



Update to Supporting Trusts Spring 2017

We are pleased to update you on how your support is helping to meet the needs of the RAF Family.

Aiming for Independence

Helping wounded, injured and sick RAF veterans is a core aspect of the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund's delivery of welfare. The form that this support takes varies enormously and depends entirely on need. In our commitment to all in the RAF Family, we also help family dependants with a disability.

Through our research study, *Meeting the Needs of the RAF Family*, published with Compass Partnership in 2015, 35% of RAF veterans were found to have a long-term condition or disability limiting their day-to-day activities; in contrast with 21% of the UK adult population.

Each year we spend around 20% of our income supporting the RAF family with mobility needs.



This figure rises to 61% of RAF veterans overall, who have a disability or long-term health condition that could worsen and potentially start hindering daily life. Moreover, the number of people who are disabled will likely grow, due to general increased length of life and ever improving medical treatments.



We found that 195,000 of the RAF veteran community suffer as a result of mobility problems, second only to the issue of self-care (205,000). Thanks to our supporters, we are able to step in and provide a life line to veterans like former Senior Aircraftman Mark Dudley.

As an ex-RAF serviceman, Mark, 48, considers himself to be strong in mind. But being in constant pain for ten years, after surgery for Slipping Rib Syndrome damaged his nerves, brought him very low.

Seeing him struggling to cope, Mark's wife Nadine suggested

that they get a mobility scooter. When they discovered an all-terrain kart that would handle even the steep paths and mud of their native Exmoor with ease, it seemed like a turning point for the family. But with Mark retired on medical grounds, such a kart was financially out of their reach. This is where the RAF Benevolent Fund was able to help.

“I applied on the off chance”, says Mark, “and it’s made such a wonderful and life changing difference to what I can do and where I can go. My daughters jump on the back and we whistle around.”

Thanks to the Fund’s support, Mark’s quality of life has improved dramatically. He has his independence back and feels optimistic about the future. Mark says: “We have loads of fun again, as a family. Life is good again.”

RAF Regiment 75th

The RAF Regiment has played a vital role in major operations across the world, including World War II, Northern Ireland, the Falkland Islands and Afghanistan. The RAF Benevolent Fund has provided assistance to many members of the RAF Regiment and their families over the years.



The catalyst for the RAF Regiment's formation, in 1942, was the fall of France two years earlier, when the Germans' unique use of mobility and surprise, 'Blitzkrieg', demonstrated the vulnerability of airfields that were long considered safe. The Regiment's role was to seize, secure and defend airfields to enable air operations to take place.

The modern-day RAF Regiment is trained in CBRN (chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear) defence, and is equipped with advanced vehicles and detection measures. RAF Regiment instructors are also responsible for training all RAF personnel in basic force protection such as first aid, weapon handling and CBRN skills.

The Regiment and its members are known within the RAF as 'The Regiment', 'Rock Apes' or 'Rocks'. After a 32-week trainee gunner course, its members are trained and equipped to prevent a successful enemy attack in the first instance; minimise the damage caused by a successful attack; and ensure that air operations can continue without delay in the aftermath of an attack.

Since its formation, the [Queen's Colour Squadron](#) (the unit charged with the safe-keeping of the Queen's Colour) has been manned exclusively by officers and men of the RAF Regiment. A dual operational role for the Regiment's 63 Squadron, QCS are responsible for representing the RAF at various significant occasions. The unit has mounted the guard at royal residences and formed guards of honour for various visiting heads of state at its current base of RAF Northolt.

The RAF Regiment is a very specialist organisation that has such a varied history in such a short time when compared to much older units.

Award Nominee

The Constance Travis Charitable Trust is one of many longstanding trust supporters of the charity. Since 2010, the Trust has made donations towards a range of welfare services, in memory of Constance Travis who served in the Royal Air Force during World War II.

In recognition of its regular generosity, we are delighted to have shortlisted The Constance Travis Charitable Trust for a 2017 RAFBF Award, in the category Outstanding Support from an Organisation. The RAFBF Awards take place on 20th April in central London.

Most recently, the Trustees have donated towards the RAF Disabled Holiday Trust, which enables disabled members of the RAF Family to holiday on equal terms with their able-bodied loved ones at hotels and resorts on the Holiday Property Bond.



The Disabled Holiday Trust (run by the RAFBF) operates on a membership basis, whereby holidaymakers are granted a holiday every two years, before re-joining the queue.

Every £12,000 raised through the generosity of trusts and donors allows the RAF Benevolent Fund to purchase extra Holiday Property Bond units, thus shortening members' waiting time.

If you would be interested in supporting this service, please do not hesitate to specify this to us.

The Patron's Fund

In February we celebrated receiving a £2,500 gift from The Patron's Fund, the charitable fund set up to acknowledge the work of the charitable organisations for which Her Majesty The Queen acts as a Patron, on the occasion of her 90th birthday.

This gift will be used to support the costs of our Lunch Club service at Princess Marina House (PMH), our respite centre on the South Coast. The Lunch Club brings elderly RAF veterans together and provides meals, afternoon entertainment and transport to and from PMH for those who need it. This funding will help continue the service on a daily basis and allow us to plan for the Club's continuation in 2018.



“The RAF Benevolent Fund is delighted to have Her Majesty The Queen as our Patron and thank The Patron's Fund for this generous gift.”

– Air Vice-Marshal David Murray, CEO

Mental Wellbeing



Stress and trauma experienced during service can lead to anxiety, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and depression. According to recent research, one in five veterans are likely to be living with a common mental health illness but many do not seek the help they need. It can be difficult to reach out for help when you are feeling stressed or anxious.

Anxiety UK and the RAF Benevolent Fund are now working in partnership to provide much-needed support to veterans and their families for their mental health needs. You are helping us to provide a new dedicated helpline for those who are struggling, enabling us to offer quick, practical and emotional support during their darkest hours. As well as therapy and counselling, we offer support through email, and self-help books.

RAF Benevolent Fund beneficiaries describe how this new service made a real and lasting impact upon their lives:

“At times it was as if my counsellor had waved a magic wand, helping me to realise things and come to solutions. I appreciate all your efforts. They have not been in vain.”

“I have not had any other treatment that has been quite so effective. I cannot praise it enough.”



The Update to Supporting Trusts is produced in-house at the RAF Benevolent Fund, at minimal cost to the charity. If you would like further copies, for example for members of your Board of Trustees, please do not hesitate to let us know.

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