



The Air League Newsletter

Issue 6: November/December 2013



MORE CAPACITY NEEDED

The Chairman of the Airports Commission, Sir Howard Davies, who is due to announce his interim report by the end of this year, has for the first time expressed in public the Commission's "emerging" view that more runway capacity will be needed in the south-east of England, even if the lowest growth forecasts are considered. The final Commission report is not due to be published until after the next General Election in 2015 but the group has been inviting comments that will inform the interim recommendations and the Air League has submitted its own analysis. The carefully phrased comments in October by Sir Howard Davis are nevertheless in line with the Air League's view that it is going to be essential to increase new-build runway capacity if London is to maintain its role as a leading international air hub in the future.

Sir Howard said, "Our provisional conclusion is that we will need some net additional runway capacity in the south east of England in the coming decades. To rely only on runways currently in operation would be likely to produce a distinctly sub-optimal solution for passengers, connectivity and the economy and would also almost certainly not be the best solution in terms of minimising the overall carbon impact of flights and travel to and from airports."

Earlier this year, Colin Matthews, CEO of Heathrow Airport, made it clear that his willingness to await the outcome of the Davis report on future airport capacity should not suggest that he is relaxed over the question of how long it is taking to arrive at a decision. In an interview in the Sunday Telegraph he said, "I'm not really (relaxed) because in the meantime Dubai and Istanbul are putting in big hub capacity that will, over time, shift the flows

of international traffic away from Europe, and the competitive pressure between Heathrow and other European hubs will increase." He added, "The question at some stage will be not so much shall we have two (hubs in the UK) but how on earth are we going to be sure we have one at all?"

In September, Heathrow traffic to China and India rose by 13.4% and 12.3% respectively while 6.6 million passengers passed through the airport during the month, up 3.4% on the previous year. Speaking at the commencement of a new scheduled link with the Philippines, Colin Matthews said, "Because Heathrow is full, it can take many years to achieve new routes like this one. Linking British businesses to trading opportunities in key emerging markets is vital, and without a larger hub airport the UK can expect to fall behind in the global race for trade, jobs and economic growth."

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The Defence Budget League Tables: False Comfort from Statistics

By Air Chief Marshal Sir Michael Graydon and Vice-Admiral Sir Jeremy Blackham

Politicians like sound bites; this government is no exception. In response to criticism of cuts to defence, the government has consistently asserted that the UK has the fourth largest defence budget in the world. This is a statistic beloved by Ministers and echoed by faithful MPs as if, in itself, it justifies the savage cuts of recent years which have left the United Kingdom bereft of key capabilities such as Maritime Patrol Aircraft, Theatre Missile Defence and Carrier-based Air, cuts that have reduced our armed forces personnel and equipment to the lowest levels in living memory.

A moment's thought would soon reveal how shallow this sound bite really is. What matters is not what you spend but what you get for the money; the output not the input. The key issue is whether our capabilities are real, sustainable and adequate for the threats we may have to face now and in the future. Even the most cursory examination of the facts, in such as the IISS publication The Military Balance, will show that we are a long way from having the fourth largest or most capable armed forces in the world. Our personnel numbers, for example, including all our Reserves, place us in 31st position, behind even Spain and Argentina. Experienced, skilful and battle hardened we may be, but we are just too few – too few in personnel, ships, aircraft and weapons.

Selective Statistics

It seems that only certain league tables are appealing to the political mind. Tony Blair was vocal on the need to raise spending on the NHS to the average in Europe; it was perhaps a worthy ambition recognising that the NHS was not fully meeting the national need. But, as any businessman would know, just spending money without a very clear vision of the necessary output or any strategy to achieve it brings no guarantee of success. Look at the 60% increase in health spending in the ten year period from 2000 and ask whether by any measure we have produced the desired outcome.

Now the Sun newspaper has blown the gaff on the sound bite. It highlights that we are not 4th but 5th in the spending league. But, by 2017 we will be 6th and are very likely to fall still further in the years to come. Most recently, the newspaper has also highlighted the major undermanning of Army front line units which must surely pose serious questions on retention, redundancy and recruitment.

But whether we are fourth, or sixth, is surely not the point. What the tables do reveal so clearly is that there are a number of countries, particularly those which are located in the more unstable but strategically critical areas of the world, who are increasing their defence budgets – Russia, China, India, Japan, Brazil, the Gulf States, to name just a few. Why then is it that these countries have so different a view of the world from the UK? In short, why are they re-arming while we are disarming? Any objective analysis of the situation would reveal that the changing league table positions arise from the strategic ambitions of Russia, China, Japan and India, whilst our relegation arises from a series of defence cuts which have little to do with strategy and everything to do with short term fiscal priorities.

So we have to ask, in a complicated world, does strategy matter? Or does the Government think that our interests are best served by off-the-cuff pragmatic reaction and decision-making only?

Well, history strongly suggests otherwise. Previous UKNDA papers have highlighted the incoherence of a number of decisions made in recent years, many of which will have long

term consequences for the security and well being of the nation. Our nuclear deterrent for example, which we fully support, has had its credibility undermined by weaknesses in conventional capabilities. Such conventional weakness is highly dangerous. When considering lack of personnel, think Basra, think Helmand. And do not be fooled by our much trumpeted success in Libya; the United States provided 70% of the support air sorties plus most of the critical Day One air attacks. If an attack is launched on Syria, take note of who is doing the heavy lifting; it will not be us even if by then we have rejoined the Coalition of the Willing. Anyway, how can we react pragmatically unless we already have some benchmark to decide what forces to provide ourselves with – in a word, strategy.

Strategy is not prescriptive; rather it provides vision and direction; it focuses ambition. All involved in the promotion of a nation's well being and success need an understanding of its strategy. Russia, China, India, and Japan have national strategies widely understood within their borders and evident to the outside world too. In every case, this has been reflected in the commitment, strength and make-up of the nation's armed forces.

“It seems astonishing that politicians themselves should not want a stronger military, as that and only that gives them a voice worth listening to in the councils of the world.”

For the United Kingdom, the rudderless slide down the tables places our standing in the world at risk. However rich, however well intentioned we may be, a nation whose armed forces are perceived as weak and unable in a crisis to support their national aspiration, does not, and cannot, carry real conviction in the world in which we live. What message does it send to allies, and what comfort does it bring to potential enemies? There is a timeless truth to Andrew Roberts' comment in his foreword to the UKNDA paper on 'A National Debate on Defence':

“It seems astonishing that politicians themselves should not want a stronger military, as that and only that gives them a voice worth listening to in the councils of the world.”

We should therefore thank the media for shining a light on the strategic vacuum in UK defence policy, a point made in the past by several commentators including the then Chief of Defence Staff in 2010. And the reality of the figures puts a large spoke in the wheel of Government rhetoric.

Where Next?

What will politicians say now with an election on the horizon? We can expect to be reminded of the problem of fiscal debt, and that defence should play its role in reducing it. But defence already has. Since 1989, and in marked contrast to health and welfare, the core defence budget has halved its share of the GDP, from over 4% to about 2% – a saving of around £30 billion a year. Over the same period, in real terms, the health budget has increased by a factor of 3 and the Welfare budget by a factor of 2. Can it really be the case that our health and welfare in 1989 were so poor that such an increase can still be justified when, on the government's own admission, this level of public

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COMMENTARY *by Aeronautica*

IF THE FRENCH CAN DO IT...

From the end of the Second World War until the late 1970s, the UK's aerospace industry was unquestionably second only to that of the USA in the West. So was the nation's capability in air power. But today things are very different. European co-operation has become an integrated reality in the industry from missiles and space, to large commercial aircraft, combat jets and helicopters, radars and electronic systems, and along the way has transformed export prospects, achieving results that would have staggered those working in the sector in the 1970s. However, at that time the SBAC trade body could still proudly boast that no other aerospace nation in Europe could provide products at every stage of the supply chain, from components, equipment and systems, to engines and complete aircraft from general aviation to commercial airliners in all market segments, and every type of military aircraft. Whereas most of these categories have now become consolidated internationally, with much horizontal as well as vertical integration, France, and not Britain, has somehow managed to emerge as today's European aerospace giant. For all its success in maintaining high profitability in some key areas, the UK no longer compares favourably with the sheer scale and diversity of French aerospace activity. While we Brits no longer make complete aircraft (apart from the Hawk) and managed to exit the regional and business jet sectors just before a tidal wave of demand arrived, and even managed to shed ownership of a 20% share in Airbus, France has never for one micro-second shared the UK view that "final assembly doesn't matter". The results can be seen throughout our neighbour's country, but especially at Toulouse, which has overtaken Seattle as the world's powerhouse for commercial aviation, with assembly halls and flight test centres that now stretch from horizon to horizon. The French space sector has also overtaken the US with the most modern satellite launchers, and the biggest assembly and launch centres in the world. Not only does it also build 100% French combat and business jets, it has ATR regional airliner final assembly and Europe's largest general aviation industry. It is also a world leader in the development and co-production of ten-ton size commercial jet engines with its share of the best-selling CFM-56 and now Leap turbofans powering thousands of Boeing 737s and Airbus A320s. And then there are all-French strategic and tactical submarine and air launched nuclear missiles, some carried by French built naval jets operating off a French nuclear-powered aircraft carrier.

So how do they do it? An example of how French aerospace commitment has helped their industry take over the lead in Europe can be seen in an announcement in October by Dassault and Thales. Confirming the go-ahead by the French government of a new Atlantique 2 upgrade programme that will sustain and safeguard France's long-range maritime air capability for the next twenty five years, the joint statement includes the following, "The programme will help to maintain key skills required by the defence industry in areas ranging from undersea warfare and next-generation acoustics to radars for combat and surveillance roles and complex systems architecture and integration. The development and production work will support jobs in several regions of France for both the main contractors and their partner SMEs. Sensor developments will build on the results

of government-funded advanced study programmes in underwater detection and combat aircraft radars, including the RBE2 active electronically scanned array radar developed for the Rafale." Pointedly the statement adds, "France is the only country apart from the United States to produce maritime patrol aircraft capable of deploying both advanced sensor suites (optronic, radar, acoustic) and a wide range of weapon systems." The new contract will involve the development and integration of next-generation technologies for a new tactical system and state-of-the-art sensor subsystems and display consoles. "The integrated systems will be among the most sophisticated in the entire aerospace industry."

Some may scoff at the fact that the chosen platform is the Atlantique, a design that pre-dates the Nimrod, but unlike in the UK, where over £3 billion was spent on the MRA4 with absolutely nothing to show for it, with one of the last factories big enough to assemble large aircraft closed down, France in contrast will have 15 of the most advanced maritime patrol and anti-submarine aircraft in the world – and at a cost considerably lower than a new Boeing P-8A, and far more capable than an MR version of the C295. It is excellent that the UK government can announce yet another new initiative in the form of the Defence Growth Partnership, but the French realise that supporting new programmes with orders, and not giving priority to off-the-shelf procurement from abroad, is essential if exports are to continue into the future. So who has got it right and who has got it wrong?



ABOVE - A French Navy Atlantique 2 (Dassault photo)

END OF AN ERA -

Richard Gardner reports

Friday, September 20, was a significant day for the Royal Air Force for it marked the end of a 47-year long service career for Britain's last great four-engine airliner, the iconic Vickers VC10. In the early 1960s RAF Transport Command operated a worldwide schedule of long-distance routes from the UK to Canada and the USA in the West, and to Hong Kong, via Cyprus, the Middle East and Singapore to the East. When the Vickers VC10 was introduced by BOAC in 1964, the beautiful, rear-engined long-range airliner represented the latest commercial aviation technology, with four very powerful Rolls-Royce Conway turbofan engines, a short take-off and landing runway performance, intercontinental range, and a fuselage cross section that offered more internal space and a much quieter cabin than the contemporary US Boeing 707s and DC-8s. It was also very much faster than the RAF's Britannias, with a cruising speed of 600mph. With the demise of Concorde, the VC10 has remained the fastest jet airliner in the world right up to its retirement, with its Mach 0.96 cruising capability - no Boeing or Airbus cruises as fast today!

The RAF VC10 C1 fleet originally numbered 14 aircraft, and all featured a large cargo door which enabled a useful mix of passengers and freight to be carried. They flew not only on RAF scheduled routes, but accompanied fighter and bomber detachments on operational missions and also on joint exercises overseas with other friendly nations. They could also be fitted with a VIP cabin and for more than three decades were used to fly The Queen and senior government and Service officials on state business on flights all over the globe. Since 1966, when RAF VC10s entered service in the transport role, with the appropriately numbered No 10 Squadron, they have taken part supporting every international conflict or natural disaster relief operation in which the UK has been involved.

During the Falklands War in 1982 the fleet was in continuous use shuttling men and supplies between the UK and the forward air head on Ascension Island in the

South Atlantic. After this conflict Mrs Thatcher ordered a strengthening of air assets and this highlighted the need for additional air-to-air refuelling aircraft to supplement the Victors. As a result, the government ordered the conversion of 9 ex-airline Super VC10s as three-point tankers for a second RAF VC10 squadron, No 101. These K3s were needed mainly to provide sufficient air refuelling capacity for the expanding Tornado F3 fighter fleet, but eventually all the VC10s were given a receiving and tanking capability, including the C1 transports, which were equipped with two under-wing refuelling pods and became K2s. The Super VC10 K3s had additional rear fuselage mounted HDUs for refuelling large aircraft. The two wing-mounted pods catered for fast jets, which could use all three points simultaneously if needed, though this was rarely done. The converted Super VC10s (which were bigger than the standard version) were completely rebuilt by British Aerospace at Filton, Bristol, with large internal fuel tanks, self-supporting equipment for deployments to



VC10 bids farewell

Editor's photos

from RAF Brize Norton

remote airfields, and close-circuit TV to aid refuelling at night and in bad weather. The high tail, rear engine configuration gave the VC10s outstanding stability and safety and the minimum turbulence in their path made them perfect for the tanking role. In 1987, 101 Squadron celebrated its 60th anniversary in style by flying ZA147 non-stop to Australia, creating a new world air speed record, taking 15 hours and 53 minutes, with two air refuellings en route from Brize Norton to Perth.

By the 1990s the RAF VC10 and Super VC10 fleet needed to be expanded further to replace the remaining Victors, and another five ex-British Airways Super VC10s were flown from open storage at Abingdon to Bristol where they were extensively rebuilt and became K4s. These retained their passenger/cargo cabins and could be used for long-range troop flights as well as tanking operations. During the first Gulf War in 1991, No 101 Squadron deployed all its K3 aircraft to the Middle East where it flew over 1,400 flying hours on tanking operations, delivering eight million kgs of fuel to coalition aircraft. During the 1990s VC10s were based in Cyprus, Turkey and Bahrain supporting the No-Fly Zone over Iraq, and later continued to fly tanking missions in support of coalition air forces over Kosovo. During the second Gulf War in 2003, VC10s were deployed to Saudi Arabia where they achieved a 100% tanking sortie success rate and also took part in casualty evacuation flights between the war zone and Cyprus. From 2009 to 2011 No 101 Squadron VC10s flew from Oman supporting RAF and US Navy fast jet fighters operating over Afghanistan. The last major operation involved supporting the UN operations over Libya in

2011. Finally, the detachment based in the Falkland Islands returned this summer to RAF Brize Norton. The RAF is continuing until April next year to use four of its six remaining Lockheed Tristars as tankers, with one based in the Falklands, but is gradually building up a new fleet of Airbus A330 Voyagers supplied under the Air Tanker PFI deal. Eight will be dedicated tankers, one will be used for transport duties only, and four more will be available on release from passenger duties if required, though equipping them for tanking service will not be a simple "clip-on" exercise.

The editor was fortunate to fly on the very last operational VC10 tanking sortie on the last day of its service career. Now no VC10s remain in civil or military service anywhere. It was a beautifully clear day and the four and a half hour sortie involved the last two Super VC10 K3s, ZA147 and ZA150, flying out over the North Sea, where filmed by a BBC TV crew aboard the second aircraft, one VC10 refuelled the other and then in turn refuelled two Tornado GR4 bombers and two Typhoon fighters, before making final approaches and fly-bys over Lossiemouth, Leuchars and Prestwick in Scotland, then the Samlesbury and Warton BAE Systems factories, Coningsby and Marham, and Birmingham, before a final formation break and landing back at RAF Brize Norton. It was an emotional moment as squadron personnel and their families gathered around the steps of the sleek grey aircraft to pay their final respects and share in the sense of history, and a job well done. The VC10s have thus ended almost half a century of safe and reliable flying, with no aircraft losses in all that time, and a reputation shared by its crews for being a superb flying machine. It should be pointed out that the new Voyagers carry three times as much fuel as a VC10 yet they can also carry 250 passengers and their baggage as well as being able to tank aircraft at the same time. So farewell Queen of the Skies, only the English Electric Canberra has served longer in the RAF's history- 55 years in continuous service.



Air League/Boeing Disabled Flying Scholarships



ABOVE - Karl Hinnett

On 19 September 2005, Karl Hinnett of the Staffordshire Regiment was seriously injured in his Warrior armoured vehicle at Basra, suffering third degree burns on 40% of his body. Karl is one of six former members of the Armed Forces to be awarded an inaugural Air League/Boeing flying scholarship. “When I found out I’d been given the chance to learn how to fly, it felt like I’d won the lottery,” said Karl. “After Iraq, I felt like I was at a crossroads in life. Either you let it take over or you decide to make the most of what you’ve got, and I chose the latter. Ever since I was fully rehabilitated I’ve been pushing myself to overcome new challenges. It’s difficult but very rewarding and after I gain my pilot’s licence, I plan to continue training to become a commercial pilot in the future.”

Karl trained with Aerobility at Blackbushe in Surrey and eight years to the day after being injured at Basra, on 19 September 2013, he flew solo in a PA-28 Warrior aircraft. Helping former soldiers such as Karl to fulfil their flying potential only underlines the combined commitment of Air League, Boeing and Aerobility to widen the horizons of UK aviation. The flying achievements of the disabled veterans will be recognised at the Air League Annual Reception next year.

UKNDA Report continued from page 2

expenditure is now wholly unaffordable? It is a striking observation that a reduction of just 1% in the combined Health and Welfare budgets would fund a 10% increase in defence, but even then still leaving defence well below its levels of 1989. Of course health is an important priority but getting the balance right between a nation’s health and its security is vital.

So, if relatively we were spending too much on defence then surely we would be ranked high in any Global Militarisation Index? Not so. A recent German assessment, seeking to highlight pronounced military spending, comparing a variety of indicators such as GDP, health expenditure, and weapons to population, shows that Israel and Singapore lead in terms of serious militarisation, while the UK, in contrast, is down at 64th position – below Sweden and France and alongside even neutral Switzerland. Now that is a statistic to inform the nation.

We can accept our fall if we wish, but there is a further arguably more dangerous consequence to the present state of the armed forces. Because major equipment inevitably takes a long time to design and build, modern wars are always fought with the equipment, support and human resources which have been invested over the preceding decade or so. This gives today’s policy makers a great responsibility. The decisions made today will affect the capability of our Services in 10-20 years time, in a world that is likely to be quite different from ours. A review of the past 50 years will show that nearly all the wars surprised us and we have never been able successfully to predict

the nature of geostrategic balance ten years ahead. We are not at the end of history and thus have an obligation to future generations. Our current failure to invest for an unknown future, and sustain the capacity to meet it, may leave our own children and grandchildren unprepared and with insufficient time to strengthen our military capability. Should that happen, neither history nor our children would ever forgive today’s political leaders.

So, the tables have introduced many more questions than just our place in the spending league. Have we abandoned strategic thought for short term political expediency? Why is it that in 2012 France, spending some \$11bn less than us on defence, can field 24 Principal Surface Combatant (PSC) ships to our 19 in a navy with a comparable range of capabilities, and 15 Squadrons of combat aircraft to our 9. Or Russia, who even when spending a similar figure to our own, fielded over 1300 of the most modern Main Battle tanks to our 227, 33 PSCs and over 70 Air Squadrons. And even Italy, spending less than half of what we spend on defence, has 18 PSCs and 10 Squadrons of combat aircraft.

How does all this affect our much vaunted permanent place on the UN Security Council? We have answered the matter of strategic direction; there is none. We will address the other questions in a later paper; there is much to say and much political fog to disperse. **For now, take note of our descent in the league tables but, more importantly, do not ever again be taken in by the politicians’ chant that all is well with the defence of the United Kingdom simply because we are the 4th largest spender in the world.**

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2014 BRISTOW SCHOLARSHIPS

Ed Barrett, Thomas Bean, Graham Bendall and James Johnson successfully completed their Bristow NPPL(A) licences over the summer. They will now continue their training at Bristow's Academy in Florida for an EASA CPL(H), and then to their Instrument Flying School at Staverton for an EASA IR(H).

Bristow will generously fund another four NPPL(A) in 2014. If you are interested please complete the electronic application when all the Air League Trust flying scholarship applications go live around the middle of November.



INDUSTRY NEWS

The second Airbus A350 XWB to fly, MSN3, landed back at Toulouse-Blagnac Airport France, shortly after 14:30 hours local time, on 14 October, after successfully completing its first flight that lasted approximately five hours. The A350 XWB test aircraft, MSN3, was flown by Frank Chapman and Thierry Bourges, Airbus Test Pilots. MSN3 - similarly to MSN1 - has no passenger cabin furnishings but is equipped with heavy flight test installation. The first A350 XWB to fly (MSN1) took off on 14 June, and has to date flown some 330 flight test hours in almost 70 flights. These flights have been devoted to the identification and freeze of all flap and slat configurations, loads and aeroelastic testing and evaluation of the aircraft's handling characteristics and systems' operation throughout the operational envelope. Three more A350 XWB test aircraft will join MSN 1 and 3 to perform the planned 2,500 hours up to Type Certification. The A350 XWB has already won 725 firm orders from 37 customers worldwide. First delivery is planned second half of 2014 to Qatar Airways.

The Lockheed Martin F-35 Lightning II programme continues its operational development, surpassing 10,000 flight hours in September. More than half of the total hours were accumulated in just the past 11 months. Through September, F-35s flew 6,492 times for a total of 10,077 flight hours. The new milestone effectively doubles the safe flight operations of the F-35 in a year, compared to reaching 5,000 flight hours in six years. This milestone was achieved by operational production aircraft operating at Eglin Air Force Base, Fla., and Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, Ariz., where F-35 pilots and aircraft maintainers conduct training and the combined F-35 System Development and Demonstration (SDD) and Operational Test (OT) aircraft operating at Edwards AFB, Calif., Naval Air Station Patuxent River, Md., and Nellis AFB, Nev. All three variants: the F-35A conventional takeoff and landing (CTOL), the F-35B short takeoff/vertical landing (STOVL), and the F-35C carrier variant (CV) participated in the programme milestone.

On 7 October Rolls-Royce welcomed a decision by Japan Airlines to order 31 Airbus A350 XWB aircraft, which are powered by Rolls-Royce Trent XWB engines. The Trent XWB, the world's most efficient engine flying today, will power 18 A350-900 and 13

A350-1000 aircraft. The Trent XWB engine benefits from a close partnership with Japanese partners Kawasaki Heavy Industries (KHI), Mitsubishi Heavy Industries (MHI), IHI Corporation, and Sumitomo Precision Products (SPP) as well as other Japanese suppliers. KHI manufactures the Intermediate Pressure Compressor (IPC) module, MHI manufactures combustion modules, low-pressure turbine blades and intermediate pressure turbine discs, IHI Corporation manufactures Intermediate Pressure Turbine (IPT) shafts, Intermediate Pressure Combustor (IPC) rear stub shafts and low pressure fan shafts and SPP designs and manufactures the heat management system.

On 11 October Thales UK confirmed that it has signed a contract with the Ministry of Defence (MOD) for a further 200 STARStreak short-range surface-to-air missiles, a key component of the UK's Ground Based Air Defence (GBAD) capability. The order has been placed to increase STARStreak stocks as part of the Government's transformation agenda for the Armed Forces, Force 2020, to equip both the Regular and Reserve forces with the STARStreak systems. David Beatty, Managing Director of Thales in Belfast, said, "Not only will this contract sustain jobs at our facilities in Northern Ireland, but it also demonstrates very clearly to our export customers the ongoing importance and trust that the UK MOD places in the STARStreak system and our design, manufacturing and support capabilities". The STARStreak missile systems, and its Air Defence Alerting Device, were deployed in the UK by the British Army during London 2012, where they were considered essential to the delivery of a safe and secure Olympic Games.



MEMBERS' NEWS

William Hardy, Mark Philip Jones Memorial Flying Bursary 2013. I finished my AOPA Basic Aerobatics course today and got everything signed off for my certificate. I just wanted to say a huge thank you to the Air League for giving me the opportunity through the bursary you awarded me. I've had an amazing week learning how to fly basic aerobatic sequences in a Pitts S2A and luckily I got through the syllabus fast enough for me to have a go at standard sequences too! Some real pure flying, as Alan Cassidy put it. I'll keep up the aerobatics practice as much as I can afford and I might well end up going for a competition sometime soon! Please pass on my thanks to anyone else involved in the funding and selection process within the Air League, I really can't tell you how grateful I am.



Phoebe Marks, Swire Charitable Trust Flying Scholarship 2013. I would like to thank the Air League Trust and the Swire Charitable Trust for the 12 hour flying scholarship that I was awarded

in May of this year. I commenced the two-week scholarship on Monday 19th August at South Warwickshire Flying School. Having had such a brilliant two weeks at the school I decided to stay on and attempt to gain my full PPL. Unfortunately, due to poor weather and University starting again the next week I had to return home to Edinburgh just short of the requirements to gain my license. I am, however, already booked in to return to complete my training and skills test. I would consider the five weeks I have spent at SWFS some of the best of my life. Every day I was challenged and enthused to learn, and for this opportunity I am immensely grateful. Completing my qualifying cross-country filled me with a huge sense of achievement and I cannot wait to get back up into the sky! Having recently received the offer of an RAF pilot bursary, I know I will take the fond memories of my Air League scholarship with me through my future aviation career and I hope, in the future, I can contribute an opportunity for another young enthusiast to experience the joys of flying!

Douglas Wood, Engineering Scholarship 2013. I am writing to thank the Air League Trust for awarding me an Engineering Scholarship. I spent two weeks shadowing engineers at Eurocopter UK, and thoroughly enjoyed the experience. I was happy to assist the engineers inspecting components

for damage or corrosion, replacing worn parts, and cleaning or repainting helicopter surfaces. One of my favourite tasks was the inspection of engine turbine blades for damage to coatings, which involved threading a small flexible probe (a borescope) deep into the engine, so that pictures could be taken. In addition I was lucky enough to go flying three times - the highlight of the placement has to be being taken for a stunning low-level aerial tour of Oxford, a delightful experience which I will remember for a long time. And I was fortunate enough to experience two helicopter test flights from the co-pilot's seat! This placement has given me plenty of practical, up-close, hands-on experience to complement the theoretical knowledge I am gaining at university studying for my engineering degree. As such, as well as being very interesting, I feel that the placement has greatly benefitted me, and will no doubt help me to stand out when it comes to job applications and interviews in the future. Without the Air League Trust, I would not have had this experience — thank-you very much for awarding me the scholarship as well as arranging the placement.

Robbie McLellan, HQ Air Cadets (The Air Cadets Scarman) Flying Scholarship 2013. I would like to thank Group Captain J Lawlor, RAF Chief of Staff Headquarters Air Cadets and the Air League for giving me the opportunity of the flying scholarship. I consider myself very privileged and fortunate to be given such a great chance to map out my future in aviation and in particular work towards fulfilling my ambition of a career in the RAF. I was absolutely delighted to attend the two weeks at Tayside Aviation, Dundee. All scholarship arrangements and flying were brilliantly delivered by Kate Watt and the flying crew. To be lucky enough to achieve my first solo flight at the end of the training was just fantastic for me. I am currently a Cadet Sergeant in the Air Cadets 142(2nd Edinburgh) Sqn and I would like to thank you enormously for enabling me to achieve my wings post completion of this prestigious scholarship. I am immensely grateful for an outcome that will live with me forever as I seek to embark on an RAF career.

2014 Subscriptions

Revised subscriptions with effect from 1 January 2014 were approved at the Air League AGM held on 13 June 2013. The new rates will be:

| Corporate Membership Category | Rate (Direct Debit) | Rate (Cash) |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| RED | £4,000 & above | £4,000 & above |
| WHITE | £1,250-£4,000 | £1,250-£4,000 |
| BLUE | £650-£1,250 | £660-£1,250 |
| GREEN | £200 | £220 |
| Individual Membership Category | Rate (Direct Debit) | Rate (Cash) |
| Full (over age 22) | £67 | £70 |
| Retired (over age 65) | £47 | £50 |
| Intermediate (age 22-27) | £47 | £50 |
| Student (under age 22) | £35 | £38 |

1. Subscriptions are revised annually.
2. Individual Life membership £900.00.

New Members

Individual Members: Kaylie Balsler, Neil Battye, Edward Bellamy, Jonathan Davies, Christopher Farfan, Aidan Fraser, Keven Gambold, Catherine Gray, Elizabeth Gray, Alexander Jefferies, Andrew Loy, James Parker, Jordon Rickard, Joe Riley

Diary Reminders

3 December: Council meeting - RAF Club

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

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