

# THE AIR & SPACE POWER ASSOCIATION

SHAPING THE FUTURE OF AIR AND SPACE POWER

THE BULLETIN | AUTUMN 2023



## CHAIR'S LETTER

**It's been a busy year so far for the Association and I am delighted to be able to welcome all our new Individual and Corporate members.**

A warm welcome too for our new Patron, the Chief of the Air Staff (CAS) Sir Rich Knighton, who stepped into post in June and set out his objectives for the UK's air and space force at a critical juncture for Europe's security.

Sir Rich took to the stage at this year's Global Air & Space Chiefs' Conference – his first major address to his counterparts from around the world - where he highlighted the importance of air – and space - power and working together. Over 60 chiefs attended and as attested by the Chief and all those attending there was a palpable feeling in the auditorium and over the two days of a unity of purpose and resolve to deter any aggressors to NATO's borders and further afield. In this issue, the Royal Aeronautical Society's Tim Robinson has put together a summary piece of the key topics addressed during the conference.

Following on the heels of the GASCC and RIAT the Ministry of Defence issued its **Defence Command Paper Refresh** in July incorporating lessons learned from the war in Ukraine and plans to deliver a credible warfighting force. Inside this issue Group Captain Paul Sanger-Davies has penned an article on what this means for the RAF and airpower with a focus on the RAF's Air Operating Concept.

In other news, the ASPA delivered its first conference for NATO in London in September. The Joint Capability Group



Unmanned Aircraft Systems meeting saw over 150 representatives from NATO and industry join forces at the Victory Services Club over four days to discuss a range of operational and technology/capability-related issues to inform future NATO programmes. The event had special significance given the continued operational UAS focus resulting from the war in Ukraine.

Looking ahead, we hope to see some of you attend **Defence Space 2023** on 12 December. I am delighted that our partnership with the UK MOD and UK Space Command is going from strength to strength after six years. I am greatly looking forward to delivering the one-day event in December with additional partners Dstl and the Freeman Air & Space Institute. The full two-day conference will be held in September 2024. The conference series, now an annual fixture, provides a platform for Space Command and UK Defence to share operational planning and delivery milestones while also facilitating dialogue with the space sector.

Developing further the ASPA's Space focus, our funded Masterclasses with the National Space Academy are now up and running (see page 8). We encourage members to take a look and if you would like to come onboard or know a local school which might wish to take advantage of the programme then please do get in touch and we can connect you with the team delivering the classes.

Finally, we look forward to seeing many of you at our Industry Dinner in November during which we will award our annual trophy. And in case many of you are unaware of our provenance, our Hon Secretary Andrew Brookes has written a short piece about our heritage and history of the ASPA award in our 76th year!

Lastly, I would like to extend my warmest wishes to you the members and thank you for your continued support.

**Yours  
Roberto**

**Air Commodore (Ret'd) Mark Roberts  
Chair of The Air & Space Power Association**



## PRESIDENT'S VIEWPOINT

**This year's Global Air & Space Chiefs' Conference was our most significant event since the last Bulletin; this conference goes from strength to strength, and is a superb platform for the Royal Air Force's standing and reputation. I won't expand too much on the event as Tim's excellent report in this Bulletin says it far better than I ever could - thank you Tim.**

But, as ever, context is everything, and the situation in Ukraine brings the airpower debate into stark relief. It is somewhat ironic that a conflict, where air has been largely muted, is indisputable proof of the importance of the air and space domain in warfare today.

Also, it's easy to forget the significant routine efforts made in continuing to protect NATO's borders and allies - especially at the heightened state of alert today. It is also worth



Since 2014 the RAF has continued to combat ISIL in Iraq and Syria together with the British Army and RN UK Carrier Strike Group as part of the international coalition. RAF Typhoons conduct surveillance with occasional air strikes as part of Operation Shader. Image: RAF/Crown Copyright

acknowledging that Op SHADER (the UK's contribution to air operations over Syria and Iraq) is now in its Tenth year. What was once being "sold" to me as a six-month operation has shifted from being a humanitarian mission to an all out combat support mission, to one today that has evolved into a counter insurgency. It also has strategic overtones when you factor in the Russian influence and presence in Syria.

Op SHADER in all its past and present guises demonstrates how air and space power are both ready and capable of adapting in contact. It's what makes these domains so powerful and vital but also raises the challenge of being ready for anything and able to switch missions and intensity in the blink of an eye.

Technology and innovation have always been vital when considering evolving threats and the need to stay ahead of adversaries, but it is the quality of the people and the training they receive that truly make air and space power

work. It may be somewhat of a soundbyte but it truly is the flexibility, adaptability, resilience and confidence of aviators that makes air power so effective and so often the military power of choice, no matter what the scenario or challenge.

And so, perhaps more than ever, the greatest challenge for air and space forces (and the organisations that support them) face is the recruitment and retention of talented and motivated individuals who not only have the skills to excel in these environments, but also the character to endure the strains and efforts required to sustain them over a long period of time under the highest level of pressure and stress. So, as important as technology remains in the rarefied domain of air and space, it is the human element that remains the most precious and vital resource.

**Air Marshal (Ret'd) Greg Bagwell**  
**ASPA President**

## DEFENCE SPACE 2023 AND 2024

**We are now gearing up for Defence Space – now an annual event - and we look forward to releasing details for the agenda and speakers very soon.**

The one-day conference on 12 December will see us partnered with Dstl and Freeman Air & Space Institute to deliver the event while the two-day conference will be held 24-25 September 2024. Other key Defence partners include UK Strategic Command, Defence Equipment & Support (DE&S) and Security, Policy and Operations (SPO). The aim is to ensure that Defence Space complements other defence-related events such as DSEI and UK Space Conference and that we maximise the synergies with these events for all stakeholders.

In six years, the conference has become the primary forum for the underpinning of cross-government collaboration and multinational space partnerships with allies as well as the launch-pad for intergovernmental and MoD partnerships with industry and the space technology sector.

Importantly, the pace of technological change in the space sector and geopolitical events such as the war in Ukraine, which highlighted the importance of Space as a game-changer for the delivery of open-source imagery and information services for homeland defence, prompted a review of the [Defence Space Strategy](#) and recognition of the need to regularly assess new capabilities. The DSC partnership and scheduling of an annual event is designed to accommodate this need.

Outputs from the Conference are intended to help steer discussions and guide strategies for new technologies and capabilities to help transform UK operations in Space and develop the skills needed in the UK.

As Air Vice-Marshal Paul Godfrey, Commander, UK Space Command, said:

"The Defence Space Conference series presents a unique opportunity to bring together all the critical stakeholders across the space community to share ideas and new initiatives to protect and defend the UK and harness the technology pipeline we need to deliver leading capabilities and generate the necessary skills to conduct space operations."

For more details, please go to: <https://airspacepower.com/defence-space-2023/>

# THE RAF'S AIR OPERATING CONCEPT

BY GROUP CAPTAIN PAUL SANGER-DAVIES  
DIRECTOR DEFENCE STUDIES (RAF)



RAF Typhoons operating from roads in Northern Europe (Photo: RAF/Crown Copyright)

## The RAF Air Operating Concept - Flying, Fighting and Winning using Agility, Integration, Resilience and Decision Superiority

The threats which we face, to the UK, our people, interests, allies and partners are acute. These include the potential threat to NATO's stability and security from Russia, and the threat to the international order posed by an increasingly assertive China. And these threats are especially evident in the Air, Space and Cyber domains.

Air Power gives our Government the choice to act globally, rapidly and decisively. It protects our airspace and our access to capabilities in the ultimate high ground of space. And our Air Power capabilities allow us to be quick to the fight, to defend our interests and to defeat our enemies. Air Power gives us the deep-strike capabilities to change the strategic calculus of our adversaries. And it opens up the battlespace to create opportunities in space and time. Our Air Power capabilities provide the freedom of action for our forces to act effectively across all operational domains. And Air Power is a leading element and crucial enabler for Integrated Action, providing the intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance and the command and control connectivity for our forces to succeed.

We must be ready to **deter, deny, defend** against and **defeat** those who challenge us.

This includes retaining or regaining control of the air wherever and whenever necessary. It means presenting adversaries with multiple operational challenges which unravel their ability to respond coherently and effectively. And it requires us to demonstrate credible deterrence. We will focus first on improving conventional

deterrence and our core warfighting capacity.

The Air Operating Concept is the RAF's Vision for how we will fly and fight and succeed on operations as a response to the changed threat. And importantly, how we will achieve integrated effects using the manoeuvrist approach, working seamlessly with the other domains of Maritime, Land, Space and Cyberspace, including the Electro-Magnetic Spectrum. The Air Operating Concept is based on Decision Superiority, Agility, Integration and Resilience. Its foundation rests on empowering our people through mission command and engendering our warfighting mindset.

**Decision Superiority** means being able to make better and quicker decisions than our adversaries, and the operational advantage that this gives us.

**Agility** involves flying and fighting from a variety of adaptable locations.

**Integration** means working seamlessly with other domains, allies and partners.

**Resilience** means being able to endure protracted conflict and flying, fighting and

winning. It relies as much on personal resilience as on stockpiles, supply-chains and support from industrial partners.

The RAF approach to operating and warfighting will focus on **Agile Combat Employment (ACE)** and **Dynamic Force Employment (DFE)**. These will enhance our survivability and resilience whilst changing the dynamics of the strategic environment by delivering persistent global presence using pulsed air activities.

**ACE** is the flexible and scalable dispersal of capabilities to agile and adaptable bases. It can be proactive or reactive, and enhances survivability, resilience and flexibility by harnessing the offensive advantages and defensive strengths of agility. To promote rapid deployment and re-deployment of air capabilities, ACE will involve minimal footprints and only essential support. ACE transcends the air domain and may be applied across the integrated or combined force.

**DFE** is the episodic and flexible use of FEs and their effects to shape the strategic environment. It exploits inherent



Exercise Agile Pirate, demonstrating ACE at MoD Boscombe Down (Photo: RAF/Crown Copyright)

***“As our operating bases will be within range of adversary precision weapons, denying them targeting opportunities will require a combination of traditional and novel techniques, and a significant change in organisation and mindset to make these effective.”***

**GROUP CAPTAIN PAUL SANGER-DAVIES**

unpredictability to generate uncertainty for adversaries. DFE will use the flexibility of air power to achieve persistent yet non-permanent engagement at range, with global reach, using pulsed activity to concentrate effort and reduce the enemy's ability to target our FEs.

Using ACE and DFE, we must be able to continue operating effectively at scale, pace and range. We will use speed, precision and lethality to win in armed conflict. And we must be capable of conducting air operations concurrently across the UK, and globally, as part of integrated NATO action within the Euro-Atlantic region, in the High North, the Middle East or the Indo-Pacific with our partners and allies.

The RAF will be operating alongside other air forces which means we must integrate our models of ACE and DFE with those air forces we will be operating with. ACE and DFE are already being exercised and refined using opportunities such as the 'Agile

Pirate' series of exercises. This will continue with increasingly ambitious dispersals and deployments which will provide confidence in our ability to deter, deny, defend and defeat, and develop our warfighter mindset. Experience from Scandinavian air forces, which have practised and refined ACE over many decades, suggests that success is 70% mindset and 30% equipment, and being 'comfortable being uncomfortable'.

The RAF will conduct a comprehensive assessment of the operating locations it can use within the UK, involving a range of traditional and novel locations. It will also need to assess the degree of protection, concealment and dispersal achievable within MOBs which may reduce the requirement to disperse elsewhere. For the key capabilities that cannot be moved, appropriate protection and redundancy is required.

**Dispersal, Deception, Protection, Camouflage and Concealment** will be utilised in innovative ways across operational

domains, augmented by information operations, to maintain our resilience and preserve warfighting capability. Reversionary planning, runway repair and facility repair will be essential to sustaining post-attack operations, especially where our capabilities rely upon immovable headquarters and support facilities.

The transparency of the future battlespace and the rapid targeting cycles used by our adversaries provide them with the ability to detect and target mobile systems, including aircraft on the ground and their support facilities. As our operating bases will be within range of adversary precision weapons, denying them targeting opportunities will require a combination of traditional and novel techniques, and a significant change in organisation and mindset to make these effective.

These changes require an evolution of our culture and mindset. They will include evolving our enabling and supporting concepts including: Integrated Air and Missile Defence; Cyber and Electromagnetic activity; resilient logistics and support; and implementing a whole force People Strategy.

It is up to us all to make the ambition of our Air Operating Concept a reality. And we will.



RAF front-line aircraft will operate increasingly from deployed locations (Photo: RAF/Crown Copyright)

# NEW CHIEF OF THE AIR STAFF MAKES HIS MARK- "WE'RE READY TO FLY AND FIGHT"



Over 60 chiefs attended this year's GASC.

## TIM ROBINSON reports on the highlights from this year's Global Air & Space Chiefs' Conference (GASCC), held in London in July.

The annual GASCC, hosted by the Royal Air Force and organised by The Air & Space Power Association has now evolved into a must-attend annual international forum for air and space power professionals, defence industry, academia and the media. It saw two days of high-level presentations covering the Indo-Pacific, NATO's eastern flank and the high north, operating sustainability, space and emerging technology – and with military and civil speakers from around the globe including the chiefs of the Royal Australian Air Force and Swedish Air Force, Commanders of US European and Pacific Air Forces.



Major General Jonas Wikman Commander, Swedish Air Force addressed the audience as new NATO member.

This year it was especially significant – for three reasons. First, it is now over a year since the Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, which has left shattered assumptions about peer-on-peer conflict of WW1 levels of destruction only three hours' flight from London.

Second is that December 2022 saw the UK, Italy and Japan announced a major new strategic partnership to develop a next generation future fighter - the Global Air Combat Programme (GCAP) – a defence project that literally spans the globe and positions Britain as one of the lead nations at the very forefront of combat air development.

Finally – this year's Conference also saw one of the first high-profile public engagements by the new head of the RAF, Air Chief Marshal Sir Richard Knighton – with therefore much

anticipation about how his command style and priorities would differ from his predecessor.

## MINISTER PAYS TRIBUTE TO 'ABSOLUTE NINJA' SPYPLANE CREWS



The Rt Hon James Heapey MP Minister for Armed Forces.

Delivering an opening address in his usual ebullient manner, was UK Minister of State for Armed Forces, James Heapey MP, who praised the entire personnel of the RAF – particularly the 'absolute ninjas' of Rivet Joint spyplane crews providing vital work in monitoring events in Eastern Europe at the moment and the 'devious' air warfare planners at RAF Waddington. Warming to his theme, he said "with my apologies to other chiefs in the room, but the Royal Air Force is, without doubt, the most cunning, most professional air force in the room".

Heapey also threw out a challenge to industry at the conference, asking whether the aircraft 'on sale' at the Royal International Air Tattoo were 'quantum ready' for the next revolution in digital technology. While it could be debated whether any chiefs present would be whipping out the credit card to take home fighters from RIAT just that weekend, his point was that the introduction of quantum computer technology for faster processing, unbreakable communications, all-seeing sensors and jam-resistant precision navigation could be as big as leap in warfare as a "tank versus cavalry, machine guns versus humans' moment". Weapon systems on the drawing board will need to be ready to take advantage of this.

This year's GASCC also saw the debut of the new RAF Chief of the Air Staff Sir Richard

Knighton – the first non-aircrew officer to be promoted to the role – and it was clear that the audience of fellow air force peers would be scrutinising him not only for that aspect, but also for his vision for the RAF in the post-Wigston era.



ACM Sir Rich Knighton made his first address to his global peers.

In the end, he delivered a relaxed, professional and highly engaging speech, laced with some humour (and perhaps the first example of an RAF chief using an internet 'meme' involving a cat video) and a firm message to any nations thinking of threatening the UK – you will have to get past the dedicated men and women of the RAF first.

ACM Sir Rich Knighton said: "Using the doctrine of the four Cs around deterrence, we're going to need to understand what we need to communicate, so that our adversaries comprehend that we have credible capability – and that we're ready to fly and fight and that they will lose."

## RAF TO TAKE TO THE HIGHWAYS

Potentially most significant news, doctrine-wise, from the conference came from RAF Air & Space Commander Air Marshal Harvey Smyth who said that the RAF would be training Typhoon and F-35 pilots in highway operations in both Finland and the UK – a significant step up in realising the new Agile Combat Employment (ACE) vision of making an air force as dispersed, lethal and survivable as possible in the face of rapidly emerging threats and lessons from Ukraine. (See article on the Air Operating Concept on page 3).



RAF Typhoons practise road takeoff and landing as part of ACE concept.

As might be expected, air and space power lessons from the ongoing war in Ukraine were never far away from many of the presentations – either in the use of Starlink satellite communications, weaponised drones or the stalemate in the skies. For example, Gen James B Hecker, Commander USAFE said “the big thing I notice is that no-one’s able to get air superiority. Because no-one can get air superiority you end up with a fight that we see today – which is almost like WW1.”

Though Gen Hecker made these comments prior to the recent Ukrainian offensive – arguably some would link the slow progress in this attack to it being conducted without what NATO armies would take for granted – overwhelming airpower to crack open ground defences in their path.

While the audience were only just digesting the Wagner revolt/coup of the previous month, Prof Justin Bronk of RUSI gave a blunt warning that despite the initial poor showing of Russian air power in Ukraine and the seeming fragility of Putin’s position, Moscow would be back as a medium-term threat and the West had only a few years to prepare for another, tougher fight. “None of this is going away”. He urged European NATO nations to beef up SEAD/DEAD capabilities to defeat the Russian’s extensive SAM umbrella – if a stretched US has to intervene in Asia-Pacific in 2026-2028.

## SAVING EVERY DROP OF FUEL TO FIGHT AT DISTANCE

Another thought-provoking presentation came from the Roberto Guerrero, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Operational Energy, USAF – who outlined his service’s obsession with finding new ways to save fuel. This is not being driven by any green agenda to win points with Greenpeace, but intensive study of what many believe could be the next big global flashpoint – the Indo-Pacific. The extreme distances of the Pacific, coupled with China’s A2/AD (anti-access) strategy is pushing US forces further away from where they might be needed – and making every drop of fuel count. The USAF is thus fast-tracking incremental improvements and tweaks such as aerodynamic fuselage strakes on C-17s and vertical windshield wipers on its KC-135 tankers to cut fuel burn. Though individually these small tweaks may seem minor, taken together (and with the USAF’s huge fleets) they are contributing to the *raison-d’être* of any air force – reach and the ability to influence events at range.

Space too was a major theme at the conference, including presentations from General B Chance Saltzman, Chief of Space Operations, US Space Force and head of UK Space Command, Air Vice-Marshal Paul Godfrey. The increasing number of players (both state and non-state), lower launch costs

is threatening this domain, with new malign challenges from coming ever increasingly important as military, commercial and civil society comes to rely on this shared common environment. As with terrestrial air forces, using ACE, the USSF is seeking to increase its operational resilience in space, said Gen Saltzman – denying any enemy the temptation to carry out an orbital surprise attack.



General B Chance Saltzman Chief of Space Operations, United States Space Force speaks about operational resilience in space.

## SUMMARY

**In short, this year’s GASCC was a highly significant conference – taking place as the world enters a ‘dangerous decade’ of unexpected events, rising tensions and staggering technological change that is constantly shifting. It was also important in that the past year or so has seen the deepening and widening of ‘free world’ global partnerships to check aggression – either by Finland and Sweden joining NATO, or Japan’s involvement in GCAP. Air and space forces will need to be ready and rise to the challenge as it is likely they will be first choice by decision-makers to deter, respond and react to this new world we find ourselves in. As one speaker noted: “Control of the air, and, of every increasing importance, control of space, really does matter”.**

**Tim Robinson**  
Editor in Chief, AEROSPACE magazine

**The Global Air & Space Chiefs’ Conference 2023 can be watched in full [here](#).**

# SAVE THE DATE FOR GASCC 2024 17-18 JULY 2024

[www.airspacepower.com](http://www.airspacepower.com)



The RAF Protector RG Mk1 (Photo: RAF)

# NATO'S LONDON MEETING FOR UNCREWED AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS



**In September, the ASPA supported the NATO Joint Capability Group for Unmanned Aircraft Systems (JCGUAS) by helping to deliver their first plenary session with industry partners integrated into the sessions.**

The NATO Joint Capability Group for Unmanned Aircraft Systems (JCGUAS) held their Autumn meeting, hosted by the Royal Air Force, in London last week. This was the first JCGUAS plenary session where industry partners were integrated within the main plenary discussions. This was also the first meeting where NATO Partner, the Republic of Korea attended in person, reflecting broader global interest. At the meeting the JCGUAS finalised the world's first 'Sense & Avoid' standard for remotely piloted air vehicles.

The conference was attended by over 150 delegates representing air, land, maritime, procurement, technology, and operational experts within and beyond the NATO alliance.

The JCGUAS seeks to enhance NATO UAS coherence, interoperability, and capability collaboration and reports to National Armament Directors and the NATO Military

Committee. With a regular attendance of over 100 personnel, the JCGUAS' focus is standardisation of Uncrewed Aircraft Systems within the alliance, as well as incorporating new and emerging technologies, including autonomy and artificial intelligence, providing exciting opportunities for the RAF and the alliance.

Wing Commander Richard Long, Head of Protector RG Mk1 International Strategy for the RAF said, "I'm delighted to be hosting the JCGUAS meeting here in London. It is important for the RAF and NATO to have forums such as this to discuss the current and future role of uncrewed aircraft systems and agree standards for their use across NATO."

Wing Commander Long also heads the MQ-9B International Cooperative Programme, which is a community of nations that have procured, are in the process of procuring or are actively considering procurement of the MQ-9B (called Protector in the UK).

Mr. Ross McKenzie, NATO International Staff-UAS Officer and part of the JCGUAS Leadership said, "Our Autumn meeting in London delivered an important NATO-wide standard on Sense and Avoid as well as providing a forum in which industry, government, academia, and

military were brought together to enhance development of related standards. Augmenting established NATO Uncrewed Aircraft Systems Airworthiness Standards, with the new Sense and Avoid standard, facilitates allied adoption of Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems, assisting allies' ability to prove that these aircraft are airworthy, safe, reliable, and predictable."

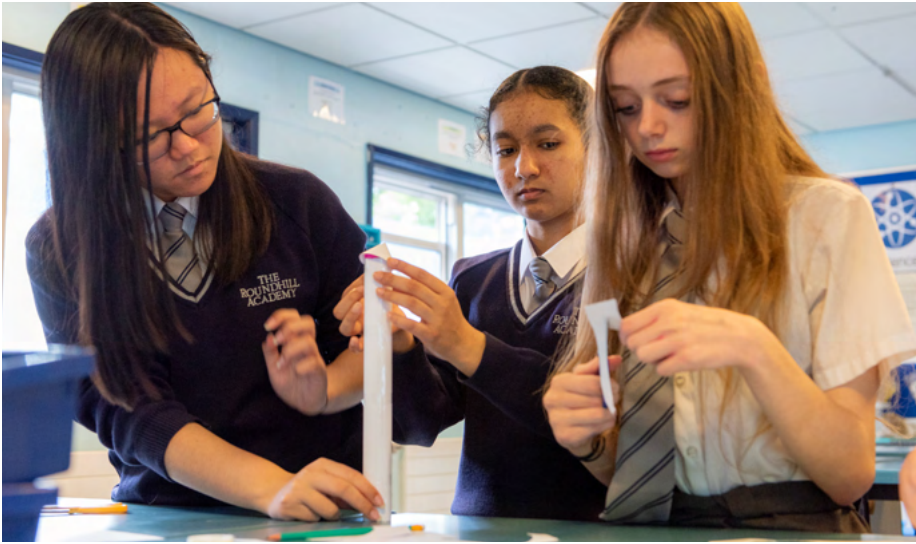
The JCGUAS is the source of technical and operational UAS information for NATO and addresses UAS issues including acquisition design, employment, the demonstration of UAS System capabilities, identification of a common approach to airspace management, complementary use among UAS Categories, operator training and standards, and doctrine including tactics/operational procedures.

The Group also looks to enhance and facilitate interoperability, develop a common standard of data transmission, and address the provision for complimentary uses of different fleets, tactics, techniques, and procedures.

The overall aim of the group is to improve the operational effectiveness of UAS in NATO and coalition environments by ensuring availability, interoperability, utility, and operational integrity of UAS.



Over 150 delegates from industry, government, academia and military were brought together to develop new NATO 'Sense and Avoid' standard for unmanned systems.



The RAF Protector RG Mk1 (Photo: RAF)

**The National Space Academy is thrilled to announce that our ASPA-funded masterclasses have now been launched. The Academy is the largest secondary-level space education and space skills development programme in the UK and has been delivering curriculum-related space masterclasses since 2008. Thanks to funding from the ASPA, we're able to bring a number of these sessions to schools around the UK, completely free of charge.**

These masterclasses utilise contexts from space science, engineering, and the work of ASPA to inspire and engage our next generation. Masterclasses highlight potential career pathways, as well as supporting students' school science studies, opening up opportunities in the growing UK space sector.

In the UK Space Agency's most recent **survey of the UK space sector**, among the most significant barriers to growth according to UK space sector companies are recruitment and a general skills shortage. To break these barriers, we are looking for more partners in the space sector to

## **ASPA MASTERCLASSES FROM THE NATIONAL SPACE ACADEMY**

**GRACE DAVIS,  
COMMUNICATIONS AND  
MARKETING MANAGER,  
NATIONAL SPACE ACADEMY**

enhance our work, whether this be through offering guidance, facilities and expertise, or supporting us with resources and funding.

**To get involved, please contact [nsa@spacecentre.co.uk](mailto:nsa@spacecentre.co.uk), visit [nationalspaceacademy.org](http://nationalspaceacademy.org) or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#).**



**NATIONAL  
SPACE ACADEMY**





# PER ARDUA AD ASPA

ANDREW BROOKES, HON SECRETARY

**This year's Annual Dinner in November marks the 76th year of the event and of the Association since its formation in May 1947.**

For those of you unfamiliar with our history, The Air and Space Power Association (ASPA) is rooted in the dawn of the jet and space age.

Back in May 1947, the Air Public Relations Association (APRA) was formed by Charles Pennycook Robertson. 'Robbie' came to RAF PR from the print media in 1918 and thirty years later, he focused APRA on those who had served in the RAF or Air Ministry on public relations duties. APRA's agreed objectives back then were 'To enable members to keep in touch with one another, principally by an annual dinner and an annual general meeting' but more importantly, 'To foster a continuing interest in the RAF and its non-regular forces.' By 1960 there were 146 paid-up members. In 1954 an annual C P Robertson trophy was inaugurated for the best work in interpreting the RAF to the public during a period of twelve months between Battle of Britain Days. This trophy is awarded every year at our November Industry Dinner.

Around 2012, coordination of APRA was taken over by the MOD Air Staff, whereupon the title was changed to the Air Power Association (APA). With cutbacks in MoD, APA organisation and coordination was transferred to the current small secretariat headquartered in Fairford, supplemented by an enthusiastic cadre of specialist volunteers.

The Association renamed as The Air and Space Power Association (ASPA) in 2019 in recognition of the importance of the Space domain for airpower and to acknowledge the RAF's new role within the UK Space Command at RAF High Wycombe.

The ASPA Annual Award for 2022 was presented to Space Command. The new award winner will be announced at our Annual Dinner on 15 November and presented by Air Marshal Harvey Smyth, Air & Space Commander RAF.

The ASPA's Mission is 'to promote the advancement and understanding of military air and space power in the UK and beyond'. Our aim is 'to provide a focal point for all stakeholders in the air and space domains'. But this is more than simply banging the drum for the military exploitation of the air and space environment. The ASPA's aim is



**The ASPA trophy is awarded 'for constant effort over a number of years in the interpretation of the Royal Air Force to the public.'**

concurrently to grow air power ambassadors and provide a focal point for interaction between air and space power practitioners, their industrial partners and other relevant organisations and individuals. To that end, we continue to develop our events and platforms for engaging our existing members but also new potential members of the future. Our partnership with the NSA and funding for the masterclasses are a case in point to help drive the development of the next generation of air - and space - power skills for the country.

Although the UK has reached out to the stars since 1918, we trust that 'Robbie' would applaud and encourage the ASPA's continuing efforts to serve as the national focal point for air and space power. Onwards and upwards!

## MEMBER NEWS

**We continue to attract a healthy and representative cross section of corporate, individual and associate members - with several prospects in the pipeline for 2024.**

Some of our members had gone dormant and we had lost contact with a couple of long-standing corporations which prompted us to get in touch and engage with them.

You could help us in this regard so please do get in touch should any of your contacts have an interest in joining The Air and Space Power Association.

**By all means get in touch with either myself Ian Draper [ian@airpower.org.uk](mailto:ian@airpower.org.uk) or Lloyd Francis [lloyd@airpower.org.uk](mailto:lloyd@airpower.org.uk)**

**ASPA Membership Team**



**The Air & Space Power Association is a vital forum for encouraging and stimulating debate on important air power issues. We welcome feature letters from members on any air or space power-related subject.**

Contact us: [info@airpower.org.uk](mailto:info@airpower.org.uk)

Phone : +44 1285 711457

Address: The Air & Space Power Association  
Gloucester House, Market Place, Fairford,  
GL7 4AB, UK

