



ROYAL AIR FORCE REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

www.rafregt.org.uk

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: 234 DECEMBER 2008

THE BIRMINGHAM BRANCH NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 234 DECEMBER 2008

Dear Readers.

A very happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year to you all. At this time of the year when Christmas is almost upon us, we look forward to the festive season when we will gather together with family and friends to celebrate Christmas. Valerie and I wish everyone, members and their families – and all my readers who are not members – a wonderful, joyful and merry Christmas, and a happy and prosperous New Year. May the coming year bring peace to the world. May all your dreams come true and may good health and happiness be yours.

As we do on every Christmas Eve at 9.00 p.m., Valerie and I will raise a glass and drink a toast to “Absent Friends”. This includes each and every one of you for you’ll all be in our thoughts. Particularly those who have lost someone this year. Christmas will be a very sad time for them for their loved ones will be sadly missed and will never be forgotten. Words cannot heal their pain but we hope that time will help to heal their loss.

At a time when our servicemen and women are fighting in Afghanistan and Iraq - in Afghanistan, the hardest fighting since World War Two - it is easy to forget that members of HM Armed Forces are serving in hostile situations all over the world. Apart from permanent commitments in such places as the Falkland Islands, Ascension Island, Gibraltar, Cyprus and of course in UK Air Defence, the Royal Air Force and the Army, supported by the Royal Navy, are also serving in such potentially hostile areas as Kosovo in the Balkans, Georgia, Sierra Leone, the Congo, Liberia, Nepal; and Qatar, Oman, Kuwait and Bahrain in the Persian Gulf.

Nearly 16,000 members of HM Armed Forces are actively engaged in operational duties across the globe, ranging from war fighting to peacekeeping, and providing humanitarian aid. From enforcing anti-terrorism measures to combating the international drugs trade.

The increased operational tempo, particularly driven by the situation in Iraq and Afghanistan, has led to more frequent and lengthy deployments of units and soldiers across the entire

Armed Forces. These in turn have placed increasing stress on them all.

How much does the rapid rotation of deployments stretch the Armed Forces units and soldiers? The Chief of the Defence Staff, the professional head of the UK Armed Forces and the principal military adviser to the Secretary of State for Defence and the Government, is Air Chief Marshal Sir Jock Stirrup GCB AFC ADC DSc FRAeS FCMI RAF. And he has said that Britain’s Armed Forces are stretched beyond their capabilities and cannot continue fighting two simultaneous wars. He has also said that troops operating in Iraq must not be transferred to Afghanistan when numbers in Basra are cut next year. With all these commitments, may their burden get lighter and may all our lads and lassies in Iraq and Afghanistan and everywhere else that brave British servicemen and women are serving, have a safe and peaceful Christmas and New Year and return home safely after their tour of duty is over. You are all in our thoughts now, and will be particularly in our thoughts at Christmastime.

BRANCH BIRTHDAYS

A Happy birthday to the following Birmingham Branch members whose birthdays are in December. We hope that they have many more of them. Some members have not fully completed their Application Forms so if I have missed anyone out, give me a call and I’ll put it right. I have also put these birthday greetings onto the Birmingham News page of the RAF Regiment Association Website.

If anyone does not wish to be included in these birthday greetings, please let me know.

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| 5th December | Albert Clarke of
Newcastle under Lyme,
Staffordshire. |
| 10th December | Cyril Turner of Walsall,
West Midlands |
| 11th December | Colin Smith of Warwick,
Warwickshire |
| 15th December | John Bowen of Totten,
Hampshire |
| 17th December | Rod Hancock of Burton on
Trent, Staffordshire |

25th December **Peter Cole** of Shifnal,
Shropshire
26th December **Charles Dodd** of
Bedford, Gloucestershire

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.

We are now regularly sending “goodies” to the lads in Selly Oak Hospital. Through Roy Thomas and Ralph Dean we have regular contact every month with the military ward nursing staff.

At each visit they are asked for their next request so we have a continuing need for regular donations. 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 staffs 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.

Donations to the Fund

My wife Valerie is a member of two Flower Clubs, Shirley Flower Club and Peterbrook Flower Club and like many of these and other clubs, at the end of their financial year, they contribute their surplus funds to a good cause of their choice. This year, the members of Peterbrook Flower Club were asked to nominate a suitable good cause. Valerie nominated the Birmingham Branch Military Ward Appeal Fund and Troop Aid was also nominated. After

considering these two good causes, the Club decided to give their surplus funds to both Troop Aid and to our Military Ward Appeal. As a result, I was asked to go to their November monthly meeting on Wednesday 5th November, to accept a cheque for £100.00 and to give a short talk about the Military Ward in particular and the Royal Centre for Defence Medicine in general. We are extremely grateful to Peterbrook Flower Club and I have written to their Club Secretary to tell them so. Suffolk Branch has given another £30.00 to the Military Ward Appeal Fund, this takes their total contribution to the Fund to a magnificent £335.00 that the Norfolk Branch has given to our Appeal.

We need more from you lads to keep up with the Norfolk Branch so come on lads, just remember what the lads in the Military Ward have done for all of us and so see what you can do and as we often say, “dig deep and die happy” for we would like you all to consider supporting this appeal. Colin Clarke the Secretary of the Norfolk Branch has written another letter to me regarding this additional £30.00 donation and it he says;

“Dear Malcolm. I have sent Tom Magee a cheque for £30.00 for the Birmingham Branch Military Ward Appeal Fund. This has been donated by Norfolk Branch members Bob and Jacque Blackmore. In their letter to me they say;

“To help fill the coffers for the boys in hospital in Birmingham. We have been saving our small change for a while, hence the amount. We have also decided no Christmas cards this year and will donate to “our boys”, for they need it”.

Bob is a Past Chairman of the Norfolk Branch and although now unable to attend meetings he and Jacque regularly keep in touch with events. At 91 years of age, he is our oldest member but one of the youngest at heart. Kindest regards. Colin.

Well what a generous gesture and one that we can surely emulate. So come on lads, again I say “dig deep and die happy”.

THE ASSOCIATION WEBSITE

Birmingham Branch Pages

How many of you with access to the internet have visited the Association website? If you haven't then you should do so for it is well worth a visit. In addition, with the ability to edit our own Branch pages on the website, I'm looking

for suggestions to improve the content of these pages. So go on, have a look and tell me what you think. This month, I have added Tom Magee the Branch Treasurer's photograph to the Committee Page and one of our Military Ward Liaison Officers Roy Thomas.

I'm waiting for other committee members to send me their photographs too in the hope that we shall soon have a "full house". Now talking about the internet has reminded me that I have received a very interesting and informative e-mail from the National Secretary Bill Espie. Apparently, someone has got it in for the Starbucks Coffee chain and is posting disinformation on the internet about them. Now I must admit I have read the stories on the internet and got quite angry about Starbucks, but apart from boycotting Starbucks Coffee shops, I didn't do anything more about it but Bill did and good for him too, for he has discovered the truth of the matter as the following e-mail from Bill tells us.

Starbucks Coffee Disinformation

When I read the bit about Starbucks banning military personnel in uniform, I have to say my blood boiled and I had a first class snottogram composed for the MD of Starbucks UK. I then thought this might be old news so before I fire off a warning to all the guys I will check it out.

The best way to do that is to visit a site called <www.snopes.com>. It would appear to be quite an old false story of misinformation which was started by an American Sergeant who has just returned from Iraq and who had got a little upset at a nightly news broadcast. (his name is Howard C Wright USMC). He has posted an apology on the internet but as they say the story just keeps on running and running. It has now morphed into Royal Marines and added that troops are not welcome in Starbucks establishments.

Somebody out there does not like Starbucks – a lot! Other false stories that have surfaced are that the fire fighters involved in the 9/11 disaster needed a water supply and got it from a nearby Starbucks shop – and were then charged for the water – again not true and a whole list of other stuff which has become legend. I just thought that if members come across this story they would have the information to effectively debunk it. Best regards. Bill.

Many thanks for the info Bill and now I can go back to buying a cup of coffee from Starbucks every time my wife takes me shopping in Solihull, for I'm quite happy to sit in a coffee shop with a newspaper while she is quite happy to do all the browsing round and round and round the shops. In addition, I have discovered another benefit from Bill's e-mail, because thanks to him I have browsed the internet website he mentioned <www.snopes.com>. It's a cracking website for information about website myths and realities. One of the things that all of us who use the internet have to realize it that all the glistens on the internet isn't necessarily gold. You sometimes have to dig a little to get at the truth of matters. And that brings me to the next item.

Finding the Association Website

It would be a great help of course if – when the title "RAF Regiment Association" is typed into a website search programme – the only one that came up was – The RAF Regiment Association. Unfortunately it isn't, and for the life of me I cannot understand why. Our site is headed The RAF Regiment Association Official Site. No problem you would think, quite clear and easy to understand.

BUT - there is another site headed THE ROYAL AIR FORCE **REGIMENT ASSOCIATION** with a sub-heading Royal Air Force **Regiment Association** ("Incorporating the **RAF Regiment Association** & the **RAF Regiment Comrades Association**").

Then there is another one headed The Association of the ROYAL AIR FORCE REGIMENT. In addition there are two others headed The **Association** of the **RAF Regiment** and finally, there is one headed **The Association of RAF Regiment** Cambs Branch.

Just how many Associations are there and in any case, the Association of the RAF Regiment no longer exists? If our site is - the OFFICIAL RAF Regiment Association website - and therefore should be the only one – then why, are others still listed? Cannot something be done about their titles?

If you know what you are looking for it's easy to log onto the official site but what if you do not? What if we have potential recruits for our Association looking for the right site? Then it would be very confusing wouldn't it! I look forward to the day when all will be made clear.

ASSOCIATION AGM

Saturday 4th OCTOBER 2005

The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming everyone present to the third Annual General Meeting of the Association. He then thanked the Commandant General in his absence for his help and support over the last twelve months that resulted in the presence of the new Queen's Colour and Colour Party at the AGM. The Chairman advised the meeting that the absence of the CG had been caused by the sad death, the previous day, of the CG's father, FS Bud Abbott and said he would, on behalf of the Association, send heartfelt condolences to the family. He then invited the Chaplain, The Rev Willie Downie, to conduct the Commemoration and Dedication.

The Chairman then introduced Dr Nigel Warwick to the meeting. Dr Warwick briefly covered his work to date and expanded on his future projects which included service history of the RAF Regiment in the Mediterranean 1942-1946. Dr Warwick would like to hear from members with service history of 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.

He would also like to hear from members of RAF Armoured Car Companies/Squadrons in the Middle East 1921-1953, as well as members of No 2 (Armoured Car) Squadron. Finally, Dr Warwick invited members to submit stories to help "flesh-out" the history of the RAF Regiment in the UK. D-Day and North West Europe and the Occupation of Germany 1944-1946. The Chairman thanked Fred Ringham (Birmingham Branch) and Shirley Wynn (Isle of White Tours) for organising the Reunion weekend.

Members of the Lincolnshire branch were thanked for organising the raffle. The Chairman explained that charity law required a clear statement of the purpose of a charitable raffle and that the NEC had agreed that 70% of the raffle proceeds would go to our designated charity, Combat Stress, and 30% to the RAF Regiment Fund.

ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN:

In accordance with the announcement at the last AGM, the membership had been asked to vote on whether election of National Officers should take place at an AGM or by postal ballot.

Of the 522 papers received, 292 had been in favour of electing National Officers of the Association by a postal ballot of all members.

Jeff Stevenson and Tom Renshaw had been nominated for the Office of Vice-Chairman and the Chairman of the Elections Sub-Committee, the Regiment Secretary, Wing Commander Martin Hooker was called upon to report the outcome of the voting which of 402 votes cast (1 invalid) was:

J Stevenson	160
T Renshaw	241

The Chairman thanked Martin Hooker and the members of the Election Sub-Committee, Colin Clarke and Mick O'Maley for conducting the count and congratulated Tom Renshaw on his election. Tom Renshaw thanked everyone for their support and Martin Hooker for organising this election. The Chairman warmly thanked Jeff Stevenson for his hard work and personal support over the past two years. He proposed a formal vote of thanks to Jeff Stevenson; it was seconded by W Espie and carried unanimously. The new Vice-Chairman would take up office at midnight.

SECRETARY'S REPORT:

The National Secretary Bill Espie thanked the Chairman and members of the National Executive Committee (NEC) particularly Membership Secretary, Frank Xavier, for his help and support. He then reviewed the membership statistics of the Association. Notts and Derby branch were highlighted as having had the biggest increase of returned members, almost a 50% increase.

He encouraged branches to make use of the Association website and to update their pages regularly. Branches and individual members were urged to send articles of interest to be printed in The Flash. The electronic "Mini Flash" is also in need of branch information and input. The Secretary was thanked by the Chairman for his report.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

The National Treasurer Derek James produced and tabled the audited accounts for the year to 31.03.08 to everyone present, together with explanatory notes. The auditors, Needham Chipchase Manners & Co, of Richmond, had carried out their responsibilities efficiently and at reasonable cost. Income and expenditure figures were also made available to everyone present and

he highlighted the figure of £53,000 held at Barclays Bank.

G Thwaites, Bromley Branch, queried expenditure of £50 to Isle of Wight Tours. The Chairman explained that this was a gratuity for the hotel staff at the 2007 AGM. There were no other questions on the accounts. It was proposed by T Renshaw (Bromley), seconded by R Barnbrook (Somerset & Dorset), that the accounts be accepted. This was agreed unanimously. The Chairman then thanked the Treasurer for his report and for his work as Treasurer throughout the year.

NEC REPORT:

The Chairman reported that two NEC meetings had taken place since the last AGM, on 19 January and on 19 July 2008. Minutes of both meetings had been sent to branch secretaries for distribution to their members. He outlined the salient points covered by the 2 meetings. Due to work commitments, Steve Horton had resigned as Membership Secretary, an office held by him since the inception of the Association. Steve was thanked for his invaluable contribution and hard work for the Association.

Frank Xavier was thanked for taking on the role of Membership Secretary and for his excellent work to date.

The NEC had agreed to present two trophies to serving personnel undertaking training at RAF Honington. These trophies were to be called Op Telic Trophy and Op Herrick Trophy and would be presented for the top student undertaking further training. The two trophies were on display at the meeting, one of which was a family piece donated personally by the Chairman. It was hoped that the problems recently experienced with the RAF Regiment Shop were now resolved. In addition it was planned that a website shop is to be set up for the benefit of members. Association Christmas cards were available at the weekend.

The National Standard Bearer, John Smart, was thanked for his duties over the past year and it was announced that work was in hand for a new Standard to be purchased; the present National Standard having been in use for nearly 20n years. It is hoped that the consecration and dedication would take place at St Anne's Church, Catterick in May 2009.

The NEC had decided that it was important to assess what needed to be done in the

long-term interests of the Association. The NEC had set up a Way Ahead Working Group (WAWG) for this purpose and Frank Xavier had been appointed Chairman, tasked to examine how to develop the Association and recruit new members, especially younger members, and how to ensure the long term future of the Association. The first meeting would be held in November and the WAWG would report to the NEC in July 2009.

The NEC had agreed to make a contribution of £500 for the painting of the engagement at Al Waki and to make an additional contribution if necessary. Arrangements had been approved for John Smart to carry our National Standard at the Festival of Remembrance at Royal Albert Hall on 6th November 2008.

The membership Secretary Frank Xavier had been concerned about the robustness and accuracy of the data held on Association members and would be liaising with Branch Secretaries to ensure its accuracy. It might be necessary to invest in new software to ensure that we held current, accurate and relevant information on members and to provide appropriate membership services. The Chairman reiterated the need for articles for The Flash and MiniFlash. He reminded the AGM that membership of the NEC was a demanding role and thanked NEC members for their attendance, ideas and contributions to the lengthy NEC Meetings. He stated that the Next NEC meeting was planned for 17th January 2009.

AMENDMENTS TO CONSTITUTION AND RULES:

The NEC had identified problems with paragraphs 53, 54 and 57 of the Constitution and Rules... The Chairman presented the present wording of the three paragraphs, the problems they presented and the NEC's proposed changes.

53. Proposed Wording

The NEC shall agree items for inclusion in the agenda for the General Meeting at the NEC meeting scheduled prior to the General Meeting. These agenda items, together with nominations for office, shall be issued to Branches and Chapters with the Minutes of that NEC meeting.

54. Proposed Wording

Other resolutions for discussion at the General Meeting as Any Other Business must be advised to the National Secretary prior to the start of the General Meeting, but shall not be voted upon unless the National Officials conclude that

the matter is of due Association importance or urgency. This does not preclude general discussion on other important or urgent Association matters.

It was proposed by D Gooding (Birmingham) and seconded by T Montieth (Lincolnshire) that these rules be accepted. Agreed unanimously.

57. Proposed Wording

All decisions of a General Meeting shall be decided by votes of entitled Members attending the General Meeting and a simple majority shall be required, except on Association Constitution and Rules matters – see Rule 52e. In the event of a tied outcome, the motion shall not be deemed carried. To avoid repetitious discussions, a decision of a General Meeting shall not be raised for formal consideration at the next consecutive General Meeting, unless the NEC concludes that circumstances demand it. It was proposed by G Hughes (Merseyside) and seconded by J Stevenson (Sussex) that this rule be accepted. Agreed unanimously.

The Chairman confirmed that a new edition of the Constitution and Rules would be distributed to Branch Secretaries.

SPRING / SUMMER SOCIAL REUNION:

The topic of a Spring/Summer “Social” Reunion had been discussed by the NEC. It had been agreed that time was too short to canvas members’ opinion for an event in the spring of 2009 and therefore that we should aim for such a reunion in spring 2010.

However, after further representations by Jim Scott of Somerset and Dorset who had agreed to organise a Spring 2009 event from 17 – 19 April 2009, the Chairman had agreed that Warners should send out a “flyer” outlining the proposed arrangements to all members who would be able to respond individually. Martin Hooker reminded the meeting that the Association’s primary focus should be the AGM Reunion weekend in October and questioned whether members would wish to attend – or could afford to attend - 2 major functions in each year. He urged members to prioritise events.

DIARY OF EVENTS:

The National Secretary presented the diary of national events. In particular, he urged members to attend this year’s Field of Remembrance at Westminster Abbey on 6th November and the Remembrance Parade in

Whitehall on 8th November 2008. They were also encouraged to attend the Tower of London Church Service and Parade on 17th May 2009 and the Annual Commemoration of the RAF Regiment Chapel, also in May 2009.

NEXT MEETING

The Chairman reminded members that the next AGM would be held, at a venue to be decided, on the weekend 2nd – 5th October 2009.

OPERATIONS BRIEF:

The Chairman thanked the Commandant General for arranging for members of No 34 Squadron RAF Regiment to give an operational briefing and introduced Flight Sergeant Ian Pollock and SACs John Williamson, Ivan Anthony, Adam Bowser and Simon Milner.

The team provided an outstanding briefing, supported by excellent slides, on the operational life of the Squadron over the past few years. The Chairman thanked members of 34 Squadron for travelling such a distance, for attending the meeting and for the enlightening and informative presentation. Association members warmly applauded the team.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 1.30pm.

AIR VICE MARSHAL DONALD POCOCK CBE (CG 1973 – 1975)

b 5th July 1920 – d 30th July 2008 RIP

Your Branch Committee has decided to commemorate Air Vice Marshal Pocock at the National Memorial Arboretum. There is a facility for this in the walkway between the Visitor Centre and the Millennium Chapel. This is paved with red brick pavers upon which the details of those to be commemorated can be carved.

We have already commissioned a number of these pavers commemorating various people and we have commissioned another paver to commemorate AVM Pocock. I will let you all know when it will be dedicated. In addition, we also hope to get all the Branch pavers re-laid so as to be all together in one place.

NEWS OF THE RAF REGIMENT



FROM THE RAF REGIMENT SECRETARY

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

DEATH NOTICES:

VINCE DENNIS. RAF Regt Flt Lt Dennis George VINCE, born 3 May 24, died on 18 Oct 08 aged 84. Flt Lt Vince enlisted on his 18th birthday in 1942 and was accepted into the NCO Aircrew Training Scheme, training on Mosquito and Beaufighter aircraft. In 1945, he was retired and promptly joined the RAF Regt OCTU at RAF Belton Park, where he was commissioned in to the RAFVR in Mar 46. His first posting was to 2865 (later renumbered 63) Sqn RAF Regt at Air HQ, Bad Elsen, West Germany. He spent much of his Regt career in German, and participated in the Berlin Airlift operation. He opted for early retirement at his '38-year' point and went into local government as a Civil Defence Officer in Dorking, Surrey. He then went through a series of Emergency Planning Officer-type roles.

He married Pat Martin, the daughter of the Snr Gnd Def Staff Offr (SGDSO) of 205 Gp, Wg Cdr N Martin, in Jul 56. The funeral was held on 29 Oct 08 in Verwood, Dorset. Donations, if desired, may be made to Age Concern Verwood and sent to Nicholas O'Hara, Funeral Directors, Manor Way, Verwood, Dorset BH31 6HF. Letters of condolence may be sent to Mrs Pat Vince, 11 Glenwood Road, Verwood, Dorset BH31 6HU. The Corps extends its sincere condolences to the family.

ALLSOP PATRICK. Former RAF Regt WO Patrick Joseph 'Olly' ALLSOP BEM, born 22 Jan 40, died on Mon 10 Nov 08. He served from Apr 58 to Jan 80 on II Sqn RAF Regt, RAF Watton Fire Sectn, GDT at RAF Changi, 3 Wg HQ at RAF Wittering, 26 and 1 Sqns RAF Regt at RAF Laarbruch and, finally, GDT at RAF Buchan. From Jan 80 - Jul 83 he was the Sqn WO of 2623 Sqn RAuxAF Regt at RAF Honington. A cremation service was held at St Faiths Crematorium, Horsham, Norfolk, at 14.45 on Fri 21 Nov 08. The Corps extends its sincere condolences to the family.

DAY GEORGE. Former RAF Regt gnr George Day, born 1921, died on 10 Nov 08 aged 87. Served on 780, 2790 and 2770 Sqns RAF Regt from 1941 -46. Funeral was on 19 Nov 08, in Taunton, Somerset. Letters of condolence may be sent to his son, Kevin Day, at 32 Northfields,

Bishops Hull, Taunton, Somerset TA1 5DR. The Corps extends its sincere sympathy to the family.

DOWNIE WILLIE. The Rev Willie Downie, Chaplain to the RAF Regt Assoc, died suddenly on 18 Nov 09. The funeral was at St Machans Church, Larkhall, on Thu 27 Nov 08. He is survived by his wife, Sarah and sons Robert, Fraser Samuel and Craig. Letters of condolence may be sent to Mrs Downie at 21 Pentland Crescent, Larkhall, South Lanarkshire, ML9 1UP. The Corps extends its sincere condolences to the family.

WARBURTON HAROLD. RAF Regt Fg Off Harold Warbueton born 26 Feb 14, died 9 Sep 08 aged 94. Service details unknown at this time, but he enlisted in 1935 and served until 1947, reportedly serving in SEAC 1936-37, 1940-42 and in 1945. Escorted HRH The Duke of Windsor when he returned from France on the death of King George V. Heavily involved with the ATC and in the Reserves until 1959. The funeral took place in Romiley on 8 Oct 08. He is survived by his son, Stephen, of 6 St Christopher's Drive, Romiley, Stockport SK6 3BE, to whom all correspondence should be addressed. The Corps extends its sincere sympathy to the family.

GENERAL NOTICES:

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.

Commemorative Brochure RAF Fairford

To commemorate the presentation of The Queen's Colour for the Royal Air Force Regiment at RAF Fairford on 11 July 2008, the Regimental Secretary has a limited number of copies of a specially produced 8-page souvenir brochure - adapted from the colour pages of the latest Centurion Journal - together with the RIAT '90th Anniversary of the Royal Air Force' programme.

The latter may be particularly appreciated if your own was spoilt in 'the great flood' afterwards. Both items are free of charge, but will incur a P&P charge of 70p plus an invited donation to the RAF Regiment Museum Refurbishment Fund. I regret that only one set per addressee can be sent for now and the offer is subject to availability. When the '90th Anniversary' programme stock is exhausted, only

the Souvenir brochure will be sent. Please allow 2-3 weeks for mailing; it's a busy time of year! If you are interested, please send a suitable cheque made payable to the RAF Regiment Museum) to M R Hooker, RAF Regiment Secretary, RAF Honington, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, IP31 1EE.

RAF Regt Officers' Dinner Club Annual Reception 2009

The 2009 Annual Reception will take place at RAF Honington on Fri 29 May 09. On present plans, the day will commence with a Trainee Gunner Graduation Parade, followed by a buffet lunch in the Offrs Mess. In the afternoon, some training and/or capability displays will be staged, together with a visit to the Regt Museum. A Calling Note will be issued in the Spring. Pre-registration is not required at this stage.

RAF Regt Officers' Annual Dinner Club

The 2009 Officers' Annual Dinner will take place at the Def CBRN Centre, Winterbourne Gunner, on Fri 30 Oct 09. A Calling Note will be issued in the 3rd Qtr of 2009.

CORPS DIARY DATES:

(Updated - not exhaustive - contributions welcome).

17 Jan 09 – RAF Regt Assoc NEC Meeting – RAF Waddington.

6 Feb 09 - Officers' Corps Formation Dinner - RAF Honington.

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

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

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

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

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

FROM THE BRANCH SECRETARY

1 Squadron RAF Regiment Casualties

1 Squadron RAF Regiment flew out to Afghanistan in mid-August on a six-month tour of duty. The Squadron had only been back in Britain for barely twelve months from its last deployment at Basra in Iraq, during which four members of the Squadron were killed. Army regiments generally have two years between operational tours - the RAF Regiment units get twelve months if they're lucky.

On Wednesday 29th October, three members of 1 Squadron were flown back to Selly Oak Hospital where they were put into intensive care and have undergone major surgery. They were on a routine patrol in Kandahar when their vehicle, a military WMIK (Weapons Mounted Installation Kit) Land Rover was blown up by either a land mine or roadside bomb. Our thoughts are with them for a complete recovery.

Camp Bastion, Afghanistan

The British headquarters in Central Helmand Province in the south of Afghanistan

History

This British encampment lies in the flat, grey desert just north of Lashkar Gah, the provincial capital of Helmand Province, Afghanistan, in a place normally inhabited only by nomads, where the soil is so arid, that not even a weed - let alone a poppy – will grow.

Camp Bastion did not exist at the beginning of 2006. It came into being after John Reid, the then Defence Secretary, announced in January that British forces would extend their mission in Afghanistan from the relative stability of the north, to the Taliban stronghold of Helmand further south.

A few months and roughly £1bn later, over 2,000 British troops - more than half the force in the province – were living in this strange lunarscape.

John Reid of course was also responsible for the somewhat naive comment in January of that year, that he would be happy if the three-year mission could be completed, "without firing a shot". Three year mission? Without firing a shot? What planet was he on?

A second runway, 2,350 metre long and 28 metre wide runway, was built by the Royal Engineers in 2007 that allows RAF C-17s to fly in direct from the UK and to land at Camp Bastion. The new runway replaced the temporary gravel landing zone constructed by 39 Engineer Regiment in March 2007.

Before it was built, because of the gravel runway at Camp Bastion, C-17 aircraft could only land at Kandahar Airfield. So Hercules C-130 aircraft were used to ferry freight between Kandahar Airfield to Camp Bastion. The Hercules C-130 aircraft also benefit from the new runway as they are now able to carry more weight on landing – be it troops or supplies.

Its Location

The location of Camp Bastion is anything but haphazard. A short distance to the north, the province is bisected by Highway One, a trunk road built by American engineers in the days when this country was a way-station on the hippie trail, and the West was competing with the Soviet Union for influence. Away to the east is the Helmand River; like the Nile in Egypt, it is a densely populated ribbon of green in the midst of arid desolation.

Only in the mountainous northern tip of Helmand, where there are a few snow-fed tributaries, is it possible to exist more than a short distance from the great river. Imagine a rectangle, four miles long by two miles wide, drawn almost at random in the flat emptiness of the southern Afghanistan desert. Fill it with cargo containers, white polythene tents and a bulldozed airstrip, and you have an idea of what Camp Bastion, the main British military base in lawless Helmand province is like.

The Base

The base has been built in a vast military base in an inhospitable and barren environment. Surrounded by hostile militias, Camp Bastion is the biggest military camp to be constructed since the Second World War. It is home for the thousands of troops that have the task of imposing order on Afghanistan's lawless Helmand Province. Camp Bastion is a sprawling eight-square-mile encampment in the middle of the southern Afghan desert, 18 miles from the nearest town,

Scores of giant tents, housing eight to ten men each, are swathed in camouflage netting, with more netting draped across outdoor seating areas to provide shade. It has its own 25-bed medical tent, cookhouse, gym and a makeshift running track around the perimeter. A NAAFI shop sells such basic goods as sweets, magazines and toiletries along with 'luxury' items such as iPods, Pamela Anderson posters and even a Bose stereo system for more than £1,000.

The site was chosen because of its remote location devoid of Taliban or Al Qaeda fighters and because it is next to an Afghan army base, ominously named Camp Tombstone. Everything in Bastion is imported, from the shower blocks to the food.

Its Construction

Thanks to modern military logistics and prefabrication techniques, it is possible to drop a capsule of Western living conditions almost

anywhere on the planet, with Rola-Trac plastic flooring for the tents. Rola-Trac made by Rola-Trac of Norwich, Norfolk, simply clicks together with no need for tools or expertise of any kind. And ramparts made of Hesco bastions by HESCO, Handling Engineering Services and Conveyors Limited, of Glasgow.

Described on the company website as "the most significant development in field fortifications since WWII", Hesco Bastion consists of giant plastic bags surrounded by steel mesh and filled with local dirt. If a base is ever constructed on the Moon, it will probably be made the same way. Assembling the Hesco Bastion entails unfolding it and (if available) using a front end loader to fill it with sand, dirt or gravel. The principle protecting personnel and equipment from enemy fire (or bombs) is very similar to the use of sandbags or earth berms in previous conflicts. The main advantage of the Hesco barriers, strongly contributing to its popularity with troops, is its quick and easy setup. Previously, troops had to fill sandbags, a slow undertaking, with one soldier filling about twenty sandbags per hour. Troops using Hesco barriers and a front end loader, can do ten times the work of troops using sandbags.

Without such technological advantages, this area, like most of the rest of southern Helmand, would be uninhabitable. The camp is protected by barbed wire, blast walls and radar that can spot hostile intruders for miles around. It is approached by a single rutted road, but new arrivals invariably fly in because driving is too dangerous.

It measures six miles by three miles (10km), and the sand that surrounds it is of the sort that sucks at your feet. The camp is in the badlands of Afghanistan, and the area is hostile in every sense.

Its Environment

In places the talcum-like dust is so deep that it can come over the top of your boots; in the distance, spiky mountains rear up from the plain without so much as a preliminary foothill. Not that you can always see the mountains - in summer, the air is distorted by temperatures of up to 50C, and even in late autumn, dust devils suddenly blow up in the heat of the day.

The main discomforts are the desert sand which coats everything with a fine layer of white dust and the temperatures, which reach 30C

during the day but plunge to near freezing at night. The heat is debilitating, with temperatures already pushing 45C (113F). There are scorpions that can kill in 15 minutes with no known anti-venom. The Helmand region has some of the fiercest weather in the world with winter temperatures of -10C and summer heat of more than 50C (122F).

There is also an increasingly sophisticated enemy ready to attack face to face, through suicide bombers or by using roadside bombs. Locals are employed for about £3.50 a day to do menial jobs such as cleaning the toilets. One of their co-ordinators said; "they go through a tough screening process but we have a high turnover. The money doesn't sound much, but it's a fortune to them but by working here they are placing themselves and their families in grave danger".

Medical Care

At the field hospital there are two wards and a state-of-the-art operating theatre. The forward based facility, Camp Bastion Field Hospital has been a tented hospital since 2003. By 2008 the deployment of the British military to Afghanistan increased and there was a need for a more solid structure so that the capability of the British military medical team in the Helmand Territory could be increased. On the 6 February 2008 the Medical Treatment Facility (MTF) was officially opened.

Though other units in Helmand Province remain in tents, the MTF is now in solid buildings and has extended their capabilities. This includes two general wards, several private rooms, a six bed intensive treatment unit (ITU), CT scanner, X-Ray machines (which includes the latest mobile digital dragon X-Ray machine), pharmacy, pathology laboratory, operating room with two modern operation tables and temperature controls to ensure the comfort of patients and staff from the extreme heat and cold weather conditions of Helmand territory and offers more protection from the Afghan dust.

The injured, wounded and sick soldiers of Operation Herrick IV are cared for by 86 tri-service staff. This also includes primary health care from a general practice surgery, two dental surgeries, a welfare department, a mental healthcare team and a dedicated Hospital Chaplain. In time there will be a physiotherapy treatment department.

Injuries treated by the team have included burns, ballistic trauma injuries, trauma injuries, mine strikes, blast, fragmentation, or gunshot wounds. Being so near the front line, the medics and nurses can perform immediate surgery and treatment which will save limbs and lives. Once stabilised patients are then swiftly repatriated to the UK for further treatment and care.

Outer Compounds

At Lashkar Gah, the provincial capital, known as "Lash", and Gereshk, the commercial centre, strategically located at the intersection of Highway One and the Helmand River, smaller detachments of troops are housed in compounds no larger than the grounds of the average comprehensive school at home. Some, such as the cooks and vehicle mechanics, will arrive and leave by helicopter, and never pass through the gate in their entire six-month tour.

For those who go out on patrol, the experience is like emerging on to the surface of an alien planet. While the Lashkar Gah base is at least within the outskirts of the town, the Gereshk compound is out on the plain, a short distance from the town.

Casualties

UK casualty rates in Afghanistan are approaching World War Two levels, as the world's focus turns from Iraq to the fight against the Taliban. The most recent figures from the Ministry of Defence (MoD) for the period of the January 1 2006, to September 30 2008, state that 34 UK soldiers have died and 161 have been wounded in action in Afghanistan. The latest British soldier causality in Afghanistan was killed on 15 October in an explosion whilst on patrol.

By comparison, in Iraq two British soldiers have died and 20 have been wounded in action during the same time period. As a proportion of soldiers in combat, the Afghanistan casualty rates since the war began in 2001 are the worst that Britain has suffered since the Second World War advance through France, Belgium and Holland into Germany in 1944-45.

From the Association Chairman

We are now getting lots of requests for information on units or individuals who have served with the Corps. A Lot of these are from relatives trying to trace the military history of their loved ones. I will put these together and send them on to branches and would appreciate if branches can air them at their meetings. The

power of memory is a powerful tool. Please feedback any information which is forthcoming.

Information required

Phil Bond is trying to find out what happened to Frederick C McIver 1138209 LAC. He was involved in some kind of incident on 18/6/44 and is probably still based at Little Staughton. Any information please contact Phil on <philbond@talk21.com>.

Phillip Pearce served on 1 Sqn at Laarbruch from 1985 – 88. During 1988 his flight (C Flight) were involved in making an RAF recruiting video. The flight is having a reunion in Weeze early next year and Phillip would love to present a copy to the troops. Anyone know how he can lay his hands on a copy of it?

Seane Madge is looking for information on his late grandfather's squadron 2718. His grandfather served between 1942 – 46.

Terence Fredrick Atkins recently passed away and his widow Carol has requested any information on his service. He served with the Corps and was deployed during the EOKA campaign in Cyprus 56 – 58. She doesn't know what squadron or his service number so either of those would be a start. Her sons want to represent their father at Remembrance Parades. Terry was about 70.

Jim Leaney is trying to get in contact with comrades of Dennis Earthy who served on II Armoured Car 45 – 47.

Lynne Crook is looking for any information on her father's squadron – 2932. He served between 1942 and 46.

Mark Osborne is looking for a copy of a book called "Below the bottom rung" (RAF Regiment in Palestine) written by Edward Grocott and published in 1996 by & KH Publishing. His father was a member of 65(R) Sqn.

EDITOR'S NOTE – RAF Regiment Books

Ted Grocott is a lapsed member of the Birmingham Branch. I have tried to contact him without success, so I have passed on his contact details to the Chairman. I have also been asked for information about RAF Regiment books by someone who wishes to buy an original Ground Gunner a suitable book for his 85th birthday this month. After assembling a list of all the books about the Regiment that I know of, I thought that it may be of interest to all of so here it is. I have also published this list of books on the

Birmingham Branch News Page of the Association Website.

"**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.

"**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 - 1995 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.

"**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.

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

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.

NATIONAL MEMORIAL ARBORETUM (NMA) UPDATE

As far as the weather is concerned it has been a disastrous summer and here we are with

floods once again. However, the NMA has been extremely busy with many dedication services and new memorials being built and visits by His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, Duke of Kent, Duke of Westminster, David Cameron and many others.

Remembrance Day Tuesday November 11th at the NMA

The National Memorial Arboretum welcomed Prince and Princess Michael of Kent to its Armistice Day service on Tuesday, November 11th. The event marked the 90th anniversary of Armistice Day, which signaled the end of the First World War. The NMA played a key role in national commemorations and a ticket-only service, at which all of the services were represented, took place within the Armed Forces Memorial.

The service was led by the former Bishop to the Armed Forces, the Right Reverend John Kirkham, the Reverend Monsignor Paul Donovan QHC VG Royal Navy; and the Honorary Chaplain to the Arboretum, the Reverend Simon Lumby.

The day's events commenced at 10.00 am with well known tunes of the WI era performed by the Band of HM Royal Marines, Plymouth. Standards were paraded at 10.20 am and the proceedings were relayed on screen to members of the public in the arboretum's Leonard Cheshire Amphitheatre. At precisely 11.00 am, and signaling the two-minute silence, a shaft of sunlight fell from the slot cut into the walls of the Armed Forces Memorial and struck its central plinth. A fly past of three Tornados, acknowledging the 90th anniversary of the Royal Air Force, took place at noon. Due to this event, access to the Armed Forces Memorial was not possible until 12.30 pm.

A park-and-ride scheme for all ticketed guests and members of the public operated from Catton Hall at a cost of £2. A limited number of spaces were available for blue badge holders at the National Memorial Arboretum itself. Since the Second World War alone, more than 16,000 men and women have given their lives so that the majority of us can continue to enjoy this country's hard-fought peace and there's nowhere better to remember all of these sacrifices than at the National Memorial Arboretum.

And at the Arboretum, the Armed forces Memorial represents 46 post-War theatres of conflict, an astonishing 13 of which have seen

personnel killed since the turn of the new Millennium. Ominously, there's room for the names of thousands more mothers and fathers, sons and daughters, brothers and sisters. Standing on a hill, the whole monument glows in the late afternoon sunshine like something out of ancient Rome. Its imposing style and proportions look magnificent from the visitor centre.

You can imagine that in 100 years' time, people will still be enthralled that, for once, this early 21st Century generation was able to design something to match the timeless ingenuity of the builders of our great cathedrals and churches.

Future Events at the NMA

I'm sorry about the limited information about future events at the NMA. I get most of my information about these events from the NMA website but either the NMA Events Page isn't kept up to date or there aren't any other military events booked for the rest of this year or for 2009.

So what I have got – you have got.

2009

Tuesday, 27th January, 2009. Remembrance event - Holocaust Memorial Day. More focus on education. For further information contact NMA - Tel: 01283 792 333.

Town swells with patriotism and pride

By Paul Adams Diplomatic correspondent, BBC News Sunday 12th October 2008

Come rain or shine, the people of Wootton Bassett have turned out, sometimes in their hundreds, to pay their respects to fallen soldiers. On Sunday, under blazing autumn skies, the armed forces marched on the town to say thank you. Usually, the sight of a vast C-17 transport plane, making its final approach to nearby RAF Lyneham, heralds the arrival of flag-draped coffins from Afghanistan or Iraq, but when the aircraft's four jet engines roared low over the high street, flags fluttered and a cheer went up. Air Chief Marshal Sir Clive Loader told the crowd the military was here for one reason alone. He also said;

"And that's to pay tribute to a townspeople who have shown an uncommon humanity. You and your neighbours have chosen to stand side by side, time and time again, and show your unified support for those who have fallen in battle."

Welcome home

Wootton Bassett has now seen 102 repatriations, in 53 separate ceremonies, since bodies started being flown to RAF Lyneham in April 2007. What began with a handful of veterans saluting the passing cortege soon developed into a simple ritual involving larger and larger numbers of people. They line the road each time word goes around that another hearse is expected.

Dennis Compton, Wiltshire chairman of the Royal British Legion, has been here from the start. "When a regiment goes out and comes back, they have a welcome home parade, in whatever town they're barracked in," he told me. "These lads don't get a welcome home parade. So when they come back, in Wootton Bassett, it's their welcome home parade."

Town came to a halt

When I came here on 19 September, I watched as the cortege carrying the bodies of Lance Corporal Nicky Mason and Private Jason Rawstron, both from 2 Para, entered the high street. It stopped by Saint Bartholomew and All Saints Church, before being led on at walking pace by a funeral director. When the coffins reached the town's distinctive war memorial, with four brass hands holding up a globe, the cortege stopped for two minutes while veterans and police officers saluted and the town came to a halt.

Today, in what felt like summer's last glorious hurrah, thousands cheered and clapped as brass bands representing all three services marched along the high street. Patriotism and pride were much in evidence. Local resident Pauline Cuss clutched two Union Jacks as she welcomed the military. "It's a very proud day for Wootton Bassett," she told me. "We take the repatriation here very seriously."

With plenty of serving and retired military people living in the community, it's hardly surprising that Wootton Bassett has achieved its reputation. Should the rest of the country take note, I wondered? "I really don't think we're as proud of our armed forces as we should be," Pauline said. In north Wiltshire this afternoon, nothing could have been further from the truth.

The next article was sent to me by Birmingham Branch member – and one of our Military Ward Liaison Officers – Roy Thomas, as a tribute to another Birmingham Branch member, Group Captain Kingsley Oliver who died last

October. At some future date, we would like to commemorate him with a brick paver in the covered walkway at the National Memorial Arboretum.

Rank has its Privileges

(A small memory of the late Group Captain Oliver's time as CO RAF Catterick) by Roy Thomas

It was on an autumn/winter Saturday morning in 1976 and the RAF Catterick game shooting club (of which I was the assistant keeper) were resting between drives close to Castle Hills, when a very young ATC NCO possibly a Sergeant? - arrived on the scene, if my memory serves me correctly, by bicycle.

In a somewhat pompous manner, he complained to us that it was very dangerous as shooting (shotguns) could hit the gliders as they took off or landed. Memory fails a bit here, well it was some 32 years ago, but it would have been pointed out that we were on an official shoot and the gliders were nowhere near us. The lad then said that he would make a complaint about this to the Station Commander's office. Whereupon Group Captain Oliver in the appropriate shooting outfit, stepped through the group to face the might of the ATC. He said looking down at the lad, "in that case you had better make it to me as I am your commanding officer", to which the lad beat a hasty retreat. We carried on shooting and the gliders carried on flying, oh! - and we never saw that NCO again that day. As a matter of interest, in attendance on that days shoot were, SAC (assistant keeper) Roy Thomas, Squadron leader McGloughlin, Flight Sergeant Pollard (MT) and Sergeant Hart - all of 58 Squadron; and the Church of Scotland Padre Squadron Leader Gibson. There were others on my photographs but I have no names listed.

Thank you for that short story Roy, for it is memories such as these that help us to remember our members that have passed on to that great squadron in the sky.

BRANCH APPEAL REMINDER

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. To date - 14th November - we have raised £595.00 from Birmingham Branch members, this, together with £50.00 from Sussex

Branch, £50.00 from Kent Branch and a magnificent £335.00 from Norfolk Branch makes a total of £1,030.00. And as of the same date, we have spent £810.00 in donations to the Military Ward.

Donations Gratefully Received

By Roy Thomas

The generous donations - totaling some £1,030 made by various branches and individuals (you know who you are) - allowed the Birmingham Branch's Military Ward Liaison Team (Roy Thomas and Ralph Dean) to go shopping for items that would be of use to all the recovering troops on the wards at Selly Oak Hospital. Acting on a suggestion by Major Cheeseman of the OC Patient Support Services (PSS) - and always on the hunt for a bargain - the team made their first purchases from Sainsbury's of 3 Phillips portable DVD players and a small selection of films, then onto ASDA for the protective carrying cases and cleaning kits. Major Cheeseman said that these particular items would allow the patients to lose themselves for a couple of hours in some quiet corner to watch a film or just listen to their own brand of music without impinging on their fellow patients and the very busy staff. Now to the purchase of the next items. This may surprise and even shock some people as they are medical supply items (with a NATO supply number) in the form of protective waterproof wound coverings called Limbo Products and are made by Thesis Technology down in West Sussex. They are designed to protect wounds, dressings and medical attachments usually for the limbs or sections of them, by way of water tight collars and waterproof coverings, allowing the patient to bathe, shower, go for a swim, or simply a trip away from the ward without resorting to medical plastic sheeting/bags and sticky tape.

These products are available on prescription but as it can take up to two weeks to have them approved/processed from the time of diagnosis the individual concerned has been moved on elsewhere. At the moment the wards do not hold them as a stock item and there is no local purchase facility, so unless patients or their families buy them themselves (and they are not cheap) it is up to the likes of us to help out from time to time. Roy Thomas made an approach to Thesis Technology and spoke to Mr. Steve Parker - one of the senior managers - and asked what

they could offer us with the £330 available to spend. Steve said he would see what he could do and would personally help to pack up a box and dispatch it asap and without a charge for carriage.

Within two days the parcel arrived and I can honestly say 'they did us proud'. Inside were a variety of the protectors totaling 36 pieces, priced under the market value. As these are an individual user/patient item it means they will help up to 36 troops in the coming months. The paying up time coincided with our Annual Reunion weekend; so on the way back from Folkestone to Birmingham we popped across two counties to the company's factory in Fishbourne near Chichester (not very far from old RAF Tangmere and Thorney Island) and handed over the cheque to Steve thanking him on behalf of us all for their kind assistance. The photograph taken in the Admin. Section of the Military Hospital at Selly Oak, shows the goods donated as Major Cheeseman struggles under the weight of it all. Propping him up is Ralph Dean (left) and Roy Thomas (right) - the Birmingham Branch's Hospital Liaison Team.



Handing Over the "Goodies" to Ian

Dear Roy and Ralph.

DONATION TO RCDM PATIENT WELFARE FUND

Firstly, may I on behalf of the soldiers, sailors, airmen and women who have had the misfortune (due to wounding) who have had the misfortune to pass through this organisation, now and in the future, offer my sincerest thanks to all of the members of the RAF Regiment Association, for the generous donation of DVD players and waterproof protectors to the RCDM patients. It is quite a simply a fantastic gesture and will make a considerable difference to those

military personnel that have been wounded in action.

It was good to chat yesterday and explain a little of what we do here at Selly Oak for our wounded. The protectors are an excellent convenience to soldiers with limb injuries and whilst we agree it would be nice if “the system” provided them, it is not always possible for any number of reasons. They are so truly appreciated by our patients and a very welcome gift. The portable DVD players are very well received and again, invaluable to the patients with so much time on their hands. Thanks once again, to you and everyone involved in this donation. Public support is very important is very important to the Armed Forces, particularly those injured in the line of duty, and support such as yours certainly boosts the morale of both patients and staff. Your continued support is truly valued. Yours aye. Ian.

Well that's all for now, look after yourselves and keep smiling.

Malcolm

DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES



16

Thursday 8 th January	2009	Branch Night	Thursday 9 th April	2009	Branch Night
Sunday 1st February	2009	67th Ann RAF Reg.t	Wednesday 23 rd April	2009	St George's Day
Sunday 1 st February	2009	Subscriptions Due	Sunday 26 th April	2009	ANZAC Day Serv & Par
Thursday 12 th February	09	Branch Night	Sunday 10 th May	2009	Reded of Regiment Chapel
Sunday 1 st March	2009	St David's Day	Thursday 14 th May	2009	Branch Night
Thursday 12 th March	2009	Branch Night	Thursday 11 th June	2009	Branch Night
Tuesday 17 th March	2009	St Patrick's Day	Sunday 14 th June	2009	RAF Cosford Air Show
Sun 15 th – Mon 30 th Mar	09	Battle For Meiktila	Sunday 28 th June	2009	RAF Reg.t Service at NMA
Sunday 5th April	2009	Branch Reded Mem.l	Sunday 4 th October	2009	Merchant Navy Day
			Thursday 8 th October	2009	Branch Night
			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

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