



ROYAL AIR FORCE REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

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BIRMINGHAM BRANCH

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The Best of the Best

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

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

**NEWSLETTER NO: 227
MAY 2008**

THE BIRMINGHAM BRANCH NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 227 MAY 2008

Dear Readers.

Branch Appeal

We should 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 sending "goodies" to the lads in Selly Oak Hospital.

Through Ralph Dean and Roy Thomas, we have made contact with the military ward nursing staff and at their request we have already supplied them with thirty shaving mirrors. It seems that the lads often arrive in the military ward with very little kit and this includes shaving mirrors. Apparently they have been borrowing the nurses powder compacts to use their mirrors to shave with so this was something of a priority.

The shaving mirrors were supplied to us at a substantial discount by Bodylines of 1135 Warwick Road, Acocks Green, Birmingham and we are very grateful to them. Now we have a firm contact with the nursing staff at Selly Oak, they will give us a new list of "goodies" required every month, so we have a continuing need for donations.

Not only are we now receiving donations from Birmingham Branch members, we have also received a £50.00 donation from the Sussex Branch. Our grateful thanks to you all but we need more, so come on lads, just remember what the lads in the Military Ward have done for all of us and so see what you can do and as we often say, "dig deep and die happy". We have already voted to give 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. Or if anyone would like to contribute financially to this appeal, send a cheque to the Branch Treasurer Tom Magee, made out to the Birmingham Branch – Military Ward Appeal.

BRANCH SUBSCRIPTIONS

Association subscriptions should have been paid up on 1st February so after three months of reminders, non-payers have now been removed from the Branch Roll of Members and from the Association.

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:

TWO GNRS KILLED IN ACTION IN AFGHANISTAN: RAF Regt Gnr **SAC Graham LIVINGSTONE**, aged 23, of 3 Sqn RAF Regt and **SAC Gary THOMPSON**, 52, of 504 Sqn RAuxAF were Killed In Action on the evening of Sun 13 Apr in Kandahar, southern Afghanistan. Two other servicemen were also injured in the same incident. At approximately 1848 hrs local time, the men were conducting a routine patrol some two Kms west of Kandahar Airfield (KAF) when the vehicle they were travelling in hit a mine. Medical care was given at the scene and all four servicemen were evacuated to the field hospital at KAF. Sadly, despite the best efforts of the medical team, two of the servicemen died as a result of their wounds. The injuries sustained by the other two men were not serious and, in fact, they have returned to duty.

Further details will be released shortly, together with funeral arrangements when they are finalised. Clearly, this has been a massive blow to the unit, but it has responded magnificently in the finest tradition of the Corps. Operations have continued without pause, and if anything with even greater steely resolve. Indeed, to do otherwise, would offer the greatest disservice to those who have given their lives in the service of their country, as well as succour to our enemies.

CHURCHER. Former RAF Regt Wg Cdr W J (Jack) Churcher, born 12 Feb 27, died on 23 Mar 08, aged 81, following a stroke on the 21st. He was commissioned in Jan 49 and retired from HQ 38 Gp in Apr 79. The funeral will be held at Horbling Church, Horbling (near Sleaford, Lincs) on Sat 5 Apr at 1030. He was pre-deceased by his wife, Margaret, in 2002. Letters may be sent to Mrs Jean Clayton (daughter) via the Funeral Directors, Colin Ward, 14 Boston Road, Sleaford, Lincs, NG34 7ET. Family flowers only, but donations - if required - may be made to the Royal Star & Garter Homes or the PDSA. The Corps extends its sincere condolences to the family.

SIBLEY. Former RAF Regt gnr John (Jack) Sibley died on 26 Feb 08. Served from 1941-45. The funeral took place on 5 Mar 08. Member of Bristol and Bath Branch of the RAF Regt Assoc. No other details known. Letters of condolence may be sent to his widow, Mrs Ann Sibley, at 13 Rosebay Mead, Stapleton, Bristol, BS16 1XF. The Corps extends its sincere condolences to the family.

MacDONALD TURNEY. Former RAF Regt WO Godfrey MacDonald Turney died in early 2008. No further details are known at this time. The Corps sends its sincere condolences to his wife, Janet, who survives him. Letters of condolence may be sent to Mrs Janet McDonald Turney at 9 Abbotsfield Drive, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY2 6DJ.

PASSEY. Former Gnr Roy Passey of Brierley Hill, West Midlands, born 29 May 31, died on 20 Mar 08 after a long illness. He was a National Serviceman from Aug 49 – Aug 51 and served on 60 (Rifle) Sqn RAF Regt at RAF Fassburg in West Germany. The funeral took place at Stourbridge on 2 Apr 08. He is survived by his wife, Margaret, to whom the Corps extends its sincere condolences.

WORTON. Former RAF Regt Sgt Albert Worton, born 30 Jul 21, died on 10 Apr 08, aged

86. He enlisted as a Gnd Gnr and served from May 41 to Jul 46 in the UK, North Africa, Italy and Palestine Theatres. The funeral was held at 10.45 on 18 Apr at the English Martyrs Church, Oldbury Road, Rowley Regis, West Midlands, B65 0PS and the interment will be at Quinton Cemetery, Halesowen Road, Halesowen, B62 9AF at 12.00. Other details not known at this time.

GENERAL NOTICES:

Move of Air Historical Branch

The AHB will move from RAF Bentley Priory to RAF Northolt during the period 28 Apr to 16 May. Its services will be suspended during that period. The new address will be: AHB (RAF), Bldg 824, RAF Northolt, West End Road, Ruislip, Middx HA4 6NG. Dedicated telephone numbers are not known at this time, but the AHB will be reached by telephoning RAF Northolt on 020 8845 2300 and asking for the AHB.

RAF Regt Fund Membership

The Fund membership stands at around 1500, which is significantly less than the number of both Serving and Retired members. The Fund is established to support the preservation of the good name, history and traditions of the Corps, and also to support members' activities. The Fund Committee's mission in 2008 is to have every member recruit another member. Please help YOUR FUND to achieve its aims for the Corps.

If you are not a member already, why not contact your unit representative (if still serving) or the RAF Regt Fund Sec (Flt Lt Andy Gaskell) or the RAF Regiment Secretary at Honington for a membership form. Membership brings with it the annual subscription for the 6-monthly Centurion journal, rated as one of the best Regimental journals in the British Services.

Change of RAF Regt Fund Subscription Rates – 2008. 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 mailing costs over the past 4 years. The increase for new members will take effect from 1 May 08 and for existing members at the annual Direct Debit run in Sep 08.

Pingat Jasa Malaysia Medal. Most will be aware that the Malaysian Govt awarded a medal - the Pingat Jasa Malaysia (PJM) - for those Servicemen who served in the fight against communist guerrillas during the Malayan Emergency between 1948 and 1960, and against Indonesian incursions into the Malaysian part of Borneo between 1963 and 1966.

We are advised informally that the Malaysian authorities will cease accepting applications for the medal from 1 May 08. Should you be eligible for the PJM, or know someone who is, applications should be made on the appropriate form as soon as possible. The PDF form is downloadable from the UK Veterans' Agency at: www.veterans-uk.info/pdfs/medals/PJM%20Medal%20Application%20Form.pdf

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

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

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

The ACB Assoc is celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the arrival in Cyprus of 5001 Sqn Airfield Construction and the RAD Regt sqns, on 10 Sep 08. The main function will be in conjunction with the 2008 Wings Appeal Garden Party at the residence of CBF Cyprus, AVM and Mrs R Lacey. It will be a joint function with Apollo Branch Paphos. Any RAF Regt people interested in joining the ACB Assoc event would be more than welcome; they are also offering a trip down 'Memory Lane' around RAF Akrotiri, for a small donation to Wings Appeal. Contact the ACB Assoc by filling in the Visit to Akrotiri form on their website www.rafacypus.co.uk or contact Gordon Boam at gordonb@cytanet.com.cy. Tel 0035 7253 22905.

Operation BANNER (Northern Ireland) Commemoration - 10 SEP 08

It is proposed to hold a Commemorative Service to mark the end of the Forces'

commitment to Operation BANNER in St Paul's Cathedral on Wed 10 Sep 08. Confirmation and further details are awaited.

Charitable Status for RAF Regiment fund

To reflect the fact that the RAF Regt Fund has achieved Charity status, the RAF Regt Fund Application Form has been updated to include a Gift Aid Certificate, which will enable the Fund to reclaim 28% of the subscription from the Taxman (1600+ members x £2.80 = £4,500+ per year!).

The forms are available electronically now, but I cannot mass-mail them with this message. Branch Secretaries please contact me in the New Year (after 10 Jan please) for an e-copy, and encourage new members to use the new Form (RAFRF Form App v2008-1.0). Please don't use the previous form (2007-2) anymore.

New Regt History Book - 'Constant Vigilance'.

A new Corps history - 'Constant Vigilance - The RAF Regt in the Burma Campaign' by Dr Nigel Warwick, has been published with a cover price of £25.0. However, the RAF Regt Fund can supply a copy for £20 + P&P. The book has been critically reviewed and is undoubtedly a 'good read' and a 'must' for every Corpsman's bookshelf.

The RAF Regt Shop has copies for sale NOW. It is also available on-line at Amazon.com at a competitive price (but more than the Shop with P&P) and the Fund will benefit from all sales, irrespective of where bought.

Regimental Cufflinks:

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

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

Regimental Blazer Buttons:

The RAF Regt Museum is proud to offer for sale sets of exceptionally high quality Regimental Blazer Buttons, also made by the G E Collins & Sons Ltd, the Crown Jeweller. The finish of the buttons is known as 'Dead Gilt & Burnished', which means they are gilded in a matt

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

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

22 May 08 - Bosnia-Herzegovina Commemoration - NMA Alrewas.
 01 Jun 08 - Centurion journal No25 - Contributions Due Date.
 28 Jun 08 - RAF Regt Memorial Re-Dedication - NMA Alrewas (Veterans Week)
 11 Jul 08 - Presentation of new RAF Regt Queen's Colour - RIAT, Fairford
 10 Sep 08 - Op BANNER Commemoration - St Paul's Cathedral, London (Provisional)
 19-21 Sep 08 - WOs & SNCOs Assoc Reunion
 25-27 Sep 08 RAF Regt-USAF SF Exchange Reunion Weekend – Berkshire
 3rd – 6th Oct 08 - RAF Regt Assoc 2008 Reunion and AGM.
 17-20 Oct 08 - RAF Armoured Car Assoc Autumn Reunion - Derby.
 31 Oct 08 - RAF Regt Offrs' Dinner Club's Annual Dinner - The Guest Speaker will be Col Bob Stewart of Cheshire Regt, Bosnia and now TV fame. The venue - Midland Hotel in Derby - is excellent and it promises to be a super evening
 06 Nov 08 - Garden of Remembrance - Westminster Abbey
 09 Nov 08 - Remembrance Sunday - Cenotaph, London and nationwide.
 01 Dec 08 - Centurion Journal No26 - Contributions Due Date.
 6 Feb 09 - Officers' Corps Formation Dinner - RAF Honington

From the Branch Secretary

DEATH NOTICES:

PASSEY, Roy. I regret to inform you that former LAC Roy Passey of Brierley Hill, West

Midlands, who was born on 29th May 1931, passed away peacefully after a long illness, on Thursday 20th March 2008. Roy was called up into the RAF Regiment for his National Service on 29th August 1949. After his Basic Training and his RAF Regiment training, was posted to 60 Rifle Squadron at RAF Fassburg in West Germany and served with this squadron until his discharge on 29th August 1951. Roy was a happy family man and will be sadly missed by his wife Margaret, his children Nick, Allison and Andrew and their families. The Funeral Service took place at Stourbridge Crematorium on Wednesday 2nd April and the Chapel was so full that many had to stand outside.

WORTON, Albert. I regret to inform you of the death of former Sergeant Albert Worton who passed away on Thursday 10th April 2008. Albert, who was born on 30th July 1921, enlisted into the Royal Air Force at No 3 Recruitment Centre, PaIdgate, on 1st May 1941 and after his Basic Training was posted to 114 DRF Squadron as a Ground Gunner. On 22nd December 1941, he was posted to 836 D Squadron which on the formation of the RAF Regiment on 1st February 1942 became 2836 Squadron, RAF Regiment.

Albert eventually volunteered for overseas service and on 10th November 1942, was posted to 333 Group which was destined for North Africa where Albert on 22nd November 1942, joined 152 Fighter Squadron at Souk El Arba. This was followed by a posting on 20th February 1943 to 4347 Anti-Aircraft Flight. He was then posted to 2864 Squadron and then on 21st June 1943 to 2867 AA Squadron then at Constantine, Algeria.

On 20th October 1944, Albert was posted to 2788 Squadron at Osigliano in the River Po valley, Northern Italy. He served with 2788 Squadron in Italy, Egypt and Palestine until on 9th July 1946 he was posted to 102 Personnel Reception Centre to await his release. Albert was finally discharged on 16th October 1946.

Albert received the 39-45 Star, the Africa Star and Clasp, the Italy Star, the Defence Medal, the Victory Medal and the Palestine General Service Medal 1945 – 48. In civvie street Albert became a builder and after he retired, his daughter Pat bought him a book about making wooden models so that he could make model toys for his grandchildren. In due course on 2nd April 1991 he joined the Birmingham Branch together with

another six ex-members of 2788 Squadron who became known as “The Magnificent Seven” and Albert in fact became a “model maker” extraordinaire. For after honing his skills with wooden models, after I jokingly said to him “how about a model Bofors Gun then Albert”, never thinking that he could turn his hand from big blocky wooden models to the intricate metal work needed for a model L40/60 Bofors Gun, he just said “I’ll think about it. After three months he telephoned me to say, “you know that Bofors Gun?” I had forgotten all about our conversation so I said “what Bofors Gun? Albert said, “you know, the model, because I’ve finished it, come over and have a look at it”. To say that I was gob smacked is an understatement and when I first saw the model, I was even more gob smacked for it was superb.

And so “Our Albert”, the Birmingham Branch Model Maker Extraordinaire was born, for he continued to make us such superb models as the Rapier Field Standard C Missile Unit, our Branch Standard Crest, an amalgam of the Crossed Rifles and the Crest of the City of Birmingham, for which we had previously obtained the permission of both the then CG and Birmingham City Council.

He also made various Branch Officer’s badges Top Table furniture such as Branch Guidons, mounted Crossed Rifles and so on. Just to illustrate how good Albert’s model making skills were, at one of the Cosford Air Show days, I saw a man closely examining the Rapier Field Standard C Model which we had on display together with all our other models.

Thinking he was an ex-Rock and therefore ripe for recruitment, I asked him if he was an ex-Rock. Oh no he said, but I was a part of the design team at the British Aircraft Corporation that designed it and I was trying to find any fault with and I can’t. It’s just perfect. Albert was a special person indeed for in addition to making models for the Birmingham Branch, Albert also made several models for St Dunstan’s and for a local school for children with special needs.

Albert who was a much-loved father and grandfather, was predeceased by his wife Josie and will be sadly missed by his daughters Pat and Maria, their families, especially his grandchildren and everyone who knew him. Albert’s funeral service was at 10.45 am on Friday 18th April at the English Martyr’s Church, Oldbury Road, Rowley

Regis, West Midlands and was followed by a burial at 12.00 noon at Quinton Cemetery, Halesowen Road, Halesowen, West Midlands, B62 9AF. The Service and funeral were attended by the Birmingham Branch Standard Bearer John Docker who carried out his duties with the utmost dignity and solemnity that was very much appreciated by Albert’s family. Also in attendance were the Branch Chairman Ron Sharp, the Branch Vice-Chairman Fred Ringham, Cliff Sutor, Roy Thomas together with their ladies and others. Two Regiment wreaths were laid, one from the Birmingham Branch and the other from the Gloucestershire Branch. Afterwards everyone was warmly invited back to the church hall for refreshments.

EDITOR’S NOTE:

“Operation Torch” (initially called Operation Gymnast) was the British-American invasion of French North Africa in World War II during the North African Campaign, that started on 8th November 1942. The Soviet Union had pressed the United States and Britain to start operations in Europe, and open a second front to reduce the pressure of German forces on the Russian troops. While the American commanders favored Operation Sledgehammer, landing in Occupied Europe as soon as possible, the British commanders believed that such a course would end in disaster. An attack on French North Africa was proposed instead, which would clear the Axis Powers from North Africa, improve naval control of the Mediterranean Sea, and prepare an invasion of Southern Europe in 1943. American President Franklin D. Roosevelt suspected the African operation would rule out an invasion of Europe in 1943 but agreed to support British Prime Minister Winston Churchill. The Allies planned a three-pronged amphibious landing to seize the key ports and airports of Morocco and Algeria simultaneously, targeting Casablanca, Oran and Algiers. After consolidating in French territory, the Allies struck into Tunisia. By 13 May the Axis forces in Tunisia had surrendered.

Two senior aircraftmen killed in an explosion in Afghanistan

Graham Livingstone, 23, of the Royal Air Force Regiment, from Glasgow, leaves one young son. Gary Thompson, 51, of the Royal Auxiliary

Air Force, a husband and father to five daughters, was managing director of a Nottingham company. Two other personnel were injured in the blast, during a routine patrol near Kandahar Airfield on Sunday. The men had been taking part in a security patrol in Daman District as part of Support Weapons Flight of 3 Squadron RAF Regiment, when the general purpose Land Rover they were travelling in struck a roadside bomb. SAC Livingstone and SAC Thompson were taken to the field hospital inside their base but died from their injuries. The two other servicemen suffered less serious injuries. One has already returned to duty, the MoD said.

'Afghan mission'

"He was a wonderful, wonderful son. He was a wonderful person. I'm going to miss him so much. I was so proud of him. SAC Livingstone joined the RAF in 2004 after a short period in the Royal Marines. He had been promoted to senior aircraftman in 2005 and had also served in Iraq. He leaves a young son, Kyle. His mother, Rosemary O'Neil, said he was a much loved father, son and brother and that the family was "very proud". "He loved his job so much, he never wanted to do anything else."

SAC Thompson joined the RAF in 1973, but left in 1977 to pursue a civilian career. He subsequently joined No 504 (County of Nottingham) Squadron Royal Auxiliary Air Force in March 2005. His family said: "Gary was more than our hero, he was the rock and foundation of our family. Words cannot express how much he was loved and how proud of him we are. Gary, you have had our hearts from the beginning and now they are yours forever." He leaves behind his wife Jacqui and five daughters: Laurie, 24, Aimee, 22, Jordan, 20, Jade, 17 and Kelly, 16 - who he said inspired him to serve in the war against the Taliban. In February, SAC Thompson was quoted in the Rutland and Stamford Mercury saying: "I have five daughters, three of whom are at university. "I want women in Afghanistan to be given the same opportunity that my daughters have had. It means I can come back and say I have played my part in trying to make that happen."

Andrew Smith of Southwell RFC, the rugby club where SAC Thompson was third XV vice-captain, said there would be a minute's silence in his memory at several rugby matches in Nottinghamshire this weekend. "He was at the

centre of a lot of club activities over the past few years. He was always the life and soul of the club." The commanding officer, Squadron Leader Richard Langley, said SAC Livingstone, known as Livi, was "one of the brightest characters on the squadron". He said: "He was a very operationally experienced gunner, and his professionalism showed in all that he did. Always with a smile, a throw away line and a gag, Livi's humour was at the heart of Support Weapons Flight."

'Humour and skill'

Sqn Ldr Langley described SAC Thompson, nicknamed Tommo, as, "a consummate professional soldier and airman. He was not one to seek the attention, but was the voice of calm and reason who continuously supported the squadron's less-experienced gunners" He said the regiment's thoughts were with their families, adding: "The loss of Tommo and Livi is a tragic blow to all who knew, trained and fought alongside them. Both men were immensely popular and professional, and the humour both brought to the squadron was immeasurable." The deaths bring the number of UK service personnel killed in Afghanistan to 93.

Student spends gap year fighting Taliban

Published in the Watton and Swaffham Times on 9th April 2008

Most students pull pints, flip burgers or pester their parents to make ends meet at university. But instead, 20-year-old Peter Tudor chose to battle the Taliban with the RAF to finance his further education. Senior Aircraftman Tudor is back at RAF Marham after a six-month tour of Afghanistan where his unit defended the Nato airfield at Kandahar - a vital supply hub for coalition troops. He signed up to a part-time auxiliary squadron after leaving school but fought alongside regular servicemen in pursuit of a full RAF pay-packet to fund his studies. The young aircraftman endured regular rocket attacks, 15-hour foot patrols and took part in night-time raids to arrest suspected weapons suppliers and bombers. But, despite being only 80km from the fierce fighting in Helmand Province, SAC Tudor described Kandahar as "pretty calm apart from the odd rocket". He said: "It is easy to brush it off when you hear reports that the base had been attacked, but when you hear rockets going past your head you start to realise that you might not

wake up if one of them hits your billet. Rocket attacks are so indiscriminate and if it happens, it happens. If not, you just need to get on with your job. That is the British way.”

SAC Tudor joined 2620 Squadron of the Royal Auxiliary Air Force at Marham after finishing his A- levels last spring. But the squadron's current deployment in Iraq coincided with university term-time, so when he asked for the opportunity to fight overseas he was assigned to 15 Squadron based at RAF Honington.

The year-long secondment has earned him £15,000 towards an astrophysics degree course if he is not selected for his dream place on the RAF's gruelling four-year fighter pilot training scheme. “When I finished my A-levels I thought I could get a job like every other student or I could get a year's pay as a regular,” he said. “I thought I could just give something back to the air force and I got to experience a conflict zone and a different country. Now I get the best of both worlds. I can go to university and get a regular job or stay in the RAF. I have got a medal on my chest and I am walking proud. If students want to have something on their CV and something to tell people about at university then they should do it.”

Squadron Leader Jonathan White, the officer commanding 2620 Squadron, said: “SAC Tudor has been an outstanding ambassador for this auxiliary squadron. He was a great asset to the squadron.”

The RAF Regiment and the RAuxAF Regiment is currently seeking to recruit several hundred new Gunners every year. As we all know, the Regiment has the finest troops anywhere with a camaraderie that is second to none and since its formation on 1st February 1942, it has steadily built up a reputation in its world-wide operations, both aggressive and peace-keeping that is widely acknowledged. For information about the RAF Regiment call 0845 605 5555 and for the RAuxAF Regiment, contact 0800 783 1915 or visit <www.rafreserves.com>.

RAF REGIMENT AND RAuxAF REGIMENT RECRUITMENT

If anyone knows of someone that may be interested, the following articles may help to stimulate their interest and perhaps, result in a new recruit for the Regiment. If there is a job to be done, we can do it so let's see what we can do to recruit new members of our Corps.

THE RAF REGIMENT 1942 - The Beginning

Formed in the storm and stress of war in 1942, the RAF Regiment was born of the official recognition of the necessity for an indigenous and credible RAF ground defence force. The success of German 'Blitzkrieg' tactics during the opening years of the war had signaled the vulnerability of airfields to attack by a highly mobile enemy.

RAF units attempting to withdraw from the Continent during the Battle of France in June 1940 were badly mauled by rapidly advancing German air and ground units. The subsequent intensive German air attacks on RAF bases during the Battle of Britain further strengthened the argument that the Service should look inwards for its own defence. The fall of Crete in 1941 was particularly disastrous for the RAF, with the Service's main operating base at Maleme being swiftly overrun by German airborne forces and subsequently utilised by the Luftwaffe to reinforce the offensive.

The already considerable strain placed on the British Army by the demands of the war meant that it had scarce resources to dedicate to the defence of air assets. In the aftermath of Crete, the Findlater Stewart Committee was convened to find a solution to the problem of airfield defence. It recommended that a 'Royal Air Force Aerodrome Defence Corps' be formed, giving RAF commanders control over the defence of their own assets and releasing Army units for redeployment.

The new Corps, to be titled the Royal Air Force Regiment, was established by Royal Warrant on 1st February 1942. Its motto was to be 'Per Ardua', translated as 'Through Adversity', with its insignia crossed No.4 Lee Enfield rifles encircled by an astral crown. RAF Regiment training schools were quickly established across the UK, with officers and Gunners being trained to operate as infantry, armoured car crewmen and air defence artillerymen. Ultimately, the Regiment adopted two distinct types of operational establishments, the field squadron and the anti aircraft flight. All members of the Regiment, however, were initially trained as combat infantrymen, an arrangement that continues to the present day.

The Cold War Era

By the end of hostilities, the RAF Regiment had served in all theatres of the war and

had gained an enviable reputation for tenacity and versatility. The Corps particularly distinguished itself at Meiktila in Burma, where it had suffered heavy losses repeatedly counter-attacking against Japanese forces attempting to capture the airstrip; at Monte Casino in Italy, where squadrons fought alongside Army units; and during the Normandy landings, when RAF Regiment wings were amongst the first units to come ashore at the Juno beachhead. In the post-war years the RAF Regiment found itself continually deployed on operations worldwide. The withdrawal from the British Empire and the associated small wars that followed placed increasingly large demands on the Corps. Service in Palestine, Aden, Suez, Cyprus, Malaya, Indonesia and Oman continued to hone the operational capabilities of squadrons and also developed a capacity for internal security and peacekeeping duties. The latter were to prove invaluable when RAF Regiment squadrons deployed to Northern Ireland in 1969. The Corps has maintained a continuous presence in the Province ever since. The Falklands conflict of 1982 saw 63 Squadron RAF Regiment deploy to provide air defence for the San Carlos airhead and since then, the Regiment has been at the forefront of combat operations world-wide.

Since its formation, the RAF Regiment has served in the United Kingdom, the Middle East, North Africa, East Africa, West Africa, Sicily, Italy, Greece, the Balkans, India, Burma, Indo-China, the East Indies, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Denmark, Norway, Austria, the Azores, the Cocos Islands, Cyprus, South Arabia, Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Borneo, Belize, Northern Ireland, the Falklands, the Gulf, Bosnia, Kosovo and Kuwait.

“Options for Change”

As a result of "Options For Change" which was a restructuring of the British Armed Forces in 1990, aimed at cutting defence spending following the end of the Cold War, the RAF Regiment has taken its share of reductions. However, a number of equipment enhancement programmes have significantly improved the Regiment's operational field capability, which will ensure that the RAF Regiment continues to be a flexible, cost effective and highly professional force which is capable of responding rapidly to events in all parts of the world. Since the 'Option for Change' programme, the RAF Regiment has begun to expand again with 51

Squadron being reconstituted in March 2001 and is based at RAF Lossiemouth.

Recent Years

The RAF Regiment has been involved in operations in the world's trouble spots such as East Timor, Georgia, Cambodia, the Balkans, Sierra Leone and Afghanistan, as well as maintaining Force Protection for RAF assets deployed in the Middle East. "Operation Granby", the liberation of Kuwait in 1991, saw the largest deployment of RAF Regiment personnel since the end of the Second World War. Although only 3% of total Royal Air Force strength, the Corps contributed 19% of the total RAF force in theatre, with some units advancing into Kuwait with the lead elements of Allied Forces. Since 2001, the RAF Regiment has been employed on intensive operations against the Taliban in support of the reconstruction effort in Afghanistan, as part of Operation Herrick under which all British operations in the war in Afghanistan have been conducted since 2002. This commitment is likely to last for the foreseeable future. The RAF Regiment returned to the desert of Iraq in 2003, the majority of its squadrons being involved in the invasion of Iraq as part of Operation Telic. As well as leading the force protection of military assets in the region, the RAF Regiment has also supported local community development projects.

In addition to RAF Regiment units based at all major RAF stations, responsible for ground defence and ground defence training, there are now six Force Protection Wings, eight Regular RAF Regiment squadrons and four Royal Auxiliary Air Force Regiment squadrons. The Royal Air Force Regiment is therefore, an up to date, highly mobile and flexible force, trained for operations in all parts of the world.

THE RAuxAF REGIMENT

The Royal Auxiliary Air Force (RAuxAF) owes its origin to Lord Trenchard's vision of an elite corps of civilians who would serve their country in flying squadrons in their spare time. Instituted by Order in Council on 9th October 1924, the first Auxiliary Air Force (AAF) Squadrons were formed the following year. After valiant service in World War Two the Auxiliary Air Force was reformed on 10th May 1947. In recognition of its wartime achievements, on 16th December 1947, the force was granted the honour of the prefix Royal by HM King George VI. The

same year, it was decided to expand and broaden the scope of the RAuxAF. Each flying squadron was to have a Regiment Light Anti-Aircraft (LAA) squadron and an air defence unit, later re-designated as Fighter Control Units (FCUs). Between 1949 and 1954 Radar Reporting Units (RRUs) were also formed. Twelve LAA squadrons, twenty-eight FCUs and two RRUs were formed. In 1947 the Air Council had approved the formation of twenty-eight RAuxAF Regiment LAA squadrons but only twelve actually came into being, the first of these on 1st May 1947. An LAA squadron's primary role was airfield defence, using Bofors L40/60 Guns against attack by low-flying aircraft, with a back up function of local ground defence. They were equipped with transport to make them fully mobile in a crisis. To emphasise their affiliation with a flying squadron, the LAAs "number plate" was prefixed by the number "2", for example, my own auxiliary squadron was affiliated to 605 (County of Warwick) RAF Squadron and thus, had the number and title 2605 (County of Warwick) RAuxAF Regiment Squadron.

The first four LAA squadrons formed on 1st May, a fifth on 1st October and the remainder on 1st December 1947. Some shared their town headquarters and their Honorary Air Commodores with their flying squadrons and many had detached flights. In common with other RAuxAF units, they attended a two-week summer camp, the first in 1948, both within the UK and in Germany. Many were held at the RAF Regiment Anti-Aircraft Gunnery School at RAF Watchet in Somerset where live-firing exercises took place.

When the manually operated wartime 40 mm Bofors L40/60 was to be replaced by the more complex hydraulically operated 40 mm Bofors L40/70, it was decided that the new weapon posed too great a training task for the under-manned auxiliaries. As a result, in 1955 the RAuxAF Regiment squadrons were converted to the field role and this proved to be a more attractive option for recruiting than the light anti-aircraft role had been. On 10th March, the so-called "trip wire" strategy for the defence of the UK and Western Europe came into being. To counter the threat from the Soviet Bloc, an all-out nuclear response would be NATO's answer to any escalating conflict. This left little room for defence of airfields etc. And removed the need for the flourishing force that was the RAuxAF

Regiment. So the 10th March 1957 saw the disbandment of all 21 Royal Auxiliary Air Force flying squadrons and also the Light Anti-Aircraft squadrons of the Royal Auxiliary Air Force Regiment that had been formed during the Second World War. The renaissance of the RAuxAF Regiment began in 1979 with the formation of three Regiment field squadrons and continued with a movements squadron in 1982 and following lessons learned during the Falklands conflict; an aeromedical evacuation squadron in 1983. A more recent addition in 1987 was an auxiliary element (the Grampian Troop) formed within a regular RAF Regiment Rapier Defence Squadron. During 2004 the RAuxAF was involved in the first large-scale mobilisation for over fifty years. More than nine hundred people, over 70% of its trained strength, were called into full-time service and were deployed to support RAF operations in Cyprus, Kuwait, Iraq and the Falkland Islands, as well as those in the UK.

The RAuxAF enjoyed its 80th Anniversary during 2004 and Lord Trenchard's vision has been amply vindicated by its achievements spanning the years. Whilst the auxiliary concept has moved away from the provision of flying squadrons, the professional skill, enthusiasm and esprit-de-corps of his young men of the twenties and thirties are matched by the men and women who constitute the RAuxAF of today.

RAuxAF Regiment Recruitment

Royal Auxiliary Air force Regiment personnel enlist initially for a 5-year engagement as members of the Royal Auxiliary Air Force. In order to qualify for bounty an auxiliary airman, SNCO or Officer must;

- * Complete a minimum 27 training days per year.
- * Complete Annual Continuation Training (ACT).
- * Successfully complete Common Core Skills (CCS).
- * Successfully complete Annual Personal Weapons Test.
- * Successfully complete RAF Regiment Battle Fitness Test.
- * Successfully complete RAF Regiment Operational Fitness.

Since the Strategic Defence Review of 1998 the Royal Air Force policy of "Total Force Concept" means that auxiliary training matches that of their regular counterparts as close as

practically possible. This means an auxiliary recruit, although on a shorter more modular course, completes exactly the same lessons on exactly the same subjects during the crucial Initial Ground Defence Training (IGDT) phase of recruit training as their regular counterpart. Although they do complete significantly less drill and ceremonial. In addition, after completing recruit training, potential officers must then attend a rigorous 4-day selection process alongside their regular counterparts at Officer and Aircrew Selection Centre (OASC) at RAF Cranwell. When at OASC they join the regular candidates and must pass exactly the same rigorous selection tests to exactly the same standard as their potential regular contemporaries. Prospective Junior Non-Commissioned Officers (JNCOs) and Senior Non-Commissioned Officers (SNCOs) must successfully complete JMLC/IMLC alongside the regular force at RAF Halton. However, the longer, regular, Further Training (FT) Courses are not normally compatible with the training time available to auxiliary personnel. Therefore, specialist auxiliary FT course are run by the appropriate regular trade training sponsors and these match the regular courses as close as possible. Auxiliary personnel also attend regular pre-employment courses such as Basic Instructional Techniques (BIT) and Ground Defence Training (GDT) Instructors Courses. If you are between 17 and 45 and are looking for a different challenge, the RAF Regiment or the RAuxAF Regiment could be what you are looking for.

So there you have it all, if you know anyone that may be interested in joining either the RAF Regiment or the RAuxAF Regiment, let me know and we'll give him or her further information and point them in the right direction. Go to it lads.

Our boys winning trust in a war-torn desert

Published in the Peterborough Evening Times by Jonny Muir

If a picture paints a thousand words, then photographs released today of RAF Wittering Regiment personnel in Afghanistan, speak volumes about efforts to win hearts and minds. In the midst of ever-present danger, the Peterborough Gunners are taking time to help

communities that have lived under the shadow of conflict for generations. In the picture, a soldier from the elite RAF Regiment can be seen tenderly treating a child who has clearly hurt himself. The picture also makes it clear that the child's mother trusts this trooper from a land faraway to care for her precious little boy. Another Gunner walks hand-in-hand with an Afghan youngster, while their father walks beside them, clearly at ease in the company of the trooper as blazing sunshine burns into the scorched earth of a village street.



The risks in this operation are graphically shown, however, where personnel from 3 Squadron RAF Regiment are crouched in the sand chatting to villagers, but one of their comrades – ever conscious of sniper fire or rocket attack – is armed and on watch. Tasked with protecting Kandahar Airfield – 10 miles south-east of the country's largest city – a crucial part of the force's work is winning the effort to gain the trust of isolated Afghan communities. The area is continually monitored to prevent the Taliban launching mortar and rocket attacks from outside the airfield's wire.

The force, which includes the 130-strong 3 Squadron RAF Regiment, 15 members of 1 Force Protection Wing and 18 reservists hailing from five different units, began a seven-month deployment in late February. Squadron Leader Rich Langley said: "I have no illusions about the challenges that lie ahead, but I am extremely confident that all our pre-deployment training will hold us in good stead."

No 3 Squadron RAF Regiment is responsible for the force protection of more than 12,000 multi-national troops and civilians at Kandahar Airfield from a variety of threats, including rocket attacks and suicide bombs planted by the Taliban. The squadron's 420km sq area of operation begins outside the perimeter fence and stretches up to 10 miles from the

airfield across rugged and barren landscape. Squadron Leader Langley added: "It is fundamental that we win and retain the will of the people, often referred to as hearts and minds.

RAF REGIMENT PENNANTS

Through the contacts that Branch member Ralph Dean has 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, contact the Branch Treasurer Tom Magee.

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. If anyone else would like to have it and can let me have an e-mail contact address too, 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 swords, trophies and many other items.

51 SQUADRON RAF REGIMENT

51 Squadron, RAF Regiment supported by 2622 Squadron Royal Auxiliary Air Force Regiment, will go to Iraq in the autumn under the command of Number 5 Force Protection Wing. RAF Lossiemouth Station Commander, Group Captain Monkman said: "This is an extremely busy year for RAF Lossiemouth and its personnel, not only for those going away, but for the station

personnel who have to ensure everyone is prepped and ready to go and then cover their absence, as well as provide support to those families and friends left behind. It requires a great deal of effort from the whole team and I know everyone is working very hard to make sure everything is done in time."

The next articles were published in the 28th March edition of RAF News.

In their sights – RAF Regiment's crack sniper squad target Iraqi militia

By Simon Williams

UK Forces are upping the stakes on Operation Telic by deploying a crack squad of highly trained RAF Regiment snipers to support ground troops and Immediate Response Teams under fire from Iraqi militia in Basrah. Flying with RAF Merlin and Lynx crews, the heavily armed heli-snipers can be mobilised at short notice to locate and destroy enemy positions, reducing the threat to Army ground troops and medical units on the ground.

So far the heli-snipers have been deployed to give force protection for Lynx immediate response teams, scrambled to evacuate casualties, fire support for deliberate operations, rapid route clearance for convoys and to counter the threat from militia preparing crude explosive devices.

Using IRT for the role gives the heli-snipers the ability to respond quickly. Travelling by air also gives them an improved field of vision allowing them to relay vital surveillance to commanders on the ground. Tasks such as fence-line checks which can take ground patrols hours to complete can be accomplished in minutes.

Armed with state of the art rifles equipped with specialist night-sights and laser marking capability, the RAF Regiment sniper teams have already proved effective in combat. As well as a range of cutting edge thermal imagers, the teams have been issued with laser target designators, range finders and a suite of VHF radios for maintaining air to ground communications, allowing them to counter the threat from vehicle borne suicide attacks by calling in air strikes.

Each field squadron within the RAF Regiment has a section of sniper qualified riflemen who provide the surveillance and target acquisition capability for the squadron. The section has a heli-sniper team on standby around the clock to respond to specific incidents. The

team work on a rotational basis, with the heli-snipers carrying out ground sniping and surveillance duties when not on standby.

In order to operate the cutting edge battlefield technology heli-snipers are put through a tough nine week training course at Honington covering all the essential elements of sniping and surveillance including specialist marksmanship skills such as angular shooting and advanced correction for wind. Once qualified as snipers, specialists can go on to command a sniper section, but continual training is required for service personnel to hone their shooting skills to deal with continually changing combat environments.

Over and out

Members of the RAF Regiment's 15 Squadron have been praised as heroes during their six-month stint on their front-line tour. The Squadron's last tour of duty guarding the sprawling complex has been the most challenging yet, according to Squadron Leader Neil Rawsthorne. Despite daily threat of attack, in one incident facing down Taliban insurgents during a barrage of mortar and rocket attacks on Kandahar Airfield. The Squadron has won admiration for their efforts in protecting the 12,000 civilian and military staff at the base which is home to ISAF regional command. Speaking after handing over to 3 Squadron he Squadron Leader Rawsthorne said: "The operation was complex and involved every element of my Squadron. It is a great testament to their teamwork. Happily there have been no fatalities within the wire at the base. When you get a result like that it's a great morale booster". A low part came when the Taliban launched a rocket attack on the base on Christmas Day – bringing to an end the NATO force's already muted celebrations. Despite the constant risk of attack from insurgents, 15 Squadron managed to launch successful operations to aid local villages caught up in the conflict. Squadron Leader Rawsthorne said: "I am delighted in what we have achieved".

RAF Regiment leads tri-service effort to scale Makalu

After nearly three years preparation, four teams from across the Armed Forces will attempt to conquer the fifth highest mountain in the world. Makalu, 22 km east of Everest on the border between Nepal and Tibet, was once described by Sir Edmund Hillary as "one of the hardest propositions of all". At the tri-service team

prepared for its biggest challenge to date, expedition leader Squadron Leader David Tait from the RAF Regiment was blunt about the scale of the task. He said: "It's like scaling the Rock of Gibraltar with high altitude boots on, thick mittens, and about half the oxygen. It's pretty full-on. We'll start feeling the altitude before we even get to base camp. People will start to get headaches; we'll have to watch each other carefully".

The expedition was formally launched by the Duke of Westminster and attended by Defence Minister Baroness Taylor, Vice Chief of the Defence Staff General sir Timothy Granville-Chapman, chief of the Air Staff Sir Glenn Torpy and other senior members of the Forces and expedition sponsors. Makalu 2008 is the latest of a four-yearly cycle of UK military mountaineering expeditions which began exactly 50 years ago with the first joint-service expedition in 1958. It is the second time the services have joined forces to tackle the peak – an earlier effort was abandoned because of adverse weather conditions.

The expedition team is made up of forty-two service personnel including eight servicewomen and a mixture of officers and other ranks. Makalu 2008 comprises four separate but linked expeditions: a main team who will attempt the summit, a subsidiary team, a high altitude development team who will aim to stretch potential future main team members, and a junior team that will take on the highest trekking hill in the Himalayas.

Getting into any of the four teams was a challenge in itself, involving rigorous physical and aptitude tests. One hundred and seventy applied and were interviewed; eighty went forward through six different training sessions and camps, with just forty-two being selected for the final teams. Once base camp is fully established, the Main Team's effort will be to get their highest camp – itself at a daunting 7,800 metres – built and stocked with supplies. Then they will need a three-day break in the weather to make the final reach for the summit, at a terrifying 8,463 metres.

To succeed, the team's strongest climbers will need to conquer the 5–6 metres of knife-edge ridge in tough conditions. Squadron Leader Colin Scott has the job of making sure the climber have the kit they need, from sourcing it in the UK to freighting it to Nepal. Squadron Leader Emily Flynn is head of communications for the

expedition. She explained that the communications equipment will serve three main purposes; communication within and between the teams, keeping the outside world informed of their progress, and calling for assistance in the event of an emergency. The expedition will achieve this through a combination of UHF and VHF radios and iridium satellite 'phones. Meanwhile, rugged laptops, rated to minus 20 degrees and coupled to BGAN/Inmarsat data uplinks, will enable the teams to post updates to the web direct from the base camps at Makalu. Although optimised for cold weather rather than hot, the set-up is broadly similar to that used by the Forces Joint Media Operation Teams to relay video footage back from operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Powering the equipment will be a major challenge and will be down to Squadron Leader Flynn who said:

"The main teams and base camp will use a combination of diesel generators and solar panels, but the Junior Team will rely purely on solar. Large solar collectors will be used to top-up 12 V DC batteries for powering static kit such as laptops, while team members will carry their own smaller, foldaway solar cells to help power handheld equipment".

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Makalu has proved to be a challenging climb, as only five of its first sixteen attempts were successful. To date, there have been a total of 206 successful ascents of Makalu and a total of 22 fatalities. There have been no known winter ascents of this peak. Prior to its first ascent in 1955, it was admired and studied by several Everest expeditions, but like a lot of other giants in the Khumbu region, it was not attempted until the summit of Everest was first ascended in 1954.

NATIONAL MEMORIAL

ARBORETUM (NMA) UPDATE

A major new improvement is that the NMA now operates a land train on-site. What a wonderful idea for such a large site that can be daunting to get round for many older visitors. They can now see all, the site in relative comfort. The company that operates it charges £2.00 for a day ticket enabling the visitor to hop on and hop off. At the moment it only covers the hard surfaced roads, but once the weather is a little drier they will try it "off-road". The NMA have also installed an outdoor catering establishment,

run by the same company that will be on-site throughout the summer too.

£4m expansion for Arboretum

A huge increase in the number of people visiting the National Memorial Arboretum has prompted a £4 million expansion plan for the site. Growing visitor numbers have prompted a centre commemorating the UK's war dead to launch an appeal for £4 million to improve facilities. The NMA has already netted £500,000 and has given itself another four-and-a-half years to find the rest. Organisers have set up two appeal councils and are confident the lion's share of the cash will be secured thanks to the benevolence of private donors, who have already been approached.

However, they are keen for the public to dig deep and are encouraging them to send their contributions to the centre or via a special facility on its website. Arboretum chief executive Charles Bagot Jewitt said: "It's a very exciting time for us. The arboretum has now gained full status as a national site and we are now looking to move it forward to its next phase where it proves an even better visitor experience than it is already."

He said the centre was expecting to attract at least 220,000 visitors from the UK and abroad this year and was keen to ensure it could cater for them. To do this, it intended to spend £4 million on additional drains and toilets, classrooms and car parking, as well as a resource centre and extra restaurant facilities. Funding would also be channelled into new amenities to support the 200 events the arboretum stages each year. Mr Bagot Jewitt said organisers had given themselves five years to raise the money and develop the facilities but would try to achieve their target sooner if possible. The centre had set up a national appeal council chaired by Major General Patrick Cordingley and a regional equivalent under the leadership of James Leavesley, he said. Massive interest in the centre's new £7 million Armed Forces Memorial, unveiled by the Queen last October, is the main driver behind the need for additional facilities. Its huge Portland stone walls are inscribed with the names of the 16,000 soldiers, sailors and airmen killed since World War Two - and there is room for 16,000 more.

The future vision for the arboretum at Alrewas includes an education centre, a dedicated exhibition centre, and a charity shop, as well as the expansion of cafes, car parking and other

facilities. The arboretum's chief executive Charles Bagot-Jewitt said:

"One of the key things about the arboretum is that we have really become a national site, particularly with the arrival of the Armed Forces Memorial. We are seeing huge numbers of visitors – 15,000 a month throughout the winter. We're looking at 220,000 visitors this year, and it might even turn out to be more than that – that's if we have enough parking spaces. All of our facilities need to expand to be able to cope with the numbers, and we have launched a capital development appeal of about £4 million. This will help with the basics – car parking, more toilet facilities so on – but also give us the opportunity to build an education centre, an exhibition space, an additional cafe, a charity shop and an office for our friends group and volunteers."

Mr Bagot-Jewitt said the expansion had always been the ultimate aim, but the growth in popularity meant things were happening more quickly than expected. "I think the arboretum has really touched on a nerve with people, particularly with everything that is going on in Iraq and Afghanistan," he said.

Future Events at the NMA

Thursday 22nd May 2008

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

Saturday 24th May 2008

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

Sunday 1st June 2008

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

Wednesday 4th June 2008

Avro Shackleton Association. Dedication of the Association's memorial at 2.00 pm in the Millennium Chapel, then on-site. Contact: Mr

James Box on 01462 453315 or by email: box805@btinternet.com

Saturday 7th June 2008

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

Sunday, 15th June, 2008

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

Thursday 27th June 2008

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

Sunday 29th June 2008

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

Saturday 5th July 2008

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

Sunday 27th July 2008

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

Saturday 30th August 2008

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

Saturday, 27th September 2008

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

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

Malcolm B

DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES



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Sunday 1 st June	2008	Cosford Air Show	Thursday 11 th Sept	2008	Branch Night
Thursday 12 th June	2008	Branch Night	Monday 15 th September	08	Battle of Britain Day
Monday 16th June	2008	20th Anniv of Branch	Sunday 5 th October	2008	Merchant Navy Day
Friday 27 th June	2008	Veterans Day	Fri 3rd-Mon 6th Oct	2008	Ass.n Reunion & AGM
Saturday 28th June	2008	Ded.n Mem at NMA	Thursday 9 th October	2008	Branch Night
Sunday 29 th June	2008	National Service Day	Tuesday 21 st October	2008	Battle of Trafalgar Day
Friday 11th July	2008	New Queen's Colour	Saturday 1 st November	2008	Midlands Festival of Rem
Thursday 10 th July	2008	Branch Night	Sunday 2 nd November	2008	B'ham Poppy Ball
Thursday 10 th August	2008	Branch Night	Sunday 9th November 2008		Remembrance Sunday
			Tuesday 11 th November	08	Remembrance Day
			Thursday 13 th November	08	Branch Night
			Sat 29 th -Sun 30 th Nov	2008	Birmingham Int Tattoo
			Sunday 30 th November	2008	St Andrew's Day
			Thursday 11 th December	08	Branch Night
			Sunday 1 st February	2009	67 th Ann RAF Regiment
			Sunday 1 st February	2009	Subscriptions Due
			Sunday 1 st March	2009	St David's Day

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