

Wales, Midland & South Western Area

Newsletter

OCTOBER 2014

THIS NEWSLETTER SHOULD BE DISPLAYED FOR THE USE OF ALL MEMBERS

1. MEMBERSHIP

Whole Area Membership figures as at 30 September 2014 were as follows:

Annual	Life	Full Associate	Total	New Ann/Ass 14	Losses Ann/Life/Ass 14
6544	5435	2552	14531	737	1103

Attracting new members is never an easy task, let alone finding individuals that are happy to take on Branch responsibilities. It is really heartening therefore to see that our Area membership numbers are returning steadily and that we have only lost one Branch in 2014. Thank you again for your hard work.

- Area Membership as at 31 December 2013 – 15,168.
- Area Membership as at 30 September 2014 - 14,531.
- Minimum target by 31 December 2014 - 14,788.
- Still required to achieve minimum target - 257.

2. WE WILL REMEMBER THEM

It is with great sadness we report the passing of Mr William (Bill) Parkes, who for many years served as the Wolverhampton & District Branch Chairman and latterly President. Following his RAF service, Bill joined the Association in 1947 and served the Branch and wider Association with distinction, receiving a Presidential Certificate in 2009. Bill will be sadly missed and our thoughts are with his family at this time.

3. GRAND DRAW – A QUICK UPDATE!

Just a quick update to let you know that we have recently distributed Grand Draw ticket packs into Saga and CSMA magazine to test the response rate to this media. 50,000 ticket packs were inserted into each magazine in addition to 50,000 leaflets promoting the new online grand draw ticket facility. If you haven't seen the new online system check it out at <http://www.rafa.org.uk/Get-involved/Wings-Lotto/Grand-Draw-2014>.

We have also sent out around 20,000 ticket packs to our warm supporters – ie people who have supported Grand Draw in the past who are not members of the Association and a further 20,000 persons have been mailshotted from a purchased list. Also just a note to let you know that if you need Grand Draw tickets or promotional posters please get in contact with Neil Everall (0116-268-8756) – neil.everall@rafa.org.uk.

4. RAFA CALENDAR GIRLS

I've received the following information from the RAFA Calendar Girls that you may find useful as another fundraising mechanism (or indeed as Christmas pressies!):

I am contacting you on behalf of the 'RAFA Calendar Girls' to introduce the work that we have been doing on behalf of the Association since October 2012. We are a group of RAF wives and Serving Members who have produced a 2015 charity calendar to support the Association. Our calendar is 1940's inspired and features many 'women of the war', as we wanted our final product to be family friendly our calendar does not contain any nudity. Alongside bringing together the props, costumes and locations to make our calendar both interesting and authentic we have run a number of fundraising events over the past 2 years. The aim of our events initially was to raise the money necessary to produce and print the calendar. Now that the calendar is completed we have continued to raise fund to allow us to add to the final amount that we will give to the charity.

I wondered if you would be able to support us by forwarding this e-mail out to the branches within your area as a way of introducing us and what we are doing, as well as seeing if there are any members who would be prepared to help us to hit our final sales target which is 5,000 calendars. As we are now entering the traditional calendar sales period we wondered if any of your branches would be prepared to support our project by taking some on a 'sale or return' basis? We would arrange to send the calendars out either to a regional office or local branch and we could organise with them how to collect any cash raised from sales and any leftover calendars. If you would like to see some of the types of images that appear in the calendar please visit our website here: <http://www.rafacalendargirls.org.uk/about-us.html>. Additionally if any individuals would like to place a bulk orders to save on postage and packing this can easily be done. If you have any questions or would like any further details on our project, please contact me via return e-mail. Thank you very much for your time and I hope to hear from you soon. Kind regards, Mrs Elizabeth Parsons, Project Manager, RAFA Calendar Girls, www.rafacalendargirls.org.uk.

5. DOOR 2 DOOR CAMPAIGN

You may be interested to know how the Door 2 Door fundraising campaign has fared in the south of our area over the summer period. A big thank you to those local Branches who have helped support this activity.

- There was a total of 844 new supporters recruited from the following post codes:
242 from BH post code
151 from DT post code
406 from SO post code
45 from SP post code
- This equates to 43.6 % of new supporters across the whole project and the average gift per month is £9.42 with 71 % who have signed up for Gift aid. There were 14 complaints generated from this area which is 37.8 % of the total complaints made. The total number of new supporters raised by the initiative from all areas was 1933. Activity has now ceased and a decision will be taken as to whether this project is repeated.

6. INFORMATION FOR ALL BRANCH CLUBS

All Branch/Club Committee members are to be aware that as of 13 December this year, any organisation serving food must provide information on allergenic ingredients either in writing or verbally. The information should be "easily accessible, in a conspicuous place, easily visible and clearly legible" to customers, whether or not they have a food allergy. If the information is included on a menu it must include information for every item that contains any of the following 14 allergens: Gluten; Crustaceans; Eggs; Fish; Peanuts; Soybeans; Milk; Nuts; Celery; Mustard; Sesame; Sulphur Dioxide and Sulphite; Lupin and Molluscs. For a buffet, allergen information should be provided for each food separately.

If the decision is taken not to include the information on the menu, other options include a chalkboard, information pack or advice given verbally by staff. However, if staff are responsible for giving the information, it must be signposted, verifiable in some way and consistently given and all staff should receive training on handling allergy information. To help identify allergens, clubs are advised to make sure kitchen staff use the same recipes every time, keep a copy of the ingredient information on labels of pre-packed food; keep ingredients in original containers where possible and file a copy of the labelling information.

For further guidance regarding Allergen Loose Foods and free online training courses in allergy training then please visit the following webpage: <http://allergytraining.food.gov.uk/english/dashboard/>. Also, don't forget that beer and wine are classed as 'food' and as such are covered by this change in legislation. If there are any questions or you need further guidance, then please contact the RAF Association National Clubs Advisor, Brian Fare on 0116 268 8762 or brian.fare@rafa.org.uk.

7. RAFALO UPDATE – OCTOBER 2014

This is the latest edition of the RAFALO Update, which includes information on changes to the Service.

SENIOR APPOINTMENTS LIST

Air Commodore P Lyall OBE to be Head British Defence Staff (France) and Defence Attaché Paris with effect from 30 September 2014 in succession to Air Commodore J D Maas CBE.

Air Commodore J D Maas CBE to be Senior Military Advisor to the Crisis Management & Planning Directorate, European External Action Service, Brussels with effect from 3 October 2014 in succession to Brigadier General W Huhn.

Air Commodore N W Laird CBE to be Head Doctrine (Air & Space) at the Development, Concepts & Doctrine Centre with effect from 24 November 2014 in succession to Air Commodore I D Teakle DSO OBE, whose appointment as Deputy Commander and Chief of Staff NATO Airborne Early Warning & Control Force Command has previously been announced.

Group Captain D G Cooper to be promoted Acting Air Commodore and to be Director Air Operations, Headquarters ISAF Joint Command, Kabul, Afghanistan with effect from 9 November 2014 in succession to Air Commodore D J E Cooper CBE, whose appointment as Joint Force Air Component Commander, Headquarters Air Command has previously been announced.

GENERAL

New Red Arrows Team Leader. Squadron Leader David Montenegro will fly as Red 1 in the 2015 season. The 38-year-old succeeds Squadron Leader Jim Turner, whose three-year tour as Team Leader finishes at the end of the current season. Having flown as a team pilot between 2009 and 2011, this will be Sqn Ldr Montenegro's second term with the Squadron, which is one of the world's premier aerobatic teams. Sqn Ldr Montenegro said he was relishing the chance to lead the team over the next three years and, once again, represent the Royal Air Force and United Kingdom both at home and overseas. Sqn Ldr Montenegro was educated at Alleyn's School, Dulwich, where he was a member of the Combined Cadet Force and was awarded an RAF Flying Scholarship in his final year. He went on to gain a BA in politics and theology at the University of Manchester.



Disbandment of No 78 Sqn – RAF Benson. No 78 Sqn is one of two Front-Line Merlin helicopter sqns that deliver day and night support helicopter lift to ground troops and contingency lift capabilities to UK Defence. The Sqn will disband on 30 Sep 14 and is a part of the planned transition of the Merlin helicopter to Royal Navy's Commando Helicopter Force. It is part of the

wider change programme in the Joint Helicopter Command's structure that includes the upgrade of the Puma fleet and the growth of the Chinook Force.

No 78 Sqn's personnel will be re-assigned within the Services, with most Pilots and Weapon System Operators remaining in the Joint Helicopter Command. The majority of ground trades will stay at RAF Benson in support of Merlin operations, or will retrain on the RAF's Puma or Chinook helicopters. The transition of the Merlin to the Royal Navy will continue until autumn 2016 when the final aircraft and Royal Navy crews will relocate to RNAS Yeovilton with the Commando Helicopter Force.

No 78 Sqn formed in November 1916 and has an illustrious history that has seen them operate during World Wars I and II as well as being the only RAF squadron permanently based in the Falkland Islands for almost two decades.

EQUIPMENT AND MANPOWER

Airbus A400 M. The Air Force Board Standing Committee has confirmed that Number LXX Squadron will stand up as the first operational Airbus A400M Atlas Squadron, to be based at RAF Brize Norton.

LXX Squadron will be stood up in an administrative and engineering support capacity on 1 October 2014, which will allow sufficient time for the Squadron to be configured and manned appropriately prior to formally accepting air transport tasking from Summer 2015.

The first Atlas will arrive at RAF Brize Norton in late 2014. The aircraft will be operated initially by XXIV Squadron, the Fixed Wing Air Mobility Operational Conversion Unit, which is responsible for conducting training for Atlas aircrew and engineering personnel. Additionally 206(R) Squadron will test and evaluate Atlas as part of the aircraft's capability development process.

22 Atlas aircraft are scheduled for delivery in total. Although the aircraft will employ its strategic reach and impressive payload capacity by operating initially in the strategic air transport role, Atlas is primarily a tactical airlifter. Its tactical capabilities will be developed over the next 8 years as it assumes the roles performed by the C-130J Hercules prior to the C-130's planned retirement from RAF service in 2022.

Storm Shadow. The RAF's Typhoons will be fitted with the Storm Shadow long-range precision attack missile under a £120 million contract to enhance its combat capabilities. The contract was signed between the NATO Eurofighter Tornado Management Agency and the four Eurofighter partner nations, including the UK, at Farnborough. The contract was signed between the NATO Eurofighter Tornado Management Agency and the four Eurofighter partner nations, including the UK, at Farnborough. RAF Typhoons. Also announced at Farnborough was that the Typhoon has passed 100,000 flying hours.

8. RAF ASSOCIATION CONCERT BAND – LATEST UPDATE

Our Concert Band has been busy as ever promoting the Association through its excellent live music. Please take a look at their latest activity on the enclosed update where you'll see an interesting list of upcoming performances.

9. BRANCH SECRETARY CONTACT INFORMATION

Area Council has recently approved the release of Branch Secretary contact information in the form of a name, phone number and e-mail address where applicable. You will find this as an enclosure to the Newsletter. Please understand, this information is taken from our database which is informed by your F1056A submissions. If there are any inaccuracies - please get in touch with Debbie Byam,, Area HQ Administrator.

10. RAF ST MAWGAN BRANCH - A REPORT BY FLIGHT SERGEANT ALAN GOUDGE

Having joined the RAF in 1977 as a supplier I have been involved for many years with the RAF Association, the majority of the time in the back ground. My father Bryan Goudge was Chairman of the Richmondshire Branch for many years in the late 1960s early 1970s, which held its meetings in the Sgts Mess at RAF Catterick. Though the Branch had its meetings on the RAF Station, it was not directly linked with the Unit. So, to be an active Committee member of the RAF St Mawgan Branch (as Secretary) it feels that our association as a family has gone round full circle and to which I am proud to serve.

RAF St Mawgan Branch did not just happen, it was an idea discussed between the current Cornwall County Regional Chairman, Mr Lance Smale and Wg Cdr Retd Steve Richards. Who in consultation with the Station Commander at the time - Wg Cdr Phillip Lamb - agreed that there was merit in having a Branch directly linked with a RAF Unit. With the Newquay Branch closing some years earlier, there were a significant number of members within the TR7/8 post code area that potentially would support the new Branch. In a very short period of time, with support from the Area Director, Paul Baker, the Branch was opened in January 2013 by Air Marshal Sir Dusty Miller, National President.



The evening saw over 90 people attend from past members of the Newquay Branch and members from across the County of Cornwall.

Without the support of the Station Commander Wg Cdr Phillip Lamb and the executives on the Unit, it would have been very difficult to establish the Branch on Base. Indeed in the early planning it was suggested using the Station Rugby Club which sits on the boundary of the Unit. It was felt that it may not necessary attract new members due to the limited space and cold winter months, so it was ruled out. I as a member of the Mess Committee suggested approaching the PMC and committee to utilise the Anti-Room one evening a month, which was agreed and passed. Since then we meet every 3rd Tuesday where on average we exceed 45 members attending. The success of the new Branch has seen us steadily grow in membership, currently we have 77 ordinary members and 17 associate members. Benefits to our members include use of the Stations Cinema two nights a week, Library for DVD and books, the use of the Gymnasium, tennis courts, 5 aside field and use of the CRL contract catering facilities. However; more importantly is the way we conduct our meetings.

Every month we have something different, whether a speaker giving presentations on numerous topics. We even have had a presentation from Cornwall Advanced Motorists. Quizzes, dances with live entertainment and of course the Traditional Christmas Dinner held in the T E Lawrence Mess which we open to all the County Branches. The day to day committee business is discussed the day prior to the members evening and decisions are sent out by e-mail. However; we do include all members quarterly and prior to the AGM. Monthly raffles by our ardent supporter Mr John Beale are well received raising funds to support the Branch.

Within the first year we attended the Royal Cornwall Show, Trebah Gardens memorial for the 29th US Infantry Battalion, Armed Forces Day in Falmouth, Remembrance Parades across the local area and a high presence in the local towns during Wings week.



Praa Sands September 2013



Trebah Gardens 70th Military Anniversary of the 29th US Infantry Battalion that left for Normandy Landings. and Mr Paul Hedge our Standard Bearer with Mr John Coles Deputy Chairman at the Royal Cornwall Show Wadebridge.



The Branch has developed and grown significantly since January 2013, culminating in a marvellous accolade by being presented with the Presidents Cup at this year's Annual Conference; an achievement we did not expect but so proud to have been recognised. At a recent Branch meeting the Cup was presented to our new Station Commander and President Wg Cdr Guy Bazalgette.

The Branch this year continues to expand its footprint and already has collected the same amount as last year's Wings Appeal with more to come and we anticipate being close to doubling last year's totals. As the Deputy RAFALO for the South West I shall endeavour to assist Vince as much as I can. With RAF St Mawgan the last main RAF Station in the South West I have a large area to cover. In addition I am also the Cornwall County RAFA Secretary and the Chairman of the Royal British Legion Newquay Club, so I do not have a great deal of spare time. We had great support from our previous RAFALO Sgt "Wilky" Wilkinson from RAF Portreath who has now moved on to pastures new as FS Wilkinson of RAF Fylingdales, good luck Wilky on your new post and on a well deserved promotion. If any members are in the area on the 3rd Tuesday of each month, do pop into RAF St Mawgan where you will be made most welcome.

11. NEW - WINGS PORTAL!

Repeat Article. The Wings Appeal team is pleased to announce that the Wings Portal is complete and ready for use. It will enable branch committees to complete their Wings Appeal returns online, saving time and getting the branch welfare rebate back quicker. Full instructions on the use of the system will be available on the portal itself in the form of a video tutorial but in summary:

- One committee member populates the portal with the details of the branch's Wings Appeal return and states whether the branch wishes to claim any expenses or welfare rebate from the monies being submitted.
- The portal then automatically emails another member of the branch committee who logs into the system to check the submission. If the second committee member agrees with the details then they simply click 'Authorise'.
- A Direct Debit authorisation is built into the system so the monies the branch are submitting for the Wings Appeal are collected automatically from the branch account. Any requests for expenses or welfare rebate are paid back to the branch via electronic transfer within 28 days of the submission, with receipts being sent to the branch officials.

All branches are encouraged to register with the portal at their earliest opportunity in order to benefit from the following:

- The ability to fill out Wings returns from home on your PC, Mac or tablet device at a time convenient to committee members.
- The process is simpler with the portal validating and checking the figures as you input them.
- It saves on paperwork and postage as no cheques or paper forms are needed.
- It helps with branch finances as it allows branches to claim for expenses or welfare rebates when submitting Wings monies, rather than waiting until the end of the year.
- It affords better visibility of the branch's Wings Appeal returns as the system allows you to view previous submissions from the current or previous Wings years.

Any members of your branch committee can register with the portal, but the system does require a minimum of two committee members per branch. It is easy to access and register with the Wings Portal. Simply log in to the members area of the RAF Association website at www.rafa.org.uk/Account/logon and choose 'Wings Portal' from the list on the right hand side of the screen.

Wings Appeal paper returns

Not all branch committees will want to submit their Wings returns online. Therefore, the branch Wings Appeal Organiser received a new Wings Returns (WR) pack in their August Wings newsletter. This pack will replace the old Wings Appeal forms which were coded WA1 – WA5. Please do not continue to use these previous 'WA' forms.

The new Wings Returns (WR) pack captures the same information as the previous format but is laid out differently to mirror the layout of the Wings Portal. Instructions on how to fill in the forms are included in the

pack. Please relay this information to the branch committee at your earliest opportunity, especially to those involved in the completion of Wings returns.

Street collection returns

We are legally required to provide each local authority with a statement of the amount raised in their area through street collections within **one month** of the collection taking place. Please submit your street collection returns either via the Wings Portal or by using the new paper WR packs, to be received by the Wings Appeal team at Leicester no later than 2 weeks after the date of your final collection.

Submit Final Wings Returns for 2014

Please have your branch's final Wings monies returned to the Wings Appeal team at Leicester by **Fri 14 November 2014**. This will enable us to process all 2014 income and close your branch's Wings account for the year in preparation for producing the branch's annual Wings statement.

12. DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Area Welfare Seminar – The Helicopter Museum – 2 October 2014.

Area Welfare Seminar – RAF Cosford – 16 October 2014.

East Glamorgan & Gwent Regional Dance at Llandaff & Ely RAFA Club – 17 October 2014.

Mid Wales Region Meeting at Llanidloes (2pm) – 18 October 2014.

Devon Region Meeting at Plymouth Branch HQ (2.30pm) – 25 October 2014.

Northern (Midland) Region Meeting at County Council Club Eastgate Street, Stafford (1215pm) – 29 October 2014.

Cornwall Region Meeting at the Kernow Club, Truro (2pm) – 8 November 2014.

East Glamorgan & Gwent Region Meeting at Penarth Branch (2pm) – 22 November 2014.

Northern (Midland) Region Meeting at County Council Club Eastgate Street, Stafford (1215pm) – 26 November 2014.

North Wales Region Meeting at Llangollen Branch HQ (2pm) – 29 November 2014.

Devon Region AGM at Dawlish RAFA Club (2.30pm) – 7 February 2015.

Area Conference and Reunion at the Derwent Hotel, Torquay – 20/22 March 2015.

Paul Baker - Area Director

Its hard to make a comeback when you haven't been anywhere.

Enclosures:

1. RAFA Concert Band Newsletter.
2. Branch Secretary Contact List.