



For immediate release

1206 (Mercian) RAF Air Cadets Lichfield Staffordshire 26th April 2013

Matt Blackwell rejoins 1206 (Mercian) Squadron as Pilot Officer after graduating from the Royal Air Force College Cranwell

A proud moment as Pilot Officer Matt Blackwell receives his Commissioning scroll from Group Captain Lawlor Chief of Staff, HQ Air Cadets and was awarded an Institute of Leadership and Management(ILM) qualification in first line management.

After attending a Commissioning Board in front of a Wing Commander and two senior officers to make sure he demonstrated the right qualities and calibre Matt was given clearance to attend the Officer's and Aircrew Selection Centre at RAF Cranwell. The elation of being successful quickly turned to reality when as an Officer Cadet (officer in training) meant learning the tools of the trade including behaving as a role model with cadets and developing his leadership style and appropriate behaviour.

After 12 months in the post of Training Officer for 1206 Squadron Matt was accepted to attend the final part of his Officer training at the adult training facility RAF Cranwell, The week's intensive emersion into all things RAF was heavily focused on discipline, military customs, and the most important element of all, leadership. He also spent time in the RAF's notorious leadership hangar, best described as a cross between the crystal maze and an adventure based assault course.

The journey from joining the Lichfield Squadron in 2009 after reading an appeal for staff article in the Lichfield Mercury to holding a Queen's Commission in

the Volunteer Reserve Training branch of the Royal Air Force has been life changing for Matt.

He was in his final year at university and remembered his time as a cadet and had always regretted leaving. So looking back now he is really glad he made the move as it has been instrumental in his personal development as he has become a weapons instructor, been flying in a Tutor and Vigilant, undertaken a wide variety of fieldcraft exercises and achieved a D of E expedition leader's award

We asked Pilot Officer Blackwell what difference the RAF Air Cadets has made to his life.

"Being in an organisation so closely affiliated to the Royal Air Force has positively impacted my attitude and approach. I can attend any job interview with an enormous amount of confidence, and answer questions by relating my experiences. The training I received at the Royal Air Force College was very powerful and, as with most of the things I do here, I feel it has helped me to improve my performance as an officer and has given me some brilliant life skills which has helped me increase my ability to get that next job. "

We have vacancies for Uniformed Officers and SNCOs so if you want to help train the next generation of pilots, navigators, managers, salespeople and professionals, please volunteer through the website at 1206mercian.org.uk.

1206 (Mercian) Squadron of the RAF Air Cadets was formed in the 1960s and is based in Cherry Orchard in Lichfield Staffordshire with a cadet force of 53 on the books as at December 2012. As part of one of the largest youth organisations in the country the positive attitude, sense of friendship and fun delivers a highly professional and rewarding environment that helps prepare cadets for their chosen career when they leave school, college or university.

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1206 (Mercian) Squadron

Cherry Orchard

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7:00pm to 9:30pm Tuesdays and Thursdays

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