



ROYAL AIR FORCE REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

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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: 226

APRIL 2008

THE BIRMINGHAM BRANCH NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 226 APRIL 2008

Dear Readers.

NEW ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP CARDS

In your newsletter envelope this month, you will also find your new Association Membership Card so don't throw it away with the envelope. You will also find recorded on it your Birmingham Branch Membership Number. In addition, as you will see, to give everyone in the Association a unique number, our membership number prefix has changed from B to BIR. Also, please sign the card as soon as you get it.

I normally put articles about the RAF Regiment later on in my newsletters, but with regard to the publicity about certain low-life individuals abusing servicemen and women in uniform, resulting in an order to RAF Wittering personnel not to wear their uniforms outside the base, this month, with regard to the following article, I have changed my mind, for our servicemen and women put know what military honour is and put it before their own lives.

Are we now saying that those who survive and their comrades should not wear their uniforms with pride? Our servicemen and women do not choose the battles they fight on our behalf, these are decided by our politicians and we should all support what they do. If we abuse those who would lay down their lives for us, we are not a society at all, for we should visibly honour our Armed Forces. For this reason this article deserves "pride of place" in this month's newsletter. However, it is a sad reflection on our times that we no longer have a Great Britain and due to our politicians voting for devolution, we no longer have a United Kingdom either. What is worse though is that due to the failed policy of multiculturalism, we no longer have a "united" Kingdom either.

The war in Iraq remains hugely unpopular and not many people understand what the war in Afghanistan is all about but we should remember that soldiers continue to pay the price in blood for the Government's foreign policy experiments and if anyone disagrees with our involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan, then they should take it up with

our politicians and not blame the lads who are only doing their duty.

CORPORAL DAVID HAYDEN MC

Corporal David Hayden MC, of the RAF Regiment, is the first RAF Airman to receive the Military Cross. In a particularly ferocious battle against a determined group of insurgents, involving a fully dismounted patrol in Iraq, Hayden repeatedly showed the most outstanding courage, selflessness and personal example. With absolute disregard for his own safety he repeatedly risked his own life in order to rescue a wounded comrade and extract his combat team.

Corporal Hayden, a 29-year-old 6ft 3in serviceman, an ex-comprehensive schoolboy from Spalding, Lincolnshire, might have gone into the building trade had he not joined the RAF Regiment, was awarded the Military Cross after running 250 yards under fire with an injured colleague slung over his shoulder.

Corporal Hayden, who is married with a four-year-old son, is the only Airman now privileged to use the initials MC after his name. His patrol was on the outskirts of Basra when they came under fire from around 50 insurgents in what would become the battle of Al-Waki market, Basra, in August last year. "Every time we tried to move we got hammered from about four or five different places," he said. Then one of his colleagues, Leading Aircraftsman Martin Beard, was hit. He had been fatally wounded but Corporal Hayden was not prepared simply to give up on him. LAC Beard was lying in the open but still kneeling, holding on to his machine gun.

Corporal Hayden saw a 6 foot mud wall between him and his injured colleague and raced over open ground towards it. The only way through was a steel door, but it was locked. I just got my head down and ran at the door," he said. "It came off on its hinges and we ran out into the open to get Beardy. Me and one of the lads from the section grabbed him and moved him about 20 yards to cover. We were still receiving fire."

As AK47 fire rang out around them, Cpl Hayden hoisted the injured man on to his shoulder and ran, upright, another 200 yards, across cesspits, broken sewers and other obstacles to

safety. "Then off I went again," (as he nonchalantly put it) to rescue the rest of his section. Corporal Hayden was cited for showing "the most outstanding courage, selflessness and personal example," risking his life repeatedly "with absolute disregard for his own safety". He was modest about his achievements, praising the rest of his men and paying tribute to the fallen. "Obviously I was gutted because we lost Beardy but the men that were with me that day were fantastic. It was a team effort. I'm honoured to get this award but I dedicate it to my fallen comrades." He said: "It's amazing what a tour in Iraq does to somebody. My family mean more than anything to me now – it might be me next time." And the uniform? "I'm proud of this uniform because it identifies me as a serviceman, as a protector of the Sovereign. I'm proud of it because the RAF Regiment has made me what I am today - a Military Cross winner. And no-one can take that away."

Corporal Hayden's father James fought in the First Gulf War and his grandfather, David Coles, was his father's sergeant. His mother Sylvia, who lives in Spalding said: "I am ecstatic for him and I am just bursting with pride at the moment. My husband would have been absolutely delighted.

Branch Appeal

The above article should remind us of the dangers they are all facing, so please remember the appeal your Branch Committee have set up. We are now sending "goodies" to the lads in Selly Oak Hospital. Through Ralph Dean and Roy Thomas, we have made contact with the nursing staff and at their request we have already supplied them with fifty shaving mirrors.

Not only are we now receiving donations from Birmingham Branch members, we have also received a £50.00 donation from the Sussex Branch. Our grateful thanks to you all but we need more, so come on lads, just remember what the lads in the Military Ward have done for all of us and so see what you can do and as we often say, "dig deep and die happy". We have already voted to give £200.00 this year, to be given in four blocks of £50.00 each and we would like you all to consider supporting this appeal.

If any of you would like to contribute items to this appeal, you can either take them directly to Selly Oak Hospital and ask for Major Andy Maine, or post them in a parcel to Major A Maine RLC, RCDM Ward S4, Selly Oak

Hospital, Raddlebarn Road, Selly Oak, Birmingham, B29 6JD. Or if anyone would like to contribute financially to this appeal, send a cheque to the Branch Treasurer Tom Magee, made out to the Birmingham Branch – Military Ward Appeal.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING SAUTURDAY 19TH JANUARY 2008 MINUTES

1. Minutes of the Last Meeting

Minutes of the July 2007 meeting were accepted as a true record.

2. Matters Arising

Clarification on Affinity Cards.

a) It was established that no transferable liability for any previous organisation could be accepted by the Association and therefore the previous affinity cards were defunct.

Personal Liability Insurance for Standard bearers.

b) It was established that all our standard bearers were covered by our Public Liability Insurance as long as the parade was deemed to be an Association parade. If we were parading at another organisation's parade (e.g. RBL) then branches must ensure that the organising body had cover for public liability.

Membership Forms.

c) It was noted that the new membership forms were not universally available although they had been sent both electronically and by normal hard copy to each branch. The Membership Secretary Steve Horton should hold electronic copy of the form available to every branch that could handle it and a supply of hard copies to those branches that could not.

Membership Cards

d) The National Chairman Steven Brereton Martin displayed the new plastic Association membership cards. They will be issued forward to all branch secretaries in the next few weeks. They have a tamperproof strip on the back that indicates when they are valid from and the Branch Secretaries will have the annual update stickers annually to issue when subs have been paid. Local branch numbers will be allocated and a list of numbers supplied to the Membership Secretary.

3. Voting Procedures at NEC

The National Chairman presented a paper on voting procedure at NEC meetings to ensure a more efficient system of vote counting and recognition. This was unanimously approved.

4. Election of National Officials Ballot

The National Chairman outlined the voting paper for the vote by the membership on whether or not to delegate the responsibility for the election of National Officers to attendees at the AGM. He reminded members that this had been promised at the AGM and that, in order to cater for the possibility of a postal vote for the Vice Chairman this year, the following time scale would be necessary:

- 1 April – papers out to members
- 15 May – close of voting and count
- 1 June – ballot paper if necessary to be ready
- 1 July – ballot paper to go out with Flash

This was unanimously approved.

There was discussion as to the counting and invigilation process. It had been proposed that the count would be carried out by an outside agency such as a RAFA area. The other option was to remain with the present system of the votes being counted at Honington with NEC-elected invigilators. The NEC voted by 15 to 2 to retain vote counting at Honington. Tom Feeley and Tom Renshaw were nominated as invigilators and both accepted.

5. Budget

With regard to the current budget (2007-08), Tom Feeley enquired if the National Treasurer Derek James had a breakdown of the budget heading "Office Expenditure". Derek James confirmed that these figures could be extracted and that he would produce this at the AGM. Several items were queried on the current budget including the costs for the Service at the National Memorial Arboretum (NMA). Martin Hooker and Ron Sharp reported that the major spend at the 65th service had been the provision of tea and coffee for arriving members and guests.

The National Chairman reminded members that the current budget (agreed at the July 2007 NC meeting) had been adjusted to allow for 3 editions of the Flash. The draft budget (2008/09) allowed for 2 editions, but there were sufficient reserves to allow for more editions if more material were submitted for publication. In

view of the NEC's reservations about the costs at the NMA, the draft budget was adjusted to transfer funds from this heading to the Contingency Fund. This was approved.

6. Area System

Alan Day of the South Wales Branch raised the issue of reverting to Branch Delegates meetings as he did not see the Area system working very well. It was the opinion of his Branch that the Association should revert to its old system of governance and have a Delegates meeting. There was much discussion on this issue with the chair pointing out that continuity played an important part in ensuring the acceptance and success of the Area system and a systematic approach which could be traced back through Area meetings to Branch meetings to ensure that the process was transparent and trustworthy.

On the first proposal of reverting to Delegates meetings with representatives from every Branch, members voted for – 4 against – 13. On the second proposal of retaining the status quo, members voted for – 13 against – 4. The existing structure would therefore be retained. Forward notice of NEC agenda items would be given to branches.

7. Reunions

Alan Day proposed that a second reunion be held each year. The meeting agreed that the Association AGM should continue to be held in conjunction with the October reunion but, other than that, the only limit was the number of members and friends who wanted to attend such an event and who would organise them. Some discussion was had over the relative merits of Isle of Wight Tours and Warner's as organising parties. Each had much to offer. Warner's provided quality accommodation but were more expensive whereas Isle of Wight Tours provided rather lower quality but gave a greater value for money. The National Secretary Bill Espie, pointed out that the Association needed to take the lowest common denominator for its AGM reunion as many of the older members were simply not in the position to afford price rises. It was agreed that Isle of Wight Tours would remain as the provider for the Annual AGM reunion (in October) for the time being and that the matter would be raised at the AGM so that members could express a view as to their wish to hold a second reunion. With regard to the AGM and reunion in October 2008, Fred Ringham reported that he had been offered a number of venues for

this year's reunion. The best of these seemed to be in Folkestone. The accommodation was all en suite and, for half board, would cost £134 for the Friday until Monday morning. Additionally, the Association could hold its muster parade at the near by RAF Battle of Britain memorial. The NEC approved the choice. The reunion dates would be Friday 3rd–Monday 6th October with the AGM being held on Saturday the 4th.

8. C&R and AGM issues

- a) Tom Feeley reported that there were some issues around rule 53 and rule 57 of the current C &R's. Rule 53 required notice of questions for the AGM in October to be given before the NEC meeting which sets the Agenda (in June). Rule 57 was intended to stop decisions being reversed before there had been a reasonable chance for them to succeed. It meant that the same decisions were not being taken year on year. A point in case was the Fees increase which was upheld at last year's AGM. The NEC agreed that Rule 53 was too prescriptive and that Rule 57 was capable of misinterpretation. The NS and MH would review and reword these Rules for debate by the NEC and Branches prior to the AGM.
- b) It was requested that copies of the previous AGM minutes, accounts and agenda be provided for all attendees at this years meeting. This was agreed.
- c) Minutes and Accounts were to be included in, or distributed with, the edition of the Flash following the AGM. This was agreed.
- d) AOB item to be reinstated. This provoked a lively debate. The NEC concluded that notice of any other business must be provided to the National Secretary prior to the start of the meeting. The National Chairman would ask the proposer to speak on the matter, but no vote would be taken to allow the Branches and the NEC to consider the matter and report back to the subsequent AGM.
- e) Agenda to ensure that National Officers gave formal reports at AGM – NC, NS, NT. This was agreed.

9. Standard Operating Procedures

As approved by the June 2006 NEC, the Association Standard Operating procedures parts 1, 2 & 3 needed review this year. NS to ensure an

electronic copy was supplied to each area for review onwards to branches by May. Feedback would then be included in a report for NEC in June and subsequent updating of SOP's. This was agreed.

10. Charitable Donations

The National Vice Chairman Jeff Stevenson proposed that the monies accrued in the various raffles at the AGM reunion would be sequestered into a charity pot named the Chairman's Charity and that this money be distributed to various charities. The National Chairman felt that this was the Association's charitable giving and that "Chairman's Charity" was not therefore an appropriate name. The NEC took note that the RAF Regiment Fund was now established as a charity and some members of the NEC felt that charity should start at home and that the RAF Regiment Fund should be a major beneficiary of money raised by the Association.

In the event it was proposed that, for future AGM raffles, the Association should choose a principal Charity to which it would donate 60% of its raffle income to annually. It was observed that this charity would have to fulfil the criteria of being acceptable to the NEC and contribute towards influencing the media for the Association and the Corps. The remaining 40% would be donated to the RAF Regiment Fund. For 15 against 2. This was carried.

With regard to the raffle from the last AGM, Jeff Stevenson reported that his Area had been split on who this should go to with considerable weight being put on to the "Help for Heroes" charity. Tom Renshaw spoke forcefully about his belief that the Association should make a sizeable donation to this charity and proposed that the £1000 from this year's raffle be donated to the Help the Heroes Charity. This was not carried.

It was proposed that the £1000 be split with £500 to Help the Heroes and £500 to the RAF Regiment Fund. This was carried.

11. Lapel Pins

Alan Day produced designs of a new Association Lapel pins. The NEC approved the design (at reduced size of 16mm diameter) and voted £400 for an initial run. This was carried.

12. Membership Secretary

The National Chairman stated that he had had a request from Steve Horton to stand down as Membership Secretary for the Association. Steve had taken this duty on in 2006 and had now had a

promotion at work and needed to concentrate on that and his Branch duties. The NEC agreed that he had contributed enormously to the reformed Association and recorded a vote of thanks for his contribution. The National Chairman went on to say that he had drawn up a list of requirements he thought was necessary for the Membership Secretary and had cast the net far and wide. As a consequence Frank Xavier of the North East London Branch had volunteered to replace Steve. This was unanimously agreed.

13. Parades and Ceremonial

a) **New Queen's Colour.**

The National Chairman reported that a new Queen's Colour was to be presented to the Corps at the same time as a new Colour was to be presented to the RAF. This was to take place on 11th July 2008 during the RIAT at RAF Fairford. The CG had been appointed Project Officer of the whole event. It was hoped that arrangements would be made with the organisers and sponsors of the RIAT to reduce or eliminate the entry fee for Association members attending and that we would be fully included in the day. More details would be forwarded through the National Secretary when they became available.

b) **Tower of London.**

The annual ceremony at the tower of London was to be held on the 18th May 2008. This annual event has forged good links between the Yeoman Warders and the Corps, reinforced by our own WO B Loughlin. NC and TR stated that it would be gratifying to have more Branch Standards on Parade. All requests for tickets and arrangements to be made through Sam Naylor of the Uxbridge Branch.

c) **Annual Commemoration of RAF Regt Chapel.**

The Annual Commemoration of the RAF Regiment Chapel at St Anne's Church in Catterick Village would take place on the 11th May. The National Standard of the Comrades Association would be laid up if permissions can be granted. Martin Hooker will write to ensure this. The WO's and SCO's Standard will be on Parade, together with the Standards of other Branches.

Tom Feeley informed the NEC that ex-members of the Manchester Branch of the Comrades Association had asked him not to lay up the Standard at present. Post Parade refreshments would likely be at RAF Leeming, hopefully under the auspices of 34 Sqn RAF Regiment.

d) **NMA.**

The Commemoration Ceremony to celebrate the Corps' 66th birthday would be held at the NMA on 28th June 2008. 120 tickets would be allocated for the ceremony available on a bidding process through Branch Secretaries. In the light of last year's ceremony a welcome table would be manned to issue Chapel tickets and entrance to the Chapel would be by ticket only with minders on the doors to ensure that only ticket holders entered the Chapel. The National Secretary to liaise with Martin Hooker to book the Chapel etc. and with Ron Sharp for the local arrangements.

14. Miscellaneous Items

a) Tom Renshaw reported that feedback from the serving units was poor. This was echoed by Alan Day. The National Secretary to liaise with MH to see how we could improve this.

b) Ron Sharp reported that arrangements had been made for personnel about to deploy to Afghanistan to visit the NMA and the Regiment Memorial Garden.

c) It was proposed that a vote on increasing mileage on Association duties be taken at the next NEC and that it should be increased from 25p per mile to 40p a mile as the rate had not changed since 2006 but the petrol prices had rocketed. This was agreed.

d) It was requested that clarification on the role of Parade Marshal – particularly in relation to the QCS NCOs - be given at the next NEC meeting. This was agreed.

e) Tom Renshaw asked for a vote of thanks be recorded to Kingsley Oliver for his outstanding contribution to the Association in producing the Flash. The National Chairman stated that he was aware that Kingsley Oliver had only taken on the post of Editor as a short-term arrangement and that the Association needed to find a long-term Editor. Area

reps were asked to canvass their Areas for suitable and willing candidates.

- f) Association Cup Award. In order to strengthen the links between the Association and the serving Corps, it was proposed that a cup be awarded to a serving member on a specific course at the Depot. However, junior officers and recruits were already well provided with trophies, so it was agreed that the Association's award would have more impact with the FT1 and FT2 courses. As these are graded anyway, no extra work would be needed to identify the top student on each course. The award should be accompanied by a miniature of the cup and a £20 voucher award. Suitable cups could be found (possibly from the historical RAF silver stores). Costs to be investigated and reported to the next NEC meeting. This was agreed.
- G) Promotional Video. A promotional DVD is being considered, to be produced by Black Cat Video. It would include RAF Regiment history, NMA and interviews with members of a variety of ages. £2,500 for 250 copies. The National Chairman will commence discussions with Black Cat and report back to July NEC. This was noted.

The National Chairman closed the meeting at 16:30 hrs. The next meeting to be held in July 2008.

BRANCH SUBSCRIPTIONS

Association subscriptions are £10.00 and Branch Subscriptions are £5.00 making a total of £15.00. Our grateful thanks are due to those members who have not only paid up on time, but have also included a donation to Branch funds, well done lads. For non-payers, please remember that your Branch Subscriptions were due on 1st February, 43 members have not yet paid up so – **YOU ARE NOW TWO MONTHS LATE.** Pay your £15.00 subs now or you will no longer be a member. Please make your cheques out to The Birmingham Branch, RAF Regiment Association and send them to **THE BRANCH TREASURER** Tom Magee and **NOT** to me and if you wish to remain as members, please pay them now.

NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIPTIONS

I have a list of members of other branches 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 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, to **THE BRANCH TREASURER** Tom Magee and **NOT** to me. If you wish to continue receiving the newsletters, please pay your Subscriptions **immediately** or this will be the last one.

NEWS OF THE RAF REGIMENT



FROM THE RAF REGIMENT SECRETARY

General: The following Parish Notices are provided for your information and interest.

The following Operational Awards to members of the RAF Regt have been announced in the Operational Awards List No30 published on 7 Mar 08:

Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE): Sqn Ldr J Sutton - 1 Sqn RAF Regt

Military Cross (MC): Cpl Hayden - 1 Sqn RAF Regt

Mention in Dispatches (MiD): SAC Wharton - 1 Sqn RAF Regt

Queen's Commendation for Bravery (QCB): Sgt Bainbridge - 1 Sqn RAF Regt

Queen's Commendation for Bravery (QCB): SAC Stinson - 1 Sqn RAF Regt

Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service (QCVS): Gp Capt Burt (CO 903 EAW, now RCDS)

Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service (QCVS): WO Hargreaves (WO 903 EAW, now Trg Wg)

Note: Cpl Hayden is the first RAF and RAF Regt NCO to be awarded the MC. The total number of awards made to 1 Sqn RAF Regt following their operational tour in Iraq is viewed widely as remarkable and unprecedented.

Joint Commander's Commendations (Iraq) were also awarded to the following 1 Sqn RAF Regt personnel:

Fg Off B Alcock

FS B Daniel

Cpl J Davis

Cpl C James

SAC L Badderley

SAC A Davey
 SAC M Duxbury
 SAC M Williams (attached from 609 Sqn
 RAuxAF)
 SAC M Greenwood
 SAC C Lowe (attached from 63 Sqn RAF
 Regt)

AOC 83 EAG Commendations were awarded to:

SAC R Baker - 1 Sqn RAF Regt
 Sgt Wilson - 51 Sqn RAF Regt -
 Afghanistan
 Cpl Jardine - 51 Sqn RAF Regt -
 Afghanistan
 SAC Anderson - 51 Sqn RAF Regt -
 Afghanistan (attached from 2622 Sqn
 RAuxAF Regt)

NATO AWARD FOR RAF REGT SNCO

NATO's Allied Command Transformation (ACT) has selected RAF Regt SNCO Sgt MacDonald, of the NATO School, Oberammergau, Germany, as its Military Member of the Year for 2007. The award is competed for by thousands of personnel from the 26 nations of NATO. He was presented with his award at the ACT HQ in Norfolk, Virginia, USA.

DEATH NOTICES:

BURNS. Former RAF Regt SAC Rabbie Burns, born 30 Mar 36, died on 29 Feb 08 aged 71. He served from 1954-66 in the Middle East (Suez), RAF Bridgenorth, 34 Sqn RAF Regt at RAF Nicosia, 2 (Fd) Sqn RAF Regt at RAF Malta, RAF Felixstowe and 63 Sqn RAF Regt at RAF Tengah. The funeral was held on 5 Mar 08. He was survived by his wife, Nan, to whom the Corps extends its sincere condolences.

HOLMES. Former RAF Regt LAC Horace Leslie Holmes (Les), born 7 Feb 1921, died 23 Feb 2008, aged 87. He was called up for RAF service at the outbreak of WWII and transferred to the RAF Regt on its formation. Served throughout the War on 2763 and 2724 Sqn RAF Regt until the end of the War.

Left the Corps in Mar 45 and joined the Royal Military Police, with which he served for a further five years. The funeral was held on 4 Mar 08 in Scunthorpe and was attended by a Guard of Honour from the Lincolnshire Branch of the RAF Regt Assoc, of which he was a long-term Member. Les is survived by his two daughters, Eileen and Doreen. The Corps extends its sincere condolences to them both and to the family.

TURNER. Former RAF Regt SAC Michael Turner died on 5 Mar 08. Served with 48(Fd) Sqn RAF Regt in 1957 and with 62 (LAA) and 1 (Fd) Sqn RAF Regt in Libya. Funeral was held at Llwyd Coed Crematorium, Aberdare at 1400 hrs on Thu 13 Mar 08. Family flowers only but donations, if required, may be made payable to the RAF Association. Letters of condolence may be sent to his daughter, Mrs Jackie Marshal at 24 Council Street, Methyr Tydfil, CF49 2DX. The Corps extends its sincere sympathy to Mrs Marshal and the family,

GENERAL NOTICES:

RAF Regt Senior Officers' Conference – 7 to 8 May 08

The 2008 RAF Regt Snr Offs' Conference is scheduled for 7-8 May 08 at the Def CBRN Centre, Winterbourne Gunner. The calling note will be issued in due course. The POC is Sqn Ldr Dave Stellitano, SO2 FP Plans at HQ 2 Gp (GPTN 95221 6675). The Conference is only for serving Snr RAF Regt offrs.

RAF Regt Fund Membership

The Fund membership stands at around 1500, 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 still serving) or the RAF Regt Fund Sec (Flt Lt Andy Gaskell) or the RAF Regiment Secretary at Honington for 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.

Project 104 - The Great Escape Hut

Readers may recall that The Great Escape from Stalag Luft III, at Sagan in Poland, took place on the night of 24 Mar 44. Seventy-six POWs made it outside through a 111 metre tunnel called 'Harry', some 10 metres deep. After the escape was uncovered and the alarm was raised, four prisoners were caught by the tunnel outlet.

A huge manhunt began and only three of the POWs managed to avoid the traps and chases, and the Nazis caught the remaining 73. It was the biggest escape ever from the Sagan camp and, in pursuance of Hitler's personal order - *Sagan*

Befehl - 50 of the escapees were executed summarily. Following a Staff Ride to, among other camps, Stalag Luft III in 2006, a number of RAF personnel from RAF High Wycombe and other stations devised the plan of building a replica of Hut 104, the hut from which the entrance to Great Escape tunnel, 'Harry', was concealed to act as a further memorial to all those who were POW's at Stalag Luft III and as a major feature for the small, under-funded museum there.

It will be built - hopefully in the autumn of 2008 - at the site of the Great Escape Museum at Sagan. Although over £30,000 has been raised, some £18,000 is still needed. If you would like to contribute to Project 104, donations (made payable to SFAS RAF High Wycombe - with 'Project 104' written on reverse) may be sent to the RAF Regt Secretary who will forward them on to the project Team.

Fund Database Corruption

The RAF Regt Fund Database was corrupted in the New Year and the addresses of all those who advised their changes of address since mid-Dec 07 - 16 Jan 08 may have been lost. The Regt Sec would be grateful if anyone who advised a change would re-email their new address as a double-check. Any inconvenience is regretted.

RAF Regt Fund Subscriptions.

The Direct Debits for the Subscription Year 2007-8 were actioned in mid-Sep 07. Unfortunately, the banks for a variety of reasons rejected over 200 Direct Debits. This has left the RAF Regt Fund with a considerable shortfall on its expected income. Letters and Emails have been issued to all appropriate subscribers and it would be appreciated if those concerned would respond promptly by completing and sending a new application form. Since the new Direct Debits will not now be submitted until Sep 08, a cheque for the forthcoming subscription year will be required.

GBAD Sqns Standard Laying-Up - 9 May 08

The outline-planned Church Service for the laying-up of the existing GBAD sqns' Standards at Bury St Edmunds on 9 May is cancelled. The future of the Sqns' number plates has yet to be resolved with the possible run-on of some sqns in the field role post-GBAD. However, a suitable marking of the demise of the Corps' GBAD capability is still under consideration for a later date.

Bosnia & Herzegovina Commemoration - 22 MAY 08

An official Commemorative Service to mark the withdrawal of UK Forces from Bosnia and Herzegovina will take place at the Armed Forces Memorial, Staffordshire, on Thursday 22 May 2008, and 1000 tickets are available to attend the event.

The Service will give thanks to those who served in Bosnia and Herzegovina, marking the outstanding contribution made by UK Forces in bringing stability, security and peace to the country. Tickets are available for the Commemorative Service for veterans of the conflict, and the families and friends of those who lost their lives. An application form can be downloaded from www.veterans-info.uk/bosnia_app.doc or by calling the free ticket line on 0800 169 2277, and each application will receive two tickets.

63 Sqn RAF Regt Standard Presentation

The new Standard presentation for 63 Sqn, planned provisionally for Spring 2008, is deferred to a later date (tbd).

New Queen's Colour for RAF Regiment - 11 Jul 08

Both The Royal Air Force and the RAF Regiment will receive their new Colours at the Royal International Air Tattoo, Fairford, on 11 July 2008. The Corps 'family' will be most welcome, but arrangements and attendance requirements will not be issued until much nearer the event. Please do not request further information on the subject as it cannot be given at this stage. It will be publicised widely at the appropriate time.

Airfield Construction Branch/RAF Regt 50th Anniversary in Akrotiri Celebrations – 2008:

The ACB Assoc is celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the arrival in Cyprus of 5001 Sqn Airfield Construction and the RAD Regt sqns, on 10 Sep 08. The main function will be in conjunction with the 2008 Wings Appeal Garden Party at the residence of CBF Cyprus, AVM and Mrs R Lacey. It will be a joint function with Apollo Branch Paphos.

Any RAF Regt people interested in joining the ACB Assoc event would be more than welcome; they are also offering a trip down 'Memory Lane' around RAF Akrotiri, for a small donation to Wings Appeal. Contact the ACB Assoc by filling in the Visit to Akrotiri form on their website www.rafacyprus.co.uk or contact Gordon Boam at gordonb@cytanet.com.cy. Tel 0035 7253 22905.

Operation BANNER (Northern Ireland) Commemoration - 10 SEP 08

It is proposed to hold a Commemorative Service to mark the end of the Forces' commitment to Operation BANNER in St Paul's Cathedral on Wed 10 Sep 08. Confirmation and further details are awaited.

Charitable Status for RAF Regiment fund

To reflect the fact that the RAF Regt Fund has achieved Charity status, the RAF Regt Fund Application Form has been updated to include a Gift Aid Certificate, which will enable the Fund to reclaim 28% of the subscription from the Taxman (1600+ members x £2.80 = £4,500+ per year!). The forms are available electronically now, but I cannot mass-mail them with this message. Branch Secretaries please contact me in the New Year (after 10 Jan please) for an e-copy, and encourage new members to use the new Form (RAFRF Form App v2008-1.0). Please don't use the previous form (2007-2) anymore.

New Regt History Book - 'Constant Vigilance'.

A new Corps history - 'Constant Vigilance - The RAF Regt in the Burma Campaign' by Dr Nigel Warwick, has been published with a cover price of £25.0. However, the RAF Regt Fund can supply a copy for £20 + P&P. The book has been critically reviewed and is undoubtedly a 'good read' and a 'must' for every Corpsman's bookshelf. The RAF Regt Shop has copies for sale NOW. It is also available on-line at Amazon.com at a competitive price (but more than the Shop with P&P) and the Fund will benefit from all sales, irrespective of where bought.

Regimental Cufflinks:

A new range of quality Silver-Gilt Cufflinks is now available. Made by Collins & Sons, the Crown Jewellers, they are in Sterling Silver Gilt (i.e. hard gold-plated). They have a chain link fitting with an engravable oval disc.

The Special Introductory Price is £47.50 a pair, plus £4.50 P&P& Ins (Special Delivery) within the UK/BFPO. Overseas/Rest of World P&P&Ins will be £8.50. All profits will go to the RAF Regt Museum Refurbishment Fund. A 9ct Gold version will also be available on Special Order (POA, between £240 and £420 depending on fitting). Those requiring further details and an order form should contact the Regt Sec.

Regimental Blazer Buttons:

The RAF Regt Museum is proud to offer for sale sets of exceptionally high quality Regimental Blazer Buttons, also made by the G E

Collins & Sons Ltd, the Crown Jeweller. The finish of the buttons is known as 'Dead Gilt & Burnished', which means they are gilded in a matt finish and the highlights are then polished by hand to give a bright polished finish; hence there are two differing and subtle contrasts on the button. A suitably high quality case is also supplied. A 6+8 button set will cost £67.00 plus £4.50 UK Special Delivery P&P&Ins (per set). Overseas (Europe and Rest-of-World) addresses will incur a P&P&Ins charge of £8.50. If you are interested in obtaining a set or just more details (incl photo and order form), please contact - ideally by Email - the RAF Regt Sec. Two 6+6 sets (£62.50 + £4.50 P&P&Ins) are still available but will not be repeated. The High Street retail value would be at least twice the cost and they are not to be confused with cheaper versions currently available. Latest tranche now in stock!

Corps Diary Dates: (Updated - not exhaustive - contributions welcome)

- 7-8 May 08 - Snr RAF Regt Offrs Conf - Def CBRN Centre, Winterbourne Gunner
- 11 May 08 - Annual Commemoration of the RAF Regt Chapel - Catterick.
- 16 May 08 - RAF Regt Offrs' Dinner Club's Annual Reception - RAF Museum, London.
- 18 May 08 - RAF Regt Assoc - Annual Service at the Tower of London.
- 22 May 08 - Bosnia-Herzegovina Commemoration - NMA Alrewas.
- 01 Jun 08 - Centurion journal No25 - Contributions Due Date.
- 28 Jun 08 - RAF Regt Memorial Re-Dedication - NMA Alrewas (Veterans Week)
- 11 Jul 08 - Presentation of new RAF Regt Queen's Colour - RIAT, Fairford
- 10 Sep 08 - Op BANNER Commemoration - St Paul's Cathedral, London (Provisional)
- 19-21 Sep 08 - WOs & SNCOs Assoc Reunion
- 25-27 Sep 08 RAF Regt-USAF SF Exchange Reunion Weekend – Berkshire
- 3rd – 6th Oct 08 - RAF Regt Assoc 2008 Reunion and AGM.
- 17-20 Oct 08 - RAF Armoured Car Assoc Autumn Reunion - Derby.
- 31 Oct 08 - RAF Regt Offrs' Dinner Club's Annual Dinner - The Guest Speaker will

be Col Bob Stewart of Cheshire Regt, Bosnia and now TV fame. The venue - Midland Hotel in Derby - is excellent and it promises to be a super evening

- 06 Nov 08 - Garden of Remembrance - Westminster Abbey
- 09 Nov 08 - Remembrance Sunday - Cenotaph, London and nationwide.
- 01 Dec 08 - Centurion Journal No26 - Contributions Due Date.
- 6 Feb 09 - Officers' Corps Formation Dinner - RAF Honington

From the Branch Secretary

I said in last month's newsletter that there was some good news in a letter from Jim Davies of Middlewich, Cheshire, about Congleton Borough Council. I copied my articles on the subject to Councillor Jean Pearson, who is Chairman of Mole Valley Council into which area Leatherhead Leisure Centre in Surrey belongs – where you will recall, injured servicemen were jeered out of the swimming pool - and was delighted to get a reply telling me that they now offer free use of the soft play area and swimming pool during the public open sessions at the Leatherhead Leisure Centre and free access to the cinema at Dorking Halls to injured servicemen and women undergoing rehabilitation at Headley Court and to their families when visiting them. The following article is the one I didn't have room to tell you all about. I do now so here it is.

Council thanks troops with free leisure centre entry

Congleton Borough Council agreed recently to give all members of the Armed Forces free use of leisure facilities in any of their five leisure centres located around the borough, including Malkins' Band Golf Course. The leisure scheme gives troops returning from duty in places like Iraq or Afghanistan free use of activities such as swimming, aerobic and keep fit classes, interactive fitness suites and golf. It is hoped that the gesture of appreciation will help the war weary troops relax whilst on leave and is a big 'thank you' for doing such a worthwhile job for their country. Councillor Andrew Thwaite, a retired Squadron Leader in the RAF who spearheaded the scheme said: "After a career initially at sea, largely in the Middle East, followed by 29 years in the Royal Air Force I am very aware of the severe risks and hardships our service personnel are undergoing 24/7 in Iraq and

Afghanistan. From talking with those who have served in Basra, the extensive media coverage and the casualty rates it is obvious we are operating on a full war footing in Iraq and particularly so in Afghanistan. The description by a neighbour's son of the conditions and risks within the airfield perimeter at Basra were staggering.

I felt that we should recognise the effort the borough young service men and women are making on our behalf. In the USA service personnel, including visiting UK service personnel, get substantial concessions on travel, accommodation, leisure pursuits, etc. and are made to feel they are doing a worthwhile job for their country. While there is not much we as a Council can do individually we are by making this gesture of waiving entry fees for serving personnel to the Council leisure facilities, to show our appreciation and hopefully help them relax while home on leave.

The Sun newspaper is running a "Wall of Honour" showing all the offers for service personnel that they have been told of, and to date no other Council has taken an initiative, hopefully once again other Councils may follow Congleton's initiative. "For more information on the scheme, please contact the Council's Leisure Services team on 01270 529740.

RAF REGIMENT GUNNERS HONOURED

We will remember them." That was the poignant message from members of an historic RAF Regiment squadron as they paid tribute to four fallen comrades who lost their lives in Iraq. More than 80 gunners from 1 Squadron RAF Regiment joined family and friends of Leading Aircraftsman Martin Beard, Cpl Matthew Caulwell, and Senior Aircraftsman Peter McFerran and Chris Dunsmore to honour the servicemen who were killed in battle last year. The deaths of the four men, who died within the space of three weeks while defending Basra air base, marked one of the darkest days in the history of the regiment, based at RAF Honington, near Thetford.

But station commander Group Cpt Russ La Forte said that 1 Squadron and the RAF Regiment had emerged more united as a result of the tragedies last summer. Nine other members of the 86-year-old forces protection unit were also injured during the six-month operation in Iraq.

"Time is a great healer, but these four individual tragedies were like having a death in the family. The long term effect has been to

strengthen our common purpose. We will never forget them or their families," he said.

Around 200 mourners gathered at St Mary's Church in Bury St Edmunds for a service of thanksgiving to the four gunners who would have been preparing for a six-month deployment to Afghanistan later this year.

Corporal Matthew Caulwell, 22, from Birmingham, SAC Peter McFerran, 24, from North Wales, and SAC Chris Dunsmore, 29, from Leicester, who was attached to 1 Squadron from 504 Squadron Royal Auxiliary Air Force at RAF Cottesmore, were all killed in a rocket attack on Basra air base on July 19. LAC Martin Beard, 20, from Nottinghamshire, died following a small arms fire attack whilst on foot patrol near the air station on August 7. He was set to get married on his return home. After the service, Squadron Leader Jason Sutton from 1 Squadron said the six month deployment in Iraq was probably the "toughest" for the RAF Regiment since the Second World War. "They grieved very deeply and it was a big blow at the time, but we never stopped fighting. It means a lot to the lads to speak to the families today because they were very close to the men that they lost," he said. Bob McFerran, whose son followed in his footsteps to join 1 Squadron RAF Regiment, said the church service was "very moving and emotional", but helpful to know that SAC McFerran would never be forgotten. The 150 members of 15 Squadron at RAF Honington are set to fly home following a six-month deployment in the Kandahar region of Afghanistan

Tributes to serviceman killed in Iraq

A serviceman dedicated to saving lives has died while serving in Iraq. Sergeant Duane Baz' Barwood was killed during a rocket attack in Basra on Friday while serving with 903 Expeditionary Air Wing of the RAF. The popular serviceman spent years working with Swindon paramedics as a first response volunteer. His death, his colleagues say, will leave an irreplaceable void in the team. Swindon paramedic and union chairman Phil Davis said: "Baz was a top bloke. This is a terrible and tragic thing to happen to such a nice guy. He was a genuine guy, nothing was too much trouble and he was really dedicated to first response. To have this to happen to someone you work with is indescribable - you never expect it to happen to

them." One friend - who wants to remain nameless - said 41-year-old Baz was anxious about his tour of duty in Iraq and especially about leaving his wife Sharon and daughters Leanna and Rebecca. The friend said: "Baz never complained at anything thrown at him, but talked of his apprehension about going to Basra. I wonder if he knew. He didn't want to go. He was a good guy, a family man who talked fondly of his children and of his wife. It was evident he was dedicated to his family. He was good company, friendly, full of interesting stories, diligent, eager to learn and do a good job responding." Baz, from Carterton, Oxfordshire, joined the RAF in 1985 as a Regiment Gunner and later transferred to become a motor transport driver. He was promoted to Sergeant within nine years in the trade, which is exceptional by any standard. Still eager to do more, he volunteered with Great Western Ambulance Service and in 2006 became a first responder, working from Swindon Ambulance HQ. Headquarters manager Steve Arnold said Baz was an exceptional man. He said:

"Baz was an integral part of our team and now there is a space at the table in the rec room that can never be filled. He never came in for his shift empty handed, he'd always have cakes or biscuits readily available - probably another reason he was so popular. For someone that spent his day serving his country it was remarkable that he would then choose to spend his evening serving the community - but that was Baz."

Baz's wife Sharon echoed his colleagues' sentiments in a statement. She said: "Baz will be greatly missed by all those who knew him. He was a very proud and dedicated member of the Royal Air Force who gave his life for the job he loved. Baz cared about helping others around him - shown by his voluntary work as a First Responder for the Ambulance Service. His caring nature was shown in his family, social and service life. Baz lived life to the full and will never, ever be forgotten."

GUNNERS HONOURED FOR BRAVERY

Six RAF Honington-based gunners have been honoured for their bravery in a gruelling tour in Iraq - including the first non-commissioned officer in the RAF's history to receive the Military Cross. The men from 1 Squadron RAF Regiment lost four comrades and suffered nine injuries during a six-month deployment at Basra airbase where they were subjected to constant attacks from enemy insurgents. They have all been

named in the military's Operational Honours list for outstanding battlefield courage.

Corporal David Hayden receives the Military Cross for his gallantry after repeatedly risking his life in a fire-fight to rescue a wounded colleague and extract his men from danger. The father-of-one is the first non-commissioned officer in the RAF and only the third serviceman in the history of the RAF Regiment to get the honour after he ran into the open to carry the fatally wounded Leading Aircraftman Martin Beard to safety after coming under heavy fire during a foot patrol in the Al Waki district of Basra on August 7. The 28-year-old Gunner, who was born in Germany and lives at the service families quarter at RAF Honington, joined the air force in 1997 and is now an instructor at the Suffolk base. Two service personnel from Bury St Edmunds, Sergeant John Bainbridge and Senior Aircraftman James Stinson, have both received the Queen's Commendation for Bravery following their actions after an insurgent rocket attack on the Basra Deployed Operating Base on July 19, which killed three members of 1 Squadron RAF Regiment. Sergeant Bainbridge, 47, helped evacuate injured personnel and saved the life of a comrade after coordinating the fire fighting operation at the base. SAC Stinson, 25, also disregarded his own safety to help free trapped colleagues, despite badly burning his feet.

Senior Aircraftman Benjamin Wharton, 24, from Daventry, Northamptonshire, has been Mentioned in Dispatches after helping to evacuate and treat injured colleagues after the rocket attack on July 19. The heavy machine gunner was also knocked off his Land Rover after receiving a hit to the chest on August 7 before remounting the vehicle and providing covering fire. Squadron Leader Jason Sutton, of 1 Squadron RAF Regiment, will receive the Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire for his outstanding leadership during the relentless six month deployment in Iraq in which 800 insurgent rockets were fired at the Basra airbase. After the memorial service he said that the tour was probably the "toughest" operation for the RAF Regiment since the Second World War. Warrant Officer Robert Hargreaves, from the RAF Regiment Training Wing, has also been recognised for his inspiring leadership, during the deployment with the Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service.

34 Squadron RAF Regiment Welcomed Back

MOD Monday, March 03, 2008

Personnel from 34 Squadron RAF Regiment based at RAF Leeming in North Yorkshire have been given a warm welcome home after a successful six-month tour in Iraq. More than 100 personnel from the squadron attended arrival celebrations at a suite within RAF Leeming where they were greeted by colleagues, family and friends. The squadron's tour in Iraq saw them face roadside bombs and incoming rockets on a regular basis but they also contributed positively to helping the people of Iraq rebuild their lives by completing a project to install mains water for the first time in a village 10 kilometres from Basra City. The village, consisting of approximately 350 families, now has access to 57 standpipes for both domestic use and to maintain their herd of water buffalo.



Squadron Personnel Enjoying the Celebrations

Before going off for some much deserved leave, the squadron was officially welcomed home by Group Captain Edward Stringer, Station Commander at RAF Leeming: "I want to thank you for the job you have done," he said. "I remember standing in front of you before you left in August and I knew you would make a difference. The Iraq you have left behind is different - it is better. It is better for all sorts of reasons but not least of those is the effort that you have put in. The rest of the Air Force knows what you've done and I believe increasingly the rest of this country knows what you've done as well.

So we here at RAF Leeming are hugely proud of you, the Royal Air Force is hugely proud of you, and the people of this country are hugely

proud of you as well. Welcome home!" Personnel were also thanked by Squadron Leader 'George' Formby, who took over as Officer Commanding 34 Squadron during their time in Iraq. He added: "We all know what we've done, and we all know how we did it. We've got something to be proud of in that we've all come back safely and done a bloody good job while we've been out there. Be proud of yourselves and what you've achieved."

After six weeks off, personnel will return to their regular training and prepare ready for any future deployment they are asked to undertake.

WELCOME HOME FOR AFGHAN TROOPS MOD Thursday March 06 2008

Family members and friends were on hand to greet their loved ones who had returned from six months service in Afghanistan. 26 Squadron, from RAF Waddington, had been based in at Kandahar Airfield, defending the airbase in a tour which has been hailed as 'highly successful'. But despite the success of the tour, the airmen were glad to return home to their families. Section commander Corporal Craig from Metheringham, said he had missed his wife and children most of all. "From the day I left, I've thought of nothing but getting back to my family," said Corporal Howes, who had spent six months away from daughter Abbie aged three, son Rhys aged four and fiancé Ayshae Strong. I find it hard to put into words how good it is to be back home, it's really fabulous," His wife echoed the sentiment, saying: "It's lovely to have him home, for me and the kids." Speaking words of praise to the boys, Station Commander Andy Fry said: "We've had a fantastic result since you have all been out there, which goes to say a lot about the team work that was involved." The gunners were supported out there by 15 squadron, based at RAF Honington, in Suffolk. This was 26 Squadron's last active tour of duty as the squadron has now disbanded.

NATIONAL MEMORIAL ARBORETUM (NMA) UPDATE

A Major mining company is backing moves to create a new railway station for the National Memorial Arboretum, Tory Michael Fabricant claims. The Lichfield MP wrote to quarrying firm Lafarge Aggregates to seek its backing for his campaign to reopen the Lichfield

Trent Valley to Wychnor railway line to passenger traffic and the re-establishment of a station in Alrewas. Mr Fabricant believes the facility would be justified as it would serve both the village and rapidly expanding Fradley nearby, and also the massive expansion in visitors to the National Memorial Arboretum since the opening of the new Armed Forces Memorial last year. Now he has had a boost from Robert Whetstone, managing director of quarrying giant Lafarge Aggregates, who says the company is considering financial support for a rail transport feasibility study. Mr Whetstone writes: "We have actively promoted the idea since the mid-1990s, ensuring that it has been incorporated into the Central Rivers Project and adopted by Staffordshire County Council and Lichfield District Council into supplementary planning policy. We feel it would be a welcome addition to this corner of The National Forest which we have also supported over the years." Mr Whetstone says land with 'the most potential for a new station' is already allocated for quarrying in a county council minerals plan. "I am sure you will recognise that this provides is with an excellent opportunity to work this land to tailor the restoration to ensure that it is well-suited to the establishment of a station. We believe that the land offers scope for projects of varying scales, from a simple platform to a fully functional station."

Mr Whetstone says that, 'given the company's enthusiasm for the project' it would consider a financial contribution for a feasibility study. He said the company is awaiting a response from Network Rail as to what the study may entail. "We would also be prepared to enter negotiations to identify the best possible arrangements for future ownership and management of the land," he writes.

Mr Fabricant hailed the letter as 'a very constructive development' and pledged to work closely with the arboretum, the Department of Transport and Network Rail to progress the idea. He said: "With 200,000 visitors to the arboretum expected in the next 12 months, rising in five years' time to half a million visitors a year, an alternative means of transport to the overused A38 trunk road simply must be found. Lafarge's commitment to supporting the National Memorial Arboretum is to be applauded. I know that Lafarge are proud of what they are doing at Alrewas, from the extraction and production of building materials to restoring the site and

developing a long-term partnership with the National Memorial Arboretum, which has developed immensely over the years. I look forward to working closely with Lafarge Aggregates and the NMA on the revival of the Lichfield to Wychnor line. This will ensure even more people can enjoy it."

Future Events at the NMA

Tuesday 6th May 2008

Royal Tank Regiment Association, Nottingham Branch. Annual Service of Remembrance at 12.00 noon on-site at the RTR plot. Contact: Mr Brian Rogers (Hon Secretary) - 07740 631426.

Saturday 10th May 2008

Palestine Veterans Association Service, a combined event with Palestine Police and Palestine Veterans Association, to commemorate 60th anniversary of withdrawal from Palestine. For further information contact NMA - Tel: 01283 792 333.

Saturday 17th May 2008

Civil Defence Event to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the stand-down of the Civil Defence Corps and the Auxiliary Fire Service. For further information contact NMA - Tel: 01283 792 333.

The Eleventh Hussars Old Comrades - dedication of new 11th Hussars Memorial. For further information contact NMA - Tel: 01283 792 333.

Tuesday 20th May 2008

Royal Corps of Signals Dedication of Memorial at 12.00 noon - All Royal Signals Association members are welcome to apply for a ticket and should send their name, address and DOB to: rsa@royalsignals.mod.uk Contact: RSA Admin Officer on 01258 482090 or by email at: rsa@royalsignals.mod.uk RSA website: www.army.mod.uk/royalsignals/rsa

Thursday 22nd May 2008

A commemorative service will be held at the new Armed Forces Memorial, to honour the 55 personnel killed during the Balkan conflict, those who were injured and the many thousands who have served there throughout the 15 year deployment. The service will also reflect upon the contribution made by the British Armed Forces towards a more stable and secure environment within Bosnia-Herzegovina. For further information contact NMA - Tel: 01 283 792 333.

Saturday 24th May 2008

Royal Military Police – remembrance event. For further information contact NMA - Tel: 01 283 792 333.

Sunday 1st June 2008

Royal Marines Association – Service. For further information contact NMA - Tel: 01283 792 333.

Wednesday 4th June 2008

Avro Shackleton Association. Dedication of the Association's memorial at 2.00 pm in the Millennium Chapel, then on-site. Contact: Mr James Box on 01462 453315 or by email: box805@btinternet.com

Saturday 7th June 2008

Royal Military Police – remembrance event. For further information contact NMA - Tel: 01283 792 333.

Sunday, 15th June, 2008

RAF Boy Entrants Association. Relatives of deceased members to an act of remembrance in the Chapel and at the Memorial. For further information contact NMA - Tel: 01283 792 333.

Thursday 27th June 2008

Veterans Awareness Day. For further information contact NMA - Tel: 01283 792 333.

Sunday 29th June 2008

National Service Veterans Day – annual service and parade. For further information contact NMA - Tel: 01283 792 333.

Saturday 5th July 2008

Royal Artillery Association. Remembrance event - Annual Service. For further information contact NMA - Tel: 01283 792 333.

Sunday 27th July 2008

British Korean Veterans' Association Annual Service of Remembrance. The Volunteer Band of the Lancashire Artillery supplemented by musicians from the Lancashire Regiment in attendance. Details to be confirmed nearer to the date.

Saturday 30th August 2008

The Brotherhood of Veterans of the Greek Campaigns 1939-1945. Annual Service of Remembrance at 11.30 am on site. Contact: Mr Frank Gill - Tel: 0151 924 2712.

Saturday, 27th September 2008

HMS Bulwark, Albion & Centaur Association Chapel service and on-site dedication ceremony for tree and new plinth. Time: 11.15 am. Venue: Millennium Chapel and on-site at the Royal Naval Review. Contact: Mr. John Truscott - Tel: 02392 431150.

STOP PRESS - POSTAGE

Do you know that from 1st April, the cost of postage is going up considerably by 12 ½ % no less from 24p per stamp to 27p per stamp. The Branch postage bill last year was £704.80 and that in itself was an increase from £662.56 in 2006. A 12 ½ % increase this year will take our postage bill up to £792.90 approximately. Some members have already included a donation to Branch funds with their subs.

If those members that have not yet paid their subs could add a donation towards toward this massive increase in our costs, it would be most appreciated. And I will have to see what I can do to reduce the bill this year. Well that's all for now, look after yourselves and keep smiling.

Malcolm B

DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES



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Sunday 4 th May	2008	Service at Runneymede	Fri 3 rd -Mon 6 th Oct	2008	Ass.n Reunion & AGM
Thursday 8 th May	2008	Branch Night	Saturday 1 st November	2008	Midlands Festival of Rem
Sunday 11 th May	2008	Ded RAF Regt Chapel	Sunday 2 nd November	2008	B'ham Poppy Ball
Friday 16 th May	2008	Officers Din Club Rec	Sunday 9 th November	2008	Remembrance Sunday
Sunday 18 th May	2008	Tower of London Para	Tuesday 11 th November	08	Remembrance Day
Thursday 22 nd May	2008	Bosnia & Herz NMA	Thursday 13 th November	08	Branch Night
Sunday 1 st June	2008	Cosford Air Show	Sat 29 th -Sun 30 th Nov	2008	Birmingham Int Tattoo
Thursday 12 th June	2008	Branch Night	Sunday 30 th November	2008	St Andrew's Day
Monday 16th June	2008	20th Anniv of Branch	Thursday 11 th December	08	Branch Night

CHAIRMAN & MMTLdr

Ron Sharp
46 Lightwood Road
Yoxall, Burton on Trent
Staffordshire DE13 8QE
Tel No: 01543 472411
r.sharpe@orangehome.co.uk

VICE-CHAIRMAN AND PROPERTY AUDITOR

Fred Ringham
76 Lowbrook Lane
Tidbury Green
Solihull
West Midlands B90 1QS
Tel: 01564 824 221

PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER/SOCIAL SEC

Michael Beard
21 Abingdon Road
Bloxwich, Walsall
West Midlands
WS3 2SX
Tel: 01922 491453

PRESIDENT

Peter Swash
'Mdina' Rowney Green Lane
Rowney Green
Redditch
Worcestershire, B48 7QF
Tel No: 01527 60870
peter.swash1@btinternet.com

SECRETARY

Malcolm A Baldwin
61 Pear Tree Crescent
Solihull Lodge, Shirley
Solihull, B90 1LE
Tel: 0121 608 3791
Baldwinmalc@blueyonder.co.uk

MINUTE SECRETARY

Ken Bridgwood
29 Claverdon Drive
Great Barr
Birmingham
West Midlands, B45 5HR
Tel: 0121 357 4242
Kenbridgwood@aol.com

BRANCH QUARTERMASTER

Tom Magee
11 Pavilion Avenue
Smethwick, Warley
West Midlands, B67 6LA
Tel: 0121 429 5635 e-mail
rockape2005@tiscali.co.uk

VICE-PRESIDENT AND RBL LIAISON OFFICER

Dave Gooding
31 Queen Elizabeth Road
Rubery, Rednal
Birmingham, B45 0NE
Tel: 0121 604 4637
legionaire@blueyonder.co.uk

TREASURER

Tom Magee
11 Pavilion Avenue
Smethwick, Warley
West Midlands, B67 6LA
Tel: 0121 429 5635 e-mail
rockape2005@tiscali.co.uk

WELFARE OFF/STD B

John Docker
151 Calder Drive
Walmley
Sutton Coldfield
West Midlands
B76 1GG
Tel: 0121 351 5580

RESEARCH CO-ORD/ LINK-UP DATA BASE

Hughie Cooper
11 Sandringham Close
Baswich Lane
Stafford, ST17 0AB
Tel: 01785 242269
loz@monarchs.freeserve.co.uk

FINANCIAL AUDITORS

Trevor and Joan Round
45 Sandfields Road
Sedgley
Dudley
West Midlands
DY3 3LB
Tel: 01902 672597

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