

ON THE RADAR

SUPPORTING FORMER AND SERVING MEMBERS OF THE RAF AND THEIR FAMILIES.



STANDING SIDE-BY-SIDE WITH THE RAF FAMILY THIS SUMMER

Welcome to our latest newsletter, full of information about how we can support you.

Summer has arrived! After a long and, for many, difficult winter, warmer days and lighter nights are very welcome.

This edition of *On The Radar* delves into the support on offer from our Community Engagement Workers, who can help lonely or isolated RAF Family members find and enjoy social activities. Plus, hear what we're doing to mark the 80th anniversary of the Dambusters Raid, how we support RAF Family members worldwide, and from one of the competitors who represented the Fund at the Veteran Games in Israel.

If you think you could benefit from any of our support mentioned in this issue, just give us a call or send us an email – we're here for you today and always.



CALL: 0300 102 1919



EMAIL: welfare Navigators@rafbf.org.uk

- ✓ EMOTIONAL WELLBEING
- ✓ FRIENDSHIPS AND CONNECTIONS
- ✓ FAMILY AND RELATIONSHIPS

- ✓ INDEPENDENT LIVING
- ✓ FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

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HOW OUR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT WORKERS CAN HELP YOU

Our Community Engagement Workers (CEWs) support RAF Family members to find social activities and friendships and get involved in their communities. Why not get in touch?

We now have CEWs in Cambridgeshire, Norfolk, Suffolk, Lincolnshire, West Sussex, Hampshire, Kent and Nottinghamshire, ready to help you.

We caught up with CEW Sophie Napleton to hear how she supports veterans in West Sussex.

"Typically my week starts off with checking emails for referrals. Once a referral comes through, I usually create a plan of action with the person looking for support, researching suitable local activities that we can attend together," says Sophie.

"I also connect them to other Fund services that may be useful to them, such as our Telephone Friendship Groups. Another event I run is a monthly breakfast club at the Tangmere Museum of Aviation, which is great fun."

Group holidays

Sophie recently helped run a group break, where RAF veterans and partners of veterans – all of whom were feeling lonely or isolated – went away together for four days.

Sophie says: "By the end of the break friendships had been made, numbers had been swapped and feelings of isolation and loneliness had been reduced significantly."

"Everyone had a very enriching time and, for some, it was the first time they had been on holiday in

many years. It's a privilege being able to offer help and support to the RAF Family."

Get in touch with a CEW

If you are experiencing feelings of loneliness or isolation, please reach out to our Community Engagement Workers by calling **0300 102 1919**, and we will help connect you to local activities and groups.

FROM NORMANDY TO NEW ZEALAND – OUR GLOBAL SUPPORT

Our Community Engagement Workers are there for people in communities around England. Did you know we also support RAF Family members around the world?

In 2022, we gave grants to people in 33 countries, including Phyllis 'Pippa' Latour. We've supported Pippa with the costs of continuing to live in her own home for the past decade.

Once a Special Operations Executive agent acting behind enemy lines during the Second World War, Pippa is now 102 and lives in New Zealand.

She was a member of the Women's Auxiliary Air Force when she was seconded to the Special

Operations Executive in 1943. In 1944 she parachuted into Nazi-controlled Normandy to act as a wireless telegraphy operator. Pippa, posing as a schoolgirl, supplied intelligence that would lead to the bombers being brought in. On D-Day she watched as Allied troops stormed Normandy.

Her work made a significant impact on the Allied victory and she was awarded the Croix de Guerre for bravery and made a Member of the British Empire.

"Thanks to the Fund from all my heart for giving me the quality of life to reach my centenary milestone." - Pippa Latour.

GOING FOR GOLD!

After RAF policewoman Ann Hughes was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis (MS), we were by her side. Now, she has been able to take part in the Veteran Games in Israel on behalf of the Fund.

Working in the RAF for two decades, being a runner and taking part in expeditions, Ann has always been up for a challenge. But nothing could prepare her for her MS diagnosis in 2007.

Ann started her career in the RAF police in 1990. She did a tour in Iraq and detachments in Italy and Cyprus, plus postings in Germany. She met her RAF firefighter husband Mick while they were both stationed in the Shetland Islands and had their daughter Lauren, now 23.

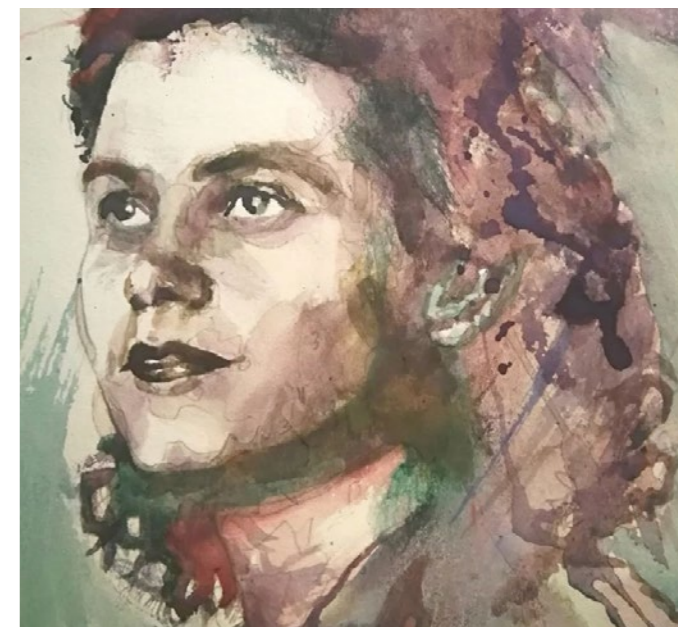
Ann was medically discharged from the RAF in 2009 due to her condition deteriorating. Feeling depressed and unwell, she contacted the Fund for support.

"It was frightening," Ann says. "After being in the Air Force for so long, I was lost. I don't like asking for help but I'm so glad I contacted the Fund."

"My MS affects my walking, my eyes, everything really. I get a lot of spasms and fatigue, and can't walk far. I have to use a wheelchair for distances. The Fund stepped in and found a house which we now rent. They adapted the whole place and also provided me with a mobility scooter. The Fund has been like another family."

Representing us in Israel

In May 2023, Ann went to the Veteran Games in Israel on behalf of the Fund, where she enjoyed



A portrait of Pippa by Quinn Lockman

sporting, social and cultural activities with other military veterans and their families.

"I used to be so active and took part in sailing, skiing and mountaineering. But since leaving the RAF I haven't been involved in these sorts of activities, which has left me feeling quite isolated," says Ann. "It was great to connect with other veterans with similar interests and experiences."



"The Fund has been like another family." - Ann Hughes

QUIZ

Give our quiz a go and see how well you know your RAF!

1. Aeronautical engineer RJ Mitchell has been credited as the sole designer of the Spitfire. But what did he originally want to call the aircraft?
2. The Royal Air Force Memorial on London's Victoria Embankment is surmounted by a gilded eagle and an inscription. What does the inscription say?
3. Who was the first Patron of the RAF Benevolent Fund?
4. What was unique about the RAF Eagle Squadrons?
5. Who commanded 617 Squadron during the Dambusters Raid?

1. Shrew, 2. I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you unto myself, 3. King George VI, 4. They were Americans, 5. Guy Gibson

HONOURING BRAVERY

We're marking the 80th anniversary of the Dambusters Raid throughout 2023.

On the night of 16-17 May 1943, the RAF's 617 Squadron carried out Operation Chastise, an audacious bombing raid attacking dams serving the Ruhr valley, leaving German factories and mines badly damaged.

We're marking the 80th anniversary of this key moment and honouring the bravery of those who took part with a dedicated website telling their story. Visit rafbf.org/dambusters to read

about the raid, share your memories and leave a dedication.

257 people also took part in our event The Dambusters Ride in mid-May to pay homage to the Dambusters and raise money for the Fund. Cyclists rode either 40, 80 or 100 miles starting and finishing at Woodhall Spa, Lincolnshire, the home of 617 Squadron. Thank you to everyone who took part to support the RAF Family!



WORD SEARCH

P S X F K O T Y A G F H
R P D P W Z S C E G L C
I G A T A V T O Z B J Q
D U M M Y F A M I L Y N
E P B X G F F M A L C H
Q C U P O C V U L C A N
I A S L L L W N F F R W
R H T Q D H C I J X E M
B F E D Q E Z T M M R F
H O R I Z O N Y S A S W
L F S G C U K L N G H Y
H J E C E N T E N A R Y

VULCAN
DAMBUSTERS
CARERS

HORIZON
COMMUNITY
PRIDE

GOLD
CENTENARY
FAMILY

100 YEARS OF THE RAF MEMORIAL

The RAF Memorial – which we maintain for the nation – has stood proud on the banks of the River Thames since 1923.

The RAF Benevolent Fund was originally known as the Royal Air Force Memorial Fund as one of our charitable objectives was to raise money for a memorial for airmen who died in the Great War.

Every Remembrance Day the Fund lays a wreath and on 16 July we will be commemorating 100 years of the Memorial.

To learn more about the memorials we are honoured to maintain, visit rafbf.org/memorials

To read previous editions of this newsletter visit: rafbf.org/ontheradar



**Royal Air Force
Benevolent Fund**