



# ROYAL AIR FORCE REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

[www.rafregt.org.uk](http://www.rafregt.org.uk)

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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: 244  
OCTOBER 2009**

# THE BIRMINGHAM BRANCH NEWSLETTER

## NUMBER 244 OCTOBER 2009

Dear Readers.

### Honours for Birmingham Branch

You will see later on in this newsletter, that the CGs Commendations 2009 have now been published and our Branch has been greatly honoured, for our Branch Chairman Ron Sharp is one of the recipients of the CGs Commendations for services to the maintenance of the RAF Regiment Memorial Garden. I don't think anyone really knows just how many hours Ron gives to the Garden. Most of our members know that he is responsible for its maintenance that he does so well but he also carries out a number of other jobs too, such as lowering the flags to half-mast when sadly this becomes necessary, so our congratulations to Ron for an award that is so richly deserved. It reflects the enormous amount of work that he puts in.

In addition, our Branch Vice-President is now the Chairman Elect of Birmingham County Royal British Legion and will be elected into that important post on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2009. This is a very influential position in ex-service affairs in the Greater Birmingham area and another great honour for the Birmingham Branch. Such is Dave's dedication and well-known enthusiasm for all things ex-service, that it will hold him in good stead and I have no doubt that he will bring great efficiency to that position. His election will be good for the RBL and will also reflect well on the Birmingham Branch in having a senior member of the Branch in such an important position. Our congratulations to Dave for being nominated to a position that he so richly deserves.

### Branch Website

Although this may only be of interest to those of you that have access to the internet, another first for the Birmingham Branch is that through the efficient services of the Association Website Manager Gordon Diffey, I have added another page to the Birmingham Branch site on the Association website. We now have five pages listed that are now as follows.

- Birmingham Branch Committee Page
- Birmingham Branch News
- Birmingham Branch Roll of Honour
- Birmingham Branch History

### RAF Regiment Books

My list of books is growing all the time and at Gordon's suggestion, it was decided to add a separate page for this information. As you will again see later on in this newsletter, some of the books have been in my list for some time now but due to adding another seven books, some of them not all about the RAF Regiment but containing references to the RAF Regiment. I have split the list into two parts, one with books all about the RAF Regiment and the other, with books that refer to the RAF Regiment.

### BRANCH BIRTHDAYS

A very Happy Birthday to the following Birmingham Branch members whose birthdays are this month, may you all have many more.

- 2nd Oct **Philip Ranford** Walsall W Mids
- 6th Oct **Neal Barber** Stoke on Trent Staffordshire
- 10th Oct **Ernie Bucknall** Nuneaton Warwicks
- 11th October **James Setter** Barnstaple Devon
- 21st Oct **Ken Lobley** Todmorden Lancashire
- 23rd October **Ray Hill** Nuneaton Warwickshire
- 24th Oct **Anthony Minns** Burton on Trent Staffs
- 27th October **Barry Howe** Clacton on Sea Essex
- 28th Oct **John Dolphin** Birmingham West Mids
- 29th October **Reg Burton** Enfield Middlesex
- 31st Oct **Jeremy Hedges** Broadway Worcs

### 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 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 for we need more money as we only have £18.40 remaining.

If any of you would like to contribute items or cash now to this appeal, you can either take them directly to Ward S4, Selly Oak Hospital and ask for Warrant Officer A (Alan) Wanbon RAF, or post them to him at Patient Support Services, RCDM, Ward S4, Selly Oak Hospital, Raddlebarn Road, Selly Oak, Birmingham, B29

6JD. Alan can also be contacted on 07795 801276.

### **DEATH NOTICES:**

I regret to inform you of the death of ex-SAC John Docker who passed away on Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> October 2009. John who was born on 30<sup>th</sup> October 1933, would have been seventy-six on 30<sup>th</sup> October. John joined the Birmingham Branch in March 1991 and has been a stalwart member of the Branch ever since and had also served us well as our Branch Standard Bearer. John had been ill for some time and he will now be sadly missed.

John enlisted on 10<sup>th</sup> January 1952 and after his Regiment Training at RAF Dumfries and Driver Training at RAF Weeton, was posted to a Rifle Squadron (No unknown) at RAF Credenhill and served there and at RAF Thornaby with that squadron until he was posted to 58 Field Squadron at RAF Khormaksar at Aden and later at RAF Eastleigh, Kenya. During his service there he was detached to 1340 Flight at Marriars Farm on anti-terrorist patrols. John completed his service there and was discharged on 31<sup>st</sup> December 1954. He was awarded the General Service Medal Kenya Clasp and the Queen's Coronation Medal.

He is survived by his wife Eileen to whom we extend our sincere condolences. At the time of this newsletter being posted off for photocopying, no funeral details were available.

### **The New Branch Standard Bearer**

In last August's newsletter, I told you that due to John Docker's ill-health, we had to appeal for another Branch Standard Bearer. I am delighted to tell you that we have had three volunteers. Our Branch Vice-President Dave Gooding of whom more later, Roy Thomas and W/O Mick Silver, now, due to his retirement from the Regiment, Mr. Silver. Due to Roy and Mick's shift working arrangements, Dave will take the lead role assisted by Roy and Mick where their shift patterns allow.

### **RAF Regiment Memorial Project 2009**

At last month's Branch meeting we agreed to donate £500.00 to this important project that will greatly enhance the appearance of the RAF Regiment Memorial Garden. The project will cost about £3,800 to complete and the RAF Regiment Secretary Martin Hooker has told me that with our donation, he now has about £2,900 so we're getting there. When the Birmingham

Branch installed the current grey paving slabs, the one hundred and ninety 2 X 2 foot slabs cost £363.97. Digging out the foundations for the slabs by the NMA staff cost £370.00 and the slabs were laid by a professional slab layer at a cost of £400.00, making a total of £1,333.97. This was funded by a donation from the RAF Regiment Association of £500.00 and £733.97 taken from the remaining balance transferred from the Memorial Garden Appeal Fund.

At the time this was all we could afford but the red paving bricks it is proposed to install in their place will look very much better and will give a much more modern appearance, much more in keeping with the general appearance of the NMA. I'm sure that the remaining £900.00 of the money required will be raised and that we will soon be able to greatly enhance the appearance of the RAF Regiment Memorial Garden.

### **Major Coup for the RAF Regiment**

In my August newsletter on page 6, I told you about a major development for the RAF Regiment by the formation of a new Field Squadron and a new Force Protection Wing Headquarters. The RAF Regiment has become so strategically important that in July, the Armed Forces Minister announced that a new Force Protection Wing Headquarters and a new Field Squadron would be operational by this month. The twelve personnel needed to run the FP Wing HQ and the one hundred and seventy-two troops to man the new Field Squadron will deploy to Afghanistan in 2011. And a MoD study has determined that the best possible base for this new Wing and Squadron will be either RAF Leuchars in Scotland or RAF Shawbury in Shropshire. I think that the best location would be Shawbury not only from our point of view but mainly for the excellent recruiting possibilities in the Midlands.

### **Battle of Crete 1941**

As the following article "Who Watches the Watchers" will tell you, the Battle of Crete was a major factor in the establishment of the RAF Regiment but what was it all about? On the morning of 20th May, 1941, the Germans launched the first airborne invasion in history. And they chose the Greek island of Crete in the Eastern Mediterranean for it.

The Battle of Crete was unprecedented in three respects: it was the first mainly airborne invasion; it was the first time the Allies made significant use of intelligence from the deciphered

German Enigma code; and it was the first time invading German troops encountered mass resistance from a civilian population. In addition, as a result of the heavy casualties suffered by the parachutists, Adolf Hitler forbade further large scale airborne operations. However, the Allies were impressed by the potential of paratroopers and started to build their own airborne divisions. The battle began on the morning of 20<sup>th</sup> May 1941, when Nazi Germany launched an airborne invasion of Crete under the code-name "Unternehmen Merkur" ("Operation Mercury") Greek and Allied forces together with Cretan civilians defended the island.

After one day of fighting, the Germans had suffered appalling casualties and none of their objectives had been achieved. The next day though, through bad communications and the failure of Allied commanders to grasp the situation, Maleme airfield in western Crete fell to the Germans, enabling them to fly in reinforcements and overwhelm the Allied forces. The ensuing battle lasted for about ten days. Aircraft, and the personnel, facilities and equipment necessary to maintain and operate them, are particularly vulnerable to attack on the ground. The RAF discovered this to its cost during the Battle of Crete when German airborne forces quickly overran the lightly defended airfields. The realization that air assets required their own robust defences led to the formation of the RAF Regiment in 1942. To my great pleasure and surprise, the Mail Online Live has recognised the importance of the RAF Regiment role by publishing on 5<sup>th</sup> September 2009, the following major article about this development. With my apologies to Jeremy Taylor I have rearranged some of the paragraphs as he has used what I call "flashbacks" which slightly confused me and may confuse some of my readers.

## **Who Watches the Watchers?**

**By Jeremy Taylor**

**The RAF's fighters and spotter 'planes rule the skies in Afghanistan but they are terribly vulnerable on the ground – which is why the RAF has ordered a new unit to protect them.**

*It was a major coup for the RAF Regiment and virtually unprecedented in military circles where more commonly numbers are being cut or regiments amalgamated to save money.*

*However, the Taliban have become so aggressive that the Regiment's Force Protection Wings have become key to containing the threat against British air bases. Most people imagine it's the Army who protect our airfields in hostile environments and that members of the RAF just fly and maintain the aircraft. In fact RAF Regiment Force Protection Wings are responsible for protecting both the military airport in Kandahar, where British forces are based in Afghanistan, and since July, the desert airbase at Camp Bastion.*

*The Royal Air Force has become the backbone of the military operation in Afghanistan and it is vital that the two air bases are protected from constant attacks.*

## **Out of defeat – the rise of a new RAF Regiment**

Force Protection Wings have their origins in the 1920's when No 1 Armoured Car Company RAF was deployed in Rolls-Royce armoured vehicles across the Middle East, including Iraq. Fitted with a turret and a machine gun, the mobile teams proved successful in helping to prevent attacks on vulnerable outposts. However, it took the military disaster at the Battle of Crete in 1941 to persuade Whitehall defence chiefs that a dedicated RAF Regiment was needed to protect Royal Air force assets in the far-flung corners of the world. Allied forces stationed on the Greek island were defeated after a bloody battle that claimed more than 10,000 lives in just ten days. Poor leadership and communications were blamed for the defeat but a key factor was the loss of the airfield at Maleme, which enabled the Germans to fly in reinforcements. Within a year the RAF Regiment was formed, thanks to a Royal Warrant signed by King George VI.

At the height of World War Two its numbers swelled to more than 85,000 men, with paratroopers, field squadrons, armoured cars and mortar teams – just a few of the specialist units set up to defend air bases. Regiment numbers fell significantly during peacetime and the term Force Protection Wing didn't come into existence until 2004. Before that, they were known by the less memorable title of Tactical Survive to Operate Headquarters (Tac STO HQ).

**Mail Online Live trains with the men who safeguard Britain's air power**

My mission is to reach the perimeter wire. There's an open road between myself and the fence, with nothing obvious blocking my path. Sitting behind the steering wheel, I use a pair of binoculars for a final check. The coast seems clear, and my family hatchback doesn't look out of place in this remote Norfolk backwater. But inside my vehicle, hidden is the spare wheel foot well, is an AK 47 Assault Rifle. I'm at the Stanford Training Area (STANTA) near Thetford, which is used by around 85,000 members of Britain's Armed Forces, on a training exercise with a RAF Force Protection Wing. I'm posing as a would-be terrorist and the fence is playing the role of the outer barrier of an airbase.

The area is littered with pretend battlegrounds and shot-up buildings, as well as firing ranges and tank tracks. Perhaps the most bizarre feature of the site is the purpose-built Afghan village. It is surrounded by high walls painted a sand colour, inside, it's a labyrinth of narrow streets and alleys – complete with Afghan graffiti – all designed to prepare troops for the dangers they will encounter in Afghanistan. Today the exercise is taking place in open country. So far I haven't seen an armoured vehicle or even a single person. The occasional helicopter hovering overhead is the only reminder that this is no ordinary Norfolk road. As I drive over a small ridge, I mentally measure out the final half mile.

I am doing well. I'm just a few hundred yards from celebrating my success when I round a corner and come face-to-face with a weapons mounted installation kit (WMIK) – essentially an armoured Land Rover. The vehicle looks sinister enough but it's also loaded in the rear with a 12.7 heavy machine gun, an upgraded version of the Browning M2 50 cal. Weighing in at a hefty 80lb it is capable of taking out a low-flying aircraft.

I hit the brake pedal hard. Then I notice the ground around me moving as men camouflaged with grass, branches and soil, suddenly appear. There's nowhere to hide, nowhere to make a break as more and more human bushes appear in every direction. This is my first, slightly uncomfortable contact with the RAF Force Protection Wing, although they've obviously been watching me for some time.

My captors in Norfolk are from 51 Squadron RAF Regiment, part of No 5 Force Protection Wing. They are multitasking soldiers,

or Gunners in RAF "speak". They are on a patrol exercise and loaded with more hand luggage than most of us would take on a two-week holiday.

After I'm invited to open the bonnet, doors and tailgate of my car, one Gunner carries out a meticulous search of every nook and cranny. It takes them minutes to find my rifle stashed under the boot floor. As I am led away for questioning, a few of the men are at the roadside, preparing their camouflage gear for another operation. The webbing blankets draped over their shoulders are covered in green and brown stands, with tufts of long grass sprouting from their helmets. One of them is using a compact mirror to smear on thick grease. Moments after I've been led away I turn round and the unit is gone. They've vanished into thin air, gone to ground a few yards from where I am now. And that's the thing about this RAF Regiment. They operate quietly below the radar, providing a vital but little-known role.

**Vehicle Check Points (VCPs) are an essential part of the defence strategy in Afghanistan.**

"VCPs like this are carried out every day", says Wing Commander Derek Read OC No5 Force Protection Wing. They provide a visible presence on the ground, help prevent the movement of weaponry by the Taliban and act as a deterrent to those who might try to do so. We also guard the approaches to runways to deny the enemy the chance to launch ground-to-air rocket attacks".

Squadron Leader Al Green tells me; First and foremost the unit is guarding the aircraft that are taking off and landing, protecting them from Taliban forces looking to shoot them down. They protect the airbases from indirect fire, such as mortars, rockets and small-arms fire directed into the base itself". Training is tough and there is a significant rate of failure. But the members of the unit need to know how to fight too, as they can get caught up in action. Among those who have already made the grade is Corporal David Hayden from Spalding who, in 2008, became the first Airman to be awarded a Military Cross, after braving a hail of enemy bullets to rescue a fatally wounded colleague at Al-Waki, near Basrah. Corporal Hayden's foot patrol had been ambushed and pinned down by up to fifty insurgents.

Speaking from his base in Afghanistan, Corporal Hayden said; "There was effective fire coming at us from all sides, at least a dozen firing points. But we were giving as good as we were

getting and picked off quite a few gunmen and they exposed themselves to fire. I'm certainly no hero – I was just doing my job”.

### **The best of the best on the ground**

“Our men are among the best of the best on the ground” says Wing Commander Read. We need people who are tough and robust but they have to be intelligent enough to understand a wide range of complex kit. They could be using a powerful Nikon camera for surveillance, the latest computerised communication equipment or new Javelin Anti-Tank missiles”. Wing Commander Read, who in the past has served in hotspots like Kuwait and Sierra Leone, says the multiple roles expected of the RAF Regiment meant it constantly needed to update and improve equipment. “When I joined in the eighties, we were armed to defend our bases from more conventional Soviet attacks during the Cold War. Now we are operating in places where the enemy is difficult to identify, often using improvised explosive devices or even suicide attacks. Our equipment lists reflect this situation. We are a relatively small force with a protective role and that means we have to multitask. We might need a camera or night-vision equipment to carry out surveillance, or specialist sniper rifles and 250 cc quad bikes to move them around quickly”.

### **In Afghanistan**

In Afghanistan units often spend days out in the field, the men carrying up to 120lb of equipment as they mount surveillance and sniper exercises, or make random vehicle checks around the air bases. The RAF is cagey about exact numbers but fifty to one hundred men are on duty outside the protection of the perimeter at any one time. It might sound a lot but their patrol area can extend to hundreds of square miles.

It's dangerous work. In the course of their patrols, three members of the RAF Regiment have been killed by roadside bombs or mines since August 2001. A further four died during six years of safeguarding the RAF airfield at Basrah International Airport in Iraq. Shifts are long, often between twelve and sixteen hours. The heat means they have to carry over eight litres of water as well as all their equipment.

It's 50 degrees centigrade and sweat is dripping down his forehead and into his eyes. He rubs it away, leaving a dark smudge of desert dust. He scans the area and then picks up his telescopic sight to get a better view. His body is

aching badly. He's been in this 6 foot by 6 foot hole for two days and he is starting to get cramp.

But with the roof barely an inch above his head, there isn't even room to stretch his arms. And he has to share this tiny space with a “spotter”, the man he's here to protect. Corporal Toby Box aged thirty from London, is a sniper with the RAF Regiment's Force Protection Wing. He spends days out in the field in Afghanistan, usually dug into a small hole from where the spotter relays intelligence back to Kandahar Air Base. Once in place, the two men are unable to break cover, cook food or move more than a few feet inside their cocoon. Corporal Box and his spotter dig out their hole under cover of darkness and it's always filled in at the end of a mission. They use folding shovels that they have carried in their kit together with all the equipment they need; a high-powered Nikon camera, telescopic sight, an Accuracy International L96A1 Sniper Rifle, rations and most importantly, litres of water.

A neat square is cut out in the scrubland and put aside. Then the serious digging begins. All the soil has to be carried away from the site in sacks or dragged on sheets to a spot where it doesn't give away the location of the observation point. Logs are then placed over the hole, followed by chicken wire and a plastic sheet. The topsoil and turf are then carefully replaced on top of the sheet. “The idea is that if somebody stood on top of a hole and dug down, they'd have to dig some way before they realised there were men underneath” says Box. In Afghanistan, the holes are left open where possible because it is so hot. The men will stay in the hole for up to five days, watching and observing.

They survive on cold rations because cooking would give away their location; a bottle of Tabasco sauce provides the only heat they're allowed. Washing and cleaning teeth is not an option as soap and toothpaste can be smelled from three hundred feet away. Holed up in his dugout, Corporal Box is carefully scanning for anything suspicious – a vehicle could be carrying weapons or a group of Taliban preparing to make an assault on the airbase. Rocket attacks can be launched from up to twelve miles away and are a frequent occurrence.

Often the Taliban fire a barrage of up to twenty at a time from makeshift launch sites, and it is the job of the RAF Regiment to be alert to the

potential threat. The protection provided by the Force Protection Wings is regarded by many as the best in the military. Up to three hundred members of the RAF Regiment are currently serving in Afghanistan, and the two airbases are guarded around the clock.

## **NATIONAL MEMORIAL ARBORETUM (NMA) UPDATE**

For anyone who has not visited the National Memorial Arboretum recently, it is constantly changing with new memorials being frequently added. With this in mind, for any of you considering visiting, if you do, it will be well worthwhile investing a fiver in buying the second edition of the NMA guide book for it is well worth having.

Not only is it very well laid out it is of enormous use in finding your way around the site and identifying all the memorials. You may think that all the memorials should be easy to identify and so they are but the guide book contains a wealth of other information about them. Not only that, a few of them consist of groups of trees and without the guide book, you would not know why they are there. So go on, splash out a fiver and you won't regret it, for not only will it be of great help in finding your way around, it is well worth having in its own right as a valuable source of reference.

### **Dedication of Memorial to Polish forces**

On Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> September, at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire, UK, over 1,500 guests were present for the unveiling and dedication of the internationally significant Polish Armed Forces Memorial. Polish Armed Forces veterans from across the UK joined guests including HRH The Duke of Kent and Her Excellency Barbara Krystyna Tuge-Erecińska, Ambassador of the Republic of Poland and other senior figures from the UK and Polish governments and their armed forces.

The imposing bronze and granite Polish Armed Forces Memorial, situated prominently in a site that is fast becoming one of the world's leading places for remembrance, will signal to the last remaining veterans that their struggles, and those of their departed comrades, will be duly remembered for generations to come. The Polish Armed Forces Memorial is superbly located at the eastern end of 'The Beat' a long avenue of chestnut trees. Four humble toy soldiers, each painted a bronze colour and glued back-to-back

atop a two pence piece provided the inspiration behind the Memorial's design.

It was decided that the statue would be based on this model soldier concept and would comprise four sculptures of typical members of the different branches of the Polish Armed Forces: the Air Force, the Army, the Navy and the Polish Underground Home Army. The Airman is a Polish pilot from RAF 303 Squadron during the Battle of Britain; the Underground figure is a woman courier wearing civilian clothes; the Army is represented by a typical Polish soldier from the battle of Monte-Casino; the Sailor is a crew member of the Polish destroyer *Błyskawica*.

In addition, incorporated within the statue is the symbol of the Polish Eagle (the Polish State emblem), uniting all four sculptures under its outspread wings. The statue is set within an imposing 18 metre diameter architectural feature which has a series of inset plaques describing the Polish contribution in the Second World War.

The Memorial is designed to act not only as a tribute to the fallen, but also as an educational aid for those visitors not familiar with the history of the allied Polish Forces. Seventy years after the invasion of Poland, leading British statesmen and military leaders, from The Rt. Hon. the Baroness Thatcher to General The Lord Guthrie, unite to remind us: "We must never forget Poland's unique contribution to Britain's freedom and the defeat of Nazi Germany."

### **"First to Fight" a New Book**

Polish veterans were profoundly shocked to find young people in the UK asking whether Poland fought with Germany in WW2. To ensure their contribution to Britain's war effort is remembered, a new book 'First to Fight' was launched on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2009, ahead of the dedication at the NMA of the first national memorial to Polish forces in the UK last month.

The Polish veterans' 'last campaign' is being supported vigorously by Britain's senior political and military establishment, including Baroness Thatcher, Patron Conservative Friends of Poland, who said:

*"Today, as we mark the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the invasion of Poland and the subsequent outbreak of World War II, we remember the unique contribution of the Polish armed forces towards the freedom of Britain, of Europe and indeed of the world. Poland fought alongside us from the first day of the war to the last. Her*

people showed extraordinary bravery: many giving their lives as the ultimate sacrifice.

*But the freedoms for which they fought were to be cruelly denied them in the post-war world. Those who remained in exile could only look on as a new wave of oppression engulfed their country. Some would never achieve their heart-felt goal of returning to their homeland. But, finally, after more than four decades under communist tyranny, the people of Poland were able to set their own destiny. In Britain, we remember the steadfastness of the Polish people; we treasure the bond of history which ties our peoples together; and we look forward to a flourishing friendship which will serve our nations well into the future."*

General The Lord Guthrie, former Chief of the Defence Staff, writes in the book:

*"We owe much to the Poles who came to join us in our struggle. There was a time when the only allies the British Commonwealth had were Polish and large numbers died in battle many miles from their country. We are right to remember those gallant men and women who, at a very difficult time in both our countries' histories, were our firm friends and allies."*

**Other contributors to the book and supporters of the campaign include:**

HRH The Duke of Kent, KG

HRH The Duke of Gloucester, KG GVC

Major General The Duke of Westminster, KG CB OBE TD CD DL

General The Lord Guthrie of Craigiebank, GCB LVO OBE DL

General Sir Mike Jackson GCB CBE DSO

Winston S. Churchill MP (grandson of the wartime Prime Minister)

Sir Martin Gilbert (Churchill's official biographer)

Frederick Forsyth (author and political commentator).

'First to Fight' recounts Poland's epic six year struggle – with some historically significant texts being published for the first time, such as the English translation of Stalin's signed order to execute 14,736 of the Polish Officer Corps at Katyn Forest in 1940.

The story is brought to life with moving personal stories from Poles who fought in the air, on land and at sea, on many fronts. For example, the myth of Polish cavalry charging German Panzers is put to bed: yes they did charge, but to

good effect as recounted by Lieutenant Andrzej Zylinski. Leading the 4th Squadron of the Polish 11th Uhlan Regiment they charged with sabres drawn, breaching the German defences of Kaluszyn. After fierce fighting, the town was captured with the almost complete destruction of the German 44th Regiment, whose commander committed suicide.

'First to Fight' was launched ahead of the dedication of the first official war memorial in the UK for the 500,000 members of the Polish forces who fought in WW2 under British command. The event, in the presence of HRH The Duke of Kent, took place at the National Memorial Arboretum on 19th September. With the publication of 'First to Fight' and the unveiling of the Polish War Memorial last month, the last remaining veterans now know that their struggles, and those of their departed comrades, will be duly remembered in Britain for generations to come.

**Historical Synopsis**

Despite being the first to bear the brunt of Hitler's Blitzkrieg, Poland's resistance lasted longer than that of France, Norway, Holland or Belgium and was only hastened by the invasion from their rear by the Soviet Union. After the fall of Poland and France over half a million Poles found a way to answer Churchill's call to arms of "blood, sweat and tears" by continuing the fight under British command (many having to walk over 2,000 miles after being released from Stalin's Siberian gulags to do so). From the pilots of 303 Squadron, who shot down the highest tally of German aircraft in the Battle of Britain, to the men of General Anders 2nd Corps who captured Monte Casino.

**EDITOR'S NOTE 1:**

Shortly after the attack on the Soviet Union by Germany on June 22, 1941, Anders was released by the Soviets with the aim of forming a Polish Army to fight alongside the Red Army.

Continued friction with the Soviets over political issues as well as shortages of weapons, food and clothing led to the eventual exodus of Anders' men - known as the Anders Army - together with a sizeable contingent of Polish and Jewish civilians, along the Persian Corridor into Iran, Iraq and Palestine; where Anders formed and led the 2nd Polish Corps while agitating for the release of Polish nationals still in the Soviet Union.

It was during this time that large numbers of non-combat-capable Polish men and women were sent to Britain. Many stayed, and made their way in the world after the end of the war. Anders was the commander of the 2nd Polish Corps in Italy 1943–1946, capturing Monte Casino in the Battle of Monte Casino. Poles were also critical to cracking the German Ultra codes and providing intelligence on the V1 and V2 rocket programme threatening our population on the Home Front. More Poles died as a percentage of its population than any other country, but at the end of the War they saw their country lose its freedom to the Soviet Union who had conspired with Nazi Germany to invade Poland in September 1939. Over 120,000 Polish veterans settled in Britain after the war, unable to return home for threat of imprisonment or death at the hands of Stalin.

Whilst they assimilated well into British society and were grateful for the safe haven offered, their contribution to Britain's freedom seemed to be soon forgotten. When over 130 allied nations marched in the great 1946 Victory Parade in London, the Poles were excluded to appease 'Uncle Joe'.

## **EDITOR'S NOTE 2:**

For the benefit of my younger readers, "Uncle Joe" was the nickname given to Joseph Stalin, the benevolent-looking General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union's Central Committee from 1922 until his death in 1953, by the Western press. He was regarded by some at the time, as the most dangerous man in the world. His position made him the most powerful man in Russia and he was basically a dictator. The question of how many people died through Stalin's "harsh measures" may never be answered. During the late 1930s, Stalin launched the Great Purge (also known as the "Great Terror"), a campaign to purge the Communist Party of people accused of sabotage, terrorism, or treachery; he extended it to the military and other sectors of Soviet society. His victims were often executed, imprisoned in Gulag labour camps or exiled. In the years following, millions of ethnic minorities were also deported.

Some historians believe that a minimum of around 10 million deaths - 6 million minimum

from famine and 4 million minimum from other causes - are attributable to his regime, with a number of recent historians suggesting a likely total of around 20 million, citing much higher victim totals from executions, gulags, deportations and other causes. Last September, the authorities in St Petersburg uncovered a mass grave of about 30,000 people executed in the 1930s by a single shot in the back of the head.

## **Duke and Duchess of Gloucester attend dedication of memorial to St John Ambulance**

On Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> September 2009, the nation's leading first aid organisation commemorated the many hundreds of thousands of volunteers those who have faithfully served the Order of St John over its long history. To mark the occasion, Their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester joined guests that included members and supporters, for the dedication of a memorial garden at the National Memorial Arboretum, near Lichfield, Staffordshire.

The service of dedication commemorates the commitment and selfless service of those involved with the charity, including those who have assisted during times of national emergencies. Uniformed members including Badgers, Cadets and Fellowship welcomed the Royal Party and took part in the service. Following the service the Derbyshire St John Band led a march past of St John Ambulance members, Cadets and Fellowship.

His Royal Highness, who is the Grand Prior of the Order of St John, was then invited to meet and talk with some of the many members, past and present who have travelled from across the country to the event. St John Ambulance has a long history, with the modern organisation established in the 1800's. The St John Ambulance Association was established in 1877 and was concerned with training the public in first aid while the St John Ambulance Brigade provided first aid care to the public.

Both these organisations were amalgamated in 1987 to form the charity with which most people are familiar. The garden is the only such memorial that St John Ambulance has dedicated to its members. It incorporates the Amalfi Cross which forms part of the St John Ambulance logo and uses black granite panels to

depict the badges of St John and the Priory of England and the Islands.

## **NEW MEMORIAL FOR THE FLEET AIR ARM**

A ceremony to dedicate a new memorial to remember and celebrate the service of the many men and women who have served in the Fleet Air Arm was held on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> September 2009. Over 6,000 men and women have given their lives in the service of Naval aviation - many of whom have served at RNAS Yeovilton - over the past 100 years and it is particularly fitting that during this centenary year that their sacrifice should be honoured.

The new memorial - a sculptured plinth of Portland stone supporting a granite aircraft carrier - is set among an avenue of old English oak trees, close to the National Armed Forces Memorial and has been designed to enable squadrons, ships and associations to place plaques or wreaths around the base of the aircraft carrier allowing the memorial to become the "spiritual property" of everyone who has served in the Fleet Air Arm.

Chief of Staff Aviation and Carriers, Rear Admiral Simon Charlier, speaking in the third issue of the special Centenary News magazine celebrating 100 Years of Naval Aviation, said: "We are very grateful to the Fleet Air Arm Associations for their considerable contribution in raising the funds to commission this project.

The design of an aircraft carrier is not only testament to the enduring importance of carrier aviation, which in a relatively short space of history has had such a significant impact, but it holds memories of loved ones for so many people throughout the country." The service included an unveiling ceremony, a flypast and the Band of the Royal Marines Beating Retreat.

## **RAFA Remembrance Garden**

On 28<sup>th</sup> September 2009, the first national remembrance garden in memory of all those who have served in the RAF and Commonwealth air forces was opened by HRH The Princess Royal at the National Memorial Arboretum. The RAF Association Remembrance Garden is the first major RAF memorial on the site in Alrewas, Staffordshire. About 1,000 current and former RAF personnel and their families joined HRH The Princess Royal at the opening and dedication of the garden. The guests included families of RAF servicemen who have been killed while on recent

operations in Iraq. They were joined by Defence and Air Attachés representing countries that have fought alongside the UK. Kevan Jones MP, Minister for Veterans, also attended.

A service of dedication was conducted by Air Vice Marshal Peter Mills, the RAF's Chaplain in Chief. At the end of the service, a wreath was given to HRH The Princess Royal to lay at the memorial by Elizabeth Williams, 8, the daughter of Flight Lieutenant David Williams. Flight Lieutenant Williams was killed in March 2003 when an RAF GR4 Tornado aircraft from RAF Marham returning from an operational mission was engaged near the Kuwaiti border by a Patriot missile battery. After the Last Post was sounded, a Spitfire from the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight flew overhead. The inspiration for the remembrance garden came from the RAF Association's Dedication - the end line of which is 'we will remember them'. It is an opportunity for anyone who has an interest in the RAF to celebrate and remember departed loved ones. The garden will preserve the memory of serving and ex-serving members of the RAF for many years to come. At the centre of the garden is a three metre tall monument depicting the RAF Association emblem - a magnificent stainless steel eagle sitting on top of the world. The eagle is made up of over 1000 hand-forged feathers and is surrounded by a segmented RAF roundel separated into four quarters to depict the RAF Association at the heart of RAF welfare.

The RAF Association provides friendship, help and support for any members of the RAF past and present and their families. It is also the largest single-service membership organisation in the United Kingdom, with around 74,000 members and almost 500 branches.

## **Future Events at the NMA**

### **Wednesday 11th November**

**Armistice Day.** The Armistice will be commemorated at the National Memorial Arboretum with an outdoor service of Remembrance which will be held on the Armed Forces Memorial (AFM). Entrance to the Remembrance service will be by ticket only.

### **Warwickshire RAF Lodge**

Service of remembrance at 11.00 a.m. in the Masonic Garden. For further information contact Colin Hill (Secretary) on 01905 621350 or <hill9456@hotmail.co.uk>.

**REME.** A short Service of remembrance at 10.55 a.m. on site at REME memorial. For further details contact Mr David Sly-Jex for more information or to register interest in attending Tel: 01827 383223 or be e-mail at < david.slyhjex@googlemail.com>.

## 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 Birmingham Branch Research Co-ordinator Hughie Copper has sent me a list of additional books to add to this list. They are as follows;

- “**Sunset in the East**” by John Hudson
- “**Esprit de Corps**”
- “**Flugplatz Gutersloh**” by Gerry Lewis
- “**The Lost Lady**” by Mario Martinez
- “**Britain's Modern Royal Air Force**” by Peter F Guiver
- “**The Autobiography**” by Brian Clough
- “**The Royal Air Force**” by Michael Armitage

Some of the following books have been in my list for some time now but due to adding the above books, I have split the list into two parts, one with books all about the RAF Regiment and the other, with books that refer to the RAF Regiment. Those above will be added to the list of books containing references to the RAF Regiment. All the books are listed by their date of publication.

## Books about the RAF Regiment

“**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.

“**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 and now out of print.

“**The Royal Air Force Regiment – A Short History**”. A 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary edition. An updated short history of the RAF Regiment from 1942 to 1982 with a brief account of the approach to the problems of airfield defence in the Royal Air Force from 1918 until the formation of its own defence Corps in 1942. By Group Captain

Kingsley Oliver and Wing Commander Keith Batt. Published in **1982** by Adlard and Son Ltd, Bartholomew Press, Dorking, Surrey. No ISBN Number and now out of print.

“**No Tigers in our Jungle**” about life in the RAF Regiment in South-East Asia Command 1943/45. By ex-Flight Lieutenant Harry Homer. Service number 127613. Published in 1982 ISBN 84 398 8656 X.

“**The Edges of War**” An RAF Regiment Story by Tim Hillyar. About 2804 Armoured Car Squadron, from landing in France at the end of June 1944, through the fighting in Europe to the British Victory Parade in Berlin on 21<sup>st</sup> July 1945. Privately published in **1992** by Tim Hillyar. I have no contact details.

“**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, Christchurch, 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. But now out of print.

“**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.

## **Books containing references to the RAF Regiment**

**"The Lost Lady"** all about the American Bomber "Lady Be Good". No publication date available. By Mario Martinez. Published by Leo Cooper at £19.95. Mentions 2926 Squadron RAF Regiment.

**"Flugplatz Gutersloh"**. A Short History 1937/87 with references to the RAF Regiment. Published in **1987**. By Gerry Lewis. Published **1987**.

**"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. First published in **1982**. ISBN 1 898697 15 9. Republished by Grub Street in **1994** in an updated version.

**"Britain's Modern Royal Air Force"** which contains a complete chapter on the RAF Regiment. Published in **1994**. By Peter F Guiver. ISBN 1 85260 4328.

**"The Autobiography"** by Brian Clough. Mentions his service at RAF Watchet. Published in **1995**. ISBN 1 85225 198 0.

**"The Royal Air Force"** an Illustrated History by Michael Armitage. Published by Brockhampton Press in **1995**. ISBN 1 86019 8511. Contains several references to the RAF Regiment.

**"Esprit de Corps"** by Walter Archibald Elliott. A Scots Guards Officer on Active Service 1943 - 1945. Published in **1997**. In Chapter 7 it's about the Transfer of RAF Regiment Personnel to the Scots Guards. ISBN 085955 220 9.

**"Sunset in the East"** by John Hudson published by Leo Cooper in **2002**. ISBN 0 85052 846 1. It briefly mentions The RAF Regiment on page 43. Its main interest is the fact that to maintain order and to control the nationalist in Java, the author employed captured Japanese army personnel. It also gives a lot of detail about the war in Burma.

**"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.

## **NEWS OF THE RAF REGIMENT**

### **FROM THE RAF REGIMENT SECRETARY DEATH NOTICES:**

**HUTCHINS PETER.** Gp Capt (Retd) Peter Hutchins OBE, born 5 Nov 25, died after a long illness on 24 Aug 09 aged 83. He was commissioned on 12 Jan 46, promoted to Gp Capt on 1 Jan 74 and retired on 16 Jan 79. The private family funeral was held on 1 Sep 09. He is survived by his wife, Dinah, of 'Red Gables', 1 Chiltington Close, West Chiltington, West Sussex, RH 20 2LY, to whom the Corps extends its sincere condolences. A Thanksgiving Service for his will be held at 12.00 on Sat 14 Nov 09 at the Parish Church of West Chiltington, W Sussex.

A reception will be held afterwards the Roundabout Hotel, West Chiltington. Those planning to attend are asked to notify Mr Christopher Hutchins (son) at: chrishutch@mac.com or by e-mail at <mailto:chrishutch@mac.com>.

**HENTY-DODD (a.k.a SIMON DEE)** Former RAF Regt Sgt Cyril Nicholas Henty-Dodd (known professionally as the TV personality, Simon Dee), born 28 Jul 35, died on 30 Aug 09 aged 74. Born in Manchester, he was conscripted into the RAF on 24 Feb 53 as a Cadet Pilot but was unsuccessful in flying selection. He remustered on 25 Jun 53 to the RAF Regt and underwent training at No4 School of Recruit Training. He converted his Conscript Service to a five-year Regular engagement on 17 Jul 53 and went to the Basic Training School at Dumfries on 5 Aug 53.

From there, he went to the RAF Regt Depot at RAF Catterick on 5 Oct 53 and attended the No1 Air Signals School from 15 Dec 53 to 12 Apr 54, during which time he was promoted to the rank of SAC. Promoted to Substantive Cpl on 15 Mar 54, he underwent Bofors L40/60 gun training at RAF Watchett, the Regt's Gunnery School, from 12 Apr to 3 Jun 54, before being posted to the Middle East Air Force and 5 LAA Wg RAF Regt on 10 Sep 54. He returned to Catterick a week later for further training before returning to 5 LAA Wg in Jan 55. He served briefly on 2 LAA Wg until Oct 55 before being posted to HQ 205 Gp on 22 Jan 56.

He then moved back to 2 LAA Wg and served on 2 (Fd) Sqn RAF Regt from 14 Mar - 16 Jun 56, when he was promoted to Substantive Sgt, and he then moved to 3 LAA Wg RAF Regt at RAF Akrotiri. A detachment to RAF El Adem in



Libya followed in Jul 56, returning to the UK on 19 Apr 57, where he was posted to RAF Cottesmore.

He was discharged on 16 Jul 58 and served a further four years on the Reserve List. He is survived by his third wife, Judith and four children, to whom the Corps extends its sincere condolences.

**WARD DENIS.** Former RAF Regt Cpl Denis Ward, born 4 Jul 21 died on 5 Sep 09 aged 88. He enlisted on 1 May 40 and was assimilated into the RAF Regt on its formation in 1942. He served at 22 Gp at RAF North Witham and in the Middle East and European theatres during WWII in both North African and Italian Campaigns.

After the war, he worked for the 'Tizer' soft drinks company in the UK before emigrating to Canada where he worked for the General Mills Company for over 30 years. He was a long-term and active supporter of the Royal Canadian Legion and was a member of the Canadian Branch of the RAF Regt Assoc. The funeral has taken place. He is survived by his daughter, Mrs Veronica Frodsham of Suite 609-2, Toronto Street, Barrie, Ontario L4N 9G, Canada, to whom the Corps extends its sincere condolences.

**JONES WILLIAM.** Former RAF Regt Gnr William George Perrins Jones, born 13 May 22, died on 3 Sep 09 aged 87. No Service details are known at this time, but he was a member of the Essex and North-East London Branches of the RAF Regt Assoc. The funeral was held on 15 Sep 09 in Knebworth, Herts. He is survived by his partner, Mrs Virginia (Betty) Woollams of 12 The Downs, Hatfield, Hertfordshire AL10 8JP, to whom the Corps extends its sincere condolences.

**MOLLOY ARTHUR.** [Amendment to CPeN 109 - Last Name corrected] Former RAF Regt SNCO Arthur William (Bill) Molloy, born 23 Dec 28 died on 15 Jul 09 after a long fight against cancer. He was born in Earlsfield, South London, the eldest of five children. In 1945, at the age of 17, he joined the RAF Regt. He saw active service in Palestine, Malaya and Aden, and was awarded a Certificate of Commendation from the Commander-in-Chief, Far East Air Force, for his devotion to duty while serving in Malaya. On his return from Aden, he trained RAF recruits for three years before a posting to RAF Lynham and then RAF Brize Norton. He returned once more to Aden before retiring in 1971. He is survived by his wife, Avril, of York cottage, 60 York Road,

Maidenhead, Berkshire SL6 1SJ, to whom the Corps extends its sincere condolences.

**AULD JOHN.** Former RAF Regt FS John (known as Geordie) Auld, born 3 Feb 28, died on 25 Sep 09, aged 81. His Service details are being verified. He was discharged in Jun 79. He was a member of the RAF Regt Assoc and the Assoc of RAF Regt WOs and SNCOs. The funeral was held at 14.20 on Mon 5 Oct 09 at Harrogate Crematorium. Family flowers only were requested but donations may be made to St Michael's Hospice c/o the Funeral Directors, Roger Bowers, Birtswith Road, Hampsthwaite, Harrogate HG3 2EU. He is survived by his wife, Linda, of 1 Lime Grove, Harrogate, HG1 4AZ, to whom the Corps extends its sincere condolences.

**CHARMAN SID.** Former RAF Regt LAC Gnr Sid Charman, born 23 Dec 21, died on 17 Sep 09 aged 86. He joined the RAF in 1941 and transferred to the RAF Regt on its formation in 1942. No Service details are known at this time, but he was discharged in 1945. Late member of the Sussex Branch of the RAF Regt Assoc. The funeral took place on 1 Oct 09 in Eastbourne. Donations in his memory may be made to the RAF Regt Assoc via the Assoc National Treasurer. He is survived by his wife, Edna, of 10 St Andrew's Drive, Bishopstone, Seaford, East Sussex BN25 2SG, to whom the Corps extends its sincere condolences.

**DESFORGES JAMES.** Former RAF Regt SAC Gnr James Trevor Desforges died on 22 Sep 09, aged 22. He enlisted in 2006 but was subsequently medically discharged in 2008. A Thanksgiving Service was held on 30 Sep 09 in Grimsby. No further details are known at this time. The Corps extends its sincere condolences to the surviving family.

**STOUT GEORGE.** Former RAF Regt Cpl George Thomas Stout, born 20 Sep 23, died on 21 Sep 09 aged 86. He enlisted in 1942 and served on 2733, 2873 and 2770 Sqns RAF Regt in the UK and NW Europe, participating in the Normandy Landings in Jun 44. He was discharged in Mar 47. He was a member of the Normandy Veterans' Assoc, the SE London (Bromley) Branch of the RAF Regt Assoc and he was also Vice President of the NE London Branch. The funeral took place on 1 Oct in Upminster. He is survived by his wife, Jean, of 16 Pennith Road, Harold Hill, Romford, RM3

9NS, to whom the Corps extends its sincere condolences.

#### **GENERAL NOTICES:**

#### **GREEN PAPER - THE NATION'S COMMITMENT TO THE ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY**

A Green Paper entitled 'The Nations' Commitment to the Armed Forces Community' has been published and Service personnel are encouraged to comment on the issues raised. The consultation comes one year on from the Service Personnel Command Paper, which examines issues particular to Service life and seeks to ensure that no one is disadvantaged through membership of the Armed Forces. For more information, visit [www.mod.uk/spcp](http://www.mod.uk/spcp). Views may be Emailed to [DCDSPERS-SEC-SPCPMailbox@mod.uk](mailto:DCDSPERS-SEC-SPCPMailbox@mod.uk).

Please include the phrase 'Consultation Response' in the Subject line.

#### **COMMANDANT GENERAL'S COMMENDATIONS FOR 2009**

The CG's Commendations Award Panel for 2009 met at RAF Honington on 3 Sep 09. The successful candidates have been confirmed by the CG, and be notified by post. The Awards List was published on 17 Sep 09.

#### **HONOURS AND AWARDS OPERATIONAL AWARDS**

The Armed Forces Operational Awards List No33, reflected the following RAF Regt personnel being recognized:

#### **Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service (QCVS) for Service in Iraq:**

Flt Lt A J B Betley RAF Regt - HQ Comdr UK Amphibious Force (COMUKAMPHIBFOR)

#### **Joint Commander's Commendations for their work on operations:**

##### **For Service in Iraq:**

Flt Lt T D J Rees RAF Regt - 51 Sqn RAF Regiment - RAF Lossiemouth

##### **For Service in Afghanistan:**

Cpl M A Cardus - 1 Sqn RAF Regt - RAF Honington

SAC S J Heys - 1 Sqn RAF Regt - RAF Honington

SAC C J Lewis - 1 Sqn RAF Regt - RAF Honington

SAC C M Richardson - 1 Sqn RAF Regt - RAF Honington

SAC W M Ince - 501 Sqn RAuxAF - RAF Brize Norton

#### **ANNUAL REGIMENT CHAPEL COMMEMORATION SERVICE 2010**

The Annual Commemoration Service of the RAF Regt Chapel will take place at St Anne's Church, Catterick, on Sat 8 May 10 at 16.00. Note that this is a departure from the traditional Sunday service and is to better facilitate the Corps needs for a bespoke service. Further details will be issued in early 2010.

#### **RAF REGT ASSOC SPRING REUNION 2010**

The Spring Reunion of the RAF Regt Assoc will be held at Alvaston Hall, Cheshire, over the weekend 16-19 Apr 10. Those interested in attending should contact either Christine (Warners Groups) on 0800 072 0772 Quoting **RAF02** or Jim Scott (Assoc Organizer) on 01935 476321. Please include a SAE if writing to Jim Scott.

#### **REGT SEC EMAIL DATABASE**

The Regt Sec's Email database has again been corrupted and its restoration has been only partially successful, in that it is a very old version that contains addresses that are known to be obsolete. As such, this CPeN will not get to all intended addressees and, in some case, will have gone to individuals who had previously 'unsubscribed' or even died! Please notify your personal Regt addressees of this fact and invite them to contact the Regt Sec if they are no longer receiving CPeNs etc routinely. If you are one of those who 'unsubscribed', please repeat the process. However, if you have received this Email direct, you may assume that your address is correct. Apologies for any inconvenience caused.

#### **CG COMMENDATIONS**

The following individuals have been awarded CG Commendations for 2009:

Alfred Charles NEWTON - RAF Regt Assoc (Norfolk Branch) - For Welfare Services.

Ronald SHARP - RAF Regt Assoc (Birmingham Branch) - For Services to the RAF Regt Memorial Garden Maintenance.

Derek JAMES - RAF Regt Assoc (Catterick Branch) - For Services to the RAF Regt Assoc and the RAF Regt Chapel.

John SMART - RAF Regt Assoc (Bristol & Bath Branch) - For Services as the Assoc's National Standard Bearer.

Henry KIRK - Past President RAF Regt SEAC Assoc - For Services to RAF Regt causes.

#### **SPREADING THE WORD**

Since its inception in late-2006, over 105,000 individual Corps Parish eNotices (CPeNs) have been sent worldwide with the sole intention of providing timely Corps-related information to both Serving and veteran Corpsmen. If you haven't registered to receive them, or know of others who could but don't, please register the required Email address with the Regt Sec. Similarly, there are countless Corps members who still don't subscribe to the Regt Fund in order to receive the Centurion journal. Anyone now saying that they don't know what is going on with their Corps has no excuse! Please help to spread the word!

#### **RAFR REGT FUND AND SHOP QUERIES**

If you have any queries on the RAF Regt Fund or the Shop, please direct them to the responsible individual, namely:

**Officer in Charge RAF Regt Fund:** Sqn Ldr Mick Donoghue - 01359 237812 (for policy issues)

**Fund Secretary:** Flt Lt Monaghan-Welsh on (for general Fund and grant issues)

**Fund Treasurer:** Fg Off Ben Alcock on 01359 237755 (for finance issues)

**Fund Membership Sec:** Flt Lt Jamie Milnes on 01359 237077 (for all Membership and Subscription issues)

**Officer in Charge RAF Regt Shop:** Flt Lt 'Hutch' Hutchinson on 01359 23 7171 (for Shop issues). Direct Email addresses will be issued shortly. RAF Regt Assoc Branch Secs are asked to publicise these details in their respective Newsletters. Please do not send queries to the RAF Regt Sec any more.

#### **NEW STANDARD FOR 63 SQN RAF REGT**

A new Standard will be presented to 63 Sqn RAF Regt later this year, following the Sqn's return from operations in Afghanistan. The provisional presentation date is 26 Nov 09 but is subject to confirmation. Further details will be issued as and when known.

#### **CORPS DEATH NOTIFICATION FORM**

It is important that the death of any Corps veteran is made known to the wider Corps family as soon as possible. The Regt Sec now operates a formal Corps Death Notification scheme, whereby those informing on deaths of former Corps members should use a formal notification process and form (DNF 1). The form is available from the Regt Sec or may be downloaded from the RAF Regt Assoc Website using the link:

<http://www.rafregt.org.uk/RollofHonour/tabid/62/language/en-GB/Default.aspx>. All information provided will be passed on to associated bodies such as the RAF Regt and WOs&SNCOs Assocs as appropriate. However, it will not be forwarded to any Govt Depts, such as the Ministry of Works.

#### **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.

#### **REGT VETERAN AWARDED FINNISH MEDAL (UPDATED)**

Former RAF Regt Sgt, Peter Martin (who is 76 years old and served in the Regt from 1951 - 1956 and then 1957 - 1962) lives in Finland and has been awarded the Finnish Entrepreneurial Diamond Medal, which is given in recognition of at least thirty years teaching English to the officer cadets at the Finnish National Defence University. The Corps extends its sincere congratulations to him for this outstanding achievement.

#### **CORPS DIARY DATES:**

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

5 Nov 08 - Field of Rem - Westminster Abbey

8 Nov 09 - Remembrance Day (Cenotaph, London, NMA Alrewas and Nationwide)

11 Nov 09 - Armistice Day (Cenotaph, London, NMA Alrewas and Nationwide)

26 Nov 09 - Presentation of new Standard to 63 Sqn RAF Regt (details to be announced).

15 Dec 09 - Centurion Journal No28 contributions deadline.

5 Feb 10 - Handover-Takeover of CG RAF Regt appointment.

5 Feb 10 - Officers' Corps Formation Dinner (RAF Honington).

16 -19 Apr - RAF Regt Assoc Spring Reunion Weekend (Alvaston Hall, Cheshire)

8 May 10 - Annual RAF Regt Chapel Commemoration - Catterick

18-21 May 10 - Regt-USAF Exchange Offrs 'British Invasion III (Washington DC)

11 Jun 10 - RAF Regt Officers' Dinner Club Reception (House of Lords) - incl Palace of Westminster Tour.

26 Jun 10 - RAF Regt Annual Memorial Commemoration (NMA Alrewas).

27 Jun 10 - National Armed Forces Day (NMA Alrewas and nationwide).

## **What is it?**

Arnold Schwarzenegger has a big one.

Michael J. Fox has a small one.

Madonna doesn't have one.

The Pope has one but doesn't use it.

Clinton uses his all the time.

Bush is one.

Mickey Mouse has an unusual one.

Liberace never used his on women.

Jerry Seinfeld is very, very proud of his.

Cher claims that she took on 3.

We never saw Lucy use Desi's.

The answer is: 'A last name.' Did you think I would print a dirty joke? Well that's all for now.

***Malcolm***

# DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES



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Wednesday 21 <sup>st</sup> Oct	2009 Battle of Trafalgar Day	Thursday 14 <sup>th</sup> January	2010 Branch Night
Sunday 1 <sup>st</sup> November	2009 Midlands Fest of Rem.	Monday 1 <sup>st</sup> February	2010 68 <sup>th</sup> Ann RAF Regt.
Sunday 8 <sup>th</sup> Nov	2009 Remembrance Sunday	Monday 1 <sup>st</sup> February	2010 Branch Service NMA
Wednesday 11 <sup>th</sup> Nov	2009 Remembrance Day	Thursday 11 <sup>th</sup> February	2010 68 <sup>th</sup> Ann RAF Regt.
Thursday 12 <sup>th</sup> Nov	2009 Branch Night	Thursday 11 <sup>th</sup> February	2010 <b>Branch AGM</b>
Saturday 14 <sup>th</sup> Nov	2009 B'ham Poppy Ball	Thursday 11 <sup>th</sup> February	2010 Branch Subs Due
Sat 28 <sup>th</sup> -Sun 29 <sup>th</sup> Nov	2009 B'ham Int Tattoo NIA	Monday 1 <sup>st</sup> March	2010 St David's Day
Monday 30 <sup>th</sup> November	09 St Andrew's Day	Thursday 11 <sup>th</sup> March	2010 Branch Night
Thursday 10 <sup>th</sup> December	09 Branch Night	Wednesday 17 <sup>th</sup> March	2010 St Patrick's Day
		15 <sup>th</sup> - 30 <sup>th</sup> March	2010 65 <sup>th</sup> Ann Battle of Meiktila
		Monday 5 <sup>th</sup> April	2010 9 <sup>th</sup> Ann Ded of Mem.l
		Thursday 8 <sup>th</sup> April	2010 Branch Night
		Friday 23 <sup>rd</sup> April	2010 St George's Day
		Sunday 25 <sup>th</sup> April	2010 ANZAC Day
		Sunday 9 <sup>th</sup> May	2010 Runnymede Mem Service
		Saturday 8 <sup>th</sup> May	2010 Regt Chapel Comm Service
		Thursday 13 <sup>th</sup> May	2010 Branch Night

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