

Dear Readers,

I hope you all had a pleasant Christmas and I extend my belated best wishes to you for the New Year ahead. The Christmas break was a much needed break for us all. It was agreed that the time should be used by the cadets to relax, the NCOs to act like teenagers rather than wander around with the responsibilities of young professionals and the staff members to actually spend some time with their other halves.

But now we are back, and as ever pressing onwards to another busy year, which is beginning to sound like a bit of a cliché because I don't think we have yet had a year which isn't busy.

This is possibly the worst time for someone to have to pull together a newsletter seeing as we took three hours of your time telling you what we have been up to in the recent past at our presentation evening, which I hope you all enjoyed, and if not, at least the cakes at the interval were nice.

Nevertheless I have pulled together what I could without (I think!) repeating too much of what you heard about at the presentation evening. I think I should also publicly announce my gratitude to the cadets who actually write the articles, it wouldn't really be much of a newsletter with just an editorial, so thanks. Keep them coming, and let's hear from some new people!

Enjoy.

Ajvir

Ajvir Sandhu
Flight Sergeant
IC No. 2 Flt & Editor 241 Sqn Newsletter

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General News

Festival of Remembrance 11th November

Cdt Alex Dutch

6 cadets - Cpl Ishct, Cpl Nicklen and Cadets Abela, Beveridge, Dutch and Goldman - were invited to attend the Annual Festival of Remembrance at the Royal Albert Hall. The festival commemorates those who lost their lives in the wars of the last century.

The day started with a quick rehearsal and then lunch in the National Art Academy. After this, guests for the afternoon performance started arriving. Our job was to sell poppies and programmes in return for a donation. To do this we were joined by cadets from other ATC units and some Guides and Scouts. When we'd finished we were all seated for the first performance.

The performance began with an opening address and the entrance of the Torch of Remembrance by the father and twin brother of Cpl Rigby of The Rifles, who was killed in Iraq. There was also a talk from L/Cpl Michelle Norris who was the first female to win the Military Cross, in Iraq in 2006, at the age of 18. It was extremely moving to see both the War Widows and the Chelsea Pensioners taking part, both groups having the rest of the participants standing to attention as they marched across the floor. In addition performers included Katherine Jenkins and Blake, the Royal Air Force Band and The Royal Marine Corps Band.

We were lucky enough to see our OC, Sqn Ldr Godden, march onto the final parade, as he had been selected to represent the Air Cadets at this event. Cpl Nicklen and Cadet Beveridge were also selected to be in the final parade.

After the performance we got some dinner, had a drink and got our kit prepared for the evening performance.

The evening performance held more importance than the afternoon one, as The Queen, Prince Phillip, Prince Charles and Camilla were all in attendance, as well as many war survivors with their medals. Also this was on national television, so nobody wanted to mess up.

The performance was largely the same as the first one, however after the fall of the poppies, this time the parade at the end followed with three cheers for the queen.

The Festival of Remembrance is definitely an event I'm proud to say I've been to, it was a very enjoyable day and I was glad I was lucky enough to be selected for this event.

Visiting the Guide Dog Centre 8th December

ICWO Kristina Pisano

On an extremely dull Saturday morning twenty-six 241 Sqn cadets ventured into the pouring rain to walk the 15 minute journey to the London Guide dog Centre based just down the road in Woodford. The visit was organised in conjunction with the squadron sponsoring three Guide Dog puppies, one for each main flight, for the next 20 months and would allow the cadets to see how the money they raise for the charity goes to a great cause. All money raised is through fundraising and volunteers; the government does not contribute at all.

Arriving at the centre somewhat damp, and others soggy, the cadets spirits were disheartened by the awful weather as we were introduced to the centre and the many volunteers available to take us on tours. Splitting down into smaller groups we were taken around the centre as the volunteers explained in great depth of how the Guide Dogs are trained right from birth to working adult dog, how they are cared for and what the charity does for many visually impaired people.

Touring the kennels where the dogs of various breeds (including a Labradoodle, a cross Labrador and Poodle!) ate, slept and played; the cadets were able to stroke these beautiful gentle dogs as they sniffed and licked their hands.

As well as the hard work the dogs have to do during their training, they are also giving lots of time to be their doggy-selves and are giving the freedom to roam around in a playpen full of obstacles and lots of space for them to run around.

The care and attention these dogs receive is evident from the hard work and dedication of all the volunteers and the immaculate conditions of the dogs. Some of the workers there have volunteered at the centre for over 20 years!



Returning from the kennels a visually-impaired speaker, Tony made time to talk to us about his life being blind since birth and his experiences with his guide dog Walter. It was fascinating to listen to him talk about how he copes with everyday life and heart reaching to know he has gained his independence through the training his dog Walter has received. It was wholesome to see how his life was so normal, complete with a wife (also visually-impaired) and two daughters, both sighted however, who live together as a family.

The guide dogs, and all the people who dedicate their time to helping others unfortunate enough not to have vision are truly remarkable and I thank them for allowing us cadets to roam around and gain a better insight into the great things this charity achieves.

You can also help the squadron do more for the Guide Dogs by collecting all your empty printer cartridges and/or any old mobile phones you no longer use to donate them to the Guide Dog charity to help them raise money. Many thanks for all your support!

Adventure Training

Wales Adventure Training 30th Nov- 2nd December

Cdt Josh Beveridge

On the 30th of December around 30 cadets, NCOs and staff ventured off to far flung north Wales in an attempt to extend their mountaineering, climbing and mountain biking knowledge. On arrival at the squadron at 1830 the usual organised chaos of putting the relevant luggage into its transport inevitably took place and after this we set off. Rain and traffic jams plagued our journey but eventually we arrived at our destination, Snowdon house and bunkhouse. Of course the usual unpacking of kit and briefings then went on until around one o'clock when everyone got some sleep, ready for the following day.

I had previously chosen the night before that I wanted to go walking, among the choices open to me were mountain biking and climbing. We were put into our relevant groups, and journeyed minibus journey to Snowdon, the highest peak in England and Wales which stands at around 1085 metres. My group was to be supervised by Plt Off Reuben who was down from RAF Boulmer, Northumberland where he is doing his fighter controller training.



Up we ventured along the 'Pyg track' and eventually hit the wind. Layers were being pulled out of day sacks left right and centre in an attempt to keep warm as the British winter did its best to throw us off the mountain. After walking and a little scrambling for around 2 hours we reached the summit of Snowdon, the highest mountain any of us had climbed in our somewhat small mountaineering careers to date. Compared to most of the Alps Team who were also present on this trip this was nothing, a mere quarter of what they had climbed, but for us Snowdon was big enough

and at the summit pictures were taken and lunch was eaten, a welcome break for us. Next was the descent, unsurprisingly easier than the ascent but either way it was still tiring. Back to the bunkhouse for showers, and a change of clothes and then we would be out on the town and the shops, well I call it a town, but Llanberis has about the same marketing prowess as the squadron canteen. However, it had a fish and chip shop which was all most of the cadets wanted. (Ed. The sqn does not have a fish & chip shop!)

After eating our fill we were back to the bunkhouse just to relax and swap stories of the days adventures. Most of which were very amusing, especially hearing of Corporal Bedford have a flying lesson over the front of his handlebars.

The next day the weather was unfortunately too bad for anything to really be done on the mountains so it was off to Betws-y-Coed where the staff, NCOs and cadets went bargain hunting in and amongst the various mountaineering shops. After a lot of money changed hands we were back on the minibus for the long journey home, with yet more stories of cadets flying over handlebars and such.

Overall a great time was had by all those who attended and I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to all the staff and NCOs that contributed to the organisation of December Wales 2007. It was a fitting farewell to Plt Off Davies as this was his last mountaineering trip with the squadron before joining the Army as an Officer.

Special Courses

Flying Scholarship 15th-28th October

Flight Sergeant Mike Cross

The Air Cadet Flying Scholarship is a prestigious scholarship awarded to 125 of the 45, 000 cadets in the country. The course involves 12 hours of flying training over a 14 day period which culminates in a solo flight – if you are deemed suitable to fly solo! 13 nights accommodation with dinner, bed, breakfast and packed lunch are all included in the cost which is paid for by the Royal Air Force.

I arrived by train in Dundee at approximately 5pm and along with the two other cadets on my course we were picked up by Tayside Aviation and taken to the hotel.

The courses are staggered so that there is always a senior and a junior course present on the scholarship. This proved quite useful as any questions we had were quickly answered by the previous course that had already been there for a week.

Each day we were collected from our hotel and driven to the airport. Tayside Aviation who run the course, operates out of Dundee International Airport. Although called a international airport it had two flights a day with a total of 40 passengers and the furthest they went was to London! On our arrival we were given a welcome brief and issued with our logbook and booklets to help us study towards the Air Law exam. We were then free to relax in the cadet crew room until it was our turn to fly.

The flying programme was displayed in the clubhouse and you would usually expect to get either one or two flights a day. As well as flying we had several ground school lectures which we would have to attend, before practising what we had learnt in the air. We were also expected to study on our own for the Air Law exam which we had to pass before going solo. A few bad weather days meant flying had to be cancelled and we were left to explore the delights of Dundee – the 24/7 Tesco was regularly visited to stock up on supplies.

The learning curve was pretty steep and was harder for me since I hadn't completed a gliding scholarship whereas the other cadets on my course had. One was a G1 glider pilot which meant that he could take cadets up on their first gliding flight – quite an achievement considering he was only 17 and hadn't paid a penny towards his training!



Promotions / Awards

Promoted to Corporal:

Karim Bedford
 Joshua Beveridge
 Shahaab Qaisar
 Ross Davidson
 Jonny Dawson
 Emily Channon
 Darren Southcott
 Adam Sinclair

Promoted to Sergeant:

Rhys Reeves-Roberts

Promoted to Flight Sergeant

Caroline Dent
 Ajvir Sandhu
 Kyle O'Donovan

After 8 hours of flying my instructor decided I would be ready for a solo flight. After signing off that I was safe to fly on my own I went out to the aircraft and began the relevant checks before starting the engine and waiting for my instructor. We would first do a pre solo flight to check that I was still capable of going solo. About 50 minutes later I was told to land and taxi to the apron. Then my instructor donned his high-viz jacket, gave me a new call sign, said good luck and jumped out to walk across to the ATC tower. It felt weird to be in charge of an aircraft worth tens of thousands of pounds as I began my pre take of checks before taxiing to the runway for take off.

Congratulations to all!

I was thankful for my instructors "direct" attitude to training as I remembered all the relevant checks, heights and speeds I was supposed to be at throughout the flight. Without the instructor in the right hand seat the views are pretty amazing as the visibility is increased a great deal. It's also much quieter as you haven't got someone telling you what you're doing wrong through your headset! On my final approach my heart rate increased slightly because the busy radio traffic meant that I finally received clearance to land at about 100ft. After a successful landing I taxied back to the clubhouse to an instructor with a few more grey hairs and a well done from the other guys on the course.

Your Views

This newsletter has taken a fair amount of time to prepare. We would appreciate your views on it. Is it worth the effort? Have you enjoyed reading it? How can we improve it? Also if you have any other comments on the squadron we would love to hear them too. Please use the contact form at:

www.241squadron.com/contact.php

The ACPS is open to all cadets aged 16 or above who have GCSE grade C in Maths and English. To apply all you need to do is complete an application form which is available from the Squadron.

Forthcoming events:

Annual Dinner & Dance- 8th February
 NCO Cadre- 15th-17th February
 Gliding Induction Course- 16th February
 L98 Shoot- 17th February
 All Night Exercise- 23rd February
 Bag Pack- 1st March (Compulsory)
 Wales- 7th-9th March
 AEF- 9th March
 Quiz Night- 15th March
 L81 Shoot- 16th March
 Crowbrough Rct/FTX- 28th March-30th March
 L81 Shoot- 5th April
 L98 Shoot- 16th April
 Shooting Camp- 18th-19th April
 McGrath Competition- 27th April (Compulsory!)

For a more detailed calendar go to the forum.