



Royal Air Force  
Benevolent Fund



COMMEMORATING THE 80TH  
ANNIVERSARY OF THE RAF AIR CADETS





## LET'S CELEBRATE THE RAF AIR CADETS TOGETHER

**The RAF Benevolent Fund was proud to join forces with the RAF Air Cadets to mark the 80th anniversary of the youth organisation in 2021.**

Throughout their 80-year history the air cadets have been inspiring their members to go on to great things, whether that be as part of the Royal Air Force itself or further afield. From Olympic medals and Oscar nominations to topping the charts or even becoming a NASA Astronaut.

Linford Christie OBE, Tom Fletcher, Dr Michael Foale, Rory Underwood MBE and Richard Burton were all members of this extraordinary youth organisation.

Throughout the years cadets have played a key role in helping us to be there for the RAF Family, whether that's raising money, supporting events or helping to raise awareness. To mark the organisation's 80th anniversary, the RAF Benevolent Fund was proud to offer an enhanced package of welfare support for the RAF Air Cadets, including members of the Combined Cadet Force. Support includes emotional wellbeing, counselling and bereavement support, as well as financial support if a member is killed, on or off duty. This also extends to staff cadets and uniformed volunteers. We also launched a fundraising drive, raising a staggering £60,000 for the RAF Benevolent Fund and the RAF Air Cadets General Purposes Fund.

To celebrate this impressive anniversary, the RAF Benevolent Fund invited former cadets to share their best memories and advice for current cadets. We hope this serves a reminder of the power of the youth organisation and inspires future generations. Thank you to everyone who shared their story with us.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Chris Elliot".

**Air Vice-Marshal Chris Elliot CB CBE DL BSc MA**  
Controller, RAF Benevolent Fund



It was an ATC summer camp at RAF Church Fenton that provided the catalyst for me to join the RAF. I helped a technician fix a fault on the undercarriage of a Jet Provost – to see the aircraft in bits, help put it back together, and then see it fly, was hugely inspiring. That experience convinced me that a career as a RAF Technician was for me, and two years later I joined as an Apprentice – 34 years later I'm still serving! I wish I'd known then that there were so many more brilliant activities available. My advice to current RAF Air Cadets? If you set your mind to something, almost anything is possible.

**Air Commodore Tony Keeling,  
Commandant, RAF Air Cadets**

145 (Altrincham & Hale) Squadron

One of my best memories was an overseas flight in a 30 Squadron Valetta to Gatow, Berlin in December 1954. The extent of wartime bombing was still very evident. Twenty-two years later I left the RAF after 21 years' service and my final pilot tour was on the C130 Hercules with 30 Squadron. My advice to current air cadets? Whenever possible, check rather than assume.

**Sqn Ldr (Ret'd) Dennis Pasco**

74 (Crayford) Squadron

I joined the cadets quite late as they weren't allowed to advertise back in



1990s Northern Ireland. I went to my first summer camp at RAF Linton-on-Ouse and flew in a Bulldog for the first time. It was the most amazing experience, and it changed my life! I decided then that I wanted to be a doctor in the RAF. I gained a bursary and a cadetship, joined the UAS, have done various jobs all around the country and done some specialist training. I've absolutely loved my time

in the RAF and am so glad I joined the cadets. I wouldn't have considered my current career without the experience I had during cadets. I wish I knew sooner how great the air cadets were so I could have joined earlier! If I had any advice to current air cadets it would be don't vomit on your first flight!

**Felicity Leaming**

817DF (Ballynahinch) NI



My most treasured memory? Learning to fly Percival Proctors out of Barton Airport. To all those currently in the RAF Air Cadets – choose your friends carefully and remember, superior officers don't know more than you do!

### **E Des Heath**

145 (Altrincham) Squadron  
(Founder Member 1941)

There are so many great memories... I loved Chipmunk flights and gliding... night exercises (careering around the local woods)... mountaineering in north Wales... sports, sports, and more sports (tennis, cross country, netball, swimming)... summer camps (being woken by bagpipes for reveille – poor livers-in!)... more range days than I've managed in the last 10 years of my 25 years of Service... and the unforgettable flight in a Canberra. What fantastic opportunities we were afforded. The ATC continues to be a truly wonderful outlet for today's youth to grow, learn and explore.

### **Nel Doherty**

57 (Potters Bar) Squadron,  
Herts & Bucks Wing

It's so difficult to pick out just one standout memory. I think the most influential moment was when I was on Summer Camp at RAF St Athan. There was an organised visit to the Big Pit, but I'd

been on a school trip, and we were given the alternative of visiting the Technical School. A small group of us went round the school that afternoon and talking to the people there is what inspired me to be an RAF Engineer Officer. I wish I knew then to literally apply for every opportunity that came along. I met such awesome people on every course. If I had a piece of advice for current RAF Air Cadets or those thinking of joining it would be to remember that respect for yourself and your standards is just as important as your respect of others.

### **Flt Lt Kathy Morten**

424 (City of Southampton) Squadron

My best memory is from 1980 – getting a VERY close look (from an RAF Air-Sea Rescue launch) at Kosmonaut Vladimir Komarov, a Russian satellite tracking ship in the Straits of Gibraltar. The Cold War still on and it was very interesting to see the 'other side' close up. With hindsight, I wonder if the ship was actually doing a spot of ELINT? The Air Cadets gave me confidence and all manner of interesting experiences and might well have stopped me going off the rails because I'd joined at my sister's suggestion not long after my father died, at a really bad time. My advice to current cadets would be to seize as many opportunities as possible.

### **Anonymous**

195 (Grimsby) Squadron

I joined the ATC in March 1966. I remember the greatcoat in which I 'drowned' and my weekly struggle with collar studs! We paraded on Wednesday evenings in an old wooden 'hut' situated in Lyndhurst carpark. I can recall to this day one Sergeant Davey for his meticulous turn-out and shouts of 'T, L, V' as we about-turned on the march! The excitement of Chipmunk flights, summer camps and gliding at RAF Old Sarum. At 17 I joined the RAF as a radar mechanic; subsequently commissioned in the Engineer Branch and ultimately retired as a Wing Commander some 33 years later! The ATC remains just as relevant today for young people whether or not they aspire to long-term service in the Armed Forces.

### **Paul White**

1308 (New Forest) Squadron,  
Lyndhurst Flight

I joined in 2009 and ended up meeting my now husband in 2010. From camps at Leuchars, to being a part of a Memorial Guard of Honour for a member of staff who had passed, I had made so many amazing memories, and had so many experiences within the ATC. I urge everyone to take every experience you can – friendship comes from all over. From road marching, flying and gliding scholarship to shooting and much more, the cadets shaped me into the person I am now. My husband was also a cadet at 298



Hornsea and is now working alongside the RAF Red Arrows after spending the last eight years in the RAF.

**Aimee Gardner**

2394 (East Cleveland) Squadron and 740 (Whitby) Squadron

Air experience flying with 5 AEF in Chipmunks at Cambridge is one of my best memories and flying on Varsity aircraft at RAF Oakington along with summer camp at Watton and flying on a Hastings. But my overriding memory is gaining my gliding wings at Henlow with 616 Gliding School May 1969.

**Ian Stewart**

10F/2492 (Luton) Squadron

There are many memories that I remember as an RAF Air Cadet. The one that stands out is my time at the Royal International Air Tattoo. I was selected as the Best Cadet of the Camp, this was out of over 800 cadets. Commandant Air Cadets Air Commodore Dawn McCafferty visited the campsite, I was introduced to her and escorted her around for the day. The main activity was that we attended a lunch at one of the chalets with many RAF personnel. We went into the main private chalet, and I met several high-level RAF staff including the Chief of the Air Staff – our Ambassador, Carol Vorderman, was also there. The main part of the prize

was a flying scholarship with Teesside Aviation. This was an absolutely amazing achievement! The best moment in my seven-year cadet tenure!

**Dan Scholes**

366 (King Ecgbert) Squadron

I joined prior to joining the RAF. Flying in Chipmunks convinced me that I was destined to be groundcrew. My abiding memory was summer camp at RAF St. Athan – those aircraft stripped down for maintenance, nirvana. I did 24 years as Avionics. The ATC gave me the discipline to succeed. I never regretted a single day. Great times, great places and great people. To those who are currently a cadet? Enjoy the good times. Learn from the bad.

**Gary Williams**

128 (Barrow) Squadron

I joined 362 Squadron in 1980 on advice that it would help with my enlistment in the RAF. I joined up in 1983 and served for 12 years. A few years later I met my former Warrant Officer at the Remembrance Parade and was invited to re-join. I am now Officer Commanding the squadron. My advice to current cadets at the squadron? Mouth shut, ears open!

**Paul Watts**

362 (Ashleigh School) Squadron

## FROM CROYDON TO SPACE COMMAND: AIR VICE-MARSHAL GODFREY ON THE FINAL FRONTIER

**In celebration of the RAF Air Cadet's 80th anniversary, we spoke to Air Vice-Marshal Paul Godfrey, the inaugural commander of the United Kingdom's new Space Command. Working alongside strategic global partners, Air Vice-Marshal Godfrey will help lead the fight in combating threats from other nations and ramp up efforts to counter space-based weapons.**

I grew up near Kenley, a former Battle of Britain airfield south of London. I remember being a six-year-old, watching aircraft display during the air show season and knowing even at that young age that I wanted to be a pilot.

I joined the Combined Cadet Force (CCF) when I was at Trinity School in Croydon, and it cemented my love for aviation. Although I had my sights set on flying, when I went for officer and air crew selection, I failed navigator for mental arithmetic and was graded 'marginal' for a pilot.



The best decision I ever made was to stay and continue pilot selection. I was lucky enough to be awarded a scholarship in sixth form, gaining my private pilot's licence at 17 (before I could drive!), heading to RAF College Cranwell and eventually joining the RAF at 18.

From a pure flying perspective, my career in the RAF has been nothing short of fantastic, flying an array of aircraft from the Jet Provost and the Hawk, to the Harrier, F16 and Typhoon. It was also an incredible honour to fly the Spitfire and Hurricane with the RAF Battle of Britain Memorial Flight.

There have been some truly testing times – flying on operations in the Balkans and Iraq and deploying to Italy and Cyprus in response to conflicts – and some equally motivating opportunities, including my appointment as Station Commander at RAF Lossiemouth, managing the new aircraft carrier project and most recently serving as Combined Air and Space Operations Centre Director based in Qatar. It was in this role that I learned I'd been appointed Space Commander.

Growing up, I never thought Space Command would be an entity, let alone one I would be leading. I remember when I got that phone call: I was surprised, as you never expect it to be you – it's a massive honour but also a huge responsibility to stand up a command. Even though I'm



only a few weeks in, whilst it's been busy, it's been fascinating.

Space is the ultimate high ground. In military terms, the exploration and understanding of space gives you the intelligence you need to succeed. And as a nation, we need to focus on it more, as it improves our ability to operate in the other domains - land, sea, air and cyber.

The chance to collaborate with other nations is exciting too - there are so many capabilities that that can be deployed in the future.

It's not just a military focus either; our day-to-day lives are full of space-related activity. It's important to explore on the civil side what can be done in the right conditions, to protect ourselves and discover opportunities for the future.

Looking back, I always had an interest in science and STEM subjects at school and although I had no desire to be an astronaut, I loved science fiction when I was younger – from Flash Gordon to Star Wars. I think it's vitally important to open the conversation about space and why it's significant to everyday life, not just for adults but young people too.

I try not to get ahead of myself, but I am really excited about this next step and feel immensely proud to be appointed to lead UK Space Command. I've always said that I just want to enjoy my job, and I have been incredibly fortunate to have done that over the past 30 years. It's been a hell of a ride and I wouldn't be here if the cadets had not given me the confidence to stay and complete the pilot selection all those years ago.

**Air Vice-Marshal Godfrey is Chairman of RAF Rugby Union, proud supporters of the RAF Benevolent Fund.**



My standout memory of being an RAF Air Cadet (other than the countless memories I made with lifelong friends) was flying in the back of a Chinook, on a trip to RAF Odiham. It was my first trip with the cadets, and it made an impact – I wish I had seized even more opportunities while I was there! To current cadets – you don't have to be the loudest person in the room to be a good leader.

**Jessie Reid**

129 (Tunbridge Wells) Squadron

I made lots of memories within the ATC, my favourite being flying the Grob Tutor. I loved everything about it especially doing aerobatics for the first time and controlling the aircraft which was really exciting!

**Baset Azemie**

1374 (East Barnet) Squadron

I loved my time at 332 High Wycombe. So much so I re-joined as a CI. My standout time was doing our bronze Duke of Edinburgh expedition down on the south coast. The weather was cold and very wet. We had no clue that one cadet's confidence in map reading wasn't matched by his ability. We end up six miles off course and got chased by a bull too. We managed to navigate our way back to camp the last team in. At the time it was very scary, but I laugh about it now.

In fact, I think we were laughing about it that very night with our Flt Sgt who had decided to cook dinner using all the ration tins of food – cooking it in one big pot. He said, "it's gourmet food". I can confirm he was wrong, it was very far from that, but being tired and hungry we scoffed the lot.

**Phil Webb**

332 (High Wycombe) Squadron

I was chosen to take part in the first (and almost the last) air cadet camp to be held in Malta, in 1973. We flew from RAF Luqa and stayed at RAF Hal Far. We toured Malta, admired the Grand Harbour, swam in the Mediterranean and could hardly believe our good luck! What great days, even better than air experience flying at RAF Manston! Although my career took me to the Army, I treasure my memories of the air cadets and salute their enduring excellence over 80 years.

**Major General Stephen Andrews**

593 (Ravensbourne School) Squadron

I had a brilliant time as a cadet, beginning in 1951 with summer camps at Oakington, Bassingbourne and Marham. Gliding with 618 at Detling flying in Anson, Tiger Moth and Chipmunk. I was selected for overseas flights to Singapore from Lyneham stopping en route in Libya, Iraq, Sharjah, Pakistan, and Ceylon [now Sri Lanka].

After four years in the ATC, I went on to complete 20 years in the RAF. And I'd do it all again.

**Peter George Robinson**

1039 (Gillingham) Squadron

In 1969 I was privileged to be selected to represent Somerset Wing ATC at the 22nd International Air Cadet Exchange. Flying out from the US Air Base at Rhein Main, Germany in a C141 Starlifter, our group spent almost a month in the USA visiting New York, Wichita in Kansas, and Washington DC. A fantastic experience for an 18-year-old made even more exciting as the Apollo 11 moonshot was happening at the same time!

**Anthony John Siddall**

159 (Weston-Super-Mare Grammar School) Squadron

Joining the RAF Air Cadets at 16 was my only chance as girls were not allowed before then. I had wanted to join the RAF since I was nine-years old, so being an air cadet was my dream. I was only in the cadets for 13 months as I joined the RAF. In those 13 months I reached the rank of Sgt, went flying, gliding, shooting, abseiling into mines and had many walks in the Welsh mountains. The highlight was when I attended a camp at RAF Scampton three weeks before heading off to RAF Swindon for basic training. Little did I know that





three years later I would be posted to RAF Scampton! To all current cadets – embrace all the activities as there are so many. Remember: nothing is impossible, try everything however hard it seems.

**Lisa Dunkerley**

2445 Squadron

The day I first flew in a Kirby Cadet glider at RAF Manston in the 1980s changed my life – I loved flying and to experience a first flight in an open glider was incredible. My love for aviation never left me, nor my love of the RAF and the ATC. In later life I became a Commissioned RAF VRT Officer, attained the rank of Flight Lieutenant and commanded 1218 Squadron. To all those in the cadets today, remember, we all have weaknesses, it's how we develop and overcome.

**Kevin A Gorringe**

358 Squadron

I joined the air cadets through word of mouth via a leading cadet. And my best memory is my mum who attended my first parade involving all ATC squadrons. It was a very very proud moment for me. I still have the picture that was taken with my mum outside the barracks.

**Kyle Reese**

291 ATC Squadron



Being the first cadet to be awarded the Endeavour Award in our squadron during the presentation evening was a surprise and one of my standout memories. I was awarded it for being brave and taking up new adventures whilst on Beckingham Camp. As a cadet I learnt to always stand up for myself – they helped me build my confidence.

**Rebecca Bradley**

1073 Squadron

Just one stand out memory? I've too many to choose from! I'm glad to have been part of the adventure. I'll always remember that proper planning and preparation prevents poor performance.

**Nigel Kerr**

C Flight 1903 (Penge) Squadron



During my early days as an air cadet, I learnt an array of skills that have stuck and served me well - from first aid training to drill practice and kit preparation. With great support from the volunteers, I progressed over the years and came into my own, attaining a position of responsibility for the younger cohort and allowing me to start instructing and encouraging the other air cadets. Being an air cadet gave me the skills to get to where I am today - an RAF Regiment Gunner on the Queen's Colour Squadron, 63 Squadron RAF Regiment.

**SAC Jack Hawkins**

124 (Hereford City) Squadron ATC

As a cadet I won a Flying Scholarship and learnt to fly on Tiger Moths, G-AHVU and G-AKYR at Cardiff Aero Club in 1951. This led to undergoing flying training during National Service and I won the cup as best all-round pupil at RAF Pershore, presented at our passing out parade. Unfortunately, various factors, including the ending of the Korean War, led to me being taken off training on Meteors at RAF Worksop in 1953. I wish I'd know then how many friends I would get to know as a result of being in the cadets.

**Terry Harper**

Air Cadets, Monmouth School

I joined 225 (Brighton No. 1) Squadron at the age of 13. I still remember that first evening - it was a little daunting! But I needn't have worried - it was new, but it was also exciting. As I settled in over the weeks, I uncovered more about myself and my interests. The opportunities to get into sport were fantastic; I enjoyed the competition, the camaraderie, and the challenge. Like many other air cadets, I learnt to fly before I could drive - something I will always be delighted by! Flying a Tutor at RAF Benson remains one of my fondest memories.

**Flt Lt Chris Wilce**

225 (Brighton No. 1) Squadron

I joined 2442 Westbury on Trym Squadron, Bristol in 1982, a year after girls were permitted to join the ATC. I wasn't sure how long I would be in the ATC or whether I would like it. When I left in 1991 as a Staff Cadet Warrant Officer I looked back on my time, even now, with great love. I met some lifetime friends, completing many unusual tasks, camps, exercises and hill climbs. I am proud to be an ex-cadet. It was the best time in my life.

**Tina M Veasey (Fox)**

The most memorable part of my time as an air cadet was flying an airplane! I was lucky enough to do this on summer camp in a Chipmunk with a Jaguar pilot - what

an amazing experience to actually fly a plane and be treated to lots of aerobatics afterwards! At 2267 Squadron we had a great commanding officer and Warrant Officer who gave up lots of their spare time to keep us busy. In addition to the exciting things - flying, shooting etc. - I learned some life skills that I still use today. Useful stuff like ironing, shoe-polishing, good timekeeping, map-reading, first aid and working with other people. Although I didn't join the RAF, being an air cadet gave me a life-long interest in airplanes, and I've always been proud of being part of it.

**James Buckley**

2267 (Brize Norton) Squadron

I served in 101 Squadron between 2013 and 2020, eventually reaching the rank of Flight Sergeant. I did many things that I would not have to be able to experience elsewhere, including RAFWARMA, RIAT 2016, Wing Field Days, and many more. I also became an Instructor Cadet and gained my BTEC in Aviation Studies. My two most memorable experiences were taking part in the Lord Mayor's Show in 2016 and going on an Alpine Expedition in 2017. Both of these events proved to have a big impact on my later life - I joined my University Snowsports Club in 2018/19 and my experience in the Lord Mayor's Show served as inspiration for one of my second-year film projects. Being an RAF



"CADETS GAVE ME  
THE PERSEVERANCE  
AND RESILIENCE TO  
BE SUCCESSFUL IN  
JOURNALISM"

**The lessons and skills BBC journalist Laura Trevelyan learned as an air cadet prepared her for a life on the road, living on her wits, ready to leave at a moment's notice on the trail of breaking news. Here she recalls her time with her local squadron.**

Being a cadet was a wonderful experience, I loved it. One of the highlights was learning to glide at West Malling in Kent. It was just amazing – aged 16 to be able to be up there as free as a bird, the beneficiary of these expert instructors. I can still remember how exhilarating that feeling was. I will always be so grateful for that opportunity.

I wanted to join the air cadets because of the excitement of flying. Joining the cadets expanded my horizons in a way I didn't appreciate at the time. It was something I pursued at university too, joining the Air

Squadron and I continued to fly, becoming the first person in my year to go solo in a Bulldog.

I also did my Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award and got to meet Prince Philip at Buckingham Palace. Back then he would present the gold awards himself. For that you had to do various community service and a 50-mile trek over four days.

All these qualities – team building, perseverance and resilience – all of these things I learnt from being an air cadet and took into my professional career. Broadcasting is very often the art of the possible, what can you do, and having to hit the ground running. All of those attributes of organisation and a can-do attitude, those are all things I learned when I was an air cadet.

There is a connection between having been an air cadet and being a journalist. You have to be organised, you have to be on time, you have to be disciplined, you have to meet a deadline.

Although I did not choose a career in the Royal Air Force, my time in the cadets left with me with utmost respect for those who do serve and who do dedicate their lives to the protection of the rest of us. And that has stayed with me through my life.



Air Cadet effectively made me into the person I am today. Never give up, never give in. Per ardua ad astra.

**Aaron Stevens**

101 (Kenton and Kingsbury) Squadron

I had the privilege of being one of the first Squadron Adjutant Cadets, where I supplied a full Administrative Support Service, to the late Squadron Adjutant Phil Massey. I have recently become aware that 2486 Squadron has recently been disbanded, which has been quite upsetting for me, as was the knowledge of the death of Phil Massey, who was not only an excellent boss, but considered him a personal friend.

**Julien Timothy FitzGerald (was Woolley)**

2486 (Lytham St Annes) Squadron

Attending summer camp at RAF Hendon in the '50s the year before it closed are some of my best cadet memories. Plus, trips in Ansons, Chipmunks and Dove/ Devons plus sitting on the tailplane of the Ansons whilst the engines were run to check for mag-drop. Memories! I wish I knew then to persevere in all things. And my advice? Don't upset the drill sergeant!

**Anthony Griffin**

395 (Stafford) Squadron



I joined in 1976 and completed 13 years with Stafford, rising to CWO, then Civilian Instructor. Highlights included numerous summer camps and becoming one of the first CWO to be a qualified range officer. I've so many memories, including taking 16 cadets to Buckingham Palace to receive their Gold Duke of Edinburgh awards. I also remember visiting Canada on an

exchange, Nijmegen Marches, getting my Glider Pilot licence – great times and great character building. I flew in Chipmunks, Nimrod, Shackleton. Thank you to the Officers and instructors at the time.

**Neil James**

395 (Stafford) Squadron



My final day remains one of my best memories. I finished as CWO from 312 Squadron Canterbury, after a week in the Lake District, sat on Windermere station travelling back to medical School in Cardiff on my own. It was massively emotional journey. So many happy memories – summer camps in particular. If I had any advice for current cadets? Never ask someone to do something you wouldn't be willing to do yourself.

#### **Dr Ed Curtis**

312 Squadron

Best memories of being an air cadet? Flying in Chipmunks from RAF Abingdon and Gliding from White Waltham. To all current and future cadets – remember, it's not criticism, it's help!

#### **Steve**

211 (Newbury) Squadron

Being awarded a flying scholarship in 1951 and undergoing my training at Wolverhampton Municipal Airport are two of my best cadet memories. I never knew that being an air cadet would have such an impact on my personal life – remember, you are now a member of an extended family.

#### **John Souster**

196 (Walsall) Squadron

My best memories of being in the cadets were the thrills and adventures of summer camps and visiting RAF operational units such as RAF Brize Norton and RAF Wyton. It was great to meet lots of RAF characters and see how the RAF operated – how they lived their lives encouraged me even more to want to join. I remember the trade days where you got to go and work with an RAF trade. I was given the opportunity to work with the MT section and can remember at Brize Norton MT section helping to do daily inspections on light-weight land-rovers. I also was thrilled to do ranges and night exercises with the RAF Regiment Flight, who both scared me and inspired me. This inspiration led to a 30-year career culminating my time as Station Warrant officer at RAF St Mawgan. I learn to be confident in your own abilities and never give up!

#### **Richard Pyshorn**

272 (Wisbech) Squadron

I was a cadet from 1992 to 1995. I loved meeting people from across the area at camps in the woods, and remember winning a regional shooting competition, flying in Chipmunks and Bulldogs, going in a Chinook, parading in town, volunteering at local events, rock climbing, canoeing, obstacle courses and wearing my uniform with pride! So many unique experiences. It was my safe place that I felt welcomed

at. Many friendships were made but also many sad times saying goodbye to members.

#### **Catherine Swain**

2071 (Stamford, Lincolnshire) Squadron

My best memory? Flying in a Tiger Moth flying over Margate after taking off from RAF Manston in 1948.

#### **John Matthews**

342 Squadron

I had a great time at 2513 Squadron. I met and performed for HRH Queen Elizabeth II with the national cadet force pipes and drums, completed Nijmegen marches and helped at RIAT. I became so much more confident since joining them and now I'm giving back what I can as a CI for them.

#### **Kim Couchman-Sawyer**

2513 Romney Marsh ATC

I joined 2236 Stanmore Squadron in Middlesex Wing in July 1981. I spent a number of wonderful years there rising to the rank of Cadet Warrant Officer. In 1988 I did my BGT on the Venture at 613VGS, RAF Halton. I got bitten by the flying bug and joined as a Staff Cadet, Civilian Instructor and got my Commission in 2000. Becoming an A2 on the Vigilant, I amassed some 1,500 hours with the



## "WHAT YOU LEARN WILL STAY WITH YOU FOR LIFE"

**As we celebrate the 80th anniversary of the RAF Air Cadets, Air Commodore Paul Rose MBE, Head of Helicopters 3 within Defence Equipment and Support, looks back at where his interest in the RAF all began. Paul is Director of Representative Rugby for the RAF Rugby Union, proud supporters of the RAF Benevolent Fund.**

My family background was quite cool – my grandfather was in the Royal Navy, with one of his brothers in the Army and the other having served in the Royal Air Force. Growing up in Kent, I had an avid interest in the RAF from a young age having seen the ATC band lead the local carnival, with the Battle of Britain's Spitfire and Hurricane displaying overhead.

Although I couldn't become a pilot due to my eyesight, the opportunity to join the RAF Air Cadets is open to all, so I proudly signed up with 2230 Sqn in Sittingbourne.



Although I knew I wanted to join the RAF, I didn't know exactly what I wanted to do. But as an air cadet, I learnt so many grounding ideals at a young age, which allowed me to explore avenues I didn't know existed. I was taught about

confidence, pride and respect, about self-discipline, teamwork and leadership. These qualities are vital for moving through life, whatever path you take, and the air cadets provided an enjoyable yet encouraging platform for me. Learning



what it means to be a leader but also a follower is so important and I'm grateful I was privy to this so early on in life.

In my final years with the air cadets, I was selected for a sixth form scholarship from the Royal Air Force before then applying for university sponsorship. I gladly accepted, heading off to the University of Bath to study Aeronautical Engineering. Upon graduation, I headed straight to RAF Cranwell to begin my Initial Officer Training.

So far, my career has been nothing short of an extraordinary whirlwind, from a specialist engineering officer on an aerial delivery trials unit, to being the Chief Engineer and In-Service Leader for the Chinook Delivery Team. While sometimes challenging, my career has been filled with numerous hugely enjoyable and immensely rewarding experiences, some of which have defined my approach to life.

One of my proudest moments was taking command as the Senior Engineering Officer on the Merlin Force at RAF Benson. I oversaw a doubling in size of the force, managing the extraction of aircraft from Operation TELIC in Iraq and then leading the advance party for the deployment of the Merlin Force into Afghanistan in support of Operation HERRICK. For what was an incredible

experience, I was appointed an MBE in the 2009 New Year Honours List – a moment that will stay with me for life. Those moments, though, are defined by the team - the people with whom I worked at RAF Benson were truly inspiring. We could not have achieved all of the incredible things we delivered without every individual playing their part and for that I will be forever grateful.

For me, the air cadet organisation is vitally important to the future of the Service – they are the next generation of the RAF. Even for those that don't continue on with a military career, what you learn will stay with you for life. Being an air cadet also affords you a greater understanding of the military, providing a connection to the Armed Forces that many across the country do not get to experience – that empathy is important, allowing one to assess and approach situations with emotional intelligence.

While I relished my time in the air cadets, I unfortunately haven't been able to keep in touch with a lot of the great friends I made all those years ago. Everyone was fantastic, particularly the adult volunteers who gave so much of their time and energy for the benefit of others. I look back with nothing but very fond memories on a time that instilled incredible qualities that have stayed with me for life.

Air Cadets, sending solos and teaching instructors to be instructors. The best years of my life were in the cadets, and I am grateful to have been allowed to participate in this great organisation. I never knew how amazing it was going to be. Believe in yourself.

### **Milton Josephs**

2236 (Stanmore) Squadron and 613 VGS

I had the amazing friendships in the cadets and remember winning the Drill Competitions several times! How good it would have been to stay longer...

### **David Gilbert**

491 (Handsworth Birmingham) Squadron

Marching down the Mall in London for the 150 years of the cadet service movement with the Red Arrows flying over, and meeting Prince Charles, is my best cadet memory. I'd encourage cadets to take the advantage of getting all the flying hours you can. And if I had any advice? Always make your bed first thing in the morning.

### **Adam Levy**

155 Maidenhead ATC

I joined 2195 Squadron on my second attempt (I was only 12 on the first attempt) and some 33 years later I'm proud to still be volunteering in the RAF



Air Cadets. When I reflect on my time as a Cadet, my first annual camp at RAF West Raynham was such a special time – I will never forget those Bloodhound missiles and the opportunity to fly in a Chipmunk (with RAF jets flying in close proximity). Subsequent camps in both the UK and overseas remain a highlight, forging new friendships with many of us continuing to serve as volunteer instructors to this day. Many many years later, commanding my 'home' Wing is a personal highlight during my CFAV service and I now relish the opportunity to serve as the first ever Senior Volunteer Advisor Gp Capt. I never knew how life changing being a cadet would be – family, friendship and professionally. The more effort you put in, the more you will gain from the RAF Air Cadets.

#### **Gp Capt Andy Pass**

2195 (Long Eaton) Squadron

Great days in the air cadets! I made fab friends and did some cool stuff including meeting the Duke of Edinburgh and the Duchess of Kent. Still involved with RAFAC despite being 56 now! I never knew how many opportunities there are for cadets. My advice to current cadets? Enjoy the drill, it is the best team builder!

#### **Andrew Markham**

1368 (Warwick) Squadron

The atmosphere was fantastic in the cadets, where else could you meet such interesting and fun people, get the opportunity to fly and learn all about the RAF? Many happy memories. Make the most of every experience and have fun!

#### **Jonathan Edward Meyern**

134DF (Flitwick) Squadron

I think the standout memory is with Flt Lt Bob Swallow taking me for air rifle shooting whilst on a weekend camp, using 2p pieces as targets stuck in a log and him showing me how to shoot whilst he rested his lit cigarette in his ear.

#### **Tom Hill**

1228 (Louth) Squadron

Marching the Normandy beaches in 2012 was perhaps the proudest moment of my life, and an informative moment in my further development as a military historian. I didn't know then that my days in the cadets would be some of the best days of my life. To current cadets – try not to rush it, enjoy it. And don't use steel wool to strip your parade shoes!

#### **Francis Pulham**

176 Squadron

My main memory of being a cadet is going on a week visit to RAF Valley, going go karting and ending up driving into the

single stack of tyres on a corner, which ended up with me at Bangor Hospital. The week camp was great, meeting other people from Speke and Prescott squadrons. I hope that all air cadets make the most of the opportunities they are given. If I had any advice, it would be always arrive five minutes early – even then you will still be late.

#### **Vicky Ball**

1439 (Skelmersdale) Squadron

I joined 2431 (Keighley) Squadron with a couple of friends just as something to do and ended up having the time of my life. All the flying, shooting, Duke of Edinburgh experiences and amazing annual camps. I loved every minute of it and the adult staff were amazing, genuinely interested in our development as people. I learned community values, discipline, and respect. I still have ex-cadet friends some 35 years later. It kickstarted my interest in the military and aviation, and I joined the RAF at 18 as an Aircraft Mechanic.

#### **Mark Ding**

2431 (Keighley) Squadron

My best memories of being in the cadets are flying a Chipmunk and gliders.

#### **Nigel Jones**

395 (Stafford) Squadron





RED ARROWS'  
DAVID SIMMONDS  
ON HOW THE RAF  
AIR CADETS INSPIRED  
HIM TO FOLLOW  
HIS DREAMS

**As the RAF Air Cadets celebrate their 80th anniversary, Red Arrows pilot Flt Lt David Simmonds looks back on where it all began for him in the organisation.**

I was a cadet with 188 (Ipswich) Squadron and thoroughly enjoyed all the time I spent there. Being a cadet really does give you a good grounding of what military life is like, and I was lucky enough to do

some fantastic things, such as flying in the Chipmunk, which really was a stand-out moment.

Flying is like a bug, once you have had a go at it, it gets into you and you just want to have another go. That really cemented my desire to become a fast-jet pilot in the Royal Air Force.

I learnt so many things as a cadet and went away with some great advice. As an air cadet, I remember being told by the chief instructor at the time to give everything a go — now I'll always encourage others to follow their dreams. If you want to achieve something in life, a bit of hard work and determination can take you a very long way. When I was 13 years old, I had no idea or even any confidence that I would be able to become a Red Arrows pilot. But if you believe in yourself and try your very best, you will be surprised by what you can achieve.





## “WHAT I LEARNT AS AN AIR CADET SET ME ON A PATH THAT I’M PROUD OF”

**As we continue to celebrate the achievements of former air cadets, we spoke with SAC Jack Hawkins about how the organisation helped him to create life-long memories as part of one of the RAF’s most highly regarded display teams. Jack is with the RAF Queen’s Colour Squadron, proud supporters of the RAF Benevolent Fund.**

There’s a strong military history within my family, both the Army and the Royal Navy, so I had always had an interest in the service. So as a 15-year-old, despite having previously toyed with the idea of joining the Army Cadets, I signed up to 124 (Hereford City) Squadron ATC.

One of my friends was already part of the squadron so I went along with him that first evening with an open mind. I don’t remember feeling nervous and I was right not to be – by the end of the night, I’d had great fun with such a terrific mix of friendly people that I kept going.



During my early days as an air cadet I learnt an array of skills that have stuck and served me well – from first aid training to drill practice and kit preparation. Being in the air cadets also ignited my passion for adventurous training; the opportunities to undertake activities such as camping, kayaking and climbing were endless.

With great support from the volunteers, I progressed over the years and came into my own, attaining a position of responsibility for the younger cohort and allowing me to start instructing and encouraging the other air cadets. It was

both enjoyable and rewarding, being able to give something back to the squadron in that way, all the time remembering that I was once in their shoes.

Being an air cadet gave me the skills to get to where I am today – an RAF Regiment Gunner on the Queen’s Colour Squadron, 63 Sqn RAF Regiment. This is my third year with the Squadron and every day I’m proud to be representing such a highly regarded part of the force. Our role is dual purpose: ceremonial duties in the public eye and field duties. I’ve had to earn my spot here as standards are kept exceptionally high – you get out what you put in – every single person on the squadron works hard and every day is busy, but I thoroughly enjoy it.

My standout moment to date was leading the 48-man drill show at Twickenham Stadium for the England versus Ireland RFU Six Nations game in 2019. To perform in front of thousands of people, let alone a global audience, was incredible. I tried not to overthink it at the time so I could focus on the task at hand, but when the national anthem played, I felt nothing but full-on pride.

What I learnt as an air cadet all those years ago, set me on a path that I’m very proud of. From the friends to the adult volunteers, it’s great to still be in touch with some of them – every person taught me something that helped me get to where I am today.



Stand out memory, among loads, was flying the Slingsby Venture T2 at RAF Henlow.

**Brian Mugridge**

955 (Stevenage) Squadron

I was one of the air cadets who was lucky to attend the Bomber Command Memorial unveiling ceremony and participate in helping veterans to their seats and looking after their welfare during that unbearable heat. It was a great experience, and it was one of the proudest days of my life to participate in that event, I will never forget it. My deepest gratitude to my squadron staff for organising for myself to go. Without our dedicated staff we have no air cadets, I thank you all. The best experiences of my life were in the air cadets.

**Luke Emin**

452 Squadron

I joined 2200 Squadron in 1981. My best memory is being made lead drummer in the drum corps. Second to that was being promoted to Corporal. That said, I have so many great memories of my time in the ATC and made so many great friends.

**Andy Leach**

2200 (Saddleworth) Squadron

I transferred Squadrons when I was 16 and my parents moved house. I met my husband at my new squadron and 21 years, two kids, two dogs and several house moves later we are still together. And all these years later I still have all my cadet friends now. My takeaway? That if I work hard, I can do anything.

**Samantha Campion**

346 (Tynemouth) Squadron

The cadets were a fantastic place for young men to learn about Service life. My advice for current cadets? Spit and polish to get fantastically bulled toecaps!

**Alan Ardron**

218 (Rotherham) Squadron

My proudest memory? Being given my uniform, taking it home and my dad showing me how to shine the shoes over time using polish and water to get a mirror effect. I felt so proud wearing that uniform. Great days. I flew the Vigilant and fired the L98. Loved it all. I wish I joined younger and took advantage of what was on offer.

**Lee Ellis**

877D/F (Huntly) Squadron

One of my best cadet memories is when I took control of an RAF C-130K Hercules out of RAF Lyneham over Salisbury Plain at 14 years old. That and flying gliders, Chipmunks, and the Gazelle helicopter – what more could a young teenager wish for! Well done, happy Birthday and thank you very much Air Cadets. To all those currently in the RAF Air Cadets – take all opportunities available to you, it will be over all too soon. You can achieve anything you put your mind to, so don't let anybody tell you that you can't!

**Marcus Stroud**

1391 (Rosmey) Squadron

I think the most memorable moment of my cadet years was going on a first flight – I was so scared as up to that point I've never been more than three feet off the ground. I wasn't sure if I was going to get air sick or do something crazy! I enjoyed my time as an air cadet, and it set me up for my military career. I would encourage any person to join either by volunteering as an adult instructor or as a cadet.

**Robert Burrill**

1263 (Rochdale) Squadron

My standout memory? Winning Corps Ensemble!

**Grace McDonald**

209 (West Bridgford) Squadron



I was introduced to the ATC by a school mate. I joined the Squadron at their HQ in Renfrew St, in Glasgow town centre. Too many things stand out to pick just one. Flying a Chipmunk at RAF Turnberry to gliding at Kirknewton. Throw in shooting, football, parade work and outdoor activities at the likes of Garelochhead. It gave us youngsters a great all-round grounding for moving into adulthood. I still meet up occasionally with former comrades and reminisce about those days back in the 70s. Glad to see the Squadron is still alive and kicking although at a different venue.

### **Colin Mackie**

122 (5th Glasgow) Squadron

I have amazing memories of flying a Chipmunk and running around Thetford Forest at 3am covered in camouflage cream and rolling in cow poo. Being one of the first girls to join my Squadron, the ATC was inclusive even back then and just an amazing organisation to be a part of. I eventually joined the RAF, I have so many amazing memories! My youngest son Lewis joined too, joining the RAF Odiham Squadron. He's 21 years old now and has many great memories too. Thank you, air cadets. To anyone thinking of joining or currently a cadet: you can do anything.

### **Caroline Stag**

Brampton

My best memory was learning to fly which led to PPL and ultimately Spitfire flying. Anything is possible!

### **Steve Stead**

Loughborough GS

I joined 59 (Huddersfield) Squadron in late 2009 as soon as I turned 13 whilst my brother was also at the Squadron. I went on to complete the Junior Leaders Course as the XV course after my brother completed course XI. My experiences in the Corps helped me greatly in furthering myself to become who I am today. I spent eight fantastic years at the Squadron and wouldn't change a thing. I joined the RAF a few years after aging out of the Corps and joined the RAF Photographic trade where I continue seeing everything I loved about the ATC but as my full time job. I wouldn't change it for anything and have my time in the ATC to thank for it. You only get out of the organisation whatever you put in. Keep your head up high and don't let anything or anyone stand in the way of who you want to become.

### **SAC Ciaran McFalls**

59 (Huddersfield) Squadron

I joined the air cadets as soon I could when I was 13 years old. I have lots of good memories and the ATC taught me so much more as I was growing up. I learned so much about myself and what I could

achieve by taking part and pushing myself. One of my favourite memories was abseiling down a 120ft cliff in Cornwall. I was petrified of heights and the sense of achievement when I had done it was fantastic. Also, the opportunity of flying and going to the range was something that most kids wouldn't be able to do. I wouldn't have joined the RAF or have the career I have now if it wasn't for the Air Training Corp.

### **Paul Strick**

235 (1st Stoke on Trent) Squadron

I had an incredible journey throughout my time in the Air Cadets and still do today as an Adult Volunteer. There were so many opportunities available to me and I took as many of them as I could, from camps to sports to shooting to flying. I loved what I could get out of cadets – new friends, new experiences, confidence, and life skills, to name just a few. If I had to name one of my best experiences, it would probably have been the opportunity to participate in the Cadet 150 parade in 2010, from Horseguards Parade to Buckingham Palace, followed by a Royal Garden Party, which was incredible. It was an amazing experience, one of many that I was lucky enough to take part in and I only have the RAF Air Cadets to thank for that!!

### **Lauren Ellis**

610 (City of Chester) Squadron



I tried to join when I was 12 and a half but had to wait until I was 13 years old! I have fantastic memories of AEF in Chipmunks at Shawbury and winter gliding at Ternhill. After leaving the cadets I joined the RAF four years later. I had two fantastic civilian careers on leaving the RAF as aircraft engineering and airline piloting, with 15 years as a jet Captain.

**Martin Vennard**

238 (Hartshill) Squadron

I joined Skegness Air Cadets at the age of 13 and my first memory was going on an adventure training camp in Llanbedr. I enjoyed it so much I made it all the way up to a Sergeant and enjoyed everything about being a cadet before eventually left at the age of 18. I learned a lot from being an air cadet and would say to current cadets to always work as a team.

**Christopher Bradley**

1073 (Skegness Lincolnshire) Squadron

I joined the ATC when I was slightly younger than 13 and soon began to learn the arts of bulling boots (in fact my boots and I made it into the local newspaper), drill, handling firearms etc. I went on to serve for eight years in the RAF, and without doubt my time in the cadets gave me a massive advantage in the challenges of basic training. I also remember lots of laughter and on bus trips back from air





experience flights the singing of bawdy songs passed down by generations before (I wonder if they are still sung). Youth will go so quickly. Seize every opportunity. And remember – wet cotton wool and parade gloss will always work! To all the volunteers who helped run the Squadron, thank you.

**Jonathan Saull**

2432 (Leigh on Sea) Squadron

I was fully prepared for RAF recruit training due to my air cadet grounding. Within a few hours of receiving my kit, my uniform was pressed, and my shoes were buffed. I was more than ready. Aim high.

**Esmon George**

4(F) (Ilford) Squadron

I've too many memories to pick my best! I'm just glad to have been and still be a part of a fantastic organisation. I'd encourage all cadets to take every opportunity to do activities and have as much fun as you can.

**Gareth Hardy**

195 (Grimsby) Squadron

Spending two weeks at RAF Bruggen in Germany is my best memory of being a cadet. There was no way my family could afford holidays never mind abroad. I saw

the Jaguar aircraft at a key time in history and learned things I'd find useful for the rest of my life. It would be over 20 years before I travelled overseas again but that experience would eventually lead to a long career as an RAF Auxiliary including operational tours and culminating in commissioning. I'll never forget my time in the ATC, or the doors it opened for me. It's the gateway to a life I never expected.

**Alfred Hall**

2266 (Spilsby) Squadron

The opportunities that the ATC provided me led me to a 42-year career in the Royal Air Force, enlisting as an AC and retiring as a Group Captain. I attribute much of the self-discipline and service before self ethos to the six years that I spent in the ATC.

**Alan Cowan**

1138 (Ardrossan) Squadron

My best memory? The opportunity to go shooting and learning to better myself with practice.

**Gareth Bowen**

1297 Squadron

Being sent solo in a T31 at RAF Catterick in the summer of 1972 is my standout memory. Although becoming ill with gastritis in the wilds of Northumberland

on my Silver Duke of Edinburgh's expedition comes a close second. Many happy memories of the air cadets, never forgotten.

**John Joseph Gallagher**

361 (Gateshead) Squadron

One of my best memories is graduating Year 2 Junior Leaders. It was the hardest thing I did as a cadet and more intense than anything I did as staff in the 12 years after I timed out.

**Jonathan Hurst**

162 (Stockport) Squadron

My standout memory of being an air cadet was visiting RAF Gatow on summer camp in the mid 80s before the Wall had come down – it was a political hotbed at the time. Travelling through Checkpoint Charlie and coming face to face with East German counterparts will stick in my mind. Overall I grew up a lot as an air cadet and while I didn't get to realise the dream of becoming a pilot, it has led to a 30+ year career associated with military aviation. I am still in touch with some of my fellow cadets, so it was truly a formative experience which will stick with me throughout my life.

**Paul Dawkins**

2486 (Lytham St. Annes) Squadron



## INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION OF AIR CADETS

**To mark the 80th anniversary of the RAF Air Cadets, Fund Ambassador Mike Goody he tells us what it's like to inspire the next generation.**

"I didn't join the cadets when I was at school. All my free time outside of school was fitness and sport. I didn't have time for cadets, swimming was my life.

When I was medically discharged from the RAF, following my injury, I took up sport as part of my rehabilitation. Training took up a lot of my time but also left me with some free time and I decided I wanted to use that to give something back.

I got involved with my local air cadets squadron, 461 Squadron in Chichester, after giving a talk about taking part in the Invictus Games. I wanted to give something back and use my experience to help cadets. I absolutely loved it. The cadets were absolutely amazing.

After having an in-depth discussion with the Wing Commander about what is on offer to the cadets and what they get up to, I decided to take the next step and



became a civilian instructor. I see it as a small reflection of my former military life and volunteering helps to keep me even more connected to the RAF Family. Three years later, in January, I became an Acting Pilot Officer.

I really enjoy my time with the cadets and now I can pass on some of my military skills to support the cadets, for example shooting and field craft. Becoming a uniformed member of staff too will also enable me to support the Squadron Commander and take on some of the leadership responsibilities to support the squadron.

It gives me a great sense of pride, having that blue uniform on, and on a personal level it's amazing to be back as part of the RAF Family.

This past year has been a challenge, as the pandemic has meant we have had to do things very differently. Everything has had to be done virtually. A lot of the cadets have spent most of the day online already with school, so running virtual parade nights teaching more things has been challenging. So we've tried to make the learning more fun and interactive for the cadets and new recruits we have to give them a space where they can have fun whilst learning but also know they are supported if they need it."

Former SAC Mike Goody, served with the RAF Regiment, before he was injured in an IED blast in Afghanistan in 2009. Since then, the Fund has been by his side, providing support during his rehabilitation and more recently as he came to terms with the death of his father.



I was one of the inaugural cadets with 225 DF, later to become 2529 Burgess Hill Squadron. I had the privilege of being the first cadet on the Squadron to go solo and gain my wings, later becoming an instructor and OC of 226 Brighton Squadron. Wonderful times.

**Stephen Freeman**

225 DF (later becoming 2529 (Burgess Hill) Squadron)

Being a cadet was a fantastic experience that I would recommend to anyone, from classroom and practical lessons on various aviation topics and fieldcraft to flying the Grob Tutor. Not to mention summer camps to various RAF bases. I was lucky enough to go to RAF Valley, RAF Marham and RAF Waddington. There were even some who spent time in Gibraltar, Germany, and Cyprus. Then there are times in your local town where you do things like bag packing in supermarkets to raise money for the RAF Benevolent Fund. That just scratches the surface of what can be done and achieved through the Air Training Corps. Best time of my teenage years bar none.

**Adam**

795 (Harpenden) Squadron - Herts and Bucks Wing







As a cadet I loved gliding at RAF Catterick in 1986, the annual camp at Machrihanish. I loved the whole experience as an air cadet of which I was a senior cadet and completed three years before joining the Royal Air Force. It helped me greatly before going into the RAF and I made loads of friends, some of whom I still keep in touch with from over 30 years ago.

**Darren Coates**

1016 Squadron

I first joined air cadets in 1987-89. What an amazing experience I had. Not only was lucky enough to fly in planes but also a Sea King helicopter. I was also taught to fire a rifle, drill and ended up making lifelong friendships. My son has now followed in my footsteps and is a cadet at Grimsby 195 ready to join the RAF when he leaves school.

**Julie Foxon**

195 (Grimsby) Squadron

So many great memories of 1155, then 1239 during my time! But representing the ATC at athletics was up there. And the time spent with friends will always be the best memory. I'd ask all current cadets to make the most of every opportunity you are offered as they don't come around again. You can do it.

**Scott Burrell**

1155 Squadron

I spent three years in 97 Squadron (Croydon). Happy days. I can remember going to White Waltham in 1970 for first flight in a Chipmunk and meeting my boyhood hero Douglas Bader there. I went to RAF Fairford in 1970 too and sat on Concorde's wheels in her hanger before I went on to join the RAF in 1971. Best grounding ever!

**Stephen Mullis**

97 (Croydon) Squadron

The staff were and are still my biggest memory of the ATC. The Warrant Officers especially gave me the will to stay in the ATC. I am now proudly 26 years as a Warrant Officer, 30 years since re-joining as staff and 35 years since I joined in the first instance. And now as a member of staff, my proudest moments are when I watch young cadets grow into great individuals, learning from their experiences with the ATC and then possibly joining the RAF.

**WO Amanda Coleman**

1803 (Hucknall) Squadron  
331 (Chesterfield) Squadron

As an air cadet I was introduced to a Tornado pilot who would be taking me up for my first air experience flight. I still couldn't believe at the age of 15 I would be allowed to fly a plane. He took off and almost immediately gave me control. I

flew over my house and was allowed to attempt aerobatics. I was hooked. From that moment forward I was inspired and subsequently joined the RAF as an engineer working on Hercules and Typhoon. I never imagined it would have such a positive impact on my childhood and my life.

**Mike McDonald**

1304 (Rudloe Manor) DF

I will always remember the annual camp at RAF Turnhouse in Edinburgh. I was helping out in the Airmen's mess with a friend called Jock. He was using water from the boiler and forgot to fill it back up! The Corporal went mad at him and told him we could have all been blown up! Obviously that wouldn't have happened but I sat with him for an hour after as he cried like a baby in the accommodation block. He later became an RAF cook and we both served together in the Falklands and Ascension Island. Alas he's not with us anymore, but we some great memories both in the cadets and in the regular RAF.

**Dave Marriott**

1401 Squadron

I had a fantastic five years of gliding, hill walking and many other pursuits as a cadet that I would never have been able to do otherwise, while learning many things that helped me to develop as a person.



## "NOTHING BUT GOOD MEMORIES"

**We spoke to Flight Lieutenant Chris Wilce, Officer Commanding, the RAF Falcon Parachute Display Team 2021, about his time as an RAF Air Cadet.**

As a youngster, I wanted to be a pilot, but my eyesight meant that wouldn't be possible. However, as my three uncles served in the RAF, I had a broad awareness of military life and knew that the service was about more than being a pilot – so I persevered undeterred.

I joined 225 (Brighton No. 1) Squadron at the age of 13. I still remember that first evening – it was a little daunting! But I needn't have worried – it was new, but it was also exciting. As I settled in over the weeks, I uncovered more about myself and my interests.

The opportunities to get into sport were fantastic; I enjoyed the competition, the camaraderie and the challenge. Like many other air cadets, I learnt to fly before I could drive – something I will always be delighted by! Flying a Tutor at RAF Benson remains one of my fondest memories.

Coincidentally, I had the chance to help Brighton AFCO at an event the RAF Falcons were displaying at when I was 16



and remember thinking how cool it would be to be a part of a team like that. When I left the air cadets I travelled and worked elsewhere, but in the back of my mind the interest in the service remained. Before too long I had spoken to individuals from the RAF careers office and the rest is almost history! I was so proud to enlist in 2008 and even prouder to receive my commission in 2013.

Now I'm honoured to be the Officer Commanding of the RAF Falcons. In 2021

we're celebrating 60 years since our formation and I'm immensely proud to be leading such a dedicated team, who have achieved so much over the past few months.

I remember being a young air cadet and looking at the RAF officers with respect thinking, 'that will never be me' yet here I am! Being a cadet is great at coaxing that confidence out of you. I look back with nothing but good memories and feel quite lucky to have had the chance to experience so much, around such great people.

The adult volunteers were fantastic, always encouraging us and imparting advice. And what I learnt was more than just practical skills; I learnt about teamwork, communication and above all the importance of pushing your own boundaries – if you apply yourself, you really can reach enormous heights. It's natural to be nervous when you do something for the first time, but I am so glad I walked through those squadron doors all those years ago.

Being an air cadet doesn't mean you have to go on to have a career in the RAF – I learnt so many things that you could apply to any role, whatever your passion and your path. But it's fair to say I wouldn't be where I am today if it weren't for my time in the air cadets – I will forever look back fondly.



For aspiring and current cadets – believe in yourself.

### **Colin Baines**

381 (Reading) Squadron

I was a cadet from 1976 to Dec 82 then CI to July 91. I have many memories but studying with one of the Radio Instructors to pass the City & Guilds Radio Amateurs Exam, and being at time youngest radio amateur in country, definitely stands out. Also First Aid Training over the years was key. I have kept this up and have been a first aider at number of incidents, more than 40 of which were treatments for life threatening events.

### **Robert Snary**

85 (Southgate) Squadron (later Enfield and Southgate)

My fondest memories of being a cadet were learning to fly in the Vigilant glider, eventually getting my glider wings, and air experience flying in the Chipmunk which led to be me being awarded a flying scholarship. This led to a career in the RAF for nine years frontline as a Merlin Helicopter Crewman Trainer with multiple tours of Iraq and Afghanistan. Air cadets was the best thing for me growing up, the team sense of one purpose and drive was amazing to be part of. I loved every second of it. I wish I knew then that those

people around me will end up as my best friends in life. Never ever give up on your dreams. No matter what life throws at you.

### **Kaal Page**

2F (Watford) Squadron

My first air experience flight in an Avro Anson from Boscombe Down is my best cadet memory. One of the times I didn't feel airsick!

### **Robin James Ponting**

2293 (Marlborough) Squadron

I had some really great times in the ATC. What most stands out for me was annual camps, RAF Station visits, and chosen to be a member of the armed party at our local war memorial on Remembrance Day. Plus the odd Squadron party! Being an air cadet gave me self-confidence and respect for others.

### **Simon Walton**

1372 (Elstree and Borehamwood) Squadron

There are many great memories from my time as a cadet. But one that really stands out is my first solo in a Glider. It was only my third day on the course. And I went for two flights with one of the instructors (he was the CFI). I didn't even realise that it was my solo check ride. After the check

flights he asked me if I thought I could manage another one, to which I said of course. He got out of the aircraft, secured his harness and calmly said I think I'll let you do this one on your own. Next thing I was hooked up and on my way. It was an experience I will never forget. And the sense of achievement was incredible.

### **Tony Mills**

131 (City of Newcastle) Squadron

So many brilliant cadet memories to choose from! Joining the cadets was the best decision I ever made and the organisation shaped me as a person to be who I am today. I made so many friends and memories along the way, getting experiences I could never of imagined. My stand outs are reaching the rank of Cadet Warrant Officer and my two overseas camps to Cyprus and Gibraltar. I loved being part of the organisation so much I have gone on to other proud moments as a volunteer, commanding 153 (Slough) Squadron and now as the Wing Training Officer for Thames Valley Wing. To all the current cadets – the opportunities available are endless. Be the best you can be, try hard and do your best no matter what.

### **Sqn Ldr Luke Baker RAFAC**

2211 (Bracknell) Squadron



Best memory? Working through my Gliding qualifications and joining 633 VGS as a Flight Staff Cadet before going on to become a CGI. The ATC gave me structure, discipline, respect and an incredible sense of belonging. It helped to mature me well and though I never made it into the RAF, I took all the skills I had learnt through my long time in the ATC and ended up joining the police, doing something I absolutely enjoy. One day, I'll get back flying...

**Luke Carter**

2438 Squadron

My best memory? Being the Squadron Cdr of 1862 Squadron almost 40 years after joining 1151 Squadron as a cadet and hosting our Squadron dining in night with our guest of honour, my original Squadron Cdr Squadron Ldr Bob Lowes, from 1151 all those years ago. His dedication as a volunteer gave me my encouragement in life to join the RAF and make something of my life, eventually re-joining as an Officer and commanding the Squadron he moved to after 1151. We both eventually became Wing Staff too. His encouragement inspired me to volunteer and encourage the cadets I met to achieve their dreams too.

**Brian White**

1151 & 1862 Squadron

Being in the drill team training twice a week until we were a high standard and winning the Wing and regional competitions are two of my best cadet memories. To all the current cadets and future generations – it's okay to push yourself but rest is important too.

**Gary Cantwell**

396 (Paisley) Squadron

I have many fond memories from being in the air cadets. One of my favourite memories was when I won the sports woman of the year for my region! I used to compete in every sports event I could and travelled all over the country competing. I met some amazing people and some of which are friends for life. Being an air cadet was a great honour which I will treasure for the rest of my life.

**Kirsty Mcwhirter**

2449 (Carnoustie) Squadron

Sitting in the waiting area at RAF Manston waiting for my first flight in a Chipmunk is my favourite cadet memory. The parachute was so tight I could not walk completely upright. What a fantastic day that was – 14 years old and taking control of an aircraft. The ATC set me up for my successful career in management and manufacturing.

**Gary Newington**

1921 Squadron

The first time I ever went flying, for me that was one of my best moments as an air cadet. It was exhilarating and a moment I always remember. It's made me suggest cadets to others at any opportunity I have to do so. Be the best version of you you can be. The RAF Air Cadets will forever have a special place in my heart.

**Jack Daniel Currie**

135 Squadron

The opportunity to fly in Chipmunks and old gliders when visiting RAF stations are some of my fondest cadet memories!

**Christopher Hewitt**

1295 (Peterhead) Squadron

Learning to fly initially in Grob Vigilant at Newtownards airfield before moving on to Grob Tutor at RAF Woodvale circa 2003 – fantastic memories.

**Gareth Saunders**

Campbell College Belfast CCF

I joined 47F Grantham Squadron along with two of my friends in 1966. I departed thirty years later having been the OC for nine years to take up the post of Lincolnshire Wing's Training Officer. I subsequently went on to command Trent Wing. The ATC gave me access to experiences a working-class lad could



normally only dream of. My first flight, of any description, was in a Kirby Cadet Mk3 glider on a cold snow-covered airfield at RAF Spittlegate; I hardly dreamt that three years later I would be going solo in that very same machine. What a life changing experience being in the cadets was.

**Wg Cdr Stephen Hullott RAF VR(T)| Retd**  
47F (Grantham) Squadron

My last camp was also one of the last years that the ATC was allowed to go to RAF Luqa, in Malta. Range shooting out at Golden Bay, then up early to join a Nimrod for eight hours over the eastern Mediterranean. We intercepted a Kirov class cruiser with escort out of the Black Sea, and took some close-range photos whilst she tracked us with the

range-finding radar for her 20mm AA guns. I got to work the microwave oven (novelty!) and serve steak and chips to the navigators. The previous year, the drought of 1976, I completed my glider course at West Malling, the day before the weather broke. I'd encourage all cadets to try something new. And my advice? Emergency drills matter; in a crisis, panic makes things worse.

**Stephen Adams**

1343 East Grinstead ATC, 1973–77

I was a cadet from 1991 to 1996 – looking back I seemed to cram a fair bit in! Summer camps at RAF Church Fenton, RAF Wyton, RAF Honington, and Rheindahlen. Lots of flying in Chipmunks at 5 AEF (at Cambridge airport back then) and gliding at 622 VGS at RAF Swanton Morely. Shooting at RAF Marham and at the local Army Cadet's tube range (now removed!). Weekend exercises at RAF Barnham and at STANTA (which came in handy during Initial Officer Training when we went there for the mid-course Ex.) Also did the Nijmegen marches in 1995 as part of the Norfolk and Suffolk Wing team – mega blisters, but a great experience.

**Alan Hall**

1018 Squadron



## "THEY PREPARED ME FOR SO MUCH OF WHAT I HAVE ACHIEVED"

**Mike Ling recalls how his grandad's encouragement saw him join the RAF Air Cadets, setting him on a path to success and creating lifelong memories.**

My interest in aviation started back in 1982 – I was three years old and saw the Red Arrows display at Biggin Hill Air Fair. But it was my grandad who suggested that I join the air cadets when I was growing up. He served on 49 Sqn and, knowing about my passion, said that the best thing I could do was join the air cadets. And so, having done my research I did exactly that, signing up to 2427 Biggin Hill Squadron at the age of 13.

I was lucky enough to join the air cadets with a friend from school, Nick. He and I were in the same class and when we rode the school bus together, we used to talk about the RAF, both of us wanting to become pilots. I still remember my first parade night. At that time when you first joined, you would turn up in your school uniform, learning the basic parts of drill – how to form a flight and marching – all



in your school uniform, in front of quite a large squadron.

When I finally received my air cadet uniform, I took such pride in getting it ironed, polishing my shoes and putting it on. My grandad came round one weekend and asked to see what it looked like. I remember him teaching me how they used to salute and march, and I was showing him how things were done

now and what I'd learnt. Even now that memory makes me smile.

I was an aviation geek even back then, so I loved all of it – discovering the principles of flight, map reading, aircraft recognition. I didn't know it then but learning all of that as a teenager gave me a really good bedrock for going on to become a professional pilot. It wasn't just the aviation items that served me well.



I was really involved in the sports opportunities afforded to me – rugby, hockey, swimming, athletics, I hoovered them all up all and was lucky enough to represent my squadron, Kent Wing and London and South East Region, across the country.

Most vitally though, it was learning first aid which meant that I knew what to do if called upon. You never know when you might need such a vital life skill, but I was put to the test only a couple of years later, saving a lady's life when she had been hit by a car in front of me. Had I not been in the air cadets I would not have known what to do. There aren't many organisations which can teach you that as a youngster.

I left the air cadets on Wednesday 27 May 1998 and joined the RAF that Sunday. From there, I've seen, learnt and enjoyed so much. From flying training and becoming an instructor in my early 20s, to becoming a frontline Tornado pilot and of course serving with the Red Arrows for 10 years.

I gained a huge amount from joining the cadets and have endless great memories from captaining the victorious pentathlon team, to my first flight in a Chipmunk. As an AEF pilot flying the Grob Tutor in 2011, taking a cadet flying for the first time was one of the most rewarding things I've done – knowing how special

it was for me at that age and being able to be the person delivering that special moment was really rewarding. Even in my current role with The Blades, sharing that flying experience with someone who is doing it for the first time is just magical.

I stay in touch with my old squadron and speak regularly with many of my fellow cadets. In fact, my old school friend Nick, who I signed up with all those years ago, went on to become a pilot too – heading off to Oxford University before going straight to fast jet training at RAF Linton on Ouse, where ironically, I taught him how to fly. It just goes to show there is no 'best track' into the RAF. If you put the work in and have the skills, the opportunities are there for you to take.

2427 Biggin Hill Sqn is where it all started and after everything they gave me, I do what I can to give back. If they hadn't supported me I wouldn't have progressed as well as I did through training. They prepared me for so much of what I have achieved.

The chance to engage with different peer groups, leadership, mentoring, confidence – the air cadets provided the perfect space for me to realise my potential. I'm passionate about what the air cadets can give to young people and I hope I've inspired even a few people to give it a go, to push their boundaries and reach great heights.

I used to love working at RIAT (Royal International Air Tattoo) as a cadet and I have so many fond memories of making new friends from around the UK, the glorious weather and being able to get up close to the best military aircraft from around the world. I still keep in touch with people today 15 years on!

**Amy Cluley**

165 (Castle Bromwich) Squadron

My best memory of being a cadet is forming part of a Remembrance Day parade on 11 November.

**Ewan Main**

135 Squadron

My best memory of being an air cadet? Getting to be Flight Sergeant. I was so proud to get my stripes. Had a wonderful time with wonderful friends. Summer camps and lots of trips with an insight into life in the RAF. It was the best fun and learning a kid could have at no cost.

**Allan Davies**

1340 Squadron

My first ever flying experience and getting to visit active RAF stations in the early 1980s are some of my best cadet memories. It led to a 23 year career in the RAF followed by another 15 years (so far) working alongside the military. The



cadets were a great start to my life long association with the RAF. I didn't know back then how it would steer me towards my career.

**John McGuigan**

32(F) Squadron

A memory that stands out to me is standing in a field at Senny Bridge training area and hearing the words "contact front!" and holding my L98A2 to the front and firing blank rounds at staff playing as the enemy! Now that was the best experience I've had! To all those in the cadets today – don't be afraid to speak to staff. Don't be afraid to let your voice be heard.

**Joshua Withington**

579 Squadron

So many memories, so many skills and confidence gained during my time in the cadets. The learning curves and people skills have all been built into the person I have become today. To have the confidence to move to America, and then Australia, I put down to the people and friends which I still have to this day. The gliding scholarship and being a staff member at 614VGS and the Flying Scholarship at High Wycombe helped by the air cadets are two great memories, along with camps, the Duke of Edinburgh Awards and wing sports. To future

generations – there is more to follow once you leave the air cadets, use it as a stepping stone. And remember! Make the corners of your bed perfect and iron shirts properly!

**Rianne Wright (née Ryan)**

2531DF (Burnham on Crouch) Squadron

I can't remember the year I joined, but in 1976, as a Cdt. Sgt. I made it through the selection for the I.A.C.E. and spent an incredible month in the USA based at McChord AFB where they had the Starlifters and Galaxy in Military Airlift Command. On the way back I was bunked up with another cadet at the Waldorf Astoria in New York. He and I recently reconnected after 45 years when he somehow met a school colleague of mine from the boarding school in Warminster. I lived in Seattle USA (20 miles from McChord) for 21 years. Memories!

**Richard Fazakerley**

2238 (Warminster) Squadron

I joined 120 Squadron during my apprenticeship at De Havillands, Stag Lane and Leavesden 1954/59. I played trumpet in the band and was in the Wing Band which played at the Royal Tournament. I was blessed with many friends in the Squadron and the whole experience formed a significant and

lasting experience in my life. I hope that today's cadets join, take part, get involved and enjoy the benefits.

**Gerald Fisher**

120 (Hendon) Squadron

It is, of course, hard to pick only one memory of being in the cadets, but reaching Cadet Warrant Officer was an incredibly proud moment. It symbolised all I had achieved in the Air Training Corps, and inspired me to keep aiming high. 308 was a wonderful squadron to be a part of, and Essex Wing a fantastic collection of squadrons!

**Fiona Katherine Smith**

308 (Colchester) Squadron

One of many stand out memories! 1979 aged 16, first solo in a Sedburgh glider at RAF Lindholme. Open cockpit, freezing February clear skies, heart racing totally in the moment concentration. Perfect sortie!

**Kevin Ardron**

218 (Rotherham) Squadron

A stand out memory? My first gliding solo and first powered solo on a Flying Scholarship were pretty special as was becoming the section Cadet WO. However, the best memory has to be the International Air Cadet Exchange to Canada in 1970 (even if we had to wear





an Air Training Corps blazer badge and tie), where I was privileged to pilot a light aircraft over Niagara Falls.

**Mike Coward**

Portsmouth Grammar School CCF  
(RAF Section)

I joined the cadets at 13 and left at 17 as a Flt Sgt Staff cadet. I gained my gliding proficiency and experienced many other exciting things. I joined the RAF subsequently. On arriving at RAF Swinderby, the Corporal said: "We have your ATC records Penfold, you can be in charge of a room!". So I was! The ATC prepared me for that and I have always carried that with me. A great organisation for any person for any future you wish.

**Colin Barton Penfold**

2464 (Storrington) Squadron

In 1972 I was lucky enough to gain a Gliding course and, as a result, became an instructor at 618VGS (West Malling). I stayed an instructor until 2014 making very many life-long friends along the way. A real privilege to see so many cadets go solo over the years. I never knew how much the cadets would change my life for the better. Take your opportunities as soon as they are offered.

**Scott Hansen**

1107 (Leyton) Squadron West Essex Wing





## MARK BEAUMONT: AIR CADETS AND ME

My mum thought it would be good to have an interest outside school, another network of peers and friends in a different environment. Somewhere I could enjoy all the things I loved at home. I loved the outdoors, I was always very hands on, helping on the farm and so on. I loved my bicycle, transportation. I was one of those kids with Airfix models – Lancaster bombers and the like.

I loved aviation conceptually as a kid. My mum could see I was struggling at school, and thought the Air Cadets seemed a place where I could bring all that together. So that started a number of very enjoyable years marching round the drill hall, going on camps, learning to fly and getting out in gliders and helicopters and all sorts – it was great fun.

My best memories were flying. For a teenager to get the opportunity to fly – it was such a freedom, such another world, it's a dream come true for a kid to be handed the controls of a light aircraft or a glider before I could get behind a steering wheel on the road.

When you're 14 or 15 years old, you're sitting in the nose of the glider, and it's mainly canopy and there's a silence – all you can hear is the sound of the wind. I remember the experience of pulling the glider into a stall and there is that absolute silence, in those moments the world is completely silent and then you nosedive into a recovery. It's just so exhilarating.

Undoubtedly what you learn as a cadet goes with you into adult life. Look at what I've done in my career – I've run major expeditions, that's a huge amount of teamwork, collaboration. A lot of the organisational skills and the communication skills you learn as a

cadet, you can't learn that in a classroom at school. That military approach, those formative experiences, even the processes of learning to fly – like health and safety – that's so useful when you're organising expeditions.

For me being in the cadets, having a different social environment and also a very applied one, where you problem solve and you get involved in activities, gave me a quiet confidence, to figure out who I was and not to let the world define me. And I think in this time of social media, and I look with my two young daughters, I think it's so, so important for them to have the ability to assess who they are, to explore and make mistakes and the cadets is a safe environment to do all of that.

Things I learned at cadets were very much about communication, responsibility, decision-making, which I use every day as an entrepreneur, an athlete, a project leader. These days what do I do? I try to break world records and I invest in early stage companies so my entire career is trying to do difficult, pioneering stuff, and clearly being given responsibility as a teenager is useful. You can go through your entire life acting like a student and not being able to internalise, communicate clearly and all those skills. So being a cadet for me is understanding how you interact with the world around you.



My most important memory was being awarded a Flying Scholarship in 1957 leading to a PPL in 1958. Subsequently I completed a gliding course at 616 GS Henlow in 1958 and an advanced gliding course at Halesland in 1959. After that I was a Staff Cadet with 616 GS, becoming an instructor. At 80 years old now, I still fly gliders and am a BGA Basic Instructor – all thanks to the Air Training Corps – a fantastic organisation! It was to have a very, very significant influence on my life.

#### **Anonymous**

Initially 797 Squadron, then 220 (St. Albans) Squadron

My best memories are when I remember the effort, knowledge and life learning that I received from the uniformed VR(T) staff and Civilian Instructors. Ground lessons in life and a career in aviation, all from my four years as an Air Cadet, stay with me today. Those memories and knowledge learnt will last forever.

#### **Alan Moss**

462 (3rd Plymouth) Squadron

From my time in the cadets I'll remember the five years of preparation it gave me before joining the RAF as an officer cadet in 1983. Were it not for the excellent grounding in discipline, leadership and military lifestyle and ethos (due to a combination of a fabulous CO who

had served for many years as an air loadmaster, and an adult WO from our detached flight who was a great character) I would have struggled as an 18 year old at RAFC Cranwell during IOT.

#### **Derek Smith**

252 (Bridlington) Squadron

I enjoyed so many opportunities for fun and personal growth during my time as a cadet. Flying, gliding, rock climbing, annual camps, leadership and learning across a range of subjects, plus lasting friendships. It gave a great foundation for my future career and I would recommend to anyone!

#### **Anonymous**

459 (Windsor) Squadron

My introduction to flying in the cadets is a real highlight. I joined the RAF as an Aircraft Apprentice (Radio) at RAF Locking and later qualified as a pilot flying Vulcan B2 for 10 years before becoming a QFI.

#### **Bob Alcock**

367 (Norton) Squadron

When I had my final flight with 7 AEF before ageing out, I flew over my own house and several locations I recognised – definitely by best memory as a cadet. It was amazing to see place I knew, from above. When I was in, I didn't know how quickly the time would pass, I wish I'd

done more in my time as a cadet. To all the current cadets: go for it, and do whatever you want to do.

#### **Luke Manning**

141 (Boston) Squadron

I've so many great memories of my time with 131 Squadron. I made so many friends and learned skills which have stood me in good stead for my life journey. The standout memory has to be sitting on the cockpit of a Vulcan of 617 Squadron at RAF Scampton, just the best.

#### **David Atkinson**

131 (Newcastle upon Tyne) Squadron

I joined 84 Squadron in 1980 and left in 1984 to join the Royal Air Force. I attained the rank of Staff Cadet Corporal with Glider Wing. Based at Coventry airport we had plenty of room to do drill and leadership exercises. I attended many annual camps, AEF, shooting and station visits. One of the Civilian Instructors Ron (Mac) MaCLachlan would take one us up in a Cessna aircraft each Sunday out of his own pocket. Great times. Great friends. Great staff.

#### **Cameron McNab**

84 (2nd City of Coventry) Squadron



I was lucky enough to be on camp at RAF Boulmer and got a flight in a Sea King! It was a dream come true and I wish every day I could recreate it. I wish I knew then how much I would gain throughout life because of those moments.

**Tracy-Anne Southernwood**

308 (Colchester) Squadron

The ATC gave me the drive and inspiration to keep developing as a person. I became a helicopter pilot for Bristow all thanks to the cadets. I've so many happy cadet memories, from a flying Scholarship to a flight in a Vulcan.

**David Higgins**

1165 (Oswestry) Squadron

Being a part of the cadet staff, I love watching kids becoming great adults!

**FS Terry Butcher**

200 (Torquay) Squadron

My best memory? When I was permitted to 'take-over' control of a 436 Squadron RCAF Dakota to view a selection of parked German aircraft at RAE Farnborough. Even in 2021 it remains one of my life's greatest experiences!

**Raymond (Ray) Hillyer**

1590 Squadron (based at RAF Odiham)



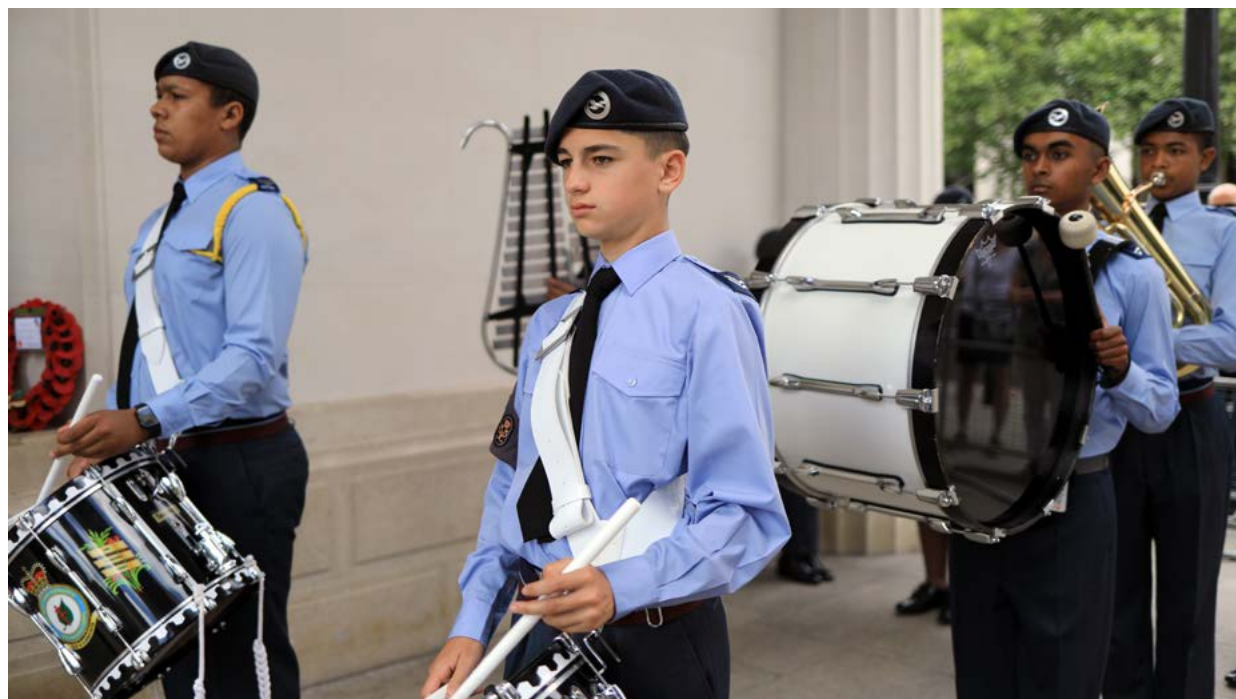


In 1960 I joined with a group of local lads who I still keep in touch with. At a camp in Kinloss in 1962, we were dropped off in the forest for DofE Silver with no money and no training and told to live off the land! Another highlight from 1962 was a flight in a Beverley from Abingdon to Wick. I was told to get a flask of coffee from the tail boom – there were no rear doors just a strap and I had to climb down one handed! How times have changed. I hope all current cadets know that nothing stays the same, and to take more of the opportunities available. You can do it.

### **Dennis John Neville**

2(F) (Watford) Squadron

During the time I attended RAF Air Cadet in 2000, one of my best memories is from at RAF Cranwell at the RAF's flagship event for the millennium celebrations with around 2,000 cadets and staff. My Wg Cdr, Kevin Anderton, was the camp commandant and arranged for his brother-in-law Kenny Baker (R2D2) and David Prowse (Darth Vader) to come and meet the cadets. On other camps I flew in a Wessex and Jaguar and did work experience with the Red Arrows and Chaplains. After leaving as a cadet, I continued as a CI until leaving to join 4PARA, passing P Company at 36. I developed greatly throughout my time and made many lifelong friends, I also earned the last set of IGT wings, my Gold



DofE and became a Flt Staff Cdt. I wish I knew then the amount of opportunities available to me as a cadet, as many of them I only learned about as staff.

### **Julian Hendy-Ibbs**

471 (Hesketh Bank and Tarleton) Squadron & 10 Air Experience Flight

Of the fond memories (that I can share!) the one that stands out for me is the opportunity I was given to experience the buzz and activity of an operational Tornado RAF station for the first time. Spending a good few days with 17

Squadron, meeting cadets from all around Scotland on the camp and making friends for life. I look fondly as little did I know at the time I'd spend 18 years on Tornado, being the person responsible for withdrawing it from service, and having the fortune to spend a lot of time in Germany at NETMA. My advice for current cadets? Don't let anyone ever tell you that you can't achieve something.

### **David Herschell**

2497 (Bridge of Don) and 2368 (Aberdeen Airport) Squadrons

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