



# FLASHPOINT

ROYAL AIR FORCE & DEFENCE FIRE SERVICES ASSOCIATION MAGAZINE



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## Cover Picture

Making a speedy exit at Kandahar



# From the Editor

Regular readers will think I am beginning to sound like a broken record, but it needs to be said. This magazine can only continue if we receive contributions to fill it. This edition contains items submitted by regular contributors and me. Those contributing amount to less than a half of one percent of the membership!

As a consequence we need to consider either reducing the size of the magazine in numbers of pages, or reducing the number of issues per year. Previously I have said if each paid up member submitted one item it would keep us going for years, so come on people, everyone has a tale to tell, tell yours through these pages.

I receive very little input from colleagues from the AFDFS or DFS as is now so please people get your thinking hats on and send in some material.

This edition sees the introduction of our first prize crossword, where a book token awaits the first person to email the correct solution to me, [train.ade@virgin.net](mailto:train.ade@virgin.net), which coincidentally is the same email address for items for publication.

On a different note, I recently paid a very brief visit to the museum at Scampton and I have to commend Steve Shirley and his

team on an excellent job. The museum is very welcoming and laid out in a logical fashion, and they have a comprehensive library being managed by Steve Harrison.

We should not underestimate the amount of time contributed by volunteers to maintain our heritage, once this stuff is gone it cannot be replaced and no donation to the museum is ever wasted.

Having just been advised how much it is going to cost just to restore the bodywork on my TACR2a I shudder to think how much it must cost to maintain the museum fleet. I was fortunate to be taken to the vehicle hangar by Steve H for a look round the vehicles.

It was just like stepping back in time, my first crash combine could all be found there, ACRT, Mk 6, DP2, really awakened memories, the only job I, as a 17 year old LAC, was allowed to do was to run the transfer hose from the DP2 to the Mk 6. I would be prepared to bet good money it's the only place you can see a Mk6-7-8-9-10-11 all in the same place at once.

Just like riding a bike you never forget this stuff and fond memories of a variety of vehicle related escapades came to mind, most of which I cannot mention in order to protect the guilty (you know who you are!)

I was disappointed when the time came for me to leave as I knew I hadn't been able to devote the time to the museum that it deserves, but I plan to return in the near future and do the tour properly, if you are within 50 miles of Scampton you really should go.

On a much sadder note, I attended the funeral service for Ted Firmager. For those who don't know, Ted was one of a breed rarely seen now, he was a WO who was a legend throughout our trade, feared and respected in equal measure. I always thought Ted to be a very fair man and absolutely committed to our trade, he loved the job, and his men very much and always expected, and got, the very highest professional standards.

At the service we were reminded of Ted's sense of humour, they wheeled him to the dulcet tones of the 633 Squadron, and midway through the service we had a blast of James Last. It turned out Ted had been a bit of a dance champion in his youth, if only we had known that when serving with him!

He was dispatched on the conveyor belt to the sound of The Dambusters Theme, and now I imagine he is running the ultimate Crash Crew in the great beyond, god bless and RIP Sir, one in a million.

## Our Patron from Trevor Hayes

Our Association Patron, Air Marshal Sir Roger Austin, is also the President of the Royal Air Forces Association, South East and Eastern Area.

At the Area Conference, held at Potters Resort, Norfolk, on the weekend of 20th to 22nd March, Sir Roger presented RAFA branch representatives with certificates of merit.

Pictured are our Treasurer, Trevor Hayes receiving the Small Branch Efficiency Certificate for his branch. Also a picture of Sir Roger, Trevor and his wife, Pat, who accepted the certificate for collecting over £10,000 for the Wings Appeal and Sir Roger in full dress uniform having taken the salute at the parade on Sunday morning.



# Letter to the Flashpoint editor

Dear editor just a note to say I thought this latest edition of Flashpoint (autumn) 2014 in my humble opinion must rank as one of the best ever editions of our Association magazine. So much diversity and variety literally some thing for everyone and a real good read.

I don't now how you managed to obtain so many responses from members but it was certainly worth the effort well done to you Adey and to all the contributors. I always enjoy looking through flashpoint and coming across a name or a photograph that brings back fond memories and in this edition the face in question was my good buddy Steve Harrison how on earth I thought to myself has my friend for nearly fifty years managed to keep his good looks and have such a fine head of hair while I'm as bald as a coot and my youthful looks went a long time ago.

But on a more serious note Steve and his lovely wife Liz have just become grand parents for the first time congratulations to you both. the name that brought back many memories was that of Sergeant Andy Dixon who was mentioned in John Woodward's interesting article on page eight I was stationed at RAF Lindholme with Sgt Dixon in the seventies and I remember him as a quiet pleasant man that was until he took me to a Rugby league game; Doncaster versus St Helens. The legendary Alex Murphy was playing for Saints and it soon become apparent that Andy had no time for Murphy and called him some terrible names at one time Murphy came over to our location seeking out the perpetrator of this torrent of abuse I thought for one minute that Murphy was going to climb into the crowd and sort Andy out.

Back at the Fire section the next day Andy reverted to type and was his usual easy going relaxed self but what a difference to his behaviour at the rugby match. Still I Thought Sgt Dixon a good man great to work with. Have included a photograph of the Lindholme Fire Section which includes Andy Dixon taken in March 1972. It would be nice to hear from any colleagues pictured

*George Edwards member number 238*

For some reason when I read that headline by Adey the image of that famous WW1 recruitment poster appeared in my mind, almost causing me to leap to my feet and salute! I didn't because any form of leaping is off limits at the moment given I'm in Week 5 of a projected 6-7 weeks of a broken right humerus, which, let me assure you all is anything but humourous! Being a clever bugger of sorts, however, I have adapted my left arm to holding my glass of superb NZ Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc, a case of which arrived the day I fell over and so has remained largely untouched apart from one or two removed by the 'clefthy wallahs' in my family; "Thanks Dad!"

So, some observations on the Summer edition! What a nice photo that is accompanying the BEM Citation for George Edwards! That little group would qualify for what I used to refer to as a "Warrant Officers' Soviet", using the literal meaning of the word 'soviet' of course, which loosely interpreted means a meeting of minds. I'll put money on it that none of the buggers bought the round, the experience I had being that "you're the Boss, your shout"! I also notice the distribution of hair seems about even!

That's a good piece from Tim Hunt ["Land of the Long White Cloud"] whom I must have met on my last visit to his current base, courtesy of his predecessor, also ex-RAF Fire Service. Tim wouldn't be aware of it but the fact of ex-RAF recruitment as he experienced was a direct result of a precedent I set way back in the mid 1960's when I realized that every now and then the RNZAF Fire Service, which ran very much on similar lines to the RAF, needed a boost

of experienced firemen. I, myself, was such a recruit, but there were others before me. Nice to see he's become an All Black supporter too. Smart move there son!

I liked the "Lest We Forget" too. I can perhaps add a little to it. My Dad was wounded at "Wipers" and sent home, fortunately for me! He never spoke about his experiences, certainly not to me, but that generation was scarred for sure. My wife is fourth generation New Zealander, and of course the NZ contribution to both World Wars was massive given the size of the population in 1914 was less than a million, ten per cent of which joined up! Her father's two older brothers are buried in France and a cousin who was never found is on a memorial. WW2 was much the same. New Zealand didn't have much of a Navy in 1939, being an overseas station of the RN, but NZ did supply a lot of trained manpower to the RN, and HMS Achilles at the Battle of the River Plate was manned almost entirely by Kiwis! In the RAF NZ pilots were the third highest group during the Battle of Britain after the UK itself and the Czechs who were from a displaced country. There were over 6000 Kiwis in Bomber Command, a third of whom never came home. Don't get me going on my views of a British Government which dumped the best friends it ever had in Australia and New Zealand when it opted to join the EU and look how well that turned out!

Right, that's it for now. I've typed this with one finger on my left [the wrong] hand and my concentration span is rapidly waning!

*Congratulations on your Editorship Adey*

*Colin Hall*

## A Note about George Edwards

I have just had a call from George Edwards who has passed on the sad news that after all the pain that he has suffered over the years, his cancer has returned to his stomach.

George is one of the most decent, brave men that I have ever had the privilege of knowing and I would ask any one that has served with, or known him, to offer support or prayers for his recovery.

*Brian Ford  
Membership Secretary*

I would just like to add my support for Brian's message. George has been a cornerstone of the Association throughout my involvement, and he has worked tirelessly both behind the scenes and on Flashpoint. My thoughts are with you and your family George hoping you can once again rise above adversity and this evil disease.

*Dave [webmaster@rafanddfsa.co.uk](mailto:webmaster@rafanddfsa.co.uk)*

# From the family of Sir John Sutton

Dear friends and colleagues,

I recently received this e mail from ex. RAF Firemen crew mate of mine (RAF Stanley and RAF Coningsby) Dave can be best described as a top class RAF fire fighter one of the very best and a real good chap it doesn't surprise me one bit to see him going out of his way to raise funds for this very worthy cause.

To the best of my knowledge our old trade and association has in the recent past lost five dearly loved colleagues to cancer including Dave Stevenson Paul McGhee Mick Hayward Mike Shenton & Nev Tortice may they all rest in peace, apologies if I have missed anybody off the list. It would be fantastic if we as an Association/ group of ex RAF Firemen could rally as much support as possible for Dave. I only wish I could join him for a small part of the journey but I am otherwise engaged at the moment

*Hope you can help  
Every good wish*

*George Edwards ex RAF Fireman  
and ex and current cancer patient*

**David Louie Lucock** 1 March 14:06

Hi all, Its another month down and getting ever closer to the day I have to try and get up Box and Leith Hill on my 100 mile challenge. I would be grateful to anyone who would support me in this Endeavour and also help this great cause. Thank you

[David Lucock is fundraising on JustGiving for Macmillan Cancer Support](#)

[www.justgiving.com](http://www.justgiving.com)

Members are invited to attend the late Sir John Sutton KCB RAF Retd Service of Thanksgiving on 22 May 2015 at 13.00 hours at St Michael and All Angels' Chapel, Royal Air Force College Cranwell, Sleaford, Lincolnshire NG34 8HB, Followed by light refreshments in College Hall Officers' Mess.

Those wishing to attend please contact Neil Slade Chairman on 01252 492111, email [fordmondeo12@sky.com](mailto:fordmondeo12@sky.com) with name and vehicle registration before the 20 April 2015.

Wives and Partners are also invited, please state if you will be accompanied.

Thank you very much indeed for your kind message of condolence over John's sudden death. It was indeed a great shock but the many messages, such as yours, have made it a little easier to bear.

The blessing was that that it was very quick. With Angela helping him in the garden John was about to plant a replacement pear tree. His death was instant and he suffered no pain or distress. It may amuse you to know that Air Marshal Sir John was taken away still wearing his best green wellies!!

In view of his long professional career and varied appointments the family wish to have a small private funeral, to be followed in the spring by a Thanksgiving service.

*With thanks from Angela, Shenagh, Shaun and Steve*



# From the Webmeister

The site continues to grow at a steady pace, much of the input coming from our Facebook Group. At the last count it consisted of 16,318 Files in 742 Folders, most of which are images. We currently have galleries for all the main crash vehicles from the WOT1 right through to MFV & RIV as well as action shots and incidents. In the Memories Pages there are galleries for:

Abingdon	El Adem	Mount Batten
Acklington	Elvington	Newton
Aden (Khormaksar, Steamer Point and Ryan)	Fairford	North Luffenham
AFCENT	Falkland Islands	Northolt
Afghanistan	Farnborough	Oakington
Aldergrove	Finningley	Odiham
Ascension Island	Fylingdales	Old Sarum
Australia	Gan	Ouston
Ballykelly	Geilenkirchen	Pershore
Barkston Heath	Gibraltar	Quedgeley
Bassingbourn	Goose Bay	Rudloe Manor
Bawdsey	Gravelly	Salalah
Belize	Guttersloh	Saxa Vord
Benson	Halton	Scampton
Berlin	Hemswell	Sharjah
Bicester	Henlow	Shawbury
Biggin Hill	High Wycombe	Sibson
Binbrook	Hong Kong	Singapore
Bishops Court	Honington	St Athan
Boulmer	Hullavington	St Mawgan
Bovingdon	Kemble	Stafford
Brawdy	Kineton	Stradishall
Bridgnorth	Kinloss	Strubby
Brize Norton	Laarbruch	Sutton-on-Hull
Bruggen	Lee-on-Solent	Swinderby
Bruntingthorpe	Leeming	Sydenham
Buchan	Leuchars	Tangmere
Cardington	Lindholme	Tuernhill
Catterick	Linton-on-Ouse	Thorney Island
Chivenor	Lossiemouth	Tobruk
Christmas Island	Lyneham	Topcliff
Church Fenton	Maastricht	Upavon
Colerne	Machrihanish	Valley
Coltishall	Malaya	Waddington
Coningsby	Malta	Wahn
Cosford	Manston	Waterbeach
Cottesmore	Marchwood	Wattisham
Cranwell	Marham	Weeton
Croatia	Masirah	Wegberg
Cyprus	Menwith Hill	West Raynham
Dishforth	Mepal	Wildenrath
Donnington	Metheringham	Wittering
Driffield	Middleton St George	Wyton
Duxford	Middle Wallop	Yeovilton
Eastleigh	Minhad	
	Molesworth	

I know that's a lot of places, and some have more galleries within them, but it will give the reader an idea of how much work has gone into building and maintaining [www.rafanddfsa.co.uk](http://www.rafanddfsa.co.uk)

*Cheers Dave*

## Welcome

The Association welcomes the following new members who have joined since 1<sup>st</sup> January 2014

1074	Simon	Marsh
1075	Bill	Snow
1076	Phillip	Barnes
1077	Ian	Crabtree
1078	Kevin	Pateman
1079	Michael Albert	Allsop
1080	Ian	Baker
1081	Michael	Branch
1082	John	Raynor
1083	Brian Thomas	Shields
1084	Frank	Mycock
1085	Sir Roger	Austin
1086	Frederick John	Morris
1987	John	Simpson
1088	James Lee	Cairns
1089	Alan (AL) Taff	Cummins
1090	Christopher	Rogers
1091	Geoffrey	Allen
1092	Steven	Lewis
1093	Derek William	Edgington
1094	Bruce David	Bagley
1095	Malcolm John	Hawtrey

# SECTION OF THE MONTH

## THE FIRE SECTION



Fire Services at RAF Lindholme are responsible for crash fire coverage of all aircraft movements and incidents on and off the airfield. Domestic fire cover is not mandatory but of course the fire services turn out for all calls, aircraft movements allowing, and we have not let anyone down. Night and day we are on call for fire special services, or advice on fire matters and we are always pleased to assist.

Congratulations are in order to the NCO in charge, Flt Sgt Nicholl, on the award of a well-earned British Empire Medal in the New Year's Honours List. Well done!

The section is a hotbed of sportsmen. Station football and Hockey. Wing golf, shooting and table-tennis. The section football team ranks pretty high in inter-section matches. One member of the section was recently presented with a Command Sports Representatives Badge for Angling. Before finishing with sport, a challenge is thrown open to the station to find a volley ball team comparable, however slightly, to the Aces of the Fire Services.

The location of the section for those unaware is the white buildings with red trucks outside, next to the Air Traffic Control Tower, where a welcome with a cup of tea/coffee is extended to all seeking advice or just a natter.

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*L to R?? Cpl Denis Piper, Sgt Frank Truscott, Fsgt Gerry Nichols, Sgt Andy Dixon, SAC Scouse Martin, SAC George Edwards, SAC Bob Lowe, SACc Sandy Sanderson*

# The runaway road roller by Brian Ford

Probably, one of my strangest postings was to RAF Steamer point in Aden. This was during the “troubles” in the mid sixties. During our unaccompanied tour we were subjected to heat, flies and, like war, “long periods of inactivity, interspersed with frantic action”

One of our extra duties was the routine testing and maintenance of Royal Navy fire equipment and it was while returning a freshly serviced Dennis, Large Trailer pump that we found that even in grim circumstances such as those that we were facing; life could be hysterically funny.

One afternoon we were en route for HMS Sheba, a naval shore establishment. Our role was two fold, one to return the trailer pump, the other to marshal in a Whirlwind Helicopter.

We were passing over Belfry bridge when we heard a loud rumbling and crashing noise from behind us, Thinking that the trailer pump had come adrift I yelled “Brakes” but before Mike Hammond, the driver could react, to my utter amazement, we were overtaken by a contractors Road Roller on the near side ! This normally slow moving Diesel powered vehicle passed us at a speed of at least thirty - forty miles per hour.

It would seem that the young Arab driver had been negotiating the steep, tortuous road down from the hospital which would compare favourably with a Swiss mountain pass. Becoming bored with his slow progress he knocked the gear lever into “neutral” and attempted to “coast” the machine home. Once in neutral, the ten ton machine quickly gathered momentum and there was no way that he could shift back into gear. On this type of roller there are no brakes, other than the parking brake, all speed being controlled by the engine revs.

Steering was by a primitive tiller system operated by a very small, low geared, steering wheel. So the poor devil had negotiated about five hair pin bends, on gradient slopes in excess of one in ten and the camp traffic, spinning the wheel like a man possessed. Then, just as he approached Tahwahi and flat ground he saw this huge fire vehicle in front. Realising that he could not overtake in the usual way because of oncoming traffic he elected to attempt to

pass us on the near side.

Having squeezed past, he completely lost control. I have this vivid picture of the driver, bouncing up and down on his old tractor type, spring steel seat and with every bounce; his head was striking the underside of the corrugated tin roof.

Then suddenly, seeing the pedestrians and traffic in front of him, he veered across the road, through the Anglican Church Graveyard wall, demolishing a swathe of tombstones, angels and crosses, before finally coming to rest against the church wall.

Running across to him I was deafened by the noise of the screaming engine. My first concern was for the safety of the driver. I attempted to tell him to climb out but he had frozen with fear, I remember that his eyes had rolled right up in their sockets. I had to physically remove him. This was easily achieved; a good grip of his “djeabilla” (long skirt) in the crotch region and a good heave had him out and passed over to Mick and Dave Bright. Then the next problem; how to silence the damned engine.! There were no keys or shut off lever but looking round the machine I found a large brass wheel, having nothing to lose I gave it a turn and this resulted in a roar of escaping air and then.....blessed silence!

Then it started; a snort, a gurgle, a giggle then wave after wave of raucous laughter. The laughter that comes easily as fear departs; the laughter that becomes agony, that joyous sound that means, we are safe, we are happy, it borders on hysteria but to me it was music because it was my crew that had forgotten for a while, all the hardships and loneliness that we were each individually enduring.

A few minutes later a Land rover, full of “Red Caps” (Army Policemen) arrived and took control. This load of superior “Neanderthals” regarded us with total contempt, their day had been ruined and here were a crowd of “Brylcreem Boy” Firemen giggling like a crowd of half wits.

We eventually arrived at H.M.S. Sheba, just in time to bring in the helicopter, deliver the trailer pump and then returned to Steamer Point to make out our report.

We had hardly had time to “brew up” when the light in the doorway was blotted out by the figure of a huge Army Red Cap Corporal. This poor lad had been sent to take statements.

Within a couple of minutes he had been drawn into our hysteria and was laughing as loudly as any of us; it took him about four hours to get his statement written down and because he was for a while “one of us” he further enjoyed our company in the bar that night.

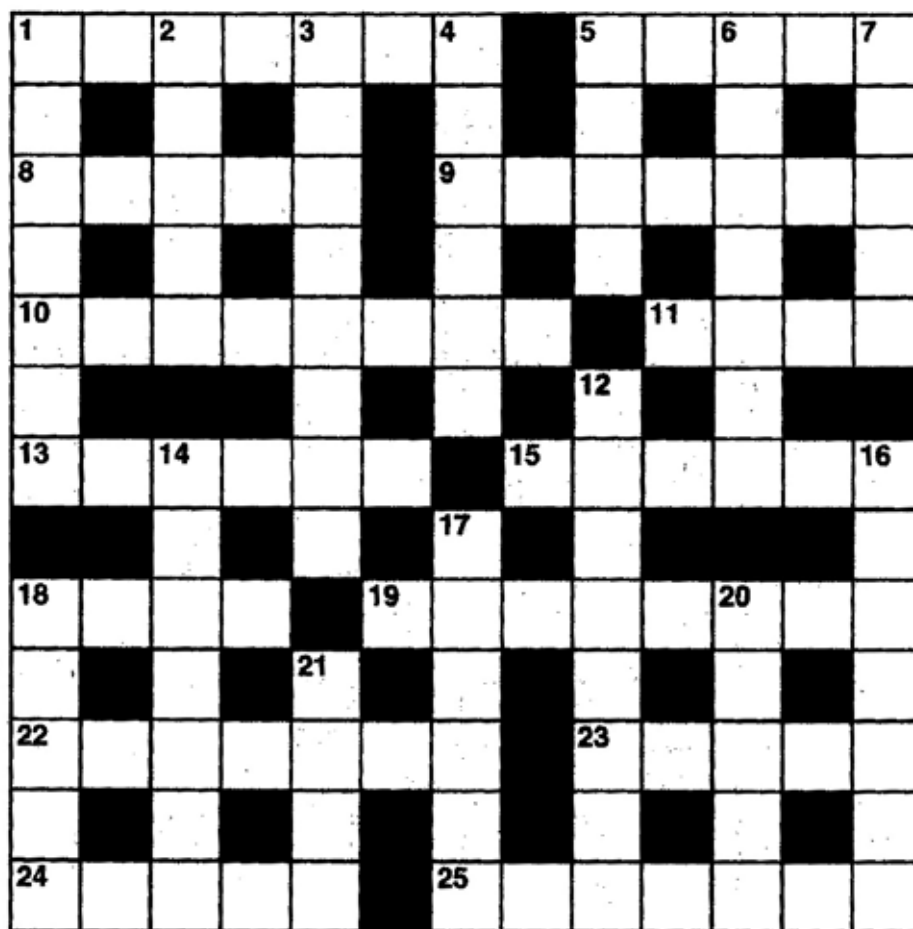
The next day, when I arrived for duty, I was summoned into F.O. Bill Ford’s office. He had a huge grin on his face and introduced me to a “Red Cap” Captain, who said “Well Corporal, we’ve all heard the story and had a darn good laugh, now, I’m afraid I am going to take the smile off your face. Apparently the young driver, in his quest for speed had carried out certain modifications to his machine.

When we examined it we found that he had wired down the pressure relief valve on the air tank, perhaps you would care to examine this.” He laid a pressure gauge on the table..... The needle had gone past the red sector and was in fact jammed on the wrong side of the stop pin! “If you hadn’t turned off the engine when you did, you might have all been killed... now laugh that

Off! ”.....Silence!!!



# Flashpoint Crossword No 1 by Firefly



Across:

1. Antony perhaps over iconic crash truck. (4,3)
5. Torn rib zone scrambled the home & 13 of RAF transport fleet. (5,6)
8. Endless match mother followed with deadly radiation. (5)
9. Morning jewellery strolling. (7)
10. Hobo was in front but rode roughshod to solution. (8)
11. See 18 down.
13. See 5.
15. Bloom had Ali in a whirl. (6)
18. What one aims to do with life, and computing. (4)
19. Fancy script journalist searched down page for. (8)
22. A very ordinary call at dawn one initially takes to be a tropical fruit. (7)
23. Unsuitable paint maybe. (5)
24. Hose, pump or ladder? It's boring! (5)
25. Hide belt material. (7)

Down:

1. Unusual game not powerful bomb rating. (7)
2. Odd BA dance. (5)
3. Camps not made into Dam Busters base. (8)
4. Ten tread carefully in adult movie. (1-5)
5. Breathing Apparatus beside new-born. (4)
6. Basic training to start with. (7)
7. Shoulder flash bird. Bald or golden? (5)
12. Xmas song in a US State. North or South? (8)
14. Gunners six oil perhaps, for Italian parcels. (7)
16. Hill on German car, he checks the books. (7)
17. Primary or Secondary? Sutton-on-Hull, Catterick or Manston perhaps. (6)
- 18 across. Set upright tube for & 11 hydrant accessory. (5,4)
20. Bloodsucker in vile ache. (5)
21. RAF(H) Nocton, or Albert perhaps? (4)

Prize Crossword: First correct entry to reach me by 30th April 2015 receives a copy of a highly regarded book, email: train.ade@virgin.net

*It is with sadness that I wish to advise members of the passing of the following colleagues, clear to stand down now lads.*

## **Edward "Ted" Firmager**

It with great regret that I have inform you of the death of Edward (Ted) Firmager ex WORAF Fire Service, who passed away in Thetford on Saturday 31 January 2015.

He will be greatly missed by family and friends

*From the Association:*

Ted was a past member of our Association and was known to many of us throughout the trade. He was a well respected Warrant Officer and his passing deserves our universal respect and admiration for his years of service as a fire fighter.

*RIP Ted  
Brian Ford*

Editor's note: Steve Harrison and I were present at Teds' funeral, together with sufficient former firefighters to provide a Cat 6 crew, Ted would have been pleased. He was wheeled in to the 633 Squadron march and he was dispatched to the memorable sounds of the Dambusters March J I was honoured and proud to have served with Ted and consider him to be one of the best men I encountered during my 14 years in the service.

## **Bill "Chalky" White**

Bill passed away peacefully in his sleep surrounded by his family after a short illness on 21 January 2015. During his time with RAF Fire Service he served at various locations including Newton, Singapore, Catterick, Benson, Waddington, West Raynham, Gan, Abingdon, Bruggen, Machrihanish and Finningley.

Bill will be sadly missed by all his family but reunited with his beloved wife Margaret.

*RIP Bill*



## **Colin Farmer**

It is with a feeling of deep sadness, that I have to report the death of Colin Farmer, Who passed away in Perth, Australia, on the morning of the 19th January.

Colin was a "Sutton" trained Fireman and served on various stations during his twenty two years service, including Church Lawford, Bassingbourne, Tangmere, Kuala Lumpur, Hullavington, Catterick (as an instructor), Sharjah, Fairford and Laarbruch.

During a holiday visit to UK in September, Colin met up with the Royal Wootton "Baseteers" and was made an honorary member. We all enjoyed a warm afternoon in his company and his passing has left us saddened but richer for his friendship.

*RIP Mate, One of the best  
Brian Ford*

## **Mike Shenton**

I am sorry to have to inform you of the death of Mike Shenton on 5th Jan 2015 . Mike died at home after a long fight against ill health.

*From the Association:*

Mike was a past Committee member and became the Association Treasurer. During his time in the RAF, he was trained at Sutton upon Hull and served at Shawbury, Khormaksar, Salalah, Dishforth and Ternhill. As a well respected and hard working member of our group we deeply regret his passing.

*RIP Mike  
Jim Bryson*

## **James Bryson**

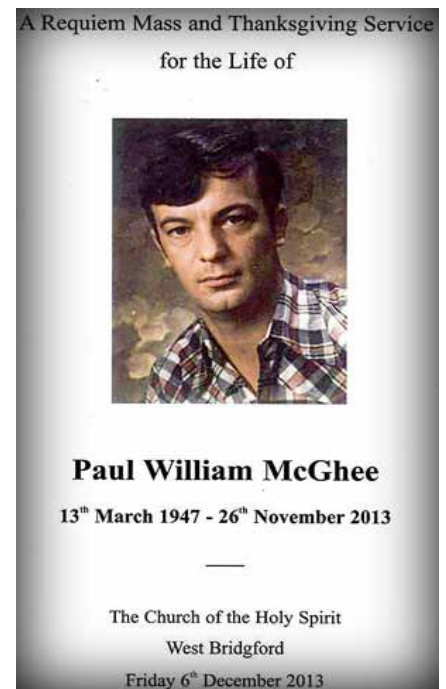
Sorry to have to announce that ex-RAF Fireman James Bryson died six weeks ago at the age of 76. During the 1960s Jim served at RAF Leuchars, RAF Aldergrove, RAF(H) Wegberg and finally RAF Geilenkirchen. He lived in Mossblown, Ayrshire.

*RIP Jim*

## **Paul McGee**

It was 26th November 2013 that we lost our fire-fighting brother Paul McGee. our hearts go out to Angie, Sharon and James. Rest in Peace Paul, my old desert buddy a well respected Royal Air Force fire-fighter.

*Steve Harrison*



# The NAAFI Run by Colin Hall

## Fireman's Prayer

*When I am called to duty,  
God  
whenever flames may rage,  
Give me the strength to save  
some life  
Whatever be its age.  
Help me to embrace a little  
child  
Before it's too late,  
Or some older person  
from the horror of that fate.  
Enable me to be alert  
And hear the weakest shout,  
And quickly and efficiently  
to put the fire out.  
I want to fill my calling  
and give the best in me,  
To guard my neighbour  
And protect his property.  
And if according to Your  
will  
I have to lose my life,  
Please bless with Your  
protecting hand  
My children and my wife  
A.W (Smokey) Linn*

Your call for humour has stirred a response! I have not embellished this tale in any way, It's precisely as it happened.

Cottesmore , 1961, and the man in charge of the Fire Section is a WO name of "Cockie" Cockerton, though we mere SAC's would never, ever, presume to call him by that name. To us, he was "Sir" . I seem to recall he was single, and lived in the Mess, which is where I was sent one morning to pick him up. Now WO's didn't wear any visible trappings of priesthood, but to we earthlings they were GOD! On arrival at the Mess, you rang the bell and stood back, because behind that door was hallowed ground and you dare not trespass.

Cockie was, however, a gentleman of the old school, and I recall when a Victor crashed three miles down the approach I had heard the crash alarm and though off-duty but still in my crash gear and ran to the gate to jump on the first crash truck to pass, Cockie thought this was commendable. I acted on instinct; this was a big one and I wasn't about to miss it! Later, out of hours, he "persuaded" the Airmen's mess to open and serve all of us steak eggs and chips!

Cockie, as I say, was single, and on very good relations with the Naafi Manageress. To the extent that one day she rang him to say the civilian driver of the Naafi mobile hadn't turned up for work and could he spare a driver for the morning Naafi run? Not having a Naafi run was a catastrophe of course because all those lesser beings to we Firemen, such as armourers, sooties, etc, would enter a comatose state without at least three meat pies inside them.

Anyway, Cockie nominates me as the driver and I'm duly dropped off at the Naafi. A quick cockpit check of the van, and an introduction to the lady in the back, and off we went on our rounds. You all know the van, the back opened up to provide a roof and a shelf for serving. I was the driver, she operated the server, and everything was under control.....more or less, until I had stopped at a junction and was about to set off again, and , still wearing my suede fire boots, my foot slipped off the clutch and we did a kangaroo leap forward.

I heard a muffled yell from the back and looked up to the rear view mirror just in time to see a pair of legs disappearing over the tail gate. It seems I had lost my server! I stopped of course, and went to help her to her feet, much to the amusement of a bunch of hungry armourers and we all know how they can talk [it comes from being partially deaf from all those bangs!], so the word soon got out!

I was paid for my services by the way, but Cockie "suggested" I might like to buy him a pack of smokes; as compensation presumably!

*Colin Hall*

Hi Adrian

I'm just reading the Flashpoint Magazine - Autumn 2014, and on page 12 there's a photo from Steve Harrison of recruits under instruction on a stripped down Mk5A. Correct me if I'm wrong but I think Steve may not have the right year or location. I think the photo was taken at Sutton not Catterick. Notice the trainee Fireman aren't wearing Regiment shoulder flashes and there are at least two National Serviceman in the photo which predates it before 1963. I'm almost certain the chap standing in the bottom left hand corner is Joe Cowe, who I was stationed with at RAF El-Adem 1961 to 1963.

*Regards Peter McMurray 1044*

Dear Ade and Peter,

Thanks for your input as regards the photo. The photo was with a few others that I came across in the museum and the date and location was attached to them. I never gave a thought about the Regiment Flashes. I cannot remember if the flashes were put on straight away as we were still U/T Firemen. We shall have to see if there are other responses. Still I am pleased Peter that you looked at it and it created some interest.

*Regards & Happy Christmas  
Steve Harrison*



The Museum has remained open throughout the winter and we have been as busy as every! A steady stream of visitors every week has kept us on our toes. Many of these have been ex-RAF Firefighters, many of whom are not association members. Hopefully, application forms in hand, we will soon see our numbers grow!

Since my last article, we have acquired two more vehicles! A Mk10b and an early HCB Angus bodied TACR 2 ex Harrier Force. The TACR came to us via the Merseyside Fire Service Museum. They felt the vehicle was no longer part of their core collection so they offered it to us on a 99yr loan! The initial connection to the Merseyside Museum was made through membership of the Fire Heritage Network UK. The Network held its AGM in Liverpool last year and we attended. During the weekend, we got our first glimpse of the TACR looking a little sorry for itself outside in

the car park beside the Museum. A few questions later and the deal was done!

Thankfully our very generous low loader driver Terry Shaw of Bloom Demolition managed to pick up the TACR on a return load. He also collected the Mk10b from Lancashire on a separate trip. Terry does all of this work in his own spare time and the vehicle is supplied free of charge. Without this fantastic support, we wouldn't be able to half the things we do! Both these vehicle will require a fair amount of work, but they are both runners which means we have the basis for good restoration projects.

The TACR 1 is in the middle of a full rewire. Some 15 years after its original restoration, constant problems with the electrics meant that it was time to bite the bullet and start the job from scratch. Museum volunteer Colin Tasker built up a complete wiring loom from original manuals and the results are fantastic. A few alterations have been made to the

original specification but these are in part down to safety. Hazard warning lights are now installed as well as halogen headlights. As the vehicle goes on the public highway often, these additions were considered essential.

The Museum has just received the Visit England Quality Assured Visitor Attraction mark. A fantastic achievement for all concerned. We scored 76% which in itself is very good, but also shows that we still have room to make improvements. Some of the requirements are quite obscure and without professional guidance we would never have given some of them any thought! Work within the annex to the Museum will focus on these areas whilst we generally do our best to improve the displays in general.

At the end of last year we were delighted to learn that we had been awarded a grant from the Armed Forces Community Covenant. We can only use this money

for improvements to the infrastructure of the Museum itself. This includes buying equipment that improves our ability to attend shows where we represent the Museum. We have just purchased a second hand Ford Transit Van which will soon be sign-written to advertise the Museum.

New display cabinets and manikins will soon follow. Whilst it's disappointing that we cannot use any of the money for vehicle restoration, this grant is vital for our continued development and ultimate survival. We can never take our position at RAF Scampton for granted so anything we can do to prove to all the powers that be, both service and civilian, that the Museum is an attraction that should be supported for all to enjoy for many years to come!

Our support comes in many forms. A recent example was provided by serving RAF Firefighter Sgt Neil Burnside. Whilst detached to the Falkland Islands I asked Neil if he could do us a "favour" for the Museum? Within the domestic Fire Section at MPC are a number of

pictures of RAF Fire Crews dating back to the early 1980's. I asked initially if these photographs could be repatriated to the UK for display within the Museum where they could be enjoyed by a wider audience. In typical MOD fashion, no-one seemed to support this idea and we were passed from pillar to post! With Neil's time on the Islands running out he decided to enlist the help of the photographic section to copy every picture. This involved taking over 90 framed pictures over to the photo section, removing them from their frames, scanning them and then replacing the original back in its frame.

Some of the pictures were so large that the original had to be scanned in four parts and then joined together electronically to produce a finished image. All of this work was done in his spare time with the help of the photo section. We now have a CD containing all of these images within the Museum. It is planned that we will have the images placed on our website this year and then hopefully we'll then start putting

names to faces on many of the older photographs. Many thanks to Neil and the photo section for taking on this task, a fantastic achievement that will ensure a vital part of our history is preserved for the future! It is hoped that similar projects can follow so that we don't forget our involvement in other conflicts. This will include peace-keeping duties as well.

Well folks, the deadline for articles is almost on me so I must get this article off to the printers. I'll finish by thanking all of the Museum volunteers for all their continued hard work and support and of course, you, the membership, for continuing to help us achieve our vision for the future by reading these articles and visiting the Museum.

*WO Steve Shirley MBE*

*Museum Founder/Chairman*

*Pictures courtesy of Wayne Gilmour*



# St. Mawgan TACR2a by Adey Tearle



Back in February I became aware, via social media, that a TACR2a was available for sale. I made a few enquiries and it turned out that it was based at West Wales Airport (formerly MoD Aberporth) and had arrived with them from St Mawgan via Shoreham Airport.

Anyway, I got in touch with the guy who was handling the sale and he told me what was wrong with it and sent me a couple of pics of bodywork that needed attention. On this basis I made a tentative offer for the truck on the basis that I hadn't physically seen it.

My offer was favourably received so I made arrangements to make the 6 hour journey from home in the Lakes to

Aberporth for a look. On a cold Sunday morning in February, with the dog for company, I set off on the journey.

Driving through the beautiful North Wales countryside I was reminded of the many times I had used that same route when driving from Brawdy to visit the first Mrs Tearle's family in Grimsby. As I had decided on a 6am start from home it was no surprise that the roads were pretty much clear all the way.

On arrival I was met by Ryan, who was handling the sale, a thoroughly nice bloke and a Firefighter, it's interesting how we all speak the same language in our little brotherhood. I saw the truck and immediately the hairs on my neck stood

up as I anticipated hearing the muscly sound of that 3.5 Ltr V8 engine spark into life.

Sadly it took a lot of turning before the engine actually fired and then the noise was deafening as the exhaust appeared to be completely absent! It had struggled to start and then continued to run, briefly, after the ignition had been turned off, I suspected timing problems.

Idly I wondered if it was running on

straight unleaded or unleaded with the lead additive so I asked Ryan, "AVGAS" he said! I nearly choked, no wonder she sounded rough.

Externally the bodywork appeared sound although there was a small area at the back where the fibreglass needed repair. Under the bonnet everything seemed to be where it should be and there was no obvious corrosion. Internally there was a lot of rust and I knew it needed a lot of work.

Ryan offered me a coffee and we sat and chatted while I turned over in my mind what I wanted to do about the truck. I decided that this was something I needed to sleep on, so I told him I would contact him on Monday once I had made a decision.

Monday came and I contacted Ryan with an offer of around half what I had originally said, and left it with him to pass on to his boss and for them to think about. By Thursday I still hadn't heard from them so called to see how they felt. My offer had been accepted! So the next challenge was getting the truck home. It wasn't really driveable.....

Fortunately, if you go on the interwebnet there is a company called Shiplly who act as an on line broker for vehicle recovery. You enter your vehicle details and where you want it transporting from and to and then people get back to you with prices for the job. I selected what I thought was the best all round deal and arranged for the truck to be collected.

It was going to be a few days before the truck was delivered to me so in the





meantime I arranged with a local garage for it to be dropped off there. I wanted them to fit a new exhaust and sort the timing. I had also arranged for the truck to be delivered directly to them.

Delivery was scheduled for Saturday morning and as the garage didn't open on Saturdays I met the transporter driver to off load the truck. He started to reverse it off and was slightly off line on the ramps, he hit the brakes and all the wheels locked up, so now I knew that at least the brakes worked.

Both exhaust down pipes were replaced as was the rest of the exhaust, with the addition of some flexible exhaust to allow for the difference in length between a standard Range Rover and a TACR2a.

Whilst they were sorting the timing they

discovered that there may be a head gasket leak, but that would have to wait as the priority was getting the bodywork sorted. So I collected the truck, with new exhaust, and took it home.

Next on the agenda was to arrange for a local specialist classic vehicle restorer to come and do a survey and quote for the work required. It is my intention to restore the vehicle to its original RAF FS livery and condition.

Two blokes turned up to do the survey, one of them taking lots of photographs of all sorts of bits of truck. The outcome of the survey was; new footwells driver and passenger side, new inner and outer cills both sides, new door pillars, new doors, roof was rotten and in danger of collapse just above windscreen, new rear bumpers required, the written quote also said "and any other such structural work as may

present itself during restoration".

They reckon it will take around 4 weeks to get it from its present state to the resprayed glory of its days in the service. Once they have finished with it, it will be back to the garage for more work which I will talk about in the next edition of Flashpoint.

Finally, this truck has absolutely no kit on it at all, a kind member has offered me 3 hoses which I will be receiving shortly. I have bought a searchlight and the cable and reel from ebay, unfortunately the searchlight was not as advertised and is 7in. instead of 9in. and the cable reel is for major foams not TACR's!! So I am asking members, if any of you have any gear for a TACR2 which you would like to make available for this restoration project please get in touch, limited funds are available where required. Contact me on [train.ade@virgin.net](mailto:train.ade@virgin.net)



*Roof directly above windscreen*



*Roof drivers side*



*Footwell*



*Inner and outer cills gone drivers side*



*Oh dear!*



*Drivers door*



*Passenger side cills gone*



*Oh dear oh dear!!!!*

# Tales from India Pt 2 by Adey Tearle

## Saturday 11th April

Woken at 6.30am by car horns, children, noisy staff and dogs barking, when I get up all the noise stops.

In India the national pastime appears to be nose picking to be conducted in full public view. Absolutely no attempt is made at circumspection, it really is right up there in your face. And they are all at it, men, women, kids, police, army, in fact the entire country!

In some parts of Delhi there is an overwhelming smell of excrement, it is common to smell the sewers which you get used to. But the it is overpowering, there are wild dogs doing it everywhere, the sacred cows, oxen, horses, and of course the average Indian when receiving a call of nature, answers it in the street. Worst area for this so far was the market area Chandni Chowk.

Went to check on the laptop this morning, still not ready, but at least he has sent it to an Apple service centre (he says?) He wants me to collect it this afternoon.

When I went to collect it it was in pieces on his desk, apparently the motherboard is shot. You would have thought an Apple service centre would have the spares. He tells me a new board will be 28000 (400 quid!), I point out its under warranty, he says its not valid in India. I ask him to put it back together and I leave.

Off to get the bus to Dharamsala, iPhone still not working with the internet.

Arrived at the bus stop at 4.50 for a 5

departure, its now 20 past and we still aint moving. When the bus arrived a crew of 6 got off, and they haven't been seen since!

Bus departs at 5.45, we had been on the road about 45 minutes when we stopped at the Delhi Tibetan refugee village to pick up more passengers. There was some more arguing about seats and then we got underway. The bloke in front of me was about 6-10 tall, so he pushed his seat all the way back and fully reclined it, halfwit.

A further 40 mins down the road and we stop again, one of the crew gets off, and 2 mins later he gets back on. Drive another 20 mins and the same bloke gets off again, 2 mins later he gets back on, obviously couldn't find whatever it was he was looking for.

A little later we suddenly braked to a screaming halt for no obvious reason, an Indian woman jumped on and went straight into the crew compartment. 10 mins later we stopped again and she got off, hiding her appearance, very strange?

We stopped several times after that for the crew to pee, but not once for the passengers. The first stop for everyone was at 10.45pm after 5 hours on the road. We stopped twice more after that.

## Sunday 12th April

We finally arrived at McLeod Ganj at 6.45am, 13 hours after we had started, don't fancy that again, nightmare journey.

On arrival I struggled to find someone who knew where my hotel was, then as usual, the kindness of strangers, a guy

volunteered to tell the cabbie where it was.

On arrival the scenery is breathtaking, I can see the foothills of the Himalayas from my balcony.

I unpacked, had a shower and decided to walk the 6kms back to McLeod, only because it was downhill all the way. It was a beautiful sunny day with spectacular scenery. On the way I came across an Anglican church, St John in the Wilderness, went and had a look round, very simple but beautiful church.



Had a look round HH The Dalai Lama's monastery and temple. The temple has a big square which is where I think he does his public teachings.



Inside DL's temple with a blue Tara Buddha figure. It was an absolutely beautiful temple and I felt very moved, especially when I thought about when I saw DL in Scotland.

As you would expect there are lots of Tibetan shops selling goods produced by Tibetans, but there are also shops selling Hindu and Sikh stuff and other traditional Indian style goods. Also some shops selling crystals and semi-precious stones, plus lots of alternative therapies, in fact it was very new age and reminded me of Glastonbury J







*Temple in McLeod High St*

I bought a couple of t-shirts, small Tibetan flag, 2 of the DL's words of wisdom on wall hangings, a book on Tibetan Buddhism, set of prayer beads because my others are in England, pack of incense, Lavender and Patchouli oil and some Earl Grey. But the best buy had to be a blanket made from Tibetan Llama wool in a beautiful turquoise colour.

Got 4 cans of Kingfisher lager on the way back to the hotel just in case, its 8%, also a half bottle of whisky for less than a tenner. Sat on the balcony and drank 2 beers, enjoyed sunset over the mountains and had a cigar. Early night and slept well.

### **Monday 13th April**

Up at 7, went to breakfast which was on the 4th floor with panoramic view of the mountains, they offered me a table on the balcony but it was too hot and bright. I ordered 2 boiled eggs, toast and coffee, there are 3 staff but it takes an awful long time to get delivered.

The penny has just dropped, Indian drivers use the horn instead of indicators, they use it to pull out, pull in, overtake, turn, stop and start, and up here they also use it to go round bends. All this is in addition to them using it just because they can!

Went to the NORBULINGKA INSTITUTE which was set up by DL to keep alive Tibetan traditional craftsmanship, funded initially by the Japanese. It is another beautiful place with a Japanese style garden.



I was shown how they produce THANGKANS, which are religious paintings, they use a canvas of organic cotton which is then primed using a

mixture of paint and glue. First they pencil in the painting using a stencil and tracing paper. All the religious aspects are drawn in accordance with specifications prescribed in the scriptures, but they have a free hand with the design surrounding the religious aspect. They use only natural paint and each painting can take up to 6 months to complete.

Moved from here to the workshop where they produce the fabric. They use either pure silk or brocade. Because the products are for domestic use they use fine fishing line for sewing, however for special items they use hair from horses tails.

Next stop was the workshop where they produce the Buddha statues. They use copper and finish them with a mix of gold leaf and mercury, or silver.

Finally the carpentry and wood carving, which was all very intricate and skilful. Pine is used for items which do not need to be hard wearing, and teak for those that do.

I finished off the visit at the doll museum, which was mostly religious dolls, mostly in traditional Tibetan dress and very impressive. In the museum I was shown around by a Tibetan girl who was very sweet, she insisted I take her picture, then she asked for my email address so she could email me and I could mail the picture back, her name was Tenzin



*Some of the dolls and Tenzin.*



My next port of call was the monastery and temple of the Karmapa Lama, he is DL's number two. This was by far the most impressive temple of the lot and was really beautiful inside. While I was there they were preparing for some sort of ceremony.

After this it was off to see the temple of a Sikh goddess where there are fires which burn perpetually using natural gas escaping from the earth. I wanted to see the temple but the normal entrance was closed and people were being diverted along a convoluted route at the end of which was an Alton Towers style queueing arrangement, so as you do, I joined the queue. I thought I was in a queue for the temple.

Sadly not, by the time I got to the front it was a queue to make offerings which were promptly burnt in this fiery altar! Enough of being a tourist, back to McLeod for me.

In McLeod I went to a rooftop restaurant with an impressive view of the valley. The bonus though was an amazing cup of tea, it was made with red tea, mint, sandalwood powder and honey, needless to say I have the recipe and the ingredients!



*View from the rooftop restaurant.*

# REMEMBRANCE DAY PARADE WHITEHALL - LONDON SUNDAY 8th NOVEMBER -2015



Attendance at the Parade is by ticket only and you must be a fully paid up Association member and complete a ticket application and \*send to Ron Brown without delay.

All ticket applications should be sent to me as soon as possible and no later than mid-late September 2015

Surname: ..... First name: ..... Membership number: .....  
Address: .....  
.....Postcode:.....  
Tel No:.....

Signed:..... Date.....2015

To avoid damaging your copy of Flashpoint, photocopy it, or print the details clearly on a separate sheet of paper. "Please enclose an SAE with your application for the return of your ticket and assembly details etc.

**Send to:** Ron Brown.  
38 Sedgebrook , Liden, Swindon,  
Wiltshire SN3 6EY  
Tel: 01793 496 307  
or email: brown026@virginmedia.com

**Note:** Tickets will be dispatched as soon as I receive them from the Royal British Legion or at the October reunion.

Late applications: Anyone **not** applying for a ticket immediately but finding later, that they may be able to attend the Parade on the day after all, can ring me direct as I **may** have a spare ticket available, but don't leave it too late!

**Note:** Travel and accommodation are your responsibility, but the following might be helpful:-

The Union Jack Club,  
Sandell Street.  
London  
Tel. 020 7928 481

Victory Services Club,  
63179 Seymour Street,  
London W2 2HF  
Tel: 020 7616 8302  
Fax: 020 7616 8344  
email: mem@vsc.co.u k

It is in your interest to check prices before booking.

Dress: On this special occasion - Blazer & Badge, Tie, Medals, Veteran's Badge and Beret with RAF or Crash Fire Rescue Badge please .\*\*

1}\*\* It helps to show up the badge on Parade by placing a circle of red material behind it.

**Important Note:** Mobile phones must be switched off before entering Horse Guards Parade.

Please make every effort to attend. Thank you.

*An experience never to be forgotten!*

# Lyneham Disaster

I am greatly indebted to member Arthur Brooks who has very kindly submitted this article from September 1957 and the accompanying photographs concerning a disaster exercise at RAF Lyneham. Arthur served in the RAF Fire Service from 1952-1964

and was stationed at Lyneham 1955-1959. I do wonder which genius at the Air Ministry decided that putting service firemen in white suits was a good idea!!

WEDNESDAY *Evening Advertiser* SEPTEMBER 2

## THREE FIRE BRIGADES IN BIG LYNEHAM 'DISASTER' TEST

### Plane crash simulated

**FIREMEN** from Swindon, Calne and Wootton Bassett, joined RAF men last night in fighting a big blaze at RAF Lyneham.

The fire had been started deliberately—for a "major disaster" exercise, the biggest staged on the aerodrome. A Canberra aircraft, with a crew of three, was assumed to have crashed on the perimeter of the airfield, damaging and setting fire to a row of terraced cottages.

At eight minutes to seven, the stage was set. A glider mainplane filled with refuse and soaked with 100 gallons of used engine oil and 200 gallons of contaminated petrol was used to simulate the main wreckage of the crashed aircraft.

Glider and aircraft parts sprayed with petrol, were scattered around and inside a disused building which was on fire.

In an ejector seat in a mock-up cockpit sat AC2 Bussey, waiting to be rescued. With him were two other men to complete the crew.

#### 15-MINUTE ANSWER

RAF fire and foam trucks on the scene, with the assistance of Wootton Bassett unit of the Wiltshire Fire Brigade arrived. Station Officer H. J. Blockside, of Fire Headquarters, Devizes, who was called for help, and units from Calne and Swindon came in.

Everything looked realistic. Fire engines churned up the mud—some stuck—and spotlights pierced the darkness. The roof of the burning hut exploded as the result of the heat on the wet asbestos roofing sheets, sending up showers of debris. Arranged by Flt-Lieut. F. H.

Robertson, RAF Lyneham fire officer, and Divisional Officer Chadwick, of Swindon, the exercise was completed successfully.

#### RESCUE TIPS

Afterwards, members of the Wiltshire Brigade were given a demonstration by Flt-Lieut. Robertson on how to make an ejector seat "safe" and rescue its occupant.

Chief Fire Officer J. A. Broadbent watched the exercise. The RAF fire fighters were under Flt-Sgt. J. M. Neafsey, and civilian units were under Station Officer Hobbs (Wootton Bassett), Leading Fireman Stevens (Calne) and Leading Fireman Merrin (Swindon).

About 60 Service and civilian firemen and rescuers took part.





## RAF Fire & Rescue Services Memorial Fund

In my last letter in the RAF & Defence fire Services Association's issue of our magazine, Flashpoint, which is issued to 450 of our members, as well as to 28 flying stations including Manston, and Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted Airports, I requested some representation from serving personnel of the RAF Fire Service who I could liaise with. To this end, Flight Sergeant Steve Pickston, Station Officer, RAF Odiham, has stepped forward and is to become a signatory on the Memorial Fund Account. One more signatory would be good.

The Association held its AGM and reunion on 10/12th October 2014.

Over that weekend, at the beginning of the meeting, a Memorial Fund collection was held and £124.45 was raised. A raffle was held and raised a further £157,

and an auction raised a further £40. A donation was received from Allan, our shop Manager, of £15.75 and all this totalled £337.20.

In addition, I received a cheque for £98 from one member, Colin Farmer, from Australia, also a cheque for £100 from our Patron, Air Marshal Sir Roger Austin.

This gave the fund a boost of £535.20 and the fund now stands at £9,522.63 at 28/11/14. In March of this year the balance was £6,328.96.

As you can see, the contributions made over the last six months from the members of our Association show the commitment from the Association to this most worthy cause, but we still have a long way to go and need to set some goals. Some help from our serving colleagues in the RAF and DFS, wherever they are stationed,

would be very much appreciated. I know that they are all very busy at the moment. If each station could raise £400-500 (I leave the "how" up to each station), this would assist greatly to achieve our £20,000 target, or whatever the final cost of the memorial will be. It's already been close to 10 years.

I will soon be writing to the Arboretum to establish the procedures and requirements needed to purchase and position a Memorial.

At the Association Reunion in October we also raised a further £378 which was rounded up to £400 and was donated to the RAF Fire Service Museum at RAF Scampton.

*Trevor Hayes*

*Custodian of the RAF Fire and Rescue Service Memorial Fund*

## Eighteen months in the life of Private David Hayes 25071 DLI

After reading Adrian, our Editor's article on his Grandfather's experiences in the First World War, and Jim Cairn's letter "Step Short," I was inspired to write about my Grandfather, David Hayes. It is 100 years since my Grandfather made his first march down that hill, stepping short for his disembarkation to France.

My Granddad, who lived in Hetton -le Hole, Co Durham, was a miner at that colliery, aged 26 and married with three children. Along with many of his fellow pit mates he volunteered, his short service enlistment card shows, on 11th Nov 1914, (Miners were exempt from conscription).

He joined the 15 battalion Durham Light infantry "DLI", which was part of the 64th brigade in the 21st Division. After basic training, he moved to Holton Park then Maidenhead and finally Witney before marching to the coast and down the hill to the port and no doubt was ordered to "Step Short". The date is not known. His journey ended on the Somme somewhere south of Arras, it is believed .

Some short time later my Grandfather was shot and injured and returned to England and was then discharged from service due to his injuries on 29th March 1915. After recuperating from his injuries at home, he re-enlisted into the DLI and was again sent back to France. He would have been ordered to "Step Short" for a second time. As the Germans had advanced much further south, the DLI was on the front line just south of Albert.

The DLI, mostly being miners, were digging the tunnels for the large mines that were to be exploded on the 1st July 1916. He was on light duties due to his earlier injuries and was a batman to a Lt J Leys. At 1am on the morning of the 7th May, I quote from Lt Leys' letter to my Grandmother: "We were in a fairly hot part of the line and whilst running for safety from a mine explosion your husband accidentally fell down a mine shaft and died from the injuries he sustained." These shafts were up to 80 feet deep. He died 3 days later in a hospital close to La Neuville sur Corbie and is buried there along with about 200 other soldiers.

Buried next to my Granddad is his friend Private W Lee, also of the DLI and his service number is only 12 different from my grandfather's. They both died on the 10th May 1915. All this in eighteen months. He was never ordered to step short a third time.

*Trevor Hayes 419*

Those of you unable to attend reunions should be aware that we have a range of RAFDFSA and CRASH goods for sale, which are also available by mail order via us and the Association website shown at the bottom of each page. We look forward to meeting as many of you as possible at the reunions.

Regards and best wishes Allan and Marilyn

Contact details: - David and Christine Hughes  
 Email: rafanddfsashop@yahoo.co.uk  
 Telephone: 02380 660995

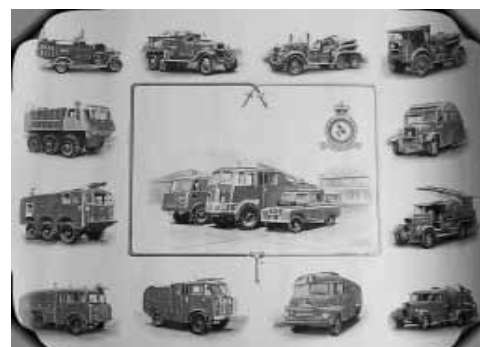
Note:- For Mail Order - All items will be subject to postage and packaging, which will be calculated per individual order. A customer will be informed of the cost and, when payment is received, the order will be despatched.

Cheques & Postal Orders made payable to RAF&DFSA Shop Account.

AMENDMENTS FOR AUTUMN 2012 FLASHPOINT

## RAF & DFSA SHOP PRICE LIST 1.10.12

BASE BALL CAP . . . . .	£10.00
KNITTED HAT . . . . .	£10.00
KNITTED HAT (LG BADGE) . . . . .	£10.00
FLEECE HAT . . . . .	£10.00
RUGBY SHIRT . . . . .	£21.00
SHORT SLEEVE POLO SHIRT . . . . .	£14.50
LONG SLEEVE POLO SHIRT . . . . .	£17.50
SHORT SLEEVE T SHIRT . . . . .	£6.50
SHORT SLEEVE T SHIRT (EMBROIDERED BADGE) . . . . .	£11.50
LONG SLEEVE T SHIRT . . . . .	£10.50
LONG SLEEVE T SHIRT (EMBROIDERED BADGE) . . . . .	£13.00
WHITE SHORT SLEEVE SHIRT . . . . .	£15.00
SWEATSHIRT . . . . .	£16.50
HOODED SWEATSHIRT . . . . .	£17.50
FLEECE JACKET . . . . .	£23.00
FLEECE BODY WARMER . . . . .	£21.00
ASSOCIATION TIE . . . . .	£9.00
ASSOCIATION SHIELD . . . . .	£29.50
BLAZER BADGE . . . . .	£13.00
PATCH BADGE . . . . .	£3.50
CAP BADGE . . . . .	£8.00
LAPEL BADGE – ALL TYPES . . . . .	£3.00
FIREMAN KEYRING . . . . .	£3.50
CLOTH KEYRING . . . . .	£3.50
RED ARROW FRIDGE MAGNET . . . . .	£3.00
LEATHER BOOK MARK . . . . .	£1.00
PRESENTATION PEN . . . . .	£3.50
PRESENTATION PAPER KNIFE . . . . .	£2.50
CUFF LINKS . . . . .	£5.50
ASSOCIATION CAR STICKER (INSIDE WINDOW) . . . . .	£1.00
ASSOCIATION CAR STICKER (OUTSIDE WINDOW) . . . . .	£1.00
FIRE SCHOOL STICKER (OUTSIDE WINDOW) . . . . .	£0.50
JUTE BAG WITH EMBROIDERED LOGO . . . . .	£7.50
DOCUMENT BAG . . . . .	£8.50
NYLON BAG . . . . .	£6.50
SPORTS BAG . . . . .	£17.50
WASH BAG . . . . .	£11.50
HAND TOWEL WITH LOGO . . . . .	£10.00
BUTCHER'S APRON WITH EMBROIDERED LOGO . . . . .	£14.00
RIPPER WALLET . . . . .	£8.50
ASSOCIATION MUG . . . . .	£4.00
FIRE ENGINE COASTER . . . . .	£1.50
RAF FIRE CARDS . . . . .	£2.00
FIRE ENGINE PRINT SERIES ONE . . . . .	£5.00
FIRE ENGINE PRINT SERIES TWO . . . . .	£5.00
FIREMAN PRINT . . . . .	£3.50
NOVELTY TOYS PIN BADGES AND WHITE METAL MODELS AS PRICED	
ASSOCIATION SHIELDS AS PRICED	





# OFFICERS

Making simple stuff difficult  
for hundreds of years.