



33 SQUADRON ASSOCIATION AT THE REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY CENOTAPH PARADE 10 NOVEMBER 2024



Sunday 10 November 2024: Ready for the off. D9 - the 33 Squadron Association contingent - formed up on Horse Guards Parade, about to hurry up and wait on Whitehall.

RAF Benson, 11 November 2024,

After a wonderful day in town on Sunday with 9999 fellow veterans, and a rather excellent marching display by the Association that the BBC once again failed to show to our folks at home during their broadcast of the event, it would be remiss of me not to capture for posterity some photographs of the Association faithful that are circulating on social media at the moment. It was a day that was nicely rounded off by a surprise visitor as we were stood on Horse Guards Parade, awaiting Prince William's departure from the dais and a well deserved drink in the Horse & Guardsman!

Before the photographs in London I have added some of the other photographs from friends and colleagues at events and locations around the world - from Yorkshire to Malaysia.

It is worth bearing in mind that 10 000 veterans were

marching past the Cenotaph on Sunday, a monument that began life as a temporary structure for the Victory Parade that took place on Saturday 19 July 1919. That day 1 500 officers and 15 000 soldiers marched past and saluted the Cenotaph, and in the following week an estimated 1.5 million people had travelled to Whitehall to pay their respects. A permanent structure was unveiled on 11 November 1920, within a week 1.25 million people had visited and the Cenotaph was 10 feet deep in flowers. Until World War Two a ceremony was held on Armistice Day, but then the ceremony was switched to the nearest Sunday to 11 November to avoid disruption to industry. In 1946 the Sunday was formally adopted as Remembrance Day to embrace both world wars and subsequent conflicts. It has remained the setting for the national ceremony ever since.



Above: Cyril Butchers was 33's first fatality and was buried in Fulford Cemetery near York. Tony Whitehead paid his respects there and also attended the Remembrance Service at the Yorkshire Air Museum.

Below: On 11 November our President was on wreath laying duties at the Lusignac Memorial in the Dordogne.



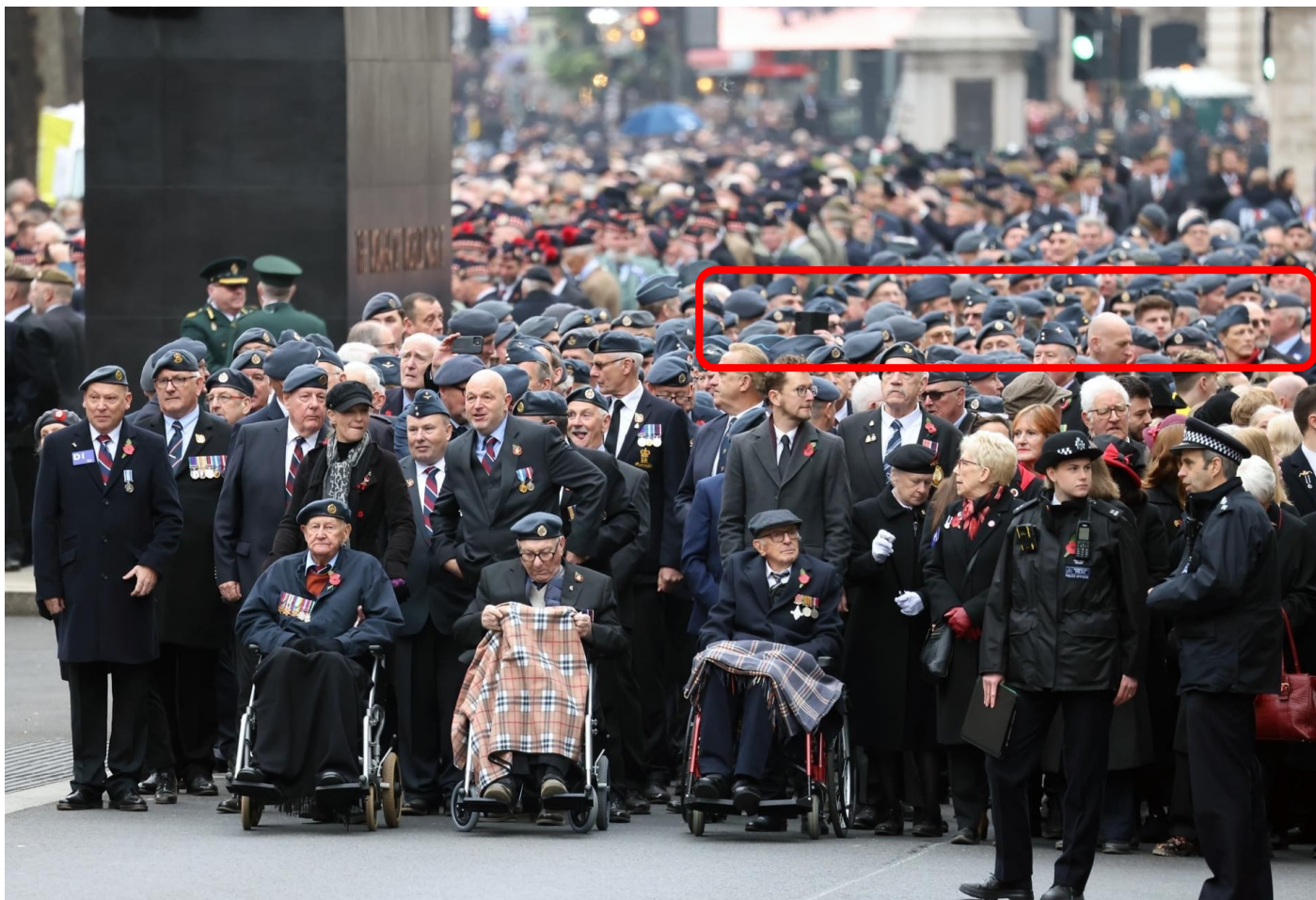
Above: Colin Would and his wife at the Labuan CWGC Cemetery in Malaysia.

Below: Our Membership Secretary was over in France and Belgium on a Battlefield Tour to remember several family members. Day Three was the Poppy March from behind the Cloth Hall in Ypres through the Menin Gate.





The view down Whitehall towards the Cenotaph, with the 33 Squadron Association contingent in the red box. It was unusual to be this close to the front of the column, and it gave us a good view of the Cenotaph Service while we were watching it on the big screen to our left.



The front of Column D, awaiting the off. In the red box from left to right you might just be able to make out my forage cap, Jamie's beret, Paul and Angus' forage caps, Ivan's sunglasses, possibly Jez's beret, and Eamonn.





Prince William took the salute as we marched back to Horse Guards Parade. Prince William's equerry, Squadron Leader Mike Reynolds, was previously 28 Squadron's Puma Flight commander; he took up the new role on 19 September 2024.



While waiting to be dismissed from the parade we were very pleased to be joined by ACM Sir Rich Knighton KCB ADC FREng. As the professional head of the RAF the Chief of the Air Staff is accountable to the Secretary of State for the RAF's fighting effectiveness, efficiency and morale, and his appearance among the RAF veterans gathered on Horse Guards Parade certainly did wonders for their morale. I cannot recall ever seeing any Chief of Staff walking around and talking to the veterans before. Paul Lyall commented that mingling with the boys was the mark of an excellent and empathetic CAS, and I couldn't agree more. I do hope that the findings of the Strategic Defence Review, once they are published in mid-2025, do not block the RAF's effectiveness and reduce capability any further. We shall see.

Having looked at CAS's impressive service record, it did mention that he had joined the RAF in 1988, studied Engineering at Cambridge and spent his early career in frontline roles working on Nimrod MPA (where he worked with our very own Mr Stringer), the Tornado Force and in several roles within the Harrier Force. The Harrier Force Association had been marching behind us, and a wonderfully friendly and generous bunch they were too - most definitely with their hip flasks. Now I am wondering if he was heading over that way to chat to them and we were in the way?! Either way, it was a wonderful way to end the morning. Thank you gentlemen, it was an absolute pleasure.



While my selfie with Sophie was a real bonus, I am closing this 'Cenotaph Special' with the photo of Jez and his daughter, my favourite picture of the year. Jez deserves a special 'thank you' from us all for once again organising the Remembrance Sunday event for us, as he has done for several years now. As I said on somebody's post, Jez epitomises 'loyalty' with his unwavering dedication to the Association. I am also publishing the message that Glen Stringer wrote on his post which summarises the whole Remembrance Sunday experience perfectly:

Today marching past the Cenotaph with my 33 Squadron brothers, remembering those that have gone before us, and our absent friends, it was described to me by Nigel Scarffe as "Chicken soup for the soul" and I couldn't think of a better description.

It's coming home.

It's belonging.

It's family.

It's Loyalty.



Proud to be ...33

Dave Stewart

