

600

Praeter Sescentos

“THE RIGHT OF THE LINE”

600 (City of London) Squadron RAuxAF Association Newsletter

Patron: The Viscount Trenchard of Wolfeton

Affiliated Members: 601 & 604 Squadron Associations.



June 2012

Editorial

Welcome to the summer 2012 edition. Well, 2012 is as well all know a VERY big year in the UK. By the time you read this the main Queens Diamond Jubilee celebrations up and down the country will have passed and we will be gearing up for the Olympics being hosted in London, just a matter of weeks away now.

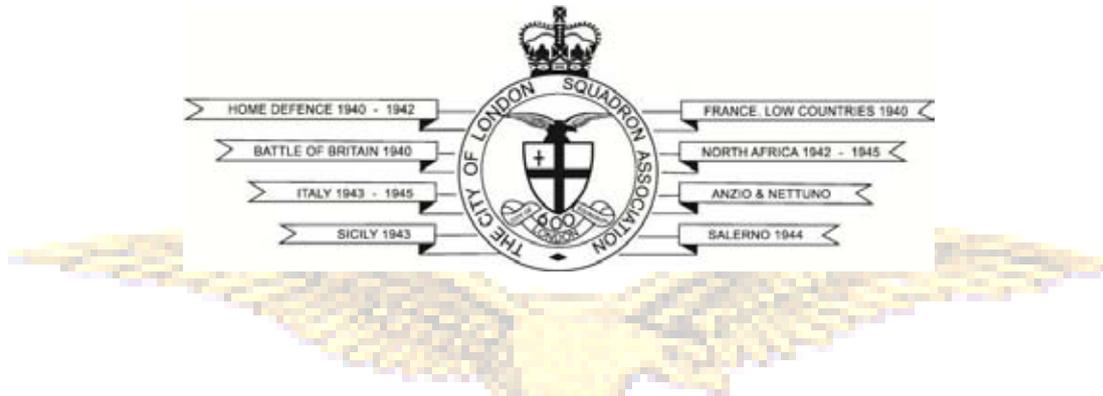
The web site is now receiving growing numbers of hits and especially, has prompted both some enquiries and some guestbook comments – all good stuff. We have a good deal of material to place up onto the site and this will start to appear over the coming weeks as John our Web Master tackles it in between everything else he has to do, but please do keep it coming in. Specific areas of interest remain your photos and documents, all 600, 601 & 604 Squadron specific, especially for the war years where 600 Squadron especially has a huge black hole. Many of you have given some truly wonderful material, which is really generous and oh so helpful, but we need more please. I also need more of your anecdotes and short stories please. Your memories, humorous or serious are actually really interesting and of great interest to readers.

In the last edition, I made an appeal for you to consider us for your donations, bequeaths upon your demise - it's a raw ole subject, but one that will ultimately come to all of us, so excuse me for asking, but this is what will preserve our Association and your material – for this is our legacy. I therefore have run the same article again as a reminder.

This Month has seen the AGM where we appointed a new Treasurer following the much loved and already missed John Wilding who has finally opted for a quieter life. We wish you a happy retirement John and an immeasurable thank you for so many years of dedicated service to the Association. BIG shoes to follow, but we would like to welcome Sgt. Ian Walton into the role and wish him every success. Ian is currently still serving on the Squadron but approaching retirement. We also welcome Tom Melling onto the Committee who some of you may know. Tom also enjoyed a very successful career on the Squadron, but more about Ian and Tom later in the Newsletter. All other Committee position remained the same.

Andy

600 Squadron Association News



In December 2011 the Association launched the new web site. The new site hosts a full and ever growing history of 600, 601 & 604 Squadrons with a growing & impressive gallery of photographs, some of which many people will not have seen. The Association newsletters are posted onto the web site along with back issues. In addition, we have an extensive links page, a guest book, an events diary and a news section & pages dedicated to membership & fundraising.

Remember, this is YOUR Association, so do tell us what you like, what you don't like and any ideas you have – and, as ever, PLEASE keep your material coming in for both the newsletter and now the web site.

As usual, huge thanks go to our hardworking Webmaster Mr John Wheeler and we are all very grateful for his efforts.

Whilst there is still much to do and some areas are still temporarily “under construction”, it is coming together and our archive is being boosted thanks to readers and web browsers. Your archive donations will boost and benefit both the Squadron and the Association & enable us to fill the huge void we have of the War years in our archive.

With the direct help & support of OC600 Squadron and staff, we are working together to gather, preserve and share the many wonderful images we have for all to enjoy and that will enable us to continue to build a web site to be rightly proud of.

Once again, thank you to all of you for your help, support and contribution.

WWW.600squadronassociation.com



Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the City of London Squadron Association held at the RAF Club on Saturday 2012

The President opened the meeting at 1108hrs.

Those Present were: Kevin O'Shaughnessy, Sean Ahearn, John Wilding, Angie Luddington, Tom Snow, Andy Cameron, Tony Stotesbury, Sid Myers, Ian Walton, Dennis Sprake, Mr and Mrs Hanley-Brown.

Apologies were received: Lord Trenchard, Ken Rock, Rosemary Savery.

1. Due to many letters of support and congratulations, the President proposed a show of thanks to Andy Cameron for his production of the newsletter.
2. Minutes of the 2011 AGM had been distributed to the Members. John Wilding proposed that the minutes were a true and accurate record, seconded by Andy Cameron, all were in favour.
3. There were no matters arising.
4. The President, Chairman, and Secretary are all happy to continue in their roles and there were no other applications.
5. Nominations for the post of Treasurer were received from Ian Walton and Michael Cowham. Michael wished to cover the post should no other nominations be received. Therefore, Ian was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by the President, all were in favour.
6. The Auditor is happy to continue in her post. This was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Tony Stotesbury.
7. No confirmation that the present Welfare Officer, Rev Matthew Buchan, was willing to continue was received and there were no nominations for this post. It was discussed at length during the Committee meeting and it was decided that there would now be a Welfare Team. Andy Cameron would be the single point of contact with the President, Chairman, Secretary and Trustees to act where required. The Chairman will advise on RAFA and RAF Benevolent Fund issues, the Secretary will deal with home welfare issues and all will take up visiting duties as they are able. Dennis Sprake offered to put us in contact with RAFA the welfare officer network as required. The President and Chairman will deal with any issues which may involve the Royal British Legion.
8. Tom Snow and Andy Cameron are happy to continue in the current roles on the Committee. The President reported that there was a vacancy for a further Member. Tom Melling was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by the President, all in favour.
9. Accounts and balance sheet for the year ended 30th September 2011 have been published and were presented at the meeting by John Wilding. No comments were received from the floor. John said that the General Fund was in good shape and has not required a top-up from the Trust Fund for some time. It was proposed by the Chairman to accept the accounts, seconded by Tom Snow, all in favour.
10. The Chairman reported that the Trust Fund is quite healthy due to a number of donations during the year and he asked for a vote of thanks to all those who contributed to be recorded in the minutes. Sean suggested that any interest from the Welfare Fund should be used to support the AGM excess costs. He also asked for any new donations to be paid into the Treasurers Account in order to manage all the accounts to best practice.

Due to a number of changes in personnel in various positions, Sean will need to speak to Lloyds Bank to add/remove permitted signatures on all accounts.

11. The Committee have agreed to attempt to meet twice prior to the next AGM but they will not decide dates at this stage.
12. Tony Stotesbury announced he would like to stand down as a Trustee and handed documents back to the Chairman. This leaves a position vacant. Both the President and Secretary are happy to stand. The Chairman will raise the relevant documents and both the President and the Secretary will present themselves to Lloyds bank to sign the relevant paperwork.

Meeting closed at 1136 hrs.

Angie Luddington,
Secretary

Some Images from the AGM kindly taken by AI & Eileen Hanley Brown



(L) L-R, Our outgoing Treasurer, John Wilding with Sean Ahearn, Chairman and Angie Luddington Secretary.

(R) Angie with John and Ian Walton, our new Treasurer



(L) Sean Ahearn with Mike Allen

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Our New Honorary Treasurer, Ian Walton – An Introduction.

I worked for 27 years in Nat West Bank in London & the South East. After taking voluntary redundancy from the Bank in 1998, I joined the Inland Revenue in Maidstone in 1999, initially as an Administrative Assistant, and gained promotion to Assistant Officer in 2000.

I joined the Royal Observer Corps in 1980, serving initially at the No 2 Group Control in Horsham, and transferred to No 1 Group Control, Maidstone in 1991, rising to Leading Observer. When the Corps was stood down in September 1991, I applied to join No 1 Maritime Headquarters Unit (RAuxAF), and was attested in May 1992. I have participated in numerous exercises in the UK and abroad, including Sicily, Portugal, France & Germany.

My interests include Skiing & long distance walking, & I have completed the Nijmegen Marches in Holland 19 times.

Association Events

There are a number of events in the calendar for which full details are not yet available. If you think you may be interested in attending any of these **please indicate using the proforma at the end of this newsletter** and details will be forwarded as they become available. By indicating your interest it does not commit you but reduces the number of people I have to contact prior to the event.

- a. Battle of Britain Service at Westminster Abbey on 16th September.

- c. 600 Squadron's Annual Formal Dinner at Butchers Hall has been provisionally booked for 12 October but this will be confirmed at a later date. The cost of the evening last year was £60. This is a fine event involving good food and good company. For further details please contact the Secretary or return this form to register your interest.

- d. The Lord Mayors Show takes place in the City on Saturday 10th November. Veterans are invited to march behind the Association Standard.

- E. Remembrance Sunday Service at St Paul's Cathedral on Sunday 11th November. The service starts at 1030 hours, followed by wreath laying and a parade at the Royal Exchange, then lunch at the Mansion House. Due to high demand this event may be restricted to Veterans. That said, there does not appear to be a restriction of people attending St Pauls but it should be remembered that this is a high profile event and ID may be required on the day. Tickets are required for entry to the Mansion House.

- f. Christmas Lunch - This year it has been suggested we have a get together before Christmas, a spot of lunch and a sherry or two. I think this is a wonderful idea! Parades are great but it's good just to catch up with no meeting or marching. If you'd like to join us let me know by returning this form.

Please remember, registering your interest does not commit you, it just gives me less people to contact prior the event. Late enquiries are welcome but please remember events where we rely on tickets from other parties (i.e. Battle of Britain and Remembrance Sunday) have quite strict numbers and entrance requirements so it is best to let me know early.

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600 Sqn has had a request from the Reserve Forces and Cadet Association (RFCA) for volunteers to attend the Armed Forces Flag Raising on 25 Jun 12.

Veterans from all units are invited to attend. Please can you let Angie Luddington know if you are willing and able so that she can muster a co-ordinated reply to the Sqn.

This event is in support of the Armed Forces Day to be held on 30 Jun 2012 and both will be featured heavily in the media. The details we have to date are as follows:

Date: 25 June 12.

Location: Guildhall Yard, London, EC2V 5AE

Time: 1500hrs (assembly by 1430)

Media coverage: The Greater London RFCA team were on standby. The Guildhall media team would also promote the event.

Blazer Badges

A reminder for those wishing to purchase blazer badges. Our Squadron crests are £19 each plus £1.50 p & p.

As 600 Sqn are unique and have 2 badges to choose from, I suggest you use their wording (shown below with the 2 crests) in order to find on the web site or to order over the phone.



600 Sqn blazer badge



600 Squadron blazer badge



601 Sqn RAF blazer KC badge



601 Sqn blazer QC badge



604 Sqn blazer badge

Please order direct from.....

Robin Finnegan Jeweller and Military Badges, 27 Post House Wynd, Darlington, County Durham
DL3 7LP England
Tel. +44 (0) 1325 489820

Email diamondmerchants@btopenworld.com

Website WWW.Militarybadges.co.uk

Association Diary dates 2012

15 July 2012 - BofB Memorial Day – Capel le Ferne

16 Sep 2012 - BofB Annual service, Westminster Abbey, London

09 Nov 2012 - Dutch service of Remembrance, Mill Hill, London

10 Nov 2012 - Lords Mayors Show, London

11 Nov 2012 - Remembrance Day, St Paul's Cathedral, London



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Reunions & requests for information?

Please do let me know of any anything in the way of reunions etc. and lost/found friends that you would like included here.

Did anyone know?

Sgt Francis Joseph Tearle joined 600 Squadron before the war as an Aircraft hand (800569). He re-mustered (?) as an Airman u/t Air Gunner and re-joined 600 Squadron Northolt on 1 July 1940 as 123198 and served in the Battle of Britain. In 1943 he was commissioned and flew with 89 Squadron in the Middle East.

He was released from the RAF in 1947 as a Ft Lt, worked for Pan American and TWA and took US citizenship in 1954. However he returned to Manchester for Saudi Arabian Airlines and resettled here, dying in 1990

Sgt Tearle achieved a DFC and his DFC citation in the London Gazette of 16 Feb 1943 reads:

Pilot Officer Francis Joseph TEARLE (123198) Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, No. 89 Squadron

Pilot Officers Miller and Tearle have flown together, as pilot and observer respectively, on numerous night operations. They have destroyed 4 enemy aircraft and inflicted damage on 3 enemy E-boats. They have both displayed courage and skill of high order.

Pilot Officer Miller is Reginald Arthur Miller (123201) also of the RAF VR No 89 Squadron

The family looked up 89 Squadron and I found this little gem;

On 25 September 1941 89 Squadron reformed at Colerne as a night-fighter unit, flying its Beaufighter's out to the Middle East in November and beginning night patrols in December. A detachment was sent to Malta in June 1942, which also flew intruder missions over Sicily. Detachments were based along the North African coast for night defence until October 1943, when the Squadron moved to Ceylon. In September 1944, intruder flights over Burma began in addition to normal night-fighter patrols. Conversion to Mosquitoes took place early in 1945 and in September

No. 89 moved to Singapore where it lost its aircraft in March 1946. It flew some Walruses on air-sea rescue duties until it was disbanded on 1 May 1946.

Colerne is in north Wiltshire, not too far from Bath.

The notes on 89 Squadron in Wikipedia are very similar to those above, and it is confirmed that the Bristol Beaufighter 1F and V1F were used 1941-1945, so Tearle and Miller had to have been flying them. I can understand how the plane would have damaged E-boats because it was a torpedo layer and bomber, but it must have been some feat to bring down enemy aircraft. Still, Wikipedia does say it was a heavy fighter... From the dates above, it look as though Tearle and Miller gained their DFCs over the North African coast.

Francis' death registration in Manchester reads;

Name: Francis Joseph Tearle
Birth Date: 16 Oct 1918
Death Registration Month/Year: Oct 1990
Age at death (estimated): 72
Registration district: Trafford
Inferred County: Cheshire
Volume: 39, Page: 1924



Flt Sgt Michael Zollo, 600 Squadron, Royal Air Force 1940 – 1944, by Mike Zollo



In a recent edition of the 600 Squadron Association Newsletter, there was a photograph of my Uncle Michael in his RAF uniform, and a feature on the diorama of his Beaufighter created last year by my son David. This has provided me with the impulse I needed to fulfil an intention I have nurtured for some years: to write about Michael, his motivation to join the RAF and his experiences in the service prior to his sad loss in May 1944. Being the first male to be born to the Zollo family after World War 2, just a few years after his loss, I was given exactly the same name. I also rose to the rank of Flight Sergeant in the RAF Section of my school Combined Cadet Force. I never had the privilege of meeting my uncle, but he has always been something of an icon for me, and I have always tried to live up to his reputation within our family. Besides, his widow - my Aunt Madeline - was my godmother, so I have always felt a sense of duty to her; sadly, she passed away in 2009. Hence my aspiration to record all I know and have been able to research about him. This article is only a basis for a fuller version I hope to be able to produce in the future... It would be fantastic if this material jogs the memories of anyone who might remember him, or who had similar experiences. I'd be delighted to hear from any such person; please write to me via Andy Cameron (Newsletter Editor)

Michael was born in 1914 to a large Portsmouth family of Italian origin, being the fourth of ten (surviving) children. He was named after his grandfather, who in turn bore the name of his grandfather. Thus, my eldest son Michael is at least the fifth Michael Zollo in seven generations I have been able to trace back to the late 1700s. Like his brothers, Michael was educated at St John's College. At some stage he went to work at Airspeed, which had moved from York to Portsmouth in 1933. Among other planes, Airspeed constructed about 8,500 Oxford trainer/transport aircraft and 3,800 Horsa gliders, which were used in the Normandy landings. When

World War Two broke out, Michael was not called up, presumably because he worked in an industry which was essential to the war effort. While working at Airspeed, however, he had met and fallen in love with Madeline O'Driscoll, whose sisters also worked at Airspeed. On the evening of 24 August 1940, Michael and Madeline went for a walk up Portsdown Hill, the enormous hump on the mainland north of Portsmouth: they were chaperoned of course - by Madeline's older sister Eileen. On the way back down the hill they witnessed the Luftwaffe's first night-time bombing raid on their beloved city. Michael was so incensed that he decided there and then that he would go to volunteer for the Royal Air Force the following day.

For the next section, I am indebted to the late Dowman (Dow) Whitehead, who undertook initial flying training with Michael in Canada. In 1941 they mustered near London Zoo, and were billeted in flats nearby. Michael was enlisted in 600 Squadron, and Dowman in 108 Squadron. They undertook their initial flying training, I think, at Dauphin Airbase near Winnipeg, Manitoba. Dow recalled that Michael was a bit of a maverick, but that he always got on very well with everybody. He had no problem identifying Michael in a photograph I showed him which is one of the only ones the family has of him. It shows three airmen in, I believe, Ontario; Michael is the one in the middle with his greatcoat not buttoned up. When they returned to the UK, Michael was sent to Harrogate for further training, being billeted at the Majestic Hotel. I often travel to Harrogate in connection with my work for the AQA exam board, and our meetings have sometimes been held at the Majestic Hotel, one of several strange coincidences. At some stage Michael spent time at RAF Shawbury prior to undergoing night-flying training at RAF Condover on Oxfords. One of my cousins has a letter he sent from the Sergeants' Mess to her mother, one of his older sisters. In it he mentions how he hopes to marry Madeline soon. He also describes living conditions at the base, which was still under construction, and even the wildlife to be seen on walks in the surrounding countryside. He also writes *"Today I got lost for a while on a solo cross-country but I put down at an aerodrome and got my bearings back home. I always wanted to fly Oxfords and I've had my wish"*. He had, of course, worked for years at Airspeed, which constructed this aircraft. It was a pleasant surprise to me that at the end of the letter he signs himself 'Mike' as I do; I had only ever heard him referred to as Michael within the family.

As regards his operational experience, Mike flew Beaufighters, and was certainly in North Africa for some time, providing air support to Royal Navy convoys to Malta. He was then based with his Beaufighter for a short time at RAF Luqa in Malta before moving to southern Italy. Stationed at a number of bases in the Naples area, he flew sorties behind enemy lines, bombing bridges and other infrastructure in support of the Allies' campaign at the Battle of Anzio. He was always accompanied by his good friend and navigator, Sergeant Ed Critchley from Bolton, Lancashire. While in Naples, he used to meet up with my father Mario Zollo, who was based there with REME. Whenever Mike could get a lift into the centre of Naples on an RAF truck, they would go to Sunday mass together, the Zollo family being Roman Catholic. One Sunday in late May 1944, Michael didn't show up; it was many months before my father found out what had happened to his older brother.

On 24 May 1944, the very last day of the Battle of Anzio, when they were flying in support of the Anzio beach-head, Mike and Ed's Beaufighter was shot down over the sea. They were shot down apparently by a Wellington, whose tail gunner mistook the Beau for a German night-fighter (possibly an HE 111? I hope someone can confirm this or suggest alternatives). The crew of the Wellington reported their error, and apparently Mike and Ed's commanding officer flew out to look for them. The family was eventually told that their dinghy was seen, apparently shot up, and that Michael's mae-west was found in the sea - with his name in it - presumably by an RAF Air-Sea Rescue Launch. I don't know how soon the family was told that Michael was missing, presumed lost, but one of my aunts for years nurtured the hope that he had been rescued by the enemy and had been sent to Russia.

Both Michael Zollo and Ed Critchley are commemorated on the RAF memorial in Valetta, Malta. Commonwealth War Graves Commission Records show the following entry for Ed: Sergeant EDWARD CRITCHLEY, 1546085, 600 Sqn Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, who died age 32, son of Edward and Betsy Critchley, and husband of Mary N. Critchley, of Bolton, Lancashire. I have been unable so far to trace any surviving relative, but my family understands that Ed's wife may have had a son at some stage, and that he was possibly named Michael after Ed's best friend, Michael Zollo. The entry for my uncle reads: Michael Angelo ZOLLO, 1321643, Flight Sergeant, Royal Air Force (V.R.), 600 Squadron, died 24th May 1944.

Michael and Madeline married in 1943, and he was lost less than a year later: they had only spent two weekends of his leave together; she never remarried. Thus, like countless others, they both made great sacrifices for their country. Being the first male child born in the family after his death (in 1948), my father was keen to name me after him, and Madeline was my godmother; she was always very good to me, and my son Mike and I both attended her funeral in Gosport in 2009. I always felt an affinity with this uncle I had never known, and for me it was a natural thing to join the RAF section of my school cadet force as soon as I could. I was proud of having gained very good marks in the RAF Proficiency exams, and even more so at reaching the (cadet) rank of Flight Sergeant – another Flight Sergeant Michael Angelo Zollo. Indeed, I enjoyed my contact with the RAF so much that I seriously considered joining up after leaving school. However, my eyesight was not good enough for me to be a pilot or navigator, so I went to university to study languages instead. At least I had contact with the Royal Air Force over the sixteen years during which I taught at Britannia Royal Naval College; we always had a RAF liaison officer, and on a couple of occasions the BRNC badminton team I managed beat the team from Cranwell, which I visited twice.

It was after many years of my teaching career and raising five children with my wife Carol, whose father John Pritchard served on RAF Air Sea Rescue launches towards the end of WW2, (he later became an expert on their construction and history), that I eventually found some time to start researching into my Uncle Michael's story. By chance, when a distant relative - Tony Zollo of Poole and Wimborne - attended a friend's funeral, another gentleman attending – Dowman Whitehead - overheard his name and asked him if he was related to Michael Zollo of the RAF; they exchanged addresses. A few years later when I learnt of this and was given his address, I wrote to Dow Whitehead, who by then had moved house. Fortunately my letter was forwarded to him, and we eventually established contact. I visited him and his wife Joy at his home in Bournemouth in June 2010. He was President of the Royal Air Force Association in Poole. We chatted for some time about his memories of Michael and of their time training in Canada; I gather that Dow had been CO of their training group. In the photograph mentioned earlier, he not only commented on how typical Michael's appearance was, but also remembered that the airman on the right of the photograph had been a policeman from London. He spoke much about his own fascinating experiences of the RAF flying Beaufighters, Mosquitos and eventually Spitfires, having made a career in the service. Dow's house was full of model aircraft and RAF memorabilia, of course, and his wife Joy had been very much a RAF wife. They told me how in the early fifties they had visited my family's house in Winchester asking for news of Michael; this was a large house in which several members of my father's family lived, two of them with their wives. It transpires that it was my mother who answered the door; she called one of her in-laws, who told Mr and Mrs Whitehead that Michael had been lost in 1944.

Michael is commemorated on the War memorial role of honour of St John's College, Portsmouth, and on a wooden panel listing the war dead of both World Wars in the west foyer of St John's RC Cathedral, Portsmouth. I have a photograph of this, with my eldest son Michael and I standing in front of it - three generations of Michael Zollo. Indeed it was only natural that my wife and I maintain the family tradition of this name, which can be traced back at least seven generations and over 200 years.

One of my aunts recently recalled how her older brother Michael was obsessed with aircraft and flying years before WW2, indeed that he always had a pile of aircraft magazines; as a schoolboy I collected brochures on planes of the fifties and sixties, and had a collection of Airfix kits. The more I delve into family history, the more I am able to explain the characteristics of my generation and my children's. Certainly, all the men in the family seem to have been bitten by the same bug of fascination with things mechanical. My dad was a draughtsman in REME in WW2, doing technical drawings of bits of Army machinery (hence was based in Naples when he used to meet up with his brother); another uncle was in the Royal Artillery, and later worked as a railway signaller in Winchester, later for the GPO, and then as an electrician for many years for the RN at Lee-on-Solent Airbase. Once, when I was staying with him in my RAF cadet days, he arranged for me to have a flight in a RN Heron with a trainee RN pilot who was practising bumps and circuits. Couldn't do that nowadays! My brothers Tony and Andy and I have a penchant for fast cars, and Tony with motorbikes; my nephew Matt Zollo is a motoring journalist. Both of my sons are engineers; Mike is a Naval Architect managing the building of warships in the RN Dockyard in Portsmouth. Dave is a keen tank modeller, and has just graduated as an engineer; his final year project was on the subject of the effectiveness of the armour-plating on WW2 German tanks. They too are 'petrol -heads'. As mentioned before, my Uncle Mike was evidently a bit of a

maverick, from what Dow Whitehead told me; that's great to know, because so are my brothers and I, and our sons too, only more so! It seems to go with the territory of engineering, because it provides you with the resourcefulness to find unconventional solutions to problems when the conventional ones don't work.

Previous enquiries to 600 Squadron have not thrown up any further information on Flight Sergeant Michael Zollo. I hope that this account of what little I have been able to put together might jog the memory of anyone who remembers him or Ed Critchley. These two men - and their wives and families - epitomise 600 Squadron in the way in which so many were willing to sacrifice their own futures by volunteering to serve their country in the name of the freedom we now enjoy. If these names ring any bells, I'd be delighted to hear from you. Perhaps then I will be able to fill in some of the gaps between 24 August 1940 and 24 May 1944...



(A Beaufighter in 600 Sqn Markings - Copyright C M B Barrass 2001- 2008)

Donations

Membership fees and donations are the financial lifeblood of our Association and these last few months has seen a huge increase in donations so it is with great thanks the Association acknowledges the very kind donations from:

Mr K. Pearson	£ 10.00
Mr G. Pearce	£ 25.00
Anonymous	£500.00
Mr Ernie Bounds (Luton & Dunstable RAFA)	£ 20.00
604 Squadron Association	£500.00

Whilst the Association does not at presently operate an “Annual subs” system, we are very dependent on a regular income and would be enormously grateful if anyone was willing or able to set up a regular Monthly or Annual direct debit payment to the Association as a charity donation. It can be for any sum, and all donations go toward the cost of managing and funding the Association facilities such as the web site, Newsletter, AGM costs etc...

Please contact the Association Treasurer via Andy Cameron

Corporate Donations

A number of corporate cash donations have been received following an appeal;

United Facilities Management Ltd	£150.00
Imagination:	£100.00

The following “gift” donations were made for us the raffle at the AGM;

Gardiner & Theobald LLP;	4x Bottles of Wine
CIP Recruitment;	1x Bottle of Tattinger Champagne
Baxter Storey Catering	1x Basket of Fruit
West Horsley Dairy	1x Basket of Cheese
Tandy Ltd (Printers)	1x Bottle of Champagne

The subsequent raffle raised; **£100.00**

We have also very kindly received an undertaking from Waitrose that they will enter us into their Community Matters scheme, initially in their Tottenham Court Road, London store whereby we join another two charities every 6 months for a share of a £500 cash payment by Waitrose. The 3 charities are “voted” for by shoppers using a green disc voting system.

http://www.waitrose.com/content/waitrose/en/home/inspiration/community_matters.html

The City of London Squadron Association Autumn Draw.

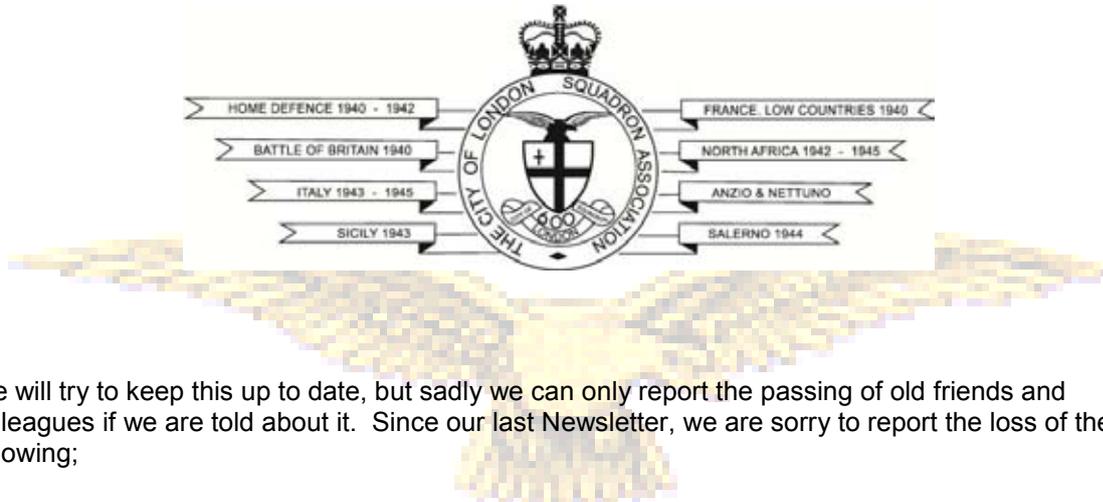
Thanks to the extreme generosity of some further corporate sponsors, we have been “gifted” with a number of items that we will be using as part of an autumn draw. Tickets will be sent out for you to enter within the next couple of Months. “Gifts” donated for the purpose are:

- SOS Office; A Samsung HTE 4500 home entertainment system with 5 Speakers, Blue ray player and sub-woofer plays DVDs CD’s and HD Blue discs. It’s the bee’s Knees!
- Equinox Security; A Samsung PL22 Compact Digital Camera including a 4GB memory card and deluxe Camera Case.
- Waitrose; 1x 75cl Bottle of Moet & Chandon Rose Imperial
- Call Print (Printers) 1x 3D printed Scale model of a Spitfire
- Capital Service Facilities 4x separate “Gifts” of a £25 M&S Gift card
- Kleeneze (Thanks to Kevin O’Shaughnessy) 1x Bail of Towels

We were “gifted” with a Sony Home Cinema system worth £400 but sadly whilst in storage the box was opened and most of the content’s stolen – however, the remnants of the box were eBay’ed and £48.50 was raised. Thanks go to Universal Commercial Relocations Limited for the very kind donation which sadly wasn’t fully realised – but nonetheless, a wonderful gesture. Thank you.



Association Obituaries



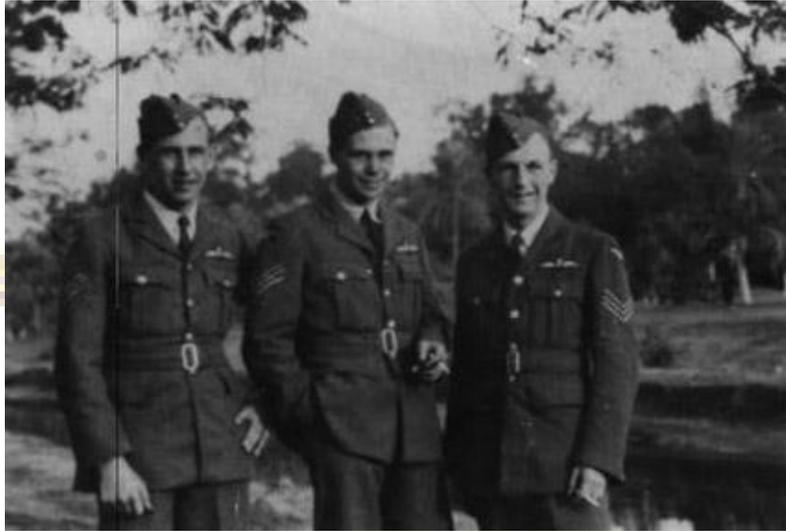
We will try to keep this up to date, but sadly we can only report the passing of old friends and colleagues if we are told about it. Since our last Newsletter, we are sorry to report the loss of the following;

As at 31 May, we have not been made aware of any deaths in the last quarter, however, please see below the obituary for Michael Hyett – the timings were such that we couldn't quite get it in the last Newsletter;

Michael John Hyett 21st April 1924 - 19th February 2012 - 601 Squadron



Memorie Di Guerra (Memories of War)



On the banks of the Nile at an Operational Training Unit (OTU) in Ismalia in January 1945, I am in the middle.

I was fifteen years old and still at school in South Woodford when war broke out in September 1939. After nine months evacuation to the countryside I returned to London in July 1940 to attend a Technical School for one year. That summer, as I lay on the grass watching the Battle of Britain overhead, a fascination and a longing to be a fighter pilot grew inside of me. Watching the condensation trails across the sky and hearing the machine guns, as the Spitfires and the Hurricanes engaged the German planes, my friends and I were oblivious to the dangers. I only knew that it seemed far less dangerous than fighting in the trenches!

When I was seventeen and working in a bank I tried to volunteer as a pilot, only to be told to join the Air Training Corps and to try again when I had turned eighteen. Day after day I would avidly read the latest reports on the Battle of Britain, my desire to be involved in the 'action' still driving me on until; finally, I turned eighteen and enlisted, having passed my medicals. In February 1943 I received my calling-up papers and went to the receiving centre at Lords Cricket Ground in London. I was kitted out and sent to Scarborough for elementary training, flying for a few hours in Tiger Moths at Brough.

We sailed from Greenock in Scotland in September 1943 and into the Atlantic to dodge the U-Boats. It took eight days to reach Gibraltar and then we sailed through the Mediterranean, finally docking at Suez in Egypt where we were off-loaded into a transit camp as the ship, one of the Castle ships, I think the Llangibby, was needed in the invasion of Italy. We understand that it was sunk. After three weeks in the desert, we continued by the Highland Brigade down to Durban in South Africa where we stayed in another transit camp for another few weeks before travelling by a wonderful train up to Bulawayo in Southern Rhodesia where we did a short refresher course in ground subjects. We then went up by train to Salisbury, now Harare, where we did our elementary flying training in a single-engined Canadian trainer called a Cornell. After completing 85 flying hours of dual and solo flying, I went onto Cranborne in March to do my advanced flying on Harvards where I did another 190 hours flying training and passed out, receiving my service wings on the 3rd November 1944.

After a wonderful three weeks with several Rhodesians, game shooting in the Zambesi Valley, we flew up in stages to a rest camp in Heliopolis at Cairo and then onto an Operational Training Unit at Ismalia in Egypt near the Nile. It was called 71 OUT (Operational Training Unit). Here, after a few hours on Hurricanes, we graduated to Spitfires which were much lighter on the controls and produced a 'bucking bronco' when I took off, as the Harvard's and Hurricanes needed heavier handling.

In early April 1945 I joined up with 601 County of London Squadron, which had already been at Bellaria in north-east Italy for five months, under the command of Wing Commander 'Cocky' Dundas. With the war entering its final phase the Germans were entrenched on the banks of the River Senio and British troops needed strong air support to help drive the Germans back across the River Po and out of Italy.

Our task was to cut off the supply line of ammunition to the German front, by bombing and blowing up bridges across the River Po, and destroying any potential ferries or transporting vehicles. The breakout across the Senio began on April 9 1945, the Wing flying 121 sorties that afternoon in an uncompromising bombardment on the German targets. For eighteen days the attacks, with two or three sorties continued relentlessly, day in, day out, from dusk till dawn. Although most of the time the assault was constructive, destroying pre-selected targets, we increasingly went on free-ranging missions as the enemy dropped back, targeting anything that could possibly be construed as enemy transport, even down to horse and ox-drawn wagons.

In total the Wing flew 4644 operational hours, comprising 3661 sorties; 851 bombs were dropped; 345,380 rounds of 20mm cannon; and 804,291 rounds of machine gun ammunition were expended. At the beginning of the mission we started out with between 90 and 100 aircraft. By the end, anti-aircraft fire had claimed fifty-five of our aircraft, and another 41 were so badly damaged that we couldn't repair them ourselves. A further 31 were also damaged badly. Nine of our pilots had been killed, and three were missing, one of whom was a Prisoner of War. Three more were injured and several baled out behind enemy lines and were able to return.

Hugh (Cocky) Dundas, now a Group Captain and the youngest at age 24, said in his book 'The Flying Start' that the last four to six months of the war in Italy were, in his opinion, the most dangerous and terrifying period of the war. Not only were the Germans now extremely accurate in their ground-to-air firing, but a consignment of 500lbs bombs that we used had faulty detonators and at least two of our pilots blew to smithereens in bomb dives. (See pages 159 — 161 of 'The Flying Start', a book by Hugh Dundas).

My role in the assault, however, ended on 20 April, the day before my 21 birthday, and on the day that would turn out to be Hitler's final birthday. We were on a sortie to bomb a position northeast of Bologna on a stretch of road that was entrenched with heavy German guns. Having dropped our bombs by dive-bombing from 6000 feet down to 2000 feet we circled the area and found at least one of the guns. We came into strafe and, on the second run in, I felt the aircraft being hit and buffeted around. 'Phoning' Flt Lt. 'Johnnie' Johnson I was told that my plane was pouring out smoke and oil and that I should put down in a field that was on our left. The field looked perfect with beautiful lush grass and I didn't anticipate any problems, other than those normally associated with 'crash-landing' a fighter plane!

What I hadn't realised, however, was that under the grass were irrigation channels. As I approached to land one of my wheel legs which was hanging loose caught in one of the channels. The starboard wing was torn off as the aircraft somersaulted ten times, breaking into three portions, before coming to a standstill, cockpit uppermost with yours truly apparently lifeless in the seat. My fellow pilots circled above me in the sky until a jeep arrived from the nearby Welsh Regiment to take me, first to a farmhouse called Cuazzaloca, and then onto the Army hospital at Rimini. My mother used to say that the long journey, whilst I was unconscious, along rough track by jeep to Rimini couldn't have helped much. I was not expected to recover from my head injuries and was left unconscious, in a foetal position for eight weeks. A lack of medical knowledge in those days meant that the head injury was left to heal by itself and I was often left hungry, as the nurses were so busy with other patients. I was unable to feed myself as both arms were in plaster and over time my weight dropped to five stone.

In July 1945 I travelled by ambulance train to Naples from where I was flown back to Shenley Hospital in northeast London where my cousin would visit to feed me, before being transferred to No.1 RAF Hospital at Halton. It was a miserable time; the head injury had caused paralysis down one side of my body; I had little memory; and I was unable to read. A minor speech impediment that I had had before the accident had developed into a serious stammer; and the head injury had also stimulated bone growth on my elbows, which required an operation once the plaster had been

removed. I only recovered 75% of their movement but I now have severe arthritis in both my wrists also.

After rehabilitation at Chessington I was invalided out of the RAF with 100% disablement in July 1946. However, the process of my recovery was to be a long difficult path, taking many more years. Following my retirement from Lloyds Bank Foreign Department in 1982, I began to get a strong urge to seek out the location where I had crashed. And, thanks to an historian at the Public Records Office at Kew, I was able to identify the village of Tombiazza, near Medicina, east of Bologna in northern Italy. I wrote to the Mayor of Tombiazza, and also requested help from the Italian Air Attaché in London. Within a matter of months arrangements were made for an emotional return to the area that had so affected my life.

In April 1999 I returned to the place where fifty-four years before my life had been dramatically changed forever. Following a flight over the old battle zones in a light aircraft, my host Bernado Cattani took me to the very field where my plane had crashed. There was a row of cars, and people standing there, along with two journalists and, to my amazement, four people who had witnessed the crash. It was an emotional moment.

And on the penultimate evening Bernado threw a big party for local war enthusiasts, and the four witnesses to my crash. To complete a very emotional four days for me, into the party was carried an eight foot length of my Spitfire's fuselage, peppered with bullet holes, which had been used for 54 years as a dog kennel!

The fantastic four days I spent with the Cattani family will live in my memory forever.

*From the BBC's WW2 People's War, an archive of World War Two memories – written by the public, gathered by the BBC.
Contributed by; ageconcern7oaks.
People in story; Michael Hyatt
Location of story; UK, Africa, Italy
Background to story; Royal Air Force
BBC Article ID A4446605
Contributed on; 13 July 2005*

Michael was born in Hackney 21st April 1924 where the family ran a shoemaking business. They moved to Woodford where he went to Grammar School.

Early memories of Michael by his brother Tony

I have known Michael all my life. He was my big brother. Michael was big in more than the mere physical sense, he taught me so much.

He taught me to climb trees, to ride a bike, to skate, to shoot, and to play cricket with stumps chalked on the house wall.

Not only did he teach me, he protected me. When as a small child I fell from a tree and broke my arm, he put his arm around me to escort me back to the house. The GP came and while he set my arm and bandaged it, Michael held my uninjured hand to comfort me.

He had a wicked sense of humour. Our mother, although a gentle lady, was a strict grammarian – she came from a literary family. One evening when I was about 10, she was giving me a lesson and she asked, "Do you know what an apostrophe is?" Michael, without looking up from his homework, said "Yes. Isn't he one of those blokes who followed Jesus?"

When time came to be evacuated, in order to stay together, I went with Michael and his school. While we were waiting in the playground, some boys began pushing me around. Michael, without threatening anyone, eased me away and stood in front of me. From then on no-one touched me. We were evacuated to Brentwood. I was placed in a home with an elderly couple, whilst Michael, aged 15, was placed in a home with two teenage girls. His schoolwork suffered!

Shortly after leaving school, Michael went to work for Lloyds Bank. They were very Dickensian. They sat at long high benches and were forced to write with their right hands. Michael being naturally left-handed was told that if he could not do so, he would have to leave. At home he spent many hours perfecting this skill. This was a typical example of Michael's very determined nature. If he wanted something he would go all-out to get it.

Then one day he came home and said he had volunteered for the RAF. Our parents were devastated because they remembered the slaughter of the First World War but he said he wanted to be a pilot and the only way was to volunteer. Letters came from Bulawayo and Salisbury in Africa, and other strange sounding places. Then one day came a photo of him with his sergeant's stripes and wings. Oh, we were so proud. Mum bought a silver-wings brooch studded with diamonds. Then came letters from Egypt and we knew he was going to war.

Later came the dreadful telegram to say that Michael was missing, believed killed. I had never seen our father cry before but he did then. His first-born son, his high hope.

Another telegram told us that Michael was not dead but dangerously ill in a hospital in Naples. He lay unconscious for many weeks and his arms and legs became fixed in a foetal position. On his return home, I remember helping him regain movement in his arms which must have been agony for him, but he never said a word of complaint.

After much determined effort, he recovered enough to go back to the bank. He realised that if he wanted to get on in the bank he must have the bank qualifications. He studied and studied and obtained them.

One weekend he went to a bank dance and came home saying, he had met the girl he was going to marry. That was Sybil. They married and had two splendid children. Michael is flying now in a different universe to this. Keep flying, Mike. Thanks for being such a splendid brother.

Later memories from John and Susan

Apparently the evening Michael met Sybil, she was only at the dance as the queue at the cinema was too long! The following day, after cheekily checking bank records that she was indeed 21, he asked her out. They became engaged and married two years later. They had two children, John and Susan. There had been a bet as to whether their new car – a green Morris Minor- would arrive before or after the baby. The car won. Whenever it rained, this treasured car was dried and polished before being garaged and not a spot of rust was found on it when it was sold 14 years later.

Michael was a keen photographer and member of a local camera club. He preferred taking photos of people, either posed using a screen and lamps to get the right shadow or capturing more natural pictures. He spent many a happy hour developing black and white photos in the dark room he had built in the loft, mounting them for the local competitions.

He was also keen on DIY. He was frequently found up ladders, wallpapering and painting inside and outside the house and almost as frequently falling off the ladders, suffering no more than a few bruises. He even fell off the roof one day, whilst checking the chimney. Another time he put his foot through the ceiling whilst up in the loft. The family remembers a time when he was standing on the kitchen counter, tinkering with the electrics. With a sudden yell, Michael seemed to freeze except for the tiny shuffling of his feet towards the edge of the counter before launching himself to the floor. He had become part of the mains and needed to break the circuit. Again just a few bruises! But he never attempted it again.

Michael was an active member of Panmure Lodge. The friendship and support he received there gave him self-belief and he found his voice, enjoying a successful year as Worshipful Master.

Michael found the close work at the bank affected him and he was granted early retirement. He immediately joined the local cooking class, entitled 'Be your own Chef for Retired Gentlemen', delighting his family with his rapidly improving culinary skills. He also kept busy with many activities including bowling, upholstery, attending several social groups, open-air concerts and frequent theatre trips, developing a passion for musicals. He acquired a camper van and he and Sybil spent many happy weekends 'camping' away from home. He began to wonder how he had ever had time to go to work!

Michael was a keen traveller and following Sybil's retirement they took an around-the-world trip. Susan joined them and over 4 months they travelled through Hong Kong, Bali, Perth, Adelaide, Sydney, Cairns and Melbourne, before flying to New Zealand catching up with cousins and friends and taking a coach trip round the north and south islands before flying back home via Hawaii and Los Angeles.

Sadly in the late eighties, Sybil's brain tumour returned, resulting in increasing disability until, after a series of falls, she became wheelchair bound and completely dependent upon Michael. He was a most devoted carer, pouring himself selflessly into keeping her at home as long as possible. However this time was not all sad as Susan married Richard, producing Caroline and Nicola. John married Sandy and they had Ned and Freya.

John and Sandy shared a memorable and relaxing holiday with Michael in Ireland just after the loss of Sybil. However Michael's driving was at times a white-knuckle experience, steering down middle of the road, missing Irish lorries by inches. John was convinced that his dad was still flying a Spitfire.

Michael continued to keep busy and enjoyed his various hobbies but his family were aware that his selfless dedication to Sybil's care had exhausted him and they were concerned over his well-being. When he met Sylvia the colour and relaxed smile returned. How marvellous that this kind and compassionate man was fortunate enough to get a second chance at happiness. Susan treasures her dad's stay with them the Christmas before last, whilst Sylvia was visiting her son in Australia. A precious time spent enjoying his company and reminding her of what an amazing man he was. Michael entertained his grand-daughters telling risqué jokes, face dead-pan, with a wicked glint in his eye.

John treasures a memory of a golden afternoon last summer, spent with his dad just sitting in the back garden at Tatsfield, two chaps chatting and relaxing in the sunshine, putting the world to rights.

John and Susan reflect that even as an adult their Dad did not stop teaching them. His perseverance, dogged determination, fighting spirit and good humour in the face of obstacles are lessons never to be forgotten, an example to us all.

Sylvia's Memories

Michael joined an exercise class as he always wanted to keep himself fit and it was there that he met Sylvia. They struck up a friendship and Sylvia quickly realized that Michael needed companionship and help to live his life to the full, and in the following years they spent a great deal of time together and life blossomed again for Michael.

He started to attend the R.A.F.A and the Aircrew Association meetings, making lots of new friends and having a great time at the many events.

Michael loved travel and organizing various holidays. They travelled to New Zealand, Australia and to Zimbabwe where Michael was sent during the war for his flying training.

He wanted to retrace his steps and after further research he and Sylvia went to Italy to visit the scene of his Spitfire crash.

They were given a wonderful welcome by their Italian host, Bernardo Cattani, who arranged for Michael to meet witnesses of the crash and to meet a gentleman who had kept part of the Merlin engine in pristine condition, picked up in the field in 1945. They were taken in a private plane to fly over the territory Michael had flown on his missions. At a party on the last evening, to Michael's great surprise, a huge parcel was unwrapped containing part of his fuselage which is still used today as a shelter for farm dogs.

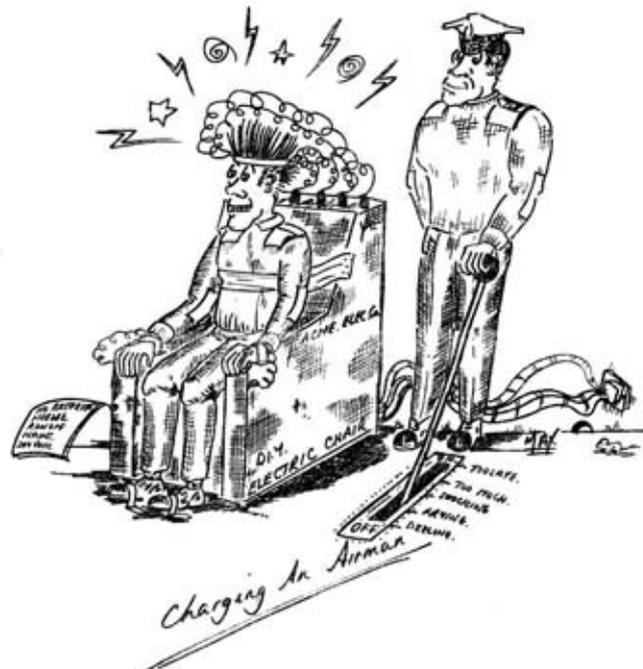
Michael proposed regularly to Sylvia, and when, to his great delight she finally named the day 10 years ago, they married and moved together to Tatsfield. They have been so happy and grateful for the wonderful community here.

Following his severe stroke last year, Michael needed full-time nursing. Sylvia was determined to find the perfect place for him. This was the wonderful Belvedere House, part of the Seafarers Association -the pilot joined the sailors! Michael was warmly welcomed by the devoted staff and their care and attention was rewarded with his ready smile, quickly earning him the nickname 'Smiler'. He could effortlessly charm everyone with nothing more than that infectious grin. Being lost for words was made easier as his special smile spoke volumes.

Michael passed away peacefully on Sunday 19th February after suffering a serious stroke in October 2011. He was a true fighter, not only in the skies, but on the ground too, and was very much loved by family and friends. The funeral service was held Monday 19th March at St Marys Church, Tatsfield, Kent.

The cards and letters Sylvia has been receiving show how much Michael was loved and respected by all who knew him as they frequently mentioned his lovely smile.

Michael was a true family man and friend, a gentleman, loved by us all, our hero. He will be greatly missed. We would like you to share with us your memories of him as we have shared some of ours with you, in a joyous celebration of his full and active life.



Military (and not so) Quotations

“Don't listen to anyone who tells you that you can't do this or that. That's nonsense. Make up your mind, you'll never use crutches or a stick, then have a go at everything. Go to school, join in all the games you can. Go anywhere you want to. But never, never let them persuade you that things are too difficult or impossible.”

Douglas Bader

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“Rules are for the obedience of fools and the guidance of wise men.”

Douglas Bader

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It is better to be violent, if there is violence in our hearts, than to put on the cloak of nonviolence to cover impotence.

Mohandas K. Gandhi

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It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood, who strives valiantly; who errs and comes short again and again; because there is not effort without error and shortcomings; but who does actually strive to do the deed; who knows the great enthusiasm, the great devotion, who spends himself in a worthy cause, who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement and who at the worst, if he fails, at least he fails while daring greatly. So that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat.”

Theodore Roosevelt

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Filled with mingled cream and amber I will drain that glass again. Such hilarious visions clamber through the chambers of my brain -- Quaintest thoughts -- queerest fancies Come to life and fade away; who cares how time advances? I am drinking ale today.

Edgar Allan Poe

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"Is that a gun in your pocket or are you just glad to see me?"



Mae West



Northolt Sgt Awarded Top London Reservist Award



RAF Reservist, Sgt Ian Walton was recently presented with the Lord Lieutenant's Meritorious Service Certificate at the Reserve Forces and Cadets Association for Greater London (RFCA GL) awards ceremony in recognition of his longstanding commitment and contribution to 600 (City of London) Sqn based at RAF Northolt.

This prestigious event held at Handel Street Army Reserve Centre in Bloomsbury honours the outstanding achievements of the reserve forces in the local area.

Ian Walton, who works for Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs, has been a member of the RAF Reserves for the last 19 years, with the past 10 being dedicated to Flight Operations with the Royal Air Force, where through sheer hard work and dedication he has achieved the position of Flight Operations Manager. Recently mobilised Ian was able to put his extensive experience into practice supporting current Operations.

Ian has also enjoyed the challenges of participating in many training expeditions, including the RAF Ski Championships and the International Nijmegen Marches.

Addressing the invited guests at the ceremony, Wing Commander Mike Dudgeon, Vice Lord Lieutenant of Greater London, (Pictured with Sgt Ian Walton) presented the evening's awards and said, "Tonight is an evening of celebration to mark with great enthusiasm London's very special sons and daughters" he continued "It is also my chance to thank everyone on behalf of Her Majesty The Queen for their service. "

600 Sqn Commanding Officer, Wing Commander Tripp, who nominated Ian also praised his dedicated and tireless commitment to the reserves and said, " 600 Sqn continues to support current Operations alongside our regular RAF colleagues and could not do so without the loyalty and commitment of personnel like Sgt Walton, he is part of a professional diverse team that I am extremely proud of, and he is richly deserving of this official recognition."

More information on a career in the RAF Reserves is available from www.raf.mod.uk/rafreserves.

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The Olympic Ideal by the Revd Matthew Buchan

"The most important thing in the Olympic Games is not to win but to take part, just as the most important thing in life is not the triumph but the struggle. The essential thing is not to have conquered but to have fought well." Baron de Coubertin

In 1988 at the Seoul Olympics, British 400 metres athlete Derek Redmond was injured before his heat. It was four years' toil down the drain and Derek and his father were heartbroken.

In 1992, at the Barcelona Olympics, the Olympic Stadium was packed, with millions watching the 400m semi final on TV as Redmond was going down the back straight. Later he would say 'I was in the Zone', just flying. Then his hamstring went. Stewards came to help him off the track, the other athletes having already finished, but Redmond crawled to his feet, pushed them away, and began to hobble round the bend towards the line in agony.

Way up in the stadium, his father ran down the steps. He leapt over the barrier,

throwing off a security man in the process, and made his way to his son, who by this time was in the middle of the home straight, sobbing, in pain, but determined to get to the line.

Derek Redmond's father put his boy's arm round his neck. In front of all those people, father and son staggered over the line together.

This was an unforgettable moment for all who watched it, and some would say a great example of the Olympic ideal – for Derek Redmond at that moment it certainly wasn't the winning that was important but the taking part and finishing.

As we draw nearer to the Olympics (amid all the stories of people selling Olympic torches on ebay!) inevitably attention will focus more and more on our medal prospects. Perhaps it is due to professionalism, or maybe due to Lottery funding auditing, but so much (for example continued funding) now seems to rest on winning.

Of course winning has always been important to athletes – otherwise there would be no point in competing, but the focus seems to get more and more on the medals. We are tempted to judge our Nation in terms of who we have beaten in the medal table; it's as if winning is everything. Of course we like to win and we all love winners but the Olympic creed reminds us that should also learn from those who have simply competed well.

Life is sometimes about winning; about getting that job or that award, but often it is as much about having to learn how to fail gracefully, and allowing others to carry us, just as we carry them when

they need it. This is something we learn in a military environment – teamwork depends on relying on others.

“They’re the sources of fleeting moments – instants, really – that have become permanently seared in our collective memories. Derek Redmond bravely making it through with a little help.” Barack Obama

Perhaps the Olympic creed and the example of Derek Redmond’s Dad have as much to teach us as those who win the medals?

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600 Squadron visit to ‘Hellfire Corner’

In May 1940, 600 Squadron (Sqn) RAuxAF was stationed at RAF Manston in Kent in the heart of what was known as ‘Hellfire Corner’, due to the intensity of the air war in the area. Over a gloriously sunny weekend in May 2012, current members of 600 Sqn returned once more to Manston to follow in the footsteps of their gallant predecessors.

During the early part of the Second World War, 600 Sqn was operating the out-dated Bristol Blenheim and on May 10th 1940, almost half the Sqn, including the Commanding Officer was lost on a mission over Rotterdam.

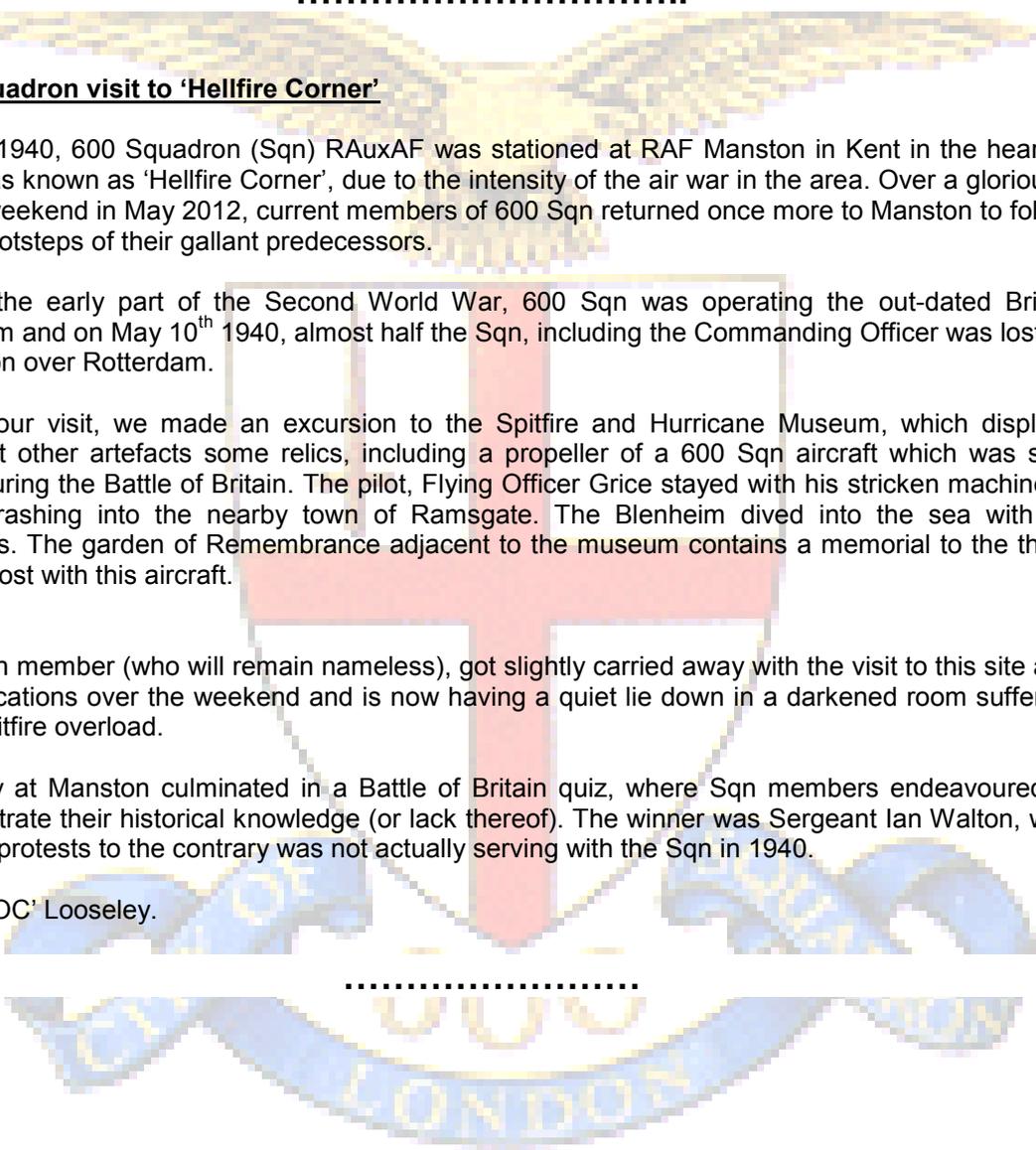
During our visit, we made an excursion to the Spitfire and Hurricane Museum, which displays amongst other artefacts some relics, including a propeller of a 600 Sqn aircraft which was shot down during the Battle of Britain. The pilot, Flying Officer Grice stayed with his stricken machine to avoid crashing into the nearby town of Ramsgate. The Blenheim dived into the sea with no survivors. The garden of Remembrance adjacent to the museum contains a memorial to the three airmen lost with this aircraft.

One Sqn member (who will remain nameless), got slightly carried away with the visit to this site and other locations over the weekend and is now having a quiet lie down in a darkened room suffering from Spitfire overload.

The day at Manston culminated in a Battle of Britain quiz, where Sqn members endeavoured to demonstrate their historical knowledge (or lack thereof). The winner was Sergeant Ian Walton, who despite protests to the contrary was not actually serving with the Sqn in 1940.

SAC ‘DOC’ Looseley.

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Capel Le Ferne by SAC Stuart Edwards



As part of a Battle of Britain themed force development weekend in Kent, personnel of 600 Squadron paid their respects at the Battle of Britain Memorial at Capel le Ferne. The memorial was laid out in the 1990s. It was built largely due to the efforts of former battle of Britain Pilot, the late Geoffrey Page and is manned and maintained largely by volunteers.

The memorial is on the cliff tops just outside Dover, and overlooks Folkestone. Both were regular targets for German bombing in the Battle. Also nearby are the remains of one of the RDF stations that gave the RAF such a competitive edge in the summer of 1940. Kent is of course home to the remains of such fighter command stations as Manston, Tangmere, Biggin Hill and Hawkinge – all of which form part of the national collective memory.



It was and is fitting that a memorial was built here. The skies above the memorial were christened "Hellfire Corner" by the RAF pilots due to the ferocity of the air fighting that once went on here. However, on our visit in May, the skies were clear, quiet and peaceful. On a warm spring day it wasn't too hard to imagine the view when white contrails curved everywhere in sight marking the progress of countless individual dogfights and contests

The memorial itself is built so that when viewed from the air it forms a massive, white, 3 bladed propeller hewed into the cliff tops of Kent. In the centre is a statue of a young pilot sitting and looking out to sea, perhaps waiting for his squadron to return overhead 72 years after the battle. Nearby are replicas of a Spitfire and Hurricane as a reminder of the two fine aircraft that provided a tenuous prospect of national salvation after Dunkirk.



As well as the monument itself there is a granite wall on which the names recorded in the Battle of Britain roll of honour have been carved. As I have been Squadron archivist for the last year, I was familiar enough with the Squadron's part in the battle to be able to pick out names of our aircrew recorded on the roll of honour. Some names flew with the Squadron as it tentatively explored night fighting; J.J. Booth and Norman Haynes for example. Others, such as Mickey Mount and Ronald Kellett, flew with and led other famous units such as 303 Squadron. More poignantly, and lesser known, were names like Marcus Kramer – who had narrowly escaped death in May 1940 over Rotterdam, and who had escaped occupied Holland only to become one of the first Jewish casualties in RAF service when killed in the battle a few weeks later.

We also reflected on the names not on the memorial wall – the ground crew who like us were all part-time volunteers before the war started in 1939. Nonetheless, they worked on with great professionalism and courage, working through bombing raids to maintain the Squadron airframes by day, and working on the airframes of the fighter squadrons by night. The long summer of 1940 saw 600 Squadron achieve no victories in the air, but the Squadron's contribution was obvious and important.

The memorial is open throughout the year and is well worth a visit.

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Battle of Britain Memorial Day 2012

The Battle of Britain Memorial Trust organises a number of events throughout the year, with the undoubted highlight being Memorial Day, the annual commemoration of the anniversary of the start of the battle. Although usually held on the Sunday closest to the first day of the Battle, 11 July, for logistical reasons the 2012 event is planned for 15 July.



Bof B Memorial day 2010. 600 Sqn Assn Standard far left.



<http://www.battleofbritainmemorial.org/>

600 Squadron Association News



Dear all – an appeal and something for us all to consider.....what happens when our time is up? - By Andy Cameron

A reasonably unsavoury thought, but one that I feel is important to register. This appeal is meant not to offend or upset, but to simply plant a thought in all of our minds.

We all of us will one day, pass over to that great Airfield in the sky, but hopefully not any time soon!

What I would like to ask of you all is a bit like a will – indeed, if you have one that you put something in it. If you don't have a will, please do consider one, or at the very least, please make sure your family are aware of any of your wishes upon your death.

My appeal then.

Would you please consider leaving your 600, 601 or 604 Squadron memorabilia to the Association? Many people like to keep things as mementos, many do not, but we would really like to have anything of historical value to add to our archive – photographs, log books, uniform items, all are of great value to us. Your items are of great significance to the Association and will be preserved and protected if you give them to us.

Are you a secret £Millionaire? Would you leave some or all of your wealth to the Association please?

Even if you're not a £Millionaire, these days most people don't really like or want flowers at their funeral, but prefer donations to a charity. Did you know that the 600 Squadron Association is a registered charity? Any donation made in lieu of flowers, in memory or respect for you could go straight to the Association and help us to continue our work providing support to members like you.

If you would like to do this, PLEASE DO TELL YOUR FAMILY.

It's a difficult thing to do and often people don't like to talk about it, but please remember, we will always try and represent the Association or a Squadron at a (your) funeral. Please tell your families about us and give them my contact details – if you would like to think that when it's your turn, that we were there to see you off – we need to know if anything happens to you – so again, PLEASE DO TELL YOU FAMILY. It is SO sad when we hear of a death long afterwards.

The level of our presence is up to you and your family. When we can be there, we will be discreet – but otherwise, subject to availability, I can attend with the Association Standard. Sometimes, an RAF Bugler can play you out to the last post – and none of this is at any cost to you or your family. This is our courtesy gesture, our thank you, our goodbye.

The key I need to emphasise here is the need to make sure your family knows about us and what you want – and making sure they let us know as soon as possible. Arguably, these issues are the last thing on the minds of loved ones at a time like that, but where we have been involved in the past, and we do quite a lot, the family always expresses how grateful they were that we were there and how our participation was a both a comfort and fitting & appropriate way to mark the passing of an Air Force veteran.

Please don't think the object is to profit from a death – on the contrary, the idea is to preserve and protect our history – because you are part of it. Any financial donations are purely to enable the Association to continue to function. Your donations help finance things like our meetings, trips (when we have them) newsletters and correspondence etc.

And finally – we always like to publish an obituary – this is often written by families, but often, your family will discover that they may not have known as much about you as they thought! If you had a choice, would you write your own? Again, discuss this with your family. If it's important to you, try and make sure someone has all the info – and try and include a uniformed picture if you have one.

OK, that's that then – point made, now let's focus on living.

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Blank Cards for Birthdays, Christmas etc?



The Blenheim Society, by kind permission of Artist Tim O'Brian have produced some blank cards of the above painting "Final Destination Waalhaven". The original painting was presented to 600 Sqn by Sqn Ldr Kevin O'Shaughnessy QVRM AE on his retirement in 2003. The central Blenheim, BQ-O, was flown by Norman Hayes and was the only aircraft to return.

The cards are sold in packs of 5 (with envelopes) at £5 +p&p (p&p will be 60p for one pack, 90p for two packs). The insides are plain – there is no Christmas message printed therein, so they can be used not just as Christmas cards but also as Birthday cards, thank you cards etc. etc.

To order, please contact Ron Scott on 01992 442608 or my email r.j.scott@ntlworld.com

All profits go to the Blenheim Society.

**THE DOMINIONS STRIKE BACK - The Career of Captain Loudon Pierce Watkins, MC, RFC,
Home Defence Pilot. By Ian White & Jack Meadows**

What should have been the peaceful small hours of a 1917 summer morning in rural Suffolk was spoilt by the all too familiar noise of Zeppelin engines. Despite the losses sustained by Germany's Imperial Navy in the autumn of 1916, the officers and men of the Naval Airship Service continued to raid the industrial north and Midlands of England when the weather conditions favoured them. The vast majority of Home Defence pilots who opposed the raiders were British, but there were amongst their number a small group of Dominion pilots who came to Britain to join the RFC and found themselves defending the night skies over England.

To a Canadian member from this group, it had become a routine matter of yet again taking off into the dark sky to chase fruitlessly after the intruders and return empty handed. However, on the night of 16/17 June 1917, the 20-year old lieutenant from Toronto was to assist in the destruction of a Zeppelin carrying no less a personage than the second-in-command of the Imperial Navy's Zeppelin Fleet. Why was this so and how did it come about?

Only at the 1926 Imperial Conference were the British Dominions granted full autonomy. Even then, although Canada had been a Dominion since 1867, many English speaking Canadians still thought of Britain as the Mother Country.

It is not therefore surprising that when Germany invaded Belgium on 4 August 1914 and Britain declared war, Canada quickly followed suit. Nor was it surprising that so many English speaking Canadians quickly volunteered for the armed forces. Amongst these were the Watkins brothers.

The four Watkins sons lived with their parents Edward James and Elizabeth, at 95 Breadalbane Street Toronto. They were born in Canada, but it is not known if the parents were recent arrivals, or long term Canadians. All four boys joined up. John, presumably the eldest, went to France as a sapper, perhaps as the quickest way of seeing action (even at home the war was expected to be over by Christmas). The other three had all somehow become air-minded. Harry is presumed to have been the youngest, for he later became an RAF cadet at Burwash Hall, Canada, a late (1917) institution. The middle two, Edward and Loudon Pierce, a student known to all as "Don" and born on 26 August 1897, went together to the Curtiss School of Flying in Toronto.

The number and success of Canadian airmen in the Great War was out of all proportion to the small population of the country. Most went overseas with the Army and only later transferred to the RFC/RNAS. A few knew a better way; an aviator's certificate would almost certainly bring an immediate RFC or RNAS commission. It was with an eye to this that the American pioneer aviator, Glen Curtiss, on 9 May 1915 set up at Toronto the Curtiss Aviation School.

The School started with Curtiss Model F single-engined flying boats, later six Curtiss JN-3 Jennys on floats, operating off Toronto Island. Soon it started a land operation with six JN-3s on wheels at nearby Long Branch Rifle Ranges (winter ice prevented water operations) from which most pilots graduated. The cost of the approximately 400 minutes flying time needed for the Royal Aero Club Certificate was \$400 (the modern day equivalent of perhaps C\$7,000, or £3,300 sterling). Both the RFC and the RNAS had recruiting missions in Ottawa and for successful candidates would refund most of the cost. The Loudons presumably had somehow to earn, or borrow the money.

Don and Edward must have been amongst the earliest candidates, starting their course in July, or August 1915, for they were accepted by the RFC on 10 August 1915 and commissioned as 2nd Lieutenants on 8 December and arrived in the UK two weeks later. There, after an administration and "square-bashing" course they would have been posted to other RFC schools for further training on a variety of (mainly old) aircraft before being parted and going their different ways to operational squadrons. Edward survived the war - Don did not.

Don was posted to France to join No.7 Squadron, flying R.E.8s, and then later in June to No.21 Squadron at Fienvillers flying R.E.7s. Escort, close support, offensive and defensive patrols saw several encounters, but no decisive action is reported.

At home there was public demand for more action against the Zeppelin airships raiding London, East Anglia and the industrial Midlands. Although the Army wanted every available aircraft in France, the War Office was forced to establish twelve Home Defence squadrons (one reserved for training) to supplement the existing RNAS defensive fighters. Watkins, by then an experienced pilot, was in December 1916 posted back to join No.37 (Home Defence) Squadron based at Woodham Mortimer, near Maldon, Essex.

No.37 Squadron had formed at Woodham Mortimer under Major W.B.Hargreave on 15 September 1916, with detachments at Rochford, Stow Maries and Goldhanger, where a picture was taken of Watkins alongside a Sopwith 1½ Strutter. S.F.Wise's History of the RCAF says Watkins "gained some limited experience of the nature of anti-Zeppelin operations during the raid of 16/17 March 1917 and probably during that of 23/24 May as well, but like other airmen was unable to come to grips with the height climbers".

Height climbers, a British term, refers to an improved type of Zeppelin introduced by the Imperial German Navy's Airship Service during February 1917. These 'ships, of the "s", "t" and "u" Types, were of a lighter construction, had only five instead of the six engines of the previous "r" Type and a restricted bomb load, which reduced their weight to allow them to reach heights in excess of 20,000 feet (6,100 metres). With the height climbers the Navy's Leader of Airships, *Fregattenkapitan* Peter Strasser, hoped to provide the Imperial Navy's Airship Service with an "invulnerable" airship capable of bombing from altitudes of 16 - 20,000 feet (4,900 - 6,100 metres), at which heights they would be immune from interception by aircraft and outside the reach of anti-aircraft guns. It was Strasser's expectation that the naval Zeppelin fleet would be able to redress the losses suffered in the autumn of 1916, when five of his 'ships had fallen to the guns of British night-fighters.

When flying at high altitude the height climbers were invulnerable to interception by aeroplanes and outside the range of anti-aircraft guns. But flying and navigating these 'ships was by no means easy. The lack of oxygen and severe cold at high altitudes reduced the effectiveness of the crews and impeded the proper operation of the 'ship. Crews became sluggish and slow to respond to commands, whilst control lines and engine telegraph cables became slack due to the changes in thermal expansion and contraction. Nevertheless, by dint of hard work, acclimatisation and good leadership on the part of the officers and warrant officers, the Airship Service overcame the operating problems and introduced the height climbers to raiding sorties over England in the spring of 1917.

The RFC in conjunction with the RNAS had by the summer of 1916 developed a relatively sophisticated intelligence and air defence reporting network, by which means Zeppelins could be tracked from their bases in northern Germany, or Belgium, to the point where they made landfall in England. Ground based observers were then capable of tracking them inland. By the end of 1916 the Home Defence force comprised 17,341 officers and men to man 110 aeroplanes in twelve fighter squadrons and anti-aircraft guns, principally around London. Operating night-fighters in 1917 was not easy. Fighter crews had to contend with poor weather (especially fog which wiped out their ground references), a limited blackout, few navigation facilities other than visual beacons and the pilot's knowledge of his airfield and patrol area and few and primitive flying instruments.

The principle aircraft employed as night-fighters; the Royal Aircraft Factory's B.E.2c/e, B.E.12 and F.E.2b, were relatively fragile machines that were frequently damaged and/or wrecked on landing, surprisingly with little or no loss of life. Their performance in theory enabled them to reach 18,000 feet (5,500 metres), but the state of their engine and the weather usually reduced this to much lower altitudes; 12 - 16,000 feet (3,700 to 4,900 metres) being more common. Armament comprised a single upwards firing 0.303 (7.69mm) Lewis gun with three, or four ninety round drums, firing solid and incendiary ammunition. To see the Zeppelin it had to be illuminated by searchlights (their underneath was painted in black non-reflecting distemper by 1917 to make things more difficult) and the fighter had to climb to within lethal range (typically 500 feet - 150 metres) without being seen by the lookouts who manned the 'ship's machine guns. The fighter (preferably) needed to be above the Zeppelin to enable him to dive on his target and then swoop up underneath its keel before opening fire. This in itself was difficult to achieve in a fighter whose climbing speed was less than the cruising speed of the Zeppelin, its top speed was only 10 - 20 mph (16 - 32 km/hr) faster

and its service ceiling was barely above 13,000 feet (3,960 metres). Unless airborne well in advance of the Zeppelin's arrival and flying on a patrol line across its path and with the raider flying at 13,000 feet, or less (as they were on occasions when taking navigation fixes, or repairing engines), it took a very long time to get anywhere near the enemy. It should be noted that by the spring of 1917 the British wireless interception service were able to provide fairly accurate information on the progress of airship raids, as the Germans frequently reported their position and the weather state. If all these conditions were met, the pilot stood a good chance of destroying the raider. If not his chances of success were negligible.

On the afternoon of 16 June six Zeppelins, *L42*, *L44*, *L45*, *L46*, *L47* and *L48*, were prepared at their bases in northern Germany and issued with orders to bomb London and the south of England. The raid was led by Strasser's deputy, *Korvettenkapitan* Victor Schute in *L48*. Things started to go wrong from the very beginning. *L46* and *L47* were prevented from leaving their sheds at Ahlhorn by strong crosswinds, whilst *L44* and *L45* experienced engine failures and were forced to return. Only *L42* under the command of *Kapitanleutnant* Martin Dietrich and *L48* captained by *Kapitanleutnant der Reserve* Herbert Eichler flew on across the North Sea.

L48, suffering from a failed starboard engine and a poorly running forward engine, was 40 miles (64 km) to the north-east of Harwich, Essex, at 23.34 hours. The 'ship's mechanic set about repairing the engines, but by the time this work was completed at 02.00 hours it was too late to bomb London and instead Eichler decided to attack Harwich as an alternative target. Having bombed Harwich he planned to escape as quickly as possible across the North Sea before dawn broke.

L48's exact route that night is not known with any certainty. It is known that she crossed the Suffolk coast at, or near, Orfordness at 01.45 hours and then flew inland before turning south to approach Harwich from the north. Eichler released his bombs at the naval base at 02.50 hours from a height of 18,000 feet (5,500 metres), but his aim was poor in the face of heavy anti-aircraft gunfire and they undershot to fall harmlessly into fields in the vicinity of the villages of Kirton and Martlesham. On completing the attack at 02.55 Eichler made a wireless telegraphy (W/T) request to the wireless station in the German Bight for bearings. The return message indicated that strong tail-winds were likely to be found at lower levels which would aid his escape across the North Sea. Whilst communicating with the W/T station *L48* must have drifted inland again, for at 03.10 she was reported as being inland in the vicinity of the small Suffolk town of Aldburgh, 19.5 miles (31 km) to the north-east of Harwich, passing over Orfordness once again. Furthermore, Eichler had taken her down to 13,000 feet (3,950 metres) to take advantage of the tail winds.

By sheer misfortune *L48* had made her original landfall over the Orfordness Experimental Station, whose airfield provided fighters for the daylight protection of London (at that time, spring of 1917, London was also subjected to daylight attacks by Gotha bombers of the German Army Air Service). In response to an air raid warning issued earlier on in the evening of the 16th the station was at a readiness state and received orders to "scramble" its aircraft. Lieutenant E.W. Clarke flying a B.E.2c took-off from Orfordness airfield at 01.50 hours, whilst *L48* hovered overhead at 18,000 feet (5,500 metres) trying to repair her engines. Clarke was followed shortly afterwards by Lieutenant F.D. Holder and Sergeant S. Ashby in an F.E.2b. Unable to coax the B.E. any higher than 11,000 feet, Clarke fired off four drums of Lewis-gun ammunition in the vain hope of hitting the airship. Holder's F.E. reached 14,000 feet (4,300 metres), still then well below *L48*, and like Clarke loosed-off Lewis-gun fire in the hope of hitting something, but Ashby's gun jammed and could not be cleared.

Having bombed Harwich and turned, or drifted north towards Aldburgh, *L48* was once again clearly visible from the ground at Orford. The station's commanding officer, Major P.C. Hooper, ordered Captain Robert Saundby (later Air Marshal Sir Robert Saundby, MC, DFC, Air Chief Marshal Harris' deputy in Bomber Command from 1942 to 1945) to take off at the earliest opportunity, before telephoning No.37 (Home Defence) Squadron at Woodham Mortimer to advise them of a target. Major W.B. Hargreave, in turn alerted A Flight at Goldhanger, near Maldon, Essex, and C Flight at Rochford, near Southend. No.37 Squadron was essentially a day-fighter unit equipped with Sopwith 1½ Strutters, with only the B.E.12 flown by Watkins having anything like a reasonable performance for pursuing Zeppelins. At 02.06 hours Watkins took off with instructions to search the area around

Harwich for a Zeppelin. Saundby in a D.H.2 was airborne from Orfordness at 02.55 hours, by which time *L48* was down to 13,000 feet (3,950 metres).

From reports of the incident it would appear that Saundby and Watkins attacked *L48* sometime around 03.10 hours over Aldeburgh. Both pilots climbed until they were in a position beneath *L48* with Saundby firing at the 'ship's tail and Watkins working directly below the envelope, before shifting his aim to the tail. Having cleared the stoppage on Ashby's Lewis-gun, Holder also appeared on the scene and completely unaware of the presence of the other two aircraft, saw the 'ship begin to loose height rapidly. Holder was able to position the F.E for Ashby to expend four drums of Lewis-gun ammunition into the raider. Fire was seen to leak out of the airship's tail section, before spreading rapidly through the rest of the envelope as described in Watkins combat report¹:-

"I climbed to 8,000 feet over the aerodrome, then struck off in the direction of Harwich still climbing, when at 11,000 feet (3,350 metres) over Harwich I saw the A.A guns firing and several searchlights pointing towards the same spot. A minute later I observed the Zeppelin about 2,000 feet (600 metres) above me. After climbing about 500 feet (150 metres) I fired one drum into its tail, but it took no effect. I then climbed to 12,000 feet (3,650 metres) and fired another drum into its tail without any effect. I then decided to wait until I was at close range before firing another drum; I then climbed steadily until I reached 13,200 feet (4,025 metres) and was then about 500 feet (150 metres) under the Zeppelin. I fired three short bursts of about seven rounds and then the remainder of the drum. The Zeppelin burst into flames at the tail, the fire running along both sides, the whole Zeppelin caught fire and fell burning."

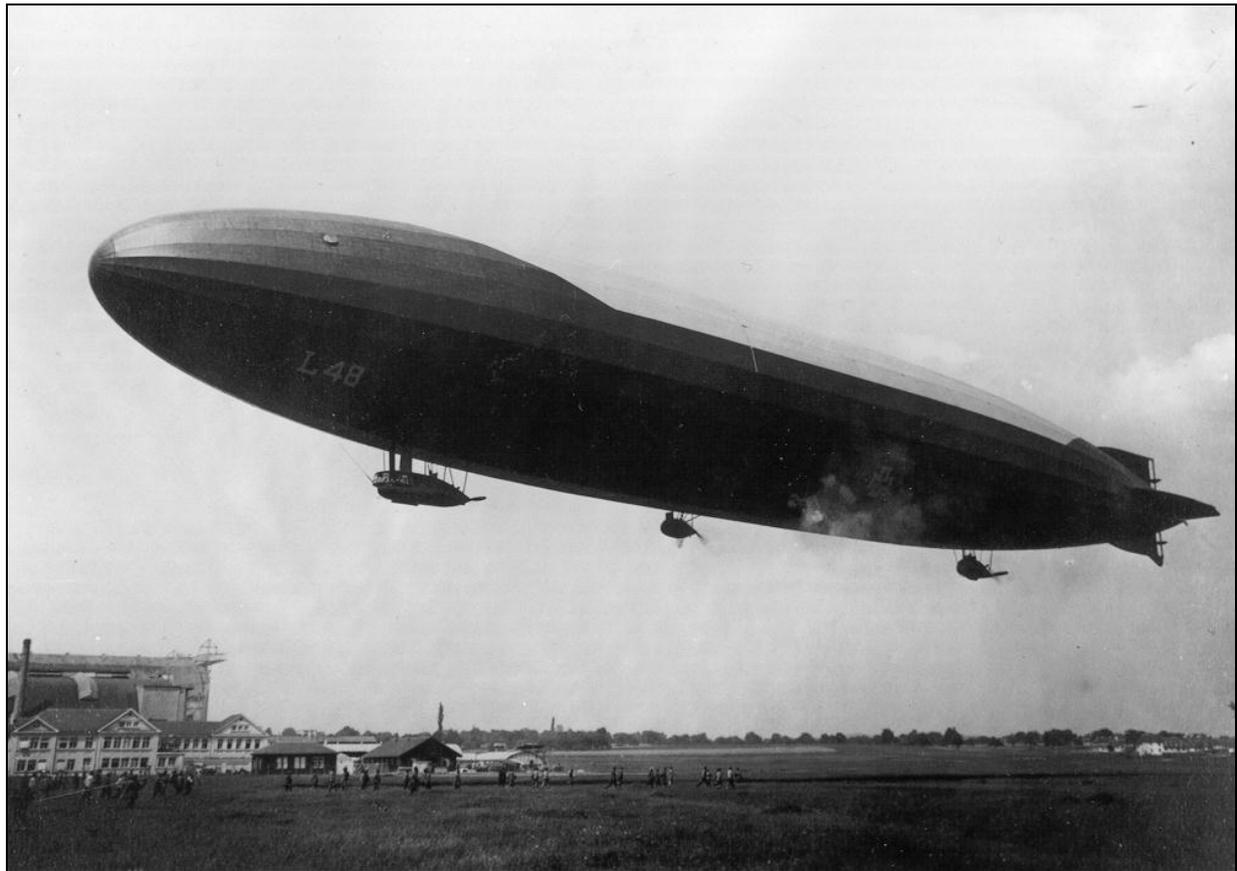
L48 crashed at Holly Tree Farm, near to Theberton, Suffolk, 6 miles (9.5 km) north-north-west of Aldeburgh, taking Schutze, Eichler and all but three members of the crew with her. Most of the crew had already jumped from the blazing wreck, preferring a quick end to one of being roasted alive. *Leutnant zur See* Otto Mieth, the 'ship's executive officer, survived with two broken legs, along with two mechanics, Wilhelm Uecker and Heinrich Ellerkamm. Uecker was badly burned and died eighteen months later on Armistice day 1918, whilst Ellerkamm who was in charge of the midships gondola escaped with superficial burns.

The available evidence of *L48*'s destruction was sifted by the War Office to decide which of the three pilots was to be awarded the credit. Initial investigations indicated that all three participants were worthy of being awarded a combined credit, however, the War Office eventually awarded the primary credit to Watkins. For their part in the action Watkins, Saundby and Holder were each awarded the Military Cross.

Less than two months after his Zeppelin success, in August 1917, Watkins was promoted to captain to command a flight of No.38 (Home Defence) Squadron at Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire. In April 1918 with the Zeppelin threat over and the Gotha one diminishing, he joined No.148 (Bomber) Squadron at Andover, Hampshire, flying F.E.2ds and moved immediately with them to France. The Squadron's main task was night bombing, where his night flying experience would have been invaluable.

At 00.30 hours on the night of 1 July Don Watkins and his observer, Lieutenant C.W.Wridgeway, took off from Sains les Pernes in an F.E.2d carrying two 20lb (9 kg) and one 112lb (50 kg) bombs. Less than half an hour later a broken rocker box arm caused engine failure and he crash landed in a corn field at Ostreville. Wridgeway was able to clamber out of the inverted wreckage, but Don Watkins was killed instantaneously. Canadian Captain Loudon Pierce "Don" Watkins, MC, RFC, is buried at Ligny-St Flochel Cemetery, Averdoint, Pas de Calais.

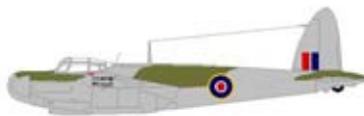
¹ Watkin's report is listed in the Imperial War Museum's file *Pilot's Reports Relating to Destruction of Airships*, and quoted in Dr Douglas Robinson's book *The Zeppelin in Combat*.



Zeppelin *L48* taking off from Friedrichschafen to the south of the factory's hangers, sometime during May 1917 for a trial flight. The smoke rising between the two aft gondolas is caused by the backfiring of the port engine (Zeppelin Museum).

Zeppelin L48 Specification

Gas Capacity	1,970,800 cu ft.	Engines	5 x 240hp Maybach HSLu
Length	644.7 ft.	Propellers	4 x Jarar L.Z
Diameter	78.4 ft.	Weight (empty)	56,900 lb. (25.4 tons)
Useful lift	85,800 lb. (38.3 tons)	Maximum speed	66 mph
Gas cells	18	Ceiling	20,000 ft.
Crew	20	Full speed endurance	7,600 miles



(Copyright C M B Barrass 2001- 2008)

Aircraft of the London Auxiliaries No.4 Bristol Blenheim IF by Ian White

HISTORY



*(Crown Copyright via the RAF Museum)
Bristol Blenheim If K7159 coded YK-N of No.54 Operational Training Unit, showing the port azimuth receive dipole aerial and the stub for the transmitter aerial of AI Mk.III on the nose. These aircraft were employed by 54 OTU for night-fighter and AI training from late 1940 to 1942, when they were replaced by Beaufighters. Many of 600 and 604's crews were trained on these aircraft.*

During a conference that was called by the London Chamber of Commerce and the Royal Aeronautical Society and held in the Mansion House on the 8th December 1935 to discuss airports in the UK, HRH The Prince of Wales told the audience of some 124 local authorities, that 'we must think in terms of [aircraft] cruising speeds of 250 mph [402 km/hr]'. This conclusion had also been drawn some six months earlier by Frank Barnwell, the Chief Designer of the Bristol Aeroplane Company, and Roy (later Sir Roy) Fedden the Chief Engineer of the Bristol Engine Company, who between them had sketched-out the design of a transport monoplane, capable of carrying six passengers and two pilots when powered by two Bristol Aquila Mk.I sleeve-valve, radial engines, then under development by Fedden. First run during September 1934, the engine was delivering 500-hp by October and had completed its fifty-hour civil certification test.

Designated Type 135 in Bristol's numbering system, the aircraft was a low-wing aircraft that was estimated to have a low drag and structural weight comparable to designs produced by Boeing, Lockheed and Douglas in the United States (US). Despite no authorisation being granted by the Bristol board to build a prototype, Fedden was granted funds to build two Aquila engines. However, during a discussion at a luncheon to discuss civil aviation with his editors, Lord Rothermere, the proprietor of the Daily Mail, proposed that he sponsor the building of an aircraft that was 'the fastest commercial aeroplane in Europe' and better than the Douglas Commercial No.1 (DC-1) then being built in the US. Informed by Robert Lewis of the *Bristol Evening News* that such an aircraft already existed in the form of the Type 135, albeit on paper, he put Lord Rothermere in touch with Barnwell who in turned quoted the performance of the aircraft as being 240 mph (386 km/hr) at 6,500 ft.

when powered by two Bristol Mercury radials. On the 26th March Lord Rothermere ordered one example of the aircraft for his private use as a light, fast, civil transport and to emphasize to the Air Ministry the RAF's current day-fighters would be no match for it, if it was used as a light-bomber. Following a meeting between Roy Fedden, Sir Stanley White, Bristol's chairman and principal shareholder, Barnwell and Lord Rothermere in London on the 29th, a price of £18,500 was agreed to build an aircraft capable of carrying six passengers and a crew of two.

When the Air Ministry was advised of the project by Bristol's they, surprisingly, appeared enthusiastic which persuaded the Company to build two aircraft; one the Type 143 powered by Aquila engines and a second powered by the Mercurys, but carrying eight passengers and a crew of two, as the Type 142. Although the two types were very similar (seventy percent commonality), the latter had a slimmer fuselage and a more pointed nose. By the time Barnwell returned from a visit to the US to assess developments in aircraft development in May 1934, the Finnish Government had already expressed an interest in the Type 143 as a civil transport and light-bomber. Discussions between the Finns and Bristols during February 1935 for the supply of nine Type 143F aircraft were interrupted by the Air Ministry who now expressed themselves as being interested in acquiring a bomber version following the first flight of the Type 142 at Filton on the 12th April 1935.

Registered G-ADCZ in February 1935 and powered by two 650-hp Mercury VIS 2 engines with four-bladed, fixed pitch, wooden propellers, the Type 142 prototype was given the name *Britain First* by Lord Rothermere and despatched to the Aeroplane & Armament Experimental Establishment (A&AEE) at Martlesham Heath, Suffolk, in June 1935. Before departing Filton for Martlesham Heath, the aircraft was fitted with three-bladed, two-position, Hamilton-Standard propellers, which gave it a maximum speed of 307 mph (494 km/hr) - some 50 mph (80 km/hr) faster than that of the RAF's latest fighter prototype, the Gloster F.7/30 (later the Gloster Gladiator). Indeed, such was the Air Ministry's most favourable assessment of the aircraft they asked that it be retained for a full evaluation as a potential light-bomber. Similarly impressed, Lord Rothermere in a spontaneous gesture of generosity, presented the Type 142 to the Air Council, who allocated the military serial number K7557 in October 1935.

Damaged at Martlesham Heath during July 1935 when an engine cowling became detached, K7557 was repaired at Filton where the opportunity was taken to improve the undercarriage fairings and the brakes, whence it was returned to A&AEE to complete their assessment. When these were concluded K7557 was transferred to the Royal Aircraft Establishment (RAE) at Farnborough, Hants, for use as a transport and experimental aircraft before being grounded in 1942 and relegated as an instructional airframe with the serial 2211M at No.10 School of Technical Training at Kirkham, Lancs. This historic aircraft was scrapped by Morris Motors at Cowley in 1944.

The Type 143 registered R-14 in Bristol's constructor's series, made its first flight on the 20th January 1936, as a test-bed for the Aquila engine, but was not provided with a Certificate of Airworthiness by the Air Ministry. Although thought of as a possible civil transport for Imperial Airways, the Type 143 was retained by Bristol's to develop the Aquila engine and when that engine programme was finally abandoned in 1938 the aircraft was scrapped shortly after the outbreak of war in 1939.

On the 9th July 1935 the Air Ministry's Director of Technical Development (DTD), Mr A.Verney, in discussions with Barnwell in London, expressed the Ministry's desire that Bristol's proceed with the design of the Type 142 as a mid-wing, light-bomber, with a retractable dorsal turret, internal bomb stowage and Mercury engines. In order to convert the Type 142 into a practical bomber, Barnwell modified the aircraft to mount a 0.303-inch (7.69mm) machine-gun and a bomb aimer's station in the nose, raised the wings, engine nacelles and undercarriage by 16-inches (0.4 metres) to allow for the bomb stowage inside the fuselage below the main spars, thus making it a mid-wing aircraft, and provided a semi-retractable turret in the rear fuselage. The tailplane and elevators were also raised some 8-inches (203mm) and their span increased in length and width (chord) and fitted with pilot-adjustable trimming (trim) tabs. The fuselage's overall strength was improved to permit an increase in weight and higher load factors. In all other respects the Type 142M was similar to that of the Type 142. Thus modified the Air Ministry wrote Specification 28/35 around the aircraft, provided Bristols with the authority to proceed with the design and ordered 150 machines in September 1936

capable of carrying a crew of two and 1,000-lb (454 kg) of bombs over a range of 1,000 miles (1,609 km). Thus was born the Bristol Blenheim.

The prototype Blenheim, K7033, made its first flight from Filton on the 25th June 1936 and following its evaluation and service trials at Martlesham Heath was cleared for series production by December of that year. During the trials it was found necessary to provide controllable gills on the engine cowlings, improve the carburettor air intakes, remove spinners on the propellers because they produced no notable increase in performance and lock the tailwheel in the down position and remove the retraction linkages.

The first production Benheims (K7034 - K7182) fitted with Bristol B.I Mk.I turrets and mounting a single Lewis machine-gun, were delivered to the RAF in March 1937, with No.114 Squadron at Wyton, Cambs, receiving its first aircraft that same month as replacements for its Hawker Audaxes. A second order for 434 Blenheim Mk.Is (L1097 - L1503) was later increased by 134 (L1531 - L1546 & L4817 - L4934) to replace the biplanes in Bomber Command's light-bomber squadrons. In its Mk.I form the Blenheim proved capable of attaining a maximum speed of 260 mph (418 km/hr) at 15,000 feet (4,572 metres), a service ceiling of 25,500 feet (7,772 metres) and a range of 920 miles (1,480 km) when carrying a bomb load of 1,000-lbs (454 kg) and by the outbreak of war twenty-eight bomber squadrons at home and abroad were equipped with them - (*Home*) Nos.18, 21, 34, 44, 57, 61, 62, 82, 90, 101, 104, 107, 108, 110, 114, 139 & 144 (*Abroad*) Nos.8, 11, 30, 39, 45, 55, 60, 113 & 211.

With large numbers of Blenheim Mk.Is available to the RAF and with many of them being replaced in Bomber Command by the improved Blenheim Mk.IV, the opportunity was taken to develop a fighter version for use by Fighter and Coastal Commands. Designed to fulfil the long-range day-fighter role and to be capable of undertaking such tasks as bomber escort, ground attack, convoy protection and night-fighting, the Blenheim Fighter was a stop-gap solution pending the introduction of better aircraft. In the night-fighter role its poor performance was not a drawback as it was unlikely to encounter the enemy's day-fighters, the Messerschmitt Bf 109 and the Bf 110, and would later prove capable of carrying some 800-lbs (362 kg) of radar equipment.

Conceived in 1938, the Blenheim If was an adaptation of the standard day-bomber with a gun pack comprising four 0.303-inch (7.69mm) Browning machine-guns with 500 rounds per gun (rpg), being attached to the bomb beams after the bomb-bay doors had been removed. Manufactured in the Southern Railway's workshops, the gun-packs were heavy and reduced the Blenheim's maximum speed by 30 mph (48 km/hr), but did prove effective. During the early part of the war the Bristol turret was retained, but when the type was turned over to the night-fighting the turret was frequently removed to counteract the weight of the radar equipment and the resultant hole plated over.

The first Blenheim If's were supplied to Nos.23, 25, 29 and 64 Squadrons during December 1938 and to Nos.600, 601 and 604 Squadrons of the Auxiliary Air Force's (AAF) Hendon Wing the following month. By September 1939 111 Blenheim fighters had been delivered to Fighter Command. During August 1939 a flight of No.25 Squadron based at Northolt was inadvertently supplied with Blenheim Mk.IVs (otherwise known as 'Long Nose Benheims'), to which examples of the first air interception (AI) radar, AI Mk.I, were fitted by a team led by Dr Edward 'Taffy' Bowen from the Air Ministry's Research Establishment (AMRE) at Bawdsey Manor in Suffolk. Although intended for installation in Blenheim Ifs, the radar was quickly adapted to 25 Squadron's Mk.IVfs, such that two were ready to protect London on the first night of the war - the 3rd/4th September 1939 - with two of Bowen's staff, Robert Hanbury-Brown and Keith Wood, acting as radar operators (R/O).

Whilst 25 Squadron's 'C' Flight assisted AMRE's scientists and engineers with the development of AI radar, Fighter Command's other Blenheim fighter units were engaged in patrolling the North Sea and other war duties. On the 29th November six Blenheim Ifs from 25 Squadron and a similar number from 601 Squadron raided the German seaplane base on the island of Borkum that was close to the German/Dutch border. During February 1940, 601 Squadron was stood down at its Tangmere base to convert to the Hawker Hurricane, prior to the transfer of detachments to Merville in France, but leaving 600 and 604 at Northolt and Manston respectively to continue in the long-range, day-fighter role. During November 1939 600's Ifs were supplemented with Blenheim IVf's

fitted with AI radar in an attempt to tackle a number of Heinkel He 115 floatplanes that were laying mines in the Thames Estuary. However, none were caught perhaps because the early AI radars were not particularly effective at the low altitudes at which these raiders flew.

600 Squadron's first contact with the enemy occurred during the early hours of the 10th May 1940, when Pilot Officer Anderson on patrol over the English Channel intercepted two He 111s, damaging one and having his hydraulics shot away in return. This also marked the first day of the German offensive in France and the Low Countries, in response to which 600 flew a daylight raid on Waalhaven airfield which was being used as a base for *Luftwaffe* aircraft and airborne forces. In the resultant battle with the *Luftwaffe*'s fighters, five of the six Blenheims despatched were lost.

Likewise 604 were employed on shipping patrols off the east Coast of England and stood-to on night readiness at its airfield at North Weald, Essex, between September 1939 and January 1940. However, in company with 600 and those of 23, 25, 29 and 219 Squadrons, 604 were allocated the night-fighter role during the autumn of 1939. With no AI radar fitted to their aircraft, neither Squadron came in contact with the enemy during their early day or night patrols. Although 'warned-off' to prepare for service in Finland in March 1940, the order was cancelled and 604 saw little or no action with their Blenheims until May 1940, when like 600, they undertook the strafing of Junkers Ju 52/3ms at the Hague and later patrolled the beaches over Dunkirk in support of the BEF's evacuation. The Squadron's first contact with the enemy occurred on the 15th June 1940, when Flying Officer Hunter and LAC Thomas intercepted and shot down an He 115 over the English Channel.

During the early summer of 1940 both Squadrons were re-dedicated to the night-fighter role when their Blenheims were fitted with the latest development in AI radar, AI Mk.III. This required the installation of some 800-lbs of equipment (transmitter, receiver, indicator unit, and power supplies) plus dipole aerials in the nose, engine cowlings and wings and associated cabling. Operating in the 1.5 meter band (200 MHz) AI Mk.III had a maximum range at altitude of 2½ miles (4 km) on a good day, but like all other radar equipment of that period was subject to frequent breakdowns and poor performance. Nevertheless, thanks to the Blenheim's inherent stability and reliable engines it did make a good night-flying aeroplane, even if its performance was not regarded as 'sparkling'. Hence why it was later employed in the training role.

The Blenheim's first night 'kill' of the war occurred on the night of the 18th/19th June 1940, when a 29 Squadron Blenheim flown by Pilot Officer J.S.Barnwell destroyed an He 111H from the *Stab* (Staff) Flight of *Kampfgeschwader 4* (Stab./KG 4), only to be shot down and killed himself by the bomber's return fire. That same night two Blenheims from 23 Squadron shot down another Heinkel from KG 4's 2nd *Gruppe* (II./KG 4). Once again one of the Blenheims was shot down by return fire. Both actions were undertaken without the benefit of radar (often referred to as 'Cat's Eyes' interceptions), however, on the night of the 22nd/23rd June, a Blenheim of the Fighter Interception Unit (FIU) flown by Flying Officer Glyn 'Jumbo' Ashfield, with Sergeant Reginald Leyland operating the radar and Pilot Officer Morris observing, shot down a Dornier Do 17Z of 2./KG 3 into the English Channel off Bognor Regis. This was the RAF's and the world's first successful AI radar assisted night interception.



The Aerial System of AI Mk.III in Blenheim If Aircraft²



Top Left: Folded 1/2 wave dipole for the Transmitter aerial in the Blenheim's nose.

Above: Port azimuth 1/4 wave receive unipole in cut-out in engine cowling gills.

Left: Upper and lower elevation 1/2 wave receive dipoles on port mainplane outboard of engine.

Whilst 604 Squadron continued to acquire the necessary skills and luck in night interception and made no claims for enemy aircraft destroyed during their time with the Blenheim, it did claim a Do 18 flying boat shot down during the day by Squadron leader Anderson and Pilot Officer Crew on the 18th September. Conversely, 600 Squadron claimed a night victory a few days earlier on the 15th/16th September 1940, when a Blenheim flown by Flight Lieutenant Pritchard, with Pilot Officer Jacobs as R/O, intercepted an unidentified Ju 88 and shot it down over Bexhill, Sussex.

By the summer of 1940, the Blenheim/AI Mk.III combination was rendered obsolete by the introduction of the more powerful Bristol Beaufighter and the much improved AI Mk.IV. It was only the lack of Beaufighters in sufficient quantity that extended the life of the Blenheim into 1941. Both Squadrons received Beaufighters during September 1940 when 600 were based at Hornchurch and then Redhill and 604 at Middle Wallop. With insufficient Beaufighters available and the newer crews requiring training, the Blenheim was retained as an active fighter until the end of the year and as a fighter-trainer thereafter. While 604 Squadron released its Blenheim Ifs to the maintenance Units (MU) and the night-fighter Operational Training Units (OTU) in June 1941, those with 600 Squadron lasted until the following October, by which time it had been in service for two years and ten months!

It is known that the following Blenheim Ifs served with the London Auxiliaries:

600 Squadron: Code 'BQ'	K7117 'L', K7126, L1115, L1251 'Y', L1295 'E', L1403, L6684 'S', L6791, L8450 'O', L8679 'D', L8685 & L8698 'M'.
601 Squadron: Code 'UF'	K7178, L1501, L1517, L6599, L6603, L6680 & L8701.
604 Squadron: Code 'NG'	L1337, L4908, L6602, L6607, L6617, L6782, L6798, L8607 'A', L8690 'O', L8666, L8673 'H' & L8680 'Q'.

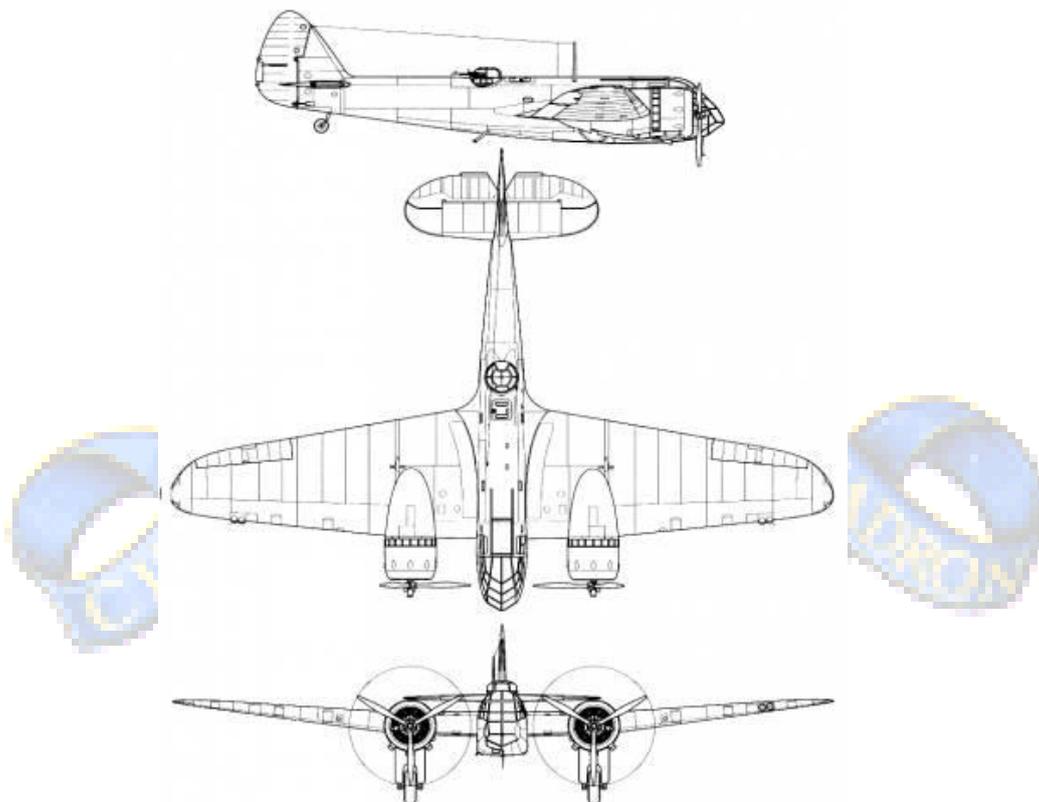
DESCRIPTION & TECHNICAL DETAILS

² All photographs Crown Copyright via the Douglas Fisher Collection.

The Bristol Blenheim Mk.II was a two seat, all-metal, mid-wing, long range, monoplane fighter, powered by two 840-hp Bristol Mercury VIII, single row, radial engines. The pilot was accommodated in a 'greenhouse' cockpit with his gunner/observer behind him in a Bristol turret mounting a single Lewis machine-gun. The aircraft's primary armament comprised four 0.303-inch (7.69mm) Browning machine-guns with 500 rpg mounted as a detachable pack that was directed bolted to the aircraft's bomb beams. A similar 0.303-inch machine-gun was provided for the pilot in the port inner wing. The wheels of the main undercarriage were raised and lowered by hydraulic pressure driven from an engine pump and when retracted were semi-exposed. The flaps were also raised and lowered by hydraulic power. The tailwheel was fixed. When used in the fighter-training role an AI instructor was frequently carried and the rear turret was removed to save weight. The Blenheim II had the following dimensions, weights and performance:

Length:	39 ft 9-ins (12.12 metres)	Empty Weight:	8,025-lbs (3,640 kg)
Height:	12 ft. 10-ins (3.91 metres)	Loaded Weight:	12,500-lbs (5,670 kg)
Wing Span:	56 ft. 4-ins (17.17 metres)		
Wing Area:	469 sq. ft. (43.57 sq. m)		

Max Speed at 18,000 ft. (5,486 metres):	230 mph (370 km/hr.)
Cruising Speed:	200 mph (322 km/hr.)
Initial rate of climb:	1,540 ft./min (469 m/min)
Service Ceiling:	25,500 ft. (7,772 metres)
Range:	920 miles (1,481 km)
Endurance:	5 hours



Trivia - The first German serviceman killed in WW2 was killed by the Japanese (China, 1937)

'The M.O's Story' – Flg.Off. F.G.Grisley

An air of anticipation and mystery surrounded the dining-in-night. Knowing looks passed between the Staff who would only say to enquiring course members that it was the high-light of the year and not to be missed. Rumour had it that the M.O. was going to speak. What the hell had he got to say to us?

The M.O. was a distinguished-looking character already going grey at the temples. He could have stepped straight out of Harley Street and, but for the war, undoubtedly would. But within a year of qualifying he had seen the 'Big One' coming and had volunteered his services. Come the Peace he decided that this was his vocation and stayed on.

After good food and wine and the usual toasts we were suitably lubricated and attentive when he rose to address us. He had a fine speaking voice and knew how to use it. He was in fact a master of the English spoken word. Think of Olivier, Alistair Cooke, Churchill even. He could have held his own with any of them. For this occasion, he adopted a tongue-in-cheek persona of the university lecturer.

The subject of his discourse concerned his postings around the world dictated by the vagaries of warfare. You name it, he'd been there. His diction was so fluent, his choice of words so careful, his double-entendres so fleeting, and his one-liners so subtle that it took some time for we birds of passage to appreciate what was really going on. Which was just as well for, tucked away in one corner were a couple of young WAAF Officers from Sector; of whom more anon.

From the word go the Staff had been convulsed with mirth. One by one, depending how sheltered our upbringing, we got it. This travelogue had a hidden agenda! It had to do in general with the medical examinations which the M.O. had made among the various nationalities; and in particular with the male pudenda (dangly bits to you). One chap maintained that he never did get it until we explained it to him afterwards. He was known thereafter as 'The Virgin'. (Whatever became of him?!) There was no crudity or salaciousness, nothing to suddenly shock you. It was instead a verbal conjuring trick. Quite how it was done I still don't know. If I had a tape-recording, I'd make a fortune.

The M.O.'s odyssey was not arranged chronologically but in order of dimensional merit. Did you know that, in the endowment league, the low-men on the totem pole are to be found in Egypt? I didn't. You will be pleased to know that Anglo-Saxons are near the top of the table, but the leaders by a short (and curly?) hair are to be found in Africa.

At this point in the discourse there was a disturbance. In those days young ladies, particularly those who made WAAF Officer, were very gently bred. Never-the-less by this time our two WAAF's had finally cottoned-on. Blushing furiously they rose to their feet and made for the door.

The M.O. was equal to the occasion. His voice, hardly raised, but clear and commanding, stilled the room and caused the WAAF's to pause in mid-stride.

"Come back ladies. Ladies, come back. The boat for Cape Town doesn't leave until next week!"

© Flg. Off. F.G, Grisley BSc MIPI (Retd)

604 (County of Middlesex) Squadron

Royal Auxiliary Air Force

.....
Trivia - The first American serviceman killed in WW2 was killed by the Russians (Finland 1940).

THE BOMBING RUN

*Written September 15, 1944 by George (Ole) Olson, a veteran from British Columbia.
With thanks to David Lyon*

*Bomb doors open, I hear this call
Soon our load of bombs will fall
Onto our target down there below
Then we'll turn and homeward go*

*But now starting on a bombing run
The most dangerous period has begun
Any evasive action we cannot take
As a steady bombing run we must make*

*Puffs of black smoke fill the air
From shells a-bursting everywhere
That they have missed us brings relief
A feeling that will be far too brief*

*Left, left, steady, I now do hear
While my heart beats fast in fear
Sitting in my turret in awful dread
Frightening visions are in my head*

*Steady, steady, that voice so cool
He must be fearless, or else a fool
And then I hear bombing, bombing, go
We now drop the bombs upon our foe*

*Bombs away, we now start to weave
We turn around and our target leave
Homeward bound our bomber now flies
Through the black puffs in the skies*

*For the guns below send up more flak
But we're going home and heading back
Yet before we reach our distant base
There are still perils we must face*

*Anti-aircraft guns and a fighter plane
To shoot us down they will try again
Luck is with us and we do survive
Back safe on our base we do arrive
Surviving perils through which we flew
Another safe return for a bomber's crew.*

.....

Profile - Squadron Leader Jimmy Rawnsley, DSO, DFC, DFM*, by Ian White



(via the Douglas Fisher Archive)

Cecil Frederick 'Jimmy' Rawnsley was born in London in March 1904. His father hailed from Yorkshire and his mother from the West Country, and as he describes in the book he co-wrote with Bob Wright, *Nightfighter*, I was 'of that generation which had, from the time of our childhood, become accustomed to the sounds of war'. After leaving school he joined one of the companies that supplied the Hendon, Golders Green and Mill Hill districts of North London with their electricity as an engineer. During a number of summer holidays in the Thirties, he and his wife Micki cycled and hiked along the Rhine and in the mountains of Bavaria, where he encountered a 'bewildering number of flags' and much marching about by members of the SS and the emerging *Luftwaffe*, who convinced him that war in Europe was inevitable in the near future. Determined to do something about the situation Rawnsley applied to join the Auxiliary Air Force (AAF) as an electrical fitter with 604 Squadron towards the end of 1936, where at thirty-two he was one of its oldest recruits. It should be noted that a part of that decision was made in the light of his position with the electrical company being a reserved occupation, which barred him from military service in the event of war. Joining 604 and signing the Territorial Act thereby trumped that rule!

Successful in his application to join the AAF following an interview with a 'regular Flight Lieutenant', probably the adjutant, Francis Fogarty, and making it known his name was 'Jimmy' and not Cecil, he was accepted for service with 604 during September 1937. Although advised he did not have any chance of flying, he accepted a reduction in rank from electrical fitter to 'aircraft hand and gunner' in order to improve his chances of getting airborne in the Squadron's Hawker Demon fighters. Being one of the junior gunners he was allocated to the youngest pilot on the Squadron, one Pilot Officer John Cunningham, with whom his appointment would become permanent and long lasting.

In company with the Squadron's other gunners, Aircraftsmen Gordon 'Tommy' Thomas, Jack Warry, George Young, Robbie Roberts, 'Ollie Oliver', Ron Taylor, Jack Beal, Sidney Shirley, Donald Moody, 'Nobbie' Kennedy, 'Gus' Guthrie, Maurice Goodman, 'Mel' Melvin and Corporals Jack Love, Ray Sellars and Stan Hawke,³ Aircraftsman Rawnsley learned his trade and trained as a gunner following his attendance at numerous evening lectures, summer camps and at Armament Practice Camps. During 1938 Jimmy qualified for his air gunner's badge and was promoted to LAC. Following the introduction of the Bristol Blenheim If to 604 Squadron during January 1939, LAC

³ List taken from George Evan's book *Bless Em All* privately published in 1998.

Rawnsley was provided with a fully enclosed, power-operated turret that was partly retractable when not in use and a marked improvement on the Demon's fully exposed Frazer-Nash unit. Although he did not know it, it was in the Blenheim's Bristol Type B.1 turret with its 0.303-inch (7.69mm) Lewis machine-gun that Jimmy Rawnsley would go to war.

Mobilised and called to full time service during August 1939, it was to be eight months before Rawnsley or any of the Squadron's gunners saw an enemy aircraft - 'eight months of alarms and discomforts, of losses, and of frustration' during which time 'few of the pilots had done any appreciable amount of night flying', given that night-fighting was made the Squadron's principal task during the autumn of 1939. Apart from a daylight raid on Junkers Ju 52 transport aircraft on the airfield near The Hague, during May 1940, in which Cunningham and Rawnsley did not participate, the Squadron had a fairly quiet time until the summer of 1940. During July the Squadron was moved to Middle Wallop, Hants, where its Blenheim's were equipped with airborne intercept (AI) radar in the form of the 1.5 metre AI Mk.III and began their task of learning their trade by means of numerous practise interceptions (PI) and an equal number of practical failures, or what Rawnsley describes as a period of 'unskilled labour'.

Promoted to sergeant along with all the Squadron's gunners, Rawnsley was given the opportunity to retrain as a radar operator (R/O) - or Radio Operator (Air) - as the gunner's position in the Blenheim was superseded by the radar equipment. Whilst others moved to Bomber and Coastal Commands, Jimmy remained with the Squadron, where under John Cunningham's patient tutelage and despite a lack of reliability on the part of their radar set, the two began to learn to work as a team and develop an interception technique. At this time the Squadron also saw an influx of airmen R/Os to replace those gunners who had transferred out, or failed to make the grade as R/Os. Amongst these were Mike O'Leary, John Philipson and A.G.Paston who were all former ground radar men.

Although the Cunningham/Rawnsley team had a few close calls at completing a night interception under the guidance of a ground controller based at a Chain Home (CH) radar station, they had no opportunities to engage the enemy. During September 1940 the Squadron received the first of its Beaufighter If night-fighters equipped with the superior AI Mk.IV radar. With John Cunningham by then the 'B' Flight commander and Rawnsley the Flight's senior gunner, the Squadron's R/Os assumed another task in the Beaufighter that of armourer responsible for the changing of the drums on the aircraft's four 20mm Hispano cannon from spares on racks located in the fuselage. In a manoeuvring aircraft, on a dark night in the bitter cold of the Beaufighter's interior, this was no easy task.

With the start of the Night Blitz during the autumn of 1940, Fighter Command's night-fighter squadrons began to receive 'trade' in abundance. However, it was not to be Jimmy Rawnsley who would be responsible for guiding his pilot onto their first enemy aircraft and shooting it down. That task was to fall to Sergeant John Philipson on the night of the 19th/20th November, when he guided Cunningham on to a Ju 88A-5 which he shot down near East Wittering, Sussex, and another on the 12th December. Flight Lieutenant Cunningham and Sergeant Rawnsley's first successful interception occurred on the night of the 23rd December, when they shot down a Heinkel He 111 near Lulworth, Dorset. This was followed by an He 111P-2 on the 15th February 1941, an He 111H-5 on the 7th/8th April, another He 111 on the 11th/12th, three He 111s on the 15th/16th and He 111H-5s on the 3rd/4th May and the 7th/8th. For his work with John Cunningham, Rawnsley was awarded the DFM on the 4th April 1941 and a bar on the 23rd May. On the 14th July 1941 he was commissioned as a Pilot Officer.

With John Cunningham now promoted to Squadron Leader and retaining command of 'B' Flight, the pair continued to extend their score: an He 111P-2 on the 31st May/1st June 1941, another He 111 on 22nd/23rd August and a Ju 88C on the 1st/2nd September. By this time John had assumed command of the Squadron when Wing Commander Appleton stood down during August and Jimmy was the leading R/O. On the 9th September Rawnsley was awarded the DFC.



(via the 604 Squadron Archive)
Beaufighter If NG-F of 604 Squadron equipped with AI Mk.IV radar. Note the R/O in the rear bubble cockpit facing backwards towards the indicator unit of the AI radar.

Following the invasion of Soviet Russia in June 1941 and the transfer of the *Luftwaffe's* bomber *Geschwader* (wings) to the east, the night-fighter trade diminished to something approaching a trickle. Cunningham and Rawnsley completed their last victory with 604 on the 23rd May 1942, when they brought down an He 111H-6 near Shaftsbury, Dorset. Two months later, with Wing Commander Cunningham and Flight Lieutenant Rawnsley operationally 'tour expired', they were posted to HQ No.81 Group to manage and direct the work of the night-fighter Operational Training Units (OTU).

'The dreaded rest' as Rawnsley described it in *Nightfighter* occupied the pair from July 1942 to January 1943, during which time the de Havilland Mosquito had superseded the Beaufighter as Fighter Command's premier night-fighter and the centimetric AI Mk.VIII had replaced the 1.5 metre AI Mk.IV. With the end of their rest in sight, Cunningham and Rawnsley were posted to 85 Squadron at Hunsdon, Herts, where John would assume command from Wing Commander G.L.Raphael and Jimmy would succeed to the position of Navigator Leader. It should be noted that by January 1943, the R/Os had been regraded as navigator (radio) and hence the senior R/O became the Nav Leader.

Whilst at Middle Wallop 604 had been responsible for intercepting *Luftwaffe* bombers leaving France and heading for Birmingham and the industrial Midlands. Hunsdon in Hertfordshire was not far from their old station at North Weald, from where 85 Squadron was tasked with protecting London from any enemy aircraft approaching the Capital across the Essex Marshes or up the Thames Estuary. His position as Nav Leader placed additional responsibilities on Flight Lieutenant Rawnsley and required him to assess the proficiency of the Squadron's R/Os in the station's ground AI trainer. Despite this equipment's limitations, Rawnsley was able to introduce a standard procedure by which a navigator would lead his pilot onto a radar contact. He would later use this system to introduce the Squadron's newer navigators to an orthodox approach to night-fighting.

Flying their first operation during February 1943, the pair had to wait until June to claim the first enemy aircraft of their 'second innings', when on the night of the 13th/14th they shot down a Focke Wulf Fw 190A-5 fighter-bomber near Borough Green, Kent. Their second was also an Fw 190A-5, which they shot into the North Sea off Aldeburgh, Suffolk, on the night of the 8th/9th September. It should be noted that Cunningham had his Mosquito, DZ302/G, coded R-Robert (VY-R) - the third such aircraft to bear his personal letter.



(via 604 Squadron Archive)

Flight Lieutenant Rawnsley alongside John Cunningham's Mosquito DZ302/G 'R' of 85 Squadron. The 'G' suffix to the aircraft serial number indicates it is to be kept guarded when not flying, on account of it being fitted with the secret AI Mk.VIII radar. It is also possible to see the strain in a man who has seen operational flying for the past three-and-a-half years.

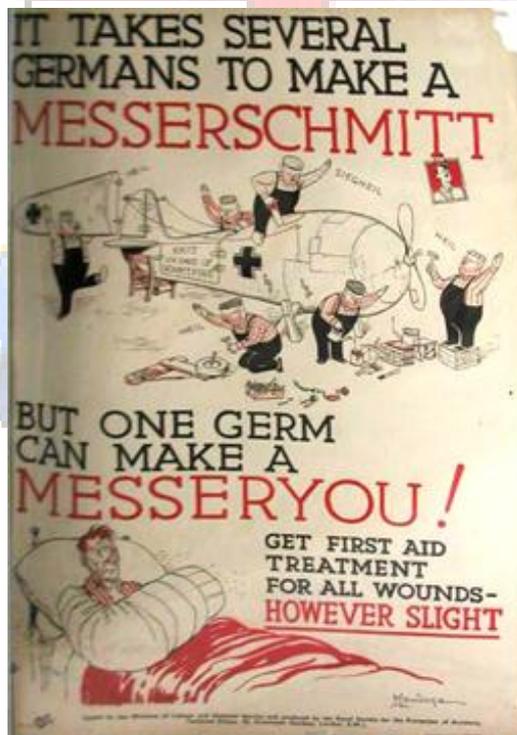
On the 26th October 1943 Flight Lieutenant Rawnsley was awarded the DSO, in recognition of his seventeen kills - sixteen of them at night - making him one of the most highly decorated R/Os in the RAF. However, the strain of very nearly four years of operational flying was beginning to tell on a man who was thirty-nine years of age and well aware that the odds were against him and John surviving much longer were poor. Worse still he was beginning to lose his confidence, as in his opinion 'too many had got away'. Nevertheless, he continued on when the Squadron was re-equipped with Mosquito NF.XVIIIs in November 1943. These were fitted with the American SCR-720B AI, better known as AI Mk.X, which proved superior to the earlier Mk.VIII radar and had a great range. For a while the Squadron flew with both marks, some of which had been fitted with a nitrous-oxide injection system to boost the Merlin's performance at high altitude. It was in one of the old Mk.XII Mosquitoes fitted with the nitrous-oxide boost that Cunningham and Rawnsley shot down a Messerschmitt Me 410 over the coast of France on the 4th/5th January 1944. This aircraft would prove to be the pair's last victory, as Cunningham was tour expired and posted to HQ No.11 Group as Group Captain Night Operations. In turn Rawnsley stood down as Nav Leader and was posted to the Fighter Interception Unit (FIU) at Ford. Their final operation together occurred towards the end of February 1944, when they damaged a Ju 188 before the radar went u/s over the English Channel.

Although resident at Ford, Hants, FIU was moved to Wittering, Cambs, in order to make way for a number of Squadrons preparing for the D-Day invasion of France. Therefore, on the 3rd April the

Unit was moved and Rawnsley went with them until John Cunningham obtained a transfer to work alongside him at 11 Group's HQ at Uxbridge, planning night operations for the invasion. When the work was completed and there was little more to do, Cunningham and Rawnsley went down to Ford on the 9th June, where they persuaded Wing Commander Edward Crew (ex-604), No.96 Squadron's CO, to lend them a Mosquito and fly an operational sortie over the Normandy beaches under the control of a Fighter Direction Tender (FDT). While they attempted the interception of a low-level raider flying over the invasion fleet, he escaped into the ground echoes, with a second proving equally as elusive. The loss of two contacts, admittedly hard ones, did little for Jimmy's confidence.

Jimmy's last operational flights took place sometime during August/September 1944, when he flew as the R/O to 85 Squadron's Squadron Leader Peter Green attempting to intercept V-1 flying bombs over the English Channel in a Mosquito NF.XIII (AI Mk.VIII) fitted with nitrous-oxide boost. No claim was made on this sortie, but the following night with Flight Lieutenant J.A.Dobie he assisted in the destruction of a V-1.

Rawnsley remained at HQ 11 Group until the end of the war and was released from the RAF in 1946 as a Squadron Leader, by which time he was forty-two. When 604 Squadron was reformed at Hendon in May 1946, Jimmy was granted an Auxiliary commission as a Flying Officer re-joined the following year as its intelligence officer. Post-war Jimmy worked for a number of organisations, chief of which was Flight Refuelling Ltd where he studied the problems of the interception of tanker aircraft at the invitation of Alan Cobham (later Sir Alan Cobham). However, his health did not hold and he retired from the Royal Auxiliary Air Force on the same day as John Cunningham stood down as 604's first post-war CO, the 5th June 1948. Both were dined out of the RAuxAF in the Officers Mess at Hendon. Squadron Leader Jimmy Rawnsley, DSO, DFC, DFM*, aircraft hand, air gunner, R/O and navigator leader, died on the 12th February 1965, shortly after this author first read his and Bob Wright's book about his exploits in the night skies over Britain.





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Bomber Command
By John M Milne (57 Sqdn)

*A long cold night, a star filled sky,
A blacked out world below.
The grim faced crew on faith rely
They'll live to see tomorrow.
The searchlights sweep, the hell sent flak,
A thousand shards of steel.
But on they press their bold attack
And hide the fear they feel*

*For near six years, night after night
Squadron after Squadron
Shattered the dream of Nazi might,
Its power a sham illusion
They shared a duty, fate and fear
That forged uncommon pride
And paid a price in lives so dear,
More than fifty thousand died.*

RAF Redhill (Aerodrome)

A history of Redhill Aerodrome

Redhill Aerodrome commenced operations in 1934 to accommodate the original Redhill Flying Club. Imperial Airways started to use it as an alternate to the then London airport at Croydon.



Hanger 9 - 1934 (the first hanger to be erected at Redhill)

No. 15 EFTS (Elementary Flight Training School) was formed at RAF Redhill Surrey on 3rd July 1937. The first aircraft allocated were a few tired DH 60 Gipsy Moths and later two Hawker Harts were added to the Squadron, finally being replaced by Miles Magisters sometime in 1938. The Squadron had amassed 28 Magisters, 15 Hart variants, 4 Fairy Battles and 3 Avro Ansons. When war finally broke out in September 1939 the Squadrons aircraft were ferried out, but returned to resume training at Redhill between 11th September and 6th November 1939.

On the 1st March 1940 a course was started for the testing & grading of Polish airmen. Each Pilot flew 10 hours in Magisters and 15 hours in Battles. Towards the end of May 1940 the skies over southern England began to darken as aerial activity grew at a steady rate. After the Dunkirk

evacuation of the B.E.F. from France No. 15 EFTS evacuated RAF Redhill & moved further North to Carlisle.



Polish Pilots of No. 15 E & R FTS - Redhill 1939/40



Polish Pilots of No. 15 E & R FTS - Redhill 1939/40

On the 3rd June 1940 No. 16 (Army Co-operation) Squadron arrived with their Westland Lysanders but they did not stay for long. Redhill remained inactive for much of the Battle of Britain until the arrival of No. 600 Squadron with its Blenheim IVfs and the new radar equipped Beaufighter 600 Sqn. carried out night fighter patrols until moving out in October 1940 to be replaced by No. 219 Squadron with its Blenheims and Beaufighters where they also flew many night fighter operations until finally moving out by 10th December 1940.

A perimeter track was constructed round the airfield (which remained grass-surfaced) and from this led taxi-tracks to eight Blister hangers and a dozen or so dispersal pens.

On 1st May 1941 Redhill became a satellite aerodrome for RAF Kenley and No 1 Squadron Hurricane's moved in. No 1 Squadron had been employed as a specialist night fighter unit and on the night of 10th May they shot down no less than six enemy aircraft! No. 1 Squadron stayed at RAF Redhill until 1st June when they were replaced by Hurricanes of No. 258 Squadron as part of the Kenley Wing.



Spitfires Scramble

From May 1941 to January 1944 numerous fighter Squadrons flew Rodeo fighter sweeps over France from RAF Redhill, all except six were equipped with Spitfires (see movement table). Circus operations covering Boston aircraft were also flown from Redhill during this time. No. 485 Squadron during their stay at Redhill destroyed 14 enemy aircraft, plus 8 probable's & nine damaged. On the 20th March 452 was replaced by No. 457 Australian Squadron led by Sqn Ldr. M. Brothers DFC. On 13th May 602 Squadron led by Sqn. Ldr. B.E. Finucane moved in together with 457 Sqn. to form the Redhill wing. Later that month Canadian 402 Squadron moved in to replace 457. 602 moved to Peterhead and were replaced by No. 611 Squadron with their Mk IX Spitfires and flew many Rhubarb operations against railways and other communication systems. Later No. 350 Belgium Squadron moved to Redhill flying convoy patrols. The airfield was used as an advanced air base for the attack on Dieppe in August 1942 and for this purpose, housed No's 350 Squadron, 611 Squadron, 303 Squadron, 310 Squadron and 312 Squadrons. During the Dieppe raid 24 enemy aircraft had been destroyed by the Redhill Squadrons! By this time over 800 personnel were at Redhill and the huge piles of bicycles outside mess halls were common sights. The squadrons left Redhill on the 18th September and airfield was used as an unofficial emergency landing ground with two B-17's and a B-24 landing on 23rd short of fuel.

After departure of the fighter Squadrons, Redhill housed No. 83 Group Support Unit and various second-line squadrons. In October No. 231, 400 and 414 Squadrons with their Mustang I's part of 39 Reconnaissance Wing 2nd TAF. In line with the policy of the 2nd TAF, No. 83 Support Group was formed at Redhill from 1st March, No's 405 and 410 Aircraft Repair Flights arriving from Detling to join with No's 403 and 409 already at the airfield. They were soon joined by No, 3207 Servicing Commando pre pairing new aircraft, mainly Typhoons for squadron service. The airfield now became an important platform for build-up of supplies and equipment for the preparation of D-Day. Prior to D-Day over two hundred fighter aircraft were based at Redhill to support the invasion forces. With the threat of the V1 ever closer Redhill became No. 24 Balloon Centre and landings were forbidden. The Avro Ansons of No. 1310 Flight were here for a short time during 1944. No 116 Calibration Squadron to Redhill from Gatwick on September 5th 1944. The unit was equipped with De Thailand Tiger Moths, Airspeed Oxfords and Hawker Hurricanes and its main task was calibration of radar used by Anti Aircraft units and checks of predictor equipment. In December the airfield became the base for the Canadian Casualty Evacuation Unit whose Dakotas flew in day and night with wounded being transported to Smallfields Hospital, they moved out in the New Year. On January 20th 1945 it was joined by No. 287 Squadron (also from Gatwick), this was an anti-aircraft co-operation squadron flying Airspeed Oxfords, Spitfires and Typhoon aircraft. On the 15th January 1945 Redhill became a satellite for Biggin Hill and in February No's 166 and 287 were the last squadrons to occupy the airfield.

At the end of WW2 Redhill was used for the storage of unused bombs, which were finally cleared by the end of 1946. On April 1st 1948, No. 15 Reserve Flying School was formed at Redhill. Tiger Moths were used as basic trainers for pilots and Ansons for Navigational training. The RFS also used a few Oxfords and towards the end of its service life, it received De Havilland Chipmunks. The increasing complex of modern aircraft resulted in closure of the Reserve Training Programme in 1954 and No. 15 RFS was dis-banded on June 20th 1954.

Today Redhill is a busy airfield with light aircraft and helicopters flying in the now peaceful skies.

Redhill Aerodrome (IATA: **KRH**, ICAO: **EGKR**) is located 1.5 NM (2.8 km; 1.7 mi) southeast of Redhill, Surrey, England, in green belt land.

Redhill Aerodrome has a CAA Ordinary License (Number P421) that allows flights for the public transport of passengers or for flying instruction as authorised by the licensee (Redhill Aerodrome Limited).

Flying squadrons during World War II

- Royal Air Force 
 - No. 1 Squadron RAF - Hawker Hurricane
 - No. 16 Squadron RAF - Westland Lysander
 - No. 66 Squadron RAF - Supermarine Spitfire
 - No. 116 Squadron RAF - Airspeed Oxford and Avro Anson
 - No. 131 Squadron RAF - Spitfire
 - No. 219 Squadron RAF - Bristol Blenheim, Bristol Beaufighter
 - No. 231 Squadron RAF - North American Mustang
 - No. 258 Squadron RAF - Hurricane
 - No. 287 Squadron RAF
 - No. 303 Polish Fighter Squadron - Spitfire
 - No. 310 Squadron RAF - Spitfire
 - No. 312 Squadron RAF - Spitfire
 - No. 340 Squadron RAF - Spitfire
 - No. 350 Squadron RAF - Spitfire
 - No. 504 Squadron RAF - Spitfire
- Royal Auxiliary Air Force 
 - No. 602 Squadron RAF - Spitfire
 - No. 611 Squadron RAF - Spitfire
- Royal Australian Air Force 
 - No. 452 Squadron RAAF - Spitfire
 - No. 457 Squadron RAAF - Spitfire
- Royal Canadian Air Force 
 - No. 110 Squadron RCAF - Lysander
 - No. 400 Squadron RCAF - Mustang
 - No. 402 Squadron RCAF - Mustang
 - No. 414 Squadron RCAF - Mustang
 - No. 416 Squadron RCAF - Spitfire
 - No. 421 Squadron RCAF - Spitfire
- Royal New Zealand Air Force 
 - No. 485 Squadron RNZAF - Spitfire

Postwar

The airfield returned to civilian use in 1947 but was suspended in 1954. In 1959 flying resumed at Redhill when the Tiger Club moved in. The following year Bristow Helicopters started to use Redhill as an operating base and carry out helicopter maintenance for the next 40 years.

The airfield is still operated for private flying and training, with an emphasis on helicopter operators. Pilots can use three grass runways. Information on the aerodrome's state can be found on the operator's, Redhill Aerodrome Limited, website.

Charter and private arrivals and departures can be tracked on the Aerodrome Information website.

The aerodrome has its own Air Traffic Control and fire and rescue services (Redhill Fire Fighting Service). The fire and rescue service is H2/Cat2 and has two fire appliances built by Land Rover (now Jaguar Land Rover) that carry over 1400 litres of fire-fighting fluids between them as well as rescue equipment. They also refuel aircraft.

The airfield has also been the venue for the flying displays and aviation trade shows, including the annual Redhill Airshow in the past, which was focused around a charitable cause.

Future development and additional runways

In 2010, the Redhill Aerodrome Master Plan was published, documenting in great detail the proposal to create a hard surface runway in replacement to the existing grass airstrips, alongside other developments. There will be an opportunity for local residents, businesses and authorities to comment on this.

The aerodrome's runways are currently grass, so they are often damaged by adverse weather during the winter. Creation of a more durable runway would allow virtually all-year-round operation and permit small business aircraft to use the aerodrome as a reliable airport in competition with London Gatwick Airport.

There is an option to use the taxiway to the south of the airstrips as a runway - designated 07/25 - but because of the restricted conditions of use and the limited length, this is far from ideal for pilots and flights.

Redhill Airshow

The Redhill Airshow was a classic "garden party" style event held at Redhill Aerodrome. The show was one of the highlights of the local area's calendar. The show has seen fly-past's by the Red Arrows and displays from the Royal Air Force solo display teams, the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight including the Lancaster Bomber as well as popular warbirds such as Spitfire MH434, and Rob Davies' P-51 Mustang. The last show was in 2006 and the subsequent year's event was cancelled at the request of the Redhill Aerodrome management; they have not run since.

With fury to Baghdad - By Derek Dempster ©

In the late summer of 1952 I became aviation editor of the *Daily Express* at a salary three times greater than *The Aeroplane* magazine - then a weekly rival to *Flight* - had been paying me. To celebrate, I threw a whacking great party at my apartment near Harrods department store in London and rather overdid the hospitality.

Three-fold salary increase or not, I wasn't flush enough to cover my moment of wild extravagance. I had to make some money fast. An aircraft ferry job looked like the obvious solution, although I had never done one before: out and back over a week-end; no one at the office would be any the wiser. And I would have cash in hand at the end of it.

Three years with *The Aeroplane* as the journal's test pilot and membership of No 604 County of Middlesex Fighter Squadron of the Royal Auxiliary Air Force had given me easy access to information about the aircraft industry, and numerous contacts with enough confidence in my piloting to let me loose on most of their aeroplanes with barely more than cockpit familiarization. For instance: half an hour with Pilot's Notes and a briefing from Short's chief test pilot Tom Brooke-Smith was all I got before starting up a Sturgeon's two Rolls-Royce Griffons with contra rotating props and taking off! Some were not so willing. Boulton Paul's Ben Gunn wouldn't let me fly their Delta. Probably just as well, if you believe Ben's colourful reminiscences of the plane. I'm still here to write this piece.

The other source of information about who was moving what aircraft and to where - gossip, more like - was the Brevet Club in Chesterfield Street, Mayfair, where I'd frequently been offered unbelievable sums to take Spitfires, Tempests, Mosquitoes and Mustangs of questionable ownership to Palestine at the height of the Jewish bid to establish Israel.

By 1952 most of the wheelers and dealers and wide boys of aviation - who made the Brevet such a fascinating source of stories that over the years found their way into fiction - had dispersed, but

there was always the chance of a tip-off from the habitués who still gathered there for a drink, a gossip and a good steak - probably horse, as Britain was still in the grip of rationing.

It was Brevet Club gossip that led me to Airwork Ltd when they picked up the contract to deliver a batch of 25 Hawker Fury fighters and three trainers to Iraq⁴ and put me on their books to fly as many as I could to Baghdad. And as they were looking for additional pilots to fulfill the contract, I suggested to Geoffrey Ford, Manager of the ferry operation, that fellow 604 Squadron pilots Gerry Threlfall and Bingham Dore were well qualified and willing candidates - Gerry having flown Republic P47 Thunderbolts in the Dutch East Indies campaign, and Bingham having spent time flying De Havilland Mosquitoes in Egypt and Ethiopia before joining North Weald-based 604 Squadron which by 1952 had progressed from Spitfire 16s and Vampire 3s and 5s to Meteor 8s.

Next stop was Dunsfold, Hawker's Surrey base, for a morning's familiarisation with the Fury. The only time I had seen one prior to my introduction at Dunsfold was in mock combat during one of those defence exercises they used to mount- *Emperor*, *Mainbrace*, *Pinnacle*, or was it *Beehive*? I had been told it was a big brute, but didn't agree with the description when I finally hauled myself up onto the port wing and into the cockpit. After the Spitfire and the Vampire it was big, but not dauntingly so. The layout of the cockpit was typical of most British fighters I had flown, a bit ragged but with fewer excrescences on which to rip your hands and fingers which was an improvement. So, with Pilot's Notes in one hand and test pilot Frank Bullen in attendance to point things out, I soon had the measure of the aeroplane. All I had to do now was fly it.

For long-forgotten reasons it was five months before I was free to go. I paid for my rash hospitality out of salary. Arthur Christiansen, the editor of the Daily Express, got to hear of my sideline and was unexpectedly encouraging. Journalists were even then personae non-grata in Iraq. He saw it as an opportunity for the Express. "You might pick up a scoop or two while you're there" he suggested.

Bingham Dore was the first to go with Royal Iraqi Air Force (RIAF) Fury No 304 (WM383) early in October 1952, followed in quick succession by 305 (WM484) flown by someone whose identity I don't have, and Gerry Threlfall who collected 306 (WM485) from Hawker's Langley aerodrome near Slough on 29th October and flew it to Blackbushe airfield for export clearance prior to leaving for Baghdad on 31st October. John Langley was next with 307 which he cleared through Blackbushe on 10th November, 1952.

RIAF No's 308 (WN480) and 309 (WN481) were not ready for collection until early February 1953, following first flights in the hands of Hawker test pilots Frank Bullen and Frank Murphy on 29th and 27th January, respectively. Gerry and I were notified accordingly and in the circumstances decided to fly out as a pair. When we reported to Geoffrey Ford at Blackbushe early on 12th February for briefing, documents and kit (maps, parachute, export papers, funds, radio beacon frequencies, permit to fly, fuelling and emergency instructions) I found I had been allocated 308, which I'm delighted to find is still all-of-a-piece and airworthy in North America and whose original Permit-to-Fly is still in my possession, together with Airwork's instructions for the delivery. It had logged 2 hours 35 minutes in the air since coming off the production line.

You could never call a north European February a fun month for flying and February 12th 1953 was typical: short on daylight hours and long on low, grey clouds spilling snow at irregular intervals. On the road between Blackbushe and Langley I began to doubt whether we would be able to fly back to Blackbushe that day. But a break while we were completing Hawker Aircraft's paperwork at Langley encouraged us to hurry. Gerry - with one delivery to his credit and familiarity with the Fury - lost no time getting away. I took a little longer, and as 308 got airborne and the undercarriage was rising, I flew into snow.

It wasn't too bad for the first couple of minutes, but then the flakes multiplied and at 1,000 feet map-reading essentials began to blur. Not a good situation to be in with just three minutes experience on type. Luckily the London-Reading railway on the edge of Langley's northern

⁴ Iraq had already taken delivery of 30 single seater Furies - ordered in December 1946 - and two Fury trainers in 1948.

boundary and White Waltham airfield 10 miles away was still visible. White Waltham Tower gave me clearance and as I came to the end of my landing run the shower thickened into a whiteout. My first flight in a Hawker Fury had lasted all of a hairy seven minutes.

I warned the Tower I'd be off as soon as conditions allowed, and used the enforced grounding to sit snugly in the cockpit to reflect on the behaviour of the aeroplane and to bond more closely with it. There's little to say about the flight and engine instruments and switches; they were bog-standard. What was an improvement over other, earlier, British single-seaters, however, was the neater layout of the ancillary switches, buttons and gauges. They were on banks - more like shelves - on either side of the seat, the port one carrying IFF control unit, armament [*bombs and rockets*] control panel, rudder and elevator tab control, undercarriage position indicator and, protruding slightly below the throttle quadrant, the flap selector lever. At the far end of the starboard shelf were the main fuel cock, drop-tank selector and jettison levers, also the fuel tank air pressure gauge. Within hand's reach were the engine management gauges, buttons and switches: fuel gauges, starter test button, fuel booster pump circuit breakers, air intake filter control switch and warning light, fuel booster pump control switch, cylinder printing push-button, ground flight switch and so on.

Listing them for this feature was a lot more difficult than I remember checking them over in the cockpit 45 years ago. I wonder now how I then did it all so casually and confidently!

In the rush to get out of Langley, practised instinct over-rode any intellectual thought about how the Fury would handle. It was enough to know that as the type was being flown by hundreds of ordinary military pilots serving with several land and naval air forces, it would not be particularly demanding. The wide undercarriage gave the aircraft a solid, stable feeling while taxiing and running up for mag-drop tests. Final checks before take-off called for elevator trim neutral, rudder fully left; r.p.m. control set for max revs; main fuel cocks on, contents checked and booster pump on; flaps up and tail wheel locked. As power was applied for take-off, the aircraft wanted to swing right, but left rudder easily checked the bias. It was airborne before the throttle had taken the engine to maximum r.p.m. As for the flying controls, they were all light and responsive.

Because of the fairly high cockpit, forward vision was not seriously impaired by the Fury's long radial nose. During straight finals you could see forward well enough right down to the flare-out over the runway threshold. The view ahead suffered mildly if you tried a three-pointer - also when the tail-wheel sank to ground after a "wheeler". It didn't call for the curved approach commonly adopted in the Spitfire, whose long nose did restrict forward vision considerably during a straight approach to touch-down. At taxiing speed, a gentle weave from side to side alerted the pilot to any obstructions.

The drill for landing a Fury was pretty conventional. At typical service load of 12,500 lbs., the engine was set to turn at 2,400 rpm and the approach speed, with flaps lowered, to 100 knots although Pilot's Notes did say " ... the initial approach should be made at a speed of 10-15 knots higher than the 100 kts ... " quoted.

White Waltham's white-out cleared after ten minutes and the moment the 18 cylinders of the 2,480 HP Centaurus 18 engine responded to the Kauffman cartridge starter, the slipstream from its five-bladed Rotol propeller blew most of the accumulated snow off the inner wings and the fuselage. The rest of it, I could see, would blow off as the aircraft gathered speed for take-off. It did, and 15 minutes later I parked next to Gerry's RIAF 309 at Blackbushe in readiness for full refuelling - including two 90 gallon drop tanks - and a dawn take-off next day, weather permitting.

It was still dark when the taxi from our rather basic Camberley guest house deposited us outside Airwork's Ops Room - rather a grand description for a Nissen hut! Overnight I'd studied Airwork's briefing to *Captain D.Dempster (or Deliverv Flight No DF 318'*

1. INSTRUCTIONS. You are to deliver from the Hawker Aircraft Co Ltd., Langley, to the Royal Iraqi Air Force, Baghdad, Fury aircraft No,308.

2. ROUTE. Your airport of departure will be Blackbushe, where customs have been arranged. The route to follow will be: Blackbushe - Nice - Malta - Mersa Metruh - Nicosia - Baghdad.

The rest of the briefing document was really useful, setting out mileage details, flight times, names of handling agents en route, diversionary airfields, emergency facilities and sunset hours. Each ferry pilot was issued Shell and BP carnets - credit cards in today's terminology - enabling them to sign for the 100 Octane fuel and Aero Shell 100B specified for the Centaurus. "The R.I.A.F. will pay for the petrol left in the tanks on completion of the delivery", said the instructions, "and you must get a signature from them for the amount". *Les bons comptes font les bons amis*, as the French would say.

"You are to keep us informed of your progress by signalling AIRWORK CAMBERLEY your arrival at each night stop. Each signal is to be given successive serial numbers prefixed by your name, e.g. SMITH 1 SMITH 2." And with a further eye on costs they advised: "These signals may be sent either by Cable & Wireless or over the Fixed Telecommunications Service which is a free service and wherever possible should be used in preference to the more expensive method of civil cables".

The fee Airwork paid for delivering a Fury to Baghdad was £60. When good salaries like mine were £24 a week (equivalent to £700 a week at today's rates) £60 to a high-living aviation editor was as good as a prince's ransom, and the daily overseas allowance of two pounds five shillings (£2.25 in today's money) generous when compared with the seven or eight pounds a week secretaries were then paid. Airline tickets for the return to Britain were provided, but it wasn't uncommon to hitch a lift - usually with RAF Transport Command - and cash in the ticket.

The briefing document also set out ETDs and ETAs and where we should night stop. With Britain still rationed and Nice in France a refuelling stop en route, there was no way we were going to abide by that instruction. Who in their right minds would give up a chance of a super French lunch and dinner to press on to Malta for English-style sausages and mash or fish and chips in a Royal Air Force or Royal Navy mess?

Met indicated nimbo-stratus with an average base of 4,000 ft. all the way to the Rhone Valley. There was no clue how high we would have to climb to reach clear air. Taking the quadrantal rule and the most economical cruise settings, we settled for 21,000 ft. where we hoped to find blue sky. By 07.00 Hrs. - one hour ahead of Airwork's recommended ETD - we'd completed formalities and were ready to roll when 308's radio failed. A replacement had to be brought over from Hawker's and fitted. We finally got away about three hours late, leaving Blackbushe in battle formation with myself about 200 yards to Gerry's starboard. It wasn't long, though, before we were in cloud and I had to slide into close formation, where I stuck right on past our chosen cruising altitude in search of blue sky. At FL 27 it was still eluding us, so went back to our original, planned cruising height of 21,000 ft.

As leader, Gerry handled the navigation. A back-bearing 25 minutes into the flight showed our course was true. Fifty minutes later he called the Paris (Call Sign *Cite*) and Dijon (Call Sign *Vougeot*) VHF/DIF Fixer Services on 121.5 M/C for a fix. It put us about five miles east of track.

After about an hour of close formation in cloud with never a look at my flight instruments, vertigo crept up on me. I won't deny it was frightening. As I tried fighting it I debated whether to break off and go my own way on my own instruments or slip into line astern in the hope of killing the beast by using 309's level wings as a substitute for my artificial horizon. I chose the latter alternative; it worked a treat, and that's where I stayed until we broke into the open over Macon, about 20 miles north of Lyon.

It was clear and smooth from then on all the way to Nice, enabling me to shift concentration from close formation flying to relaxed scanning of the scenery (snow-capped Alps and the Rhone Valley) and the instruments (+ 2.5 lb./sq.in. boost and 2,200 rpm., 80 lb./sq.in. oil pressure; 300°C cylinder head temperature; 80°C oil temperature, IAS 210 / TAS 295kts). Just past Colmar in the Basses Alpes we started a gentle descent that brought us to circuit height as we reached the coast. According to my log book, it had taken us exactly two hours to cover the 590 nautical miles from Blackbushe - 40 minutes less than the elapsed time set out in Airwork's briefing sheet. Because of our late departure we landed an hour before sunset, so that even if we had wanted to fly on to Malta it was not possible except in darkness, and that was never an option on a delivery contract.

Nice aerodrome in 1953 had a single runway about 200 metres from and parallel to the shore. You can still see it in modern aerial photographs of the airport, lost and unused in the midst of a cat's

cradle of jumbo-friendly runways laid on land since reclaimed from the sea. The terminal building was nothing more than a glorified shed where Monsieur Bloch, the manager of Aeromarine, Airwork's handling agents, had his office. A real Provencal Frenchman clad in blue overalls, black beret, a Gauloise cigarette dangling beneath a big black moustache, Monsieur Bloch waved us to our parking bays and during the next half hour - while we tidied up, retrieved our personal belongings from the ammunition bays, placed covers over pilot heads and locked controls and canopies - he saw to the refueling, what few customs and immigration formalities the local gendarmerie felt it necessary to carry out, and then drove us to the little Aviatic Hotel at the edge of the airfield. "It's where I put all my pilots" he said, "because the Patronne looks after them well!" I think it was Monsieur Bloch she looked after so well, because he was on hand and fussing around her when she served our coffee and croissants breakfast!

We didn't get our French lunch, but made up for it with a French dinner. Our friend Bloch suggested "*un petit restaurant bien modeste et intime ou fa cuisine est excellente et les divertissements interessants*". It was "*modeste*", meaning small. What he didn't explain, though, was that "*intime*" meant the restaurant's side door was the stage door of a night club! I can't remember what I chose to eat, but I shall never forget the wine - a superb Chateauneuf du Pape - and the attention of some stunning show girls.

The Cote d' Azure can be pretty cold in winter. If you don't believe it, let me tell you that the water Madame La Patronne had so thoughtfully placed in a glass on my bedside table froze during the night! No wonder the scantily-clad show girls who sat with us between acts were wrapped up in warm dressing gowns! They kept us occupied rather longer than our bedtime deadline. Enough said!

A bore with the Centaurus was the need to turn the engine over through two revolutions by hand - when starting from cold - in order to minimise the risk of hydraulic shock damage. In service there would have been a couple of fitters on tap to do that; but when you're ferrying and responsible for your own servicing, you have to do the chore yourself, which isn't easy for a 13 Stone (182 Lbs) man without help. As it happened, manpower was on hand, courtesy of M. Bloch. That said, the starting procedure was simple enough, although I was always a little worried the engine wouldn't fire first time. So it was thrilling - to me, at any rate - to feel a motor the size of the Centaurus catch and cough into smooth running. I don't know why I was apprehensive because I never once had to re-index cartridge starters on any of my Fury flights.

By start-up time we'd stowed our personal kit in the ammunition bays and checked the weather for the Nice-Malta sector. The blue sky we'd had on arrival had given over to the sort of conditions we'd encountered on the Blackbushe/Nice sector, but *Meteo* said we'd be in the clear from Sardinia to Malta. As I was leading on this leg, I looked after the navigation and calculated on covering the 576 nautical miles to Malta in about two hours ten minutes - thirty minutes less than Airwork's briefing notes suggested. In case of need Corsica's Ajaccio, Sardinia's Cagliari Elmas and Tunis were recommended diversionary airfields.

The climb out of Nice followed the pattern we'd used from Blackbushe, except that cloud base was higher, so we flew in battle formation to about 7,000 feet where Gerry tucked in to close line-astern on entering cloud and stayed there until we broke into the open at cruising altitude south of Sardinia.

We made minimal use of the *R/T.*, but between Sardinia and Sicily I called Gerry: "Airwork 308 to Airwork 309. I'm looking for a boat I can ditch near. Keep your eyes peeled. My oil pressure's dropped to zero and I expect the engine to seize at any moment!" Indeed, during a scan of the dials, I had caught the oil pressure reading dropping like a stone. Long before it reached zero my heart skipped a beat or two and as my stomach tightened I tried to remember what Pilot's Notes said about ditching the Fury.

It's amazing how a tight spot sharpens up the grey cells, because suddenly I was getting a perfect mental picture of the words on the relevant page: "The ditching characteristics of the aircraft are known to be satisfactory, with or without drop tanks fitted, provided that all external armament stores are jettisoned or dropped". Well, as I wasn't carrying any external stores, I consoled myself

with the thought that I might get away with it. Of course, baling out was the obvious alternative if I felt like joining the Caterpillar Club. But the engine turned on sweetly and as none of the other instruments gave any hint of malfunction, I relaxed from the conclusion I came to in the time it took to reach Sicily, overfly it and land smoothly at Luqa airport in Malta, that it was only the oil pressure gauge that had become unserviceable.

As expected, the lunch menu at Luqa Airport after refueling the aircraft lived down to expectations. Sausage and mash, fish and chips and a variety of egg dishes centered on a frying pan. But food wasn't the focus of our attention: 308's oil pressure gauge positively monopolised it! Should I ask Airwork's agents, Malta Airways, to take a look at it - which meant the possibility of staying on the island for two or three days while a spare was flown out from England and fitted - or should I ignore the fault, confident in the experience that there was nothing to worry about the performance of the engine? Over coffee I made up my mind to start up, run up on the way out to the runway and, if all went well, to fly. The danger with Malta, though, is that it doesn't have a single field on which to pancake and skid safely to a standstill if an engine fails. Dry sandstone walls criss-cross them all. It was a risk everyone took on take-off - never mind whether your oil pressure gauge was serviceable or not.

Airwork's briefing notes nominated Mersah Metruh in Egypt for refueling 695 nautical miles from Malta, with Benina by Benghazi, 325 nautical miles away in Libya, as the diversionary airfield. In the circumstances we agreed on staging through Benina.

RIAF 308's engine started first go and as it settled down to a smooth idle, the oil-pressure gauge showed a steady rise to 105 psi and then dropped back to the recommended 100 psi while cylinder head and oil temperatures rose to normal settings. What a relief! It made up my mind. I called Gerry and said "let's go!" Fifteen minutes later we were bombing along at cruising altitude. But as we crossed the Gulf of Sirte this old adage kept popping into my thoughts like a well-worn mantra: "A bold pilot is never an old pilot. There are no old bold pilots!" Would I regret not having consulted Malta Airways engineers? In the event, I needn't have worried; my Centaurus didn't even give in to the rough-running every pilot of a single-engined aircraft imagines hearing the moment he or she crosses a coast and heads out to sea.

Benina was still largely manned by RAF personnel, some of whom had transferred to International Aeradio Ltd to run the communications and air traffic control aspects of the base, so the patter from Benina Tower when we called for landing instructions 1 Hr. 35 mins after leaving Luqa was pure *RAF-speak*. By chance, the duty controller was an old friend who had often talked us down to safe QGH landings in atrocious weather at North Weald. This time he talked us into a low-level pass up the runway rising into a three-second break that put the two Furies into long line astern at 1,000 feet on the downwind leg for a curved fighter approach on finals. With friends like that, the welcome that came with a cool beer was bound to be warm - but not wild enough to make rising for an early departure a matter of regret. On the contrary, I was in bed by 10.30 and slept deeply until aroused by a turbanned orderly bearing a cup of sweet mint tea at what seemed midnight, but was actually five a.m. and as cold as Nice had been. One imagines anywhere bordering a North African desert as always being warm. Not so in winter. I could have done with an extra sweater and an overcoat for the walk to the control tower and ramp.

As the crow flies from Benina to Nicosia, he'll follow Cyrenaica's coastal' strip of dazzling white sand for about 100 nautical miles to Derna - scene of some heavy fighting during the War - and then strike out across the water for about 600 miles. RIAF 308's Centaurus made it faster than a crow and it behaved impeccably all the way, even though the oil-pressure gauge started behaving erratically at the half-way mark. Inspired by my old school motto: "experientia docet", I ignored it. But even if it had been working properly, I would have kept a weather-eye out for boats of which there was no shortage within gliding distance.

The good thing about the Fury was that it trimmed out reasonably well for the cruise, giving some scope for hands-off flying. This enabled me to take some rather nice pictures with an ancient camera that produced 212 x 4Y4 inch negatives (mammoth jobs by today's standards). It was a bellows-type Autographic Kodak manufactured between 1914 and 1924. I picked it up for a few

shillings in a junk shop in Brighton's famous Lanes. The pictures illustrating this feature were taken with it.

As I started to say about trimming, undercarriage and flap lowering naturally produced changes, but only slight - nose down in both cases and vice versa on raising them. Engine cooling shutter openings and closures also induced changes, only stronger, which accounted for the advice not to operate them in a high speed dive. Directional trim changes occurred with alterations of speed and power.

An hour out from Derna I called Trodos Homer for a bearing. "Steer 080°" they advised, " ... and "stand-by". As we altered course from the 074° we'd been flying the voice from Trodos called back: "Derek, Gerry, there'll be a couple of pints waiting for you when you land!" - and for the next 50 minutes we racked our brains trying to identify the benefactor who insisted on anonymity! It seemed the welcome we got at Benina was being repeated - only this time our instructions were to join the airport circuit with dignified formality behind a Douglas DC3 and to park, after landing, next to a British European Airways Elizabethan, where a bowser would be standing by to refuel our Furies. What the instructions didn't say was that another old chum from North Weald would be there holding a tray of beers for us - much to the merriment of the Elizabethan's skipper. The network of old aviation friends and contacts was working a treat.

Over the next few years I flew into airfields and airports in many parts of the world and was sad to see the gradual replacement of that close-knit brotherhood of aviators and air traffic controllers by scruffy-uniformed half-shaved cyphers wallowing in Byzantine practices that tainted so many newly independent states. Passing time did nothing to mellow them; on the contrary, in some places they became even more officious and demanding.

It was too early in the day to take beer drinking seriously, although Gerry and I were tempted to lock up our aeroplanes and night-stop at Kyrenia on the north coast of Cyprus, where former Hawker test pilot, Bill Humble, owned the Harbour Bar Hotel. But we resisted and set course for Baghdad half an hour before mid-day, Gerry leading. Our track crossed the Syrian coast south of Tartus and clipped the northern edge of Lebanon. A faint yellow haze permeated the air, which served as a reminder to check the carburettor air intake filter switch; even so, it was possible to see the pipeline that carried oil from the Kirkuk and Mosul oilfields to the Syrian port of Banyas stretching for mile upon mile across the Syrian desert to the banks of the Euphrates River near Lake Habbaniya in Iraq. What a navaid !

I was told that if you looked carefully, you could see trails made over centuries of Middle Eastern commerce by countless camels in caravan carrying - as school textbooks put it - "silks and spices" But from 20,000 feet my untrained archaeological eye couldn't tell a dried-up wadi from a ploughed furrow.

It took over an hour to fly from the Mediterranean coast to the Euphrates. I can't say there was much in the way of detail to absorb from a desert panorama that seemed to go on forever, but relief to the eye and mind came soon enough from the changing hues of the landscape where they emerged from the cultivated banks of the Euphrates and, beyond, the Tigris which flows through Baghdad.

In London *Kismet*, with Alfred Drake and Doretta Morrow in the starring roles, was playing to packed houses. With melodies borrowed from the Russian composer Borodin, it was set in a Baghdad of the Arabian Nights - a world of djinns, khalifs, wazirs and magic carpets piloted in and out of beauty-packed seraglios by handsome swains. I knew Baghdad would never be like a scene from that rollicking romantic musical, but it amused me to imagine joining the stack at Baghdad West airport and taking my turn to land behind half a dozen flying carpets.

As it turned out, there was no traffic in the circuit when we called for landing instructions. Apart from a Vickers Viking twin-engined airliner, our two Furies were the only aircraft on this civil gateway to the Iraqi capital. There was, however, a reception committee on the ramp to greet us: two Iraqi Air Force officers and a dozen uniformed airmen lined up behind them.

The moment we stopped engines the airmen broke ranks, split into two parties and ran to open the cowlings of our aircraft wide. "To cool engine fastly", explained the N.C.O. as he offered to undo the

straps of a surprised Dempster and help him from the cockpit. Being February it wasn't --' all that hot, but clearly the practice had merit in the heat of an Iraqi summer. "All men here good engineers", added the N.C.O. - a Flight Sergeant who memory tells me was called Zayadan. "They knowing Fury very good". And conscientious they certainly were about checking over the planes before giving their officers the OK to sign the acceptance documents so they could be flown to their permanent base at Rashid. As for the oil pressure gauge, Flight Sergeant Zayadan listened carefully to what I had to say and looked at me with a broad grin. "No problem! We fix very fastly!"

As I said, I never thought Baghdad would look like a scene from the Arabian Nights. Nevertheless some bits of it did! After a swim in the pool of the residential ex-patriates' Alwiyah Club, Gerry and I took a stroll around the city and were arrested by the sight of the still waters of the Tigris reflecting the silhouette of houses and minaret's against a darkening orange sunset. Gradually pinpricks of light began to pierce the blackening sky until it was ablaze with a myriad stars. In the foreground, along the beach-like shore, flickered dozens of small fires on which freshly caught *Masgoof* - Tigris salmon - were being grilled with onions and tomatoes for diners in the coffee shops and taverns of Abu Nawas, a nearby street named after the famous Arabian poet. The view across the river at sunset, the flickering fires along its banks and that lively street all captured - it seemed to me - the spirit of old Baghdad Baghdad as it might have been in the Arabian Nights.

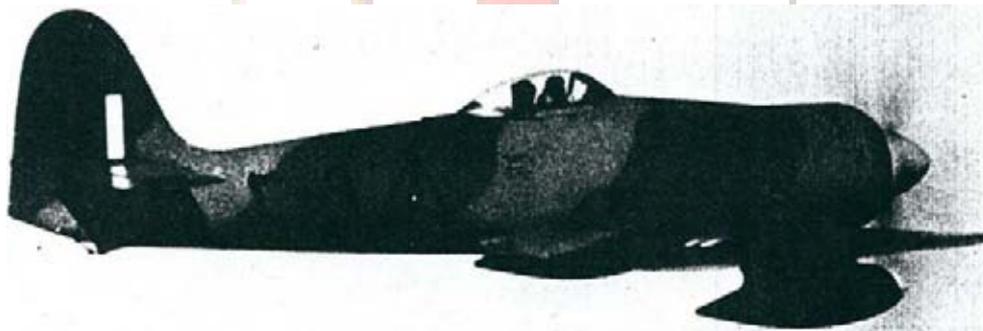
Abu Nawas may still be there today, catering as ever for Baghdad's chattering male population. But gone are a lot of the houses that lent their irregular outlines to such a magical silhouette. They have been replaced by square concrete blocks that would never allow you to bend your imagination to a bit of romantic fancy

RIAF 310 and 311 were next to be delivered. Then, on July 20th, I took time off on the eve of Hawker's summer vacation closure to fly 312, 313 and 314 from Langley to Blackbushe for export clearance. Hugh Merewether - who later joined the Hawker test flight team - was to have made up a trio with Gerry in 313 and myself in 314, but he had trouble with 312's tailwheel oleo and was compelled to postpone his departure by a couple of days. The only change I made to our tried and tested flight plan was to retrack to cross the French Mediterranean coast at Le Lavandou so as to circle the offshore nudist colony islands of Porquerolles low and slow before heading for Nice.

Apart from my first trip, when 308s oil pressure gauge nearly gave me heart-failure, all my Fury flights were trouble-free. I mention this because 314 was the last one I flew, although about seven more were still due to the RIAF. Two more contracts would have suited me well, for apart from the enormous enjoyment I got out of the Hawker Fury (*and the overnight stops in Nice!*) I could have used the money to speed up and complete the restoration of my 1932 Rolls-Royce 20-25 sedanca de ville: another enjoyable extravagance I paid for out of salary. But what now gives me such pleasure is knowing that so many of the Baghdad Furies we ferried to Iraq 46 years ago have been rescued, restored, are cherished and still flying. I am looking forward to seeing some of them again. I'd like to fly one, but I'm absolutely certain no one will let me!



Gerry Threlfall with the Iraqi officers who signed for the two aircraft delivered by him and Derek Dempster at Baghdad West Airport on 15th February 1953. The aircraft in the background (IAF 308) is now owned by Mrs Lynette Zuccoli in Toowoomba, Queensland, Australia. She runs a business restoring antique and vintage aeroplanes



Gerry Threlfall in flight between Nicosia and Baghdad on 15th February 1953

800668 Geoffrey Turnham – I joined Sid Cotton's Private Air Force

I was called up for full time service on 24th August 1939. The Squadron had moved from Hendon to Northolt. It was a very quiet period. Aircrews were on conversion courses changing from our Hawker Demons to the twin engined Bristol Blenheim. I was becoming rather bored and was looking for some action when I heard a volunteer driver was required for Wing Commander Cotton, OC No.2 Camouflage Unit based nearby at Heston which was a private airfield. So I volunteered and attended Heston for an interview with the Wing Commander.

He seemed quite happy to have me and I was told to return to Northolt, collect my kit, and report back to him after lunch. On returning to Heston I was told to throw my kit in the Beechcraft aircraft outside the hanger and that he would be out soon. When he turned up I asked where we were going and was told we were going to Paris first.

We set off accompanied by his civilian Batman and on arrival in Paris were conveyed to a hotel. After breakfast the next morning, feeling rather worse for wear after a night out on the town with the Batman, the two of us reported to the Wing Commander. He said we were to take his car, a Hodgekiss Straight Eight Saloon which was parked in the hotel garage, drive to Nancy, Alsace Lorraine, and report to him at the local private aerodrome. Apparently No.2 Camouflage Unit had

relocated there from Coulommiers, near Paris.

After a couple of circumnavigations of Paris we eventually found the right road and reached Nancy the following day.

Personnel were quartered in the Hotel de l'Univers in the town where we lived like lords. Cotton even provided wine for dinner, the cost of which he met from his own pocket. There was no bull, saluting or parades and being allowed to wear casual dress, we appeared more like civilians than member of the RAF. The only requirement upon us which Cotton insisted was that we dressed correctly for dinner.

However, it didn't take me long to discover the Unit title was just a cover name for security reasons. I was in fact now a member of a top-secret survey flight, No.1 Photographic Unit. Everything was hush hush; we had two spitfires, a Blenheim and a Lockheed Hudson which were guarded night and day by MPs.

Work started on the aircraft and everyone took part regardless of trade. They were stripped down, guns and ammunition boxes removed, rivets filed down and everything highly polished, which considerably increased the speed of each aircraft. They were painted sky blue and pink and we were known as 'Sid Cottons Private Air Force'.

Photographic survey flights started in the New Year. These were over neutral Belgium and Holland, as well as France & Germany. On one occasion, the Hudson started from Heston and refuelled in France before flying to Baghdad where it was repainted and given the civil registration G-AGAR. From there it flew over the Caucasus region photographing oil Installations.



Surveys continued up to the fall of Dunkirk on 27 May 1940. Two days after the fall of Paris on 14 Jun the Unit was told to evacuate Nancy and get back to England as best it could. By which time we were completely cut off from the Channel coast.

So with such equipment as could be moved, we made our way to a grass airstrip Fontenoy-le-Conte on the Atlantic coast. A trip which involved avoiding the advancing Germany hordes by going via Troyes, Blois, Tours, Poitiers and Norte. A very hectic journey on roads crowded with fleeing civilians on foot, in carts, cars, Lorries and every kind of vehicle.

On arrival at the grass strip we piled all our equipment, except the 15cwt, in a corner of the field and set it on fire. The aircraft were flown back to England. In addition, some of the airmen patched up an abandoned Fairey Battle we'd come across on the airfield at Poitiers. The aircraft had a damaged wing which was made good with a bit of fencing and some fabric. Lots were drawn, using a pack of cards, and four airmen were packed in and flown back to England by F/Lt Tug Wilson, a flight which took 4 hours.

Cotton evacuated some in the Hudson and promised to come back for more. Feeling it was none too safe hanging around waiting for Cotton to return I and a couple of others took the 15cwt to Bordeaux where, with the help of the Harbour Master, we managed to find a coal boat sailing for England.

It was a very unpleasant journey. We were locked in a cabin out of sight during the day and only allowed on deck after dark. We reached England on, I believe 01 July 1940 and all Unit personnel got safely back to England one way or another.

Back at Heston No.2 Camouflage Unit was disbanded. Wing Commander Tuttle took over from W/Co Cotton. Sidney Cotton's Private Air Force was no more and in its place was the first of the Photo Reconnaissance Units which initially started life under Coastal Command.

On arriving back at Heston I was given a rail warrant to return to 600 Squadron. On being asked where the Squadron was to be found I was told 'it's a nice quiet spot by the sea, Manston'. So having escaped from France I was just in time for the Battle of Britain! I stayed with 600 until November 1942 when I was posted to 141 Wing HQ. MT. Section with whom I stayed through France, Belgium, Holland and Germany until demob.

Date: 23-MAR-1941
Type: Lockheed 414 Hudson I
Operator: RAF 2 PRU
Registration: G-AGAR
Fatalities: 0 / Occupants: 0
Other fatalities: 0
Airplane damage: Written off (damaged beyond repair)
Location: Heraklion - Greece
Phase: Standing
Nature: Military

22.3.41 Damaged by Fiat CR 42s in an air raid on Heraklion, destruction completed the next day, engine and other parts salvaged and returned to Egypt. G-AGAR was also known as 'Cloudy Joe' and was involved in secret reconnaissance missions on Soviet oil fields in 1940 by 1 PDU under the command of Sidney Cotton.

Before it is too late? – by Richard Swale

Until recently I have been able to look upon history as events that happened before my time. No longer: more and more I find events being served up by the media and press not only happened in my lifetime, but I was involved. Many of these happenings are frequently misreported or portrayed in a totally fictitious manner, and, there is a tendency to treat World War 11 as though it was no different from the skirmish that is going on in Iraq and Afghanistan. I can assure you that if the latter bore any resemblance to WWII we wouldn't be doing it.

Total war is not easy to explain in a short essay, but if I use myself and my chum as examples of how two ordinary lads were affected, and the changes that took place in this country between 1939 and 45, perhaps it will enable people to judge the difference.

My chum and I were not academic and spent our time at grammar school in a 'C' form. Time off we enjoyed rowing, swimming and sailing my little dinghy: with the odd beer and girls too, of course. In fact, we were with our girl friends when we heard Chamberlain announce we were at war with Germany. After that our one aim in life was to fly with the RAF.

This we achieved and he became a Halifax bomber pilot, surviving two tours of operations and winning the DFC after a shell burst under a wing turning his aircraft, which was carrying a full bomb load, upside down. He regained control and went on to bomb the target.

If you can; imagine every trip to be your last. As his home was near the airfield he was flying from, he spent as much time as he could with the girl friend he had married. One evening, when I was home on leave, he invited me to dinner. When the meal was over he got up, shook me by the hand, kissed his wife goodbye, and walked out of the room to face the blackness of the night, the roar of four Bristol Hercules engines, German flak and night fighters.

It takes courage of a more than usual order to do that night after night, week in week out.

He was tough and good at his job. Staying alive meant never flying straight and level for more than a couple of minutes, keeping awake for several hours in a bitterly cold and rarefied atmosphere, making sure your crew were awake, at the same time being on constant look out for night fighters and other bombers in the stream. As a night fighter pilot myself I can confirm that once latched on to a bomber was unlikely to escape. He was one of the 25% who survived each tour of 30 operations, and he has my complete admiration.

B52s bombed Baghdad unopposed from 50,000', an operation that took a matter of days - hardly similar.

During his time on bombers he fire bombed Hamburg and the much publicised city of Dresden. Some years ago I talked to him about it, and he told me that as far as he and the other crews were concerned it was a long trip, and just another raid they were glad to get back from. The war was nearing its inevitable end and their luck could be running out. Not that they had any choice in the matter. Unlike today, where if you don't like a situation you walk away from it, then (a) all aircrew were volunteers, (b) each raid or sortie was unknown until it was underway, and (c) if you refused to fly, you were branded with those terrible words 'lacking in moral fibre'. If you were an NCO you could also be reduced to the ranks and stripped of your wings and medals. Officers would be grounded and given a desk job.

It is hard to imagine today just how much aircrew wings could mean to a man. In fact, when I was briefly in Canada, a chap hanged himself from the rafters of the Mess hall because he had failed a pilot training course.

We did not go to war to rescue the Jews, we didn't even know, until much later, that they were being murdered wholesale. We went to war because of a conviction that Hitler would, sooner or later, go for us, and we did have Treaty obligations in Europe.

My friend and I were not filled with patriotic zeal, more a desire to fly for free, and the excitement. We didn't think about the real price when we joined, but there was no turning back once committed. We were well aware of the carnage of WW1, it only finished four years before we were born and both our fathers had been in the army. My father took part in one of the last cavalry charges carried out by the British army, chasing the Turks out of Gaza in 1917! On a wall in my chums house was his father's sword. The blade was 'frozen' in its scabbard with German blood.

The ultimate price was to be paid by many of our friends from school. As an example, five of us met in transit in Canada in November 1942. By 1945 my friend and I were the only survivors, and they were only a minute number of the 35,000,000 who died in Europe. Most of that total, incidentally, were Russians who bore the brunt of Hitler's attack - something which should never be forgotten. Four out of five Germans were killed by Russians.

I expect the present generation would be surprised to hear there was much sympathy for Russia at the time. Many a night I heard drunken aircrew shouting "Joe (Stalin) for King!" as they staggered along the street, on their way to the transport waiting to take them back to camp. Not serious perhaps, but our lives were closely connected to the success of the Russian army. Together we were breaking the back of the Germans some time before the Yanks got organised.

This country was vastly different from what it is today. Virtually an armed camp -almost everyone was involved. Most women were working in the services, armament factories and on the land. A lot of men were serving abroad, but many were in England - particularly aircrew. Their expectations were not good, and hormones raged, as they do in young men and women, so many were the unfortunate liaisons which had their repercussions for years afterwards. Attachments were frequently brief. I met a girl when I was home on embarkation leave in 1943, her boyfriend had recently been lost on a bombing raid - her eyes said it all - why are you surviving when my love is dead - what is so special about you? I found I had no answer to that.

Shortly after this I took off from Portreath in a Beaufighter and flew to Gibraltar, and then on to join a night fighter squadron protecting shipping convoys and the many bomber airfields in Italy.

At the age of 17 my wife was driving ambulances, and putting into bags the dismembered remains of the victims of the bombing raids in the Midlands. Later, she was blown down the ward, missing several obstacles on the way, ending up across the bed of a patient when a bomb struck the London hospital where she was working as a nurse.

Life was not too bad in some rural areas, but generally this country was a mess, everywhere needed a coat of paint, and, due to fuel shortages winters were cold and the only way to travel any distance was by train. A train crammed with troops going on posting or leave - all carrying their kit and rifles - on a black, wet and cold winters' night; the only light being dim blue bulbs which gave a grim ghostly glow, was not a pleasant way to travel. There was no heating as the steam which was normally used for the purpose was needed to power the engine. A trip to the toilet needed some forward planning as the corridor would be filled with slumbering men and their gear, and that included the toilet! There are complaints today about smoking in public places, in those days the air was blue with tobacco smoke wherever you went.

Breakdowns were frequent, engines and rolling stock were worn out by 1944, a state of affairs which was the start of the problems suffered by the railways long after the war was over. And, of course, there was always the chance of being shot up by a German intruder aircraft.

Communication with your loved ones was confined to censored letters. Telephones were few and far between in those days. My parents were bombed in York when I was training as a pilot in America in 1942. It was reported in the Atlanta Journal at the time but it was weeks before I had a letter saying they were unharmed. My 14 year old brother was commended for carrying messages through the burning streets of the city that night. This was at the time of the, so-called, 'Baedeker raids' on historic cities, which included Exeter.

Coming home on leave could be a deadly dull experience. Friends of your own age were all called up, food was rationed, parents were working during the day and on various duties such as, in the case of my father, the Observer Corps, at night. On one leave, excitement came in the form of a lone bomber dropping its load on the gas works (close to where I happened to be at the time) a few days before Christmas 1941. Christmas dinner was not only frugal, but late that year!

There was the blackout, of course. Black eyes and broken noses were common, the trouble was, lamp posts and pillar boxes, went between outstretched arms. Why didn't people use torches? There was the blackout to consider, and along with most other things there was a shortage of batteries.

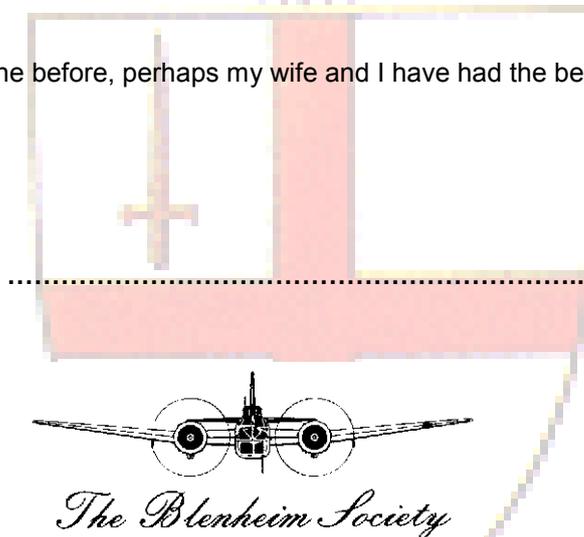
The blackout was very effective, flying over big cities on a dark night one could only see brief flashes and a faint glow, which gave little idea of its size or shape. In spite of this, land marks like rivers could not be hidden, and there was much heavy bombing early in the war with V bombs later on. You will see the similarity between WW11 and today? !

I am concerned that the reality of the war, and the efforts of those who took part in it will be lost in the distortion and sensationalisation that is the media and Hollywood today. My generation gave a great deal and I would hate it to be squandered by a new generation dedicated to hedonism and reducing aid to the generation that suffered and saved this country from Nazi domination. I expect a lot of old Romans said something similar, and times are not unlike the last days of Rome.

I am old enough now to have come from another world, another time. It was by no means perfect but it was simpler and more satisfying. I shall not be part of the future, or not much of it, but over-population and shortages of water and power reserves could cause conflicts the like of which we have not yet seen.

In spite of all that has gone before, perhaps my wife and I have had the best of it.

RS 2010



Blenheim progress – From the Engineering Side

From the Engineering Side No.29

As reported earlier we have been concentrating on getting the airframe completed up to the front spar; so Steve, on finishing the laying in of the control cables has now bolted in the turret gun column and the cupola and fitted the flooring in the rear fuselage ably assisted by Tony who when not assisting in this is getting on with the bomb doors which is a massive job in its own right. Another item fitted is the main electrical panel in the rear fuselage.

Colin in the meantime is carrying on with the hydraulics and pneumatics in the nose section and has fitted the hydraulic selectors to the seat frame with the associated pipe work, also going in is the conduit which carries the electrics and other instrument connections.

Brian has been completing the lower inner rear engine cowlings and I along with Conor have been manufacturing other inner cowlings along with new starboard outer wheel bay nacelle panels and keeping the paperwork up to date.

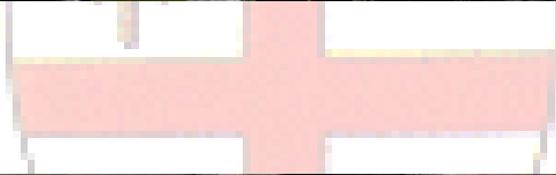
Steve has now picked up the engine gill rings, which got damaged in the accident , every gill drive will require to be examined and rebushed where necessary which is a big task in its own right its best to start these now or they could cause a delay later.

Tom in the meantime has stripped the Port engine down to the crank case this will allow an examination of all of the cylinders and we can then check the run out on the main crank and reduction gear to see if they are reusable.

Once again the Society made a superb effort in 2011 to donate the fantastic sum of £21000 so a big thank you from me as I know how much effort is put into this.

Smudge
January 2012





600, 601 and 604 Squadron pilots may be interest in the following opportunity;

Meteor 7 Event



Want to watch a Meteor 7 fly?

Dayne Markham is associated with the restoration of a Meteor 7 at Coventry Airfield (Baginton). He has made enquiries of The Classic Collection at Coventry and his plan is to get about 50 (although numbers are not limited) pilots there, and, assuming the aircraft is serviceable, it would cost about £1500 to put enough fuel into the aircraft for a circuit. With 50 people that would work out at £30 per head.

The proposed date is THURSDAY JUNE 14th 2012

EDITOR – Due to the late production of this newsletter, this date will have passed. Sincere apologies to all, but please contact Dave anyway as this event can no doubt be repeated with enough interest.

Please let Dayne know if you can be there on that day by email daynemarkham@hotmail.com or phone 01 489 782 637.

He requests that all pilots do their maximum to find as many old friends as possible or pass him the info to make contact.

If the task of raising the cost of fuel for a circuit is just too much the second option is a fast taxi.

He had originally proposed to include lunch in a DC6 (while parked!) in the price, but now says that Lunch would be extra, or bring a hamper.

He says there will be another visit to the Meteor 7 in November 2012 but a demo flight is less likely.

Hope to see you there,

Ged Lavery

An email from Ann Jackson.

"Firstly I want to praise the 600 Squadron Newsletters which my father receives; I do not usually read them, but did so recently and found them to be very interesting.

I do, however, wish to take issue – albeit gently – with the caption on the lower photograph on page 66 of the December 2011 issue. The Blenheim in the image is BQ-O, not BQ-Q, and was taken at Manston, not Redhill. The man on top of the aircraft is my father (800467 Ronald Hayden). He was a member of the ground crew who serviced this aircraft. He joined the 600 Squadron at Hendon in 1936 and was posted to Manston in 1939 when war broke out.

Kind regards

Ann Jackson”

The picture & offending caption



The above picture shows L8679 BQ-Q of 600 Squadron at Redhill in 1940, a sister aircraft of L4905 BQ-M in which Tony Hobson, Charlie Cooper & David Hughes were lost.

Ann, many thanks for your email and for the correction – I have also pointed out the error to the author via the Battle of Britain Historical Society. Sincere apologies to you and your Father for this error, now duly corrected.

Editor -

Ronald James Hayden joined 600 Squadron in Hendon in 1936 and was posted to Manston when war broke out. He was ground crew and “his” aircraft at Manston was Blenheim BQ-O. He was posted to Cranwell in 1941/2 where he served out the war.

Roy “Acko” Atkinson worked for the Post Office and joined 600 Squadron in 1936 at Hendon. He was posted to Manston when war broke out and was ground crew alongside Ron Hayden; he remained with 600 Sqn until the end of the war. When he retired from work, he and his wife emigrated to Australia to be near their grandchildren. They both died there a few years ago.

Pilot Officer Ernest "Ernie" Matthews also joined 600 Squadron in peace time and was posted to Manston when war broke out. He was then posted to Cranwell and later to 78 Squadron. He was killed in 1943 over Berlin and is commemorated in the Berlin War Cemetery.

Fl. Lt. Royston "Carrie" Carrington was with the above airmen at Manston. He was killed in service with 35 Sqn in October 1942 and is commemorated in Lille Southern Cemetery, France.

Ann Jackson (Ronald Hayden's daughter)

April 2012

Anne kindly sent me a number of her Fathers photographs, a few of which can be seen here, the rest I will post onto the web site ASAP.

With sincere thanks to the Hayden family for giving permission for the Association to use these images. As usual, if anyone knew and/or remembers Ronald Hayden, I know the family would be delighted to hear from you.



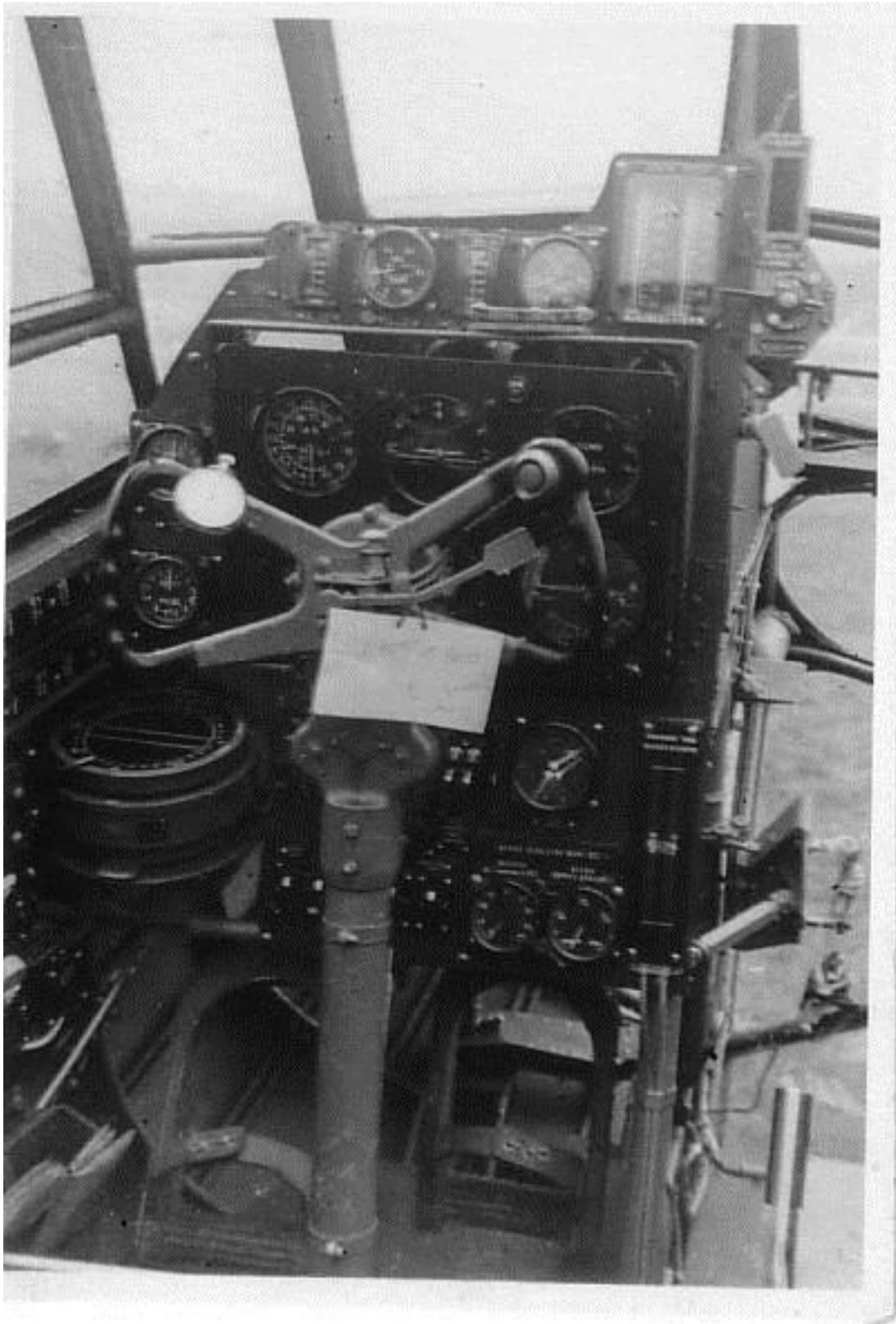
Manston, "Birchinghall in the cockpit. ©Copyright 600 Squadron Association. Reproduced by kind permission of the Hayden Family



Manston, L-R: Unknown, Royston "Carrie" Carrington, RJH ©Copyright 600 Squadron Association. Reproduced by kind permission of the Hayden Family



Manston, L-R; Ernie Mathews, unknown wireless operator, RJH. Front; Roy "Acko" Atkinson ©Copyright 600 Squadron Association. Reproduced by kind permission of the Hayden Family



Manston, Blenheim Mk 1F cockpit – possibly BQ-O. ©Copyright 600 Squadron Association. Reproduced by kind permission of the Hayden Family



Manston 1940, note on the back of the photograph states this is possibly a replacement for an aircraft lost in the Rotterdam raid. ©Copyright 600 Squadron Association. Reproduced by kind permission of the Hayden Family



Group photo taken at Hendon. My Dad is 4th from left in the middle row and, judging by his appearance, I would say this was taken in 1936 when he first joined. . ©Copyright 600 Squadron Association. Reproduced by kind permission of the Hayden Family

John's Memoir – by John Brockhurst

When we moved to London from Limpsfield, Surrey our address was 4, Sussex Mews East, in Paddington close to Hyde Park near Lancaster gate, Bayswater Road (not far from Paddington Railway Station.)

We, Ken and I, attended Hampden Gurney School. A Church of England School near Marble Arch. The Church was the 'Church of the Annunciation' which was a high church. Both Ken and I sang in the choir and when our voices broke we became Servers. We attended the priest at Communion service.

I remember Winston Churchill being a resident of a house in Sussex Square that backed on to the Mews. At night time, we could hear the click of the revolvers as the Police men guarding him whiles away the hours of darkness.

At this time in the early 1920's my Father drove a car called a Delauney Belleville (I am not sure if I have the spelling right)



I understand it was made in Belgium and was one of the top notch cars of it's day. After that, he always drove a Rolls Royce. S.O. Lazarus was his employer (Samuel Octavious, obviously the eighth child of his parents). Father attended the RR. School for drivers at Derby and he told me that in their spare time, they often kicked a ball about. One of the pupils was an Indian and wore a Turban and it came off! He was surprised how long it was. I thought this was very interesting at the time. It must have been for me to remember it.

As a boy I used to help my Father clean the car when he returned with it covered in mud. Remember at this time the cars were painted and then varnished and if you left it wet it would spot badly. So it had to be done at once whatever time he came in.

Ken went to day continuation classes to learn the retail trade of Menswear. His first job was at Barkers, a retail department store in th High Street in Kensington, where he joined the Mens outfitting department as a junior. Off the peg suits, jackets and trousers and shirts, ties and socks.

He joined the Territorial Army when he was there. An anti aircraft unit and he reached the rank of Sergeant before war broke out in September 1939. I remember him wearing puttees.

His second job was as a commercial traveller for a firm that made leather belts etc. He bought a second hand Austin Seven and went as far afield as Yorkshire! It did about 40 mph maximum! He wore a snake skin tie.

In 1929 I left school at the end of the summer term at the age of 14. Father must have spoken to S.O.L. about me and he offered me a job as office boy in his firm of Huttenbach Lazarus, Importers and exporters to and from Lamaya. They had offices in Penang and Singapore. My main jobs were dealing with the post and copying contracts. The copying was done by using damp sheets of material into a bound book of flimsy sheets – I placed the original contract in the book covered by a flimsy sheet then a sheet of damp material on top, closed the book, inserted into a press, screwed it down to apply pressure. On releasing the pressure and extracting the contract and the cloth sheet

you then had a bound book of contracts.. Mind you the task was beset with difficulties. The damp sheet had to be the correct dampness otherwise you had a spoilt original and a blurred copy!

This was the time of the slump and I was made redundant. After one week on the dole, I applied for a job at Sainsbury's. I attended their school at Stamford Street, near Waterloo Station and learned how to make large blocks of butter into ½ pound packs. The butter came in large blocks weighing 56lbs. Then I was sent to a branch in Porchester Road quite near to my home. We were then living at 54 Gloucester Mews, Craven Road which was even closer to Paddington Station where I was a rookie on the butter and egg counter. Sainsbury's were very good employers. Some of the staff lived in over the shop. All staff had their lunch provided on the premises. Good quality hot meal.



©eHive. Butter boxes were used as storage for factory butter intended for transportation for distribution and sale. They were crudely made from wooden staves with nails holding the box together. A company marker would be painted on the sides of a box so that they may be identified when returned. The boxes were used continuously until falling into disrepair.

This butter box belonged to the Jamberoo Co-operative Dairy Society Ltd. It was used to transport 56 pound blocks of their choicest butter

The cold store at Porchester Road was underneath the shop floor and was reached by a trap door in the floor and a steep ladder. There the butter and meat was stored. I would be sent down to get the blocks of butter, tip them out of the case they travelled in onto a scrubbed board and bring them up to the counter. I was a weedy youth of poor physique, and I struggled every time. Sometimes they would tilt ominously. Often one of the butcher's staff who would be hunking carcasses to the shop would come to my rescue to avoid a disaster. Assistance gratefully received! I stuck this for about a year and then the chance came to return to an office job in the City. It was with Lewis Lazarus & Sons, Metal Brokers at 37 Lime Street, London E.C.3 another business owned by S.O.L. and his sons, Eric, Kenneth & Alan. They were similar to stockbrokers only instead of dealing stocks and shares they dealt in metals, copper, tin, lead and spelter. I used to attend Kenneth Lazarus when he was dealing on the London Metal Exchange. When war broke out in September 1939 I had just got my 'ticket' to deal.



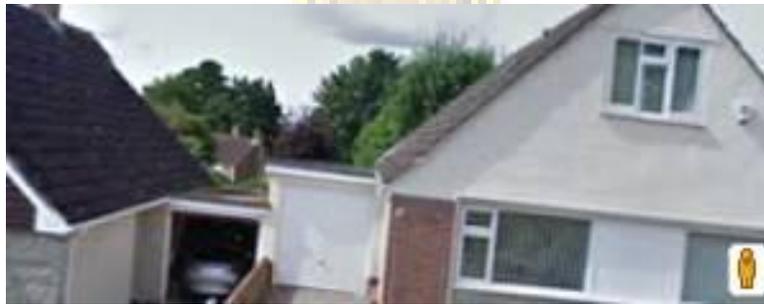
The LME trading floor, "The Ring" at Whittington Avenue

By this time, Father had changed jobs and was driving (another Rolls Royce) for Lady Wimble and we were living at 54 Gloucester Mews, Craven Road, Paddington, even nearer to the railway station.

The war caused Ken and I to go our separate ways and I know little about his wartime service except that he elected to stay in the Army after hostilities had ceased. He had then attained the rank of Major and was part of the occupying army in Germany.

I wrote an article for the 'BOBS' (Battle of Britain Society) magazine 'Scramble' which covers my war service (following this article).

After I was invalided out of the RAF, I returned to Exeter and my wife Mary and looked for a job. I found one with the Ministry of Food, a temporary war time job. Then the University College of the South West of England advertised a vacancy in the Finance office for a clerical assistant at £3. 10s per week. I remember asking for £3.15s! (and I got it), and there I stayed until my retirement in 1975. We moved out of accommodation with friends of Mary's into a cottage owned by the college and paid 15s (75p) a week rent. We bought a bungalow on a small development in Pinhoe, on the outskirts of Exeter in the early Sixties, 3 Saxon Avenue.



In July, we sold our bungalow and moved to Ferdown in Dorset. Mary's health had been poor, she suffered with her heart and Asthma and we thought it would be better for her in a different type of climate. She died in January 1989. We had 49 years of happiness together, she was 82. Vera and I were married two years later, and a very happy marriage it has been. And still is.



RAF BOMBER COMMAND MEMORIAL SITE



My father, John Cherry, was one of the first pilots to join 604 Squadron in July 1930 and the Squadron had a place of honour in our family. I had always wanted to have contact with it and having been in touch with Mike Allen in the autumn, the 604 Squadron Association very kindly invited my wife Scilla and I to their Christmas lunch at the RAF Club in Piccadilly. The moment we came into the room before lunch I felt as if a piece of my life had suddenly been put back in place. I think they felt it was good that new (72 year old!) blood was coming into the Association. They were all incredibly kind to us and after lunch they said some very kind words about my father which made us both rather choke up a bit.

The host was Squadron Leader Lawrence Goodman, also known as Benny, originally from 617 Squadron and as I had just read a biography of Leonard Cheshire VC and 617 Squadron and what it had done I was in some awe of him. We exchanged pleasantries but that was all.

By chance, Philip Jackson, the sculptor (King George and the Queen Mother on the Duke of York steps, the Queen on horseback in Windsor Great Park etc.) is a friend and has his studio about a mile away. The veterans of Bomber Command have always wanted a proper war memorial for the 55,000 of their brave men who gave their lives in the Second World War. Finally they are getting one in Green Park, showing the crew of a Lancaster walking back to the debriefing room after a mission. And it is Philip who has been given the commission to do it. Of the crew of seven of a Lancaster, six statues have so far been cast and only the seventh, the Pilot, remained to be cast and it was still in his studio. (Many ex-bomber crew have visited his studio and from initial scepticism have come to realise that he has gone to immense trouble to get every detail in their clothing and equipment exactly right, which has pleased them a lot).

To celebrate the completion of this part of the commission, Philip asked a number of people to a preview which included Scilla and myself. I was told I could bring a guest. And then, I had an idea.

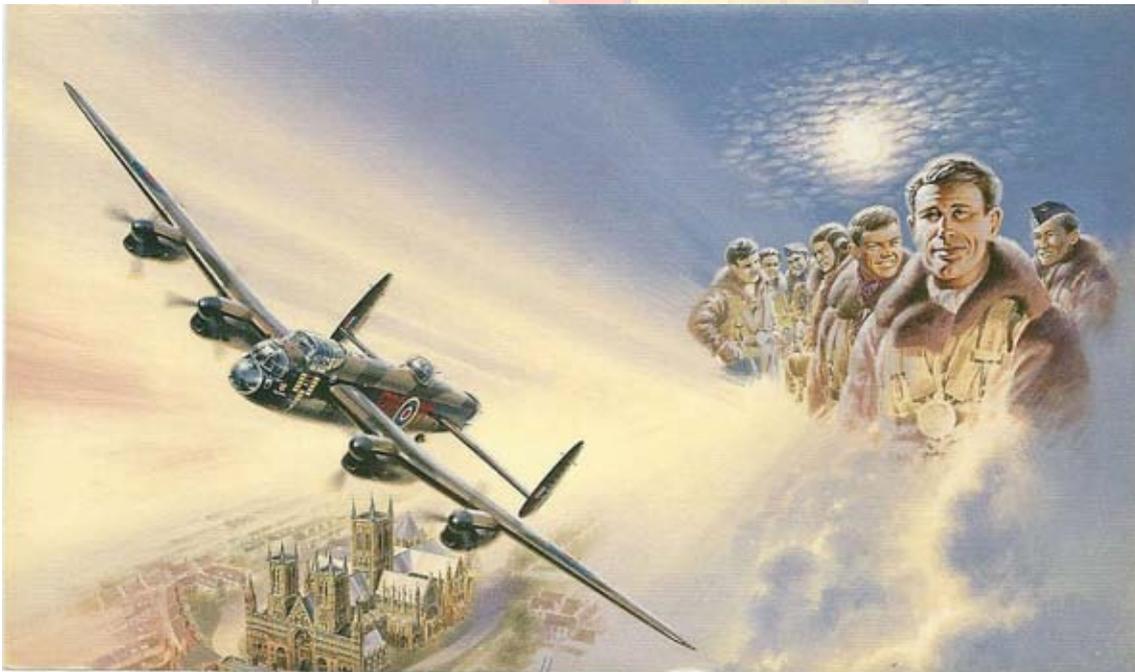
I rang up Mike, took a deep breath and said "Do you think Benny would like to come as my guest?" and he replied "I think he would love to." He checked with Benny and rang back with his number. I telephoned Benny and he said "Yes" on the spot. We arranged that he would come down by train to Haslemere and I would pick him up at the station the next week.

The day arrived, I met him and we drove off down towards Midhurst talking nineteen to the dozen. We went out to lunch at a lovely Tudor pub with super food and one of the best views in England which he really liked. Then back home for a coffee and to pick up Scilla and off we went to the Studio. We went into the picture gallery first and had a cup of tea with Jean Jackson, Philip's wife and then we went across to the studio itself. I opened the door and let Benny go in first.

The RAF Bomber Command Memorial



The Bomber Command memorial is being unveiled by the Queen, 28 Jun and will be attended by Andy Cameron, the Association Standard Bearer as part of a RAFA Standard Bearer party.



'Service Memories by John Brockhurst

Memory is a funny thing. It seems to be haphazard. Some things you cannot remember at all while other memories are so vivid.

I first became aware of the Auxiliary Air Force in the spring of 1938. I bought a glossy monthly aviation magazine and in it was an article about the A.A.F. 601 Squadron. I discovered it was based at Hendon and the T.H.Q (Town Headquarters) was in Kensington. Quite convenient for me as my home was near the Bayswater Road at Lancaster Gate.

601 was formed in 1925 – the first squadron of the Auxiliary Air Force. Born of an idea of Lord Grosvenor's, the youngest son of the first Duke of Westminster. He was a member of White's, a Gentleman's club in London. He had this idea of forming a reserve Squadron for the RAF which could be called upon when needed. He picked members of White's who were enthusiastic amateur aviators – most of whom owned their own aircraft. He became the first Commanding Officer. It was dubbed the 'Millionaire's Squadron, because all of them were 'well healed'. These affluent young pilots embellished their uniforms with red silk linings, wore red socks and blue ties instead of the regulation black.



White's Club, St James's Street, London.

I joined 601 in May 1938, just a week after my 23rd Birthday. My first real memory is of F/Sgt Brownrigg! He was in charge training and drilling us, a motley crew of civvies, from all walks of life, into a group of smart airmen reasonable capable of marching in a formation of fours, turning left and right and standing to attention on command!

THQ was at 45 Kensington park Road. At one time, the home of Sir Philip Sassoon, the Minister in charge of the Air Ministry. He gave his home to the nation for the use of 601 Squadron.

We met once a week in the evening after work to drill and, eventually to practise our skills in the trade of our choice. I chose 'Metal Rigger' who was responsible for servicing the Airframe. Many week-ends were spent at Hendon where we got to work on an aircraft under the eagle eye of a Senior NCO.

I remember watching with awe, Sgt Reddington, an experienced Metal Rigger, adjusting the tension of the wires between the two wings of a biplane, a Gloster Gauntlet, and I thought "will they ever

trust me to do that?!"

At the time, all our aircraft were biplanes. Hawker Harts and Hawker Demons, two seaters, for pilot, air-gunner, open cockpits and fixed undercarriages.

We, the ground crew, all had the opportunity to fly. This meant dressing up in a cumbersome insulated flying suit, white on colour, like a boiler suit, a leather helmet with earphones, so that you could hear the pilot speak, goggles, and a parachute that you sat on. As you walked to the aircraft you waddled like a duck! You were whisked away for a short flight. Perishingly cold, buffeted by the wind, noisy, and subjected to the attempts of your pilot to make you airsick by performing 'loop the loops' and other aerobatic manoeuvres. Rather different to my first taste of flying a five bob trip in a Gypsy cabin plane at Croydon. My abiding memory of that was the shaking of the aircraft!

September, 1938! Munich Crisis! Warscare! We were called up to report to Hendon. Two days later we moved to our war station, Biggin Hill, Kent. Five days later, we were ordered back to Hendon, and stood down on the 08th October.

During 1939 I gradually progressed from Aircraftsman 2nd Class to Leading Aircraftsman by regularly attending the weekly meetings at THQ and Hendon at the weekends. Early in 1939 our out-dated biplane aircraft were replaced with monoplanes. The Bristol Blenheim. Twin engined fighters with four machine guns slung under each wing.

On the 24th of August, I received my calling up papers to report to Hendon; this time it was for real. ON the 02nd September we travelled in convoy, mainly in our won transport across London to Biggin Hill. I remember it well. I drove my own car, a 1938 Morris 8 Tourer.



We were cheered all the way across London. We had all sorts of vehicles – solo motorcycles, combinations, a Morgan three wheeler, various RAF Lorries and petrol tankers. The motorcyclists would sweep ahead and station their machines across the adjoining cross roads to keep a free passage for the convoy. This is one of my most vivid memories.

For a while, the war was more like continuation of the annual training camp. Dubbed 'the phoney war'. In November, we were honoured by being selected to take part in the first raid on German territory. We dispatched six aircraft, three from 'A' Flight and three from 'B' Flight to Northolt, West London. I went along as one of the crew. The planes had their final preparations, long range fuel tanks were fitted, the guns were armed and everything was checked and rechecked. We learnt afterwards that they had shot up the seaplane base at the island of Borkum, 250 miles across the water.

Christmas 1940, we moved to Tangmere in Sussex. 'Lord Haw Haw' announced on the radio that 'the famous 601 Squadron had been posted to Tangmere on the Sussex Coast'. Our role at that time, with the other Squadrons of No.11 Group was to protect London.

In April 1941 we were re-equipped with Hawker Hurricanes, the best single seater fighter of that

time. The situation in Europe was getting desperate and 601 were ordered to send six aircraft and their ground crews to France. We flew across from Tangmere to Merville in the North. As I remember it was just a large field.



A Hawker Hurricane Mk I of 601 Squadron Royal Air Force - Battle of Britain 1940

Often we had to start the aircraft engines by hand to save the starter batteries for emergency starting. This meant the Rigger had to wind the handle at one side of the aircraft while the fitter sat in the cockpit and set the controls. This was all very well if you had a heft rigger, but I was a mere stripling 5'8" in height with a 34" chest and weighing a mere 8 stone. I managed to turn the handle alright but I could not turn it fast enough to fire up the engine!! My friendly fitter came to the rescue. He abandoned the cockpit having set the controls, grabbed the other handle and he wound one side while I wound the other side!

One day I remember well was when F/Lt. Peacock, now a Sqn Ldr with a Squadron of his own, came walking into the camp with a bloody bandage around his head. He had been shot down. We didn't stay in France very long, about three weeks; the situation got worse, the Germans had broken through the Belgian, side stepping around the much vaunted Maginot Line defences.

We were ordered to "get the hell out of there". No time to go back to our tents. We left everything. The only thing to be saved was the aircraft, the pilots and us, the ground crews. We made our way to Boulogne. I travelled on a Bedford petrol tanker. We spent the night in an evacuated brothel. The next morning, as we left, the Mayor, waving his arms frantically, pleaded with us to stay and defend Boulogne. Our Officer in charge was having none of it and we swept by onto the dockside. Our transport back to England was there, fully laden with ammunition which had to be unloaded! We were volunteered as dockworkers to assist!

All our transport was left at the dockside.

We had a scare on the way home. A couple of depth charges were dropped. The white cliffs of Dover never looked so inviting.

In his book 'The Flying Sword', Tom Moulson wrote:-

'An order was received by 601 Squadron on 31st May 1940 to supply nine Hurricanes as escort for a VIP Flamingo aircraft which was flying from Warmwell to Paris. Three sections of these Hurricanes each escorted the 'Flamingo' in correct battle formation, five hundred yards between sections, stepped up towards the sun and suitably placed to anticipate any attack. On arrival at Villacoublay, Paris, the VIP turned out to be Mr Churchill, whose first words were a rebuke to his pilots that he had not seen his 'Spitfires' as he called them throughout the trip. Rather than ruffle the new Prime Minister with explanations of tactics, the situation was tactfully remedied on the return flight by placing one of the sections close enough to the 'Flamingo' for its passengers to see the pilots' faces'.

Back at Tangmere during the Battle of Britain, we kept the aircraft nose into the wind, for a quick take-off, running the engines at intervals to keep them warm. When there was a flap on, there were three stages of readiness – 'Available' which meant we had fifteen minutes to get airborne,

'Readiness' five minutes to get airborne and 'Standby' when the pilot sat strapped in the cockpit and was airborne in two minutes. 'Released' meant you were stood down. The ground crew slept at the dispersal point, away from the hangars and station buildings, either in the crew hut or on the grass close to the parked aircraft.

In August, the German Luftwaffe paid particular attention to our airfield. Two days in succession the Messerschmitt's screamed out of the sky to bomb and strafe. The damage was slight. The bomb holes were soon filled in and flying resumed. Two airmen sheltering near the cookhouse were killed by a direct hit. The noise was tremendous!

We had lost a number of pilots and those remaining were in no fit state to carry on such intense, frequent aerial combat. We were due for a rest. On the 7th September the Luftwaffe changed their tactics and concentrated on bombing London. The start of 'The Blitz'. Shortly afterwards, 601 was transferred to Exeter, but not before my pilot, Flying Officer Carl Raymond David DFC was shot down and killed.



Flying Officer Carl Raymond David DFC 1939.

Carl was credited with thirteen enemy aircraft shot down in the Battle. I felt his loss very much. He was 29.

It was the next day that we moved, a much depleted Squadron, to the aerodrome at Exeter owned by Whitney Straight. There, new and inexperienced pilots straight from flying school, some as young as eighteen, were given further training to prepare them for aerial combat. Just before Christmas 1940 we were moved to Northolt. This was a bitter blow for me as I had become engaged with a wedding planned to take place in Exeter in January; however, 601 were operational again!

Then we had a spell at Manston, on the coasts of Kent, dubbed 'Hell Fire Corner'. Here we had regular morning calls by Messerschmitt 109's who would strafe the airfield with their machine guns. In July we moved again, this time to Matlasjk in Norfolk, near Cromer. Our Hurricanes were replaced with 'Airacobras', and American airplane. These had tricycle retractable undercarriages and were powered by an 'Allison' engine situated behind the pilot's cockpit. They were never successful. They were hardly ever serviceable, prone to faults, mainly electrical and engine.

Neither pilots nor ground crews liked them.

Another move, this time a move North to Yorkshire, Acaster Malbis. Here we encountered severe weather conditions. Snow, slush and freezing temperatures. After a frustrating time, these aircraft were shipped off to Russia and we were re-equipped with Spitfire. The pilots were delighted knowing they had the best single seater aircraft and the ground crews were no less ecstatic.

Our next move was overseas. We sailed from the Clyde in a convoy of ships escorted by the Royal Navy aboard a New Zealand meat ship. We went in convoy escorted by the Royal Navy as far as Durban, South Africa. We were whisked away to a transit camp just outside the town. We were there about a week, and then we proceeded to a 'destination unknown' aboard the 'Mauretania'. Not escorted, this time it was considered safe to rely on its speed.

I heard from the ships radio an announcement that the City of Exeter had been bombed! I knew that my wife, who I had left on Yorkshire, was returning to Exeter!

This was when we lost contact with each other. We both were sending frantic messages which were not received. What made it worse, I discovered later, my wife new the wife of another member of 601 who had heard from her husband! In all, it took two months to re-establish contact and she told me that they had an unexploded bomb in their garden!

We landed in Egypt while the pilots flew to Malta. Almost immediately we experienced our first sandstorm and what an experience it was! I was in the Sergeants mess at the time, a marquee. We all clung to the poles to save the whole thing taking off in the wind. Sand was everywhere, in our eyes, ears and hair and in our mouths too! The visibility outside was zero. Worse than a 'London pea-souper'. After a few days our pilots arrived from Malta and we were operational again.

Following the victory at El Alamein, our role was to support the 8th Army in their push to oust Rommel from North Africa. We leapfrogged from one advanced airfield to the next. I must explain – we were constantly on the move. When we vacated an airstrip to move forward, the main body of the Squadron would move there and we would go on to another airstrip closer to the enemy lines. There would be around twenty such moves before we reached Tunis. One airstrip was a little too advanced for comfort! I quote from Tom Moulson's history of 601 Squadron;-

'On the morning of March 1st the bombardment began in earnest. The first shells struck the camp at ten minutes to five. Puffs of smoke in the neighbouring hills indicated a large number of guns. The shelling was incessant and accurate. Without hesitation, the No.244 Wing Commander ordered all serviceable aircraft to leave, which they did through heavy fire. A few days later the 8th Army breached the Mareth Line and we returned'.

We continued our advance and duly arrived at Tunis. I had driven the 'A' Flight stores truck some fifteen hundred miles through the sand and the minefields of the Western Desert from Al Alamein.

The Squadron then returned to Malta to help cover the projected landing in Sicily. Unfortunately, I was taken ill there and was flown back to Cairo to the RAF Hospital. I was sent to Tel Aviv to recuperate and promptly caught sand fever! Then a return to the UK as 'Unfit for overseas service', in luxury in a Sunderland Flying Boat, landing in Poole Harbour. A stay in the RAF hospital at Wroughton. On discharge I was posted to 85 Squadron. A night fighter Squadron equipped with twin engined Mosquitos. My service ended when I was discharged as 'Physically unfit for Air Force service', on the 24th January, 1945.

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Lancasters

*Where are the bombers, the Lancs on the runways,
Snub-nosed and roaring and black-faced and dour,
Full up with aircrew and window and ammo
And dirty great cookies to drop on the Ruhr?*

*Where are the pilots, the navs and air-gunners,
WOP's and bomb-aimers and flight engineers,
Lads who were bank clerks and milkmen and teachers,
Carpenters, lawyers, and grocers and peers?*

*Geordies and Cockneys and Wiltshire moon-rakers,
Little dark men from the valleys of Wales,
Manxmen, Devonians, Midlanders, Scouses,
Jocks from the Highlands and Tykes from the Dales?*

*Where are the Aussies, the sports and the cobbars,
Talking of cricket and sheilas and grog,
Flying their Lanes over Hamburg and Stettin
And back to the Lincolnshire wintertime bog?*

*Where are the flyers from Canada's prairies,
From cities and forests, determined to win,
Thumbing their noses at Goering's Luftwaffe
And busily dropping their bombs on Berlin?*

*Where are the Poles with their gaiety and sadness,
All with the most unpronounceable names,
Silently, ruthlessly flying in vengeance,
Remembering their homes and their country in flames?*

*Where are the Kiwis who left all the sunshine
For bleak windy airfields and fenland and dyke,
Playing wild Mess clinics like high cockalorum,
And knocking the Hell out of Hitler's Third Reich?*

*Where are the Poles with their gaiety and sadness,
All with the most unpronounceable names,
Silently, ruthlessly flying in vengeance,
Remembering their homes and their country in flames?*

*Where are the Kiwis who left all the sunshine
For bleak windy airfields and fenland and dyke,
Playing wild Mess clinics like high cockalorum,
And knocking the Hell out of Hitler's Third Reich?*

*Where are they now, those young men of all nations,
Who flew though they knew not what might lie ahead,
And those who returned with their mission accomplished
And next night would beat up the Saracen's Head?*

*The Lancs are no more, they are part of legend,
But memory stays bright in the hearts of the men
Who loved them and flew them through flak and through hellfire
And, managed to land them in England, again.*

*The men who were lucky to live to see victory,
The men who went home to their jobs and their wives,
The men who can tell their grandchildren with pride
Of the bomber which helped to save millions of lives.*

Audrey Grealy

Sgt. A J A Roberts

Arthur John Alan Roberts was born on December 23rd 1915 and educated at Fleet Road Central School, Hampstead, London. He joined the RAF in January 1932 as an Aircraft Apprentice and passed out in December 1934 as a Metal Rigger. He was later selected for pilot training. He arrived at 12 Group Pool, Aston Down on December 11th 1939 and, after converting to Blenheims, was posted to 29 Squadron at Debden on January 12th 1940.

On August 22nd his Blenheim was struck by lightning during an RDF trial flight. He and P/O PA Tomlinson returned to Digby, unhurt.

On October 29th Roberts struck a tree, taking off in Blenheim L1503. He was again unhurt. Commissioned in April 1941, Roberts was with 600 Squadron in 1943. He shot a SM84 down into the sea four miles north of Monastir on April 26th. He was awarded the DFC (gazetted 20th August 1943) as a Flying Officer with 600. The citation credited him with three enemy aircraft destroyed. Roberts retired from the RAF on December 23rd 1957, as a Squadron Leader.

He died in April 2009.



Photograph courtesy of the Roberts family

Autumn meeting by Richard Swale

He regarded the coins in his hand, and sighed. The only one he recognised looked like a shilling piece, and, slipping the change into his pocket, he wondered vaguely what they called it now. The long trip from the southern hemisphere had taken it out of him, but he'd made it, his moment of truth had arrived at last. Picking up his cup and saucer, he turned and looked round the room. What a difference.

The tobacco stained walls, dirty windows and peeling paint work he remembered so well had been replaced by plate glass and hygienic shiny plastic. Looking up to where the sign Refreshment Room had been etched into the transom window over the entrance he found it changed to red neon. Behind the bar was a plastic board with lettering offering snacks and fast food in place of the long wall mirror. On the bar itself, the long handled beer pumps had been changed to flip taps, and the tea-urn had been superseded by a dispenser offering a variety a hot drinks to the choosy traveller. Then as the door of the restaurant swung open, there came the pulsating beat and wine of a diesel/electric locomotive, replacing the pant and hiss of the old steam engines of times long gone.

The transformation was complete; no vestige of the place, as he recalled it, remained. Even so the change that struck him most was in the people. The uniformed figures clear in his memory, were slim and tough. Many of them had witnessed events and carried out deeds more shocking than any to be seen in a modern horror movie, and it had shown in their gaunt and hollow eyed faces. Others, young and boyish by comparison, had sat drinking pints of beer which were darker than present brews. Cigarettes had dangled from wet lips as they joked with young service girls.

He smiled to himself as he realised that those girls would now be ageing grandmothers, if, indeed they were still alive. He found it hard to believe that most of the overfed and harassed looking people he saw before him must be the progeny of those young men and women.

His reflections were interrupted by a pushy young lady trying to get to the cash desk to pay for her tray of food. Muttering an apology, he moved away, looking for somewhere to sit and drink his tea. At first he thought all the seats had been taken, but the rattle of an umbrella falling to the floor drew his attention to a vacant seat beside that of the smartly dressed, elderly lady, to whom it belonged. Placing the paperback book she had been flipping through down on the table, she was about to lean across to pick up her umbrella, when his: 'Allow me,' caused her to pause and look up. For a moment she hesitated, thinking it would be far easier for her to retrieve the umbrella from where she sat than for him to put down the cup and saucer and travel bag he was encumbered with, before he could recover it from under the table.

But it was a long time since she had been treated with old-fashioned courtesy, so she smiled and offered a polite; 'Thank you so much', as she moved her shopping bag along to give him room. Having ascertained she had no objection to him taking the empty seat at her table, he settled down and took a sip of tea. Replacing his cup on its saucer, he looked around the room once more. Change was to be expected, but this was total, and left him wondering if his remembrance of the past was some sort of mirage.

He became conscious that the eyes of the woman were upon him and, feeling the need to say something, if only to recover his composure, he began: 'Rather crowded in here.'
'Yes', she replied, 'It usually is on Thursday evenings, for some reason.'

She was about to pick up the book she had been scanning, but then changed her mind as he went on, 'It wasn't like this when I was here before, but that was many years ago.'

'May I ask how many?'

'Over fifty I'm afraid,' he replied, with a grim little smile.

'Goodness, that is a long time ago.'

'Yes, I emigrated to South Africa, and this is the first time I have been back.'

'You must notice a great many changes.'

'Indeed. This was a rather dingy railway refreshment room in those days.' He took another sip of

tea. His eyes twinkled as he looked at her over the rim, and added: 'and you know, the tea still tastes the same!'

Amused, she replied: 'Does it really taste the same? I've been coming here each week for a long time and I hadn't noticed. I suppose I must be used to it.'

'You deserve a medal for devotion to railway refreshment room tea!'

'I don't actually come here for the tea. I visit town each Thursday shopping. I must be in a terrible rut.'

I used to come here on a Thursday, he went on. Had a long wait for a connection I remember.'

'What did you do when you lived in England? For a living I mean?'

'I was a doctor - retired now, of course.'

She was curious, and wondered why he had returned to this place and was drinking tea in this particular railway refreshment room. She imagined he would have taken a taxi to the nearest hotel with its more comfortable surroundings. After all, that is what tourists of his type usually did; but somehow she thought, he wasn't your usual type of tourist.

This place meant something to him and she wondered what it could be: 'Is your wife with you?'

Suddenly embarrassed by her question, she added hastily: 'Forgive me, I'm being very personal and probing.'

He smiled reassuringly: 'No, that's all right. Sadly she died last year, but it has left me free to make this sentimental journey.'

'Sentimental?'

'I met another woman here. Silly really. I took a cinder out of her eye. We chatted over a cup of tea, just as we are doing now I suppose, and then it happened.'

She paused as if she shouldn't go on. But she couldn't resist the question:

'What happened?'

He looked at her in his turn, as if doubtful whether he should continue, but felt impelled to answer.

'It sounds ridiculous, sitting here after so long, but we fell in love. Desperately and foolishly in love.

That is why I emigrated. I couldn't stand being so close without hope I suppose.' He added sadly: 'I expect it would have been different today.'

She dropped her eyes. So that was it, she knew there had to be something. His story was a familiar one: a love affair, destroyed by the traditional attitudes and mores of the time. She felt a wave of sympathy go out to the man sitting beside her, but her voice gave no indication of her feelings at first as she answered calmly: 'Yes I suppose it would.' Then sentiment overcame her, as she went on: 'Strange places, railway stations, especially during and just after the war. Filled with emotion. Men, and women, leaving. Many never to return. Those returning so glad to be back. There was a catch in her voice as she added: 'Rivers and rivers of tears. So sad, so terribly, terribly sad. 'It was a moment or two before he could murmur in reply: 'Yes. I'm afraid so.'

He took a deep breath, as if clearing his mind of the thought of so much pain.

Then sensing the need to change the subject, he queried: 'May I ask where you are going?'

'Home,' she replied brightly, adding to his feeling of relief. 'That is as soon as I have finished this famous tea! I find visits to town very tiring, and as I live alone. I thought I would pause for a while and watch the world go by.' 'Your home is near here?' he persisted, Then he thought he ought to apologise for his question. 'Now I'm being probing!' he laughed. She joined in his amusement, and told him: 'It's not far. Just a short taxi ride to the village. 'Is there anywhere I could eat in your village?' he asked. 'Yes,' she replied. 'The George does a good evening meal. I eat there myself on special occasions, or when I want to entertain friends. It's so much easier when peoples' tastes differ so much these days, and living alone has made me lazy I suppose. 'Self-motivation can be difficult, I'm sure. I'm afraid I cheat. I have a cook/housekeeper, so I don't have to bother.'

He shuffled in his chair and looked at her from under his brows, obviously uncomfortable about what he was going to say next.

'I wonder?' He started uncertainly. I hope what I am about to say is not too embarrassing. Would you join me for dinner tonight and help me lay a ghost?'

The doubt was clear in her eyes, and he found himself fervently wishing he hadn't asked the question. How stupid of him on such short acquaintance. How could she agree? She knew absolutely nothing about him. He had every intention of withdrawing the suggestion when she asked: 'You mean help to exorcise the ghost of the woman you are still in love with?'

Avoiding her direct question, he explained: For more than fifty years I have thought about this place, and the relationship that developed here. It has filled a melancholy corner of my mind for all that time, and I haven't been able to rid myself of the great might have been. Seeing this place so changed has helped already. They say you should never go back, as the illusion is likely to be destroyed. That is just what I want to happen, and so far it is working very well. If I could go away with the recollection of someone else. I am sure the exorcism would be complete. I could leave with a totally different memory, enough, hopefully, to last me the rest of my days.'

She regarded him thoughtfully, before saying lightly: 'I'm old enough to know better, but, all right, I'll join you in your quest for freedom. You have made it sound rather intriguing!'

He leaned towards her: 'You will?' Their eyes met and she nodded her head in agreement.

'That is marvellous'. His relief was palpable, but then he paused: 'Strange,' he remarked.

'What is strange?' she asked him.

'I suddenly feel so young again', he replied.

'I don't', she said, - with a degree of bitterness: 'I suddenly feel much older. Your proposition has made me realise just how old I am!'

'Nonsense', he said, smiling at her self-pity. He continued innocently: 'Was I making a proposition?'

'It certainly sounded like it to me.!' Her tone was lightly coquettish, and her eyes were smiling again.

'Wonderful! Shall we go?'

She nodded her assent, and they started to gather their things together and move away from the table, he paused, and said: 'Don't forget your book.'

She glanced down at the paperback which had been lying forgotten during their conversation.

'Book? Book? Oh, it doesn't belong to me. It was there when I arrived. It is Noel Coward's Brief Encounter - I never did like the ending!!'

Richard Swale 2000



601 Squadron Association News



A Hawker Hurricane Mk 1 in 601 Squadron markings

Motto:No Motto

Badge:A winged sword

No.601 Squadron was formed at Northolt on 14 October 1925 as a light bomber unit of the Auxiliary Air Force. A nucleus of permanent staff was posted to the squadron and on 4 December the first Auxiliary personnel were enlisted. Flying did not begin until May 1926 and it was the following year before the Avro 504Ks were supplemented by D.H.9A light bombers. In January 1927 the squadron moved to Hendon, which was its base up to the outbreak of war, apart from a few days during the Munich crisis in September 1938. In November 1929 Wapitis began to arrive and a year later had replaced all the D.H.9As. These were in turn replaced by Harts by June 1933 and on 1 July 1934 the squadron was redesignated a fighter unit. The Harts were retained until replaced by Demons in August 1937. In November 1938, No.601 converted to Guantlet single-seat fighters, but in January 1939 began to receive Blenheims. It was with these that fighter patrols began when World War Two broke out in September 1939 but in March 1940 the squadron had converted to Hurricanes. During the German invasion of France, a detachment operated from French soil for a week, followed by defensive duties during the Battle of Britain while based in southern England.

In February 1941, the squadron began taking part in offensive sweeps over northern France which continued until August, when re-equipment with Airacobras began. These proved useless and were discarded in favour of Spitfires in March 1942, but after only a few minor operations. In April the squadron sailed for the Middle East and re-assembled in Egypt on 25 June. Fighter sweeps over the Western Desert started a few days later and after the rout of the Afrika Corps at El Alamein, the squadron moved westwards to Tunisia, where it was present at the end of the North African campaign in May 1943. Next month it flew to Malta to cover the Allied landings in Sicily moving into captured airfields in mid-July. In October No.601 moved to Italy, where it spent the rest of the war flying ground attack missions in support of the Allied armies. On 14 August 1945, the squadron was disbanded.

On 10 May 1946 the Auxiliary Air Force was reformed and No.601 began to recruit personnel at Hendon in June. In October it commenced flying Spitfires, but moved to North Weald in March 1949 where it converted to Vampires in December. There it flew until re-equipped with Meteors in August 1952. On 10 March 1957, the Royal Auxiliary Air Force was disbanded and No.601 ceased to exist.

www.601squadron.com



A note from the Editor regarding the 601 Squadron OCA

Following on from some comments I received from ex 601 Squadron members, I felt it necessary to seek advice and guidance on the status of the 601 OCA and its links to our very good friends over in the US. I think it appropriate to share with you the following feedback I received from Scott Rall Member 601 OCA;

Thank you for your email note of May 17. I duly appreciate your concern over this issue, but must respectfully clarify. James Ivers, John Wheeler and I were at the final 601 OCA meeting before 'disbandment' in 2009. I should point out that they did not so much formally disband as decide not to have any further formal meetings although James, John or I have attended them as members since 2005.

They do still get together at times, and have done so quite recently. At the final meeting which was attended by the residing President of the 601 OCA - Tony Oldham – it was voted upon, and agreed what we would be given Association membership. We were then tasked by the OCA to be the 'way forward' as they put it in remembering our squadron, through the website, our re-creation group, research and the considerable amount of archive materials that we have collected. We were presented with the honour of being allowed to wear the 601 OCA Squadron tie. In short, we are the link between past and present and future due to our passionate interest in 601 Squadron and their trust in our stewardship of their Squadron history.

I do understand that there might be some former 601 members, subsequently OCA members who were not at that final meeting, and who may not be aware of the honour bestowed upon us.

Without wishing to unduly offend any former 601 Squadron members, if anyone has any questions regarding our "membership" in the 601 OCA, please direct them to me and I'll be happy to clarify.

I don't know which 601 OCA members joined the 600 Squadron Association. I think it is a fine and noble idea that you have come up with such an idea to keep the memory of all of these great Auxiliary squadrons alive. To that end I think James, John and I would be extremely honoured to join the ranks of the 600 Squadron Association. I do not think however that it is particularly necessary or proper to abandon all effort made to remember and pay homage to our squadron (and I think we'd earned the right to call it 'ours') in an individual manner, rather than just grouping in with the others. I think we can quite easily help grow and foster your noble attempt, and continue with our own. But without any attempt to sound rude and certainly with all due respect, we were granted 601 OCA membership and feel entitled to use that moniker, unless the gentlemen heavily involved with the stewardship of the memory of 601 who granted us that honour tell us otherwise. I would respectfully suggest that anyone who may have issue with this can contact us directly, or can speak with Sir Torquil Norman, Tony (who might still be recovering though from recent ill health) or some of the other OCA members we regularly deal with.

Thank you Andy and I hope members do not take offense at any of this, but we take extremely seriously the honour bestowed upon us, and the responsibilities that it entails. We have worked immensely hard in providing a tool of remembrance for 601, heavily in fact from our first meeting with 601 OCA in 2005, to include our active participation with the Billy Fiske window and the Hendon Monument. We have been told by the OCA that they are most pleased with our efforts.

Before we are told to unceremoniously 'knock it off' I believe those that are unaware of why we make this claim are allowed to know the circumstances.

I will close with this. One of the most treasured things I have in my vast collection includes a (now framed) signed letter from Tom Mouslen to me that thanks us for our continued promotion of the Squadron and it sits prominently on the wall in my office.

Scott Rall, Member 601 Squadron OCA

604 Squadron Association News



(A Bristol Blenheim Mk 1F in 604 Squadron markings)

Motto: *Si vis pacem, para bellum* - 'If you want peace, prepare for war'

Badge: A seax.

No 604, being the County of Middlesex squadron, took part of the armorial bearings of the county, a seax, to commemorate that association.

No 604 Squadron was formed on 17 March 1930 at Hendon as a day bomber unit of the Auxiliary Air Force. On 2 April it received its first DH9As and flew these till the arrival of Wapitis in September 1930. On 23 July 1934, it was redesignated a fighter squadron and received Harts as an interim type, pending the delivery of Demon two-seat fighters which arrived in June 1935. Shortly before the outbreak of war, it converted to Blenheims with which it flew defensive patrols and undertook early experiments with airborne radar.

When Germany invaded the Low Countries in May 1940, No 604 flew sweeps over the battle areas, but reverted to night patrols in July and became a full-time night fighter squadron, with Beaufighters beginning to arrive in September and by January 1941 the squadron was completely equipped with the type. Early in 1943 the decrease in enemy night raids allowed some Beaufighters to be diverted to intruder operations over enemy airfields in northern France. Conversion to Mosquitoes began in February 1944 and joined Second TAF to help provide cover for the invasion forces during the Normandy landings. In August 1944 it moved to airfields in Normandy, but returned to the UK in September for three months. From January 1945 until it disbanded on 18 April 1945, the squadron was based near Lille to provide night defence for Allied bases in the Low Countries and northern France.

On 10 May 1946, No.604 reformed at Hendon as part of the newly reconstituted Auxiliary Air Force and began recruiting in November. As a fighter squadron, it was initially equipped with Spitfires, the first of which arrived in October 1946. It converted to jet fighters with the arrival of Vampires in November 1949. These were replaced in August 1952 by Meteors which were flown until the Royal Auxiliary Air Force was disbanded on 10 March 1957.





604

SQUADRON ASSOCIATION

31 March 2012

**44 CAMPDEN HILL COURT
CAMPDEN HILL ROAD
LONDON, W8 7HU**

*Phone/fax (020) 7937-0696
Email michael.allen@btinternet.com*

Dear Mr Radcliffe

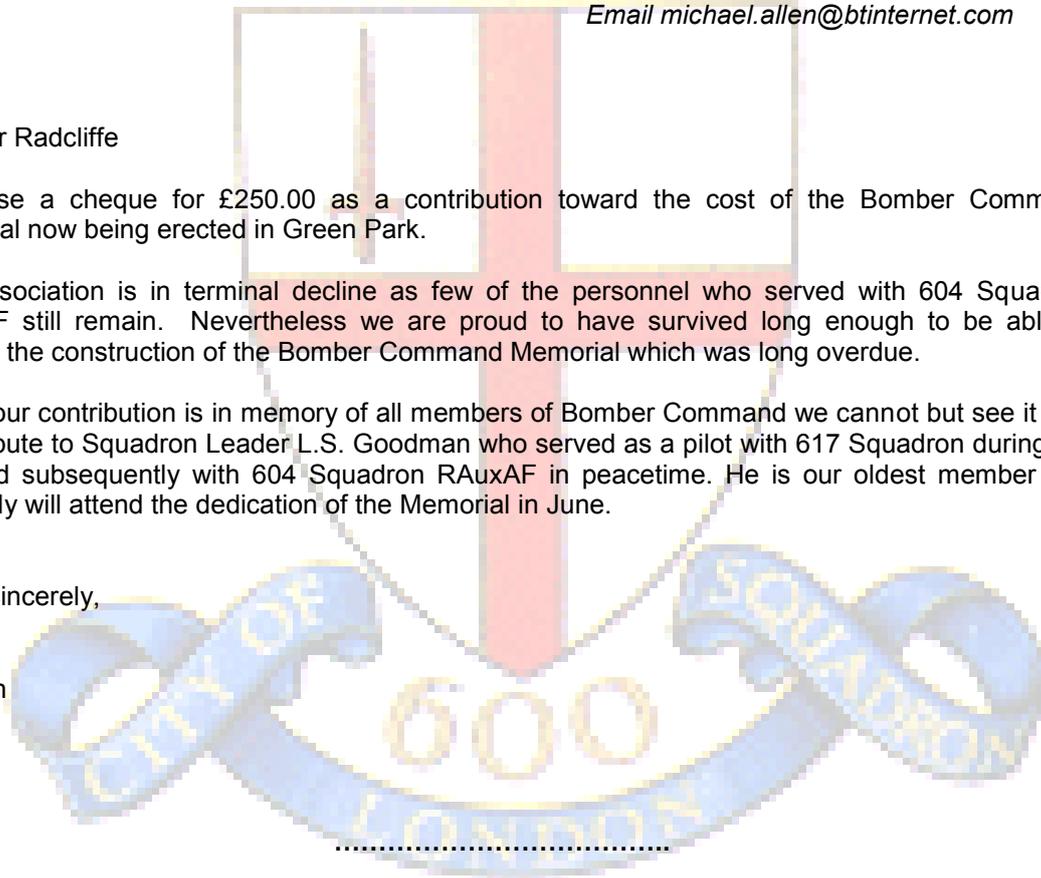
I enclose a cheque for £250.00 as a contribution toward the cost of the Bomber Command Memorial now being erected in Green Park.

Our Association is in terminal decline as few of the personnel who served with 604 Squadron RAuxAF still remain. Nevertheless we are proud to have survived long enough to be able to support the construction of the Bomber Command Memorial which was long overdue.

Whilst our contribution is in memory of all members of Bomber Command we cannot but see it also as a tribute to Squadron Leader L.S. Goodman who served as a pilot with 617 Squadron during the war and subsequently with 604 Squadron RAuxAF in peacetime. He is our oldest member and hopefully will attend the dedication of the Memorial in June.

Yours sincerely,

M. Allen



BOMBER COMMAND ASSOCIATION

Registered under the Charities Act 1960: No. 292469

President:
Marshal of the Royal Air Force
Sir Michael Beetham
GCB, CBE, DFC, AFC, FRAeS

Chairman:
Air Commodore Malcolm G.F. White
OBE



Secretary:
Douglas Radcliffe
MBE

R.A.F. Museum
Grahame Park Way
Hendon
London NW9 5LL
Telephone: 020 8358 4841
Fax: 020 8358 4935

Mr. M.Allen
44 Campden Hill Court
Campden Hill Road
London
W8 7HU

16/4/12

Dear Mr. Allen,

Thank you very much for your kind donation of £250 towards the memorial, the Association is most grateful.

We wish 604 Squadron well and hope that they 'press on' and look forward to meeting Squadron Leader L.S Goodman on the day.

The proposed site in Green Park is proceeding on time, the ticketing is in the hands of the Royal Air Force, who are also planning a poppy drop from the Lancaster at a chosen time.

Yours sincerely

Douglas Radcliffe
Secretary

Website: www.rafbombercommand.co.uk

VICE PRESIDENTS

Air Vice Marshal Nigel B. Baldwin CB, CBE, FRAeS
Air Marshal Sir John Curtiss KCB, KBE, FRAeS, CBIM
Group Captain William L. Farquharson DFC*
Air Vice Marshal Norman Hoad CVO, CBE, AFC*

Squadron Leader Tony Iveson DFC, AE, CRAeS
Air Vice Marshal Eric Macey OBE
The Lord Mackie of Benshie CBE, DSO, DFC, LLD

The reply to the welcome given by Kevin O'Shaughnessy, President of the 600 Squadron Association, to members of 601 and 604 Squadron Associations at the AGM lunch on 21 April, 2012 by Mike Allen.

I should like to say on behalf of 604 Squadron Association members and myself how much we appreciate the work that the 600 Squadron Association is doing. Particularly, we think that the Newsletter is wonderful. Thank you Andy Cameron. We are in awe of what you have achieved.

We are hugely grateful to be a part of this organisation and we shall contribute in any way that we can to the Association's success.

Now may I touch on a completely different topic. Outside the club, at the moment, the finishing touches are being put to the Bomber Command Memorial. It is a scandal that one has not gone up before.

I was a boy during WW2, 13 at the end of the war. I remember that early on we were told that we could not win the war by defence alone. To win you must attack.

Bomber Command carried out that mission and over 50,000 young men died doing it.

However, they became an embarrassment to the politicians at the time. Much as the errors of judgement over Iraq and Afghanistan are to the present day politicians.

So they chose to forget Bomber Command.

Well the memory just didn't go away and in June the Memorial will be dedicated, but it still needs more funds. Somewhat belatedly members of the 604 Squadron Association have contributed to the Memorial fund as I expect many of you have. For those who haven't can I suggest that you make a quick comparison between the lives of 20 year olds now and those who reached that age during the war.

Actually the Auxiliary Air Force squadrons are all closely linked with Bomber Command. When the squadrons were originally raised they were bomber squadrons and only later did we take on the role of fighters. We are too closely linked to forget the Bomber Boys!

Thank you.

M. Allen



604 SQUADRON ASSOCIATION TIES

A limited number of 604 Squadron Association ties are available for purchase by former 604 Squadron Association members. The ties are the remainder of stock produced some years ago by C.H. Munday Ltd and may be purchased at a price of £10.00 per tie including postage & packing.



Former members wishing to obtain a tie should send a cheque made out to '604 Squadron Association' to:

M. Allen
44 Campden Hill Court
Campden Hill Road
London W8 7HU

Ties will be despatched on a 'first come, first served' basis, i.e. when they're gone, they're gone!



The Radio Observer's Lament! To the tune of Room 504)

*Now come all you erks and you sergeants as well,
For here is a story that I have to tell.
You needn't titter, you needn't guffaw,
For this is a story you've ne'er heard before.*

*I'll sing you a song of a man you all know,
Who stooges around in the back of a Beau.
And who is this man? Why surely you know,
He's the stooge in the back, the ruddy R.O.*

*He writes down the 'gen' and prepares for the flight,
His pilot sits playing at poker all night.
And when 'scramble' goes, he is off like a shot,
His driver's still trying to win the jackpot!*

*At last they get airborne to battle the foe,
Get pooped at by Yankees with Bofors below,
And who gets the blame when the Plessey won't go?
Why, the stooge in the back, the ruddy R.O.*

*Then when at last a contact they get,
His eyes, like dogs bollocks, peer into the set.
At minimum range pilot misses his shot,
Swears at his R.O. and calls him a clot.*

*They close in at night on a Dornier Do.,
The range is about fifty yards or so,
And who gets the blame when the cannon won't go?
Why, the stooge in the back, the ruddy R.O.*

*Up in the front the pilot's at ease,
Whilest in the back the R.O's. on his knees.
The engines misfiring, the ammo's all spent,
The fuses are blown and the 'weapon is bent'.*

*They bale out at night with the drink far below,
The pilot's still captain wherever they go.
Just lolls back at ease and says, row, blast you, row!
To who does he say it? The ruddy R.O.*

Sometimes at night they go out to dine,

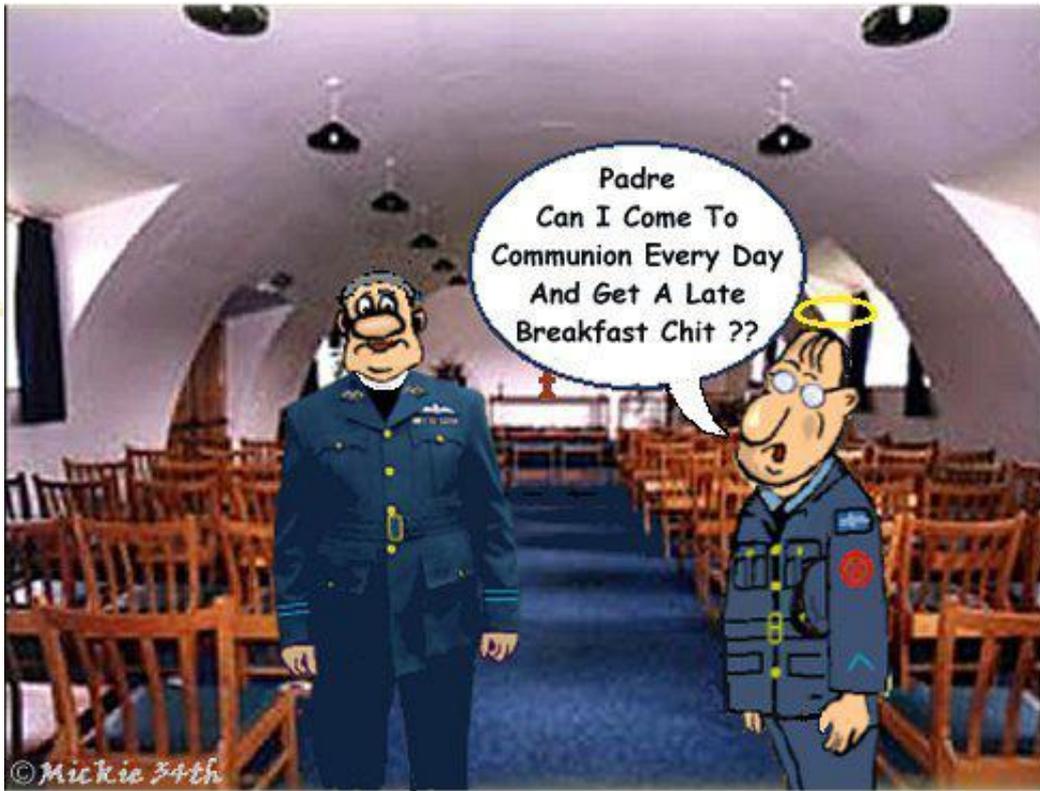
*The pilot sits there shoots a horrible line,
For he's just a hero with women you'll find,
His R.O's. just ballast who sits way behind.*

*And when it's all over, to camp you must go,
Off with your girlfriend you find he will blow,
And who does he leave there to pay for the show?
Why, the stooge in the back, the ruddy R.O!*

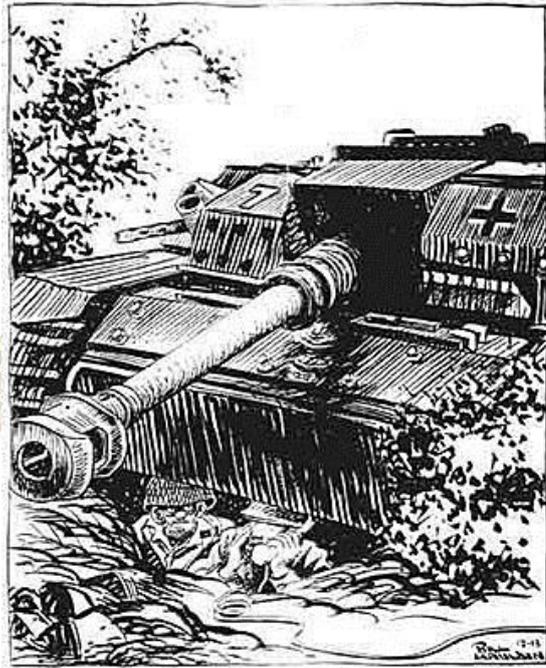
255 Squadron 1944



Fun & Stuff



A modern Mans cockpit....



"Able Fox Five to Able Fox. I got a target but ya gotta be patient."

.....

It was during the blitz in WW2 and London was taking a thrashing and moral was low. The BBC radio decided an interview with a Swedish Pilot for the RAF who had in his first day on the job made Ace, meaning he had shot down 5 German planes in that one day. It would be so good for the people of Britain's moral.

So that evening Sven is in the studio and the interview began;

Announcer: So Sven, tell us all about your heroic day in the skies protecting the grateful people of this country.

Sven; Vell, it vas un eencredible day. Vurst vas dis foker come up me rite zide so I shoots him down den two more of them fokers I see on my left so I shoots them fokers, and den.....

Announcer interupts; Just so you're all aware Sven comes to us from Sweden and what he means to say is Foker, that very deadly German war machine....

Sven interupts; Ya ya dats true but dese fokers vas Meserschmits!

.....





Taliban Air Force.....



Captain's wife has been selecting the stewardesses again !!

Q. How do you know your date with the fighter pilot is half over?
A. He says "but enough about me – wanna hear about my plane?"

Q: How do you know if there is a fighter pilot at your party?
A: He'll tell you.

Q: What's the difference between God and fighter pilots?
A: God doesn't think he's a fighter pilot.

Q: What's the difference between a fighter pilot and a jet engine?
A: A jet engine stops whining when the plane shuts down.



A WAY THEY HAVE

"Any fags?"—"No."
"Any biscuits?"—"No."
"What 'ave yer got?"—"Blanco and Bluebell."



About Pilots:

1. As an aviator in flight you can do anything you want... As long as it's right... And we'll let you know if it's right after you get down.
2. You can't fly forever without getting killed.
3. As a pilot only two bad things can happen to you and one of them will.
 - One day you will walk out to the aircraft knowing that it is your last flight in an airplane..
 - One day you will walk out to the airplane not knowing that it is your last flight in an airplane..
4. Any flight over water in a single engine airplane will absolutely guarantee abnormal engine noises and vibrations.
5. There are Rules and there are Laws. The rules are made by men who think that they know better how to fly your airplane than you. The Laws (of Physics) were made by the Great One. You can, and sometimes should, suspend the Rules but you can never suspend the Laws.
6. More about Rules:
 - The rules are a good place to hide if you don't have a better idea and the talent to execute it.
 - If you deviate from a rule, it must be a flawless performance. (e.g., If you fly under a bridge, don't hit the bridge.)

7. The pilot is the highest form of life on earth.

8. The ideal pilot is the perfect blend of discipline and aggressiveness.

9. About check rides:

- The only real objective of a check ride is to complete it and get the bastard out of your airplane.

- It has never occurred to any flight examiner that the examinee couldn't care less what the examiner's opinion of his flying ability really is.

10. The medical profession is the natural enemy of the aviation profession.

11 The job of the Wing Commander is to worry incessantly that his career depends solely on the abilities of his aviators to fly their airplanes without mishap and that their only minuscule contribution to the effort is to bet their lives on it.

12. Ever notice that the only experts who decree that the age of the pilot is over are people who have never flown anything? Also, in spite of the intensity of their feelings that the pilot's day is over I know of no such expert who has volunteered to be a passenger in a non-piloted aircraft.

13. It is absolutely imperative that the pilot be unpredictable. Rebelliousness is very predictable. In the end, conforming almost all the time is the best way to be unpredictable.

14. He who demands everything that his aircraft can give him is a pilot; he that demands one iota more is a fool.

15. If you're gonna fly low, do not fly slow! ASW pilots know this only too well. (Amen)

16. It is solely the pilot's responsibility to never let any other thing touch his aircraft.

17. If you can learn how to fly as a 2nd Lt and not forget how to fly by the time you're a Maj. you will have lived a happy life.

18. About night flying:

- Remember that the airplane doesn't know that it's dark.

- On a clear, moonless night, never fly between the tanker's lights.

- There are certain aircraft sounds that can only be heard at night.

- If you're going to night fly, it might as well be in the weather so you can double count your exposure to both hazards.

- Night formation is really an endless series of near misses in equilibrium with each other.

- You would have to pay a lot of money at a lot of amusement parks and perhaps add a few drugs, to get the same blend of psychedelic sensations as a single engine night weather flight.

19. One of the most important skills that a pilot must develop is the skill to ignore those things that were designed by non-pilots to get the pilot's attention.

20. At the end of the day, the controllers, ops supervisors, maintenance guys, weather guessers, and birds; they're all trying to kill you and your job is to not let them!

21. The concept of "controlling" airspace with radar is just a form of FAA sarcasm directed at pilots to see if they're gullible enough to swallow it. Or to put it another way, when's the last time the FAA ever shot anyone down?

22. Remember that the radio is only an electronic suggestion box for the pilot. Sometimes the only way to clear up a problem is to turn it off.

23. It is a tacit, yet profound admission of the pre-eminence of flying in the hierarchy of the human spirit that those who seek to control aviators via threats always threaten to take one's wings and not one's life.

24. Remember when flying low and inverted that the rudder still works the same old way but hopefully your IP never taught you "pull stick back, plane go up".

25. Mastering the prohibited manoeuvres in the Natops Manual is one of the best forms of aviation life insurance you can get.

26. A tactic done twice is a procedure. (Refer to unpredictability discussion above)

27. The aircraft G-limits are only there in case there is another flight by that particular airplane. If subsequent flights do not appear likely, there are no G-limits.

28. One of the beautiful things about a single piloted aircraft is the quality of the social experience.

29. If a mother has the slightest suspicion that her infant might grow up to be a pilot, she had better teach him to put things back where he got them

30. The ultimate responsibility of the pilot is to fulfill the dreams of the countless millions of earthbound ancestors who could only stare skyward ...and wish.

.....



Rookie:- "Our Instructor put me on Cookhouse Fatigues - But I am a Cook Sarge " - I says." "Don't Fret Rook - No One in there will ever guess"! He says!

Random Word Search Puzzle

Created by Anonymous Visitor



WORD BANK

- STRATEGY
- WORLDWAR
- FREEDOM
- AIRFORCE
- MARINES
- ARMY
- NAVY
- COASTGUARD
- VETERAN
- VICTORY
- SOLDIERS
- PARADES
- GUNS
- HONOR
- BULLETS
- DEFEAT
- HERO
- FLAG
- MEDAL
- GRAVES

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Classhelper.org.uk

Puzzle #2444. To view the solution or reprint this puzzle, please visit:

<http://www.classhelper.org.uk/puzzle-solutions/>



Footnote

A reminder. This is YOUR newsletter, and I hope you will both enjoy reading it, and find the content interesting. I would of course welcome your feedback.

The newsletter depends largely on YOUR contributions. Please forward any & all contributions to me (no matter how small). Photographs, articles, memories, funny stories etc. – all welcome and appreciated, especially from our older members who may like to share memories, thoughts records, pictures etc that they may wish to share with our younger members of perhaps your War time experiences?

I will endeavour to use all material provided albeit I reserve the right to edit as required. Please also note that I may not use your material in the current newsletter period, but may hold it back for a later issue.

If anyone ever spots an innocent faux-pas or technical inaccuracy, please do let me know so I can correct it.

Please send me all your material at andyandjulie.cameron@btopenworld.com if you do not have e mail, post your articles to Andy Cameron, 53 Telford Crescent, Woodley, Reading, Berkshire, RG5 4QT. If you require any originals returned, copies will be taken and sent back, although please ensure you provide your name & address. If you wish to kindly donate any material to the archive, please do specify this and it will of course be very gratefully received!

If at all possible, electronic copies are preferred either by email or disc. Please where possible save your file to word format as it makes it quicker and easier for me to simply format and insert.

Hand written or typed are fine too!

And one final reminder – can I please ask that those of you who have e-mail drop me a quick contact message with your name so that I can keep our records up to date.

I have been asked several times if I could e-mail you the newsletter so that you could get it faster and save the Association money in printing, paper, envelopes and postage. Having done it all now several times, I now find that emailing is none too easy due to the file size (average of 55mb) – It's all the lovely photos that are to blame, so for now, I will continue to mail you the hard copy. It should be noted that presently, I have a private sponsor who is providing all materials and postage costs for the newsletter by way of a donation.

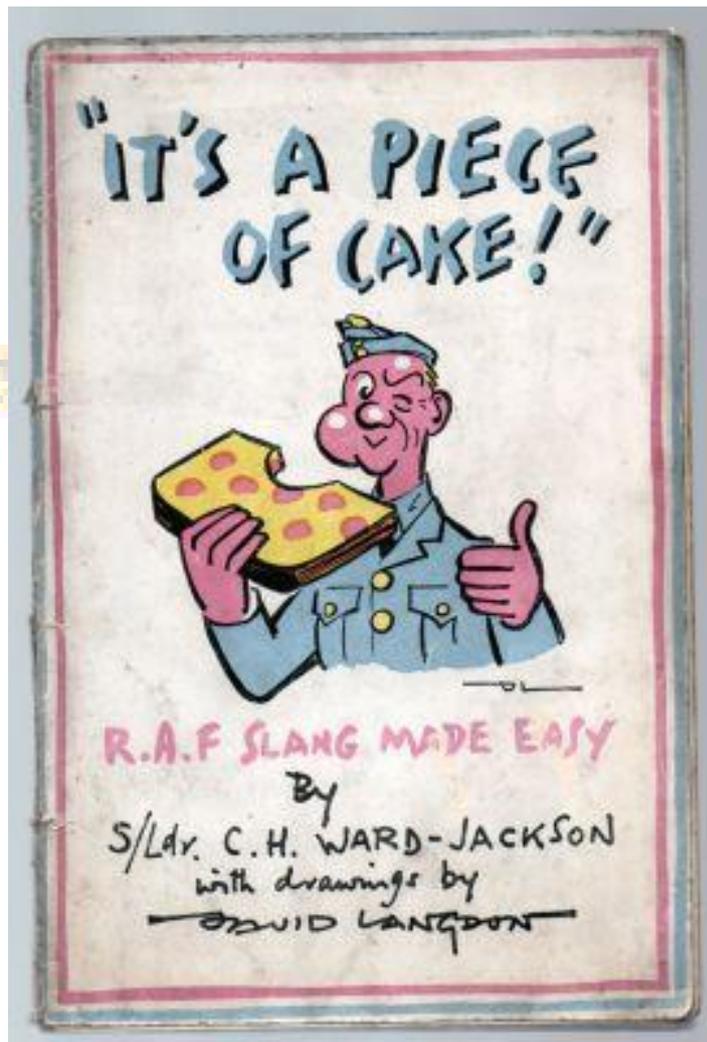
And finally, if anyone has any photos or records specific to the Blenheim, I would be very grateful for a copy. The records would be primarily for the archive, but also for my own personal interest.

Cut-off date's for Newsletter submissions to Newsletter 2012

31 August 2012

30 November 2012

Andy



Newsletter contact;

Andy Cameron
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Woodley
Reading
Berkshire
RG5 4QT
Email; andyandjulie.cameron@btopenworld.com
Tel; 0118 962 8118

Personal Details updates.

Please (print off) complete and return the form below (address at end of newsletter) for confirmation and all updates of your personal contact details. It is the only way we can communicate with our members and so would be grateful if you can confirm to ensure we have the correct details on our files. If you know of any member changes that we may not, please do let us know or ask the member to do so.

Personal Details Update Request

Name:

Address:

Post Code:

Telephone:

Mobile:

Email address (if applicable):

Date:

For the attention of the Secretary, 600 Squadron Association.

Dear Secretary,

I have noticed from your records that you are holding certain information on me that is incorrect. Please find details of how this information should be amended.

Current details held:

Amendments:

I would be grateful if you could acknowledge receipt of my request, and notify me once the necessary amendments have been made. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours Sincerely,

Donations

DONATION SLIP – ONE OFF PAYMENT

To help us please print off a copy of this form then complete and return it, along with your donation (in pounds sterling only) to the address below. Please note we do not recommend sending cash through the post and would advise the safer option of a cheque, postal order or Bankers Order. Unfortunately we cannot accept credit card donations. **Cheques payable please to; the 600 (City of London) Squadron Association.**

Andy Cameron, 53 Telford Crescent, Woodley, Reading, Berkshire, RG5 4QT

"I would like to make a voluntary donation to 600 (City of London) Squadron Association,

Registered Charity No. 248203 ("The City of London Squadron Central Fund") to assist with the funding of the Association.

Title	Mr Mrs Miss Ms Other _____		
	<i>(Please circle, as appropriate)</i>		
First Name(s)		Surname	
Full Address			
City & Country			
Telephone No. (including area codes)			
Email Address			
Date of Birth			
Amount Donated			
Payment Method	Cheque Postal Order Cash		
	<i>(Please circle as appropriate)</i>		

