

All Members,

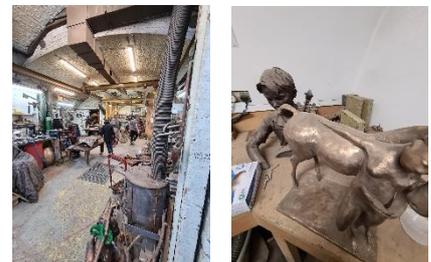
It's been a little whilst since our last update, however with the pandemic it's fair to say there is fairly good reason for the delay however as things start to get back to being a bit more normal, it's time for an update and we have some great news.

Just prior to the first wave of COVID, we had got to a position where costing had been firmed up, we looked to have the funds in place to proceed and a lot of work/visits were undertaken to get things moving. Then everything paused due to reasons I'm sure you'll understand, life stood still for pretty much 18 months. It was considered last year to potentially continue however due to the fact that the demographic for the memorial was most likely a high % of vulnerable people the decision was made to postpone the build until we were more certain of how we could get the memorial built and unveiled properly.

The funds as I type stand at around £25,000. I'm sure Trevor will provide the accurate figure but importantly the funds are strong. Despite the knock on from the pandemic driving general costs and labour to increase, which is as I'm sure you recognise is widespread, we have recently had quotes rehashed and although there is a marginal increase its not significant and we were all pleasantly surprised that there is little foreseeable impact on the project pressing forward.

There is a meeting upcoming with the Ops Mgr at the NMA to confirm arrangements and the formal submission of plans will follow shortly afterwards. From here, the plans will need to be formally approved at the next NMA committee meeting, we have informally had plans accepted previously and have adjusted to meet some NMA guidelines so don't envisage any issues here. The anticipation is that the memorial will be built in Spring 2022, with a formal unveiling and dedication taking place which of course we will advertise when dates and arrangements are firmed up.

We recently visited the Bronze Foundry that has been commissioned to create one of the key features of the memorial, a bronze fire helmet to get the ball rolling on its creation. A helmet was provided for them to take the mould and we got a tour of the foundry to see the various stages that will take place to create the piece which was a great experience and to see the quality of their work was also reassuring. The deposit was paid with full payment due on completion, so the ball is well and truly moving. This piece should be completed before Christmas all going well.



Some of the other key features will be developed over the coming weeks and an artist (who is also working on these) will be putting together an artist's impression which once approved by the NMA will be shared with you all on social media and also within flashpoint.

As for the memorial itself, a proposed site within the NMA for our memorial has been identified and agreed with the NMA as briefed in an earlier update.

It's a great spot, right next to the stunning RAF Association memorial, and if you have been here the site, we have been looking at is within the RAF part of the NMA, to the right hand side of the image on the right, just down a slope with some of the other RAF trade and squadron memorials.

The images below, are a few different views of the proposed plot and the bench currently occupying the site would be relocated by the NMA. We aren't guaranteed this spot, but there is nobody else looking at this site at present and its being unofficially held for us and as the RAF Association memorial is one of the spectacular memorials, it would provide a good reference point for visitors trying to find ours.





Position in relation to RAF Association looking towards it, away from it and left and right. Bench to be relocated.

It's been a long road to get here, and I must point out that Pat and Trevor have put a significant effort in as well as all those who have helped fundraise so please raise a glass for them tonight. As some of you may be aware, I have now retired from the RAF for a new role in the Heritage Insurance sector, but I can assure you my desire to build this memorial is still as strong as ever and we will get this built in the new year, of that I can assure you.

I would have loved to have spoken to you in person tonight, but pre-existing plans mean I'm tied up elsewhere, but I wish you all a great weekend, I thank you for your patience to date and look forward to meeting you all at the dedication/unveiling early in 2022 and if I don't update again before have a great Christmas and New Year.

Warmest Regards

Steve

S Pickston  
Warrant Officer TG7 Fire (Retired)