

Royal Air Forces Association Hartlepool Branch

The Charity that supports
the RAF Family



QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

June 2025

URGENT REQUEST

As our current Treasurer and Honorary Welfare Officer is relinquishing his duties at the end of this year, we need volunteers to consider taking over these posts on the Committee.

Please be aware, it is a requirement for the Committee to have a Treasurer. Therefore, if we do not have a Treasurer the Branch can no longer operate as a Branch.

CANADIANS REMEMBERED

The annual remembrance ceremony to recall P.O. Andrew Minarski VC, and all of the Canadians who served at RAF Middleton St. George, was held on Saturday 7th June at the memorial outside the former Officers' Mess, at Teesside Airport.

The wreath laying was led by Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Co. Durham, Pam Royal and included representatives from the Royal British Legion, RAF Leeming, Canada House, and The Middleton St. George Memorial Association.



The Branch was represented by vice chairman Paul Rodway, (pictured). The service was conducted by Rev Dr Sqn Ldr Kate Bruce from RAF Leeming and was completed by singing "O Canada" and "God save the King".

The ceremony was concluded with a march past led by eleven cadets and veterans association Standards, followed by contingents of air cadets and sea cadets. The salute was taken by Lady Pam Royal and local dignitaries. After the service, refreshments were served in the airport terminal café where Lancaster memorabilia and artefacts were on display. We were informed that after a long and distinguished history, Moose Squadron has been disbanded. There is hope that it will reform in the near future with new aircraft and then continue to be represented annually on Teesside.

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.

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, joining on line.

Welfare work remains at the core of the organisation although a decrease of 32% in cases shows over the past 2 years, which is similar to RAFBF and SSAFA. Northern region has just under 25% of the national casework.

In FY 2023-24 the Association raised £35m. Wings Appeal 2024 raised £8.3m of which 67% was community fund raising by branch members across the country and internationally. Wings Certificates were awarded to branches which had achieved £5k or more. Hartlepool Branch received a £5,000 certificate, while Stockton & Thornaby Branch reached £15,000. Carrickfergus Branch topped the list at just over £32,000.

A representative from RAFA TRAD announced that new products were on the way, especially a new design of duck, pictured below.

Some products are focussed on the Battle of Britain, which this year celebrates the 85th anniversary.



Branch collections for Wings Appeal are confirmed as follows;

26th July at Morrisons, Hartlepool,

13th September at Middleton Grange,

30th August TBC— hopefully Tesco Hartlepool

Please come along and support the Branch as a volunteer or to catch up on the latest merchandise.

BRANCH MEMBERS 80th VE DAY CELEBRATION

Branch member Lucy Hodgson hosted an 80th VE Day Anniversary coffee morning at her home when over 20 family members and friends enjoyed a cup of tea, coffee and cakes. The coffee morning was to celebrate the 80th Anniversary of VE Day and also to raise funds for the Branch's welfare work. As her visitors enjoyed the company, drinks and delicious homemade cakes & scones, they donated a most generous £295.98p for the Branch Welfare Funds. Thank you Lucy for organising and raising the fantastic sum of money for our welfare work. Photo right to left shows Lucy with Branch members Margaret Stacey, Linda Fraser and Lucy's daughter Emma alongside the wonderful cakes and scones.



BRANCH VISIT TO ELWICK GRANGE CARE HOME, HARTLEPOOL

Elwick Grange Care Home Hartlepool was the first Care Home in Hartlepool to register as a member of the National Veterans Friendly Framework (VFF). The aim of the VFF is designed to enable Care & Nursing Homes to provide extra support for Veterans residing in their care that hopefully will improve their social inclusion and wellbeing. At the invitation of Tori Gardener, Activities Co-ordinator, Branch Welfare Officer Dave Stacey recently visited Elwick Grange Care Home together



with members of the Royal British Legion, DLI Association and the Armed Forces Breakfast Club Veteran. Also attending was Hartlepool Armed Forces Champion Councillor Chris Wallace. They met Veterans and other residents engaging with stories and some good-hearted banter. Elwick Grange provided hot dogs and coffee and the visit was concluded with a quiz. A very enjoyable visit that was appreciated by the Veterans and residents that we met. Dave Stacey took the opportunity to visit a resident 101 yr old ex WAAF Veteran who served in WW2 as an Aircraft Mechanic 1942 – 45. Photo shows Association visitors and residents.

In Memoriam

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

Mr. Donald Ruddock—formerly of Redcar Branch



LOOKING FORWARD



Wing Appeal 2025 started in November 2024 and has so far raised £1492.45. Last year our efforts topped £5000, for which the Branch has been awarded a Certificate at the Area Conference. Future collections will be notified as soon as they are confirmed by our supporting organisations. Please see website for details.

BREAKFAST CLUB

From its tentative beginnings the RAF Breakfast Club has grown to attract more members and other veterans, and has recently passed its 8th anniversary. Brewers Fayre manager, Debbie, continues to support us for breakfast and Christmas.

The Breakfast Club is held on the first Saturday of each month, from 9:30. Pay on the day for a full English or just continental.

FOUR SEASONS LUNCH

Lunch and Chat at Sambucas, Church Street, Hartlepool. 13:00 hrs on Saturday 16th August. Come and join us.

ARMED FORCES DAY

Saturday 28th June will see a gathering of veterans for a parade and ceremony in the Royal Navy Museum car park. The event will run from 11:00 to 15:30 and comprise stands, Veterans Associations, Cadets, a static parade and live music.

MUSIC EVENT

Friday 11th July — The RAF in Concert performs at Princess Alexandra Auditorium, Yarm, TS15 9EJ. Tickets £22.00 Box office - 01642 792587. www.thepaaonline.org

MEMORIAL EVENTS IN YORKSHIRE

Eden Camp Service and Parade on Sunday 7th September, is a very popular event for all Veterans' Associations. The AFLG will probably run a coach to the event. Please check the website for latest information and pricing.

Elvington Air Museum holds their annual Allied Air Forces Memorial Day on Sunday 14th September.

Branch Meetings are held on the second Monday 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
Phone: 07907 874654
or website
www.hartlepoolrafa.com