



ROYAL AIR FORCE REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

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BIRMINGHAM BRANCH

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The Best of the Best

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

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

**NEWSLETTER NO: 243
SEPTEMBER 2009**

THE BIRMINGHAM BRANCH NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 243 SEPTEMBER 2009

Dear Readers.

BRANCH BIRTHDAYS

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

3rd Sept **Bernard Wynn** Birmingham West Mids
 7th September **Clive Cumber** Woking Surrey
 9th September **Spencer Wilcox** Tipton West Mids
 15th Sept **Roy Thomas** S Coldfield West Mids
 17th Sept **Derek Trust** BEM Torquay Devon
 23rd Sept **James Patterson** Wolverhampton WM

On 21st August our Chairman Steven Brereton Martin sent me the following important announcement. Due to the short time remaining before the Reunion, I immediately forwarded it by e-mail to all our members who have access to the internet so those members will have already received it. For the benefit of those without access to the internet I am publishing it here, although by the time the rest of you get it, the Reunion will be less than three weeks away.

ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND REUNION

The Association's Annual General Meeting and Reunion is the most important event in the Association's calendar. It incorporates the principal mechanism for the governance of the Association – the AGM – as well as a major social gathering of members – the Gala Dinner – and the Muster Parade.

This year, the Reunion will take place at the Britannia Hotel in the heart of the City of Coventry over the weekend 2nd – 5th October 2009. The RAF Regiment WOs and SNCOs Association will be holding their AGM and Reunion over the same period and we will be combining for the Gala Dinner. The entire hotel has been given over to the RAF Regiment Associations for the weekend which promises to be a happy and successful occasion.

Our President, the Commandant General, Air Commodore Steven Abbott CBE RAF and his wife will attend, and the Guest of Honour at the Gala Dinner will be Baroness Harris of Richmond, a long-standing friend and supporter

of the RAF Regiment. Members will gather for an informal evening on Friday 2nd October.

There is important business to discuss and report at the AGM on the morning of Saturday 3rd October. The AGM will include the result of the election of the new National Secretary and the CG has arranged for an operational report by a team from No 63 Squadron RAF Regiment (The Queen's Colour Squadron), recently returned from Afghanistan. These operational reports have proved immensely popular with Association members in the past. The Muster Parade and Service will be held on the morning of Sunday 4th October immediately outside the hotel and in the shadow of Coventry Cathedral. In addition there is a programme for ladies and ample opportunity to meet old friends and make new ones.

**THE REUNION IS NOW JUST 6 WEEKS AWAY SO
PLEASE ENCOURAGE YOUR MEMBERS TO APPLY
FOR TICKETS WITHOUT DELAY**

Tickets can be obtained by contacting Isle of Wight Tours Ltd, 3 New Road, Lake, Sandown, Isle of Wight PO345 9JN. Telephone number 01983 405116. Or by e-mail at <enquiries@iowtours.com>. Please quote our reference number for the event RF56853 in all correspondence.

Branches are encouraged to display their Standards, alongside the National Standard, at the Gala Dinner (floor stands will be needed) and to parade their Standards at the Muster Parade and Service. Dress for the formal elements of the occasion will be normal Association dress with medals (beret or formal headdress for outside) while dress for the formal dinner must include jacket and tie (blazer and trousers, suit or dinner jacket).

The NEC has chosen this hotel because of its excellent reputation among veterans' organisations and because it is situated as near as we can get to the centre of the country with good road and rail links to make travelling as easy as possible. The AGM and Reunion is a marvellous opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to the Association and its aims – and simply to have a good time among old friends, so please do all you

can to encourage a good attendance by your members.

Steven Brereton Martin. Chairman

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 and what better way of raising it than the following letter describes. It was sent to me last month by Jim Davies of Middlewich, Cheshire. Now I didn't know that the Military Ward could accept financial donations as I understood that they had no facilities for financial donations but Jim, Sheila, Ray and Rita have proved me wrong. Ray Penny is also a member of the Birmingham Branch.

Jim Davies of Middlewich, Cheshire

Hi Malcolm. Sheila and I did a car boot sale two weeks ago and the night before we went, I printed out two notices to tell everyone that all the money raised from the car boot sale would be given to the Military Ward at Selly Oak Hospital. It was very slow as first but as it was a very nice day so there were a lot of buyers at first but when we got set up and pinned the two notices to the table, things picked up.

We made a total of £93.37 with the car boot sale and my wife Sheila said let's make it up to £100.00 which we did. We then telephoned our friends Ray and Rita Penny who live at Rubery, Birmingham, and arranged to visit Selly Oak Hospital with them. Ray and Rita added ten pounds to our total so when we arrived at the hospital and met RAF Regiment Warrant Officer "Stoney" (Alan) Wanbon we gave him a cheque for £110.00.

Warrant Officer Wanbon was absolutely made up and said that he would have a photograph taken to send to you. We are going to have another car boot sale next September and Malcolm, can you put this in the Branch newsletter. we can then show the newsletter to the people at the High School where the car boots are held as they let us use the car boot sale free of

charge when I told them where the money was going. It's always a good car boot sale as there are always lots of buyers. Photograph enclosed,



and keep up the good work. Jim and Sheila.

L to R Jim Davies, Ray Penny and W/O Wanbon

Very well done lads, the Branch is proud of you and what a good idea. Any other takers for we could appeal for car boot sale goods to help the funds. As it happens and by coincidence, last month W/O Wanbon met the Branch Chairman Ron Sharp when he gave a talk to the Moseley Branch RAFA about the Military Ward.

Ron found his talk to be very interesting and took the opportunity afterwards to introduce himself to him. If any of you would like to contribute items or cash now as I have found out, 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.

FROM THE BRANCH SECRETARY DEATH NOTICES:

LANGLEY KENNETH. I regret to inform you of the death of ex-Corporal Ken Langley of Ashmore, Salisbury, Wiltshire. Ken who was born on 29th June 1921, died at the age of 88 on 12th July 2009. Ken enlisted as a Ground Gunner on 21st February 1941 and after the RAF Regiment was formed served with 2788 Squadron. On 8th November 1942 the British and Americans invaded French North Africa in "Operation Torch" and Ken's Squadron was ordered to North Africa. On 12th December 1942 the SS Strathallan troopship sailed from the Clyde on her second trip to Algeria, as commodore vessel of a convoy bound for Oran. She was

carrying 4,000 British and US troops and 250 Queen Alexandra's nurses. The troops on board included 2788 Squadron. On 21st December 1942 she was torpedoed by the German submarine U562 in bright moonlight and fine weather shortly after passing through the Straits of Gibraltar about 75 kilometres (45 miles) off Bougie. She was hit in the engine room on the port side at 2.25 am, two engineer officers and two Indian engine-room crew being killed in the explosion, but no other lives were lost. Flying Officer F R Dodd of 2788 Squadron was subsequently awarded the MBE for his work in rescuing men from the dark and oil-filled waters of Algiers Bay. The nurses and 1,000 troops were picked up by the destroyer HMS Verity and another destroyer, HMS Laforey, took Strathallan in tow. With the help of the salvage tug Restive it was hoped that she might reach Oran, but her list increased and the remainder of the troops were taken off by escorting destroyers. At 1.15 pm she caught fire, and once it reached her cargo of rockets and ammunition, the rest of the crew were taken off by Restive. On the following day she sank 19 kilometres (12 miles) off Oran at 4 am.

Ken's Squadron reached Oran safely but without their Bofors Guns as they had been lost with the troopship. The Squadron was hurriedly re-equipped and served throughout the North African campaign, sometimes operating ahead of the Army in order to seize airfields in the area of Cape Bon and Medjez el Bab. From 26th to 28th February 1943 the Squadron was involved in fierce fighting on the approaches to Cap Serrat until with 2788 Squadron acting as rearguard, on 7th March the Regiment withdrew safely to Bone Airport. The Squadron continued on operation in North Africa until the Germans were finally thrown out of Africa in May 1953.

The landings at Anzio on 22nd January 1944 threw immense strain on the Allied armies and Regiment units were diverted to a variety of non-RAF tasks in this period. Some field squadrons were used in the infantry role and placed under Army command: 2771 and 2788 Squadrons operated on the Cassino front under command of the 2nd New Zealand Division and 4th British Division respectively from 24th April to 27th May 1944. The Squadron took part in the Battle of Casino with Ken's Squadron going into the front line in October 1944 to relieve 2721 Squadron and were tasked with holding the line

between two Canadian regiments, Lord Strathcona's Horse and the Governor-General's Horse Guards. The battle of Monte Casino was a costly series of four battles with the intention of breaking through the German Winter Line and seizing Rome. From January 17th to May 18th 1944, the defences were assaulted four times by Allied troops. For the last of these the Allies gathered 20 divisions for a major assault along a twenty mile front and drove the German defenders from their positions but at a high cost. In July 1944 2788 Squadron was detached from 1320 Wing to take part in "Operation Dragoon", the invasion of the south of France and subsequently landed on the beaches of St Raphael. Ken continued his service with 2788 Squadron in Greece and Palestine until his discharge on 14th February 1946. His funeral took place on 22nd July 2009 with one hundred and fifty-six mourners attending. He is survived by his wife, Mrs Edith Langley of "Keepers Lodge", Green Lane, Ashmore, Salisbury, SP5 5AQ, to whom we extend our sincere condolences.

Low Flying in Wales

During the school holidays we spent three weeks at our caravan in mid-Wales with our three grandsons. At the end of the first two, very wet, weeks on an overcast Saturday morning 1st August I think it was, my grandsons were bemoaning the fact that they had not seen any jet aircraft flying over the site since we had been there. I told them - and I don't know how true it is but it satisfied them - that they would be trainee pilots and that they only flew in good weather. Only half an hour or so after I told them this the sky cleared and wonderfully, three aircraft roared fairly close overhead and my three grandsons Daniel aged 14, Samuel aged 11 and Tobias aged six were delighted.

As it happened, the weather cleared for the following week and they seem to think it was due to the pilots. Due to the good weather, on the following Tuesday I was playing golf with Samuel at the Mid-Wales Golf Centre when three aircraft appeared again. My grandson forgot all about golf as he followed the aircraft with his eyes, flying down the valley - we had a great view - towards what seemed like almost certain destruction against a hillside in the distance. We held our breath as they continued flying at very low level almost disappearing from sight against the ground until they swooped up and over the hill

and away. My grandson was awestruck and couldn't wait to tell the other two boys all about it when we got back to the caravan. I know that low flying does sometimes cause complaints but I have no time at all for that point of view, for as far as we were concerned, what we saw at our caravan added immensely to our enjoyment of the holiday for we saw the aircraft flying low on a number of other occasions and it always gave us such a thrill to see them.

LOW FLYING

Low flying remains an essential skill for military aircrew. UK forces have deployed repeatedly to potential trouble spots around the world usually with little or no warning. They have to undertake a variety of roles including reconnaissance, fast-jet or helicopter operations, search and rescue, transporting troops or the delivery of humanitarian aid to remote locations. Whatever missions we ask our Armed Forces to undertake the aircrew must be able to fulfil the task as effectively as possible, often without time for "work-up" training. Current operations around the world see aircrew of both fixed and rotary wing aircraft undertaking operations at low level.

They are only able to do this through specialist training gained through the use of the UK Low Flying System. The UK Military Low Flying System covers the open airspace of the whole of the UK and surrounding overseas areas from the surface to 2,000 feet above the ground or mean sea level. Military fixed wing aircraft are judged to be low flying when they are less than 2000 feet minimum separation distance from the ground. Light propeller driven aircraft and helicopters are judged to be low flying below 500 feet minimum separation distance from the ground. Minimum separation distance is defined as the distance that must be maintained between any part of an aircraft in flight and the ground, water or any object. It does not apply to separation between aircraft in the same formation.

Low Flying The Facts

Low flying is an essential skill that provides aircrew with one of the best chances of survival. It is a highly demanding skill which can only be maintained through continuous and realistic training and is conducted with the safety of people on the ground, the aircrew, and other airspace users as the overriding concern. It is also rigorously controlled and continuously monitored. There are twenty areas in the low flying system

but only three of them are known as Tactical Training Areas. It is only within these areas that Operational Low Flying is permitted. They are LFA 14T that is in central Scotland, LFA 20T that is in north-east England covering the Lake District and the Yorkshire Dales and LFA 7T that covers most of Wales. It is only within these areas that Operational Low Flying is permitted and this is when fixed wing aircraft are authorised to fly as low as 100ft minimum separation distance, although larger aircraft such as C-130 Hercules are only permitted to fly as low as 150ft.

Low Flying Area 7 (LFA 7T)

LFA 7 covers the whole of Wales, apart from a small area in the northeast of Powys which is within LFA 9. RAF Valley, RAF St Athan, the Air Weapons Range at Pembrey Sands, Army barracks at Brawdy, Royal Artillery range at Manorbier and Field Training Centres at Castlemartin and Sennybridge are all in the area.

RAF Valley is at Holyhead, Anglesey and the aim of the Station is to train future fast jet combat pilots. **RAF St Athan** is at Barry in South Glamorgan, RAF St Athan is the designated site for the UK's new defence training academy due for completion in 2017.

The Air Weapons Range at Pembrey Sands is at Burry Port, Carmarthenshire. RAF Pembrey Sands Air Weapons Range is primarily an air-to-ground bombing and strafing practice area but as military helicopters also use the range and its targets for cabin door gunnery practice, the RAF Regiment has got to be involved too I should think.

The **Army barracks at Brawdy** houses the Royal Signals Regiment who are based in the former RAF base. The **Royal Artillery range at Manorbier** is at Tenby, Pembrokeshire and was a RAF airfield in World War Two but is now home to the Royal Artillery Air Defence Range Manorbier. The range at Manorbier sees considerable amount of usage for activities where aircraft are working in support of the ground forces.

The **Castlemartin Range** is at Merrion, Pembrokeshire and **Senneybridge** is part of the Army Field Training Estate. **Sennybridge** Camp and Army Field Training Centre is one of the major bases for Infantry Warfare Training by the British Army in the UK.

In addition LFA 7 includes the Tactical Training Area 7T. The Welsh landscape and little

controlled airspace above 2,000ft (offering flexibility for military aircraft to enter or leave the lower airspace), combine to make LFA 7 a key training area for military low flying training.

RAF advanced fast-jet pilot training is carried out at RAF Valley using Hawk aircraft, the range limitations of which generally mean that most of the associated flying activity needs to be carried out locally, some of it using the Pembrey Range. Much of the helicopter activity is associated with Castlemartin and Sennybridge, RAF Search and Rescue training at RAF Valley, support helicopter and AAC aircrew pre-deployment training for overseas operations and the Defence Helicopter Flying School at RAF Shawbury in the adjacent LFA 9.

“The Great Game”

Some of you may not be aware that the current war in Afghanistan is the 4th war that the British have fought in Afghanistan. The first and second wars began in the Nineteenth Century as a result of “The Great Game”. The third was in 1919 as a result of the Afghans sensing post-World War I British fatigue. The Great Game was immortalised in Rudyard Kipling’s novel about Imperial India called “Kim” and for those of you who have not read it, it is a great read and thoroughly enjoyable as a sort of “boys own” adventure story. But what was the Great Game and what was it all about?

The Great Game is a term used for the strategic rivalry and conflict between the British Empire and the Russian Empire for supremacy in Central Asia. The classic Great Game period is generally regarded as running approximately from the Russo-Persian Treaty of 1813 to the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907. Following the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 a second, less intensive phase followed. In the Nineteenth Century, two world imperialistic powers were competing for supremacy in the Middle East; they were the Russian Empire and the British Empire. The Russian Empire was a land empire that had no direct ice-free access to the world’s oceans but after the Mogul Empire was the largest continuous empire the world had ever seen.

At the beginning of the 19th century, Russia was the largest country in the world, extending from the Arctic Ocean to the north to the Black Sea on the south, from the Baltic Sea on the west to the Pacific Ocean on the east and by 1884, the Russian conquest of Central Asia was

complete except for the small region of the Pamir plateau, conquered 11 year’s later. By then, the Russian frontier met the frontiers of Persia, China and Afghanistan. At one point the Russian-Afghan frontier was but a few miles from British India. Great Britain on the other hand, was a seafaring empire with possessions scattered all over the globe and although not the largest, was the greatest and most powerful empire that the world had ever seen. The “Jewel in the Crown” of the British Empire was India and although at that time, the Russian Empire was not interested in conquering India, because the Russians were sending exploratory expeditions into Afghanistan, the British believed that they had India in mind. From the British perspective, the Russian Empire’s expansion into Central Asia threatened to destroy the “Jewel in the Crown” of the British Empire, India. As the Tsar’s troops began to subdue one Khanate after another, the British feared that Afghanistan would become a staging post for a Russian invasion of India. This led to what became known as the Great Game, where both Empires sought to extend their influence over Afghanistan. The term “The Great Game” is usually attributed to Arthur Conolly (1807-1842), an intelligence officer of the British East India Company’s Sixth Bengal Light Cavalry. It was introduced into mainstream consciousness by British novelist Rudyard Kipling in his novel *Kim* first published in 1901.

The First Anglo/Afghan War December 1838-October 1842

In order to ensure the welfare of India, the British decided that they must have a trustworthy ally on India’s western frontier. The official British position was that their troops were merely supporting Shah Shuja’s small army in retaking what was once his throne was generally seen (at the time, as well as now) as a pretext for incorporating Afghanistan into the British empire.

Although the Simla Manifesto stated that British troops would be withdrawn as soon as Shuja was installed in Kabul, Shuja’s rule depended entirely on British arms to suppress rebellion and on British funds to buy the support of tribal chiefs. The British denied that they were invading Afghanistan, instead claiming they were merely supporting its legitimate Shuja government “against foreign interference and factious opposition”. However with Persia ruled by a pro-Russian it may well have been the case

that Britain was trying to install a pro-British leader in Afghanistan to prevent Russia becoming the dominant power and threatening the North-West Frontier. An army of 21,000 British and Indian troops under the command of Sir John Keane (subsequently replaced by Sir Willoughby Cotten and then by Elphinstone) set out from the Punjab in December 1838. With them was William Hay MacNaghten, the former chief secretary of the Calcutta government who had been selected as Britain's chief representative to Kabul. They reached Quetta by late March 1839 and a month later took Kandahar without a battle. In July, after a two-month delay in Kandahar, the British attacked the fortress of Ghazni, overlooking a plain leading eastward into the North West Frontier Province, and achieved a decisive victory over Dost Mohammad's troops led by one of his sons. Dost Mohammad fled with his loyal followers across the passes to Bamian, and ultimately to Bukhara. In August 1839, after almost thirty years, Shuja was again enthroned in Kabul.

The majority of the British troops returned to India (only 8,000 remained in Afghanistan), but it soon became clear that Shuja's rule could only be maintained with the presence of British forces. The Afghans resented the British presence and Shah Shuja. As the occupation dragged on, MacNaghten allowed his soldiers to bring in their families to improve morale; this further infuriated the Afghans, as it appeared the British were settling into a permanent occupation. After he unsuccessfully attacked the British and their Afghan protégé, Dost Mohammad surrendered to them and was exiled in India in late 1840.

By this time the British had vacated the fortress of Bala Hissar and instead moved to a cantonment built to the North-East of Kabul. The location chosen was terrible, low and swampy with hills on every side. To make matters worse the cantonment itself was built too large and had a defensive perimeter almost two miles wide. On top of this the stores and supplies were in another, separate fort placed 300 yards from the main cantonment.

By October 1841, however, disaffected Afghan tribes were flocking to support Dost Mohammad's son, Mohammad Akbar Khan, in Bamian. In November 1841 a senior British officer, Sir Alexander 'Sekundar' Burnes, and his aides were killed by a mob in Kabul. The

substantial remaining British forces in their cantonment just outside Kabul did nothing immediately. In the following weeks the British commanders tried to negotiate with Akbar Khan. MacNaghten secretly offered to make Akbar Afghanistan's vizier in exchange for allowing the British to stay. A meeting for direct negotiations between MacNaghten and Akbar was held near the cantonment on 23 December, but MacNaghten and the three officers accompanying him were seized by Akbar's troops. MacNaghten and Captain Trevor were murdered and their corpses dismembered and displayed in the bazaar. On 1st January 1842 following some unusual thinking by Elphinstone, that may have had something to do with the poor defensibility of the cantonment, an agreement was reached that provided for the safe exodus of the British garrison and its dependants from Afghanistan. Five days later, the retreat began. The departing British contingent numbered around 16,000, of about 4,500 military personnel, and over 12,000 civilian camp followers; the military force consisted mostly of Indian units and one British battalion, the 44th.

Despite the safe-conduct they had been granted, as they struggled through the snowbound passes, the British were attacked by Ghilzai warriors. The evacuees were harassed down the 30 miles (48 km) of treacherous gorges and passes lying along the Kabul River between Kabul and Gandamak, and massacred at the Gandamak pass before reaching the besieged garrison at Jalalabad.

The force had been reduced to fewer than forty men by a retreat from Kabul that had become, towards the end, a running battle through two feet of snow. The ground was frozen, the men had no shelter and had little food for weeks. Only a dozen of the men had working muskets, the officers their pistols and a few unbroken swords.

The only Briton known to have escaped was Dr. William Brydon, though a few others were captured. Dr Brydon was, with one of his servants, allowed to go free in order to deliver the message of the destruction of the British force in Afghanistan. Lady Butler's famous painting of Dr. William Brydon, initially thought to be the sole survivor, gasping his way to the British outpost in Jalalabad, helped make Afghanistan's reputation as a graveyard for foreign armies and became one of the great epics of Empire. Together with the attacks on the garrison at

Kabul, Afghan forces also beleaguered the other British contingents in Afghanistan. These were at Kandahar (where the largest British force in the country had been stationed), Jalalabad (held by a force which had been sent from Kabul in October 1841 as the first stage of a planned withdrawal) and Ghazni. Ghazni was stormed but the other garrisons held out until relief forces arrived from India in spring 1842. Akbar Khan was heavily defeated near Jalalabad and plans were laid for the recapture of Kabul and the restoration of British hegemony. However, following a change of government in Britain, Auckland had been replaced as Governor-General by Lord Ellenborough, who was under instructions to bring the war to an end. He ordered the forces at Kandahar and Jalalabad to leave Afghanistan after inflicting reprisals and securing the release of prisoners taken during the retreat from Kabul.

In August 1842 General Nott advanced from Kandahar, pillaging the countryside and seizing Ghazni, whose fortifications he demolished. Meanwhile General Pollock, advancing through the Khyber Pass from Jalalabad, inflicted a further crushing defeat on Akbar Khan. The combined British forces took Kabul in September. A month later, having rescued the prisoners and demolished the city's main bazaar as an act of retaliation for the destruction of Elphinstone's column, they withdrew from Afghanistan through the Khyber Pass. Dost Muhammad was released and restored to power in Kabul.

In the three decades after the First Anglo-Afghan War the Russians advanced steadily southward towards Afghanistan. In 1842 the Russian border was on the other side of the Aral Sea from Afghanistan, but five years later the Tsar's outposts had moved to the lower reaches of the Amu Darya. By 1865 Tashkent had been formally annexed, as was Samarkand three years later. A peace treaty in 1873 with Amir Alim Khan of the Manghit dynasty, the ruler of Bukhara, virtually stripped him of his independence. Russian control now extended as far as the northern bank of the Amu Darya. In 1878, the British invaded again, beginning the Second Anglo-Afghan War.

The Second Anglo-Afghan War September 1878 – September 1880

In 1878 Russia sent an uninvited diplomatic mission to Kabul. Sher Ali tried, but

failed, to keep them out. Russian envoys arrived in Kabul on 22 July 1878 and on 14 August, the British demanded that Sher Ali accept a British mission too. The Amir not only refused to receive a British mission but threatened to stop it if it were dispatched. Lord Lytton, the Viceroy of India, ordered a diplomatic mission to set out for Kabul in September 1878 but the mission was turned back as it approached the eastern entrance of the Khyber Pass, triggering the Second Anglo-Afghan War. A British force of about 40,000 fighting men was distributed into military columns which penetrated Afghanistan at three different points. An alarmed Sher Ali attempted to appeal in person to the Tsar of Russia for assistance, but unable to do so, he returned to Mazari Sharif, where he died on 21st February 1879. With British forces occupying much of the country, Sher Ali's son and successor, Mohammad Yaqub Khan, signed the Treaty of Gandamak in May 1879 to prevent a British invasion of the rest of the country. According to this agreement and in return for an annual subsidy and vague assurances of assistance in case of foreign aggression, Yaqub relinquished control of Afghan foreign affairs to the British.

British representatives were installed in Kabul and other locations, British control was extended to the Khyber and Michni passes, and Afghanistan ceded various frontier areas and Quetta to Britain. The British army then withdrew. Soon afterwards, an uprising in Kabul led to the slaughter of Britain's Resident in Kabul, Sir Pierre Cavagnari and his guards and staff on 3rd September 1879, provoking the second phase of the Second Afghan War. Major General Sir Frederick Roberts led the Kabul Field Force over the Shutargardan Pass into central Afghanistan, defeated the Afghan Army at Char Asiab on 6th October 1879 and occupied Kabul. Ghazi Mohammad Jan Khan Wardak staged an uprising and attacked British forces near Kabul in the Siege of the Sherpur Cantonment in December 1879, but his defeat there resulted in the collapse of this rebellion.

Yaqub Khan, suspected of complicity in the massacre of Cavagnari and his staff, was obliged to abdicate. The British considered a number of possible political settlements, including partitioning Afghanistan between multiple rulers or placing Yaqub's brother Ayub Khan on the throne, but ultimately decided to install his cousin

Abdur Rahman Khan as emir instead. Ayub Khan, who had been serving as governor of Herat, rose in revolt, defeated a British detachment at the Battle of Maiwand in July 1880 and besieged Kandahar. Roberts then led the main British force from Kabul and decisively defeated Ayub Khan in September at the Battle of Kandahar, bringing his rebellion to an end. Abdur Rahman had confirmed the Treaty of Gandamak, leaving the British in control of the territories ceded by Yaqub Khan and ensuring British control of Afghanistan's foreign policy in exchange for protection and a subsidy. Abandoning the provocative policy of maintaining a British resident in Kabul, but having achieved all their other objectives, the British withdrew.

The Third Anglo/Afghan War 3rd May 1919 – 8th August 1919

The end of the Second Afghan War in 1880 marked the beginning of almost forty years of reasonably good relations between Britain and Afghanistan under the leadership of Abdurrahman and Habibullah, during which time the British attempted to manage Afghan foreign policy through the payment of a large subsidy. The main problem for the British was manpower. After the end of the First World War in 1918, the troops in India were no longer of the standard that they might otherwise have been at another time. Coming just after the end of a very costly war in Europe, the British will to fight and military-industrial capability to fight another war was very low. The Indian Army had been heavily committed to the First World War and had endured a large number of casualties. Many of its units still had not returned from overseas, and those that had begun a process of demobilisation and as such many regiments had lost almost all their most experienced men and likewise, the British Army in India had been gutted.

Sensing post-World War I British fatigue, the frailty of British positions along the Afghan border, unrest in British India, and confidence in the consolidation of his power at home, Amanullah, the new ruler of Afghanistan, suddenly attacked the British in May 1919 in two thrusts. Although, Amanullah had written the British Viceroy of India, rejecting British control of his foreign policy and declaring Afghanistan fully independent, the British were taken by surprise. Airpower proved to be one of the greatest assets that the British possessed during

this conflict. Not only did it allow them to extend their reach beyond the border and bomb Kabul, but it also enabled them to harass the retreating enemy and to break up tribesmen as they attempted to form larger groups prior to launching an attack.

Afghan forces achieved some success in the early days of the war as Pashtun tribesmen from both sides of the border joined forces with them. The military skirmishes soon ended in stalemate as the British recovered from their initial surprise. The war did not last long, however, because both sides were soon ready to sue for peace; the Afghans were unwilling to sustain continued British air attacks on Kabul and Jalalabad, and the British were unwilling to take on an Afghan land war so soon after the bloodletting of World War I. The month long war resulted in about 1000 Afghan dead and 2000 British and colonial deaths. What the Afghans did not gain in battle they gained ultimately at the negotiating table. Deciding the outcome of the Third Afghan War is somewhat difficult however. Ostensibly, by virtue of the fact that the British repulsed the Afghan invasion and drove them from Indian territory and that Afghan cities felt the weight of the Royal Air Force's bombers, the result of the conflict was a British tactical victory. However, in achieving this the British and Indian troops suffered almost double the amount of casualties that the Afghans suffered and so, as such, a certain degree of tarnish must be placed upon their victory.

But while the war was over, the effects that it had were not. The nationalism, disruption and unrest that it had sparked stirred up more trouble in the years to come, particularly in Waziristan. The tribesmen, always ready to exploit weakness, whether real or perceived, banded together in the common cause of disorder and unrest. They had become well-armed too, as a result of the conflict, as they had benefitted greatly from the weapons and ammunition that the Afghans had left behind as well as from the influx of manpower in the large numbers of deserters from the militia that had joined their ranks. With these they launched a campaign of resistance to British authority on the North-West Frontier that was to last until the end of the British Raj in India in 1947.

The Fourth Anglo/Afghan War 7th October 2001 – to date

The war in Afghanistan, which began on October 7th 2001 as the U.S. military operation “Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF)”, was launched by the United States with the United Kingdom in response to the September 11 attacks. The war has a triple purpose:

1. to neutralise and to destroy Al-Qaeda, and Osama bin Laden himself,
2. to destroy the opium industry in Afghanistan, which supports and finances all Al-Qaeda operations,
3. to stop opium traffic from Afghanistan to the US and UK.

The stated aim of the invasion was to find Osama bin Laden and other high-ranking Al-Qaeda members and put them on trial, to destroy the whole organization of Al-Qaeda, and to remove the Taliban regime which supported and gave safe harbour to Al-Qaeda. The United States' Bush Doctrine stated that, as policy, it would not distinguish between terrorist organisations and nations or governments that harbour them.

Two military operations in Afghanistan are fighting for control over the country. Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) is a United States combat operation involving some coalition partners and currently operating primarily in the eastern and southern parts of the country along the Pakistan border. Approximately 28,300 U.S. troops are in OEF. The second operation is the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), which was established by the UN Security Council at the end of December 2001 to secure Kabul and the surrounding areas. NATO assumed control of ISAF in 2003. By July 23, 2009, ISAF had around 64,500 troops from 42 countries, with NATO members providing the core of the force. The United States has approximately 29,950 troops in ISAF.

The U.S. and the UK led the aerial bombing campaign, with ground forces supplied primarily by the Afghan Northern Alliance. In 2002, American, British and Canadian infantry were committed, along with Special Forces from several allied nations including Australia. Later, NATO troops were added. The initial attack removed the Taliban from power, but Taliban forces have since regained some strength. The war has been less successful in achieving the goal of restricting al-Qaeda's movement than anticipated. Since 2006, Afghanistan has seen

threats to its stability from increased Taliban-led insurgent activity, record-high levels of illegal drug production, and a fragile government with limited control outside of Kabul.

The war might be seen as unsuccessful in its primary officially stated purpose of capturing Osama bin Laden, destroying opium industry in Afghanistan, stop traffic of opium to the United States and United Kingdom, while tensions have grown between the USA and Pakistan due to incidents of coalition troops crossing the Pakistan border while pursuing Taliban fighters.

My next article is a poem and I will make no other comment other than the fact that it is based on my favourite poet Rudyard Kipling's poem “Tommy” and that I enjoyed this one too. It was sent to me by Birmingham Branch member Colin Smith of Warwick. My thanks to you Colin.

Tommy (with apologies to Kipling) Written by Patrick Campbell

They flew me 'ome from Baghdad
with a bullet in me chest.
Cos they've closed the army 'ospitals,
I'm in the NHS.

The nurse, she ain't no Britisher
an' so she ain't impressed.
It's like I'm some street corner thug
who's come off second best.

Yes, it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that,
an' "You're not welcome 'ere".
But when Saddam was collar'd,
they was quick enough to cheer.

They're proud when Tommy Atkins
'olds the thin red line out there,
But now he's wounded back at 'ome,
he has to wait for care.

Some stranger in the next bed sez,
"Don't you feel no shame?
You kill my Muslim brothers!"
So it's me not 'im to blame!

An' then the cleaner ups an' sez
"Who are you fightin' for?
It ain't for Queen and country
'cos it's Bush's bloody war!"

It's Tommy this, an' Tommy that,

an' "Tommy, what's that smell?"
But it's "God go with you, Tommy,"
when they fly us out to 'ell.

O then we're just like 'eroes
from the Army's glorious past.
Yes, it's "God go with you, Tommy,"
when the trip might be your last.

They pays us skivvy wages,
never mind we're sitting ducks,
When clerks what's pushing pens at 'ome
don't know their flippin' luck.

"Ah, yes" sez they
"but think of all the travel to be 'ad."
Pull the other one.
Does Cooks do 'olidays in Baghdad?

It's Tommy this, an' Tommy that,
an' "Tommy, know your place,"
But it's "Tommy, take the front seat,"
when there's terrorists to chase.

An' the town is full of maniacs
who'd like you dead toot sweet.
Yes, it's "Thank you, Mr Atkins,"
when they find you in the street.

There's s'posed to be a covynant
to treat us fair an' square
But I 'ad to buy me army boots,
an' me combats is threadbare.

An' 'alf the bloody 'elicopters
can't get into the air,
An' me pistol jammed when snipers fired.
That's why I'm laid up 'ere.

Yes, it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that,
"We 'ave to watch the pence";
Bold as brass the P.M. sez,
"We spare them no expense.

"But I'll tell you when they do us proud
an' pull out all the stops,
it's when Tommy lands at Lyneham
in a bloomin' wooden box!

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. I have added yet another book about the RAF Regiment, "**The Royal Air Force Regiment**

– **A Short History**". This time 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. It is a 40th Anniversary Edition and was published in 1982. No ISBN Number and now out of print.

"**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 40th 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.

"**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 21st July 1945. Privately published in **1992** by Tim Hillyar. I have no contact details.

"**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.

"**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.

"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.

If anyone knows of any other books, please let me know.

NATIONAL MEMORIAL

ARBORETUM (NMA) UPDATE

Wreath laid by last British survivor of WWI trenches on display at National Memorial Arboretum

In tribute to Harry Patch, who died last month at the age of 111, the wreath laid by him at the Cenotaph last Armistice Day has gone on public display at the National Memorial Arboretum. Harry Patch, who joined the Army aged 18, fought in the Battle of Passchendaele at Ypres in 1917. The battle resulted in the deaths of more than 70,000 British soldiers. The Arboretum, part of the Royal British Legion

family, is home to several First World War memorials. Visitors can explore the *Gallipoli* memorial which is dedicated to the nations who took part in the 1915 Gallipoli campaign and features a sculpture of dead oak trees representing the arms of injured soldiers reaching upwards in the hope of rescue as they lie in the mud among the unburied dead. Nearby is a large glass mosaic showing a map of the theatre of war.

The Battle of the Somme, possibly the most bloody in military history, with 1.5 million casualties is remembered by the *Western Front Association* who have an avenue of hornbeams, propagated from the only tree in the notorious Delville Wood that survived the intense battle. *Shot at Dawn*, situated at the part of the Arboretum that gets the first light, is a moving memorial featuring a central statue modelled on a 17-year old soldier who was executed at Ypres in 1915. As punishment for various offences, British and Commonwealth military command executed 306 of its own men during the First World War. Since pardoned, it is recognised that many of those shot were underage at the time of enlisting and many had suffered shell shock or post traumatic stress disorder.

Royal Navy Patrol Service Memorial

A new memorial to fallen members of World War Two's Royal Naval Patrol Service was dedicated at the NMA on 23rd August 2009. Dubbed the 'Navy within a Navy', the patrol service cleared the seas of devastatingly effective Nazi mines – to tremendous success yet terrible loss of life. Throughout the early years of the war mines were laid by the Germans by sea and air around the British Isles in an attempt to strangle the coastal convoys which were used to keep Britain supplied.

It was the work of the RNPS to keep the shipping lanes clear so that the convoys could continue. More than 125,000 mines were laid in Europe alone during the Second World War and the new memorial at the Arboretum features a replica of the type that the Royal Naval Patrol Service had to clear.

"We played a uniquely valuable and dangerous role during the war and suffered enormous casualties," said John Hodge, Birmingham branch secretary for the service's veteran's association. This memorial is a fitting tribute to all of our brave comrades that didn't make it home". Mr Hodge can be contacted on

0121 308 4596. The memorial commemorates the 13,890 men who were lost – 2,385 of whom have no known grave. Over 125,000 mines were laid in Europe alone during WWII and the impressive new memorial at the very heart of the Arboretum features a replica of the type the Royal Naval Patrol Service had to clear.

Established in August 1939, with an initial fleet comprising 6,000 fishermen and 200 requisitioned trawlers, drifters, pleasure steamers and whaling vessels, the patrol service played a key part in the war effort. Sailors were drawn from fishing ports and other towns and cities across the UK and stationed at HMS Europa, a base erected on the municipal gardens in Lowestoft, Norfolk. Eventually growing to a force of 66,600 men and women, with 2,000 ships, and operating from the Arctic to the creeks of South East Asia, they worked tirelessly to keep lanes open to ports and were instrumental in enabling the successful D-Day Landings.

RAFA Remembrance Memorial Sculpture Nearing Completion

Work on a stainless steel eagle sculpture which will form the centre piece of the RAFA's remembrance garden at the National Memorial Arboretum near Burton on Trent is well on schedule. Tim and Fran Mackereth, who own Anwick Forge, were commissioned to produce the sculpture, having previously produced the Commando Veterans' Association memorial at the same location and provided the metalwork for the Fire Service Memorial Trust's garden

The latest unique memorial to be produced by the local blacksmith will commemorate all those who have served in the Royal Air Force and the air forces of the Commonwealth. Once complete, the stainless steel eagle will perch, with its wings aloft, on top of a globe of the world, and will be the central feature of the new RAFA memorial garden. The vast hand crafted monument is a depiction of the RAFA emblem and will be made up of around 1,000 hand-forged feathers.

Mrs Mackereth said: "The eagle sculpture is coming on nicely. It is in skeletal form at the moment and the intricate feathers are being finished off. Once completed, it will be a beautiful memorial." The sculpture, which will be mounted on a stone plinth about 1m high, will measure approximately 2.2m from the tip of the eagle's wings to the base of the globe, giving a

total height of over 3m. It is to be unveiled by Her Royal Highness the Princess Royal at the National Memorial Arboretum on Monday 28th September 2009.

Future Events at the NMA

Saturday 19 September

Polish Forces War Memorial Dedication and unveiling ceremony of memorial to commemorate Polish military and civilians who served and died during WWII. The Duke of Kent will unveil the memorial. On site at 12.00 noon for start of service, followed by RAF flypast (subject to weather conditions). Contact: Dr. Mark Stella-Sawicki, Tel: 0208 997 4848 or email drmarksawicki@hotmail.com

Sunday 20 September

HMT Lancastris Annual Service of Remembrance to those lost at St Nazaire on 17th June 1940 at the Millennium Chapel at 2.00 p.m. Contact: Justin Bowley on 01509 237844.

Saturday 26 September

60th Anniversary of the Berlin Airlift. Commemorative event (supported by the Ministry of Defence) at 12.00 noon to mark the 60th anniversary of the operation. Telephone 0800 169 2277 for ticket application forms. Note that applications are not administered by the Arboretum.

Monday 28th September 2009

Unveiling by Her Royal Highness the Princess Royal of stainless steel eagle sculpture which will form the centre piece of the RAFA's remembrance garden at the NMA.

Saturday 10th October 2009

The annual Ride to the Wall to remember all the troops that have died on duty since World War II. The Inaugural Ride which took place last October, saw more than 2,500 motorcyclists ride together to the National Memorial Arboretum. Several improvements are planned for this year's event which is on the 10th October 2009. Because of the vast numbers involved, a new assembly point has been chosen - Drayton Manor, Tamworth, Staffs, B78 3TW - about 15 miles from the National Memorial Arboretum.

The Manor has improved parking space and facilities and overnight camping is also available. There will also be an RAF Spitfire flypast following the service. For further information please contact: Martin Dickinson, Founder, Chairman RTTW Organising Committee

by email at <martinp dickinson@aol.com> or by telephone on 07740871983.

Wednesday 11th November

Armistice Day details to be provided.

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.

NEWS OF THE RAF REGIMENT



FROM THE RAF REGIMENT SECRETARY DEATH NOTICES:

MALLOY WILLIAM. Former RAF Regt gnr William (Bill) MALLOY, born 28 Dec 28, died on 15 Jul 09 aged 80. He served on 62 Sqn RAF Regt but no further details are known at this time. The funeral has taken place. He is survived by his wife, Mrs Avril Malloy, of York Cottage, 60 York Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire SL6 1SJ, to whom the Corps extends its sincere condolences.

MORTE VICTOR. Former RAF ACC airman, Vic MORTE, died on 19 Aug 09. He served under the legendary Sqn Ldr 'Cas' Casano on No2 Armoured Car Company during WWII. No further details are known at this time. The funeral took place in France. He is survived by his wife, Mrs Patricia Morte, of Les Chêne Liéges, 83580 Gassin, France, to whom the Corps extends its sincere condolences.

GENERAL NOTICES:

REMEMBRANCE DAY - CENOTAPH PARADE PARTICIPATION

Those RAF Regt Assoc veterans wishing to participate in the Cenotaph Parade in London on Remembrance Sunday, 8 Nov 09, should register their names with the RAF Regt Assoc Coordinator, Mr Tom Feeley, at feeley@easynet.co.uk or by telephoning him on 0161 3011711 without delay. Permitted Assoc numbers this year will be less than in the past, owing to the increased public interest in the event.

RAF REGIMENT MEMORIAL PROJECT 2009

The RAF Regiment Memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum (NMA) was

dedicated in April 2001, following some serious fundraising. Eight years on, while the Memorial stone itself looks as fresh as the day it was unveiled, the walkway leading from the road, which comprises basic paving slabs, is looking rather dowdy and is threatening to detract from the overall effect.

It is therefore proposed to replace the current paving slabs with modern block paving, in the style currently adopted by the NMA for the latest memorials there. The proposed upgrade will see the present T-shaped walkway replaced with block paving and provide the opportunity to install - at cost - individual memorial stones with simple wording reflecting an individual's name and unit, or dates, or perhaps units themselves.

This form of memorial is proving very popular at the NMA and is considerably cheaper and longer lasting than the current NMA metal memorial plaques, which are very expensive to produce and are showing early signs of decay. The projected cost of the work will be in the region of £3,800 and it is intended to commission the work in time for the 68th Annual Commemoration Service at the NMA on 26 June 2010. Units, associations and individuals are invited to donate to the fund, to help bring the RAF Regiment's Memorial Garden up-to-date and to preserve the fabric for many years to come.

If you would like to donate towards the Project, please send your cheque - made payable to the RAF Regt Fund (Memorial Project 2009) - and send it to the Regimental Secretary at RAF Honington, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP31 1EE. Any donations would be most appreciated.

OPERATION TELIC – HISTORY CAPTURE

In this digital age, the recording of history is largely anonymously electronic and there is a great danger that vital information about the Corps will be lost with the passage of time; there are no longer dusty files to trawl through to uncover historical facts and stories.

With the end of UK and RAF Regt operations in Iraq under the Op TELIC banner, the Corps is now in the process of capturing a vast amount of information about the operations there since the initial Gulf War 1 in the early 1990s, through Gulf War II in 1997 to the latest 'war on terror' operation from 2002-2009.

While the operational data and patrol reports are still in our possession, we will also need to capture the stories and anecdotes from

those that served in the Middle East/Iraq from 1992. The collation and storage system is still being developed but it would be helpful if those who were involved would record their experiences etc while memories are relatively fresh. Once we have the required infrastructure in place, the coordinator will call for input.

FORMATION OF THE EIGHTH FP WING HQ AND RAF REGT FIELD SQN

In order to increase the RAF Regt's capability, the Armed Forces Minister, Bill Rammell, announced in the House of Commons, on 9 Jul 09, that he has decided to establish an additional RAF Force Protection (FP) Wg HQ and RAF Regt Field (Fd) Sqn.

The units will increase the time that their personnel spend between operational deployments and will bring the RAF Regt's harmony levels more into line with Govt guidelines, and should have a positive effect on the retention of skilled personnel. Recruitment and training are underway to meet the additional 12 personnel required for the FP Wg HQ and the 172 personnel for the RAF Regt Fd Sqn. Both units will be formed from Oct 09. An ongoing basing study has determined that the optimum basing solution for the new RAF Regt Fd Sqn will be either RAF Shawbury or RAF Leuchars.

The basing work for the FP Wg HQ is at an earlier stage and the options have yet to be refined, with the final outcome of the studies are expected by Autumn 2009. More information, including the intended number-plate of the 8th Fd Sqn, will be published when known.

RAFR REGT ASSOC – ELECTION 2009

Voting in the 2009 Election of the RAF Regt Assoc's National Secretary and National Treasurer has now closed. Any Voting Papers now received will be discounted. The Voting Count, by NEC-Nominated Assoc officials, will take place at RAF Honington on Thu 17 Sep. The results will remain sealed and confidential until released at the Assoc's AGM that will be held in Coventry on Sat 3 Oct 09.

ANOTHER YEOMAN WARDER FROM THE REGT

We are pleased to announce that, with effect from 3 Aug 09, former RAF Regt FS Peter McGowran has been appointed a Yeoman Warder of HM Tower of London. Peter McGowran served from 1975-2000 and he joins Bob Loughlin MBE in that very select group.

WORLD RECORD ATTEMPT AT RAFA 'BREW FOR THE FEW' EVENT AT COSFORD

Cpl Hefti, of 1 Sqn RAF Regt, will be taking part in a World Record breaking attempt to launch RAFA's 'Brew for the Few' event at Cosford on 3 Sep 09. Essentially, he will be 'looping the loop' 300 times with a cup of tea in his hands, in an aircraft flown by Wg Cdr (Retd) Andy Offer (former OC 4 Sqn and Ex Red Arrows 'Red 1').

SPREADING THE WORD

Since its inception in late-2006, over 105,000 individual Corps Parish Notices 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!

CORPS DIARY DATES:

2-4 Oct 09 – Combined RAF Regt Assoc and Assoc of WOs & SNCOs AGMs and Reunion (Coventry)

15-16 Oct 09 - RAF Armd Car Assoc Autumn Reunion (Derby) – Formal Dinner on 16 Oct.

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

5 Nov 08 – Garden of Remembrance – Westminster Abbey

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

11 Nov 09 - Armistice Day (Cenotaph, London 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).

8 May 10 – Annual RAF Regt Chapel Commemoration – Catterick (provisional date)

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).

JOKE TIME

With all the sadness and trauma going on
in the world at this time, it's worth reflecting on
the death of a very important person, which went
almost unnoticed last week. Larry LaPrise, the
man that wrote 'The Hokey Kokey' died
peacefully at the age of 93.

The most traumatic part for his family was
getting him into his coffin. They put his left leg
in. Then the trouble started!

Well that's all for now, but in spite of the
weather keep smiling.

Malcolm

DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES



16

Sat 28th-Sun 29th Nov 2009 B'ham Int Tattoo NIA
 Monday 30th November 09 St Andrew's Day
 Thursday 10th December 09 Branch Night
 Thursday 14th January 2010 Branch Night
 Monday 1st February 2010 68th Ann RAF Regiment
 Monday 1st February 2010 Branch Service at NMA
 Thursday 11th February 2010 68th Ann RAF Regiment
 Thursday 11th February 2010 **Branch Night and AGM**
 Thursday 11th February 2010 Branch Subs Due
 Monday 1st March 2010 St David's Day
 Thursday 11th March 2010 Branch Night
 Wednesday 17th March 2010 St Patrick's Day
 15th - 30th March 2010 65th Ann Battle of Meiktila
 Monday 5th April 2010 9th Ann Ded of Mem.l
 Thursday 8th April 2010 Branch Night
 Friday 23rd April 2010 St George's Day
 Thursday 13th May 2010 Branch Night

Fri 2nd – Mon 5th Oct 2009 Ass.n Autumn Reunion
 Sunday 4th October 2009 Merchant Navy Day
 Thursday 8th October 2009 Branch Night
 Wednesday 21st Oct 2009 Battle of Trafalgar Day
 Sunday 1st November 2009 Midlands Fest of Rem.
 Sunday 8th Nov 2009 Remembrance Sunday
 Wednesday 11th Nov 2009 Remembrance Day
 Thursday 12th Nov 2009 Branch Night
 Saturday 14th Nov 2009 B'ham Poppy Ball

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