



The Air League Newsletter

Issue 4: July/August 2015

REMEMBERING THE FEW

The summer air show season is with us again and with it comes the annual opportunity for the public at large to see close up the equipment and personnel who continue to provide our air defences. The biggest gathering as usual will be at the Royal International Air Tattoo being held at RAF Fairford from July 17-19 which will see international participants from air forces and army and naval air squadrons from all over the world, and also a nostalgic pageant of vintage and classic warbirds representing a century of military aviation. Other air displays will take place in many locations around Great Britain, from Prestwick to Bournemouth as well as at such well-known airfields as Duxford and Old Warden, where newly restored veteran aircraft demonstrate the ongoing enthusiasm and dedication that keeps alive interest in aviation history for the benefit of future generations. The shrinking size of the UK's own air power is very noticeable at RIAT, where once dozens of operational units proudly displayed their squadron colours to the public. Although this reflects the reality of lost capabilities and depleted numbers, the ethos and professionalism of today's Few will still feature strongly, thanks to the appearances of the Red Arrows and the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight, and various individual aircraft displays. To commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the Battle of Britain a Typhoon of No 29 Squadron has been repainted in the 1940 wartime colour scheme with the identification code of the aircraft flown by Flt Lt James Brindley Nicholson, the only Fighter Command pilot awarded the Victoria Cross during the battle. MOD announced that this special Typhoon will display at air shows this summer in a unique synchro-pair sequence with a Spitfire from the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight. The official photograph accompanying this announcement depicts the heritage colour scheme Typhoon flying alongside a Hurricane of the BBMF - which caused some confusion in the national press where not every editor can tell the difference between a Hurricane and a Spitfire!



(RAF Crown Copyright 2015 image)

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VULCAN'S LAST HURRAH!

After many reprieves, the flying days of Avro Vulcan XH558, the last airworthy V-Bomber, are finally drawing to a close. The Vulcan to the Sky Trust has announced that after the iconic "Tin Triangle" lands after her last flight this autumn, there will be no more such air displays. The trust says that the team is working extremely hard to make the summer of 2015 a memorable flying season for every Vulcan enthusiast across the country. The intention is to use every flying hour available, taking the aircraft to more people than ever before, celebrating iconic British engineering achievements and saluting the heroes of the V-Force in which XH558 played a vital role during the tensions of the Cold War.

The very demanding standards of technical compliance for such a large, complex, preserved aircraft have always been a challenge, but it has been clear for some time that this magnificent one-off aircraft was likely to become more and more difficult and expensive to keep in the air. The supporting companies, including Marshall, Rolls-Royce and Safran-Messier Dowty, that have helped to return the aircraft to the sky, have acted as the technical authorities to keep the Vulcan flying safely and within the CAA regulations but have reluctantly decided to cease their support after this season and so this has finally signalled the end of XH558's flying career. The aircraft's structure and systems are already more than ten per cent beyond the flying hours of any other Vulcan, so trying to anticipate where a future failure might occur has become more difficult to predict with any accuracy. To have maintained the Vulcan for

so long after it officially retired in the early 1980s has been a remarkable if costly achievement, but the specialist expertise needed to provide the engineering support has involved many retirees returning to work on the aircraft and its engines and systems. The trust says that the skills issue has become particularly acute. While readers will have one last glorious summer of opportunity to witness the sheer majesty of the big delta in its natural environment, the Vulcan to the Sky Trust is planning to keep the grounded aircraft in a running condition so that it can still be seen accelerating dramatically along a runway. But for many there can be nothing to compensate for the loss of such a familiar shape in our skies and which has acted as a reminder of the past greatness of Britain's aircraft industry and our once so powerful, world ranging, nuclear-armed Royal Air Force.



(Editors photo)

Thales surveillance system for Merlins

Thales has been selected under the MOD's "Crows Nest" project to provide the Royal Navy with its next airborne surveillance and control system to serve aboard the new Queen Elizabeth Class aircraft carriers from 2018, fitted to Merlin helicopters. This results from the planned phasing out of the Sea King Mk 7 ASaC helicopters, which first entered service in 1983 in a "fast-track" acquisition following heavy naval losses in the Falklands War resulting from a lack of Early Warning air cover at sea. They have served continuously ever since and after a previous upgrade to the current Mk 7 standards, the twelve specially equipped Sea Kings have played a major overland force protection role in Iraq and Afghanistan as well as in anti-piracy operations and their original mission protecting RN ships at sea against air attack.

The chosen solution, to be managed by Lockheed Martin UK, is based on the UK-built Searchwater radar and Cerberus mission system which can detect and track multiple moving targets over land, sea or in the air. The latest version features updated systems with enhanced performance and data processing, an improved human machine interface, reduced weight and built-in training features to future-proof what is already a successful and operationally proven system. Through new innovative radar modes and performance against low radar cross section targets, the new system, combined with the advanced avionics, communications and glass cockpits on the modernized Agusta Westland Merlin Mk 2 will provide an affordable new-generation RN airborne surveillance and control solution.

COMMENTARY *by Aeronautica*

DEFENCE - MORE OF THE SAME?

Now that there is a Conservative government, albeit with a slim overall majority, those who hoped that a more robust defence policy might emerge, no longer constrained by coalition considerations, must have been disappointed by the first Queen's Speech presented by the new administration. Just as in the election run-up itself, the subject of national defence received hardly a passing mention, and significantly, there was no commitment by the new government to maintaining the minimum 2% of GDP expenditure on defence that is supposed to be a NATO requirement, and on which the Prime Minister lectured his under-spending European colleagues at last year's Gleneagles conference. So what, if anything, has changed regarding defence policy since Mr Cameron returned to No 10 Downing Street in May? On the face of it, nothing. Defence, remains one of the few major big-spending government departments that has not had its overall funding ring-fenced, unlike Foreign Aid, the NHS and so many other Whitehall budgets. The Queen's Speech confirmed that defence is to take another £500 million hit. This latest raid features last year's underspent defence budget. The Service Chiefs were given their own budgets to spend as they saw fit, so what sort of incentive is it that rewards savings and prudent forward planning by simply taking away that money if it isn't all used up in the financial year? Such outdated, inflexible and damaging Treasury policy is unfit for the needs of today's complex and sophisticated armed forces. It is probably true that few members of the public have any real idea of just how little hardware is protecting the UK today, for if they knew the reality there might well be a political outcry and a demand for change. When the economy is in decline defence spending is cut, but when GDP is increasing it isn't restored – so what is the point of having such a commitment?

First of all let us look at current air power, and associated naval power, which together are tasked with defending not only these shores, but also our overseas territories, our shipping lanes carrying the bulk of our imports and exports, and also regional commitments from Norway and Eastern Europe to the Caribbean, South Atlantic, the Mediterranean, the Gulf and the Indian Ocean, where we have always played an important role alongside other allied nations. When we had 30+ fast jet squadrons, aircraft carriers with aircraft, over two dozen aerial tankers and a similar number of maritime patrol aircraft, around sixty military transport aircraft and 35+ frigates and destroyers, then we could do all these things and be seen to be playing a valuable part in protecting our own interests and helping our partners. Today we have foreign and defence policies that are unchanged in aspiration, but the means to deliver have been slashed and slashed again, and the process is continuing. We now have but eight fast jet squadrons in the entire Royal Air Force, no aircraft carriers or naval fast jets in service, just eight aerial tankers, the transport fleet is being halved, and the Royal Navy's fleet of frigates and destroyers has been cut to just 19 ships, many of which are in refit, repair or modification at any one time. Our ability to project air power on any sustained level is now severely limited, as we have seen in minimal air operations against so-called Islamic State targets. The Royal Australian Air Force and France both provide more air power in that region than the UK. If yet more cuts are on the way, as predicted, then this can probably only be met by taking part in even fewer overseas

exercises, which are essential to remain effective flying as part of a coalition. Skilled specialist personnel are in very short supply in key areas of operational and support activity, thanks to massive manpower cuts in recent years, and these skills can't just be re-created overnight, even if there was the will to do so. But it is the continuing complete lack of a maritime patrol and long-range anti-submarine airborne capability that is most worrying. Where is the logic in investing £billions in a new fleet of nuclear-missile armed Trident submarines when we cannot provide the deep-water air cover that protects them and other naval assets? Anti-submarine helicopters provide only relatively short range cover. And how humiliating is it to have to ask the French, Canadians, or Americans to deploy their MR aircraft on our behalf to look for unidentified submarines operating around our own shores? This reportedly has happened in the Western Approaches and just off the East Scottish coast, within national waters, and in a North Atlantic maritime zone that the UK has a NATO responsibility to protect. Trawler owners in Scotland have told the local media that they have received MOD requests to "keep a look out for anything suspicious". You couldn't make it up! But this is far too serious to be allowed to continue without challenge. It would be a disaster if the forthcoming SDSR fails to start the process of defence regeneration. A good start would be to acquire as a matter of urgency some new MR aircraft, preferably with oceanic capability, which means the P-8 Poseidon. If we can't afford to buy them, then lease them. No doubt we would end up buying them, just as we did with the C-17s.

2015 Air League Annual Reception

On Tuesday 6th May, HRH The Duke of Edinburgh, patron of The Air League, hosted the League's Annual Reception in the splendid setting of St James's Palace. The Air League's Annual Reception is a key event in the national aviation calendar and once again it proved to be an excellent opportunity for both sponsors and recipients of the scholarships and bursaries to meet one another. The weather was lovely and the Palace apartments provided a memorable backdrop as awards were made to those who had completed 117 awards in 2014 comprising 39 flying scholarships including The Prince Philip Flying Scholarship and the Bristow and TAG NPPL scholarships; 18 flying bursaries; 11 gliding scholarships and 8 engineering scholarships. In addition, the Trust provided 14 flying scholarships for disabled veterans/serving personnel, together with 26 gliding scholarships for inner city youngsters. Thanks to the stalwart support of our sponsors, the Air League now sets the standard for aerospace scholarships.

The evening also recognised a number of personalities who had made outstanding contributions to aviation beginning with Stephen Cochrane for his considerable contribution to The Air League, Anthony Haig-Thomas for his considerable contribution to aviation

over many years, William Hall for his achievements as a private pilot, Laurence Price for his considerable work on behalf of General Aviation and the Air League, and Caroline Wyatt for her unstinting support for air power as BBC defence correspondent.



ABOVE – The Chairman and President greet the Patron on his arrival at St James's Palace



ABOVE – N Anandakumar receiving his flying scholarship certificate from the President



ABOVE – Katie Dickson receiving her flying scholarship certificate



ABOVE – The British Airways gliding to solo scholars



ABOVE – Stephanie Wen receiving her engineering scholarship certificate from the Patron



ABOVE – Captain Eric Brown receiving the Founders Medal

n Celebrates Aviation Excellence

Air Chief Marshal Sir Brian Burridge was made a Companion of the Air League.

The Billy Deacon Search and Rescue Memorial Trophy, commemorating Billy Deacon who was posthumously awarded the George Medal in November 1997, was awarded to Winchman Sergeant Neil Clements for recovering a stricken woman in heavy seas off Tynemouth Pier on 5 November 2014.

The Evelyn Saunders Trophy was awarded to Bisma Pervez, the Airbus Helicopter Trophy was awarded

to James Johnson and the Babcock Trophy was awarded to Jonathan Davies.

The Marshall of Cambridge Medal was awarded to Scott Pendry for his enthusiastic and unstinting work in support of The Air League. The Scott-Farnie Medal, for meritorious work in the field of Air Education, was awarded to The Shuttleworth Collection. The Jeffrey Quill Medal, for meritorious work in the field of air mindedness, went to Stephen Grey. The Air League Founders Medal went to the legendary test pilot, Captain Eric 'Winkle' Brown, who made 2,407 carrier deck landings and flew 487 different aircraft types.



ABOVE – Ben Ashenden receiving his Boeing Disabled Veteran flying scholarship certificate



ABOVE – Sergeant Neil Clements receiving the Billy Deacon Memorial Trophy



ABOVE – Bisma Pervez receiving the Evelyn Saunders Trophy



ABOVE – Caroline Wyatt receiving her framed address



ABOVE – Ross Willington receiving his flying bursary certificate



ABOVE – The Leading Edge helpers who contributed so much to the success of the evening

2015 FLYING SCHOLARSHIPS

Sponsor/Flying Scholarship

The Prince Philip NPPL Flying Scholarship
 Bristol Ground School ATPL(A)
 Bristow NPPL
 Bristow NPPL
 Bristow NPPL
 Bristow NPPL
 BAE SYSTEMS (John Cunningham)
 Captain Colin Barns
 HQ Air Cadets (The Air Cadets Scarman)
 Lady Humphrey (Andrew Humphrey)
 Lucas Aerospace
 Robert Kronfeld
 Sir Arthur Marshall
 Sir Arthur Marshall
 D G Marshall
 Sir James Martin (Martin Baker)
 Hugh Pope
 Rhodes-Moorhouse VC
 Royal Aeronautical Society
 Swire Charitable Trust
 The Coachmakers Livery (Victor Gauntlett)
 The MacRobert Trust
 The Red Arrows Trust

Recipient

Mr J Davies from Neath, West Glamorgan
 Mr R Gale from Portsmouth, Hampshire
 Mr G Coe from Waterlooville, Hampshire
 Miss O O'Dea from Pennyburn, Derry
 Miss S Searle from Holloway, London
 Mr J Young from Twyford, Berkshire
 Mr C Rickett from Leek, Staffordshire
 Mr S McCusker from Northenden, Manchester
 Mr J Black from Harrow, Middlesex
 Mr D Brown from Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire
 Mr L Norman from Lincoln, Lincolnshire
 Mr B Riley from East Grinstead, West Sussex
 Mr D Timson from Leicester, Leicestershire
 Mr S Wyss from Lichfield, Staffordshire
 Miss J Janes from Dunstable, Bedfordshire
 Mr B Hachula from Peterborough, Cambridgeshire
 Mr A Szymanski from Colchester, Essex
 Miss M Bartlett from Llandegla, Wrexham
 Miss S Beasley from Salisbury, Wiltshire
 Mr O Webster from Cambridge, Cambridgeshire
 Mr H Cherkas from Amersham, Buckinghamshire
 Mr R Somers from Armadale, West Lothian
 Mr E Allen from Frest Forest, Guernsey
 Mr A Hammond from Southampton, Hampshire
 Mr S Bancroft from Cheswick, Bristol
 Mr S Barbour from Bristol, Gloucestershire
 Mr J Gray from Falkirk, Stirlingshire
 Mr C Holmes from Bristol, Avon
 Mr M Leung from Loughborough, Leicestershire
 Mr G Nixon from Baldock, Hertfordshire
 Mr A Pearson from Newmarket, Suffolk
 Miss K Pound from Send, Surrey
 Mr J Savage from Kings Lynn, Norfolk
 Miss D O'Driscoll from Warwick, Warwickshire
 Mr A MacIsaac from Toryglen, Glasgow
 Miss N Scriven from Eastbourne, East Sussex

2015 GLIDING SCHOLARSHIPS

Sponsor/Gliding Scholarship

Air League Trust
 Robert Kronfeld
 John Marriott
 John Marriott
 Darren McQuoid
 Darren McQuoid

Recipient

Miss S Nock from Lincoln, Lincolnshire
 Mr A Saidian from West Ealing, London
 Mr C Taylor from Cheltenham, Gloucestershire
 Mr L Taylor from Hornchurch, Essex
 Miss S Whiteside from Watlington, Oxfordshire
 Mr A Nicolai from Reading, Berkshire
 Mr G Hunter from Great Kingshill, Buckinghamshire
 Mr J Matthews from Cornwall
 Mr R Aziz from London
 Mr J Eveleigh from Essex

WINNERS 2015

2015 ENGINEERING SCHOLARSHIPS

<i>Placement Company</i>	<i>Recipient</i>
Airbus Helicopter	Mr J King from Edinburgh
Boeing Defence	Mr J Cleary from Cobham, Surrey
Boeing Defence	Miss E Keogh from Chertsey, Surrey
Booker Aviation	Mr A Foster from Pontyclun
Heli Air Ltd	Mr S Haley from Twickenham, Middlesex
Marshall Aerospace	Mr J Millar from London
Marshall Aerospace	Mr J Sermon from Maidenhead ,Berkshire

2015 FLYING BURSARY

<i>Sponsor/Flying Bursary</i>	<i>Recipient</i>
Buckland Memorial	Mr W Au-Yeung from Dundee, Angus
Sir Michael Cobham	Mr D Beeden from Oundle, Peterborough
Sir Michael Cobham	Mr A Collaco from Reading, Berkshire
Sir Michael Cobham	Miss B Donaldson from Morpeth, Northumberland
Sir Michael Cobham	Mr B Filer from Dagenham, London
Sir Michael Cobham	Mr H Holmes from Welling, Kent
Sir Michael Cobham	Mr S Keeler from Newcastle upon Tyne
Sir Michael Cobham	Mr P Kirkwood from Berkshire
Sir Michael Cobham	Mr R Malinowski from Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire
Sir Michael Cobham	Mr E Martin from Swindon, Wiltshire
Sir Michael Cobham	Mr T Meadows from Shetland
Sir Michael Cobham	Mr M Perham from Lee-on-the Solent, Hampshire
Christopther Foyle	Miss B Pervez from High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire
Mark Philip Jones Memorial	Mr J de Maid from Bromley, Kent
Keith Mans	Mr M Pye from Edinburgh, West Lothian
Sir Michael Marshall	Mr R Ross from Grantham, Lincolnshire
Sir Michael Marshall	Mr S Tomlinefrom Oxford, Oxfordshire
The Red Arrows	Miss A Wilkinson from Burton, Dorset

BRISTOW VISIT



Andrew Menzies organised a superb visit to Bristow Helicopters, Aberdeen, on Friday 24 April. It was great to see such a large turnout and provide a Leading Edge visit for some of our Scottish members from Scotland who aren't easily able to attend events in the South. Thanks to Chief Pilot, Aberdeen, Guy Holmes, everyone was highly impressed with Bristow hospitality and the willingness of staff to engage with us.



AIRBUS UPDATE

Airbus booked orders for 18 A320 Family aircraft in May, while the month's 47 deliveries involved all of its current-production jetliner families – from the single-aisle A320 product line to the widebody A330, A350 XWB and A380. Leading the single-aisle aircraft new business was Frontier Airlines' firm order for 10 A321s and two A320s – all in the CEO (current engine option) configuration. Also included in the May order book were two A320neo (new engine option) aircraft for Singapore's Tigerair (conversion from a previous order for A320ceo versions), along with one A320ceo each for Air New Zealand, Israir of Israel, and the BOC Aviation global aircraft leasing company. Completing the activity was the first order for an ACJ320neo from the UK's Acropolis Aviation – launching the new engine option variant of Airbus' ACJ320 corporate jetliner family. The latest bookings brought total A320neo Family orders to 3,797 from 72 customers at the end of May. Net orders logged by Airbus so far in 2015 had reached the 225 mark as of May 31, which takes both bookings and cancellations into account. Deliveries during May were composed of 37 A320 Family aircraft, six A330s, three A380s and an A350 XWB. Highlights included the handover of Airbus' first 242-tonne A330-300 variant to Delta Air Lines, along with the third A350 XWB provided to Qatar Airways. At the conclusion of May, the Airbus order backlog totalled 6,368 aircraft.



ABOVE - This dramatic painting of an RAF Search and Rescue Sea King, entitled "Braving the elements" by Anthony Cowland FGAvA, is one of over 450 aviation paintings on show and for sale at the Annual Guild of Aviation Artists Paintings of the Year Exhibition at the Mall Galleries, London, open to the public from 21-26 July. This year, some 70 of the paintings depict Westland aircraft, past and present, in celebration of the company's (now Agusta Westland) centenary.

New Members

Individual Members: Katherine Hodge, Timothy Redstone, Nicola Scriven, Claire Stoll, Lucy Wootton

Diary Reminders

17-19 July: Royal International Air Tattoo, RAF Fairford
8 September: Andrew Humphrey Memorial Lecture

For up-to-date information on all our activities please visit our website at www.airleague.co.uk where you can register for changes to be sent to you by email as they are announced.

NEW £51M CHINOOK HELICOPTER SIMULATORS FOR RAF

The Ministry of Defence is investing £51 million in a new synthetic training system developed by Lockheed Martin for the Royal Air Force's Boeing Chinook Mk6 helicopters. The company will design and construct a purpose-built training facility at RAF Odiham in Hampshire, the home of the Chinook fleet, that will prepare pilots and crew for deployment on operations. Virtual reality technologies and simulators will enable crews to experience a wide range of training scenarios ranging from sorties in urban locations to embarked maritime operations. The facility will also include classrooms where aircrews will be trained in the specific flying, emergency and mission capabilities of the Mk6 aircraft. Lockheed Martin already plays a key role in training MoD pilots through its role in Ascent, which is delivering the UK Military Flight Training Service pipeline, and by 2018 it will have an extensive training footprint across the UK's Military Aircrew fleet. The new 12-year contract to deliver synthetic training for the Chinook Mk6 crews will also include managing and introducing the training system. Approximately 12-16 employees from Lockheed Martin UK will also deliver a medium to long term support package to include maintenance and instruction at RAF Odiham.



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