



The charity that supports the RAF family

EDINBURGH, LOTHIANS and BORDERS BRANCH

(a charity registered in Scotland: SC009110)

Trustees' Annual Report

Period: From 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2017

“Be Part of Something Special”



Charity contact information

Bob Bertram MBE; Charity Principal Contact

Edinburgh, Lothians and Borders Branch

The Royal Air Forces Association

Scottish Charity Number: SC009110

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Susan Kidston; Branch Secretary (for Branch Correspondence)

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Charity Trustees

Name all of your charity trustees for the period, and the date they left if they were not in post for the whole year

1. Robert Bertram MBE (Chairman) – retired August 2017, co-opted November 2017 as “Interim Chairman”.
2. Lewis Ritchie (Vice Chairman) – February 2017 elected as Trustee, August 2017 co-opted as “Interim Chairman”, extended leave of absence November 2017 (see note below).
3. Susan Kidston (Secretary & Wings Organiser, Air Cadet Liaison)
4. David Prior (Member & Treasurer, Webmaster)
5. George Prentice (Member & Branch Honorary Welfare Officer, Standard Bearer)
6. George Megahy (Member)
7. William Mounsey (Member & Branch Chaplain)
8. Sue Gillot (Member & Social Secretary)
9. James Scott MBE (Member & Branch Life Vice President)

NOTES:

1. At Branch Annual General Meeting on 25 February 2018; Robert Bertram elected as Chairman, Lewis Ritchie no longer a charity trustee.

2. Non-Committee/Trustee Branch support (Branch Newsletter Editor, Membership Secretary, Data Processor) – Brian Fox.

Non-Committee/Trustee Branch Support (Branch Assistant Honorary Welfare Officer) – Hamish Reid.

Non-Committee/Trustee Branch Support (Branch Assistant Welfare Officer) – Steve Wright.

Object, Purpose and Policy

OBJECT: *The object for which the Association is established is to promote, through the comradeship engendered by its members, the welfare by charitable means of all serving and former members of Our Air Forces, their spouses and dependants, together with the widows and widowers and dependants of those who died whilst serving or subsequently.*

PURPOSE

RAFA, the Royal Air Forces Association (or RAF Association), is a membership organisation and registered charity that provides welfare support to the RAF Family.

The RAF Family includes all serving and ex-serving personnel and their dependants. To be eligible for welfare support, for both themselves and those who depend upon them, service personnel need to have served a minimum of one day in the RAF.

The Association exists in the recognition that RAF personnel and their immediate families dedicate their lives to their country, and to ensure that such a sacrifice does not result in suffering, poverty or loneliness.

Policy (extract from Rules & By-laws)

The Association shall be democratic, non-sectarian and non-party political and shall not be affiliated, directly or indirectly, to any sectarian organisation or to any political party or party organisation or staff organisation. In no circumstances shall the Association or any of the Area Councils, Regional Committees or Branches publically express any views in connection with any political or industrial dispute or engage in any activities in connection therewith.

Structure, governance and management

By Royal Charter, originally granted 1952; renewed 2016.

(copy available from the charity website)

Trustee recruitment and appointment

Those individuals wishing to serve as Branch Committee/Charity Trustees (Branch Officers and Additional Committee Members) are required to be nominated and supported by a Proposer and Seconder; the supported nomination will then be put to assembled Branch Members attending our Annual General Meeting in February each year. Although not formally required; a similar process is followed for “Active Supporters” i.e. significant non Committee Members who volunteer and fulfill the various non-committee/trustee (albeit vital roles) within the branch. No other external organisations are permitted to appoint a Committee Member/Trustee.

When new Trustees are appointed they are given an induction to the work of the Association and the Branch/Charity; and provided with the information they need to fulfil their duties. This includes information about the role of Trustees and charity law; also the requirements of the Association's Governing Document “The Royal Charter 2016”, the RAFA Governance Document (Rules & By-laws) and other relevant Branch governance documents (including financial).

It should be noted that “Succession Planning” for new additions to the Committee/Trustees and in particular for a Vice Chairman have not borne fruit over the last couple of years. However; the Committee are committed to continuing with this aspiration and thus add to the collective skills and experience for the benefit of our branch, the RAF Association and its beneficiaries.

MEMBERSHIP (extract from Royal Charter)

Membership of the Association shall consist of such classes of members as shall be prescribed and shall be open to all persons who are serving or have served in one of Our Air Forces and who qualify in accordance with the Rules.

The expression Our Air Forces shall be deemed to include all or any of the following Air Forces of the United Kingdom: (a) The Royal Flying Corps; (b) The Royal Naval Air Service (before the first day April 1918); (c) The Royal Air Force; (d) The Women's Auxiliary Air Force; (e) The Women's Royal Air Force; (f) Princess Mary's Royal Air Force Nursing Service and Reserves thereof; (g) The Auxiliary Air Force; (h) The Royal Auxiliary Air Force; (i) The Special Reserve; (j) The Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve; (k) The Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve (Training Branch).

The expression Our Air Forces shall also be deemed to include:

(a) All or any of the Air Forces of those Nations who are members of the Commonwealth; (b) All or any of the Air Forces at the time of membership of the Commonwealth of those Nations who have now left the Commonwealth; (c) The Air Forces of Our Colonies and Dependencies; (d) The Air Transport Auxiliary. (e) The Royal Observer Corps. (f) An Air Cadet Organisation.

Additional information

How it all began – a brief history of the RAF Association

In 1929, in the Sergeants' Mess at RAF Andover, three men named Vernon Goodhand, Joe Pearce and Warrant Officer Bartlett met to discuss the formation of a single organisation dedicated to the welfare of serving and ex-serving RAF personnel: one which would replace the many smaller organisations that had grown to keep former servicemen in touch since the end of the First World War.

*By 1930 a provisional committee had been formed called "**Comrades of the Royal Air Forces Association**" (CRAFA) and the first general*

meeting of the new organisation took place at the Queen's Hotel, Leicester Square, London.

Air Ministry support for the Comrades came in 1933 when the Air Council officially recognised the organisation and Lord Trenchard accepted the Presidency.

Throughout the early thirties the new Association made rapid progress, establishing benevolent schemes and distributing Christmas hampers to unemployed members.

*Then, in 1936, King George VI gave his patronage – and the Association has been honoured with **Royal patronage** ever since. Following the outbreak of war in 1939, the Women's Auxiliary Air Force reformed, and the **Women's Royal Air Force Old Comrades Association** (created in 1919) opened its membership to all ranks of the new female air service. In 1941, the two Old Comrades organisations for airmen and airwomen merged, resulting in a combined membership of nearly 20,000 (currently circa 70,000).*

*By 1943, with more than a million serving in the RAF, the organisation's name was changed to the **Royal Air Forces Association**. A National Council, under the chairmanship of Air Chief Marshal Sir John Steel was formed to replace the Central committee of CRAFA.*

The foundations of the charity's present structure were laid during the remaining wartime years, and the Association was fully prepared for the consequences of demobilisation, which began in 1945.

The origins of the "Edinburgh, Lothians and Borders Branch" of RAFA go back to 16 October 1931 when it was formed as a branch of the "Comrades of the RAF Association" Therefore it is fair to claim that EL&B (previously Edinburgh Branch) is one of the founder branches of the Royal Air Forces Association.

Achievements and performance

Introduction

This Branch's geographical area covers the "whole of the South East of Scotland". Thus, engaging with over 400 members, including those who may be located elsewhere in the UK, overseas and over 100 serving is not an easy task, but one the committee/trustees take very seriously. With our high quality and widely read quarterly Branch Newsletter reaching over 3,000 per year, plus nearly 70 Christmas Cards, various social events and our continuing Welfare efforts – we believe we are achieving worthwhile and in many cases "the only" contact with our members and supporters throughout the year.

Membership

During 2017 Branch Membership has increased from 406 at the beginning of the year to 423 at end of year. Current membership make-up is as follows:

Ordinary (full) Members = 158

Associate Members = 29

Serving = 104

Honorary Life Members = 4

Life Members = 128

Wings (the RAF Association's national fund-raising project)

To support direct welfare delivery and other support services for serving RAF, ex-serving, their families and dependants i.e. "The RAF Family". It should be noted that membership of the RAF Association is not a requirement for receiving support.

Despite generous contributions from a small number of our partners, the "wash-out" experienced at the East Fortune Air Show 2017 vastly reduced our share of the takings generated by the RAFA Leicester

and Area based Mobile Exhibition vehicles. However, despite this set-back a fund-raising total of £3,149.86 was achieved during the year, 20% of which is returned to the Branch in the form of a rebate ringfenced for branch welfare.

Appreciation for their fund-raising on our behalf must be given to the RAF Air Cadets (ATC) units within our branch area, 603 RAF Reserve Squadron, The Church of the Good Shepherd Murrayfield Edinburgh and donations given to the branch by individuals.



Branch Fund-raisers on the streets of Edinburgh & Branch Wings Organiser Susan Kidston receiving her Area Presidential Certificate from Area President Air Vice Marshal David Niven at Scotland & NI Area Conference in Glasgow last year.

Welfare

The RAF Association, the charity that supports the RAF family

The Branch Honorary Welfare Manager manages a welfare team consisting of himself, 2 Assistants and 8 volunteer “Helpers/Visitors” (befrienders).

As in previous years; the Branch Welfare Team has been very active and during 2017 made 139 face to face visits to members of the RAF Family, a total of 202 non face to face contacts have also been made, with 2196 miles travelled by our volunteers delivering welfare.

The branch welfare team are to be commended for their nomination for the “Inspiring Volunteer Awards Edinburgh in 2017”.



There has been a large increase in the number of face-to-face contacts made during 2017, this largely due to the additional input from the branch welfare helpers delivering TLC (Tender Loving Care) visits. The non-direct contacts take the form of phone calls, letters, e-mails, cards (including Christmas Cards & newsletters).

It is worth remembering just how important these various contacts can be, as 'loneliness' has been identified as one of the major causes of ill health or lack of wellbeing. RAFA have launched a 'befriender' programme nationally; but with very mixed results within our area, therefore the bulk of this work is still falling to the branch TLC volunteers. Welfare cases appear to be becoming even more complex and time consuming; with one case in 2017 involving the Army Benevolent Fund and the Benevolent Fund of the Royal Logistical Corps. We should bear in mind that although money is important, even more important is that our "RAF Family Members" know that they are not forgotten and this can in turn enable them to take steps forward, rather than giving up in despair.

Assisting members of the RAF Family to make use of the "RAFA Wings Hotels" at Rothbury House in Northumberland, Richard Peck House in Lytham St Annes and Flowerdown House in Weston-Super-mare. All three whose facilities continue to receive consistently high praise from those who make use of them.

The Edinburgh, Lothian's and Borders Branch continues to deliver its welfare commitment for our friends in the RAF Family; thus achieving

the objectives of the Branch Welfare Strategy , this only possible due to the efforts, commitment and dedication of a small branch welfare team.

Remembrance

As well as representing RAFA at individual funerals at the request of families; as in previous years 10 RAFA wreaths were laid throughout the branch area in 2017 (at least one wreath in each of the Branch's 5 constituent local authority areas), with an additional 7 individual Poppies laid on individual RAF war graves in Dalkeith.



Partnerships

The Branch continues to develop its “partnerships” with various other organisations; and we hope that these connections will be mutually beneficial to them, the Branch and RAF Association as a whole. Therefore, we commend our current partners and wish them well in their particular endeavours.



Certificate of appreciation from our partner The Military Museum Scotland (Linburn West Lothian)



Presentation of the branch “Group Captain Marvin Trophy” to cadets of our partner RAF Air Cadet Squadron 1271 (Bathgate) by Keith Brown MSP, Scottish Government Veterans Minister. This trophy is awarded to the RAF Air Cadet unit that collects the most for RAFA Wings during the year.

Other partners are:

603 (Reserve) Squadron RAF, The Scottish Veterans Residences Edinburgh and 7 currently developing Veterans Support Services/Breakfast Clubs within our branch area.

Financial review

Statement of the charity's policy on reserves

Our Reserves Policy is:

“The invested money and General Account balance as of the beginning of the 2018 financial year leaves usable funds to be utilized by both General and Welfare accounts for the remainder of 2018 with reserve funds sufficient to sustain the Branch for a minimum period of six months”.

Details of any deficit

An “operational difference” between Income & Expenditure in 2017 shows minus £1,812. This in the Trustees view evidences an efficient and effective use of charity funds through the year; therefore the Trustees do not deem this difference to be a “deficit” as such.

It should be noted that the Branch's efforts in providing a welfare delivery service resulted in attracting a total of £4,482.45 in grants for RAF Family beneficiaries; these being “Restricted Funds” which were then disbursed to the benefit of those in need.

Donated facilities and services

A total of £2,054.82 was disbursed as donations during the year:

Christmas Cards to those of the RAF Family as a gesture of “Friendship, Help and Support”.

Military Museum Scotland (West Lothian) to support Veteran's Support Services (in support of Veterans Drop-in-Centre & Breakfast Club).

RAFA Scotland & NI Area towards Area Conference 2017 costs.

Richard Peck House (Lytham St Anne's) RAFA “Wings Hotel”.

Rothbury House (Rothbury) RAFA “Wings Hotel”.

Future plans

The Edinburgh, Lothians and Borders Branch will continue to take an interest and participate in the wider world of RAFA and the Veterans Community; and will raise issues/make recommendations to both Area (Scotland & NI) and RAFA Headquarters in Leicester.

In addition, it is expected that the Branch Committee/Trustees will continue to focus on “succession planning” (branch officers), increasing membership (including that of the branch committee), continued development of Partnerships, reviewing our Wings Fund-raising strategy and branch/charity governance.

Declaration

Signed on behalf of the charity trustees:

R.W. Bertram MBE

Branch Chairman

Date: 27 March 2018

