



Message from the Commanding Officer:



A belated New Years greeting to all our supporters. It has been a year since our last Squadron newsletter, but what a year! The Squadron has achieved an almost inconceivable amount, which can be seen from the cadet activity write ups throughout this newsletter.

As the Squadrons Commanding Officer, my strategic goal for 2019 was the recruitment of additional volunteer staff. I am pleased to report this has been a great success with a doubling of the staff numbers. Welcome to the following new Civilian Instructors; Robert Barry, Michael Collins, Richard Preston, Jim Phillips and Lulu Caffery. I am also pleased to welcome back Flying Officer Hutchings and congratulate Flying Officer Gerrish on his return to Commissioned uniform service.

Now. It may seem that we have plenty of staff, however I am always looking for individuals to help the Sqn in any capacity as 'many hands make light work'! Please do get in touch if you feel that being press ganged into the Squadrons service is your thing. That and we offer excellent tea and coffee facilities.

The last 12 months have brought success to the Sqn in cadet achievement and Sqn progress. A new minibus, full use of the Sqn flight simulator and more shooting on our air rifle range. Extracurricular trips arranged by the civilian committee have included 'Go-Ape', Bounce house and the Birmingham Military Tattoo. I know the cadets have enjoyed these 'extras', so please think of lending a hand by supporting our Squadrons Civilian Committee. One or even half a day a year would make the greatest of differences.

If you are interested then please contact the Chair of the Civilian Committee at chair.2385@aircadets.org.

As always my door is open and equally my email inbox. I look forward to working with the cadets, Staff, Civilian Committee and our supporters throughout 2020.

CADET PORTAL

As a reminder for all Cadets and Parents. Cadets should by now, all have access to Cadet Portal (CP), and more importantly have used it.

It is mandatory to use CP for absence reporting. Furthermore all activities are advertised on CP. Cadets are expected to liaise with their parents regarding activities. The Squadrons annual training program can also be found on CP.

The expectation and requirement is that cadets login to CP a minimum of once per week to view changes.

If there are access issues please contact the Squadron Adjutant, Fg Off Gerrish in the first instance.

Interview with Robert Barry

By Squadron Staff



What is your role in the Air Training Corps?

I joined the Squadron about 9 months ago and since then my role on the Squadron has evolved. I suppose I could be called the Flight Simulator Training Coordinator. I had heard from the Commanding Officer that the Squadron simulators were out of action so I volunteered to help restore them to operation. Subsequently, I have been able to recruit Mike and Richard to the team and between us, we can now provide simulator training for the cadets most weeks.

What do you enjoy about working with the air cadets?

Watching members of the organisation (cadets, staff and committees, alike) grow, develop and achieve, and playing some small indirect part in that process.

What do you do outside of the Squadron?

Before retiring I was in the Army having been a Royal Signals technician. I then spent 30 years working for xerox on large laser printers.

Mike, Richard and myself have been members of the Bristol Flight Simulator Group for many years. This has allowed us to build enough knowledge to guide the cadets through familiarisation flight training. Our simulators run the RAF Grob Tutor aircraft. They are now able to run in multiplayer mode as well so that the cadets can now see their fellow pilots on screen.

What do you hope to see happen with 2385 (Melksham) Squadron this year?

I think with the enthusiastic leadership of the Commanding Officer and his team, the Squadron will continue to grow and provide many varied and interesting activities for the cadets.

Social Media Presence



The Squadron is starting to develop its online presence and can now provide the new Twitter Feed:
[@2385MelkshamATC](https://twitter.com/2385MelkshamATC)

Contact Details, website

Phone: **01225 700979**
Website: <http://2385atc.org.uk>

We are currently looking for more Staff Volunteers

Any volunteers are very welcome; be it to offer administrative support; teaching; technical knowledge; sports or just general assistance. No experience is necessary as full training will be provided.

Promotions, Qualifications and Awards

Congratulations to all of our cadets on their many achievements in 2019, both individual and their contributions to the success of the Squadron. There are too many to mention individually but here are some prime examples this year:

- Promotions: Cadets Hubbard, Mepstead E and Fulluck have been promoted to Corporal.
- 15 Cadets have earned their Cadet Health and Safety Entry Level Award, well done!
- 38 cadets have progressed one or more classification grades.
- All cadets have earned their Heart Start first aid badge.

Flying – Cadet Somers

Last month, 3 other cadets and I travelled with the OC to MOD Boscombe Down. When we arrived, we met up with some other cadets from two different squadrons. We were then given flying suits to put on and taken to another room to be briefed. We practised how to evacuate the aircraft in a simulator in case of emergency and learnt how to deploy our parachutes.



We were delayed for an hour before we flew because the fog was too low to fly in. Eventually, we went down in pairs to wait for our turn to fly. When we got into the aircrafts, the pilots were really friendly and explained how we took off and how to check the engines etc. The flight was really fun and exciting, and everyone really enjoyed it. Overall, the day was amazing, and everyone had lots of fun.



Gliding - Cadet Fulluck

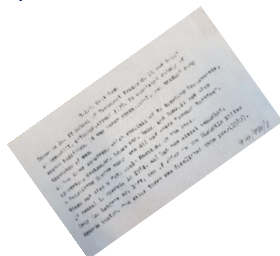
On 3rd August I was one of 2 cadets chosen to go to Little Rissington to go gliding. It took around an hour to get to the airfield before the briefing of basic airmanship, and the main parts of the glider. We would be flying a Viking T1 that would be winched up to 1000 feet in 30 seconds! Cdt Mepstead and I were awarding our blue wings at the end of the day. The best part of the day was being able to fly the glider myself; it was such an amazing experience.



Squadron History Project Updates

Wiltshire and Swindon Archives - Cadet Pritchard

We went to the Wiltshire and Swindon Archives, and had a tour of the archives and strongholds as well as the rest of the building. After that, we went back to the main research room to learn about the RAF base during WWII. This was because the Squadron are putting together a history project to display in our building. After this we had lunch in the reception room (which was immaculate) and then we headed back into the research room to find more information. Overall it was an enjoyable time – we learnt a lot of things, and enjoyed our tour of the amazing building and archives.



Chippenham History Museum – Cadet Canham

I enjoyed my experience of the Chippenham History Museum. We learnt about Melksham Squadron's past, as well as spending time with the squadron. It was an enjoyable trip. The only downside was the fact that I cannot learn history (or any lesson) to save my life! Overall, I enjoyed the trip and cannot wait for the next exciting experience.



Squadron Dining In Night – 15th November 2019

Dining in Night is an annual tradition for the Squadron and includes a sit-down meal, speeches and awards. It is a fantastic opportunity to get together all the Cadets, Staff, Families, Friends and Squadron Supporters from around our community to celebrate the years' great successes and to thank everyone for their ongoing commitment and support in delivering this for our cadets. This year, we celebrated our 58th Dining in Night at the Melksham Assembly Hall. Our town's Mayor, Councillor Hubbard was kind enough to deliver a moving speech emphasising the difference that our young people can make not just to themselves and loved ones but to the wider community as well.



Squadron Exercises and Fieldcraft

The Squadron is continuously developing the Fieldcraft programme we can deliver and always finding new and fun ways to try out these new skills with creative Squadron Overnight Exercises and Joint Thunder Camp.



Fieldcraft - Cadet Krunity-Salako

With the squadron I went on an overnight exercise a few months ago. It was in a local forest. We did a shooting exercise, and a camouflage exercise which included applying camo cream, hiding, and leopard crawling. It was a good experience because we did most of the tasks independently. I had never been on a fieldcraft exercise and I found it to be a great experience.



Walking and Duke of Edinburgh Programme

2019 saw the development of the Squadron walking and Duke of Edinburgh programme start to take shape and we now have staff trained and ready to develop this further for our cadets into 2020.

Lacock Walk - Cadet Boulton

We walked to Lacock in October to practice for Duke of Edinburgh. We started at the squadron building in a mild drizzle, and split into teams of two. These teams would be navigating the group to the next point.

The route had about 9 segments: through the trading estate, through some housing, past the fields where the fireworks are held, detouring through some other fields, then coming out near the roundabout near the Taylor Wimpey houses, following the road up the back route to Lacock, through a sweetcorn field, across some ditches, under barbed wire, through some slushy ground, over the Lacock bridge, and into the minibus.

My favourite part was running through the corn fields that towered over even Dan while the heavens opened up. We also came across a wire fence which might have been electrified and led to an intense crossing which cut close to sensitive areas when sweeping legs over. Thankfully nobody chanced it. Before this, CI Fielding taught us how to take a bearing to find the correct direction to head with a map, compass, and a landmark. Seeing the bridge was a relief but I started to see the walk as a good start to more challenging walks and a real accomplishment. One thing that needs to be explained to me is why my feet were steaming when I changed shoes yet it was freezing!



Practising for Duke of Edinburgh Bronze award – Cadet Fielding

Today, 21 cadets ran laps of 20 metres in 2 minutes, sit-ups, ball bounces, and one-legged squats. After that we all did push-ups in a line. Once we were all tired, we played a game of rounders, the losers ended up running down to the end of the field but the winners soon followed. Once we did all that we packed away and came back to the squadron for a rest.

Birmingham Tattoo - Cadet Robinson

The Birmingham Tattoo was amazing fun. We got there, got out of the minibus, and saw a massive centre. We went inside and watched all the performances – in my opinion the Netherlands were the best. We saw other Air Cadets and there were two singers plus some really cute dogs. We also met the Air Commander.



Bournemouth Air Show - Cadet Derksen

At the end of July, we went as a squadron to the Bournemouth Air Show. It was an all day show, with lots of different types of aircraft. When we arrived, we went as a group to the beach where the actual show could be watched. As well as looking at all the different aircraft displaying, there were lots of stalls, some rollercoasters, and even a games room. All the aircraft did some stunning fly-bys, and some amazing stunts. The whole day was a great experience with 2385 Melksham Squadron.



Bournemouth Air Festival - Cadet Baber

On 3rd August 2019, 8 cadets plus staff travelled down to Bournemouth for their annual air show. It was around a 2 hour minibus journey and we were all excited to see what would happen. The show involved boats, ships, aircraft and land attractions too.





Messages from some of our New Cadets

"I have been at 2385 Melksham Squadron for about 1 month now. So far my time here has been really good. The people here are very kind and helpful to me. Before I joined I didn't know what to expect, but on the first day people were very welcoming, and I had a go in the flight simulator, which was really fun. Classes are all right, but can be a bit boring sometimes – however, it's worth it because other weeks we do more fun things. The food and drink at break is also reasonably priced and very good, the squash is free which is also nice. They have also added a new system called Cadet Portal, which is good because if you forget what you're booked to attend, you can just look on there and check."
Cadet Kirby

"I have been at Melksham Squadron for about 2 weeks now, and have enjoyed everything I have done so far. Since I joined, I have taken part in leadership, and have learnt the basics of drill. I have also flown in the flight simulator where I flew circuits and landed at two separate airfields. On my first attempt I landed on a taxiway, and on my second landing I was more successful." Cadet Heard



"I enjoyed joining Air Cadets because I made new friends. I joined in September because I found out about Melksham Squadron in a school assembly at Melksham Oak. The people were really nice and made sure I was ok, and everybody tried to make me laugh. I was introduced to what goes on, and how this can help in the future. I really enjoyed my first night because everyone helped me. Everyone was asking if I was ok and if I was having fun, and I did." Cadet Klepczarek

"I joined the Air Cadets in September after seeing the OC's presentation at Melksham Oak School. I was intrigued about what I could do there, and how it could help me in the future. I really enjoyed my first night – we went out to the field and did fieldcraft. I made lots of new friends. All the staff made sure I was ok the whole time, and even though it was cold in the field I had a lot of fun!" Cadet Evans

Sports.

Rugby Trials - Corporal Brown

On September 28th, Cpl Brown, Cdt Hubbard and Cdt Hiscocks went to Tidworth Oval for trials for rugby and football. First we went to the rugby field and did a simple warm up. Then we split down into our different age groups – U15s, U14s and U13s. We then did a fitness test which consisted of pushups and running.

We then went to do some ball handling drills, and then took things to the next level of doing the same drill but running. We finished with some Rugby X to test our playing and tackling abilities. It was a fantastic but tiring day!

Sports - Cadet Edney

Sports at cadets is really fun. My favourite part is probably the hock at the end because it is a really good time for socialising, and an opportunity to have fun. I also enjoy the high intensity training, including skipping, pushups and leg squats.

Wing Athletics – Cadet Edney

Wing Athletics was super fun, although it was also really tough and hard work to go up against other squadrons. I took part in the 100m and javelin competitions. Sadly, I came last in javelin, but the 100m spring was a completely different story. I came third in the first round, then got into the finals where I came third again. Everyone in Melksham Squadron did very well and tried their best. We also relaxed and enjoyed our time waiting for our different activities to come up.

Squadron Flight Simulator

Flight Simulator - Cadet Caffrey

My first ever experience on the flight simulator was amazing, although at the start I was a bit nervous about crashing. My take-off wasn't all that great, I missed the runway, and ended up taking off from the grass! I found it hard to use the rudder pedals, mainly because I couldn't reach them, but then I got the hang of it. I learnt how to make smaller movements to the steering wheel in order to avoid crashing or do an unexpected barrel roll. I did a couple of circuits around the airport. At the end I got to fly under the old Severn Bridge, and just missed it! On my landing, I crashed into a fence and a tree, but overall it was a great experience.



Camps

HMS Bristol Camp - Cadet Hiscocks

On the 3rd to the 6th October 2019, I went with two other cadets from Melksham Squadron to Portsmouth on the HMS Bristol Camp. Our days on camp consisted of visiting museums including the submarine museum and the Portsmouth Historic Dockyard. Staying on a Type 80 destroyer was an exhilarating experience. I really enjoyed my time there and would definitely return.

RIAT - Corporal Tate

At the end of July, 4 other cadets and I went on a camp based around helping the smooth running of the Royal International Air Tattoo. Through this 6 day camp, we were split into flights all named after aircraft, with 15-20 in each flight in order to help with jobs around the 3-day show. Some of these jobs ranged from VIP duty, where we had to check passes and help VIPs around the venue, to crowd lining, where we went past the barrier that stops spectators from obstructing the runway. On arrival we had to attend a pre-camp safety brief, then were issued with two RIAT 2019 t-shirts and a RIAT cap to wear, then we had free time until lights out at 2100. We were ready for breakfast at 0600, and this continued throughout the 6 days of the camp until the final Tuesday.

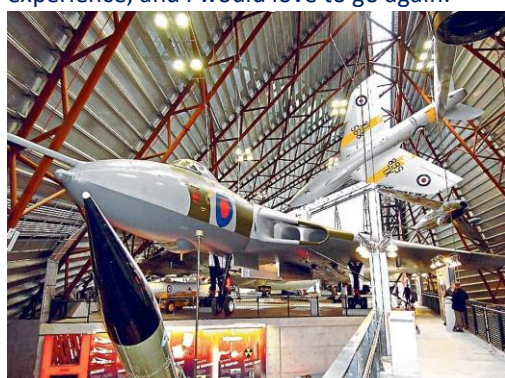
Shooting Camp - Cadet Foster

In the summer we went to Salisbury Plain for a shooting camp. We travelled down there on the Friday, and were allocated our billets. There was a sense of excitement in the air as we had our first meal. That night was cold and wet! We woke at 0545 due to the noisy Cadet Warrant Officer slamming the cupboard. We got up and it was freezing as we went to the showers. We all got given a L98 and went into the classroom to be trained.

It was intense training, and also really tricky as we had our smocks and webbing on. We had 2 days of training and then we were able to fire our rifles. We went to Warminster in a convoy of minibuses. We were issued our rifles, did the safety precautions, then split into groups – I was in the third group. We waited for the first rounds to echo around as the rifles fired, and a rush of adrenaline went through us! It was our turn next – we walked up to the range with our rifles. The instructor told us to load, then we slowly pulled the trigger – boom! The target was hit, a cloud of smoke went into the air! It was a fantastic week.

Cosford Camp, Cpl Price

On the 26th October at 0900, I was waiting at a bus stop in Lyneham for a coach to pick me up to take me to Cosford. We arrived after a journey of around 2 hours at RAF Cosford in dismal weather, but there was a very happy atmosphere. We were issued our rooms and took our bags upstairs to our respective rooms. I was sharing with another Cpl, and we got on really well. We did a variety of activities on and off camp, including going to an aircraft museum and a major memorial site. At the memorial we saw a lot of officers including the Lord Lieutenant. Some evenings we watched movies. It was a great experience, and I would love to go again.





RAF Club Presentation of the Squadron Badge



RAF Club, London – Corporal Tate

On this day we took a minibus full of cadets to central London to hand over our new Squadron badge. The day started with us arriving at the squadron at 0700 to drive to London. After arriving, we walked for 10 minutes to the Bomber Command Memorial to lay a wreath. After this we went over the road to the RAF Club itself. On arrival, we went on a brief tour of the building, then we handed over the badge. After this we sat down for a delicious 3-course lunch. Following this, we had about 20 minutes to look around, then we walked back to the minibus for the trip back to the squadron.

Bomber Command Memorial – Cadet Price

On the way to the RAF Club, we stopped to pay our respects at the Bomber Command Memorial. I volunteered to place the wreath, so I marched up to the memorial, saluted, placed the wreath, saluted again, then marched back. I was a real privilege to place the wreath representing 2385 Squadron, and to pay our respects to all those who fell during WWII.



Remembrance Parade – Unknown Cadet

I did Remembrance Parade, which was really enjoyable. We marched around Melksham - the ceremony was interesting, and then there were free cakes and tea afterwards at Melksham Assembly Hall.

Remembrance Parade - Cdt Fielding

With the squadron, I attended Remembrance Parade. We marched around Melksham and made the Brigadier General feel uncomfortable by looking him dead in the eye all at once. After going to church we marched down to the assembly hall, where we ate cake and sandwiches.



Other Events and Activities

MOI Course – Cadet Mepstead, E

On 17th November, Cdt Fulluck and I went to MOD Boscombe Down to participate in a MOI course in order to develop our understanding and knowledge of teaching cadets. Throughout the day we did exercises with other cadets from Christchurch and Bournemouth Squadrons. First we paired up with someone we didn't know, and introduced them to the others. I introduced Cpl Pain of 130 Squadron.

For the next 4 hours we learned how to properly and effectively teach cadets, and had some scenarios that might happen when we come to teach. At precisely 1100 we stopped for a 10 minute break before continuing our learning. After lunch at 1330 we had a practice assessment in front of two people that we didn't know plus the assessor. I taught my small class how to do a static about turn properly, and the timings for the movement.

Afterwards I got some helpful feedback on how to improve when it comes to my real exam. I really enjoyed my day as I liked learning about the different learning styles, and how to adapt my lessons to best suit different learners. I highly recommend this course as it gives an insight into teaching cadets properly.

Various Squadron Activities - Cadet Mepstead, R

We went to the RAF Club in London, and it was really good. We had a nice meal, and enjoyed laying the wreath at the Bomber Command Memorial as a sign of respect. We went to a 75th wedding anniversary celebration for some nice people. We also went to the Wiltshire and Swindon History Archive and looked at documents and information about our squadron's history.

And the Less Formal...

Squadron Snowman, Go-Ape, Wiltshire Air Ambulance Visit, Bounce-House and RNAS Yeovilton



Melksham Squadron in the Community

Guard of Honour – Sergeant Gerrish

In May 2019, after a long day at the RAF Club in London; I and several other cadets went to Melksham Assembly Hall to do a guard of honour for a couple's 75th wedding anniversary. I took the Banner and we created our Guard of Honour as a corridor. Everyone was very impressed with the cadets and the BBC even did a short clip that went on BBC news.

Local couple, Allen and Edna Gullis, married during World War II on the 6th May 1944 just a few weeks before Alan took part in the D-Day landings on the northern French coast. He was on a 48 hour pass before returning to duty, and then being absent from his new wife for 16 months.

Mayor's Cadet – Cadet Fulluck

Recently, I became Melksham Squadron's Mayor's Cadet. Being Mayor's Cadet comes with great responsibility, including assisting the Mayor in public events. I will have the honour of having this title for one year.



Another great thing about being Mayor's Cadet is that this award will be on my CV. This will be a huge asset for me, as I want to strive to give back to the public and the community in the future.

After discovering that I would be given this honour, I attended the Mayor's Reception to be presented with a badge and certificate from the Mayor. On 22nd March, I became the Mayor's Cadet for the coming year. Overall, I am thrilled to have earned this special position, and am very grateful to my squadron and the RAF Air Cadets for giving me this opportunity.

Fireworks - Cadet Mepstead, J

I really enjoyed the fireworks because we had a free hot chocolate! I enjoyed directing the cars towards the other cadets for them to park them. At the end of the car parking, we watched the fireworks, which was amazing, but I was very cold. Luckily the hot dog warmed me up! I really enjoyed the fireworks because everyone was funny and made lots of jokes.



Tree Planting - Cadet Sommers

"A few weeks ago, the squadron helped out the local council."

Squadron supports the Melksham Without Parish Council with their tree planting initiative.



Castle Coombe - Cadet Giurgia

On September 21st 2019, I arrived at the Squadron at 0630 to meet with several other cadets and some staff. At around 0700 we went to the Castle Coombe racing circuit to assist with car parking. On arrival, the team of us set up the 12x12 tent.



Cars began to arrive by 0730, but after 0800 we were halfway through the field. I think it was a good day, seeing the teamwork from the cadets that were there, but especially when we realised that we had raised double the amount we had expected!

****ADVANCE NOTICE OF 2019 SQUADRON DINING IN NIGHT ****

Tickets will go on sale in the March 2020 but please put this date into your diaries. – **Saturday, 4th July 2020.**

2020 will be the 59th Annual Dining In Night for 2385 (Melksham) Squadron and you are all invited, cadets, parents, staff, RAFA Colleagues, special guests and Squadron Supporters. This year it will be held at **Melksham Assembly Hall** and further details will follow.

A 'Dining In Night' is considered a parade by the RAF and as such is a formal event. The evening will include a three-course meal with a few short speeches and presentation of Squadron trophies our cadets have earned throughout their year. It is a time to reflect on the year just past and an opportunity to think of the year ahead.

The Assembly Hall has a maximum seated capacity of 200. With this in mind and considering the number of guests expected, places are offered on a strictly first come, first served basis. Late ticket requests place a considerable demand on the organising team so please apply for your places early.

Ticket prices for cadets will be £10.00 and for guests and all others £20.00.

If you have any general questions about the event, please contact the Squadron. We look forward to seeing you there and thank you for your ongoing support to the Squadron and our cadets.