

**TANKER EDITION
EARLY VALIANT PERIOD**

41/42

"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)



WINTER / SPRING 2005

You will all know that last year I twisted Vic Pheasant's arm very hard to take over as Treasurer for at least this year , until John Gulliver had completed his years hard labour completely renovating and adding to his home in the Isle of Wight.

John has done the work and Vic, instead of just holding the line, has completely brought our accounts into the computer age to allow our "young" Treasurer to work in a familiar environment rather than in Bill's double entry booking system which requires many entries and as many opportunities to make a mistake, particularly for those not tutored in the method. The method was never a problem to Bill and we will be forever grateful for his years of meticulous bookkeeping.

I am old enough to remember little bits of the process , I was confused at the time and would be now but spreadsheets I can use.

Vic , thanks again for everything. How many times have I said that over the years ; I do know that you several other allegiances stemming from your varied career but please keep in touch with us although I can't promise to change the date of the Reunion.

John Gulliver takes over on Jan. 1st. 2005 and I know he will do a meticulous job. Gulli thank you once again for volunteering .

Those of you on the committee I haven't yet mentioned , thank you , your advice and help over the year has been invaluable.

Now for the good news , our President joins us tonight ; we are indeed honoured to have our country's senior airman as our President and as our guest at tonight's dinner.

Please welcome him.

Now to the business of the day.

Treasurer's Report

Vic Pheasant commenced by explaining the summary of accounts for 2004 to the end of September. The balance to date was £3,488.91 less expenditure from No. 1 and 2 accounts of £1,258.02, leaving a balance of £2,230.89 .

Income for 2004 to date has amounted to £795.50 .

Expenses for producing and posting the two "Nightjars" in 2004 amounted to :

February edition (220 copies printed) : £291.14

July edition (205 copies printed) : £467.50

Other expenses incurred during the year to date have amounted to £431.50 , mainly by Committee members , the largest portion of this being secretarial costs of £237.51 .

Our current membership amounts to 197 following the loss of about 60 who did not return the slip inviting them to pay past arrears. (These were mainly long term bad payers).

If every member pays their annual subs of £5 our annual income would amount to £985.

As can be seen from these figures if we continue on our present expenditure we will soon running a deficit and eating into our reserves.

As our Chairman mentioned our biggest annual expense is the production and posting of the twice a year "Nightjar" and the Summer/Autumn edition was the largest and most expensive to date.

It would appear that we have two choices and these have been discussed at a Committee meeting held before this AGM.

1. The last edition of the " Nightjar " had fourteen double sided pages plus the two covers, a loose late news sheet and two Reunion booking forms.

Feedback from members has indicated that the bigger Nightjar has been well received and many would like it to continue.

If we continue with the subs at £5 per annum we will soon run down our reserves. This choice would allow us to produce either one bigger or two smaller newsletters each year.

2. The second choice is to produce two decent size Nightjars each year but increase the subs. to £10 per annum.

However if this is agreed by the members present the Secretary will still need to work to a budget of approximately £350 per edition (assuming about 210 copies to be printed).

**Minutes of the 16th. AGM of 214 (FMS) Squadron Association held at the
Maids Head Hotel, Norwich on Saturday September 25th. 2004**

Committee present ;	Sqn. Ldr. G.W.Moffatt	Chairman
	Sqn. Ldr. V.A. Pheasant	Treasurer
	Peter McD. Walker	Secretary
	Jock Whitehouse	Historian
	John Gulliver	Committee
	Roy Monk	Committee
	Dave Parsons	Committee
	Sqn. Ldr. Bob Davies	Committee

and 43 members

APOLOGIES had been received from AVM Eric Macey, Walter Rowley, George Cox, Sqn. Ldr. Ray Glass, Graham Paxman, Neil Scott, Jim Newman, Sqn. Ldr. Jack Dixon, Tom Tate, Wng. Cdr. John Wynne, B.A. Mowlem, Bob Mackett (Canada), Alan Deadman, Peter Jowett, Wng. Cdr. John Brown, F. Alan Wilkes, Martin Staunton, Sissie Heilig, Kiwi Evans and AVM Jack Furner.

Chairman's welcome. Welcome to you all . First of all I would like you to all stand for a few moments to remember our friends and comrades who are no longer with us .

In Memorium . Jan. 2004 , Ralph Fellows , Winchester . Navigator ,Stradishall 1941/42
May 2004, O.C. (John)Brush , Marlow,Bucks . Sp.W/Op. Oulton 1944/45

Welcome also to those of you who have made the effort to travel from far flung foreign parts. From Australia ; Sylvia and Maurice Harding ; Sylvia was a WAAF on the mess staff at Chedburgh, Sculthorpe and Oulton.Her husband Maurice was also in the RAF but not on 214 Sqn.

Steve Nessner , his wife Joan and their son Bill , all from Canada , welcome again to the Reunion. It is also great to see a third generation here , Stevie, Bill's son , keeping up the family traditions. Welcome indeed.

As usual we are delighted to see Gerhard Heilig here again from Vienna. Gerhard a Reunion would not be the same without you. Please pass on our best wishes to Sissie.

This is also a good time to highlight some other personal markers.
Johnny Johnson-Biggs and Ted Walker are fast approaching their 94th. birthdays .
Congratulations to you both.
We are always delighted to see the ladies particularly those perennial stalwarts ,
Betty Bidmead - Harold was the driving force in forming the Association.
Joyce Hughes , Elsie Williams and Pauline King , it is really good to see you all again.

Minutes of the last meeting . The minutes of the 2003 meeting were read and agreed. Bill Doy proposed that they be adopted and the motion was seconded by Gerhard Heilig. There were no matters arising.

Chairman's Report . This has been a good year apart from some issues , particularly finance, caused by the very success of the " Nightjar " newsletter. We need to get a grip of these issues which we have debated in the Committee meeting held before this AGM.
I will let Vic give you the details and then I will put a proposition to you ; I would like your opinions before we take a vote.
I would like to pay tribute to the sterling work done by Peter and Jock. All of us owe them much , for without their efforts there would be no Association, no Annual Reunions , and no Nightjar to keep us all in touch.
Thank you both for everything.

We have also been successful in that unlike most Sqn. Associations we are continuing to recruit , thanks to the efforts of Peter and Roy Monk. I am very grateful and very aware of how much effort you have both put into recruiting new members.

Secretary's Report on the AGM.

Following the Treasurer's Report the members attending were asked for their views on the choices open to them.

After some discussion they were asked for a show of hands for those in favour of increasing the subs to £10 per annum and receiving two Nightjars .

Almost all of the 43 members present voted in favour of the increase.

John Gilpin proposed that the Treasurer's report and the members agreement to increase the annual payment to £10 be adopted, this motion being seconded by Johnny Johnson - Biggs.

Committee members report .

Roy Monk was able to report that recruiting was continuing by placing notices in various places such as the Channel 4 " Service Pals " on page 152 of Teletext . Both Roy and Jock Whitehouse had recruited new members during the year.

Election of Officers .

All current members , other than Vic Pheasant , had indicated that they were prepared to continue in office. As previously mentioned Vic had agreed to serve as Treasurer until the end of Dec. 2004 when John Gulliver will take over. Vic will not continue as a committee member but will remain as an Association member.

New members since the 2003 Reunion.

V.A.Barham : Cousin of F/Sgt. Wilf Barham , lost on 6/7th. June 1942

John V. Mathews RAAF , W/Op , shot down and taken pow March 1945 (Fortress)

David Wright , Pilot , Valiant 1956 to 1962

John Fenn, F/Off. W/Op. Signals , Stirling/ Fortress (S/L Day's crew). Commenced 2nd. tour in Feb. 1945 (F/L Haynes crew)

Jack Bennett , Cpl. Engine Fitter , Stradishall 1941/42

Ian Hunt , Aircraft researcher with a special interest in the 214 Sqn. Fortress period. From RAF operational records Ian has produced lists of all recorded crews, ops. flown and names of most aircrew members. Very useful for research.

Mrs. Margaret Craig : Her uncle, Sgt. D.O. Dowson lost on April 11th. 1943.

Kate Brettell : Her uncle , F/Lt. Reg Turtle , skipper of Stirling lost on 6/7th. June 1942.

John " Dan " Gurney , F/Lt. pilot , Victors , 1969 to 1972 . (Attended the Reunion)

David " Tug " Wilson , F/Lt. nav/radar , Victors , 1966 to 1971 (Attended the Reunion)

Bob Tuxford , Sqn. Ldr. pilot , Victor 1971 to 1975 (Our speaker at the Reunion)

Mrs. Alys Smith . Her late husband, A.C. (Colin) Smith was a member. Fortress 1944/45 .

Secretary's report on the Reunion Dinner .

The evening commenced at 19.30 hrs. with a sherry reception in the Oak Room at the Maids Head. This was a most pleasant room and the atmosphere was very relaxed and comfortable. Our President , MRAF Sir Michael Beetham was introduced to various members , especially our older members and those from overseas.

Two members , Sylvia Harding from Australia and Gerhard Hielig from Vienna met up for the first time ✱ since Christmas 1944.

Just before 20.00 hrs. we all moved into the Minstrel Room where 73 members and guests sat down for dinner.

Our Chairman , Sqn. Ldr. " Moff " Moffatt welcomed us all and especially our President.

This is what he said;

' Tonight I am delighted to welcome our President , Sir Michael Beetham to our table.

It is a great honour and privilege to have the country's most senior and most distinguished airman with us tonight. He has been involved at all levels in the most critical and significant military and political episodes of our times. "

He won his DFC as a bomber pilot in the dark and difficult days of 1944, spending all told three years on 50 , 57 and 35 Sqn.

He then served in Africa twice during the challenging 20 years post war. Mau Mau and the withdrawal from Aden come to mind.

Reunion Dinner cont.

As CO of our Squadron in the 1950s he initiated and developed the air to air refuelling techniques that we younger ones took on and developed until they came of operational age in the Falklands conflict.

Appropriately he was Chief of the Air Staff at that time, indeed he must be the CAS with the longest period, 5 years , in that important and demanding appointment.

Prior to that he had been Commander of the NATO 2nd. Tactical Air Force , 1976 - 1977 . This was at the peak of the Cold War when the Communist threat to our civilisation seemed very real, particularly to those of us on the front line who maintained our readiness at very high levels.

A fantastic career touching all the momentous political and significant military moments of those years.

Sir you are most welcome , we are honoured by your company.

After the fiasco with the 2003 Dinner the Maids Head staff looked after us very well , the meal was very good, the service was much improved and the atmosphere was relaxed.

All in all I think that all members and guests were satisfied.

After dinner Moff introduced our speaker , Sqn. Ldr. Bob Tuxford.

" I first met our guest speaker, Bob Tuxford , when I arrived as Flt. Cdr. in 1976 ; he was in the crew room when I took the tentative step back into Squadron life. The first thing he did was to invite me to a party that weekend.

He was on his way to America for an exchange tour and this was to be his farewell.

This was a good start.

I left for Norway in 1980 and Bob returned to Marham from the USA to fly the Victor K2, first as Pilot Leader on 57 Sqn. and then as Flt. Cdr. on 55 Sqn.

This operational background made him eminently suitable as the formation leader for the Black Buck raids, we will hear more of this later.

The remainder of Bob's service career took him into the flight test world where he was project pilot for the Nimrod and Tristar. He has 24 aircraft types in his service logbook, including the Hawker Sea Fury.

Since retiring from RAF service in 1987 he has flown as First Officer and Captain for Monarch Airlines on scheduled and charter services.

He has accumulated some 15,000 flying hours , 2/3rds. of which are in the civilian area.

Please welcome Sqn. Ldr. Bob Tuxford AFC who will tell us about the Falklands War Black Buck raids.

On April 1st. 1982 Argentina invaded South Georgia and the Falkland Islands . On April 18th. five Victor tankers left Marham for Wideawake Airfield on Ascension Island. Four more Victors left next day and on the 30th. they were joined by six more.

They were 6000 miles from their home base and almost 4000 from the Falkland Islands.

The detachment's job was to provide air to air refuelling for the aircraft deploying to the area, namely Hercules , Nimrods and Harriers .

On the night of April 30th. two Vulcans and eleven Victors took off for the first of seven

" Black Buck" operations to bomb Port Stanley airfield, the Vulcans carrying 1000lb "iron"

bombs, the Victors to refuel the Vulcans as well as each other on the outward and return legs.

Towards the final stages of the outward leg one of the Victors developed a fuel leak and turned for Ascension , but would not make it without help from another tanker.

In the meantime Bob Tuxford had just topped up the Vulcan and also the Victor that would give the Vulcan it's final top up. Whilst topping up the Victor it's probe broke before the full amount had been transferred.

Bob had then to make the decision to carry on with the Vulcan instead of the damaged Victor but before he could do this he had to take back the fuel he had just transferred.

As he flew south and gave the Vulcan it's last transfer , he had to give more fuel than planned leaving him with insufficient to return to Wideawake airfield.

He could not call base because of the need for radio silence at this critical stage of the raid, he had to press on until he heard the call " Superfuse " from the Vulcan , indicating success.

Black Buck , cont.

He was then able to call Ascension and request a tanker to top him up. Finally landing at Wideawake he had been in the air for 14 hours 5 minutes. For their part in the operation the crew were awarded the Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service in the Air and Bob Tuxford received the Air Force Cross.

Bob's talk was not only about the meticulous planning required for the Black Buck operations but the dedication and sheer hard work carried out by everyone involved, from the mess staff to the top Commanders.

The talk was illustrated by slides of various aspects of the operations and life on Ascension at this time.

Thank you Bob , it was a most interesting evening . As far as I am aware this is the first time that, as far as I could see, no one fell asleep.

Peter M. Walker

NEWS SINCE THE SUMMER/AUTUMN NEWSLETTER

Regarding the photo, in the last Nightjar, of Field Marshal Montgomery being introduced to a Valiant crew , I received a letter from AVM Eric Macey who mentioned he could name some of the crew but suggested that I contact David Wright, a 214 Sqn. pilot at this period. This I did.

David informs me that he was the captain of the Valiant (XD816) and is seen shaking hands with "Monty". The photo was taken at Wyton in the early 1960s. The rest of the crew were, left to right : Co-pilot , Ian Sinclair. Nav/ Plotter, Johnny Spear (deceased). AEO, Ken Snape. Crew Chief, Colin Fielder. As a result of contacting David he has decided to rejoin the Association.

Two Diamond Weddings reported

August 19th . Ken and Pam White, Hayling Island , Hants.

Dec. 12th. John and Cynthia Lyall , Bull Creek , Western Australia

On behalf of the Association I sent cards of congratulation to both couples and very nice thank you letters from each of them.

I actually received an invitation to John and Cynthia's celebrations , but considered that Western Australia was just that little bit too far.

July 2004 John and Pip Wynne, with their granddaughter, flew to Germany for the 10th. anniversary of the dedication of "Hoffnung" the rocking horse, John's gift to the people of Huchenfeld in 1994.

I understand they were given a great welcome and received wonderful hospitality from those involved with the reconciliation.

In Memorium

October 24th. 2004 . D.T. BAILEY , Weston-super-Mare, Somerset
W/Op.A/G ; Wellingtons , Stradishall 1941.

October 2nd. 2004 . FRED PARKINSON, Bradley, West Yorks,
W/Off. Air Gunner , Fortress , Oulton , 1944/45.

New Members

Sept. 2004 , R.O. "DOUG" DOUGLAS , Nelson , New Zealand. Rear Gunner
in Norman Rix's crew , shot down and POW 15/16th. March 1945.

Nov. 2004 , T.C. (MAURICE) MATTHEWS, Wells-next-the-Sea, Norfolk.
Cpl. Air Radio Fitter, Valiants , Marham. April 1961 to Dec. 1964

News Items (continued)

In Memorium

December 15th. 2004 . RAY GAMBLE , Uttoxeter , Staffs. Ray was the port waist gunner in Norman Rix's Fortress shot down on March 14/15th. 1945. All the ten crew landed safely but became pows. On behalf of the Association I wrote to Ray's family and received a nice reply.

New Members January 2005 . RON CARR , Lanchester , Durham. Ron's brother, Sgt. Lawrence Carr was lost over Biscay on January 15th. 1943 in Stirling W7637 "W", S/Ldr. Carlyon's crew . Ron has joined as an Associate member, although he did serve as an air wireless mechanic at RAF Lyneham in 1950/53 .

January 2005 . ALAN COOPER , Darwen, Lancs. Alan was a National Serviceman who served as an airframe mechanic on 214 Sqn. during 1957/58.
Welcome to both Ron and Alan.

100 Group Reunion/Dinner

This popular annual event will be held over the weekend of May 14/15th. 2005. Please contact the City of Norwich Aviation Museum for details.
Tel. 01603 - 893080

214 Sqn . Reunion / Dinner will be held over the weekend of September 23/24th. 2005 at the Maids Head Hotel , Norwich . Details and booking forms will be in the next "Nightjar" newsletter due out early /mid July. If you want to book a room well in advance please telephone the hotel, (mentioning 214 Sqn. Association) Tel. 01603 - 209955 .

January 9th. 2005. Many 214 people at Oulton will remember Sqn.Ldr. Don Bellingham DFC , AFC , C/O of 1699 HCU . Sadly Don died on Sunday January 9th. After the war he went on to fly with BOAC , later to become one of their senior Captains . He carried out the early long range trials on the BOAC Boeing 707 airliner, with Norman Tebbit , himself a pilot , acting as navigator.
Information via Murray Peden in Winnipeg , Canada.

Items for this "Nightjar" Thank you to all those who sent me items of interest for inclusion in this newsletter. However there are only so many we can use at this time and hopefully they can be included in the next or future editions.

This edition of the " Nightjar " has been produced on the latest type of commercial photocopier which also has a facility for folding the paper and inserting the staples.

In previous editions the pages with photos had to be printed on a laser copier in order to obtain clarity . The paper used was also slightly heavier which added to postal costs and restricted the number of pages in each newsletter because of cost.

The photos in this edition are not quite as good as the laser printed copies but they are, I believe , good enough . It also means that each newsletter can be produced at less per copy than previously . In turn it may be possible for future editions to have an extra couple of pages (this one has twelve plus the covers) and still keeping in the lower postal rate, currently .35p per copy.

I hope you like the end product ?

. Peter M. Walker

HISTORIAN'S REPORT

Squadron wreaths were laid at the Stradishall and Chedburgh memorials in November 2004 and again we must sincerely thank Mrs Olive Lax for her generous donation made in remembrance of those who lost their lives, including her brother Sgt. N F Ventham. Hopefully 'we' shall gather again at Stradishall this November for the usual wreath laying.

At the No.218(Gold Coast) Reunion weekend at Chedburgh in July 2004 (to which any 214 Squadron Association member is always welcome) we were represented by Bob Moorby, Clare Pollard and myself. Our Association wreath, laid by Bob had a very realistic 'Stirling centrepiece' especially created by Clare for the occasion. Reasonable weather, a simple service of Remembrance and excellent refreshments made for a memorable weekend, the only disappointment being the non-appearance of the Lancaster on the Saturday-grounded at Base due to severe cross-winds.

The 'Enquiries front' has been fairly quiet.

In July, (via Vic) I replied to a query by Mrs E H Dixon who wrote seeking information as to where her brother's Flying Log Book might have been directed on his death. (Sgt T W H Usher, KIA. 8/9 February 1945) No reply as yet.

Jack Bennett, a fitter from the early days at Stradishall (Wellingtons and Stirlings) remains in contact happily recalling his days on 214, as does John Hoskins (engine fitter on Stirlings) and his wife Elsa who was a parachute packer at the same time at Stradishall and Chedburgh. Although now unfortunately unable to travel long distances they all send their best wishes to all ex-214 friends.

Similarly, Jim Newman from Bristol, and until recently a regular attender at our reunions also sends his best wishes to those of us gathered at Norwich. Jim was a navigator during the very early Stradishall days and comments on a point made in the excellent 'Boys of B-Baker' article in the last edition of 'Nightjar', namely the statement that 'To-night (31 August 1943) is one of the first raids over the German capital'.

Jim points out that on 7 October 1940 he was navigator/bomb-aimer in Wellington 1c X3209 captained by F/O Dawes on a raid to Berlin, the flight lasting 7hrs 30mins. After 'Den Helder' map-reading was impossible so Jim navigated the rest of the way by astro-navigation/bubble sextant recently issued to him. Some of us may remember Jim giving a talk on these early experiences at the 1996 reunion.

Whilst the 1943 raids reflected the growing strength of Bomber Command in terms of the number of participating aircraft and thus the potential damage, it should be remembered that the German capital had been regularly attacked commencing with the famous retaliatory attack on August 26/26 1940 made after the erroneous bombing of London. It is worthy of note that the first operational loss by No.214 Squadron during WW2 was during a raid to Berlin on 31 August 1940 (exactly THREE years to the day later than the one mentioned in the article!) when F/Lt Craigie-Halkett and all his crew were killed when shot down over Holland. Those importance of those early raids in which No.214 Squadron was a prime participant and in which vital lessons were quickly learned are often lost in the shadows of the mighty bombing campaign which was to follow.

Historian's report (continued)

Kate Brettell is nearing the end of her dedicated research into the flying career and loss of her uncle F/Lt Reginald Arthur Turtle DFC, and his crew (KIA from Stradishall 6 June 1942). She has covered an enormous amount of ground and we must now wait patiently for the results of her work to be published. Kate has donated a small precision scale model of a Stirling to be placed at Stradishall in Remembrance of all crews lost. It will be in 214 Squadron markings.

You might like to know that Peter has been contacted by George Mackie an ex- 214 Squadron Stirling and Fortress pilot A Scot, George currently lives in Lincolnshire and indicated that he may join the Association. He has however, kindly sent some historical material to us.

'Corgi' die-cast Classics are marketing a 1/72 scale Wellington 1c, an excellent (if a little expensive) reproduction which, although in the markings of No.9 Squadron at Honington could easily be converted to a No.214 Squadron machine.

Don Crossley (air-gunner) has forwarded a better copy of a Squadron photograph taken in front of a Lincoln at Shallufa, Egypt in 1953. Names: S/Ldr Bowhill, F/O Paul Tabbard, F/Lt John Meckiff, F/Lt Steve Nunns, F/O Lord, F/Sgt Paddy McMasters and Sgt Butch Norman. Don also recalls a direct flight from Upwood to Shallufa in RA709 lasting 11hrs 30mins. after which he says: 'I was rather glad to land'!!

On a recent trip to Brooklands Aviation Museum (always worth a visit) I noted that the nose section of Valiant XD816, used in the 'High Altitude' Test Facility after its service days, had, once flown with both Nos.148 and 214 Squadrons, naturally attached to the remainder of the airframe. So a small piece of our 'Valiant history' does survive.

STRADISHALL. The ex-Officers' Mess ('Stirling House') has now been upgraded to a Regionally -controlled Home Office Prison College and Conference Centre confirmed by a splendid sign which also includes a small reproduction of the Stirling painting by Charles Thompson displayed within. Further improvements to the building and increased working facilities with the dining/ballroom already completely re-furbished will be on-going. Perhaps surprisingly in today's climate but very welcome nevertheless, those in charge have expressed a strong desire to preserve both the physical and aviation heritage aspects of the building so there is now a very real chance to create a permanent reminder of the local aviation history in which I suggest, 214 must feature. Training rooms will soon carry suitable aircraft nameplates (For some reason 'Venom' and 'Vampire' were rejected!) A memorial rose garden is also planned. So work to do.

The Stradishall visitor's book shows that Lucian Ercolani had recently been to see his old station. We are reminded that Lucian won his DSO from Stradishall in 1940 and that the beautiful carved wooden Squadron crest on show today was presented to No.214 Squadron at Stradishall by his father to mark the survival of Lucian and his crew.

Addendum to the Historian's report

Remembrance weekend. An Association wreath was laid at Stradishall, by Don Walter (Air Electronics Officer from Valiant days) whilst Eddie Wheeler (214- 1940) laid a wreath on behalf of the RAF Stradishall Memorial Trust. It is hoped that the 60th Anniversary of the end of WW2(Europe) will be commemorated at Stradishall, Chedburgh and Oulton at the appropriate time. Details to follow.

Sgt L CARR.. KIA. 15/16 January 1943. (RAF Chedburgh, 20th operation)

Sgt Carr was W/OP in S/Ldr Paul Carlyon's crew . Their Stirling W7637 (BU-W) was lost in the Bay of Biscay after participating in one of a series of attacks on the U-Boat pens at Lorient. All are commemorated at Runnymede.

Mr Ronnie Carr (brother) requested any help on any relevant details of his brother's career and subsequent loss. Grateful thanks expressed by Ronnie on behalf of the family for information and photographs, Ronnie plans to join the Association.

F/O W G COOPER. KIA 29/30 March 1943. (RAF Chedburgh)

Mrs J Birch is researching her cousin Bill's career. The incident which ultimately cost Bill his life is well documented: his, and Jack Dixon's Stirling collided over Chedburgh on return from operations. Jack put his aircraft down on the airfield (sadly Sgt Burt the rear gunner had been killed in the collision). Bill Cooper kept his severely damaged EH362 airborne long enough for his crew to bale out but was himself unable to get out before it crashed near Hadleigh (Suffolk). Mrs Birch is very grateful for our help (the gaps are slowly filling) and is now trying to identify Bill's first tour squadron? He was killed on the first trip of his second tour.

F/Lt N HARRISON KIA 6 June 1942 (Stradishall)

A main part of Kate Brettell's in-depth research into the career of her uncle F/Lt Athur Turtle DFC (KIA RAF Stradishall , 6 June 1942, 214 Squadron) has been to try and contact the families of the other crew members. Thus I was able to welcome Norma Carruthers (F/Lt Norman Harrison's daughter) and her husband to Stradishall recently. Norma saw her father's name in the Book of Remembrance in St.Margaret's Church, visited Stirling House (where her father would have lived) and later visited Ely Cathedral where (on our advice) she was able to see her father's name in the No.3 Group Roll of Honour. Norma had been trying, unsuccessfully, to trace her father's career believing it to have been centred on Lincolnshire when suddenly 'it all happened' .and she describes her recent visit as one of 'high emotion but of great satisfaction'.

Kate now reports that by another remarkable set of circumstances and after almost giving up, she is now in contact with the family of P/O Cardinal an American in the RCAF and a member of the crew. This final success now enables Kate to complete her project which as another piece of '214 history', we look forward to reading.

The wish of families to seek out information on the service careers of relatives is an interesting trend and should place important information for the benefit of future generations. We are always willing to help if possible. All required are 'Thanks' (not always forthcoming however).

Joe R Whitehouse.

THE STORY OF FLIGHT REFUELLING

THIRTY YEARS have elapsed since the first recorded attempt was made to refuel an aircraft in the air. It was in the nature of a "stunt," and was one of the features in the programme of an air display which toured America in 1923. Two aircraft flew one above the other; a hose was thrown from the one aloft and caught by the co-pilot of that below and, if he succeeded in his catch, he rammed the nozzle at the hose's end into the fuel tank and the "topping-up" proceeded.

The stunt attracted the attention of that great American airman, General H. H. Arnold, and later of Air Vice-Marshal R. L. R. Atcherley, then a Squadron Leader in the Royal Air Force, who happened to be visiting America from his squadron in Transjordan. Atcherley was impressed with the possibilities flight-refuelling offered in both the commercial and military spheres of aviation and subsequently carried out his own experiments in developing the system at Farnborough.

At the Royal Air Force Display at Hendon in 1934 the process was demonstrated for the first time in Britain, when a Westland "Wapiti" received fuel from a Vickers "Virginia" converted as a tanker.

In the meantime, Sir Alan Cobham had formed Flight Refuelling Ltd. With all the experience of his long-distance pioneering flights behind him, he readily appreciated the advantages to be gained from the development and application of a system which would make it possible to carry commercial loads over long distances without having to make intermediate ground stops to refuel.

Since that time Sir Alan has never relaxed in his en-

deavours to improve the methods and equipment and bring the practice into general use.

Its successful application was proved five years later when Imperial Airways, predecessors of B.O.A.C., carried out a series of regular Atlantic crossings between Southampton and New York by refuelling in the air en route. Later, B.O.A.C. aircraft were used in a series of further trials across the Atlantic in 1946 and 1947. All these early trials were carried out with the Looped Hose system which had been developed by Flight Refuelling Ltd.

Meanwhile, the U.S.A.F. had decided to import a large quantity of the British looped hose equipment for service with their bomber aircraft, and they subsequently used it for the first non-stop flight round the world by the "Lucky Lady II." The looped hose is indeed the foundation of flight-refuelling and it is still in large-scale use.

Next came a requirement by the U.S.A.F. for the application of flight-refuelling to fighter aircraft which led to the production of the present Probe and Drogue technique. The simplicity of this operation was demonstrated to both Royal Air Force and United States Air Force officers three years ago when R.A.F. Meteors collaborated with U.S.A.F. and R.A.F. tanker aircraft in a series of trials, foreshadowing uniformity of equipment and procedure in all countries.

Further extensive trials in the U.S.A. proved so successful that the Probe and Drogue technique was immediately adopted by the United States Navy and soon afterwards by the U.S.A.F. Now it has been adopted by the British Government for the V-class bombers of the Royal Air Force.



Flight Refuelling Limited

Tarrant Rushton Airfield

Blandford, Dorset, England

THE TANKER EQUIPMENT

THE SIMPLICITY with which aircraft can be converted from their normal rôle to aerial tankers from which other aircraft can be refuelled whilst in flight has been demonstrated by the use of the "pack" unit system.

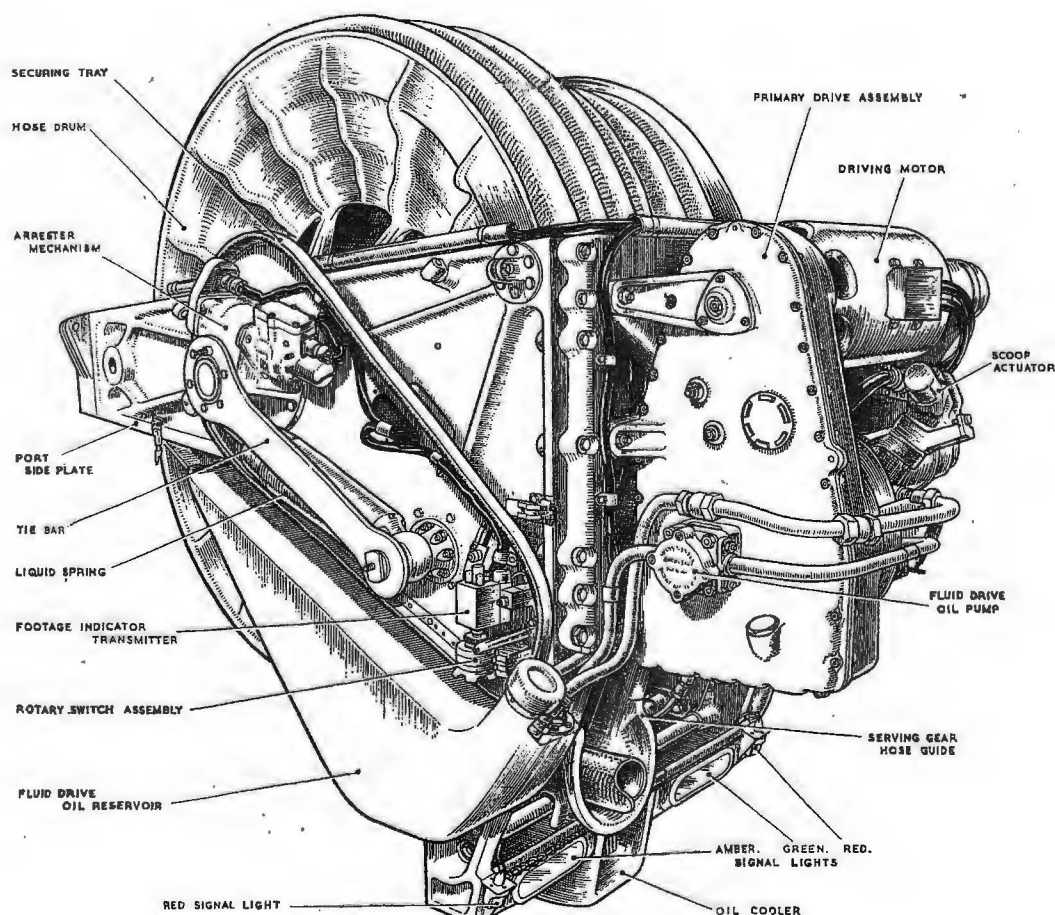
The "pack" unit is the outcome of the latest developments in the design of the PROBE AND DROGUE system of flight refuelling. It combines the hose reel unit, from which the Drogue is trailed, and the fuel supply tanks in a single unit, thus eliminating the necessity to draw upon the aircraft's own fuel supply for the refuelling operation.

Its design as a self-contained unit also makes it unnecessary for aircraft already equipped for ground pressure refuelling to be specially converted or designed for tanker duties. The unit is virtually a piece of auxiliary equipment for use as and when required. It is transported on a trolley and hoisted

into the aircraft's belly just as bombs are hoisted into a bomb bay. Special fittings to which it is attached in the aircraft hold it in position. The hose reel mechanism is driven off the aircraft's normal electric system, into which feed arms are plugged, and the trailing and re-winding of the hose is controlled from a small switch panel in the crew compartment. The unit's fuel tanks can similarly be connected to the aircraft's fuel system to provide extra transfer fuel should it be required after the "pack" unit's tanks have been exhausted of their supply.

The "pack" unit is of nominal comparative weight. During field trials its installation has been accomplished in the minimum of time.

When the aircraft is no longer required for tanker duties the "pack" can be removed with equal simplicity and the tanker returns to the rôle for which it was originally built.



Port side view of one of the latest high rate of flow hose drum units. This unit forms part of a pack assembly for the quick conversion of an airliner or bomber aircraft into a refuelling tanker.

From a 1957 leaflet issued to 214 Sqn. personnel by Flight Refuelling Ltd. In these early days of the in-flight refuelling trials some of the groundcrews attended a short course at Flight Refuelling's airfield at Tarrant Rushton in Dorset.

By W/Off. Shaun P. Broaders MBE RAF (Retd.)

214 (FMS) SQUADRON - TANKERS

THE VALIANT YEARS - RAF MARHAM

'You are posted to RAF Marham'! The year is 1959 and fresh out of armament mechanic training the clerk advises me of my posting; 'Report to the general office on arrival'. I am posted to a Bomber unit with the first of the V Bombers, the Valiant. Leaving Melksham for Marham all kinds of visions pass across the mind, but you have to feel that a posting to a Squadron would be much better, as it would be more exiting and a chance to see the world. On arrival at Marham it took a few months to settle in and attend the Valiant Ground Servicing course at RAF Gaydon and the Martin Baker Ejection Seat course Type 3A at Higher Denham and then it happened, I was posted to No 214 Squadron, what joy.

Just to put you in the picture, concerning 214 Squadron and Marham, I think a little history would not go amiss.

On the 21st January 1956, 214 Squadron re-formed at Marham with Valiant B1's, first of the V Bombers. Powered by four Avon 204 axial-flow turbojets rated at 10,050 lb.s.t. Estimated performance: speed 610 mph at 40,000 ft cruising speed 530 mph service ceiling 50,000 ft initial rate of climb 4,500 ft/min and range was 3,000 plus miles.

The same year 207 Squadron disbanded on 27th March and re-formed at Marham on 1st April with Valiants. (During that month a party of VIP's arrived on the station and included; Mr N Krushev, Marshall Bulganin, Mr I V Kurbachov (a nuclear scientist) and Mr A N Tupolev, the Russian aircraft designer). 148 Squadron also re-formed at Marham on the 1st July with Valiant aircraft.

During September/October 1956 all three squadrons were detached to Luqa airfield in Malta to take part in the Suez operations. In October, 214 Squadron carried out raids with 1000lb bombs on El Adem airfield, Almaza and Abu Sueir, and in November the targets were Kasfrit, Huckstep Barracks and El Agami. All of these squadrons returned to Marham in November/December 1956. Also, with the arrival of the nuclear capability in 1957, RAF Marham was awarded its own Station Crest, a Blue bull with the motto "DETER".

In-flight refuelling was not a new concept in 1956, history records that as early as 1919 some people were beginning to think that by transferring fuel from one aircraft to another in flight, thereby extending their flight times, that this idea could be used for trans-continental flights and many combinations of aircraft have been used through the years trying to prove the benefits of in-flight refuelling.

Flight Refuelling Ltd (FRL) has had a long association with the RAF but the company was about to end its long association with propeller-driven aircraft. In May 1953, following a decision to equip the RAF's 'V' bomber force for aerial refuelling, Canberra B.2, WH 734 arrived at FLR and after installation of the prototype Mk. 16 Hose Drum Unit (HDU), then being developed for the Valiant tankers, it became Britain's first jet tanker.

Further studies in flight refuelling led to trials of a modified Valiant bomber, which started flying from Boscombe Down in 1956 and after clearance for Service was obtained from the Aircraft and Armament Experimental Establishment (A & AEE) 214 Squadron began Valiant-to-Valiant flight refuelling trials in 1957, which were in

the main dry contacts. Then in March 1958, whilst retaining its bombing role, 214 Squadron became the trials and development unit for flight refuelling trials number 306 and 306A, Trial No 306 was to test the capability of aircraft tanker and receiver equipment, and Trial No 306A was for developing modern rendezvous (RV) procedures and techniques. (These Trials were to last until May 1960). The initial training of both air and ground crews was carried out at Flight Refuelling Ltd. at Tarrant Rushton, while a Flight Refuelling School was developed at Marham – and all subsequent training for flight refuelling in the Royal Air Force was to be carried out at this School.

During this evaluation period Wg. Cdr. Michael Beetham commanded the Squadron; who as we all know became Chief of the Air Staff in 1977 and eventually retired from the service as Marshall of the Royal Air Force in 1982.

Conversion of the Valiant Bomber entailed the fitting of a probe to the front of the NBS scanner bay and connecting it internally to the aircraft fuel system and installing a Mark 16 HDU internally in the rear of the bomb bay and a 4500 lb fuel tank in the front of the bomb bay. The HDU control panel was positioned beside the Navigator Radar who became in addition the fuel panel operator. External floodlights were fitted to give the aircraft the capability of flight refuelling at night.

The modification to the Valiant bomber gave the aircraft in the tanker role the facility of transferring 45,000 pounds of fuel at a maximum rate of 4000 pounds per minute with a maximum drogue fuel pressure of 50 pounds per square inch. Although there were early teething problems, these were overcome, and in January 1959 two fully modified tankers began wet transfers.



The Mark 16 Hose Drum Unit and Drogue



Hose Drum Unit (HDU) installed in the bomb bay; winding in the hose.

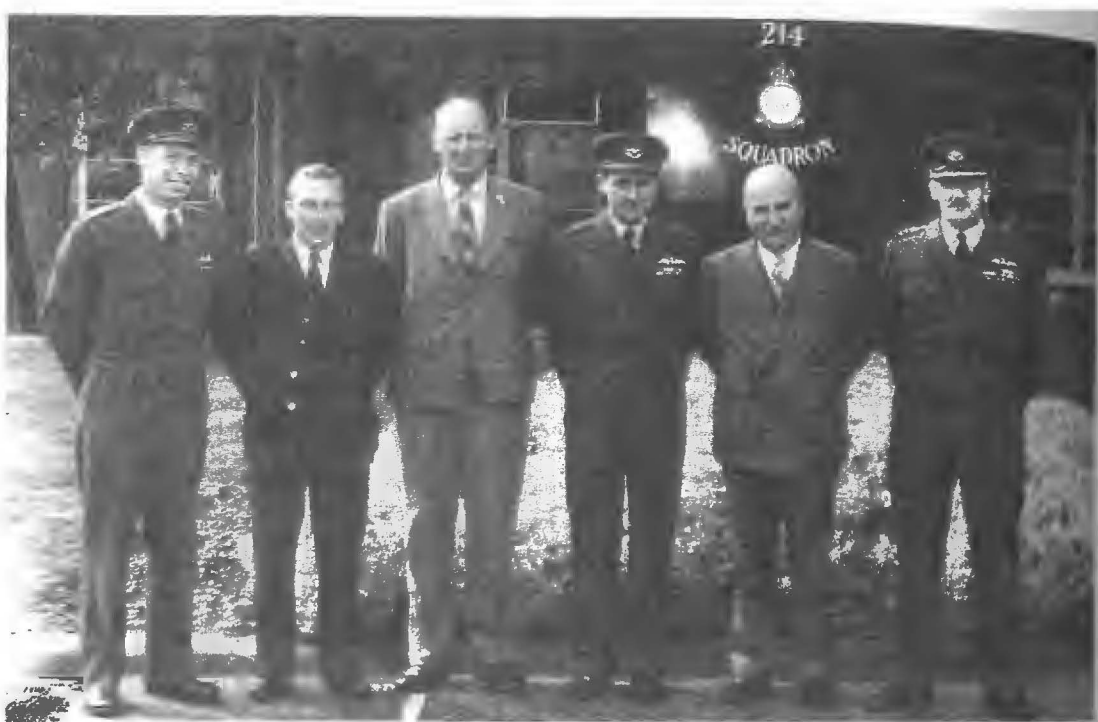
The 214 Squadron Valiants actually gave their first public demonstration of air-to-air refuelling at the 1958 Society of British Aircraft Constructors (SBAC) Flying Display, after which, during the Trial No 306 they were involved in many long distance proving flights and various interesting unofficial records were made:

- a. Marham to Aden in 7 hrs 10 mins.
- b. Marham to Nairobi 4,350 miles in 7 hr 40 mins.
- c. Marham to Salisbury 5,320 miles in 9 hr 42 mins.
- d. UK to Johannesburg 5,845 miles in 11 hr 3 mins.
- e. UK to Capetown 6,060 in 11 hr 28 mins.
- f. Capetown to UK 6,060 miles in 12 hr 20 mins.
- g. The longest jet flight (at that time) by an RAF aircraft, (214 Sqn Valiant) of 18hr 5 mins, which covered 7400 nautical miles, around UK.
Sqn Ldr J H Garstin flew this aircraft.

As recalled, 'IN COBHAMS' COMPANY' by Colin Cruddas ISBN 0952449907; Sir Michael was particularly inspired to make a two-way, record-breaking flight from England to South Africa in 1959, by Sir Alan Cobham's journey to the Cape thirty – four years earlier. His Valiant was the first aircraft to fly to Capetown and back, non-stop in each direction, being refuelled by two Valiant tankers over Kano, Nigeria on both flights.



Wg. Cdr. Michael Beetham (left) and crew of the Valiant, which undertook the first non-stop flight to Cape Town, 1959.



Pat Hornbridge, Dickie Dickenson and Sir Alan Cobham, visit 214 Sqn, Marham, 10 June 1959. With Sqn Ldr Garstin, Wg Cdr Michael Beetham and Gp Capt Wilf Burnett

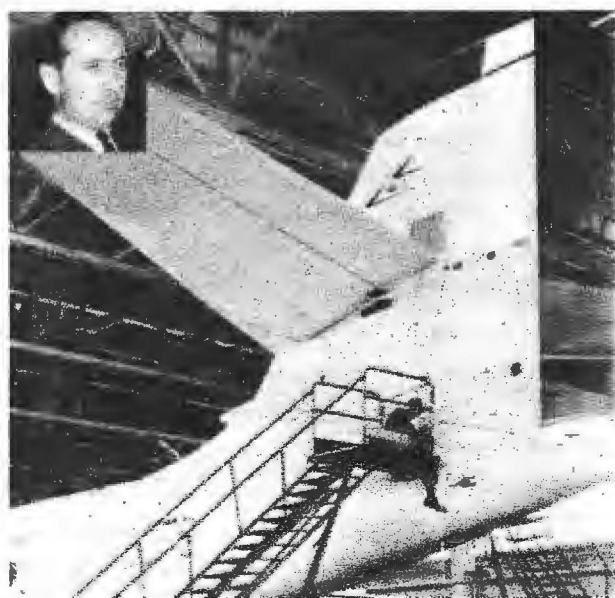
By now both aircrew and ground crew were enjoying flight refuelling. The main challenge to the aircrew was the exacting task of learning to fly as receivers whereas the ground crew had many opportunities for visiting exotic places such as Malta, Cyprus, Bahrain, Karachi, Mauripur, Nairobi, RAF Gan, RAAF Butterworth, Singapore and Darwin. Of course they also enjoyed flying in the Bristol Britannia,

which usually stayed with the Squadron throughout the detachment. You can imagine the enthusiasm when the next detachment was mentioned; almost all the ground crew personnel were quick to volunteer for the trip, knowing all too well that some were going to be disappointed.



WZ 390 and WZ 376 During Trials

May 1960 saw the completion of the Trials No 306 and 306A, it also heralded the arrival of Wg Cdr P.G. Hill the new Squadron C O. The Squadron were kept busy with training and deployments overseas as well as taking part in trials with the Royal Navy Scimitar and Sea Vixen fighters and a compatibility exercise with a USAF Destroyer, Super Sabre and Voodoo aircraft.



214 Valiant on servicing; Inset photograph Wg Cdr P G Hill

Other long distance flights during this period include:

- a. Marham to Offutt 4,336 miles in 9hr 30 mins 19 Jan 1960
- b. Offutt to St Mawgan 4,400 miles in 9 hr 3 mins 25 Jan 1960
- c. Marham to Changi, 8110 miles in 15 hr 35 mins 25 May 1960
- d. Butterworth to Marham, 7,700 miles in 16 hr 16 mins 1 June 1960
- e. Marham to Vancouver, 5007 miles in 10 hr 28 mins 5 July 1960
- f. Vancouver to Marham, 5007 miles in 9 hr 35 mins 8 July 1960

Another interesting exercise in which the Squadron took part was the refuelling of a Scimitar aircraft from the Royal Naval Air Station (RNAS) at Lossiemouth to the Aircraft Carrier Ark Royal 'somewhere in the Mediterranean'. We did find it!

The Javelin crews of No 23 Squadron from RAF Coltishall started receiver training in 1960 with practice flights to Akrotiri and back in August, then in October four Javelins were flight-refuelled from the UK to RAAF Butterworth in Malaysia via Akrotiri, Bahrain, Mauripur, and Gan.

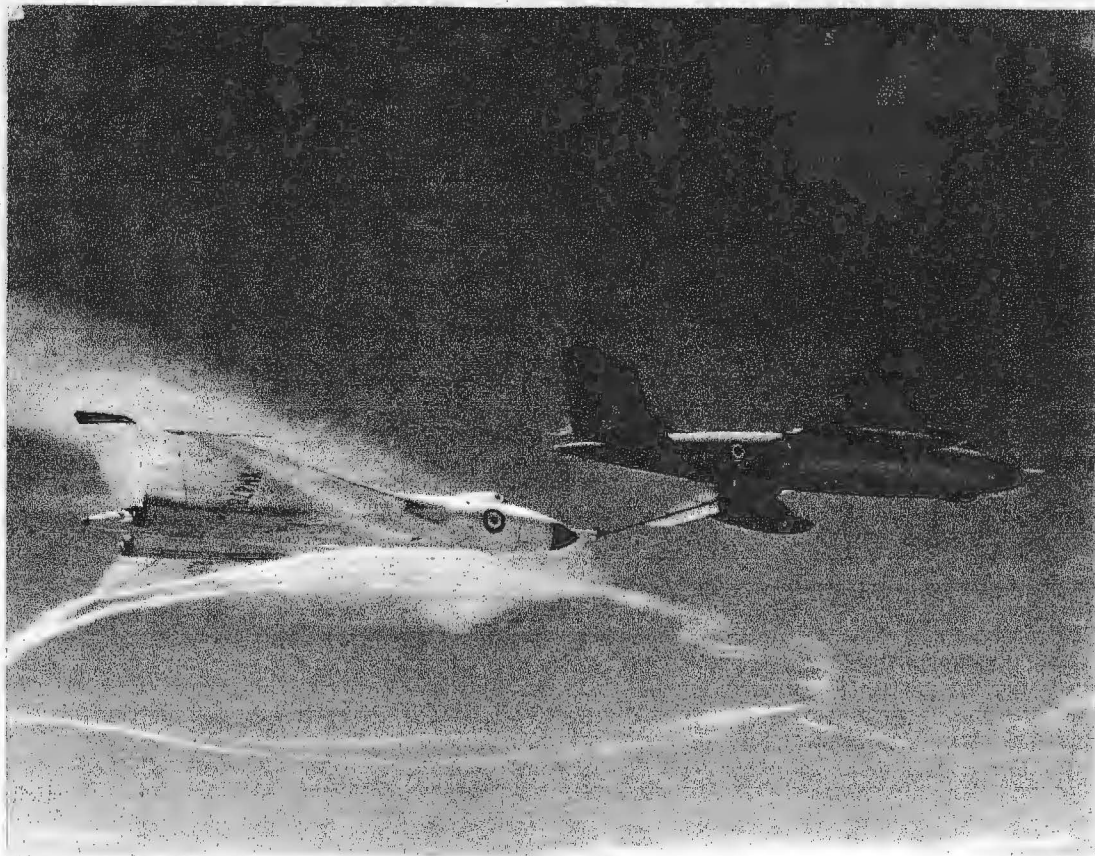
It was on this trip that a number of the squadron ground crew suffered the usual tummy upset at Mauripur, fortunately we had the Javelin Squadron medical officer with us. To ensure we did not drink any more water, I recall him giving authorisation for the squadron to obtain soft drinks from a local soft drinks distribution firm for the duration of the detachment. This ensured that we all made it to Butterworth without further mishap. Ernie Hill, the squadron Sgt Electrician, was very ill at this time and it was doubtful whether or not he would make it to Butterworth. However, with good nursing and plenty of fizzy drinks, he recovered enough for the onward trip to Gan and after medical treatment carried on to RAAF Butterworth with the Squadron.



Valiant Tanker of 214 Sqn refuelling a Javelin of 23 Sqn

It was about December of 1960 that Vulcan crews started receiver training for the proposed non-stop flight to Sydney in Australia. Training progressed with non-stop flights from Scampton to Nairobi, and to Karachi and back then finally in June 1961 with the first non-stop flight from Scampton to Sydney, a distance of 11,500 miles in 20 hours 3 minutes at an average speed of 573 mph, the aircraft was refuelled overhead Cyprus, Karachi and Singapore. If memory serves me right we had nine Valiants on this trip and all remained serviceable for the duration of the exercise. After this significant achievement Sir Alan Cobham presented trophies to the officer commanding of No's 214 and 617 Squadrons. It was also memorable in that the double 'Speed Bird' logo used by FRL was now incorporated in the 214 Squadrons emblem emblazoned on the tail fins of the tankers. (See picture page 9)

Other memories are of the boss, during one of the many training trips to Nairobi, coming home with a bomb bay pannier full of fruit for the squadron personnel. My wife and I recently visited Kenya and arrived at Nairobi airport only to find the aircraft parked opposite the RAF Detachment Office that we used, still proudly displaying the RAF sign. The bomb bay pannier was also handy for the Christmas run to Malta, when orders were taken for the Christmas bottle.

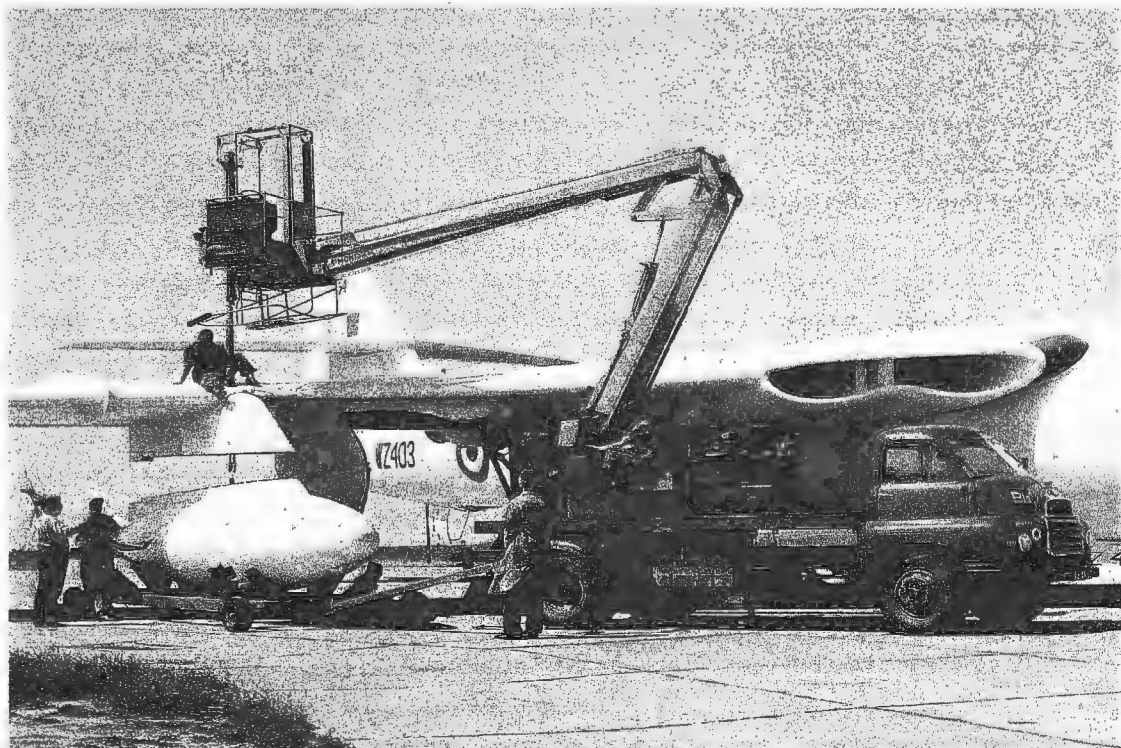


Valiant tanker of 214 Sqn refuelling a Vulcan



Happy Days - 214 ground crew with a Valiant tanker - staging through Malta on the way to the Far East -1961. Author; is front row, third from left.

It should be noted for the squadron enthusiast that on the 1st April 1962 (44 years after the formation of the RAF) No 214 (FMS) Squadron and No 90 Squadron officially became tanker squadrons, losing their bomber commitment and so becoming the first tanker squadrons in the RAF. HQ 3 Group retained operational control of these squadrons.



Tank Change using Simons Bomb Hoist mounted on a 4 Ton Bedford Chassis

It was during the loading of a HDU to one of our aircraft that we nearly had a serious

accident, although at the time we all fell about laughing. I used to drive and operate the Simons Bomb Hoist, the corporal, (Cpl Blower) would get in the cage and I would manoeuvre him onto the spine of the aircraft and with the chief in the bomb bay we would carryout the loading procedure, during this time we would be in contact through a throat mike head set. After the load was completed it was standard operating procedure for the corporal to stow the equipment, remove his headset and throat mike and before placing them in the cage, hold the mike to his throat so as give me the instruction to withdraw the boom and remove the vehicle, (you must bear in mind that you could not see the top of the aircraft from the vehicle), he would then come down via the aircraft rear hatch. The instruction given I started to swing the boom, only to hear a strange noise in my headset; that's right, he was still attached and I was pulling him along the spine of the aircraft, I hate to think what would have happened if I had decided to raise the boom first.

It was about this time that the RAF Mk VI probe and drogue equipment was replaced with the Standard NATO Mk VIII probe and drogue. There was further training with the Vulcan's and this was to lead to yet another trip to Australia. This time with three Vulcan's of 101 Squadron who flew non-stop from Waddington to Perth in 18 hr 7 mins. Operational training was in full flow and the Sqn was to carry on training with the Vulcan's, Sea Vixen's, Victor's and the Lightning aircraft, which would be the next aircraft to be tanked to the Far East. There was never a dull moment on the Squadron. One day we had a Valiant return with the hose and drogue still extended, some electrical fault had prevented it from being wound in, but the crew being professional landed safely. There was also an incident when a Lightning lost its probe, you've guessed it, it was still in the drogue when the Valiant landed.



XD 816 Note the Squadron Crest within the Speed Logo

In December 1964 the Valiant aircraft were grounded because of severe metal fatigue in the main wing spars and were officially withdrawn from service at the end of January 1965, many of the squadron personnel were posted during December 64 and the rest during the early part of the new year. I consider myself to be one of the lucky ones as I was posted, in March 65, to RAAF Butterworth, a unit I had visited regularly during our tanking exercises. Now my wife could see for herself the terrific hardship we suffered in the Far East!

214 Squadron disbanded on 28 February 1965, a sad day for all on the squadron and those associated with it. During the tanker years the squadron had a record that anyone would be proud of and history will recall that the first tanker squadron; 214 (Federated Malay States) Squadron played a significant role for the future of air-to-air refuelling.

214 Squadron was to reform at Marham on the 21 July 1966 with Victor tankers. However, that is another story.

WO Shaun P Broaders MBE RAF Ret

I would like to offer my grateful thanks to the following, for their help and contribution.

Photographs from Cobhams Archives and quotations from In Cobhams' Company by Colin Cruddas ISBN 0 9524488 0 7
Photographs from Aerofax Vickers Valiant by Eric Morgan available from Midland Counties Publications 0145 254450



Valiant B (PR) KI WZ390 . Very early refuelling trials, late 1958 early 1959. The officer in the foreground is Sqn.Ldr. Doug Petrie, one of the Squadron's many Sqn.Ldr. pilots at this period. Note the long shadows indicating an early morning start to the day. The crew chief was Jock Smithers. Original (colour) photo sent by Wng. Cdr. John Wynne.



Handley Page Victor BK 1A XA936. At Marham in 1973. Note the unique (red) squadron logo on the tail fins of the aircraft and on the door of the Landrover. Photo from Jock Whitehouse.

ROLL OF HONOUR 1942 to 1941

As in previous Roll of Honour lists in the Nightjar I have continued backwards through the months from March 1942 to ~~May~~ 1941.

Sgt

Wellington Mk1c Z1143

March 26/27th. 1942

P/Off. E.W.C. Creed RAAF	+
Sgt. W.W.R. Norton RAAF	+
Sgt. W.I. Christsen RAAF	+
Sgt. A.F.M.Emms	+
Sgt. J.R.Payne	+
Capt. A.P. Mair RA	+

Wellington Mk.1c Z1081 "B"

February 12th. 1942

W/C R.D.B. Macfadden DFC	✓	+
P/Off. J.Wood	✓	+
F/Lt. P.R.Hughes DFC	✓	+
Sgt. A.P.Everett		+
Sgt. R. Murray		pow
Sgt. G.I. Taylor		+
S/L M.T. Stephens DFC		+

Wellington Mk.1c X9890

January 28/29th. 1942

P/Off. G.H.Webster RCAF	+
✓ Sgt. F.A.Tait RCAF	+
Sgt. C.J. Irwin	+
Sgt. G.M.Robinson	+
Sgt. P.G.Milton	+
Sgt. F.G. Truscott	+

Wellington Mk.1c R1759

January 15/16th.1942

F/Sgt. E.E.Hale RCAF	+
Sgt. G.J. Peck RCAF	+
P/Off.H.J.Woodrow RNZAF	+
F/Sgt. W.J. Elder RCAF	+
Sgt.L.B.Myers	+
Sgt. A.L. Lax	+

Wellington Mk.1c Z8953

December 1st. 1941

Sgt. M.J.Fitzgerald	+
Sgt. J.R. Boland	+
Sgt. I.A.Flower	+
Sgt. G.J.W. Fleming	+
Sgt. R.W. Ebsworth	+
Sgt. H.L. Loveday	+

Wellington Mk.1c X9752

November 29th. 1941

Sgt. S.J.Miller	+
Sgt. A.H.Barford	+
Sgt. Stewart	injured
Sgt. A.D.Southall	+
Sgt. R.G.C. Walton	+
Sgt. T.A. Quinn	+

Crashed near Oakington airfield

Wellington Mk. 11 Z8373

November 26/27th. 1941

✓ F/Sgt. N.G.Hettrick RCAF	+
✓ Sgt. M.A. Weavers	+
✓ P/Off. A.D. Moore	+
✓ P/Off. C.D.Cooling RCAF	+
✓ Sgt. H.J. Cooper	+
✓ Sgt. G.L. Hall	+

Wellington Mk. 1c R1784

November 7/8th. 1941

✓ P/Off. L.B.Ercolani	ok
Sgt. Hamilton	ok
Sgt. McLennan	ok
Sgt. Holdsworth	ok
Sgt. Weller	ok
Sgt. Fry	ok

Note : As a result of the saving of P/O Ercolani and his crew after five days at sea his father presented the Squadron with a carved, wooden squadron crest. The crest still exists and is put on display at our annual Reunions.

cotinued overleaf

Wellington Mk. 1c X9762

October 12/13th. 1941

Sgt. J.A. Key	pow
Sgt. H.R. Boyd RCAF	pow
Sgt. A. Saxton	pow
Sgt. R. Mutch	pow
Sgt. C.W.G. King	pow
Sgt. C.W. Heathman	pow

Note: Sgt. Heathman was killed on 19/4/45 when the pow column in which he was marching was mistakenly shot up by Allied fighters.

Wellington Mk. 11 W5452 "U"

September 20/21st. 1941

Sgt. L.D.Kissack	+
P/Off. C.W. Abrey	+
P/Off. J.B. Ruston RCAF	+
Sgt. J.Aitken	+
Sgt. I.J. Green	+
P/Off. White	injured

Note: Crashed at Manston

Wellington Mk.1c R1717

September 2/3rd. 1941

F/Lt. R.H. May	+
Sgt. C. Hambleton	+
F/Off. J.P.McKay RCAF	+
Sgt. L.W.Price	+
Sgt. L. Black	+
Sgt. C.J. Brakeman RCAF	+

Wellington Mk. 1c X9750

August 6/7th. 1941

P.Off. C. McD. Didsbury RNZAF	+
Sgt. R.G. Burnett	+
Sgt. W.J.V. Crowsley	+
Sgt. N.E. Mills	+
Sgt. E.J. Page	+
P/Off. G.D.E. Stack	+

Wellington Mk. 1c R1613 "G"

July 14/15th. 1941

P/Off. J.G. Crampton	pow
F/Sgt. R. Instone	pow
P/Off. J.C. Jenkins	+
Sgt. R. Kent	pow
F/Sgt. H.E. Jones	pow
Sgt. M.A. Johnson	pow

Wellington Mk.1c X9884

September 29/30th. 1941

Sgt. L. Hancock	+
Sgt. D.F.Cooper	pow
Sgt. A. Burbridge	pow
Sgt. J.W.B. Follitt	pow
Sgt. A.N. Jones	pow
Sgt. H. Antehley	pow

Wellington Mk.1c R1784

September 7/8th. 1941

W/C G.L. Cruickshanks DFC	+
S/L W. Davies	+
F/Off. W. Esplen	+
F/Lt. K.J.Falconer DFC	+
Sgt. L.T. Chapman	+
Sgt. A.N.Page	+

Wellington Mk. 1c R1604

August 29/30th. 1941

Sgt. E.W. Foxlee RCAF	+
Sgt. J.H.Williamson	+
Sgt. J.E. Jerrard	+
Sgt. G. Klusky	+
Sgt. E. Halestrap	+
Sgt. K. Morris	+

Wellington Mk.1c R1614 "H"

July 14/15th. 1941

P/Off. V.K. Brown	+
Sgt. M.R. Collins RCAF	+
Sgt. J. Taylor	+
Sgt. J.S. Else	+
Sgt. R.D. Hull	+
F/Sgt. W.G. Lewis	+

Wellington Mk.1c T2992

July 7/8th. 1941

F/Off. R.M.P. Jenkyns	+
P/Off. J. McAnnally	+
P/Off. D.N.R. Armstrong	+
	RAAF
Sgt. E.H. King	+
Sgt. A. Evans	+
Sgt. G.F. Roughton	pow

BY ONE OF OUR MEMBERS

Flight Lieutenant Reginald William Arthur Turtle DFC (1916-1942)

My uncle, known to the family as Arthur, received his flying badge in December 1938. A note on his personnel records describes him as 'a most intelligent pupil and a sound pilot with good common sense'. He had joined on a short service commission at a time of rapid interwar RAF expansion. His first posting was to No 14 Squadron when it was re-equipping with Vickers Wellesley, in TransJordan. A refractive lens condition meant that he was invalided back to the UK in early 1940 but his eyesight seems to have improved sufficiently for him to be posted to No 9 Squadron, flying night sorties in Vickers Wellingtons. As was the custom for many aircrew, who had completed thirty sorties, Arthur undertook a six month period of instructor's duties, stationed with No 27 OTU. In November 1941, No 149 Squadron began to convert to the new Short Stirling four-engine bomber and Arthur was posted to RAF Mildenhall a month later.

In May 1942, No 214 Squadron also converted to Stirlings. There was a need for experienced Stirling pilots at this time and Arthur transferred to RAF Stradishall on 8th May. The Operations Record Book shows that Arthur flew three sorties with No 214 Squadron in late May and early June, including the famous 1000 Bomber raid on Cologne. Then, on June 6th, out of the eight Stirlings detailed to attack Emden, Arthur's was the only Stirling, N3761 BU-E, which failed to return. It was shot down over Terschelling, one of the Frisian Islands, at 1.47am by a German Night Fighter Oberleutnant Prinz Egmont Zur Lippe Weissenfeld, 11/NJG2, based at Leeuwarden. None of the eight aircrew survived.

The catalyst which sparked my interest in researching my uncle's war time career was an entry in the reunion column of SAGA magazine in July 2000 from a Dutchman, Wyb Jan Groenedijk, who tended the war grave cemetery on Schiermonnikoog where my uncle's body had been washed ashore and subsequently buried. Wyb Jan had amassed an incredible amount of information, including photographs of the military funeral accorded to Arthur by the German Commandant. Having accessed Arthur's personnel records and exhausted the archives at PRO, Kew, I felt the research would not be complete without contacting the families of the seven aircrew who died with Arthur and I would like to thank them for their interest, support and all the helpful information they have been able to provide. The crew were:

F/Lt Norman Harrison RAF(VR), Navigator, who seems to have been aboard in his capacity as Bombing Leader. (His daughter Norma Carruthers is also featured in this issue). **P/O Leonard Treppass RAF(VR) Observer**, was the first officer who had been trained in USA to serve with the No 214 Squadron. **P/O Edward Marks RCAF**, Rear gunner and **P/O Barrie Cardinal RCAF**, Mid upper gunner. Both the Canadians had been transferred from a Night fighter squadron based at Drem in Scotland. **P/O John Holdsworth RAF**, Wireless operator/airgunner. (Previously he had been a member of Lucian Ercolani's crew who had managed to bale out their ditched Wellington and were rescued from their dinghy at Ventnor, having been at sea for two and a half days, November 1941). **F/Sgt Wilfred Barham, RAF**, Wireless operator/airgunner. **Sgt Allan Scott RAF**, Flight engineer.

Kate Brettell
Priory Cottage,
Moxby Priory Farm,
Marton-cum-Moxby
Stilington, York YO61 1NB,

A Place in the Sky

I hope there's a place, way up in the sky,
Where aircrew can go, when they have to die.
A place where a guy can get a cold beer,
For a friend or a comrade whose memory is dear.
A place where no doctor or lawyer can tread,
And a scribbly-type would not be caught dead!
Just a quaint little place, kind of dark, full of smoke,
Where they like to sing loud, and love a good joke!
The kind of a place where a lady could go,
And feel safe and secure by the men she would know.

There MUST be a place where old aircrew go,
When their wings become weary, and their airspeed gets low;
Where the whisky is old, and the women are young,
And songs about flying and dying are sung.
Where you'd see all your mates, who'd "flown west" before
And they'd call out your name, as you walked thru the door,
Who would buy you a drink, if your thirst should be bad,
And relate to the others, "He was such a nice lad!"

And there thru the mist you'd spot an old guy
You'd not seen for years, though he'd taught YOU to fly,
He'd nod his old head, and grin ear to ear,
And say, "Welcome, my son, I am pleased you are here!
For this is the place where true flyers come,
When the battles are over, and the wars have been won;
We've come here at last, to be safe and alone,
From the government clerk, and the management clone,
Politicians and lawyers, police and the noise,
Where all Hours are Happy, and these good ol' boys,
Can relax with a 'cool one', and a well deserved rest....."
"Cos this is Heaven my son, you've passed your last test!"

Anon

Capt. J. Larkin , ex Trans World Airways (Ret).

Sent in by Sqn. Ldr. Bob Davies

**FINALLY; PLEASE DONT FORGET THAT THE ANNUAL
SUBSCRIPTIONS HAVE BEEN INCREASED TO £10 AS VOTED FOR AT
THE LAST AGM .**