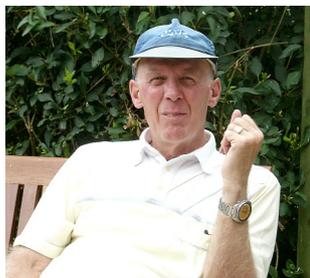




**Before Bob Tacey passed away he kindly sent me this article on Malta. As a tribute to him I would like to print it in full. Peter**

### Another Visit To Malta.



In October Marjorie and I paid another visit to Malta. We departed from East Midlands Airport on a Saturday evening at 22.20 for a three hours flight, after adding an hour we arrived in Malta at 02.20. A nice

man was waiting for us at the airport entrance, he took us in a mini bus to our hotel at St. Paul's Bay. We had been to this small hotel before and knew we would have to ring the bell or knock on the door to get in. This done we went to bed, not much left of the night now 03.45.

One reason for visiting Malta this time was, if possible, I could visit the four anti-aircraft guns featured in the film "Guns for Malta". These guns are situated on the parade square at the old No 2 site of RAF Luqa. This now belongs to Malta Armed Forces, so I would need to make an appointment to get in.

On Sunday morning after very little sleep but a good breakfast, we walked to Bugibba bus station and bought seven day bus tickets. Trying our tickets out we went to Valletta.

A few changes to Valletta since our last visit, the archway at the entrance to the City has been removed and work was being carried out on the ruins of the Royal Opera House which was bombed in WW2. It is now an open air theatre.

After a walk visiting the Siege Bell and gardens we found the bus stand for Luqa, which would be needed the next day.

Monday up early and back to Valletta, then bus to Luqa Village. A short walk and we were at Luqa Barracks. I went to the guardroom and asked the soldier on duty if there was a chance we could see the guns. He did make a lot of phone calls but nobody was available to escort us in. I was given a phone number for the adjutant.

So it was back to Valletta and across on the ferry to Sliema and a visit to Depiro Street where we lived in the early seventies.

Tuesday morning before leaving the hotel I rang the adjutant and explained who I was and if it was possible to see the guns. He said it should be OK but he may have to go to higher authority. As it was another warm sunny day we decided to walk to Mellieha. Taking a bottle of water each we set off leaving St. Paul's Bay and a short distance on the road to Golden Bay. It was then a turn on a farm road, past a hunting lodge and a very steep climb up to Mellieha and a welcome lunch. A visit to the WW2 Air Raid Shelters was next.

Returning to the hotel by bus I found a message from the adjutant at reception, he asked if I could scan our passports and email them to him. As the hotel were unable to do this, Marjorie suggested I use the camera on my mobile phone and email direct from it. So off it went through the air waves. Can't beat modern technology.

The next two days we enjoyed, going to Mdina, Rabat, Sliema, the Classic Car Museum at Bugibba and the Aquarium at Qawra.

At the hotel on Thursday evening was a message saying we could go to Luqa Barracks at 09.30 the next day. We would need a taxi as it would be difficult to get there at that time by bus. A taxi was arranged and we were all set for Friday.

The guns we were going to see were a gift to Malta from former gunner Stanley Fraser. He was based at a gun site near the village of Qrendi during WWII. Stanley returned to Malta in later years and was disappointed at the lack of recognition of the anti-aircraft gunners. He began to look for some 3.7" anti-aircraft guns he could give to Malta. Having been told there were none available in the U K, he came across four in a scrap yard not far from his home in Wales. These he purchased and with the help of the REME who moved and refurbished them, they were shipped out to Malta five months later.



## THE RUTLAND FLYING HORSESHOE

In 1992 the guns were presented to Malta, with a parade at Luqa Barracks. The Maltese Government promised to keep them in good condition, so I suppose that is why they are kept inside the barracks.

On Friday morning our taxi came on time and off we went. On arrival the guard made a phone call and a few minutes later a very smart WO1 complete with pace stick came to meet us. He introduced himself as Roger and off we went for a tour of the camp. Roger pointed out all the buildings, things had not changed very much since I was stationed there. The church near the entrance was still used, the Astra cinema was in use but not a cinema. Sgts mess was the same as were the barrack blocks. The married quartets are now used by Air Malta. During the tour the adjutant a lieutenant came to speak to us. We then watched the recruits doing their basic drill training. Recruits when they join sign on for twenty five years, but they know they will stay at home.

We were then taken to see the guns and left alone for a few minutes to take some photos. Roger then took us back to the gate and we said our farewells and departed. A very interesting morning. Returning by bus we passed the old No1 site RAF Luqa now an industrial estate. Roger had also told us that Malta Armed Forces use the old airfield at Hal Far.

Still a few days holiday left, it was off on the double Decker sightseeing bus on Saturday. This was a hop on/hop off bus. One of the places we got off was at Vittoriosa one of the "Three Cities", situated on the other side of Grand Harbour from Valletta. The Royal Navy HQ was here at Fort St Angelo. Taking a walk we saw the most luxurious yachts we had ever seen. They were based in places all over the world. Continuing our tour we stopped at Marsaxlokk for lunch. On the next bus to Blue Grotto and then on the road under the airport runway. Leaving the bus at St Julian's we caught the normal bus to the hotel.

Sunday back to Marsaxlokk and the street market, this takes up the whole length of the sea front. Not much you can't buy here.

Monday the last full day, we visited the old RAF Station at Ta' Qali, it was closed as an airfield in the 1960s. It now houses a craft village, the National Stadium, picnic park, National Park and the Malta Aviation Museum. It was the latter we visited first. Another new hangar had been built since my last visit. Many aircraft and engines on display, too many to list but here are a few, Meteor F8 & NF14, Vampire T11, Seahawk, Spitfire, Hurricane, Tiger Moth and many more.

Leaving the museum we had lunch and then went to Mdina Glass where Marjorie bought a souvenir. Just then we heard rumblings in the distance, looked like a storm was coming. We made our way quickly to a café, just got our drinks when the storm broke. In about thirty minutes the storm had passed and blue sky again. We decided to catch the first bus that came as long as it was going in the right direction, with it having rained all the windows were steamed up. After what seemed a long journey I just caught sight of Muscat's Garage through the steamed up windows, so I knew if we got off at the next stop we would be on our normal bus route. Muscat's Garage is where my Triumph Herald was delivered to in 1971. It was then back to the hotel and dinner with one final bottle of Green Label wine.

The next day a final bit of shopping and then another nice man took us to the airport. On arrival at East Midlands we even found our car without searching the whole car park. And so we came to the end of a very enjoyable ten days.



"Guns for Malta" is now available on YouTube. Anyone wishing to listen to "Malta Memories" just google Malta university broadcasting, go to webcasts then Malta Memories. These are presented by my old friend Mike Roberts, I actually get a mention in programme 9, Series 2.

Bob Tacey

# THE RUTLAND FLYING HORSESHOE



## January RAFA Speaker.



Our speaker for our January meeting was Charley Streather from BLEASMA.

This was particular of interest to me as coordinating the BLESMA/Family's day in 1984 was my last job in the Air

Force. I think it's good to hear from the old trusted Service Charities and that we are not all dependent on Help for Heroes and other more modern service charities. As good as they are.

Charley started working at Blesma: in 2003 and covers the Midlands.

He joined the Army in 1976. He was injured in 1979 whilst stationed in Arborfield. He retired from the Army in 1981. He became a Blesma Member in 1983. He later became a voluntary Welfare Representative for Lincolnshire in 2003, becoming a full time Area Welfare Officer of the Midlands in December 2008. Before joining BLESMA, he occupied himself by running a smallholding and an engineering workshop by the coast in Lincolnshire. This was supplemented at weekends by playing guitar in numerous bands.

His interests include sailing, music, photography, fossil hunting and fishing.

Currently he is chairman of the East Midlands Patient Lead User Group and a committee member on the East Midlands Veterans Advisory and Pensions Committee.

Charley brought members up to date on the charities work which was fascinating and the amount of work they were doing for our Limbless Veterans quietly and without fuss.

## 2248 (Rutland) Squadron Annual Awards Presentation evening

On Thursday 18th December 2248 (Rutland) Squadron held their Annual Awards Presentation evening.

The event was well attended by officials from the town council, parents and families and RAFA Rutland member's .The officer carrying out the parade revue on the evening was AVM Gary Waterfall, President of the squadron. The Air Vice Marshal presented trophies and certificates with "The Rob Toy" trophy being presented by Diana Toy a RAFA Rutland branch member.

A full programme of events took place after an introduction and welcome by the OC Flt Lt Paul Bowden. A highlight of the evening was the presentation given by the cadets on their achievements throughout the year.

After the slide show presentation on the cadet force activities in

2014 families and guests were encouraged to participate in the mulled wine and mince pies on offer.

In all a resounding and successful evening for all involved and congratulations to all the cadets who the received awards.



Rob Toy Trophy for Best NCO which was presented by Di to Sgt Joe Miller aged 16

Derek Bury

### **Urgent Can you Help Please!!!!**

The Rutland RAFA Branch have the urgent need for members to fill in the following positions:-

#### **Wings Appeal Organiser**

#### **Speaker Coordinator**

Please give a lot of thought to the possibility of you helping the Branch by undertaking one of these roles. Perhaps you could share the reasonability with a friend.

Please contact Phil Marston, Branch Secretary, for further information.

Many thanks to all of your contributions. Perhaps we can print your story next month.



# The Gazette

## Dates For Your Diary



|              |     |
|--------------|-----|
| 4th February | TBA |
| 4th March    | TBA |
| 1st April    | TBA |

### Personal Notices.

It is with great sadness that we have to announce that our stalwart committee member and meetings coordinator, Bob Tacey, passed away on the 18th December following a massive heart attack. He will be sadly missed.

Welcome to Mr Terence Cutmore of North Luffenham who joined RAFA Rutland in December  
**Angie Humphreys Membership Secretary**

#### **"Robert (Bob) Tacey"**

The family would like to thank everyone from Rutland RAFA for their many cards and kind messages and for the support of those who attended the funeral. Thank you all very much.

#### **Marjorie Tacey"**

### **Branch Meeting**

Branch Meetings are First Wednesday every month Venue:  
**Cottesmore Sports & Social Club 7.00 for 7.30pm**

### **Branch Committee Members**

**Chairman:** Duncan Manderson, Pickwell Grange, Whissendine, LE15 7ER, 01664 474274

**Vice Chairman:** Gordon Diffey. Tel 01572 722068

**Branch Secretary:** Phil Marston, 12 Seaton Road, Uppingham, LE15 9QX, 01572 822731

**Treasurer:** Gordon Diffey. Tel 01572 722068

**Editor Flying Horseshoe:** Peter Hart, , Tel 01572756750 peterivy42@btinternet.com

**Speaker Coordinator:**

**Wings Appeal Organiser :**

**Honorary Welfare Officer:** Richard Foster, Tel 01780 411020 lizrich5049@hotmail.co.uk

**Membership Secretary:** Angie Humphreys, email angelaandfrancis@talktalk.net

**Meetings Coordinator:** Derek Bury, Tel 01572 755969, email derek\_bury@hotmail.co.uk

**Social Secretary:** Derek Bury, Tel 01572 755969, email derek\_bury@hotmail.co.uk

**Standard Bearer:** Francis Humphreys,

**Christmas Dinner Organiser,** Roger Hyde, Tel 01572 813547 email g3zdw@btinternet.com