

The Royal Air Force Servicing Commando and Tactical Supply Wing Association

Representing a Common Heritage

Newsletter Spring 2018

Chairman's Introduction

It comes round fast, with the RAF: the 1st Hundred Years.

Happy Birthday to our Service. Let's take a moment to reflect on what it has achieved in 100 years and more importantly, let us reflect on those who have served in it and those who have supported it during that time. We remain proud of and committed to an organisation that has risen to every challenge, embraced change, honoured history and tradition and triumphed – often against the odds.

The RAFSC & TSW Association represents those who display the finest attributes of the RAF, and in the same breath, I must pay tribute to 2 exceptional men who have cast long shadows across our Association. Last summer, we lost Gp Capt John Craven-Griffiths, founder of TSW and Vice President TSW within our Association. Earlier this year, we lost Alan Robinson, ex 3207 SC, past Chairman of the Servicing Commando Association and driving force behind the formation of our Association, as it is constituted today. Tributes to the enduring legacy of these men have appeared elsewhere and brief comment is contained in this Newsletter, but I wanted you to consider in the Centenary year of the RAF, that it is men such as these who have made the RAF the Force it is today.

This Newsletter contains the usual variety, exotic locations and tales of good works that you would expect of our Members and in addition, we welcome a contribution from our Industry Partner, Air & Ground, regarding their refurbishment of the TSW HQ "Gate Guardian" Wessex. CEO Mr Ian Dodds and his team have been most generous and enthusiastic supporters of our Association and we look forward to continuing to develop and enjoy our friendship.

You will note TSW continue to provide support whenever and wherever required, with reports on OP Ruman in the Caribbean and Ex Gryphus Trail in Belize. George Parke reminds us that TSW used to go to cold places too, with a recollection of Norway.

Sqn Ldr Peter Berry laid a wreath on your behalf at the B3 Airfield, St Croix sur Mer, Normandy; and on page 9, you can see the Plaque placed in All Saints Church, Maymyo Hill Station, Burma in honour of the RAF Servicing Commandos.

The current crop of exemplary Servicemen are present also in this issue: Cpl Luke Kirwan (your new Membership Secretary!) receiving the Matthews Sword; and SAC Jordan Williams receiving the President's Award of Airman of the Year. Both



Inside this issue

| | |
|--------------------------------------|----|
| U3A Presentation | 2 |
| Calling all 3202 SC..... | 2 |
| Gp Capt John C-G | 3 |
| Air & Ground Ltd | 4 |
| Ex GRYPHUS TRAIL | 5 |
| Wreath Laying at B3 | 5 |
| Operation RUMAN | 6 |
| 2017 Reunion Dinner and AGM | 9 |
| President's Award 2017 | 11 |
| Tigger's Tale | 12 |
| Alan Robinson | 13 |
| From the Archive | 13 |
| Norway Memory | 13 |
| Welfare | 13 |
| The Matthews Sword | 14 |
| 2018 Reunion & AGM..... | 15 |
| In Remembrance | 16 |
| Your Committee | 16 |
| AGM 2018 Agenda | 17 |

awards richly deserved, their efforts are an inspiration. From yesterday's crop of exemplary Servicemen, we learn from Steve "Tigger" McTigue, that lengthy service on TSW qualifies people for almost anything! Steve rehearses his story on page 11. Stardom, Tigger, comes with the territory for the RAF.....Per Ardua ad Astra!

Finally, after a *top-ho* Reunion Weekend in 2017, you'll find an application for this year's *wizard* event enclosed with the Newsletter. Please take time to fill it in and return it early to guarantee your place at what promises to be another *spiffing wheeze*.

Pip pip

David

Chairman

U3A Presentation

The University of the 3rd Age (U3A) aims to promote continuing interest in diverse, stimulating pursuits and challenges amongst those who have emerged from the frenzy of earlier-life career and family commitments with enthusiasm intact. The Organisation is global, with presence across UK and your Chairman was "nabbed" by the Lanark and District U3A to deliver one of their annual lectures.

In the splendidly refurbished Memorial Hall in the ancient County Town of Lanarkshire, several hundred unsuspecting locals were briefed on "The RAF Servicing Commando and Their Legacy". In the days immediately preceding the Centenary of the RAF, interest was piqued, and your Chairman delivered a 2 hour, 3-part presentation with questions, describing the works of the Servicing Commandos, TSW, and the RAF SC & TSW Association.

Spreading the word is a pleasure and again, the word was well received with the Association benefitting from a generous donation.

Calling all 3202 SC

The photo below shows some 3202 SC during the landings in Sicily, including Ron Jones, whose son has asked if anybody has memories of the Landings or his father (nearest fuselage, shirtless).

Please contact a Committee Member if you can help!



Gp Capt John Craven-Griffiths OBE

It is with great regret and sadness that we report the death, on Sunday 13th August, of Father of the Wing and Life Vice President Gp Capt John Craven-Griffiths OBE BA RAF (Retd) after a short illness.

David Packman writes: John was an RAF College Cranwell cadet in No 55 Entry from 14 September 1949 until 9 May 1952.

In the late 1960s, he was working as a sqn ldr in the Directorate of Supply Policy (RAF) in MOD. This was the time at which NATO was revising its Cold War military policy from being one of 'Mutual Assured Destruction' to one of 'Flexible Response'. This meant that supply support for RAF operations also had to be radically up-dated. John and his colleagues were much involved with this task which led, inter alia, to the concept of the Tactical Supply Wing. In mid-1970 and with the acting rank of wg cdr he was posted to RAF Changi to command the Rear Maintenance Area for the five-nation Exercise BERSATU PADU which involved the biggest airlift since the Berlin Airlift. I was already working in the Joint Warfare Branch of the Far East Air Force and was appointed to be his air movements specialist. It was at this time that I became aware of his sometimes unusual but remarkably effective way of doing things.

In the Autumn of 1970 John returned to RAF Stafford to set up the embryonic TSW. On arrival all he had were a few airmen and an empty barrack block for the Wing's headquarters. By begging, borrowing and, quite possibly stealing, he fairly quickly obtained most of what he needed and started to train Supply tradesmen in the somewhat unusual skills they would need when supporting air operations away from fixed bases. This was the time of the Allied Command Europe Mobile Forces Air and Land, and the United Kingdom Mobile Force. The air elements were the then brand new Harrier aircraft and sundry helicopters. Operational areas were principally the Northern and Southern Flanks of NATO. To the best of my recollection the first major exercise in which the Wing took part was one of the Southern Flank 'EXPRESS' series based near Thessaloniki in northern Greece.

During late 1970 and 1971 I was based at Headquarters Air Support Command and, on the strength of my experiences in the Joint Warfare Branch and on BERSATU PADU, I frequently lectured Wing training courses on living and operating 'in the field'. This gave me a good opportunity to see how effectively the Wing was being established.

After a few years back on more usual Supply duties John was appointed as part of the team planning and managing HM The Queen's Jubilee Review of the RAF in 1977. By this time I was in command of the Wing and it did not take too much effort to persuade him that we should have a presence on the ground display. This resulted in some very complimentary comments from Prince Philip and, more to the point, from AOC 38 Gp whose sqns were our principal customers. After leaving the RAF John worked, I believe, for a civil airline and for London Transport.

All of John's efforts were devoted to making sure that the Wing had the facilities it needed to be able to operate effectively. Certainly he could become outspoken when he felt that command and MOD staffs were not pulling their weight. There is still no doubt in my mind that HQ Maintenance Command simply did not know how to cope with commanding a truly operational unit. One of John's credos was that 'staff work is no substitute for action'.

The funeral was held at the Church of St Paul and St Margaret, Nidd, Harrogate on Friday 1st September. TSW provided a guard of honour and pall bearers for the service; Association Chairman, **David Orr, writes:**

The weather was less than kind and the guard of honour, lining the path to the remote, rural Kirk were drookit, rain dripping from cap-peaks which were held high, straight and proud nonetheless. Their presence was moving. The Bearer party of SNCOs were expertly marshalled into and out of the restricted space of the ancient nave and chancel by WO Mick Stokes, who had returned to the Wing for this duty in place of Wg WO Gaz Barlow, on richly-deserved holiday in Mexico. The mourners heard CG's sons Robin, Guy and 2 grandsons give amusing, poignant recollections; and Robin Springett added reflections of a contemporary, military friend and colleague. Another member of the "founding few" team of TSW present amongst the mourners was Jim Coleman, transported by Bob McBey. CO TSW, Jamie Miller, brought particular focus to CG's enduring legacy. His contribution was warmly welcomed and capped a fine send off.

Of course, as is the way, the sun broke through as CG was borne to the hearse for his final journey, TSW at attention, saluting farewell to their founder. In chatting with Barbara Craven-Griffiths after the service, we were struck by how touched she was by the serving and retired turn out and how keen she was to chat to the young airmen, to thank them personally. Duty served all round, rightly.



Wessex, Charlie-Charlie, has stood proudly as gate guardian at TSW MOD Stafford since June 2016, when it was gifted by Air & Ground to mark the support and long-lasting relationship between the two organisations. However, in March this year, Air & Ground decided it was time for the retired Wessex to undergo a makeover – and what better time to do it than in the



centenary year of the RAF? The Air & Ground team prepped and lifted the Wessex, with the great help of some TSW personnel, ready for its visit to Somerset - where Charlie-Charlie is currently being cleaned up, repainted and refurbished. In the next few weeks we'll see the return of the Wessex to its home as gate guardian at TSW, welcomed with a ribbon cutting ceremony...so keep a look out!

Air & Ground will be exhibiting at Farnborough International Airshow from the 16th to the 20th of July and would like to invite two guests from TSW to join us on the 18th, for a day of magnificent air displays, fascinating seminars and experiencing one of the industry's biggest events—with a helicopter flight to and from the show. Please contact Lauryn Mellor at marketing@airandground.com to be in with a chance to attend. This will be on a first-come-first basis, so be sure to get in touch ASAP to secure your ticket.

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Recently, Air & Ground have been exploring a new and rather exciting sector in the aviation industry. UAV's are quickly being incorporated in so many industries across the globe, from agriculture to search and rescue, drone technology is paving the way. As official sellers for the top manufacturers in the industry, Air & Ground are stepping into this new generation of aviation and we can't wait to see its potential. We hope to bring some of our favourite UAV's to upcoming events at MOD Stafford this year to demonstrate their amazing features and capabilities.



Air & Ground have supported the RAF since the company began over two decades ago and will continue to support the RAF and TSW for as long as we can. After sponsoring the TSW football kit last year, we have decided to go one up and become the official sponsors of the Senior Representative RAF Football Team (SRT). We can't wait to get stuck into new and exciting opportunities with the Senior Representative Team and show our support.

Exercise GRYPHUS TRAIL

Tactical Supply Wing (TSW) recently deployed a small team to Belize consisting of 1 JNCO Supplier, 1 JNCO Engineer and 2 MT Drivers equipped with 2 Tactical Bowsers. They were tasked to support 3 Army Lynx helicopters who were conducting jungle training and provide casualty evacuation cover for troops exercising in the vast jungle training areas. Once the guys eventually made it there they spent 8 weeks in Belize, during this time they conducted in excess of 200 refuels and issued over 90000Ltrs of fuel to the 3 aircraft. Sometimes deploying away from the Helicopter Landing Site (HLS) at British Army Training Support Unit Belize (BATSUB) and providing a Forward Refuelling Point (FRP) in the less dense areas of the jungle, a task that the veteran tactical bowsers are suited to with their small size.

Due to the FRP tasks, all the TSW personnel undertook a Jungle SERE package to ensure everyone knew the risks and problems associated with operating in such an environment. The package consisted of basic jungle awareness, survival shelters, locating and cooking food sources. The course is made up of 2 parts: a Unit SERE Instructor delivers a PowerPoint brief prior to deployment into the trees, and once there, Locally Employed Civilian trackers deliver all the practical demonstrations and training. The TSW guys undertook the course with the ground troops which meant a 30 minute helicopter journey to the camp location as there is no land route available to vehicles. Due to the terrain, the short 200m walk from the jungle HLS to the troop's camp would take 20 minutes. The highlight of the course was always going to be the part where you get to eat all the harvested food and all the cooked meats of the animals found in the jungle.

Throughout the deployment personnel took opportunities during down time to get out and explore the former British territory. Trips to ancient Maya ruins of Lamanai in the North of the country were frequently planned, interestingly, the journey there involved passing through an Amish village. Others organised scuba diving or snorkelling in the Caribbean Sea so they could see the giant sink hole called the Great Blue Hole, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Personnel also booked overnight stays to sample some of the culture (local nightlife), in the tourist hotspots of Belize like Caye Caulker & San Pedro. Both places very popular with North Americans and back packers, one back packer even suggested San Pedro is the Americans version of Brits going to Benidorm. One of the lesser visited places was the Central Belize Prison Gift Shop where someone bought hand carvings made by the prisoners. The weather for the duration of the exercise was always ideal to make sure you had the usual uniform tan lines, so towards the end of the time in Belize, guys would make their way to down to Old Belize Waterpark and spend some time to even out the not so all over sunburn whilst enjoying a well-earned beer or two.

Wreath Laying at B3 Airfield, St Croix sur Mer, Normandy

In July, our Historical Focal Point, Sqn Ldr Peter Berry, laid a wreath at the memorial at B3 Airfield, St Croix sur Mer in Normandy, in memory of all those who served at the airfield in WWII. You will recall the installation and unveiling of the RAF Servicing Commando plaque reported upon in the 2016 Newsletter. Pete reports that a few minutes after these photographs were taken, a group of British visitors arrived to pay their respects and to learn more about the Normandy Campaign and those who fought so bravely.



Operation RUMAN—in the Caribbean

On the evening of 7 Sep 17 TSW personnel were stood up to assist in the Caribbean. The aftermath of Hurricane Irma had devastated much of the British Virgin Islands (BVI), Turks & Caicos Islands and several other British Territories in the Caribbean area. The initial deployment consisted of Sgt Mulholland (Det Cdr), Cpls Gaskin, Murray and SAC Ellis and departed RAF Brize Norton, by Voyager, with the main party of JHF3 early hours of the 9 Sep 17. Transferring to a C-17 at Barbados the Det arrived at Henry E. Rohlsen Airport (HERA) based within the US Virgin Islands (USVI). With no accommodation JHF 3 personnel picked a spot within the US National Guard Black Hawk Hanger and bedded down for the night.

The aftermath of Hurricane Irma had devastated much of the British Virgin Islands, Turks & Caicos Islands and several other British Territories in the Caribbean area.

The first day consisted of identifying fuel options for the TSW Det which was satisfied by the local contractor, BOHLKE. On the 12 Sep Cpl Potter, SACs Morgan and Jones arrived bringing the TSW numbers to 7. By this stage a disused building was identified as suitable accommodation. With no air con, running water or lights, the JHF3 Det now had a home, albeit a rather hot and humid one.



JHF 3 Working and Living Accommodation

On the 13 Sep, Sgt Mulholland and Cpl Potter conducted a RECCE to Tortola Airport, Beef Island, within the British Virgin Islands. Liaison with Airport Authorities, TAC ATC, Fuel Contractors and JFHQ personnel resulted in a workable solution to provide a viable TSW refuelling facility. All we needed now was our equipment. That evening Cpls Paul, Rathbone and SAC Stevenson arrived bringing the Det numbers to 10.



Tortola Airport, Beef Island. BVI

Still without equipment, the TSW Det planned for the refuelling sites that were being requested from CO JHF3. In addition to USVI and BVI sites, the CH47 Det requested TSW support at Turks and Caicos Islands. By the 16 Sep there was still no TSW equipment in location; however, news of a Tropical Storm emerged during the morning brief. By the evening the Tropical Storm had progressed into a CAT 3 hurricane and HERA was directly in its path. The Pumas were directed to be re-located to Trinidad and Tobago in the early hours of the 17 Oct 17. The 17 & 18 Sep were extremely busy days for the TSW Det as preparations for Hurricane Maria were ongoing and during late evening of the 17th the first 3 Aircraft Pallets of TSW equipment arrived; we were expecting 4, but it was still a small victory. This was soon dashed when we noticed that we had no filters — therefore still no capability. The morning of 18 Sep brought the news that Hurricane Maria was now a CAT5 hurricane.

That evening we were given the order to evacuate USVI due to Hurricane Maria; we proceeded to board the hastily sent C-130, destination Barbados. On the evening of 19 Sep we arrived at our hotel accommodation at Barbados which I am pleased to say was a much improved living environment than what we had been recently used to. During this period, the additional 3 personnel arrived from the UK, SACs Maher, Laird and Smitten.



TSW relaxing in Barbados

On the 24 Sep eight of us returned to USVI where it was apparent that the Island had not fared well with Hurricane Maria; extensive damage to buildings and infra structure with 80% of the Island's power lines down. By the 25th all 13 TSW personnel were at USVI and we were busy preparing the equipment for the envisaged tasking. The mighty TAC B was commissioned and, despite her age, it was our main means of refuelling at USVI. One of the APFCs suffered damage by Maria but we had managed to do some fuel blending and could, finally, offer the Puma Det a refuelling option; this happened the next day, 26 Sep 17, a mere 16 days after arrival!



The aftermath of Hurricane Maria

Over the next week the Det continued preparing equipment and personnel for various requests ranging from FRPs in Dominica to C-130 fuel support at Barbados whilst supporting refuelling operations at USVI. Most requests did not come to fruition but it did involve detailed planning and numerous packing of aircraft pallets (the team were now experts in loading, unloading and reloading these pallets). Cpl Paul and 3 others departed USVI on the 29 Oct for Turks and Caicos Islands to provide support to the CH 47 Det. The team did their best to acclimatise to the 5 star hotel they were now accommodated in!



The mighty Tac B was commissioned...

The remaining personnel at USVI supported the Puma Force and had the opportunity to conduct some under-slung loads which consisted of netted loads filled with water. Due to Hurricane Maria, the US ramped up its relief efforts and several thousand US forces personnel arrived in theatre. With little in the way of accommodation for the troops, the US dealt with this in their own stylish way, they provided a cruise liner. Due to the assistance JHF3 had provided to the local population and around the airport we found ourselves being provided enough cabins to house most the Det.

As civilian contractors became more established the Military effort was ending. By the 7 Oct all fuels equipment had been packed up ready for return to the UK. All TSW personnel from USVI departed for the final time and headed back to Barbados before arriving at RAF Brize Norton in the early hours of the 9 Oct 17. Those personnel at Turks and Caicos Islands followed 2 days later and arrived home on the 11 Oct 17.



...they provided a cruise liner.

Overall this was a very interesting, and at times frustrating deployment. The planning considerations in a complex multi island operation has taught us many lessons which can only improve TSWs performance in the future. Although the TSW Det did not deploy as many refuelling sites as expected the whole team performed excellently throughout.

2017 Reunion Dinner and AGM

The 2017 Reunion Dinner and AGM was held at Stafford on 30th June and 1st July. The events were very well attended, with 85 members and friends sitting down to dine in the Sergeants' Mess on the Friday evening. At the dinner, the President's Award was presented to the Airman of the Year, SAC Jordan Williams (see below), by Gp Capt David Packman who has very generously sponsored the Award for the next 5 years.



RAFSC & TSW Association Reunion Dinner — 30th June 2017

The AGM was held on the Saturday morning; a résumé of the main points arising from the AGM is given below. Following the AGM and a buffet lunch in the Sergeants' Mess, members and guests were able to enjoy the TSW Families Day and, in the evening, the Hangar Bash.

The main points arising from the AGM:

- The Chairman welcomed Members, passed on apologies from absent friends and thanks to TSW for their support for the weekend's events.
- A moment of reflection for those members of TSW on active duty and Association Members who had passed away.
- The Chairman reminded members of the need to pass on stories and anecdotes to Jim Coleman for his next edition of the Wing history book.
- CO TSW, Wg Cdr Jamie Miller, reported on TSW's year and the Chairman, David Orr, thanked CO TSW and placed on record special thanks from the Association for the continuing support and friendship of the Wing.
- The Treasurer reported on the Accounts for the year ending 31st December 2016. The funds remained in a healthy state and the Treasurer again invited suggestions for worthy employment of the funds.
- Current paid-up Membership stood at 254, another small increase over the previous year.
- Luke Kirwan was elected as Membership Secretary vice Martin Williams who had undertaken the role for several years; thanks were passed to Martin - and his wife Terry - for their considerable support during Martin's time on the committee. The Chairman again reiterated the call for a successor to Tim Newstead in the role of Treasurer.
- The Chairman gave a broad outline on the Association's involvement in the RAF's Centenary celebrations in 2018. It was felt that joining the activities in London would probably be too difficult, but that the Association would join with the Wing in the Freedom Parade at Stafford.
- The Chairman reported on the RAF Heraldry Trust whose aim is to catalogue and preserve the heraldic badges of all RAF units past and present. The Association had sponsored the inclusion of the TSW unit badge; regrettably, the Servicing Commando badge could not be included as it was not an authorised badge.
- Following the stepping back of JCB's support to the Association, the Chairman had approached Air & Ground Aviation Ltd to fulfil the role as industrial partners to the Association; this was welcomed unanimously.
- Alan McQuillin very generously donated a picture and book of Typhoon Tales to CO TSW for display in the Mess.
- Immediately following the AGM, Sgt Chris Furlong volunteered to assume the role of Treasurer from Tim Newstead; arrangements would be made the handover/takeover.



Plaque in memory of the RAF Servicing Commandos placed in All Saints Church at Maymyo Hill Station, Myanmar (formerly Burma)

The inscription on the plaque reads:

This plaque is in memory of the RAF Servicing Commandos who served in the Far East from 1944 to 1946.

Their bravery, endeavour and achievements will not be forgotten and will forever be an inspiration to those who provide expeditionary logistic support to the Royal Air Force.



The 2017 Annual General Meeting



Alan McQuillin donated a picture and book to CO TSW for display in the Mess

2017 President's Award Winner — SAC Jordan Williams

SAC Williams has consistently delivered exceptional performance in his primary role as an operator on Team 2 of A Flight. Having joined the Unit in Oct 13, he has completed tours of duty to Afghanistan, Oman, India and a plethora of exercises throughout his tenure. During this time he has established a reputation for reliability, professionalism and the proven ability to step-up and fulfil the duties of a JNCO when required. As such, he was selected to be one of the first SACs to undertake the new Defence Landing Point Commander's Course and he was selected as acting Cpl for a three month detachment to the Falkland Islands in Aug 16.

It was during his time in the Falklands, in the JNCO Tactical Fuels role, that Williams cemented his suitability for this award. Throughout the tour his leadership and sound judgement were constantly displayed; he grasped the extra responsibility, with the ease of an experienced JNCO. Of particular note, due to his Sgt post being gapped, he displayed his potential by organising and completing numerous complex ship-to-shore fuel transfers; thus completing SNCO level duties faultlessly, which earned him laudable praise from his in-Theatre Chain of Command.



In addition to his primary duties, he volunteered to be the F&L Section QCIT representative, a high profile JNCO position which necessitated his attendance at weekly meetings to brief the squadron executives. This position found him routinely working out of hours to update working instructions in accordance with new legislation. He was also at the forefront of the successful Command External Quality Audit. A natural leader and mentor, he organised two AT/FD events to Port Stanley and a focused team building event for his section to enhance morale. This is an SAC who has gone beyond what was required.

During the past year he also deployed in support of Ex WINGED LEOPARD in Oman, where he was IC of his shift, fulfilling a JNCO's role once again. To alleviate pressure on his management he took it upon himself to expertly manage fuel stocks, including predicting consumption and flawlessly organising fuel receipts from the Host Nation to meet operational requirements. During this Ex he also delivered comprehensive training on key blending equipment for operators unfamiliar with its capabilities; yet another example of going above and beyond his position and rank.

He again showed his abilities through his performance on his team's Collective Training Re-validation Exercise. Throughout this challenging week he led by example and set the benchmark for his peers to aspire to. Of note, during the Forward Refuel Point serial, which puts a small team under pressure to demonstrate both fuel and force protection knowledge, he showed outstanding followership in supporting his JNCO, whilst motivating and mentoring the weaker members of the team to achieve the mission. Moreover, during decommissioning of the refuel site, he provided a safe solution to removing the remaining fuel from the tanks due to the loss of pump pressure. He briefed his Chain of Command and the training team of his resolution to the problem, which proved a highly appropriate course of action; thus demonstrating his confidence and ability in a dynamic and high pressure environment, where safety is the primary concern.

Back at MOD Stafford he has further enhanced his standing by mentoring two new JNCOs, who have benefited significantly from his knowledge and experience. Equally, he is the 'go to' person for junior SACs on Team 2 and has selflessly offered direction and guidance in order to help develop his immediate peer group.

In summary, SAC Williams is the epitome of the cadre of exceptional airmen and airwomen who have built TSW's reputation over its 48 year history. Professional, dedicated and always willing and able to step up when required.

The TSW Airman of the Year for 2017 is SAC Jordan Williams.

Tigger's Tale



Winston Churchill. Over the years, Steve has played the Great Man in Feature Film's, TV and Radio. By far



'George' the Tramp in the Film



Evil Serbian Crime Lord 'Viktor' from the feature film 'Retribution' to be released in 2018.

One of our TSW colleagues Steve McTigue – better known, by many, by his nick-name 'Tigger' – since leaving the RAF, and after completing 14 years on the Wing over 4 tours of duty, has made probably the most dramatic career change you could possibly imagine: becoming an actor.

His interest in acting started like most people at school, taking part in the yearly performances, nativity plays and drama studies; this stopped however upon his joining the RAF. Then, one evening in 1985, a bored young airman tired of spending evenings watching TV in his barrack room approached the Station Theatre to see if he could volunteer to help out. His offer was accepted and for a very happy 6 months during his free evenings he helped sell popcorn, programs and choc ices with some back drop painting and prop building in between.

Until one day when the Theatre Director (an old Squadron Leader) called him to his office to inform him that, due to a sudden 24 Hour posting of 'young SAC Bloggs', Tigger was, that night, going to play the role of the 'Reverend Canon Chasuble' in the station production of "The Importance of being Earnest" in front of the then Chief of the Air Staff, Sir David Craig, and the Borough Mayor. Steve explained that he had not read for any part in the play. But in good military order, he was told to "Shut up, stop whinging, here's the script: you only have 20 pages to memorise and 4 hours to do it in; a bloody doddle"!

As you can imagine, Steve's performance was a little disjointed with his lines appearing written on fellow actors hands, clothing, picture frames, furniture and floor; but he got through it and received a standing ovation after the audience had been informed that he had never acted until that night. A night that would change his life forever!

Stepping forward 33 years and we now find Tigger a well-established award winning actor with lead roles in Hollywood feature films, television dramas, radio, voice overs for audio books and national advertising commercials and theatre productions under his belt. He is a member of Equity, member of Spotlight and has his own page on the Internet Movie Data Base (IMDB).

In 2016, he attended the Cannes Film Festival to promote the feature film "Return of the Don" in which he played the lead role of 'Jack Ackerman' for which he was awarded the Depth of Field International Film Festival-Award of Merit in a leading role. Steve has also been nominated for an African Academy Film Award for 'Lead Actor in a Foreign Film'.

This year finds Steve filming in a television series, 3 feature films (one to be filmed in Germany and one in Ireland) and, if auditions in May go well, touring the UK in a West End play starting in September for a year before it finishes back in London for another West End run.

Steve says he owes a lot to his time in the RAF and to where he finds himself today. He says he has a lifetime of characters he can draw from, through his time in the Service – from gibbering Irishmen to stammering Flight Lieutenants and barking mad airmen, JNCOs, SNCOs, Warrant Officers and Officers from his 25 years of Service. Steve is never too far from your TV screen (last month Steve was seen in the Hollywood feature film 'Jack the Giant Killer' in which he played General O'Shauney on the SyFi Channel) so keep your eyes open. You never know, you might see yourself in the next character Tigger plays!!

Alan Robinson



It is with great sadness that we report the death of Alan Robinson, who passed away in Wythenshawe Hospital, on 13th January 2018. Alan, who served with No 3207 Servicing Commando was formerly Chairman of the RAF Servicing Commando Association and was a very active member of the RAFSC & TSW Association. Indeed, Alan was the driving force behind establishing the Servicing Commando link to the RAF of today through TSW and the 'new' Association. None will forget his enthusiasm for the Association, or his generous hospitality at the Tillington Hall Hotel and the Mess at Stafford, coupled with the genuine interest he showed in sharing his stories and listening to other Association members. Alan will be greatly missed by all who knew him and our thoughts go out to his family and friends.

From the Archive



Tactical Supply Wing 1987

A memory of Norway

From George Parke

There should be photos down at the wing of the time I was in Norway and there was no snow. There was no point trying to dig a bund so I went to see the Major and asked him to get me 200 bales of straw. He was a bit reluctant at first but when I explained there would be no fuel for the aircraft he soon relented. The following day a truck arrived with the bales. So we built a bund and pump area with them, got the fire trucks down and hosed them down. They were like concrete walls the next morning! Nothing can stop the Wing doing what they do best.

Welfare

David Packman is still the Association's welfare officer and will always be pleased to hear from members who may feel that some support would be helpful. He can be contacted on telephone number 01531-248294 or by e-mail at: packmanpacky@aol.com.

The Matthews Sword 2017



The Matthews Sword is awarded annually to a TSW Corporal to recognise outstanding performance during the year. The Award comprises the equivalent of a day's pay and a miniature RAF officer's sword. It is presented by Group Captain Alan Matthews (OC TSW 1985-88), whose own ceremonial sword is held by the Wing. The 2017 winner was Cpl Luke Kirwan who received the award from Lt Col David Natrass (Int Corps and formerly TSW Ops O) at a presentation at Stafford on 8th February 2018.

Corporal Kirwan's contribution to TSW and the wider service community has been extraordinary and he has been an exemplary role model during 2017. A passionate individual who constantly lives and breathes the ethos of

what it is to be a member of this unique RAF organisation. He has excelled in all quarters, delivering success whilst leading numerous exercises and operations. However, what has set him apart from his peers is his extraordinary level of commitment to secondary and associated duties, to the significant benefit of all on TSW and the plethora of charities and civilian organisations he has supported.

A dependable and trustworthy JNCO, with the ability to absorb information and maximise its application, he has led several successful exercises, notably Ex FARADAY PARK, KUKRI DAWN and HAWK OWL. Due to these high calibre performances he became an obvious choice for a key role during Ex JOINT WARRRIOR, where he was given responsibility for the commissioning and decommissioning of the fuel infrastructure. He also volunteered at short notice to deploy as the detachment commander on Op GASLOCK, where his considerable management skills and trade knowledge enabled him to work seamlessly with discrete force elements.

In addition to his core role, he has been part of TSW's RIAT and Eastbourne Airshow teams, where he has been praised for his outstanding oral communication skills when helping promote TSW and the RAF to the general public. A loyal individual, always wanting to put the service first, he volunteered to be in the honour guard for the funeral of the founder of TSW, Gp Capt Craven Griffiths. Furthermore, he also volunteered for the Battle of Britain parade.

He is Chairman of the TSW Force Development and Adventurous Training Committee, where he proposed, planned and executed a successful staff-ride to Berlin. This incorporated visits to the Berlin Airlift Museum, WW2 and Cold War exhibits for 15 personnel from across TSW. With minimal support from management he staffed all finance bids and academic elements; an extraordinary achievement for a JNCO. He has also taken the time to design and produce a TSW coin which is presented as a symbol of gratitude when collaborating with other nations. Additionally, he volunteered and was appointed as Membership Sec for the TSW Association; a role previously undertaken by a retired Wg Cdr. Moreover, he has been a highly active member of the TSW Para Cadre, playing a central role in organising training events.

Outside of work he is a true advocate of TSW and the RAF ethos, as demonstrated at his local Sea Cadets unit, where he assists with maintaining a variety of boats, enabling cadets to gain various water based qualifications. He is a TSW champion for the RAF Benevolent Fund and has coordinated numerous fund raising events across the unit. Additionally, he is an ardent supporter of the Royal British Legion, helping in a myriad of roles including the annual poppy collection. His support to the RBL has been so impressive he has won the local branch's 'good show award' for the last 5 years, prompting them to recognise his unique contribution with a 'Certificate of Appreciation'.

In Summary, Corporal Kirwan's passion to be the best at whatever he does, encompasses the traditions and values of what being a member of the TSW family is all about. The saying 'it's in his blood' epitomises his character; he is selfless, dedicated and above all genuine, especially when promoting the ethos and core values of the Wing to an external audience. As a result, Cpl Luke Kirwan is duly recognised as the TSW Junior Non-Commissioned Officer of the Year and is the worthy recipient of the Matthews Sword for 2017.

2018 Reunion Dinner and AGM

As advised previously, our Reunion Weekend this year will be held at the end of June. The Dinner will take place on the evening of Friday 29th June and the AGM will be held the following day, Saturday 30th June, followed by lunch and the TSW Families Day. As usual, there will be the opportunity to attend the traditional Hangar Bash on the Saturday evening. We very much hope that you will be able to get to the weekend's events.

Friday 29th June

We have made arrangements with the Tillington Hall Hotel to offer a preferential accommodation rate of £70.00 for a Double/Twin Room B&B and £58.50 for a Single Room B&B, per room per night. Please quote the date and "RAF Reunion" (possibly also referenced David Orr") in your direct booking with them. The Tillington Hall Hotel telephone number is: 01785 253531.

The Dinner

Through the good offices of the Wing, we have once again managed to arrange the dinner in the Sergeants' Mess which is timed at 1930 for 1945. Transport to and from the hotels will be arranged for those who require it, leaving Tillington Hall at 1900 and calling, if necessary, at the Premier Inns. Once again, the costs of the Dinner will be subsidised by the Association for members and their first guest. Any member wishing to bring additional guests will be required to pay the full price for each additional guest. Guest seats will, of course, be subject to availability of places. Dress for the dinner will be lounge suit for gentlemen and equivalent for the ladies. The President's Award of "Airman of the Year" will be made after dinner and our President will make a brief speech as will the CO TSW Wg Cdr Jamie Miller.

Saturday 30th June

The AGM, Lunch and Families' Day

The Agenda for the AGM is at Enclosure 1 and the Receipts and Payments Account for the year ended 31st December 2017 is included at Enclosure 2. Should you wish to have specific items considered at the AGM, please include them in the Remarks block of Enclosure 3. The AGM itself will start at 1100 in the Sergeants' Mess with coffee being served from 1030. As last year, the AGM will be followed by a buffet lunch in the Sergeants' Mess hosted by Association funds. Transport for those who require it will leave Tillington Hall at 1015, calling, if necessary, at the Premier Inns.

All are very welcome to join in the TSW Families' Day activities during the afternoon. As in previous years there will be a number of displays and activities to interest and amuse. Members are invited to make their way to the Association Hospitality area (white mini marquee and signs will make it stand out!) at the rear of HQ TSW. On production of your Membership Card members will be offered free drinks (no spirits!). For those staying at the Tillington Hall or Premier Inn hotels, Transport will leave the Wing at 1600.

Chris Furlong will act as the focal point for the pre-event admin. Accordingly, please return your completed Application Form (Enclosure 3) and cheque **to Chris by 2nd June 2018** at the latest; his address is shown on the Form. If you prefer, you can also pay via PayPal by using the 'Donate' button on the Association website at www.tswscoassn.co.uk (you do not need a PayPal account to do this) – please quote "2018 Reunion" in the Purpose block when using PayPal.

Your Committee look forward to seeing you.

Diary Dates

Don't forget to fill in the following dates in your new diaries and iPhones and Androids etc for 2017:

Friday 29th June 2018:

Reunion Dinner

Saturday 30th June 2018:

Association AGM

TSW Families Day

Hangar Bash

In Remembrance

We record with sadness the passing of the following members and friends:

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|---------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 3208 SC | Mr Brian Stone | Died 2nd June 2015 |
| 3210 SC | Mr Dennis Taylor | Died December 2015 |
| 3201 SC | Miss Margaret Dickinson | Died August 2016 |
| 3202 SC | Mr Roy Reddaway | Died October 2016 |
| 3202 SC | Mr William Lawton | Died December 2016 |
| 3206 SC | Mrs Gwyneth Pritchard | Died 27 February 2017 |
| 3209 SC | Mr Ron Stone | Died 10 May 2017 |
| 3206 SC | Mr Bernard Goodyear | Died 22nd June 2017 |
| 3210 SC | Mrs René Atkinson | Died 5th August 2017 |
| 3208 SC | Mr Norman Humphrey | Died 25th November 2017 |
| 3207 SC | Mrs Celia Aitken | Died November 2017 |
| 3207 SC | Mr Alan Robinson | Died 13th January 2018 |
| TSW | Gp Capt John Craven-Griffiths | Died 13th August 2017 |
| TSW | Mr Robert "Sharky" Gray | Died 5th September 2017 |
| TSW | Flt Lt David Godwin | Died 1st October 2017 |
| TSW | Mr Aaron "Mork" Lovell | Died December 2017 |
| TSW | Mr Vernon "Blue" Nuttall | Died February 2018 |

Your Committee

| | | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------|-------------------|--|
| Chairman: | David Orr, | Tel: 07725 311115 | E-mail: chairman@tswscdoasn.co.uk |
| Treasurer: | Chris Furlong, | Tel: 07921 389861 | E-mail: treasurer@tswscdoasn.co.uk |
| Membership Secretary | Luke Kirwan, | Tel: 01785 787668 | E-mail: membership@tswscdoasn.co.uk |
| Welfare & Publicity | David Packman, | Tel: 01531 248294 | E-Mail: welfare@tswscdoasn.co.uk |

**AGENDA FOR THE ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING TO BE HELD IN THE SERGEANTS' MESS
MoD STAFFORD AT 1100 ON 30th JUNE 2018**

1. Introduction and Reflections
 2. Matters Arising from 2017 AGM
 3. Tactical Supply Wing Report
 4. Treasurer's Report
 5. Membership Update
 6. Election of Committee Members (Chairman and Welfare & Publicity Sec plus ratification of Treasurer and Membership Sec)
 7. Arrangements for 2019
 8. AOB
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