

## Update to Supporting Trusts

December 2015

The RAF Benevolent Fund would like to thank you for your support. Here we provide a brief overview of the past year at the RAF's leading welfare charity.

### 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Battle of Britain

This year the nation paid tribute to the bravery and sacrifice of 'The Few' Battle of Britain pilots who protected Great Britain's skies from Nazi invasion. Sergeant Stan Hartill was 19 years old when he joined the RAF, servicing Spitfires at Middle Wallop for one week when the Battle broke out.



Recently the RAF Benevolent Fund helped Stan, 95, with the maintenance charge on his flat after it was increased by 20 per cent. We also provided financial assistance to help run his daughter's car so that she can take him shopping, which also helps him get out of the house. Stan tells us how he remembers those brave young pilots who never made the final journey home.

"If you saw how young those pilots were when they took off in their Spitfires, never once thinking of their own safety, you, like me, would have nothing but admiration for them. I was a member of the ground crew team and we got to know some of the pilots very well. They knew we were outnumbered but they still went into the skies to protect us, day in, day out.

"Of course many did not return – 33 per cent of those who fought in the Battle of Britain were injured or lost their lives – that's a staggering figure. We would never refer to a pilot as having died – there's an RAF saying – 'Billy Brown has bought it' – and that's what we'd say.

"I still think about those young men today and the huge sacrifices they made. I was also part of D-Day landings and was honoured to receive the Légion d'honneur from the French government recently.

"I remember one day visiting a church in Normandy and seeing lying down the whole side of one aisle about 50 young allied dead soldiers. Not one looked a day over 18. I keep seeing them there to this day and it still touches me. I hope we never, ever forget their sacrifice."

During September the RAF Benevolent Fund organised a number of activities to commemorate the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the decisive Battle.

These included a nationwide Great British Sunday Lunch, a sponsored Brompton bicycle ride from Paris to London, and a black tie dinner with some of 'The Few' in attendance, held at RAF Northolt (pictured, right).



## Reaching out to the Loneliest Veterans

This year the RAF Benevolent Fund published 'Meeting the Needs of the RAF Family', co-authored by Compass Partnership. This report was designed to discover the needs of today's RAF Family and ensure that we are in a position to continue meeting them. The study found that a significant number of veterans, both young and old, are experiencing depression, loneliness, relationship troubles, and bereavement. These concerns join self-care and mobility as the top welfare needs of the RAF veteran community.

To address these needs head on, we have developed an Individual Support Service to provide tailored assistance to vulnerable, isolated or bereaved members of the RAF Family. Dedicated and specially-trained staff are now the first point of call for those requiring assistance, providing customised support to address each individual's circumstances. This new service builds on our recent Advice and Advocacy Service and long running mobility provision, individual financial support and many other services.

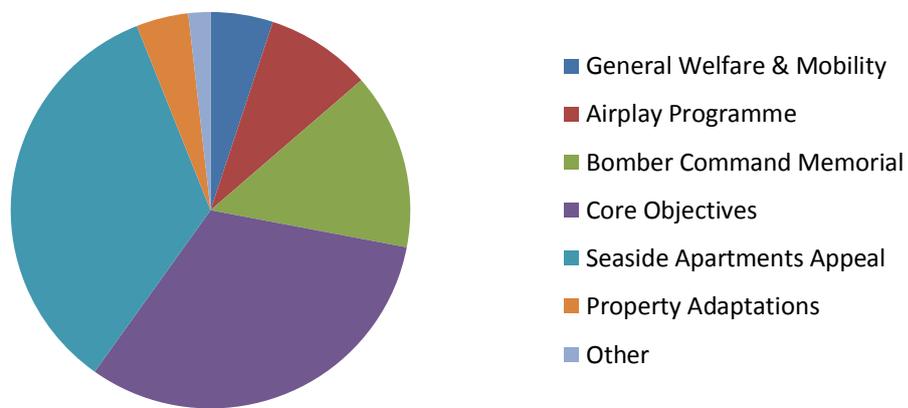
Air Commodore Paul Hughesdon, Director of Welfare and Policy, said: "With the marking of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of the Britain this year, the thought of these proud men and women suffering in silence, having served their country, is saddening and unacceptable. Our new Individual Support Service is designed to help those in the RAF family, whatever their age, by providing practical and emotional assistance."



## Funding in 2015

As a team we have been working to diversify our income streams in order to ensure that the RAF Benevolent Fund can continue to meet the RAF Family's needs. Funding from trusts and foundations has grown overall in the past year and we are very grateful for such generosity.

We have been fundraising towards the charity's strategic programme areas, including general welfare and mobility grants for veterans and their dependants; the Airplay Programme to support Serving families on 23 of the RAF stations across the country; the endowment fund and maintenance of the Bomber Command Memorial; as well as securing funds towards our core charitable objectives.



Additional developments this year have been a capital appeal to provide two new holiday apartments for Serving families adjacent to Princess Marina House on the South Coast; and a programme to adapt homes for wounded, injured and sick ex-personnel, following a lead grant secured from the Ministry of Defence's Veterans Accommodation Fund in 2014.

We warmly thank you for your kind support and look forward to keeping you informed of the RAF Benevolent Fund's news and activities in 2016. Everyone who works here wishes you a Happy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year.

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## Contact Us

We are happy to host visits, in London or our other offices, by trustees and personnel of trusts and grant-makers, to present the work we undertake on behalf of the RAF Family. Please do not hesitate to contact either of the RAF Benevolent Fund's trust fundraisers:

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