



Confound & Destroy

The magazine of RAF 100 Group Association

SPRING
2022



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Home to Memorabilia of RAF 100 Group

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EDITOR'S PAGE



Hello Everyone,

It is said that there are three things that are constants, three things that you can pretty much guarantee in life: Death, Taxes ... and Change. I wanted to let you know of some changes in personnel at CNAM and acknowledge the great contribution and oversight of Colin Kerrison, who has stepped down from his responsibilities of Chair on the CNAM board and together with Graham Hall, who also has moved on, we would like to express our appreciation for their roles in making the City of Norwich Aviation Museum just outside Horsham St Faith, the tremendous success it is today.

Your Committee met via 'ZOOM' just recently and after some discussion looking at the current situation in Britain, the decision was made to meet again this coming May in Norfolk – so the Reunion is **ON!** We have missed the last two years and the thought of cancelling yet again ... well it was not an encouraging one!

That does not mean we are out of the woods yet as far as Omicron or other Covid variants are concerned, and a change in circumstances may mean accepting the need to make some last-minute changes and alterations to those plans. We need to be mindful of what is happening, be flexible and see how things go. But we do have a plan and we will for our part try to make it work – as much as we are able. So, please bear with us as we work out the logistics of meeting together once again in a sensitive, sensible and safe way.

We have very sadly lost five of our Veteran family since August:

- Mr Bernie How who served with 199 Squadron out of North Creake
- Mr Peter Woodard serving with 192 out of Foulsham
- Mr John Lyall (Perth Western Australia) serving with 214 out of Oulton
- Mrs Barbara Bradshaw also served with 214
- and Mr Murray Peden (Canada), also with 214 Squadron.

The numbers of our elderly Veteran family are sadly thinning more noticeably now, but I am both encouraged and thankful to know that there are a handful who are continuing to hold up pretty well considering.

And to all our elderly Veterans; I want to take this opportunity to personally pass on my **warmest greetings** to each and every one of you. You are all very special people. I owe many of you an up-to-date letter, too, so keep an eye on the mailbox in the next few weeks.

And I see in our News today that Britain, France, Ireland, the Netherlands and very soon Finland have already or will be shortly, ending the widespread restrictions on their citizens.

As I write this, we still have mask mandates here in Western Australia and our borders remain firmly closed, with no hint so far when they might re-open. New Zealand's borders were until today also firmly closed, which means that my younger sister and I still cannot attend Mums funeral tomorrow (Friday 4th February). We at least we will be able to watch it on 'Livestream.'

The Reunion this year is one bright spot on the horizon. I sincerely hope that this one will be the catalyst for Reunions to continue in the years to come.

It certainly *will* be an 'interesting year,' of that, I am sure. I know that many of you are Church goers and many of you are not. But whether you read this and agree or not, I know there is a place for faith, not a blind unreasoned faith, but one that is intelligent, reasoned, informed, considered and one that anchors hope. That goes hand in glove with an unshakable confidence that Someone far greater than us, knows what is going on and knows what the future holds.

We live in a time that calls us look around and to think, and to think deep. So, my encouragement to you is this; don't allow fear to win, but to look to where true hope can be found. Fear or faith? I know which one I would rather embrace.

Take care and stay safe.

Stuart.

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***Or, if you would like to reach me at my personal email
you are most welcome to do so. You can contact me at:***

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**For those of you who have been writing personally to Janine,
please continue to do so at her home address in Filey. Thank you.**

Membership Subscriptions are now due ... please

CHAIRMAN'S LETTER



Dear Friends,

A new year brings hope of a fresh start. Perhaps in 2022 we may emerge from the Coronavirus pandemic which might have been as lethal as the 1918 Spanish Flu save for modern medicine, especially vaccines.

I write on the day your committee decided to press on with the May Reunion after a two-year hiatus. I hope many of you will be able to join us this year in Norfolk. There will be minor changes to the programme. Having listened to member suggestions, we have moved the Foulsham event from Friday afternoon to Saturday morning. The Oulton ceremony will be before lunch which will then be held at the refurbished and extended City of Norwich Aviation Museum. The AGM will be at CNAM in the afternoon.

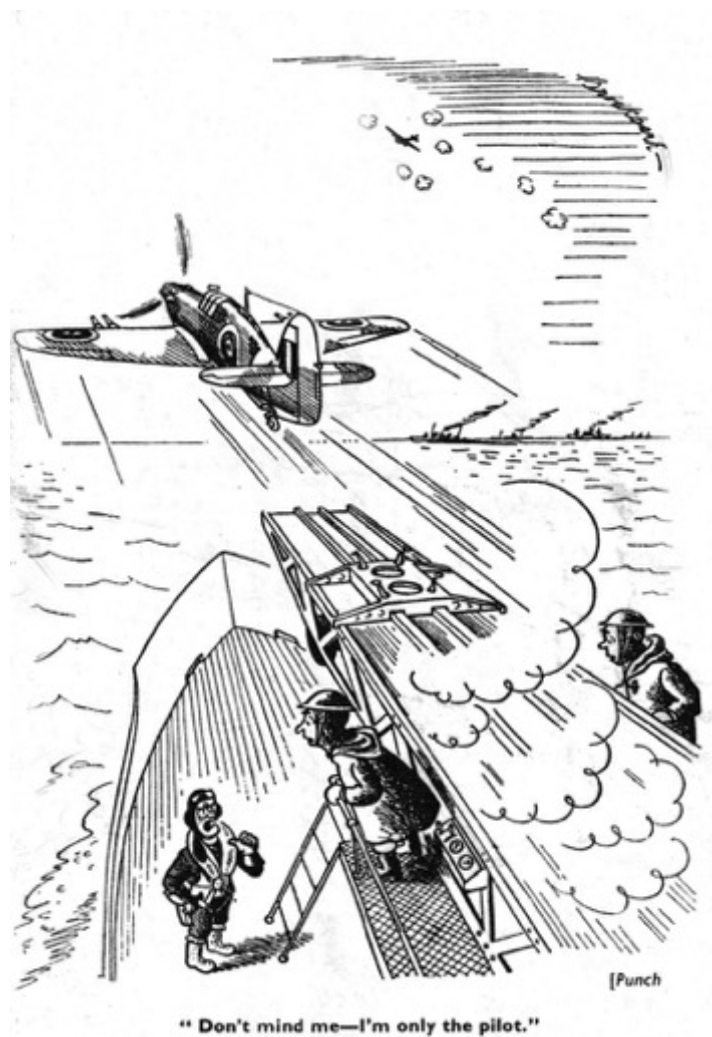
One positive of the pandemic has been widespread use of video calls. We are no exception with the Committee adopting Zoom courtesy of the Treasurer. This change is a welcome improvement in our ability to manage and develop the Association. When I joined the committee, there was one hurried meeting per year in a noisy corner of the 'Plough Inn'. This evolved during 2021 when we held four meetings with full agendas. These have been highly successful despite the time zone challenge. At 2 p.m. in the UK it is 10 p.m. in Western Australia and 9 a.m. in North Carolina which allows all of us to be present (virtually) – Stuart has a long day whilst Stephen Hutton had an early start!

The involvement of 36th Bomb Group in our Association reminds us of the important contribution of the US Air Force to the war effort. This month we have been reminded of Canada's role by the sad passing of Murray Peden Q.C., D.F.C. who served with 214 Squadron piloting a Short Stirling then transferring to the Flying Fortress. Murray reached a great age (98). Following the War, he had a very distinguished career in the law becoming a Queen's Counsel. He was also a considerable author. I have quoted from his book 'A Thousand Shall Fall' in a previous letter. He was a fine example of his country and extremely fortunate to survive the war.

We are often reminded that of the 125,000 who served with Bomber Command, 55,573 were casualties. A loss rate of 44.4% was comparable to serving in the trenches of World War One! The Bomber Command Museum of Canada's best estimate for the number of Canadians killed while serving with Bomber Command is 10,250. These numbers include 379 Americans who were serving in the RCAF, but do not include Canadians in the RAF - one of whom who survived, being Murray Peden.

Anniversaries can be important reminders. This year we celebrate Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth's Platinum Jubilee. In recent years we have observed anniversaries of the Battle of Britain, D Day and VE Day. Next year 2023 will be the eightieth anniversary of the formation of 100 Group. I believe we should start thinking about how we might celebrate our own important anniversary.

I reported in the last magazine that the nearby Talkin Tarn Amateur Rowing Club had agreed to name a boat after my father. Here is a photograph of me pouring traditional tarn water over the Bow. My father would have complained about wasting good champagne!



LETTERS PAGES



I want to express my thanks to those of you who have written over the last few months but asked that your letters not be printed. It is always good to hear from people and your correspondence is appreciated.

We are part of a special RAF 100 Group family of people who are scattered all over the World, with the same goals and aspirations of keeping alive the Wartime memories of those who served within this unique Organisation.

That is, considering today's situation and climate, quite remarkable.



Sir,

For my private research on the RAF night raid in the night of 1 to 2 May 1944 on a marshalling yard in my hometown Mechelen (Malines is the French translation), I'm looking for more information of the involvement of the 100th Bomber Support Group in that night round Mechelen.

As mentioned in the ORB's of 100th Bomber Group Squadrons like the 214 Squadron B17 F Fortress II SR388 BH-U, the Halifax III LW614 DT-T of the 192 Squadron, the Mosquito's F II of the 141 Squadron which are given as protection of the Bomber stream to and out of the target.

So, my question is, can the 100th Bomber Group Association help me with more information on this mission of the group around Malines on that night, like equipment, crew etc.

I am also looking for information on the crash site of the 10 Squadron Halifax HX347 ZA-Q in the same night. The crash site is given as Eppegem, but German, British and Canadian official sources give Braine L'Alleud as the crash site. Sgt Burton speaks in his report that the order to leave the plane was given and he landed in a garden at Braine L'Alleud.

With late seasons greetings and thanks beforehand for every information and help to my research.

Regards,

Jean-Pierre Vanhoof

jean-pierre.vanhoof@telenet.be

Jean-Pierre is making some progress in his research already, but is there someone who might be able to shed more light on the events of that night back in 1944 over the town of Mechelen? If you know something that will be of assistance to him, please feel free to contact him directly.



Hi Janine & Stuart,

Hope you are both keeping well.

For your info I've placed a wreath on the Bomber Command Memorial at Green Park for the 100 Group Association and my late grandfather. I'm the eldest grandson of Stanley Forsyth DFC. You'll know me from past Reunions. Few photos attached, all ready for Remembrance Sunday.

I have done this for a number of years bar last year, when my father, Stanley Forsyth (junior), passed away around same time.

Please accept my best wishes and promise, I'll do this every year going forwards.

Take care

Iain Forsyth



Iain, many of us have the fondest memories of your Grandfather Stan. He was someone very special and we thank you and your Family for what you are doing to publicly honour him. Yes, we honour the memory of all those who served with RAF 100 Group, but your Grandfather Stan was very dear to many of us. He will not be forgotten. *Stuart.*



Hello Stuart,

How very sad I was to recently learn that RAF 100 GP 214 Squadron pilot Murray Peden, had passed away. What such a fine man and great example of dedication to duty, courage, and heroism.

His book 'A Thousand Shall Fall,' has been hailed as being one of the very best accounts ever written about the air war. I see where former RAF Air Marshal Sir Arthur Harris in writing to Peden wrote:



"I have just finished reading your book – in fact I found it hard to put down. I consider it not only the best and most true-to-life "war" book I've read about this War, but the best about all the wars of my lifetime – from the Boer War onwards."

In the past I was most fortunate to have Murray assist me and add his input to my Unit history book 'Squadron of Deception - The Story of the 36th Bomb Squadron In WWII.'

During WWII he was a friend to the airmen of my father's 8th Air Force 803rd Bomb Squadron, which later became the 36th Bomb Squadron that performed radar countermeasure missions.



And you Stuart were blessed to have visited Murray and spend some quality time with him after your stay with us here in the States back in October 2018. Surely a memorable and wonderful experience for you then!

In closing, May God Comfort and Bless his family this day and All the days forward. Rest in Peace Murray! Our lives are richer, our paths having crossed!

Most sincerely,

Stephen Hutton

Thank you, Stephen, for the photographs of Mr Peden.

Escape to Victory: Memories of Swannington

**Kaptein Sven Heglund DSO, DFC & Bar, War Cross with Two Swords
(Norway) and the Legion of Merit.**

**Written by Mike Hillier,
RAF Swannington**

At the outbreak of World War Two, men and women from many parts of the world sought many ways to make their way to Britain and join in the fight against the Luftwaffe. It is well documented that most were from the Commonwealth countries, such as Canada, Australia and New Zealand as well as the smaller islands of the Caribbean; however, there were also those from countries outside of the Commonwealth and these included the USA and Ireland.

Many were from countries which had been overrun by the power of German forces, from both the land and the air and these countries included Poland, Czechoslovakia and France among others.

Throughout World War One, Denmark, Sweden and Norway had remained neutral to the war that raged throughout the Continent of Europe and when World War Two broke out, it followed that those same countries would once again state their neutrality.

It was on the 9th of April 1940 during "Operation Weserubung", that Germany invaded Denmark and Norway, but since Sweden, although neutral had prepared for war, it was not attacked and therefore remained neutral. It took only a few days for the capitals of both Denmark and Norway to be captured by the Germans, and so come under the ruling of the Reich.

Although British troops had landed in the northern part of Norway to form a British, French and Free Polish task force, it was in the first week of the following June that they were totally overrun by the enemy and had to withdraw.

King Haakon VII of Norway, who by this time had fled to England aboard HMS Devonshire, surrendered his country to German occupation on the 9th June. He had refused to abdicate and to accept Germany's demands to legitimise the Quisling Regime Government. By this act of defiance, he united the Norwegian people in their resistance to the German invasion.



Although Norway was now under the rule of Nazi Germany, many Norwegians fled the country, seeking safety in neighbouring Sweden. Many Norwegians however, who were qualified pilots, managed to escape, making their way by any means possible to England to join the RAF.

One such pilot was Sven Hegland, born on the 10th December 1918 in the Norwegian capital of Kristiania (the name being changed back to its original name of Oslo in 1925).

King Haakon VII of Norway, 1872-1957

In 1939, when serving as a conscript on National Service in the Norwegian Army, he tried to enlist into the Norwegian Army Flight School but was unsuccessful as the deadline for admission to the school had passed. At the end of his time in the Norwegian Army, he travelled to Switzerland to study engineering at the ETH in Zurich, and it was whilst he was studying in Zurich but taking a short break cycling in Italy, that the news of the German invasion of his country reached him. It was at this point he knew he needed to somehow get to England and join the RAF, and fight against those who had taken his Country by force.

With dogged determination, he contacted the Norwegian Consulate in Bordeaux asking them to help him to get to France where he would try to get to the port of Bordeaux. When he arrived there, he managed to board the SS Lista which was bound for Portsmouth and although the ship was bombed by German aircraft on the way, it managed to arrive at its destination fairly intact.

It was only when reaching England, that he received the news that the RAF was not taking in foreign recruits, so he and other Norwegians stayed aboard the Lista and sailed on to New York. This journey was itself not without incident, as the Lista was sabotaged on arrival and was beached ablaze in New York.

After arriving in New York, he and the other Norwegians who had travelled with him, learned of the setting up of a Norwegian Air Force base in Toronto, Canada, and it was to there that they set off in the hope of joining up. Once there, they found many Norwegians who had, like themselves, travelled many miles in search of the opportunity of joining the RAF and fighting the Germans from the air.



Initially he attended the Elementary Flight Training School in Toronto where he flew Fairchild 62A's, then to 32 Service Flying Training School at Moose Jaw in Saskatchewan flying Harvard's, and finally onto advanced training back at Little Norway (Lille Norge) based at Toronto Island Airport, flying Curtiss Mohawks and Douglas 8A-5S aircraft.

Once his Flying Training was completed, the then Sergeant Heglund travelled to Britain in July 1941 and joined 59 Operational Training Unit (59 OCU) at Crosby-on-Eden, where he trained on Miles Master aircraft before going on to train on the Hawker Hurricane.

Norwegian airman on guard duty at Little Norway Camp

It was in October of that year that he was posted to RAF Skeabrae on Orkney, flying Hurricane Mk 11Bs with the RAFs newly formed 331 (Norwegian) Squadron which was tasked with escort duties over the convoys at Scapa Flow, as well as giving aerial protection to the Royal Navy base there against air attacks from enemy aircraft.

It was now November 1941, and the Squadron's fleet of Hurricanes IIBs were replaced by the Spitfire Mk IIA's, and just four months later they were replaced with Spitfire Mk VB's.

Within a few short weeks, Heglund was on the move again when his Squadron moved south to RAF North Weald in Essex, where the Squadron's duties involved escorting bombers on their sorties over continental Europe, as well as defending London during enemy bombing raids. Entering action in May 1942, he was commissioned to 2nd Lieutenant in July and although being involved in many incursions, he shared his first victory on the 2nd of February 1943. After that, success mounted

considerably and by June of that year he had been promoted to Captain and taken on the role of Flight Commander.

After spending 3 months at the Spitfire Operational Training Unit (OTU) at RAF Eshott in 1943, he returned to 331 Squadron as the newly promoted Commander of 'A' Flight. During his two years with the Squadron, he had accrued a total of 12 confirmed enemy fighters shot down, together with a further 5 deemed as probably destroyed. In August of that year, Captain Svein Heglund was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, followed shortly afterwards in October with a Bar to the DFC whilst during that month he claimed his 10th victory.

Capt Heglund at RAF North Weald in the winter of 1943-1944

Even though his record as a Spitfire pilot was nothing less than exemplary, in November 1943, he was posted for a rest to RAF Ferry Command on 45 Atlantic Transport Group at Dorval, Montreal. In March 1944 he undertook a twin-engine conversion course at RAF Spitalgate.



In the next six months he made aircraft deliveries across the Atlantic to Scotland, via Labrador, Greenland and Iceland. These included the ferrying of three Mosquitos, two Douglas Boston's, and a B25 Mitchell Bomber.

His qualities in airmanship had not gone unnoticed, and through the intervention of Wing Commander John "Cat's Eyes" Cunningham, Captain Heglund found himself once again on the move, this time on his way to RAF 100 Group.



It was in October 1944 when he was posted to 85 Squadron at RAF Swannington to fly Mosquito Night Fighters, whose role it was to support British Bomber sorties over Germany and occupied Europe. In fact, he was to be one of several Norwegians on the Squadron, all of whom had fled the grip of Germany's occupation of their country, in order to fight in the RAF.

Capt Heglund completed his tours with 85 Squadron at RAF Swannington, flying with Flying Officer Robert Symon as his Radar Operator/Navigator. Robert, who was an Englishman, after the war became a citizen of the United States. It was whilst Heglund was flying with Robert that he was successful in shooting down three Messerschmitt Bf110's.

Kaptein Sven Heglund

*

On the 4th December 1944 when on patrol over Southwest Germany, Symon obtained a contact on his radar. Heglund reported:

"We had just regained height at 10,000 ft., after investigating Schwabish Hall airfield and were flying on about 260° when, at 20.15 hours, my N/R said he had contact and told me to turn 100° port. Our position then was about 10 miles N.E. of Heilbronn.

Contact was then obtained 6 miles ahead and well below. The aircraft was doing a mild corkscrew on an easterly course, and we came in behind at 4,000ft (about 2,500 ft. above the ground). The aircraft being chased was travelling very slowly – 190 – 200 IAS – and we overshot, recognising it as an ME110 by its square wingtips and 2 fins and rudders, as we pulled to starboard 400 ft. away. Contact and visual were momentarily lost but contact regained and maintained to bring a further visual at 400ft. We were still overtaking, and I lost the visual in making further S turns to lose speed and remained behind the enemy aircraft. Contact was maintained the whole time and finally the visual was obtained at 400ft. and held steady. I fired a 1-second burst obtaining strikes immediately on the starboard engine and wing root. The enemy aircraft burst into flames, lighting up the crosses on wings and fuselage and showing up the radar aerial display on the nose. Enemy aircraft sideslipped into the ground near Rothenberg where it exploded. Time 20.25."

At 20.26 Heglund and Symon set course for Base via the Frankfurt area where several airfields were seen active, but their fuel was low and Heglund had to put down in Brussels where they arrived at 22.00 hrs. After refuelling, the Mosquito took off again at 23.20 and landed back at Swannington at 00.10 hours. Heglund had expended just forty rounds to bring down the enemy aircraft.

Robert Symons adds, *"Captain S. Heglund DFC, who joined 85 Squadron (and his fellow Norwegians) in October 1944, was a delightful and modest young man, who I found later, was Norway's Ace".*

On the night of 1/2 January 1945, Captain Svein Heglund DFC went in search of his fifteenth victory of the War, again with his 85 Squadron Radar Operator/Navigator, Flying Officer Bob Symon. They were airborne from Swannington at 19.55 hours for a High-Level Support Patrol north of Osnabruck.

Heglund reported:

"After having patrolled beacon in Munster/Osnabruck area without any contact we set course for Hannover and arrived just as the target indicators were sent out. We got a contact, which we chased in a westerly direction for 20 minutes with everything pushed forward. We got a visual of exhaust flames which looked like a Mosquito and took it for one of the Pathfinder Force and turned back towards target.

At 22.23 hrs we got another head on contact north of Osnabruck and turned in behind it. It was slightly above, and we closed in to about 2,000 ft. when my operator lost contact owing to scanner trouble. We made one orbit and picked up contact again at 4 miles' range. We closed in again and got a visual of a Me110 recognising square wings and twin fins and rudders.

As we were slightly overshooting, I weaved underneath the enemy aircraft keeping visual contact all the time. At 500ft. range I pulled up behind it and gave it a short burst, which caused an explosion in the fuselage. Lots of smoke and debris was flying off and the enemy aircraft continued flying straight and level. I rather think the crew was killed right away. I fired another burst which missed and noticed small explosions going on all the time. The third burst put enemy aircraft well on fire and it crashed on

the ground with a large explosion at 22.30 hrs. We got two more contacts afterwards, which turned out to be Mosquitoes and then set course for base."

It was Heglund's fifteenth and final victory of the war. He finished the war as the top scoring Norwegian pilot with fifteen and one third victories. And to add to his DFC and Bar, he was awarded the Distinguished Service Order medal.

***Taken from the book 'Mosquitopanic' by kind permission of the author, Martin Bowman. Reports also were taken from 85 Squadron's Operational Record Books.**

Captain Heglund was one of many from the Royal Norwegian Air Force who flew with 85 Sqn at RAF Swannington, most of whom having previously flown with either the RAF's Fighter Command and/or Transport Command before their posting to 100 Group.



In May 1945, and when Germany had surrendered, Sven Heglund was posted to Stockholm as Norwegian Attaché. On the 20th of July 1945, he was awarded the Norwegian War Cross for the second time; he was also awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross twice and the Distinguished Service Order. In September he left the Service and returned to Zurich where he stayed to complete his studies until late 1948. Returning to his native Norway, he re-joined the Royal Norwegian Air Force holding several positions in connection with the Norwegian Air Force's Material Command (LFK). In 1970 he became Chief of Air Defence of the Armed Forces High Command, and in 1974 Head of LFK, a position he held until he retired in 1982, with the rank of Major General.

The first Norwegian decoration Heglund received was The Norwegian War Cross which was awarded *"... for having rendered the Norwegian Defence major services through active participation in air operations against the enemy through a long time."* (Direct translation)

Whilst flying with the RAF, he shot down 15 German aircraft and received recognition for a one-third kill. His score was; 7 Focke-Wulf 190's and 6 Messerschmitt Bf 109's, and as a Night Fighter pilot, shot down 3 Messerschmitt twin engine Bf 110's.

During the war, he met and married Patricia McDowell, a Canadian Nurse. Before their retirement in Oslo, he had worked as a Consultant for the World Federalist Movement, in Civil Aviation Insurance, and for the Civil Aviation Integration Program for the World Bank.

Shortly before he died, he completed his memoir of his time in the Royal Air Force, which was published in 1995 as "Hok over Hok" (Hawk over Hawk). His book was published in Norway and printed in Norwegian; it is believed that the book was translated into English but only one copy exists – and that is owned by his family.

Major General Svein Heglund passed away on the 18th of June 1998 in his native city of Oslo, Norway, aged 79. He had served in the military for 42 years.

(Thanks to Mike Hillier also for the bit of humour on page six!)

Features Section

My Memories...100 Group Airfields of Norfolk

Written by Alan Wood

My fascination with exploring abandoned World War Two airfields was triggered by the first "Lancaster at War" book by Garbett & Goulding as they had photos of long abandoned Lancaster bomber airfields and I became hooked. By 1972 I was making trips from Nottingham to Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, Cambridgeshire, Norfolk and Suffolk to explore and record these airfields that lay within Eastern England.

I came into Norfolk around 1973 to record and explore the airfields and my first visit was to Foulsham airfield. I remember thinking how complete the airfield was with the T2 hangers still in very good condition and the main runway was still in reasonable condition, but above all the control tower was still standing, though somewhat covered in Ivy.



Great Massingham had an unusual looking control tower that was unlike the standard square type on most airfields. It looked more like a villa than a control tower. I don't remember seeing any hangers surviving, but the main runway looked in remarkable condition.



Little Snoring airfield had a beauty all of its own, at the time the main runway was almost full length along with the westerly part of the perimeter track.

The control tower stood in the middle of the airfield surrounded by golden corn looking quite resplendent with its red bricks reflecting the sun.

My partner and I went back to Little Snoring in 2014 and again in 2018 when we went flying over several airfields starting with West Raynham, Sculthorpe, North Creake, Langham and finally flying over Little Snoring itself before landing.

I also went to Swannington, (pictured right) but apart from the Control Tower which then was in a very good condition, there was very little to record.



My first visit to North Creake was around August 1973 and I remember driving up to the control tower which was surrounded by conifers and knocking on the door. I was greeted by an RAF man living with his family in the control tower, so I asked whether I could take photos having explained my interest in war time airfields.

He then invited me in to show me around where upon he asked me if I had seen the murals of the Stirling bomber. I replied that I had no idea there were any murals existing at North Creake. So off we went around the side to some old surviving buildings that were being used for storage. I could not believe what was at the back of the building where two brilliant murals of Stirling bombers stood proud on the wall. The first was EX-N in remarkably excellent condition and the second mural had the painting of the Stirling flying away from you, though it was in slightly poorer condition but still easily recognisable.



Thanking the man and his wife for allowing me to look round I made my way to the site of the B1 hanger that still had its original cladding. The runways had been removed several years before to help with the sea defences in Wells.

There were still a lot of buildings surviving in the technical site on the side of the road including a fine example of a Nissen hut to the rear of where the new memorial now stands.

I never thought back then that one day I would return to meet Nigel and Claire at the same control tower forty-one year's later to see the complete restoration they have made. Especially considering that I would be staying with my partner as guests in that same building that I had visited so long ago.

We have become very good friends over the last few years and we were honoured to be asked to help with the memorial project. We were on holiday in South Dakota when I had a call from Nigel asking whether John could help with the format of the lettering that would be on the memorial.



I remember the winter nights with large drawings laid across the living room floor whilst sorting out the wording. This year we were able to attend the dedication of the memorial in June along with veteran Bernie How, a Flight Engineer with 199 squadron.



My first visit to Oulton was in 1981 when I was with my parents at a caravan meet on the Norwich Show Ground. I made my way taking with me our Cocker-spaniel dog "Rebel", who accompanied me on many airfield trips over the years and he had an embarrassing addiction to rabbits.

On arriving at Oulton I remember walking the full length of what I think would have been the main runway which at the time was in very good condition. I can only remember seeing one T2 type hanger and the derelict control tower which was used by a farmer for storage.

After many years I was with a couple of friends, and we managed to pay a visit to Sculthorpe. Although we could not get on to the main part of the airfield, as it is still a Military active base, we did manage to record the ex-U.S. airmen's living dormitories along with the murals located in the nursery.

We had to photo the control tower through the wire fencing but at least I was able to record it.



From there we made our way to West Raynham where we were able to explore the site uninterrupted until we came to the Post-war three-storey control Tower, as a man drove up and asked what we were doing. We explained our reason for being there wherein he then took us around the inside of the



Post War Control Tower at West Raynham

tower which gave excellent views across the airfield. About five years later my partner and I went back to meet an ex-army man and his wife who had taken on the job of trying to restore the building to its former glory when in use by the RAF.

By then solar panels covered most of the flying site isolating the tower, Jon and Shell gave us a tour around the building showing us what they had managed to restore. They both seemed positive that in time they would have the tower looking like when in use by the RAF but also as a bed and breakfast place for guests.

Sadly, today most of the airfields are now lost to time either by returning to agricultural, housing, or industrial use. However, some are still visibly recognisable, such as North Creak and quite a lot today have memorials which act as a reminder to never forget the sacrifice made by the men and women who called these airfields their home during World War Two.



The World War Two Control Tower at West Raynham ...

With grateful thanks to Alan Wood for his written memories and photographs. – Editor

Closure and Dedication: Remembrance Day 2021

... by Rod Vowler

Written here is the culmination of 26 years of research and perseverance.

My uncle Leonard Vowler was a Volunteer Reservist who served with 223 Squadron based at RAF Oulton. He was killed in action over Germany on 21st March 1945.

His parents never believed that he had died, as the survivor of the crash said he saw him go out the escape hatch. He was however too low for his parachute to deploy.

The Vicar of Bickleigh, Leonard's home village, would not let his name to be remembered in the church. Eventually he was persuaded as I was able to provide more than enough evidence that my uncle Leonard had died. So, after 26 long years of research and perseverance, we got there in the end.



This picture of me on Remembrance Sunday 2021, reading the dedication to the Memorial Plaque to my uncle Leonard Vowler.

The large brass Plaque on the wall facing me is inscribed with the names of the fallen from the Village who died during World War One. The smaller one beneath is for Leonard.



Left to right; Janet my cousin, Carol my partner, then my brother Alan.



Standing outside the church with the Vicar.

Best wishes,

Rodney.

In Memory...

Dedication to Bernie How

23rd November 2021, All Saints Church, Worlington.

By Nigel Morter



It is an honour to be asked by Bernie How's family to talk about Bernie's wartime experiences, but first, I should probably explain my connection with Bernie.

In October 2011, my wife Claire and I bought the control tower at former RAF North Creak; a station where Bernie served during the Second World War. At the time we had hope, but little expectation of ever meeting a veteran from this station. However, in 2014 we met Bernie when we were invited to an event, organised by the Stirling Society, to celebrate the Stirling Bomber. At first, we thought we were mistaken when we heard this chap say he'd served at RAF North Creak; for a start he didn't look old enough. Explaining that we lived in the Control Tower at North Creak, we quickly hatched a plan for Bernie to visit the Tower after the event. When first at the Tower, Bernie seemed reluctant to reveal more than his name, rank and number, preferring to discuss the nature of our building works, however, when on the roof, I think the tide of memories became too much to resist.

Bernie volunteered for the RAF in late 1942. All aircrew for Bomber Command were volunteers and it's always surprised me that they did volunteer for such a dangerous occupation; the urgency and peril of the situation I imagine. Generally, you hear that the choice between services was governed by perceptions of glamour, adventure or even the attraction of the uniform to the opposite sex (It's often considered that here, the RAF had the advantage), but Bernie was more pragmatic; he told me, "It was only in aircrew that you came back to your own bed". Nonetheless, it was dangerous; it's difficult to

appreciate now that they were volunteering for a job where the majority would not complete their first tour of 30 operations. Indeed, if you commenced your operations in 1943, as Bernie did, you had a 1 in 6 chance of completing all 30. Some were shot down and became POWs, some made it back but were so severely injured they couldn't fly again, but most – *most* were killed.

It is said that out of every 100 who started their first tour you could expect 25 to complete them. Nearly 45% of those who served in aircrew in Bomber Command during the war would die. The worst survival record of any British fighting force in modern History. When Bernie joined-up, they knew most of this, but still they volunteered.

But Bernie did survive, he always got back to his own bed. He officially completed 40 operations (equivalent to one and a half tours), although his logbook outlines 43. This is not to say that Bernie's time in the RAF was without incident; in September 1944 on his 29th operation one before the end of his first tour, he crashed.

Bernie and his crew were in a Stirling – a large four-engine bomber – which needed a high take-off speed of between 80 and 100 mph. Approaching this speed one of the aircraft wheels hit some debris on the runway. The tyre burst, the undercarriage collapsed and down came the aircraft (you need it appreciate, this is a long way down; when parked, the cockpit is 22 feet from the ground). The wing hit the ground and was torn off and as this is where the petrol tanks are located it sprayed fuel everywhere. Eventually, the aircraft came to rest in a mist of airborne debris and fuel with an eerie silence settling.

Having no conception of what this must be like I asked Bernie; he considered the point momentarily and then concluded "Very noisy!" A classic of Bernie understatement. Recovering from the shock, the crew scrambled out as best they could and ran as the aircraft might have exploded at any moment. As rescue raced towards them it was only the pilot that needed first aid as he had cut his head. Pictures of this crash still exist, and you can see what a remarkable escape it was.

This crash was at North Creake, but Bernie had started his operational RAF career at Lakenheath with 199 Squadron before transferring to North Creake with the same squadron and crew in May 1944. As a rule, although with some exceptions, they always flew together. Crews were tight-knit and co-operative. Bernie would never hear of any greater importance being applied to any member of the crew; "We were all vital to the aircraft's successful operation" he told me. They flew together, slept in the same hut, ate together and, importantly, drank together; and he could drink! His crew, along with many from North Creake, drank at the Black Swan in South Creake; the Mucky Duck as they called it. We were always puzzled why they chose the Mucky Duck when there were so many nearer pubs, in reply to this query and with a glint in his eye and a cheeky grin he replied "the Land Girls were stationed next door" – 100 of them apparently. I hope I'm not betraying any confidences.

Bernie was the Flight Engineer in his crew, this meant he was responsible for the running and safety (in terms of mechanics) of the aircraft. He monitored fuel, engine oil pressure and temperatures. He advised when an engine needed shutting down and tried to keep the engines alive in their arduous work. He was constantly switching between fuel tanks and pumping fuel, when needed, to ensure even distribution of the petrol between the 14 tanks. He was a busy man.

This is what occupied him on his milestone operation of the 5th of June 1944. D-Day. Not that he knew it at the time. It was his first Op from North Creake and they knew they were doing something different as they'd been practising for a month. The role of his squadron was to hide the invading forces behind a screen of electronic interference through the use of on-board equipment, codenamed 'MANDREL'.

This was in order that the Germans, who were watching for invasion, could not see them on their RADAR. This was a 'most secret' operation and they had been held back from using this equipment for months in order to preserve its secrecy. It was highly successful in protecting the invading forces, which in turn, changed the tide of the War.

Bernie had huge respect for his crew mates and, particularly, his pilot, but recognising the exhaustion is a feature of war, he told me of their last op. In April 1945, they were flying a MANDREL Screen and then assigned to drop a bomb load. The practice of bombing dictates that when the bombs have gone you fly a wide arc in order to avoid the following bombers. For some reason, his pilot failed to do this and turned instead directly back into the bomber stream. Bernie said that they spent a harrowing period avoiding collisions with the on-coming bombers. When this emerged at the debrief, the Commanding Officer simply told them "That was your last Op." Bernie said, "I've always wondered if he grounded us because he knew how exhausted we were and how unlikely we were to survive another sortie." Characteristically, Bernie held no malice towards his pilot for endangering them, simply recognising that they were all exhausted and that we all make mistakes. A mark of the man.

The crew were quickly posted to different airfields and shortly thereafter peace was declared. Bernie was posted as an Air Traffic Controller to an airfield in Scotland. He told us, "Lucky it was quiet as I knew nothing about Air Traffic Control". Bernie was demobbed shortly after the cessation of hostilities as he had essential peacetime carpentry skills. His war was over.

Through the course of the 8 years we knew Bernie, he helped us understand RAF life for aircrew in a way we could have never understood without his experience. Being the man Bernie was, meant that he came to mean the world to us. When we first started our fundraising programme to raise a memorial at RAF North Creak, it was of course Bernie we asked to cut the ribbon! On asking, we told him it would be two years. He looked himself up and down and, in his pragmatic way, said "I think that will be fine!" In the end, with Covid, it was three years, but he was there, and we are delighted he was.

Bernie became our 'go to' veteran, particularly at fundraising events, so much so that we would worry a little that he felt ill-used. But I think Bernie actually liked the attention; he was justly proud of his and his comrades war record. But he held no truck with the discourse of heroes – "Ordinary blokes in extraordinary times" he would say. I think he was probably right, but nonetheless; Bernie and his comrades defeated the most evil regime ever devised by a human brain. That's what makes him, and his like, exceptional. It is why we'll never forget and it's why *'we will remember them'*.



Tribute to Barbara Bradshaw

Officers Mess WAAF Sergeant, RAF Outlon

*A Personal Tribute to a Dear Friend
...by Janine Harrington (with Stuart Borlase)*



Barbara Bradshaw was a lovely lady. Stuart and I knew her well, and looked forward to our annual visits with her, spending time, sharing laughter and love with her and daughter Margaret living just next door. It was Margaret who presented us each with a miniature hedgehog she'd made out of coloured fabric. She is one of those ladies who is talented and able to create something precious from things other people might throw out. 'Happy Hedgehog', named after one of the characters in the old-time 'Jack & Jill' comics I had in childhood; now sits on my mantelpiece with so many stories wrapped around his small frame. A reminder always of past times shared.

Barb had a treasure-trove of memories which spilled out each time we visited her. Her stories of wartime drew us closer. It was wonderful to hear of her experiences as a WAAF Sgt in charge of the Officers' Mess at Outlon. She also discovered a hoard of photographs from that era, including pictures taken at Blickling Hall during the filming of 'The Wicked Lady' starring Margaret Lockwood and James Mason.

She was a gentle lady, always smiling, yet through her stories you could easily tell she had had to be tough with airmen wanting to see the chart she carried around which told her when they would be flying, and when they would return. Their meals would be scheduled accordingly. In time, she became proficient at counting the number of hours they would be flying to roughly be able to calculate where they were going. So, she was a person who, in wartime, held secrets that she kept firmly to herself.

The Officers Mess at Outlon with two of the Stars of 'the Wicked Lady'.



I think very fondly of her now as I write this, as she finally passed away on the December 21st, just prior to Christmas and a month shy of her 101st Birthday. My deepest sympathies to you Margaret, and your brother John. Your mother will be missed by many, including both Stuart and me, but her name and experiences will live on. Her laughter, her love, is a part of our Today.

Rest in peace Barb. And God bless you, Margaret. Thank you for all you did along with your Mum to make our visits so enjoyable and the little treasures we have today in memory.

*With Love and Hugs,
Janine xx*



Barb joined the RAF in 1940 but wasn't called up until May 1941.

"Funny thing" she said, "you went in as a civilian and came out wearing a uniform. That's all I wore for six years – an RAF uniform".

At the time there were only three jobs open for WAAFs: Cooks, Drivers (but you had to have held a license for two years) and Nursing. The lady behind the desk asked Barb what her best subject at school had been. "Maths" Barb replied! "Oh, that's alright then" said the woman, "you can become a "Messing NCO"!

"I had to do six months in the Cookhouse first. On my 21st Birthday I went on a course to become a 'Messing NCO', which entailed ordering food and other supplies for the Mess, which was quite a stressful job" she said. Barb did this for three years from RAF Coltishall, taking care of the Mess requirements for two Aerodromes. She left with the rank of Corporal.

In 1944, after D Day she thought, "I don't know – I've had enough of this"! She knew a Squadron Leader who was in the catering trade, and she spoke to him about her doing something else. He asked if she would like to go on a 'Messing Stewardess Course' and also approached some of the other Messing NCO's. Their training would be the same as provided to his own people who served in the popular "Tea House" Cafes.

"I came out a Sergeant" she said "and that's how I found myself at RAF Oulton as the 'Mess Sergeant –Mess Stewardess',

"I was a little bit shocked when I got there because it was all Nissan Huts. We were also issued with a bike, which after coming from a Fighter drome that also was a bit of a shock. We used RAF vehicles to get around".

She went on explain that from their Quarters to the Officer's Mess was about a mile away, "so in the mornings we had to jump on our bikes and ride to work"!

There were five of us WAAF Sergeants in one quite small Nissan Hut and after coming from a place where we had our own rooms, it was not ... well ... it was a peculiar sort of feeling really".

"Bomber Command was so much different to Fighter Command. The crews interacted with one another much more than the pilots of Fighter Command did. Officers were completely different. You know, "*I'm an Officer*" sort of thing. With the Ground Crews it was different – but the Aircrew, no. They mucked in with their Flt/Sgt or Warrant Officer or whoever they were flying with – it was a completely different sort of community to belong to. You felt as though you were doing more towards it (the War Effort) than being in Fighter Command".

"The Comradeship was so much different. You could walk past an Officer there and if you didn't salute, he didn't bother! He'd probably just say hi and that would be it, sort of thing"!

Barbs job was to ensure that the Officers Mess ran smoothly, with oversight of the Cooks, the Cleaning Staff and Mess Staff. Looking after the logistics of running the Mess also involved looking after with tired and sometimes spirited crews who came through.

The Dining Hall (Mess) was another Nissan Hut with the Kitchen/Cookhouse attached and an Anteroom which served as a Lounge Room for the Crews. It had soft chairs all the way round, "Rather like an old folks' home today you might say, with some tables and chairs in the middle and a Bar and that was it" Barb explained.

Most of the Crews however were billeted in the Nissan huts, but there were some in Blickling Hall itself, but 6 or 4 in a room even in there. The big advantage there was that they could walk around the grounds although there were two big rooms there which they could use as recreation rooms.

"They flew most nights and were known as the 'Window Boys'. They threw that silver paper out to confuse the radar of the Germans. The whole of 100 Group was a lot like the Pathfinders more or less, they went in and upset things – but with their radio and radar equipment and all that sort of thing."

"We had the Forts and the Libs because we could adapt them better for the equipment than our own aircraft. That's why we had American planes. They were already in action before I got there".

She explained that there were American personnel stationed at Oulton. Two Officers, five NCO's and several others of different ranks who did not fly, but who were Ground Crew working alongside the Fitters and LAME's of the RAF.

"They flew most nights, there weren't too many nights they didn't go. They didn't all go off all together either," Barb said, "they went off at odd times".

There was always somebody on shift in the Officers Mess, particularly through the night. The Crews had a meal before they went and a meal when they came back.

"I didn't have to work at night, but I did work a couple of nights a week especially if they were going on a long trip – and I would wait for them to come back. The girls, well they changed shifts, they were out there every night waiting for them to come back"!

"It is very hard to explain the atmosphere," she said, "because the Crews would be fooling around, and you'd never think that they were going out on a Raid. But you knew that in the back of *their* minds was the thought, well, are we coming back?"

Some of the Crews were very superstitious and carried small mascots with them onboard during Ops. The airfield personnel and especially the WAAFs, knew if there was an aircraft missing. Barb said you could often tell from the Crew of first plane in if there was something wrong – and she said they would count them as they landed so it became very apparent if there was an aircraft late. They would look at one another and say 'Oh' and hope that in the following 24 hours somebody would contact to say that they had landed away and were alright.

Barb went on to say, "They used to say we were hard hearted. Because we could keep up the rapport with them as if nothing had happened sort of thing. And the others used to say, well, you're a hard-hearted lot ... but you had to be! It's not to say we didn't go down and have a good cry after we got home if somebody was missing. You couldn't let them see it. It was like that ..."

The film "The Wicked Lady" starring James Mason, Patricia Roc and Margaret Lockwood and Michael Rennie, was shot at and around Blickling Hall in 1945 with a budget of £900,000! **(The cost of a Lancaster was £75,000 – Ed)** "They did that at Blickling Hall, so we didn't see much of it, but it did cause quite a commotion," said Barb. The personnel from the Officers and Sergeants Mess asked if the Stars of the film could come one evening and join them. Accepting their invitation, Patricia Roc and a number of others came over to Oulton to spend the evening.



Somebody tapped Barb on the shoulder and said “Ok, Bab’s you’re her escort for the night”! A car duly arrived, and Miss Roc stepped out and Barb met her saying “Good Evening, Miss Roc, I’m Sergeant Kerry and I’m your escort for the night”. “Oh I’m Pat” she said “There’s no Miss Roc about it”!

Miss Roc then asked if Barb would like to accompany her to check some of the day’s ‘Rushes’ before heading in. “A lot of us trooped over to the hut that the film crew were using to have a look at some of the shots they had taken that day. If they didn’t like anything, they just cut it and threw it out”!

“We went back to the Mess and Pat sort of got swamped a bit in there, that’s why I had to sort of hold on to her as you might say,” she said with a laugh! “But she enjoyed herself and as we went out, she said, ‘Thank you, that was lovely’ and gave me kiss ... and then off she went!”



Barb was a Star in her own right, another that will never be forgotten.

I chuckle to myself when I remember the times that Barb would ring me at home, asking in her high-pitched squeaky voice, “Is that you Stuart”? It’s hard to imagine that this dear old lady once had a voice that could be heard from one end of the parade ground to the other! Oh, it’s true, believe me!

Barb’s passing still leaves an ache in my heart when I think of her. As it does when I remember with great fondness dear friends that we have already lost – Stan Forsyth, David Butler, Joe Sayers, Peggy Pollard, JP Ostler, Rex Waters, Arthur Reid, Andrew Barron to name just a few. And many others that have meant a great deal to so many.

I grew to be extremely fond of Barb, treasuring her friendship and appreciating her openness in sharing her Wartime experiences with the RAF and especially at Oulton.

Stuart

A Tribute to Peter Woodard

Radio Operator, 192 Squadron, RAF Foulsham



Janine and I visited Peter and his wife Irene at their home in St Albans, around mid-October 2016. We chatted about his Wartime experiences and the following is some of what he shared with us.

Peter and his twin Brother were members of the local ATC, the Air Training Corps, which was about 50 strong in those days he said. Peter always wanted to fly and used to dream about leaving his bedroom window open and then leaping out arms flapping ... and away he'd soar. The funny thing he said, now that he thought about it, that stuck with him pretty much all his life!

His brother joined the RAF and was posted to the Middle East where he did all his training and obtained his 'Wings'. Peter said he didn't want to do that, so ended up at Aircrew Examination in London and when presented with a number of options, told them he didn't know anything about cars (no to becoming a Flight Engineer) and didn't want to be a Gunner, so said he would like to become a Wireless Operator.

He did his W/O course at Yatesbury in Wiltshire, and then found himself up at Dumfries in Scotland for additional training. Posted to OTU Chipping Warden for his Operational training he 'Crewed Up' there. He explained that they were 'conglomerated together' in a hanger in their trade groups and was approached by a pilot, F/Lt Forks and his Navigator F/Off Scott. He said that the F/Lt was quite tall and that he liked the 'cut of the man' and they got on straight away. The three of them then walked over to a group of Air Gunners and "got an Air Gunner. That's all we needed for Wellingtons" he said although he added that "we picked up a Bomb Aimer later". They all clicked together and in the end came on to the Squadron at Foulsham.

His Skipper became the Commander of 'A Flight' and they spent the first few Operations flying up and down the Dutch coast in a Vickers Wellington, looking for the launching sites of the V1's and V2's. The only time he touched the Wireless Communication Equipment was when to report something 'untoward'. He said they watched one time as a V2 left the deck and was on its way to East Anglia. He said, "By the time I had got the message out it, it probably landed!" That was the only time he used

his Wireless Communications because at all other times they operated under WC silence. He used the DFL, the Direction Finder Loops to provide bearings to his Navigator to assist in establishing their position. He thought that the Nav would be asking him for bearings just to give him something to do!! It was Peter said, "otherwise, a quiet life"!

His Crew then converted onto Halifax's and commenced Operational flying over Europe. They used to fly with the Bomber Stream then shoot off at an angle and begin throwing out 'Window', which he said was the Bomb Aimers job, then "scoot back into the stream again, then scoot off at an angle again, and again throwing out Window. It was a bit dicey" he said.

"It was all to do with confusing the Enemy. That and Radio Countermeasures"

"We only saw one enemy fighter throughout the whole time, and we had to do a 'Corkscrew' to evade him, which we did – thank the Lord – of course – on account I'm still here!" he said with a shoulder shaking chuckle!

The majority of the work with 100 Group was 'Radio Investigating' he said. "The 'Special Operator' was a permanent member of the Crew, although we had a different one at times, but our one flew with us the most. He was usually a two-tour man who knew quite a bit about Radio Counter Measures" Peter said. "The 'Rest Position' in both the Wellington and the Halifax was taken over by his special equipment, and this was something I didn't know anything about. I was a radio man, a straight radio man, familiar with my R11 55 and T11 54 Transmitter. That's it"!

The last flight of his Tour was a Raid to Flensburg in Northern Germany, "The last Raid of the War I think."

Peter was a Gentleman, an articulate softly spoken man with a ready laugh, the more serious reflections of the War seeping through to his expression at times while we spoke.

He passed away on September 22nd last year. His wife Irene slipped away just a few days later.



Peter and Irene Woodard with Janine (centre).

A Tribute to John Lyall

214 Squadron Rear Gunner, RAF Oulton.



I met John Lyall for the first time midway through 2018 and ended up visiting a number of times and enjoying lunch with him in the Air Force Memorial Estate Mess, next to the Aviation Museum in Bull Creek, south of Perth.

He was another quietly spoken man with a great Aussie sense of humour and with some amazing stories to tell of his younger days growing up in Kalgoorlie, about 6 and ½ hours east of Perth. It was late 1940 when he and a mate took the train to Perth one day with the aim of joining the Navy. They were told to go home and come back when they were 18!

A bit later in the day they were walking along St Georges Terrace in the city and past the Air Force Recruiting Centre. His friend Ed looked at him and said, “Let’s give this Mob a go. So, in we went as 17-year-old Kids and two hours later came out as Airforce Recruits”! They were placed on what was called ‘Airforce Reserve’, as you could not join under the age of 18 and not without your parents’ permission.



So they went home to Kalgoorlie and the first thing his Dad said to John was, “So, what *did* you join?” John told him and said that he needed his Dad and Mums approval. His Father told him that he “would fix it with Mum ...that it will be ok.”

Later he was selected as a Wireless Operator/Air Gunner and did the Wireless course in Ballarat (he could already do 25 words per minute Morse). After completing the Gunnery course at Sale in south-eastern Victoria he obtained his Half Wing and Sergeant’s Stripes.

Not long after he found himself on a ship heading for the United States and to his surprise, 19 days later he was looking up as they passed under the Golden Gate Bridge!

He eventually found himself in Bournemouth, England, where after two days was posted to an OTU on Wellingtons. On arrival he asked why he was there, mentioning that he was a Radio Operator. "Oh no" he was told, "you're not here as a Radio Operator, you're here as an Air Gunner!" So, John said, "an Air Gunner is where I stayed"!

Crewing up was an experience he was always grateful for. There was an RAF Flight Lieutenant who had seen service flying Hurricanes up in the Orkneys (Northern Scotland) and had been sent to Canada to instruct for two years. When he returned to the UK he elected to go onto 'Heavies'.

On this day he asked if there were any Australians to Crew-Up. Yes, he was told, "We've got one, an Air Gunner." "He's mine," he said. "And that was that!" said John. "Jeff Bray, by this time had nearly 2000 hours and was a very experienced Pilot. I was a very lucky boy for him to have grabbed me. We became immediate, great friends, right up until the day he passed on."



**F/Off Rudi Lang, RCAF 'Spec Op' back row left; F/Off John Lyall Air Gunner RAAF, back row third from left and Sqn/Ldr Jeff Bray Pilot RAF, front row second from right (with moustache).
With thanks to the 214 Squadron Association.**

They went to Stradishall in Suffolk, to an HCU, a Heavy Conversion Unit, converting on to Stirlings. From there they went to Chedburgh, just outside Bury St Edmunds and from there flew their first few Ops. The crew moved later moved up to Downham Market (11 miles south of Kings Lynn in Norfolk). They flew their last Op on Stirlings from there and then because Jeff Bray was a qualified Instructor, they were sent down to the US Eighth Airforce Base at Alconbury in Cambridgeshire to convert onto the B17 Flying Fortress.

Having successfully done that, the Jeff Bray crew returned to Downham Market and with the assistance of a number of Eighth Airforce Instructors, worked to convert the rest of the Squadron onto

the B17. From memory John said they had eight crews converted when word came down from Bomber Command to get ready for Operations.

In the meantime, his crew had picked up two additional Air Gunners and a Special Operator. Their 'Spec Op' Rudi Lange was German born; his family having migrated to Canada when he was thirteen. He came on Squadron with a science degree from the University of Winnipeg and was able to speak 5 or 6 German dialects.

They then moved to RAF Oulton, by which time the whole Squadron was operating. "And," John said, "that's how I came to be in RAF 100 Bomber Support Group!"

Not long after the Squadron arrived at Oulton, he was commissioned and moved into the Officers Mess, which was a Nissan Hut style of structure – right alongside the 'Buckingham Arms'!

"We frequented the establishment quite a bit," he said with a very large smile! They also used to go into Norwich quite regularly as well. Going to the village dance in nearby Aylsham was also very popular and that's where he met the lady who would become his wife, Cynthia.

Cynthia was a Plotter in the 12 Group Fighter Command Control Room at Stratton Strawless, attached to Coltishall. They always knew when he was flying, the Geoff Bray crew often flying in 'A Able', so when 'A Able' was airborne, Cynthia knew that John was in the air. She was on duty on the day when the RAF gently dropped by parachute the spare leg for Douglas Bader, during a bombing raid S.W of St Omer in France, on 19th August 1941.

"I've got a story about Stratton Strawless Hall," John remarked..." It was a beautiful country home, three storeys which has been converted as an Ops Room for the War. It had a flat roof with a Parapet around it. I found out that the young ladies would get up there and 'sun bake' ...



Stratton Strawless Hall in 2018. The building John 'bombed' is on the right.

One day we had to take the aircraft up for a Night Flying Test, so I loaded a carton of toilet rolls. We made a low-level attack and for months, there were rolls and streams of toilet paper in every tree for miles around! Anyway, when we get back to base and there was a message; "Lyall, C. O's Office **NOW!**" So, I front up to Wing Commander McGlynn, walked into his office, saluted and said, "I believe you wish to see me Sir". I had not long been commissioned and I thought I'd really torn it this time.

He was sitting behind his desk with a smirk on his face; he said, “You bloody Australians – get out of here!” John threw back his head and laughed “And that was my punishment”!

“We had many happy times at Oulton. It had beautiful gardens Blickling Hall, and the Lake. And we used to swim in the lake. I enjoyed life at Oulton”.

His tour of Ops (not all with 214 Squadron) extended from September 1943 right through to November 1944, the last trip to Munich on November 26th He did not fly operationally after that but was posted to an OTU at Moreton-on-Marsh as a Gunnery Instructor. Then they called for first Tour crews to go back. He met up with a Skipper from Queensland who asked John if he would go back with him. John said yes, but this time their time was to be on Lancs.

The new crew went to a Heavy Conversion Unit to convert onto Lancaster’s, something that John always wanted to do. They then were posted to 467 RAAF Squadron at Waddington in Lancashire. It was not long before the end of the War and the C.O said them, “What are you blokes doing here? I’ve got crews to burn. I don’t want to see you!”

The end of the European War finished very soon after that. The RAF then formed ‘Tiger Force’, which was to go to Okinawa to hit Japanese targets that “the Yanks couldn’t hit from 30,000ft!” John said they ‘worked their butts off in training’ and even had their embarkation leave at RAF Metherringham whilst waiting for their modified Lancasters to be delivered and the signal to depart.

That signal never came. Instead the news flashed about the dropping of the Atomic Bomb, something that the crews had never even heard of!

The War was over and within a week 467 RAAF Squadron was disbanded and John found himself on a ship heading home. He had left Australia in January 1943 and finally arrived back in Fremantle in late December 1945. John passed away peacefully on 25th October last year, aged 98.



**John Lyall standing next to the Rear Turret of the Lancaster
at the Aviation Heritage Museum, at Bull Creek, south of Perth, Western Australia.**

A Tribute to Mr Murray Peden

DFC, MiD, BA, LLB, QC

French Legion of Honour



Standing at the Podium alongside her brother John at their Dad's funeral, his Daughter Laura reflected on the many titles he had throughout his long 98 years; Son, Husband, Dad, Granddad, Great Granddad, Lawyer, Author, Musician, Photographer and World War Two Bomber Pilot. He excelled in each of these roles.

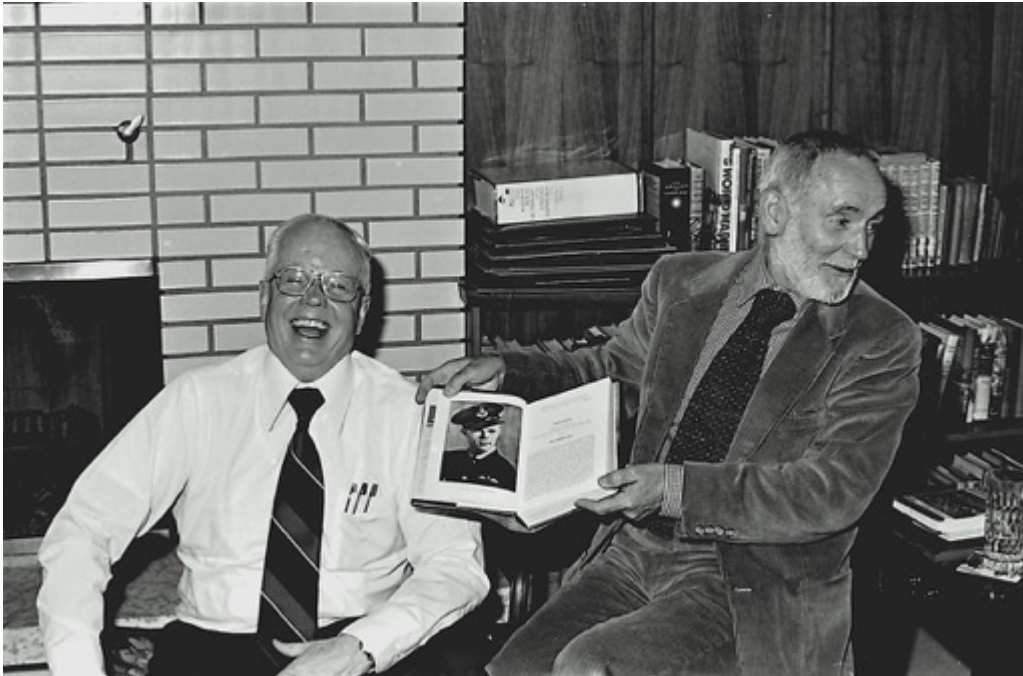
"One of Dad's most distinguished attributes" Laura said, "was his intelligence and memory". Being a bit of a night owl, it was common for him to stay up late, often working on trigonometry problems till two or three in the morning. "That was his idea of fun," she added. "He had a thirst for knowledge that was never quenched".

At aged 95, he received a gift from his Grandson Andrew of an 1100-page biography of Ulysses S Grant, which he read from cover to cover! He studied the American Civil War for many years, reading extensively on the topic; his interest in this aspect of military history being so keen, that some years ago, "when I was nine," Laura added, he even took his family on a tour of the American Battlefields.

"Dad had a committed work ethic but also understood how to enjoy life" Laura said. He had many hobbies and interests over his life including fencing, photography, skeet shooting, duck and goose hunting and fishing; he was a voracious reader and really enjoyed listening to many different genres of music including classical, bagpipes, brass bands, opera and Kenny Rogers!

For many years, all his spare time was spent writing. He authored three books; 'Fall of an Arrow', 'A Thousand Shall Fall' and 'Harken to the Evidence'. "The writing of 'A Thousand Shall Fall' was a milestone for Dad, that continued to shape his life for long after it's writing" Laura said.

"Dad took great pride in answering emails from Readers of his books. His correspondence was always timely, personalised with eloquent descriptions and meticulous wording. He made a vast number of friends as he willingly answered all questions about his books to anyone who contacted him."



Murry Peden sharing a very funny moment with George Mackie.

The value of a friendship was very much a top priority for Mr Peden and he had long time friends from all over the world. Laura shared how she came across a letter written back in 2008 from an old friend of her father's. It was written by the brother of her Dad's closest friend in flying school, Wilma Plate, who lost his life on his first solo night flight. Because of the friendship between the two pilots, the Airforce chose Murray to accompany Wilma's body back to his home State and he was able to share with his Francis family, not just additional details about the crash but about the character of the young man that Francis had become.

After that trip, Wilma and his Mother Lucy Plate, would keep in touch with Murray for the next 66 years! In the letter Wilma wrote, he said of Murray, that "Ours is the most enduring relationship with the exception of my wife that I have experienced".

Laura said that her Dad replied, "How remarkable it was, that out of the tragedy of Francis's death, so many pleasant and wholesome things eventually grew". Laura went on to say that the letter made her marvel at the circumstances and bond of friendship they established.

"After surviving his Tour and watching so many close friends lose their lives, his outlook on life was greatly influenced" Laura shared. "He was able to pass on to us the ability to look at the big picture and try our best to balance our lives accordingly".

Murray was a gifted conversationalist and storyteller and Laura shared that this talent had clearly been inherited by her brother Jock. The ability to captivate an audience with the re-telling of stories was a

gift that her Father possessed, and he had the ability to find a common thread with anyone he sat down with.

Jock moved to the podium, and he began by saying he wanted to start with a Lawyers Caveat about the impossibility of doing justice in a few short minutes to the life of someone who lived for 98 years *and a bit*. Jock related the story of how his cousin a few years ago, asked his Dad how old he was. His Father replied, “93 *and a bit*”. There was a brief pause and then he said, “*And when you’re 93 – the bit counts*”!!

Immediately after Law School, Jock related, his Father began his career with the Attorney General’s Department and he loved working as a Crown Attorney for several years. There is the story which in its day had legendary status around Winnipeg Courtrooms, about the way Murray very cleverly handled of a case of theft by a ‘Safe Cracker’, where systematically blowing apart the “dubious, incredulous, fantastic and completely implausible explanation” of defence by the Accused, Murray, at arm’s length, dropped the heavy paper bag of stolen coins - which immediately exploded all over the Courtroom floor! The Judge straight away asked for a recess so the Clerk “could sweep up Exhibit 3!”

The defining period of time in Murray Peden’s life, was unquestionably his time in the RAF during World War Two. He and his crew were involved with regular bombing Operations and also engaging in night drops of supplies to groups of Free French Resistance fighters. He eventually found himself on his way to RAF Oulton, to 214 Squadron, operating under the banner of RAF 100 Group.



Murray Peden’s B17 Fortress at Oulton.

“We went to war without bombs, but with Tinsel, ABC, Mandrel, Jostle and all the other countermeasures invented by the Telecommunications Research Establishment at Malvern. The crew included a “Special Wireless Operator”, a fluent German-speaking airman whose primary function was to tune his powerful jammer, code-named ‘Jostle’, to the frequencies being used by the German Night-Fighter Controllers and blot out their transmissions to their own questing night-fighters.”

In his book, Murray describes a Sortie they flew on the Eve of D-Day, the night of the 5th / 6th of June 1944. He was tasked to fly support along the French coast for a group of fifteen Lancasters that were to bomb German coastal gun batteries. Totally unaware of the Invasion, he described what he witnessed on return to Oulton.

"We left the French coast behind, continuing our descent, and headed back towards England. It was not yet daylight, but the darkness had begun to soften. Suddenly we saw a sight that brought a lump into my throat. A tremendous, awesome aerial armada was passing us in extended formation a mile or two on our left side – not bombers, but C-47s: an airborne army. They were going in. We were coming out. For a long minute I watched them sailing silently onward to their date with destiny".

His most harrowing sortie came on 21/22 June. The target was the Nordstern Synthetic Oil Plant at Gelsenkirchen. Going into the target, their B-17 was attacked with cannon fire from an enemy ME 410 night fighter, wounding two of his crew, setting the starboard-inner engine on fire and shredding the rubber on the right main wheel. A few minutes later the same aircraft attacked again.

Roughly 10 minutes from the target, Murray turned and set course to return to England. Making for the RAF Woodbridge, an emergency airfield just off the southeast coast of Suffolk, their Fortress touched down, grabbed and veered off the runway, and impacted a 61 Squadron Lancaster, which still had a 12,000lb bomb on board! Murray and his crew vacated the aircraft fearing an almighty explosion. The Lancaster was cut in half! For his actions in getting their Fortress back that night, he was awarded the DFC.

"The fact that electronic jamming sorties by their very nature attracted the attention of Luftwaffe Night Fighters, exponentially increased the risks they faced, but that was just a given that had to be accepted," Son Jock explained.

"For Dad," Jock continued, "it was a four-year period combining heart stopping excitement with heart stopping tragedy and grief. Their off-duty times were escapist and robust – they had to be to counteract the indescribable strain of Operational flying".

His widely acclaimed book "A Thousand Shall Fall", received glowing and effusive accolades.

Sir Arthur Harris, Marshal of the Royal Air Force, wrote, **"I consider it not only the best and most true to life 'war' book I've ever read about this war, but the best about all the wars of my lifetime"**.

Dr Noble Frankland DFC CBE of the Imperial War Museum London, said:

"Murray Peden's "A Thousand Shall Fall", is in my view, the best personal experience account of Bomber Command which I have ever seen. The author's power of recall is astonishing and extremely accurate. He conveys, in a completely authentic manner not only the activities of Bomber Command but the flavour of life for the air crews who served in it.

Murray Peden is not only a first-class eyewitness of the events and experiences which he describes, but he is also a most gifted writer whose language it is a joy to read"

The writing of the book had a completely unforeseen consequence, however. After the book was published, he received many many unexpected calls right out of the blue, from old friends and colleagues who had similar experiences to his, in some cases from people who he had mentioned in the book that had played a role in some of his stories. New lifelong friendships were created and other friendships that would have been lost, were rekindled!

John drew toward a close by saying, "Perhaps the greatest Post-War service his book provided, was to portray in a completely honest and illuminating way what it was like in those tempestuous times. People had written Dad to tell him that they had an uncle that died in the War, or a son whose father

never spoke about the War, and after reading the book they were immensely grateful that Dad's book had allowed them a greater understanding of what their loved one had been through."

As he finished, John quoted from a speech that General McArthur made back in 1962, where he said that his last thoughts before 'crossing the river' would be – "the Corp, the Corp, the Corp."

John said, that if his Dad were to make that speech a day before his passing, *his* last thoughts would have been ... *"my family, my family, my family."*



Murray and Jean Peden

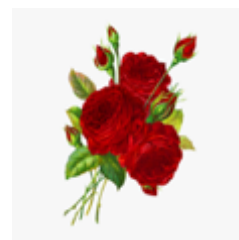
I want to thank Laura Miskiewicz and Jock Peden for their permission to use their words of tribute to their Father and for kindly providing the photographs – Ed



FINAL POSTINGS

Friends we've had to say goodbye to:

**MARTIN ALBERT STAUNTON,
EILEEN BOORMAN (NEE STAUNTON),
LEN AND EVELYN BARTRAM**



Founders of RAF 100 Group Association – Remembered in love

2018

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

2019

- 169 Squadron** Brian Odam, Groundcrew, died 7 Feb 2019. Missed & loved by daughter Rosemary.
- 171 Squadron** Jim 'Ginger' Fawcett died 1 March 2019. Remembered with love by wife Ruth and family.
- 171 Squadron** Henry 'Harry' Freegard died 8 July 2019. Lovingly remembered by son Alan & family.
- 214 Squadron** Wing Commander John Wynne DFC died 19 November 2018. Remembered with love by wife & daughter. Son died just over one week previous to his father in a farming accident.
- 214 Squadron** Flt Lt Vern L. Scantleton DFC died 11 April 2019. Received Legion D'Honneur in 2015
- 214 Squadron** WAAF MT Driver Daphne Rowlands serving w Win & Irene: 'The 3 Musketeers'. Much loved xx
- 92 Squadron** Flt/Lt Signals Officer Arthur Baxter Reid died Saturday 14 Sept 2019. Remembered with love by son Arthur & Linda & his family; together with all who knew him. God Bless, till we meet again x

- 199 Squadron** Flt Lt Roy H. Smith, Navigator died 1 Aug 2019. Remembered in love by family.
- USAF 36th BS** Donald Burch, Lt Boehm crew. Remembered with love by all who knew him.
- USAF 36TH BS** John 'Des' Howarth, Lt McCarthy crew in Lt. Boehm's B24 'Beast of Bourbon' when it crashed on Feb. 19, 1945. Died Sunday 9.6.2019. Remembered with love by son Brian & all his family.
- USAF 36th BS** Sgt Jack Hope, Tail Gunner for Lt Brookshire crew. Remembered with love by wife & family.

2020

- Co-Founder** Evelyn Bartram, co-founder of this Association w husband Len, Martin & Eileen; has died. Loved & remembered by family & all who knew her.
- 192 Squadron** Warrant Officer Frank Elliott died 16 April 2020. Missed & loved by son Paul & family, together with all in the Association who knew him.
- 192 Squadron** Leading Aircraftsman Joseph Henry Sayers. Joe died in January this year and is loved and missed by wife Mary and family, as well as his worldwide Family of Kindred Spirits.
- 171 Squadron** Squadron Leader David Butler DFC, Rear Gunner, died 2 February 2020. Missed by wife Edna and family, together with all who knew him.
- 214 Squadron** Ken White, known as 'Chalky', served as Air Gunner, died 21 May. Chalky was the final survivor of his crew who he remained in touch with through his life. Loved by son Ken and family.
- 223 Squadron** Mr Len S Davies; passed away 25th August 2020. Served at RAF Oulton and is believed to be the last of Flight Lieutenant Brigham's crew.
- 214 Squadron.** Cyril Piper. Passed away December 2020. Known as "Pip", he served with Sid Pike in F/Lt Don Austin's crew at RAF Oulton and then with F/Lt John Wynne until May 2nd 1945.

2021

- 223 Squadron** Andrew Barron aged 97 years and 9 months. Served with 223 out of Oulton. Passed away peacefully on Saturday May 1st 2021, with his Wife Dorothea and Daughters Kati and Fiona by his side.
- 100 Group HQ** Peggy Pollard aged 98 years. Passed away June 6th. Served at Belaugh Hall, RAF 100 Group HQ as an Administrative Assistant to Group Captain Porte. Loved by her sister Pat and son Geoffrey
- Swannington** Dorothy Hudson left us on 13th June, 2021 aged 95 years. Dearly loved by Daughter Kath and husband Richard. Dorothy served as a 'Weather girl' at Swannington and had a deep love for flowers and nature and became was a talented artist, seamstress, flower arranger and knitter.
- USAF 36th BS** 'JP' – James Ostler, passed away on 17th June, 2021 peacefully at his home in Arlington Heights. He served as a Navigator on B-17's and was awarded the DFC (US), the DFC (UK) and the the French Legion of Honour. He is blest with a large family and is dearly loved and missed.
- 199 Squadron** Bernie How, left us on 10th August 2021. He served with 199, flying out of North Creake in Norfolk as a Flight Engineer on Stirlings. Loved and missed by his family and Nigel and Claire at the 'Control Tower' at the old RAF Airfield at North Creake.

- 192 Squadron** Peter Woodard, passed away on 22nd September 2021, followed a few days later by his wife Irene. He served with 192 as a Radio Operator.
- 214 Squadron** Mr John Lyall, passed away on October 25th in Perth, Western Australia aged 98 years. He served as a Rear Gunner on Fortresses and was commissioned on the same day as Murray Peden from Winnipeg, Canada.
- 214 Squadron.** Mrs Barbara Bradshaw, passed from time to eternity on 21st December, just three weeks shy of her 101st Birthday. She was a WAAF Sergeant in charge of the Officers Mess at Oulton.

2022

- 214 Squadron** Mr Murray Peden, passed away peacefully at home in Winnipeg Canada, on the 6th January. He is the Author of the book "A Thousand Shall Fall". Pursuing a very successful career in Law he also had a wide range of interests including fishing and hunting. He was a devoted husband, father and grandfather.

100 Group Order of Battle

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



Closing off this magazine, the 36th Bomb Squadron Crest, serves as a reminder of how RAF 100 (Bomber Support) Group and the 36th Bomb Squadron of the United States Air Force, working in joint Operations as two support forces, together, prosecuted the battle against Germany, from November 1943 to the end of the War in 1945.

Created by Stuart Borlase.

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

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

To Arthur and Linda Reid,
with their effort in overseeing the packaging of this magazine
and the logistics of seeing it posted to the four corners of the Globe.

To David and Tracey Mortimer and their team at
PRONTAPRINT in Scarborough, North Yorkshire,
a special thanks for their diligence, dedication and faithfulness
over many years in printing this magazine.

*'All content published within this magazine is copyright to the individual Author and represents their own views and beliefs.
This should be respected.'*

You are all very much appreciated.

