

LARGE PRINT GUIDE



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RAF Stories:

The First 100 Years 1918 – 2018

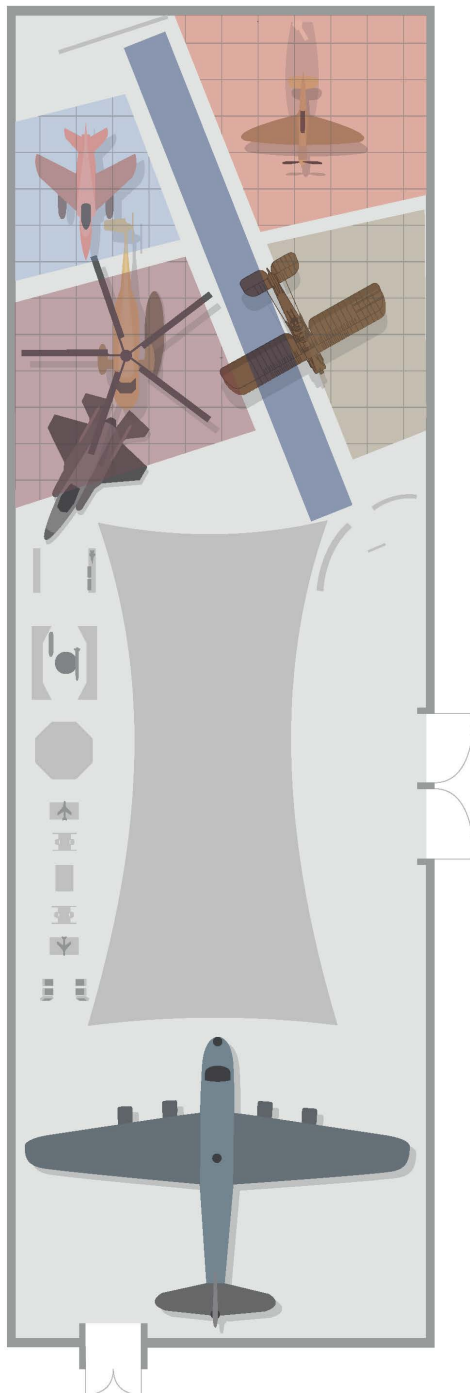
Introduction and Meet the RAF

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■ Introduction and Meet the RAF

RAF Stories

The First 100 Years 1918–2018

The Royal Air Force's story is woven into the history of the United Kingdom, from its formation during the First World War to the vital role it performs today as the nation's first line of defence.

The function of the RAF, the world's first independent Air Force, remains unchanged across a hundred years: its mission is to defend the UK, to attack if required, to provide reconnaissance and intelligence, to support in times of humanitarian crisis and to move people and equipment across the world quickly. The RAF provides the UK Government with choices in a rapidly changing world.

Discover how the Royal Air Force delivered this mission across its first 100 years through stories about its extraordinary people, innovative technologies, global alliances and partnerships with industry.

Meet the RAF

While the RAF uses state-of-the-art technologies to deliver its mission, its greatest assets are the well-trained, highly-skilled, dedicated men and women who serve in its ranks. Despite the popular image of the Second World War RAF pilot, personnel come from diverse backgrounds and serve in a wide range of roles, both in the air and on the ground.

Whether they are full time military and civilian personnel, reserves, cadets, veterans or part of the service's wider support network, they all share and represent the RAF's spirit and values.

[text on reverse of four figures, right to left]

Squadron Leader Nic Lofthouse

Corporal Laura O'Brian-Burn

Sergeant Dave Hardy

Chef Vishwaananda Kisten

Typhoon Model 2007

With over 50 careers to choose from, you don't need to be a pilot to fly with the RAF.

Made for a television advertisement, this model highlights the different skills and roles required to keep the RAF flying.

Roles in the RAF

Aircrew	7%
Air Operations Support	9%
Personnel Support	8%
Technicians and Engineers	38%
Medic/Medical Support	5%
Logistics	15%
Intelligence	5%
Force Protection	13%

RAF Spirit and Values

The motto of the RAF, Per Ardua ad Astra (Through Adversity to the Stars), sums up the Air Force spirit.

After its formation in 1918, when the Royal Flying Corps and Royal Naval Air Service were merged, the new RAF was keen to foster this spirit. It promoted unit identities through symbols and rituals while maintaining a distinct character of light-hearted professionalism which is still shown today.

In 2008 the values of the RAF were defined as Respect, Integrity, Service and Excellence – values that have, in fact, been embodied by RAF personnel since its earliest days.

[RAF Spirit and Values showcase labels]

Assistant Section Officer, Noor Inayat Khan GC

Joined the Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF) in 1940

Noor Inayat Khan escaped to Britain following Germany's defeat of France in June 1940. Although she was a pacifist, she volunteered for the WAAF and became a skilled radio operator.

Noor later joined the Special Operations Executive and was sent to occupied France in June 1943. There she helped the Resistance by transmitting information until she was betrayed and captured. Noor refused to co-operate under interrogation and was executed at Dachau in 1944. Her last word was 'Liberté'.

'Inayat Khan displayed the most conspicuous courage, both moral and physical [for] more than 12 months.'

Citation for the posthumous award of the George Cross, April 1949.

[Image caption]

Noor Inayat Khan in 1940. After her death, she became the first Muslim woman to receive the George Cross.

© RAF Museum PC76/24/24

Log Book

1

Squadron Leader Frank Rymills flew Noor Inayat Khan to Angers, France on the night of 16 June 1943. His flying log book, displayed here, shows his record of the successful flight, marked Operation 61.

Full Dress Uniform

Introduced in 1920 the Full Dress Uniform was worn on ceremonial occasions. It was expensive and many junior officers opted to hire a uniform for the infrequent occasions they were required to wear them.

In 1923 Prince Albert chose to wear the RAF Full Dress Uniform for his marriage. Like many officers the future king found the uniform uncomfortable and he had a particular dislike for the helmet which some people likened to a baboon's bottom.

Uniform Assembly: 2

**Jacket, Trousers, Helmet, Plume, Belt, Sword, Boots,
2018**

Rudder from an Avro 504K 1918–1920 3

In addition to the roundel, the tail fins, or rudders, of British aircraft are marked with variations of the national colours to help identify them. This rudder is from the Avro 504K C4451 in which Prince Albert learned to fly.

The 100-day Baton Relay is part of RAF100 celebrations and commemorations in 2018.

The baton was designed by students of No. 4 School of Technical Training as part of a competition judged by Chief of the Air Staff. The winner was chosen for its storytelling as it includes materials, such as brass, wood and aluminium, used in past, present and potential future aircraft.

The relay is an orienteering challenge across the UK and abroad between 1 April and 10 July. It includes RAF sports such as cycling, canoeing, horse riding and even parachute jumping. The baton is being carried by RAF personnel, cadets and veterans.

The baton will be presented to the RAF Museum later in 2018.

The Baton Relay has been supported by Raytheon.

Side Drum, RAF Central Band

5

About 1932

The RAF Central Band was established in 1920 and has been providing musical accompaniment to parades, events and broadcasts ever since. The drum plays a special role in ceremonies like the presentation of a standard or colour where stacked drums are used to form a makeshift altar.

Invitation to the Sergeants' Mess, 1940s

6

Observance of etiquette has always been very important in the RAF. Invitations to formal events took a prescribed format depending on the occasion and the attendees. There is a strong tradition of dining within the Mess to mark special occasions.

Officer's Flag 1940s

7

Officers' flags, commonly referred to as pennants, are flown from a flagstaff, attached to motor vehicles or painted on aircraft to denote the rank of a senior officer. This pennant represents the rank of group captain.

Minor Offences Book, No. 4 Squadron Boys' Wing

8

20 May to 2 September 1918

The misdemeanours of any RAF personnel who broke rules were recorded in a Minor Offences Book by an officer in the squadron. In this instance it was Prince Albert, who later became HRH King George VI.

Badges and Crests

Each level of RAF group hierarchy has its own official visual identity, down to squadron level, although some units create their own. Unit badges have their origins in heraldic devices or coats of arms. The motto underneath, often in Latin, relates to that particular group.

Heavy Bomber Conversion Unit Crest 9

1942–1945

This is an example of an unofficial badge. The motto, 'We Convert You', likens the unit's job of teaching crews to operate heavy bombers to the evangelical work of the Salvation Army.

Badge of the Royal Air Force 10

1918–1954

The heraldic symbol of the Royal Air Force shows an eagle in front of an Imperial Crown topped circle displaying the motto *Per Ardua Ad Astra* – Through Adversity to the Stars.

No. 1 Squadron Badge, 1936–1954 11

Every squadron has a badge. The Latin motto here reads, 'In all things first', reflecting No. 1 Squadron's status as the oldest flying unit in the world.

Cambridge University Air Squadron Badge, 1925 12

Before being granted an official squadron badge in 1963, the Cambridge University Air Squadron used this device which incorporates the coat of arms of the University.

No. 600 Squadron Badge, 1936–1954 13

No. 600 City of London Squadron was an Auxiliary Air Force unit made up of part-time personnel and is unique in having two official badges. One is a standard squadron badge. The other, the original squadron badge shown here, incorporates the shield of the City of London. This squadron was based at RAF Hendon, now the site of the RAF Museum.

Decorations, Medals and Awards

These decorations are awarded for acts of valour. This can be for a single act, or a sustained period of operational flying.

The Air Force Cross is awarded during periods when there are no active operations against an enemy. Until 1993 the Distinguished Flying Medal was awarded to non-commissioned ranks, while the Distinguished Flying Cross was only presented to officers. Today the Distinguished Flying Cross can be awarded to any rank.

Air Force Cross, (AFC) Established 1918 14

Awarded 1918–today

For gallantry while flying but not on active operations against the enemy.

Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC), Established 1918

Awarded 1918–today 15

For exemplary gallantry during active operations against the enemy in the air.

Distinguished Flying Medal (DFM), Established 1918 16

Awarded 1918–today

For exceptional valour, courage or devotion to duty whilst flying in active operations against the enemy.

Air Crew Europe Star, 1939–1944 17

This is an example of a campaign medal signifying that the personnel took part in operations within a specific area. In this case, the Air Crew Europe Star was awarded for a period of 60 days operational flying from UK bases over Europe between 3 September 1939 and 5 June 1944.

Long Service and Good Conduct Medal 18

1919–today

This medal marks 15 years of service with the RAF with no record of misconduct. It is often jokingly referred to as the undetected crime medal.

These medals belonged to Marshal of the Royal Air Force, Viscount Trenchard, the first Chief of the Air Staff and regarded by many as the founder of the Royal Air Force as we know it today. The Medal Bar includes the Distinguished Service Order, six campaign medals, a jubilee and two coronation medals, the Belgian Croix de Guerre and the US Distinguished Service Medal.

Medals are only worn on dress occasions. Medal ribbon bars, which represent the medals by using a small part of the medal's ribbon, can be worn daily. This bar represents the medals awarded to Group Captain Max Aitken. The silver rosettes signify an additional award to a decoration or service in a specified area or operation during a campaign.

To find out more about Sir Max Aitken, look for his life-size cut out photograph in the RAF Family area of this exhibition.

RAF Image

The RAF has always been keen to showcase its importance to the UK as an independent military service. It has also built a fine reputation for skills as varied as music, drill and dog handling.

However, it is the image of a hero in a leather flying helmet with a handlebar moustache portrayed in books, comics, film and television that has defined the RAF in the public's imagination.

The short films on the exhibition's big screen show this expected image and demonstrate the reality of the wide variety of people and roles in the RAF throughout its first 100 years.

[RAF Image showcase labels]

Flight Lieutenant Paul Brickhill

Joined the Royal Australian Air Force in 1941

In 1943, Australian Spitfire pilot Paul Brickhill was shot down and imprisoned at Stalag Luft III at Sagan in Silesia.

Brickhill later wrote three best-selling RAF books: 'The Great Escape', 'The Dam Busters', and 'Reach for the Sky'.

In each, he shows the service combining individual talent and courage with strong leadership and teamwork to achieve success.

Paul's books, and the iconic feature films they inspired, have defined the wartime RAF in the public mind.

'Paul Brickhill] set a standard in the telling of popular war stories which has never been surpassed.'

'The Times', 1991

[Image credit]

Flight Lieutenant Paul Chester Brickhill, Royal Australian Air Force, about 1945

© National Portrait Gallery

The Great Escape, The Dam Busters, Reach for the Sky 1

Folio Society Edition 2016 Courtesy of the Folio Society

RAF Uniforms

In 1919 the Royal Air Force adopted the distinctive blue grey as their uniform colour. Patterns, fashions and details have changed but the male officer's service dress uniform of today differs very little from that of an officer's uniform from 1919.

Pilot Uniform: 2

Type C Flying Helmet, Mk VIII Flying Goggles, Type G Oxygen Mask,
Pullover 1945

This uniform embodies the classic image of Second World War aircrew as seen in many films and TV series. This is typical flying gear from 1944 onwards.

Suit, Aircrew: Jacket, Trousers 1940

Modelled on the Battle Dress uniform worn by the Army, Suit, Aircrew proved so popular that by 1943 it had been adopted as the working dress uniform of the RAF under the name of War Service Dress. A variation of this uniform remained in service until the early 1970s.

Life Jacket Mk 1 1941

Operated by a small compressed air bottle, the Mk 1 life jacket contained an inflatable stole which would hold the user's torso and head clear of the water. The ample inflation provided over the chest area led to the life jacket being universally known as a Mae West after a famous actress of the time.

Flying Boots 1943

Known as escape boots, the suede uppers could be cut away leaving what would appear to be a pair of normal civilian shoes.

Model Aircraft

A toy or model Spitfire has been an object of desire for children (and adults) from the 1940s to the present day. For many the sleek lines of the Spitfire have come to embody the spirit and image of the Royal Air Force. A fascination with the RAF sparked by these toys can last a lifetime.

Spitfire Model, 1940s 3

The recipient of this wooden model must have been someone very special to the RAF serviceman who carved it.

Airfix Model, 2018 4

Model Spitfires remain one of the most popular items on sale in the Museum shop.

Female Officer's Uniform

Women have been serving with the RAF since 1918. In 1994 the Women's Royal Air Force merged with the RAF and women became fully integrated into the service on equal terms to their male counterparts.

Female Officer's Uniform: 5

Jacket, Skirt, Cap, Shirt, Tie, 1999

This uniform belonged to Wing Commander Edna Felicity Partridge. She was the first female officer to command an Auxiliary Air Force Squadron, No. 600 at Northolt.

This jacket displays the three equally-sized rank laces of a Wing Commander on the cuffs, metal Auxiliary lapel badges and a medal ribbon for the Air Efficiency Award on the left breast.

Combat Uniforms

It is easy to spot the RAF when they are in Dress uniform. However, combat uniform is very similar to army uniform, in that it needs to be fit for purpose. It still identifies the wearer as being in the RAF via the tactical flash.

Wolseley Helmet, 1918–1945 6

During the 1920s and 1930s most operational RAF squadrons were stationed abroad, policing the empire and mandated territories. In these tropical climates blue grey uniforms were replaced by Khaki Drill. This pith helmet would offer some protection from the sun.

General Service Helmet Mk 7, 2009 7

Introduced under an urgent operational requirement, this nylon helmet is shaped to enable troops wearing body armour to fire their weapon while lying down. It is fitted with a cloth cover in Multi Terrain Pattern camouflage, able to blend in with a large number of environments.

In 1936 the Other Ranks Service Dress uniform changed from a high collared tunic to an open collared jacket worn with a shirt and tie. The No.1 dress uniform of today is very similar to its 1930s predecessor. No smarter example of an Other Ranks uniform can be found than those of the Queen's Colour Squadron of the RAF Regiment famed for the precision of their drill.

Queen's Colour Squadron Uniform, RAF Regiment:

Cap, Tie, Jacket, Trousers, Boots, Belt, Scabbard, 2018

[Sensory display at the end of The Image showcase]

[Model of the collar of the dress uniform in the showcase opposite]

The amount of the oak leaf decoration on the collar increases with the rank of the officer. This uniform belonged to a squadron leader.

[Smell]

RAF uniform buttons and fittings were traditionally made of metal and could only be kept clean by regular polishing with Brasso.

[Sound]

This song from early days of the RAF was sung by aircrew who performed aerobic moves. A military mess is a building where personnel can eat and socialise.

RAF RANK AND STRUCTURE

[Cut out figures]

Air Chief Marshal Sir Stephen Hillier KCB, CBE, DFC, ADC, MA

Joined the RAF in 1980

Sir Stephen Hillier was appointed Chief of the Air Staff, the overall commander of the Royal Air Force, in July 2016. He has seen service around the world as an operational pilot and an instructor and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for operations over Iraq in 1999.

As Chief of the Air Staff, Sir Stephen Hillier is responsible for around 35,000 Regular and Reserve RAF personnel and over 700 aircraft.

His rank is identifiable from the single 50mm and three 12mm braids on his sleeves.

'From a very early age, I always wanted to be a pilot in the Royal Air Force. I feel hugely privileged to have achieved that ambition and I'm immensely proud now to be leading the Royal Air Force, especially in our 100th Anniversary year.'

Sir Stephen Hillier, 2018

[Image caption]

Sir Stephen with British personnel in the United States during preparations for the F-35's entry into UK service, 2017

© US Department of Defense

Reverse image: © Sir Stephen Hillier

Warrant Officer Karen Bowers

Joined the RAF in 1988

Karen Bowers is a Station Warrant Officer (SWO). The SWO is responsible for maintaining standards of dress and discipline for all ranks on the Station, organising and running ceremonial events and represents the views and issues of junior ranks at management level. In 2017 Bowers became a Female Ambassador for the RAF and subsequently set up an RAF Women's Ambassador Network.

'Warrant Officer Karen Bowers is a positive role model after becoming the first female SWO at Royal Air Force Boulmer, beating some stiff competition for the position.'
Anne Russell, Media and Communications Officer at RAF Boulmer, 2015

[Image caption]

Karen Bowers on Parade for the Annual Anzac Day Ceremony 2017.

© Karen Bowers /Reverse image: © Karen Bowers

The RAF Family

[Cut out figures, anticlockwise from Geoffrey Page, shown right]



The support network for the RAF is known as the RAF Family.

This family includes many clubs and associations for serving personnel. Welfare organisations and charities, including the RAF Association, Benevolent Fund and the Charitable Trust, support service families, personnel and veterans. Cadet organisations and University Air Squadrons offer young people a taste of life in the RAF as well as introducing essential skills of leadership, confidence and comradeship.

The people in this circle have been selected to represent the RAF Family.

Wing Commander Alan Geoffrey Page DSO, DFC and Bar,
RAFVR,

Joined the RAF in 1939

Geoffrey Page was badly burned when he was shot down while attacking a German bomber formation over the English Channel on 12 August 1940, during the Second World War.

He became one of the patients, known as 'Guinea Pigs', of Dr Archibald McIndoe, who used pioneering reconstruction surgery on injured aircrew. Page eventually underwent over 40 operations. He returned to flying in 1942, destroying several German aircraft, before becoming a spokesman for the 649 members of the morale-boosting and fund-raising Guinea Pig Club.

'Apart from indefatigable skill as a surgeon, McIndoe had an insight into human nature and a willingness to help that is rare.'

'Tale of a Guinea Pig', Geoffrey Page, 1981

[Image caption]

Geoffrey Page in his Hawker Hurricane during the Battle of Britain. Page underwent many operations to his burned hands and face after he was shot down.

© RAF Museum X003

Reverse image: © RAF Museum X003

Taila-leigh Grose, ATC cadet

Joined the ATC in 2016

Taila-leigh Grose is a member of No. 120 Squadron of cadets which was formed in March 1938, and in 1949 moved from its original location at Brent Street to RAF Hendon – today the location of the RAF Museum. The squadron is now based near Watling Park. Cadets meet twice a week and gain direct experience of activities and trades – flying, shooting, sports, parades and camps. ‘I like flying ... it’s a different experience ‘cos you’re pushing your boundaries and doing stuff you’ve never done.’

Taila-leigh Grose, 2018

[Image caption]

Grose with No. 120 Squadron colleagues Flight Lieutenant Anthony Fernandes, Commanding Officer No. 120 Squadron (right) and Senior Aircraftman Oliver Hebson.

© Alphonso Grose

Reverse image: © Alphonso Grose

Acting Pilot Officer Ryan Staple

Joined the University Air Squadron (UAS) in 2015

Ryan Staple is a Senior Student at the University of London Air Squadron and studying Aerospace Technology at the University of Hertfordshire. The UAS offers instruction from ex-frontline pilots and up to six hours of solo flying time.

A former Air Cadet, Ryan sees the UAS as the logical next step to a career in the RAF. He hopes to begin Initial Officer Training in 2018, before beginning pilot training.

'The Air Squadron has shed a whole new light on the Air Force and introduced me to life-long friends, all with a similar mindset.'

Ryan Staple

[Image caption]

Grob Tutors are flown by the University of London Air Squadron.

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Group Captain Sir John William Maxwell Aitken DSO DFC and Bar
Joined the Royal Auxiliary Air Force in 1935

Over three generations, the Beaverbrook family has forged close connections with the RAF through government policy and service. Sir Max Aitken began his RAF career in 1935 as an Auxiliary Reservist in No. 601 Squadron stationed at RAF Hendon.

Sir Max remained with No. 601 until July 1940 and saw much action during the Second World War, destroying 14 enemy aircraft. His final commanding role was with the Banff Strike Wing, which withstood heavy losses attacking German shipping off Norway in 1944 and 1945.

His father, the first Lord Beaverbrook, was Minister of Aircraft Production 1940-1942, and his son, AVM Lord Beaverbrook, has been the Commandant General of the Royal Auxiliary Air Force since 2016.

'The door opened and out jumped a very handsome young man ... He grinned at both of us and acknowledged us. As he walked by we realised his cap had gold braid on the peak, and we found out later it was our new station commander!'

Corporal Joyce Trovey, WAAF, in 'A Separate Little War', by Andrew Bird, 2003

[Image caption]

Air Vice Marshal Lord Beaverbrook is a British peer, politician and businessman who joined the Royal Auxiliary Air Force in 2004. He served as Honorary Air Commodore of No. 4624 Squadron, the only specialist Movements Squadron in the RAF Reserves, before being promoted to Honorary Inspector General in 2009. He also serves on the Air Force Board.

© MOD

Reverse image: © RAF Museum PC98/173/6042/11

rafm.tours/beaverbrook

Corporal Lauren Smith

Joined the RAF in 2009

When Lauren Smith joined the RAF her great-grandmother, Joyce Edwards, was delighted. Edwards was a former Women's Auxiliary Air Force cook and the widow of John Madge, who was killed flying with Bomber Command in 1944. During Smith's basic training her great-grandmother died suddenly, forcing her to decide whether to finish the course or to go to the funeral and delay her graduation. Smith chose to complete the training and proudly carried her great-grandmother's photograph in her tunic pocket at her passing-out parade.

'I was thinking of Joyce and she was with me throughout my passing-out parade.'

Lauren Smith

[Image caption]

Smith's role covers passenger handling, loading and offloading and also the load planning of all aircraft departing Brize Norton.

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rafm.tours/smith

Group Captain Donald Osborne Finlay DFC, AFC

Joined the RAF in 1935

Don Finlay was a successful Olympian of the 1930s, who became an RAF Spitfire pilot with several confirmed air-to-air victories. Finlay won a bronze medal in the 1932 Olympic hurdles, improving to silver in the 1936 Olympics in Berlin. He had originally trained as an RAF Apprentice at RAF Halton.

He flew Spitfires during the Battle of Britain and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. He later served in the Middle and Far East before retiring from the RAF in 1959.

'To me he was the greatest British high hurdler ... he was a maverick ... a great and lovable eccentric, a likable chap.' **Peter Hildreth, British Olympic hurdler, 1970**

[Image caption]

Although Finlay was known for his athletic prowess, he was also a successful fighter pilot and commanded his own squadron.

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Corporal Laura MacLeod

Joined the RAF in 2007

In 2017, the RAF Charitable Trust awarded Laura MacLeod a Junior Ranks Pilot Flying Scholarship with the RAF Flying Clubs Association. The scholarship gives each trainee fifteen hours of flying, with the opportunity to fly solo, which she described as ‘an amazing opportunity and an incredible privilege’.

‘I never thought I would be able to say I have been ‘pilot in command’ of an aircraft. Never limit yourself to what you think you can achieve, you never know what the future holds.’

Corporal Laura MacLeod, 2017

[Image caption]

Here, MacLeod is seen just after the last flight of her Scholarship.

© Laura MacLeod

Reverse image: © Crown Copyright

Corporal Stuart Robinson

Joined the RAF in 1999

During a patrol in Afghanistan in 2013, Stuart Robinson's RAF Regiment vehicle hit an Improvised Explosive Device.

The explosion resulted in the loss of his left leg and seriously damaged his right arm and leg. In hospital, he took the decision to have his right leg amputated.

After his recovery, the RAF Benevolent Fund helped Robinson purchase a specially-adapted trike which has helped to improve the quality of his life at home.

'I don't like asking for help but you can't do everything on your own ... The RAF Benevolent Fund has been there for my family through the hardest time.'

Stuart Robinson, 2017

[Image caption]

Despite sustaining injuries in action in Afghanistan Robinson has become a successful Paralympian and Invictus Games participant. Support from the RAF Benevolent Fund was vital during his recovery.

© Stuart Robinson/Reverse image: © Stuart Robinson

rafm.tours/robinson

Warrant Officer Shobha Earl

Joined the RAF in 1978

Shobha Earl trained as an administrator and became the RAF's first Asian female Warrant Officer in 2001. After 25 years' Regular Service, she moved to the Royal Auxiliary Air Force where she was appointed Command Warrant Officer Reserves and organised prestigious ceremonial events. In 2018 she managed the part-time, locally-engaged personnel of the Volunteer Ex-Regular Reserve at RAF Honington. Earl has also escorted the Sovereign's Colour of the Royal Auxiliary Air Force on five occasions. 'I am proud to achieve 40 years' continuous regular and reserve service during the RAF's Centenary in 2018.'

Shobha Earl, 2018

[Image caption]

Earl seated in her office at RAF Honington. Earl manages a pool of ex-service personnel that supports the regular air force.

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Sergeant 'Sparky' McDougall

Joined the RAF in 1980

Military units sometimes keep animal mascots for ceremonial purposes and to represent their common spirit or 'esprit de corps'. Sparky McDougall was the mascot of No. 1 Radio School based at RAF Locking, and was called Sparky after the nickname for RAF radio operators: Sparks. McDougall represented the unit at parades and also attended events and galas around the country. Loved by all, the little donkey was even presented to Queen Elizabeth II.

'He was so friendly and he loved children, especially if they had a polo mint to feed him.'

Gwen Garfield, Sparky McDougall's friend and carer, 2009

[Image caption]

After 12 years' good conduct, McDougall was promoted to Sergeant, outranking his Corporal handlers. He retired in 1999.

Chief Technician Paul Phelan

Joined the RAF in 2000

Paul Phelan is the Drum Major with the Central Band of the Royal Air Force and in charge of their ceremonial engagements. A graduate of the Royal College of Music, Phelan was Principal Horn with the Central Band before becoming Drum Major.

Highlights of Phelan's career with the Central Band have included tours of the USA and throughout Europe and leading out the Tri-Service Bands during the commemorations marking the Centenary of the Third Battle of Ypres in 2017.

'There is another side to the sterling accomplishments of Central Band musicians. As serving members of the Royal Air Force, musicians also undertake key operational support roles in theatres around the world.'

'More Music in the Air', Ian Kendrick, 2011

[Image caption]

Phelan playing with the RAF Central Band, 2017.

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Reverend Eleanor Rance

Joined the RAF in 1999

Eleanor Rance became the RAF's first female Anglican chaplain in 1999 and spent the next 11 years supporting service personnel and their families in the UK and in Iraq. She remembers moments of great joy and tragedy, when she guided people to 'the divine and the eternal, healing love'. Rance is proud to have followed in the footsteps of chaplains of all denominations who have served the RAF over time.

'I recall intense conversations in the bar at 3.00am, young men and women in immaculate uniform bearing a fallen comrade, dozing in body armour to the sound of helicopter patrols, laughter, hilarity, excellence.'

Eleanor Rance

[Image caption]

“To serve, not to be served” is the motto of the RAF Chaplain’s Branch. It remains my motto just as the RAF remains in my blood.’

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