

Blessing ceremony for WW2 airman, Arnold Hallas, in Italy.

On Friday 29 April, 77 years after his final flight, a blessing ceremony was held for Flying Officer (Fg Off) Arnold George Raymond Hallas, RAF, at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's (CWGC) Padua War Cemetery, Italy. Several members of the family attended the service that was organised by the MOD's Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre (MOD JCCC), also known as the 'MOD War Detectives'.

The ceremony took place to bless the additional remains of Fg Off Hallas, which were recovered by Aerei Perduti Polesine, an Italian aircraft recovery group in November 2020 and was conducted by the Reverend (Squadron Leader) Rebekah Cannon, Chaplain RAF Brize Norton.

Padre, RAF trumpeter and RAF NATO representatives. Crown copyright.

The RAF Air Historical Branch was able to review documents that confirmed Fg Off Hallas was given a burial by the Padre who attended the crash site straight after but observed only partial remains were recovered. The aircraft parts and artefacts found by the recovery group enabled an identification to be made by MOD JCCC without the need for DNA testing.

Tracey Bowers, JCCC said:

"This case has highlighted the difficult conditions that were faced 77 years ago and the sad reality of war in that sometimes it was not possible to recover all of a casualty.

"We are grateful to the recovery group for the dignity and care that was taken during the excavation of Spitfire NH231 and the understanding of the family in this sensitive case."

On 30 April 1945, Spitfires of No. 601 Squadron took off from Bellaria, Italy, on a reconnaissance operation. Fg Off Hallas was flying as Mustard 4 in Spitfire NH 231. Whilst looking for enemy transport, the formation was fired upon by light, but intense, fire from enemy positions. As they turned back, Fg Off Hallas called up and reported that he had been hit in the engine. After flying through bad weather, he reported that the temperature was rising and at 4,000 feet he took the decision to bail out. His aircraft dived several times and was seen to roll, finally diving straight into the ground. Fg Off Hallas was 24 when his Spitfire crashed just months before the end of the Second World War and two days before it officially ended in Italy.

The service for Flying Officer Hallas Crown copyright.

Heather Garden, 93, Arnold's only surviving sibling said;

"It is such a great pleasure to witness the return of the rest of Arnold's body to his grave. My grateful thanks to all those who made this happen. Arnold's sacrifice can now be fully recognised in perpetuity"

The Reverend Cannon said:

"Today's service was emotive for all involved and particularly moving to have so many family present here today to see Arnold their relative laid to rest"

CWGC Horticultural Supervisor, Francesco Migliosi, said:

"Flying Officer Hallas lies at rest alongside his comrades from the Italian Campaign in the CWGC's Padua War Cemetery. We are grateful that it has been possible to bring closure to the family and honoured to be able to care for his grave in perpetuity."

[Cambridgeshire man fined £5,000 after burning toxic waste at home](#)

Adam Ivory, 38, of Magnolia Cottage, Tydd St Giles, stored and burnt waste without a permit between April 2019 and September 2020.

A neighbour reported that commercial waste was being burnt at the site every 3 to 5 weeks where it was being piled up with accelerants. Among the items set alight were plastics, pallets, polystyrene and plumbing waste.

Fires at the site were reported as lasting for hours on end, the air described as being "toxic" as a result. Concerns were reported about the impact of the blazes on a neighbour's health as well as that of their animals.

The Environment Agency wrote to Ivory on 2 occasions providing advice and requiring him to remove all the waste on the site. Ivory told officers in March 2020 that the waste had been removed. However, further fires then took place in April 2020 and continued after he was questioned in July 2020.

In mitigation, Ivory said in court that he had been running his business legitimately for the past 18 months.

Ivory pled guilty to operating a regulated facility without being authorised by an environmental permit under regulation 12 of the Environmental Permitting Regulations 2016.

He also pled guilty to keeping controlled waste on land in a manner likely to cause pollution of the environment or harm to human health. This is contrary

to section 33(1)(c) of the Environmental Protection Act.

He appeared at Peterborough Magistrates Court on 27 April 2022 where he was fined £5,200. He was also told to pay a victim surcharge of £190 and costs totalling £4,302.

Sentencing, magistrates described the site as “unsuitable” and said it had been a serious risk to public health. They said Ivory had acted deliberately over a prolonged period and had continued to light fires, despite letters advising him to stop.

Peter Stark, Enforcement Team Leader, said:

Burning waste can have a serious impact on local communities and cause untold damage to the environment. Especially in the quantities and repeated waste fires in this case.

Ivory was given advice on a number of occasions and told to remove the waste legitimately from his property but failed to do so.

Anyone with suspicions of waste crime can call our incident hotline, 0800 807060, or Crimestoppers, on 0800 555111.

- In 2019 we stopped illegal waste activity at 940 sites, 3% more than the previous year. We found 775 new illegal waste sites, 14% less than we found the previous year.
- We continue to close illegal waste sites. At the end of March 2020, 544 known illegal waste sites were still active. 21% less than at the end of March 2019 and the lowest number on our records.
- More information about waste permits can be found here: [Waste](#).

[Royal opening for carbon neutral military dog training facility](#)

HRH The Princess Royal this week officially opened a new training facility for military working dogs and their handlers at the Defence Animal Training Regiment (DATR) at Remount Barracks, Melton Mowbray.

The Canine Training Squadron (CTS) is home to around 200 highly skilled working dogs, training in a variety of roles including police force protection, arms and explosives searches, Counter Improvised Explosive Device (C-IED), and drugs search operations in the UK and overseas.

DATR Commanding Officer Lt Col Mike Robinson RAVC said:

The Defence Animal Training Regiment provides innovative and crucial training for our personnel and military dogs.

I am pleased the Canine Training Squadron headquarters is officially open and can continue to provide a great learning environment for our Armed Forces whilst fulfilling our NetZero objectives.

Following £4.1 million investment, the new training centre will be carbon neutral and 96% self-sustaining.

HRH The Princess Royal met service personnel who showcased the training of military dogs and their handlers, and the range of capabilities they provide to the MOD. HRH was also invited to plant a tree on site as part of the Queen's Green Canopy. This initiative is part of the national celebrations to commemorate Her Majesty the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

Defence Infrastructure Organisation Area Delivery Manager for Lincolnshire and East Midlands, Greg Piper, said:

The state-of-the-art new training facility will provide a modern and self-sustaining operating capability for the Unit going forward. The project was a complex and challenging piece of work, but excellent collaborative work with partners, stakeholders and the customer ensured successful delivery and we are delighted to see this very important facility now in full operation.

An Army Safety and Environmental Award was presented to the DATR in March, recognising the collaborative approach between the Unit, Defence Infrastructure Organisation and Amey in delivering the new, sustainable training facility.

The new facility includes three new classrooms, indoor and outdoor training areas, a new Station Headquarters office space and training accommodation.

Using its own solar panels and a battery generator the facility will fulfil its own electricity requirements, and an air source heat pump and recovery system will regulate heating across the entire site. A grey water harvesting system will recycle water for non-drinking requirements, reducing the main water supply by up to 60%.

The new facility has achieved a Defence Related Environmental Assessment Methodology (DREAM) rating of 'excellent' and will help the Army to achieve its net-zero carbon emissions targets for 2050. In addition, cost savings from the project will be invested into Army infrastructure.

London rapist receives increased sentence following referral to the Court of Appeal

News story

Blessing Eyewu-Ago has had his sentence for rape increased under the Unduly Lenient Sentence scheme.



A London man has received an increased sentence for rape after his case was referred to the Court of Appeal by the Solicitor General Alex Chalk QC MP.

Blessing Eyewu-Ago, 36, entered the victim's home uninvited, where he waited for her to return from work. When she got home, he demanded to have sex with her. After she refused, he prevented her from leaving her flat before raping her.

The offender was then arrested the following morning at Heathrow Airport as he was attempting to leave the country.

On 27 January 2022 the offender was found guilty of rape, false imprisonment and kidnapping at trial and was sentenced to 8 years' imprisonment at Woolwich Crown Court. He also had to sign the sex offenders register for an indefinite period.

Following the verdict, the Solicitor General referred Eyewu-Ago's case to the Court of Appeal under the Unduly Lenient Sentence Scheme, because he felt that the sentence length did not reflect the severity of the crime of rape.

On 29 April 2022, the Court of Appeal found Eyewu-Ago's sentence to be unduly lenient and increased it to 12 years' imprisonment.

Speaking after the hearing, the Solicitor General Alex Chalk QC MP said:

This was a sickening act of rape by Blessing Eyewu-Ago, who then tried to flee the country in an attempt to escape justice.

I am satisfied that the Court's decision to increase his sentence today both better reflects the appalling circumstances of this particular rape and demonstrates that crimes of sexual violence will be met with severe punishment.

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[International Earth Day celebrated in Ashgabat](#)

World news story

To celebrate International Earth Day 2022, the British Embassy in Ashgabat organised a screening of Sir David Attenborough's documentary 'A Life on Our Planet'.



To celebrate International Earth Day 2022 on 22 April, the British Embassy in Turkmenistan hosted a screening of Sir David Attenborough's award-winning Netflix documentary film 'A Life on Our Planet' and a [Creative Earth art exhibition](#).

The events were organised with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Culture of Turkmenistan, as part of activities to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between UK and Turkmenistan.

A 'Life on Our Planet' film screening in Ashgabat.

The purpose of the event was to support the key achievements and outcomes of the COP26 international conference on Achieving Nature-Based Solutions to Climate Change and was a strong call to all to protect and restore the earth's natural habitats and ecosystems.

David Attenborough's latest documentary, 'A Life on Our Planet' is a candid first-person account of humanity's impact on nature and a message of hope for future generations. Sir David highlights the problem the world is facing at an alarming rate as a result of human-induced climate change. The film was created in 2020 by the world-famous British film studio Silverback Films and the global environmental organisation the World Wildlife Fund (WWF).

The film reflected the impact of humankind on nature, as well as the history of the evolution of life on the planet in order to draw attention to the loss of nature on earth.

Coincidentally, today the UN named Sir David "Champion of the Earth". The UN conferred its "most distinguished environment award" for his dedication to telling stories about nature and the climate crisis and advocating for protection.

Creative Earth art competition.

UK Ambassador to Turkmenistan Lucia Wilde said:

As the first generation with a clear understanding of our impact, we must work to restore nature now to protect our planet and ourselves. This film shows the scale of the challenges that we are facing, and the role that everyone here can play in creating the solutions we know we need.

I would like to say a huge thank you to each person here for joining us today. Today we have a crucial opportunity to come together and put nature at the heart of everything we do. Today is a great chance for us to step into a new way of thinking – to encourage our friends, families and wider community to take action and build a better future where we can live in balance with our natural world.

This inspiring event concluded with the children's [Creative Earth climate change art exhibition](#), where the embassy displayed some of the best work by the truly creative and talented schoolchildren in Turkmenistan depicting their vision of an ecologically friendly and climate neutral life on our planet in the future.

Painting from the Creative Earth art competition.

A painting from the Creative Earth art competition.

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