

Wales, Midland & South Western Area

Newsletter

OCTOBER 2013

THIS NEWSLETTER SHOULD BE DISPLAYED FOR THE USE OF ALL MEMBERS

1. MEMBERSHIP

Whole Area Membership figures as at 30 September 2013 were as follows:

Annual	Life	Full Associate	Total	New Ann/Ass 13	All Losses
6311	5257	2465	14033	659	1275

Renewals & Subscriptions - Membership functions from within our Area have now been successfully handed over to CHQ. Please direct any membership renewals, subscriptions or finance related query to Rishi Sheth (rishi.sheth@rafa.org.uk / 0116 2688785), who will be happy to help and assist.

2. BRANCH CLOSURE

It is with sadness that we report the formal closure of the Bridgwater Branch with effect from 1 October 2013. The Branch has contributed hugely over many years and we thank the retiring Committee for the dignity with which closure has been conducted. Several Members have already elected to transfer to adjacent Branches which is great news.

3. BRANCH STANDARD BEARERS AT THE BIRMINGHAM INTERNATIONAL MILITARY TATTOO!

The numbers of Branch Standard Bearers who have 'signed up' to the Birmingham International Military Tattoo at the NIA on Saturday 30 November and Sunday 1st December is growing and we look forward to performing alongside military musicians and other performers at this 25th Anniversary Tattoo. If you have not already done so, please consider representing your Branch by making contact with the Area Director in Exeter. The enclosed Tattoo leaflet provides more information including our ticket hotline! Thank you.

4. AREA WELFARE SEMINARS

We are moving ever closer to this year's round of Area Welfare Seminars and paperwork has been despatched to Branch Secretaries with similar information contained in the latest Welfare Bulletin, inviting Branch and particularly HWO attendance. Please do all you can to support these Seminars. The cost is £8 per person. If you haven't seen the paperwork and wish to attend please make contact with your Branch Secretary and/or the Area Office (Debbie Byam on 01392-462088 Option 4 or at Debbie.byam@rafa.org.uk):

Celebrating 70 Years 1943-2013

- Thu 17 October 2013 – RAFA Branch HQ Cwmbran, Greenhill Road, Forge Hammer, Cwmbran, Gwent, NP44 3DQ.
- Thu 24 October 2013 – All Services Club Moseley, 91 Church Road, Birmingham, B13 9EA.

Confirmation of your attendance would be welcome by 11 October.

5. RAFA YOUTH – THE LATEST UPDATE!

This month we have already seen three rafa YOUTH members win £300 of flying kindly donated by Mr Francis Bacon, RAF Association Life Member. One of the three lucky winners Jordan Alleyene who is currently doing a paper round to pay for his PPL, saw his prize doubled by the Directors Jim McVey and Paul Lodge at Lomac Aviators. They have also enquired about donating further prizes after learning more about rafa YOUTH and our aims to develop young people in aviation.

On Monday 16 September another 10 rafa YOUTH members headed up to Lancashire to attend a VIP day at BAE Systems Warton. The day offered by Mr Drew Steel MBE (RAF Association Life Member) enabled the 10 winners to visit the Typhoon & Hawk production facilities, view the Air Traffic Control operations, flight test systems, Military ops, as well as meeting and chatting with Nat Makepeace BAE test pilot. Rob Chandler, rafa YOUTH member, Air Explorer Scout & prize winner said: 'Now I've finally recovered from the long journey there and back, I'd like to say thank you for such a brilliant time I had at BAE Systems. It was great to meet everyone from across the UK involved in rafa YOUTH, and spend the day with them at such a fantastic location! I can't believe how much I learned visiting the factories and seeing how our Air Force's aircraft are constructed!'

We currently have 283 memberships with 2541 likes on our vibrant Facebook page and looking forward to next week's second members prize drawers; A day at the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight & three one day gliding courses with the British Gliding Association. This along with our continuing program of ATC, CCF(RAF), Air Scout/Air Explorer Scout & GVCAC unit visits, it's all go at rafa YOUTH! Remember, in promoting rafa YOUTH, your Branch can sponsor membership at £10/year per cadet at your local squadron – ask your Area Director for more details.

<https://www.facebook.com/rafaYOUTH>

www.rafayouth.org.uk

6. CONGRATULATIONS TO MR HAL DAVENPORT BEM

A lifetime of dedicated service to his community and to the RAF Association saw Mr Hal Davenport (former Halesowen Branch) recently awarded a British Empire Medal as part of the Wolverhampton & District Branch Battle of Britain Parade and Service which was held on Sunday 15 September 2013. Presented by Colonel Tom Lloyd, West Midlands Deputy Lord Lieutenant, Hal is pictured below.



7. WELLINGTON BOMBER CRASH MELTON MOWBRAY – AUGUST 1944

On the 13th August 1944, Wellington MkX LN281 took off from No.14 Operational Training Unit at RAF Market Harborough in Leicestershire at 15:45hrs for a routine training mission for what was thought to be a routine cross country training flight followed by a bombing detail at Grimsthorpe Bombing Range. At some point during the sortie, the aircraft started to experience trouble with the starboard engine and overflew Melton Mowbray airfield at a height of 1000ft. Whilst trying to execute a large circuit on one engine and make an emergency landing at RAF Melton Mowbray, the aircraft lost flying speed, stalled and crashed four miles from the airfield between Saxby Road and Thorpe Road in the Copley South field and burst into flames. The entry in the No 14 OTU ORB for 13th August states:

"Wellington LN281 crashed 4 miles north Melton Mowbray airfield. Staff Pilot - F/O Owen. Pupil Pilot - Sgt. Roberts. Attempted forced landing in field and blew up on impact, finally being destroyed by fire. 7 killed and 1 dangerously injured."

The crew for LN281s training mission on the 13th August 1944 consisted of the usual six trainees plus experienced Staff Pilot and Staff Navigator. The crew on this fateful sortie were:

Staff Pilot: Fg Off N Owen DFC 162950 – Killed Aged 26

Staff Nav: Plt Off S J Guiver 174686 – Killed Aged 24

Pilot: Sgt E M Roberts 1624053 – Killed Aged 20

Nav: Sgt W M Thomas 1652484 – Killed Aged 28

W/Op: Sgt R McCudden 1822819 – Killed Aged 19

Bomb Aimer: Sgt L Wilson 1684528 – Killed Aged 21

Air Gunner: Sgt P R Stafford 1881894 – Killed Aged 20

Air Gunner: Sgt G H Raby 3006707 - survived

The Melton Aviation Society, who meet at the Melton Mowbray RAFA Club on a monthly basis are researching this crash and are looking at erecting a Memorial near to the crash site to provide a lasting memory in recognition of the sacrifice the crew of Wellington LN281 gave on that fateful day of 13th August 1944. It is planned that the unveiling/dedication of the Memorial will take place on or near to the 70th Anniversary in August 2014. If anyone has any information about this crash, was a witness, involved in the rescue/recovery or was based at either RAF Melton Mowbray or No 14 OTU at RAF Market Harborough at the time of the incident and can provide information about the aircraft or its crew then please contact Brian Fare on 07885 938945 or brian.fare@hotmail.com.

8. CHRISTMAS GIFTS TO SERVING PERSONNEL ON DEPLOYMENT

Members of the public are being asked to show their support through Service charities at Christmas rather than overloading the British Forces Post Office (BFPO) with unsolicited mail to Afghanistan.

It is now 86 days until Christmas, and in the run-up to the festive season the BFPO receives a high volume of gifts and parcels to be sent on to personnel on operations – primarily Afghanistan, but also all around the world, including Royal Navy ships. Head of BFPO, Colonel Stephen Heron, said: Every year we see first-hand the generosity of the British public and though the sentiment is to be welcomed it can cause problems in delivering the mail that matters most – that from servicemen and servicewomen's families. Getting this post through to them is our absolute priority, particularly at this time of year.

It is far better for people who want to show their support for our Armed Forces to donate to recognised Service charities who can use their experience to focus their efforts directly on what will be of most benefit to deployed Service personnel.

The public are also asked to bear in mind this year that, with the ongoing redeployment of UK personnel and equipment as security responsibilities are increasingly handed over to the Afghan forces, there will be significantly fewer UK troops in Afghanistan this Christmas compared to previous years.

The Armed Forces are asking the public once again to show their support by making donations to approved charities such as the uk4u Thanks! Christmas Box appeal, which works with BFPO to make use of any spare space in the existing supply chain.

The uk4u Thanks! Christmas Box appeal has sent festive boxes to personnel for 7 years and ensures a present 'on behalf of the nation' is sent at Christmas to every serviceman and woman working overseas. People can donate to this and other charities now to show their support and appreciation, and are encouraged to do so rather than sending their own gifts by post.

Director and Trustee of uk4u Thanks! Sally Little said:

Christmas is a difficult time for servicemen and servicewomen who are serving away from their families on operations. uk4u sends them all a Christmas Box filled with Christmas gifts which are useful and fun items.

This year over 18,000 boxes will be sent all over the world, using spare space in military transport, therefore we do not put additional strain on BFPO at Christmas.

How you can say thanks

There are many other ways in which people in the UK can thank forces deployed overseas for their work and commitment. Helpful advice and a list of recommended Service charities which accept public donations to assist deployed personnel and their families back at home can be found on the MoD website.

9. A HUGE THANK YOU TO OUR STANDARD BEARERS

A locomotive renovated after 20 years in a scrapyard has been rededicated to the Battle of Britain hero it was first named after in 1947. Sir Keith Park commanded RAF squadrons that defended London and the South East from Luftwaffe attacks in 1940. On 31 August almost 66 years after the original ceremony, the Sir Keith Park locomotive was rededicated at Kidderminster railway station in Worcestershire with the unveiling of the nameplate by The Right Honourable Sir Lockward Smith, New Zealand High Commissioner. Thank you to those Branch Standard Bearers who were on Parade and who added to the sense of occasion. Last minute changes certainly kept you all on your toes but as ever you rose to the challenge. Southern Locomotives Ltd has kindly donated £500 to the Association following our involvement.

10. WALES, MIDLAND AND SOUTH WEST AREA ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND REUNION – 2014 (7 - 9 MARCH)

Repeat Article. Amazingly the time has come to start warming you to the idea of our 2014 Area Conference and Reunion which is to be held at the De Vere Village Urban Resort on the outskirts of Cardiff over the weekend 7 to 9 March 2014. Attendance at our last 3 Conferences has been fabulous and I sincerely hope we can achieve similar results in 2014.

You can now begin to make your accommodation bookings direct with the hotel by quoting the following code – RAFA090314. A £25 per person deposit will be requested which is non-refundable. Call on 02920-524300 Option 2. Your costs are as follows:

- Twin/double room based on 2 sharing - £117.95 per person for 2 nights bed and breakfast, Friday evening forked buffet and Saturday evening Dinner.
- Single room - £152.95 for 2 nights bed and breakfast, Friday evening forked buffet and Saturday evening Dinner.
- One twin/double room based on 2 sharing for just the Saturday night including the formal Saturday evening Dinner and Sunday breakfast is £62.50 per person.

- One single room for just the Saturday night including the formal Saturday evening Dinner and Sunday breakfast is £80.00.
- If you wish to come along just for the Saturday evening Dinner, this will be £25 per person. Please let the Exeter Office know if this is your plan as we shall need to keep an eye on additional seats over and above those that have booked for the weekend.

A final note for now. Saturday and Sunday lunch arrangements are not included in this package and you are invited to make your own arrangements with the Restaurant. More information on our Reunion Weekend will follow but please don't hesitate to call the Exeter Office if you have any queries.

11. RAFA CONCERT BAND STILL AT FULL SPEED!

Yet again our RAFA Concert Band has been very active on behalf of the Association. Please find enclosed the September/October Newsletter.

12. WINGS APPEAL RETURNS

Repeat Article. Branches are reminded that monies from Wings Appeal street collections should be returned to the Wings Appeal office at CHQ with the appropriate forms within 14 days of the collections taking place. All other monies for Wings Appeal 2013 should be returned by Friday 15th November. Final monies should be accompanied by the Wings Appeal financial forms including the blue form (WA5) which was sent out to Wings Appeal Organisers in their Summer Newsletter. If your Branch pays Wings Appeal monies by BACS transfer please note the account details are Sort Code 30-00-02, Account number 04065404. When paying via this method please put the reference on the transfer in the format of '*Branch Name Wings*' and send your paperwork to CHQ. If you have any questions, please contact the Wings Appeal team on 0116 268 8758 / 8757.

13. PERFORMANCE BY THE CENTRAL BAND OF THE ROYAL AIR FORCE

Celebrating 70 years of the Royal Air Forces Association, our Mid-Somerset Branch wishes to announce a performance by the Central Band of the Royal Air Force, by kind permission of the Air Force Board, in the Concert Hall at Millfield School on Tuesday 17 December 2013 at 7.30pm. Tickets are priced at £14 and are available from the Millfield School Ticket Office on 01458 444320. The Bar opens at 6.30pm and Concert hall at 7pm.

14. DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Wiltshire Region Meeting at Swindon Branch Club (1pm) – 5 October 2013.
 Devon Region Meeting at Plymouth Branch (2.30pm) – 19 October 2013.
 Mid Wales Region Meeting at Brecon Branch (2pm) – 19 October.
 Somerset Region Meeting at Weston-super-Mare Branch Club – 19 October 2013.
 Cornwall Region Meeting at RBL Truro (2pm) – 2 November 2013.
 Devon Region Meeting at Exmouth RAFA (2.30pm) – 16 November 2013.
 Area Council Meeting at Brecon Branch Club – 21 November 2013.
 Northern (Midlands) Region Meeting at Staffs County Council Club (12.15pm) – 27 November 2013.
 North Wales Region Meeting at Llangollen Branch (2pm) – 30 November 2013.
 East Glamorgan & Gwent Region Meeting at Barry Branch (2pm) – 7 December 2013.
 Devon Region AGM at Dawlish Branch Club (2.30pm) – 1 February 2014.
 Northern (Midlands) Region AGM at Staff County Council Club (12.15pm) – 26 February 2014.
 Somerset Region AGM at Taunton Deane Branch Club – 1 March 2014.
 Mid Wales Region Meeting at Towyn & Aberdovey Branch – 22 March 2014.
 North Wales Region Meeting at Anglesey Branch (2pm) – 12 April 2014.
 Somerset Region Meeting at Taunton Deane Branch Club – 5 July 2014.

Paul Baker – Area Director

Never laugh at anyone's dreams. People who don't have dreams don't have much.

Enclosures:

1. Birmingham International Military Tattoo Poster.
2. RAFA Concert Band September/October Newsletter.

The 2013 **BIRMINGHAM International TATTOO**

Experience the Pageantry and Spectacle of the

Massed International Bands

The Band of the Royal Air Force

(celebrating 70 years of the RAF Association)

The Band & Drill Contingent of the King's Guard (Norway)

The Royal Band of the Belgium Navy

The Slovenian Services Band, Maribor District Slovenia

The Air Training Corps National Band

The National Youth Marching Band

Exciting Displays

Royal Air Force Cosford Queen's Colour

Tri-Services Field Gun Competition

Massed Parade of Standards

Blue Falcons Gymnastic Display Team

Racing Dogs 'Flyball' Competition

Air Training Corps 70th Anniversary Display

Scouts Special Anniversary Display

United Kingdom Disco Display Team

Birmingham Tattoo Town Crier

FEATURING THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY SPECTACULAR GRAND FINALE

Special guests British Tenor Tim Pitman and UK singing sensation Rebecca Robinson join all the performers for a spectacular finale

the nia **The NIA**
birmingham **Birmingham**

Saturday 30th November 2013 at 6pm
Sunday 1st December 2013 at 2pm



RAF Association Ticket Hotline

0116 268 8785

RAF Association members can purchase tickets for just £15, with a donation going to the Wings Appeal. Call the ticket hotline to take advantage of this great offer and ensure that you don't miss out as there are a limited number of these tickets available.

More information at www.birminghamtattoo.co.uk

Sept/Oct 2013



To all our Colleagues & Friends,

Once again September and October have been busy times for the Band, with many requests for music support and they are still coming in! We welcome new players to the band Malcolm, Phillip and Sarah, Michael, Hayley, Di, Anne, Tim, Patrick & Phil.

Sat 10 Aug –RNLI Launch on the Pier- with BBC TV Presenter **Ali Vowles**.

Sun 11 Aug-Grove Park- Our only appearance this year because of band commitments and well received by the audience. With the feedback comments agreeing we gave “nice entertaining music” and “being entertained always assured from a well respected Band”.

Sat 17 Aug- 999 Services on the Beach lawns-18 piece band on the day.

Sat 7 Sep–Joint Concert in Blakehay- with St John Avon County Band.

Wed 11 Sep- Piazza Concert Abbey Wood- annual lunchtime concert at Filton. 14th year!

Thu 12 Sep-Military Dinner Ashton Court- Battle of Britain Dinner over 147 diners including RAF and Navy Personnel, MPs & ‘Sirs’. Applause after every piece played, I think they liked us?

Sat 14 Sep-Somerset Military Tattoo- an interesting day at the Race Course with Military Wives; Prince of Wales; Rifles and Wessex Pipe Band plus other Service acts. Band on stage, just!

Pictured Below; RNLI Launch, Grove Park, 999 Services, Blakehay & Tattoo.



BAND WELFARE-

Dave & Ian have had successful operations & both are on the mend. Bert & Jim have had hospital app's hope they feel better soon.

BAND BOX REPORT–

The Band Stall is always at our concerts. The Band CD ‘At Your Request’ continues to sell well, priced **£6.99 each**.

FUTURE ENGAGEMENTS 2013

Sat 5 Oct – Music from the Movies Concert - Blakehay Theatre, WsM

Sat 19 Oct- Band 15th Anniversary Dinner – Winter Gardens, WsM

Thu 24 Oct- Small Band-Trafalgar Dinner Night – Plymouth

Sat 23 Nov- Rotary Christmas Fayre – Winter Gardens WsM

Sun 24 Nov- Christmas Concert – Blakehay Theatre 3pm

Sat/Sun 30 Nov/1st Dec – NIA Birmingham Tattoo

Look forward to seeing you at one of our **2013** Concerts.