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JULY - SEPTEMBER 2017

 ROYAL
AIR FORCES
Association

The charity that supports the RAF family



Medals reunited - thanks to befriender



Patron: Her Majesty The Queen
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**Medals reunited - thanks
to befriender**

Photo: © MOD/Crown

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The charity that supports the RAF family



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Message from the Secretary General

I write fresh from our latest Conference. As always it was a great opportunity for individual members, branches and staff from around the world to benefit from each other's comradeship, catch up, share our knowledge, and also learn from each other. We all then leave refreshed, invigorated, and equipped to continue the vital work of this crucial Association for another year. I was delighted that the new venue meant we were able to include the European and RAFALO conferences on site for the first time, and benefit from their company and contribution. For the first time we also broadcast conference live via YouTube and I know that hotel employees and members around the country who couldn't attend were following the business with interest. I hope more of you will join us in person and via the internet next year. You will find reports and pictures of this year's conference events, business and voting results, winners of trophies and flying scholarships and much more throughout this issue of Air Mail.

At Conference Sir Dusty Miller stood down and Conference acclaimed Sir Baz North as our new President. In his final address, Sir Dusty was very clear that it is the right time for him to hand over control of the joystick. As he said, "Air Marshals of Sir Baz's quality don't come along very often" and he wanted to give the Association the best chance it could possibly have to continue flourishing, under Sir Baz's leadership. You can read more about Sir Baz's life and achievements on page 14, in our Extraordinary Trustee Spotlight.

I am also proud to report a 'first' to you. In early June the Association opened its first high street Wings Centre, in Preston. The centre is a physical presence that will offer contact, companionship and access to welfare for anyone from the RAF family, and also from other Armed Forces. More about that is on page two.

And finally, Council elections will take place early in 2018. To better reflect the membership in the Association's decision making, Council are keen to encourage those with particular skills in governance, information technology, marketing and communications, fundraising, legal or human resources to consider putting themselves forward for election. We are particularly keen to encourage underrepresented groups so we can reflect the broad spectrum of our membership at the highest levels. Details of the formal notification process will be in the next (Oct to Dec) issue of Air Mail.

Nick Bunting
Secretary General



National Presidential Certificates

The following were awarded National Presidential Certificates to coincide with HM The Queen's Birthday Honours List, in recognition of their ongoing support and dedication to the RAF Association.

Linda Taylor	Barry and Penarth Branches
Terry and Margaret McKeown	Barry Branch
Llandaff and Ely Branch	
Paul Sharp	Shrewsbury and District
Sudbury Branch	
Windsock Club	Harrow Branch
Peter Proctor	Ormskirk Branch
Barry Furness	Fareham Branch
Phil Thurston	Kidderminster Branch

Spreading our Wings in Preston

A WWII veteran was finally presented with his campaign medals 72 years after leaving the RAF during the formal launch of the RAF Association's new Wings Centre in Preston, Lancashire.

In the presence of the Mayor of Preston Councillor Rollo, RAF Association Secretary General Nick Bunting, and step-daughter Elaine, 96 year-old Albert Pemberton-Sheen received formal recognition and thanks for his work training WWII pilots - for the first time.

The presentation of the medals was a central part of the ceremony to formally open the Association's first high street welfare and drop in centre. Albert's step-daughter Elaine had called in when the doors first opened, earlier in the spring, to see if she could get help to apply for his medals. Centre manager Ian Barber was glad to support her.



Albert receiving his medals at the Wings Centre

Speaking after the opening event, Ian said: "The Wings Centre is part of the RAF Association's welfare support for current and former serving forces personnel. It's our first high street support centre in the country. It offers a warm and welcoming environment to get involved with the Association and it's for anyone who needs a safe meeting place for groups, an opportunity to build friendships or a location for our beneficiaries to get some much-needed welfare support. The Preston Wings Centre is there to support anyone from the RAF family in the Preston area. We also welcome anyone involved with other branches of the armed forces.

"I am hoping the Wings Centre will act as a bridge between the Armed Forces community and the people of Preston," Mr Barber added. "We've got lots planned in the upcoming months, and the Wings Centre should be a hive of activity, right at the heart of Preston. And, of course, if any of our members or their families are passing by, we'd love to meet you. Do drop in and say hello."

The Wings Centre can be found at 82-83 Fishergate, Preston, PR1 2NJ.



Helping connect people using computers



Bridging the gap over a cup of tea

Forces Cars Direct offers us exclusive rewards

Forces Cars Direct is offering members of the Association discounts of up to 30 per cent off new cars in a new partnership. The deal includes cars from a wide range of marques and manufacturers. There are also special deals and offers that are exclusive to the Association, deals on pre-owned cars and opportunities to take up leasing plans.

"This new deal gives higher discounts than any previous affinity partnerships we have ever had, and covers a wider spectrum of makes," said Neil Everall, RAF Association's Direct Marketing Manager. "So we are delighted to offer this as part of our members' RAFA Rewards and hope many people will benefit from it."

The offers include:

- up to 30 per cent off new cars
- a wide range from the majority of the manufacturers
- a dashboard camera recorder for cars purchased
- other exclusive deals and offers for Association members not available elsewhere

"We are delighted that Forces Cars Direct will also be helping us increase our membership," Neil said. "When they are publicising their offers, they will promote support and membership of our organisation and they are assisting us with first prize in our Grand Draw."

Find out more by calling: 01522 814010 or logging on to www.forcescarsdirect.com or www.rafa.org.uk/rewards



MBE for Dutch member of the Amsterdam Branch

An Association member has been recognised with an MBE for his work honouring UK World War II airmen in The Netherlands.

Hans Onderwater, a member for nearly 40 years, joined a small and exclusive group of overseas recipients of the award, announced in HM The Queen's New Year's Honours List.

The ceremony to present him with his MBE took place in January in the residence of the British Ambassador to the Netherlands, Sir Geoffrey Adams. In attendance were the Lord Stirrup, Air Commodore the Lord Trenchard (HAC 600 Squadron), Air Commodore Tim Thorne, Dr. Brett Mason, ambassador of Australia, Major General Ivo de Jong RNLA, the Commanding Officers of Nos. 600 and 603 Squadrons and many other guests.

Hans worked to ensure that the sacrifices of the RAF over the Netherlands during World War II were not forgotten. He wrote several books about that time, connected towns and villages where Commonwealth aircrew were buried with their next of kin and, after many years of research, successfully identified four aircrew of No. 600 City of London Squadron who had been buried unknown in 1940.

Later Hans was instrumental in the commemorations of Operation Manna, the food drops over starving western Holland in April/May 1945, every five years between 1980 and 2015. He also arranged for schools to adopt allied graves and connect with the families around the world. He wrote several books, two of them on the History of No. II (AC) Squadron RAF, one about No. 600 Squadron and two about the food drops.



'Tour of Lincs' in aid of RAF Association's work

A group of Royal Air Force personnel cycled an incredible 82 mile 'Tour of Lincs' in a single day to raise funds for the RAF Association.

Led by personnel from RAF Scampton, 13 riders took part in the tour that visited all of the RAF stations in the area. The group made sure to stop at each station to raise funds and talk about the work of the Association. Event organiser Senior Aircraftman Stu Coutts said: "The Association does lots of amazing welfare work that we'd like to support – from helping parents record their children's favourite bedtime stories before they are deployed



overseas, to providing befriending volunteers for isolated elderly former servicemen and women, and so much more."

The group raised a fantastic £855 overall, which included around £100 from events at each station. A great example of different stations working well together to put on a fundraising event.

Photos: © Mod/Crown

Win big in the 2017 Wings Grand Draw



A Toyota AYGO x-play from Forces Cars Direct worth more than £10,000, a cruise for two from Fred Olsen worth £4,000, a VIP day with the Red Arrows for four people, an Apple iPad and a gliding experience are the top prizes in this year's RAF Association Wings Grand Draw.

Tickets for the nationwide raffle, which was launched at Conference in May by Grand Draw mascot Wingsy, are now on sale and can be bought online, by phone or by email. The draw takes place on Friday 20 October 2017.

Neil Everall, Direct Marketing Manager says: "Last year we raised more than £100,000 for our crucial welfare work through the Grand Draw. We'd love to smash that target for 2017". Members who want to sell tickets at their events and to friends and families can place bigger orders with Jo Bray jo.bray@rafa.org.uk or by calling 0800 018 2361.

To buy your own tickets and stand a chance of winning any of these prizes:

- Go to our website www.rafa.org.uk/granddraw
- Contact your local RAF Association branch
- Contact Jo Bray 0116 268 8766 or Neil Everall 0116 268 8756

Lumpy Jumpers' mass parachuting event

75 former and currently serving RAF women will be taking part in a mass parachuting event to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the RAF Regiment.

The 'Lumpy Jumpers' have reclaimed the politically incorrect slang term for women in the armed forces and adopted it as the name for their group. They will all jump over one weekend in early July from air bases in Strathallen, Coleraine, Peterlee, Langer, Tilstock, Beccles, Hinton and Dunkeswell. The event will raise awareness of veterans' issues and raise funds for the welfare work of the RAF Association.

They are led and inspired by former Women's Royal Air Force member, Donna Finlay, who said: "Each jumper has pledged to raise a minimum of £500 for the event – with the aim of raising a grand total of £37,500. So thank you to them all. And we also thank the RAF Sports Parachute Association and instructors who will be donating their time to help us achieve this."

Rachel Huxford, Director of Fundraising at the Association, said: "We know the services that we provide to the RAF family are close to the hearts of many of the women participating in the jump, and we are so proud that they have chosen us as beneficiaries.

"We wished all of the jumpers the best of luck for the day and would like to encourage anyone who wants to show support for this unique challenge, to donate today in recognition of the selfless service of our current and former serving personnel!"

Air Mail hopes to report on the jump in words and pictures for the next edition.

To donate to any of the 'Lumpy Jumpers' go to mydonate.bt.com and search fundraisers for 'Lumpy Jumpers'!



Staying on the right side of the law

Following requests from a number of members about governance, guidance and the law of the land for branches and clubs, we provide here a quick guide to the kinds of things committees should be aware of, and where more information can be found to help get it right.

The Royal Air Forces Association and its branches are established under charity law as a member led welfare charity that supports the RAF family. We all have the support and guidance of our Royal Charter and Rules, handed down to us from HM The Queen supported by the Byelaws and the Standard Branch Regulations.

These help the generous people who run the branches on a voluntary basis stay the right side of the law. Branches must also follow Charity Law and the regulations issued by the Charity Commission in England and Wales, the Charity Commission in NI and the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR). The first place to get help on everything is on the members' portal of the website, www.rafa.org, or in the most recent printed versions of the Standard Branch Regulations.

Association branch clubs also have their own set of Standard Branch Club Rules, and also cannot exist independently of any branch.

The main elements that must be considered are:

- **Committees.** Every branch needs a minimum of three trustees (a chair, treasurer and secretary) to be legally constituted
- **Who can be a trustee?** Exclusions include bankrupts, people with certain unspent convictions, and a list of others
- Further details on trustee responsibilities can be found on www.gov.uk/guidance/charity-trustee-whats-involved. Or you can get training on Voluntary Wise, <http://vwise.org.uk/>. Their training over the internet costs approximately £15 for a 30 minute session. Branch operating funds can be used to fund this
- Branches have both **operating and welfare accounts**. The first is used to run the branch. The second can only be used to fund welfare activities of the branch. The rebate paid to the branch from the Wings Appeal is restricted to welfare activities only. There are strict rules on using the donations which can be found in branch guidance
- **Succession planning.** As outlined at Conference 2017 – planning for the succession of a branch and the cultivation of fresh new committee members is crucial for the branch to continue delivering its welfare work. It takes time, thought and the building of relationships
- **Data protection.** Rules have tightened over the past decade, and bigger changes are due in summer 2017. In April this year the Information Commissioner's Office fined Great Ormond Street Hospital £11,000 for breaching data protection rules. Companies have been fined up to £400,000. Find out how to make sure it doesn't happen to you here at www.ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection
- **Support from Area offices.** There is a very important form called a 1056. This should be completed after your annual AGM and returned to your Area office. Employees there will then complete, or assist you to complete, the required Charity Commission forms to keep you within the law. The updated form also enables branches to easily comply with the Association's data protection policy
- **Annual Accounts.** Trustees of charities are under a legal duty as charity trustees to submit annual returns, annual reports and accounting documents to the Commission as the regulator of charities. Trustees are under a legal duty to prepare annual accounts and reports and should be able to provide these on request. Failure to submit accounts and accompanying documents to the Commission is a criminal offence. The Commission also regards it as mismanagement and misconduct in the administration of the charity. The Commission will not hesitate to exercise its statutory powers to ensure that a charity's annual reports, annual accounts and annual returns are submitted to the Commission within the statutory deadlines where trustees persistently fail to comply with their legal duties
- **Grants and Welfare payments.** Branches wishing to make grants or welfare payments in excess of £5,000 should seek guidance from their Area office prior to making any grant or payment

Tips on wills and legacies

Q: Can a gift to charity help me pay less tax?

A: Technically, yes as gifts to UK registered charities are exempt from Inheritance Tax. The Association offers members a half price will writing service, which includes advice on tax benefits associated with leaving a gift to charity in your will. We have teamed up with The Beneficial Trust and Will Company where we pay for half of the cost of a simple will for our members.

For further information please contact our Legacy and Remembrance Manager, Mrs Vinny Manak at vinny.manak@rafa.org.uk or on 0116 268 8791. The RAF Association recommends that you speak to a solicitor or a financial advisor for advice on tax issues.

“One of the best cadets we have ever seen”

The Northern Area have crowned this year's winner of their Young Person of the Year award, Cadet Warrant Officer Susannah Firth.

Susannah was nominated by 1953 (Knaresborough) Squadron ATC after a truly exceptional year. In the past 12 months Susannah has become RAF Station Commander's Cadet at RAF Linton-on-Ouse, represented cadets at the Wing Concert and marching band performing at the Royal International Air Tattoo and came second in the cadets' national competition at RAF Halton. For the past two years she has been Cadet of the Year for 1953 (Knaresborough) Squadron and was promoted to Cadet Warrant Officer as well.

She is an integral part of her squadron and can often be seen leading from the front when it comes to activities such as Wings Appeal collections and cadet camps. Susannah would like to join the RAF upon completion of university, and work as an Aerospace Battle Manager or a speech therapist.

Susannah's Commanding Officer has received many valedictory letters about her, including one from RAF Valley, stating she is: "one of the best cadets we have ever seen." Congratulations Susannah on this award.



Better interest rates for your branch

At Conference, people were asking about investment for their branches", said Andrew Wilkinson-Sharpe, Director of Finance at the Association, "and we want to share the details with everyone."

The Association offers an investment opportunity to all branches – called The Branch Deposit Fund. Using its ability to negotiate better interest rates when it invests larger sums of money, headquarters invests more than £1million on behalf of 98 branches.

"We encourage all branches to consider taking this up, as we offer 0.25 per cent returns per quarter of the year," said Andrew Wilkinson-Sharpe. "We hold the money in a separate account and branches can access their funds in less than five working days. When it comes to your branch's funds, we recommend following the Charity Commission guidelines and use the Branch Deposit Fund to keep your money secure, while building up interest on additional cash. The maximum standard interest rate offered by most banks is less than one per cent. We offer over 1 per cent and I strongly recommend that all branches looking to invest their excess money consider it."

Branches who take up the offer get quarterly paper or email statements, and are recommended to deposit or withdraw in amounts of a minimum of £1,500. There is no maximum to what you can invest. The Association simply needs a contact name and email to administer the account.

For further information please get in touch at branchfinance@rafa.org.uk.

Museum prepares for RAF 100

2018 marks the centenary of the Royal Air Force and the award-winning RAF Museum will celebrate and commemorate this anniversary through a major transformation of its visitor experience - sharing the RAF story on site and online.

A multi-million-pound transformation of the RAF Museum's London home will allow visitors to discover a new green heart of the community in Colindale, reflecting the historic RAF Hendon airfield.

New galleries will explore the first 100 years of the RAF, its roles today, and invite visitors to imagine its future contribution and technology. A new digital sharing project will promote a conversation with a global audience and help connect people to the RAF story.

The museum will remain open to the public while the site is being redeveloped, so visitors may also chance upon an aircraft being carefully dismantled or wheeled across the site. For more information about the RAF Museum's RAF Centenary programme visit www.rafmuseum.org



Parachuting padre

A parachuting padre will throw himself out of an aircraft on a Wednesday in late summer to help raise funds for the Association's Wings Appeal and welfare work.

Reverend Mark Perry, currently stationed at RAF Lossiemouth and soon to move to RAF Northolt, was inspired by a meeting with the Association's former President, Sir Dusty Miller. "I was talking to him about your work", he told Air Mail, "and had just seen an advert for a tandem sky dive on the mess noticeboard. I have raised money for charities before, and thought this was a really good cause. I am impressed by how the Association supports serving and ex-serving RAF personnel and their families whenever they are in need." There are strong links and support between the organisations, the RAF Chaplaincy provides pastoral and spiritual care for all personnel and their dependents, irrespective of their status or religious beliefs.

"I am hoping to wear my dog collar when I jump," Rev Mark added, "safety precautions allowing! It's two years since I last did my only other tandem sky dive. I'm looking forward to being part of the Association's fundraising event with the RAF Falcons parachute display team."

Rev Mark is aiming to raise at least £800 and his jump is scheduled for 30 August 2017 in the midlands. He laughs and says, "Faith is great, but a parachute is a wise precaution."



Photo: © MoD/Crown

Twelve months of celebration planned for RAF100

The RAF100 programme will salute the centenary of the Royal Air Force through wide-ranging local, regional and national events and activities running from 1 April 2018 to the end of September 2018.

The public launch is scheduled for autumn 2017, which will coincide with the start of the RAF100 Appeal, run by the four key RAF charities (RAF Association, RAF Benevolent Fund, RAF Charitable Trust and the RAF Museum) to raise charitable funds to support the RAF family.

The www.raf.mod.uk/raf100 website has been launched to tell people about RAF100 and how to get involved. As you'd expect, there will be traditional events, full of ceremonial and historic significance, including: a live broadcast multi-media event from the Royal Albert Hall; a service at Westminster Abbey; and a parade of 1,500 uniformed personnel up The Mall to Buckingham

Palace where Her Majesty The Queen will take the salute and review a flypast.

Important though these big events are, there is much, much more to RAF100. The Royal Air Force will be showcased in lots of different ways to reach as many people as possible - from air shows to festivals; from national, iconic events to local initiatives and schools projects focusing on science, technology, engineering and maths. The RAF Association will be leading on RAF100 Appeal collections at some of these events and in due course we will be asking for the support of Association members and other volunteers to help us.

More generally, there are plans for a range of special RAF100 publications as well as television and radio programmes and social media campaigns.

Pay in instalments for Centenary Anthology

A new payment option has now been offered for The RAF Centenary Anthology from Extraordinary Editions. Featured in the last issue of Air Mail and also on display at Conference, the anthology is currently only available to former and serving members of the RAF and their families. It is being offered at a discounted subscriber price of £750, before being offered to the public at the full price (£975).

To pay in instalments you can choose the level of payment you wish to make [examples include £75 a month for 10 months, or £50 a month for 15 months] and once the book is fully paid for it will be delivered. There are no arrangement fees or penalties and it costs no more to buy the book this way.

More information from: www.extraordinaryeditions.com or contact the publisher, Martin Morgan at: mm@extraordinaryeditions.com or on 020 7267 4547

A donation from all sales will be made to the RAF100 Appeal supporting the RAF Association, RAF Charitable Trust, RAF Benevolent Fund, RAF Museum and the Royal Air Force's nominated charities.



Support for RAF at Sheffield half marathon

SAC Thom Dobson and SAC (T) Tom Garland from RAF Leeming ran the Sheffield half marathon in April and raised £300 for the Association. Thom tells the story:

"0930 seems like an early start for a morning run when I could quite easily have been enjoying a relaxing Sunday, but as we walked into the city centre with hundreds of other runners, there was a great atmosphere and sense of anticipation.

"My good friend Tom had asked for my help fundraising for the RAF Association. I was going to leave it at that but then decided to enter the race as well. I was really pleased that I had.

"People shouted "come on RAF lads!" as we ran side-by-side, out of the city centre and into the Peak District.

"We aimed to finish in one and three quarter hours. I did it in 1hr 45mins 32secs. Tom finished in 1hr 45mins dead. The sign of it being such a good race was that we both immediately wanted to enter for next year - maybe for the Association again.

"A big thank you to everyone who sponsored us."



Bath duck gives our appeal Wings

In 2016 branches raised an incredible £1.24 million for the RAF Association. But collection days are not just about fundraising. As North Weald and Ongar Branch have been showing, community engagement is just as important to breathe new life into branches. While coordinating a store collection, they gave away a duck to a local police officer, who promised to post about it on social media and let people know that the RAF Association was fundraising.



The branch members thought nothing more of it, until a couple arrived in the afternoon, asking to buy ducks and for more information about the Association. As a result of this interaction, the couple have joined the branch and are really enthusiastic about getting involved. A great example of how fundraising and community engagement can work hand in hand to benefit the branches.



Wings Week will soon be here (11 to 17 September 2017) and this year there are some brand new items available for branches including; three new pin badges, Spitfire windmills, an RAF Regiment 75th anniversary 'Name Me, Claim Me' Bear and of course this year's jet ducks.

To order any items for your branch go to www.rafashop.com and look at 'Wings Appeal' items. Or you can contact the community fundraising department on 0800 018 2361.

Brew for the Few



A great way of fundraising for the RAF Association is holding a coffee and cake event. The Association is launching this year's Brew for the Few to raise funds and remember all those that fought during the Battle of Britain.

A Brew for the Few is versatile, they can be large or small and are a great way to catch up with friends, family or colleagues. Whether you want to do a themed event, invitation only or something a little bit more casual, you're sure to have a great time for a great cause.

If you'd like to host your own Brew for the Few have a look at our website www.rafa.org.uk/brew or email wings@rafa.org.uk.

RAF Waddington team get help for their holiday home

Members of the RAF Association Lincoln Branch visited RAF Waddington to present a generous £1,000 donation to the Waddington holiday home.

The donation will be used to update furnishings and continue to meet the demands of the guests who stay at the caravan, situated in Haven Thorpe Park Holiday Centre.



Photo: © MoD/Crown

David's commitment honoured

Association caseworker David Stacey was hailed **Welfare Caseworker of the Year at the 2017 RAF Benevolent Fund Awards for his outstanding contribution to helping the RAF family.**

Al Bennett, Housing Executive at the RAF Benevolent Fund, said: "There is one caseworker who consistently stands head and shoulders above his contemporaries for both the quality of his applications and his willingness to go the extra mile for his clients.

"He is quick to identify the need but where David really excels is in taking a fully holistic approach to both his casework and the beneficiary."

The RAF Benevolent Fund works in conjunction with caseworkers from the RAF Association, SSAFA, and The Royal British Legion - who ensure beneficiaries receive the help they need.

On receiving his award, David, who served in the RAF in logistics and now lives in Hartlepool, said: "As well as seeing cases where people need support to live independently at home, I see a lot of people in financial distress.

"When you knock on the door you never quite know what you're going to find. You're a total stranger but you have to find out about peoples circumstances and you have to gain their trust. I find the lesson's learned from the Association's welfare training courses are invaluable.

"I can meet somebody who needs a stair lift but they may have been told by their local authority that although they can have



Welfare Caseworker of the Year David Stacey is presented with his trophy by Paul Cushen.

one, they need to wait 12 months. I know I can go to the Benevolent Fund and, as long as all the circumstances are correct, they will respond and help."

The award was sponsored by Midshires Mobility Group and presented by its Managing Director, Paul Cushen.

Rebecca reaches 100 recordings

A Storybook Wings editor who has recorded more than 100 bedtime tales **has been recognised for her dedication by the Association.**

Rebecca Langley is the first of four Storybook Wings editors who will receive certificates to mark this milestone. The Association is also looking at ways to celebrate the achievements of volunteers who have reached 150 stories and more.

She first heard about the project three years ago when she was listening to BFBS radio. She loved the idea of helping children cope with the separation from their serving parents, and signed up. When parents are about to be deployed, Rebecca records them reading their child's favourite bedtime story, to help make the separation more bearable for both.



"I think Storybook Wings is a really cool project to run and encourages mummy or daddy to read to their children," she said. "I enjoy the satisfaction of knowing I have helped RAF families and the excitement of the child when they listen to their story".

Rebecca's favourite stories to record include Guess How Much I Love You, Room on the Broom and Goodnight Spaceman, because of the variety of sound effects and music she can add to each and she says, "I'll definitely aim for 200 next!"

2,345 hours were given by volunteers to help serving parents record stories last year, and recording devices are now available in 32 RAF stations in the UK. Serving parents are also able to record stories while on active duty, with two recorders in Afghanistan and others in Cyprus, the Netherlands and at RAF Mount Pleasant in the Falkland Islands.



Hotel news

The Association's Wings Break hotels can be found in three of England's most idyllic seaside and countryside areas. Their combination of peaceful relaxation and stimulating company provides perfect breaks for all the RAF family, with additional care and support for those who need it.

Flowerdown House in Somerset welcomed members from the RAF Association Burnham-on-Sea and District Branch who joined them for coffee and cake. They presented hotel manager, Di Jones, with a generous donation of £250, to go towards enhancing the guests' stay at Flowerdown House.



Guests were treated to a visit to Weston Helicopter Museum to see the farewell flypast from the iconic Lynx helicopters before they were formally retired. The flight circled in glorious sunshine and visitors were then able to get behind the controls of the museum's own Lynx Mk 11 craft in an 'open cockpit' experience.

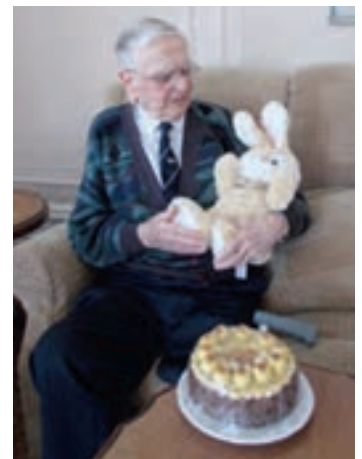
Betty, a regular visitor to Flowerdown House, surprised employees at the hotel with a basket of hatchlings holding a hidden surprise. A chocolate egg was nestled in every one!

Finally, a regular guest had a special birthday. Mary turned 80 while staying at Flowerdown and her daughter arranged a surprise visit to her mum. Celebrations took place in the bar lounge, with 20 other guests enjoying birthday cake, party food and champagne poured by Mary's husband Charles.



Richard Peck House in Lancashire ran an Easter bonnet competition, won by Sybil. Mr Berrett won both the Simnel cake and the Easter bunny during his holiday stay.

The hotel has also been entertaining Association branches. Members of the Edinburgh and Lothian Branch, Barrow Branch and Oldham Branch have been busy raising funds for the Wings Appeal. The amounts raised will go far in helping to improve guests' experience at the hotel.



Finally, to **Rothbury House** in Northumberland, where manager Colin Lee, as chair of the RAF Association Rothbury Branch, received a collection of 1986 first day issues stamps. They show WWI and WWII aircraft and RAF heroes and now have pride of place in the main lounge at the hotel.

The garden is also beginning to wake up in time for summer, as the flowers come into bloom. The hotel team is preparing to add a bowling green to one of the lawns which should be ready for this summer's guests. Air Mail looks forward to hearing if any teams are formed and how far they may progress in any local or national competitions!

If you are looking for a reasonably-priced holiday break, among RAF friends, in a beautiful part of the country, find out more on 0800 018 2361 or www.rafa.org.uk/wingsbreaks. As Air Mail went to print, there were some spaces still available for 2017.



New £1 coin - pay in your old ones now

The round £1 coin was replaced on 28 March 2017 by a 12-sided coin. The round coins will remain in circulation until 15 October this year. After then they won't be legal tender and not paying them in could result in a loss of donations.

If you fundraise for the Association, there's no time like the present to check your old collecting tins. Perhaps you or your branch has some out in local shops or you have one in your home. And don't forget joint collecting tins on RAF stations – get these collected up and all monies paid in as soon as you can. If you are responsible for one or more collections or tins, make a note in your diary to pay money in at the start of October and beat the banks' deadline.

Although trolley tokens have not been available for Wings Appeal fundraising for four years, there may be some still out with branches. Media reports have suggested that trolley tokens will still work in supermarket trolleys for the foreseeable future,

so you can continue to offer them in exchange for a donation. We will advise branch Wings Appeal Officers if we hear otherwise.

For more information on the new coin visit www.thenewpoundcoin.com



Door opening to better member's portal

Members who use the Association website's portal will be keen to hear of plans to improve it, and interim measures to explain the changes.

Dick Whittingham, chair of Council's Information Environment (IE) Committee, says: "The members' portal is filled with information and provides a means for feedback to Council and headquarters. It can only be reached via a login page to ensure privacy from the general public.

"We are very conscious that the members' portal, does not fully meet the Association's needs," he continues. "Regrettably the portal's structure is locked into the structure of Salesforce, the Association's customer relationship management (CRM) system which is currently being significantly updated. Major changes to the portal can only be effected in parallel with the implementation of the Salesforce 2.0 project. That is expected to go live in April 2018.

"In the interim Phil Sherwin, Chief Information Officer at Atlas

House, and his team are working to make best use of the capabilities that we have. They have provided an IE folder in the 'Resources' area of the current portal. This contains a summary of the current IE position ('Read This First!') with detailed supporting papers. These cover the high priority challenges of Personal Data Privacy (PDP), the development of an effective customer relationship management system and IE security."

The IE Committee provides strategic oversight of the Association's information environment. It is chaired by Dick Whittingham, with Wayne Swiggs, Chris Goss, and Martin Watkins as members. Other Council members, in particular the chairs of the other Council committees, the Secretary General and the HQ directors also participate as appropriate.

It is supported by the IE Support Group (IESG), an ad hoc group of volunteers whose experience and knowledge help identify IE requirements and resolve IE challenges. If you have relevant skills and would like to be part of the IESG, you are invited to contact the IE Committee Chair via InformationEnvironment@rafa.org.uk

Offer of help for Akrotiri museum pieces

An Association member is hoping to give something back to the station that gave him "the best tour in 15 years' service." And he's offering to help others who served there to provide materials for the base.

John Lewis, Press Officer of the Association's Sheringham and District Branch hopes to help RAF Akrotiri build up its museum with records, memorabilia and artefacts:

"The Station Museum is currently in St Paul's Church. They are planning a move to a dedicated building and the Station Heritage Officer, Wing Commander Steve Chappell, is working to improve the displays. He is interested in any documents or images relevant to RAF Akrotiri, from any era. He is also keen to hear personal reminiscences of your time there. Steve can be contacted at: stevechap50@hotmail.com



Interior view of the RAF Akrotiri Museum

"I appreciate that many people have precious photographs or documents that could not be sent overseas and need to be scanned," John says. "I am happy to do that in the UK for people. All material will be returned in a card backed envelope, first class with a DVD of the items copied." To take up this offer, contact John Lewis, Press Officer, Sheringham and District Branch RAF Association, 7 Town Close, Holt, NR25 6JN.

Air Marshal Sir Baz North KCB OBE MA FRAeS RAF Newly acclaimed President of the RAF Association

Can you start with a short outline of your RAF career?

"I was commissioned into the RAF in 1982 and initially flew Wessex helicopters in Northern Ireland. This began an association with the Support Helicopter Force which would last for 22 years and four commands (Falkland Islands, Special Forces Flight, squadron and station) and all RAF helicopter types. Then, in 2006, I commanded No 83 Expeditionary Air Group in the Middle East before returning to the Ministry of Defence as its Director of Air Resources and Plans. In 2009, I was appointed Air Officer Commanding No 22 (Training) Group. Following a tour as the Assistant Chief of the Air Staff in the Ministry of Defence, I was promoted to Air Marshal in 2013 and appointed the RAF's Deputy Commander Capability and Air Member for Personnel and Capability. I was appointed KCB in the New Year's Honours list 2015 and retired from the Air Force in 2016."

You have just become President of the RAF Association – what are you looking forward to?

"I was honoured to be asked to follow Dusty Miller as the Association's President; his are big shoes to fill and, God willing, I will deliver to you the levels of energy, enthusiasm and commitment that have been so marvellously displayed by Dusty at every turn.

"In Nick Bunting and his team we have executives who are singularly focused upon the effective and robust governance of our Association; they will remain relentless in the pursuit of sustained compliant delivery of the Association's intent."

What challenges are you facing?

"With the political and structural challenges that lie before the nation in the coming decade, the trustees have a responsibility to ensure that the Association moves to a position of total compliance with any changes to the law. In particular, in the age of an increasing dependence upon electronically stored information, it is essential that the Association is universally data compliant. This will require the learning of new tricks for many of us. However, if we fail to adapt to the forthcoming changes in UK law, we will find ourselves open to legal challenge and open to the potential for the loss of personal and branch confidential information."

What does it mean to be President of the RAF Association? What will your role on Council entail?

"The Association has had a distinguished record of achievement since its formation; it is essential that it remains as vibrant of thought and as innovative of deed as it was upon its inception. In order to continue to move forward in both its growth and robustness the Association needs to have relevance to both its current members and those who will join it in the future. If it does not, then it will serve well only



those who presently enjoy the comradeship of membership. Members of the Association have a duty to ensure that those who follow us have the opportunity, in the second century of the RAF's existence, to find familiar friendship, support and assistance from the warmth of an Association formed of men and women with a common background. A background founded upon the experiences gained serving within the RAF family and one that holds dear the core values and standards that we all share at heart."

What would you like to achieve in your time as President of the RAF Association?

"Above all the Association is in a very strong place to capitalise upon the engagement that it has established within the wider national community. With such strong links to the Air Training Corps, and other charities and organisations that help less fortunate members of our local communities, the Association remains respected and admired. By continuing to assist in the development of future generations of UK society, and by doing our bit to contribute to the welfare of those in need, the Association will continue to be one that is consulted and included in the opinion-forming process by civic leaders."

As well as the RAF, Sir Baz has a love of cricket, motor sports and travel. He has been married for more than 30 years to Fiona. They have two daughters, Alexandra (a teacher) and Anastasia (an oncology nurse and health visitor). His first grandchild is due in early autumn.

Extra wind for Turn to Starboard

It's an exciting time for Turn to Starboard, as they increase their capacity, taking on more boats. With the latest additions to their fleet, they hope to double their capacity and put 36 people on the water each week.

The RAF Association supports Turn to Starboard, which was set up to support serving and retired armed forces personnel and their families who have been affected by military operations. Their assistance is given through a variety of Royal Yachting Association programmes and family sailing trips.

Courses range from Day Skipper and Yachtmaster, to family sailing trips, helping families to reconnect through shared experiences out on the water.

Whether you are retired, or serving, reserves or regulars, any member of the RAF Association is welcome to sail with Turn to Starboard. To see about availability or for a course that's right for you call 01326 314262 or email tamsin@turntostarboard.co.uk



Air cadets to take to the sky

The RAF Association runs an annual Flying Scholarship programme, which makes six awards to outstanding members of the Air Cadet Organisation. The awards attract around 200 applications each year from across the UK.

Air Vice-Marshal John Cliffe, Chairman of the RAF Association and a former RAF pilot, said: "We are delighted that these young adults who aspire to a life in aviation are going to receive some flying training and so take the first steps. It is how my flying career started and I have always been grateful for the wonderful opportunity given to me at a young age. Because of the costs involved in flying, I know only too well that such opportunities are beyond most families, and so it is really pleasing that the Royal Air Forces Association is able to help make these dreams become reality."

The cadets were awarded their scholarships at Conference by the Chief of the Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Sir Stephen Hillier, in front of their friends and families.

35 Hour Flying Scholarship Winner

Cadet Sergeant Esmée Webley

12 Hour Flying Scholarship Winners

Cadet Sergeant Ryan Cawsey

Cadet Sergeant Karol Kubik

Cadet Corporal Ciara McHugh

Cadet Corporal Alexander Stockton

Cadet Sergeant Thomas Santini was unable to attend but he was congratulated on his 12 Hour Flying Scholarship Award.



MBNA credit cards

Members who have an Association credit card issued by MBNA Limited should have received a letter at the end of May, about the future of the Association credit card programme.

If you have not received this letter, please call MBNA direct on 0800 062 062 for further information.

mbna



For more information, take a look at our website at www.rafa.org.uk/rewards and see how you can claim your rewards

A friend in need is a friend indeed

A 95 year-old former Spitfire engineer has been presented with replicas of his long lost medals as a result of the befriending service run by the RAF Association.

Ted Rexter-Baker had his medals stolen more than 20 years ago. In the course of his chats with his befriender, Air Vice-Marshal Gary Waterfall, Ted explained how much his medals had meant to him and how distraught he was at the loss. Gary decided to see if the medals could be re-presented and they were formally handed over to Ted in a ceremony at RAF Northolt in April. "We contacted the Medals Office and, after providing all the evidence they needed, I am delighted that we succeeded," says Gary. "The ceremony to re-present them to Ted was very emotional and a very special day for him. He had tears in his eyes. I described him as a man of exceptional ability."

Senior Technician Rexter-Baker:

- enlisted as a Boy Apprentice
- joined the Royal Air Force on 12 December 1940 as an engine mechanic at RAF Halton
- was posted to RAF Hornchurch where he first became acquainted with the Merlin engine on Spitfires
- joined 72 Squadron in Tunisia, as an engineer on Spitfires
- returned to RAF Hornchurch at the end of the war
- re-mustered as a Marine Fitter on 5 January 1949
- left the Royal Air Force on 21 April 1953
- transferred to the RAF Reserve
- worked on Cheetah, Hercules, Merlin, Goblin, Derwent, Nene, Hercules Perkins, Crossley, Thornycroft, Napier and Parsons Marine engines
- on leaving the RAF, his Commanding Officer, simply summed up Rexter-Baker's talents as: 'He is a man of exceptional ability'

Ted, who lives in north London, joined the RAF in September 1938 as a boy apprentice at RAF Halton. Following graduation he was posted to RAF Sealand in Cheshire after which he worked on Spitfires with 72 and 84 Squadrons. He served in Tunisia as well as the UK. He stayed in the RAF for a further ten years after the war, at the end of which was awarded the Africa Star, the Africa Clasp, the Defence Medal and the 1935-1945 Star.

"a man of exceptional ability"

"Getting my medals back was one of the most important days of my life. It was very emotional and I would not have missed it for the world," says Ted. "I am the original loner and my only real friend lives 100 miles away so the befriending scheme means so much to me. Gary looks by or rings me up and I like that. He quizzes me about my life and we both talk about our times in the RAF. Me, a bloody Sergeant, calling an Air Vice-Marshal by his given name!"

The befriending service pairs RAF veterans with volunteers from their community. Gary was prompted to sign up after conversations with an isolated neighbour in his village. Like everyone else who volunteers, he attended a day-long course where, he said, he learnt how to listen and what to watch out for in the people they befriend. With the loneliness of many veterans highlighted as a critical issue by the RAF Association, Gary hopes that Ted's story will encourage others to help out.



Attendees at the presentation ceremony. Photo: © MOD/Crown



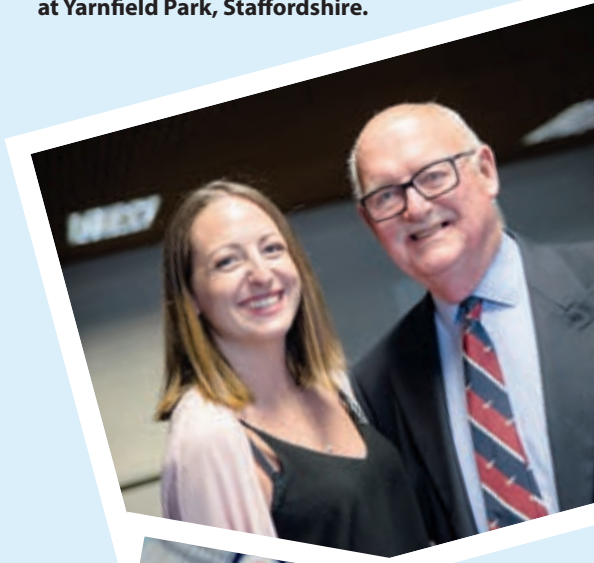
Ted (right) pictured with Air Vice-Marshal Gary Waterfall at the presentation ceremony. Photo: © MOD/Crown



- More than half of the UK Armed Forces veteran population are aged 75 or over and relationship/isolation issues affect approximately 170,000 RAF veterans, with 85,000 of them specifically experiencing loneliness
- Loneliness is a critical issue to the Royal Air Forces Association
- This service will ensure that more is done across the board to support our service men and women
- The Association believes a veteran's service should be shared, celebrated, and never forgotten
- To find out more about becoming a befriender, or any other kind of volunteering for the Association, please call 0800 018 2361 or visit www.rafa.org.uk/befriending

Conference in pictures

From debates to dignitaries, raffles to RAFALOs, parades to prize winning, we bring you a flavour of 2017 Conference at Yarnfield Park, Staffordshire.





All Conference photography by Heidi Burton

Annual Conference 2017



The 2017 Annual Conference of the Royal Air Forces Association was held at Yarnfield Park Training and Conference Centre in Staffordshire between 13 and 14 May 2017. The Conference Chairman was Air Marshal Sir Dusty Miller KBE guided and supported by Mr Anthony Rees.

The Silent Tribute

The Silent Tribute to the Fallen was conducted by the Deputy Chaplain-in-Chief of the Royal Air Force, The Reverend (Group Captain) Tim Wright QHC BSc MTh RAF.

Messages of Greeting

The President announced that messages of greeting had been received from Her Majesty The Queen, Patron of the Association, His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh, past President, and from His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales, also past President.

The President welcomed the 120 branch delegates in attendance, with a voting strength of 24,766, along with their guests and members of the Association which has this year exceeded the total number in attendance to the previous two years. The President also welcomed members who were watching Conference from the comfort of their own homes via the live video streaming. This was broadcast during the weekend to allow greater engagement for members who were unable to travel.

Report of the Annual Conference Committee

The Chairman of the Annual Conference Committee, Mr A Rees, presented his Report of the Annual Conference Committee, noting that there are nine resolutions one of which is daggered and will require a two thirds majority for the resolution to be debated at this year's Conference. In addition the Chairman noted that there is a Supplementary Report 1 which has been circulated.

The Chairman of the Annual Conference Committee, Mr A Rees, moved the adoption of the Report of the Annual Conference Committee, which was duly seconded by Penarth and adopted.

FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAINED
99.12%	0%	0.88%

The Chairman of the Annual Conference Committee, Mr A Rees, outlined the Supplementary Report 1 submitted by York. The Chairman moved for the adoption of the Supplementary Report 1, which was duly seconded by Jersey and adopted.

FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAINED
91.15%	6.19%	2.65%

The President noted that the Emergency Resolution would be debated before Resolution 7.

Resolution Results

Please note the number of the Resolution is the number it appeared within the Conference programme. You may view all the presentations and debates by visiting www.youtube.com/c/rafassociation 'The Morning Session 13th May 2017'.

Resolutions carried – Indicated in Green. Resolutions NOT carried – Indicated in Red.

Resolution No. 1. This Conference resolves to receive a presentation on the review of the Standard Area, Branch and Branch Club Regulations by members of the Review Team set up by the Council which will also provide an opportunity for questions and answers on factual aspects of the review.

**Council
Seconded: Glasgow**

FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAINED
95.69%	1.72%	2.59%

The Vice-President, Bryan Pattison delivered a presentation on the review of the Standard Area, Branch and Branch Club Regulations and accepted questions from Conference. The full presentation can be viewed here: www.youtube.com/c/rafassociation/live 'The Morning Session' at 59mins 05secs

Resolution No. 2. In line with Charity Commission guidance this Conference resolves to consolidate the policy of the Association

that all Branches of the Association are required by the Charity Commission to be registered with the Charity Commission as individual charities, utilising the Royal Charter as their charitable objects and introducing an amendment to Byelaw 18.

Charitable Status of Branches
18. (2)

a) The Association requires all Branches, utilising the Royal Charter as their charitable objects:
I. In England and Wales to be registered as individual charities with the Charity Commission;
II. Branches in Scotland are required to register with the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR).

b) Branches in Northern Ireland are deemed to be a charity regulated under the Association's charity number, 226686, which in turn means that Branches in Northern Ireland are registered under Section 167 of the Charities Act (NI) 2008.

c) Branches, elsewhere, should take local action to ensure compliance with local Charity legislation and to register/confirm their charitable status as necessary. If a problem arises, they should contact their Area Office.

Branches should contact their Area Office for advice and guidance on registering with the Charity Commission, OSCR or their local charity regulator.

Council
Seconded: Ellesmere

FOR 92.11%	AGAINST 3.51%	ABSTAINED 4.39%
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Resolution No. 3. This Conference resolves that the Standard Area Regulations be amended, bringing them up to date and simplifying them to reflect the decisions of past Conferences (2007, 2012, 2014 and 2016) and attached to this notice be adopted as the Standard Area Regulations of the Association, to the exclusion of all previous Standard Area Regulations and shall come into force at the closing of this conference.

Council
Seconded: Cosford

FOR 93.04%	AGAINST 3.48%	ABSTAINED 3.48%
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Resolution No. 4. This Conference resolves that the Standard Branch Regulations be amended, bringing them up to date and simplifying them to reflect the decisions of past Conferences (2007, 2012, 2014 and 2016) and attached to this notice be adopted as the Standard Branch Regulations of the Association, to the exclusion of all previous Standard Branch Regulations and shall come into force at the closing of this conference.

Council
Seconded: Global

FOR 93.91%	AGAINST 2.61%	ABSTAINED 3.48%
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Resolution No. 5. This Conference resolves that the Standard Branch Club Regulations be amended, bringing them up to date and attached to this notice be adopted as the Standard Branch Club Regulations of the Association, to the exclusion of all previous Standard Branch Club Regulations and shall come into force at the closing of this conference.

Council
Seconded: Torquay

FOR 89.47%	AGAINST 3.51%	ABSTAINED 7.02%
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Resolution No. 6. This Conference resolves that notwithstanding any amended Standard Branch Regulations approved at this Conference the Standard Branch Regulation, currently Standard Branch Regulation 38, authorising Branches to recruit Branch Associates as supporters of the Branch shall remain extant.

St Neots
Seconded: Basingstoke

FOR 38.6%	AGAINST 57.02%	ABSTAINED 4.39%
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RP3 Emergency Resolution – Supplementary Report 1. This Conference resolves to continue alternating Conference venues between the North and the South and return to Blackpool in May 2019.

York
Seconded: Alnwick

RP5 Proposed.

This Conference resolves to continue alternating Conference venues between the North and the South and return to Blackpool in May 2020.

Northern Area Council

FOR 68.38%	AGAINST 28.21%	ABSTAINED 3.42%
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Emergency Resolution with the RP5 amendment.

This Conference resolves to continue alternating Conference venues between the North and the South and return to Blackpool in May 2020.

Northern Area
Seconded: Alnwick

FOR 62.16%	AGAINST 32.43%	ABSTAINED 5.41%
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continued on next page



Annual Conference continued

Resolution No. 7. This Conference resolves that Council will source a venue in the Midlands for the 2019 Conference.

Council

RP5 Proposal

This Conference resolves that Council will source a venue in the Midlands for the 2019 Conference.

Northern Area Council

FOR 85.22%	AGAINST 14.78%	ABSTAINED 0%
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Emergency Resolution with the RP5 amendment

This Conference resolves that Council will source a venue the 2019 Conference.

**Northern Area Council
Second: Leicester**

FOR 96.58%	AGAINST 3.42%	ABSTAINED 0%
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†**Resolution No. 8.** This Conference resolves to accept the report of the Trophy Review Committee and accept the recommendations of the report.

**Council
Second: Market Drayton**

† A Resolution marked with a dagger [†] means that it was the subject of debate and lost at last year’s Annual Conference and the consent of Conference will be required (by a vote being taken by Conference with a two-thirds majority) for the resolution to be debated at this year’s Conference.

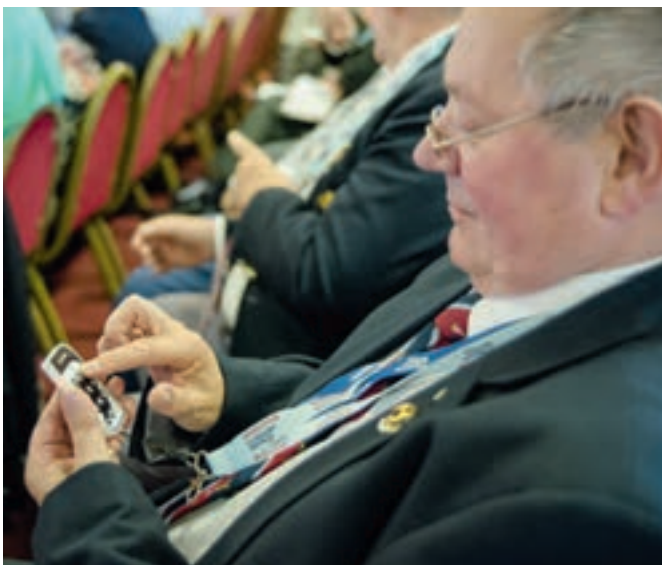
FOR 95.58%	AGAINST 3.54%	ABSTAINED 0.88%
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Conference voted and AGREED for Resolution No 8 to be debated.

Resolution No. 8. This Conference resolves to accept the report of the Trophy Review Committee and accept the recommendations of the report.

**Council
Second: Carrick**

FOR 98.25%	AGAINST 0.88%	ABSTAINED 0.88%
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Resolution No. 9. This Conference reminds Central Council that in accordance with Emergency Resolution 1 of Annual Conference 2009 which was carried almost unanimously, all Association branding should include the strapline Friendship/ Help / Support and resolves that no further changes to the branding should take place without the agreement of Conference.

**Aylesford and Malling
Second: Dunstable**

FOR 42.98%	AGAINST 53.51%	ABSTAINED 3.51%
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Presentation of the 2016 Financial Statements

Honorary Treasurer – Mr Philip Tagg

The Honorary Treasurer’s report and presentation for Conference 2017 can be viewed here: www.youtube.com/rafassociation ‘The Morning Session 13th May 2017’ at 02hrs 53mins 10secs.

Mr P Tagg, moved the adoption of the Financial Report 2016, which was duly adopted.

FOR 99.05%	AGAINST 0%	ABSTAINED 0.95%
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Mr P Tagg, moved the adoption and asked Conference to elect the auditors for 2017.

FOR 97.09%	AGAINST 0%	ABSTAINED 2.91%
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The Annual Report for 2016

Chairman of Council – Air Vice-Marshal John Cliffe CB OBE

The Chairman’s presentation for Conference 2017 can be viewed here: www.youtube.com/rafassociation ‘The Morning Session 13th May 2017’ at 03hrs 02mins 58secs.

AVM J Cliffe moved the adoption of the Report of the Annual Conference Committee, which was adopted.

FOR 99.07%	AGAINST 0.93%	ABSTAINED 0%
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2016 and the Future Presentation

Secretary General – Nick Bunting

The Secretary General gave a presentation to Conference which highlighted the importance of the work which has taken place over the last year and the investments being made to meet our objectives for 2020. Within his presentation he presented to Conference the proposal to work with the Royal College of Arms on a badge for the Association to include the eagle on the globe. Conference supported the proposal by acclaim and understood that the final version would be a matter for the Royal College of Arms. The Secretary General’s presentation for Conference 2017 can be viewed here: www.youtube.com/rafassociation ‘Afternoon Session 13th May 2017 at 19mins 19secs.

Presentation from the RAF Presentation Team

Flight Lieutenant Rich Smithson, WO Andy Rodulson BSc (Hons) GCGI and SAC Christopher Churchman

The RAF presentation team delivered an inspiring presentation on what the Royal Air Force is doing today. The team described

the role the highly professional personnel and cutting edge equipment play in the delivery of air power for the United Kingdom.

To watch their presentation please visit www.youtube.com/rafassociation 'Afternoon Session 13th May 2017' at 01hrs 17mins 42secs.

Address by the Chief of the Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Sir Stephen Hillier KCB CBE DFC ADC MA RAF.

The Chief of the Air Staff gave a state of the nation report on the Royal Air Force one year after taking office. He also spoke in depth about the welfare work of the Royal Air Forces Association – and its value to everyone in the Royal Air Force family, particularly to serving personnel.

Due to election purdah, his address was not broadcast via the live feed of conference business.

Presentation of National Presidential Certificates

The President awarded National Presidential Certificates, to coincide with Her Majesty The Queen's Birthday Honours List 2016 and The New Year Honours List 2017.

Eddie Duke-Low	City & Central London Branch
Joseph Corr	Carrickfergus Branch
Kath Allison	York Branch
Arlene Dowson	Skipton Branch
Caryl Vivien Williams	Llanidloes Branch
Richard Noel Williams	Carrickfergus Branch
Bill and Maureen Kelsey	Littlehampton Branch
Bob and Jane Latin	Morecambe & Lancaster Branch
Mike Facey	Neath Branch
Terry Dennett and	Sud-Ouest Branch
Beryl Dennett Stannard	

Parade Trophies

The Johnson Trophy for the smartest Flight on parade was awarded to South East and Eastern Area.

The Fred Brisley Challenge Cup awarded to the smartest Area Standard Bearer was awarded to the Wales, Midland and South West Area.

Questions for Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Honorary Treasurer and Secretary General

The Chairman, Vice Chairman, Honorary Treasurer and Secretary General took questions from the floor.

Air Marshal Sir Dusty Miller KBE gave an inspiring speech and overview of his presidency over the last six years. To view his speech, please visit www.youtube.com/rafassociation 'Morning Session 14th May 2017'

Question: What is happening with the Wings Portal?

Terry Perriman, Huntington & District Branch

Response: Following an IT review and feedback from branches the Wings Portal has been closed down. The small number of branches who used the portal during 2016 were emailed w/c 8 May to advise them of this closure and given instructions regarding how to revert back to paper returns.

Question: Could you explain what the financial implications are of taking on the RAFA Housing at Storrington?

Terry Dennet, South West France Branch

Response: RAFA Housing at Storrington was an industrial and providence society and as a consequence the assets of the Housing Association are required to stay within the Housing Association. Therefore, no consideration could be paid for the acquisition of RAFA Housing – i.e. there was no cost to the Association. RAFA Housing does trade at a small surplus to allow the residents to live there at a reasonable rent whilst also paying for the running costs and maintenance of the housing. It will add to the balance sheet of the Association in 2017 due to the value of the buildings but its assets are ring-fenced due to the way it is regulated.

Question: Can you update Conference on the investigation into the costs of the CRM?

Barry Furness, Fareham Branch

Response: The cost of running the CRM database is in a similar order to that of running and maintaining the old database and elements such as the portal costs. The Association has spent £12,000 less than the budget which was approved by Council and the IE Committee continues to review and manage the development of the project to ensure the right work is completed within the budget to agreed timescales. There is no material difference in price of running the old system to running the new one.

Question: Reading through the update of Resolutions carried from 2017, please could you provide an update on Resolution 33 (support for branch Clubs) and Resolution 34 (support on Property management).

Dave Chaple, Alnwick Branch

Response: There was an appointment made of a property administrator who has since retired. Therefore, the Association's Director of Finance is currently reviewing the position and best way forward to support this area. In addition, we have given the Branch Support Officers, Area Directors and Station Officers training on licencing laws to enable them to provide direct support to branches and branch clubs.

Question: Why have the three respite home now come under the heading as hotels?

Mr Sutton, Liverpool Branch

Response: It should be noted that only a third of all the beds across the hotels are 'respite care' under the Care Quality Commission and, following extensive research with those who attended and/or wanted to go to the three hotels, the feedback was clear: they did not want to go on holiday to a 'care home'. They wanted to have a break, to go on holiday and for those who require it, have access to enhanced care during their stay. Therefore, based on this feedback the names were changed and the Association has seen an increase in the number of people who attend. In the minds of the people that wish to go there and stay it is important that they receive the care they need and have a holiday.

Question: Through the RAF Benevolent Fund the Association distributed 23,000 euros to beneficiaries in need in the Costa Blanca in the form of mobility scooters, hospital beds, chair lifts and wheel chairs. I understand that these items remain the property of the Association and should remain on our property books. Therefore, when there is no further need for them, they should be returned to the Association, however, I cannot find any paperwork to confirm this - please could you advise?

Phil Laverick, Costa Blanca Branch

continued on next page

Response: from the RAF Benevolent Fund:

For people living on the UK mainland, the Fund provides electrically powered vehicles (EPVs) such as electric scooters and wheelchairs on a loan basis so that when they are no longer needed it can reuse them for another beneficiary. All EPVs should be returned to the Fund when there is a change in medical need, change in circumstances or passing away of the user.

For beneficiaries outside the UK mainland, the Fund provides EPVs on a grant (not loan) basis and requires a recommendation from a suitable professional, such as an occupational therapist or doctor, as well as two quotes for the recommended EPV. Assistance with repairs or other ongoing costs can be considered on receipt of an application.

All other equipment, in the UK and abroad, such as riser-recliner chairs and profiling beds, is generally provided as a grant. The Fund does not loan these items as it is unable to reissue them to other beneficiaries for hygiene reasons. Once no longer required, the equipment can be disposed of as the beneficiary or family chose. Any questions on the RAFBF Mobility Scheme should be referred to the Fund. Further information can be found at www.rafbf.org/how-we-help/.

Question: Has anything moved forward with regard to a Wings durable sticker which would be worn and kept the same way as a poppy would?

Monica White, Halifax Branch

Response: Absolutely. The development of a new 'emblem to be worn on the lapel' is being taken forward and we are in the

process of commissioning a prototype similar to that used by the RBL for their poppy, most likely made of fairly durable paper/card. We hope we can get agreement for it to be in the shape of the roundel and that it will be used as the official emblem for the RAF100 Appeal city collections next year.

Vote of Thanks

Mr A Rees proposed the vote of thanks for individuals and organisations who helped bring conference together.

The President welcomed Air Marshal Sir Baz North to the stage, who was then voted in by acclaim as the new President of the RAF Association.

Chairman of the Association, AVM J Cliffe invited Air Marshal Sir Dusty Miller KBE to become a Life Vice-President of the Association and this was acclaimed by Conference.

Photographs

Photographs taken over the Conference weekend are available on Flickr, the album will be labelled 'RAF Association Annual Conference 2017, please visit: www.flickr.com/photos/rafwingsappeal

See you again next year from 11-13 May 2018 at Yarnfield Park Training and Conference Centre in Staffordshire



Reports from Area Conferences

Northern Area, in Blackpool

Members gathered to reignite old friendships and celebrate. The Association is growing and welcomed the new City of Manchester Branch and the virtual branches hosted in the North. Membership has grown by 18.2 per cent this year, and the Area Welfare Conference was also a great success. Area Conference was an opportunity to build our accomplishments and encourage as many branch delegates and members to attend as possible. The event focuses on the formal process of the Area Annual General Meeting, but great emphasis was also put on the social aspects of the weekend and members, volunteers and employees were thanked for the very important roles they play in the life of our Association.



Getting together in Blackpool

Wales, Midland and South West Area, in Torquay

With delegates from nearly 60 per cent of branches and two Registered Member Groups, it was our best attended reunion for some time. There were excellent presentations and the mass of standard bearers was truly impressive. The best thing about the weekend was the reunion aspect, the laughter and the fun. Council were delighted that delegates had a great time; however 40 per cent of branches missed the opportunity to take part. They 'encouraged even more to join them in Cheltenham from 23 to 25 March' in the 100th year of the RAF.



Having a sing along in Torquay

Scotland and Northern Ireland, in Glasgow

An informal meet and greet on the Friday evening was followed by a thriving marketplace on Saturday. Showcasing the Scottish Mobile Military Museum, Scottish Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders, Fares for Free, Glasgow Branch, and The Scottish International Airshow, alongside our own welfare and volunteering displays. The ATC Banner Competition was followed by a fundraising presentation and a Wings Appeal Workshop before the main business of conference and presentation of awards. Saturday night's festivities included a dinner dance, raffles and revelry and Sunday morning saw a service and wreath-laying ceremony.



On parade in Norfolk

South East and Eastern Area, in Norfolk

Area Conference reported that membership had increased for the second year in a row to 26,393, the level last enjoyed in 2010. Everyone who was involved in 'this excellent outcome' was warmly thanked.

The fundraisers also did well in the year, but there was an overall 20 per cent reduction in the total raised for the area, due partly to the lack of Shoreham Airshow in 2016. There will not be an airshow in 2017 either and members were encouraged to do anything they could to help fill this gap in income.

National and Area Presidential Award winners were thanked for their outstanding work, often over very many years. And the 'tremendous work of the RAF Association Liaison Officers and air cadets' in the area was acknowledged. Finally every single member of the Association in the Area was thanked for their support and enthusiasm and wished continued success for 2017.



Taking flight in Glasgow

Trophy winners 2016

At Conference we celebrated all that has been achieved in 2016. And the trophies awarded there reflect the continued hard work and dedication of our members and volunteers. They were awarded as follows:

Branch Trophies for the Wings Appeal

Sir Thomas Pike Trophy, awarded for the highest net Wings Appeal collection, including airshows. With a total amount raised of over £17,000, the trophy went to the Torquay Branch.

Lord Craig Trophy, awarded for the highest net Wings Appeal collection, excluding Airshows. Raising over £40,000, the trophy was awarded to Carrickfergus Branch.

Gwynne-Vaughan Trophy is awarded to the branch which achieves the highest net collection per member including airshows in the UK. With a total amount raised of over £3,500, the trophy was awarded to the Antrim Branch.

Lord Stirrup Trophy, awarded for the highest net collection per member excluding airshows in the UK. Raising over £703 per member the trophy was awarded to the Carrickfergus Branch who have consistently provided outstanding support to the Association.

Trefusis Forbes Trophy, awarded to the overseas branch which achieves the highest net collection per member including airshows. With over £11,000 raised in total and another successful year, the trophy was awarded to the Jersey Branch.

Bill Bailey Trophy, awarded for the highest net collection per member excluding airshows for overseas. Raising £5,000, the award was given to the Luxembourg Branch for their tremendous effort and commitment to the Association.

Sir Douglas Bader Trophy, awarded for the highest Wings Appeal collection per capita by an ATC squadron. Raising a total of just over £3,250 in total, the trophy was awarded to 415 (Merthyr Tydfil) Squadron.



Above: The Sir Douglas Bader Trophy being presented to 415 (Merthyr Tydfil) Squadron

Sir Robert Saundby Trophy, awarded for the Air Training Corps squadron collecting the highest net Wings Appeal amount. Raising over £5,700, the trophy was awarded to 1224 (Wharfedale) Squadron.

The Sir Andrew Humphrey Trophy, awarded to the unit making the greatest sustained effort and overall contribution to Wings Appeal. Awarded to the Girls Venture Corps Air Cadets (Walsall).

Shell Mex Trophy, awarded to the area achieving the highest percentage renewal rate of annual membership. This year, for their outstanding efforts in organising numerous membership campaigns, the award was made to the Wales, Midland and South West Area.



Above: The Shell Mex Trophy being presented to the Wales, Midland and South West Area

Overseas Membership Trophy, awarded to the overseas branch achieving the highest percentage increase in membership. This year's winner is Sydney Metropolitan (Australia).

The Amodio (Overseas) Trophy, awarded to the overseas branch recruiting the highest number of new members. Once again, showing their expertise in this area, the trophy has been awarded to the Costa Blanca Branch.

President's Cup, awarded for outstanding achievement by an Association branch. Another year of high achievement from an extremely proactive and industrious branch. This branch have continually excelled themselves in the promotion of the Association coupled with the outstanding welfare support provided to their members. Also throughout the year, as always, their members have been exceptionally generous in giving up their personal time to raising thousands of pounds for the betterment of the Association. This year the President's Cup is awarded to the Grimsby & Cleethorpes Branch.



Above: Grimsby and Cleethorpes Branch receiving the President's Cup

Dickie Collins Branch Club Efficiency Trophy, awarded to the branch club that is judged to be the most efficient of those clubs whose parent branch has over 200 ordinary or life members. This

continued on next page

branch has been outstanding in furthering friendship within the Association and providing exceptional welfare support as well as their fundraising activities. The award went to Porthcawl and Kenfig Branch.

The Branch Newsletter Trophy, awarded to the branch judged to have produced the most interesting and informative newsletter over the year. This year the trophy was awarded to the Leicester Branch.

Awards for RAF Stations and Units

Lord Tedder Trophy, awarded to a RAF unit for the highest net collection for Wings Appeal. Once again a truly magnificent effort by all station personnel in raising such a noteworthy total in excess of £18,000. The trophy was awarded to RAF Wittering.

Sir Charles Wheeler Trophy The trophy is awarded to the home RAF unit achieving the highest net collection per head of personnel. Raising over £3,200, the trophy was awarded to the worthy recipients RAF Scampton.

Marquis of Amodio Trophy The trophy is awarded to the RAF unit recruiting the highest number of new members pro rata to unit personnel. The station RAFALO team have worked tirelessly in promoting the Association and its work. This has culminated in an extremely successful recruitment campaign. This year the trophy was awarded to RAF Stafford.



Above: The Marquis of Amodio Trophy being presented to RAF Stafford

The Ken Jago Trophy, awarded to the overseas unit achieving the highest net collection per head of personnel. Having raised over £500 the award was given to RAF Akrotiri who continue to raise funds in support to the Association.



Above: The Ken Jago Trophy being presented to RAF Akrotiri

Sir Geoffrey Bromet Trophy, awarded to the station or unit that demonstrates exceptional achievement in support of the Association. Without exception RAF Benson has demonstrated its unwavering allegiance to the Association in providing their support of the RAF Association in fundraising and membership events.



Above: The Sir Geoffrey Bromet Trophy being presented to RAF Benson

The Airshow Plate, awarded for exceptional achievement by an RAF unit in support of the many airshows that take place throughout the UK. For their ever-presence and valued support at our many airshows RAF Scampton are the worthy recipients.



Above: The Airshow Plate being presented to RAF Scampton

Wally Marriott Trophy, awarded to the RAFALO judged to have made an outstanding contribution to the Association. For her superior performance as an Area RAFALO and untiring dedication towards the betterment of the Association Sergeant Paula Murphy is our RAFALO of the year. Read more about her in our RAFALO spotlight on page 28.

Parade trophies, awarded after the parade and service of dedication on Sunday morning:

The Johnson Trophy, for the smartest Flight on parade was awarded to South East and Eastern Area.

The Fred Brisley Challenge Cup, awarded to the smartest Area Standard Bearer was awarded to the Wales, Midland and South West Area.

Sergeant Paula Murphy

Each year we award the Wally Marriott Trophy to the RAF Association Liaison Officer (RAFALO) who has made an outstanding contribution to the Association's work. This year's award was presented at the 2017 Annual Conference in Yarnfield and we are pleased to say the recipient was Sergeant Paula Murphy.

Nominated by RAF Association Station Officer Geoff Burton, he describes Paula as: "Head and shoulders above any other RAFALO within the UK. She leads from the front and by example, every single time." Paula has been the Senior RAFALO at RAF Scampton since 2012, and is the dynamism behind the incredibly successful team. A team that has multiple plaudits to its name as a result, winning the Air Show Plate in 2013 and 2014, as well as coming away with three awards at this year's Conference.

Fundraising is at the heart of what Paula does as Senior RAFALO. In 2016 alone her team raised over £12,000 on station, with events including; competing in the Pathfinder March, Brew for the Few coffee and cake mornings, gate collections and assisting the Association's fundraising events team at local airshows. The team also organised and hosted the annual Swing Wing concert, with music performed by the RAF College Cranwell Band to an audience of 370 people and VIP guests. They regularly operate an Association stall at Lincoln Christmas Market, along with RAFALOs from RAF Waddington, raising in excess of £24,500 over the past four years.

Paula is also an active and enthusiastic member of the RAFALO and local communities. She often hosts local branches on the station, showing them around the Heritage Centre and sustaining their link with the RAF, past and present. She willingly gives her free time, organising and delivering her team's efforts, supporting the local branches and constantly raising the profile of the Association.



Paula (left) pictured receiving the trophy from RAF Scampton Station Commander Wing Commander J.L. Campbell. Photo: © MOD/Crown

Geoff credits Paula as a shining example, saying she is: "A true giant among her contemporaries and at the vanguard of the RAFALO cohort." Paula is one of the many RAFALOs who serve as a vital link between serving personnel and our branches. Representing service personnel at branch events, raising awareness on stations and fundraising for the cause, week in week out. Paula does all of this with enthusiasm and heart, pushing her team forward to receive the praise, rather than take it herself. She is certainly a worthy recipient of this award.



Paula pictured at the Scarborough Armed Forces day, assisting on the Association stand. Photo: © MOD/Crown

P R E S E N T S

American Legends

An evening of fabulous music performed by the
Royal Air Force's finest musicians

Marking the 70th Anniversary of the United States Air Force, the Bands of the Royal Air Force present a Stars & Stripes flavoured musical tribute performing pieces that have become the soundtrack to our lives over the last seven decades.

From Sinatra to Streisand, Basie to Bernstein and featuring the best of Big Band, Swing, Rock 'n' Roll and Motown, prepare to be entertained!

The programme includes Send in the Clowns, Hoe Down, Stars & Stripes March and I Left My Heart in San Francisco.

Royal Air Force in Concert Tour 2017

7 October	Wycombe Swan	High Wycombe
9 October	Royal Festival Hall	London
16 October	Colston Hall	Bristol
18 October	The Anvil	Basingstoke
20 October	Royal Hall	Harrogate
29 October	Lighthouse	Poole
18 November	Royal Concert Hall	Nottingham
22 November	Symphony Hall	Birmingham
26 November	Sage Gateshead	Gateshead
29 November	Bridgewater Hall	Manchester
1 December	Cliffs Pavilion	Southend
3 December	Theatre Royal	Norwich

For more information visit rafinconcert.com



Volunteer spotlight

To celebrate Volunteers' Week in June 2017, the Association thanked every one of our 3,340 volunteers by writing to them, and highlighted the work of seven who work in a variety of different roles. Here's what they said about the time they give to others.

Roger Galloway

23 years with the RAF; 20 years with Devon and Cornwall police. Volunteers as a branch Wings Appeal fundraiser and branch standard bearer.

Our branch gave Wings Appeal £10,000 this year. We raise money all year long instead of just September, at tourist spots and in Plymouth. The air cadets are very keen to help out and are very creative.



Jeni Ives

11 years as an RAF assistant air traffic controller; now an emergency care practitioner in Lincolnshire. Volunteering as a befriender since December 2016.

During my working life I only got to visit people for maybe five or 10 minutes, so being able to spend more time with them is such a privilege. I love volunteering, I see it as a permanent thing in my life.

Kelly

Currently serving at RAF Waddington. Volunteers as a befriender.

The skill I've developed through being a befriender is how to listen to people. It gives you more confidence in the fact you can do it - just strike up a conversation with a stranger. It might only be a little thing but you can see it. It's paying it forward and knowing you're making a difference.



Martin Turner

Served for 27 years as an RAF armourer; volunteers as deputy chair for the Armourers' Registered Members Group, one of the Association's virtual branches, and as a caseworker in Wales.

I went to one client who needed a new reclining chair. Just by listening I could tell that they need far more assistance than they'd asked for. The support they received is making a real difference to their life. If I've helped a client you can see their relief.



Ian Waddington

Retired from the construction industry; living near Chester. Has volunteered as a Storybook Wings editor for two years.

I have always had a great deal of admiration and respect for the armed forces. Editing stories for Storybook Wings allows me to get involved from a distance. Parents often tell us how it helps their children to hear mummy or daddy's voice while they are away from home and I realise the work I am doing is really appreciated.

Roy Ward

A 90 year-old living in Sussex, currently befriending two people.

I have to travel by three buses to get to Jack, so it takes two hours. I work it so that when his carer comes for his meal, I leave. I discovered he likes a game that is one of my great loves - crib. I took the crib board and the cards, but we never have time to play as we are too busy talking.



Cameron Wilson

A serving 21 year-old from Fife; one of the Association's first volunteer fundraising team leaders.

A lot of leadership roles need years and years of experience for you to be allowed to do them. The biggest challenge will be getting people involved - getting my generation involved. But I think if we have younger people leading, then we will also have younger people getting involved. Until I joined the military I hadn't done much volunteer work, so it's really the idea that the Association could support me that makes me want to give back to them.

Read the full interviews with our seven volunteers at www.rafa.org.uk/volunteer

Donna Hutchinson Area Volunteer Coordinator for Scotland



Tell us a little about you...

I have been part of the RAF Association for just over a year. Before that I was self-employed, selling candles and party planning. My husband worked away for a few years as he is an Air Traffic Controller in the RAF. Now my two daughters are away at boarding school during the week and my husband is based at Leuchars Station, it seemed time for me to be able to take a more regular job. As well as being part of the RAF family, I've also worked for the air force, at Boscombe Down and RAF Nordhorn.

What does an Area Volunteer Coordinator do?

My job is really varied, but essentially I recruit caseworkers, befrienders, and fundraising team leaders and fill branch vacancies. Because I help branches in Scotland to recruit volunteers, it helps me have a really good relationship with those in my area. I prefer going to events and finding people face to face, but I also recruit for volunteers online.

I also write a regular feature in our area newsletter about my role. I've had a few people asking to become befrienders as a result of that.

What is a typical week like for you?

I work part time, so I have to prioritise my workload. I respond to all of the email enquiries from recruitment campaigns and general interest, telling them who we are and about our vacancies. I also advertise all our vacancies, making sure that they're online, in community forums or in newsletters where potential volunteers will see them. I update branches on their branch committee vacancies. I like to contact branches and let them know about new people who want to fundraise or support them.

I also research local events all over Scotland. It's important to be seen as a part of the local community and there are some good opportunities to showcase the volunteering we do. I also train the fundraising team leaders, to take on managing fundraising teams in places we may not have anyone. So there's never a dull moment.

What are the best parts of your job?

I think my favourite part is seeing the new fundraising team leader role grow. From getting an initial enquiry, I train them and make sure they have the knowledge and support to take on the role. Now they're just about to do their first events. I'm so passionate about what I do because I'm part of the RAF family. I've seen people that have received our help in the past and it makes me want to help even more. If I can bring in more fundraisers or befrienders then that can only benefit the Association.

What's the most challenging part of your job?

There is nothing hugely challenging, but I can be a little impatient. If there's a beneficiary that needs a befriender and we aren't able to find one in that location, it can be frustrating. But that's the nature of the job. I can always ask someone else's advice and we run events together, which helps us share our knowledge. We all pitch in and there's always someone on hand to answer a question anyone might have.

Tell us something interesting about you?

I don't know if it's interesting, but I sing in the Military Wives Choir. I've been singing in the Leuchars choir for around six months. We sing anything really, but we have some songs that were specially written. It's great fun and feels like we are a real part of the military community; it's about wives being there for each other, a bit like the Association.

Sports update

Becci picks up bronze

It's been a great few months for RAF Association-supported GB fencer Becci Curwen.

Since we last caught up with her, Becci competed in the British Schools Team Championships. Despite fencing 'up an age group' her team still managed to win gold.

At the Public Schools Fencing Championships there was even better news. She fenced in all three disciplines, (foil, épée and sabre) and finished in 3rd, 23rd and 5th places respectively. This success set her up for a chance at the Master at Arms Championship. She went on to win this after accruing the most points and was delighted with her victory.

Most recently Becci has competed at the U16 British Youth Championships where she picked up a bronze – her highest ranking at this event.



RAF Athletics celebrates a winning season

The RAF Cross Country team put in an excellent performance at the Inter-Services Cross Country Championships. The men's team dominated, with Corporal Bellward and Senior Aircraftman Kallenberg finishing first and second – and leading the team to first place.

Team victory also went to the men's veteran team, while the women put in a great effort despite missing some key athletes due to injury. Senior Aircraftman Gardiner also demonstrated the future is bright for the men's team as he produced a big win.

After the events came the annual presentation evening. Speeches were made by the team managers and special guest, President of the Athletics Association, Air Vice-Marshal Bethel. As well as celebrating the Inter-Services results the team also had various other successes though the season, on road and cross country. These included second place at the International Air Cross Country Championships and individual and team wins at the Cyprus International 4 Day Challenge.

The RAF Athletics Association are, as always, grateful for the RAF Association's support in this annual event.



Selection for the Invictus Games

The RAF Association supports many people in achieving their dreams, especially when those dreams may have changed due to injury. For former RAF personnel Jeff Robinson and Ben Steele, their dream is to go to the Invictus Games.

After months of gruelling practice through the cold and frosty winter months, Jeff was delighted to learn he had been picked as part of the wheelchair rugby squad to fly out to Toronto, Canada this September.

Wheelchair rugby, (originally called murderball) is as physical as the name suggests. Contact between wheelchairs is allowed, so players collide as they try and stop their opponents and win the ball back. Points are gained when the players touch the goal line with two wheels of their chair when they are in possession of the ball.

For Ben and Jeff the team spirit and the ability to maintain an active lifestyle that they have always known was a huge factor in their recovery. As Jeff says: "I cannot underestimate the positive impact that rugby has had on me. It was the spark to not only participate in sport, but to move on with my life."

We will be keeping you up-to-date on how Jeff gets on at the Invictus Games and beyond.



News from the RAF

Royal Flying Corps airmen honoured in Ypres, Belgium ceremony

Two Royal Flying Corps Airmen from Canada were honoured in Ypres on Thursday 18 May 2017 with the rededication of their previously unmarked graves after a local amateur historian's 12 year search for their true identities reached its conclusion.

Pilots Lieutenant Lindsay Drummond (1 Squadron now based at RAF Lossiemouth) and 2nd Lieutenant Robert Bennie (45 Squadron now based at RAF Cranwell) were shot down over the fields of Flanders 100 years ago in two separate sorties while fighting the Germans in WWI. The two pilots were Canadian serving in the Royal Flying Corps, the RAF's predecessor.

The families from the two men were joined by the family of Lieutenant Methral, who was 2nd Lieutenant Bennie's observer who had previously been correctly identified and lies buried next to the pair. The reason for the delay in the correct identification of Lieutenant Drummond and 2nd Lieutenant Bennie's remains was due to the accidental misnaming of the pair by the German forces that initially buried them. Drummond had been buried under the name Bromond, with Bennie being called simply Ben.

On 18 May 1917 Lieutenant Drummond (No 1 Squadron RFC) was shot down while attacking a German observation balloon over the town of Geluwe. He was buried in the nearby German war cemetery.

The following month, on 5 June 1917 2nd Lieutenant Bennie and Lieutenant Methral were shot down during a photo reconnaissance mission over Menin. They crashed in Gelewe and were buried in the same cemetery.

The discovery of their true identities came after a 12 year long search by a local Belgian historian called Dirk DeCuypere, a retired teacher from the Ypres area in Belgium. He linked the wrongly named bodies to the true stories after examining the German records and subsequent historical archives.

The event was attended by representatives of the Ministry of Defence and British Embassy in Belgium, the Canadian Air Force and Canadian Embassy, the Belgian Armed Forces and other local dignitaries.



Photo:© MoD/Crown.

RAF aircraft flypast at NATO summit

A Royal Air Force A400M Atlas from LXX Squadron based at RAF Brize Norton and two Typhoon FGR4 aircraft from No.11(AC) Squadron, RAF Lossiemouth pictured taking part in a flypast over Brussels, Belgium, to mark the NATO summit on the 25 May 2017.



A view from the A400M, the two Typhoons can be seen below the engine nacelle. Photo: © MoD/Crown

Red Arrows ready for 2017 season

On 31 May 2017, the Royal Air Force Aerobatic Team was formally awarded its Public Display Authority (PDA). It marks the start of the 53rd season for the team which aims to showcase the excellence of the Royal Air Force and represent the United Kingdom.

The Red Arrows' nine fast-jet pilots are expected to perform more than 60 displays, involving precision flying, in front of millions of people across the country and overseas this summer.

Leading the team for his third and final year will be Red 1, Squadron Leader David Montenegro. The 40-year-old, who was previously in the squadron as a team pilot between 2009 and 2011, said: "More than six months of preparation, training and teamwork goes into a Red Arrows season and the award of Public Display Authority is a milestone moment for the entire squadron.



The Red Arrows shown on a training flight for the 2017 season. Photo:© MoD/Crown.

"Everyone in the Red Arrows relishes the opportunity to represent the Royal Air Force and Armed Forces and display to large, enthusiastic audiences across the UK and beyond, which is a huge honour and tremendously rewarding."

Squadron Leader Montenegro is responsible for all aspects of the display, from running the training programme to creating the show routines, which change every season.

The former Tornado F3 pilot said there are a number of new moves and features added to the 2017 display which he believes will prove popular with those watching.

The team leader said: "This year we have added some colourful changes to the display, for example, our Wall arrival will involve our signature red, white and blue smoke.

"Our signature Diamond is back in the show this year. When the weather allows, this shape will be flown as a quarter-clover towards the end of the first-half of the show.

"The finale to the entire display will be the Infinity Break, a manoeuvre not flown for several seasons and involves Red 1 creating an infinity sign before we split as a formation.

Training for the new season began in December last year at the Red Arrows' home base of RAF Scampton in Lincolnshire.

This was two months later than the traditional timescale to allow the team to carry out its biggest tour in a decade – visiting 17 countries in nine weeks.

All Red Arrows pilots are from frontline squadrons and, before joining the team, operated jets such as the Tornado or the Typhoon – helping the Royal Air Force to project influence for the UK and secure the skies 365 days a year.

PDA follows a two-day assessment by a senior Royal Air Force officer. Commanding 22 (Training) Group, Air Vice-Marshal Andrew Turner, observed all aspects of the team, on the ground and in the air.

This is to ensure the team satisfies the highest safety standards and is performing a display that is a credit to both the service and UK.

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Fighter-bombers over Devon

by Chris Goss



Focke Wulf Fw 190 Fighter bomber. Photo: © Author

2 January 1943 saw a continuation of the Luftwaffe's 'tip and run' campaign against southern Britain. From early 1942, Messerschmitt Bf 109 fighters had started low-level high speed attacks against relatively undefended targets in southern Britain.

The two units responsible were 10 Staffel (Jabo)/Jagdgeschwader 2 (10 Jabo)/JG 2 commanded by Hauptmann Frank Liesendahl and then 10 (Jabo)/JG 26 commanded by Hauptmann Karl Plunser. Mid-1942, both units were re-equipped with the superlative Focke Wulf Fw 190 and targets now ranged from as far west as Cornwall to as far east as Suffolk.

By the start of 1943, losses, included the deaths of two and the capture of one commanding officer. Coupled with questions about its suitability as a fighter



The damaged Suffolk House flats in Barrassey Road, Bexhill in East Sussex. Photo: © Author

bomber, had forced changes. With Oberleutnant Heinz Schumann now commanding 10 (Jabo)/JG 2 and Oberleutnant Paul 'Bomben' Keller commanding 10 (Jabo)/JG 26. The former unit now tended to operate further west and the latter further east which is exactly what happened on 2 January 1943.

At 0838hrs, four Fw 190s took off to attack Bexhill. Each aircraft carried a single 500 kg bomb and reported hitting a large block of flats (Suffolk House in Barrassey Road). The German pilots noted smoke and flames, after which they strafed the town before returning to France unscathed. The attack sadly cost the lives of 73 year-old Ada Adamson, 84 year-old Jane Cana, 39 year-old Edith Corke and 65 year-old Eleanor May, all of whom lived in Suffolk House.

Just over three hours later, eight Fw 190s of 10(Jabo)/JG 2 lifted off from their base at Caen-Carpiquet and headed towards the market town of Kingsbridge in Devon. Only one pilot can be positively identified as taking part in this mission - 21 year-old Austrian Leutnant Leopold 'Poldi' Wenger. He had first flown operationally on 24 July 1941 as a fighter pilot, but his first fighter-bomber mission had been against Dartmouth on 31 May 1942.

Between then and 2 January 1943, he had flown 29 fighter-bomber missions, most of them being over Devon and Cornwall, and this could be his 30th. The German aircraft arrived



Photograph taken by Wenger during the attack on Kingsbridge. Photo: © Author

over the town at 1235hrs and dropped seven 500 kg bombs (due to a technical problem, an eighth bomb hung up and was

continued on page 38

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Pilot Officer Karel Zouhar. Photo: © Author



A picture of Pilot Officer Ladislav Zadrobilek taken earlier in the war. Photo: © Author

successfully jettisoned over the sea). After which the town was subjected to cannon and machine gun fire. Eight women were killed, the oldest being 77 year-old Mary Smith who was killed in her home at 23B Fore Street, the youngest being 22 year old

Eileen Griffin who was killed at 63 Fore Street, three children aged 7, 10 and 14 and two men - 43 year-old Special Constable Alfred Ford who was killed at 63 Fore Street and 56 year-old Frank Lewis who was killed in his home at 7 Duke Street.



Only one pilot can be positively identified as taking part in the raid on Kingsbridge, 21 year-old Austrian Leutnant Leopold 'Poldi' Wenger pictured (above right) getting out of his aircraft. Photo: © Author

Leaving the death and devastation behind them, the German formation headed south towards Start Point. To make matters worse, the German report submitted later that day states what happened next:

"..On the return flight two Spitfires were seen at Start Point. One was probably shot down as cannon hits were observed..."

At 1150hrs, a section of two Czech Spitfires from 310 Squadron was ordered to carry out a patrol between Torquay and Start Point just in case of such 'tip and run' or 'Rhubarb' attacks. They were then relieved by White Section, Pilot Officers Ladislav Zadrobilek and Karel Zouhar. As the two Czech pilots were approaching Torquay at 1120hrs, they saw warning rockets being fired from the direction of Dartmouth and then bombs exploding in Kingsbridge; the combat report submitted by 310 Squadron afterwards relates what happened next:

"...Zouhar then saw two Fw 190s quite close at sea-level and gave chase, firing a short burst when some three to four miles over the sea but did not observe results as at this moment, Zadrobilek called on his radio that he was wounded and Zouhar broke off to give him protection.

"It would appear that Zadrobilek was engaged by two or three more Fw 190s and had received a cannon shell which broke his left arm, his aircraft (Spitfire AR610) being badly shot up (Category B) by cannon and machine gun bullets. Despite his serious wounds, Zadrobilek returned to Exeter and made a perfect landing at 1255hrs but was too seriously wounded to be interrogated."



Leutnant 'Poldi' Wenger on the right, pictured after receiving his Knights Cross. Photo via Matusiak

'Poldi' Wenger's logbook substantiates what happened stating he took off from Caen at 1150 hrs in an aircraft carrying the markings blue 12 and carrying a 500 kg bomb, attacked Kingsbridge with good hits in the town itself but then subjected to heavy anti aircraft fire and then two Spitfires were attacked. He then landed at Cherbourg-Ost.

Such tip and run attacks would continue all over southern Britain until 6 June 1943 after which most of the Luftwaffe fighter-bomber pilots, including 'Poldi' Wenger, were transferred to the

Mediterranean and then the Eastern Front. From that date on, no more tip and run attacks occurred over Britain. Both Czech pilots would survive the war, but 'Poldi' Wenger was not so lucky.

Awarded the German Cross in Gold on 17 October 1943, then the prestigious Knights Cross on 14 January 1945, he was killed in action with Soviet aircraft on 10 April 1945 crashing near Deutsch-Wagram. By this time he had flown over 300 operational flights and 71 fighter-bomber missions, of which 54 had been over the UK against such targets as Kingsbridge.

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Branch News

including region, area and overseas news



1. Sudbury Branch attended Sudbury on Show at the beginning of March. This civic event was staged to celebrate local voluntary community activities in the town and to show the public what organisations are available.

Photograph shows members on the stand throughout the day (l-r): Mike Marsh (standard bearer), Gregg Grant (treasurer), Nicky McIvor (Vice President), the Mayor Mrs Sue Ayres (Associate member), Ron Farrow (secretary) and Eddie Harris (Vice Chairman).

PS. The cupcakes were nothing to do with the branch but belonged to the Women's Institute stand alongside. But samples were given!

2. Global Branch celebrated its first full year of being a branch by holding its second Annual General Meeting (AGM) at the Cleethorpes Club. Guest speaker was Flight Lieutenant Dan Lowes, also known as Red 3 of the Red Arrows. He gave a riveting presentation under challenging conditions.

Both the AGM and his presentation were streamed "live" via the internet to branch members in over 23 countries who would have been unable to attend the AGM. Showing that the branch continues to break new ground in these challenging times.

The branch also attended a presentation at the old RAF Binbrook of the S-Sugar Avro Lancaster Cockpit Project.

3. Tunbridge Wells Branch. Following the branch AGM, a book containing 939 facsimile signatures of the surviving 950 pilots still alive in 1985 out of the estimated 2,945 who took part in the Battle of Britain, was presented to Wing Commander Andy Simpson RAFVR(T) for safe keeping at the Battle of Britain Memorial Trust at Capel le Ferne.

The book was originally presented to the branch in 1985 by Peter Vincent to commemorate the 45th anniversary of what was the greatest air battle of all time. It took Peter many months collecting and collating these signatures into a book. Only six copies were printed, one of which was given to Her Majesty the Queen.

Photo shows (l-r) Maurice Verrell (Branch President), Wing Commander Andy Simpson, Peter Vincent and Ron Sawyer (Branch Chairman).

4. Leicester Branch. An act of remembrance took place at the memorial, Victoria Park, in March to remember the 'Great Escape' from Stalag Luft 111 in March 1944.

The brutal murder of 50 of the recaptured RAF officers and the subsequent complex post-war investigation carried out by the Royal Air Force Police Special Investigation Branch, identified those responsible – from German High Command down to the Gestapo executioners who carried out their orders.

The wanted men from the Gestapo and Kriminalpolizei were rounded up as war criminals by the small but dedicated RAF Police investigation team and later brought to justice in Hamburg.

This remarkable war crimes investigation, the only one of its kind entrusted to a British Military Police force, began at the end of hostilities in 1945. Over 23 years later, in 1968, one of the last suspects in the case was traced and convicted by a West German court for his part in this infamous wartime mass murder.

Photo shows (l-r): Roy Sherwin (Braunstone Branch), Roy Rudham (Leicester Branch) and Barry Smart (Leicester Branch).



Branch News

including region, area and overseas news

5. Leamington Spa, Warwick and District Branch. On a beautiful spring day, 36 members and associates visited the Air Transport Auxiliary Museum at the Maidenhead Heritage Centre. The party was welcomed by Peter Rogers, Deputy Chairman of the museum, and split into two groups. One group viewed an informative and entertaining documentary film about the Air Transport Auxiliary (ATA) while the second saw many artefacts on show and experienced the Spitfire simulator. The groups then exchanged places and all were able to learn more from museum volunteers.

After thanking the volunteers for their most informative talks, the party transferred to the ATA WWII HQ at White Waltham airfield for lunch in the 'Flying Food Cafe'. Afterwards, Mike Clews of the Joystick Club at White Waltham, arranged a private tour of the club hangar. Photo shows a very happy group at the airfield.

6. Waddington Branch members were treated to an exclusive visit to No 5 (AC) Squadron at RAF Waddington, on the personal invitation from Officer Commanding, Wing Commander Melville, when he attended the branch's annual dinner as guest of honour.

The visit commenced with an excellent lunch laid on by the Warrant Officers and Sergeants Mess. The party were then taken to No 5 (AC) Squadron HQ for a fascinating briefing delivered by two image analysts on the role, capabilities and recent operations of the squadron.

The members were then extremely fortunate to be shown around a Sentinel R1 by current aircrew. A truly fabulous and memorable day.

7. Solihull Branch. In March, the President, Chairman, Vice Chairman and two members of the branch Wings Appeal team visited the headquarters of 492 (Solihull) Squadron ATC to present trophies and a certificate in recognition of the support provided by cadets during the annual street collection last year. They were welcomed by Flying Officer Marianne Aitken and over 80 cadets.

The awards were presented by Branch President, Norman Page, who joined the squadron as a cadet in 1941 before serving in the RAF and was subsequently commissioned as an officer on the squadron. Flight Sergeant Demmar accepted the Jack Dowler Trophy on behalf of the squadron. This is awarded to the squadron who collected the most.

Corporal McTough accepted the 492 Top Collector Cup on behalf of Corporal Kash Singh, who was unable to attend, and Cadet Mary Isles received a Branch Certificate of Appreciation for supporting Corporal Singh during the collection.

8. Knighton Branch. At the monthly meeting in April a special diamond-encrusted cup was presented to the branch for being the best small branch in the Wales, Midland and South West area.

Pictured are the committee receiving the cup. From left seated Sally-Ann Rowlands, Mike Hiles (treasurer), John Williams (Vice Chairman for Wales, Midland and South West) presenting the cup to Roger Bright (chairman) and Leigh Spicer (secretary). Standing from left Roy Williams (welfare officer) Frank Evans, Anthony Rowlands and Andrew Johnson.



Branch News

including region, area and overseas news



1

1. Mablethorpe and Sutton-on-Sea Branch. Photo shows a one third scale replica of the WWII Spitfire. This model will be shown at all events held or attended by the branch and offer children of all ages to be photographed as though seated in the cockpit.

The replica is shown along with its creator, Branch Chairman Neville Drury.



2

2. Haverfordwest Branch members were invited to Pembroke Dock Sunderland Trust to attend an exciting and nationally unique Sunderland Flying Boat project launch in April of a replica Sunderland cockpit, built by volunteers and a large scale interactive Sunderland model. This is not a flight simulator but a simulated flight.

Present at the opening was Mrs Ann McPhee, daughter of former Sunderland pilot, Wing Commander Harry Bunting OBE. Also in attendance were cadets from 2420 (Whitland and District) and 948 (Haverford West and City of St Davids) Air Training Corps (ATC) squadrons plus the 948 (Haverford West and City of St Davids) ATC squadron band. The address for the opening of the launch was given by Air Commodore Adrian Williams, Air Officer Wales.

3. Sud-Ouest Branch. In early spring, members joined with about 60 local French people to attend a ceremony among the Cognac vineyards to remember the tragic death of Flight Sergeant Donald Hoddinnot, a member of No 644 Squadron.

On 5 and 6 April 1944, Flight Sergeant Hoddinnot's Halifax left Tarrant Rushton in Dorset to complete a drop of arms to the Maquis under Special Operations Executive control in south west France. Unfortunately the Halifax was hit by flak and Donald, being the rear gunner, was forced to parachute out of the stricken aircraft. Sadly, the Halifax was too low to enable his parachute to open successfully. He died at the roadside in the commune of Fontauray near Chateaufneuf in the Charente Region of France. The rest of the crew survived.

Photo shows the Sud-Ouest Branch Chairman, Beryl Dennett-Stannard, saying a few words to the assembled dignitaries and people in front of Donald's memorial and all the wreaths that were laid on the day. Flight Sergeant Hoddinnot will not be forgotten by French and British alike.



3

4. Sheringham and District Branch. The fundraising efforts of the branch are boosted by the Air Training Corps, 1895 (Cromer) Squadron ATC who, working with their Commanding Officer, Flight Lieutenant Brian Keerie provide willing and enthusiastic support with street and store collections. In return the branch has adopted the squadron and is pleased to make a modest donation to their funds every year.

Photo shows cadets Penny Othon and Kalan Barratt, both aged 14, receiving the cheque on behalf of 1895 (Cromer) ATC Squadron.



4

Branch News

including region, area and overseas news

5. North Walsham Branch was presented with a cheque for £334 by the landlord of the Black Swan Public House in North Walsham to Bob Barker, Wings Appeal organiser. Also at the presentation were Frank Gill (Branch President) and Stella Howlett (Vice President). The Association is the main charity supported by the Black Swan.



6. Whitstable Branch. Following the branch meeting in April, an award ceremony took place with the presentation of an Area Presidential Certificate to Angela Simmons by Group Captain Trevor Dole. The award was in recognition for her work as welfare officer and several years as Branch Secretary and Wings Appeal organiser.

The ceremony was attended by many members and friends from the branch. Angie receives much support from her husband Clive, who also does the job of Welfare Officer and is Branch President.

5

7. Oldham Branch. Derek and Muriel Simpson paid a visit to Richard Peck House on behalf of the branch, where they presented a cheque for £758. It was accepted by Barbara Byrne.

6

8. Republic of Ireland Branch. At the recent AGM the outgoing President, James Kelly MBE handed over his chain of office to the incoming President, Alan Harrison BEM.

Both presidents joined the RAF as young men from their homes in the Dublin area and served for a number of years all over the world.

James was appointed president seven years ago and has served the Association magnificently. He was presented with a plaque in recognition of his services.

His successor has been Vice President for a number of years and is more than experienced for the undertaking. Both men have been committed members of Association for many years

The branch will be celebrating its 70th anniversary during 2017 and many events are planned, including hosting European Area Conference in October this year.



7

Please submit Branch news to BranchNews@rafatrad.co.uk or via post. The address can be found under Air Mail contacts on the inside front cover. Wording should ideally be around 100 words, accompanied by a supporting photograph (minimum requested photo quality 300 dpi).

Please give as much information as possible about those shown in any photographs and any copyright information relating to it.

Due to space limitations, submission of an item does not guarantee its publication.



8

Branch News

including region, area and overseas news



1

1. West Bromwich Branch. Branch Chairman John Sheldon is shown receiving an Area Presidential Certificate from Air Commodore Andrew Neal at the branch headquarters in March.

John served in the RAF for 24 years as an engineer, working on Thor, the top secret, first operational ballistic nuclear missile developed during the Cold War.

2. Darlington Branch. A donation from the branch will give much needed support to personnel from RAF Leeming who are currently deployed on Op Biloxi.

Peter McGraghan and Norman Athey from the branch presented a cheque to Station Commander, Group Captain David Arthurton, during a recent honours and awards ceremony. The £1,000 welfare grant will directly enhance the quality of life for the 135 Expeditionary Air Wing personnel while based in Romania as part of the UK's commitment to NATO.

Group Captain David Arthurton thanked the branch and said: "This generous donation will make a huge difference; it will help provide links home and will hopefully be used to provide much needed activities during down time and ultimately help to ensure a successful deployment."



2

3. Thetford and District Branch. In May there was thanksgiving service for the 80th anniversary of RAF Honington at All Saints Church in Honington village. This was followed by the dedication of 3 Group Bomber Command War Memorial at RAF Honington, dedicated to the memory of personnel who gave their lives while serving at RAF Honington during WWII.

Both services were very well attended by RAF personnel and members from Thetford and District, Bury St Edmunds, Diss, and Woodbridge branches, Royal British Legion (RBL) Stanton and RBL Diss. In addition Roger Broscomb from Area Council and Steve Webb, Branch Support Officer, were in attendance.



3

4. City and Central London Branch. Entente Cordiale, at citizens' level, was very much in evidence during a most interesting programme arranged for the branch by RAF Association Normandy, Calvados and District Associates.

The three day visit in April started with a warm welcome by the Mayor of Benouville, Salvatore Bellomo, attended by several former mayors of the commune, associates, supporters and their families. Guided tours of key WWII sites in Calvados included D-Day landing beaches, Pegasus Bridge, Creully, the British and American cemeteries and places of tourist interest. The family atmosphere continued with convivial lunches and dinners with ample supplies of wines. Sincere thanks to the hosts. A reciprocal programme is planned.



4

Picture shows: centre: Mayor of Benouville Salvatore Bellomo welcoming Branch Chairman Peter Ramrayka with (to the left of the Mayor) Alain Lepareur, President RAF Association Calvados and District Associates; fourth from left (back) Gerard Ducable, Secretary RAF Association Benouville Associates; other members of the French welcoming party; far left Mike Saunders, Branch Secretary; third right Ann Brown Branch Treasurer and other members and supporters of the branch.

Branch News

including region, area and overseas news

5. Beccles and Southwold Area Branch held another of its Wings Appeal collection in Beccles in May. More are planned.

Picture shows (l-r) RAF Association Liaison Officer Flying Officer James Whitehead (RAF Honington), member Natasha Kelland, Honorary Secretary Jackie McSweeney and member Brian Sillick at the marquee in Exchange Square, Beccles. 12 members took part on the day.

6 Skipton Branch. At the AGM, Branch President Derek Granger presented a bouquet of flowers to Wings Appeal organiser, Associate member Arlene Dowson who stood down from her position after 19 years. Her skills have seen the branch Wings Appeal totals rise from around £4,000 to exceed £10,000, and, on some occasions, top £15,000 a year. She will continue to help and be a delegate at Annual Conference.

7. Dartford Branch. Frank Svensek received a presentation for his dedication of over 35 years as a poppy seller and Association Wings Appeal Officer. The presentation was made by Mick Larkman, Branch Support Officer of the South East area in April at the Dartford branch/club.

8. RAF Association Concert Band has been very busy promoting and providing music support at various events. In March a concert at the area reunion in Torquay; April St. George's Day concert; May charity concert; June, Association annual Service of Dedication at the National Memorial Arboretum with further engagements still to come including Battle of Britain dinners and concert events; Wings Appeal concert in Teignmouth; charity service launch in Cabot Square, Bristol; Armistice Day concert and various Christmas/Carol events.

Photo shows Lord Lieutenant and guests at the St George's Day concert.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Formby Branch deeply regret the loss of one of its most stalwart of members, Howard Yourston. Reverend Paul Collins had the privilege of conducting his funeral service.

Howard was born in the Isle of Man and, at 27, went to Liverpool where he met his future wife Pat. His passion was motor cycle racing and he often assisted with marshaling. He even assisted Barry Sheene many times in the paddocks.

He was heavily involved with the Association at RAF Woodvale and spent seven years running 611 (Woodvale) Squadron ATC at the base. For many years he organised Wings Appeal with the cadets' help. He will be sadly missed.

Lords and Commons Branch. As part of its support for the Association's 2020 plan, the branch held another successful annual dinner in the House of Lords, hosted by co-chairs Marshal of the Royal Air Force the Lord Stirrup and Madeleine Moon MP.

The event gave a platform to update guests on the Association's befriending service, with a poignant speech from the Association's President at the time, Air Marshal Sir Dusty Miller. The event was well attended by branch members and also gave the Association the opportunity to showcase its work to a wider group of influential guests such as ministers, members of both Houses, the Air Force Board and existing and potential corporate supporters. Guest of honour was the Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Stephen Hillier.



Branch News

including region, area and overseas news



1. Cosford and District Branch. 63 (Bridgnorth) Squadron ATC cadets spend several days each year collecting on behalf of the Association through street collections and fundraising events in the Bridgnorth area.

In May this partnership was officially recognised when the branch adopted the squadron, cementing the relationship between both.

Marilyn (Lyn) Addison, Branch Chairman, presented a Certificate of Adoption to Pilot Officer Glen Cadman, Officer Commanding 63 (Bridgnorth) ATC Squadron, at the squadron presentation evening held at the Bridgnorth Rugby Club.

Wing Commander Andy Griffin, Officer Commanding West Mercian Wing, was also present on the evening and said: "This is a great step forward and I know that the squadron will continue to support the Association in the years to come, particularly with Wings Appeal. Our partnership is mutually beneficial to all."

Photo shows (l-r): Wing Commander Andy Griffin, Pilot Officer Glen Cadman and Lyn Addison.



2. Perth Branch visited the Scottish Charity Air Ambulance at Perth Aerodrome in April to make a donation to the charity. Pictured (l-r): Jim Given, Ronnie Finlayson, Helicopter Pilot Russell Myles, Mike McEwan, Dick Duff and James Urquhart Branch Chairman.

In May, members were invited to Errol Airfield to take part in the remembrance ceremony of the crew of a Russian aircraft which crashed in Loch Tay during WWII. The date is also the commemoration of VE Day on the Russian Front.



3. Kettering Branch. 12 members of the branch had a fascinating visit to the RAF Wyton Heritage Centre. The centre holds a wealth of historical information that tells the story of RAF Wyton from when it was first opened to the current day. The centre hosts a rare collection of Pathfinder squadrons' memorabilia from WWII. It tells the hidden story of photographic reconnaissance, and imagery interpretation as well as providing a unique insight into the development of electronic warfare during WWII up to the retirement of the Nimrod aircraft. The Heritage Centre is an absolute must for the aviation enthusiast and the history 'buff'.

4. Thurrock Branch. A group from the branch went to Runnymede RAF Memorial to join other personnel and high ranking persons from across the RAF with Commonwealth representatives and other veterans in May to remember the loss of life of airmen and women from across the Commonwealth that have no known graves.

Many thanks to Neil Speight for arranging the outing and transport.



Branch News

including region, area and overseas news

5. Lincoln Branch. Members visited RAF Waddington to present a generous £1,000 donation to the Waddington holiday home. The donation will be used to update furnishings in the caravan and continue to meet the demands of the guests who stay in the accommodation situated in Haven Thorpe Park Holiday Centre.

6. Wantage Branch. At the March meeting, members said farewell to Branch President and welfare officer Sir Roger Austin due to his forthcoming relocation to Norfolk.

To mark the occasion Branch Chairman, Alan Clark presented Sir Roger with a 'Certificate of Appreciation' from the branch, some cufflinks and a 'Great Western Railway' railway station clock in keeping with his interest in steam engines and all things railway.

His presence at meetings, his knowledge and his humour will be sorely missed. As a measure of his level of commitment to the branch, it will take two members to fill his vacated posts.

All wish him well in his new home and are confident he will engage with a local branch and continue his support of the Association.

7. Aberdeen Branch. Saturday 20 May was the 97th birthday of the branch's senior member, Flight Lieutenant John Cruickshank VC. By happy coincidence it was also the date set for the branch's routine monthly meeting and so a surprise birthday party was felt to be in order. Picture shows John cutting his birthday cake.

After coffee and cake all round, to the absolute delight of all members present, John gave an impromptu 45 minutes of reminiscences about flying Catalinas. Did you know that one of the crew members was always a riveter, whose duty in the event of a firm landing on the sea was quickly to fill the holes caused by 'popped' rivets in the hull. Thus preventing the aircraft from sinking.

John also spoke at length of his wartime exploits with No 210 Squadron flying out of Gibraltar in support of the North African Campaign and the night when, returning home after a patrol in the Bay of Biscay, a faint light was seen in the water; this turned out to be a life raft containing all the survivors of a shot-down Sunderland. John and his crew managed to mark the life raft's position accurately and for long enough to permit a daylight rescue by a Naval vessel.

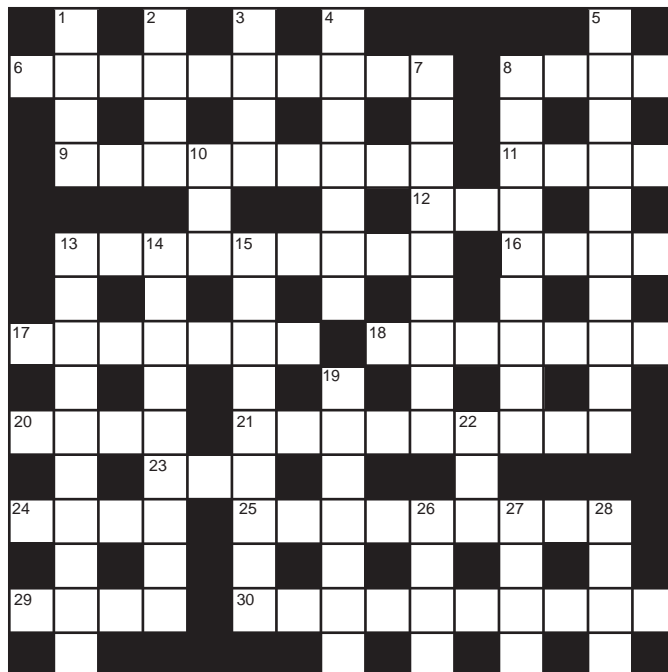
8. Faversham Branch. Mrs Angela Simmons was presented with an Area Presidential Certificate by Group Captain Trevor Dole in recognition of her work as a welfare officer, undertaking cases throughout Kent. In addition to her several years as Branch Secretary and Wings Appeal organiser.



For more information, take a look at our website at www.rafa.org.uk/rewards and see how you can claim your rewards

Summer 2017 FUN CROSSWORD

by Enigma



Across

- 6 Name 'Agent M' for administration (10)
- 8 Scottish spit from Skye, perhaps (4)
- 9 Occurring around 21 June (9)
- 11 Moroccan returns to the lounge (4)
- 12 Loud noise (3)
- 13 Particular Italian's biscuit (9)
- 16 Loud tune at the gala (4)
- 17 Play area usually not on the beach (7)
- 18 Throws away - king leaves 25 ac (7)
- 20 Some concoct a unit of cloud cover on airfield (4)
- 21 Quadrilateral shape (4-5)
- 23 Sound beat, nervous twitching (3)
- 24 Hindu woman's garment (4)
- 25 Aircraft (9)
- 29 Against a drink (4)
- 30 All (10)

Down

- 1 Type of bomb and weapon cause injury (4)
- 2 Put 25 ac on the ground (4)
- 3 List of recipes available (4)
- 4 Belamy and I react radiantly (7)
- 5 The RAF 'A' is this with the RAF (10)
- 7 Lateness of Dr Who's vehicle covering three points (9)
- 8 Location of RAFA Annual Conference in 2017 and 2018 (9)
- 10 Travel on runner (3)
- 13 Redress in the car! (4,6)
- 14 Alpha, beta, gamma, for example (9)
- 15 This item doesn't last long in court (5,4)
- 19 Dispute concerning arrow (7)
- 22 I will shortly become sick (3)
- 26 Settles account (4)
- 27 Pain of a revolutionist (4)
- 28 Bird found in the Severn estuary (4)

Notes

Solution to this crossword can be found on page 63



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Australia



The Royal Australian Air Force has displayed its first examples of the electronic warfare version of the Boeing Super Hornet, the Growler, in Australia. This took place at the major Avalon airshow in March. These aircraft had flown directly from the USA where they are part of an international training fleet in Arizona. Australia is the only country outside the USA to fly this aircraft and will eventually have a fleet of 12.



AUSTRALIA - Australian Growler roll out. Photo: © Boeing Australia

France



The French Air Force aerobatic team, the Patrouille de France, have carried out a seven-week tour of North America this spring, 31 years after they were last there. The primary objectives of the tour were to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the United States' entry into WWI and to reaffirm the historic ties between France and the United States. The tour covered the USA and Canada and ranged across the continent. The team's ten Alphajets were supported by a French Air Force A400 Atlas transporter. The aircraft transited the Atlantic using refueling stops in Scotland, Iceland and Greenland in both directions.

France/UK/USA

These three nations took part in Exercise Atlantic Trident 17 at Langley Air Force Base, Virginia, in April. The exercise brought together French Air Force Rafales, RAF Typhoons and US Air Force Raptors and Lightning IIs. The aim was to ensure successful integration between the participating forces in coalition air operations such as are currently underway in the Middle East.



FRANCE - French Air Force Rafale, RIAT July 2016. Photo: © JM Henderson

India



The Indian Navy retired its Tupolev Tu-142 "Albatross" long-range maritime patrol aircraft at the end of March this year. The Indians

were the only export customer for the type, having acquired eight in 1988. Only three remained operational with 312 Squadron on the retirement date. They have been replaced by eight P-8 Poseidons with another four on order.

Malaysia



The Royal Malaysian Air Force has taken delivery of its fourth and last Airbus A400M transport aircraft. It was handed over at a ceremony at the Langkawi Aerospace and Defence Exhibition (LIMA) earlier this year.

NATO



The European Defence Agency (part of NATO) is overseeing a multinational programme to acquire and operate a pooled fleet of Airbus A330 multirole tanker transports by 2020. These are

broadly similar to the RAF's Voyagers. The Netherlands and Luxembourg were the initial countries to participate in the programme and have now been joined by Belgium, Germany and Norway. Initially, two aircraft were being procured but as the programme expands, it could lead to a fleet of between eight and 11 aircraft. Other nations will also be able to join the programme in the future.

Exercise Frisian Flag took place in the Netherlands in late March and early April. This annual event brought together over 1,000 personnel and nearly 50 aircraft from seven NATO nations: Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Portugal, the UK and the USA. The UK was represented by six Tornados of No 31 squadron from RAF Marham. The exercise aims to allow aircrew to practice planning, executing and debriefing large scale air operations involving multiple air forces and a variety of capabilities.

The Netherlands



The last of three Netherlands' Chinook transport helicopters, which had been deployed in support of the United Nations in Mali, returned to Europe in mid-April after the German Army took over the role. The helicopters were transported in C-17 transports of NATO's Strategic Airlift Capability unit. Dutch personnel have completed twelve detachments to Mali over a two-and-a-half year period carrying out transport and medical evacuation sorties.



INDIA - Indian Navy Tu-142. Photo: © Beriev

New Zealand



The Royal New Zealand Air Force is to become another operator of the Boeing P-8 Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft. New Zealand plans to order four of the aircraft to replace the Lockheed Orions that have been in service for forty years. Among other countries that operate or have this aircraft on order are Australia, India, the United Kingdom and the USA.

United Kingdom



The rundown of the RAF's Tornado force has continued with the disbandment of No XV (Reserve) Squadron, the Operational Conversion Unit, at RAF Lossiemouth on 31 March. This was after 102 years of service, of which the last 24 were spent at this Scottish station. It is not yet known if the squadron will be reformed. The squadron was the last Tornado unit to be based at Lossiemouth.

The last Royal Navy Lynx helicopters were withdrawn from service with No 815 Squadron in March. The Lynx has been replaced by the Wildcat.

To help mark the Royal New Zealand Air Force's 80th anniversary, the RAF was invited to take part in the celebrations at the Ohakea Air Tattoo earlier in the year. An A400M Atlas was sent from RAF Brize Norton for this event and was the location of a meeting between the Chief of the Royal New Zealand Air Force and the RAF's Chief of the Air Staff to mark the long history of the two air forces operating together.

No 3 Squadron at RAF Coningsby is deploying to Romania this summer for four months as part of the UK's support for NATO. They will be working with the Romanian Air Force.

United States



The US Air Force is planning a light attack aircraft experiment at Holloman Air Force Base, New Mexico this summer, in a new bid to obtain a low-cost fighter. Aircraft manufacturers will be invited to demonstrate 'off-the-shelf' aircraft to see if the experiment should be continued in the more demanding environment of the Middle East.



USA - USAF F-35A from Hill AFB at RAF Lakenheath. Photo: © JM Henderson

In mid-April, the US Air Force carried out the first overseas deployment of its F-35A Lightning II fighter. Eight aircraft made the long journey from Hill Air Force Base in Utah to RAF Lakenheath, utilising multiple air-to-air refuelings en route. Two of the aircraft were delayed in the north eastern United States with a technical problem on one of them, but completed their journey a few days after the main party. During the deployment the aircraft trained mainly in UK airspace. However, they also made a number of out and back flights to other NATO bases.



UK - Royal Air Force A400 Atlas in New Zealand. Photo: © MOD/Crown

High altitude attacks

by Chris Goss



Junker Ju 86. Photo: © Author

In an attempt to counter Bomber Command's increasing attacks on Germany in 1942 the Luftwaffe looked to alternative means to attack Great Britain. Chris Goss tells the story of a German bombing campaign over Britain by two high-altitude bomber crews which lasted just over a month in the summer of 1942.

In the spring of 1942, it was suggested by the Luftwaffe that the Junker Ju 86 R be converted from the pure high-altitude reconnaissance role to having the ability to drop a single 250kg bomb. The Ju 86 R was fitted with a pressurised cabin which enabled it to fly at altitudes of over 40,000 feet, way above the maximum ceiling of RAF fighters. On 17 June 1942, Flieger Hauptingenieur Werner Altrogge (a test pilot based at the Luftwaffe Test Centre at Rechlin) first flew the Ju 86 R from Oranienburg in Germany. Just over a month later, he was flying from Gosstokino in the Soviet Union on operational trials. Attached to 3 Staffel/Aufklärungsgruppe Oberbefehlshaber der Luftwaffe, his first operational flight was on 26 July 1942 and by 7 August 1942, he had flown seven proving or operational flights after which he returned to Oranienburg. However, on 18 August 1942, he flew west, arriving at Beauvais in northern France on 20 August 1942.

On 17 August 1942, a unit known as Höhenkampfkommando der Versuchsstelle für Höhenflug (which was shortened to Höhenkampfkommando Beauvais) was formed, commanded by Leutnant Erich Sommer and consisting of four Ju 86 Rs. The unit was to be re-designated 14 Staffel/Kampfgeschwader 6 (14./KG 6)

in September 1942, but for reasons that will become obvious, this never happened.

Sommer's pilot was Feldwebel Horst Götz. Both had flown together on pathfinder missions with Kampfgruppe 100 from the start of the war and were regarded as an experienced and competent team. However, flying the Ju 86 R was a different matter as Horst Götz recalls:

"To get the best performance, it was necessary to fly at 220 mph at all altitudes. However at 40,000 feet, all we could get was 74 mph. The engines gave a lot of trouble, especially with lubrication and we usually had to come back on one engine. Even though special oil was used which later was heated electrically, there were several cases of lubrication failure. The maximum speed of the turbo-superchargers was 24,000 rpm and a nitrous oxide injection did not make a lot of difference and was not usually used."

Another problem was bombing from altitudes above 40,000 feet with experts thinking that the bombs would tumble. But after a few tests, it was found to be satisfactory and so it was that on 24 August 1942, the first operational flights were mounted with Götz and Sommer taking off at 1414hrs to attack Aldershot. Altrogge with his Observer Unteroffizier Gerhard Albrecht took off at 1430hrs to attack Southampton. RAF records confirm that bombs were dropped at Camberley and Southampton (with just one death at the latter, 50 year old-Mabel Winter) and of the 18 Spitfires scrambled, all failed to intercept as the report filed by 308 Squadron shows:



Leutnant Erich Sommer. Photo: © Author



Feldwebel Horst Götz. Photo: © Author

"Black Section (Sergeant Roman Marecki and Sergeant Jan Osoba) took off at 1505hrs to intercept enemy raid... When near Portsmouth at 20,000 feet they saw anti-aircraft fire from Portsmouth and bursts at 21 to 26,000 feet. A vapour trails was seen at 28,000 feet and Black Section climbed to 30,000 feet but the unidentified aircraft which could only be traced by the vapour trail climbed to 38,000 feet estimated. Black Section followed three quarters of the way cross the Channel in the direction of Dieppe but was unable to gain on enemy aircraft..."

The following day, Götz and Sommer took off mid-afternoon to attack Luton. They were plotted flying overhead Fareham and towards Middle Wallop in Hampshire at 30,000 feet, then headed east to Hunsdon in Essex and then south towards Shoreham in Sussex where they dropped their bomb. Of the six Spitfires scrambled, yet again none intercepted. The random track flown on this day seems unusual, but is easily explained by Horst Götz:

"After take-off from Beauvais, we would climb flying either east or west and when we reached high altitude, would turn northwards towards England. The climbing time was almost exactly 60 minutes. When we reached England, the important thing was to fly a zig-zag course to cause alarm in as many places as possible. Since we carried only a single 250 kg bomb, there was not much else we could do."

There was a break of two days before the RAF next tried to intercept what they thought was another high-altitude attack. But according to both German pilots' logbooks, their next flight was not until 28 August 1942.

Götz and Sommer took off from Beauvais airfield at 0840 hrs on 28 August 1942 headed for Bristol and dropped a single bomb and then headed back, landing just after midday. The German crew were not to know the dreadful carnage their single bomb caused. At about 0920hrs, their bomb landed on a car in the Broad Weir district of Bristol. As a result of the subsequent explosion one of three nearby buses was seriously damaged by the blast, while petrol from the car's fuel tank then sprayed over the other two buses which immediately burst into flames. The death toll was horrific with 45 being killed, many burnt to death in the blazing buses and a further 45 injured. The youngest to die was seven year-old Violet Higgins, the oldest 74 year-old George Bradshaw.

That afternoon, Altrogge took off at 1345hrs headed for Cardiff. At 1414hrs, Pilot Officer K J Fox and Pilot Officer A G Russell of 124 Squadron were scrambled from RAF Debden in Essex to intercept the Ju 86 which by then was flying at 41,500 feet. They

struggled to get to 40,600 feet and with an air speed of just 85 mph, fell away leaving Altrogge to drop his bomb which landed on the Roath district of Cardiff, killing two and wounding a number more.

The following day would see another two attacks - Götz and Sommer in the morning taking off at 0818hrs headed for Swindon, where he dropped his bomb despite two Spitfires trying to intercept him. His bomb landed on Drove Road killing eight civilians. Altrogge then took off at 1312hrs headed for Cambridge. As usual, a number of aircraft were scrambled to intercept as 124 Squadron recorded:

"A section of two aircraft were scrambled at 1355hrs to try and intercept a bandit approaching base at great height. The aircraft turned out to be a Ju 88 [sic] and although the Section climbed to 37,000 feet and got to within four miles of the enemy aircraft which was 2,000 feet higher, it drew away with ease still climbing..."

Even 609 Squadron scrambled Hawker Typhoons from RAF Duxford near to Cambridge at 1320hrs and Pilot Officer Peter Raw reported seeing an aircraft north-west of Braintree at 1411hrs at 33,000 feet, but could do nothing to intercept.

There would be just one more day which would see Ju 86s over the UK in August 1942. In a change, the morning attack on 30 August 1942 was to be carried out by Werner Altrogge, but one of his engines suffered a broken connecting rod so he aborted the mission. Götz and Sommer then took off at 1430hrs headed for Romford but dropped their bomb on Chelmsford at 1425hrs. The bomb failed to explode and the Spitfires scrambled to intercept failed to get anywhere near the German aircraft which was flying in excess of 38,000 feet.



Pilot Officer Peter Raw of 609 Squadron. Photo: © Author

Werner Altrogge was to carry out an attack on the afternoon of 31 August 1942 but his new aircraft now suffered a coolant leak and just under an hour and a half later, he landed back at Beauvais.

Despite there being just two aircraft involved, the inability of the RAF to intercept resulted in the formation of the Special Service Flight at RAF Northolt on 5 September 1942, commanded by American Flight Lieutenant Jimmy Nelson. As well as being medically fit, pilots were put onto a special diet to hopefully help them cope with the strain of high altitude operations. The aircraft were also different as one of the pilots, Pilot Officer Emmanuel Galitzine, recalls:

"The aircraft had been lightened in almost every way possible. A lighter wooden propeller had been substituted for the more normal metal one; all the armour had been removed as had the four machine guns leaving an armament of only the two 20 mm cannon. The aircraft was also painted in a special light-weight finish which gave it a colour rather like Cambridge blue..."

The first Spitfire didn't arrive until the end of the first week in September 1942 but in the meantime, the Ju 86s, after a short break of four days, were back over Britain on the afternoon of 4 September 1942 when Horst Götz, after a meandering flight over south-east Britain, dropped his single bomb in the sea off Ramsgate. A number of Spitfires were scrambled, 124 Squadron patrolling off Orford Ness at 36,000 feet and reported seeing two trails above them headed for RAF Manston in Kent. They were told that there were two Spitfire IXs intercepting. These were from 133 Squadron which apparently got within 400 yards over Clacton, where Pilot Officer R N Beaty filed a very optimistic but incorrect claim for a Ju 86 damaged off Ramsgate.

The following day, the Germans were back again. Götz and Sommer took off in the morning headed for Luton via Portsmouth, Oxford, Caste Bromwich, Bicester, Halton and Hatfield. The bomb was then dropped, landing on Midland Road and killing four civilians, before they headed for home via Colchester and Clacton. Again, all sorts of fighters tried to intercept. Flight Lieutenant Emil Foit and Sergeant Karel Pernica from 310 Squadron were scrambled from RAF Warmwell in Dorset at 1110hrs, struggled to get to 35,000 feet only to find what they thought was a Heinkel 177 which was another 2,000 feet at least above them. They then watched the single bomb fall ...15 miles north of London..." before they returned to base. Two Typhoons of 609 Squadron flown by Belgian Pilot Officers 'Balbo' Roeland and Jean Creteur were scrambled from Duxford at 1122 hrs and had a visual over Luton at 1150hrs but again could get nowhere near the Ju 86. The final attempt to intercept was by Squadron Leader Stanislaw Lapka and Flying Officer Tadeusz Ciastula of 302 Squadron who gave up after 50 minutes when the Ju 86 was reported way above their maximum ceiling at 37,000 feet. Later that afternoon, Werner Altrogge took off to attack Brighton. He was seen flying over Winchelsea and Hastings at 1535hrs, but landed after two and a half hours when one of his engines failed.

6 September 1942 would see both attacks taking place in the afternoon; Götz going for Gloucester and Altrogge for Aldershot. The latter pilot, flying a different Ju 86, suffered yet another engine failure and returned after just over two hours but Horst Götz, flying Portland to Bristol to Gloucester and then back to Portsmouth was causing all sorts of mayhem. At RAF Warmwell, Pilot Officer J A Jackson and Sergeant H C Henderson of 501 Squadron were scrambled at 1445hrs followed just over 15 minutes later by two P-38 Lightnings of the 94th Fighter Squadron, one of which was flown by 1/Lieutenant Lewis C Murdock.

Having lost his number two, Murdock continued the mission (the first unit operational mission) alone as his mission report relates:

"Red 1 given vector 170 degrees left coast at Isle of Wight, orbited 3/4 way across Channel at 30,000 feet. Controller told Red 1 that there was one bandit also that he could team up with a section of Spitfires that were in the vicinity. The enemy aircraft was coming towards England. Red 1 joined the two Spitfires near the Isle of Wight and the three aircraft were vectored 220 degrees and sighted aircraft at 41-42,000 feet. Red 1 left the Spitfires and climbed to 38,000 feet but could not reach the enemy aircraft which continued north.... Red 1 says enemy aircraft had two engines, nose in line with engine, wing tips were oval and white. Single fin and rudder and underneath painted a very light pink. Fuselage was thicker than Ju 86 P."

Of all the attempted interceptions so far, Horst Götz later admitted:

"Almost every time we raided England, the fighters tried to catch us. The American Lockheed Lightning came closest to making an interception but didn't succeed. He pulled up nearly vertically, loosed off a quick burst, then fell out of the sky..."



Pilot Officer 'Balbo' Roeland of 609 Squadron. Photo: © Author



Squadron Leader Lapka. Photo via Matusiak



Flying Officer Cistula. Photo via Matusiak

Again, there was a three day break in operations during which time, the Special Service Flight continued to prepare for operations. During this time, 421 Squadron stripped down three aircraft by removal of cannon and armour plating and with two pilots from each flight, was detached to RAF Colerne near Bath to intercept high-altitude incursions to the west of England. Its first scramble was against Werner Altrogge on the afternoon of 9 September 1942. Altrogge took off from Beauvais to attack Chelmsford and although 421 Squadron failed to intercept, the German pilot again suffered an engine failure. Altrogge would fly a successful mission against Bournemouth two days later, his bomb landing between Poole and Bournemouth killing five. Again, Spitfires from 501 Squadron flown by Pilot Officer J A Jackson, Pilot Officer S W Chilton, Sergeant E H Moore and Sergeant J A Collis were scrambled but failed to intercept. However, on 12 September 1942, things were about to change for good.

On 10 September 1942, Emanuel Galitzine flew his first high-altitude flight in the modified Spitfire, getting as high as 43,000 feet. Two days later he was on readiness and at 0927hrs was scrambled to intercept an aircraft being watched on radar climbing to height over Rouen in France and which was thought to be a high-altitude aircraft. At the same time 421 Squadron scrambled a Spitfire from Colerne as did 501 Squadron who scrambled Pilot Officer J M B Scott and Flight Sergeant C J Carmody from Warmwell.

Horst Götz and Erich Sommer got airborne from Beauvais at 0925hrs headed for Bristol via Portsmouth and Stockbridge. However, this time the German crew were not going to get as far as there, as Erich Sommer recalls:

"The first thing I saw was a vapour trail coming from behind us about five km away and 1,000 feet below. I said to Horst: "How come the other aircraft is coming up behind already?" Then I realised it was not a Ju 86 vapour trail but a single aircraft's trail - something else was coming after us. It came up on the starboard side at a range of two miles and gained height. It then overtook us in a wide sweep of about 2,000 feet climbing to 500 feet above us. At this moment I jettisoned the bomb..."

The German crew felt it prudent to turn for home and it was then that Emanuel Galitzine attacked, coming from the north-north-west. He attacked, hitting the Ju 86, then overshot but came around again and attacked from the same direction. Erich continues the story:

"...at this moment, I told Horst and he turned hard to starboard and shook him off. We were still at 13,000 metres altitude and thought it better to remain high so as to make things difficult as possible for him. We waited until he opened fire and when I saw his guns light up, I told Horst and he swung the aircraft hard to starboard..."

Emanuel Galitzine attacked for a third time and the German crew turned again at the last minute but the combat was all but over:

"I told Horst to go down into a layer of mist and as the Spitfire swung away to the east gaining altitude, Horst swung to port and took us down almost vertically and I saw nothing more of him. Our engines began to leave terrible vapour trails but then cut and did not restart until we were down to 4,000 metres and we were down to sea-level by mid-Channel..."

Horst Götz made for Caen as he wanted to check for battle damage and following landing, found

just one bullet hole in the port wing so, 25 minutes later, got airborne for Beauvais. But the end of the Höhenkampfkommando was nigh as Horst Götz recalls:

"Several senior officers expressed doubt that a fighter could possibly have attacked us at such high altitude. I told them that it was not possible that we made that hole ourselves. The upshot was that the Höhenkampfkommando ceased its operations over Britain. They were only of marginal value if they could be made without losses but now it was clear that it would only be a matter of time before one of our lone raiders was shot down."

It would appear that Werner Altrogge tried to fly another mission against a target south of London on 25 September 1942 but yet again lost an engine and returned early. He repeated the mission on 2 October 1942 with unknown results but six days later, flew his Ju 86 back to Oranienburg. The remaining aircraft were then probably assigned to 2 Staffel (Fern)/Aufklärungsgruppe 123 based as Kastelli in Crete. This unit had suffered a similar fate as Horst Götz and Erich Sommer when, on 24 August 1942 Oberleutnant Benno Biereye and Oberfeldwebel Helmut Dorries were intercepted and damaged by Flying Officer George Reynolds of 103 Maintenance Unit Aboukir flying a Spitfire specially modified to counter high-altitude Ju 86s operating over Egypt.

Horst Götz, Erich Sommer and Gerhard Albrecht would survive the war, but Werner Altrogge would be killed in an accident at Memmingen on 15 April 1944 while testing the roll characteristics of the revolutionary Dornier Do 335. In 1975, both Horst and Erich met and became good friends with Emanuel Galitzine thanks to the efforts of aviation author and historian Dr Alfred Price, each promising to do better next time they met in combat!



The single bullet hole in the wing of the Ju 86. Photo:© Author



A 103 MU Spitfire seen at Aboukir ready for the next Ju 86. Photo:© Author

Camera Guns at War

On 6 October 1942, six Beaufighters of 252 Squadron led by Wing Commander Peter Bragg carried out a strafing attack against the Italian seaplane base at Bomba in Menelao Bay, Libya claiming to have damaged seven Cant. Z. 506 seaplanes probably from the 148a Squadriglia Regia Marina.

The following day four Beaufighters of 252 Squadron led by Flying Officer Ian 'Nipper' Maclean and Sergeant Ernest Strange in Beaufighter T5052 lifted off from Edku in Egypt at 1250hrs to carry out a repeat attack claiming to have damaged five Cant Z.506 seaplanes. They then claimed to have damaged an F-boat and, in the Gazala area, strafed two lorries and trailers which they destroyed and then claimed to have destroyed a lorry full of troops. Finally, they strafed five tented camps and claimed to have caused at least 50 casualties.

The first photograph shows two of the four Beaufighters of their way to the target on 7 October 1942. The second photograph shows two Beaufighters strafing Cant Z. 501 and 506s in Menelao Bay. The next three photographs show what appears to be Italian vehicles being strafed while the final photograph shows one of the tented camps under attack. All four Beaufighters landed safely at 1715 hrs although T5114 flown by Sergeant G. Nettleship and Warrant Officer J. B. Blake was damaged by flak.



7 October 1942. Photo: © Author



7 October 1942. Photo: © Author



7 October 1942. Photo: © Author



7 October 1942. Photo: © Author



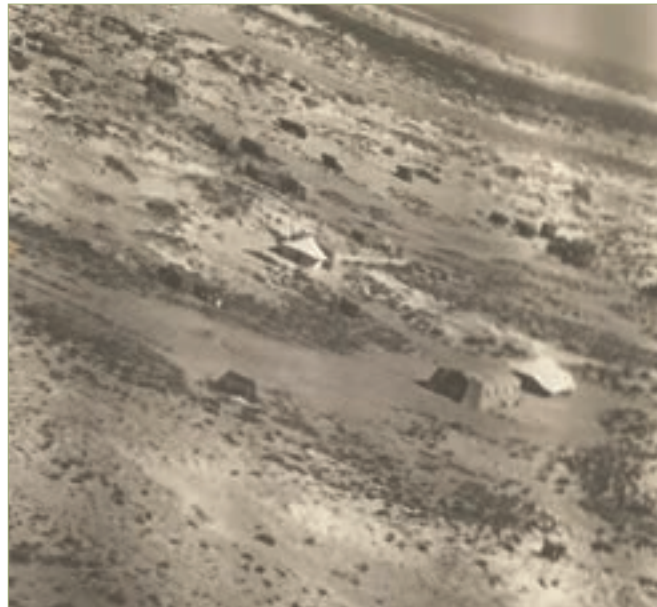
7 October 1942. Photo: © Author

At 1340hrs on 12 October 42, Canadian Flying Officer Charles McMills and Sergeant H. Bicknell in Beaufighter T5110 of 252 Squadron led another three Beaufighters which were escorting Bristol Bisley bombers tasked to attack a train. The train was not located, so the Beaufighters went looking for other targets claiming to have destroyed a Junkers Ju 52, damaged a Messerschmitt Bf 110 and two-masted schooner, destroyed several lorries and trailers and set 13 railway trucks on fire.

These two photographs show two of the burning trucks. All four Beaufighters landed safely at 1720hrs

At 1215hrs on 19 October 1942, two Beaufighters of 252 Squadron flown by Sergeant G. Nettleship and Flight Sergeant S. G. Deacon in Beaufighter T4932 and Pilot Officer R. B. Watson and Sergeant G. D. Hudson in T5036 lifted off on a strafing mission. Another two aircraft took off at the same time to strafe enemy road vehicles.

As shown by these photographs, the first pair hit and destroyed a locomotive and left six wagons smoking. They then destroyed a petrol bowser before landing at Edku at 1445hrs.



7 October 1942. Photo: © Author



12 October 1942. Photo: © Author



12 October 1942. Photo: © Author



19 October 1942. Photo: © Author



19 October 1942. Photo: © Author

Images of War



Photo: © Author

The photograph shows German soldiers standing around the wreck of an aircraft and the translated title reads "A French aircraft shot down in a dogfight". The wreckage is in fact British not French and the event it shows occurred nearly 101 years ago.

William Hayhurst Hope was born in Argentina on 16 July 1893, the son of John Hayhurst Hope and Harriet Hope. He was educated at Bedford Grammar School by which time his parents were living at Cauldwell Cottage, Bedford. He joined the Royal Navy on 7 September 1915 and gained his Royal Aeronautical Club Certificate at Chingford in January 1916. He would then be posted to B Flight 8 Squadron Royal Naval Air Service (RNAS) (which would later become 208 Squadron RAF) with the rank of Flight Sub-Lieutenant. 8 Squadron was formed at St Pol in France on 25 October 1916 flying Sopwith 1½ Strutters to assist the Royal Flying Corps over the Western Front and was commanded by Squadron Commander Geoffrey Bromet who would later be

Air Vice Marshall Sir Geoffrey Rhodes Bromet KBE, CB, DSO, DL (28 August 1891 to 16 November 1983) and whose name should be well known to Association members. By mid-November 1916, 8 Squadron was flying Sopwith Pups and William Hope was destined to be the Squadron's first casualty.

On 23 November 1916 and while on an offensive patrol flying Pup serial N5190 coded 2, William Hope failed to return. He had taken off at 0830hrs and was last seen over Albert flying west at 12,000 feet at 1010hrs. His squadron subsequently learned that he had been shot down and captured but had died of his wounds behind German lines the following day. He was buried at Cambrai. He had fallen victim to Leutnant Franz Ray of Jasta 1 at Haplincourt at 1110hrs and he was the first of Ray's 17 kills of the war. Ray's last being a French fighter on 30 September 1918. Unlike William Hope, who now lies at the Porte De Paris Cemetery, Cambrai, Franz Ray survived the war apparently without a scratch.



Photo: © Author

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NOTICES

Help

For family history research if anyone with knowledge/information of **Edward Guthrie Davison RAFVR** 745988/1282450 1939-1946 Cornwall, Fairwood Common, Bahrain, please contact syncopator2014@sky.com or call 01743 359506.

Old Colleagues

The RAF Locking Apprentices Association welcomes contact from apprentices who trained at RAF Locking or RAF Cranwell and wish to renew comradeship. www.raflaa.org.uk or telephone 01933 317357.

A warm 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, memsechangi@telco4u.net for free enquiry pack.

141st Boy Entrant Photographers, Cosford 1960. We are missing two of our number and would appreciate any contact/knowledge of: 1942938 Ian D McMurray (Wallasey), 1942742 Jerry C Edwards (Oswestry). Contact 07528 476831 or e-mail johnfraser@elginmoray.scot

RAF Administrative Apprentice Association. Did you train as a Supplier or Clerk at either RAF St. Athan, Bircham Newton, Halton or Hereford? Please contact www.rafadappasn.org or call 01425 511378 for details of your association.

No. 2 ANS Winnipeg Canada Course 30WB June 1952/Jan 1953. Contact Rayne (Paddy) Orr on portballintrae@btinternet.com

02 Squadron Association Remembrance Day Service Sunday 12 November 2017. All welcome. Meeting at St. Catherine's Church, Barnby Moor 10 am for 10.15 service and wreath laying. Followed by service at Pocklington Airfield Memorial for further service and wreath laying. Contact Hon Sec email: mikeparish1918@gmail.com or tel 01923 711818.

3GRSS RAF Norton 1957/58. 740 JT John Sparrow would like to contact 804 JT Bill Tweedle. Please contact 01823 337691.
No. 2 ANS Winnipeg Canada Course 30WB June 1952/Jan 1953. Contact Rayne (Paddy) Orr on portballintrae@btinternet.com

Any ex member of **683 Squadron** out there? Please contact John Clubb on 01480 433099 or email johnclubb@hotmail.co.uk
continued from previous column

Remembering **Harold Corbin CGM** Legion d'Honneur, Caterpillar Club (1923-2017). Extraordinary Mosquito pilot 248 Squadron Portreath, later Banff Strike Wing. From his grateful Navigator Maurice Webb.

Reunions

RAF Seletar Association including RAF Tengah annual Reunion October 20 - 23 2017 at Hallmark Hotel, Derby. For more info contact Christine Mackie (Membership Secretary) on 01623 407136 or email chrismonteban@hotmail.co.uk

No 214 (FMS) Squadron Association will celebrate formation centenary of 4 Squadron RNAS/214 Squadron over weekend 7/8 October 2017 to include Reunion dinner in Derby and memorial wreath-laying at Alrewas Arboretum. Former Squadron members/families/friends welcome. Details at www.214squadron.org.uk or contact John Gulliver 01983 873248 or no214fms@btinternet.com

continued on page 62

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING

Reunions continued

The Royal Air Force and Defence Fire Services Association Reunion will be held at the Aztec Hotel, Bristol on weekend of Friday 13 October 2017. For details contact Chairman Neil Slade on 01252 492111 or e-mail crashmarksix@sky.com

230 Squadron Reunion. Calling all existing and ex-230 Squadron members. Annual all ranks reunion 22-24 September 2017 in Grantham. Contact Rod for details: rodgoodier@btinternet.com

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19 Quarrel; 22 Ill; 26 Pays;
14 Radiation; 15 Brief case;
10 Ski; 13 Gear change;
7 Tardiness; 8 Yarnfield;
4 Beamly; 5 Associated;
1 Harm; 2 Land; 3 Menu;

Down:

29 Agin; 30 Everything;
24 Sari; 25 Aeroplane;
21 Four-sided; 23 Tic;
18 Rejects; 20 Octa;
16 Fair; 17 Sandpit;
12 Din; 13 Garbald;
9 Midsummer; 11 Room;
6 Management; 8 Yesk;

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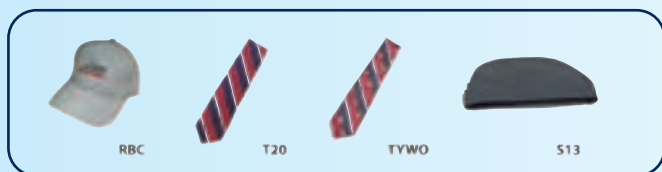
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Blazer badge Ord Member Cut Out cloth	B17MCL	10.00
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Button Large Chrome 20 mm	B20L	4.50
Button Small Chrome 17 mm	B20S	4.50
Forage Cap/Beret Badge	B24	10.50

Clothing

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Beret exc eyelets and cap badge (see B24 above)	S19A	18.00
Bow Tie Ordinary Member Striped ready made	T10B	11.00
Cravat Ordinary Member Striped Polyester	T10CR	14.50
Forage Cap inc RAFA buttons state size (see B24 for badge)	S13	68.50
Ladies Long Blue Polyester Scarf with RAFA Crests	S20	24.50
Tie Full Associate Polyester	T15	11.00
Tie Ordinary Member Silk RAF with RAFA Crests	MR29	22.00



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WAAF brooch badge boxed	LR2	5.00
WRAF brooch badge boxed	LR1	5.00

Prints

Air Sea Rescue Launch Ltd Edition print	P25	23.50
Bob Doe signed prints - call for designs & availability	P30	10.00
Come into My Parlour WWI Ltd Edition print	P28	10.00
The Drop 1917 46 Sqn WWI Ltd Edition print	P26	10.00
The Drop 54 Sqn WWI Ltd Edition print	P27	10.00

MISCELLANEOUS

Gifts

Apron Cotton - Union Flag	U2	10.50
Double Oven Glove - Union flag	U3	8.00
Medal Holder - plastic - takes 5 mounted medals	M10	6.50
Napkins pk 12 - Union flag when folded	U4	3.50
Table Flag with 10" pin Union 6" x 3"	M4	6.00
Wooden Base for Table Flags	M7	4.49

Glassware: UK only.

RAF or RAF Association crest. Lancashire Crystal. Phone for details.
Made to order - 2-4 weeks. Wording can be added to some items at cost.
Most items presentation boxed. Despatch to UK only.

Wine, Champagne, Hi-Ball, Whisky - pairs or sixes £66.00 / £159.50
Whisky, Wine or Ships Decanter £152.50
Scalloped Optical Clock £42.50, Paperweight £31.50. Vase £96.00
Tankard - 1 pt £79.00.

POSTAGE AND PACKING:

UK - add cost below to order

Up to £5.00	Add £1.80
Up to £20.00	Add £3.80
Up to £50.00	Add £5.00
Over £50.00	Add £6.50

Overseas -add cost below to order

Europe	Add £8.75
Rest of World	Add £15.00

Visit www.rafa.org.uk/shop for more gift ideas



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