

# RAF base given sword for cyclone and rescue work

**AWARD:** Honour recognises Brize's efforts on humanitarian missions

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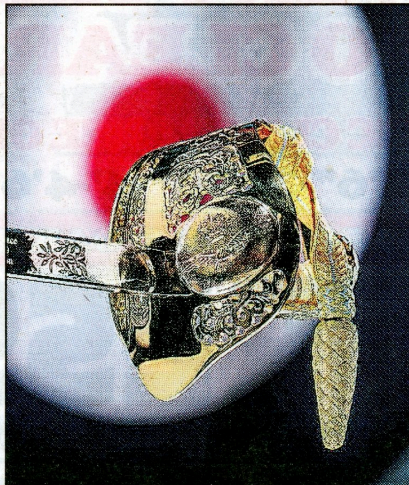
**AN RAF base has been gifted a sword for its humanitarian efforts.**

RAF Brize Norton has received the Firmin Sword of Peace after the station was deemed to have made the most valuable contribution to humanitarian activities of all RAF bases.

The award comes following work in 2019 which saw support during national disasters as well as in the local community.

In particular, Brize Norton was recognised for its work in Africa in the wake of Cyclone Idai, the conduct of search and rescue operations in the South Atlantic, and the recovery of British nationals with suspected Lassa fever from Sierra Leone.

Group Captain Emily Flynn, station commander at RAF Brize Norton, said: "The award of the 2019 Firmin Sword of Peace to RAF Brize Norton is a phenomenal achievement which captures and recognises the broad spectrum of output delivered on a daily basis by personnel based here both in support of our global taskings and outside the wire in support of local communities and many charities.



"I am humbled by the amount our personnel continue to give to the Royal Air Force and beyond.

"It is wonderful to see the station recognised in this way."

During 2019, the station got involved with various programmes and activities in the local community, for example through its careers and outreach team, and the Jon Egging Trust.

Many personnel also volunteered for other local organisations, taking part in fundraising challenges.

In total, more than £166,000 was raised

for 18 separate charities.

Group Captain Simon Blackwell, air wing commander at RAF Brize Norton, added: "The award of the Firmin Sword of Peace is a fantastic reward for the outstanding work, commitment and attitude of the whole-force personnel here at RAF Brize Norton.

"It is well-deserved recognition of both the fantastic engagement we have with the community through charity events, STEM [science, technology, engineering and mathematics] and community work, and also the valuable contribution that the Air Mobility Force output makes towards humanitarian and life-saving work around the globe."

Flight Lieutenant Ben Burton, RAF Brize Norton's flight safety officer, was presented the sword at a special ceremony at Brize Norton last month.

The sword was handed over to him by the RAF's chief of the air staff, Mike Wigston.

Established in 1966, the award was originally known as the Wilkinson Sword of Peace.

When Wilkinson stopped the production of swords in 2005, military uniform suppliers Firmin & Sons began sponsoring the award.

A ceremonial sword is presented to one unit each from the Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force every year.

# News



Ben Burton along with the chief of the air staff Mike Wigston, unsheathes the Firmin Sword of Peace.

Pictures: MOD Crown



Ben Burton salutes chief of the air staff Mike Wigston, prior to receiving the Firmin Sword of Peace



The devastation left after Cyclone Idai.

Picture: Caroline Irby/ British Red Cross/ PA Wire