

Connect

**ROYAL
AIR FORCES
Association**

The charity that supports the RAF family

Spring 2017

In 2016:



STATION WI-FI

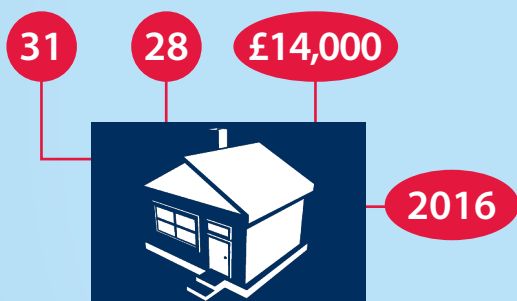
We have now provided communal wi-fi to 15 units, including Coningsby, Waddington, High Wycombe and Shawbury.

We are looking at supplying a further five units in 2017.

Armed Forces Compensation Scheme

Resolved 95 cases in 2016, including:

- 11 complex serving/invaliding cases now finalised/resolved, all with success
- 40 per cent of cases resolved relate directly to serving or invaliding RAF



Contact Houses

- **31** contact houses over **28** RAF stations
- **£14,000** spent on improving the contact houses in **2016**, which includes a new contact house opening at RAF Spadeadam



- Around **85 per cent** of new RAF entrants join the Association
- **Over 50 per cent** of the Regulars and **45 per cent** of the Regulars and Reserves are Association members

**Storybook
Wings**



Over 62,000 bedtimes made better, when parents are away from home

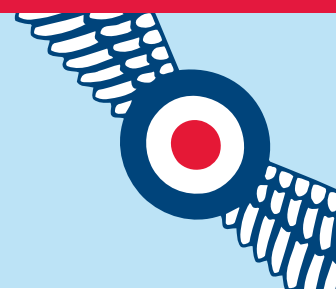
2,345 volunteer hours have gone into the production of the stories

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rafa.org.uk

Registered Charity 226686 (England & Wales), SC037673 (Scotland)



Message from the Secretary General

The last three years have seen a transformation in the RAF Association and we have all made huge strides in the areas of membership and welfare – the two reasons our Association exists.

We, with the backing of Council, continue to invest in our services and our people, employees, members and volunteers alike. This is essential to meet the changing and increasing welfare needs of the RAF family, as well as the changing priorities of our members. One activity from last year that really brought home the current and future need for the Association was the Keeping in Touch campaign. This was originally started to encourage previous members to rejoin the Association, but it quickly became evident that many people who had once been a part of the Association now needed our help. Some people had lost touch with us when their local branch closed, some were simply unable to travel to branch meetings and some were incredibly lonely – one person said that our call was the first time they had spoken to someone in three weeks.

At this point Keeping in Touch became a welfare campaign, with the focus of the call being to check that those who had once helped others by being members received help if they now needed it. This reaffirmed the need for our befriending service, which is slowly but steadily growing each month.

Although we have come a long way, there remain a number of cultural challenges for the Association. We must continue to adapt to sustain the growth in membership after a long period of decline. It is the responsibility of all of us, employees and members, to keep on recruiting members – sometimes it's as easy as just asking an RAF colleague to join. You'd be surprised how often this works.

The leadership of Council has been vital in both recognising the challenges we face and giving the management and wider headquarters team the resources necessary to meet them. It would be naïve of me to say that we have always made the right decision in recent years, but they have always been made for the right reasons.

Sustaining our membership growth and ensuring we meet the changing needs of the RAF family will remain the focus for 2017.



Nick Bunting
Secretary General

Your story here!

Have you got an interesting tale to tell about your RAF Association fundraising or a welfare story? Something you want to share with your fellow serving personnel? Please send them over to Lauren Park at marketing@rafa.org.uk.



Social media update

The RAF Association Twitter and Facebook pages have been busy in the past few months. Here's a selection of what we have been up to on social media.

Have you joined the conversation yet?



www.facebook.com/RAFAssociation



www.twitter.com/RAFAssociation

Get Connected

Follow us on social media and help us to show the great work we do for the RAF family, as well as getting the latest news on our work.

Challenge yourself to a challenge event

If you're thinking of ways to kick-start a new fitness drive or what goal you would like to set yourself for 2017, the RAF Association is here to help.

If you like the wind in your hair, why not try wing walking? The Association has places available for a lucky few. Strapped to the top of a 1940s biplane, fundraisers will spend around 12 minutes in the air as the pilot whizzes around performing dives, climbs and flypasts. This is a rare opportunity and spaces are likely to fill up fast.

The Great North Run on 10 September is perfect for those that like a real challenge. This half marathon starts in the city of Newcastle upon Tyne and ends on the beautiful South Shields coast. Running over the iconic Tyne Bridge with thousands of people cheering you on to the finish line, the atmosphere at this event is truly one of a kind.

If you prefer obstacles to distance then sign up for a Wolf Run. Set in unspoilt countryside, with breathtaking natural and manmade obstacles over the 10km courses, Wolf Run is the ultimate test of teamwork. With events in Warwickshire and Leicestershire, you will be working together to get over, under and through each of the obstacles. What better way to fundraise than with your friends, family or colleagues by your side (or under your feet).

The London to Paris cycle ride will have participants feeling like they are in the Tour de France! Taking place from 19 to 23 July, the four-day trip will encompass the beautiful British countryside, as well as the sights and sounds of beautiful Paris. What's more, cyclists will be able to see the final stage of the Tour de France, after completing it themselves.

For something a little further afield, why not take on an overseas challenge? One of the most popular trips is trekking the Great Wall of China. It will be nine days of gruelling hikes, along the ancient and beautiful wall, while having a little time to explore the wonders of this historic country.

To kick-start your 2017 with a challenge, get in touch with the fundraising events team via jules@rafa.org.uk or 0800 018 2361. Minimum fundraising amounts apply.



rafaYOUTH fundraising again

Tom McCarthy, rafaYOUTH member and cadet from Woodford and Bramhall (55) Squadron Air Training Corps marked the 75th anniversary of Air Cadets last year by climbing Mam Tor in Derbyshire 75 times in 24 hours. This equates to around 24 miles of climbing and descending.



Tom raised over £380 for the RAF Association in the process. Thank you Tom!

If you know of any air-minded young people between the ages of 13 to 17, they could join rafaYOUTH. It is free to be a member and offers incredible opportunities, including the annual flying scholarships, prize draws and reduced or free entry to aviation events. Visit www.rafa youth.org.uk to find out more.



RAFALO spotlight

RAF Cosford's new RAFALO committee

This feature usually highlights the work of one RAF Association Liaison Officer and this time we thought you would like to read about a whole team that is working closely with a local branch. We visited RAF Cosford on a soggy, blustery autumn day to speak to members of the RAF Association committee about their work and why they volunteer for us.

Chief Technician Kerrie Stevens from the Defence School of Aeronautical Engineering is the committee chair. She said: "There are 11 of us on the committee, which is really encouraging, as we only re-formed in 2016. It helps that we have quickly developed a close relationship with the Cosford and District Branch and that we can support each other with events and advice.

"The committee has a lot of ideas for events in 2017, so we need to prioritise those that will appeal most to personnel on station. We do know that we will be heavily involved in the Association's presence at the RAF Cosford Airshow on 11 June, meeting the public, telling them about the charity and hopefully selling a duck or two!"

Flight Sergeant Dean Atkinson is the committee's secretary and as such has written to other branches in the area offering the support and involvement of Cosford personnel. The plan is to allocate at least one committee member to be the main point of contact for each branch, providing a valuable link between former and current serving personnel.

Corporal Martin Knight wanted to get involved and help the Association as he has seen first-hand the support provided by military charities. He said: "I come from an Army family and when my cousin was killed in Afghanistan I saw the support that was given to my relatives. This is my way of giving something back." We were joined by Marilyn Addison and Stephen Hucker, chairman and treasurer of the Cosford and District Branch respectively.

Marilyn said: "The branch was about to close in March 2016 when I accepted the chairmanship. Hitherto, there had been a good relationship between the station and the Association. We simply could not let the branch close and so, with a new committee comprising Fiona Burton as secretary, Stephen Hucker as treasurer, Jack Morris remaining as welfare officer and myself as chairman, we are breathing new life into the branch.

"Having the support of Kerrie and the RAF Cosford committee is vital to the health of the branch. This two-way relationship allows both sides to help each other and the input from younger serving personnel helps us stay relevant. We have also had great support from our area office and Branch Support Officer Ian Campbell."



Airshow Events Calendar 2017*



1 May
7 May
14 May
27 May
27 and 28 May

Lechlade Duck Race
 Shuttleworth Season Premiere Airshow
 Abingdon Air and Country Show
 Durham Tees Valley Airshow
 IWM Duxford Air Festival

3 and 4 June
11 June
17 and 18 June
24 June

Torbay Airshow
 RAF Cosford Air Show
 Weston Air Festival
 Liverpool Armed Forces Day



1 and 2 July
8 and 9 July
14 to 16 July
21 to 23 July
22 July

Wales National Airshow – Swansea Bay
 IWM Duxford Flying Legends Airshow
 Royal International Air Tattoo
 Sunderland International Airshow
 East Fortune Airshow

12 and 13 August
17 to 20 August
19 and 20 August
26 and 27 August
26 and 27 August
31 August to 3 September

Blackpool Airshow
 Eastbourne Airshow
 Biggin Hill Festival of Flight
 Rhyl Airshow
 Wings and Wheels Dunsfold
 Bournemouth Air Festival

2 and 3 September
9 and 10 September
14 September
15 to 17 September
23 and 24 September

Scottish Airshow – South Ayrshire
 Scampton Airshow
 Jersey International Air Display
 Southport Airshow
 Duxford Airshow

*Please note this list is not exhaustive and that these dates and venues were as known at the time of going to press. Readers are advised to check in advance that changes have not been made to venue or dates prior to considering attendance. The RAF Association cannot be held responsible for any changes made nor any subsequent loss due to any changes made by organisers of these events. Please also note that some events may have limited access and may not all be open to the general public without invitation. Please ensure you check with the organisers before travel.

RAF Brize Norton hosts Christmas Fayre for the Association

The start of December 2016 saw the inaugural RAF Association Brize Norton Christmas Fayre organised by the station RAF Association team. It was held in the station gymnasium and main briefing facility, where over 40 stallholders took position for the day, each donating an item from their stall to be entered into a Christmas raffle. Station personnel and their families were encouraged to come along and support the day, enjoying donated cakes and other refreshments. The inaugural fayre raised over £1,500 and following the success, planning has already begun for the next one!



RAF Marham cheque presentation

Over the last 12 months, RAF Association Marham Branch have organised or supported several fundraising events, including a boxing event, cycling around Norfolk, running 100 miles in 24 hours, Marham village fun day, RAF Marham Families and Friends Day, quiz nights and gate collections. RAF Marham personnel and the local community can be justly proud of their efforts in helping to raise £6,204.91 for last year's Wings Appeal.



Members of the RAF Association's Marham Branch hand over a cheque to Steve Webb, Eastern Area Branch Support Officer

Santa comes early to the Falkland Islands

Santa came early to the Falkland Islands to spread some festive cheer, as RAF Mount Pleasant personnel took part in a two-mile Santa run to raise funds for the RAF Association. The Santas got together for the warm up, taken by one of Santa's little helpers and came to life as Elvis's 'Burning Love' blared out while they strutted their stuff.

Joining the Santas on the start line was a little girl called Lydia, who came with her mum and baby sister to run the race. The event had an extra twist, as one of Santa's helpers set off with a 30-second head start, so the others could try to catch him. The whistle blew and they were off.

Santa's little helper was caught and overtaken by several of the other runners and they all came over the finish line a little wetter than they started. The festive fundraisers were proud to have taken part in supporting the Storybook Wings project and a grand total of £738.36 was raised.



47 Squadron takes on Tough Mudder

A group of dedicated 47 Squadron personnel took part in a 'Tough Mudder' challenge. Looking for a worthy cause to donate to, they chose to give over £900 of their fundraising efforts to the RAF Association. Thanks to their success, plans are afoot for an even bigger event later in the year.



RAF Leeming lathers up for the Association

Fundraisers from the Mechanical Transport section at RAF Leeming braved the cold to raise money for the RAF Association. The group carried out a charity car wash, raising a grand total of £280, as well as raising the profile of the RAF Association on station. A great job by all involved!

RAF Coningsby Memorial Miles

A team from RAF Coningsby Air Operations team have decided to spend 2017 running for a very good cause.

Between 2002 and 2015, 635 UK armed forces personnel lost their lives in military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. To honour those that made the ultimate sacrifice, the team will be running one mile for each person on the day they passed away.

The team are fundraising for a number of Service charities, including the RAF Association. To keep up with their fundraising, visit www.memorialmilesrun.com or donate at www.uk.virginmoneygiving.com/team/Memorialmilesrun

Look out! Cyclists about

If you are on a Lincolnshire station on Wednesday 19 April, keep your eyes peeled for up to 20 cyclists whizzing by in Association t-shirts.

Sergeant Richie Atha, Senior Aircraftman Stuart Coutts, members of the RAF Scampton cycle club and others will be biking 80 miles in a day around all the camps in the Lincoln area. They will be raising money from sponsorship and from stalls at each of the camps to support the Association's work.

Look out for them on the day, and read more news of how it went in future editions of Connect.



Keeping the RAF family safe

Stepping out of the shower without worrying about falling is something the majority of us do every day without a second thought. This was not the case for Andy though, before the Royal Air Forces Association helped him modify his bathroom.

Andy joined the RAF in 1991, aged 23, as a telecoms technician. His 22 and a half years of service saw him in many places, including RAF Swinderby, RAF Cosford, PJHQ Northwood, 12SU Episkopi Cyprus, the Falklands and Bahrain. He also served at Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe in Belgium, finishing at Waddington.

Andy loved his time in the RAF, but after much deliberation he decided in 2013 that it was time to look for another challenge. He was already going through the Premature Voluntary Release (PVR) process when he was helping some colleagues rearrange an office move and felt a 'tweak' in his upper back, a bit like a pulled muscle.

Several months of physiotherapy followed for a suspected trapped nerve, but after months of sporadic pins and needles in his left arm, Andy suspected it was something more serious. His physio referred him to the Regional Rehabilitation Unit at RAF College Cranwell. He was again told that it was probably a trapped nerve, but he was sent for an MRI scan, just to be sure. This revealed that, in fact, Andy had two protruding/bulging discs in his neck.

As is usual when many people leave the RAF, Andy and his wife had used his gratuity to purchase a house. Due to being medically discharged, however, he was not entitled to the amount he received and had to pay back money he simply did not have.



Andy was unable to pay for modifications to his bathroom that would improve his quality of life. His shower was a corner shower, meaning he had to step out into the centre of his bathroom, with nothing to hold onto. The situation was made more precarious as the shower tray was around eight inches above floor level. This would be no problem for most people, but for someone who could easily end up in a wheelchair if he slipped, showering became a real issue.

Andy applied to his local authority for a disabled facilities grant, but was unsuccessful, so he approached the RAF Benevolent Fund to see what help he could get. They put him in touch with the RAF Association, who sent a volunteer welfare officer to see Andy. An application was made for

funding to change the shower tray and door in Andy's bathroom. He obtained three quotes and was all set to have someone come to do the work, when the plumber was taken ill and didn't know when he would be able to start work. Andy was left with a higher second quote, so the RAF Association funded the difference to make sure work could be started as soon as possible.

The new shower tray is only an inch off the floor and it's a little larger, meaning Andy can easily bend to wash his feet and lower legs – something that simply wasn't possible in the previous cramped shower.

Andy says: "I would just like to say a huge thank you to both the RAF Association and the Benevolent Fund for all the help they have afforded me with the adaptations to my bathroom and the difference it has made to my life; I can't thank everyone involved enough."

Items for Operation Shader

When the RAFALO team at RAF Coningsby approached us for some support, we were only too happy to help.

11 Squadron were due to deploy on an operational tour as part of Operation Shader. To make the tour a little more homely, they requested items including under-counter fridges, George Foreman grills for the bacon butties after a 12-hour shift, microwaves to reheat meals or cook a snack and some kettles so they could make cups of tea in the blocks after work.

Sergeant Ross said: "I was overwhelmed with the speedy response from the Association and the support we received. I was able to purchase all the items I asked for. In addition, some lovely Association teapots, mugs and water bottles were donated.

"The items have been well received in theatre and will continue to be well received by the next squadron to deploy. The support

shown by the Association will ensure that the thousands of personnel who deploy to Operation Shader will have some little home comforts.

They may not seem much on paper, but mean a great deal to those out here."

The RAF Association is here to support all of the RAF family, serving, ex-serving and their dependants.



Wokingham Branch visits RAF Northolt

Personnel from RAF Northolt hosted a visit for the RAF Association Wokingham Branch.

Branch members visited Queen's Colour Squadron (QCS) with Flight Lieutenant Soan, where they toured the building and learned much about the roles of the QCS.

Corporal Smith provided lunch in the Sword and Wheel 'facility', where branch members took the opportunity to speak with serving personnel. After lunch came their final visit of the day, the dog section. Branch members were able to watch the police dogs practising their tactics, before they left the station having had a thoroughly enjoyable day.



The RAF Association help contact houses at RAF Valley

The Secretary General of the Royal Air Forces Association, Nick Bunting, and Director of Welfare and Policy, Rory O'Connor visited RAF Valley recently to meet the station's welfare team and visit the newly re-furbished contact houses, which benefitted from a grant from the Association.

RAF Valley operates two contact houses, which provide service personnel and families with fully equipped and furnished homes for welfare purposes. The houses are for family contact where children and a parent live apart, for families of service members visiting relatives serving at Valley, and for emergency compassionate and welfare reasons. The Association provided the grant to replace furniture in both houses and to give them an update.

RAF Valley Station Commander, Group Captain Nick Tucker-Lowe accompanied the Association guests and said of the grant: "We are extremely grateful to the RAF Association. At RAF Valley, our

personnel work extremely hard to train world-class aircrew to protect the United Kingdom and its interests. To do this, we need to look after our people, and the contact houses provide a vital part of this support network. The RAF is a family, of which the Association is a big part."



Wish you were here?

When it's grey outside, planning a summer holiday can help lift the blues. The RAF Association has holiday homes in two delightful locations at very affordable rates, available to all serving and ex-serving personnel in the RAF family. Our Hemsby Holiday Chalets are on Norfolk's popular east coast, just north of Great Yarmouth, well placed for the Broads and close to the beach.



We have six very well equipped chalets at the Sea Dell Estates site. Young families love the location and each chalet sleeps up to four (sorry, no pets) with two bedrooms, sitting room, kitchen area and modern shower – one also has a bath.

The season runs from May to October and bookings are allocated no more than 10 weeks ahead, to give priority to those with identified welfare needs.



The Association also has an attractive self-catering static caravan at the Green Lawns holiday park run by Bunn Leisure at Selsey, near Chichester, on the West Sussex Coast.

The caravan accommodates up to six (double bedroom, twin bedroom and stowaway bed in the lounge) and is fully wheelchair-accessible. There's a well-equipped kitchen and lounge/dining area with TV and DVD player.

To find out more about Hemsby, call 0116 268 8782.
To check availability for Selsey call 0203 823 8130/31.



ROYAL AIR FORCE Families Federation
Investigate | Influence | Change

Serving or family, Regular or Reserve... Stay informed and have your say
We provide a voice for your issues direct to the RAF, MOD and Government Ministers

Sign up via www.raf-ff.org.uk for:

- Envoy – our free quarterly magazine
- Facebook and Twitter
- eBULLETIN – a weekly news summary
- Online surveys on issues that affect you
- Our RAF-FF App

Image caption: Competitors in the 2015 Military Inter Service Road Race Championships. RAF Photographer. Contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0.

B&B help for separated families

The RAF Association has extended its help to separated serving RAF families. Funding has been provided to refurbish contact houses on RAF stations for several years. These provide safe, comfortable places for separated families to spend time together.

Unfortunately these contact houses are in such high demand that some families are struggling to find room. The Association has stepped in to help and will provide up to two nights' bed and breakfast accommodation for those serving personnel with a welfare need.

RAF Benson helps Association Headquarters

A team from RAF Benson visited the new RAF Association headquarters in Leicester to help maximise the efficiency of their warehouse floor space. The group arrived, having drawn up plans for the shelving and racking, ready to get to work. With the help of headquarters employees, a stock take was held and shelving set up in each of the rooms. At the end of the three days it looked smart and was shown to be more effective.

Fundraising Events Manager, Chris Osborne said: "Having the team from RAF Benson in allowed us to use their specialist knowledge and expertise to set up the much needed warehouse facilities here at the new headquarters."

Grand Draw success for Vicky

Sergeant Vicky Stewart of RAF Halton received her RAF Association Grand Draw tickets with Air Mail and thought she'd 'give it a go'. Having paid for her tickets online, she forgot she'd entered. It therefore came as something of a surprise to receive a letter telling her she had won the top prize of a car.

Vicky said: "It was a complete shock to win, but a nice shock! I chose to take the cash equivalent and I've used some of the money to pay off my credit card, but I will use most of it for a trip to America I'm planning for later this year to celebrate a milestone birthday."

The 2017 Grand Draw will be launched in May and every £1 spent on a ticket helps us support members of the RAF family when they need us most.

The RAF Association supports responsible gambling, for more information visit www.rafa.org.uk/responsible-gambling



Becci set to foil her opponents thanks to the RAF Association

The RAF Association helps many people to achieve their dreams. Like student, Becci Curwen, who finds time in between schoolwork and air cadet meetings, to be a top Great British fencer.

At just 15 years old, Becci is part of the GB under 17 Fencing Foil team, and at the end of last season ranked sixth in England and 24th in Great Britain. She has now jumped to 13th place in the GB rankings, after some fantastic results.

Becci's parents are no stranger to the Association's work, with dad a part of the RAF Apprenticeship Management Team and her mum working for the Ministry of Defence, and helping to organise Becci's cadet squadron. Becci's achievements



are more remarkable because of the learning difficulties she tackles every day: Asperger's Syndrome, dyslexia, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and Irlen's Syndrome (a visual processing disorder).

Fencing provides Becci with a focus, not just in the sporting arena, her goal is to be picked for the 2024 Olympics, but also academically. It gives her more coordination, develops her memory and communication skills, and gives her a sense of self-worth.

Rory O'Connor, Director of Welfare and Policy at the Association said: "We are thrilled to be supporting Becci and know that her drive and determination will help her to achieve her goals! We look forward to sharing her progress as she works her way up the rankings."



RAF Volleyball Association

The RAF Hawks (RAF Ladies Volleyball) have experienced a major turnaround of proficient players in recent years, encouraging the need to develop and recruit new players to the sport. The Hawks participate in the Woman's Division 3 Central competition of the National Volleyball League (NVL), with fixtures scheduled for most Sundays throughout the volleyball season.

Participation in the 16/17 NVL season has enabled the RAF Hawks to build on the foundations of a relatively inexperienced squad. The experience and skill of key players has assisted the head coach when developing newer members, quickly allowing the team to become competitive against stronger teams in their division. Although there have been no wins so far this season, the drive and determination of the team has to be commended; their unwavering fighting spirit has resulted in some extremely close contests, surprising the majority of their competitors.

The regular training sessions and matches allows the team to improve their skills and build on team cohesion. The big competitions the team are preparing for are the Crown Services tournament and most importantly the Inter-Services competition. The British Army, as the current Inter-Services winners will undoubtedly be the hardest opposition for the RAF side. However, with continued confidence the RAF Hawks have high expectations to bring home the Inter-Services trophy in 2017.

Oliver aims for Europe

The RAF Association supports people in achieving their goals, whatever they may be. Wing Commander Steve Wood, Officer Commanding Base Support Wing at RAF Leeming got in touch with us when his son needed support to achieve his dreams.



Aged 18, Oliver wants to become a top triathlete, and has worked incredibly hard, being selected to represent Team GB in the 2016 Sprint Distance Duathlon European Championships in Kalkar, Germany. It was at this time that they approached the Association to see if we could help Oliver:

"In 2014 I competed in my first adult sprint triathlon, finishing in sixth place. By 2015, I was entering some high profile races and in 2016, I qualified for the European Duathlon Championships in Kalkar, Germany."

"In April 2016, I travelled with my family to Kalkar. I felt proud to wear the GB kit, represent my country and be part of the age group team. The course was open and windy, but the spectators cheering us all on made it more enjoyable and I finished eighth in my age category."

"I loved the experience of competing and am looking forward to competing in the 2017 championships in Soria, Spain. I would like to thank the Association, who were a key contributor in supporting me, as I try to compete at such a high level."

RAF triathletes

RAF Association supporters Flight Lieutenant Ben Terry and Flight Lieutenant Lynsey Carveth started their season early this year, competing in the Ironman 70.3 Dubai race. Travelling with fellow RAF triathletes; Flight Lieutenant James Ford and Corporal Andy Nash, they headed for Dubai a few days ahead of the race to acclimatise to the heat and familiarise themselves with the race route.

It was their first race of the year and for Lynsey, her first attempt at the challenging middle distance discipline. Consisting of a 1,900m open water swim, 90 km bike ride and half marathon run, the race started from the picturesque Jumeriah beach with an unforgettable swim start.

Both made positive starts during the swim and exited transition one and the start of the bike leg in good positions. The bike route featured a strong-head wind followed by a very fast return to transition, with the wind working in the favour of the



athletes. Lynsey had the misfortune of a puncture on the return route, however, successfully rectified the issue and was able to return to transition for the start of the run. Ben continued to work hard in the challenging heat and crossed the line in 10th in age group and Lynsey crossed the line of her first Half Iron distance race in 17th in Age Group. Both Flight Lieutenant Ford and Corporal Nash achieved their race goals. It was a successful trip for the group of travelling athletes and an excellent early start to the triathlon season.

RAF Athletics Association sprints to a successful 2016 thanks to Association support

The RAF Association is not just dedicated to helping individuals reach their potential, but also supports teams to achieve their targets. One of those teams is the RAF Athletics Association. We spoke to Mike Kallenberg, team spokesperson and long distance runner to find out how the 2016 season went.

"2016 was a great success for the team, after winning numerous titles at Inter-Service level. The number of personnel involving themselves in athletics increased dramatically, which was wonderful to see.

"With athletics and cross-country teams looking strong and having some real depth to them, we are really looking forward

to all of next year's matches, in particular the Inter-Service championships. We are also looking forward to planning athletics events for the RAF's centenary in 2018.

"We are thrilled to have a great relationship with the RAF Association and thank them for their continuing support as we go into the 2017 season."

We will be keeping you up to date with the RAF Athletics Association throughout the 2017 season, but if you want to keep up to speed yourself, you can follow on Facebook www.facebook.com/RAFathletics/ or Twitter www.twitter.com/rafathletics.



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