



# ROYAL AIR FORCE REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

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

## ESSEX & NORTH EAST LONDON BRANCHES NEWSLETTER July – August 2008

Dear Members and Friends,

It is with much regret that we advise you of the sad passing of one of our Branch Founding Members, Dave Elliott. Dave attended our Branch meeting in June, but was suffering from a sore toe which he had hurt a couple of weeks previously. A phone call was received from Dave's wife on the 18 June to say that he had been taken into Hospital, having problems with his toe. At that time the hospital was uncertain of how to treat him; then another phone call from Dave's wife on 24 June saying that Dave had passed away that afternoon.

Dave served in the RAF Regiment from March 1955 to February 1957 and served on 66 Rifle Squadron in Aden. His grandson joined the RAF and is an Air Traffic Controller at RAF Odiham. Cards from the Branches have been sent. Dave's funeral took place on 3 July at Southend Crematorium, members of the Branch attended.

It is also with much regret that we advise you of the sad passing of Jim Street. Jim passed away on 25 July 2008 after a long battle with Cancer. We have no information regarding funeral arrangements. A card has been sent to the family on behalf of the branch. Jim served in the RAF Regiment from 1950 – 1955 serving on 15 and 26 Squadrons.

We also advise with much regret that John Wagstaffe (Royal Engineers) and regular attendee at Witham with his brother Peter who was our then chairman has sadly passed away. When John's wife died he moved to Cambridge to live with his family. His funeral was at Great Burstead on 1 August, members of the Middle East Veterans attended.

### **WE WILL REMEMBER THEM**

#### **The National Memorial Arboretum.**

Bert Salisbury and I attended the service on 28 June. The Queen's Colour was on parade for the last time before being laid up following the new Colour presentation on 11 July. We assembled in the Chapel at 11:00hrs and listened to the daily homage before the service began and then moved down to the RAF Regiment Memorial for the Rededication Service. After the service Bert and I went to look at the new Armed Forces Memorial, I found the name of a friend from the Regiment when we all served on 1 Squadron, after that we went our separate ways - sadly he was killed in 1976 while serving in Belize.

On the 11 July Bert and I again were on our travels, this time to RAF Fairford for the presentation of the two new Queen's Colours. The parade started with the two support squadrons marching on the parade ground, followed by Squadron Colours for the RAF and the Regiment. Then followed the two Escort Squadrons, these were made up from members of 3 Regiment Squadrons, QCS (63), 15 and 34.

Her Majesty The Queen arrived and inspected the Parade; the Old Colours were marched off to Old Lang Syne and the new Colours were uncased and placed on the drums. Her Majesty then presented the Colours to the RAF and the Corps, after the speeches the new Colours were paraded for the first time.

After the Colours had finished the parade The Queen and others left, the two Escorts Squadrons then marched off. Just as the Colours for the Squadrons were about to march off, the heavens opened up and in a matter of seconds everybody was soaked to the skin.

Bert and I, both soaking wet, decided that the better part of valour was to head back to the car and make our wet way home. The rain put a damper on the day, we would have liked to have stayed and had a look round before the fly-past. But all in all, it was a day to remember. The next big parade on that scale will probably be for the 100 Anniversary of the RAF.

### **Our Good Wishes**

A “get well” card has been sent on behalf of friends and members to Jean Stout who, unfortunately, has been unwell and in hospital. All good wishes for a speedy recovery Jean.

We have received a phone call from Frank North’s daughter, Pauline, who advised that, sadly, Frank is in a serious condition in hospital having suffered a stroke. Over the years Frank has been an inspiration to us all. Our thoughts are with Frank and his family at this sad time.

### **AGM Reunion Weekend**

There is still time to book for the Reunion Weekend in October. For information, please contact Isle of Wight Tours, 3 New Road, Lake, Sandown, Isle of Wight, PO36 9JN. Lots have already booked, you may meet up with a few serving pals.

Letters from former Regiment personnel still wanted by some of the lads currently serving overseas, airmail envelopes are available at post offices. Email address available if more convenient.

<a href="#">For Iraq:</a> Res RAF Regt Fd Sqn Basra COB OP TELIC BFPO 641	<a href="#">For Afghanistan:</a> Res RAF Regt Fd Sqn Kandahar Air Station OP HERRICK BFPO 772
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### **VJ Day Lunch**

We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible on Sunday 17 August to celebrate VJ Day.

### **Belated Congratulations**

We overlooked in a recent newsletter sending congratulations to Louisa and Dave Conner who have been married for 65 years. Belated best wishes to you both.









### **Anthony Xavier with his proud parents**

What an amazing day at Cranwell for the Graduation Ceremony. The weather stayed fine, there was an excellent church service and fly pasts from the Red Arrows and a Typhoon during key points of the parade and, after lunch from a Vulcan. A most memorable day.

Frank Xavier

### **Major TV programme depicting RAF Regt Heroes**

Central Television, which covers ITV in the Midlands and has the 2nd largest TV audience in the UK, was granted access to cover RAF heroism at home and on operations abroad. The result can be seen on Central early in Aug 08 as part of a 10-part series, entitled 'Above and Beyond'.

The major contribution of the RAF Regt in protecting the airfield at Basra in Iraq can be seen in the programme that screens on Central TV on Aug 8 at 2000 and repeated on Granada TV on Sept 4 at 2300. The programme also tells how 1 Sqn RAF Regt stubbornly refused to submit during an ambush by Iraqi insurgents at Al Waki market place. Despite withering firepower from more than a dozen rooftop locations after the Sqn came under a hail of gunfire that lasted 90 minutes, the gnrns fought their way out, carrying an injured comrade and another, LAC Martin Beard, who had been mortally wounded. The incident resulted in many bravery and leadership awards, including a Regt cpl - David Hayden - who received the first Military Cross (MC) awarded to an airman.

The programme also recounts how RAF Regt Flt Lt (now Sqn Ldr) Matt Carter risked his life repeatedly in Afghanistan as a Forward Air Controller embedded within 3 Para. In one incident, he was part of a force being dropped off by helicopter at night to capture a high-value Taliban leader, but the Chinook pilot had to take off, owing to heavy incoming fire, after just 20 seconds with Carter still onboard. Without regard for himself, Carter jumped out of the Chinook from 15 ft in darkness, landed in a ditch and instantly began directing fire onto Taliban positions. He gallantly and exposed himself repeatedly during all contacts with the enemy at a very high risk of being killed. Again, he was awarded an MC.

See the link below for more details about the Al Waki firefigh

<http://www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/DefenceNews/HistoryAndHonour/TheBattleOfAlwakiMarketvideo.htm>

For viewers outside the Granada/Central TV regions, the programme can be viewed on Central TV's broadband service, ITV Local, once the programme has been transmitted, terrestrially. The link is - <http://www.itvlocal.com/central/programmes/>

### **Dates for your Diary**

- Aug 17 VJ Day Lunch, Miller & Carter Sate House, Alderborough Road, Newbury Park, 12.30  
(if you need a lift from Newbury Park Station phone Denise 01708 456062)
- Oct 1 Essex Branch Meeting
- Oct 3 – 5 Association Reunion and AGM Folkestone
- Nov 6 Field of Remembrance, Westminster Abbey 11am
- Nov 8 Festival of Remembrance (our National Standard will be Paraded by John Smart)
- Nov 9 Remembrance Sunday, Horse Guards Parade
- Dec 3 Essex Branch Meeting (Buffet)

### **Raffle prizes always welcome**

**Steve and Denise**

Last but not least,

**MANY HAPPY RETURNS TO MRS MAY STAPLEHURST AND  
TO STEVE**

**And a BIG THANK YOU to Steve for all you do for the branch and Association**