



Confound & Destroy

The magazine of RAF 100 Group Association

 **Winter 2013**




100 Group Association Chairman Wing Cdr John Stubbington: 
100 Group Association Secretary Janine Harrington: 

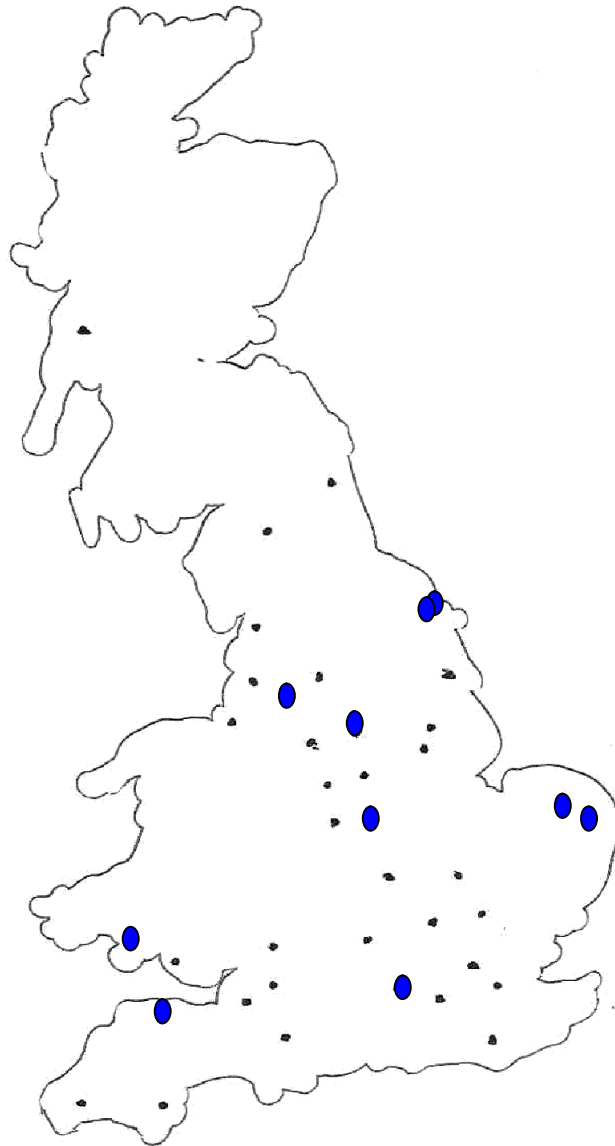
Email: raf100groupassociation@gmail.com
www.raf100groupassociation.org.uk

Home to Memorabilia of RAF 100 Group Association
City of Norwich Aviation Museum
Old Norwich Road, Horsham St Faith, Norwich, Norfolk NR10 3JF
Telephone: 

www.cnam.co.uk

RAF 100 Group Association

Membership Areas



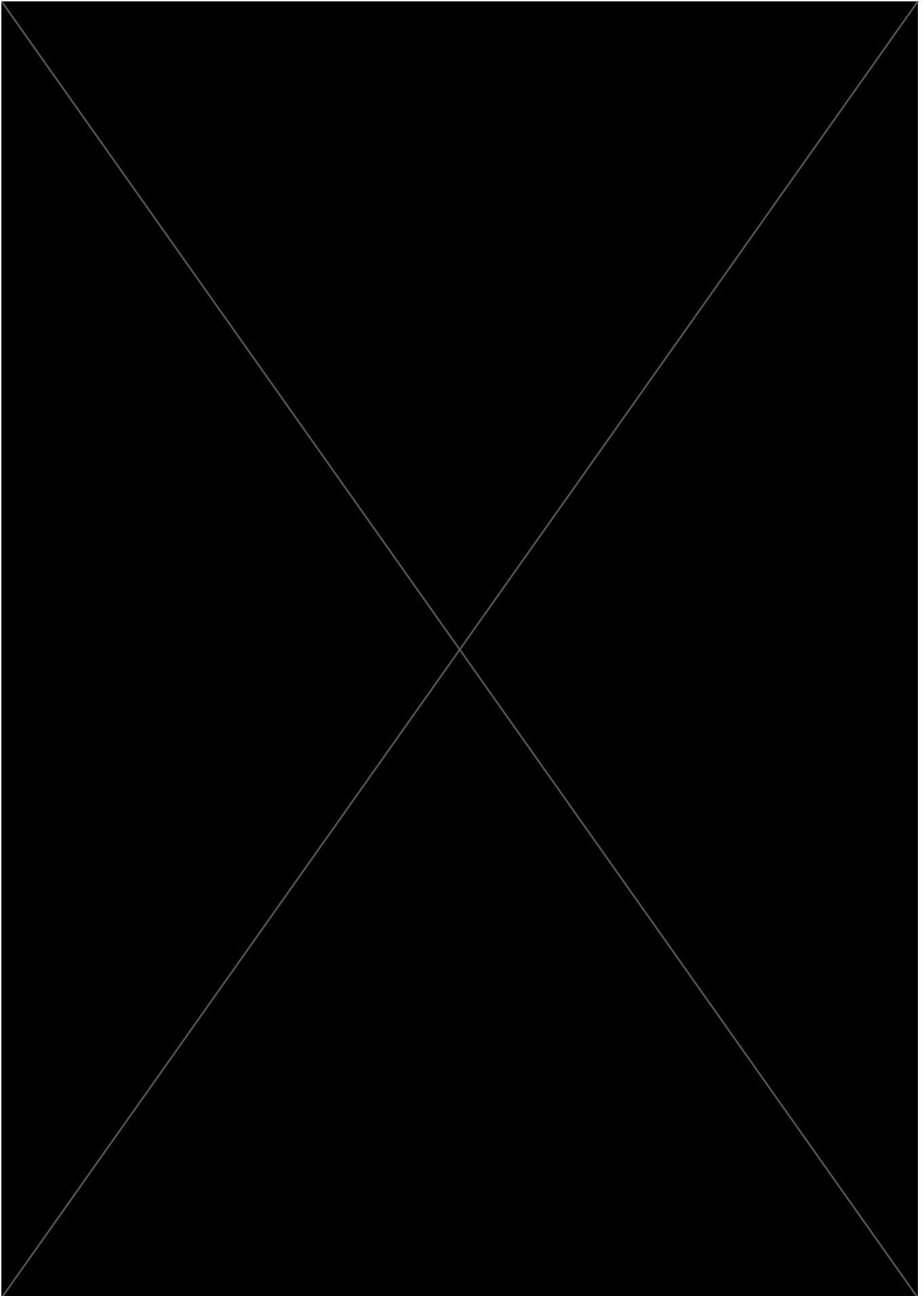
Each dot represents an area where there is a cluster of members
Big dots show where members of the RAF 100 Group Association Committee live

Members who live abroad are in the following countries:

Northern Ireland
Canada
Austria
China
Germany
Australia
USA
South Africa
Thailand
Brazil
New Zealand

RAF 100 Group Association

Committee



EDITOR'S PAGE



Dear Friends

It is with a head filled with memories and a heart still leaking emotion from our September wedding and honeymoon in France that I thank each and every one of you for your kind thoughts, congratulations and good wishes, together with the many many cards and letters we received. It was the kind of event when you wish Time could stand still to fully appreciate and immerse yourself in everything it has to offer. I am still pinching myself to know that it's true ... it all seems now like some faraway dream. And yet the albums I am filling with photographs and memorabilia tell the story so well, and I know I shall look through them often ... and your cards and good wishes are very much a part of that. Thank you xx

I am also grateful to those of you who receive the magazine by email and who came back so quickly to say how easily you downloaded the Autumn edition through the new pathway Tony and I created in Google Drive.

However, before moving on further there is one mistake I need to rectify. Page 11 in the last magazine showed two photographs, one of Xmas 1944 Menu at Oulton, the other with airmen standing and crouched in front of an aircraft. My humble apologies to the Burton family, and thank you for your phone call, Donald. I inadvertently put Donald Burton's father's name as James Sargent, when the latter was obviously his rank. The man featured in the second photograph at Oulton, far right, second from back, was SGT. JAMES BURTON. If anyone remembers James Burton serving in RAF No. 214 Squadron at Oulton I would be very happy to hear from you and to put you in touch with his family. What I didn't know at the time of printing this photograph was that it shows 214 Ground Crew combined with Aircrew after a flight over Germany to see the devastation for themselves in the aftermath of war.

Some good news is that we continue to take on new members, and from different countries, so our Family is spreading further and further afield. It gives me great pleasure to welcome John Beeching hailing from Nelson in New Zealand. He and lifetime friend and Navigator Fred Herbert served with 169 Squadron at Great Massingham. Fred sadly passed away a few years ago, and his name along with Tail Gunner 'Doug' Douglas from 214 Squadron now appear on the Final Postings page as a lasting memory of them. Alongside Peter Gunn, Ken Wright, and George Stewart (23 Squadron), John has become a firm friend and we all regularly correspond. It is always a pleasure to receive their letters. Both John and Peter particularly have proved perfect gems in providing necessary contacts and information to complete the booklet on RAF Great Massingham as one of the last in the series on Norfolk airfields founder member Len Bartram began some considerable years ago. Each time I step through the portal to see through the eyes of those who served during the war, standing in any one of the airfields under RAF No.100 (Bomber Support) Group, it gives me a tremendous feeling of timelessness. I hope today those veterans amongst us still feel at the heart of our Association that same strength and support, friendship and love that stretches back through the years. I remain passionate your stories and personal experiences should be remembered and live on. It is what drives my writing and leads me into bringing the series of booklets created on these Norfolk airfields under one cover for the future ... filled with the warm and often funny witticisms, brave acts of courage, and very touching personal stories, poetry and photographs which you continue to send to me and which extend beyond the booklets already printed and on sale. Thank you for being a part of this endeavour. I continue to value all your many letters, emails and phone calls ...

Tony joins me in wishing you all a
and every happiness for 2014.

*Love & Hugz
Janine & Tony XX*

*Merry
Christmas*

Items for magazine should be sent to:

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Chairman's Report



THE 100 (BOMBER SUPPORT) GROUP ASSOCIATION

LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN, NOVEMBER 2013

Dear Members,

It is so absolutely appropriate that I should be writing this letter on Remembrance Day. For all our veterans within the 100 Group Association and for your colleagues who may still be with us but not members of the Association, I offer my sincere respect of your personal achievements. You shall be given everlasting memory as we pass through years to come. In my capacity as your Chairman, it is a huge privilege to speak to audiences about the work of the Group and the continuation of that work in different ways through to current operations in various places around the world.

In this very context, I must speak about Phil and Vera James. You will all know that they have been members of the Association from the very start and have served us all so very well. Phil flew with 192 Squadron from RAF Foulsham, as a Flight Engineer on Halifax aircraft. Just one of the things that he has done much more recently was to 'engineer' me into becoming Chairman of the Association; so you can blame him for that!! The Reunion raffles after Dinner on the Saturdays have always yielded quite amazing benefits for the Association funds, coming from the many prizes that Phil was able to acquire from his many contacts in South Wales. In this context, their daughter Barbara and grand-daughter Tracey have both done so much to enliven the recent raffles with their auctioning of various items. It is therefore with huge regret that I must tell you that both Phil and Vera have been unwell. Phil had asked if he could step down from the Committee because it is unlikely that they will be able to travel to our Reunions. However, I am so very pleased to tell you that Phil did agree to stay with the Committee as the remaining Veteran member. In that capacity he could continue to offer valuable advice in a non-executive capacity. Phil, I am delighted that you have accepted that request – Thank you.

Through the summer I had been researching and preparing a paper on the subject of the ill-fated Nuremburg Raid on 30/31st March 1944. I am sure many of you will recall that raid, some only too well from a 100 Group point of view. The Group provided 20 Mosquitoes from four Squadrons; 192 Squadron flew two Halifaxes and two Mosquitoes on special signals operations; thankfully all 100 Group aircraft returned safely. But you will all remember that the overall losses for Bomber Command were the worst ever; 94 bombers failed to return with a loss rate of 11.8%, excluding those aircraft lost for other reasons. You will know equally well that the raid has been surrounded with intrigue and alleged conspiracy. This had been largely put down by Martin Middlebrook in the second edition of his excellent book '*The Nuremburg Raid*'. But the story and the mythology are still out there. It was a very bad night for Bomber Command, but there were two other raids in the same period where losses totalled between 8 and 10%. Steve Bond and I have been closely associated with a new documentary film which attempts to reinforce the fact that there was no conspiracy. In the bluntest of terms, it was the cost of War. We may remember that on this special day.

With my most sincere best wishes to all members,

John Stubbington

Wing Commander, Chairman

City of Norwich Aviation Museum



Since the last edition of 'Confound and Destroy', Summer has well and truly faded into Autumn and as Winter approaches, we are already planning our 2014 season. Already, our publicity has been arranged for the new season, our opening times confirmed and updates to some of the displays around the Museum buildings are underway.

Work to open 'Shed 5' to the public next Spring is now underway with electrical work to fit display lighting in progress. Last month, external painting of the main building was completed. In particular, the extension constructed in 1997 - home to the RAF 100 Group display - now has a new look. This has undergone a very noticeable change of colour and is now finished in a shade of olive green picked to match the shade of the steel cladding of the original building.

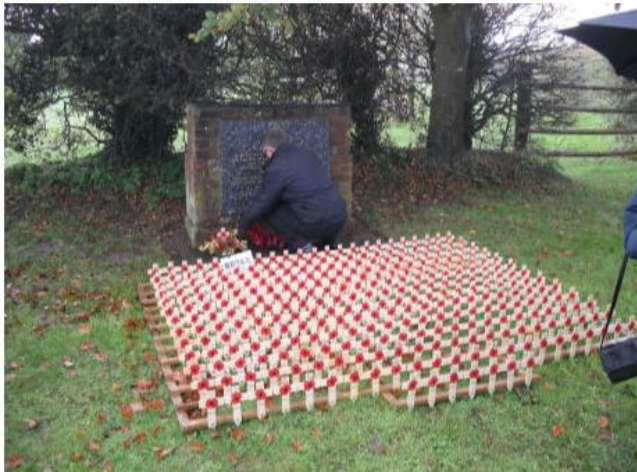
Derek has recently reminded me that, thirty years ago, in the Autumn of 1983; we purchased the building for the princely sum of £40. Several weekends were spent at Southrepps, Norfolk, where it had served as the village hall, dismantling and preparing the timber sections it is constructed of in preparation for its move to the Museum. One of the attractions of this building to us was that before its use at Southrepps, the building, manufactured in America, had been at the USAAF B-24 Liberator maintenance facility at Griston, Norfolk. Although now extensively modified both for its new purpose and to meet with modern day building regulations, its origins can still be clearly seen. Apart from housing some of Norfolk's aviation heritage, it is, in fact, an exhibit itself.

Recent months have seen a large intake of items to the Museum collection and we now have many hundreds of items waiting to be catalogued. Amongst the new arrivals have been a 25kg package of books and documents from Gerhard Heilig that are extremely valued additions to the collection. We must record our appreciation to Gerhard and Cissy for packing these items for shipment from Vienna to Norfolk. Our Curator, Robert Walden, was able to visit Gerhard and Cissy at their home in early November and found Gerhard in good spirits.

We have also absorbed the complete collection of the now defunct Civil and Military Aviation Society, a group that was very active in Norfolk in the 1970/1980's. We had already taken a number of larger exhibits from this collection some years ago, but now all the items they had collected have been donated. A telephone call to the Museum requesting we collect items from a local donor has brought forward the complete collection of the Norfolk and Norwich Aero Club's Chief Flying Instructor. These items include his three World War Two flying log books and many items relating to private flying in Norfolk in the period 1950-1980.

The Museum archive now numbers over 18,500 recorded items. Over 500 additions have been made to our MODES accession system so far in 2013 and we estimate that recent additions have created a backlog of a similar number of items awaiting entry. One of the many challenges the Museum faces in the future is to document and record items in such a way that they are accessible and can be used towards our objective '*to preserve and record the aviation history of Norfolk*'. Our own expectations and those who use the Museum facilities are higher now than at any time during the Museums thirty-year history and we will continue to make improvements to manage the rapidly growing collection in our care.

We are committed to further growing the Museum collection and we remain very active in seeking additions to the store of items we already have. This is an area where RAF 100 Group Association members can be of assistance as they may find items of interest and value to the Museum in their own local area. If you see or hear of collections of aviation memorabilia being disposed of, please think of the collection here in Norfolk. The number of new arrivals in 2013 illustrates that there are items '*looking for a good home*'. A telephone call or email to the Museum will bring a quick response. We are able to arrange collection of packed items from any part of the UK should items be too large or heavy for posting. In particular, we would like to repeat our request for photographic images relating to RAF 100 Group



On Remembrance Sunday, people gathered at the Oulton Memorial ... and Association members were amongst them, including Sidney Pike, ex 214 Squadron (below).

Tributes from RAF 100 Group Association and the Museum can be seen to the left of the Memorial.

Kim and Kay were there to represent the Museum and the Association.

Rod Vowler called in on his way back to his daughter's at Cambridge, and it was great to see him looking so well.



Rod is seen talking to Peter Witt's daughter, Andrea and her husband, Peter Sluman.



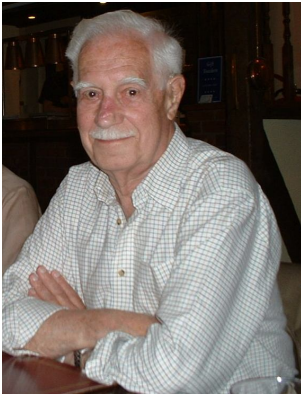
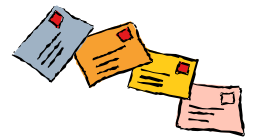
The poppies, one for every loss from Oulton have all been replaced by Paul Killingback this year.

At the Museum itself, we gathered around the 100 Group tree for the two minute silence.

Kelvin Sloper

Treasurer, City of Norwich Aviation Museum

LETTERS PAGES



Dear friends,

Here are the latest extracts from my memoirs as so many of you have asked to be kept informed.

Saturday 28th September. Three weeks have passed since I returned home (from hospital) and they have been very happy times indeed. My family has always been a very close-knit and loving one, but in the past we had never given much thought to this as it appeared to be simply nothing but a natural one. But the present circumstances have brought us to an even closer and very conscious degree together which has brought a great happiness to us all.

Added to this were the reactions of our friends here and even more the responses to my last round-robin. The first of these left me utterly speechless and like Victor Meldrew in that sitcom *One Foot in the Grave*, my first words were: I DON'T BELIEVE IT! Others followed in a similar vein and filled me with great happiness. I had always felt that I was well liked at the reunions, but never considered this as anything special. I had often raised my voice at the AGMs and so had many others, so this had never been of any significance to me. These responses now showed that my contributions had been more than I could have imagined and this had also proved to be of great support and contentment in my present circumstances.

Throughout this time I have never felt any physical discomfort whatsoever. Though needing a great deal of rest and a time of being up limited to two hours and bit, then requiring a period of rest, then a necessity of an afternoon sleep from 2-4 pm is simply a matter of organising the day in an appropriate manner which has presented no problems whatsoever.

I had always been very concerned, even while I had still been in hospital, that the bits and pieces I had collected over the years should not end on the rubbish heap but passed on to someone who might have some further use for them. As soon as I was back home and settled I made a start on this task. The family had of course priority and in the course of events I found to my surprise that all my suits, which although some 20 years old and still in prime condition, fitted my so-in-law Roman, who was very happy to have them. My considerable collection of books were all in English and although all the family spoke the language well, would have difficulty reading them without the aid of a dictionary and this would detract from enjoying them. The sole exception was my son Robin, who had spent many holidays in England in his youth and was therefore familiar with English as she is spoke, but I was surprised at the number of books he showed an obvious interest in. A number of books found a home in the small museum at Blickling Hall, dedicated to Oulton, where my first squadron, 214, had been stationed and quite a heap at the Norwich Aviation Museum. My piper friend, who had a great interest in aviation matters, was only too happy to receive a great pile. A few dealing with military history even found a new home at the National Army Museum in Vienna. There was a great pile of old letters, brochures, newsletters, periodicals and such like which could be of no interest to anyone and these found a further use in the paper recycle-bin.

I have achieved all that I had set out to do and to a far greater extent I had thought possible. Now I can relax and look forward in satisfied confidence to what Fate has in store for me.

Harry

Gerhard Heilig
29 September 2013



Dear Janine,

As you will gather the 'plain brown envelope' has once again dropped through my door. Many thanks and I will take the magazine to Church as soon as I've finished with it. I know several of the congregation do read it.

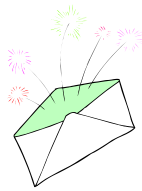
Many congratulations to you and Tony on your marriage.

Just to reassure you the Mission Room is booked ready for your AGM at the Association May Reunion 2014 so you can put your mind to rest on that one. And when you prepare the Winter edition of 'Confound & Destroy', would you please pass on our, that is Horsham St Faith Church's, very best wishes to everyone for Christmas and 2014.

With very best wishes

Peter Holness

Horsham St Faith Church



Hi Janine

I just read your editor's page, and found out that you and Tony got married on Friday 18th of September!!!! Wow! That's dynamite!!

Marion and I flew that day to Boston to see our granddaughter get married the next day to a Harvard professor. QT is a foot doctor. It was an elegant affair.

Congratulations Mr and Mrs Bradley and our very best wishes to both of you, for a long and happy future together!

Affectionately,

Marion & George Stewart



Hello Mrs Bradley

Received the Newsletter and was able to download it without problems - excellent issue. Delighted the wedding went off successfully, and that all your arrangements worked out OK.

Regards

Richard

Richard Forder (Committee)



Hi Janine

Latest issue received -- thank you very much -- enjoyed it. Congratulations to you and Tony on your marriage.

Going back to the summer edition, I was sad to learn that Roger Jones died. I did meet him once at a reunion. His brother and my step uncle Peter Newman were in Flt Lt Allies' 214 Squadron crew, and sadly all were killed on the night of 21/22nd March 1945.

Keep up the good work

Best regards

David Porteous

Hello All,

I am passing on the sad news that we have just lost another of our 223 Squadron veterans. I had a call from his wife Betty this morning to inform me, and requesting I pass on the news to the 100 Group Assn. It was sad news for me as I had known Ron and kept in contact since the very first reunion in 1994. Ron and Betty were initially regular attendees at our reunions, but had not attended for many years because Ron was not able to travel. He had not enjoyed good health for many years, and his death yesterday at the age of 91 years was a merciful release for him according to Betty. Ron always retained a strong interest in 100 Group, and 223 Squadron in particular. I last heard from him just a few weeks ago when he rang to say how pleased he had been to read about Rod's very special presentation to me of the 223 Squadron badge at the last reunion. He of course was the author of one of the early books about the Squadron when he produced his personal account of his wartime RAF service in "A Navigator's Tale. I will of course provide a tribute to Ron for the Newsletter in due course.

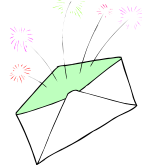
Many years ago I visited the crash site of Ron's aircraft, TS520 (J) and was able to present him with a piece of it which he had framed in a glass case. A photo of Ron with the framed item appears on Page 125 of "Special Ops Liberators". Betty has asked if CNAM would like it in their collection, and I will approach them to confirm that. Assuming they wish to have it I will hand it over at the next reunion.

Ron's funeral took place at Worthing Crematorium at 1200 on 3rd September.

Best wishes

Richard

NOTE: Richard has written a fitting Memorial for Ron Johnson which appears in the SHARED EXPERIENCES section of this magazine.



Dear Janine

Thank you so very much for the parcel of two (blown up versions of the original 171/199 Squadron) photographs and letter – beautifully and carefully packed to arrive here in perfect condition.

Yes, I would like to accept your offer of greater magnification and to indicate the area I have taken a photo on my ancient machine to show the area I am on. Incidentally, I should have said in my previous letter that the photo where colleagues were standing on the wings was 171 Squadron and this 199 Squadron would appear to be the other photo.

Very many congratulations to you both on your proposed marriage on 20 September and to wish you every happiness for the future. And I do hope the trip to France goes well.

Just a few other comments.

1. *Some people did not come for this photo session because the word went round that it was a publicity stunt and they did not wish to be included.*
2. *My eyesight may not be good, but where are all the WAAFs?*
3. *There are not many in dark blue uniforms of the New Zealand Air Force. Was there a plot to keep them away?*
4. *The Group Captain (George Cubby) does not appear in their photos? I do not think he would have approved that all the propellers were not at the same angle. (We all remembered the very long starting handles we all carried in case you landed away from home and next morning there was no ground batteries available so we had (as a crew) to turn over the engines by hand to get sufficient compression on the engines before using the on board batteries.) Well, we did at CARNABY having lost our brakes the night before.*

Yours sincerely, and with best wishes,

Peter Sclaverano

NOTE: Anyone else who would like an A4 size print of the original 171/199 photograph contact Janine



171 Squadron: PETER SCLAVERANO, right end of 4th row



171 Squadron: second from right on main photograph



171 Squadron photograph, far right of nose + wing man

An urgent plea was put into the Autumn edition of the magazine on behalf of Ken Wright asking if anyone knows of any aircraft from RAF No.100 Group which was operational during the early hours (3am) of 15 December 1944 over either France or Germany? Richard Forder on the Association Committee, responds:

Hello Janine,

Re: Ken Wright's request concerning 100 Group aircraft flying on Ops over France or Germany at 0300 hr. My information is that it was a relatively quiet night for Bomber Command Ops on the night of 14/15 Dec 45. A force of 138 Lancasters from 3 Group were launched to attack Siegen in Germany on a daylight raid, but were recalled as they reached the French coast as bad weather prevented their fighter escort from taking off. No aircraft from the heavy units from 100 Group (171, 192, 199, 214 and 223 Squadrons) were airborne in support of this Operation. A small force of Lancasters from 617 Squadron also attacked the E Boat pens at Ijmuiden on the Dutch coast. As far as I am aware there were no aircraft of 100 Group operating over France or Germany in the early hours of the morning on the 15 Dec 1944 ...

Regards

Richard



Greetings, Janine,



... Great to hear from you. Bad news is we have just been told dear old Sister Laurie has shuffled off her mortal coil, the lady who did so much for Great Massingham and its RAF connections. We visited her at Rickmansworth last year so at least we have some fond memories. Delighted of course that you have made contact with Peter Gunn, who is one of the very best. I stayed with Peter and Janet when I was over there one year and Peter was at the 169 Squadron Reunion Dinner we had; most of those who attended are no longer with us. I do have a very good group photograph of the entire 169 Squadron taken at RAF Great Massingham

right at war's end which I think has not been seen anywhere. Personal cameras were forbidden during the war, so very few photographs are available, alas, apart from those taken by official photographers.

My memories are still vivid and remain as recollections of salad years. I was only 21 years old when I was given a wonderful Mosquito aeroplane to fly, carefully maintained and serviced by a wonderful ground-crew. I wonder what happened to all of those, as they got so little credit. I look at pictures of those great big Rolls-Royce Merlin engines which ran faultlessly for hours on end and took it all in those days as a matter of fact. Today, at Air Shows, a Merlin powering a Mustang or similar is looked up as something special, which it probably is, but on some of our bigger raids, there were something like five thousand Merlins all thundering away at once, for something like ten hours, each engine burning up a gallon of 100 octane petrol every minute! Such was the audit of war, no wonder Britain went broke!

This coming Sunday is Battle of Britain Day here and Wendy and I have been invited to attend a Memorial Service and Luncheon. Last year I got joed to give a talk about my war in the air at a similar function; fortunately one can shoot a bit of a line as there are very few people left who can shoot you down, certainly here in Nelson, at any rate. I sent away and have since received the Bomber Command Clasp for my 1939-45 Star medal, so that is a fairly distinctive recognition, I suppose.

Whatever you do, keep up the good work and I will help you in every way I can. Regards to Peter and Janet (Gunn) if you are in touch with them.

John & Wendy

John & Wendy Beeching, Nelson, New Zealand



HAPPY 90th BIRTHDAY, JOHN, so happy you got to reach up once more into the wide blue yonder!

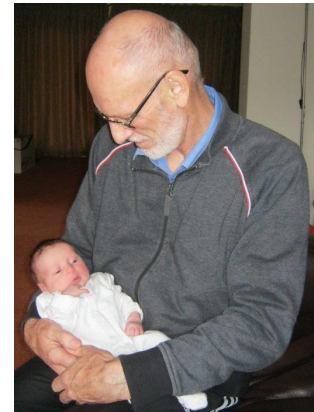


Hi Jan,

This is a picture of me with my new-born granddaughter.

I don't know if you've heard of a new Service that has been set up for people who are alone, especially aimed at elderly, and those on their own at Christmas. It's a sad time of year for a lot of people.

The Silver Line aims to help by offering someone to speak to 24 hours a day, giving support and advice to those suffering neglect or abuse. It's been set up by Esther Rantzen with a £5m grant to launch before Christmas in the loneliest time of the year. It is run by volunteers 24 hours a day. They may refer callers to activities and organisations that can help, but they are really there to offer a friendly voice and a person to talk to when you're feeling low. It's been trialled in the North West and North East as well as Jersey since the end of last year, but the grant now means they can extend the service to the rest of the UK in time for the end of the year ... and the service is free!



Contact The Silver Line on 0800 328 8888 or visit the website at www.thesilverline.org.uk

My very best wishes to everyone for Christmas!

Rod

Rod Vowler
Association Standard Bearer



Hallo Janine

Congratulations on your recent marriage.

Yes – I received the Autumn Magazine loud and clear. Having messed up things on my computer before, I was a little worried by the warning *"Google hard drive can't scan this file because it exceeds the maximum size that Google can scan. Would you still like to download this file?"* But I decided to risk it, and it started a lengthy download. Seeing the updating message about minutes left to download I decided to have my evening meal, and when all was eaten and washed up I went back to the computer and there it all was!

I was not stationed at one of the action airfields in the Group, but a mere Clerk GD at Bylaugh Hall as shorthand-typist to Group Captain Porte, but nevertheless we WAAFs who formed that side of things kept our ears to the ground and I now have the 100 Group magazine to fill in those many gaps in those top secret times. I still keep in touch with two of my lifelong friends from Hut 5 on the WAAF Site. We all celebrated our 90th birthdays this year, and once a month I'm one of 12 ex-wartime WAAFs living in and around my hometown of Sutton, Surrey, who meet up for a coffee morning at The Grapes Pub. On one such occasion a man enjoying his pint enquired who we elderly souls were, and on being told, sent the Barman to buy us all a free drink (*"they can have doubles if they like!"*). When we thanked him for his generosity he said *"No, it is I who should thank you ladies"*

With best wishes and thanks for all your hard work.

Peggy Pollard



HAPPY 90th BIRTHDAY, PEGGY, AND EVERY HAPPINESS FOR THE COMING YEAR!



SHARED EXPERIENCES

My Wife's Story

2163561 SERGEANT SWAN

by Norman Storey



Alice Josephine Swan was born in Londonderry, Northern Ireland on 13 April 1926. Her mother was Irish, her father English and born in Farnham, Surrey. They moved to Richmond in Surrey when Alice was far too young to remember anything about it. She was educated at Richmond Central School and on leaving school, she went to work in a Milliners.

On arriving for work one morning, she was shocked to find an empty space where the shop should have been.

It had been bombed!

She then obtained a secretarial job with Chryslers who were manufacturing parts for the Halifax Bomber. She stayed there until she was old enough, in 1944, to enlist and immediately volunteered to join the WAAF, (Women's Auxiliary Air Force) to be posted to RAF Wilmslow with about 40 other girls. It is more than likely that there was more than one Alice and this is probably how she became to be known as Audrey. Corporal Ruby Mallison had the task of putting these girls through their Initial Training.

After the war, Audrey was to become Chairman of the WAAF Association. Audrey was an early member of the Association and was to meet Ruby at many Reunions. We always visited Ruby when she was staying at the Union Jack Club in London.

From Wilmslow, Audrey was posted to RAF Station Medmenham, in Buckinghamshire. This was known as a screened posting, which meant that, once posted, you could not be posted on due to the very secretive work. Medmenham was the centre of Photographic Intelligence, deciphering all the photographs taken by the photo reconnaissance aircraft (unarmed for speed) stationed at RAF Benson. Audrey was stationed with Sarah Churchill (Sir Winston Churchill's daughter) and always spoke very highly of her, she would always volunteer to make the tea when it was her turn – a very natural person who was later to be commissioned.

It was Constance Babington Smith who located the V2 Rockets produced at Peenemunde. It was estimated that the V2s contained 40-45 tons of high explosive.

On the night of 17 August 1943, Bomber Command attacked Peenemunde. Considerable damage was caused and it is known this raid delayed the production of the V2s. Once again, Bomber Command suffered heavy losses – 40 aircraft. It has been considered in hindsight, that Germany might well have won the war with the V2s had it not been for this raid. The Dambuster's raid received all the publicity, but probably Peenemunde raid was the most important and decisive raid of WWII.

After the war, Audrey was posted from Medmenham, promoted to Sergeant and put in charge of an Office. On her Demob, she joined the British Control Commission in Germany as a Secretary to the Governor General in Berlin. She served all through the Russian Blockade where everything, including food, had to be flown in. She had two incidents connected with the Russians. Trains carrying personnel on Leave were held up for about an hour at the Russian Control. On this occasion, one of the male passengers made a derogatory remark about the Russians – the Russian Official understood English. The outcome was that the train was held up for four hours. The second incident was much more scary. The Opera House was in the Russian Zone, but the British were allowed to visit it on the understanding they returned to the British Sector before midnight. Audrey and a friend took a taxi to the Opera and arranged for the taxi to come for them after the show. The taxi never arrived. She and her friend had to run the

length of the Kerfusendam, reaching the British Sector with one minute to spare. If they had not made it in time, they would have been detained for forty-eight hours by the Russians and the British Sector would not have been informed they were being held. When she left the Control Commission and Service in Berlin came to an end, she went to work for the Council of Europe in its very early days in Strasburg.

On returning to England, she went to work for Odhams Press on 'Woman' magazine as an Agony Aunt for the Evelyn Home Page.

This was a very responsible position, needing considerable sympathetic understanding and a great deal of knowledge of so many subjects including Common Law. At times, it could be very stressful, especially some of the matrimonial problems. Women used to write in with such varied problems, some financial, some sexual and some quite sordid. One common request was asking for advice on wedding etiquette, the latter probably one of the least difficult to answer. She had an enquiry about wedding etiquette from a girl she knew in the WAAF and would love to have written to her sending her best wishes. However, it was strictly forbidden to have any personal contacts.

She worked on 'Woman' magazine until she married in 1954.

I lived at Westcliffe-on-Sea, Essex, and spent over three hours each day travelling to and from London to work in my father's Antiquarian Book business in the West End. Obviously Audrey could not run a home and spend so much time travelling. She had to give up being a well-paid Agony Aunt and find employment more local.

She went to work on a desk job for Echo, the radio manufacturers. The wages were much less, but the income was a vital necessity. My father died one year after our marriage. Then a bit of luck came our way. I was offered a small apartment two storeys above the shop. We moved in immediately which made it possible to work together, Audrey doing all the secretarial work and maintaining a wonderful filing system, enabling me to concentrate on running the business. She was a great support and exceptionally efficient.

Through sheer hard work and dedication, things gradually improved financially. Each year, the Antiquarian Booksellers Association held a Congress in a different country. These lasted about a week and she attended all of these with me, visiting most countries in Europe, also Sweden, Norway and Denmark, Canada and America. We also travelled a great deal, exhibiting in Antiquarian Book Fairs in Europe, Scandinavia and many in America, New York, Boston, Chicago, San Francisco and Los Angeles.

Two other visits of great interest were to Israel and Japan. It was in Japan that Audrey was introduced to and shook hands with the Japanese Princess.

When I turned sixty in 1984 and, having no children, I decided to sell the business and retire. We now had time to relax and go on a few cruises, including the Mediterranean, Russia and the Caribbean. One of the highlights was cruising to New York, a stay in the Waldorf Astoria, and a flight back to England on Concorde.

We think it can safely be said that Audrey is a very capable person, dedicated to everything she has undertaken. She has led a very full life with many experiences. A woman well respected, held in high esteem, and very much loved by all who know her.

As Audrey herself always says: *'Joining the WAAF opened all the doors'*.

Norman Storey
214 Squadron, Oulton

SHARED EXPERIENCES

Flt/Lt RONALD WALTER JOHNSON RAFVR

Navigator, 223 (Bomber Support) Squadron

28th January 1922 – 28th August 2013

by

Richard Forder



F/O Thompson & crew, lost 20/21 Feb 1945

Rear L to R: F/S Jack Kendall, F/S Ron Wood, F/S George Graham,
F/O 'Tommy' Thompson, F/S Ron Wynn, **F/O Ron Johnson**

Front L to R: Sgt Ted Whittaker, F/S Rex Arnett, F/O 'Chips' Carpenter
F/S Brian Maxwell, W/O Bill Baker, W/O Ron Palmer

(Carpenter had left the crew and Arnett was sick and replaced by F/S Des Bryant on the night)

Ron Johnson was employed in a Law firm in Grays Inn, London when war broke out. Like many of his contemporaries he was inspired to be a pilot and volunteered for aircrew. This was despite the advice of his elder brother who urged him not to volunteer for aircrew. He was already serving in the RAF and had seen at first hand the casualties amongst the young fighter pilots flying from Kent airfields during the Battle of Britain.

His call-up papers duly arrived and he reported as instructed to the RAF Recruiting Office at Euston. After a very strenuous day of rigorous testing and examination he was pronounced A1 in all respects, and was accepted for pilot training. At this early stage of the war the training machine was swamped by the avalanche of recruits, and Ron was placed on Reserve and returned home to await further instructions.

After a wait of 7/8 months he received instructions to report to the Aircrew Reception Centre at St Johns Wood where he was kitted out, jabbed and lectured. More waiting followed until he was called forward to 11 ITW at Scarborough to begin the first stage of his aircrew training. Completing his ITW course it was on to No 4 Elementary Flying Training School (EFTS) at Borough in East Yorks where initial assessment of his suitability for pilot training was carried out. This was his introduction to the De Havilland Tiger Moth. Again he was successful and was told that he would be going to Canada, taking part in the Empire Air Training Scheme.

He crossed the Atlantic in style travelling in the Queen Elizabeth to Halifax, Nova Scotia. A long train journey followed across Canada to the Town of Virden in Manitoba, the home of No. 19 EFTS. Ron enjoyed his flying training using the Tiger Moth and went solo after 13 hours 25 min in the air. Despite this success in training Ron was not convinced that he wanted to be a pilot after all. Despite pressure to continue his pilot training he would not change his mind and reluctantly he was posted away to a nearby Holding Depot. After a number of interviews he was offered an Observer's Course. This entailed an Air

Gunner's course, a Bomb Aimer's course and a full Navigator's course. This comprehensive series appealed to Ron and the die was cast.

His new direction commenced with his attendance at No. 31 Bombing & Gunnery School, Picton, Ontario flying in Blenheim and Bolingbroke aircraft. Completed in 6 weeks it was on to No. 9 Air Observers School (AOS) at St Jean, Quebec, near Montreal. The 5 month course was very intense covering the theory and practice of air navigation. The practice took place in Avro Ansons involving flying some 75 hours by day and 40 hours at night. Inevitably some of his colleagues fell by the way side, but Ron survived to finish a creditable 6th out of the 24 who finally emerged to earn their Observers' Flying 'O' badge and promotion to Sgt.

There followed a brief interlude of an unforgettable week's leave spent in New York before it was off on the next element of the long training trail. He had been selected to join Coastal Command, and this required another long rail journey, this time to Prince Edward Island in NE Canada, home of No. 1 General Reconnaissance School (GRS) at Summerside. The sun was certainly shining on him at this time as he was among a small number of his fellow AOS graduates to be granted a Commission. Ron spent his time polishing up his navigational skills at Summerside, again flying in Avro Ansons.

Another surprise posting at the end of the course saw him on his way to No. 111 (Coastal) Operational Training Unit at Nassau in the Bahamas where he was to convert to one of Coastal Command's Very Long Range aircraft, the Consolidated B-24 Liberator. His move to Nassau had the bonus of extending his time away from the blackout, rationing and other miseries of wartime Britain. Here, Ron went through the crucial crewing up experience that was very much a lottery. However, he was very lucky as he met an RCAF pilot, 'Tommy' Thompson, who after a chat, invited him to complete his crew. He was introduced to them, 5 more Canadians and an RAF Flight Engineer (F/E). Ron quickly gained a great respect for his new skipper, a big man in every way, and quickly bonded with his crew mates.

Flying commenced on the twin engine B-25 Mitchell at Oakes Field. This was the first stint in their conversion training. It lasted for 5 weeks carrying out training exercises by day and night, including 5 hour anti-submarine patrols. It had the benefit of shaking them down as a crew in preparation for the second and most important phase which involved a move to the Island's other airfield at Windsor Field where their conversion to the Liberator would take place. This was successfully completed after 3 months.

At the end of the course it was back to Britain via Canada to await their posting to a Coastal Command Squadron. However, the war had moved on since their training had begun. The Allies had got the upper hand in the U Boat war, and the Command had started to disband some of its Squadrons creating an aircrew surplus. Fate decreed their return would also coincide with a requirement to reform a Squadron in Bomber Command to be equipped with Liberators; given added priority to help deal with the then perceived threat of radio controlled V2s. *What was the role of 100 Group and 223(Bomber Support) Squadron, and where the hell was RAF Oulton?* They were soon to find out. Ron and his crew were entering the highly secretive world of Radio Counter Measures, and only the Squadron's Liberators would be initially familiar to them.

Arriving at Oulton in early September there was a hiatus whilst their aircraft were delivered and made ready for the new role. After a short work up they flew their first operation on 7 October 1944. Ron was ever present on their first 19 missions.

On the night of 19/20 February 1945 the crew were on Battle Order for a Window Patrol. It was not a good night for them. They would be without their regular Wireless Operator, Flt Sgt Rex Arnett RCAF who had reported sick and was replaced by Flt Sgt Des Bryant RAF.

For no apparent reason they felt apprehensive as they walked across the dispersal to their regular aircraft TS520, J-Johnnie. They were unsettled further by last minute minor faults that delayed their take-off by 11 minutes, and finally got airborne at 2236. More trouble developed in the climb when the turbo-supercharger on No. 4 engine was found to be u/s; this affected the aircraft's rate of climb, and its ability to maintain height and speed. The need to use higher boost and rpm settings resulted in a significant increase in fuel consumption. Notwithstanding these problems, F/O Thompson elected to continue, and surprisingly they were only 1 minute late at their first turning point.

The flight continued uneventfully until 0125 when they were approximately 30 miles SE of Dortmund at a height of 18,000ft. Without warning they were attacked by 2, possibly 3, Ju88s. Thompson took immediate evasive action, corkscrewing to shake off the attackers. This appeared to have been successful and they were left alone for a few minutes. Ron had just sorted out his plot and given Tommy a course correction to bring them back on track, when they were attacked from both ahead and from the rear. There was no escape this time and J-Johnnie was raked from end to end; there followed a violent rocking and the whole aircraft appeared to shudder before entering an uncontrolled dive. The aircraft was now on fire, and smoke and flames reached Ron's position in the nose. Remarkably, Tommy and Jack Kendall briefly regained control. Over the intercom he heard Tommy say calmly *"This is the end fellows, abandon aircraft"*. Ron pulled the emergency handle to open the nose wheel doors that provided his escape from the Navigator's position in the nose. He experienced a moment of panic as he could not move the handle. It took a kick from his boot before it operated to open the doors. After the noise, smoke and flames all was peaceful as his chute opened and he descended to the snow clad hills and forests of enemy territory below. He landed without injury, but had lost a flying boot during the descent. The snowbound conditions and his frozen foot eventually prompted him to seek help and he was taken prisoner. Four of the crew located in the rear of the aircraft had also baled out successfully. They were the two Special Operators: W/Os Ron Palmer RAF and Bill Baker RAF, Rear Gunner Flt Sgt George Graham RCAF and Waist Gunner Flt Sgt Brian Maxwell RCAF. Those who were unable to escape from the doomed plane were:

<i>F/O 'Tommy' Thompson RCAF</i>	<i>Pilot</i>
<i>Flt Sgt Jack Kendall RAF</i>	<i>2nd Pilot</i>
<i>Flt Sgt Ron Woods RCAF</i>	<i>Mid Upper Gunner</i>
<i>Flt Sgt Ron Wynn RAF</i>	<i>Flight Engineer</i>
<i>Sgt Ted Whittaker RAF</i>	<i>Waist Gunner</i>
<i>Flt Sgt Des Bryant RAF</i>	<i>Wireless Operator</i>

Ron's period as a POW was thankfully brief. After an initial period at the aircrew interrogation centre at Stalag Luft Oberusel near Frankfurt he was transported to Dulag Wetzlau to the NW of Frankfurt. This was another temporary stop before he was moved again to Stalag Luft III in Nuremberg. From here in early April he was to join a march of fellow POWs that ended on 20 April at Stalag VII AC located at Moosburg near Munich. At the end of hostilities he was repatriated in a USAAF Dakota landing at RAF Westcott, near Aylesbury, on 10 May.

After a lengthy spell of leave he attended a Medical Board where he was pronounced unfit for further flying duties. Whilst he waited for his release date he was posted to the RAF School of Administration at RAF Credenhill, Hereford for a month's course to turn him into a Secretarial Officer. On course completion he was posted to HQ 43 Group, Maintenance Command, at RAF Stanmore to be Camp Commandant. In July 1946, he married Betty and in September 1946 Flt Lt Johnson returned to civilian life. He did not return to his pre-war Law occupation. In yet another change of direction he attended Wandsworth College and trained as a teacher. A successful career in Education followed and he became a respected headmaster. He also lectured at the University of London.



This photo of Ron shows him holding a fragment of his aircraft retrieved from its crash site on 20th September 2000.

I first encountered Ron at the early Reunions, and I always looked forward to meeting him and Betty through the years. Sadly, in later times he did not enjoy good health and he and Betty had to give up attending the annual event. However, we kept in touch and it was always a particular pleasure to speak with him on the phone or to see his familiar handwriting amongst my morning mail. He retained his interest in all things 223 Squadron. Fortunately, he placed all his wartime memories in his book, *'A Navigator's Tale'*, published in 2000. Particularly valuable, it was the second of only three personal accounts covering 223 Squadron's 100 Group activities. I have drawn on it for this account in addition to the memories from our conversations and correspondence over the years. He was a very modest man, but always

willing to discuss his experiences with me and he was always interested to learn of my progress during my long period of research for my own book on 223 Squadron. Ron really was a man of many parts. In addition to the varied aspects of his life already mentioned he was a talented writer of poetry. It was particularly poignant that he was able to read his poem 'In Memoriam' at the dedication of the memorial at Oulton in May 1994. He had written it in June 1945 in dedication to the 6 members of his crew who made the supreme sacrifice on the night of 20/21 March 1945.

Ron was a private man but warm hearted to those who were lucky enough to come know him. I count myself very fortunate to have been in the latter category. It was therefore with great sadness that I received Betty's telephone call to break the news of his passing. I shall always remember him with respect and affection.

Richard M Forder (9th November 2013)

Photographs courtesy of Mrs E Johnson, with thanks

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SHARED EXPERIENCES

GEORGE STEWART DFC

23 Squadron, Little Snoring



Former Mosquito pilot, George Stewart DFC, recently accepted an invitation to become an affiliate of The People's Mosquito George, a Canadian, flew 50 Ops on Mosquito with No 23 Squadron: July-November 1944 – all by the time he was 21.

He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for this work, which was mostly day/night Intruder Operations.

George Stewart, aged 19 years old, can be seen in the photograph in 1944 (*courtesy of George E Stewart*).

This is an extract from his citation:

'Flying Officer Stewart's eagerness to operate against the enemy, his unflagging zeal and determination combined with his devotion to duty have won the admiration of all.'

After the war, George spent time in China training Chinese Nationalist Air Force pilots on the aircraft in an effort to reduce their frightening loss of pilots to accidents. Both his unsurpassable knowledge of flying the Mosquito and his unquenchable enthusiasm for it will be of the utmost value to The People's Mosquito as they move ahead with their Project.

THE PEOPLE'S MOSQUITO

The Vision

Patron, Air Chief Marshal (Retd) Sir John Allison, KCB, CBE, FRAeS, RAF.

The People's Mosquito has a simple vision: to see the return to the UK skies of the de Havilland DH.98 Mosquito. The Project is a non-profit and benevolent one that reflects the public movement seen during the Second World War when many aircraft were funded by the people: companies, towns, villages and organisations. We plan to replicate that model by asking the people of the United Kingdom to help us restore to airworthy condition this magnificent flying memorial that captures the spirit, the pride, the design brilliance and above all the courage of our nation.

www.peoplesmosquito.org.uk

Already over the last eighteen months, George has given invaluable advice to both the Kiwi and U.S. pilots who have flown KA114, which they have all used to good effect.

Recently, an article written by George Stewart appeared on The People's Mosquito website, in which he shares photographs illustrating the original asymmetric power technique that resulted in so many ground-loops and crashes on take-off, and describes the Zero Boost method he developed for making Mosquito launches safer.

ASYMMETRIC POWER **versus** **George Stewart's Zero Boost Method** by George Stewart

These three photographs show the original technique (asymmetric power) taught at High Ercall, 60 O.T.U, when we first checked out on the Mosquito, September 1943, as we gingerly countered torque and crosswind, easing the port throttle ahead of the starboard (using a lot of runway)!!



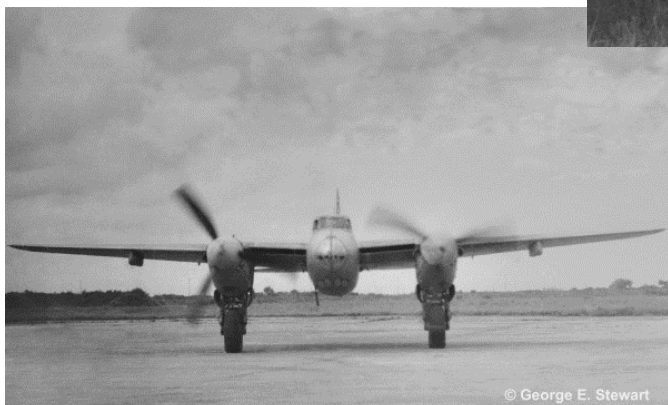
Left: *Asymmetric power made clearly visible by the single prop vortex.*

The second picture shows the too often resulting ground-loop, which followed when things didn't work out too well. These examples happened in China, when we instructed there in 1948 and we had dozens of these during our nine months there, before the cure.

Right: *results of the all too regular ground-loop in China, 1948.*



Below: *the third picture taken by me at that time in Shanghai, which inspired my Zero Boost method used in flying KA114.*



The Missing Link between discovery and use of the Zero Boost method – note asymmetric power.

I assumed that, since this was prop wash, with NO slipstream, that there would be rudder control from the moment you released your brakes, instead of at 70mph, when the tail would have come up, putting the rudder into the slipstream, well down the runway.

Asymmetric Power became redundant! Balanced Power at Zero Boost on the brakes before rolling ahead, was born!

Simultaneously, as you release the brakes, Power quickly to the gate; Stick full forward (*we'll get there eventually*), and full right rudder to counter the resulting left turn from torque and steer straight down the runway. Take-off power is usually achieved by the time you'd run the length of the aircraft! The huge bonus was that the critical Single Engine Safety Speed would easily be reached by the end of the runway!!! (*not so, the old way*). In hopes to establish this as a standard, it is my recommendation that the Gate be set at 14lbs, Boost to continue that capability.



The Zero Boost method in practice as Mike Spalding launches Mosquito FB.26 KA114, June 2013

George's invaluable advice will help ensure that, once The People's Mosquito is ready to roll, she will take off safely, as has been the case with KA114.

Credits: B&W photographs © George E. Stewart, Colour photograph of KA114 © Neil Hutchinson

* * * *

Not only is George a great Pilot, he is also a Poet and his poem 'Why?' features in this Winter edition's 'A Quiet Corner' where, in reading it, many of us will identify with the question he is asking ... and take hope in the answer that comes.

George and I (Janine) write often, and he was kind enough recently to send me a complete photograph and background to his sitting on the nose of his aircraft as the picture was shot all those years ago:



Left-right: W/Cdr Murphy, F/Lt Curd, F/Lt Joynson, F/Lt Griffiths, S/Ldr Russell, F/O Cockayne, F/Lt Smith, F/O Heath, W/O Rann, F/Lt Reid, F/Lt Gregory, Lt Christie, P/O Sutcliffe, F/O Atherton, F/S Howes, F/O Beaudet, P/O Neil, F/S Chessell, F/O Bessy, F/S Wilson, F/S ..., F/Lt Badley, F/S Barn, F/O Cotter, F/S ..., F/S Devliss, F/S Weston, F/O Spetch, F/Lt Ramsay, F/S Goodman, F/S Gawthorne, F/O Smith. George known as 'Toots' is sitting on the nose.

'Here's our Squadron photo, from the old days, Oct 1944. The aircraft is PZ-448, YP-J, in which Paul and I flew on Ops that night, ground strafing in the Paderborn area; bombing a railway, severely damaging one train, plus damaging two more, as we commenced our extended tour of 15 trips (to 50). F/O Joynson, pictured third from the left went missing that night. They towed this aircraft out of the maintenance

hangar, following a regular inspection. I noticed that it was my aircraft, and said; "That's my aircraft; I'm climbing up on the nose" which I did, and some guy closed the door!

Sticky Murphy, who was standing off to the left, said; "Just shoot the damned thing!" And so that is how it happened. We lost Sticky a few weeks later, on 2 December, 1944, on a trip to Gutersloh (where Ken Eastwood was lost on 18 September, when, as 'spare crew', he took my trip, because I crashed my Mosquito on landing with a blown tyre, while doing my Night Flying Test). I was sent to Gutersloh on my 49th trip, to see if I could sense anything that might have caused those two losses, but there was no activity other than the usual scanning we heard in our headsets ...'

George Stewart

With thanks to The People's Mosquito

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SHARED EXPERIENCES

Always Take a Padre on a Mission

by
Ken Wright

What does chewing gum and a World War Two Royal Canadian Air Force Padre have in common?

Royal Canadian Air Force Flight Lieutenant Cliff Black can certainly attest to the possibility that the two possibly saved his life and that of his crew. Flt Lt Black had many adventures and close calls during his tour of duty in World War Two flying with 419 Squadron whose motto was 'Moose Aswayita' – 'Beware of the Moose' This Squadron was part of the Canadian Bomber Command (6 Group) based at Middleton-St George in Yorkshire, England. In a 2013 interview, the 96 year old Mr Black recalls two raids that may have had a divine ring of protection!

'During my tour of operations with Canadian Bomber Command, I was privileged to meet a young Roman Catholic Padre, Father Lardie, who was Base Padre for No. 419 and No. 428 Squadrons. He was a perfect selection for the job and highly respected by all aircrew risking their lives almost every day to defeat the German war machine. Prior to raids, both Squadrons would marshal aircraft around the perimeter track leading to the runway in use – No. 419 on one side, No. 428 the other. This was done almost an hour before take-off. It gave the crew a chance to gather around their aircraft and relax as well as allowing Ground Crew to make any final checks on the serviceability of the planes. This period allowed padres to mix with the crews and provide comfort to some who may be concerned about their particular target. I noticed that it was not only the Catholics that gathered around Father Lardie. He had that exceptional ability to make these young men feel that what they were doing would help to make this world a better place and they should be proud of themselves.

In early October 1944, we were put on a target in the Ruhr valley which we knew would be heavily defended. It was the most industrialised part of Germany surrounded by flak and searchlights. Our Lancaster KB762 took off around 18:00 hours in marginal weather, joined the rest of the bomber stream and as we flew over the English Channel we started to climb to our assigned operational altitude. A few minutes into our climb I felt a tap on my right shoulder. I looked round to see Father Lardie wearing a parachute harness and an oxygen mask. I immediately knew that my crew had been in on a plan to let him on-board. He was hooked into our intercom and asked me what I was going to do. Would I report him when I got back? I can't remember what I said, but it was something about putting his life in the hands of a Protestant pilot when he could have any number of good Catholic pilots to choose from. I also said as he was here, his special connection could almost guarantee we would get back from the mission.

My comments assured him that I was okay with him being there and he was willing to take the risk with our crew on a tough target. We completed our bomb run, dropped our payload and turned out of the target area. The flak barrage was moderate and searchlights no problem because of the weather. My navigator gave me my course out of the target area and we were on our way home. A few minutes into our return flight, Father Lardie came on the intercom to express his concern about not being at the door of the Briefing Room when crews returned from the raid. It was his practice to greet them and show how pleased he was to see that it was a successful trip or give spiritual comfort to those who might need it. He asked me if there was some way we could be first back to Base. The only way to accomplish this was to leave the main bomber stream and take direct course home. I instructed my navigator to plot the course and at the same time, instructed my Gunners to keep a sharp lookout for night fighters. I considered there was little risk due to the weather and the fact that German night fighter controllers would be directing fighters to the main bomber force if they had any fighters in the air. We saw none and as we approached the English Channel, the weather was starting to clear.

Our return flight away from the main bomber stream was risky. The British Gunners could mistake us for an enemy aircraft and open fire. In addition, we didn't have the protection that a group of bombers offered. To avoid wrongful identification, we carried an IFF unit (Identification Friend or Foe) which I turned on. We seldom used it, so I was very relieved when it came on and recognised by the British Gunners. Father Lardie was at his post on time and later told me he hadn't realised that after wearing an oxygen mask for six hours it left a mark on his face! We were used to seeing each other like this and when he asked one of the pilots about the raid, he got a big smile and the comment that he should know, because the look of his face told him he had been right there with them! Father Lardie was a special individual. His sincere dedication to his vocation was immediately recognised. Young men of different faiths admired, respected and trusted him. To my knowledge, Father Lardie was the only padre in Canadian Bomber Command to fly an operational mission over Germany. I will never forget him.' 1

Father Lardie would have a word for all no matter what their faith, and many non-Roman Catholics and total non-believers found inspiration and moral courage from his words and presence among them. A significant factor in this was that they knew the good Father would also bring them a special last-minute gift which, to miss out, may well mean they would not return. At the dispersal area he would open his RCAF issue small pack which he carried and begin to carefully give out packs of his special 'two way chewing gum.' It is a well-known fact that superstition played a large part in a fragile existence of aircrew and many were more than prepared to believe this chewing gum would indeed see them through a mission. As each waiting airmen, irrespective of rank or nationality, was given his gum; Father Lardie would almost hand it to them as a benediction, then say the same to all. *'Now here's your two packs of chewing gum, son. In my left hand is the one you chew for King and Country on the way out. In my right is the one you chew for your mum and dad, wife, children, brothers and sisters on the way home. See you back here tomorrow.'* Many felt that with Father Lardie's 'two way gum' they had all the spiritual armour and encouragement needed to survive the coming operation.

Perhaps something of Padre Lardie's connection with the Almighty might have stayed in Lancaster KB762 for, as Flight Lieutenant Black relates in Royal Air Force parlance, *'they almost bought it'* on December 15, 1944. RAF Bomber Command sent 327 Lancasters and 14 Mosquitoes to attack Ludwigshafen. The target area for this raid was the northern part of Ludwigshafen and the small town of Oppau in which two important I. G. Farben chemical factories were situated. Severe damage was caused and fierce fires were started. The Oppau factory ceased production completely. Five other industrial firms were also damaged. Some damage was also caused to housing areas around the various factories and damage also caused to installations and ships at nearby Rhine River quays. Mosquitoes hit three other targets. One Lancaster was lost.

Flight Lieutenant Black:

'We were attacking Ludwigshafen. The Pathfinders (100 Group) marked the target and we couldn't see anything except the big beacon they dropped on the ground. It burned for about 20 minutes and if we didn't make it, they would drop another. My Log Book states it was a good attack. We thought we hit the target. On each plane, was a permanent camera on board, and when the bomb aimer dropped the

bomb, the camera was activated and took a shot right over where it was released. It would take four pictures and I was going straight and level to drop. Bomb aimers always complained: 'don't peel off right away. Stay for 'x' amount of seconds after you drop'. The last three pictures were of the target.

We were coming back from the raid. It was about three in the morning. My bomb aimer McKinnon had done his job and always sat on the bench with the navigator seated just behind me in case he could help. He stood up to stretch his legs and asked if he could look out the cockpit window, then casually told me that just off my wingtip was an American B17 Flying Fortress. This surprised me. The Americans flew the daylight shift. We did the night shift. What was a B17 doing out there at night? I said to Larry, my Mid-Upper Gunner, I had a funny feeling about this and to train his guns on the B17 just in-case. 2

After a while, we decided it had to be one of ours that got screwed up, so we figured they might want to follow us home in case their instruments were out. I gave them the benefit of the doubt. As the old Lancaster is faster than a Fortress, I figured I would just decrease speed a little to give him a break. As I slowed down, the B17 increased speed and went up 75 yards ahead of me. Then suddenly it dipped down and went under my nose to open fire from its rear gun.'

Flight Lieutenant Black immediately climbed hard to port as the tracers came up, but was unable to avoid some of the 0.50 calibre bullets that slammed into the Lancaster's nose, one shell hitting the Flight Engineer's right foot. Bomb Aimer McKinnon didn't say a word or yell he had been hit.

'My navigator said Mac had been hit and was down. In the meantime, the B17 had vanished. We had to get an emergency hospital because Mac's foot was almost shot off and he might bleed to death. We carried these big shock things (crash pads) in the aircraft you could pull down off the wall. We put the pad around his foot and pulled these long strings to create pressure to stop the bleeding.

There was an emergency base at Woodbridge. I opened up the old Lancaster and 15 miles out from the Base I radioed the Tower to tell them I had an emergency with a wounded crew man who needed emergency treatment. As soon as the wheels touched down and the aircraft came to a stop, an ambulance and a crash truck were already standing by. It was amazing how fast they whisked Mac off for treatment. We bedded down that night at Wood Bridge, about an hour from our Base and in the morning we visited Mac. He was asleep, minus his right foot. Really sad, but at least he survived. That was the last time I saw Mac.

There was an organisation the Germans had that was so secret even the people working in the Squadron didn't know what they did. It was called KG 200. They captured about 40 American Flying Fortresses and as the Americans only operated during daylight hours, lots of them were hit and if they managed to get them down on the ground in enemy territory, many the crews were taken prisoner. About four planes were fixed and able to fly and they put Germans in the planes with American uniforms and away they go. For the remainder of my Tour with 419 Squadron I kept the same crew with the exception of a new bomb aimer and fortunately the crew survived the war.'

Was the lone B17 operated by the Germans as Flight Lieutenant Black was later led to believe or was the reason something entirely different?

The idea of Germans using captured aircraft for deception purposes is disputed by P. W. Stahl, a pilot and Detachment Commander in his excellent book; 'KG 200. The True Story.' 3 He writes in part:

'The transfer tasks involving heavy loads and very long distances could always request the use of large aircraft including captured American B-17s and B 24s. These former enemy bombers were selected from those that had made forced landings in German territory and were only slightly damaged. It was very often only a matter of a bent propeller and a few dents in the fuselage. They were repaired and refitted internally for our purpose and as far as necessary, equipped with German instruments, radio sets and navigational devices. However, these aircraft were not available in such large numbers as has been asserted by the Allied side. There could have been no more than about 20 such ex-enemy aircraft in our service at any one time.

It has also been repeatedly asserted that the Luftwaffe used these captured bombers for deception purposes, often even with Allied markings. That simply isn't true. First of all, we all flew at night when,

as the saying goes, 'all cats are black' and secondly, these captured bombers were, on principle, always flown with German insignia. Apart from everything else, it also happens to be a breach of international law. It also could not have brought us any benefit except possibly being shot down or damaged by our own anti-aircraft guns or fighters and if captured (on enemy territory) their crew would have been dealt with as spies. I personally have not heard of a single case where this legend of German aircraft in Allied markings has been substantiated. Perhaps the reason this story refused to lie down is that the British themselves had no qualms about using a HE115A-2 float plane with German markings in the Mediterranean. This particular aircraft was successfully flown on very special missions between Malta and North Africa.' 4

Leaving aside the scenario of possible German deception, there are however, two more plausible answers to the mystery B17. One revolves around propaganda leaflets and the other involves electronic counter measures!

The first is the American 8th Air Force on Mission 751. It had two B17 Fortresses on a propaganda leaflet dropping mission over France and Germany the same time as the Ludwigshafen raid. Could the Fortress have been off course and suddenly surprised by the Lancaster's appearance, instinctively reacting to what they thought was a German aircraft, perhaps a JU 290?

The second possible answer might be with 214 Bomber Squadron of RAF 100 Group which utilised various specialist electronic jamming devices to disrupt enemy communications and radar. During operations, specially equipped aircraft including the B17s would fly just above the main RAF bomber stream or sometimes just ahead of the bombers as a Mandrel jamming screen. The equipment used included Airborne Cigar (ABC) jammer, Jostle (jammer), Mandrel (jammer), Airborne Grocer (jammer), Piperack (jammer), Perfectos (homer), Serrate (homer), Corona (spoof), Carpet (jammer) and Lucero (homer), used against German equipment such as Lichenstein, Freya and Würzburg radars. B17s were operational on 15 December by both RAF Units. 5

Is it possible that one of these aircraft, perhaps also off course for some reason, mistook the Lancaster for a German plane and a startled Rear Gunner opened fire? There is, of course, the original worn out scenario of a German-crewed B17 up to some dirty tricks. The mystery remains. Of course, there are a few more possibilities that can be put forward, but perhaps with the passing of time since WW2 we will never know.

Whatever the answer, luck or divine providence stayed with the crew of KB762 as Flight Lieutenant Black and his crew survived the war. Perhaps Father Lardie for some reason ran out of chewing gum on the day of the raid back in October 1944 and the crew of KB762, unknown to the skipper, thought the next best thing was to take the Padre on the mission instead just to be sure.

Father Lardie on 15 June 1985, made a dedication speech to the RCAF Memorial at Middleton St George. He said in part: *'And all those who had a part in it will have left to posterity a legacy of honour, of courage and of valour that time can never despoil.'* These words would no doubt, apply to every man and woman who served in Bomber Command, no matter what nationality, creed or colour.

Footnotes

1-Father Lardie flew two other 'unofficial' missions until he was officially grounded.

2- December 15 was also the day the music died and created a mystery yet to be solved. A United States Army Air Force single engine UC-64 Norseman disappeared possibly over the English Channel en-route to Paris from England. On-board was the famous American swing band leader and composer, Glenn Miller.

3- The KG denotes Kampfgeschwader and translated means 'Battle Squadron.'

4- Stahl, P. G. KG 200 the true story. Janes Publishing Company, London. 1981. Pages 63-4.

5- No.100 Group RAF. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/N0.-100-Group-RAF>

The author thanks Colonel Cliff. M. Black RCAF (Ret) DFC and Croix de Guerre with Silver Star for permission to quote from his memoirs.

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A response follows from Richard Forder, Association Committee member and 223 Squadron Specialist, offering further insight into Ken Wright's article -

RESPONSE

from Richard Forder

Thanks for the copy of Ken Wright's article, which enables me to focus on his actual query. From his writings, I am pretty confident that Padre Lardie was referring to events on the night of 15/16 Dec 44. I am still confident that 100 Group aircraft were not involved in the incident in question for the following reasons:

Before I explain I would just like to correct a slight confusion in his article that appears to stem from his interrogation of Wikipedia.

He states that: '*B-17s were operational on 15 Dec 44 by both RAF units*'. There were only 3 Squadrons that operated the B-17 in RAF Bomber Command during WW2. The first was 90 Squadron that used Fortresses from May 41 - Feb 42, 214 Squadron, which employed Fortress II and III aircraft from Jan 44 - Jul 45 and 223 Squadron which started exchanging their B-24 Liberators for Fortress aircraft in Apr 45. In other words, only 214 Squadron were operating Fortresses on the night of 15/16 Dec 44.

On 15 December, there was just one major Bomber Command raid mounted by Bomber Command.

This was to Ludwigshafen by a force of 327 Lancasters and 14 Mosquitoes, as Ken has recorded. It was also a quiet day for 100 Group who only contributed 31 sorties. 214 Squadron provided one Fortress to mount a Target Patrol over Ludwigshafen, and 4 aircraft as part of a diversionary Window Force in support of the Ludwigshafen operation. I do not have take-off and landing times for the 214 Squadron aircraft, but I do have them for 223 Squadron which supplied one Liberator for a Target Patrol over Ludwigshafen and 4 aircraft for the Window Patrol. The 223 aircraft were airborne between 1515 and 1523, and as 214 Squadron aircraft were involved in the same operations, I would expect their landing times to have been the same or pretty close. As far as I am aware, there were no problems for 214's aircraft, so I am pretty confident that none of the Squadron's aircraft would still have been airborne over France or Germany at 0300 hours on the morning of 16 December.

Like Ken I had also looked at possible 8th USAAF Fortress activity on the night of 15/16 December. Not many people appreciate that some USAAF Units did operate at night. I can confirm Ken's information that 3 Fortresses of the Night Leaflet Squadron operating from Cheddington were airborne over France and Germany on the night. So my guess would be that one of these aircraft were responsible for the strike on F/L Black's Lancaster.

I hope this information will be of use to Ken and my thanks to him for sight of his interesting article.

Richard

Richard Forder (Committee)

IN MEMORY

SISTER LAURENCE

Founder:

Sister Laurence RAF Massingham Museum



To speak of LAURIE, to share the memories of someone who was “a legend in her own lifetime” ... even to say a few words about Sister Laurence – Laurie – will be a difficult task! She was a person of many talents, involving many friends and contacts. She managed to combine her Religious Life commitment with her many outside interests and projects.

Born in Brierfield, Lancashire, she was a child of the cotton mills. A tomboy as a small child, in the early days of the war, she preferred to play football in the street with the boys rather than playing with dolls. At the age of 11 her parents sent her to our Convent school in Colne, where her mother

hoped the nuns would make a lady of her – without success! She was popular in school mainly because she used to organise cricket in the convent field at lunch time recreation!

Laurie joined the Rangers/Guides and was a life-time member till she died! She used her guiding skills in many ways: when she entered the Novitiate to train for life in the Convent she was ever the Girl Guide, organising concerts, singing-games, exploring the countryside etc. She was very good with children: she taught for a while at the little parish school here of St Monica's and loved organising football for the boys on the Green outside, where now stands the local school of Rickmansworth Park. She taught Catechetic to children at weekends and later at an RAF Base in Buckinghamshire.

As her skills were more practical than academic she later was engaged in pastoral activities, cooking, archives, gardening, domestic work, driving, and general mechanical work. She was great at 'fixing' things: if you needed a shelf put up or a door fixed or a bolt put in she would do it – even if sometimes it might not be quite straight! On one occasion she was told she could **not** knock down a partition wall to access the attic from her bedroom, so she got a saw and cut a door-shaped hole in the wall instead!

She was a fund of knowledge and information, an avid reader of newspapers, journals, local affairs, Church affairs, World News; a fervent Royalist and football enthusiast; concerned about social and political matters....She had visited places up and down the countries of the British Isles, and what's more could recall details of events and sights that others had long forgotten. She was a keen photographer and recorded everything, including stunning sunsets.

But, as I was reminded, there was one place she could not say she had visited – until now! Even there, she has beaten us to it!

In her later years Laurie developed a passionate interest in researching the lives and history of the Veterans of RAF Bomber Command, stationed during WW2 at Massingham airfield in Norfolk. Pilots from there were billeted at Little Massingham Manor, which much later was bought by the Daughters of Jesus as their Provincial HQ and later became a Retreat Centre. It was from here, in the onetime stable block, that Laurie started her work which has since developed into the Massingham RAF Museum.

Apart from these major passions in her life, she was given the task as Archivist for our Province and this led her to research the beginnings of our Congregation in England, by the first Sisters from France who founded here. She researched the first foundations and went on to document the history of our house in Massingham and our present house in Rickmansworth – once the Residence of an Ambassador - and the

lives of our first Sisters. Coupled with this she searched the records of all the Sisters who are buried in cemeteries around the places where the DJ's have lived & worked. Alongside these researches she has gone in depth into her own family history, about which she was equally passionate.

She was passionate about gardening for which she was trained and the results can be seen today in our lovely garden at Blakenhall. She insisted on having a section for wild life with flowers for the butterflies and bees. She kept a well-supplied bird table and spent time keeping away the squirrels and magpies – the food was for the **little** birds. She spoilt the neighbour's cats with cuddles and titbits. They can't understand why she isn't around anymore, and still come around occasionally to see if she might have come back!

As you see, our Laurie was quite a remarkable person, unique in her brand of Christianity. She was deeply spiritual with a simple Celtic faith, sensitive, generous, brave and industrious, a prayerful and loyal Daughter of Jesus. She was active right to the end, in spite of lifelong poor health: up to the day before she died she was working on a translation, from French, of a document she was researching for a contact, concerning information about an RAF Veteran and finished it! I was able to see the relative and to hand over to her this last piece of documentation a few days after her death. Laurie would have been so pleased to see the delight and emotion of the recipient: her life's work thus completed!

Tribute to Laurie by Anthony Robinson on a visit to Blakenhall:

*Today I sat on a bench
At the bottom of Laurie's garden
A seed off a Lime tree floated down in a spiral
It landed at my feet and I cried
I sobbed for that contact from her*

*Bless you Laurie for all your Lads
There are few left to grieve
You will never be forgotten
God Bless*

By Ant (Anthony) Robinson
Curator

NOTE: More can be learned about Sister Laurence, affectionately known as 'Laurie' and the Museum she founded at Great Massingham as well as the history and people's shared experiences in the RAF Great Massingham booklet in the Airfields of Norfolk series, obtainable direct from Janine.

IN MEMORY

WE'LL MEET AGAIN

The personal writings of George Fisher
Passed away: 25th September 2012



It is thirty-six years since Joe, Mac, Frank, Lofty, Bill, Alan, Jim, Jock 'A', Jock 'B' and I climbed in a Boeing B-17G, HB795 to undertake our last flight together in a Flying Fortress. Since the beginning of May 1945 we had flown together in fifteen such aircraft totalling in time 92 hours. That last flight on July 24, 1945, was not a particularly spectacular one, just local flying. In no way could it compare with a flight undertaken ten years previously in the United States of America. I was just a boy still at school. Seattle, the largest city of Washington State in the North Western corner of the United States is the home of Boeing – the aircraft people. It was here in July, 1935, that the Boeing design Model 299 flew. This all metal four-engine mono-plane, designed specifically as a heavy bomber with its heavy gun emplacements and weighting up to 15 tons was aptly called by the press, Flying Fortress. A name that will long be remembered. (George) (Ginger) shown on right with grandson.)

On July 31st, 1940, the Royal Air Force opened a flying field at Oulton near Aylsham, Norfolk. From that day and throughout the war from this airfield many operations were mounted against the enemy. In May, 1944, after a period of major surgery to the runways, the building of extra hangers and expansion of living accommodation – 214 squadron flying B-17s moved in. The Squadron undertook radar counter measure operations until it disbanded on July 29th, 1945. A 214 pilot of that time, Murray Peden, has written a book – *'A thousand Shall Fall'* – in which he describes life as it was then at Oulton. Today little remains of the airfield where happiness, pathos and courage were inextricable mixed. Perhaps in years to come, people will visit such places as Oulton. Maybe they will find an overgrown hardstand, a desolate shell of a flying control tower or part of a runway to remind them of its history. No way will it match the splendour of the nearby red rustic pinnacled hall of Blickling – today maintained by the National Trust. Legend has it Anne Boleyn spent some time there. When I visited it two summers ago my memory could only recall the days spent in the lake doing dinghy survival drill. One thing is certain, people today will never be able to appreciate the thrill of having been around when it all happened.

In 1968, there was a semi reunion of the crew. Present were George, Mac, Joe Frank and Jeff. In 1978 George started tracing the rest of the crew and in 1983 had managed to make contact with all of them. This is a story within itself.

In July 1945 Joe, Mac, Frank, Jock, Jeff, Lofty, Archie, Jim, Bill and I were ten little Fortress boys at RAF Oulton, Norfolk, but not for long because by the end of the month the Squadron disbanded and we were scattered on postings to RAF stations around the world.

It was while reading a book published earlier that year I came upon a photograph of a Fortress aircraft. The book by Martin Streetly: *'Confound & Destroy – 100 Group the Bomber Support Campaign'*, showed the aircraft, Fortress BIII KJ109-6G-F of 223 (RCM) Squadron. On May 3 1945, in this aircraft, then BZ-C of No 1699 BSTU, Joe and his boys flew on their first flight. Before service with 1699 BSTU KJ109 was on the strength of 214 (RCM) Squadron, where it had been used on radar counter measure operations over Germany. This unexpected discovery set the nostalgia adrenalin going, and awakened my urge to find the missing crew members.

The question uppermost was where to begin. Frank, in business trips around the country, had called at last known addresses to be told that the birds had flown. Mac's contacts had dried up years previously. Telephone directory enquiries could not help. Where to start? IBM inspired me with one word *'Think'*.

Bill, I recalled, had told me his father was a policeman in the Liverpool Force. My letter to the Chief Constable of Liverpool was acknowledged. Shortly afterwards, I heard from Bill; in his letter he informed me that my letter had been handed to him by his son, a Liverpool policeman.

Tracing Jock was reasonably easy when I remembered that he graduated MA from Aberdeen Uni in 1944. The Uni confirmed this and also supplied his present address in Blairgowrie.

Despite further efforts during the next five years the trail to Archie, Jim and Lofty went cold.

In the summer of 1963 I was fortunate to meet a reporter with the Reading Chronicle. By coincidence he also had undertaken a similar exercise and so understood my difficulties. At his suggestion I wrote to the Shrewsbury Chronicle telling my story of the search for Jim, also to the Wallsend and South Shields Gazette in regard to Lofty. Archie is another story.

Within 2 weeks, Jim wrote to say that while he was away on holiday an old neighbour from the area where he had previously lived had read my letter in the Chronicle and put a copy through his door.

Delighted with my success, I wrote to the Shrewsbury Chronicle to thank them for their help. To my surprise, a Chronicle reporter telephoned to obtain a '*human story*', and *S – for sugar crew reunion – thanks to the Chronicle* were the front page headlines that greeted readers of the next edition, along with a photograph of Jim and a 1945 copy of the crew.

Jim's letter came in the morning post and before the day was through I knew I had found Lofty. In the afternoon post a letter arrived from a cousin of his, she did not know his address, but gave the address of another cousin who lived in a nearby town and thus I established that Lofty occupied a lighthouse off the coast of Queensland, Australia.

At the time I was making enquiries about him, Lofty had attended a very special reunion. He informed me that when he left the RAF he joined the RAAF and enclosed with his letter a cutting from the Brisbane Sunday Mail which reported his RAAF crew reunion.

Flushed with success, I was now determined to find Archie. Jim joined me and enlisted the aid of an advertising connection to run an enquiry in the Glasgow press. But ... no Archie! So I put an entry in *Royal Air Force Association calling old colleagues*. To months passed – no response, so that was it. Call off the search, close the hangar doors, finish.

Then, hello George, Ginger – what a wonderful surprise – out of the blue, your advert reached me through the following sequence. Lady, not known to me, had shown the magazine to a colleague at work who lived in Glasgow. She in turn showed it to her husband, who was an old school pal of mine. He did not know my address, but was in touch with a mutual friend in Leeds who did. I had found Archie.

Fact is better than fiction, especially since I left Glasgow 33 years ago to live in Yorkshire. Archie's letter came from Berwick-upon-Tweed. My case now rests, Bill is now in the Philippines, Mac is in Windsor, Jeff is still in his home town of Rickmansworth, likewise Frank is in Stoke-on-Trent. Despite all my wanderings by chance I am still living in my home town of Reading. Perhaps one day we shall meet again, but sadly it will not be the ten of us as in May 1983 the reaper struck and Joe was taken from us.

December 1944, I believe, will best be remembered as the month in which the Germans flung all their might into the Ardennes offensive to be stopped by the heroic stand of the Americans at the Battle of the Bulge. That cold snow-ridden month I stood in a group of navigators, along with pilots, wireless operators and air gunners in a large drill hall. RAF Desborough, Northants, was a Wellington Operational Training Unit in Bomber Command and we were assembled that December morning to form crews among ourselves. Suddenly, before I had time to make a choice, a smiling Pilot Joe, with a Gunner Mac, stood before me with the question: '*Will you be our Navigator?*' – this is when my story began.

George Fisher (Ginger)

Navigator:

No. 214 REM & No 206 Squadrons 1942-1946



REMEMBER

As children, we recall this day, the 11th November,
Our school bell tolls 11am, a quiet minute to remember
Of Flanders fields, the sea, the sky, the entire room is hushed
To honour those who fell before, our future in their trust.

It didn't seem quite real to us in the silence of that pause
That many lives were really lost, just where – just how – what cause.
We were to find out later when in war we got the call,
Knowing real names and faces of those who gave their all.

In service of their country, on land, on sea, in air,
The many young participants, all soon became aware
That what they each were doing brought many to that bend
No matter which the roadway, your choice could mean your end.

We didn't think of death, you know, it was usually them not us,
But sure as God made apples, our future could go bust.
I remember on our Squadron, when I woke up each day
To find out what last night might tell, if a friend had gone away.

It was often pretty quiet sitting 'round there in the Mess,
Knowing last night's flying sorties left us with one or more crews less.
The awful part was wondering if they died or got away,
To evade and make their way back home or stay there where they lay.

Missing in Action was the phrase used, 'til we knew for certain,
If our friends were POWs – on the run – or final curtain.
We didn't dwell on this – be sure, as every day went on,
The role resumed for us who lived who flew from Dusk to Dawn.

Decades have passed, and still we stop, each Autumn to remember
The friends we knew and cherished well, who will see no more Decembers.
Then there are those remembered here, our own – our private list
The ones who left us much too soon, they always will be missed.

Yet God provides the human race to overcome its sorrow,
A gift we take for granted now, that's right, it's called 'Tomorrow'!

Gratefully, we remember

George E. Stewart

23 Squadron, Little Snoring, Norfolk



Final Postings

Death will be but a pause...

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

Founders of RAF 100 Group Association – remembered in love

- 192 Squadron** George Ward DFC Sqd/Ldr; Phil James' Canadian pilot
- 192 Squadron** Kenneth 'Paddy' Passmore: DFC Flt/Lt; Canadian, died 2005
- 192 Squadron** John Cooke left memorabilia to the Museum archive collection
- 192 Squadron** Ron Phillips passed away late 2005
- 192 Squadron** Ted Gomersall passed away 30th November 2004
- 192 Squadron** Hank Cooper DSO, DFC passed away 2005.
- 192 Squadron** Michael Simpson W/Op & F/O passed away on the Isle of Man
- 192 Squadron** Richie' Richards Rear Airgunner, flew Wellingtons. His son, F L Richards, passed on in August 2009, both members of the Association.
- 192 Squadron** Air Commodore Vic Willis, C.O, RAF Foulsham, passed away 30.7.06
- 192 Squadron** Group Captain Jack Short passed away December 2006. Association Chair till 1996
- 192 Squadron** W.O (later P/O) A G McEachern RCAF died 15th August 2007, Saskatchewan aged 85
- 192 Squadron** LAC Harris, Ground Crew passed away 15 August 2007. Grandson James Kerslake is an Association member.
- 192 Squadron** Wing Commander David Donaldson, DSO*DFC passed away 15.1.2004
- 192 Squadron** Wilhelmson, F/O Sander Willie Raymond (J10026). DFC Home: Elbow, Saskatchewan
- 192 Squadron** F/Lt Richard (Dick or Dobbie) William Dobson, died 1996, remembered by son, Roger & daughter Susan, both members.
- 192 Squadron** W/O John Rhys Powell, Rear Gunner flying Wellingtons, died 1992
- 192 Squadron** Sgt George Richards, Tail Gunner, posted missing 4/5 July 1944. Remembered by niece Cheryl Cairns nee Colgan & sister Agnes Colgan.
- 192 Squadron** F/Lt Henry Victor Vinnell (Vic) posted missing 26/27 Nov 1944. Remembered by wartime fiancée Nina & her daughter Janine H.
- 192 Squadron** Jack Glen Millan Fisher, Pilot Officer with Royal Canadian Air Force, posted missing 26/27th Nov 1944. Remembered by sister Audrey.
- 192 Squadron** Flight Lieutenant Albert Victor (Vic) Parker passed away November 14 2010. Remembered by daughter Ann Felsky.
- 192 Squadron** Spec/Op (Wop) John Henry BALL, Association member for many years, passed away 23 April 2009. Remembered by daughter, Susan Lawford.
- 192 Squadron** George Lowe, originally 1473 Flight before becoming 192 Squadron, Special Signals, Foulsham. Died 24 March 2011.
- 192 Squadron** F/O Alan Thomsett passed away 27 May 2011. Initially flew ops with 1473 Flight during Battle of the Beams, 1941, then as part of No. 80 Wing. Sadly missed by daughter Anne, and other Association members who knew him.
- 192 Squadron** Eric Clarkson, Wireless Operator/Navigator, passed away beginning of 2012. Remembered by daughter Jenny Bentley & friend Dennis Wildman.

- 192 Squadron** Squadron Leader Cecil William Cornish, passed away 19 August 2011. Flight Sergeant at Foulsham. Initially with 98 Squadron, he was a survivor of the sinking of TS Lancastria.
- 192 Squadron** Flight Sergeant John Eggert (2202199) aka 'Shorty'. Passed away 28 April 2006
- 192 Squadron** Sgt Hugh Holm, Radio Mechanic, is remembered with love by Phil and Vera James, especially for his kindness to them while holidaying with him in Canada.
- 199 Squadron** F/O Ed Emmerson, Navigator to Flt/Lt Paddy Passmore DFC, Canadian
- 199 Squadron** Arthur Fitch, former RAF Bomber, passed away July 2006
- 199/171 Sqn** Group Captain George Cubby, MBE, FRMets passed away 2005. Remembered by Roy Smith, only surviving member of his crew.
- 171 Squadron** Joe Brogan, Halifax pilot; passed away 2004, remembered by widow Sheila
- 171 Squadron** Arthur Adcock passed away February 2008 & Syd Love, Canadian crew member, passed away April 2008. 'Friends to the end!'
- 171 Squadron** Len Fanstone passed away 13 January 2010. Greatly missed by Harry Freegard & wife, in touch since his return to Canada in 1946.
- 171/102 Sqn** Ken Ratcliffe Nav/Bomb Aimer passed away March 8 2010 age 86. He flew Halifax & Lancasters, in touch with his crew all their lives.
- 171 Squadron** Flight Engineer Andrew Melvin Robertson passed away 1998. Remembered by son Colin Robertson, Association member.
- 157 Squadron** Bryan Gale Flt/Lt passed away 2.1.09. Missed by daughter Valerie & son Chris
- 169 Squadron** Fred Herbert, Navigator/Radar, passed away on 15 October 2010, remembered by his friend, colleague & pilot John Beeching
- 169 Squadron** Flt/Lt Bert Vine, former Navigator of Sqdn/Ldr. James A. Wright, 'A' Flight Commander, both of whom are no longer with us, remembered by 169 pilot John Beeching
- 214 Squadron** Geoff Liles, Pilot, passed away 4 March 2006
- 214 Squadron** Mr J Creech passed away April 2006
- 214 Squadron** Don Austin, remembered by Les Bostock
- 214 Squadron** Air Vice Marshall Jack Furner passed away 1 Jan 2007
- 214 Squadron** Sqdn Leader/Flight Commander Bob Davies passed away June 2007
- 214 Squadron** Bill Howard passed away October 2007
- 214 Squadron** Flt Lt Blair passed away Sept 2007
- 214 Squadron** John Hereford, Spec Op.
- 214 Squadron** Robert Moorby W/Op passed away on January 2008. Remembered by sons, Michael and Robin. Also Shirley Whitlock.
- 214 Squadron** Ft/Sg Hadder, Air Gunner in Fortress III HB815, bearing code letters 'BU-J' killed 3/4 March 1945, remembered by nephew Leslie Barker.
- 214 Squadron** Alan Mercer passed away 6 June 2009
- 214 Squadron** Warrant Officer Gordon Wing, 'Howie', passed away Nov 2009 age 87. Rear Gunner, Eric Morrison's crew, Stirlings/Fortresses; Founder member of Airgunners' Association.
- 214 Squadron** Robert Louie William Darracott, Navigator, died May 8 2010, 94 years
- 214 Squadron** Flying Officer Reginald Coates completed whole of 2nd Tour of Ops as Bomber Pilot in March 1945. Died 10 Nov 1963. Remembered by son.

- 214 Squadron** Bomb Aimer [Les Bostock](#) in Don Austin's crew died just before Christmas 2010. Remembered by M/U gunner C A Piper, 'Pip'.
- 214 Squadron** Flight Sergeant [George V Cox](#) passed away 21 July 2011. Flight Engineer in crew of Squadron Leader Miller DFC.
- 214 Squadron** Squadron Leader [William 'Bill' Doy DFC](#) passed away 28 November 2011.
- 214 Squadron** P/O [Peter Witts 223/214/462 RAAF, Airgunner](#), commissioned after the war. 1925 – 2011. Missed by family and friends, remains in our hearts, a Legend.
- 214 Squadron** [George Fisher, Navigator](#) with No. 214 REM & No. 206 Squadrons 1942-1946 sadly passed away with a heart attack on 25th Sept 2012
- 214 Squadron** Flying Officer [William 'Bill' Foskett](#) passed away 21.12.2011. Sadly missed by wife Pauline, 2 sons, 4 grandchildren, good friend Tony Cooper.
- 214 Squadron** 'Doug' Douglas, Tail Gunner on Fortresses and ex POW, died in Nelson, New Zealand, last year.
- 223 Squadron** Flt Lt [A E L Morris \(Tony\)](#) died June 2005. Andrew Barron's skipper: Oct 44 – 1945.
- 223 Squadron** Tom Butler '*Bishop*'.
- 223 Squadron** [C. L. Matthews \(Les\)](#) rear gunner, Peter Witts Nose Gunner in Flt/L Stan Woodward DFC crew before Peter went on to 214 Squadron.
- 223 Squadron** [Arthur Anthony](#), Flight Engineer, passed away May 13 2006.
- 223 Squadron** F/Lt [Jack Brigham DFC](#) passed away 2008. Original Captain as 223 reformed. Flew Liberator TS524/6G-0; 36 ops. Remembered by Len Davies, Waist Gunner, only surviving member of crew.
- 223 Squadron** F/L/Sir [John Briscoe](#) passed on a few years ago.
- 223 Squadron** 2nd Pilot [Mervyn Utas](#), Canadian in late Tony Morris's crew, passed away 8 Nov 2010.
- 223 Squadron** James Edward Bratten: 26.11.1922 - 16.11.2001. Andrew Barron's crew.
- 223 Squadron** [Mick Stirrop](#) passed away in March 2012.
- 223 Squadron** Flying Officer [Reggie Wade, Navigator](#), passed away Christmas Eve 2012. Reggie served in the crew of Squadron Leader Carrington, 'B' Flight Commander.
- 223 Squadron** Air Gunner [John McLaren](#) passed away 31.3.2013, leaving wife Margaret and son Graham.
- 223 Squadron** F/Lt Navigator [Ron Johnson](#) passed away August 2013. Remembered by Richard Forder.
- 23 Squadron** Flight/Lt [Johnny Rivas](#), passed away on 2 January 2013.
- 23 Squadron** Wing Commander [Phil Russell](#) passed away last week in November 2012.
- 23 Squadron** 'Bud' Badley, passed away beginning of 2013
- 88 Squadron** F/Lt [Len Dellow](#) passed away Christmas/New Year 2006-7; veteran of 88 Squadron, 2 Group & Rear Gunner/Wireless Operator on Bostons.
- 49 Squadron** [Len Bradfield](#) passed away Nov 2005. POW with pilot Johnny Moss when shot down in Lancaster ED625. Nursed to health by Nora, who he married.
- 462 RAAF Sqn** F/O H .R. Anderson DFC '[Andy](#)' passed away 6 April 2008 in New South Wales.
- 462 Squadron** [Donald Hulbert](#) passed away October 2009.
- 462 Squadron** Pilot [Bruce Drinkwater](#) passed away 2 May 2010. Peter Witt's Skipper.
- ?** Flt Lt [Eric Atkins DFC* KW*](#) died 22.11.2011. Blenheim pilot with 139 Sqn flying from Horsham St Faith & Oulton in 1940/1. Flew Mosquitoes with 2 Group.
- ?** Corporal Charles '[Fred](#)' [Savage](#) passed away 18 Dec 2011. Fred was a Wireless Operator, serving in No 2 Heavy Mobile W/T Section in France, 1940.

Dates for your Diary



**** 2014 Renewal of Membership due now! ****

2014 RAF 100 GROUP ASSOCIATION REUNION

9th – 11th May 2014

NOTE: CHANGE of Guest Speaker at main Saturday evening dinner!



MR JOHN LILLEY

Project Lead for The People's Mosquito

will be joining us in place of Bill Ramsey

'Hello to all Members of the RAF 100 Group Association.

My name is John Lilley and I am the Project Lead of The People's Mosquito. Our organisation is run by a collective of volunteers donating time for free in the pursuit of restoring to the UK skies a de Havilland D.H.98 Mosquito - an aircraft used to great effect by 100 Group in WW2. The Mosquito was the first true multi-role combat aircraft and paved the way for today's modern Air Force. It will be my great pleasure to share our Project story, set up and progression with you in May of next year. Meanwhile if you wish to learn more please go to www.peoplesmosquito.org.uk

John Lilley

ALSO ...

AUCTION

to acquire and purchase a Phillip West Mosquito print from an original painting raising funds for various Mosquito Projects.

This kind offer comes from David Coeshall, and there are other opportunities also!!!

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The first SPRING edition of this magazine will be out at the beginning of FEBRUARY 2014 to allow members time to prepare and book for the May 2014 Reunion



RAF GREAT MASSINGHAM A Brief History

Written by Janine Harrington is now available, continuing the series started by Len Bartram. They can be ordered direct from the author:

£5+pp

100 Group Order of Battle

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

Created by Janine Harrington

A heartfelt 'thank you' goes to David Mortimer and his team for the printing of this magazine at Prontaprint, Scarborough, North Yorkshire