

# 317 NEWS LETTER

WE ARE SO BACK

TEAMWORK



LEADERSHIP



ADVENTURE



INSPIRING YOUNG PEOPLE  
TO SOAR HIGH

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# TRAINING AT THE HEART OF 317

## FOREWORD

As the Squadron Training Officer, I thought it would be a great opportunity to give you an insight into the machine that is 317 Failsworth Squadron. I may be biased, but there are few places that put training so firmly at the centre of their mission as we do. Everything revolves around our young people; if what we are doing doesn't benefit the cadet, then we have to ask ourselves, why are we doing it at all?

## OUR MISSION

At 317, our training vision is clear:

- Provide the best cadet experience in Greater Manchester
- Ensure every cadet completes all Blue badges during their time with us
- Continuously develop our staff team to deliver a dynamic, high-quality programme
- Empower our senior cadets to manage and deliver elements of the Blue training package

## PLANNING FOR SUCCESS

Each year begins with a full staff training conference where we set out our vision and plan the year ahead. This includes building a comprehensive training programme and scheduling activities across the calendar. We carefully balance delivering high-impact opportunities for cadets with maintaining a manageable workload for staff. This ensures that every cadet, from their first night on the squadron to those progressing towards becoming staff themselves is challenged, supported, and developed.

This approach creates a continuous pipeline of talent. In fact, 8 out of our 10 staff members were once cadets at 317, something we are incredibly proud of.



### **Additional Opportunities**

Our “Sunday Parades” provide valuable flexibility throughout the year. These sessions allow cadets to catch up on missed training, complete qualifications, sit exams, or take part in short courses. They also offer a more relaxed, social environment compared to our regular parade nights, helping to strengthen the sense of community within the squadron. We also ensure our staff remain connected to the wider RAFAC. Attendance at the Wing Conference allows us to align our training approach with the broader vision, while still maintaining the high standards we set at squadron level.

### **Sporting Success and Milestones**

Under the leadership of our Sports Officer, CI Stone, we have engaged in a number of external sporting events. A particular highlight was our Junior team winning the Wing 5-a-side competition and progressing to the regional level, a fantastic achievement.

We also celebrated the passing out parade of Intake 02/25. These parades, introduced a number of years ago, mark the completion of initial training and showcase the remarkable development cadets achieve in just six months.

With family and friends in attendance, and an inspiring address from our reviewing officer, Lt Col Glyn Potts MBE (Army Cadet Force), the event was a proud moment for all involved.

### **Delivering Excellence in Training**

Behind the scenes, the level of training delivered at 317 is significant. Our team includes seven Method of Instruction (MOI) qualified instructors, two qualified teachers, and a strong system of continuous development and quality assurance.

This ensures that both staff and cadet NCOs are actively involved in delivering our monthly training programme, maintaining consistently high standards across all activities.

Beyond the squadron, our staff continue to contribute at sector and wing level. This year, I have supported the development of the Wing Training Officers’ Course and recently worked on creating a new JNCO course, with nine cadets trialling it in April.

### **Resilience and Commitment**

Managing such a comprehensive training programme is no small task, at times, it can feel like a second job. Even when faced with unexpected challenges, such as a temporary building closure, we remain undeterred. By relocating to an alternative venue, we have ensured continuity, proving that while the surroundings may change, the quality of our training does not.

None of this would be possible without the dedication of our staff and cadet NCOs. Their commitment, professionalism, and passion are what drive 317 Failsworth Squadron forward and make everything we do possible.





# 5-A-SIDE



## A 5 STAR SHOWING



317 Squadron submitted two teams, Under-16 and Under-14, to the Wing competition held at the Soccer Factory in Rochdale. Following two focused training sessions, our squads competed in round-robin tournaments against other units from across the Wing.



## VICTORY IN THE CAGE



### The Highlights

**Under 16s** Despite being limited to just four players due to illness, the team fought through the adversity to secure a respectable 3rd-place finish.

**Under 14s** Our U14 team reigned supreme, advancing directly to the finals and triumphing to bring back their third consecutive gold medal in as many years.

The attacking effort was led by our Goulden twins and Cdt madden who were moving like prime MSN (Messi, Suarez, Neymar) out there. And the defensive effort was led by Cdt Richards, who delivered some great performances in net.

## TACTICAL EXCELLENCE

The day's success was heavily influenced by the management of CI Stone and CI Gill. By carefully monitoring workloads and making key tactical substitutions, they ensured the teams performed at their highest levels throughout every round.

The final result was a major haul for 317 Squadron, returning with three medals and two trophies. This included Wing Bronze, Wing Gold, and the prestigious Regional Gold. While the Wing did not win overall, our 317 teams proved to be the standard-bearers for the competition.



# BERLIN & POLAND



## A JOURNEY THROUGH HISTORY WITH 1330 SQN

**The Cold War in Berlin** The expedition began at the Stasi Prison, where cadets explored the corridors and interrogation rooms used to hold political prisoners. It was a chilling look at the psychological tactics of the GDR era and a reminder of the resilience of those held within its walls.

**Memorials and Monuments In Berlin** The group visited the Brandenburg Gate—a symbol of peace and unity—before walking through the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe. These sites provided a tangible sense of the scale of the lives and families affected by the conflict.

**The Shadows of Auschwitz** Entering Auschwitz I under the infamous "Arbeit Macht Frei" sign was a solemn experience that changed our perspective on history. Seeing the piles of suitcases, glasses, and personal items brought the individual human cost of the Holocaust into sharp focus.



**The Scale of Birkenau** At Auschwitz II-Birkenau, the cadets followed the railway tracks into the camp, witnessing the vastness of the site. The experience was made even more emotional by the guide's final reflection: "Imagine if this was your family."

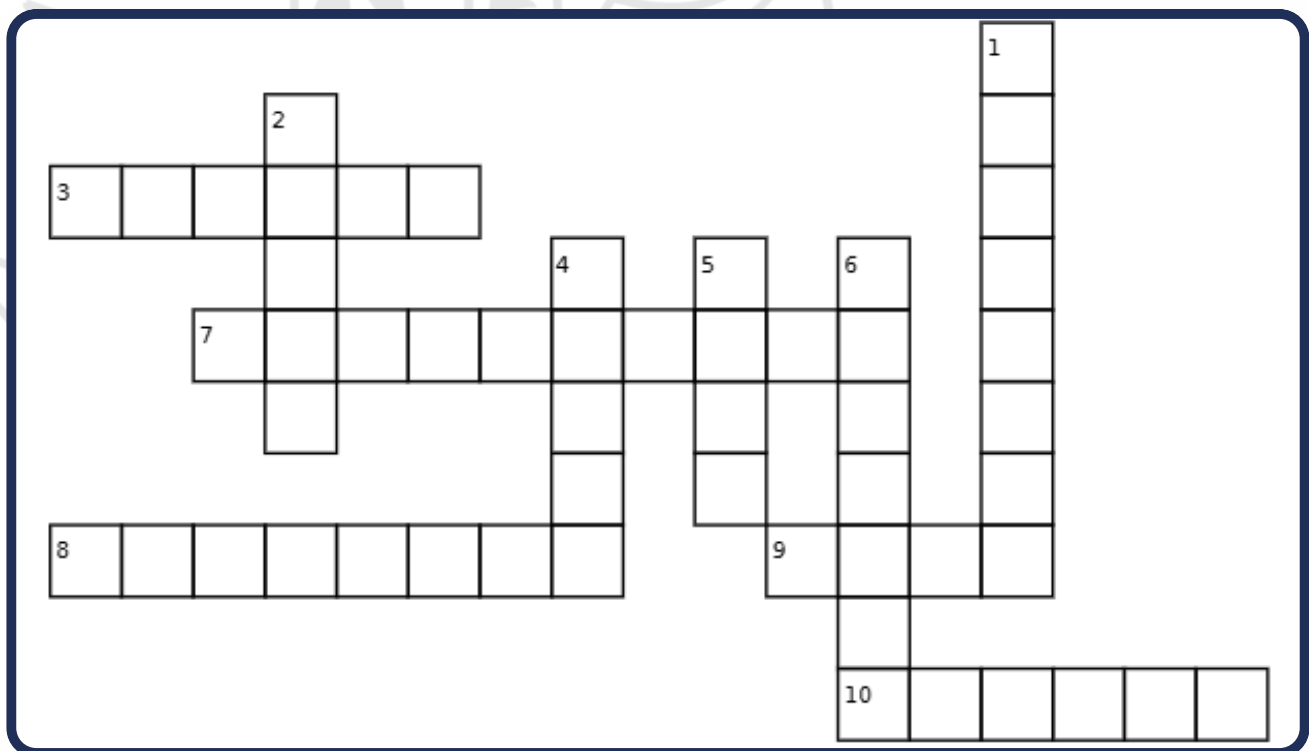
**Subterranean Majesty** The journey concluded deep underground at the Wieliczka Salt Mines. After descending 500 steps, the group explored enormous cathedrals carved entirely from salt—with a few cadets even performing a "taste test" on the walls to confirm their authenticity!

# EARN FLIGHT POINTS!

**Earn your flight some points by completing this issue's crossword!**

We have been pushing for our cadets to up their knowledge game recently, it's vitally important that they know the facts about the organisation and the people within it!

To submit an entry, scan the QR code and type in the answers. Correct replies will earn flight points!



## Down

1. Rank denoted by 3 chevrons **(8)**
2. Digital System used by the Air Cadets **(5)**
4. RAF Motto Language **(5)**
5. The electrical check reeking havoc on the RAFAC **(4)**
6. U in the phonetic alphabet **(7)**

## Across

3. Weekly gathering of cadets is called a \_\_\_\_ night **(6)**
7. Another name for a LEFT RIGHT pause **(10)**
8. The Wing Commander **(7)**
9. Left side of an aircraft **(4)**
10. Highest Cadet Classification **(6)**



# LEADERSHIP COMPETITION



## Aviation & Skill at Arms

The weekend offered more than just leadership challenges. Four lucky cadets kicked off the event at RAF Woodvale, where they took to the skies in a Viking T1 for a glider flight over the Blackpool and Southport coastline.

The momentum continued into Saturday evening as 12 cadets successfully achieved their L98-A2 Weapons Handling Test. This achievement was kindly facilitated by the Merseyside Wing Shooting Team, further enhancing the squadron's technical skills and readiness for future range days.



## SECTOR 4 COMPETITION: ALT CAR TRAINING CAMP

Over 90 Cadets and CFAVs from across Sector 4 descended upon Altcar Training Camp to participate in the highly anticipated Annual Leadership Competition. The event was designed to be a rigorous test of character, pushing participants both mentally and physically to demonstrate their capabilities under intense pressure.

Throughout the demanding weekend, leadership abilities were scrutinized across a variety of specialist stands. Cadets were challenged with high-stakes First Aid scenarios, intricate STEM projects, and technical tests in coding and encryption. Every representative did their unit proud, showing immense dedication to their tasks.

After a hard-fought weekend of assessment, 284 (Cheadle & Gatley) Squadron emerged as the overall winners! Well done to them, we hope to put up a fight for 1<sup>st</sup> next year!

# RAFAC SHENANIGANS

Moving into Summer Dress this year, a few of our cadets had an incredible opportunity to get a little more insight into what the Royal Air Force Air Cadets could provide for them on their Cadet Journey.

Our cadets were definitely busy all day. There was plenty of excitement on the ground beforehand, though one cadet learned the hard way that eating chocolate right before a flight isn't the best idea—let's just say the aerobatics and chocolate combination didn't sit too well!

Despite this, the good weather has really been on our side lately, with clear skies and plenty of sunshine making training sessions and outdoor activities far more enjoyable than usual. It's safe to say morale has been lifted all round!

## WORK LIFE BALANCE

On a more studious note, the commitment to education was also impressive to see. During the break, one cadet was spotted revising hard for their GCSEs, making good use of the time to stay on top of their studies. A great example of balancing training and academics!



# AIR EXPERIENCE FLYING



Wednesday 22 Apr



## SALUTING OUR STAFF

Greater Manchester Wing Presentation Evenings are currently underway, celebrating the exceptional contributions of staff from across the wing. At the first event, 317 Squadron was well-represented by CI Catterall, FS Gill, and Fg Off Barker, all of whom had been nominated for prestigious awards.

The evening highlight saw both CI Catterall and FS Gill awarded an OC Wing's Commendation. These awards recognize the countless hours of dedication and service they have provided not just to the Squadron and Sector, but to the Wing and the wider cadet families. Each commendation was also accompanied by a Wing Coin.

### What does this represent?

- **Dedication:** Countless hours of voluntary service.
- **Impact:** Supporting the Squadron, Sector, and Wing levels.
- **Excellence:** Setting a standard for the wider cadet community.
- **Legacy:** Helping to shape the future of 317 Squadron.

# AWARDS & HONOURS

## WING PRESENTATION EVENING

### STAFF RECOGNITION

"The OC Wing's Commendation is a testament to the tireless work behind the scenes."

"Twelve years of service represents a massive commitment to the development of our young people."

"Well done to our three staff members recognized this time around—as for the rest of us, I'm sure we'll get a certificate one day!"

