

Paul Edwards – Platinum Membership

I was commissioned into the Queen's Regiment which later became the Princess of Wales Royal Regiment (PWRR) and I had no intention of doing anything other than infantry soldiering, but my posting away from the Battalion to command the Army Youth Team was cancelled due to Defence cuts at the time and my CO asked me what else I wanted to do. I had a pass on the aptitude test, and the Army Flying Course option came up first. I arrived as a Queen's Regiment senior subaltern, post platoon command and company second in command, already with three very different operational tours under my belt. During the course, I visited the museum then located in the old cinema on camp and learned about the stunning heritage of Army Flying. The Glider Pilot Regiment with their motto of "Nothing is Impossible" stuck with me and the fact they were soldiers who flew, crash landed their gliders and then fought alongside those they had carried into battle – a true combat arm. A few years later it was this impression which tipped the balance for my transfer from the Infantry to the Army Air Corps.

Whenever I was posted to the UK, I subsequently visited the Museum of Army Flying on its current site both before and after addition of the Hayward Hall. It was the place to go with my children and more recently my grandchild, post Project Eagle and rebranding to as the Army Flying Museum. Three generations have visited and supported.

I was privileged to command 655 (The Scottish Horse) Squadron on 24/7 operations for two years during which we answered the call to send the museum artefacts relating to Op BANNER. I was equally privileged to command the 1st Regiment and Gutersloh Flying Station, then later as Chief of Staff HQ DAAvn playing a key role in the team effort to field the Apache AH1.

Many of the types of aircraft I have flown are represented in the museum including some which feature in my logbook. The collection and the staff who look after it are very important to me. A Champion of the museum (along with my son John who ran Hadrian's wall with me), I am becoming a Platinum member because I am stepping down after nearly 8 years as a Trustee/Director on the Board and nearly 9 years on the Fundraising and Development Committee, but I remain a strong supporter and will continue to visit. My final message to Board colleagues and to the staff is the same as I gave when handing over command of my squadron and my regiment:

"I might be leaving, but one thing will never change, we will always have served together and if any of you ever get into trouble or need help of any kind in the future, you only have to ask, and I will be there for you".