

TANKER EDITION
VICTOR K.1 and K. 1A

"NIGHTJAR"

NEWSLETTER

of

No.214(FMS) SQUADRON ASSOCIATION

President:

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

Chairman:

Squadron Leader G W Moffatt RAF (Ret'd)



SUMMER / AUTUMN 2005

NEWS SINCE THE WINTER / SPRING NIGHTJAR

March 2005 Vic Pheasant handed over the reins as Treasurer to John Gulliver. Thanks are due to Vic for taking the job on in 2003 and continuing through 2004 until John was in a position to take over this vital work.

A Committee meeting was held on 9th. at the Victory Services Club , Seymour St., London. It was agreed that having increased the annual subs to £10 our financial situation should enable the Association to go forward with confidence. If any members would like a copy of the report of this meeting please contact the Secretary.

In Memorium STAN BAYLESS . It is with great sadness that we have to report that one of our long standing members died on March 29th. 2005. Stan was one of the first of the Special Wireless Operators to fly in the Fortresses , serving from April to November 1944, completing a total of 38 operations. Having completed his tour he set off on leave , travelling from Oulton on his motorcycle . He had not gone far when he was involved in a collision with a service vehicle causing a severe injury to his left leg. As a result he had to have the leg amputated above the knee and was eventually fitted with an artificial limb.

Stan eventually married , had two daughters and persued a successful business career. On behalf of the Association I sent a card of condolence to Rona.

He will be much missed at Reunions and the 100 Group Reunions.

Bob and Hilda Froggatt represented the Association at Stan's funeral and report that such was his involvement in many aspects of life that about 250 people attended.

Wng. Cdr . KEN WILKINSON (RAF rtd.) died on March 22nd. 2005. Although he was not an Association member Ken was the son of BILL and KAY WILKINSON. Bill of course was our long serving Treasurer until 2003 and continues to serve as a Committee member.

On behalf of the Association I sent a card of condolence to Bill and Kay and received a nice thank you 'phone call in return.

NEW MEMBERS Mr. P. J. and MRS. J. H. BIRCH , Quinton , Birmingham . Mrs. Birch is a cousin of F/ Off. W.G. Cooper who lost his life on March 30th. 1943 when his Stirling collided over Chedburgh with a Stirling flown by Jack Dixon. F/Off. Cooper managed to bail out his crew but sadly did not have time to get out himself before crashing.

Jack Dixon managed to make a wheels up landing on the airfield only to find that he had lost his port tailplane and the rear turret , the rear gunner being killed.

Sqn. Ldr. Jack Dixon DFC , is of course , a past Chairman of 214 Sqn. Assn.

A.J. (JIM) GOLDSON , Mildenhall , Suffolk . Jim has joined the Association following having to find out about us from a member in Australia , John V. Mathews RAAF.

On the night of March 7/8th. 1945 Jim was the port waist gunner on Fortress

continued -----

NEWS , CONTINUED

KJ106 BU-G (skipper, George Stewart RNZAF) shot down on a trip to Harburg. The skipper and four of his crew were killed and five became pows. John Mathews was the W/Op. This was Jim Goldson's 34th. operation. RAF records show that this aircraft was shot down by a Lancaster but Jim and John can only recall being attacked by a nightfighter, probably a JU88 which eventually passed underneath them. Jim reports that he never saw a Lancaster and was surprised to learn that this is in the RAF records. The 214 Sqn. Association historical department will try to throw more light on this mystery.

LESLIE BARKER , Tring , Herts. His uncle, Flt/Sgt. Leslie Hadder , was one of the eight crew members who lost their lives in Fortress HB815 BU-J , (skipper P/Off. J. Bennett) shot down over Oulton by a JU88 intruder on March 4th. 1945. Alistair McDermid , one of our long standing members , was one of two badly injured survivors from this aircraft.

Flt/ Sgt. Hadder is buried in the village cemetery at Thorpe-St.-Andrew near Norwich. On March 4th. 2005 , sixty years after his death, I placed a wreath, with a 214 Sqn. Assn. card attached, on his grave.

By coincidence at about this time Jock Whitehouse received a letter from Leslie Barker seeking information about his uncle . Jock sent me a note of his name and address and I then wrote to inform him of the wreath. Leslie in turn telephoned his mother (Flt/ Sgt. Hadder's sister) and read out the bit about the wreath placed on her brother's grave. She was delighted to think that he is not forgotten after all these years.

As a result of this coincidence Leslie, who is named after his uncle, has decided to join the Association.

G.N. (GEOFF) HICKS , Menston, Ilkley , West Yorks.

Geoff was a National Service Airframe Mechanic , serving on the Squadron from 1957 to Oct. 1958. (Valiants). He is our third National Service member, the others being Brian Burgess and Alan Cooper . They all served on 214 at about the same time and hope to come to the Reunion in September.

NEW BOOKS I am informed that Avenging in the Shadows , the history of 214 Sqn. by Ron James , is going back into print , but in softcover form and not on the same quality paper as the original.

This new addition will only be printed in small quantities as required and will not be generally available to the book trade. The price is expected to be about £10 to £12 . I have not yet got a date when the book becomes available but if you would like a copy please let me know and I will put your name on the waiting list. For the information of those who have a copy of the original numbered edition you will be pleased to know that these are now collectors editions, fetching between £50 and £80 depending on condition.

LOST PHOTO FILE (Folder). At last year's Reunion Dinner at the Maids Head Hotel one of our members lost a red folder of aircraft photos, mainly of Victor aircraft. In a later search at the hotel it was not found . It is possible that someone inadvertently picked it up with their own papers etc. Could you please check and let me know if you find it.

NEWS , CONTINUED

100 Group Reunion This annual event took place over the weekend of May 13/15th. hosted by the City of Norwich Aviation Museum. On the Friday the members attended a lunch at Bylaugh Hall , the wartime HQ of 100 Group. On the Saturday members visited Foulsham and Oulton airfields and some went to Blickling Hall .

As in past years Chris Lambert and the ladies of Oulton village had laid on a wonderful spread for the visiting veterans and their families. Following gorging themselves with a variety of goodies and drinks the visitors made their way to the Oulton Memorial where about 60 people gathered to remember those who did not return to Oulton.

A 214 Sqn. Association wreath was laid by Bill Howard.

Thanks are due to the good people of the City of Norwich Aviation Museum for organising the event and providing us with a buffet lunch on the Saturday and the people of Oulton village for their , as always , wonderful hospitality. On the Saturday evening a dinner was held at the Aylsham Lodge Hotel. The weekend finished on Sunday morning with a service in the village church at Horsham St. Faith near Norwich.

Another new member D. J. (DON) WALTER , Steeple Bumpstead ,Haverhill Suffolk . Served on 214 Sqn. as an Air Electronics Officer in John Slessor's crew , 1956 to 1958 . Posted to 232 OCU on instructional duties.

The colour page in this Nightjar Thanks are due to Guideline Publications , publishers of the monthly magazine, Scale Aircraft Modelling , who kindly granted us their permission to use the illustrations of the Victors and Valiants. Thanks also to the illustrator , David Howley of Harby , Melton Mowbray, Leics. Not only did David give us permission to use his illustrations but he supplied a CD with 16 images of 214 Sqn. Victors and Valiants as well as a copy of the page as in the Nightjar.

Out of interest David is a retired RAF Warrant Officer who served in Movements. Copies of this edition of the Nightjar have been sent to David and to Mr. Regis Auckland of Guideline Publications.

The Roving Secretary On May 9th. I travelled to Llanbedr to visit John and Pip Wynne. The weather was good , the countryside beautiful and the their home at Glyn Artro is a magical place. Their sheep and lambs are cared for as if they are family but do involve a lot of hard work for quite a few hours each day. (seven days a week).

However it was not all hard work ,time was found for a visit to Harlech castle and to Bodnant, a wonderful National Trust Garden near Conway.

John and Pip were wonderful hosts and went out of their way to make my three day visit most enjoyable. John sends his best wishes to all who know him.

Abe Levine Sp. W/Operator on Fortresses 1944/45. Abe recently sent me a cutting from the Montreal Star which had reported his gift of his collection of sea shells to McGill University . The collection had been built up over many years and was one of the finest anywhere in the world . From the report it would appear that Abe knew the scientific names of most of them and could quote these off the top of his head. A few days later I received a 'phone call from Abe who told me that he had just been fishing and had caught fifteen fat trout to put in his freezer for later consumption. He cannot come to the Reunion this year but sends his regards to all.

HISTORIAN'S REPORT

Kate Brettell's extensive research on her uncle, F/Lt Arthur Turtle DFC (see previous 'Nightjars') continues to produce results as Australian relatives of P/O Barry Holdsworth, one of the crew who died in June 1942, hope to meet with her in UK in October. For any relevant German night-fighter data, Bob Davies has enabled Kate to contact one of his many friends, conversant with existing records.

Mr. Leslie Barker (of Tring) nephew of F/Sgt. Leslie Hadder, a gunner in F/O Bennett's crew, and who died when their B17 was shot down on approach to Oulton on 3 March 1945, contacted Peter and myself for help in trying to piece together his uncle's Air Force career. Leslie has supplied considerable documentation for clarification and good progress has been made, so much so, that Leslie has joined the Association. Welcome Leslie!

DO YOU REMEMBER? IF SO CAN YOU HELP?

1) MARHAM. May or September 1969. On final approach, one of two American F.100 'Super Sabres' suffered a flame-out. The pilot ejected (slight injuries) but the aircraft ploughed in close to Victors on dispersal, finishing near married quarters. The F.100D was probably 562986 of the 20th Tactical Fighter Wing/79th Tactical Fighter Squadron. which crashed on final approach at Marham on 13 September 1969. 20th TFW HQ was at RAF Wethersfield, home of the 55th and 77th TFS but the third squadron (79th) was at RAF Woodbridge. This 'lively' incident seems to have eluded any official mention, but if anyone can recall it (if seen, certainly not forgotten?) or can provide any other information I would be pleased to hear. More precise details are hopefully in the 'pipeline'.

2) OULTON. Pre-214.

Does anyone recall a Lockheed Hudson crashing close to Blickling in April 1942? Eight on board were killed and possible ground fatalities? Hudsons were based at Oulton at the time.

SQUADRON ASSOCIATION WREATHS.

New-style wreaths, now with a full colour squadron badge as centrepiece (RBL special service) were laid at Stradishall (8 May) Chedburgh (June Memorial weekend) and Oulton. (100 Group Memorial Weekend).



No.214 (Federated Malay States) Squadron Association

Remembering the dedicated service
of those who served on No.214(FMS) Squadron
whilst stationed at
Royal Air Force Stradishall
1940-1942
(Royal Air Force Chedburgh
1942-1943)

and honouring the memory of those
killed in action

LEST WE FORGET

John M. Whitehouse

THE HANDLEY PAGE VICTOR

A Brief History

The Victor was designed as a high subsonic four jet bomber capable of carrying heavy loads over a long range at altitudes up to 50,000 feet.

The prototype first flew on December 24th. 1952 and the first production aircraft took to the air on February 1st. 1956.

All production Victors were fitted with internal piping to enable them to receive fuel when the first tankers became available.

The first aircraft in service were delivered to 232 OCU at Gaydon in November 1957 followed by the first operational squadron in April 1958 , 10 Sqn. at Cottesmore. 49 Victor Mk. 1 and 1As were eventually built and served with four squadrons (10 , 15, 55 and 57)

The Mk. 1 Victors were powered by four Armstrong Siddeley Sapphire 202 or 207 turbojets.

Wing span was 110 ft., length 114 ft. 11ins. and height 28ft. 1.5in.

In the bomber role the Mk. 1s were, by 1966, replaced by the slightly larger and more powerful Mk. 2s . (Rolls Royce Conway by-pass turbofans).

In 1965 , following the main spar problems with the Valiants , some of the Mk. 1/1As were converted to tankers . With the demise of Handley Page the conversion was carried out by Avro at their Woodford works.

A total of 30 aircraft were eventually converted.

In June 1965 the first tankers entered service with 55 Sqn. , these being B(K) 1A 2 point versions , followed by the 3 point K.1s with 57 Sqn. in December 1965.

Suprisingly 214 Sqn. , despite being the pioneer air to air refuelling squadron, was not to reformed with Victors until July 1966.

All the tanker squadrons and the Tanker Training Flight (later became 232 OCU) were based at Marham.

In 1974/75 No.s 55 and 57 Sqns. started to re-equip with Victor K.2s, leaving 214 Sqn. to soldier on with their K.1s until disbandment in January 1977.

Due to defence cuts 57 Sqn. was disbanded in June 1986 leaving 55 Sqn. to carry on until October 1993.



Victor Mk. 1 XA921 (the fifth production aircraft) and Vulcan Mk.1 XA889 (the first production Vulcan) , with eight of Marham's Valiants all lined up for the visit of HM the Queen in June 1956.

All the aircraft were aluminium except for the Victor which was in the new white finish



A Handley Page Victor K. 1A OF 214 Sqn. RAF Marham , Norfolk , refuelling two Phantom FGR 2's of 41 Sqn. RAF Coningsby , Lincs. Believed 1973 but could be later.

Who was flying it or was a crew member ?

THE FIRST NIGHTJAR WITH COLOUR

This edition of the Nightjar has , as it's main theme , photos and memories of the Victor tankers. It is also the first edition with colour, albeit on only one page.

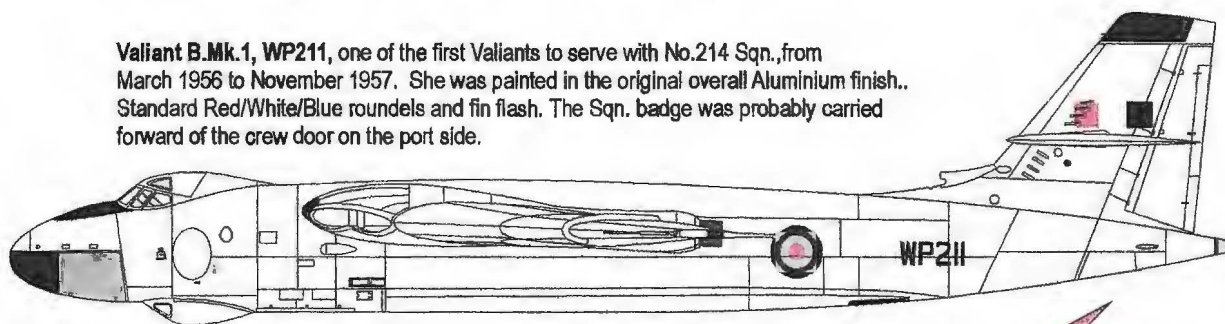
Colour copy printing is very expensive compared to black and white. This colour page costs .45pence compared to just under .4pence for black and white.

In order to have one colour page we have to reduce the number of other pages if the overall cost is to be kept within reasonable bounds.

We hope you like it ?

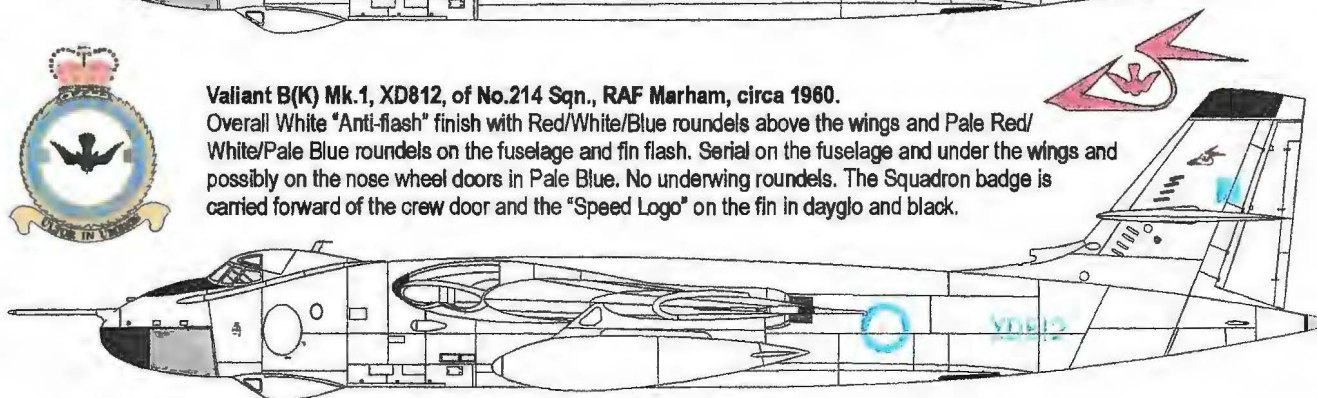
Valiants and Victors at Marham

Valiant B.Mk.1, WP211, one of the first Valiants to serve with No.214 Sqn., from March 1956 to November 1957. She was painted in the original overall Aluminium finish.. Standard Red/White/Blue roundels and fin flash. The Sqn. badge was probably carried forward of the crew door on the port side.



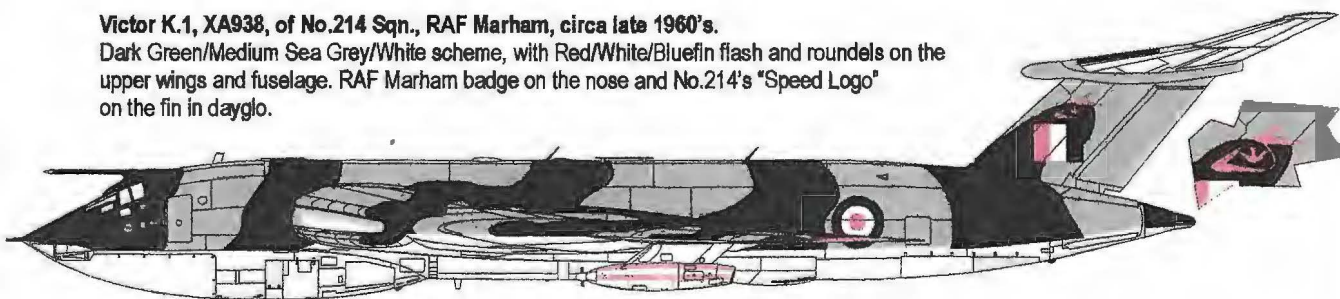
Valiant B(K) Mk.1, XD812, of No.214 Sqn., RAF Marham, circa 1960.

Overall White "Anti-flash" finish with Red/White/Blue roundels above the wings and Pale Red/White/Pale Blue roundels on the fuselage and fin flash. Serial on the fuselage and under the wings and possibly on the nose wheel doors in Pale Blue. No underwing roundels. The Squadron badge is carried forward of the crew door and the "Speed Logo" on the fin in dayglo and black.



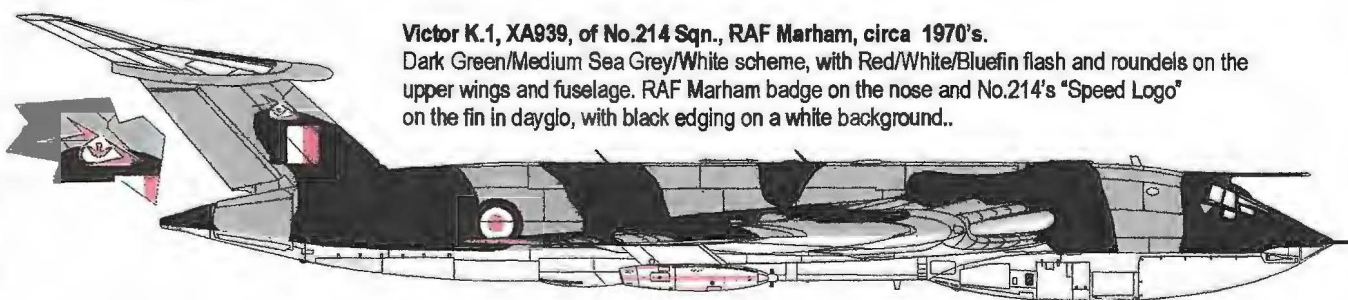
Victor K.1, XA938, of No.214 Sqn., RAF Marham, circa late 1960's.

Dark Green/Medium Sea Grey/White scheme, with Red/White/Blue fin flash and roundels on the upper wings and fuselage. RAF Marham badge on the nose and No.214's "Speed Logo" on the fin in dayglo.



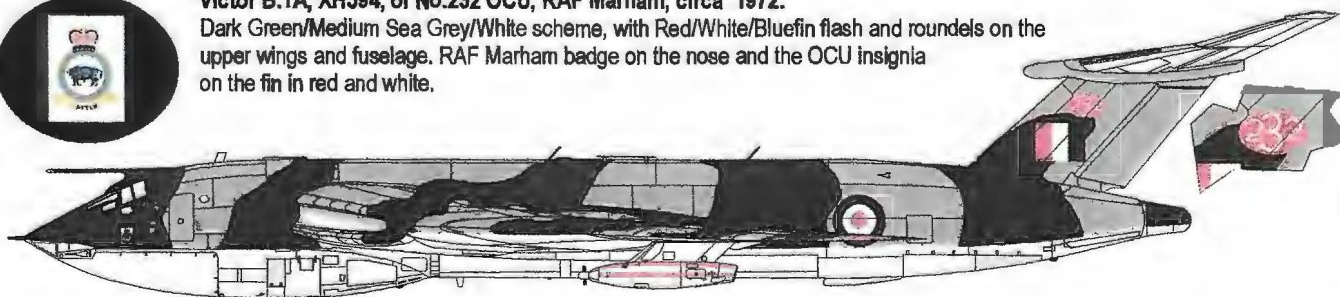
Victor K.1, XA939, of No.214 Sqn., RAF Marham, circa 1970's.

Dark Green/Medium Sea Grey/White scheme, with Red/White/Blue fin flash and roundels on the upper wings and fuselage. RAF Marham badge on the nose and No.214's "Speed Logo" on the fin in dayglo, with black edging on a white background..



Victor B.1A, XH594, of No.232 OCU, RAF Marham, circa 1972.

Dark Green/Medium Sea Grey/White scheme, with Red/White/Blue fin flash and roundels on the upper wings and fuselage. RAF Marham badge on the nose and the OCU insignia on the fin in red and white.



Most if not all crews posted to 214 Sqn. Would have passed through 232 OCU. This unit served at Marham from May 1970 to April 1986. From June 1965 until May 1970 it was known as The Tanker Training Flight.

The illustrations (except WP211) originally appeared in Scale Aircraft Modelling monthly magazine and are the copyright of the Illustrator, M.D. Howley - RAF Movements WO (Retd).

No 214 Squadron – The Flight Refuelling Years

One Pilot's Memories

1. I have just spent an hour or so going through my log books and another hour looking for my photographs. The first really brought back memories – the second did my feeling of wellbeing no good at all!! You will have gathered from the lack of graphic adornments to this article that most of the photos have disappeared - the memories though remain and they are most potent and pervasive.
2. I was lucky enough to be posted from my fast jet AFTS – Vampires -- to the Tanker Force; the majority of the students were posted to that insatiable beast the V Force, which consumed a large majority of the output of the Fast Jet AFTS' for almost 3 years. I was delighted to have passed out and to have my wings: the future would take care of itself.
3. First though I had to endure the OCU at Gaydon, which was part of the great V Force training machine. I soon learnt that to reach my squadron destination, now announced as No 214 Sqn, the Flight Refuelling Squadron, I would have to know the detailed workings of the aircraft systems, all of them, including the NBS – navigation and bombing system. The latter requirement, in particular, rather bemused me – I couldn't see it and would never have to operate it. Over the years though, having that knowledge allowed me to listen to my crew, understand their problems, and appear reasonably au fait with their equipment and their problems.
4. OCU was different. First of all there was a simulator, there we could make mistakes and learn the characteristics of the aircraft in safety and at a price considerably less than operating the aircraft. Most of the training, both in the simulator and aircraft was V Force based – Navex's, simulated emergencies and diversions, time on the bombing range, and circuits – the last the cream on a pilot's cake. We co-pilots learnt that we were there as a speaking – when spoken to – cockpit facility: and so after 6 months we graduated from the training machine and arrived at No 214(FMS) Squadron. I had amassed 28 circuits and landings in my almost 5 months on the course and in a grand total of 10.35 hours dual handling. My valedictory briefing indicated that "whilst there was no doubt I could fly the aircraft, the mysteries of the role, crew management, and time on the squadron without blemish, would require at least one tour for me to attain the highly desirable Left Hand Seat qualification and Captaincy".

No 214(FMS) Squadron

5. A new unit and new challenges. First of all the people were different; the majority of the executives and captains had been fast jet pilots. Tanking requires close formation skills of the highest order hence their backgrounds in this new role. There were new and serious tasks for the co-pilots, not the least fuel planning. There were times when we would plan to transfer half or more of the total fuel on board, and we had to be sure, with the help of the navigator team in the rear, that we too would be able to reach our destination. A not unknown occurrence would be that the fuel offloads required to fill our 'customers' to full, to get them to their destination or allow them to remain 'on task', varied significantly from the original plan. Between the rear crew and the front end we had to be sufficiently flexible to change our mission to meet the "sharp end's" requirements and make sure that we would return to 'terra firma' with sufficient fuel -- sometimes with quite exciting results – more of that later.
6. During this time we extended the nature of the task. UK air defence was an important element of our role, but we also supported deployments, taking our Lightning and Javelin customers away from the UK – the force extender element. It was during these early deployments that we learnt the real degree of flexibility the role demanded. Malta, Cyprus, El Adem and Bahrain were regular destinations, and there was a notable trip to India with Javelins.
7. I also learnt the stupidity of trying to be smart by pre-empting my Captain. As a result, I spent a weekend in Luqa with the crew chief, replacing the main undercarriage fuse and testing the system. The fuse was rather larger than the normal household variety and located in a small and very hot hole

in the main fuselage, the jacks needed for a retraction test were difficult to manoeuvre and the hangar was very hot!! On top of it all, it was my round in the bar all weekend!! A character-forming episode.

8. The great wing spar crack occurred at Gaydon in December 1963, thankfully without any fatalities. We were grounded – my last flight in a Valiant was on December 2nd 1964. As Squadron Adjutant, I had a side role to play in disbanding No214 Sqn; an exercise that would prove helpful in the future.

9. We all, aircrew and groundcrew, went our different ways. I was lucky and went to a flying role as captain, flying piston aircraft, mainly operating away from base and in the weather rather than above it. I had the good fortune to fly with a lot of very experienced NCO pilots who taught me a lot in a very short time; this stood me in good stead over the coming years.

10. In 1966 we were aware that the Tanker Force was back flying Victor K1 and K1A aircraft, and my annual reports clearly indicated my desire to return to the fold. In late 1968 I was posted to the Tanker Force as Captain, and to No 214 Squadron. A Jet refresher course followed by the OCU, and then back to "THE Tanker Squadron", except that, by now, both No 55 and 57 Squadrons were claiming some form of seniority based on time with the aircraft!! A claim that was never taken seriously by the senior team.

11. I spent the next 2 years relearning the role – higher certainly, faster certainly, but the old requirements remained: total flexibility across the crew and the formation. The need to move the fuel and the aircraft down track with the minimum of tankers still applied, but more so. The number of receiver types had also increased, and we had to know their requirements and foibles; the size of tanker formations was also much larger. All the crews in the formation needed to know their role and that of the rest of the aircraft in the formation. If an aircraft went u/s in the air, the whole mission would have to be re-planned on the spot by the formation leader and his crew – it was not unusual for a crew planned for just a Marham – Marham sortie to finish up in Cyprus at the end of a day.

12. After just 2 years on the Squadron I was posted to Bawtry and HQ1Group, where I spent 2 years getting involved in both Victor and Vulcan affairs. The threat from the East – the Cold War - was a serious business and was uppermost in everybody's minds. Our task was to ensure that the front line was equipped, manned and trained to meet the threat, whenever and wherever, it might occur. It was a time to learn and also to develop ideas and concepts which might be used should we ever have to go to war. The experience of the past was taken, modified, developed and passed back to the sharp end for their comment and evaluation.

13. Time in Staff work led to a posting back to Marham as Flight Commander, on No 214 Sqn. We were still busy, but now the big boys – Victor K Mk2s flown by No 55 & 57 Sqns – were on the job. There were some new faces but also so many from the past, and there was plenty of work to go around. A lot of rivalry but always centred on getting the job done efficiently, flexibly and with style. A missed first contact to take fuel as part of the job, especially in a formation in which more than one tanker

squadron was present, would be noted and subsequently used in evidence at an appropriate moment!!



14. All this increasing activity went hand in hand with constant operational training and evaluation of the front line's capability. The base and its squadrons were subjected to an ever increasing number of evaluations by national and occasionally NATO staff. To cope with the operational implications and to learn the necessary lessons, the stations created their own mini evaluations

– Minivals – which lasted only a day or so. Tactical evaluations by Command grew more frequent and were bigger, better and much longer. We even took part in one that covered almost 2 weeks and kept a peacetime station on a 2 x 12 hour shift system for the whole period, including operating in a very warm spell in full NBC equipment. It was a difficult time for all, but the ground crew were faced with the reality of 'war in rubber suits', found it really difficult, but still met all the requirements.

15. We still worked at our deployments to the Mediterranean and beyond, but fast jet training and Red Flag scenarios in the USA meant more tanking across the Atlantic and beyond; different lessons to learn, different tactics to devise. In reality we were preparing the ground for that demonstration of the ability of Air-to-Air Refuelling to extend a Force Capability – the bombing of Port Stanley in the Falklands.

16. The Tanker Force came of age then, and those of us who had been in at the beginning or very close to it were extremely proud of the way it was handled – professionally, flexibly and ultimately, when the plans went somewhat awry, with considerable bravery, to ensure the task was successfully completed.

17. This demonstration of the worth of AAR took place after our Squadron had been disbanded yet again but we all played our part in developing the tactics that were used and many of the main players, at all ranks, in that operation, were proud to include No 214 Squadron in their log book.

ADDENDUM

I promised a short story recognisable by most aircrew - of that time when a total belief in ones own and one's crews' abilities to cope with all eventualities - overconfidence - lead to a nasty shock to the ego.

Imagine this: -

"My first trip as detachment commander to Leuchars – 4 aircraft from the squadron on a quick reaction alert in support of the Phantom squadrons during a period of high Russian activity – Bears and Badgers operating in the Atlantic, close to the British Air Defence Identification Zone(ADIZ) testing our ability to react.

It was a busy time and we were flying at least one, and occasionally two, sorties a day. Interesting, high intensity work as the threats changed and our 'chicks' profiles and airborne requirements changed accordingly.

On Day 3 we were scrambled in the late afternoon to support the Phantoms well out to the West looking for Bears who had been picked up further north heading South into the ADIZ. All went fairly well and we joined up with our receivers who were not having much joy making contact with the "enemy"– fuel was a problem; we were a long way from base. They could take large amounts of fuel from us – so the plan was to keep them well topped up (with fuel) to allow them maximum operational capability but also keeping us well aware of our fuel state..



No contact with Russian aircraft had been made after some long time 'on task' and we were beginning to think about getting the 'chicks' and ourselves back to base – both our base and alternative diversion weather forecasts were good. As we announced the final plan, the fighter leader called contact, simultaneously requesting another fuel

top-up. A very hurried appraisal of our fuel state and checks on base and diversion weather allowed us to cope with most of their fuel requirements. The new plan, however, also required us to land at Lossiemouth, our diversion, with normal landing fuel. Lossiemouth was en route to Leuchars, and there would be sufficient to go to Leuchars and land on minimums should Lossiemouth become non-available. Good plan!



The trip back to the mainland was normal. As we approached Lossiemouth I checked the weather at both bases, both were gin clear and with good forecasts. At that stage the devil in the head said "Don't be silly just confirm the forecasts with 'actuals' and then you can get back to Leuchars albeit with minimum fuel and get on with being detachment commander – what a good idea I thought.

The actual weather at Lossiemouth was gin clear with no trend; Leuchars was clear with a forecast of 3/8 cover at 800 feet later. So the decision to continue to the forward operating base was made: after all it was only another 40 minutes or so, and we could monitor the trends!!

Some 10 minutes later the AEO announced that Lossiemouth had called saying that they were now below minimums and were closed!! I think I – calmly -suggested that perhaps we should check the Leuchars weather now some 20 -30 minutes away – just to be sure!!

"AEO to Captain – Leuchars report the Haar is moving in with the cloud base 600ft with drizzle – continued deterioration expected"

A brief acceptance of a "fickle finger of fate" intervention in the plan – realisation that the issue was to beat the weather as we were not going to go anywhere else, a brief pause for thought and then the plan – for even briefer consideration by the crew:-

1. Get Air Traffic clearance for a clean 300kt descent on a curve of pursuit to join Leuchars RW 27 at 1000 feet and 3miles, at approach speed and configuration. Land on first approach!!
2. Radar Nav to plan approach in minimum time and best speed – safety height considerations.
3. AEO to monitor weather with base only letting me know of significant deterioration.
4. Co-pilot to monitor the fuel and his captain

No real discussion just a series of navigator inputs to position us and then, in what seemed like an eternity as we descended from 30,000 feet at 300 knots, a constant flow of weather inputs – all deterioration. Fuel was as planned – we would have enough for a climb out, position the aircraft safely and abandon it. As we passed 1200 feet we reduced speed and configured for landing hitting the 3 mile point at 900ft on-speed and on the ILS glide path and centre line together with an announcement from the Tower that the cloud base and visibility were now minimums. We saw the lights at just under the mile, touched down, ran out and turned off the runway accompanied by the Tower telling us that the base was now closed for weather!!

It really was a close run affair with many lessons learnt; the most important being that decision-making still relies on the favour of the gods; that a professional, integrated well-trained crew not only shares the load in trouble but also shares the outcome of bad decision-making or plain bad luck.

The quick reaction of the Navigator Radar, his and the rest of the crew's professionalism in that hectic half hour, ensured a safe return to the haven of the Mess bar and to the plans for the next day's programme for a tired and certainly wiser young man. And this time I was very happy for it to be my round - all evening!!

Pacific Ranger 5803

During the summer of 1970, a group of USAF B-52 bombers and KC-135 tankers deployed to the UK for a joint bombing and navigation competition with Strike Command Vulcans and Victors. 214 Squadron's Victor K1s took part in the navigation portion of the competition, and I was the copilot of one of the competing crews. John Longhurst was the captain, Derek Tuthill, the navigator plotter, John Foley the radar navigator and Rick West the Air Electronics Officer.

But this story isn't about the competition; it's about what happened next. Although we didn't drop a single bomb, we achieved the highest score among the competing Victors (including those of 55 and 57 Squadrons), and we were awarded the squadron's annual allocation of Pacific Rangers (an allocation which was rarely taken up), the longest, most desirable training exercise on the books. I had heard stories of Frank Milligan's crew's Pacific exploits, and now it was going to our turn!

The objective was to head westward, across the Atlantic, the United States and the Pacific to Singapore, then turn around and return. Now your average, everyday 747 can do that in about a day and a half, but our trip was scheduled to take three weeks. Along the way we were meant to learn about operations in the types of environments we rarely visited. We were assigned Victor B1A K2P, XH 667, the squadron "hack", the last Victor 1 off the production line, and one of the half dozen Victors that were rapidly converted to two-point tankers when the poor old Valiant suddenly bit the dust (before my time, but I know Moff will appreciate the mention). Our callsign was "MARXU".

Having 667 turned out to be a good deal. The two-point tanker was a lot less capable than the K1s, and the squadron didn't mind (much) if it stayed away for a long time. It had just been equipped with TACAN (this was 1970; TACAN was introduced in 1947) replacing "GEE", the WW2 hyperbolic navigation/bombing system. Oceanic navigation continued to be 18th century – the sextant; it had served us well during the competition and, with a little help from TACAN and John F's radar, we managed to find all the stops on the way.

We set out late in September after identifying our first hurdle; we didn't have enough fuel to get to our first stop, Goose Bay. I told you it wasn't a very capable tanker! Fortunately, Operations found a three-point tanker with a few thousand pounds to spare somewhere to the east of Scotland, so we made a quick contact and went on our way. We landed in Goose, a desolate spot on the coast of Labrador, intending to leave for points west the following day. When we tried to leave, however, we had an electrical problem that prevented two of the engines' starting; Rick diagnosed an unserviceable circuit breaker, and we ordered a spare. It took almost a week for the part to arrive. This was unfortunate since we had packed for warm weather merry-making, and it was distinctly chilly in Goose. In addition, there was always the chance that No1 Group or our own squadron would recall us if we delayed for too long. We survived the cold (plenty of cosy bars) and Group couldn't have cared much less about the location of 667 at any particular moment. (The poor old girl ended her days in Malta as a fire-practice hulk; I have a souvenir piece at home.)

Just before the part arrived, Rick found that it wasn't a bad CB after all, just a loose wire, so he fixed it and set out for Offutt Air Force Base in Nebraska. That was just a brief lunch stop, and on the same day we proceeded to McClellan AFB near Sacramento, California. Hey, things are looking up! We're almost far enough away from the UK that it would be a waste of time recalling us.

Flying across the USA, we tended to cheat a bit. It was permissible in those days to track off airways, potentially direct from start to end of route, by requesting "inertial routing". Of course,

we didn't have an inertial navigation system, but our antique bombing radar, H₂S, had a computer (I use the word loosely; it was full of cams and rubber wheels) which allowed the aircraft to be flown directly to a very distant point, so we asked for inertial routing and hoped no one would rumble us. They didn't. We were a bit of a curiosity. Air traffic control wasn't familiar with five-letter callsigns and wasn't sure how it was supposed to be pronounced. We called ourselves "Mike, Alpha, Romeo, X-Ray, Uniform" as the phonetic standards demanded. In reply, we heard "Emm, Eh, Are, Ex, You" and "Marx Uniform" and "Marks You". One time we were even called "Victoria".

Once we'd bedded the aircraft down in McClellan, the RAF Detachment Commander gave us a lift into San Francisco in the detachment station wagon, and we walked a little way to the hotel we'd booked just off Market Street. We had something of a wild night in North Beach and suffered the after-effects the following morning, but not so badly that we weren't ready to take a cruise around the Bay and wander the streets for a few hours. At least that part went to plan.

Next stop was Hawaii, and on the way, we smelled electrical burning and my gyrocompass tumbled. I switched power supplies and apparently blew the other fuse too, the only spare of its kind in the aircraft. Once we were on the ground in Hawaii, Rick replaced the gyro, and I went trolling around the fleet of C-141s parked awaiting cargos for Viet Nam to try to find a suitable replacement. Funnily enough, these aircraft carried no spares, relying on one extra in a holder on each piece of equipment. Finally, I was reluctantly given a fuse, and I became directionally orientated once again. In the process of all this, someone had left Rick a can of Coke on the cockpit coaming in the hot sun. When he eventually came to open it, it went off like a fire extinguisher, and we had a sticky windscreen to clean.

Then we found that, on landing, we had run over a piece of debris cutting two tyres. We were carrying a rim with two tyres (the Victor had two tyres on each wheel with a spacer between). The cuts were in one on the front axle and the one behind it, and they proved to be different brands which could not be mixed on the same rim. OH POOH!! The RAF Detachment Commander said that the last time they ordered spares, they ended up in Houston, so we looked forward to a long stay in Honolulu. The Detachment made us hotel reservations in town and we learned a little about Transport Command's priorities when it came to accommodating crewmembers, priorities that were applied in the following order:

1. All crewmembers will be allocated a single room
- If 1 is not possible:
2. The aircraft captain will always have a single room
3. Officers and NCOs will not share rooms
4. Male and female crewmembers will not share rooms

We were a good deal less discerning, having in mind that our daily allowances barely covered the cost of a hotel (so no beer at all!). Once we arrived at the hotel, we cancelled three rooms and shared the other three. Oh, I forgot to mention that, in addition to the five crewmembers, we had with us Chief Technician Arthur Pogue, a veteran of overseas deployments and a great hand when the aircraft broke down. Rick put half a dozen beers into the washbasin in one room, set the cold water running over them, locked himself out, and by the time he'd taken the (wrong) lift up to the 23rd floor, down to the lobby and back up to the 21st, the room was a trifle flooded and we had a mopping up job to do.

It was a very pleasant stay. We rented cars and toured the island (I learned to drive on the right in the process, though some doubt I really learned anything), visited the marine life park, relaxed in the sun, and drank what was likely far too much. But all too soon it was over. The tyres arrived more quickly than anyone could have imagined and we were on our way again.

The next stop, another quick lunch-break, was on Wake Island, about 4 hours west of Hawaii. The only thing I remember is sitting outside a building on a bench eating my share of a big box of doughnuts. We were an hour into the next leg to Guam when John F asked John L if he was smoking again (smoking wasn't allowed in the Victor, but some weren't 100% compliant). John L's reply was "cheeky bugger" at which point the cockpit filled with thick white smoke and a little pandemonium broke out in the back. The smoke appeared to be coming from a roof panel and Arthur was in there with his GS screwdriver in one hand and an extinguisher in the other. But by the time the fasteners were undone, the smoke had cleared. John L and I had turned the aircraft around and Rick had transmitted a Pan call, which was evidently not understood by local air traffic control. Eventually, some friendly airline pilot said "hey Oakland, you got an airplane here with an emergency". We landed back on Wake and parked "Sick Sick Seven" for a long stay. We looked with some awe at the wiring that had been exposed when the roof panel had been removed. It was charred and matted together and the conductors were showing through the insulation. It didn't take too much discussion to conclude that we needed help, and our next delay signal said so. Two technicians were dispatched but would take a week to arrive.

Although it seemed like a rough deal that this hadn't happened close to Hawaii, Wake turned out to be a really nice place for an extended stay. The setting would have been a good choice for the first Club Med with beautiful beaches and lagoon, wall-to-wall sunshine, 24/7 food hall and laundry, and lots of friendly folks.

Our first encounter with the "locals" was right after landing when the Coastguard came out to see how well their LORAN had worked for us. Our response ("Er, what's LORAN?") led to the revelation that we'd arrived at this pinprick in the middle of the Pacific using just a sextant. We also became friendly with the two USAF personnel on the island, which was mostly worked under contract. One of them loaned us a rubber dinghy and a bow with a captive arrow for fishing. With the latter, we finally managed to nail what looked like a sole in about two inches of water; we felt so sorry for it that we released it.

At that time, Pan Am maintained a staging post for occasional refuelling stops on Wake. They also had a club which was one of the several drinking establishments on the island. We spent some time in there but felt compelled to spend equal time in all the others. I don't think we let anyone down.

We took part in a game of softball against a local team who were very gentle with us. We were invited to a wedding; the bride was the daughter of the island's trash contractor, reputedly the richest person around. It was certainly a very good bash. We became friendly with the local meteorologist who seemed to have a large Filipino in police uniform carrying a pump-action shotgun perpetually in tow. This Chief of Police had heard about the urban terrorist group "The Weathermen", and meant to keep the local chapter well in check. And finally we met the air traffic controller who had been on duty when we had our little problem. He said "Oh, yeah; you were the guys who made the Pan call the other day. I looked it up in my ICAO Controller Manual. You got it exactly right."

All good things must come to an end, and eventually our technical support team arrived. They glanced into the overhead panel, snipped a connexion to a big electrolytic capacitor and said "OK, you can go now."

"Don't we need to replace that component?"

"It'll be OK until you can get a spare"

"But what about the wiring, it's all charred and the conductors are showing through?"

"Oh, it's all like that!"

So the next day we went into flight planning for our trip to Guam. There was a Vulcan crew going in the opposite direction, just arrived from Guam. We asked about the weather en route and were told that they had spent most of the trip at 53,000 feet weaving among the thunderstorms. There wasn't much we could do about the weather, and we certainly couldn't get to FL530, so we set out and weaved among the cumulonimbi at around 41,000. We had a nice evening in Guam and then set out for Singapore the following day. It took us four weeks to get to Singapore from Marham, only a week longer than the round trip was meant to take.

Much to our surprise, Group allowed us our days off in Singapore, but by then it had all been enough for us, and we opted to take the "short" way home. We replaced the burned-out capacitor and bought some goodies to take home. Then, an hour after we set out for Gan, the cockpit filled up with smoke again. This time we were a bit blasé about it and no one jumped about too much, but we put out an emergency call and returned to RAF Tengah. This time the call was answered immediately and appropriately, and when we ground to a halt after the landing, there was a rescue helicopter hovering over us and fire vehicles everywhere. Over the next two days, we replaced the inverter which had caused the problems with the capacitor, as well as the capacitor itself. Then we set off eastwards to Gan, Masirah, Bahrain, Cyprus and home with no more problems, a five week voyage or, as it had become known on the squadron, "Around the world in 80 delays".

As I write this, I am in Amsterdam on the second leg of an eastbound, round-the-world trip which will be the first chance I have had since 1970 to really "unwind".

Sqn. Ldr. John Brown
Snohomish
Washington State
USA

An important note from our Treasurer

Are you with the Woolwich?

My thanks to all of you that have chosen to pay your membership subscription by standing-order, it will make life easier for me in the future and reduce the paperwork. One or two banks however have misread the standing order instructions and started paying the subscriptions monthly! This is good for our funds but a drain on the affected bank accounts. I have managed to trace and correct all but one of these, a **Woolwich** account with a number ending in 270. If this is yours, please go to your bank and tell them the error of their ways. I am unable to trace you because the bank will not divulge customer details, so please get in touch with me so that I can send you a refund. If any of you wish to set up a standing order, just contact me and I will send you a form to complete and give to your bank – all very simple. If you have yet to pay your subs for this year, I will be happy to receive them at any time, but if in the future they are paid in January, when they are due, it saves me lots of work and visits to the bank. It also gives your committee scope to plan expenditure for the year. I look forward to seeing many of you at the reunion in September.

John Gulliver - Treasurer

ROLL OF HONOUR 1941 to 1940

As in previous Roll of Honour lists in the Nightjar I have continued backwards through the months, from June 1941 to February 1941

Wellington Mk1c R1609

June 24/25th. 1941

Sgt. G.T. Jones	+
P/O J. Dodds-Forrest	+
Sgt. G.T. Hunt	+
Sgt. J.C.E. Black	+
Sgt. K.J. Barton RCAF	+
Sgt. G.A.D. Cotton	+

Wellington Mk.1c R1462

May 11/12th. 1941

P/O J.G. Topliss	+
Sgt. P.R.K. Burley	+
Sgt. A.W. Gibson	+
Sgt. H.W.J. Barr	+
Sgt. A. Liversey	+
Sgt. T.W. James	+

Wellington Mk.1c R1447

May 9/10th. 1941

P/O I.K. Woodroffe	pow
Sgt. H. Barnes	pow
Sgt. J.R. Fry RNZAF	pow
Sgt. H. Gillies	pow
Sgt. B.L. Tillotson	pow
F/O M.M. Marsh	pow

Wellington Mk.1c R1226 " L "

May 8/9th. 1941

S/Ldr. F.L.H. Eddison DFC	+ ✓
P/O N.M.K. Kirkcaldie RNZAF	+ ✓
Sgt. J. Holt	+ ✓
Sgt. K. Tait	+
Sgt. A.F. Wilson	+
Sgt. C. Paton	+

Note; F/O Marsh was a well known race horse trainer, having many successes, including two Derby winners ; Windsor Lad in 1936 and Tulyar in 1952.

Wellington Mk. 1c R3208 ✓

May 8/9th. 1941

F/Sgt. W.H. Browell	+ ✓
Sgt. A.W. Dean	+ ✓
Sgt. J.L. Smith	+ ✓
Sgt. R.J. Bennett	+ ✓
Sgt. W.J.S. McGregor	+ ✓
Sgt. M.G. Robertson	+ ✓

Wellington Mk. 1c T2542 ✓

April 8/9th. 1941

Sgt. J.P. Cusworth	+ ✓
Sgt. C.M.F. Hitchcock	+ ✓
Sgt. J.C. Cattell RNZAF	+ ✓
Sgt. R. Brown	+ ✓
Sgt. A.J. McHardy	+ ✓
Sgt. D.C. Rowland	+ ✓

Wellington Mk. 1c R1380

April 7/8th. 1941

Sgt. R.A. Williams	+
Sgt. K. Manson RNZAF	+
Sgt. R.A. Chatfield	+
Sgt. R.C. Plummer	+
Sgt. H.R. Easton RCAF	+
Sgt. C.H.R. Mercer	+

Wellington Mk. c N2746

March 13/14th. 1941

Sgt. A.G. Elder	+
Sgt. V.L. Bagley	+
Sgt. S. Glazer RNZAF	+
Sgt. J. la B. Tomkinson	+
Sgt. D.W. Waters	pow
Sgt. G.C. Daniel	+

Wellington Mk. 1c L7859

Feb. 25/26th. 1941

Sgt. H.C.S. Horden	inj.
Sgt. Russell	inj.
P/O McKenzie	inj.
Sgt. Cross	inj.
Sgt. Platt	inj.
Sgt. Stuart	inj.

On return from Dusseldorf stalled and crashed whilst trying to make a second circuit.

Association member's stories from times past

By Rodger Rudol . Airframe mechanic, then a fitter on 214 Sqn. 1960 to 1965

On a Valiant's return from a flight in 1963, a job we had to do was check for air leaks in the bomb bay sidewall ducting. I cannot recall the exact procedure, but with the bomb doors closed, the rear deflector was opened, closed and opened again, then made safe by the Crew Chief to allow access into the bay. On this occasion I remember the deflector being opened and thinking it safe, took hold of the radius rods to haul myself, feet first into the bay. How wrong I was !!

The deflector was then selected down on the second cycle, hitting my head and knocking me out of the bay, but trapping my left ankle between the rim of the door and the deflector and leaving me hanging upside down, until someone kindly supported me and the Crew Chief raised the deflector. Afterwards I counted myself lucky, any further and I would have been seriously injured, as those deflectors came down with some power.

A local Court of Enquiry put the accident down to my keenness to get the job done , (I probably needed to go to the bar before it closed), but what I did find interesting , was the repair to the bomb door rim had even been costed , in the region of approx £6 if my memory serves me correctly.

By Jack Bennett , Cpl. Engine Fitter 11 , 214 Sqn. Wellingtons & Stirlings 1942/43

Having read the summer 2004 "Nightjar" and the Roll of Honour list for 1942 I noticed that name of Sqn.Ldr. Nixey is there.

As Sqn.Ldr. of "A" Flight he was a great officer and popular with the ground crews. I remember playing him at shove halfpenny on a board next to the Flight Nissen hut door.

I also recall the night that we lost him, he had driven to the Flight in a canvas covered Hillman pick up truck . Later a WAAF brought it back and inside was a dog fast asleep.

This was a dog Nixey always had with him and on this night the dog began to bark loudly. The WAAF then approached me saying , " the dog has jumped out of the van " her next words were , " Sqn.Ldr. Nixey is not coming back ".

We had a job catching that dog , Nixey was not to return.

We were told not to say anything about this incident ,but were told later that his aircraft had been badly shot up and he had gone in with the kite. Later we were told that four crew had been lost and four taken as pows, as in the Roll of Honour list.

Sometime later " C " Charlie caught fire on the dispersal, ~~th~~^{is} was a replacement for Nixey's aircraft , I seem to remember that the cause was some incendiaries exploding. Having seen the molten mass of wreckage with a cycle in the middle, I've always thought of Nixey.

I do not know what happened to his dog , I hope someone adopted it ? Jack Bennett , Biggleswade , Beds.

Editor's note ; Nixey's aircraft was Stirling Mk.1 N3762 BU-C , 19/20 June 1942

By Vi Holden (nee Lancashire) . On the 214 Sqn. Sgt's mess staff at Oulton
1944/45

In 1942 I was stationed at a small Signals station in the North West of England , we were billeted in a grand Hall . The girls slept in the large upper rooms while the men had Nissen huts in the grounds.(naturally). We cooked in the Hall's own kitchen just like TV's " Upstairs Downstairs ". Downstairs was a great life at the time, but after about eleven months someone decided to sent us to all corners of the UK. I was the first to go (Why ?)

I was sent to Sculthorpe (never heard of the place). It was here that I met up with some of the best bunch of WAAF's in the Air Force. Sculthorpe was an active airfield and here I was assigned to 214 Sqn.

We would be together until 1946 when we were demobbed.

One day many weeks later we had finished serving and had cleared everything away when our Sarge shouted (and he could shout too), " get ready , some Yanks are arriving " ; Oh how our eyes lit up , Americans !! , we could picture GABLE , FLYNN , POWER etc, we worked hard to get a meal ready for our screen idols.

The only problem was the sweet , it had to be tinned prunes , peaches and custard . Eventually all was ready and we awaited the GI's arrival.

Suddenly in they came, oh dear , dragging their feet and with funny caps on the back of their heads with the peaks turned up. They had more badges on their uniforms, than the local Boy Scouts.

Not one of them looked anything like our screen idols , mind you none of us looked like Betty Grable either.

It was while we were serving the sweet that the fun started, some of the GI's asked for the fruit to be put on their lunches, I obliged and thought what a lot of odd bods.

When we finally got back to our own meal we joked and put some of the remaining fruit onto our own dinners, we could'nt believe it , it tasted delicious !! . Try it boys, you may enjoy it too.

Not long after this event " they " took over and we were sent by wagon train to Oulton where we spent the rest of our WAAF service.

So you will gather that by 1946 the Mess girls knew quite a lot about Oulton and the 214 Sqn. personnel . Happy days and a great experience for lots of young women.

Vi Holden (nee Lancashire) Worsley , Manchester.

Editor's note : Vi is still in touch with former WAAF friends from those days and in recent years via the Association,has been put in touch with some of the aircrew boys, especially R.O. "Doug" Douglas in Nelson, New Zealand. Doug was the rear gunner in Norman Rix's crew shot down and became a pow on the night of March 14/15th. 1945.

PLEASE NOTE ;

**THE NEXT " NIGHTJAR " IS DUE TO BE
SENT OUT IN EARLY FEBRARY 2006**

LATE NEWS , REQUESTS ETC .

The next edition of the " Nightjar " , due out in July , will hopefully continue the tanker story from 1965 with the main spar failure of the Valiants to the introduction of the Victor K.1 and K.1A in July 1966.

However before I can go ahead with preparing this next article I need photos or preferably copies of the originals. Both air-to air and ground shots will suffice .

Colour photos as well as black and white are acceptable although colour can , because of the expense, only appear in the Nightjar as black and white.

Modern laser copying machines usually produce quite acceptable black and white copies from a colour photo.

Some technical drawings such as the bomb bay and wing mounted hose drum units may also be useful.

I cannot guarantee that all items sent will be used and some may be carried forward to future newsletters . Any original photos will be returned , also copies if so requested.

Peter McD. Walker, Secretary

Obituary in the Daily Telegraph , Feb. 1st. 2005

Flt. Lt. Pat O' Hara DFM ,DFC and Bar. 214 Sqn. , 109 Sqn., 147 Sqn., and The Kings Flight. (10 operations with 214 Sqn. Stirlings). Age 91

On the night of June 27/28th. 1942 he was navigator of a Stirling attacking Bremen . Over the target the aircraft was hit by flak and an engine set on fire. Continuing on three engines the aircraft was attacked by a night fighter which killed the rear gunner and damaged another engine.

A second fighter blew a large hole in the Stirling's fuselage but one of the gunners shot it down

Two more fighters attacked and both were shot down.

Over the sea the Stirling was so low that part of the tailplane was torn away, nonetheless the pilot , Sgt. Frank Griggs RAAF , managed to gain height and Pat O'Hara got them back to Stradishall using astro-navigation and map reading. The ~~the~~ six surviving crew (all NCOs) were awarded the DFM.

Although Pat O'Hara was not an Association member some of our older members may remember him and his crew from those days. Griggs and O'Hara went on to fly over 50 ops with 109 Sqn. and when Griggs returned to Australia O'Hara continued with another pilot. From 1942 to late 1944 he had completed almost 100 sorties over enemy territory. He was then "rested", he had surely earned it.

Sqd. Ldr. Jack Dixon DFC In mid January , our former Chairman was laid low with a stroke. Fortunately his speech and brain are unaffected although he has a problem with one of his legs. He is currently in a nursing home in Horsham. I have spoken to him by telephone and he informs me that he is now comfortable and would be delighted to hear from any members who know him. His address is Lakeside , Pondtail Road , Horsham , West Sussex. (He does not know the postcode) A telephone line direct to him is : 01403 - 252563 Jack sends his regards to everyone and in turn , on behalf of all members, I wished him a speedy recovery.