

# Royal Air Forces Association Hartlepool Branch

The Charity that supports  
the RAF Family



## QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

June 2026

### ARMED FORCES DAY

Hartlepool Armed Forces Day was held on Saturday 27 June outside the Royal Navy Museum. The day opened with a selection of music by Hartlepool Brass Band leading into a static parade by over 40 veterans, serving personnel and cadets. Six Standards were marched on before the opening speech by Andy Cammas announced the advent of the Hartlepool Valour Centre, offering a range of services for veterans and their families to open shortly in Middleton Grange shopping centre.



A welcome from the ceremonial mayor, Councillor Sue Little, followed. The National Anthem was played before the Standards marched off and the parade was dismissed. The band played a few more pieces, followed by a range of solo performers, as visitors browsed the dozen stands representing organisations linked to the armed forces. Our gazebo (pictured) raised £244.46 for Wings Appeal. Thanks to all who contributed and to those who worked the stall.

### EAST DURHAM VETERANS TRUST

East Durham Veterans Trust (EDVT) is a charity based in Seaham, which supports veterans and their families from across the North East, through three main areas. Firstly, case managing issues that a veteran or family member may have by offering practical support, this includes finance, housing etc. Secondly, through social inclusion and finally, to support veterans and their families with mental health coaching and wellbeing.



EDVT is shortly to open a full time facility in Middleton Grange Shopping Centre where veterans and their families can access services including mental health support, housing, benefit checks and more, including links to military branch charities and organisations.

Further information from <https://www.eastdurhamveterans.co.uk>

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.

## CANADIAN MEMORIAL

The annual memorial service for the Royal Canadian Air Force members who served at RAF Middleton St. George during WW II was held at the memorial on Saturday 13 June. The event has been supported by a detachment from 419 (Moose) Squadron RCAF for many years, but alas the squadron was disbanded earlier this year and there were no RCAF or Canadian officials available to take part. A wreath was sent from Canada House. Wreaths were laid by political and military representatives at the conclusion of the service, which was followed by refreshments in the airport terminal café. Photo shows branch members Mick Coverdale and Paul Rodway after the ceremony.



## SNINE AREA CONFERENCE

The Scottish, Northern Ireland and Northern England area RAFA Conference took place on Saturday 31 May at Glasgow. A total of 35 people representing 27 Branches took part, including the speakers, those in the venue and eight on line participants. Hartlepool Branch was represented by vice chairman, Paul Rodway, pictured, receiving the branch Wings certificate for collecting over £5,000 last year, from Area chairman Noel Williams.



The conference opened with messages from the Secretary General, Nick Bunting OBE and Charity Director Rory O'Connor MBE. The fund raising report showed that £755,270 had been raised in 2025 by Wings Appeal, with 26 Branches being awarded for their efforts. The SNINE area raised 26% of the total.

The RAFALO report by Flt Sgt Simon Milner was detailed and wide ranging, involving actions by RAFALOs on a number of RAF Stations.

Marc Boyle, RAFA Communities Manager, gave a summary of the Branch & RMG Wellbeing initiatives. He praised the activities which help to bring veterans and communities together, such as breakfast clubs, and spoke about new tools and facilities available on line to help organisers achieve their goals.

Paul Greenwood, Area Communities Officer, thanked all Branches, Clubs, volunteers and Welfare officers for their work, including over 300 cases approved for financial assistance last year.



The collection at ASDA, Peterlee raised £349.41 on Saturday 9 May. Thanks to all who volunteered and those who donated.

The Branch total for this year is £1633.95

Collectors should note that the new range of RAFA Ducks have been released and will be on sale at the next collection event. They represent three iconic aircraft; the Harrier, Sea King and Vulcan, all now retired from active service.



## VETERANS VISIT TO SALTHOLME

Hartlepool veterans associations were invited to visit RSPB Saltholme at Seal Sands on Thursday 25 June. Twenty members were welcomed to the visitors centre by guides Phil and Christine. Phil gave a short introduction to the RSPB and the construction of Saltholme the then led the group on two walks to view the wildlife. Both Phil and Christine answered many questions from the group



as we heard birdsong along the path and they pointed out various species by sight and sound. One unexpected species we all saw was a flypast by two RAF Typhoons practicing low flying manoeuvres.

Photo shows Phil (centre) advising the veterans group on species to seen from the hide.

### In Memoriam

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

**Thomas Sayers 5032726, d 8 June 2026, aged 87**



## SOCIAL EVENTS

The Branch has comprehensive range of social activities, to which all members are invited.

### Breakfast Club 6 June.

A smaller turnout than usual but that did not stop us enjoying the camaraderie and breakfast. We welcomed new member Kath Bevington to swell the ranks of our lady veterans.

**Breakfast Club** - a morning to catch up with friends and enjoy a leisurely breakfast at Brewers Fayre, Hartlepool from 9:00 am on the first Saturday of each month. Pay on the day. Our reserved tables are now wheelchair accessible.

**NOTE.** We have been informed that Brewers Fayre will close on 1 September 2026, bringing an end to our Breakfast Clubs. We have arranged an extra meeting to say farewell to the staff on Saturday 29th August. The committee is looking for another venue for this most popular event.

**80th Anniversary** - Please make your menu selection ( from above) when ordering your tickets. £15 each from [rafahartlepool80@gmail.com](mailto:rafahartlepool80@gmail.com)

**4 Seasons Lunch** - Pizza and Pasta in a relaxed and convivial atmosphere at Sambuca, Church Street, Hartlepool. Meet at 1:30 pm on Saturdays, 15 August and 21 November. Pay on the day. From £9.95 for 2 courses.

**Garden Party** - CANCELLED - Due to circumstances beyond our control

**Christmas Lunch** - Saturday 12 December 2026 at 1:30pm. Details in October.



Branch Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month from 7:00 pm

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

**Contact Details**  
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