



# Confound & Destroy

**The magazine of RAF 100 Group Association**

*Spring*  
**2021**



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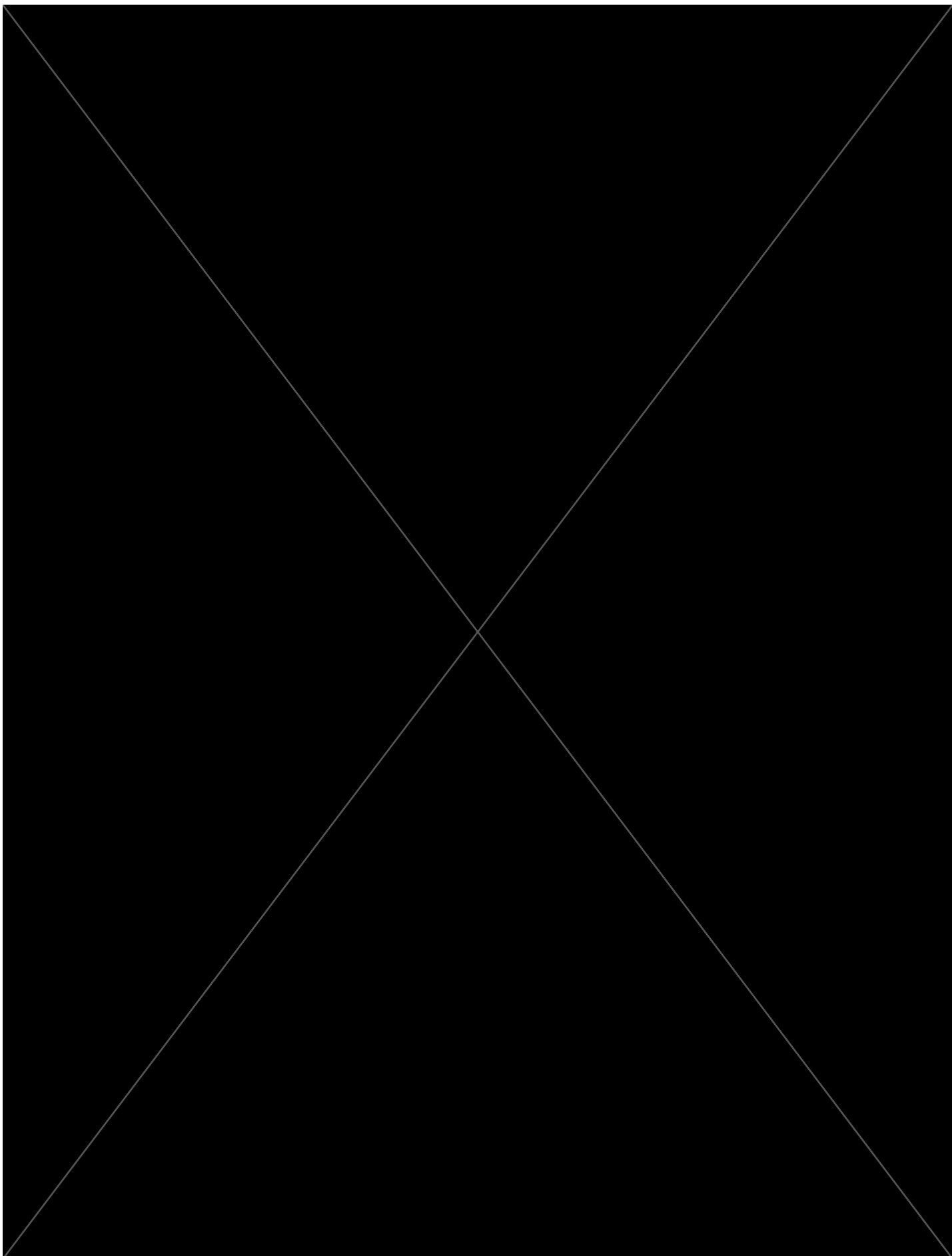
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*RAF 100 Group Association Committee*



# Editor's Page



*Hello Everyone,*

Life has changed for us all over the last twelve months in ways that none of us could have foreseen or even imagined. There has been challenge and tragedy, hardship and grief and we are not out of the woods yet.

But there have been huge positives in the way people have been reaching out to one another through lock downs and restrictions over the past several months that have shone a ray of hope. Where people could not gather personally – there was ‘ZOOM’!! And Live Streaming of all sorts of things including Church services! And I remember hearing about the public support campaign in the UK for the frontline personnel of the NHS, where people stopped and clapped to show their support. This just serves to demonstrate that where there is adversity there is also resilience!

But we now live in a very different world. Yes, Covid19 has played a significant part, but there are other things that we are facing that have the potential to have a significant impact on our lives. We live in a world where “Cultural Marxism, Cancel Culture, Social Justice, Extinction Rebellion, LGBTTTQIAA+, Victim Culture, Conversion Therapy, Identity Politics and ‘*all the evils*’ of ‘Heteronormativity’” are pushing in on all sides. Our culture is making critical thinking an exhausting battle and in many ways, we are losing the battle to preserve truth and articulate truth without a malevolent, orchestrated pushback. I am reminded of the words of Winston Churchill -

*‘In wartime, truth is so precious that she should always be attended by a bodyguard of lies.’*

His remark was made at the time when there was planning in the lead up to 6<sup>th</sup> June 1944, D-Day, with the need for very clever deception and innovative subterfuge. The truth of that event **was** so precious, that it needed that “bodyguard” to protect its integrity - and ultimately, save lives.

Regrettably, we now live in a World, where more than ever before, the truth is guarded *from* us, truth is actually being suppressed in our public life and in our media and culture. And increasingly we are encountering an impulse that is geared *against* it. So, this then begs the question; Does truth really matter? There are good people in this Country (Australia), who have lost their jobs, lost University tenures and had professional accreditation and registrations cancelled and have been prevented from fostering children for speaking truth. It is not just that truth itself is a dangerous thing today – it is becoming increasingly dangerous (also now a crime in some instances) even to speak it.

I am reminded of a verse from the book of Isaiah, chapter 59 verse 14-15;

*“Justice is driven back,  
And righteousness stands far away,  
For truth has fallen in the public squares  
And honesty cannot enter.  
Truth is missing  
and whoever turns away from evil becomes a prey”.*

This bothers me – a lot, because this is happening right now, right here - in Australia!

Truthfulness and integrity are still an integral part of life, personal, professional and political. And underlying these attributes are the undergarments of trust. We are part of a wider 100 Group family that has a proud and distinguished history and are blest to have still within it, a number of very special people, our Veterans to whom these attributes meant something and has done so to another generation.

They saw the reality of the threat that was facing Europe, the UK, and wanted to do their bit, but did not place themselves at risk on a whim. So, they went to War, against a past tyranny - and prevailed, but that victory was won hard and at a cost still felt today.

It was John Stuart Mill who said in 1867: *“Bad men need nothing more to compass their ends, than that good men should look on and do nothing.”* These were ‘good men and women’ who did something.

We are blest to belong to an organisation like ours. Each year, when we are able, we honour the memory, the service and sacrifice of those who served with RAF 100 Group, and gather at familiar places like Oulton, Foulsham and North Creake, gladly and with gratitude. And at other places and dates, ANZAC Day, Remembrance Day and Veterans Day, we take time to remember **all** those who served with our respective Armed Forces. This is a good thing. But let us not forget why they went to war and have the quiet courage to make a stand, as they did, against things which are dark.

Is there any hope then? Yes, of course. As I write, another Christmas is only a matter of days away. With much of the world in the grip of SARS CoV-2, and *whole Countries* going into ‘lock-down’. Fear seems to be the emotion driving so many parts of the world. The message of Christmas remains a constant in a world forever changing and is a beacon of hope to all those who can see and accept it, especially today where our world is racked with fear, turmoil and uncertainty.

I would like to take this opportunity to pass on my warmest greetings to all our Veterans, their families and to our wider 100 Group family.



*And I would like to take this opportunity, to mention one very special lady of our 100 Group family, who has just celebrated a very special Birthday recently.*

*Barbara Bradshaw, who served with 214 Squadron out of Oulton, celebrated her 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday last month, on the 10th of January.*

*Barb, on behalf all those who are part of your wider RAF 100 Group family, and especially from those who know you, I want to pass on our love, warmest congratulations and very best wishes as you begin your Centenary year.*

***A very Happy 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday dear Barb! XO***

Take care Everyone and stay safe.

*Stuart*

# Co-Editor's Page

*Dearest Kindred Spirits,*



It is wonderful to know that, in these crazy times we live in, we are part of a worldwide Family of Kindred Spirits!! I find that comforting. I also find it rejuvenating, joyful, and inspiring. Writing letters, sharing a story, making a phone call, sending a gift or card, or even just saying 'Hello' is precious and healing. I thank every one of you who has made contact despite these devastating times, reaching out to one another and to me. You are all valued. Loved. For the year ahead, I wish you and your families Happiness, Peace, and good Health. God Bless You All xx

Sadly, we need to say a fond farewell to RAF 100 Group Veterans **Arthur Pigott**, **George Mackie (100 years old!!)** who served with **214 Squadron** and **Len Davies of 223 Squadron**. There are tributes & writings included in this magazine about them. But if anyone can share more, we are keen to hear from you. Association members **Stan Forsyth Jnr**, son of Veteran Stan Forsyth Snr who served in 192 Squadron, and **Robin Moorby**, son of Bob Moorby of 214 Squadron, also died this year. We hold their families in our thoughts and prayers.

We would also ask that you hold in your prayers Veteran **Barbara Bradshaw** who was rushed to hospital in November 2020. For her daughter Margaret who lives just next door to her mother, it has been a worrying time. Barbara was WAAF Sgt in charge of the Officers' Mess at RAF Oulton and remains a firm friend to both Stuart and I.

At this point I would offer a heartfelt THANK YOU to our 'Dream Team' who currently brings together our Association magazine enjoyed by so many. Stuart has proved a true and valued Kindred Spirit for some years now, and as items are sent in for the magazine, I send them electronically to him in Australia for inclusion. When ready, there is the final edit, before he contacts Scarborough printers. Tracey and David have proved invaluable in sending the newly printed magazines up to Edinburgh where Linda and Arthur Jnr take charge of enveloping, labelling, stamping, and sending out your magazines worldwide. However, I would suggest for the future that, if sending material electronically specifically for the magazine you continue as before. But if using the post to send a newspaper cutting for example, instead of sending it to me, please can you send it direct to Linda & Arthur Reid in Edinburgh, address shown below. Otherwise, all letters to myself are still truly valued.

We have no idea yet if next year's Reunion can go ahead but felt it prudent to organise and then cancel if need be. We are privileged to have as our After-Dinner Speaker Dave Gilbert of the International Bomber Command Centre in Lincoln. 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:  
**Linda & Arthur Reid,  
68 Granton Road, Edinburgh EH5 3RD**

Postal Mail remains as usual:  
**Ms Janine Harrington  
7 Ashley Court, Filey, North Yorkshire YO14  
9LS  
Tel: 01723 512544**

# CHAIRMAN'S LETTER



*Dear Friends,*

Producing the Association's magazine is a considerable logistical challenge. We are indebted to Janine and Stuart in (Australia) for delivering yet another bumper edition. Our magazine is even more important because we have been limited in what else we can do by Coronavirus. Hopefully, if you are reading this in the northern hemisphere you will be in the warming weather of spring. Today I am writing surrounded by snow covered fields – the first dusting of winter.

I wonder whether we are going to see a White Christmas in 2020?

Logistics has attracted much attention this week in the UK. Yesterday the first batches of the Pfizer vaccine arrived from Belgium with the unusual challenge that it must be stored at extremely low temperatures. The development of a vaccine in less than a year is a remarkable achievement – this compares with the ten years it took to develop a vaccine for Spanish flu.

With the knowledge of previous pandemics and the benefit of modern science and international collaboration It looks as though we will avoid the appalling toll of Spanish flu. However, the cost of Covid is still extremely high. We are experiencing the worst downturn in the economy for three hundred years and most painful of all is the loss of life. Yesterday the official UK fatalities passed through 60.000 and this figure will likely rise significantly before vaccine protection becomes widespread. Other parts of the world have suffered even more casualties. Many of us have lost family and friends and our thoughts are with the bereaved. Lock down, circuit breakers, tiers, self-isolation, and quarantining have all been challenging. Many of us will have been disappointed by the cancellation of our May reunion. I was also sorry that I could not fulfil my planned attendance at Newhaven Fort for their VE Day commemoration.

On a personal note, it has been very frustrating for me to miss out on the lives of my five grandchildren who are growing up so fast. But my experience is as nothing compared with the difficulties faced by my father Flt. Lt. Richard Dobson Navigator/Special Operator of 192 Squadron as he lay in hospital in Norwich and then Ely following the crash landing of his Mosquito in September 1944. I believe my pregnant mother managed the challenging war time train journey from Manchester to visit him, but I do not know when he was able to see my sister who was born in January 1945.



We do know that some of the long hours spent in hospital were occupied by carving and modelling a wooden Mosquito and a Halifax which are now in my safekeeping.

One comforting aspect of the pandemic has been the many impressive examples of communities coming together and helping each other. Neighbours have looked out for each other and vulnerable individuals have been supported with prescription and food deliveries. The ethos of 'Keep calm and carry on' is alive and well. One impressive demonstration of persevering in the face of adversity will be found in Kevin Sloper's report on the City of Norwich Aerospace Museum. Despite current difficulties they have made considerable progress and are solvent. Well done to Kevin and his team. They are deserving of our support.

I believe that we can learn much from history. Just as the 1918-20 Spanish Flu Pandemic has been a guide for us perhaps, we should be comforted by the knowledge that Spanish Flu was followed by the Roaring Twenties.



I hope my remarks find you and your loved ones in good health and that if normality has not yet returned for you, that it is around the corner.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kevin Sloper'.

### Membership Subscriptions

Hello Everyone,

When sending through your Membership Subscriptions from this point on, could you please post your Checks through to our Treasurer Andrea. Electronic transfers including Paypal are also welcome. This is to make life a great deal easier for our Secretary Janine.

Andrea's address is:

26 Chestnut Road,  
Tasburgh,  
Norwich NR15 1UH  
Phone: 01508 471 529

[andrea@theslums.co.uk](mailto:andrea@theslums.co.uk)

A further reminder will be included in following issues of the magazine.

# 8th AIR FORCE REPRESENTATIVE



**Stephen Hutton**

*Hello Friends,*

With the coming of Spring our hearts are enlivened and cheered to witness nature's bright colourful flowers and happy birds singing their songs of love. Our spirits are raised with hope of happier and better days ahead.



The Spring of 1945 undoubtedly produced these same feelings as the war in Europe was coming to a close. Most importantly there was the great hope that the suffering, death and destruction would be ending. VE-Day, Victory in Europe came on May 8th and in the days that followed relief finally came from the horrible miseries of war and brought cause to celebrate.

Those of 8th Air Force's 36th Bomb Squadron Radar Counter Measure Unit having flown almost half of its missions alongside the RAF100 Group quite naturally felt good reason to be happy. The 36th Gremlins joined other Squadrons of the 482<sup>nd</sup> Bomb Group there at Station 102 Alconbury to commemorate this historic day and to witness special ceremonial events. An impressive part of the ceremony was a group of aircraft on its way to the continent for the first of many observation flights to see the destruction of Hitler's war on Europe. The aircraft flew over the assembly in a "V" for Victory formation. A prayer of Thanksgiving was offered by the group chaplain and the National Anthem was then played by the station band. Next the individual unit commanders delivered short congratulatory talks to the men. The program came to a close with the playing of "America" by the station band. Everyone joined in the singing.



Although this was a most special day for all the men, unfortunately all personnel were restricted to the exact limits of the base. All the British village public houses were considered out of bounds and all clubs and bars were closed until the usual evening opening time. Other events scheduled that day included a ball game featuring the officers versus enlisted men. Following the ball game, an impromptu Variety Show on the athletic field entertained the men. Inevitably the men found ways to celebrate and express their great joy in the victory that all had worked so hard to achieve.

Now they could unwind and let off steam! Their wild elation could not be restrained.

As recorded in my book, *"Squadron of Deception"* here is what some of the 36<sup>th</sup> Squadron Gremlins experienced on that historic day.

**Sgt. Robert King, flight engineer for the Lt. Stanley Studstrup crew, wrote of VE-Day:**



*"On VE-Day Col. Hambaugh announced a victory party to be held in the squadron area. Barrels of English beer were brought in and the party proceeded. The troops were having a great time firing flare pistols and .45 cal. automatic pistols in the air. Some flares landed in the farmer's haystacks and started them on fire. Col. Hambaugh came down the hill to slow down the celebration.*

*To the best of my memory he said, "Gentlemen, I have been standing on the hill watching and listening to you. I have to tell you guys to hold it down." By then all the beer was gone and some joker shot himself in the foot with his .45 pistol!"*

**Lt. John Beaty, navigator for Lt. Sweeney's crew penned a V-Mail letter to his wife Sarah back in Baltimore, Maryland. His V-Mail read:**

*England, May 7, 1945*

*Sweetheart,*

*"The big day over here has finally arrived -- Germany has officially quit today. In spite of their uniforms and their rank most of the fellows are just over-grown boys at heart. From all indications there won't be much sleeping done tonight -- in fact, if you didn't know better you might think this was the 4th of July. There has been a continuous popping of pistols and firing of flares (looks like our Roman Candles -- red, green, and white). Outside the barracks some of the boys have set fire to the trash cans. Yes! It's quite a hullabaloo -- the fire department has just arrived with their engines. The bonfires can be seen for quite a distance and they aren't taking any chances. You remember that haystack I told you was right near the field -- well, I expect to see that lit up before the night is over. Wish you and the babies and I could get together for a quiet celebration."*



*All my love,  
Johnny*



**For Lt. Al Bohne, the Navigator for Lt. Eby's crew, this day was doubly special. He wrote:**

*"My 20<sup>th</sup> birthday was on May 7<sup>th</sup>, 1945. What a gift when we were informed early that evening that Germany had capitulated. My combat tour had come to an end. A final bash was ordered by the CO to celebrate the end of the European war and the resulting victory. The CO jokingly ordered all officers to the base for the party. I doubt the order would have been necessary. It was a great party. A few over joyous fellows emptied some of the planes of very pistols and flares. They proceeded to light up the night skies. Fires were even started in the streets of our billet area. As the firefighters fought the blaze there, another would be started somewhere else, just to keep the firefighters active. We all bought a couple of haystacks that evening by lighting them afire. I never heard of any disciplinary action as the result of this celebration other than the collection to pay for the hay!"*

**Being such a historic day Sgt. Art Ledtke, the RCM operator for Lt. Kittle's crew noted in his [unauthorized] diary:**

*VE-Day, May 8, 1945*

*"We got word that the war was over. Celebrations started. Officially, we were restricted to the base. Some fellows skipped out and went to London. Our crew was too worried about missing orders for home, so we stayed on base. Most of the GI's did. We had extra rations of food and drinks passed around. After dark rockets, guns, etc. were shot off. Quite a few of the fellows were drunk. I have one vivid scene in mind of the pasture next to our quarters. By the light of the rockets, flares, etc. going off overhead, an old white farm horse which in the past moved very slowly, got scared and started to run. It ran right through the hedgerow and fence and kept going. It was a couple of days before it was returned to the field. We partied until the wee hours of the morning. I don't remember too much of the rest. I guess the beer and scotch got to be more than I could handle."*



After seeing and enduring so many hardships and tragedies of war, the relief the squadron men felt on VE-Day was surely tremendous and truly difficult for us to imagine. And still uncertainties lay in the days ahead with the war against Japan still presenting itself. Would the men of the 36<sup>th</sup> and their special duties be called on to serve in the Pacific Theatre? Only time would tell ... For us today though, we know that answer – no!

Yes, we continue to do our best to remember and honour the struggle for right and free the world from tyranny and oppression. We will remember them - *we will remember them!* Bless them all!

*Stephen Hutton*

# LETTERS PAGES

*\*\*Letter from our President\*\**



**Mr Phil AE James MBE,**  
25 Sandown Road,  
Port Talbot  
SA12 6PR.  
Nov 5<sup>th</sup> 2020.

Dear Janine,

Firstly, we hope that this letter finds you in relatively good spirits. All things taken into consideration though this cannot be a good time for you. What with all these lockdowns and "Bubbles," it is difficult to know who to listen to.

Anyway, Dad has asked me to drop you a line, you can use it in the magazine if you wish. Just to say, that he was once again delighted to receive the Autumn/Winter magazine and it would appear that 100 Group Kindred Spirits are growing in numbers worldwide! The magazine is so interesting, and he is sure that the members take much pleasure in reading all the articles.

He also wants to send his condolences to the family of 'Doc Elliot'. He was such a lovely man and so interesting to talk to. He is going to be greatly missed. Please pass on our love to Paul and all the family.

It was nice seeing the photographs of Foulsham and Oulton airfields that David Nock took when he did his flypast in May 2018. Brought back some lovely memories and it was so interesting to read the typed reports.

On a happier note, we would like to send our congratulations to our dear friend Gosling and Diem in the USA on their recent marriage. What lovely photographs he sent. Glad to hear that Diem has recovered from Covid19. Hopefully they have settled into their new home in Alabama. The pandemic is changing the world and we are going to experience a 'new normal' I guess.

Well, in closing I must say that we have been luckier than most. Trying to keep Dad safe is not easy but we are doing our best. It is difficult to see family and friends and we miss them so much.

Take care Janine, stay safe and we send our best wishes to everyone in 100 Group. We will be thinking of them all when we stand together in the garden on Remembrance Day on Sunday.

Love and best wishes,

**Phil James**

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Barbara &amp; Phil". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**President 100 Group Association & family.**



Dear Arthur (and Janine)

Another excellent issue of the 100 Group Magazine. Thanks for sight of this. I was pleased to note that John Cruickshank VC got a very good write up on the occasion of his recent 100th birthday in the magazine. I actually flew with John in a Catalina a few years ago from Leuchars. It was an amazing sortie. In fact, I called John only a couple of days ago when I heard that the Catalina we had flown in had encountered engine problems on Loch Ness last week and had to be towed by a lifeboat. We both had a laugh at this.

Maybe you know that the 'Not Forgotten' charity is planning to give out 5000 hampers to WW2 Veterans. They are asking for details of those veterans. You might want to pass this link to the 100 Group organisers - although returns must be in by 6th November. I have put Alastair's details forward for this.

I see you are doing a great job in helping to print and distribute the magazine. This must be some task.

Best regards,

*Bob*

[bobkemp19@gmail.com](mailto:bobkemp19@gmail.com)

The link is: <https://thenotforgotten.org/how-we-help/forgot-you-not/>



Hi Janine

You can see that your magazine is being appreciated.

Not sure if the link is useful at all for any of our Veterans or if we can do anything this end to help with it if it is?

*Arthur*

**It is my pleasure to tell you all, that applications for the delivery of Christmas Hampers were made through "The Not Forgotten" Organisation for ten of our UK RAF 100 Group Veterans. – Ed.**



Dear Janine,

I know I am very lax at answering letters, and I think it is quite a while since I wrote to you, but in the meantime, I have moved into a Care Home hence the change of address. I have always been thinking of you and I know you will not get better, but I remember you in my prayers every night and ask you may feel comfortable and be well taken care of. In this Home we are not allowed to have visitors and it is very hard not to be able to see loved ones, but it is a fact of life now and it is the same for everyone so am very grateful I am cared for, so no worries really. I am very grateful to have my friend Jack here and we help each other whenever we can.

Yesterday, I had the most wonderful surprise, couldn't believe it. I had a parcel delivered here by post, and I was flabbergasted when it was opened.

It was from Buckingham Palace, 'THE FORGOT YOU NOT BOX'.

You will know all about it of course, but I can't explain how I felt that people still remembered all who served in the Services. It took a big piece of our lives, but I know it was my duty to do what I could, and I know I was very lucky, and things were not so bad anyway.

I met my husband while at Blickling Hall and we had a wonderful happy life together until the year 2000. I don't know who is responsible for all these gifts and 'The Not Forgotten Association' but wish you will be able to let them know how much appreciated it has been. I have no way of telling them personally, but I am hoping you have some way to thank them for me and for everyone else because I am sure everyone will have been overwhelmed as I have been.

Thank you again so much.

May the Lord bless everyone concerned.

Goodnight. God Bless.

*Irene*

Irene Houghton

( [WAAF Veteran, 214 Squadron -Ed](#) )

*NOTE: I just want to offer a heartfelt 'Thank You' to Irene and everyone else who sends letters. I don't mind if you feel you're 'lax at writing', it's always good to receive them and to hear from you, sharing in your daily life. It truly lifts my spirits when letters arrive on the doormat.*

*As a child I used to win handwriting competitions, and spend my pocket money either on sheet music to play on the piano ... 'The Ink Spots', Acker Bilk, Glen Miller ... or specially printed notepaper with pictures around the edges. Now, with chronic arthritis in my hands, my writing looks like a wiggling worm. But I can assure you that, despite being typed, my words speak from the heart.*

*Janine XO*



Hello Everyone,

Arthur and I were excited to hear about the Group '*The Not Forgotten*'.

Group Captain Bob Kemp CBE QVRM AE DL kindly highlighted that the Group were on a mission to find and thank as many surviving World War II Veterans to send a '*Forgot You Not*' gift box.

Janine who we call our '*Angel of the South*,' quickly sent us information to allow Arthur and myself to fill in the Application Forms with the required details. Janine is so organised and had everyone in alphabetical order with everything neatly pulled together, it made our job so much easier.

The Not Forgotten Group's Mission Statement is as follows:

*"We're on a mission to find and thank as many surviving World War II veterans as possible. The pandemic has denied our Veterans the chance to properly celebrate the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the end of WWII, and with your help, we are going to do something about it."*

*We're sending up to 5,000 gift boxes as a small token of our appreciation for all they have done and to remind them that their service is not forgotten."*

We do hope that '*Forgot You Not*' gift boxes arrived safe and sound and were a great surprise! Hopefully, this will solve a mystery of where they came from and you all enjoyed the treat. If you know any other Veterans who might like to be added to the list, please let us know. I have to say it was with such pleasure and excitement that Arthur and myself filled in the forms.



<https://thenotforgotten.org/how-we-help/forgot-you-not/>

# *“The Not Forgotten Group”*

*Our Patron: HRH The Princess Royal*

## **Our Founder:**

In 1919 American soprano Marta Cunningham visited a Ministry of Pensions hospital, having heard that there were ‘*perhaps a handful*’ of soldiers wounded in WWI still residing there. She called on the Matron and asked if she had a few lonely patients who would like to come for tea. The Matron looked surprised and replied that there were in fact 600 injured patients lying in the hospital, with many more across the country. Marta was horrified by what she saw:

*“Could these wasted, listless men be the once adored youngsters, who, but a few years, nay months ago, went so dashing, with a swing and a song to the Nation’s rescue. Alas and this was their reward, suffering, silence and loneliness.*

During one of these early invitations one injured soldier said: “*We don’t want no charity Miss. We are forgotten by everybody and we’d better stop so.*” But, undeterred, on 12 August 1920, Marta formed the “*NOT FORGOTTEN*” Association for the ‘*comfort, cheer and entertainment*’ of the war wounded and within a year some 10,000 men had been entertained.

Thanks to the generosity of other charities and the public, as well as the firm backing of the Royal Family, hospital visits and tea concerts were followed by outings, drives and gifts such as fruit, chocolate, and cigarettes.

## **WWII Onwards**

Whilst the aims of *The Not Forgotten* have remained much the same throughout its history, it has adapted to meet the changing needs of the serving wounded and Veterans with disabilities. The Second World War brought a huge increase in the number of disabled Service men and women and a renewed need for the charity’s work. The new generation of injured and sick were there to be helped alongside the ‘*Boys of the Old Brigade*’ who required care as never before. But in the 1960s the number of Veterans eligible for our assistance dwindled. However, with the deployment of our Armed Forces in Northern Ireland, the Falklands, The Balkans, Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere, the need for our work grows no less.

## **Today**

Marta wrote in 1937: “*...as long as there are sufferers so will The Not Forgotten be needed*” and we are. Today, *The Not Forgotten* remains true to Marta’s original principles of providing entertainment and recreation to those injured in the service of their country. The charity has gone from strength to strength, continuing to adapt to meet the changing needs of their evolving beneficiary base. Despite the loss of our Records in an air raid in 1941, we can be reasonably confident that around one million men and women have benefitted from our activities since 1920.

Sending you our love and best wishes  
Looking forward to a brighter and better 2021

***Linda & Arthur Reid Jnr*** (known to Janine as her ‘Angels of the North’)  
[lindareid1960@live.co.uk](mailto:lindareid1960@live.co.uk)



Hi Janine,

Yesterday Midge and I took our youngest Granddaughter Pip to the IWM Museum Duxford. A typical October day - wet, of course and chilly on the airfield.



Granddaughter Pip in the mock-up cockpit of a Hurricane(left) she loved it; now I've got a Granddaughter and a Grandson wanting to be RAF pilots! Grandson Roo is in the ATC already, he can't wait to fly, well, he has already, thanks to Grandad.

The other photos are of the Victor Mk1 K-2P in the restoration hanger and a fabulous photograph of a bomber variant in the all white reflective covering, what a beautiful aeroplane. I am sure that many a 214 Sqn crew flew this aircraft during training on 232 OCU

The weather today is even worse, so Domino, Scrabble, Word Search and Connect 4 competitions, followed by the Studio Ghibli DVDs on the TV. The studio Ghibli collection of cartoons were made in Japan and they are much loved by all our grandchildren and me (I guess the I am an ageing Peter Pan).



Remember the old USAF saying,

**'WHEN THE GOING GETS TOUGH, THE TOUGH GET GOING'.**

I know that it must hard for you, but keep the faith.

Love,

*Badger.*

Neil Brooks

[badgerbrooks@icloud.com](mailto:badgerbrooks@icloud.com)



Hello 100 Group,

Whilst searching the web, I found an article in your Autumn 2013 which mentions my Uncle, Sgt Thomas Wilfred Henry Usher (Harry). I'm interested in finding more about his training history, his exact crash site and any more information anyone could supply. I have one or two photos of him which may be of use to you? I guess no one will be still around that remembers him.

One attached photo is of 21 ITW Bridlington. **Thomas (Harry) Usher is 3<sup>rd</sup> row from back on left hand side of group photo.** Photos come from his sister Betty. The whole family would be most grateful to learn more.

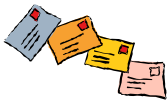


His brothers Joe and Edwin Usher as well as sisters Betty and Eunice are still alive and would be interested in any information that could be provided. Unfortunately, my mother Esme died in 2012. Harry died in B17 Fortress III HB796, on 8/9 Feb 45. They never found either the plane or his body, just two oxygen tanks near Hythe/Lydd Denge Marshes. Many thanks for your help.

Kind regards,

*John Dixon*

[john\\_dixon@hotmail.com](mailto:john_dixon@hotmail.com)



Dear Mrs Harrington,

**Nina and Vic**

One of the few blessings of Covid isolation, is that one gets more opportunity to address items that have been languishing in the pending tray! In the event, I am getting caught up with reading and have just finished, and thoroughly enjoyed, 'Nina and Vic', which was given to me as a present a short time ago, and for which, with some others, I had been awaiting a window of opportunity. It is a marvellous account of the life and times of a generation whose experiences will never be paralleled. It set the windmills of my mind a whirring as I shall explain.

I have always had an interest in Aviation, dating back to the occasion, when, as a very young child, I was taken to see the acrobatics of Alan Cobham and his 'Flying Circus' in our area in the North of Scotland. I was captivated by 'Those Magnificent Men, and their Flying Machines'! When time came for me to do National Service, I opted for the R.A.F. and served in the Fifties as Medical Officer at Leuchars and subsequently at R.A.F. Hospital St. Athan.

You will probably have read the book 'No Moon Tonight' by Australian Don Charlwood who was a Navigator with 103 Lancaster Squadron, operating from R.A.F. Elsham Wolds. Theirs was the first crew to complete 30 Missions from Elsham and his book has been hailed as a classic in the depiction of the human experience of that era. I immediately recognise some parallels in your own work.

My involvement followed a request from the Author and his Publisher, a considerable time after publication, to try to trace the Medical Officer who is mentioned in the book and who was held in high esteem. He had flown on quite a number of missions in support of crew members who were feeling the strain. Thereby hangs another tale; suffice it to say that I found him in Canada.

As a result of this experience, Don and I were friends and kept in regular touch for the rest of his life. I have been a member of R.A.F. Elsham Wolds Association for several decades.

Nina, Vic and others of that generation were a race truly set apart from others in the history of our Nation in its darkest hour ...

Kind regards,

Yours Sincerely,

*(Dr) Bill Hossack*

[ws.hossack@btinternet.com](mailto:ws.hossack@btinternet.com)



Dear Janine,

I am Arthur Pigott's daughter. I am sorry to pass on sad news, but Dad sadly passed away on 10th March 2020 at the grand age of 97. Luckily, it was not Covid related. He died at home and peacefully, he had been living with me in Norwich for the last few years.

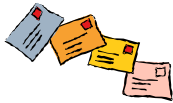
I am letting you know as we have just received your Autumn and Winter magazine. I know you run on a tight budget and thought it will save you posting anything to him again.

He was very proud to have a chapter in your book and thoroughly enjoyed corresponding with you.

Take care and keep safe.

*Alison Witchell*

There is a piece written about Arthur in the “In Memory” section at the back of the magazine – Ed.



Dear Janine,

It is with sadness that I write to notify you of the death of my Father, Leonard S Davies. He passed away peacefully last Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> August.

He is survived by my Mother (92 yrs) and would have been married for 70 years in November.

I believe he was the last surviving member of his Squadron – could you possibly confirm this?

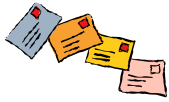
I am aware of your personal battle and hope that you are currently well.

With kind regards,

*Debbie Jones*

(Len's Daughter)

[jonesdeborahjayne@gmail.com](mailto:jonesdeborahjayne@gmail.com)



Hi Janine,

Thanks once again for your further email. I wish I'd been in possession 20 years ago of all the papers and information that I've managed to collect and had been able to visit some of your Reunions and meet those amazing men and women to listen to them in person.

I'm sorry it seems unlikely that I'll ever get to meet any of them now, as they'll all be well into their nineties and few in number. But it's great that because of your wonderful effort and commitment so many of their stories have been recorded for posterity. Well done you!

I'm afraid I'm going to query your sixth paragraph concerning Operation Gisela, as I don't think there was just a single intruder. I attach a copy from the 100 Group Flying Control Log Book which recorded events as they were happening that night.

Sunday 4 March 1945

|      |                                                                     |                 |
|------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 0003 | Suspected Hun activity. (Ex G/c Dickins)                            |                 |
| 0004 | Hun activity confirmed. Table suddenly alive with hostiles.         |                 |
| 0005 | DSO instructed to tell all heavies to proceed to screen diversions. | 38<br>10<br>CFC |

|      |                                                                                                            |  |
|------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| 0016 | Ex S/Rayham - report crash North of Sten sending crash tender and ambulance. (J/214 shot down over Dutton) |  |
| 0018 | Ex Foulsham - Stinson 17 pranged on landing. Crew ok.                                                      |  |
| 0020 | Ex Foulsham - 462 Sq. all down at Base. 6 of 192 Sq. down ok. Much activity overhead.                      |  |

You'll see the entry timed at 00:04 hrs recorded the [plotting] table was "**suddenly alive with hostiles**".

At 00:20 the 100 Group Operations Log recorded a Bomber Command Warning of two intruders in the area, heading west and north.

0003 EX G/C Dickens Believed Enemy Intruder  
above A/F Oulton

EX Oulton One of them Jents shot down

0004 EX Controller to ALL Stns Intruder  
diversion plan to be carried out

0020 B C Broadcast  
Intruder Warning

|   |       |              |
|---|-------|--------------|
| X | WG 55 | Heading West |
| X | WG 63 | " North .    |

The Great Massingham 'Operations Record Book' (copy pictured above), records the shooting down of S/L Fenwick's Mosquito shot down and crashing near Coltishall about 10 minutes after having been given the Intruder/Diversion Warning. This book records that there had been "approximately 12 hostile intruders" in the area that night, and that "Snoring, Foulsham and Oulton" airfields were attacked.

All I conclude, therefore, is that there's no evidence of the various attacks having been carried out by just one of the Intruders. Given the number of them in the Group's area and the spread both geographically and in timing, I think it's more likely that two or more Intruders were responsible.

The Little Snoring ORB doesn't actually record any attack on its airfield, although it does say that its fire crew was strafed when attending the crash of F/O Roberts' Foulsham-based 192 Sqn Halifax at Fulmodeston, nearby. Foulsham's ORB says that F/O Roberts' aircraft was attacked approaching, or over, its base and its crash site lies about 3 miles away.

Do you have any information about the intruder "shot down on the borders of Norfolk"? Apart from three Ju 88s which crashed from low flying (one each in Yorkshire, Lincolnshire and Suffolk), the only three awarded as having been shot down fell into the sea, two being shot down by 68 Sqn pilots, the third one by 125 Sqn, all based at Coltishall. The nearest to Norfolk seems to have fallen about 11 miles off the coast at 01:32 hrs. It seems like this one could be the one referred to by Murray Peden in 'A Thousand Shall Fall' where he says they saw a Ju 88, then a Mosquito pursuing it, passing over Oulton, followed a few minutes later by the announcement of the 88's destruction over the Tannoy. A Mosquito doing 300 mph over Oulton would take just under 5 minutes to reach the area where this Ju 88 was shot down.

The other two 88s were shot down about 45 and 50 minutes later, about 65 and 25 miles out over the North. There seems to be no evidence that 'Gisela' was *particularly* targeting 100 Group and its airfields. True, Norfolk was the first County to be attacked, but that seems to be because the two returning bomber forces and part of the intermingled intruder force passed over and alongside Norfolk on their way home. Some of the intruders followed the bombers up the UK (while I think others came directly across the North Sea in a second wave later on), causing losses and damage all the way from East Anglia up to North Yorkshire, and even as far inland as Buckinghamshire and Northants/Rutland. 4 Group up in Yorkshire suffered quite a number of attacks and losses.

Anyway, that's my stuff for the moment. Big congratulations on finding out what happened to your mother's Fiancée. That must have been so satisfying to learn the truth there. Bill Chorley's book of Bomber Command Losses for 1944 records the date of that loss and the identity of the aircraft and crew correctly but doesn't have the correct location.

Kind regards once again,

*Ian Hunt*

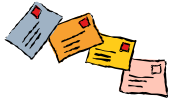
[ian.hunt29btinternet.com](http://ian.hunt29btinternet.com)

29 Cranwell Grove  
Shepperton  
Middx  
TW17 0JR

**This Operational account serves to demonstrate just how complex and fast moving an aerial battle over a relatively wide area could be and illustrates clearly just how organised defending Forces needed to be to respond and counter it.**

**Our thanks to Ian for his letter and for his research into the events of Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> March 1945.**

**He generously provided additional material that regrettably could not be used here because of available space – Ed.**



Hello Janine,

My brother has found the attached book amongst those from my late mother. Have you heard of this one? one?

I'm wondering now if the reason that my father was posted to RAF Oulton was because of his work in Canada. From 1940 to 1943 he was involved with training Canadian pilots, but I don't know in what capacity, although he was quite senior, so it could have been administration.

However, he could have been involved with the more technical issues of counter measures and training Canadians to use the equipment. This book could be about what he did, although he is not mentioned very often.

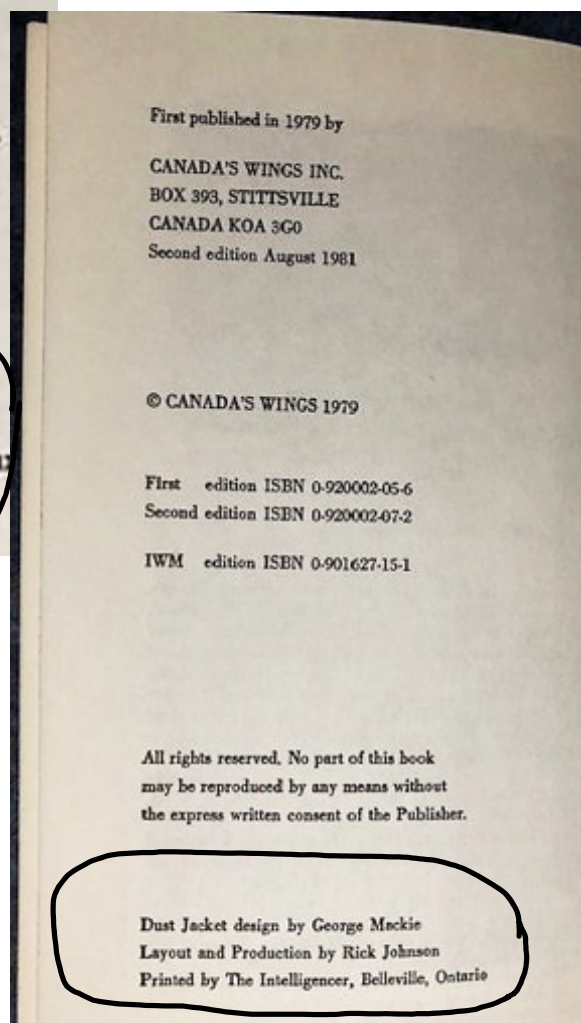
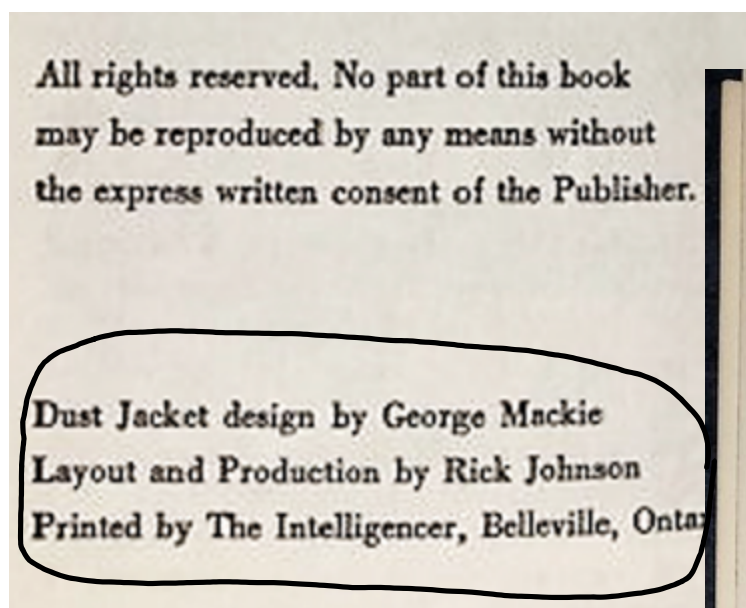
Sincere best wishes,

*Eric*

**Eric Dickens**

Son of Group Captain Thomas Charles Dickens: RAF Oulton Station Commander in 1944/45





Thank you, Eric for sending through your letter regarding the possible links between your Father and the Wartime account written by Mr Murray Peden. I know that Janine is familiar with the remarkable story contained within this book.

I would also, on behalf of our wider 100 Group family, like to wish Mr Peden a very Happy 97<sup>th</sup> Birthday which he has only recently celebrated! And, not forgetting our own Mr John Beeching from New Zealand, who also celebrated *his* 97<sup>th</sup> on the same day! Our congratulations and very best wishes to both Gentlemen.

The other thing I wanted to draw everyone's attention to – remarkably, is the name on the Flap ...  
“Dust Jacket design by George Mackie”!

Thanks to Janine for spotting that ... Ed.



Hi Janine and Stuart,

I've placed some of these photographs on the Facebook website and thought you might like copies. We are managing to get through Lockdown, although some days are occasionally easier than others. Let's hope that this epidemic disappears before next May, so that once again, we can be a family together as one.

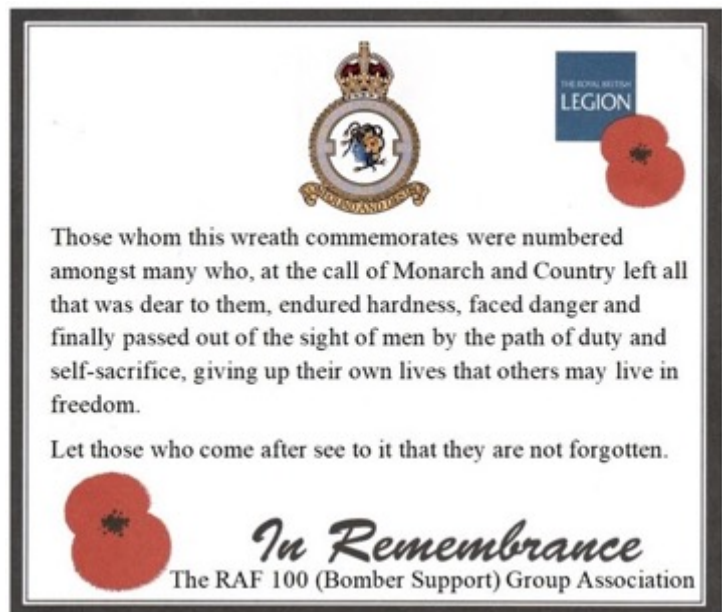
I hope you are both as well as you would wish to be.

Stay Safe,

**Mike**

Mike Hillier  
Swannington.

## *Haveringland Remembers*





The following letter was sent to Donna who, with partner Darren, runs the 'Heroes of our Time' website featuring many stories of RAF 100 Group. Donna and Darren share it with us because it has relevant information to members, and a link to the story of one of our own:

Hi Donna,

We are currently clearing all burial plots in Thorpe St Andrew cemetery, near Norwich and have come across the last resting place of Leslie Hadder. His story is featured on your website, and I was wondering if you had any details of the direct family of Leslie. We would like to contact them and invite them to Thorpe to view the recently cleaned plot of Leslie. I look forward to hearing back from you on this matter.

Regards

*Dale Wiseman*

Leslie Hadder's wartime experience was featured in our Winter 2009 Association magazine, and can also be seen on the following website link, courtesy of Donna and Darren:

<https://heroesofourtime.co.uk/my-uncle-leslie-hadder.html>

On this occasion, I was delighted to help in providing details of Leslie Hadder's nephew who was an Association member until 2018. Since then, I have heard nothing further from him.

*Janine*



Hi Janine

Here is a photo of the freshly cleaned up plot for Leslie Hadder – they had a small Remembrance Service where his name was read out along with 13 others buried in the same location.

*Darren Rose*

**Darren Rose**

PC Assist @ Home

01508 471459

[darren.rose@pcassistonline.co.uk](mailto:darren.rose@pcassistonline.co.uk)

[www.pcassistonline.co.uk](http://www.pcassistonline.co.uk)





Dear Mike,

Further to Janine Harrington's recent email, I attach a couple of 157 Squadron photos that might interest you as they identify all the squadron members.

The late Brian Whitlock-Blundell (named Whitlock only, while on 157 Squadron. See obituary beneath) was of great assistance to me in naming all those on the photos. A lovely man whom I had the pleasure of meeting several times.

The two photos which I attach are part of a 157 Sqn history which I compiled and distributed to relatives as part of our family history. Naturally, I have other photos and documents relating to 157 Sqn at RAF Swannington that you might be interested in.

Kind regards,

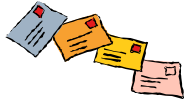
*Richard Doleman*

[dollydoleman@gmail.com](mailto:dollydoleman@gmail.com)



**157 Squadron. Officers, NCOs and Towser**  
**The Officers Mess at Haveringland Hall**  
**RAF Swannington 1944**





Hi,

I have just purchased the Little Snoring booklet by Janine Harrington and would like to advise you that airman two in the 2nd row was most likely my father in law, Flt.Lt. Douglas Wattson. We know he was stationed there for some time. My wife Valerie and her sister are convinced that the person I indicate in the front photograph is their father. Douglas died in 2008 aged 102.

I had many conversations with him but he, as is usual with most ex. Servicemen, seemed to indicate he virtually did nothing other than 'repair the electronics damaged by enemy fire and poor landings by 'poor' pilots!

He left the RAF after the war and joined A.V. Roe at their Woodford, Cheshire, factory. We live nearby in Bramhall, Cheshire. He was also sent to the Woomera Rocket range in Australia on the Blue Steel project and subsequently, was involved in the Vulcan programme.

I am trying to obtain Douglas's full-service records but it is not easy. If you can help me please in my endeavour, we would be very grateful and happy to pay for any expenditure.

I await your reply with thanks.

*Gerald Huxley*  
12 Southern Crescent  
Bramhall Stockport ,  
Cheshire SK7 3AH



Dear Gerald,

Thank you for your e-mail which I am copying to Janine Harrington (Secretary of RAF 100 Group Association in addition to successful author) who may be able to help. My sister and I were able to obtain our Father's service record without too much difficulty by using the attached form.

Little Snoring to Vulcans - was quite a career! Good luck with your search.

Kind regards,

*Roger*

Roger Dobson  
Chair RAF 100 Group Association



Hello Janine,

Thank you for your speedy reply.

I note you live in Filey. I was stationed at RAF Bampton 1956-8 so know the area well. My signing of the Official Secrets Acts on demob. prevents me from letting you know what I did (only joshing!). Soviet Union countermeasures as a clue!

I had a girl friend who lived in Humanby and one or two in Bridlington! After a year, I met my present wife, at home in Cheshire, and that finished things. With reference to me submitting an article on my father in law, Douglas J Wattson, I will prepare one shortly and send it to you for your consideration.

Thank you for the current magazine. On glancing through I find the details of what the airmen and women went through very harrowing. All were the bravest of the brave. Your involvement, with others, a tribute to them.

Best wishes

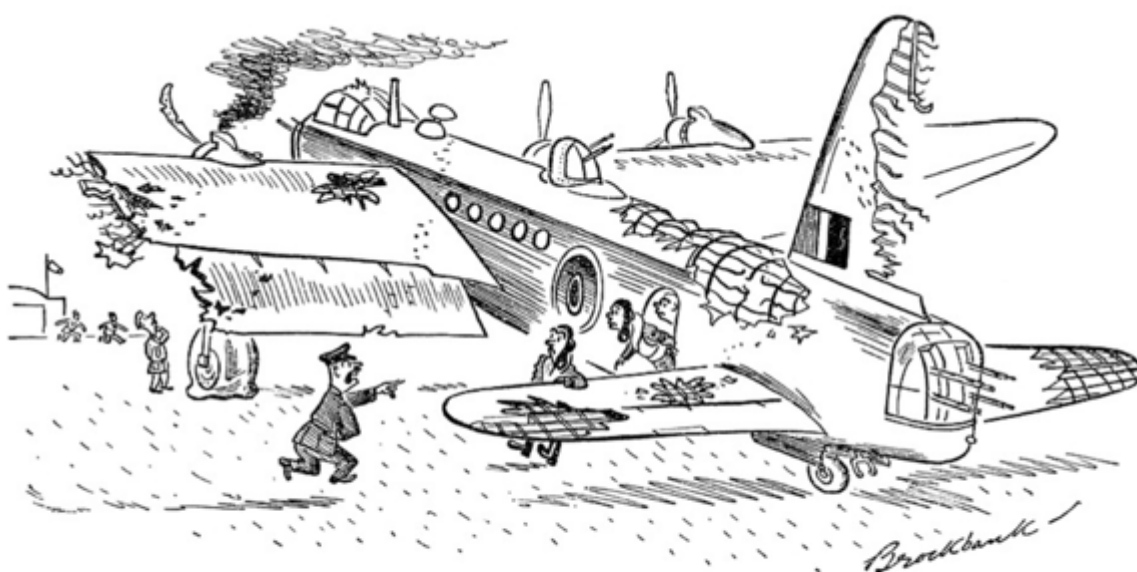
*Gerald.*

**Gerald Huxley**

PS. Douglas was the last male to have the surname 'Wattson' in the UK.

---

... from 'Punch', a little bit of humour courtesy of Mike Hillier.



*"Late again, Parkinson."*

# Updates and Follow Up

## Have you seen The Angel of North Norfolk?

**A beautiful new sculpture is flying the flag for all the men who never returned to RAF North Creake from Operations in World War Two.**



It's an echo of a sight once familiar over these huge Norfolk skies: a stainless-steel Stirling Bomber coming in to land, home safe after a dangerous mission.



Nigel Morter and Claire Nugent own 'The Control Tower Bed and Breakfast' in Egmore near Walsingham. They have been fundraising since 2017 to build a Memorial for those who served at the former RAF airfield.

The Time to Remember project was temporarily derailed by Covid-19, but the first part of the memorial has just taken flight with the installation of the beautiful Home Safe sculpture on the B1105.



There, passers-by are treated to a sight that last filled the skies in 1945: a Short Stirling bomber returning from another dangerous mission to its home base of RAF North Creake. The B1105 slices through what was once North Creake's Technical Site – you can still see Nissen huts and hangars, turret trainers and a Bomb Teacher hidden in the trees.

A mains store, gas clothing and respirator store from World War Two days are also still in use today and, slightly further away, the Airmen's huts still stand. This is a landscape that still shyly reveals its past, the bravery and heroism, the tragedy and desperation. Everywhere you look, there are reminders of RAF North Creake, Runways, Taxiways and Hard-Standings.

[Nigel and Claire with Sculptor Andy Knighton.](#)

There is a memorial erected by the Airfields of Britain Conservation Trust that stands away from the busy road and is a tribute to the 17 crews that never returned to North Creake and all their comrades who served alongside them.

But Nigel and Claire were keen to mark the 75th anniversary of the disbandment of RAF North Creake in August 2020 with a memorial which simply could not be missed: and this, they have achieved, with the help of fundraisers.



The large sculpture of the Short Stirling aircraft, mounted as if in flight, its wings banked at an angle to the ground, is a visual reminder of the real-life Stirlings which flew from the base between May 1944 to March 1945. While the nose of the plane faces the B1105, the fuselage is parallel with Runway One of the airfield and in time, there will be information panels where visitors can discover more about RAF North Creake and the incredible 3,250 staff based there.

It was a huge operation: the main runway was 2,000m long and was intersected with two smaller runways, there were 36 aircraft dispersal points and three hangars, technical and administration sites, quarters for thousands of servicemen and women and, of course, central to all, a Control Tower.

From here, 199 and 171 Squadrons of No 100 Group of RAF Bomber Command flew Stirling IIIs and Halifax IIIs on radio counter-measures intended to conceal the true position of the main Allied bomber thrust and to create maximum confusion among German radar operators.

They used airborne radio transmitters called Mandrel to jam German early-warning radar and dropped aluminium strips, known as chaff or Window to give false radar readings.

After the War, Mosquito aircraft were stored at RAF North Creake for a time, but the runways were largely broken up. It is difficult to comprehend just what a hive of activity this area once was, and as it falls away from first-hand memory, it is essential that we remember the part it played in winning the war.



*"It seemed a shame that with Covid we couldn't achieve our August 2020 deadline, but with the memorial set to survive beyond 100 years there's plenty of 'time to remember' those who served at RAF North Creake," Nigel said.*

Sculptor Andy Knighton was commissioned by the 'Time to Remember' project to create the bomber, which has a wingspan of more than 20 feet.

*"A local nickname 'The Angel of North Norfolk' is gaining traction," added Nigel, saying he and Claire hoped the sculpture would form "a gateway to the Second World War history of North Norfolk".*

Claire added: *"It will ensure all those who are passing on their way to Wells-next-the-Sea note that this was a former airfield and if their interest is tweaked, they can stop and find out more.*

*"It is not every day that ordinary people like us get to commission large-scale pieces of art. It has been a privilege to do this.*

*"When Andy delivered Home Safe to us last December, we couldn't have been more thrilled. We can't wait to share it with all those who see it when they pass this way – it is truly magnificent."*

Later this winter the rest of the site will be completed with a large steel Roll of Honour giving details of the 73 men who died while serving at the airfield set close to the sculpture along with information boards and a bench. The final landscaping will be completed in time for what the couple hope is the new dedication day: Sunday June 6th 2021, the anniversary of D-Day and of the first Operation from RAF North Creake.

*"Seeing 'Home Safe' in place made our year. The backdrop of the trees makes the sculpture look a little ghost-like, transporting us across the years and creating a strong sense of place.*

*'Home Safe' represents all those who worked, lived and served here. We would like to thank everyone who has contributed to help make this project happen."* Claire said.

Find out more here; [www.rafnorthcreake.co.uk](http://www.rafnorthcreake.co.uk)

### **Did you know?**

1. RAF North Creake was operational from June 1944 until May 1945
2. It played a critical role in supporting Bomber Command. Flying four-engine 'Heavies', initially Stirlings then from March 1945 Halifax's. Two RAF squadrons, 199, and 171, both part of RAF 100 Group, flew Operations to carry out secret radio counter measures
3. Tragically, 73 men were lost, 69 while operational, four in a training accident after the end of the War – their Halifax hit the cliffs at Cromer.
4. Fundraising included a charity beer, Drink to Remember, from Beeston Brewery, Warham Three Horse Shoes' Pie to Remember during National Pie Week, a charity auction, 1940s' days,
5. Sponsors of the Time to Remember project included North Norfolk Big Society Fund, Bomber Command Association, Holkham Estate, Walsingham Estate, Walsingham Parish Council, ABN, The Pickled Inns, Mr and Mrs Campbell, Paul Berry, Rhia Watson and Stephen Squires, Egmore Solar Farm
6. Sculpture was designed by Architect David Exeter who donated his work due to his love for the Control Tower and to honour his father, who was ground crew in the RAF from 1939 to 1945.

Story courtesy of the Eastern Daily Press,  
Friday 25 September 2020.

<https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/angel-of-north-norfolk-plane-sculpture-is-memorial-to-raf-north-creake-1-6853565>

**Our thanks to Eddy Tomblinson for sharing this with us.**

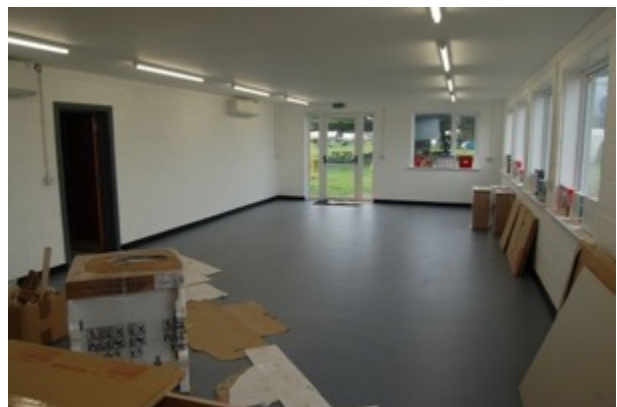
# *Update...*

## City of Norwich Aviation Museum

### News December 2020

Despite the challenges of the past nine months, 2020 has been a year of progress here at the City of Norwich Aviation Museum. Here are some of our achievements since March:

- Construction of new multi-purpose building completed. This building gives us a space that can be used as a Tearoom, for meetings, school visits and expands both our archive facilities, Museum storage and the Office/Admin space.
- Air source heating system installed in new building
- Kitchen area installed in tea room area of new building
- Disabled toilet facilities constructed in main Museum building
- Complete refurbishment of both male and female toilet facilities
- Premium quality floor covering fitted to new building and all toilets
- Car park area expanded by removal of banking
- New storage area for larger exhibits and equipment constructed
- Connection of electrical points around the site to provide power, vital for maintenance of aircraft exhibits and for special events.



We had an Avro RJ85 airliner added to aircraft collection. This was a major task with the aircraft having to be craned over the perimeter of Norwich Airport onto the Norwich Northern Distributor Road, lifted from one carriageway to the other and picked up once more before being lowered onto the Museum site! Needless to say, the road had to be closed to allow this complicated manoeuvre to be completed. To minimise disruption, this task was undertaken at night. Images of this epic night from the BBC and other media can be found by searching '[RJ85 Norwich Aviation Museum](#)' on the internet.



Photo above courtesy of Ian Brighton; Archant (Eastern Daily Press.) Below, courtesy Kelvin Sloper.

Apart from the completion of these projects, our fantastic volunteers have continued to maintain the Museum site, have made some progress with aircraft restoration and, as our six employees have been furloughed since the end of March, staffed the Museum when we have been open to visitors.

Funds had been collected over very many years to enable the construction of the new building and although the new aircraft was kindly donated by its final operator **City Jet**, the cost of the lift and road closures were drawn from money set aside for the acquisition of new exhibits. We believe that the improvements we have made will be of great benefit when we are able to return to more normal operating conditions and that the value they add to our visitor experience and the income they will generate will help us to make similar improvements to both our facilities and collection over the coming years. A year ago, we were looking back at the best year in terms of visitor numbers and income that the Museum had ever had.

With the new building and its better Tea room facilities due to be available from April, we confidentially anticipated that we would again enjoy another good year. Things did not go as we expected! Our visitor numbers have fallen by around 10,000 with the resultant decrease in income.

We have always ensured that the Museum holds sufficient funds in reserve to cover costs for some time in case we found that the Charity's income ceased. Our experience in dealing with the uncertainty over the location of the Museum in the period leading up to the construction of the new road has helped us to deal with the problems of 2020 successfully, we had planned for the possibility that we would not be able to open.



Although our income from visitors has obviously fallen, we have had the support of the Job Retention Scheme to enable us to continue to pay our employees and have received Business Interruption Grants for the lockdown period which have covered some of the costs of operating the Museum such as insurance, standing charges and professional fees. These are the costs of running the Charity which we cannot avoid, whether we are open or not. We are extremely appreciative of the measures the Government have put in place to support us.

Income has also been gained from the opening of the site to visitors. To keep everyone safe, we have not opened any of the buildings, restricting access to outside areas only. We have also raised funds from selling surplus donated items on Ebay.

We are grateful for the many donations we received over the Summer and the lockdown has given many the chance to have a good clear out! When safe, we very much look forward to being able to open all our facilities up to visitors. We also eagerly anticipate welcoming our staff back to work. We have ambitions to make further expansions and improvements to the Museum.

In preparation for the future, we are currently in discussions to make changes to some of the Museum site boundaries to give us more usable space. In particular, we hope to be able to 'square up' the western end of the site where we presently have a long narrow area which is not very useful. So that we can quickly start normal operations as soon as we are able, we are currently raising funds so we can fund purchases of items we will need to resume normal operations. Apart from what income we can gather from opening the Museum on a limited basis and continuing sales on Ebay, we are also actively encouraging our supporters who shop online to use Amazon Smile and 'Easyfundraising', nominating 'The City of Norwich Aviation Museum' as their chosen charity. Using either or both of these will not cost the shopper anything when making a purchase, but a small percentage of the value of goods bought will be donated to the Museum.

Already we have many signed up and regular contributions are being received. For example, you can shop online at Tesco's using Easyfundraising and the Museum will receive a donation every time you make a purchase. Both of these simple and easy to use ways to obtain donations to the Museum have the potential for us to raise a great deal of money; we just need many individuals signed up to support us. Details of how to register and use Amazon Smile and Easyfundraising can be found on our internet site [www.cnam.org.uk](http://www.cnam.org.uk)

We look forward to being able to welcome you back to the Museum and trust that this will be possible for the 2021 Reunion.

Regards,

*Kevin Sloper*

# Features

## *The Norman Storey Story!*

Rear Gunners were known as 'Tail End Charlies', their main task being as a look-out, and to defend their aircraft and crew when under attack. Looking at the Rear Gunners position, it's difficult to imagine how a grown man could even fit into such a small, cramped, confined space, let alone spend up to eight hours a night, flying backwards in what must surely have been claustrophobic conditions.

They would have known their position often put them first in line for elimination by the enemy fighter planes, who tended to attack from the rear and under the belly of the bomber without fear of being shot at.

According to [Yorkshire Air Museum](#), 20,000 rear gunners lost their lives during WWII.

Norman Storey, describes his life and routine as an Air Gunner during winter 1943/1944:



*"I awoke one morning in a freezing cold Nissen hut. After dressing, I walked across the snow-bound ground to the ablutions or wash rooms for a cold-water shave and wash, before climbing on my bike to the Sergeants Mess for breakfast. Afterwards, with the rest of the crew, we'd go to the Flight Commander's Office for confirmation that all were fit for Operations that day if required. On the odd occasion I was sick, it was my responsibility to find a spare Gunner to go in my place.*

*We then sat in the crew room until 11am when the NAAFI wagon turned up for tea and a wad (bun). If the order came through that we were on Ops, I'd need to go to the Armoury to pick up a set of four .303 Browning machine guns, taking them to the aircraft. With the help of an armourer, I'd then set them to concentrate at 400 yards with a maximum of 600 yards. Finally, with everything in position, I'd head back to the Mess for lunch and the allotted time for Briefing. After this came the aircrew meal of egg and bacon before heading to the locker to put on flying kit. After all the checks, we'd prepare to taxi for take-off tucked inside the aircraft.*

*On returning back to dispersal, I'd need to remove the guns from the turret and return them to the armoury. Then it was into the crew room for hot tea and rum before de-briefing, and on to the Mess for another egg and bacon meal. My cycle was always on standby for the ride back to the cold Nissen hut to sleep, and then the next day it would start all over again."*

This was a typical day in the life of a Bomber Command Air Gunner.

*"The Rear Gunner had three enemies: **the three 'F's – Flak, Fighters and Frostbite.***

*On the return flight from Leipzig in December 1943, it was the third one that got me. The condensation in my oxygen tube froze. I was being starved of oxygen, which caused the effect of being drunk. I was thrashing about in the turret, even in that confined space! After a while, the turret light came on, but quite how that happened I'm not sure.*

*The Mid-Upper Gunner reported it to the Pilot and having an idea what was wrong, sent the Wireless Operator to the back of the plane using a portable oxygen bottle, with a replacement helmet and oxygen mask. Removing the old one from my head, he replaced it with the one he had brought. But my ears had already suffered frostbite, and on return to Base, I was taken to Sick Quarters where my ears were treated and bandaged. I remained there for three days, and when released, was allowed to wear a silk stocking, courtesy of the Wireless Operator's wife.*

*I wore this at all times for the rest of the winter, much to the frustration of the Warrant Officer who was unable to put me on a charge of being improperly dressed! As time went by, the problem became less and less painful, although on a very cold day, for the rest of my life, I continued to suffer pain down the back of each ear: a constant reminder of Leipzig."*



**Norman pictured here sitting astride the rear turret of a Lancaster.**

## **THE AIR GUNNER'S ROLE**

The Air Gunner sits alone in his turret  
Anxiously scanning the unfriendly skies,  
Looking for approaching enemy fighters  
As on an operation his bomber flies.

Confined in the dismal, cramped quarters  
In a circle, his turret continually rotates.  
Tensions mount as they near their target  
Alert and on guard for any peril he waits.

For hours he must maintain constant vigil  
On a Mitchell bomber, he's the only defence,  
The crew's survival depends on his alertness,  
During an Op there's no break in suspense.

An Air Gunner's life is barren of glamour,  
Recognition or medals are not in store;  
Overlooked when they hand out the glory,  
No fame for performing his dangerous chore.

To a bomber's crew the Air Gunner is vital,  
A thankless and dangerous task is his role  
To protect his bomber from enemy fighters  
Ensuring its safe return to base is his goal.

When a bomber is on an operational sortie  
And comes under an enemy fighter attack,  
The crew will rely on their trusted Air Gunner  
To provide the protection needed to get back.

From his crewmates he will gain recognition,  
Acknowledgement that on him they depend;  
They know that when their bomber is in peril  
A capable Air Gunner will their aircraft defend.

**George Olson**  
**20 October 1944**

## *Mr Sidney Pike; Another Extraordinary Story.*



I lived in Essex in 1939. I was apprenticed to the post office engineering Department. It was from there I joined the Air Force. I was a youth in training, having left Technical College that year. I had joined the Air Defence Cadet Corps in 1939 - which was the precursor to the Air Training Corps (the ATC grew up from that organisation), so it was natural enough that when the opportunity came to join the RAF, I did.

I was given the opportunity to join the RAF, provided I joined as either a pilot or navigator, that was the deal with the Post Office. Otherwise, it would have been the Royal Signal Corps in the Army and that I didn't want.

I volunteered for the Air Force and just after I was 19 in March 1942, I joined the Aircrew Reception Centre at St Johns Wood. I went to Initial Air Training Wing at Scarborough until July 1942. I had never flown before I joined the Air Force, that was my first experience. I thoroughly enjoyed it, apart from being a learning process it was great fun to fly their aircraft. If you offered me Concorde or a Tiger Moth, I'd still take the Tiger moth every time! Dodging about in the clouds was great fun. Unfortunately, I failed miserably on my landing for my solo test. Otherwise, I would have been doing very well. I enjoyed it and got on with the Tiger Moth well. But I knew I'd blown it because I'd made such a mess of it. All the manoeuvres were fine, it was purely the landing. When you know you are on your final test you do feel the pressure - and mistakes can result.

So, I was re-mustered to a trade that I'd never heard of; a 'Navigator – Wireless'.

I wondered "What's this Navigator-Wireless? What's so different about that"? However, I never got to find out. I was posted off to No 1 Signals School at Cranwell, where I had to learn Morse Code. We trained in a 'Harwell Box' which was something like a voting booth. It was soundproof, so the only thing you heard through your earphones was Morse Code. It was like the small Wireless Operators cabin in an aircraft, you were isolated from anything else. You either got the Morse or you didn't, you were on your own.

We also flew in Dominies and Ansons, doing Wireless operating down to the ground. I passed the test at the sufficient speed – I think it was twelve words a minute.

In January 1943 I was shipped off to Canada on the Empress of Scotland, a troopship. The trip itself was pretty dicey, the waves were horrendous and the conditions on board the ship were pretty horrendous as well! We landed in New York, which was an eye opener. We went straight to the station and entrained for Canada, to number 33 Navigation School which was just outside Hamilton Ontario. There we started again on the Wireless work then commenced Navigation training, which entailed flying with other Operators, swapping roles as Nav/W. Op on air exercises. So it continued for the first month or so, then it was far more concentrated on the navigation itself. Without boasting, I was pretty good at mathematics, which helped me with the course as I had attended Technical College for three years back in the UK. Geometry and mathematics were also very much part of the course.

It was a very different life. There was plenty of everything, plenty of food and booze, mind you, you had to be over 18 to get a liquor licence. At weekends (you usually got weekends off) you would go into Hamilton itself. If you had got to know someone, good stay overnight with them. You indulged in all the things the Canadians indulged in. We were living very well and enjoying civvy life. I never had any trouble with the Canadians. I was there from March 1943 to July 1943 and then from there went to a transit camp in Moncton, Montreal.

The next thing, I was on a General Reconnaissance course up at Charlottetown in Newfoundland. There, apart from navigating, we were doing ship recognition, German Battleships, Merchant shipping and so on. We used to fly in Avro Ansons over the Gulf of St Lawrence, spotting ships. Then I was sent to Vancouver Island, Patricia Bay.

Then I picked up a crew of New Zealanders, a pilot and two Wireless Operator/ Air gunners, flying Hampdens of all things. They were horrendous aircraft, the most peculiar thing, very cramped. The Navigator had to more or less crawl beneath underneath the Pilot to get down into the bulbous nose. For landing the Navigator had to come up from the nose and take his seat behind the Skipper. The Pilots seat had an armour plate and the Navigator held on to that as the aircraft landed. We had a rather heavy landing one day and I hit the underside of my nose on that plate and spilt the skin open! Ray, the Skipper, radioed for an ambulance and I was picked up and taken to a medical centre on the Canadian side. I had this little split on my lip dressed and it was made to sound far worse than it actually was.

I would have hated to have done Ops on these aircraft, any time in the air would have been very uncomfortable. The lads who flew in Hampdens at the beginning of the War and Whitleys and all that, were definite heroes; they were flying old bags of string – terrible things!

We were on dummy torpedo runs and submarine searches. We flew over the Pacific and up the straits between Vancouver Island and the coast mountains. It was absolutely superb flying; the mountains on one side and this most beautiful island on the other. You didn't have to look far to find Royal Canadian Navy submarines. The water was so clear you could see them submerged, travelling along the seabed! The sea floor was full of colour- greens and reds- an absolutely incredible sight. It was a thoroughly enjoyable course, running from September to December 1943.

I arrived back in England in January and conditions were similar to those when I left. I was posted to No 3 Advanced Flying Unit, at Halfpenny Green, Worcester and back onto Ansons. It was advanced navigation, which wasn't very different to anything I'd already done.

But I finished the course in February 1944 and went to No 26 Operational Training Unit at Wing, near Leighton Buzzard in Bedfordshire. There I picked up another crew, a Pilot, Bomb aimer, Wireless Operator and two Air gunners, all English. We 'Crewed Up' in the usual fashion, all shoved into a room, milling about, chatted with bods and finally you found yourself in a crew. It was a bit of a lottery. It all happened fairly quickly. Quite tall young men came over to me, a flying officer pilot- Frank Savage. I was a Sergeant. He said, "Have you got a crew? Right, come with me." I went with him. A very good choice it proved to be, because he had already been a flying instructor, so he wasn't green.

Frank Savage was a tall man. He was a very pleasant individual and pretty relaxed, but you knew where the orders came from. He was never overbearing or over strict. I think his stature, his rank as a Flying Officer and his reputation, having been a flying instructor, gave him a certain status. He was senior in rank to all of us and he was older than the rest of us and that gave him a certain cache. He was the governor as it were, without being overbearing or shouting the odds.



F/Sgt. S. A. R. Pike Sgt. D. E. Astbury F/Lt F. W. Savage F/O A. N. Craven F/O J. Hussey  
Sgt. N. L. Rishworth Sgt. N. J. Lee Sgt. C. Hamblett Sgt. R. D. Kenney Sgt. S. Judge

100 Group Bomber Command - 214 Squadron - "Oulton."

1944.

We flew Wellingtons until June. It was a lovely aircraft to fly; Geodetic construction with a fabric covering so was very cold. The Wellington was reliable and comfortable enough for training. When we finished at OTU we were sent to 1657 Heavy Conversion Unit at Stradishall flying Stirlings. It was another aircraft taken off operations because it wasn't up to requirements. The Stirling had a reputation for being a Pilot's nightmare to land because the undercarriage was very

tall. It was so high up off the ground, it was a fantastic thing to climb into; behind the Pilots seat there was a hatch you reached by ladder. The Stirling was cumbersome however. Glad to say our pilot Frank Savage was a real expert, so we did very well with him. Again, we flew cross countries and exercises, but no more wireless operating for me!

On these various courses I had always wondered about this Navigator/Wireless Op category. "What is this? Where are we going?" Mosquitos weren't a big thing at that time. Was it Beaufighters? Were we going onto Torpedo Bombers – the death run! You just didn't know. Then suddenly you find yourself a plain old Navigator in Bomber Command.

We finished our flying at Stradishall and were sent to 1699 Heavy Conversion Unit at Oulton, just outside Aylsham in Norfolk. We flew B17s, Flying Fortresses. This was a complete change. We picked up two more Air Gunners, so we had a Rear gunner, Mid-upper and two side Gunners. The Fortress was a comfortable aircraft to fly and it was different. There was a side door in the fuselage, and you walked up to the Pilots cabin, which was raised up, and you ducked down under to get into the nose. Once you were in the nose you had more headroom; you could stand up! After a couple of weeks converting onto Fortresses' we were posted to 214 squadron.

214 Federated Malay States, Bomber Support Squadron was on the other side of the airfield. It was one of the squadrons of 100 Group. RAF 100 Group was set up towards the end of 1943 specifically for Bomber Support and Radar Countermeasure operations. In 1943 Bomber losses were becoming unsustainable; we couldn't afford to keep losing aircraft and even less the aircrew at that rate.

The Germans were becoming more sophisticated in their electronic measures, with their Night Fighters and their gun laying - they were getting that down to a fine art! All the squadrons of 100 Group we're based in the County of Norfolk and Group Headquarters was based at Bylaugh Hall.

214 Squadron Fortresses were specifically modified for their support role; the front gun position under the nose was removed and the H2S was fitted. The belly turret was taken out and in the bomb bay a special transmitter was installed. I think the Fortress was used not because it had a slightly superior performance to the Lancaster but because its Bomb Bay was vertical as opposed to the lateral design of the Lancaster and the B17s Bomb Bay design lent itself to the fitting of a floor.

The 'Jostle' Transmitter was a huge dustbin like thing. It must have been 4'6" high and 3'4" in diameter. It fitted the vertical Bomb Bay very well. We picked up another Wireless Operator on the Squadron – so there were ten of us in the crew. He was a 'Special Duties Wireless Operator', a German speaker who operated the Jostle. The Fortress was fitted with a special little cabin behind the Pilot and the Special Wireless Op sat in there. His compartment was locked up when he wasn't occupying it. We never asked him what he was doing, and he was never allowed to tell us. It was always very 'Top Secret' stuff. We did some trips when the Special Operator wasn't with us; it depended on what we were doing.

We only had the faintest idea of what was going on. We were not told a great deal. We just knew the transmitter in the Bomb Bay was something to do with jamming. You were more concerned with your own interests- getting the aircraft to the target and back again safely. I couldn't worry about what others were doing, they had to look after themselves – and in doing so, the rest of us! It's possible we could have found out more, but I doubt anyone would have wanted to tell us too

much. It was very, very stum, I remember signing the Official Secrets Act. We didn't learn a great deal, it was a case of doing what we trained to do and everyone to himself.

We never did a sustained period of trips to a particular target in Germany, to get the feeling that there was a hornet's nest you are going to fly into every night. I can understand those going to Berlin thinking ... "my gosh not again through that Hellfire". The boys doing the Berlin raids in '43 and the beginning of '44 found life was very precarious. They were horrible raids at the best of times. You can understand them being extremely apprehensive that they were going into hell -as it were - yet again. I took each one of our own trips wondering, "What's this one going to be like"?

The crew list was posted in the crew room that day, so you went to find out who was on the roster for that particular night. In the morning you would know if you were on that night. That's as much as you would know. In the afternoon you took the aircraft you were flying that night out on a test flight. It was usually only 15 minutes up to 3000 feet. It was a Pilot and Flight Engineer's job to ensure the aircraft was serviceable and you'd make sure your Gee and other electronics were all working.

The pilot and I were briefed together. But the Wireless Operator was briefed separately because the knowledge imparted to him would be specific to him. As for the special operator, I imagine he must have been briefed separately too. The job of the Pilot, Engineer and myself was to get the plane to the target and back, so we were told courses, times and weather conditions.



Others were concerned with the purpose of the trip. All of the briefings were much of a muchness. On a particular night some crews would be carrying out spoof raids while others would be going out with the bomber stream. Whatever it was, my work would be exactly the same - to be at a set point, at a certain time. The type of operation made no difference at all.

After the specialist briefings I have a feeling there was a general aircrew briefing. Then you were fed and watered before you went out. You didn't say where you were going. You kept that very much to yourself. And after you'd had your meal in the Sergeants Mess, you went to the Crew Room and put your flying gear on. The crew room had lockers with all the heavy flying gear in; silk long Johns, and underwear, long socks, woollen jumpers, the padded electric flying suit which the aircraft electrical system warmed up, little silk gloves and some heavy ones. We used the silk gloves for navigation work. We had an Irvin flying jacket as well. We wore a helmet with earphones and an oxygen mask. I can't remember being very uncomfortable, certainly very tired, but not uncomfortable. I also had a big green bag with all my navigation gear which I kept in my locker.

**Photo courtesy of Mike Hillier**

The WAAFs would drive us out to the aircraft in a Crew Bus, about half an hour before take off. The aircraft was at its dispersal point on the station. We would get our kit sorted, check the Gee equipment again, test your oxygen and the intercom.

The Pilot and the Engineer started the four engines and let them warm up. I had a Dalton computer, sextant, pencils, callipers, charts, Mercator's maps and topographical maps. The Bomb Aimer would use that for pinpoints to give the Navigator some plotting aids as the Bomber Aimer was sort of an assistant Navigator as well. In our aircraft there were no bombs to drop so the Bomb Aimers were Bomb Aimers in title and were referred to as assistant Navigators/Observers although they weren't doing the plotting as such.

I sat in the navigator's compartment on take off. The perspex nose was a couple of feet away. Like the Pilot, I had a good view of the runway and the take offs and landings were quite exciting. At night you couldn't see a damn thing! The Fortress was a well powered aircraft.

After take off you might climb to height and then set off, or you climb to height on your way out. 23,000 feet was our usual operating altitude, I can't remember going much higher than that. If we were going out over the North Sea coasts, or Denmark, we very frequently went out via Southwold. Orfordness was another point we passed over on the way out. If we were going deeply into Germany, we went across the channel from Brighton or Bournemouth and crossed into southern Germany.

You were working on your navigation all the time; checking your position using any information H2S or the Bomber Aimer could give you and plotting your actual position. H2S and Gee were very helpful although Gee had a limited range. Before the front line moved forward, Gee was limited to 300 miles from the base stations which transmitted the geocentric circles of signals. So you could only go so far into Germany with Gee, after which H2S became very useful. Rivers and canals showed up particularly well. If the bomb aimer was reading his map and could pinpoint the River you could get quite accurate fixes. The Bomb Aimer was quite useful and must have been so on Lancasters too – even before they reached the target!

In the navigator's compartment I was in line with the propellers. Of course, there was roar from the engines, you could not avoid that. But I wouldn't say it was obtrusive to the point that it put you off your work. The noise became a blur. You'd get up and work over your Maps on the chart table, it was easier to work standing up than sitting. You sat down again when working on your Gee or H2S equipment.

Once you got to the target area you were always on the edge of your seat. You would be nervously thinking –“Have I got it right”? You would tell the Skipper, “Any time now you should see something”. Being upfront you might get a bit of a twitch on thinking, “Where the hell is this target - when's it going to start”? Then it would begin. It was always very reassuring when the skipper came back , “Yes I can see it in the distance”. There wasn't quite the same buzz on the way home. All you wanted to do was get home and go to bed!

We stayed at the target for about 10 minutes and orbited it in the darkness. If you were jamming, there was no point in going out and coming back. The bombers were coming in over a period of about 20 minutes, so you needed a Fortress jamming to cover that period. We used to do it in shifts. One aircraft would arrive at 5 minutes before zero, he would leave at 5 minutes after zero. Another fortress would arrive at zero and would leave 10 minutes after. Another fortress arrived

had arrived at zero and would leave 10 minutes after zero. And so on. There was always coverage over the target so we had to remain there for ten minutes. After I had worked out my first course home, ready for the off, all I could do was sweat. You just hoped to God the ten minutes would go so you could get the hell out of it! It gave you a very good chance though to see what was going on.

I liked the day trips. At least you could see clearly what was happening around and below you. Day trips were far more interesting. At night you were enveloped in blackness although you were aware of other aircraft around you and you feel an aircraft if you get into or cross its wake. The target was a spectacular sight at night, an awful lot of fireworks and huge fires. Once a City was well alight, it was always an awe-inspiring sight. Dresden was particularly bad because the city consisted of a lot of wooden buildings. It really was one hell of a great fire. An exceptional fire. A Firestorm in fact.

Coming back from the target we were still jamming so the fighters couldn't get into the stream on the way back. We had to stick with them to provide jamming coverage. If anyone wanted to make his own way home, "taking a flyer," it was up to him. He's on his own.

You had to wait your turn for clearance to land. One of our chaps was coming in on approach but another of our chaps radioed in with an emergency and was given priority. The first aircraft went round again and was caught by a hunting Ju 88 and shot down, with the loss of the entire crew!

We were picked up by the on-duty WAAF Driver at our Dispersal and driven back to de-briefing. All the crew would tell the Intelligence Officer about the trip and answered his questions. He asked about fighter activity, searchlights and flak. The Gunners would say if they had seen other aircraft or aircraft being shot down. After that you got changed, walked to the Mess, had your meal then went to bed.



The Billet was about a quarter mile down a little lane at Oulton. As you come out of Oulton, coming south, there's a small lane on your left, up there was a couple of communal sites and the Sergeants Mess. I think there was an Officers quarters as well. If you walked down the lane, the Crew Room and all the Squadron buildings were almost opposite. There's nothing at Oulton now, yet there used to be all sorts of buildings; our Sergeants Mess, The Officers Mess, the Nissan Huts we lived in. It's all National Trust now.

**Photo of Oulton taken 2018 courtesy of Mr David Nock.**

Oulton was a comfortable Station. But there was one instance when we were woken up by the Service Police who came through the door and started picking up all the kit of the other Crew who was sharing the hut with us. They had been lost on that night's Raid. A bit disconcerting but you just had to get on with it. You had to. It was all a bit of an adventure – we were young - so that's the way we looked at it. None of us wore white rabbit's feet, but a number of the crew might take a talisman of some kind with them. It wasn't uncommon.

The only time you got really fidgety, was when things started to get hot over there, above the Continent. When search lights were flashing around the Sky, you thought "God, I don't want one of those getting onto us". Then there was the flak and the night fighters! We had heard about the Me 262 and then, one night, we saw it in the distance- a great jet of flame. We thought, "What have we got here? What new devilry is this?" You always feared the worst! That was toward the end of our first tour.

We had to do one or two 'Corkscrews' during the Tour. It was normally because a German night fighter was sighted and positioning for an attack. It was the Gunners job to say whether to go or not. We didn't do a lot of it but when you did, I suddenly had to start holding down all my navigation gear down! We saw plenty of flak, but we were never troubled by it. We were positioned slightly higher than the Bomber stream. I think we were lucky.

You did get frightened, there's no doubt about it. I remember thinking, " God, get me out of this mess and I'll be a good boy forever more"! You never were. You just forgot it when you landed. Had a few beers and forgot it. There was sometimes a tinge of fear going out, depending on what you were doing; "Its a tough one tonight". You were so knackered after it all that sleeping was no problem.

You were your own man if you weren't flying, to go swimming in the lake at Blickling or go to the local dances. We were free to relax, you didn't have extra mural activities or training. I wouldn't say we got a lot of leave. I came home once in six months at about January 1945. Prior to that I'd had a week, I stayed up in Norwich with a local family. I just relaxed, took off the suit and went for walks or messed about at the house. A couple of times the skipper, Frank, took several of us to the Maid's Head in Norwich for a dinner. I can't recall going anywhere with Vern. I didn't spend a lot of time in the Officers Mess at all. I used to spend it locally with the family. It was like a day job really. You had to go over in the morning and find out if you were flying that night. If not, you pushed off home again. That was the way it went toward the end of the second Tour. I didn't spend an awful lot of time on the station at all.

In mid September 1944 we did patrols along the Dutch coast escorted by Spitfires. At the time London was being bombarded by the new V2 Rockets. We were trying to find out which frequencies the Rockets operated on for launching and control in flight.

We patrolled up and down a 30 mile stretch, about 5 miles off the Dutch coast, waiting to see if any V2s'were launched. The patrols we're a bit boring. We flew in beautiful sunny days with blue skies, flying up and down the coast. It was dead easy stooging up and down the coast. We didn't see a great deal of the Spitfires, they stood off from our track. The Gunners had to keep their eyes on what was going on inland, to see any tell-tale signs of rockets coming up, our Special Operator ready to sort out the frequency on which they operated using the 'Big Ben' equipment. That was abandoned after a while, as they weren't working on any frequency at all. Although they did use a guidance system, they were just fired off randomly.

On the 27th of September 1944, we escorted the US 8th Army Air force on one of their raids to Bottrop. It was quite strange to see a completely black Fortress amongst all those silver jobs!

On the night of the 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> of November 1944 we went to Saarbrücken. We didn't take off until 1:00 o'clock in the morning.

Coming back from this raid, both port engines caught fire and there was a period when I thought we might be bailing out. I thought, "Uh oh, better get hold of things just in case we have to go". I didn't get around to clipping my chute on though. The Skipper put the plane into a dive and got the fires out. When Frank came on the intercom and said "The fires are out. It's under control", I relaxed a bit. He then tried to feather the dead engines; the outer feathered but the port inner wouldn't and it continually wind milled. He said to me, "Sid, give me a course to the nearest emergency landing station". I found that the closest was Juvincourt, near Reims in France, gave him a heading and we duly found the airfield, which not long ago had been abandoned by the Germans. The runway had been patched and the holes filled where we had bombed it previously. We landed, a hell of a bumpy landing – and one of the propellers came off, hit the Tailplane and took part of it off!

A Flying Officer and a couple of blokes were the only personnel at Juvincourt and they gave us a bed for the night. The Pilot, Bomb Aimer and Special Operator were Officers, the rest of us were NCOs; we were put up in the old Luftwaffe barracks where we had straw palliases and a blanket. We thought, "Ok, we'll go into Reims tomorrow and we'll get some champagne"! But later that morning the Squadron sent a Fortress to bring us back! We left at 3.30 in the afternoon on the same morning we pranged. Would you believe it, the next night they sent us to Bremen!

About this time, we knew one of our Gunners, Sgt Astbury, was getting a bit fidgety, but we didn't take any notice of it. He wasn't very old, about 21 and had done three quarters of the Tour but he just couldn't take anymore. One day he just disappeared. He was discharged because he couldn't go on. I imagine it was a case of LMF- Lack of Moral Fibre. I think they were stripped of their rank and sent to a disciplinary centre – it was a horrible business. He was married with one child so the whole thing was a bit sad. Another Gunner joined the Crew.

One raid which was obviously intended to disrupt morale, was on Christmas Eve 1944. At half past three in the afternoon, four of us took off and made for Cologne, windowing like mad all the way. You can imagine the poor devils having to dash down the shelters, the German night fighter crews having to get kitted up and into the air - only for the raid to fizzle out! We got back at 8:00 o'clock in the evening, went to the Sergeants Mess and whooped it up with the girls. Our earlier escapade was intended to knock the poor Huns morale by getting the civilians down in the shelters and get the night fighters up in the air wasting time and fuel.

Our last trip, 14th of January 1945, was another disastrous effort. In the afternoon the Pilot, Engineer and I took an aircraft, H for Harry, up for an air test. The aircraft was very sluggish getting off the runway. It just trolled along and I thought, "Come on, when are you going to get off"? It lifted off eventually and we did the air test. It appeared to be OK but it was faulty ...

When we took off that night, airborne and passing the end of the runway, there was a hell of a BANG! I thought, "What the hell was that?!" Nobody said a word. The moment passed and we settled in on track for the trip. We'd got as far as the coast, Aldeburgh, when the Engineer said, "Look Skipper, we've got to turn around, all the engines are overheating". I thought, "Oh well, that's that one over". I didn't get any twitches about it. We were quite blasé about it. So, we came back and landed, got down on the ground and went to de-briefing and explained why we had aborted the Operation.

The following day we went out to see the aircraft at Dispersal. The leading edge of one wing was almost flattened! The nacelles and the fins on the engine cylinders, halfway up to the propeller hubs were full of twigs; we'd hit trees on the end of the runway!

Something had gone wrong preventing the engines from developing full power, drastically affecting our ability to reach take off speed. That was the last trip of the first tour – enough is enough!

We should have done 30 operations, officially we did 28. Some of the sorties only counted as a half. If it was a short trip and just a window patrol for example, that was designated only as a half, so you would have to do two of those to get one operation. We did 34 sorties which counted as 28 operations.

When I finished the first tour there was talk of setting up a Navigation School within the Stations Heavy Conversion Unit. I don't know why. They wanted me to stay as an Instructor. As far as I knew I was just hanging around, reporting every day with nothing to do. I enjoyed flying. I enjoyed the experience. I liked Oulton and the company I was keeping. The fact that it was just a night job was attractive and I hadn't a clue where else I was going. I didn't know if I could carry on flying or not, but I wanted to keep flying. There was nothing altruistic about it.

Jack Lee, our Flight Engineer and I were both commissioned. We, together with the ordinary Wireless Operator had volunteered to do another tour. An Australian Pilot, Verner Scantleton, had finished his first tour and wanted to stay on flying. He had a couple of his crew with him and we were all told, "You want to go flying again? Here's another crew, off you go lads"! We picked up the remnants of another crew who also had completed their first tour and so we formed a new crew together.



**Photo courtesy of Mr John Scantleton, NSW, Australia.**

**Back Row; P/O Lee, F/O Handman (RAAF), P/O Rushworth, P/O James  
Front Row; P/O Sid Pike, Vern L Scantleton (Skipper), F/Lt Don Beaton DFC**

Vern Scantleton was a fairly quiet unassuming individual, very laid back. He didn't quite have the presence of Frank Savage, but Vern was very likeable, easy going and all he wanted to do was fly. He was only happy when he was flying. I liked Verner.

Our first trip of our second tour was to Dresden on the 13<sup>th</sup> February 1945. That was the raid that did it for us in Bomber Command. Churchill didn't want to know about that one – despite the fact he asked that it should be done. The Russians wanted Dresden raided. Of course, there is plenty of information now about how essential it was to go after the City. It was a nine and a half hour flight, a hell of a long time. We took off at six in the evening and landed at 3.30 the next morning. I was totally knackered by the time we got back. Coming across the Channel I could just see the English coast coming up. I was laid out in the nose of the aircraft and that was it, I was gone. I didn't know any more about it until we were landing at Oulton. The Bomber Aimer had been kipping half the way back anyway and he took over. It was easy enough to find Oulton once you had got back to the English coast.

On the 18<sup>th</sup> February we went to the Rhine. We had to land at North Creake as we couldn't get into Oulton. The following night we went to Leipzig, two nights after that, Krefeld; the night after that Dusseldorf – you can see the concentration. We went out night after night after night. We went back to Leipzig again on the 8<sup>th</sup> April and on return landed at Tangmere. I have no idea why this was the case, probably weather at Oulton. On the 10<sup>th</sup> April we went to Magdeburg, that's another one out near Dresden. That was 8 hours. You did 30 trips on your first tour, 20 trips on your second. This was our fifteenth operation. When we got back our Group Captain was waiting for us. He said, "I think you've done enough". And that was it. Altogether, I did 47 trips.

In a way I was very lucky spending so long training on all these courses we were sent on. If I'd gone straight to navigator training, without all this wireless operating and general reconnaissance, I would have been on operations the year before. When though the trips were shorter, they were more dangerous, though it has to be said for losses at the end of the war were just as bad. In the period I was at Oulton, 9 or 10 Fortresses were lost. There was no question that it was getting much easier. The dangers were still there, but they weren't the horrendous continuous trips as they were with the Berlin campaign. That was night after night with really horrendous conditions.

When I finished flying I was sent to the RAF School of Administration at Creedenhill near Hereford. I spent six weeks studying Kings regulations, hygiene, discipline, how to run a court martial and how to put blokes on fizzers.

It obviously looked as though an Adjutants job was in prospect. Rumour was that it could be in the Far East. Halfway through the course VE Day turned up and about 10 of us went AWOL for the weekend. The Wing Commander wigged us about this 'going over the top' ... "Officers don't do that sort of thing". He smacked our wrists and told us to clear off! So that was fine. I finished at the school and was posted to Germany, being told to report to an office in the small town of Buckeburg. A beautiful town. Close by is the spa town of Bad Aalsen.

I duly reported to this office, which had three desks, one on either side and one in the middle, one of which was vacant. As I walked in a Squadron Leader stood up from behind one desk. He was a very tall man, pure white hair, big white moustache, Wings and all the First World War medals. He'd been a RFC Pilot. Bob Lloyd. After a brief chat he said, "Right, here's your desk, sit down". I took the vacant desk and discovered I was on Personnel Staff, in the Headquarters of the British Air Force of Occupation, which had just been renamed from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tactical Air Force.



Photo courtesy of Mike Hillier

My job, as there were three of us, was organising postings of officers in and out of Germany. Equipment Officers, Armaments Officers and Airfield Construction Officers were three of the groups I had, there were several others as well. Commanding Officers would telephone us to indent for new officers or for posting officers out, they got to know us personally in the end. We went through our opposite numbers in the Air Ministry and asked for what was needed. Occasionally, when I did come home on leave, I'd call in at the Air Ministry and pass the time of day with my opposite numbers. Adastral House is a warren of a place

I signed on for an extra year in the RAF, so I was out there 2 ½ years, in between doing the job and having a hell of a good time! Our Mess was a beautiful schloss of the Princess of Schomburg-Lippe, surrounded by a huge moat with the most magnificent Carp. Our little staff of six was billeted in a large, comfortable home with several bedrooms, the house of a German General who was a prisoner of war in England.

His wife, Frau Andre and their 14 yr old Daughter still lived there and she did for us making our beds and cleaning. I was first there in June. We arrived for breakfast one morning in December only to be told that the Schloss Kitchen had caught fire. That was the end of our Mess. We were bussed to Bad Aalsen about three miles away. The Officers Mess was in a large hotel, the Firschtenhof Hotel. I had a room on the third floor at the back. A number of us had a young German Bat-Woman between us, but there was no fraternisation! We were not allowed to fraternise with the Germans at all. No, you had to leave the Fraulein's well alone!

Part of the personnel staff included a legal section, headed by a Group Captain. It was good to have a legal section there because you got several perks. The first perk was when I was asked to attend the Nuremberg Trials, where for the first time I saw my enemy first-hand; Goring, Hess, Ribbentrop, Raeder, Doenitz were amongst those on trial. I was incredulous!

All these people you've heard of, just names, and suddenly they're right in front of you. It was quite exciting to see them in the flesh. It's an experience I'm glad I had, there can't be too many English flyers who can say, "Yes, I've actually seen the perishers!"

The day I was there, in the VIP Gallery, the prosecutors and judges were talking about the relativity of the trial to international law. The US prosecutor was Robert Jackson, the British one was David Maxwell-Fyfe. That day the charges were read out and the defendants entered a plea. They weren't the whole gamut of charges, but quite simple charges that could be proven; not unlike the charges that were brought against Saddam Hussein in Iraq. I had a good look at the enemy. The accused entered from a door between the American guards and moved down to their seats. The first one in was Goring. I was taken aback by the fact he was nothing like the great portly individual that he had been portrayed. He had lost a lot of weight and looked gaunt. The charges were read out and the defendants were asked to plead individually. They had to stand up and walk down to the front of the court and plead. Goring got up, started to make a political speech and he was cut short in two shakes! The judge cut in, "You're not here to make a political speech, you are here to plead guilty or not guilty". He said not guilty and sat down again. Hess was next. He looked up with a completely vacant stare. He stood there, in a zombie like fashion and said "nothing". So, the judge said, "I'll take that as not guilty". And so, they went right through the lot.

At least I had seen my enemy. The trial went on for a couple of months. These individuals were trying to pass the Buck, claiming they had nothing to do with the charges brought against them. They *were* involved, and slowly and surely their involvement was proven. 21 were tried, 11 sentenced to be hanged. The sentences were carried out in October 1946 by Albert Pierrepoint, the British Hangman. Seven were jailed; Hess was jailed and died in Spandau Prison in Berlin. Three others were acquitted. Goring took an SS cyanide pill the night before and escaped the rope.

I went back to the job and then shortly after was invited to the Auschwitz Belsen Camp trial where there were 44 accused facing charges. While some facing charges relating to Auschwitz and Belsen, others were charged with crimes at Belsen only. Belsen wasn't a death camp as such, although thousands died there, mainly from ill treatment, malnutrition, Typhoid. But Auschwitz - that was a death camp. Millions died in that place. It was a British military court because it was in the British zone. It was totally a British trial.

The VIP galleries were situated round the Courtroom – and sitting opposite me was a young lady whose name is infamous – Erma Greise.

Bearing in mind that I was only 22 myself, Erma Greise particularly caught my attention. Any sympathy just evaporated! She grinned the whole time as evidence was read out, you couldn't have any sympathy at all. She was SS Concentration Camp supervisor at Ravensbruck, Auschwitz, Berkenau and Bergen-Belsen. She had had control of thousands of women and the power to exterminate thousands of human beings on her whim and fancy. According to witnesses, she sent thousands and thousands of people to the gas chambers. She indulged in murders, torture, cruelty and sexual excesses. There was graphic evidence given about her behaviour, her involvement with selection for the gas chambers. She was responsible for the murders of up to 30 people a day, she directed the beating and whipping of Concentration Camp inmates and directed her dog to savage others. It was horrendous to listen to the evidence against this smirking young woman. She was 22 when she was hanged.



The camp commandant was Josef Kramer, 'The Beast of Belsen'. A big, heavy jowled man, clean shaven but his beard was black. He looked every inch the thug he was. Along with Kramer, Greise was the most notorious defendant in the trial. She, along with two other women, was convicted and sentenced to be hanged by the Tribunal. Of the 44 accused, 11 were sentenced to death, 19 served various terms of imprisonment and 14 were found not guilty. Even now I find it horrendous that these people could do what they did. Unbelievable! You almost felt they didn't deserve a trial, they should have been shot on the spot, no bother!

**Erma Greise and Josef Kramer, 1945.**

I went back to the old job, again. Weekends away up in the rest camp in the Hills. You booked in on a Friday evening and went the 50 miles by coach. It was mostly junior officers and WAAFs but rank was forgotten. We all ate together, there were dances on Saturday nights, a swimming pool for the summer and beautiful walks. In the winter there was skiing and sledging - absolutely wonderful!

At the beginning of 1947 things began to change. Wives were coming out and boys turn into men because their wives were present. Mrs AVM started to dabble in what the WAAFs could and couldn't do. Things started to tighten up all round. Until then the Mess had been a place of lively and cheerful activity. They all started behaving themselves, not that we misbehaved in any way before, but it was a bit more rowdy in the Mess at times. Boys were boys. We were all ex-Aircrew. It started getting a lot more serious then.

I attended two more War Crimes Trials, of which there were about 10,000, carried out by the various Allies. The legal section asked me to go to Wuppertal to attend a court, but this time I was *on* the Court. After the war an Allied Controlled Commission was sent out to Germany which consisted of civilians from Britain, including judges and solicitors etc. They were part of the Judge Advocate General's Department. The people from the JAGD set up two small courts consisting of two British Officers and a Judge.

Our Court consisted of an Army Prosecutor and Army Defence Officer, an Army Captain and a RAF Flight Lieutenant – me, having been promoted to this rank around the end of December 1945.

The first trial was of a Burgermeister accused of leaving a prisoner of war without adequate medical attention. It was a New Zealand pilot, a Flight Lieutenant, the poor chap so badly burned his skin was hanging off. The Burgermeister (literally 'Master of the Town -Town Mayor') refused to provide him with medical treatment. The only comfort the chap had, was from other members of his crew captured with him and he died in custody. We listened to the evidence, the defence and prosecution. In the end the Judge delivered his verdict and asked each of us if we agreed with his decision. He passed sentence; the Burgermeister being given 10 years in prison.

The next trial was a couple of months later, again in Wuppertal. A German civilian had been accused of murdering a British airman. There has been a lot of aircrew lynching going on. On this occasion, the German had pitchforked the Airman to death and disposed of his body in a manure heap. Again, procedure was followed, but it became too obvious for words he was as guilty as hell! The judge could not sentence him to death at that level and he referred the case to a higher Court.

I think the War Trials were fairly conducted. The case for the defence was put, the case for the prosecution was put. The evidence was compelling. There was no doubt about their guilt. And the Germans were quite happy to shop one another. Anything to get themselves out of trouble. The evidence was certainly compelling in the two cases I saw. People had witnessed the incidents and were prepared to give evidence. It was a foregone conclusion and did not take long. We used to start at 10:00 in the morning and by 3:00 o'clock in the afternoon proceedings were concluded. Sentence was passed and that was it. I never had any compulsion about that. I never lost any sleep over any of it. It was just part of what happened. War is a terrible thing.

Men started it; if you saw the wind, you will reap the whirlwind. It's no good being moral about it. There was plenty of moralising going on toward the end of the war and after it. It still goes on. War is War. It may sound dismissive, but I can live with it and have done so happily.

I went back to the job I was due for demob in November 1947. I had got to know a WAAF and she'd been posted to Berlin. So I went to see my Boss and asked "What are the chances of being posted to Berlin before I go"?

He said, "Leave it to me". The next thing that comes up ..." We've got a job for you Sid, you're going to audit the Officers Mess at RAF Gatow." I was driven to Hanover and put on the overnight train to Berlin. I shared a compartment with an Army Captain. Halfway through the night the doors banged open, it was the Russian guard. "Pass"! he demanded. We showed him our passes and off he went. I arrived in Berlin and was picked up by car. At Gatow I was introduced to the Group Captain, a very nice chap. He took me under his wing and gave me quarters in the Officers Mess for the two nights I stayed. I audited the accounts. I don't know anything about accounting, but it all added up, so I signed them off!

That was in the morning. In the afternoon the Group Captain said would you like a trip around Berlin? He wasn't coming but he sent me with his German driver in his Group Captain's car to go around the city. The poor driver was absolutely paranoid with fear. I had an old Leica camera which I swapped for some fags, I was poking the camera out of the window to take photographs and he was saying "No, no! The Russians will see you!" We got to the Brandenburg Gate and I was clicking away with the Russian guards standing there and managed to get a number of pictures. "Put it away, put it away" the driver urged! In the evening I duly met my WAAF friend and we went to the night clubs in Berlin. She got paralytic! I put her into the back of a seven tonner and that was the last I saw of her!

The following day the Group Captain said would you like to come to a disarmaments meeting? We met the Russians in a room with a long table. The Air Vice Marshall led our group of six RAF officers; The Russian General sat opposite the AVM.

The meeting was about the disposal of Pillboxes, but there were a lot of tank traps still around too. The AVM kept talking about the Pillboxes, but the Russians kept bringing up the issue of the Tank traps. There was no discussion, no meeting of minds whatsoever.

It went back and forth for 3/4 of an hour and they just abandoned the meeting. The Group Captain turned to me and said "This happens every day. We get absolutely nowhere". I thought "Well, that's the shape of things to come"! Come November 1947, I flew back to Northolt in a Dakota and took a train to Blackpool. I got my suit, shoes and a trilby hat. That was my lot. I was finished in the RAF.

I found that extremely difficult to settle into civilian life; it had been 2 ½ years living the life of old Riley. I went back to the Post Office Engineering Department. I was very, very unsettled. I was up at a telephone exchange in Stepney Green in Commercial road. I was established as an Engineer, but I didn't like it. I was very unhappy. I had left the luxury of a Flight Lieutenants position; pay, messing and all of that. I was getting £12.00 a week in the RAF and back at the Post Office - 5 Guineas a week was a bit of a come down.

I remember going back to the Air Ministry during a lunch break and asking if there was anything in the way of a permanent Commission. I must have gone back three times. They offered me a short Service Commission of three years, but I didn't know what was going to happen after that - and I had a permanent job. A lot of chaps at that time hadn't jobs to go to. I was lucky. That was the option, the Post Office is certain, the RAF is uncertain. In point of fact, I now know that it would have been converted into a permanent Commission because of the Berlin airlift and the start of the Cold War. Anyway, I stayed with the Post Office, later British Telecom, and they looked after me a treat.

I can look back and say, "Yes I enjoyed it". I wouldn't have missed it for worlds. It was a wonderful time, it was a wonderful experience. There was a sense of camaraderie that existed then that I have never found anywhere else since. As aircrew you stuck together. There has never been anything approaching the camaraderie we had in those days and the feeling is still there when you meet former aircrew. It was something different to anything you'd experience before or since.

There's an awful lot of positives about it; an experience I wouldn't have missed. I get a bit cynical when Governments say - "Our Heroes". Then I think, "Yes, just for today, then you'll be forgotten. Same as everyone else".



# Poetry Corner



Almighty and all present Power,  
Short is the prayer I make to Thee;  
I do not ask in battle hour,  
For any shield to cover me.  
The vast unalterable way,  
From which the stars do not depart,  
May not be turned aside to stay,  
The bullet flying to my heart.  
I ask no help to strike my foe,  
I seek no petty victory here;  
The enemy I hate, I know  
To Thee, Oh God, is also dear.  
But this I pray - be at my side  
When death is drawing through the sky,  
Almighty God, who also died,  
Teach me the way that I should die.

Flight Sergeant Hugh Rowell Brodie, RAAF, a former Schoolmaster from Victoria, was killed in action serving with 460 Squadron over Germany on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 1942 aged 30 years.

As far as we know, this short poem was Bodie's only piece to be published.

**Photo of 460 Squadron Memorial RAAF, in Binbrook Village, Lincolnshire.**

# *In Memory*

## *IN MEMORY*



***FLIGHT/LT GEORGE MACKIE, DFC***

George Mackie, who has died aged 100, became a celebrated book designer and illustrator after the Second World War, during which he served as a Pilot with Bomber Command – an experience which left him with mixed feelings.

The middle years of the last century were a golden age in the quality of book production. But all that changed in the late 1960s and 70s, when letterpress printing all but disappeared and the oil price crisis hit the British paper industry.

One University Press refused to give way and maintained the standards others abandoned. This was the Edinburgh University Press under the direction, from 1953 to 1987, of Archie Turnbull and George Mackie who, working hand-in-glove, continued to design books made using handset and machine-composed letterpress type.

Together, they studied examples of fine printing and book jackets from the past and applied them to their designs. George Mackie would be given a host of ideas from which a rough design would emerge, to be debated with Archie Turnbull often over several days.

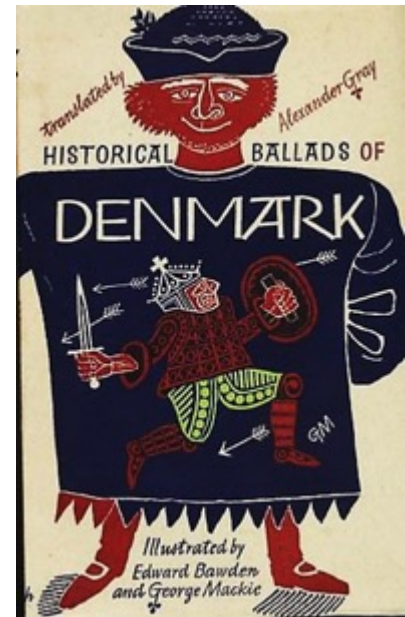
In letterpress printing, layouts had to be imagined, sketched, and minutely specified before pages can be made – an expensive process rendered practical by the precision of George Mackie's layouts.

The quality of Edinburgh University Press publications came to be recognised all over the world. It joined the American Association of University Presses in 1967 and featured regularly in its Annual Best Books Show.

Books designed by George Mackie are now Collectors' items, one of the most attractive being Sir Alexandra Gray's Translation of *'Historical Ballads of Denmark'* (1958), with illustrations by both George Mackie and Edward Bawden, (seen right) a limited edition of 750 copies printed on coloured paper.

By the time Archie Turnbull retired and George Mackie's connection with the publisher ended in the 1980s, there was a staff of more than a dozen and 459 titles had been published. George Mackie received the rare distinction of being both a Royal Designer for Industry and a recipient of the DFC.

He joined the RAF aged 19 in 1940. After training as a pilot, he flew Wellington bombers, but in June 1941, he arrived at RAF Wyton, near Huntingdon, to join 15 Squadron, which had recently been re-equipped with the Stirling, the RAF's first four-engine heavy bomber. The seven-man crew included two pilots, and George Mackie flew his first bombing operations as Second Pilot before being given command of his own crew.



Later, in 1941, Lady MacRobert, widow of a Scottish landowner and cattle breeder, donated £25,000 to buy a bomber in memory of her three sons all killed serving in the RAF. When she presented the Stirling, named *'MacRobert's Reply'*, to 15 Squadron, she included a letter in which she wrote:

*'I know you will always strike hard, sharp and straight to the mark. That is the language the enemy understands. My thoughts and thousands of other mothers are with you.'*

George Mackie bombed industrial targets in Germany, and in December 1941, attacked the German capital ships *'Scharnhorst'* and *'Gneisenau'* in Brest. He also dropped mines in approaches to enemy-held ports and in the Baltic. In the eight months he was at RAF Wyton, 20 Stirlings were lost on operations.

In February 1942, he joined a Bomber Training Unit instructing new crews to fly the Stirling, a job some thought more hazardous than flying on operations.

Occasionally, the Training Units were used to supplement the main bomber squadrons and George Mackie flew with a student crew on the first *'Thousand Bomber Raid'*, when the target was Cologne on the night of May 30/31 1942.

Two months later, again with a student crew, he took off to bomb Hamburg. Of the eight crews sent on the operation, four were lost. The weather was atrocious, and George Mackie was forced to fly in cloud for more than five hours with ice building up on the aircraft's rudders, ailerons, and elevators. He remembered it as his most frightening experience.

In October 1943, he returned to operations to fly the Stirling with 214 Squadron, which soon re-equipped with the American-built B-17 Flying Fortress bomber. A fellow pilot on the Squadron who became a close friend, described George Mackie as *'a small dark-haired Scot of serious mien and fiery temper'*. He went on to say: *'When I got to know him better, I found a tremendous store of humour and warmth that lay in him below the surface'*. He also commented that George Mackie was recognised as a first-class pilot who *'maintained an iron discipline in the air'*.



The Squadron's task was to fly radio and Radar countermeasure sorties to confuse the enemy's air defence control and reporting system during major bombing raids. By October 1944, George Mackie had flown 44 operations against the enemy, and later in the year he was awarded the DFC.

Many years after the end of hostilities, George Mackie reflected: *'I gave the war little thought for many years. With months of service in the front line, I didn't see a single dead body. Nor was I aware of the enormity of Europe's tragedy. I looked down on the burning cities and saw them, with their defences, only as threats to my own survival.'*

His ambivalence was reflected in a 2012 letter he wrote to the London Review of Books following an article by Jonathan Meades, describing the new

Bomber Command Memorial in Green Park as *'a lump of Croesus bling'*.

*'As one who had the audacity to respond in kind to Germany's bombing campaigns, I write to applaud John Meades' demolition of the recently built monument to Bomber Command which I find trivial and irrelevant. The long absence after the war of any formal recognition in stone was creating an increasingly powerful silence where all manner of feelings of revulsion or acclaim were felt. No solid memorial could express so clearly today's ambivalence.'*

After his active service with 214 Squadron, he returned to instructing on the Stirling before joining 46 Squadron in February 1945. He was flying a later version of the aircraft, which had been modified as a transport aircraft, and he flew routes that took him as far afield as south-east Asia. By the end of the war, he had completed a total of 2,151.5 hours flying. He left the RAF as a Flight Lieutenant in 1946 to resume his art studies at Edinburgh College of Art. While working with Edinburgh University Press, George Mackie taught design at Gray's School of Art in Aberdeen, serving as Head of Department from 1958 to 1980.

As well as his books and design work, he was a proficient painter and was elected to the Royal Scottish Society of Painters in Watercolour. Examples of his work are held in public and private collections. A major retrospective of his book design work was held in 1991 at the National Library of Scotland.

George Mackie. Born 17<sup>th</sup> July 1920 and died October 3<sup>rd</sup> 2020.

Courtesy of the Daily Telegraph, Tuesday 20th October 2020:

<http://digitaleditions.telegraph.co.uk/data/387/reader/reader.html?social#!preferred/0/package/387/pub/387/page/98/article/93800>

**Thanks to Mr Neil Brooks (Badger) who drew our attention to the Obituary.**

# *IN MEMORY*

## *Mr Arthur Pigott, FRTS*



I was born Arthur William Pigott on 25 June 1922 in Deptford, SE London. An Elementary schoolboy, I was voluntarily coached Algebra by one of the teachers. On leaving school at fourteen, I began a seven-year Apprenticeship in hot-metal printing as a Compositor. This was interrupted by World War Two, opening a whole new unexpected and extraordinary chapter in my life, with four and a half years' Service in the RAF as a Wireless Operator Mechanic (*one of only 7 in the RAF*) with 3 years' Service overseas.

At the age of seventeen, way back in 1939, I joined No.41 (Deptford) Squadron of the Air Training Corps. The ATC had its own monthly magazine, '*ATC Gazette*'. When World War Two started, I received my 'Call-Up' and 'Medical' Papers prior to joining the Royal Air Force, hoping to become aircrew.

I remember the day of my Medical clearly. I made my way to Euston House (then War Dept.) in London by tran-car, travelling via the '*Kingsway Under-Tunnel*' from the Thames Embankment to Holborn. The train halted almost outside the Medical Centre.

*Why do I remember this so clearly?*

On the tram journey, I was reading an article in the '*ATC Gazette*' on '*Radio*', in which it gave several definitions of Wireless components. One of these was a condenser: '*Condenser – consists of two parallel plates, separated by a dielectric, used for the storage of electricity*'.

As any ex-service person will recall, a Service Medical is thorough: heart, lungs, feet, *cough*, eyes and ears. It was during my hearing examination that it was discovered I suffered from perforated eardrums – hence I would not be selected for aircrew. The letters E.N.T. (Ear, Nose, Throat) were stamped over all my documentation. It meant I was destined for Ground Staff duties only.

During subsequent interviews, to decide which Ground Staff trade I was to be employed whilst in the RAF, the questioning went something like this:

RAF: *'What is your employment?'*

AP: *'An apprenticed Compositor.'*

RAF: *'There's no print shop in the RAF. Can you drive?'*

AP: *'No.'*

RAF: *'What do you know about Radio?'*

AP: *'Nothing much.'*

RAF: *'What is a Condenser?'*

AP: *'A Condenser consists of two parallel plates, separated by a dielectric, and used for the storage of electricity.'*

RAF: *'That's right. Good – I'll put you down for the Group 1 Trade of Wireless Mechanic.'*

I was disappointed at not being fit enough for aircrew because of bad hearing, although most of my colleagues and friends who did become pilots, navigators or air-gunners did not survive the war. So, I was fortunate in that respect. But it was reading that definition and being able to quote it word for word that changed my whole life!



I spent a year training to become a Wireless Mechanic, first at Glasgow Technical College (Fundamentals), then at Glasgow University (Radio Theory); I was then posted to the Technical College, Bolton, for familiarisation of RAF ground and aircraft wireless equipment. We had tough examinations every six weeks. The mark of my first exam was 37% with the letters 'C.T.' on top of my paper, meaning *'Cease Training'*. However, my Tutor, a Dr Jameson, asked if I wanted another chance, so I continued. Subsequent results: 53%, 75%, and in the final exam: 97% with the option of becoming either a Radar or Wireless Mechanic. I felt Radar was rather specialised, and Wireless would prove more useful if ever I made *'Civvy Street'*. Hence, gaining my *'Sparks'* I still consider my greatest achievement! I'm so glad a Condenser consists of two parallel plates, separated by a dielectric, used for the storage of electricity!

Now, as a Specialist in Radio and Radar equipment, and being young at the time; I volunteered for anything just for the excitement! Whenever an RAF bomber was shot down, but remained intact, the Germans would thoroughly inspect all its equipment and, if need be, devise an *'Anti-Device'*. Likewise, we would devise improved versions originally tested on Operations by the Designer Boffin.

But if that aircraft was shot down, we lost a Boffin too. Hence, Operational Testing went to Ground Crew ... we were more dispensable!

I was overseas at the time. There were few Wireless Mechanics in the RAF who could receive and send Morse Code. On five occasions I was sent for by my Signals Officer to be told that a volunteer was required by Bomber Command for a Special Operator. Since I qualified for that task, would I volunteer? It was an urgent matter. Being fearless, I could only say: 'Yes'. I was flown to RAF Northolt, taken to a Manufacturer for familiarisation and Briefing; then flown to a Bomber Squadron for the Special Operation.

Plessey and Boffin Bob Roberts can easily be recalled. From memory, the aircraft was always a modified Halifax which comfortably took '*Aircrew Member No.8*' on board. The Operation was more difficult because 'results' were written in a form of code in case of capture, but I doubt if I would have withstood any torture without spilling the beans.

On return, after de-briefing and a sleep, I was whisked back overseas to await the next '*Special Operation*'. I had no idea where or when they might happen. Since I was only an LAC (Leading Aircraftsman) and the minimum aircrew rank was Sergeant, I '*borrowed*' a Sergeant's jacket for the flight out and back, receiving that rank's pay for the two days involved.

*What generosity!*

On my first Special Operation, I was sworn to secrecy, even hearing the words: '*under sentence of death*', for any disclosure of operations, place names, equipment used, people involved, dates, etc. This put great fear in me. I remember hiding my personal camera and never using it again out of sheer terror of what might happen if discovered.

Whenever I arrived on a Norfolk RAF Station, I was always '*Confined to Barracks*' with visits so brief I never even knew the Station's name or Squadron No. of the aircraft I was flying in ... that is, with one exception: Little Snoring. It is from where we flew and returned on my final trip. There were no 'signposts' around to give me a clue as to where I was anyway, and I was forbidden to speak with airmen or anyone bringing me food, etc as I continued to eat and sleep alone.

At that time, if it were ever mentioned, RAF 100 Group would have meant nothing to me.

Despite being 'Ground Crew', I did an awful lot of flying – testing equipment, especially Air Tests whilst on RAF Transport Command. On Repatriation, I was posted to RAF Uxbridge where I was '*attached*' to many operations:

- High Speed Flight at RAF Tangmere where Group Captain Donaldson and Squadron Leader Townsend reached the fastest speed of 470 mph in the jet-engine Meteor,
- Air Ministry, London, to install the '*Direction Finding Beam*' from the Air Ministry roof for the very first Flypast, which was a long one.
- Ending up at RAF Duxford on No.91 Squadron, equipped with Meteor aircraft.

I was de-mobbed in January 1947, only to find myself still an Apprenticed Compositor, having to serve out my time, aged twenty-four.'

It is important to note, even today, that in all Arthur's writings shared, he felt it important to ensure that his words in no way contravened the Official Secrets Act he signed in wartime. He gives nothing away as to what he was expected to do, yet his writings show immense courage and fortitude ... and a gentle, humble manner. It is as if he is saying: *'I was just doing my job!'* Yet through his words, we can see he had exceptional skills and was very experienced and knowledgeable, despite his young age.

The following account is one of many operations in which Arthur participated, with none of the technicalities involved being disclosed.

### **Special Operations Duties: S.O.D.s**

'It was early Spring, 1945. The Allied invasion of Europe was well underway, being stubbornly resisted by the Germans all along the Front. The Americans from time to time, requested assistance from the British, especially when they discovered British equipment in German hands and difficulty was encountered in its operation. The American advance, near Frankfurt (USA 9<sup>th</sup> Army) was such an occasion.



Very early one morning, on an RAF No. 101 Staging Post in Lydda, Palestine, I was awakened with the instruction to report to the Orderly Room immediately. There I was greeted by the Signals Officer. He informed me that a WOM was urgently required to volunteer for an SOD (Special Operations Duty) somewhere in Germany.

**(Arthur pictured seated on the right. Courtesy of his daughter Alison.)**

Being the only WOM on the Station, I was expected to 'volunteer', which I did as on many other occasions previously. Within the hour, I was receiving VIP treatment, on my way flying to Cairo West for another aircraft to whisk me off to Rome, then to Germany. Before the second take-up, being an LAC, I was kitted out with a Flight Sergeant Air Gunner's uniform (which seemed to fit). This procedure was to confuse the enemy in the event of capture and ease conditions in the case of captivity. A holster, a revolver, and ten rounds of ammunition were handed to me ... on my remark that I'd never used one before, I was given a very brief run-through on how to load the barrel, the importance of the 'safety-catch', and how to aim and fire with the trigger; never thinking I would ever have to use the weapon.

Before take-off, a sealed packet was handed to me and I was asked to study it carefully and remember its contents as it was unlikely I would receive another Briefing on landing. As usual, on SOD Briefings, there was no notetaking.

All instructions and details had to be committed to memory. The information given was rarely complete, always there was some other instruction to be given by an unknown person later. Handing back my *'Brief'*, I eventually made my way to a twin-engine aircraft, I believe a Lockheed Hudson. The flight over the *'Med'* was pleasant, like going on holiday.

I was advised to load my issued revolver, just in case! We finally lobbed down on a grass strip, somewhere in Germany, in the American zone of operations somewhere near Frankfurt. As soon as I was out of the aircraft, it revved up and took off, leaving me alone, expecting to be met by some welcoming Yanks and given further instructions with some *'comforts'*.

But there was not a soul in sight!



I heard gunfire in the distance, presumably the *'Front'*. It occurred to me to make for nearby hedgerow and, as it turned out, I had arrived in the middle of a small German counterattack. Not long after arriving at the hedgerow, I was suddenly physically assaulted by a young German soldier, possibly sixteen years old. He charged, holding a fixed-bayonet, and at close quarters, thrust it towards my stomach. The whole incident happened incredibly fast and unexpectedly. Instinctively, I went for the loaded revolver, automatically releasing the *'catch'*, aimed it at my attacker, and fired once, but not before the blade of the bayonet thrust right through the twin bones of my left arm. Although the bayonet had been destined for my guts, it had gone through my left arm, probably saving my life. I fell to the ground with my assailant, killed with the one-shot. I cannot remember much pain, just a shocked numbness, of being deafened, bewilderment, being in a helpless, motionless heap with another person, not knowing what was happening or where I was ... I seemed unable to move and must have remained on the ground bleeding for some time for there was plenty of blood on the pair of us. I never did discover if the German rifle was loaded (*perhaps there was a shortage of bullets, hence the bayonet attack?*). Then I heard American voices ... *'the Yanks were here!'* I remember the utter relief at seeing my rescuers, who disentangled me from the dead companion beside me.

*'Hang on, Buddy. I'll pull it out for you.'*

I remember the strong tug, but must have passed out ... I came round looking into the eyes of who then was the most beautiful female nurse in the whole wide world. There was pain, or a rather big hurt. I was lying in an American field hospital, had been attended to, cleaned up and bandaged without knowing anything about it. Not until the next day did I get a glimpse of the hole right through my left arm. *It was a mess!* But I was assured, luck was on my side and I would make a full recovery. My left hand showed no signs of movement though, but again was assured that, after therapy, I would gain full use again. Being a Composer by trade, the left hand holds the *'composing stick'*. This could mean the end of my career! After a few days, I was posted and flown back to Egypt to recover. The healing process was swift, too swift, therapy seemed more painful than the wounding; but the long rest was enjoyable, and I considered myself very lucky indeed to have survived the encounter.

I never did complete my Special Operations Duty, so will never know what resulted in it not being carried through. I wonder how important these escapades were and if the risks were warranted. Servicemen were expendable. There were always others to carry on. We never had '*counselling*' in those days. If aircrew refused to continue to fly on missions because of genuine trauma, fright, or mental fatigue, they were considered cowards. I remember full parades being called, in which these brave sick men, who would now be considered '*sick*', being on the parade ground, humiliated in front of comrades ... being '*de-ranked*', having aircraft flying badges and tunic buttons torn from their uniforms.

Within just five weeks, I was posted back to my Staging Post Unit serving in PaiForce, RAF Transport Command, Palestine, where Britain was preparing to transfer troops to the Far East to assist the Americans. After the European ceasefire was declared in 1945, Palestine was a bloodier place to be than some war postings in Germany. This time, we British servicemen were confronting the Jewish nation, especially the Stern Gang in their endeavour to illegally take over that country for themselves. It was to become my most dangerous assignment.

### **'Lucky Piggy'**

The purpose of one particular mission was the setting up of and transmitting and receiving of ground equipment of the improved Mark IV 'Oboe' (known as by code name) target-plotting system that was useful, but not necessarily a successful system when used over Germany, although we were not informed of this at the time. This target location system was to be extended to Burma eventually. To give purpose to the dangers that might be encountered, the dropping of leaflets was given. Originally four aircraft were assigned, but only three serviceable aircraft were able to take off. Crews were not acquainted with the area to be flown and only limited practice runs were undertaken, although Ground Stations and aircraft systems were extensively tested in operations in the Lydda and Haifa Mediterranean Sea areas.

Before take-off, all aircraft were prepared, including guns loaded and leaflets loaded in specially designed containers to assist in the coverage of large ground areas when released from bomb-bay in separated batches.

Crew consisted of Skipper (Pilot), Co-Pilot, Flight Engineer, Navigator (and RADAR), Wireless Operator (Gunner), Observer-Bomb Aimer, Rear-Gunner, and myself who was assisting the W/Op and Navigator and recording the detailed performance of '*Oboe*'.

After take-off, it was an uneventful flight over a semi-moonlit sea up to Greece, without any problems and with equipment behaving perfectly. We were using a system of three co-ordinates, which proved extremely accurate. There was no opposition, and the limited targets were located, and leaflets dropped. After which we turned for Base, slightly surprised and relieved, thus far, but inwardly perhaps a little disappointed (with nothing to report).

However, about forty-five minutes into the return journey, the Engineer reported one engine was showing signs of problems. The starboard outer engine eventually caught fire but was extinguished; much relief; but the fire re-started.

We were approaching the '*Haifa*' zone and Skipper announced over the intercom that we might have to abandon aircraft and should put on and fasten our chute belts, preparing ourselves accordingly. There was no panic. But the engine was still on fire, and we were losing height slightly. Then over the intercom came '*Piggy, you are number one out*'. Since the rear underbelly door was already open, I naturally assumed this to be a command. I grabbed the dinghy '*tether*' and jumped out with the dinghy after me. You count six, pull your ripcord and wait anxiously until you feel the parachute opening, then begin to '*enjoy*' the trip down!

Not long after, I hit the water, but without injury. I cannot remember hearing the dinghy strike the water, but it did, and on doing so automatically inflated and was upright when I eventually pulled on the tether either floating towards it or pulling it towards me (which I doubt!). After struggling into the dinghy feeling very wet and uncomfortable, at least I was floating, not immersed in the sea. Looking around for my companions, I saw nobody, but then heard the aircraft fading away into the distance. Hoping my colleagues would still be okay, I settled down to drift, who knows where, in the Mediterranean somewhere off the coast of Palestine, knowing full well that assistance in the form of a motor launch would eventually be sent to rescue me. (When falling from a height, even if you failed to pull the rip cord, the parachute will automatically open at 2,000 feet.)

A high-speed launch was sent from Haifa, in Palestine, to search for me after the dinghy beacon had been switched on by me soon after entering, which was also reassuring. It felt safe. Since these dinghies held four people, there was plenty of room. But being wet was very uncomfortable, with my legs stretched out and in sea water. I tried to enjoy the experience but remember being very annoyed at the situation which had developed. It was just a question of being patient and waiting for assistance. By this time, dawn had broken, and it was getting light.

After being picked up, I was landed at Port Haifa, then taken by road to RAF Haifa where I was '*debriefed*' and two days later returned to RAF Lydda by a Dakota where I joined my Unit.

Shortly after this incident, I was told to report to HQ to see the CO. Thinking a Court Martial was upon me, I was surprised to get the sympathy of Groupie and, to my amazement, he handed me a silk parachute panel as a souvenir of my '*Adventure*', as he put it. On entering the dinghy, I'd had the presence of mind to use the paddle to reach the parachute still floating in the sea nearby, picking it up and pulling it in with me. I'm so glad I did! It is tradition that a parachute is only used once in saving a life. It was made of silk, and one of the panels is cut out and presented to the survivor. I still possess this panel of silk which I come across in the house from time to time. It should be preserved as a permanent souvenir.

Shamefully for me, the Liberator was not abandoned, but got back to Base unharmed, with just an unserviceable engine and one member of crew missing. I remain uncertain whether the Skipper was playing a joke on me, because, having such a large number of operational flying hours to my credit, all crews I flew with on SODs always considered me as and called me '*Lucky Piggy*'.

The following is the actual Air Ministry Briefing received:

## **THE DRESDEN RAID**

### **Air Ministry Briefing**

Request by the Russians to seriously dislocate German transport communications, especially marshalling yards near the Eastern Front.

### **Special Operations Mission**

Independent of the main scheduled bombing raid on Dresden by Bomber Command, another operation was initiated to test, operationally, Impact Point (IP) equipment being developed for the war in the Far East. Such equipment was designed to re-transmit directional location signal beams from directions received from ground stations in the UK, thus vastly extending its range. Extreme accuracy was the criteria.

A minimum of two aircraft were required, to be converted with the necessary equipment to receive and then re-transmit radar/radio signals to their cross-over points. To test this over Germany was a high-risk strategy and very dangerous operation, especially at a height of 20,000+ feet. German radar detection could be anticipated both in the reception and transmission modes, but it was considered a reasonable hazard for the experience and verification to be gained from it.

Requirement demands of the RAF were to provide aircraft for the installation of this new array of equipment and to familiarise and train RAF personnel to operate, evaluate and assess effectiveness and efficiency under operational conditions. In addition to any recommendation for modification and improvements if found necessary.

**Aircraft used:** two modified and super-powered HALIFAX bomber aircraft.

**Personnel used:** RAF 'volunteered' specially trained Wireless Operator Mechanics, possibly there were Radar Mechanics among them. The Boffins could not be risked in such an operation. If they were shot down, a boffin was lost too (Ref: A. L. BLUMLEIN who was shot down (classified as an accident) and killed in 1942 in such an operation, being a great loss to the nation's counter-operations.



Note: The Germans possessed a superior skill in RADAR beam operations to the Allies.)

**Date:** 13-14 February 1945

**Operation:** *Codename 'Thunderclap'*, but a Special Operation Duty (SOD).

**Station:** RAF Little Snoring, Norfolk; ETD 21.15 hours; IP midnight+; ETA 7.20 hours (nine hours).

**Halifax crew;** Pilot, second Pilot, Flight Engineer, Wireless Operator, Front Gunner, Rear-Gunner, Mid-Gunner, no Bomb-Aimer, but a 'Number Eight' Operator – Me! (The Air Ministry had suggested all armoury be stripped (ie, no Gunners required) and the weight saved be utilised for additional equipment. But the Pilot and other crew objected to this and Gunners were retained, (mainly for psychological reasons, I guess).

**Height:** Zigzag 20,000 feet. (The flying flight pattern was no concern of mine).

??? Group 100: No.138 Squadron; modified Halifax bomber, AWP a number 'eight' crew member, but could have been No.161 Squadron (Note: probably not 138 or 161 Squadrons as this was an SOD mission.)

*(Other aircraft were used, but what and from which bases is not known to me.)*

**Some Background:** Heavy and clumsy valve equipment; R.F.carriers; analogue, pulse-modulated; experimental loop and rotating aerials, some fixed, some hand controlled; plus Radar equipment.

**Familiarisation and operational instruction:** Took place in an undisclosed venue near Hatfield, (although I did hear the name PLESSEY mentioned, but cannot fit into what context). Modifications were being carried out even at this stage.

**The Mission:** 'I flew up from RAF Northolt to RAF Little Snoring where I met the aircrew and saw the installed aircraft equipment, spending one day on further familiarisation with only one short Air-Test a day before the operation. It was here I was fitted with a temporary Sergeant's uniform to conform with flying rank conditions. Meals were good, but on advice, laid off drinking fluid. Boarding and take-off seemed routine and for me the outward flight was uneventful; we were not in the mainstream.

Dresden was well alight on arrival, which was seven minutes later than ETA, still at 20,000 feet. All the prescribed operational procedures were carried out and diagnostic results recorded, using pre-arranged coded language in case of falling into the hands of the enemy. Instructions were to destroy such in the event of a forced landing. (I was later informed by other crew members they had instructions to shoot me in such circumstances!) We wore Mae West life jackets, although no-one thought we would endure the cold North Sea very long at that time of year should we have to ditch.

Crew safety was paramount, but since there were no barrage balloons over the city, Skipper decided to stay and circle over the venue, going down to 5,000-6,000 feet. We seemed to stay for a very long time to the extent of feeling the heat from the blazing city.

Much apprehension was apparent on the return flight at 20,000 feet (which is bloody cold at that height!); further beams had been planned south of the Frankfurt area and the crew anticipated German fighter problems during such trials. Alertness was the key word by all members aboard. Some evasive actions and the skill and alertness of all crew members allowed us to survive the incidents.

For me, as a 'Number Eight', I thought the return trip uneventful, despite the many dangers of being easily located due to the tell-tale Radar pick-up of our several beam receptors. It was still dark when we flew over the Wash, landing unharmed back at Little Snoring. On reflection, I cannot remember any fear whilst flying over Germany ... there were too many other things on my mind. But I was not doing this sort of activity regularly.

However, we all felt tired and slept well after a lengthy de-briefing. Having to make out a thorough report of the equipment in action came several hours later ... two tots of rum made all the difference to my sleep pattern!

## Footnote:

This was considered the most infamous bombing raid by most post-war commentators. Bomber Command sent two waves of bombers three hours apart to attack Dresden on the night of 13/14 February 1945. The first wave consisted of 244 Lancasters from No.5 Group; this raid was hampered by cloud but considered a success. The second wave comprised 500 plus of bombers that dropped a further 1,800 tons of bombs in clear weather. There were six Lancaster losses which was light for such a long-distance raid. Dresden was devastated and as the city's population had been increased by an influx of refugees, there was a heavy loss of life mainly women and children. On 14 February, it was again blasted by the 311 USAAF B-17s which added to the devastation and confusion.

The RAF, Bomber Command and UK Boffins were extremely active in their efforts to originate accurate bomb-aiming impact positioning; much time, energy and expense went into the work. The higher the dropping point the less dangerous it was, and it certainly helped in cloudy weather experienced over the Continent. To accurately hit the target blind was the real goal. To my knowledge and understanding, the Allies never successfully achieved this goal, and it seemed the Germans were always a little ahead of us.

It is a great pity that Bomber Command was never considered worthy by any British Government of being awarded its own medal like many other spheres of War Service organisations; Bomber Command only carried out the wishes and aims of its Government.'

## Final Thoughts:

'*Lucky Piggy*' was a highly skilled radio countermeasures technician, involved in testing radio countermeasures in an operational environment. When required, he was flown in from abroad under cover of darkness without warning. He then boarded an aircraft to do his work, not allowed to speak to any other airmen, or to eat or sleep with them. His work was done in absolute secrecy, segregated from the general running of the Station. Once finished, he was flown back to his own base abroad immediately. His work was so secret that crew he flew with while testing equipment he had installed, had strict instructions. If ever they were shot down, they had orders to shoot him and destroy his equipment.

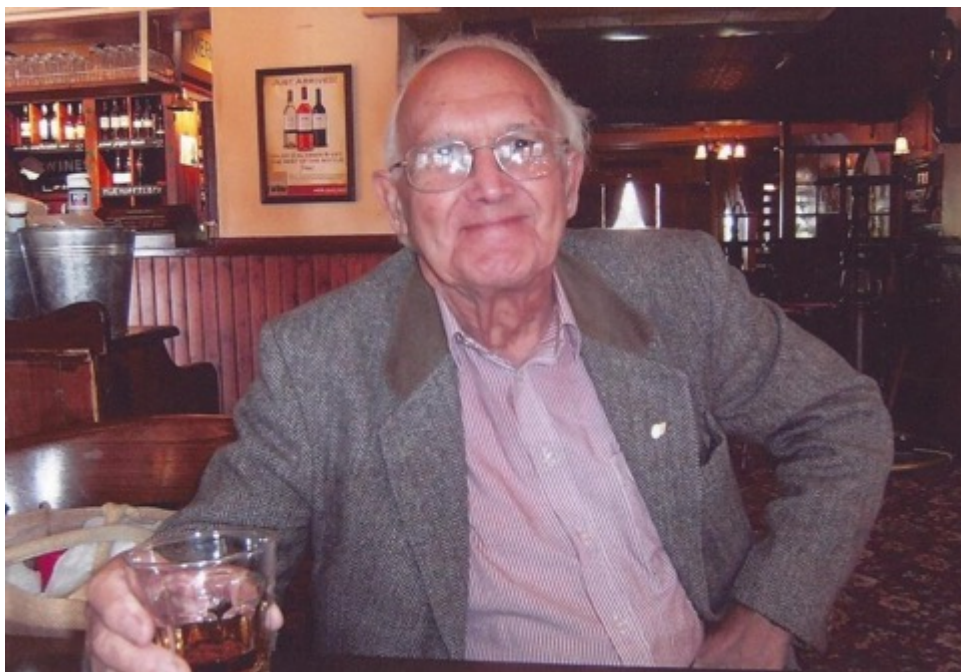
Arthur continues ... "I've had a varied career: Composer, Proof-Reader, Typographer; Composing Manager for 'Picture Post'. I became a printing teacher, then switched to film and television teaching at 'Degree Level' (not bad for an Elementary schoolboy!). By joining the Royal Television Society, it found me at 'Mecca' (BBC Television Centre, alas no more). I retired in 1986, having left school at fourteen (fifty-one years working).

I consider myself an 'Analogue' person with little respect for 'digital' techniques but have never allowed myself to be exploited and become a 'DPI' (Digital Product Idiot; the idiot part is allowing oneself to be exploited) hence I do not possess any gadgets. I would dispose of the telephone, but my family implore me to retain it.

In 2000 I was awarded a 'Television BAFTA' for twenty-five years in television ..."

( See the top photograph. – Ed.)

## Mr Arthur W. Pigott, FRTS



LAC Arthur W Pigott 1397335  
25<sup>th</sup> June 1922 – 10<sup>th</sup> March 2020  
Wireless Operator Mechanic,  
Transport Command,  
Fighter Command,  
Bomber Command,  
Special Operations.

Published with permission from Arthur Pigott's Daughter Alison Witchall.

Full story is featured on Darren & Donna's website: '*Heroes of our Time*':  
<https://www.heroesofourtime.co.uk/lucky-piggy-arthur-pigott-biography.html>

Arthur's story can also be found in; ***"RAF 100 Group – Kindred Spirits"***.  
He also wrote the Foreword to ***"RAF 100 Group – The Birth of Electronic Warfare"***.  
***Both books written by Janine Harrington.***

## Mr Peter Walker



A former RAF airman and insurance salesman who became an expert in Norfolk military airfields has died at the age of 85.

Peter Walker of Brundall, published an operational record of all 52 of the county's military airfields, from Attlebridge to West Raynham, covering the period 1913-97.

His interest in the military was stimulated at an early age. His father served in the Strumpshaw Home Guard. They trained with a machine gun in a local quarry, now Strumpshaw Recycling Centre, and the gun was stored in his father's garden shed, which Peter was forbidden to enter.

As a boy, he watched military aircraft passing over Strumpshaw Hill and witnessed huge quantities of gravel being extracted from the aforementioned quarry to build military bases across East Anglia.

He mostly served at RAF Marham as an engine mechanic with 214 Squadron, working on Valiant bombers. A highlight of his time at Marham was the visit of the Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev in 1956, during a brief thaw in the Cold War.

On leaving the RAF, Mr Walker worked for agricultural firms in the Great Yarmouth area before becoming an on-the-road insurance salesman. He offered a unique service, such as the time when a customer mentioned in passing that his apple trees needed pruning and was amazed to see Mr Walker climb up into the branches in his suit and carry out the task on the spot. At a Reunion of the 214 Squadron Association, Mr Walker was asked by the Marshal of the RAF, Sir Michael Beetham, to be its Secretary. He did this job with great pride for many years, organising Reunion dinners at the Hare Arms, Stow Bardolph, close to Sir Michael's home.



In retirement, Mr Walker published “Norfolk Military Airfields” which gives a complete account of the service record of every base, and it is widely used as a research source by military historians. Last year, Janine Harrington and he worked together to publish a booklet entitled: “Return to Lutzkendorf”, an account of the life of Wing Commander John Wynne, a WW2 Bomber Pilot he met at Marham while servicing his Valiant.

Mr Walker died at home in Brundall, a few yards from the house he was born in. He leaves Sally Ann, his wife of 55 years, and three sons.

Thanks to the Eastern Daily Press. Published 13<sup>th</sup> November 2020.

Photo above courtesy of Mr Richard Bond.

Top photograph courtesy of Stuart Borlase.

***There will be tributes to Mr Frank (Doc) Elliot, 192 Squadron  
and Mr Cyril (Pip) Piper, 214 Squadron, in the Memorial  
Section of the June issue of the magazine.***



# FINAL POSTINGS



*Friends we've had to say goodbye to:*

*Martin Albert Staunton, 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.
- USAF 36<sup>th</sup> 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
- USAF 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.
- USAF 36th BS** 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** Vern Scantleton DFC, Australia, died November 19<sup>th</sup> 2019. Received the Legion of Honour 2015.

- 214 Squadron** WAAF MT Driver Daphne Rowlands serving w Win & Irene: *'The 3 Musketeers'*. Much loved.
- 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.
- 199 Squadron** Flt Lt Roy H. Smith, Navigator died 1 Aug 2019. Remembered in love by family.
- USAF 36th BS** Donald Burch, Lt Boehm crew. Remembered with love by all who knew him.
- USAF 36TH BS** John 'Des' Howarth, of Lt McCarthys' crew in Lt. Boehm's B24 'Beast of Bourbon' when it crashed on Feb. 19, 1945. Died Sunday 9.6.2019. Remembered with love by son Brian & all his family.
- USAF 36th BS** Sgt Jack Hope, Tail Gunner for Lt Brookshire crew. Remembered with love by wife & family.

## 2020

- Co-Founder** Evelyn Bartram, co-founder of this Association w husband Len, Martin & Eileen; has died. Loved & remembered by family & all who knew her.
- 192 Squadron** Warrant Officer Frank Elliott died 16 April 2020. Missed & loved by son Paul & family, together with all in the Association who knew him.
- 192 Squadron** Leading Aircraftsman Joseph Henry Sayers. Joe died in January this year and is loved and missed by wife Mary and family, as well as his worldwide Family of Kindred Spirits.
- 171 Squadron** Squadron Leader David Butler DFC, Rear Gunner, died 2 February. Missed by wife Edna and family, together with all who knew him.
- 214 Squadron** Ken White, known as 'Chalky', served as Air Gunner, died 21 May. Chalky was the final survivor of his crew who he remained in touch with through his life. Loved by son Ken and family.
- 223 Squadron** Mr Len S Davies; passed away 25<sup>th</sup> August. Served at RAF Oulton and is believed to be the last of Flight Lieutenant Brigham's crew.
- Special Duties** Mr Arthur Piggot; passed away 10<sup>th</sup> March aged 97 years. Served all over in a "Special Duties" role, but particularly with RAF 100 Group. He has an amazing story. Missed and loved by Daughter Alison, Granddaughters and Great Granddaughters. He was as an old school Gentleman, charming and "with a twinkle in his eye right to the end."
- 214 Squadron** Mr George Mackie DFC; passed away 3<sup>rd</sup> October aged 100. A colourful character who served with 214 and 46 Squadrons. Survived by one Daughter.
- 214 Squadron** Mr Cyril ( Pip) Piper; passed away December 2020 aged 95. Served with 214 out of Oulton as a Mid Upper Gunner on Fortresses. He was a keen cricketer and footballer, an avid reader and had a great interest in the RAF ... and horses, his father and uncle being Jockeys. He lived only a short distance from Epsom Racecourse.

## ***This Year's Reunion Update.***

Your Committee has unanimously made the decision to cancel the Reunion that was due to take place in Norfolk in May, because of the continuing threat of the SARS-CoV2 Virus.

This is a decision that has been made two years running and reflects the very serious nature of what we are facing, not wishing to put at risk anyone from our RAF 100 Group family.

It is our sincere hope that we will be able to gather once again in Norwich next year for what we anticipate will be a time of very special celebrations.

If you have any questions, please, don't hesitate to contact us.

# 100 Group Order of Battle

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

Created by Stuart Borlase; Edited by Janine Harrington.

The front cover features the Halifax 3 that our President Mr Phil James MBE, served in as Flight Engineer, flying Operations out of Foulsham.

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

To Arthur and Linda Reid,  
for continuing to support our Association with their effort in overseeing the printing of this magazine and the logistics of seeing it posted to the four corners of the Globe.

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