



# ROYAL AIR FORCE REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

[www.rafregt.org.uk](http://www.rafregt.org.uk)

## **BIRMINGHAM BRANCH**

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## The Best of the Best

**The Best Fighters in the RAF  
Operate on the Ground**

**The Royal Air Force Regiment.  
Ground-based specialists,  
protecting RAF assets from  
enemy attack.**

**NEWSLETTER NO: 238  
APRIL 2009**

# THE BIRMINGHAM BRANCH NEWSLETTER

## NUMBER 238 APRIL 2009

Dear Readers.

I understand the reasoning behind the new rank of Lance-Corporal being introduced but I ask myself – where does it leave SACs? In my day, we always understood that a RAF SAC was equivalent to an Army Lance-Corporal and in my day it was always useful when dealing with stropky “Snowdrop Lance-Corporals, but where do SACs stand now? I daresay someone will explain it all to me. Now here’s a nice little story from Birmingham Branch member Don Hancock. Don went to have his haircut recently and as is usual with hairdressers, he got into conversation with Don and during their talk Don told him all about our Appeal for the Military Ward. When Don produced a five pound note to pay for his haircut, his hairdresser said “there’s no charge, just put it towards your Appeal”.

Now how about that then particularly as Don’s hairdresser is a much younger man and is not an ex-serviceman. It’s so encouraging to know that our troops have such support from members of the general public. Well done the hairdresser and well done Don for spreading the news.

### BRANCH BIRTHDAYS

A Happy birthday to the following Birmingham Branch members whose birthdays are this month.

1st April **Derrick Turner** Walsall  
 3rd April **Ray Walker** Stoke on Trent  
 9th April **Keith Regester** Leicester  
 19th April **Bernard Harris** Leicester  
 24th April **Michael Gilson** Brierley Hill  
 26th April **Clarence Carline** Telford  
 27th April **Neville Barrett** Norwich  
 28th April **Don Hancock** Birmingham

### Branch Appeal

#### Goodies for the Military Ward

It is most important that we remember the dangers that our young men and women serving on operations are all facing, so please remember the appeal your Branch Committee have set up. With the ever increasing number of casualties being evacuated from the combat zones, we need

to encourage continuing donations to the Appeal Fund.

With your help, we can continue to provide these small comforts and any other items that the Military Ward staff ask us for. We can never get enough goodies for the lads, so in the mean time, your continued support is appreciated.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any other ideas where we could help. All donations will be gratefully acknowledged and will be recorded in the Birmingham Branch newsletters. If anyone would like to contribute financially to this appeal, please send a cheque to the Branch Treasurer Tom Magee, made out to the Birmingham Branch – Military Ward Appeal.

If any of you would like to contribute items to this appeal, you can either take them directly to Ward S4, Selly Oak Hospital and ask for Major Ian Cheesman, or any of the Military Ward staff; or post them to Major I R Cheesman, OC Patient Support Services, RCDM, Ward S4, Selly Oak Hospital, Raddlebarn Road, Selly Oak, Birmingham, B29 6JD.

### NEWS OF THE RAF REGIMENT



#### FROM THE RAF REGIMENT SECRETARY DEATH NOTICES:

**WOOD HUBERT.** Former RAF Regt Cpl Hubert Lionel WOOD, born 9 Sep 22, died on 26 Feb 09 aged 86. He enlisted on 29 Jul 42 and saw service in Norway and Palestine. He was discharged on 25 Sep 46. No further Service details are known. He was the first Chairman of the Oxfordshire Branch of the RAF Regt Assoc.

The funeral was held in Oxford on 12 Mar 09. He is survived by his cousin, Mr S Kirby of 82 Morrell Avenue, Oxford OX4 1NB. The Corps extends its sincere condolences to the family.

**DUGGAN EDWARD.** Former RAF Regt Cpl Edward DUGGAN, born on 28 Jun 30, died on 28 Sep 08 aged 78. He enlisted on 2 Jul

51 and, after Basic Training at RAF Wilmslow, was posted to a course at the Small Arms School at RAF Watchet but, during his time there, the School was transferred to RAF Dumphries. He completed his training and was then posted back to RAF Watchet for training on the Bofors L40-60 gun. He was posted to RAF Yatesbury in Jan 52 where 37 Sqn RAF Regt was being formed. The Sqn then moved to Abu Suir, Egypt. In May 52, he was sent back to RAF Watchet to complete a Jnr Gnr Instructors' Course and, after the course, returned to Egypt. He completed his service there and was discharged on 2 Jul 54. The funeral was held in Madeley, Shropshire, on 30th Sep 08. He is survived by his wife, Helen, of 12, Westbourne, Woodside, Telford, Shropshire TF7 5QJ, to whom the Corps extends its sincere condolences.

**MOTT JOHN.** Former RAF Regt SAC John Frederick Mott, born 2 Jul 36, died on 13 Mar 09 aged 72. He served in the Regt from 3 Jan 55 to 28 Dec 56 on 31 (LAA) Sqn RAF Regt at RAF Wunstorf in West Germany. On discharge, he was with the Suffolk Constabulary from 1957-88, retiring in the rank of Act/Superintendent. He was a member of the Norfolk Branch of the RAF Regt Assoc. The funeral service was held at 13.15 on Wed 25 Mar 09 at St Mark's Church, Oulton Broad, Lowestoft, and was followed by Cremation at Gorleston Crematorium. Family flowers only were requested but donations, if desired, to Palliative Care, James Paget Hospital or Home Care Fund, Victoria Road Surgery, c/o Anglia Regional Co-operative, Police Station Road, Lowestoft, NR32 1NY. He is survived by his wife, Beryl, of 7 The Ridgeways, Oulton Broad, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR33 9NN, to whom the Corps extends its sincere condolences.

**MARCER PHILIP.** Former RAF Regt WO Philip Marcer, born 5 Feb 51, died on 18 Mar 09, aged 58, following a short illness. He enlisted in Apr 69 and served on 1, 27, 37, 51, 58 Sqns RAF Regt and TQCS, receiving a Queen's Commendation for Bravery for containing a civil disturbance at a RAF Akrotiri piquet post in Jan 75. He became something of an expert on CVR(T) and, following his 1 Sqn tour in 1981-84 at RAF Laarbruch, became the Regt's Instructor in Gunnery for Light Armour at the RAC's Lullworth Trg Camp and Bovington Trg Area. He was promoted to WO in May 89 and retired in May 95. The funeral was held at 11.15 on Fri 27 Mar 09 at the Haltemprice Crematorium, Main St,

Willerby, East Yorkshire, HU10 6NS. He is survived by his daughter Yvonne Hamilton of 92 Poplar Close, Honington, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP31 1LJ, to whom the Corps extends its sincere condolences.

**MOIR NORMAN.** Former RAF Regt Sgt Norman George Moir, born 13 May 26, died on 21 Mar 09 aged 82. He enlisted on 12 Jun 47 and served on 56 (R) Sqn RAF Regt in Germany and at the 11 School of Recruit Training in the UK. He was discharged on 3 Feb 53. Funeral and next-of-kin details will be announced when known.

#### **GENERAL NOTICES:**

#### **OPERATIONAL HONOURS AND AWARDS**

The following Corps personnel have been awarded the following in the Operational Awards List No 32 dated 6 Mar 09:

#### **Mention-in-Despatches**

**FS A J Smith**

Gnr Now of Trg Wg - RAF Honington

**Cpl S Oswald**

Gnr 3 Sqn RAF Regt - RAF Wittering

#### **Queen's Commendation for Valuable Services**

**Wg Cdr S M Miller**

OS(Regt) 1 RAF FP Wg - HQ RAF Wittering

**Wg Cdr P T Lester**

OS(Regt) 3 RAF FP Wg HQ - RAF Marham

#### **Joint Commander's Commendations - Op HERRICK (Afghanistan)**

**Cpl H S Patel**

Gnr 3 Sqn RAF Regt - RAF Wittering

**SAC S J Smalley**

Gnr 3 Sqn RAF Regt - RAF Wittering

**SAC J D Toghill**

Gnr 4001 Flt - Trg Wg - RAF Honington

#### **Joint Commander's Commendations - Operation TELIC (Iraq)**

**Sgt S J Rockett**

Gnr 3 RAF FP Wg HQ - RAF Marham

#### **CG's COMMENDATIONS**

The need has been identified for the CG RAF Regt to be able to recognize the efforts of Corps individuals or teams within the RAF Regt 'family', for example those of the RAF Regiment

Association, who may fall outside of the conventional Service Commanders' Commendations associated with the New Year's and The Queen's Birthday Honours Awards.

As a result, the CG will consider the award of his personal commendations to suitable Corps nominees on an annual basis. The Award Year will run from 1 Aug to 31 Jul. Submissions for such an award must be completed using the formal CG's Commendation Nomination Form obtainable from the Regt Sec. Submissions must be received no later than 1 Sep annually. Where the award of a Commendation is not viewed as justified, no Commendations will be awarded for that Award Year.

### **RAF REGT OFFRS DINNER CLUB – ANNUAL RECEPTION 2009**

The 2009 Annual Reception will be held at RAF Honington in the evening of Fri 29 May 09. It will be preceded by a Corps Day involving attendance at a TG Graduation Parade, lunch, and then an afternoon of Corps capability demonstrations and a visit to the RAF Regt Museum. Accommodation at RAF Honington will not be possible, but there are a number of suitable hotels in the Thetford-Bury St Edmunds area. The Calling Note & Application Form is available now and those members who wish to attend are asked to register their interest with the RAF Regt Sec. Please use Email wherever possible.

### **194 and 63 Sqns Reunion – 2 May 09**

A reunion of former 194 Sqn and 63 Sqns RAF Regt personnel will take place 2 May 09 at the Royal Carlton Hotel, Blackpool. The Friday, Saturday and Sunday bed, breakfast and evening meals will cost £100 pounds per person. For further details please contact Howard Jones direct on 01244 815469.

### **CORPS CHAPEL ANNUAL COMMEMORATION SERVICE**

The Annual Commemoration Service at the RAF Regt Chapel in St Annes Church, Catterick Village, will be held on Sun 10 May 09. Details will be issued shortly but, for planning purposes, RAF Regt Assoc Branch Secretaries should start determining how many of their members will be attending in anticipation of the call. The Service will include the laying-up of the old Assoc Standard and the dedication of the new one. **EDITOR'S NOTE:** See article page 5.

### **II Sqn RAF Regt 87th Anniversary Celebration Day - 2009.**

II Sqn RAF Regt will hold their 87th Anniversary celebration in their hangar at RAF Honington from 10.00 – 18.00 on Thu 14 May 09. Lunch and refreshments will be available. The event is open to past and present Sqn members, and also former members of 2 Armd Car Coy. For more details and an application form, please contact Fg Of Nathan Foster at [2sqnafltoc@honington.raf.mod.uk](mailto:2sqnafltoc@honington.raf.mod.uk) or by letter at II Sqn RAF Regt, RAF Honington, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, IP31 1EE, or by telephone on Mil: 95991-7731 Civ: 01359 237731. Details will also be found at the Sqn Website at [http://www.raf.mod.uk/rafhonington/aboutus/ii\\_sqn.cfm](http://www.raf.mod.uk/rafhonington/aboutus/ii_sqn.cfm).

### **Annual Corps Commemoration at the NMA**

The Annual Corps Commemoration at the RAF Regt Memorial, NMA, will take place on National Armed Forces Day, Sat 27 Jun 09. Details will be issued later in the Spring, but it will follow a similar pattern to the 2007 event. Note that the 1100-1115 period in the Chapel, which has the Daily Homage played out, can no longer be reserved for our exclusive use and we will plan our Service around it.

### **RAF REGT OFFRS DINNER CLUB - ANNUAL DINNER 2009**

The 2009 Officers' Annual Dinner will take place at the Def CBRN Centre, Winterbourne Gunner, on Fri 30 Oct 09. A Calling Note will be issued in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Qtr of 2009 and advertised in the Centurion.

### **Oman Experiences**

The RAF Regt Sec is keen to talk to SOAF/RAF Regt veterans involved, primarily, in the Battle of Mirbat, the RAF Regt's defence of RAF Salalah, in 1972. An author would like to discuss the event in preparation for a book on the 'Secret War' in Oman during the late 1960s–early 1970s. Please contact the Regt Sec initially.

### **1- 58 - 26 Sqns RAF Regt Reunion at RAF Laarbruch - 2009**

The RAF Regt Museum is in the process of loaning a Rapier FSB1(M) missile system to the RAF Laarbruch Museum in Weeze, Nord Rhein Westfalia, Germany. It is planned to hold a formal unveiling of the exhibit sometime in the Spring/early Summer of 2009 and it is hoped to use the event to stage a reunion for those who served at RAF Laarbruch on the Regt Sqns or

GDT during the period 1953-1999. The Museum website may be found at: <<http://www.laarbruch-museum.net>>. Details of any such reunion, including suggested accommodation, will be issued at a later date. If anyone is interested in helping run, or to take on the coordination of the reunion attendees, please contact the RAF Regt Sec.

### **SERVICE OF COMMEMORATION OF THE RAF REGIMENT CHAPEL**

#### **St Anne's Church Catterick Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> May**

This will be an especially important event since the Service will include:

- The Laying-up of the National Standard of the Comrades' Association
- The Laying up of the National Standard of the RAF Regiment Association
- The Dedication of the new National Standard of the RAF Regiment Association.

The Commandant General of the RAF Regiment, Air Commodore Steven Abbott CBE, will attend with his wife Tricia, and the Service will also be attended by Baroness Harris, who is a keen supporter of the RAF Regiment and the Association. It is important, therefore, that the event is well supported, and I urge all members to make every effort to attend.

Branch Secretaries and HQ Roll members are requested to advise Derek James, Catterick Branch Secretary, of attendance and numbers for buffet lunch (Tel: 01748 833025, Email <[dtjames2@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:dtjames2@tiscali.co.uk)>). The timings for the event are as follows:

- 10.15. Branch Standard bearers to assemble outside St Anne's Church
- 10.30. All attendees to be seated in the church by this time.
- 10.35. CG arrives with Baroness Harris to inspect the guard of honour of Branch Standards and to meet the Vicar of St Anne's and the co-celebrating RAF Padre
- 10.45. Commemoration Service starts
- 12.00(approx). Parade of Association members and serving personnel (if available) outside the church in High Green
- 12.10 (approx). March Past via High Green, the Bank and Low Green. CG to take the salute.
- 12.20 (approx). Parade dismissed in Low Green

12.30 (approx). Social gathering in Catterick Social Club in the High Street. Bar and buffet lunch available.

14.00 ( approx) - Social gathering ends.

This annual Service has become an important event within the Association's calendar and I very much hope that it will be well supported. **Steven Brereton Martin.**

### **RAF REGT FUND SUBSCRIPTIONS**

The RAF Regt Fund continues to have severe problems in correcting the errors of the recent Direct Debit run (in Nov 08) and we continue to receive notifications of incorrect sums, multiple payments and, in many cases, no payments at all. If any members have suffered such problems, please advise the Regt Sec who will pass the details on to the Fund's Membership Sec for action. It is clear that the problems will not be overcome quickly and we ask subscribers to be patient while we try to unravel a very complicated software problem. The likelihood is that we will need to cancel all previous Direct Debit Mandates and start afresh. This would require the submission of a new Application Form, which was predicted earlier in 2008 for other reasons. Details will hopefully be available in the next Centurion journal.

### **MEMBERSHIP OF THE RAF REGT FUND**

The RAF Regt Fund membership stands at around 1600, which is significantly less than the number of both Serving and Retired members. The Fund is established to support the preservation of the good name, history and traditions of the Corps, and also to support members' activities. The Fund Committee's mission in 2008 is to have every member recruit another member. Please help YOUR FUND to achieve its aims for the Corps. If you are not a member already, why not contact your unit representative (if you are still serving) or the RAF Regt Fund Sec (Flt Lt Andy Gaskell), or the RAF Regiment Secretary at Honington for details and a membership form. Membership brings with it the annual subscription for the 6-monthly Centurion journal, rated as one of the best Regimental journals in the British Services. While these CPNs go directly to over 800 people (some 68,000 have been sent since its inception), some 25% are not registered members of the RAF Regt Fund. While membership of the Fund is not a prerequisite - as yet - for CPN subscription, please

do consider joining and supporting YOUR Regimental Fund.

### **RAFR REGT ASSOC MEMBERSHIP**

The Constitutional objective of the Association shall be to maintain and promote *esprit de corps* and comradeship amongst all RAF Regiment personnel, both past and present, in order to promote the good name, reputation and traditions of the Corps. All who wore the 'Flash' are entitled to join. For more information and an application form, contact the Assoc Membership Sec, Frank Xavier at: [FXavier@TBGLearning.com](mailto:FXavier@TBGLearning.com).

### **CORPS DIARY DATES:**

(Updated - not exhaustive - contributions welcome).

2 May 09 – 194 & 63 Sqns RAF Regt Reunion.

5-7 May 09 - Snr RAF Regt Offrs Conference (Def CBRN Centre, Winterbourne Gunner)

10 May 09 – Annual RAF Regt Chapel Commemoration – Catterick Village

14 May 09 – II Sqn RAF Regt 87<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration (Honington)

29 May 09 – RAF Regt Officers' Dinner Club Reception – RAF Honington

15 Jun 09 – Centurion Journal No27 contributions due.

27 Jun 09 - RAF Regt Memorial Commemoration - NMA Alrewas

7-8 Jul 09 - RAF Regt Golf Annual Championships (Mentmore Golf & Leisure Club)

12 Jul 09 – RAF Regt Assoc Annual Service at The Chapel Royal, Tower of London (London)

30 Sep 09 - RAF Regt Golf 4-Way Match & AGM (Greatham Valley Golf Club)

2-4 Oct 09 – RAF Regt Assoc AGM and Reunion.

17-18 Oct 09 - RAF Armd Car Assoc Autumn Reunion (Derby)

30 Oct 09 - RAF Regt Officers' Dinner Club Annual Dinner – Def CBRN Centre, Winterbourne Gunner

8 Nov 09 – Remembrance Day (Cenotaph, London, and Nationwide)

11 Nov 09 – Armistice Day (Cenotaph, London, Nationwide)

15 Dec 09 - Centurion Journal No28 contributions due.

5 Feb 10 - Officers' Corps Formation Dinner (RAF Honington). Date to be confirmed.

18-21 May 10 - Regt-USAF Exchange Offrs 'British Invasion III (Washington DC)

11 Jun 10 - RAF Regt Officers' Dinner Club Reception (House of Lords) - incl Palace of Westminster Tour.

### **BRANCH SUBSCRIPTIONS**

Please remember that your Branch Subscriptions were due on 1<sup>st</sup> February and also, please remember that your total subscription will be £15.00 that is £10.00 Association Subscription and £5.00 Branch Subscription. We have **THIRTY-ONE MEMBERS** who have not yet paid up so those members are now **TWO MONTHS OVERDUE**. If you have not yet paid up and wish to remain a member, please make your cheque out to the Birmingham Branch, the RAF Regiment Association and send them **IMMEDIATELY** to **THE BRANCH TREASURER** Tom Magee and **NOT** to me.

### **NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIPTIONS**

I have a list of members of other branches and others, who have asked to receive Birmingham Branch newsletters. The subscription for this service is now **£7.00** per year. So would those other branch members and others who have asked to be put onto the Circulation List for Birmingham Branch newsletters and wish to continue receiving the newsletters, please send a cheque for **£7.00** as above, **IMMEDIATELY** to **THE BRANCH TREASURER** Tom Magee and **NOT** to me. Would all of you please pay your Subscriptions **immediately** as having to chase up late payers is a time consuming job and adds to my workload and to the workload of the Branch Treasurer. My sincere thanks to those members who have already paid up.

### **FROM THE BRANCH SECRETARY**

**DUGGAN EDWARD.** I regret to inform you of the death of ex-Corporal Edward Duggan of 12, Westbourne, Woodside, Telford, Shropshire. I have only recently been informed of Edward's death that was on 19th September 2008. He was born on 28th June 1930. Edward enlisted on 2nd July 1951 and after his Basic Training at RAF Wilmslow, he was posted for small arms training to the Small Arms School at RAF Watchet. During his training there, the School was transferred to RAF Dumphries where he completed his training and he was then posted back to RAF Watchet for Bofors Gun Training.

In January 1952, he was posted to RAF Yatesbury where 37 Squadron was then being formed. The Squadron was then posted to Abu Suir, Egypt. In May 1952, he was sent back to

RAF Watchet where between May and August, he completed a Junior Gunner Instructor's Course. On completion of the course, he was sent back to Egypt where he completed his service and was discharged on 2nd July 1954.

The funeral was held at St Mary's Church, Madeley, Shropshire on 30th September 2008. He is survived by his wife Helen, their children Edward and Gillian and their families. We extend our sincere condolences to them. Mrs. Duggan can be contacted at the above address.

**MOIR NORMAN.** I regret to inform you of the death on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> March 2009 of ex-Sergeant Norman George Moir of Cannock, Staffordshire. Norman, who was born on 13<sup>th</sup> May 1926, enlisted on 12<sup>th</sup> June 1947. After his Basic Training and Regiment Training, in January 1948, he was posted to 56 Rifle Squadron in Germany. In October 1950, he was posted to No 11 School of Recruit Training at RAF Hednesford, where he completed his service and was discharged on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 1953. No details of the funeral are available. Norman was pre-deceased by his wife and son and left no other relatives.

## Emotional homecoming for RAF Regiment

The forward party of No 5 Force Protection (FP) Wing RAF Regiment returned to the UK from a six-month deployment in Iraq to an emotional homecoming with friends and family at RAF Lossiemouth. 5 FP Wing returned to the UK on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> February 2009 after their deployment to Iraq, where they were responsible for the security of both the civil and military flights now operating into and out of Basrah Airport. As the security situation in the area improved they were able to provide practical support to the local Iraqi community and assisted in numerous building projects.

Wing Commander Derek Read, Officer Commanding No 5 FP Wing, said: "We are all glad to be back home after running the Force Protection for the Contingency Operating Base at Basra for the last six months. We have had a successful deployment that saw a period of improved security, clearly demonstrated during the recent elections. We are delighted to be reunited with our families and friends and look forward to 51 Squadron joining us back home in a couple of weeks." The team were greeted by

some of their Lossiemouth colleagues including Acting Station Commander Wing Commander James Linter. The party enjoyed some rousing music played by Corporal Richard Bond, Pipe Major of 2622 (Highland) Squadron RAuxAF Regiment Pipes and Drums, as they left the aircraft, and each member of the group received a 'wee dram' kindly provided by Gleaner Oils. Andrew Laing of Gleaner Oils said: "We are delighted to support the invaluable work done by our local servicemen and women and hope that they all enjoy their traditional Scottish welcome home!" The group were then moved swiftly to the officers' mess where they were reunited with their waiting families. Wing Commander James Linter, Acting Station Commander, RAF Lossiemouth, said: "Once again 5 Force Protection Wing and 51 Squadron have done an excellent job in Basra over the last six months and we at RAF Lossiemouth are proud to have supported them and their families during this arduous time. We are pleased to have 5 Force Protection Wing home safe and sound and will welcome 51 Squadron back early next month."

## 51 Squadron in Basrah



Gunners from 51 Squadron RAF Regiment shelter from the dust thrown up from a helicopter as they conduct a dawn airborne counter insurgency patrol on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2009 in Basra, Iraq. Using a RAF Merlin helicopter, the Gunners set up vehicle checkpoints close to the main British base at Basra Airport, where they are primarily used as force protection for the base but also regularly patrol the outlying areas. British Forces are looking to leave Iraq later this year and the recent peaceful elections have been seen by many as an indicator of how secure and stable the country has become. No 51 squadron RAF Regiment, from Lossiemouth returned from its six

month tour of duty in Basra last month and was the last Scottish unit to serve in Iraq and the following article by Cameron Buttle of BBC Scotland describes one of their last patrols.

### **'A bladder the size of a beach ball'**

As we pass through the gates of the British military base for the patrol, the convoy halts. The Gunners of 51 Squadron RAF Regiment load their weapons, cocking a live round into the breach. The four huge Bulldog armoured personnel carriers rumble along the tarmac, a formidable show of force. But as we near the outskirts of a village the Bulldogs pull up, we dismount. Helmets off and the patrol goes into the village on foot, leaving the armour behind.

"Rolling up into their neighbourhoods in tanks is not the way to win friends around here," says the squadron's commanding officer Jim Lennie. "This is all about showing some respect, being open and approachable. There's no need to be an intimidating force any more."

### **Operation Black dagger**

Soon the children are swarming all around us, the troops playing the difficult balance between friendly banter and keeping the perimeter secure, this is still a potentially hostile area. Squadron Leader Lennie is from Cumbernauld. He draws on extensive experience from numerous tours in Bosnia, Iraq and Afghanistan. Today is the last day of what seems to be a highly successful exercise Operation Black Dagger.

The aim of Black Dagger is stop militias firing rockets at the British base in Basra. Jim Lennie is going to do that over a cup of tea. Inside the sheikh insists we sit for some refreshment, first water, then heavily sweetened tea in small delicate glass cups.

Over the past six months the squadron has set up a system of meetings they call Key Leadership Engagements. It's a face to face sit down, grievances aired, reassurances give, intelligence gathered. Operating in this way has only really been possible since the Iraqi army mounted a huge offensive throughout Basra city. The Charge of the Knights operation cleared most of the "bad guys" out of the area. Squadron Leader Lennie said: "The local people are now helping us when a militia team tries to operate in the area again, there hasn't been a rocket attack on the base for months now."

Sheikh Saied Hussein Al Battat ordered another round of sweet tea, which was gratefully

received all round. Great offence can be given if it is declined. Jim Lennie sips away and hears that Sheikh Al Battat is concerned about what happens when 51 Squadron leaves. It seems the Americans, who will replace the British presence, have heard about Black Dagger and are keen to continue. By early evening Jim Lennie has been in four meetings with local Sheikhs, saying his goodbyes, passing on new contacts, drinking lots of tea. As we headed back to base, Jim reflected: "We don't need tanks and guns now, what you need, is a bladder the size of a beach ball."

### **Brave RAF Regiment Gunner Craig fights back**

If there ever was a Rock Ape, Craig Richardson, is one. True to the nickname moniker and the Regiment's motto (per ardua, or through adversity) he is, incredibly, back on two feet just three months after being blown up and losing his lower right leg just outside Kandahar.

It was his second tour as a Gunner with RAF Honington's 1 Squadron. The first tour was as part of operation Telic in Iraq in 2007. Their camp was hit by more than 700 rockets and 1 Squadron lost three airmen, including leading aircrafts-man Martin Beard, who Craig knew well. So when the Squadron was posted to Afghanistan in August last year, fewer than 12 months after returning from Iraq, the Tottenham Hotspur fan from Dereham hoped it would be a little calmer. Craig's unit had the task of patrolling around the base for anything between a few hours to three to four days.

On the night he was blown up in late October last year, he was on a quick-reaction-force posting, on call for anyone outside the base who needed help. "We were just sitting around waiting for the call," he said. When the call came, late at night, they went out, carried out their duty and were heading back to camp.

Craig was standing at the front of their military WMIK Land Rover and the next thing he knew he was on the ground and in severe pain. An IED - improvised explosive device - had blown him away from the vehicle, his leg was badly broken, blood was coming from his head and he was alone.

"I don't remember a noise, flash or anything," he said. "I remember waking up and I had severe pains in my right leg and back. In a matter of seconds the battlefield medics came over to give first aid." He wasn't allowed

morphine because he had a head injury and he had to wait until another airman was released from a vehicle to be taken to the base hospital by Black Hawk helicopter. Back at base his injuries were assessed, he was given morphine and from there it got hazy. His injuries were extensive - he had a severely break of his leg, broke ligaments in his left knee, got shrapnel in his inside thigh, broke his arm, needed skin grafts on one arm, had a perforated ear drum and cuts to his ear and head.

His broken leg was operated on and he was told there was a possibility he might lose it. He was flown to Selly Oak hospital in Birmingham where the RAF had made sure his parents were waiting for him. Among the operations he under-went was one to take an artery from his arm in an attempt to keep blood flowing to his broken leg. "They told me in Afghanistan there was a possibility I could lose it so it wasn't as much as a shock," he said. "And there would have been more complications if they had tried to keep it."

When the news came it would have to be amputated he updated his Facebook profile to "getting legless tonight". For rehabilitation - and fitting a prosthetic leg - he was transferred to Headley Court in Surrey, a specialist MoD unit for amputees. "The set-up at Headley is brilliant," he said. "You get one-on-one attention and they give you specific exercises." The remarkable work there has made his fast recovery possible, although there is still much work to be done. Having lost his leg in November, he is already up and about on his artificial leg. And he is even thinking about having a go at competing in the Paralympics.

He has no regrets. "I knew the risks; there is no point feeling sorry for yourself," he said. "There is a para, Tom, who has lost three limbs and you look at him and think 'he's carrying on as normal'. It could have been a lot worse." And it is a far more interesting than the roof truss factory he worked in after first leaving school.

He is currently enjoying time with his family on a break from Headley Court. His father, fireman Mark Richardson, his girlfriend, Danni Farthing, and brothers and sisters, all live in Dereham. But he is also looking forward to getting back to work. "I want to stay in the job and see where it goes," he said. "There's no reason I can't do everything as before. I just want to get on with it."

## **RAF Regiment recognised for defence of Kandahar**

Members of No 1 Squadron RAF Regiment who have been defending Kandahar Airfield, its aircraft and the thousands of Coalition Forces personnel operating there, have been awarded their International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) medals. Of the 144 members of 1 Squadron deployed, 124 personnel gathered on parade on the airfield to be presented with their medals by Commander Kandahar Airfield (COMKAF), Air Commodore Andy Fryer.

Despite the wind and sand, medals were issued to each member of the squadron before COMKAF addressed the parade. He told the parade that they had both succeeded and delivered on their mission to protect the airfield to an extremely high level and said that he was proud of the results that they have achieved and that they should all return home with their heads held high.

The squadron, who originally arrived in theatre on 16<sup>th</sup> August 2008, have faced the whole range of weather conditions from sweltering heat and sandstorms to rain, mud and freezing cold. Whatever the conditions, the squadron have spent most of their tour out on the ground, maintaining security in a large and dynamic Ground Defence Area. This particular deployment has also seen additional tactics employed. Flight Sergeant Statham explained what has set this deployment apart from previous tours:

"The most gratifying part of this operation has been the implementation of the mortars counter-firing in response to IDF [indirect fire] attacks. This is the first time the RAF Regiment have engaged in this activity, probably since Aden. The counter-fires, combined with targeted illumination fire plans, have reduced freedom of action and movement for the insurgent rocket teams. This has enabled continued air operations but has also generated increased security for over 12,000 multi-national personnel operating on Kandahar Airfield."

Officer Commanding 1 Squadron RAF Regiment, Squadron Leader Lee Morgan, said: "We have worked hard during the tour to provide a secure environment from which air operations can continue unhindered. Every member of the squadron has understood the importance of air power to both the NATO and UK mission and the role that we have played in the delivery of that capability."

The squadron has had a significant impact on insurgent IDF teams operating in the Area of Operations, reducing the frequency and intensity of attacks. Through targeted influence operations, we have attempted to persuade the local population to act against insurgents intent on attacking Kandahar Airfield. Of course, we have also worked hard to maintain our own freedom of manoeuvre, constrained by a relatively high level of IED [Improvised Explosive Device] activity. The men (and woman) on the squadron have worked extremely hard in difficult conditions, with some outstanding individual performances.

The squadron is now looking forward to a well-deserved period of recuperation and time with their families." The squadron remains focused during their last few days in post, carrying out their mission with the same professionalism and determination that has characterised the previous six months. They handed over to No 63 Squadron RAF Regiment (Queen's Colour Squadron) at the end of February.

## **RAF Regiment Gunners back from Afghanistan**

Gunners from RAF Honington had emotional reunions with their families last month after returning from a grueling six-month tour of duty in war-torn Afghanistan. About 150 members of 1 Squadron RAF Regiment had completed a half-year operation defending the Kandahar airbase in Afghanistan.

The squadron have given the airfield a high degree of security thanks to innovative and aggressive tactics. These have included mortar counter-firing, with targeted illumination, which has reduced the frequency and intensity of attacks from insurgent rocket teams. The squadron has now handed over the defence of Kandahar to 63 Squadron RAF Regiment.

In recognition of their work in tough and dangerous conditions, ranging from sweltering heat and blinding sandstorms, to rain, mud and freezing cold, the squadron's 144 members were presented with International Security Assistance Force medals before they left the country.

The squadron's commanding officer, Squadron Leader Lee Morgan, said: "We have worked hard during the tour to provide a secure environment from which air operations can continue unhindered. Every member of the squadron has understood the importance of air

power to both NATO and the UK mission and the role that we have played in the delivery of that capability.

The squadron has had a significant impact on insurgent teams operating in the area of operation, reducing the frequency and intensity of attacks. The men and women on the squadron have worked extremely hard in difficult conditions, with some outstanding individual performances."

On 4<sup>th</sup> March they flew into RAF Mildenhall before being bussed to RAF Honington where they met their families, including wives and children who had prepared banners and posters welcoming them home. Flight Lieutenant Mick Liston, spokesman for RAF Honington, said after being met by their families they would be going on "a well-deserved leave of absence". The Gunners also paraded at 11.a.m. in Bury St Edmunds, where RAF Honington has the Freedom of the Borough, from Abbey Gardens in the town, accompanied by the Central Band of the Royal Air Force, and marched up Abbeygate Street, into St Andrews Street before returning to take the salute on the Angel Hill.

The historic Suffolk town came to a standstill to welcome an RAF squadron home after a six-month tour of duty in Afghanistan. Hundreds of people lined the streets of Bury St Edmunds on Saturday morning to pay their own tributes to the servicemen of the 1 Squadron RAF Regiment. Basking in bright sunshine, the homecoming parade saw loved ones, veterans and children - proudly waving their Union flags - come together to salute the personnel.

The efforts of the crowds, which maintained the close link between East Anglia and the Armed Forces, was not lost on senior members of the Squadron. Flight Lt Tony Field, deputy squadron commander, said: "To have such outstanding recognition is really the jewel in the crown for us since we have returned. "I think there might have been a bit of resistance among the boys at first as they wanted to start their leave, but ask anyone now and they would be glad they did the parade."

Led by the band, the parade took the servicemen through the town centre and into the new multi-million pound Arc shopping centre which opened on Thursday. They were then joined by comrades who were wounded on active

service in Afghanistan before returning past the offices of St Edmundsbury Borough Council on Angel Hill where the salute was taken by Mayor Bob Cockle and RAF Honington's station commander, Group Captain Nick Bray.

Margaret Charlesworth, St Edmundsbury deputy mayor, said: "The whole parade has been absolutely fantastic. Bury has a history of honouring servicemen and it was great to see those in the squadron get the credit they deserve."

The sentiments were echoed by the crowd whose applause rang round the historic streets as the servicemen marched past. John Stewart, 35, who lives in the town, said: "It was great to see the town get right behind the servicemen and have a big celebration. With the Arc opening and more people coming to the town, it was a good way of promoting Bury and showing it in such a good light. It was nice to see the flags waving and everyone, young and old, taking part."

They were warmly welcomed in the spring sunshine by the large numbers of residents and visitors in the town that turned out to show their respect. Kris and Jill Casey, who both come from a military background, took their two young children Erin and Sam to the parade. The couple said: "I think it means a lot to the servicemen on parade to see this level of support. Bury has always had good military links and it is good to see this continuing."

The troops were joined on parade by two servicemen injured during the current tour. One of them, Senior Aircraftsman Craig Richardson, from Dereham, was blown up by an improvised explosive device and lost his lower right leg while on a routine call-out. On the night he was blown up, in late October last year, he was on a quick-reaction-force posting, on call for anyone outside the base who needed help.

SAC Richardson was standing at the front of their military WMIK Land Rover and the next thing he knew he was on the ground and in severe pain. However, having lost his leg, he is already up and about on his artificial leg. Flight Lieutenant Liston said both men were doing well and joined the squadron on parade. There was also a medal parade at RAF Honington on the following Saturday. The squadron lost three airmen as part of operation Telic in Iraq in 2007. None was killed during the last tour.

Around £1,000 was raised for Help for Heroes as Spandau Ballet's Tony Hadley handed

our Beer from the Red Rat Brewery. People can support members of 15 Squadron, currently on tour in Afghanistan, by buying a beer for the boys on <[www.redratcraftbrewery.co.uk](http://www.redratcraftbrewery.co.uk)>.

## **On Afghanistan Patrol with 63 Squadron**

The lads on 63 Squadron have wasted no time in getting to grips with the Taliban. On a patrol to hunt for intelligence on Taliban rocket attacks, on the five-hour tour of local villages, the Squadron medics treated a bay girl with a serious brain swelling. The troops also saw a massive filled in crater in the road where the insurgents had tried to blow them up the previous day.

Flight Lieutenant Dale White said: "We try to come out and get around the villages as much as we can. If we help the locals they help us in return and tip us off about what the enemy are up to".

## **From flying high in the RAF Regiment to flying high on the slopes**

RAF Regiment rising star Flight Lieutenant Jim Smith, is set to go to new heights after his recent selection for the GB Boardercross team. Successful RAF Regiment Officer Flight Lieutenant Smith now faces a new challenge of representing his country - at the sport he loves. Having recently been selected for the GB Boardercross team, Jim is living the dream, taking full advantage of the opportunities available to him to achieve both his sporting and career aspirations.

Jim, who is Captain of the RAF Snowboarding team, returned victorious from Meribel last month, after winning the RAF Championships and the Inter-Services BoarderCross races, beating the Army and Royal Navy competitors -whilst suffering from a broken rib! He says: "Although I was in pain I had to try my best and show that the training I had received was not wasted! It felt fantastic to win and justify my place on the GB Team."

Being paid to board is a dream come true for Jim, who is given time off from the RAF to pursue his sporting career. 'Being in the RAF not only offers the chance to have a varied and interesting career, it also presents the chance to travel the world and feed my obsession for adrenaline fuelled sports and activities.'

Adrenaline and glory are not new to Jim, who has had a colourful career to date in the RAF Regiment: 'Since joining back in the spring of 2000, I served on the Queen's Colour Squadron, where I took command of the guard at Buckingham Palace and led my guys across the border in Iraq during the invasion. I have trained new RAF Regiment recruits into becoming effective 'Gunnery', learnt to skydive from 12,000ft, and carried out Tactical Landing Zone Recess across the outer reaches of Afghanistan.'

Jim has also fulfilled his sporting goals, born from an early obsession with snowboarding, whilst serving in the RAF: 'I wanted to ride for the RAF against the other services, and after a few years I got to go to the RAF Championships. I was selected for the RAF team and a year later asked to captain the team. It was this year that we won the Inter Services against the Army and Navy, and I won the overall Individual Championship.'

After leading a successful Tri-Service team to the British Championships Jim was invited to attend try outs for the GB Team. 'After returning from a six month tour of Afghanistan I felt it was the right time to go for it. So last summer I attended a week long selection camp on the Saas-Fee glacier in Switzerland. After an anxious few weeks I was told I had been selected for the GB Boardercross Team.'

BoarderCross is a snowboard competition in which contestants start simultaneously atop an inclined course, then attempt to reach finish line first. BoarderCross courses are usually quite narrow and can include turns, gap jumps, drops, and steep and flat sections, all designed to challenge the riders' ability to stay in control. It is the Newest Olympic Snowboard event, after making its debut at the Winter Olympics in 2006.

Now in the thick of training hard for this season's races in Europe, Jim has found that it requires a lot of stamina: 'The training means early starts in sub-zero temperatures, continual physical exertion at altitude and a no-fear attitude that allows you to ride and hit jumps harder, faster and bigger than you thought possible. This is not for the faint hearted; we have already had two guys pull out due to a broken leg and arm.'

His long term ambitions are to make it onto the World Cup Circuit and ultimately gain enough points to compete at the Winter Olympics, but for now Jim is enjoying the chance to travel

across Europe competing against the best in the sport. Jim has found that his RAF career has helped prepare him for the physical exertion required in training and competing, and has given him the support to help him achieve his sporting dreams:

'The old adage 'Work Hard, Play Hard' has never been more fitting. I have gone from defending my country to competing for my country in the space of 18 months, and none of this would be possible without the support of the RAF, in particular the RAF Sports Lottery, the Corps and my family.'

#### **RAF Regiment Officer's Job Description:**

As an RAF Regiment Officer, you'll be trained as a specialist in combat tactics, weapon systems and surveillance equipment. But you'll also be a leader. You'll lead your flight of around 30 men to protect the RAF's aircraft, people and bases around the world. You'll be trained to operate in peacekeeping and counter terrorist situations as well as full-scale war fighting. And you'll learn to rapidly evaluate tactical situations, formulate a plan and then brief this to your troops, no matter what the pressure.

The RAF Regiment is a specialist combat unit, formed in 1942. Since then, its Gunnery have seen action around the world, including most recently Sierra Leone, Kuwait, Iraq and Afghanistan. The RAF is open for business and currently recruiting for over 4,500 jobs. With over 50 careers available, from Regiment Gunner to ICT Specialist, you don't have to be a pilot to fly in the RAF. Visit [www.rafcareers.com](http://www.rafcareers.com) or call 0845 605 5555 for more information.

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Politicians, just like the bankers who have got the world into so much trouble, go for the short-term advantage. Bankers have based their trades on what will this do for me with this year's annual bonus? Politicians go for electoral advantage. Will this policy get us re-elected in three or four year's time? If our politicians gave more long-term thought to what is best for the country, instead of short-term fixes, we'd all be much better off.

Yorkshire men are supposed to be renowned for their common-sense and the following article that was published in the Yorkshire Post on Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> March by Ted Bromund seems to prove that statement for it is full of commonsense.

## **Another crisis... and another misjudgment as Britain fails**

Over the past few months, Britain's armed services have been in crisis. Again. You know the drill. The weapons the forces want to buy will bust the defence budget, so cuts have to be made. The services leak furiously against each other, each valiantly trying to shove the others towards the chopping block.

In December, Defence Secretary John Hutton adopted the time-honoured remedy: cancel nothing, but delay a lot – those new aircraft carriers will have been talked about for two decades before they arrive, if they ever do. With delays, of course, come higher costs. And all the while, the forces shrink and the Ministry of Defence proclaims there is no cause for alarm.

That's particularly laughable now that the MoD's been put on the hook by the Treasury for most of operational costs in Iraq, and also Afghanistan where Britain suffered its 150th fatality this week since hostilities began in 2001.

That will turn the Treasury's proclaimed £500m increase on defence into a £1.2bn cut. Sure, the Treasury always wins, but for Hutton to do that badly, the forces must have been in an even deeper hole than he let on. The Treasury's claw-back is standard stuff. They know how to work a crisis. But when crises keep on happening, they're not crises. They're normal, and that's not the same as good. Britain's forces are in a hole. Here's why. There are three things you have to get right if you want to have a sensible defence policy. How much you spend, what you buy with it, and doctrine, or what you plan to do with what you've bought. The cure for Britain's forces is not simply more money. It's true that Labour's taken Britain perilously close to the precipice. Defence spending now is 2.3 per cent of GDP. The last time Britain went lower was in 1933. By 1939, that didn't look so smart.

So spending needs to rise. Historically, 4 per cent of GDP is a reasonable level. Set that as the target, so the forces aren't nibbled away by demands for peace dividends, and move towards it gradually, over the next decade. But just spending more money is no cure. Procurement's broken too. The Government uses it as a wildly inefficient welfare policy. It buys at home, even if what it buys is expensive, because it's a way of paying off the trade unions.

Buying British is not an assertion of sovereignty. That's not a knock on Britain. But it's a fact that most everything the British forces use has American or European components in it already. The US should buy British if it is efficient. And Britain should buy American when it needs to. Defence should be about defence, not about showering workers in key constituencies with wasteful contracts.

But it's hard to know what you want to buy unless you know what you're going to use it for. Even the US can't cover every contingency. Britain certainly can't afford to do so. But Britain doesn't really think about doctrine. When the Strategic Defence Review came out in 1998, the big concept in it was "jointness". All the services would co-operate with each other, which, conveniently, would both save money and make them better.

Of course, "jointness" didn't work out as planned. But the real problem is that "jointness" was a US concept: Britain ripped it off from the US's Joint Vision 2010, which came out in 1996. Then, in 2003, Labour shifted to emphasising "transformation". That was a US idea too, associated with then-Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld. There are a couple of problems with Britain's relentless copying of the U.S. First, sometimes the US gets it wrong. And second, even when the US is right, America's defence budget is 10 times as big as Britain's.

The kind of doctrine you have, the kind of weapons you buy, and the amount of money you spend are all connected. Or at least they should be connected. Copying US doctrine without copying the US's budget means you won't have enough money to go round. And that's why the British forces are always falling short.

So fixing the problem doesn't start with money. It starts with recognising why Britain has armed forces. Like any democratic state, Britain maintains its forces for two reasons: to deter potential adversaries, and to beat them if they play rough. This Government has decided that future wars are going to be light, Afghan-style affairs. Therefore, it doesn't need to buy anything heavy, like tanks. Conveniently, heavy things are also expensive. The Government's crystal ball is really all about saving money.

Even on its own terms, this vision is foolish. No one knows what the future of war holds. People who are sure they do invariably end

up looking very silly, very dead, or both. And light forces, no matter what their other merits, are not good at deterrence. Trident is not the answer: Britain should keep it, but relying on nuclear weapons alone is not something a liberal state should get comfortable with.

That means Britain, to deter and to win, needs balanced conventional forces, ones that don't rely on the magic-wand victories of "transformation". And that means Britain needs to raise its defence budget and emphasise efficiency in procurement. The fact that Britain does not connect money, procurement, and doctrine coherently is not the fault of the forces. The real problem is that neither the politicians nor the British people take defence issues as seriously as they used to. In the most recent list of Cabinet precedence, the Ministry of Defence was in 10th place, behind the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. That is a European order of priorities. The British people are proud of their armed forces, but, like the continent, they do not appear to want to make a sustained national commitment to defence. That will not work. If the defence crises are to end, a firm commitment of care, money, and above all of sustained thought will have to be made. And it needs to be made. An under-armed Britain is not simply failing in its duties to its citizens, to Nato, and to its men and women in uniform. It is tempting predatory powers to take chances. The world's democracies tried that strategy in the inter-war years. It failed miserably. There is no reason to try it again.

**ASSOCIATION REUNION 2009**  
**BRITANNIA HOTEL COVENTRY**  
**Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> – Monday 5<sup>th</sup> October 2009**  
**£139.00 per person**

Right in the heart of the City, Coventry's premier hotel adjoins the historically famous Coventry Cathedral, a popular tourist favourite. The Britannia Coventry is located right in the heart of Coventry city centre and department stores are just on the doorstep. The Reception area is pleasant and the marble floors give this a modern and professional feel. The Britannia Coventry's 205 en-suite bedrooms are tastefully furnished and decorated rooms are light and airy and offer comfort and style for your stay. They all have modern facilities that include TV, Telephone, Hairdryer and Tea & Coffee facilities.

The hotel's Bentley's Restaurant enjoys a well-deserved reputation for its cuisine and offers a tempting choice of menus. It opens out onto Cathedral Square and with its delicious aromas that just tantalizes the taste buds it proves popular with the Coventry locals and residents alike. The Bar-Rogue Café Bar is great for a lighter bar snack or meal.

With the AGM at 10.45 a.m. on Saturday morning and a coach trip to Stratford on Avon and Warwick for those not attending at the AGM and an optional coach trip at £4.00 per person to the National Memorial Arboretum at 11.00 a.m. on Sunday morning, a full weekend programme is guaranteed. As it is situated right next door, a visit to Coventry Cathedral is a must. The new St Michael's Cathedral, built next to the remains of the old that was almost destroyed in the Coventry Blitz during the Second World War, was designed by Basil Spence and is a Grade I listed building. Spence (later knighted for this work) insisted that instead of re-building the old cathedral it should be kept in ruins as a garden of remembrance and that the new cathedral should be built alongside, the two buildings together effectively forming one church. The tower of the old Cathedral can be climbed for a magnificent view of Coventry, but it's not a climb for the infirm as the steps of the spiral staircase (if I remember right it is 320 steps) go straight up without allowing for rests, unless you stop on the staircase thus blocking everyone else. There is a small charge for entrance to the tower which is through the Cathedral Shop.

In addition, the Coventry Transport Museum is just a few hundred yards away and with free admission, this is also well worth a visit. Coventry was the birthplace of the British cycle and motor industry and the Museum displays the world's largest collection of British road transport.

The Museum is dedicated to collecting and exhibiting the products of a city that changed the world and focuses on the skills and innovation of its people. The majority of the collection is Coventry built or has a strong connection with the city. Coventry had nearly 600 companies making cycles, motorcars, commercial vehicles and motorcycles. You can find out about their fascinating histories and see vehicles made by world famous names throughout the Museum. And in the simulator of Thrust 2 and Thrust SSC - a truly supersonic car, you are able to experience

for yourself what it is like to travel faster than the speed of sound. And it's all free.

### **RAF Regiment Books**

I am often asked for information about books about the RAF Regiment. The following list is of the books that I know of that I am regularly adding to. If anyone knows of any other books about the RAF Regiment, please let me know. The details I need are the following; title, author, brief account of subject matter, year of first publication, who published it and the ISBN number.

**"Khaki and Blue"** the early ground defence of the RAF in WW2 by Colonel Ronald Sherbrooke-Walker TD DL. Published in **1952** by The Saint Catherine Press Ltd. Now out of print. No ISBN number.

**"A Short History of the RAF Regiment"** from 1942 to 1970 with a brief account of the approach to the problems of airfield defence in the RAF from 1918 to 1942 by Kingsley M Oliver. Printed by Thanet Printing Works in **1969**. No ISBN Number.

**"The Battle of the Airfields 1st January 1945"** by Norman L Franks. About "Operation Bodenplatte" when the Germans attempted to destroy the advanced Allied Airfields. It goes into great detail about the involvement of the RAF Regiment and lists all the squadrons together with their "kills", and the airfields the squadrons were on. First published in **1982**. ISBN 1 898697 15 9. Republished by Grub Street in **1994** in an updated version.

**"The Blue and Khaki Hunters"** Privately published in a Limited Edition of 500 copies in **1993** by D F Sampson through Newton Publishers. ISBN 1-872308-34-1. Can be obtained directly from Mr D F Sampson, 17 Shelley Close, Highcliffe on Sea, Chrsitchurch, Dorset, BH23 4HW. Telephone number 01425 279206.

**"Below the Bottom Rung"** the RAF Regiment in Palestine by Edward Grocott. Published in **1996** by J and K H Publishing. ISBN 1 900511 57 6.

**"Through Adversity"** the History of the RAF Regiment 1942 - 1992 by Kingsley M Oliver. Published in **1997** by Forces and Corporate Publishing Ltd. ISBN 0 9529597 0 4.

**"In Adversity"** Exploits of Gallantry and Awards to the RAF Regiment and its Associated Forces 1921 - 12995 by Nicholas G Tucker. Published

in **1997** by Jade Publishing Limited. ISBN 1-900734-08-7.

**"The RAF Regiment"** History, Colours, uniforms and Equipment of the RAF Regiment. Edited by Stuart Asquith. Published in **2000** by Nexus Special Interests Ltd. Book Number 001772. Foreword by Air Commodore R C Moore, MBE, RAF, Commandant General, RAF Regiment. The RAF Regiment Today. The Early Years. The Formation of the Royal Air Force Regiment. The RAF Regiment at War. The Return to North West Europe. The War in South East Asia. The Post War Years. The RAF Regiment Since 1980. The RAF Museum. The RAF Regiment Chapel. The RAF Regiment Association. Packed with superb full colour and black and white reproductions of paintings, sketches, and photographs, both contemporary and modern and including portraits of officers and men, groups, battles and engagements, uniforms, badges & insignia, equipment, colours, regimental devices, bands, and much more.

**"The RAF Regiment at War"** 1942 - 1946 by Kingsley M Oliver. Published in **2002** by Pen and Sword Books Limited. ISBN 0-85052-852-6.

**"On the Road to Mandalay"** featuring the life of the author Randle Manwaring focussing particularly on his time with the RAF Regiment in the Burma Campaign. Published in **2006** by Pen and Sword Books Limited. ISBN 1844154971.

**"Constant Vigilance"** the RAF Regiment in the Burma Campaign by Nigel W M Warwick. Published in **2007** by Pen and Sword Books Limited. ISBN: 9781844155002.

**"Joint Force Harrier"** by Commander Adrian Orchard, with James Barrington. The true story of a Royal Navy Fighter squadron at war. Published in 2008 by Penguin Books and Micael Joseph. ISBN 9780718153991.

In addition, other books have been privately published by their authors telling of their experiences in the RAF Regiment. If anyone knows of any other books, please let me know.

### **NATIONAL MEMORIAL**

#### **ARBORETUM (NMA) UPDATE**

#### **Future Events at the NMA**

**Saturday, 25<sup>th</sup> April 2009**

At 11.30 a.m. in the Millennium Chapel. The 94th Anniversary of Gallipoli Remembrance Service to commemorate the Allied Gallipoli Landings on the Gallipoli Peninsula in . For details contact Nadir Imamoglu on 01922 406604.

It will be open to all, but the Chapel has a seating capacity of 120.

**Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> June 2009**

The Mercian Volunteers Association (MVA) will hold a dedication for association branches' standards and a families day.

**Saturday 27 June 2009**

A Service to Rededicate the RAF Regiment Memorial. For details contact the RAF Regiment Secretary Wing Commander Martin Hooker RAF (Rtd) at RAF Honington at <rafregtsecretary@honington.raf.mod.uk>.

**Saturday 12th September 2009**

Northern Ireland Veterans' Association. Annual service of remembrance, with drumhead, followed by parade to Ulster Ash Grove. At 1.30 a.m. a Service in the Leonard Cheshire Amphitheatre Open to all. Standards welcomed but advance notice of participation appreciated. Contact Alan Preston <service2009@nivets.org.uk> or PO Box 9004, Leicester LE21 4BL.

Well that's all for now, Spring is here at last so look after yourselves and keep smiling.

*Malcolm*

# DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES



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Wednesday 23 <sup>rd</sup> April	2009	St George's Day	Thursday 13 <sup>th</sup> August	2009	Branch Night
Sunday 26 <sup>th</sup> April	2009	ANZAC Day Parade	Thursday 10 <sup>th</sup> September	09	Branch Night
Sunday 10 <sup>th</sup> May	2009	Reded of Regt Chapel	Fri 2 <sup>nd</sup> – Mon 5 <sup>th</sup> Oct	2009	Ass.n Autumn Reunion
Thursday 14 <sup>th</sup> May	2009	Branch Night	Sunday 4 <sup>th</sup> October	2009	Merchant Navy Day
Thursday 11 <sup>th</sup> June	2009	Branch Night	Thursday 8 <sup>th</sup> October	2009	Branch Night
Sunday 14 <sup>th</sup> June	2009	Cosford Air Show	Wednesday 21 <sup>st</sup> Oct	2009	Battle of Trafalgar Day
<b>Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> June</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>Branch 21<sup>st</sup> Ann.y</b>	Sunday 1 <sup>st</sup> November	2009	Midlands Fest of Rem.
Saturday 27 <sup>th</sup> June	2009	Reg.t Service at NMA	Sunday 8 <sup>th</sup> Nov	2009	Remembrance Sunday
Thursday 9 <sup>th</sup> July	2009	Branch Night	Wednesday 11 <sup>th</sup> Nov	2009	Remembrance Day
			Thursday 12 <sup>th</sup> Nov	2009	Branch Night
			Saturday 14 <sup>th</sup> Nov	2009	B'ham Poppy Ball
			Sat 28 <sup>th</sup> -Sun 29 <sup>th</sup> Nov	2009	B'ham Int Tattoo NIA
			Monday 30 <sup>th</sup> November	09	St Andrew's Day
			Thursday 10 <sup>th</sup> December	09	Branch Night
			Monday 1 <sup>st</sup> February	2010	68 <sup>th</sup> Ann RAF Regiment
			Monday 1 <sup>st</sup> February	2010	Branch Service at NMA
			Thursday 11 <sup>th</sup> February	10	<b>Branch AGM</b>

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