

Royal Air Force Regiment Property Booklet



1942 - 2008





“History cannot give us a program for the future, but it can give us a fuller understanding of ourselves, and a common humanity, so that we can better face the future”.

Robert Penn Warren

The RAF Regiment Fund maintains over 650 items of Regimental Property on behalf of the Corps. This booklet contains information on the most significant items that the Fund holds.

Front Cover Image: 2777 Sqn RAF Regt outside the Brandenburg Gate and Reichskanzlerei, Berlin, in the Winter of 1946-7. One Flt of cars was detached permanently to Berlin and based at RAF Gatow, where they formed part of the British Military presence (British Air Forces of Occupation - BAFO) in Berlin after WWII. Lead car comdr is Fg Off Dickinson, RAF Regt. Photo courtesy of Flt Lt Don Nelson RAF (Retd). Flt Lt Nelson was latterly a Lt Col in the RCAF and still lives in Canada.

**“Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II”
Air Commodore-in-Chief
Royal Air Force Regiment**



Her Majesty The Queen unveiled this portrait of herself, which now dominates the entrance hall, in 1967. The portrait depicts the Queen as Sovereign of the Most Noble Order of the Thistle, Scotland's premier Order of Chivalry. The portrait was commissioned by the Officers of the RAF Regiment to commemorate the Regiment's 25th Anniversary and was executed by Huseph Riddle. Both at the unveiling and subsequently at the Royal Review of the RAF Regiment to commemorate the 40th Anniversary in 1982, The Queen expressed her particular satisfaction with the portrait.

Gunner 2007



Although the significance of a 65th anniversary in military terms is not great, it was recognized in 2006 that the Corps should recognize yet another milestone in its short history in some way and the idea of a new and significant piece of silverware was developed. The key requirements were that it should show the Corps in a modern light, and that it should reflect the nature of current operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. The Jewellers to the Queen, Collins and Sons of Royal Tunbridge Wells in Kent, were duly commissioned and the piece - entitled *Gunner 2007* - was unveiled ceremoniously by the outgoing CG, Air Cdre Peter Drissell, at the Corps' 65th Anniversary Dinner at RAF Honington on 1 February 2007. The piece shows a patrolling RAF Regt gnr in Iraq, while the inscription above the shattered building's door lintel translates to '*Tobacconist and Greengrocer*'.

Capability



Presented to HM The Queen in her Golden Jubilee year was "Capability" commissioned by the Officers of the RAF Regiment to celebrate the 60th Anniversary of the Corps. The picture is a montage of the various Force Elements of the RAF Regiment deployed at Ali Al Salem Air Base Kuwait. HM The Queen has kindly allowed the painting to be displayed within the Officers' Mess at RAF Honington.

The RAF Regiment Centrepiece



This superb silver sculpture of the RAF Regiment's crossed rifles and Astral crown badge was subscribed to by the Officers of the RAF Regiment in 1950. It is displayed in company with the statuettes of the RAF Regiment and Associated Overseas Forces, but they are not part of the same ensemble. This piece is generally known as the Regimental Centre-Piece.

The Silver Statuettes



Over the years, the Regiment has built up a fine collection of statuettes in silver. Representing respectively the new RAF Regiment (1943) on guard for the first time at Buckingham Palace that year to mark the RAF's 25th Anniversary, The RAF Regiment Malaya (1947), the Iraq Levies (1954) and the Aden Protectorate Levies (1957), the collection was added to again in 1973 with a statuette of a contemporary Gunner, in tribute to the Gunners' magnificent performance over the years. These statuettes are often associated with the RAF Regiment centrepiece, but are not actually an integral part of it.

Action at Nejd Mergid, Aden



This painting commemorates the action in which Flight Lieutenant Leonard George Calvert won the Military Cross whilst serving with No 10 Squadron, Aden Protectorate Levies on 12 January 1957. An extract from the London Gazette reads, "For courage, determination and leadership, in the face of hostile fire, when in command of a section of armoured cars, on the 12th January 1957 and other occasions". Sergeant J F Molyneux, also of No 10 Squadron, Aden Protectorate Levies, won the Military Medal during the same period under similar circumstances.

Flight Lieutenant Leonard George Calvert MC

Flight Lieutenant Calvert's unpublished citation reads as follows:

"At 1430 hours on the 12th January 1957, Flight Lieutenant Calvert, Royal Air Force Regiment, commanding a Section of Armoured Cars, accompanied the Force Commander on a reconnaissance of the of the Nejd Mergid track. As the small column reached a position 800 yards from the Yemeni Fort, left of the track, they came under very heavy enemy fire from the fort, and the trees on the left of the track. Flight Lieutenant Calvert moved his cars to within 300 yards of the fort and engaged the enemy with accurate sustained fire. Although his car had been hit over fifty times, a visor smashed, and one ammunition bin penetrated, Flight Lieutenant Calvert maintained his position with the utmost coolness, directing his section on to new targets as they arose. On receiving orders to withdraw nearer to the Section position, to engage fresh enemy positions on the Spur on the right flank, he discussed the situation verbally with the Force Commander, although his own car was still under heavy fire, coolly pointing out the main positions on the fort and on the Spur. On receiving orders to cover the withdrawal of the Force Commander and the Section he again moved forward, and engaged the enemy at the fort with such accurate fire that those positions did not seriously interfere with the Section's withdrawal. The Force Commander and the Section having withdrawn, he then proceeded as ordered to Nejd Mergid, receiving more hits as the track was still under heavy fire. During this and other operations between 12th and 23rd January 1957, Flight Lieutenant Calvert showed qualities of leadership and command of the highest standard. His complete disregard of his own safety and his example were the main factors contributing to the magnificent work of 'A' Flight during those operations".

Sergeant John Frederick Molyneux MM

Sergeant Molyneux's unpublished citation provides an account of his supporting role in the action:

"On the 27th January, 1957 a section of No. 10 Armoured Car Squadron under the command of Sergeant Molyneux was involved in the action with No 9 Squadron, Aden Protectorate Levies, against Yemeni Army Forces at Sanah, on the Protectorate-Yemeni border. The action began when Yemeni Forces attacked Sanah at 0530 hours, and continued until approximately 1130 hours. During this period Sergeant Molyneux's section was continually engaged. His skilful handling of the armoured cars and the coolness and bravery he displayed against prolonged opposition contributed greatly to the success achieved by the Protectorate forces. He placed his own car in the most forward and exposed position and although it was hit frequently by small arms fire he continued calmly to pass back most useful and vital information to the commander of the forces. His final position, selected by himself, brought him under very close fire, and as he had to expose the top part of his body in order to observe adequately he was, for a long period, in very considerable personal danger. This was not the first time that Sergeant Molyneux had distinguished himself in action. He has, during the last few weeks, been involved in other actions. On all occasions he has shown very great ability and courage and, by his example, has been an inspiration to the men under his command".

Aden Protectorate Levies Sergeant of the Camel Troop



From a locally raised force in 1928, known as the 1st Yemen Light Infantry, was born the Aden Protectorate Levies. The Aden Protectorate Levies expanded during the Second World War under the command of 50 British Officers and NCOs. In 1946 the force was reorganised and the recently formed RAF Regiment provided officers and NCOs to lead it. RAF Regiment officers continued to serve on secondment with this force until it was finally handed over to the South Arabian government in 1967.

The oil on aluminium painting, painted at Singapore Lines, Aden in August 1955, depicts Sergeant Muhdi in Ceremonial dress of the Aden Protectorate Levies Camel Troop.

The Battle for Meiktila



This painting, commissioned for the 50th Anniversary of the RAF Regiment, commemorates the RAF Regiment's historic defence of Meiktila. In 1942 the Japanese advanced into Burma and posed a serious threat to the British presence in India. On 3 August 1944 the British began their counter-attack and by early March 1945 the valuable airfield complex at Meiktila had been captured by No 1307 Wing, RAF Regiment and was held against Japanese attacks. The nature of operations in the Burma campaign and the ground forces available meant that the RAF Regiment had to withdraw at night into a close perimeter guarding aircraft, materiel and personnel. The Japanese would then try to infiltrate the airfield positions, occupying ground held by the RAF Regiment during the daytime. Each morning the RAF Regiment would move out to oust the Japanese and re-occupy its daytime positions before flying operations could begin. After much fierce fighting, in which the Wing Commander was killed leading two of his squadrons in a counter-attack, the area was finally cleared by the end of March. The RAF Regiment's skill and ability in defending the airfield enabled the RAF to provide close air support to units of the XIVth Army in their advance south to liberate Burma. The painting depicts a dawn counter-attack by RAF Regiment forces to retake the airstrip from the Japanese before the commencement of flying operations.

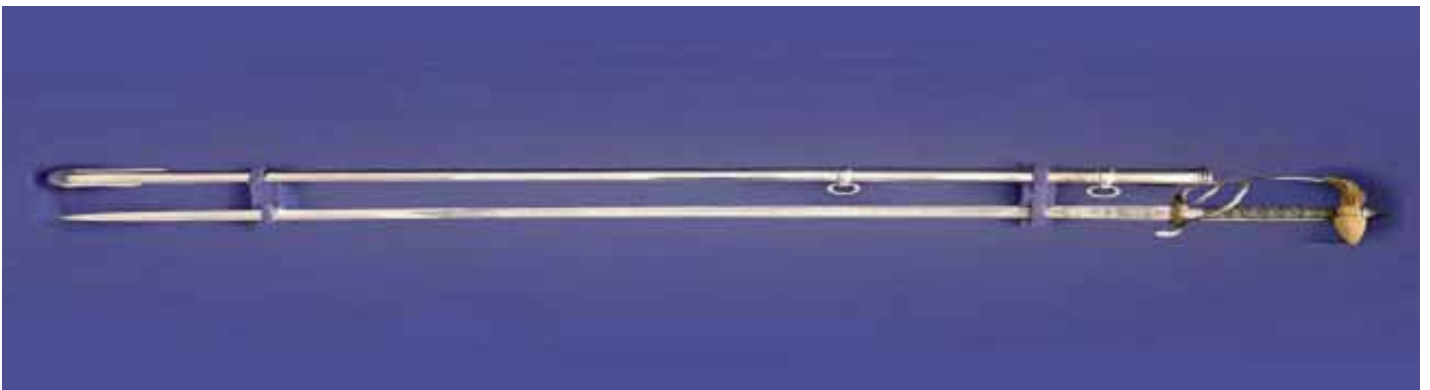
Samurai Sword



The Samurai Sword was recovered from a dead Japanese officer at Pegu on the road from Mandalay to Rangoon. The sword was presented to the Officers' Mess at RAF Catterick in 1947 by the first RAF Regiment PMC of the Officers' Mess - Squadron Leader Angus Ian Mitchell MC RAF.

Mitchell was awarded his MC for two counts of gallantry while serving in Burma with No2942 Field Squadron RAF Regiment. On 29 September 1944, while on detachment with the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry in South Mayu Range, he accompanied a Company Assault Party in an attack on a Japanese position. When the Company Commander was killed, the then Fg Off Mitchell immediately assumed command and succeeded in capturing and consolidating the objective under hostile and accurate shellfire. On 2 October 1944, he then took part in a patrol that was repeatedly attacked by superior forces and eventually surrounded. As the situation deteriorated, Fg Off Mitchell volunteered to make his way back to the Company HQ to bring down artillery support to assist the withdrawal of the patrol. Although there was little cover on the journey, and the ground was swept by enemy automatic fire, he succeeded in getting through.

The Barratt Sword



The RAF Regiment ran its own Officer Cadet Training Unit at the Depot until mid 1948. The original Sword of Honour displayed in the Mess is particularly interesting since it is a mounted officer's sabre, but bears a Royal Air Force sword-knot. The sword was commissioned and presented to the Regiment by Air Chief Marshall Sir Arthur Barratt.

The Kuhn Sword



Lieutenant Colonel Byron G Kuhn, USAF, was the first USAF/RAF Regiment exchange officer in 1966. He died in office, at HQ Air Support Command at Upavon, a few weeks before his tour-expiry date in 1969. He was found to have commissioned Messrs Wilkinson to manufacture the sword above, which he intended to present to the RAF Regiment for use by the Queens Colour Bearer of the RAF Regiment. After the sword's posthumous presentation to the Corps and, as a result of an undertaking by the then Commandant General, Air Vice-Marshal B P Young, to Mrs Kuhn, the sword is not only used as directed by the benefactor but is always unsheathed in the presence of the Colour whenever the Colour is uncased in RAF Regiment messes. When so displayed, if not in its show-case in the Officers' Mess, the sword is mounted on a walnut plinth emblazoned with a US Air Force Officer's Cap badge. The plinth was presented by Group Captain D A Pocock, Commandant of the Depot at the time of the presentation, and the badge on it was a gift of Captain Jon M Samuels, the Depot's USAF Exchange Officer at the time. Subsequently, Captain Samuels presented the Colour-Bearer's sword-belt to complement the Kuhn Sword.

The Kapuscinski Sword



This standard-pattern RAF sword was commissioned and presented at a Service of Dedication on 20 December 1984 by fellow students in memory of a brother officer. Flying Officer Stephen Andrew Kapuscinski, a member of No 1/84 Junior Regiment Officers' Course, died of injuries received in a road traffic accident during a Course project weekend on 28 September 1984. The Commandant General of the RAF Regiment awards the Flying Officer Kapuscinski Memorial Sword to the most successful student in a Junior Regiment Officers' Course.

The Colour Party



Commissioned to mark the RAF Regiment's 40th Anniversary in 1982, this very modern silver piece was subscribed for by serving and retired Officers and friends of the RAF Regiment. It depicts the full Queen's Colour Party and thereby for the first time, in complementing the silver statuettes of individual men of the RAF Regiment and Associated Overseas Forces, it represents Officers, Warrant Officers and Non-Commissioned Officers of the RAF Regiment

RAF Regiment AA Site Normandy



This painting depicts a 2819 LAA Squadron 40/60 Bofors Gun detachment in a gun pit at Cristot, France. The war artist Frank Wootton painted Corporal Turner and ACs Reynolds, Swabey and Jones manning their Bofors gun on a warm summer's day in Normandy in late August 1944. 2819 Squadron had landed together with 1304 and 1305 Wing HQs, and 2809 and 2834 LAA Squadrons on D+1. The Regiment force had been due to land on D-Day (6 June 1944) but could not get ashore due to congestion on Juno Beach. 2834 Squadron were the first Regiment Squadron into action in France when they were deployed at Bazenville on D+2. By the end of August 1944, there were nineteen Regiment wing HQs and thirty squadrons, of which eighteen were LAA squadrons. Although the LAA squadrons had been landed in Normandy in order to provide defence against enemy aircraft, personnel were often withdrawn from their anti-aircraft guns to form fighting patrols to drive out enemy forces harassing operations on allied airfields.

Kris



The Kris or Keris is a distinctive, asymmetrical dagger indigenous to Indonesia, Malaysia, and the southern Philippines. Both a weapon and spiritual object, krisses are often considered to have an essence or presence, with some blades possessing good luck and others possessing bad.

The kris spread from the island of Java to many parts of the archipelago of Indonesia, such as Sumatra, Bali, Lombok, Sumbawa, South Sulawesi, Kalimantan, and to the Southeast Asian areas now known as Malaysia, Brunei, southern Philippines, southern Thailand, and Singapore.

Jambya



Jambya (Arabic script **جانبية** or **جانبية**) is the Arabic term for dagger, but it is generally used to describe a specific type of dagger with a short curved blade that is worn on a belt. Although the jambya is of Arab origin, it is mostly associated with people of Yemeni descent; it is said that a Yemeni man is incomplete without his jambya. There are several theories about the origin of the jambya. It is reported that a statue of King Madi Karb (500 BC) of the Himyarite kingdom was recently found showing him with a jambya on his belt. It is also believed that the jambya originates from a long sword that was worn during a time of unrest when it was not safe for a man to be outside without a weapon. Eventually, the need for a sword diminished, however, it had already become a part of their culture. Jambyas are passed down from generation to generation and today it is used as a means of defining and displaying the status of a man in society, and is also worn as a sign of patriotism and tribal loyalty.

Flight Lieutenant George Henderson GM and Bar

The Kris and Jambiya on the opposite page were presented by Flight Lieutenant George Henderson GM and Bar. Although George Henderson did not win his George Medal, or the bar to it, whilst serving in the RAF Regiment, it was his service with the RAF Regiment, and particularly with the Aden Protectorate Levies, which led him to obtaining a position in Aden, and thus the actions which he faced.

Flight Lieutenant Henderson enlisted in the Royal Air Force in 1938 as an apprentice clerk, attained the rank of Warrant Officer in 1946 having served in France, Egypt and Palestine. After attending OCTU, where he was awarded the Sword of Merit, he was commissioned in the Royal Air Force Regiment in March 1947, and served exclusively with the Aden Protectorate Levies (other than a period at the Middle East School of Arabic Studies). Retiring in December 1953 at his own request, he entered Her Majesty's Overseas Civil Service as a Political Officer in Aden.

In May 1956, he was returning to his Headquarters at NISAB, accompanied by a driver and a tribal guard, when his party was fired upon by a group of tribesmen concealed on high ground. Henderson dashed across open ground, was wounded in the foot, but reached dead ground and managed to ascend a hill from which he put his enemy to flight. By his action, when chances of survival seemed slender, he undoubtedly saved his companions lives as well as his own. For this feat he was awarded the George Medal.

He acted as Deputy Advisor and British Agent in the Western Aden Protectorate from 1959 to 1960, becoming acting advisor in 1962 and senior advisor in 1963. He was appointed to act as British Agent and Assistant High Commissioner for Aden and the Protectorate of South Arabia in September 1963.

In December 1963, when the British High Commissioner and her party of Government Ministers and Officials were assembled at Aden Airport a bomb was thrown from a balcony into the party. As the bomb exploded, Henderson hurled himself forward and took the full blast in his chest. By doing so, he saved the lives of the other members of the party and showed complete disregard for his own safety. He was awarded a Bar to the George Medal, but unfortunately died from the wounds that he received.

Regiment At Salalah



This painting depicts RAF Regiment operations during the Salalah Campaign in Oman in the early 1970s. RAF Regiment Field Squadrons manned a line of fortified, defensive firebase positions, nick-named “hedgehogs”, between the airfield at Salalah and the enemy mountains or Jebel to the North. The Success of the ground operations to defeat the enemy was dependant upon the ground attack, air supply and CASEVAC missions flown from Salalah. Despite numerous attacks, the rebel forces were never able to get close enough to the airfield to disrupt air operations.

Top Left

Browning .5 inch
Heavy Machine Gun

Top Right

View from the F.O.O Tower
North from Hedgehog
Charlie to the Jebel

Centre Left

81mm Mortar
Command Post

Centre

81mm Mortar

Centre Right

ZB 298 Radar Operator and
GPMG Gunner

Bottom Left

Vickers .303 inch
Medium Machine Gun
Manned by the
Dhofar Gendarmerie

Bottom Centre

GPMG(SF) Gunner

Bottom Right

Green Archer Artillery/
Mortar Locating Radar
Manned by the Royal
Artillery

Bofors 40mm L70 Gun



The silver Bofors air defence gun was commissioned by Squadron Leader Paul Cormack to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of 16 (LAA) Squadron on 12 January 1973. Bofors AG of Sweden subscribed half the cost with the remaining funds being raised by the squadron. Initiatives included the production of a first day cover for sale bearing stamps celebrating the United Kingdom's entry into the Common Market and signatures of the AOC, the Commandant General Air Vice Marshall Pocock, the Commandant and Mr Brian Trubshaw who flew the envelopes to Cape Town on Concorde. The Squadron sent copies to the Queen and the Prime Minister (Ted Heath). The item was finally presented before the squadron disbanded and reformed as a Rapier squadron in 1975. The commissioning of this superb piece constituted a remarkable achievement when it is recalled that 1975 was possibly the most economically disastrous year in a series of years of financial hardship and difficulty in this country and in the Armed Services in particular.

“Tigercat” SAM



The silver Tigercat model was presented by Short Brothers and Harland, manufacturers of the Tigercat, the world's first land-based airmobile short-range surface-to-air guided missile system. It was introduced to service by the RAF Regiment and subsequently was sold throughout the world.

Richmond Castle



A 10 inch high, silver plated, reproduction of the Richmond Castle Keep. The Keep is mounted on a stone plinth, which has affixed the crests of both Richmondshire District Castle, and the Royal Air Force Regiment Depot. Centrally, on the stone plinth, is a brass plate, engraved with the following:

“Presented by Richmondshire District
Council to mark 40 years of the RAF
Regiment Depot at Catterick
1946 – 1986.

Scorpion



This model was presented to the RAF Regiment by Alvis Ltd, manufacturers of Scorpion and its “family” of light armoured vehicles on the occasion of the formal handover of the first vehicles to the Regiment in August 1981. The model is not of silver, but of the special aluminium armour from which the real vehicles were made. It was constructed by the apprentices of Alvis Ltd.

The Khukri



The magnificent Khukri was presented to the Iraqi Levies by the IV (Prince of Wales Own) Ghurkha Rifles, to commemorate joint wartime operations in “PAIFORCE” (pronounced “Pieforce”), the Persia and Iraq Force.

Gen Don Jose de San Martin



The bronze statuette of General José Francisco de San Martín Matorras was brought from the office of the Second in Command of the Argentine occupation force in the Falklands Islands, Comodoro (Air Commodore) Carlos Blumer-Reeve. General de San Martín was one of the most significant authors of today's world; unfortunately, because of the "remoteness" of South America, he is almost unknown outside of his own sub-continent. However, as a soldier and as a man, his life and examples are particularly worthy of study. José de San Martín was born on 25 Feb 1778 at Yapeyu, Viuroyalty of La Plata, South America and died on 17 Aug 1850 in Boulogne, France. He was an Argentine soldier, statesman and national hero who helped lead the revolutions against Spanish rule in Argentina (1812), Chile (1818) and Peru (1821). The statuette was "liberated" by Flight Lieutenant Guy Bransby, a RAF Regiment Officer, on the surrender of the Argentine occupation forces on 14 June 1982, and donated to the Officers' Mess of the RAF Regiment.

The Iraq Levies Trophies



This photograph is the Iraq Levies Inter-Regimental Association Football Cup. The trophy pre-dates the RAF Regiment and is a fine example of the silver from the Imperial Forces under RAF Regiment command.

Rapier FSC



British Aero Space presented this silver model of a Rapier FSC to the Royal Air Force Regiment on the Occasion of the Formal Handover of Rapier Field Standard C on 18th October 1996.

The Gillan Samovar



One of the very few pieces of non-sterling silver among the Regiment's finer pieces, this samovar from Iraq was presented to the Regiment by the late Group Captain G M Gillan, RAF Regiment, Force Commander, Iraq Levies and later Commandant of the Depot. Group Captain Gillan's son, Flight Lieutenant A M F Gillan, RAF Regiment later served several years at the Depot and was the first son of a former Commandant to do so.

The Southport Scroll



This superb silver cylinder is the container of the illuminated Vellum Scroll presented to No 2611 (West Lancashire) Squadron, Royal Auxiliary Air Force Regiment in 1956 by the Borough of Southport to the Squadron. One year later, the squadron disbanded together with almost the entire Royal Auxiliary Air Force, as a first step in the process later known as "The Sandys Axe".

The Silver Goblets



These two silver goblets have distinctive histories.

On the left is the “Jubilee Goblet”. Made in 1977 of Britannia Silver (the highest extra-fine grade of Sterling) to commemorate the Silver Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II, it bears the Silver Jubilee hallmark. It was presented by the Officers of RAF Catterick to the Royal Air Force Regiment and was designated at the time as a drinking vessel only for Royalty. Accordingly, it is placed on the top table as decorative silver on formal occasions, but is only offered for use to members of the Royal Family.

The goblet on the right is “The Ward Goblet”. Presented by Group Captain O A “Gus” Ward on his retirement in 1973, the Regiment accepted his request that it be used as the Guest of Honour’s drinking vessel. Accordingly, it is always placed for such use on Guest Nights and major luncheons unless the Guest of Honour is a member of the Royal Family, when the Jubilee Goblet may be so used.

Roberts Trophy



Gp Capt Roberts MBE MM served in the RAF Regt from its inception in 1942. In 1991 he presented a trophy to be awarded annually to the junior RAF Regt officer who had best demonstrated the qualities of leadership under demanding conditions

The RAF Regiment Essay Prize



Gp Capt Oliver was Deputy Director of the RAF Regt when he retired in 1978. He presented an essay prize to be competed for annually by all junior officers in the Regt, to develop an analytical mindset, encourage study of the Service and wider Defence issues and develop command and staff skills. The submitted essays are marked by Kings College London (Air Power Studies Department).

Quaiches and Syphon Holder



The larger of the two quaiches was the gift of Wing Commander D G Roberts MBE MM, Chief Instructor of the RAF Regiment Depot and Wing Commander P D Lee MBE, OC Fire and Rescue Training Squadron. Wing Commander Roberts was the first member of the RAF Regiment to be decorated for gallantry in action, winning his Military Medal as a Corporal in 1942, very shortly after the RAF Regiment was formally constituted. He later returned to the Depot as Commandant and became ADC to The Queen.

Scottish Command of the British Army presented the second Quaiche in recognition of the RAF Regiment's exceptional contribution to ceremonial in Scotland, particularly the Edinburgh Tattoo.

The Student Officers of Regiment Officers' Basic Training Course XIII presented the syphon holder in 1957. "ROBT" was a short-lived interim title for the Junior Regiment Officers Course (JROC), which today is popularly known as "The J Course".

Sources

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The RAF Regiment Property Book

The RAF Regiment Museum

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Designed and Produced by RAF Honington Media Services