



ROYAL AIR FORCE REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

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BIRMINGHAM BRANCH

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**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: 230
AUGUST 2008**

THE BIRMINGHAM BRANCH NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 230 AUGUST 2008

Dear Readers.

Due to an early July holiday, I had to get the July newsletter out earlier than usual, and as the 66th Anniversary Commemoration Service of the RAF Regiment at the National Memorial Arboretum and the Memorial Garden was held on 28th June, it was too late for me to get the event into the July newsletter, but here is the information now. Although I wasn't there, I understand it was a first-class day and our thanks are due to the RAF Regiment Secretary and everyone else responsible for the excellent organisation of the event.

66th Anniversary and Memorial Commemoration Service

Ron Sharp and Fred Ringham had previously spent several days getting the Garden "shipshape and Bristol fashion" in preparation for the big day. Ron had also taken down the two sets of Crossed Rifles and the Cross - carved for us by Chris Steel - taken them home, re-varnished them and then took them back to the Garden and put them back up.

It was a great day for the Corps and for the Association as the current Queen's Colour for the RAF Regiment was paraded at the event for the last time, before it was to be laid up on 11th July at the Royal International Air Tattoo at RAF Fairford, Gloucestershire. And in addition, for the first time at this event, 40 Trainee Regiment Gunners were also on parade.

The programme consisted of a Thanksgiving Service in the Millennium Chapel at 11.00 a.m., followed by a Memorial Service in the RAF Regiment Memorial Garden. The Commandant General Air Commodore Steven Abbott CBE MPhil BA RAF was the principal VIP and the Services were conducted by the Rev William Downie, Chaplain to the RAF Regt Association, assisted by the Rev Canon Roger Scott the Birmingham Branch Padre.

Those attending were asked to arrive from 10.00 a. m. and to be seated in the Chapel by 10.45 a.m. Birmingham Branch members Ron Sharp, Fred Ringham, Ralph Dean, Roy Thomas and Peter Coles acted as Stewards for the day.

A Welcome Desk was positioned just inside the front entrance for the Stewards to welcome everyone and hand out programmes of the event. The Welcome Desk was manned by Roy, Ralph and for a time Ron who had other things to do as well. Peter assisted at the Welcome Desk for a time as well, until Ron asked him to standby at the entrance to the chapel to organise admissions. In the meantime, Fred was busy putting reserved seat signs on the seats outside the chapel. Refreshments were available in the Visitors' Centre Arbor Restaurant on a pay-as-you-dine basis. There is no charge for entrance to the NMA but there is a £2.00 charge for car parking and because there was another event on at the NMA on 28th June, a Park-and-Ride system was in operation. The Chapel Service began at 11.00 a.m., with the daily recorded message by a BBC News Reader Peter Donaldson, who gives an introduction and explanation of the origins of the Two Minute Silence. This is followed by a bugle playing the Last Post, then a Two Minute Silence during which Peter Donaldson recites the Kohima Prayer; *"when you go home, tell them of us and say, for your tomorrow we gave our today."*

Then the bugle plays Reveille and the broadcast finishes. The bugle calls were recorded by the band of the Royal Marines. The event ended at about 12.20 p.m., with those attending having the rest of the day to tour the NMA, especially the new National Armed Forces Memorial unveiled by HM The Queen in 2007.

The Standards on parade under the direction of the Parade Marshall Tom Monteith, were the Queen's Colour for the RAF Regiment carried by the Queen's Colour Bearer Flight Lieutenant A Gaskell BSc RAF, escorted by the Queen's Colour Warrant Officer A Patterson.

The Association National Standard was paraded by the National Standard Bearer John Smart; the Birmingham Branch Standard was paraded by our Standard Bearer John Docker. The Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Branch Standard, the South and West Wales Branch Standard and the Association of RAF Regiment

Warrant Officers and Non-Commissioned Officers Standard were also paraded.

Chapel Programme

Everyone was asked to stand for the marching in and out of the Queen's Colour and the Association's Standards

- 10.45 a.m. All to be seated in Chapel
 10.55 a.m. Marching in of Association Standards
 10.58 a.m. Marching in of the Queen's Colour for the RAF Regiment
 11.00 a.m. Act of Remembrance
 11.03 a.m. Service Commenced
 c11.35 a.m. Chapel Service ends
 Marching out of the Queen's Colour for the RAF Regiment
 Marching out of Association Standards
 c11.45 a.m. Marchers form up behind the Queen's Colour and Standards
 Move to the RAF Regiment Memorial Garden
 Positioning of the Queen's Colour and Standards
 Formal photographs
 11.55 a.m. RAF Regiment Memorial Commemoration Service
 11.58 a.m. Last Post with Two Minute Silence
 12.00 noon Reveille
 Benediction
 The National Anthem
 C12.05 p. m. Garden Service Ends
 Informal photographs
 Dispersal and lunch (as appropriate)

Chapel Order of Service

Call to Worship

The First Hymn

“Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus

Prayer

First Bible Reading

Read by the Commandant General RAF Regiment

Address

Second bible Reading

Read by the Chairman of the RAF Regiment

Association

Offering

The RAF Regiment Prayer

The Second Hymn

“Onward Christian Soldiers”

Benediction

Garden Order of Service

- Introduction and RBL Prayer
 Last Post and Two Minute Silence
 Reveille
 Wreath Laying
 Reading Prayer and Benediction
 National Anthem
 Informal Photographs
 Dispersal
 Lunch available in Arbor Restaurant

Even the weather was kind for the day for although it was very windy, it was dry and sunny, always a bonus at the NMA. I also understand from the following letter copied to me by the RAF Regiment Secretary that the Commandant General was very impressed, that the event is now fully on his radar for the future, and that we should expect to see The Queen's Colour and a contingent of Trainee Gunners each year now as a routine. Next year the 28th of June falls on a Sunday, so please put it into your diaries.

From Air Commodore S Abbott CBE MPhil BA RAF, Commandant General Royal Air Force Regiment

ANNUAL RAF REGIMENT SERVICE OF COMMEMORATION

Most Corps members, both past and present, will be aware that a new and impressive Memorial to the RAF Regiment was unveiled in 2001 at the National Memorial Arboretum (NMA), in Alrewas, Staffordshire. It remains one of the most impressive and inspiring memorials at the NMA and, with public attendance there quadrupling in the past year since the opening of the National Armed Forces Memorial by HM The Queen in 2007, it is viewed by literally hundreds of thousands of visitors each year.

The various RAF Regiment associations maintained an annual re-dedication Service there until 2006, when the new, all-embracing Regimental Association was formed and the first truly RAF Regiment Service of Commemoration at the NMA was held in June 2007, on the occasion of the Corps' 65th anniversary. The annual date to observe the commemoration was decreed as the 28th June - the day after National Veterans' Day to capitalise upon the NMA preparations during veterans' Week - and this is now firmly in the Corps Calendar. I have been

privileged to attend both the 2007 and 2008 events and have been impressed with the support provided by the Association and, not least, the efforts of the RAF Regiment Memorial Maintenance Team, shouldered in the main by members of the Birmingham Branch of the Association. In 2008, I authorized the attendance of The Queen's Colour for the RAF Regiment and also encouraged the attendance of a contingent of Trainee Gunners from Training Wing at RAF Honington. Both elements were undoubtedly exceptionally well received by our veterans and drew unanimous praise and appreciation.

I believe that the Annual RAF Regiment Service of Commemoration represents and supports the very best of Regiment's *esprit de corps*, in that it celebrates two very powerful symbols of the Corps: The Queen's Colour and the Memorial. The event is clearly in the Association's annual calendar and I believe that it should equally be so in the serving Regiment's programme.

To this end, I wish The Queen's Colour to be paraded at the event annually, and that a contingent of Trainee Gunners be provided to route-line and participate in the Memorial Service as part of their Force Development and induction into the Corps. I would also wish to see, in future, a higher level of attendance by the serving element, particularly senior staffs and unit commanders.

I appreciate fully the demands upon our peoples' time, especially over weekend periods when some events will fall; however, I consider the Annual RAF Regiment Service of Commemoration to be important for both our veterans and our serving element alike. The next event will be held on Sunday 28th June 2009 and I ask everyone to place a marker in their diaries for that day.

<Original signed>S Abbott Air Cdre ACOS FP

Branch Appeal

Goodies for the Military Ward

It is most important that 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. We are now regularly sending "goodies" to the lads in Selly Oak Hospital. Through Roy Thomas and Ralph Dean we have regular contact every month with the military ward nursing staff. At each visit they are asked for their next request so

we have a continuing need for regular donations. Last month the Norfolk Branch contributed a magnificent £200.00 to the Appeal. 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" for we would like you all to consider supporting this appeal. Colin Clarke is Secretary of the Norfolk Branch (and an ex-Chairman of the Birmingham Branch) and in his letter to me regarding their £200.00 donation he says;

"Dear Malcolm. On reading your article in the newsletter about your Military Ward Appeal I wrote about it in a Norfolk Branch newsletter. The response was such that our branch members decided to make the Military Ward Appeal our Branch "Good Cause" for 2008 and to raise money for it at our June BBQ Tombola.

I am pleased to tell you that the money from the Tombola, a "whip round" by members of Louise's Oulton Broad Art Circle during a painting evening held at our home and donations from Norfolk Branch members amounted to £200.00. A cheque for this amount has been sent to your Branch Treasurer Tom Magee. We know the money will be put to good use for necessities and comfort for our servicemen and women at Selly Oak hospital. Keep up the good work. Kindest regards from all at Norfolk. Colin Clarke, Branch Secretary".

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. Please do not send money directly to the Military Ward as they do not have the means to use it but 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.

Plans for a New Military Ward

Anyone who has recently visited the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham will know that a major new hospital is being built on the site, and a ward solely for the use of injured servicemen and women will be included in the

new hospital. The ward, which will be able to accommodate up to 30 injured military staff, will be a feature of the Birmingham New Hospital, in Edgbaston, due to open in 2010. Military personnel are currently treated at the city's Selly Oak Hospital, the site of the Royal Centre for Defence Medicine (RCDM). Derek Twigg, the Under Secretary of State for Defence, said the new hospital would offer "outstanding facilities" for military patients. He also said; "The military ward in Birmingham's new hospital further demonstrates our commitment to providing the best possible care for military casualties. We will build on the success of the current ward at Selly Oak as we move to the new hospital at Edgbaston".

The RCDM, together with the University Hospital Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust, will offer single rooms or four-bed rooms on the new ward with more nursing staff than normally found on an NHS ward. It will offer a quiet room for relatives, a communal space for patients to gather together and a dedicated physiotherapy area. Patients are principally casualties returning from Afghanistan and Iraq. The new hospital is to be home to the largest single-floor critical care unit in the world, with 100 beds.

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. If any non-member of the Birmingham Branch would like to receive our newsletters, please send a cheque for £7.00 as above, to the Branch Treasurer Tom Magee.

NEWS OF THE RAF REGIMENT



FROM THE RAF REGIMENT SECRETARY

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

DEATH NOTICES:

ELLIOT D. Former RAF Regt LAC Gnr D Elliot has died on 23 Jun 08, following a short illness. He joined the RAF as a National Serviceman in 1955 and served with 66 Sqn RAF Regt in Aden until his discharge in 1957. A

staunch supporter of the Southend Branch of the RAF Regt Assoc, his funeral was held at the Southend Crematorium on 3 Jul 08 at 15.20. Family flowers only were requested but donations may be made to the Heart Foundation c/o the Funeral Directors, Stibbards, 1032 London Road, Leigh on Sea Essex SS9 3ND. He is survived by his wife, Lucy, to whom the Corps extends its sincere condolences.

CHAPMAN KEN. Former RAF Regt Sqn Ldr Ken Chapman, born 19 Jul 15, has died at the age of 93 on 29 Jun 08. Commissioned on 19 Aug 44, he was promoted to Sqn Ldr on 1 Jan 54 and retired on 29 Sep 57. He lived in France for a number of years, before residing in the RAFA Sussexdown Home until his death. He was a member of the Sussex Branch of the RAF Regt Assoc. A Humanist Service was held at Tribes Undertakers, 130 Broadwater Road, Worthing, BN14 8HU, on Wed 9 Jul 08 at 14.00. The Wake was at the Sussexdown Home. He is survived by his son, to whom the Corps extends its sincere condolences.

NEWHAM TONY. Former RAF Regt gnr Tony Newham has died. He was a former member of the Bromley Branch of the RAF Regt Assoc. The funeral was held on 16 Jun 08 in Barnet. No further details are known. The Corps extends its deepest sympathy to the surviving family.

RANDALL TREVOR. Former RAF Regt SNCO Trevor Norton Randall died on 16 Jun 08. One of the founder members of the RAF Regt in Feb 42, he served in Egypt, Malaysia, and went ashore at Juno Beach on D-Day + 1. Towards the end of his service in 1945, he served in Iraq. He is survived by his widow (name not known) and his son Terence, to whom the Corps extends its deepest sympathy. No further details are known.

WARRINGTON JAMES. Former RAF Regt Sgt James Warrington, born 14 Aug 30, died on 16 Jun 08. Enlisted 7 Apr 54. Last tour of duty was with 37 Sqn RAF at Catterick from Sep 69-Oct 70, when he remustered to RAF Admin Trade. Served until 14 Jul 77. His wife, Mrs M J Warrington, to whom the Corps extends its deepest sympathy, survives him. No further details are known.

POCOCK GORDON. Former RAF Regt Sgt Gordon William Pocock, born 19 Apr 22, died on 11 Jul 08 aged 86. He served in France,

Belgium, Holland, Germany, Denmark on 2740 and 2829 Sqns RAF Regt, and at RAF Gravesend and Biggin Hill during the period 1942-47. The funeral took place at Woodvale Crematorium, Brighton, at 13.00 on 22 Jul 08. No further details are known.

POCOCK DONALD. Former CG RAF Regt, AVM Donald POCOCK CBE RAF (Retd), born 5 Jul 20, died on 30 Jul 08 at the age of 88, following a long period of failing health. He was commissioned on 27 Jul 41, was the Comdt RAF Regt Depot, Catterick, from 1967-70, promoted to Air Cdre on appointment as DGD(RAF) 1970-73 and was promoted to AVM on 1 Jan 73, on assuming the appointment as CG RAF Regt. He was ADC to HM The Queen from 1967-70. He retired on 5 Jul 75. Funeral details are awaited but it is believed that it will be a private, family affair on 8 Aug 08. The Corps extends its sincere condolences to the family.

CROCKER FRANKLIN. Former RAF Regt officer Fg Off Franklin CROCKER, born 13 Dec 22, died on 27 Jul 08 aged 85. He served from 1942, initially as an LAC on Bofors in the South-East of England, before being commissioned. He served in Aden before retirement in 1947. The funeral was held at 1230 on Wed 13 Aug at St Johns the Evangelist Church, Stratheden Road, Blackheath, London, SE3 7TH. Family flowers only were requested but donations (ideally including Gift Aid certification) may be made to the RAF Regt Fund via Mr Jeffrey Crocker at 9 Marlborough Lane, Charlton, London, SE7 7DE. Letters of condolence may also be sent to that address. The Corps extends its sincere condolences to the family.

McGREGOR HUGH. Former RAF Regt SAC Hugh McGREGOR has died. He enlisted at RAF West Kirby on 27 Jan 57 and served at various units including RAF Stations Catterick, Weeton and Felixstowe until discharged on 16 Jan 60. The funeral was held at Daldowie Crematorium, Lanarkshire, on 18 Jun 08 and the Service, conducted by the RAF Regt Assoc Chaplain, The Rev Willie Downie, was supported by members of the Scottish Branch, RAF Regt Assoc. Letters of condolence may be sent to his widow, Mrs Anne McGregor, at 30 Blarmhor Road, Caol, Fort William, PH33 7HT. The Corps extends its sincere condolences to the family.

STREET JOHN. Former RAF Regt gnr John STREET, born 8 Jan 32, died on 25 Jul 08 after a

long battle with cancer. Served from 1950-55 on both 15 and 26 Sqns RAF Regt. RAF Regt Assoc member (Essex Branch) since 2000. No further details are known and the funeral details are still awaited. The Corps extends its sincere condolences to the family.

WALKER BILL. Former RAF Regt gnr Bill WALKER has died. The funeral has already been held and no further details are currently available. The Corps extends its sincere condolences to any surviving family.

GENERAL NOTICES:

Presentation of the new RAF and RAF Regt Queen's Colours – 11 Jul 08

The Corps was graciously presented with its new Colour by HM The Queen, accompanied by HRH The Duke of Edinburgh, at RAF Fairford on 11 Jul 08. The RAF Regt provided the two Colour Escort Squadrons and Colour Parties and provided an immaculate and utterly professional parade for the 5000 attendees. Details and photographs should be in the next issue of Centurion.

MAJOR TV PROGRAMME DEPICTING RAF REGT HEROES

Central Television, which covers ITV in the Midlands and has the 2nd largest TV audience in the UK, was granted access to cover RAF heroism at home and on operations abroad. The result were seen on Central early in Aug 08 as part of a 10-part series, entitled 'Above and Beyond'.

The major contribution of the RAF Regt in protecting the airfield at Basra in Iraq was seen in the programme on Central TV on Aug 8 at 2000 and was repeated on Granada TV on Sept 4 at 2300. The programme also tells how 1 Sqn RAF Regt stubbornly refused to submit during an ambush by Iraqi insurgents at Al Waki market place. Despite withering firepower from more than a dozen rooftop locations after the Sqn came under a hail of gunfire that lasted 90 minutes, the gnrs fought their way out, carrying an injured comrade and another, LAC Martin Beard, who had been mortally wounded. The incident resulted in many bravery and leadership awards, including a Regt cpl – David Hayden - who received the first Military Cross (MC) awarded to an airman.

The programme also recounted how RAF Regt Flt Lt (now Sqn Ldr) Matt Carter risked his life repeatedly in Afghanistan as a Forward Air

Controller embedded within 3 Para. In one incident, he was part of a force being dropped off by helicopter at night to capture a high-value Taliban leader, but the Chinook pilot had to take off, owing to heavy incoming fire, after just 20 seconds with Carter still onboard. Without regard for himself, Carter jumped out of the Chinook from 15 ft in darkness, landed in a ditch and instantly began directing fire onto Taliban positions. He gallantly and exposed himself repeatedly during all contacts with the enemy at a very high risk of being killed. Again, he was awarded an MC.

Naming of the Jimmy James Hangar at RAF Honington

RAF Honington will formally name a hangar after the late Sqn Ldr 'Jimmy' James MC on 12 Sep 08. The Guest of Honour will be Baroness Harris of Richmond and it is hoped that Mrs Madge James and a number of dignitaries will also attend. The ceremony will take place late-morning and will be followed by a lunch in the Offrs Mess.

The RAF Regt Sec is keen to locate former RAF Regt offrs who served with Sqn Ldr James, or who were incarcerated with him in Stalag Luft III Prison Camp at Sagan in Poland, from which the legendary Great Escape through Tunnel 'Harry' was staged in 1944. Other representation by both IX Sqn Assoc and the RAF Regt Assoc is being sought separately. If you wish to attend the ceremony on 12 Sep 08, or know of potential attendees, please contact the RAF Regt Sec.

Centurion Journal

The coverage of the Queen's Colour Presentation will delay the publication of the next Centurion journal; issue no 25, to late-Aug/early Sep 08. Any inconvenience is regretted.

Regimental Secretary - Out-of-Office

The RAF Regt Sec will be out-of-office from 18-25 Jul incl on leave. Please minimise on communications to him during this time to prevent the electronic mail (incl voicemail) systems from overloading.

RAF Regt Commemorative Painting - 'THE BATTLE OF AL WAKI - 2007'

You will no doubt be aware of the ferocious fire fight involving No1 Squadron RAF Regiment and Iraqi militant forces in Al Waki Market, Basra, in July 2007. Sadly, LAC Martin Beard was Killed in Action, but the Corps

acquitted itself magnificently despite overwhelming odds.

The action was, of course, recognized subsequently by the award of a Military Cross to Corporal David Hayden and a Mention in Despatches to Senior Aircraftman Ben Wharton. The Commandant General has agreed that this notable engagement should be commemorated and recorded for future generations of the Corps. We have duly approached Mr Stuart Brown, an outstanding artist who specializes in military subjects and is best known for his Special Forces subjects. He has also undertaken commissions for the Jordanian Royal Family.

His high quality, dynamic style promises us a truly impressive piece of fine art of which we can all be proud. Indeed, even the preliminary sketches provided by Mr Brown are quite superb. The total cost for the oil painting and some 600 limited-edition prints, will be around £7,750; the prints will of course provide a subsequent source of revenue for the RAF Regiment Fund.

To secure the sum required to commission the piece, I ask you, on behalf of the Commandant General, to consider making personal or unit/branch contributions.

Cheques may be made payable to '*RAF Regiment Fund*', and sent to: *Al Waki Painting, c/o The RAF Regiment Secretary, RAF Honington, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, IP31 1EE*. It is intended that the painting will be unveiled sometime in Sep/Oct 08 and that the prints will be available in good time for Christmas!

We have an opportunity to acquire a fitting and dynamic commemoration, of outstanding quality, that will pay tribute not only to this specific engagement, but to all the members of our Corps who continue to serve their country so magnificently and with such regularity on operations. Donations to date have been fairly slow; we do hope that you will feel able to support this exciting and worthwhile project.

50th Anniversary of the Founding of the RAF Church of St Clement Danes - 15 Oct 08.

A Service of Thanksgiving will be held at St Clement Danes RAF Church in London on Wed 15 Oct 08. Details will be issued as and when known.

Letters to Operationally Deployed Units in Iraq and Afghanistan

Many subscribers and Assoc members have requested the mailing address of the RAF

Regt Sqns deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan, so that letters and 'goody bags' can be sent. Correspondence may be sent to:

- For Iraq: Res RAF Regt Fd Sqn, Basra COB, OP TELIC, BFPO 641

- For Afghanistan: Res RAF Regt Fd Sqn, Kandahar Air Station, OP HERRICK, BFPO 772. Items may also be sent to the Regt staffs on the Force Protection Wing HQs (FP Wg HQ), at the same addresses.

Return of II Sqn RAF Regt from Iraq in Sep 08

II Sqn RAF Regt will return from Iraq in Sep 08. If you feel supportive of our men on active and intensive operations, please consider buying the returning men a bottle of 'II Field Airborne Rock-Ape Ale' from the Red Rat Craft Brewery, with proceeds going towards the 'HELP FOR HEROES' campaign.

A bottle of II Field Airborne Rock-Ape Ale costs £2, of which 50p will go to the '*Help for Heroes*' charity. With 150 extremely thirsty gnrs on the Sqn, they are hoping to raise a modest £1,200 to wet their particularly dry whistles! If you feel that you would like to contribute even the cost of one bottle, they would be pleased to receive your donation.

Donations may be made on-line at www.redratcraftbrewery.co.uk (and then click on the II Squadron link) or by cheque (payable to 'Red Rat Craft Brewery') and sent to: II Field Airborne Rock-Ape Ale, II Sqn RAF Regt, RAF Honington, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, IP31 1EE. Please remember to include your name and address with your donation, so that the Sqn may inform you on how much they raised for charity.

Rocks in a Hard Place

The trials and tribulations of II Sqn RAF Regt on operations in Iraq are being covered in a rolling video via the following Internet links. It is all part of the on-going and coordinated recruitment drive for the Corps which has proved very effective and manning balance within a relatively short time is predicted, something that our sister Army regiments can only dream of. www.rafcareers.com/frontline
www.youtube.com/view_play_list?p=428440ECE5FE84D0

THANKSGIVING SERVICE TO FALLEN REGT PERSONNEL

A Service of Thanksgiving is being planned to commemorate the lives of SAC gnrs

Livingstone and Thompson of 3 Sqn RAF Regt and 504 Sqn RAux AF, who were Killed in Action in Afghanistan on 13 Apr 08. Likely date and venue is 27 Nov 08 at Peterborough Cathedral.

Details will be announced shortly, once 3 Sqn have returned from operations. Maximum Regt attendance will be encouraged.

CORPS DIARY DATES:

(Updated - not exhaustive - contributions welcome)

10 Sep 08 - Op BANNER Commemoration - St Paul's Cathedral, London (Provisional).

12 Sep 08 – Naming of the Jimmy James' Hangar – RAF Honington.

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.

15 Oct 08 - 50th Anniversary of St Clement Danes' Church of the RAF, London.

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

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

28 Jun 09 - RAF Regt Memorial Commemoration - NMA Alrewas (Veterans Week).

From the Branch Secretary

In several of these newsletters, I have published articles about the new book of the history of the RAF Regiment "Constant Vigilance" - The RAF Regt in the Burma Campaign by Dr Nigel Warwick. This book marked the first - or Volume 1 - in a series of similar volumes aimed at covering the Corps' short but rich history.

Dr Warwick is currently working on Volume 2, the History of the RAF Armoured Cars

in the Middle East and preparations are well under way for Volume 3, the History of the RAF Regiment in the Mediterranean theatre during the Second World War. Volume 4 will cover the UK, Home Defence 1942-1945 and North-West Europe from D-Day to the occupation of Germany.

Without the sterling and sustained efforts of people like Group Captain Kingsley Oliver and now Dr Warwick, we probably would not have any of them and now Dr Warwick needs our help.

Hughie Cooper our Branch Research Coordinator has given Dr Warwick a lot of information and through Hughie, Dr Warwick has asked me if I can help too, initially with names of Birmingham Branch members who served in the Second World War, and if these members would mind if he contacted them for their memories, to assist him in writing the further volumes of our Regimental history. I have told him that we have quite a lot of them and with that, he has asked me to publish a questionnaire for members to fill in. The information that he requires is on:

1. The RAF Armoured Car Companies or Squadrons in the Middle East 1921-1953.
2. The RAF Regiment in North Africa, the Middle East, the Mediterranean and Italy 1942-1946, including Ground Defence 1940-41.
3. The RAF Regiment in the UK and North-West Europe 1942-46 including Ground Defence 1939-41 - the Battle of France and the Battle of Britain.

He is looking for reminiscences, diaries, anecdotes and memories and photos of significant events of a personal nature which will be interwoven with the official accounts. I have told him that I am sure that all our members would be pleased to help if at all possible and with your permission, I would like to pass on the contact details of members that served in the Second World War and any other member that Dr Warwick would like to correspond with. If any of you do not want me to pass on your contact details, please let me know by 30th August and I will ensure that your details are not passed on.

THE RAF REGIMENT FUND

In last June's newsletter I published an appeal to you all to join the RAF Regiment Fund and so far I've only had two requests for Application Forms. I'm sure that when the two members that have now joined the RAF Regiment Fund read "Centurion", The Journal of the Royal Air Force Regiment, they will be more than happy with it, for it is a first class magazine and well worth the £12.00 Annual Subscription. If anyone else would like to join let me know and I'll send you an Application form. And if you join the RAF Regiment Fund, you will not only receive the magazine, you will also be helping the lads with their adventure training. So come on lads, think again about joining the Fund.

Regiment Gunners head for Afghanistan

It is a scene that is becoming all too common for our troops in Afghanistan. A routine patrol turns into disaster as an armoured vehicle hits a crudely-made Taliban roadside bomb, causing horrific injuries to the military personnel inside. But for members of a battle-scarred RAF Regiment, it was a vital training exercise yesterday as they prepared for one of their most challenging deployments to date. Less than a year after returning from a tour of Iraq in which they lost four comrades, more than 160 gunners from 1 Squadron RAF Regiment, RAF Honington, took part in their final mock battle before six months of protecting Nato forces at Kandahar airbase in Afghanistan.

Four months of intensive training came to a head at the Stanford Training Area, near Thetford, last month as personnel dealt with the aftermath of a mock explosion involving a roadside mine.

The lowland forest and heathland of Breckland is a long way from the mountainous terrain of Afghanistan, but three real-life amputees with fake blood were used to make the scenario as realistic as possible as the squadron was tested on the realities of being on the frontline in the war-torn country. Gunners spoke of their concern, but also confidence about getting the job done. After their August deployment, they will have to contend with minus 20C temperatures during the Kandahar winter nights.

News of the deployment of 1 Squadron RAF Regiment comes after 13 members of the British Armed Forces were killed in the country in

June - the second-highest death toll since operations began in November 2001. Squadron Leader Lee Morgan, officer commanding 1 Squadron RAF Regiment, said morale was "high" within the unit, despite the losses during their last operation in Basra, Iraq. he also said; "We know what the threat is in Afghanistan. We have been operating as a regiment there for two years, but we are not complacent. We know the Taliban are resourceful and constantly evolving their methods and we are constantly evolving our training to make sure we are the best prepared we can be."

Last month's exercise was the culmination of four months of work with the RAF Regiment Training Wing involving basic soldiering skills, weapons and vehicle training, and combat first aid. Squadron Leader Morgan added: "It is true that we are a busy regiment and busy across defence. We are returning to operations in Afghanistan just under a year from operations in Iraq and the only way we can deal with that is to address the quality-of-life issues and look after the men and families well when they are home. Unfortunately we find ourselves in another theatre, but this is what we signed up for and we are prepared for that." Sergeant Rob Williams, of 1 Squadron RAF Regiment, added that the unit had become "tighter" and "more united" since their tour of Basra airbase last year, in which Senior Aircraftmen Matthew Caulwell, 22, Peter McFerran, 24, Christopher Dunsmore, 29, and Leading Aircraftman Martin Beard, 20, were killed.

He added that colleagues in Kandahar, Afghanistan, were dealing with increased attacks from Taliban rockets, improvised explosive devices and suicide attacks. "We are expecting it to be very tough and if it is not, it is a bonus," he said. "It is a worry because we are taking young out lads to Afghanistan and as commanders we do worry for them. You only have to be unlucky once, but the training prepares you very well and we are all confident in the men we are taking out there."

I have had the following e-mail from Squadron Leader Bob Cargill who we met at the NMA last February. Bob is asking for our support when they have their Home-Coming Parade through Stamford on Tuesday 2nd September, so come on lads, let's see what we can do.

Return of 1 Force Protection Wing from Afghanistan

Malcolm. As we are approaching the final month of our tour, I thought I would re-establish contact following the outstanding hosting you provided in February at the National Memorial Arboretum and lunch afterwards. We have had a challenging 5 months so far, not least the tragic loss of our two dear colleagues and the wounding of a further three, one of which is currently recovering in Selly Oak Hospital from the most recent Improvised Explosive Device Strike. We pray that our Gunners remain safe but this will not divert us from our task of assuring the maintenance of air operations in Southern Afghanistan and the protection of over 13 000 people at Kandahar Airfield.

We will be celebrating our return with a Home-Coming Parade through Stamford on the morning of Tuesday 2nd September. We are just finalising the details, which you will be able to obtain through Squadron Leader Jan Burton who I have circulated. This parade is a key part in ensuring that the troops feel what they have done and the sacrifices they have made are valued by the local community. We would welcome your support in ensuring that the parade route is well populated and perhaps look forward to meeting with you on the day. Bob. R J CARGILL, Squadron Leader, Chief of Staff, No 1 Force Protection Wing, Kandahar Airfield, British Forces Post Office 772.

Regiment Squadron Leader Awarded MBE

A RAF Regiment Squadron Leader a Royal Air Force Regiment squadron on operations in Iraq and Afghanistan has been honoured by the Queen. Squadron Leader Tony Brown became an MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours list. Squadron Leader Brown aged 36 commanded 51 Squadron RAF Regiment for two years. In that time the Squadron, based at RAF Lossiemouth in Scotland, served in Basra in Iraq in 2006 and at the Nato base at Kandahar in Afghanistan last year.

The dangers were brought home when one of the gunners under Squadron Leader Brown was killed in action and two others were wounded during their six-month stint in Afghanistan. Squadron Leader Brown was praised for displaying inspirational leadership during the

deployment. He said: "I'm obviously extremely pleased to receive the honour but it is very much an honour for all the officers and men of 51 Squadron RAF Regiment as without their inspirational endeavour and sheer hard work we would not have been so successful.

The squadron was very much a team, including the support of all the families, without whom we would not achieve nearly as much. The squadron collectively performed magnificently and I remain extremely proud of them." Squadron Leader Brown's most recent posting is to Cyprus where he is serving as the military assistant to the Commander of British Forces Cyprus.

I was delighted to read the following article about free holidays for the Armed Forces sent to me by the Norfolk Branch Secretary Colin Clarke. What a magnificent offer, Pontin's deserve all our thanks and my thanks to Colin for sending me the article which was published in the Waveney Advertiser on 11th July 2008.

Free Holidays for Armed Forces

Pontin's Lowestoft is getting ready to welcome back members of Britain's Armed Forces as they take advantage of the holiday resort's donation of over 2,500 free holidays to the Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air force personnel. One of the UK's favourite family resorts, Pontin's has launched the "Back in Britain" campaign, approved by the Ministry of Defence by offering 4-day family packages to the troops at any of their resorts including Lowestoft, available through the Forces <discounts-mod.co.uk>. The campaign aims to reward the hard work of our Armed Forces which have risked their lives serving in the Middle East. Executive Chairman of Pontin's, Graham Parr said: "we want to express our support to the men and women of our magnificent Armed forces for their bravery and dedication at this most difficult time of demanding operational commitments".

HM The Queen Presents New Queen's Colours to the Royal Air Force and the Royal Air Force Regiment

On 11th July the Queen, accompanied by The Duke of Edinburgh, presented new Queen's Colours to the Royal Air Force in the United Kingdom and the Royal Air Force Regiment during a visit to the Royal International Air Tattoo

(RIAT) at RAF Fairford in Gloucestershire. RIAT is held annually in July at the Royal Air Force base, in Gloucestershire. It is the world's largest military air show, and has gained a well-earned reputation as one of the UK's top outdoor family events.

The parade began with a Royal Salute and a flypast by four Typhoons from RAF Coningsby, Lincolnshire. After the old Colours were marched off to 'Auld Lang Syne', the new Colours were consecrated, presented by The Queen and then paraded by the two escort squadrons from the Queen's Colour Squadron (63 Squadron Royal Air Force Regiment) augmented by 34 Squadron Royal Air Force Regiment and Royal Air Force Regiment squadrons. The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh arrived at RAF Fairford by helicopter where Her Majesty and His Royal Highness were met by the Chief of the Air Staff. Following the welcome the Royal party moved to the parade ground where the parade was formed up. The Parade consisted of 759 RAF personnel and over 60 Squadron Standards with music provided by an 80-piece Mass Band of the Royal Air Force.

Up to 5,000 invited guests, representing current serving members of the Royal Air Force and its various associations and charities viewed the parade from stands surrounding the parade ground. This was the largest parade of RAF personnel since The Queen conducted a 'Silver Jubilee' Review of the Royal Air Force at RAF Finningley in south Yorkshire in 1977. During the Royal salute, on The Queen's arrival at the parade, four Typhoon aircraft performed a flypast in formation. The Queen was then invited to review the Parade, which she did from the State Review Range Rover. The Colours presentation ceremony then followed, including a drumhead blessing service for the new Queen's Colours, followed by a short speech by The Queen.

The Parade then Marched Past Her Majesty with the new Queen's Colours. The Parade culminated in three cheers for The Queen. The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh then met Military and Civic dignitaries before attending a lunch hosted by the Royal Air Force Charitable Trust. Following lunch, The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh met with RAF personnel from every decade of the 90 years of the Royal Air Force. Her Majesty and His Royal Highness then viewed a 'RAF Mass Flypast' followed by a

'RAF Through the Aviation Ages Flying Display' to mark the 90th Anniversary of the Royal Air Force. The flypast involved 90 aircraft and was the largest since the flypast to mark the 50th anniversary of the Battle of Britain in 1990, when 168 aircraft flew over Buckingham Palace.

Details of the Queen's Colours

Queen's Colours are awarded by the Sovereign in recognition of Service achievement and they are presented by the Sovereign (or person nominated to act on the Sovereign's behalf). Nine Colours have been awarded to formations and establishments of the Royal Air Force and one to the Royal Auxiliary Air Force.

A Colour measures 3ft 9in square and is affixed to a pike 8ft 2in in length surmounted by a Royal Crown in gold. On 27th December 1947, King George VI signified approval to the award of Colours to the Royal Air Force in the United Kingdom, the Royal Air Force College Cranwell and No 1 School of Technical Training. Of the seven current Colours, the first Colour was presented by King George VI to the Royal Air Force College Cranwell on 6th July 1948.

The second was presented by The Queen (then HRH The Princess Elizabeth), acting on behalf of King George VI, to the Royal Air Force in the United Kingdom on 26th May 1951. The third Colour was presented by The Queen to No 1 School of Technical Training on 25th July 1952. Since then, The Queen has presented Colours to: the Royal Air Force Regiment on 17th March 1953; the Central Flying School on 26th June 1969; the Royal Auxiliary Air Force on 12th June 1989 and Royal Air Force Halton on 31st October 1997.

HELP FOR HEROES FUNDRAISING

On Saturday 21st June Mrs Judy Caulwell, the mother of SAC Mathew Caulwell who was killed in a rocket attack on Basrah Airport last July, organised a social evening in aid of the Help for Heroes Fund at the Tally Ho Conference and Banqueting Suite, Pershore Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham. It was a great success and Judy expects to have raised about £12,000 once all the money has been collected. The following prints have been very kindly given to her and she asked me if I knew of any specialist websites that they could be advertised on. I have given her several service and ex-service website addresses and also told her I would advertise these prints in my newsletters. The prints are:-

1. The Red Arrows with the signatures of the Crew - limited edition - donated by the Red Arrows in aid of Help for Heroes.
2. Army Air Corps Gazelle AH1 in action over Salisbury Plain and;
3. Vulcan in action - donated by David Whiteley MInstLM from Strategic Art & Framing in aid of Help for Heroes.

If anyone is interested in purchasing one of these prints, let me know and I'll find out if they are still available.

Our adopted ATC squadron 492 (Solihull) Squadron, Air Training Corps, continues to amaze us all with their expertise as the following article demonstrates.

Solihull Air Cadets Still Top Gun

For the second consecutive year 492 (Solihull) Squadron Air Training Corps have returned home from Warwickshire and Birmingham Wing's annual competition day with a host of trophies, including Best Overall Squadron. Over 40 of the unit's 77 cadets and staff attended the event at Bramcote Barracks near Nuneaton for the culmination of a year of competitive activities. Other trophies retained from 2007 include Best Drill Squadron, Best Overall Sports Squadron and Best Sports Cadet. New successes this year include Best Drill NCO, Best Academic Squadron and 1st place in Senior Modeling. Officer Commanding, Flight Lieutenant Elliot Hemes said "I'm immensely proud of the team and their fantastic achievements against some exceptional squadrons. We have our work cut out for us to attain the hat trick next year but we enjoy a challenge". To be part of 492 Squadron's winning team, visit <www.492aircadets.org>. Or call 0121 744 9362 for more information.

RAF REGIMENT PENNANTS

Through the contacts that Branch members Roy Thomas and Ralph Dean have made, we have now obtained a small quantity of high quality RAF Regiment Pennants in full colour. These are similar to pennants used by several other organisations such as Rotary and Inner Wheel. Our pennants are approximately A4 in size with an additional gold tasseled fringe. In the centre is a large RAF Regiment Badge with maroon and blue stripes in the background the same as those on the RAF Regiment tie. The cost of these pennants is £25.00 each. If anyone would like to

buy one of these pennants, please contact the Branch Treasurer Tom Magee. At the Tower of London Parade on Sunday 18th May, twenty-two members of the Branch and their ladies attended and afterwards as is usual, everyone was entertained in the Yeoman's Mess. One of these pennants was presented to the Chief Yeoman Warder John Keohane for display in the Mess. The Mess already has a most amazing display of military memorabilia and our pennant must surely add to this.

RAF REGIMENT PROPERTY BOOKLET

The RAF Regiment Secretary has e-mailed to me a marvelous 28-page RAF Regiment Property booklet. It's all in colour so it would be too expensive for me to print off and send you all a copy but it is well worth seeing. I've e-mailed a copy to all Birmingham Branch members that I have an e-mail address for and it is now also on the Association website <www.rafregt.org.uk>. If anyone who has an e-mail address and would like a copy let me have your e-mail address and I'll e-mail it to you as well. The RAF Regiment Fund maintains over 650 items of Regimental Property on behalf of the Corps. This booklet contains information on the most significant items that the Fund holds. The first item to be shown is a full colour picture of the painting of HM The Queen, Air Commodore-in-Chief, Royal Air Force Regiment. The portrait was commissioned by the Officers of the RAF Regiment to commemorate the Regiment's 25th Anniversary and is hung in the entrance hall of the Officer's Mess at RAF Honington. It contains photographs of all the Regimental silver of course, seven paintings, four presentation swords, trophies and many other items.

PROPOSED LADIES SECTION

For some time now Sue Magee the wife of our Branch Treasurer Tom, has been acting as an unofficial contact for anyone with a problem who would like to talk on the telephone to someone. Sue now feels that perhaps it is time that the Birmingham Branch set up an official Ladies Section not just to assist with taking telephone calls but to integrate our ladies into the life of the Branch. If any of our ladies are interested in being a part of this, please give Sue a call on 0121 429 5635. If enough of our ladies are interested then it should be possible to set up the Birmingham Branch Ladies Section.

NATIONAL MEMORIAL ARBORETUM (NMA) UPDATE A Book by Commander David Childs RN (Rtd)

David Childs, who is the Founder and first Chief Executive of the National Memorial Arboretum, has now written a book entitled "Growing Remembrance" about the history and struggles of the early years of the NMA. The story of the inspiration for, establishment and evolution of the National Memorial Arboretum is a fascinating one and already it has become the Nation's all year round focus for remembering and paying tribute to all who have served their country in both peace and war not only in the armed forces and merchant navy but in the emergency services as well. Planting began in 1997 and was supported by hundreds of organisations both serving and retired. Among the early memorials was a life-size wooded polar bear, for 49th Division, a grove of Irish trees for the Royal Irish Regiment, an Avenue of Chestnuts for the Police the RAF Regiment Memorial Garden and a Chapel of Peace and Forgiveness to mark the coming of the Millennium. Britain's war-widows had a rose-garden planted for them while the Far East Prisoners of War managed to fund a small museum to stand alongside a length of railway track brought back from the notorious Burma Railway. In October 2007, HM the Queen confirmed the importance of the site when she opened the Armed Forces Memorial to commemorate all service personnel lost on active service since the end of the Second World War. This is especially poignant given the on-going conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. The importance of the National Memorial Arboretum is well demonstrated by the growing number of stands and the steady increase in visitor numbers.

The book was published at the end of June and copies can be obtained at £15.99 plus £3.50 p&p total £19.49 from Pen and Sword Books.

Some time ago I was asked to support Len Owens in his attempt to get two flagpoles erected on his plot at the NMA, one to fly the Union Flag and one to fly the French Tricolour, to show the abiding and long-lasting appreciation that the surviving members of the Phantom Regiment have for those brave French men and women who gave their lives rather than betray Len and his

comrades. To my abiding regret, we were never able to get the NMA to let Len have his two flagpoles due to the flimsy excuse that – with the halyards whipping in the wind - the NMA was in danger of sounding like a marina. We could not understand their reasons and Len was never able to have his two flagpoles. Thank goodness we were able to erect our two flagpoles when David Childs was still responsible for the NMA. However, due to Len's determination, even at the age of 87, he has finally been able to pay tribute with a memorial to those brave villagers.

Veteran Len in tribute to brave villagers

A memorial to French villagers has been unveiled at the National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas. In 1944, Sergeant Len Owens was part of a communications unit behind enemy lines in the village of Moussey in occupied France. Sixty six years later the veteran, now aged 87, has battled back after a stroke to pay tribute to Moussey's unsung heroes, without whom he says he may never have made it home. A plaque marking their bravery has now been unveiled at the National Arboretum at Alrewas. At the age of 24, Mr Owens, of Walsall Road, Lichfield, was a wireless operator serving with the Phantom Regiment in support of an SAS unit hidden in the forests to arm and organise the French resistance. Mr Owens and his unit were sending information back to Britain from the area, to help arrange drops of supplies and ammunition. The soldiers were being chased by two German divisions and were waiting for the US army to catch them up at their hideaway in eastern France. "The Americans ended up stopping in Nancy," Mr Owens said, "We were left marooned." The Nazis rounded up 220 men and boys from Moussey and ordered them to reveal the whereabouts of the hidden unit.



Mr Owens said: "They were offered an amnesty in return for information about where we were in the forest. Not one stepped forward." All 220 villagers were marched off to concentration camps – and 140 of them would never return. To this day Moussey is still known as the Valley of the Widows. Four years ago Mr Owens, who lost three friends from his unit in Moussey, devoted himself to building a special garden at the National Memorial Arboretum in their memory. Now the spot also pays homage to the bravery and sacrifice of the French civilians who paid the ultimate price for their silence. Plaques commemorating the villagers were unveiled at the Arboretum on Sunday watched by two descendants of the Moussey villagers who had travelled especially for the ceremony. "There will have been other situations like this in France which are just not known about in this country," said widower Mr Owens. "So I decided to have the names of the 140 villagers become part of the memorial, as well as those of my three mates and 31 SAS killed by the Nazis. It's about time this country knew about what went on in Moussey and the sacrifices these people made – they were just ordinary citizens. It could well be that I am alive because of them. I had a stroke a while back and my short term memory is shot to pieces. But I will never forget what happened back then."

GHQ Liaison Regiment

The Phantom Regiment

The Phantom Regiment had its origins in 1939 as the No 3 British Air Mission in France. Together with the Belgian General Staff, its role was to report back information about the allied forward positions from Belgian GHQ to the Advanced Air Striking Force HQ so as to pinpoint the changing locations of "bomb lines. The codename for these Missions was classified by themselves as 'Phantom', which later became an

official designation. After the Dunkirk evacuation, the unit was re-formed as No 1 GHQ Reconnaissance Unit. In January 1941, the Reconnaissance Corps was established and Phantom was reclassified as GHQ Liaison Regiment to avoid confusion. Phantom recruited men with various skill-sets – linguists, drivers and mechanics and undertook rigorous training in wireless communication and cipher. Deployed as Squadrons in North West Europe, South East Europe, North Africa and Italy, the Regiment's role was to provide collection, passage and dissemination of real-time information on the progress of battle back to Corps HQ. Phantom information was obtained by patrols, either embedded with other formations or by specially-directed missions by individual Army HQs. A Squadron GHQ Liaison Regiment, under the command of Second Army, consisted of a Squadron HQ (SHQ) and a number of Patrols one per Corps and a further ten further forward of Corps). Each patrol consisted of an officer, an NCO and up to 9 other ranks.

They were typically equipped with Norton motorcycles, Jeeps, Morris 15cwt trucks and White M3 A1 Scout cars and carried a 107 Receiver, 52 and 19 sets. Some patrols undertook parachute drops with the SAS to provide communications with SAS Brigade HQ. During Operation Market Garden, in September 1944, the only communication with the surrounded airborne troops at Arnhem was from a Phantom patrol. This communication included the famous, desperate, message from General Urquhart that "...unless physical contact is made with us early 25 Sept...consider it unlikely we can hold out long enough". Two Phantom officers were subsequently awarded the Military Cross for maintaining these vital communications during the operation.

Future Events at the NMA

Saturday 30th August 2008

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

Saturday 13th September 2008

TA100 Armed Forces Memorial Parade and Service at 12.30 pm for 2.00 pm. The Royal British Legion and Regimental Association Standard and Guidon Bearers. Contact: Mr Bob Rankin - Tel: 01782 444246.

Sunday 14th September 2008

Ton Class Association. Ceremony 11.45 am for 12.00 noon. to unveil plaque to founder-President, Vice Admiral Sir John Cox KCB. At the Ton Class Memorial Contact: Mr P Down Tel: 01449 721 235.

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.

The 317 Mechanical Transport Squadron Association. Tree planting to commemorate those who lost their lives serving with the Supply & Transport Columns. At 12:00 noon. Contact: Mr Knight on 01788 337887.

Saturday 11th October 2008

Nene Valley Harley Owners Group. Dedicated to troops that have died on duty since World War II, Saturday 11th October at the Armed Forces Memorial. Open to all Harley Davidson riders.

56th Midlands Festival of Remembrance 100th Anniversary of the Territorial Army Sunday 2nd Nov 08

The programme in the Town Hall will begin at 6.30 p.m. and will include the Band of the Royal Artillery. Alcester Male Voice Choir, the Royal British Legion and Association Standards, an Act of Remembrance and a Wreath Laying. Tickets are at £5.00 - £10.00 and £15.00 and can be obtained from Mr Frank Manning, 22 Lambeth Road, Birmingham, B44 9NS.

ASSOCIATION WEBSITE

If you have access to the internet then please visit the Association website at www.rafregrt.org.uk and you will find a wealth of information on it, including from last month, our newsletters. I have also asked him to put the RAF Regiment Property Booklet on the site too so everyone with internet access will be able to see all the Regiment Silver and the other items.

I also asked him to put the History of the RAF Regiment Memorial Garden on the Association website too so go on, if you have internet access, visit it. The RAF Regiment Property Booklet alone is well worth a visit. To remind you all, the website address is also published on the front page of every newsletter.

Our thanks to the Website Manager Gordon Diffey for his help with this.

MOBILE 'PHONE FRAUD

If you receive a phone call on your mobile from any person saying that he or she is a company engineer or telling that they're checking your mobile line and you have to press #90 or #09 or any other number, end this call immediately without pressing any numbers. There is a fraud company using a device that once you press #90 or #09 they can access your 'SIM' card and make calls at your expense. Forward this message to as many colleagues, relatives and friends as you can.

BRANCH APPEAL REMINDER

Please remember the appeal your Branch Committee has set up for as we are now regularly sending "goodies" to the lads in the Military Ward at Selly Oak Hospital and we need all the money that we can get. If anyone would like further information or can help in any way, please call me. Well that's all for now, look after yourselves and keep smiling.

Malcolm

DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES



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Sunday 5 th October	2008	Merchant Navy Day	Sat 29 th -Sun 30 th Nov	2008	Birmingham Int Tattoo
Fri 3rd-Mon 6th Oct	2008	Reunion & AGM	Sunday 30 th November	2008	St Andrew's Day
Thursday 9 th October	2008	Branch Night	Thursday 11 th December	08	Branch Night
Tuesday 21 st October	2008	Battle of Trafalgar Day	Thursday 8 th January	2009	Branch Night
Saturday 1 st November	2008	Midlands Fest.1 of Rem	Sunday 1st February	2009	67th Ann RAF Regiment
Sunday 2 nd November	2008	B'ham Poppy Ball	Sunday 1 st February	2009	Subscriptions Due
Sunday 9 th November	2008	Rem Sunday	Thursday 12 th February	09	Branch Night
Tuesday 11th November	08	Remembrance Day	Sunday 1 st March	2009	St David's Day
Thursday 13 th November	08	Branch Night	Thursday 12 th March	2009	Branch Night
			Tuesday 17 th March	2009	St Patrick's Day
			Sun 15 th – Mon 30 th Mar	09	Battle For Meiktila
			Sunday 5th April	2009	Branch Reded of Mem.1
			Thursday 9 th April	2009	Branch Night
			Wednesday 23 rd April	2009	St George's Day
			Sunday 26 th April	2009	ANZAC Day Serv & Par
			Sunday 10 th May	2009	Reded of Regiment Chapel
			Thursday 14 th May	2009	Branch Night

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