

Confound & Destroy

The magazine of RAF 100 Group Association

 **Autumn 2016** 



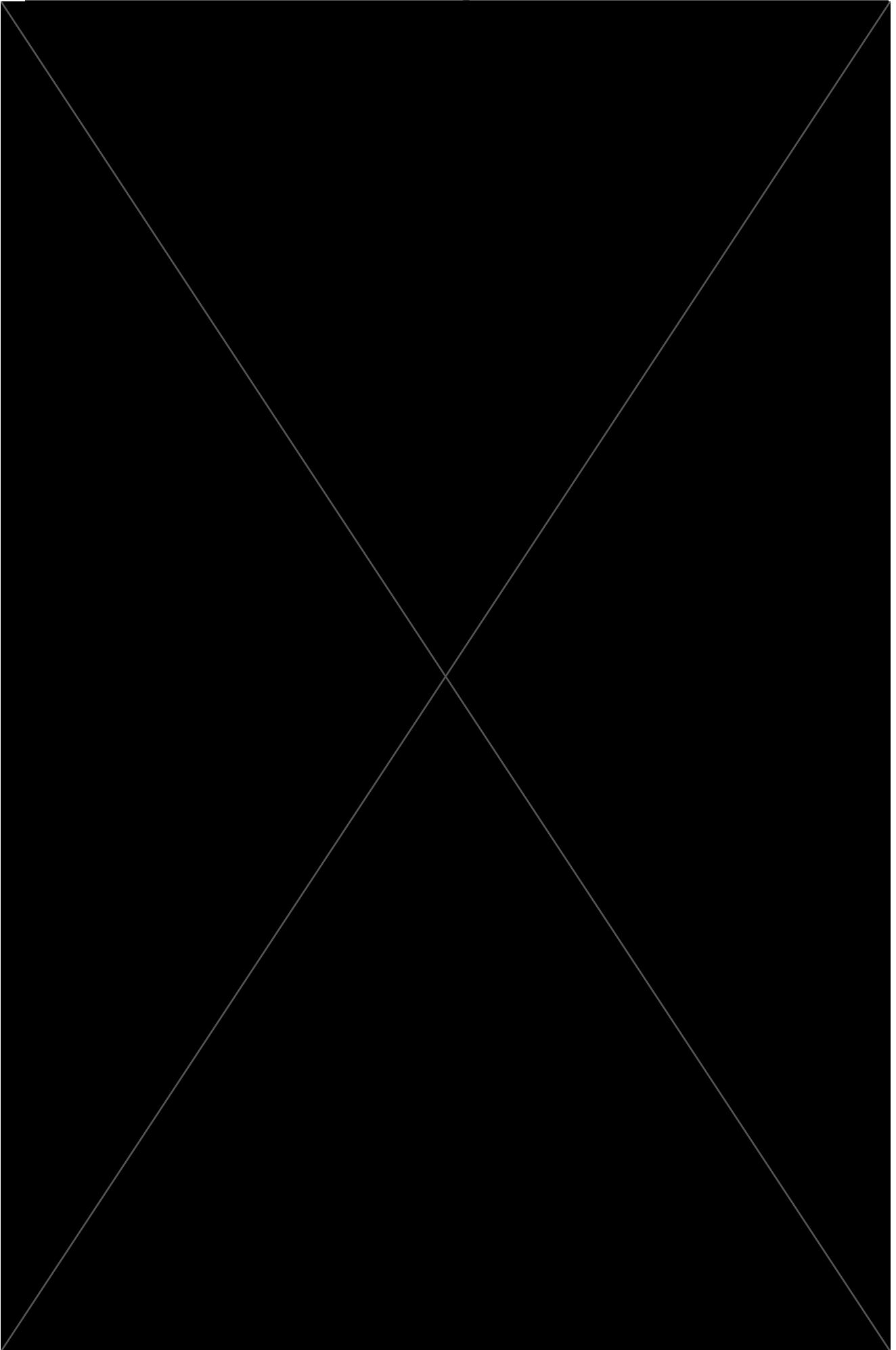
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RAF 100 Group Association



EDITOR'S PAGE



Dearest Kindred Spirits,

I begin this Autumn magazine by sharing with you the phenomenal news that both the Queen and a Colonel on behalf of the Prime Minister have written letters to be shared with the Association after receiving 'Collectable' Special Edition copies of my book: *RAF 100 Group – Kindred Spirits*, with veteran signatures. I include these at the end of the Letters Section in this magazine. I would appreciate hearing further comments from you on what Colonel Nick Perry DSO MBE says in his letter. I was asked when writing, to pose the question as to why RAF 100 Group still has secrets under a 100 Year Rule, and did he think it fair that some veterans continue to live in fear. I know a few veterans who do, because of specific secrets they hold relating to their past work. They have never divulged these because of the Official Secrets Act signed in wartime. My personal feeling is that the letter skirts around these questions posed and I therefore continue to campaign on your behalf.

One further important issue I need to discuss is an amendment to the Summer magazine in which words of Chris Lambert at Oulton Memorial during the Reunion in Norfolk were misquoted:

'... Chris concludes the Memorial ceremony by offering a timely reminder that crews of the U.S. 306th Bomb Squadron died whilst serving here at RAF Oulton, leaving us with the thought that they may be gone, but we have a responsibility to keep them alive by holding them in our thoughts, remembering the ultimate sacrifice they made.'

When Chris spoke of the figure 306, he wasn't referring to the U.S. 36th Bomb Squadron, but rather to the 306 aircrew who died. The wording should therefore have been:

'... Chris concludes the Memorial ceremony by offering a timely reminder that we should remember the 306 who lost their lives whilst serving at RAF Oulton, leaving us with the thought that they may be gone, but we have a responsibility to keep them alive by holding them in our thoughts, remembering the ultimate sacrifice they made.'

My apologies to both Chris Lambert and members.

This magazine is packed with goodies which I hope you enjoy reading, including my epic journey from North Yorkshire to Norfolk, visiting veterans in their own homes. It proved an extraordinary adventure as well as an enormous pleasure in putting faces to names I've known for years, meeting some of the many kindred spirits who make up our Association. Thank you so much for your hospitality. Every visit became a joyful reunion, creating such warm loving memories to take home with me. Now, at the end of September/beginning of October, Part Two of this epic adventure begins as I join Stuart Borlase of Living History Films from Australia, visiting more of you, driving further afield both north and south in the UK to capture your wartime memories on film. He will be sharing some of these cameos as our Guest Speaker next year at our 20th Association Reunion to prove that veterans remain at the very heart of our Association. Meanwhile, I include in these pages past and present pictures of people we visited earlier ... with more adventures to be shared in the Winter edition. I would remind all members that subscriptions are due by the end of this year: £15.

*Love & Hugs All,
Janine xx*

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LETTER from the CHAIRMAN



Dear Friends,

I am writing this on board ship in Mallaig harbour, N W Scotland. This is the twentieth year that we have visited the Hebrides, arguably the best cruising ground in the world – when the weather is fair. Alas, that is not the case today.

I was introduced to cruising here by a good friend R. A. (Dick) Fresson who was a colleague when I worked in the distilling industry. Before Dick joined the Distillers Company, he was a Pilot with the RAF, flying jet fighters.

Dick's boat 'Viking' lies alongside mine in a west coast marina. We met up with 'Viking' earlier this week at Tobermory, and I talked to him about a radio interview I had heard with a young lady who had the unusual occupation of being a Wing Walker. Dick reminded me that his father had much experience of this as a Pilot in an air circus between the wars. Captain E. E. (Ted) Fresson OBE was an important figure in British Aviation who pioneered flying in the north of Scotland. Having trained as an Engineer, he worked in China before the First World War. Volunteering for the Royal Flying Corps, he was trained as a Pilot in Canada. After the war, he returned to China where he designed and built aircraft. On one occasion, working for a Chinese warlord, he only escaped execution when he was able to demonstrate that his design would fly. With the advent of Civil War, he returned to the UK and continued in aviation through giving joy rides to thousands of people all over Britain.

As a result of a private charter to the Orkneys, he realised the potential for aviation serving the Northern Isles. Fresson opened up the first airports at Wick, Kirkwall, Aberdeen Sumburgh and Stornoway. He established an airline, Highland Airways, whose inaugural flight was from Longman Airfield, Inverness to Kirkwall. This is probably the longest-running, continuously operated air service in Europe and possibly the world. His airline gained the first domestic airmail service in May 1934. He also pioneered an air ambulance service. The first scheduled flight to Sumburgh was on 3rd June 1936 when his DH89 Rapide carried fare-paying passengers and the Provost of Aberdeen. This brought a social revolution to the Shetland Islands. Previously served by two sailings a week, the islands were now four hours from Aberdeen. For the first time, Shetlanders could read a national newspaper on the day it was published. More importantly, emergency medical treatment was available within 24 hours rather than three or four days.



Statue: Captain E. E. Fresson OBE

During the Second World War he continued flying scheduled services whilst acting as an Advisor to the Air Ministry and the Admiralty. The current Inverness airport is on the site recommended by Fresson for a wartime airfield. He recommended tarmac (a first) for the runways at Halston, Orkney. Captain Fresson was also a witness from the air, to the crash of S-25 Sunderland flying boat which carried Prince George, Duke of Kent, when it hit Eagle Rock close to Thurso. The following day, he took the only aerial photographs of the crash site. Captain Fresson is commemorated by the Fresson Trust (an aviation charity set up in 1991, with the objective of

furthering the knowledge of aviation past, present and future, for the benefit of people), by a statue at Inverness Airport (seen right) and by bronze statues of the DH69 at both Wick and Sumburgh, depicting his pioneering flight to Sumburgh.

Ted Fresson's younger brother also made a significant contribution to the war effort. Serving in Bomber Command, Air Commodore Noel H. Fresson DFC was Commanding Officer in turn of 7, 51, and 97 Squadrons. In October 1943, as part of the Pathfinder Force, his aircraft was damaged by enemy fire, putting one engine out of action and damaging a second. The Citation states:

'... despite this, Group Captain Fresson continued to the target and bombed it. This Officer has completed many sorties and has displayed inspiring leadership, great skill and determination.'

In addition to being awarded the DFC, this exploit may have earned him the nickname 'Press On' Fresson. I like to think that 100 Group might have been helping out that night.

Captain E. E. Fresson wrote a memoir: *'Air Road to the Isles'* which is still available.

One of the many pleasures for me in attending our annual Reunion is after lunch at The City of Norwich Aviation Museum (CNAM) when I can spend a little time browsing in the bookshop. Last May, I bought a book called *'Pilot – A Tale of High Adventure'* written by Squadron Leader Joe Patient DFC. The purchase was stimulated by the picture of a Mosquito on the cover. However, it turned out to be a riveting read which I highly recommend. Joe Patient flew 59 Mosquito operations, first as a bomber Pathfinder with 139 Squadron and then with 1409 Met Flight at Oakington. For 48 of the 59 missions, his Navigator/Observer was Flt/Lt Norry Gilroy DFC. Moved from operations, he was engaged in test flying and delivering repaired and new aircraft for a short time before being an Instructor on Wellingtons – a far cry from the speed and versatility of a Mosquito. Amazingly, he then volunteered to become a glider pilot. The account of his post-war career in the Middle East and Africa is equally fascinating.

Back in today's RAF 100 Group Association we are making progress with developing a draft Constitution for consideration at next year's AGM. However, introducing the website is proving more challenging, but hopefully we will succeed.

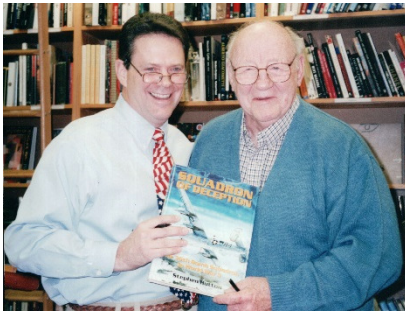
Kind regards,



Roger Dobson
Tir A Môr Uchaf, Cemaes Bay, Isle of Anglesey

8th AIR FORCE REPRESENTATIVE

Stephen Hutton: Association Committee Member



Dear Friends,

In this issue, I write from America regarding the Squadron of Deception's intense partnership and co-operation in working with both RAF 100 Group and the American-British Laboratory Division 15 of the British Telecommunications Research Establishment located at Great Malvern.



After D-Day, in June and July, the 803rd Squadron flew successful electronic jamming operations alongside RAF 100 Group Squadrons. Squadron operations for the month of August had eight missions flown from RAF Oulton and the remaining eight from AAF Station 113 at Cheddington. The 803rd had moved to Cheddington on August 13th where the Squadron name was changed to the 36th Bomb Squadron Radar Counter Measure Unit.



In addition to the MANDREL patrol missions, four search missions were flown by the Squadron at the request of ABL-15 – the American and British Laboratory Division 15. These missions contributed materially to the research being carried out in Radar countermeasures by the ABL-15 technicians.

The 36th Squadron Navigator Lt. Joseph Thome of Lt. William Corder's crew, seen right; spoke of serving at these air bases as well as working with ABL-15 (below):

'We were doing a lot of different things flying from that same air base. There were some guys that were ferrying in people and going and picking people up close to Germany. I don't think we did much talking among ourselves, because we didn't know what the hell we were doing. We didn't ask any questions.'

One of our biggest enemies was because we were so few airplanes, flying around when the main forces were not flying. The British were very very careful to make sure that nobody was coming in invading their country. We got more shots fired at us by the British than by the Germans just because we weren't on anybody's schedule, going out or coming in.

Some of the work we were doing there was pretty highly classified. We worked real close with ABL -- the American British



Laboratory. They were the ones providing the Americans with their electronic knowledge. They were quite a bit ahead of us. We worked together. That's the reason, of course, that we were there. We loaned them the airplanes to put their equipment aboard. And when we weren't flying combat missions we were flying for ABL. We were trying to prove over England what we were going to perhaps do later over on the Continent. They [ABL-15] were very very successful in what they were doing. They were so far ahead of us it was terrible. They came out with some pretty good inventions.

We just tried to keep everything way above board. Anything we didn't have to know, we weren't told and we didn't ask questions. We just went out there and turned certain switches on and turned them off as they programmed us to do.

Now, I had a special clearance with those people. And even some people on my crew were mad at me because they weren't allowed to go in and out of their own airplane at times. I had to make sure that nobody was fooling around with the radio tubes and that sort of thing. So, it was rather difficult, even for me, not being able to tell the rest of the crew what the hell I was doing aboard the same airplane they were flying in.'



Lt Corder Crew

Stephen Hutton

Author: 'Squadron of Deception'

8th Air Force Historical Society Unit Contact

36th Bomb Squadron RCM

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CITY OF NORWICH AVIATION MUSEUM



Dear Friends,

With the main visitor season now over, we can reflect on a very successful summer at the Museum.

We are still adding up the figures, but it looks as if August 2016 will have been a fantastic month for the Museum, with record visitor numbers. We enjoyed two great days at the end of the month when the Red Arrows were based at Norwich Airport for their appearances at the Clacton Air Show. Our car park was overflowing into Old Norwich Road on these days and we were crowded with visitors, many of whom stayed all day to view the comings and goings of the Red Arrow's Hawk aircraft. As always, we must thank the Museum staff and volunteers for making this summer so successful.

A year ago, we were still uncertain whether the Museum would be remaining on its established site or be faced with a move to another area around the airport. The reorganisation and expansion of the site around the construction of the Norwich Northern Distributor road has presented us with both challenges and opportunities. So far, we have benefited from the changes which have had to be made, and we are confident that having a final settlement to the many years of discussions with the local authorities will bring a bright future. As one of our volunteers reminded us recently, we could have spent the summer packing up the Museum for a move rather than enjoying the present stage of our development.

As we move towards the Autumn, our main priority is to regain our Arts Council Accreditation. This we lost during the period of uncertainty as to our lease arrangements. Now this is resolved, we will be working towards meeting the present standards required to achieve restoration of our Accreditation, which is a vital step in the Museum's future development.

Kelvin Sloper
CNAM

September 2016

LETTERS PAGES



In the Spring magazine, Vic Flowers shared his frustration in seeking the exact whereabouts of the Direction Finding Hut at RAF North Creake. Nigel Morter, co-owner with Claire Nugent of North Creake Control Tower now extensively renovated into a home and B&B; shared the fact that information from that period can be unreliable, with 1942 maps available only from RAF Hendon, and the principle contractor W. O. Lawrence who erected buildings having gone out of business. In the Summer magazine, Vic shared a drawing showing the outside appearance of the Hut. Vic has since written two lovely letters to me sharing both his thoughts on reading of the impending Reunion in May, and explaining why the location of the Direction Finding Hut is so important to him:

Dear Janine,

... When I saw the Reunion event many thoughts went through my mind – will there be someone like me attending, a plain NCO who did his job amongst the tension of an operational Unit and the Front Line troops, those wonderful lads: the aircrews who had extra rations in the section of Nissen Hut allocated to them where we had our meals together at a distance? The tears of WAAFs waiting for overdue aircraft ... I wondered how many other ranks like myself are still surviving. I still remember those colleagues of the Sergeant's Mess, our trades virtually covered the running of the Base. There were still Sergeant and Flight Sergeant aircrew who were segregated in their own part of the Mess.

I imagine you at your keyboard. Some of the time in the RAF was spent as a Wireless Operator at a Ground Station, but I did not personally receive Morse on a typewriter like other fellow Operators. I had to write all my signals down in long hand.

When I read of your visit to North Creake airfield, I wondered if you had time to visit the Memorial which now marks the wartime location of the site. I obtained a fine photograph of it which I used in my article for the Creake News, Autumn edition, produced by Bob Freakley.

But then again, how could I forget the location of the Direction Finding Hut where I used to go at odd times for inspection and yet such a short distance from the Control Tower! The Hut was central to my responsibilities at North Creake and, I think wisely perhaps now, fate has decided its exact location should remain unknown.

The hut was manned by WAAF and RAF Operators. I made regular inspection visits either on my cycle or using the mobile Direction Finding Vehicle. On all my visits, it was obvious the Operators had been tipped off. One day, I had just arrived when an aircraft started calling for a bearing and was becoming quite verbal. I soon realised it was a false call as it was flying in a circle, making a course to fly on impossible and unnecessary. I had to put up with these practical jokes on a regular basis!!

On one of my visits, I became aware of a distinctive smell in the Hut which reminded me of when I was in Villerupt, in France, with the RAF at the beginning of the war when I had to visit a brothel to retrieve the cap of our driver who had left without paying and forgotten his cap. This I duly retrieved, but begrudging having to bear the cost of the hiring of a female. My suspicions that something was going on in or around the Direction Finding Hut was confirmed when I decided to check the toilet, to be confronted by the sight of used condoms festooned amongst the branches of a large blackthorn bush nearby. I was disgusted and embarrassed to think that this had been going on in an RAF compound and my responsibility. I could imagine the ridicule and Barrack Room humour it would create if generally known. Fortunately, I left soon after – not even telling my good friends.

As a raw NCO, new to Squadron life, I felt my time at North Creake had been well spent and I had achieved all that had been asked of me. I did, however, feel sorry for my replacement and the legacy I was leaving him.

Forty-five years later, in 1991, I received the Air Efficiency Award Medal in recognition of Wartime Service with the Civilian Wireless Reserve, Royal Air Force Voluntary Reserve and Royal Air Force.

I look forward to hearing from you in the not too distant future.

Best wishes

Vic

Vic Flowers



Jan

At this year's Reunion, I asked Jane Larcombe, Manager at *The Swan*, Lavenham, if she could help trace the history of my Uncle's aircraft in wartime. *The Swan* is involved in a number of projects and events as it was a place where airmen used to meet and talk, leaving their signatures on the walls in memory.

'*T for Tommy*' was Arthur Anthony crew's plane in which my Uncle, Sgt Rodney Vowler serving with 223 Squadron at RAF Oulton was brought down. My Uncle had started with Mr Sykes crew, moving on in December 1944, until in 1945 he joined up with Ayre's crew.

The following information came as a result of my enquiries, aided by Jane Larcombe, and my grateful thanks go to her for making this happen:

Hello Rod,

I received an email from Jane Larcombe at 'The Swan' who indicated that you are still looking for information about B-24 42-52572, and a photograph of the aircraft 'T Tommy', your Uncle's aircraft with USAAF markings. Some of this you will already know:

B-24H 42-52572 was first assigned to the 836th Bomb Squadron of the 487th Bomb Group, and was flown overseas from Alamogordo, New Mexico, to Lavenham, England, by the crew of Lt Clelland J. Hanner in March – April 1944. Here is the Hanner crew roster from Special Orders No. 71, the Order directing the 487BG Air Echelon to proceed from Alamogordo, New Mexico, to Herington, Kansas, the first stop during the overseas deployment:

Plane #42-52572 - Crew #87-6-7

P	2ND LT (1024)	CLELLAND J. HANNER	0808992
CP	F/O (1024)	HUBERT B. MEYER	T-61149
N	2ND LT (1034)	NELSON N. HERRING	0759847
B	2ND LT (1035)	WAYNE T. KANE	0693334
E	S/Sgt (748)	Clarence R. Wooten	14055370
R	S/Sgt (757)	Murell G. Hampton	17160671
AG	Sgt (612)	Clarence V.B. Flowers	38388106
CG	Sgt (748)	Max E. Dawson	35671130
CG	Sgt (748)	James T. Dunn	16027721
CG	Sgt (612)	James B. Knight Jr.	34303998

This is the photograph of the Hanner crew that I received in 2010 from Mary Hanner, Lt Hanner's widow (she is now deceased). The photo was probably taken at Herington, Kansas in March 1944. The crew is posed in front of a B-24, but the identity of the aircraft is unknown. The names of the men in the photo are shown underneath.



Back Row, standing: Wayne T. Kane (Bombardier), Nelson N. Herring (Navigator),
Hubert B. Meyer (Co-Pilot), and Clellenad J. ('Clee') Hanner (Pilot).

Front Row, kneeling: Clarence R. Wooten (Engineer), Murell G. Hampton (Radio Operator),
James B. Knight Jr (Gunner), Clarence V. B. Flowers (Gunner), James T. ('Jimmy') Dunn (Gunner),
and Max E. Dawson (Gunner).

We know from the research of Tom Brittan of B24BestWeb that B-24H 42-52572 carried Squadron Code 2G (for 836th Bomb Squadron) and Radio Call Letter E. It was nicknamed: 'The Spook' and assigned to RAF 100 Group on 6 October 1944. I don't know whether there are any surviving crew members and don't have time to go searching at present, maybe later ...

This Hanner crew photo is also on the 487BG website: <http://487thbg.org/Photos/HannerCrew.shtml>

Best regards,

Paul Webber

Paul M. Webber

Secretary, 487th Bomb Group Association | <http://www.487thbg.org/>

Colorado Springs, Colorado

pwebber@pcisys.net



Jan

In 2011 the Bath Branch of the Royal Air Forces Association closed down. The Standard required laying up somewhere. The former Secretary, Ken Burgin, 86 years; contacted me as a former member. He wanted a Standard Bearer, and I volunteered to help out.

On 17 July, the laying up was carried out at the St John's Hospital Chapel in the centre of Bath. The service was led by The Rev J Goodden and attended by the Mayor of Bath: P. Crossley and his wife, and thirty former members. A speech was given by the former President: Air Marshall Sir Peter Norriss KBE CB AFC MA FRAeS who gave a history of the Royal Air Forces Association, thanking past members for all their help in keeping the Branch running. A collection was made and raised £150, with half of the monies going to the church, and the other half to the ATC who provided refreshments after.

It was Ken and his son who performed all the hard work to get this successful conclusion. He said: *'It was a huge relief. It was the final chapter and it brought some closure to see the Standard laid up with dignity'*. The Chapel remains open to the general public, while the Standard gives balance to the altar, as on the other side is the Union Flag put up to mark the Queen's 90th birthday.



Rod Vowler

RAF 100 Group Association Standard Bearer



16 August 2016

Hello there!

I have only recently found details of your Association on the internet. I am researching my mother's role as a WAAF in 80 Wing during World War Two and understand that the Wing was part of 100 Group, hence my interest. My mother's name was Mercia Lovett and her War Record shows that she was stationed first at Bomber Command HQ, then at RAF Lympe in Kent, and finally at Aldington on Romney Marsh. I would be grateful if you could let me have information regarding the Association and whether I would be able to become a member.

18 August 2016

Thank you for your prompt reply, and it was lovely to realise what a friendly and welcoming Group you are. I thoroughly enjoyed reading the magazine you sent through, especially the article about the USAF on D-Day.

I have my mother's War Record and have read Laurie Brettingham's book, initially believing my mother to have been a Radar Operator in recalling what she told me. Unfortunately, she died in 1966 and at 20 years old didn't ask a lot about her time in the WAAFs. Even then, all those years after the war, little was in the public domain about Radar. Sadly, my father disposed of all her effects when he remarried, so any memorabilia she might have had disappeared.

My mother said she loved what she had done during the war, and described being in a dark hut looking at a Radar screen. She said it had played havoc with her eyesight. She also told me she knew Morse Code and demonstrated it to me sometimes. She had met my father in Ashford, Kent,

in 1945 – he was in the RAF having returned in 1944 after four years in the Far East, including a hair-raising escape from Singapore when it fell in February 1942. She told me that, at that time, she was stationed on Romney Marsh and billeted in Ashford. It was only when I got her War Record that I saw her last posting as being Aldington which is, indeed, on the Marsh. Only in recent days have I been able to find Aldington named as an 80 Wing Out Station.

I met an amazing elderly lady two years ago who had been a WAAF Radar Operator at Worth Maltravers who persuaded someone in the RAF to look at Mum's War Record. The person concerned told me my mother had definitely not been a Radar Operator and instead been a Wireless Operator, but I still find it odd that she should have known anything about Radar and conditions in which they worked if what the person says is correct. I have no brothers and sisters or anyone else to whom my mother might have spoken about her wartime experience and any help would prove invaluable.

I am intrigued by the use of the 100 Year Rule in relation to 100 Group – the mystery grows and I have always loved puzzles! Thank you so much for all the information you have given to me, and I look forward to meeting you some time as well as other members of the Association. For the future, I am going to become a member.

I have this photo of my parents' wedding when a WAAF Guard of Honour greeted them at the church. Sorry, I don't know any names. It would be lovely if someone should recognise anyone.



Best wishes,
Lesley Griffiths
lesleygee@aol.com



My Dear Janine,

I cannot recall ever receiving such a lengthy delightful missive in my many years of living. It gave me much pleasure, containing so much readable chit-chat, must attribute to your special talent. Why not retain all your correspondence and produce another worthy book entitled: *'Friendly Mail'* ... should sell like hot cakes!!

I recently received mail from our friendly Aussie Bod Stuart ... He mentioned about his next visit plus a collective film crew possibly in September/October so on standby for an Aussie attack!

I've not yet had any info from our Lady Rep representing Lincoln Lancaster Bomber Organisation. No idea what that could develop into, however eventually it will be surprise, surprise!

Your request for old wartime photos created a passionate search into records, etc. but ancient fun! I found an assortment of old and latest for fun viewing ... Meanwhile, I'm still playing my part as President of our local Royal British Legion, attending various ceremonial parades ...

Take good care, and best wishes

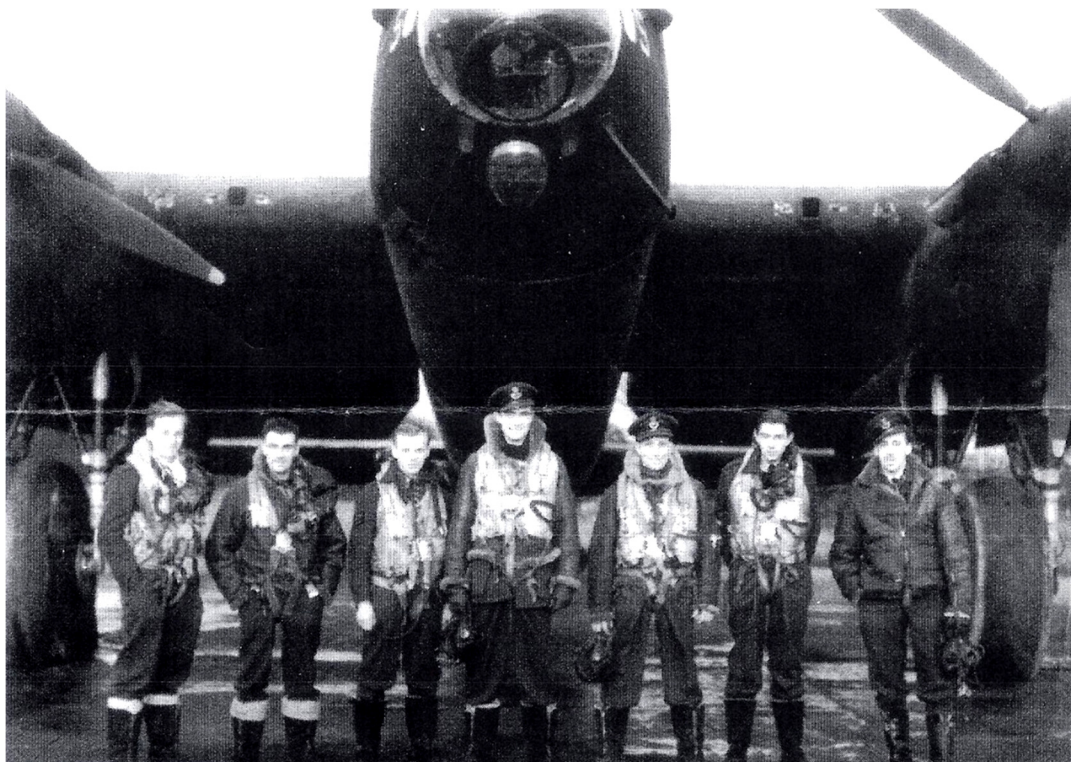
Yours

David

Squadron Leader David W. J. Butler DFC, 171 Squadron, RAF North Creake



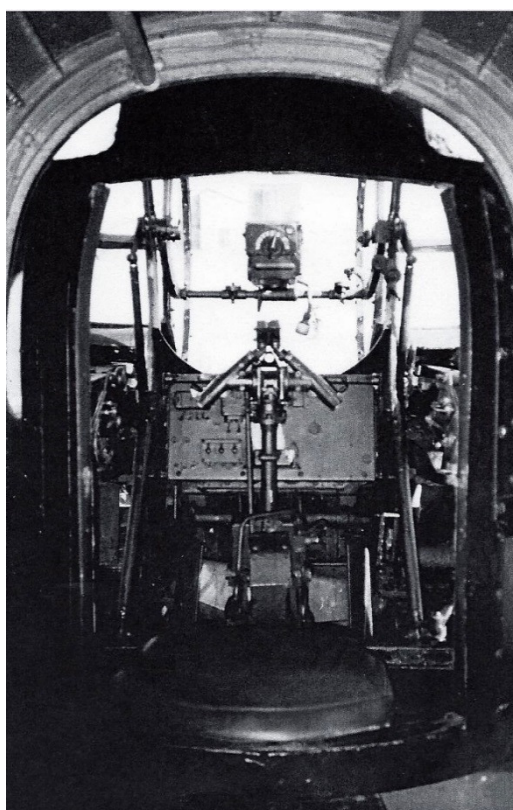
David Butler at Luftwaffe Night Fighters Event



Lancaster 12 Squadron Ops Unit, RAF Wickenby, 1943 - 1944

30 Bomber Missions

Left to right: P/O T. Lane (Bomb Aimer), Sgt Mac (M.U.G.), F/Sgt C. Solly (W/Op), P/O B. Adams (Pilot), P/O T. Kimmett (Navigator), Sgt. T. Attwood (Engineer), **P/O D. Butler (Rear Gunner)**



Lancaster Rear Turret



*171 Sqn RAF North Creake, Halifax a/c
25 Bomber Missions 1944-1945*

Left to Right: F/O Tom (Navigator), F/O David Butler DFC (Rear Gunner), F/S Paul (MUG), F/O Bill (Pilot), F/O Paddy (Engineer), F/O Graham (Bomb Aimer), F/O Jock (W/Op), P/O Cliff (W/Op)



The following emails presented by John Beeching (169 Squadron, RAF Great Massingham) relate to the final operation of the war, and offer new information members might like to share:

Hello again John,

... My half-brother Flying Officer Kenneth N. J. Croft, took part in what became the last heavy bombing raid on Kiel, Germany. He was part of a huge combination of Squadrons, his being 199 Squadron of 100 Group. He took off from North Creake on the evening of 2 May 1945. He was part of the Radar Jamming Group. We now know that very early on 3 May, Halifax RG 375 which was flying in formation with Ken's RG 373, was attacked by Ju88 Night Fighters. The flying controls of Halifax RG 375 were damaged, causing that plane to strike Ken's RG373. This was over Meimersdorf, near Kiel, where the remains of both aircraft were found. Of the total 16 crew, only 3 survived. Until Dr Boiten's research had found documents revealing the Night Fighter attack, it was not known what caused the collision – it was all conjecture. It would, of course, have been wrong and pointless to lay blame on either crew, but I can now complete my documents and bring closure to this very sad event.

I think you told me you have at least a couple of books about this last raid, in which many Mosquitoes took part, and other types too. The worst thing of all was to learn later that RAF Chiefs thought the raid unnecessary, because the Intelligence they had been given, it was later discovered, had been inaccurate. Such is war!

Philip Croft

Nailsea, Somerset

Hi Phil,

Whilst doing some further research, I found a little bit more info about the crashes.

After running a Mandrel jamming screen over the North Frisian Islands to cover the Mosquitoes of 8 Group, the 199 Squadron aircraft delivered a three-pronged Window screen as a '*spoof*' to divert attention from the real target, which was Kiel.

A number of Ju88 Night Fighters took off to try to intercept the bombers. They assembled near Eggebek. Oblt Fritz Brandt of Stab IV/NJG3 found and attacked Halifax RG375. The Rear Gunner, F/Sgt Hunter and the Pilot, P/O Currell were the only crew who managed to bail out. Hunter reported later that the fighter attack had damaged the flying controls and the aircraft went out of control, and as a result, collided with Halifax RG 373. This was the last Luftwaffe Night Fighter Report from the war, according to the Dutch Researcher Dr Theo Boiten.

Kind regard,

Jo

Dear Both,

The new evidence is a great relief in that it shows that neither crew members from the two bombers involved in the collision were to blame in any way. The cause of the collision is explained. I can put my Records straight at last ...

Regards both,

Philip Croft

As John Beeching points out:

'Collisions were part of the programme – when you have up to 1,000 large aircraft, carrying no lights, all heading towards the same bit of sky and concentrating on the same end-product; then collisions are sometimes going to happen. To think of apportioning blame is, in my opinion, fatuous. I used to correspond with Theo Boiten and sent him quite a bit of gen when he was writing his books ...'



BUCKINGHAM PALACE

27th July 2016

Dear Mrs. Bradley,

The Queen wishes me to thank you for your letter enclosing a copy of your new book *RAF 100 Group – Kindred Spirits*, in which you have brought together the individual stories of those who served in this Group, along with pages containing signatures of each of the veterans.

Her Majesty was very touched by the detail and considerable time and effort you have put into your publication and that you, and the members of the Association, have sent the book for The Queen to see.

Her Majesty was also interested to hear the RAF 100 Group Association is now paired with the US 36th Bomb Squadron and of the activities and future plans on which you are currently working.

The Queen sends everyone in the RAF 100 Group Association her good wishes and I am to thank you, once again, for writing as you did.

Yours sincerely,

Susan Hussey
Lady-in-Waiting

Mrs J Bradley



10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

www.gov.uk/number10

From The Military Assistant

2 August 2016

Dear Ms Bradley

Thank you for your letter of 17 June to the former Prime Minister, and the enclosed copy of your latest book, *RAF 100 Group – Kindred Spirits*.

The former Prime Minister greatly appreciated receiving this, which is such a fitting tribute to the men who served in 100 Group during the course of the war, often on difficult, secret and incredibly dangerous missions. It is only right that their exceptional contribution to the war effort is now recognised and celebrated publicly.

Of course, the nature of their work meant that they were required to sign the Official Secrets Act. You requested some guidance on their behalf as to the continuing requirement for secrecy regarding their wartime activities.

The release of Government records has been subject to a number of pieces of legislation over the years, including the Public Record Act of 1967, which established that records would normally be released after a period of 30 years. More recent legislation reduced this period to 20 years, though some records may be subject to extended closure if they contain particularly sensitive information.

The vast bulk of the records relating to the work of RAF 100 Group are no longer considered sensitive. However, the veterans are quite right in considering themselves still bound by the provisions of the Official Secrets Act. Should any veteran have concerns about what they may safely reveal to their family or others, they may write to the Head of the Air Historical Branch in the Ministry of Defence, specifying their particular concern and seeking advice on any continuing sensitivities. The address is:

Head of the Air Historical Branch
Building 824
RAF Northolt
West End Road
Ruislip
Middlesex
HA4 6NG

I hope that this information is helpful. Please accept my thanks again for the copy of your book, and my very best wishes as you continue to support the RAF 100 Group and plan their 20th annual reunion next May.

Yours sincerely

Nick Perry

COLONEL NICK PERRY DSO MBE

Well you've really done it this time, Janine, immortalizing all of us, including yourself!!

*What a wonderful, well deserved response, from Her Majesty
CONGRATULATIONS FROM ALL OF US WHO WERE THERE!!!!!!*

God bless you for all the hard work you did and do in bringing back those precious memories often otherwise lost!!!!

Fondest wishes and thank you so much!!!!

Marion and George

George Stewart DFC, 23 Squadron, RAF Little Snoring



Hello Janine,

Just a note to say how excited I was to receive your email message and letter from Buckingham Palace. How very special that is to be so recognized. Thank you most sincerely. I immediately notified the Commanding Officer of the 36th Electronic Squadron of this good news.

Once again hearing from you makes me so very proud of your extreme efforts to recognize and honor the Gremlins of RAF 100 Group and its Association. My hat's off to you!

Your friend,

Stephen

Author: 'Squadron of Deception'

8th Air Force Historical Society Unit Contact

36th Bomb Squadron RCM

Father: Iredell Hutton, served in U.S. 36th Bomb Squadron, 8th Air Force, USAAF

Well! What does one say to news like that? Congrats, to start with ...

Great news indeed, Janine, and it will be interesting to see what follows. As you say, there won't be much coming from the PM's camp, but the Queen's lady might do a bit of fishing around and come back with something of note, but what this could be is a bit hard to say as I can't imagine that there could possibly be anything left involving the erstwhile 100 Group which could have anything secret about it at all. The gear we had would now be relegated to the Stone Age bracket. Nevertheless, it is all a step in a constructive direction, so we will be watching this space.

Perhaps there was some weird goings on within the Group which they didn't tell minions like me about, but for the life of me I can't imagine what it might have been. All the tricky stuff which we carried has been very fully covered in books by the likes of Martin Streetly and so forth, so any hint of anything else would be interesting indeed, providing there is still somebody around who might recall it. The secret war has moved on a bit in the last 70 years, ask Sir Max Hastings!

John Beeching

John Beeching 169 Squadron, RAF Great Massingham



Hello again Janine

I have now finished Kindred Spirits and passed it on to a friend!

As you say, it is a weighty volume, but it is so interesting.

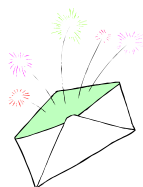
How on earth those young men went on, night after night, knowing the odds, I simply do not understand. To accuse those who could not take it of LMF is awful and they would not get away with it today. Today things are just so different but our young display their courage in different ways. I remember a family friend who had an RAF son posted as missing and his Mother, to her dying day, refused to accept that he had failed to return and was dead, she believed him to be wandering about Europe having lost his memory, so sad because it ruined the rest of the family as well. She fully expected him to walk through the door at any moment.

The variety in the book is amazing and I am determined to go back to Norfolk, to the Museum at the airport, but particularly to see the station area at Little Snoring which is such a lovely quintessential English name.

I wish you and the 100 Group every success in the future.

Kindest regards

Richard



IN MEMORY of MASCOTS

By

Janine Bradley



One thing, I realised, we have never covered in magazines is the vital role of Mascots who were just as important to aircrew as rituals which took place before an op. In a very real way, Mascots were part of crews and their operations, and it occurred to me that they too should be honoured and have their names marked in history to ensure they are remembered.

'Pinnocchio' was one such Mascot.

He was presented to the City of Norwich Aviation Museum by June Turpie of Bathgate on behalf of her late husband Ron Turpie, an Air Gunner with 223 Squadron, based at RAF Oulton 1944 – 1945. He is displayed in a wooden case donated by Rod Vowler of Bath, our Standard Bearer, and nephew of Len Vowler who was also an Air Gunner in 223 Squadron; killed in action on 21 March 1945.

Sgt W. R. Turpie was part of Flight Lieutenant Levy's crew as an Air Gunner. Fellow airmen consisted of:

F/O J. R. Wolf – Air Gunner,
F/O R. Simmons – Navigator,
Sgt N. S. Pearson – Air Gunner,
F/O C. Boden – 2nd Pilot,
Sgt R. D. Pryce – Fight Engineer,
F/L Fairbanks – Special Operator,
Sgt J. E. Nicholls – Air Gunner.

Sgt Turpie had been one of the Air Gunners in the same group and on the same course as Len Vowler at Walney Island.

It's interesting to note that while 'Pinnocchio' ended up on display in a Museum, 'Beaumont Bear', (nicknamed 'Bea') a fellow Mascot sporting an RAF tie and Royal Crest accompanied by the letters AM (Air Ministry) tattooed on his chest; ended up for sale at Bonhams Auctioneers on behalf of a private collector carrying the unbelievable sum of £10,000.

Flight Lieutenant Stephen Beaumont had taken this cherished bear on every flight with him and his crew in wartime, and he was right there with him in the Spitfire cockpit as Beaumont went on to become a celebrated Battle of Britain fighter pilot in 1940.

Flt/Lt Beaumont was one of just seven of the twenty-four pilots in his Squadron to survive the 1940 Second World War battle and believed it was his beloved 'Bea' who brought them luck. When Flt/Lt Beaumont died aged 87 in 1997, 'Bea' was passed on to his family suffering only a little wear and tear.



Also up for sale at £2,000 was Flt/Lt Beaumont's uniform.

Tom Lamb, a specialist in Military History at Bonhams, explains:



'The life of an RAF Pilot in the Summer of 1940 was marked by great physical danger and mental strain. Of the 3,000 airmen who served during this period, over one-sixth were killed in combat. Teddy bears became popular mascots and helped bolster the resolve of men engaged in a conflict where survival seemed a matter of luck as much as skill ... Flt/Lt Beaumont survived the war and died aged 87. His bear lives on. If it could speak, it surely would have some amazing stories of dogfights, sorties and close shaves. If it were just a normal bear, it would be almost worthless, but this one is almost priceless because of the untold memories it carries ...'

Flt/Lt Beaumont was thirty years old when his Squadron Commander, 26-year-old George Darley, removed him from combat duties midway through the Battle of Britain because of his 'advancing age'. Beaumont was furious - seen right with mascot 'Bea' in the cockpit of a Boulton Paul Defiant. The Battle of Britain was the German Air Force's attempt to gain air superiority over the RAF, and pictured below is a German Messerschmitt 109 shot down in raids over Ramsgate.



Stephen Beaumont went on to become an Instructor, and Flight Commander at an Operational Training Unit, where he distinguished himself in teaching pilots the skills needed to fly Spitfires and Hurricanes in dogfights against the Luftwaffe. Quickly, he rose through the ranks to the position of Wing Commander, before helping plan the aerial assault aspect of the D-Day invasions as Deputy Air Officer Administrator. Everywhere he went, 'Bea' was with him, a part of history in the making.



In 1945, Beaumont was honoured for his outstanding contribution to the war by being made an OBE with Bea very much a part of that honour. To his owner and constant companion, he was a vital part of his every action.

Post-war, Flt/Lt Beaumont, educated at Oxford University and a solicitor prior to the war; returned to his home town of Wakefield, West Yorkshire, to

take a string of administrative roles, including becoming the city's Deputy Coroner. In 1967, he was appointed Deputy Lieutenant for the West Riding of Yorkshire, and in 1979, High Sheriff of West Yorkshire. He retired to Devizes, Wiltshire.

Courtesy: 'The Telegraph', Rod Vowler, CNAM

I would love to share stories of other Mascots which played such a vital wartime role!

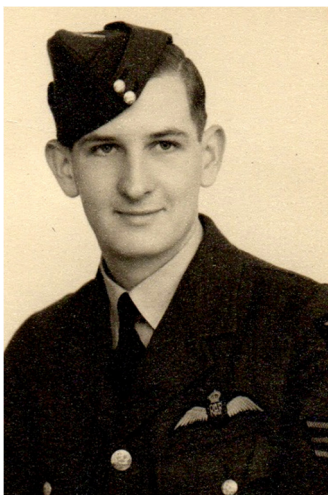
It's Never Too Late!



Veteran: William Clark

Seventy-five years on from the Battle of Britain, RAF veteran William Clark finally received his World War Two medals on his 95th birthday, 15 September last year.

Mr Clark, originally from Kent but now living in Nottingham, only applied for his medals last year in order to wear them at the unveiling of a Memorial to World War Two aircrew at RAF Debden. It was the Chief of Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Andrew Pulford, who presented the former fighter pilot and prisoner of war with the African Star, 1939-1945 Star and War Medal on the steps of St Paul's Cathedral. Mr Clark said he was delighted to be awarded his medals by the most senior Officer in the RAF, rather than being presented them by the postman in a little cardboard box. *'It was a very exciting and proud moment!'*



William Clark enlisted with the RAF in April 1940 aged nineteen years old, and was under training during the height of the Battle of Britain. He welcomed the chance to pay tribute to RAF veterans who took part in the Battle, describing himself as *'just one of the many, who followed 'the Few'*.

The former fighter pilot learned to fly Battles, Ansons, then Hurricanes before being posted to Malta, then on to 274 Squadron Amriva in Egypt on 13 July 1941; where his Unit flew Hurricanes and Gladiators on fighter sweeps against the Nazis over the African desert.

Just after his 21st birthday, his aircraft was shot down and he was taken prisoner by the Germans. He saw 'little balls of fire' approaching him fired by anti-aircraft guns on the ground, and still distinctly remembers the shock of a crash-landing after his plane was hit. Surviving the crash, he then trudged in the desert's midday sun wearing fur-lined flying boots, in heavy desert battle dress as he tried to evade the enemy.

"It wasn't a very pleasant experience and, of course, there was the shock. I was only just 21 and suddenly I wasn't in my normal environment – in the sky, in an aircraft. Here I was, wandering about all on my own in a vast expanse of rock and sand. It was very, very lonely. I've never been so lonely in all my life."

William was captured and made a PoW, spending the rest of the war being moved between prisoner of war camps in Italy, Austria and Germany, during which time he was promoted from Sergeant Warrant Officer. He recalls the boosting food parcels, concert parties and escape plans as well as the hunger, boredom, lice and fleas.

“Morale in the camps used to go sky high whenever the Red Cross food parcels were available. When they weren’t, things were pretty grim because the food was very, very meagre.”

William arrived home in the UK on 8 May 1945 – VE Day! His first glimpse of home was from the cockpit of a Dakota, when he saw bonfires being lit beyond the white cliffs of Dover. It was to be later that year when he demobbed, moving on to become a Head Teacher, to marry, and in time have two children.

He never bothered asking for his medals as he couldn’t see when he was ever going to wear them ... until he was asked, last year, to unveil a Memorial and told to wear his medals in memory of all those people he had flown with and who would never fly again. The Minister in the House of Lords, Earl Howe, said of him:

“It’s a privilege today to pay tribute not only to ‘The Few’ but also to other veterans, like Mr Clark, who courageously served in defence of our nation during the Second World War. I am pleased that Mr Clark has been presented with medals to reflect both his wartime RAF service and his country’s enduring gratitude.”

The Chief of Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Andrew Pulford, added:

“It was a pleasure to meet William today and I was delighted to present him with his medals for his service in Africa on both his 95th birthday and the 75th Anniversary of the Battle of Britain. It is wonderful to see so many veterans here today; the modern day Royal Air Force is proud to continue to serve the nation now as they so valiantly did then.”



Courtesy: Defence in the Media: modmedia.blog.gov.uk

Award of Highest Military Honour



War veteran Godfrey Flack

Godfrey Flack is a former World War Two Lancaster bomber Pilot. He flew 40 bombing missions over Germany in the early 1940s, a time when it was considered almost impossible to survive so many combat operations, as evidenced by his comrades who survived only a handful of missions and never returned. Yet Godfrey did survive, and last December, this Tasmanian war veteran, at 94 years old, was awarded France's highest Military award – the Legion of Honour.

It was the French Ambassador to Australia, Christopher Lecourtier, who paid homage to this man's service at a moving ceremony held at Hobart Town Hall, reminding those attending that he was speaking of 'an adolescent youth' at just twenty years old:

"That year, 1944, you entered legend, you became a hero. You were no longer a fighter, you had become a liberator. You were no longer merely a man, but a living symbol of our common values, the spirit of resistance, the spirit of liberty, the spirit of mate-ship."

As he proudly accepted the Award, his emotional response was:

"We only did what we could, for whatever group we could represent or acknowledge. I will say thank you very much to all the people who have become my friends, and all the people I ever knew."

After the ceremony, Mr Flack recalled growing up in Queenstown and driving trucks while harbouring a deep desire to join the Air Force. He did not originally go to school or attend University, but eventually completed his studies at the top of his class. His son, Patrick, added his own congratulatory words:

"We're so proud ... people come back from the war, they have their problems and their families have to deal with that too. But he's been positive for us. He's done for us what he did in the war. Nothing is ever a drama. He just looked after us, and made us stand up and be accountable, same as he did."

Mr Lecourtier said that Mr Flack's exceptional service was a reminder of the challenges France and Australia would continue to face, particularly in the light of recent Paris terror attacks.

"Today's ceremony resonates in a way with what's happening in the world, not only in France, because we see that probably, unfortunately, this century is no less dangerous than the previous one. We will need new men and women, just like this one, to defend our values, to defend our communities, and that's unfortunately, a never-ending story."

Courtesy: ABC News: Peta Carlyon

SUPPORT THE GUINEA PIG CLUB



Sir Archibald McIndoe with Guinea Club Members

For those who have never heard of *The Guinea Pig Club* a bit of background might be needed.

The Guinea Pig Club was initially the name given to pilots injured in the Battle of Britain who underwent reconstructive plastic surgery generally after receiving burn injuries in aircraft. They were treated by Sir Archibald McIndoe at the Burns Unit of Queen Victoria's Hospital in East Grinstead, West Sussex.

The treatment of burns by surgery was in its infancy. Before that time, many severely burned casualties did not survive. The term '*Guinea Pig*' as it suggests, refers to the experimental nature of the reconstructive work carried out on Club members, with new equipment designed specifically to treat this type of injury. McIndoe, with no reference book to guide him, had no choice but to try his own ideas on men who would otherwise die in excruciating pain.

Initially, the Club was a drinking club whose aim was to help rehabilitate members during long reconstructive treatments. Formed with 39 patients, it was the original intake of recovering pilots who decided to set up the Club and only men who had been patients at the Burns Unit could join. This decision was taken in July 1941. They chose the title of the Club – a sign of the humour the men had as they knew full-well that reconstructive plastic surgery was in its infancy and that they were quite literally guinea pigs for the Burns Unit.

This type of humour even worked its way into the Club's Committee selections. Archibald McIndoe was the Club's first President; the first Secretary had had his fingers seriously burned, so any notes of Club meetings had to be short and were, therefore, easy to read. The first Treasurer was a pilot with very badly burned legs – so he could not run away with Club funds! The Committee decided on three levels of membership:

1. The Guinea Pigs – men who had been burned in a plane crash and had had plastic surgery at Queen Victoria's Hospital,
2. Honorary Members – scientists, doctors and surgeons who worked at the Burns Unit at the Queen Victoria's Hospital,
3. Friends of the Guinea Pig Club – someone who contributed to the Club either financially or in other ways.

The Club was meant to have been disbanded when war ended, but it did not. As war progressed, the type of patient treated at the Burns Unit changed from fighter pilots to bomber crews. In the final year of war, 80% of those treated at the Burns Unit were from bomber crews.

By the end of the war, the total number of Guinea Pigs stood at 649:

- British – 57%
- Canadian – 27%
- New Zealanders – 8%
- Australian – 8%

Before the war, the RAF made preparations by setting up Burns Units in several hospitals to treat expected casualties. Archibald McIndoe, working at the Queen Victoria Hospital Burns Unit, through his experimental work, improved, developed and invented many techniques for treating, reconstructing and rehabilitating burn casualties, dealing with very severe injuries. One man, Air Gunner Les Wilkins, lost his face and hands. McIndoe had to recreate his fingers by making incisions between his knuckles. Many burns required several surgical operations that took years to accomplish.

In the early days of plastic surgery for burns, there was little emphasis on reintegration of patients back into normal life after treatment. The ethos behind *The Guinea Pig Club* was McIndoe's efforts to make life in hospital easy for his patients and to begin to rebuild them psychologically in preparation for life outside. He expected many to stay in hospital for several years and undergo many reconstructive operations, so he set out to make their stay relaxed and socially productive.

Unlike many Military hospitals of that time or since, patients were encouraged to lead as normal a life as possible – wearing usual clothes or service uniforms instead of 'convalescent blues', able to leave the hospital at will. There were even barrels of beer in wards to encourage an informal and happy relaxed atmosphere. McIndoe also convinced local families in East Grinstead to accept his patients as guests, and other residents to treat them as normally as possible. East Grinstead hence became 'the town that did not stare'.

Later, many also served in other capacities in RAF Operations Control Rooms and occasionally as pilots between surgeries. Those unable to serve in any capacity received full pay until the last surgical operation, only then being invalided out of the Service. McIndoe also later lent money to some patients for their subsequent entry to civilian life.

Surviving members of the Club continue to regularly meet, offering help to Burns patients. Annual meetings at East Grinstead attract visitors from across the world. By 2003, there were 200 survivors. One local pub adopted the name 'The Guinea Pig', but closed in 2008, and was demolished in 2009 to make way for social housing. Members of the Club have also written books of their experiences, some during the war. Since the death of Sir Archibald McIndoe in 1960, the Duke of Edinburgh has been the Club's President. One Club member shares his experience, speaking out with a plea for us to consider:

"I joined The Guinea Pig Club after my Stirling aircraft was shot down in a raid over Germany. Plastic surgeon Archibald McIndoe insisted we didn't hide our injuries, and the ethos was to embrace life regardless of disfigurement. When treatments finally ended, we Guinea Pigs went on to find jobs, marry and raise families in a civilian world which stared at our injuries and questioned our abilities. Now just 17 Guinea Pigs remain in the UK, and we are working with the RAF Benevolent Fund to ensure the legacy of the Club lives on. I urge you to visit its website to learn more."

rafbf.org/guineapigclub

Douglas Vince, c/o The Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund, London W1

IBCC Digital Archive Project

Preserving and Sharing the Heritage of Bomber Command



Wallet retrieved from a crashed Stirling

The International Bomber Command Centre Digital Archive is bringing together information from across the world, preserving it as a digitised record of events, activities, feelings and memories of Bomber Command veterans, and those who experienced the Bombing Campaign on all sides of the conflict.

We are interested in hearing from anyone who has memories of the Bombing Campaign: those who were bombed, the people who built the aircraft, ground personnel, WAAFs, the people of many nations who served with Bomber Command, those who witnessed incidents and crashes, the aircrew and many more.

Your photographs, military records, personal documents and artefacts will be gathered safely, while an extensive oral history programme will ensure that veterans' memories are captured and preserved, that their voices never grow silent.

As the project is digital, original photographs, documents and personal items are returned to veterans and families after digitisation, ensuring that they retain their collections, links to the past and tangible memories of loved ones.

At present the Archive has obtained in excess of 360 interviews. These will be available online as a free resource and at the Chadwick Centre on the Bomber Command Memorial site at Canwick, Lincoln.

Preserving these documents and making them freely available will ensure that future generations can learn from the unique and sometimes contentious history of Bomber Command. It will provide education for children and enable free access to previously hidden information for people with an interest or family connection across the globe. Without this project the documents and memories of these brave men and women will be lost forever.

If you wish to share your stories with us, please contact us at:

IBCC Digital Archive
Riseholme Hall
University of Lincoln
Riseholme Campus
Lincoln LN6 7TS
01522 837707

archive@internationalbcc.co.uk



Cartoon from a POW diary

PAST & PRESENT IN NORFOLK

by

Janine Bradley with Stuart Borlase

Honours & Awards			
Date	Squadron	Name	Awards
Jan. 1945	S.H.Q.	Squadron Leader Davis	Mention in Despatches
Jan. 1945	515	L.a.c. Sparrow	Mention in Despatches
Jan. 1945	515	L.a.c. Walmsley	Mention in Despatches
Jan. 1945	23	Corporal Brookes	Mention in Despatches
Jan. 1945	S.H.Q.	Corporal Ford	Mention in Despatches
Jan. 1945	515	Flying Officer Tynihan	D.F.C.
Jan. 1945	23	Squadron Leader Smith	D.F.C.
Feb. 1945	23	Flying Officer Cotter	D.F.C.
Feb. 1945	23	Flying Officer Worcester	D.F.C.
Feb. 1945	23	Warrant Officer Barr	D.F.C.
Mar. 1945	23	Squadron Leader Griffiths	D.F.C.
Mar. 1945	23	Flying Officer Beaudet	D.F.C.
Mar. 1945	23	Flying Officer Stewart	D.F.C.
Mar. 1945	23	Warrant Officer Smith	D.F.C.
1945	23	F/Lt A. C. Hayes	D.F.C.
		P/O W. Bennett	D.F.C.
Sept 1944	515	L.a.c. G.E. Harper	Mention in Despatches.

Board in St Andrews Church, Little Snoring, showing some familiar names

For twenty years and more, I have been inspired by people I have come to call 'kindred spirits' around the world. As you know, I remain passionate about preserving both the history and stories of wonderful people who gave so much in wartime for the freedom we enjoy today. I have always held the dream that, if ever I had a windfall, I would spend it on bringing together veterans and their families from around the world for a long weekend gathering, overcoming difficulties in travel and disabilities so that we could all come together one final time and talk and share, listen and learn, laugh and love. What an extraordinary weekend it would be!!

No, I didn't just come into a windfall, before you start calling to ask. But an opportunity did arise which went some considerable way towards fulfilling that dream. It came in the guise of Stuart Borlase of Living History Film Productions in Australia, someone equally as passionate as I about preserving the past, using the medium of film rather than writings to develop the theme on. At his suggestion, I stayed on for a week following this year's Reunion, later returning to Norfolk to add further experiences to our adventures.

I will be going back at the end of September/beginning of October for Part Two of this epic journey, this time travelling out from Norfolk both south and north of the country, visiting veterans in their own homes as they share on camera their wartime memories. There are no words to describe the mix of emotions at finally putting faces to names I have known for years. It is truly an incredible feeling ... one which I re-live through pictures taken at the time. Stuart travels all the way from Australia to bring this documentary of past meeting present, and he will be sharing cameos of our journeyings at the next Reunion, marking our 20th Anniversary of members coming together in Norfolk. Meanwhile, I felt that the magazine provides an excellent medium in which to share these adventures to date, and for veterans across the world to re-connect with a place which was once a wartime base.

LITTLE SNORING



Janine w Tom Cushing, Control Tower behind

St Andrews Church, Little Snoring, still stands straight and tall and proud, providing a treasure chest of memories from the past ... including long wooden boards filled with the names for whom this had been 'home' during the war. At the start of this article, I shared a close-up of just a few of these names, including two very familiar: *F/O Beaudet DFC*, and his friend and Pilot *F/O Stewart DFC* ... 1945!



Wherever we stopped around Norfolk we found tell-tale signs of airfields, nuggets of memories. At Swannington people we met told us there was nothing left ... yet, right where it had always been, was the round-towered church. I remembered it well from an old photograph, with a Mosquito in the same position as the car we had arrived in. West Raynham is just as it was left all those years ago, buildings now being used as workshops by the community. We saw the Control Tower, the runways, the only thing missing were the airmen and aircraft who belonged there, who once occupied the empty spaces, filling the area with excitement and sound. We feasted hungrily on anything and everything that reminded us of a bygone age. But then, there were still people we could talk to, veterans who could tell us so much more than we could see...



Sgt Major BARBARA BRADSHAW

It's impossible to put into words, even for a Wordsmith, the myriad of emotions as finally, after so many years, Barbara and I met, hugged, drank tea, nibbled biscuits, talked, laughed, shared. Moments moved on, and still we sat there, while pictures of the past rolled into the room, drawing us in. It was captivating to hear so many stories of how Barbara, initially in charge of the Officers' Mess at Blickling Hall, went on to become a Sgt Major, with responsibility for the Sergeants' Mess ... a place brought alive by the antics of airmen, while Barbara maintained control and discipline of staff catering to their needs ... ensuring cook and cleaners knew their timetables, when to prepare meals, clean up after, serve drinks ... taking care of upset WAAFs dating those who did not return.

She spoke to Stuart and I of the filming of 'The Wicked Lady' with actresses Margaret Lockwood and Patricia Roc becoming her responsibility as ogling airmen vied for their attention in the Mess. She can be seen in the picture, right, peeking over the right shoulder of Margaret Lockwood. Given a secret list of flight duties, airmen were always badgering her for info, anxious to know where they would be going. From the list it was possible for her to work out those going into the heart of Germany because of the number of hours they would be away ... knowledge she had to keep to herself, but have meals ready for their return.



Patricia Roc and Margaret Lockwood



Barbara was thrilled to take part in the filming and on behalf of Stuart and myself, I would like to thank Barbara and her daughter for her hospitality and everything we shared on that memorable day.

A huge 'thank you' also to Evelyn Bartram for her tour of Stody Gardens where she and husband Len lived and worked for over 40 years. *Incredible!* It is a lovely setting, and remarkable to see the number of trees Len was responsible for planting, and grounds he was in charge of as Head Gardener; surrounded by such a rich variety of colour and life.

Leading Aircraftsman JOE SAYERS



Joe Sayers stands back row, third from left

Sadly, I had to return home by train for an urgent hospital appointment, so it was Stuart who continued visiting veterans, capturing the past on film. I will therefore let him share experiences in his own words ... and look forward to future excursions planned to begin on 28 September.

It was my great pleasure to meet Joe and Mary Sayers and I would like to take this opportunity to thank them both for their warm hospitality and for sharing with me the memories of Squadron life during Wartime. The filming was



easy and relaxed and dispersed with cups of tea with delicious Buns and Cake!! My thanks to Chris the cameraman, who did a sterling job in being concerned with the technical side while I was able to enjoy a very relaxed flow of conversation with Joe.

I want to express my thanks too, to Barbara and Sidney who also very kindly agreed to share their stories and memories with me, memories that remain clear and vivid even after all these years. My thoughts also turn to Stan Forsyth, a true natural and the interview we did over a year ago following last year's Reunion and to my friend John Beeching, from my own home town of Nelson, New Zealand, with whom I recorded an interview a couple of years ago. It has been a real joy and pleasure to get to know you just that little bit more and I really do very much appreciate you being involved, partnering me to ensure that the 100 Group Story is boldly, proudly and meaningfully told.

Thank you too to Mr David Butler and Edna (photos of David appear in earlier pages) with whom I spent a very enjoyable couple of hours chatting over tea and biscuits. It's amazing what one can learn in conversation with our Veterans and somewhere in there was made mention of a rather boisterous and now banned game called 'I-coc-olorum', something that I doubt any of you will find in the Oxford Dictionary!! But please, whatever you do, don't tell him I mentioned it here

Finally, I want to thank those of you who have agreed to allow me to meet with you and record your stories and memories when I am over in a few weeks.

Without you, this whole project sinks. Without you, this project means nothing. I do so appreciate and value your input and your willing participation.

Thank you.

Scene right: Joe Sayers preparing for filming at home.

*Janine Bradley
Stuart Borlase*



A Quiet Corner



OLD AIRFIELD

I lie here still, beside the mill
Abandoned long to Nature's will,
My buildings down, my people gone,
My only sounds, the wild birds' song.

But my mighty birds will rise no more
No more I hear the Merlins roar,
And never now my bosom feels
The pounding of their giant wheels.

From the ageless hill their voices cast
Thunderous echoes of the past,
And still in lonely reverie
Their great dark wings sweep down to me.

Laughter, sorrow, hope and pain,
I shall never know these things again,
Emotions that I came to know
Of strange young men so long ago.

Who knows, as evening shadows meet,
Are they with me still, a phantom fleet,
And do my ghosts stride still unseen
Across my face so wide and green?

And in the future, should structures tall
Bury me beyond recall,
I shall still remember them,
My metal birds and long-dead men.

Now weeds grow high, obscure the sky,
Oh, remember me when you pass by,
For beneath this tangled, leafy screen,
I was your home, your friend, 'Silksheen'.

W. Scott
630 Squadron



Final Postings

Death will be but a pause...

Martin Albert Staunton, Eileen Boorman (nee Staunton), Len Bartram

Founders of RAF 100 Group Association – remembered in love

- 192 Squadron** George Ward DFC Sqd/Ldr; Phil James' Canadian pilot
- 192 Squadron** Kenneth 'Paddy' Passmore: DFC Flt/Lt; Canadian, died 2005
- 192 Squadron** John Cooke left memorabilia to the Museum archive collection
- 192 Squadron** Ron Phillips died late 2005
- 192 Squadron** Ted Gomersall died 30 November 2004
- 192 Squadron** Hank Cooper DSO, DFC died 2005.
- 192 Squadron** Michael Simpson W/Op & F/O died on the Isle of Man
- 192 Squadron** Richie' Richards Rear Airgunner, flew Wellingtons. Son, F L Richards, died August 2009.
- 192 Squadron** Air Commodore Vic Willis, C.O, RAF Foulsham, died 30 July 2006.
- 192 Squadron** Group Captain Jack Short died December 2006. Association Chairman till 1996
- 192 Squadron** W.O (later P/O) A G McEachern RCAF died 15 August 2007, Saskatchewan aged 85
- 192 Squadron** LAC Harris, Ground Crew died 15 August 2007. Grandson James Kerslake: Association member.
- 192 Squadron** Wing Commander David Donaldson, DSO*DFC died 15 January 2004
- 192 Squadron** Wilhelmson, F/O Sander Willie Raymond (J10026). DFC Home: Elbow, Saskatchewan
- 192 Squadron** F/Lt Richard (*Dick or Dobbie*) William Dobson, died 1996, remembered with love by son, Roger & daughter Susan. Roger Dobson – Association Chairman from May 2014.
- 192 Squadron** W/O John Rhys Powell, Rear Gunner flying Wellingtons, died 1992
- 192 Squadron** Sgt George Richards, Tail Gunner, posted missing 4/5 July 1944. Remembered by niece Cheryl Cairns nee Colgan & sister Agnes Colgan.
- 192 Squadron** F/Lt Henry Victor Vinnell (*Vic*) posted missing 26/27 Nov 1944. Remembered by wartime fiancée Nina Chessall & daughter Janine Bradley, Association Secretary.
- 192 Squadron** P/O Jack Glen Millan Fisher, Royal Canadian Air Force, posted missing 26/27 Nov 1944. Remembered by sisters Audrey, Gloria and family.
- 192 Squadron** Flt/Lt Albert Victor (*Vic*) Parker died November 14 2010. Remembered by daughter Ann Felsky.
- 192 Squadron** Spec/Op (Wop) John Henry BALL, Association member for many years, died 23 April 2009. Remembered by daughter, Susan Lawford.
- 192 Squadron** George Lowe, originally 1473 Flight before becoming 192 Squadron, Special Signals, Foulsham. Died 24 March 2011.
- 192 Squadron** F/O Alan Thomsett died 27 May 2011. Flew with 1473 Flight during Battle of the Beams, 1941, then as part of No. 80 Wing. Missed by daughter Anne, and Association members.
- 192 Squadron** Eric Clarkson, Wireless Operator/Navigator, died beginning of 2012. Remembered by daughter Jenny Bentley & friend Dennis Wildman.
- 192 Squadron** Sqn/Ldr Cecil William Cornish, died 19 August 2011. Flt/Sgt at Foulsham. Initially with 98 Squadron, he was a survivor of the sinking of TS Lancaster.
- 192 Squadron** Flt/Sgt John Eggert (2202199) aka '*Shorty*'. Died 28 April 2006
- 192 Squadron** Sgt Hugh Holm, Radio Mechanic, remembered with love by Phil & Vera James, especially for kindness to them while holidaying in Canada.
- 192 Squadron** Macdonald, Kenneth Wynne CD, Colonel, Stan Forsyth's Skipper; died 12 February 2014. Missed by family and all who served with him.
- 192 Squadron** F/Sgt Earl Skjonsberg, mid-upper gunner on DT.O, in crew of Phil James MBE and remembered by him. Died October 2014.

- 192 Squadron** F/O Bryan Helme, Navigator on Wellington Flight & Halifax IV A/C, Aug 44-Feb45, completing 24 Ops, 8 Ops on Halifax w F/Lt Bob Gray. Died 22 May 2015. Remembered by daughter Sally HelmeJagensen and members of RAF 100 Group
- 192 Squadron** Sergeant Fitter IIA, William James 'Bill' REES, 1473 (Special Duties) Flight and 'B' Flight. Co-Author of *'Espionage in the Ether'* and *'The Final Fling'*. Remembered by John, Lynne & family.
- 199 Squadron** F/O Ed Emmerson, Navigator to Flt/Lt Paddy Passmore DFC, Canadian
- 199 Squadron** Arthur Fitch, former RAF Bomber, died July 2006
- 199/171 Sqn** Group Captain George Cubby, MBE, FRMets died 2005. Remembered by wife Betty and Roy Smith, only surviving member of his crew.
- 171 Squadron** Joe Brogan, Halifax pilot died 2004, remembered by widow Sheila
- 171 Squadron** Arthur Adcock died February 2008 & Syd Love, Canadian crew member, died April 2008. *'Friends to the end!'*
- 171 Squadron** Len Fanstone died 13 January 2010. Missed by Harry Freegard & wife, in touch since his return to Canada in 1946.
- 171/102 Sqn** Ken Ratcliffe Nav/Bomb Aimer died March 8 2010 age 86. Flew Halifax & Lancasters, in touch with crew all their lives.
- 171 Squadron** Flight Engineer Andrew Melvin Robertson died 1998. Remembered by son Colin Robertson.
- 171 Squadron** Wop/Ag Wilf Thompson died 1991. Remembered by son Peter, Association member.
- 171 Squadron** Warrant Officer Edwin Moore died 15 May 2014. Remembered by son Ian & family.
- 171 Squadron** F/Lt Charles 'Chuck' Warner, Edwin Moore's pilot, died 6 July 1965.
- 157 Squadron** Bryan Gale Flt/Lt died 2 January 2009. Missed by daughter Valerie & son Chris
- 169 Squadron** Fred Herbert, Navigator/Radar, died 15 October 2010, remembered by friend, colleague & pilot John Beeching
- 169 Squadron** Flt/Lt Bert Vine, former Navigator of Sqn/Ldr. James A. Wright, 'A' Flight Commander, both no longer with us, remembered by 169 pilot John Beeching
- 214 Squadron** Geoff Liles, Pilot, died 4 March 2006
- 214 Squadron** Mr J Creech died April 2006
- 214 Squadron** Don Austin, remembered by Les Bostock
- 214 Squadron** Air Vice Marshall Jack Furner died 1 Jan 2007
- 214 Squadron** Sqn Leader/Flight Commander Bob Davies died June 2007
- 214 Squadron** Bill Howard died October 2007
- 214 Squadron** Flt/Lt Blair died Sept 2007
- 214 Squadron** John Hereford, Spec Op.
- 214 Squadron** Robert Moorby W/Op died Jan 2008. Remembered by sons, Michael, Robin & Shirley Whitlock.
- 214 Squadron** Ft/Sgt Hadder, Air Gunner in Fortress III HB815, bearing code letters 'BU-J' killed 3/4 March 1945, remembered by nephew Leslie Barker.
- 214 Squadron** Alan Mercer died 6 June 2009
- 214 Squadron** Warrant Officer Gordon Wing, 'Howie', died Nov 2009 age 87. Rear Gunner, Eric Morrison's crew, Stirlings/Fortresses; Founder member of Airgunners' Association.
- 214 Squadron** Robert Louie William Darracott, Navigator, died May 8 2010, 94 years
- 214 Squadron** Flying Officer Reginald Coates completed 2nd Tour of Ops as Bomber Pilot in March 1945. Died 10 Nov 1963. Remembered by son.
- 214 Squadron** Bomb Aimer Les Bostock in Don Austin's crew died just before Christmas 2010. Remembered by M/U Gunner C. A. Piper, 'Pip'.
- 214 Squadron** Flt/Sgt George V Cox died 21 July 2011. Flight Engineer in crew of S/Ldr Miller DFC.

214 Squadron Squadron Leader William 'Bill' Doy DFC died 28 November 2011.

214 Squadron P/O Peter Witts 223/214/462 RAAF, Air Gunner, commissioned after the war. 1925 – 2011. Missed by family and friends, remains in our hearts, a Legend.

214 Squadron George Fisher, Navigator with No.214 REM & No.206 Squadrons 1942-1946, died 25 Sept 2012

214 Squadron Flying Officer William 'Bill' Foskett died 21 December 2011. Missed by wife Pauline, 2 sons, 4 grandchildren, good friend Tony Cooper.

214 Squadron 'Doug' Douglas, Tail Gunner on Fortresses and ex PoW, died in Nelson, New Zealand, 2013.

214 Squadron Sgt Gerhard Heilig, Pilot Officer in post-war RAFVR; died 24 October 2014 in Austria. Loved and missed by wife Sissy, together with all who knew him. A true Gentleman!

214 Squadron Allan Chappell DFC, Navigator, flew more than 30 missions. Died 22 April 2016 aged 94 at the Austenwood Nursing Home, Gerrards Cross. Remembered by sons Peter and Stephen

223 Squadron Flt/Lt A E L Morris (Tony) died June 2005. Andrew Barron's skipper: Oct 44 – 1945.

223 Squadron Tom Butler 'Bishop'.

223 Squadron C. L. Matthews (Les) Rear Gunner, Peter Witts Nose Gunner in Flt/L Stan Woodward DFC crew before Peter went on to 214 Squadron.

223 Squadron Arthur Anthony, Flight Engineer, died 13 May 2006.

223 Squadron F/Lt Jack Brigham DFC died 2008. Original Captain as 223 reformed. Flew Liberator TS524/6G-0; 36 ops. Remembered by Len Davies, Waist Gunner, only surviving member of crew.

223 Squadron F/L Sir John Briscoe died a few years ago.

223 Squadron 2nd Pilot Mervyn Utah, Canadian in late Tony Morris's crew, died 8 Nov 2010.

223 Squadron James Edward Bratten: 26.11.1922 – 6.11.2001. Andrew Barron's crew.

223 Squadron Mick Stirrop died March 2012.

223 Squadron Flying Officer Reggie Wade, Navigator, died Christmas Eve 2012. Reggie served in the crew of Squadron Leader Carrington, Commander of 'B' Flight.

223 Squadron Air Gunner John McLaren died 31.3.2013, leaving wife Margaret and son Graham.

223 Squadron F/Lt Navigator Ron Johnson died August 2013. Missed by wife Betty & Richard Forder.

223 Squadron W/Mechanic Desmond Pye, Ground Crew, B Flight died 3/4 May 2014, remembered by daughter Virginia Cranfield & family.

223 Squadron Flt/Lt John R. Maunsell DFC, Navigator with Flt/Lt Allnutt crew, died beginning of 2015.

223 Squadron Flt/Lt Robert Oliver Belton, Pilot died 11 January 2015. Remembered by his family with love.

23 Squadron Flt/Lt Johnny Rivas, died 2 January 2013.

23 Squadron Wing Commander Phil Russell died November 2012.

23 Squadron 'Bud' Badley, died beginning of 2013

141 Squadron Flt/Lt Doug Gregory DFC, Pilot died 2015 aged 92 yrs. Missed by wife Liz, son & daughter.

157 Squadron W/Cdr K. H. P. Beauchamp DSO*, DFC, Commanding Officer 157 Squadron, Swannington, died 1996 aged 80 yrs. Missed by son Paul, Association member.

515 Squadron Flt/Sgt Reg Fidler, Navigator w Townsley crew on Mosquito died 4 August 2015. Remembered with love by daughter Jenny & husband Martin, with stepsons David & Laurie.

88 Squadron F/Lt Len Dellow died Christmas/New Year 2006-7; veteran of 88 Squadron, 2 Group & Rear Gunner/Wireless Operator on Bostons.

49 Squadron Len Bradfield died Nov 2005. PoW w pilot Johnny Moss, shot down in Lancaster ED625. Nursed to health by Nora, who he married.

462 RAAF Sqn F/O H. R. Anderson DFC 'Andy' died 6 April 2008 in New South Wales.

- 462 Squadron** Donald Hulbert died October 2009.
- 462 Squadron** Pilot Bruce Drinkwater died 2 May 2010. Peter Witt's Skipper.
- 462 Squadron** Warrant Officer Ken Spriggs died peacefully at home 20 January 2016. Loved and remembered by Wendy, his daughter, his family, and by all who knew him in RAF 100 Group
- ? Flt/Lt Eric Atkins DFC* KW* died 22.11.2011. Blenheim pilot with 139 Sqn flying from Horsham St Faith & Oulton in 1940/1. Flew Mosquitoes with 2 Group.
- ? Corporal Charles 'Fred' Savage died 18 Dec 2011 - Wireless Operator, serving in No. 2 Heavy Mobile W/T Section in France, 1940.
- USAAF 36th BS** Sergeant Aubrey 'Bill' Whitworth, Nose-Gunner for Lt Soderstrom crew died 11 August 2015. Missed and loved by daughter Kim and family & all who knew him.

Dates for your Diary

December 2016: 2017 Membership due of £15. Renewals forms going out with next magazine

2017 REUNION : Friday 12 – Sunday 14 May

2018 REUNION : Friday 11 – Sunday 13 May

NORWICH HOLIDAY INN, Norwich North for main Saturday evening dinner 13th May 2017. 10 rooms have been put aside on first come, first served basis. Cost of 3-course meal is £27. Rooms are £80 B&B.

THE HALIFAX SUITE with our own private bar and dance floor is reserved. Be prepared those who have the urge to get up and dance as the band will play on! The room is spacious, and they are laying on a lot of extras free of charge. We HAVE found our home for the future! They pride themselves on their aviation theme, and decoration reflects this throughout. Those with cars, there is plenty of free parking.

CONTACT DETAILS: Jade Fromings, Conference & Events Supervisor, Holiday Inn, Norwich North, Cromer Rd., Norwich NR6 6JA. Telephone: 01603 410544. Email: events@hinorwich.com

Mention you are with the RAF 100 Group Association Reunion Weekend.

PLEASE NOTE: Geoff West still has DVDs of our Reunion 2016 Weekend. Please contact him direct to make the most of this opportunity. Especially for those who cannot attend Reunions, it is the perfect way to become included and involved. Geoff's DVDs contain precious memories of wonderful weekends shared, history in the making. Please make the most of this opportunity to purchase and show family and friends the true meaning of our Association and the very real love we share, connecting us around the world. I have purchased copies, and I do hope you will do the same. We need this valued service to continue ... thank you Geoff! I realise how much time and attention you give to providing this service, and please know you are truly valued.

Geoff West: Bancroft, The Street, Little Snoring, Fakenham, Norfolk NR21 0HU
Tel: 01328 878501 Email: grwest@btinternet.com

100 Group Order of Battle

SQD	AIRCRAFT	1st 100 GROUP OPERATION	BASE	SORTIES, LOSSES ROLL
192 USAAF 7 th PRG	Mosquito II, B.IV, B.XVI, Halifax IV Wellington B.III Lightnings P-38	Dec 1943 Aug 44 – March 45	Foulsham	2171/5 Losses Electronic Intel/Elint
141	Beaufighters VI, Mosquito II, VI, XXX	Dec 1943	West Raynham	1214/11 Losses 80 EA, 58 Trains, 7 Ships Dest
219/239	Mosquito II, VI, XXX	20 Jan 1944	West Raynham	1394/9 Losses 51 En AC Dest
515	Mosquito II, VI	3 March 1944	Little Snoring	1366/21 losses 29 En AC Dest
169	Mosquito II, VI, XIX	20 Jan 1944	Little Snoring, Great Massingham	1247/13 Losses 25 En AC + 1 V1 Dest
214	Fortress II, III	20/21 April 1944	Sculthorpe, Oulton	1225/13 Losses Electronic Jamming
199	Stirling III, Halifax III	1 May 1944	North Creak	1707/6 Losses Electronic Jamming
157	Mosquito XIX, XXX	May 1944	Swannington West Malling	1336/6 Losses 37 En AC +39 V1 Dest
85	Mosquito XII, XVII	5/6 June 1944	Swannington West Malling	1190/7 Losses 71 En AC+30 V1 Dest
23	Mosquito VI	5/6 July 1944	Little Snoring	1067/8 Losses 18 En AC Dest
223	Liberator VI, Fortress II, III	Sept 1944	Oulton	625/3 Losses Electronic Jamming
171	Stirling II, Halifax III	15 Sept 1944	North Creak	1583/4 Losses Electronic Jamming
462 RAAF	Halifax III	1 January 1945	Foulsham	621/7 Losses Jamming/Windows
36 & 803 BS	Boeing B-17F P38	Jan 1944	Sculthorpe, Oulton	1211/0 Losses Electronic Jamming
857 & 858 BS	Consolidated B-24G	Jan 1944	Oulton	280/2 Losses Electronic Jamming

Created by Janine Bradley

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