



## Royal Air Forces Association Republic of Ireland Branch

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### **IT'S SUMMER, IT'S RAFA GARDEN PARTY TIME!!!**

**Please come and join in the fun at the RAFA Garden Party and BBQ at Leopardstown Park Hospital, Leopardstown Road, Dublin on Saturday, 27 June 2015, starting at 2.00 pm.**

**Entrance €10 per person, including buffet/BBQ and one drink. This party is growing in popularity and is our major Wings Appeal fundraiser for the year, so your support would be very much appreciated.**

**The Hospital has its own car park. Alternatively, you can take the Luas Green Line (Brides Glen to St. Stephens Green) line and get off at the Central Park stop.**

### **GRAND RAFFLE 2015**

Please find enclosed tickets for the Annual Grand Raffle. This year's draw will be held at our social gathering on Sunday, 25 October 2015. This raffle raises funds essential to the Wings Appeal and we would be grateful if you could sell as many tickets as possible. Please return all stubs and cheques to the Hon Secretary: Mrs Pam Roche, 45 Cardy Rock Crescent, Balbriggan, Co Dublin, by Friday, 16 October 2015. Very many thanks indeed.

### **BRANCH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2015**

The Branch held its Annual General Meeting in the National Yacht Club in Dun Laoghaire. The Branch invited members of various Branches of the Royal British Legion, the Royal Naval Association and the Organisation of National Ex-Servicemen and Women (Irish Defence Forces veterans' organisation) to attend as guests. We had one of the largest attendances in many years. The existing committee was re-elected *en bloc*. Thank you all for your generous support. Your Committee will continue to work hard to represent your interests.

### **VISIT OF RAFA ANGLESEY AND RAFA LISBURN**

On 26 April 2015, we were honoured to receive visitors from RAFA Anglesey and RAFA Lisburn. We greatly appreciated the efforts our friends made to come to see us at the National Yacht Club in Dun Laoghaire. The weather was somewhat unpredictable, but everyone still enjoyed the beautiful setting. Among the guests, we were delighted to welcome Sarah Waugh (Overseas Director) and Air Commodore Michael Milligan and his wife Gilly.

## **REACHING OUT TO MEMBERS – COMMEMORATION IN CO MAYO**

The Branch started its Reaching Out Visits (ROVs) initiative three years ago. Most of our committee and members live in the Dublin area. The idea behind ROVs is to hold events in other parts of Ireland outside the Dublin area to give members from these areas an opportunity to meet fellow members at a social event. To mark the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Britain and as part of our ROV initiative, we are planning a commemoration event at the Mayo Peace Park in Castlebar, Co Mayo. Details to be confirmed but is likely to be around the third weekend in August. As soon as we have finalised the date, we shall contact you. We are hoping that there will be a good turnout of members in the Mayo area as well as surrounding counties that can make it. Members of the Royal British Legion, the Royal Naval Association, the Organisation of National Ex-servicemen and Women (ONE), IUNVA and any other veteran's organisation are all very welcome to attend. Please spread the word. The plan is to have a social gathering at a local hotel in Castlebar as part of the commemoration event.

## **RAF ASSOCIATION EUROPEAN AND NATIONAL CONFERENCES, EASTBOURNE 2015**

This year the Conferences were held in Eastbourne (7-10 May 2015). Our Branch President, Jim Kelly, represented us at the National Conference. Pete McWilliams, our Branch Chairman and Elected Member of the European Area Council represented us at the European Area Conference. He was re-elected to the European Area Committee for another year. The Republic of Ireland Branch is in the European Area. Simon Martin who was our Overseas Area Director has now retired and the position has been taken over by Sarah Waugh. Some of you may know Sarah in her role as Northern Ireland Regional Manager which she continues to hold. We are very pleased that Sarah was appointed, she will be a massive asset to the Association.

The main topics of the Conference were Membership and Volunteering. On the topic of membership, one of the important resolutions carried at the conference was that Associate Members could apply directly to a Branch Secretary to join the Association without the need for an Ordinary Member to propose the applicant. Our Branch felt that an important check was removed from the process and we voted against. However, the majority was in favour. It should be stressed that this Branch warmly welcomes Associate Members and greatly values the contribution they make to the Branch. On the topic of volunteering, many of the elements around volunteering applied mostly to the United Kingdom and had little relevance to non-UK branches.

## **LOOKING FORWARD**

The Branch started its Reaching Out Visits (ROVs) initiative three years ago. Most of our committee and members live in the Dublin area. The idea behind ROVs is to hold events in the remoter parts of Ireland to give members from these areas an opportunity to meet fellow members at a social event. These visits are also good for welfare and for public relations exercises that raise our profile. We intend to continue this initiative this year and build on a very successful event we held in Cork city some years ago. Later this year we intend to go to Castlebar, Co Mayo in the west of Ireland.

To mark the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Britain and as part of our ROV initiative, we are planning a commemoration event at the Mayo Peace Park in Castlebar, Co Mayo. The Peace Park commemorates all those who served and died in the major world wars and conflicts of the past century as well as in other wars and conflicts. It was developed to remember a forgotten generation of brave heroic local people from every town and village of Co Mayo, whose service and sacrifice had been ignored and forgotten, indeed airbrushed out of modern Irish history until recent times. They had served with the Allied Forces in the world wars, in particular with the British, American, Canadian, Australian, New Zealand and South African Forces. (Credit <http://www.mayo-ireland.ie/en/towns-villages/castlebar/visitors-guide/mayo-peace-park.html>)