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Hello and welcome to the first edition of INSIGHT for 2016. The new year has started in similar fashion to the way 2015 finished, with so many of you engaged in sporting activities, charity drives and just generally making the station a better place to work and live.

Lots of you will have been involved in the Ski Champs this last month as January sees skiers of all abilities from across the RAF taking to the slopes...you are all braver than me as I think I would spend most of my time trying to get back up! Please send us your skiing related stories and pictures and we will publish them at the risk of creating jealousy amongst those that couldn’t make it onto the slopes this year. On another sporting note, you will see the Sub Aqua Club article later in this edition. It is a really informative article and details not only what the club is about but also highlights the numerous opportunities available, such as training and instructor courses.

This is recognised as a very challenging time of the year as families in particular tend to feel more of a strain than at any other time in the calendar. The festive season can put excess pressure on relationships for a whole host of reasons and when you couple that with the pressure that life in the Military and in our case, life on an operational front line unit can place on people, it can lead to relationship breakdowns and ill health to name but a few things. There are a number of support mechanisms in place for us, and the Hive, Padre or Community Support will be able to advise on each of them, but we are fortunate to have an article detailing one such option in this edition. I would draw your eyes on to the article by the RAF Benevolent Fund on ‘Building Stronger’, a free and easy to access on line course that aims to help RAF couples deal with the challenges of family life - there is a web address in the article which you can use if you are interested in taking up the course.

This is the last edition of INSIGHT with Gp Capt Barrow as the Stn Cdr. I am sure I speak on behalf of the readership in wishing him and his family the very best for the future and to thank him for all of the initiatives he has instigated, encouraged and approved during his tenure that have helped to improve RAF Waddington both as a station and as a community - Sir, we wish you well.

Please do keep the articles coming in, this time of year there tends to be a dip in the number we receive and this can impact on the quality of the magazine we produce for you. Whilst I speak on behalf of the readership in wishing him and his family the very best for the future and to thank him for all of the initiatives he has instigated, encouraged and approved during his tenure that have helped to improve RAF Waddington both as a station and as a community - Sir, we wish you well.

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In this issue...
Station Commander’s Foreword...

Station Commander, Group Captain Richard Barrow OBE, RAF

A very warm welcome back following, what I hope, was a restful and enjoyable festive season; although, with the intensity of work since the New Year being the way it has, the holidays probably feel like a lifetime ago.

The continuing commitment to deployed operations, the ongoing requirement for Op BOLTHOLE, coupled with the day to day business that keeps the ISTAR Force running, have all made for a fast paced start to 2016.

This is my final Insight foreword as your Station Commander. I am pleasantly surprised in the process of handing over command to Op Capt Al Marshall and, in doing so, it has caused me to reflect on what has been an unbelievable couple of years. To have the opportunity to command a station is a real privilege and I hope that this chapter has been special by the people that make the station and that has most certainly been the case for me. I was asked recently what my highlights have been and swiftly realised there were many, almost too many to put in any particular order.

At the beginning of my tour the ISTAR Force were continuing their unyielding support to operations in Afghanistan and, most notably, preparing for the crucial Afghanistan leadership elections that were so important as the country struggled to establish and maintain a hard fought democracy. ISTAR support to the Coalition during withdrawal from Afghanistan undoubtedly saved both British and Coalition lives, as our ‘eyes and ears’ helped ensure a safe route out and a secure handover to Afghan Forces. At home we were preparing for the closure of our runway and the start of Op BOLTHOLE and ensuring that our ability to continue to deliver round the clock operational effect was maintained. Some 12-18 months in and I was preparing to ‘launch the fleet’ as 2015 saw all ISTAR Force Elements deployed and an even bigger strain placed on our finite resources. Whilst we should have been looking forward to an operational pause, so deserving following years of continual ops, we were packing up to support air operations in Iraq and the Levant as Daesh emerged from the ashes of an Arab Spring, seizing the initiative in a highly unstable Middle East and Northern Africa. Op BOLTHOLE has endured, despite initial timelines to have completed in 2015 and some significant attention drawn to the issues over the runway resurfacing. This has had a huge effect on our people and seriously stretched our resources, and yet you have continued to deliver in excess; a consistent factor during my tour and one for me to consider for future generations of Waddington personnel thanks to your endeavours.

What makes these particular things stand out is that they were by Station personnel for Station personnel and goes back to what I said earlier about the people. I have often watched in awe at the efforts, outputs and achievements of so many of you and have, at times, been truly humbled. Thank you so much for making my tour as Station Commander a special one and I know you will continue delivering your support to my successor.
Officer receives top award in London

A WINNINGTON based officer has been honoured for his service in Afghanistan at a ceremony in the heart of the City of London. Flt Lt Nic Justice was the Guest of Honour at a special gathering of the Worshipful Company of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators, one of the professional guilds of London, which collectively trace their history back to 1155.

He was awarded the Richard Sermon Award, as the member of Personnel (Support) specialisation considered to have made the most outstanding contribution to the effectiveness of the RAF on operations. In 2014 Flt Lt Justice was the UK Key Leader Engagement officer to the Commanding General of the United States Marine Corps (USMC) Forward Brigade in Helmand Province, Afghanistan. His role was to understand the objectives and needs of the key Afghan tribal, military and political leaders, and then prepare and accompany the General, and his staff, to meet with them.

Meetings normally took place off-base, which required him to deploy by various means to many of the most contested areas of Afghanistan. In many meetings, or ‘shuras’, he would sit cross-legged with tribal leaders, whilst others events consisted of elaborate meals with political and military leaders. His understanding of the Afghan perspective ensured that the maximum benefit was derived from every gathering.

“I’m extremely happy to receive this award and to meet the members of the Guild, who include some of the most senior personnel leaders in the country. I’m particularly glad that my branch is able to call upon their wise counsel and found them to be very interested in the RAF’s approach to personnel matters,” Flt Lt Justice said.

Air Cdre Alan Opie, Head of the Personnel Branch said “Flt Lt Justice richly deserves this wonderful award. His outstanding contribution to the success of this complex mission highlights the excellent support that Personnel Officers provide across the spectrum of military operations”.

Flt Lt Justice was among the very last personnel to leave Helmand in October 2014. His service was also recognised with a formal award from the USMC, the citation of which noted that his performance, “significantly contributed to this Bde’s potency in support of combat operations” and was “directly tied to the command’s success.”
Education Guide

There are a wide range of educational services on offer to the families in Lincolnshire, helping parents whose children are starting school for the first time, those who are transferring to secondary education and those who are being relocated to RAF Waddington and seeking new schools for their children.

Every child is different and each school is different. With help from the experts you can find the perfect education so that your child will enjoy their time in school and work to his or her full potential.

Over the next few pages you will see just some of the local nurseries, primary schools, secondary schools, colleges and universities that are in your catchment area.

Nurseries
Education can be provided in a range of settings. You may choose to take your child to pre-school, playgroup, a private nursery or an independent school.

Primary Schools
Covering ages 4 to 11 these are the key years of a child’s educational and emotional development in preparation for secondary school and where core subjects such as English, Mathematics and Science are learnt.

Secondary Schools
Secondary school incorporates Key Stages 3 and 4 of the National Curriculum (GCSE) and in most schools leads to the option of sixth form studies, with a range of options including AS and A levels, plus in some cases the International Baccalaureate. Options in the independent sector include day, weekly boarding and boarding places, with a range of bursaries, exhibition places and scholarships available. An increasing amount of state schools are offering boarding places with no tuition fees payable.

FE Colleges
FE Colleges offer an alternative to traditional academic sixth form education, including a range of vocational courses under the remit of the Learning and Skills Improvement Service.

Connexions offer a range of advice and services.

Special Needs
There are a range of specialist schools in both the state and independent sectors offering SEN services. These schools have particularly high teacher-pupil ratios and a range of facilities to accommodate pupils’ needs.

Certain mainstream independent secondary schools can also offer excellent SEN support.

Higher Education / University
Primarily covering universities in the UK under the governing body UCAS there are also post 18 opportunities in vocational courses at other specialist HE organisations. Students will typically start considering destinations in the first year of A level study, awaiting offers in the final year. A good deal who do not received preferred offers or obtain the necessary grades for their first choice colleges will go through the clearing process post A level.

If you would like more information please contact the schools direct and they will be happy to answer any questions that you may have.

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For more information about Heath Farm Day Nursery Ltd, please visit our website at www.heathfarmdaynursery.co.uk

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CALLING ALL FORMER 51 SQN MEMBERS

CELEBRATING 100 YEARS 1916 - 2016

51 Squadron invites all former Sqn members and Association members to join us for a weekend of events at RAF Waddington to celebrate our Centenary

13th - 15th May 2016

Fri 13th May
Dinner Dance

Sat 14th May
Families’ Day

Sun 15th May
Church Service
92 year old Corporal Peter Kimberley returned to RAF Waddington this week for the first time in nearly 70 years to see how the base has changed since he last served here during WWII. Peter joined the RAF on the 16th May 1941; his 18th birthday. Following his basic training at Blackpool he arrived at RAF Waddington in the summer of 1941 the same year the mighty AVRO Lancaster Bomber entered service with the RAF.

Specialising as MT driver, Peter drove a variety of vehicles in support of the flying operations at the base. His duties were varied and would range from transporting aircrew around the base or to their waiting aircraft, to driving the aircraft re-fuelling bowsers. Often he would be at the wheel of a fire engine deployed in an emergency to attend to an aircraft that had crash landed at the base. Peter recalled the “bomb runs” he and his colleagues used to do in their trucks to RAF Norton Disney which supplied bombs, ammunition and oxygen to RAF Hemswell, RAF Waddington and RAF Scampton.

It wasn't unusual for Peter to be carrying 2 x 2000lb bombs on his truck and the same again in a trailer he’d be towing; some of the bombs with the paint still wet such was the demand for munitions at the height of the War. Peter smiles as he recalls how one of his colleagues took a corner slightly too fast one day and gave some livestock the fright of their lives as the 2000lb bombs came tumbling towards them as they lazily grazed in a nearby field. No casualties on this occasion thankfully.

During his visit Peter was shown around the RAF Waddington Heritage Centre by Mr Chris Dean. The Heritage Centre is home to numerous exhibits some of which date back to the time when he was based here. He also took in a tour of the station with Sgt Claire Protheroe and Flt Lt Dave Lusk which gave him the opportunity to see the historical infrastructure that still remains from when he was last here.

What had been Peter’s accommodation block is now the Stations Training and Development Flight. Peter recalls RAF Waddington with real affection. Strong friendships were formed and he remembers with real fondness his buddy Corporal “Don” Donaldson with whom he kept in touch with long after the War finished. He also remembers that the girls in the Mechanical Transport Section were the best looking on base!

Peter said: It’s been wonderful to re-visit RAF Waddington as I have such fond memories of it. I can remember that on my 21st Birthday I was hauled outside and covered in lipstick by the WAAFS which I thought was very funny.

Peter was posted to Singapore in 1943 until he was demobbed in 1945. He returned home to Garforth where in August 1946 he married the beautiful Rita. They went on to have two daughters; Carol and Heather. Aged 92 (nearly 93) he still drives and thinks nothing of hopping in to his Ford KA on a regular occasion to visit family nearby.

Flt Lt Dave Lusk who helped to host Peter and his family said: “It’s been such a pleasure to meet Peter and to listen to him recounting his time in Service at RAF Waddington and overseas. I think what’s clear is that whilst so much has changed over the years, so much remains the same. Service men and women past and present form those strong bonds to both our comrades and to the Service which stay with us forever.”
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Henry James, The Portrait of a Lady

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FIRA GOLD INSTALLATION CERTIFICATION
During a recent weekend training session held in Task Development Flight, RAF Waddington, members of the current RAF Intelligence Reserves pre - Basic Recruit Training Course (pre - BRTC) took the opportunity to visit the Waddington gate guard – Vulcan XM607. Famously, this was the actual airframe that flew the first Black Buck mission, a 6,800 nautical mile, 16 hour round trip from Wideawake airfield at RAF Ascension Island to the Falklands and back in May 1982. As part of their training, the recruits are taught the principles of Air Power, and the Black Buck missions are used as an historic example of Offensive Action and Deep Attack. The mission, which involved 2 Vulcan B2 bombers and 11 Victor K2 tankers on the outward leg, and a further 2 Victors and a Nimrod MR2 for the return, clearly demonstrated to the Argentinians the British resolve and determination that the Falkland Islands would be retaken, and was at that time the longest bombing raid in history. It achieved most of its doctrinal objectives – including denying the use of the airfield to high performance combat aircraft. The actual journey of the recruits to the Vulcan, situated on the far side of the airfield at RAF Waddington, also helped to reinforce another lecture given the same day – Flight Safety and the layout of an airfield. Because of the current runway resurfacing program, the recruits were required to proceed in convoy – after carrying out a wheel check for FOD – along the various taxiways and across the southern threshold, all the way around to the Vulcan hardstanding, passing numerous airfield structures and buildings along the way. The aircraft sits cold and quiet, surrounded by 1,000lb bombs, a silent reminder of a past conflict. As one recruit remarked, “The Air Power lecture teaches us the stark facts of the raid, but to be able to stand under, and touch the actual aircraft is amazing!” Reservist recruits spend four weekends at Waddington on the pre-BRTC, usually on consecutive months. Subjects covered include Discipline, Ranks, Ethos and Core Values, History, Air Power, Security, Trades and Branches and many more. The recruits are issued with PCS, shown how to wear it, and taught the rudiments of Drill. Fitness training and testing is also carried out. At the end of the course, many go straight on to the Recruit Training Squadron at RAF Halton for the 15 day Basic Recruit Training Course, where they complete their Phase 1 training.
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If you have a patch management issue, the Helpdesk will raise a survey. Your AO will assess your issue and will be responsible for making sure that any work required is carried out.

If you have a problem with any of the above call the CarillionAmey Helpdesk on 0800 707 6000 Option 1
The RAF Benevolent Fund has launched a free, easy-to-access, online course to help RAF couples deal with the challenges of family life.

The Building Stronger Families course is tailored to the needs of RAF families to give couples the skills and knowledge they need to deal with common relationship issues, covering topics like communication, resolving conflict and family life.

The course is designed to be the first port of call for couples in need of extra support and has been created with the help of national charity Relate. The RAF Benevolent Fund has worked with Relate for several years, providing free counselling sessions for those who feel professional help would be a benefit. Since its introduction, more than 3,000 RAF individuals have used the service.

Alison Wyman, Head of General Welfare at the RAF Benevolent Fund, said: “No-one knows the RAF Family like the RAF Benevolent Fund. We have been supporting RAF personnel and their loved ones for almost 100 years. As the RAF’s leading welfare charity, the RAF Benevolent Fund knows that RAF families face unique pressures as separation and deployment take their toll on family life.

“This is why we are launching a new free online support course to help couples who are facing difficult times before the problem develops into something more serious. Building Stronger Families is just one example of new ways the RAF Benevolent Fund is developing to support serving personnel with tailored, bespoke services designed with the RAF in mind.”

Chris, 33, from Birmingham, is currently serving with the RAF. He said: “It really was make or break for us. The Relate sessions that we had kept us together ultimately. We had one-on-one sessions and sessions together as a couple. I do not think we would have our little girl and the life that we do now if it wasn’t for the RAF Benevolent Fund. And for that I will be forever grateful.

“I know it’s not easy to talk about, I’m the kind of person who keeps things bottled up, but I would encourage any couple who are struggling with the pressures of military life to take the online course and take up the offer of counselling if they need it.”

The service is funded by a £75,000 grant awarded to the RAF Benevolent Fund from The Armed Forces Covenant (Libor) Fund.

If you would like more information or are interested in doing the course, visit: http://rafbf.relate.org.uk
The Pathfinder March is a 46 mile event following the Pathfinder Long Distance Walk, taking in the four main bases (RAF Wyton, RAF Gravely, RAF Oakington and RAF Warborys) of 8 Group, The Pathfinder Force (PFF). The objective is to complete the walk in less than 20 hours. The event is open to Military, Civil Service, Cadet forces and Civilian personnel. The Participants can either walk or (for the ultras amongst you) run the full 46 miles (individual or as a group of friends/colleagues) or form a relay team. The runners have 16 hours to complete the distance.

I have attached a soft copy of a poster and ask could you possibly place in on your station moss sites. If you require any hard copies please get in touch.

If you wish to visit our Pathfinder March Web Site, head to: http://www.pathfindermarch.co.uk for further details. You can also access via the website, photos and a video of the event which includes aerial shots.
The ladies of Waddington Military Wives Choir will be joining the legendary singer Lulu on stage later this year during her UK tour.

Lulu has teamed-up with The Military Wives Choirs for the release of a new single, ‘Cry’. Released on Friday 26th February, with all proceeds being donated to The Military Wives Choir Foundation charity.

To support the single’s release, Lulu will perform ‘Cry’ with a different Military Wives Choir at each of her thirty-five UK tour dates throughout March and April. This is something of a challenge that has never been done before by a mainstream artist throughout one of their tours. Joining her at the Charter Theatre in Preston on 8th April will be the ladies of Waddington Military Wives Choir from Lincolnshire.

The Military Wives Choirs Foundation is a charity that brings women in the military community closer together through singing. Being part of a Military Wives Choir makes a positive difference to women’s lives by improving well-being, building friendships and developing skills.

Looking forward to the tour, Lulu said, “Having a different Military Wives Choir join me onstage every night will be a lot of fun. But on a more serious note, later in my life I was diagnosed as having post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and what that did was help me to relate even more with our men and women in the armed forces. I realised I would like to do something to help, so we recorded ‘Cry’ and my brother and I rewrote the lyrics to apply specifically to the military.”

Lulu added, “PTSD is not just about physical scars, and they run very deep. They are enormous and very difficult to deal with. We need everybody’s support.”

Sara Scott, Trustee of The Military Wives Choirs Foundation, said, “We are delighted to team-up with the amazing Lulu for the release of ‘Cry’. Women are the strength behind the strong, and there is now a network of seventy-five choirs on military bases across the UK and overseas. The opportunity for different Military Wives Choirs to perform ‘Cry’ with Lulu at each date of her UK tour is such an honour.”

For further ticket information please go to: http://www.ticketmaster.co.uk/Lulu-tickets/artist/746365?tm_link=artist_artistvenue_module
On the weekend of 23-25 Oct 15, members of 2503 Sqn RAuxAF Regt travelled to France to conduct a staff ride based around the WW2 Allied Invasion of Normandy (known as Operation OVERLORD).

Prior to deployment, all participants were given an introduction to the key events and personalities of Operation OVERLORD as well as the contribution that air power made to its enablement. This ensured a common level of understanding and provided some food for thought prior to the presentations they were expected to deliver on site.

The Sqn was accommodated in Caen, which allowed easy access to the stand locations. The first site visited was the Merville Battery, where British Paratroopers fought to destroy German artillery, which had the potential to threaten the Allied landings on D Day. The second was Pegasus Bridge, where a key crossing point was captured that provided flank protection to the oncoming invasion forces and prevented the arrival of German reinforcements. The final stand was at the town of Arromanches, the site of Gold Beach and the Mulberry Harbours that were build to sustain the huge influx of troops required to break through Western Europe and ultimately on to Berlin.

One of the recurring themes from stands was that in spite of years of meticulous preparation and planning, the success of Operation OVERLORD owed much to the initiative, courage and sacrifice of the troops on the ground. Overall, the staff ride achieved all of the Force Development objectives and allowed members of the Rifle Flight a well-deserved respite following a demanding period of Annual Continuous Training. Moreover, while technology and equipment may have moved on, many of the lessons learned are as applicable today as they were in 1944 and can be applied to the challenges we now find ourselves facing in an increasingly uncertain world.
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Platforms and personnel from all three UK services were involved, all hoping to benefit from the unique training that such a large scale exercise provided. HMS Bulwark and HMS Ocean headed up the senior services' commitment and the Army deployed a brigade headquarters. Meanwhile the RAF dispatched the Typhoons of 1(F) Squadron, RAF Lossiemouth and Tornado aircraft from 31 Squadron, RAF Marham.

For 8 Squadron's 3 week involvement, Torrejon Air Base just outside Madrid was to be its temporary home, alongside the RAF's Voyager air-to-air refuelling aircraft of 101 Squadron, RAF Brize Norton. 20km east of the Spanish capital city, Torrejon is home to Spanish Air Force F-18 fighter aircraft, its fleet of Canadair CL-215 fire-fighting aircraft, and its VIP transport hub through which many global top dogs pass, including US Secretary of State John Kerry on his recent visit to Spain just after 8 Squadron had set up shop there.

The main aim of Exercise TRIDENT JUNCTURE 15 was to enhance the ability of all those involved to work together, despite language and cultural differences, differences in levels of experience and working practices, and equipment. The NATO Response Force (NRF) and the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF) were both to be put through their paces to make sure that NATO can respond to the ever evolving challenges it might face in the near future.

Not having conducted an exercise of such size for over 10 years, NATO began by just getting participants from around the globe flying safely together in unfamiliar airspace. Having established the basic coordination required to make sure the F-16s from Portugal, Turkey and Norway could fly safely alongside the Grippens from Sweden, the EA-18s from the USA, the Eurofighters from across Europe and the Tornados from the UK, it was time to introduce some bad guys to go up against. To round off the training a selection of tanker aircraft and Sentry itself were thrown in to the mix, along with a hand full of heavy transport aircraft including Hercules and C-160s. As the eclectic selection of crews became more familiar with each other and built confidence day on day, the scenarios faced became ever more complex and eventually spanned airspace across Southern Spain and as far as Ibiza. The exercise concluded with 20 fast jets up against 16 bad guys and a search for a naval vessel taking place off the coast.

With the exercise drawing to a close and with much valuable training had by all, 8 Sqn bid Buenos Noches to their Spanish hosts and headed for home. Some much appreciated time in the UK awaiting them, before the prep for Exercise RED FLAG 16-1 begins....
The Waddington Pipes and Drums have just returned from a tour of Germany. Dresden is the capital city of the Free State of Saxony. It is situated in a valley on the River Elbe, near the Czech border and it was here the band was based for a couple of days as they performed three shows, one in Chemnitz and two in the Dresden Margon Arena. A very long overnight trip north was required to relocate the band to their Hamburg base for the last two shows in the Rostock Stadt Halle and the Kiel Sparkassen Arena. Rostock is the largest city in the north German State of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern while Kiel is the capital and most populous city in the northern German state of Schleswig-Holstein. Both of these cities were members of the Hanseatic League, a trading association in the middle ages which also included Kings Lynn.

Although the German audiences can be very critical they seem to love the pipes and drums, lots of clapping to the tunes with standing ovations at the finale as Waddington's Pipe Major Finlay MacGhee closed each show with a ‘Lone Piper’ slot. Along with Waddington’s finest the arena displays included bands from China, Moldovia, Germany, The Netherlands and Belarus.

A new set had been practiced over the winter and all the hard work paid off with the band looking sharp, well drilled and sounding great.

For further information please contact the Pipe Major at the Waddington band room or visit the website www.rafwaddingtonpipeband.com.

Sean Cleary
With the wealth of clubs and associations active at RAF Waddington it is possibly a little-known fact that the station is also home to a thriving Sub-Aqua club. In fact the club goes by the rather grander title of RAF Waddington, Scampton and Digby Sub-Aqua Club (WADSAC) and has members from all three units. The club has a classroom/clubhouse, training equipment and a boat, so members do not need to buy any equipment before they start their training.
of CPR, Oxygen administration and casualty recovery. A seemingly depressing way to kick off the season it is however mandatory training and due to the nature of the sport it is essential that we make sure that everyone is capable of providing first aid should we require it. Luckily for our club we have several instructors who are trained over & above the basic requirements so we can also offer our members extra training such as use of an Automated External Defibrillator (AED).

From there we go into our early season training where we aim to refresh each member on their basic skills and start training for their next qualification if they wish to do so. We also look to welcome new members into the club as early in the year as possible so that they can get their pool and theory training under their belts while it’s still cold, and get out into the open water in the warmth of the summer. This year we are running a training weekend on 12/13 March specifically for new members. We hope that during that weekend we can get all of the theory and pool package completed and that participants will then be ready to join in some of our trips later in the year.

Talking of trips we have a lot planned for this year, after all there isn’t much in the way of diving around the Waddington area! We are looking forward to a trip to Plymouth in April, hosted by the Joint Services Sub-Aqua Diving Centre we will make use of their excellent facilities and carry out some challenging dives on the fantastic array of wrecks in the area. We will also make use of this trip to get some of our newly qualified divers into the open water. We are also planning a trip to Anglesey in Wales to see what the Welsh coast has to offer, a visit to RAF Boulmer to dive with the seals in the nearby Farne Islands, and an autumn trip to Malta to experience the famous diving in that part of the Med. We’ll also arrange day trips to some of the inland sites that the UK has to offer, with training carried out at some of theses sites during the season too.
The RAF Waddington Heritage Centre

The RAF Waddington Heritage Centre is a Station Force Development facility which seeks to preserve the history, culture and ethos of RAF Waddington for current and future generations to learn about and enjoy.

The Centre is dedicated to supporting all Station personnel who wish to conduct Force Development activities or whom just happen to have an interest in aviation and military history. Moreover, as part of the Total Force concept, the centre also welcomes Civil Servants, Defence Contractors, Reservists and dependants of all personnel stationed at RAF Waddington and who wish to enjoy the many varied and interesting artefacts and collections in the Centre. The Centre also receives numerous visitors from outside of the station including Veterans and their families whom have past links with the Station, RAFA and other Squadron association members, aviation enthusiasts and researchers who wish to refer to the many of the thousands of archive records & documents which the Centre holds. The Centre has also hosted many schools visits and creative writing workshops thus providing further support to the local community in Lincolnshire.

The Centre covers all elements of the history of RAF Waddington, from its formation in 1916 to the redevelopment during the Second World War, the arrival of the V-force through to its role today as the home of the Combat ISTAR force. Amongst the numerous highlights of the Centre, the Cold War room, the Augsburg raid commemoration and the history of the RFC at Waddington stand out. Guided tours are provided by our outstanding guides who have an encyclopaedic knowledge of the history of RAF-Waddington. However the star of the Centre has to be the reconstructed fuselage of Lancaster PD 259 which takes centre stage.

Painstakingly recovered from the Scottish Highlands, the aircraft has been carefully and respectfully rebuilt using the hundreds of pieces recovered by volunteers and mounted on a unique steel trellis frame manufactured locally in Lincoln. Providing a holistic experience, visitors can ‘fly’ a sortie onboard from the cockpit area, experiencing the thrill, and danger of a low-level sortie in WWII.

In 2016 the Heritage centre will actively support the centenary of the Station, with numerous additional opening hours, including for the ‘Stn Families’ day and during the half term holidays for families to enjoy this fascinating and enjoyable facility.

The centre is open by appointment through our visits co-ordinator email WAD-Heritage centre (MULTIUSER) and will always seek to meet the needs of the wider station community by providing guided tours as required. – We look forward to seeing you soon!
On Friday 11th September, competitors and their horses started arriving at RAF Cranwell Saddle Club from all over the country. Members of all three branches of the armed forces (both regular and reserve) and the emergency services took part, as well as MOD contractors and dependents. Altogether, more than one hundred riders competed over the weekend and with dressage, show jumping and cross-country classes on offer - as well as the Inter-Services competition - it is not surprising that the event was so well-attended. Those people who do not own their own horses (like me) were still able to compete, as hired horses were provided by the Leicestershire Hunter and Hireling Company.

Saturday morning saw the show jumping and dressage classes starting bright and early. The sun was shining, the show jumps looked brilliant and the scene was set for a great day of competition. I had decided to enter the Intro (less advanced) One Day Event class. Despite its name, this class was held over the two days and it involved riding a dressage test, a show jumping round and a cross-country round.

RAF Cranwell Saddle Club had kindly let me hire a pony called Malibu, who I sometimes ride at the weekly lesson that the RAF Waddington and RAF Digby Saddle Club have at Cranwell. Malibu was well-behaved during the dressage test, but when it came to the show jumping, he took exception to a couple of the brightly coloured fences and decided to sneak around the side of them at the last minute instead of going over them – much to my surprise! We went on to have one pole down as well, which meant we ended up with quite a few faults (penalty points). Despite these hiccups, we both really enjoyed it. The classes finished in the late afternoon and once the prize giving ceremony had taken place, there was a polo match between the RAF Polo Association team and an Army polo team to watch. It was an exciting match - especially as there was a commentator on hand to explain what was going on - and in the end the RAF won 5-2. After that, there was a BBQ at the Qaboos Pavilion to end the day.

Sunday was cross-country day. Cross-country is arguably the most exciting equestrian discipline to watch, and definitely my favourite to take part in, as it involves the horse and rider travelling at speed around a course of natural-looking fences, including ditches, sunken roads, log fences and water jumps. The staff and members of RAF Cranwell Saddle Club had put a lot of effort into improving the cross-country course and it really showed. As I mentioned, I was really looking forward to the start of my round and I was determined that Malibu would actually go over the fences and not around them this time.

When it came to our turn, we set off and immediately had a disagreement about whether to go over the first fence or not. I won the argument on this occasion and I think that I was so pleased with myself that I lost concentration for a second and Malibu took advantage of that by skirting around the second fence! I couldn’t believe it as it was probably the easiest fence on the course. After that I made sure I didn’t have any more lapses in concentration and we successfully made it round the rest of the course without any mishaps! It’s hard to describe the thrill that you get from flying around the course and also the relief of returning in one piece. Once all the riders had completed their cross-country round, it was time for the final prize-giving. Unfortunately for RAF and Navy supporters, the Army won the Inter-Services competition, but among the riders from the RAF who achieved particularly good results were Cpl Kelly Moulson (RAF Cranwell) on Wineport Taking The Mick, who came 6th in the Intro One Day Event, Cpl Alison Cartlidge (RAF Northolt), who came 5th in the Intro One Day Event on a hired horse and Sgt David Carrothers (RAF Cosford) on Birchol Full Monty who came 4th and 6th in Combined Training 17 and 18. As the event drew to a close, everyone agreed that it had been a big success and that they were looking forward to next year’s competition already!

In other equestrian news, RAF Waddington and RAF Digby Saddle Club have won the Inter-Station League Runners-Up Final 2015! The Inter-Station League (ISL) aims to promote riding within the RAF and to encourage novice riders to gain experience of competition. The eighteen teams that entered the league this year were split into groups according to their geographical location and over the past six months, the teams have arranged ‘matches’ between themselves to determine their position within their group. During a match, the four members of each team must perform a riding test (like a basic dressage test) and ride around a course of show jumps at a height of 2’6”-2’9”; all on an unfamiliar horse. This year the Waddington and Digby Saddle Club team came second in their group and therefore qualified for the ISL Runners-Up Final, which took place on 10th November at RAF Cranwell. The team rode excellently on the day and beat RAF Cosford to the top spot. The ISL Final, for the winners of each group, was held the next day. RAF Valley were crowned champions, ahead of RAF Benson, RAF Cranwell and Defence Medical Services. Well done to everyone involved! If you would like to get involved with Waddington and Digby Saddle Club, please email our multiuser address, WAD-Equestrian Club.

Images of the Festival of Equitation are kindly provided by Geoff Marston Photography and Baron Halpeny.
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The Fastest Way to Slow Things Down…

By Sgt Jonathan Brereton

Whether you’re looking for a family holiday with a difference or just want to unwind and take life at a more tranquil pace, our Narrowboat could be for you. With no itinerary you can set your own agenda, holiday at your own pace and moor virtually anywhere you please. In a week you’re likely to cover the distance you could cover in an hour by car… but the journey will be a far richer one!

The Lord Portal is a 66ft semi traditional stern Narrowboat owned by the Junior Ranks Welfare Fund at RAF Cranwell. It is moored on The Grand Union Canal in a stunning part of Northamptonshire, and is available to all service personnel and their families. It can accommodate up to six single people comfortably and can be reconfigured for a variety of sleeping arrangements to suit. Two active adults can easily handle the Narrowboat. As you cruise along, one person steers and the other members of the crew are free to take in the scenery or even walk the towpath alongside. At locks and when mooring one person stays on the boat to steer, whilst at least one person works the lock mechanism. Don’t worry if you’ve never done it before; you’ll be taught what to do before you’re set free, and by the third or fourth lock it’ll be second nature!

Very quickly you find yourself relaxing into your new surroundings; a world leftover from a bygone age before motorways and high speed transport. The canals were the lifeline of the Industrial Revolution, moving vast quantities of raw materials and manufactured goods to the coast for export across the world. Ironically, it is nature that now relies on these man-made waterways for survival. Watch out for Otters, Kingfishers and all manner of small creatures thriving in this hidden countryside haven.

Seeing the country by canal gives a whole new perspective to an area you may already think you know, discovering waterside pubs, villages, towns and historic treasures along the way. This really is an amazing facility for all the family… even the dog is welcome! After a week on the boat people often say that it felt more like a month away from work!

You can find more details on this beautiful Narrowboat and its availability for the 2016 season on the RAF Cranwell MOSS page (Stn Clubs) or email at CRN-Narrowboat-MULTIUSER@mod.uk
RAF Waddington has bid farewell to Group Captain Rich Barrow today and welcomed Group Captain Al Marshall as the new Station Commander.

Under Group Captain Barrow’s command RAF Waddington has successfully navigated a period of significant change; the drawdown from Afghanistan during 2014 and, more recently, the continued support to operations in both the Middle East and Eastern Europe. Group Captain Barrow leaves to take up a role in the Air Warfare Centre.

On his departure Group Captain Barrow said: “It will be with great sadness, although immense gratitude, that I will formally handover to Group Captain Marshall on the 26th February. RAF Waddington has come through an extremely difficult and demanding period that was filled with both challenges and successes. I have been confident throughout of the abilities and support from Station personnel and, together, we have met every challenge head-on. We have delivered over and over again and we can be justly proud of our achievements. It has been an honour and a privilege to command Royal Air Force Waddington and I wish Group Captain Marshall every success in his new role.”

The new Station Commander Group Captain Marshall is no stranger to the base having previously been stationed at RAF Waddington as Officer Commanding 5(IAC) Sqn; then a Joint Army and RAF unit. During his command he led the Squadron on operations in Afghanistan, Libya and Mali. More recently he was the Deputy Principal Staff Officer to the Chief of the Defence Staff.

On his new position as Station Commander RAF Waddington, Group Captain Al Marshall said: “It is a real pleasure and privilege to take command of RAF Waddington, and especially so given the significant level of current operational commitment from across the Station. The capabilities that RAF Waddington generates are respected and highly valued. There is much to be optimistic about and the Station certainly has a bright future. What RAF Waddington has delivered to operations in recent months and years is admirable – all platforms have been deployed, support from the Station has been substantial and continuous, and many personnel have served overseas in non-formed unit roles. That you have produced this level of output, despite resource challenges, uncertainty over the future prior to last year’s Defence Review, and with the additional pressures caused by the extended runway resurfacing work, is even more impressive.

I am no stranger to the Station, having previously been Officer Commanding 5(IAC) Squadron and know the Force reasonably well, but fully recognise that I still have much to learn. There is certainly a great deal more to RAF Waddington than meets the eye, especially the pivotal role of the support Wings and the numerous important lodger units based here.

Looking ahead, we must focus on returning the airfield to full flying status as the new runway comes online. Following such a long period of reduced airfield activity, the return to normal levels of flying, when it comes, will not be simple and needs to be carefully considered and planned. Procedures will need to be refreshed, training completed and checks carried out to ensure that we are able to get things back to normal in a safe and sensible manner. However, with the runway work progressing, the demand for ISTAR as high as ever, and positive announcements on many capabilities in the recent Defence review, there is much to be optimistic about and the Station certainly has a bright future. As I hope you are already aware, the Station is reliant on a healthy mix of regular and reserve uniformed personnel, civil servants, and contractors, and everyone has an important part to play in the efficient and safe running of the Station. Hence, as we plan for the future, I will rely on input from you all to keep me informed on important matters and offer your ideas. The better informed I am, the better I can support you and ensure that, as decisions are taken on the future of the Station, we can both maximise our operational output but also increase the support we are able to offer to our people and, importantly, our families. So please don’t sit there in silence, make sure your views, suggestions and feedback are heard.

This year also marks the 100th anniversary of the Station, which was formed as a Royal Flying Corps unit in November 1916 to provide additional flying training capacity during the First World War. We should be proud of what our predecessors have achieved over the last Century and remember those from the Station that lost their lives, not just overseas, but also here at Waddington itself. A variety of events are planned throughout the year and I hope that you are all, along with your families and our community, able to join in some of the celebrations of this milestone.

So to conclude, it is great to be back at RAF Waddington – I look forward to serving you all as your Station Commander and getting out and about to meet personnel from all areas of the unit as soon as possible.
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