History Of The RAF School Of Physical Training

The Royal Air Force School of Physical Training (SofPT) was formed on the same day as the fledging Royal Air Force (RAF), 1st April 1918, at the re-designated RAF College Cranwell, previously Royal Naval Air Service Training Establishment, and Cranwell. The SofPT is one of only 2 schools the same age as the RAF still in existence, the other being the Central Flying School. The School was based in the old Royal Navy swimming pool and gymnasium/station church (a wooden building which existed until the early 1960s). The School’s motto ‘Viribus Audax’ which means ‘Bold In Strength’ is symbolized by a Roebuck on the School Crest. The Roebuck was chosen because of its extraordinary alertness, energy and physical fitness; qualities we endeavor to instill in our Physical Training Instructors (PTI).

In 1920, the School moved to RAF Uxbridge where it remained until the Second World War. Early in the War the School was closed down - presumably because everyone thought the War would be over by Christmas and there was no need to train more PTIs. In contrast to this and probably when it was realised that it was going to be a long war, the RAF recruited many civilian trained physical education teachers as PTIs and Physical Fitness Officers. During 1940/1941, PTI training was resumed at 3 newly formed PT Schools: No 1 at RAF St. Athan, No 2 at RAF Cosford and No 3 at Loughborough College. Later in the War both No 1 and No 2 Schools were closed, presumably because there were enough trained PTIs.

in August 1988. As of May 2016, the School had graduated over 1,000 PTIs, Possibly for the Specialist Trade Training of Basic PTIs, the running of Trade Management Training Courses for newly promoted Corporal and Sergeant PTIs and
To overcome the potential problems with the release scheme after the Second World War, 2 PT Schools were re-opened in late 1945/early 1946 at St. Athan and Cosford. For some reason, probably a simple administrative error, the numbers of the schools were reversed so that No 1 School was at Cosford and No 2 School was at St. Athan. In late 1946, it was decided to close No 2 S of PT at St. Athan as soon as the existing courses at St. Athan were completed and all training be transferred to Cosford, including the remainder of the staff.

After a number of years residing at Cosford, in 1954, the School was again moved back to St Athan and then finally, bringing us up to date, the school returned to RAF Cosford in 1977.

Since 1977, there have been many changes at the SofPT with some notable milestones: in 1977, No 65 Basic PTI Course (BPTIC) was the first course to graduate at the newly formed School at Cosford. Their training had started at RAF St Athan and was bridged during the move from South Wales. In November 1977, the course numbers were zeroed and the No 1 BPTIC commenced training. Since that date 88 courses have subsequently graduated including 5 female only courses. The first combined male and female course was No 29 BPTIC that started training in August 1988. As of May 2016, the School had graduated over 1,000 PTIs, had 19 Officers Commanding SofPT and 15 School Warrant Officers.
Tap Dancing Knight Alan of York

Only an eccentric former RAF PTI could become a tap dancing medieval jouster.

During my early school days my only interest was sport, horse riding and tap dancing to the displeasure of my father who never saw me dance, boys in those days did not in his opinion attend dance classes.

Think I was the original Billy Elliot!!

At initial training at Cardington early 1953 after completing training, we managed to put on a show, yours truly dancing up and down the stairs thinking I was Fred Astaire! One of the lads commented. “Keep dreaming”

After Headley Court as a UT.PTI then posted to the School at RAF Cosford in between the obvious, I still managed to keep the tap practice, sometimes to the amusement of course members. My Russian steps (Gopak) gave them a challenge. (A bit like Diversity, gymnastics to music).

After a posting to the Far East in the first instance RAF Changi, then later to Butterworth in Malaya, stations providing some hilarious experiences in show business terms, in between normal duties. At Changi the OC whose wife was an amateur operatic singer insisted that the Theatre Club put on a show. To the annoyance of the Station W.O., a small wooden stage (platform) was assembled which supported a piano and loud microphone, which as you can guess the CO’s wife, took center stage. No one dared move or comment after suffering the sound of cat’s... never ending. The bar was soon full from the exhausted audience.

May be that this contributed to me being sent to Butterworth as the first PTI to set up and establish facilities for our branch. The O.C. Flying Wing wrote music and volunteered anyone who could dance, sing, play an instrument would take part in entertainment i.e. South Pacific.

Rehearsals, due to operational duties, performances soon deteriorated, particularly on the first night in front of a large audience at Penang Island and RN base at Singapore. Especially the guy who sang “off key” there is nothing like a dame. The lads visualized him running along the beach naked. He probably loses sleep thinking about it to this day.

An exciting opportunity came for the formation of a Saddle Club, as a result of giving the horse riding lessons to the Penang Pony Club that I helped to set up with a retired Army Major.

I by this time had made friends with racehorse owners who offer to let the RAF at Butterworth have a number of retired horses free of charge.

This opportunity was made to my CO. resulting in me being called to a meeting with Squadron Leader Podavin, Air Marshal Kyle to discuss details etc. (I think a nudge had been given by General Templar who at the time was the President of the British Horse Society). I nearly had a fit being a junior NCO at the time.
We managed to re-train a couple of horses winning some races at Penang Turf Club, KL and Singapore which provided funding for the Saddle Club.

Squadron Leader Podavin an accomplished rider taught me to use a lance and fall of a horse at speed, vaulting on and off initially on the pommel horse that was historically designed for this purpose.

Perhaps due to transferrable skills including, boy hood dreams and opportunities gained through the Royal Air Force, who also educated me, I was able to develop my tap dancing to a high level of competence, realizing also skills at Arms in various international events medieval jousting.

Being an equity member Alan of York, gave me the opportunity to take an active role in riding events at home and overseas.

Tap dancing has provided me with a third career e.g. teaching at Bedale Leisure Centre, North Yorkshire and TV shows with Chris Evans, Friday Live, Move it event at the XL London (including this year), CBBC programme, Diversity Steal The Show, a dream come true.

The journey has been exiting helped by being in the quarter final with Britain’s Got Talent and Got To Dance.

The Roebuck Memorial Fund

On 1 April 2018 the RAF celebrates its 100th anniversary, as will the RAF School of PT which is now one of only 2 remaining fully functioning RAF schools still in existence since 1 April 1918, the other being the Central Flying School.

To mark the occasion in a befitting manner and led by the PTI Association, it was decided to commission the manufacture of a Roebuck mounted on a granite plinth to be located at the National Memorial Arboretum (NMA). This will be a fitting and lasting tribute to all those personnel who are and have been involved within RAF Physical Education over the past century. Why a Roebuck, because at one time or another, regardless of Q annotation or background, we have all passed through the School of PT and it is the one common figure that represents us all.

This is indeed an ambitious project, costing circa £20000 to complete, broken down as follows; sculptor £10000, stone mason £7000 and NMA costs £3000.

We are well on the way towards our target amount, although we desperately require more donations to complete this project.

Send Donations To: Details for bank transfers as follows:


If you have any queries about transfers contact Dave Percy on 07962 076088

Send Cheques to: R Archbold, TSF(D) S of PT, RAF Cosford  WV7 3EX, West Midlands.
I was playing basketball for the RAF Detachment at Aldershot against a team from 2 Para; the venue was Maida Gym situated at one end of the Queens Avenue. During the second half of the match one of the opposing team collapsed unconscious, we took turns at giving him mouth to mouth resuscitation until the doctor arrived at which time he was pronounced dead, the eventual diagnosis was a massive heart attack. Before starting CPR we had to check his airways and this necessitated the removal of his false teeth.

A few days passed, we were sitting in the crew room having coffee when our cleaner walked in. Joe was a local civilian who lived on his own, his standards of hygiene were very suspect, and often he would come into work unshaven with his clothes in a poor state of cleanliness and repair. The odd item of clothing were often given to Joe, he didn’t seem to mind about a coat being two sizes too big or half a dozen pairs of socks that by the time they reached him as a gift, had already seen a great deal of use.

This particular morning he came in a more dejected state than usual, it appears on this morning in his haste to reach over and turn his alarm clock off he knocked over a glass of water on his bedside table containing his false teeth, these had fallen on to the floor breaking into several pieces. He remonstrated to us moaning about how much a new set would cost him almost coming to the point of tears. Pete Binney one of the instructors suddenly remembered the false teeth from the now long dead basketball player, were still in his tracksuit pocket, he went out to his locker, they were wrapped in a used handkerchief and by this time the dead mans saliva had solidified forming a crust over much of the surface.

“Here you are Joe!!” Pete exclaimed. Joe’s eyes lit up as if it were Christmas.

“Oooo thanks Pete he said “his voice full of emotion, he then popped them straight in his mouth. At the site of this most of us were gagging on the verge of feeling sick, Joe licked his lips running his tong over the second hand teeth making a joyful clicking noise as he gnashed them together.

“Lovely teeth, good fit, he chortled, these will see me out. “He then went about his cleaning duties.

Ron Houghton

From Roy Rigg (17 Jan 2017): Still Living in the Premier Inn at Loundwater after flooding now in the eleventh week. Busy standard bearing. As off the 14 January 2017. Attended three parades in five days. 1x ex Army, 1 ex Royal Marine I joined up with a vet of Malaya Borneo War. The third at Bovington former good friend he was a Sgt PTI for short time then commissioned left the branch and served 20 years at MOD. Air Command High Wycombe (Flt Lt Manning) there was a fly past by helicopter a serving RM Bugler followed by RMs standard. A great send off for a great man RIP. Shortly to carry the standard for 103 year old President of the Royal British Legion and HW Football team. Former Army Mr. Monty Seamore.

Best Wishes To All
Payment should be made in cash cheque to: “Service Funds RAF Cosford” (We are unable to process electronic payments) R Archbold, TSF (D) S of PT, RAF Cosford WV7 3EX, West Midlands.

A special edition centenary Boxed Tie, Lapel Pin and Key Fob will be shortly available expected cost £25
In case you didn’t already know this little tidbit of trivia, it might make you chuckle when you read it.

When Astronaut Neil Armstrong first walked on the Moon, he not only gave his famous “one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind” statement but followed it by several remarks, usual communication traffic between him, the other astronauts and mission control. Just before he re-entered the lander, however, he made this remark. “Good luck Mr. Gorsky”

Many people at NASA thought it was a casual remark concerning some rival Soviet Cosmonaut. However, upon checking, there was no Gorsky in either the Russian or American space programs. Over the years many people questioned Armstrong as to what the “Good luck Mr. Gorsky” statement meant, but Armstrong always just smiled.

On July 5th, 1995 in Tampa Bay Florida, while answering questions following a speech, a reporter brought up the 26 year old question to Neil Armstrong. This time he finally responded. Mr. Gorsky had finally died and so Neil Armstrong felt he could answer the question.

When I was a kid, he was playing baseball with a friend in the backyard. His friend hit a flying ball, which landed in front of his neighbor’s bedroom window. His neighbors were Mr. & Mrs. Gorsky. As he leaned down to pick the ball up young Armstrong heard Mrs. Gorsky shouting at Mr. Gorsky. “Sex! You want sex? You’ll get sex when the kid next door walks on the moon”.

True Story

RAF PTI ASSOCIATION REPS

Scotland
Wales
London & SE
North West
North East
West Midlands
East Midlands
South West
East Anglia
Overseas

George Whitecross
Ron Houghton
Ian Swindale
John Gallagher
John Doran
John Weedon
Chris Williams
Graham Hughes
Terry Hagan
Sue Zwart-Woodward

George.Whitecross@moray.gov.uk
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jpdrn@hotmail.com
jweedonsnr@aol.com
barneysmob@aol.com
hughes56@sky.com
Terence.hagan@talktalk.net
suezw@hotmail.com
RE: RAF PTI ASSOCIATION/AGM/DINNER/GOLF
7th - 8th April 2017

I include this information as a reminder for those attending the above.

GOLF
Golf is booked Fri 7th April 2017 at The Shropshire Golf Centre. Tea/coffee + bacon butties will be available on arrival and first tee off times will be approximately 11.00 with subsequent times and partners announced on the day. There will be two competitions:

Max handicap for the Association trophy - 18. NB anyone can play for the Association Bowl even with a higher handicap, but can only claim 18 shots and must declare this prior to the comp

“Diggers and Hackers” sponsored by Chris Beadel for all higher handicaps

If you have any queries please contact Dave Percy heather.percy@btopenworld.com

The cost of the golf will be £25 with a non refundable deposit of £10 to book your place. Please complete the attached booking form and return with a cheque made out to Service Funds RAF Cosford.

TOUR OF THE SCHOOL OF PT
There will be an opportunity to visit the School of PT on Fri 7th April at 14.30.

ACCOMMODATION
We have moved to the Holiday Inn, Telford so that we can accommodate greater numbers. We will miss the Ramada Telford which has provided such friendly and good service since we moved off base a few years back.

The Holiday Inn hotel is only five minutes drive from the M54 motorway. Telford Central station, for trains to London Euston and Birmingham, is also five minutes away. You can catch an international flight from Birmingham Airport (BHX), 45 minutes away by car.

The hotel is 15 minutes by car from Telford's iconic, 18th-century Iron Bridge. Hotel guests also have free access to the Wonderland woodland, in the park directly behind the hotel.

You can work out in the gym or you can relax beside the fire, or outside in the garden in summer.

The Olive Tree restaurant is open for breakfast and serves food throughout the day and evening. Room service is available 24/7

The cost of the accommodation (including full English Breakfast) is:-

Bed and Breakfast £69 single occupancy per night /Bed and Breakfast £79 double/twin occupancy per night.

Apologies for the increase, it comes with a move to a bigger hotel, however there are more “twin rooms” here compared with The Ramada, so an opportunity to share with someone and halve your accommodation costs.

Members are requested to settle their bill before leaving the hotel on Sunday 9th April, so do not include this in your payment.

PAYMENT
NB send cheques for dinner, golf etc direct to the treasurer Sgt Ronan Archbold:-

Training Support and Design Flight / School of Physical Education / Royal Air Force Cosford / West Midlands / WV7

NB affiliated members will take precedence over non-affiliated so if you have not taken out membership it would be in your interest to do so. Contact me on 07737192103 if you need a membership form, alternatively you can email me at dmbsquash@hotmail.com