**RAF Icemen selected for 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi**

**Two Royal Air Force airmen have praised the service after they qualified to represent Team GB at the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi.**

Corporal Stuart Benson, 32, an Avionics Technician from RAF Cosford has had a blistering season and will be a member of the GB1 4-man bobsleigh team event. His colleague Senior Aircraftman (SAC) John Baines, 28, an ICT Technician based at RAF Leeming in North Yorkshire has also booked his place at the games in Russia, where he will be a part of the GB2 4-man bobsleigh team.

Speaking at a press event held at the University of Bath before jetting off to Russia, both men took time to praise the RAF and the role their career has played in turning them into Olympic athletes.

Cpl Benson will be part of a quartet in top form going into the games. The GB1 4-man bobsleigh team scooped a bronze medal at the World Championships at Lake Placid in December, followed by a hard-earned silver in the European Championships at the end of January.

Stuart – who is also an experienced sprinter with the RAF said: *“A silver medal at the European Championships was a great achievement and standing on the podium gave me an exceptional sense of pride and excitement – I felt that not only was I representing my country, but also the Royal Air Force.*

He continued: *“Recognising the support for young athletes is what attracted me to the Royal Air Force and since winning the RAF Sportsman of the Year accolade in 2011, I have never looked back.”*

SAC Baines was given his first involvement in winter sport when he took-up bobsleigh in 2008 after joining the RAF team and competing in the Inter-Services Championships shortly after. Looking back at his meteoric rise up to Olympic level, he said: “*The opportunity given to me as an elite athlete in the Royal Air Force is a dream come true and I can’t think of a better career to have alongside my second as an athlete.”*

Both servicemen will be making their Olympic debut but insist their military training has given them the relevant skills to adapt to any situation. John continued: *“Being part of a strong team is familiar to us and we have a clear understanding of the task ahead.

“Working hard, staying positive and having confidence in our ability as a team is what you learn in the Royal Air Force. I feel that is what we bring to Team GB.  As we head to Sochi, we will always strive to rise above the rest!”*

The Sochi Winter Olympics begin on 7 February in Russia. Team GB comprises of 56

athletes selected from the sports and disciplines of curling, figure skating, short track,

skiing and snowboarding, skeleton, bobsleigh and biathlon.

*The RAF is recruiting now and with more than 50 different careers to choose from, you don’t have to be a pilot to join. For more information please visit* [*www.raf.mod.uk/careers*](http://www.raf.mod.uk/careers) *or for any queries on a career, you can also visit* [*www.twitter.com/rafcareers*](http://www.twitter.com/rafcareers) *or* [*www.facebook.com/rafcareers*](http://www.facebook.com/rafcareers)*.*

*Team GB profiles on both John Baines and Stuart Benson can also be found below:*

[*http://www.teamgb.com/athletes/john-baines*](http://www.teamgb.com/athletes/john-baines)

[*http://www.teamgb.com/athletes/stuart-benson*](http://www.teamgb.com/athletes/stuart-benson)