

Fleet Air Arm Memorial Service – Lee-On-Solent

Telegraphist Air Gunners (TAGs) served in Fleet Air Arm aircraft from 1922 – 1950, providing communications by Morse Code and manning the rear gun. Three thousand TAGs were trained in the 28-year life span of the branch. 507 were lost through enemy action and/or flying accidents, 69 became Prisoners of War.

Most TAGs served only for the period of WW2, returning to civilian occupations in 1945/46. TAGs were awarded 2 CGMs, 115 DSMs, 20 BEMs and 134 Mentions in Dispatches. They served in 77 different Aircraft Carriers.

Each year the Association presents the TAGA Trophy and Medal to the outstanding Air Engineering Mechanic of the Year chosen by the Air Engineering staff at HMS Sultan.

The Telegraphist Air Gunners Association has held a Memorial Service on the third Sunday in May since 1953, when the Duchess of Kent unveiled the Fleet Air Arm Memorial at Lee on Solent.

Since 2013, when the TAG's Association dissolved, the service has been organised by the Fleet Air Arm Association.

This year the event fell on Sunday 19th May.

It began with a lunch at Lee on Solent Golf Club. There was a welcome by the Chairman of the FAAA, Dave Smith, and introductions by Vice President Peter Murray. Grace was led by Valerie Sayer, and the toasts were given by FAAA secretary Jim Moulson, and FAAA Patron Sir Adrian Johns. There was also a short speech by Lt Hayley McDermott RN.

This was followed by the Memorial Service at St Faith's Church, which was conducted by The Reverend Doctor Paul Chamberlain, vicar of St Faith's, and The Reverend Timothy Ndegwa, Chaplain RN, currently based at HMS Sultan. After the service an informal wreath laying ceremony took place at the memorial itself.

It was lovely to have representatives from HMS Sultan join in with the memorial and wreath laying.

It would be great to have more association members come along to this annual event, so why not put it in your diary for next year, when it will be held on Sunday May 18th.

