

# ARIES

The Magazine of RAF Shawbury

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SHAWBURY**

Edition 4  
**2022**







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## ARIES TEAM

**Editor:** Sqn Ldr Kim Leach  
**Deputy Editor:** Flt Lt Ade Vine  
**Editor's Assistant:** Vacant

### Aries Squadron Representatives:

**CFS (H):** Flt Lt Burgess  
**660 Sqn AAC:** WO Simpson  
**670 Sqn AAC:** Maj Marsden  
**60 Sqn:** Flt Lt Edwards  
**705 Sqn:** Maj Gittos  
**DCASO:** WO Murphy-Brown  
**ATC:** SAC Coulthard

### Distribution:

Mr Frank Young, Central Registry  
 Mr Colin Woolley, Central Registry  
 Mrs Cheryl Foster, HIVE  
 RAF Shawbury Road Reps

### Front Cover Design:

Mr Chris Roberts, Graphics Officer

### Photography:

Mr Ian Forshaw  
 Mr Dave Granger

### Enquiries:

**Email:** SHY-AriesMagazine@mod.gov.uk  
**Tel:** (mil) 95531 7572 or 7177  
**Tel:** (civ) 01939 250351 x7572 or 7177

### Date of Next Edition:

Submissions for Edition 1 2023  
 to be received by  
 8th February 2022 to  
 SHY-AriesMagazine@mod.gov.uk

### Published by:

Lance Media Group Ltd  
 1st Floor, Tailby House, Bath Rd,  
 Kettering, NN16 8NL

**Tel:** 01536 334 222

**Designed by:** Jo Glen

### Advertising:

Darren Greenhead  
**Email:** darren@lancemedia.co.uk  
**Tel:** (01536) 680 414

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### COVER PICTURE:

60 Squadron carry the Colour at the Remembrance Parade in Shrewsbury



## Editor's Welcome

By Squadron Leader Kim Leach

**W**elcome to the final edition of the

Aries Magazine for 2022. This edition is full of the latest news, including the Aries Awards evening, Alpine Eagle Adventure Training Exercise and a notable career milestone achieved by Master Aircrewman Diable of 2000 hours instructing.



You can also read about how some of our trainees from the Defence College of Air and Space Operations have been busy supporting an interesting, historical and environmental project; this involved working with the Praise Bee charity and Historic England to restore the moat at the former site of Hunkington Manor and rewild the site to attract bees and wildlife.

At this time of year, we also remember those who have gone before us; our personnel were honoured to take part in the annual Remembrance Parade in Shrewsbury, followed by a commemorative Service at the Quarry Park Memorial, which was led by the Rev (Wg Cdr) Bissell. Representatives from RAF Shawbury also laid wreaths at 29 ceremonies, which were held in local towns and villages throughout Shropshire.

This edition also marks a change in the way the magazine will be distributed. Due to the current economic situation, our publisher has informed us that it is no longer viable to produce the magazine in hard copy and it will become a digital online version. You can read Edition 4, the Winter 2022 issue of Aries, the official magazine for RAF Shawbury on line at News | RAF Shawbury | Royal Air Force (mod.uk) - <https://www.raf.mod.uk/our-organisation/stations/raf-shawbury/news/> or at [www.rafmags.co.uk](http://www.rafmags.co.uk) where previous back issues are available. You can also subscribe for free, as well as keeping up to date with other RAF magazine titles.

I will finish by wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and a happy and peaceful New Year.

# FOREWORD

by Group Captain Phil Wadlow, Station Commander, Commandant of No. 1 Flying Training School and Commandant of the Defence College of Air and Space Operations.

**I**t gives me both pleasure and sadness to write this forward to the Aries Magazine as I sit here nearing the end of my handover to Group Captain Andy Baron at the end of a 2-year tour that seems to have flown by in the blink of an eye. Throughout the entire tour I have never failed to be impressed by all at Shawbury from the most junior trainee to the most seasoned contractor – the desire to deliver and support the best training possible has been a constant.

December 2020 seems like a long time ago when the focus was heavily on COVID and continuing to deliver training, whilst keeping everyone as safe as possible. That we, collectively carried on training with next to no break in output is a testament to the dedication of our workforce. It was not

lost on me that many of the people going to work each day were doing so whilst genuinely scared for their and their family's wellbeing. Fortunately, COVID now seems a long way behind us, and the second half of my tour has been relatively normal.

The whole tour has been fantastic, the warm welcome given to myself and my wife Rachael by all at Shawbury and those in the local area has been humbling and means there is real sadness that we are now moving out and heading back down south. I will endeavour to return for a visit at some point and whenever I see a black and yellow helicopter in the sky will reflect happily on a great 2 years in Shropshire. All the best to you all for the future and please give Andy the warm welcome you gave to me.



## Wing Commanders' Welcome

RAF Shawbury has recently welcomed two Wing Commanders appointed to Officer Commanding Wing roles.

**W**ing Commander James Sills assumed command of Engineering and Logistic Wing (ELW) in August. Wing Commander Sills is an Aerosystems Engineer with experience of both rotary and fast-jet appointments. His roles have included managing Survival Equipment at RAF Coningsby, as the Junior Engineering Officer at RAF Lossiemouth working with Tornado and aviation airworthiness policy with Joint Helicopter Command. In more senior roles he has managed a Technical Training Contract and has been the Mechanical System Engineering Authority for Tornado. Working with Defence Equipment and Support he was responsible for systems integration on Typhoon. He has deployed with Expeditionary Air Wings and Groups in the Middle East where he was the Principal Engineer advising Duty Holders across the Joint Operations Area.

Wing Commander Sills spends his spare time keeping fit through swimming, cycling and running, and, when time permits, he is also a keen SCUBA diver.



**W**ing Commander Mark Paxman assumed command of the Defence College of Air and Space Operations (DCASO) in September. Wing Commander Paxman is an Air Operations (Control) Officer, whose service has included terminal air traffic, air-land integration, defence engagement and instructional duties. He has served at RAF Lyneham as an Air Traffic Controller and also with the Tactical Air Traffic Control Unit, conducting temporary landing zone operations on numerous exercise and operations in the UK and overseas.

No stranger to RAF Shawbury, he has been an instructor on the then Central Air Traffic Control School (Now DCASO), training both ab-initio controllers and trainee instructors. He has served on various overseas deployments including Afghanistan and Iraq frequently working with the Army and NATO forces advising on air planning, defence engagement and security sector reform.

More recently he was the MARSHALL Programme Manager, responsible for the delivery of the circa £2b national Air Traffic Control Programme. Wing Commander Paxman has always had a passion for the outdoors, is an RAF Cresta Rider, canoe coach and sailing instructor.





# The Assault Glider Trust - The final frontier

On Tuesday 22 Nov 2022 the Assault Glider Trust (AGT) held a farewell meeting for members of the Trust in the WO and Sgts' Mess at RAF Shawbury. The event was attended by Gp Capt Dickie Allen (rtd) the President of the AGT, Lt Col Pearce CO 9 Regt and 32 members.



The event included a presentation and lunch to mark the completion of the project. The origins of the AGT date back to the year 2000, when veterans of the Midland Branch of the Glider Pilot Regiment Association decided to construct a complete Airspeed Horsa assault glider to serve as an appropriate memorial to airborne forces in the Midlands.

Of the several hundred Horsa gliders used in the Second World War, many were built in Birmingham, and were assembled and tested at West Midlands airfields such as RAF Cosford, Shawbury and Sleaf before being delivered to the Glider Pilot Regiment's operational squadrons. Surprisingly, no complete example of the Horsa has been preserved anywhere in the world.

While honouring two Midlands glider-borne regiments, the South Staffords and the Oxf & Bucks Light Infantry, both of which acquitted themselves with outstanding gallantry, no memorial would be complete without reference to the Royal Air Force crews who towed the gliders, dropped para troops, and kept ground forces resupplied during the battle. The great airborne battles in NW Europe and the Mediterranean are well chronicled, but the Burma campaign must never be forgotten. Six brigades of Chindits were inserted behind Japanese lines, many by glider, and were resupplied almost entirely from the air. The smaller, metal-framed American Waco CG4A glider was used in these operations.

The project commenced in the summer of 2000 and the Horsa glider finally went on display



at the Overloon War Museum in the Netherlands in 2019. RAF Shawbury hosted the AGT from 2000 to 2014, before the Horsa went into storage at RAF Cosford in 2014.

The aircraft was acquired by the Overloon War Museum in 2019 and was the centre of attraction at the 75th Anniversary commemoration of the Battle of Arnhem in Osterbek where the Prince of Wales, now King Charles III was one of the many visitors to board the aircraft.

The AGT would like to thank RAF Shawbury for their support over the years and the WO and Sgts' Mess for hosting the final formal gathering of the volunteers.

**By Gary Wann**



For more information about the AGT, see the Trust website:

<https://www.assaultglidertrust.co.uk/>

# Padre's Peace

**A**t the time of writing this article, early November, the weather has turned colder. There are clear signs that we are moving from Autumn into the winter months. As a keen runner, I for one, enjoy those cold crisp winter morning getting out into the fresh air.

As we journey towards the end of the year, the early morning frost can also remind us that we are moving into the season of Advent. This is a season within the liturgical year observed by many Christians as a time of expectant waiting and preparation for the celebration of the birth of the Christ child at Christmas.

As we meet together with family and friends and celebrate the giving and receiving of gifts, let us remember that Christmas is also a time to think of others and reflect on those difficult and challenging events of the year that may have brought pain and distress.

However the last year has shaped you, and those you love, it is my hope that we will all be able to discover the meaning of the Christmas story, in all its breadth and mystery.

**Padre Alastair Bissell**



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# Gala Awards' Evening

## RAF Shawbury commemorates the Aries round-the-world flight

On 20th October 2022, the Officers' Mess at RAF Shawbury was the venue for a special Gala evening to celebrate the achievements of personnel at RAF Shawbury. The evening formally recognised the military personnel, Civil Servants and contractors who had made a significant contribution to the base and the local community during the last year.

The event also paid tribute to the aircrew that flew the first ARIES round-the-world flight. In 1944, RAF navigation training was centred at the Empire Air Navigation School at RAF Shawbury and a Lancaster bomber PD 328 named ARIES was offered to the School for research flights. In October 1944, ARIES undertook the first RAF circumnavigation of the world, under the command of Wing Commander McKinley. The trip was successful, and ARIES returned after 53 days having flown over 200 hours, setting new world records. Aries was the first British military aircraft to fly around the world, and covered almost 36,000 nautical miles on this historic flight.

Group Captain Phil Wadlow, the Station Commander, was delighted to welcome 2 special guests, His Majesty's Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Shropshire, Major General (Retired) John Crackett and also the Honorary Colonel of 9 Regiment Army Air Corps, Colonel Tim Peake. The following awards were presented:

### Most Outstanding Contribution to RAF Shawbury (Civilian)

Mrs J Sheffield

### Most Outstanding Contribution to RAF Shawbury (Military)

Air Specialist (Class 1) J Pearsall

### Sporting Achievement Award

Flight Lieutenant R Robertson

### Unsung Hero Award

Flying Officer J Nicholas and Sgt G Collier

### Community Spirit Award

Sergeant A Ford

### Most Outstanding Team Award

RAF Shawbury Air Traffic Control Squadron

### Most Outstanding Individual Award

Flight Lieutenant A Martin

### The Lifetime Achievement Award

Mr P Sowerby

### The Wing Commander McKinley Memorial Award

Lieutenant J Yates RN, Warrant Officer A Cracknell, Sergeant B Clasper, Corporal M Sullivan, Lance Corporal N Chapman, Private D Cansfield



*Most Outstanding Contribution to RAF Shawbury (Civilian)*



*Most Outstanding Contribution to RAF Shawbury (Military)*



*Major General Crackett and Colonel Peake talk to the Guard of Honour from 28 Sqn (Shawbury) Air Cadets*





*Sporting Achievement Award*



*Community Spirit Award*



*Most Outstanding Individual Award*



*Most Outstanding Team Award*



*The Wing Commander McKinley Memorial Award*



*Lifetime Achievement Award*



*Unsung Hero Award*



## ... Gala Awards' Evening

At this year's event, two new awards were also awarded - the Station Commander's Best Cadet Award and the Silver Award. The Silver Award was presented to individuals who have provided exemplary collective service to, or under Command, of a RAF Shawbury Unit.

**Station Commander's Best Cadet**  
Cadet Warrant Officer B McAleese

### The Silver Award

**From Ascent:** Mr L Calderwood, Mr B Sokhi, Mr T Nicholas, Mr A Reid  
**From Airbus:** Mr J Hughes, Mr K Grant  
**From ESS:** Mrs L Gillespie, Mrs L Whitelegg  
**From Midwest, Station Workshops and SSS respectively:** Mr C Jaundrell, Mr J Harris, Mr P Murphy

Station Commander's Commendation Awards were presented to all the nominees to recognise their excellent contribution in support of Defence and the local community.

Group Captain Wadlow said:  
*"This event has been a very special occasion for 2 reasons: firstly, we commemorated a special event which took place in 1944, when the ARIES set off for its record breaking mission. Secondly, we celebrated the talent, commitment and achievements of all the nominated personnel. I was delighted that we were also joined by our special guests His Majesty's Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Shropshire, Major General (Retired) John Crackett and the Honorary Colonel of 9*



**Station Commander's Best Cadet**



**The Silver Award (Airbus)**

*Regiment Army Air Corps, Colonel Tim Peake, who presented the awards. I would also like to thank 28 Squadron RAF Air*



**The Silver Award (ESS)**

*Cadets, who provided the immaculate Guard of Honour. Congratulations to all the nominees and award winners."*



**The Silver Award (Ascent)**



**The Silver Award (Midwest, Station Workshops and SSS)**





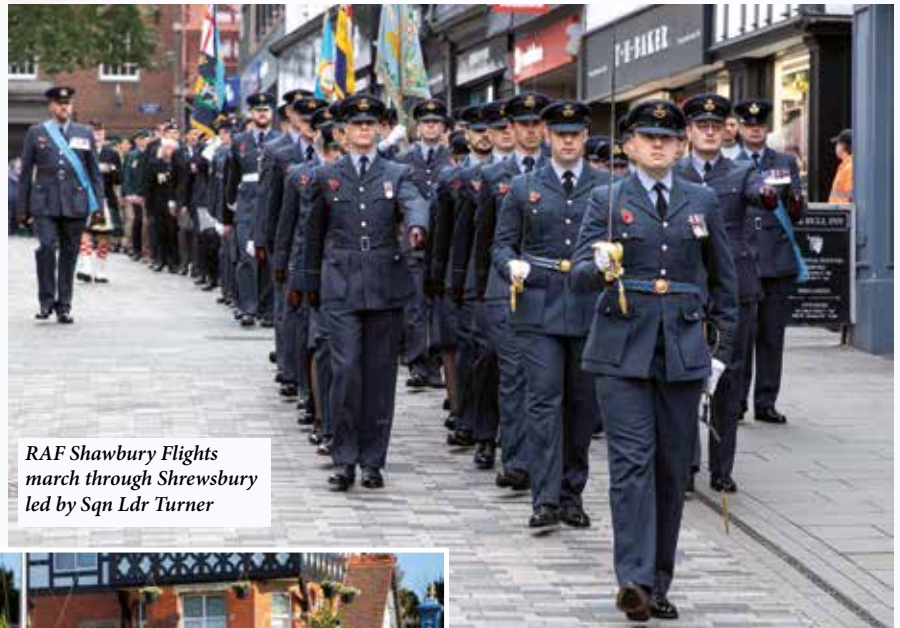
# Lest We Forget

## RAF Shawbury Remembers

On Sunday 13th November the Station Commander and personnel from RAF Shawbury participated in the annual Remembrance event in Shrewsbury. The Mayor, Councillor Elisabeth Roberts, led a civic procession, including the Sixty Squadron Colour Party and two tri-Service RAF Shawbury Flights, from Shrewsbury Castle.

At the Quarry, military units, local dignitaries, veterans, cadets, charities and civilian organisations gathered for the Act of Remembrance and two minutes silence at 1100 hrs. Following the silence, wreaths were laid in remembrance of those who gave their all in conflict and wars. The Station Commander, Group Captain Wadlow, Commanding Officer 2 Maritime Air Wing, Commander Brown, and Commanding Officer 9 Regiment Army Air Corps, Lieutenant Colonel Pearce, laid wreaths on behalf of RAF Shawbury and the tri-Services.

After the Remembrance acts the Parade marched past the senior dignitaries and military officials with the RAF Shawbury Flights commanded by Squadron Leader



*RAF Shawbury Flights march through Shrewsbury led by Sqn Ldr Turner*



*The Station Commander, OC 2 MAW and OC 9 Regt AAC conduct the Act of Remembrance*



*The Last Post is sounded commencing the Act of Remembrance.*

Turner from the Defence College of Air and Space Operations. Further afield personnel from Shawbury

attended over 20 Remembrance parades and service across Shropshire. *We will remember them.*



*Senior dignitaries and officials prepare to lay their wreaths*



*The Parade marches past*



# Colonel Tim Peake – finds space in his diary to get back into the Shawbury orbit!

RAF Shawbury was delighted to welcome Colonel Tim Peake, Honorary Colonel of 9 Regiment Army Air Corps for a short visit to the base on 19-21 Oct 22.



*Presentation of a second bar to the LSGCM to WO1 Sweeney by Col Peake*



*Presentation of a second bar to the LSGCM to Sqn Ldr Sheppeck by Col Peake*



*Presentation of a first bar to the LSGCM to Mr Brompton by Col Peake*



*Presentation of Captain's rank slide to WO1 Riley.*

During the visit, Col Tim was presented with a painting by Lt Col Pearce, which was commissioned for the Army Air Corps by the Army Air Corps Charity to mark Col Tim's appointment as the Honorary Colonel of 9 Regt AAC. The painting, which was painted by Alex Chamberlin, depicts Col Peake within his Soyuz capsule. In his paintings, Alex, a veteran himself, celebrates the achievements of veterans who have gone on to exciting and inspirational careers.

Col Tim was the guest of honour at the Annual Aries Awards evening, which is covered as a separate story in the edition. He was also invited to present a variety of awards, commendations,

flying milestones and Long Service and Good Conduct Medals (LSGCM) to personnel in 9 Regt AAC.

As part of the visit, Col Tim took the opportunity to see the Defence College of Air and Space Operations.

Col Tim had some wise and inspirational words for our trainees: *"Try and make the most of every job that you do and when you love your job, even more so. It can be a sad moment when they come to an end; I think back to my last flight on the Apache, for example, so make each moment count and enjoy every day, but always be ready for the next opportunity because life might just through you something unbelievable."*



*Regimental photo of 9 Regt AAC personnel and Col Tim Peake*





Presentation by CO 9AAC to Col Tim Peake of an oil painting commissioned by the AAC of Col Peake and his Soyuz capsule



Presentation in recognition of achieving 9000 hours to Ft Lt Sean Leach



Presentation of AOC 22 Gp Commendation to FS Logan



Presentation of RAF Safety Centre "Well Done" to Mr McDonald



Presentation of AOC 22 Gp Commendation to FS Turner



Presentation of AAC retirement Guidon to Mr Hall by Col Peake on behalf of the AAC Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess



Presentation in recognition of achieving 1000 hours to Capt Marshall

# DCASO Dits

With the summer months behind us we are greeted with a plethora of shades of red; autumnal leaves, toffee apples, fireworks... and of course our new OC DCASO! We welcome Wg Cdr Mark Paxman who joins us from HQ Air Command where he was the MARSHALL Programme Manager within Air Capability. Having previously completed a tour at Shawbury as an ATC Instructor, he has quickly settled into the role and is busy getting to know the team who are busy bringing him up to speed with all things DCASO.

## AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL TRAINING SQUADRON

In September this year, ATCTS deployed 10 members of the squadron to Bavaria to take part in Ex ALPINE EAGLE. 2 teams of 5 took part in multiple activities such as white-water canoeing, mountain biking and hiking. They also took part in the famous Alpine activity of Klettersteig, meaning "metal pathway" in German. This involved traversing near vertical mountain sides with only carabiners and ropes clinging

to metal hooks embedded within the rock. They also made good use of the local outdoor swimming pools, which were heated to combat the 0 degrees Celsius evening temperature. Oh, and of course they had to sample the thing Bavaria is most famous for.... beer!

The annual Aries Awards were held on the 20 Oct 22. Lt J Yates RN and Sgt B Clasper were presented with the



Wg Cdr McKinley Memorial Award for their direct involvement saving the life of one of their colleagues. The West Midlands Ambulance Service Incident Commander sent his thanks with the following words: "This case is proof that having staff trained in basic life support, CPR and use of an AED is crucial whilst awaiting the arrival of ambulance and specialist medical resources. The personnel that were present at the indoor football pitch on Wednesday evening should be immensely proud of themselves. They did all the right things, in the right order and did it well – they saved their colleague's life and ensured that he can return to both his family and friends without significant neurological damage". Everyone within DCASO sends their sincere thanks to all those involved.

## ASSURANCE SQUADRON

A difficult start to the month of July in Assurance Sqn as a few members of the Sqn began having some serious withdrawal symptoms as there hadn't been a Sqn Bake-Off for some time. A date therefore was placed in the diary, as Series 3 of the Assurance Sqn Bake-off was confirmed. All entries were tasted, and voting followed, resulting in a resounding win for WO Coyle's showstopper Lemon Drizzle Sponge.

A very successful evening for members of Assurance Sqn at the

annual Aries Awards. Both nominees, Flt Lt Robertson and Flt Lt Martin went on to win their categories. Flt Lt Robertson won the Sporting Achievement Award for her efforts representing the RAF in powerlifting. She looks forward to representing the RAF and the UK at the World Powerlifting Champs next month. Flt Lt Martin won the Most Outstanding Individual Award for his charitable work throughout the year, as well as the organisation of RAF Shawbury's Jubilee celebration and Annual Reception. An outstanding

achievement for them both and huge congratulations to them from everyone in Assurance Sqn.

Finally, congratulations to both Fg Off Mills and Fg Off Buckley in completing the Gower Ultra Marathon, which saw them running 50 miles around the Gower Peninsular in a time of 11hrs 20min for Buckley and 11hr 40min for Mills.

A total of £1035 was raised for a local charity foundation.



## AEROSPACE BATTLE MANAGEMENT TRAINING SQUADRON (ABMTS)

ABMTS has continued to be busy, frequently participating in Force Development and Adventure Training opportunities. Although the squadron has been occupied with both surveillance and weapons courses, members of all sections have found time to partake in incredible Force Development schemes. Flt Lt Hobbs, FS Hamm, AS1 Gisborn and AS1 Greenslade took part in Ex Alpine Eagle where they took part in several activities such as white-water rafting, mountain biking, rock climbing and many more. This helped build confidence and leadership qualities. In addition, Flt Lt Davis also participated in the Wilderness Eagle scheme, which saw him enjoy a canoeing expedition throughout Sweden.

STF welcomed 35 cadets and 3 accompanying school staff members from Shrewsbury School for a visit on 13 Oct 22. The purpose of the visit was to provide the cadets with an insight into military life. ABMTS hosted the school where they were all shown the roles of Identification Officer and Weapons Controller with an interactive brief on the Tac Sim.



The pupils were shown how the surveillance and weapons teams work together to detect and react to possible threats to the UK. The pupils were also shown how Shawbury trains its future Surveillance and Weapons officers in the simulator before heading off to RAF Boulmer.

Unfortunately, the squadron has seen a few members depart in recent times; AS1 Brown who has sadly left SSF but hasn't gone far as he is now a civilian working with Aquila. We have also lost Sgt Langworthy, Cpl Halliwell and AS1 Harris who are all moving on to bigger and better things.

## AIR AND SPACE OPERATIONS TRAINING SQUADRON (ASOTS)

ASOTS says farewell and good luck to Cpl Wright, Cpl Avery (promoted to Sgt) and WO Marriott, who made the difficult decision, for the greater good, to take up post as the WO TG7 (FO). Cpl Lockwood departs for a posting overseas and is promoted upon return, congratulations. We welcome back Cpls Hodson, Rowe & Quiney and FS Lee from overseas/exercises, and Sgt Conaghan arrives back to ASOTS from Brize Norton.

Always keen to support the station activities, in Sep ASOTS provided Air Space Operations Specialist Course (ASOSC) 2 to be the Guard of Honour for the Autumn Reception, which

was cut short due to the death of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II. As a result, ASOTS were heavily involved with the King's Proclamation parades in Shrewsbury & Telford, providing 12 of the 14 pers. ASOSC 3 also assisted with Landowners' Day as parking marshals.

Oct saw ASOTS delivering to 7 different courses, playing musical chairs at times, to ensure training continued. The Sqn also played a pivotal role in the Aries Awards with over half of the committee members coming from ASOTS and both Flight Operations Training Course (Officers) 12 and ASOSC 3 providing workforce for the event. Congratulations to Sgt Ford for winning

the Unsung Hero Award and Cpl Chapman, a runner up in the most Outstanding Military Individual Award.

ASOSC 2 & 3, plus Sgts Conaghan, Dale, Ford, Cpls Dodd, Hope & Tregoning all participated in a very well received, community project at Hunkington Moat, just outside Shrewsbury near Attingham Park, where they assisted in the planting of a wildflower meadow as part of the Praise Bee Charity. The charity has links with RAF Shawbury and the MOD through its work in establishing wild bee populations on MOD sites, in conjunction with DIO.

# Operation ARTISAN

## Joint Arms Control Implementation Group Training Exercise held at RAF Shawbury

The Joint Arms Control Implementation Group (JACIG) is responsible for the delivery of the UK's legally and politically binding, international Arms Control Treaty obligations and is based at RAF Henlow, Bedfordshire. One of their tasks is to conduct multi-national Arms Control training events, the latest of which culminated with a training inspection at RAF Shawbury with students from Azerbaijan, Kirgizstan and Turkmenistan taking part.

Whilst still at RAF Henlow, the foreign students were educated on the Treaty on Conventional Forces Europe (CFE). They then used their knowledge to plan and conduct the training inspection at RAF Shawbury. All of this was part of Op ARTISAN, an annual training event that enables Arms Control Verification Agencies from Central Asia to train alongside their UK counterparts. This activity is principally about building partner capacity, but it also provides an excellent opportunity to enhance and further develop vital Defence Engagement. It also allows the

participants to work closely together and understand how different countries apply Arms Control Treaties. Crucially these Joint exercises help to identify 'best practice' which can be applied to future Arms Control activity.

The day-long exercise started at Station Headquarters with a briefing delivered by Shawbury's Sqn Ldr Smith on behalf of the Station Commander. This brief was then translated into the Russian language by JACIG's interpreters. The majority of the day was spent inspecting the numerous aircraft stored

at the Station, where the students ensured that the types and numbers of aircraft declared in the UK's Annual Data Exchange matched the actual aircraft held on site. The student Guest Inspectors all considered the exercise very successful. One Azeri Army Colonel commented on how well the aircraft in storage were maintained, while another enjoyed his lunch at the 'aircrew' feeder. All were particularly impressed by the professionalism of the Station workforce, both military and civilian during their visit to RAF Shawbury.

**Squadron Leader Smith**

## STEM Ambassadors support World of Work Week

Our Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) Ambassadors from No. 1 Flying Training School were delighted to visit Darnhall Primary School, Winsford recently to support their World of Work Week. We hope that the children learnt all about the science behind how a helicopter flies. Our aircrew certainly enjoyed meeting the children and answering all their questions.





# Flying Milestones

## 2000 Hours Instructing in the Air!

Master Aircrew Diable from the Central Flying School (Helicopters) Squadron at RAF Shawbury recently achieved a significant, and comparatively rare, milestone of 2000 hours instructing in the air.

Master Aircrew Diable trains Rearcrew Instructors for all three Services. Once qualified, these instructors may remain at RAF Shawbury to hone their skills instructing on Number 1 Flying Training School, be posted to Operational Conversion Units to feed Combat Ready crews to front line squadrons, or return to front line squadrons to support continuous improvement and upgrading skills.

Congratulations from everyone at RAF Shawbury.



*Master Aircrew Diable*

## 5000 Hours

In another notable milestone for CFS (H), Flt Lt English achieved his 5000 Hours Milestone.

OC CFS(H) Sqn, Sqn Ldr Shipley, presented the Hours Milestone Certificate in recognition of this accomplishment.

Well done!



*Flt Lt English (L) is presented with his certificate*



# Alpine Eagle

50K bike ride across  
to Austria finished!

During a week in September, a lucky few from RAF Shawbury were selected to take part in Alpine Eagle in Bavaria as part of the Eagles Scheme run by the HQ Air Robson Academy of Resilience.

The lucky few that were selected were Squadron Leader James, Flight Lieutenant Hobbs, Flight Sergeant Hamm, Air Specialist 1 Greenslade and Air Specialist 1 Gisborn. After 10 long hours of travelling, everyone finally arrived at the RAF Robson Resilience Centre in Bavaria to be given a warm welcome by all the staff.

To start with, we were given a week-long schedule which included hiking, rock climbing, Klettersteig, mountain biking and white-water rafting. We were equipped with our own Garmin watches for the week that monitored our heart rates, stress levels and sleep patterns. We were fortunate enough to have sunny blue skies throughout the whole trip, which complimented the outstanding views Bavaria had to offer. These activities tested everyone who was involved through developing individual mental resilience, physical durability and emotional distress. During the week, the team was fortunate enough to travel into Austria whilst mountain biking, covering 50 km of demanding terrain.

The final exercise the team participated in was called Kletterstiege, which meant the team had to climb up a rock face which was around 200ft high, assisted by pre-positioned lines and ladders.



Sunny day for white  
water rafting



Stopped for lunch  
and photo break



Kletterstiege,  
almost at the top.

Whilst the location and events were fun, the brilliant training staff made the experience even better than expected. Overall, it was an incredible experience, and we would all highly recommend it to anyone with an interest in the opportunity for a challenge, and to build personal and team resilience.

AS1 Gisborn  
AS1 Greenslade



# Tactical Exercise – Post Exercise Report

During October, 445-14 course deployed to Middle Wallop (MW) for Exercise Pegasus Warrior, the Sixty Sqn Tactical Exercise (TACEX). The exercise provided a new and unfamiliar environment for the trainees to operate in a tactical scenario, and to test the tactical skills they had learnt during the preceding phases of training.

The scenario built on a fictitious tactical scenario, with enemy forces pushing into allied territory; this required a forward deployment of Sixty Sqn aircraft to MW to provide support to allied forces under threat. The tactical exercise escalated over a period of 4 days, with the scenario building as enemy forces pushed further into the Area of Operations (AO) and developed greater capabilities. Each flight introduced different rapid planning considerations, as well as airborne re-tasking.

Trainees and staff deployed from RAF Shawbury to MW via air and MT. The journey was divided by a stop at Gloucester Airport for crew change and refuel, giving all crews a chance to sample operations from a new and busy airfield with differing procedures from the usual Shawbury

norms. Arrival and induction at MW continued into the evening, after which trainees trialled local delicacies such as Adam's Best Kebab and warmed to the luxurious transit messing arrangements. Tuesday commenced bright and early with the first of the deployed flights experiencing the sparse planning facilities of a Forward Operating Base environment. The focus in the air was on Handling Pilot duties, an introduction to the Salisbury Plain Training Area, as well as a chance for the instructors to demonstrate what they expected from Non-Handling Pilot (NHP) duties on the exercise.

The intensity increased on Wednesday as the time available for the rapid planning was reduced, and the trainees stepped up to NHP duties in the Salisbury Plain Training Area. Thursday was the culmination of the exercise,

and it included a final assault on enemy forces with time-critical elements for the trainees to achieve.

With the successful completion of the exercise, Thursday night offered a rare opportunity for students and staff alike to let off some steam with a 3-course meal and night out, sampling the best that a Thursday night in Andover had to offer.

Personnel returned to RAF Shawbury on Friday, offering a chance to reflect on what the trainees had learnt during the week. This included the benefits of having constituted crews and consistent scheduling, which provided excellent continuity throughout the exercise. In addition to this, the trainees had benefitted from the chance to operate outside the relatively sanitised airspace of the Dedicated User Area around Shawbury, in particular with regards to the increased captaincy, fluency of comms and joining unfamiliar airfields that these operations require.

Overall, the trainees were able to look back on TACEX as a challenging week, but one that had clearly been a good learning experience and provided beneficial training to us all. The exercise gave us confidence that we could achieve fairly complex tasks whilst operating out of a completely unfamiliar airfield and in a new environment and will undoubtedly help to improve us as future aviators.

*Deployed at MW*



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# Be Seen, Be Safer

Squadron Leader Kim Leach shares her experience of RAF Shawbury's Be Seen, Be Safer community safety campaign.

As RAF Shawbury's Be Seen, Be safer campaign enters its 8th year, it is time to reflect on the campaign and what it has achieved.

As a busy tri-Service helicopter training base located in the beautiful Shropshire countryside within Low Flying Area 9 (LFA 9), our aircrew share their training area with many equine businesses, riding schools, liveries, and horse owners. With up to 100 flights each day departing from RAF Shawbury, it is inevitable that military aircrew will sometimes encounter horse-riders during essential flying training activities. As well as training Shawbury-based aircrew, LFA 9 is often used for low-level training exercises and transit by visiting helicopters from other bases in the UK, including helicopters from the Joint Helicopter Command.

Launched in 2014, the Be Seen, Be Safer campaign has gone from strength to strength. At the start of the campaign, it was evident that many horse-riders were very aware of the road safety benefits of wearing high-visibility kit, but they were unaware of the potential 'air safety' benefits of wearing high-visibility kit when riding off-road. In addition to this, aircrew had great difficulty in seeing horse riders, if the riders were not wearing high-visibility kit.

The aim of the campaign is to promote the wearing of high visibility clothing by riders in LFA 9 so that they are more visible and can be seen earlier by helicopter aircrew. The campaign has a 2-fold approach – firstly, to build a relationship with the riding community and promote the wearing of high-visibility kit. Secondly, to develop a safety culture and greater awareness in our aircrew to ensure that they understand the actions to take to minimise disturbance to horses and riders and how to report any incident. As RAF Shawbury delivers basic helicopter training to tri-Service aircrew, the safety culture developed by the aircrew whilst at RAF Shawbury is an excellent foundation to build on, and share with others, throughout their careers.



Throughout this campaign, RAF Shawbury has worked closely with The British Horse Society (BHS). The BHS Safety team have provided advice and information and attended events such as the annual Rider Awareness Day, to share expert safety advice to the guests. The Rider Awareness Day has proved to be a key engagement event, giving the riders the opportunity to get airborne and experience for themselves the view from the Juno cockpit.

From their aerial vantage point, the riders had the additional challenge of spotting military personnel on bicycles, simulating a pilot's view of riders on horseback, with and without high visibility clothing. This enabled the riders to appreciate the challenges that the aircrew face, and the advantage of the earlier warning that wearing high visibility clothing gives to aircrew. Educational talks about the campaign have also been delivered throughout the year to local Pony Clubs, Bridleway Groups and Riding Clubs to reach an even wider audience.

Wing Commander Lee Turner, Officer Commanding Operations Wing and the Aerodrome Operator at RAF Shawbury said: "As part of the training syllabus,







our instructors teach the trainees to consider riders and if they can see them, they will do all that they can to avoid them. However, conducting violent avoiding manoeuvres when close to riders significantly increases the potential for disturbance. Therefore, if riders are seen late, our aircraft will usually over-fly in a gentle climb, as this is the safest option to minimise disturbance. I am very supportive of this campaign, which makes a real difference to the safety of horse riders in LFA 9. I hope that riders will continue to work with us to ensure that LFA 9 is as safe as possible for both riders and our aircrew."

Feedback and evaluation of this campaign has proven its success. We are delighted that our campaign has been shared with other units to ensure that our safety message is spreading throughout the country to create a safer environment for all.

More information on RAF Shawbury's Be Seen, Be Safer campaign and advice from The British Horse Society can be found at: the links below:

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**...to avoid you**

**Be Seen - Be Safer**

MOD flight trials have shown that high-visibility clothing significantly improves the detection rate of riders in open countryside. Whilst high-visibility clothing may not prevent an over-flight as there may be other safety considerations, it does provide a considerable, cost-effective improvement to rider safety

RAF Shawbury in partnership with **The British Horse Society**

Find out more at: <https://www.raf.mod.uk/our-organisation/stations/raf-shawbury/flying-info/>  
[www.horseincidents.org.uk](http://www.horseincidents.org.uk) [www.bhs.org.uk](http://www.bhs.org.uk)

The British Horse Society is a registered charity, No. 210594 and 10238018

<https://www.raf.mod.uk/our-organisation/stations/raf-shawbury/flying-info/>  
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*Congratulations to MEF student AC Marco Barba on completion of his first solo*

# GO GLIDING AT RAF SHAWBURY

Learning to fly a glider is not difficult, but there can be a perception that the cost may sometimes put flying beyond reach.

*Below: MEF student AC Leah Wadhams (front) prepares for a first flight with RSGC instructor Will Dean*



At RAF Shawbury we are lucky to have one of 7 regional RAF Gliding and Soaring Association (RAFGSA) gliding clubs located at or near RAF stations. Each club has an excellent range of aircraft, including tandem two-seaters and an assortment of single seat gliders, catering for all standards from the early solo pilot to the advanced cross-country exponent. However, the emphasis lies firmly with training the uninitiated and introducing service persons, civilian MOD employees and their families to this safe but exhilarating aviation sport.

There are a number of funding streams that make flying affordable. Primarily financed by The Malcom Club Fund, the RAFGSA 'Go Solo' Scheme is a fully funded gliding scholarship for regular Junior Rank/JNCOs covering everything required to achieve a first solo flight. This is delivered at RAFGSA clubs. Students are expected to attend regularly in order to make progress.

The second scheme is the Mechanics Endowment Fund (MEF) Gliding Scholarship Course made possible by funding from The RAF Central Fund. Students must be a Phase 1 or 2 trainees, and may be of any rank at RAF Cosford and RAF Shawbury. Ground training includes transferable skills and knowledge of aircraft maintenance that will directly affect safety, airworthiness, human factors, mechanical skills and much more. In the air, the programme is planned so that students get a real taste of gliding with 10 flights. The course is over 3 months and should take about 3 flying days, and is easily achievable during a Phase 2 course.

Lastly there is a Soaring Eagles publicly funded one-day gliding course that follows the British Gliding Association 'Go for Gliding' syllabus. Students are funded for 3 aerotows to 2,000 ft or one hour of flight time. Ten students will have completed the scheme this financial year.

We also have very affordable rates for all other groups within the Service community from a taster flight all the way through to competing in competitions or going away on a soaring week or expedition at another gliding club.





*"It's sick!" MEF student Isaac Adewole after his first flight in a club 2 seat trainer*



*RSGC's Sqn Ldr Alan Swan congratulates Go for Solo student AC Harri Reilly on going solo.*



*RSGC Instructor Geoff Matthews congratulates AC Micky Atherton on completion of his first solo*

If this has attracted your attention and you'd like to join us then, for an informal discussion and more information, contact Sqn Ldr Alan Swan 07834 638625 alan.swan143@mod.gov.uk, or Ian Gallacher, RAF Cosford 95561 Ext 4962 ian.gallacher375@mod.gov.uk, both of whom will be delighted to answer your questions. You can also find more details on our website at: <https://www.rafshawburygc.co.uk> #rafgsa #gliding #raf\_shawbury#raf\_cosford.

# A new look for the Cookson Community Centre



*Child friendly play area*

Thanks to some amazing volunteer work and initiative, the Cookson Community Centre has seen some changes.

The outside patio and child friendly play area has been refurbished with a bright new paint scheme. Thanks go to the efforts of Sgt McGuire, who has given up her own time spending many an afternoon to make this happen. The more than modest outside play area joins the already popular indoor area where Tots' group gathers every Tuesday morning for interactive play.

Tots' group meet from 10:00 until lunch for interactive play for young toddlers and parents. A newly placed ball pit takes its place with other toys, books, and a dedicated

snack area. Events and special occasions are also held with the end of October seeing the group's Halloween party with costumes, story time, games, music and more. The group is always welcoming new families to join and help them adapt to station life.

Along with the changes outside comes a new nursing room opened at the end of November. This new addition, a project by Cpl Croker of DCASO and SCSO FS Bowyer, creates a place for parents who want some privacy when in the centre. The new room features dedicated equipment and comfortable nursing chairs in a calming environment

to help give some excellent one on one time.

The indoor area also provides space for scheduled events, including parenting classes such as infant first aid, a focal point for welfare and community meetings and a place to take time for a friendly chat. New activities are always being planned for onsite and in the Youth Activity Centre and the Cookson Community Centre continue to support personnel and their families at RAF Shawbury.

**Fg Off Harvey**

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## Volunteering at the Commonwealth Games

For years, I've been aware that MOD Civil Servants have 6 days per year which can be used for volunteering activities; however, I had never given it serious consideration until summer 2021, when I saw a shout-out on social media for volunteers to work at the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham during the summer of 2022.

Being a sporty person and with Birmingham on our doorstep, this was too good an opportunity to miss. After a chat with my Line Manager my application went in. Following 2 interviews, and a very comprehensive training package, I found myself

working as part of the Events Services Team (big foam hands squad!) at Smithfield for 6 days last summer, which hosted the 3x3 Basketball including Wheelchair Basketball and the Beach Volleyball events as well as being one of two Festival sites for the Games. From hanging out with 6ft 8in Sainey Jawo from the Gambian team, to high 5'ing hundreds of kids 'and adults' with an oversized foam 'Perry hand', being a part of the Commonwealth Collective, as we were known, was a fantastic experience; it gave me the chance to test my customer service/communication and teamwork skills in another sector with a very multicultural environment and different ways of working. I met people from all over the UK with a variety of backgrounds, but all hugely enthusiastic and on board with the philosophy of the Games.

So, I'm already looking for ideas of how to use my 6 days in 2023 – how will you use yours?

**By Cheryl Foster**



*Some of the Collective with Sainey Jawo.*



# Hunkington Manor Moat Community Project

A team of trainees and trainers from the Defence College of Air and Space Operations at RAF Shawbury have spent a day supporting the Praise Bee Hunkington Manor project.

The moated location, in the parish of Upton Magna, is a well-preserved example of a medieval site and is listed as an ancient monument by Historic England.

Mr Viv Marsh, the project co-ordinator and lead for the Praise Bee charity is working with Historic England to preserve this important area. Parts of the moat have been dredged and the team from Air and Space Operations Specialist Courses 2 and 3 spent time helping to clear undergrowth and plant wildflowers within the outer Tudor Garden and shaded areas, to assist in re-establishing a natural habitat and promote the biodiversity of the reserve. Parts of the site have not been accessed in 500 years, and experts from Chester University and Harper Adams University will be involved with the preservation and biodiversity of the reserve.

The medieval manor, which was originally located on the island created by the moat, is well gone. Legend says it was dismantled block by block when the son of the original owner Mr John Onley, also called John, went off to



*Planting indigenous plants*



*Let's get this cleared.*

Parliament as the MP for Shropshire and left the manor abandoned. It is believed that the blocks of locally quarried Grinshill sandstone, taken from the manor, were used to build parts of what is now St Lucia's church in Upton Magna.

With the moat already cleared, the RAF Shawbury team set to work cutting back overgrown bracken and thorny plants, as well as trimming trees; this clearance will provide access for a technical scan of any surviving archaeology of the manor. The team planted 1040 indigenous plants and 540 bulbs to create a meadow, which should then attract bees and other pollinating insects next Spring. Hedgehog shelters were also built to provide a foothold for these creatures and increase their declining numbers. These shelters may also be used as breeding cover for a new colony of Grass and Adder snakes.

Various locally dignitaries have visited the site and Vice Lord Lieutenant Mark Cuthbert-Brown met and chatted with the team while they were there. The weather was kind, other than for a 30-minute rain shower, and the RAF Shawbury team impressed everyone involved with their high energy levels and the amount of progress they made during their day on the site. Mr Marsh said: "They truly represent a wonderful young section of society coming through their military training."

**Sgt Ford**



*Tooled-up for the task.*



# An update from the Shawbury Military Wives Choir



The last 6 months has been exceptionally busy for Shawbury Military Wives Choir. In June, we participated in the Wem community celebrations for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. We were honoured to perform at the beacon lighting ceremony, as well as at the Proms event on the Saturday evening. In July, we were invited by Blists Hill Museum, to perform during the Queen's baton rally whilst it proceeded through the museum. In full Victorian costume, and on the hottest day of the year, we entertained visitors with a varied repertoire.

On June 8th, we continued our 10th birthday celebrations by welcoming Station Commander, Group Captain Philip Wadlow and Padre Alastair Bissell to our rehearsal. During the evening, the Station Commander planted a beautiful Rowan tree in the grounds of the Station Church to commemorate the anniversary. With the tree securely planted and the official photographs taken, we celebrated inside the church with cupcakes and Pimms.

RAF Shawbury's Families Day event is the choir's primary opportunity for fundraising and recruitment.



Choir members at Families Day

Traditionally, we have a large presence in the hangar where visitors can come along to meet members of the choir and discover what's involved in becoming a member. We also have fun and games, a cake sale, and opportunities to win prizes on the tombola. We were delighted to see so many people come to visit us and support our fundraising efforts. This year, we were very grateful to have received the generous donation of a glider flight from the RAF Shawbury Gliding Club, which enabled us to organise a raffle to raise additional funds. The raffle was supported by local businesses and individuals, who also

donated prizes. This support helped make the raffle a great success. The glider flight was won by a pilot, based at RAF Shawbury and we offer our thanks to him as well as all our other supporters who either donated a prize or bought a ticket.

On September 2nd, Shawbury's Military Wives Choir joined choirs from other military bases to form a 216 strong choir, who participated in a performance at Lincoln Cathedral to an audience of almost 700. The event was one of a series of Cathedral performances to mark ten years since the formation of the Military Wives Choirs organisation. We were joined on the night by the 'Never Such Innocence', choir whose members are all children of military personnel. They gave a wonderful performance of 'Stand Up', which they sang in the final of Britain's got Talent. It was a long and tiring day, but we all enjoyed celebrating this huge milestone for the organisation in such a breath-taking setting.

Finally, we held an open rehearsal at the Station Church on September 7th where we hosted members of the community who were interested in discovering more about the choir and what it would be like to be a member. We coaxed them in with cake and drinks and were rewarded by having several new ladies join our choir.



10th Anniversary tree planting

By Gwen Marsh



# RAF Volleyball Camp

Admin Order received, and attachment returned 4th October 22, 19 days early getting all warmed up and ready to attend the first RAF Volleyball camp of my 24-year career.

Social chatter starts before, then you know people are getting excited and you are not the only one. Arriving early 23rd October 22 after a very wet drive of 2 hours the rain lashing down to take over the accommodation ahead of everyone arriving, travelling from as far away as a 5-hour drive.

1200 hrs and training started with setting up the gym and a warmup session designed to blow out some cobwebs after a quick mobility check. No volleyball in sight saw people jumping, running, and sliding about the court, this then led to the more senior players playing on one court and individuals new to the sport or those that wanted more ball time given the opportunity on another court. Everyone warming up and getting used to the feel of passing, setting, and hitting a volleyball.

Once everyone was sufficiently warmed up a quick couple of games with mixed abilities ensured everyone had a good game with plenty of communication from all sides. A good blow out from day one with 4-5 hours of volleyball which then lead to the accommodation to get freshened up before a chat on how the next day would progress with the normal coach's spouse giving birth (another volleyballer) and someone graciously stepping up from the civilian world to assist (Anthony). I have never been met so warmly by a group of individuals that I have never met



*Hawks and Harriers after their match*

before and it was very pleasing and relaxing to meet everyone without bravado, everyone was there for one reason... to play volleyball.

Day 2 Started nice and early with breakfast from RAF Cranwell before moving on to RAF Digby, a quick warm up ensued with everyone learning to pass on the move (Volleyball a very quick and chaotic game, with everyone on their toes) and jumping at the net in a safe manner. Progressing to passing and setting before a quick game of king on the Hill. Anthony

patiently and expertly demonstrated all he was teaching which showed as personnel picked up and passed better than the morning.

Day 3 saw people breaking into the teams of Harriers and Hawks (Men and Women first team) and the mighty Typhoons (RAF mixed development team). All training continued at different times with the Hawks and Harriers learning their trade positions and the intense 'You have to receive the ball first before you can set up



*Some old and young RAF boys playing for Telford 2nd Men.s team*



*Typhoon after their match*



# Sporting Prowess

Flight Lieutenant Rachael Robertson has excelled in the demanding sport of Powerlifting, progressing from being a complete novice to elite level in less than 4 years. In 2022, she was selected to compete at the National and World Championships for the first time.

Powerlifting involves either participating in one of the 3 'single lift' disciplines of squat, bench press or deadlift, or taking on all 3 combined, which is known as 'Full Power'. Competing at an extremely high level, Rachael has represented the RAF at the UK Armed Forces Powerlifting Championships, achieving second place in the bench press in 2022. She was also selected to compete at the British Women's National Powerlifting Championships in April 2022, finishing 3rd in the Full Power category in her weight class, setting a personal best with a 125kg squat, 75kg bench and 140kg deadlift. This was an incredible achievement, qualifying Rachael to go on to compete at elite level in the Full Power category at the World Powerlifting Championships held in Northern Ireland in November 2022.

Keen not only to excel in the sport as a competitor, Rachael is also a proactive member of the RAF Powerlifting Association, taking on

the role of training coordinator. This involves planning and coordination of British Powerlifting Level 1 & 2 courses, strength and conditioning training and referee courses for all committee members and competitors, with the community ever growing and currently at around 130 personnel.

Flight Lieutenant Robertson also assists in the management of the RAF women's team of 12 competitors and is part of the coaching development team, helping the Training Manager in selection for the squad. She assists in the organisation and running of novice camps and competitions and is an extremely active ambassador for the sport, being highly influential in recruitment for the women's squad.

Since her involvement, the team has gone from strength to strength, culminating recently in their first ever overall UK Armed Forces win this year.

Congratulations!



*Typhoon, hawks and harriers training together.*

an attack'. Typhoons learnt more on positional play too with Anthony once again making everything look so seamless as he passed and set balls, I assume if there was a 50p piece on the court he could have put the volleyball on the spot. Day 3 ended with a mixed Harriers/Hawks playing a local team and the mighty Typhoons playing another, Typhoons a team where no one had played together before the training showed good spirit and comradery forcing a fifth set with an established team, unfortunately although very close Typhoons played very well but were pipped at the net.

Day 4 meant a washup from the previous day and some more excellent training, this time bringing everyone closer together as we played some games of which team could pass the ball quicker which meant lots of laughter as the day ended in a mixed competition enjoyed by all with everyone getting involved.

Day 5 started with a handover of accommodation and everyone saying their goodbyes and looking forward to the next training sessions and seeing who else might be able to attend. Every day ended with everyone requiring freshening up after working so hard honing their volleyball skills, the wealth of experience and knowledge with which personnel were freely sharing was wonderful to hear and see along with comradery throughout meant I would have no doubt attending again, looking forward to shout "Toon... Army". For those personnel and their families in the area, Telford volleyball train Thursday nights and are very welcoming at Telford College of Art and Technology (TCAT).

**Flight Sergeant Mann**

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