



‘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 CW Moffatt RAE (Ret'd)

WINTER/SPRING 2007

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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Sqn Ldr G W Moffatt

Chairman Designate

Wg Cdr A J Mawby

Treasurer

John Gulliver

Secretary

Peter M Walker

Historian

Jock Whitehouse

Committee

David J Parsons

Roy Monk KM

Sqn Ldr B D Davies

Wg Cdr W A Wilkinson

Shaun P Broaders MBE, MSM

Should you have any queries on Association matters please feel free to contact, by telephone or letter, any member of the Committee.

THE 2006 REUNION DINNER

The Reunion Dinner was held over the weekend of September 22/23rd. 2006 at the Maids Head Hotel in Norwich, attended by 54 members and guests. Attending for the first time were new members Gerry and Joy Crombie and father and son John and Nicholas Jewsbury.

From the USA was S/Ldr. John Brown and Mrs. Paula Brown. Another recent new member was Mrs. Shirley Whitlock.

One of our oldest members is Ted Walker, at 96 had managed to come all the way from Darlington. (With his son, James).

Sqn. Ldr. Jim Newman, 88, travelled from near Bristol in a Mercedes taxi and returned by the same mode of transport on the Monday morning. Jim had brought a family friend with him, Mrs. Mary Tucker who is 92.

I think that Mary came along to keep an eye on him as well as to keep him out of mischief.

The Dinner was followed by our guest speaker, Group Capt. David Seward AFC. David had been C/O of 56 Sqn. at Wattisham (Lightnings) in 1961 to 1963 followed by becoming GCI with 226 OCU, the Lightning conversion unit at Coltishall from 1963 to 1965.

During his Lightning period he often used to refuel from 214 Sqn's Valiants.

The BBMF was at Coltishall during this time and David was fortunate in having the opportunity of flying Spitfires, the Hurricane and occasionally the Lancaster. His talk was mainly of the Lightning, both from a maintenance and flying aspect. David illustrated his talk with slides. Thank you David, it was most interesting.

It was a most relaxing and enjoyable evening, old friends meeting and chatting

of old times. Despite the Maids Head not the best of hotels most people agreed that it was one of the best Reunions for many a year.

The AGM

The 18th. AGM was held at 14.00 hrs. when we were welcomed by our Chairman, Sqn. Ldr. "Moff" Moffatt. Twenty members were present.

Apologies for absence were read out having been received from:

MRAF Sir Michael Beetham, S/L Maurice Webster, Bert Mowlem OBE, Gerhard Heilig, Graham Spaxman, A V M Jack Furner (but at the AGM), Mrs. Joyce Hughes, Bill Doy, Hazel Southgate, George Cox, Keith and Norma Evans (New Zealand), Sylvia and Maurice Harding (Australia), Howie Wing, Neil Scott, Bill Howard and Mrs. Peggy Dain, Steve and Joan Nessner (Canada), John and Gwen Morton, Charles Lilley, Brian Burgess, Alastair McDermid, Peter Jowett, W/C John Brown, Geoff Hicks.

In Memorium

BERT FINCH (Sept. 2005) JOHN FENN (Dec. 2005)

HERBERT HARKER (Dec. 25th. 2005) Sqn. Ldr. JACK DIXON (Jan. 16th. 2006) GEOFF LILES (March 2006)

Mrs. BILLIE MURRAY (March 2006) JACK CREECH (April 2006)

DON AUSTIN (July 2006)

S/L RAY GLASS (August 2006)

The AGM continued:

The minutes of the last meeting were read out and agreed. Proposed by Paul Henry and seconded by Bob Moorby.

The Chairman then reported that the Association was in a healthy state, both financially and membership, in fact the membership has increased slightly to, currently, 215.

He also announced that he would, with affect from the 2007 Reunion, be standing down as Chairman. His replacement would be W/C Alan Mawby who is already a Committee member.

Treasurer's Report

As at 31/12/05 our total members funds stood at £2,820.02 . Since this date the No.2 account has been closed and the small amount held in the a/c has been transferred to the No.1 a/c.

If any member would like a copy of the accounts please contact the Treasurer whose name and address is inside the front cover of this newsletter.

The HISTORIAN'S REPORT is included on a separate page further on in this newsletter.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Two editions of the Nightjar have been produced in 2006. The February edition had 10 pages and two covers. 220 copies were produced at a total cost, including postage, of £303 00.

The June edition had 13 pages, two covers and three loose sheets (two booking forms). 220 copies were produced and cost, including postage, a total of £426 00

The normal UK postage rate had increased from 35p to 37p per copy during the Spring. Due to a booboo by the printers the weight of the June edition meant that, despite a previous weight test, it was marginally over the limit which pushed the postage up to 50p per copy. Very annoying, your Secretary had to spend quite a few hours licking and sticking 600 extra stamps over and above the 37p ones already on the envelopes.

Despite these problems the Nightjar seems to have been well received by the members It is the Nightjar that keeps us all in touch, especially for those, who for various reasons, cannot get to the Reunions.

New members since the 2005 Reunion:

WAYNE TAGGART , Nova Scotia, Canada. Wayne's father was Flt. Sgt. Bruce Taggart RCAF , mid-upper gunner in Bob Macketts crew with Bill Wilkinson and Alan Deadman. (Stirlings)

Mrs. SHIRLEY WHITLOCK. Her uncle, Sgt. Eric Smith, was the navigator in Stirling BF516 which came down in the sea off Pevensey Bay, Sussex on August 10th. 1943. Sadly he lost his life. One crew member who survived was Bob Moorby who has become very good friends with Shirley and her family.

Mr. RON ROBERTS. Brother of Shirley Whitlock (above)

BOB MACKETT Jnr. Vancouver, Canada. Son of Bob Mackett RCAF. (Stirling pilot 1942/43 and a member)

The AGM continued:

LES BOSTOCK , Bomb Aimer in Don Austin's Fortress crew 1944/45 and John Wynne's Fortress crew on 214 Sqn. 1945 and RWE 1945/46.

BILL PHILLIPS. Rear gunner on crew of S/L Sturdy, Wellingtons at Stradishall 1940/41.

CYRIL SWINDELLS. Airfield defence gunner, RAF Regiment, Stradishall 1940/41. Attached to 214 Sqn. for airfield defence. Had a couple of flights in Wellingtons.

GERRY CROMBIE ; Salhouse, Norwich. Pilot on Victors 1968/71.

BEN WYNNE. Son of Wng. Cdr. John Wynne.

CAROL and JOHN EDWARDS, Harrow, Middlx. Now running the 214 Sqn. website. <http://214squadron.atspace.com/default.htm>

e-mail: raf214squadron@yahoo.com

Mrs. BARBARA ROBINSON , London SW15. Long time friend of Jack Dixon

JOHN JEWSBURY . Headcorn, Kent. John's father was Bob Jewsbury, Jack Dixon's Bomb Aimer at Chedburgh.

NICHOLAS JEWSBURY, son of John and grandson of Bob. Nicholas is currently a pilot flying Tornados with 111 Sqn. at Leuchars,Fife.

Three of the above new members came to the last Reunion. They were John and Nicholas Jewsbury , and Shirley Whitlock.

During and after the Dinner the young 21st. century fighter pilot, Nick Jewsbury apparently had a very interesting conversation with the mid 20th. century fighter pilot, Grp. Capt. David Seward.

Nick also sat at the same table as Ted Walker, 96 , who was a navigator in WWII. I believe that they thoroughly enjoyed comparing notes.

It was decided that the 2007 Reunion would again be held at the Maids Head Hotel in Norwich over the weekend of Friday 21st. and Saturday 22nd. of Sept. We understand that the Maids Head is to be upgraded in 2007 when over £2 million is to be spent on refurbishment.

Details and booking forms for the Reunion will be in the June edition of the Nightjar.

Treasurer's Notes

My thanks to all those members who have paid their subscriptions by cheque, or standing order during the past year. I wrote to 76 members who we had not heard from for a while. I regret that some members have passed away, others have moved with no forwarding address, whilst a few have resigned their membership.

Many of you replied promptly - many thanks - especially if you paid for missed years. To clear any confusion voiced by some of you, the current subscription is £10 per annum payable to 214 (FMS) Squadron Association. I do not anticipate any foreseeable change to this figure. I do not issue receipts for subscriptions as a matter of routine, but should you require one, please make the request with your cheque.

The financial year 2006 ended with the Association funds in a healthy and stable state. I shall give the details at the AGM in September but should any member unable to attend require a copy of the report, please let me know.

This year marks two anniversaries, the 90th since the formation of the Squadron, and sadly, the 30th since the disbandment. Let us make this year's Reunion one to remember.

I wish you all the best of health and fortune for 2007.

John Gulliver.

News since the Reunion

It is with great sadness that we report the passing of MARTIN STAUNTON, age 76, on December 2nd. 2006. Martin was a founder member of the Association and a leading light in the 100 Group Assn.

For some years he was Secretary of 214 Sqn. Assn. until ill health forced his resignation in 1999.

Martin's connection with the Squadron was that his brother-in-law was Stafford Sinclair, W/Op. in the crew of Flt.Lt. Allies lost on March 12st. 1945.

Bob Moorby was able to represent the Association at Martin's funeral in Hastings.

It is with equal sadness that we report the death of AVM JACK FURNER, age 85, on January 1st. 2007.

He was a great supporter of the Association and his wise counsel was much valued. Jack was very involved in the RAF Historical Society, the Bomber Command Assn., the Stirling Aircraft Assn. and was often invited as a speaker at various seminars both here and in the USA.

He was also considered to have been one of the ablest and knowledgeable navigators to have served in the RAF.

The funeral service was held in Norwich on January 16th. 2007 and representing 214 Sqn. Assn. were MRAF Sir Michael Beetham, Sqn.Ldr. "Moff" Moffatt and Peter M.Walker.

An outline of Jack Furner's RAF career is further on in this newsletter.

HISTORIAN'S REPORT

COINCIDENCE(S)? --PERHAPS NOT -- WHO KNOWS?

(1) On a November afternoon, whilst leaving after a visit to Stirling House, a member of staff asked me if the red car in the restricted area opposite was mine. 'No' I said but as I knew it could only have just arrived and was close by the Stradishall Memorial I offered to check. With my dark clothing probably suggesting otherwise, I assured the driver that I was not a prison officer but might be able to help if they were visiting the memorial for any particular reason. This was indeed the case as the couple from Lincolnshire, had called in to Stradishall as the lady's brother-had apparently lost his life from there flying with No.214 Squadron! We chatted for a while about Stradishall's history, the memorial (nice that our squadron wreath should be in place), Stirling House and the Association, but I sensed an error when told that the airman in question, Sgt Felce, had been lost on a raid to Hamburg in March 1943 (Not Stradishall time). Rather than query this at the time I chose to double check first and as expected found that Sgt. H M Felce, the 19 year-old flight-engineer in the crew of P/O. C W V. Pepper had indeed lost his life on 3/4 March 1943 operating with No.214 Squadron - but from Chedburgh! Six of the crew lost their lives, Sgt Manglasen RNZAF becoming a PoW. and now, five of the men including Sgt Felce, lie in the Sage War Cemetery which the family has visited.

However, there exists a strong Stradishall connection, as P/O Pepper's crew completed their Stirling training there on No.1657 HCU before being posted to No.214 Squadron at nearby Chedburgh on 31st January 1943. After settling in, they only flew two operations during February, both successful: a 'Gardening trip to 'Nectarines' on the 5th and a full 'op' to Cologne on the 26th.this one in EF329 (BU-C) the aircraft in which they were tragically lost on their third operation, that to Hamburg on the 3/4 March, yet another crew to fall victim to 'flak'. I forwarded this information to Mr & Mrs Dickerson with details of the Personnel Management Agency in the hope of them obtaining further service details for Sgt. Felce.

I was making a brief unplanned visit to Stirling House, so is it not a little strange that literally at the moment I was leaving, the sister of an airman, killed whilst flying with '214', arrived at Stirling House just to see the memorial sited on the old airfield, and certainly not expecting to be 'met' by someone with information so relevant for her. That may be regarded as 'real service'--- but who, if anyone arranged it? I, for one cannot claim to have the answer.

(2) In October I was asked by Wickhambrook Local History Group if I would give them talk on RAF Chedburgh (at the request of the members!)and after failing to convince them that I had packed away my slides and projector, and due to the fact that they were old friends (if not gluttons for punishment, for they had already suffered previous talks on aspects of Stradishall's history), I agreed to a date in January.

As the time approached I knew my knowledge on Chedburgh was decidedly 'rusty' so I resorted to a very humble way out and that was to read the book written by Spencer and myself so long ago!(Amazing what you forget). I am sure Spencer had a quiet chuckle at my struggles but as always, his retained notes proved invaluable.

I decided on a modified format and rather than re-presenting a mass of wartime data, a look over post-research days might prove interesting so the efforts expended on the main memorial projects, reunions past and present, Squadron Associations and visits to 'old' Chedburgh were to start the talk.. The 'hungry locals', however, not forgotten, enjoyed a good pictorial trawl of 'Stirling, Lancaster, Warwick and Halifax' days which many recalled with relish.

The evening went well and it was good to be amongst old friends including one or two Chedburgh veterans including Alan Gamble and Stan Brice both of the Stirling Aircraft Association (Alan is Chairman and Stan the organiser of the East Anglian Branch) who both served on No.620 Squadron which as you should know formed at Chedburgh by combining 'C' Flights of Nos. 149 and 214 Squadrons.(truly our offspring). Unfortunately Bob Moorby could not make it, similarly Margery Griffiths the ex-W AAF of No.218 Squadron and organiser of the Annual Chedburgh Reunion. Present, however, was Graeme Bushell interested in aviation history and the last Station Commander of Stradishall (he who switched the lights off in 1970) but who as a participant in the Berlin Airlift knows Bob Davies well! Ron Penhaligan a local man and groundcrew at Stradishall and Chedburgh gave his support as usual. I also had a few exhibits on show and the carved 'Ercol' squadron badge and the brass tray both with strong Chedburgh connections, were greatly admired. I also displayed Ian Hunt's excellent publication of all Chedburgh Stirling operations for 1943 in which was the sheet detailing all Jack Furner's trips as navigator. (A last minute thought)

But not quite the evening as planned. My decision to include aspects of latter years meant mention of some of the splendid people who made our work so easy-- after all it was their story, but I was quite comfortable to talk about or show pictures of Ray Glass, Jack Dixon, Ray Hartwell and his crew, and those from other Chedburgh units whom we had either met or contacted. One of the earliest and most fruitful responses was from John Verrall a New Zealand pilot who vividly described his experiences at Chedburgh. Unknown to me at the time was that we were nearly next door neighbours in Shrewsbury and that John's navigator was Jack Furner who spoke so highly of John in his Foreword to our Chedburgh book.

I opted to open my talk by reading the sections from the book entitled: 'Chedburgh pre-War', 'The Price Paid' and Jack Furner's 'Foreword' hopeful that these would set the scene in the desired manner. Which they did.

What I could not have foreseen, however, was that I would be reading these on Tuesday 16th January: not only the day chosen for the 'Chedburgh Evening' but also that of Jack Furner's funeral. The response from those present was noticable and it offered all a quiet moment to reflect on what had been given and sacrificed and I trust that Jack would have approved of his unexpected 'part' in the evening's programme which I thought only right to include.

Our thoughts were therefore certainly in the right place. But why was Chedburgh selected, why did I choose to dwell a little more on the Remembrance side for my talk, why did mention and inclusion of a totally unexpected and sad happening seem so appropriate, and WHY 16th January?

Random happenings or arranged? As above I would not even attempt to hazard a guess.

Jock M Whitehouse.

FLYING DOWN TO RIO - WELL NEARLY!

The call came through from Marham Ops - mid afternoon on Friday 2nd May 1975; as this type of call always did. 214 were to put four crews on standby over the weekend for an urgent overseas task. 'Why 214, can't 55 or 57 (the Victor Mkl/1A sister tanker squadrons at Marham) provide a crew or two?' 'They are meeting other tasks and have no crews available' came the reply. Uhha, we thought, typical 55/57. But we scabbled around and found four crews, including my own crew: Tony Banfield - captain, Dick Druit - co-pilot, Keith Richards - nav rad, Pete Martin-Smith - nav plotter, and myself, Vic Pheasant- AEO. I was also to be the nominated Detachment Commander.

Thankfully, the weekend passed uneventfully with no call out, but we did learn of the task. A Royal Navy Phantom F4 from the Ark Royal had gone unserviceable at the US Naval Air Station Roosevelt Roads in Puerto Rico. It was now serviceable, but the Ark Royal, on a good-will tour to the Caribbean and South America, was now in Rio De Janeiro and the F4 did not have the legs to fly that far. The task was to send three Victors to 'Rosie Roads' via Goose Bay; two for the task and one standby. If the primary and secondary aircraft got away OK with the F4 from 'Rosie Roads', then the standby aircraft would return to the UK via 'The Goose'. At Rosie Roads, the primary and secondary aircraft would get airborne, followed by the F4 to fly south as a loose formation. To maximise fuel availability (and this was the good bit), both the primary and secondary aircraft would land back at Seawell, Barbados. At an appropriate stage en route, the secondary aircraft would refuel the F4 and then give its remaining available fuel to the primary aircraft. The primary aircraft would then fly on with the F4 giving it a further top up, and cast off the F4 somewhere south of the equator from where it would fly on to Rio - provided its navigation and comms gear was OK. If it was not, then the primary aircraft was to accompany the F4 to Rio. As it turned out - a rather nice task.

Of course, when Monday morning came and 55/57 heard about the task - especially the Barbados and possibly Rio bit, they immediately had crews available to muscle in. It was decided that 55 would provide the secondary aircraft, 57 the standby aircraft and 214 would provide the primary aircraft (my crew) plus a UK standby aircraft. Also, because of seniorities in personnel, 55 would now provide the Detachment Commander. So, later that morning on the 5th May, the three aircraft got airborne independently for Goose Bay. We were initially in XA 938 with Dave Parsons as our crew chief in the sixth seat. But we did not get off to a good start. Sometime in the climb it became apparent that something was wrong with the pressurisation; that turned out to be the 'flood flow' stuck permanently on. We had no choice but to return to base. We radioed ahead, were able to quickly swap to good old XA936, and flew on to The Goose with no further problems. After a night stop on The Goose, the following day the three aircraft flew on independently to Rosie Roads.

As a US Naval Air Station, there was little suitable ground equipment for the Victors, so we had to make do as best as we could. (Our means of climbing in and out of the cockpit was via a large wheeled, dual bottle fire, extinguisher apparatus.) We met up with the F4 crew in the rather spartan BOQs (Bachelor Officers Quarters), and the following morning completed the planning and briefing for the task. Later that morning, both the primary and secondary aircraft, and the F4, got airborne and established in loose formation en route OK, so the standby aircraft returned to The Goose and then back to the UK. The secondary aircraft gave the F4 its first refuelling, and it was now our turn to plug in to take its remaining available fuel. Tony did his usual jokey 'I'm not sure if I can do this tricky thing', to be told 'just get it done'. And of course he plugged it in with his usual smooth dexterity. When we had all of his available fuel, the secondary aircraft then peeled off en route for Barbados, and we continued on with the F4. By now, we were over the Amazon delta. It was absolutely 'gin clear' so we were able to view this magnificent panorama. The film Papillon, starring Steve McQueen and Dustin Hoffman about the escape from the French penal colony, had been released a year or two earlier, and this came to mind as we flew over its Devil's Island location.

Having refuelled him a couple of times, it was coming to the point where we had to cast off the F4 and, as briefed, this could only be so if its nav and comms gear was OK. We enquired how things were, to be told that everything was fine. At which point we declared that we were receiving his comms broken and distorted and we were having difficulty hearing him. (You don't often get opportunities to fly down to Rio!) However, we were soon told, in direct Anglo Saxon, that all was fine and that we could depart pronto. So reluctantly we turned away and headed back up to Barbados. Taxiing into the dispersal, we were discussing what we should do in the evening we had on the island, when I looked up to see that one of the hydraulic pump ammeters had fallen to zero. I switched it off and on a couple of times, but it was clear that we had had a hydraulic pump failure. When I announced this to the crew, there were cries of 'well done sir' and 'great stuff. I protested that I thought that this was genuine, which was later confirmed by Dave Parsons, the crew chief, after we had shut down. So this meant that a new pump had to be flown out to us in Barbados, and that we had at least one clear day to explore the island. We told the 55 Sqn detachment commander the situation, and he said that they would also be staying as their nav radar had a severe stomach upset. Seemed a bit flaky to us, but we were in the clear.

The hotel in which we were accommodated was one of the more established places on the island, just a little worn at the edges, but on the beach. I found that I had been allocated a room which opened right out on to the beach. Soon we were in the bar, then out on the town to explore the night life, which we found to be very lively and cosmopolitan. Everybody mixed without question. The following morning, having awoken to the gentle sound of lapping waves, we decided to hire two open topped 'mini mokes' to explore the island, which proved to be an excellent idea. It certainly was very delightful and picturesque, quaintly British in some ways, but with much local charm, especially the small but colourful wooden houses that were built so that they could be moved. The palm fringed beaches were just as shown in any travel brochure, the weather warm and dry. The Barbadians were a very friendly and helpful people, and very hospitable as we were to find out. Sometime in the late afternoon we were passing a beachside hotel, when a cool beer seemed to be the order of the day. While sitting in the bar supping our beers and looking out on to the clear blue ocean, we were accosted by a very large, and formidable looking, Barbadian. 'Where are you guys from?' he enquired, 'you're not the crew from the Victor down at the airport?'

When we confirmed that we were indeed so, his face broke out into a very broad grin. He said that he had been in the RAF for five years in the UK serving as a fireman. He was now the hotel manager, and would we like another beer on him and another. and another. It was a great ending to the afternoon.

The next day, which was a Friday, we were told that the new hydraulic pump would arrive that afternoon. The 55 crew decided that they had run out of excuses and would be returning to the UK via The Goose. We said that we would leave the day after provided we got the hydraulic pump installed OK. That afternoon, Dave Parsons and I set off to find the pump at the airport. The two hydraulic pumps in the Victor are situated laterally side by side on the rear floor of the nose wheel bay. They are not easy to get to, and the space is rather cramped with just about enough room to allow two persons to work. Under Dave's instruction, we got the old pump out and installed the new one. It was very hot and exhausting work, especially due to the weight of the pump. We got to the point where we had to make just one last connection of the hydraulic pump to the main piping. To facilitate getting the pump to the right level, shims are used to slightly raise the pump to the right position. But do you think that we could get the large brass nut on the piping to mate with the pump? We tried all ways, re-shimming a couple of times, but to no avail. Eventually it was decided that we would have to send for a new piece of piping, which was of a very complex shape with a number of bends to facilitate its fixing around the nose wheel bay walls. Of course, when the crew were told of the problem necessitating a further delay, they could barely conceal their joy at this turn of events, and we had yet another clear day to explore the island in the mini-mokes, and swim from the beaches. As it turned out, we were into the weekend and we learnt that the replacement part would not arrive until late on the Sunday night. A whole weekend in Barbados! I shall not elaborate further on this turns of events. Suffice to say it was most enjoyable.

The new part arrived on the Sunday night, so it was decided that Dave and I would fit it on the Monday morning. If it all went OK, we would get airborne as soon as possible for The Goose. (It was well appreciated that there might be some cynics at Group, and probably at base, that might have other views on our sojourn on this delightful island.) However, if things did not go well and we still had problems getting the hydraulic connections made, then the go/no go cut off would be midday.

Early on the Monday, Dave and I packed and checked out of the hotel to be driven by one of the crew in the mini-moke to collect the part and then out to the aircraft. The rest of the crew took it more leisurely. For the better part of the morning, in the blistering and humid heat, Dave and I struggled in the nose wheel bay until at last we managed to get the new pump and new piece of pipe connected into the system. Dave checked and wire locked all of the connections, and it was time for power on to the aircraft to check that it all functioned. Just before midday, we were able to say that the aircraft was now fully serviceable and, despite the fact that Dave and I were pretty knackered, it was agreed that we would leave as planned. By this time, the mini mokes had been returned, all of the kit was on board, a flight plan had been filed and we were ready to leave. Within an hour we were airborne, and it was a delight to get out of the humid heat and cool down while getting our liquid levels back to some normality.

Just as we were starting to relax in the climb, when passing something like fifteen thousand feet, we heard that familiar, but most unwelcome, hissing sound - of a door seal failure. This was the last thing that Dave and I needed. The door seal was essentially a rubber tube in the space between the cabin door and the fuselage opening. It's inflation, when airborne, made an airtight seal so that cabin pressure could be maintained, usually at around an eight thousand feet cabin altitude. If it failed, as in this case, then cabin pressure would be lost. The usual two alternatives in this situation were either oxygen masks permanently on, or descend to an altitude where an acceptable cabin pressure could be maintained (depending on the size of the leak) or, if not, at an altitude below ten thousand feet. Tony levelled out while we discussed the options. Problem one was that our oxygen level was already down a bit as we were unable to top it up at Barbados, so returning there (as attractive as that might be) was not really an option. A quick calculation of low altitude fuel usage made it clear that we did not have enough fuel to make The Goose at an altitude where we would not need oxygen, and we were uncertain that we had enough oxygen in the depleted tanks for us to make The Goose at high level. The final decision? - divert to Bermuda, which was almost en route.

On landing at Bermuda they clearly did not know what to do with us as we seemed to be taxiing for an interminable period. Eventually we were given a parking area and closed down. While waiting for someone to turn up with transport, Tony, Dave and I discussed what we should do next. Dave was understandably reluctant to undertake a door seal change in Bermuda, and we were unsure whether we would be able to top up the oxygen at Bermuda. What to do? As the discussion went to and fro, Keith Richards wandered up to the group 'I don't know what all this discussion is about. Why don't we just top the fuel up to the gunwales and go up to Goose Bay at low level?!' The three of us just looked at each other out of the mouths of babes and nav radars! We spent the night at a rather delightful hotel next to a golf course, and the following morning did just as Keith had suggested. The subsequent flight up to The Goose went smoothly, and the aircraft went into the hanger for the door seal change.

There was a sizeable detachment of mainly engineering personnel at Goose Bay, so there were plenty of hands to assist Dave. But our troubles weren't over yet! The Wing Commander Goose Bay Detachment Commander advised us that he had decided to relieve us of our crew chief, who was also Vulcan qualified, and send him on to the USAF SAC base at Offutt where a Vulcan was stuck unserviceable, with the crew chief sick and unable to take the rectification action. We were, understandably, not very pleased at this turn of events, not least Tony, in his capacity of aircraft captain, who had to be restrained a bit from his protestations. The Goose Bay Det. Com. was not the most endearing of characters, but we knew that he was within his rights. It was pointed out to the Det. Com. that we knew that our aircraft was required back at Marham for a major trail that was to take place within a few days, so we could not wait for Dave to return. But more important to the trail was Dave's return to Marham due to the current Squadron shortage of qualified crew chiefs. With the Det. Com.'s refusal to consider this, we requested permission to signal the Squadron about the action that he was about to undertake. He grumbled a bit about this as he had to approve the signal before it went out. Eventually, he sent a message to the effect that he had changed his mind and that our crew chief would now not be required. We did not enquire what it was that had changed his mind!

After a couple of nights on The Goose, our aircraft was pronounced serviceable, and we returned to Marham, arriving back some six days later than planned. Tony had a bit of explaining to do, especially about the Bermuda bit. But there was much envy on the Squadron over our delightful sojourn on Barbados - but it would have been nice to have made it to Rio!

Sqn. Ldr. Vic Pheasant MBE

Order of Service

Conducted by The Reverend Robert C. Wright

Miserere (Allegri)

Sentences

Introduction

Symphony No. 5 (Sibelius)

Eulogies: Marshal of the RAF Sir Michael Beetham, GCB, CBE, DFC, AFC

Peter Furner

Richard Furner

Jonathan Furner

Reading

Satyagraha (Glass)

Prayers

Commendation and Committal

A Trumpeter of the Band of the Royal Air Force Regiment

(The Trumpeter plays by permission of the Air Force Board of the Defence Council)

Double Piano Concerto for 3 Hands (Arnold)

Air Vice-Marshal

JACK FURNER

CBE,DFC,AFC

14 November 1921 - 1 January 2007



St Faith's Crematorium

Horsham St Faith

on

16 January 2007

AIR VICE MARSHAL D.J.FURNER CBE. AFC. DFC

AVM Jack Furner who lived in Cromer, Norfolk, died on January 1st., aged 85. He joined the RAF at the Lords cricket ground recruiting centre in 1941 and from the outset he wanted to be a navigator and not a pilot.

During a 35 year career he flew in 42 different types of aircraft with 243 different pilots.

After basic training and navigation school he moved on to an Operational Training Unit (OTU) where he later joined his crew.

In March 1943 he was posted, with his crew, to an operational bomber squadron, No.214, at Chedburgh, Suffolk to fly the Short Stirling four engined heavy bomber. His first operation was to Kiel on April 4th. and his last to Berlin on Aug.31st.

A total of 25 operational flights were flown, completing his "tour".

He was 21 years old and was posted to No. 3 Group HQ at Exning near Newmarket to carry out analysis of operational navigation logs and charts.

In November he learnt that a new Group was being formed in Bomber Command. This was 100 Group with it's HQ at Bylaugh Hall, near Dereham, Norfolk.

The Group's task was to bring together various squadrons and other specialist units that were to fight a very secret war of electronic and radio countermeasures to attempt to reduce the losses of the mainstream heavy bombers and crews.

In December he heard that his old squadron, No. 214, was to be reformed in 100 Group to fly the B17 Flying Fortress on radio countermeasures duties.

He also heard that they would require a navigation leader in the rank of Flight Lieutenant and wanting to get back to operational flying he applied to return to his old squadron.

His request was accepted and in the early months of 1944 he moved to Sculthorpe, Norfolk where the squadron was to receive Fortresses for familiarisation training. By April they

began to fly a few ops and in May a move was made to Oulton near Blickling.

Here operations commenced on May 16th. From this period to September Jack flew as navigation leader on many important raids in support of the main RAF bomber raids against targets over Germany and occupied Europe. Having now completed his second operational "tour" he was sent, in late 1944, to fly as navigator in Transport Command aircraft, operating from India on supply dropping over Burma. Although the war against Japan came to an end in August 1945 there was still much work to do and Jack did not return home until 1947.

In the postwar period he instructed at a Navigation School then went to the Central Navigation and Control School (CNCS) at Shawbury from July 1950 to April 1951.

This was followed by a period at Boscombe Down where he was involved in trials and development work on new navigation and bombing equipment.

In November 1953 he was seconded to the USAF for development work at the Wright Air Development Center at Dayton, Ohio.

Here he flew in a variety of aircraft, B25, B26, B29, B36, B47 and B52 as well as the T33 and T29.

In June 1956 he returned to England with his wife, sons and a Chevrolet.

Following his return he attended a five month course at the RAF Flying College at Manby, Lincs.

His next job meant promotion to Wing Commander as O/C of the Vulcan Operations Wing at RAF Waddington.

Next was a desk job as an operational planner at Bomber Command HQ, then to SHAPE in the Nuclear Activities Branch.

In 1965 he was a Deputy Director of Manning at the Air Ministry.

Promotion to Group Captain brought command of RAF Scampton with three Vulcan Blue Steel Squadrons.

In 1969 Jack became AOC of the Central Reconnaissance Establishment at Brampton, Hunts. (now Cambs.) with it's airfield at Wyton.

1970 saw him appointed as Secretary to the Military Committee at NATO HQ in Brussels.

His final appointment before retirement in 1976 was as Assistant Air Secretary.

MORE NEWS

In Memorium

Dec. 2006, SQN.LDR. F.C. (CHARLES) HAINES, Royston, Herts. Navigator B on 214 Sqn. 1956/58.

November 9th. 2006

Bob Davies and two friends tidied the grave, in Putney Vale Cemetery of a 214 Sqn. pilot killed in a 214 Sqn. Wellington at Methwold on Nov. 6th. 1939.

The pilot's brother's name is also on the stone, he went missing on ops in December 1940. A caption at the bottom reads;

Two English boys died

My sons

But England lives - DAD

The grave is of P/Off. J. Lingwood , age 20 .

Thank you Bob for your care.

Our guest speaker at this year's Reunion Dinner (Saturday Sept. 22nd.)

Group Captain PHIL OSBORN OBE, ADC, RAF , O/C RAF Marham

January 12th. A telephone enquiry from Mrs. Sheila Engelse of New Maldon, Surrey. As Sheila Foley she served as a WAAF M.T. driver at Stradishall and Chedburgh from 1941 to late 1943. She often took the aircrews to and from their aircraft.

She particularly remembers the Squadron Adjutant, Flt. Lt. George Wright who was a real gentleman and the essence of kindness to everybody.

A pilot she also remembers was Flt.Lt. Ted Youseman , later to lose his life with 617 Sqn.

If anyone can remember Sheila she can be contacted on 0208 - 9472259 or write to her at 15, Malden Court, West Barnes Road, New Malden, Surrey KTJ 4PW

This is not a 214 Sqn. item but nonetheless should prove of interest to our members. After the war Flt.Lt. Edwards became well known as the radio and TV comedian, Jimmy Edwards.

| | | | | |
|---|---|-------------------|------------------|-----------|
| FORM 520 | AIR 27/1574 | Summary of Events | No 271 SQUADRON | SECRET. |
| SEDT 44 | STATEMENT FROM F/Lt. EDWARDS 271 SQUADRON ON EXPERIENCE ON D + 4 DAYS | | | |
| | 21ST SEPTEMBER, OPERATION 'MARKET' | | No 2/F540/271/1. | SEDT 1944 |
| <p>We had successfully dropped our panniers on the D.Z. area and turned for home climbing to 7000ft, and the first intimation I had that anything was wrong was when I saw about six fighters which I could not identify as Allied, away on my port side. Before I could make sure of their identity we were attacked from behind, strikes being obtained on fuselage and wings; tracer also appeared bursting ahead of the aircraft and under the impression that it might be flak I took suitable evasive action. After a moment, however, I saw, out of the corner of my eye, what was unmistakeably a FW190 commencing an attack from the port side. His cannon fire was passing across ahead of the aircraft so I pulled back the stick and kicked hard on left rudder and avoided attack and dived for cloud. I then warned the crew of the presence of fighters and the W/Op Sgt. Randall took up station in the astrodrome. We reached cloud before a further attack materialised but this cover did not last long and as soon as we broke from cloud another attack came from Eastern resulting in several strikes. The next few minutes were spent in dodging in and out of what cloud cover was available and during this time we were subjected to three more attacks all of which registered hits on our</p> | | | | |

but the damage that then was so badly

aircraft. The Navigator gave me a course to steer but the compass just then was so upset that I was unable to follow the course given and the frantic dodging about in the past few minutes made it impossible for my co-pilot to give me a pinpoint. The FW190 was obviously taking his own time in making his attacks and was always above and astern so that it was extremely difficult for the W/O in the astro-dome to anticipate the exact moment of attack. I had full revs and throttle up to now and had found in my preliminary dive for cloud that the elevator trim was w/s. During the sixth and last attack I lost aileron control and so gave the order to bale out. The co-pilot and navigator jumped and at that time I was under the impression that the rest of the crew and despatchers had also gone but later I found this was not the case. After barely a minute I looked round and saw three despatchers sitting by the cabin door and asked why they hadn't jumped and one of them said

SEPT 44 F/LT EDWARDS

Summary of Events

AIR 27/1574

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they could not, so I concluded they must have been wounded, and I then decided to stay in the aircraft and crash land, but almost immediately both propellers went into 'fully fine' and I throttled back in preparation for crashing. We were then approximately at 6000ft. when the a/c went into a steep dive I found that somehow I had regained partial aileron control and at about 100ft from the ground I held off to reduce speed. We were passing over a village with numerous haystacks and I shouted out "standby for crash landing" although I'm pretty sure no one heard me. I selected 'flaps down' but whether I got any flap I shall never know. I remember frantically trying to strap myself in with one hand but found this impossible. At about 50 ft up I opened the pilots escape hatch and the

draught caused a great rush of flame from the back of cabin. A despatcher came lurching forward crying "Christ the flame is coming right in". This was the first idea I had that the aircraft was on fire (I learned later that fire had been raging for some minutes) and the cabin was now well alight, so I stood up and put my head out through the escape hatch and rested it on my forearm, my other hand still being on the control column. I looked along the port wing and had a quick glimpse of it being smashed against numbers of small trees and then the aircraft hit the ground. With the impact I was thrown half out of the hatch and was enveloped by a sheet of flame. I hung on because I feared being thrown completely out in the path of the aircraft which was still sliding along the ground. Suddenly the nose dipped down and the tail came up almost vertical and as it fell back again I was flung out backwards on to the top of the aircraft whence I fell to the ground in front of the starboard engine. I picked myself up and ran away from the machine which was now a mass of flames. The aircraft had crashed in a small clearing surrounded by trees and as I ran towards these I saw the FW doing a steep turn at about 100ft. directly above. I also realised now that the W/Op. and one despatcher had crashed with me and had got clear of the aircraft and sensing that the FW might attack us again I warned the other two to take cover in the trees. I barely had time to get to the trees myself when the FW returned and commenced to strafe us. I only heard 3 shells and assumed that the enemy had run out of ammunition, which was a good thing as I was still wearing my Mae West which

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MIL 27/1574

Summary of Events P/LT EDWARDS

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made me too good a target for my peace of mind. We all got together and crawled into a belt of larger trees and sat down to consider the situation. I buried my Mae West and found that Randall was unhurt whilst the despatcher was suffering from flesh wounds but could easily walk. I was burned in face and arm but otherwise felt fit enough for travel.

We took the compass from our escape kits and decided to go south, but had no sooner commenced to crawl away from our shelter when we heard voices in the vicinity. Through the trees we saw a man and a woman and for some reason it occurred to me that it might be a German that the woman was directing to the aircraft but as we realised that they knew we were there and that if an enemy he would probably spray our hiding place with bullets we decided to go out and take a chance. To our relief we found that he was a civilian. My attempts at establishing friendly relations were nearly doomed to failure I asked where the Bosche were and the woman apparently thinking I meant who was the Boss' waved towards the man and said "The Bosche" with the result that I was about to let him have it from my pistol. However he came towards us then having dispersed a group of young inquisitive sightseers and asked us to follow him. With the aid of our language cards we ascertained that no Germans were nearby although they could not tell us where we could contact the British. We went on through the woods for about 20 minutes and at each small clearing our guide halted and made sure there was no one about and then we all dashed across at a high speed. Finally we were settled in the corner of a wood and the guide indicated he would fetch bandages and food and then left us. Later he and his wife returned with food and drink and dressed our wounds. Soon afterwards three young men joined us, one of whom produced a white silk handkerchief made from parachute silk bearing the letters A.M. This he waved in front of us as a guarantee of good faith and gave us to understand he would help us as he had helped other British airmen in the past. They then relieved us of our pistols which they seemed to think they would soon be able to put to a much better use than we could. Just before darkness fell a doctor arrived who fortunately spoke French and I was able to converse with him to some extent. We were then led away to a house where the doctor redressed our wounds and we were given coffee. Here we were told that the nearest British

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troops were at Grave and it was decided we should move on the first stage of our journey on the back of an old cart horse but seeing the anxiety in my face they explained there would also be a cart. After the doctor left a Roman Catholic priest appeared who spoke moderately good English and with the aid of maps from our purses he showed us the way we should go to Grave. We apparently were then at St Antonis.

We then asked them to accept some money in return for their kindness but this was indignantly refused but at last we persuaded them to accept some towards the expenses of the organisation. The padre asked me to write down his name and address so that I could write to him after the war but I pointed out the folly of this in view of possible recapture by the enemy who would be sure to deal with him in no uncertain manner. I remembered the Intelligence Officer telling us of the results of certain evaders who kept the names and addresses of helpers when in France who were eventually caught with tragic results to the helpers. We later got word that the other two members of the crew were in German hands some 15 kms away. We were eventually loaded into a 2 wheeled horse buggy (a most unsafe contraption) and all along the route there were men at intervals of about a mile who would suddenly loom up out of the darkness and tell us that the next stretch was clear. We were most impressed by the efficiency with which the whole affair was handled. We arrived at a farm and entered the kitchen where we sat talking for some time until my W/Op fell asleep over the table. We were then taken to bed where we slept until 6 a.m. At 8 a.m. a large car drove up driven on gas generator principle and we all got in. Incidentally whilst waiting for the car several people came in at intervals to inform us the road was clear. We went into Grave with two men on the front and one on each step quite a triumphal procession and were taken to a dressing station. From there we were taken to Driest where I stayed for three days, before going to Brussels where I remained two days, until I was finally picked up by aircraft and brought back to Down Ampney on the 27th September.

Editor's note

This is an extract from the 271 Sqn. Operations Record Book held at The National Archives, Kew. Jimmy Edwards was flying a Dakota on the 4th. day of "Operation Market", the attempt to take the river bridge at Arnhem in Holland.

As a result of his injuries Jimmy Edwards needed plastic surgery and in order to cover the scars he later grew what became his trademark, an enormous handlebar moustache.

Ex - Flight Sergeant John "Jersey" Heys served on 214 Sqn. from 1961 to 1964. Then a Corporal engine fitter here is a report from a Jersey newspaper dated January 15th.1963 of a "volunteer" trip to Goose Bay, Labrador.

15/1/63 122 THREE JERSEYMEN AND A GUERNSEYMAN Chance meeting in frozen north

THIS is a story of coincidence. It is also a story of jet-age life in the Royal Air Force. It is, in fact, a story of three Jerseymen and a Guernseyman.

The story starts at R.A.F. Marham, King's Lynn, Norfolk, home of 214 Squadron. Here are stationed Cpl. J. E. Heys, of Corbiere, and Cpl. Williams, the Guernseyman involved.

Towards the end of last year both of them agreed to face the banter of fellow Servicemen and to volunteer for a month's trip to Goose Bay, Labrador. Kitted out with parkas and all the rest of Service clothing guaranteed to keep out sub-zero temperatures, they flew from R.A.F. Lyneham aboard a Comet IV of Transport Command.

Blizzard

Six hours later they were at Gander, Newfoundland, where they faced a five-hour wait while a blizzard blew itself out. When flying conditions improved they boarded a D.C.4 of Maritime Central Airways for the last lap of their journey to Goose Bay.

Arriving there at 11 p.m. they got their first taste of a white world, where the thermometer never moved far from 22 degrees of frost and where everyone, if they had any choice in the matter, moved only from one warm building to another.

Corporals Heys and Williams

many, in fact, that the three put their back and fished only to see who caught the biggest. The Guernseyman (he should be used to fishing in colder climates) won.

The month-long tour of duty soon passed. Cpls. Heys and Williams were allocated seats on an R.A.F. Britannia heading for Britain from the Caribbean via Goose Bay.

Sun-tanned R.A.F. men aboard welcomed the chance to stretch their legs during the brief stop after their long flight north. The first to take the opportunity turned out to be S.A.C. Bob Samson, yet another Jerseymen, who was homeward bound after a three-month spell in Trinidad with his squadron.

One remained

Three Jerseymen and a Guernseyman now stood together on the tarmac, but one Cpl. Le Sueur had to stay there when the rest flew out. S.A.C. Samson headed for his own station when the Britannia landed in the United Kingdom. Cpls. Heys and Williams went back to King's Lynn.

Whether the three Jerseymen ever meet up again during their Service careers remains to be



found themselves numbered among 13 other R.A.F. men, 400 Canadians, thousands of Americans and countless Newfoundlanders. They had no sooner moved into their new quarters than they found that there was another Jerseyman there as well—Cpl. Technician Les Le Sueur.

Fishing expeditions

Yarns were swapped, experiences exchanged, and it was not long before the three Channel Islanders found a mutual interest in fishing. When their off-duty hours coincided, the three made for a nearby river, used axes to hack holes through ice almost two feet thick and dropped through chunks of red meat (from the Canadian mess) on improvised lines. Like wasps to a jam jar, the fish came—so

seen. The only thing certain is that, if they do, they'll quickly recall the day they met in Goose Bay, Labrador.



Cpl. Williams (left) and Cpl. Heys at Goose Bay

To the East and back in a month

And an encounter with a remarkable Jerseywoman

CPL. J. E. HEYS is a Jerseyman serving in the Royal Air Force, but although he is normally stationed at Marham, King's Lynn, Norfolk, he enjoys opportunities to get abroad and to write about his experiences on return. A year ago, the "Weekly Post" published his account of a month at Goose Bay, Labrador; now comes the story of a month out East in lands where the sun burns, mosquitoes bite and Channel Islanders are thin on the ground.

Together with Guernseyman Cpl. Williams, of St. Peter Port, Cpl. Heys is a member of 214 Squadron. They were two of 40 R.A.F. men given the task of flight refuelling a squadron of Javelin fighter-interceptors going to Kalikunda, an Indian Air Force base near Calcutta, to join the Indian and Australian air forces in a defence exercise.

20,000 miles

"Ground crew servicing parties had to be dotted right along the route to India, and that's where we came in," writes Cpl. Heys. He goes on: At 6 a.m. on October 25th we took off from Marham in a Transport Command Britannia of 511 Squadron on the first leg of a flight which, during the weeks ahead, meant over 50 hours in the air covering 20,000 miles.

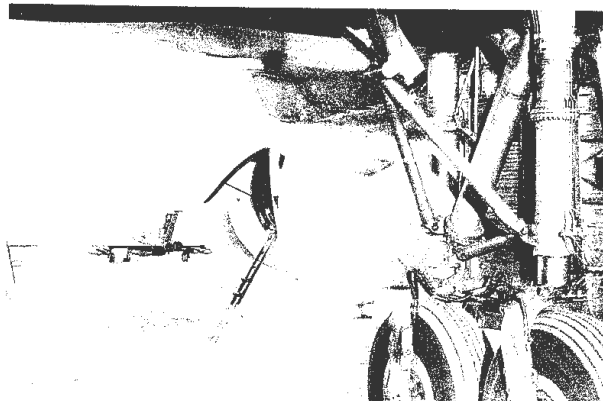
We arrived at Cyprus for lunch and continued our journey over Turkey and Persia to land on the island Sheikdom of Bahrain in the Persian Gulf at 11 p.m. We lived there in tents for five days. There was no cooling apparatus and the flies—as any Serviceman who has been there will remember

after seven years, is still being run single-handed by Mrs. Doris Fleming, of Jersey. She was delighted to see me and we spent many an hour talking of Jersey and people we knew.

Mrs. Fleming volunteered for the W.V.S. in 1956 after the death of her husband and was sent to Malaya. She never stops, Cpl. Heys writes, and nothing is too much trouble for her. She is mother to hundreds and is loved and respected by them all.

A coach trip around Penang Island was arranged by Mrs. Fleming for the 214 Squadron visitors. My most vivid memories of her will be the way she stormed up hundreds of steps in the mid-day heat, ahead of 40-odd perspiring R.A.F. types, towards a Buddhist temple on a mountain-side. On arrival at the top, she pushed aside Chinese and Malay guides who were trying to translate various writings on the walls saying: "Utter poppycock." Then she led us on a conducted tour of the whole enormous place pouring forth volumes of information while we and the guides followed in awed silence.

On another occasion, on



—persisted in an apparent aim to consume all white men in the shortest possible time. But there was a swimming pool which we lived in in off-duty time.

It was in a small writing room at the R.A.F. station there that Cpl. Williams and I encountered our first Channel Islander, Cpl. P. D. Le Flocq, from St. Peter Port. The two Guernseymen had never met before, but naturally we found a lot to talk about.

Monsoon season

The five days up, the Britannia reappeared and we were off to the Royal Australian Air Force base at Butterworth, Malaysia, calling at Bombay to refuel and have lunch. At 9 p.m. on Wednesday, October 30th, we landed at our destination to discover that the monsoon season was in full swing. Mosquitoes swarmed into our rooms for shelter and, while we emerged covered in bites, the chit-chat lizards emerged full of mosquitoes—their favourite food.

Accommodation here was good and so was the Australian food. Off-duty hours found us sunbathing and swimming in the station pool; the sea, unfortunately, was out of the question due to sea-snakes, pollution and stinging jelly fish. There were also visits to the offshore duty-free island of Penang for shopping expeditions and sightseeing.

Single-handed

There is a small but permanent R.A.F. detachment at Butterworth, and for its members there is a W.V.S. club which

arrived at a snake temple, she instructed one of the keepers to pick up a potted tree festooned with snakes and carry it outside because "my lads want to take some photographs". The snakes, although drugged by temple incense, are highly venomous and revive somewhat in the fresh air, making the return trip a bit tricky for the keeper.

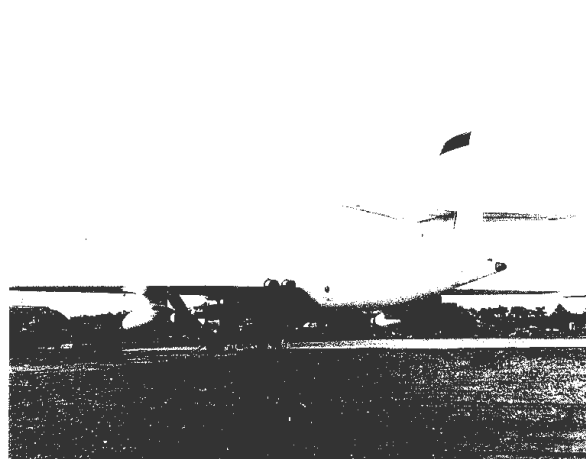
Longing for Jersey

She is doing a wonderful job out there, Cpl. Heys goes on, and must be happy in the knowledge that her efforts are appreciated. She told me she loves Malaya but often longs for Jersey, and to her many friends in the Island she sends distant wishes for a merry Christmas.

The faithful Britannia returned all too soon and, after 17 days in the area, we were off again to Calcutta, arriving at Dum Dum Airport at 3 in the afternoon. We were distressed to see the poverty of many Indian people and shocked to discover that upwards of half a million people are born, live, eat, sleep and die on the pavements of Calcutta. It was almost with relief, five days later, that we left for home via Bombay, Bahrain and Cyprus. Back at Marham, we soon rediscovered what goose-pimples felt like!

The exercise had been a complete success, helped throughout by the hard work and long hours of 511 Squadron, Transport Command, who were always on time and, once we were airborne, seemed to have an inexhaustible supply of ham salads—old faithfuls beloved of every R.A.F. type for so the story goes.

" Jersey " Heys again . Tanking a squadron of Javelins to India. 1962
Photos taken at Aden.
Temperature at Marham 9c , Aden 39c
Valiant XD861 (below)



From " Flight " magazine Aug. 6th. 1942

AUGUST 6TH, 1942

FLIGHT

145

TOTAL WAR

Text of Bomber Chief's Warning to Germany by Radio

WE in Britain know quite enough about air raids. For ten months your *Luftwaffe* bombed us. First you bombed us by day. When we made this impossible, they came by night. Then you had a big fleet of bombers. Your airmen fought well. They bombed London for 92 nights running. They made heavy raids on Coventry, Plymouth, Liverpool, and other British cities. They did a lot of damage. Forty-three thousand British men, women and children lost their lives. Many of our most cherished historical buildings were destroyed.

You thought, and Göring promised you, that you would be safe from bombs. And, indeed, during all that time we could only send over a small number of aircraft in return. But now it is just the other way. Now you send only a few aircraft against us, and we are bombing Germany heavily.

Why are we doing so? It is not revenge, though we



Air Marshal Sir Arthur Travers Harris, K.C.B., O.B.E., A.F.C.,
Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Bomber Command.

you that our losses are so heavy that we shall not be able to go on bombing you very much longer. Whoever believes that will be bitterly disappointed. I, who command the British bombers, will tell you what our losses are. Less than 5 per cent. of the bombers which we send over Germany are lost. Such a percentage of loss does very little even to check the constant increase

Why are we doing so? It is not revenge, though we do not forget Warsaw, Belgrade, Rotterdam, London, Plymouth and Coventry. We are bombing Germany, city by city, and ever more terribly, in order to make it impossible for you to go on with the war. That is our object. We shall pursue it remorselessly. City by city: Lübeck, Rostock, Cologne, Emden, Bremen, Wilhelmshaven, Duisburg, Hamburg—and the list will grow longer and longer. Let the Nazis drag you down to disaster with them if you will. That is for you to decide.

In fine weather we bomb you by night. Already 1,000 bombers go to one town, like Cologne, and destroy a third of it in an hour's bombing. We know; we have the photographs. In cloudy weather we bomb your factories and shipyards by day. We have done that as far away as Danzig. We are coming by day and by night. No part of the Reich is safe.

Military Targets

In Cologne, on the Ruhr, or at Rostock, Lübeck, or Emden, you may think that already our bombing amounts to something. But we do not think so. In comparison with what it will be like as soon as our own production of bombers comes to a flood and as American production doubles and then redoubles, all that has happened to you so far will seem very little.

I will speak frankly to you about whether we bomb single military targets or whole cities. Obviously we prefer to hit factories, shipyards and railways. It damages Hitler's war machine most. But those people who work in these plants live close to them. Therefore, we hit your houses and you. We regret the necessity for this. The workers of the Humboldt-Deutz, the diesel-engine plant in Cologne, for instance—some of whom were killed on the night of May 30 last—must inevitably take the risk of war. Just as our merchant seamen who man ships which the U-boats (equipped with Humboldt-Deutz engines) would have tried to torpedo. Were not the aircraft workers, their wives and children, at Coventry just as much "civilians" as the aircraft workers at Rostock and their families? But Hitler wanted it that way.

It is true that your defences inflict losses on our bombers. Your leaders try to comfort you by telling

ensured by the ever-increasing output of our own and the American factories.

Allied Strength

America has only just entered the fight in Europe. The first squadrons, forerunners of a whole air fleet, have arrived in England from the United States of America. Do you realise what it will mean to you when they bomb Germany also? In one American factory alone, the new Ford plant at Willow Run, Detroit, they are already turning out one four-engined bomber able to carry four tons of bombs to any part of the Reich every two hours. There are scores of other such factories in the United States of America. You cannot bomb those factories. Your submarines cannot even try to prevent those Atlantic bombers from getting here; for they fly across the Atlantic.

Soon we shall be coming every night and every day, rain, blow, or snow—we and the Americans. I have just spent eight months in America, so I know exactly what is coming. We are going to scourge the Third Reich from end to end if you make it necessary for us to do so. You cannot stop it, and you know it.

You have no chance. You could not defeat us in 1940, when we were almost unarmed and stood alone. Your leaders were crazy to attack Russia as well as America (but then your leaders are crazy; the whole world thinks so excepting Italy).

How can you hope to win now that we are getting ever stronger, having both Russia and America as allies, while you are getting more and more exhausted?

Remember this: no matter how far your armies march they can never get to England. They could not get here when we were unarmed. Whatever their victories, you will still have to settle the air war with us and America. You can never win that. But we are doing so already now.

One final thing: It is up to you to end the war and the bombing. You can overthrow the Nazis and make peace. It is not true that we plan a peace of revenge. That is a German propaganda lie. But we shall certainly make it impossible for any German Government to start a total war again. And is not that as necessary in your own interests as in ours?

COME AND JOIN US IN THE AUSTRALIAN ARMY

A LETTER HOME:

Dear Mum & Dad,

I am well. Hope youse are too. Tell me big brothers Doug and Phil that the Army is better than workin' on the farm - tell them to get in bloody quick smart before the jobs are all gone!

I wuz a bit slow in settling down at first, because ya don't hafta get outta bed until 6am. But I like sleeping in now, cuz all ya gotta do before breaky is make ya bed and shine ya boots and clean ya uniform. No bloody cows to milk, no calves to feed, no feed to stack - no thin !! Ya haz gotta shave though, but its not so bad, coz theres' lotsa hot water and even a light to see what ya doing!

At brekky ya get cereal, fruit and eggs, but theres' no 'roo steaks or possum stew like what Mum makes. Ya don't get fed again until noon, and by that time all the city boys are buggered because they've been on a route march, geez its' only like walking to the waterpump in the back paddock.

This one will kill me brothers with laughter. I keep getting medals for shooting . dunno why. The bullseye is as big as a bloody possum's bum and it don't move and its' not firing back at ya like the Johnson's did when our big scrubber bull got into their prize cows before the Ekka last year!

All ya gotta do is make yaself comfortable and hit the target - it's a piece of pi55!! Ya don't even load ya own cartridges- they come in little boxes and ya don't have to steady yaself against the rollbar of the 'roo shooting truck when ya reload.

Sometimes ya gotta wrestle with the city boys and I gotta be real careful coz they break easy - it's not like fighting with Doug and Phil and Jack and Boori and Steve and Muzza, all at once like we do after the muster.

Turns out I'm not a bad boxer either and it looks like I'm the best the platoon's got, and I've only been beaten by this one bloke from the Engineers - he's 6 foot 5 and 15 stone and 3 pick handles wide across the shoulders and as ya know I'm only 5foot 7 and eight stone wringin' wet, but I fought him 'til the other blokes carried me off to the boozier.

P.T.O

Note relating to the previous page:

I wonder how many Germans listened, or indeed dared to have listened to this broadcast by Sir Arthur Harris. I bet that Hitler and Goebbels were advised of it's content and Himmler received something similar ???

I can't complain about the Army - tell the boys to get in quick before word gets around how good it is.

Ya loving daughter, Sheila.

SECRETARY'S THOUGHTS

At the time of writing we have 198 members (in recent weeks we have lost 15 members, three of whom have died and the rest not renewed membership.) Of the 198 members about 82 served in WWII, mostly aircrew with a sprinkling of groundcrew and four WAAFs.

All of these people are, at the youngest, now in their early eighties with the majority in their mid to late eighties and a few over ninety. It is believed that our two oldest members are ninety six or dose to it.

Having now served as Secretary since early 2001 it has been my privilege and pleasure to have met and/or corresponded with most of these people and all are wonderful characters each with fascinating stories to tell.

Having served on the Squadron from 1956 to 1958 I left the RAF knowing almost nothing about the history of 214 or indeed of Bomber Command until some years later when I started to research my book on Norfolk Airfields, eventually published in 1997 after about 30 years of gathering the facts and figures.

After becoming more knowledgeable on Bomber Command operations during WW11 I then realised that the difference between war and postwar ops was that when the boys took off in wartime they knew there was a very good chance that they would not return or at best be taken as a pow.

Equally those serving on the ground ran the risk of being bombed or attacked by a low flying intruder. (or indeed breaking their necks falling off a Stirling)

Of course I have not forgotten that some of our wartime members went on to serve postwar, a few reaching high rank.

Whatever period that you served it has been a pleasure to have got to know many of you. Long may it continue.

This is an extract from the January 2007 edition of Aeroplane magazine.

It proves the point that information contained in squadron operational record books do contain errors which can cause confusion to historians and researchers.

Serial slip-up

SIR — Having just read the August copy of *Aeroplane* and the article *Flying South*, as a former member of 214 Sqn during the early air-to-air-refuelling days I was particularly interested in Rowland White's look back to that period.

However, although I had left the unit before the flight to D.F. Malan Airport took place I have, in recent months, needed to consult Sir Michael Beetham about the serial number of the Valiant that he flew to Cape Town on July 9, 1959. Looking up various publications it appeared that it was XD861, but I had a gut feeling that this was incorrect.

Having consulted his logbook, Sir Michael kindly telephoned me to confirm that it was XD858 and not XD861.

Mike Beetham had flown the first of his long-distance proving flights in April

1959 to Salisbury in Rhodesia and the second on June 18, 1959, this time to Jan Smuts Airport, Jo'burg. Is it possible that XD861 was used on one or both of these earlier record-setting flights?

PETER M. WALKER

*Secretary, 214 Sqn Association
Brundall, Norwich, Norfolk*

Rowland White replies:

Many thanks for forwarding the letter from Peter Walker. It presented a bit of a puzzle, as I too had read elsewhere that XD861 was the Valiant flown by Sir Michael to Cape Town.

While writing the piece, I double-checked it using the 214 Sqn Operations Record Book (ORB). And it's here, I've discovered, where the source of the confusion lies.

I've attached a copy of the relevant

entry, which I took at face value, recording that Sir Michael and his crew flew from Marham to Cape Town aboard XD861 on July 9, 1959.

On the next page, however, the ORB states that Sir Michael and his crew flew back in XD858 on July 14.

So, assuming that Sir Michael returned in the same jet he flew out in, where does XD861 come into it? Well, the mistake in the ORB arises, I suspect, because XD861 was in Cape Town at the same time as Sir Michael. Staging through Kano, it left Marham on July 11 and arrived in Cape Town the following day. Captained by Sqn Ldr Furze, it was carrying spares needed to repair a fault with XD858's undercarriage.

So, I stand corrected, but at the same time relieved that I'm not going nuts. Sir Michael and his crew did indeed set their record between London and Cape Town flying XD858 — not XD861 as recorded by the ORB.

ROWLAND WHITE

London WC2

| DETAIL OF WORK CARRIED OUT | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|---------------|-------|-------|------------------------------|
| By 214 Squadron | | | | | | |
| SECRET | | | | | | |
| For the Month of JULY 1959 | | | | | | |
| DATE | AIRCRAFT Type & Number | CREW | Duty | Time | | DETAILS OF SORTIE or FLIGHT |
| | | | | Up | Down | |
| 9.7.59 | 660 | P/L.A. Fern | Captain | 05.52 | 07.41 | Secondary Tanker Kano - Kano |
| | | P/O.C. Powell | 2nd. Pilot | | | |
| | | P/L.G. Butler | Wing. Radar | | | |
| | | P/L.H. Harrison | Wing. Plotter | | | |
| | | P/O.R. Snape | A.E.O. | | | |
| 9.7.59 | 870 | P/L.R. Butler | Captain | 05.57 | 08.07 | Reserve Tanker Kano - Kano |
| | | P/O.D. Johnson | 2nd. Pilot | | | |
| | | P/L.B. Wallis | Wing. Radar | | | |
| | | P/L.B. Turner | Wing. Plotter | | | |
| | | P/O.J. Brix | A.E.O. | | | |
| 9.7.59 | 861 | P/O.M. Beetham | Captain | 01.13 | 18.05 | Marham - Cape Town |

| | | | | | | |
|--------|-----|------------------|--------------|-------|-------|----------|
| | | V/L.O. Braggan | Cnd: Pilot | | | |
| | | F/L. S. Campbell | Nav: Radar | | | |
| | | F/L. J. Taylor | Nav: Plotter | | | |
| | | F/O. M. Baker | A. E. O. | | | |
| | | S/T. J. Paine | Cock: Chief | | | |
| 7-T.55 | 881 | S/L. R. Furse | Comdant | 17.56 | 18.24 | 41m West |
| | | S/L. G. Braggan | 2nd: Pilot | | | |

ABOVE The erroneous entry in 214 Sqn's Operations Record Book which led to the wrong Valiant serial being quoted in Rowland White's article — see above.

Note: Rowland White is the author of the book, Vulcan 607, the epic story of the "Black Buck" bombing operations against Port Stanley airfield in the Falklands war.

The story involves the huge part played by the Marham Victor tanker force and the trials and tribulations of operating so far from home.

Of course, our President, Sir Michael Beetham was very much involved, he was Chief of the Air Staff at that period.

It is an amazing story and a book hard to put down.

Published in 2006 by Bantam Press it is still available from most good bookshops or your local library.



*Life depends on
a silken thread*

THE CATERPILLAR CLUB

Membership for Life

The Caterpillar Club was founded in 1920. There is only one qualification for membership: it is reserved exclusively to those who have saved their lives with Irvin Air Chutes.

The only class of membership is life, and the sole privilege, its continued enjoyment.

Prior to the present war, the number of enrolled members exceeded two thousand but it is believed that many who are qualified have not reported their eligibility.

Already, many of the personnel of the flying services engaged in the war have successfully used their Irvin Air Chutes in extreme emergency and, as it goes on, the membership of the Caterpillar Club will expand week by week.

Leslie L. Irvin, inventor of the Irvin Air Chute and founder of the Caterpillar Club, is anxious that the records of the Club be kept as complete and up to date as possible. He therefore invites all who are now, or who may become, eligible to communicate with him.

Their names will be recorded in the Club Register and on the gold Caterpillar which is sent to each member on enrolment.

LESLIE L. IRVIN, THE IRVING AIR CHUTE OF GREAT BRITAIN LIMITED
LETCHEWORTH, HERTS, ENGLAND

