

Confound & Destroy

The magazine of RAF 100 Group Association



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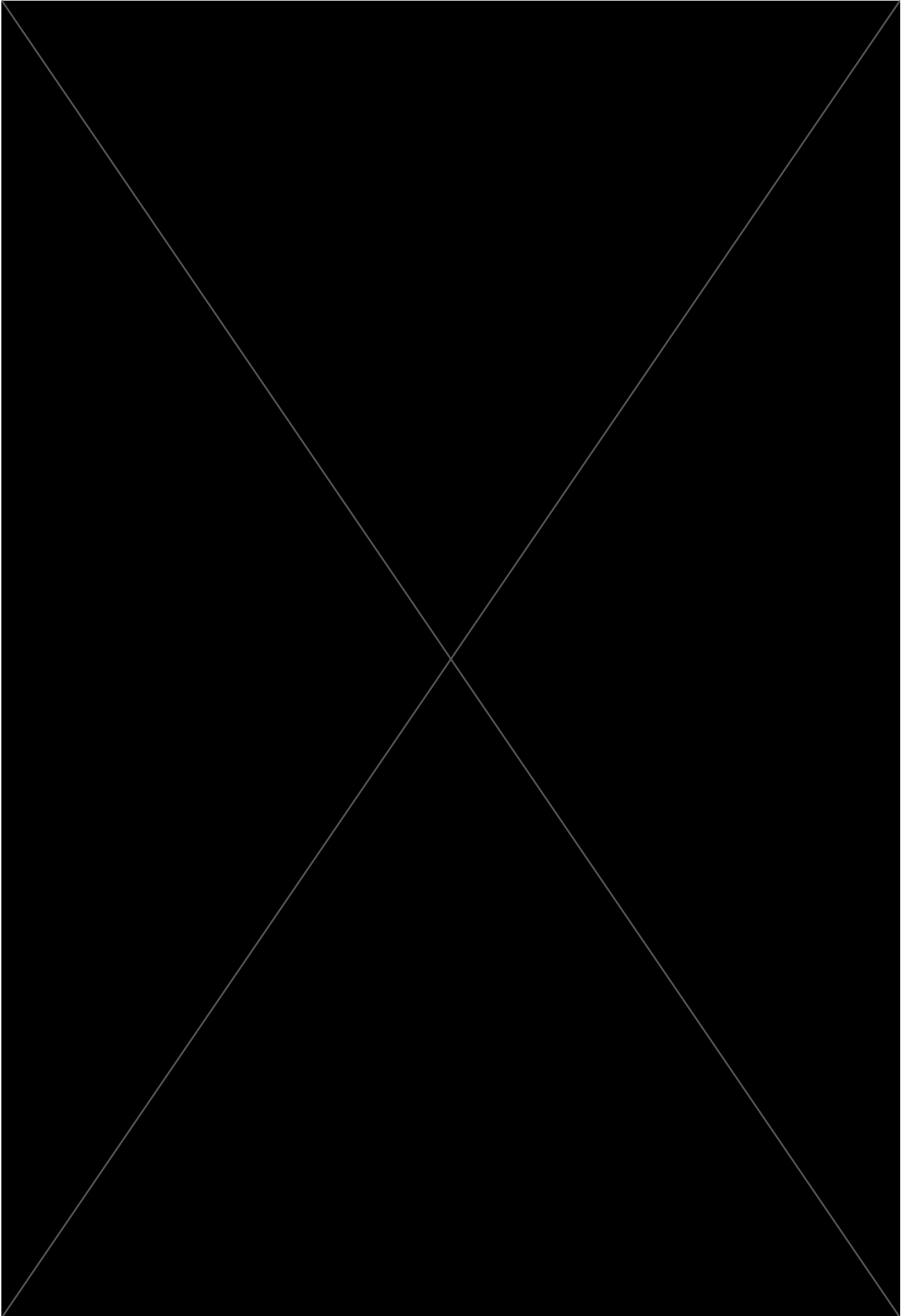
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RAF 100 Group Association

Committee



EDITOR'S PAGE



Dearest Friends

Merry Christmas

My heartfelt thanks to the kind and generous member who sent a gorgeous bouquet of flowers on one of my darkest days. Thank you so much! The card with them simply said: 'RAF 100 Group', and with the wealth of letters and cards which continue to arrive since the last magazine, I feel your love reaching across the miles. Thank you everyone for your support and encouragement during this difficult time. It has now passed the three month marker since reading that shocking email sent by Tony telling me he wasn't coming home from London ... ever! I now know he has been leading a double life, and his relationship with another stretches back into the past. I have no idea what is truth and what is lies any more. To make it worse, they met up here in the north! There are times when I feel my heart can't take any more ... yet somehow, something happens to tell me I am still needed. My world has shrunk since I don't have a car any more. Travel is restricted. But right here in Filey I now attend a Monday Lunch Club for my one hot meal of the week. Wednesday I have a Ladies Group ... lots of tea and chatter. On Thursdays I join *The Show Stoppers*, a singing group preparing for Christmas engagements. Sundays I attend the Salvation Army service nearby. My grandmother was a Salvationist, so I'm going back to my roots. But there is still the empty shell of home to return to, with evenings and weekends worst of all.

Publishers keep me busy. There are two new books under different publishers coming out in December – the long-awaited *RAF 100 Group – Kindred Spirits, voices of RAF and USAAF who flew from secret Norfolk airfields in WWII*, published by Austin Macauley; and *RAF 100 Group 1942-1944: The Birth of Electronic Warfare*, published by Fonthill Media as the first in a two-part series. There is a special price offered on Amazon of £19.99 to those who pre-order. Otherwise, it will be £25. Please take no notice of a £400 price tag given to the latter book by some unscrupulous individual!

Remembrance Day this year was particularly poignant, and our thanks to Iain Forsyth for the wreath placed on behalf of RAF 100 Group Association at the Bomber Command Memorial in Green Park, London. With this magazine comes a reminder about renewing annual membership subscriptions. Please forward the £15 annual sum to me by the end of this year as I am anxious to avoid confusion whether on my part or yours of subscription monies and cheques for our Reunion 2016, for which the programme will be out with the Spring edition in February. Reunion weekend is 6 – 8 May 2016, with our Saturday evening meal being held in The Halifax Suite at The Holiday Inn, Norwich North, Cromer Rd., Norwich NR6 6JA. The name of our contact is Jade Fromings on 01603 410544 (Hotel) and cost of our three course meal: £25. I am giving advance details because those living abroad are asking for this information. We have booked The Magee Brothers again for their music by popular request, with a Hudson Flypast arranged by Phil James MBE, our President.

We still have new members joining our Association and a warm welcome is offered to you. We also give a huge CONGRATULATIONS to **Eddy Tomblinson**, Winner of our Autumn Competition: 'The Battle of Britain' of course gained its name from a speech by Winston Churchill. Our thanks to Alex Wilson, Marketing Executive of Isle of Man Stamps & Coins for providing the generous prize of an informative folder with First Edition stamps commemorating the Battle of Britain. More news of this as you read on.

I wish you all a very Merry Christmas. Please remember those living alone, those for whom Christmas is difficult, a time of sadness and memories. Please be assured that each of you is valued and part of our worldwide Association Family. I won't be alone in carrying you in my heart, thoughts and prayers ... and every happiness for the New Year! May it bring us all the kind of gifts money cannot buy – peace, courage to meet Life's challenges, good health, companionship, and Love in the truest sense of the word.

Love & Hugs All,
Janine xx

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WORDS FROM OUR PRESIDENT

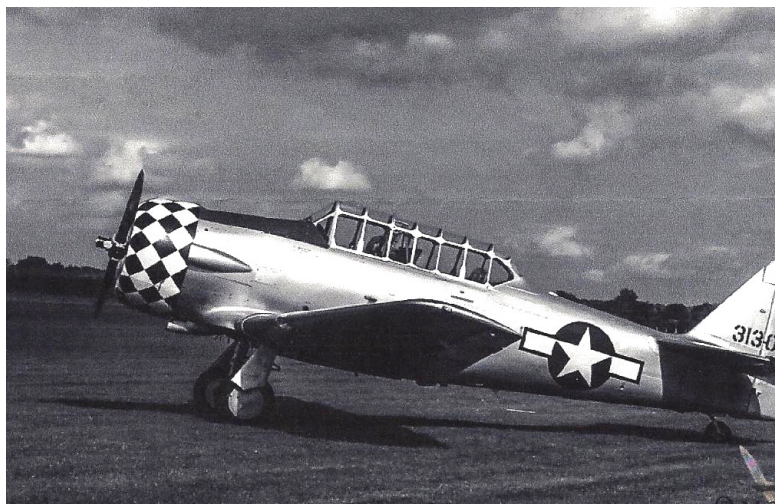
Phil James MBE



Dear Friends,

David Nock has agreed to provide us with a Flypast in his Harvard aircraft over our Oulton Memorial during next year's Reunion.

Definitely something to look forward to! Let's hope the weather gives him the opportunity to fly ...



Phil James MBE

LETTER from the CHAIRMAN

Dear Friends,



The excellent weather we enjoyed during our May Reunion did not precede a fine summer for me. My sailing in the Scottish Hebrides was restricted by endless Atlantic lows, high winds and heavy rain. There were, however, two wonderful passages and September delivered an Indian summer. In early October I was able to stow dry sails (always a blessing) and set off for the long drive south. Approaching Preston we saw low in the sky the unmistakable profile of the last Vulcan bomber XH558. She was on a parallel but opposite course to us flying majestically at about 2000 feet. We were seeing her on her farewell tour, for this year will be the last time that a Vulcan takes to the skies.

Although she is airworthy and could keep flying for some time, essential technical support is no longer available in part due to key personnel retiring. The Vulcan to the Sky Trust has done an amazing job in restoring XH558 to airworthiness in 2007 and keeping her flying up until this month. It should be noted that she has flown 10% more hours than any other Vulcan.

The V bombers (Vickers Valiant, Avro Vulcan and Handley Page Victor) were designed to a 1947 Ministry of Supply specification. One surprise I stumbled across researching this note was that a fourth heavy bomber was also commissioned. Because of concern that the technical innovation of the V bombers would take too long to bring into service a more conventional design of lower performance was specified – the Short Sperrin of which two were produced. In fact the Valiant was only six months behind the Sperrin and only two Sperrins were produced. The Sperrin was very unusual in appearance because each pair of engines was mounted in a nacelle, one above the other.



My bias in favour of the Vulcan may be because the founder of Avro, Alliard Verdon-Roe, was born in Patricroft, Eccles, Manchester, where my family lived for generations. He was the son of a doctor and I knew the house where he was born very well. It was the home and surgery of our own family doctor.

Importantly, A. V. Roe was joined in 1911 by Roy Cochrane another Lancastrian who had just completed an apprenticeship. By 1918 he had become Avro's Chief Designer overseeing many designs over the next thirty years including the Anson, Manchester, Lancaster, Lincoln, York and Shackleton. Almost his last work before his untimely death in a flying accident was the Vulcan with its revolutionary delta wing. This was the next generation following WW2 aircraft that we are familiar with in 100 Group. The Vulcan first took to the skies in 1952. Operational service commenced in 1956 when it was the mainstay of our nuclear deterrent. However, by 1960 the design operation altitude of 50,000 feet was obsolete because of Soviet missile technology (in fact Vulcans had a maximum ceiling of 65,000ft and maximum speed of 645mph). With remarkable flexibility the Vulcan was able to adopt a low level role less vulnerable to Radar detection and anti-aircraft missiles.

After thirty years on the front line and approaching retirement the Vulcan's finest hour came with the unexpected Falklands war. I recommend Rowland White's excellent book: '*Vulcan 607*' which has been recently revised. This describes the remarkable '*Black Buck One*' raid on Port Stanley airfield by a single Vulcan flown from Ascension Island. The Vulcan was refuelled by eleven Victor Tankers – seven times on the outbound leg and once homebound. At the time this was the longest bombing mission on record – a

round trip of 6,800 nautical miles. The raid was successful, with XM 607 delivering its 21 x 1,000lb bomb payload straddling the Stanley runway. Although this did not deny Stanley to the Argentinian Pukaras and C130s the raid influenced Argentina to withdraw some of their much more dangerous Dassault Mirage III fighter aircraft from the Southern Argentina Defence Zone to the Buenos Aires Defence Zone. Six more Black Buck raids were planned, however two of these were aborted because of technical or weather problems. Black Buck Two and Seven involved bombing the Stanley area whereas Black Buck Five and Six were aimed at eliminating Argentinian Radar using American AGM – 45 Shrike anti-Radar missiles. This seems to me very much a 100 Group type role. Black Buck Five hit 10 metres from the target, disabling but not eliminating the Argentinian Radar. Black Buck Six remained in the Stanley area for forty minutes but could not persuade the Argentinians to switch on their Radar, denying an attractive target. Finally they fired two Shrike missiles and destroyed a fire control Radar.

So, almost forty years after 100 Group's time, worthy successors demonstrated the same characteristics of skill and courage of their forebears. They should be remembered along with their much loved Vulcan and Victors as we remember our men and women of 100 Group and their Mosquitoes, Halifaxes, Wellingtons, Fortresses, Stirlings and Liberators.

I hope you enjoy the festive season and that we may meet up in 2016.



Roger Dobson

CITY OF NORWICH AVIATION MUSEUM



Dear Friends,

Since the last 100 Group Association magazine there have been several important changes and developments which have impacted on the day-to-day running of the Museum.

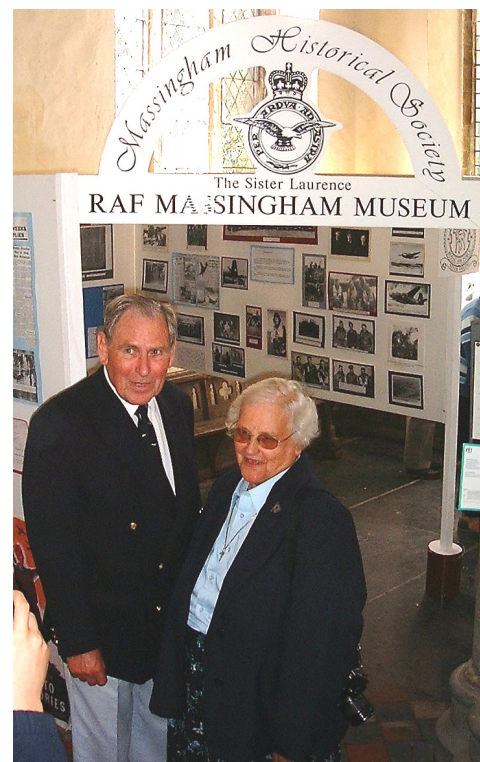
Firstly, we have had a number of staff changes. After over six years in our employment Daniel Bygrave has left and we have appointed Linda Marks to join our team of Museum Assistants. Daniel has now joined the Museum as a member and is now regularly volunteering. Jamie Bygrave has taken up the offer of an apprenticeship with KLM and now works for the Museum only on Sundays.

On weekdays, Linda and Yvette have shared duties supported both by volunteers, and on days when we have identified we need extra help, James Plumstead, Tom Briggs, Tom Elsegood and Ben Francis, all students have worked for us when required during the past months. This has ensured that we have had the tea room, Nimrod and Vulcan all open to visitors during the main visitor season.

Our financial year ended on 31 August 2015 and without doubt, 2014/5 will have been a record year for CNAM in terms of both income and visitor numbers. Both staff and volunteers have worked hard to firstly attract visitors, and then to ensure that they have been well looked after while they are our paying guests. Visitors are attracted to CNAM by many forms of media these days and our internet site and Facebook pages now play an increasingly important part of our publicity campaign. Glen Amber and Daniel Bygrave have carried out some very good work on these. To be further encouraged, please look at the comments we have received both in our Visitor Book and on Trip Adviser on the internet.

The next few months will be very important for the future of CNAM as the final situation concerning the Norwich Northern Distributor Road is resolved. Very simply, we will either move a short distance towards Norwich Airport, which will ensure we are still connected to the airport; or, with some modifications to our present site, stay where we are. On a day-to-day basis, we still have a Museum to run and Autumn visitor numbers and income are very encouraging. In November, we will be open on Fridays in addition to previously advertised times. There is a general re-organisation of many displays within the buildings happening at present and we have a number of important new exhibits arriving over the next few weeks and months which will replace and indeed improve previous displays. Already installed is a cockpit section from a Hunter aircraft which is fitted with a Flight Simulator, allowing visitors the opportunity to 'fly' a jet fighter. The vital work of cataloguing the Museum collection on our MODES computer system will also continue, and with the number of new items that are likely to arrive, we will be very busy.

During the summer, we were contacted by Anthony Robinson of the Massingham Historic Society to discuss the future of the Collection gathered by Sister Laurence, a Sister of Jesus whilst at St Mary's Convent, Little Massingham. The Convent was used as accommodation for Officers from RAF Great Massingham during World War Two and contact with returning veterans started Sister Laurence on a project lasting many years, researching the history of the airfield and those who were based there. Items from the Collection were displayed annually at events at Great Massingham Church when veterans from Squadrons of 2 Group and 100 Group returned to the village. In 2000, an exhibition in the Church was opened by [Kenneth Wolstenholm](#), [seen right with Sister Laurence](#)), famous as BBC Football Commentator for the 1966 World Cup Final, and also a Pilot flying the Bristol Blenheim with 107 Squadron from Great Massingham.



St Mary's Convent closed a few years later, and Sister Laurence left the area, but continued her research from her new home in Hertfordshire. In 2013, she passed away, and her large collection of material was brought back to Great Massingham by the village's Historic Society. Although displays from the Archive have continued to be shown in the village, the Historic Society was concerned that it could not look after such a specialised and large amount of items. Our meetings and emails over Summer and early Autumn resulted in the City of Norwich Aviation Museum offering to provide a future home for the Collection.

On Sunday, 1 November, Jamie Bygrave and I arrived at Great Massingham to meet again with Anthony Robinson and his colleagues from the Massingham Historic Society. The description of Great Massingham Airfield in the book: *'Action Stations'* by Michael Bowyer is *'a bleak airfield set alongside one of Norfolk's most idyllic villages'*. We can only agree with the second part of this statement as we found the airfield not at all bleak, with a well-used public footpath running through part of the former RAF Station which is still used by a number of light aircraft. The village certainly is a fine place and well worth a visit.

In a post-war farm building on the airfield we were shown the full extent of the Collection. Boxes and boxes of documents, books and photographs as well as a few larger exhibits. After three hours of general sorting of items, our car was completely full. At the time of writing, some larger items still remain for us to collect. However, the Great Massingham experience was still not over for us as Anthony led us back to the village the long way around the surviving perimeter track, following the path aircraft would have taken as they headed to and from the runways.

We now have the challenge of cataloguing everything we have brought into the CNAM Collection. Given the quantity, this is a task that will take some time and is in addition to the normal archive workload we have here. We intend to create a special section within the Museum to display items from the Collection and I am sure that we will remember Sister Laurence by perhaps naming the Exhibition in her honour.



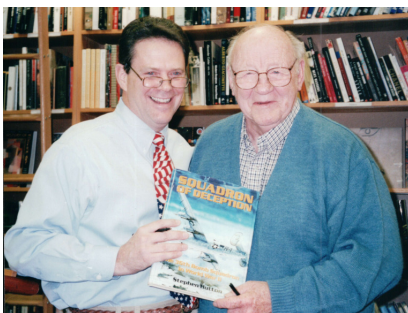
Great Massingham airfield was first opened as a satellite of nearby RAF West Raynham in 1940. Squadrons of 2 Group's Blenheim, Fortress and Boston aircraft were based there until temporary closure in late 1943 for construction of concrete runways and general upgrading of facilities. Re-opening in April 1944, the airfield was allocated to RAF 100 Group and became home to 169 Squadron, 1694 Target Facilities Flight (later Bomber Defence Training Flight) and 1695 Bomber Support Training Flight (later Unit). Many 100 Group Mosquito Pilots spent time at Great Massingham as part of their final training before joining their Squadron. By August 1945, the airfield had been passed to 12 Group and was retained as an emergency stand-by airfield until 1958 when it was returned to agriculture.

Seen left: Sister Laurence with John Beeching, now living in New Zealand, who was based at Great Massingham, serving in 169 Squadron during World War Two. (Copyright: John Beeching)

Kelvin Sloper
CNAM

COMMITTEE MEMBER

Stephen Hutton: 8th Air Force Representative



From across The Pond – Stephen Hutton, representing the USAAF 8AF, sends another story of American involvement with RAF 100 Group.



Lt. James Warner was co-pilot in Lt Richard Obenschain's crew* in one of the first six American aircrews to form the 803rd Bomb Squadron. Lt Warner spoke of his new assignment:

Stephen with father Iredell Hutton 'Our crew with the 388th Bomb Group, Obenschain and myself and the rest of the crew completed our twenty-five missions in February 1944. Everybody else went home after their twenty fifth mission, but we hung around for six weeks or so until this 803rd RCM Squadron came into being. Sometime in April 1944 we moved (from Knettishall) to RAF Sculthorpe and the training and our missions began to take shape. Sculthorpe was not an active RAF combat base at that time. We were assigned an additional airman, Sgt Wilson, to complete our crew. Captain George Paris was already in place at Sculthorpe as Operations Officer. Some night training missions were flown in conjunction with the RAF where evasive action/reaction to possible Luftwaffe night fighters was stressed. Our aircraft were stripped of identification except serial numbers. We were flying stripped down B17s. The British had some older model B17s which had been stripped down. They were also flying Lancasters and Stirlings.

We were initially at Sculthorpe and then we moved to Oulton with Group Captain Dickens as Commander of the entire Unit. Our immediate Commander for the American portion was Lt Col Scott. We flew a number of night missions in support of the British bomber stream. We would be given certain coordinates, then go over the North Sea and orbit five miles with all this jamming equipment on board. The British really flew a bomber stream because sometimes you'd find yourself right in the middle of it.

On one night's training mission we were to orbit a set of coordinates within a five mile radius. After about one hour we received anti-aircraft fire and immediately got out of the area. As it turned out we apparently hit a jet stream and Jim Ostler, our Navigator, estimated our ground speed between 475-500kts which placed us over the enemy-held coast in a hurry.

Night flying involved flying without clearance lights of any kind and engine exhausts were equipped with flame suppressors. The aircraft instrument lights consisted of small ultra-violet lamps which normally were left on and directed toward the instruments which activated the radium coating causing the instruments to glow. However, the recommended procedure at that time was to turn on the lamps just long enough to energize and incite the instrument radium, then turn them off. The instruments would glow for some time. The lack of clearance lights, complete blackout, and minimum instrument lighting was responsible for my first encounter with vertigo.

After a night training mission we were introduced to a directional and landing procedure completely new to me and one I thought was great and a compliment to British ingenuity. If you needed assistance (and who didn't in a complete blackout) you proceeded to call by radio and say: 'Hello Darcy, where am I?' Codes were used to identify your aircraft and the airfield you wanted. Searchlights would come on vertically, then lay down in the direction you were to fly. This continued until suddenly there appeared a circle of lights (about 3 miles in diameter) at your destination. The procedure was to make a left turn around through the circle of lights until you came to a funnel configuration in the circle. You turned into the funnel and after completing the turn and levelling out, the runway lights appeared. You would fly in and land with no aircraft landing lights and immediately all runway lights went off. Leaving the lights on for even a short period made it possible for Luftwaffe night fighters to follow bombers on landing and destroy them on the ground. Hence the caution!

We had a good crew. Dick Obenschain (later to become Assistant Operations Officer) was an excellent Pilot, Aircraft Commander, gentleman and friend. Jim Ostler (later to become Squadron Navigation Officer) was an excellent Navigator, Officer, gentleman and friend. Our airmen were top notch. This crew made the disappointment of not returning to home and family after our 25th mission a lot easier to take.'



** Lt. Richard Obenschain Crew standing on a B17 Flying Fortress.
Lt. Obenschain at front with Lt. Warner behind.*

While at Oulton Lt Warner was another Yank (like my own father) who enjoyed comradery with the RAF at gatherings at nearby Blickling Hall. Warner wrote:

'At RAF Oulton, the RAF Commander issued all members of the 803rd new bicycles. I thought it was wonderful and practical for all of us on a new Base without the transportation facilities we were used to. Oulton was Ann Boleyn's home. It was a place for visitors to go until the time of the war, then the RAF took it over and the house itself was the Officers' Club. The bar and main club activities were in the great room of the home. At one end of the great room was a huge fireplace. Up one wall across the high ceiling and down the opposite wall was a set of boot prints. We were told that the RAF people at a rousing party took their smallest member, a Scotsman and Navigator, blacked the soles of his flight boots and held him as he walked up the wall. His boots were rim-coated with soot from the fireplace, put back on him, tables were stacked as the height increased and his steps continued until the entire track was completed. It seemed to me at the time it would have been simpler to just use the boots for the prints, but the RAF fellows felt it more meaningful to have a man in the boots even tho he had to be held upside down to make the prints. They flew hard without any thought of a completed tour and lived it up when they could. A truly remarkable group of people.'

Most sincerely and with my best regards,

Stephen Hutton

North Carolina

Author – 'Squadron of Deception'

8th Air Force Historical Society Unit Contact

36th Bomb Squadron RCM

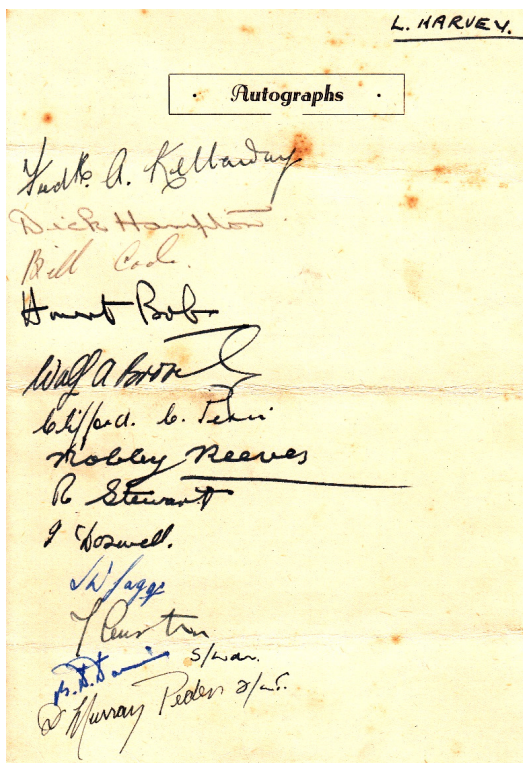
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Janine

City of Norwich Aviation Museum



12

Anyway, many thanks for all the work you do for the Association – reading between the lines in the magazine it seems to be much appreciated and I would like to express my appreciation for everybody being such a friend to Dad. As you say, it was such a shame he didn't find you so much earlier!

Best wishes

Patricia Brunt (nee Belton)
pmbgrunt@googlemail.com



Hello Janine

I have some sad news in that my father-in-law, Reg Fidler, died on 4 August. He was a past member and former Mosquito Navigator (serving in 515 Squadron). Please can you amend your Records as necessary, and I wish you well with the Association.

Thanks and regards

Martin Pavey

* * * *

Hi Janine,

Thank you very much for the kind words. Reg actually went in to Papworth twice. The first time his op was postponed due to other people's emergency operations taking priority. He then went in for the heart op and all appeared to go well, although he had some post operation breathing problems and transferred to Ipswich for the last week or so ... He was comfortable to the end and as ever cheerful.

Again, thank you for your response which I have forwarded to Jenny, my wife, and David and Laurie, Reg's stepsons. Our best wishes for the Association and magazine and your books.

Kind regards,

Martin

* * * *

Dear Janine,

Thank you very much for your emails and card, which arrived at Dad's (Reg Fidler) It was only when I was reading through a folder of Dad's to do with the RAF, looking for information to go in his Eulogy which I was going to read at his funeral, that I came across the correspondence he'd been exchanging with you not so long ago about your book. If there is any chance of being able to have a copy of the Winter edition of your magazine when it comes out please, that would be lovely (or even the Autumn one as well – I'd be happy to pay for these). Also, I looked at your book on Amazon and it seems it can be pre-ordered, so I am hoping to be able to purchase a few copies for the family.

Dad was always very modest about his time in the RAF and apart from having read the '*Last of the Few*' article about their Switzerland experience and having a copy of the book '*Infringing Neutrality*' (which I think he sent you) he was reticent to dwell on the past. Now I wish I'd asked him more questions. I have original photos of the aftermath of the crash, the same photos as in the '*Last of the Few*' article.

Do you have any contact details please for Townsley who was Dickie's son – I think Dad may have met him (the son) but I can't find any contact details for him. If there is anyone else you think I should tell please let me know. There is in his address book, an address for the nephew of Henry Morley who was the Pilot Dad flew with, so I will write to him.

You seem to be doing an excellent job, but if I can be of any help please let me know. We will obviously keep all Dad's paperwork relating to the RAF so please do contact me if you need to. My address is 2, Rose Farm Cottages, Shotley, Ipswich IP9 1PH and this email address is fine to contact me on.

Kind regards

Jenny Pavey (nee Fidler) jenny.pavey@btinternet.com

Hi Janine,

This is Kim Whitworth, Bill's youngest daughter. Over the past few months of my dad being in and out of the hospital he has mentioned your name a few times and asked me to reach out to *'the little British author who is interviewing him'*. I am not sure exactly what he was helping to provide with your writing, but whatever it was he thought it was necessary and important I contact you. I am very sad to tell you that my dad passed away last Tuesday. After a very tough and brave fight (over the past few weeks especially), his body just couldn't hold up any longer. That said, I wanted to honor his wishes and let you know about his passing, and also offer any information you might need for whatever it is that you are working on.



Although we have never met or spoken before, I just wanted to let you know that whatever you were working on with my dad brought him a lot of joy and excitement over at least the last few months. For that, I am so grateful. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Kim

kkwhitworth@gmail.com

* * * *

Hi Janine,

Thank you for your kind note. I am so happy to hear about your extensive work with the preservation of these wartime stories and the incredible people who experienced them. My father and I have always been very close, though he was not always fond of speaking extensively about his WWII experiences. I think mainly because he did not want to be thought of any differently. People who knew of his time in the war would often call him a *'hero'*, he would adamantly profess that he was not a hero and instead explain that: *'The guys who never came back are the real heroes'*. Janine, you spoke of my father's excitement about seeing your research and his stories paired together in print. I would be honored to have his copy if you wouldn't mind sharing it when it is finally finished. Of course, I am happy to pay for any costs incurred. My father gave me his copy of Stephen Hutton's *Squadron of Deception* and left little notes in many of the pages explaining his participation in particular missions -- I treasure it for obvious reasons.

In case you're interested, I have attached the program I created and had printed for dad's Memorial Service on Saturday, 22 August. Everything in it was written by him, including the *'Farewell Speech'* which I believe he wrote for his mother right before he left for the war. I thought you might enjoy seeing some of his other achievements during his time in the Air Force, as well as learning a little bit more about his personality in more recent years! If you didn't think he was a hilarious kook before

Thanks again and hope you're well.

Best regards,

Kim

Hello Janine,

Thank you for informing me about Bill Whitworth's death – another Gremlin goes to join his buddies. Like the rest, he and his kind shall be greatly missed. That strong and noble breed were truly a great generation. I shall, of course, pass on my deepest condolences to the family.

Your friend,

Stephen

Stephen Hutton

AUBREY 'BILL' ANDREW WHITWORTH

27 February – 11 August 2015



MEMORIES OF ALCONBURY

Janine, you wanted to know more about the 36th Bomb Squadron and I have probably forgotten the most important happenings of long ago. But I remember when our crew joined the 36th in early 1944. The Squadron had moved to Alconbury and been converted to our role as Radar jammers. We shared the base with two other Squadrons commanded by actor Lt Col Jimmie Stewart but we never mingled with them. I do remember Col Stewart had a voice that projected clearly from 100 yards away playing volleyball. Something I still find amusing, we were known as the 36th SNAFU Squadron. Translated, that was 'Situation Normal, All F****d Up'. Our Wing Commander changed it to 'Radar All Fouled Up' but we will always prefer our version. Orchestra leader Glen Miller's plane went down just a couple of days before we reached Southampton after a perilous two week voyage that saw us take an extreme northern route across the Atlantic, but icebergs sent our convoy due south towards the Bahama Islands to avoid unfriendly submarines. Johnny Desmond, a great vocalist with the band, took over and had a 12 to a 30 over the radio ... I assume Armed Forces Radio carried the Show if it had been invented then. There was only one little catch. The Mess Hall only served lunch between 11:45 and 12:45 and more than half of us stayed to hear the Show and its conclusion, the greatest stampede for lunch before they closed was almost comical. Some rode bikes and the rest of us ran like mad. We had one handle on the showers in a distant hut so the water was either too hot or too cold. But when the water was right, those of us who smelled like dead fish raced to get there while the temperature was warm. I have to admit, those of us flying missions got velvet glove treatment. Fresh eggs were rare, but when we received a shipment, we got the eggs, the rest got powdered eggs. The same applied to fresh milk. After landing from a mission, we were given a paper cup of the vilest cognac man ever created, but I guess it served its purpose. By the time we reached the Mess Hall our feet were airborne.

Janine, that's enough of the trite stuff. It was only designed to give you something to read as you waited for something to do. Also including a photo or two I thought you might find enlightening. Oh yes. Discovered an English fish and chips restaurant run by a gentlemen from Liverpool. Walls were saturated with British photos and mementoes. He is truly a great guy. Of course, we did a duet of 'I've got a lovely bunch of coconuts' for those dining in his place. They are likely not to return!

Bill Whitworth (God Bless You, Bill. Will miss you, your cheery emails and writings ... Janine xx)

My Farewell Speech

It's nice to have big muscles,
To be tall and have a tan,
But then you've got to hustle,
For your marked a Navy man.

And if you came in pint size
It doesn't help a bit,
For there before your bleary eyes
A sergeant's having fits.

Yours Truly's in the latter group-
I passed the test just fine.
I knew just how to eat my soup,
Wash dishes and tell time.

And since I got into the fight,
You don't have to worry,
I'll win it for you overnight
And home to you I'll hurry.

Dear Janine,

My father, Luis Castillo of the U.S. 36th Air Force was always very proud of his Service. I remember one time while speaking to my mother about my father's war stories. I told her I thought Dad had watched too many war movies. She turned to me and said: *'Your father was telling those stories long before we owned a television!'* It was not until near his death that I realised this was a part of our history we didn't need to lose. So I sat down with him and started to tape his stories.

The ones I send you are just a few of the many things he talked about, the good, the bad and the ugliness of war. I wasn't sure what you need, so I'll keep it clean! I think he would be very happy today to know that, seventy years after the end of the war, his voice is still being heard. Here are a few more excerpts from his interview and a better copy of the photograph:



Question: What weapon did you carry in combat?

In combat I carried a M1 rifle. The M1 rifle was a good rifle, it shot very accurate and was powerful during training. We would put a towel under our shirt by the shoulder to fire it because it hurt after a few rounds of non-stop firing. In combat, it is different. I know. I fired a lot. But many times you walked and fired. I may have killed a few Germans, but the only time I remember shooting at a German I actually had in my sights was when I captured some Germans after a fight. One of them tried to make a run for it and the Lieutenant slapped me on the back hollering: 'Shoot him!' I fired, but missed, but the German stopped running and was brought back at the end of a bayonet. We fixed bayonets a lot and you hated to hear the words: 'Fix bayonets' before you went into combat. But we mainly only used it when we had prisoners, many times we would poke them in the ass if they weren't moving fast enough!

Question: Tell me about the time all the Germans surrendered?

One time we had a bunch of German soldiers surrender to us. There was a GI who was always drunk, yet he was damn good with the M1 rifle. These Germans all came out together from a large stone house with their hands up. As we searched them, a shot rang out. We all hit the dirt, including the Germans. We looked around and the GI who was always drunk was standing there saying: 'I got a sniper, I got a sniper!' Sure enough, he had shot a sniper in a window about to machine gun us. There were two of them just kids. He went in and made sure he was dead by sticking him with his bayonet and we brought the other one out at the point of our bayonets, kicking and slapping him. We also brought out two old men who we threw in with the rest of the prisoners because they were in the house and considered Militia (People's Army). After that incident, we didn't care how drunk he got. He would be so drunk we had to hold him up to keep him from falling off the tanks when we rode on them. We all did some drinking, but not like him.

Those are just a few more excerpts from the tape. Thank you for all you are doing in preserving our history and keeping the memory of these men alive. Please keep in touch and let me know if I can help in any way.

Sincerely,

AL

Al Castillo



Hi Janine,

David Hales spoke in the last magazine of his visit to Durnbach in memory of RAF 100 Group veterans who were killed there, including his uncle. He was speaking about the trip he made last November (2014), but has it in his calendar for another trip to that War Graves cemetery sometime in the unspecified future. I have pictures of my mate's grave which I took when I was there some years ago.

My best mate, Reg Dobson, flew Lancasters on 103 Squadron from Eltham Wolds and was killed on a raid on 23 February 1945. The Curator at Runnymede was inclined to the view that Reg, on his 33rd Op, collided with another aircraft. But I am really thinking that he fell prey to a German night fighter. His aircraft was PM-Z. I can find no information regarding whatever happened, and possibly never will. But he is also buried at Durnbach, Plot 8, Row 6. I have asked David Hales if he might be able to drop a poppy on his grave to let him know his old mate still thinks about him. Reg was an only son and his parents had a lovely little message inscribed along the bottom of his headstone. Durnbach where he resides, is quite a pretty setting and very well maintained by the War Graves Commission. Some of Bavaria looks very much like New Zealand. I visited his grave some years back, thanks to the generosity of a kind friend here, and stayed at Bad Tolz, a Bavarian village close by, easily reached by train from Munich. I was there on 5 November, a day they have some great commemoration when everybody dresses up and I had great difficulty in finding accommodation. I signed the book at Durnbach, but didn't know until quite recently that Bad Tolz was where they trained SS Officers during the war. I was not on operations the night Reg went down, but did one to Flensburg a couple of nights later, on 27 February, and somewhere else the next night. Ted Baumfield, whose daughter is a 100 Group Association member living quite near to me here in Nelson, New Zealand, flew on B17 Fortresses on 214 Squadron and quite conceivably, Ted, now long since dead, could have been on one of those operations.

Pride in the flag

Good on you, Margot Haley, for putting it so well (letters, *Nelson Mail*, September 9).

We should be proud of the Union Flag, not trying to get rid of it as some Johnny-come-latelies are trying to advocate without, to me at least, any valid reason.

This is the flag we fought under; for what it represented, namely, the British Commonwealth of Nations, the enduring symbol of democracy.

Its inclusion in our present flag displays our origin.

Ours is the country developed by people like the Smiths, the Jones and the Browns, who established New Zealand and gave British names to our towns, like Christchurch, Hastings and on and on, and who battled through the wars to maintain their British standards of justice, tolerance and fair play.

Our present flag is the flag prominently displayed during royal visits, overwhelming occasions which must surely show where our loyalties lie.

Think again about these stupid, poorly worded referenda.

The first one should ask, Do you want to change the flag?

The answer to that might save a few million dollars, part of an

expenditure I find, certainly not singularly, impossible to justify.

The whole business is a travesty and should be dropped forthwith.

I say, keep the flag the way it is and I entreat people to really think hard about what they are being asked to give away.

JOHN B BEECHING
Nelson, September 13

You might not have read anything about this in the UK, but our Prime Minister John Key, is trying to get the Union Flag removed from the New Zealand flag. Feeling is quite strong about it, especially with old vets like me, so this is my most recent letter to the paper. There will be two Referenda, costing 26 million dollars, asking the population what they would choose from five hideous designs currently presented.

Cheers and with best regards,

John

John & Wendy Beeching



Hi Janine,

This is by way of an update on 'The Magee Family'. We have been to France on holiday, our first for nine years ... We played on two Saga Cruise ships just before leaving for France, and Paul played 'Toy Soldiers' (shared by The Magee Brothers at the 2015 Association Reunion) giving some background about writing it, saying he played it for the RAF 100 Group Association. After the performance, several people came to praise the performance and one lady spoke to Paul saying her father was Wing Commander of 100 Squadron during the war. Hope you are all keeping well, and we are looking forward to seeing you again in May 2016 in Norfolk. (Matthew has created a new website: <http://themageebrothers.com/>)

Diolch yn faw iawn,

Stephen, Elaine, Paul, Matthew, James, Sean & Daniel



Hello Janine,

Hope all is well with you. It seems a long time since we had contact!

I have just had another lovely week in Norfolk based in Blakeney. This time my brother was also with my sister and I, and of course we included a visit to the Church at Little Snoring to view again the Memorial Boards from the Officers' Mess. Considering the Boards and information is 70+ years old, they appear in remarkably good order, and look to have been varnished. Through you, I would like to enquire if there is a person who is keeping a watchful eye on them, and to say thank you, and ask if there is anything else that might be done to ensure their continued wellbeing.

We have found a copy of the same photograph in the front of 100 Group Magazine that shows the rows of seated personnel, including our Dad, but taken without hats! On the reverse of the picture, my Mother has written the names, ranks and jobs of personnel in the shot. Is this of interest to you? Also, a photograph taken in 1945 of some WAAF personnel with a small presentation cup.

My next question concerns Wolterton Hall, Aylsham, Mannington, Norfolk – a large country house built in 1725 for the Walpole family who still occupy part of it. Do you know anything about its history during WWII other than it was a PoW Camp? I am interested because our parents visited Wolterton Hall during their honeymoon, driving from Blakeney when the place was not open to the public. They are photographed in smart clothes, and from a letter they wrote at the time, refer to visiting friends connected with their time at Little Snoring.

Living on the canal, we are wintering in a marina adjacent to the Shropshire Union Canal at Audlem, Cheshire. We are plugged into the electric, which means immersion heater and electric kettle, etc. Our car is here so we can shop. These sunny days mean we can go out onto the cut, light the wood burner and be quite snug, even though it is fairly chilly through the night.

In the last magazine, I spotted an item re Barnes Wallis and his name is of some importance to our family as my brother won a Barnes Wallis Scholarship through the RAF Benevolent Fund to help with his education at Christ's Hospital School in Horsham. Also, I see an article about St George's Chapel at Biggin Hill – my Aunt knows the Rector there and visited only a couple of weeks ago.

We look forward to the publication of your books – could well solve a Christmas present problem!

Kind regards,

Nicola & Bob

Nicola & Bob Atkins/Alison & Bob Baker

nbatkins@hotmail.co.uk/alison.trinder@btopenworld.com

NOTE: Our father shows in the photograph as **F/L Harold Forth**



SHQ Officers at Little Snoring, Fakenham 1945

L-R Back Row: F/L Buckler (FC); F/O Barton (CAT); S/L Every (Padre); F/L Bennet (Adj); F/L Bennett (Denta); F/O Stokes (ED); S/O Black (Admin 2); F/L Birkett (Equip); F/O Bye (MT).

There is an extra name associated with this row, at least you can recognise the Padre!

2nd Row: P/O Glass (NZ); F/L Waltson (Elec); P/O Elmsley (NZ); F/O Christie (MET); F/O Wood (Admin); S/O Macleod (CAT); S/O Hamilton (Equip); S/O McReynolds (WAAFC); P/O Walters (MET); F/L Lawrence (ADMIN); F/O Moss (Link Trainer Instructor)

3rd Row: F/L Blackford (ACCTS); F/O Gallavan (WAAF'G'); S/L Hinchcliffe (FC); SL Jeakes (S.Ad.O); G/C Sammy Hoare (CO); S/L Price (FNT); S/L Muir (NAV); F/L Page (AMT); **F/L Harold Forth;**

Front Row: P/O Ellis (NZ); P/L Nass (INT); PD Brown (TECH); F/O Horley (SPORTS); F/L Geoff Forge (ED).

There is an extra name in this row too?



Mother is in the centre row, far right: Diana Jelley, Leading Aircraft Woman (LACW)

NOTE FROM EDITOR: Thanks Alison for all your help in deciphering names and places handwritten on the back of the photographs!

Hello,

My Granddad was at 157 Squadron during World War Two. His name was Albert Barnard and he married Patricia Peck who he met in the Acceptance Hangar at RAF Swannington. I am trying to locate this hangar to put a plant and some poppies in memory. I understand there is a more modern building there now, but I would love to find this location if anyone can help me? Your help would be much appreciated. My grandparents have a page on the RAF Swannington website, and I am happy to share it with members.

Regards

Gary Gunnell

Gary.Gunnell@met.pnn.police.uk

The Story of Pat & Albert Barnard



LAC Albert 'Barney' Barnard & LACW Pat Peck

Pat Peck was from Gorleston in Norfolk. Albert Barnard came from London. They both joined the RAF and found themselves posted to RAF Swannington when it opened in 1944. The war lasted just another year, but their union lasted for the rest of their lives.

Albert was 20 years old when he joined the RAF in 1942. He qualified as a top craftsman Carpenter 1, Group 1, having in addition studied aerodynamics, hydraulics and general maintenance – ideally suited to working on the airframe of the Mossie, the 'Wooden Wonder'. He was posted to 157 Squadron at RAF Predannack, Cornwall, only to find when he got there that the Squadron had moved to RAF Valley, Wales.

When he caught up with them, he was delegated, not to hangar duties, but to A Flight to carry out normal daily inspections and night shift to despatch aircraft on their missions, to receive them back and to refuel them. It was on one of these occasions that he acted in a way which would today be recognised with a bravery award. Albert describes the incident:

'After marshalling the kite into the dispersal bay nearest the A Flight Office/Crew Room and having positioned the petrol bowser in front of the aircraft, I smelt burning. I traced this to beneath the Navigator's seat. I called to the airman already on the main plane unscrewing the petrol tank caps to get to the Office and report the fire, whilst I re-started the tractor and moved the petrol bowser to safety.

On returning, I saw the oil bowser on the grass in the bay where the aircraft was alight and moved it to safety. By then, the Mossie was burning fiercely, cannon shells exploding in the direction of other aircraft in the same bay. I hitched on the towing cable from the tractor to the main under-carriage wheels and, getting the airman on duty to steer the kite via the long bar

attached to the tail wheel, we moved it to safety towards the Control Tower area. The aircraft burnt to ashes ...'

With the launching of V1 'Doodlebugs' from the other side of the English Channel, there was a serious threat to London and the South East. One of the few planes capable of the speed necessary to catch them was the 'Wooden Wonder'. In July and August 1944, both 157 and 85 Squadrons were temporarily transferred from Swannington to RAF West Malling in Kent. Albert throws light on this period:

'When the V1s started to come over the Channel, the Mossies had some success in exploding them. 157 A & B Flights, and I believe 85 Squadron, were sent to West Malling. The aircraft were modified to use a higher octane petrol and, when refuelling, gloves had to be worn. The manifolds were removed and stub exhausts fitted to give extra speed. To the best of my knowledge, the pilots were permitted to pull the booster tit for a specified number of seconds to get that extra bit of speed.

It was on one of these missions that S/L Matthews of A Flight returned to the Base having exploded a V1. He had dived on it and it was a question of shooting at it and going through the resulting fireball or peeling off and letting it go on. The result was that every bit of dope paint, lettering and roundels were scorched off his Mossie, including the fabric on the rudder. The canopy and windscreen were blackened with soot, except where the wipers were used.'

There were, of course, lighter moments. The boys would get to Cawston for a beer or two and occasionally travel to Norwich where 'The Bell' was a favourite haunt.

The Church Army Tea Wagon would pull up on the perimeter in front of the Maintenance Hangar. Here, the various RAF personnel would queue up for their tea and wads. Albert would get in the wagon to help serve. One young lady, an assistant from the parachute section (having become redundant from the fabric section), on several occasions kept her fingers in the handle of the mug as she handed it to Albert. They would have a good laugh, and soon started courting. Albert had met his Pat!

'For the celebrations of Victory in Europe, the Acceptance Hangar was emptied and a Bar set up to extend the whole length of one side. A good portion of the concrete floor on the other side was treated with aircraft dope paint to make a dancing surface which was surrounded with trellis work and bunting, and there was a huge bonfire away from the hangar. It was a happy night. I can recall a chap called 'Pinky' returning next morning with a bucket to salvage any beer left in the barrels.

I can remember playing for RAF Swannington Hockey Team. I also remember converting two drop tanks with a sail to mess about on the Lakes (Haveringland Hall). The shed that housed the sluice gate on the other side of the roadway between the two lakes (which had different water levels) was used for snogging!

After VE Day, a weekly Sports Day was introduced and a troop carrier used to go to Caister-on-Sea for a day trip with a huge inflatable dinghy lashed to the roof. Pat and I had a whale of a time!'

Pat and Albert married on 1 December 1945. Pat was then discharged from the Service, while Albert moved on to at least five different airfields, finally discharged in 1947. They set up home in London. After Pat died on 1 December 2002 – 57 years to the day of their marriage – Albert and a family group fulfilled Pat's wish by spreading her ashes within yards of where they met in 1944 – under a tree on a patch of grass adjacent to the old site of the hanger at Haveringland ...

Courtesy: Grandson Gary Gunnell / R. Gibbons www.swannington-norfolk.co.uk/index-page157.html

Dear Janine,

Having just purchased a copy of your booklet: *RAF North Creake* and reading it from cover to cover, I am keen to join the RAF 100 Group Association ... I served with the Royal Air Force from 1938 to 1946 – much of my time on Radio Countermeasures. I joined 100 Group at North Creake in 1944, where I was I/C Station Signals, responsible for the Control Tower and Direction Finding Hut which was just outside the Airfield perimeter (I have spoken to Claire Nugent of the Control Tower recently). Some of my experiences have been recorded in Laurie Brettingham's books: *'Beam Benders: RAF 80 (Signal Wing) 1940 – 1945'*, and *'Even When the Sparrows are Walking: The origin and effect of No. 100 (Bomber Support) Group RAF 1943 – 1945'*.



I use the internet, but restrict the use of my email address. My friend David Lang will accept any messages and if necessary reply on my behalf, using his email address ...

You may be able to help in my quest to find the exact location of the Direction Finding Hut. My duties were to visit regularly at odd times which I did on my RAF-issue bicycle, or the Direction Finding vehicle which, even with the aerial system in its lowered position, was very cumbersome to drive. The Direction Finding Hut, to the best of my memory, was dome-shaped with circular rotating aerials on the top. The construction was almost entirely of wood sections, shaped like pockets and filled with shingle. The official name was: *'A Bullet and Blast Proof Hut'*.

Due to the sensitive nature of the radio equipment, particularly when calibrated to a compass bearing; the hut was located in a farmer's field away from the nearest road and nothing metallic was allowed near it (not even my bicycle)! The hut was manned by WAAF and RAF Operators, operating a 24-hour watch system which caused me considerable problems. I always referred to the site as being at North Creake, but with the airfield now known as being located at Egmore I am not so sure. I do feel sure however that there is someone who can recall the exact hut's location. The power supply would still be visible long after the building was gone, so perhaps a farmer made use of it?

I am now 96, but still very interested in recording my wartime activities in the RAF.

Very best wishes,

Vic Flowers

* * * *

Hi Janine,

Thank you for your very nice email, it certainly cheered Vic up to know that there are still such caring and passionate people about. I am enclosing a small photo of him taken late last year which we thought you might like to see. He appreciates very much what you have done for him and is looking forward to receiving his membership and all that goes with it ...

Vic is a perfect gentleman and I feel privileged to have known him for several years. He is full of so many memories of his time during the war and particularly of his time at North Creake as that is where he first met his dear wife Dorothy who sadly is no longer with him, and he misses her very much. He has written many articles during his retirement and had some published in books and magazines. I am sure he will be only too willing to pass some of them on to you when he is over the excitement of knowing that he is so near to learning more about his time in North Creake.

Thanks again from both of us for making Vic *'a happy chappy'* and giving him some new challenges to keep his active brain working. We will be in touch again soon, I'm sure. In the meantime, please use his letter in your next publication.

Regards

David Lang

Dear Janine,

My pleasure at receiving yet another magazine from RAF 100 Group Association turned to sadness after reading the Editor's Page with disbelief as each paragraph became clear. How could anyone treat such a lovely person so badly? Although it is only weeks since we made contact, I feel I know you like all members of the Association and must write to express my feelings and encourage you not to be beaten, to start building a new life with fresh rewards. Time is a great healer and you will overcome the harm that has been done and a new sparkle will be kindled amongst your many friends.

Best wishes,

Vic Flowers

* * * *

Hi Janine,

... The reason for my email is to say that Vic is enjoying going through all of the material you sent him. On his behalf, I must thank you again for all that you have done. He has also asked me to pass to you a very interesting story he wrote some time ago describing a period of his life he will always remember, his time in the RAF during WW2. Included in this story is a brief description of his time at North Creake with some interesting insights into life on an airbase and how he had to adapt to a different way of life from his earlier experiences of the war as a member of the British Expeditionary Force in France. Vic feels you would be interested in his story and may want to use it in your magazine, which he is only too glad for you to do. I thank you again on Vic's behalf for taking such an interest in his memories of a life none of us today can imagine, but we should never forget!

Yours,

David Lang

pp: *Vic Flowers*

daveandjanlang@gmail.com

A Change of Scene

Vic Flowers

All my RAF Service since Call-Up on 3 September 1939 to the posting at North Creake was spent in small independent Units, first with the Wireless Intelligence Screen in France where we were self-supporting in commandeered farmhouses or similar type buildings, then with 80 Wing Radio Countermeasures outstations in the south of England where all personnel were billeted with local people in surrounding villages. Initially, with no accommodation other than transmitter/receiver huts, it was difficult to bring personnel together for Briefing or Training. They were only required to report to Site just before going on duty to relieve the previous Watch. Under such conditions, it was difficult for newly commissioned Signals Pilot Officers or NCOs to exercise more than basic discipline. Familiarity between all ranks was common, but this did not have any adverse effect on operational efficiency, although it did cost me promotion to Flight Sergeant!

Postings to 80 Wing outstations were normally direct from Wireless Operator or Wireless Mechanic Training Schools, so experience of life on an operational Squadron was virtually nil. I was no exception when posted to North Creake and felt like a '*fish out of water*'. It was difficult to adapt to accommodation consisting of a 'bed space' in a Nissan hut shared by NCOs of many trades and having my meals in the Sergeants' Mess. My job was Sergeant in charge of Station Signals Section only remotely connected with Radio Countermeasures, but I found the new radio commitments and challenges quite absorbing. I spent a lot of time at the Section to gain as much knowledge of what was completely new equipment to me and gained confidence of most of the

lads, so much so that when a new operational channel was required in the Control Tower, I decided, in order to gain experience, to do the job myself with back-up from a couple of tradesmen from the Section. Existing equipment could not be re-channelled so a complete installation was necessary with cables to be run from equipment room to control desk and to roof for aerial.

All was going well with only the coax to run from roof to equipment room to be completed. I was used to this type of work, so wearing my forage cap and khaki dust coat over my uniform, cleated the cable down the side of the building working from a ladder with its foot on the pathway. The job finished, I was lowering the ladder while trying to manoeuvre it clear of the path when, out of the corner of my eye, I saw an Officer in full flying kit approaching. Thinking he was interested in what we were doing and just come down from the Control Tower to ask, I waited to give him the details, completely forgetting that I should observe the, unfamiliar to me, ritual of saluting a Senior Officer, later found to be CO Group Captain Bray!

Using the full authority of his rank, he really '*went to town*' on me. I just stood there while, using the full extent of his vocabulary, he slated me for not saluting and not standing to attention. It all started again when he found I was a Senior NCO wearing a dust coat with no distinguishing marks. By this time, all my assistants and others were enjoying the spectacle of an NCO being '*torn off several strips*' and I never lived the incident down. I had to report to the Senior Signals Officer for what turned out to be a much milder admonishment ending in a few laughs, but I wished I was back on the '*friendly*' Units I had known so well.

Soon after, I thought I was '*for the high jump*' again! I was driving the mobile DF van, an ungainly vehicle with its lattice aerial mast in the lowered position, but useful as transport for the Signals Officer to visit other RAF Stations in the area and for me to visit the DF Hut outside the Camp area, which is where I was going on this occasion. To get there, I had to go on a little used road out of Camp and through a barrier controlled by a guard in a sentry box. Usually, the guard saw me coming and had the barrier raised before I reached it, so I did not have to reduce speed. On this day, the guard must have dozed off and did not hear me coming. Too late to stop the vehicle, I hit the barrier full square, smashing the wooden structure complete with supports. The guard was speechless, more worried about sleeping on duty than the damage to the barrier. I gave him my details and left him to report the incident fearing the worst. After a few worrying days and sleepless nights, during which I heard nothing and the grapevine was silent; I realised as there were no witnesses, the guard must have produced a story which did not involve either of us. Possibly '*an unidentified vehicle*' which failed to stop, hitting the barrier. I always took a different route for future visits to the DF Hut so never saw the guard again, but doing a reconnoitre one day by cycle, I saw the barrier was just a temporary arrangement and it remained so for the rest of my stay at North Creak.

This incident involving the DF Hut leads me to my first and only involvement with the WAAF Wireless Operators. My simple request for more Wireless Operators to maintain a 24-hour Watch at the DF Hut produced ten new WAAF Operators instead of the RAF Operators I had expected. I am sure the '*Powers-that-Be*' had no idea what they were required for, and neither did the WAAF Officer i/c until the duties were explained to her and she was shown the DF Hut where they would be required to work, consisting of one circular room with equipment in the middle (due to its construction of many hollow plywood sections filled with shingle, it was called a '*Bullet and Blast-Proof Hut*'). There was no privacy and the toilet was a chemical closet in a small hut a few steps from the entrance door. Like me, the WAAF Officer was not happy, insisting there must always be more WAAF Operators than RAF on watch at the same time.

Transport must always be provided for WAAF to and from the hut for every change of duty at shortest intervals, constant with good watch-keeping procedure; and I must make regular inspections at frequent unannounced times during 24 hours! At first, I found these visits very embarrassing to both me and the Operators, but soon it was obvious no matter what time I left Camp on my cycle to pay a visit, by whatever route, advance warning had been given so naturally I found everything in order. However, from rumours around the Camp, I knew that was far from true!

I felt that, even under '*Conditions of War*' RAF and WAAF should not be working together under such unethical and unsupervised conditions. I made my feelings known, but have no knowledge of any change, for soon after I left North Creak. Looking back, I realise how opportune that posting was for I had never settled to life on an operational airfield in spite of several good NCO friends in the Main Stores, Armoury and Workshop. I shall never forget illicit early morning trips carrying an empty sandbag in which to put the pheasant and rabbits my marksman friend bagged ready for his weekend Leave. He prided himself that only one shot was needed, straight through the head! I picked the mushrooms which were our excuse for the early trip. With my experience of Radio Countermeasures it was hard to accept the main operational workshops were out of bounds, but this did not prevent me from acting as Assistant when my friends had to work overtime on a special job. As a practical man, my ideas always seemed welcome.

With North Creak behind me, I headed for Morecambe and according to friends, a Posting to warmer climes; but somehow I felt my Service with the RAF would not be complete without an overseas Posting. So I was quite prepared for it, although the two weeks of inactivity just waiting for my name to be called seemed endless. I am sure many Servicemen and women before departing these shores can recall similar experiences. I was billeted with eight or ten airmen in a small house designed to take about six bed-and-breakfast customers pre-war. Sleeping conditions were cramped and the large amount of personal kit did not help. The landlady fed us well, but we were always in search of a snack at Voluntary Organisations to help out. The Billet had to be vacated during the day apart from meal-times, and the only duties were to report twice a day for posting instructions. Each reporting session lasted about two hours and as postings were coming in all the time, you were expected to be there if your name was called or appeared on the list. In the same area was a transit camp for airmen returning from the Middle or Far East. I recall a barber where I went for a haircut commenting: '*I expect it was nice to be home!*' I did not realise I had acquired such a tan before going overseas, but it said a lot for sea air and outdoor activities we had been forced to indulge in due to lack of money for attractions like cafes, pubs and dances.

[A shortened extract from Vic Flower's memorable writings](#)

[Thanks, Vic, for the memories ... and welcome as a new member to our Association Family!! xx](#)

70th VE DAY ANNIVERSARY

Two Pilots Remember



*Pilot Cliff Rhind beside a Mosquito at the Alberta Aviation Museum, Edmonton, Canada
Courtesy: Edmonton Journal*

Owen Cornish was eighteen years old when he enlisted in the Royal Canadian Air Force in Saskatoon in March 1941, but was disappointed the following year to be assigned as a Flying Instructor in England:

‘When you sign up, you are prepared to be sent anywhere’, he remembers, sitting in his living room in St Albert in days preceding the 70th Anniversary of the end of the war in Europe. ‘From the earliest days I was keen on flying. I was very frustrated at being kept in Training Command. But when I look back, it probably saved my life ...!’

Owen earned his wings at Blatchford Field in Edmonton, staying in Residence Halls at the University of Alberta before being shipped overseas. In the year leading up to war’s end and the joyful celebrations that followed, he bombed German factories and rail yards from the Pilot’s seat of a Halifax bomber.

‘What we did was terrible’, Cornish said, acknowledging the bombs probably killed civilians. ‘But it was an order ...’

He was restricted to camp on VE-Day so he partied with other airmen, but wasn’t dancing in the streets. He says he just felt lucky to be alive, to have survived, while feeling guilty because so many others were lost. He went on to practice dentistry, retiring after practising in Edmonton almost forty years.

Cliff Rhind signed up before he graduated High School at just seventeen years old, joining the RCAF in Saskatchewan, so young he had to wait six months before being allowed to go to Boot Camp in Brandon, Man. In early 1942, on receiving his wings in Alberta, he served as a Pilot Instructor for a year and a half in England, before being assigned to a Mosquito Squadron at RAF West Raynham. He flew a night fighter for the last eighteen months of the war, piloting the fast and versatile aircraft ahead of Lancaster heavy bombers, protecting them from enemy fire.

‘We never gave it much thought, we just did what we were told’, Cliff remembers at 92 years old in his Edmonton apartment.

Cliff completed 34 missions, escorting bombers, flying through the darkness at 480km per hour, clearing a path for Lancasters carrying heavy bomb loads. At the end of the war, he returned to Canada to work for Imperial Oil at the Edmonton-Strathcona refinery for thirty-five years.

THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN

Janine Bradley



It gives me great pleasure to announce the winner of the Competition we ran in the August magazine as being: **Eddy Tomblinson**. He was the entry picked at random, correctly identifying that the Battle of Britain got its name from a speech made by Winston Churchill. Eddy has already received his prize: a large package containing a six-page full colour Special Folder containing a mint pictorial stamp sheet and four artwork prints by Aviation Artist Keith Woodcock, courtesy of Alex Wilson, Marketing Executive, Isle of Man Stamps & Coins. **Well done, Eddy!** Thank you Alex for your help in this.

I asked Eddy if he would say a bit about himself, being a fairly new member to the Association:

'I have not had any Military Service, but been very interested in World War Two stories for at least forty years. It is a very close community with very caring and competent members and Officers. I appreciate what people went through in the war and the sacrifices made. I made contact with the Association by reading the Airfield Booklets written by Janine which I have purchased in my home area of Norfolk. I spent time working with a local grain Merchant on Witchford Airfield just outside Ely in Cambridgeshire, but left Ely in 1966 and returned here ...'

Eddy is delighted to have won the competition, saying it is the only thing he has ever won, but apologises for the photo, saying it is he who usually holds the camera, and this was the only personal picture he could find, being from his passport. He is looking forward to obtaining my books when they come out and learning more about RAF 100 Group and the people who served.

The actual speech made in the House of Commons in which Winston Churchill refers to 'The Battle of Britain' was made 18 June 1940:

'What General Weygand called the Battle of France is over. I expect that [The Battle of Britain](#) is about to begin. Upon this battle depends the survival of Christian civilisation. Upon it depends our own British life, and the long continuity of our institutions and our Empire. The whole fury and might of the enemy must very soon be turned on us. Hitler knows that he will have to break us in this Island or lose the war. If we can stand up to him, all Europe may be free and the life of the world may move forward into broad, sunlit uplands. But if we fail, then the whole world, including the United States, including all that we have known and cared for, will sink into the abyss of a new Dark Age made more sinister, and perhaps more protracted, by the lights of perverted science. Let us therefore brace ourselves to our duties, and so bear ourselves that, if the British Empire and its Commonwealth last for a thousand years, men will still say, 'This was their finest hour.'

It is worth mentioning that, in reading the Saturday *Daily Mail*, it is said that one in three people today haven't even heard of The Battle of Britain! Some even think Germany was on our side! It is adults we're talking about here, not children. A recent poll reveals a shocking lack of knowledge about what was effectively a turning point in WWII, when 'The Few' denied Hitler's forces the air superiority they needed to have any chance of launching a ground invasion. I have personally heard it said that Germans were never going to invade Britain. It was only ever rumour and conjecture. Meanwhile, researchers have also discovered that one in every eight Britons are unaware of D-Day and what it meant, with one in five not having heard of Anne Frank. As I write this, approaching Remembrance Day, many people, it seems, have no idea why 'the poppy', what makes it so significant? Ignorance extends to the Blitz, Auschwitz, Hiroshima. TV is the greatest influence of our time. While it is said that the two World Wars shaped this country into what it is today, it becomes all the more worrying that we have no idea of our roots.

THE IMPORTANCE OF REMEMBRANCE



Flight Lieutenant John Benjamin Joseph Smith

Navigator Kenneth Russell Goldthorpe



F/Lt John B. J. Smith, 22 yrs

Two young brothers watched the descent of a burning aircraft as it plunged out of the sky towards the earth. Victor and Harry Slenter stood in their home farm in rural southern Holland, witnessing the deaths of Pilot Flight Lieutenant John Benjamin Joseph Smith, 23 years old and on his first operational flight; with Navigator Kenneth Russell Goldthorpe. In the final year of the Second World War, their aircraft crashed a few yards from the young boys' home where both airmen perished. However, the crash was to have a major impact on Norbeck, a village close to the Belgian and German border, while John Smith's family were aware only that he died in a plane crash, nothing more.



*F/Lt John Smith,
training U.S. Pilots in Alabama*

Jenny Wilkins had been just 14 months old when the Mosquito fighter aircraft fell in flames to the ground. She is John's niece. Seventy years on, her telephone rang as she sat in the same house in Stourbridge where her Uncle John lived seven decades earlier before going to war. The 71-year-old teacher, who taught at Redhill School in Stourbridge, listened to a Dutch woman based in England on the other end of the phone, desperately trying to track family members on behalf of Norbeck villagers. Four weeks on, Jenny, accompanied by her sister Judith and husband Paul, attended a Memorial Service in the Netherlands honouring her Uncle.



John, brother of her mother, grew up in Hagley, and was educated at Stourbridge King Edward Grammar School. Unlike many of his generation called up to serve their country, he volunteered, training Pilots in America and Canada prior to his doomed first operational mission. Jenny Wilkins knew he had been killed and the date of his demise, although her family talked little of it. She believes her grandparents were 'unforgiving that he had gone out there at all'. All they knew was that he had been shot down with no idea where. It therefore came as a shock all these years later to be informed

that a Memorial Service was being held in the Netherlands to remember her Uncle, more of a shock to realise that people from another country knew more about how John had died than she or her family ever had. Meanwhile, in the village of Norbeck, even seventy years on, people were determined to remember the airmen who lost their lives that fateful night, and that family members should share the occasion with them. *(Jenny Wilkins seen left, above, niece of F/Lt John Smith.)*

Association member Dave Berry, confirms that his wife Judith's maiden name is 'Gardener'. Her mother was Elsie Smith, Pilot John Smith's one and only older sister. In Genealogical terms, it makes John Smith Judy's Uncle, and in turn, Dave Berry's Uncle-in-Law. Likewise, Jenny (Jennifer) Wilkins' maiden name was Gardener, with her husband's name being Wilkins; making John Smith her Uncle also. John Smith, known to his family as 'Jack', was born on 6 September 1921. It appears he joined the RAF on 11 August 1941 at ACRC London. Shortly after, he was sent to Scarborough, followed by Maywell Field, Alabama, U.S.A., and Moncton, Canada, in October/November 1941. Flying/training had begun on 20 December 1941 where he first trained on a PT17, flying a further 17 other aircraft throughout his career. He then went on to train other Pilots whilst overseas where he was referred to as 'Smithy, one of the Birmingham Lads' in a

publication by the Alabama Institute of Aeronautics for British Cadets, dated February 1942, Volume 2, No. 2. He arrived back in the UK around 4 September 1943 when he married, but soon returned following a short break. Around December, he came back to the UK where training and training others continued.

John first met Kenneth Russell Goldthorpe RAF VR 165287 (seen right, centre) on 17 September 1944, again flying various aircraft at 51 O.T.U. Mosquito training started on 7 November at 51 O.T.U. including numbers: 4081, 560, 611, 714, 606, 741, 602, 447, 772, 631, 759, 540 and 666.



Sometime after 14 January 1945 – this being the last entry shown in his Log Book at 51 O.T.U. – and 29 January 1945; they transferred to RAF Great Massingham, 1692 Flight, based on the other side of the main aerodrome, continuing to fly Mosquitoes – No. 246 on 29 January, 710 on 3 February, 712 twice on 4 February, before transferring to 169 Squadron for their departure on 7 February 1945. The Flying Records are endorsed: '7 February NT 178 NFT', followed in red by: '**7 February NT 176 Ops TIS on BONN, FAILED TO RETURN**'.

Members might remember on page 19 in the Spring 2014 edition of this magazine, an article headed: 'Mystery in Yorkshire' where information was given and it was later discovered that the Elvington Project's use of Code VI-C was to base the construction of a Mosquito on a Norfolk airfield: VI-C being Great Massingham. *(I should add, as Editor, having spoken at length to Tony Agar at Elvington on several occasions; the Mosquito being built by him to which I believe this refers, is dedicated to his wife Val who died from cancer over 20 years ago ... the length of time he has been involved in constructing this aircraft from scratch using authentic materials, with the number relating to his wife.)*

That said, the following story unfolds:

Early in January this year, 2015, a former lady resident of Hoogruts in Holland now living in the North of England; was asked through her Military connections to try to trace details of an aircraft which crashed on 8 February 1945 near Hoogruts and Terlinden in The Netherlands. The reason for this was that villagers, including eye witnesses; had remained troubled over this past event 70 years ago and wanted to commemorate the crash. She managed to trace descendants of Navigator Kenneth Russell Goldthorpe, RAF VR 165287, which attempts in the 1990s failed to do. Eventually, she was put in touch with a historian in Hagley, Worcestershire, who had researched the Hagley War Memorial. Descendants of John Benjamin Joseph Smith (Pilot, Flt/Lt) RAF VR 125796 were traced immediately, leading to Dave Berry's wife's sister who still lives in the old family home.

Initially, the Ceremony of Remembrance was to be a Church Service on 8 February this year, 2015, as the construction of a commemorative stone was delayed. However, knowing Dave Berry and his family were going to attend, a full ceremony was prepared in honour of the airmen who died and for family members to share these precious moments with villagers in a union of remembrance and love.

Pictures follow of two different Ceremonies, one held in February on the Anniversary of the crash, the other in June given that Kenneth Goldthorpe was of Jewish faith and people involved in The Netherlands wanted to ensure this was recognised. Hence the first picture depicts the February Ceremony held for John Smith, while the next two pictures show the same orchard in full bloom in June as people remember Kenneth Goldthorpe. However, they remain together, finally at peace.



Grateful thanks to Association member Dave Berry, *The Express & Star*, & people of The Netherlands

Victor Slenter was one of the two brothers who first witnessed the crash all those years ago. With additional information he has gathered through the years, he remembers:

'The plane was a Havilland Mosquito, serial number NT176, a fast two-engine wooden fighter plane, also equipped with several bombs. The aircrew consisted of Pilot, Flight Lieutenant J. Smith and Navigator, Flying Officer K. R. Goldthorpe who were both killed on impact.

On the morning of the 8 February 1945, we witnessed from our front window on the roadside, how a burning plane flew low over the houses of neighbours across the road, from north to south. It was absolutely frightening! We realised that the aircraft must have descended in the direction of Hoogcruts and we were told very quickly that the plane had crashed in the allotment of Guillaume Offermans (also called Piepke). At around 9am, my Dad, Harrie and I went to the accident spot. We were curious to know what had happened in our fields.

The gate to the field was open and there were many U.S. Servicemen with their Jeeps and civilians from both Terlinden en Hoogcruts, all known to us, who came to see what on earth had happened in their area. In the middle of the allotment was a large crater. At the edge of the crater we stood amazed at the sight in front of us. At the bottom of the crater were the blackened remains of the plane, barely recognisable. A four-bladed propeller rose near enough vertical from the depths, one blade curled over, rising about 30cm above the grass. Two pieces of guns, like long heavy machine-guns, lay at the bottom of the crater against the side with the barrels up.

An American Red Cross truck arrived and I saw how two soldiers were gathering personal effects and remains of the crashed airmen and carefully putting them on a large white sheet. They then carried the sheet like a hammock between them, over their shoulders, to the waiting truck.

While we all stood there and talked together about what we had just witnessed, a plume of smoke was still rising from the depth of the crater. Suddenly, an explosion! A GI who was standing near us screamed, grabbed his stomach, and slowly sank to the ground. Luckily Red Cross medics were still there and could take care of the wounded man. We were actually quite frightened by this and Dad told us to urgently return to our home. There could be more explosive material still in the smouldering remains of the plane. We became intensely aware of the danger posed by the crash site.

The crash was about 175 metres behind the last house in Terlinden, at the Provinciale weg (Province Road) in the direction of Hoogcruts. The allotment was a small area of around 5 x 35 metres and three borders were adjacent to our respective pear, hay and cherry meadow which we called 'the meadow of Offermans'. Because of the enormous explosion, our fields were now covered with debris, such as unexploded and exploded ammunitions, wood, metal, glass, etc. Afterwards, before we could let the grass grow, we had to, Dad and us nine kids, pick up the pieces. We crawled on our knees to pick up inch by inch the remainders of the plane. Everything we thought we could still use such as the screws and wood was put aside for recycling while the rest was buried in a large deep hole. Pieces of plywood were used as fuel for the stove. We were brought up to be mindful of reusable parts and of course the depravations of war helped to encourage this (the Translator notes that the last year of the war was one of the coldest on record!).

What I remember vividly is that we found bits and pieces of remains near the plane. I will never forget finding part of a glove in which there were fingers and a thumb. My first thought was to look for a ring and hopefully a name engraved on it, but no ring was found so we didn't have a name either. Father believed that we should bury the remains for the time being and we did. Under a pear tree, a liegipond, we dug a small grave and buried the remains respectful of the sacrifice the men had made. We weren't



put off or scared of the remains, the opposite, we were in awe of those men who had died for our freedom. Together with Dad, we made two white crosses for the grave as two people had laid down their lives. With wire and wooden poles the gravesite was marked off so the cattle could not reach it. After several years, the remains were dug up and taken to the British and Commonwealth Cemetery in Venray.

After a few months, the British Military came to fill in the crater with earth. The blades of the propeller with the bent blade stood over the place of the crash for a long time. After a few years, the site was dug up and the debris taken out. Then a few years later, they dug it up again as a 120kg unexploded bomb was found. After a while, the crash site was finally filled in for good. Over the years, a lot of the salvaged bits and pieces have been lost, especially in the fire of 1974.

The last few reminders I managed to salvage was a high pressure cylinder (maybe an oxygen tank) a few gear pieces, discs, wooden screws, etc. The copper cylinder I tried to clean up a bit to make an ashtray from. This collection of, what others might see as rubbish, is in fact, a silent witness to the terrible events which took place in our skies between 1940 and 1945. (The Netherlands were invaded in 1940, so did not directly enter the war in 1939.) There were as many air raid alarms during the day as there were at night. When the Allies flew to Germany, they flew in V formation of 7 – 9 aircraft, hundreds at a time. Around them there were fighter planes to protect them and they would get into dogfights with German fighter planes. In between, you could see black smoke from the German anti-aircraft guns. Many times, aircraft would just explode in the air. The bombers gave off a lot of smoke before that happened, often we saw like white clouds in between the black smoke, which were aircrew that managed to get out of their plane before it crashed.

Once I saw a plane crash onto another plane so both crashed. Many crashed in a straight line or at an angle; others exploded in the air or circled like a corkscrew down to the earth. If the dogfights were right over our heads, our parents made us go into the air raid shelter, which father had built with the neighbour. The air raid shelter was on the spot where now our house stands. Terlinden (Terlindener straat) 9. What we kids hated most was having to get out of bed when the fights were in the middle of the night, pull on our clothes, go downstairs and run to the shelter. The smallest children would be carried under one or two arms and half the time only woke up in the shelter.

Harrie and I tried to see, for us, the exciting fireworks half the time. A bomb straight on our shelter would have killed all of us, but of course, shrapnel and bullets would not have reached us in the shelter, so it was safer. On several occasions we found shrapnel in our attic and the woods near us. Often we found metal with sharp edges, shrapnel the size of a chicken egg. When roof tiles were broken, we also found shrapnel.

Therefore, those who see this remainder of a plane, don't throw it away, but keep it safe as a silent witness of the terrible historic event which was witnessed by our whole family.

With thanks,
Mr V. G. A. Slenter,
Terlinden, 2011



Kenneth Goldthorpe's Commemoration

SHARED EXPERIENCES

Love at First Flight George Stewart DFC

By the gate of No. 60 Night Intruder O.T.U., at High Ercall, Wellington, Shropshire, England, on Tuesday 31 August 1943, with my 249:40 total flying hours, I'm 19 years old and about to fly Mosquitoes. YIPPEE!!!! It's all ahead for me!!

Months earlier, on 19 February, I was credited with two aircraft destroyed, quite a feat for a young man. Unfortunately, they were ours, so my score didn't count! My Instructor explained that they counted only enemy aircraft scores (*such a pity*). Only three more, and I'd have been an Ace!

All those years ago now, but I'd love to do it all again, only this time I would like you to come with me, meet the Mosquito and enjoy some wonderful flying. First, imagine yourself as that famous artist Frank Wootton, at his easel, painting at a WWII Squadron, with all the trappings that give life and time to the art. Aviation Art has been wonderful for aspiring aviators and enthusiasts over the years, firing up interest since flying began. It also livened up our Training Manuals where a picture was '*worth a 1,000 words*', and how about The *Aeroplane* and *Flight* magazines which we looked forward to each month in the Officers' Mess? Who can forget TEE Emm and P/O Prune?!?!? Just where would we model builders have been without your wonderful illustrations and inspirations to guide us?

Canadian Warplane Heritage does fine work preserving the memories of WWII, featuring the aircraft and people who helped make that history. We have been blessed with a steady stream of visitors from the start, with new exhibits arriving regularly. We've got a terrific reference library and the CWH 'Store' is second to none. Our capable staff and volunteers work hard to keep up this high level of interest. Many groups host special events here, to our mutual benefit. I am a life member of CWH (*at the beginning, I was 13th to join*), I've had the thrill of flying many of the Museum aircraft, and have checked out several Pilots wishing to fly them.

Flying Mosquitoes on Ops had its thrills too (*at times more than we'd bargained for!*), and it gave us a great appreciation of their worth. We respected them highly, flying them in their operational role, and also had tremendous admiration for the brilliant designers and craftsmen (many of whom were cabinet makers), who built our '*Wooden Wonder*'. Most other aircraft of that period were made of precious aluminium, so the Mosquito project didn't affect that supply. It was a 'win-win' situation, and used a whole industry not taken up in war work. They did a superb job, adapting the Mosquito to its various roles, and its wooden construction withstood battle damage well, very often easily repaired.

But let's go through the gate at High Ercall and begin!

Squadron Leader Phil Russell greets us once we are seated in the Briefing Room:

'Good morning Gentlemen, and welcome to 60 O.T.U. You are Course #6, and will be with us for three months to train for your operational role as Night Intruder Pilots. You'll likely fly about 75 hours here, plus several hours in our Link Trainer. After a few days here in Ground School, you'll start flying. You will be divided into two groups, so we can juggle flying times, etc. effectively. You Navigators are qualifying too and you will soon 'crew-up'.

Initially, you'll spend your time getting used to the aircraft, flying around England, then, with your Navigator, do cross-countries using GEE and night conversion. Following that, you will go

away for a Gunnery Course, and when you return, finish up with flying that will simulate your night intruder role. You'll then be sent to Squadrons and begin your tours.

As Squadron aircraft are replaced with newer models, the old ones are put out to pasture to fly out their remaining days in Units like ours. This will give you a first-hand appreciation of the progress made as you compare flying older MKIIs with our latest MKVIs (which you will fly on Ops). I think you will find the Mosquito quite manageable with your various flying backgrounds. The weather in Canada and other countries you have trained in, is very good if you compare it with the UK and Continent; so expect to fly under marginal conditions over here, and also be prepared for flying to be scrubbed quite often. But on a more positive note, what better time could you find on those days, than to take advantage of our all-weather Link Trainer? I'm sure that you'll love the Mosquito as much as I do. Any questions?

We would be given surprisingly little dual to check out on the aircraft, actually even less, because we didn't do touch and go landings. Our Mosquito used up far too much runway to allow us to clean up, re-trim, and 'Go', so we had to taxi all the way back around the airfield for each take-off. This resulted in way fewer circuits per hour. But then, we aircrew arrived with a known background from the BCATP, so a quick 'check-out' was expected of us. The main purpose of O.T.U. was to prepare us for our operational role: 'Night Intruding', and Bomber Command requirements were always changing so we had to adapt as they came up with new ideas. Our aircraft, and to a degree, we aircrew, were expendable. Everyone just had to get on with the job and the demands of war. That said however, nobody could take away from me the pure joy which flying the Mosquito gave me. For some pilots, it was just a job. But for me, it was the satisfaction of a raging hunger which filled my entire being!!

Looking back at my hours flying them, I remember several were spiked with excitement. I think of them as '*Mosquito Moments*' and they stand out as my tale unfolds.

The Mosquito, still a bit of a mystery in those early days, made us even more curious about its legendary speed, power, armament, and diverse roles; so the few days we spent in Ground School were very interesting as we learned about it. First, of course, they taught us the basics: Wingspan of 54' 2", two Merlin 25 Engines, each having almost 1700hp, swinging 12' diameter Props, and the Mosquito had a 50lb Wing Loading. It weighed over 11 tons. Our version, the MkVI, had four .303 machine guns, over four 20mm cannons all nested closely together creating a devastating concentration of fire. At times, we carried two 500-lb bombs. Also, our fuel load ranged up to 716 gallons. So, not surprising, our stalling speed was 130mph, and single-engine safety speed started at 170mph or more, depending on our load. We were given a copy of the traditional blue 'Pilot's Notes', thinner than the manual you'd get today for your doorbell; yet it held all the information we needed to know. Strangely, they omitted any horsepower reference, just quoting engine numbers and operating limits, etc. I was '*chomping at the bit*' to get into the air and finally, on Sunday morning, 5 September 1943 ... I began!!

My Instructor was F/O Satchwell.

Out at the airfield, we stood beside this beautiful, but sinister-looking '*dead-black*' monster, a MkIII Trainer (adapted from the fighter-bomber version). I went up to it and gave it a little shove, rapping it with my knuckles. It was as hard and rigid as concrete, unlike the Tiger Moth which you could wiggle with two fingers. (*It scared the pants off me, and that alone is scary enough!!*) After a quick walk-around, F/O Satchwell climbed up the tiny ladder, pushing his parachute ahead of him, through the small door in the fuselage, over the right seat, settling down in the left. I followed him up, strapped myself into the right seat beside him, and put on my helmet. Our Ground Crew had folded up the collapsible ladder and reached it up for me to stow in the

door rack. He then walked under the starboard engine and gave it the required shots of prime, came out front, and gave us thumbs up for start, and went over to do the same for the other engine. F/O Satchwell called out: *'Contact Starboard'*, and pressed the starter and booster coil buttons together for the right engine. It roared into life. WOW!! What a noise!!! Our man then rapped the side of the fuselage with the back of his screwdriver (the noise level was too high for voice), signalling that it was okay to start the port engine; which we did. After we were running smoothly, he disconnected the battery-cart, and we turned on our generator and radio switches and were ready to roll, waving the chocks away. Now alive, this 11-ton 'slug' became like an eager racehorse. He waved us out onto the perimeter track and we pranced around to the run-up position. Cleared for take-off by the Tower, after the pre take-off check and run up, we taxied onto the runway. He eased his throttles ahead, leading slightly with the left to counteract torque, at the same time pushing the control column fully forward as we rolled. He was keeping straight with coarse rudder, but instantly ready to use brake if required. The tail came up at about 70mph, and now with full rudder control we quickly gained speed. At about 100mph, it started to feel lighter, a bit bouncy, and we flew off around 120 to 130mph. He held it down to about 50ft to let the speed increase, squeezing the brakes a jab to stop the wheels, and raised the gear. At the end of the runway, he eased into a climb as the airspeed reached 180mph, and throttled back to 6lbs boost and 2650rpm, keeping it climbing away for the demo, letting the speed ease off to 170mph for max-climb.

This was faster than I used to cruise, so when we reached about 8000ft and he throttled back to cruise, we were going 250mph. WOW!!! He then showed me stalls, steep turns (*'Look at those wingtip vortices, George'*), and let me do some; then single engine procedures, including the reaction when trying to climb out below the SE safety speed. We then flew back to Base for a circuit which was flown at 1500ft. The reason being that, if you were on one engine, the gear would take twice as long to deploy, and the extra height would be used to dive and get your single engine safety speed and raise the gear and flaps if the landing had to be aborted. 800ft on final was the decision point about going around. We were up for 45 minutes, and I was totally impressed. We then went off to lunch. He said:

'We'll fly again afterwards.'

Back at the Mosquito, I climbed in first this time to sit in the left seat (the Command position) and went through start-up procedure to taxi out for my first, hands-on, Mosquito flight. I was amazed at its responses and, although a bit stunned at the realisation of what I was doing, it all went well and we did two hours of circuits. As warned, I was ready for most of the Mosquito's cute tricks and was ever ready to anticipate and correct any swing during take-off, and after landing as the tail came down. The braking system was very effective and successive quick double-jabs seemed to be the best technique. Tired but exhilarated, I taxied back to the flight-line and shut down. He said:

'That went well, George. See you in the morning.'

I was drained but happy and off we went to tea. Monday brought bad weather, however on Tuesday we did an hour and twenty minutes, and after the last touchdown he said:

'Well, George, I think you'd better go up and do an hour on your own.'

I gulped, and said:

'GREAT!!!'

I was totally blown away, being sent off solo with so little dual. But I was not going to argue with him! I had likely flown 12 circuits. He signed me out in a MkII fighter bomber and with an anxious feeling in my gut, I did it!!

Later, I thought: 'WOW!! DID I REALLY DO THAT???' He sent me up again later in the afternoon in a MkIII for more of the same, and for some local flying, and RT Homings. I was in Seventh Heaven!!

Two days later, Thursday 9th, when the weather cleared again, I flew solo for 1 hour 50 mins doing the same thing. By now, I'm starting to get a bit of a swelled head and I just can't wipe the smile off my face. I felt a bit strange after a day off, going right back to flying solo, but my 'butterflies' were tapering off. I was far from feeling like an old hand at this, but I was gaining confidence with each solo flight ... like a kid in a candy store!

English weather kept us down until Tuesday, 14th when another Instructor, F/O Deakin, took me up for an hour's dual on instruments. Then after lunch, F/O Satchwell sent me off again for 1:40 local flying and homings. Wednesday 15th, wet again, but Thursday was great because I met and flew with the young man who became my Navigator.

After landing from a 1 hour 45 min. solo in a MkII, a young Navigator, F/O Paul Beaudet, asked me if he could come up for a ride, explaining that he was left over from the previous Course. My total Mosquito time was about 10 hours. I said: 'Sure', and he would be my first passenger if he felt okay with that. It was fine with Paul, and we went up in a MkII for 2hrs, 50 min. including 30 minutes on instruments. It was a happy flight, both loving the Mosquito. We both agreed immediately to become a 'Crew'. We flew together from that time on.

My 'check-outs' continued with minimum dual, but my night flying check stands out clearly. F/O Deakin had me up the following Monday night, 20th September, for 1 hour 10 minutes, and said:

'Okay, George. That's enough of that.'

We taxied back in. He sent me solo the following night. As I stood by the aircraft before climbing in, in the pitch dark I glanced at the 'Wrekin' (a 1500ft landmark which loomed straight ahead of us, a few short miles after take-off). My knees were actually shaking, and my guts were clenching!! I climbed aboard, strapped in, and started up. Now, with both engines running and the radio turned on, I felt better as I flew my first solo night circuits, and I felt relief afterwards.

Next day, 22 September, I went on Leave and didn't fly again for almost two weeks, on 4 October. Those long intervals between solo flights didn't help my confidence level too much, when each following time I climbed in and flew the Mosquito. However, gradually I was getting used to it, and Paul's company was comforting as well.

That was the end of my dual instruction, except for a couple of demos for air-to-air firing and low flying. Paul and I then concentrated on x-country, 'Gee' navigation flights, as well as practice night intruder trips to Ireland, simulating the same procedures going and returning across the Irish Sea that we would use over the English Channel later on our way to and from Germany.

By the end of our Course, I had about 75 hours on 'type' and was raring to go!!

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THE PEOPLE'S MOSQUITO
To Fly • To Educate • To Remember

'Mosquitos'

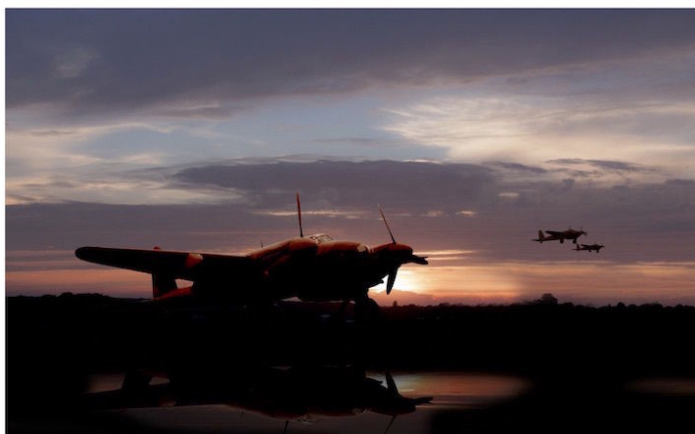
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Legasee Educational Trust works with veterans of past and present conflicts to make sure that their stories are preserved for the benefit of future generations. By interviewing veterans about what they have seen and done during war, Legasee makes sure that the children of today never forget the sacrifices others have made on their behalf.

In partnership with oral Historian Martyn Cox, Legasee is now working on a unique oral history project: *'Spooks, Spies and Videotape: London's Secret War'*, and is looking for men and women involved in classified or clandestine World War II operations so that their stories can finally be recorded for posterity. These filmed interviews will be added to an already unique collection to form an archive of at least seventy other veterans who played vital roles in the Secret War, and which will be made available online as an important learning and research resource.

Vital roles like that played by Captain Hugh Verity, a member of a small group of RAF Pilots who flew clandestine missions into Occupied France during World War II to support SOE agents and the French Resistance. For those who have never experienced war, understanding what it felt like to live through such experiences is enlightening:

'One always feels a little bit frightened, I suppose, when being shot at by a tracer coming up from the ground, or bursting near your aeroplane, it gives you a shot of adrenalin, but generally speaking, one wasn't frightened because one was too busy, you had to do all the Pilot navigation as well as flying the aeroplane, and it kept one's mind pretty occupied ...'

As he explained to Cox, flying at night, mostly in specially adapted Lysanders, Verity completed about three dozen operations. A round trip would usually take about four hours, although he completed a number of pickups that took up to eight hours. Landing strips were marked out by hastily lit torches, while the Lysanders were painted matt black and fitted with a fixed ladder to provide quick access to the rear cockpit. A robust plane, able to land and take off on rough, short ground, the Lysander was especially suited to these clandestine operations. To give it the long range it needed, the aircraft was lightened by removing all unnecessary equipment, including guns and armour protection, making the plane worryingly vulnerable. As Verity explains, the main form of defence for the Lysander was its manoeuvrability at night – and a well-thought-out route. Indeed, the real dangers, according to Verity, were adverse weather conditions:

'The fog would often form un-forecasted and the weather men in England in those days had very limited sources of information on which to base our weather forecasts, and they couldn't always forecast whether it was going to be clear skies or fog on the ground in France, and so there were a number of operations which were unsuccessful because fog was over the target areas. The real killer though ... was mud ... if the Pilot landed off the marked triangle of lights, maybe in an area which was too muddy, he could get stuck. And even if the local farmer was persuaded to bring along bullocks and chain to the Lysander and try to pull it out of the mud, there were a couple of Lysanders that had to be left there and burnt because of mud.'

Often it's the stories of the average man or woman during the war that can bring events of the past to life, such as that which Verity tells of one of the agents in charge of the field where the plane was to land:

'... the agent ... had arrived late for his rendezvous with the Officer in charge of the operation, and he was drunk, and he'd laid the flare path over a ditch so that the Lysander went up on its nose, and had to be set fire to. The Officer in charge was Christian Pineau who was later on, French Foreign Minister, and he decided the agent had behaved so irresponsibly that he ought to be executed on the spot. But he didn't feel like carrying out his own order, so instead, he got the Police Chief in Lyon to get the agent thrown into prison for a non-existent black-market offence.'

It's just such anecdotes from veterans that gives modern viewers and listeners an insight into life in times of conflict. Amid the stories of the adversity of war, of the difficulties of weather conditions and the dangers of clandestine operations, there can also be moments of lightness and, like many veterans, Verity could see the humorous side to things. Like the time his first Squadron Commander, Wing Commander Pickard (*later on a famous hero of Operation Jericho at Amiens prison*), complained that his compass wasn't working properly, taking him too far west, meaning he had had to land down in Cornwall instead of back at Tangmere, or risk running out of fuel. It turned out that 'Pick' had a steel bayonet stuck in his flying boot and had placed the compass between his knees when navigating!

For Legasee's Project: *'Spooks, Spies and Videotape'* the crucial part of Verity's interview is the secretive nature of much of his work. Indeed, taking part in clandestine operations, Verity was usually kept in the dark over who his passengers were:

'We were never told their real names or even their code names, we were only told how many there would be in each direction ... The whole thing was Top Secret, I mean, we had to be very careful ... not even to record in our Flying Log Books the location of the fields we landed on. Everything to do with these operations was treated as being extremely hush-hush.'

What Verity did know is that some of his passengers were FANYs and WAAFs. Often these women would have parachuted into France and the Lysanders were sent in to pick them up. In Verity's opinion, he was *'privileged to bring several of them back'*. Indeed, he was *'amazed that, you know, after perhaps a period of training, they'd go back in again. Absolutely invincible courage.'* Like many veterans, Verity is humble about his work during World War II, preferring instead to turn the attention on others:

'The FANYs were a marvellous asset. I know the FANYs did a marvellous job manning the coded wireless transmissions to the field, doing the coding and de-coding and receiving messages from our agents in the field. So they were a very important part of the organisation.'

Although many veterans feel that their contribution to the war effort was unexceptional, it is in fact the everyday experiences of the average soldier, sailor, pilot, radio controller, driver or submariner that help pupils of today connect with the war effort. Hundreds of men and women were also involved in the secret side of World War II who understandably have kept their experiences to themselves. Now is the time to bring these stories to light, to help expand our understanding of the clandestine aspect of the war.

Captain Hugh Verity died in 2001 at the age of 83. By talking to Martyn Cox before his passing, Verity ensured that his experiences were preserved for posterity. If you would like to speak to Legasee about your experiences, please contact: Martin Bisiker at martin@legasee.org.uk. If you'd like to know more about Legasee and the Secret War Project go to www.legasee.org.uk/oursecretwar. Otherwise, mailing address to Martin Bisiker is: Pill Box, Studio 412, 115 Coventry Road, London E2 6GG. Tel: +44 (0)20 3657 9078



Captain Hugh Verity

* * * *

REMINDER TO ALL MEMBERS:

Geoff West has been kind enough each year to dedicate his time to our Reunion Weekend and recording a DVD as a lasting memory of people and events. These DVDs are an absolute treasure, reaching back to the original Opening Ceremony of the unveiling of the Oulton Memorial, the first meeting in Aylsham Town Hall, and Dedication Ceremony. DVDs are £10 First Class in the UK, available from: Geoff West, Bancroft, The Street, Little Snoring, Fakenham, Norfolk NR21 0HU. Tel: 01328 878501. grwest@btinternet.com **Cheques to be made out to: G. R. West.**

* * * *

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A Quiet Corner

Folks Like You

I have a list of folks I know all written in a book;
And every year at Christmas time I go and take a look.
That is when I realise that these names are of a part,
Not of the book in which they're written, but of my very heart.

For each name stands for someone who has crossed my path sometime
And in that meeting, they've become the Rhythm and the Rhyme.
And while it sounds fantastic of me to make this claim,
I really feel I am composed of each remembered name.

And while you may not be aware of any special link,
Just meeting you has shaped my life more than you can think.
For once you've met somebody, those years they can't erase,
The memories of a pleasant word or of a friendly face.

So never think my Christmas greeting is just a mere routine
Of names upon a Christmas list forgotten in between,
For when I send a Christmas greeting that is addressed to you,
It's because you're on that list of folks I am indebted to.
For I am but a total of the many ones I've met,
And you happen to be one of those I prefer not to forget.

Whether I have known you for many years or few,
In some way, you had a part in shaping things I do.
So every year when Christmas comes, I realise anew
The biggest gift, life can give, is meeting someone like you.

And may the spirit of Christmas that forever and ever endures
Leave its rich blessings in the heart of you and yours.

Shelby Hairston Pilkington

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR:

I would like to dedicate these words to all members of RAF 100 Group Association
for keeping me alive this year: Kindred Spirits, one and all xxxx



Final Postings

Death will be but a pause...

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

Founders of RAF 100 Group Association – remembered in love

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

- 192 Squadron** Macdonald, Kenneth Wynne CD, Colonel, Stan Forsyth's Skipper; died 12 February 2014. Missed by family and all who served with him.
- 192 Squadron** F/Sgt Earl Skjonsberg, mid-upper gunner on DT.O, in crew of Phil James MBE and remembered by him. Died October 2014.
- 199 Squadron** F/O Ed Emmerson, Navigator to Flt/Lt Paddy Passmore DFC, Canadian
- 199 Squadron** Arthur Fitch, former RAF Bomber, died July 2006
- 199/171 Sqn** Group Captain George Cubby, MBE, FRMets died 2005. Remembered by wife Betty and Roy Smith, only surviving member of his crew.
- 171 Squadron** Joe Brogan, Halifax pilot died 2004, remembered by widow Sheila
- 171 Squadron** Arthur Adcock died February 2008 & Syd Love, Canadian crew member, died April 2008. *'Friends to the end!'*
- 171 Squadron** Len Fanstone died 13 January 2010. Missed by Harry Freegard & wife, in touch since his return to Canada in 1946.
- 171/102 Sqn** Ken Ratcliffe Nav/Bomb Aimer died March 8 2010 age 86. Flew Halifax & Lancasters, in touch with crew all their lives.
- 171 Squadron** Flight Engineer Andrew Melvin Robertson died 1998. Remembered by son Colin Robertson, Association member.
- 171 Squadron** Wop/Ag Wilf Thompson died 1991. Remembered by son Peter, Association member.
- 171 Squadron** Warrant Officer Edwin Moore died 15 May 2014. Remembered by son Ian & family.
- 171 Squadron** F/Lt Charles 'Chuck' Warner, Edwin Moore's pilot, died 6 July 1965.
- 157 Squadron** Bryan Gale Flt/Lt died 2 January 2009. Missed by daughter Valerie & son Chris
- 169 Squadron** Fred Herbert, Navigator/Radar, died 15 October 2010, remembered by friend colleague & pilot John Beeching
- 169 Squadron** Flt/Lt Bert Vine, former Navigator of Sqdn/Ldr. James A. Wright, 'A' Flight Commander, both no longer with us, remembered by 169 pilot John Beeching
- 214 Squadron** Geoff Liles, Pilot, died 4 March 2006
- 214 Squadron** Mr J Creech died April 2006
- 214 Squadron** Don Austin, remembered by Les Bostock
- 214 Squadron** Air Vice Marshall Jack Furner died 1 Jan 2007
- 214 Squadron** Sqdn Leader/Flight Commander Bob Davies died June 2007
- 214 Squadron** Bill Howard died October 2007
- 214 Squadron** Flt/Lt Blair died Sept 2007
- 214 Squadron** John Hereford, Spec Op.
- 214 Squadron** Robert Moorby W/Op died January 2008. Remembered by sons, Michael & 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 died 6 June 2009
- 214 Squadron** Warrant Officer Gordon Wing, 'Howie', died Nov 2009 age 87. Rear Gunner, Eric Morrison's crew, Stirlings/Fortresses; Founder member of Airgunners' Association.
- 214 Squadron** Robert Louie William Darracott, Navigator, died May 8 2010, 94 years
- 214 Squadron** Flying Officer Reginald Coates completed 2nd Tour of Ops as Bomber Pilot in March 1945. Died 10 Nov 1963. Remembered by son.

- 214 Squadron** Bomb Aimer [Les Bostock](#) in Don Austin's crew died just before Christmas 2010. Remembered by M/U gunner C A Piper, 'Pip'.
- 214 Squadron** [Flt/Sgt George V Cox](#) died 21 July 2011. Flight Engineer in crew of S/Ldr Miller DFC.
- 214 Squadron** Squadron Leader [William 'Bill' Doy DFC](#) died 28 November 2011.
- 214 Squadron** [P/O Peter Witts 223/214/462 RAAF, Air Gunner](#), commissioned after the war. 1925 – 2011. Missed by family and friends, remains in our hearts, a Legend.
- 214 Squadron** [George Fisher, Navigator](#) with No.214 REM & No.206 Squadrons 1942-1946, died 25 Sept 2012
- 214 Squadron** [Flying Officer William 'Bill' Foskett](#) died 21 December 2011. Missed by wife Pauline, 2 sons, 4 grandchildren, good friend Tony Cooper.
- 214 Squadron** 'Doug' Douglas, Tail Gunner on Fortresses and ex POW, died in Nelson, New Zealand, 2013.
- 214 Squadron** [Sgt Gerhard Heilig, Pilot Officer in post war RAFVR](#); died 24 October 2014 in Austria. Loved and missed by wife Sissy, together with all who knew him. A true Gentleman!
- 223 Squadron** [Flt/Lt A E L Morris \(Tony\)](#) died June 2005. Andrew Barron's skipper: Oct 44 – 1945.
- 223 Squadron** [Tom Butler 'Bishop'](#).
- 223 Squadron** [C. L. Matthews \(Les\)](#) Rear Gunner, Peter Witts Nose Gunner in Flt/L Stan Woodward DFC crew before Peter went on to 214 Squadron.
- 223 Squadron** [Arthur Anthony](#), Flight Engineer, died 13 May 2006.
- 223 Squadron** [F/Lt Jack Brigham DFC](#) died 2008. Original Captain as 223 reformed. Flew Liberator TS524/6G-0; 36 ops. Remembered by Len Davies, Waist Gunner, only surviving member of crew.
- 223 Squadron** [F/L/Sir John Briscoe](#) died a few years ago.
- 223 Squadron** [2nd Pilot Mervyn Utah](#), Canadian in late Tony Morris's crew, died 8 Nov 2010.
- 223 Squadron** [James Edward Bratten](#): 26.11.1922 – 6.11.2001. Andrew Barron's crew.
- 223 Squadron** [Mick Stirrop](#) died March 2012.
- 223 Squadron** [Flying Officer Reggie Wade, Navigator](#), died Christmas Eve 2012. Reggie served in the crew of Squadron Leader Carrington, 'B' Flight Commander.
- 223 Squadron** [Air Gunner John McLaren](#) died 31.3.2013, leaving wife Margaret and son Graham.
- 223 Squadron** [F/Lt Navigator Ron Johnson](#) died August 2013. Missed by wife Betty & Richard Forder.
- 223 Squadron** [W/Mechanic Desmond Pye, Ground Crew, B Flight](#) died 3/4 May 2014, remembered by daughter Virginia Cranfield and family.
- 223 Squadron** [Flt/Lt John R. Maunsell DFC, Navigator with Flt/Lt Allnutt crew](#), died beginning of 2015.
- 223 Squadron** [Flt/Lt Robert Oliver Belton, Pilot](#) died 11 January 2015. Remembered by his family with love.
- 23 Squadron** [Flt/Lt Johnny Rivas](#), died 2 January 2013.
- 23 Squadron** [Wing Commander Phil Russell](#) died end November 2012.
- 23 Squadron** 'Bud' Badley, died beginning of 2013
- 141 Squadron** [Flt/Lt Doug Gregory DFC, Pilot](#) died 2015 aged 92 yrs. Missed by wife Liz, son & daughter.
- 157 Squadron** [W/Cdr K. H. P. Beauchamp DSO*, DFC](#), Commanding Officer 157 Squadron, Swannington, died 1996 aged 80 yrs. Missed by son Paul, Association member.
- 515 Squadron** [Flt/Sgt Reg Fidler, Navigator w Townsley crew on Mosquito](#) died 4 August 2015. Remembered in love by daughter Jenny and husband Martin, with stepsons David & Laurie.
- 88 Squadron** [F/Lt Len Dellow](#) died Christmas/New Year 2006-7; veteran of 88 Squadron, 2 Group & Rear Gunner/Wireless Operator on Bostons.
- 49 Squadron** [Len Bradfield](#) died Nov 2005. PoW w pilot Johnny Moss, shot down in Lancaster ED625. Nursed to health by Nora, who he married.

- 462 RAAF Sqn** F/O H .R. Anderson DFC 'Andy' died 6 April 2008 in New South Wales.
- 462 Squadron** Donald Hulbert died October 2009.
- 462 Squadron** Pilot Bruce Drinkwater died 2 May 2010. Peter Witt's Skipper.
- ?** Flt/Lt Eric Atkins DFC* KW* died 22.11.2011. Blenheim pilot with 139 Sqn flying from Horsham St Faith & Oulton in 1940/1. Flew Mosquitoes with 2 Group.
- ?** Corporal Charles 'Fred' Savage died 18 Dec 2011 - Wireless Operator, serving in No. 2 Heavy Mobile W/T Section in France, 1940.
- USAAF 36th BS** Sergeant Aubrey 'Bill' Whitworth, Nose-Gunner for Lt Soderstrom crew died 11 August 2015. Missed and loved by daughter Kim and family and all who knew him.

Dates for your Diary



2015 November Issue FLYPAST – Big articles on Mosquitoes with Ross Sharp of The People's Mosquito having written the feature article including, on page 43, Association member George Stewart DFC on his 'Ranger' sortie to Denmark, 26 September 1944.

2015 Mid-December – **RAF 100 Group – Kindred Spirits by Janine Harrington**, published by Austin Macauley, bringing together the voices of RAF and USAAF who flew in partnership.

2015 31 December – **RAF 100 Group 1942-1944: The Birth of Electronic Warfare by Janine Harrington**, published by Fonthill Media. Foreword by George Stewart DFC.

2015 31 December – Membership subscription of £15 due!!

2016 February – Spring edition of magazine with full Reunion programme.

2016 REUNION – Friday 6, Saturday 7, Sunday 8 May

NORWICH HOLIDAY INN, Norwich North for main Saturday evening dinner 7th May 2016. 10 rooms have been put aside on first come first served basis. Cost of 3-course meal is £25. Rooms are £80 B&B.

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

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

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

* * * *

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We are grateful for their contribution and interest

100 Group Order of Battle

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

Created by Janine Bradley

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for continuing to support our Association in the printing of this magazine:
Tracey & David Mortimer, Prontaprint, Scarborough, North Yorkshire

