

DIARY DATES 2010

Aug 18	Scotland Southern Regional Committee Meeting
Aug 22	Newry & Mourne Memorial Parade, Killeel
Aug 28	Ards Aviation Fair
Aug 29	Battle of Britain Service, Old Presbyterian Church, Larne
Sep 4/5	Portrush International Airshow
Sep 7	City of London Salute – St Paul's Cathedral, London
Sep 10	Launch of Northern Ireland Battle of Britain Wings Appeal 2010
Sep 10	Northern Ireland Regional Committee Meeting
Sep 11	Leuchars Airshow
Sep 12	Dowding Memorial Service, Moffat
Sep 12	Phoenix Wind Band Concert, Queen's Hall, Edinburgh
Sep 12	Carrickfergus & Londonderry Branch Battle of Britain Church Services & Parades
Sep 13-19	Battle of Britain Week
Sep 19	Annual Battle of Britain Church Service & Parade, RAF Aldergrove
Sep 26	Armagh & East Belfast Battle of Britain Church Services & Parades
Oct 3	RAFA Annual Golf Competition, Perth
Oct 20	Scotland Northern Regional Committee Meeting

MESSAGE FROM THE AREA DIRECTOR

1. As we head into August I am sure that many of you will be planning to order stock for Battle of Britain collections and summer events. There are a few new items of RAF Association stock, such as the new rubber wristbands and the 70th Anniversary Wings badges. Most of these are quite limited but are now available for order via FastAnt or RAFATrad. In addition to these I have been made aware that there are Books and DVDs, produced by the MOD and BBC, respectively. I am in the process of securing stocks of these and will aim to distribute once I know what level of supplies we have been given. I understand that the BBC has allowed us to reproduce excerpts from the DVD for Anniversary use, which may also be useful for Armed Forces Day events.

2. As most of the Branch and Club Accounts have now been received (7 Branches outstanding), I have spent some time collating these to allow me to quantitatively demonstrate just how valuable the RAF Association Members are in their local welfare provision. While talking with the Senior Commanders in Scotland I was very pleased to tell them that the Area members had granted £197,000 of Branch Welfare money, with an additional £64,000 of Benevolent Fund money being distributed. These figures are considerable and the reaction from the Commanders was significant. Thanks to all the Members that have spent the hours collecting money, visiting veterans in need and ensuring that the welfare needs across the Area are met. Well done to you all!

3. Following on from this, I have had a request for Branch support for Dowding House as they desperately need to refurbish the individual kitchens. The estimated cost for each unit will be around £5,000 which, with 27 units, is a considerable total. If Branches feel that this is a cause that they would like to support then please contact me in the first instance to collate our efforts.

4. Finally, I have desperately wanted to get out on the road to visit more Branches over this last year. Cuts in Travel budgets have limited this but I do hope to see more of you and either Mike McCourt or I will always attend Regional Meetings to see as many of you as possible at one time. If I have not managed to visit your Branch yet, please accept my sincere apologies.

APPOINTMENT OF NEW SECRETARY GENERAL

5. Following a competitive recruitment process, the President of the Association and the Chairman of the Central Council are delighted to announce the appointment of Jane Easton as Secretary General from 1 September 2010.

6. Jane joins the Association after six years as Diocesan Secretary for the Church of England in Leicestershire. With 25 years in the charitable and not-for-profit sector, Jane brings experience and skills much needed to help drive the Association forward against a strong strategic agenda being developed by Central Council on behalf of our membership. Prior to her time with the Church of England, Jane had worked as a university manager, in hospital administration and in the arts.



7. Jane is joining the Association at a time of both celebration and challenge for the Royal Air Force family and she is keen to build on the excellent work of the Association as well as develop our contribution to the Services charity sector.

8. In accepting her appointment as Secretary General, Jane said: "It is vitally important that the Association listens to the membership, continues to maintain support for our branches, veterans and associates, and adapts our services for the needs of a growing Serving membership and their dependants". The Chairman of the Association Central Council, Air Vice-Marshal Nigel Bairsto, noted that "the Association has a sound financial base, dedicated trustees, a highly professional staff, a wonderful network of volunteers and a charitable commitment to friendship and welfare support which is second to none. We look forward to welcoming Jane to the Association where she will bring to the Executive Team and members, skills and experience from the wider charitable sector to support the ethos and help build and deliver the specific aims of the Royal Air Forces Association."

APPOINTMENT OF THE NEW CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE STAFF

9. Her Majesty the Queen has approved the appointment of General Sir David Richards as the new Chief of the Defence Staff. General Richards will take over from the current CDS, Air Chief Marshal Sir Jock Stirrup, in October this year. Dr Liam Fox, Secretary of State for Defence, said "I am pleased to announce the appointment of the successor to the Chief of the Defence Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Jock Stirrup. General Sir David Richards will take over as CDS in October this year, following the conclusion of the Strategic Defence and Security Review. I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Sir Jock who has provided excellent leadership to the military throughout his time as CDS, and who will undoubtedly continue to do so over the coming months on Afghanistan and on the SDSR."

RAFA and RAFBF BATTLE OF BRITAIN WIND BAND CONCERT

10. To complement the 70th Anniversary, The RAF Association and Benevolent Fund will be holding a concert in Queen's Hall, Edinburgh, on 12 September. The Phoenix Wind Band will play a concert which will be a good precursor to the Perth Christmas Concert on 16 December. Any ticket requests for the September concert can be addressed directly to the Queen's Hall Box Office on 0131 668 2019.

RAFA AREA GOLF COMPETITION

11. The Area Golf Competition will again be held in Perth on Sunday 3rd October 2010. Details are enclosed with this Newsletter. It is hoped for a good turnout and the **closing date for entries will be 10th September 2010.**

MEMBERSHIP

12. Annual subscriptions are normally valid to the end of the calendar year in which a new member joins. There is, however, a concession that new members joining after 1st July shall have their membership extended to the end of the following year. This means that anyone joining after 1st July 2010 will pay the current 2010 subscription but their membership will be valid until 31st December 2011.

BRANCH CLUB QUARTERLY RETURNS

13. Enclosed as Annex A is the Club Secretaries'/Treasurers' pro-forma for the second quarter of 2010 (as at 30 June). Club returns are a requirement, therefore please return the completed form by 3 September 2010.

REMEMBRANCE DAY – CENOTAPH PARADE LONDON – SUNDAY 14 NOVEMBER 2010

14. The SE RAFA Office will again be administering the ticket allocation for the above event. The Royal British Legion, on behalf of the Home Office, will be organising the ex-service contingents attending the Parade and Service at the Cenotaph, Whitehall, on Remembrance Day, 14th November 2010.

15. A representative of the Scotland & Northern Ireland Area will lay this year the Association's wreath. Stewards will also be positioned at the Cenotaph to lay wreaths on behalf of the detachments as they march past. Contingents will assemble and disperse at Horse Guards Parade. Due to the number of personnel on parade the overall length of the march past has increased and we are asked to remind all on parade to be aware of the physical demands of standing in Whitehall for at least 1 hour and then marching for a distance of 1.5 miles, possibly in inclement weather. We have also been asked to remind all on parade to help to ensure that behaviour and dress standards match the dignity of the occasion. There have been a few rather regrettable lapses that have offended the majority of those marching and the general public.

16. In view of the current security arrangements, only holders of admission tickets will be allowed to join the parade. All participants are liable to a security search on the day. Applications for tickets to: **P H Stockdale MBE, South East Office, 3-5 Old Bridge Street, Hampton Wick, Kingston-Upon-Thames, KT1 4BU as soon as possible.**

AREA ANNUAL CONFERENCE, QUEENS HOTEL, PERTH 18/20 MARCH 2010

17. Plans for the 2011 Area Annual Conference are already underway for the weekend of 18/20 March 2011. It is hoped that we will continue with the strong support and we look forward to seeing you there. Full details will be sent out in due course.

OLD STYLE WINGS COLLECTION ENVELOPES

18. Dick Alderson, Leuchars Branch, has asked if any Branches have spare old style Wings collection envelopes that they may be able to send him.

WAR VETERANS – INHERITANCE TAX SAVINGS

19. It has been brought to the Association's attention that hundreds of families of war veterans could be missing out on large inheritance tax savings because they're not aware of a little used tax exemption. A firm of solicitors in the South West of England have reported that they recently used the 'death in active service' exemption in the estate of an 85 year old former soldier who sustained injuries in Burma in 1944 and died in 2006. The man's family saved more than £250,000 and the Solicitors have used the same exemption in other cases. This exemption is not only restricted to Second World War veterans as the rules apply to anyone who dies from wounds, accident or disease contracted while on active service with the armed forces. The death certificate of the veteran must refer to those injuries and the effect they had on the person's life. Once this has been clarified an application is made to the Veterans Agency and full exemption granted by the MOD. Veterans should talk to their solicitor for further information.

TURN2US

20. Turn2us is an organisation helping people access the money available to them – through welfare benefits, grants and other help. They are a funding partner in the Armed Services Advice Project (ASAP). Their free services will be an invaluable tool for those wishing to generate maximum income for themselves or others, through maximising benefits income or accessing charitable grants. They have a free, accessible website which has been designed to help people find appropriate sources of financial support, quickly and easily, based on their particular needs and circumstances. They produce a monthly online Newsletter with useful and helpful current topics. There are also useful e-learning resources for support workers and welfare officers. For those with internet access, their website is www.turn2us.org.uk

NI ARMED FORCES VETERANS SECURITY FEAR

21. About 3,000 retired armed forces personnel in Northern Ireland have been told their security may have been compromised. Pension information was sent to the veterans in envelopes which identified them as ex-military staff. The MOD has apologised to those involved and said they are investigating how the mistake happened. The threat level from dissident republicans in Northern Ireland is currently classed as "severe". The letters were sent on behalf of the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency. Its logo was prominently displayed and the letters were stamped for ex-service personnel. An urgent security investigation is now underway. Anyone concerned should contact the Veterans Helpline on 0800 169 2277.

ARMED FORCES DAY 2011

22. As some of you may be aware Edinburgh has been asked, and has agreed, to host the UK National Armed Forces Day 2011 which will be held on 25th June 2011. It is going to be a spectacular event spread over 2 days and involving a multitude of events. The main event is the March through the city by Armed Forces – Past, Present and Future. Our input as Veterans will be a "March of 1000 Veterans" from all services, together with Standards and Bands. Robert Newman of RBL Scotland has agreed to act as the Veterans Coordinator for the event. There is a cost in gathering bands etc together and work towards getting sponsorship for the Veterans portion of the parade to cover expenses will be looked at.

23. The route for the march has yet to be finalised but is likely to start in Johnson Terrace and head for Lothian Road, along Princes Street, up South Bridge to the High Street and then down past the Parliament and Palace where the salute will be taken before dispersing in Holyrood Park where the displays and entertainment will take place. The route is about a mile and a half long. Watch this space for more information.

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS BOOKLET

24. Please be aware that there is a slight error in the new Membership Benefits Booklet. Unfortunately the contact number for SEIB (over 50's insurance) is incorrect. The correct number should be 0845 450 7882. SEIB are aware of the problem.

POPPYSCOTLAND AND CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

25. For those of you who are not aware Poppyscotland, on behalf of a funding partnership (please see below for those organisations involved), has commissioned Citizens Advice Scotland to deliver a National advice service to the Armed Forces Community in Scotland. This service will take the form of a national telephone helpline (0845 231 0300), complemented by 5 regional co-ordination points where caseworking will be delivered from. The regional co-ordination points will be in Dundee/Fife, Inverness-shire, Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire and Stirling. More information about the project will be circulated shortly but in the meantime the project is up and running.

26. The funding partnership comprises Poppyscotland, the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund, The Robertson Trust, the Maritime Charities Funding Group, ABF The Soldier's Charity, SSAFA Forces Help's Scottish Resources Committee and Turn2us.

N G BRISBANE MA RAF
Area Director

ENCLOSURES: Quarterly Return (Branch Club Only)
Area Golf Competition