

Lossie

Lighthouse

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Autumn 2020

The Magazine of RAF Lossiemouth



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Fancy Yourself as a Journalist?

**The Lossie Lighthouse is looking
for regular contributors of articles
for each issue on a wide variety
of subjects. If you're interested
in becoming a journalist for the
magazine, or for more information,
please contact the editor.**

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Front Cover: Copyright RAF Lossiemouth Photo Section.

Hello From the Editor!

Sqn Ldr David Wild

I'd like to welcome everyone
to the autumn edition of
the Lossie Lighthouse. The
last few months have been
extremely challenging for
everyone in the wider RAF
Lossiemouth community, so I
want to say a huge thanks to
everyone who's taken the time to contribute pictures
and articles to this edition – your input makes this
publication possible.
As always, if you've any comments or good ideas for
the magazine, please do not hesitate to get in contact.



With its two sandy beaches, championship golf course, marina and seafront esplanade - Lossiemouth is quite rightly known as The jewel in Moray's crown. For those looking for either an active lifestyle or leisurely retirement Lossiemouth is the place to stay.



Tulloch of Cummingston have a wide selection of homes available to suit all budgets, tastes and styles at their two Lossiemouth developments. All homes are built to the highest of standards incorporating energy efficient design, spacious room sizes with ample storage and a specification which includes luxury fitted kitchens and bathrooms, natural wood internal finishes, feature stone frontages and underfloor heating as standard.

Kinneddar Meadows Lossiemouth

Positioned on the southern edge of town adjacent to open farmland and within easy walking distance of the school, community centre and supermarket, a wide and varied portfolio of homes are available to suit all tastes and budgets from two bedroom semi-detached bungalows and flats to three and four bedroom family homes.

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STATION COMMANDER'S FOREWORD

Group Captain Chris Layden

Welcome to the Autumn Edition of Lossie Lighthouse, the first to be released during my tenure as Station Commander. I feel immensely privileged to be appointed here – although this is my first posting to Lossie, I have family close by so it's something of a homecoming for me, my wife Sarah and our children Sophie and Jonny.

The last few months have been unusual to say the least, but what strikes me is how well Team Lossie have looked after each other, whilst continuing to secure the seas and skies. It makes me really proud to serve here. I particularly want to thank all our families and loved ones, who have coped with the impact of COVID-19 in terms of things like home schooling and the need to care for vulnerable friends and relatives, whilst many of us have had to continue at work. Crises tend to bring out the best in people, and I pay tribute to you all.

COVID will pass, and RAF Lossiemouth remains a really exciting place to be. The runway works continue apace, the contract has been signed for IX(B) Sqn's new building, and plans for new single living accommodation are well underway. Over the Summer (August until October) the Typhoons will temporarily joint the Poseidons at Kinloss whilst the runway intersection is re-laid, and in October we'll welcome all our aircraft back to Lossie – a really important moment.

In the meantime, as usual, Lossie is at the forefront of operations – CXX Sqn has flown live United Kingdom maritime patrol operations, QRA continues to deter Russian probing of our airspace, II(AC) Squadron are in Cyprus for Op SHADER, 6 Sqn are delivering Baltic Air Policing in Lithuania, and 5 FP Wing have mobilised reservists for the COVID-19 response and force protection tasks. None of this would be possible without the work of the whole Lossie Team, exactly in line with my motto: "One Team, Delivering Together, Safely". So I congratulate you all, and wish you and your families the very best.



Chaplain's Corner

Padre pondering in a pandemic

2020 has not gone as planned! I arrived here at the start of January, a new Padre in a new location. So much to see, so much to learn, so much to enjoy. I had the year mapped out. Settling in at work, exploring the area, looking forward to my husband visiting and, of course, to going home as well. And then COVID-19 arrived.

I'm a 'feeder' - someone who loves to feed others, and someone who loves to eat! I, naturally, turned to food (knowing that my uniform would still need to fit!). Actually, I created an International Bake-off with friends and relatives. We've taken it in turns to share recipes ranging from family favourites to local treats so that others can try them. We collect our ingredients (a challenge when one country has the flour while another might have the sugar), and when everyone is ready, we give ourselves 48 hours to bake. Photo's of the finished goods are posted and then we get to eat. Which is fine when you have family around to share. I had to make a decision – either eat it all myself and not be able to



get into my uniform, or share. My neighbours have benefitted from Chocolate Cookie Muffs, Salted Caramel Chocolate Brownies, and Pineapple Upside Down Cake, but I may have just eaten the Picnic Slices on my own.

Lockdown has been an odd experience. I've still worked, albeit differently, and I've had the same online contact with family and friends. But I've felt the inability to travel to see them. Baking new recipes, sharing them across the world, and then, brilliantly, being able to eat them, has helped me find some balance. It's creative, fun and social. All things which I know I need. Will we continue as restrictions ease? Probably, but at a slower pace. So maybe once a month rather than once a fortnight.

What have I learned, apart from some new recipes and the fact I need to up my exercise? Well, nothing earth-shattering, but it's been good to discover that it is really quite easy to socialise internationally (who knows we may Zoom our baking at some point). But more importantly than that, it's been good to choose to build relationships rather than sit in my quarter and feel lonely. That's something I will be very happy to continue – any bakers out there?

Helene Grant





1(F) Squadron



TRADE FOCUS - 1(F) Sqn SURVIVAL TECHNICIANS

Our team consists of one Sergeant, four Corporals and four Senior Aircraftman responsible for the repair, rectification and modification of Typhoon Aircrew Equipment Assemblies (AEA). Due to the performance capability of our aircraft, the role of an SE Tech is vitally important. The Pilot's AEA has been specifically designed to enable them to withstand the pressures exerted on their body, during differing sortie profiles, enabling them to operate their aircraft safely. Ultimately, should a Pilot be required to pull the little yellow and black handle between their legs, then it is the role of an SE Tech which comes into focus. Our AEA will enable the Pilot to withstand the rigours of ejection, followed by the parachute they will descend on, the life raft within the seat they sit on, all working in combination with the survival aids provided within his Flight Jacket enable them to return home.

1(F) SQUADRON GIVES BACK

1(F) Squadron started 2020 in preparation for CAPEVAL, a major NATO Capability Evaluation at RAF Leeming to prove the RAF's ability to conduct operations in challenging conditions and to core NATO standard operating procedures. To demonstrate the United Kingdom's emboldened alliance to NATO, the RAF stood up 135 Expeditionary Air Wing (EAW) and executed the largest single RAF deployment since the start of Operation HERRICK in Iraq in 2003.¹ No 1(F) Squadron, augmented personnel from 11(AC) Squadron and wider 'Team Lossie', would provide the air assets, pilots, and engineers to sustain the air component of the Wing. The deployment to Leeming provided a stern challenge for the EAW to operate to a testing set of NATO Interoperability standards in response to survive and operate in post attack recovery procedures following simulated chemical attacks and other testing scenarios around operations, logistics and wider Force Protection threats. The whole EAW performed extremely well throughout and the results were worth the months of hard work and preparation. The assessment was a huge success for 1(F) Squadron and wider Team Lossie and EAW, with the Chief of the Air Staff commenting:

*"After a decade away from NATO's CAPEVAL assessment programme, the RAF's Typhoon Force has provided NATO with clear evidence of its ability to operate to the highest operational standards, under highly testing conditions. The successful CAPEVAL outcome proves the RAF's ability to deploy a potent fighting force and reinforces the RAF's and the UK's commitment to NATO, and confirming our ability to work effectively alongside our NATO allies."*²

There was also thankfully some 'down time' during the deployment that allowed a number of forays into the North Yorkshire countryside

¹ <https://www.raf.mod.uk/news/articles/raf-passes-major-nato-capability-test/>

² Ibid.



which were welcome respite from the operational routine.

During the redeployment, 1(F) Squadron immediately faced an unsuspecting and different test. As the United Kingdom quickly introduced COVID-19 social distancing guidelines, 1(F) Squadron adapted to keep squadron members safe while continuing to train and operate to secure the skies as part of our Quick Reaction Alert mission and to work up to the role of the very high readiness Squadron in the near future as our adversaries haven't retreated with the threat of COVID 19 and remain very much alive. The way in which everyone has approached this has been refreshing to see and the opportunities to innovate and safely re-invigorate and define new ways of working will hopefully benefit all now and in the future.

The response to the pandemic has also seen people taking a selfless path to improve and support the lives of others during this unprecedented and uncertain times.

The shutdown of some local markets and most restaurants has limited the number of options and ease of food access for many around Lossiemouth. The more vulnerable members of our community looking to avoid exposure to potential health risks are left with even fewer options and concern surfaced for how certain households in Elgin would receive food.

Sgt Mark and his wife recognized the issue and took it upon themselves to make a difference. Sgt Mark, has volunteered for months to deliver meals through local charity, The Arrows, twice a week to those in need. On each trip he visits over 20 households to supply people with their next hot meal. These gestures and actions have an important impact on the health and wellbeing of the community our people call home.

The first step of morale is a full stomach as we witnessed first-hand with 3MCS at CAPEVAL. Now closer to home, during the COVID 19 restrictions, several Squadron personnel SAC(T) John, SACs Tilly and Rachel took it upon themselves to ensure that 1(F) Squadron were kept well fed! Roaming the offices and flight line taking orders for the next day for nutritious and welcome snacks. They have carefully and successfully reorganized the crewrooms to ensure social distancing and proper sanitation is maintained. This has been accomplished by scheduling the arrival time for food pickup to minimise interactions. A constant supply of food to provide the squadron with a much-needed hot plate after hard work on the flight line and in the hangar. There is no doubt that the entire squadron has benefited from the selfless work these three have put forth, and the proof is in the happy faces around the Squadron.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP?

1(F) Squadron's own, SAC(T) Chris recommends GoodSAM as an option to offer up your off-duty time to be on call for NHS volunteer work. In addition to his time allotted to GoodSAM, Chris volunteers in our

Spitfire Project to bring our squadron historic aircraft back to life. If you have a desire to volunteer or an idea to help the public, please bring them to your chain of command for consideration and implementation or support a local charity or project in your spare time where to coin a well know brand 'every little helps'.

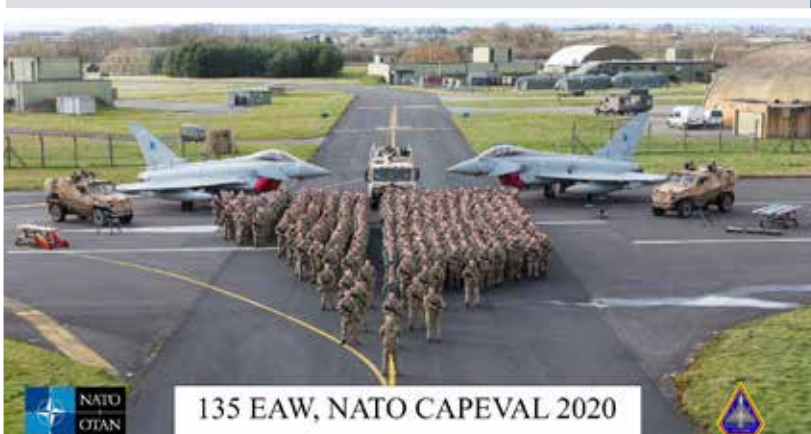
FINAL FAREWELL

1(F) Squadron said farewell to Squadron Leader Mike in May after 20 years in the RAF. Fortunate to have remained in a frontline cockpit almost exclusively (or perhaps elusively) to the envy of many fellow aviators. Mike now heads Down Under for a fresh chapter with his significant other who he met during an exchange tour with the RAAF. He leaves the Squadron and Service having made a resounding impact on the squadron and is directly responsible for 1(F) Squadrons past operational mission successes. We wish him well in his future endeavours and thank you for all that you gave to the RAF! His parting words to the squadron: "Thank you legends."

LOOKING AHEAD

The squadron continues to provide defence of UK sovereign airspace and prepare for upcoming deployments. Despite uncertainty of the UK's timeline and recovery from the COVID-19 virus, 1(F) Squadron remains as part of the RAF's frontline ready to respond where and when required in support of the UK's Defence Mission. Until the next time - stay safe and be kind.

In Omnibus Princeps





Team photo – Ex Bersama Lima 2019

II(AC) Sqn in front of the Squadron HQ.

II(AC) Squadron

THE NEW YEAR – COMBINED OPS

The beginning of 2020 saw 'Shiny Two' preparing to deploy with 1(F) Sqn to RAF Leeming to undertake the strategically important NATO CAPEVAL (Capability Evaluation). In the months leading up to the assessment, the two squadrons combined aircraft, Engineering and Ops resources, resulting in greater efficiency and improved flying rates for both squadrons...as well as an enjoyable opportunity to host the junior squadron at Shiny Two's HQ.

NATO CAPEVAL

Deploying to North Yorkshire to prove themselves in austere and challenging conditions (including a good deal of simulated chemical warfare) the men and women of No. II(AC) Sqn became part of 135 Expeditionary Air Wing, a force comprising over 600 personnel from across the Royal Air Force. Their hard work and many weeks spent (re-) learning NATO procedures, force protection priorities and detailed aircraft recce knowledge all paid off when the NATO assessment was passed to an extremely high standard. Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Wigston said, *"After a decade away from NATO's CAPEVAL assessment programme, the RAF's Typhoon Force has provided NATO with clear evidence of its ability to operate to the highest operational standards, under highly testing conditions."*



A II(AC) Sqn pilot conducts Close Air Support training with JTACs from 29 Cdo and 1 RHA.

AFGHANISTAN BATTLE HONOURS

Following CAPEVAL and back at RAF Lossiemouth, finally able to pack away the General Service Respirators and rubber over-boots, the news came through that HM the Queen was honouring II(AC) Squadron with the Battle Honour 'AFGHANISTAN 2001-2014' for playing a significant and vital role in the Afghanistan Campaign. Since its formation in 1912, Shiny Two has received 22 Battle Honours, 11 of which are emblazoned on the Squadron Standard. These reflect the tremendous contribution of RAF squadrons to operations in the air and on the ground. We congratulate our Tornado GR4 predecessors for their outstanding efforts in highly challenging conditions.

OPERATIONAL HONOURS, MEDALS AND AWARDS

Shortly after the award of the Battle Honour, the most recent Operational Honours List was released. For their contribution on Op SHADER in 2019, the II(AC) Sqn Senior Engineering Officer (SEngO) was awarded a Joint Commander's Commendation, and one of the squadron pilots was awarded the Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service (QCVS). Many congratulations to both individuals for their outstanding work in support of the ongoing operation to defeat Daesh in Iraq and Syria.



Further congratulations are due to all squadron personnel who were honoured at the recent Squadron Medal Ceremony held on the II(AC) Sqn flight-line. Squadron members were awarded the Op SHADER medal and/or clasp, an Op AZOTIZE medal, a Cosford Award, two Flight Safety awards and five Combat Ready patches.

PRE-DEPLOYMENT TRAINING

Recently the Squadron has focused on preparing for the upcoming deployment to Op SHADER in the summer. Refreshing Close Air Support (CAS) skills, the squadron worked closely with ground forces from 29 Commando Regiment and 1st Regiment Royal Horse Artillery (1 RHA), who provided Forward Air Control for the Squadron at various Air Weapon Ranges and across the Scottish Highlands.

As part of the pre-deployment training, Shiny Two conducted a two-week Armament Practice Camp (APC) with live weapon drops at Cape Wrath Range and live Strafe at Tain Range. All training objectives were met successfully, with the APC providing highly valuable training for squadron pilots and engineers alike.

COVID 19

Although the squadron has continued its essential work of preparing to deploy on operations, together with vital training to maintain readiness for Quick Reaction Alert duties, COVID 19 has meant the cancellation or postponement of many squadron social events, planned Adventurous Training, and Force Development opportunities. Flexible and resilient, Shiny Two has risen to the challenge of new working practices

on the squadron including individual social distancing in line with government guidance. The additional demands, particularly on partners and families, are not underestimated and we look forward to future events when restrictions are eased.

Throughout this period, squadron members have also deployed to 1435 Flight on the Falkland Islands, and continued to undertake duties on Quick Reaction Alert, including the recent interception of several Russian Tu-142 Maritime Patrol Aircraft. Social distancing was strictly observed...

SQUADRON FAREWELLS AND NEW ARRIVALS

Over the last few months, the squadron said farewell to several much-loved members. These included our Squadron XO, who is leaving the RAF to join the Royal Australian Air Force, as well as three senior engineers who were part of the original team that re-formed II(AC) Sqn at Lossiemouth in 2015. We thank you for all your hard work over the years, and we wish you all the very best for the future.

II(AC) Sqn has also welcomed several new arrivals: we have a new XO and OC B Flight, both recently arrived from sister squadrons across the airfield, as well as a new Engineering Officer and Intelligence Officer. A new Intelligence Analyst, two new Air and Space Operations Specialists, new Administration personnel and new engineering personnel have also joined Shiny Two. A very warm welcome to all.

II(AC) Sqn completed live weapon drops in April at Cape Wrath Range as part of Pre-Deployment Training.



II(AC) Sqn jets being prepared on the flight-line.





6 Squadron



6 Squadron deployed on Op AZOTIZE in late May 20 as part of 135 Expeditionary Air Wing to undertake Baltic Air Policing; protecting the airspace of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia. The detachment is co-located with Spanish Air Force F/A-18s at Šiauliai Air Base in Lithuania and are also working closely with French Air Force Mirage 2000s which operate out of Amari in Estonia. The deployment has given the Squadron the opportunity to undertake some excellent operational flying, including intercepting Russian ISR and Fighter aircraft operating out of the Kaliningrad Oblast. When not at high readiness, the Squadron has been able to carry out various training missions, working closely with NATO allies across all three Baltic States.

These began with a rather nautical flavour, taking part in an Air Defence Exercise with Standing NATO Maritime Group 1's Norwegian Flagship, HMNS Otto Svedrup and German Auxiliary Ship Rhön. NATO's BALTOPs exercise followed, which saw the Squadron working alongside Polish F-16s, Sukhoi Su-22s, Finnish F/A-18s and U.S. Tankers.

Not forgetting the ground domain, 6 Squadron has also carried out Close Air Support training with NATO nations, including British soldiers in Estonia. The 'Flying Canopeners' also found time to hone their air-to-air combat skills; pitted against their Spanish counterparts based at Šiauliai. This proved to be a great spectator



sport for those watching from the ground as the 'dogfighting' unfolded above.

Whilst local COVID restrictions have been strictly adhered to - with a whole plethora of face masks making an appearance on the EAW - restrictions have begun to ease in Lithuania, allowing Squadron members the opportunity to explore everything the country has to offer. Šiauliai has a mix of modern, soviet and historical architecture as well as some fantastic local bars and restaurants. The local lakes provide a picturesque setting for the ever-popular EAW BBQ and as the weather improves, some of the paler members of the Squadron have been forced into panic-buying sun cream.



Members of the EAW took the opportunity to explore Lithuania's turbulent history and visited Fortress 9 at Kaunas, which was used by both the Nazis and Soviets to detain and execute prisoners. This gave valuable insight as to why our hosts are so appreciative of the role NATO plays in the Baltic; enabling the Nation to exercise its hard-earned independence. 6 Squadron is due to handover Air Policing duties to the Portuguese and German detachments in September, but until then, 6 Squadron stands ready!



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IX(B) Squadron

EXERCISE CAPITAL BATS

Early on 4 March 2020 a compliment of 16 enthusiastic Officers and SNCOs from IX(B) Squadron embarked on a Force Development (FD) excursion to London. The itinerary included a visit to Defence Intelligence at MOD Main Building for a series of highly relevant briefings, the RAF Museum at Hendon, Battle of Britain Memorial Walk, St Clement Danes RAF Church and a visit to the Houses of Parliament with hope of an audience with the Moray MP.

Ex CAPITAL BATS launched significantly before the 'crack of dawn' in order to get as much out of the trip as possible, catching the 'red-eye'

flight from Inverness to Heathrow. Accommodation for the trip was to be Cavalry Barracks in Hounslow and that location certainly improved the team's knowledge of the London Underground system! The first event on the itinerary was to Defence Intelligence at MOD Main Building, where the group received a brief on new capabilities and Russian air activity. The briefs delivered were extremely beneficial and will enhance the role of IX(B) as an Aggressor Squadron.

After a long day of travelling followed by some fascinating briefings, most of the team went back to the accommodation for some well needed rest. However, not all. The chance of a mixed rank team building and social night out, for a nascent and currently non-deployable squadron was one not to be squandered!



Following a 'restful' 55-minute tube journey into the middle of town, the team began Thursday morning with a refreshing walk along the Embankment to the RAF Memorial and then on to ACM Sir Hugh Dowding's statue. Briefings were delivered, and discussions prompted by pre-prepared questions. The debates were engaging, and this enabled the team to expand their knowledge of the RAF and the specific history of IX(B) Squadron. With a packed itinerary, it was straight back to MOD Main Building for lunch and more briefings on current airborne threats to the UK. This proved to be an extremely valuable opportunity for the Squadron pilots, with a chance to gain a deeper understanding from up-to-the minute data, which will aid future simulation work and support real time QRA(I)N operations. The National Security Secretariat also briefed information surrounding Cabinet Office involvement in national operations, as did the Department for Transport Threats Office. Following an afternoon of very informative briefings, the day concluded with a much-anticipated full-team visit to a Chinese Dim Sum Restaurant on the Southbank. Later, refreshments flowed, music was eccentric, and OC MSF certainly showed the youngsters how to cut some fancy shapes on the dance floor! A fitting end to an exceedingly informative and enjoyable day. Then, the 55-minute tube ride back out of town ... what station do we get off at?



Somewhat tired and emotional, Friday morning commenced early doors with a visit to the RAF Museum in Hendon. To ensure personnel were kept on their toes yet well-informed, consideration was given to numerous thought-provoking questions such as the role the Bristol F.2B Fighter played during the inter-war years, the significance of the Squadron's use of the Canberra in operations in Malaya and the Suez Campaign, and perhaps the most hotly contested item 'how did IX(B) Squadron sink the Tirpitz?'



The Team resting, refreshing and engaging!



The team then completed the Battle of Britain Memorial Walk before lunch and a visit to the Houses of Parliament, the last location before heading home. The Parliament visit was highly beneficial, with all personnel gaining a deeper insight into the UK democratic process and parliamentary procedures, along with some interesting and entertaining historical anecdotes and folklore from the Palace of Westminster.



Battle of Britain Memorial



House of Commons Visit



The whole FD exercise proved to be a very worthwhile yet rare opportunity, not only to build a broader understanding of current operations and wider RAF history, but perhaps more importantly facilitating team building and unity amongst diverse squadron personnel. Huge thanks from the Squadron to all on the Station who assisted and made the exercise successful and possible.



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51 Sqn RAF Regt personnel taking part of the Virtual Runnymede Commonwealth Memorial Service (credit, Loss Photo Section)



51 SQN RAF REGIMENT

When we last went to press, B, C, Eng, HQ and Comms Ops Flts went to Barry Buddon to conduct their Annual Combat Marksmanship Tests (in the middle of Storm Dennis – which was fun) and SW Flt were at RAF Leeming supporting 1 Sqn RAF Regt in the delivery of Force Protection for RAF Lossiemouth's Typhoons on CAPEVAL. We were also conducting the final preparations for the Sqn's 3-week Live Field Firing exercise at Sennybridge....oh how things changed!

The UK's COVID-19 restrictions quickly derailed the Sqn's meticulously planned Spring activities including the VERY last-minute postponement, and then cancellation, of Ex MARAUDING CHEETAH (the aforementioned range package at Sennybridge) and the indefinite pause of Short-Term Training Team (STTT) 20-1 to Nigeria which would have been the Sqn's last one on the current Defence Engagement programme.

Adapting and overcoming (Per Ardua), the Sqn was quickly placed at Extreme High Readiness as part of the RAF's commitment to the COVID Support Force (CSF), requiring a quickly planned and executed PDT package. In addition, the Sqn came up with some new and innovative ways of training from home including virtual lessons, Skype meetings and individual phys programmes. Being focused and ready to deploy

remained at the forefront of the Sqn's mindset throughout. But in amongst this, we still found the opportunity to 'virtually' parade at the annual Runnymede Commonwealth Air Forces Memorial Service and represent at RAF Lossiemouth's own VE 75 celebrations on the 8th of May, which was also the 19th anniversary of the reforming of the Sqn shortly before its move to RAF Lossiemouth in 2001.

So, with all the changes to the Sqn's planned activities, we're going to take this opportunity to tell you a little bit more about the Sqn's history...

Dating back to 1941 as No. 713 Defence Sqn and serving in France and Germany during WWII, it was renumbered No. 51 Sqn RAF Regiment in 1947. Disbanding in 1957 and reforming in 1964 it deployed to Zambia, Aden, Muharraq, Salalah, Northern Ireland and to the Gulf in 1991. Unfortunately disbanding in 1993 it was reformed in 2001 and deployed on 2 tours Kuwait, 4 of Iraq, 4 of Afghanistan and 8 STTT's to Nigeria. The Sqn holds Battle Honours for 'France and Germany 1944-1945', 'Gulf 1991', 'Iraq 2003', and in March this year was proudly awarded 'Afghanistan 2001 – 2014' with the right to emblazon.

Today, the Sqn is on Very High Readiness to deploy globally in support of current and future operations, which requires the Sqn to maintain its fighting edge through high-end and demanding dismounted close-combat training. Away from field the Sqn prides itself on its sporting prowess. Representing the Station, Corps and Service at Archery, badminton, Boxing, Brazilian Ju-Jitsu, Football, Golf, Rugby Union, Rugby League and Triathlon. We try to make the most of what the local area and Scotland have to offer. Sqn phys sessions regularly take place on the local beaches and along the rugged Moray coastline. We also take advantage of what is on our door step in terms of Adventurous Training and Force Development by utilising the Cairngorms Nation Park and the West Coast of Scotland. It doesn't stop there either, members of the Sqn take an active role in the Mountain Rescue Team that is based at RAF Lossiemouth.

CELERITER DEFENDERE

SAC Evington at RAF Lossiemouth Boxing night (credit, Loss Photo Section)





51 Sqn RAF Regt post exercise.
(credit, Loss Photo Section)



Cpl Breeze representing
the RAF at Rugby Union
(credit, U/K)



Sqn members who are also part of the MRT
(credit, Loss Photo Section)



Sqn level phys on Lossiemouth's East Beach
(credit, Flt Lt Padbury)



CXX Squadron

MCM images Ltd

This has been a relatively quiet, yet productive, few months for Lossie's first Poseidon MRA Mk1 Squadron. Starting with the arrival of ZP802 (City of Elgin) in early March, it and ZP801 (Pride of Moray) have been instrumental in continuing the training of the first 2 crews of Course 1, culminating in their completion of training and the declaration of Initial Operating Capability (IOC) for the Squadron on 1st April. This has meant that the Squadron now has an active role in the maritime defence of the United Kingdom, albeit still in limited scope due to the build-up of trained crews and aircraft. In order to achieve IOC, and to hone their Anti Submarine (ASW) and Anti Surface (ASuW) Warfare skills, crews 1 and 2 took part in several exercises and training evolutions. This kicked off with Exercise Joint Warrior in late March, where valuable deep water ASW was on offer with UK and French submarine assets. As an additional part to this, the crews were involved with being the "enemy" forces for a Submarine Command Course (also known as a Perisher Course due to the potential career ending nature of the exercise) This is where potential future UK submarine captains are put under testing conditions and sustained pressure by Teacher to confirm their suitability for command. The Squadron put up stern opposition to test their responses, achieving realistic training for all concerned. This was followed by Exercise Grampus, a French led ASW exercise where UK ASW tactics could be further practiced and developed to make the most out of this fairly rare opportunity.

After achieving IOC, there has been a subtle shift of focus for these crews away from specific training sorties to more operational flying, with the aircraft returning to the more traditional roles needed for the maritime defence of the UK. Patterns of life flights around most of the UK seas have been flown and will continue to be the mainstay of the qualified crews roles to remain current and proficient in key roles. These have included sorties in the Irish Sea, and as far away as Southwestern Scandinavia.

As with most aspects of business at RAF Lossiemouth during this period, life since early March for 120 Squadron has also been dominated by the pandemic brought around by Covid-19. Social distancing has been maintained by remaining with allocated crews to prevent cross contamination. Working mainly from home, but with key training being carefully managed, has become the "norm" for crews 3, 4, 5 and 6. The pandemic has impacted, to a certain degree, on force development for these courses, with Crews 3 and 4 being delayed in going to the USA to continue with Post Graduate School (PGS) crew simulator training. This has been mitigated by moving course elements around in order of priority, with the pilots commencing a Return to Flying Package, starting with simulator work in a commercial 737 simulator at Gatwick. Being very similar in its cockpit layout (the

Poseidon is a developed version of the standard 737-800) and with the same flying characteristics, these sims have been useful for keeping up perishable skills learned on the US Courses, as well as learning from highly experienced civilian instructors. These sims will provide the ability to achieve some basic currency requirements until Poseidon Force have their own simulators as part of the building of the Strategic Facility at Lossie. These should be operational by early 2021. It is hoped that Crews 3 and 4 can return soon to Naval Air Station Jacksonville (NAS JAX) to complete the elements of PGS which cannot currently



be achieved in the UK. They should return in late August, and be operational by early September, bolstering the already qualified crews in frontline service.

Of the remaining members of the Squadron, Crews 5 and 6 have just completed their initial Category 2 training course at NAS JAX, Florida, and having returned to the UK at the height of the pandemic, have remained at home for 2 weeks. Personnel for Crews 7 and 8 have been joining since early April and are preparing to deploy to NAS JAX for the 6 month initial course as soon as travel restrictions are lifted. Included in this course are several ab-initio aircrew, who have been assigned for the first time to a Poseidon course. They have been taught a bespoke maritime introduction package and achieved the requisite survival skills to be able to join the other more experience brethren in training on their first OCU.

Away from work, most members of the Squadron completed some form of celebration over the VE 75 Day weekend, with one member, the deputy Chairman of the Nairn branch of the Royal British Legion (no names mentioned) producing a Virtual Remembrance Service on YouTube (other streaming services are available) This included contributions by local church representatives and the Lord Lieutenant of Nairn. For those interested, the link is <https://youtu.be/177fs9EANSQ>.

Looking forward to the summer term, the Squadron will be keen to try out the new accommodation provided by the nearly completed



Strategic Facility. Capable of housing up to 3 Poseidon Squadrons worth of personnel, the Poseidon Line Squadron of engineering support, as well as space for 3 aircraft in a bespoke hangar, it should be up and running in time for the delivery of the next Poseidon aircraft from Boeing in October.



2622 (HIGHLAND) SQUADRON RAUXAF REGT- MAR TO MAY 20

Introduction

A dynamic, high tempo and demanding period for 2622 Squadron who have not only been conducting training but have completed the biggest mobilisation of personnel since Iraq in 2003. The COVID virus has presented for Royal Air Force (RAF) Lossiemouth but for the local RAF Regiment Reserve Sqn this has been a period of success and an opportunity for the Reserves to display what they do.

OP RESCRIPT support

As many Sqns were slowing down their activity ours had a peak. With the requirement for Reserves to relieve the Regular forces enabling wider support tasks, the Reserves did not disappoint. Moving from an initial 16 RAF Regiment Gunners mobilised in April to a total of 34 mobilised from 2622 and 603 (City of Edinburgh) sqns in support of Lossiemouth and Kinloss security tasks. This was no easy feat for the permanent staff who spent time ensuring all safety measures were in place, and conducting bespoke training for the security task at each location. Meanwhile the HR team were engaging with the employers of our newly mobilised Reservists to ensure a smooth transition for both Reservists and their employers, (from the oil, airline and teaching industry to name a few). Much of the effort, however, was down to the individual Reserves. They have displayed their agility and professionalism time and time again over the last fast-paced month, moving seamlessly from civilian employment into the roles of the Regulars, releasing both 51 Sqn RAF Regt and station personnel from critical duties.

Condensed Regiment Gunner Training

After completion of Phase 1 training at RAF Halton the Reserves embark on the journey to receive their RAF Regiment trade qualification arm badge, called 'mudguards', as worn by all members of the Corps. This is done over 6 weekends, typically taking 6 months, to then attend OMEGA at RAF Honington as their final assessment. Seven of our Phase 2 trainees managed to achieve the required training within eight days and on the 9th be off to attend their final course. This included ranges, section battle drills and Complex Air Ground Environment lectures. Not an easy

achievement, with the necessity to ensure no reduction in the standards of those the Squadron deem ready to send. With a ticking clock on one hand, an arduous exercise at RAF Honington to complete and Op RESCRIPT to support, some would not rise to the challenge. We can gladly say however that all personnel passed and are now at the forefront of providing security to RAF Lossiemouth and the RAFs new P-8s.

RAF Honington OMEGA

A 3-week course conducted at RAF Honington consisting of shooting, Complex Air Ground Environment lectures, the gruelling RAF Regt fitness test and a field exercise to assess the culmination of months of training, no easy feat whether you are Regular or Reserves. Our trainees flourished during this final assessment phase which is largely down to the individuals but it helps being part of a team effort. This was made more difficult with the COVID social distancing restrictions in place which only amplifies the ability and competence of each of the 7 trainees that have now passed the course, received their mudguards and are ready to ensure Air Power through the defence of the ground.

The next three months

An interesting second part to our year and not what we thought we would be writing about this month. Op RESCRIPT will give our Reserves a valuable role for the next few months and for those that can't be, we hope to be telling you about their training in the next issue.

If you would like the challenge of joining the RAF Regiment as a Part-Time Reserve then ring Flight Sergeant Andy Stephens on 01343810776 or search us up on social media #2622 Sqn.

Seasaidh Sinn Ar Tir – We stand our ground



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It is almost business as usual here at the Fire section during the Covid-19 restrictions. Obviously a fire crew cannot work from home, so with exception of the Station Fire Officer, the rest of our personnel have been working as normal. We did change our shift pattern to allow fewer instances of shift changeovers in an attempt to limit the potential spread of Covid-19. Our crews have been working 2 x 24 hr shifts each week which proved challenging particularly with the recent late flying.

Part of any Firefighters daily routine has always included a clean up of the workplace before handing over to a new crew and this has taken on a new importance with crews conducting a deep clean before every change over.

We would like to thanks those who have helped us by adhering to the temporary rules of leaving fire extinguishers at the back of the section for us to service. This has allowed us to provide a nearly normal service but without exposing our fire fighters to any unnecessary risk.

Some of you may have noticed our new uniforms. We are now employed by Captia and although the Station should see no difference to the service we provide, every reporting system and associated paperwork, forms etc have changed and we are working hard to seamlessly bring these new systems on line.

Over the next few months you will see our new fire appliances. We look forward to receiving them and getting stuck into the training required for us to operate them and continue to provide fire cover for the Station.





SR Ex Dreadnought to Drones

From Dreadnoughts to Drones, an Eng and Ops Staff Ride.

Nine members of Eng and Ops Wing left RAF Lossiemouth for Scotland's Secret bunker on Thursday 3rd October. FS Davies, Chf Tech Robertson, Sgt Winsper, Sgt Murray, Cpl Corbett, SAC Hylton, SAC Mant, SAC D'Addio and LAC Thom took part in the Staff Ride. We arrived at the not so secret bunker shortly before midday, after an uneventful journey. Scotland's Secret Bunker, formerly a Nuclear Command Centre was Scotland's best kept secret for over 50 years. The Cold War Relic, 6 miles from St Andrews lies 100ft underground. Built by the RAF in 1953 AS RAF Troywood in response to the threat of nuclear war with the USSR. Visiting the Bunker gave the Operations Specialists insight into how the Ops environment has significantly changed during the years. There's no longer a requirement to write backwards on a Perspex board.

After spending a couple of hours at the Secret Bunker, we headed to Edinburgh Castle, our accommodation for the night. Shortly into our journey we encountered minibus issues and had to call the AA out. Thankfully it wasn't serious, and we were on our way within an hour.

Once settled in our rooms in the Castle, we headed into Edinburgh for a bite to eat. After dinner the group split, three decided to do an Edinburgh Ghost Tour. This was a good way to learn about the underground history of Edinburgh and it certainly intensified the experience of sleeping in the Castle.

We left Edinburgh Castle on the Friday morning for the National Museum of Flight located at East Fortune Airfield, formerly RAF East Fortune. We began the visit by exploring the Military Aviation Hangar before we presented the Stands. The Stands helped to provide an insight into how the



Air Power roles described in today's doctrine, developed and evolved from Sea Power's predominance and decline, Air Power's ascent and Cyber Warfare's emergence. Each participant delivered a short presentation, ranging from English Electric Lightning and current QRA to Bristol Bolingbroke and the need for an anti-surface capability. The Stands were all well researched and presented.

Once the stands had been presented, we boarded Concorde and visited the rest of the hangars; before ending the visit in the Gift Shop. We left the museum for RAF Lossiemouth and arrived back at camp just before 2100. It was a thoroughly informative and enjoyable Staff Ride. A big thank you to Sgt Winsper for organising the Staff Ride and Chf Tech Robertson for his skilful minibus driving!





Armourers FD Trip to London

This FD trip originated when a request came in from FS Andy Harris at RAF Northolt for a team of weapon specialists to build a Paveway II drill bomb, to be mounted outside the Northolt armoury. The first question was how could we officially get a team to Northolt to build the bomb?

Quickly we decided we could use this task as an Armourers FD trip and work it in with a Staff Ride to visit various WWII related sites close to Northolt and the centre of London. With FS Harris arranging all the kit for the bomb build and accommodation at Northolt all we had to do was arrange the travel and put together an admin order. With a lot of help from Sgt Muir and Flt Lt Corlett the admin order was completed, signed off and travel to Northolt booked.

Day 1 The travel to Northolt was going well until we got to the hire car collection office at Luton airport. Apparently we had collected the car four days previously and there wasn't a car for us now. A few calls to the travel cell to sort out the confusion and 2 hours later we were on our way to Northolt.

FS Harris arranged a meet and greet for us with the Northolt station armoury manager John Jeffery and the QCS armourers in the Sgts/WOs Mess. That lead to a very social first night and a chance meeting with the Queens Colour Sqn WO, who then invited us to watch the QCS weekly parade practice at 0800 the following morning, which was a great idea at the time.

Day 2 Up for breakfast then straight to the QCS building to watch the parade practice from the viewing platform overlooking the parade square. A QCS Flt Sgt talked us through all the drill movements that were happening on the parade square and pointed out the markings on the parade square. The exact dimensions of the internal of the Albert Hall and the entrances to Buckingham Palace are painted on the parade square so the guys can practice for any major events in those locations without leaving camp.

Now to the bomb build. John the station armoury manager already had the 1000lb drill war head mounted onto a stand and positioned where he wanted the bomb to stay outside the armoury. Our job was to fit the Enhanced Computer Control Group and the rest of the kit of parts including the tail section and harness. The kit of parts were quite



a few years old and looked like they had come from a trials weapon, but all the parts were in good condition and the build didn't take long at all. On request from the armoury manager we were to activate the tail to deploy the fins, so we made sure everyone was standing a safe distance away from the tail expecting a harsh quick deployment of the fins. After a short count down the tail lanyard was pulled and the fins deployed extremely slowly and calmly to a round of applause but more a lot of laughing. As is customary we retired to the t-bar for tea and a few Mr Kipling to celebrate. John and his workshop colleagues had a bit of a surprise for us. He told us to meet him outside the armoury in 10mins and he then disappeared. It turned out that John and friends are WWII vehicle enthusiasts and they arrived outside the armoury in two Willys jeeps and a motorbike and sidecar. Now this was an opportunity not to be missed. We loaded up, me in the sidecar and the lads following in the two Willys jeeps and we had a drive round the airfield and got dropped off outside the mess. I don't know what we looked like, but I can imagine it was a mixture of Wallace and Gromit meets Dads Army. Excellent fun which brought huge smiles and an experience that certainly doesn't come along every day.

The first stand on the Staff Ride was at the Battle of Britain Bunker at Uxbridge which is only a few miles from Northolt and free to visit if you have your MOD90, plus it has a nice café. The museum is interesting for a walk round and we got on a guided tour/talk which took us down into the bunker where the Battle of Britain was controlled and co-ordinated and was watched over by Winston Churchill. The guide was very knowledgeable, but I recommend going after you've had a good night's sleep as there isn't a lot of air flow that far underground. Once back above ground again we carried on with the staff ride talk and discussion. The realisation that we were standing where Winston Churchill first said the quote "Never was so much owed by so many to so few" was quite spine tingling.

To end the day we decide that because the tube central line to London was only 150m away from Northolt front gate that we should just have an early night, well one of us thought that.

Day 3 Off to London today to visit a few sites and conduct the majority of the staff ride, but first breakfast. On advice from the travel cell we were to buy off-peak all-day travel tickets for the tube which was from 0930 onwards therefore giving us plenty of time for a hearty breakfast in an Eastender style greasy spoon beside the tube station.

The first stand of the day was the Bomber Command memorial in Piccadilly. This is a big and very impressive memorial, well worth visiting. The facial expression in the bomber crew statues shows how tired and beaten the crews were. The talk and discussion brought up a few points about WWII carpet bombing and the present-day precision bombing to reduce collateral damage. Was the loss of British/German civilian life and the sacrifice of bomber crews really necessary? Maybe it was at the time, but we came to the conclusion that it wouldn't happen again, hopefully!

We decided we should walk between the stands just to see a bit more of the town and get a bit of exercise, nearly 15 miles in total apparently. On route to the second stand we heard a lot of emergency vehicle sirens but just thought that was standard in London. Not quite though as we found out a few minutes later when we turned a corner towards the treasury to see a fire engine parked in the middle of the road. The issue with this fire engine was the red dye coming out of the hose.



We had come across the aftermath of Extinction Rebellion trying to hose down the front of the Treasury with red dye, only for the hose to get away from them and the road turning red instead.

As we walked on towards the Thames and the Battle of Britain memorial we got side tracked by a couple of things. First, we were close to Westminster Abbey so a quick walk round there as its free with your MOD90 and then secondly on to Parliament to look for the Stop Brexit man, but we couldn't find him among the masses of other people doing weird stuff.

The Battle of Britain memorial is another exceptionally well designed and perfectly made memorial commemorating the sacrifice and bravery of all those involved in the Battle of Britain. Of course, the aircrew and armourers take centre stage of the memorial. The topic of this stand was "Did the allies win the Battle of Britain or did Germany change tactics?". The opinion of the group is that it was a bit of both. The allies fought hard and delayed the German plans leading them to change their tactics due to the changeable weather in the English Channel during the winter. Unknown to the Germans but if they'd pushed on for another day things could be very different now.



On and upwards to the final stand at the Imperial War Museum but of course with a couple of stops on the way. First stop was a no brainer and only off the beaten track to visit St Clement Danes church, the church of the RAF. Once again this is free to visit and a must see if you are in the area. The floor is made up of all the crests ever used in the RAF and an interesting way to spend half an hour trying to find your sqn crest. If you want to cheat, there's a map at the entrance to the church.

Next stop was a quick sandwich in one of those overpriced sandwich shops, although we could claim this one back.

It was a good half an hour walk to our final stand at the Imperial war Museum and once again it was free entry. If you plan on visiting the museum, give yourself at least two hours. After a walk round the main floors of the museum we went into the final exhibition about the Holocaust. I don't think we were prepared for what we were about to see. The exhibition doesn't hold back and displays many photos and videos showing the horrendous conditions of the concentration camps and the true evil of the German reign. Two hours could be spent in that exhibition alone. The mood of the group had taken a bit of a dive after that, so we had a quick chat to round up the visit and decided to get the tube back to the centre of town to have a refreshment and talk about the day.

Overall this was a very enjoyable FD trip. We tried and I believe succeeded in keeping the cost and travelling to a minimum while also taking in as much RAF culture and history as possible. Plus, we left something at Northolt that should be in place for quite a few years.

Thanks again to FS Andy Harris, Sgt Michell Muir, Flt Lt Corlett, John Jeffery and the travel cell for making the trip happen.



STATION OPERATIONS

Station Operations – life out of training just before lockdown and during lockdown for LAC SCOTT and LAC HARRIMAN in our First Tour.

LAC SCOTT- I arrived at RAF Lossiemouth a month before COVID-19 and lockdown really took place, in that that time I really got to see what the wider air force was like. Coming from the training environment where all you knew was inspections, exams and thinking Cpl's were gods to now going out on the town in Elgin having one to many with them. During my first month at RAF Lossiemouth it was a whirlwind, I was unwell with tonsillitis for my first week meaning I was in my room in the block not knowing anyone and feeling homesick as being a long way away from home and Lossiemouth not being an original preference for myself was a big adjustment to make. However, once I recovered from tonsillitis, I soon started to feel at home here as I got to meet new people and validated in my role in Station Operations. Just before lockdown happened I joined the cricket team, as cricket is my main hobby this gave me something to look forward to and gave me a chance to meet new people out of the work environment, however I only managed one training session before lockdown struck and this is where I really started to notice the affect everyone was feeling of lockdown.

However, LAC Harriman arrived during lockdown, so he has only known life at RAF Lossiemouth how it is in Lockdown.

LAC HARRIMAN- Arriving at Lossiemouth during the pandemic did present various challenges. Firstly, getting here from RAF Shawbury, with all the social distancing rules being put in place travelling via public transport presented its own risks. Thankfully however, due to the

circumstances I had a carriage to myself every leg of the journey.

Since arriving most changes around the station don't seem to alien to me as I don't know any other. There has been combined messing, no gym and no social gatherings since I arrived. So, although frustrating and rather boring, it's not been too bad from my perspective. The absence of a barber however is taking its toll, an issue I feel many of us are feeling around camp. For my personal hobbies the gym being closed is a very unfortunate, especially coming from the facilities at RAF Shawbury to nothing at all. A pair of running shoes will have to do. On the other end of the spectrum of hobbies the pub being closed is just as heart-breaking. Most people's hub of seeing friends is unfortunately Covid-19's favourite method of spreading. Not really getting to know anyone either does mean my social life has come to a halt. But thanks to modern technology I have found communicating with friends and family back home no issue at all. Furthermore, everyone is in the same boat, no one has avoided the impact of Covid-19.

Station ops however, is trying to keep life as normal as possible while following the governments guidelines. With people working from home means social distancing is possible in the office creating a safer environment for everyone. With the SQN's still flying it does bring that element of normality at work. The only thing missing from a day in the life of station ops is the number of brews coming out of the tea bar.

We both look forward to coming out of lockdown and COVID becoming a distant memory, from all of us from Station Operations stay safe and we look forward to seeing you soon.

LAC SCOTT AND LAC HARRIMAN.

AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL

During the Covid-19 restrictions Air Traffic Control has been busier than ever. The Squadrons are getting in as many operationally essential sorties as possible. I believe this is to take advantage of the lack of civilian flights in our airspace.

The Covid-19 restrictions have not really affected much in ATC. This is due to the lack of space within the Tower and the amount of flying taking place. We are keeping the 2 meter rule where possible and limiting the number of people allowed in the crew room/ kitchen to prevent infection. Every surface is wiped down at least twice a day, anti-everything alcohol hand gel is scattered throughout ATC. One of my colleagues has taken it upon himself to create a quiz every week on Whats App which we are all invited to take part in. The biggest surprise was to walk into work, after the hairdressers closed, to find the lads sporting various shaved heads. Overall, ATC is coping well with the restrictions given the amount of flying taking place both at Lossie and Kinloss.

For VE-Day, me and the two controllers on shift decided to have our own mini celebratory dinner in the Tower. Prawn cocktail/ patte starter, roast beef/ steak with mash, carrots, broccoli and gravy, finishing with strawberries, cream and chocolate brownies. We sat down with one ear out for the radios and one ear on the Queen's speech. It was a really good evening and we felt a part of the celebrations, even though we toasted with Schooler.

From the Tower, it is easy to see how busy the contractors have been remaking our airfield. Now the old tarmac at the 23 threshold has been removed. Contractors are in constant contact with ATC to ensure

that professional help and support can be given on both sides. We are working well with them through Covid-19.

Normal operation of P8's from Lossie is still a while away. However, the foundations of the new improved runway is progressing well. Focus is on widening the taxiways and strengthening all aircraft manoeuvring areas to ensure they can take the size and weight of the P8's.

Alongside these physical changes that you can see, there is underground improvement. Looking out of ATC one day I saw the sudden appearance of a massive cage. We were all trying to figure out what on earth it could be used for. Theories ranged from a monster cage to tiger restraints. The answer came as it is used to transport huge pipes. These are ready to be used as either ducting for wires or drainage pipes. It was a bit anti-climax.

All wiring for the new light system is to be placed underground. This is a safety measure so that aircraft or other vehicles do not accidentally destroy them or be damaged by them. It is amazing how much wiring is needed to ensure the airfield works in top condition. It is not just the runway lighting that will be improved. Charlie and Delta dispersals are getting new overhead lighting as well as ground lighting.

As you know, when it decides to rain here, it pours down. Due to the structure of the runways, we have some areas which are more prone to gathering water than others. The drainage pipes are to lessen the chances of this occurring. This will have an impact on the need for de-icing in the winter months. If there is less water collecting on the airfield then there is less chance of ice building up, leading to less de-icing chemicals being used.

From everyone at ATC we hope you are coping well with the Covid-19 restrictions. Keep safe, keep healthy and keep hopeful (pubs will re-open).

You ask, we answer



Update from LDP/ LTT

IX(B) Sqn Typhoon Hangar and Technical Accommodation construction starts.



LDP declare IOC Strategic Facility opens.
P-8A operating from Lossiemouth.



Single Living Accommodation (SLA) construction starts.

Summer 2020

Autumn 2020

Winter 20/21

Resurfacing works reach their critical phase, when the intersection of the two runways will be reinforced.

During this time QRA and routine Typhoon training will be relocated so there is no interruption to critical Operations.

Fire Station construction starts.



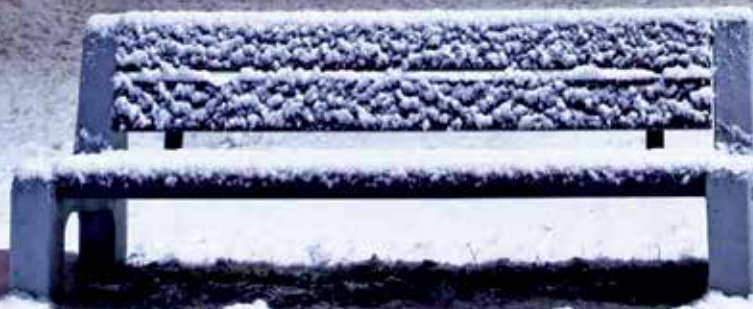
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Being in the Armed Forces brings opportunities to try out and develop skills and ambitions in a wide range of sports, in fact being 'sporty' is positively encouraged in Service personnel. But what if skiing or running don't grab you, what if cycling and rugby just aren't for you? Fortunately, that wide range of sports includes something that suits just about everyone...including tug of war, archery, sea angling... just a few of the lesser known/less popular sports being enjoyed by personnel at RAF Lossiemouth.

Corporal Philip Morley-Jones, known as MJ, is a member of the Elgin Tug Of War team and the RAF Tug Of War (TOW) team. A man who has tried a variety of sports, MJ was first drawn to TOW when based at RAF Brize Norton a couple of years ago. At the time he was training for his first Strongman competition and played rugby union – so likely to be a powerful asset to the base's TOW team. This first foray into the sport led to MJ being asked to join the RAF Tug Of War team. His love of the sport led to him becoming the RAF Scotland Tug of War representative, and the RAF Benevolent Fund's ambassador for the sport.

After being posted to RAF Lossiemouth MJ joined the Elgin Tug Of War team and now competes at Highland Games across Scotland over the summer months. In the team of eight 'pullers' he is one of the XXX. Pullers 1-4 at the front of the rope are the 'stabilisers' – they try to ensure the rope is kept steady and at the right height. Pullers in positions 5-7 are the stronger members of the team and the 'engine room'. It's their job to get the rope moving back with the tension and pressure that is forced through the rope against the opposition.



The final puller is the anchor – the person responsible for keeping the rope steady and in line from the rear; the anchor is also usually the strongest person in the team and uses their strength to help the engine room pullers.

At the moment RAF Lossiemouth doesn't have a tug of war team of its own, although it did have a fairly good team a few years ago, but this is something MJ is hoping to rectify in time for next season. As a qualified coach MJ is able to take new members from absolute beginners and make them into a fully formed team. Training equipment is being sourced and training plans prepared. TOW competitors need to have a good all round level of fitness and a good level of stamina. Training to improve cardio fitness and strength is combined with training on a bespoke A-frame used to replicate the opposition.

So far this season MJ and Elgin TOW team have managed to...

MJ is happy with the performance of the Elgin Tug Of War team this season, the team finished...

MJ plans to start training recruits for the RAF Lossiemouth tug of war team...



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Personal Support & Social Work Service RAF Lossiemouth

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SSAFA offer a **CONFIDENTIAL** welfare service to **ALL** military personnel on the Station irrespective of rank, gender or marital status. We are here to support spouses, partners, children and extended families.

The main areas of work are as follows:

- Family, relationships and personal difficulties;
- Stress, anxiety and depression;
- Debt, financial problems and benefit advice;
- Applications to the RAF Benevolent Fund and other charitable organizations;
- Illness, disability and additional needs;
- Housing, resettlement and medical discharges;
- Bereavement, loss and grief;
- Equal opportunities, discrimination and harassment;
- Support groups and referral to other agencies;
- Childcare issues;
- Adoption and fostering;
- Deployments (pre- and post).

The list is endless. Whatever the issue, you can be certain that SSAFA will confidentially support or signpost onto a relevant agency and ensure that you are always treated with dignity and respect. SSAFA has close links with all Service charities.

Meet the Lossiemouth team

Jayne Whitcher
Team Leader

Agnes Gardiner
Personal & Family Support Worker

Chris Sherwin
Personal & Family Support Worker

Debi Clarke
Welfare Administrator

Contact Us

Debra.clarke@ssafa.org.uk

01343 817076 (95161 7076)

We are located in St Aidan's
Monday – Friday 0830 – 1700hrs.

**Lifelong support for our Forces and their
families.**

PHOTOGRAPHIC SECTION

Station Commander Handover, Group Captain Walls handed over to Group Captain Layden



Progress of the work on the runway



Puma and NHS Epishuttle Trials



Pumas assisting MACA in Western Hebrides



6 Sqn Leaving for Azotize



Wildlife Hazard Management Award and P8 Imagery



VE Day Typhoons Taking Off for Flypast



Runway Progress



Typhoon Taking Off



PHOTOGRAPHIC SECTION

People at Work



CAS and AOC 1 Group Visit



Bastille Day with Capt Rage



P8 Pax Flight



C17 Logistics moving equipment for Op Azotize



Ex Marauding Cheetah, 51 Sqn



Prime Minister Boris Johnson and AOC 1 Group Visit RAF Lossiemouth



P8 Flight



Lossiemouth Social Engagement Worker continues to provide support

Hello, I am Veronica, known better as Vron, the RAF Benevolent Fund's Social Engagement worker for RAF Lossiemouth and parenting RAF Leuchars. The Fund has appointed four Social Engagement Workers for an initial two-year trial at the following RAF Stations: RAF Lossiemouth, RAF Leeming, RAF Honington, and RAF Odiham. I work alongside the Welfare and Community Support teams providing an additional resource, but not duplicating or replacing any of the vital roles that already exist.

I'm originally from Garmouth, but due to marrying into the RAF I have been away from Moray for the last twenty years. I worked for Airwaves (now the RAF Families Federation) at Akrotiri, Cyprus, and then upon my return to RAF Leuchars I ran the HIVE from 2004 to 2015 for the RAF. This was turned into an Army HIVE at Leuchars in 2015 and I worked for the Army until taking up this post in October 2019. I also held the position of SSAFA in Service volunteer coordinator at Leuchars for the last 16 years. I am very glad to be back working for the RAF once again.

I started my new role as RAF Lossiemouth's Social Engagement Worker last year following the RAF Benevolent Fund's research, 'Meeting the Needs of the Serving RAF Community'. I know first-hand that moving to a new location can be very disruptive; it can take time to establish yourself and develop new networks. In addition, a change in circumstances, such as deployments, having a baby, or starting a new job can result in people feeling isolated.

As your Social Engagement Worker I am here to help you to connect with your local community. This can be supporting you in finding local clubs, activities and workshops as well as helping you access additional services offered by the RAF Benevolent Fund.

Think of me as a bridge between yourself and the Station, and a bridge between where you find yourself now and where you would like to be.

During the COVID-19 lockdown, I have adapted to using WhatsApp video and Skype or phone calls to keep in regular contact with new and existing clients, sharing resources with them, and signposting them to internal and external agencies to help keep them on positive pathways during these unprecedented times. I am also running weekly virtual coffee mornings that many have found useful to ease their feelings of isolation. Please feel free to contact me to join this weekly event that will continue throughout the COVID-19 lockdown.

As a result of the pandemic, I have been conducting "Check & Chat" calls for the Fund, when my capacity allows, with 22 veterans on a regular 2-week cycle. These veterans live alone and are mostly in the vulnerable shielding community. I have been a bit creative with these clients and I have even taken requests to play tunes on my saxophone over the phone to two female veterans, one of whom is 93 and used to be a trombone player in the RAF Central Band.



Another veteran is missing his concert band that he normally plays in touring the local old folks' homes in his area, and he himself is 83. To ease his isolation, we have been having fortnightly music sessions where he sings and plays his guitar and I harmonise with him. It is heart-warming to know that these simple, if a bit unusual, little things are helping people get through these strange times.

Please do not struggle in silence. I am here to support the whole RAF Lossiemouth community.

If you are going Out of Area (OOA) then please ensure you nominate a point of contact for your family. Once you are OOA, if your partner or family starts to struggle they are welcome to contact me for support.

As a member of the Station Welfare & Community Support team I can be contacted through any member of the team or by email on veronica.young@rafbf.org.uk or phone 07834688009.

Stay safe, positive, and healthy.

Vron

RAF Benevolent Fund continues to support personnel and veterans amid COVID-19 crisis



**Royal Air Force
Benevolent Fund**

Author: Gavin Davey, RAF Benevolent Fund Area Director (Scotland, Northern Ireland and NE England)

For the past 100 years, the Fund has stood side by side with the RAF Family during its toughest times and the coronavirus pandemic is no exception. The welfare of our beneficiaries and staff have been and will continue to be at the forefront of all we do.

We have adjusted our working practices to ensure it is 'open for business' for those members of the RAF Family who need our support. Indeed, in the first two months of the lockdown, the Fund awarded more than £2.6M in grants to RAF veterans, serving personnel and their families.

We have also produced a COVID-19 Resources and Information page on its website to signpost the different services available to members of the RAF Family throughout the coronavirus pandemic and beyond. For more information, please visit rafbf.org/covid19.

We want to ensure the most vulnerable RAF veterans, serving personnel and dependants are able to access the very best level of support we can provide in these challenging times. To that end, the Fund has expanded a number of our welfare services.

The Fund has made £2,500 available for each RAF station to provide an activity and wellbeing pack for RAF children who will be missing our Airplay youth support sessions which have been temporarily paused.

Our Social Engagement Workers have flexed their role and are working hard with their local station to better support the socially isolated on and off station.

Our Listening and Counselling Service, which has been expanded to provide 24-hour support, is available to veterans and serving personnel in need of emotional support. There are still some spare spaces on our existing Headspace provision for the serving RAF, and we have agreed to double this in the coming months.

We have an online mental wellbeing zone on our website where RAF veterans and personnel can find advice, support and find out where to go for more help. For veterans, the Fund has introduced a weekly Check and Chat service and expanded our Telephone Friendship Groups service to allow more veterans to join a weekly call. It has also launched an online grant application process for RAF veterans and their partners, allowing beneficiaries apply for grants up to £750 using an online form.

Introducing Michelle Jeffcott, Community Fundraiser at the RAF Benevolent Fund

Hi, I'm Michelle, the new Community Fundraiser for the RAF Benevolent Fund in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Northern England.

I started my role here at the Fund in March and despite spending just three days in the office before lockdown, I feel like I have been able to build so many fantastic relationships already.

Coming from a recruitment and sales background I am used to this new world of video meetings, so meeting people this way initially hasn't been a problem for me. However, I simply cannot wait to get out and meet people face-to-face and visit you all on station!

My role at the Fund is to recruit supporters and volunteers to take part in our fundraising challenges, and to provide support those who wish to host their own fundraising events.

As well as working with the serving RAF community, I work with veterans, Reserves, Air Cadets, University Air Squadrons, and businesses and other organisations in the wider community who want to raise money for the RAF Benevolent Fund.

These charitable efforts help us to continue providing vital welfare support to the whole of the RAF Family, whenever they need it.

I am here to help make your fundraising as successful and as enjoyable as possible by providing volunteers, advice, materials and equipment to help you raise money and awareness of the RAF Benevolent Fund's important work. We even have a handy fundraising toolkit packed with information and ideas.

If you would like to fundraise or volunteer, then I would love to chat to you. Please feel free to get in touch with me at michelle.jeffcott@rafbf.org.uk or 07720955097.

The RAF Benevolent Fund provides a range of services to support current and former members of the RAF and their dependants. This includes welfare breaks, grants to help with financial difficulty and getting about inside and outside the home, specialist advice on benefits and support with care needs. We also provide support for young people through our Airplay programme.

In 2019, the Fund spent nearly £100,000 supporting serving personnel and their families at RAF Lossiemouth.

RAF Families Federation Brighten Your Day

The RAF Families Federation and the Annington Trust came together to invite applications for funding from all members of the RAF Family for items that could brighten their day or make things easier during this unprecedented time of Lockdown and Social Distancing due to COVID19 restrictions. I was lucky enough to be nominated by Cpl Lucy Reed for a bunch of flowers.

May, like for many, was a month of 'should of' that never occurred! My 'should of' included: going on holiday, receiving a refund, enjoying my 40th birthday, watching Guns N' Roses & Ronan Keating, visiting friends in London and my parents visiting. Unfortunately, the most important 'should of' was moving into our forever ever home.

It would have been easy to dwell, don't get me wrong there was tears and tantrums, but in my true style I looked to the positives: new adventures are just delayed, the refund will arrive eventually (deposit for the next holiobol!), dressing up as a princess (tiara included) for a virtual party with the besties on my birthday, meals are postponed not cancelled, concerts are rescheduled plus I will, of course, meet my parents & friends again soon. Our forever home is still there and waiting; however, I now have a worried husband as I have more time to make decisions on 'needs' for the new house!

So, let's look for the positives, after all it's those memories that will make you smile and be happy.





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