

**EDINBURGH, LOTHIANS and BORDERS BRANCH  
(SC009110)**



The Edinburgh, Lothians and Borders Branch's geographical area covers the "whole of the South East of Scotland". Therefore, keeping in touch with over 400 members who may be located elsewhere in the UK, overseas and of course serving, is not an easy task. But with our high quality quarterly Branch Newsletter reaching something like 2,500 per year, plus over 60 Christmas Cards and our continuing Welfare efforts – I believe we are achieving worthwhile and in many cases the only contact with our members and supporters.

Throughout the year, we have continued to contribute to the RAF Association Wings Appeal"; with our help a total of £18,190.54 was taken at our two Scottish Airshows and a share has been credited to the branch. It should be noted that any rebate received is calculated after expenses are debited i.e. resource costs. Rebates to the Branch once all calculations are made are returned to the Branch and are ring-fenced for "local" welfare delivery. Therefore, the total efforts of the branch for Wings during 2016 is estimated to be over £9,000. This is only achieved with the support of dedicated branch members, our Air Cadet Partners and 603 Reserve Squadron.

As well as representing RAFA at individual funerals at the request of families; 10 RAFA wreaths were laid throughout the branch area in November, with an additional 7 Poppies laid on individual RAF war graves in Dalkeith. This year members of the branch were pleased and honoured to provide one of the Vigil Watches (0100 to 0200 hours) during the Somme Vigil held at the Scottish National War Memorial in June. The branch has also been particularly pleased this year to help celebrate two

special RAF WW2 veteran birthdays; Violet Turner who marked her 102<sup>nd</sup> birthday and Ernie Thomas who was 100 years old this year.

The Edinburgh, Lothians and Borders Branch endeavours to take an interest and participate in the wider world of RAFA and the Veterans Community and has raised concerns and had dialogue with both Area and Central HQ with regard to Data Protection, Membership Data-base and changes in Welfare and Befriending. The Branch continues to reach out to the wider veteran's community and has contributed to the regular meetings of the "Legion Scotland Edinburgh & South East Scotland Veterans Group" and has recently established contact with the "Lothians Veterans Centre in Dalkeith and the Scottish Mobile Military Museum (mobile educational/awareness facility currently with a temporary base at Linburn in West Lothian". The Branch Chairman has subsequently been nominated to represent RAFA at the "Scottish Parliament Cross-party Group on Armed Forces and the Veterans Community" held in Holyrood.

Finally; it is with great pleasure that the Branch has been advised that it has been awarded "The Senior Branch Efficiency Trophy" for 2016 within the Scotland & Northern Ireland RAF Association Area.

Bob Bertram

Chairman