

HRH The Duchess of Cambridge Joins RAF Air Cadets on Camp

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The Duchess of Cambridge today (Feb 14th 2017) joined young air cadets at RAF Wittering taking part in their first camp.

As the Honorary Air Commandant of the RAF Air Cadets she attended Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Wing's Skill Development Camp and met several cadets experiencing their first camp.

Cadets and RAF Air Cadet instructors led the Duchess through a range of activities including flying training on a simulator, leadership exercises and more.

The Duchess was also shown the Tutor aircraft which thousands of cadets use each year for air experience flights.



Showing the Duchess around the aircraft was Cadet Sergeant Jordan Bertalaso, 17, of 1406 (Spalding) Squadron, a qualified aerospace instructor.

Cadet Sergeant Jordan Bertalaso said: "Flying is my favourite air cadet activity and it was an honour to show the Duchess the layout of the Tutor cockpit, particularly as the aircraft is used by cadets for air experience.

"It's incredible to have such a high profile Royal as our Patron, especially as she has strong links to the Royal Air Force with her husband being a former pilot."

Spalding air cadets Erin Hope, 14; Emily Empringham, 15, and Joshua Wait, 14 – also met the Duchess at the aircraft.

Later, HRH also took the controls of a flight simulator with help from Flight Lieutenant Michael Slater. She also joined in a leadership exercise demonstrating effective planning and communication skills.



At the end of the visit, the Duchess was invited to join the cadets and volunteer staff for a camp photo and was presented with a limited edition RAF Air Cadet 75th anniversary print by Commandant Air

Cadets, Air Commodore Dawn McCafferty.

This is the third occasion that HRH the Duchess of Cambridge has met with cadets since HRH The Duke of Edinburgh handed patronage of the national youth organisation to her in December 2015.

Her prior engagements involving air cadets have included the Royal International Air Tattoo at RAF Fairford, Gloucestershire in July 2016 and the launch of the RAF Air Cadet 75th anniversary celebrations in London in February 2016.

The event was held at RAF Wittering, Cambridgeshire, which is one of the oldest RAF bases and has played a key role in military operations and the development of air power since 1916.

Camps are an important part of the RAF Air Cadet experience and take place at RAF bases across the country and are centred around leadership, personal development, aerospace, music and more.



Some senior cadets even take part in the International Air Cadet Exchange Programme which includes countries such as Hong Kong, Canada and Australia.

Commandant Air Cadets, Air Commodore McCafferty said: "It was a delight to see the Duchess again and to witness her engaging with our young cadets and adult volunteers in such a relaxed manner.

"Her personal support of the RAF Air Cadets is very much appreciated and I am sure those lucky enough to meet her today will keep those memories for a lifetime."

RAF Wittering Station Commander, Group Captain Richard Pratley said: "It has been an honour to welcome HRH The Duchess of Cambridge to RAF Wittering to see some of the facilities we offer to cadets to help inspire the next generation."

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Major Role for RAF at World's Premier Air Combat Exercise

MAJOR ROLE FOR RAF AT WORLD'S PREMIER AIR COMBAT EXERCISE

The world's premier air combat exercise is underway in Nevada, with the Royal Air Force (RAF) playing a major role alongside American and Australian counterparts.

Set at Nellis Air Force Base, Red Flag pits 'Blue' coalition forces against hostile 'Red Force' aggressors, mirroring real-life threats in air-to-air, air-to-ground, space and cyber warfare.

Typhoons, from 6 Squadron, RAF Lossiemouth, are operating in a swing-role capacity, fighting their way into hostile airspace, launching precision strikes on ground targets and fighting their way out again.



The Typhoons have also worked with the US Air Force (USAF) F-35A Lightning II for the first time, and with USAF F-22 Raptors – hugely rewarding exposure to 5th Generation aircraft for RAF crews ahead of the F-35B's introduction into the RAF's combat inventory in 2018.

Air Control Centre are supporting RAF assets at Red Flag, helping control air battles from the ground and conducting their 'taxy to target' capability: taking aircraft taxiing at Nellis and guiding them through to dropping bombs on target.

Voyager, the RAF's 'petrol station in the sky', is taking part for the first time to provide a key air-to-air refuelling capability during the exercise, while a Sentinel and Rivet Joint are gathering intelligence and other mission-critical information.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said: "The RAF is playing a major role alongside our greatest ally in the world's leading aerial combat training exercise.

"Britain's pilots and aircrews will receive unparalleled training and an opportunity to sharpen the combat skills they are demonstrating every day in the fight against Daesh.

"Training alongside our US partners and other nations shows how the UK is stepping up internationally, ensuring maximum interoperability with our allies, and in doing so helping keep Britain safer and more secure."



Group Captain Graham Pemberton, RAF Detachment Commander for the exercise, said: "Red Flag replicates truly challenging, high-end warfare – from

realistic aerial combat to emerging cyber and space threats. It's as close as we can get to the real thing.

"Testing ourselves against highly capable enemy aggressors is hugely beneficial and improves and readies our personnel – from pilots to those in crucial support roles – for real-world operations.

"It's a privilege for us to work with our US Air Force and Royal Australian Air Force counterparts and to cement our relationships with them at an exercise of this scale."

Wing Commander Billy Cooper, whose 6 Squadron Typhoons are taking part in Red Flag, said: "We flew eight Typhoons here from RAF Lossiemouth to take part with our US and Australian counterparts.



"One of our UK day jobs is protecting sovereign airspace through Quick Reaction Alert, but in Nevada we've been air-to-air fighting and carrying out strike missions.

"Red Flag's threat replication is truly unique. We can simulate fighting our way into a target area through a high-threat environment, drop precision munitions on specific targets and then fight our way back out again."

Red Flag's live element takes place over the US Air Force's premier military training area in Nevada; over 15,000 square miles of airspace and 2.9 million acres of land – an impossible scale to achieve in Europe.

The exercise runs until early February and marks the start of three months of RAF Typhoon activity in the US, with 6 Squadron participating in Red Flag, 2 Squadron taking over for Exercise Green Flag and 1 Squadron taking part in a tri-lateral exercise with the US and France.

Editor: Gavin Brown

Photographers: Sgt Neil Bryden and Cpl Graham Taylor

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[RAF Typhoons Monitor Russian Aircraft Carrier](#)

RAF Typhoons Monitor Russian Aircraft Carrier

Typhoon aircraft from RAF Coningsby have been monitoring the Russian aircraft carrier, Admiral Kuznetsov, as it sails through UK waters on its way home to Russia from the Eastern Mediterranean.

The RAF aircraft have been part of a wider ongoing operation that is being conducted in conjunction with the Royal Navy and our NATO allies to monitor the Russian carrier and its accompanying vessels as it passes through the waters of Western Europe on its way home.



Wing Commander Stu Smiley, Officer Commanding Operations Wing RAF Coningsby said "Whilst the British public are familiar with our role escorting Russian long-range aviation, on this occasion we launched to monitor the Russian warships as they transit near to our sovereign waters".

The air operation was planned and is being controlled by the UK Joint Force Air Component, based at RAF High Wycombe. Air Vice Marshal Steve Shell is commanding the Air Operation and said: "The operation to escort the Russian Task Group is part of our routine activity to insure the integrity of UK airspace and waters; the air elements were smoothly and professionally coordinated by the UK JFAC."

The Kuznetsov was sent to the Eastern Mediterranean to participate in Russian military operations in Syria but suspended flying operations after two aircraft were lost in accidents. The aircraft carrier has now been ordered home following the end of operations against rebels in the Syrian city of Aleppo.

The Russian Carrier has been slowly steaming back to Russia and its passage through the English Channels in International shipping lanes is entirely routine. The Secretary of State for Defence, the Right Honourable Sir Michael Fallon MP, however, said: "We are man-marking these vessels every step of the way around the UK as part of our steadfast commitment to keep Britain safe."



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[Personnel on Ice at RAF Championships](#)

THE SERVICE'S stars on ice are doing battle for precious Inter-Service spots in La Plagne, France as the RAF Championships got under way.



The two-week camp, which culminates in the championships, is not for the faint-hearted, as the track is regarded as one of the toughest on the winter sports circuit, having been used for the 1992 Winter Olympics, with athletes reaching speeds of 90mph, with forces of up to six G testing all involved.

Team manager and reigning Inter-Services champion Flt Lt Gav Arnold said: "The championship race will see SAC Mark McQuitty of 99 Sqn as favourite following his excellent performances on the World Cup Circuit for Team GB.

"I will be challenging him along with GB hopeful Cpl Danny Burke, with the race determining selection for the Inter-Services Championships to be held in Norway in March where we will be defending our title against what is sure to be tough opposition from the Army."

Cpl Ross Brown bobsleigh coach/ceputy team manager said: "The camp is proving to be a very demanding fortnight, which has pushed all 32 athletes beyond their limits on the second fastest track in Europe, reaching speeds in excess of 75mph whilst pulling up to 4.5g on a mile-ong track from a standing start.

"Bobsleigh athletes have been exposed to dealing with a wide variety of emotions, such as adrenaline, fear, nerves, excitement, physical pressures and much more, all within a controlled environment of this extreme winter ice sport. And this camp is proving no different."

Anyone interested in next year's luge novice training camp should contact team manager Flt Lt Gav Arnold on: 30Sqn-pilot27@mod.uk. or for bobsleigh: marksilva021@hotmail.com

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[WAAF who stared into Hitler's eyes dies](#)

Former WAAF Patricia Clark, a Battle of Britain filter room plotter, who became a bestselling novelist, has died aged 95.



Born Patricia Robins on February 1, 1921, she was the second of three daughter of novelist Denise Robins, known as 'the Queen of Romance'. After going to school in Switzerland, where she learned French and how to ski,

Patricia wanted to learn German and was sent, aged 16, in 1937 to study near Munich. She once found herself in a traffic jam a few feet away from Hitler who was in an open topped car. Nearly 80 years later she vividly remembered 'meeting Hitler's cold blue eyes.'

Returning to England she found a job on *Women's Illustrated* magazine as a junior editor. As war loomed, she joined the RAF and after basic training was assigned to special duties, in the Filter Centre at 10 (Fighter) Group. Her job as a filterer was important, skilled work. The Filter Centre was a high pressure environment that demanded a great degree of skill and dexterity and close team cooperation.

Patricia proved to be a highly capable operator who was commissioned and made a Filterer. The Filterer's job was to analyse the huge amount of conflicting information to decide on the most accurate position, vector, height and strength of detected aircraft in a very short time. She was further promoted to Filter Officer, acting as deputy to the Filter Centre Controller and with overall responsibility for all the filtered information which produced the recognised air picture.



In 1944 Britain was the first nation ever attacked by ballistic missiles and Patricia took part in the pioneering work designed to locate the firing positions of V2 rockets so they could be attacked from the air. Her work was highly classified and she was sworn to secrecy about it for 30 years after the war ended. During breaks for bad weather in this top-secret war work, Patricia started writing romance stories for magazines, using the extra income she made from them as petrol money to get to NAAFI dances.

In 1947, she met and married former RAF pilot Donald Clark. They divorced in 1976. Her writing career began in earnest after the war and, like her mother; Patricia became a prolific author of light romantic fiction. In the 1970s she started to write blockbuster historical romances using the pen name Claire Lorrimer. In later years she moved to new genres, including murder mysteries. In March last year, under her pen name, she was presented with an Outstanding Achievement Award by the Romantic Novelists' Association, after completing her 80th novel.

She is survived by her three children, eight grandchildren and one great grandchild.

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