

The Griff

The Magazine of the Royal Air Force Police Association



January 2021



Alex Oliver in Goulburn NSW on Remembrance Day
see page 15 for information

Who's Who in the RAF Police Association

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Letters to the Editor

Assassination of JFK - where were you?

On 22 November 1963, I was on evening shift, control of entry duties, at Building 2 in Camp Guynemer, Headquarters Allied Air Forces Central Europe (HQAACE), Fontainebleau. This was situated some 50 miles due south of Paris. The shift was (as usual) quiet, with just the sound of teleprinters from along the corridor. The control of entry post was inside the main entrance (usually unlocked) and outside the secure area, which was protected by a steel electrically operated door, controlled by the duty policeman ie me. I had a small private transistor radio and I was listening to the Armed Forces Network (AFN), Orleans. Suddenly a voice broke into the music shouting, "the President has been shot". In short order the transmissions went to AFN Paris and then AFN HQ in New York and a quieter voice. However a few minutes later the same voice was not so quiet as he announced, "the President is dead. President Kennedy is dead. He died soon after being shot while driving through Dallas". I telephoned the Duty Officer inside the secure area. He was an American Air Force Major and usually a very pleasant person towards we junior Air Police. I told him what I had heard and he went completely gaga; shouting "how dare you?" I was quite firm in my response that the information had come from the AFN. Seconds later, the electrically controlled steel door was flung open and the wild eyed Major grabbed my radio and disappeared back inside the secure area!! So I quickly locked the main (also steel) door and "stood by". Sure enough, shortly after the big brass (and the not so big) started to arrive in all manner of dress and undress.

As we know, it turned out not to be an immediate threat to world peace and later that evening it all went back to being peaceful in Building 2. I was in bed by midnight. So where were you when President John Fitzgerald Kennedy was assassinated?

PS My little radio was returned by the Major with a handsome apology. His reason was simply of shock and disbelief at the news.

Submitted by: **John Walton**

Help required please...

My father '**John Rawsthorne**' was in the RAF Police from approx 1942 to 1945.

He served in Germany towards the end of the war possibly in Hamlin.

I would like some information on him if it is possible. I have many photographs which I would like to share.

If anyone has any information they would like to share with me, please would they contact me at: toffeeman@me.com

Submitted by: **Christopher Rawsthorne**

Remembrance Day 2020

Here is a photo taken on our housing estate near Altrincham where a bugler kindly played the last post for residents. The wreath I hold is for my late Father-in Law. The Officer with me is a good chum and he was a Sqn Ldr Dental Officer back in the 60's.

Submitted by: **Brian Burgess**



Honnington Personnel Fundraise in their cars for SSAFA



RAF Honnington held a coffee morning with a difference for SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity. In true Covid-19 style, a drive through coffee morning took place on 1st October Personnel were able to pre-order their choice of cake or scone selection box via a QR code made available through social media. SSAFA Suffolk also kindly loaned their card reader allowing contactless donations.

All together £369.10 was raised. RAF Honnington recognise that charities are experiencing a downturn in fundraising, and in lieu of very few expenses being incurred this year, the committee have unanimously voted to donate these funds to SSAFA Suffolk, increasing the donation to an incredible £1,000. SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity, has been providing lifelong support to our Forces and their families since 1885 and are here to help serving personnel, veterans, and their families.

If you would like to help support **SSAFA** Suffolk, please donate here: ssafa.org.uk/suffolk

Battle of Britain Day



George Poad parading the SWAB Standard on Plymouth Hoe, on Battle of Britain Day, 15 September 2020.

Submitted by: **John Walton**

'Mind the Chasm'

A new report from SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity, launched to raise awareness of the charity's own Mentoring Service, graphically illustrates the level of misunderstanding about the ongoing needs of the ex-Forces when they leave the military.



Submitted by: **Natasha Bennett, SSAFA**

Letters to the Editor

Why a 'Snowdrop'?

I was not far off being a 'War baby', being born 4 years after the end of WW2, the area of South London where I grew up was close to the Surrey Docks and suffered huge amounts of bomb damage. We grew up in the ruins of houses and factories playing 'goodies & baddies'. The Germans were always the baddies... Every Christmas my large, extended family would gather at our house. Nan & Pop lived downstairs and me and my parents (and later my younger sister) lived upstairs, the carsey was in the back garden! The Uncles, Aunts and Cousins would gather, crates of Watneys would be purchased from the pub opposite and the war stories began. I always wanted to be in the services, but which one?

Dad joined the local TA in Southwark in 1936; he was 'Embodied' in September 1939 and sent with the BEF to France with his Regiment: 2/7th Battalion, The Queen's Royal Regiment (West Surreys). In May 1940 he was shot and captured at Abbeville. He then spent 5 years in Polish coal and salt mines as a slave labourer for the Third Reich. Sod the Army then. Uncle George had a full and dangerous war. He was a 'Pom Pom' gunner on destroyers and managed to get through Malta, Arctic and Atlantic convoy duty without getting his feet wet or his head shot off. Tales of mountainous waves, sea sickness and death all around. Sod the Navy then.

Uncle Bill....my hero. Still serving in the RAF when I was growing up, and I loved hearing his Squadron tales of Singapore and Germany in the 50's and 60's. He was more reserved when it came to his war service but I knew he was a navigator in Bomber Command and he spent a few nights over Berlin in his Mossie. Apparently he was sent to Florida to train as a pilot but an unauthorised low flying episode robbed him of his wings and he was bounced down to a flying 'N'. His flying skills were to come into good use when, on returning back from a mission over Germany, his pilot and mossie were both shot up and he flew the plane back home, crash landed and got his injured pilot out of the burning aircraft and was awarded the DFC. Sorted, RAF then!

Just to be fair to Dad, who was really hoping I would choose the Army, I sent off for 2 packs of info from adverts in the Daily Mirror. One showed a squaddie standing next to a Mighty Antar tank transporter with a tank onboard (I had the very same dinky Toys) and the other advert showed 2 RAFP standing next to a L/R. These shiny imposing servicemen I had seen at the MGR at RAF Northolt when Uncle Bill took me visiting in the early 60's. I promised Dad that the first to respond would get my signature... thank God the RAF were desperate and replied quickly!! To be fair to Dad, I did serve 8 years in the RE TA so he was happy with that.



Submitted by: **Brian Burgess**

Memory Lane...

The photograph on page 22 in the September edition of the group in front of Concord 002. It was early 1970, I arrived in mid 70 to RAF Fairford and the Concorde Support Flight with Sgt Eric Seymour as l/c and Flt Lt Mullett as OC GD Flt. I can't remember all the name's but back row Left was Mike Harrey. QPD front Right was Paul Urell both had left by the time I arrived.

Submitted by: **Steve Lamacraft**



An already trained dog...

Taking over an already trained dog and being given the opportunity to be trialed for the vacant place on the famous Royal Air Force Police Dog Display team seemed, in March 1957 a perfect compensation for missing a posting in the Mediterranean sun after my first dog Panther had been rejected after being re-coursed and returned to his owners in Essex, and my chums on my original course flew to Cyprus and Malta replacing the eight handlers who died in the Beverley crash on 5th March of that year. The pressure was on to get to know my new charge, Karl, already a veteran of a season on the Display (Demo) Team and the 1956 Royal Tournament, and to learn the display routine which was carried out in its entirety on the whistle by the team leader, Cpl. Bert Leeson.

Routines were carried out every day, with dogs and without dogs. In the evenings after dinner I went back to the Squadron to take Karl out for a change for both of us, on the lead in the early days and later off. The Netheravon airfield is vast, and it was unusual to see anyone and I naturally hoped, even assumed, Karl was appreciative of these excursions.

During training he was behaving perfectly, his head appeared to be glued to my left knee - right or left turns, he was always as close as possible. I felt it natural to be apprehensive for our first 'public' show which was on the camp and attended by permanent staff and their families and I believe some of the Netheravon villagers. Suddenly, after the march on with all dogs on the lead and the whistle for the halt, then a second for the release of all the dogs from the leads, I discovered the Jekel and Hyde of Karl's character. The rest of the display was off the lead and immediately Karl was drifting away from me. He was doing all the right things, but as if I wasn't there. My concern was not helped by Cpl Leeson's, 'Get a grip of your dog, West.'

Somehow we got through the display, followed by complaints, not only by the Team Leader, but also by the Officer who was in charge of us. 'I don't think the Vicar would be impressed by your language if he could have heard you.' I really had no idea what I had said, such was the shock of such a change in Karl's behaviour. It was only a few days after this and the warnings of how things had to change or my association with the Team would be ended, when we were told a group of Airforce Officers were visiting and the C O wanted a display but not the full routine, but something 'impressive.' I guessed Jim Williamson and Storm would be doing whatever was decided as they were detailed for the criminal work in our routine for public display. However, I was surprised to hear my name and that of Karl followed by Sgt. Hart coming over to me with the airman who would be playing the part of the criminal in the public displays. I was told Karl was very good at the 'stand still, leave.' 'What is that?' I asked. 'You do the normal criminal routine, but remove the padded arm before marching him off. Only he then runs, and you shout 'standstill' and then 'leave.' At this the criminal, as much in shock as I was, says he would not do it as I had only had Karl a short time. Here I must state my admiration for Sgt. Hart which is with me today still (up to last Christmas we still exchanged cards), when he said 'Ok, I will play the criminal.' 'Can we have a run through.' I innocently ask. 'No, I will only do it once', was his not unreasonable reply. I was told to do the 'event' with Sgt Hart running towards the Officers for maximum effect! The only problem with that for me was that the wind was from behind the Officers and I would have to shout even louder because of this, a real problem as my throat was already very dry.

All went well, and Karl returned to me quite quickly after the initial chase and catch. I did the search, removed the padded arm put Karl only on a slip lead, and started the march towards the Officers.



An already trained dog continued.

Only a few paces and Ken Hart was away. 'Stand still,' 'Karl, LEAVE' I yelled. With that, Ken dropped to the ground and doubled up like a ball. I saw Karl leap over him, and heard the gasp from the group of officers. Karl, good as gold, returned to me. Only afterwards did I learn that Karl's mouth was open and teeth exposed as he leapt over Ken's back. Sadly, this did not begin a new relationship between us, and a deployment as one of four handlers and dogs to take part in the White City Tattoo proved a break for me and Karl as one of the three taking part in the Scramble Board event and Cpl. 'Mac' John Mc Whirter doing the criminal work.

I was due for a weekend pass on our return, but Bert Leeson asked if I would mind foregoing that this coming weekend. I agreed, thinking one of the team was sick. 'No.' Said Bert. 'Since you have been away the couple of shows we did have been perfect, but without Karl, they have been boring!' There was no doubt in my mind the public loved seeing his independence and I played the part of the frustrated handler and removed my cap and scratched my head, and he always returned knowing the last thing I could do was chase after him. By the end of the season things were very much better, and a winter posting to RAF Odiham, in Hampshire, meant we were spending much more together on night patrols when I felt totally confident I could go anywhere or face any problem with him in my company. Knowing of my and handler friend at Odiham, Jim Gilchrist's time with the Display Team, the Station CO regularly used us to 'entertain' his guests to the Station with some criminal work which ensured our dogs were well up on continuation training.

After the 1958 UK Trials at Netheravon and the Royal Tournament of that year, I took Karl, who had proved to be a great Police Dog, a great character but who was also an independent animal back to Netheravon as my National Service was coming to an end. Such was his worth in the mind of Mr Fricker, when I returned him I expected to do the routine criminal work run through. However, Mr Fricker asked 'Does he work as good as he looks?' 'Yes.' I said. 'Good, well done.' Said Mr Fricker. 'Put him away.'

Submitted by: **Roy West**

Acting unpaid Corporal John Walton versus Group Captain Sir Douglas Bader

At Camp Guynemer (HQ AAFCE) near Fontainebleau, in the summer of 1963, I was on control of entry duties on the afternoon shift, at the side gate. Quite suddenly, a large open touring car swept into the gateway and I had to jump very quickly out of the way. Off it roared into the domestic area and perhaps I should have alerted the Sgt of the Guard, a huge USAF Police Staff Sgt. I didn't because although I did not recognise the driver who was in civies, I instantly knew the passenger in uniform. He was Air Chief Marshal, the Earl of Bandon (Paddy Bandon or the Abandoned Earl). He was the Commander of Allied Air Forces Central Europe, and hugely popular with all ranks who met him. A few minutes later the car slowly and quietly drew up beside me and as I very formally saluted the Commander, he asked me if I knew who the driver was. I said I now recognised him as Group Captain Bader. The Commander said "that's right Corporal and Group Captain Bader is going to apologise to you for his previous bad manners in driving past you". The war hero growled "Sorry" and as I saluted again and said "Thank you Sir", away went the car out of the camp. So I suppose honour was satisfied!!

Submitted by: **John Walton**



A First Overseas Posting

After enlisting in 1952 and serving with P&SS units in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Northern England I was given my first overseas posting in 1958. I clearly remember the posting notice stating "Posted to Ceylon ERTBA for duty GAN". I knew where Ceylon was, (vaguely), but could not get an explanation of the other wording. So, it was off to Southampton and boarding Her Majesty's Troopship Nevasa. Amazingly, I was the only RAF Police NCO on board. It was a 6 week voyage, calling in at Gibraltar, Malta, Suez and Aden. Given shore leave at each port, I was pleased to be met by someone from the local P&SS unit and given a tour of the locality. Eventually, on arrival at Colombo, I learned that the words "ERTBA for duty GAN" meant "Eventual Route to be Annotated for duty on the island of Gan", the southernmost island in the Maldives archipelago.

After two weeks at RAF Katunayake and being very well looked after by the P&SS unit, I boarded a Valetta aircraft for the 5 hour flight to Gan where we landed on the WW2 coral runway.

At that time, Gan was in the early stages of being developed as a staging post for Far East movements. A new concrete runway was being constructed requiring, in addition to MOD and UK contractor personnel, a large labour force recruited in Pakistan supplemented by local Maldivian labour from Gan and other islands in the atoll. There was a village of local Maldivians on the island together with a Maldivian Government liaison office. All of this created a security and discipline problem for a relatively large RAF Police Flight supplemented with Auxiliary Police recruited in Pakistan.

Accommodation consisted of two-man tents and normal facilities were very basic but in fact I found life pleasant and interesting. Then, on 31st December, 1958, the Maldivians on Addu Atoll and Suvadive Atoll to the north, rebelled against the Maldivian government and declared themselves independent. The RAF interfered only to rescue the Maldivian Government representative on the island. He was initially taken out to a merchant supply ship, then in the lagoon, for his safety and to await an RAF aircraft which was to fly him to Mali, the Maldivian capital. When the aircraft arrived, an RAF Police Land Rover was reversed on to an RAF landing craft which went out to the merchant ship, the government official was put into the back of the Land Rover and when the landing craft



beached, was driven directly to the waiting aircraft. Life was never dull but one incident stands out in my memory – in April 1959 I was at my desk when an MOD official came to see me. He reported that about 2 tons of concrete mix in bags had been stolen from the adjacent island of Fedu. It had been agreed that Maldivians living on Gan would be moved to Fedu to allow Gan village to be demolished for completion of the new runway. The concrete on Fedu was for bases of houses to be built for the Maldivians moved from Gan.

Without the concrete, the houses could not be built, the Gan village could not be demolished and the runway could not be completed. A complication for me was that all other islands in the atoll, except for Hittadu, were strictly out of bounds. However, after discussions with Mr. Affif Didi, the self-styled "President of the United Suvadive Islands", he provided me with a written warrant authorising me to go anywhere and search anywhere. He provided me with a dhoni sailing boat with a crew of four to get around the atoll and I spent a day sailing from island to island. When I uncovered a newly laid concrete structure or surviving bags of concrete, culprits were punished by the island headman and recovered concrete was loaded on to the dhoni. By the end of the day I had recovered a considerable amount of concrete and ordered the crew to sail back to Fedu. As we approached Fedu, the boat hit a reef and sank. I had to swim to shore. When I returned to the UK in June, there was still a Maldivian village on Gan!

Submitted by: **George Egleton MBE**



National Memorial Arboretum

A small team of RAF Police personnel from RAF Cosford attended the National Memorial Arboretum on 22 Sep 20. The intent was to carry out some light husbandry of the memorial whilst participating in a period of reflection and remembrance. Traditionally the RAF Police at RAF Cosford supports the RAF Police Association annually in the form of a Parade. Unfortunately the events of 2020 have meant that this has not been achieved this season. Therefore it was decided that a personal event, meeting the same intent was to be achieved in a socially distanced setting. In addition to the RAF Police and also in attendance was the Unit padre, Revered (Wg Cdr) Eddie WYNN from RAF Cosford, Pastoral Centre where he led a short act of reflection, prayer and remembrance. This was followed by a short vignette read by Cpl Ryan SHEPPARD, RAF Police, detailing the chequered history of the trade:

We gather here at this special place of remembrance, the National Memorial Arboretum, to reflect upon and remember, those who belonged to and will forever belong to our trade, the Royal Air Force Police.

Since 1918 when the Royal Air Force was formed by Lord Hugh Trenchard, the Royal Air Force Police have provided effective Policing and Security to allow the Royal Air Force to deliver its core mission to protect The United Kingdom and her interests, both at home and overseas. Some of those who served, set out to fulfil their duties but sadly never returned. The realities of war and conflict have been prevalent throughout the history of our trade having served in 66 countries around the globe including Germany, The Falkland Islands, Burma, Kosovo, Iraq, Afghanistan and Kenya; and this special place exists to remind us of those who paid the ultimate sacrifice for Queen and Country. They shall grow not old, as we who are left grow old, age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn. At the going down of the sun and in the morning, we will remember them. We will remember them. The team then immersed themselves in the rich and diverse history that a number of the memorials relate to by fully exploring the site whilst representing both RAF Cosford and No 6 Sqn, RAF Police.

Those in attendance were: **WO Leigh Proctor, Sgt Joshua Ball, Sgt Gareth Evans, Cpl Ashely Broom, Cpl Stuart Tyler, Cpl Jake Harlow, Cpl Emily Winks, Cpl Victoria Robinson and Cpl Ryan Sheppard.**



Submitted by: **Leigh Proctor, WO RAF Police & Sy Flt, Royal Air Force Cosford**

I remember one of my first meals was beetroots with runny cheese all over it. It was lovely, we were so hungry. We were then allocated huts & beds & one small cupboard each for keeping our clothes & personal item out of the way.

As I was the only one in the hut who had served in the Air Training Corps (In my school CCF) I was made Senior Man of the hut. I wore three very small sergeants stripes to show my position. I had to ensure everything (as required) was done in the hut & report to the Hut Corporal. That weekend was August Bank holiday & we were allowed a 36 hour leave pass. We left Camp at 12 noon on the Saturday & had to be back in Camp by the Sunday following at 12 midnight. If you arrived after that time you were put on a charge, a 252.

I played cricket on the Sunday & running down the slope to save a boundary went crash into a fence. I damaged my back, so could not return to Bridgnorth until the following Tuesday. My father obtained permission from the Station C.O. to do this. I went by train to Wolverhampton stn. & a RAF vehicle took me to the Station.

Thus started my eight week training. After about a week the Prime Minister (Clement Attlee) decided to increase N.S. by 6 months ,because of the serious situation in Korea, making us all serve for two years. Taking rifles to pieces for cleaning & putting together again. Kit inspections. Blanchoing your webbing, Bulling your boots & shoes, Brasso cleaning your buttons, belt buckles & hat badges. Putting creases in your trousers & jackets .The hut floor was shiny red lino that had to be kept up by Cardinal polish which was supplied to us. However our BRASSO & BLANCO had to be purchased from our weekly wage of 28/6d a week. (£1.42 & half pence in todays money) Although against the Services Law we all tore large chunks from our blankets to use as floor 'sliders'. This seemed to an accepted thing to do.

Our training/marching boots had many studs in them ,so without the sliders the floor would be ruined entailing a lot more work to get it right again. On hut/kit inspection days the Duty Officer & Sergeant messed the floor up (intentionally) meaning this all had to be worked over with the polish. For the kit inspection our blankets were folded to a STANDARD, our cutlery was gleaming. Our tins of black boot polish were scraped of the writing etc & polished. The backs of our brushes were scrubbed until almost white. Socks were folded with our service numbers showing & many other painstaking things. We took rifles (Lee Enfields)to pieces & put them together again. We fired on ranges with both rifles & revolvers, most had an experience of gas chambers (laughing gas) where gas masks were removed. As Senior Man I could delegate & was at most kit & hut inspections, which meant I missed many of the drill training!

One day in September we marched from Camp to Bridgnorth to attend St Stephens Church. I think it was for the Battle of Britain Service. We had breakfast & then set off (mainly downhill) at about 7-30 am to march the three miles or so to Bridgnorth & then up the hill to the Church. We fixed bayonets when in the town & were given a generous welcome by the townsfolk. After the Service we marched back to Camp (mainly uphill) arriving about 2-30 pm having had nothing to drink or eat since break fast about 6.30 am 8 hours. We were thirsty & starving. No water bottles for us!

Part 3 in the next issue of The Griff

Submitted by: **John Anthony Williams** - (Service No: 2499829).



Cape Town Calling

As I sit here looking out of the window at “that mountain” it is mid-November 2020 and what is going through my mind is “what a year it has been”. If you had told me 12 months ago that my wife and I would be virtual prisoners in our apartment for over 6 months whilst a pandemic rampages the world I would have suggested that you having been watching too many movies; if you had added that I would be acting Association Secretary then I would have recommended taking stronger medication! It hasn't actually been a case of “all change” at Association Officer level, more like a game of “musical chairs” with the only new boy being “yours truly”. What I will say about the current crop of worker bees is that we are all pulling on the same end of the same rope. You will see changes to the way in which The Griff is circulated and to the Website layout and content; not so much a money saving exercise as getting value for every penny of your money that is spent.

We mourn those members who have succumbed to Covid 19, “We will remember them”.

After the 2020 AGM was cancelled due to the pandemic the Association moved into the 21st Century! The Officers now chat monthly via Zoom and the Council held their first Zoom meeting in October (if you don't know what Zoom is then ask your grandchildren). Anyway it works, as does having a Treasurer who lives in Dubai and a Secretary in Cape Town; it is an electronic world that we live in and any UK legwork that needs doing keeps the Vice Chairman fit.

Yorkshire South Branch have again offered to host the AGM & Reunion over the weekend of 24th to 26th September 2021 at the Holiday Inn, Warmsworth, Doncaster, and booking details appear elsewhere in this edition; thank you YSB. We hope that by holding it later in the year than usual that life will have returned to what passes as normal.

The Annual General Meeting of the Association will commence at 2.30pm on Saturday 25th September 2021 at the above mentioned venue. Nominations for office and other proposals for inclusion in the Agenda should be sent to me at neil.rusling@vodamail.com reaching me no later than 31st May 2021; if you do not have e-mail facilities they should be sent by post to Steve Lamacraft who will then scan and forward to me.

Our system of Absentee Voting was introduced some years ago to encourage more members to participate in the decision making process. The short-notice, but essential, cancellation of the 2020 AGM reminded us how essential it is to have the input of the absentee member. In past years our overseas members have been able to return their voting forms by e-mail, in 2021 this will be extended to all members; those without e-mail facilities will of course be catered for. Please cast your vote, it doesn't take long. Other methods of voting are being explored but baby steps for now.

Many will recall that in October 2020 I did a mail shot to all of those members for whom we are holding e-mail addresses (Griff preference exercise) and 70 of the addresses ‘bounced’; so if you have previously provided an e-mail contact address and didn't get the e-mail please let Steve Lamacraft know your current one.

I think that you have had enough of me for now, Keep well & stay safe.

Submitted by: **Neil Rusling**



RAFPA Annual General Meeting 2021

The **Royal Air Force Police Association** is holding its **2021 Annual General Meeting** (AGM) from **Friday 24th September** through to **Sunday 26th September 2021** at the **Holiday Inn, Main Road, (A630) Warmsworth, Doncaster DN4 9UX**.

The Hotel is located approximately 200 yards from the A1 (M) junction 36.

Hotel facilities

The Holiday Inn, Warmsworth is located within landscaped gardens of the old Warmsworth Hall that still stands within the grounds. The Hotel which has been re-furnished during the last year is air conditioned, with modern rooms and suites. All feature flat screen TV with cable channels, work desks and tea and coffee making equipment. Upgraded rooms have an added mini bar.

Preferential accommodation rates have been negotiated for all guests attending the Conference. This means that guests staying over the Conference weekend are not only able to take advantage of the preferential room rates, but also the use of the excellent Club motivational health and fitness club, which has a heated pool, sauna and gymnasium. All are free for use by our resident delegates. The same preferential rates apply for those who may wish to arrive early on the preceding Thursday 23rd September 2021. There is ample parking within the grounds for 250 vehicles.

Conference Facilities for the AGM and Gala Dinner

Within the Hotel are Conference and Dining facilities that are being solely dedicated to the RAFPA Association 2021 Annual General Meeting, ECM, and Gala Dinner. This dedicated facility is known as Manor 1 and Manor 2 rooms which have their own private bar facilities nearby. All are approached by a fully glazed walkway. The only exception being the Friday evening Buffet which will be held in the hotel Dining Room.

Accommodation

Please note: The prices quoted in the Hotel Proposal are on a room basis. This means that the room costs include Bed and Breakfast for 2 persons AND where specified cover the cost of the Gala Dinner and/or Buffet Dinner on a Friday evening.

The costs of rooms are as follows:

35 rooms are held provisionally from now until 30 days prior to the event. Early booking of rooms is advisable.

Most Important - When booking accommodation please ring the Hotel on this direct line 01302 799988 and quoting - RAF Police Association - 2021 AGM. Doing so will ensure preferential rates and ensure your booking is linked to our conference.

If delegates have specific requirements for their room (i.e. Ground Floor, Accessible or Disability etc.) please let the Hotel know at the time of booking. This will enable the staff to check what is available and allocate a room accordingly.

24th September 2021 - Standard Room - to include Buffet Dinner and Bed and Breakfast Rate:

Single Room **£ 74.95**

Double/Twin **£110.90**

25th September 2021 - Price includes Gala Dinner for 2 Bed and Breakfast

Single Room **£ 84.95**

Double/Twin **£130.90**



RAFPA Annual General Meeting 2021

Overall Weekend 24th through to departure 26th September 2021 to include Standard Room Bed and Breakfast, Friday Buffet, AGM and Gala Dinner as follows:

Single Room **£159.60**

Double/Twin **£241.80**

A limited number of Executive Rooms are available at an additional cost of £30.00

All guests are requested to settle their own accounts.

Pre – Order for the Gala Dinner – In order to assist administration and catering for the event, a menu for the Gala Dinner has been provided for you to make your choices. Please let me have your pre-orders for the Gala Dinner well in advance, preferably immediately after booking your accommodation but in any case, 6 weeks before the event. This will enable me to compile our requirements and forward them together with table allocations well before the event. Please forward your details to me at: **arthurvickers@mac.com**

Seating Plan - Within the Dining Room will be round tables with a capacity for 10 persons. For those of you who may wish to sit with friends, please let me know your requirements as soon as possible and at least 6 weeks before the event. Every effort will be made to accommodate your requests within the limits of table sizes, but of course cannot be guaranteed.

Entertainment – A dance floor has been provided within the Dining room and a DJ has been booked for the Gala Dinner. He will provide music during the event and for dancing afterwards.

For the Ladies

For your entertainment whilst staying at the hotel and for those not attending the AGM, the Holiday Inn is well placed for visits to take place. Recommended activities include visits to:

Yorkshire Wildlife Park
Cusworth Hall
Brodsworth Hall
Meadowhall Shopping Centre
Frenchgate Shopping Centre
Cast Theatre
Lakeside Village Shopping Outlet
York Town Centre
Clumber Park
Sherwood Forest
Chatsworth House
Bawtry Town Centre
Wentworth Garden Centre and Tea Rooms
Yorkshire Sculptor Park

The hotel can arrange Taxi's, Minibuses and Coaches if required. You can be assured of a very warm Yorkshire welcome.

Arthur Vickers - Secretary and Treasurer - The Royal Air Force Police Association, Yorkshire (South) Branch. email: **arthurvickers@mac.com** or go to: **<https://rafpasociation.com/event/2021-agm/>**



Gala Dinner Saturday 25th September 2021

Starters

Country Vegetable Soup
Served with crusty bread roll

Chicken Liver Pate
Served with Melba toast & red onion marmalade

Mains

Pan Roasted Chicken Breast
Served with stuffing ball, pig in blanket & a rich red wine jus

Grilled Pave of Salmon
With a lemon butter sauce
The above main courses are served with
roasted potatoes and seasonal vegetables

Vegetable Moussaka (V)
With a crisp side salad & garlic bread

Desserts

Toffee & Honeycomb Cheesecake
With Chantilly cream

Individual Strawberry Tart
Served on a layer of crème patisserie, in a sweet pastry case

Coffee or Tea



Blackburn Beverly Aircrash XH 117/253, 1957

Some time ago in a previous issue of **The Griff** a report was published on the sad story of this aircraft crash and the tragic deaths of 8 newly qualified dog handlers, with their their dogs and two civilians on the ground. Some additional facts have been supplied by Ken Huxtable which he is sharing with us. A Mr Fred Webster a former RAFF NCO and a colleague were driving by as the crash occurred. They left the car and ran over towards the stricken plane but driven back by two explosions, at this time they were joined by two men, Eric Webb and Bill Dawson. At great risk to themselves they started a search of the wreckage and managed to to get an injured man away from the wreck, however he died soon afterwards. Going back they managed to lift another injured man away on a an old door using it as a stretcher, in a confused state and clothes smoldering, they managed to get him to a horse trough and drenched him with water. The emergency services arrived at this time and took over. At this time two dogs seriously injured had run off and two more were trapped in the aircraft, the local vet put them down. SAC Smart a dog handler from the RAF Police Depot was a member advised to track and assist in the capture of the two dogs. One dog was cornered in a farmyard, in a pitiful state and to dangerous to approach. The farmer who was very distressed about the pitiful state of the animal was asked to shoot it, which he did mercifully putting it out of it's misery.

Mr Webster one of the witnesses to the crash had served as a corporal in the RAFF. LAC Robert Rose-Harvey told Andy Manning, a recruit on the following course, that he had had a dream that the aircraft was going to crash! Ex RAFF Nigel Bean made a request to the staff at RAF Museum Newark about how they felt about allowing a small grass area be used to plant a tree or site a bench as a memorial to the event. There were no problems so an effort was made to contact any relatives of the eight handlers killed in the crash. Several were traced and they, along with invited VIP's, came the day the tree was planted. There are now several trees and benches and family members place ashes around the tree.

Taken from information supplied by: **Ken Huxtable**

Remembrance Day - Australia

Around the country, many services were low key events due to the Covid 19 restrictions placed on them. Here in Goulburn NSW, we could not have a formal service as the Sub Branch of the Returned Services League (RSL) due to not being able to meet the strict requirements for public gatherings.

It had been mentioned in the local media that the Sub Branch would not be having a service, however, members of the public gathered around the Plaque Court, spacing themselves accordingly, to watch the service, that usually occurs. The President of the Sub Branch explained to the public why a more formal affair could not occur. He mentioned that wreaths will be laid to honour the fallen. The members of the Sub Branch could only attend as "individuals" so as not to appear to be in a group at a public gathering requiring documented contact tracing of any attendees. Nationally, public movement between the States is still being controlled to prevent the spread of Covid. It may not be lifted until next year. A considerable time frame of no cases in any State, we are getting there, must occur for the Country to open up completely.

See the front cover for picture

Submitted by: **Alex Oliver**



The Short Straw...

The story by Nigel Clark in this latest editions the Griff brought back my own memories and my connections with the subsequent events of the Beverley crash in March 1957. My story begins while on Basic Police Course at the end of 1956. An airman was seen about the Station at Netheravon doing a very good impersonation of the Invisible Man. He was literally swathed in bandage and eventually, stories of how he was mauled by a dog (now in quarantine) who was called, appropriately, Panther, were rumoured. Responding to requests for volunteers for No 3 Sqdn. I, with a few others, were taken to the quarantine kennels to meet our dog.

No doubt my height at 6ft 5ins had some bearing on the Flight Sergeant's reason for pointing at me and saying 'I have just the dog for you.' My response was immediate. 'I don't want Panther, Flight Sergeant. 'He is fine. Look, that kennel maid is walking over there with him and is having no trouble with him.' So, Panther and I set out on Course together and soon revealed himself to be a real 'softy' and his howls could be heard as we marched away at the end of the day. Sadly, despite loads of praise and much support from our instructor Cpl. Peter Reagan, It was obvious he was more suited for home life than Service life. His reputation was caused by the fault of the airman who collected him from Essex without using a muzzle, and the stress of being on a train, surrounded by strangers, and the last straw being when the idiot on the other end of the lead thrust his face near to say 'Good Boy.' My connection with the Beverley crash? The day, the 5th March 1957, is for me similar to the 'Where were you when Kennedy was shot?' I was on Course, the Course behind the eight lads who were killed in the crash. I, with another trainee, were being supervised by Cpl. George Mason (the same one in the pictures). Suddenly he, with Cpl. Eddie Snailum and other instructors were seen climbing aboard a truck and were off to we did not know where. In the aftermath of the crash they were to attend to the 11 dogs also aboard the aircraft, should they be injured or just running free. Sadly, all were killed.

At the end of my group's course Panther failed and we were re-coursed for two weeks, but the rest of the group were detailed to replace the group on the ilfated flight for the Cyprus/Malta postings. Panther was eventually returned to his former home in Essex. Without a dog now, I was advised by Dave Remnant to apply for a vacancy on the Demo Team. 'I don't have a dog, Dave!' I replied. An experienced Demo and Royal Tournament 'veteran' 4544 AD Karl was being returned to Netheravon while his handler Cpl Peter Trehane was posted to Germany and with this information I applied and was given the opportunity to experience an unforgettable season 'on the road', followed by a successful Trials in 1958 when Karl gained a First Class Certificate with 479 points out of 500, and participation in the Royal Tournament of that year. In August I returned to my work as a Press Photographer and met Margaret, my wife to be, who had joined the Portsmouth Evening News in my absence and was the Woman's Pages Editor.

If any one thinks I had it easy taking on a ready trained dog, well that is an entirely different story!

The Dog Handlers killed in the crash were:

LAC Thomas Jones, LAC Tony Blakey, LAC William Gorst, LAC Raymond Thorley, LAC George Croucher, LAC Colin Elsegood, LAC Robert Rose-Harvey and LAC Michael Cordon.

Note: Details of the crash are on **page 87** of: **RAF Dogs on Patrol** by **Stephen R Davies**. Also see **page 17** of this issue of The Griff.



The Short Straw continued.



SAC Roy West on Course with Panther at Netheravon early 1957.



The team off duty but away from Netheravon on a Demo. L to R. West, Lewis, Remnant, Leeson, Fry and Mason. Missing from this picture is Jim Williamson. Jim would have been exercising his dog Storm away from the rest of the team because although brilliantly handled by Jim, and the pair who performed the criminal work during the Demonstration, Storm, was by name and nature, just didn't mix with the other dogs. When this picture was taken our dogs were at the 'sit' behind us.



Six of the 1957 Demo team. L to R. George Mason, Dave Remnant, Bert Leeson (Team Leader), Roy West, Jim Williamson, 'Taffy' Lewis. Daz Fry, the seventh member of the team, was for some reason I remembered, missing when the picture was taken.

Submitted by: **Roy West**

Passout Parade - Roussillon Platoon

On 1 Oct 20, 13 trainees from Roussillon Platoon finally graduated as fully-fledged Royal Air Force Police NCOs. The Course commenced on 10 Feb 20, with a period of lockdown halfway through; trainees therefore had to work hard to stay current, prevent skill fade and keep fit. Elements covered throughout the RAF Police Initial Course included; a 4 week Legislation phase, Arrest, Entry, Search and Seizure (AESS), Stop and Search Powers, Personal Safety Training, Statements and Interview After Caution, a 4 week Environmental Testing phase, Air Transport Security, Protective Security and a 5 week Ops phase before graduation.

The graduation week culminated in a busy period of administration, drill practice, kit preparation and ceremonies. For Roussillon Platoon, it commenced with a White Hat parade on the Monday morning. During this ceremony on the parade square, trainees were presented with their white hats by Wg Cdr Alabaster, the new incumbent Comdt DSPG. Trainees from the junior courses attended and watched on; affording them an insight to where they would one day be stood.

Tuesday saw the trainees undertaking their Service Police Oaths. Despite the cancellation of the Formal Graduation Dinner due to COVID restrictions, spirits were high.

The same restrictions prevented the families and friends of trainees from attending the Graduation Parade; notwithstanding a short film was recorded of highlights of the graduation week to be kept as a valuable memento. With drill practice going well, and the weather predicted to take a turn for the worse, the Graduation Parade took place on the Thursday with Wg Cdr Alabaster as the Reviewing Officer. Best Overall Student was awarded to 30325020 A/Cpl Cameron Rankin, the RAFPA sponsored General Police Duties Trophy was awarded to 30050526 A/Cpl Paul Lugg and the Physical Training Certificate was awarded to 30320621 A/Cpl Saranya Sriganesh.



Roussillon Platoon stood at ease awaiting the arrival of the Reviewing Officer, Wg Cdr Alabaster.

Continued overleaf:



Passout Parade - Awards - Roussillon Platoon



30050526 A/Cpl Paul Lugg in the Map Room of Southwick House with the RAFFPA sponsored General Police Duties Trophy and Certificate.



30320621 A/Cpl Saranya Sriganesh being presented with the Physical Training Certificate by Wg Cdr Alabaster.



30325020 A/Cpl Cameron Rankin in the Map Room of Southwick House with the Best Overall Student Award and Certificate.

Submitted by: **Cpl Alycia Wood, Initial Training Unit, DSPG, Southwick Park, Hampshire**

Force Development and Adventurous Training event

Members of the Royal Air Force Police at Royal Air Force Cosford Police Flt utilised the fine weather and excellent surroundings of the Shropshire Hills with a socially distanced Force Development and Adventurous Training event within the Telford and Wrekin area. Led by:



Sgt Joshua Ball,

Cpl's Ashley Broom, James Hayes, Toby Powney, Ryan Sheppard, Emily Winks and Robert Yull took advantage of the break in the weather after storm Barbara barrelled through this week. Supported by Sgt Ball's dogs; Dixie and Hendrix, the team learned some relevant history about the Royal Air Force Police whilst fully immersing themselves in the beautiful, autumnal weather whilst fully delivering on the adage going 'round The Wrekin'!

Submitted by: **Leigh Proctor, WO RAF Police & Sy Flt, Royal Air Force Cosford**



Last Post

A chance to pause for a minute in quiet contemplation for our friends and colleagues who have 'passed away'.



Mr. Roy Alden - SDB
Mr. Peter Cook - NEB
Mr. Trevor Cooke - EMB
Mr. Bernard Glasgow - S&NI
Mr. Barrie Gough - WILTS
Mr. Donald Harrison - MID

Mr. John Holmes -SWAB
Mr. John McCabe - NWB
Mr. William (Jim) Phillips - NWB
Mr. Alan Shread - S&NI
Mr. John Twigger - NEB
Mr. William Walker - WAB

Sept 2020 - Dec 2020



Always & Forever

Welcome to New members

Sept 2020 - Dec 2020

Annual Members:

Mr. Christopher Perkins - SWAB

Serving Members

None this time.

National Members

Mark Weaver, David Lisk.

Apologies if your name is not included here, updates will be included in the Septembers Griff 2021.

welcome



Rest in Peace

Alan Shread

The latest copy of The Griff was delivered today. We thought we should inform you, sadly, of the death of our father **Alan Shread**, Retired RAFP Flt Sgt on 17th June 2020. He passed away, at home in Dunfermline, after a short illness. He retired in 1973 from RAF and is survived by his wife, Marion.

Submitted by: **His family**



Bernard Glasgow

I have just spoke with Ben's wife Patricia and ascertained that Ben died at the age of 90 on 12th May. Pat did not know how to contact anyone from the Association hence the late notification. Ben was diagnosed with alzimers some 5 years ago although at first it was slow taking effect but last year he fell and broke his hip and spent some 6 weeks in hospital. On being released home it appeared that his alzimers had really taken hold and Pat, who has had both her hips and knees replaced, could not deal with him as she wished so it was decided that he would be put into a local home, Unfortunately he deteriorated quickly and passed away in May. Pat had wished to have some one from the RAF service environment as neither she or Ben were religious to that extent. However, it appears that she managed to identify a retired Sqn Ldr Alistair Symington who resided a few streets away in Troon and he gladly gave the sermon for Ben's funeral. Due to the lockdown only a total of 12 persons attended the funeral but Pat said that Sqn Ldr Symington made the whole service about Ben, his life and career and it was a lovely service. Apparently it helped that Alistair was from Edinburgh, like Ben, and he (Sqn Ldr) had also many friends within the RAFP during his career.

Submitted by: **Gus McGowan**

RAF Police personnel from RAF Cosford attended the National Memorial Arboretum on 22 Sep 20.



Subscriptions 2021

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New Members Joining 2021

1st January to 30th June

Joining fee £ 8.50

Subscription £ 12.50

1st July to 31st December

Joining fee £ 8.50

Subscription £ 6.50

Serving Members Scheme

Membership for entire service - **FREE**

(Does not include Provost Parade, The Griff or Members Directory).

NOTE: Joint membership may apply to eligible spouses of existing members and to those joining as Serving Members.

One normal joining fee plus £ 1.00

STOP PRESS

Subscriptions:

Subscriptions: Membership Secretary, Steve Lamcraft, wishes to remind all members that subscriptions were due on the 1st January 2021. Please ensure your payments have been made promptly and the correct information is with your Bank if paying by Standing Order.

If paying by cheque they should be made payable to RAFPA and sent to Steve at RAFPA 106A Bradford Street, Braintree, Essex. CM7 9AU. You can also pay by Credit/Debit card via the Payment Gateway at: <https://rafpassociation.com/subscription-gateway/>

Any item from RAFPA Sales will now be actioned by: Wayne Dewfall, Hillside Cottage, Poplar Terrace, Kingswood, Bristol, BS15 4AN. Tel: 07711 851061.

Guide Deadline for the 'July 2021' Edition of 'The Griff' will be May 2021. **Ed.**

RAFPA Sales

B1	Unbleached White Beret* Please indicate size required: 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62cms	£ 8.65
B4	Beret Badge	£ 6.26
B5	Lapel Badge	£ 1.98
B6	RAFPA Blazer Badge	£ 8.50
C1	RAFPA Cufflinks	£ 7.76
C2	RAFPA Adjustable Cumberbund	£14.21
C3	Pocket Handkerchief Black & Red Diagonal Stripes	£ 4.43
C4	RAFP Armband	£ 15.03
C5	Scarf Black/red/black	£ 20.00
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T5	RAFPA Clip-on Tie Black/Red Diagonal Stripes with RAFPA crest	£ 8.79
T6	RAFPA Tie Black & Red Diagonal Stripes with RAFPA Crest	£ 8.00
T8	QPCI Course Tie	£ 10.00
P1	RAFPA Wall Shields, screen printed, light coloured wood base, 150 x 175 mm (5" X 7")	£26.33

Please remember to add **£4.80** for P & P to orders to UK addresses and **£9.00** to overseas addresses.

Cheques made payable to:

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Wayne Dewfall, Hillside Cottage, Poplar Terrace, Kingswood, Bristol, BS15 4AN. Tel: 07711 851061.

or pay via **PayPal** direct to **Association Quartermaster**.

Please write your name & address on the reverse of your order. Depending on stock availability orders will be dispatched within 5 working days of receipt of order.

For those wishing to purchase items from the **RAF Police School "Provost Parade" Shop** a list of merchandise can be found on the main RAFPA web site at:

<http://www.rafpa.com/ppms.htm>

*It is best not to shrink Berets, because they are not made with the same amount of material as the Service issue beret. It is best to lightly spray with water, fit and shape to head and then let dry on an upturned basin, or similar.



Walk Down Memory Lane



David and Margaret Ray on their Wedding Day



David and Margaret Ray



David Ray



David Ray

Where
and when?



David Ray

remember

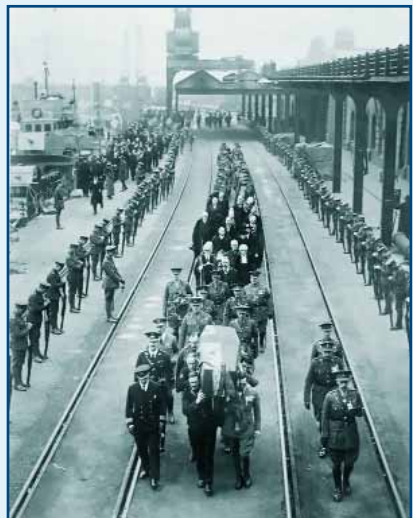




Remembering the 100th Anniversary of the Unknown Soldier

SSAFA, The Armed Forces Charity asks public to remember this often forgotten element of Armistice Day.

11th November, marked the 100th anniversary of the Unknown Warrior - an unidentified body chosen to represent all the soldiers, airmen and sailors who were lost in the First World War. Brigadier General Louis John Wyatt was the General Officer in command of British troops in France and Flanders, as well as Director of graves, registrations, and enquiries. In this capacity, in a makeshift chapel at St Pol in France, Wyatt chose the body of a soldier to represent the Unknown Warrior. This unidentified body was chosen to represent the many lives lost and was buried with reverence in Westminster Abbey.



Submitted by: **Anna Baines - SSAFA**