



51° NORTH



Spring 2026

The Magazine of RAF Brize Norton



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EDITORIAL TEAM

Editor
Ms Anita Jack

Editorial Team
Mrs Bev Masters

Editorial Contact
51° North Magazine
RAF Brize Norton
Carterton, Oxfordshire OX18 3LX

Email: bzn-51degreesnorth@mod.gov.uk

PUBLISHING TEAM

Published
Lance Media Group Ltd,
1st Floor, Tailby House, Bath Road,
Kettering, Northants,
NN16 8NL
Tel: 01536 334222
Email: mike@lancemediagroup.co.uk

Advertising
Darren Greenhead
Tel: 01536 680414
Email: darren@lancemediagroup.co.uk

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Designer
Amanda Robinson
Tel: 01536 334226
Email: amanda@lancemediagroup.co.uk

Printed
Micropress Printers Ltd,
Fountain Way,
Reydon Business Park,
Reydon, Suffolk
IP18 6SZ

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	DEADLINE	DELIVERY DATE
SPRING	5 FEB	19 MAR
SUMMER	14 MAY	18 JUN
AUTUMN	17 AUG	18 SEPT
WINTER	12 NOV	16 DEC





51° NORTH



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EDITOR'S FOREWORD

Time has a way of slipping past us. One moment we are closing the final pages of last year and the next we are welcoming the first issue of 2026.

The pace can be dizzying, but it also reminds us why moments of pause and reflection matter. A new year always arrives with a quiet challenge; to look ahead without forgetting where we've been. As we bring you the first station magazine of 2026, that balance feels especially meaningful.

This issue is all about momentum, ideas that are taking shape and the shifts within station that will lead to lasting change. Across this edition you'll find all the latest stories, celebration of station successes and reflect on what is coming not just as it is.

Magazines have always been places to pause. In a time that moves faster than ever, I hope this issue gives you space to think, to feel and to be inspired. Whether you are reading cover to cover or dipping in between moments of a busy day, our aim is simple, to offer an insight into the RAF's largest and busiest RAF Station.

Thank you for starting 2026 with us. I am looking forward to where the year and time takes us and

I am delighted that you will be part of our 2026 journey.

There is a lot happening this year, keep your eyes peeled for updates across our social media channels and of course the upcoming Station Magazines.

Till next time ...

Anita – MCO
Editor 51 Degrees North



DEADLINE

PLEASE SUBMIT ALL ARTICLES BY 14TH MAY

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 Mobility Guardian

Joint Air Delivery Test and Evaluation Unit (JADTEU) was tasked with assessing the feasibility of despatching the USA-provided A-22 Container Delivery System (CDS) in preparation for Exercise Mobility Guardian 2025.

After receiving the equipment, JADTEU's Aerial Delivery and Engineering Sections worked closely with 206 Squadron and Red Scientific to determine the evidence required to safely deliver this new capability.

Support came from our partners at USAF Mildenhall, who shared rigging procedures and practical tips for safe despatch.



We also drew on lessons learned from a NATO ally with prior experience of A-22 CDS operations from the Atlas A400M. These insights fed into a comprehensive Ground Assessment, ensuring the UK's first A-22 despatch would be conducted safely and effectively.

With UK-specific modifications identified and clear procedures established for both aircrew and despatchers, the final step was to gain the necessary clearances. To support this, JADTEU deployed a Qualified Air Despatch Instructor and a Despatch Crew Commander to work alongside 47 Air Despatch Squadron, providing guidance on the unfamiliar equipment.

The result was the successful and safe despatch of a foreign load from the Atlas A400M for the very first time – a milestone achievement that underlines the UK's commitment to 'NATO First' and enhances Aerial Delivery interoperability.

Images: Crown copyright
Photographer: Cpl Cann



From Posting to Posting and Still One School

For RAF and Forces families facing frequent moves, boarding school can provide educational stability and lasting friendships.

If you've ever unpacked the same boxes in Brize Norton, Cyprus or the USA, you'll know military family life is never dull. It's an adventure, but frequent moves can disrupt children's education. Just as they've settled and made new friends, new posting orders arrive. Another move, another school, another round of settling in.

For many service families, boarding school offers something the Forces can't always guarantee: stability. But with around 500 UK boarding schools to choose from, where do you start? That's where I come in.

I'm Claire Calder, a former Cheltenham College pupil, mother to two children who thrived in boarding from the age of eight, and wife to a British Army officer for 27 years. We've lived across the UK and overseas, including Saudi Arabia and Nigeria, so from very personal experience I understand the juggling act of military life. I also know how daunting the search for the right school can feel.

At Claire Calder Consultancy, we take a child centred, family focused approach. Every recommendation considers your child's personality, strengths and interests, whether they're academic high-flyers, creative explorers or sports enthusiasts. We provide independent, personalised guidance that helps families, particularly those in HM Forces, make sense of the UK boarding school landscape and feel confident their child is in the right place to thrive.

Our service is completely impartial and, for HM Forces families, entirely free. Serving families deserve the very best guidance without any additional expense.

I handle the practical steps for you, from shortlisting schools and arranging visits to explaining admissions and advising on the full range of Forces discounts. I also visit schools regularly, offering insights you won't find in brochures or online. Together, we ensure your child's education is guided by expertise rather than dictated by the timing of postings or well-meaning social media advice.

Boarding school isn't about sending children away. It's about providing a home from home, continuity of friends and teachers, and opportunities that repeated moves can interrupt. My own children left school at 18 with lifelong friendships, confidence and a wealth of experiences.

If boarding school could be the right option for your family, get in touch for a friendly chat. I'd be delighted to hear about your child, your circumstances and how I can help you explore the possibilities.

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Industry and Air Power Unite at RAF Brize Norton

Innovation met inspiration at RAF Brize Norton, as No.1 Group's Industry Day and Awards Evening brought together Royal Air Force personnel and Defence Industry Partners, for a dynamic showcase of collaboration, capability, and future ambition.

From the outset, Air Vice-Marshal Jackson, Air Officer Commanding 1 Group, set a powerful tone - unveiling a realistic conflict scenario that challenged both the RAF and industry to think, adapt, and act as one team in the face of a rapidly changing threat environment. The scenario underscored a clear message: national security depends on seamless partnership between air power and innovation.

Across the airfield, static displays from the Combat Air, ISTAR, Air Mobility, and Air and Space Warfare forces turned concepts into conversations; engineers, aviators, and industry leaders standing shoulder to shoulder, discussing how today's systems must evolve to meet tomorrow's demands. But the highlight for many came later, RAF Brize Norton's first flying display in nearly a decade! An Atlas A400M Rapid Air Assault captured the imagination of all present, as the aircraft performed a short landing and reverse manoeuvre before deploying troops from 2nd Battalion, Parachute Regiment. The paratroopers advanced on electric bikes and vehicles, symbolising the modern, agile, and sustainable force that is emerging across Defence. The Red Arrows followed with precision and pride, before a Typhoon's raw power closed the display in spectacular fashion showcasing rapid take-off, acceleration, and powerful 9G turns, a fitting symbol of the RAF's cutting edge.

The event's success was built on meticulous planning, teamwork, and assurance, supported by the Flying Display Safety Committee and RAF Brize Norton personnel, whose professionalism ensured safety at every stage. Special thanks go to the local community for their cooperation in minimising congregation around the Station. The buzz even reached local schools, where children watched wide-eyed as air power returned to the skies.

As the sun set, attention turned to the 1 Group Awards Evening in the Officers' Mess, a celebration of excellence across the Group. From Air Mobility Force innovators to frontline operators, the night honoured those who embody the ethos of "Agility, Readiness, and Resolve".







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National Apprenticeship Week

National Apprenticeship Week is a week-long celebration that brings together organisations and apprentices across the country to shine a light on the positive impact that apprenticeships make to individuals and Defence.

At Royal Air Force Brize Norton we have apprentices working in professions across the Station, from serving personnel to industry partners, gaining skills and working towards nationally recognised qualifications.

Air Specialist 1 Callahan is a Royal Air Force Firefighter with RAF Fire & Rescue currently working towards his RAF Operational Firefighter Level 3 Apprenticeship. This course is designed to train individuals for 24/7 fire and crash rescue protection, both in the UK and overseas. The apprenticeship covers everything a firefighter needs to know from equipment, to correct procedures, enabling them to be effective in their role. Enrolment in this apprenticeship begins during Phase Two Specialist Training at the Defence Fire Training Unit, typically lasting between 12 and 24 months. It is completed along with daily duties. The final part of the apprenticeship consists of an end-point assessment in which all the skills and knowledge they have learnt are put to the test and examined. It provides a nationally recognised civilian qualification that validates expertise in high-pressure emergency situations. For the RAF, this apprenticeship ensures a standard of elite, deployable protection for global air operations.

Air Specialist 1 Callahan said:
"For me, the apprenticeship is a great way to learn the role of being an RAF firefighter as it goes in-depth into all the equipment and operational procedures. It also pushes you to be the best you can be in your role as you can gather a lot of information and become a crucial part of your crew."

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Mud, Maps and Motivation – 501 Squadron Takes on Exercise Mud Master

Twenty members of 501 Squadron RAuxAF took on the challenge of Exercise Mud Master, a demanding two-day navigation and driving competition organised by 154 (Scottish) Regiment Royal Logistics Corps.

The event brought together over 308 participants and 154 vehicles, including teams from across the British Army, the RAF and even the Dutch Army, making it an international affair.

Ex Mud Master is designed to promote safe and skilled cross-country driving and navigation across varied and unfamiliar terrain. Conducted concurrently with a British Army Motorsports Association (BAMA) Navigational Trial, the exercise tested not only off-road driving ability but also teamwork, route planning and problem-solving under pressure.

501 Squadron fully embraced the challenge. Competing against tough opposition, the team showcased their professionalism, driving skill and sense of adventure, ultimately finishing as the First RAF Team overall and also taking home the title of First RAF Brize Norton Team.

The event was a fantastic opportunity for the Reservists to really sharpen their skills in a competitive yet supportive environment, reinforcing the importance of safe driving and manual navigation, key components of their Logistics role.



The Squadron's performance not only highlighted 501's trademark spirit and determination but also strengthened inter-service and international relationships through shared experience, muddy boots and a healthy dose of friendly rivalry.

A brilliant result for 501 Squadron - first in the mud, first in the competition and first in teamwork!



RAF Brize Norton are the new holders of the prestigious Firmin Sword of Peace

The Award of the prestigious Firmin Sword of Peace.

The prestigious Firmin Sword of Peace, awarded by Britain's longest-standing sword making company to the military unit or establishment judged to have made the most valuable contribution to humanitarian activities at home or overseas was presented to Royal Air Force Brize Norton by Chief of Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Harv Smyth.

Air Chief Marshal Smyth said:
"This award celebrates not only the professionalism and ingenuity of our people, but also the power of joint effort across the A400 Force, 47 Air Despatch Squadron, the Joint Air Delivery Transport Evaluation Unit, 206 Squadron, DE&S, RTSA and 83 Expeditionary Air Group; all under the command of 11Gp. Together, they delivered hope where it was needed most, setting a benchmark for operational excellence and teamwork."

**Air Chief Marshal Smyth
Chief of Air Staff**

Awarded for Operation Underhill, which delivered essential aid to civilians in Gaza facing acute food shortages, it represents a significant UK military contribution to a major humanitarian crisis, showing the RAF's ability to conduct complex air drop operations under challenging conditions.

Group Captain Bishop said:
"I was the deployed Air Component Commander in the Middle East responsible for the command of this operation. I'm really proud to be part of today and to see the Firmin Sword presented. It was a real Whole Force effort, and that's been reflected today. The entire breadth of people involved from



here at RAF Brize Norton through to those forward deployed have been recognised in this award. The operation was about genuinely helping people and it was humbling to be part of."

Group Captain Bishop

Operation Underhill was the RAF's essential contribution to a global humanitarian effort to prevent famine in Gaza through air drop delivery of aid with the Atlas (A400M) aircraft, 83 Expeditionary Air Group (83EAG), 206 Squadron, the Joint Air Delivery Transport Evaluation Unit (JADTEU) and 47 Air Despatch (AD) Squadron Royal Logistic Corps, all at the forefront of activity.



**Warrant Officer Class 2 Dibbs,
47 Air Despatch Squadron,
Royal Logistic Corps, said:**
"I was one of the first people deployed as part of the initial planning team to engage with the other nations involved in the operation. We had such a strong team from the UK Armed Forces as part of this operation across both the RAF and Army working at an incredibly high level, and seeing everyone here again today to receive this award together is a special moment. It was a privilege to be involved in a mission like this"

**Warrant Officer Class 2 Dibbs
47 Air Despatch Squadron
Royal Logistic Corps**





Receiving the award on behalf of everyone involved, Squadron Leader Chris Bowen, LXX Squadron said: *"It is an absolute honour to receive the Firmin Sword of Peace. To be recognised is without a doubt, the perfect way to end an operation as complex as it was."*

Squadron Leader Bowen
LXX Squadron

This also marked the first time the RAF used the Atlas for humanitarian air drops in such a high-pressure situation, highlighting complex logistics and international cooperation.

Squadron Leader Playle said: *"I was the Detachment Commander for Op Underhill, and today we got a chance to reflect on such an incredible achievement. Today we are reminded of the joint nature of the operation, and how everyone worked so well together. Everyone wanted to deliver the aid as quickly as possible and its warming to see all those enablers come together to be recognised as a team and Whole Force."*

Squadron Leader Playle



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RAF Safety Centre Trophy Award 2025

Squadron Leader Masters, the lead for the Royal Air Force Brize Norton Road Safety Team, was announced as the RAF Safety Centre trophy winner 2025, for his outstanding innovation and commitment, driving a fundamental and measurable improvement in safety culture across the RAF's largest station.

With a high operating tempo and complex infrastructure, with thousands of vehicle movements daily, Squadron Leader Masters delivered a sustained programme of innovation, education and infrastructure improvement.

Overseeing 16 major road safety initiatives, including station-wide Road Safety Week, interactive Road

Safety Roadshow, reaching over 4,000 personnel, the hard hitting 'Survive the Drive' presentation and an extended Christmas Drink Drive Campaign resulted in a measurable decline in incidents.

This influence has extended across every rank and department, creating a unified approach to road safety that has demonstrably reduced risk and enhanced operational resilience.

Receiving the trophy from Air Commodore Sam Sansome, Squadron Leader Masters said:

"I'm immensely proud to accept the 2025 RAF Safety Trophy. This award is a testament to the outstanding team at RAF Brize Norton. This achievement highlights their dedication, initiative, and unwavering commitment to keeping our people safe. Empowering them has been a privilege - this award belongs to all of us."

Squadron Leader Masters



RAF Brize Norton Celebrates Dual Honours at RAF Association Annual Conference

RAF Brize Norton has proudly secured the prestigious Lord Tedder Trophy after raising the highest RAF Association (RAFA) Wings Appeal total in 2024.

The award was collected on behalf of the Station by Group Captain Henton, Wing Commander Stringer, Chief Technician Craven and Sergeant Anstis.

In addition to the Station's achievement, Chief Technician Craven was personally recognised with the Royal Air Force Association Liaison Officer (RAFALO) of the Year Award, acknowledging his exceptional contribution to the Association throughout 2024.

Both trophies were presented by Air Marshal Sir Baz North, President of the RAF Association, during the Annual Conference. Reflecting on the awards, Station Commander Group Captain Henton said:

"I was absolutely delighted to hear that RAF Brize Norton had won the Lord Tedder Trophy for raising the highest net collection for the RAFA Wings Appeal. This is a testament to the outstanding commitment of the Station RAFA Committee."

"It was also fabulous to see Chief Technician Craven recognised as RAFALO of the Year. His dedication to RAFA over the years has been phenomenal, and this award is a fitting recognition."

The awards highlight not only the Station's fundraising success but also the lasting impact of its personnel's dedication to the welfare and support activities championed by the RAF Association.



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RAF Falcons Continue Intensive Training Ahead of 2026 Display Season

The Royal Air Force Falcons Parachute Display Team are pressing ahead with an intensive pre-season training programme as they prepare for their 2026 display season.

As the UK's premier military parachute display team, the Falcons are working tirelessly to ensure their trademark precision, professionalism and aerial excellence remain at the forefront of their performances.

This year's build-up features several new team members, who are being put through their paces in a demanding training regime designed to meet the high standards expected of the RAF Falcons. From advanced canopy control to complex formation work, the new team members are undergoing rigorous assessments to ensure that they are fully prepared to join the team in delivering spectacular displays across the UK and overseas.

Training includes a combination of ground-based drills, specialist parachute instruction, physical conditioning and detailed safety preparation. Under the guidance of experienced instructors and seasoned Falcons display parachutists, the new team members are developing the skills and confidence needed for the challenging season ahead.

OC RAF Falcons Parachute display Team, Flight Lieutenant Compton-Davies said:

"Winter training has allowed us to further develop and refine the high-level skills required for the season ahead. We have been working tirelessly to perfect our aerial displays, ensuring audiences will once again enjoy thrilling performances throughout the year. You may catch glimpses of us training in and around the Oxfordshire area during late March and April, as we adapt to UK weather conditions and operate across a variety of drop zones during the domestic phase of our training."

The RAF Falcons are made up of both Regular and Reserve personnel. To become a Falcon, individuals must come from one of the following specialisations: Training Officer Branch, Physical Training Instructor, or Survival Equipment Technician. Behind every display is a dedicated network of support. The Falcons are proud to be backed by outstanding military personnel, valued sponsors, the incredible members of the public who attend our displays, and, of course, their families.

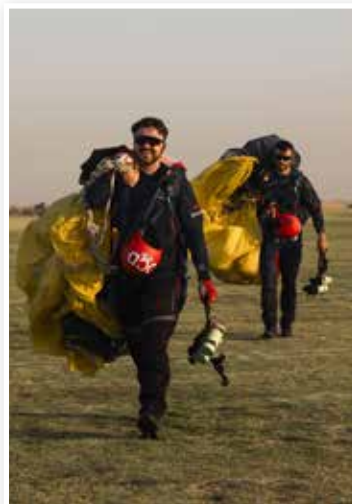
With preparations well underway, the RAF Falcons have a busy year ahead, and the team is looking forward to bringing audiences their full display schedule soon.

As the season approaches, the RAF Falcons encourage the public to stay connected:

You can find out more and keep up to date by visiting:
www.raf.mod.uk/raffalcons

You can also follow the RAF Falcons on social media for news, behind-the-scenes updates and upcoming display announcements.

Keep your eyes to the skies - you never know when you may just catch a glimpse of them.






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Mental Wellbeing Support for the RAF Community

Service life can be deeply rewarding, but it brings unique pressures. Long hours, demanding deployments, frequent relocations and the expectation to remain calm and resilient at all times. That takes its toll; not only on serving personnel, but on partners and families.

Jane Pendry at Sense-Ability Hypnotherapy & Coaching offers confidential online therapy tailored to the Armed Forces community.

Jane is a multiple award-winning, accredited clinical hypnotherapist, fully trained, DBS-checked and insured. She supports individuals experiencing stress, anxiety, low mood, burnout, trauma and major life transitions using evidence-based, neuroscience-informed approaches, including:


- Solution Focused Hypnotherapy:** supporting nervous system regulation, improving sleep, reducing anxiety and enhancing focus.
- 'Closure with Disclosure' Trauma Resolution Techniques:**
- Eye Movement Desensitisation & Reprocessing (EMDR):** trained by former military medic and neuropsychologist, Marc Johnson.
- The Rewind Trauma Technique:** trained by Dr David Muss. **Free sessions** often available for serving RAF personnel below commissioned rank experiencing service-related PTSD (subject to availability).
- Root Cause and Parts Hypnotherapy:** for deeper-rooted, complex trauma, trained by Sarah Yuen-Gilliat, author of *The PTSD Solution: A Military Approach*.

Understanding the demands of military life, Sense-Ability offers **£20 off every therapy session** for RAF Brize Norton personnel and their families.

Flexible appointments, online booking and secure payments make accessing support easy. The initial 20 minute exploratory consultation is free.

Seeking support is a proactive step toward maintaining wellbeing, performance and healthy relationships.

For more information or to self-refer, get in touch with Jane at:
www.sense-ability.co.uk
 +44 7843 813 883 (please text or WhatsApp)
jane@sense-ability.co.uk



Indoor Skydiving Takes Logistics Squadron to New Heights

A team from Logistics Squadron swapped the familiar rhythm of day-to-day operations for something a little more exhilarating when nine personnel took part in an indoor skydiving Adventurous Training (AT) session at iFLY Basingstoke.

For all involved, it was a first encounter with the sensation of freefall and it delivered exactly the lift in morale the Squadron was aiming for.

The day opened with a thorough safety brief and coaching session from the iFLY instructors, setting the team at ease before they stepped into the wind tunnel for the first time. Once the helmets were on and the first brave volunteer stepped into the tunnel, any nerves were quickly replaced by laughter, wide-eyed surprise, and the unmistakable buzz that comes from trying something completely new. One by one, the team entered the airflow, each flight lasting only a short time but delivering a rush that felt far longer.

For those involved, the purpose of the day went beyond the novelty of flight. Adventure Training remains a vital part of RAF culture, offering personnel the chance to challenge themselves, build resilience, and strengthen the bonds that underpin effective teamwork. Indoor skydiving

proved to be an ideal choice: physically engaging, mentally refreshing, and just far enough outside the comfort zone to spark genuine camaraderie.

By the end of the session, the group had not only mastered the fundamentals of indoor flight but also rediscovered the

value of stepping away from routine. As one member of the team put it, they'd had a "class day", a simple summary that captured the mood perfectly. The shared experience and the collective sense of achievement all contributed to a noticeable lift in spirits.

Cpl N Jones



Names from Left to Right: AS1 Welch, Cpl Sparey, Cpl Roberts, AS1 Davidson, AS1 Begbie-Dilks, Cpl N Jones, AS1 McCarroll, Cpl J Jones, Cpl A Dunne.





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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.

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501 Squadron Dining-In Night – A Celebration of Excellence and Tradition

501 Squadron Royal Auxiliary Air Force hosted its annual Dining-In Night.

The event was more than a formal dinner, it was a celebration of achievement and camaraderie. The night featured an awards ceremony recognising outstanding contributions across the Squadron, with a wide range of accolades presented to various members of the Squadron. AS1 Penderis was celebrated as Best Phase 2 Trainee, while the coveted art-time Volunteer Reservist (PTRV) of the Year award went to AS1 Bisset (Spicy). The OC's Trophy was jointly awarded to Cpl Popplewell and FS Gorman for their exceptional leadership and commitment. AS1 Scott received the Regis Deleuze Award and Cpl Marshall was honoured with a Special Recognition Award for his remarkable efforts over the past 11 years since the re-role of the organisation as a Logistics Support Squadron. The Squadron Supply Chain Specialists received a two-star Team Commendation for their efforts in a high-level tasking and finally, FS Rudge surprised the room with a thoughtful gesture, presenting the Squadron with a beautifully cased and framed Union Flag as his leaving gift. This flag was brought back from the rededication service of Fg Off G. Cox, a former Squadron Pilot who was killed in action and formally rededicated last year, a ceremony at which FS Rudge proudly represented the Squadron.

The occasion drew an impressive turnout, with 90% of the Squadron in attendance alongside distinguished guests from the higher headquarters and colleagues from other sections. The sense of pride and unity was palpable, as members reflected on the Squadron's successes and looked forward to the year ahead.

Just one of the evening's highlights was a surprise solo performance by the Squadron Piper AS1 Bisset, who delivered a unique rendition of We Will Rock You, mid-way through the dinner, blending tradition with modern flair and earning rapturous applause.

The Dining-In Night reaffirmed the Squadron's strong spirit of camaraderie

and celebrated an outstanding year of performance, leaving everyone with lasting memories of an extraordinary evening. AS2 Wright, acting as Ms Vice, captured the essence of the Squadron perfectly. As one of the more junior members, she delivered a heartfelt tribute reflecting on her first year of service, highlighting the warm welcomes, enduring friendships, and invaluable learning experiences that have shaped her journey.

Quote:

"The atmosphere was unforgettable, seeing the Squadron come together in such numbers, celebrating achievements and traditions, was truly special and one I don't think anyone attending will be forgetting anytime soon."

Flt Lt Smith





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Just Camps also offers one-to-one sports coaching, including specialist SEND support. These calm, structured and child-led sessions are tailored to individual needs, allowing children to progress at their own pace in a positive and encouraging setting.

Just Camps is known for its extended family feel. Children are welcomed, encouraged and valued, while parents trust that their children are in capable, caring hands. We are proudly community-driven, building strong relationships with families and schools to create positive, lasting experiences.

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Exercise AUSURI SIEGE

Exercise AUSURI SIEGE - AMFHQ's Staff Ride to Malta

Twelve personnel from RAF Brize Norton embarked on a transformative journey to Malta for Exercise AUSURI SIEGE. A staff ride designed to develop leadership, operational insight, and strategic thinking through the lens of the island's WWII legacy.

Malta's Strategic Legacy: A Timeless Case Study

Malta's pivotal role in WWII offered a powerful case study in geography, command decisions, and joint operations. Its resilience under siege and strategic location in the Mediterranean provided a backdrop for discussions linking historical events to modern RAF challenges.

Day One: Operation PEDESTAL

The visit began with Operation PEDESTAL, the 1942 Allied convoy mission that resupplied Malta despite heavy losses. The arrival of the SS Ohio symbolised resilience and the strength of coordinated effort. At Fort St Elmo, participants explored the operation's relevance to modern logistics and resilience. The group examined the contributions of 32 Squadron and the broader impact of air operations launched from Malta. A tour of the Lascaris War Rooms illustrated the complexity of commanding the joint defence of Malta from the underground complex. The day concluded at the Commonwealth Air Force Memorial where reflections on civilian hardship during the siege drew poignant comparisons to the Blitz in London.

Day Two: Siege and Sacrifice

The group visited the Miracle of Mosta Church to consider the impact of an island at siege and the Law of Armed Conflict. At Imtarfa Military Cemetery, wreaths were laid at the grave of Sgt James Reardon, a Wellington Observer. The day ended at the Malta Aviation Museum with discussions on Control of the Air.

Day Three: Leadership and Legacy

Focus shifted to leadership at the Malta at War Museum, where AVM Sir Keith Park's command style was examined as a model of RAF crisis leadership. Fort St Angelo provided a fitting venue to reflect on Malta's George Cross award, sparking conversations about courage, resilience,



Wreath laying at Imtarfa Military Cemetery.



Sector Operations Room at Lascaris War Rooms.

and the importance of recognition in military service.

From History to Application

Each visit was designed to build not just historical understanding but also practical RAF skills of teamwork, analysis, and communication. Participants drew clear links between past and present, identifying strategic geography, decisive leadership, and joint force integration as enduring lessons.

By walking in the footsteps of those who defended Malta, personnel returned with renewed perspective and a deeper commitment to applying the past to future challenges.



Grand Harbour from the Saluting Battery in Valletta.



Group photo at Mosta Church.

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Iconic Cycling Events, based in Bath, manage a series of large scale cycling events around the UK. Appealing to riders of all ages and abilities the events start and finish at iconic locations. Brize Norton sits close to this year's events in Bath, Oxford and Tetbury where 25, 50 and 75-mile rides will have participants follow marked routes through the glorious Cotswolds and beyond - a great way to explore the local countryside. The rides aim to attract over 700 riders each including an extensive number of charity and corporate teams.

All the events take place on a Sunday when the roads are relatively quiet and riders can enjoy a bite to eat and drink at the end of their ride.

The business was set up in 2012 by former Army captain, Richard Best, who encourages more service personnel and their friends and families to take part and they may consider raising funds for one of the many service charities or even consider sponsoring the event if you are a local business.

All details are available on
www.iconiccyclingevents.co.uk

For further details email
info@iconiccyclingevents.co.uk

Dental Centre Oral Health School Visit

Jasmine, the Oral Health Educator from RAF Brize Norton Dental Centre, recently visited St. John's Primary School in Carterton, where she delivered an informative and engaging session to Key Stage 2 pupils. Her visit aimed to highlight the importance of proper brushing techniques and raise awareness of how sugar consumption affects dental health.

Joined by former RAF Dental Nurse, Alex, who now works within education, they crafted a dynamic session filled with interactive learning. The excitement began with a food cut-out game, where students identified which snacks contained sugar. The findings were both surprising and enlightening for the children.

The session continued with a presentation that explored tooth-friendly snacks and the risk of sugary drinks, highlighting how sugar and plaque can contribute to dental decay.

The highlight of the day involved the children using disclosing tablets, an innovative tool that reveals missed brushing spots by staining them bright pink (and occasionally blue). It was a thrilling moment as they discovered areas they'd overlooked while brushing.

Each student received goodie bags filled with toothbrushes, mouth mirrors, informative leaflets, and additional disclosing tablets to encourage continued learning and engagement at home.

The RAF Brize Norton Dental Centre is committed to providing oral health education not only to serving personnel, but also to military families and the wider community of Carterton.

If your child attends a school or nursery near RAF Brize Norton that could benefit from a fun and educational lesson in oral health, please reach out to Jasmine, the Oral Health Educator, at

UKStratCom-DMS-DPHC-BZN-DenGrp@mod.gov.k



Jasmine - Oral Health Educator.



Disclosing Tablet.



Health Teeth Activity.



St. John's Primary School Classroom.

Supporting Our Families of Deployed Personnel: The Launch of Take Away Tuesday

In February, the People & Families Support team, formerly known as Community Support, launched an exciting new initiative: Take Away Tuesday. Designed specifically for the families of deployed personnel, the event aims to create a warm, welcoming space where families can come together, connect with others in similar circumstances, and enjoy a well-deserved night off from cooking.

The inaugural evening was a great success. Families tucked into delicious pizzas while children made full use of the soft-play area and got creative with Valentine's Day crafts. Laughter, conversation and a real sense of community filled the centre, with many attendees saying they were already looking forward to the next event.

Initiatives like Take Away Tuesday play an important role in supporting the families of our Service personnel. Not only do they offer a relaxed and enjoyable environment, they also provide valuable opportunities for family members to chat with the People & Families Support Team, who are on hand to offer guidance and assistance with any challenges that may arise during their loved one's deployment.

For further information and to book your place at Take Away Tuesday please email bnz-community@mod.gov.uk

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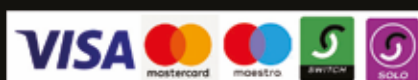
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