



RAF WELFORD

Families Friends & Veterans of Welford

The Welford Historic Society is located at RAF Welford in West Berkshire with two independent Groups operating from building 229. The Families Friends & Veterans of Welford (FFVW) and The Ridgeway Military & Aviation Research Group (RMARG) have been custodians of the building since 1995.



The FFVW was originally formed as the 50th anniversary of WW2 Commemorative Committee under the name of The Friends, and Veterans of Welford Association which disbanded on 14th December 1996 to reform as they are known today. The name was changed by adding the word Families in February 1998 to encourage the involvement of personnel currently serving at the unit.

(1) The Aims and Objectives of the group are to provide a point of contact for Veterans, Families and Friends to discuss or research past activities.

(2) To liaise with Veterans overseas.

(3) To preserve, in premises provided by the services USAF owned historical artefacts and pictures in a condition to be viewed by current servicemen, families, visiting veterans and, on authorised occasions the public.

(4) To promote the interests of serving personnel within the local community at Parish meetings, in local schools and churches.



The FFVW continues today with a small dedicated membership who meets every Wednesday to continue with the recording and collecting of USAF and RAF memorabilia from the current base personnel and or veterans. The FFVW exhibition is located on the first floor of the building displaying uniforms, military coins, medals and many maps and documents. The main focus of the group is to preserve the history of RAF Welford from WW2 until present day.



Memorial Grove at RAF Welford

This is a quiet and peaceful spot accessed via the “Ammo Alley” road leading off “Hangman’s Stone Lane”. The mixture of British and American origin trees were planted in 1992 to commemorate 50 years of continuous use by both countries and the symbol of the trees growing together cementing the bonds that have grown during that period. To date four plaques have been installed on the Sarsen Stone, each with full military honours.



A Sarsen stone was positioned in front of the oak tree and carries commemorative plaques to a number of Welford Anniversaries which include commemorating 50 years of use and includes all the military and civilians who had been stationed or worked at the facility during that period. On the same stone is a commemorative plaque dedicated to the 435th Troop Carrier Group stationed here during WW2 and unveiled at a very moving ceremony involving USAAF and 101st Parachute Veterans to commemorate the D-Day invasion to liberate Europe.



The second memorial is to the crew of an Avro Lancaster which crashed on the Base on the 31st March 1944. In the half light of the morning, a Special Operations Lancaster bomber, of 101 Squadron from RAF Ludford Magna, crashed on the airfield at RAF Welford. The aircraft was returning home from a Nuremberg Raid having carried out vital electronic countermeasures roll during that raid. Sadly the crew of eight all perished in the crash. Precisely what caused the crash will never be known, was it attempting to land, had it succumbed to battle damage? She was to become the one hundred and first, the final casualty of that fateful raid.



The third memorial is from the Berkshire Parachute Association, and dedicated to the memory of all the airborne troops who left the Newbury area for Europe and did not return.

The fifth commemorative plaque is to Newell Day, a civil servant who wished to be buried where he worked and lived.

The last memorial to be erected in the grove is dedicated to John & Kathleen Stephens for their lifelong support and friendship to RAF Welford and the Ammo community.