



ROYAL AIR FORCE REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

www.rafregt.org.uk

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH

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**NEWSLETTER NO: 229
JULY 2008**

THE BIRMINGHAM BRANCH NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 229 JULY 2008

Dear Readers.

Cost of Increased Postage

Due to the greatly increased cost of postage as from 1st April this year, we shall have to make every effort to keep our postage costs down. So if any of you wish to obtain anything from me such as membership cards, application forms, etc., please try to ensure that you include a stamped addressed envelope in with your letter.

In addition, donations of stamps would be more than welcome. It may be that in time, unless we succeed in keeping our costs down and postage is by far the largest element of our costs, we may have to consider putting up our subs and that is something that your Committee would be very reluctant to do.

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 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.

We have also received a £50.00 donation from the Kent 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 a Branch donation of £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.

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.

Birmingham Branch Associate Member Dinah Shave, who in 1952-1953 was attached as a Signaler to a RAF Regiment squadron in Scotland, and is confined to a wheelchair has been to all her local supermarkets and gathered in a huge haul of toiletries, sweets, quiz books, CDs etc.. If a "young" lady like Dinah can accomplish this, what can the rest of us do if we put our minds to it?

Britain - The Fifth Richest Economy in the World

This article was stimulated by the fact that the Treasury is insisting that there isn't any money to pay our poorly paid troops better salaries. The Treasury has rebuffed General Sir Richard Dannatt, the head of the Army after his unprecedented public cry for higher wages for all service personnel. He compared a soldier's basic wage of £13,013 before being fully trained rising to £16,227 after completing the 26-week course, with that of a traffic warden on £17,000 but the Treasury said that there was no extra money in the coffers. General Sir Richard Dannatt said; "You look to see how much a traffic warden is paid and compare that against what a private soldier gets paid. And if you compare a police constable on overtime, I think you will find that an individual serviceman gets quite a lot less".

EDITOR'S NOTE:

A police constable is paid between £21,009 and £32,985, excluding overtime. Of course as we all know, if you wear HM Forces uniform you do not get overtime pay for if servicemen and women were paid by the hour – never mind overtime pay - soldiers pay would shoot up the scale.

General Dannatt also said; "I am pleased that we had above-inflation pay rises over the last couple of years and I think this year's pay rise which reflected an increase in the 'X- factor'

[danger and disturbance money] was appropriate. But I would like to see it going up above inflation for the next couple of years". Despite the increases, however, the Army has failed to meet its manpower target of 101,800 and is suffering a shortfall of about 3,500 trained soldiers. Young recruits do not tend to join the Army in the hope of making a fortune but it is recognised that in a market where all employers are competing for the best, a good opening salary must be an inducement. The General gave voice to frustrations in HM Forces by comparing military pay levels unfavourably with what a traffic warden earns but the Treasury said that there was no question of more money in the short term because the Ministry of Defence budget was fixed for three years.

SAS chief resigns over lack of kit

A Former head of the SAS has quit the army after criticising the government for risking soldiers' lives by failing to fund troops and equipment. Brigadier Ed Butler, one of Britain's most experienced and decorated Special Forces soldiers, is the most senior of three key commanders to have resigned in the past year amid widespread anger over lack of funding. News of his resignation came in the same week that General Sir Richard Dannatt, head of the army, called for better treatment for the forces and more money to be spent on defence.

In a statement issued through the Ministry of Defence (MoD), Butler said he was leaving for "a number of factors and reasons" and singled out difficulties faced by service personnel. He praised the "extraordinarily brave men and women" who repeatedly did their job well in the face of "constraints and restraints". He said the country owed them "a huge debt of gratitude".

The MoD said it was "not a protest vote". But close friends said Butler was disappointed that the government put soldiers' lives at risk by failing to pay for sufficient troops and equipment. "He was very frustrated at the cuts going on in the army at present," one close associate said. "Sadly, many of the concerns held by senior officers have not been resolved and, across the armed forces, there are a lot of officers and soldiers who are not happy." Butler, aged 48 was widely expected to become the next director of Special Forces, friends said.

He led the first British deployment to southern Afghanistan in 2006 and said in his statement that his decision to quit came "after a great deal of discussion and deliberation over the last six months". Six months ago the board of inquiry into the death of Captain Jim Philippon, the first British soldier to die in action in Helmand province, cited Butler's criticism of the failure to provide troops and kit and blamed "political machinations" for his death. Butler was highly critical of John Reid, then defence secretary, for keeping troop numbers low and of the failure of the Treasury under Gordon Brown to fund equipment.

Lieutenant Colonel Rick Williams MC, another commanding officer of the SAS, resigned last July after being criticised by senior officers for spending too much time on the front line with his men. He was followed in November by Lieutenant Colonel Stuart Tootal, commanding officer of third battalion, the Parachute Regiment.

Butler's Special Forces career during the 1991 Gulf war, in Northern Ireland, the Balkans, Sierra Leone, Iraq and Afghanistan had him marked down for great things. He is the grandson of Richard "Rab" Butler, the former Tory foreign secretary and chancellor. He was mentioned in dispatches in Northern Ireland, awarded the Distinguished Service Order twice, in Iraq and Afghanistan, and was made a Commander of the Order of the British Empire for his time in Helmand. He is currently the commander of Joint Task Force Headquarters which is based in the UK and contains a strong Special Forces element.

The – Broke - UK Economy

The economy of the United Kingdom is the fifth largest in the world in terms of market exchange rates and the sixth largest by purchasing power parity (PPP). It is the second largest economy in Europe after Germany's and its gross domestic product (GDP) PPP per capita in 2007 was the 22nd highest in the world. Until this year when China overtook us to become the fourth richest economy in the world, we were the fourth richest economy in the world, so why is it that with all this money sloshing around, we never have enough of it for anything? How many times have the Armed Forces and the Great British Public, been told that there isn't enough – or any – money for anything? Where's it all gone?

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:

SHAW James. Former RAF Regt Gnr James (Jim) Shaw died on 13 May 08 in NSW, Australia. Joined the RAF in 1953. After RAF Basic Trg was posted to Dumfries for Regt Trg. Then posted to RAF Watchet for LAA conversion and, from there, went to 7/31 (LAA)Sqns RAF Regt at RAF Wunsdorf in 1954. Was then posted to 48 Sqn RAF Regt at RAF Aldergrove, NI. He was discharged in 1957 and went to live in Perth but eventually emigrated to Tasmania. No further details are known at this time. He is survived by his wife Sue, to whom the Corps extends its sincere condolences.

GERRISH Norman. We regret to announce the death of former RAF Regt FS Norman Phillip GERRISH, MM, on 1 Jun 08 at the age of 87. As a sergeant in charge of a rifle flt of 2708 Sqn RAF Regt, performed magnificently during the action at *Meiktila* airstrip in Burma. Despite his leg wound, he rallied his men, taking over a light machine gun and engaging the enemy to good effect. His fire was so effective that all his personnel were able to cross open ground to reach cover. Only then did he join his men - in full view of the enemy.

As the Military Medal citation reads: *'His courage, determination and leadership were instrumental in holding two companies of the Japanese and for their ultimate defeat, during which 20 of the enemy were killed. He set a magnificent example in the face of strong opposition'*.

Norman Gerrish MM was born in Bristol on 1 May 21. He joined the RAF in 1941 as a Ground Gunner, shortly after his 20th birthday. After recruit trg, he joined 2810 Sqn RAF Regt on as an AC2. He remained with 2810 Sqn for 3 years and rose to the rank of Sgt. He also served briefly with 2882 Sqn before joining 2708 Sqn RAF Regt on 25 Oct 44. He embarked with the Sqn on 12 Dec 44 for overseas service in the Far East. He remained with 2708 Sqn throughout the Burma campaign, finally reaching Hongkong, where the Sqn disbanded in May 46. He was promoted to A/ FS in Mar 46 and was discharged from the RAF on 19 Oct 46. He was the Chairman of the Bristol & Bath Branch of the RAF Regt Assoc until his death.

The funeral will be held at Westerleigh Crematorium, Westerleigh, near Bristol on Wed 11 June at 13.30. He is survived by his wife, Lilly, to whom the Corps extends its sincere condolences. Further details may be obtained from Mr John Smart on BT 0117 9561395.

GENERAL NOTICES:

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

You will no doubt be aware of the ferocious firefight 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 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.*

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. 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.

Move of Air Historical Branch

The AHB has moved from RAF Bentley Priory to RAF Northolt. The new address is: AHB (RAF), Bldg 824, RAF Northolt, West End Road, Ruislip, Middx HA4 6NG. The AHB may be telephoned at RAF Northolt on 020 8833 8163.

Move of RAF Personnel Records Branch

The former RAF Personnel Management Agency at RAF Innsworth no longer exists. Those wishing to obtain personal records of serving or former members of the RAF should contact: RAF Disclosures, Rm 221b, Trenchard Hall, RAF Cranwell, Sleaford, Lincs, NG34 8HB. The BT tel no is 01400 26, followed by one of the following extension nos: Data Protection Act Cell (for one's own personal records): Extn 8172 or 8173 or 8174. For Third Party enquiries: Officers - Extn 8159, Airmen Extns 8163 or 8168 or 8162. Please note that a £30 administrative fee may be charged for personal records in certain circumstances. Those requiring records for obituary purposes will normally be given a précis of the Service Record for which there is no charge at present.

Appeal for Historical Photographs – Humber Armoured Cars post-WWII

There is a need for a series of 1 Sqn RAF Regt Humber Armoured Car photographs in the post-WWII period for the forthcoming RAF Regt-sponsored RAF Armoured Cars history book. If anyone has such copies, the Regt Sec would

appreciate their loan for copying. They will of course be returned.

Responses to Letters etc

The volume of hard-copy mail to the Regt Sec has increased significantly of late and he is well behind in responding to letters. Additionally, many writers fail to include their names and addresses, which makes for some difficulty in replying! If possible, please use Email wherever possible. Please note that we do not hold personal details in the RAF Regt Museum archives; you will need to contact the RAF Personnel Management Agency at RAF High Wycombe, the RAF Air Historical Branch (moving soon to RAF Northolt or the Public Records Office at Kew.

RAF Regt Golf Society

The Corps has its own golf society, which holds a number of events throughout the playing season. As well as the annual RAF Regt Championships, there are 5 fixtures against affiliated corps/units and an annual 4-way fixture (teams of offrs, SNCOs, JRs and retired players). Players of all ability are welcome in the Society and players affiliated to Corps members may be eligible to take part in events. Forthcoming 2008 fixtures include:

28 & 29 Jul: RAF Regt Championships @ Mentmore GC, Bucks.

4 Aug: Royal Marines @ Trethorne GC, Cornwall.

10 September. Royal Signals @ Mentmore GC, Bucks.

1 October. Four-way match @ Greetham Valley, Leics.

Full details, including costs, are available from the Society Chairman, Sqn Ldr Stuart Holcroft at HQ Air Command on (BT) 01494 496366 Or GPTN 95221 6366, or from the Society Captain, Sgt "Muddy" Waters at RAF Honington on (BT) 01359 237813 or GPTN 95991 7813.

RAF Regt Fund Membership

The Fund membership stands at around 1600, which is significantly less than the number of both Serving and Retired members. The Fund is established to support the preservation of the good name, history and traditions of the Corps, and also to support members' activities. The Fund Committee's mission in 2008 is to have every member recruit another member. Please help YOUR FUND to achieve its aims for the Corps. If you are not a member already, why not contact

your unit representative (if you are still serving) or the RAF Regt Fund Sec (Flt Lt Andy Gaskell) or the RAF Regiment Secretary at Honington for 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.

Change of RAF Regt Fund Subscription Rates – Year 2008-9

The RAF Regt Fund Committee voted, at the Fund's AGM on 19 Mar, to increase the annual Basic Membership Subscription from £10 to £12, while the Enhanced Membership Subscription (for serving offrs) will be increased from £15 to £18. This is the first and only increase to the subscription rates since its inception in 1996 and is caused in the main by the steady and significant increase in Centurion production and distribution costs over the past 5 years.

The increase for new members took effect on 1 May 08 and, for existing members, the increase will be implemented at the annual Direct Debit run in Sep 08. Please do not use the old (2008-1) form. New forms are available from the Regt Sec or the Fund Sec (Flt Lt Gaskell) at RAF Honington, or Unit Fund Reps. Assoc Branches should request the new form (2008-2) from the Regt Sec. (CPN 48)

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

A Commemorative Service to mark the end of the Forces' commitment to Operation

BANNER will be held in St Paul's Cathedral on Wed 10 Sep 08. on the SPVA website <www.veterans-uk.info> which will include information about the event and application forms for invitations. There will also be helpline numbers and addresses to which members may apply for invitations.

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.

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

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.

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

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

From the Branch Secretary

On page 2 of last May's newsletter I published an article about a particularly ferocious

battle involving a fully dismounted patrol in Iraq, against a determined group of insurgents in which Corporal Hayden of 1 Squadron, RAF Regiment, became the first RAF Airman to receive the Military Cross. The following article further describes this action and the Citation accompanying Corporal Hayden's award.

In the same newsletter, I also published a list of Operational Awards to members of the RAF Regiment that was announced in the Operational Awards List No 30 published on 7th March 2008. Corporal Hayden's award was listed as was also the Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) awarded to Squadron Leader J Sutton, Commanding Officer of 1 Squadron RAF Regiment and the Mention in Dispatches (MiD) awarded to SAC Benjamin Wharton, also of 1 Squadron RAF Regiment.

Hailed as Heroes – Al Waki Awards

A RAF Corporal who dodged sniper fire to save an injured colleague has been awarded the Military Cross. Corporal David Hayden has become the first Airman to be given the honour for his "outstanding gallantry and selflessness" during a 90-minute firefight in Iraq after his patrol was ambushed which has become known as the Battle of Al Waki. Despite withering fire from more than a dozen rooftop locations after 1 Squadron RAF Regiment came under a hail of gunfire that lasted 90 minutes, the Regiment Gunners, among them Corporal David Hayden fought their way out carrying an shot comrade and another who had been mortally wounded.

As a result of the action – the first major foot patrol battle involving the RAF Regiment since UK forces arrived in Iraq in 2003 – three of those involved in the "ferocious fire fight" at Al-Waki have received operational awards and two received their medals at Buckingham Palace.

Corporal Hayden was awarded the Military Cross for outstanding gallantry, selflessness and personal example during the ferocious battle. Commanding Officer of 1 Squadron RAF Regiment, Squadron Leader Jason Sutton aged 42 from Watford received the OBE for his outstanding leadership over a relentless six month detachment last year and making a safe and secure area around Basra Air Station. He lost three of his gunners on 19 July last year when a rocket attack struck his Squadron's accommodation. A further 6 were injured, but in the months that followed he motivated his men to

continue delivering all tasks, including lethal use of snipers which struck terror into the hearts of the enemy. At Al-Waki he placed himself in the thick of the fire fight which tested his resourcefulness to the full. Senior Aircraftman Benjamin Wharton aged 24 from Daventry was Mentioned in Dispatches for courage and determination in the face of the enemy by providing covering fire from his Land Rover despite being hit in the chest with a bullet which knocked him off his vehicle.

It was in encroaching darkness on August 7th last year when a 40-man patrol from 1 Squadron, left Basra Air Station on a routine foot patrol in the market place of Al-Waki village to show presence and reassure local people that they were being protected by British forces and were safe to go about their businesses. Although relations with the locals in the area was good overall, earlier in the tour 1 Squadron snipers killed an insurgent who had been caught in the night sights of their rifles unloading equipment ready to fire off a rocket. Also in the days running up to the 7th there had been a large contact to the North of Al-Waki where with great skill and courage, C Flight of 1 Squadron had defeated an attack on their patrol. In addition, there was intelligence that the insurgents were claiming to have re-taken the area around Al-Waki and pushed out Western forces.

Squadron Leader Sutton said: "We had arrived later than planned at Al-Waki because on the way we had come across a suspect command wire that might have been linked to a bomb. But on arrival in the village my unit had just started talking to local stallholders via an interpreter about how we could help them apply for grants to build their businesses when the first shot was heard. It sounded like it came from Qarmat Ali, a village to the north. The market starts to come alive at this time of the day because it is cooling off, but still the temperature was in the mid-40'sC. I remember being offered fruit by one of the stallholders just as the shooting began. It was an unremarkable start to a routine patrol with no foretaste of what was to come. At first the firing was sporadic, but suddenly one of my Corporals was hit in the leg and within moments, heavy fire was coming in from all directions and we took cover and we returned fire. We called for assistance from our back-up, but all radio communications went down. One of my Corporals said he felt the splash of rounds on his

back, which was luckily protected by our Osprey armour and another man's helmet was grazed by a round."

Suddenly the cry "man down." was heard and Corporal Hayden, who was second in Command of a sub unit of B Flight, aided by one of his men, ran out into the open to bring LAC Beard, who lay mortally wounded, into cover. As he did so he took on enemy gunmen, accounting for at least one in the process. The remainder of the patrol deployed rapidly to assist the withdrawal of B Flight and after a pitched battle lasting over 30 minutes, the enemy had been suppressed, though many were still firing.

Although being constantly exposed to enemy fire Cpl Hayden carried LAC Beard a further 200 metres to safety. With absolute disregard for his own safety, he repeatedly risked his life in order to rescue a wounded comrade and rally his men to extract themselves. He also further exposed himself by returning to LAC Beard's location to pick up his kit. Corporal Hayden said: "I reacted instinctively when I realised one of my team was down and had to be rescued – although there were rounds whistling all around I heaved a deep breath and ran 200 metres across the danger zone with him on my back."

During the sprint Cpl Hayden was able to shoot down a gunman firing at him and after putting down his colleague he ran back to rally the rest of his "multiple" and lead them to safety. "There were at least a dozen firing points. We felt the enemy were so close that we would have fixed bayonets had we had them to hand."

While LAC Beard was being rescued, SAC Wharton was the heavy machine-gunner providing covering fire from one of just two weapons-mounted Land Rovers in the area. As such he was completely exposed in his unarmoured, open-topped vehicle. Suddenly he was hit in the chest by a ricocheting enemy round, knocking him from off his vehicle. Despite this he recovered his position and continued to provide accurate covering fire for almost an hour while his injured colleagues were rescued and others exited the fire fight. His citation read: "There can be no question that Wharton's action was instrumental in contributing to the eventual withdrawal of the enemy, the successful evacuation of the casualties and the safe extraction of his colleagues. Without Wharton's exceptional courage, determination and skill, the outcome could have been very

different." Corporal Hayden received the Military Cross for his outstanding gallantry, selflessness and personal example in the face of a particularly ferocious attack from a determined enemy. Without a second thought for his own safety, Hayden volunteered to carry the injured man out of the fire fight. He dashed across open ground under a hail of enemy small arms fire. Hayden ran fully upright with the man on his shoulders to safety, having been exposed to enemy fire for the whole distance. His bravery was of the very highest order.

"With absolute disregard for his own safety, he repeated risked his life in order to rescue a wounded comrade and extract his men from danger. For his outstanding gallantry, selflessness and personal example in the face of a particularly ferocious attack from a determined enemy, Corporal Hayden is awarded the Military Cross".

Eventually all the men from the three Flights involved were accounted for. Said Squadron Leader Jason Sutton: "We estimate there were about 50 insurgents attacking us during the sustained assault. They were very organised.

But we estimate that we were able to take out at least 16 of them. Tragically we lost LAC Beard but he displayed the same courage as the rest of the patrol until he was hit. We drew some comfort from his falling, weapon in hand, fighting for and alongside his comrades. Our six-month tour in Basra was especially challenging due to the constant rocket attacks.

I am honoured to have received the OBE for my part in the tour, but I have nothing but unstinting praise for my men who were magnificent throughout this most demanding time. We lost three of our squadron the month before when a rocket was fired into Basra Air Station and the Al-Waki and C Flight contact incidents were the RAF Regiment's first major dismounted troop contacts with enemy forces since 2003. It was successful as we displaced the insurgents and were still in charge in the Al-Waki district. This allowed us to continue to work with the Iraqi people in the area to help them reconstruct and develop their communities"

Corporal Hayden aged 29, received the honour from HM The Queen at a ceremony at Buckingham Palace, also attended by his wife Phillipa, Mum Sylvia and Dad David. Afterwards, a modest Corporal Hayden, who has

served in Iraq, Afghanistan, Kuwait and Northern Ireland said: “At the end of the day, I was doing my job. The lads out there were tremendous – they were phenomenal. I could not have done it on my own and this medal is not just for me but also for the rest of the lads I was with and also for the lads that have died”.

During the Al-Waki action SAC Benjamin Wharton aged 24 from Daventry was Mentioned in Despatches for courage and determination in the face of the enemy, by providing covering fire from his Land Rover despite being hit in the chest with a bullet which knocked him off his vehicle.

The Commanding Officer 1 Squadron, RAF Regiment, Squadron Leader Jason Sutton aged 42 from Watford, was also honoured at Buckingham Palace. He received a MBE for outstanding leadership over a relentless six month detachment. Squadron Leader Sutton, who himself was on the patrol in Al-Waki, was joined at the ceremony by his wife Nana and two children. He said: “I am incredibly proud. I am proud of all my men. I am very honoured but in the back of my mind, our time in Iraq was a team effort and I guess I am wearing this MBE on behalf of my whole unit. There was no person who did not pull his their weight”.

The task of the RAF Regiment it to protect Basrah Air Station in Iraq and the assets flying in and out by patrolling the several hundred miles of desert around the Station against enemy action. The Regiment also conducts hearts and minds, and reconstruction patrols in a wider area which takes in dozens of villages and communities – the aim being to foster good relations, demonstrate resolve to the insurgents and improve the lives of ordinary Iraqis.

The following article is about the same action in Al-Waki Market.

Basrah Medic scoops top Scots award

A Royal Air Force doctor who faced a hail of bullets as he fought to save critically injured RAF Regiment colleagues in the Battle of Al-Waki has swept the boards at a prestigious Scottish awards ceremony. Squadron Leader Sam Potter from RAF Leuchars scooped the Daily Records Military Heroes category, before going on to lift the coveted Scottish National Hero of the Year Award. He received a standing ovation from the 600-strong crowd, dedicating both awards to his wife Gill and their three children. He said: “I

wouldn't be able to leave home without my wife's support. These awards are for her more than anyone else”. Sam and the helicopter Immediate Response Team (IRT) were scrambled to Al-Waki Market in Basrah after a 40-strong RAF Regiment team was ambushed by heavily armed militia in August 2007. Pinned down for nearly two hours two members of the RAF Regiment suffered serious bullet wound injuries. Under heavy fire, the IR Team landed as close to the injured men as possible.

Braving gunfire, the then Flight Lieutenant Potter raced to the casualties and began giving emergency treatment to unconscious LAC Martin Beard while coordinating treatment for the other casualty. LAC Beard later died of his injuries. Only two days later he risked his life again, trying to save three civilians fatally injured in a roadside bomb blast near Tallil. He was presented with his awards by Scottish First Minister Alex Salmond who described the South African born RAF man as a “truly deserving winner and an inspiration to all those who have served with him”. Flight Lieutenant Potter paid tribute to the IRT crews who risk their lives with every operation. He said: “There are 11 people on every IRT helicopter that goes out and we don't know from day to day if we are all going to be there at the end of the day” Earlier in his career as an Army Medical Officer Sam carried out life-saving treatment to victims of the Omagh bombing which killed 28 people.

Additional RAF Force Protection Wing and RAF Regiment Squadron announced

Minister for the Armed Forces Bob Ainsworth announced on Wednesday 21st May 2008, the establishment of an additional RAF Force Protection Wing Headquarters and an additional RAF Regiment Field Squadron. The new Headquarters will be established at RAF Coningsby in Lincolnshire while 15 Squadron RAF Regiment will be based at RAF Honington in Suffolk. The formation of the new RAF Force Protection Wing Headquarters and RAF Regiment Field Squadron will increase the total (including Royal Auxiliary Air Force assets) to nine RAF Force Protection Wing Headquarters and nine RAF Regiment Field Squadrons. In a Written Ministerial Statement to Parliament Mr Ainsworth wrote: "I should like to inform the House that I

have decided to establish permanently an additional RAF Regiment Field Squadron, (15 Squadron RAF Regiment) and a RAF Force Protection Wing Headquarters (No 7 RAF Force Protection Wing Headquarters). 15 Field Squadron RAF Regiment and No 7 Force Protection Wing Headquarters will increase the RAF Regiment's capability, will reduce the time that their personnel spend on operational tours, and it is anticipated, have a positive effect on recruitment and retention.

15 Squadron RAF Regiment has been formed by combining and re-rolling the two remaining RAF Rapier Squadrons (15 and 26 Squadrons) which were otherwise due to disband on 31 March 2008. The new Squadron was formed as a temporary measure for deployment on Operation Herrick from August 2007 to February 2008. Following this decision it will now be permanently established at RAF Honington.

No 7 Force Protection Wing Headquarters will be manned by personnel who have been re-allocated from across the RAF to meet current operational priorities and will be based at RAF Coningsby. Implementation of this measure will reduce the level by which the RAF Regiment operates in excess of harmony guidelines which set the ratio of months that personnel spend on operational tours compared to time spent at their home base.

The RAF Regiment is the cornerstone of the RAF Force Protection (FP) organisation delivering a range of specialist capabilities through RAF Regiment Force Elements and non formed unit personnel deploying in key FP command, staff and training posts. The core Force Elements comprise RAF FP Wg HQs which provide the Force Protection planning, reconnaissance, mission analysis and subsequent Command and Control of national and multinational deployed operating bases. In addition RAF Regiment field squadrons which are specialist ground close-combat units uniquely equipped and trained to undertake defensive operations to combat ground based threats to air assets. RAF Regiment field squadrons and RAF FP WHQs are deployed on concurrent operations at Kandahar airfield and Basra airbase. The new posts will be filled by manpower from the RAF Regiment's final two Ground Based Air Defence (GBAD) Squadrons and as a result of the RAF Regiment's increased recruiting and training

initiatives which are already seeing an increase in the number of recruits joining the Service.

New squadron on royal standby

A newly formed RAF Regiment field squadron in Suffolk has prepared for the prestigious honour of protecting the Queen in London. Last May as armed forces minister Bob Ainsworth was announcing the permanent formation of 15 Squadron RAF Regiment at RAF Honington, Gunners were undergoing an intensive drill course to carry out ceremonial duties at Buckingham Palace over the summer months. The Field Squadron was formed as a temporary measure and sent on a tour of Afghanistan last year ahead of the disbandment of two Rapier ground defence units at the RAF Regiment but the government has confirmed that the former 15 and 26 missile squadrons at RAF Honington would be permanently merged into a field unit as part of the RAF Regiment's Force Protection Wing.

The addition of a new field squadron at Honington would help reduce the time personnel spend on operational tours and have a "positive effect on recruitment and retention. It came as members of 15 Squadron prepared to augment their fellow Gunners from The Queen's Colour Squadron at Buckingham Palace. The unit is also set for an upcoming tour defending the Contingency Operating Base at Basra, Iraq, which will begin next March. Squadron Leader Chris Berryman, commanding officer of 15 Squadron RAF Regiment, said:

"The Gunners have demonstrated their professionalism in spades over the past 18 months and they are a real credit to the RAF Regiment. The re-role from the ground-based air defence role and deployment to Kandahar airfield in the infantry role was grueling, but we had a successful tour there. The ceremonial season ahead will give these airmen a unique experience, and such commitments demonstrate the versatility and agility required to be an RAF Regiment gunner today."

RAF Regiment personnel help build new school for Afghan Children

A school in a remote, mountainous area of Afghanistan is preparing to welcome its first pupils thanks to the efforts of a group of dedicated RAF Regiment personnel. Flight Lieutenant Jim Smith and Sergeant Taff Burton are spearheading a \$1 million battle to improve life for thousands of Afghan villagers whose lives have been affected

by the years of conflict in the country. Financing and overseeing the building of a 10 room school in the isolated village of Mulla Abdulla Kariz is just one of their achievements, but it's the one they are most proud of.

For many communities living without water and power, basic medical care and education, the RAF has provided a vital lifeline since NATO took over control of the region from the United States in 2007. In the last 12 months, the Force Protection Wing has launched a raft of projects to ease the plight of thousands of local people, from providing safe water to the ambitious school building project, funded by a \$1 million donation by the UK government.

Working alongside the RAF Regiment's 15 Squadron, Flight lieutenant Smith and Sergeant Burton have played a key role installing generators at Kandahar International Airport, proving power for security systems, and fresh water and sanitation for the homes of civilian workers, living in rundown concrete apartment blocks built by the Russian military in the 1980s. Flight Lieutenant Smith said:

"The school is the crowning glory of what has been a successful hearts and minds campaign. It will be opening in a couple of weeks and will make a huge difference. By improving the quality of life for so many Afghan people, 7 Force Protection Wing has made a massive contribution to the overall force protection at Kandahar Air Base and the long term development and prosperity of the region."

The RAF team has also launched an ambitious project to supply power to the village of Qazi Kariz, installing an electrical grid supplying the local school and mosque. The lack of clean water is one of the major causes of disease that blights the lives of local people caught up in the fighting with Taliban militia, while inadequate water supplies can have devastating effects on isolated communities trying to survive by growing their own food in the arid desert conditions.

Working with tribal leaders in the village of Morghan Kechah, the RAF team brought in power diggers to create irrigation channels, diverting water over a 20 km network from the Tarnak river. The RAF humanitarian aid programme has provided fresh sanitised drinking water for the entire community in the village of Mow and, repairing damaged water supplies and creating two new wells. Flt Lt Smith said:

"This kind of work shows how effective hearts and minds operations can be," Flt Lt Smith added. "It's great to be able to make a difference and help people lead normal lives."

RAF officers spin-up on 820th SFG roles, mission, training

Two members from the Royal Air Force, Force Protection Centre at RAF Honington, United Kingdom, recently visited the 820th Security Forces Group at Moody Air Force Base, Ga., as part of an exchange program between the units. Flight Lieutenant Dave Martin and Wing Commander Tom Sawyer, Force Protection Centre RAF Honington, are the first members of a RAF regiment to visit the unit since September 2006, when three senior non-commissioned officers exchanged slots as part of the program.

"The RAF regiment is the equivalent to the 820th SFG," said Master Sgt. Jason France, 820th SFG operations superintendent. "The RAF has two forms of what we know as security forces; the RAF police, who deal with day-to-day policing, and the regiment, which deals with force protection, more along the lines of what the 820th does."

According to the RAF Honington leadership, the FP Centre's mission is to provide force protection advice, expertise and training to the RAF, and to deliver specialist chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear capability at very high readiness in support of national contingency operations.

Along with the exchange program, the two units have an additional connection. Wing Commander Sawyer and Col. Don Derry, 820th SFG commander, have been stationed together at two bases in England during the colonel's time as an exchange officer in the early 1990's. The colonel also pointed out they have deployed together numerous times.

"My time spent among the regiments in the United Kingdom gave me some foresight into what a force protection unit should be," Colonel Derry said. "Using some of their concepts as a basis for the group, the unit was born."

The 820th SFG was created as a direct result of Khobar Towers bombing in Saudi Arabia in 1996. After the incident, Gen. Ron Fogelman, Air Force Chief of Staff, developed the initiative for a force protection group to provide Airmen with more secure base defense and force protection.

A tiger team, headed by then Captain Derry, began modeling a force protection unit based on the United Kingdom's RAF Regiment, which would later become the 820th SFG. "The whole concept of the 820th SFG was born from the RAF regiment," said Wing Commander Sawyer. "The regiment provided the basis for the unit -- a force protector and base defender." The two RAF officers began the week with briefings to learn about the unique mission of the 820th SFG. They also received tours of different 820th SFG units and areas including the intelligence section, medical cell, communications flight and the military operations in urban terrain training village. "We've seen a lot of similarities between us and the 820th SFG," Wing Commander Sawyer said. "From training techniques to deployment cycles, there are many parallels -- to see another nation accomplish this really helps validate what we've been doing. We've also experienced and overcome many of the same obstacles we discussed here," Wing Commander Sawyer said.

"Together, we may have a better chance at solving existing difficulties we face as specialists in force protection." Every time the 820th meets with the RAF Regiment, invaluable information is shared on base defense, Colonel Derry said. "We will continue to expand upon this exchange of ideas," the colonel said. "This dialogue is vital to our mission, especially with our coalition partners. These programs are the way ahead for the future, in order to defeat our enemies and win the global war on terror." As the organizations look to move forward with future missions, they will continue to rely on each other to resolve issues we both encounter, Wing Commander Sawyer said. "When dealing with the 820th SFG, we know we're working with a group that trains like us, has an approach like us and is as capable as we are," he said. "I've been absolutely bowled over by the enthusiasm of the members of the group".

Parachutist in plunge terror at air show

By Michelle Fiddler, in the Liverpool Echo on 7th June 2008

Veteran RAF Regiment parachutist told how he spent more than a week in hospital after he crash landed to avoid hitting a moving car. Flight Lieutenant Duncan McGregor shattered both his heels after smashing into the ground at

top speed. The 38-year-old, who has nearly 900 jumps under his belt, was taking part in the Liverpool Military Show in Walton Hall park.

Flight Lieutenant McGregor, commanding officer of the RAF Regiment "Falling Rocks" freefall display team, told how he opted to make a safe landing outside the show arena after being blown slightly off course by strong winds. As he hovered above the ground, the parachutist swerved to avoid a car being driven through the park. But the car was driven into his path once again and with time running out he hit the ground at speed. The driver, who has never been identified, left the scene. Flight Lieutenant McGregor, who is based at RAF Benson, in Oxfordshire, took off with four colleagues earlier that day from RAF Woodvale. Although it was blustery, the team was given permission for the 3,000ft jump. He said:

"Safety is always foremost and paramount, especially with displays. We went over the arena and waited until it was safe to exit. I came out of the plane and I unfurled a Union Jack flag. I tried to get across to go to the arena and I probably could have made it but I decided to go for a safe landing area. As I was coming into land I could see a car driving through the park. I came across to the left and the car was driving below me. I did not know what he was doing.

At that point I was about 40ft above the ground. I expected a hard landing and I got one. The car should not have been there and was a direct contribution to what happened. The car was very close to me when I landed. I think it was purely someone who was curious about a parachutist coming in and wanted to get a closer look. I don't think there was any malicious intention. I am the most experienced guy on the team so for this to happen to me was quite unbelievable." Flight Lieutenant McGregor was taken to Fazakerley hospital where and he underwent surgery on his broken right heel and had a metal rod inserted in his left foot. He said: "My left heel was pretty mashed and broke into different pieces. This is going to take time to recover from." Show chairman Ken Orme said: "He was treated on the spot by the St John Ambulance team who were on public duty at the show and transferred to hospital.

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

This summer the NMA are running a Land Train to take visitors on a route around the site which will also include a short commentary on the plots passed during the tour.

In addition, in order to raise money for the car park which badly needs resurfacing, the NMA have had to add a Pay and Display charge so that they can "raise funds to carry out essential work. They are asking you to contribute today so that they can continue their work tomorrow". The charge for car parking is £1.00 for up to thirty minutes and £2.00 for over thirty minutes. However, if you think that you are going to be a regular visitor, then you can buy a standard pre-paid annual parking permit for just £20.00 by contacting Helen Overton, Visitor and Tourism Manager, on 01283 792333.

The Armed Forces Memorial



Carving has commenced on the Memorial of the names of the 102 members of HM Armed forces who died on duty during 2007, the most forces deaths in service since the 1982 Falklands

War. You will see from the photograph that the new names will, from now on, be done by hand whereas the original names were put on by computer for the first 16,000 names would have taken many years to carve them all by hand.

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 book will be published at the end of June and the price will be £19.99. If you would like to purchase a copy at £19.99 plus p&p at £2.50, a total of £22.49 let me know and I'll find out where to get copies from.

New Funding announced for Armed Forces Memorial

In a written ministerial statement dated Thursday June 5, the Under Secretary of State for Defence, Mr Derek Twigg has announced funding for the Armed Forces Memorial, located at the National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas.

The Armed Forces Memorial (AFM) was opened in October 2007 and the total cost is expected to be in the region of £7.3 million. Trustees of the AFM have raised £6.7 million which includes £1.5 million from the proceeds of the sale of Trafalgar Coins and a Millenium Commission grant of £2.417 million.

The AFM Trustees have advised the Ministry of Defence that there is no realistic prospect of significant further public contributions. Consequently, the Trustees have sought payment, forecast at some £500K in total, to meet outstanding construction costs owed to contractors and expected construction costs. The Ministry of Defence now intends to meet these costs and the cost of inscription of names of those who died since 2007.

The MoD also intends to provide an annual Grant-in-Aid to the AFM Trustees to cover maintenance of the memorial and to fund inscription of names of those who have died since the original inscriptions were made and those who die on duty or as a result of terrorist action in the future. Annual maintenance costs and engraving is expected to cost some £120K to £150K per annum. Subject to negotiation with the Trustees, the Ministry of Defence is therefore proposing to

make a grant of some £120K to £150K per year to be reviewed by April 2010 and subject to up-rating in the interim. The MoD considers that the unique circumstances warrant an exceptional departure from established policy to provide an element of funding for the AFM. The National Memorial Arboretum, as host site for the Armed Forces Memorial, warmly welcomes this announcement from the MoD which concerns the Memorial alone and does not impact the overall funding arrangements for the rest of the NMA site. The Arboretum still relies heavily on generous donations from the public to maintain the site and its visitor facilities. A £4m Appeal has now been launched by the Arboretum to help upgrade these facilities, so that a first class visitor experience can be maintained for the increasingly large numbers who visit.

UK Bosnia Forces Commemorated Thursday 22nd May 2008

With attention currently focused on the loss of life in the ongoing war zones of Afghanistan and Iraq, there was a poignant reminder last May of another trouble zone where members of the armed forces have given their lives to help others. The National Memorial Arboretum, in Alrewas, Staffordshire, was the setting for a service to mark the British Armed Forces' 15-year military presence in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

On Thursday 22nd May a commemorative service was held at the magnificent Armed Forces Memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire. It marked the efforts of more than 100,000 members of UK Armed Forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina over their 15 year deployment, paying tribute to those who did not return.

Between 1992 and 2007, more than 100,000 British servicemen and women were deployed to help the United Nations peacekeeping force. War broke out in March 1992 and the Bosnian War, as it was commonly known, involved several regions of Yugoslavia including Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, all of which became separate countries. Recent estimates claim about 110,000 died, with 1.8m left homeless. Among the dead were 72 British servicemen and women. The service was attended by HRH the Princess Michael of Kent, Minister of State for the Armed Forces Bob Ainsworth, Chief

of the General Staff General Sir Richard Dannatt, and Bosnia and Herzegovina Defence Minister Mr. Selmo Cikotic. Also present were hundreds of veterans from across the UK, and the families and friends of those who paid the ultimate price in bringing greater peace and stability to a country once ravaged by a bitter civil war. Wreaths were laid inside the Memorial on behalf of HRH Princess Michael of Kent, the Government and Armed Forces of the UK, and the Government and people of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

During the wreath laying Vedran Smailovic, the "Cellist of Sarajevo", played a musical tribute to the UK personnel and their efforts to help his country. Vedran famously played his cello for 22 consecutive days in Sarajevo in 1992 to honour the deaths of 22 civilians who were killed when queuing for bread during the bombing and shelling of the city.

Chief of the General Staff and Bosnia veteran General Sir Richard Dannatt, opened the Service and said: "The United Kingdom's contribution to the operation in Bosnia was not only vital but has led to considerable success. We were part of a unified international effort which resulted in the negotiation of the Dayton Peace Agreement in 1995 – an agreement that has endured and set the political and military framework for that country ever since.

The British Army, on the ground and in the air, helped to create a safe and secure environment. The Royal Air Force established the No Fly zone and the Sarajevo Air Bridge, and the Royal Navy contributed to the maritime embargo as well as assisting the efforts in the air. As a nation, we can be proud of what we have achieved, not just in Bosnia but throughout this region – although the contribution came at the cost of 72 lives lost, all now properly commemorated by the Armed Forces Memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum."

Mollie Wormald's son Captain Steven Wormald of the 2nd Battalion Royal Anglian Regiment, was killed on patrol in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1994. She gave a Reading in the Service, and said of the commemoration: "I am so very proud of my son and all of those who died helping Bosnia and Herzegovina become a safer place. The service today has paid fitting tribute to them, and also to the efforts of those who returned safely home. It gives me comfort to see my son's name engraved on this national tribute to our

brave service men and women. May his reward be as great as his sacrifice” Bosnia and Herzegovina Defence Minister Selmo Cikotic paid thanks to UK Armed Forces on behalf of his country: “I stand before you with a sense of deep humility and great pride. We are here to commemorate more than fifty sons and daughters of this country who have died fighting for a better tomorrow. They took on a grave and honourable responsibility, to be the ones to stand between the civilized world and what threatened it.

They signed up, took an oath, and made a promise to defend something larger than themselves. We must never forget that. To the men and women of the British Military, you have our deepest gratitude and respect for your support, dedication and friendship. We remain indebted to those who passed away for their courage and sacrifice, and we keep them in our thoughts and prayers.”

Future Events at the NMA

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 later.

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 13th September 2008

TA100 Armed Forces Memorial Parade and Service. The Royal British Legion and Regimental Association Standard and Guidon Bearers. Members of the public are welcome to watch the event. Time: 12.30 pm for 2.00 pm Contact: Mr Bob Rankin - Tel: 01782 444246.

Sunday 14th September 2008

Ton Class Association. Ceremony to unveil plaque to founder-President, Vice Admiral Sir John Cox KCB. Time: 11.45 am for 12.00 noon. Venue: 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 of the 2nd Allied Tactical Air Force, from D-Day to capitulation. At 12:00 noon on-site. Contact: Mr R M Knight on 01788 337887.

Saturday 11th October 2008

Nene Valley Harley Owners Group. The first ever Ride to the Wall event in the UK – dedicated to troops that have died on duty since World War II – has been set for Saturday 11th October at the Armed Forces Memorial. Registration from 9.30 a.m. on Saturday 11th October. Open to all Harley Davidson riders, you can find more information along with the application form at the event's website: <www.rttw.co.uk>.

ASSOCIATION WEBSITE

If you have access to the internet then please visit the Association website at www.rafrege.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.

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.

STOP PRESS

The Norfolk Branch has contributed a magnificent £200.00 to the Appeal but more of this in next month’s newsletter.

Malcolm

DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES



16

Sunday 9th November 2008 Remembrance Sunday
 Tuesday 11th November 08 Remembrance Day
 Thursday 13th November 08 Branch Night
 Sat 29th-Sun 30th Nov 2008 Birmingham Int Tattoo
 Sunday 30th November 2008 St Andrew's Day
 Thursday 11th December 08 Branch Night
 Thursday 8th January 2009 Branch Night
Sunday 1st February 2009 67th Ann RAF Regiment
 Sunday 1st February 2009 Subscriptions Due
 Thursday 12th February 09 Branch Night
 Sunday 1st March 2009 St David's Day
 Thursday 12th March 2009 Branch Night
 Tuesday 17th March 2009 St Patrick's Day
 Sun 15th – Mon 30th Mar 09 Battle For Meiktila
 Sunday 5th April 2009 Branch Reded of Mem.l
 Wednesday 23rd April 2009 St George's Day
 Sunday 26th April 2009 ANZAC Day Serv & Par

Thursday 10th August 2008 Branch Night
 Thursday 11th Sept 2008 Branch Night
 Monday 15th September 08 Battle of Britain Day
 Sunday 5th October 2008 Merchant Navy Day
Fri 3rd-Mon 6th Oct 2008 Reunion & AGM
 Thursday 9th October 2008 Branch Night
 Tuesday 21st October 2008 Battle of Trafalgar Day
 Saturday 1st November 2008 Midlands Fest.l of Rem
 Sunday 2nd November 2008 B'ham Poppy Ball

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