

## VISIT TO RAF MARHAM – 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2019

As members will be aware, invitations were offered to join with Stanhoe & Barwick WI's centenary celebrations, and enjoy a guided visit round the newly revamped RAF station. 20 visitors, of whom 14 were non-WI members (several being husbands of members, and several members of both), travelled by coach from Stanhoe, arriving in good time at Marham, and waiting for our host for the day, Warrant Officer 'Mo' Howard, to meet us. The visit began with a talk and visual aids presentation, covering the airfield as it was before the new F35B 'Lightning' jet, the subsequent changes to the infrastructure, and also descriptions and technical information (within security parameters) of both the recently retired Tornado, and the new Lightning, including design, and to a degree, armament, and performance.

We moved on to the Heritage Centre, which is open to the public every Tuesday and Wednesday from 9am till 4pm, and on the last Saturday of each month 9.30am to 4pm, free of charge, but donations are welcomed. The curator, Steve Roberts MBE RAF Ret'd, gave us a comprehensive overview of the station's history from an unusual perspective, and we all learned a lot about Marham, and the RAF's history generally, from it.



*Photo: W O 'Mo' Howard*

A tour around the perimeter road by bus was the next highlight, again with a running commentary on what we were seeing, and the implications of the new buildings and their occupants - all accompanied by an unexpected impromptu 'air display' by two Lightnings engaged in "circuits and bumps"! Finally, we gathered for presentations of the history and capabilities of the two 'gate guardians', a Victor and a Tornado, and photographs, before we were driven back home. We are very grateful to the Station Engagement Officer for all his assistance.

## MARHAM VISIT MARK 2 – 14<sup>th</sup> January 2020

Another group of Legionnaires and WI members assembled at Stanhoe Reading Room to board the Peelings coach for RAF Marham, to spend a most enjoyable and informative day there. The programme was the same as for our October 2019 visit, starting with an audio visual presentation in the station cinema, continuing with a guided tour of the Heritage Centre, and ending with the circuit by service coach of the airfield perimeter road with a running commentary on all that we could see. A couple of Lightnings were airborne, and thus we again had the benefit of seeing several 'fly-pasts' from the bus. Despite some rain while we were indoors, the weather co-operated, and we had a dry day. However, I was sorry to hear that, finally, my old II(AC) Squadron building is to be demolished, along with the old Ops block where I gave my weekly briefings during Op Telic.

- Ed