

# 100 Years of Aeromedical Evacuation

## **Lone Airman in Desert Rescue**

A lone airman saved the life of a wounded soldier by flying him directly to a field hospital 45 minutes away – a journey by land that would have taken days across hazardous desert terrain. Remarkably, this flight took place 100 years ago on 19 February 1917 and was the first recorded aeromedical evacuation.

Lance Corporal MacGregor of the Imperial Camel Corps had been shot in the ankle as his unit advanced towards Bir-el-Hassana in Egypt. Forty four miles from the nearest medical facility in El Arish, it was felt that L/Cpl MacGregor's best chance of survival was to be flown there in the observer's seat of a Royal Flying Corps B.E.2c biplane.



One hundred years on, and still one year away from its own centenary, the Royal Air Force remains at the forefront of this life saving aviation capability.

The heroism of the RAF's Medical Emergency Response Teams (MERT) became synonymous with recent conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. Hundreds of injured servicemen today owe their lives to the RAF helicopter aircrew, Flight Doctors, Flight Nurses and Flight Medics who risked their lives to recover them, sometimes while still under enemy fire.



Specially adapted RAF C-17s and Voyagers, manned by aeromedical evacuation (AE) flight doctors, nurses and medics, provide the next step of the journey home for injured and ill servicemen, wherever they may be in the world. Critical Care Air Support Teams (CCAST) move critically unwell patients, while general AE teams move general ward patients.



The RAF currently has one Regular AE squadron and two Reserve AE squadrons. Squadron Leader Sarah Charters ARRC, has served as a Reservist with 4626 Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron for 27 years and has

deployed

to two Gulf wars and twice to Afghanistan. She said: "It is an absolute honour

to be a part of this fantastic service which has such a rich history of saving lives.

"My squadron's motto is 'Safely Home' and this neatly sums

up the role of Regular and Reserve aeromedical evacuation personnel. We provide

high quality clinical care in the air, all the way from point of injury on the

battlefield back to the UK."



Later this year, a re-enactment of L/Cpl MacGregors historic flight in a B.E.2c will further mark this milestone for aeromedical evacuation

services. More information on medical roles in the RAF, either as a Regular or

Reserve, can be found [here](#) or by searching 'RAF medical careers'.

**Editor: Flt Lt Peter Lisney**

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## [HRH The Duchess of Cambridge Joins RAF Air Cadets on Camp](#)

**HRH**

### **The Duchess of Cambridge Joins RAF Air Cadets on Camp**

The Duchess of Cambridge today (Feb 14<sup>th</sup> 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 75<sup>th</sup> 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 75<sup>th</sup> 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 5<sup>th</sup> 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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## [Typhoons from 6 Squadron take part in Red Flag](#)

6 Squadron Typhoons, from RAF Lossiemouth, are taking part in the world's largest and most complex air combat exercise at Nellis Air Force Base in the United States.



Red Flag is a three-week exercise that pits friendly 'Blue' forces – including the 6 Squadron Typhoons – against hostile 'Red Force' aggressors in live and synthetic training environments, simulating air-to-air and air-to-ground combat, and space and cyber warfare.



The training mirrors the threats and complex air defences posed by real-life adversaries, helps participating nations better understand each other's capabilities and ensures that RAF personnel maintain the highest levels of readiness for potential future military operations.

The 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 also sees the Typhoons fly alongside US Air Force F-22 Raptors and F-35A Lightnings. This continues the evolving integration of RAF operations with 5th Generation aircraft ahead of the introduction of the F-35B into the RAF's combat air inventory in 2018.

Wing Commander Billy Cooper, Officer Commanding 6 Squadron, said: "We've brought eight Typhoons with us from RAF Lossiemouth to take part in Red Flag alongside the United States Air Force and Royal Australian Air Force.



"While our day job at Lossiemouth is protecting UK airspace through Quick Reaction Alert, here in Nevada the majority of what we're doing is air-to-air fighting and some strike missions. This means we'll be flying two waves of six aircraft every day.

"One of the benefits of this exercise is the threat replication; we can simulate fighting our way into a target area through a high-threat environment, dropping precision munitions on specific targets and then fighting our way back out again. It's a privilege to deploy here with 6 Squadron and to represent the Royal Air Force, the UK and Scotland in particular."

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