



TROPHIES AND AWARDS 2023

Aviators recognised for outstanding contributions and achievements in the Honourable Company of Air Pilots' annual Trophies and Awards

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

21 September 2023

The world-famous Royal Air Force Battle of Britain Memorial Flight (RAF BBMF) has been recognised by the Honourable Company of Air Pilots for its outstanding and enduring contribution to aviation, not least operating as a living memorial to aviators killed in the service of the nation.

The BBMF is among the recipients of the eagerly awaited annual 'Trophies and Awards' presented by the Air Pilots, which cited the flight's status as a national institution, representing values held dear by the RAF, typifying professional excellence, teamwork and dedication that have existed since the RAF's foundation and to which today's service aspires.

Best known for showcasing its eight iconic Spitfire and Hurricane 'warbirds' to the public, the BBMF is tasked flying some 100 displays and 800 flypasts each season, generating more than 1,000 individual aircraft appearances – including by the Avro Lancaster and C-47 Dakota – with an estimated audience of eight million. For these reasons, the BBMF was awarded the prestigious Award of Honour, for its lifetime contribution to the aerospace industry.

The professionalism, quick thinking and courage of an experienced air show pilot was also recognised by the Air Pilots when a partial engine failure mid display led to a successful ditching at Bournemouth Air Festival. Continuously assessing the safety of others and determined to protect the public, David Barrell of the AeroSuperBatics wing walking team performed a textbook handling of a difficult situation, including calmly ditching at minimum speed and a tail down attitude and assisting his crewmate to evacuate the aircraft, which was upside down and submerged.

Barrell was awarded The Hugh Gordon-Burge Memorial Award, which goes to a member or members of a crew whose outstanding behaviour and action contributed to the saving of their aircraft or passengers.

The Air Pilots' Trophies and Awards are among the industry's most prestigious because recipients are selected by their peers, who have decades of experience in military and civil aviation around the world. The awards are traditionally presented at London's Guildhall on the last Thursday of October.

Another astonishing act of selflessness and professionalism was performed by the crew of Rescue 924, an HM Coastguard helicopter operated by Bristow. This incident saw a nighttime search and rescue mission assist eight yachtsmen from a vessel to the west of the Lizard Peninsula in challenging weather caused by Storm Claudio. On scene for more than an hour, the crew were faced with conditions described as 'horrendous' with a 'screaming wind gusting Force 10, driving

heavy rain, rough seas and extremely poor visibility'. Having demonstrated exemplary initiative, crew co-operation, tenacity and skill, the crew of Rescue 924 quickly and correctly identified how best to respond to the intensifying incident and rescued the crew of the yacht. For this, they are awarded the Prince Philip Helicopter Rescue Award, which recognises an act of outstanding courage or devotion to duty in the course of land or sea search and rescue operations.

Another award recognising an outstanding contribution – this time for the art of display flying of historic, vintage or modern fighter aircraft – goes to Paul Stone. A military and civilian qualified test pilot who served in the Royal Navy for 20 years, followed by 14 years in the defence industry, Stone accumulated over 4,700 hours on more than 200 aircraft types. Having displayed the Sea Harrier FA2 and supervised other military pilots displaying the jump jet, he also flew with the Royal Navy Historic Flight, displaying the Sea Hawk and Sea Fury. While still in the Royal Navy, Stone became the youngest ever pilot to join the Shuttleworth Collection, becoming the Chief Pilot in 2019.

He has held a Display Authorisation for more than 25 years and is passionate about developing the next generation of display pilots, actively encouraging new talent by providing a safe and nurturing environment for display pilots to debut at Shuttleworth shows and supervising and managing display currency and mitigating skill fade for 20 pilots flying multiple types. He sets the highest standards and inspires others to follow his example. For his enduring contribution, Stone is awarded the Hanna Trophy, named for legendary display pilot Ray Hanna.

This year's Sword of Honour – which recognises an outstanding contribution to General Aviation – goes to Francis Donaldson. For more than 30 years, as chief engineer of the then Popular Flying Association and then Light Aircraft Association, Donaldson has recommended the issuing of permits to fly for more than 3,000 aircraft and overseen the engineering and handling reviews of around 200 different types. He stood down from his role at the beginning of 2022 but has remained involved as a consultant. Few people have been more influential to the progress and development of light aircraft in the past three decades, with an encyclopedic knowledge backed by real world engineering and flight testing expertise.

For further information please contact the Honourable Company of Air Pilots at:

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A full list of awards recipients is available at: <https://www.airpilots.org/what-we-do/trophies-and-awards/>

Notes to editors:

1. The Honourable Company of Air Pilots 'The Air Pilots' was established as the Guild of Air Pilots and Air Navigators in 1929. It is based in London but has an internationally based membership of professional and private pilots. The principal activities of the organisation are centred on developing action and activities to ensure that aircraft are piloted and navigated safely by aviators who are highly competent, self-reliant, dependable and respected.
2. The Air Pilots support the education and training of pilots from the initial instruction of young pilots to specialist training at the highest levels. Through its charitable activities, education and training, technical committees, aircrew selection, scholarships and sponsorships, advice and recognition of the achievements of fellow aviators worldwide, the Honourable Company keeps itself at the forefront of the aviation world.

3. The Air Pilots also provides expert, impartial input to regulators, government and media on areas including aviation and the environment, airport capacity in South East England, aircrew flight time limitations and the maintenance of piloting skills in increasingly automated aircraft. Air Pilots experts are also available to all media on request, to ensure accurate and fully informed reporting of any aviation events. If you need our assistance, please contact us on the number or e-mail addresses above.

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