



QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

March 2024

MESSAGE FROM STEVE DAVIS – CHAIRMAN RAFA HARTLEPOOL

At our AGM in February, there were no new nominations for Committee positions. Therefore, the Committee remains as was. However, if anyone would like to volunteer their services to assist the Committee with running the Branch, then please contact myself or the Branch Secretary. We would appreciate people to look at taking on Wings Appeal Organiser and assistance with Branch Welfare work. If you feel this might be something you are interested in doing, please contact the Branch Welfare Officer.

Last year our Branch managed to organise seven Wings Appeal collections at local Supermarkets and Shopping Centre. This also included participation at the Tall Ships Race 2023 where we manned a stall in the Military Village which was set up to cover the event over the 4 days the event was open to the public. Together with individual donations from members the Branch raised £5113 for RAF Associations Wings Appeal funds. This represented a lot of hard work by the small number of members who were available to assist with the collections.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The meeting was attended by 14 members out of a registered membership of 256. There were very few apologies.

Both of our Welfare Officers are much in need of assistance. The Chairman gave the reports of Branch activities during the year and the Treasurer gave the audited accounts, all of which were accepted by the membership. There were no members resolutions and the Area Representative did not attend.

At the end of the meeting the members were informed that the social club will be closing its doors on a Monday evening at 8pm, due to lack of custom. After some discussion of alternative days and times the decision was made to remain with Ye Olde Durhams, and to start the meetings on Mondays at 6:30pm, to allow time for social activities before the building closes.

The Royal Air Forces Association (RAFA) is a membership organisation of serving and former members of the RAF, their families and dependents and all those supporting the aims of the Association. The Branch would welcome more ex RAF personnel and people who would be interested in supporting the Association in attending social events or assisting with collections in various locations. The Branch now covers an area from Seaham in the North to Whitby in the south excluding Stockton on Tees.

BOXING DAY DIP

Branch member Maggie Lawlor, accompanied by her daughter, Kay and granddaughter, Freya, took part in the Boxing Day Dip at Seaton Carew to raise money for Wings Appeal. Registration at the Marine Hotel was quickly followed by the run to the sea at 11:30am. Over 600 people took part and more than one thousand supporters cheered them on. All of the participants had to go fully into the sea to claim completion, and Maggie can be seen on a short video on the RAFA Hartlepool website.



Thanks to the RNLI for safety cover on the day and thanks to the friends and supporters who helped Maggie raise £240. The photo shows Maggie presenting the donation to Branch Chairman, Steve Davis, at the conclusion of the Annual General Meeting. Well done Maggie.

BRANCH WELFARE ACTIVITY

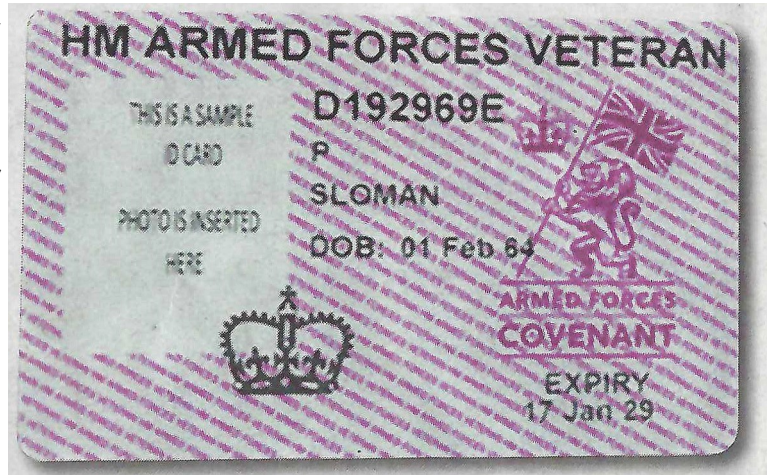
The Branch continues to provide a high level of welfare support through our two Welfare Officers Dave Stacey and Peter McGraghan. Both are kept busy not only with Branch welfare support but also among the wider area including South Durham, Tees Valley Area and North Yorkshire. During 2023 they collectively dealt with 40 cases referred to them by RAFA North Welfare Office (based in Preston). In addition to this Area work both Dave and Peter make regular visits to homes, Care Homes and hospitals to support our members and other members of the RAF Family who seek assistance. Given the size of Hartlepool Branch area; having absorbed the members of Seaham and Redcar Branches following closure, it is not always possible to keep in touch with all our more elderly and venerable members although we do make a big effort to do so. Any member who is feeling isolated, lonely and would appreciate a call from our Welfare Officer please give him a call on the Branch No 07907 874654. Alternatively, members may wish to consider registering with the Associations "Connections for Life" scheme. The scheme provides members with a regular one-to-one personalised call, vital friendship and support via the telephone. Any member who would like information on the "Connections for Life" can call the Branch Welfare Officer or RAFA Headquarters Tel 0800 0182361 for details.

ANZAC MEMORIAL EVENT

The annual ceremony to remember the men of Australia and New Zealand who died in the Royal Air Force during WWII will take place at Chevington Cemetery on Sunday 28th April 2024 at 14:00hrs. All veterans are invited to take part and are to assemble by 13:40, with Standard Bearers by 13:30. There will be a short service of remembrance, wreath laying and march past. Chevington Cemetery is 3 miles south of Amble, Northumberland, on the B1330. This is a popular event and early arrival is recommended as parking is limited.

VETERANS' ID CARD IS LAUNCHED

The RAF News announced in the February 9th issue that the long awaited Veterans ID Card is now available. The card is offered to all HM Forces personnel who left their Service before 2018, and may be applied for via the website [.gov.uk/veteran-card](https://www.gov.uk/veteran-card). Postal applications are also available. Please contact Veterans UK Helpline, veterans-uk@mod.gov.uk Telephone: 0808 1914 218



Use of the card will enable veterans to access support services more easily including rail cards, specialist health care and defence discount services. *Thanks to RAF News for permission to reproduce this image and information.*

80 YEARS ON — We Will Remember Them.

This year, 2024, sees two major 80th anniversaries. The Great Escape of 76 allied prisoners from Stalag Luft III took place on 24th March 1944. Of the escapees, 50 were executed on the orders of Hitler, and only 3 made the 'home run' to their respective countries.

The invasion of Europe on D Day, 6th June, is the other major anniversary this year, when allied land, sea and air forces breached the defences of Hitler's European Fortress and began the final phase of the war.

MILITARY BAND CONCERT

The concert in St. Hilda's Church is on Saturday 15th June, (time TBA) and is FREE, with refreshments on sale. The Fusiliers Volunteer Band with a piper will play music with a D-Day theme and there will be short Act of Remembrance.

In Memoriam

The Branch marks with sadness the passing of these Members.
We will remember them.

Andrew Thorn d. 8 March 2024 aged 79

RAF No. 4260364, SAC Fireman 1960—1969

Brenda Bird d. 26 January 2024 aged 90

Associate Member



ANDREW THORN — RIP

Andrew is a former member of the Branch Committee and as such served as Wings Appeal organiser, as well as Area and National Conference Delegate. We have benefitted from his experience and offer our condolences to his family. His funeral is at Hartlepool Crematorium at 11am on 27 March. Members are welcome to attend.



Our first Wings Appeal collection of 2024 took place in Middleton Grange Shopping Centre on Saturday 24th February. The stall was manned in two shifts and was visited by veterans and members of the public. Windmills sold well and we received some very generous donations. The total raised on the day was £322.94, bringing the total so far for the year to £1444.75p. Thanks to all who contributed.



LOOKING FORWARD

BRANCH MEETINGS

2nd Monday each month at Ye Olde Durhams, 6:30pm.

PUBLIC EVENTS

Wings Appeal Collections

April 20th — Morrisons, Hartlepool

July 20th — Middleton Grange, Hartlepool

September 14th — Middleton Grange, Hartlepool. Battle of Britain Remembered

September 28th — Morrisons, Hartlepool

Armed Forces Day

June 29th — Heugh Battery area with stalls, a Drum Head Service and March Past.

Veterans Hub — Mondays 2pm in the 1908 Lounge, Hartlepool Football Club

SOCIAL EVENTS

Breakfast Club - First Saturday of each month at Brewers Fayre, Old West Quay, Hartlepool, 9:30am. Pay on the day

4 Seasons Lunch - 18th May at Sambuca, Church Street, 1.30pm. Pay on the day.
From £8.95 for 3 courses

Garden Party - Sat 13th July. 14 Oxford St. Hartlepool. Theme: "Cocktails on the Lawn" Limited places @ £5.00

For all social event bookings please contact Social Secretary Hazel Davis – 01429 551193 or

stepinout@live.co.uk

Branch Meetings are held on the second Monday of each month from 6:30 pm

We meet at
Ye Olde Durham's Social Club
St. Aidans Street
Hartlepool TS25 1SN
Free street parking at rear

Contact Details

Phone: 07907 874654
or website
www.hartlepoolrafa.com