

That this council bestows the freedom of the borough upon the Royal Airforce (including the RAF Regiment), in recognition of the RAF formation on 1st April 1918.

The Royal Air Force was formed on 1st April 1918, with its formation, it subsumed the Royal Flying Corp and the Royal Naval Air Service. In doing so it became the world's first independent Air Force.

Its motto is; Per Ardua ad Astra which, translated to English is; "through adversity to the stars". From its inception The RAF has certainly lived up to its motto, through their un-daunting tenacity in many conflicts across the world in which it has found itself engaged in.

It is appropriate for this council to recognise and pay tribute to the ability of the men and women of the RAF and their sacrifice, by bestowing the honour of the Freedom of the Borough on them.

The RAF has a long history of service and a unique relationship within this Borough, particularly during the Second World War when it was to the forefront in defending these shores and importantly supply convoys during the Battle of the Atlantic. This unique relationship is continued today with their invaluable support to The Airwaves Air Show.

Many who served in this place with the RAF fell in love not just with the land but with its people, many married, had families and settled here. Far too many lost their lives in the course of duty and local grave yards of all denominations are a reminder to their ultimate sacrifice. The numerous RAF Associations which operate throughout the Borough are not only a support mechanism to those who served, but also a living testimony to what has gone before.

We as a council are justly proud of the Royal Air Force and the famous words, Prime Minister Winston Churchill spoke in May 1941 are as relevant today as they were then, "Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so few".