



Confound & Destroy

The magazine of RAF 100 Group Association

Spring 2020



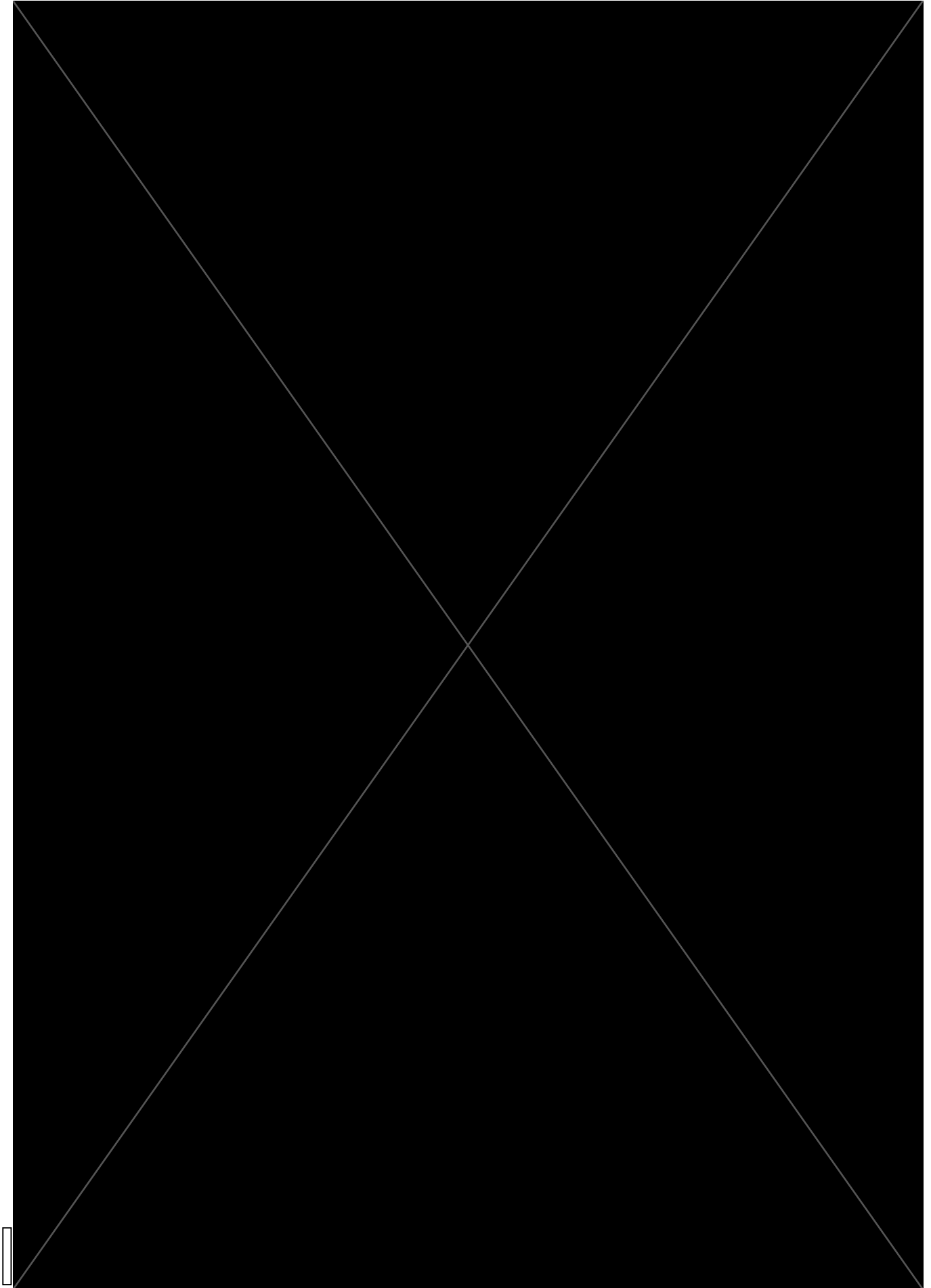
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RAF 100 Group Association



EDITOR'S PAGE



Dearest Kindred Spirits,

A very Happy, Healthy & Peaceful New Year to you all! Thank you all for your precious cards, gifts & flowers over the Festive Season. Laid low over Christmas each was truly valued. While here, within these pages, I bring another feast of delights, with gifts of writing you provide & timeless photos bringing life to your stories. Please, never stop sending these gifts of the heart. They are priceless, so precious ... true Treasures of Time!

Included in these pages are further tributes to friends we've sadly had to say goodbye to:

- **Arthur Baxter Reid** – Special Operator in 192 Squadron, RAF Foulsham,
- **Daphne Rowlands** – WAAF serving at RAF Oulton with Win Seeley (nee Robinson) and Irene Houghton, known affectionately as '*The Three Musketeers*',
- **Ron Simmons** – Veteran of 223 Squadron at RAF Oulton, who died in the latter part of 2018, while his wife Yvonne died '*of a broken heart*' on 4 February 2019. Ron and Yvonne came a few times to our May Reunions travelling over from Canada, and were well loved,
- **Roy Smith** – Navigator in 199 Squadron at RAF North Creak, also joined us at Reunions with his wife. News of his death came from son Steven.
- **Kevin McCann** – it was sad to learn of Wilf McCann's son. Wilf served in the same crew as Stan Forsyth DFC in 192 Squadron, at RAF Foulsham. I'm just thankful his son Kevin with sister Geraldine got to meet Stan and daughters, Linda and Alison, before he died,

I have also received news that **Bettie Wilshaw, wife of Derek Wilshaw** died on 10 November after a short illness. Derek was a Rear Gunner with 223 Squadron who died in 2017.

With this magazine is a copy of our May 2020 Reunion Programme, and I offer a warm THANK YOU to Stuart Borlase for his support in bringing this together. Stuart is our newly appointed Secretary Support – a role he's put his heart into over these past few years following my diagnosis of Cancer. Everything he does is much appreciated as I now live with a terminal illness. Please pay special attention to the Reunion programme with changes in timings and events. The essence remains the same as always over the past twenty years ... that of bringing our worldwide Family of Kindred Spirits together, remembering those who, in wartime, never made it home. We are privileged to have as our After-Dinner Speaker AVM (Ret) Paul Robinson. He has written a brief resume of himself and what he intends to share as Founding member and Trustee of the International Bomber Command Centre in Lincoln. I'm sure he will receive a warm welcome from all.

I would also share what an honour it was to receive an invitation from the Flight Commander of the 36th Electronic Warfare Squadron to attend an Event taking place at Eglin Airfield. It would indeed have been wonderful to be there in person. Stephen Hutton also received an invite but was also unable to go. I have asked for photos and a write-up of the day to share with you soon.

Finally, I include a heartfelt 'THANK YOU' to Iain Forsyth who places a wreath each year on behalf of RAF 100 Group Association at the Bomber Command Memorial, Green Park, London, with another for his father Stan Forsyth DFC.

Thank you ALL for the joy you bring, the love we continue to share!

Love & Hugs, Janine xx

Items for the magazine should be sent to:

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CHAIRMAN'S LETTER



Dear Friends,

I am writing this letter as we approach the Winter Solstice. It will be my twenty-fourth and probably the last of my letters. I have served six years as your Chairman, which is probably long enough. It is my wish to step down at the 2020 AGM. I believe there is a strong case for renewal and fresh thinking. Thank you for your tolerance in reading these jottings. I have covered a wide range of topics which gratifyingly has generated some comments and several helpful corrections. I have also been able to share some insights that I have learnt along the way. Paddy Gilpin on board a Stirling during an involuntary barrel roll, Stan Forsyth identifying the 'Tirpitz', John Wynne's incredible piloting home of a damaged B17 single-handed and (special for me) the revelation by Richard Forder that my father's crashed Mosquito DZ535 had previously flown for Vickers testing the Barnes Wallis bouncing bomb.

There have been many books written about the Dambusters Raid. This year, I was fortunate to receive, as a birthday present, a copy of recently published 'Chastise' written by eminent Journalist/Historian Sir Max Hastings. 'Chastise' is a riveting account of 617 Squadron's attack on the Ruhr dams. I can thoroughly recommend this book for its scholarship and revelations. The story of 19 Lancasters attacking the Mohne, Eder, Sorpe, Beaver and Ennepe dams is well-known. However, Max Hastings provides a strategic context and fascinating insight into the lives of 617 Squadron's personnel; both the brave airmen and their tireless ground crews. His account describes the remarkable effort, speed and resources brought to bear once the decision was taken to attack the dams. Achieving the destruction of the dams came at a heavy price – only 11 of the 19 aircraft returned, and 53 aircrew were lost. The high casualty rate was probably a consequence of the need to fly below 200 feet to avoid Radar detection which made aircraft vulnerable to ground fire and navigation difficult – in addition, 2 aircraft were lost in collisions with power lines.

If RAF 100 Group had been in being in May 1943, perhaps there would have been a lower cost. It would not have been necessary to fly at low level (less than 200 feet before reaching the target and navigation would have been much easier). Given the challenges to resource the Dambusters raid, one can only admire how extensive resources were diverted later the same year into the creation of RAF 100 Group.

We are beginning to see the benefits of an Association website which is generating a steady trickle of enquiries. Most recently, I received mail from a correspondent who is organising a celebration for the 75th Anniversary of Victory in Europe at Newhaven Fort, Sussex. As part of the Event on 8th May 2020, it is planned to commemorate the last two losses of Allied aircraft in Sussex. An American Curtiss Wright C46 Commando cargo aircraft and a de Havilland Mosquito – both crashed on the South Downs in bad weather on 6th May 1945, just two days before the German surrender. The Mosquito was from 169 Squadron, part of RAF 100 Group, and may have been the last aircraft lost from Bomber Command. The crew, F/Sgt Douglas P. Williams and F/Sgt Kenneth Rhoden were both killed. The Mosquitoes of 169 Squadron were night fighters initially based at Little Snoring, then transferred to Great Massingham in 1944.

I had not realised that a famous test cricketer had flown for 100 Group. Australian Keith Miller joined 169 Squadron in March 1945 as a Mosquito Pilot. Miller has been described as Australia's greatest all-rounder. He scored 2,958 runs and took 170 wickets in test cricket after the war. Many years later, during an interview with Michael Parkinson, he was asked about pressure in cricket. Miller responded: 'Pressure is a Messerschmitt up your arse, playing cricket is not!'



Flying Officer Keith Miller, 169 Squadron

Great Massingham seems to have attracted sporting personalities. In addition to Keith Miller, another great test cricketer based there was Bill Edrich (Squadron Leader William John Edrich DFC) and the famous 1966 World Cup Commentator: *'They think it's all over'* Kenneth Wolstenholme (Acting Squadron Leader DFC and Bar). Both flew Bristol Blenheims with 107 Squadron in 1941.

The RAF 100 Group Facebook page predated our website and regularly features interesting items. I am indebted to Len Witts for highlighting the remarkable story of B17 Flying Fortress *'All American'*. Although this has no direct connection to 100 Group, it provides a fascinating account of the robust build of the B17 Flying Fortress, many examples of which flew with 214 Squadron.

On 1 February 1943, bombers of the 414th Bombardment Squadron departed their base near Biskra, Algeria, to attack the German-controlled seaports: Bizerte and Tunis, Tunisia. After dropping their bomb loads and returning towards Base, the bombers were attacked by German fighters, believed to be Messerschmitt Bf 109s. Two fighters attacked the lead B17 and the *'All American'* which was flying next to it in formation. The bombers' machine gun fire downed the first fighter, but the second pressed its head-on attack against the *'All American'*. Apparently struck by machine fire, the second fighter could not complete its roll to pull down and away from the *'All American'*, the Pilot having been killed or disabled.



The fighter's wing collided with the top rear fuselage of the *'All American'*, almost cleaving the bomber's tail section off, leaving a large diagonal gash from the base of the *'All American's'* tail and severing the left horizontal stabilizer from the plane. Metal in the airframe near the right tail plane was the only thing keeping the tail section, housing the Rear Gunner, attached to the aircraft.

The fighter broke apart, leaving some pieces in the bomber's fuselage.

The Bomber Squadron maintained formation to protect the 'All American' until they were beyond the range of enemy fighters, with the crew donning parachutes in expectation of having to bail out. However, the aircraft was piloted to a safe landing at its base, and despite the damage, none of the crew was injured.

Remarkably, the 'All American' was repaired and returned to service, flying until its March 1945 dismantlement.

The 'All American' is reputed to be the source of the phrase: 'Comin' in on a Wing and a Prayer' and inspired the 414th Bombardment Squadron's emblem: an image of a puppy praying atop the rear fuselage. *Emblem of 414th Bombardment Squadron, WWII, right.*



Plans for another 75th Anniversary were shared with us at the May 2019 Reunion by our Guest Speaker Nigel Morter. Nigel and Claire manage an amazing B&B at the former Control Tower at RAF North Creake. They have been the driving force behind a project to commemorate the role of 199 Squadron at North Creake and its mainstay, the Short Stirling. A large stainless-steel sculpture of a Stirling has been completed. The plan is to unveil the Memorial on 1 August 2020. For those with internet access, more details and a photo of the sculpture can be found at:

www.rafnorthcreake.co.uk/time-to-remember-raf-north-creake-memorial-project/

One innovation for our 2020 Reunion is that we have moved the Foulsham ceremony from Friday afternoon to Saturday morning. We hope this will make it easier for members with an affiliation to 192 Squadron and RAF Foulsham to attend. I look forward to meeting many of you again at Foulsham on Saturday 16 May 2020, or later in the day at the City of Norwich Aviation Museum.

Janine, our Secretary, is a model of forward planning. The comprehensive programme for the 2020 Reunion is testament to Janine's tremendous efforts and mastery of organisation. The Association has been very fortunate over the years to benefit from her unique contribution to the magazine, the Reunions, keeping in touch with members, and in so many other ways.

I also pay tribute to all the other members of the Committee who have been a great support to me during my period of Office. I have thoroughly enjoyed being your Chairman. Seventy-five years after the end of the Second World War, the Association continues to have an important role commemorating the valour and sacrifice of the men and woman of RAF 100 Group who made such an important and unique contribution to achieving Victory. I hope this work continues for many years to come.

Very best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'B. G. W.', written over a horizontal line.

8th AIR FORCE REPRESENTATIVE

Stephen Hutton



Hello Friends,

My news from the States is one of great elation!

Last November, my wife Pam and I received an invitation to attend a Ceremony for former 36th Bomb Squadron Radar Counter Measures Unit Veteran James P. 'J.P.' Ostler who, at 99 years old, was to receive France's highest distinction of induction into The French Legion of Honor. The Legion of Honor is the highest French Order of Merit for Military and Civil Merits, established in 1802 by Napoleon Bonaparte.



You and a guest are invited to join

WWII Veteran, James P. Ostler Sr.

As he receives France's highest distinction,

The French Legion of Honor

Thursday, November 21st, at 12:00 p.m.

American Legion Post 208

121 N. Douglas Avenue, Arlington Heights, IL 60004

Light reception to follow the ceremony

Dress is Business Casual

*Please RSVP by November 5th to Nancy Ostler Carracher
at (847) 774-4350 or Ostler.JamesP@gmail.com*

Unfortunately, Pam and I could not attend the Nov. 21, 2019 Ceremony due to family commitments. Also, that day was truly significant to me in that it happened to be my father's birthday. He was a B24 Liberator Tail Gunner who served in both the 803rd and 36th Squadrons, flying 55 missions. He died on Valentine's Day 2005 and had he lived he would have been 99. Happily, for me, though, the day after J.P.'s Award Ceremony, I was pleased to receive an extensive email message from J.P.'s eldest son Jim, with many heart-warming details surrounding J.P.'s most splendid day.

And who is J.P. Ostler – he was born April 28, 1920, in Melrose Park, Illinois and was the youngest of three sons of English immigrant Charles Ostler, a house painter, and Johanna Murphy, who came to the U.S. from her native Ireland. J.P.'s future wife, Audrey Cahill, grew up in Brooklyn. They were married in 1948 and moved to Arlington Heights, Illinois and raised their seven children James Jr., Ray, Tom, Nancy, Bob, Kathy and Mike. For his career, he worked for Time Inc., the publisher of Time and Life Magazines. He retired in 1985. His wife died in 2012. They were blessed with 12 grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

In my book: '*Squadron of Deception*', J.P. as an 8th Air Force B17 Navigator with the Capt. Richard Obenschain crew, flew the first mission for 803rd Bomb Squadron (Prov.) alongside RAF 100 Group aircraft, flying from Oulton on the morning of D-Day, jamming Nazi Radar ahead of the Allied invasion. Once at their assigned position, their B17 lost its No. 3 engine but luckily were able to complete their flight on three engines. By jamming enemy Radar, it has been officially recorded

that this historic D-Day mission contributed materially to the success of the landings on the beachhead.

It must also be noted that J.P. and airmen of the Capt. Obenschain crew had already completed a hazardous tour flying 25 missions in the 388th Bomb Group before joining in the Radar countermeasures program. What noble and brave men! Before D-Day, his Service in the 388th had already earned him a Distinguished Flying Cross. Then in August 1944, with the formation of the new 36th Bomb Squadron Radar Counter Measure Unit now based at Cheddington, Commanding Officer Lt. Col. Robert Hambaugh named J.P. to his staff as Squadron Navigator. Because of his great Service with the RAF 100 Group, J.P. was awarded the British Distinguished Flying Cross. The Award was given by the Air Officer Commanding RAF 100 Group, Air Vice Marshal E. B. Addison.



J.P. & Obenschain B17 crew, courtesy Stephen Hutton

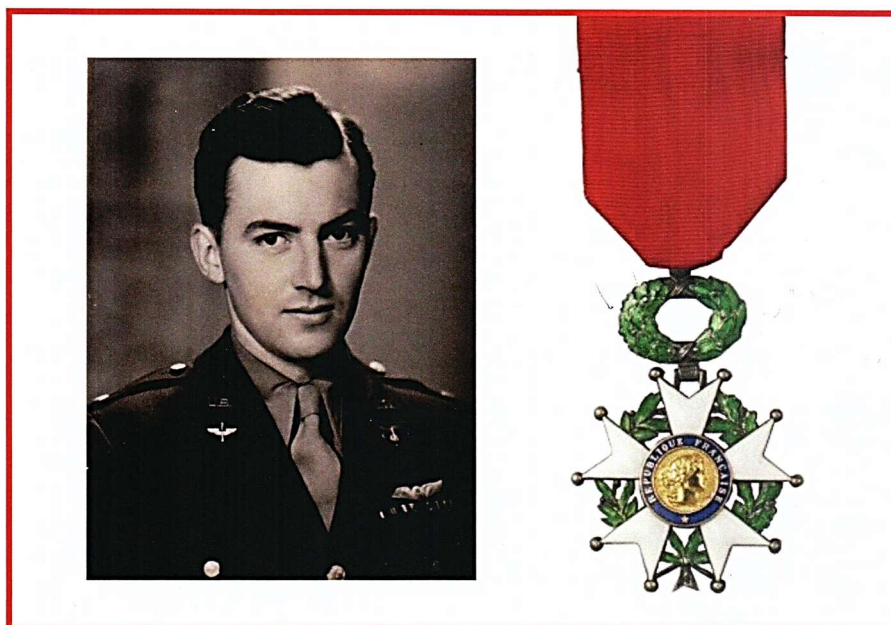
In son Jim's email message to me, he included a video link showing that, three days before the Award Ceremony, the Mayor in the Village of Arlington Heights, at its Board Meeting, presented J.P. with an official proclamation recognizing his great achievement upon receiving the French Legion of Honor Medal. The entire Ostler family, especially Nancy and Kathy, worked most diligently preparing for the Event, alerting both the newspaper and TV media for coverage.

When the Big Day of the Award Ceremony finally came, J.P. travelled with a special police escort from his home to the American Legion Post for the Event. There, he was met outside by the American Legion Honor Guard before he entered the Hall for the ceremony. Sons Jim and Mike greeted every guest as they arrived. Jim said there were many long-time friends, family members, neighbors, fellow parishioners, village officials, American Legion members, their leaders, representatives from both U.S. Senators' Offices, several members of the press, and many others – an estimated 150 or more people in attendance.

How pleased I was when Jim related that there were several copies of 'Squadron of Deception' on display tables in the room, some earmarked to those pages referencing J.P. and his crew. Another

of J.P.'s sons, Ray, was the program's Master of Ceremonies. He delivered a factual narrative of J.P.'s flying activities. Of course, the primary Speaker of the day was the Honorable Guillaume Lacroix, Consul General of France in Chicago. He spoke for about 15-20 minutes before presenting J.P. with his medal. As reported in the *'Daily Herald'* Lacroix when presenting the Award said:

'What you did Sir, as part of America's greatest generation, for us is a debt that we owe you ... and a debt that we cannot repay.'



Son Jim added that Lacroix stayed on after the formal part of the ceremony for the informal dining, drinking and conversing among the guests that followed, and seemed to thoroughly enjoy himself as much as the Ostler family appreciated him.

Jim's message said that last second additions to the program included J.P.'s son Tom's reading of a letter from U.S. Senator Dick Durbin, and also the presentation of a plaque from Major Jenny Ji, a representative of the 36th Electronic Warfare Squadron from Eglin Airfield Base. It pleased me to learn that I had succeeded in my effort to assist the Ostler family in the program and recognize J.P. for his Service to our Nation, for I had called Lt. Col. Andrew Maguire, the Commanding Officer of today's 36th Squadron, and requested his input to the special occasion. He indeed helped and sent Squadron representative Major Ji along with a fine gift.

Son Jim went on to say that one particularly touching moment that day involved the presentation to J.P. of a vial containing sand from each of the beaches involved in the Normandy D-Day invasion. It was given by a son of J.P.'s recently deceased long-time friend, schoolmate and neighbour.

In closing his message to me, Jim said:

'Words cannot adequately convey the emotions involved. There were a lot of tears, and I don't know how my Dad handled it as well as he did.'

So, now J.P. is honoured by three Nations for his heroism. He said he believed the heroes of Veterans Day are those who didn't get the opportunities he has been able to enjoy. As reported in the *'Daily Herald'*, J.P. summed it up when he said:

'The people to be honoured are the ones who didn't come back. When the guy who had the bunk next to you doesn't make it back and you did, you think about life and death differently. This is

what we signed up to do. We're going to do it the best we can. And that's it. Nobody was particularly frightened; nobody was particularly joyful about what we did. It was a job that our generation had to do, and we did.'



J.P. Ostler at 99, and in World War Two

Finally, today we realize that the Veterans of WWII such as J.P. are now in their 90s or more and taking their final flight. Opportunities such as this to recognize their bravery and achievements are most rapidly fleeting. With those Veterans remaining we must take this one last chance to say:

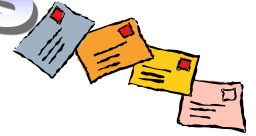
'Thank you for your dedication to Duty and Service to help free the world from tyranny and oppression.'

Bless Them All!!!

With love,
Stephen & Pam Hutton

Author: *'Squadron of Deception'*
8th Air Force Historical Society Unit Contact
36th Bomb Squadron RCM
Website: www.36rcm.com. Email: smhutton@36rcm.com

LETTERS PAGES



Hi Janine & John Stubbington,

I do not know where to begin to thank you both for the wonderful kind words and photographs shared in memory of Mum (Vera James) included in the Autumn/Winter edition of the magazine. My thanks also, Janine, for the Special Edition 2020 Calendar. They all brought on such strong and mixed emotions for us. As time goes by, there is a huge void now being felt without Mum. She was such a character and a strong influence within our family. We give thanks for her wonderful life. She worked hard and played hard, but was so kind to everyone, and loved by many.

The Calendar is excellent and put together very sensitively. What memories will be remembered by many!

The work put into these publications is amazing, and I am sure much appreciated by everyone.

Thank you both once again. We as a family send our best wishes to you.

Barbara xxx

Daughter of Phil James MBE



Dear Janine,

We were thrilled to receive the latest magazine today. You've been very busy again! Thank you so much for everything you do for RAF 100 Group, it is so very much appreciated by all.

We shared a fabulous Family Weekend in May 2019 with Alun bringing his wife and all three ginger children for the first time. Dad's empty space was there (Stan Forsyth DFC) but at Reunions it's easy to remember the happy times he enjoyed in Norwich. The Reunions were the highlight of his year, and he so looked forward to magazines arriving. RAF 100 Group Association truly brought Dad to life in his final few years. Thank you for that.

Take care.

Love and best wishes,

Stan & Brenda Forsyth

Son & daughter-in-law of Stan Forsyth DFC



Good Morning Janine,

Thank you for the wonderful Special Edition Calendar of the RAF 100 Group & 36th Squadron, 8th Air Force. It will hang prominently in our country home with pride and great honor for those who have served and protected our futures over fifty years ago.

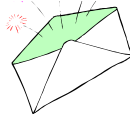
I was also joyfully surprised to receive the actual 'Confound & Destroy' magazine in my mailbox all the way from England just the other day! Yours is about the only European mail I've ever received! Having the actual article in my hand did greatly show how much work you put into the project and Group's other activities. It was equally nice to see such heartfelt words from a few of Dad's other associates from his travels and acquaintances.

Thanks for keeping me in the loop about your plans for the New Year. You are obviously a very incredible lady to continue as you are, given your health. There are those who might just 'give up' and pass on without much of a life. You obviously, strengthened by your faith, have decided to carry-on differently to most folks with Cancer. It is truly inspirational!

Best Regards,

Barry Howarth

Son of Des Howarth, 36th Bomb Squadron, 8th Air Force



Hi Janine,

Apologies for the delay in writing, but I have been focused on finishing the RAF 100 Group work on the website that Darren and I promised to achieve for you. I am pleased to say we have now covered all the Norfolk 100 Group airbases. It has taken a little while, but we felt it important to get it right. So, the final one is finished with RAF Little Snoring, the link to which follows:

http://www.heroesofourtime.co.uk/raf-little-snoring_100group.html

We hope to have honoured all members and Veterans in the most respectful way, and at least they have a presence now on the worldwide web where their memories and courage will never be forgotten. The plan now is to move on to the Gremlins, and to this end, we are keen to start reading through Stephen Hutton's book and material he has kindly sent us, which will form another section on the website.

Meanwhile, we have booked for a Mosquito Experience Day at Lincolnshire Aviation Centre, a present for Darren's birthday (and to remember Dad as it would also have been his Birthday too).

With our best wishes,

Donna & Darren



Good Evening Janine,

Thank you for the Autumn/Winter magazine which I look forward to reading.

A quick update from the City of Norwich Aviation Museum is that, after what seems a very long time in planning, construction of the replacement Tea Room will commence next month. We appointed the contractor last week and our brilliant volunteers have already started the process of preparing for the changes. We are filling the whole corner, which will provide a bigger internal space. Also included is an accessible toilet with baby-change facility, plus a new doorway to give access into the main Museum. These changes are also providing us with an opportunity to have a good 'clear out' of items we have hoarded over many years.

Best wishes,

Colin

Colin Kerrison

Chairman of City of Norwich Aviation Museum

Hi Janine,

As always, thank you for the Autumn/Winter magazine, excellent as always. With all the content it is possible to continue to learn something new every time!

I know you are busy and that I have asked you this before, but at the 'People's Mosquito' we are building up a wonderful library of Mossie photos. Any new ones would be most welcome and appreciated, individuals or collections, actual copies or in digital format.

I am now extending this plea to a wider audience, asking if anyone has pictures of Mosquito aircraft, they could pass on to us, for which we would be only too happy to make a donation.

Looking forward to the next magazine when it comes ... no pressure!

Kind regards,

David

David Coeshall

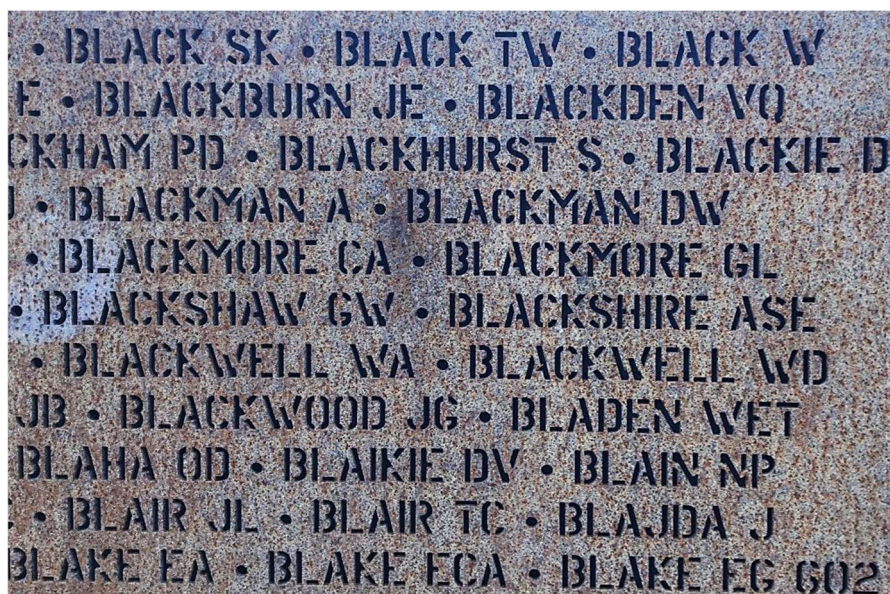
dicoeshall@aol.com



Dear Janine,

Many thanks for a bumper edition of the magazine.

I was particularly interested in the reference to the Bomber Command Memorial in Lincoln, because we visited it just the other day, before the Biker's Reunion. We went there because Lalla's father is remembered there ... the dot to the left of his name, **Blackden VQ**, is a small hole which will take a poppy, so anyone visiting should take one with them. Her father was a Wing Commander. I do recommend that people visit when possible, because it is not only a very moving Memorial, but there are helpful staff who will look up details for you, a very good Museum, a stunning view of Lincoln Cathedral across the valley, and a restaurant serving a wartime menu. It is very good for children or grandchildren to realise what their relatives lost their lives for.



Best wishes,

Eric Dickens

Dear Janine,

You are so right when you say that finding facts and bringing them together to discover the story behind them can become addictive. It has become an absolute obsession, especially knowing it's out there somewhere.

My father, [Squadron Leader Arnold Maurice Hill \(seen left\)](#), was born in Luton, Bedfordshire and, as they say about Bedfordshire Boys: '*Bedfordshire born, Bedfordshire bred, strong in the arm, thick in the head*'. He joined the war effort in 1939, volunteering as a Reservist at Luton Airfield (2 huts and a grass runway). He eventually wound up with 85 Squadron which, in 1944, was seconded to Bomber Command.



On 20 October 1944, Flight TA400 crashed at 21.30hrs, 1.2km west of Wittstadt, escorting bombers. Flying at 5,000ft the Mosquito exploded in mid-air. There was a severe snowstorm, and for that reason, villagers could only make a search two days later. They found Navigator Gregory Brooker dead. My father, however, was found still in his seat, suspended from a tree. He was taken down and moved to the Church in Wittstadt where they read him his Last Rights.

However, against all odds, he survived.

Two months later, he was transferred to Stalag II. He survived for six months there and eventually was freed by Russians on horseback.

On returning to England, he was sent to RAF Cosford where he spent a year learning to walk and talk again.

I have made many efforts to find the full story of what happened, but his War History still has not been released. Through a German Researcher we have established there were no claims of any other planes being shot down, and believe he may have been shot down by Mosquito TA404 of 157 Squadron, which claimed to have shot down a Junkers 88 (although no German flights were reported missing).

I find it strange that his War Records are still not released. His other claim to fame was in discovering that it wasn't U boats shooting down Mosquitoes which were built under licence in America. My father realised that the loss of power after a long flight was quite likely a failure of the inlet manifold. He managed to ditch his Flight in Southern Ireland and, following his observations, it was found that the Americans had reduced the tolerance of the inlet manifold to save on costs. The reduced protection afforded by the thicker manifold allowed the manifold to effectively melt. I'm not sure how many Mosquitoes and good Pilots were lost this way, but Rolls Royce engines were built to a specification not to be tampered with.

Any help regarding my father's wartime story would be much appreciated. I include the following extract from the News/Gazette of 2 February 1994 which offers a brief insight into my father in the article entitled: '*Luton At War*'.

Jon Hill

jon@thefoxdarleyhall.co.uk

NOTE: Due to the small print of the article the Editor has written it out in full to make it clearer.

LUTON AT WAR

Thrust into the Firing line for King and Country

by David Tooley (News/Gazette, 2.2.1994)

Dashing Luton fighter pilot Arnold Hill had many close scrapes with death during the Second World War.

RAF Flt/Lt Hill, DFC, of Whitehill Avenue shot down two enemy aircraft and was himself blown out of the sky in a dramatic airborne career.

Like thousands of other young men, he went from an ordinary job and was thrust into the firing line for King and country against a deadly and ruthless foe.

Flying Officer Hill, as he was in May 1943, is pictured below second from right during some of the quieter moments.



Flying Officer Hill, second from right, May 1943

He was on Brains Trust Panel which answered questions from members of the public on all aspects of flying. It took place at Luton's Odeon Cinema and was one of many local events to publicise Wings for Victory Week. Other panellists included Sunday Times Air Correspondent Peter Masefield, BBC Question Master Donald McClough and Luton Squadron Leader Geoffrey Warnes, who was the first operational RAF Pilot to wear contact lenses.

Wings for Victory Week encouraged people to put their money with National Savings to buy equipment for the war effort. Luton's appeal target was £1,425,000 but the town raised a magnificent £1,450,231.

Mr Hill, now 77, remembers the Brains Trust Event was a sell-out success. He recalls one particular question from a member of the public who wanted to know how aircraft stop on a runway.

Before the Brains Trust, Mr Hill completed a two-year tour of duty which was meant to last just six months but was extended because of a shortage of Pilots. He had trained at Luton airport, which he remembers as an open field with a hut. He joined Fighter Command and flew short-nosed Blenheims on night-time operations. After spells in Canada and training duties in England, he volunteered to resume operational duties. Mr Hill joined 85 Squadron which flew the famous wooden-framed Mosquitoes.

He was shot down in October 1944, when anti-aircraft fire scored a direct hit. Mr Hill was unconscious and stuck in a tree near Osterburken after the mid-air explosion. Seriously injured, he miraculously survived, only to be interrogated by the notorious SS. He spent the rest of the war as a prisoner and at the end of the conflict, spent six months in hospital at RAF Cosford.

Mr Hill said: 'I had a lot of narrow scrapes but came through. I remember the companionship, the many friends I made and the many friends who were killed'.

On discharge Mr Hill resumed his employment with J. W. Green Brewery in Luton, where he became the Group Head Brewer. He retired from Whitbread in 1980. Mr Hill officially opened the Flowers Trading Estate, in Latimer Road, about eight years ago. He married Margaret in 1940 and has two sons, Jon and Robert. He is a Luton Town FC Fan and regularly attends matches. He remembers seeing Joe Payne's ten goals against Bristol Rovers in 1936.



Dear Janine,

Thank you so much for your very kind message. I've always had a love of old airfields. I spent many of my younger years working as an Ops Officer for various airlines and in 1971 came to work for Air Anglia at what had been Horsham St Faith. In those days, many of the old airfields still had their runways including Foulsham, which I remember visiting all those years ago. A couple of years ago, my wife and I returned there one fine Summer's day to have a picnic at the end of what had been the main runway, walk the dog and savour the atmosphere. Matlaske and Docking are my favourite airfields – hardly anything to be seen at either of them now, which adds to the attraction. Yet in their day they were very busy places. Sadly, the last surviving big brick and earth revetment at Matlaske was bulldozed by the farmer a year or two ago.

'RAF Matlaske was delightfully situated in The Middle of Nowhere Norfolk. Excellent today, as then, for dog walking. Originally planned with three grass runways, the longest was 1600yds, the other two approximately 1300yds. Prone to water-logging, they were described by Pilot Officer Harry Shaw (56 Squadron Tempest Pilot) as having 'a heck of a slope on it!' A very busy fighter airfield (satellite of Coltishall) throughout the war, at its peak it had 2,500 personnel based here. Airmen and NCOs were billeted at nearby Barningham Hall, first in the house and later, when the Hall was occupied by Officers, in the grounds. When 56 Squadron arrived in August 1942, the Officers, Airmen and NCOs were billeted in Itteringham village, the Officers at Itteringham Mill astride the River Bure.

'Cocky Dundas' the CO, was a great dog lover. Subsequent to his departure on November 10th, 1942, the following entry was made in The Squadron Diary: '29 November 1942 – Appointment of a new Mess Officer (F/L Sutton 1489TT Flight). An enormous improvement in orderliness and cleanliness was soon noted. It had been difficult to tell it from a kennel with untrained dogs running all over, leaving behind signs of their presence'.

(Taken from Janine Harrington's booklet about RAF Matlaske, one of a collection of 12 each featuring one of RAF 100 Group airfields.)



It's worth including a photo of Cocky Dundas and other members of 56 Squadron at Duxford, taken in 1942, with notes that go with it:

'Robin, whose sudden appearance and over-familiar behaviour outraged Air Vice Marshal Vincent on the occasion of an Inspection by General de Gaulle at 59 OTU in October 1941 ... together with his Master's unkempt appearance coupled with the split-arse formation flying demonstrated to the dignitaries by Dundas and his Free French trainees, resulted in Cocky and Robin being given an immediate posting.'

Shown left: Cocky Dundas, Robin and other members of 56 Squadron at Duxford in January 1942

Courtesy: Charles Brown, via Tom Nightingale

In late May 1942, as a result of a series of Luftwaffe hit and run raids along the south coast, 56 Squadron was detached from Snailwell to Manston ('A' Flight Gillam) and Westhampnett ('B' Flight Dundas). The coastal patrols that followed were the first operational sorties by Typhoons. Whilst the Luftwaffe were conspicuous by their absence, 'A' Flight lost two Typhoons (Sergeant Pilot Stuart-Turner, killed) on June 1st, when they were shot down by Spitfires south of Dover having been misidentified as Focke Wulf 190s. At this stage of the war, Typhoons were relatively unknown and further misidentification and losses occurred. To minimise this risk, Typhoons subsequently carried identification stripes. I have seen it said that one of the reasons the Pathe film footage was shot was to familiarise pilots with identification of this type.



Quite by chance, I discovered that some sort of 'Press Day' had taken place at Matlaske on April 21st, 1943, when the Typhoon was revealed to the general public. Charles Brown was one of the photographers. I'm sending a snap from that day, as 56 Squadron's C.O. Squadron Leader T. H. V. Pheloung, RNZAF, and his Typhoons pose for Charles Brown's camera between Cawston and Aylsham.

Courtesy: Charles Brown via Tom Nightingale

On 15th March 1943, Pheloung had abandoned his Typhoon over the North Sea after being hit by a flak ship. A Walrus from 278 Squadron, Coltishall, located him 35 miles off the Norfolk coast and picked him up. Pheloung was subsequently killed in action on June 20th, 1943 during a low-level shipping strike.

A week after Typhoon R8825 was photographed (above) her pilot had a lucky escape.

On a training flight on 28th April 1943 from RAF Matlaske with Typhoon, R8825 US-V flown by Sgt A. P. McNichol, while carrying on circuits over Coltishall, Typhoon DN265 exploded in mid-air (no cause established) and the tail and parts of the wing flew off and damaged R8825. Sadly, Sgt Driscoll was killed as the Typhoon plunged to the ground between Dudwick Farm and Aylsham Road.



It was amazing that Sgt McNichol made a wheels-up landing at Broadmoor Farm, North Walsham, Norfolk, escaping unhurt.

My mother was a Plotter at Sawston Hall. Like your mother, Janine, she too kept an unworn wedding dress. Fortunately, her Beau didn't die, he just ditched her. But because she was so upset by the whole business, she (and her dog) were

medically discharged from the RAF.

I would like to thank Janine Harrington for allowing me to quote from her excellent book about RAF Matlaske, and herewith are an additional few links which might prove of interest:

[56 Squadron Typhoon DN265 US-B Sgt Driscoll](http://aircrewremembered.com/driscoll-daniel.html)

<http://aircrewremembered.com/driscoll-daniel.html>

With kindest regards,

Tom Nightingale

l.nightingale23@btinternet.com



Hello Janine,

Thank you so much for the time you have taken to create these little vignettes of the Battle Stations of WW2. My Uncle – [Ft Lt Frank\(ie\) Thomas](#) served with 23 Squadron at RAF Little Snoring – and wonderfully, features dead centre in the cover photo of your RAF Little Snoring booklet (as well as getting a mention or two inside).

I always did wonder the name of the farming family who Frank took up with – apparently, he volunteered to look after their livestock at one point, with near catastrophic results! After the war, Frank became quite a known figure working internationally for the World Bank on land use

research. In the course of my devilling, one of the oddest things emerged – one of his best post-war chums and colleagues at the World Bank was a Walter Schaefer-Kelnert – erstwhile Hauptman and OC 3Bn 119 Artillery Regiment, 11th Panzer Division Wehrmacht (not the SS 11th Panzers!!). This chap too, had a remarkable war.

I visited 23 Squadron at RAF Waddington just before I left the Service in 2006 and was treated to a full rummage of their (limited) archives of that period. From this, I was permitted to photocopy their entire F540 Operation Record Book (01.08.1944 – 25.09.1945). This Document, not just dramatic and poignant in its content and detail, has been invaluable in helping others researching their own relative's exploits.

Frank's daughter, Megan, is equally taken up with her father's past, and I will be sending her your wonderful book

* * * *

... *Wow! That was quick!* Many thanks. Lovely to pick up on the 23 Squadron story again.

Strangely, I worked with 23 Squadron (Lightnings) along with 43 Squadron (Phantoms) at RAF Leuchars in 1973/4 on my first posting as a Flying Officer in the Supply Branch (OC Technical Supply and Mobility Flight). My Uncle Frank was still alive then (died 1997), but he was in Australia and we had had little contact with him and his family for some time (as he rarely stayed put for a year or more!). If only I had known his background then, I could have re-acquainted him with his successors (who appeared just as frenetic a bunch then as in Frank's time!) Ah well, it was not until his daughter, Megan, got in touch in the early 2000s – knowing I was, by then, a Wing Commander – that we managed to get the ball rolling with getting his Service Record and my trip to 23 Squadron at Waddington. In the process, I too corresponded and spoke with Pete Smith on a regular basis for a couple of years – extremely helpful and knowledgeable. We collaborated on putting together his father's Record from the Ops Log and, indeed, the back story for a number of other pilots of the time.

Now – a query.

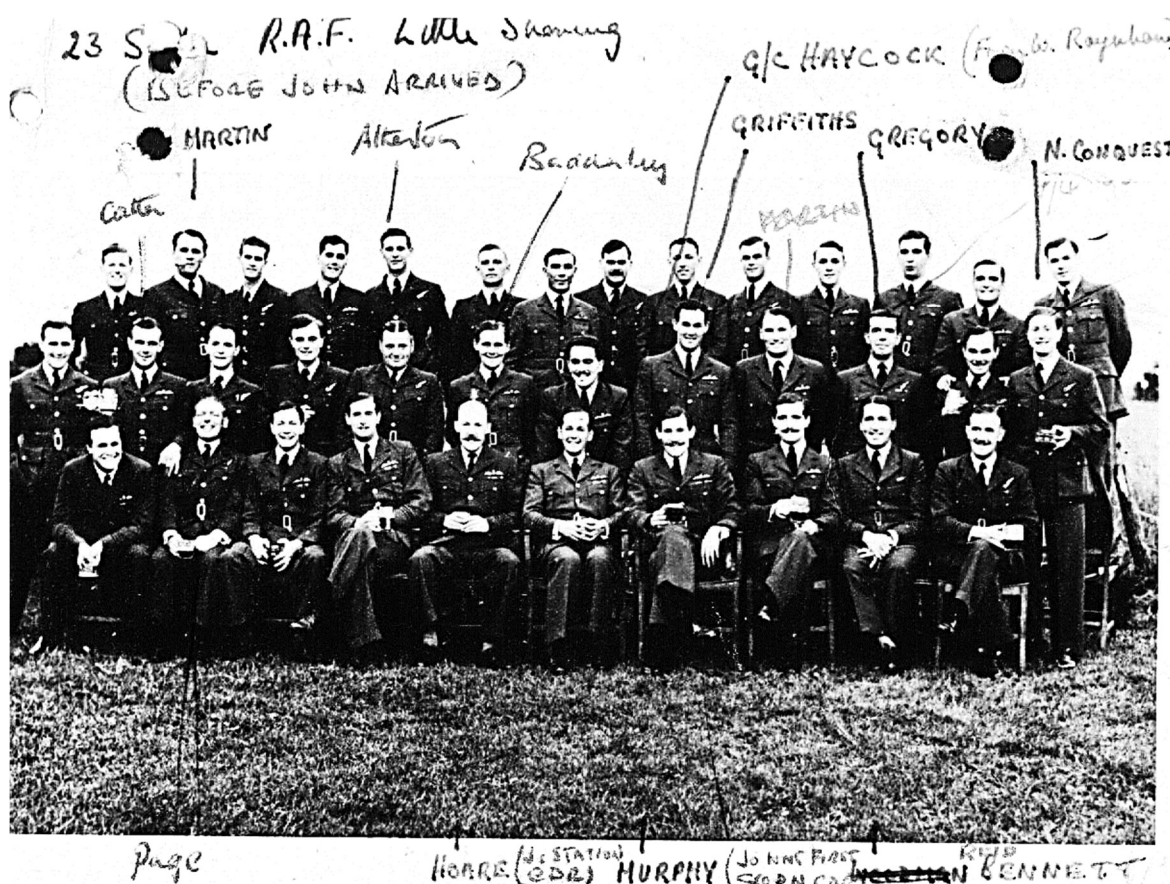
In the following photograph I have always thought that the chap sitting five in from the left, second row (with the cock-eyed hat) in your cover picture of RAF Little Snoring booklet is Frank Thomas ... but you have annotated inside as the Squadron Commander, Group Captain Hoare. I know my information is just word of mouth, but there is a remarkable similarity with every other verified/annotated picture of Frank – rakish cap, moustache, and small stature. Group Captain Hoare, judging from the other pictures of him (Googleable) is of quite a tall chap with a very large moustache, and thus would probably have sat somewhat higher?

I attach pictures of Frank to thoroughly confuse matters!



Front cover photograph of RAF Little Snoring booklet shows HQ Station Staff during Summer 1944
Courtesy: Tom Cushing

Courtesy: Tom Cushing



Top Row: 1. F/L Ritchie, 2. ... 3. Padre J.W. Goulding, 4. F/L Bennett, 5. ...
6. ... 7. Pamela Black, 8. ... 9. ...

2nd Row: 1. Don Glass RNAF, 2. ... 3. Mac Ruddenklau RNAF, 4. F/O Cristiel,
5. ... 6. Elvera McCloud, 7. Joan Hamilton, 8. ... 9. ... 10. ... 11. ...

3rd Row: 1. ... 2. F/O Gullivan, 3. F/L B. Hinchliffe, 4. S/L Jeaks, 5. G/C Hoare,
6. S/L Charles Price, 7. F/L Muir, 8. F/L Jacky Page, 9. Flt Lieutenant
Harold Walter Melvin Forth,

4th Row: 1. ... 2. ... 3. ... 4. ... 5. ...

2nd Row: 1. Don Glass RNAF, 2. ... 3. Mac Ruddenklau RNAF, 4. F/O Cristiel, 5. ... 6. Elvera McCloud, 7. Joan Hamilton, 8. ... 9. ... 10. ... 11. ...

3rd Row: 1. ... 2. F/O Gullivan, 3. F/L B. Hinchliffe, 4. S/L Jeaks, 5. G/C Hoare, 6. S/L Charles Price, 7. F/L Muir, 8. F/L Jacky Page, 9. Flt Lieutenant Harold Walter Melvin Forth,

4th Row: 1. ... 2. ... 3. ... 4. ... 5. ...

The Squadron picture on previous page shows my two candidates. However, while Group Captain Hoare is identified, the one I have been told is Frank my Uncle, sitting front row, 4th from right (holding beer – so very likely as he was Squadron Entertainments Officer!) – appears to be annotated ‘John’s first Squadron Commander’.



Courtesy: Mike Thomas

If anyone can throw any light on this, I would be very grateful, as I might have to tell Megan that, who she has thought was her father in some pictures all these years ... *ain't*!!!

Best wishes,

Mike Thomas

johnmikethomas@aol.com



Hi Janine,

I have a book on my shelf by Rory Chisholm: ‘*Cover of Darkness*’ in which he details one or two things about Berlin raids involving RAF 100 Group, although he gives no dates or details as if it were still secret post-war (which I suppose it was). I think I have just about worked out that one raid he talks about at length must be 2/3 December 1943. The clue he gives is reference to the loss of 40 bombers ... well, we did lose 40 that night, so that seems to fit.

I love all this detective work as usual, but it’s getting more difficult.

What I’m really trying to track down is some information on a [Major Tom Gates](#) referred to by Chisholm:

‘... A few days later, two P-38s and two PO51s arrived at Little Snoring and Major Tom Gates joined the HQ staff. Tom was a 50-year-old Texan, with a slow speech and an attractive way with him. He attended our planning conferences (at Bylaugh Hall, no doubt) and listened patiently ... Then one day, he announced earlier than usual that he was going off ‘to see the boys’ and the next thing we knew was that his name came through on the night’s ops programme. Tom was going with the bombers to Berlin in a P-51 to see for himself. He got there and back safely ...’

I'd like to know the ins and outs if possible. It would make a nice addition to the chapter I have written from the overall RAF perspective on the raid on Berlin that night. I'll also see if his namesake Tom Cushing might have some gen. If anyone has anything to offer about that night, I'd be happy to hear from them.

The little tidbits on Tom Gates from Roderick Chisholm's book: *'Cover of Darkness'* will enable me to get the personal details covered. But I am curious to know what happened to Tom Gates and if there is a WW2 picture of him? It would also be great to have a picture of Tom Gate's Mustang. I think I have a photo of the P-38 somewhere, but I'd love a short of the P-51 he flew.

I am now trying to incorporate Roderick Chisholm's account of the Berlin raid he talks about, but does not go into detail on date, the Base he was at for the Briefing, etc, etc. The only clue he gives is that *'losses that night could not be called disastrous. Forty for Berlin was reckoned average ...'*

I have spent 24 hours working it all out. This has to be the night of 2/3 December 1943 he's talking about because that's exactly how many Bomber Command lost that night. He doesn't mention that three RCM aircraft took part or that all three were shot down. For much of yesterday I was under the growing impression he was talking about RAF 100 Group ECM aircraft, but of course they didn't have any that were operational on that date (I had considered it might be 192 Squadron, but it couldn't have been). I am therefore of the opinion he must have gone to Ludford Magna and saw 101 Squadron who were doing ABC stuff.

All this would fit with his personal career details at that point in the war i.e. he was posted to *'a radio-countermeasures Group, which had yet to be formed'*. This would be November 1943 and it is of course, RAF 100 Group. As 100 Group were not yet in business, that's why I guess he went to Ludford Magna to see the ABC Lancasters and their boxes of tricks.

He confuses the issue somewhat in his book by saying he watched the departure one night of a Station's force of 30 Lancs. Then he adds: *'That particular night – the target was not Berlin'*. Then reverts back (presumably to 2/3 December) when he says: *'To add to the Staff Officer's picture of the Berlin Raid, I visited the Station where German radio was intercepted'*.

It's just got to be Ludford Magna! I'm going with that anyway.

Also, when he says: *'at a Station of that Group I attended a Briefing on the plan'* it has to be 1 Group (not 100 Group, as I first thought) 'cause 101 Squadron ABC Lancs at Ludford was in 1 Group. I'm a genius with the Bloodhounds and the magnifying glass!!

Any help with this in relation to Tom Gates would be deeply appreciated.

Martin Bowman

martin.bowman@mypostoffice.co.uk



Hello Dear Janine,

When my 'Confound & Destroy' magazine arrived yesterday I knew I had to write. I can't remember if I told you that I had been invited to the Memorial Service at the Bomber Command Memorial in London, which was lovely. I was able to lay my bunch of poppies on the Monument and remember my dear Father ([Ken Spriggs, 462 Squadron RAAF](#)) and all the Bomber Boys. Afterwards, we had a lovely finger buffet lunch at the RAF Club which was a wonderful experience. It certainly is a beautiful place, and I was able to wander around and see all the marvellous paintings and Memorabilia they have. It was a moving day, but also a happy day to see such a fabulous Memorial statue. I am sending a few pictures of the day.



Both pictures taken in front of the Bomber Command Memorial, Green Park, London





Both pictures taken inside the RAF Club



Well, my love, I look forward to hearing from you when you have a minute,
Lots of love and hugs to you,

Wendy

Wendy Spriggs

wendyspriggs416@gmail.com



Dear Janine,

My Grandfather, Richard Holman was in England roughly April 1943 – July 1945, but he didn't discuss the war with his family, just saying he saved a lot of people. He was always good with scientific stuff and later worked at NASA for many years. My mother, Richard Holman's daughter, has already bought your book: '*RAF 100 Group – Kindred Spirits*' and is now reading it for a second time. She can't put it down! She used to have a photo papered copy of the 36th Bomb Squadron with the 8th Air Force Group on the span of the wings of an airplane at Alconbury, England, taken 23rd May 1945, shown on page XIII. Do you know where we can obtain a real photo paper copy of this picture? We'll be ordering a number of your Special Edition Calendars for my family, knowing

Richard's photo appears in its pages. Thank you. I've also been in touch, as you suggested, with Stephen Hutton who has found papers and an image of Richard looking out of the cockpit of a plane. This image is in his book: *'Squadron of Deception'*. My family and I are very thankful for the help both you and Stephen have given.

We really didn't start digging into Richard's wartime in England until one and a half months ago when I contacted you about the Association. It was then a big surprise when Ancestry DNA pinged a match with Richard having a son across The Pond. My mother has since been in contact with him. Richard de Kerbrech in the Isle of Wight. He knew nothing about his father, believing he died in the war. His mother was in the RAF at that time. He is an only child. But now he has a crazy family over in the States ... *ha-ha* ... He also is an author, writing about the *'Titanic'*.

Also, my Dad's second cousin, Wilfred Chrisner, was in the 36th Bombardment Squadron as a Navigator, and I believe I saw his name in your book.

Stephen Hutton writes:

'It was Michelle's grandfather, Richard Holman, who was a Mechanic with the 36th. Michelle has now ordered my book and will see further photos of him inside. I learned that Michelle's father, Donald, had a second cousin, Wilfred 'Chris' Chrisner, who was a Navigator for Lt Bob Senn crew in the 36th. Both Chris and his wife Dorothy attended our 36BS Reunions. Together with photos, there is also the 36BS Mechanic Quentin 'Kent' MacGillivray's 'Mechanic's 23rd Psalm' with a gambling debts list which Holman pencilled in ... although upside-down just above the 3 GI's, seen in ink near the bottom left. I love it!! The poem was read at our last 36BS Reunion in Dayton, Ohio, on June 7, 2002. We had both a B1 Lancer and a B52 Stratofortress Flypast for the occasion. What a thrill for the Gremlins and their families! Deacon Joe (Veteran: Joe Melita) offered our Closing Prayers.



*Navigator Richard Holman in the cockpit of his plane
Courtesy: Stephen Hutton*

NOTE: A picture of the poem complete with list of gambling debts is shown on page 28, following Richard Holman's wartime experiences.

SHARED EXPERIENCES

RICHARD HOLMAN

by Granddaughter Michelle Chrisner, U.S



My family stumbled upon recent information about WW2 concerning my grandfather, Richard Albert Holman. To our surprise, this journey has led us to England with the 36th Bombardment Squadron and how men and women fought courageously in this war.

In 1940, my Grandfather completed his Degree at Green Mountain Jr. College in Vermont. Richard's Dad wanted him to continue his path with more schooling, but he was adamant about wanting to instead serve his country.

It was September 5, 1942. The war was already in full swing, while my Grandfather married his soulmate. As my Grandparents were just getting on familiar ground with married life, not having much time for a Honeymoon, Richard was shipped off to the war in England in April 1943.

This is where the brakes are applied with a screeching halt of information about my Grandfather's experiences with the war. Whether its discussions about 'dog fights', the harsh cold weather that pounds their soul, or even the peace times of enjoying the fellowship for food, and of course the tasty beers that one can't forget in that region. My Grandfather was tight-lipped with information about which his children would ask again and again and again.

It was just accepted with my family of the not knowing and missing pieces for our curiosity. Just recently, I have pried into the memory tank of Cindy, my mother, hoping to jar something that may have been filed away. But her emptiness of a response speaks louder to me than words. I can see the anxiousness in her eyes as her breath becomes frail, still longing for answers today.

The bits and pieces that Cindy can recall are the constant questioning about the war to their father. Questions of: *'How many Nazis did you kill?'* *'Where were you in the war?'* These pleading, begging questions were often asked by Richard's youngest teenager, Jerrie. After all, at that time teachers were discussing wartime, and children have their own personal bragging to share. Jerrie wanted her own to boast about. Every now and then, my Grandfather would explain to his children:

'I was in England, just England'

and

'The only thing I can tell you is I don't like war and killings. But I helped save a lot of lives.'

He would also remind them as he quickly changed the subject that:

'I can tell ya'll things, but then I would have to die.'

There is only one story my mother remembers her father allowed them access. He was in an airplane and a fire broke out inside, towards the rear of the plane. The Pilot ordered every crew member to jump for their safety. The Pilot turned back to see the plane was empty, but Richard still aboard trying to get the fire out with the fire extinguisher. The Pilot once again demanded his orders to be followed and to jump. My Grandfather refused to explain he was getting the fire out,

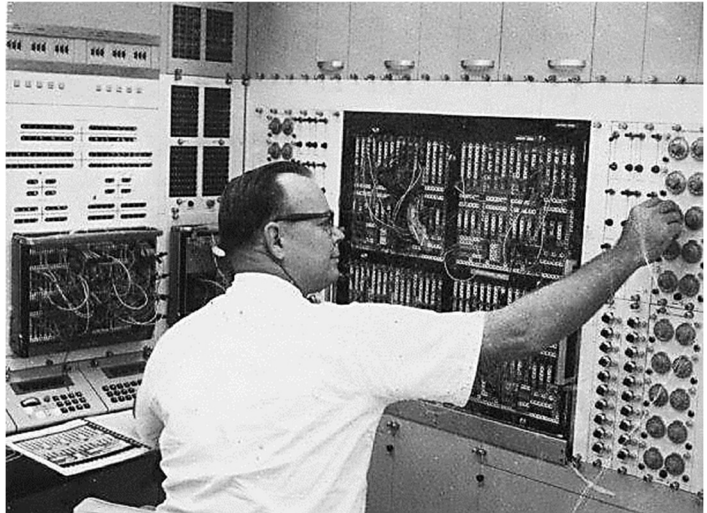
and that he wasn't jumping out of a perfectly operational airplane. The Pilot landed safely. But it makes me wonder what happened to the crew members who had jumped from the plane.

Information my family does have comes in the form of Richard's Military Papers. He was in the 803 Squadron, later to be the 36th Bombardment Squadron. His (MOS) Airplane Maintenance tech, specialized in Sub Machine/gun expert. His known locations – Ardennes, Central Europe, Air Offensive Europe, Normandy, Northern France, Rhineland. He was a Tech Sgt and ranked to Master Sgt by the time he returned home from the war.

My Grandfather stayed on active duty in the Air Force until 1960 when he retired as a Chief Master Sgt. He then obtained a job as a Computer Analyst Specialist with NASA (*not a Janitor as he told his Grandkids!*) at Johnson Space Center in Clear Lake, Texas.

Richard Albert Holman died on April 13th, 1984. He was 67 years old.

If anyone knows of or has any kind of information about my Grandfather, whether it be big or small, would be much appreciated.



Richard Holman working at NASA, courtesy Michelle

I want to thank Janine Harrington and Stephen Hutton for their extensive efforts in finding concrete evidence about my Grandfather's Squadron and other pieces of information. He has always been a Hero in my eyes with or without the war. But isn't that how most grandchildren view their Grandfather ... a true Hero?

Michelle Chrisner
chrisnermichelle@yahoo.com



NOTE: As new members of our Association, we join in welcoming both Michelle and her mother Cynthia Homan Chrisner to our worldwide Family of Kindred Spirits!

Seen left:

Richard Holman's 2nd cousin Wilfred Chrisner. Wilfred was a Navigator in the 36th Bombardment Squadron.

CAREFULNESS IS MY WATCHWORD, I SHALL NOT WANT,

IT MAKETH ME REMEMBER TO CHECK EACH POINT
BEFORE I PUT MY O.K. ON THE PLANE...FOR
OTHERWISE MY PLANE'S PILOT MIGHT CRASH INTO
GREEN PASTURES OR DIVE OUT OF CONTROL INTO
STILL WATERS.

IT RESTORETH MY CONFIDENCE IN MYSELF, FOR I
KNOW THAT BEING CAREFUL I AM KEEPING OUR
PLANES IN THE AIR SO THAT WE CAN WIN THE WAR
YEA, THOUGH I SIT IN THE PLANE AND WORK ON
IT FOR HOURS, I DO NOT FOOL WITH THE IGNIT-
ION SWITCH NOR DO I TAXI THE PLANE ACROSS
FIELDS JUST FOR THE THRILL OF IT AND THOSE
ABOUT ME FEAR NO SUCH EVIL FOR MY WRENCH AND
MY SCREWDRIVER ME AND I DO MY WORK WELL.

I PREPARETH THE PLANE FOR THE PILOT IN FRONT OF OUR ENEMIES. I CARESS MY PLANE WITH LOVING CARE AND SEE THAT EACH PART OF IT IS IN GOOD WORKING ORDER AND ANNOINTETH ITS ENG-

INES WITH OIL UNTIL IT HAS JUST ENOUGH..AND
IS NOT RUNNING OVER,
SURELY SMOOTH FLYING AND SUCCESS WILL FOLLOW
MY PLANE WHERE EVER IT IS AND BY BEING CARE-
FUL I WILL BE ABLE TO KEEP IT FLYING FOREVER

INGELS - 5
HOLLY - 5

MILLER -
 MARSHALL -
 KALITA -
 HOLMAN -
 BAKER -
 LITZ -
 1

[illegible]

K.E. MUMMA
874th Chem Co. D.T. A.
40.6.558

Stephen Hutton adds in relation to this poem:

'The Mechanic's 23rd Psalm was given to me by 36BS Mechanic Kent MacGillivray who also put the names of GIs who owed him gambling debts – Holman being one of them. I don't know for certain, but it may have been Kent who wrote the Mechanics 23rd Psalm.'

Hi there,

I'm looking to find more information on an RNZAF family member who flew for 214 Squadron and was killed in 1944. Can you help or suggest where to look?

We have his name, Service No. and some details on what he was doing etc. from the RNZAF Museum in Christchurch, New Zealand, but would like to see if anything else can be uncovered.

[Colin James Ashworth of Rangiora, New Zealand ... a Flight Sergeant RNZAF, 427492, Pilot ...](#) was the cousin of my maternal Grandfather. My Grandfather's brother also served at the end of World War Two with the RNZAF in the Pacific.

Colin was born on 6 July 1922 at Rangiora, Canterbury, New Zealand, the son of Abram Ashworth (3.8.1894-5.6.1970) and Jessie Mitchell Ashworth (died 23.12.1968, aged 70/71, nee McGowan) of Sefton, North Canterbury, New Zealand; married 16.6.1920).



Flt/Sgt. C. J. Ashworth, of Rangiora, killed on active service.

Abram Ashworth had served as a Lance Corporal with C Squadron of the Canterbury Mounted Rifles in the NZEF during WWI and was awarded the Military Medal – occupation listed as Farmer (sheep – 5600 as of 1915). His father was James Ashworth, Harleston, Sefton, North Canterbury. Abram left New Zealand for Egypt early January 1916.

Colin received some schooling at St Andrews College, Christchurch, New Zealand.

Knowledge passed down from Family

Remembrance of Flt/Sgt Colin Ashworth is noted on Sefton and Rangiora Memorials. I have also identified four other Memorials where he is mentioned.

A memory of family member named Joyce? is that Colin was killed in an accident involving a Wellington bomber during late World War Two, which was an accident and not enemy action.

Known information from Web and RNZAF Museum Book Collection

Colin Ashworth died Thursday 16 November 1944, aged 22.
Buried Cambridge City Cemetery – Grave 15351.

Colin was a member of RAF 100 (Bomber Support) Group, 214 (Federated Malay States) Squadron. 214 Squadron was commanded at the time of the crash by Wing Commander D. D. Rogers, who took command on 26 August 1944.

The Squadron previously flew Vickers Wellington Medium bombers and Short Stirling Heavy Bombers as part of Bomber Command.

In January 1944, 214 Squadron converted from bombing to countermeasures using Fortress Mk2 and Mk3 (and Short Stirling already in use by Squadron?)

Fatal flight was Colin's second Fortress Operation.

17 Fortresses are known to have been lost during the war, with a total of 192 RCM Raids in Fortresses during 1944-1945. 214 Squadron also flew B24 Liberators after the end of 1944, but we remain unsure whether these were used for countermeasures or as part of the Bomber Force.

The aircraft involved in the crash was an RAF Boeing B17 Fortress Mk3, BU-J. Serial HB787. The colour scheme was likely all black for lower surfaces with a lighter camouflage on upper surfaces, with the RAF roundel on sides and wings and BU-J identification. There was no lower ball turret. As a Mk3 it had a chin bulge for Radar. This aircraft may have previously been identified as BU-S and may even have been involved in a crash-landing in mid to late 1943, repaired, then at some time transferred to 214 Squadron. I have been unable to confirm this or identify the previous user if so.

This aircraft left RAF Oulton on 15 November 1944 at 23.30hrs. It crashed in Twyford, England, approximately one mile south-west of RAF Foulsham, Norfolk, at 04.40hrs on 16 November 1944, burning out while attempting to land. Radio Countermeasures had been in support of raids on Germany. It was approximately a five-hour flight, likely not to have been active over Germany, but involved in jamming over the English Channel or France.

It seems that when the aircraft was returning to Norfolk it was in poor weather, resulting it being diverted to RAF Foulsham. On approach at 04.36hrs cloud was down to 100ft. A faulty radio transmitter had not forewarned of a crosswind. HB787 struck the ground several miles south-west of the airfield, bounced, and climbed into the cloud where it stalled and crashed into a wheat stubble field farmed by Mr Seaman of Twyford. All ten-man crew died – three RNZAF airmen being buried at Cambridge, with the last being transported to Northern Ireland.

Foulsham had at some stage in 1944 been fitted with a FIDO system (Fog Investigation and Dispersal Operation) to disperse fog. Basically, this involved the burning lines of fuel down either side of the runway to create heat to clear the fog. This may have been helpful in marking the runway in poor visibility?

Other RNZAF crew on flight

F/S Earnest Robert Armstrong 427084: Wireless Operator, 20yrs, Geraldine, New Zealand

F/S Terence Francis McCormack 429183: Air Gunner, 24yrs, Hastings, New Zealand

F/S Alexander McLaughlin 422972, Air Gunner, 27yrs, Irish?

Four other crew comprised of two RAF and four RCAF.

We would like to identify and find further information on the following:

1. Any early information about Colin Ashworth. I managed to find his birth date through a family researcher, and that he attended St Andrews College in Christchurch, which I also attended briefly. I intend to research these channels further. I also identified his father was a WWI NZEF Veteran.
2. Any information on his Military Training. I have a huge gap here, no information from the time he left school until the time he was killed. I have been told by family he flew Wellingtons for some time but cannot confirm this. Logic says if he flew Wellingtons, he likely flew Stirlings, but he possibly transferred into the Squadron and did not progress through with 214. Where was he trained? Did he serve with other Units before 214?
3. There is only one photo I found of Colin on the internet from a death notice in a newspaper. Does anyone have a source of that photograph?

4. Any information of other members of the crew. We identified four RNZAF - one from Northern Ireland, four RCAF and two RAF. Only one of the crew (RCAF) has no job/position identified and I think he was likely overseeing electronics on the flight.
5. Crew layout of the plane. I note there were two Navigators. Where were they positioned? Also, only one Pilot? Did the Engineer sit in to help?
6. What the likely target would have been for bombers on that night (15/16 November 1944). Given the flight was only about 5 hours, I would guess they only went as far as France or the low countries on that flight, but the actual target may have been further away.
7. Any information about 214 Squadron or 100 Group that would be of interest, together with airfield photos, stories, historic information, etc.

Information we have provided was found:

'For Your Tomorrow', copy at Wigram.

International Bomber Command Centre website.

www.214squadron.org.uk

General interest searches.

223 Squadron, from 23 August 1944, also flew the same B17 aircraft in the same role for 100 Group until converting to an all B24 Squadron. 223 Squadron was disbanded on 29 July 1945. Possibly some information, missions, training, etc, crossed between the two Squadrons?

Two other Ashworths have been identified on the Wigram Airforce Museum Memorial Wall which do not appear to be related.

Any information or leads would be greatly appreciated.

Many thanks,

Cymon

Cymon Hewitt

Christchurch, New Zealand.

D6motorsport@hotmail.com

NOTE: We all understand what it means to start out on a journey back through Time, trying to find out about a family member, particularly his/her experiences in wartime and what became of them. There are books which offer information about airfields and Squadrons, but as those of us who have made this journey can testify, it is information about individuals which becomes hardest to find. I would therefore urge anyone who feels they can signpost this writer in a direction which might prove helpful, or may know something they might find of interest, please don't hesitate in making contact. Your help and support in this will be truly valued.

Hi Janine,

You've published another fascinating magazine (Autumn/Winter) including a beautiful piece from Bob Burrows on West Raynham. This magazine you publish must take so much of your time, but I find it fascinating reading all the stories and superb photos. I would love our Group to do a piece for it.

We're quite a small gathering with only four of us on RAF West Raynham Association Committee, but I'm always busy doing something for the Group to keep it all ticking over. I will ask older members if they would like to send their history to you and will keep you up to date with what we are doing.

However, I believe there is some confusion in relation to West Raynham Memorial which I would like to clear up.

The main Memorial is very well looked after indeed, pictured below –



Courtesy: Stuart Borlase 2016

It is to this main West Raynham Memorial where we go to lay a wreath. But it is the Memorial at Brisley created in memory of three lads killed after their aircraft crashed, which remains neglected and makes us very sad. Our Association only has the one Memorial at West Raynham. The other doesn't belong to us but has significance. My husband and I came across it on the internet and decided to visit with a wreath the same weekend we were at West Raynham. Living in Southampton means we need to make weekend trips, and it's just sad to discover this other Memorial dedicated to brave young men who also served at RAF West Raynham left in desperate need of regular upkeep and attention:



Courtesy: Donna Cunningham, West Raynham Association

We laid the blue centre wreath as a mark of respect for these boys, and will continue to do so, pulling up weeds before we leave. But then there's not a lot we can do in the time available to us.

The story behind this Memorial relates to a Bristol Blenheim Mk IV V5455, on 9 June 1942.

The aircraft crashed at Brisley, six miles SSE of Fakenham, and burst into flames. Prior to crashing there was an engine failure which caused the crash. The crew jettisoned their bomb load and informed Base they were returning because of an emergency. This Bristol Blenheim and her crew took part in 'Operation Millennium' – the first RAF 'Thousand Bomber Raid' on Cologne.

Based at RAF West Raynham, their crew comprised of:

- Pilot Officer John Stuart Graham buried in St Mary's Churchyard, East Raynham,
- Observer Sgt Michael Henry Beaufoy buried in Weymouth Crematorium,
- Wireless Operator/Air Gunner Sgt Leslie Frederick Harrowell buried at Watford Cemetery.

They appear to have been on an Intruder mission and were on route when the emergency occurred. The outcome was the three crew members were killed as the aircraft crashed and ultimately was written off, damaged beyond repair.

Donna Cunningham

donna.cunningham65@googlemail.com

Sources:

<https://aviation-safety.net/wikibase/192013>

<https://www.tracesofwar.com/sights/21825/Memorial-Crash-Blenheim-V5455.htm>

<http://www.waymarking.com/waymarks/WMQQTDBristolBlenheimIvV5455114SqnCrash9June1942BrisleyNorfolk>

Bomber Command Losses 1942

CWGC

SHARED EXPERIENCES

AN AIRMAN'S JOURNEY TO RAF WEST RAYNHAM

by Paul Lloyd

Chair: RAF West Raynham Association

I joined the RAF in May 1971 and did my basic training with many others at RAF Swinderby, near Lincoln. We passed out and were posted to RAF Hereford for trade training. My trade was 'Supply'. I passed out from there as a Leading Aircraftman. Like most of us, we longed to be in the real RAF, training was not real to us.

We looked on the Postings Board to see where our Unit was to be. I wanted London and the south-east, and I saw RAF West Raynham. I was to go with Bernie Tompkin with whom I did my training. Where the hell was West Raynham? We asked our Corporal. *'Norfolk, I think,'* he said. *'They've got Harriers there, I think.'*

After a brief spot of Leave, Bernie and I got off the train at Kings Lynn one dark raining Monday evening and walked across to the bus station to ask one of the staff when was the next bus to West Raynham. He checked his timetable. Pulled on his pipe. *'Wednesday'*. Eventually, we rang the Guard Room, explained who we were, and they sent a car to pick us up.

We settled in at Transit Block, before being given a permanent room next day. Block 100, ten-man rooms. We went up to the grandly titled *'Supply and Movement Squadron'*, where I was to work for the next four and a half years.

I was given a job in SCAF (*Supply, Control and Accounting Flight*) consolidating forms and filing them away. I lost the will to live! Eventually, when they discovered I was useless at this, I was moved to R&D (*Receipts & Dispatch*) known as the *'Ramp'*. One of the highlights of my first few months were the trips to RAF Germany with Bloodhound Missiles. My Corporal asked if I fancied a *'Jolly'* to Germany? Report to work at silly-o'clock. We pushed a couple of Bloodhounds on to a low loader, travelled for what seemed like hours to RAF Marham, pushed the missiles onto a Short Belfast ([my photo above: RAFM Cosford](#)) and took off for Wildenrath. We pushed the serviced Bloodhounds off, old ones back on, and legged it to Duty Free whilst the Belfast was re-fuelled. A great Adventure for a 20-year-old on his first Station!! I was to do this several times over the years when West Raynham became a flying Station. Never flew in a Belfast again. Transport used was the Hercules.



28 January 1972. This was the date my real RAF Service started, and West Raynham became a flying Station. Two Squadrons of English Electric Canberras arrived, Numbers 85 and 100 Squadrons. [100 to Number 1 Hanger, see photo.](#)

Number 85 to Number 2 Hanger. No 45 Squadron with Hawker Hunters were at the Station temporarily in June 1972.

I had many jobs on the Station during my time, Petrol, Oils and Lubricants (POL) being one. We looked after the Bulk Fuel Installations (BFIs) now demolished, which stored AVTUR fuel for the jet aircraft. Worked on the Bloodhound Support Unit (BHSU) later 85 Squadron Forward Supply, which delivered spares all around the Station. After the Station closed for flying in February 1976, the Canberras moved to Marham. I was involved with packing all the spares up for dispatch to Marham.

Sadly, although I didn't think it at the time, West Raynham and I parted company. I was posted to 16MU Stafford. When I think back over those years, I remember a happy Station, made many good friends and if I had my time again, I would like my time at West Raynham again!

* * * *

THE ROAD TO WAR & THE WAR YEARS

RAF West Raynham was one of the expansion airfields built to counter the threat of another continental war. Following the Survey, on 29 October, the Air Ministry confirmed it would take 346 acres of Packsfield Farm. Another 86 acres were also required of Kipton Ash Farm (owned by Weasenham Farms Ltd) making a total of 432 acres. The cost of acquiring the land and making it ready for use was £26,500. Work started in late 1936 and by 1937, foundations for most buildings were in place. Further land was acquired around this time.

The work to build the Station moved quickly. 4 Hangers were built, with a 5th to be built later but abandoned; domestic buildings, Sick Quarters, HQ Buildings, Accommodation Blocks, Messes and other buildings considered essential to the Station were erected. Although despite this frantic work, the Station was not completed when it opened on 23 March 1939, and an Air Ministry Order decreed that Station Headquarters would open on 5th April, with Group Captain A.S. Maskell as the first Station Commander. The airfield was not suitable for aircraft until 5 May. However, bombs and pyrotechnics had been arriving by the trainload via East Rudham Station.

101 and 90 Squadrons arrived from Bicester on 9 and 11 May, flying Bristol Blenheims Mk1 and Mk IV bombers. They started operational flying over France in July. Hawker Hurricanes of 213 Squadron were deployed at West Raynham for a time from Wittering, to counter threat of enemy action from the Wash.

On 28 May 1940, a new Station Commander was appointed: Group Captain Basic Embrey. However, during his takeover of the Station, he flew a mission over France on 27 May and was shot down but returned to England later in the war. Missions continued against shipping during the winter of 1940/41.

West Raynham was also the target of enemy action.

The Station was attacked several times during the War. On 10 July 1940, a single enemy aircraft dropped 21 bombs of varying sizes on the Station. One hit No.1 Hanger, destroying a portion of the roof. Three Avro Ansons and one Gloster Gladiator were burnt out. Massingham and West Raynham were bombed out later in the year, killing RAF and Army personnel. There were many other attacks on the Station. One on the night of 7/8 May 1941 when Fakenham was bombed in mistake for the Station. Late July that same year, a Do17 (similar to one raised from the English Channel recently) dropped three 500lb bombs near to No.4 Hanger, just missing No.1 Bulk Fuel

Installation. No damage or casualties ensued. The photo, right, shows damage to No.1 Hanger still visible today.

Many different aircraft flew from West Raynham during the war years. The B17 Fortress – *yes, we had them first!* – plus the Wooden Wonder De Havilland Mosquito, the B25 Mitchell, Lockheed Ventura, the Douglas Boston. No.2 Hanger saw the assembly of gliders, based at Massingham and used in the Normandy Invasion; Lysanders, Martinets and Beaufighters were among aircraft seen at West Raynham.



The Station closed in May 1943, reopening later to allow for the construction of concrete runways replacing the grass landing strip.

The latter years of the War saw DH Mosquitoes of 141 and 239 Squadrons fitted with Airborne Interception (AI) to support RAF bombers to seek and destroy enemy night fighters. This was fairly successful, until the Germans realised the RAF was homing onto their Radar – the Germans simply switched it off when not needed. Other later marks of Mosquito used AI with great success.

At the end of the War, West Raynham personnel flew from North Creak in Halifax bombers to see the destruction of enemy cities.

This ended the involvement of RAF West Raynham in the Second World War.

* * * *

CENTRAL FIGHTER ESTABLISHMENT & THE KESTREL

The Post War Years at RAF West Raynham saw a flurry of activity. Whilst other airfields were being shut as surplus to operational needs, West Raynham was expanding to meet new challenges. One of these was the formation of the Central Fighter Establishment, by Air Commodore R. L. R. 'Batchy' Atcherley. Some of you living in the old OMQs will recognise the name.

By 28 September 1946, the CFE pool of aircraft was huge, with over 170 aircraft of different types moving to West Raynham, including 746 Squadron Naval Night Fighter Development Unit. There were also several former enemy aircraft, including a Junkers 88, Messerschmitt 262 and Messerschmitt BF110. A captured [Messerschmitt Bf109G](#) had visited West Raynham during the war years. This is [now currently at the RAFM Cosford](#), pictured right.



Notable events in 1947 was the Opening of the new Control Tower and laying PSP hard standings outside the hangars, replacing churned-up grass and winter mud.

By 1948, the obsolete wartime aircraft were being replaced by more modern aircraft such as the DH Vampire and Meteor. On 25 May 1948, the Second Tactical Convention took place at West Raynham, which attracted 149 visiting aircraft. The considerable interest was understandable for

the flying display which included demonstrations by the DH108, Attacker, Balliol, SR 53 jet flying boat and the Vampire V. There were also formation acrobatic displays by Meteor and Vampire teams from Coltishall and Odiham respectively. A live ejection over the airfield from the Martin Baker tests Meteor had the audience spellbound.

Many aircraft visited West Raynham during the Post War Years. A Boing Washington from 57 Squadron visited. The Washington was the RAF version of the mighty B29 bomber, which dropped atomic weapons on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Other aircraft included the USAF F-86 Sabre; AVRO-Canada CF-100s; Hawker Swifts and Hunters and Supermarine Attackers to name just a few.

The [Gloster Javelin](#) with No.85 Squadron arrived on 29 August 1960, from West Malling. An example [remained on the Station as Gate-Guardian](#) before being scrapped when the Station closed, [seen right](#). When the CFE left for Binbrook in 1962, its departure ended Fighter tactic and development at West Raynham.



One of the most exciting phases of the history of West Raynham came in 1964 when the Station was to be used to evaluate the Hawker P1127, later Kestrel. Aircraft deliveries to the Kestrel Evaluation Squadron began on 8 February 1965 and a total of eleven were operated during the trials. However, one of these, XS696 ground-looped and veered sideways off the runway during take-off on 1 April. The port outrigger snapped off when the aircraft left the runway and the aircraft caught fire. As a result of the accident, XS696 was written off for component recovery. While in a second accident on 13 October, XS689 was damaged and taken by road to Hawker's Kingston-upon-Thames factory for repair.



The aircraft (left), XS695, is currently at the [RAFM Cosford](#), on display in the Test Flight Hanger.

The Kestrel went on to be the highly successful Harrier, sadly no longer in RAF Service.

Before closing this Section, I think it is worth mentioning two Events involving West Raynham, one directly, one indirectly.

On 18 March 1967, an Event occurred which plunged the Nation into a pollution catastrophe and West Raynham's Hunters into the firing line. The Torrey Canyon, a super-tanker carrying over 60,000 tons of crude oil from the Middle East, smashed into the Seven Stones reef off Land's End. The first napalm strike from West Raynham since May 1945 was mounted by 1 Squadron on 29 March, led by Flt Lt Alan Pollock, when three aircraft took off and flew by way of the English Channel to Land's End. One set of drop tanks failed to ignite, but the remaining two pairs started small fires which soon went out. More napalm strikes were flown that afternoon, preceded by two Hunters firing salvoes of twelve three-inch rockets to open up the ship's tanks.

The second Event became known as the Tower Bridge Incident.

On the 50th Anniversary of the RAF, Flt Lt Pollock was returning to West Raynham from Tangmere when he decided to salute the RAF Memorial on the Embankment by leaving formation and flying over, wagging his wings. He went a little too far and flew under the upper span of Tower Bridge. He was grounded permanently.



Courtesy: The Telegraph, 5 April 1968 – RAF 50th Anniversary

* * * *

BLOODHOUNDS, CANBERRAS, & FINAL CLOSURE

Anyone driving through the back roads, say Hellhoughton to Weasenham, couldn't help but notice the rows of Bloodhound Missiles pointing skywards. Why were they here?

On 1 September 1965, 41 Squadron formed at West Raynham to equip with the Bloodhound Missile. A secure compound was built, and all paraphernalia associated with a new Squadron was constructed or transferred to the now named BHSU (Bloodhound Support Unit), including mobile Radar Units. 41 Squadron was only to be at West Raynham until it was disbanded on 18 September 1970. But this was not the end of the Bloodhound.

This valuable asset came under the command of RAF Germany in October 1971, supporting 25 Squadron. The Bloodhound Training School moved from Watton to North Coates, then to West Raynham. West Raynham supported several Units, notably Aberporth where live firing took place. Many people posted to West Raynham at the time were familiar with the missile turnaround with RAFG. Serviced missiles were flown to Germany from West Raynham or Marham before West Raynham opened to flying again, bringing back missiles to be serviced at West Raynham. It was a great day out for some of us.



Canberras at West Raynham, 1972

June 1971 saw the International NATO Helicopter Rescue Meet, when NATO helicopters met up in a competition won by the Royal Navy. Teams from Belgium, Norway, Netherlands, Denmark, Germany, the UK and the USAF took part.

The Station re-opened for full-time flying on 28 January 1972, when No. 85 Squadron with

Canberras moved to West Raynham from Binbrook ([see photo previous page](#)). A few days later, No.100 Squadron reformed, taking aircraft and personnel from a large and unwieldy 85 Squadron. Target-towing and other duties were undertaken by these Squadrons. One of these duties, which springs happily to mind, was Practice Interceptions.

I was lucky enough to be given the opportunity to go on a flight with 85 Squadron on a PI. The aircraft took off, flew low over the North Sea, then climbed as it returned to the English coastline. We were picked up on Radar. Fighters from Coltishall and other Stations, including Americans, were scrambled to see who was entering British airspace. You looked out of the window of the Canberra and two fully armed Lightnings were alongside. A little scary!

No. 45 Squadron reformed at West Raynham on 1 August 1972 with 9 Hunters, although they had been on the Station since June of that year. They moved to Wittering in September 1972.

Changes were made at the end of 1975, when the BHSU was disbanded. 85 Squadron changed role and took over the Missile duties at West Raynham. 100 Squadron moved to Marham in January 1976. This ended operation flying at RAF West Raynham. Bloodhounds in various guises and flights were to remain at West Raynham until the Missiles were no longer needed. 85 Squadron was disbanded, and the missiles scrapped.

Already responsible for area missile defence of the east coast with Bloodhounds, the Station was also to become the centre for training the RAF's British Aerospace Rapier Force, and that part of the Rapier Force dedicated to the defence of USAF Bases in the UK.

The first of these Units to form was the Headquarters, 6 Wing RAF Regiment. HQ 6 Wing reformed at West Raynham on 1 July 1983 as Headquarters of the USAF Rapier Force. The Wing began preparations for the introduction of the Rapier to the U.S. Inventory in a unique arrangement where the USAF procured the hardware and spares, whilst the RAF provided agreed levels of manpower.



No. 66 Squadron, RAF Regiment, the first of three Squadrons to come under the command of 6 Wing, formed at West Raynham on 3 November 1983. [The USAF-funded Air Defence Tactical Training Theatre is shown above.](#)

RAF West Raynham finally closed in September 1994 but was designated a Reserve Site and remained so until September 2004 before being sold two years later.

The old West Raynham Station sign shown below is currently at Flixton Museum.

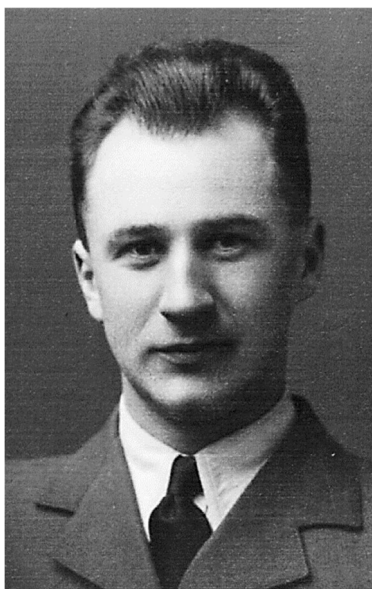


SHARED EXPERIENCES

Frantic 7 – The Story of Two Flags

by **Adrian (Żółkowski)-O'dell**

Chair: Norfolk Polish Heritage Group



Father: Stefan Żółkowski

In 1940, my mother, Winifred Ward, a 27-year-old nurse at Blackburn hospital met my father, Stefan Żółkowski aged 30, on the dance floor at the Winter Gardens Ballroom in Blackpool = Flight Lieutenant and Technical Instructor in the Polish Air Force: 307 Lwów Night-Fighter Squadron.;

Earlier that year, he had arrived in Glasgow after a ten-month journey following his escape from Warsaw a few days after the German invasion which started World War II in September 1939.

During his 9,000 mile journey through south-east Europe, the Middle East, North Africa and France, he and small groups of fellow airmen suffered attack by Luftwaffe planes, feared being captured, endured grim living conditions, bureaucratic frustration and intense boredom while not knowing what had happened to his loved ones back in Poland.

Some years later, after they had married and raised a family, making their life together in Norfolk, England, my mother and father sat down and created a diary of that arduous journey based on his memories, substantiated by documentary evidence such as Visas, embarkation papers, Military permits, certificates and photographs.

In September 2019, 80 years to the day when he left Warsaw, my wife Jane and I set off from Poland's capital city to retrace the route of his odyssey. The intention was to pay tribute to the sacrifices he made when leaving his family and homeland behind to continue the struggle from Britain against Nazi oppression.

Now in our seventies, we also felt that this was the opportune time to replicate the journey my father made so that we might experience and understand the cultures, landscapes and peoples in the nations he visited. We wanted to commune with individuals and learn about present conditions and the recent and more ancient histories of those countries and regions. We also wanted to produce a Record in film, audio and blog format which we might pass on to our family and conserve in the permanent collection of Norfolk Polish Heritage material held in the Norfolk Record Office.

On 12th October 2019, Jane and I took to the floor of the Winter Gardens Ballroom as a finale to the re-creation of my father's endeavour. During our eight-week adventure, we will have visited 21 countries, driven 8,800 miles, had conversations with people from 57 different nations, taken 7 flights, sailed on four ships or ferries, stayed with three old friends, ridden on two trains and walked or carried baggage for miles. We do acknowledge and regret the extent of the carbon-footprint we have made but do feel that driving fuel-efficient cars such as Jane's bijou petrol-engine Nissan Micra, a hybrid and two other small-engine rental cars, lessened the impact.

The most emotive moments have been when we re-enacted episodes from Stefan's diary. These included standing on the rain-washed cobbles at Glasgow Docks where he first landed in Britain,

gazing across the sun-drenched port at Casablanca, Morocco where he set sail for what he thought would be England and filling a small bag with sand from the beach at Argelès-sur-Mer, south-west France, where he slept on the dunes before embarking on a fishing trawler to Algeria and then Morocco.

We took part in the high drama of a procession with 40,000 pilgrims at Lourdes which he visited during his sojourn in France, six years after St Bernadette was canonized. In France, we also discovered and stood by the buildings in which he worked in Lyon and Limoges and strolled in the densely wooded Park where he camped in Beirut. In Constanta, Romania, we passed through the gate he used to board the '*MS Transilvania*' to cross the Black Sea away from the German and Russian occupiers. Close to his home-town of Siedice, in eastern Poland, which burned as he travelled through it from Warsaw, I crouched in a ditch near where he sheltered by the railway line as Stuka dive-bombers destroyed the train in which he and his comrades were travelling.

What a journey for him ... and what a privilege for us to walk in his footsteps, eighty years later!

As we head for home, the real voyage of discovery has not only been seeking new landscapes and experiences, but in having new eyes to see them.

Adrian (Żółkowski)-O'dell
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+44 (0)1362 637033/ 07902 280087

* * * *

SECOND AIR DIVISION USAAF MEMORIAL LIBRARY

The Forum – Millennium Library – Norwich

Thursday 28th November 2019 at 19.00

NOTE FROM EDITOR: News of the above Event came too late to include in the Autumn/Winter 2019 magazine, but I was able to let people living in Norfolk know and am hoping were able to attend. The Event welcomed representatives of the Polska Fundacja Narodowa (Polish National Foundation) from Warsaw to The Forum.

'*Frantic 7 – The Story of Two Flags*' was the subject of the evening, with the fascinating and dramatic account of how USAAF planes air-dropped arms and supplies to Polish insurgents fighting in the calamitous 63-day Warsaw Uprising of 1944 against German forces. 250,000 Poles lost their lives during the fighting and Warsaw was razed to the ground.

Norfolk has a strong connection with the Frantic 7 missions as B-17 Flying Fortress bombers from Thorpe Abbotts Air Base took part. In recognition, members of the 100th Bomb Group Memorial Museum also attended in WWII USAAF uniforms to display archive materials. The evening included a Presentation with films, a Talk, and recorded interviews with aircrews who flew on those missions 75 years ago.

* * * *

Adrian was kind enough to share a brief summary of his recent journey taken with his wife in the footsteps of his father and his story. A map of their routes they took follow. He is also now starting work on production of a film about his Polish father's escape journey.

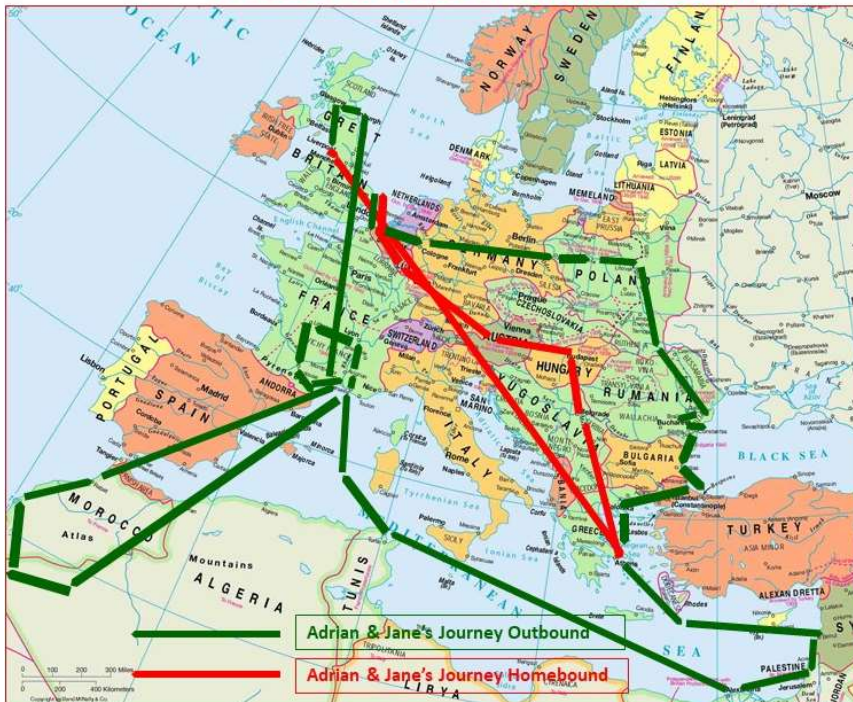
STEFAN'S JOURNEY (POLAND - BRITAIN) 1939-1940



STEFAN'S ROUTE 1939-1940

6th September 1939
 Depart Warsaw then via
 Siedlce (Poland)
 Breść (Poland)
 Zaleszczyki (Poland)
 Łuck (Romania)
 Suszawa (Romania) 19th September 1939
 Focsani (Romania)
 Odobesti (Romania)
 Galati (Romania)
 Tulcea (Romania)
 Bucharest (Romania)
 Babadag (Romania)
 Constanta (Romania) 9th November 1939
 Istanbul (Turkey)
 Athens (Greece)
 Beirut (Lebanon) 13th November 1939
 Jaffa (Palestine)
 Alexandria (Egypt)
 Marseille (France) 21st November 1939
 Lyon (France)
 Bron (France)
 Limoges (France) 5th March 1940
 Lourdes (France)
 Toulouse (France)
 Port Vendres (France) 24th June 1940
 Oran (Algeria)
 Marrakech (Morocco)
 Casablanca (Morocco) 2nd July 1940
 Glasgow (Scotland) 10th July 1940
 Blackpool (England)
 14,900 Km - 9 Countries - 307 Days

ADRIAN & JANE'S JOURNEY 2019

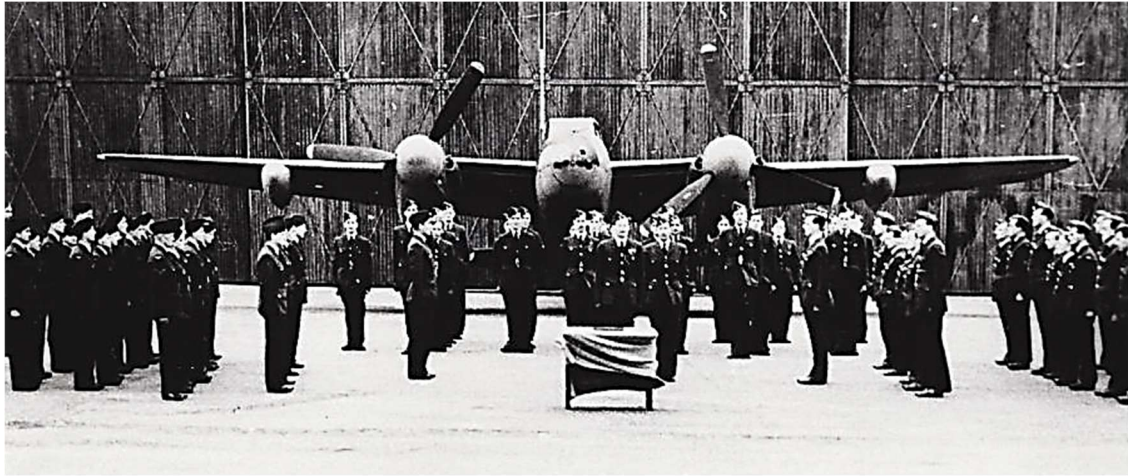


Adrian & Jane's Itinerary 2019

N Tuddenham-France-Belgium-Cologne (Germany) 30/08 - 01/09
 Cologne-Poznan (Poland) 01/09 - 02/09
 Poznan-Warsaw (Poland) 02/09 - 04/09
 Warsaw-Siedlce-Grezow-Tremboke-Korczew (Poland) 04 - 07/09
 Korczew-Chernivtsi (Ukraine) 07/09 - 08/09
 Chernivtsi-Tulcea (Romania) 08/09 - 09/09
 Tulcea-Bucharest (Romania) 09/09 - 11/09
 Bucharest-Constanta (Romania) 11/09 - 13/09
 Constanta-Burgas (Bulgaria) 13/09 - 14/09
 Burgas-Istanbul (Turkey) 14/09 - 16/09
 Istanbul-Alexandroupoli (Greece) 16/09 - 17/09
 Alexandroupoli-Thessaloniki (Greece) 17/09 - 18/09
 Thessaloniki-Lamia (Greece) 18/09 - 19/09
 Lamia-Athens (Greece) 19/09 - 21/09
 Athens-Beirut (Lebanon) 21/09 - 24/09
 Beirut-Cairo-Alexandria (Egypt) 24/09 - 25/09
 Alexandria-Cairo (Egypt) 25/09 - 28/09
 Cairo-Tunis (Tunisia) 28/09 - 30/09
 Tunis-Marseille (France) 30/09 - 30/09
 Marseille-Flassan sur Issole (France) 30/09 - 01/10
 Flassan sur Issole-Bron-Lyon (France) 01/10 - 02/10
 Lyon-Limoges (France) 02/10 - 03/10
 Limoges-Toulouse-Lourdes (France) 03/10 - 04/10
 Lourdes-Carcassonne (France) 04/10 - 05/10
 Carcassonne-Port Vendres (France) 05/10 - 06/10
 Port Vendres-Nimes (France) 06/10 - 07/10
 Nimes-Marseille-Marrakech (Morocco) 07/10 - 09/10
 Marrakech-Casablanca-Rabat (Morocco) 09/10 - 10/10
 Rabat-Marseille (France) 10/10 - 11/10
 Marseille-Edinburgh-Glasgow-Largs (Scotland) 11/10 - 12/10
 Largs-Blackpool (England) 12/10 - 13/10
 Blackpool-Manchester-Athens 13/10 - 14/10
 Athens-Larissa (Greece) 13/10 - 14/10
 Larissa-Skopje (N Macedonia) 14/10 - 16/10
 Skopje-Belgrade (Serbia) 16/10 - 17/10
 Belgrade-Novi Sad - Budapest (Hungary) 17/10 - 18/10
 Budapest-Salzburg (Austria) 18/10 - 19/10
 Salzburg-Stuttgart (Germany) 19/10 - 20/10
 Stuttgart-Luxembourg (Luxembourg) 20/10 - 21/10
 Luxembourg-Le Touquet (France) 21/10 - 22/10
 Le Touquet-Claes to the sea - 22/10 - 23/10
 24,525 Km - 21 Countries - 54 Days

UPCOMING EVENT

Marking 75 Years at Great Massingham by Ed Tyhurst



*169 Squadron receiving 'Hunting Horn' crest, July 1944
Copyright: John Beeching, Veteran: 169 Squadron, Great Massingham*

My name is Ed Tyhurst and I work at Newhaven Fort, a Military Museum set within the walls of a fine Victorian Fortification on the Sussex coast.

Myself and my colleagues are currently in the planning stages of our 75th Anniversary Event for VE-Day: 8 May 2020, which will be a National Bank Holiday.

As part of the celebrations, I plan to organise a Memorial aspect to the day's proceedings remembering the last two Allied planes to crash in Sussex during the war with Germany. Tragically, these two planes, one British, one American, came down (with the loss of all crew) on 6 May 1945, just two days before the German surrender.

The American plane was a C46 Commando Transport, which struck the South Downs next to the Long Man of Wilmington at approximately 18.45 in bad weather. Around three hours earlier, in the same poor weather that persisted over all of Southern England that day (low cloud, rain and fog) a De Havilland Mosquito Mk XIX Night Fighter – MM637 – of 169 Squadron (on an instruments flight practice) struck the South Downs just outside Patcham, Brighton (near Devil's Dyke Road). In the crash, both F/Sgt Douglas P Williams and F/Sgt Kenneth Rhoden were killed.

In trying to find out more about 169 Squadron, I came across your excellent website for the RAF 100 Group Association. Such an incredible story of how they gathered all these Squadrons to fly with the latest Radar sets and ECM equipment, backed up by the night-fighting Mosquitoes!

Not only were these the last two Allied planes to crash in Sussex during the war with Germany, comparing dates and Operation Records of Bomber Command listed in the book: *The Bomber Command Diaries* by Martin Middlebrook and Chris Everitt, Williams and Rhoden's Mosquito may also be the last Bomber Command aircraft lost during the war as the last offensive mission (to Kiel 2/3 May 1945) had been flown three days earlier (during which a 169 Squadron 'Mossie' was lost.

For my planned Commemoration to these young men, I was hoping that somewhere in the archives of RAF 100 Group Association, you may have more information on 169 Squadron activities and personnel; particularly any photos which exist of F/Sgt D P Williams and F/Sgt K Rhoden which could be shared for the Commemoration? I would, of course, credit the Association on the day and in any Press Releases for any information/pictures shared.

This Event may also be something that people from the Association would like to attend, representing RAF 100 Group. Anyone attending would be very welcome.

Please contact me direct for a copy of our Event programme and I look forward to hearing from the Association.

Kind regards,

Ed Tyhurst

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Mosquito Night Fighter of 169 Squadron at Great Massingham, 1944
Courtesy: Peter Gunn

NOTE: Plans remain ongoing for this Event. Anyone interested in attending, or is willing to share wartime experiences and photos, should contact Ed Tyhurst direct. He would welcome hearing from anyone who feels they can help make this day Special.

UPDATE

NORTH CREEKE CONTROL TOWER

by Claire & Nigel



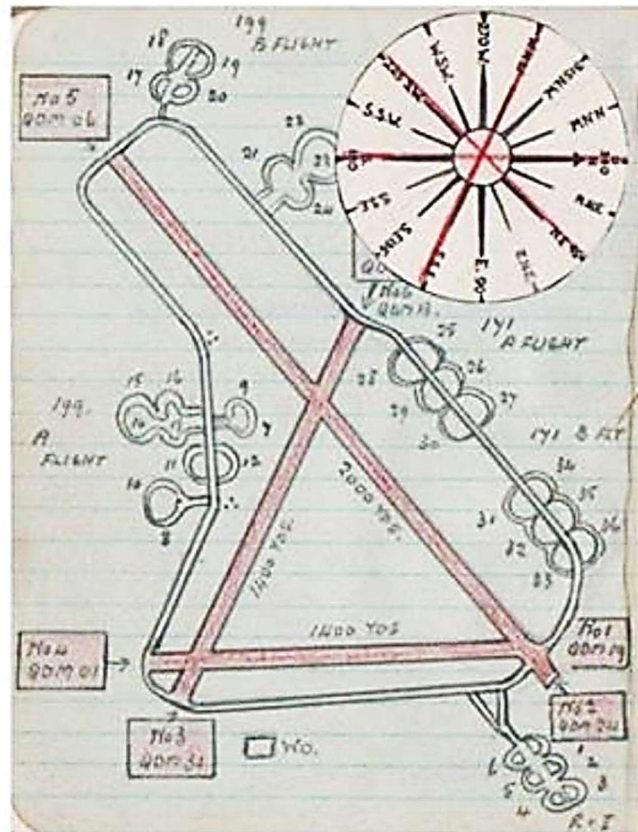
It has been a busy 2019 here, with the Memorial Project going very well and other Projects continuing at Control Tower HQ. We got the north face of the Control Tower re-rendered in March and it is looking fantastic. Being partially closed during this time meant we got a few other jobs in the Tower done too. We were thrilled to be included in [10 of the Best UK B&Bs for Vegetarians and Vegans](#) in *'The Guardian'*!!

On a personal level, we have had some difficult times over the last few weeks. Our son was diagnosed with Testicular Cancer while travelling in Australia. Thankfully, he was able to have an operation there quickly and his only follow-up treatment is close monitoring. The news is very positive now, but while we were waiting for the operation and results it was very fraught. Wonderfully, he is now home with us recuperating well. But his unplanned return meant we had to accelerate plans to renovate the chalet, a project which had been on the back burner for years. Initially it gives him somewhere to live for a few months. The plan is to offer it as a one-bed self-catering holiday let, and we'll let you know more about this as things develop. There may be an opportunity early in 2020 to get involved in a crowdfund to complete the transformation from *'scary chalet'* to *'Halifax Lodge'* – similar to how we funded the Stirling Suite renovations – keep an eye out for better than half price rewards for pledges towards the work.

Meanwhile, please note a couple of dates for your 2020 Diary:

1. 8 February 2020 – Fundraising Airfield Tour

A very special guided tour of the former RAF North Creake Airfield with Nigel Morter with kind permission from both Walsingham and Holkham Estate on which the airfield was first sited. We will be using vehicles to take guests out to various points of interest on the former airfield site. We have 14 places still available for this and one room (Controller's Rest Room – smaller double room with en-suite rainfall shower room £110 per night, minimum 2-night stay). The Tour is £40 per person starting at 10am, finishing at 4pm. Lunch at The Black Lion is not included in the price.



Airfield Plan by Sgt Norman Turnbull –
Caravan Controller at RAF North Creake

* * * *

2. Saturday 1st August 2020 Memorial Dedication Ceremony & Street Party

12 noon – 4pm
Memorial Site (B1105 junction with Edgar Road)

The full programme is still being developed, but please make a note of the date as we hope to see you here to help celebrate the completing of the Memorial and raise a collective glass to all who served at RAF North Creake (apologies for the B&B being already fully booked).

* * * *

TIME TO REMEMBER

Time to Remember is our Project to build a Memorial to those who served at RAF North Creake during the Second World War.

Our fantastic Sculptor Andy Knighton has completed the Stirling aircraft sculpture and is now working on the beautiful curved stand for the Stirling. We love how all this is coming together and aim to have it in situ early Summer 2020, in plenty of time for the Official Dedication Ceremony on 1st August 2020.



Paul Bishop Builders from Wells-next-the-Sea have dug out and filled foundations in readiness for the Sculpture. Paul and his team are doing the ground works for the Memorial site and been giving their labour for free. We are overwhelmed by the generosity of people both near and far.

* * * *

To commemorate Armistice in 2019, we planted oak trees at the Memorial Site. The Roll of Honour walls are almost ready to Commission, then we need to arrange for the rest of the ground works to be done ready to take these metal walls, creating paths around the Sculpture centrepiece.

It really is all coming together.

Planning for the Tour in February and the Dedication Ceremony are also going well. We have had huge support getting this far, but our particular thanks go to Mike

Hillier who has helped us find missing information for the Roll of Honour as well as inviting RAF Dignitaries to the Event in August, and John Pillier who is creating the CAD Documents for the metal Roll of Honour walls.



Planting oak trees at the Memorial Site

Advance notice of this delight coming to Norwich



ART DECO BY THE SEA

9 February - 14 June 2020

£13 | £12 concessions

BOOKING ADVISABLE

ON SALE SOON from 1 December
2019, scva.ac.uk or call 01603
593199 (Monday–Friday, 9am–5pm)

50% off for under 18s, full-time students and Art Fund Members

FREE for Sainsbury Centre Members, UEA and NUA Student Members,

[click here to find out more about becoming a Member](#)

This beautiful and exciting show will include around 120 works including paintings, posters, brochures, drawings, photographs, fashion, furniture, ceramics, glass and textiles, drawn from both public and private collections across the UK.

Curated by Sainsbury Centre Deputy Director Ghislaine Wood.

Image: Septimus Edwin Scott, 'New Brighton and Wallasey', 1923–1947, London Midland and Scottish Railway company. Courtesy National Railway Museum, York

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IN MEMORY

ARTHUR BAXTER REID



Arthur Reid beside a Halifax prior to final operation

EDITOR'S NOTE: I had just finished writing up dear Arthur's story in the Autumn/Winter 2019 magazine, smiling at the thrill he would get on seeing it, when Linda and his son Arthur shared their sad news:

'Arthur Senior has gone Home to Our Father. Very peacefully, he is at rest in the arms of our Lord and with Stan (Forsyth). He slipped away at 12.49 on Saturday 14 September, just short of his 99th birthday in October 2019.'

Following the funeral, Arthur and Linda were kind enough to send me words shared at the Service as a way of expressing that enduring feeling of belonging, and the deep connection we share with one another.

The words of Bob Kemp, Group Commander shared at Arthur's funeral, offers an early insight into Arthur's life and who he became.

TRIBUTE BY BOB KEMP

Uncle Arthur. I would not have known this great man were it not for his great nephew marrying my daughter. It is now my privilege to share some memories of his Military career with you.

He started his Military life in the Home Guard. But that was not exciting enough for young Arthur and he volunteered and was accepted to fly with the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve. During his long life, he was reluctant to speak about his exploits in the air during the dark days of World War Two and maybe only in the last few years were some of his stories told.

Having flown the most demanding and harrowing missions throughout the heat of the war supporting the Bomber offensive, and we will return to this amazing chapter of his life in a moment, Arthur stepped from an Avro Anson in 1945 at the end of the war as a Senior Signals Flight Lieutenant and wrote in his Log Book: *'Posted to Bombay – Marvellous!'* His flying days were

over. Well, they were almost over, but he had to wait a further 72 years for his next flight and that was in a Spitfire. Yes, at the grand age of 96, Arthur took to the air from Cumbernauld Airport in that iconic fighter of World War Two and he had the time of his life.

But there were moments when Arthur was not having the time of his life.

He joined the Royal Air Force in early 1941 and trained as a Wireless Operator and Air Gunner known in the business as a WOPAG. But unlike most other WOPAGs, in Bomber Command Arthur was posted after training to 192 Squadron under RAF 100 Group, a Squadron formed to carry out 'Special Duties'. Arthur's home was at **192** Morningside Road in Edinburgh and he felt comfortable joining **192** Squadron. He felt this was a good omen.

The Squadron then comprised of several aircraft, including Wellingtons, Halifaxes and Mosquitoes. The task of this very clandestine Squadron was the delivery of Radar Countermeasures in support of the Allies. Other tasks involved carrying a civilian German Speaker in the aircraft who would operate from behind a black curtain hidden from the rest of the crew while he seduced Luftwaffe fighters away from the main Bomber force by imitating their Radar Controller in their own language. In all these missions, Arthur and his crew never met the German Speaker who would board the aircraft after all the crew were in position and leave before the crew exited.

Using highly classified equipment, Arthur would search for and identify German Radars on ships, aircraft and even submarines and jam them. His role in the aircraft was key to the whole operation and even he admits that, most of the time, missions he flew from Foulsham in Norfolk were so secret he had no clear idea as to their real purpose.

Arthur would operate equipment such as the Airborne Cigar, known as the 'ABC' and 'Airborne Grocer'. Bearing in mind Arthur was with 192 Squadron, the number of his home address in Morningside Road, and that he was using 'Airborne Grocer' and he was a Grocer before he joined up ... he felt he was made for the job!

It was with this advanced jamming equipment he would deny the enemy use of their Radars and radios. This was a cat and mouse game in which enemy Controllers were continually changing frequencies to avoid being jammed requiring great skill on Arthur's behalf to follow them. It was a risky business for several reasons. These missions invariably required Arthur and his crew to fly close to or over hostile territory for considerable periods. 192 Squadron would operate between Norway in the north, and the Bay of Biscay in the south. These Special Operations were top secret, far more than those of the main bomber crews who would write in their Logbooks details of their attacked targets. Most missions in Arthur's Logbook simply read '*Cross Country*' in typical understatement, as if he was out on a picnic on a very fine day! These clandestine missions were often carried out at night, searching for and jamming Radars that were controlling the Luftwaffe fighters, themselves creating havoc with our main bomber force.

One of Arthur's first missions on 192 Squadron was in support of a '*1,000 Bomber Raid*' on Cologne. They lost 46 aircraft and 300 airmen that night alone. They would have lost more had it not been for Arthur and his crew jamming crucial radio frequencies.

These '*Special Duty*' missions attracted attention from the enemy as powerful jammers they were using often highlighted their own position and Luftwaffe fighters would be directed towards them. The term '*Hammer the Jammer*' was well known, but Arthur survived 34 of these hugely dangerous missions. He was involved in one complex operation working closely with the Royal Navy, when a German submarine was disabled in the Bay of Biscay and in so doing, a most valuable Enigma code machine was captured. This was a huge asset to the Allies that arguably shortened the war,

although Arthur didn't know it at the time. It was recognised after the war that, were it not for the stoic, dedicated and skilled operations of men in 100 Group of which 192 Squadron was a key element, 1,000 more of our bombers and 7,000 aircrew would have been lost.

Excerpts from Arthur's Logbook highlight the stressful moments characteristically with just one or two words inserted in pencil. After a daring and stretched mission of 8 hours 40 minutes to the Bay of Biscay, Arthur had pencilled '*engine*' in his Logbook. On the lengthy return flight, one of the Wellington's engines just ran out of oil. On another operational mission, he nonchalantly wrote in his Logbook: '*landed with the main spar cracked*'.

Unbelievable!!

There is no doubt Arthur was fortunate to survive.

Carrying out an air test at Lossiemouth in the early days, the aircraft overshot the runway and caught fire. The pilot escaped through his cockpit hatch leaving Arthur to make his own way out of the burning machine. On another occasion, he was grounded by the doctor for a few days with conjunctivitis. The crew he would have flown with the next day did not return!

At the end of the war, Arthur was awarded the 39-45 Star, the Aircrew Europe Medal, the Bomber Command Clasp, the Atlantic Star, the 39-45 Defence Medal, the Italy Star, the War Medal and the magnificent Legion d'Honneur – France's highest Order for Military activities (seen right).



Arthur's Logbook indicates between April 42 and June 45 he flew no less than 656 hours and he survived.

After his massive contribution to victory, he was posted to Ceylon via Bombay to set up a Wireless Communications Unit at a place called Kandy. This Unit assisted in bringing home all Far East members of our Armed Forces and finally Arthur was demobbed in 1946. Like many of his comrades, Arthur rarely spoke about his experiences during the war, but later in his life, he volunteered once again, this time to help the RAF Benevolent Fund in raising awareness of those who needed help. As an incredible Ambassador of the Benevolent Fund, Arthur regularly attended Air Shows and other public events along with another hero from World War Two, Alistair Lamb, also a WOPAG who is still with us today. The two heroes would sit side by side signing Bomber Command books, being photographed and chatting to the visitors.

It has been an honour for me personally to speak about Uncle Arthur. We all, his family and the wider general public, owe this wonderful gentleman, a great debt of gratitude.

We **WILL** remember him!

RGK

<https://www.scotsman.com/lifestyle-2-15039/heroes-of-the-battle-in-the-sky-1-1254458>

* * * *

TRIBUTE AT FUNERAL BY SON: ARTHUR REID



Proud Arthur receives his Legion d'Honneur

'On behalf of my sister Barbara and myself, we would like to welcome you all here today. We stood here just over three and a half years ago after the passing of our mother Dorothy, and the Adventure with Dad we simply could not have missed unfolding.

Unfortunately for Dad it has not all been an easy flight as, during this period:

- *He had to cope with the loss of Mum who he was married to for over 66 years,*
- *He had to cope with Linda and I moving in with him,*
- *He had a tumour behind his eye, a constant worry to him,*
- *He had a nasty tumour on his forehead he had removed,*
- *He fell and broke his pelvis,*
- *He took a whole series of what we suspected were mini TIAs,*
- *He fell and broke his arm,*
- *He had a few other falls requiring attention,*
- *He had numerous urinary infections,*
- *He had Sepsis,*
- *Of late, he had a long spell in hospital where his body sadly gave in.*

However, all through this, he coped well with life's challenges, always remaining positive and insisting on his daily exercises.

Now for the happy moments. We were faced with the challenge on what to do with Dad after Mum passed away – simply we picked him up and threw him back in at the deep end, 'no sitting down and feeling sorry for yourself in my house!' Through a few contacts and a bit of research, we got him re-connected with:

- *The RAF Benevolent Fund*
- *The RAF Association*
- *The RAF 100 Group Association*

In effect, they all form part of the RAF Family who simply threw their arms wide open and welcomed him back into the fold. What a blast he had! My Dad liked a wee moan along the way. Who in their '90s doesn't! But the smile on his face in many of these photos tells the true story ...'

YouTube video of Flt Lt Arthur Reid taking to the skies again in the epic Spitfire

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=emuSMOAK7DM&feature=youtu.be> (courtesy Sarah)

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/JZvyh6vfKvTB9eSY6> (courtesy Sarah)

TRIBUTE: GRANDDAUGHTER EMMA REID



'Papa enjoyed having a set routine, and could be a fusspot at times, especially with food – he knew what he liked and stuck with that. He also used to love winding people up, and spend hours telling amazing stories about life. He always had a cheeky grin, and I'm sure he could get away with murder with it! Amazingly, in 98 years, he was never wrong about anything.'

Of course, one of our favourites as kids when visiting Comely Bank was Papa's sweetie supply. You could always count on him providing you with a supply of Pan-drops. On the odd occasion, he would throw in a chocolate éclair too if you were good ... although I never seemed to get many of them! When he moved to Granton Road it became Mentos and Midget Gems. You then used to find a sweetie trail around the house, so you'd know where he'd been.

One of his favourite pastimes was TV and Sky. The Sky used to drive my Granny bonkers as it would be the biggest outgoing in a month and no-one else would ever get a look-in. He used to drive us all bonkers with his many different remote controls. We couldn't keep up. Once he had the right one though, he could watch his football, black and white classics, anything war-related, and the Christmas films in September, together with cowboy films.

A Papa Special was when he used to record films onto DVDs that he thought you'd like. Often you could visit, and three or four DVDs would be sitting there ready for you to take away. When you then sat down to watch them, you'd get 20 minutes from the end ... and find it stopped recording!

In the last few years it was always great fun coming to Granton Road to do some 'Pops Duty' as we fondly named it – otherwise known as 'keep an eye and make Papa's tea'. I was always amazed at how he had this ability to be able to speak for 45 minutes straight about the war, without taking a breath, AND eat his tea at the same time! Even Sarah couldn't get a word in edgeways.

We'd also joke that Pops had a better social life than any of us, particularly in the last few years. Thanks to friends he made through the RAF Benevolent Fund he had some wonderful experiences. Some of his highlights were:

- *Attending the Military Tattoo in the Royal Box*
- *Meeting Royalty*
- *Having the opportunity to fly in a Spitfire after 72 years – yet he refused to get on a plane in all those years to go on holiday with Grandma for a holiday abroad together!*
- *He was delighted to see Hibs raise the Scottish Cup – as a loyal Hibbee over the years, that was some highlight!*

Over the last few years, Pops has been looked after by some wonderful people who have provided outstanding care ... including Bob Kemp, Chris Gillan from Heroes Drinks, Mark Ryan from Drive Scotland, the RAF Benevolent Fund and Janine Harrington from RAF 100 Group Association. He has also had particular support from Linda and Arthur, his 'House Mates'.

A huge 'Thank You' to them all'

I'd like to end with a couple of quotes:

'Those that we love never truly leave us. There are some things that death cannot touch. Paint ... Memories ... and Love.'

The final quote is from his son, Arthur Jr, who I overheard saying to someone on hearing of Papa's leaving:

'All good things must come to an end.'

I am glad you and Grandma are finally together again. It's been a pleasure, Pops.'

* * * *

TRIBUTE: LOVING YOUNGER SISTER THELMA

Dear Arthur,

I'm not going to start praising you to the skies, although Time seems to stand still now because I can hear you saying:

'... cut that out! I'm not a Saint, so get the kettle on!'

We always liked the same things and I enjoyed all these DVDs of Crystal Cathedral you gave me, and our long telephone chats when you spoke about your days in Bomber Command and your own deep personal faith.

I will hold you in my heart forever.

Rest in peace, my Brave Warrior ... until we meet again.

Your loving sister, *Thelma*



* * * *

TRIBUTE BY JANINE HARRINGTON



Dearest Arthur,

So much has been shared by those who knew you far better than I. So, I'll simply say that I will always remember the 2018 Reunion when first we met, together with Stan Forsyth DFC who also flew with 192 Squadron. You share a special place in my heart. The world is a sadder place without you. and you both remain true Kindred Spirits for all we shared both then and since. My thoughts and prayers remain with your family, my Angels of the North. Go well, All. Love you Linda & Arthur xx

IN MEMORY

Fit Lt ROY HENRY SMITH

Bomber Command Navigator, Stirlings, 199 Squadron

by son: Pete Smith



Roy Smith, 1944, courtesy son Pete Smith

Roy was born in North London and educated in Kentish Town and Hornsey. When war started in September 1939, Roy's job in communications was considered a 'Reserved Occupation', which prevented him joining up immediately.

In 1941, determined to play his part, he volunteered for Bomber Command.

His training took place in Scotland, Georgia and Canada. He wanted to be a Navigator but found himself on a Pilot Training Course. As he put it:

'I don't think my heart was in this aspect of flying. I still felt I wanted to be a Navigator. However, things worked out because I didn't successfully complete the Course, although it had nothing to do with flying ability. It happened one evening. I went out with two or three others – I imagine we had quite a few beers and I got separated from them. Eventually, I found a taxi, but did not arrive back at Camp until after the permitted time. Knowing this would be a disciplinary offence and that I would probably be removed from the Course, I decided to try to enter the Camp by squeezing under the surrounding wire fence. During this operation, I heard a rifle being shot, lights were switched on ... I was caught! That was the end of my Pilot Training. I learned I would be sent to Canada on a Navigator Course, so I was not particularly disappointed.'

After further training in Wellingtons, Roy joined a crew of New Zealanders in 1943 flying Short Stirlings. With this crew he was posted to Lakenheath that September to join 199 Squadron. Because of their low ceiling, Stirlings were often the victims of 'friendly fire' from Lancasters flying above them. The losses were too high and Stirlings were taken off bombing missions and tasked with dropping 'WINDOW' (strips of aluminium) designed to confuse German Radar, dropping of mines and other decoy and Intelligence missions. The scale of Bomber Command's Commander-in-Chief Sir Arthur Harris wrote in his post-war Memoir that over 1,000 enemy ships were sunk or damaged because of mine laying.

Most satisfying for Roy was running supplies – ammunition, food and so on to the Free French. He had vivid memories of this:

'We usually crossed the French Coast at about 8-10,000ft and dropped to 2,000 or less on reaching the Loire. The low height was supposed to be safe insofar that it made it almost impossible for an enemy fighter to attack from below; even from above there was the danger of the attacker having insufficient height to get out of a dive. We were of course lower than this when making a drop and on the return from one trip, one of the Ground Crew found a small piece of branch in the tail wheel. Having navigated to a prominent ground marker ... we had to find the group of Free French to whom we were to make the drop. Sometimes we had to carry out a search of the area in case we were slightly off position. Failing to find the signals meant we had to take the supplies back to Base, having spent about eight hours on the round trip. The most dangerous part was flying Easterly down the valley, making a rather tight U-turn prior to getting too near to Mt Blanc, the peak of which was 2,000ft above the height we could fly.'

There is no doubt that the Resistance's efforts compromised the German ability to reinforce the Normandy battle – a direct consequence of Roy and his colleagues' efforts to provide them with weaponry they needed. In March 1944, 487 tons of equipment was delivered, including almost 5,000 rifles, 40,000 grenades, 10 million bullets. And across February and March arms for 42,000 men had been supplied.

In addition to these Resistance sorties, Roy was also involved in two operations bombing French rail yards; in March 1944, a direct attempt to block the rail lines through which German reinforcements would attempt to reach the battle. Following the 6 June 1944 D-Day Landing, the Allies would win the Battle of the Build-Up and break out from Normandy to liberate France.

In January 2018, Roy received the Legion d'Honneur in recognition of this service to the French people, seen right.

Roy completed his second Tour in September 1944 and was sent to Air Navigation School at Shawbury and thence to supervise the navigational training of the Royal Indian Air Force recruits. Roy contracted Malaria and was unconscious for several days:

'I was told after recovery that I was fortunate to have survived, due to the diligent care of my Bearer, Baxi. I have thought how ironic it would have been to have succumbed, having survived 42 missions.'

Following his RAF Service, Roy returned to 'Civvie Street'.

He worked his way up through Pearce & Partners Heating and Ventilating Engineers and retired as one of its Senior Partners. He married Dorrie in 1949 – dividing their time between London and the South coast. Dorrie died in November 2017. They had been married for 68 years and leave behind four children and seven grandchildren. In recent years, he had – along with several other Bomber Boys – raised money for the Bomber Command Memorial in Green Park. He had also been, for many years, a member of the RAF Club in Piccadilly.

Roy died at home, in Worthing, after a short illness.





ROY HENRY SMITH

Born 31 January 1922

Died 1 August 2019

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

Flt Lt Roy Smith was a Navigator with 199 Squadron based at North Creake.

Roy was the last surviving member of his crew and served with George Cubby MBE.

His number of operations were 43 in total.

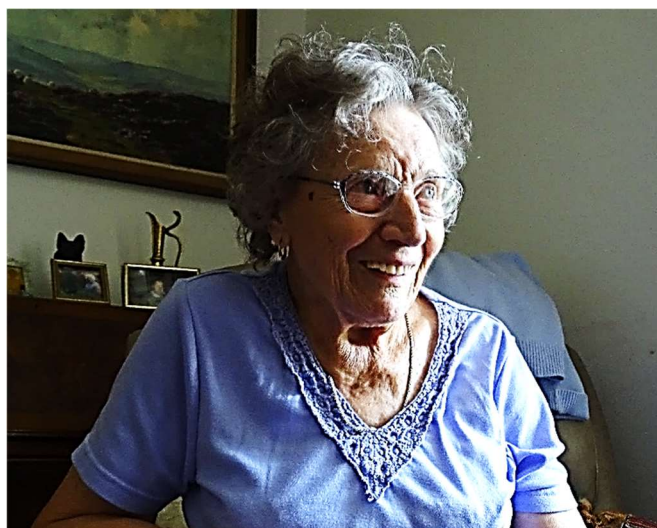


Courtesy: Pete Smith

IN MEMORY

DAPHNE ROWLANDS

by Stuart Borlase & Janine Harrington



Daphne, taken by Stuart, Summer 2018

Daphne was one of the 'Three Musketeers', a trio of unlikely WAAFs serving at a variety of places, ending up working together on the same Station serving with 214 Squadron, based at RAF Oulton, RAF 100 Group, during 1944 and 1945.



All three, [Winnifred Seeley](#) (left), [Irene Houghton](#) (right), and [Daphne](#) (behind), worked as Motor Transport (MT) Drivers on Station, engaged in a variety of duties – from taking crews out to their aircraft, meeting and picking them up again after returning from Ops, chauffeuring Officers, visiting Military Dignitaries and other personnel as required, doing transport runs for equipment and supplies away from Station, such as de-icing fluid for aircraft. These tasks were made all the more challenging because of the removal by the Authorities of all road signs!!

Driving around the perimeter track in the dark, negotiating parked and taxiing aircraft also proved to be a challenge on occasions, and there was a case or two of vehicles and wings kissing in the night air!! Not life and death serious, but embarrassing, nonetheless.



When Janine and I visited Daphne in June 2018, she was living at Spring Cottage, a Care Home in Malton, a small country village in North Yorkshire not far from where Janine lives. It was a wonderful setting surrounded by farmland, horses grazing in the fields, beautiful trees and squirrels keeping a watchful eye on these curious visitors.

Daphne's memory was not what it had been, and she had difficulty recalling events of a war that raged more than seventy-five years ago. We stayed and enjoyed tea and cake for a couple of hours before heading back.

We are both so pleased to have had that time shared with her, sitting and chatting as friends while gazing out through her window into the Gardens beyond filled with living creatures of all shapes and sizes.

Neither of us had the opportunity to get to know her more. It was her niece who let Janine know in October 2019 that she had just died. But since our meeting, she did receive our letters and cards, as well as the magazine, and a Calendar for 2020 in which her picture appears together with her wartime buddies, offering her family solace, and a legacy to pass on. As a relatively new member, we were just at the beginning of our friendship. We both felt this an opportunity lost, with the sad reality that there are still dear people out there in the wider world who served with RAF 100 Group under Bomber Command, but who don't know about us, and not yet had the chance to be welcomed into our worldwide RAF 100 Group Association Family of surviving Veterans and their families.

The good news is that we do have new members coming through all the time – Veterans who served with either RAF 100 Group or the U.S. 36th Squadron, with families urgently needing to know more about their loved ones who have since passed on, and the part they played in wartime.

New members provide an absolute pleasure for Janine, Stephen and I, to begin the journey of getting to know them, and in turn, share their own journey as they discover exactly what their loved ones were a part of.

Stuart & Janine

Stuart Borlase
Secretary Support & Australian Representative
mosquitofbv1@gmail.com

* * * *

IN MEMORY

FLT LT R. A. G. SIMMONS **Navigator: 223 (Bomber Support Squadron)** **by Richard Forder**



R. A. G. Simmons via Richard Forder

On one of my Reunion visits to the Blickling Hall Museum around 2003, I was idly looking through the Visitors Book in the hope of spotting some unknown 223 Squadron survivors, when I found an entry by Ron 'Junior' Simmons with an address in Canada. A letter to the address confirmed that he was indeed Flt Lt Mark Levy's Navigator, 'Junior' was his crew nickname. This was my introduction to a truly remarkable man and his equally special wife Phyllis. The following words are a very inadequate account of a highly successful and full life.

Ron was born in London on 5 June 1922. His parents were not well off, but his first years were happy ones until the death of his mother in his early teens. He was a bright boy and won a Scholarship to Wilson's Grammar School where he thrived and matriculated with good marks in seven subjects including Maths, Languages and Sciences. His father remarried, but Ron's life became unhappy because of a difficult early relationship with his new stepmother. However, aged 16, there was a happy event when a chance encounter introduced him to Phyllis, the girl he would meet again in later years, marry, and who would become his lifetime partner.

At 17, he left home. Ron's father found him employment in the Laboratory of the well-known Titanine Company which specialised in paint and dopes for the aircraft industry. He quickly adapted to and enjoyed the work. Unfortunately, his parents moved, and he was forced to change jobs. His father found him employment as an office boy with the Margate Corporation Water Undertaking. Initially, he was unhappy at his reduction in status and the tedium of the new job. However, he buckled down and his abilities and attitude resulted in his Manager offering to make Ron his articled pupil. He would study Civil Engineering to ultimately qualify as a Civil Engineer – generously at no cost to Ron or his parents.

Ron, like many of his contemporaries, was very much aware of the threat of war and volunteered for aircrew. He was accepted for Pilot Training, but such was the backlog as the RAF battled to

build up its training machine to cope with the flood of volunteers, it was some time before he was Called Up. Typically, he joined the Air Training Corps (ATC) to hopefully improve his chances for Pilot Training. During this time, he volunteered to belt up ammunition for the Spitfire and Hurricane Squadrons based at RAF Manston. His ATC Certificate of Service recommended him for a Commission, emphasising his power of leadership, reliability and keenness. It also recorded that he was the first winner of a Shield awarded for the most professional all-round Cadet. Finally, on the Whitsun weekend in 1942 he received instructions to report to the Aircrew Reception Centre at Lords Cricket Ground to finally start the long road to operations.

His next move was to Paignton, Devon, to join an Initial Training Wing (ITW). Whilst there, he and a few fellow trainees declared themselves to be Druids in order to be excused Sunday Church Parade. This, initially, looked to be a winner until they were given the order to fall out, whereupon they were each handed a broom and shovel and ordered to clean the surrounding streets.

Grading School at RAF Desford followed successful completion of ITW. This procedure was introduced to weed out unsuitable would-be pilots before they entered the full flying training machine. Ron successfully completed the ration of 12 hours flying in a Tiger Moth including going solo after seven and a half hours. His next move was to the Personnel Dispatch Centre (PDC) at RAF Heaton Park to await transport to the U.S.A via Canada. The trans-Atlantic voyage was on board the Queen Elizabeth sailing from Greenock to Halifax. Ron was bound for Terrell Field, Texas, in the U.S.A. involving lengthy train journeys.

At Terrell, flying training was carried out by civilian Instructors using Boeing Stearman bi-planes. Sadly, although Ron achieved solo standard, he could not master landings and, following a check flight with the Chief Flying Instructor, he was chopped from Pilot Training. Bitterly disappointed he was re-mustered to Navigator/Bomb Aimer (Nav B) and so it was back to Canada for training in his new role. This resulted in a posting to 31 RAF Bombing & Gunnery School, Picton, Ontario. Bomb training was carried out in Bristol Bolingbroke, and Air Gunnery was achieved using Avro Ansons firing at drogue targets. Ron was First in Class at the end of the Course.

Next was 9 Air Observer's School, St Jean, Quebec. The Navigation Training aircraft were Anson I and V. At St Jean, Ron was to meet up with John 'Soapy' Hudson, Reggie Wade, Alex McMillan and Peter Buckland who were to follow him on the remainder of their training journey to 223 Squadron. The Navigation training was completed at 1 General Reconnaissance School, Summerside, Prince Edward Island, again using Ansons. Ron's U.S.A./Canada adventures ended at RCAF Dorval awaiting Posting. It had been a fascinating period in his life, and he had experienced generous hospitality on his travels and established friendships which were to endure for many years.

The Posting arrived with news that Ron and his Nav pals were off to 111 (Coastal) Operational Training Unit (OTU) based in Nassau. Another long train journey took them south to Miami where they picked up Motor Vessel Jean Brilliant to take them on to Nassau. On arrival, they were taken to RAF Oakes Field where they would form the nucleus of new crews consisting of Pilot, Nav, and two Air Gunners. They would commence training for maritime ops using the Units B-25 Mitchells. This was to give the Pilot experience of nose-wheel aircraft to prepare them for the second part of the Course which was to be done at RAF Windsor Field on Liberators. Ron's Pilot was Pilot Officer Cyril (Joe) Boaden. Sgts Norman Pearson and 'Dizzy' Bryant were the Air Gunners. Flying Officer Mark Levy would be their Instructor. Mark was due a return to operations and the decision was made that, when they moved across to Windsor Field, he would become the Aircraft Captain and Joe Boaden would revert to '2nd Pilot'. At Windsor Field, they were joined by P/O Wilf Bridgeman to fill the Wireless Operator position and a Flight Engineer, Sgt R. D. 'Taffy' Pryce.

Completion of the OTU Course resulted in a return to the UK via Canada. In England, returning crews were posted to 7 Personnel Reception Centre (PRC) at Harrogate. Finally, Ron's long trail to an operational Squadron ended with the crew's Posting to 223 Squadron at RAF Oulton, arriving on 29 August 1944. Early weeks were spent establishing the newly formed Squadron and familiarising themselves with the newly delivered battle-weary Liberators acquired from the USAAF 8th Air Force. Levy's crew were the fourth to commence operations, flying a BIG BEN sortie on 23 September. Ron flew on all the crews 36 operational sorties. Their final op, a WINDOW Patrol, was successfully concluded on the night of 22/23 April 1945.

After the initial euphoria and celebration of the end of the European War, RAF life became disjointed with the disbandment of Units and return to peace-time conditions. Ron was lucky. He continued to fly as a Navigator, initially on Halifax VI aircraft with 102 Squadron at RAF Pocklington which he joined on 10 May 1945. This was short lived as he was soon on his way to 242 Squadron at RAF Stony Cross equipped with Stirling V. The Unit was involved in ferrying supplies out to Calcutta, India and supplying various RAF Stations in between. A final Posting followed to 246 Squadron at RAF Holmesley South equipped with Avro Yorks. Ron's final flight with the RAF occurred on 7 June 1946, and he was demobilised on 10 June.

What now at the age of 24 and back to civilian life?

Ron was fortunate. He had been accepted for a Scheme to enable him to study for an Engineering Degree at University. From the Autumn of 1946, he spent 8 months at a College in London to prepare himself for University – no mean task having been away from academic study through the war years. He then went on to graduate from Kings College, London, with a Degree in Civil Engineering in July 1949.

His Reunion with Phyllis had blossomed, and they were married on 17 June 1948. She had also been successful working as a Secretary to Senior Management in the Vickers-Armstrong Aircraft Company. Ron had ambitions to be involved in major civil engineering projects overseas. With Phyllis' agreement, he applied for and obtained a post as Consulting Engineer with a firm in Canada. Working mainly on water supply and treatment projects, together with associated sewage, foul water drainage and treatment projects, he established himself as a highly respected authority in his chosen field. He was eventually to become President of his final company. By this time, he had also blazed a trail overseas gaining a greatly respected international reputation for his work. To Ron, problems were to be solved and not avoided. Extremely conscientious, he was a hard worker, but at the same time, his sense of humour and outgoing personality made him very popular wherever he went. On the lighter side, he was a self-taught pianist as a boy, and played the organ including Church and cinema instruments. In his 90s, he was still playing the piano in public, accompanying a local opera singer in his Canadian hometown of Quelph.

Ron and Phyllis were regular world travellers both on business and for pleasure, the latter extending into retirement years often accompanied by their daughters Pamela and Deborah. Their travels included two memorable attendances at RAF 100 Group Reunions. On the first of these, I was able to reunite Ron with his wartime Navigator pal Reggie Wade.

It was with great sadness that we learned of Ron's death in November 2018, to be joined in February this year by his beloved Phyllis. I will miss the phone calls and the correspondence and emails which exchanged over the years, not least his incredible memory of his wartime Service and, particularly, his recall of 223 Squadron personalities; but above all the man himself.

Richard M Forder



*Ron & Phyllis Simmons, taken by Janine Harrington
at the City of Norwich Aviation Museum during a Reunion*

* * * *

KEVIN McCANN

(Son of Wilf 'Geordie' McCann)

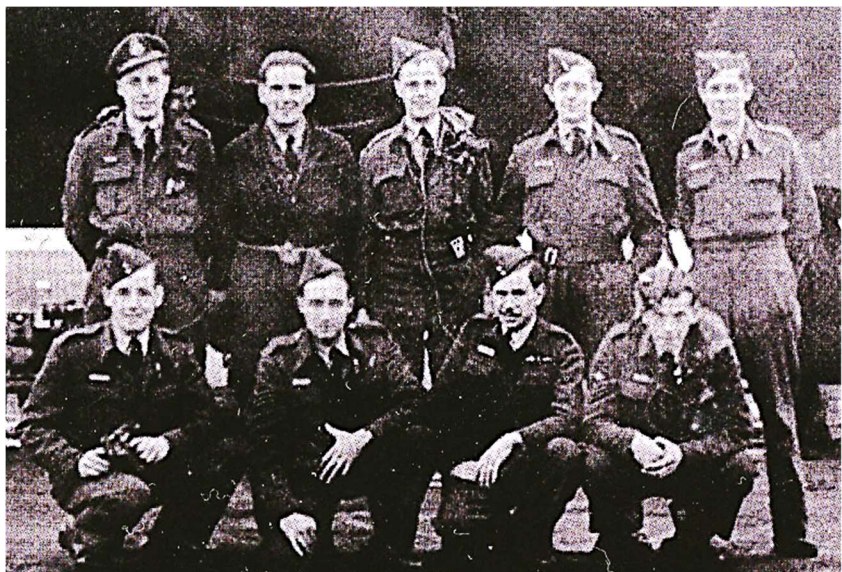


Linda Forsyth shares the sad news of the death of **KEVIN McCANN** (left). Kevin and sister Geraldine visited **Stan Forsyth DFC** specially to talk about their father, Wilf, who had flown in the same crew on 192 Squadron. Stan was delighted and had many stories to tell. However, none of them were to know that it would be their only time of meeting.

Kevin had been unwell for a long period of time, having endless operations, catching a virus, ending up with Sepsis.

But this was a very happy meeting between the two families, and it's lucky it took place when it did as both Kevin and Stan are no longer with us.

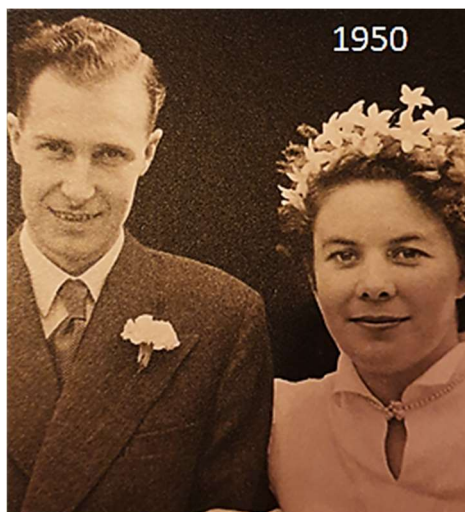
Geraldine, Linda, Ali, and all the Forsyth Family, please know we continue to hold you in our thoughts and prayers. For many, this Christmas was to be a difficult time with memories of loved ones no longer with us.



*Wartime picture of Ken Macdonald's crew w Stan Forsyth DFC &
Geordie McCann*

IN MEMORY

DEREK & BETTIE WILSHAW **by son John Wilshaw**



Derek & Bettie Wilshaw on their wedding day

My mother, Bettie Wilshaw, died peacefully at her Care Home on 10 November 2019 aged 93. Almost two years earlier, my father Derek George Wilshaw had died. He was a Rear Gunner in 223 Squadron, flying in B23 Liberators out of Oulton airfield.

Derek was born in Sheffield on 10 August 1924 between the wars. To grow up during the Depression, to attend school during the hungry thirties, was his way of life, and one that was made so much harder when his father died in 1934. Home became his Mum and his Grandma, together with younger sister Cath. As Derek recalled, he had to take on adult responsibilities, helping with the physical work, collecting sticks, dragging coal up from the cellar. He had to earn what he could to supplement the Widow's Pension his Mum received, just a pound a week. He did all he could to help, but also stayed focused at school as he loved learning and was anxious to do well. But just as he left school at the age of fifteen, the Second World War started, and everyone's goals and plans were changed.

In 1939, thanks to his Godfather, Uncle Harry got him a job at the bank, which would later become his career. In 1943, though, he signed up and joined the RAF.

There was all the usual training, spit and polish on the boots, PT on the beach at Scarborough, flying Tiger Moths and eventually becoming an Air Gunner when there were no other viable options available.

Derek flew over thirty operations out of Oulton, an amazing achievement given the losses at the time. He put his 'Luck' down to the skill of his Pilot, who, prior to the war, had been a qualified commercial Pilot. Dad explained:

'He knew his way round the skies, that is why I was lucky.'

He Passed Out as the war in Europe ended, only to find himself sent to India when, rather foolishly, he mentioned his banking background. Two years in Accounts creating pay packets followed

during which time he developed a lifelong dislike of curry! Until his final days, he would always prefer a roast dinner and some Yorkshire Puddings – and who can blame him!!

Derek met Bettie after he returned from India. They married in 1950 and I came along 9 months later. Neither Mum nor Dad were completely comfortable talking about their war exploits and experiences with the family. Dad 'opened up' about his experiences around 2010 when he was reunited with his old Squadron. But Mum never spoke of her life before she met Dad. I have since heard that, at 17 years old, during the war when she was training to be a nurse at Edgware General Hospital, she was pulling a baby out of a bombed building, a baby covered in glass fragments from the explosion. Unlike how she appeared to me as a child, she was no conformist with a mind of her own. She told a friend that she kept her marriage secret from her Matron because, in those days, married women were supposed to stay at home and look after their husband and his household. But she kept her career going, keeping her wedding ring on a metal chain under her uniform.

The world my Mum and Dad grew up in is so different from today. The sacrifices they made and unimaginable hardships of their everyday lives, both during the war and for the decade following, are lost in memories and archives. I expect my life to run its course until I am in my 90s. It is just not possible to imagine a situation where my next shift of work could be my last – but that is what my Mum and Dad lived through. Their legacy is the comfortable life I lead today.

I will never forget them.

I am not religious, but I shall make it my business to visit the Green Park Bomber Command Memorial every year, to look into the faces of those sculptured airmen, and think about how lucky I am.



Diamond Wedding Anniversary, Sept 2010

John

John Wilshaw
Son



Final Postings

Friends we've had to say Goodbye to ...

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

Founders of RAF 100 Group Association – remembered in love

2018

- 9 Squadron** Rex Waters, New Zealander, took part in raids on *'Tirpitz'*, died February 2018.
- USAAF 36th BS** Sergeant Lester Jones, Liberator B-24 Aerial Gunner, Sgt Landberg's crew, flying night missions w RAF 100 Group, died 16.1.2018, remembered by his family & all who served with him
- 223 Squadron** Dr Peter Lovatt, Squadron Leader, died in hospital 5.3.2018. Remembered with love by daughter Nina & Family. A well-known, well-loved Association member who regularly attended Reunions.
- 171 Squadron** Ernie Hughes, Flight Engineer. Died 11 June 2018. Remembered by crew member Jim 'Ginger' Fawcett, post-war friend Mel Carey, with fond memories carried by Janine H. & Stuart Borlase.
- 223 Squadron** Pilot Officer P. G. Nash. Died 5th May 2018. George is remembered with love by daughter Barbara, and friend Richard Forder.
- 223 Squadron** Ron Simmons, Mark Levy's Navigator, Mark Levy's Navigator; Aircraft: A for Apple, Name: AD LIB died November 2018. Loved & missed by all.
- 199/171 Sqn** Peter Sclaverano, W/O in 171, 199, 462 Sqns at North Creak. Died June 2018. Remembered with love by Janine as a good friend and all who knew him.
- 214 Squadron** Paul Henry, Navigator died Aug 2018. Remembered with love by cousin Victoria, & all on the Association. Attended Reunions regularly with wife Peggy, as a Founder Member.
- 214 Squadron** Flt/Lt James Wharton 'Dinty' Moore DFC died Aug 2018. Founding member of Association.
- 214 Squadron** Wing Commander John Wynne DFC died 19 November 2018. Remembered with love by wife & daughter. Son died just over one week previous to his father in a farming accident.
- 192 Squadron** Stanley Forsyth DFC, Special Operator. Died night of 22.9.2018. Remembered with love by his Family, Janine & Stuart, and all who served with and knew him. God Bless, till we meet again xx
- USAAF 36th BS** S/Sgt Deacon Joseph 'Joe' Melita, Radio Operator on B24 *'Lady in the Dark'*, died 2018. Remembered for his 40+ years in the Roman Catholic Church, his deep faith, courage and love.
- USAAF 36th** Art Brusila, Pilot, died 2 June 2018. Remembered by all who knew him.

2019

- 169 Squadron** Brian Odam, Groundcrew, died 7 Feb 2019. Missed & loved by daughter Rosemary.
- 171 Squadron** Jim 'Ginger' Fawcett died 1 March 2019. Remembered with love by wife Ruth and family.
- 171 Squadron** Henry 'Harry' Freegard died 8 July 2019. Lovingly remembered by son Alan & family.
- 214 Squadron** Flt Lt Vern L. Scantleton DFC died 11 April 2019. Received Legion D'Honneur in 2015
- 214 Squadron** WAAF MT Driver Daphne Rowlands serving w Win & Irene: *'The 3 Musketeers'*. Much loved xx
- 192 Squadron** Flt/Lt Signals Officer Arthur Baxter Reid died Saturday 14 Sept 2019. Remembered with love by son Arthur & Linda & family; together with all who knew him. God Bless, till we meet again x
- 199 Squadron** Flt Lt Roy H. Smith, Navigator died 1 Aug 2019. Remembered in love by family.
- USAAF 36th BS** Donald Burch, Lt Boehm crew. Remembered with love by all who knew him.
- USAAF 36th BS** John 'Des' Howarth, Lt McCarthy crew in Lt. Boehm's B24 *'Beast of Bourbon'* when it crashed on Feb. 19, 1945. Died 9.6.2019. Remembered in love by friend David, sons Brian, Barry, & family.

A Quiet Corner



GONE BUT NEVER FORGOTTEN



*'Avenue of Remembrance', Haveringland, April 2018
Former home to RAF Swannington*

Runway cracked and showing green
Neglect of years there to be seen
Nevermore the sounds to hear
Of engines roaring, lifting clear.

Concrete chipping at the edge
As ice drives in its deadly wedge
Sad to see what time has done
To this place of valour, battles won

A tear that drops to the aged grime
When memories drift to another time
How can we leave this place of awe
With its voices of a time before?

But Time itself it must march on
And leave an era that now has gone
To break away, to live again,
But thoughts of that time will still remain.

Copyright: *Mike Hillier*

From his booklet: *'That Sweet, Sweet Smell of Oil, Sweat and Leather'*



In this, a New Year, we will ALWAYS Remember those who Served!



Haveringland stands proud in showing what can be done to ensure airfields are NOT forgotten

Dates for your Diary



**A VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR
TO OUR WORLDWIDE
KINDRED SPIRIT FAMILY!**



Membership subscriptions were due at the end of last year!
Please ensure cheques are made out to **RAF 100 GROUP ASSOCIATION**.
Subscriptions went up last year from £15 to £20. Veterans are **FREE!!**
Direct Debits need to be changed with banks to the correct amount.

* * * *

8 May 2020: GREAT MASSINGTON 75th Anniversary Event for VE-Day
Commemorating crews of 2 Allied planes which crashed: 1 British, 1 American.
See page 44 of this magazine & contact Ed Tyhurst direct for details.

* * * *

RAF 100 GROUP REUNION 2020: 15 – 17 May

REUNION 2021: 21 – 23 May (provisional)

Be sure to put these important dates in your diary.
We look forward so much to sharing these Reunion Weekends with you!

Your Reunion Programme should accompany this magazine,
Please note changes in Events and timings!!

* * * *



**For those with an internet connection
you may like to watch these two links
featuring Veteran George Stewart DFC:**



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rayxK11m0T0&w=420&h=237>

<https://no23squadron.wordpress.com/2019/09/30/f-o-george-stewart-dfc-raf-mosquito-pilot-speaks-to-chaa/>

Shared by Pierre Lagacé

WE WELCOME TO OUR REUNION 2020

Speaker: AVM P. A. Robinson OBE FRAeS



Remembrance, Recognition & Reconciliation: World War II Bomber Command & The International Bomber Command Centre

EXTRACT:

'58,000 young men and women of Bomber Command – 60% of total RAF losses – were killed taking the war to Nazi Germany during World War Two. The story of their sacrifice is now remembered at Lincoln's International Bomber Command Centre.'

SYNOPSIS:

'Paul Robinson is a retired RAF Air Vice-Marshal who flew Harriers in Germany during the Cold War and served in a number of senior appointments at home and abroad before settling in Lincolnshire. In 2012, he volunteered to help with the Lincolnshire Bomber Command Memorial Trust, and he is a Trustee and a member of its Operations Board. During his 50-minute illustrated Presentation, he will outline the history and impact of Bomber Command during the Second World War and, by highlighting the skill and heroism of its air and ground crews, show how important it is for Lincolnshire to host a fitting Memorial to commemorate their sacrifice, recognise the suffering experienced, and reconcile both sides of the conflict. He will then describe the Trust's project, the International Bomber Command Centre; focusing on its architecture, design, exhibition and facilities. He will be pleased to answer any questions on Bomber Command, the IBCC or any other associated subject.'

100 Group Order of Battle

SQD	AIRCRAFT	1st 100 GROUP OPERATION	BASE	SORTIES, LOSSES ROLL
192 US RCM	Mosquito, Halifax Wellington Lightnings	Dec 1943 Aug 44 – March 45	Foulsham	2171/5 Losses Electronic Intel/Elint
141	Beaufighters, Mosquito	Dec 1943	West Raynham	1214/11 Losses 80 EA, 58 Trains, 7 Ships Destroyed
219/239	Mosquito	Jan 1944	West Raynham	1394/9 Losses 51 En AC Destroyed
515	Mosquito	March 1944	Little Snoring	1366/21 losses 29 En AC Destroyed
169	Mosquito	Jan 1944	Little Snoring, Great Massingham	1247/13 Losses 25 En AC + 1 V1 Destroyed
214	Fortress	April 1944	Sculthorpe, Oulton	1225/13 Losses Electronic Jamming
199	Stirling, Halifax	May 1944	North Creak	1707/6 Losses Electronic Jamming
157	Mosquito	May 1944	Swannington West Malling	1336/6 Losses 37 En AC +39 V1 Destroyed
85	Mosquito	June 1944	Swannington West Malling	1190/7 Losses 71 En AC+30 V1 Destroyed
23	Mosquito	July 1944	Little Snoring	1067/8 Losses 18 En AC Destroyed
223	Liberator Fortress	Sept 1944	Oulton	625/3 Losses Electronic Jamming
171	Stirling, Halifax	Sept 1944	North Creak	1583/4 Losses Electronic Jamming
462 RAAF	Halifax	Jan 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 Harrington

My heartfelt thanks to everyone who helps bring this magazine together
with a collection of rare and wonderful stories & photographs.

A special thank you to David & Tracey Mortimer and their team
for continuing to support our Association in the printing of this magazine

Prontaprint, Scarborough, North Yorkshire