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ROYAL AIR FORCES ASSOCIATION GLOBAL BRANCH 1370

NEWSLETTER



**Sir John
Baker
Trophy
winners
2022**



Registered Charity 1195405 (England & Wales)

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The Editor & Chairman after
Andy's Funeral Service.

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<https://rafa.org.uk/>

HAVE



**LOGGED IN TO THE
RAFA PORTAL YET?**

Why not?

**Do it NOW before
you forget**

Disclaimer - The views and opinions expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the RAFA Global Branch, the Newsletter Editor, Branch Committee or membership and therefore should not be construed as such.

FROM THE EDITORS DESK
(Actually the Snug in the Rat and Trap)

Once again I have broken the cardinal rule of the Royal Air Force, “Never Volunteer”. However I do have an excuse, I was “Voluntold” by Mr. Mullis that I should consider myself very lucky to have been offered the job !!!

I will do my best to uphold the tradition set by our illustrious and creative Chairman (his words, not mine), and endeavour to produce a publication worthy of the best RAFA Branch. There may be a few small changes to the layout and content and if anyone has any ideas on how to improve it, keep them to yourself.

I have duplicated several pages from the last Newsletter so that everyone is aware of the important dates in the coming 12 months, I have, however, omitted the Chairman’s birthday because he will remind us all on the Facebook page about 6 weeks beforehand!!!!

This issue is published a day early due to some of us being on a visit to Coltishall.

Finally, to repeat the plea from Steve Mullis. This is your Newsletter and it is incumbent on you the members, to contribute stories, memories and anecdotes. These can be sent to me using the email address on Page 2. I look forward to an overflowing inbox.

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/rafaglobalbranch1370/>

If everyone signs up to the above website, we can raise even more money for the Branch and prove to all the other branches that Global 1370 is the BEST in the RAFA family.

AGM 2024

AGM 2024 is going to be held at: **RAF CONINGSBY** on the dates of **29th February 2024 to 3rd March 2024**.

The hotel is the Southview Park Hotel, Skegness, which is part of the Parkdean Holiday Resorts. (www.southviewparkhotel.co.uk)

They are able offer us a special price for early booking with prices from £130 to £250 for 2 nights based on 2 people including breakfast through to £195 to £375 for 3 nights based on 2 people including breakfast depending on the type of accommodation running from twin, double, king size, superior twin, superior double through to a suite.

There are also 3 disabled twin rooms available at £150 for 2 nights and £225 for 3 nights.

There is no discount for single bookings unfortunately but then again there isn't when one books at a Premier Inn.

Possibly the biggest problem is that the company and indeed the hotel do **NOT** offer a cancellation policy and the cost of the stay must be paid at the time of booking.

MOST IMPORTANT. MOST IMPORTANT. MOST IMPORTANT

Please **DO NOT** attempt to try and book any accommodation via their website or booking.com as the dates we require are not currently on there. The details for booking your accommodation at the Southview Park Hotel, Skegness, Lincolnshire, PE25 2LA are as follows:

01754 896060 and select option 5

Now you should get to talk to a human being!!!

Booking for the RAFA weekend Feb 2024

Dates 29th Feb - 3rd March 2024

Remember to state if you are booking for 2 or 3 nights

Type of room you want to book

They will require your name, address, telephone number & email address

Payment card details

Check-in is from 16.00 hrs but "could" be earlier if your room is ready.

PLEASE remember that the cost of the stay must be paid at the time of booking.

I will also be adding an event linked to our Facebook page, please use it.

Please let The Chairman know how many people, how many nights and what type of room when you have booked.

The provisional agenda is on the next page!!!

AGM 2024 @ RAF Coningsby
THURSDAY 29th February 2024 – SUNDAY 3rd March 2024
Provisional AGM Weekend Itinerary

- 1. THURSDAY 29th February 15.00 hrs** onwards. Check into hotel (Southview Park Hotel, Skegness, Lincolnshire, PE25 2LA)
- 2. THURSDAY 29th February 20.00 hrs** Meet & greet at Southview Park Hotel. A chance for branch members to meet RAFALO's etc from RAF Coningsby & from RAFA Coningsby and District, Mablethorpe/Sutton & Boston branches.
- 3. FRIDAY 1st March 07.00 hrs - 08.45 hrs** Breakfast at hotel. Transfer from hotel to RAF Coningsby, Baxter Close, Coningsby, Lincoln LN4 4TG. Own transport (25 miles, Approx 40 mins.)
- 4. FRIDAY 1st March 2024 0930 –** Arrive at the main gate, park cars in the main car park. 10.00 – Tea and coffee in the BBMF tea bar or similar 10.30 – Group splits into 2 One group tour BBMF, the other visits the Typhoon Display Team and one Typhoon Squadron. 12.00 – 12.15 – Official Photo in front of the Typhoon or similar. 12.15 – Travel to Officers Mess for lunch. 12.30 -13.30 – Officers Mess lunch, to be paid individually at time of purchase. 13.30-15.00 – Groups switch over. One group tour BBMF, the other visits the Typhoon Display Team and one Typhoon Squadron. 15.15 - 16.15 – AGM. (If AGM not being held on RAF Coningsby, then AGM in hotel @ 20.00 hrs 16.30 – Depart to the hotel.
- 5. FRIDAY 1st March 20.00 hrs** Evening meal in hotel If AGM not able to be held on RAF Coningsby, then AGM in Trafalgar Suite in hotel (No Charge)
- 6. SATURDAY 2nd March 08.00hrs – 10.00 hrs** Breakfast in hotel
- 7. SATURDAY 2nd March** POSSIBLE CHOICES. Go Karting Global Branch Championship <https://kartworldextremeleisure.co.uk/> Details to follow for anyone interested. OR Visit to Lincolnshire Aviation Heritage Centre @ East Kirby for Just Jane OR Free Time OR Depart hotel for home.
- 8. SUNDAY 3rd March 12.00 hrs** Depart hotel for home.

WE SAY GOODBYE TO ANDY THOMPSON

The 4th August dawned bright and clear as a large group of mourners made their way to Skipton Crematorium to pay their last respects to Andrew, a stalwart of Global Branch. Representing the Branch along with the Chairman was Dave Routledge and Clive Simpson who was carrying the RAFA Standard. Skipton Branch of the Royal British Legion Standard together with Duke of Wellington Regimental Association Standard were also in attendance. The service, although quite short, was very moving with tributes being paid by Andy's wife Irene, his brother and an old work colleague. Irene's tribute in particular was quite poignant as she described how they met, fell in love and married. I'm sure that she will be welcomed and supported by the Branch members when she feels the time is right for her to resume her duties as events co-ordinator. At the conclusion of the service "For the Fallen" was said by George Martin, Chairman of Skipton Royal British Legion, Standards were dipped and a bugler played the Last Post and Reveille.

Following the service we went to The Three Links Club in Skipton town centre for refreshments and to reflect on the mornings event.



SOCIAL EVENTS CALENDAR

BY DAVE ROUTLEDGE

Hi all... I have put together a range of visits for 2023/4... I've consciously spread them geographically to encourage more of our members to attend. Hopefully getting the dates out in this way, will help with attendance levels.

2023

11th Nov 23 Remembrance Sunday (speak to Chairman if you'd like to attend)

2024

29th Feb - 3 March AGM RAF Coningsby

27th April RAF Cosford museum

12th June Newark Air Museum

29th June Armed Forces Day (not a branch visit, just incase anyone wishes to host an event locally)

13th August Royal Armouries Leeds

28 September National Arboretum, by which time the branch stone should be in place.

10th November Remembrance Sunday

Members Ramblings, Notices & Requests



C'mon guys and gals,

let's fill this page next issue



VETERANS SERVICES

Op FORTITUDE

Op FORTITUDE is the pathway for veterans at risk of or experiencing homelessness into supported housing or to keep them in their current home.

Op FORTITUDE is funded by The Armed Forces Covenant Fund to deliver a centralised referral pathway into veteran supported housing. The remit of the team will be to work with individual veterans at risk of or experiencing homelessness, supporting them either into suitable accommodation, or supporting them to maintain their current home.

The approach involves creating a pathway from the veteran at risk of or experiencing homelessness to veteran supported housing or organisation that can support them to keep their current home and avoid becoming homeless in the first place, as well as other unsupported veteran housing. At the centre of this is a team dedicated to making that link.

The underlying issue causing the person to be at risk of homelessness could be one or more of a range of issues, including income maximisation, employment, mental or physical health, substance misuse etc.

The Veteran Charity Sector has a rich history of providing support to veterans in these and many other areas and have a vital role to play in preventing veteran homelessness. **Op FORTITUDE** will also prove to be a critical resource for these agencies and any veterans they are working with who may be homeless.

The **Op FORTITUDE** Pathway will open for referrals on 3 July 2023, with an initial focus on tenancy sustainment and high-risk referrals and will be fully operation by the date at which the **Op FORTITUDE** funded supported housing goes live on 1 September 2023.

Op FORTITUDE Service Design Overview

Referrals can come from a range of sources, including, but not limited to, the public, the homelessness sector, the veteran charity sector, Local Authorities, His Majesties Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS), The Defence Transition Service (DTS), or directly from the veteran themselves.

Referrals can be made through a dedicated web page, and telephone access, with referrals going to the team that will facilitate referrals.

On receipt of the referral, we will assess:

- The immediate safety of the veteran
- Their current housing situation and location
- Areas, levels, and complexity of need

From an assessment of need, and led by the veteran's own choice, we will match the veteran with the appropriate supported housing or engage in tenancy sustainment activities to prevent homelessness occurring.

As mentioned, moving into supported accommodation may not always represent the best outcome, and we will need to consider wider implications, such as the impact of losing a local connection to the area they are currently residing in.

From an assessment of need, and led by the veteran's own choice, there could be a range of supportive interventions taken, including, but not limited to:

- Tenancy sustainment, where is suitable and safe accommodation, through Local Authority Homelessness Reduction Act Duties
- Referral to Veteran Charity Sector Organisations to provide additional support
- Referral to veteran supported

Referrals can be made to **Op FORTITUDE**:

By our online referral form <https://riv.org.uk/opfortitude>

Or by Freephone 0800 9520774

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Veterans Unclaimed Armed Forces Pensions

A CALL TO ACTION!

At least **16,500** unclaimed Armed Forces pension benefits*

Between June 2020 and May 2022 over **4,000** preserved Armed Forces pensions went unclaimed

Anyone serving after April 1975 now aged 60 or over could have an Armed Forces pension if they served for 2 years or more

The pension is **NOT** paid automatically – Veterans must apply to Veterans UK using AFPS Form 8 or can call **0800 085 3600** for further information

FIND OUT MORE

*Source: MoD APFS Annual Report July 2022

Welcome from the Veterans in Defence (Air) Network Champion:

“I’m delighted to become the senior champion of the Veteran in Defence (Air) group. A very significant number of Service personnel continue to work in Defence in their second and subsequent careers, whereby ensuring that we can continue to support them through a more formal network, will help in further strengthening the Whole Force across the Royal Air Force. Crucially, this includes both ex-Service personnel now working in the Civil Service, in addition to those working with partners in the private sector. The Veteran in Defence (Air) team and I hope to offer an active, supportive, social, and informative group that brings together Veterans working across the Air environment.”

Air Vice-Marshal Mark Flewin, Air Officer Commanding No 1 Group

A New Organisation for All Veterans Working within the RAF

Veterans in Defence (Air) is a new network that is already connecting veterans and reserves working across the Air domain. If you are a veteran working in support of the RAF, the network would love you to join as a full member.

The Veterans in Defence (Air) Network is an independent sub-group of the Main MOD Veterans in Defence Network. The network is formed of veterans (irrespective of what Service previously served in), and has been created to unite, support, and inform our country’s former service personnel. Founded by veterans, the network is designed to provide an opportunity where people can connect with others who have shared lived experiences, access resources, and find support in their roles - should they seek it.

So, what sets our network apart from other veteran organisations? First, our focus is firmly on creating a system of unity across the Veteran Network in the RAF - meaning that no matter where someone is in the UK or overseas, they can access our network and find friends formed from a common bond. Furthermore, our emphasis is on building a community that is inclusive and supportive of all veterans, regardless of their branch of service, rank, or background. Finally, we are committed to growing a mentoring, coaching and peer support group; dedicated to uniting and supporting veterans beyond their military service.

If you are a veteran looking to find old friends or make new ones, seeking support in your job, or you simply want to get involved and help us build a better future for our fellow veterans, we encourage you to get in touch with the Veterans in Defence (Air) Network today.

WORTH THINKING ABOUT IF YOU HAVE CREAKY HIPS AND DODGY KNEES.

As a veteran, you can ask for a referral to a specialist Orthopaedic clinic at The Robert Jones & Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital, Oswestry, Shropshire, SY10 7AG. There is a specific Veterans Clinic run by Lt. Col. Carl Meyer, an Army Reserve consultant surgeon. Lt. Col. Meyer specialises in hips and knees. If you don't mind a few days away from family, I can assure you it's more like an hotel than a hospital and the food is really good. Having a long wait ahead of you at your local GP and hospital, this might be the way to go to achieve a much quicker result.

What is it? A service for military veterans to have their hip or knee arthritis assessed and, if appropriate, have joint replacement surgery and is led by Lt. Col. Carl Meyer, Military Consultant Hip and Knee Arthroplasty Surgeon at Oswestry's specialist orthopaedic hospital. Lt Col. Meyer is an Army Reserve officer who has been on three tours to Afghanistan and one to Iraq. He is an Orthopaedic Trauma Surgeon with 16 Medical Regiment, 202 (Midlands) Field Hospital.

Who is it for? Anyone who has been in regular military service, including national service.

Where is it? The Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (RJAH), Oswestry, Shropshire SY10 7AG ,and is a centre of orthopaedic excellence specialising in lower limb replacement surgery.

When is it? Outpatient clinics are held fortnightly at RJAH. (Normally on a Wednesday)

How do I obtain an NHS referral ? Through your GP - Ask to be referred to the VETERANS' HIP & KNEE SURGERY SERVICE at Oswestry - And ask your GP to make a named referral to Lt. Col. Meyer. Contact information Email: rebecca.ann.jones@rjah.nhs.uk Fax: 01691 404067 Tel: 01691 404344.

Your records at your GP needs to be annotated with the NHS issued codes for military/veterans, take photocopies of your red discharge book, because he will ask for proof that you're a veteran.

Military medical codes

13J1. Military veteran

13JY. History relating to Military Service

13qo. History relating to Army Service

13q1. History relating to RN Service

13q2. History relating to RAF Service

13q3. Served in the Armed Forces

Lt. Col. Meyer wants to "do" more operations for veterans, but he has two problems, 1. Finding the patients, he knows that they are out here, it's letting us know he's there for us, and 2. Getting the money from the NHS, but, the more ops he does the more money they will give him, therefore the more ops he can do.

CLOSURE OF RAF ST. ATHAN

Gerwyn Thomas

Friday 4th August saw the final parade by members of RAF St Athan in the nearby town of Llantwit Major. The station was granted the Freedom of the Vale of Glamorgan in 1974 and Llantwit Major was honoured to host the Freedom ceremony. It was a poignant occasion that this last parade heralded the leaving of the RAF from the home aircraft maintenance and a variety of training for many years.

The maintenance side of the station (West Camp) was ceded to the Special Forces Support Group a number of years ago (now renamed to Churchill Lines). There is just one course of trainees going through the training side (East Camp) at present, after which training will move to RAF Cosford and RAF Lyneham.

A large part of East Camp has been sold to a consortium (Bro Tathan) with a view to building a business park encompassing both East Camp and the huge Picketston site. It is hoped that the Bro Tathan project will attract an influx of people to replace the many hundreds of RAF and civilian personnel lost to the area in the last two decades.

During the parade the main road through the town was filled with people; well-wishers, former RAF St Athan employees and the many veterans who have settled in the area formed the ranks of spectators. The Band of the RAF, in full gold-trimmed dress uniform, led a flight of the last trainees through the town, passing the war memorial in the town centre to proceed to the main street where The Lord Lieutenant of Glamorgan, the Llantwit Major Town Mayor, Air Officer Wales and OC 4 S of TT took the salute. The whole entourage then went on to what is left of RAF St Athan for a formal ceremony during which the Lord Lieutenant inspected the troops.

Comments on Llantwit Major's social media sites overwhelmingly agree that the demise of the station is a very sad event and both friendships and rivalries will be fondly remembered.



Chairman's Ramblings

For the first time in absolute ages I can sit down and actually do my ramblings at my own pace without the editor giving me earache. Ha, Ha!!!! In my dreams!!!

Well, the last few months have been ones I do not wish to repeat for a long, long time. Firstly, we lost John Lawrence, who had been a member of the branch for just about a year, during which time he was fighting Oesophageal cancer. Despite a long hard fight it was a fight he was not going to win. A joker to the bitter end, his funeral was a revelation of the man and history. Then in July, Andrew Thomson, our Branch Secretary, lost a short fight with aggressive prostate cancer. Andrew was a stalwart of the branch & the committee. His passing will be felt by the branch for a longtime to come. Rest in Peace Andrew and John. Our thoughts are with Irene & Lauren. Dave Routledge, Clive Simpson & I, represented the branch & indeed RAFA at the funerals of our members & friends.

Looking forward to the future, as we always must do, the branch still seems to go from strength to strength. As well as keeping our membership at over 600, just, we have been fortunate that Dave Routledge has stepped up to the plate to help cover for Irene Thomson as far as our social events are concerned and has laid out a series of visits covering the next 12 months starting with our first ever visit to the old RAF Coltishall by the time you are reading this. Check out his list of forth coming visits and come and join us for a couple of days away in convivial company.

Gerwyn Thomas has picked up the mantle of Branch Secretary until the next AGM, speaking of which is being held at RAF Coningsby over the weekend of 29th Feb 2024. With currently 50+ members attending this looks like being the biggest & hopefully the best yet. So, there is still time to get yourself, plus wife or partner, on the list to join us. Just checkout the Events section of the Facebook page or email the Chairman for details now.

Before that of course we have this year's Wing Appeal Week, which will of course be completed by the time you are reading this. BUT now is the time to look to the future & put into place what YOU could do to add to the branch Wings Appeal total for 2024. Graham Croft is always available to assist you in any plans you might have but there is no point in leaving it to the last minute to start planning.

Also coming up fast is this year's Remembrance Day parade in Whitehall, London where 20+ branch members will be marching in the Global Branch contingent, plus of course with many of you representing the branch around the country & indeed world.

LETS 'AVE A LARF

Growing old is mandatory, growing up is optional.

RAF Form 700

Those of us who have worked on aircraft will be aware that after every flight, pilots fill out a form RAF Form 700, called a "gripe sheet" which tells mechanics about problems with the aircraft. The mechanics correct the problems; document their repairs on the form, and then pilots review the gripe sheets before the next flight. Never let it be said that ground crews lack a sense of humour. Here are some actual maintenance complaints submitted by pilots (marked with a **P**) and the solutions recorded (marked with an **S**) by maintenance engineers.

P: Mouse in cockpit.

S: Cat installed.

P: Left inside main tyre almost needs replacement.

S: Almost replaced left inside main tyre.

P: Test flight OK, except auto-land very rough.

S: Auto-land not installed on this aircraft

P: Something loose in cockpit

S: Something tightened in cockpit

P: Dead bugs on windshield.

S: Live bugs on back-order.

P: Autopilot in altitude-hold mode produces a 200 feet per minute descent.

S: Cannot reproduce fault on ground

P : Evidence of leak on right main landing gear.

S: Evidence removed.

P: No. 2 Propeller seeping prop fluid

S: No. 2 Propeller seepage normal
1,3 and 4 propellers lack normal seepage

P: DME volume unbelievably loud.

S: DME volume set to a more believable level.

P: Friction locks cause throttle levers to stick.

S: That's what they're for

P: IFF inoperative.

S: IFF always inoperative in OFF mode.

P: Suspected crack in windshield.

S: Suspect you're right.

P: Number 3 engine missing.

S: Engine found on starboard wing after brief search.

P: Aircraft handles funny.

S: Aircraft warned to straighten up, fly right, and be serious

P: Target radar hums.

S: Reprogrammed target radar with lyrics

And the best one for last.

P: Noise coming from under instrument panel. Sounds like a midget pounding on something with a hammer.

S: Took hammer away from midget.

"Count your life by smiles, not tears, count your age by friends, not years, and remember we do not quit playing because we grow old....we grow old because we quit playing"

That's all for now, folks. I hope, as the new Editor, I have managed to produce a newsletter that you have enjoyed.