



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: 237
MARCH 2009**

THE BIRMINGHAM BRANCH NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 237 MARCH 2009

Dear Readers.

As I said in last month's newsletter, at 10.00 a.m. on Friday morning 30th January, I was invited to attend the Annual General Meeting of the Newton Branch of the Women's Institute. They meet at meets at St Bernard's Church, Broome Road,, Great Barr, and I was there to give them a short talk before their AGM Meeting began, about the Military Ward and to receive from the ladies of Newton Women's Institute, a cheque for a magnificent £270.00. So at just gone 9.00 a.m. Valerie and I left to drive there thinking that we had plenty of time for a thirty minute journey. No such luck, thanks to the traffic we only arrived just in time before the meeting started but on our arrival, Valerie and I were really warmly welcomed by their members. One of them, Hazel Bridgwood - who is the wife of our Minute Secretary Ken Bridgwood – had told their members all about our Appeal and good for them, the ladies had a collection between them and raised the superb sum of £270.00 for our Appeal. Our grateful thanks to the ladies for all their hard work and for the interest that they have so amply demonstrated, in what we are doing.



The Photograph shows me receiving the cheque from Rosamund Lucock, Secretary of the Newton Woman's Institute. The ladies were very interested in hearing all about the Military Ward and in what we were trying to do for the patients in it. At the end of my talk to them, they asked so many intelligent questions that, as it was their AGM meeting and there was a lot of business to get through, their Chairwoman apologetically had

to bring the question and answer session to a halt. Together with other ladies organisations that I

have spoken to on the same subject, these ladies really had the welfare of our wounded troops at heart and were very anxious to help. Apart from Norfolk Branch who are really supporting our Fund and a couple of donations from Sussex Branch and Kent Branch, we are not getting any support from other branches, so we really ought to tap into ladies organisations and any other organisations that you may think of for donations. All the ladies that I have talked to about the Military Ward are really interested and other organisations may be just as interested. So are there any other organisations out there that our members know of who may be interested in donating to our Fund as well? And now that I have mentioned the Norfolk Branch, their magnificent support has resulted in another cheque for £405.00. On 13th December 2008, Norfolk Branch Member Norman Hunt died aged 86 years. The funeral was held on 2nd January 2009, and family flowers only were requested but donations if desired, could be made to the Birmingham Branch, Military Ward Appeal. Colin Clarke their Branch Secretary, was pleased to tell me that a total of £405.00 has been received for the Appeal. Norman was a founder member of Norfolk Branch and he and his family were great supporters of the Branch and Association. They are grateful for everyone's donations and that the money is going to help all our troops. We are very grateful too Colin but your latest donation has given the Birmingham Branch a problem for now your Branch has given more than the Birmingham Branch. Norfolk Branch has raised the magnificent total of £975.15 compared with the Birmingham Branch total of £865.00. We've got to do better than this lads so come on, as I have said before - dig deep and die happy.

BRANCH BIRTHDAYS

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

2nd March **Bill Bennett** West Bromwich
3rd March **Colin Taylor** Newport Shropshire

5th March **Ron Ryland** Kidderminster
 6th March **Stan Cowburn** Oldham Lancashire
 9th March **Don Hawkeswood** Stourbridge
 10th March **Gordon Turner** Bewdley
 20th March **Brian Wakefield** Birmingham
 25th March **Arthur Bryant** Northampton
 25th March **Michael Silver** RAF Brize Norton
 9th March **Brian Thornalley** Longborough
 31st March **Fred Ringham** Solihull West Mids

Branch Appeal

Goodies for the Military Ward

It is most important that we remember the dangers that our young men and women serving on operations are all facing, so please remember the appeal your Branch Committee have set up. With the ever increasing number of casualties being evacuated from the combat zones, we need to encourage continuing donations to the Appeal Fund. With your help, we can continue to provide these small comforts and any other items that the Military Ward staff ask us for. We can never get enough goodies for the lads, so in the mean time, your continued support is appreciated. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any other ideas where we could help. All donations will be gratefully acknowledged and will be recorded in the Birmingham Branch newsletters. If anyone would like to contribute financially to this appeal, please send a cheque to the Branch Treasurer Tom Magee, made out to the Birmingham Branch – Military Ward Appeal. If any of you would like to contribute items to this appeal, you can either take them directly to Ward S4, Selly Oak Hospital and ask for Major Ian Cheesman, or any of the Military Ward staff; or post them to Major I R Cheesman, OC Patient Support Services, RCDM, Ward S4, Selly Oak Hospital, Raddlebarn Road, Selly Oak, Birmingham, B29 6JD.

For reasons of space, I have had to cut down the Minutes considerably, but the main points are included. If anyone would like a full copy of these Minutes please let me know and I will put a copy in with your next newsletter.

MINUTES OF THE NEC MEETING 17th JANUARY 2009

1. Intro and apologies

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and then asked the Vice-Chairman to conduct the dedication.

2. Minutes of NEC July 2008

The metal plaques currently at the RAF Regt Memorial Garden would be honoured but NMA policy now was that non-organic structures were being discouraged in favour of trees and shrubs. The provision of an alternative means of commemoration was being considered, with the provision of a block paving path to replace the current concrete slabs. This would involve little or no maintenance and also raise valuable funds for the RAFRMG and the Regt Fund.

3. AGM Report

Feedback was that the rooms were much improved and that the hotel's facilities (for the AGM, for example) had been satisfactory, except for the divided room for the Gala dinner. At the AGM, the result of the election of Vice-Chairman had been announced, followed by the Secretary's and Treasurer's reports and the AGM had approved the amendments to C&Rs proposed by the NEC. The AGM had been rounded off with a superb Operational Briefing from members of No 34 Sqn, describing operations in Iraq and in Kandahar. The Gala Dinner guests were Cpl David Heyden MC and his wife, Phillipa, the RAF Regt Historian Dr Nigel Warwick and the members of 34 Sqn. Willie Downie's poem about the award of David Heyden's MC had been read out and presented to him.

4. Appointment of a new Chaplain

The Meeting heard a short report on the Funeral of Willie Downie, the Association Chaplain. The Chairman reported that he had given one of the addresses in what he described as a very moving service. The meeting agreed that the Association needed a Chaplain to carry on the good work for members for which Willie Downie had established a tradition. A decision on whom to appoint as Chaplain would be made at the next NEC in July.

5. Canadian Branch Subs

Since the creation of the unified Association, the Canadian Branch had held its contribution to the Association in an account in Canada for lack of any discussions on the level of that contribution. The last NEC had decided that the contribution should be set at £10 per head. The only costs generated by the Canadian Chapter arose from producing and distributing the Flash. While the distribution had sometimes been done by post in the past, it had now been agreed that it would now be dispatched electronically, leaving only

cost of the design and production of the magazine.

On this basis the NC proposed that the level of the Canadian Chapter's contribution to the National Association should be set at £5 per head per year. The Chapter had already made the contribution at this level to cover the current year and the back year's contribution. This was unanimously agreed for future years until further notice.

6. Budget Report

The Treasurer presented his budget and reported that although finances were reasonably healthy, there would be an impact on the interest returned from reserves because of the turbulence in the financial markets and that interest rates on saver accounts had dropped dramatically. This would mean that income for the Association earned from savings would be much lower. Following a discussion it was agreed that the 7 day account and the current account be balanced differently. The NT also reported elsewhere that trading had been successfully started up.

7. Membership report

The Membership Secretary reported that current active membership is 1134. Since Sept-08, 21 new members joined the association. During the same period 14 members deaths were reported to him. He concluded that the membership is static, and encouraged all members and officials at branches to explore and implement local initiatives with the aim of increasing the membership by 10-12% and stressed that we needed to maintain this level of recruitment, whilst the Association explores national initiatives to attract younger serving members. He reported that he had met with Representatives of the WO and SNCO's Association with the result that closer bonds would be explored between our two Associations.

8. 2009 Election Arrangements

The Secretary reported that as part of the annual cycle of elections, two National Officials' posts were due for election this year. These were the National Secretary and the National Treasurer. An Election Sub-Committee (ESC) and a sequence of events for the election was agreed. It was agreed that members of the ESC would be Martin Hooker as Chair and Returning Officer, Jean Yule, Tom Renshaw and Steve Horton. Nominations would be requested in March, closing by 1st May. Voting papers to be included with the Flash in June and the Ballot closing on 1st

August. The election count taking place on 17th September with the results being announced in October.

9. Reunion and AGM Venue

The Reunion Co-ordinator reported on his negotiations for a venue for the AGM and Autumn Reunion from 2nd to 5th October 2009. He recommended the Britannia Hotel in Coventry. Our requirements for the AGM and the Gala Dinner were able to be fulfilled. The WO's and SNCO's Association were keen to hold their Reunion and AGM at the same time as ours in the same venue, holding separate AGMs but sharing the Gala Dinner. This was agreed.

10. Merchandising

The Treasurer reported that he had some success with his merchandising and had stock left. He informed members that those in possession of the Government-awarded Veterans' badges could now buy a tie to match.

11. Flash and Website Update

The Editor reported that, again, the most limiting factor in the production of the Flash was the amount of input he was receiving. The Secretary briefed on the Website statistics. These had more than doubled in the last 12 months and were still rising.

12. Way Ahead Working Group Report

The Membership Secretary reported that a consultation document had been designed to elicit comment and ideas from a wide range of participants, from serving Corps members who have yet to join the Association to those members who have recently lapsed.

13. National Standard

The design for the Standard featured the Union flag in the top- inner corner and the Association in the centre. The price would be £700 plus the cost of a new Pike and Gloves. This was approved. The Workshops at RAF Honington offered to make a new case for the Standard at no cost to the Association.

14. Welfare Issues

This was deferred.

15. Al Waki Painting

The Chairman proposed that the Association should purchase a Giclée print and present it to Training Wing HQ, to be mounted prominently so that it could be seen by all trainee gunners and FT's as they went about their normal duties. This proposal, for a sum of £485 for the purchase of a Giclée print was agreed. Arrangements would be

made to find a suitable occasion (such as a TG Graduation Parade) when the presentation could be made with due ceremony, and attended by a number of Association members.

16. Ceremonial Planning

The Chairman briefed the members on the dates for the calendar:- Spring Reunion Littlecote House 17th – 20th April - St Anne's Chapel service Catterick 10th May - NMA Alrewas 27th June - Tower of London 12th July - AGM and Reunion 2nd – 5th October. These would be the occasions for which the NEC approved the National Standard to be paraded. It was agreed that, if the National Standard Bearer were to be approached to parade the National Standard on other occasions, he would refer the matter to National Officials.

17. Association Trophies

The Chairman reported that, as some members were aware, the Corps was introducing a Lance Corporal Rank for gunners for the first time. As a consequence of this a further FT course was to be introduced. The existing courses would be renumbered so that the FT regime from late summer 2009 would be:

- L/Cpl's FT Course FT1
- Cpl's FT Course FT2
- Sgts FT Course FT3

As we had already presented two trophies to Training Wing for the existing FT 1 and 2, the Chairman proposed that the Association spend a sum of not exceeding £150 to purchase a silver cup of similar dimensions to the first two and be suitably engraved for the best student of the FT1 course. This trophy would be known as the Op Banner trophy commemorating the Corps deployment to NI and therefore the trophies would be as follows:-

- OP Banner FT1
- OP Telic FT2
- OP Herrick FT3

This was approved unanimously. The Treasurer agreed to source and provide books – one for each trophy - to record the names of the recipients of the awards.

18. Audit Sub Committee

The Chairman proposed that an Audit Sub-Committee be appointed by the NEC to scrutinise the accounts and the Treasurer. He proposed that the Audit Sub-Committee should comprise Alex Hargreaves, the Catterick Branch President Mrs

Ros Sweeney who had audited the accounts in the past. This was unanimously agreed.

19. SOPs

The amended SOP's were agreed to be implemented.

20. Area Issues

- a. Recruitment Equipment.** It was agreed that only one mannequin dressed in RAF Regt best blue existed. Display boards used in the past had either come from the Depot or from individual members.
- b. Travel Expenses.** SW&W commented that the current mileage rate of 40p per mile was too high now that petrol prices had come down and that the charge should be actual fuel cost plus a percentage. It was agreed that it was simply impracticable to identify specific fuel costs for a single journey and that fuel was only a part of travel costs. In addition, 40ppm was in line with (or lower than) most charities and non-commercial bodies. **This proposal was not approved.**
- c. National Officers Expenses.** SW&W requested that all National Officers claims be published individually for scrutiny by members. This proposal was not approved.
- d. Reunion to go back to Warners.** This was raised by SW&W. It was decided that the issue was not about the NEC selecting Warners or IOWT as a matter of policy, but about our duty to get the best deal for our members, no matter who supplied it. In this light, a move to choose a single supplier was deemed not a matter to be put to the vote.
- e. Grant to Spring Reunion.** The SW&W Area reported a request for £1000 from Association reserves to subsidise drinks at the Spring Reunion. This was not approved.
- f. Reunion Format.** Changes to the format of the AGM reunion were proposed from EA but it was felt that these had been dealt with under item 9.
- g. Dress Code.** The need for the dress code for Association formal functions to be advertised was also requested by EA. This will be promulgated through a MiniFlash.

21. AOB

The Secretary requested clarification on expenses for National Officials attending the Reunion to service the AGM but not attending the rest of the Reunion. Since he had a personal interest in this matter, NS left the meeting. The meeting agreed that, in the rare circumstances where a National Official travelled to the AGM, (where his presence was, of course, essential) but was not able, for personal or professional reasons to remain for the Reunion, his travel costs should be reimbursed.

22. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting to be held on 18th July 2009, at RAF Scampton.

NEWS OF THE RAF REGIMENT



FROM THE RAF REGIMENT SECRETARY DEATH NOTICES:

ROWLANDS ROBERT. Former RAF Regt SAC Robert John ROWLANDS, born 19 Jul 35, died on 23 Jan 09 aged 73. He served as a National Serviceman from 1955 – 57 and was a member of 104 (LAA) and 24 (LAA) Sqns RAF Regt, based at RAF Stations Wahn, Wildenrath and Bruggen. The funeral took place at 11.30 on Wed 4 Feb 09 at Colwyn Bay Crematorium, Bron y Nant, Dinerth Rd, Colwyn Bay. Family flowers only were requested but donations may be made to the Emphysema Society and the North Wales Branch of the RAF Regt Assoc. He is survived by his wife, Mrs Ann Rowlands of 15 Llys Trefor, Sea View Rd, Colwyn Bay, Conway, to whom the Corps extends its sincere condolences.

WILLIAM (BILL) WEIGHTMAN. RAF Regt Flt Lt (and late Lt Col TA, Rtd) William Albert (Bill) Weightman, born 1926, died on 29 Jan 09, aged 83. He served with the Regt until his retirement. He joined the TA as a Reserve Officer and achieved the rank of Lt Col.

The funeral was held at the RC Church of the Holy Family, 60 Cockerton Green, Darlington DL3 9EU at 11.00 on Thu 5 Feb 09. Further details may be obtained from the Funeral Director, John Blenkiron and Sons Ltd, on 01748 850033. He is survived by his wife, Val, to whom the Corps extends its sincere condolences.

BUNCH SAMUEL. Former RAF Regt SAC Samuel Bunch, born 12 Jun 29, died on 22 Jan 09 aged 79. He served from 1946-53 on various units, including 51 (Rifle) and 51 (LAA) Sqns RAF Regt and at RAF Dumfries. Member of the West Yorks Branch of the RAF Regt Assoc. The funeral was held at Rawdon Crematorium, Leeds, at 11.40 on Tue 3 Feb 09. Family flowers only were requested but donations may be made to Ward 1 at Otley Hospital via the Funeral Directors, D Pickles & Son, Bardon House, Park Rd, Guisley, Leeds. LS20.8AR (Tel 01943 875222). He is survived by his wife, Mrs J Bunch of 5 Crowtrees Court, Rawdon, Leeds. LS19 6J, to whom the Corps extends its sincere condolences.

SMITH JOSEPH. Former RAF Regt Gnr Joesph E SMITH, died on 12 Feb 09 aged 59. Former RAF Regt Assoc (Notts & Derby) member. No further details are available at this time. The Corps extends its sincere condolences to the family.

ARNOLD STANLEY. RAF Regt Sqn Ldr (Retd) Stanley Arnold, born 14 Dec 18, died on 11 Feb 09 aged 90. He was commissioned on 26 Apr 45 in the RAF Regt, was promoted to Sqn Ldr on 1 Jul 55, and retired on 14 Dec 73. He was previously an Air Gunner on 101 Sqn RAF, a Lancaster Pathfinder unit, before transferring to the RAF Regt at war's end. He also is believed to have served in Palestine and Malaya. He was awarded the MBE in 1972 for his work in Cyprus during the period 1969-70 and was the CO of RAF Medmenham for a time. He was also reportedly involved in some capacity in the Funeral of Sir Winston Churchill. The funeral was held at St Mary's Church in St Neots on Mon 2 Mar 09 at 13.00 which was followed by the cremation in Bedford and then a Reception at the White Horse in Eaton Socon, St Neots. He is survived by his daughter, Mrs Anne Waller of 10 New Road, Great Kingshill, Buckinghamshire HP15 6DR. The Corps extends its sincere condolences to the family.

SMITH JOSEPH. Former RAF Regt SAC Gnr Joseph E Smith, died on 12 Feb 09 aged 59. Served on 63 sqn RAF Regt and QCs. Former RAF Regt Assoc (Notts & Derby) member and Standard Bearer. No further details known at this time. The funeral was held at All Saints' Church, Riply, at 15.00 on Thu 26 Feb 09 and was followed by a cremation at Marketan

Crematorium at 16.00. Family Flowers only were requested but donations may be made to Ripley Hospital. He is survived by his wife, Mrs Carol Smith, of 31 Wright Avenue, Ripley, Derbyshire DE5 3EY. The Corps extends its sincere condolences to the family.

BAKER HAROLD. Former RAF Regt Gnr Harold Thomas Baker, born 28 May 24, died on 6 Jan 09 aged 84. Member of the RAF Regt WOs & SNCOS Assoc. No further details are known at this time and the funeral has taken place. He is survived by his granddaughter, Mrs Martina Delaney of Sandford Mill House, Sandford, Reading, Berkshire, to whom the Corps extends its sincere condolences.

JONES Alan. Former RAF Regt SAC Gnr David Alan JONES, born 22 Aug 38, died in Australia on 23 Jan 09 aged 70. He served from 1957-60 and then again from 1962-71. The funeral has taken place. His wife died a few weeks earlier in early Jan 09. No further details are known. He is survived by his son, Robert Jones of 15 Holly Crescent, Windaroo, 4207 Queensland, Australia, to whom the Corps extends its sincere condolences.

GENERAL NOTICES:

Thanksgiving Service for the Late AVM D A Pocock CBE – Former CG

A service of Thanksgiving for the Life and Service of the late AVM Donald Pocock CBE (CG 1973-75), will be held at 1200 on Weds 8 Apr 09 at the RAF Church of St Clement Danes in the Strand, London. A reception will follow at the RAF Club. Those wishing to attend should register their names with the RAF Regt Sec as soon as possible and no later than 23 Mar to enable tickets to be allocated.

AL WAKI PAINTING

The first tranche of Limited and Special Edition lithographic prints has been dispatched. These prints, limited to just 65 in number, are selling well (only some 30 are left) and the stock may not last too long. Stuart Brown's website is at www.skipperpress.com. Potential purchasers are urged to speak to the Regt Sec before ordering specific numbered copies to check whether their required number is available.

Annual Corps Commemoration at the NMA

The Annual Corps Commemoration at the RAF Regt Memorial, NMA, will take place on National Armed Forces Day, Sat 27 Jun 09. Details will be issued later in the Spring, but it

will follow a similar pattern to the 2007 event. Note that the 1100-1115 period in the Chapel, which has the Daily Homage played out, can no longer be reserved for our exclusive use and we will plan our Service around it.

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

II Sqn RAF Regt intend to hold their 87th Anniversary celebration, at their hangar at RAF Honington on Thu 14 May 09. The event will be open to past and present Sqn members. Full details of the event will be publicised in due course and, at this stage, we ask that all former Sqn members keep this date clear in their diaries.

194 and 63 Sqns Reunion – 2 May 09

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

Oman Experiences

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

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

The RAF Regt Museum is in the process of loaning a Rapier FSB1(M) missile system to the RAF Laarbruch Museum in Weeze, Nord Rhein Westfalia, Germany. It is planned to hold a formal unveiling of the exhibit sometime in the Spring/early Summer of 2009 and it is hoped to use the event to stage a reunion for those who served at RAF Laarbruch on the Regt Sqns or GDT during the period 1953-1999. The Museum website may be found at: <<http://www.laarbruch-museum.net>>. Details of any such reunion, including suggested accommodation, will be issued at a later date. If anyone is interested in helping run, or to take on the coordination of the reunion attendees, please contact the RAF Regt Sec.

Queen's Colour Presentation Video

The Regt Sec has received many requests for details of any video produced of the Queen's Colour Presentation at RAF Fairford in July. We

understand that there are no plans to produce such a video but enquiries will continue. Details will be broadcast when and if appropriate.

CORPS DIARY DATES:

(Updated - not exhaustive - contributions welcome).

8 Apr 09 – Thanksgiving Service for AVM D A Pocock CBE (Church of St Clement Danes)

18-20 Apr 09 – RAF Armd Car Assoc – Spring Reunion (Derby).

19 Apr - 3 May 09 - RAF Regt, RAF and Combined Services' Skill-at-Arms Competitions.

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

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

14 May 09 – II Sqn RAF Regt 87th Anniversary Celebration (Honington)

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

15 Jun 09 – Centurion Journal No27 contributions due.

27 Jun 09 - RAF Regt Memorial Commemoration - NMA Alrewas

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

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

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

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

15 Dec 09 - Centurion Journal No28 contributions due.

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

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

15 Dec 09 - Centurion Journal No28 contributions due.

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

BRANCH SUBSCRIPTIONS

Please remember that your Branch Subscriptions were due on 1st February and also, please remember that your total subscription will be £15.00 that is £10.00 Association Subscription and £5.00 Branch Subscription. If you have not yet paid up, please make your cheque out to the Birmingham Branch, the RAF Regiment Association and send them **IMMEDIATELY** to **THE BRANCH TREASURER** Tom Magee and **NOT** to me.

NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIPTIONS

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

FROM THE BRANCH SECRETARY

RAF REGIMENT HISTORY

Official RAF Regiment Historian Dr Nigel Warwick

Dr Nigel Warwick, who wrote “Constant Vigilance; The RAF Regiment in the Burma Campaign”, is currently carrying out further research into the history of the RAF Regiment for future books. His areas of research in order of priority are:

- a. **RAF Armoured Car Companies/Squadrons in the Middle East 1921-1953.**
- b. **RAF Regiment in the Mediterranean 1942-1946.** Dr Warwick's focus here is on the Middle East Desert Air Force 1941-1943 (Egypt, Libya, Tunisia), North Africa 1942-1943 (Algeria, Tunisia), Sicily 1943, Italy 1943-1946, Cos 1943, South of France 1944, Greece 1944-1945, Yugoslavia 1944-1946.
- c. **RAF Regiment in the UK.** D-Day and North West Europe and the Occupation of Germany 1944-1946

Time is short so it is important that we do all we can to assist him. I have sent him several stories that over the years, our members have contributed to the Birmingham Branch newsletters, but there must be many of you that can assist in this. If you have any stories connected with the above areas of research, then either let me have them, or you can contact Dr Warwick at <caronige@aapt.net.au>. There is a questionnaire about this research which can be downloaded from the Association website at <www.rafregt.org.uk>. The most valuable source of history is the people who have lived it. Please

do all you can to ensure that we can all benefit from this living history before it is lost forever.

RAF Regiment Association Website

We now have an excellent Association website with each branch having a unique page – or even pages - but so far, the Birmingham Branch is the only branch in the Association to make use of it. So far, we have five pages and there may be more in the future if we can find new topics for the Branch and enough information to fill new pages. The five pages Birmingham Branch pages are:

The Home Page

The Birmingham Branch Committee Page

Birmingham Branch News Page

Birmingham Branch Roll of Honour

Birmingham Branch History

We can only improve our input to the Birmingham Branch pages with you help, so if any of you have got any ideas for improving them, please let me know. In addition, as the Birmingham Branch appears to be the only branch in the Association to take advantage of adding to our website, the Association Chairman Steven Brereton Martin, has sent out the following request.

Steven Brereton Martin - Chairman

The Association website – www.rafregt.org.uk – can only be kept up to date if the webmaster is routinely supplied with input from those who have information relating to RAF Regiment Association affairs. Put another way, the website can only be as good as the sum of its parts. Each Branch has a unique page in the website and, of course, these can only be kept up to date if Branches supply the relevant information. In some cases, Branches have not amended their pages since they were first created, and in one or two cases, Branch officials are listed who sadly, have died. Further, any member of the Association visiting the site might spot a mistake or be able to provide more information about a topic and it is very important that they take action to correct that mistake or provide the additional information.

Equally, if members have positive comments to make about how to improve the site, then it is important that they pass that comment to the webmaster. In this regard, please note that the RAF Regiment Secretary, Martin Hooker, has NO oversight of the website and NO responsibility for

its content, so will not be able to help with any matters relating to the website.

If you, or any member has a problem with website policy, contact me or the National Secretary. However for updates, corrections, input of information or any technical matter, the person to contact is the webmaster. He is Gordon Diffey – himself a retired Rock Ape – who can be contacted at gdiffey@wsimarketing.com

Please pass this information on to your members so that we can ensure that the Association website is as good as we can make it. Steven Brereton Martin, Chairman.

Association Reunion and AGM 2009

I was pleased to receive the information that the 2009 Association Reunion and AGM are to be held at the Britannia Hotel, Coventry, for those of you that were in the old RAF Regiment (Comrades) Association from the very beginning, will recall the very first two Reunion Weekends in 1989 and 1990. At the request of the Founder of the Comrades Association, Vic Bibby, and on behalf of the Birmingham Branch and the Association, I organised both reunions and they were both held at that same hotel, although at the time, it was called the De Vere Hotel. At the first Reunion Weekend in 1989, the weekend started for the Birmingham Branch on the Friday morning when members set up a Reception Display of RAF Regiment memorabilia in the lobby of the hotel, together with a Welcome Desk for all the guests to sign in with their service details. The weekend began for the guests on the Friday afternoon with all the guests being welcomed in the lobby of the hotel by a Birmingham Branch group of members acting as Welcoming Stewards.

I negotiated with the local newspaper the Coventry Evening Telegraph, for a large quantity of that day's newspapers to be purchased at a discount. These were delivered to the hotel that lunchtime, and as each guest arrived, they were presented with a free newspaper. In addition again, by negotiation with the local tourist board office, each guest was also presented with a free pack of local tourist information which included information on all the various religious denomination meetings, for those who might wish to go to Divine Service on the Sunday morning.

After that warm welcome, the guests were shown to their rooms by the Birmingham Branch Stewards who carried their luggage to their rooms

for them too. There was an informal dance and get-together on the Friday evening, the AGM was held on the Saturday morning and on the Saturday evening a Gala Dinner was held, with the Principal Guests being the Deputy Lord Mayor of Coventry Councillor David Cairns, the Lady Mayoress Mrs Cairns, Mr. John Moore, Chairman of the Nautical Club and Mrs. Anne Moore.

A Guard of Honour that lined the entrance lobby of the hotel to receive the Principal Guests was provided by 492 (Solihull) Air Training Corps Squadron, commanded by Flight Lieutenant J Stroud. The 1989 Reunion Weekend was such an outstanding success that again, on behalf of the Association and the Birmingham Branch, I was asked to organise the second Reunion to be held at the same hotel the following year in 1990.

Such was the success of that weekend that we filled the De Vere Hotel and had to take up rooms at other hotels to cater for the overflow of guests. The late Vic Bibby of course, later became an Honorary Member of the Birmingham Branch, to honour all his hard work in setting up the first RAF Regiment association that was open to all ranks.

16-year-old becomes fourth family member to join the RAF Regiment

A family became a true band of brothers yesterday when an RAF Regiment Flight Sergeant watched his youngest son graduate as a Gunner in the same regiment as his himself and two older brothers. When Flight Sergeant Andy Brown became the proud father of three sons, little could he have imagined his brood would one day make military history.

But with the graduation on 30th January of his 16-year-old son Leading Aircraftsman Ben Brown as a Gunner in the RAF Regiment, the family, formerly of Stanton, near Bury St Edmunds, became the first since World War Two to have a father and his three sons serving in the same regiment. Ben Brown aged 16, joins brothers Sam, 18, and Matthew, 23 - both senior aircraftsmen - and father Andy, 44, a Flight Sergeant.

Ben's extended family turned out in force to see the baby of the family pass out at RAF Honington in Suffolk, where he completed the grueling Trainee Gunner programme. Oldest brother Matthew flew back especially for the occasion from Afghanistan, where he is currently

serving a six-month tour of duty at Kandahar Air Base.



L to R Flt Sgt Andy, LAC Ben, SAC Sam and SAC Matt

LAC Brown was one of 25 airmen graduating at RAF Honington yesterday, earning their RAF Regiment "mudguards" in the process. Ben paraded past Air Vice Marshall Tim Anderson, Assistant Chief of the Air Staff, before receiving his "mudguards" - the coveted shoulder strip badge worn by graduates. Ben was the youngest person to complete the 23-week training, which involved intensive field exercises and exams. Only 26 of the original 60 raw recruits made it to graduation. He was also nominated as 'senior man', the person chosen by fellow recruits to act as liaison between trainees and training staff. Speaking after the graduation, Ben said joining his father and two brothers at RAF Honington was a dream come true. He said:

"I have always wanted to join the RAF because I have been around it all my life with my dad. He never pressured us to join, but as soon as I was old enough that was it. I was really pleased to be senior man because you are chosen by the other guys and they can take it off you at any time. Bits of the training were quite tough, especially the field exercises. We went to Sennybridge in Wales and two of the guys got hypothermia."

His father, a Flight Sergeant with the training wing of the Royal Air Force Regiment Signals School at Honington, joined the RAF in 1984. And who will soon be involved in training his youngest son at the RAF's School of Signals, said: "We believe this is unique. We were formed in 1942 and I don't think this (a father and three children serving in the RAF simultaneously) has happened before. It is a proud day for me and a proud day for the regiment. I'm looking forward to training my own son. He will be making me lots

of cups of tea! In all seriousness, he will be treated no differently to anybody else.” He also said: “I am really, really proud. It seems to have snuck up on us, the momentum of suddenly having all three of them through training and part of the regiment. It's been a struggle holding Ben back until he was old enough to join. He went to a recruitment fair the moment he was old enough.” Flight Sergeant Brown said he was not planning to have any more children in the future, so the chance of having four children in the regiment were very slim.

Ben, who will not be posted on a tour of duty until he turns 18, has now been posted in the same squadron as eldest brother Matt, 1 Squadron.

Matt, who was sent to Kandahar on September 3rd 2008 and has already completed one tour in Basra, Iraq, said he was delighted to have Ben in his squadron. He said: "It's really good news that he's in the same one. We have always got on the best and it'll be a good have him there on tours in the future. I won't worry about Ben because I know how life in a regiment works and that he is in safe hands." Matt added that it was no great shock all three brothers chose to follow their father's career path. He said: "The RAF has been part of our lifestyle since we were born. I always knew I would be in one of the forces. It is great to be back for this. I'm really proud of him,"

SAC Brown said. “I missed Sam's (the third brother) graduation because I was in Iraq.” Senior Aircraftsman Sam Brown, 18, who will be departing for Iraq next month with 15 Squadron Regiment, said: “I'm proud of him too. It is good that all of us have got a good job. I've always known I was going to join.” Sam, of 15 Squadron, whose tour of duty in Basra, Iraq, begins on February 16, added: "We are all used to moving around because of dad's deployments. The regiment is like a surrogate family and we will still be able to all keep in touch."

Flight Sergeant Brown who has served in Northern Ireland, Bosnia and Iraq during the Gulf War, said it was strange to be the one staying at home. He said: "It's the oddest thing. I have always been the one dispatched abroad and leaving the kids at home. I had never been on the other end of it. I can now appreciate what it's like for the family and friends left behind. As a parent I found it very difficult last year during Matthew's first tour. But the support network and all the

communications the regiment have in place are terrific now."

The mother of the boys, Louise Burden, 44, who is now divorced from Andy, said she was "incredibly proud" of her three boys. She said: "It's a very special day for us, although I do worry about them all going off to war. After being married to Andy for 16 years I got used to him going away to Northern Ireland and Bosnia, but it's very different when it's your sons. But they all wanted to do it so we have to respect that and are just incredibly proud of them."

LAC Brown was one of 25 airmen graduating at RAF Honington yesterday, earning their RAF Regiment “mudguards” in the process. Station commander of RAF Honington, Group Captain Nick Bray said: “This is a tremendously proud moment for all of these young men and their families. It is made all the more special by the fact that the fourth member of the Brown family is now joining the RAF Regiment, in which his father and two elder brothers are already serving.” The 25 airmen who graduated yesterday have completed a 23 week long course and each will now be posted to an RAF Regiment Squadron where they will undergo further professional training.

Heroes protecting fighters at the front get a warm welcome home

Last month, a group of RAF Regiment personnel were given a warm welcome home after six months in Iraq. The forward party of No 5 Force Protection Wing of the RAF Regiment at RAF Lossiemouth were greeted by a piper as they left the aircraft and were given a dram of whisky to welcome them back to Scotland.

Acting station commander Wing Commander James Linter was also there to welcome them off the plane before they were taken to the officer's mess for an emotional reunion with their family members. One, Flight Lieutenant Mick Morley, comforted his young son Alfie, who was overwhelmed at seeing his dad after six months.

The service personnel were responsible for the security of civil and military flights now operating at Basra Airport. They were also able to provide practical support to the local Iraqi community and assisted in numerous building projects. Wing Commander Derek Read, officer commanding No 5 Force, said: “We are all glad to be back home after running the protection service

for the contingency operations base at Basra. We have had a successful deployment that saw a period of improved security clearly demonstrated during the recent elections.” Wing Commander James Linter said: “Once again they have done an excellent job in Basra. We are proud to have supported them and their families during this arduous time. We are pleased to have them home safe and sound and will welcome 51 Squadron back early next month.”

British troops in Helmand get extra helicopters at last

British military commanders in Afghanistan who have been clamouring for more helicopters since the operation in Helmand province was launched in 2006 are to have their appeals answered at last. Seven Merlin helicopters are to be moved from Iraq to Afghanistan when the British troop presence in Basra is wound down by the end of July. The deployment of the helicopters is part of a package of reinforcements which could raise British troop numbers in Afghanistan by as much as 1,500. There are no plans, however, to send an additional battle group of combat troops to take on the Taliban, according to senior defence sources. While the US is due to send up to 30,000 more troops in an Iraq-style “surge”, Britain will focus on “thickening” its forces. This will involve more specialist troops, logistics units and new surveillance aircraft to seek out the roadside bombs that have caused 80 per cent of British fatalities.

Whitehall sources said President Obama had not yet formally requested more British troops for Afghanistan, but Air Chief Marshal Sir Jock Stirrup, the Chief of the Defence Staff, has been indicating for some time that Britain would not deploy thousands more troops and that switching all 4,100 from Iraq to Afghanistan was out of the question. Nevertheless, under the current proposals, the extra equipment and the support units needed to operate them will help to build up the numbers.

The sources said it was likely that US combat medical teams would take the lead in the rescue of wounded soldiers in southern Afghanistan, which would reduce the burden for the RAF Chinooks, which currently carry out this role for injured British troops. To cater for the

influx of aircraft, American forces are going to build a second runway at the British Camp Bastion base, and a RAF Regiment squadron, currently in Iraq, is likely to be earmarked to protect the expanded airfield from attack by the Taliban.

RAF Regiment marks its anniversary

Serving and past members of the RAF’s ground fighting force descended last January on a museum near York to celebrate its 67th anniversary. The RAF Regiment, has recently come under the spotlight in a new TV documentary called Warzone, which is being screened on Channel 5. The programme – which takes a look at UK military operations in Afghanistan – has, in turn, sparked interest in England’s only exhibition of the RAF Regiment at the Yorkshire Air Museum in Elvington.

EDITOR’S NOTE: Tsk, tsk, just not true I’m afraid. I don’t know when the RAF Regiment Exhibition at the Yorkshire Air Museum was set up but in November 1993, Birmingham Branch member Ted Caine, on behalf of the Birmingham Branch and with the cooperation of John Francis, the then General Manager of the RAF Museum, Cosford, who provided the display cabinets, set up the Birmingham Branch RAF Regiment Exhibition, and it’s still there, looking as good as ever but without the Bofors L40/70 AA Weapon that it was co-located with. That has been moved elsewhere unfortunately.

Last January, members of 609 (West Riding) Royal Auxiliary Air Force Squadron, based at RAF Leeming, visited the museum following their recent tour of duty in Afghanistan. They met up with Frank Wright, a museum volunteer who served with the RAF Regiment from 1952 to 1956, to celebrate 67 years since the regiment was founded at Butlin’s Holiday Camp, in Filey. Shortly after building work for the holiday camp started, the Second World War broke out and it was taken over by the RAF Regiment and became known as RAF Hunmanby Moor until after the war ended. Museum director Ian Reed said: “It is appropriate that the Yorkshire Air Museum houses this fascinating display, containing some unique memorabilia, on the

history and development of the force – not far from its spiritual home.”

The exhibition is open every day and includes a Japanese flag presented to the RAF Regiment in Singapore when they took the Japanese surrender in 1945. The regiment served the RAF during the Second World War, seeing active service in North Africa, Middle and Far East, the Mediterranean, Italy and central Europe. Today, members continue to be deployed all over the world to wherever there are airfields, installations or other elements of the RAF to defend. Anybody with photos of the Filey camp when it was used by the RAF Regiment, are asked to phone Ian Richardson, at the air museum on 01904 608718.

Regiment Training at Moody Air Force Base

For the very first time in history, RAF Regiment Gunners are combat training at Moody Air Force Base. Busting through doors and scoping a potentially dangerous building, the Gunners have their very own way of ambushing the enemy. "Going into a building, we are a lot more aggressive and straight in, chucking grenades and that sort of stuff, whereas, this is more slow, methodical," said 30-year-old Stuart Cox from the Royal Air Force. In February, Gunners from the Royal Air Force Regiment got some hands-on instruction from their American counterparts, doing everything from the urban terrain to the shooting range. For many of these Gunners, this is the very first time they'll ever fire a shotgun. But the 820th hopes this specialized training will help them in joint combat action in the future. "Us being deployed lots of times to the same locations, whether it be Afghanistan or Iraq, you never know when it may come a time when they need to utilise our weapon systems and now is the time to train and not when that time comes," said Captain Matt Garvelink from Moody Air Force Base.

Throughout the next week, these men will get some insight into the American way of military tactics and techniques". Gunner Wesley Cummings said: "I think it will help because we're off to Afghanistan next and we work quite closely with the Americans, so if we know how they work and they can learn how we work, it will help us build a better bond,"

RAF Regiment Books

I am often asked for information about books about the RAF Regiment. The following list is of the books that I know of that I am regularly adding to. If anyone knows of any other books about the RAF Regiment, please let me know. The details I need are the following; title, author, brief account of subject matter, year of first publication, who published it and the ISBN number. The International Standard Book Number (ISBN) is a unique, numerical commercial book identifier. A similar numeric identifier, the International Standard Serial Number (ISSN) identifies periodical publications such as magazines.

Another Book "Joint force Harrier"

This month, I have added another one "Joint Force Harrier", by Commander Adrian (Ade) Orchard RN, Deputy Force Commander at RAF Cottesmore. Although strictly speaking, it is not a book about the RAF Regiment, it does contain a four-page glowing account of the RAF Regiment in Afghanistan that is well worth reading. Days after arriving in Kandahar, the Harriers of 800 Naval Air Squadron were in the thick of fierce fighting. Armed with rockets and bombs, the pilots were flying crucial danger-close attack missions in defence of troops engaged in the most intense battles seen by British forces since the Korean War. While facing the constant threat of surface-to-air missiles, the British Top Guns knew that any mistake would have fatal consequences for the soldiers who depended on their skill and determination. Written by the Commanding Officer of the first Royal Navy squadron to deploy to Afghanistan, Joint Force Harrier is a compelling insight into the exciting world of modern air warfare.

This gripping book covers the period from October 2006 to January 2007 and took about 15 months to complete. It has been well written and is a documented account of the time spent by the Royal Navy on a land based, ground attack tour of duty. This is what the reader wants; scrambles to get airborne, pressure on crews to direct attacks at the right targets, life in the cockpit of a Harrier jump jet and what happens when the going gets tough and things go wrong. Staying cool, calm and collected under immense pressures. It is a very good read. Commander Orchard, who will make no money from Joint Force Harrier - the inside story of a Royal Navy fighter squadron at war, has written a best selling book about life on

the front line that has raised tens of thousands of pounds for charity since it was first published last September. One pound from every hardback sold will be divided between the Royal Navy Historic Flight - a charity that provides funding for historic aviation - and Combat Stress the ex service personnel mental welfare society.

Commander Orchard said: "Mental welfare of our troops is something I think only now is beginning to emerge. We have individuals who have been significantly affected. It is a pretty brutal part of the world, it is a daily battle that is being fought and most people in the military will see duty in Iraq and Afghanistan. If you are in Kandahar airfield they fire rockets at you on a daily basis. Imagine going to bed knowing there could be a rocket fired at you." The book is his personal account of life in the combat zones. Commander Orchard was approached by the Ministry of Defence to write the book and worked with ghost writer James Barrington to recount his story. Originally from West Bromwich, Ade Orchard joined the Royal Navy in 1986 and was posted to Cottesmore in 2002.

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

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

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

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

Dorset, BH23 4HW. Telephone number 01425 279206.

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

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

"In Adversity" Exploits of Gallantry and Awards to the RAF Regiment and its Associated Forces 1921 - 12995 by Nicholas G Tucker. Published in **1997** by Jade Publishing Limited. ISBN 1-900734-08-7.

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

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

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

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

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

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

NATIONAL MEMORIAL ARBORETUM (NMA) UPDATE

During 2008, the National Memorial Arboretum welcomed 300,000 visitors, many of whom were attracted by the striking Armed Forces Memorial which was dedicated by Her Majesty the Queen in October 2007. Since it opened in 2001, the Arboretum has become one of the UK's leading free to enter visitor attractions.

It is part of the Royal British Legion family and it has evolved into a national focal point for remembrance. The site hosts over 200 remembrance and commemorative events every year, many of which the public are very welcome to attend. In addition to Remembrance Sunday and Armistice Day, 2009 will see a host of events taking place that will have both national and international significance.

Now I know I said I was going to discontinue the following column as I am still having difficulty in getting the information, but even though the situation hasn't really changed, some of the staff at the NMA are doing their best to help, and as I can sometimes get information about future events at the NMA from ex-service sites on the internet, I've decided to put the column back in. Even so, I do know that I haven't got all the ex-service events booked for 2009 at the NMA, so if any of you know of any ex-service events that I haven't got, please let me know and I'll include them.

Future Events at the NMA

Saturday, 25th April 2009

At 11.30 a.m. in the Millennium Chapel. The 94th Anniversary of Gallipoli Remembrance Service to commemorate the Allied Gallipoli Landings on the Gallipoli Peninsula in . For details contact Nadir Imamoglu on 01922 406604. It will be open to all, but the Chapel has a seating capacity of 120.

Sunday 21st June 2009

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

Saturday 27 June 2009

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

Saturday 12th September 2009

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

BRANCH AGM

The Branch Annual General Meeting was held last month and as is usual in our Branch, the three executive office positions of Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer are each elected in turn, for three years. This year, it was the Branch Treasurer's position that was due for election to the office. All the other officers had agreed to stand again and they were all were again elected to their various offices. The Branch Committee for 2009 is therefore as follows.

PRESIDENT	Peter Swash
VICE-PRESIDENT	Dave Gooding
CHAIRMAN	Ron Sharp
VICE-CHAIRMAN	Fred Ringham
SECRETARY	Malcolm Baldwin
TREASURER	Tom Magee
MINUTE SECRETARY	Ken Bridgwood
BRANCH QM	Tom Magee
WELFARE OFFICER	John Docker
PRO/SOCIAL SEC.	Michael Beard
PROPERTY AUDITOR	Fred Ringham
RESEARCH CO-ORD	Hughie Cooper
FINANCIAL AUDITORS	Trev & Joan Round

Our thanks to all the Branch Officers for again putting themselves forward to serve the Birmingham Branch in their various offices.

DAMAGED MAIL

Colin Clarke, Norfolk Branch Secretary is having a problem with both incoming and outgoing mail. The problem is that quite a lot of his mail is arriving at the addressee in a damaged condition and Colin is wondering if anyone else is having the same problem. I don't know of anyone with a similar problem but Colin has asked me if I could include this information in this month's newsletter. So if anyone is having this problem, please let me know.

BRANCH APPEAL REMINDER

Remember that the only casualties the public tends to hear about are the fatalities but there are also the men and women who have had their lives changed by multiple wounds. So please remember the appeal your Branch Committee has set up for 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. So keep on sending your donation to Tom Magee for the lads need them.

And last but by no means least, my thanks to Cyril Richards for his donation of books of postage stamps for the newsletters. I'd like to include his comments in the letter in which he sent the stamps as his comments about our current politicians exactly parallel mine, but as I have had been taken to task for including political comments in these newsletters, I'd better not. What do you all think of that by the way? Never mind Cyril, I couldn't have put your comments better and I agree with all you say and many thanks again for the stamps.

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

Malcolm

DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES



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Sun 15 th – Mon 30 th Mar 09	Battle For Meiktila	Tuesday 16 th June	2009	Branch 21 st Anniversary
Sunday 5th April	2009 Branch Reded Mem.l	Saturday 27 th June	2009	RAF Reg.t Service at NMA
Thursday 9 th April	2009 Branch Night	Thursday 9 th July	2009	Branch Night
Wednesday 23 rd April	2009 St George's Day	Thursday 13 th August	2009	Branch Night
Sunday 26 th April	2009 ANZAC Day Parade	Thursday 10 th September	09	Branch Night
Sunday 10 th May	2009 Reded of Regt Chapel	Fri 2 nd – Mon 5 th Oct	2009	Ass.n Autumn Reunion
Thursday 14 th May	2009 Branch Night	Sunday 4 th October	2009	Merchant Navy Day
Thursday 11 th June	2009 Branch Night	Thursday 8 th October	2009	Branch Night
Sunday 14 th June	2009 Cosford Air Show	Wednesday 21 st Oct	2009	Battle of Trafalgar Day
		Sunday 1 st November	2009	Midlands Fest of Rem.
		Sunday 8 th Nov	2009	Remembrance Sunday
		Wednesday 11 th Nov	2009	Remembrance Day
		Thursday 12 th Nov	2009	Branch Night
		Saturday 14 th Nov	2009	B'ham Poppy Ball
		Sat 28 th -Sun 29 th Nov	2009	B'ham Int Tattoo NIA
		Monday 30 th November	09	St Andrew's Day
		Thursday 10 th December	09	Branch Night

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