IBCC is delighted to introduce a unique facility to link the Losses Database to the relevant RAF Casualty Pack on the National Archives website. This project is the result of on-going collaboration between IBCC, the MOD Records Office and National Archives, Kew. This document describes what Casualty Packs are, when they were created, the process of making them available to the public and then goes on to describe the process by which you can view the contents of the packs.

- Casualty Packs (CPs) were created by the RAF whenever there was serious injury or loss of life associated with operational activity within the RAF. This includes operational flying losses, enemy action due to air raids, road accidents either on station or even off-station if they involved RAF vehicles. Deaths due to natural causes in service or accidents that did not involve RAF vehicles did not generally give rise to a CP.

- CPs were originally given a unique reference number by the RAF. Each begins with the letter 'P' and is followed by six digits, then an oblique (forward slash) and the finally the year in which the incident took place- for example P396154/42.

- The CPs are in the process of being made available to the general public as they are passed from the MOD Records Office, Portsmouth to National Archives, Kew. This process requires some rework to the files which is very time consuming, so the process of making them all available to National Archives will take several years. They are being made available in increasing date order.

- Once CPs arrive at National Archives they are assigned a unique AIR81 number, so each CP has both a P-number and an AIR81 number. Both are searchable on the National Archives website under 'Search the catalogue' and both are included on the IBCC website.

- The AIR81 reference on the IBCC website is a link to the file on the National Archives website. When you click on it, the relevant page will open in a new tab on your browser.

- There is currently no plan to digitise AIR81 files, partly because they are fragile and partly because the information they contain can at times be sensitive, even harrowing, since they may contain exhumation reports and even photographs of corpses. Family members wishing to read the AIR81 files relating to their ancestors are advised to exercise caution and be guided by National Archives warnings where appropriate.

- There are two means for accessing AIR81 files- to attend in person or to order a copy by post.

- To attend in person, the attendee should first create a Reader's Ticket. This can be done online by following this link: https://secure.nationalarchives.gov.uk/login/yourdetails. Then click on the AIR81 reference on the IBCC website and click Order in Advance. Enter your Reader's Ticket number and state the date on which you intend to visit. National Archives will have the file ready for you when you arrive, saving you time. When you visit Kew, you must quote the Reader's Ticket number and take along two forms of ID- one bearing your signature and one bearing your address. When you view the files, you are permitted to take photographs of each page, should you wish.

- Alternatively, if you wish to order a copy by post, please be aware that there is a charge for this service based on the number of pages in the file. Click on the AIR81 reference on the IBCC website and then click Request a Copy. There is an £8.40 charge for National Archives staff to access the file and give you a quotation for the copying service. The process takes around 24 days to complete and can be expensive.

- IBCC wishes to thank the staff at the MOD Records Office and National Archives for their engagement and assistance in making this facility available to our website users.