



Issue 6 2024

The Magazine of RAF Brize Norton





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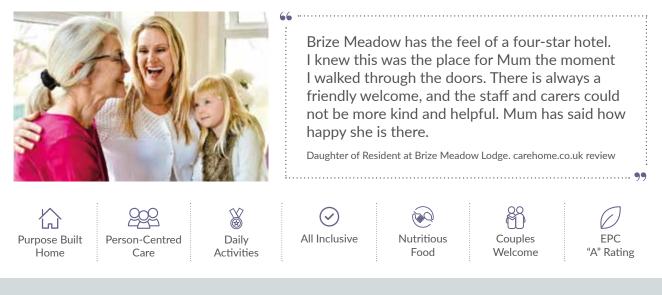
Royal Air Force Brize Norton





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	DEADLINE	DELIVERY DATE		
ISSUE 1	20 JAN	20 FEB		
ISSUE 2	12 MAR	17 APR		
ISSUE 3	12 MAY	19 JUN		
ISSUE 4	12 JULY	21 AUG		
ISSUE 5	12 SEPT	23 OCT		
ISSUE 6	12 NOV	12 DEC		



51° NORTH



Well, it's almost a wrap for 2024, I am slightly stunned at how quickly this year has gone; but here we are, our last edition of 51 Degrees North for 2024.

s we bring this year's publishing cycle to a close, it's an opportune moment to reflect on the journey we've taken together through the pages of this publication. This final issue of the year is a celebration of both the achievements and successes, across the whole force, that have shaped our shared experiences over the past twelve months which included the prestigious BRAVOS Awards.

Over the last twelve months, we have endeavoured to capture the essence of what we have accomplished both as a Station and a community. We have ensured we have brought you a mixture of what the Station and personnel have been involved in as well as lighter pieces that remind us of everyday joys and unexpected inspirations we find along the way. As with all our publications, we are committed to delivering insightful, diverse content. Your contributions have paved the way, enabling us to engage with all around us and for that I am extremely grateful. Thank you to each and every one of you for being part of this journey, we would not have such a great magazine without you all sharing your stories with us.

So, as we bid farewell to another year, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a Merry Christmas and my very best wishes for 2025. Whatever you are doing over the festive period I do hope you all have a wonderful time with family and friends.

Here's to new beginnings and a promising 2025.

See you all next year.

Anita – MCO Editor 51 Degrees North







## DEADLINE

## PLEASE SUBMIT ALL ARTICLES BY 20TH JAN

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.

# **Exercise Venture Spirit**

## Air Mobility Force Train Agile Deployment Capabilities.



xercise Venture Spirit has taken place for the second time in 2024, training the RAF's Air Mobility Force in Agile Combat Employment skills alongside the wider RAF Brize Norton Enterprise.

Agile Combat Employment involves operating from an unfamiliar setting whereby aircraft launch, recover, and are maintained from a variety of operating locations, while working with allies and partners. This time the exercise was held in Northern Ireland with Flying Station Aldergrove providing the backdrop for a simulated deployment location.

The exercise brings together several sections the Air Mobility Force work with day to day at RAF Brize Norton, including movers, emergency services, air despatchers and tactical air traffic controllers, giving the opportunity for the Brize Norton enterprise to train together in one exercise. Squadron Leader Al Spence, Detachment Commander said:

"We are taking crews on the frontline operational Atlas squadrons from a newly qualified status to a place where they are putting their skills into practise. We're having them employ the use of the aircraft and their abilities in an agile environment with a dynamic and flexible flying programme. For this exercise we've based from Aldergrove but also used Brize Norton and Leuchars as well as flying on the east coast of Scotland to simulate operational environments".

During Venture Spirit crews improved 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.

Exercise Venture Spirit takes place several times a year, utilising varying locations each time to continually train new and existing skills enabling our forces to deploy at a moment's notice and operate away from home base.





## Atlas A400M Celebrates 10 Years of Service and Capability

Celebrating the 10th anniversary of the Atlas A400M transport aircraft at RAF Brize Norton, this multi-role military transport aircraft has redefined strategic and tactical airlift worldwide.



ince the first of the 22-strong fleet of aircraft was delivered to the Oxfordshire Station on 17 November 2014, Atlas has repeatedly proven itself on a range of operations. It has become a vital asset to armed forces across the globe, demonstrating unprecedented performance, adaptability, and resilience in support of military and humanitarian missions alike.

Atlas has excelled during relief operations in the Caribbean and contributed fully to the military response to COVID, transporting patients, equipment & vaccines. It played a pivotal role in the evacuation of entitled personnel from Afghanistan and Sudan, and most recently delivered supplies by air drop in Gaza.

Operated by four squadrons LXX Squadron, 30 Squadron, XXIV Squadron and 206 Squadron at RAF Brize Norton, an Atlas is also based in the Falkland Islands providing Maritime Reconnaissance, Search and Rescue, and medical evacuation cover in the South Atlantic. With the benefit of air-air refuelling Atlas can also airdrop supplies in Antarctica.

Last year an RAF Atlas also carried out the longest-ever flight of the type flying nonstop for 22-hours from RAF Brize Norton to Guam in the Pacific. Commander Air Wing, Group Captain McIntyre said:

"The Atlas has consistently demonstrated superior strategic capabilities and versatility for the many challenging missions faced by the RAF. Its range, altitude, speed, payload and tactical performance has proven invaluable in humanitarian missions over the past 10 years, including the Caribbean, Afghanistan, Sudan, Middle-East, not to mention protecting Europe's Eastern flank and life-saving rescue missions in the South Atlantic."

#### Officer Commanding LXX Squadron, Wing Commander Stringer said:

"The success of the Atlas over these past 10 years is a testament to the collaborative spirit of what we call the Whole Force. This success is built on the hard work and dedication of everyone involved – the RAF personnel, the civil service, Defence Equipment & Support, Airbus, and our other partners in industry. Atlas's impact reflects the strength of our teamwork, determination, and shared commitment to supporting and defending the UK."

The Atlas is a four-engine turboprop aircraft that can deliver 37 tonnes of cargo over long distances, reach challenging, remote locations, and operate from short, unpaved runways, It has proven indispensable for critical operations in diverse environments. To date, the A400M has logged over 200,000 flight hours, underscoring its reliability and indispensability in missions ranging from combat support to disaster relief.

Atlas has advanced avionics, fly-by-wire controls, and a fully digital cockpit, allowing for efficient operations, precision navigation, and reduced pilot workload. It has exceptional short field performance enabling it to operate from short un-prepared as well as semiprepared strips, all achievable whilst utilising night vision goggles.

#### No. 206 SQUADRON

No. 206 Squadron (Sqn) has been integral to the Atlas programme from its inception, being the only RAF squadron involved throughout. The crews were embedded with Airbus Defence and Space to transition to the new aircraft as the first unit rolled off the Final Assembly Line in Seville, training alongside other RAF and international aircrew.

NEWS

No. 206 Sqn brought the first aircraft to the UK on 14 November 2014, and every aircraft since, trialling every hardware and software upgrade, and inspecting each upgraded aircraft over a decade. From the outset, they've been deeply engaged in certification, with our aircrew, and role specialists contributing to the multinational panel, conducting flight assessments with Airbus Defence and Space for the initial capability certification before extending it to partner nations. As the aircraft's capability requirements expanded, so did their involvement, their expertise spans numerous areas: high altitude parachuting, low level parachuting, NVG low level operations, extracted loads, drop zone sizing, defensive aids, cargo role configurations, engineering, and communications, to mention a few.

No. 206 Sqn play a crucial role within Atlas Force and have been heavily involved in recent operations across the globe.

#### No. XXIV SQUADRON

No. XXIV Sqn delivers initial and through life training and assessment for all Atlas pilots, air loadmasters and engineers. Atlas Conversion Flight trains new crews before their posting to the operational squadrons and is responsible for all Basic Mission Qualification delivery, including Non-Permissive and Maritime disciplines; as a Central Flying School (CFS) Approved Training Organisation, the Flight also provides all Atlas Qualified Aircrew Instructor development. Tactical Development Flight trains operational squadron crews in Advanced and Full Mission Qualification disciplines including Low Level Flying, Aerial Delivery, Unpaved Runway Operations and Military Parachuting.

The Engineering Maintenance School trains new RAF engineers to operate on Atlas. XXIV Sqn also provides specific training to enablers including Tactical Medical Wing, Tactical ATC and 16 Air Assault Brigade.



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## 622 Squadron Earls Colne Memorial



22 Squadron were asked to participate at the unveiling of a memorial commemorating an unfortunate accident on the 20 September 1944. That afternoon, 17 Lancasters from 622 Squadron got airborne from RAF Mildenhall to join a 600 aircraft bombing formation looking to attack some of the ports around Calais. There were large thunderstorms in the local area, and whilst all aircraft safely got airborne, LM167 and LL802 were seen to have collided whilst climbing to cruising altitude. Other squadron crews commented that as

#### The crew of Lancaster LM167

Flying Officer MURRAY LEONARD HOGG, RAFVR age 28 Sergeant JOHN ALEXANDER DE ANGELIS, RAFVR age 35 Flight Sergeant FRANK ROBINSON, RAFVR age 21 Flying Officer ALEXANDER THOMAS GILL, RAF age 28 Flying Officer HOWARD EDWARD PRITCHARD, RNZAF age 32 Flying Officer ERNEST LESLIE HOOKER Distinguished Flying Medal, RAFVR age 2 Flight Sergeant JAMES MAIN ADAMS, RNZAF age 27 Flight Sergeant GORDON WILLIAM FITNESS, RNZAF age 22

the aircraft came together, they were seen to 'stick together', cartwheeling down before visuals were lost. Both aircraft crashed near the village of Earls Colne near Colchester, with all 15 crewmembers dying.

The Earls Colne Heritage Museum, headed by their Chair, Mr Gordon Brown, took on the project to look into the incident and build a memorial to restore the memory of the crews. The weather at the unveiling of the memorial exactly 80 years after the event, couldn't have been more different. A beautiful afternoon with blue skies and no wind, allowed the descendants of the crew members and locals to meet at the local pub to peruse the information pulled together by the Heritage staff whilst enjoying a lovely lunch. 622 Squadron, represented by Wing Commander Doz James, Squadron Leader Nat Winsor and Master Aircrew

joined the group along with representatives of the Royal New Zealand Air Force (RNZAF) and the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) (four of the crew members were Canadian and one from New Zealand). The service of dedication to the crews at the memorial site was very well attended. The unveiling of the memorial was carried out by two sons of the crew members, after which Squadron Leader Nat Winsor read the poem 'High Flight' written by pilot officer John Magee, RCAF (KIA 11 December 1944). Wing Commander Doz James read the names of the crew members in an act of remembrance before Master Aircrew Paddy Adams gave the exhortation of the "Fallen". As part of the dedication, wreaths were laid by relatives and friends of the crew members, the RAF, RNZAF and RCAF.

#### The crew of Lancaster LL802

Flying Officer CLAUD ROY JAMES, RAF age 25 Sergeant EDWARD JAMES DRYLAND, RAFVR age 35 Sergeant RONALD HENRY WESTBROOK, RAFVR age 23 Flight Sergeant JAMES GIBSON, RAFVR age 22 Sergeant ROBERT SAMUEL KEATLEY, RAFVR age 23 Sergeant PETER INNES GEDDES, RAFVR age 22 Sergeant JOHN ANLEY DUMARESQUE, RAFVR age 22

Paddy Adams,



# 

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## NEWS

# **Firmin Sword of Peace**

The RAF Global Enablement Medical Force has received the 2023 Firmin Sword of Peace Award for its outstanding humanitarian contributions.

his prestigious award recognises Royal Navy, Army, RAF, and Joint Service Units for fostering positive relationships between the British Armed Forces and communities worldwide.

Presented by Air Chief Marshal Sir Rich Knighton at RAF Brize Norton, the award highlights the Medical Force's extraordinary achievements, including deployments during Operation Greenlighter after the Türkiye earthquake and Operation Polarbear in Sudan. Their efforts provided critical medical care to thousands, often under challenging conditions.

Air Chief Marshal Sir Rich Knighton said: "It's an honour to present RAF Global Enablement's Medical Force with the 2023 Firmin Sword of peace for their dedication, resilience, and professionalism. The commitment shown by our Regular and Reservist personnel represents the very spirit of service and excellence that the RAF stands for".



Alongside the support the Medical Force provides to Global Operations and Defence, personnel from Tactical Medical Wing initiated a co-responder team with the South-Central Ambulance Service, which sees them support their local communities whilst maintaining clinical skills. The Firmin Sword of Peace was first established as the Wilkinson Sword of Peace in 1966 and is awarded each year to the unit of the UK's armed services judged to have made the most valuable contribution towards establishing good and friendly relations with any community at home or overseas.

Group Captain Rowley, Commander Medical Force, said: **"This award reflects the patient centred dedication, professionalism, and compassion** of every member of the Medical Force. This award truly belongs to the entire Medical Force, and I couldn't be prouder of what we've achieved together."





# REMEMBRANCE









## **ROAD TRAFFIC COLLISON EXERCISE**

rink-driving remains a significant public health issue, contributing to thousands of fatalities and serious injuries each year. The impact of this reckless behaviour, affects not only the individuals involved but also their families, communities, and emergency services. When someone chooses to drive under the influence, they not only jeopardize their own life but also endanger the lives of others on the road. The repercussions often extend far beyond immediate physical harm, leading to emotional trauma and financial burdens for victims and their families.

To illustrate the devastating consequences of drink-driving, Joint Air Delivery Test and Evaluation Unit conducted a Road Traffic Collision (RTC) exercises that involved police, fire services, and medical personnel. These exercises simulate real-life scenarios where a drink-driving incident has occurred,



allowing first responders to practice their coordination and response strategies. During these drills, police assess the scene, gather evidence, and manage traffic, while the firefighters work to extricate individuals trapped in vehicles. Meanwhile, medics provide crucial medical assistance to the injured, highlighting the urgent need for rapid response in such emergencies. These exercises serve as a powerful reminder of the chaotic aftermath of a crash, reinforcing the importance of responsible drinking and driving decisions.

These crash exercises play a vital role in Station education and awareness. By showcasing the grim realities of drink-driving incidents, they aim to deter individuals from making the choice to drive under the influence. Participants and observers are often left with a stark visual representation of the consequences, including the emotional toll on first responders who deal with the fallout of these preventable tragedies. Ultimately, these initiatives not only enhance the preparedness of emergency services but also foster a culture of responsibility and safety on the station, aiming to reduce the instances of drink-driving and its tragic outcomes.









## **47AD Visit Arnhem for 80th Commemorations**

47 Air Despatch Squadron (47AD) has strong ties to Arnhem, due to the casualties Air Despatchers endured during Operation Market Garden where 89 aircraft were shot down.







his is why 47AD still wear the Golden Dakota on their uniform today and visit Arnhem as part of a battlefield study annually.

This year, 47 Air Despatch Squadron deployed on the Operation Market Garden Battlefield Study on the 18th of September 2024 for the 80th commemorative anniversary celebration. During Operation Market Garden, Air Despatchers played a critical role in the resupply of ground troops over Holland. Approximately 79 Air Despatchers died alongside the RAF crews, while they made heroic attempts to complete their objectives and coming under heavy fire from the German ground defences.

The visit included a trip to Kate Ter Horst house, where the injured British Troops were cared for during Operation Market Garden. The injured patients named her the Angel of Arnhem, thanks to her efforts to save them after being wounded. Throughout the visit numerous aircraft conducted parachute jumps in memory of their colleagues, who made that very jump into combat 80 years ago from several nations, including the RAF Atlas A400M despatching UK paratroopers. Finally, members of 47AD attended a parade in Oosterbeek to pay their respects to the fallen troops from all nations that took part.

Private Jones, 47AD said: "This is very poignant for us as a trade, and we must value and understand the sacrifice they made in the effort to complete resupply air drop missions. Throughout our time in Holland, we visited many of the key battle areas. One that stands out for me personally was visiting Arnhem bridge, which was tasked to be taken by the British Parachute Regiment who were entered into the battle by parachute near Renkum.

To witness the bridge and the history that came with it, was amazing to see and the bravery of these men was unbelievable. I think it made us realise how much they had to sacrifice in the face of war but also the true realities of war, which we could face in the future as part of our careers. The standout part for me, was the respect that the Dutch people have towards the allied troops and countries that gave everything for the war to be ended as soon as possible. The young children paying respects by placing flowers on the graves of soldiers, who paid the ultimate sacrifice, was something that will last long in our memories."

# Four Royal Auxiliary Air Force Squadrons receive Standards in ceremony at Tower of London

On 5th October personnel from four squadrons of the Royal Auxiliary Air Force (RAuxAF) paraded before Air Vice-Marshal Ranald Munro Commandant General of the RAuxAF in a ceremony at the Tower of London when each squadron was honoured with the presentation of a Standard.

n 5th October personnel from four squadrons of the Royal Auxiliary Air Force (RAuxAF) paraded before Air Vice-Marshal Ranald Munro Commandant General of the RAuxAF in a ceremony at the Tower of London when each squadron was honoured with the presentation of a Standard.

It is unprecedented for four RAF units to receive Standards at the same ceremony and Tower Green was a fitting location for the ceremony reflecting the solemnity and importance of this occasion in the RAuxAF's centenary year.

Standards were presented to 501 (County of Gloucester) Squadron based at RAF Brize Norton, 504 (City of Nottingham) Squadron based at RAF Wittering, 603 (City of Edinburgh) Squadron based in the city of Edinburgh and 607 (County of Durham) Squadron based at RAF Leeming. The ceremony was led by musicians from the Central Band of the RAF and the RAF Cranwell based Band of the Royal Auxiliary Air Force.

Each of the receiving squadrons can trace its history back to the early days of the RAF Reserves and a time when the then Auxiliary Air Force was recruiting civilians to learn to fly bi-planes in their spare time. During World War Two the squadrons saw operational service flying the fighters and bombers of the day.



A quarter of the squadrons which fought in the Battle of Britain were Auxiliary Air Force squadrons and they accounted for a third of the combat victories. At the war's end King George VI bestowed the prefix "Royal" on the title of the now Royal Auxiliary Air Force in recognition of the Reserve's wartime service.



Air Vice-Marshal Ranald Munro, Commandant General of the RAuxAF, said: **"The awardi<u>ng of</u>** four Standards to Reserve squadrons this year is not only a great honour but a fitting end to our centenary year. This year has seen our Reservists providing overseas operational support to the RAF in traditional areas of defence and in highly specialised roles including medicine, intelligence, cyber and now even space, demonstrating that the RAuxAF has continued to grow with the RAF and is as important to UK defence as ever."

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TEAM

BRIZE NORTON ISSUE 6 2024



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## RAF CHAPLAINS LEARN MORE ABOUT ATLAS FORCE



n November, RAF Brize Norton hosted a visit from Padres of the RAF Church of Scotland and Free Church Chaplains. Whilst attending their annual conference at the Defence Academy Shrivenham, the Padres took the chance to visit the Station to gain a more in-depth understanding of the Atlas C.1 (A400M) operations and some of the enablers which aid and support the force. The visit began with 30 Squadron, where the group received a detailed briefing on capabilities from one of the flight commanders, Squadron Leader Al Mundy. Afterward, the Padre's proceeded 'air side' for a comprehensive tour of an A400M aircraft, led by a pilot and loadmaster from the Squadron. The aircrew shared insights into the force's recent operations, including the widely publicised humanitarian airdrop missions in Gaza and the D-Day 80th anniversary celebrations. Following lunch in the Officers' Mess, the Padre's visited the Airborne Delivery Wing for a tour of the Parachute Training Squadron. They observed Parachute Jumping Instructors undergo training and were even given the chance to practice their parachuting skills by jumping from the 30ft training platform!

The visit concluded with 47 Air Despatch Sqn. The despatchers demonstrated how the various loads are built and meticulously checked ready to be air dropped from the aircraft.



## CYBER ESCAPE ROOM A test of Wits

and Cyber Awareness.



yberspace Operations Squadron recently hosted a thrilling Cyber Escape Room event aimed at boosting cyber security awareness across RAF Brize Norton. This event is part of a larger Cyber Confident initiative to stay alert against the ever-evolving landscape of cyber threats.

Teams of two to five people were able to book the experience online, with participants encouraged to come up with creative team names. Running over the course of two weeks, the event proved highly popular; all slots were quickly filled. A total of 48 teams comprising of 235 participants from across the whole force took part.

The escape room was designed to simulate a real-world cyber-attack



scenario, challenging players to search for clues, decode messages and uncover hidden passwords in a race against the clock...all in under 30 minutes. Each participating team received a Cyber Confident goody bag, regardless of their ranking on the leaderboard. The "Spectrum Team" emerged as the top performers, setting an impressive benchmark by completing the challenge in just 15 minutes and 39 seconds!

With this success, the RAF has raised the bar for future escape rooms. We look forward to seeing how future teams rise to the challenge and what innovative experiences the Defence Digital - Cyber Defence and Risk Directorate will bring next.



TEAM

## Celebrating the Remarkable Career of Flt Lt Preedy: A Lifetime in the Royal Air Force

As Flt Lt Preedy approaches retirement, we take a moment to celebrate the distinguished and adventure-filled career of a dedicated Air Traffic Controller whose service spanned over four decades in the Royal Air Force (RAF).

is journey in the RAF began in 1981 at Cranwell where he completed Initial Officer's Training (IOT). After IOT, A/ Plt Off Preedy moved on to Phase Two of his training at Shawbury. This period was marked by the harshest winter the UK had seen, with temperatures plummeting to -27°C. Yet, assessments continued in the simulators.

On completion of training, he embarked on his first posting at RAF Wittering, home to the renowned Harriers. Here, he had the rare privilege of experiencing four flights in a Harrier, including a sortie over Norway.

His next posting took him to RAF Church Fenton, a Basic Jet Training base where he controlled Jet Provosts.

In 1986, he deployed to Mount Pleasant Airfield in the Falkland Islands just after the base's inauguration. His commitment was so steadfast that he returned from this assignment just 10 days before his wedding—a testament to his dedication and his ability to balance service with personal life.

The late 1980s and early 1990s saw Flt Lt Preedy posted to RAF St Mawgan, where he spent five years controlling Nimrods and overseeing complex maritime exercises. Off duty, he indulged in his love for golf, serving as the Officer in Charge of Golf at what he still calls the nicest course in the country. This was also where he earned his private pilot's license, adding another feather to his cap.

The 1990s brought him to RAF Lyneham with a fleet of 75 C-130s. He counts this as one of his favourite assignments, noting the intense yet highly rewarding nature of the controlling.

> Midway through the 1990s, he took on a new challenge, completing the Area Radar Control Course and spending six years at

RAF West Drayton, the predecessor to Swanwick.

In 2001, he embarked on a three-year assignment to RAF Akrotiri, arriving just one month before the events of 9/11. What had been a relatively peaceful base suddenly transformed into a bustling hub of 24/7 operations. The airfield went from handling occasional rotary traffic to supporting two squadrons of KC-135 tankers, US Navy support aircraft, special forces operations, fast jets, a brandnew British C-17, and the permanent U-2 detachment. He was part of the team that was awarded the Raytheon Trophy, recognising them as the best tower in the military. His tenure there also included trips to Egypt, Jordan, and Beirut, highlighting the global nature of his service.

Arriving at RAF Brize Norton in 2004, he continued his duties as a Regular before transitioning to an Aviation Officer (AVO) role in 2009.

Throughout his career, Flt Lt Preedy witnessed the evolution of air traffic control technology, spanning four generations of radar systems. His extensive experience allowed him to control every type of aircraft—from the smallest gyrocopter to the largest Antonov and even the legendary Concorde. With 17 military aircraft flown in, seven postings, and 14 detachments, his career was a blend of complex controlling, diverse assignments, and unique experiences. He even celebrated his 40th birthday with an unforgettable flight in a Tornado.

Flt Lt Preedy's adventurous spirit extended beyond air traffic control; he participated in numerous offshore sailing expeditions. His voyages took him to the Caribbean, Mediterranean, from New York to Halifax in Canada, and an epic Atlantic crossing from Rio de Janeiro to Cape Town.

Over the years, he honed his expertise and became one of the most experienced Air Traffic Controllers in the RAF, renowned for his precision



and unnerving calmness. His influence is profound - having instructed an unquantifiable number of controllers, his wisdom is engrained in military and civil air traffic control, leaving an indelible legacy.

Reflecting on his career, he cites the intense operational tempo at RAF Akrotiri as his greatest achievement. One memory that stands out was giving his future wife a double ride, or a 'backy', on a bicycle down the runway at Wittering whilst the airfield was closed, ending with them engaging the barrier.

When asked for advice for aspiring air traffic controllers, Flt Lt Preedy emphasises adaptability: "One thing that is constant in this job is change; nothing stays the same for very long. Be prepared for it."

Flt Lt Preedy retires with gratitude for the people he worked alongside: "I've worked with lots of very good people, made some great friends, and had some amazing experiences".

As he steps into retirement, he plans to put his feet up, take care of his mother, and tackle a long list of DIY projects.

Congratulations, Flt Lt Preedy, on an exceptional career. Thank you for your outstanding service and the countless contributions you've made to the RAF and aviation. Your presence may no longer fill the control tower, but your legacy will echo in the skies for years to come. Enjoy your well-deserved retirement!

## **RAFA ARMISTICE DAY**

our members from RAF Brize Norton travelled to France from the 6th to 13th November to participate in Armistice Commemorations, visiting various English and French War graves, laying wreaths and poppy crosses to pay respects to the fallen. The group was led by Chf Tech Craven, accompanied by Sqn Ldr Farrell, AS1 Rae and AS1 Miller. This year, an additional group of five from RAF Waddington was led by WO Calvert, formerly of RAF Brize Norton.

On the journey to the hub in Chateau Thierry, they stopped off in the Somme region visiting the Thiepval memorial and its visitors centre, the Canadian Newfoundland memorial at Beaumont-Hamel where examples of WW1 trenches were seen, the Ulster Tower, Irish Guards memorial and the Lochnager Mine Crater created by the detonation of underground mines by Royal



Engineers on the first day of the Battle of the Somme.

Friday was an opportunity to meet with the President of the Médaillés Militaires, M. Jean Thomas, who gave an insight to how the twenty-year RAF link to the local community was formed and and heard of his impressive military career. In the afternoon, the group visited the American US Marine Corps cemetery at Belleau Wood.

Over the weekend the group attended several Armistice services centred around the nearby towns of La Ferté-Sous Jouarre and Bassevelle where they joined



representatives of the Médaillés Militaires, local dignitaries and members of the public in paying our respects and laying wreaths. The group also commemorated two RAF Lancaster bombers which were shot down in the villages of Bassevelle and Ussy Sur Marne, laying wreaths in their respective cemeteries where crew were laid to rest.

The last two days of the trip were an opportunity to indulge in some local WWI & WWII history, visiting the Rethondes clearing in the Compiegne Forest where the WWI Armistice was signed on a railway carriage which was subsequently used in WWII before being destroyed by the Nazis.

Overall, the trip was a fantastic opportunity for the serving RAF to build on existing relationships with the communities of La Ferté-Sous Jouarre, Joarre, Bassevelle and Ussy Sur Marne and to enhance their knowledge of the battlefields and sacrifice made by those who fought across two World Wars and the lasting impact they had on the landscape and people of France. Chf Tech Craven would also like to thank the local Carterton & Brize Norton RAFA branch for their generous contribution towards the trip.

## **ROAD SAFETY WEEK**

his week, the Road Safety Committee have held several events to raise awareness and to educate RAF Brize Norton personnel on safer driving.

**Survive the Drive** – Over 60 people attended a presentation by Sgt Grogan about the dangers of drink driving, distractions whilst driving and speeding. The brief included real life stories from people who have been affected by dangerous driving, this included members from the emergency services to family members of people who have been killed after being in a road traffic collision.

**Slow Down on Station –** RAF Brize Norton Police Flight carried out a day of checking the speed of drivers on Station not only to educate those going over the speed limit but as a reminder of the Station speed limit.

Manoeuvring and Reversing training – Airfield Support Mechanical BRIZE NORTON ISSUE 6 2024 Transport section held a training afternoon for Station personnel to learn the importance of awareness when controlling a vehicle around the airfield and to follow instructions from a marshaller. It began with a brief with some alarming facts of incidents which have happened around aircraft and the costs of damages which can occur from not having due diligence behind the driving wheel, followed with some practical assessments for people to try out and learn new skills.





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## SALUTEMYJOB CELEBRATES 10-YEARS OF UPSKILLING VETERANS TO FILL EMPLOYERS' CRITICAL GAPS

SaluteMyJob, a business dedicated to bridging the gap between employers and ex-military jobseekers, has just celebrated its 10-year anniversary. For a decade, SMJ has been fighting to bridge the gap between the skills and experiences of the two-million strong Armed Forces Community - a unique talent pool often overlooked and misunderstood.

SMJ offers a range of specialist services. **SaluteMyJob Search**, where we expertly match talent to opportunities in the public, private and Third sectors, helping employers create a sustainable talent pipeline. Our fully-funded **Pathways Programme** currently provides free cybersecurity training, targeted at filling employers' business critical skills gaps. Our **SMJ Consulting Services** provide specialist advice to help organisations implement structured sustainable and measurable programmes to deliver their Covenant pledges, build pipelines of talent and realise the social value of their activities to support the Armed Forces community.

We are very proud of our <u>Pathways</u> <u>Programme</u>, which focuses on transitioning ex-military personnel into the fast-growing world of cybersecurity. A collaborative programme between Abertay University, IBM and SaluteMyJob and supported by funding from Nominet, and the UK and Scottish Governments and the Institute of Coding's Click Start initiative, this unique programme attracts, skills and provides the commercial and practical experience required for people from across the Armed Forces community to compete for demanding roles, within cybersecurity and AI. But that is the future!

Andrew Jackson, Managing Director of SaluteMyJob, said: "We are incredibly proud of our Pathways Programme, which makes the most of veterans' transferable skills and helps them acquire the requisite skills and experience to succeed in digital, AI and cybersecurity roles, where there is the greatest demand."

One of our biggest success stories is former British Gurkha Men Gurung, who was part of one of the first cohorts who successfully completed the Penetration Testing course at Abertay University. His inspirational journey shows that even coming from an untechnical background, you can still excel in the world of cybersecurity - as Men is doing right now.

Men said: "SaluteMyJob has been the backbone of my cybersecurity journey. Providing valuable resources, guidance, training courses and morale support as well as connecting me with industry professionals, has helped me immensely in reaching where I am today."



Men's first cyber opportunity was at Wood PLC in Aberdeen, as a Business Information Security Analyst. Now he is in his 'dream role' at IBM, as a Cybersecurity Analyst. The valuable skills and experience he gained within his 20-years Service, he still uses in his role today: He believes veterans are well-suited to cybersecurity roles because they 'possess strong analytical skills, attention to detail, and a disciplined approach to problem-solving'. He added: "Their experience in high-pressure environments equips them to respond effectively to security incidents. Most of the soft skills they possess can directly translate to cybersecurity roles, making them valuable assets in protecting organisations."

Want to find out more? Read more of our success stories <u>here</u> and to apply for our Pathways Programme visit <u>here</u>. If you are an employer and would like to become a partner and access our candidates, email Andrew Jackson at andrew@salutemyjob.co.uk.





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# **RAFA Kidz Pre-School**

A new pre-school building has opened at RAF Brize Norton, run by the RAFA Kidz network of nurseries.

AFA Kidz opened a nursery at RAF Brize Norton in 2022, providing childcare for personnel of the Station. The nursery has been popular, and it became clear for the need to expand services to cater for children of pre-school age.

A suitable building was found, which had once been a pre-school for the Station, and refurbished to bring it new life. The new facility means RAFA Kidz at RAF Brize Norton can provide early learning opportunities for children right up until they start school.

The new pre-school was officially opened by the Station Commander of RAF Brize Norton, Group Captain Louise Henton.

Group Captain Henton said: "It has been a privilege to formally open the RAFA Kidz Pre-School today as an expansion of their Early Years delivery at RAF Brize Norton. The dedicated RAFA Kidz nursery team have developed the existing pre-school facility and it's a joy to see the youngest members of our community learning, and developing in such a positive environment."

#### Sarah said:

"The opening of our RAFA Kidz Pre-School is incredibly exciting. Expanding the RAFA Kidz provision here and providing quality, affordable childcare is our passion and we are looking forward to sharing what we do and the services we provide with even more families." Sarah Rathbone is the manager of RAFA Kidz at Brize Norton. Sarah has worked in childcare for over 17 years, and has supported the families of serving personnel both in the UK and abroad.

The opening of the new Pre-School was also attended by members of the RAF Brize Norton Community Support Team who worked closely with RAFA Kidz to make the project a reality. COMMUNITY

# RAF Brize Norton Celebrates Bonfire Night with Spectacular Fireworks Display



RAF Brize Norton proudly celebrated Bonfire Night with a captivating fireworks display and family-friendly evening that lit up the skies over West Oxfordshire.

> AF Brize Norton personnel and their families, joined in the celebrations on the base, enjoying an evening dedicated to fun, safety, and community spirit.

The event commenced with Station Commander, Group Captain Louise Henton, igniting the bonfire following an enthusiastic countdown led by the crowd. The spectacular fireworks display lit up the night sky, perfectly synchronized with the great music.

Thank you to the hard-working team who made the event a great success.





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## Voyager Force Create Sensory Garden

In the summer, a group of Voyager personnel undertook a community project for a local school named Edith Moorhouse, aiming to transform their garden into a sensory space for the children attending the school.



he project was completed within a two-day span by eight members of 10 and 101 Squadron, led by AS1 Tuite, this resulted in the rewarding experience of witnessing the children's faces once it was finished. Local businesses helped with donations including Burford Garden Centre, Smits Tree Nursery and Serco workshop on Brize Norton camp.

Going forward, more school projects will be taking place with Voyager Force personnel. If you know of any businesses that would be willing to give garden donations, then please get in contact with Olivia.tuite100@mod.gov.uk.





#### BRIZE NORTON ISSUE 6 2024

## "Be Safe, Be Seen"

## COMMUNITY

In October 2024, the Station partnered with Brize Norton Primary School to launch a creative road safety initiative aimed at raising awareness about the importance of visibility during the winter months.



he campaign, titled "Be Safe, Be Seen," focused on reminding drivers and pedestrians alike of the crucial need to wear bright, visible clothing during darker winter days. As part of this initiative, we ran a poster competition inviting the students of Brize Norton Primary School to design a poster that would effectively convey the message. The competition saw an overwhelming response, with over 130 submissions from the talented children. Each design was unique, showcasing both creativity and an understanding of road safety. After careful consideration, the entries were shortlisted, by split decision, to a final top six, and the final winner was chosen by the Station Commander herself.

The winning design was created by Hashir, whose "Rocket Car" poster captured both attention and imagination. The Station Commander selected Hashir's design for its clear, impactful message and vibrant, eyecatching colours, making it a powerful reminder for all road users to stay visible during the winter months.

The winning poster is now proudly displayed on Station, serving as a constant reminder to drivers and pedestrians alike to "Be Safe, Be Seen." This collaborative effort between the local school and the Station has not only highlighted the importance of road safety but also provided the children an opportunity to contribute to a meaningful community initiative.

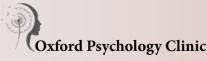


We would like to thank Brize Norton Primary School for their enthusiastic participation and congratulate all the students for their fantastic submissions. Special recognition goes to our six finalists and, of course, to Hashir for his outstanding winning design. Together, we hope this campaign will make a lasting impact and ensure greater road safety in our community.

The "Be Safe, Be Seen" initiative is just the beginning, and we look forward to further collaborations to promote safety and awareness throughout the winter season and beyond.







Sanya Arapovic, Registered & Chartered Psychologist BA, BA (Hons), MA Couns Psych, Post-MA Dip Couns Psych

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Therapy can be provided to you online or in person at Summertown, Oxford. I offer flexible appointments in both the daytime and early evening.



#### WRFM: Serving the Community Through Local Voices

WRFM, a beloved local radio station in West Oxfordshire, continues to be a vibrant hub for local news, music, and entertainment. Broadcasting live 24/7, the station reaches listeners across Oxfordshire and the Cotswolds on their FM frequencies and online streams.

WRFM prioritises providing a platform for the community. Their programming features a diverse range of music catering to all ages, alongside local news updates and traffic reports. Interactive elements like live chat shows allow residents to engage with local issues and connect with each other.

The stations primary aim and focus is to be a truly local resource for the community. This includes interviews with residents, discussions on pressing local matters like housing and flooding, and promoting local businesses and events.

Whether you're looking for familiar tunes, updates on what's happening around town, or a chance to connect with your neighbours. WRFM offers a warm and welcoming space on the airwaves.

Why not follow WRFM on social media? Find us on Facebook (facebook.com/witneyradio), Twitter (@witneyradio) and Instagram (wrfm\_radio). Tune in on their FM frequencies 90.2 - 107.4FM, on DAB, listen online, or ask your smart speaker to "Launch WRFM" and become part of the vibrant community.





## CHARIT

## **Brize Norton Support Contract Social Committee**

### What a Year we've had!

arly summer of last year the Serco Contract Manager casually asked when were we going to resurrect the Social Committee with the aim of bringing our staff together (as well as the RAF) in a social setting but, more importantly, to raise money for charity. Catherine Williams formed a Committee to talk about the possibilities! Which we did. At the inaugural meeting in September 2023 we decided (with the help of our Serco colleagues) who we were going to fundraise for and the rest, so they say, is history!

Our chosen charities for 2023/2024 were to be SSAFA RAF Brize Norton and The Springfield School in Witney, the latter being a great school who teach and engage with young people who have mild to severe learning disabilities. SSAFA and the school were delighted and wished us well in our endeavours.

Since then we have undertaken countless Bacon Bap sales, a Quiz Night, a cycling

and spinning event, two cake sales, a Rock of the Committee formally handing n Roll Bingo night, 10-pin bowling, a darts over the cheque to SSAFA. evening, a 5-aside football tournament, a golf day as well as supporting a RAFA rides event in June 2024. It has been relentless but, nevertheless, great fun and embodied the whole force approach by involving our military colleagues and their families every step of the way.

In September of this year we had raised the princely sum of £2728 which was split equally between the two recipients. Our photograph shows members

A big shout out to the Committee and the countless other people that have either helped us, taken part or simply made a donation of which there are too many to mention here. THANK YOU.

We have already started our campaign this year. More to follow in due course. We can tell you that in the space of one month we've already raised £355 but keep that quiet!



## **RAF Brize Norton Raises the Bar with BrizeRox Success**



osted by Cpl Sumpter and the PEd team, the event conducted in pairs saw participants run 500m followed by a functional workout station, repeated eight times. This rigorous yet rewarding format tested endurance, strength, and teamwork.

In addition to the physical challenges, BrizeRox served a charitable cause, raising over £350 for the RAF Brize Norton Charities Fund. The fundraising efforts included a bake sale, with delicious treats kindly donated by AS1 Munro and Cpl Dunn, adding a sweet touch to a day focused on health and fitness.

The event was a hit, running from 7am with hourly heats that concluded at 6pm. With 50 teams competing throughout the day, the competition

was fierce, but resilience and teamwork was prevalent throughout. By the end of the day, AS1 Turner and AS1 Murray achieved the fastest overall time of the event, completing the challenge in an impressive 34:46.

Here are the top performers in each category:

#### Males Under 35:

AS1 Kyle Turner + AS1 Sam Murray (34:46)

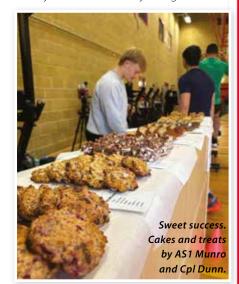
#### Females Under 35:

- AS1 Francesca Herdman + Molly Bishop (45:30)
- Mixed Under 35:
- Sqt James Stuart + Cpl Libby Dunn (39:40)
- Males Over 35:
- Wg Cdr Jack Holt + Sqn Ldr Tom Williams (42:47)
- Females Over 35:
- Cpl Kate McGuinness + Sqt Victoria Taylor (56:43)
- Mixed Over 35:
- FS Andrew Banks + Sgt Gemma Hankinson (39:13)

BrizeRox wasn't just about competition, but also about promoting inclusivity, health, and teamwork, ensuring all

participants—from fitness enthusiasts to those just starting out-had a place in the event. The enthusiasm and dedication of everyone involved made it a day to remember.

With such an overwhelmingly positive response, plans are already in the works for future events. Thank you to everyone who took part or supported the eventyou helped raise valuable funds for charity and made the day a huge success!



## **RAF BRIZE NORTON CONGRATULATES NEW FEMALE REFEREES**

AF Brize Norton proudly announces and congratulates the latest cohort of female referees who have successfully completed their training and certification.

These trailblazing women represent a significant milestone in advancing gender equality and diversity within the world of sporting officiating.

As the demand for skilled and qualified referees continues to grow, these remarkable women have demonstrated exceptional dedication, skill and passion proving that the world of officiating is open to all, regardless of gender. Their presence not only reflects progress but also serves as an inspiration for future

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generations of women aspiring to break barriers in the sporting world.

Group Captain Jon Smith, Chair Royal Air Force Football Association said:

"The potential of the women's game in the Service is significant, noting the exponential growth of the female game across the UK.

To realise this potential, the RAF Football Association is determined to provide equitable opportunities for women in the Service to play, coach and get involved in the sport. A cornerstone of that growth is a vibrant female officials' community, which the team at RAF Brize Norton are trailblazing in impressive style.



#### My congratulations and thanks to all those involved – I hope their stories inspire more women to follow in their footsteps."

The new referees have undergone vigorous training, demonstrating proficiency in all areas of officiating, from rule interpretation to maintaining fairness. With their certification, they are now prepared to officiate in a variety of local, regional, and national sporting events, bringing their unique perspectives and expertise to the field.

## Newly qualified referee Squadron Leader Danielle Burgess said:

"It is a huge honour to be part of the wider referee community. Out of 10 female referees in the Royal Air Force, seven are now based at RAF Brize Norton. We've worked hard and we are all extremely excited to represent not only ourselves and the Royal Air Force but also all the women who aspire to follow in our footsteps."

The Royal Air Force is committed to fostering an inclusive environment and will continue to champion initiatives that promote gender equality within the organisation.

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Check out our website www.tanks-alot.co.uk, join our Facebook and You Tube channel then lastly read the trip advisor reviews. Awarded certificate of excellence 17 years concurrent. Visiting a museum is like sniffing food in a restaurant rather than eating it. Get to grips with some serious military machines, enjoy the armoury, shoot shotguns at radio controlled spitfires and 17th century muskets at French soldier figurines. Learn survival skills in the woods. Win the car crush at the end of the day, life will never be the same especially if you beat your husband. Then try not to buy your very own tank from Nick - he can tell you

a dozen reasons why you should!



•

# National Fitness Day Results

## RAF Brize Norton Triumphs in the 2023 RAF Inter-Facility Challenge.

POSITION	FACILITY	PARTICIPANTS WITH 100+ MEPS	TOTAL MEPS	AVERAGE MEPS
1ST	BRIZE NORTON	39	11183	287
2ND	CENTRAL FUND	17	4496	264
3RD	AKROTIRI	24	5418	226
4TH	BENSON	22	4046	184
- Andrews			197 1980	



n 18 September, the RAF Central Fund held its annual RAF Inter-Facility Challenge in partnership with Myzone, as part of the celebration for National Fitness Day. The event aimed to promote physical activity by challenging participants from various RAF facilities to earn as many Myzone Effort Points (MEPs) as possible over a 24-hour period.

ADVENTURE

& SPORT

Only participants who earned 100 or more MEPs were included in the final tally. The total points earned by each facility were divided by the number of participants, ensuring that smaller and larger facilities had an equal chance of success.

After a competitive day of fitness, RAF Brize Norton came out on top, achieving a collective average of 287 MEPs. Their dedication and effort throughout the challenge secured them the coveted first place on the leaderboard. A special mention goes to the Central Fund facility, which finished a close second, followed by RAF Akrotiri in third and RAF Benson in fourth.

RAF Brize Norton continues to demonstrate its strong commitment to health and fitness, consistently demonstrated through station circuits, gym culture, and the active involvement of individuals in various sports across Station. We would like to extend our thanks to everyone involved in promoting and participating in these activities, from the dedicated physical trainers to the personnel who show up with enthusiasm and determination. Everyone's collective efforts ensure that health and well-being remain a top priority at the Station, fostering a culture of fitness and resilience.

Congratulations to all, and we look forward to next year's challenge!







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# **Armed Forces Financial Services**

### WHO WE ARE

Founded nearly 20 years ago by Veterans Dianne Kerry and Paul Blair DSO, Armed Forces Financial Services (AFFS) provides Independent Mortgage & Protection advice to serving Personnel, Veterans and their families.

We are proud member of the Armed Forces Covenant and can be found on the British Insurance Brokers Association's (BIBA) list of specialist military insurance brokers.

### WHAT WE DO

We provide fee free, whole of market, independent mortgage advice to; first-time buyers, those looking to use the Forces Help to Buy Scheme, home movers, remortgage clients, consent to let clients and BFPO address history.

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- For existing clients that use our mortgage switching service we can reserve a new rate early with your current lender, which means you probably won't need to supply any supporting document or have new credit / affordability check carried out. If rates fall before the new deal starts, we can switch you to the new rate, hassle free.

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## We want to hear from you!

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Interested in playing a part to help support the RAF Family? Visit: rafbf.org/meeting-the-needs







