



# ON THE RADAR

Here for former and serving members of the RAF  
and their families – at Christmas and all year round.

## MERRY CHRISTMAS!

Welcome to the second edition of our newsletter – packed with details of the help we can offer you during the festive season and beyond.



**With Christmas coming up, the weather getting colder and Covid-19 restrictions still with us, it's a good time to remind you of all the ways we can support you.**

Over the following pages you can read about how we helped adapt RAF veteran Leroy's home so he could live independently, how we

can help you with benefits and relationship support, and much more. Plus, there's a fun quiz and word search for you to enjoy.

Whether you need financial, emotional, or practical support, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Happy Christmas from everyone at the RAF Benevolent Fund – and warmest wishes for the New Year.

## HERE TO HELP YOU AT HOME

We can support you to live independently and happily at home for as long as possible.

Even though he was sleeping in his dining room and washing at a downstairs utility room sink, veteran Leroy Francis was still reluctant to ask the Fund for help. But when he did, it was life-changing.

Former RAF Sergeant Leroy, who enjoyed a 28-year career as a Weapons Systems Engineer, struggled for months until we stepped in, following a multiple sclerosis relapse which left him with severe weakness. Leroy said: "The Fund was amazing. They put in a stairlift, assisted in the conversion of my bathroom into a wet room and provided a recliner armchair, new double bed and support with my care needs. It has made a huge difference to my life.

"It was really terrible before the Fund stepped in. Their support has given me that independence, that ability to have some kind of normal life and focus on getting myself to where I need to be."

**As we have all spent more time at home this year, having a comfortable place to relax is more important than ever. We can help with house**



Image supplied by SSAFA

**adaptations, equipment like mobility scooters or riser and recliner chairs, and essential household repairs. Find out more at: [rafbf.org/independent](https://rafbf.org/independent)**

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**FREE CALL**  
**0300 102 1919**  
[rafbf.org/festive](https://rafbf.org/festive)

- ✓ FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE
- ✓ WELLBEING BREAKS
- ✓ FAMILY & RELATIONSHIPS

- ✓ EMOTIONAL WELLBEING
- ✓ INDEPENDENT LIVING
- ✓ TRANSITION

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## A BOY'S BEST FRIEND

A heart-warming tale for this time of year: thanks to our grant, four-year-old Yian, who has autism, has a new friend – assistance dog Coco.



Earlier this year, four-year-old Yian Luxton was diagnosed with autism. "Yian finds it difficult to make connections with other people, but seems to have an affinity with animals," says his mum, Gemma, an RAF medic.

Thanks to a grant from the Fund, Yian now has support from specially-trained assistance dog Coco. "We're hoping Coco will be a best friend for him," says Gemma. "If he gets overcome or compulsive,

Coco can take charge through nuzzling and licking Yian to calm and comfort him."

**This is just one example of the tailored approach we take to all grants for the RAF Family. Could we help you? Contact us to find out more.**

**// We're hoping Coco will be a best friend for him."**

## WATCH OUR REMEMBRANCE SERVICE ONLINE

Our service of Remembrance from the Bomber Command Memorial paid tribute to all those who made the ultimate sacrifice during the Second World War.

On 31 October we held a service of Remembrance at the Bomber Command Memorial in Green Park, London, which was broadcast online. The service honoured the 55,573 men of Bomber Command who were killed during the Second World War. Coronavirus restrictions meant the event had to be staged virtually this year.

The service included prayers, readings and a one-minute silence. As we are commemorating the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Britain, RAF author and historian Steve Darlow also gave a short history of Bomber Command, with a particular focus on their often-forgotten activities during the Battle of Britain.



Watch the recording of the service at: [rafbf.org/bcm](http://rafbf.org/bcm)

## QUIZ

A quiz is a Christmas day tradition for many. Why not give our RAF-themed quiz a go?

1. **During the Battle of Britain, which day in August 1940 became known as the Hardest Day?**  
5 August, 14 August, 18 August, 24 August
2. **Which children's author served as a fighter pilot during the Second World War?**  
Roald Dahl, Dr Seuss, C.S. Lewis, Enid Blyton
3. **What is the name of the Central Church of the RAF where the Fund usually hosts its carol concert?**
4. **How many aircraft took part in the flypast in London on 10 July 2018?**  
52, 101, 103, 203
5. **The term V bomber was used for the RAF's aircraft during the 1950s and 1960s. Which of the below was not part of the V force?**  
Victor, Valiant, Vulcan, Vildebeest

1. 18 August 2. Roald Dahl  
3. St Clement Danes 4. 103 5. Vildebeest

## BACK ON THE RADAR

To mark the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Britain, we led a national tribute.

We were proud to lead a national tribute to all those who played a key role in the Battle of Britain in September, with a poignant light show at former Battle of Britain radar site, Bawdsey in Suffolk and Remote Radar Head Buchan, on the Aberdeenshire coast.

The light show, kindly sponsored by Lockheed Martin, paid homage to

one group in particular, members of the Women's Auxiliary Air Force who worked on radar during the Second World War. They included Kath McLeod, 97, who worked at several radar sites including RAF Trelanvean in Cornwall and RAF Ringstead in Weymouth.

Find out more at: [rafbf.org/radar](http://rafbf.org/radar)





# NEED ADVICE ON BENEFITS?

The benefits system often feels complicated, and it can be difficult to work out what you're entitled to. Our Benefits Advice Service can help you get everything in order for Christmas and the year ahead.



**We interviewed Alan Blackett, one of our Benefits Advisors, to ask about how he helps the RAF Family.**

### What's your background?

I have been a welfare benefits advisor for the past eight years with other charities and have been at the RAF Benevolent Fund for just over a year.

The Benefits Advice Service started in 2015, and there are currently three advisors on the team – myself, Jennifer and Laura. We all work together to solve the benefits-related questions and issues members of the RAF Family bring us.

### What does a typical day look like for you?

I talk with people over the phone or via email. We complete thorough benefits checks for people who get in touch, or who have applied for a grant, but also could be entitled to benefits they aren't claiming.

We can do a very thorough check for any member of the RAF Family to make sure they're receiving all the working-age or pension-age benefits they're entitled to. For example, we find a lot of pension-age veterans may be receiving their state or other pensions, but they don't realise they may also be entitled to Pension Credit, council tax benefit or housing benefit if they're still on a low income. We also come across lots of people who aren't receiving the disability benefits they could.

We can help people apply for benefits too, as the system can be complicated to navigate. If anyone wants to appeal a benefits decision, we can support them with this, writing submissions and representing them at disability benefits tribunals. We can help whether you live in England, Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland.



### Who are you most proud of helping?

Recently I supported a veteran who didn't realise he should have been getting Pension Credit, including an extra payment as he qualified for the 'Severe Disability Addition' within Pension Credit. I helped him apply and he ended up receiving a significant amount more to live on per week. He wrote to thank me, and said he'd been able to put his heating on over the winter. It's not overdramatic to say the support we offer, and a little extra money, can change people's lives.

**If you'd like to speak to one of our Benefits Advisors, call us on 0300 102 1919 or email: [advice@rafbf.org.uk](mailto:advice@rafbf.org.uk)**

**“ We can do a very thorough check for any member of the RAF Family.”**

**Whether you're already claiming benefits, have recently had a reduction in income or have had a change of circumstances which has made you look to the benefits system for the first time, our Benefits Advice Service is here with tailored advice and information to help you navigate the often complex system.**

We support working- and pension-age veterans and their partners and are here if you've been affected by Covid-19 or the end of the government's furlough scheme.

We can check what benefits you're entitled to, help you make benefit claims, and advise you on how to challenge benefits decisions you disagree with.



Since 2015, we've helped identify **£8M** of unclaimed benefits.

## TOPPING UP YOUR PENSION

As the months get colder, we're here to keep you warm at home.

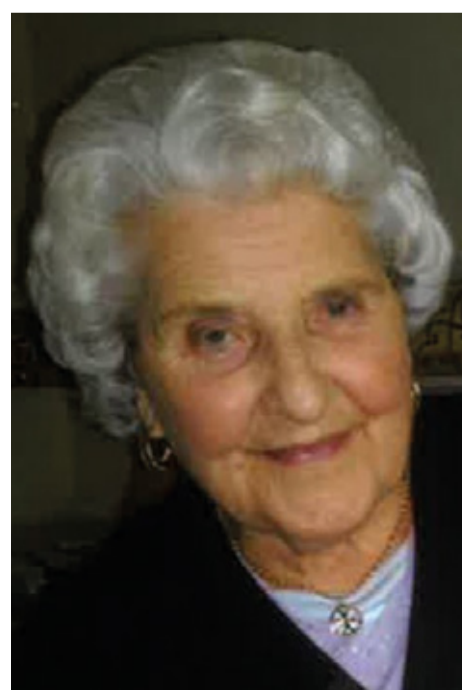
After losing her husband, 96-year-old Louisa Hovell, who served in the WAAF in the Second World War, was finding it hard to get by on just her state pension. Louisa got in touch with the Fund, and now receives a small weekly top-up.

She says: "I don't suppose I would have got in touch with them years ago, because pride is painful, you know. I can't thank the Fund enough. It's helped me enormously, especially with the heating bills. Now if anything goes

wrong in the house, I know I have that little extra for security."

**Could we help you with a pension top-up? For more information call 0300 102 1919 or visit: [rafbf.org/advice](http://rafbf.org/advice)**

**“ It's helped me enormously, especially with the heating bills. I couldn't believe the difference.”**





# RELATIONSHIP SUPPORT OVER THE FESTIVE PERIOD

For some, the Christmas season is a time for celebration, but for others it will be tough, especially this year. We're here to support you.

From feelings of sadness, loss and loneliness, to challenging family dynamics, tension over finances and health concerns, the festive season can magnify lots of problems in our relationships. Whatever you're going through, we might be able to help.

Whether you're married, living together, in a same-sex relationship, separated, divorced or single, we offer a range of relationship services that can help you get through the Christmas break. We provide free relationship and family counselling, as well as subsidised mediation sessions to support you through a divorce, separation or custody negotiations. We also offer counselling for children and young people.



## RAF WORD SEARCH

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

UPKEEP	CAROL
ST CLEMENT DANES	GIFT
VULCAN	STAR
PANAVIA TORNADO	CHRISTMAS
OPERATION	HOPE

**“ We provide free relationship and family counselling, as well as subsidised mediation sessions.”**

We work with specialist providers to help veterans, the serving RAF community and RAF Family members who are experiencing depression, anxiety or difficulties in their relationships. And if you've lost a loved one, we can provide the support you need during this difficult time.

Remember too that if you're feeling lonely or isolated, we can help you to connect with other members of the RAF Family, for example through our Telephone Friendship Groups.

**Find out more about our family and relationship support at: [rafbf.org/relate](https://rafbf.org/relate)**

**We also have tips on maintaining good relationships at Christmas at: [rafbf.org/festive](https://rafbf.org/festive) – scan the QR code to find out more.**



## WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Your opinion matters to us! We are working with the agency Bunnyfoot on an important piece of research to improve how we communicate with the RAF Family. We recently completed interviews and are now launching an online survey. As a thank you, all respondents will be entered into a free prize draw to win one of three £20 Amazon vouchers. The survey will close on 11 January 2021.

**Don't delay, please fill it in today: [bunnyfoot.com/rafbfsurvey](https://bunnyfoot.com/rafbfsurvey)**



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