

Wales, Midland & South Western Area

Newsletter

FEBRUARY 2015

THIS NEWSLETTER SHOULD BE DISPLAYED FOR THE USE OF ALL MEMBERS

1. THE QUEEN'S NEW YEAR HONOURS LIST 2015

We are pleased to announce the following have been awarded National Presidential Certificates in conjunction with The Queen's New Year Honours List 2015:

Mr Colin Campbell	Ayr & Prestwick Branch.
Mr Robert Clements	Norwich Branch.
Mr Leslie Nower	Sandwich & Deal Branch.
Mr Alan Clark	Wantage & District Branch.
Mr John O'Reilly	Trowbridge Branch.
Mr Malcolm Bennett	Aylesford & Malling Branch.

We are also pleased to announce that Mr John Deane from our Dudley Branch was awarded a British Empire Medal, through the civilian route, for his services to the community.

Our congratulations go to all recipients.

2. WITH GREAT SADNESS

It is with great sadness that we report the passing of the following – all great friends and servants of our Area:

- Mr Alan Poole of Shrewsbury & District Branch. Branch Honorary Welfare Officer, Stand Alone Caseworker, former Branch Standard Bearer, former volunteer Storybook Wings Editor, Central and Area Councillor.
- Mr Peter Bull, President, Trowbridge Branch.
- Mr Ken Waite, former RAF Association Wales Area Secretary.
- Sqn Ldr Philip Haward MBE CLJ of the Costa Blanca and Torquay Branches and former Chairman of the South West Area.

3. BRANCH CLOSURES

It is with sadness that we report the formal closure of the following Branches:

Spenn Valley on 31 October 2014.
Streatham/Norbury on 31 December 2014.
The Hague on 5 January 2015.

Cumbernauld on 14 September 2014.
 Ballymena on 15 December 2014.

4. MEMBERSHIP

Whole Area Membership figures as at 30 January 2015 were as follows:

Annual	Life	Full Associate	Total	New Ann/Ass 15	Losses Ann/Life/Ass 15
6725	5320	2696	14741	171	97

Thank you all for your immense efforts during 2014 to find new members and to encourage others back to our Association. As the New Year begins we are in a fairly healthy position but let's make a concerted effort to have 2015 a landmark year in respect of membership recruitment. Opportunities are all around us to encourage and cajole. We continue to strive to get as many members as possible onto direct debit thereby easing the administration at year end.

This bit is important! Area HQ no longer processes membership applications. These must be sent to our colleague at Central Headquarters in Leicester at the following address:

- Mr Rishi Sheth, Membership Administrator, RAF Association Central Headquarters, 117½ Loughborough Road, Leicester, LE4 5ND. Tel No: 0116-268-8785 or by e-mail rishi.sheth@rafa.org.uk.

The new membership subscriptions and Branch rebates for 2015/2016 based on the average RPI of 5.8% are highlighted below. This increase is in accordance with Resolution No 7/06 (this Resolution enshrined the mandate of Resolution 25/86 which required a review of subscriptions every second year).

Category	2013/14 Memb Fee	2015/16 Memb Fee	2015/16 Branch Rebate
Ordinary Member – 1 year	19.50	20.50	04.70
Ordinary Member – 4 year	73.50	78.00	
Associate Member – 1 year – Air Mail	13.50	14.50	
Associate Member – 1 year – No Air Mail	08.50	08.50	02.70
Associate Member – 4 year – Air Mail	52.50	55.50	
Associate Member – 4 year – No Air Mail	29.00	30.50	
Give As You Earn (GAYE) (gross payment before basic tax relief)	24.36	25.68	
RPI Dec 2011	239.40.		
RPI Dec 2013	253.40		
Increase	014.00	% Increase	05.80%

5. THE ASSOCIATION AT RAF VALLEY – FLT LT TOM SAWLE

I joined the RAF in Oct 2001 and followed the usual course through flying training with Tucanos at RAF Linton-On-Ouse and Hawks at RAF Valley, before moving onto Tornado GR4s at RAF Lossiemouth. After a tour on the front line I returned to RAF Valley to become a flying instructor and after settling in I volunteered to be the Dep RAFALO late in 2010. Unbeknown to me the current RAFALO was soon to be posted and so it was that early in 2011 I became the RAF Valley RAFALO despite at that stage having little knowledge of the role or organisation.

RAF Valley is very lucky to have a strong bond with the Anglesey Branch of RAFA who meet in the Sergeants Mess (1930hrs on the last Thurs of each month!). The Anglesey Branch is the only branch of RAFA within a one-hour drive of RAF Valley and as such although we only have one branch to support we are able to concentrate our efforts and so develop lasting ties with the local community. The Anglesey Branch has a regular turnout of 15 to 20 active members and despite some fairly advanced years they regularly raise large amounts of money during the annual wings appeal. In 2013 the total raised was £9,350 with the total for 2014 standing at £9,398.

The Anglesey Branch also have regular bowling nights using the facilities at RAF Valley and in July eleven members of the branch enjoyed two days away on a visit to Hendon Air Museum, Duxford and Bletchley Park which was organised by the Chairman and Social Secretary, Mr Jack Abbott.

During 2014 we were fortunate enough to host a visit to RAF Valley from the Republic of Ireland Branch of RAFA. Despite only being based 75 miles away in Dublin the visit was delayed significantly until security approval was granted. Finally on the 23rd Apr we were able to receive 35 members of the Association and after a lunch in the Officers' Mess they enjoyed a tour of the Hawks on 208 Sqn followed by a visit to the Search and Rescue HQ. Hopefully a reciprocal visit will take place in 2015.

Although RAF Valley is a relatively active station the service population has reduced drastically due to the civilianisation of the engineering workforce. I aim during 2015 to expand the presence of RAFA at RAF Valley and so gain more volunteers to support the Association. Each year RAF Valley opens its gates on several occasions to host motorcycle track days and these may well prove to be good fund raising opportunities.

Thank you Tom – for all your support.

6. WINGS APPEAL

We are pleased to announce that the total amount raised by the Wings Appeal 2014 from our Area was a fabulous £424,980.64 which beats our 2013 total (just) and with 4 fewer Branches. Incredible!

Our thanks go to all Branch members, their families and friends, Service personnel and Air Cadets who gave their time to help organise events and raise funds throughout the year.

Enclosed with this Newsletter is the RAF Association's Public Liability Insurance which we would ask you to pass to your Branch's Wings Organiser. This document may be requested by businesses and organisations when securing collection locations for this year's Appeal. Please be advised that although we encourage fundraising all year round the date for Wings Day this year, when the majority of Street Collections take place, is Saturday 19 September with Battle of Britain Sunday being Sunday 20 September. Please have early conversations with your local ATC Sqns so as to de-conflict with other activities.

7. ACCESS TO CENTRAL AND AREA COUNCIL MINUTES

A Repeat Article. For those Branches that wish to have electronic access to both Central and Area Council Minutes, a new facility is now available through the website www.rafa.org.uk. This facility does not replace any existing service (for those Branches who do not have internet access) but is aimed at providing a more efficient and cost-effective option. In order to take advantage Branch Secretaries must register their membership on the website (front page – log in) before being given access to the Minutes. Once you are 'logged on' you will be taken to an area that members of the public cannot access – where you will see tabs marked Central Council and Area Council. Please give this service a go and let me know how you get on!

8. AREA AGM AND REUNION – THE DERWENT HOTEL, TORQUAY – 20-22 MARCH 2015

Arrangements are well advanced for our Eleventh Area Annual General Meeting and Reunion which will take place at the Derwent Hotel, Torquay over the weekend 20-22 March 2015. Accommodation at the hotel - as part of our Association package - is rapidly being taken up so please get your room booked on 01803-400500 (quoting RAFA). You may wish to come just for the Saturday business which will start at 1015hrs when we hope to deliver an interesting programme of speakers as well as the AGM itself. Please feel free to contact the Area Office in Exeter if you wish to discuss your attendance. We are extremely

pleased with the response in respect of official Branch Delegates and expect to have around 50% of our entire Area represented. More precise details regarding the Programme for the Weekend and the AGM Agenda will be released to Branches at the beginning of March.

9. 50th ANNIVERSARY REUNION

You may wish to know that No 302 Craft Apprentice Entry RAF Cosford 1965 is having its 50th Anniversary Reunion at the Union Jack Club, London on 30 May 2015. If you would like to attend please contact Ralph Bebbington (aka Bebbs) on 01363-772233.

10. WHAT A LOVELY THANK YOU LETTER!

The following words are taken from a letter written by Kathleen Sizeland who was 100 years old on 16th January 2015 and is a good indication of the impact our work has on the lives of our members. Thank you to those in our Branches that keep our people connected:

For Sir Dusty Miller, President of RAFA

Dear Sir, I thank you for congratulations on my 100th birthday. It was a lovely surprise and much appreciated. Many thanks also to all Members of the RAF Association. I will continue to support the Association as long as I am able to do. I am, yours sincerely, Kathleen Sizeland ex WAAF.

11. A MESSAGE FROM OUR NEW VOLUNTEERING MANAGER



I'd like to introduce myself, I'm Katharine Montgomery, the Volunteer Manager for the RAF Association. I'm based at the Leicester office and can be contacted on volunteers@rafa.org.uk or on 0116 268 8794. We have been working with Area Councils and Central Council (which has endorsed the project), on setting up a National Volunteering Programme, to complement the fantastic volunteering work happening in many parts of the country.

The longer-term plan is to help Branches with finding new volunteers, where they are needed. The current focus, however, is on helping to fill the gaps where we don't have volunteers working with clients in conjunction with the Area Welfare Officers. We would also like to recruit extra fundraisers in the areas they are required. Recruitment and selection of new welfare volunteers, as part of this programme, will be carried out in partnership with the Area Welfare Officers in each region. We are working on a pilot scheme in the south east to ensure everything runs smoothly. We are looking to recruit a group of five or six volunteers. This is not about replacing the work of the Branches, as a great deal of excellent welfare and fundraising is carried out by Branches. This is initially about introducing new volunteers to the Association who will take on welfare cases where we don't currently have sufficient numbers of volunteers to support the members of the RAF family that need our help.

We're really looking forward to working with you and rolling out a National Volunteering Programme. We're excited about Conference and the opportunity to share with you our progress and plans for the programme to complement your work. We will also keep you updated via Air Mail and through these newsletters. If you would like to share your views, we'd be really keen to hear from you through our survey on volunteering:

<http://www.rafa.org.uk/vol-survey>. Thank you for all the amazing work you do for the RAF Association and I look forward to working with you all over the coming years.

12. A RAFALO UPDATE ON TODAY'S RAF

SENIOR APPOINTMENTS LIST

Air Vice-Marshal I C Morrison CBE was promoted Acting Air Marshal with effect from 5 January 2015 and remains in post as Director Saudi Armed Forces Projects.

Air Vice-Marshal E J Stringer CBE to be Assistant Chief of the Defence Staff (Operations) in the Ministry of Defence in March 2015 in succession to Major General P N Y M Sanders DSO CBE.

Air Commodore The Honourable R J M Broadbridge QHS to be promoted Air Vice-Marshal and to be Director Healthcare and Training, Headquarters Surgeon General with effect from 19 December 2014. This is a new post.

Air Commodore R J Knighton to be promoted Air Vice-Marshal and to be Assistant Chief of the Air Staff in the Ministry of Defence with effect from 23 January 2015 in succession to Air Vice-Marshal E J Stringer CBE.

Air Commodore I W Duguid OBE to be Typhoon Force Commander Royal Air Force Coningsby with effect from March 2015 in succession to Air Commodore P J Beach CBE who is leaving the Service.

Air Commodore S P Rochelle OBE DFC to be Assistant Chief of Staff Capability Development Headquarters Air Command in March 2015 in succession to Air Commodore G G S van den Berg whose next appointment is yet to be announced.

Air Commodore S J Shell OBE to be Chief of the Defence Staff's Liaison Officer to the Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, Washington in June 2015 in succession to Brigadier F G Gedney OBE.

Acting Air Commodore J E Linter OBE was promoted Air Commodore on 18 November 2014 and is appointed Head Defence Engagement Strategy in the Ministry of Defence in February 2015 in succession to Commodore W Entwisle OBE MVO.

Group Captain J C Prescott to be promoted Air Commodore and to be Head Carrier Enabled Power Projection in the Ministry of Defence in March 2015 in succession to Air Commodore S P Rochelle OBE DFC.

Group Captain M J Blackburn to be Officer Commanding Royal Air Force Akrotiri in June 2016 in succession to Group Captain P D Kennett.

Group Captain J J Stringer to be promoted Air Commodore and to be Chief of Staff Operations Headquarters Air Command in July 2015 in succession to Air Commodore S J Shell OBE whose appointment as Chief of the Defence Staff's Liaison Officer to the Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, Washington has previously been announced.

GENERAL

EQUIPMENT AND MANPOWER

The Re-Forming of Number 12 (Bomber) Sqn As part of the planned drawdown of the Tornado GR4 Force, No II(AC) Sqn was due to disband as a Tornado unit in March 2015, when the Sqn number was to be re-established as a Typhoon sqn (see [IBN 46/13](#)). The decision to run on the Tornado GR4 Force with three frontline sqns until March 2016 means that an unused sqn number must be brought back into service.

No 12(B) Sqn disbanded as a Tornado sqn at RAF Lossiemouth in March 2014, where it had been based since January 1994 (see [IBN 24/13](#)). The Sqn first formed in February 1915 and has served with distinction in WWI and subsequent conflicts, including WWII, Iraq and Afghanistan. It has been based at

RAF Marham previously and on re-forming it will deliver day and night precision attack, support to ground troops and tactical reconnaissance capabilities to UK Defence.

No II(AC) Sqn formed in 1912, making it one of the oldest fixed-wing flying sqns in the world. It has flown Tornado aircraft from RAF Marham since 1989. Its re-establishment as a Typhoon sqn is an element of the wider change programme in the RAF's combat air forces that includes the growth of the Typhoon Force and the introduction of the F35B Lightning II aircraft.

US Basing Footprint in Europe The US has selected RAF Lakenheath to be the first location in Europe to host 2 squadrons of F-35 aircraft. The first aircraft are scheduled to arrive at RAF Lakenheath in 2020. This will ensure the continued close collaboration between the RAF and the USAF and indicates the strength of the continued shared commitment to transatlantic security.

The Department of Defense has been reviewing its requirement for bases across Europe as part of their European Infrastructure Consolidation Review. The review confirms that the US has decided to close RAF Mildenhall and to consolidate the activities it undertakes at RAF Alconbury and RAF Molesworth at RAF Croughton, resulting in the closure of RAF Alconbury and RAF Molesworth. Activities at RAF Fairford, Feltwell, Welford and Menwith Hill are unaffected by the review which, overall, demonstrates a US commitment to basing in the UK into the 2050s.

As ever, we this is informative and keeps you in touch with today's 'light blue'.

13. RAF ASSOCIATION EVESHAM BRANCH - REMEMBERING A WELLINGTON BOMBER CREW

Our Evesham Branch and local All Saints Church are joining together in a Service of Remembrance for the Canadian Crew of a Wellington Bomber that crashed at Norton on 1 March 1945. The Service will take place at Norton Church at 3pm and the Branch would be pleased to hear from anyone who can help with knowledge of this crash. Please contact Mr Robin Phillips on 01386-41604. The Branch is also interested to hear from anyone who has a ration book for the years 1945, 46 or 47, in order to show people how it was then and the size of ration for one man!

14. E-MAIL ADDRESSES.....



Do we have your e-mail address? If you are not sure and you are happy to allow us to update your membership record then please get in touch. Electronic communications are so much more efficient and enable us to drive down our postage costs. Debbie Byam in the Exeter Office will be pleased to take your details (Debbie.byam@rafa.org.uk - 01392-462088 option 4).

15. INTERESTED IN THE TYPHOON AIRCRAFT?

Would your Branch be interested in receiving a talk on the Typhoon aircraft? Mr Alan Wooley is very happy to oblige with a lively presentation that lasts approximately 45 minutes and includes 3 video clips. Yes – moving pictures! Although based in the South West, Alan would be happy to consider a journey. Feel free to contact Alan direct on 01398-332195 or at aawooley@yahoo.co.uk.



16. DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

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

Northern (Midland) Region AGM followed by a General Meeting at the County Council Club, Stafford (1215pm) - 25th February 2015.

East Glamorgan & Gwent Region Meeting at Treorchy Branch (2pm) – 28 February 2015.

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

Cornwall County Armed Forces Day Thanckes Park (The Lawn) Torpoint – 20 June 2015.

Please contact the Exeter Office if there are significant events/dates you would like promulgated that maybe of interest to the wider membership. Many thanks.

This is a great opportunity to wish the Wales Rugby Union team the very best of luck as they take on the mighty mighty English in Cardiff on 6 February.....

Paul Baker - Area Director

Now that I'm older I've discovered it was a whole lot easier to get older than to get wiser.

Enclosure:

1. RAF Association Public Liability Insurance Document 2015.