

AIR MAIL

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JANUARY-MARCH 2018

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Association**

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What a picture The best of the RAF's 2017 photos



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Useful contact details

Useful RAF Association contact addresses and telephone numbers

AIR MAIL CONTACTS

Editorial/Advertising and Branch news:
0800 018 2361
 editor@rafatrad.co.uk
 BranchNews@rafatrad.co.uk

Editorial Office Postal Address:

RAFATRAD Ltd
Atlas House
41 Wembley Road
Leicester
LE3 1UT

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Photographer
Corporal Tony Hawke won a category 2nd place in the RAF Photographic Competition for "Resting Comfortably".
 More on pages 32-37.
 ©MOD/Crown

Headquarters RAF Association

Atlas House
 41 Wembley Road
 Leicester
 LE3 1UT

Telephone: 0800 018 2361

Website: www.rafa.org.uk

Area Office contact details

Northern

Area HQ and North West Office
 Wings Centre
 82-83 Fishergate
 Preston
 PR1 2NJ

Telephone: 01772 426930

North East Office

Halifax Block
 RAF Linton-on-Ouse
 YO30 2AJ

Telephone: 01347 847525/847496

South East and Eastern

South East Office

46-50 Coombe Road
 New Malden
 Surrey, KT3 4QF

Telephone: 0203 823 8130/31

Area HQ and Eastern Office
 Atlas House, 41 Wembley Road
 Leicester, LE3 1UT

Telephone: Office 0116 268 8784
 Welfare: 0116 268 8781/8782

Scotland and Northern Ireland

Area HQ and Scotland Office

20 Queen Street
 Edinburgh, EH2 1JX

Telephone: 0131 225 5221

Northern Ireland Office

21 Talbot Street
 Belfast, BT1 2LD

Telephone: 02890 325718

Wales, Midland and South Western

Area HQ and South Western Office
 RAFA House, Chancel Lane
 Pinhoe, Exeter EX4 8JU

Telephone: 01392 462088

Wales Office

Celynyn Collieries Institute
 Memorial Hall
 High Street, Newbridge
 Newport, NP11 4FH

Telephone: 01495 249522

Midland Office

The Windermere Club
 110 Wake Green Road
 Moseley
 Birmingham, B13 9PZ

Telephone: 0121 449 9356

Overseas

21 Talbot Street
 Belfast, BT1 2LD

Telephone: 02890 325718

The RAF Families Federation

13-15 St Georges Road
 Wittering
 Peterborough
 PE8 6DL

Telephone: 01780 781650
 Website: www.raf-ff.org.uk

Flowerdown House

55 Beach Road
 Weston-super-Mare, BS23 1BH

Telephone: 01934 621664

Rothbury House

West End, Rothbury
 Morpeth, NE65 7TT

Telephone: 01669 620235

Richard Peck House

1 St Thomas Road
 Lytham St Annes, FY8 1JL

Telephone: 01253 725519

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From the Editor

We give enormous thanks to Colin and Louise Pullen for their dedicated and painstaking work on Air Mail and at RAFTRAD Ltd over the last 17 years. Colin was in the RAF for 26 years and served as an air traffic controller before working at the trading arm of the Association. He and Louise would have had personal contact with thousands of you as you bought your pin badges and diaries or placed your classified ads and submitted your branch news. On behalf of us all, thank you to them both and good luck for a future that combines retirement, a new job in Sussex and close family.

I hope Air Mail will continue to grow from the strong foundations that Colin and Louise built, reflecting the great energy, compassion and dedication of members. As a member-led organisation I encourage you to complete the survey enclosed with this edition. Not only will this help Council, the team at HQ and employees in area and welfare teams to understand more about who we all are, I will also be able to tailor future Air Mails to best reflect your interests and your passions.

Annie O'Brian
 Editor Air Mail

Pick of the contents

NEWS

All the latest developments from the Association and the RAF family, including: news of Conference and the Association's own service to celebrate the RAF's centenary, a round up of RAF100 plans, a Wings Lotto big win and the Families Federation's meetings with government about the Armed Forces Covenant.

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Message from the Secretary General

A very happy new year. I am looking forward to 12 months of celebration and continued rejuvenation of the Association.

Events and celebrations

I would be delighted to see you at any of our events to mark the 100th anniversary of the RAF (see page 6). And places are going fast for Conference and for our own major commemorative service on 13 May at the National Memorial Arboretum – please see page 7 for details. Regular event attendees and new faces will always be warmly welcomed.

Moving ahead

The Association's new top level strategic plan and budget was endorsed at Council's September and November 2017 meetings. The main aims include:

- Ensuring we are compliant when General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) come into force
- Branch and membership sustainability
- Compliance with the new Governance Handbook

A summary will be made available early in 2018.

Governance

The new, reduced and considerably improved Governance Handbook was issued in autumn 2017. It focuses on the most important documents of the Association and includes: The Royal Charter, The Rules and Byelaws, Standard Area and Branch Regulations and Branch Club rules

Thank you to all members who helped develop this over the last couple of years in local, area and Conference meetings. It has been a massive undertaking. All branches have been sent a copy. It is also available at headquarters in Leicester, in area offices and on your members' area of the website.

How the Association handles information about you

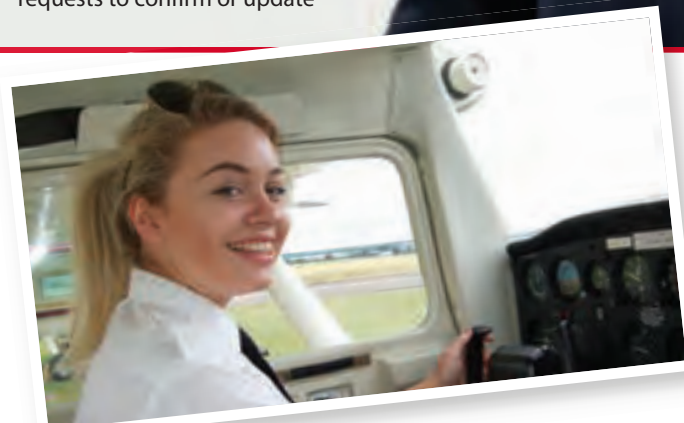
Legislation enforcing the regulations about how everyone in the UK handles data comes into force in May 2018. It is known as GDPR and the Association has already started changing processes to make sure we comply. As an individual member, please take care to respond to any requests to confirm or update

your details and permissions – otherwise we may not be allowed to contact you at all in future. Branches should also be following all guidance from central and area offices to make sure local data processes comply with the new rules.

Bon appetit

Finally we have featured the RAF100 Cook Book on page 52. With 100 recipes from 100 countries and history from 100 years of the RAF, I hope it will nourish and sustain you for the whole of the coming year.

Nick Bunting
Secretary General



Final call for entries

Applications for our 2018 Flying Scholarships close on 31 January. Any 16 to 20 year olds who want to apply for the 12 and 35 hour scholarships can find out more, watch a video of a 2017 lesson and download application forms from rafa.org.uk/flying-scholarships-application.

2017 winner Cadet Sergeant Esmée Webley at the controls of a Cessna 172 during her training.

Happy 2018 from Sir Baz North

New year's wishes for all members from the Association's President

2018 is upon us and the first seven months of my presidency of the Association have flown by; I am most grateful to the many hundreds of members who have made me feel so welcome. I shouldn't be surprised by the energy and dedication of those of you that I have met since May, but I am humbled by your work and by the difference that you make to so many current and former RAF personnel and their families. I am very proud to represent you and to campaign for the Association at a national level to help you continue your welfare work and comradeship wherever you are in the world.

Therefore, it gives me immense pleasure that, in this Air Mail, the winners of the 2018 National Presidential Certificates are announced. These Certificates recognise the extraordinary time and effort that the recipients have given to our organisation. I look forward to meeting the winners at Conference in May and to being involved in many more such awards in future.

As we move towards the centenary year of the RAF, I hope to learn more about the strength and depth of our support for each other and our fundraising. Please accept my thanks for all the hard work that you have done to sustain the Association and to look after those members who have needed support; my best wishes for a successful New Year for each of you.



2018 Presidential Certificate winners



Congratulations to all seven members who have been awarded 2018 National Presidential Certificates in recognition of their support and dedication to the Association. The certificates are announced to coincide with the New Year's Honours lists and will be formally presented at Conference in mid May by Air Marshal Sir Baz North.

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Duncan McIntosh | Fraserburgh Branch |
| Muriel and Derek Simpson | Oldham Branch |
| Susan Stroud | Sturminster Newton and Gillingham Branch |
| Ashley Oldroyd-Clarke | Germany Branch |
| Geoffrey Horton | Barry Branch |
| Derf Mockford | Aylesbury and Halton Branch |

Terry and Beryl Dennett Stannard of the Sud-Ouest Branch were recognised in 2017. Pictured here at the President's Reception at Conference 2017 with (left) Sarah Waugh, Overseas Director.



Jack celebrates 100th

Jack Lyon, one of the last two 'Great Escapers' still living, celebrated his 100th birthday at 1066 Branch in September.

Jack had been shot down over enemy territory in WW II and eventually transferred to Stalag Luft III, at Sagan, south-east Germany. In March 1944 a total of 76 Allied airmen were able to tunnel out of the camp in the largest breakout of its kind. Jack was waiting to go when the guards discovered the escape.

Nearly all of the escapees were later re-captured.

He now lives a mile or so from the branch and still regularly walks down to its Bexhill on Sea club and home again. He said: "I've got no relatives, virtually. My family are no longer around. Quite a number of my wife's family are around but not mine. They're a good bunch here."

Celebrating with family at friends at the branch



Hell runner

Smiling through hell? Flight Sergeant Paul Crook (pictured, foreground) was one of a team of 17 RAF Police from RAF Cosford who endured the miles through bogs, sand and ice in the Hell Run – and raised £1,000 for the Association. Huge thanks to them all.

Hell Runs are new to the Association's challenge events calendar for 2018 – find out more at rafa.org.uk/challenge.

Joy Lofthouse passes away

The Association was sad to hear of the death of honorary life member and Air Transport Auxiliary (ATA) pilot, Joy Lofthouse who passed away in November aged 94.

Joy joined the ATA in 1943 after seeing an advert in a newspaper asking for women to fly. She was one of only 164 female pilots, trained to deliver aircraft to wherever they were needed during WWII.

She learnt to fly all types of single seater aircraft, but the Spitfire remained her favourite. She said: "It's the nearest thing to having wings of your own and flying."

Nick Bunting, Secretary General of the RAF Association said: "Joy delivered all types of aircraft - including Spitfires, Hurricanes, Mosquitos and Lancasters - all over the country during WWII and was an honorary life member of the RAF Association. We have lost an inspirational member and send our condolences to her friends and family."

Memorial to dambusters

Seven RAF crew members who died when their aircraft crashed in the Netherlands are to be commemorated this May.

Seventy five years to the month since Lancaster AJ-A from 617 Squadron 'Dambusters' was hit by German flak near Wijk aan Zee a memorial plaque will be unveiled.

The aircraft was returning from a raid on the German Ruhr dams and finally came down at Castricum aan Zee. All seven crew members are buried in Bergen General Cemetery. To find out more about the plans, the appeal for funds to bring them to fruition and the people behind the project, see their website at: 617sqn-namf.nl



Enjoying the 2017 Annual Conference at Yarnfield. © Heidi Burton



Above: From historical grandeur to the ultra modern in Birmingham, the Venice of the north.

Conference: 2019 venue announced. 2018 bookings open

Birmingham has been announced by Council as the venue for our 2019 Annual Conference. Following debate and decisions at Conference in 2017*, Council has undertaken extensive research into 13 venues across the whole of the UK. Taking into account cost, location, accessibility and the desire to allow as many members to attend as possible, Council opted for the Birmingham Metropole Hotel. It is part of the Hilton group, located near the National Exhibition Centre, can accommodate our particular needs and has the added benefits of a spa and swimming pool.

Places are filling up fast for the 2018 Annual Conference at Yarnfield Park Training and Conference Centre from 11 to 12 May. The Staffordshire venue is within easy reach of the National Memorial Arboretum where we will be holding our major celebration of the centenary of the RAF - a service on 13 May (more details on page 19).

To book your place at 2018 Conference:

Online:

Visit our online booking page: www.rafa.org.uk/annualconference. You can register delegate details for yourself and your guests. You will need an email account for this.

By phone:

Please contact our reception team on 0116 268 8750. They will happily take your details over the phone.

To book your accommodation at 2018 Conference: Please contact our reception team on 0116 268 8750.

Accommodation is available in the conference venue and the Association has negotiated the same excellent rate as 2017. A single room will be £55 a night and a double/twin room based on two people sharing will be £75 a night. Prices include breakfast, lunch and dinner. Each room has an en-suite bathroom, TV, hairdryer, tea/coffee and biscuits and wi-fi. Please note, fully accessible rooms are limited and we would advise booking early to avoid disappointment.

Pooled fares – travel expenses scheme:

All branch delegates are entitled to claim standard rail fares or economy air fares which will be reimbursed accordingly after Conference. All claims are totalled and divided by the number of branches attending, after which each branch is sent an invoice for the amount involved (£82.29 per branch in 2017). Free transport will be provided free of charge from and to the local rail stations.

Financial assistance:

If any branch is experiencing financial hardship, they should apply to their area for assistance.

More information is online and in the letter of early December to all branches.

* (See RP3 Emergency Resolution, RP5 relating to it, and also Resolution No7 and the Emergency Resolution RP5 relating to it).

RAF100 Roundup



At the appeal launch, 92 year-old Jack Cook (left), resident at Wexford House, talked about the work of the Association and how we help him retain his independence with Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Stephen Hillier (right). ©MOD/Crown.

Jack Cook and Nick Seward of Saab, both previously of 100 Squadron, swapping stories and memories of different times. Jack lives independently in an Association house. Money from the RAF100 Appeal will be used to fund this and other RAF Association projects for veterans and serving personnel.

Appeal launched

The RAF100 fundraising appeal was launched on 25 October by the Royal Air Force and its four major charities to mark the RAF's centenary in 2018.

A spectacular concert at the Royal Albert Hall, key airshows such as Cosford and the Royal International Air Tattoo and major sporting events will help raise funds. Fundraising kicked off at the Wales/ All Blacks rugby match at Cardiff's Principality Stadium in November. Members of the public have started their own fundraising initiatives, and a number of RAF100 Appeal Days in major UK cities will take place where military and civilian volunteers will raise funds together.

Companies have already pledged more than £2 million to the appeal, including headline sponsors Babcock, BAE Systems and Fujitsu. Since the launch, Marks & Spencer has also been added to the list.

The appeal brings together the Royal Air Force, RAF Association, RAF Benevolent Fund, RAF Charitable Trust and the RAF Museum. Support it by buying appeal merchandise from rafa.org.uk/shop/ or or by calling 0800 018 2361. Set up your own fundraising appeal page online at: justgiving.com/raf100appeal. Also look out for the spectacular RAF100 Cook Book (details and recipes on page 52).

RAF100 events listed

OPENING CONCERT Royal Albert Hall, London - 31 March
RAF100 BATON RELAY COMMENCES Royal Courts of Justice, London - 1 April
RAF ASSOCIATION CENTENARY SERVICE National Memorial Arboretum - 13 May
NATIONAL AIRCRAFT TOUR Cardiff City Hall Gardens - 16 to 20 May
RAF COSFORD AIRSHOW 10 June
RAF MUSEUM RE-OPENING CEREMONY London - 21 June
NATIONAL AIRCRAFT TOUR Horse Guards Parade, London - 6 to 9 July
RAF100 PARADE & FLYPAST The Mall, London - 10 July
ROYAL INTERNATIONAL AIR TATTOO RAF Fairford - 13 to 15 July
NORTHERN IRELAND AIRSHOW Portrush - 4 to 5 August
NATIONAL AIRCRAFT TOUR Newcastle, N Ireland - 4 to 5 August
NATIONAL AIRCRAFT TOUR Victoria Square, Birmingham - 25 to 27 August
NATIONAL AIRCRAFT TOUR Glasgow Science Centre - 1 to 2 September
NATIONAL AIRCRAFT TOUR Cathedral Gardens, Manchester - 15 to 16 September
BATTLE OF BRITAIN SERVICE London - 16 September
 A further list of hundreds of locally organised events around the UK is at: raf.mod.uk/raf100/whats-on/

Please note, the Association has an extremely limited allocation of places for only a few of these events. Details of how to take part will be shared as soon as finalised. Unfortunately, the Association will not be able to respond to applications or communications made before then.



The winning baton design. It will be made of brass, wood, aluminium, steel and carbon aerofoil wing cross-sections, symbolising aircraft construction through the ages. ©MOD/Crown.



AC Jack Richardson, AC Luke Marston, AC Wame "Q" Qalobulawasikabara and AC Tristan Gower, students of Gen Tech and Workshop Course number 35 at No4 School of Technical Training, MOD St Athan, working on their winning relay baton design. ©MOD/Crown.

RAF Association events

RAF Association Centenary Service - National Memorial Arboretum, Staffordshire
 Sunday 13 May 2018.

Tickets are now available for our key commemorative event to celebrate the 100th birthday of the RAF. Members attending Conference will be guaranteed a place but still also need to register their intention to attend the service. All other places will be allocated on a first come, first served basis. Please book early: rafa.org.uk/nma or on 0800 018 2361.

Look out for details of regional events including:

Northern Area - Erewash Branch - service and refreshments at Derby Cathedral.

Northern Area - RAF Boulmer's Freedom of the City of Newcastle parade on 19 May. There is a weekend of activities planned in conjunction with the RAF.

South East and Eastern Area - a service and reception at the Air Forces Memorial at Runnymede.

Wales, Midland and South Western Area - service at Worcester Cathedral.

Wales, Midland and South Western Area - Birmingham International Tattoo.

Keep up-to-date on all things RAF100 with the newsletter from: raf.mod.uk/raf100/stay-in-touch/

Association President Sir Baz North meeting an air cadet at our Garden at the National Memorial Arboretum in 2017.

Baton relay announced

A Centenary baton relay will travel to 100 RAF sites in the UK and overseas over 100 days in 2018.

The sporting endeavour will help celebrate and commemorate, and inspire future generations, by showcasing opportunities for sport in the RAF.

Starting at the Royal Courts of Justice on 1 April 2018, the relay will involve regular, reserve, and retired personnel, their families and industry partners. It will culminate on 10 July on Horse Guards Parade.

The RAF's baton relay team is hoping to get branches involved. Look out for more information in due course.



Happy 20th

The RAF Association Concert Band will celebrate its 20th anniversary in 2018.

Set up in partnership with the Association in October 1998, it helps to promote and raise the profile of the Association. All the musicians are volunteers: some have served in the forces, some are former professionals, some teachers. Most are civilian players who just enjoy making music together.

The band also performs a number of paid engagements throughout the year. The income from these engagements is used to raise money for the RAF Association and to offset the running costs of the band.



The 2018 music programme includes concerts at the International Military Tattoo, Bristol Cathedral and the National Memorial Arboretum. It will also be performing at the families' day at Abbey Wood, in Weston-super-Mare and at the Swan Theatre in Worcester. A joint concert with the RNAS Yeovilton Band is planned next year as part of the RAF100 celebrations.

The 20th anniversary dinner is planned for October.

Full details at rafaconcertband.org.uk

The RAF Association Concert Band before a performance at Wells Cathedral. ©Peter Skellon.

Centre welcomes Blind Veterans UK

Our Preston Wings Centre is now hosting regular Blind Veterans UK drop-in lunches. These monthly events have been established to help the charity extend their assistance into the community - and are proving very popular. This month 21 members joined the staff and volunteers of Blind Veterans UK and the Wings Centre for a fun three hours of chat and friendship. The drop-ins are a wonderful way to bring people together and the Wings Centre is a great location in which to do it.

Ian Barber, centre manager said: "They have also proved beneficial for the Association. We signed up new members, encouraged the take up of Talking Air Mail and even recruited a young RAF veteran to become a telephone befriender".

We look forward to hosting more of these important activities and aim to create similar events with other service charities.



Fun, chat and friendship. Blind Veterans UK's second visit to our Wings Centre in Preston.

In it, and won it!

A former serviceman from Cumbria has won £9,750 on our Wings Lotto rollover. 84 year-old Mr Byers joined the RAF in 1951, aged just 18, and served for four years in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). He has been an Association member for 33 years and a Wings Lotto player since it started nine years ago.

Speaking of what it felt like to win, Mr Byers said: "It was a dream. When I was called up to be told I had won, I thought it was a con! I have been entering for many years, but never thought I would actually win - but you know what they say, you have to be in it to win it!"

Family man Mr Byers is putting some of his winnings towards helping his son-in-law who needs adapted facilities after having his leg amputated.

The RAF Association Wings Lotto is a weekly lottery which sees one lucky person win £1,000 each week or up to £10,000 if there are rollovers. Costing just £1 to enter, it helps raise vital funds for the Association's welfare work.

Enter at rafa.org.uk/get-involved/wings-lotto or contact Jo Bray at the Association headquarters by email jo.bray@rafa.org.uk or by post to sign up (address inside front cover).



'Wingsy' our lottery mascot

5k in Kabul



Our fundraisers operate around the world. Sergeant Zoe Fowler is the force cashier currently serving on Operation Toral in Kabul, Afghanistan. Last Wings Week she set up a five kilometre Battle of Britain Run and raised £954.27 for the Wings Appeal. We spoke to her about the challenges of fundraising on deployment and the competitive nature of a multi-national, multi-service base.

What made you want to fundraise for the RAF Association?

Back in 2014 and 2015 I was on the RAFALO committee at Allied Joint Force Command Brunssum. We fundraised for the Wings Appeal there and were really successful. I've witnessed the good work that the charity does and thought the timing was perfect to hold a Battle of Britain race.

Who sponsored you?

We were lucky to secure funding from the Morale and Welfare Team which we used locally to buy t-shirts for competitors and to help towards our donations. We also sold Association merchandise and completed a 'Name the RAF Regiment Teddy Bear', which is where most of the donations came from.

What was the route?

On the Hamid Karzai International Airport Base. The route was two full laps of camp followed by a smaller lap, all on tarmac. Running conditions are not great out here. The air quality is very poor, the surroundings are very dusty and the temperature was mid-20s even early in the morning. Luckily the weather is cooling - it's 10 degrees lower than when I first arrived.

How competitive was it?

It was very competitive. We had monetary prizes for first, second and third places for females and males. A Turkish soldier won the male first prize and my SO2 J1, an army major, won the female first prize. Everyone who entered received a t-shirt and RAF Association water bottle.

How many people usually run on base? Is there a running club?

Like any multi-national establishment, there are many fit and athletic people here. You see people running outside at all times of the day, some, like myself, prefer to run in the sunshine and heat, others prefer to run at dusk when it's cooler. I normally go out at around 6am to set myself up for the day, just for three or four miles. The longest I've ever run was a marathon in Belgium back in 2014 - although I'm not in a rush to run 26.2 miles again!

Any top tips for those fundraising on deployment?

Try to situate yourself in the best place to get the best audience. Other nations really do love our British items and many of them buy them to send home.



Wingwalk

RAF Association fundraisers release their adrenaline after successfully wing walking in September. The challenge is one of many that the Association's fundraising team offer. Further details at rafa.org.uk/challenge or email: jules@rafa.org.uk ©Scott Dabinet at focus82.co.uk.



Night Fighters march on

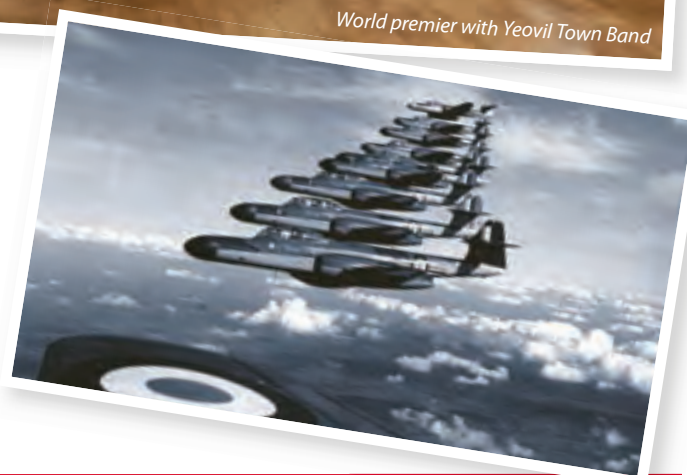
A march dedicated to Fighter Command has been brought to life by the 264 Squadron Association. It had its world premiere at Wells Town Hall, played by the Yeovil Town Band, and has since been recorded by the Band of Her Majesty's Royal Marines and by the Central Band of the Royal Air Force.

Geoff Faulkner, Squadron Secretary, said: "Everyone knows the Dambusters March dedicated to 617 Squadron of Bomber Command. There were no marches dedicated to Fighter Command - but now there is one. It's taken nearly nine years to get this played."

The 264 Squadron Association was started in the year 2000 'really by accident'. Geoff was asked if he could locate an airman from the 1950s when he served on the Night Fighter Squadron. He put a request into Air Mail, and had seven replies. He says: "They were all from wartime aircrew and it was obvious they were lonely and missed the service comradeship, but they were not the person I was looking for. However, I said to my wife 'I really can't walk away from these men', and so our Association was born. At its height we had 150 members, mainly aircrew as they had their own network and were much easier to trace, but this was more difficult to search for airmen, especially national servicemen, like myself - although I was a civvy-trained aircraft engineer." The 264 Squadron Association has its own website and you can listen to the recordings of the march on this page: <http://264squadron.co.uk/meetings/>



World premier with Yeovil Town Band



DADI of them all

Our 'Broken Wings - Your Membership Matters' campaign was one of two charities highly commended in the Charity App or Campaign category alongside Unicef UK.

The Association's digital marketing has been recognised at the DADIs (the national Drum Awards for the Digital Industries).

The Association's membership has grown to 72,000, with a target of 100,000 to reach by 2020.

One of the digital adverts used in the Broken Wings campaign

Standing for your vote in 2018

Nominations have been received for election to Council (in the office of Elected Member) following Annual Conference in 2017.

Votes are by post and must be received by noon on 7 May 2018. Branches will receive the ballot form and instructions early in 2018. Details of the nominees are also available online in the members' area of rafa.org.uk.

There are ten nominations for eight Elected Member posts on Council



Blackman, Michael

Tenure: May 2014 to present.
Council meeting attendance: 7/7 (100%)
Committees: Membership, Supporter, Partner Engagement - attendance 6/6 (100%).
Total meeting attendance: 16/17 (94%).

Experience: I have been Branch Chairman of Whitley Bay & North Shields Branch for over 20 years also having previously been Secretary and also still in the position of Wings Appeal Officer for over 20 years. I have also been serving on Northern Area Council since 2013 and on the Association Council since 2014. I have also attended and still attend training courses on Governance, Data Protection, and Charity Commission Regulations.

Statement: I would like to continue promoting the Association to allow it to become one of the top Military Charities, and to encourage the growth of membership and to bring on the RAFA Youth so that it can provide us with future full and association members. Also to help the Association through the changing environment with the introduction of the new Data Protection Act and the changes in the Charity Commission laws.

Dennett Stannard, Beryl

Council meeting attendance: not currently a member of Council.
Total meeting attendance: N/A.

Experience: Commissioned service in the Royal Air Force Administrative Branch from 1976 to 1995 gave me a sound and varied background with skills easily transferred to the charity sector. Since moving to France in 2002, I have strived to grow the Sud-Ouest Branch, meeting the needs of members and providing welfare support to the wider RAF Family. Appointment to the Association Headquarters Audit Committee and the European Area Council has added experience in governance and change management.

Statement: Passionate and enthusiastic about the future of the RAF Association, I will strive to continue to develop our Association to better meet the needs of members and to support the RAF Family worldwide. As a trustee, I would bring a wealth of charity sector



experience with a strong foundation of 19 years commissioned service in the RAF. I will endeavour to help grow the membership of the Association. Also, to make our Association the first port of call for any present or past member of the RAF, or their dependents, to facilitate continuing social friendship and kinship, as well as welfare support when needed. Finally, I will attempt to ensure that all monies raised in favour of the Association and its other many assets, are spent or used diligently and efficiently, for the benefit of our members and the RAF Family, in accordance with charity regulations and governance.

Gibson, Dean 'Gibbo'

Tenure: July 2005 to April 2007 (RAFALO co-opted); May 2016 to present (elected member).
Council meeting attendance: 6/7 (86%)
Committees: Membership, Supporter, Partner Engagement - attendance 3/6 (50%).
Total meeting attendance: 17/21 (81%).

Experience: Since becoming a RAFALO, 1 Jun 99, I have successfully undertaken a huge range of activities at all levels of the Association, especially over the last 10 years, giving me an unprecedented appreciation of branch, club and RAF-related issues and how best to resolve them. This appreciation, along with RAF Flight Squadron and Wing duties, in both Great Britain and overseas, linked with the staff and leadership training I have undertaken, will benefit the Association in many ways, including identification of health and safety problems and changes to legislation, as well as liaison between RAF personnel and the Association. My RAFALO duties range from Station to Snr RAFALO Committee, where I have been the driving force for change in many areas, evidencing my sound communication, leadership and management skills. Being the President and Assistant Honorary Welfare Officer of a branch with a club enables me to provide a grass roots perspective of proposed changes and how best to implement them. I have taken part in many collections and other fundraising activities, evidencing my commitment and drive to support the Association at a tactical level ensuring I know how those raising vital funds feel, when making financial decisions at the strategic level.

Statement: Being a serving flight commander and RAFALO, with the RAF's Core Values, Ethos and Standards at heart, and fulfilling several RAF Association duties at branch level, I have a great vantage point from which to identify the needs of the RAF Family, and how best to serve those needs in line with the aims and capabilities of the Association. With boundless energy and a proven track record in project and change management, and a willingness to take on new responsibilities, even when those responsibilities entail undergoing intense training courses, often at personal cost, I will take a full and active part in the strategic decision-making process. In over 31 years of dedicated service, I have never shied away from a task or decision, no matter how large, complex or unpalatable, and as a trustee I will continue to do this and will always put the needs of the RAF Family first, which is evidenced by my 18 plus years of continuous service as a RAFALO. As an elected trustee, I will continue to carry out my many branch and RAFALO duties, including welfare, fundraising, membership recruitment and ceremonial, to ensure my decisions are personally evidence-based. Per Ardua Ad Astra.

Continued overleaf

Goss, Chris

Tenure: July 2007 to July 2012 (RAFALO co-opted); May 2016 to present (member). **Council meeting attendance:** 5/7 (71%) **Committees:** Fundraising and Communications - 2/2 (100%); Membership, Supporter, Partner Engagement - 6/6 (100%); Information Environment - 12/13 (92%). **Total meeting attendance:** 25/28 (89.29%).



Experience: Whilst in the RAF, for my latter years up to 2012, I was the RAFALO member on Council. On my retirement, I had to resign from Council but then volunteered to be the Sud-Ouest Vice Chairman and then in 2016, put my name forward and was elected to Council. In the last 16 months, I have attended all but two Council meetings (one meeting was missed due to other Association duties), each associated training session, two strategy days and Conference. I am a member of the Information Environment Committee and participate in the Membership, Supporter, Partner Engagement Committee and Marketing Committee meetings either by phone or face-to-face. Together with another Council member, we are responsible for sifting, interviewing and selecting cadets for Flying Scholarships, a task which has involved, together with headquarters, streamlining and improving the process and changing the application form and selection procedure. I have proven myself to be an active, responsible and proactive member of Council and wish to continue in a similar fashion for another, full term as a trustee of the Association. Retiring as a senior RAF officer and then spending three years in industry, I bring this experience together with a knowledge of risk and contracts to the Association.

Statement: Having joined the Association in 1985, been a RAFALO, Area RAFALO, RAFALO on Council, Branch Vice Chairman and Elected Member of Council, I bring 32 years of RAF and RAFA experience to both Council and the Association. The Association has gone through good and then bad times but now has impetus and drive to ensure it remains relevant to today's, tomorrow's and yesterday's RAF. I would like to think that during my two years on Council I have, with my other trustees, helped to make a positive difference and I want to continue to do this and to continue to be part of this. In recent years, the Association had had to adapt to meet new and varied challenges and by having the right experience and knowledge on Council and working closely with HQ, we can all best serve the Association, its ideals and most importantly its members. I therefore feel both well-suited and comfortable in being a willing volunteer to sit on your Council.

Little, Heather

Council meeting attendance: not currently a member of Council. **Total meeting attendance:** N/A.

Experience: Currently in a head of fundraising position at a leading animal welfare charity, I have vast experience of fundraising from high net worth individuals, corporates and charitable foundations having worked in the not-for-profit sector. I am a highly motivated and successful relationship-based fundraising manager with a proven ability and track record of achieving success through the creation and implementation of growth strategies and through the development of confident, high achieving teams. Personal



success in this area includes delivering over £1.5m income from major donors in one financial year. I have knowledge and experience of multi income stream fundraising including face-to-face, community and events, individual giving and legacy. I have worked with the legacy and in-memoriam manager at the RAF Association to create and develop a legacy programme and continue to provide guidance and expertise through the Fundraising and Communications Committee. I am also a Northern Area Trustee. With a keen interest in and understanding of charity governance, fundraising and inclusion and diversity, I would relish the opportunity to use my skills and experience for the benefit of the RAF Association.

Statement: Since joining the RAF Association, I have seen the organisation move through a significant period of change, not only in terms of the way it operates but also in its widening scope and remit as the charity that supports the whole of the RAF family. Having worked in the not-for-profit sector for a number of years I have vast experience of governance, fundraising, marketing and communications. I currently provide guidance to the Association through the Fundraising and Communications Committee and through my role as a Northern Area Council Member. I have also acted as the delegate for my branch and Northern Area Council at Annual Conference, often being selected to represent branch/Northern Area views on resolutions. My belief is that we must continue to grow and evolve in order to continue our support for the next generation of the RAF family. I am truly passionate about the future of the RAF Association including every aspect of its work, its members and beneficiaries. It would be an honour to be appointed as a trustee and use my skills and experience to the benefit of the Association and uphold its values, whilst assisting in the achievement of its ambitious aims for the future.

McEnnis, Ian

Tenure: May 1996 to present. **Council meeting attendance:** 7/7 (100%) **Committees:** Fundraising and Communications - attendance 8/8 (100%). **Total meeting attendance:** 26/28 (93%).



Experience: Having served on Council for several years in various roles, I have gained in listening to the concerns of our membership. I am well organised, reliable, highly experienced and commercially aware. I have demonstrated this by the effective management of all resources available. As Chairman of the Fundraising and Communications Committee, I have a challenge to grow income to £15M p.a. I have been a Councillor in Wycombe District Council since 1999 and have been involved in several roles. As Chairman I was in a position to sign off the Armed Forces Covenant to RAF High Wycombe in 2012 and was appointed Armed Forces Champion. I am also on Buckinghamshire County Committee of the South East Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association. I feel that I am well placed to be part of the team to take forward the objectives and aspirations over and beyond the period to 2020.

Statement: As an elected member of Council I want to promote the profile and standing of the Royal Air Forces Association as an excellent authority and wish to continue to play a positive role contributing to its success. I feel I can contribute with enthusiasm and motivation in taking forward the Association's strategic direction through corporate planning, financial management and policy development. We are facing a wide-ranging agenda in the future and I hope to work with my peers in responding to the challenges, which we will face. I am clear that the delivery of our welfare services is becoming more entwined in partnership working. The systems for

obtaining funding for respite and convalescence from other charities seems to be working well. I would like to try and influence the development of existing arrangements and to seek to establish new working relationships. I am encouraged by the innovative initiatives taking place in conjunction with our business partners and I will to take an active role in encouraging and developing fundraising and communication. This together with increasing membership is essential to the delivery of our core activity which is welfare. I ask for your support to represent your interest on Council.

Millett, Neale

Council meeting attendance: not currently a member of Council. **Total meeting attendance:** N/A.

Experience: Last full time employment as a global director for an international company. Since then I have been running my own consultancy business while organising and helping to run fundraising events for the RAF Association Wings Appeal and other bodies.

Statement: Should I be elected I would strive to ensure the aims, traditions and ethos of the Association are maintained while expanding the RAF Association family to enable the continuing support of the membership in need. While continuing the previous aims, I would also want to look for new ways to attract more serving and non-serving members and increasing funds while keeping the overhead cost of the organisation under control.



Pattison, Bryan

Tenure: May 1998 to present. **Council meeting attendance:** 7/7 (100%) **Committees:** Remuneration - attendance 3/3 (100%). **Total meeting attendance:** 10/10 (100%).

Experience: As Chairman of the Governance Group that submitted the revised governance documents of the Association to Conferences 2016 and 2017 I was aware that consultation at all levels of the Association was essential during the process. I believe that this was reflected in our work over the past four years and care was taken not to disenfranchise the membership as the proposed changes were circulated widely for their input. In addition, I also made presentations of the group's recommendations at various Area Conferences. Following approval at the two recent Conferences, the new governance documents came into effect in May 2017.

Statement: A long-term strategy is necessary to ensure the Association's future, and I would like, if re-elected, to continue to be actively involved with its development. The new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) will come into force in May 2018 and I would like to be active in following the Association's implementation of the Regulation. Following the approval of the revised Governance Documents I would be available to help, where necessary, in their interpretation as well as continuing to work on the revision and simplification of the remainder of the Association's Administrative Handbook. The Association has weathered the global financial crisis extremely well and I would be in a position to help ensure that our



assets are properly protected. Concerned by the reduced Branch Delegate attendance at Annual Conference, averaging only 34% over the last twelve years, I would encourage, through the Areas, a reversal of this. I believe that my experience and knowledge of the work of Council, together with that gained in my professional career in an international environment concerned with multi-million-pound budgeting, management, and organizational skills, even 'trouble shooting' at an international level, stand me in good stead to continue serving the Association.

Ramrayka, Peter

Tenure: N/A. **Council meeting attendance:** not currently a member of Council. **Total meeting attendance:** N/A

Experience: During the last ten years I have been employed firstly as a director of an NHS Trust (2007-2009 - started in 200 - with direct responsibility for budgets totalling £30m which provided major state of the art, national and international award winning mental health facilities. Secondly from 2009 to 2011, I was the Department of Health -implementation adviser for major capital programmes (projects from £5m to £400m) covering London and South-East England. From 2011 to the present time I have been Strategic Healthcare Adviser/ Senior Consultant to an architectural firm and major construction companies working with the NHS. Concurrently, from 2013 to the present I am the elected representative from the voluntary and community sector on the local health and care top strategic forum - the health & wellbeing board. I am a business qualified (MBA) graduate with companionship (1) and fellowships (3) from three professional organisations. I have been a Justice of the Peace for Inner London (1981-90) resigning to take up a leadership position abroad. I have utilised my significant general and project management skills, competencies and experience to provide paid and voluntary services to public bodies and charities, promoting good governance, value for money, organisational and cultural transformational changes.

Statement: I have benefitted from my initial training and experience in the RAF (Medical Branch) 1961-70, in that I achieved, after 15 years an NHS Chief Officer's management position in 1986 and have continued with many successful high-profile projects, programmes and consultancies. I am committed to giving something back and am a passionate supporter of the Association's work. I have done so at branch level since being elected Chairman of City and Central London Branch in 2014, applying many of the skills acquired in the NHS. Consequently, the branch has been very active, growing in membership, sustainable, providing friendship, help and support where needed, adopted an ATC Squadron and has been recognised nationally for achievement in fundraising. In applying for an elected member's position, I bring first-hand branch experience coupled with professional expertise and involvement in the six strategic themes and associated strategic objectives, many of which are similar to those I have worked on in the NHS and in voluntary work, examples of which I have been given in my candidate's experience statement. I am confident that I have the time and the commitment to contribute to the transformational programme which Council has set in train.

Continued overleaf

Rees, Anthony 'Taff'

Tenure: 1999 to 2010 (RAFALO co-opted) and 2013 to present (elected member). **Council meeting attendance:** 6/7 (86%) **Committees:** Annual Conference Committee - attendance 10/10 (100%). **Total meeting attendance:** 16/17 (94%).



Experience: Royal Air Force 1984 to 2010. Joined RAFA in 1995. Member of Brecon Branch and Porthcawl Branch. Member of Wales Area Council 1997 to 2001. Member of Wales Area Executive Committee 1998 to 2001. Member Wales Area Development Committee 2000 to 2001. Chairman Brecon Branch 2000 to 2001. Member of Area RAFALO Committee 1996 to 2000. Member of Council 1999 to 2010, 2013 to date. Member of Executive & Finance Committee 2000 to 2002. Member of Fundraising Advisory Committee 1999 to 2002; Chairman 2000 to 2002. Member of Membership Advisory Committee 2000 to 2001. Member of Executive Board 2007 to 2010. Member of Annual Conference Committee 2007 to date; Chairman 2011 to date.

Statement: I have had experience of serving on various committees and fundraising projects both within the RAF and my local community, helping with the welfare of others, ensuring that events and services are delivered to the persons that need it, at the time they require it. My priority if elected as a member of your Council and Chairman of your Annual Conference Committee will be to liaise closely with both the retired and serving members of the Association and make your Annual Conference a more enjoyable, value-for-money and productive experience for all members. I hope in achieving this it will in turn help to make our Association more attractive to join and encourage both old and new members to become an active part of our Association. I want to ensure that our Association increases membership and its influence with veterans and Royal Air Force communities, delivering support to the RAF family for the many generations that will follow.

There is one nomination for one post on Annual Conference Committee – elected unopposed

Evans, Gail

Tenure: Member of ACC since 2014. **Council meeting attendance:** N/A. **Committees:** Annual Conference Committee - attendance 9/10 (90%). **Total meeting attendance:** 9/10 (90%). **Experience:** Since 1999 I have been involved as a RAFALO in each of the units I have been assigned to. At conference itself, I have been involved in the European Drinks evenings where we raise money for Wings every year. I am a member of Alresford Branch in Hampshire, owing to having a young family I try to be as involved with the Association as much as I can. Over the past ten years I have been involved in the Association in various roles / positions. These have included whilst I was serving in the RAF, the South East / Eastern RAFALO on Area Council and for many years I ran the two evening raffles and tombola at Area Conference. I then moved to Council as a RAF serving member, I resigned from this post when I left the RAF in 2014. I immediately became a member of the Annual Conference Committee, where I feel my knowledge of the Association family has helped me in this role. I would like to carry on in this role if selected.



Statement: I have been a member of RAFA since 1998 and since 1999. During this time, I have only missed two conferences due to operational deployments. I have watched how conference has evolved over the years and feel that I am able to help this evolution for the benefit of the membership and therefore want to have an input into this. I have been a member of the ACC for the past 3 to 4 years and feel I have not only helped to ensure we have had good and safe conferences but also have actively sought feedback from the attendees to ensure that the conference meets their needs and expectations. I recognise that to be chosen to represent the members at conference on the ACC is a privilege and all comments made to me are treated with the respect they deserve. These comments are then highlighted at meetings to ensure all ACC committee members are aware of any issues, no matter how trivial they may appear, so we can constantly improve how Annual Conference is conducted. I would also like to extend my thanks for everyone's previous support.

100 YEARS OF WOMEN IN THE RAF

The RAF Benevolent Fund's Princess Marina House in Rustington is celebrating 100 years of women in the RAF with a special celebration at the end of January.

The event is tailored for women who served in the WAAF or WRAF or anyone interested in their contribution to the RAF. It includes guest speakers, cookery demonstrations, lively entertainment, a gala dinner, excursions and lots more.

General manager Shirley Steeples said: "We want to celebrate the invaluable contribution women have made to the armed forces. So come along with your friends and partners, everyone is welcome and we can promise lots of fun!"

The WAAF's week runs from 29 January to 4 February 2018. Guests can book three, four or up to seven day breaks for just £50 per night. To book, or for further information, call 01903 784044.

Princess Marina House is situated in spacious grounds on the seafront in Rustington, West Sussex. The home provides full board and provision for guests with disabilities.

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Finding love at 91

"I've never been as happy as when I'm with you".

Betty and John on a day out.

John and his wife had been regular visitors to Flowerdown House, Weston-super-Mare. They used to visit the hotel for respite every spring and summer until her death in June 2010. Afterwards he continued to visit the place they both loved.

Beatrice, known as Betty, had also been a regular visitor to Flowerdown, visiting on her own after she was widowed. However, although Betty visited in spring and autumn, their paths had never crossed. In 2012, all of this changed when they met by chance in the lounge. They started to sit together at mealtimes, talk and spend time together. They realised that they had much in common.

Their friendship blossomed. John started writing Betty love letters and Betty wrote back. They planned to meet up after Betty returned from a holiday in Malawi. But Betty and John found it difficult to be apart and called each other every day during the five weeks' separation. It was at this point that Betty's daughter Davina and son David knew that this was more than just a friendship. Davina says: "It just goes to show that true romance can come into your life at any age and in unexpected places."

Once Betty returned from Malawi they made plans for John to visit her in Leicestershire. John drove the 300 miles from Cornwall to Leicestershire to stay with Betty. He says: "As soon as I stepped through her front door, it felt like I had lived there forever." The next time John visited he stayed longer. They went shopping together, regularly went out for Sunday lunch and John used to give Betty small presents to show how much he cared.

Their romance was a contented one and, after less than a year, they took the decision to move to Weston-super-Mare to be together. They would say to each other: "I've never been as happy as when I'm with you." For four years, they spent every minute of every day together, always talking and laughing with each other. Then Betty passed away and John's world came tumbling down. John says: "It broke my heart when she died. I felt that she had left me and my life was empty." John struggled to cope when Betty first passed away. He went from having a constant companion who he laughed with every day, to making one dinner and one cup of tea.

It's tough for John, now aged 96, to cope with his overwhelming sense of loss, but his new family, photographs and memories of the joyful years they had together are helping to sustain him. He says: "Many people my age say I've had a good marriage - and that's it. They're not interested in meeting people. But just visiting places like Flowerdown means you have the chance to meet new people. I tell people to go out and enjoy life. You won't meet any new people unless you go out."

Betty would not have wanted any sadness after she passed away so John is determined to do his best to live the rest of his life to the full.

When Betty passed away, she left the RAF Association a gift in her will. She had a second chance at love thanks to the Wings Breaks hotels. And it is thanks to the support of people like Betty that we are able to continue our much-needed welfare work for the whole of the RAF family.



Phone calls every day while Betty was in Malawi (above)



Thank you to John and to Betty's family for use of their photographs.

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Variations on a theme: volunteering

In 2013 the average age of an Association honorary welfare officer was 74. Active and energetic as they all were, many branches reported they were struggling to recruit when existing volunteers stepped down. Similar issues were faced for fundraising volunteers across the UK. The Association responded by launching a new volunteer programme so two years on, how is it all going? We outline the successes and the plans for the future, and Alyson Hunter, Director of HR and Volunteering, answers members' questions.

Q. Where are we now?

A. We recruit to the needs and vacancies identified by branches, welfare and fundraising teams. In 2016 we recruited 698 new volunteers and in the first ten months of 2017 we have recruited 631. These include: caseworkers, befrienders, fundraisers and fundraising team leaders, 64 other vacancies and branch requests for positions such as treasurer, secretary, Wings Appeal organiser.

Q. How do the new welfare volunteers work alongside honorary welfare officers in branches?

A. Honorary welfare officers in branches form the backbone of our front line welfare services and I do not see that changing in the near future. Where a branch approaches us for help to recruit welfare officers then we advertise their vacancies and manage the recruitment process including interviews, disclosure checks, references and training. We also recruit for vacancies identified by the area welfare teams where there isn't a branch. We value the contribution that all welfare officers make, however they are connected to the Association.

Q. Are new volunteers being recruited to replace branches and their activities?

A. No. From the onset of the volunteer recruitment programme an objective has been to sustain branches. The volunteer recruitment team has successfully recruited a number of people to branch committee positions, which has enabled the branch to continue. The volunteer team recently worked with the Bedford Branch to recruit a very keen and experienced volunteer treasurer. Here is what Percy Connolly, Branch Chairman, had to say about his new volunteer, Michael Coward, and the volunteering programme itself: "A fantastic bit of work from the area volunteer coordinator. We now have a superb treasurer who has fitted in perfectly and is volunteering at the branch with immediate effect. He is of fantastic calibre and will be of great support to the branch in moving forwards. I will be using the volunteering scheme again and in fact, I have since advertised another volunteering role to complement our ongoing work!"

Q. Can this help increase rather than deplete membership?

A. Yes. Welfare volunteers and fundraising volunteers are actively encouraged to become members of the Association and where possible to become members of branches. 99 volunteers formally recruited in 2017 expressed an early interest in membership and all have been notified of their nearest branch. When we are out recruiting volunteers, we are also recruiting members. We talk about the value of membership to enquirers at various stages as we believe that once they become more aware of who we are and what we do, they will be interested in joining as members.

Alyson Hunter,
Director of HR and Volunteering

Q. Do branches have a choice about whether they accept volunteers?

A. Where new volunteers have expressed an interest in the branch we give them the branch contact details and then it is a down to the welcome they receive at their local branch. Most branches have been delighted by a visit from a new volunteer and some have even paid for their membership themselves by way of a welcome.

Q. Why are we recruiting more befrienders, but not more honorary welfare officers?

A. We are recruiting both, but they are different roles with different training. As the demand for befrienders grows we have increased the number of befriender training courses and to ensure the courses are accessible, they have been run across the country.

Q. Was the membership consulted before the volunteer recruitment programme was launched?

A. Absolutely, we didn't launch until we had spoken to the membership first. We invited members to take part in an Air Mail survey, ran area workshops and formed a working group led by a branch (and area) chairman. The working group also included branch volunteers to make sure that the programme was carefully thought through. Since then quarterly progress reports are submitted to Council.

Q. What is the future for the volunteer recruitment programme?

A. There is a great deal of support from both within the RAF family and those connected to it. Our blossoming relationship with the like-minded Rotary International (see page 20) will serve to attract similarly community-minded people to our work and vice versa.



Befriender Derek Boxall (left) chatting about service days with Horsa glider pilot Jim Rudkin

To volunteer, contact your branch directly, email volunteers@rafa.org.uk or call 0800 018 2361.

To get help recruiting volunteers for your branch contact volunteers@rafa.org.uk



Burmese Days



How a Rotarian befriender and an RAF widow bonded over Burma, as Rotary and the RAF Association test a joint project to befriend.

Stroma Williams was only 12 weeks old when her father was killed in a flying accident in 1944. Now nearly 75 years later, the wartime experiences of her father have been surprisingly revived thanks to a new befriending partnership between the Royal Air Forces Association and Rotary International.

An email to her Rotarian husband about the new scheme was seen by Stroma and she asked if she could volunteer as a befriender in North Wales. After training, she was assigned to two people and discovered that the husband of one of them may well have met her father as they were both RAF pilots in Burma.

"The husband of this lady survived the war but my father died when in his Mosquito aircraft broke up due to the humidity. We realised both men had served as pilots on neighbouring squadrons in Burma and may well have met," said Stroma. "The RAF connection has certainly given us plenty to talk about, chatting about what life must have been like for wartime pilots and learning new things about what my father and this lady's husband did and faced during the war."

"The scheme enables me to give something back to people. I realised that if my late Mum had a befriender as well as family, it would have made a world of difference to her. The two people that I go to see just enjoy chatting, especially about things that they know and remember. I was quite surprised that there are no lulls in the conversation! The befriending scheme definitely helps people who are lonely, bored and for whom times hangs heavy. It helps to exercise the minds!"

Seven representatives of Rotary in North Wales and parts of North West England have been trained as benders by the Association since last summer. There are hopes that the partnership can be rolled out across the UK. Around 85,000 of the 170,000 RAF veterans in the UK have specifically said that they experienced loneliness. The scheme pairs a veteran with one of the Association's trained volunteers who keeps in touch with visits and chats.

John Bird is another Rotarian from North Wales who has volunteered for the scheme. He says that the Rotary motto 'Service Above Self' chimes perfectly with the RAF and with the service that military veterans gave to their country. He sees parallels between Rotary and the RAF Association which share similar values and are both there to help people. He described the befriender training as 'superb' and hopes that the partnership will be developed.

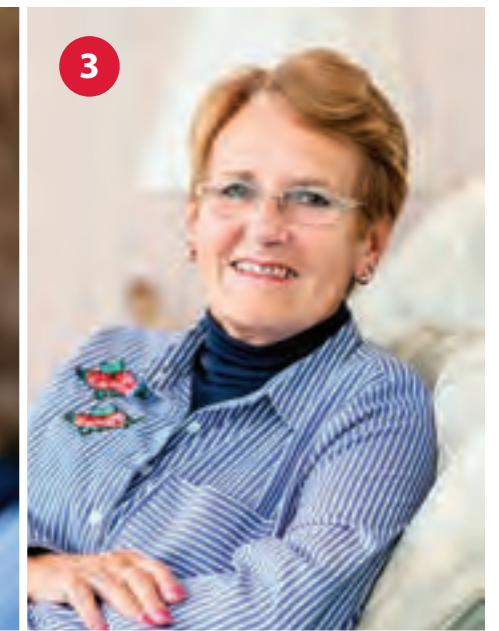
"I have been matched up with an RAF veteran not far away. His face lit up when he found a new face to talk to," says John. "It is fascinating to talk to such people and learn about their life. He feels good as someone is showing an interest in him. There is an opportunity to change someone's life for the better. I believe the befriender partnership can really make a difference."

Rory O'Connor, Director of Welfare and Policy at the Royal Air Forces Association, said: "Our partnership with Rotary is a welcome boost for our befriending which will help us give invaluable welfare support to the RAF family. Like so many of our volunteers, we hope that the first seven Rotary befriending volunteers get as much out of this as they will bring to the veterans."

Amanda Watkin, General Secretary at Rotary in Great Britain and Ireland, said: "Like the RAF Association, we are an international family of people whose common goal is to help others. We see this befriending project as an important part of our drive to help communities through our volunteer work and help make people's lives better. And who deserves support more than our forces veterans?"

"If this pilot partnership works out well, we will discuss with the RAF Association whether we can help them expand it across the Rotary network in the UK."

To volunteer or if you know an RAF veteran who would benefit from this scheme, please call 0800 018 2361 or visit www.rafa.org.uk/befriending.



1 John Bird and Stroma Williams.

2 John Bird: "befriender training is superb".

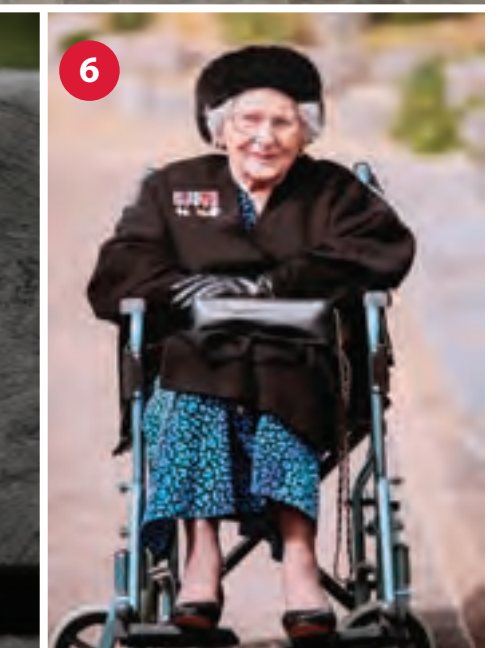
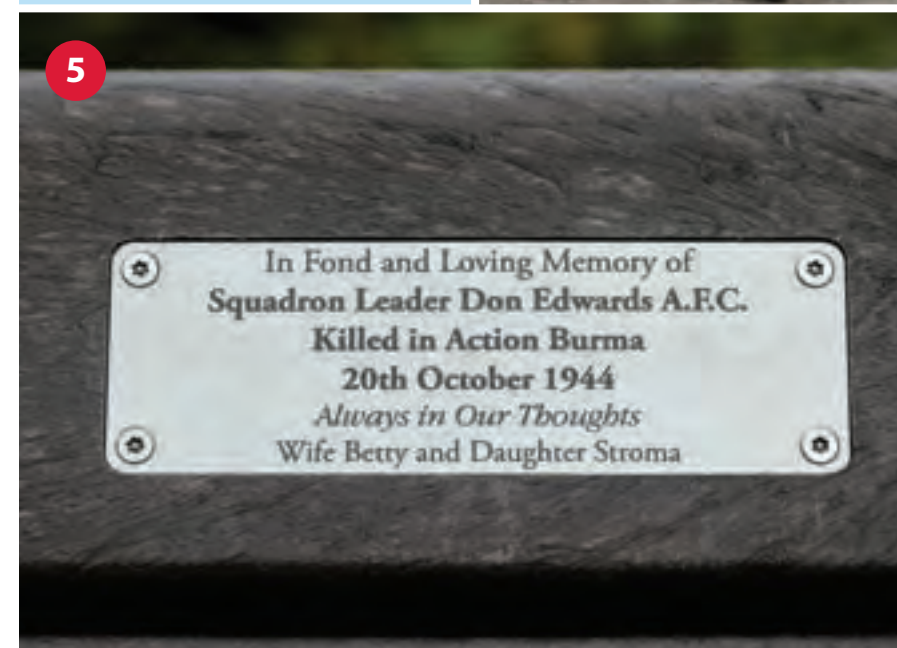
3 Stroma Williams: "befriender training would have made a world of difference to my mum".

4 John Bird and Stroma Williams on the bench dedicated to Stroma's father who was killed in action serving in the RAF in Burma.

5 Dedication to Stroma's father.

6 Stroma's mother wearing her husband's medals.

All photos ©PhilGreig



Employee Spotlight

Introducing Del Rowlands – Director of Membership

Del is our new Director of Membership based at Atlas House, Leicester. Since joining us at the beginning of October, we sat down with him to ask how things are going so far and to find out a little more about the man behind the membership.

Tell us a little about you.

I had an interest in aviation from a very young age. I was in the Air Training Corps as a child and my dad was an aeronautical scientist at Farnborough. Aviation runs through my blood and I commissioned into the RAF in 1989 and served all over the world during my career.

My final RAF appointment was as Commanding Officer at MOD Abbey Wood, having been assigned there in 2015; prior to that I served in Whitehall for three years on the Future Reserves 2020 programme.

I live in Cheltenham where most of my time recently has been spent making my Victorian home habitable. I have two children, Charlie (23) and Ellie (18), and in any spare time I enjoy motorcycling, horse riding and testing my ever-evolving cooking 'skills' on friends.

What skills have you gained?

I have nearly 30 years' service, and have learned much during my career, and I have invariably learned something new every day. Every day is a school day. I hope that in leaving the service as a group captain, I will have an opportunity to bring some of the experience I have acquired to the Association.

What are you looking forward to in your role as Director of Membership?

I'm especially looking forward to meeting all of those that have done and are doing so much for the Association. They have a great deal to be proud of. My team is obviously geographically dispersed, although of course, the headquarters membership team is based at Atlas House, and I am looking forward to meeting all of the teams in the weeks ahead.

What do you feel are the challenges?

Growing our membership of approximately 72,000 to 100,000 by 2020 is certainly a challenge. But one that I am looking forward to and one that I feel we as an Association are up to with the support of all of our members, volunteers and employees. I believe that each of us should be thinking about growing the Association, speaking to friends, family and colleagues and encouraging them to join us, especially as we approach the centenary of the RAF, so that the Association's great work can continue.

We talk a lot about the members fundraising and support of others. Do you think that enough of them call on us when they need help themselves?

I believe that we all have a responsibility to look out for each other and to support each other. To all those that have served and are serving I would say 'this is your charity', and it is important for us to continue providing the support and comradeship that we currently do. I also believe that those that give, whether financially or through volunteering for example may well be reluctant to accept help for themselves. But, we are here to support the entire RAF family, for as long as they might need us.

What do you think is the biggest benefit of the Association?

As a member, it is knowing that you're doing something worthwhile for people that have done so much. It's also invaluable to maintain those connections that people have enjoyed in the service. I believe that among many things the RAF Association holds that link in place.



Del Rowlands
Director of Membership

Hotels news

January (or February or March) blues?

Our Wings Breaks hotels are running a Winter Warmer promotion – offering warmth, cosiness and hospitality at any of our three idyllic locations.

If you stay before April 2018 you can get seven nights full board from just £325 for a single occupancy room, or £500 for a double/twin room. All meals, excursions and in-house entertainment are included.

Please note, many people are eligible for means-tested, funded holidays. So if it's been a while since you could afford a break, please just ask. We may be able to help. For more information visit rafa.org.uk/wingsbreaks or call 0800 018 2361.

Please note, the winter warmer promotion excludes bookings for Christmas and New Year.

Meanwhile, at the hotels in the last few months

Guests at Richard Peck enjoyed the annual 1940s weekend at Lytham St Annes. They were treated to music, dancing and authentic 1940s era aircraft, jeeps and motorbikes. Everyone got into the swing of things, donning 1940s uniforms and costumes and watching a mock battle on the green.

Richard Peck House also provided transport and a driver for the local South Fylde Branch to have a tour of BAE at Warton Aerodrome, accompanied by Squadron Leader Dave Cunnah.

Lisa, the Richard Peck driver said: "The tour was excellent and everyone enjoyed it." It is hoped that guests from Richard Peck will have the opportunity to visit the aerodrome soon.

The team from the newly repainted Rothbury House celebrated Hallowe'en with an extravaganza that included dressing up, a dastardly dining experience and a Jack O'Lantern beautifully carved by Darren, the Rothbury House gardener.

They have also been collecting for the Wings Appeal. The hotel's branch Wings Appeal organiser, Joy, got together volunteers from the branch, hotel and the local air cadets to collect in the nearby shopping centre and Rothbury high street, and do bag packing at a local supermarket. They raised a fantastic £2,888.27.

Rothbury House's immediate neighbour, Lord Tedder Court, has had a busy month, with photographs taken of some residents to capture what they love about living in our sheltered accommodation.

Flowerdown House welcomes a new manager, Nicholas Rickwood, in January. Meanwhile, as we went to print, Colin Lee, manager at Rothbury House was one of three shortlisted candidates for the Leadership Award in the Third Sector Care Awards. Winners were due to be announced in December.

1940s recreations, happy guests, Hallowe'en, Remembrance, Jack O'Lanterns and dinner tables.



Flight Lieutenant Michael Frankel

Our team of RAF Association Liaison Officers (RAFALOs) raise thousands of pounds for the Association every year. They provide a link between serving personnel and our wider branch network. Here we speak to Michael, RAFALO for RAF Waddington.

Tell us a bit about your RAF career.

At RAF Waddington, I am studying the effects of wind farms on radar systems, as an Aerospace Battle Manager.

I enlisted in 1983 as an Aerospace Systems Operator. After completing initial and trade training, I was sent on my first tour at RAF Neatishead, Norfolk. I earned promotion to Warrant Officer in 2008 and after serving abroad in Afghanistan and Cyprus, I returned to the UK to pursue Commissioned Warrant Officer opportunities.

How long have you been a RAFALO?

I've supported the Association in one way or another since joining the RAF, but I didn't get involved formally until I was posted to RAF Neatishead in 2006. Working at a site that had a close relationship with the local community and living in this community, it seemed natural to join the local branch and become their RAFALO.

Why did you decide to become a RAFALO?

As a serving member of the Association it was an opportunity to engage with former members of the RAF and feel more integrated within the civilian community where I lived.

What sort of events have you been involved in?

The most memorable event was organising a WWII veterans event at the heritage centre, RAF Scampton in 2015. On this occasion we hosted more than 70 WWII veterans, including Johnny Johnson MBE, DFM from 617 Squadron and Dr Mary Stopes-Roe, the daughter of Sir Barnes Wallis, the man behind the famous bouncing bomb.

What makes you so passionate about the Association?

My main drive is to provide a link between today's RAF and veterans from former years. I had the great privilege through the Retford Branch to obtain WWII medals for two veterans who had either lost their medals or not received them. Norman Levick had served briefly as a rear gunner on Lancasters before being shot down and taken prisoner. Victor Harding had been an aircraft fitter during the war and had served on 617 Squadron at one point. In both cases, the RAF Scampton Station Commander kindly hosted a formal medal presentation for both men along with a visit to the heritage centre.

If you were running a Brew for the Few, what would your first choice of cake be?

My wife Fiona makes an excellent passion cake, which always goes down well. Ingredients include bananas, carrots and walnuts, topped by a cream cheese icing.

Michael, centre, at a Veterans' day.



Culture vultures

On the horizon

'Spitfire: The Feature Documentary' will premiere in London and across the UK on Sunday 1 April to coincide with the RAF's 100th anniversary.

The film tells the story of how the aircraft was forged in competition, shaped as the war clouds gathered and refined in the white heat of combat. They named her Spitfire – after the chairman's daughter – and she would go on to become the most famous aircraft ever.

Told in the words of the people who built her and flew her – and the people who still fly her today. The film also promises to bring the story of protecting Britain's skies up to date with exclusive footage of RAF Typhoons, shot at RAF Coningsby, and interviews with today's front line pilots and ground crew.

The film's producers plan to offer Association branches the opportunity to get involved with hosting premieres at cinemas in major towns and cities on 1 April. More information will be provided once available.

Book review:

What is the title? Recycling a Son of the British Raj by Peter Ramrayka

How many roundels out of five would you give it?



What was the best thing about it? Informative and funny, a 1960s RAF medic and his poltergeist on an international cultural 'recycling' journey of discovery

What was the worst bit? After a good read difficult to find anything negative but perhaps a little more about RAF life in Cyprus

Was it historically/factually accurate? Yes

How many inaccuracies did you find? None

Would you: Pay for it again? Borrow it? Bin it?

Pay for it again - but should be on special offer to RAF colleagues

Reviewed by Eddie, 72317

New out:

'For the love of the Air Force'. Can you answer all these questions? What is sewn into a pilot's uniform when they receive their wings? In what year did the first female fast jet pilot join the RAF? Why were former Lightning pilots called WIWOLS?

For the Love of the Air Force is written by Norman Ferguson with a foreword by Air Marshal Sir Roger Austin KCB AFC (who is coincidentally the President of South East and Eastern Area). It brings together the origins of the RAF, the people who make it tick and the technology that lets it take to the skies, as well as the aviation lingo and time-honoured traditions that characterise the force we know today. The publishers promise that even if you have first-hand RAF experience or if you're just an enthusiastic supporter from the ground, this remarkable volume will be your guide.



Aerial footage for the documentary of 'Spitfire' being filmed by the world's top aviation photographer, John Dibbs, using specialist cameras attached to light aircraft and helicopters. ©Elliptical Wing. Photographer: John Goodman.

Passion for precision

Materials from a Bristol Blenheim, a Supermarine Spitfire and a Hawker Hurricane that all flew during the summer of 1940, and veneer of original wood from the Shuttleworth Collection's 1917 SE5a, have all been incorporated in a new luxury watch which will support the Association.

A star-studded evening at the Imperial War Museum on 4 October 2017 saw the launch of the 'Bremont 1918' limited edition timepiece. A percentage of sales of the watches will be given to the Royal Air Forces Association. Shortly after the launch, Nick English, co-founder of the watchmaker Bremont, spoke to Air Mail:

How long does it take to develop a timepiece like this?

"It can take anywhere up to two years. We are in fact working on a new British watch movement which has been in development for years now. It is not a quick process."

What is the main skill of a watchmaker?

"Patience, passion, a steady hand and real eye for detail."

Is that skill tested by having to include different kinds of materials of different ages – such as the wood from WWII aircraft? What do the watchmakers find most difficult?

"The integration of any non-standard part into a very controlled environment like a watch movement is never going to be easy, especially when it comes to moving parts. The tolerances are minute and the skill in producing these parts in the first place takes years and years to master. Not only does it have to work to chronometer standards but it has to look beautiful too! When you know you are selling a product that can cost the same price - in some cases - as a family car, the pressure is on to make the end product flawless in every way. This is never easy for any watch maker, no matter how many years of experience."

How do you find the 'bits of the aircraft' that you include?

"There is such a phenomenal and wonderful history over the last century for the Royal Air Force, that picking aircraft that could be integrated sympathetically and beautifully into the 'Bremont 1918' from such a large number of very viable contenders was always going to be very hard indeed. We really had to represent the RAF over two of its major historical campaigns - the first and second World Wars - and we focused on this. Each aircraft chosen had a truly special history and was still in flying condition today - ranging from the SE5a from 1917 to the Blenheim and Spitfire Mark 1 that flew during the Battle of Britain."

Who has the idea for each watch?

"This is very much a labour of love of [brother and co-founder] Giles and me. I really don't think it is possible to design by committee and the form and function of a Bremont watch is so incredibly important to us both I just don't know how else we could go about it. Giles and I also both have a very close love of the same things in life and so coming up with ideas doesn't seem to ever be an issue."

Why do you want to support the RAF Association?

"Giles and I, and our father, all learned to fly with the RAF. Flying historic aircraft has always been a passion of ours and when you see the incredible work the Association's members do for those who have served it is very humbling indeed. It really is a lovely charity and all limited editions we do of this nature have a charitable angle. It was a perfect fit."

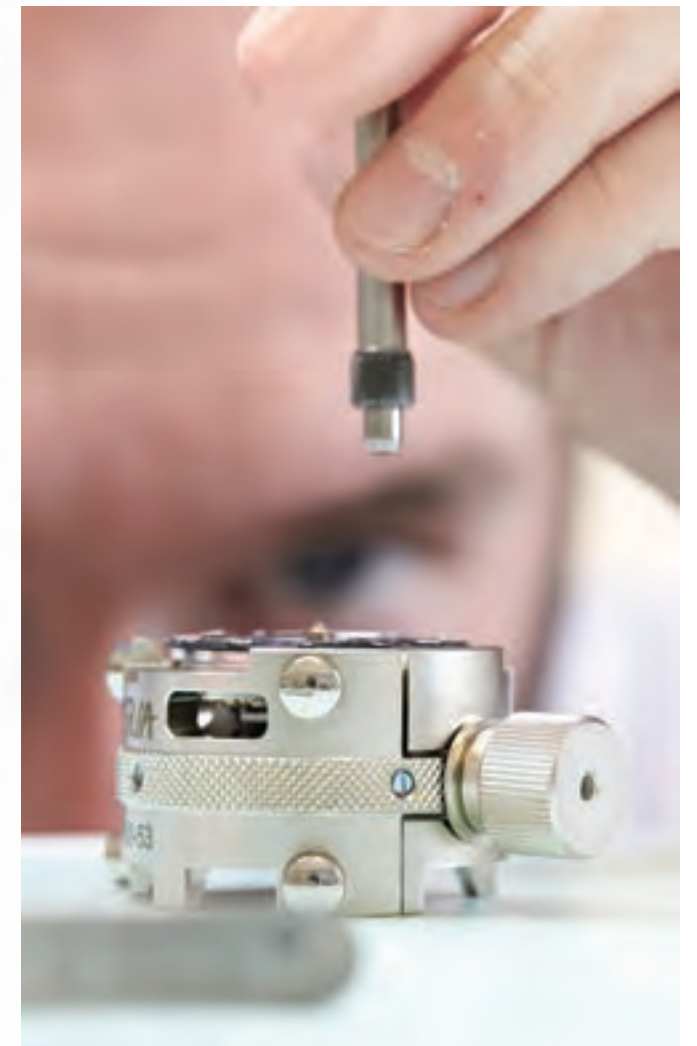
The company has donated two "Bremont 1918" chronometers to the RAF Association to assist in fundraising for our work. Look out for details about how each will be made available to bidders and interested parties.

More information on Bremont, its British engineering history and its links with the military and aviation at www.bremont.com.

The back of the Bremont 1918 watch is transparent to show the aircraft parts in the mechanism.



Minute tolerances at the Bremont workshop



Technical specification:

Modified calibre 13 1/4" BE-16AE automatic chronometer with 26 jewels, Glucydur balance and Anachron balance spring, with Nivaflex 1 mainspring. Rated frequency of 28,800 A/h with 42-hour minimum power reserve. Bremont decorated rotor featuring metal and wood veneer from four original RAF aircraft which flew in WWI and WWII.

Find the gap

Philip James and 192 Squadron

Among the RAF missions that finally sank the German battleship Tirpitz in November 1944 was a nine hour flight a few days beforehand by aircrew belonging to one of the RAF's most secret squadrons. 20 year-old Sergeant Philip James from south Wales, who is now President of the Porthcawl and Kenfig Branch of the RAF Association, was among the men on board the four Halifax aircraft with a special task to fulfil.

Philip was a flight engineer on 192 Squadron which was based at RAF Foulsham in Norfolk at that time. The squadron was re-formed to study enemy radar signals and find the gaps and weaknesses. Each aircraft carried a special operator on board with highly classified equipment.

"We took off from Lossiemouth and headed north over the Arctic circle at about 1,000 feet," said Philip. "As we got nearer to the Tirpitz in the Norwegian fjord, we pulled up to 5,000 feet. The Tirpitz put its radar on and our experts were able to plot the radar returns and the gaps in its coverage. This information was then used in the planning of the successful attacks by the Lancasters on 12 November 1944."

Philip completed 33 missions with 192 Squadron, most them with a Canadian aircrew. On one lone mission over Saarbrücken in Germany, the crew reported to the intelligence officer that they had seen some vertical vapour trails. These proved to be from the new German V-2 rockets.

Born and brought up in Port Talbot, Philip was a valet at a stately home before he joined up. He trained as a flight engineer at nearby RAF St Athan before being sent to RAF Dishforth in Yorkshire to be crewed up and trained on the Halifax. When his crew were posted to 192 at Foulsham, everybody said they had never heard of the unit. "It was definitely secret," said Philip.

After the war, Philip stayed in south Wales and worked in his father's garage business. Now 93, he and his wife Vera still live in Port Talbot and enjoy their granddaughter and great granddaughter. He was made an MBE more than ten years ago in recognition of his work for the Royal Air Forces Association in West Glamorgan. He remains President of the Porthcawl Branch. He is also President of 499 (Port Talbot) Squadron, Air Training Corps and of the RAF's 100 Group Association.



Philip James at 18

The 100 Group was formed in 1943 specifically to consolidate all the electronic countermeasures work into one organisation. 192 Squadron was disbanded at the end of the war and formed part of the Central Signals Establishment. It was reformed in the 1950s, flying Boeing Washingtons and Canberras still in the electronic intelligence (ELINT) role. In 1958, it was renumbered 51 Squadron.



Speaking at the RAF Club in 2017



Meeting HRH Princess Anne after receiving his MBE in 2005



A Halifax at the RAF Museum awaiting restoration. ©RAF Museum.

Drawing with light

100 RAF photographers stationed around the UK and deployed across the world get to submit their best work for the annual RAF Photographic Competition. The RAF Association has supported the competition for the last few years. We talk about the job to some of the 2017 winners, hear from one of their subjects, and share some of our favourite images.

In the picture:

RAF Association member and RAF Dog Handler Corporal Richard 'Rich' Retallick and Military Working Dog Riki from RAF Benson are featured on the cover of this edition of Air Mail.

"The picture was taken at my first technical evaluation as a dog handler. I had just finished my inspection with the flight sergeant and was told I was going to be having a picture taken with Riki for the section.

"It wasn't until a few weeks after when I got given a copy of the picture, I realised how amazing the image was. And again it must have been a month or so until I was informed that it had placed second in the competition. It was a lovely feeling to have such a photo taken: I see it all around base on the tv screens which is quite surreal."



The picture, taken at RAF Northolt by Corporal Tony Hawke is called "Resting Comfortably".

It won second place in the Personnel category.



Blowin' in the Wind – two RAF Mk6 Chinooks transit over North Sea wind farms during training.



SAC Nicholas Egan at the 2017 awards ceremony

Sweeping the board

"I thought I was good at photography before I joined up. But it turns out I wasn't," said Senior Aircraftman Nicholas Egan, a photographer from the Air Combat Service Support Unit at RAF Halton, at the awards ceremony. "I learned a lot from the training. I have entered this competition before, but only ever got seconds and thirds in categories or highly commended – so this year has been really great."

Nick's 'Mojave Mayhem' picture came second in the RAF Operations and Exercise category and second in the Judges' RAF Image of the Year. His 'Blowin' in the Wind' image came first in those two categories. Both images were on the shortlist for the People's Choice vote, alongside his 'Starry Night'. And he won RAF Photographer of the Year.

"I'll stay in this job as long as the RAF will keep me," he said. "My hobbies are travelling and photography, so I am very grateful: I get deployed all over the world – covering hurricane relief as well as combat zones. Some people struggle with the harsh conditions in Afghanistan or Iraq but we don't notice - we are just thinking about getting the images."



'Spacemen' – taken during a training exercise at Dartmoor Training Area at night.

Up against the big boys

"It was totally dark when I took this picture. I had to focus manually, by eye. It couldn't be done automatically," said Senior Aircraftman Will Drummee from RAF Honington after winning third place in the Personnel category with 'Spacemen'.

"Three members of 15 Squadron RAF Regiment were reviewing their options during an exercise at Dartmoor Training Area at night. The shot was taken during a section attack when different elements of the squadron were involved, including mortars and heavy weapons sections.

"It's only 18 months since my training and Honington is so small that it is nice to put it on the map – especially when we're up against 'the big boys' from other stations."

Will also won third place in the RAF Operations and Exercise category and third place in the Judges' RAF Image of the Year with his 'Life on Mars'.



Will speaking to Air Mail about his photos



Raining Cats and Dogs – by SAC Thomas Hammond-Haley, RAF Scampton. Second place in the Amateur Military Category.



KL City Wrap – we only had three chances to get the shot.

People's choice

"We were closing at 600mph and pulling G. I had two seconds to get the shot and the viewfinder was two inches away from my eye because of the flying helmet. It isn't until you land that you think – did I get it?". Corporal Steve Buckley is based at RAF Scampton with the Red Arrows and his image 'KL City Wrap' won the public vote for the best photograph. "I am one of a team of three. Our core job is to photograph and video every single display

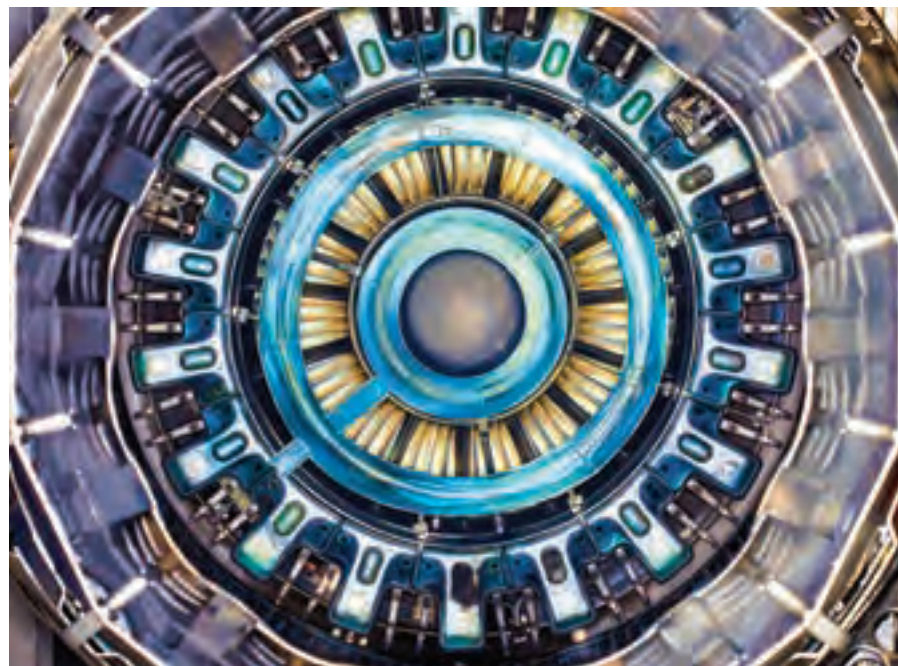
and training session for display, technical and safety assessment. Then we also do the PR photography – stills and video of the Red Arrows with iconic world landmarks or at Armed Forces Day." Steve was due to move on to RAF Marham in November, as station photographer working with the Tornados and the F35 Lightning. "It's been an honour to work with the Red Arrows. I know it sounds a bit cheesy, but I'll remember it for the rest of my life."

Steve was also part of the Red Arrows from RAF Scampton which won The Photographic Section Portfolio Category.



Steve Buckley just after his photo was revealed as the public's choice

Prettier Than You Think – by Cpl Ellie Marriott, RAF Marham. Second place in the Technical/Engineering Category.



Board of Berries – from SAC Pippa Fowles' winning student portfolio.

... and you get paid to do it!

"It's a great job. Everyone on the station knows you," said Senior Aircraftman Pippa Fowles of RAF Odiham. Previously a civilian chef, Pippa joined up to train as a survival equipment fitter, but quickly changed to photography. Just six months out of her training, she said: "I love the variety. One day I could be out flying, the next is technical photography. No day is ever the same and the people

you meet ... it's amazing ... and you get paid to do it. I have signed up for 12 years and hope to get to go overseas."

Pippa won first prize in the Mallet Student category with her portfolio of images. The trophy is awarded to photographers who have attended the Defence Photographer Training Course during the year.

Pippa Fowles receiving her award from Air Commodore Nigel Bradshaw.



The Starry Night – by SAC Nicholas Egan, RAF Halton. People's Choice shortlist.



Still Standing – Senior Aircraftman Brad Axe stares back at his opponent before the next round in No.2 Mechanical Transport Squadron hangar at RAF Wittering.

“I really liked the feel of the image, the mood it portrays for me was really good,” said Senior Aircraftman Matty Smith, the newest photographer at RAF Wittering. “Showing a fighter, despite being in a very tough fight, staring his opponent down and letting him know he’s still standing.”

The image, taken at a charity boxing event, won the Sports Category. Matty also picked up third place in the RAF Photographer of the Year category, with his untitled image taken during a drill rehearsal, and had ‘Seat with a View’ in the People’s Vote category.

“I’m absolutely over the moon with my first entries into the RAF Photographic Competition and it’s given me confidence and motivation moving forward with my career.”



SAC Matty Smith

All images ©MOD/Crown

**See every picture and watch the video entries at:
raf.mod.uk/photo-of-the-year-2017**

*Top Right
Through the Years –
by Corporal Ashley Keates, RAF Marham.
Second place in the Open Image Category.*

*Right
Arrows Through The Storm –
by SAC Thomas Hammond-Haley, RAF
Scampton. First place in the Amateur
Military Category.*



National Insurance payments



Last summer, concerns were raised by members that recent changes to National Insurance payments could disadvantage serving and retired members of the armed forces. In short, a new flat rate State Pension has been introduced for everyone who retires after April 2016. It replaced the old two tier pension where people received a basic pension and top ups through SERPS (the State Earnings Related Pension Scheme) or through SP2 (the Second State Pension).

The Association sought clarification of the changes from Air Command who explained that RAF personnel, like many other people, had been 'contracted out' of SERPS and SP2 because they benefitted from a private or occupational pension of their own. As a result, they had been allowed to pay a reduced rate of National Insurance contributions as their occupational pension scheme provided the 'top up' that SERPS or SP2 was designed to deliver. Now that everyone benefits from the new higher flat rate State Pension, the Government has harmonised National Insurance contributions so that everyone pays standard rates of National Insurance over their working lives. As a result, all existing members of occupational defined benefit pension schemes, such as serving RAF personnel, who used to pay lower levels of National Insurance had seen a rise in their National Insurance contributions.

Air Commodore Alan Opie, Senior RAF Representative for Council, said: "I was grateful that members advised us of their concerns and I hope that that this explanation provides the clarification that they sought. However, I would advise any member who is confused about any aspect of their pension to seek extra advice". Sources of advice are given at the end of this article.



Pensions concerns affect many. ©Phil Greig

Not everybody eligible for the new flat rate State Pension will receive the full amount on transition. Workers will need 35 years of National Insurance contributions to qualify for the full amount. Individuals who have been contracted out of S2P and SERPS over the years and do not have the full 35 years of National Insurance contributions may qualify for a lower amount of the new State Pension.

Further Pensions help:

- Defence Intranet: Changes to the State Pension form April 2016 – DWP Factsheet for Public Service Employees
- www.gov.uk/contracted-out
- pensionsadvisoryservice.org.uk/
- forcespensionsociety.org



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RAF Museum news

Mystery shopping at the museum

RAF Association members have been specially invited to give their feedback on the brand new galleries at the RAF Museum in Hendon. The award-winning museum is celebrating and commemorating the centenary of the Royal Air Force through a major transformation of its visitor experience - sharing the RAF story on site and online.

As Air Mail goes to press, the museum is completing its multi-million-pound new visitor spaces, which will open as part of the RAF100 celebrations. After years of planning and work, visitors will be welcomed to see the results of the hard work this summer. The development is creating a new green heart of the community in Colindale, reflecting the historic RAF Hendon airfield. Two innovative new exhibition spaces will explore the first 100 years of the RAF through the stories of its people and will invite visitors to imagine its future contribution and technology.

There will also be a new visitor centre, café, shop, orientation space, and more. A new restaurant has revitalised a disused historic building in the middle of the site.

The soft-opening (or mystery shopper) period begins in early May and ends in mid-June and all feedback from visitors will be very welcome.

For more info:

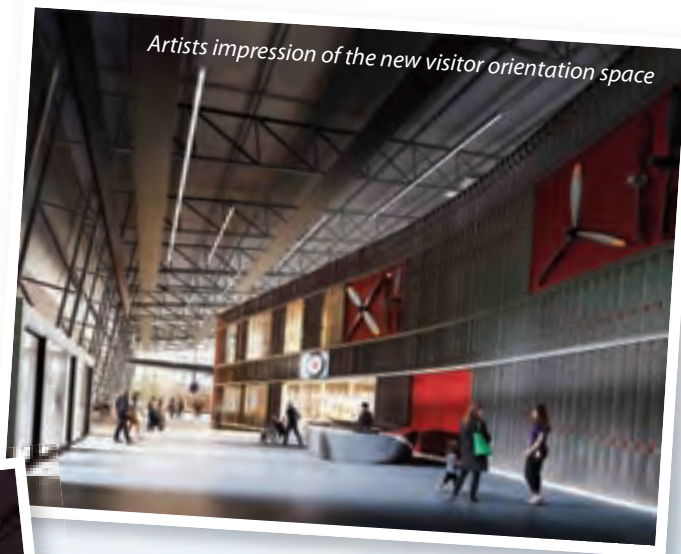
www.rafmuseum.org
London@rafmuseum.org
Get regular updates from the Museum here
<https://www.rafmuseum.org.uk/contact-us/newsletters.aspx>

Your story wanted

The RAF Museum is launching RAF Stories; an online digital project that will also be part of the celebrations of the centenary of the Royal Air Force. RAF Stories wants to find all kinds of accounts, not just from former and serving personnel, but also from their friends and family and anyone who works closely with the RAF. RAF Stories is a global effort to uncover memoirs, records and tales of heroism and bravery, humour and emotion. It welcomes modern day tales as well as memories of long-resolved conflicts.

Contact: rafstories@rafmuseum.org or 0190 237 6237

Through 'RAF Stories', a digital project, people will contribute personal stories to enhance the nation's understanding and sharing of RAF heritage, onsite and online.



Artists impression of the new visitor orientation space



An immense new hall will allow visitors to walk under the Sunderland aircraft

New main entrance from the road

Families Federation news

Families Federation meets with Secretary of State

The RAF Families Federation was present at a meeting in the Cabinet Office during November to discuss the Armed Forces Covenant.

The meeting is co-chaired by the Defence Secretary, The Rt Hon Gavin Williamson MP and First Secretary of State, The Rt Hon Damian Green MP and reports to the Prime Minister. This was the first bi-annual meeting with the single service Family Federations and Cobseo to inform the cross-government Ministerial Armed Forces Covenant and Veterans Board and ensure the views of the wider armed forces community are represented in government decisions on the Armed Forces Covenant. A further meeting is scheduled with the secretary of state that will focus solely on service accommodation issues.

The RAF Association are proud to operate and manage the contract for the RAF to help provide the RAF Families Federation on behalf of the RAF.

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Further information:
www.raf-ff.org.uk or telephone 01780 781650.

Armed Forces Covenant meeting

The board will drive forward the existing Armed Forces Covenant commitments across all government departments responsible for delivery, with a specific focus on the priority areas of healthcare, including mental health. Other areas which will be covered include housing, education and employment opportunities.

Government initiatives delivered to date through the Armed Forces Covenant include:

- **The Forces Help to Buy scheme** (Ministry of Defence) has allowed thousands of armed forces personnel and their families to borrow up to half their salary to get on the housing ladder
- **The Armed Forces Covenant Fund** provides £10million a year to support mutually beneficial projects and programmes being delivered by organisations across the UK in partnership with the armed forces community
- **The Job Centre Plus Armed Forces Champions** (Department for Work and Pensions) helps current and former members of the Armed Forces and their families access Jobcentre Plus services
- The Transition, Intervention, and Liaison veterans' mental health service (National Health Service) acts as a front door to a range of mental health support across the health and care system for veterans
- **The Service Pupil Premium** (Department for Education) is paid to schools to engage with service children to mitigate any adverse impact of family mobility and parental deployment. The Board will also seek to maximise the potential of the armed forces community through mutually beneficial partnerships with businesses, as well as with local communities throughout the UK



ARMED FORCES COVENANT

StaRRship

– the next generation

Rolls Royce is collaborating with the RAF and the RAF Association to help inspire the next generation of young scientists and engineers. The StaRRship to Mars project was unveiled at the Royal International Air Tattoo (RIAT) in July 2017 and the website was launched in December. A Mars 'arrival' is expected in July 2018.

Dave Gordon, Senior Vice President & Director UK, Defence Aerospace, Rolls Royce says: "In the second half of 2017 we have been building a very British star ship. Its mission is to fly to Mars.

"There is more than a bit of virtual reality involved," he adds. "But our aim is to inspire tomorrow's engineers and scientists to consider the world that they really want to live in, and to imagine how they can shape it!" The StaRRship will be an entertaining learning app and web experience. It aims to get 13 to 25 year-olds engaged in science, technology, engineering and maths and use modern media channels to inspire them and link them up around the world.

Rolls Royce is sponsoring and developing the project alongside partners in the RAF and importantly is also aiming to help recruit more members to the RAF Association as a result. Any profits Rolls-Royce makes from the project will also go straight to the Association.

Anyone (of any age) who is interested can keep up to date at: <http://starrship.space/> or on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube at StaRRshipHope.



How the journey to Mars is panning out:

November 2017: unknown distress call from Mars received by fictional RAF station Base Astra. Call to action - build a StaRRship for a rescue and exploration mission

December 2017: StaRRship global digital launch – virtual experience /social media channels/StaRRship Vlogs

Jan to March 2018: building the StaRRship H.O.P.E. (Human Outer Planetary Explorer) and shuttle launcher/astronaut training/learning about all the key mission roles and interacting with key personnel in RAF and Rolls-Royce

April 2018: StaRRship H.O.P.E. begins its journey to Mars

July 2018: To coincide with RIAT centenary celebrations, StaRRship arrives at Mars for our first encounter.



An introduction to propulsion from a young Rolls Royce engineer

RAF news



A Royal Air Force A400M Atlas has been put through its paces as never before during Exercise Mobility Guardian in the United States. The aircraft transported military vehicles, delivered air relief and flew aeromedical evacuation sorties during intensive exercises involving 31 nations. The distinctive shape of the A400 stood out on the ramp at McChord Field Air Force base in Washington State and attracted great interest from the local C-17 and C-130 crews.

At the end of August, the RAF ended the UK's five month leadership of NATO's enhanced air policing mission in Romania. Four Typhoon FGR4 aircraft from 3 (F) Squadron returned to RAF Coningsby after handing over the duty to the Royal Canadian Air Force. Meanwhile eight RAF personnel working on the mission have been honoured for their work by receiving the Romanian Air Force's highest peacetime award.

A fleet of RAF transport aircraft including the Voyager, C-130J Hercules, A400 Atlas and C-17 were used to support the UK military operation to deliver aid and disaster relief to Caribbean islands hit by Hurricanes Irma and Jose. After a request for help from the French President, an RAF C-17 delivered vehicles and equipment to the French island of Guadeloupe. The pilot of the 99 Squadron C-17, Flight Lieutenant Mark Shepherd, said: "We work regularly with the French military transporting freight from France to Western Africa. As ever it was a pleasure to work with our French colleagues and to help people affected by Hurricane Irma."

The future of RAF Valley on Anglesey has been secured with the upgrade of its main runway, link taxiways and visual aids. The £20 million contract has extended the life of the runway by another 25 years.

The RAF announced on 1 September that it was inviting women to recruit into the RAF Regiment, meaning that every trade and branch in the service will be open to all genders. The move comes a year earlier than planned.

Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Stephen Hillier, said: "The RAF is committed to providing equal opportunity to all, so it's fantastic to be able to open recruitment to the RAF Regiment to women ahead of schedule. We want the best and most talented individuals to join the Air Force, regardless of their gender, race or background. A diverse force is a more effective force, and we need the best people to deliver the important work we do."

The Red Arrows completed a five week overseas tour in mid-October. The team flew over the Cannes Yachting Festival before going on to Greece, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, Pakistan and Bahrain. Long-serving Red 10, Squadron Leader Mike Ling, has now left the team after nine years – three as a pilot and six as supervisor and commentator. Squadron Leader David Montenegro, Red 1 for the past three years, has now handed over to Squadron Leader Martin Pert who will lead the team through the RAF's centenary year.



Red Arrows practice formations before their October tour of the world. ©MOD/Crown

Caribbean hurricane aid was provided after Irma and Jose. ©MOD/Crown

Women in all areas of the RAF. ©MOD/Crown



Committee spotlight

The Association has eight committees that sit separately from Council. They support and develop strategies, ensuring we are at the forefront of our industry in everything that we do.

To give you more of an insight we will spotlight a number of them in the next few issues of Air Mail. Up first is the Welfare and strengthening our Membership Committee.

What is the purpose of the committee?

The welfare committee is there to have oversight, support and develop the Association's welfare strategy.

Who is on the committee and what skills do they bring?

Committee includes Council members, selected delegates and senior management. All members of the committee have relevant expertise, whether it's their knowledge of current service issues, being a beneficiary of our support or working within the Welfare team.

How often does the committee meet?

The committee holds at least four meetings a year.

What are some of the things that the Welfare Committee deals with?

The main function is to oversee our current welfare offer. Understanding emerging welfare needs and supporting the RAF service to align and develop their offer to meet these.

Key items for considerations are usually strategy and delivering on the yearly objectives.

What are some of the big issues now?

The key thing is the welfare objectives for 2018. Other items being discussed are our hotels, support of serving personnel and quality assurance and governance.

How future facing is the committee? How do they tackle changes in society?

The committee considers emerging ideas and issues, both from our serving and veteran personnel. Some of the things that are coming up frequently are issues surrounding health, well-being and family resilience.

How does the membership help to shape the committee?

For specific pieces of work, committee consults with a relevant sections of the membership to ensure it is a viable idea. Members of the committee also have effective working relationships with the membership, serving community and veterans.

Do they do research into what issues are coming up?

The committee makes evidence-based decisions supported by research and surveys. The Association is more in demand than ever because of the changing welfare landscape, austerity and social care needs. The committee look at the needs of the RAF family as well as society as a whole.

Do they look at what other charities are doing?

We consider what other service charities are delivering and ensure we are working alongside and in partnership with them to provide a holistic service to the RAF family. We ensure the projects we put forward are ones that we can commit to and deliver effectively.

Branch news

including region, area and overseas news

1. 1161 Bebington Branch

1161 Bebington Branch has funded the refurbishment and re-gilding of a RAF war memorial on St Pauls (with St Lukes) Church in Rock Ferry, Birkenhead. The memorial is to Pilot Officer Desmond Bell who was lost off Gaza, Palestine in 1938, aged just 24. The memorial sits on the side of his grandfather's vault in the graveyard.

2. Apollo Branch

On Saturday the 23 September the Apollo Branch had a gazebo at Episcopi fete courtesy of the senior RAFALO there Steve Faulkes. It was a great day that started a bit slow but picked up as it went on. Thanks to the team for all the hard work that went into the day especially six year-old Nathan Kruger who got the public to try the duck dip. We managed to raise just short of 500 euros. Well done everyone and thanks to all the members of Apollo Branch for your generous donations - we couldn't have done it without them.

Beedale and RAF Leeming - new branch

Members at RAF Leeming have teamed up with recently retired local servicemen and women to open a new branch. The very active committee at RAF Leeming recognised that many veterans retire to this beautiful part of North Yorkshire and decided to offer support and contact. Branch Chairman, Wing Commander Chris Thorpe, said: "Since the Northallerton Branch closed a few years ago we could not ignore the enthusiasm of committee members who wanted to reach out into the local community. We held our inaugural meeting in July and by the end of October we already had 79 members. We are determined to grow into an energetic and vibrant branch."

Contact the branch at rafabedaleeeming@gmail.com or find us on Facebook.

3. Braunstone Branch

(Pictured) The branch attended the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal launch event at Leicester's War Memorial on Victoria Park. The event was supported by the Lord Mayor of Leicester and three forces women, in recognition of the 100th anniversary of women joining the armed forces. The branch also attended the act of remembrance organised by the Friends of the WRC at Leicester's Welford Road Cemetery. Located within the cemetery is the Commonwealth War Graves Commission section containing 90 burials from five nationalities, including one German. Many other burials are scattered throughout the cemetery.

4. Bridlington Branch

252 (Bridlington) Squadron ATC and the Bridlington Branch held a joint dinner at the Revelstoke Hotel on 7 September to commemorate the Battle of Britain. The cadets wanted a formal squadron dinner and invited members of the Association to join them for a delicious three-course meal and a speech on the Battle of Britain from Squadron Leader (Retired) Cameron Ashton. A raffle was held in aid of the Wings Appeal. Cadet Sergeant Isobel Yorke won a trophy for aircraft modelling. This had been donated by the family of Dickie Bird, a Bridlington RAF Association member, after his untimely death. The Squadron Padre, Reverend Matthew Pollard, enjoyed the event so much he wanted to set a date for September 2018.



Branch news

including region, area and overseas news



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5. Chesham and Amersham Branch

Ray Barrett, pictured, recently volunteered to collect at TESCO and Sainbury stores for the branch Wings Appeal. The 94 year-old did five hours collecting in total and raised £396.94. A WWII veteran, he had many tales to tell of his training and service career.

6. Coningsby and District Branch

17 (Coningsby) Squadron Air Cadets – pictured - supported Wings Appeal Week this year by collecting at Coningsby Co-op again, raising £247.08. 1265 (Horncastle) Squadron Air Cadets similarly gave their support collecting at Horncastle Tesco and raised £206.17 despite an early downpour cutting things short. Our thanks and appreciation goes to both squadrons for their efforts on behalf of our branch.

At Tattershall Co-op later the same week, branch members Doreen Watkins and John Reeson this year sensibly reduced their collecting to one day but still managed to raise the magnificent sum of £151.73. Well done to you both.

7. Cranwell Branch

The branch had successful outings to Stamford and Barnsdale Gardens, Chesterfield and Kingston upon Hull and concluded the year at Boundary Mills in Sheffield in November. We also attended the excellent day at RAF Waddington, with our neighbouring branch, and the Sleaford air cadets prize giving ceremony in September.

The highlight of the range of speakers and themes at branch meetings was the annual BBQ at the farmhouse of two of the branch committee members in July.

Thanks to the strong support of the Sleaford Aid Cadets, Wings Saturday saw collections in Sleaford and neighbouring villages. The branch also had stalls at the Cranwell Families' Day, a two day collection at Sleaford Tesco in October and at the Sleaford Octoberfest (in September!)

Twenty two teams took part in the second year of the BMW-sponsored Bomber County Golf Competition at South Kyme Golf Club. Branch supporters organised the day and ran a successful buffet at the Half Way House, with valuable assistance of Cranwell RAFALO, Senior Aircraftman Rich Barnes. As well as the good PR, the auction raised over £1500 for the Wings account. It looks as if this will be an annual event.

8. Dover and District Branch

Photo taken on the lawn outside after the branch 77th anniversary Battle of Britain service at St Mary's in Castro Church, Dover Castle.

Pictured are: (left to right, back row) Royal Artillery Association Dover Branch, standard bearer, RAF Association Dover Branch standard bearer, seven RAF Association branch members and the Royal British Legion standard bearer, St Margarets Women's Branch. (Left to right front row) Five RAF Air Cadets and standard bearer from 354 (Dover) Squadron ATC.



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Branch news

including region, area and overseas news



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9. Falmouth Branch

On Sunday 8 October 2017 the branch held a service at the Parish Church of King Charles the Martyr to mark the 77th anniversary of the Battle of Britain. This included a dedication of a standard for the newly formed RAF Association Sailing Branch - a national branch that will be based in Falmouth.

Local dignitaries joined RAF, Association and Navy personnel and veterans from all three services. They were supported by RAF Air Cadets from and Truro. "Historically all the armed forces provided pilots for the Battle of Britain" said Lance Smale, County and Falmouth branch chairman.

Pictured – A colourful and fitting tribute to 'The Few' by RAF Association standards representing the eight Cornwall branches and standards from other veteran associations.

10. Huddersfield Branch

Building on the success of last year's sponsored walk, we thought "outside the box" for the 2017 Wings Appeal. So we set up a pop-up shop for six days in Huddersfield's Closed Market. We ran a second-hand stall, offered RAF Association memorabilia for sale, and organised tea and biscuits under the "Brew for the Few" banner. We raised £1,287.40. The total with the Wings Week street collections was over £7,000 - an admirable effort as we rely on a core of some 16 members – half of them associates – to carry out our fundraising. The pop-up shop is an idea we must develop. Pictured: Members of the Huddersfield Branch at the pop-up shop opening with the Mayor of Kirklees.

11. Huyton with Roby Liverpool Branch

We are pleased to be able to say that our Wings Appeal Team has achieved the £10K Club status for the ninth consecutive year - raising £10,250 so far in 2017. Our Wings Organiser Phil Southern collected £207 on 16 September 2017, at his usual point in Old Swan, Liverpool. Not to be outdone, committee member Deryk Stanton collected a total of £401.95, on the same day, at the Kirby town centre, Merseyside. He is shown with Denise Walker, from Store Optical, who gave Deryk warming drinks that day.

Our branch website is now "up and running": we are grateful for the assistance of the Leicester HQ marketing and communications team. To follow our branch news go to : rafa.org.uk/huyton-with-robby-liverpool.

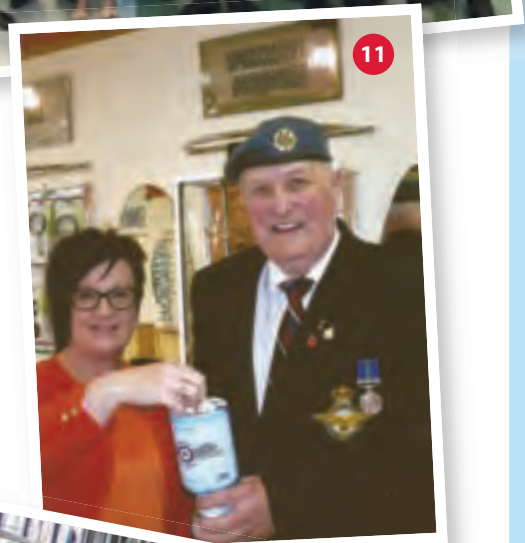
12. Leamington Spa and Warwick Branch

Despite a venue change from Leamington War Memorial to All Saints Parish Church on Sunday 17 September, our annual Battle of Britain commemoration service was well attended by our members and a small number of the public, and was magnificently supported by the RAF Air Cadets from our three adopted squadrons.

President, Mike Harrison's welcoming address highlighted the significance of the Battle of Britain and the service was conducted by Branch Chaplain, Father Christopher Wilson. The branch banner and the cadets' squadron banners (pictured) were all received by Father Wilson, along with the banner of the Leamington Royal British Legion Branch. A wreath laid in the church by member, Rusty Waughman, was later re-laid at the Leamington War Memorial.



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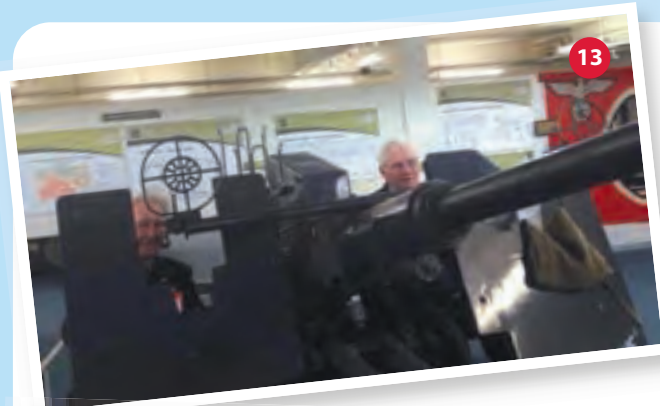
11



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Branch news

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13. Letchworth Hitchin and District

The branch recently visited the excellent RAF Regiment Heritage Centre at RAF Honington. Members took lunch in the Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess and were then hosted by a group of enthusiastic and knowledgeable volunteers at the centre. We saw a Rolls Royce Armoured Car used by RAF Armoured Car Companies (a forerunner of the RAF Regiment) in the Western Desert in the 1920s, and a 40mm Bofors gun.

Pictured are the Branch Secretary and Wings Co-ordinator 'operating' a former RAF Regiment 40mm Bofors gun.



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14. Luxembourg Branch

In October the Luxembourg Branch held its annual Wings Ball to raise funds for the Association's welfare work, and celebrated 35 years supporting the Wings Appeal. The champagne reception, gala dinner and ball went on into the wee hours of the morning. This year the branch welcomed Her Majesty's Ambassador H.E. John Marshal, Association President Air Marshal Sir Baz North and Lady Fiona, and the European and Branch President Air Marshal Philip Sturley, RAF and Association members from the UK and Europe.

Photo shows L-R: Brian Darke Branch LVP, Mrs Darke, Mrs Walker, Lady North, Sir Baz North, Mrs Eliot, the Ambassador, and Branch Chairman Charlie Eliot.



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15. Mansfield and District Branch

The branch held two successful Wings Appeal collections assisted by air cadets from 284 (Mansfield) Squadron ATC and 1300 (Sutton-in-Ashfield) Squadron ATC.

At the annual Battle of Britain dinner South East and Eastern District Director Ailsa Gough presented the Major F E Nash RFC Trophy to the cadet from 284 Squadron who collected the most money.

Ashfield MP Gloria de Piero helped members of the branch at their last collection of the year at Matalan in Sutton-in-Ashfield. This year the branch raised a record amount of over £4,000.

16. Nazeing Branch

Thank you from the branch to the cadets of 1239 (Broxbourne & Hoddesdon Squadron ATC), pictured, who raised £554.95 for RAFA Wings Appeal from the generosity of shoppers at Hoddesdon High Street, Hertfordshire.

North Cotswold Branch

We meet on the first Wednesday of each month, at the Lygon Arms Hotel, Chipping Campden, at 1800hrs, commencing with a short business meeting at 1815hrs from May to August, and at 1100hrs from September to April. We have no meeting in January.

Meetings are followed by a branch social. Recent speakers included a code breaker from Bletchley Park and events include brass band and contemporary music concerts and Wings Appeal collections and coffee mornings. Spouses, partners and close adult relatives are always very welcome.



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17. North Cornwall Branch

Members had a very interesting time visiting the RAF Memorial Museum on Davidstow Moor in October. It was pleasant viewing all the artefacts and exhibits in the displays which have been accumulated over the years as the museum continues to expand. The visit was thoroughly enjoyed by all and the evening ended with a delicious Cornish pasty supper.

Branch Chairman David Keast BEM is the owner and curator of the museum, which he founded in 2003 when the memorial stone was dedicated. The museum is open daily from Easter to the end of October and is staffed by volunteers. There is no admission charge, but donations are gratefully received.

18. North Devon Branch

Members of the North Devon Branch visited the RAF Davidstow Moor Memorial Museum and the Cornwall at War museum - both on the site of the former war time RAF station situated on the north coast of Cornwall. This visit is part of a comprehensive social programme structured by the Branch.

19. Peterborough Branch

The Peterborough Branch is going through a period of resurgence after an influx of enthusiastic new members, including senior retired officers from the Princess Mary's Royal Air Force Nursing Service. This has resulted in more Wings Appeal collections (pictured) at Armed Forces Day, the Market Deeping raft race day, Peterborough football club and elsewhere - and in record fundraising. Membership is also increasing as other branches in the area close.

The branch is developing a regular series of social events including visits to the National Memorial Arboretum, Battle of Britain commemoration, and presentations by members. We are now planning suitable ways to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the RAF and a visit to Bletchley Park.

We meet on the second Monday of each month in the Peterborough Sports and Leisure Club, Lincoln Road at 1900hrs and we would be pleased to meet any past/future members in our area.

20. Sheringham and District

The branch were invited by the Chairman of Norfolk County Council, Councillor John Ward, to the 2017 Battle of Britain commemorative event held at County Hall in Norwich.

The ceremony opened with a fly-past, from the Royal Air Force Battle of Britain Memorial Flight. This commenced the parade, led by the Air Cadet Band, Royal Air Forces Association standards and uniformed youth organisations including Forces Cadets, Scouts, Guides, Fire and Police Cadets.

There was a short service which included a Wreath Laying Ceremony at the Jaguar Memorial (pictured). The event ended with the playing of the National Anthem.

The Sheringham and District Branch were represented by Chairman, Air Commodore Jack Broughton CBE RAF (ret), Standard Bearer, Ray Loake and a number of branch members.



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21. Sturminster Newton and Gillingham Branch

Through summer into autumn there was a crescendo and climax to our sortie rate to reach and hopefully destroy our annual fundraising target. Thankfully, there were strategic targets aplenty to visit. The accuracy of our Pathfinder Forces at supermarkets ensured high success rates to the bank. At the Gillingham Town Meadow Fete and the Sturminster Newton Cheese Festival we drew much friendly fire, reaped great rewards and saw all returned safely to base despite the weather. Returning crews reported no casualties when collecting house to house - reception was friendly and very generous. Post op target analysis showed Sue Stroud with an incredible score of £733. In the Battle of Britain weeks we not only reached our target of £5,000 but overflowed it by nearly £2,000. A well-earned victory deserved a well-earned celebration which we did, in style, at the Royal Chase Hotel in Shaftesbury.

22. Sud Ouest Branch

Remembrance and devotion are very much to the fore in November in France with the two bank holidays of "All Saints" and "Armistice" - when chrysanthemums are laid on family graves, war graves and monuments. This year, the chairman of the Sud Ouest Branch, Beryl Dennett Stannard, was invited to the small village of Ars-en-Ré in the Charente Maritime, to unfurl a mural in the village cemetery. It marks the graves of the RAF airmen killed in action and buried there. The RAF Badge was sponsored and gifted by both the Mayor of Ars-en-Ré and local members of the "Souvenir Française". Our photo shows the mural being uncovered by Beryl and Mr René Remy, supported by the mayor and friends, with chrysanthemums in the foreground.

23. Swindon Branch

Highly decorated, 96 year-old, Don Mason recently visited Swindon RAFA Branch and Club and delivered a fascinating presentation on his wartime exploits to an enthralled audience of Association members, RAF air cadets, and local friends from the regular and serving army.

Don described his missions as a Short Stirling pilot with Bomber Command in the mass bomber raids on Nazi Germany and for D-Day. He had also flown Lysander aircraft into occupied France, delivering our agents to secret locations - using "dead reckoning" night time navigation and torch-light signals from the ground. He was shot down twice, once in the North Sea. Don went back into the aircraft four times to get his injured navigator and rear gunner out before they spent 56 hours in the water.

Don, a modest and unassuming "I'm not a hero" man is best described as one of life's gentlemen - and he is welcome back at Swindon Branch any time.

A warm welcome to the following new branches and new registered members' groups set up in 2017 by the time we went to print:

Bedale and RAF Leeming Branch
Chepstow and District RMG
East Fife RMG
RAF Association Sailing Branch
RAF Education and Training Officers Branch
TG6 Branch



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Branch news

including region, area and overseas news



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24. Wantage and District Branch

Branch member Simon McIntosh has raised over £1800 during a sponsored cycle ride from London to Paris last July. The "unforgettable" four day journey took him 340 miles through English and French countryside - sometimes in torrential rain and strong winds. "Passing through the Somme was very moving: coming from a military family made it a very powerful experience."

He arrived in Paris the same weekend as the Tour de France. "Arriving was very emotional for all of us," he said. "Coming down the Champs Elysees was an incredible experience, like being a rock star. All the support vans were blasting out music with more than 400 cyclists singing Queen's 'We Are The Champions', the tourists clapping and cheering, and all the cars tooting their horns".

25. Woodley and Wokingham Branch

Members recently visited the Wessex Museum of Berkshire Aviation, built on the site of the Woodley airfield. Once the centre of a thriving aircraft industry, Miles and Handley Page aircraft built at Woodley are being reconstructed and exhibited along with fascinating pictorial records and priceless archives. The group was welcomed by Chairman and Curator Keith Fostekew and his wife who gave some of the background history of the many exhibits.

Picture shows: members at the museum with a Handley Page Dart in the background.

The group then visited the West London Aero Club at White Waltham, one of the largest and oldest clubs in the country. Following lunch, we were given a talk on the development of the club by David Coe, former chief flying instructor.

26. WRAF Branch

On Sunday 3 September, WRAF Branch members from far and wide attended The Allied Air Forces Memorial Day at Yorkshire Air Museum, Elvington, to parade and take part in the drumhead service. While together, they presented a £300 cheque to Edna (Ted) Hilditch, President of the WRAF Branch on behalf of the ex WRAF Depot Veterans of RAF Spitalgate. The money had been raised at a very successful WRAF Depot Veterans' reunion held at Prince William of Gloucester Barracks, (formerly RAF Spitalgate) from 6 to 8 July. The photograph shows: Joan Geeson and Pauline Cantrell-Stephenson presenting the cheque to Ted Hilditch accompanied by Jacqueline Gawthorpe-Pettit, Barbara Ann Clough, Jean Robinson and Joan Gibson, who are all former WRAF Depot Veterans of RAF Spitalgate and WRAF Branch members.

27. Wymondham Branch

A presentation of an engraved plaque and a bouquet of flowers was made to Doreen Partridge (pictured centre) in appreciation and recognition of her service to the branch over many years, particularly as Wings Appeal organiser. Doreen, together with her late husband Brian, was a founder member of the branch in 1984. The presentation on behalf of branch members was made by Sergeant Nina Lines, the Branch RAFALO, from RAF Marham.



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We welcome all submissions for Branch News, preferably by email to BranchNews@rafatrad.co.uk. Your word count should be around 100 words. Please submit just one accompanying photograph, as a separate jpeg, tiff or gif file and at a size and quality of at least 300dpi. Submissions can also be accepted by Royal Mail to the address on the inside front cover. Unfortunately photographs submitted by post cannot be returned unless a stamped addressed envelope is included with them. Due to space limitations, submission does not guarantee inclusion and where there is too much news for an issue, the editor reserves the right to select the broadest range of news and photos to reflect the geography, people and different activities of the Association.

Sustaining in every way

The RAF100 Cookbook has 100 recipes from 100 countries representing 100 years of the RAF – and the contents sustain in so many ways: from stories of each country and dish to the fact that each sale supports the RAF100 Appeal. (More about the appeal on pages 6 and 7.) We think our grandchildren and great grandchildren will probably still have well-thumbed copies of this in their kitchens in 2118. Get your copy from: rafa.org.uk/raf100-cookbook.



A warming Bedouin lamb dish



Looking good – the RAF100 Cookbook

Mansaf

Braised Lamb in Yoghurt.
From Palestine. Serves 6.

Ingredients

For the yoghurt

- 1 litre low-fat natural yoghurt
- 1 large egg white
- 1 tbsp cornflour
- 1 tsp salt

For the lamb

- 75ml ghee, clarified butter or olive oil
- 900g lamb, cut into large dice
- 250ml lamb or chicken stock
- 1½ tsp Baharat. (Make a large quantity of Baharat using 6 tbsp paprika; 4 tbsp ground cumin; 4 tbsp ground black pepper; 3 tbsp ground cinnamon; 3 tbsp ground coriander; 2 tbsp ground cloves; 1 tbsp ground ginger; 1 tbsp ground cardamom; 1 tbsp ground nutmeg; 1½ tsp ground allspice. Store leftovers in an airtight container).

For the rice

- 50g butter
- 300g long grain rice
- 1 tsp turmeric

Method

To prepare the yoghurt

- Place in a bowl, mix until smooth then thoroughly beat in the egg white, cornflour and salt.
- Transfer to a saucepan on a moderate heat and stir until it comes to a simmer. Simmer gently for about 5 minutes until slightly thickened and smooth.
- Cool in a clean container then cover and refrigerate until required.

To cook the lamb

- Heat the ghee or vegetable oil over a medium heat, lightly season the lamb with salt and brown for about 15 minutes.
- Drain off the excess fat from the pan, return to the heat, stir in the baharat, lamb or chicken stock and the prepared yoghurt. Season with salt and pepper and bring to a simmer.
- Ladle off 200ml of the sauce (reserve for the rice), reduce the heat to low, partially cover with a lid and cook, stirring occasionally, for 2½ hours until the lamb is very tender, adding a little boiling water as required when the sauce becomes too dry.

To cook the rice

- Once the lamb has been simmering for 1¾ hours, soak the rice in cold water for 30 minutes, rinse and drain well.
- Heat the butter in a saucepan over a moderate heat and, when foaming, add the rice and cook, stirring continuously for a couple of minutes until the rice is fragrant and thoroughly coated in the butter.
- Stir in the turmeric, add 600ml of boiling water, season with salt, cover with a lid and simmer very gently over a low heat for 15 to 20 minutes until tender. Stir in the reserved yoghurt sauce (the rice should have a loose, almost risotto-like consistency) and season with salt and pepper as required.

Serve with lightly toasted pitta breads cut into 'soldiers', lightly grilled pine nuts and the yoghurt.

We also liked the Manx Broth as a starter and Appelvlaai for pudding.

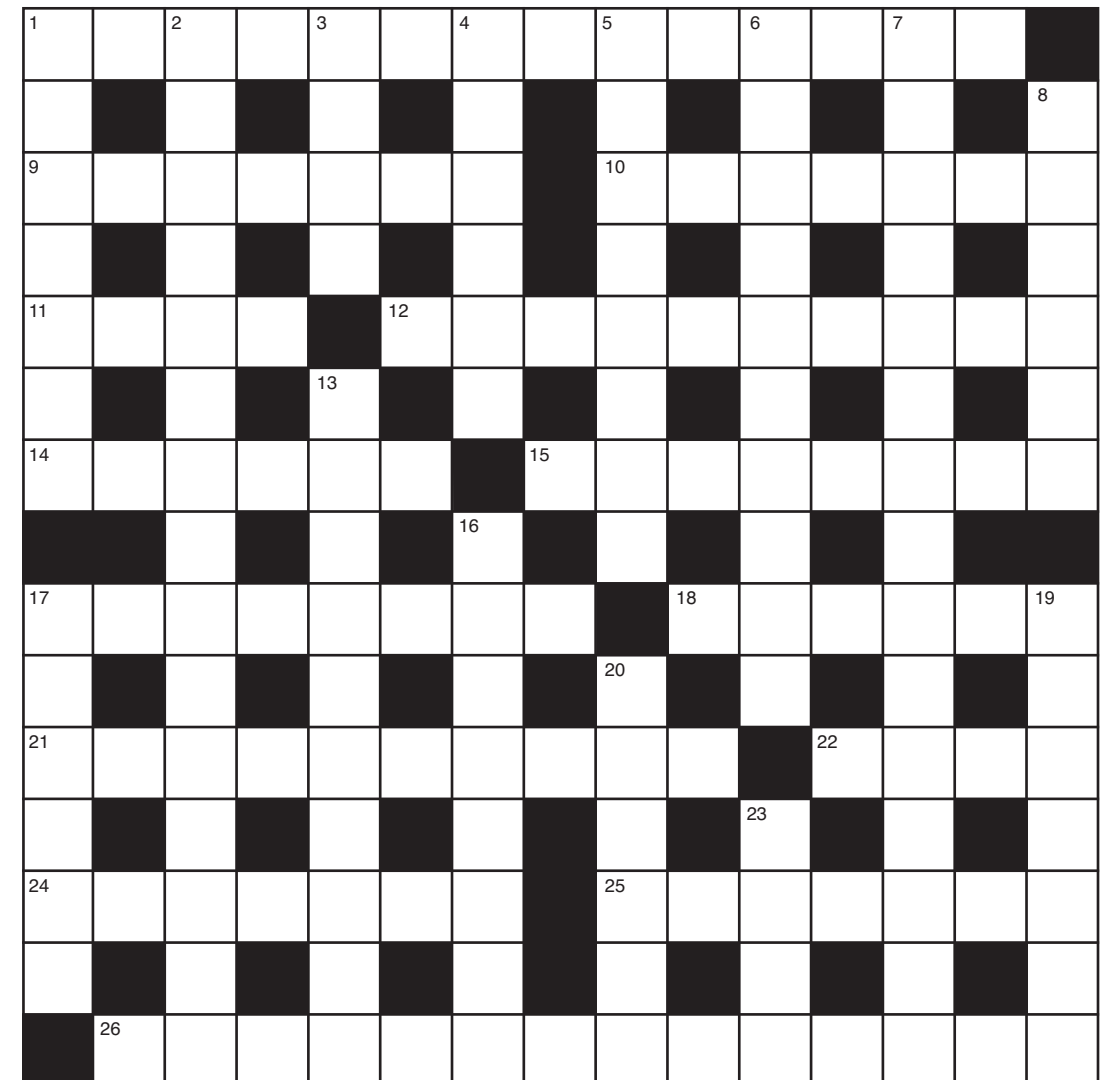
Reproduced with kind permission of St James's House publishers.



Appelvlaai – an apple pie from the Netherlands

New Year 2018 crossword

by Enigma



Across

- 1 1/1 (5, 2, 7)
- 9 Suffer experience (7)
- 10 A typical example of cooked pie to me (7)
- 11 Laugh at the ditch! (2-2)
- 12 A Principal (10)
- 14 Unfasten (6)
- 15 Rescuer of mere deer, perhaps (8)
- 17 Tense play could be this (8)
- 18 Can precede belt, fuse, net, pin etc (6)
- 21 Suggestive of fashionable police dept returning with a Conservative (10)
- 22 Alert knight after conflict (4)
- 24 Showing resentment (7)
- 25 Narrow opening, chasm (7)
- 26 This is experienced in space (14)

Down

- 1 Roused birds to move off (7)
- 2 Colours of the RAF roundel (3, 5, 3, 4)
- 3 Taught, we hear, wrong (4)
- 4 Blossom of a plant (6)
- 5 The granite city (8)
- 6 One-sided (10)
- 7 Average heat, eg, in lounge (4, 11)
- 8 Extreme fear of transitive mistake (6)
- 13 Relieving an itch (10)
- 16 Impenetrable (8)
- 17 Most arid (6)
- 19 Inhabitants of the Northern US (7)
- 20 Start to plunder the dessert! (6)
- 23 Employs (4)

RED HEARTS OVER MALTA



A Bf 109 E of 7./JG 26 showing its distinctive red heart badge. ©Author.

The first German single-engined fighter appeared over Malta on 12 February 1941 - and made an immediate impact by shooting down three RAF Hurricanes. By 25 May that year, 7 Staffel/Jagdgeschwader 26 had accounted for 48 RAF aircraft - in the air and on the ground or sea. Twenty of these were flown by former Battle of Britain pilots. The German aircraft, which sported a red or sometimes black heart on the cowlings of their Messerschmitt Bf 109s, didn't suffer a single loss. Chris Goss relates what happened during the three month campaign.

By the end of 1940 it was clear to the Germans that Malta was a threat to their operations in the Mediterranean and in December 1940 relocated X Fliegerkorps from Norway to Taormina on the east coast of Sicily. Various combat units followed. After the first German raid on Malta on 10 January 1941 air attacks became an almost daily occurrence.

The only RAF fighter squadron on the island was 261 Squadron commanded by Squadron Leader Tony Trumble. It was more than capable of countering the German heavy fighter unit, the Bf 110-equipped III./Zerstörergeschwader 26. However, with the Italians struggling in Libya, the Bf 110s went to North Africa and were now replaced by 7 Staffel/Jagdgeschwader 26, known as 7./JG 26 or the Staffel.

7./JG 26 had had a hard Battle of Britain. By the end of 1940 they had claimed 31 RAF aircraft but five of their own pilots were killed or missing and eight had been captured.

Their ground crew had left Belgium on or around 22 January 1941 and met up with their pilots at Rome. It would appear that the pilots had returned to Germany to re-equip with the Bf 109 E-7, an E-4 aircraft capable of carrying a long-range fuel tank which would give greater range and an ability to loiter over Malta - luxuries they had never had in the Battle of Britain. So it was that on or around 9 February, 7./JG 26 arrived at Gela on the southern coast of Sicily and three days later flew its first mission over Malta.

On the afternoon of 12 February, the Staffel, led by ace Oberleutnant Jochen Müncheberg, was tasked to escort a reconnaissance mission and then carry out a Freie Jagd or fighter sweep over the island. As expected, 261 Squadron was scrambled, only to be bounced by the Red Hearts. The first kill went to Müncheberg and another two to Oberfeldwebel Werner Liebing - his first of the war. Flight Lieutenant Gerald Watson was shot down over the sea and killed; his body was never recovered. Pilot Officer David Thacker, who had flown Hurricanes with 32 Squadron in the Battle of Britain and had only been on Malta for two weeks, was shot down over St Paul's Bay and baled out wounded. Flight

Foreground: a Bf 109 E-7 of 7./JG 26. Background: a Bf 110 of 9./ZG 26. Believed to have been taken at Gela, early 1941. ©Author.





Plt Off David Thacker of 261 Sqn, one of the first three victims of 7./JG 26, 12 Feb 41/ ©Author.

Lieutenant Harry Bradbury crash-landed at Hal Far suffering wounds. Unfortunately the Operations Record Book for 261 Squadron for this time is missing but it is thought that one RAF pilot claimed to have shot down a Bf 109; none were even damaged.

Conscious that there were Bf 109s operating over Malta, the following day 261 Squadron went to 22,000 feet and waited to pounce on four Bf 109s. However, they were spotted and the German fighters sped away. Two days later, things were different. Two sections of four aircraft each led by Müncheberg and Oberleutnant Klaus Mietusch escorted Stukas attacking the airfield at Luqa. The RAF response came from eight Hurricanes of A Flight 261 Squadron, led by Flight Lieutenant James MacLachlan DFC. MacLachlan was an experienced pre-war pilot who had converted to Hurricanes from Fairey Battles after the Battle of France. He then flew with 73 and 145 Squadrons in the Battle of Britain and arrived in Malta in November 1940. He had already claimed seven Italian and German aircraft destroyed and one probable but then his luck ran out. The Hurricanes were again bounced by Müncheberg. MacLachlan baled out badly wounded - his left arm later had to be amputated. The bounce then forced the Hurricanes to fly towards Mietusch's section which scattered them further, and the Germans claimed another two Hurricanes. Pilot Officer Allan McAdam and Flying Officer Spencer 'Teddy' Peacock-Edwards both landed with damaged aircraft.

With 261 Squadron doing badly, it was a relief that the next Bf 109 appearance was not until 24 February 1941. Both sides came away empty handed. Squadron Leader Tony Trumble was replaced by Squadron Leader Bob Lambert. He took command the following day when Müncheberg shot down Canadian Pilot Officer John Walsh. Walsh had flown with 615 Squadron in the Battle of Britain and had arrived on Malta at the end of January 1941. He had been credited with damaging a Dornier 215 early on 25 February but appeared to suffer engine problems that afternoon, and he was easily picked off by Müncheberg. Twenty three year-old Walsh baled out over St Paul's Bay and was rescued from the sea with his leg broken in four places and a broken arm. He died of shock and pneumonia on 2 March.

The following day would be even worse for 261 Squadron. With the Luftwaffe carrying out its heaviest air attack yet, the RAF managed a single victory but suffered badly at the hands of 7 Staffel and Italian fighters. In the space of 17 minutes, Müncheberg claimed two Hurricanes and Oberleutnant Klaus Mietusch and Unteroffizier Georg Mondry claimed one each. 261 Squadron's incomplete records make mention of five Hurricanes lost that day but the only pilots that can be linked to these losses were Pilot Officers Phil Kearsay, Charles Langdon and Fred 'Eric' Taylor. Kearsay and

Langdon were both Battle of Britain pilots and Eric Taylor was the top scoring RAF pilot on Malta to date. He had arrived on the island in June 1940 and became a founding member of the Hal Far Fighter Flight. He shot down his first aircraft on 10 July 1940 and by 26 February had been credited with seven destroyed, one probable and one damaged. He was last seen chasing a Stuka and was credited with its probable destruction - but he was also seen to be chased by a Bf 109. All three RAF pilots were reported missing and, again, all German aircraft returned unscathed.

Thankfully for the depleted 261 Squadron there was now a break and the Red Hearts did not put in an appearance again until 2 March. At 1045hrs two kilometres west of Marsa Sciocco, Müncheberg bounced what he thought were Hurricanes. Müncheberg claimed to have shot down one. This was in fact a Fairey Fulmar of 806 Squadron flown by Lieutenant Bill Barnes RN, which was being used as an emergency fighter. Barnes was an ace, credited with six plus two shared destroyed and six plus two shared damaged between 2 September 1940 and 16 January 1941. He managed to land safely with damage to his aircraft but later that day he was a passenger in a car which failed to stop when challenged and he was accidentally shot and killed by a sentry.

5 March would see a change. 1./JG 27 was passing through Gela on its way to North Africa and accompanied 7./JG 26 to Malta. Müncheberg and an unknown pilot claimed a Hurricane each and Leutnant Willi Kothmann of 2./JG 27 claimed one. Two Hurricanes from 261 Squadron were lost. Sergeant Harry Ayre managed to crash-land but immediately took off again to claim a Ju 88 destroyed and a third share in a Do 17 (which was probably a Bf 110). Sergeant Charles MacDougal, who had flown with 111 Squadron in the Battle of Britain, was shot down and killed just after claiming to have shot down a Ju 87. To add insult to injury, the Bf 109s then strafed aircraft and ships in St Paul's Bay, a clear sign of the air superiority they had achieved.

The strafing was a tactic that also paid dividends two days later. At midday on 7 March six Bf 109s chased and shot down a Maryland of 69 Squadron which had been returning from a reconnaissance of Taormina. Pilot Flying Officer John Boys-Stones and one of his crew were killed when their aircraft crashed at Wied Tal Kleigha. One of the Hurricanes of 261 Squadron that had been sent to escort it back in also crashed. The Germans then strafed a moored Sunderland of 228 Squadron in St Pauls Bay, badly damaging it and killing its guard, Sergeant Allen Jones. The Sunderland would be finally destroyed in another strafing attack by 7./JG 26 three days later.

261 Squadron had a brief respite from the attentions of 7./JG 26 as the next RAF casualty did not occur until breakfast time on 15 March. Three Wellingtons of 3 Group Training Flight had flown from RAF Stradishall to Gibraltar and then took off at dawn for Malta. Unfortunately one of them, flown by Sergeant John Crawford and Sergeant Richard Alington, was intercepted by Müncheberg 10 kilometres north-west of Gozo; the crew of six and passenger Group Captain Dudley Humphreys were all killed. On 17 March 261 Squadron at last received reinforcements. The six Hurricanes of 274 Squadron led by ace Flying Officer Ernest 'Imshi' Mason DFC were desperately needed.

On the afternoon of 22 March eight Hurricanes of 261 Squadron chased German bombers back towards Sicily. When they were about 20 to 40 kilometres north of Malta they were bounced by 7./JG 26. The Luftwaffe claimed seven aircraft shot down between 1624 and 1631 hrs. Flying Officer James Foxton (a Maryland pilot from 69 Squadron), Sergeant Dick Spyer, Pilot Officer Tom Garland, Flying Officer John Southwell and Pilot Officer Dennis Knight were all shot down and reported missing. Despite 261 Squadron submitting claims for at least two Bf 109s, none were damaged.

Flying Officer Len Rees' Sunderland after strafing by 7./JG 26 on 27 Apr 41. ©Author.





The Staffel's leader, Oberleutnant Jochen Müncheberg, celebrating a victory. ©Author.

There would be two more casualties before March was over. By then Müncheberg had flown his 200th operational flight and shot down his 33rd aircraft - again from 261 Squadron. Sergeant Reg Goode was attacked from behind and seriously wounded in the back and neck. Despite his Hurricane being badly damaged he managed to crash-land at Ghain Tuffieha, snapping off the tail of his fighter. Sergeant Alex Livingston's Hurricane was also damaged but he successfully landed at Luqa.

Between 3 and 10 April, there were no Bf 109 sightings as 7./JG 26 was operating from Taranto on mainland Italy, supporting the German invasion of Yugoslavia and Greece. This was fortuitous for the RAF as, on the morning of 2 April, ten Hurricanes and two Skuas arrived from Gibraltar. The following day Operation Winch saw the arrival of 12 Hurricane IIs and nine Fulmar fighters of 800 Squadron. They were soon in action but quickly suffered at the hands of the Germans.

On 11 April, eight Hurricanes were scrambled only to be bounced. Two of the recently arrived pilots, Pilot Officer Peter Kennett and Sergeant Peter Waghorn were shot down over the sea and died. Three more Hurricanes crash-landed due to combat damage; their pilots were uninjured. The victors in this case were Müncheberg (two) and Klaus Mietusch. Late morning on 13 April, Flying Officer 'Imshi' Mason claimed a Bf 109 just off the island only to be attacked by Mietusch. Mason levelled out just above the sea but then his engine failed. He was quickly rescued and rushed to hospital with bullet wounds to his right arm and left elbow, metal splinters in his left leg and skull and facial injuries. Again, another Hurricane returned damaged and no Bf 109s were lost.

On 23 April Jochen Müncheberg shot down Flying Officer Henri Auger over the sea off Delimara. He was seen to bale out and land between Filfa and the mainland but there were still German aircraft around so no rescue launch was sent out. Flight Lieutenant Charles Whittingham, who was just about to take command of 261 Squadron from an exhausted Bob Lambert, wrote: "...Auger ran into a bunch of 109s. Saw his parachute coming down, south of the island. But he was never picked up. The pilots in the squadron were all very indignant because they felt that control should have sent some searchers up. ... people's nerves somewhat frayed, what with the stream of so many casualties, bombing at night and bad news in Greece and Libya..."

Although Malta was not to know it, 7./JG 26 would only prowl over the island for another month. But during that time they would claim another 17 aircraft, starting with a Sunderland of 228 Squadron at Kalafrana on 27 April. That Sunday 23 Hurricanes arrived which formed 185 Squadron. Some of them were led in by Pilot Officer Leonard Rees' Sunderland but as it landed two Bf 109s strafed it and set it on fire.

1 May saw Jochen Müncheberg getting three kills which took him to 41 in total. He was awarded the Oak Leaves for the Ritterkreuz (Knights Cross) four days later. The Germans claimed five Hurricanes in two sorties that day, the only recorded losses being Battle of Britain Pilot Officer Bob Innes who baled out as his Hurricane crashed at Ghaxaq. Sergeant Brian Walmsley was wounded on the second sortie. For the first sortie, records state one Hurricane was damaged and another 'shot down, pilot safe' but there are no further details. 6 May would see another two victories for Müncheberg. Pilot Officers Alan Dredge, Colin Gray



Technical work being carried out on a Bf 109 E-3 of 7./JG 26. ©Author.

and Peter Thompson (all former Battle of Britain pilots) and Sergeant Richard Branson were all wounded, with Gray and Branson baling out.

Another Sunderland from 10 Squadron RAAF was set on fire at Marsaxlokk Bay on 10 May, strafed by a lone Bf 109 of 7./JG 26. Three days later the last victory over Malta for the Staffel came when Mietusch accounted for Flight Lieutenant Innes Westmacott, who baled out wounded, and Pilot Officer Peter Thompson, who was killed. Three more kills would be credited to III./JG 27 on 14, 15 and 20 May (two from 261 Squadron and one from 185 Squadron).

Then, on 25 May 7./JG 26 made a spectacular last show before their departure for Greece and North Africa. As the Ta Qali diary relates: "...Me 109s machine-gunned a searchlight station on the airfield, wounding one gunner. Two Hurricanes are burned out and three others seriously damaged on the ground (but repairable). A Lister engine is damaged and 90 gallons of oil are lost. One pilot and one airman are injured by shrapnel and admitted to hospital; two other airmen are slightly wounded..."

It had been a baptism of fire for the recently arrived 249 Squadron.

The Association is working with producers of *The Burning Sky* film. Members and historians with an interest in WWII battles in Malta can find out more on p5 of *Air Mail* Oct-Dec 2017 or email RAFA@motleyfilmproductions.com for the attention of Alec Mackenzie.



Stukas over Malta, March 1941. ©Author.

World Military News



Above: First Afghanistan UH-60 Blackhawk being Delivered (© USAF)

Below: RAAF PC-21s (© Commonwealth of Australia)

Afghanistan



The Afghan Air Force has received the first two of an eventual fleet of some 150 Sikorsky Black Hawk utility helicopters. These are being drawn from US Army surplus stocks and being refurbished and upgraded before delivery. They will replace the service's aging fleet of Russian-made Mil Mi-17s.

Argentina



The Argentine Air Force has taken delivery of its first four Texan II turboprop training aircraft out of a total of twelve on order.

Australia



The Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) is to receive a number of large Gulfstream business jets configured for airborne reconnaissance and electronic warfare missions. No timescale is yet known for their introduction to service.

The RAAF has started introducing its new fleet of Swiss Pilatus PC-21 basic trainers to service, with the first six having arrived at East Sale air base in Victoria. Eventually, a total of forty nine PC-21s will be in service with the majority being based at East Sale.



Bolivia



The Bolivian Air Force has retired the very last Lockheed T-33 Shooting Star in military service anywhere in the world. The T-33 was primarily a training aircraft but some smaller air forces also used it for attack duties. It was initially used by the United States Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps from the late 1940s and subsequently with some 30 air arms such as Canada, France, Turkey and Japan. Nearly 6,600 were built with about 870 of these being produced in Canada and Japan.

Brazil



The Brazilian Navy's fleet of Westland Super Lynx anti-submarine helicopters is being upgraded at Yeovil in Somerset. The first took to the air again in September 2017 and is due to be followed by another seven. The first three will be returned to Brazil next year.

France



The first of the French Air Force's new fleet of Airbus A330 tanker/transports made its maiden flight in Spain in September. It is expected to be delivered next year and will be followed by at least another eight. This aircraft will replace the Boeing KC-135 tankers currently in service.

Ireland



The Irish Air Corps has received an additional Pilatus PC-9 to replace one lost in a fatal crash in 2009. The Corps is now back to its full strength of eight of these training and close air support aircraft.

Nigeria



The Nigerian Air Force is to purchase 12 Super Tucano ground attack aircraft from the USA. These aircraft are based on the Tucano trainer, as used by the Royal Air Force, but significantly modified and updated by the Sierra Nevada Corporation in the USA. The aircraft will be used to support operations against the terrorist organisations in the country and to counter illicit trafficking.

Qatar



The Qatari government has signed a statement of intent with the UK to purchase twenty four Typhoon aircraft for its air force. Negotiations are now underway to achieve a contract for them. No timescale is yet known.



A T-33A of the US Air National Guard in 1986 (© JM Henderson)

United Kingdom



The RAF's Shadow aircraft, a heavily-modified Beech King Air, are to receive a major upgrade by prime contractor Raytheon UK. No 14 Squadron operate the current fleet of five aircraft from RAF Waddington with three more to be added shortly following the 2015 Strategic Defence and Security Review. The aircraft were initially procured as an urgent operational requirement for Afghanistan operations.

The RAF is taking over the British Army's small fleet of Britten-Norman Islanders and they will be operated by No 5 (AC) Squadron, also based at RAF Waddington. These aircraft are used for intelligence and surveillance purposes.

No 6 Squadron based at RAF Lossiemouth recently took their Typhoon aircraft to Jordan on Exercise Magic Carpet 17. They operated from the Royal Jordanian Air Force base at Afaq which is home to that air forces' No 6 Squadron who were the RAF's hosts. The common heritage of these two squadrons also extends back to 1955 when the late King Abdullah the First presented the RAF's No 6 Squadron with their Royal Standard. The RAF squadron was able to hone their pilots' skills in dropping precision guided bombs and using Typhoon's 27 mm cannon.

United States



The original version of the C-5 Galaxy outsize-load freighter, the C-5A, has been retired from service with the US Air Force after some 47 years. The last few examples have either gone into storage or been placed on display in appropriate museums. The Air Force continues to operate the newer model of the aircraft, the C-5M.

The United States Navy is currently transferring its fixed-wing squadrons in Japan from their long-time home at Atsugi, near Tokyo, to the Marine Corps Air Station at Iwakuni, just South of Hiroshima in the South West of the country. Their helicopter squadrons will continue to operate from Atsugi.

Lockheed Martin has flown the first development model of the VH-92 helicopter that will eventually be used to transport the US President. A second machine will become available later in the year. This helicopter is based on the Sikorsky S-92 medium lift aircraft that is in widespread service, including with the UK Coastguard.



A USAF C-5A at RAF Leuchars in 1983 (© JM Henderson)

We record with sadness the passing of the following members of the RAF Association

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Below: Memorial crosses.
More info: rafa.org.uk/our-remembrance-garden



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Old Colleagues

Is there anyone out there who was enlisted in the RAFVR prior to WWII and had a six figure no. starting with 7? My number was 757581. Harry Flack 01983 295669 or flack885@btinternet.com

Seeking whereabouts of John Bellsmith. Joined May 1967 as RAF Halton Apprentice 209th entry. Believed later employed at Stanstead Airport. Any info please to M Plimmer on 01403 275176.

RAF Administrative Apprentice Association. Did you train as an apprentice supplier or clerk at either RAF Ruislip, St Athan, Bircham Newton, Halton or Hereford? Please contact www.rafadappasn.org for details of your association.

Welcome extended to anyone who served at RAF Changi, including HQ FEAF between 1946 and 1971. See www.rafchangi.co.uk for joining information or apply to Malcolm Flack, Membership Secretary 01494 728562 memsecchangi@telco4u.net for free enquiry pack.

Are there any airmen who landed in France on D-Day? I landed with the Canadians on Juno beach on 6 June 1944. Contact Harry Flack 01983 295669 or flack885@btinternet.com

WILL MICHAEL BIGGS, EX-266 SQUADRON, PLEASE CONTACT FRED (BARRY) WOODHOUSE, ALSO EX-266 SQUADRON, REFERENCE BOOK PUBLICATION. I HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO CONTACT YOU.

Reunions

Royal Air Force Bircham Newton Heritage Centre. To mark the centenary of the birth of Bircham Newton, a Veterans' Day event will be held at this former RAF station on the afternoon of Saturday, 19th of May, 2018. More details can be found at www.rafbnmp.org.uk.

RAF Police 100. The first 100 years of the RAF Police will be commemorated at the RAF Police Memorial on 23 June 2018. Details: John Walton, 01395 446234, clarewalt1@gmail.com.

RAF Administrative Apprentice Association. Our 21st AGM and reunion is to be held in Swindon 22-24 June 2018. For more information please visit our website: www.rafadappasn.org

313 Entry RAF Hereford 1968. Interested in a reunion? Please contact David Johnson dcj440.313@btinternet.com

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Crossword answers

Down:
1 Flushed
2 Red white and blue
3 Tort
4 Flower
5 Aberdeen
6 Unilateral
7 Room temperature
8 Terror
9 Undergo
10 Eptome
11 Ha-ha
12 Headmaster
14 Detach
15 Redeemer
17 Dramatic
18 Safety
21 Indicator
22 Warn
24 Sulking
25 Fissure
26 Weightlessness
23 Uses.
20 Trifle
19 Yankies
17 Driest
16 Airtight
13 Scratching

S	S	E	N	S	S	E	L	T	H	G	I	E	W	
E		R		E		L		H		N		U		T
E	R	E	S	S	F	I	S	G	N	I	K	U	S	
K		T		U		I		I		H		B		E
N	R	A	W		Y	R	O	A	T	C	I	D	I	N
A		R		L		T		R		T		N		R
	Y		T	E	F	A	S		C	I	C	A	M	A
			P		R		N		A		R		E	
	R		E	M	E	D	E	H		C	A	T	E	D
O		E		T		E		R		S		I		E
	R		E	R	A	S	T	E	R		H	A	H	A
	R		M		L		R		W		T		W	S
	E		M		E	P	I	T	O		G	R	E	U
	T		O		N		B		L		O		E	L
		Y		A		R		U		A		N		J



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