

Spring 2024

# Wittering View

The official magazine of RAF Wittering

ROYAL  
AIR FORCE  
WITTERING



**Features:** New Year Honours • Remembrance • Community News • Boxing Championships • In the Hot Seat • SSAFA



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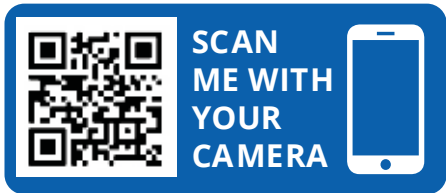
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## Editor

Welcome to the Spring 2024 edition of Wittering View

**W**e start by recognising Station personnel who were named in the 2024 New Year Honours List or received awards from the Station Commander for their exemplary service and contributions to the Royal Air Force and RAF Wittering (page 6). We are incredibly proud of these individuals and their achievements.

In fact, the theme of this issue seems to be outstanding achievements. From the technicians on 71 (Inspection & Repair) Squadron who have become the first UK personnel qualified in X-Ray Computed Tomography (page 13) to the incredible efforts of Joint Aircraft Recovery and Transportation Squadron in the historical recovery of WWII Lancaster Bomber ED603 (page 21).

We also turn the spotlight on the talented boxers here at RAF Wittering and their well-earned success at the RAF Lord Wakefield's Boxing Championships (page 20).

Looking back at the holiday season (which seems like a lifetime ago), we have a recap of all the festive activities that took place on station over Christmas.

Road safety is always a priority, and we devote coverage to the informative 2MT Road Safety Week on page 7.

As always, we marked Remembrance Day with solemn parades and services to honour those who made the ultimate sacrifice. As you will see from the features on pages 16, personnel from Wittering attended services across the area and it was a united time of reflection with the local community.

You will also find all the usual features including a new look recipe article featuring the talent of our caterers on Station.

Enjoy!

**Emma Stacey**  
Media, Engagement & Communications Officer

# Foreword

As I reflect on my first year in command here at RAF Wittering, I am struck by how much we have accomplished together as a Station.

**F**rom the new allotments to the updated gym, this past year has seen tremendous improvements across Wittering aimed at enhancing the lived experience for all our personnel and families.

None of this would have been possible without the incredible work put in day after day by our dedicated Station personnel. I continue to be impressed by the skill and commitment demonstrated by all members of Team Wittering. Together we have taken on ambitious projects to make this not just a place of work, but a thriving community we can all be proud of.

In addition to our own efforts, we have been fortunate to have the support of various charities in funding and facilitating many of our infrastructure upgrades and community initiatives. As we look ahead to the coming year, and our shared vision is for Wittering to focus on giving back to the Charitable organisations that have done so much for us.

Let's start by having Team Wittering put their best foot forward for the RAF Association's Virtual 50 challenge at the end of April. Whether walking, running, or cycling, I encourage all of you to take part in this virtual event and help raise crucial funds for the RAF family

- sign up via <https://rafa.org.uk/events/virtual-50/>

And to any who are able, please consider volunteering or donating directly to the Charities that have played such an important role in enabling our progress as a Station over the past year.

Though we have accomplished much already, there is still more to come. In the months ahead, we will continue improving Wittering with projects like the new Wellness Garden, the revitalised Community Centre, and the refurbishment of the Golden Lion. Our vision is for a Station that supports the welfare of personnel and provides the best possible quality of life for all. We are well on our way, and I am excited to see what more we can achieve in the year to come. Thank you all for your continued commitment to making RAF Wittering a thriving community we can all be proud of.

**Wg Cdr Nikki Duncan**



## Submissions

Please direct all submissions for Wittering View Magazine to:  
**The Editor, WIT-GMBWittView@mod.gov.uk**

Please try to ensure that images are in .jpeg format and as large as possible. Text should be supplied in Microsoft Word .doc format or plain text if possible.

# Wittering View

The official magazine for RAF Wittering and the A4 Force



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**Editor**  
Emma Stacey

**Team**  
Plt Off Tori Smith, Marissa Russell,  
Cpl Chantelle Gregg, AS1 Jason Barfield,  
AS2 Georgia Callaway

**Subscribe online for free at**  
[www.rafmags.co.uk](http://www.rafmags.co.uk)

**Advertising**  
Lance Media Group Ltd  
1st Floor, Tailby House,  
Bath Road, Kettering, Northants, NN16 8NL

Emma Anderson  
01536 334221

**Publisher**  
Lance Media Group Ltd, 1st Floor Tailby House,  
Bath Road, Kettering, Northants, NN16 8NL

**Designer**  
Rowena Wilson  
[rowenawilsondesign@gmail.com](mailto:rowenawilsondesign@gmail.com)

**Printer**  
Micropress Ltd

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Group Ltd

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# New Year Honours

## at Royal Air Force Wittering

Station and Support Force Personnel from RAF Wittering have been recognised with a series of awards in the 2024 New Year Honours List.

**S**ergeant Rachel Green received a commendation from Air Officer Commanding RAF No 2 Group in recognition of her contribution to RAF Wittering including her voluntary work with SSAFA, while civil servant Mrs Lisa Doyle was awarded a commendation from Air Officer Commanding RAF No 2 Group for her professionalism and willingness to go the extra mile.

Several Support Force personnel based at RAF Wittering have also been recognised in the 2024 NYHL.

A Meritorious Service Medal have been awarded to Flight Sergeant John O'Grady, an

Avionics Technician based at RAF Wittering. The Meritorious Service Medal recognises long and meritorious service by Warrant Officers and Non-Commissioned Officers of the rank of Sergeant and above.

AS1 Kathryn Corbett of 504 Sqn RAuxAF has been awarded a Director Reserves Commendation. AS1 Corbett has actively supported the publicity of the RAF Reserves and was the only Reservist Driver to augment 2 Military Transport Sqn on Ex AUXILIUM FORT.

Commendations from Air Officer Commanding RAF No 2 Group have been awarded to several personnel from Support Force.

Acting Sergeant Daniel Wilkinson of 5001 Sqn for consistently delivering engineering support, including several periods of acting rank, in particular on the Expeditionary Airfield Facilities Flight's Environmental Conditioning Facility.

Sgt Mathew Ramsdin, formerly of the SNCO Fuels Support Team (FST), who developed exercises and deployments so that the FST can now deploy at pace and into challenging environments.

PO (now Chief Tech) Martin Dodd, formerly of the Royal Navy. Chf Tech Dodd is a specialist in non-destructive testing. His work

on an ejection seat issue has been shared with international partners to better enable their own capability.

Sgt Luke Chinnock of 2MT Sqn who has been recognised for his expertise in delivering Project TIEDOWN and establishing a programme to track mandatory and professional competencies on Squadron. He is also an active supporter of the RAF Association.

The team from Support Force that planned and delivered Exercise AUXILIUM FORT 23 at RAF Wittering.

In addition to the names published in the 2024 New Year Honours List, several personnel have been formally recognised for their outstanding contribution to RAF Wittering and have been awarded a Station Commander's Commendation.

Station Commander's Commendations have been awarded to Logistics Chef Sgt Andrew Hanson, Sgt Debbie Bryson, Logistics Chefs AS1 Sam Kidd and Cpl Dolan Monaghan, civil servants Mrs Sarah Hodgkinson and Mrs Jeanette Lockwood, and the members of the RAF Wittering 2023 Families' Day Committee - WO Maxine Booth, Flt Lt Paul Crane, Flt Lt Simon Day, FS Ben Greet and Mrs Diane Coates.

RAF Wittering's Station Commander Wg Cdr Nikki Duncan said: "It is amazing to see so many RAF Wittering personnel

recognised in the New Year Honours List. Every single nomination, whether the New Year Honours List or Station Commander's Commendation, is for an individual or team that has demonstrated commitment, leadership, team spirit and are simply unafraid to tackle additional challenges and accept greater responsibility – they are an example to us all!"





AS1 Kathryn Corbett of 504 Sqn RAuxAF has been awarded a Director Reserves Commendation.



Cpl Debbie Bryson.



Wg Cdr Duncan with Mrs Lockwood.



Mrs Coates and FS Greet receive their awards from Wg Cdr Duncan.



Youngsters from Wittering Primary School were given a vehicle display and operating experience.

## Road Safety Week

**Personnel from 2 Military Transport Squadron (2MT) came together to present a Road Safety Week. Activities during the week comprised improving the presentation of street furniture, engagement and the inclusion of Wittering Primary School, raising money to promote road safety and to help those less fortunate.**

The focus for Road Safety Week was speeding this year and members of RAF Wittering jumped into action to plan a busy but important week.

On the first day, members of 2MT started bright and early, cleaning all signage within camp to ensure that they could be seen by all road users. The Police Flight deployed members to conduct speed checks around camp, and to inform and re-educate the importance of not speeding to offenders.

On Tuesday the Road Safety Team set up a Charity Carwash within station MT. This comprised members of 5001 Sqn conducting winter checks to promote vehicle safety along with the importance of having a clean vehicle during the winter months to ensure it is legal and visible to other road users. A cake sale and coffee stand helped to raise funds to purchase high visibility items for the children of Year 4 at Wittering Primary School.

The Police Flt and 2MT conducted driver training for Station personnel to promote speed awareness which consisted of fun interactive games while under the safe control of instructors.

In the run up to Road Safety Week, pupils from Wittering Primary School were invited to take part in creating a Road Safety poster relating to speeding. The winner of the competition was Ollie Slowinski.

His poster will be produced on A3 Steel posters and put up around station to enhance road safety for years to come! Part of the reward was that Ollie's class were invited to a vehicle display and operating experience at the Sports and Social Club car park.

Finally, members of Bikerdown attended station and carried out a detailed and thorough presentation about being on the scene of a motorbike accident. This consisted of basic first aid training and what to do if you come across this unfortunate situation.

Committee spokesman Cpl Arron Dalzell said: "All in all an excellent week by all those who participated, and the sum of £185 was raised which helped the team purchase important road safety items for the children of Year 4. We were also able to purchase £100 worth of food which was then donated to a local food bank.

"Thank you to all those who joined the Road Safety Team to make this incredible event possible, I would also like to thank Wittering Primary School, the Sports and Social Club manager and all those who supported the campaign with your generous donations."



The Road Safety Team donated £100 worth of food to a local food bank.

# News In Brief

## Bonfire Spectacle

Station personnel and their families enjoyed a spectacular firework display at the Station's Bonfire Night event.

RAF Wittering's Archery Club went all Viking and lit the bonfire with a flaming arrow, and the crowd were then treated to an amazing firework display, while enjoying an excellent array of refreshments as well as being able to enjoy sparklers and jumbo glow sticks.

The event was supported Lagan Aviation & Infrastructure and the Royal Air Force Association.



## New Principal Director of Music

The official handover of Command of RAF Music Services from Wing Commander Morrell to Wg Cdr Richard Murray who was promoted into the role of Principal Director of Music (RAF) took place in October.

Wing Commander Richard Murray (pictured below) joined

Royal Air Force Music Services in November 1997 and served with the Western Band of the Royal Air Force at RAF Locking, the Band of the Royal Air Force Regiment at RAF Cranwell and the Central Band of the Royal Air Force at RAF Uxbridge before receiving his commission in February 2010.

Serving as a Director of Music, Wg Cdr Murray has been integral in delivering musical support to numerous state, national and international events.



## Honour for Bandmaster

Warrant Officer George Martin, Bandmaster of the Central Band of the RAF, as part of the RAF Inclusion Training Team, was awarded a Director People Team

### Commendation in the 2024 New Year Honours list.

The RAF Inclusion Training Team is responsible for leading, managing and supporting a network of over 440 volunteer facilitators who provide mandatory Diversity and Inclusion training to all service personnel, regular and reserve, below the rank of Air Commodore.



## RAF Wittering Christmas Card Competition Winner

A Year Five pupil from Wittering Primary School won the RAF Wittering Christmas Card Competition.

Every year pupils from Wittering Primary School design the Station's official Christmas card. The card is sent to deployed RAF personnel, friends of Royal Air Force Wittering and even members of the Royal Family.

The identity of the winning pupil is kept a closely guarded secret. This year's winner was 9-year-old Wilfred Campbell. RAF Wittering Station Commander, Wing Commander Nikki Duncan announced the winner at a school assembly where she presented him with a framed winning Christmas Card and a special RAF Wittering Station Commander's coin.

This year's theme was 'Community' and Wilfred's design shows a group of people holding hands underneath the RAF roundel with the message 'Merry Christmas'.

Charlotte Blake is the Headteacher at Wittering Primary

School. She said: "The community links we foster between RAF Wittering and Wittering Primary School are incredibly important to us as a school. Our children have, once again, excelled in creative talent and I am pleased I didn't have to make the final decision! Huge congratulations to Wilfred, who encompassed everything our community stands for within his design."

RAF Wittering Station Commander, Wing Commander Nikki Duncan, said: "The 'community' theme clearly inspired the pupils of Wittering Primary who came up with some excellent designs. It was such a tough decision, but Wilfred's card stood out for being colourful and embracing the community theme whole-heartedly. RAF Wittering was proud to use his design on our 2023 Christmas card."



Wing Commander Nikki Duncan with Wilfred Campbell.



## Christmas Carols in Wittering

The Christmas season kicked off in Wittering village with the official switch on of the Christmas tree lights and Carols around the tree.

RAF Wittering's Station Commander, Wing Commander Nikki Duncan, was delighted and honoured to be invited to turn on the lights. Afterwards residents were able to warm up with mulled wine and mince pies in the Sports and Social Club.

The event was organised by Wittering Parish Council.

Meanwhile children from the Wittering Primary School choir joined personnel for RAF Wittering's Christmas Carol Service. It was held in the Station church and was taken by the Station Chaplain, Rev (Sqn Ldr) Andrew Tucker.



Wg Cdr Nikki Duncan with parish councillor Jo Gault by the village Christmas tree.

## Santa's Tour

Santa and his helpers went on a tour of RAF Wittering service family accommodation just before Christmas. But rather than reindeer and a sleigh, Santa's transport was a fire truck provided by Babcocks' Fire Team.

While Santa was busy handing out sweets and meeting the children ahead of the big day, his team also collected money for the RAF Benevolent Fund.

A huge thank you to everyone who made the evening possible, especially the amazing Babcocks' Fire Team.



## Time to Talk

The RAF Wittering Health and Wellbeing Committee (WITWELL) held a Time to Talk Day Cake & Talk event at the Station Coffee Shop.

Station Personnel were encouraged to attend and take time out of their busy days to sit

down and enjoy a slice of cake and chance to chat.

Time to Talk Day is run by Mind and Rethink Mental Illness in England, in partnership with Co-op. The Bake Sale raised an impressive £182.17 for Mind CPSL (Cambridgeshire, Peterborough & South Lincolnshire), but more importantly it gave those that came time to talk.



Station personnel at the Cake & Talk event.

## Toy Collection

Personnel from RAF Wittering collected and donated two large boxes of toys for the annual Salvation Army Citadel Peterborough Christmas toy collection.

The tradition was originally started by RAF Wittering's 3 Mobile Catering Squadron. This year the Station's Charities Committee decided to continue the tradition and personnel from across the Station were encouraged to drop off toys in the special collection boxes which were located across RAF Wittering.

All the toys were dropped off at the Salvation Army Citadel Peterborough where volunteers were filling bags ready to be distributed to local families. In previous years the Salvation Army's campaign has supported in excess of 200 children with presents.



Toys donated by personnel from RAF Wittering.

## Turkey Trot

A total of 41 participants including Crackers, a Silent Knight, Fireman Sam, and James Bond took part in RAF Wittering's annual Turkey Trot, incorporating the final event of this year's Commanding Officer's Cup.

Led by the Turkey (Cpl Hannah Calton), the 3k running route started and finished at the Main Gymnasium. Prizes were awarded by Wg Cdr Mark Concurr.

Prizes were awarded to:

- **Fastest Female**  
Cpl Chloe Tyler – 1ELS
- **Fastest Male**  
Flt Lt Stu Howard – Spt Force
- **Best Costume**  
Fireman Sam – Fg Off Sam Beresford - TCS

The final CO's Cup event was won by 1ELS.

The overall CO's Cup 2023 results:

- **1st Place** - 1ELS
- **2nd Place** - 2MT
- **3rd Place** - 3MCS



Participants in the Turkey Trot.



Christmas crackers.

Congratulations and well done to every who took part including some of the Station's canine members and thank you to the PE&D Flt for organising the event.

RAF Wittering competed alongside other teams in the Duchess of Edinburgh Competition.



# The Duchess Of Edinburgh Cup 2023

Personnel from RAF Wittering travelled to Canada to represent the Royal Air Force in The Duchess of Edinburgh Cup 2023.



The RAF Wittering team compete in the gruelling casualty evacuation competition.

The event, hosted by last year's event winners, the Lincoln and Welland Regiment, took place in Ontario, their home base where nine personnel from Wittering joined seven Army teams from the UK. The Duchess of Edinburgh is the RAF Wittering Honorary Air Commodore and Colonel-in-Chief for the respective Army and Canadian units.

The Duchess of Edinburgh Cup is an annual competition in which Her Royal Highness's honorary military appointments compete against each other in a series of challenges, fostering cooperation between them. The aim of the competition is to test military skills under pressure.

This year's event included the use of C7A2 service rifle, an assault course, an 8-mile orienteering navigating exercise, and a gruelling casualty evacuation race. It was tough but RAF Wittering won the navigating exercise (15k), and while all teams were impressive - the home team won again. The team then all had the

opportunity to meet HRH The Duchess of Edinburgh and then spent some time with other teams celebrating the wins.

The following day, Station Commander Wg Cdr Nikki Duncan had the honour of attending a Service of Remembrance with other service representatives as well as the Duchess of Edinburgh and other local Canadian dignitaries.

The final day of the trip was spent in Toronto, where the

team carried out some force development and were lucky enough to have their own tour guide. They were invited to the unveiling of Queen Elizabeth II statue and then received a tour of the Royal Canadian Military Institute.

The icing on the cake was meeting the President of the Institute, who told the group about the history of the building and military artifacts - which included the Red Baron's chair.

Station Commander Wg Cdr Nikki Duncan said: "This was an incredible experience for all those involved. Not only did it promote and foster teamwork, but we also learnt a lot and made some great friendships.

"When we set off on this amazing journey, we did not think we would finish in Toronto, learning so much about Canadian military history and how it was intertwined with ours - just fabulous. Thank you so much to our hosts."



The Duchess of Edinburgh with the RAF Wittering team.

Personnel from RAF Wittering enjoyed a cup of tea and chat with residents of Kingfisher Court in Peterborough.



# Catering Flight Brings Christmas Cheer To Veterans

**The Catering Flight at RAF Wittering and the RAF Benevolent Fund teamed up to make a Christmas difference to nearby veterans and senior citizens during the festive season.**

Flying Officer Alex Smith is the Contract Support Officer at the Cambridgeshire Station. He asked for assistance from the RAF Benevolent Fund to help the Station provide some festive cheer to local veterans and senior citizens.

The Fund was happy to help with the project and provided money for Christmas hampers

which were delivered to residents of Kingfisher Court in Peterborough. Kingfisher Court has a high proportion of Service veterans as residents and operates a high-quality extra care system.

The hampers contained lots of festive goodies along with a copy of the latest Wittering View Station Magazine and Christmas cards from RAF Wittering.

Fg Off Smith was joined by Flt Lt Dean McAulay and Sqn Ldr Lee Cope to deliver the hampers and chat with the residents. Among the residents was Veteran Gerald Dexter who served as an

aircraft technician, working on Canberra aircraft and was also a member of 504 Squadron, a reserve squadron now based at RAF Wittering.

A spokesman from Kingfisher Court said: "The tenants at Kingfisher Court always look forward to their visit from the RAF. It's one of the highlights of their Christmas celebrations and they thoroughly enjoy talking to you all. The veterans really appreciate the recognition they receive and this year, made a point of commenting about how lovely and friendly you all were.

Thank you from everyone here for everything you do."

Fg Off Smith said: "It was a great opportunity and opportunities like this are genuinely one of the best parts of the job."

Wing Commander Nikki Duncan is the Station Commander at RAF Wittering. She said: "What an amazing start to Christmas. A big thank you to Alex and the team for doing such a great job in bringing this project to life, and I'm so pleased that we've had the support of the RAF Benevolent Fund!"



Flt Lt Dean McAulay chats with residents of Kingfisher Court in Peterborough.



The RAF Benevolent Fund helped the Station provide some festive cheer to local veterans and senior citizens.



# TEA BREAK TIME

## Spot The Difference

Can you spot the 10 differences in these two photographs?

TEA BREAK  
TIME  
ANSWERS  
AT THE BOTTOM  
OF PAGE 28.



## Wordsearch

Which of the butterflies listed below cannot be found in the grid?



- Admiral
- Brimstone
- Comma
- Fritillary
- Gatekeeper
- Hairstreak
- Monarch
- Peacock
- Ringlet
- Skipper
- Wall

G	B	R	I	H	S	R	I	A	H
R	E	P	E	A	C	O	C	K	A
A	H	S	K	I	P	P	E	R	K
Y	C	R	D	R	W	A	L	M	C
B	R	I	M	S	T	O	N	E	O
K	A	N	I	T	L	L	A	W	O
E	N	G	R	R	A	M	M	O	C
T	O	L	A	E	D	C	A	E	P
A	M	E	L	A	R	I	M	D	A
G	A	T	E	K	E	E	P	E	R

## Butterfly Facts

Butterflies are often associated with springtime; some emerge as early as mid-February. Here are a few facts about our fluttery friends that might give you butterflies!



1. The UK has 57 resident species of butterflies and two regular migrants – the Painted Lady and Clouded Yellow.
2. 80% of butterfly species in the UK have decreased in either abundance, distribution, or both since the 1970s.
3. Butterflies have been discovered in fossils dating back around 40-50 million years, although they are very rare due to the insects' fragility.
4. Most butterflies don't live very long. The Priam's birdwing butterfly only lives for 10 days!
5. At the other end of the scale, the longest living butterfly, at up to 13 months, is the Brimstone butterfly.
6. The largest butterfly in the world is the female Queen Alexandra's birdwing, with a wingspan of around 27cm! They live in the rainforests of Papua New Guinea.
7. The smallest butterfly is the Western Blue Pygmy, which is only 1.3cm across.
8. The Skipper butterfly has almost 40,000 species and can reach speeds of up to an astonishing 37 miles per hour.
9. Butterflies taste their food via taste receptors, called chemoreceptors, in their feet.
10. Butterfly wings, all four of them, are covered in tiny scales. They are the only insects with scaly wings and each scale is a single colour; either red, yellow, black, or white.

**Just One More Thing...**  
Technically insects can't hibernate, but butterflies enter a period of suspended development, known as diapause, to wait out winter and re-emerge when conditions are better for them.



Personnel from 71 (IR) Squadron are the first in the UK to train and qualify to the internationally recognised aerospace standard in X-Ray Computed Tomography.

## First for RAF Non-Destructive Testing Technicians

Technicians from RAF Wittering have become the first personnel in the UK to qualify in X-Ray Computed Tomography.



**A**s part of Project WARHOL, four Non-Destructive Testing Technicians (NDT) from 71 (Inspection & Repair) Squadron have become the first personnel in the UK to train and qualify to the internationally recognised aerospace standard in X-Ray Computed Tomography.

This highly sophisticated 3D scanning technology is being used to assure the internal structural composition and validity of additive manufactured components being produced. The system also compliments other NDT methods by inspecting traditionally manufactured aircraft parts to reveal defects as small as 40 microns (0.04 mm).

Flt Sgt Mark Silva said: "The Non-Destructive Testing experts from the Sqn have been key in delivering a product that will ensure the Royal Air Force is, and will continue to be, a driving force in technology development. We must always look to push the bounds of technology and

science if we want to continue to operate at the highest standards. The adaptive manufacture facility at 71 (IR) Sqn has shown the RAF's desire to lead industry in achieving some remarkable outcomes."

To be eligible for X-Ray Computed Tomography conversion training, personnel must first be qualified Level 2/3 Radiographers in a 2D digital technique. This prior qualification can take more than 2 years to achieve, with at least 800 hours of on-the-job X-Ray training required. Highly competent radiographers, Mr Guy Lawton, Chief Tech Dodd, Chief Tech Conway-Wallace, and Cpl Crampton were selected to undertake the 4-part qualification package.

With all four individuals successfully completing their final exams during December 2023, 71 (IR) Squadron is the first organisation in the UK (military or civilian) to qualify Level 2 & 3 NDT personnel in X-ray Computed Tomography to the internationally recognised aerospace standard.

Cpl Crampton said: "It's really rewarding to know that I am one of the first people to achieve this qualification and I am very excited about the opportunity to implement this new Non-Destructive Testing technique within the armed forces. While we have gained this qualification

our work is not finished, with lots of standards and practices to be written and developed as well as consolidating my skills on the equipment there are still challenges to overcome moving forward which I relish."

Wg Cdr Mark Concarr, Deputy Commander of Support Force, said: "Non-Destructive Testing is a vital Royal Air Force maintenance activity to enable safe air operations in the UK and around the world. This new 3D digital X-ray computed tomography capability is a huge technological leap forward for the continued airworthiness of aircraft and the journey to fully utilise this has just started.

"The highly trained personnel have spent many months getting to know every facet of the X-ray computed tomography scanner and the complex software, which is a huge advancement on routine Non-Destructive Testing techniques. The team would not have been able to succeed in achieving their successful completion of their examinations without the support and guidance from industry partners and would like to thank Mr James Willcocks (Rolls-Royce NDE), Mr David Blacklock (International School of Aerospace NDT), Mr James Finch (Nikon) and Mr Kevin Pickup (NANDTB Chair) for their guidance, advice, and support."

Station Commander congratulates successful teams in Same Sex Pairs Throwdown.



## CrossFit Harrier Challenge

RAF Fitness Racing, including CrossFit, has recently become a recognised sport and what better way to show people what it is about than for RAF Wittering's CrossFit Harrier to arrange a good old-fashioned competition. Cue the Same Sex Pairs Throwdown!

**A**imed to be as inclusive as possible and open to all abilities, everyone and anyone across station was invited to sign up and take part. Ten teams dared and earlier this year they went into Fitness Battle. Each team competed in four workouts throughout the day testing their fitness, technique, strength, and teamwork!

The first workout tested the team's ability to work together, requiring the athletes to synchronise their movements, work under pressure and communicate.

For the second challenge the teams had to complete a chipper style workout as quickly as possible, sharing the repetitions between them. The key here was knowing each other's strengths and transitioning quickly.

After a short break, the third workout was designed to test their strength. The athletes needed to complete the repetitions of each movement before the time window ran out. If they managed to complete their repetitions, they moved into the next time window, where the weight increased. The teams kept going until

### ABOUT US

Affiliated, CrossFit Harrier landed at RAF Wittering in March 2022. Established by Hannah Calton and Jason Wright, the club boasts over 60 members from across station including civil servants and dependants. Currently CrossFit Harrier offers three classes per week open to all abilities. The

they failed to complete all the repetitions within a time window.

The fourth workout was split into two parts. The teams could score points in both parts of the workout so there was no time to take their foot off the gas! The first part was a distance effort on the rowing machine and the second part synchronised burpees and hanging knee raises, testing their ability to still work together after a full day of being pushed to their limits.

With the final workout complete, laughs and cheers rang in the air. High fives were had. Sighs of relief as tired bodies sat down and took stock of their accomplishments achieved throughout the day. And what a day it was!

Athletes and spectators were all asked to make a small

donation to Make-A-Wish Foundation UK to help grant life-changing wishes to children with critical illnesses. So far, the event has raised over £300 and CrossFit Harrier thanks everyone who donated for their generosity.



Challenges tested fitness, technique, strength, and teamwork.



*The Brass Quintet of the Central Band of the RAF with Group Captain Hough, Station Commander RAF Northolt, and staff of Hillingdon Hospital.*

## RAF Music Services Update

**Royal Air Force Music Services was out in force over the Christmas period performing at many different venues spreading seasonal good-will and cheer.**

The Band of the RAF College shared the stage at Huddersfield Town Hall with Gledholt Male Voice Choir and Lindley Junior School choir, performing Christmas classics and featuring several vocal solos. The concert raised money for the Calderdale and Huddersfield NHS Charity and the Huddersfield branch of RAFA.

The Brass Quintet of the Band of the RAF Regiment entertained audiences at Ruislip Methodist church and the Battle of Britain Bunker, Hillingdon, performing Bach's Brandenburg Concerto No 3, and festive Christmas classics such as Leroy Anderson's A Christmas Festival.

The RAF Salon Orchestra and trumpeter, AS1 Alan Thomas, performed with the Choir and Organist of St Clement Danes Church for the official RAF Carol Service, led by Chaplain, The Reverend (Squadron Leader) Mark Perry, and featured readings from members of the RAF community.

The Brass Quintet of the Central Band of the RAF visited Hillingdon hospital, spreading Christmas joy with a medley of Christmas Carols. The ensemble, along with Station Commander Group Captain Jonathan Hough, visited the Children's ward to deliver presents donated by personnel from RAF Northolt.

Other festive performances included Carol Concerts at St Chads, Shawbury, the Church of

St Michaels and All Angels, RAF Cranwell, and the annual Esprit de Corps concert Series in Ruislip.

In December Corporal Joe Kemp and AS1 Thomas Maddison were each awarded a General Officer Commanding London Districts commendation at Horse Guards Parade. The awards were presented by Deputy Commander Brigadier Jez Lamb, on behalf of Major General James Bowder.

They received the commendations for their contributions to Op GOLDEN ORB, the Procession for the Coronation of King Charles III and Queen Camilla.

While always an important role on any Parade, the bass drummers on this occasion were always expected to be under significant pressure to maintain vital tempo accuracy and consistency, for an unprecedentedly long and sustained period, throughout the whole of the Coronation Procession route.

For the first time ever, an innovative click-track, worn by the bass drummers from each band, was used. This ensured that personnel on the Parade stepped off and remained in time throughout the entire Procession.

The Coronation of King Charles III and Queen Camilla was witnessed by 20.4 million people, its success built on the foundation of this network of timekeepers, for which they are each worthy of significant recognition.

Cpl Kemp said: "It was an honour to take part in such an incredible occasion and the feeling of contributing to such a huge event was amazing, then to be recognised for it with a commendation fills me with great pride."



*The RAF Salon Orchestra performing with the Choir of St Clement Danes Church at the annual Carol Service.*



*Air Specialist (Class 1) Maddison and Corporal Kemp receive their commendations at Horse Guards Parade.*

*Flt Lt Dean McAulay represents the Royal Air Force at Peterborough's Remembrance Service.*



## RAF Wittering Unites With Local Community For Remembrance

The people of Stamford, Peterborough, and Nottingham welcomed parades from RAF Wittering as they marked Armistice Day and Remembrance Sunday.

**S**tamford residents were welcoming as scores of people took part in the Act of Remembrance, which was held at the War Memorial outside the historic Browne's Hospital.

Station Commander Wing Commander Nikki Duncan laid a wreath at the memorial on behalf of RAF Wittering.

504 (County of Nottingham) Squadron, RAF Wittering's reserve logistics unit, marked Remembrance with a parade in Nottingham.

In Peterborough, RAF Wittering's nearest city, Flt Lt Dean McAulay represented the Royal Air Force on Remembrance Sunday. The city's residents lined Bridge Street to watch the parade and see the

wreaths laid at the memorial.

Sqn Ldr Alice Mayor represented RAF Wittering at the Remembrance Service and Parade in Leicester's Victoria Park which was attended by hundreds of people from all faiths and backgrounds. Personnel, veterans, and cadets from all three Armed

Services were in attendance for the event.

In addition to the larger events, Station representatives were also present at Remembrance Services held in villages in and around RAF Wittering including Easton-on-the-Hill, King's Cliffe and Cottesmore.

The Act of Remembrance not only honours those who have laid down their lives in the two World Wars, but also those who have died in other conflicts. It enables service personnel and civilians to pay their respects to veterans and keeps their service and sacrifice in the minds of



*RAF Wittering join Peterborough residents at the city's Service of Remembrance.*



*RAF Wittering personnel parade through Peterborough on Remembrance Sunday.*





RAF Wittering's Station Commander Wing Commander Nikki Duncan.



## Nottingham Remembrance Parade

**504 (County of Nottingham) Squadron participated in the Remembrance Parade at Victoria Embankment in Nottingham. The Squadron was last able to attend in 1998 and the occasion was made even more notable due to 504 Squadron's Honorary Air Commodore, Veronica Pickering DL MBS historic current installation as the current High Sheriff of Nottinghamshire.**



Personnel from 504 (County of Nottingham) Squadron took in the Nottingham Remembrance Parade.

Masterfully led by Warrant Officer John Day and Flight Sergeant Sean Langston-Jones, the Squadron contingent took time to prepare at Chetwynd Barracks for Drill practice and busied themselves with final preparation of their No 1 Service Dress ready for the parade.

On the bright, cold Sunday morning, 25 Squadron personnel formed up smartly under the leadership of their Parade Flight Commander, Flight Lieutenant Rich Carr on the Banks of the River Trent alongside over 200 Parade participants from Army and Navy Regular, Reserve and Cadet units from across the county. The contingent marched impeccably to the War Memorial to observe

the poignant Remembrance Ceremony during which Officer Commanding 504 Squadron, Squadron Leader Kaye Slater laid two wreaths on behalf of the Royal Air Force and 504 Squadron.

After the parade personnel took a short walk across the river to the Masonic Lodge for a welcome warm drink and lunch. Joined by Air Commodore Pickering, a number of local personnel reflected on the memorable opportunity to have their families watch them on Parade at such an important event.

Squadron Leader Slater said: "We are all immensely proud of 504 Squadron's long history and today it was our great privilege to join together to honour the memory of those who have lost their lives in the service of their country."

younger generations. Wing Commander Duncan said: "The Royal Air Force and RAF Wittering have a long and close relationship with the local people. I am so grateful for the support and loyalty we receive from the residents of Stamford, Peterborough, Leicester, and beyond. Throughout the weekend, our personnel have been welcomed by all across the local area who clearly recognise and wish to honour the ultimate sacrifices made not just by the Royal Air Force, but also by personnel from all the Armed Forces. Many thanks to all those that came to join us to pay our respects."

*The Act of Remembrance not only honours those who have laid down their lives in the two World Wars, but also those who have died in other conflicts.*

## RAF Wittering Remembers

**Service and civilian personnel from RAF Wittering paid their respects to those who have made the ultimate sacrifice during a special Service of Remembrance.**

The service, which was conducted by Station Chaplain Rev (Sqn Ldr) Andrew Tucker, took place outside Station headquarters. Personnel observed a two-minute silence with the playing of the Last Post.



RAF Wittering personnel attend the Remembrance Parade and Service in Stamford.



## Mountain Rescue Service

Over the first half of the winter period, RAF Mountain Rescue Service deployed on three Aircraft Post Crash and Incident Management operations, as well as another 20 separate callouts that rescued 21 people.

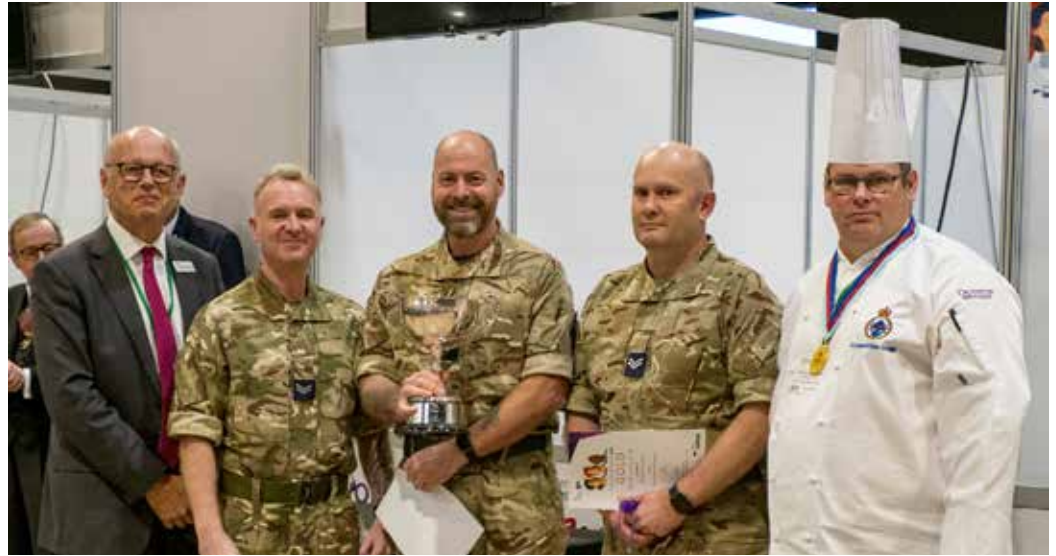
One of the most significant callouts, by RAF Leeming MRT, was a joint op with Swaledale MRT to assist with the rescue of an elderly gentleman who had fallen 10 metres into a gorge. Just two weeks prior to the incident, members of Leeming MRT successfully completed a Technical Rescue Technician course, allowing them to quickly put their newly learnt skills in to practice providing safe and efficient casualty extraction from technical ground.

On arrival, the casualty needed to be extracted from the lower terrace of the gorge having taken a significant fall. Team members rigged an abseil and descended to the casualty, also allowing a paramedic to be lowered to assess their injuries. With a suspected broken pelvis, femur, and head injury it was decided to carry out a horizontal raise.

The horizontal raise is a particularly technical process that allows the casualty and medical professional to be secured safely within to the stretcher, while being lowered or raised by a full team of MRS Troops at the top of the crag.

Moving on from this, RAF Valley MRT deployed on Op PHOENIX, after an RAF Benson Chinook was forced to make a precautionary landing, not too far from HMS Raleigh, Plymouth.

This provided operational background to further enhance MRS' presence on Exercise MAX 23 that simulated the event of a downed F-35A. The MRS showcased their unique capabilities to both British military and civilian emergency services, as well as USAF elements from 48th Fighter wing. Our Troops were the only personnel correctly trained and equipped for specific duties on the exercise.



## RAF Reserve Chefs

# Win Gold

The Inter-Services Culinary Competition Exercise JOINT CATERER which took place at the end of 2023 saw the RAF team of Chefs being crowned overall competition winners against their Army and Navy counterparts.

A prestigious accolade indeed for the Force! The RAF Team comprised of Chefs from across the RAF, with notable contributions from RAF Reserve Chefs.

Under the expert leadership of Team Manager Warrant Officer Sweeney Jarvis, potential competition Chefs came

together from across the RAF Reserves to refine menus and perfect techniques. The first major challenge was in April 2023 when Chefs competed with contemporaries from across the RAF at the Culinary Skills Day held at DCLPA Worthy Down, comprising three days of fierce competition with only the very

best military Chefs being selected to represent the RAF at Exercise JOINT CATERER.

The Culinary Skills Competition Day saw the RAF Reserves Team compete with outstanding results. AS1 Dave Cousins (504 Sqn) was awarded a Certificate of Merit in the Bread Class while AS1 Ashley Faulkner (504 Sqn) was selected to represent the service in both Decorated Gateaux and Bread classes taking Bronze in both. AS1 Anthony Morris (611 Sqn) was selected to represent in the Great British Pie class having been awarded Silver while AS1 Andy Pigott (605 Sqn) was awarded Bronze. The RAF Reserve Field Team comprising Cpl Andy Franklin, Cpl Mick Stewart and AS1 Lisa Gilley were also awarded Bronze.

3 Mobile Catering Squadron qualified with Silver to represent the RAF however, at short notice the team had to withdraw from Exercise JOINT CATERER due to operational commitments. With just a couple of days' notice and not even time for a single run through, the 504 Sqn Catering Training Team of Cpl Craig Jones, Cpl Steve Gill and Cpl Richie Curtis took on the challenge.

The outcome of the tri-Service competition for the RAF Reserves was exceptional! AS1 Anthony Morris was awarded Bronze for his Dauphinoise Pie dish, AS1 Ashley Faulkner was awarded Bronze for her Gateaux and a Gold for her selection of breads. The 504 Training Team was awarded a Gold for the Defence Field Cookery Challenge with their first delicious dish being served to AVM Suraya Marsha, Air Officer Commanding 2 Group!

Officer Commanding Catering Flight at 504 Sqn, Flight Lieutenant Jill Harrison said: "Our Reserve Chefs' creativity, impeccable skills and calmness under pressure has been outstanding. Well done to everyone who competed and a huge thank you to all those who supported them."



AS1 Faulkner best in Bread Class.



## Refurbishment of the 504 Squadron RAuxAF Memorial Garden

**The 504 Squadron Memorial Garden, sited at the front of the Squadron HQ is the focus of remembrance for Squadron members who made the ultimate sacrifice for the freedom we enjoy today.**

Following the tragic deaths of two Part Time Volunteer Reservists who were killed in action: SAC Chris Dunsmore (Iraq 2007) and SAC Gary Thompson (Afghanistan 2008); it was decided that a memorial garden would be a fitting tribute to all Squadron members who had lost their lives on active Service. WO Paddy McCaffrey took on the project and constructed the original garden at RAF Cottesmore, where the Squadron was based. The day following the formal opening of the garden the announcement was made that RAF Cottesmore would be closing!

On the Squadron's transfer to RAF Wittering, Paddy McCaffrey led the project to rebuild the garden. Personnel returned to Cottesmore and transferred the shrubs and plants to the new location. The garden was re-consecrated at a Service in

2015 when the memorial stone commemorating SAC Gary Thompson and a Regular RAF Gunner, SAC Graham Livingstone, who were killed in the same incident was transferred to the garden on the disbandment of 3 RAF Regiment Squadron where both men were assigned.

Reservist Supplier, Corporal Andy Blayney volunteered to take over the maintenance tasks in the Memorial Garden in June 2023. A decade after the garden was rebuilt it needed refurbishment, in particular the existing fence required replacement to maintain the dignity of the memorial and surrounding garden. Andy continued work throughout October and the fence was completed, the shrubs re-shaped and garden fully spruced up to ensure that it looked its very best for the Remembrance events.

It is fitting and commendable that Andy like many of his 504 Squadron colleagues have, over the past 15 years, given so generously of their expertise and time to develop and maintain the garden as a memorial to our brethren in arms.



## Ex Per Ardua Wooden Horse Escape EAGLE

**Six Service Personnel from RAF Wittering took part in the Inaugural Wooden Horse Escape EAGLE Scheme.**

The military Force Development exercise took place over three days in October at the Stalag Luft III, Zagan Museum replica Prisoner of War (PoW) Hut in Poland.

Participants planned a daily routine to dig a 'mock tunnel/trench' while making escape clothing, creating maps and identity documents and vaulting physical training sessions. The immersive experience concluded with a 'mock escape' from the 14m length tunnel, dug over the three days which began at the same time the prisoners made their escape on 29 Oct 1943.

Dressed in period clothing, participants navigated their way to the original train station, just as the prisoners did; here they had their documents inspected as they made their way to the platform to 'escape'. The immersive experience was supported by local enthusiasts, acting as members of the public in period



1940s clothing on the platform.

The 80th Anniversary was marked with a Service of Remembrance at the original escape location within the PoW camp, accompanied by new Public Information boards. No public access was available prior to this occasion. A new display was unveiled within the Stalag Luft III museum, by the Mayor of Zagan, observed by Regional News teams.

The Exercise concluded with a celebratory dinner to host the local supporters to the RAF Eagle, allowing the RAF personnel to thank them for their contribution in bringing the exercise to fruition.





# Boxing Team Victorious at Prestigious Boxing Championships

Boxers from RAF Wittering were flying high after an incredibly successful night at the annual RAF Lord Wakefield's Boxing Championships.

**N**ovember saw the return of the annual RAF Lord Wakefield's Boxing Championships held at RAF Cranwell.

The prestigious inter-station event, which has been in the RAF's sporting calendar for over 100 years, was held at RAF Cranwell and this year saw successful action for RAF Wittering personnel, representing the ever-thriving RAF Wittering Boxing Club.

Lead by a coaching team of Cpl Danny McLoughlin of 2 Military Transport Squadron and Cpl James Thompson of the PEd Flt, four boxers entered the competition across different weight categories.

After a night of many highly contested semi-finals, three Wittering boxers made it to the illustrious final's night - Cpl Joe Gartland, AS1 Adam Davidson and AS1 Jerome Smith, all 2 MT Sqn personnel. The MT drivers were ready and primed to get in the ring and put it all on the line.

Cpl Gartland was up first in the Lightweight category against a much taller RAF Odiham opponent. After a cagey first round, Gartland stepped it up a gear, landing punches at will,

forcing the referee to stop the contest in the second round, taking home the 60kg title.

AS1 Davidson was then next up in the Welterweight division, taking on a class RAF Odiham opponent. What ensued was a toe-to-toe war, oozing boxing skills in what was regarded by many as the fight of the night. Unfortunately, it was not Davidson's night as he was edged out on a close point decision.

Finally, it was AS1 Smith's time to shine as he stepped in the ring to contest the Middleweight belt against an opponent from RAF Coningsby. It was a hard fought three rounds in which Smith had to dig deep. Listening to his corner in between rounds, he managed to enforce his dominance, showing his skill to then claim a unanimous decision points win and the 75kg gold.

After a very successful evening for Wittering's boxers, having

three champions, the station was then awarded the highly respected Minor Unit Boxing Award. An accolade given to the most successful station with less than 2,000 personnel. This capped off a fantastic night for the RAF Wittering Boxing Club.

Coach Cpl Danny McLoughlin said: "The team are a credit to themselves, they have dedicated so much time and effort into the last few months, building to this, they deserve every success. So many early morning and evening training sessions have paid off. The team have done themselves and RAF Wittering proud. Their boxing future looks bright."

A great night all around for RAF Boxing, showcasing sporting excellence and prowess. With the current standard of boxing at Wittering, it may just be the start of many more successful nights to come.



AS1 Jerome Smith.



Cpl Joe Gartland.



The RAF Wittering Boxing Team won the Minor Unit Boxing Award.

The JARTS team pictured with presenter Guy Martin.



Cofferdam structure.



# JARTS Recover Lancaster Bomber

**The Joint Aircraft Recovery and Transportation Squadron (JARTS) were presented with a unique opportunity and privilege to be invited to be part of the multi-national group recovering a World War II Lancaster Bomber, ED603 as well as searching for the remains of three Missing in Action RAF personnel, from the IJsselmeer waters, Northern Netherlands.**

During a five-week period across September and October 2023, JARTS deployed 15 personnel of all ranks to the Netherlands to take part in the recovery of the historic airframe.

This novel task was a joint effort across numerous agencies including: JARTS, their counterparts from the Royal Netherlands Air Force, Netherlands Army EOD, Dutch forensics, historians and RAF Heritage. The combined effort resulted in the full recovery of the remains of Lancaster ED603, 80 years after it was shot down returning from a mission over Germany in 1943.

Due to the submerged location of the aircraft, JARTS personnel worked inside a cofferdam structure, an incredible feat of engineering that allowed them to work on the lakebed, at least 4 meters below the surface of the water.

Once constructed, the water within was drained, revealing the distinguishing outline of an aircraft. Across the following weeks the aircraft was carefully excavated from the lakebed, where components were removed, cleaned by hand, and identified, including one of the aircraft's four Merlin engines and a 303 Browning machine gun. These items will be further inspected and categorised by Dutch archaeologists before moving on to museums.

Notwithstanding the airframe,

several human remains were recovered by JARTS personnel. These have since been confirmed to be the three previously missing Aircrew: Pilot Officer Arthur Smart, Pilot Officer Charles Sprack and Flight Sergeant Edward Moore. Personal effects have been returned to the respective families. A ceremony involving families, dignitaries and senior military representation was held on the Cofferdam during the recovery process. Guy Martin and his crew visited the site and filmed part of the recovery and may be seen in a future documentary.

This opportunity allowed JARTS to refine their unique skillset as Defence's only dedicated aircraft recovery unit, and further strengthened interoperability and foreign relationships with their Dutch colleagues. This occasion also provided a poignant chance to reflect on the adversity faced by, and the bravery of, the aircrew 80 years ago.

JARTS Team Leader Sergeant Stuart Parker said: "It was important to recover the aircraft and remains of the aircrew so that closure could be provided to their respective families".

The JARTS team on site.



The teams worked inside the Cofferdam structure.



Personnel from JARTS.



A memorial ceremony was held in memory of the crew.



# Community News

The Community Support Team is available during normal working hours should you or your family have any specific enquiries. The team's contact details are below.



## Deployment Support Deployed Coffee Mornings

Come and meet the team in the Costa Coffee Shop (on Station), along with other deployed families. This is a chance to enjoy a chat over (free) coffee and cake! To find out when the next coffee morning is being held check out the Wittering View Facebook page.

## Deployed Trips and Activities

The Deployed Evenings in the Community Centre have proved a big hit especially the Pizza and Chinese. They are also an excellent opportunity to meet with other deployed families, as well as the Community Support Team. Recent deployed trips have included the Santa Express Trip at Christmas and a visit to Cadbury's World.

The team is continually working on a programme of trips and activities throughout the year. There are some exciting trips lined up for 2024 including another visit to the Harry Potter Studios, but if you have any suggestions or ideas for the team, then please let us know (contact details right).

## RAF Wittering Station Cinema Passes

We now offer deployed families a Station Cinema Pass. The pass will allow families to be able to watch an unlimited number of movies at the Station cinema for the duration of the Service Personnel's deployment. A huge thank you to the Station Cinema

Team which has made this possible. The movie schedule can be found on the RAF Wittering Station Cinema or Wittering View Facebook pages.

If your son/daughter/partner is currently deployed or is going to be deployed to a qualifying location, and you would like more information about the support we provide along with upcoming activities, please contact Vicki Maylor (contact details below).

## SSAFA Support

Wittering has two SSAFA Welfare Officers. If you need their help please contact Paula Finch, tel. 07825 016 853 or email paula.finch@ssafa.org.uk; Maddie Edgar, tel. 07584 230805 or email Maddie.edgar@ssafa.org.uk There is also a 24-hour number that you can call, tel. 03000 111 723 or visit their website <https://www.ssafa.org.uk/>

## Free Advice Clinics

Buckles Solicitors offers free 30-minute appointments on family law matters. Alex Hartnoll is visiting the Station every second and fourth Tuesday. Make an appointment directly with Alex via email alex.hartnoll@buckles-law.co.uk or phone tel. 01780 484538.

We do not have access to a Citizens Advice Rutland adviser anymore, but the local office is more than happy to receive calls and queries from Wittering residents should you need support. Visit [www.rutlandcab.org.uk](http://www.rutlandcab.org.uk) or tel. 01572 723494.

## Padre's Corner

I recently tried something new. I had a go at archery.

**Y**ou might think it would be simple and straightforward. Bow, arrow, aim, shoot. Bullseye! No problem.

Well, it wasn't quite like that. I was kindly supplied with a bow and some arrows, and I did aim and shoot. But that bullseye seemed remarkably elusive. I was aiming (or so I thought) at the gold circle in the middle of the target, but the arrows seemed to have a mind of their own, going first left of the target, then right, then above and then below. Thankfully I wasn't left alone to try and work out how to master this.

Sam gave initial directions so that I could get the basics right, and most importantly, stay safe, for the protection of both myself, and of the other archers I was sharing the shooting range with. Then he observed how I was shooting and gave some advice on posture, how I was standing (stand upright, don't lean back – which I was doing). And then he gave what was probably the single most important piece of advice.

Be consistent. Make sure that you always draw the bow back to exactly the same place, always hold the fingers you are drawing the bow back with in exactly the same way, always hold the same posture, always release without moving the bow (easier said than done in my case), always aim for the same spot. I soon began to realise that if you are able to bunch the set of arrows you are shooting in the same section of the target (hopefully as near the centre as possible), then you are making good progress and showing clear evidence that you have control of your bow.

This made me think about advice we recently gave to young First Tourists just starting their life in the RAF. During the Resilience Day we held for them we talked about the importance of the core values we live by, and how they can help us make the right decisions at key moments in our lives, and also how they can give us the strength and resolve we need to get through the difficulties and challenges we inevitably have to face from time to time.

Going back again and again to those same core values helps to point us in the right direction and gives us strength and motivation to keep moving in that direction when things get tough and threaten to push us off course.

What are your core values? It is worth finding some time to reflect on them and on how they help you make the right decisions and how they keep you going through times of adversity. For the RAF the core values remain the same: Respect, Integrity, Service (before self), Excellence.

For me these fit in perfectly with the faith I hold. When Jesus was asked what his core values were, He replied, 'To love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength. And, to love your neighbour as yourself.'

Bottom line, love. For love (genuine love) gives us both the right direction and undying motivation to do the right thing even through the storms of life. Given that we are now in the Easter Season, can I encourage you, if you are able, to read the Easter story in the Bible to see how Jesus lived out His core beliefs, the amazing impact it had then, and indeed, continues to have to this day.

So, three things. Firstly, have a go at archery – it's great fun! Secondly, reflect on your core beliefs and use them to help give you direction and strength in life. And thirdly, have a very Happy Easter!

With best wishes,  
**Padre Andrew**

## Facebook

For all the latest information, the team is regularly posting on the Wittering View and Wittering HIVE Facebook pages.

## Community Support Team Service Community Support Officer

- WO Neil Paylor - tel. 07976 206569 or email neil.paylor660@mod.gov.uk  
**HIVE Information Officer** – Vicki Maylor – tel. 01780 417541 or email Victoria.maylor100@mod.gov.uk

## Useful Websites

[www.rafbf.org](http://www.rafbf.org) – Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund  
<https://rafa.org.uk> – Royal Air Forces Association  
[www.raf-ff.org.uk](http://www.raf-ff.org.uk) – RAF Families Federation

Please note this information was correct at the time of going to press. Please visit the Wittering View Facebook Page for all the up to minute news and information.

## On the Beat



PC Stephen Main and Cpl Gemma Holloway.

## Community Policing

Cpl Gemma Holloway from the Station's Police Flt is the Community Police Officer for Wittering Village.

"As the RAF Community Police Officer for Wittering Village my primary role is to act as the point of contact between the Wittering village families and the RAF Wittering Police Flt for any crime related issues. I have teamed up with PC Stephen Main from Cambridgeshire's North Neighbourhood Policing Team. We liaise monthly to apprise each other on any situations that have been raised and how we, in consultation with the Station, can develop an action plan going forwards.

"We attend local meetings and the Housing Clinics that occur monthly in the village

to meet with the residents to better get to know local people, organisations and issues, then use that understanding to better protect the community. We are holding an open evening in the Wittering Bowls Club on 21 March from 1900 – 2100, if anyone would like to come meet us.

"The RAF Police currently conduct daily patrols around the village in support of the community to deter crime in the area. RAF Wittering is actively seeking to improve relations with the Wittering Village Community. In December, the Police Flt helped plant Bulbs in the Village Woodland, to encourage more social interaction and a instil a sense of pride within the area we live.

"In the near future, RAF Wittering Police Flt is planning to engage and deliver security and policing education to the local schools on topics such as Crime Reduction and Anti-Social Behaviour."



RAF Wittering personnel planting bulbs in the village woodland.

## Job Well Done

On October 16 1995, Pilot Officer Rob Caine was the first student to be sent solo in a Slingsby T67M Firefly by Lt Cdr Adrian "Fingers" Hands who was at the time, SMI at Defence Elementary Training School (DEFTS) Barkston Heath. Almost 30 years have passed and as Gp Capt Caine comes to the end of his tenure as Commandant 6 FTS and Capt Hands (Babcock Chief Pilot) looks to hang up his flying suit, the pair took the opportunity to fly together again. Pictured right, in front of a Grob Tutor after the 45-minute flight, they shook hands and mutually congratulated each other for a job "Well Done".



## RAF Benevolent Fund launches new Lived Experience Network



**The RAF Benevolent Fund has launched a new Lived Experience Network which aims to increase inclusion in the RAF Family.**

The new initiative will bring together a group of serving and former RAF personnel, and partners and spouses, from across the UK to share their lived experiences of the air force to help shape the Fund's service offering and drive innovation at the charity. The Fund is currently recruiting volunteers to take part in the Network.

Volunteers who join the Network can help the Fund in a variety of ways, from completing surveys, joining focus groups, or participating in long-term working groups for internal projects. All volunteering opportunities will be remote roles and can be done from home.

Volunteer Manager at the RAF Benevolent Fund, Zoe Oliver, said: "We are extremely excited to work with current serving or former RAF personnel, who would be happy to share their experiences for the Fund's new Lived Experience Network. We believe this will provide invaluable insight into the challenges and nuances of life in the RAF and will ensure we are putting the voices of the RAF Family at the centre of our decision making."

Zoe continued: "We, at the Fund, would love to hear the views of those who are currently serving or have served as well as partners and spouses. Whether you can spare 10 minutes or an hour every so often, sharing your perspective can make a real difference."

RAF Wittering Station Commander, Wg Cdr Nikki Duncan said: "The RAF Benevolent Fund's new volunteering initiative is a fantastic opportunity to hear individual experiences from current and former members of the RAF and will help not only the Fund but the wider RAF community in providing the best support possible. I encourage those at Wittering to get in touch with the Fund if interested in taking part."

If you are a current or former member of the RAF, or a partner of spouse you can sign up to the Network online at [www.rafbf.org](http://www.rafbf.org) and find out more about all volunteering opportunities available as they arise.

The RAF Benevolent Fund provides financial, emotional, and practical assistance to serving and retired RAF personnel and their families. This includes grants to help with financial difficulty, mental health support, Airplay youth clubs, and more.

# Here to Help

Spring is here and with it comes the news that SSAFA will continue to lend help and support to service personnel and their families.

But we are all grateful to see a change in the weather and some spring flowers appearing. It brings the thought of summer holidays all that bit closer.

Well, we all like to start with some good news which I am sure most will be aware of by the time this goes to print.

SSAFA has been successful with its bid to provide welfare support to the RAF. This contract is for five years with the option to extend for a further two.

So, what does that mean for our community? There will be little change really as we will continue with two support workers although our title will change, we will be known as Welfare Officers. But our support to all service personnel and families will not change, we are here to support with all aspects of service life but also those issues that may not be service related but still have an impact on your lives.

## Volunteers Needed

As I normally do, I want to talk about our In-Service Committee and Volunteers. They provide a very valuable support service to the community and without

them we could not do all the things we do. We are still in the process of building our bank of volunteers and committee members. We don't ask much, just whatever time you can give.

We also fundraise on the station and all the money we raise does not go to the larger charity but remains at RAF Wittering for us to use to support service personnel and their families during difficult times. This could be for many different reasons but without the funds we can't support them in an emergency. So, if you feel you can help in any way with volunteering or as a committee member please contact either myself or Maddie in the first instance and we will point you in the right direction.

As always please do not hesitate to contact us whatever the reason - we are here to support you.

Look forward to seeing you around the station.

**Paula Finch**  
SSAFA Welfare Officer  
RAF Wittering

**Paula.finch@ssafa.org.uk**  
**07825016853**

**Maddie.edgar@ssafa.org.uk**  
**07584230805**

**SSAFA Support**  
**(24-hours a day including weekends and Bank Holidays)**  
**Tel 03000 111 723 or**  
**email: psswsRAF@ssafa.org.uk**



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charity

Santa Express trip.



## Fun-filled Activities for Deployed Families

**RAF Wittering's Community Support team has been busy organising a whole host of activities and trips for deployed families.**

In the run up to Christmas, deployed families enjoyed a tasty brunch before hopping on the Santa Express at Nene Valley Railway, where they had a trip on a steam train. A big thank you to all the staff and volunteers at Nene Valley Railway for making our families' day so special.

In addition to the usual deployed coffee mornings and special teas, the Community Support Team organised a trip to Cadbury's World, where activities included creating a 'chocolate in a pot', where they could pick their own fillings and writing their name in chocolate. However, everyone's favourite was the 4D ride at the end which was just like going on a rollercoaster.

The aim of the trips and activities is for the families of deployed personnel to meet and socialise with other families, while their loved one is away.

If you, or a family member, is due to be deployed please contact HIVE Information Officer Vicki Paylor on [Victoria.maylor100@mod.gov.uk](mailto:Victoria.maylor100@mod.gov.uk) to find out about what support is available.



Meeting the Caramel Bunny.



Fredo was a big hit at Cadbury's World.



# RAF Wittering Airplay



Wittering won the Airplay Innovation Award.



Airplay trip to Rumble Live.

RAF Wittering Airplay had a busy lead up to Christmas with a half term trip to Rumble Live with 27 young people at the request of our members.

**A** brilliant time was had by all, it's a firm favourite and I'm sure we'll go again! We also had a couple of trips to the station cinema too, which is always fun.

Our members, alongside Project Tuesday Youth Forum, ran their annual Advent Calendar and Christmas treats food bank appeal for those less fortunate than themselves. A great success once again. We are grateful to those who contributed and would like to say thank you for your generosity. This year we took our donations along to the Trussell Trust Food Bank in Stamford.

Project Tuesday also ran a stall at Wittering Primary Christmas Fayre and have more recently

started to attend Wittering Parish Council meetings ensuring the young people of Wittering have their voices heard in our local community.

Additionally, Chloe, one of our Youth Forum members read out a nomination at the 'Airplay Young People's Awards' ceremony and did a sterling job!

We have engaged with Cambridgeshire police recently and their northern neighbourhood officers paid us a visit. It was great for our young people to speak with the officers about their roles and voice issues they face. It was a useful session enabling young people to positively connect with our local police force.

Our weekly youth sessions have been well attended. Airplay members have enjoyed joining in with craft projects, socialising with friends, playing with our huge parachute, attending digital Airplay Sketchathon sessions, playing pool and Xbox, listening to music and, well, the list is endless.



Airplay members ran their annual Advent Calendar and Christmas treats food bank appeal.

Currently, we are running five sessions weekly. Ben Club, Project Tuesday Youth Forum, Senior drop in, Sevens and Junior youth club. We are planning Summer and will have some exciting updates soon.

We are very proud to finish with the news that Wittering won the Airplay Innovation Award and one of our members, Joe Purnell won the 'Outstanding Contribution' to Airplay Youth Award. Well done to everyone involved and thanks to those who nominated.



Joe Purnell won the 'Outstanding Contribution' to Airplay Youth Award.

• For more information about RAF Wittering Airplay, their activities and youth sessions, please contact Station Youth Worker – Sharon Pollard – Sharon.pollard@ymcacrinity.org.uk

Name: Ryan Tanner  
 Role: SO3 Stn Co-Ord Cell  
 Marital Status: Single

# In the Hot Seat



## 1. What part of your job gives you the most satisfaction?

The most rewarding part of my role is being able to help those when it is needed. So, whether its helping service personnel understand a query on duties or helping one of my team to understand a process or helping to improve processes, being able to help and assist people is the most satisfying part of my role.

## 2. And the least?

The most challenging part of my role is currently understanding and providing direction on the provision of real-life support (RLS). Due to the recent restructure of the RAF groups and the closure of stations, RAF Wittering has become a hub for what we term as 'resident units'.

These are essentially units without a home. It is our role to help capture the RLS that each resident units require and keep stakeholders up to date with changes in provisions and services.

A further challenge is presented where we have non-air TLBs (so any other resident units that do not fall under the RAF, for example Army or UKStrat Com). This requires the information to be captured in a different way and my team are currently working hard to try to document this process in a way that all service users can clearly understand.

While this currently isn't the most satisfying part of my role, the challenge is motivation enough to work through the struggles and provide some clarity.

## 3. What is the best advice you have ever received?

Every loss is an opportunity, and every adversity leads to new possibilities.

## 4. Describe yourself in six words?

Caring, resourceful, witty, dedicated, supportive, attentive.

## 5. What career would you have followed if you had not pursued your current profession?

I would most likely be working in the NHS as a Biomedical Scientist.

## 6. Is there one piece of criticism that sticks in your mind?

To stop overthinking.

## 7. What would be your first act as world leader?

I expect this to sound cliché but some sort of world peace and a space where we could help each other with essentials like medicine, food, water, and a safe space to live.

## 8. Name your desert island essentials?

A set of tools for building, some livestock, and my favourite playlist – send me away!?

## 9. How would you change the MOD?

Streamline processes would be my biggest change. It can sometimes be challenging to perform some of the simpler day to day tasks and this would make life a little easier.

## 10. What food would you choose for your last supper?

Papa Luigi's pizza with pepperoni and anchovies.

## 11. Who do you most admire in the world?

I would have to say my Mum. Always had my back and supported me through the highs and lows and always provides an impartial opinion.

## 12. Name four people you would like as a dinner guest – and why?

Sir David Attenborough as I really enjoy animals and the outdoors, I think he'd be a really interesting person to talk to.

Edward Jenner who was behind the first concept of vaccines. It'd be interesting to discuss developments since his time.

Sir Archibald David Stirling as there would surely be some tales to spin there.

Monty Don to talk all about gardens and growing plants.

## 13. What one piece of music would you like played at your funeral?

AC/DC Highway to Hell

## 14. How would you like to be remembered?

To go out with a bang...

# RAFA V50 2024

Need motivation to get fit this year?

**W**hy not challenge yourself to complete 50 miles over a week this Springtime, all in aid of the wonderful RAF Association charity.

You can complete the challenge however and wherever you like: run, cycle, hopscotch all in one day or over seven – it's up to you!

The RAFA V50 challenge, taking place Monday 29 April – Sunday 5 May, is virtual so you can take part from anywhere in the world. In 2023, a mixture of serving personnel, veterans and civilians took part across the UK and in the USA, Romania, the Falklands, Iraq, Qatar, UAE and Cyprus.

This will be the fifth year of the challenge and they have seen some amazing ways of completing the 50 miles and have raised over £94K. RAFA is hoping for more incredible ideas this year and to push the fundraising past the £100K mark, but they need your help!

You can join the challenge as an individual or why not get a team together and challenge each other too?

To see a video on last year's visit: <https://youtu.be/z6hJQVTE6KE>

To sign up simply visit: <https://rafa.org.uk/events/virtual-50/> and then create your JustGiving page <https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/rafa-v50-2024> then start training and fundraising!

Registration prices are below:

- Individual entry – £10 (includes Event t-shirt)
- Team entry – £10 per person (includes event t-shirt, buy 10 places get one free)
- Family entry – £10 per adult, up to three children free (Includes event t-shirts)
- Individual entry – Free (No t-shirt)
- Air Cadet Squadron entry – Register your squadron and we will contact you with further information.

# TEA TIME BREAK ANSWERS

## WORDSEARCH ANSWER

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G	B	R	I	H	S	R	I	A	H
R	E	P	E	A	C	O	C	K	A
A	H	S	K	I	P	P	E	R	K
Y	C	R	D	R	W	A	L	M	C
B	R	I	M	S	T	O	N	E	O
K	A	N	I	T	L	L	A	W	O
E	N	G	R	R	A	M	M	O	C
T	O	L	A	E	D	C	A	E	P
A	M	E	L	A	R	I	M	D	A
G	A	T	E	K	E	E	P	E	R



Culinary

Corner

# Asparagus Risotto

We are kicking off our new series featuring recipes from talented caterers at RAF Wittering with an asparagus risotto from AS1 Ben Hares. Easy enough for a weeknight but elegant enough for entertaining, this lovely asparagus risotto captures the flavours of spring in one satisfying dish.

## Ingredients

- 1kg Fresh Spinach
- 200g Mushrooms
- 1 Bunch Asparagus
- 1 Leek
- 4tbsp Olive Oil
- 4 Garlic Cloves, Pureed
- 200g Arborio Rice
- 60ml White Wine
- 830– 950ml Hot Vegetable Stock
- Handful Basil Leaves
- 1 Lemon, Zest & Juice
- 1/2tsp Salt, more to taste
- 1/4tsp teaspoon Pepper
- Garnish: Lemon Zest, Pecorino Cheese & Toasted Pine Nuts.

## Equipment List

- 2x medium or small pots
- 1x frying pan
- 1x sieve
- 1x kitchen knife
- 3x spatulas
- 1x measuring jug
- 1x blender
- 1x micro blade (or grater)

## Method

1. Trim asparagus and set aside.
2. Blanch spinach and puree with 2 tablespoons of olive oil and the basil, season to taste and pass through a sieve.
3. Add 1 teaspoon of oil to a deep pan on medium heat. Once at temperature gently fry garlic until soft.
4. Add sliced leek and cook until soft.
5. Add arborio rice and stir.
6. Add the white wine and stir.
7. Ladle stock in 1 ladle at a time, stirring constantly until absorbed. Repeat process until desired consistency and texture required. Season to taste.
8. Once cooked, add asparagus and set aside.



AS1 Ben Hares

9. Heat frying to medium high and fry mushrooms until cooked. Season to taste.
10. Add spinach puree and lemon juice to risotto and mix well.
11. To serve, add risotto to a warm bowl and top with mushrooms, grated parmesan, lemon zest and pine nuts.



You can keep it simple and serve asparagus risotto on its own for a healthy vegetarian or vegan meal or serve this Risotto with fish or seafood like salmon, halibut, sauteed shrimp, scallops, or add sauteed mushrooms.

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# Armed Forces Chess Championships 2024

The championships are taking place at RAF Wittering Community Centre (April 5-8) for the second year running.

Open to regular and reserve service personnel, MOD civil servants and veterans, chess players of all abilities are welcome. The format is a seven round 'Swiss' tournament which basically means no-one is knocked out, everyone plays all seven rounds. To reassure anyone who might think they are not good enough, last year there were over 80 competitors, including quite a few beginners, and nobody lost all their games.

This year is going to be record-breaking with over 90 entries at the time of writing and only a few places left, so don't delay if you would like to take part. As well as deciding the single Service chess champions and overall Armed Forces champion, the tournament is also used to select the UK team for the annual NATO Chess Championship.

This year's NATO Championship will be held on the Greek island of Rhodes in October, for those who make the grade! Although there are titles and NATO places at stake there is also a big social aspect to the tournament. It is a really enjoyable long weekend where

you are guaranteed to improve your chess skills and meet new friends at the same time.

To enter the tournament or to ask any questions about Armed Forces chess please contact Sgt Jimmy Blair at james.blair663@mod.gov.uk



## ARMED FORCES CHESS CHAMPIONSHIPS 2024

Open to the Armed Forces, Reserves, MOD Civil Servants and Veterans



RAF Wittering, 05-08 April – See [2023DIN10-026](#)

or contact Sgt J Blair at [james.blair663@mod.gov.uk](mailto:james.blair663@mod.gov.uk) / 07966 717825

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## NEED FAMILY OR MATRIMONIAL LEGAL ADVICE?

Every 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month we offer a FREE 30-minute consultation for anyone based at RAF Wittering.

To take advantage of this free advisory service, please call us on 01780 484536 or email [Charlotte.Richardson@buckles-law.co.uk](mailto:Charlotte.Richardson@buckles-law.co.uk)

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## Wittering View Now Online

You can now read the latest issues of Wittering View, the official magazine for RAF Wittering, by visiting [www.rafmags.co.uk](http://www.rafmags.co.uk).

Use this link to read the latest as well as previous issues of your favourite magazine. You can also subscribe for free, as well as keep up to date with other RAF magazine titles. So, check out [www.rafmags.co.uk/subscribe](http://www.rafmags.co.uk/subscribe) to keep up with the latest news.



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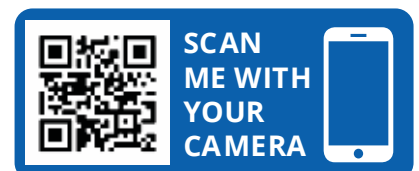


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