

War and Conflict

This aim of this project was to offer our children the opportunity to discuss the difficult topic of **war and conflict** and to dispel some of the anxieties that children can have about war.

We invited members of the armed forces in to answer questions from the children, and to present information about their roles.

We are fortunate to have links with serving and past members of the armed forces and children found it both inspirational and reassuring to meet them. It was particularly valuable to give the older children opportunities to discuss the war in Ukraine.

"The time is always right to do what is right."

Martin Luther King



SQUADRON LEADER MARK
BOWDEN

ROYAL AIR FORCE

All do different jobs but work together to help each other

Protect the security of our country – we keep everyone safe

159,000 people – 1/3 in the Army, 1/4 in the Navy and 1/4 in the Air Force

24,000 (15%) are women – increasing!

60,000 civilians

40,000 people in the Reserves – like Mrs Bowden!

Based around the world – Cyprus, Gibraltar, the Falklands, Germany ...



Mrs Bowden's husband, Mark Bowden spoke to children in Reception, Years 1, 4, 5 and 6. He talked about his role as Squadron Leader and answered many questions!



OPERATIONS – MY JOB



**FLIGHT LIEUTENANT
MARK
BOWDEN,
RAF REGIMENT OFFICER**

I'VE BEEN A PRO-FOOTBALLER IN SCOTLAND...

BUT I'VE NEVER HAD A MATCH MORE NERVE-WRACKING.

AN IRAQI VILLAGE KNOWN FOR AMBIGUITY.

AND I'D ARRANGED A FOOTBALL MATCH WITH THEM TO HELP STABILIZE THINGS!

ITAM, SATURDAY, 11AM AMAC.

WE DIDN'T KNOW WHAT WOULD KICK OFF...

THANKFULLY THE ONLY SHOTS WERE THE ONES I SAVED.

WE WON THE MATCH.

AND A FEW NEW FRIENDS TOO.

NOW WHEN ME AND THE LADS ARE ON PATROL, THE LOCALS STILL CHUCK STONES AT US.

BUT NOT AS HARD.

BE PART OF THE STORY

**ROYAL AIR FORCE
Regiment**

Search online for RAF Careers





PLACES – WORK AND FUN!

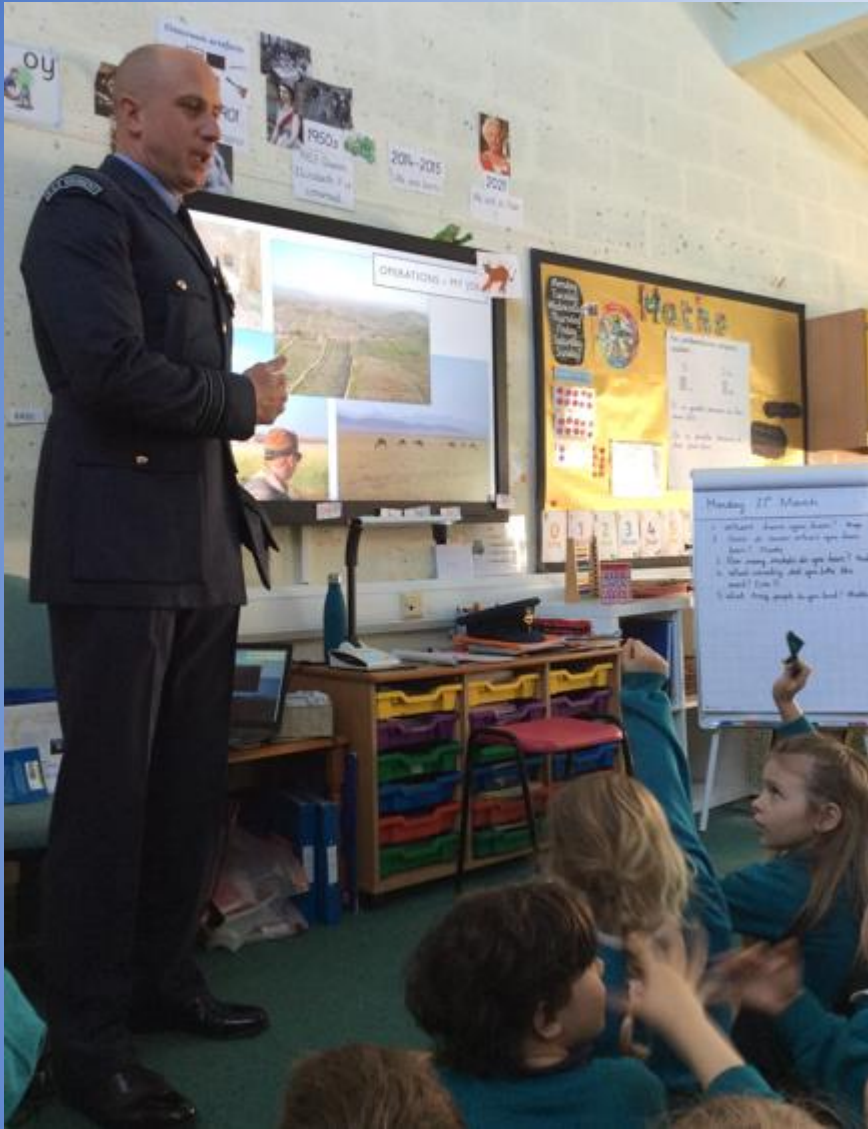


ANY QUESTIONS?



FOOTBALL AND SPORT





Yes, they asked how many countries Mark had been to and whether they were hot or cold. They asked which country he liked the best and also how many medals he had.



They were very excited to stand to attention, then march in our school playground!



Questions from Key Stage 2 classes.....

What is your favourite place that you have visited?

"America for sightseeing and Afghanistan as the best place I've worked on operations, it's actually a beautiful country"

Have you been on an aircraft carrier?

"No, but I have been near one and they are huge!"

How are the Army, Navy and Airforce connected?

"We are all part of the UK Armed Forces and support each other. We all have separate roles but need to help each other in our specific areas"

Do you sometimes have to jump out of planes?

"Yes, the unit that I last commanded was responsible for parachuting out of aircraft to get into areas before any planes so that when they land the area is already safe, it takes a lot of hard work!"

Where are your medals from?

"I have 6 medals – the Queen presents you with a medal if you deploy somewhere dangerous so that is where my Iraq and Afghanistan medals are from. I also have a medal from the Queen's diamond jubilee which you received if you had been in the military for 5 years at that point. I have a medal that was awarded when I had spent over 2 years in total away on operations and my final medal was like a 'star of the week' award, but I got it for being really good for 15 years and never being in trouble!"



What inspired you to do this job?

"I was in the Air Cadets and wanted a challenge so went to speak to the careers office when I was 20 and haven't looked back"

Is your job hard?

"It certainly has hard moments and times that are difficult, like being away from your family for a long time, but there are also lots of really enjoyable and rewarding moments. Quite often when we do our training, we make it really hard so that when we have to do things for real, it feels easier"

How do you measure the speed of a plane after the speed of sound?

"I'm not a pilot so I really don't know but that's a great question and hopefully one your teacher can help you to answer later on!"

What happens if you make a mistake?

"You learn from it and become better. Nobody gets in trouble for making honest mistakes as they are the best way to learn and we are encouraged to make mistakes when we are training, obviously we don't try to make them on purpose though!"

Mark took time and care to answer as many questions as he could and the answers taught us such a great deal about his job and all that it entails....

How old were you when you joined your job?

"I started my training when I was 21, nearly 20 years ago, and then started my job after training when I was 23"

What's happening with the Ukraine and Russia? Will you go and fight them?

"Great question. Russia is worried that NATO is getting bigger, more powerful and too close to Russia, so they have invaded Ukraine to push NATO away, focus NATO on what's happening and show how powerful Russia is. Ukraine isn't part of NATO, so NATO won't fight Russia, but we are all helping Ukraine to fight against Russia themselves. We are not planning to fight Russia but are ready to protect the country if things were to change"

How many times do you have to polish your shoes?

"Every time before you wear them, spending at least 2 hours on them. When I first got them, I probably had to spend almost 12 hours in total making them so shiny!"

What's your favourite thing about Buckingham Palace?

"It was probably being able to call it home whenever I was running the Queen's Guard. It's actually a really noisy location!"

Why do Russia want the Ukraine?

"It doesn't make any sense, but they want to create more space between Russia and NATO countries without fighting NATO – that's one of the reasons they invaded Ukraine. It's not really about wanting Ukraine but about how invading and capturing Ukraine helps Russia"

Have you ever been injured?

"I've been really lucky and only had small injuries from tripping over or banging my head, nothing serious! If we do get injured at work or doing our job somewhere we have amazing medics and doctors who help fix us and get us back going as quickly as possible"

If you're in charge, do you need to be an expert at everyone's job?

"Amazing question – the answer is no but you need to know what they do and how to best use all the people who are specialists in what they do, you don't need to be as good as them as that would be impossible"



Do you help countries when they go to war?

"We protect this country and our people as our priority but we also do that by helping other countries that we want to support or look after if they are in conflict"

What is an aircraft carrier?

"A huge ship that is basically a floating airport – they are massive and have planes that are stationed on them all the time as well as helicopters, both of which take off and land from the ship in the middle of the ocean!"

Have you been on a bomber?

"No I haven't but I have looked around some old ones like the Lancaster from WWII"

Out of 10 how much do you like your job?

"I'd say a steady 8/10 – some days a bit lower and some days a bit higher but it all depends on what you're doing, where and when. Just like in school, sometimes things you do are more interesting than others"

Have you met the Prime Minister?

"Yes, I have but not recently seen him. I met him at a reception where we used to live and he was the MP for that area – I chatted to him briefly but I was more impressed when I met the Queen!"

How many people are on your Squadron?

"In my last job I had 147 people on my squadron but the size of the team you work with will vary depending on what job you're doing. I have had jobs where I've only had a team of 12 and one where there was nearly 500 of us on the same unit"



What made you want to be in the RAF when it's a dangerous job?

"Parts of it can be dangerous but we train really hard so when it is dangerous, we are not scared, and we know exactly what to do to stay safe. I wanted to do something that would make a positive difference in other people's lives"

Have you ever flown a plane?

"No and I wouldn't know where to start but I've been in lots of planes and helicopters. We use them like a taxi to get us to the places we need to be on the ground to do our job to keep them and all the people in the RAF safe"

Have you shot a gun out of a plane?

"Yes, lots of times. It is a lot of fun, but we only fire our weapons either to practice and make sure that we hit whatever we aim at or to protect ourselves or others"

Have you been to Ukraine?

"No but I have been to Estonia which was a very beautiful and freezing cold country that borders Russia as well. I have friends who have visited Ukraine, some on holiday and they all said that Kyiv was a great city to visit"



Ruby – I found it really exciting because we'd never met one of those people before (*servicing member of the RAF*). He told us that he went all around the world and his job was difficult but very exciting. He had to sleep on the ground. I think it's a good thing that he came because children can learn about what he does as a job.

Amelia – I felt really happy because some children might be inspired by him and do it one day. He said his job was hard.

Pupil feedback on his visit.....

I was very excited and I loved it, knowing that I know a lot about the Royal Navy and the RAF. My question was about if he flew planes or not, because you can fly a plane or guard on the ground where the planes take off. That's what he did. He sees if people are ok. I was really inspired. He said somebody might have not much oil or land and things to survive so they have war to take it back. My uncle works in the royal Navy. He has two jobs. He's an engineer and he fixes the tanks and lorries that they use in the wars. He's also on the boats. I definitely want to be in the Royal Air Force when I'm older. Even if you do something wrong, you know you could win the war and save your country. You can always make a wrong right. Ruben



A local community member was invited in to talk about Remembrance Day.

“Every child in the room listened with complete respect as he shared his story. He spoke about his life as a child during the second world war, and how he lost and honoured his older brother. He showed us the importance of remembrance.”

Miss Studd Year 4

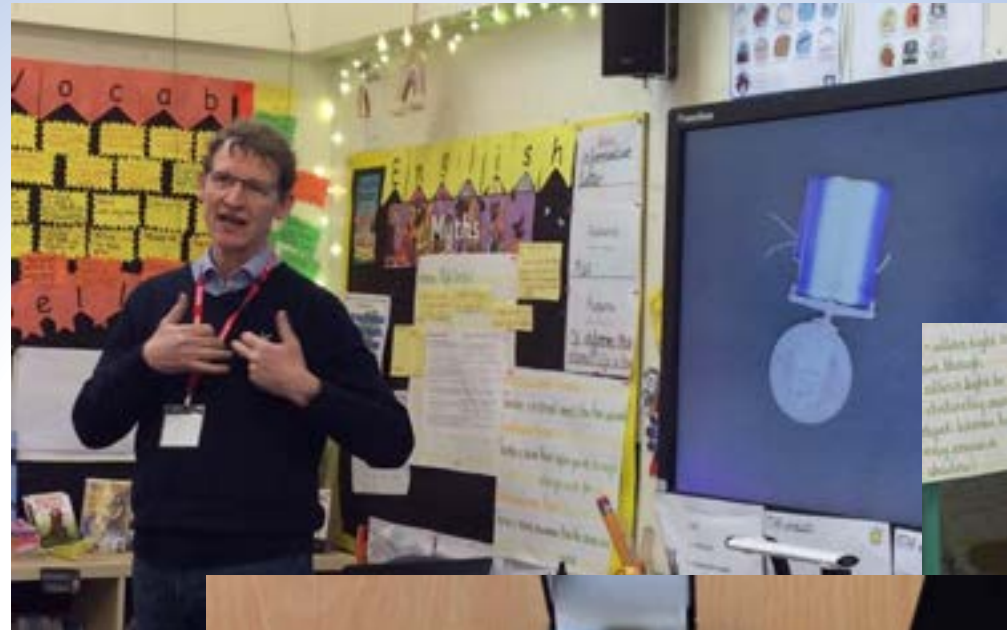
Miss Harvey's dad, Mr Harvey, came in to talk to Year 3 about his career in the Navy and what it was like going to war.



Mr Harvey served in the Falklands war on naval ships as an air traffic controller. The children were fascinated with all the different jobs there can be on a ship.

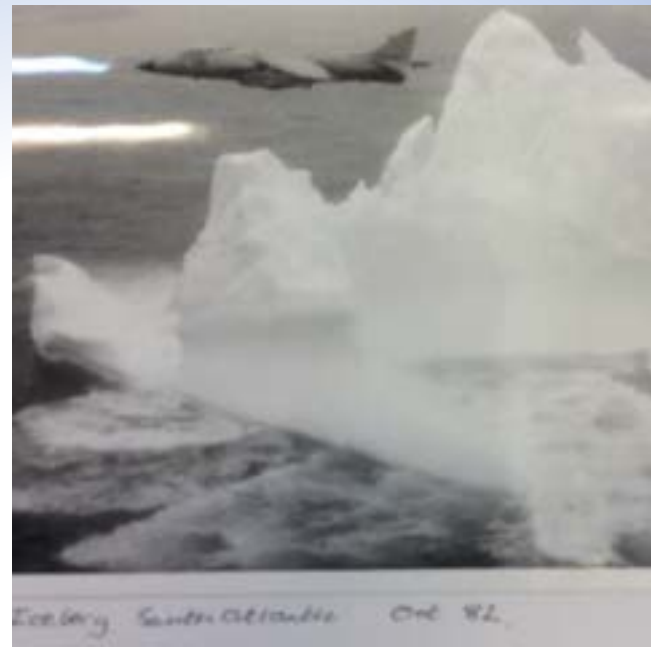
Some of the questions children asked were:

- “ How did you feel being away from your family?”*
- “ How did you contact your family?”*
- “How did you refuel your ships in the middle of the ocean?”*
- “What type of uniform did you wear?”*
- “How did planes take off from ships?”*
- “Did enemies really hurt you?”*



Mr Harvey talked about his experiences in the Navy and showed the children medals, photos, his sword and his declaration letter from the Queen.





"He said these boats are giving each other fuel! A missile from the boat has hit the plane and in this picture the missile was about to curve around and hit the other plane because it's heat seeking. Mr Harvey gave the command because he was on the boat. It would be good for every country to join together so they don't fight. Mr Harvey was my favourite visitor because he was talking about the Navy and I'm into that! If I don't become a footballer I would go in the Navy."

Jacob



“As a teacher it was great to see the children’s minds unfold about a less talked about war as well as being absolutely fascinated by every single detail. They LOVED seeing the sword and enjoyed talking about everything even down to the different uniforms they had on ship. Children learnt how hard it can be, being away from home but especially in a time where telephones were scarce and letter was the only way. It gave children a real insight into what life was like before we were blessed with technology to keep in touch with loved ones.” Miss Harvey Year 3

What the children in Year 3 thought.....

"I liked it when he showed us the sword. He said he was in a war. He said he worked with the planes and now he works with the Air Force and he goes round the world looking at the airports and checking the planes run ok. It's good he came in because we can learn what it's like in the Navy and what we can expect there." Jacob

"I liked it when he told us how missiles work. They are heat seeking so they go for the engines of a plane. It was fun because we got to know a bit about what it's like in the Navy. If you wanted to go in the Navy you would know what's it's like." Jamie

"I want to go in the Navy now, after his visit. I want to do what he does. I want to help people and I want to fly planes. I don't think he's been in many wars. It's good to give kids education and if kids want to be in the Navy it will inspire them as well!"

Matilda

"I remember that he showed us his medals. He went in a war. He says some argue and that's why there are wars. Or if people want more land like Russia and Ukraine. It's good to learn about new things!" Jack

Johnathan Wilkins' visit to Year 2...

The Royal Navy



Chief Petty Officer Physical Trainer
Johnathan Wilkins

Who Formed the Royal Navy and When?

- 1509 – 1660
- Aware of the growing importance of naval power, Henry VIII built up his own standing fleet, known as the Navy Royal. This enlarged fleet required a more developed administration which eventually saw the establishment of the 'Navy Board'. When Civil War broke out, the Commonwealth regime created the most powerful and effectively run fleet Britain had ever seen. When King Charles II came to the throne in 1660 he inherited a huge fleet of 154 ships; this was the beginning of a permanent and professional Royal Navy as we know it today.

What is the Purpose of the Royal Navy?

- Prevent Conflict
- Protect our seas
- International Partnerships
- Ready to Fight
- Protecting our economy
- Providing Humanitarian Assistance

Who is Part Of the Royal Navy?

- General Service Royal Navy
- Submarine Service
- Fleet Air Arm
- Royal Marines

My Life in the Royal Navy

- HMS Kent



Johnathan talked to Year 2 about the history of the Royal Navy and its purpose today.

He told them about his time in the Navy and his role as a physical and adventurous training instructor.

My Life in the Royal Navy

- HMS Ironduke



My Life in the Royal Navy

- HMS Chatham



Physical Training Instructor



Adventurous Training Instructor



Adventurous Training Instructor



Adventurous Training Instructor



Mr Wilkins answered lots of Year 2's questions:

"Do you enjoy being in the Navy?"

"What do you wear?"

"How many countries have you been to?"

"Do you get sea sick?"

"What training did you do?"

"How long did you have to train for?"

"What is the Navy?"

"What symbol is used for the Navy?"

"How many people are in the Navy?"

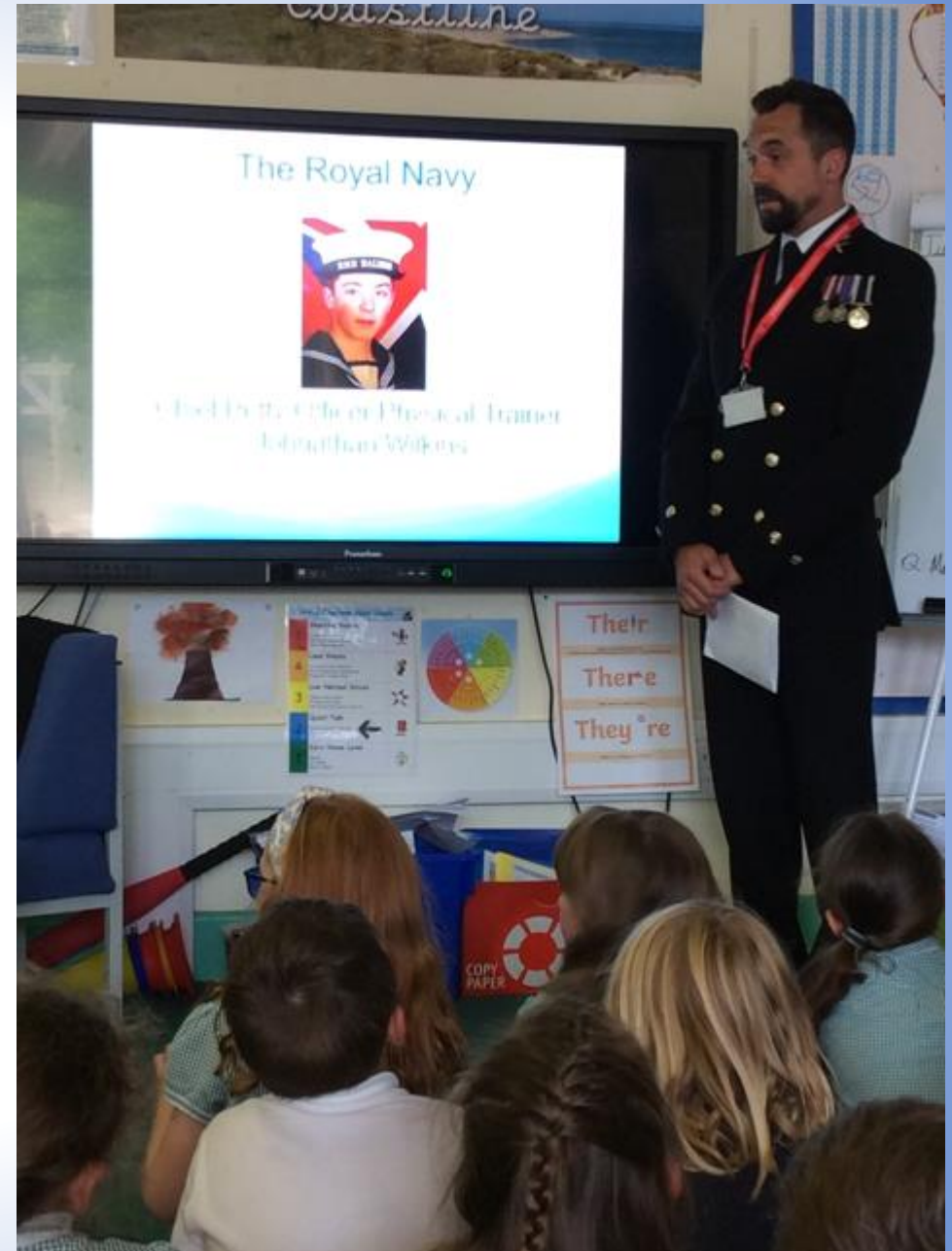
"What is your favourite bit about the Navy?"

"What's your favourite bit about the Navy?"

"Have you been in a war?"

"What weapons do you use?"

"What are you called in the Navy?"





I liked it when Chief Wilkins showed us all the medals on his jacket. Eleanor

I liked seeing all the different ships that he had been on. Erin

I liked learning about the plane where the guns track the target. Alex

I liked learning about submarines and how they can stay in the water. Sienna

I liked hearing all the names of the Royal Navy ships. Jesse

I liked hearing about all the different countries Chief Wilkins had visited.



**Year 2
feedback on
his visit!**

What the adults thought.....

"It was a really rewarding experience to come and chat with the children about the military, what we do and my experiences in the RAF. It was great to see some of the reactions to what I was saying, in particular the Y6 girls when I told them that women could now do any job in the Armed Forces: there was genuine excitement! Some of the questions that the children asked were also really well considered and thoughtful, especially some the questions about the Ukraine conflict. It was great to be able to provide them with some context they understood and reaffirm that they have no need to worry."

Mark Bowden

"The children got such a lot from this project and were obviously inspired by our visitors. There was huge impact in enabling the children to discuss war, including the Russian invasion of Ukraine with teachers reporting that children's anxiety was visibly reduced after their questions were answered."

Gill Herrin - International Co-ordinator

" I felt that my visit to the year 3 class to discuss my experiences in the Royal Navy was as interesting for me as it appeared to be to the children. I was impressed with their level of engagement and variety of questions asked. These ranged from the more obvious ones about the medals and uniform to how did a ship get fresh water when at sea. I was very surprised when one of the class immediately stated that the ships had a mini desalination plant! Overall it was a thoroughly enjoyable morning."

Mr Harvey