

Honington Herald

The Magazine of RAF Honington

 **ROYAL
AIR FORCE
HONINGTON**
Summer 2021



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ON THE COVER

Graduation news
- see pages 18 - 19

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The Honington Herald is published by kind permission
of the Station Commander, Royal Air Force Honington,
Group Captain Piers 'Dutch' Holland MBE MA RAF.

Submission Deadline for Articles

Autumn 30/07/2021

All articles to be submitted to:
HON-HeraldGMB@mod.gov.uk



Designer:
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Lanceprint

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Printed and Published by:
Lance Print, 1st Floor, Tailby House,
Bath Rd, Kettering, NN16 8NL

Tel: 01536 334222

www.lanceprint.co.uk



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Editor's Welcome

Welcome to the
Summer edition
of the Herald and
hopefully by the time you
are reading this we'll be well
and truly on our way out
of lockdown.

We spent the month of April
mourning the loss of HRH The
Duke of Edinburgh before
emerging to the beginning of the
end of restrictions.

So far RAF Honington is
successfully kickstarting the fun
as you will see from some of the
articles in this edition. All the
regular updates are here plus
charity challenges, mental health
awareness and even Curlews; did

you know we are supporting this
conservation project? Honington
hosts a wealth of wildlife, both
plant and animal, and we will look
to highlight more of this in future
editions.

If you have anything to stand out
in the next edition be sure to let
us know as we continue to SETT
the FP Force for Success.

**From your Media and
Engagement Team.**

Station Commander's Foreword

Group Captain Piers 'Dutch' Holland MBE MA RAF

It seems like only 2 minutes since I last 'put pen to paper' for a Honington Herald foreword! Much has happened, some of which we expected and some not – but that's all part of the challenge, reward and privilege of leading RAF Honington through these exciting times. I remain immensely proud to serve and lead all of you.

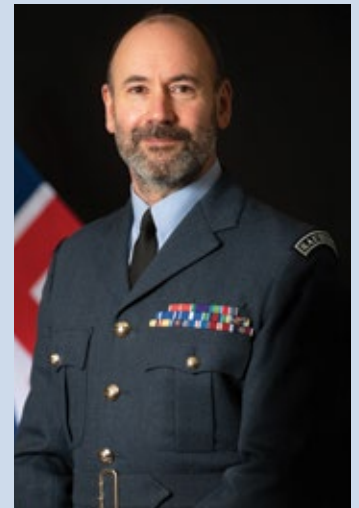
Although Covid remains a significant part of our lives and existence, it daily becomes less so and the future is bright indeed. We have already started playing sport again and our gym and swimming pool are now open; clubs, societies and Force Development activities are beginning to open up and opportunity for everyone to have fun (now there is a good word!) abounds. The social side of our

community has also started to re-open and I hope that by the time you read this they may be operating without any lingering Covid restrictions. Please unplug your PlayStation, get out of your Barrack Block / Family Quarter and get busy living!!

But it continues to be a busy time for everyone as we all work hard to SETT the FP Force for success.

The pace of training delivery from both the RAF Regt Trg Wg and the RAF FP Centre continues unabated, feeding the front-line of the Force and also RAF personnel deploying into difficult environments all around the world. The Capability Team continues to work incredibly hard to improve the Force's future equipment and technology, and Support Wg have made real progress in the Armoury and Explosives Storage arenas with the support that they can provide. We have had to say a sad farewell to our Personnel Management Sqn and we are now well engaged with our Regional HR Centre at RAF Marham; the new HR operating model requires a change in mindset and this cultural change is probably most challenging to techno-dinosaurs like me!

So, by the time you are reading this, a much deserved and much



earned summer holiday break will be beckoning; options may well be more limited this year, but I urge you all to take some time, relax and enjoy yourselves after the difficult Covid marathon; but wherever you go please stay safe and always: Stop – Think – Act in all you do!

Yours,

'Dutch' Holland



18 Apr 21; Final salute to HRH the Duke of Edinburgh following the period of National Mourning.

Do you have a question for the Station Commander?

Then **'Ask Dutch!'**

Find the link on the RAF Honington homepage on Sharepoint, or scan the QR Code on station posters to access from your mobile phone.

 @StnCdrHonington



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WO IAN DANKS AND SEARCH DOG JUNO; A voluntary SAR team



Ian and Juno

Ian Danks is a serving Warrant Officer in Armament Engineering Flight at RAF Honington and has been a member of Norfolk Lowland Search and Rescue (NorLSAR) since 2015. Lowland Rescue covers a third of the UK with 36 regional teams and over 1800 professionally qualified volunteers providing Search and Rescue coverage "From Hill to High Water". NorLSARs' 45 members help the police look for missing people 7 days a week, 365 days a year, come rain or shine.

Having decided to get Juno (as a family pet) and then train her as a SAR dog, they both passed the Lowland Rescue SAR dog and handler assessment in 2019 and have been called out regularly to search for missing, vulnerable members of the public throughout the region, helping to locate them and return them back to their families and loved ones.



Ian and Juno; Norfolk Lowland Rescue

Ian and Juno have been involved in a high number of live call outs within Norfolk and Suffolk, and the surrounding counties and Juno's skills have helped in rescues ranging from teenagers to those in their late 80s. They have conducted searches within and on the outskirts of small villages and towns, marshland, woodland, open fields, coastline, riverbanks and industrial zones. Recent searches have included those with mental health issues, family break-ups, suicides and despondents. Sadly, on occasions not everyone can be reached in time, but the missing person is always shown the utmost respect and dignity, with NorLSAR working side by side the

other emergency services to then return the missing person to their loved ones.

NorLSAR have established tactics to make best use of Juno and she is kitted out with a real-time GPS tracker that enables the Police and incident search managers to track her from the team's incident control vehicle. This capability was used during a live search for a suicidal missing male when Juno searched a large open area, then fields, and finally a large wooded area where she was observed circling a location. Juno then returned to Ian and immediately sat at his feet, alerting Ian

that she had made a find. A roll mat containing human scent had been detected by Juno and this important find helped locate the missing person safe and well and returned to his family.

Training has continued at an equally hectic pace for Ian and Juno, making sure that Ian's SAR skills, and most importantly Juno's nose is at the top of its game when called upon. Ian attends SAR basic training twice a month, leading teams conducting training exercises in and around East Anglia independent of Juno. Juno's training is twice a week, ranging from basic searches where 1 person maybe hiding 100m away in woodland, to multiple people in a wooded area of up to 50 acres.

Although qualified as an 'Air Scent' SAR dog, Ian is now training Juno to be a water search dog. With the only currently (voluntary) qualified water search dog in the UK about to retire, Ian hopes that he and Juno can be an asset that can deploy nationally at the request of regional police organisations in searching for lost and missing people, around any form of water source or feature.

Such training is incredibly rewarding, but the entire commitment to NorLSAR and supporting the local community in this fashion takes its toll. However, supporting members of the local community as the only qualified SAR dog handler in the region produces such a strong, tangible feeling that suddenly makes it all worthwhile.

Ian and Juno have, and continue to give talks and presentations to local and regional clubs and groups. If you would like to know more about Ian and Juno, NorLSAR, and how they operate, please email them on: secretary@norlsar.org.uk.



Ian and Juno in action!

Tony's 100 Verses

RAF Honington's very own poet has recited 100 verses of his personal poetry on what would have been Sir Captain Tom's 101st Birthday, 30 April 2021.

Tony Roe (69) of Rymer Point, Thetford, set himself the challenge after hearing about the Captain Tom 100 challenge on local radio. Known locally at RAF Honington as our 'Countryman' and 'Poet', Tony is best known for his work as part of the Station Warrant Officer's workforce and has been a loyal member of the Station for over 40 years. Tony said: *"It was the inspiration of Captain Tom and what he managed to do for so many people that made my decision. And once I've committed myself to something, I will see it through. Putting words on paper is therapeutic to me."*

Tony's chosen charities include The Armed Forces Charity SSAFA and the RAF Honington Memorial Garden Fund, where Tony has lovingly dedicated many hours of both his work and personal

time. The garden hosts tributes to RAF Honington and RAF Regiment personnel that have fallen in combat or in peacetime, and also those that flew from RAF Honington in the Second World War.

Today presented Tony with the perfect opportunity to share just a glimpse of his poetry. He has written hundreds of poems over the years, many of which are personal accounts of his life growing up in the Suffolk countryside and working the land surrounding RAF Honington and the local area. Other verses talk of loss and remembrance in relation



to his dedicated work for the Service personnel on the Station.

Joined by the Station Commander Group Captain Dutch Holland

and Station Warrant Officer Mac Macdonald, whom also read a few chosen verses, Tony has been well supported in his challenge by all RAF Honington personnel.

Euston

Where yellow catkins grow
Once gone the winter's snow
And sings the blackbird and the lark
By the wood that's big in Euston Park.

Pond and stream, and all that's green
Where box and yew do show
Beyond the wall, built of stone
And kissing gate, now old has grown.

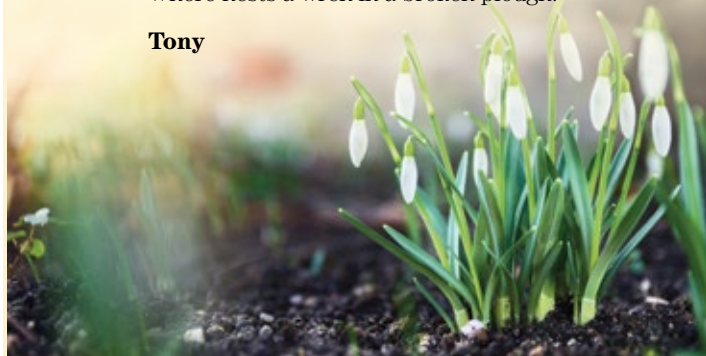
Where herons stand, by bulrush tall
As mallard and the geese will call.
And gate of oak, where snowdrops bloom
For rays of sunlight will light the gloom.

Oak and beech and larch that reach
As far as eye can see
And sunlight on the waters shine,
With stick in hand, and dog that's mine.

Rabbits in the cocksfoot grass,
Plovers in the sky then pass.
Dog-rose in the hedge of thorn
And roe does stand with new-born fawn.

Onwards then I walk once more
Where grass is green and soft my floor.
To gates of iron, all rusted now
Where nests a wren in a broken plough.

Tony



The Flag

I saw the flag that fluttered
In cold the morning breeze
The old man standing with his wreath
Head bowed, and stiffened knees.

Many years have passed, and tears been shed
For friends he knew and those now dead
Those that lived with tales to tell
For blessed from heaven, saved from hell.

We know not what they went through
That mud and blood and fear
Saved by God the chosen few
And those we still hold dear.

We ask, not what was given
By those who died to save
For they did give, so we might live
So, honour them the brave.

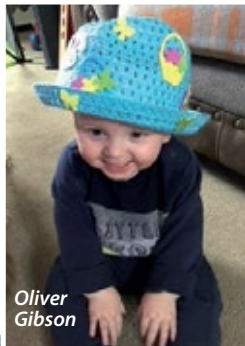
Now when you see the old man
Standing by the cross
Say your words and shed a tear
For he knows of our loss.

Tony

'Euston' and 'The Flag' are two of the many poems written by RAF Honington's local 'Countryman' and 'Poet', Tony Roe



THE HIVE EASTER BONNET COMPETITION



Oliver Gibson



Rosalyn Danks & Bella Danks

The HIVE Easter Bonnet Competition was a huge success where families collected the activity packs to make their bonnets from the HIVE. The packs were made by the HIVE Information Officer, which was funded by the Community Development Fund. All the chocolate for the activity packs and the amazing Easter Baskets for the winners were donated by the Padres of RAF Honington.

The HIVE received wonderful photos of the children in their bonnets; these were judged by the Station Commander's wife, Liz Holland. Liz said the 'bonnets were wonderful and that it had been difficult judging the competition because of all the fabulous entries'.

I would like to thank Liz and the Padres for helping with this Community Support event.

Amanda Bailey
HIVE Officer



Conall (4) and Wren (2) Finnie



Freddie Parsonage



The Millichamps

PADRE'S PEACE Chaplain's Reflection

Amazingly I have been at Honington for a year! I arrived as the first Lockdown was well established, and am now beginning to see glimpses of the 'old' Honington with social events being planned and hoped for, people who have been working from home starting to come back into their workplaces – even if it is to collect their new laptop (!) – and the trees beginning to grow their green leaves again!

Now I know that the trees probably were not impacted by all the lockdowns as most of us were, but it is a sure sign that things are changing, and the seasons continue in their cycle. As someone who loves the summer, the seasonal cycle is a promise that I hold on to every year as we journey through the dark days of winter as it keeps me focused on what is still to come, a sentiment that is echoed in the Bible.

I am reminded that although sometimes we get low and grumpy (who? me?! there will always be something different on the horizon... usually better too. There is a wonderful story in the Old Testament about a man called Job (pronounced as though there is an e on the end). He went through all sorts of trials and traumas, his friends were no help to him either; his life on the face of it was pretty hopeless. But he remained hopeful, and faithful to God, but hopeful to what was to come. He endured all sorts of horrors, and yet continued to press ahead and live as though his tribulations were not permanent. His story ends when he was very old! When he came out the good side of his troubles, it is said that he lived 140 more years and was prosperous in his old age; he had been faithful throughout suffering, and was blessed beyond measure.

I'm not for one moment suggesting I am in anyway worthy of being compared to Job, but I do sometimes feel that when I have got through the winter in one piece... I could live for 140 years! So there is some kind of poetic justice to my thoughts this season as I will be heading away on deployment this summer, to a location that will be experiencing winter while I am there... 3 back-to-back winters for me in 2021! Can you imagine how I will feel this time NEXT year when I will be able to enjoy a proper summer not in lockdown again?!

As the deployment date approaches, I feel myself drawn back to the stories I have known so well in the Bible: women and men who have been faithful to God and who have endured great hardships. I am drawn to the nature of their persistence, resilience and patience, not losing sight that at times they felt angry and despondent, but that in their strivings they too continued to be drawn back to a faithful God. I know that deployment experiences vary from person, and even from location to location; so I am approaching my preparation with an open mind, and seeking to embrace winter in a new place even. Seeking to arrive in that place as a faithful Christian, a faithful Padre, and a faithful friend – unlike Jobs friends were to him.

Maybe you are feeling a bit like Job and that all seems to be going wrong or you are simply not able to feel hopeful; if that is the case do not struggle on your own, there is a wealth of help and support for you on station. SSAFA, BEN Fund, HIVE, Chaplaincy, formal Welfare routes, military charities to name a few. Reach out for help if you need to. As always, at the Chaplaincy we continue to pray for you and are available to you should you need us.

God bless,
Padre Jo

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Happy 84th Birthday

Station Commander
Gp Capt Holland
joined the Station
Warrant Officer
Macdonald in the
new Station History
Rooms recently as the
Station celebrated its
84th Birthday.

RAF Honington opened on 3 May 1937 as one of six operational airfields within Bomber Command and today we are the home of RAF Force Protection; responsible for protecting the Royal Air Force at home and abroad, and employing over 1,000 Service Personnel, Civil Servants and Contractors in the process. The History Rooms are currently under renovation with help from volunteers but a small sample of our photographic history is shown in the images from our days as a V-Bomber Base to supporting the Training of Buccaneer aircrew in the 70s and 80s.

The rooms will safely house and display all collected and donated historic artefacts in conjunction with the Station's history which is invaluable and so important to us and our local community. Eventually the history of RAF Honington across all its 84 years will be on show and if you would like to get involved then please contact Flt Lt Payne on 1 FP Sqn or the Station Warrant Officer.

All images Crown copyright



The Station Commander will never out-stare the mannequin even with his x-ray vision powers!



CHARITY CHALLENGES

March ²⁰²¹ in March for Combat Stress

Chris Pattle is a well-known friendly face here at RAF Honington and has been a Civil Servant for the last 20 years, currently working as an Office Machinery Clerk in Logistics Support Flight.

Since lockdown began he has been planning a challenge in aid of a worthy cause and decided to do the March in March on Saturday 27 March.

As a visually impaired person who proudly works alongside the Royal Air Force, Chris felt the need to do his bit and take up this challenge to raise vital funds for Combat Stress. He successfully tapped his way from the Thurston Fox and Hounds car park to the Angel Hotel in Bury St Edmunds..

"After warm words of encouragement from the Station Commander, we finally set off into the headwinds from the Thurston Fox and Hounds Pub. I was in good spirits by the knowledge of an overwhelming support received thus far. We reached our half-way point at the Rougham Airfield memorial roundabout by which time I was starting to feel exhausted through concentration in keeping on the straight and narrow. I was being guided at a distance by instructions from my wife. We finally reached our destination, the majestic Angel Hotel in Bury St Edmunds where we took tea and biscuits in the tranquil settings of the Abbey gardens. After a photo session and feeling refreshed, we then took to the paths again for our return journey back to Thurston. Despite the exhaustion and pain during the homeward journey I remained positive in the knowledge that I was doing this for a good cause not to mention the support of encouragement.

Asked if I would do another challenge?

Well I am in fact registered to take on another challenge in September, this time for Retina UK's Thames Pathway Challenge to raise vital funds for research and treatments for inherited eye disease.

I would again like to thank all those for their support and donations for this great cause – Combat, Stress. You'll be pleased to know we raised over £1100."

Great Tommy sleep out in aid of the Royal British Legion Industries (RBLI)



We decided to take part in the Tommy sleep out to support the veterans that are currently homeless and to raise awareness. Once committed, we decided to extend this to 36 hours living rough as opposed to just one night. By night two, we had exceeded £1100 in donations combined, and our thanks go out to the generous personnel of RAF Honington, friends and family.

TOMMY SLEEP OUT DIARY DAY 1

1900

We gathered all the materials that we would require to start this challenge. We built our beds out of recyclable material; bread crates, u/s cardboard boxes and bubble wrap. We also received a donation of food from the kind ladies from the Honington Spar.

2100

We decided to settle in for the night, at this time morale was still high even though the temperature was dropping quite quickly, and we had to wrap up with all our clothing.

2330

We managed to sleep however the cold weather did have an adverse effect on our bladders meaning we were up on numerous occasions throughout the night!

DAY 2

0600

We were kindly woken up to a hot drink by a generous member of the catering section which went down a treat.

0910

The catering section kindly brought us a breakfast sandwich which set us up for the day.

1300

Again, with the generosity of the catering section they supplied us with a hot Lunch, this was well received as we were feeling the cold weather by this time.

1500

We received a visit from Fg Off Rebecca James (Contract Support Officer) which was kindly received as by this time we were getting tired of looking at the same old face.

2100

We decided to settle for the night again, this was not as cold as the previous night, but it seemed to keep us from having a full night sleep again constantly taking it turns to get up.

DAY 3

0700

It was time to clean up our living space and reflect on the previous 36 hours. We both agreed the



hardest part of this was the boredom. We were aware we would have visits, but for the people that don't have this support it must be so hard to keep going every day.

0800

With a new mindset on homelessness and how easy it is to just have the walk on by culture, it is safe to say we both have a new view on this and hopefully with what we have experienced we have reached out to other people that can help or support the unfortunate individuals who live like this day to day.

By Sgt Stow and SAC Stone of Catering Flt.



MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS By FO Anthony Wood

The RAF Honington Mental Health Network supported the Mental Health Foundation Awareness Week 10 -16 May.

We provided Commanders and line managers with the information to help their employees that may be dealing with mental health. We focused on employees returning to work and how to deal with the stresses put on their families, the stigma surrounding mental health and how to help someone suffering cope with returning to work. How it can affect personnel in the military and not just focusing on PTSD but looking at other issues military personnel may be struggling with. We looked at how to help someone recovering from mental health move forward both at home and

in work and how we can best support their recovery. Finally, child mental health and helping parents understand what their children may be going through both at school and at home, the pressures children feel from home schooling and missing out on socialising with friends. Along with the online help and signposting, the Station provided a Walk and Talk, PEd Body and Mind session as well as a Mindfulness session conducted by the Padre.

For more information on mental health or if you are concerned



about someone else's mental health there are a variety of helplines such as the NHS 111, MIND, Samaritans or you can contact the Station Medical Centre. There are also some useful apps available to download; Moodfit, Moodmission, Talkspace, Headspace and Sanvello to name a few. We are also lucky to have our very own Station Mental Health Network that includes mental health first aiders. If you'd like to speak to a member of the team you can find the list on sharepoint along with a whole host of more resources.



NEW BIKES FOR THE STATION With help from the RAF Central Fund

The RAF Honington Cycling Club has received 4 brand new bikes with a grant from the RAF Central Fund, just in time for the Club to get 'back on track' as Covid restrictions continue to ease.

Sergeant Jon Vogel of the Station Cycling Club reached out to the RAF Central Fund for a grant following the ever-growing popularity of cycling, particularly during periods of Lockdown, and the need to enhance their current fleet of cycles. Working with the well-known family run business Mick's Cycles of Bury St. Edmunds, Sergeant Vogel took receipt of the



new Merida Big Trail Bikes from Mick's earlier this month. Sergeant

Vogel said: "These new bikes will enable Station personnel to loan a bike which they can use to support physical and mental health and wellbeing. They can also be used for social club rides and charity support. It's key that we give back to the RAF Central Fund for facilitating this endeavour. Club members can now move away from a bleak winters training, largely indoors, and take their training outdoors, utilising local routes including Thetford Forest."

Station Commander Group Captain Dutch Holland said: "We are delighted to receive our shiny new bikes, courtesy of the RAF Central Fund and supplied by Mick's Cycles; perfect timing as we get all our clubs back up and running after Covid. I am looking forward to seeing them not so shiny as they are put to good use!"

And the bikes have been put to good use straight away as four personnel from RAF Honington took on the recent Captain Tom 100 Challenge. They each cycled 25 miles, off-road, and raised over £280 for the Captain Tom Foundation.

RAF Central Fund CEO Ross Perriam said: "We have definitely seen a change in the grant funding requests we have received as a result of the pandemic with more applications for equipment that supports at home workouts and outdoor exercise. We are delighted that we have been able to continue to support serving personnel in this way which in turn helps to safeguard their physical and mental health. Our Enrichment Grant programme is designed to support Stations with a view to increasing the number of personnel participating in sport and physical activities and we hope that the bikes at Honington go some way to achieving this."



Asparagus and Cheshire Cheese Soup with Apple and Walnut Loaf

BY SAC JAMES KERR
Legion by region recipe (Cheshire)

Cheese soup was originally a peasant's dish using cheap ingredients to make a sustaining tasty meal, here we use it to celebrate Cheshire cheese, the famous dairy delight of the region. One of the country's oldest recorded cheeses mentioned as far back as 1580 and claimed to be included in the Domesday Book (1086). Another fantastic produce of Cheshire is asparagus and apples, perfect to incorporate into the dish. The crumbly, tangy and salty cheese paired with asparagus makes a fantastic and unique soup which is only enhanced when paired with the wholesome almost sweet and nutty soda loaf.

- Preparation time: 20 minutes for Loaf & 15 minutes for Soup
- Cooking time: 30-40 minutes For Loaf & 45 minutes for Soup
- Serves 6

INGREDIENTS

APPLE AND WALNUT LOAF:

- 130g self-rising flour
- 130g whole wheat flour
- 50g brown sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 50ml olive oil
- 1 egg
- 150ml
- Zest of 1/2 orange
- 2 cooking apples, cored and coarsely chopped or grated, with skin
- 60g walnuts, chopped

ASPARAGUS AND CHESHIRE CHEESE SOUP:

- 1.5L chicken stock
- 680g asparagus, trimmed and chopped
- 40g butter
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 stalks of celery, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- 85g flour
- 100g single cream
- 450g Cheshire cheese, grated with a few small cubes for garnish

METHOD FOR LOAF:

1. Preheat the oven to 180 Degrees Celsius.
2. Grease baking tray with butter and lightly flour.
3. In a large bowl mix your flours, sugar, baking soda, and salt until combined
4. Make a well and add the oil and orange zest. Add the milk slowly in parts mixing well by hand or electric beater with dough hook until a rough dough has formed. Add additional flour if too wet and sticky. (all milk may not be required)
5. Add the grated/ chopped apples and chopped walnuts to the mix and knead into the mixture until the dough is smooth.
6. Place dough onto the tray and bake for 30-40 minutes.
7. Best served warm



METHOD FOR SOUP:

1. Bring 3/4 of the chicken stock to boil. Add the asparagus and cook until tender. Drain the asparagus reserving the stock.
2. Heat butter and oil in a pan over medium heat. Add onion, celery, and cook till tender. Add garlic and fry for a further 2 minutes.
3. Stir flour into the mix until combined and cook out to a blonde colour, add reserved 3/4 chicken stock a bit at a time and beating to make a smooth sauce like consistency. Don't worry if its lumpy as that will be the chopped veg.
4. Heat the single cream either on a pan or in the microwave until tepid then add to the soup mix and let simmer for about 10 minutes.
5. Add the asparagus and pulse the mix with a blender a few times before blending fully to a smooth consistency.
6. Add Cheshire cheese until melted fully then season with salt and pepper to taste.
7. Finally serve with cubed cheese sprinkled on top as garnish.



VEGETARIAN ALTERNATIVE

To make this delicious soup vegetarian friendly just swap out the chicken stock for vegetable stock



THE SECRET LIFE OF CURLEWS AT RAF HONINGTON

You may not realise it, but RAF Honington is home to a number of exciting bird species. Harry Ewing reports on his PhD research, studying our important population of Eurasian Curlews, a species of major conservation concern in the UK.

The Curlew is an iconic and widely celebrated wader species but one that is disappearing fast from our countryside. Since 1995, the UK has lost nearly half of its breeding population, a decline widely attributed to unsustainably high rates of nest and chick failure. The aim of my PhD is to identify actions to conserve breeding Curlew through conducting intensive field-based studies across Breckland.

Losing the Curlew as a breeding species in the UK would be tragic; they are easily the most charismatic species that I've had the privilege of studying. To start with, their song; a bubbling, haunting, melancholic sound that brings hope to a cold, misty, Breckland morning. Early in the season this can be closely followed by a courtship display; an endearing but embarrassingly uncoordinated dance, sparking the complete opposite set of emotions to the song. These displays are performed by the male and are rather reminiscent

of dad-dancing; females are often far from impressed and shoo away the admirer. For such a placid bird, Curlews are also impressively resilient. Once nests are laid and chicks are hatched, Curlews switch to warrior-mode, aggressively dive-bombing encroaching buzzards and crows, and occasionally charging at livestock.

All of these behaviours are incredible to observe and are a great reward for long hours spent in the field. To fully understand how to conserve Curlew, I have to immerse myself in their lives during the spring and summer months, closely following breeding attempts from courtship all the way through to chick-rearing and fledging. This intensive monitoring will allow me to identify conditions under which Curlews breed successfully and areas in which Curlews may need a bit of help from conservationists.

RAF Honington hosts a very large and important population of breeding Curlews. At the peak of




the breeding season in May, over 20 pairs of Curlews can be found nesting on the airfield. To put this into context, the only other Breckland breeding site with more than 20 pairs of Curlews is Stanta, which is nearly 25 times larger than RAF Honington. Amazingly, the Curlew population breeding on the airfield had gone largely undetected prior to my PhD, but it is now considered one of the most important Curlew hotspots in southern England.

Curlews probably like nesting on the airfield because the large, open, grassland areas provide the opportunity to quickly detect approaching threats. This means that they can mob and chase away predators such as Foxes and Crows, which like to eat their vulnerable

eggs and chicks. Thanks to the more secure, fenced areas, like the ESA, as well as the sharp-eyed Tivoli maintenance team who are great at maintaining the vegetation structure that Curlews need, Curlews can breed quite successfully at RAF Honington. In fact, over the last two years, 13 Curlews have fledged from the airfield, more than all other Breckland breeding sites combined.

A lot more work is needed to identify actions to conserve breeding Curlews and this project is far from over but, with the ongoing support of everyone at RAF Honington, good progress is being made and things look positive for Curlews.



Harry Ewing is a PhD researcher at the University of East Anglia. He works in collaboration with the British Trust of Ornithology and is part-funded by the Defence Infrastructure Organisation. For more information about the project feel free to email Harry at: h.ewing@uea.ac.uk, follow him on Twitter @Ewing_birds, or go and have a chat if you see him on the airfield.



With Spring well and truly arrived and the potential of a less restrictive Summer ahead, there are new beginnings everywhere in Training Wing with new personalities and new ideas in Regiment Training Squadrons (RTS). Here we take a look at the latest batch of Regiment Officers and Further Training (FT) 1 Students in RTS(A), and for Training Support Squadron (TSS) we take a look at RAF Regiment Recruitment and Selection Flight (RRRSF) where many careers begin with a particular focus upon Exercise FIRST LOOK.

TRAINING SUPPORT SQUADRON

One of the many outputs of TSS is the delivery of both the Potential Gunner Selection Course (PGSC) and Potential Regiment Officer Course (PROC). Delivered by RRRSF inspire these courses select future RAF Regiment Gunners and Officers. With input from Career Managers, Training Pipeline Management and even Occupational Psychologists, RRRSF were given the task of producing an exercise that gives a realistic job preview. The aim being to increase candidates' chances of success in training by letting them know what to expect, enabling them to make an informed decision and giving them a clear goal to work towards. The result, Exercise FIRST LOOK now provides candidates with early exposure to military training, the Complex Air Ground Environment (CAGE) and the equipment they will use during training. At this stage many candidates will have had no previous military experience.

Exercise FIRST LOOK is only one element of the PGSC and PROC. Candidates who commence the Exercise phase have already completed the RAF Regiment Recruitment Fitness Assessments and swim test. Kitted out with PCS jackets and bergens containing a sleeping bag, roll mat, mess-tins and cold/wet weather kit, candidates commence the Exercise with an introduction to patrolling (Old and bold fear not, green coveralls and numbered vests still make regular appearances throughout the Course). To get acquainted with patrolling, candidates move tactically from Training Wing to the CAGE training area equipped with a dummy L85A2 rifle. A full day's activity follows with candidates receiving lessons on military field craft, watching demonstrations of FP operations in the CAGE and then conducting a battle lesson covering tactical movement which culminates in a team competition to build esprit de corps. In the evening, candidates get their first introduction to weapons and specialist equipment that they will become very familiar with when they return to Honington. Evening meal is an introduction to cooking and eating the 24 hour ration pack and the exercise concludes with a patrol action in the CAGE before night routine is adopted.

Those that are successful on Exercise FIRST LOOK and the course, are awarded a single RAF Regiment Shoulder Flash, the 'Mudguard', to keep with them through training as an incentive to earn the matching one! For



Ex First Look (Credit: Holland)

many, this experience has provided them with the first opportunity to immerse themselves in a military environment and gives an insight into the role of the RAF Regiment and the demands of training. Feedback has been very positive, candidates are better informed, have an earlier sense of purpose and pride, with the aspiration that this will increase success through their training and careers beyond.

Regiment Training Squadron Basic- RTS(B) Bastion Squadron

New beginnings for Bastion Squadron as it said goodbye to the Deputy Squadron Commander, Flt Lt Richard O'Rourke and Officer Commanding, Sqn Ldr Chris Garton. Flt Lt O'Rourke has moved into a Staff Appointment in 2Gp HQ Team and Sqn Ldr Garton retired from the RAF after 22 years impeccable service. Covid-19 restrictions meant that large scale top tables weren't possible, so a much smaller, more intimate (but still socially distanced) farewell among the Sqn Execs was the order of the day.

Juno Flight has continued to receive new intakes of students, fresh from RAF Halton and ready to start the Trainee Gunner (TG) course. Ever mindful of the complexities of Covid restrictions and the need to keep newly arrived students engaged, Cpl Fleming has displayed his technical skills, designing a bespoke online learning package for TGs to conduct distance learning even if a period of precautionary isolation is required. He diligently produced several user-friendly web pages for self-study consisting of RAF Regiment History, an online TG Handbook and useful lessons which TGs can continue to refer to in their own time to refresh their knowledge and skills.

With new leadership (building on the hard work of the old), the sun beginning to shine and

the promise easing of Covid-19 measures, a wave of positivity is flowing through the Squadron. Continual Technological Innovation, continuous improvement, and planning for a social event when possible, are all in the pipeline for the coming months.

Regiment Training Squadron Advanced- RTS(A) Al-Waki Sqn

RTS(A) continues to work hard to deliver its many varied courses through Covid mitigation measures to ensure a high standard of training and provide capable and combat ready Gunners back to the Force Protection Force.

You may recall that when the Spring edition of the Honington Herald went to print the Further Training Team (FTT) were still putting future Sgts through their paces on a snow covered Stanford Training Area (STANTA). Twenty-five of them finally graduated, a fantastic achievement from what is a thoroughly challenging course even for experienced NCOs. They return to their units with the skills and qualifications to be selected for promotion to Sgt. Almost without a pause in between, the FTT went straight into running an FT1 and by the end of March, 30 SACs had met the standard required to be a LCpl and Section 2 i/c. Having passed the FT1, the students were then handed over to the Specialist Courses Team who put them training to enable them to safely supervise live firing marksmanship training and plan and conduct battle exercises.

Specialist Courses also held a 2-week RAF Regiment Reserves course in the CAGE Training Facility for Auxiliary Gunners, NCOs, and SNCOs to gain the necessary skills to progress in their Reservist careers. From reserves to parachutists Specialist Courses (ably assisted by Training Support Squadron's Formal PED Flight under the watchful eye of WO Luxon) put 32 candidates through the

gruelling 3-week Pre-parachutist selection course. After 3 weeks 15 remained who can now go on to earn their wings and serve on Airborne units.

It's been over 6 months since the Officers of Junior Regiment Officer Course 125 arrived at Training Wing and on 8th April, the 9 successful graduates were wearing their mudguards with immense pride. The course spent over 11 weeks in the field and went through every stage of tactical and command training from individual skills to commanding an entire flight. Covid restrictions meant that their graduation was an unusual one, but a visit by Commandant of RAF College Cranwell Air Commodore Suraya Marshall, along with video messages from families and former Chief of the Air Staff, Honorary Air Commodore of the RAF Regiment Sir Stephen Dalton still made it a special day.

As we head towards a the promise of a Summer with fewer Covid restrictions Training Wing will undoubtedly continue to do what it has done throughout the pandemic without pause: innovate, adapt and work hard to equip gunners and officers with the skills required by the Force Protection Force. The Summer will see new leadership, shiny new bits of Technology Enhanced Learning kit and hopefully a return to graduation parades with families in attendance.

“ Those that are successful on Exercise FIRST LOOK and the course, are awarded a single RAF Regiment Shoulder Flash, the ‘Mudguard’, to keep with them through training as an incentive to earn the matching one! ”

RAF FORCE PROTECTION CENTRE



RAF Force Protection Centre, Air FP Specialist Training Flight, Armoured Vehicle (Wheeled) Training Team.

Despite the CV19 restrictions imposed over the last year, training delivery by (AV(W)) Trg Team has showed no signs of stopping and the NCOs have continued to deliver commander and driver courses, as well as tactics and dismount courses.

With the RWMK+ being replaced by the JACKAL 2 High Mobility Tactical Vehicle, the Team has undergone a period of consolidation training on the JACKAL. Cpl Dan Hopla and Cpl Simon Barlow, the only JACKAL Driver Maintainer Instructors (DMIs) within the RAF, devised and undertook an intense period of training that has further increased their experience on this vehicle. In addition, Cpl Daz Davis, Cpl Kyle Roe, Cpl Simon Barlow and Cpl Mike Brookes have delivered several quadbike courses for the FP Force Elements. Whilst these quadbikes do not meet the "armoured" definition, they provide a mobile and rapidly deployable support capability, as well as means of moving injured personnel in extreme situations.

Having successfully completed his Foxhound DMI course, Cpl Andrew "Bomber" Harris then successfully completed his Further Training 3 course in February 2021. And is now scheduled to undertake the Army delivered Panther DMI course. The Panther DMI course will further cement his position as an armoured vehicle expert and see him expand his delivery of training beyond the Foxhound.

The team will continue to build experience on the newly integrated JACKAL, and pending approval begin to deliver JACKAL maintainer courses to engineers from RAF Honington and the wider FP Force from the middle of May 21, before getting back onto STANTA to run vehicle commander and tactics courses for 34 Sqn RAF Regiment.

Cpl Harris instructing personnel from 1 Sqn RAF Regt on vehicle formations on a recent tactics course



Photos courtesy of FP Centre



Station Commander RAF Honington letter of thanks to Sgt Power, RAF FP Centre.

On Wednesday 21 April 2021, during a visit to FP Centre, Gp Capt Holland, Station Commander, presented Sgt James "Oz" Power with a letter of thanks for his diligence, swift thinking and efficient reporting of a safety issue within the armoured vehicle fleet. Gp Capt Holland commented on how Sgt Power's professionalism had ensured the safety of FP Force personnel, and that his actions epitomised the Station Commander's "STOP, THINK, ACT" mantra.



STOP

Take a moment to ...

THINK

If it doesn't feel right then ...

ACT

Do something or tell someone

NO 1 SPECIALIST POLICE WING

Wg Cdr Teasdale hands over to Wg Cdr Card



Wing Commander Teasdale recently handed over command of RAF Police No 1 Specialist Police Wing to new incumbent, Wing Commander Card. Exciting times and new challenges lie ahead for the two officers.

No 1 Specialist Police Wing is at the forefront of the RAF Police, delivering exciting and demanding roles to support the AIR and SPACE environment. These roles include Specialist Investigations, Counter Intelligence, Protective Security and Digital Forensics.

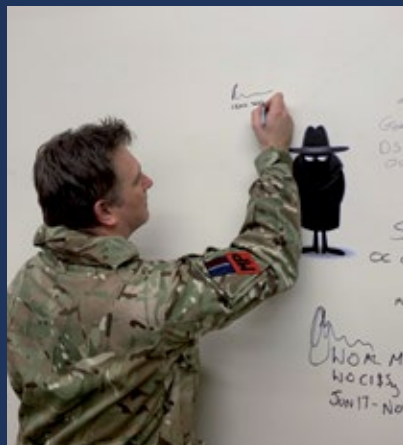
Wg Cdr Card commented:

"I have been lucky enough to serve on SPW a number of times in my career, most recently as Chief Of Staff, and having the opportunity

to return to take command is a real honour. For me there is a sense of coming home and I am really looking forward to again working alongside the dedicated and highly skilled SPW team. True to the RAF Police ethos, this team is central to SPW delivering and evolving RAF Police protective security, counter-intelligence and specialist investigative capability under the new RAF Police Operating Model."

Wg Cdr Teasdale departed for his new role in the States on exchange with the US Air Force. He commented:

"It was a genuine honour and pleasure to have had the opportunity to command Specialist Police Wing and I will cherish the memories for a lifetime. It was an absolute privilege and I was humbled to serve alongside such an incredibly capable, dedicated, and professional team of the best RAF Police personnel in the Force Protection Force. I am delighted to hand over command to Wg Cdr Card, an experienced and talented Officer, so I am confident the Wing is in good hands."



Wg Cdr Teasdale signing the 'SPW Wall', which is a tradition for all departing SPW members.



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As any parent knows, the speed at which children begin to establish who they are, what they like (or what they don't), and what they might want to be when they grow older, is truly astonishing. This is why a curriculum that helps children discover the world needs to be delivered in a way that develops the strength of character that life will require of them.

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our community values of Respect, Responsibility, and Resilience – the Three Rs – are incorporated in all that we do. This means that pupils are given every opportunity to refine these qualities: respect for oneself, others and the local and global community, an appreciation of the responsibilities we each have and should strive for, and the resilience to face up to challenges and to learn from failures.

Thetford Grammar Prep's curriculum is designed to build breadth of academic confidence, including in English, Maths, Science, Humanities, Design Technology, Computing, Languages, Art, Music, Drama and Sport. We do this by fostering a life-long love of learning.

Our many years' experience of guiding pupils to outstanding GCSE and A level results certainly helped to shape the journey we have created. This has been achieved by providing a supportive environment in which pupils learn

without limitation, finding their passions and interests and developing these into real expertise.

The pace of change we have faced recently can be dizzying for children and adults alike. The key is to keep a firm footing whilst being able to explore the changes and see what chances they might offer. By setting children on a course of discovery, and equipping them with the qualities they need to navigate what they find, we are preparing them not just for what comes next but for whatever opportunities lie beyond that. Children need a curriculum for discovery not because of an uncertain present, but ready for an uncertain future.

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GRADUATIONS

TG COURSE 4-20

Reviewing Officer Air Commodore SM Miller, RAF FP Force Commander and Commandant General RAF Regiment said: "The Trainee Gunner Course is exceptionally challenging and its standards are unremitting. Those graduating today have demonstrated exceptional skill, fortitude and resilience. I am proud to welcome them into our Corps. They have earned their right to wear the RAF Regiment 'mudguard' and to join our front-line. Here they will work alongside exceptional men and women, on a vitally important mission to enable the RAF and its Air & Space Power in the face of adversity and threats. Demanding but hugely varied and rewarding careers await them."

Further congratulations go to the Prize Winners:

Frank Sylvester Trophy:
LAC McCormack

The RAF Regt Association Trophy for Drill and Deportment:
LAC Johnson

WO Ramsey Physical Development Cup:
LAC Wilkie

LAC Beard Recruits' Trophy:
LAC Whiteford

SAC Luders Champion Shot Trophy:
LAC Mortimore

Cpl Bradfield Trophy:
Cpl Killa





Air Commodore Suraya Marshall laying a wreath at the Memorial Garden

JROC 125

Following 26 weeks of significant effort and achievement, the 9 successful graduates of Junior Regiment Officers Course No 125 are now qualified to serve in the Royal Air Force Regiment and celebrated their graduation here at RAF Honington on Thursday 8 April 2021.

Reviewing Officer Commandant Royal Air Force College Cranwell, Air Commodore Suraya Marshall

ADC MA LLB RAF said: "It is an honour to be Reviewing Officer for the graduation of the Junior Regiment Officers' Course No 125 at RAF Honington. The course is one of the most challenging in the RAF, but even more so being undertaken during the pandemic. The graduating Junior Regiment Officers, their instructors and support staff should be justifiably proud of what they have achieved. I congratulate them all."



FO Murray



FO Richmond



FO Hudson

The Prize Winners were:

The Vaux Trophy (Most Improved) – Fg Off Murray
The Kapuscinski Sword: (Most Potential) - Fg Off Richmond
The Barratt Sword: (Top Student) – Fg Off Hudson



PED FLT

It has been a busy time down at the PEd Flt since the Gymnasium reopened in April 21. For those individuals who haven't been down yet, here are some of the things that you'll need to do as well as events that have happened or are planned for the coming few months.

SPORTS AND ACTIVITY

Instructor led physical activity can be indoors in groups of up to 30 including the instructor. Station Sports Club activity can also resume informal weekly training outside of the 'Rule of Six' once endorsed by DRS and OC FDS. All other physical activities and informal sports are to keep to the limit of 30 outdoors, and 'rule of six' indoors. This is per Government direction for Step 3. The next lifting in restrictions is due 21 June at the earliest.

If you wish to organise a sports activity, the correct procedures must be followed iaw Government, PEd Pol, Sport Pol, DRS and Stn direction. Contact OC PEd Flt for guidance.



Inductions, Gym Orders and Gym Cards

The PEd Flt are running Inductions Tue 1600hrs and Thu 1100hrs so please call us on Ext 7100 or 7281 to book your slot. For gym card renewals please come to PEd Flt to get your card reactivated. If you have to pay for your annual

membership please sort that out at the Stn Cashiers before you come down. All current gym members will need to re-read and re-sign gym orders. The folders are located in the foyer. A gentle reminder that personnel are not to lone train.

RAF Fitness Testing

IBN 16/21 sees the return of routine RAF Fitness Testing (RAFFT). Initially the PEd Flt will run 2 x RAFFT's a week: Tue 0830 and Thu 1600. Max 10 participants in the Sports Hall per test. A booking system is in place on the PEd Flt SharePoint page, first come first served. Personnel have until 31 Mar 22 for a RAFFT pass to be recorded on JPA. If you want to practice, a copy of the Multi-Stage Fitness Test (MSFT) track can be found on the RAF Recruitment website. You can also download the track online.

THE HONINGTON HUSTLE

The Honington Hustle will once again be taking place this year on 22 June, keep on the lookout for posts closer to the big day for how the event will run!

Tennis Courts

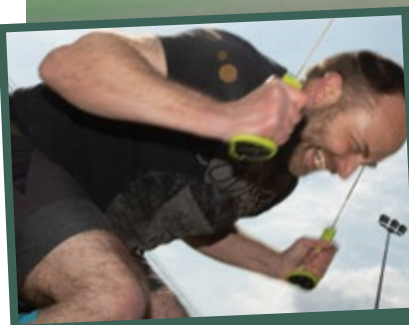
There are now two tennis courts up and available for use as of 30 April. No booking is required through the PEd Flt. Individuals are required to provide their own equipment and follow Government and Lawn Tennis Association guidelines on resumption of outdoor tennis. One court outside the WSM, One court outside the OM.



PEd Kickstart Event



Many thanks to everyone who turned up to the PEd Kickstart Event on Wednesday 28 April. There was a great turnout of 36 individuals, and well done to the two overall winners: SAC Newman from 1 Sqn and Michelle Parker from LSF. The sun shone and everyone had fun.



RAF HONINGTON GOLF

RAF Honington Golf Society played their Spring Meeting at the Royal Cromer Golf Course in early May with 18 players playing in groups of 4 as per the Golf National Governing Body rules. As most of the country was battered with storms, rain and hailstone the weather Gods seemed to favour the Norfolk Coast as we were blessed with brilliant sunshine and a fresh sea breeze.

It was a real privilege to play such a prestigious and pristine traditional links course albeit it was very challenging. The wind, hills, tight fairways and small fast greens made for a real test of Golf. Accuracy off the tee, mastery of your yardage and reading the conditions were essential to score well, any lapse in concentration or skill and there was a bitter penalty to pay as the Course would bite hard. However, play well and the rewards were there to be seized. This is exactly what Cpl Ben Lloyd was able to do, focused and determined he returned to the Clubhouse with an unassailable score. A huge congratulations to Ben, well done on winning the Spring Meeting trophy.



If you are interested in playing with RAF Honington Golf team check out our SharePoint page (Community > Sports and Social) and Gym noticeboard. Our next fixture is the Station

Championships at Felixstowe Ferry Golf Course on 31 Aug 21 and a League competition against 7 other RAF Stations is about to commence.

Joe Birch





3 (T)PS

3 (T)PS

NOT EVERYONE IN THE RAF FLY PLANES...

Around this time last year I put my civilian life on hold and began a journey into the unknown by mobilising with the RAF under government legislation in support of Op RESCRIPT (the operational name given to helping our nation and indeed the rest of the world in combatting COVID 19).

By Cpl Forder of
3 (Tactical) Police Squadron

As an RAF Reservist with 3 (Tactical) Police Squadron, RAF Police, I felt an overwhelming sense of duty when this terrible pandemic unfolded to assist in any way I could. On 14 Apr 20, my life was packed into 2 holdalls and I reported for duty with no idea where I would be posted, or what I would be expected to do, or even how long I would be away from home. All I knew was that Reservists like me were needed and needed quickly to help the wider Armed Forces and our Country in whatever way we could. Nothing like this has been experienced since 1939 and to say I was a little anxious and emotional would be an understatement.

Over the coming months, I found myself tasked with jobs and roles that saw my past 9 years' experience with the RAF Police Reserves, and the training awarded to me as a Reservist, tested to the limits. From carrying out routine security patrols of Temporary Resting Facilities, mortuaries

erected to support NHS hospitals capacity to cope with the numbers of COVID 19 victims, to operating and mentoring mobile COVID 19 testing units around the East of England, and escorting prisoners. Today, I find myself working alongside my Regular counterparts at the RAF's main air head at RAF Brize Norton supporting them with Air Transport Security by ensuring the safe passage of personnel, cargo and troops travelling on tasks around the world. I also deliver safeguarding to ensure the secure and speedy transport of COVID 19 vaccinations globally.

I am immensely proud of the tasks I have undertaken and the inspiring people I have met along the way. The selfless attitudes of fellow Reservists and Regulars alike who have given their all to help total strangers in their fight against this deadly virus. At times risking their own safety and wellbeing, making sacrifices without reward or recognition but with the sole intention of helping others, has on



occasion been humbling.

Every day has been a challenge and an experience I will carry for the rest of my life. I am proud to have served my Queen and my Country and to have helped and supported all the remarkable people who live in it.

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2623 Sqn

2623 Squadron

RAuxAF Regt

The Wolf Squadron does not sit back and relax. Mobilisation activities, charitable endeavours, physical fitness, and variety of training maintains its place as the premier FP Reserves Squadron.

7 FP WG REGULAR AND RESERVES INTEGRATED TRAINING

As part of the 7 FP Wg Cdr's direction, 2623 Sqn RAF Reserves were supported by 1 Sqn RAF Regiment Regular Foxhounds as part of an exercise commanded and executed by OC AV(W) Flt Lt Ed Woodley-Jones. There was time during high tempo rehearsals for the arrival of VIPs in the form of Stn Cdr Gp Capt Dutch Holland and Honourable Air Commodore Sir Charles Bowman. The exercise scenario saw the squadron operating as a Quick Reaction Force or QRF using the Foxhounds and their GPMG fire support to launch a number of attacks on enemy positions at Bodney Bunkers on STANTA. Following an overview of the exercise, Sir Charles presented Volunteer Reserve Service Medals or VRSMs to Cpls Kevin Liggett and Drew Smith-Watkins. The VRSM is awarded after 10 years' qualifying service in the Volunteer Reserves.

TACTICAL POLICE

We are in the process of developing the tactical policing capability on the Squadron and are currently recruiting a FTRS RAFP JNCO Instructor. We are looking for the right person that would



complement the team of highly experienced RAF Regiment instructors already in place. Should you or someone you know be interested, please get in touch with the Sqn Adj. Flt Lt Josh Pirt.

MOBILISATION ACTIVITY

SACs Kevin Briers and Darren Clements have recently completed a 4-month detachment to RAF

Scampton (OP ASKER), where they augmented the increased guarding commitment in support of Air Operations. LACs Joseph Conner, Jordan McLaughlin and Henry Wisdom continue their mobilisation to 2 Sqn RAF Regt at RAF Brize Norton, where they have been undertaking Project ERASMUS duties since November. We have 'serial mobiliser' LCpl Rob King who has deployed to Minhad (UAE) on OP KIPION, where he has been fulfilling a Flight Line Security role for 906 EAW air assets. The 6-month mobilisation will be King's fifth in the last 5 years! Finally, two SACs, one of whom is SAC Darren Clements, are currently in Romania (5-months) as part of OP BILOXI; they are part of the FP Guard Force alongside deployed assets from 1 Squadron supporting 121 EAW in the effort to provide Enhanced Air Policing in the region.

RESERVES EXERCISE TRAINING SUCCESS

Congratulations to Chris Hall, Richard Price, Andy Scott who all passed Exercise OMEGA in March. We will have a further 8 TGs on

Ex OMEGA in September. We also had 2 successes on FT 1 in March, with 4 SP due to start the September course, as well as one pass FT2, and one pass FT3. Thanks go to the volunteers who acted as support staff and our instructors Sgt Michael Watling and Cpl Jamie Scott who assisted the Trg Wg team.

To anyone coming here I would say this:

The Squadron is made up of different people, from different backgrounds and different levels of experience. None of us are perfect at everything - we all struggle in some areas. Embrace this - understand it and try and learn from it. There are areas that I fall down in. I struggle to remember anything technical - others excel in this area, this is natural. But there are two areas that we can all excel in, because they are in our control. These areas are open to anyone, they accept all-comers. They never discriminate. They are equal opportunities. Both these areas will stand anyone in this squadron in great stead and elevate you amongst your peers. They are fitness and commitment. Unless you are injured, fitness is in your hands. So if you are asking yourself "how can I shine in this squadron?" then one way that is immediately in your control is your personal fitness. It matters for all of us - If you get to work with a regular squadron and you leave them for dead on the runs, you elevate all of us.

Hopefully, there is now light at the end of the pandemic tunnel and with renewed investment in the services and focus on the RAF Reserves, we can afford to look ahead with optimism.





1 Sqn

1 Squadron RAF Regt

Since we last wrote, 1 Sqn has continued in its support to the UK government and the nations fight against COVID-19. Having concluded support to Operation RESCRIPT in Derbyshire, the West Midlands and Manchester, yet more support was required in Wales and supporting the NHS in Surrey and the Isle of Wight. Here, Gunners from 1 Sqn were instrumental to supporting testing, vaccination centres and intensive care units, working closely with Doctors, Nurses and those suffering the most severe effects of COVID-19. The Sqn is extremely proud to have made such a significant contribution in combatting the pandemic over the last 6 months but are now very much focussed and looking forward to returning to core Air Force Protection (FP) business.

The 1st April saw the Sqn enter its period of commitments to Proj ERASMUS and the delivery of Quick Reaction Forces to RAF Main Operating Bases throughout the United Kingdom. The deployed Gunners are providing essential Air Force Protection duties in support of strategically important air assets and infrastructure. This period has also seen the Sqn deploy personnel on Operation BILOXI in Romania, the UK's contribution to NATO Air Policing in Eastern Europe, and our deployed gunners are embedded within the Expeditionary Air Wing to ensure the protection of the deployed aircraft and specialist capabilities from any ground-based threats.

In what has been a fruitful 3 months for continued professional development, the Sqn has seen



9 x Gunners pass the FT1 and 4 pass the FT3 seeing them eligible for promotion to L/Cpl and Sgt respectively; the skills learned will be invaluable to them in their future careers and to the Sqn in harnessing the tactical, command and leadership skills that are essential to keeping the Sqn developing. The Sqn also deployed on Ex CHARIOT STRIKE 21 completing mandatory marksmanship ranges with both rifle and pistol, and culminating in the employment of close quarter battle skills. The Sqn Sniper Section also completed their longer ranges during this period at Barton Road, Cambridge.

The Sqn also bid farewell to Flt Lt Dan 'The Ultimate' Garner after



Sniper (photo credit: 1 Sqn RAF Regt)



Chariot Strike - Photo Credit: 1 Sqn RAF Regt

nearly 4 years. In that time, he has been OC Support Weapons Flight and most recently the Operations and Training Officer. Dan has been an inspirational character achieving a Guinness World Record in 2020 and being recognised for his contribution to the RAF Regiment, with the award of the RAF Regiment Roberts Trophy for Leadership. He departs for a position within NATO in Naples and we wish him the best of luck in his new role.

As we look forward, in addition to supporting UK based Air Operations, the Sqn is looking forward to investing time into Adventurous Training and Force Development as restrictions relax, an increased focus on personal as well as professional development and a series of smaller exercises and cadres that will ensure continued development of our ability to FIND



Photo Credit: 1 Sqn RAF Regt

the Enemy within the Complex Air Ground Environment.

Rakish Surrish.



27 Sqn

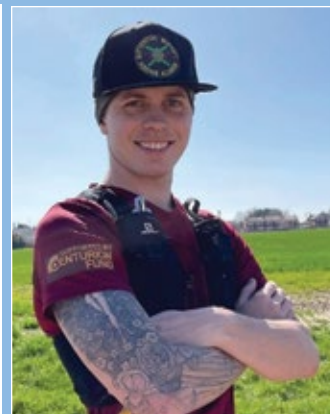
27 Squadron RAF Regt

An active and involved Spring 21 period for 27 Sqn RAF Regt has seen the Sqn not only undertake role and core skill specific activities, but also more charity endeavours and effort towards supporting the local community.

Exercise BROKEN ARROW

During the first three weeks of March, a rotational one-week Force Protection training package, saw the Sqn undertake training designed to refresh and test basic field skills. With the drawdown of personnel on the Sqn, as the C-CBRN capability transitions, this Exercise enabled the Gunners to get back into a Force Protection mindset in preparation for their shift back into the Force Protection Force. The training was conducted on the RAF Honington Training

Area and focussed on section level Standard Operating Procedures. The Exercise culminated with a theory lesson on Flight Battle Drills. This Exercise offered some relief from the consistent C-CBRN training and the vast number of competencies that must be maintained to ensure this critical UK Defence asset remains ready and focused. The Exercise also gave junior commanders the opportunity to demonstrate Force Protection situational awareness in a relevant environment.



Primary School Ultramarathon

Fg Off Aiden Houghton successfully completed a 54-mile Ultramarathon hosted by Go Beyond at Northampton and raising over £1,000 for a new outdoor learning environment at his daughters' school. In true 27 Sqn RAF Regt style, this success was not enough, and Aiden went on to raise an additional £150 to cover the entry fee and running equipment needed for the Ultramarathon. This had originally been generously paid for by the Centurion Fund, The RAF Regiments' Charity.

Community Kickstart: Honington Social Club

The Honington Social Club has seen a tremendous turn around in the past few months thanks to the tireless efforts from members of 27 Sqn RAF Regt and 28 Engineer Regt (C-CBRN). A consistent work party, supplied by 27 Sqn, diligently cleaned, tidied and painted the building. With restrictions eased, the Club opened with a sell-out opening night that was staffed with 27 Sqn RAF Regt personnel. The efforts of Sqn personnel have gone towards building an enhanced social atmosphere and links with the local community as the country follows the Government roadmap to the full resumption of social events.



SWO's Sticklers

As we head towards the summer (I know it doesn't feel like it!) The SWO has to have an eye on starting to prepare for the ceremonial season of Armed Forces Day, Battle of Britain and of course the Remembrance events in November. All of these take a fair bit of planning but it is not just down to me. I am lucky to have a great team on the SWOs gang who will repair and paint our Parade equipment in anticipation of the return to normality.

Sgt Andy Sweeney the SNCO Discip is my right hand man who does much of the administration and instruction behind the scenes, it is

a group effort. Of course none of that would be any good without our parade personnel, I look forward to seeing RAF Honington back out there on display to the public as a team.

If anyone sees me wandering the streets of Thetford picking litter I am not doing early resettlement, we (my wife Sue and I) are doing a 100 day litter pick challenge for an hour a day, raising money for a local well-being charity and community litter picking equipment; we would love to hit our £1000 target.

<https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/suzanne-macdonald-1>

**Station Warrant Officer;
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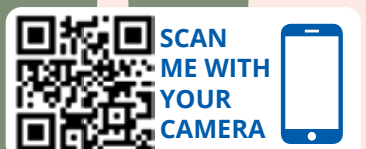
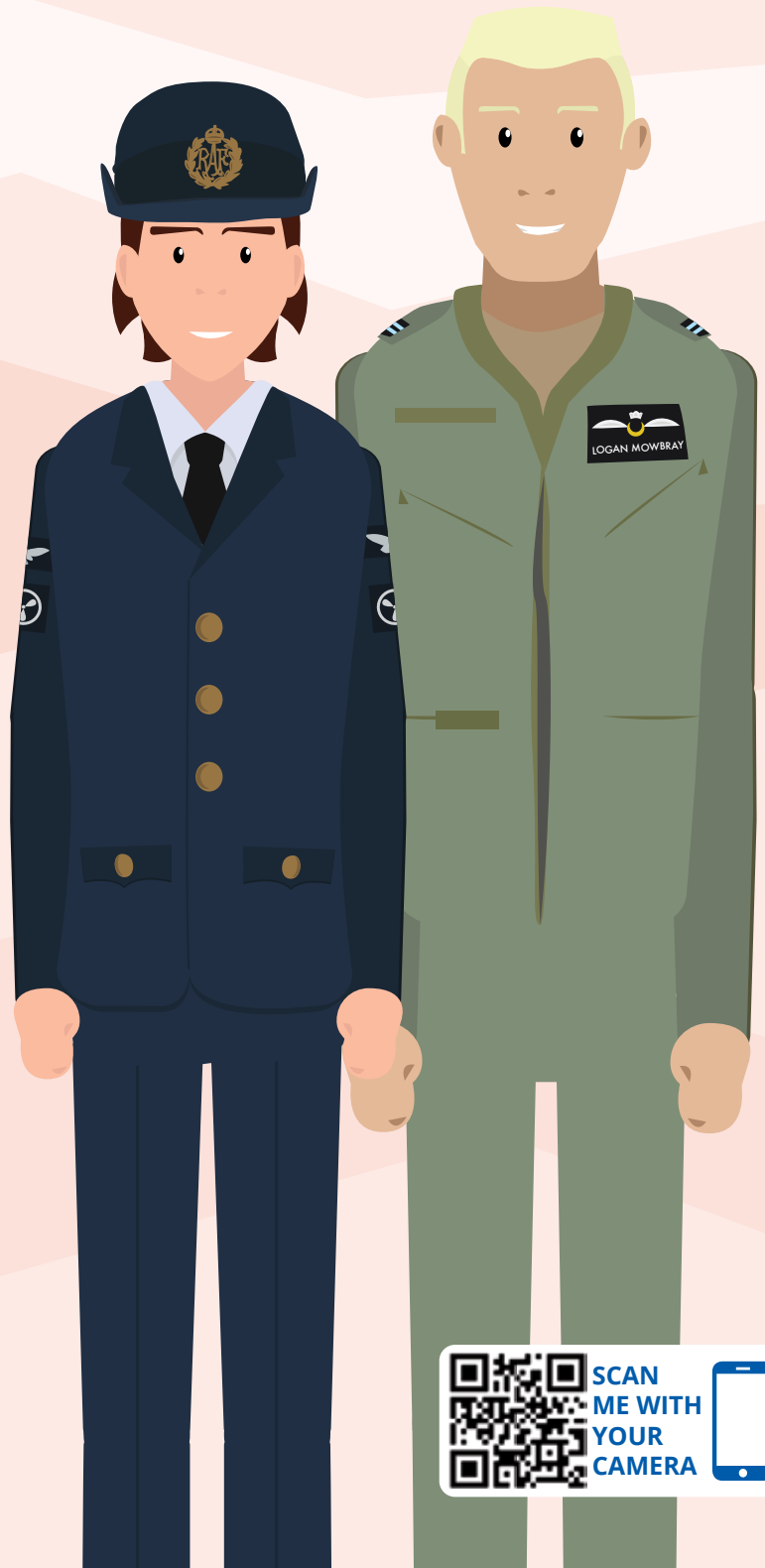
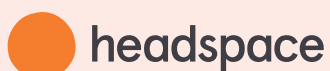
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