



PCW e-News

# 2020 - A Different Kind of Year

Issue 4 - December 2020





## FOREWORD BY THE WING COMMANDING OFFICER

Christmas and the end of this year are fast approaching, and what a year! All seemed normal back at the beginning of the year, squadrons were parading as normal, annual formal inspections were taking place, range days, wings sports and adventure training. The wing was preparing to host its first Easter camp at RAF St Mawgan which included flying in the programme, both powered in the Grob Tutor and Gliding in the Viking from RNAS Predannack down on the Lizard peninsula, it would have been the first gliding in 6 years.

Then a few of new words appeared in our daily vocabulary, COVID-19, Coronavirus, Lockdown, Virtual Parade Nights (VPN), online learning, Teams Meetings to name but a few.

This has been a challenge for all of us across the organisation, both for staff and cadets, how do we run this fabulous organisation when we cannot attend our squadrons or meet at weekends to do activity. Praise and thanks must be given in equal measure to everyone for how they adapted to the new situation we find ourselves in and still deliver a Cadet experience albeit hugely different to the one we know and love.

Just as we were getting back to a New Normal of Face to Face (F2F) parade nights, we have had lockdown 2 and a revised Tier system of restrictions. Once the Christmas and New Period is over and we have small buffer period to ensure we are safe then we can return to F2F parades again.

We are putting together a wing training program for 2021 starting in January, but it will be different in look and feel to previous years. The government restrictions on youth organisations being able to stay overnight in accommodation blocks and or camping will greatly restrict our return to a normal season of training activity. We will continue to use Teams to deliver some of our training where this can be easily and efficiently achieved and F2F for remainder. I hope that we will be allowed to return to activity requiring overnight accommodation after Easter if all goes well.

I know that for some this Pandemic will have affected some more than others and I am aware that this will have changed some peoples lives and family circumstances forever within our Plymouth & Cornwall Wing Community. However, this may have affected you and your family if there is anything, I can do to help you, please get in touch, everything will be treated in confidence, my contact details are below.

I wish everyone a joyous and happy Christmas and New Year and look forward to a better 2021.

Francis Reis  
Wing Commander RAFAC



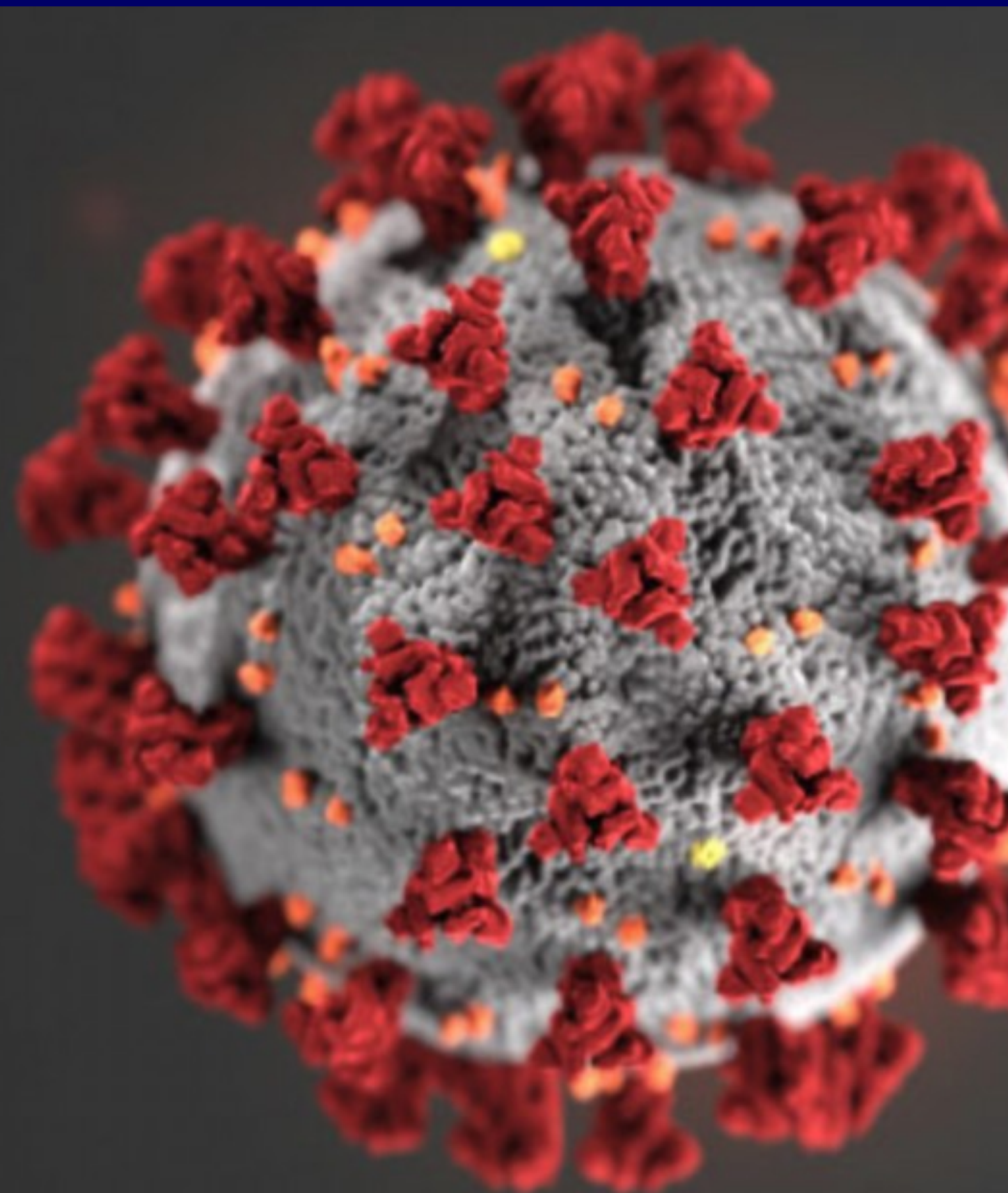




Welcome to the latest e-News from Plymouth & Cornwall Wing and a look back at what has been an extraordinary year in which we should have been celebrating many anniversaries including VJ75, 80th Anniversary of Battle of Britain and the 400th anniversary of the sailing of the Mayflower.

With the increasing spread of the COVID-19 virus, the decision was made on 17th March to suspend all RAF Air Cadet Face to Face activities. Following extensive considerations and development of Covid Secure policies were Squadrons permitted to commence to implement the policies to enable them to apply for approval to return to Face to Face activities.

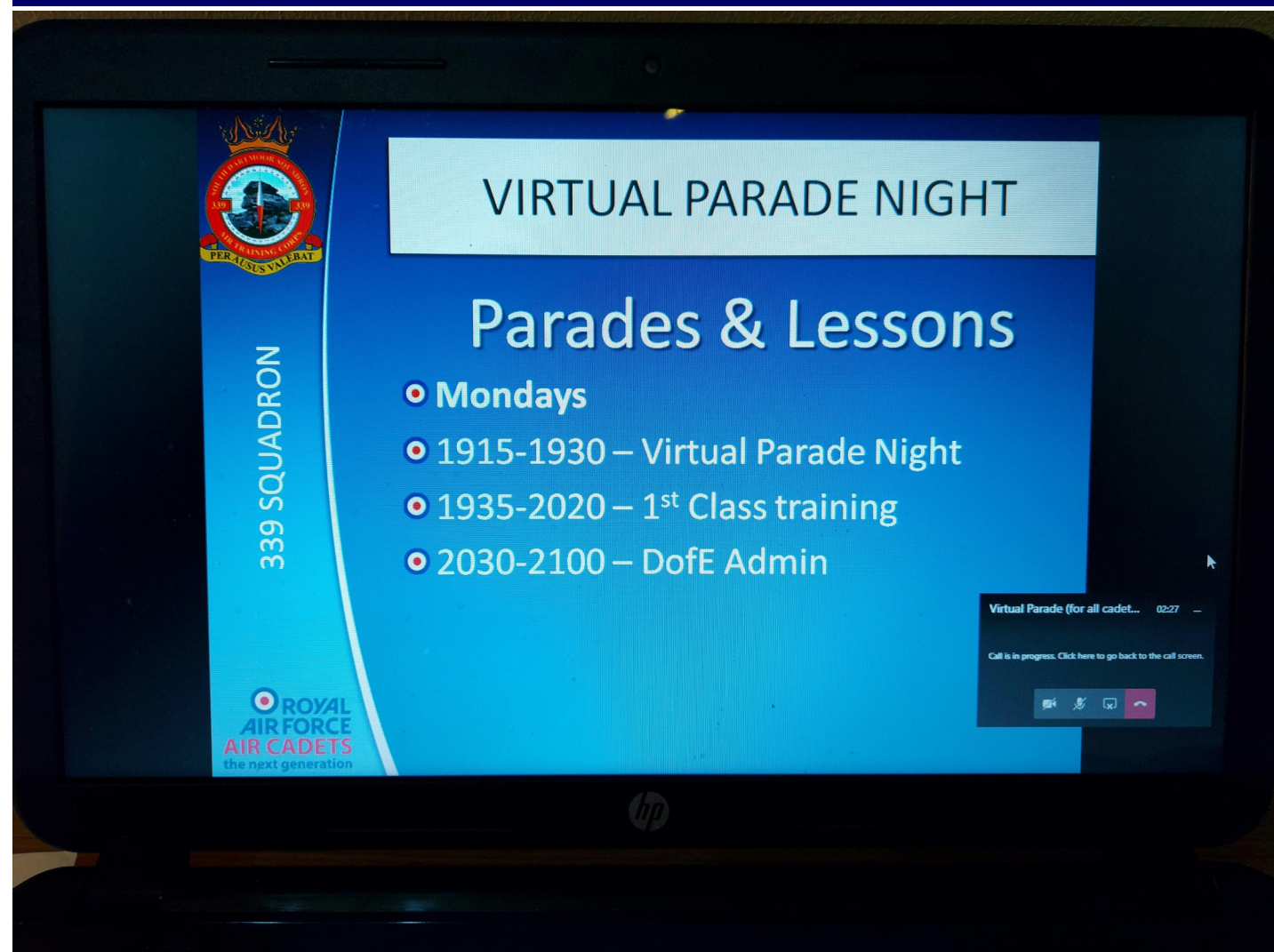
These policies introduced new practices to ensure cadets and staff attending Squadron parade evenings and activities did so as safe as possible. Squadrons started to return to parades in October and were one of the first youth groups to return to face to face activities. A limited number of activities including DofE expeditions and courses took place before on 5th November with the rise of Covid-19 cases rising across the UK, further restrictions were announced by the Government which included the pause of youth groups and so, it was back to online teaching and virtual parade nights. Sadly this also put a halt to any public participation of Remembrance events including the Poppy Appeal collections and parades.







## WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING



### Virtual Parades

With the hold on all Face to Face activities the RAF Air Cadets quickly upgraded it's IT systems to include Microsoft Teams. Teams was selected as it could be fully audited for safeguarding purposes and be integrated fully into the other Microsoft software used by the organisation.

Once rolled out squadrons were quick to use the new software to hold meetings in the form of Virtual Parades and for teaching the different classification levels. In addition there were many presentations including an almost weekly Aviation or STEM Talks given in various guest speakers including Red Arrows pilots & the Chief Aerodynamics Engineer at McLaren Formula 1 Team.

### Ten Tors

After months of preparation towards the Ten Tors event which was due to celebrate it's 60th anniversary the training, in line with other activities, was suspended in March.

The event which was due to take place at the beginning of May to avoid conflict with VJ Day was, when it was clear that many of the teams would be unable to attend, cancelled.

Due to the current restrictions and the uncertainty of future restriction in relation to controlling Covid it has been decided by the Wing to withdraw from the 2021 Ten Tors Challenge, the plan is to return back to the event in 2022, the decision was not taken lightly as we appreciate this will come as a disappointment to many cadets but safety through training is our number one priority.





## WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING CONTINUED

### Duke of Edinburgh Award

While much of the DofE expedition year was lost due to the suspension of the Face to Face activities some squadrons seized the opportunity in the relaxation of overnight camp requirements by the DofE organisation to complete some expeditions during the resumption of Face to Face activities in October.

With the relaxation of rules cadets still had to complete their travel for the normal duration as well as complete the aims of their expedition and despite there being no overnight camping they had to carry all the equipment they would have normally carried on an expedition. completed their DofE except for their expedition.



In addition, the DofE organisation recognising the complexities of running and participating in expeditions in the current Covid restrictions and the fact many cadets had completed their, Physical, Volunteering and Skill sections of their award, commenced to issue Certificates of Achievement as a recognition of their dedication. 47 such certificates have been issued to cadets in the Wing.

In the coming year it is aimed to conduct further expeditions for all the cadets who are waiting to complete their expedition section. Subject to restrictions the expedition season formally starts in April.





## WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING CONTINUED

### Archery Instructors Course

In the course of being a member of staff you can acquire new skills which is mutual benefit to staff and cadets from Duke of Edinburgh Award to teaching and Adventure Training skills.

In September a number of staff undertook a training course to become qualified archery instructors. The course was conducted under strict rules to ensure social distancing was followed at all times with students being placed in bubbles of three to ensure correct spacing between students when using the indoor sports hall and with each student being issued their own equipment for their sole use during the course.



### First Aid Course

As part of the return Squadrons all staff were required to ensure their mandatory qualifications were valid. In order for staff whose First Aid qualifications had expired during the halt of face to face activities a First Aid at Work refresher course was held at the headquarters of 339 (South Dartmoor) Squadron.

The course was run by the Wing First Aid Officer over two consecutive weekends in September.





## WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING CONTINUED

### Change of Warrant Officer Insignia

The 31st of October 2020 saw the introduction of the Royal Coat of Arms rank insignia for all Royal Air Force Air Cadets Warrant Officers, this sees the end of the Queens Crown rank insignia which had been worn by the majority of Warrant Officers since 1958.

Since 1944, Ex RAF Warrant Officers serving in the Air Training Corps have worn the Royal Coat of Arms rank insignia as they did in regular or reserve service, and this is still the case today.

Prior to 1988 ATC Warrant Officers who had completed eight years of service could apply to wear the Royal Coat of Arms subject to passing the WO course at RAF Newton.

In July 1988 authority to wear the Royal Coat of Arms was withdrawn for all WOs except those who had completed eight years of service or were entitled to the badge through previous service in the Armed Forces, all other WOs wore the Queens Crown rank badge.

From the early 2000s there became a desire within the ATC Warrant Officer Cadre to prove their worthiness to once again wear the RAF WO rank insignia, the ATC did not have adults in the ranks of Sergeant or Flight Sergeant, but in 2001 a new rank structure including Sgt and FS was put into place with detailed promotion criteria, promotion boards and a minimum four years between promotions to demonstrate the organisations commitment to training high quality individuals to serve as SNCOs who could perform with professionalism and credibility when working within an RAF environment.







## WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING CONTINUED

### **Change of Warrant Officer Insignia cont.**

In 2013 the RAF granted permission for twelve Air Training Corps Warrant Officers to wear the Royal Coat of Arms rank insignia, who would wear them was at the discretion of Commandant Air Cadets, who chose to grant them to Senior WOs holding HQ Air Cadets Appointments and the Regional WO for each of the six ATC Regions.

This was a milestone for the ATC SNCO & WO cadre and set the foundations to prove themselves further with the eventual aim of all WOs wearing the same badge.

The RAF Air Cadets continued to do great deal of hard work, building trust and making many friendships within the RAF, and finally in early 2020 Air Cdre Dawn McCafferty who was Commandant Air Cadets was granted permission for all RAF Air Cadets Warrant Officers to wear the Royal Coat of Arms rank insignia.

All RAFAC WOs have now been issued with their new rank slides which they will now wear with pride.

*Entry: Wing Warrant Officer Jon Barnes RAFAC*

### **NCO Courses**

In October cadet NCOs took place on a Wing junior NCO course to train and assess them in leadership and drill. With access to the normal venue at RAF St Mawgan restricted the course was held at the headquarters of 2312 (Tavistock) Squadron for nine cadets. Despite the Covid Secure restrictions in place all the NCOs showed great resilience and passed the course.

A Senior NCO Course for Cadet NCOs who had previously completed the JNCO Course and aiming for higher NCO ranks was successfully completed online using Microsoft Teams.







## WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING CONTINUED

### Update from 169 (St Blazey) Squadron

169's year started with our first Youth First Aid course in 12 months. 9 cadets passed the course over the weekend, with the Wing FA Officer in attendance to aid and assess the staff skills as well as the cadets. This was then followed by the Annual Presentation Evening, where we hosted the Wing Commander and Deputy Mayor of St. Austell, Richard Pears, who was himself an ex-Cadet with the OC!

February saw a visit to Hangloose Adventure at the Eden Project to test a new corporate training day. We were very lucky that CGI Chris Lane & former Plt Off Calum Kendal who help to run Hangloose and the OC who was working



for First Kernow at Eden, came together to make the day happen. A fantastic day was had by all, testing teamwork and strength of character by attempting the Skywire. We also had an important visit from the Wing Commander to interview FS James for CWO. She was successful and joins CWO Pascoe as the 2 senior cadets.

March saw the dreaded COVID hit our face to face meetings. Our last event was a trip to Ozzell Bowl for a Social evening with the staff and civilian committee. The cadets obviously won, as some of the staff aim was a little off! Our periods of down time led the cadets to more online courses.





## WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING CONTINUED

### Update from 169 (St Blazey) Squadron cont...

We made sure all cadets studying for Leading, Senior & Staff exams were ready on Utlilearn, giving online support on teams when errors arose. We also had MS Teams nights with the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight & Mr Rusty Fermin, team lead in the SAS Iranian Embassy siege.

During the Summer, Cadets and Staff participated in the Hurricane 80K challenge for the RAF Museum. Pictured right is Sgt & Cdt Bennellick who completed their distance on Par Sands. After this the Squadron decided to hold our own similar event. The 169K challenge, 169km from July 15th - Sept 15th.



The aim was to get the Cadets, Staff and Parents out for exercise any way they felt. A fantastic day was had by all, testing teamwork and strength of character by attempting the Skywire. We also had an important visit from the Wing Commander to interview FS James for CWO. She was successful and joins CWO Pascoe as the 2 senior cadets.

Alongside the clap for the NHS, Cadets were out and participated in the salute for Captain Tom for completing his distance for the NHS Charities.





## WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING CONTINUED

### Update from 339 (South Dartmoor) Squadron

The Squadron HQ is a nominated shooting hub and after upgrade to security was due to recommence shooting at the Cadet Centre until the first lock down came into force. While shooting with the new Cadet L144 rifle has yet to recommence there are plans to recommence small bore target shooting in the New Year.

During the lock down the Squadron was one of the most active squadrons in the South West region for online training with no less than five meetings each week covering all classification levels. This resulted in a number of cadets passing exams in Leading, Senior and Master Air Cadet while in lockdown. Cadets were also eager to utilise their time in progressing their Duke of Edinburgh Awards by committing to volunteering.

With the departure of some of the senior cadet NCO's as they joined the RAF vacancies for NCO posts were conducted through online promotion boards, a first for the Squadron.

The Squadron was one of the first to return to Face to Face parade in the Wing with lock down focused on academic training the more practical training was the focus including leadership challenges. However just as the staff and cadets were getting into the 'new norm' lock down part 2 came into Force. The Squadron also saw it's first virtual enrolment of cadets who had completed their training online.



The Squadron has seen a number of staff move on in 2020 including Civilian Instructor Charlotte Conroy who has successfully completed Officer & Aircrew Selection and is joining the RAF as a Dental Officer, we wish her well in her career.





## WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING CONTINUED

### Update from 1942 (Wadebridge) Squadron

The shooting team from 1942 (Wadebridge) Squadron has followed up its successes in earlier years by once again excelling in national cadet competitions in 2020. Having lost some of their experienced shots owing to age, a certain amount of rebuilding had to take place with new, inexperienced cadets stepping up to the mark to train from scratch. However, a strong nucleus of former members was still available, including two cadets, Cpl Lauryn Howard & Cdt Liam Juleff, who had won Corps colours for representing the RAFAC in 2019.

This year there were two cadet small-bore team competitions run by the National Smallbore Rifle Association (NSRA) and the Council for Cadet Rifle Shooting (CCRS). The NSRA Cadet open unit competition is organised in the three services over two rounds with the top two teams in each service going on to compete at Bisley in the Cadet Inter-Services finals. For the Air Cadets the Corps competition is for the Battle of Britain Trophy.

In the first round, 1942 A team (Cpl L Howard, Cdts E Juleff, L Juleff, L Kestle) finished 1st and 1942 B team (Cpl J Mercer, Cdts E Bosley, H Bryant, S Krasnodebski) finished 2nd, sending them through to the second round in high spirits. Round 2 saw the A team again top the table but, unfortunately, a team from 607 (Wearmouth) Sqn pipped the B team to second place so the Sqn had to settle for first and third. The A team then busily prepared for the trip to Bisley to compete for the highest cadet honours but, to their extreme disappointment, the Covid pandemic came along and caused the cancellation of the Inter-Services finals.



And so on to the CCRS .22 Team Competition (formally known as the Eley or County Life) where the Sqn entered one team of five cadets (Cpl L Howard, Cdts E Bosley, H Bryant, L Kestle, S Krasnodebski). This competition is open to all cadet units nationally, including college and school-based Combined Cadet Forces (CCFs). The format is very different from the Battle of Britain competition and the shoots very different so extra training is required. However, the team knuckled down and performed extremely well, finishing as the top community-based cadet team (i.e. all teams except the CCFs) in the country. This repeated the achievement of the Sqn's 2019 team, which also won the CCRS shield for this, and so the trophy is staying in Wadebridge.





## WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING CONTINUED

### Update from 2174 (North Plymouth) Squadron

Since lockdown 1 we have been running a weekly VPN, there have been some technical problems over the period but we managed to somehow overcome these. Often the cadets helped us less tech savvy staff to solve the problem.

We have had a fairly consistent attendance at the weekly meeting and during the period have had 3 cadets complete 1st class, 3 complete Leading, 3 complete senior and one has completed Master, MOI and the SNCO course. There are now 3 cadets almost ready for the final Leading exam and 2 ready for the 2nd exam in the Master classification .

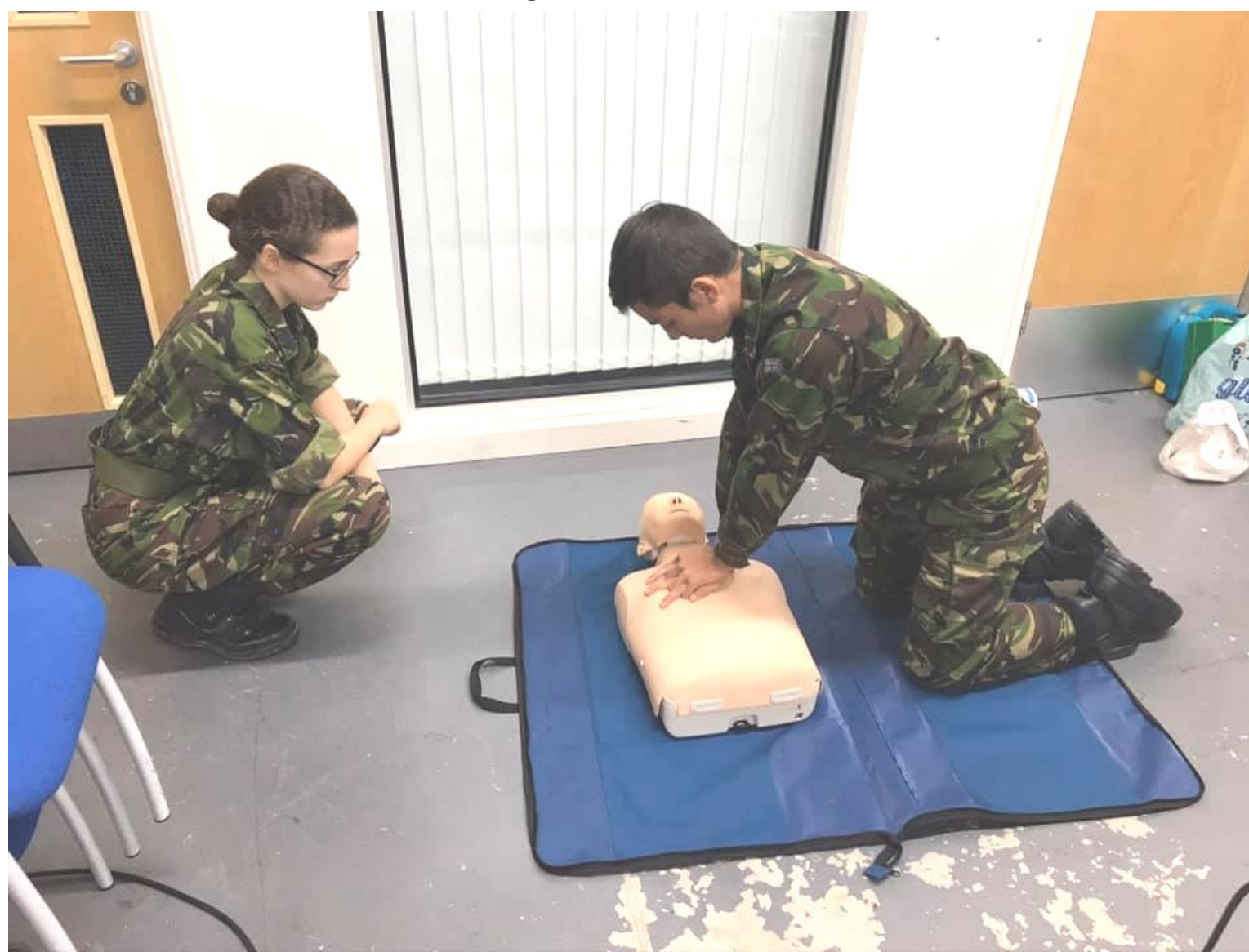
Also at the weekly meeting we have had lessons from our Sergeant preparing for her assessed lesson, all of us learnt something. The assessed lesson went really well and Sqn. Ldr. Aala was kind enough to drop

the yellow lanyard off to her that night.

We have also had a few cadet run quiz sessions, staff are buffing up on Disney movies! Our CWO has given presentations on her time as a cadet, it doesn't seem 7 years since I saw her walk into the unit for the first time

The biggest highlight of the weekly meeting has been the 'Dad' joke at the swap over between classes, the cadets have been treated to some of the WO's best.

*Photo left taken in February 2020*







## WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING CONTINUED

### Update from 2443 (Okehampton) Squadron

Royal Air Force Air Cadet Squadron Raises Money for the Royal Air Force Association, (RAFA).

2443 (Okehampton) Squadron held a Virtual Parade Night in May of this year at which Cadet Flight Sergeant Robin Dalton suggested a fund raising initiative, that both cadets and staff could participate. Members of the Squadron were asked if they could raise money for the Royal Air Force Association, (RAFA).

Flight Sergeant Dalton, who is himself a member of RAFA Youth, suggested that members of the Squadron could walk, jog or cycle a distance equivalent to the length of the runway at RAF St Mawgan, this being permitted within the then current Covid-19 restrictions relating to exercise. The length of the runway at RAF St Mawgan is 2,744 metres, which is equal to 1.7 miles and Squadron members were encouraged to request sponsorship from friends and relatives in recognition of them achieving this goal.

During the rest of May and continuing into June both cadets and staff members carried out this challenge with most walking or cycling the distance required and then placing evidence of their achievement on the internal Squadron Facebook page, this in the form of videos, screenshots from maps and photographs of keep fit monitoring devices etc. The money raised by individuals was added to an on line 'Go Fund Me' website that Flight Sergeant Dalton had set up and the final total raised through sponsorship and voluntary donations was £362.

*Flt Lt D Wilkinson, OC 2443 Sqn*







## STAFF UPDATES



### Fare Wells

After 53 years of uniform service to the RAF Air Cadets Squadron Leader Tony Windo has decided to hang up his cap for the last time. Sqn Ldr Windo was the Wing Adventure Training Technical Officer (WATTO) and was a familiar face at the Wing Adventure Training camps at Windermere and Llanbedr as well as at the annual Ten Tors.

Sqn Ldr Windo's interest in adventure extends to his 'day job' having created the business, Granite Climbing Planet, he intends to spend his new found spare time on moving his business forward as well as progressing through his bucket list.

In addition as an organisation we said fair well to our Commandant, Air Commodore Dawn McCaferty RAFR, who had planned to retire during the camp at Royal International Air Tattoo in July, however Covid put a stop to this plan and so after the maximum 2 terms of 4 years, as our Commandant, a socially distanced handover ceremony was conducted to mark the end of 8 very active years modernising the organisation with greater interaction with the cadets on social media, the introduction of the Cadet Commission, and Bader.

Many cadets met Air Cdr McCaferty in person as she regularly attended many cadet activities and did not shy getting involved including in the FOD (litter) Plod at RIAT.







### Welcomes

Following the retirement of Air Commodore Dawn McCaferly we saw the arrival of Air Commodore Tony Keeling who has picked up where Air Cdr McCaferly left of particularly on interaction with the cadets on social media.

Enthused by life as a Cadet in the Air Training Corps with 145 (Altrincham & Hale) Squadron, Air Cdr Keeling enlisted into the RAF in 1987 as an Apprentice, originally training as an airframe and propulsion technician before commissioning in 1999 as an Engineer Officer following a university cadetship at the Royal Military College of Science.

After many years in a variety of appointments, Air Cdr Keeling joined the RAF Reserve in September 2020 and being appointed as Commandant of the RAF Air Cadets.



Air Commodore Dawn McCaferly may have retired as our Commandant however we are honoured as, on settling down in Cornwall for her 'retirement', she has decided that her connection to the RAF Air Cadets was far from over and applied to become a Civilian Instructor at 169 (St Blazey) Squadron, where since undertaking all the mandatory training she has been busy assisting in the supervision of cadets undertaking the Duke of Edinburgh expeditions.

We also welcome all our new staff to the Wing and the organisation.







### Appointments

Following the retirement of Sqn Ldr Windo a selection process was conducted to appoint his successor, congratulations are to Flight Lieutenant George Blackburn who has been appointed to the role of Wing Adventure Training Technical Officer (WATTO).

Flight Lieutenant Blackburn (pictured right) was previously the Deputy WATTO and has a wealth of knowledge and experience of many adventure training activities including the running of the Wing Adventure Training camps at Windermere, Llanbedr and Fairborne.



### Awards

In October Squadron Leader Mike Symonds was appointed a Member of the British Empire (MBE) at the Queen's delayed Birthday Honours in recognition of his service to the RAF Air Cadets..

In his 42 years of service, Sqn Ldr Symons (pictured left) has served two terms as the Wing Commander of Plymouth & Cornwall Wing before continuing in service as the Special Projects Officer, Sector Commander, Squadron Commander and also as a member of the Wing Senior Leadership Team.

As Special Projects Officer Sqn Ldr Symons has organised major events from the 75th Anniversary of the formation of the ATC to Armed Forces Day events.





## WING CIVILIAN COMMITTEE

Message from Wing Civilian Committee Chair, Phil Newcombe.

Hi to all Staff, Cadets and Civilian Committee teams. In the last year we have achieved many successes across the Wing in both support and the mandatory functions committees are required to undertake in keeping the Wing and its Squadrons compliant with the RAFAC rules and the charity Commissions requirements on how we manage all the non-public funds. We have also looked to the future to support the activities planned for 2021 and the future!

On reflection, in January to March we saw the launch & successful completions of the Annual Assurance process of all squadron Civilian Committee management systems. In April to September all the financial .



records were completed. As a Wing both the Wing Cdr and I are proud that we lead in the Region with this achievement so thank you to all involved in these activities!

Further governance work has also taken place in producing a budget to ensure the activities planned by our respective Wing Staff Officers is available for offering Wing activities in Sports, Adventure Training, Specialist Shooting activities, Leadership, Fieldcraft, NCO & Drill courses, Astra & Stem Activities, Band, Radio & Cyber, First Aid all of which link into the fantastic Duke of Edinburgh Award open to all cadets!





## WING CIVILIAN COMMITTEE Cont.

Your Squadron Civilian teams have also been active in assisting in getting all Squadrons ready for activities in 2021. For parents reading this please do enquire with your Squadron about getting involved with your local committee. The time involved can vary from only an hour a month to what you wish.

Fundraising ideas are always welcomed from all especially the Cadets! I have been grateful to see many funds applied for and received in the last year bolstering Sqn accounts collectively.

Lastly, I would like to put on record my thanks to my Exec team of Sue Colling my Treasurer, Mary Aspinall (2309 Sqn Chair) my Secretary, Phil Boorman my Asset Manager and to my deputy Kevin Smith (2312 Sqn Chair) for their time and commitment enabling my role to function fully to support of the Wing Cdr and his Strategy forward to 2023 .

I wish you all a Happy Christmas & New Year for 2021

Phil Newcombe

In Memoriam  
*never forgotten*



In October we learned of Tommy Thomson who served for several years as Chair to our Wing Civilian Committee had been taken ill and had been admitted to Derriford Hospital.

Tommy retired from this role in 2019 when his health deteriorated. On 7th November we received the sad news of Tommy's passing at Derriford Hospital with his wife, Aileen & his family by his side.

On Wednesday 16th December we received of the passing of another long serving member of the Wing, Fred Davey aged 93 years.

Our thoughts and condolences remain with both families and their friends.





## UPCOMING WING ACTIVITIES

Below are provisional dates and are subject to any restrictions as a result of measures against Covid:

10-Jan — Full Bore Shooting  
30-Jan — Cadet AVIP Course  
05-Feb — ATC 80th Anniversary  
05-07-Feb — L98 Initial Weapons Training Course  
07-Feb — ATC Sunday  
12-14-Feb — JNCO & SNCO Courses  
13-14-Feb — Silver & Gold (Practice) DofE Exped

21-Feb — Cadet MOI Course  
05-07-Mar — L98 Initial Weapons Training Course  
07-Mar — Full Bore Shooting  
13-14-Mar — Bronze DofE Exped  
21-Mar — Cadet Banner Drill Course  
27-28-Mar — Bronze DofE Exped  
16-18-Apr — L98 Initial Weapons Training Course  
18-Apr — Full Bore Shooting  
18-Apr — Cadet MOI Course

## USEFUL INFORMATION

All enquiries should be initially made through Squadron staff.

Contacting Wing Headquarters

Email General Enquiries:

RAFAC-WHQ-AllUsers-PlymCornwall@mod.gov.uk

Please note all email domains have now changed to @mod.gov.uk

Website: [www.pcw-aircadets.co.uk](http://www.pcw-aircadets.co.uk)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/pcwaircadets](http://www.facebook.com/pcwaircadets)

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## AND FINALLY

Further congratulations go to Wing Commander Francis Reis who is one of only ten persons who have been recognised in the Queen's Birthday Honours' List receiving the Air Officer Commanding 22 Group's Commendation. Forming part of Air Command RAF 22 Group is responsible for RAF Training Policy and controls the RAF College at Cranwell. The current commander of 22 Group is Air Vice Marshall Richard Maddison OBE MA who took over from Air Vice Marshall Warren James CBE in August this year.