



# **Guidance on the use of educational materials accompanying The Forgotten Generations – Lest We Forget Project with secondary age children**

## **Introduction**

The online materials for the Lest We Forget project, particularly the filmed interviews of seven local black veterans whose service careers spanned from 1944 to 2011 represent a valuable new contribution to the study of black British history- the recruitment and treatment of Caribbean volunteers in the RAF both during and since the Second World War. The post Second World War history of such veterans in particular is under researched.

The filmed interviews represent eyewitness testimony, some from individuals who have never shared their experiences in public before.

These interviews can be used to educate secondary age children about black British history in a number of ways and contexts such as schools, voluntary associations, cadet or youth groups. For example;

One) Focusing on the life of a particular individual for Black History Month

Two) Comparing and contrasting the lives of veterans serving in different periods

Three) Tracing the way the RAF recruited and treated such veterans as a whole over time.

Four) Comparing veteran attitudes towards Britain and their own identities and how these might have changed over time

Five) Comparing the experiences of black RAF veterans with those of other black Britons, who did not serve in the Armed Forces.

Six) Comparing the experience of black RAF veterans with veterans who served in other services

Seven) Studying a particular aspect of the local West Midlands experience of members of the Windrush Generation.

The accompanying project timelines and documentaries on the history of the RAF and Caribbean recruits of the RAF allow adults working with secondary age young people to access specific, up to date academic historical knowledge which explains the context in which particular veterans served. This more general knowledge, along with the experiences of veterans can be woven in to;

- The study of black history or black British history in general
- The emergence of black British identity in its post – Second World War form
- The study of the Windrush Generation, contrasting the experience of local RAF veterans with those, for example of civilian activists who campaigned against racism in a contrasting locality such as London or Bristol and whose campaigns can be counted as part of the British Civil Rights Movement
- The study of migration in general, in to and out of the British Isles over time but particularly during and after the Second World War
- The history of Britain's relationships with its Caribbean colonies as they became independent
- The history of Britain's use of Caribbean manpower in the Armed Forces over time, set in its colonial context and including study of Caribbean rebellions and resistance to imperial rule, Chattel Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade
- The history of the global African diaspora for example, veteran experiences could be contrasted with that of African Americans
- The history of the British Empire and its transformation into the modern Commonwealth of Nations
- The history of the RAF as a whole since 1918
- Changing attitudes towards race in Britain since 1918
- Revisiting the substantive concept of Race and its development over time

For teachers in state controlled secondary schools in England, the 2014 National Curriculum programme of study for History at Key Stage 3 (11-14 years) gives opportunities where elements of the substantive knowledge listed above might be taught. One required area of study is described as `challenges for Britain, Europe and the wider world 1901 to the present day.` In West Midlands schools this could be linked to another requirement to cover `a local history study`.

Elements of the histories of the veterans might also be included to support particular exam specifications such as OCR's GCSE History B (Schools History Project) which features a thematic study of 'Migrants to Britain c1250 to the present'.

The value of the filmed interviews as original eyewitness testimony also supports the National Curriculum for History's programme of study requirement at Key Stage Three that pupils '*understand the methods of historical enquiry, including how evidence is used rigorously to make historical claims*'. The rubric also refers to how pupils should be introduced to '*different types of historical sources*' of which filmed interviews are one.

## **Possible Historical Enquiry Questions to lead learning**

This guidance includes a series of possible historical enquiry questions that could be used to lead learning in particular settings. Each question poses an historical problem around which teaching and learning activities could be organised, enabling children to attempt an answer to the question. A short biography is included of the particular veterans who fall within the scope of the question. A commentary is given explaining the answer to the question at adult level making references to details from particular interviews and information included in the documentaries. The commentaries have been written so that an adult or teacher is well informed before introducing enquiry questions to young people. The commentaries are then followed by suggested activities that could be used to scaffold learning for young people in relation to the question. Other useful resources are also identified.

Enquiry questions could be slotted into a scheme of work, and an assumption is made that children will already have some knowledge of their general historical context, for example of the Second World War. Although the questions do follow on from each other and follow a broad chronological order, they do not have to be taught in that order. Enquiry questions may also be freely adapted for use. After each question the main disciplinary concept that is the focus of study is identified.

## **Material for Enquiry Question One**

Enquiry Question One contrasts the way a single Caribbean volunteer (Prince Albert 'Jake' Jacob) was treated in 1944 and 1947.

## *A brief biography of Prince Albert 'Jake' Jacob*



Prince Albert 'Jake' Jacob was born in Trinidad in 1925 as one of 14 siblings in the family of a Roman Catholic headmaster. He was educated to love Britain as the Mother Country.

Jake was recruited to the RAF as ground crew during the Second World War and arrived to train at RAF Hunmanby Moor in November 1944. He served in the air force in Britain between then and 1947. Jake briefly returned to Trinidad in 1947 before coming back to Britain. He married his white, Jewish wife Mary in 1948 and both of them suffered discrimination because of his colour

and their mixed marriage, struggling to find accommodation in post-war Birmingham. Jake pursued a successful career in the Post Office and British Telecom.

He was finally awarded the British service medals he was owed from his time in the RAF at the age of 97.

***Enquiry Question One - Why was Prince Albert 'Jake' Jacob made welcome to Britain in 1944 but not when he returned in 1947?*** (the focus is on the disciplinary concepts of Cause and Consequence and Similarity and Difference)

*Commentary-* This question focuses on the difference between the welcome Jake initially experienced in Britain when arriving in Britain as a teenager for RAF training in 1944 and the largely hostile reception he got from 1947 onwards, returning as an economic migrant of the Windrush Generation and becoming a spouse in a mixed marriage. The basic answer to the enquiry question is that Caribbean volunteers were largely welcomed during the Second World War because they were offering to fight for Britain, who they already regarded as their Mother Country. They were also protected from discrimination to an extent by

service regulations and the support of welfare officers appointed by the Colonial Office, some of whom shared their Caribbean background. There was also an assumed limit on volunteer time in Britain itself which it was thought would coincide with the duration of the war.

When Jake arrived in November 1944 it was clear that the war would be over fairly soon. This would allow colonial soldiers to return to their homelands quickly. Although as British subjects, Caribbean volunteers had a right to remain in Britain, the RAF planned for the departure of colonials as demobilisation became widespread and offered training in a trade which was intended to help veterans to obtain employment on their return. However, there had also always been a racist and xenophobic undertone to the reception of colonial volunteers of colour. While the pre-war Colour Bar had been lifted to allow for their recruitment, it was privately debated towards the end of the war, both within the RAF and across Whitehall departments whether and how the Colour Bar might be acceptably reimposed (this occurred quietly between 1945 and 1947). Also, most white Britons had never encountered black people before and were ignorant of the way that Caribbean people had been educated to think of themselves as British. Popular attitudes varied between friendly curiosity (which might result in trying to touch the hair of a person of colour to see what it felt like or for luck) through to downright hostility (brawls could start in dance halls if black men attempted to dance with white women). Such was the level of prejudice and ignorance that white women might carefully feel the bottom of black dance partners' spines in order to check where the tails of black males had been cut off so that they could pass as humans rather than African monkeys).

Sometimes intense wartime friendships could exist among servicemen of different nationalities and backgrounds, breaking down traditional barriers. This particularly applied to the mixed nationality bomber crews whose average age was 23 and whose casualty rate was a shocking 44%.



*Trinidadian RAF volunteer Sgt Leslie Gilkes with Sgt Dickenson (RCAF). Gilkes's bomber was shot down off the Dutch coast in 1943. His body was never recovered.*

But while Caribbean and black volunteers sometimes succeeded in obtaining officer status as RAF aircrew with medals to show for their bravery, there was a frequent assumption that they were not fit to command a bomber because white crewmen would not follow their orders.

When Jake Jacob returned to Britain in 1947, having been discharged from the RAF previously in the year, he was driven by several factors. Among them, the desire to find a good job with better prospects than those offered in the impoverished colony he came from and the aspiration to marry his wartime white and Jewish sweetheart, Mary. When they did marry on April 27th, 1948 at Oldbury Registry office in Birmingham nobody attended the wedding from either family.



Jake`s were too far away while the opposition of Mary`s father to the match prevented the attendance of any of her family at all. Jake experienced the racial prejudice which other members of the Windrush Generation also suffered from, unprotected by service regulations and

without the support of Colonial Office Welfare Officers. RAF veterans like Jake risked assault, verbal abuse and were routinely barred from hotels, dance halls, and pubs. Despite Britain's need to fill 1.3 million job vacancies to rebuild the country after German bombing, it was usually only possible for black migrants to find lowly work, such as cleaning. Accommodation was also difficult to secure, and it was commonplace in white boarding houses for signs to be displayed saying 'No blacks, no Dogs, no Irish'. Added to all this was the problem that Jake had dared to marry a white woman. Mary was shouted at in the street that she should not be with Jake. If they had had children, their offspring might well have been the object of commonplace discrimination. Their only way of eventually obtaining a mortgage was taking one out in Mary's name. Although as Jake has said "*Nothing was easy*", the couple did succeed in establishing a good quality of life for themselves. Jake converted to Judaism and the couple found friends in Birmingham's Jewish community. He was helped into a good career with the Post Office and subsequently, British Telecom with the support of a local RAF Association. But it is no coincidence that the hardest part of Jake's life was experienced in postwar, austerity Britain where, in the early 1950s Sir Winston Churchill (back in office as a Conservative Prime Minister) secretly considered running his next election campaign on the slogan 'Keep Britain White'.

### ***Possible teaching and learning activities***

- Jake and Mary could be introduced initially as characters, by placing their wedding photograph into a layers of inference frame, where individuals or pairs might be given time to move from concrete to abstract questions, annotating copies of the diagram, which could then feed into wider discussion. The point would be to analyse an original source and arouse curiosity about the two historical figures that will form the basis of study.

What else do I need to know? What other questions could I ask?

What can I infer? What does this tell me?

What can I see?



- Children could create a timeline of Jake's life with details drawn from the interview and other resources below. Its preparation could be punctuated by viewing segments of Jake's interview, where he talks about his upbringing and British education, his war service and his post war life with Mary. Further contextual details could be explained about how and why Caribbean volunteers were treated differently during and after the Second World War from the project documentaries, the History of the RAF from 1918 and Caribbean recruits of the RAF.
- Children could convert a timeline of Jake's life into a living graph, with dates along the horizontal axis and a qualitative scale along the vertical axis between 'positive' and 'negative' experiences. Children could compare living graphs in discussion before a whole class or group version is agreed. Discussion could be held about identifying turning points in his life and debating which might be the most significant and why Jake's life might still be significant today. It could be debated what choices he faced at crucial turning points and how differently his life might have been if he had acted differently.

- Children could write a story of Jake's life for use with younger children, for example in a Black History Month assembly or presentation.
- Children could complete extended writing in answer to the enquiry question, clearly explaining why Jake was welcome to Britain in 1944, but not in 1947. A writing frame could be devised to support a range of learners.
- Jake's life could be compared with that of other people of colour who settled in Britain as part of the Windrush Generation. Questions could be posed such as *'How typical was Jake's experience?'* *'Was it harder or easier than the experience of X?'* *'How similar and different were Jake's and X's experience?'* *'How different might Jake's life have been if he had not been an RAF veteran or if he had not married Mary?'*
- Jake's life could be compared with that of other veterans interviewed for the project. Questions could be posed such as *'How similar and different were Jake's and X's experiences?'* *'Were his experiences harder or easier than that of other veterans?'* *'What might explain this?'*

The full interview with Jake, his interview broken down in to segments and relevant documentary segments which explain the context of his life experience can be accessed here.

<https://theforgottengenerations.com/lwfp-veterans/prince-albert-vm/>

A comprehensive summary of Jake's life can be accessed here

<https://solihulllife.org/2022/10/03/jake-jacob-nothing-was-easy/>

A story of Jake's life written for primary age children can be downloaded from this website page by clicking on his photograph (the text is contained in the notes section of each individual PowerPoint slide).

<https://theforgottengenerations.com/lwfp-education-landing/>

A whole class story of Jake's life produced by Year 5 pupils and teachers Andrew Wills and Janice Weathers at Welford Primary School, Handsworth can be accessed here. It was the outcome of a special historian- in -residence project funded by Birmingham Education Partnership in 2023 to mark the 75th Windrush anniversary.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B8nhLp-YWrw>

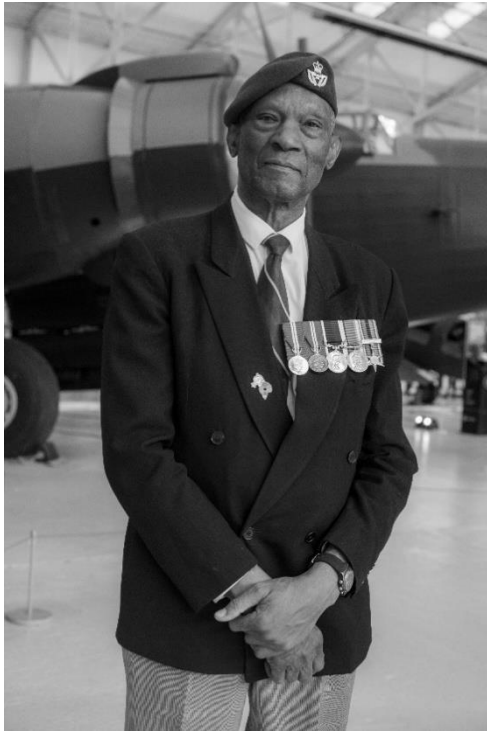
An excellent general account of the treatment of Caribbean recruits at RAF Hunmanby Moor, Filey, Yorkshire during the Second World War by historian Audrey Dewjee can be accessed here

<https://www.historycalroots.com/west-indian-airmen-at-raf-hunmanby-moor-filey/>

## **Material for Enquiry Question Two**

Enquiry Question Two compares Jake's experiences with those of two other veterans, Kenneth Straun and Donald Campbell whose brief biographies follow. Kenneth was born during the Second World War and Donald Campbell afterwards but all three were migrants of the Windrush Generation.

## *A brief biography of Kenneth Straun*



Kenneth was born in 1943 in the Caribbean Island of Saint Kitts as the son of a plantation overlooker. He had a good education and was pampered by his grandmother. Kenneth was taught that Britain was his Mother Country and does not recall any Caribbean history being part of the curriculum.

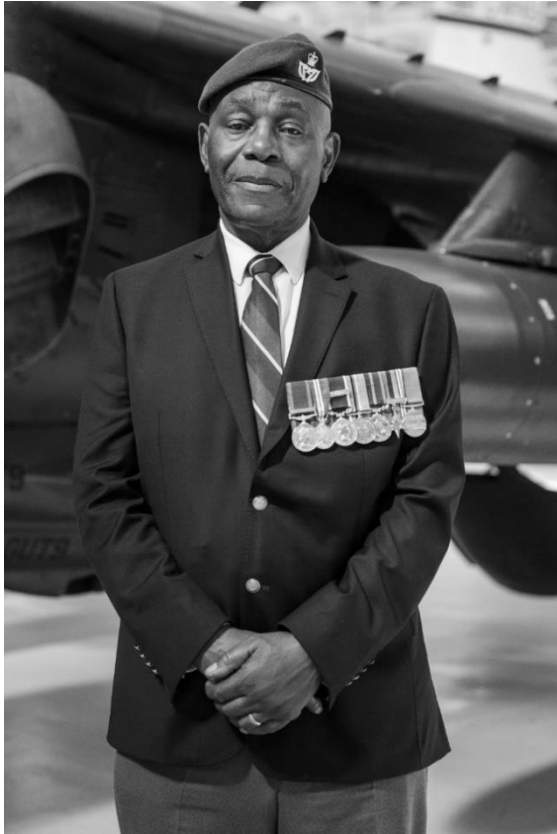
He migrated to Britain in 1961 to join his father and served in the RAF for 24 years from 1964. He worked on aircraft of the Queen`s Flight, starting in the 1970`s and rose to the rank of Flight Sergeant.

Kenneth tended to ignore any racist treatment, and in general feels that he was fairly treated in the RAF.

The full interview with Kenneth, his interview broken down in to segments and relevant documentary segments which explain the context of his life experience can be accessed here.

<https://theforgottengenerations.com/lwfp-veterans/kenneth-straun-vm/>

## *A brief biography of Donald Campbell*



Donald was born in Jamaica in 1951 where he lived until he was 13, witnessing the island's independence celebrations in 1962. He was educated to admire England as the Mother Country. Donald migrated to Britain in 1965 to join his parents in Birmingham and remembers the novelty of seeing snow and experiencing bitter cold for the first time. On leaving a local school with no qualifications (little was expected of him as a black pupil) Donald joined the RAF at 18 with a desire to travel. He served in Northern Ireland, Britain itself, Madagascar, Oman, the Falkland Islands and Germany, also visiting some other NATO countries.

Like some other black veterans, Donald suffered delayed promotion and from racism. However, he found that the RAF was "for me far more than I expected and I thoroughly enjoyed my career".

The full interview with Donald, his interview broken down in to segments and relevant documentary segments which explain the context of his life experience can be accessed here.

<https://theforgottengenerations.com/lwfp-veterans/donald-campbell-vm/>

**Enquiry Question Two - How similar and different were the lives of Windrush migrants Prince Albert ` Jake ` Jacob, Donald Campbell and Kenneth Straun?** (the focus is on the disciplinary concept of Similarity and Difference)

*Commentary* -The question asks children to compare and contrast the experiences of the three veterans, gauge the extent of the similarities and differences between their experiences as Windrush migrants and comment on the reasons for these. The question could build on the previous study of Jake`s experience during and after the Second World War.

The main difference between the lives and experience of Jake and the two other veterans is generational. Jake served during the Second World War when RAF Caribbean volunteers were largely well received in the UK. His experience of personal hardship as a Windrush migrant after the war was keenly felt because previously the `Mother Country` (the fond name for Britain in its Caribbean colonies) had given him a welcome. He was also an adult when he married Mary. Their early life as a couple was blighted by rising postwar racism as opposition grew to large-scale Caribbean migration in the 1950s. Another major difference with the experience of Donald and Kenneth was that Jake converted to Judaism as a result of his marriage and found a home among Birmingham`s Jewish community. In the end, Jake also found that his wartime service in the RAF gave him an advantage over other Windrush migrants, since it was a local RAF association that assisted him into a successful career in the Post Office.

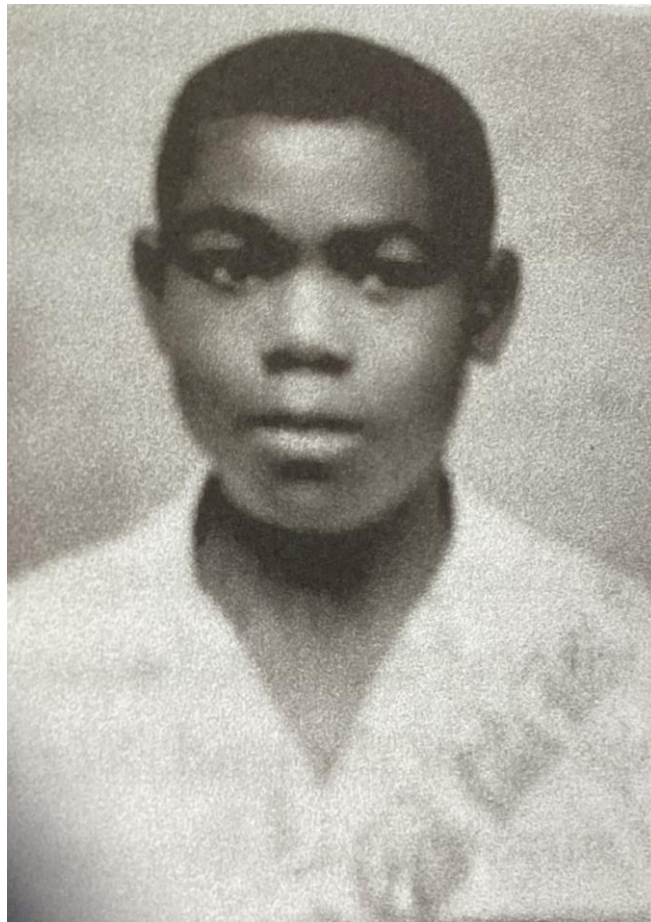
Kenneth Straun, like Donald came from the next generation after Jake (he was born in 1943). Kenneth`s childhood was happy and relatively privileged in the small Caribbean island of St Kitts. He also completed his high-quality British style education on the island so there was no danger of his being held back by racism in a British school. Kenneth arrived in Birmingham because he was summoned to follow his father there in 1961. Although Kenneth suffered discrimination in his early work life it meant that he was `bounced` by colleagues into joining the RAF in 1964 while still a young man

Unlike Jake, who was demobilised by the RAF in 1947 because service numbers were being reduced at the time, Kenneth pursued a successful long-term career, and his promotion prospects were enhanced by working on aircraft of the prestigious Queen`s Flight. Although Kenneth encountered racism it was outweighed for him by the career opportunities RAF service gave him.



*Kenneth Straun in uniform at the age of 20*

Donald Campbell's experience is different again because he is younger than Jake and Kenneth (born in 1951). He arrived in Birmingham as a child of 13 in 1965, much struck by the contrast between the lush heat of the Jamaican countryside and the polluted grey streets of a cold British city. While Commonwealth migration had now been restricted, local society in Birmingham was still struggling to come to terms with the presence of migrants of colour in their midst. It was amid these tensions that Donald arrived in the city, having like Kenneth received a parental summons to do so. In the general election of 1964, white working-class voters in Smethwick shocked national opinion by voting in a racist Tory counsellor as their new MP. African American civil rights activist Malcom X visited Smethwick in February 1965 just as Donald arrived from Jamaica to be reunited with his family.



*Donald Campbell at the age of 13*

Donald 's mother had to explain the casual racism he sometimes experienced. At school he found that his education was inferior to that of his Jamaican school. Donald was placed in a low ability set and his white teachers assumed that like other black children he would only ever excel at sport. He left school at 16 with no qualifications. In 1968, Wolverhampton, MP Enoch Powell made his notorious 'Rivers of Blood' speech, prophesying violent conflict as a future consequence of Commonwealth migration.

Yet the 1960s were also a decade of swift change. At the start of it, Britain still clung onto the remains of its empire. By 1970 this had been mostly dismantled as separate independent states within the Commonwealth. Donald himself witnessed Jamaican independence as a boy in 1962, without really understanding its significance. Unlike the Smethwick Tory MP, Peter Griffiths elected in 1964 as the result of a racist campaign, Enoch Powell was disowned by Tory leader, Edward Heath in 1968 as a result of his controversial speech. The Race Relations Act of 1965 banned racial discrimination for the first time. But arguably the three factors that the three men have most in common are that they:

- have all served in the RAF, which largely shaped their lives in a positive way
- are migrants of the Windrush Generation
- can identify comfortably as being British, West Indian (as Caribbean identity was referred to then) and within that either Jamaican (Donald), Trinidadian (Jake) or Kittitian (Kenneth) as well as being Brummies (the nick name for Birmingham people) *all at the same time*

### Suggested teaching and learning activities

- Timelines could be constructed for each veteran with selective use of interview segments from each veteran (or only from the interviews of Kenneth Straun and Donald Campbell, if segments from the interview with Jake Jacob have already been seen). Explanations could be given of events and factors mentioned above such as the Rivers of Blood speech or Jamaican independence as part of teaching. Further contextual details could be explained from the project documentaries, the History of the RAF from 1918 and Caribbean recruits of the RAF.
- Events from veteran lives could be converted into a card sort which could be used in different ways. For example, cards could be placed across a Venn diagram with overlapping circles, each circle representing a different veteran. Children could be tasked with placing events or factors that impact one veteran alone within their circle while events or factors that veterans share in common are placed in the overlap between the two circles. A third circle could be added for the third veteran and their cards organised across the expanded diagram in the same way.
- Discussion could be held debating the extent of the similarities and differences between the three veterans. Children could complete a piece of extended writing in answer to the enquiry question. A writing frame could be devised to structure a response for them.

- The veteran`s lives could be compared with that of other people of colour who settled in Britain as part of the Windrush Generation. Questions could be posed such as *‘How typical was their experience?’* *‘Was it harder or easier than the experience of X?’* *‘How different might X`s life have been if he had not been an RAF veteran?’*
- Discussion could be held around the idea of multiple identities using those of the featured veterans as a starting point. This would need to be conducted sensitively since some children might express the view that it is only possible to have a single identity and this point of view can be defended on racist grounds.

Stories of Kenneth`s and Donald`s lives written for primary age children can be downloaded by clicking on their photograph from the following webpage (the text is contained in the notes section of each individual PowerPoint slide). <https://theforgottengenerations.com/lwfp-education-landing/>

## **Material for Enquiry Question Three**

This draws on the experiences of the remaining veterans as well as those already featured. The biographies of the four remaining veterans follow below.

### *A brief biography of Karen Kellar*

Karen was born in Wolverhampton in 1955 to parents of the Windrush Generation. She was brought up in a caring family with strong values by her mother. As the eldest, Karen was well used to defending her younger siblings from racism in public and at school.



Karen remembers being told by a white child that “my dad didn’t fight (a world war) for you! “Inspired by male family members she remembers seeing in military uniforms, Karen decided she could prove her personal worth and her British identity through service. In July 1975, Karen was recruited to the RAF as a chef and in her enjoyable career cooked for Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in the 1980s at Chequers, her official country residence.

Although Karen experienced discrimination, she says she never let it get her down.

The full interview with Karen, her interview broken down in to segments and relevant documentary segments which explain the context of his life experience can be accessed here.

<https://theforgottengenerations.com/lwfp-veterans/karen-kellar-vm/>

### *A brief biography of Bryan Scott*

Bryan was born in Handsworth, Birmingham in 1962 to Jamaican parents. He was not awarded a place at grammar school because of discrimination. Bryan was recruited to the RAF when he left school at 16 in 1979.



Although Bryan finally reached the rank of sergeant, in common with some other black veterans he found promotion slower than those of white counterparts. During his RAF service, Bryan experienced what he describes as banter but says he gave as good as he got.

A highlight of his career was active service in the First Gulf War of 1992. Bryan left the RAF in 2002 and after a period of training became a Baptist minister in the local church in which he was brought up.

The full interview with Bryan, his interview broken down in to segments and relevant documentary segments which explain the context of his life experience can be accessed here.

<https://theforgottengenerations.com/lwfp-veterans/bryan-scott-vm/>

### *A brief biography of Jeffrey Dean Nelson*

Jeff was born in West Bromwich in 1963 to Jamaican parents who had migrated in the 1950s. The family lived on an entirely white estate. Jeff was strictly brought up and taught to express himself in the Queen's

English, not Jamaican patois. His father had served in the RAF before him.



Jeff joined the air force in 1980 and left in 1995. He experienced serious racism and was turned down for officer training on grounds of “skin pigmentation”. Jeff pursued a happier career afterwards in the police force. Jeff says his service in the RAF taught him resilience and a determination to improve his qualifications.

The full interview with Jeff, his interview broken down in to segments and relevant documentary segments which explain the context of his life experience can be accessed here.

<https://theforgottengenerations.com/lwfp-veterans/jeffrey-dean-vm/>

### *A brief biography of John Winston Clarke*

John was born in Smethwick in 1963 into a poor family of recent Jamaican migrants. Their small, terraced house was only heated by coal fires and paraffin heaters, with a bath only once a week.



Successful at local state schools, John`s potential and ambition was recognized and nurtured by the RAF. Through his training as a sole black recruit, first as an airman and then as an officer, he was supported through the ranks and enjoyed a distinguished career, serving in both Iraq and Afghanistan and leaving as a Wing Commander in 2011. Throughout his career John felt protected from racism by his colleagues, and he always felt he had joined a service family.

John describes the air force as “Everything I wanted it to be “.

The full interview with John, his interview broken down in to segments and relevant documentary segments which explain the context of his life experience can be accessed here.

<https://theforgottengenerations.com/lwfp-veterans/john-winston-vm/>

***Enquiry Question Three - Why did local veterans join the RAF despite racism?*** (the focus is on the disciplinary concept of Cause and Consequence)

*Commentary* - Each of the seven veterans had particular reasons for joining the RAF when they did, but there were common factors that

affected that choice, even though the points of recruitment varied between the 1940s and the 1980s.

## ***Education***

The three Windrush migrants (Prince Albert 'Jake' Jacob, Kenneth Straun and Donald Campbell) all received a colonial British style education in the Caribbean colonies they came from. They were taught about British history, geography, literature and culture, while learning little or nothing about their own islands or their African ancestry. The veterans educated in state schools in Britain itself (Donald Campbell from the ages of 13 to 16, Karen Kellar, Bryan Scott, Jeff Nelson and John Winston Clarke) learned about British history from an Anglo-centric view. Colonial history might feature to a degree but coverage of the British Empire as a whole by the late 1970s was rare in line with the popular amnesia about it at the time. It was certainly not taught in an inclusive way. Where black people appeared at all it was usually as victims of colonialism or slavery. Black History Month was only started to be introduced in UK schools in the late 1980s after the veterans had all left school.

*Growing up what they learned about Britain in school played a part in the background to the decision of veterans to join the RAF but to varying degrees.*

## ***Family background***

Veterans came from socially conservative and usually Christian backgrounds. By modern standards, parenting was often strict and in the case of Jeff Nelson perceived as harsh. Ethics of personal effort, determination and service were common, and children were often used to mixing frequently with extended family and friends which fostered a strong sense of community (the exception to this was Jeff Nelson who was brought up in a small family unit on an all-white housing estate, isolated from the black Caribbean community).

When Donald Campbell was left behind by his parents in Jamaica after they migrated to Birmingham, he was given into the care of kindly godparents who treated him as part of their own family in Jamaica. In common with other 'barrel children' left behind in the Caribbean, his parents had barrels of British goods shipped to him which might contain presents such as a pair of shoes that might not have been affordable had they remained on the island.

Karen Keller had extended family living nearby where she lived in Wolverhampton and benefited from church and family outings to the theatre, cinema and the seaside.

John Winston Clarke remembers how his family mixed well with fellow migrant households in the poor Smethwick Street he was brought up in with people from Africa, Asia, Ireland and Scotland.

Some veterans had strong female figures who shaped their characters. Kenneth Straun was pampered by his grandmother in Saint Kitts, Donald Campbell was devoted to his mother and Karen Kellar's mother was much admired for the support she gave to the wider Caribbean community where they lived. Her mother taught her *"If a task is once begun, never leave it till it's done, be the labour great or small, do it well or not at all"*

Past military service by family members influenced the attitudes of some veterans. Karen Kellar remembers the framed photographs of male family members in smart British uniforms that hung in the front room at home. Jeff Nelson knew his father had served in the RAF for his National Service between 1958 and 1961 and wished to emulate him.

*The family upbringing of most veterans meant that they were likely to respond positively to the structure, discipline and hierarchy which characterises military service.*

### ***British patriotism***

There was no doubt in the mind of Prince Albert, 'Jake' Jacob when he left Trinidad in 1944, to train as RAF groundcrew that he was British. His schooling and a white Scottish grandfather had taught him to revere Britain or England as the Mother Country and respect its institutions, particularly the monarchy. To serve in the RAF was an honour and a duty at a time of national danger. It was a revelation to Jake that British people knew little or nothing about West Indians (Caribbeans). In many cases, he probably knew more about British history, geography, culture, and literature than white Britons themselves did. The other Windrush migrants, Kenneth Straun and Donald Campbell were also brought up to view Britain as the Mother Country, even though for Donald this might have been complicated by the Jamaican Independence Day celebrations he witnessed in 1962. In fact, there was no contradiction in Donald's mind between being both Jamaican and British *at the same time*. His belief that the streets of England were paved with gold were soon tempered by his actual experience of settling in 1960s Birmingham. Karen Keller was used to protecting her younger siblings from the routine racism in the Wolverhampton of the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. However, she was shocked and horrified, when a white pupil once claimed. 'My dad didn't fight in the war for you!' (followed by a racial slur). Such traditional racism articulates the view which equates

Britishness exclusively with whiteness. It was not possible for the child's father to have served in the Second World War *and* have fought for the sake of black Britons, because it was impossible to be both black and British. However, Karen knew better from her upbringing and the framed photographs of male relatives in her front room. It gave her the determination to prove through service that having been born in Britain, she was just as British as anyone else.



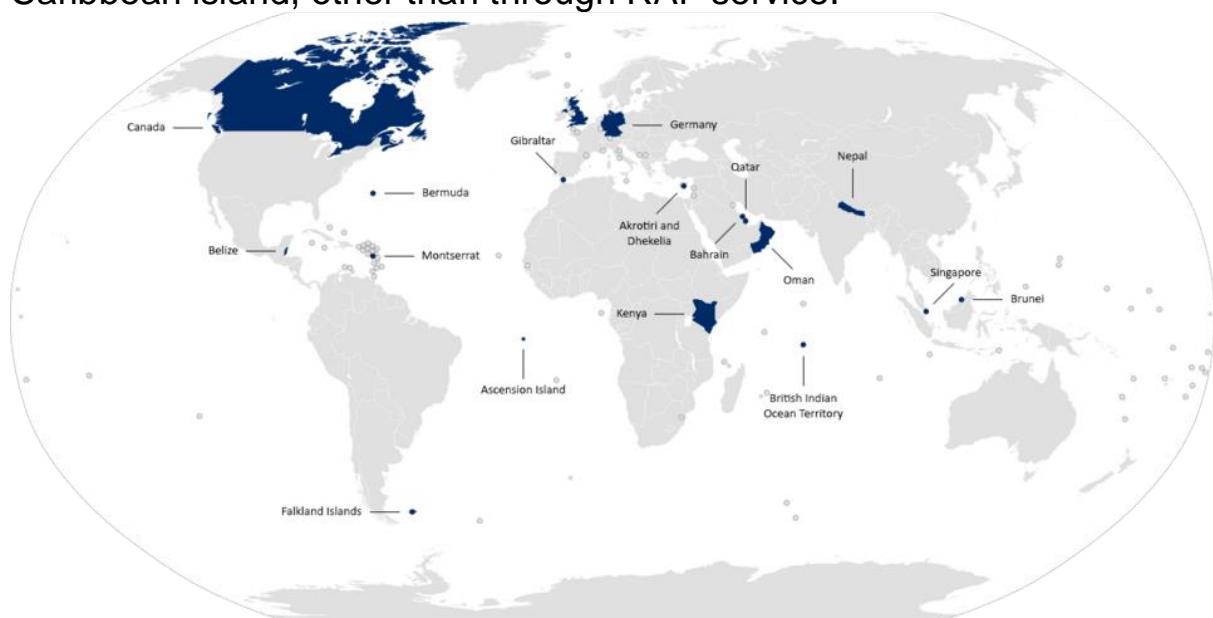
*A young Karen Kellar in RAF uniform*

John Winston Clarke was named after wartime prime minister Sir Winston Churchill. He was heavily influenced as a child of the 1960s and 1970s by frequently repeated war films and TV series, which celebrated the military success of the RAF during the Second World War, projecting a commonly felt nostalgia at the time for Britain's former role as a great power. Jeff Nelson was forbidden from speaking Jamaican patois at home and expected to express himself in the Queen's English.

*Genuine patriotic sentiment played a role in making RAF service appeal to these veterans. Who would not want a stake in a branch of the Armed Forces that was admired and respected around the world as a force for good?*

### ***Desire to travel***

The RAF maintained (and still does maintain) many bases around the world that are a legacy of empire, the Cold War and Britain's past history as an independent great power. Visiting different places was a strong draw for Donald Campbell, who served in Northern Ireland, Oman, Madagascar, Germany, the Falklands and various NATO countries. For Second World War veterans like Jake Jacob, visiting Britain itself was an ambition that might have been impossible for a colonial from a small Caribbean island, other than through RAF service.



*UK military bases overseas in 2018*

*Joining the RAF meant RAF veterans were able to visit places they might never have seen as civilians.*

### ***Good career prospects***

Service in the RAF offered secure employment with a regular wage and a good pension. Depending on the service record of veterans, recruits might experience promotion and better pay over time (they did not realize when they joined that some of them might experience delayed promotion because of discrimination). Karen Kellar became a chef for prime minister Margaret Thatcher in the 1980s, Kenneth Straun

maintained aircraft of the Queen's Flight in the 1970s and 1980s, Donald Campbell headed an RAF Training School at Cosford while John Winston Clarke was promoted regularly, retiring as a Wing Commander in 2011.

*Job security, pay, pensions and career development were attractive to recruits.*

### ***Training and education opportunities***

Depending on aptitude, RAF recruits were trained in a particular trade as ground crew (supporting aircraft on the ground and other tasks) or for particular roles as aircrew. They could develop expertise in a role or switch to another one. There were frequent opportunities for training on offer which was freely provided.

*Opportunities for funded personal development was attractive.*

### ***Preparation for future careers***

Service in the RAF could provide a springboard for successful future careers. For example, Kenneth Straun used his expertise in a civil aviation role in the United States after his retirement from the RAF while Karen Kellar went on to a second career as a home economics teacher. The RAF paid for retraining for a possible new occupation at the point a veteran left its service.

### ***Racism and Sexism as a spur to service***

Ironically racism was capable of spurring veterans to challenge racist assumptions about black people by proving their worth through military service as Karen Kellar chose to do. Also, as a woman at her point of recruitment she was subject to regulations that specified that if she married a man outside the RAF or had children at all she would have to leave the service. This gender discrimination forced her to decide whether she would actually pursue an RAF career. (It might be worth pointing out that gay or lesbian relationships were banned in the military until 2000).

*Possible, teaching and learning activities*

- The factors identified above could be introduced, explaining the recruitment of veterans to the RAF. The factors (with a brief explanation of each one) could be placed on cards for pairs/trios to

arrange into a possible order of importance in explaining veteran recruitment. Whole group or class discussion could then be held considering the differing orders of importance decided by pairs/trios.

A whole group or class version of the order of importance could be agreed.

- Selected interview segments where veterans talk about their upbringing, feelings towards Britain and the motivations for joining the RAF could be played. Children could note down particular motivations mentioned for each veteran on a mind map or spider diagram for each one.
- Having reviewed selected interview segments with veterans, pairs/trios could return to the ordering of common factors agreed previously. Within a limited time, factor cards could be re-ordered taking into account what veterans said in the interviews. A whole group or class discussion could be held to agree a new common order of importance for factors if pairs/trios, reordering warranted this.
- A further discussion could be held around why the motivations for joining the RAF may have changed between the 1940s and 1980s and today. Adults will need to be sensitive to strong opinions that might be expressed about national identity, colonialism and racism. This is where the factors considered by veterans in their youth need to be explained carefully in the context of a past period where attitudes were shaped by the culture and beliefs prevalent then and when racism was more overt than it is generally now. Also, the RAF like other services has been subject to change since the veterans retired and employs fewer people than in the past. It is not identical to the institution that the veterans served in.

Stories of each veteran`s life written for primary age children can be downloaded by clicking on their photograph from the following webpage (the text is contained in the notes section of each individual PowerPoint slide). <https://theforgottengenerations.com/lwfp-education-landing/>

## **Material for Enquiry Question Four**

***Enquiry Question Four - Why was John Winston Clarke`s RAF career longer and more successful than that of Jeff***

***Nelson`s?*** (the focus is on the disciplinary concepts of Similarity and Difference and Cause and Consequence).

*Commentary* - The question compares the careers of two RAF veterans who are of the same generation and shared similar backgrounds, but whose fortunes were markedly different. Both John and Jeff were sons of Windrush migrant parents from Jamaica, brought up in relatively poor households in 1960s Birmingham. They were both state educated and joined the RAF on leaving school. Both were recruited at a time when there were very few people of colour in the service. But while John moved through the ranks to become an officer, retiring as a Wing Commander after a distinguished career in 2011, Jeff left the service earlier in 1995 without the promotion he sought to the rank of officer.

On the face of it, the disparity could be straightforwardly explained by the talent and character of each individual. However, while it is true that John was clever, ambitious and hard-working, this is not enough to explain why he was successful in the RAF by comparison with Jeff.

### ***Factor One- Education***

John had the advantage of attending an excellent comprehensive school and sixth form college where his ability was identified (he was accelerated by a year academically at secondary level). John was not written off as black pupils were by many white teachers in other schools as only having the potential to excel at sport. Nor was he subject to racist discrimination in a selective system like fellow veteran Brian Scott who lost out on a place at grammar school because a racist headteacher did not allow him to take up his place even though he had passed the 11+ exam. As a child of colour, John benefited from the change from selective to comprehensive education. It is possible that had he been older, he might have been denied a place at grammar school, holding back his academic progress. John also happened to attend an excellent school where racism was not permitted to affect his progress. It allowed him to go onto a sixth form education. When he applied to join the RAF in 1982 at 18, he already had a strong educational record unlike Jeff whose teachers expected little of him when he left school at 16.

### ***Factor Two – Protection from racism and individual support from the RAF***

Another explanation for John`s success in his RAF career is that individuals within the service spotted his potential and actively protected him from racism. They took his ambition to become an officer, flying aircraft seriously, but saw that he needed more experience before he

was ready to take that step. In John`s initial service in the lower ranks, he gained more understanding through practical observation of what was required in an officer`s role. This meant that when he successfully applied for officer training at RAF Cranwell (1986-7), he was better prepared for it. RAF trainers also expressly warned white recruits against racist treatment of their sole black classmate. While training at Cranwell, John gravitated socially towards female trainees and those with regional accents rather than the more traditional public-school intake. He always felt protected from racism by his fellow officers. John`s status as an officer may have made it less likely that he would suffer discrimination than Jeff who never rose to this higher rank.

*Factor Three – John`s background became an advantage to the RAF*

John`s background may also have become a positive advantage to him by the late 1990s. In 1998 the RAF was obliged to attempt to increase their recruitment of ethnic minorities, publish specific data on recruitment of ethnic minorities and show that serious steps were being made to combat racism. It was useful for the institution to have a respected and talented officer who was also a photogenic person of colour. John was a useful role model for recruitment.



### *John astride his aircraft*

What is astonishing is how the same institution permitted Jeff Nelson, a black recruit from the same social background to be treated so badly. The interview segments where Jeff talks about the appalling racism he experienced in his RAF service in Northern Ireland and Cyprus in the 1980s are hard to listen to. It is also astonishing that Jeff's application to become an officer was turned down as late as 1993 on the grounds of 'skin pigmentation' (it was never intended that he would ever have known this). What is crucial here is that Jeff's potential as an officer was spotted by his friend, John Winston Clarke who encouraged him to apply for the rank. After all, it was not unreasonable to think that the institution that supported John could also support Jeff in the same way.

#### ***Factor Four – Lack of RAF accountability for how it treated ethnic minorities***

Another reason for the glaring disparity in treatment between the two men appears to be the lack of institutional accountability for the way ethnic minority staff were treated until 1998. Only with a consistent approach, rooted in official expectations could racism be effectively combated.

The behaviour of white personnel was crucial to the success of John Winston Clarke. After leaving the RAF in 1995 Jeff forged a successful later career in the police where he felt empowered by white authority figures to challenge the racism of colleagues in a way he was never encouraged to do in the RAF. It was perhaps just as well for Jeff that he joined the Thames Valley force rather than the Metropolitan Police which was condemned as 'institutionally racist' by the Macpherson report of 1999, examining the way the murder of black teenager Stephen Lawrence in 1993 had been investigated.

#### Possible Teaching and Learning activities

- The children could participate in discussion about why people from a similar background might do well or less well in the same career.

A list of initial reasons could be agreed and written up for later reference.

- Children could view selected interview segments where John and Jeff talk about their upbringing and experience of RAF service (Jeff's interview segments need reviewing carefully before showing to children. They may be deemed as too shocking to show).
- Details of John and Jeff's experiences could be written up as a set of cards and arranged by pairs/trios across a Venn diagram with two overlapping labels, one labelled John Winston Clark and the other, Jeff Nelson. Cards could then be allocated to the circle of a single veteran if they solely relate to them while shared details or characteristics would be placed in the overlap.
- Children could create timelines for each veteran. This could be converted into living graphs with a timeline of dates along the bottom axis and a vertical axis ranging from negative to positive experience. The graphs would show the highs and lows of each veteran. Particular turning points could be marked on as relevant to the life of each veteran.
- Discussion could be held about the relative importance of factors such as individual talent, quality of education, and protection, or lack of protection from racism in the RAF in explaining the different careers of John and Jeff in the air force.
- Children could answer the enquiry question as a piece of extended writing. This could be structured by use of an appropriate writing frame.

