

***Légion d'honneur* for RAFA Swiss Branch members**



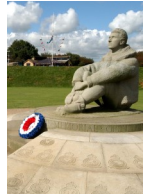
On Saturday 5th December one of our members, **Norman Thom**, received the French award of '*Chevalier de l'ordre national de la Légion d'honneur*' at Cruseilles for his wartime service in the RAF. Norman was the wireless operator on board Lancaster DV. 192 HW-Z, callsign 'Z- 'Zebra' and was on his ninth mission when he was shot down. The aircraft came down just north of They-sous-Montford. Norman was the sole survivor. Norman's wartime peregrinations have long since been set out in 'Roundel' so there is little need to repeat them here. Cruseilles is Norman's adoptive home now and they did him proud on Saturday. Every generation of his family was there. Two of his grandchildren brought in the medal on a cushion. There were a series of speeches, by the *maire* Daniel Bouchet, by General de Giuli from the *Souvenir Français* as delegate-general, by Jean-Marc Beauquis as president of the *Souvenir Français* section for the canton and by Jean Gilbert, who actually pinned the medal on Norman after a short speech paying him homage and also paying homage to Norman's country, which had sheltered him for a time during the war. Between the Swiss and Lyon branches we paraded four Standards for Norman. The ceremony was followed by drinks and nibbles and then the commune whisked him and his family off for a grand lunch *en famille*. Norman still tends the graves of his comrades from 'Z—Zebra' in They-sous-Montford and in this he is helped by none other than the man who shot him down, former *Luftwaffe Hauptmann* Heinz Röcker. ■

Not to be outdone, one of our founder members, **Doug Schofield**, also picked up one at the French Consulate in Geneva on Wednesday 9th December last, also for his wartime service in the RAF. Unlike Norman, Doug was not shot down on 'D' Day. His Lancaster flew a sortie, with Doug as navigator, to bomb railway installations near Lisieux, east of Caen prior to the landings. Doug also went on to complete a full tour of operations (30 missions), making him one of the rare 27% of aircrew who survived to complete a full tour. While protocol did not permit Standards at the ceremony and the French Consul's Residence in Geneva could definitely not compete with the Commune of Cruseilles in terms of space for guests, the RAFA Swiss Branch Committee, in the persons of Messrs. Pattison, Wanstall, Robertson, Dardelin, Pizot and Baker were firmly present to see the French Defence Attaché, Colonel Jean-Michel Meyer pin the medal on Doug and then dub him 'Chevalier' with his dirk. ■

Battle of Britain Sunday 20th September 2015

To Commemorate the 75th Anniversary

Brian Wanstall



What a start to a day, practically a cloudless sky, little wind and the sun blazing down, and it is almost autumn! Once again the comparison with that 1940 summer of the Battle of Britain when so many young fighter pilots risked all for their country. Our commemoration service was held at the Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery (CWGC) in the churchyard of St Martin's church in Vevey.



New Defence Attaché Gp Capt Roland ('Roly') Smith at left and group of RAFA members preparing to move up to the CWGC Cemetery.

St. Martin's Church surmounts Vevey perhaps by more than 60 m. and several options, road, path and steps to take. About 50 m. from Vevey railway station we take an attractive, apparently newly-cobbled, road with modest slope and a bitumen pavement which is arched over by greenery and total-

ly in welcome shadow, which we quickly seek! This road we came up has an air of having been commissioned by Vevey municipal authorities. I shall enquire. After about 100 m. of cobbles, steps take us up to the side of St. Martins Church.



View from Cemetery entrance after wreaths laid with a congregation of more than 50 people in attendance.



Standard Bearers Alain Dardelin and John Hannon with Peter Fairgrieve (Bugler).

In the road area fronting the church many cars were parking and occupants donning robes alongside or jackets discarded for the journey, the sky still cloudless and the temperature perhaps edging higher than expected. Later everyone has walked up the approach road to our small Commonwealth War Graves Commission Cemetery (CWGC) of some 136 graves in two rows either side of a cen-

tral path leading to the 4-metre high stone cross where wreaths will be laid in memory of those who fought in that Battle.

Events Calendar

17 January 2016	Branch New Year Brunch, Crowne Plaza, Geneva
5 March 2016	Branch AGM and Lunch – Crowne Plaza, Geneva
23 April 2016	Commemoration and Lunch, La Chapelle-Thècle
4 June 2016	Summer Lunch
23 October 2016	Commemoration and Lunch, Montcony



Roy Damary (Chaplain) chats with Jonathan Pitt alongside the wreaths laid by the Defence Attaché, the Commonwealth and Swiss representatives and RAFA.

Our two Flag Carriers marched formally down the central path signalling the start of the service. The congregation numbered more than 80 at this point. RAFA member Jonathan Pitt introduced this Battle of Britain Service as being to remember before God those who gave their lives that we might live. In particular those of the RAF who participated in the Battle. He handed over to our chaplain Roy Damary for the service. ■

Wreaths were laid by:

Gp Capt Roland Smith	Defence Attaché
Ms Suzanne Stein	Australian Consul General
Mr Carl Reaich	New Zealand Consul General
Lt Col Nicolas Pittet	Swiss Military
Wg Cdr Brian Wanstall	Royal Air Forces Association



Frank Hilton, John Gysin, Michael Type and Graham Robertson led the various prayers.▪

Plateau des Daines Remembers 1944 Liberation of Haute Savoie

Graham Robertson

Where: It was yet another hot, sunny day on 22 August 2015 when about 200 people congregated by the stèle on the Plateau des Daines to commemorate the memory of the local Resistance "*réseau*" and the members of the SOE and RAF who supported them. We were joined by 4 members of the RBL to make a UK delegation of seven. Unfortunately, our two stalwart RAFA standard-bearers were unable to be there. However, Régis Pizot stepped up to the plate and, after a quick demonstration from our fellow RBL standard-bearer, gave an excellent display to the assembled multitude of how RAFA can put on a show. Régis also kindly lent Di Robertson a camera so that she could join Sylvia MacKillop from RBL in recording the event. The planned parachute jump to start proceedings had to be delayed until the end of the event because of heavy air traffic in the area.



L-R: Graham Robertson, Régis Pizot, David MacGeorge (RBL), André Blanc, John MacKillop (RBL)

André Blanc, future President of *Souvenir Français (SF) de Frangy* gave an opening address. André is the grandson of the Resistance leader, Charles Blanc, who was arrested in 1944 while escorting Allied aircrew to Spain and later executed. He, André handed over to M. Ricoeur, the current SF President, who talked about the many parachute drops made by the British and Americans in support of the French forces. Wreaths were laid, including one by Graham Robertson on behalf of RAFA and one by John MacKillop for RBL. The *Fanfare de Frangy* provided the music and the local communes provided an extensive *vin d'honneur*. We then met Michelle Blanc and family on the terrace of the local *auberge* for a delicious and convivial meal to round off an event which, in remembering the mutual struggle 70 years ago, helped improve relations between our Branch and these local French communities. ▪



Parachutist landing with Union Jack.

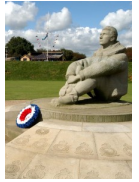
Why: In the 18 months from March 1943 to August 1944 the RAF made 50 parachute drops over the département d'Haute Savoie; 13 in 1943, rising to 37 in 1944. Over that period a total of 1,086 containers, 10 packages and 130 tons of equipment were dropped. Haute Savoie was one of the départements to receive the most supplies and is proud today to stand as the first département to liberate itself from occupation without Allied help. One of the particular services the département rendered the Allies was the return of Allied aircrew from Switzerland via Spain and Gibraltar. Trained crews were at a premium and the route was fraught with danger for all concerned. These, among other reasons, are why we remember RAF efforts and French gallantry on the Plateau. ▪

John Hannon

(Some hard facts courtesy of M. Ricoeur, Président du Souvenir Français de Frangy.)

Lunch "Au Port"

After the Battle of Britain Service at Vevey's CWG Cemetery many of the congregation will walk or drive down from St. Martin's Church to the Restaurant du Port, where RAFA Swiss Chairman Bryan Pattison had organised a Lunch for those who had Commemorated the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Britain. When Bryan has a lunch at Vevey it is often, as now, at the Restaurant du Port with fish dishes the speciality.



These lunches are popular after a major annual Service where people have made an effort to attend the service, perhaps taking two hours on the road or in the train, because the Service is important to them. It matters not whether it be commemoration of Easter, Battle of Britain Sunday or the Aussie/New Zealand ANZAC Day. They have to be there! When the Service is over, most will appreciate the relaxed atmosphere of lunch and continued conversations with people who hold similar or contrasting views, not necessarily on the RAF Association! With nearly fifty booked, we are at two long tables under the long fully transparent-covered annex leading out to the port area, with the jovial proprietor having supervised the two main options, perch or trout plus adequate white wine.



A buzz of conversation had begun when the tables had begun to fill and increased as the servers with plates, seemingly dominated by "des frites" passed by, but on closer inspection each had adequate fish and sauce, and throughout the meal, servers added more as requested!



L-R: Eric Schaerer, Margaret Duff, Gp Capt 'Roly' Smith, Bryan Pattison.

We had a welcome guest, the new Defence Attaché in Berne, Gp Capt Roland Smith, with responsibilities in several other European countries. He joined us for Lunch and was at ease with everyone, as DA's usually are!

During conversations, the length of time individuals have been members of the RAF Association is a question often posed by visitors. Taking 25 years as a mark of seniority, I noted only four or five members at this lunch who joined RAFA Swiss Branch in 1990 or before and are still there! Do they deserve greater recognition? ■

The Lost

Think of them. You did not die as these
Caged in an aircraft that did not return
Whenever hearts have song and minds have peace
Or in your eyes the prides of banner burn,
Think of those who dreamed and loved as you
And gave their laughter, gave their sun and snow
Their grave blessed by their native dew
That you would live. To them this debt you owe
Their glory shines about the sky forever
Though in these things they left for you, the ghost
Should haunt the field of ease and resting river
Their lives are ended, but dreams are not yet lost
If you remember in your laugh and song
These boys who do not sing and laughed not long

Words. Herbert Corby
RAF (b, 1911)

Montcony 25 October 2015

Alan Baker

The warm sun made not only the autumn foliage look at its best but helped in drawing another large crowd to the tiny village of Montcony in Burgundy, to share in the annual commemoration of Halifax W1018's loss 73 years ago. Parking spaces around the *Mairie* filled up before 10.30. Supported by the *Batterie Fanfare de la Bresse*, some 27 *Anciens Combattants* groups unfurled their standards and several schoolchildren were provided with small *Souvenir Français* flags.



Photo courtesy of jsl Bresse—not often we make the local news.

These same schoolchildren led the well-ordered parade, punctually at 11.00, to the old schoolhouse exterior for the traditional record of respect to “*Capitaine Vic*” and his fellow *Résistance* fighters. RAFA Swiss and Lyon Branch Standards were proudly borne by Alain Dardelin and Pierre Biard, whilst John Hannon similarly carried the Union Flag. Brian Rosen carried the Royal British Legion standard, on behalf of the RBL Lyon Branch.

These Standards were granted pride of place in the procession as it marched up to the village churchyard's crew graves, back to the crash site memorial stone and on to the French war memorial. Our Branch Member Reg Howarth kindly laid a wreath on the immaculately groomed graves, whilst Bryan Pattison and Sean Brady, Swiss and Lyon Branch Chairman respectively, laid a joint wreath at the crash site memorial, alongside five others laid by the *Sous-Préfet de Louhans* and other dignitaries.



L-R: Alain Dardelin, John Hannon and Pierre Biard.

In his address at the crash site – this year aided by an efficient microphone – Bryan recalled that 2015 was the 100th Anniversary of the Gallipoli campaign in the Dardanelles, the 75th

Anniversary of the Battle of Britain and the 70th of the end of World War II. Several elderly members of the Louhans area community recalled having lived through some of those events. Their number continues to fade but – judging from the age range present – the memories are being carried forward into younger generations.



Swiss Branch with our Lyon colleagues and local friends. The 'ladies of the village' did us proud again.

A perfect day ended with the traditionally superb meal laid on in the village hall and a moonlit drive home for those of us negotiating the Jura and its winding roads. ▀

European Area Conference (EAC), Jersey, Saturday 31 October 2015

By Alain Dardelin

This autumn, the EAC was hosted by the Jersey Branch, which also celebrated its 90th anniversary, and was held in the Radisson Blu Waterfront Hotel in St Helier. On 30 October 1925, a society called The Royal Air Force Association of Jersey was formed by ex-airmen who had served in the Royal Flying Corps and the Royal Air Force. In 1943, it changed its name to the present title of the Royal Air Forces Association.

The Swiss Branch was represented by Alain Dardelin (Delegate and Standard Bearer), Bryan Pattison (LVP), Margaret Duff and Régis Pizot.

Upon arrival at the hotel on Friday afternoon, Régis and I headed for the RAFA reception desk to make ourselves known and settle the cost of the Conference package. Once check-in was done and rooms allocated, there was little time to spruce ourselves up for the first social event of the Conference: the infamous “meet and greet” in the Conference Foyer. A female trio performed songs of the 1940’s while the audience enjoyed the canapés and drinks provided, and looked on at AM Philip Sturley cutting a slice of a specially commissioned 90th Anniversary cake before moving to the adjacent room to a well-stocked buffet dinner.

On Saturday, the Conference started promptly at 10.00 a.m.. The official dedication of the Royal Air Forces Association was read by Air Marshal Sir Christopher Coville. Silent tribute was paid to members and friends who passed away since the spring EAC in Eastbourne, with a particular thought for His Excellency Air Marshal Peter Walker, President of the European Area and Lieutenant-Governor of Guernsey, and the eleven people who died in the Shoreham air show crash.

The Chairman, Mr Robert Hunt, welcomed everybody to the European Area’s Autumn Conference and in particular Air Marshal Philip Sturley, the new European Area President. Air Marshal Chris Nickols, Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund (RAFBF) Controller, Area Life Vice-Presidents Air Marshal Sir Christopher Coville and Doctor Bryan Pattison, Area Councillors and Mrs Sarah Waugh, European and Overseas Area Director were also made welcome as well as the 9 Delegates to the Conference and the forty or so members and visitors in attendance. Apologies for absence from several people were received including Brian Darke (CC Representative) as well as Air Marshal Graham Stacey (SVP), and Flt Lt Spike Milligan (RAFALO Representative) owing to Service commitments.

The Chairman reminded Conference that there were 20 items on the agenda, which would provide opportunities to discuss some important issues: address the problems regarding the membership and the new database; need to present Resolutions at EACs which, if adopted, would be presented at the Association’s Annual Conference; revision of the Rules and Bye-Laws of the Association; opening of a Euro bank account. He expressed his regrets that so many Branches were not able to participate. Finally, he thanked the Jersey Branch for arranging the Conference weekend.

In the absence of Service Vice-President Air Marshal Graham Stacey, Air Marshal Coville reported on the RAF activities and capabilities deployed in various fields where Tornados IV and Typhoons are active. In the absence of RAFALO Representative Flt Lt Spike Milligan, his report was distributed. It highlights that “funding once again dominates and reduces RAFALOs ability to reach out and attend more events”. It is intended that CHQ is approached for funding to enable as many RAFALOs as possible to attend the Annual National Conference which to them is their only viable medium to make contacts and share ideas.

The Chairman then introduced guest speaker Air Marshal Chris Nickols, RAFBF Controller who reminded the audience of the purpose of the organisation: an independent charity with no Government funding raising money and disbursing it.

Its charitable objectives are:

- To provide assistance to the RAF family through a range of support that includes welfare breaks for families and veterans, grants to help with getting about inside and outside the home, advice on benefits and care services
- To support the morale and wellbeing of the serving RAF personnel
- To maintain and preserve the RAF Memorial in London (Embankment)
- To be responsible for the Bomber Command Memorial in Central London

Air Marshal Nickols remarked that with an increasing RAF veterans’ community, the Benevolent Fund needed to focus on issues such as self-care, mobility, and the prevention social isolation. He stated that there were too many “military” charities and that often over aggressive ways of raising money were used, a practice which is incompati-

ble with the ethos of the RAFBF, and likewise RAFA. He also mentioned that a merger between the two Associations RAFBF and RAFA was not a top priority. He reminded Conference that 2018 will mark the centenary of the founding of the RAF and that the Benevolent Fund had started work on the organisation of the event.

Before the intervention of the Secretary General Nick Bunting, Sir Dusty Miller took the floor to support AM Nickols' remark that the fusion between the RAFBF and RAFA was not a priority at present. The Secretary General Nick Bunting commented on various graphs in particular those related to membership. Statistics showed that a levelling in the number of members was occurring in the 50 to 60 years age bracket and an increase in the younger generation from Air Cadets onward. On the subject of accuracy of the new membership database, those present were assured that the issue was being followed up and glitches would be put right.



Standard Bearers L-R: Alain Dardelin, Pete McWilliams, Mick O'Connell, Bob Hunt.

Member of Central Council and LVP Dr Pattison spoke briefly of the mammoth task undertaken by the "Task and Finish" Group to ensure that the Rules and Regulations comply with requirements of current Company and Charities legislation, best practice and codes of corporate governance. The proposed revised Rules and Regulations will be presented for consideration at Annual Conference 2016. Mrs Beryl Dennett Stannard, Vice-President, requested that Branch UK accounts be closed and issued promptly at the end of December in order that Overseas Branches can close their accounts ready for auditing.

Mr Tony Abela, Malta GC Branch Secretary and Delegate, updated the Conference on the arrangements for the 2016 Autumn Conference to be held on 4-6 November in the San Antonio Hotel and Spa, Bugibba, St Paul's Bay. With regard to the hosting of future European Area Autumn Conferences, the Costa del Sol branch proposed to host the 2017 Conference over the weekend of 6 to 8 October. The venue would be the Hotel Camisa Golf situated in Mijas Costa, in the province of Malaga just 25 minutes from Malaga airport. Unfortunately, no representative of the Branch was attending to answer questions, but nevertheless the venue was agreed.

The European Area Presidential Certificates were exceptionally not presented in respect of H.E. Peter Walker untimely death in early September. However, three nominations were received for the Dennis Emes Shield award for 2015 and the Area Council decided that Gilly Beare of the Republic of Ireland Branch was the best candidate and the Shield was received by Pete McWilliams on her behalf. With no more matters to be discussed on the agenda, the Secretary announced that the next European Area Conference will be held in The Savoy Hotel, Blackpool on Friday 13 May 2016, and the Chairman declared the Conference closed.

Saturday afternoon, a visit to the War Tunnels was organised for those who wished to do so. Tunnels were built by the German occupying forces as a barracks and ammunition store but eventually became a partially underground hospital complex. After the Liberation of the Channel Islands, the complex was converted into a museum depicting what must have been everyday life in Jersey under the Occupation.

Saturday evening, we met again in the foyer for pre-dinner drinks before sitting down for the Gala Dinner interspersed by Cabaret acts performed by dancers and a stand-up comedian, before the floor was taken by people dancing to the sound of a local band. On the Sunday morning, Conference participants and visitors joined the congregation for a service led by Reverend Nick Barry (Gp Capt (Retd)) in the Anglo-Catholic church of St Luke's. Four standards were paraded: European Area, Jersey, North Costa Blanca and Swiss Branches.

The RAFA Swiss Branch representatives wish to extend their sincere thanks to Peter Clarke, Vice-Chairman of the Jersey Branch, and his team for their warm welcome and for organising the Conference this autumn. Not an easy task! ■

**SWISS BRANCH OFFICERS
AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS
2015 - 2016**

President Wg Cdr Brian Wanstall OBE
Chairman Dr Bryan Pattison OBE
Vice-Chairman Mr Alan Baker
Hon. Treasurer Mr Nick Meyer
Hon. Secretary Mrs Margaret Duff BEM
Hon. Welfare Officer Mr Alain Dardelin
Hon. Membership Secretary
 Wg Cdr Graham Robertson
Life Vice Presidents Mr Douglas Schofield, Mr John Edwards
Members
 Mr. Alan Lenton
 Mr. Jonathan Pitt
 Mr. Regis Pizot■

THANKS ERIC!

Eric Dalzell and "Roundel"

Over the 14 years that Eric has collaborated with me in producing "ROUNDDEL," our quarterly RAFA Swiss Branch newsletter, I found him reliable, competent, even-tempered with a good sense of humour, -- and a touch of his native Irish! He has a positive character and can justify his opinions.

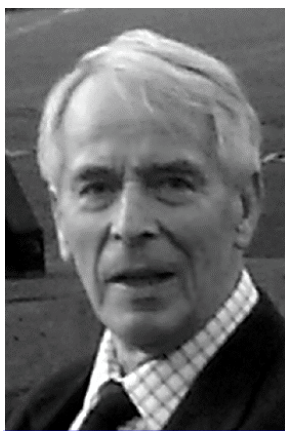
Eric went into the Merchant Navy straight from college on Anchor Line vessels for 11 years. He passed all his "Mates Tickets" and ship's Master's Certificate in that time, and visited ports on 4 continents, which may account for a quiet self-assurance he has.

In 1955 he married Dorothy Hatrick, a teacher in an International school, and they had children, all now 50+, and grandchildren.

Eric showed good sense after getting his Masters Certificate, in taking a long correspondence course at Liverpool Nautical College to ensure he could get a job ashore to avoid having to go back to sea as his only work experience!

After 'swallowing the anchor', Eric had various addresses, but for years now (16) he and Dorothy have had a modern flat in Divonne, with one room devoted to their paintings, computer systems, papers and memories! Earlier he learned that the US company, Dupont, was opening a factory near Londonderry making mainly Nylon and other fibres. Eric and an Irish friend, Hugh Cole-Baker (an industrial chemist) were taken on in 1958, as were others from Northern Ireland together with a few English. Later Eric was one of those moved by Dupont to Geneva where he developed a group of friends - Robin Iredale, (NI), Hugh Cole-Baker (NI), Alan Lenton (GB), Richard Williams (GB) and Eric himself, with as commonality— the fact that they all had primitive MacIntosh computers and the enthusiasm to write articles in Roundel on the crashed four-engined RAF bombers in the local area. From early Roundels, Eric seems to have been the 'Mr. Technical', being acknowledged, 'with Mac' on the front page of every Roundel, with Robin Iredale as Editor, and once, - on the November 1989 Roundel as - "Apprentice Hack— Eric Dalzell!!---(probably self-deprecating(?)). Robin Iredale's first Roundel was probably before Roundel February 1988. Unfortunately Robin died on 31 January 1996, the first modern Editor of Roundel having set a good style in his term, but another of the Dupont club, Hugh Cole-Baker, took over. Alan Lenton was also a big influence on Roundel by the articles he wrote until he returned to England. Richard Williams was also elected President of Roundel in the period. But of course, always providing the Roundel for print 'after approval by the Editor' was....'Eric Dalzell and (or 'on') Mac' just below the Roundel title. The oldest attribution of Eric's work I have is for Roundel July 1991, but there may be earlier editions.

Anyway, I had been CO for nearly three years of a RAF base in England being developed as a Tornado base. So I had a story for Roundel, that I e-mailed in as the first of several drafts and then met Eric for the first time in his flat. I admired his computer set-up. and his calm and confidence. Hugh Cole-Baker was still Roundel editor. The



Brian Wanstall

earliest Roundel that I have with my name on is November 2002.

My approach for Roundel has been to select four main articles, their authors and deadlines and inform Eric; progress the articles; pass them to Eric after editing; check progress of layout with Eric; the editor to do first check and modify if necessary; final check with Eric that all was correct for .PDF (set for print); go with Eric to CopyPress printers; check with 'Thais', our specialist for faults; order hard copies as needed for some members; send .PDF e-mail to Bryan Pattison for distribution. ■

Editor's footnote:

We welcome our readers' feedback, both in the form of criticism and contributions, and look forward to hearing from you.

Roundel production team:

Brian and John; photographers: Régis Pizot and Di Robertson, Ove, Nick and Simone Meyer. Header by Alan Lenton, who designed the original header back in 1988.



Eric Dalzell disguised as 'an old sea dog' ready for a run ashore.