

FLASHPOINT

ROYAL AIR FORCE & DEFENCE FIRE SERVICES ASSOCIATION MAGAZINE



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COMRADES REMEMBERED

1984 NIMROD INCIDENT AT ST MAWGAN

REUNION NEWS

REMEMBRANCE PARADE SUNDAY 14 NOVEMBER

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Personal letter to the members from Alan Alsop retiring Flashpoint Editor

Dear members,

You will already have noticed that I have vacated the editor's chair. I have done this for a number of reasons and I thought long and hard on this before making my decision. I have been finding myself working at the computer until after eleven at night, night after night and, when that was done, my wife gave much of her time putting them in to envelopes, sticking on stamps and address labels, then delivering them to the post office.



Please, don't think I am complaining, far from it, it was for the most part enjoyable and, I would like to think, achieved its purpose. It has been a challenge and an honour to be able to do this for our association. I have had the 'kudos' and the 'brickbats' but that goes with the job I suppose. I have had much encouragement and support from many, many members over the years and it is that that gave me the impetus and motivation. But now is the time to move on. I will now be able to catch up with a lot of jobs that need to be done around the house and garden and I will have something to look forward to, . . . a copy of *Flashpoint* coming through my letterbox.

Your new editor has a more difficult task ahead of him than I had when I took on the job in 1995, for a start we had 57 members then and just about enough text for two A4 sheets (on one side only).

Please give the editor your support and the material he needs to do the job, it is our magazine and whoever does it deserves, nay, needs your backing.

Finally, to all those people who wrote to me and phoned me over the years with their compliments and good wishes, a sincere thank you.

Alan Alsop member 49



A c k n o w l e d g e m e n t
Front Cover
"Practice Crash"
Courtesy of Peter (Scouse) Carter member 77
N.B. The photo is over 40 years old and not pinsharp, but has impact and typifies the action of an "Aircraft Crash Rescue"- Ed.

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The Editor, Alan Alsop, decided to stand down recently, (see his letter to members on page 2), and I have been asked to act as Editor until the AGM in October. My first priority is to pay tribute to my predecessors, Alan Alsop, Terry Matson and Bob Feather, who pioneered the way forward for Flashpoint from those early days in 1995 to the present day. Each put their personal stamp on its production; and thoroughly deserve praise for all their hard work and achievements on your behalf. I now need to carry on in their footsteps producing Flashpoint, and hope I can prove a worthy successor.



For the present, I'm concentrating on the Design, Layout and Content of your magazine, but will remain open to constructive criticism and "practical suggestions" to improve Flashpoint. I firmly believe that members deserve the very best their Association can provide, and will do my utmost to achieve that goal with your support. I hope I can bring a fresh approach, and new ideas, to the task ahead.

Flashpoint is the Flagship, and primary contact for every member, and I want to aim part of the content at those members, including overseas, who don't often attend reunions and try to keep them in touch. How? By including information many of us take for granted when regularly attending reunions, when we can then "catch up" with what is going on and also take some part in the decision making process and running of the Association. Hopefully, this will keep *all* members up to date and encourage them to know, that even if they can't make it to the reunions as often as they would like, nevertheless, they are a valuable, and integral, part of the Association.

I also intend to liaise closely with Bob Feather, the Membership Secretary, to make Flashpoint the "Shop Window" of the Association to help in the recruitment and retention of members, and remind them to pay subs!

It's going to be a very steep learning curve for me in this new role, learning and applying, new software and techniques to produce Flashpoint. I will also need your patience, understanding and help in providing feedback and articles etc. for the future success of your magazine.

Finally, I will stand for election as Editor at the AGM in October, and look forward to your support.

Regards and best wishes,

Dave Kenyon member 239 - Acting Editor August 2004

EDITORIAL NOTES

We welcome your comments and enquiries about Flashpoint, or the Association in general.

- | Letters should be kept brief.
- | The Editor reserves the right to edit, or shorten, any letter or correspondence in order to fit available space.
- | Anonymous, or unsigned letters will not be published, nor anything of an offensive or abusive nature.
- | Opinions expressed by contributors are not necessarily endorsed by the Editor or the Officers and Committee of the Association.
- | The Editor's decision is final.

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Please include your name, address, telephone & membership number and why not a photo and brief service details for publication with your letter or article.

Note:- Ensure you enclose an SAE for any items you wish returned to you. Thankyou.

Dave Kenyon member 239 Acting Editor

A Note from the Chairman

I hope that the arrival of the latest issue of Flashpoint finds you all well and enjoying the summer weather.

Committee Changes

Some changes had to be made on the Committee recently with the passing of two of the stalwarts of the Association, John Arthur, Founding President, and John Knight, Founding Treasurer, however other members have stepped in to help. Geoff Varley has taken over as Treasurer and Keith Penfold, Vice President and Founding Chairman has replaced John Arthur as President with Dennis McCann, Founding Secretary, agreeing to take on the Vice-President post. It is also good to welcome Ernie Fisher back onto the Committee as Public Relations Officer now that he has recovered his health. My thanks to all Committee members for their help and support and a welcome to new members, I look forward to working with you all.

Another change is, we now have a new Editor of Flashpoint as Alan Alsop has decided to call it a day in order to have more time to spend on his hobbies. Dave Kenyon, member 239, has taken over the job and is Editor Elect until the AGM in Stoke-on-Trent in October. I hope that you will all continue

of the ladies made their feelings very clear to the culprit (not one of us - honest!). Then it snowed....There were a few members who were sorry that there was not enough of the white stuff to make a snow man or have a snow ball fight! My thanks to everyone for their hard work in organising and running the weekend and to those of you who attended for your continued generosity with the collection for the staff and with the raffle prizes.

AGM October in Stoke

You will all by now have received the details of our next reunion and AGM in Stoke-on-Trent. Please do attend if you can, it is nice to see as many members as possible those who have attended in the past have had a really good time. We will be operating a seating plan again for dinner on the Saturday evening, it was moderately successful at Peterborough and I think was better than the "free for all" we used to have, but I hope that one of the seating boards does not go missing this time! I'm certainly looking forward to the weekend and Sue is looking forward to the shopping - must remember to leave the credit cards at home!

I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at Stoke, have a safe journey.



to support Dave, particularly when he stands for full election this October and in his task of striving to produce our magazine and please continue to send in items of interest for print.

Royal International Air Tattoo

Although our presence at RIAT in July has unfortunately fallen through due to no fault of our own; the Committee are working hard to raise the profile of the Association at airshows this year, and are attending RAF Waddington Airshow on the weekend of 26th & 27th June 04, and also by placing posters in air museums and distributing our leaflets as much as possible. If any of you have any ideas, or visit places where you feel we should have a mention, but haven't, please let a member of the Committee know.

Peterborough Early Call!

What a fabulous time we had at Peterborough in March, even though we had an early morning call when the fire alarm was set off - I understand that some

Peterborough Saturday Night Surprise Event!



Following the Saturday Gala Dinner members, partners and guests were pleasantly surprised by one of our members, Richard C. Parker, member 268, who is a professional entertainer.

Due to his many engagements, Richard, informally known as Dick hadn't been able to attend a reunion, until this March. However, as he lives fairly close to the Peterborough venue, he was determined to make it this time. He gave up bookings to leave the weekend free to attend, and decided to entertain us at the same time. He was a revelation, and had the place in stitches. However, if we want him back again, we would have to pay the going rate! Ouch!

Dick's non-stop Cabaret included Song & Dance, Instrumental, and Comedy - Ed.



How much? - Is he negotiating his return fee with Vice-Chairman & Mrs. Paterson? - Ed.



Membership News

Since my last report in the Commemorative issue of Flashpoint, we have increased our membership by 28 and, on behalf of the Association, I would like to welcome the new members. Listed below are their names and membership numbers:-

- 701 Roy Pilton
- 702 Michael Penfold
- 703 Raymond Wright
- 704 Michael Clapton
- 705 David Rose
- 706 Alan Pilton
- 707 Philip Webb
- 708 Edward Firmager
- 709 Nigel Holland-Williams
- 710 Adrian Tearle
- 711 Ken Slade
- 712 Allan Abel
- 713 William Briggs
- 714 Bob Lovett
- 715 Roy Wright
- 716 Derrick Hand
- 717 Trevor Waugh
- 718 Ralph Beer
- 719 William Elder
- 720 Keith Maw
- 721 John Sanders
- 722 Walter Lee
- 723 Michael Ayliffe
- 724 William Butler
- 725 Peter Wilkinson
- 726 Ronald Jones
- 727 Geoff Dow
- 728 John Bingham

Word of Mouth!

Again, I ask all members to pass on the word about our Association to all their friends who served with us. Not only RAF but you lads who are serving or have served in the Defence Fire Services.

Recruiting must carry on. That is why we need **YOUR** help!

It has come to our notice that Gary Passmore, member 27, is very ill and, on behalf of the Association, our thoughts are with Gary, Hazel, family and friends. The same thoughts and sentiments go to *any* of our members who may be unwell at this time.



Please - make yourself known at Stoke October Reunion

The October reunion is coming and if you intend going, you will need to book (if you have not already done so). I will be there as usual, and hope to see some of the friends both old and new at the meeting. **If it is your first reunion do please make yourself known to me.** Ask someone; we are a friendly lot of people.



Bob Feather
Membership Secretary
member 218

Reminders & Standing Orders

Recently our Chairman, Roger Brooks, sent out reminders to those members who had not paid their subs for 2003/4. To all those who responded I would like to say a very large thank you. To those who have not yet paid, I wish to remind you again, through Flashpoint, that **subs are due and have been since the First of September 2003.**

I do understand how difficult it is to remember every year to pay the subs. That is why **there is a Standing Order form for all to use should they wish to.** (New members get one on joining.) **If you would like to pay this way please do get in touch with me and I will gladly send you a copy.**

**Subs. held at
£12.50**

Once again, there has been NO subscription increase this year. When paying by cheque, please ensure your Membership Number is clearly written on the back. If you do not know your number then

give me a call and I will gladly tell you what it is.

**Please send
cheques etc. to
Treasurer**

May I remind members that all subscriptions, whether paid by cheque, cash or postal order, should go directly to Geoff Varley, Treasurer as per WHO TO CONTACT on page 2.

**Changes of
Address & Bank**

Lately, problems have occurred by members not notifying myself and the Treasurer of address changes, and Bank details. We are aware of how difficult it can be, when such major changes occur, to remember to inform us.

Until you do, in good faith, we send all communications to your last known address. People do forget to re-direct mail, and new tenants don't always forward it on.

**Last Flashpoint
before Subs.**

This Flashpoint is the last before subscriptions are due for 2004/5. **Subs are always due on the 1st September irrespective of what part of the year you enrolled.**

Publicity/Membership Leaflets

The Association has now got leaflets. They serve two purposes by helping publicise us and also act as an application form. I would like to get these into as many places as possible e.g :- Museums, Post Offices, Libraries or anywhere the public may go, even corner shops. The more we put into the public domain the better chance of finding new members. If you can help please contact me and I will send you some leaflets.

YOUR NEW PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER ERNIE FISHER

early retirement in 1994. After a short rest I then formed my own company "Fire Safety Training" which was a successful venture for six years until ill-health forced me to call it a day.

In the year 2001 I had a big set back being struck down by an illness which has resulted in permanent heart disease and diabetes. Although restricted in many ways, I now feel improved enough to take on the role of the Associations Public Relations Officer (PRO), the office I was voted into at a Committee Meeting at Redcar RAFA Club on 8th. December 2000 but,

due to the illness, wasn't able to fulfil until now. The main emphasis of this post is to make sure you, the members, have the best in hotel accommodation for our twice yearly reunion weekends. I will be carrying on the good work done in the past and working to the guidelines already drawn up. Please see article "What Goes In To a Reunion" by Bob Feather, December 2003 issue of "Flashpoint" pages 13/14. I am already working on the March 2005 reunion and then October, which is special being our Associations Tenth Anniversary.

I look forward to meeting you for a chat and a pint at these venues, and a long standing friendship, which is what the Association is about. By the way of venues I would like your views on the areas you think are most favourable, both for access and travel distance. It would appear from attendance figures, that the more recent hotels used have been well attended. Please let me have your thoughts on this and, subject to being able negotiate the right terms that we are used to, we can continue with good quality locations. I am looking forward to the

I served twenty three years in the RAF Fire Service and retired in 1978. After a short spell in the Hotel business I had the calling back to fire and joined British Railways as a full time Fire Officer in London. After the Kings Cross tragedy in 1987 I left the Fire Prevention post to take up full time Fire Safety Training of all disciplines within the industry to meet the present (1971 Fire Precautions Act (as amended) and the Health & Safety at Work Act.). In the end I managed four training centres for British Rail Technical & Scientific Services finally taking



Ernie Fisher member 385

future success of the Association and, with the help of yourselves and the Committee, we will take the RAFDFSA from strength to strength.

Letter of appreciation to the Committee and Association from the late Jim Souter's wife Evelyn

Dear Dave,

May I through Flashpoint thank everyone in the Association who sent me messages and condolences on the sudden death of my husband, Jim.

The Royal Air Force and Defence Fire Services Association was very important to him and we both enjoyed attending the reunions.

Every year we liked to drive round North Yorkshire with our caravan and we always had to stop at Leeming where Jim was stationed in the mid 1950's.

I was very pleased that his No 2 mate then, and good friend, Joe Shackleton, travelled from Middlesbrough to attend the funeral with two of his friends, Kevin Doyle and Brian Lazenby.

May I wish you every success for your future events.
Evelyn Souter.



Footnote:- Jim was one of two co-ordinators for Scotland and the photo shows Jim and Evelyn with Joe and his late wife, Jean at one of their own reunions in 1997 at Inverness, Scotland. Members may be able to recognise them if they have attended any of our twice yearly reunions. Editor.

Dear Editor,

Having read the letter from H.G. Edwards in the last issue of "Flashpoint" I would like to make a few comments. Firstly no one is saying that RAF Firemen are anything but brave dedicated people because, as we all know, they are, and always have been. And, if the ones currently serving, and our members, are anything to go by, they always will be. Secondly I don't think he could have served in the 1950s or he would not dispute the editor's remarks.

I also completed 22 years in the RAF Fire Service; my first spell was from 1955 to 1959 when I can identify with the comments made by the editor. (See also the letter from Steve Doran, member 41, in the last issue). I had a career interview at Cardington and, on joining; an officer asked me if I had thought of joining the police. I said that I had already decided to be a fireman, and his reply was "*The police are smart and uphold the law, firemen are completely the opposite*".

My first posting was to RAF Tengah, Singapore. (I was back home in time for my 21st birthday). The section consisted of 42 firemen only 3 of them over 20, about one third were National Servicemen. These lads, whilst being good firemen were, for obvious reasons, not that happy at having to be in the RAF, and were not what you could call ideal Air Force material non-conformist springs to mind. I am not saying that it was only the National Service lads that were like this as we all were, and proud of it. We even lived on the section away from the rest of the camp. How anyone could look smart in jungle greens and canvas jungle boots is beyond me. Protective clothing consisted of a leather jerkin, (fur collar optional), tin helmet with asbestos face piece and small perspex window, and a far cry from the modern crash suit. The term reprobate may be the wrong word to use but none of us were exactly the SWO's favourite people. Hard

drinking yes, hard playing yes and not the perfect example of an airman but, when the crash alarm sounded, they responded without hesitation and with no consideration for their own safety. They just got on and did the job and there were plenty of occasions to do just that.

We also lost a fireman; 19 year-old Alan Ledson was driving the ATC Landover at night laying glim lamps when a Venom hit the vehicle killing both Alan and an electrician. To have to attend that scene was not pleasant I can assure you.

I re-enlisted in 1962 and thought I had joined a different Air Force. I found that a lot of things had changed and not all for the better! National Service no longer existed and the whole attitude had changed, the D.I.'s, (Drill Instructors), were no longer allowed to swear at you), and the Fire Section, particularly the higher ranks, were more Air Force minded.

Maybe you could say *it* was more professional, although I believe that we did just as good a job in the 1950's, without all the bull***t. I just know that I enjoyed my first four years more than I did the next eighteen. Probably because we were all teenagers out for a good time and none of us at the time intended to make a career of it so didn't worry about things too much. We were too busy sampling the delights that Singapore had to offer!

Ron Brown member 294



Memories Of D Day 1944 Calshot Hampshire 1768126 LAC Hird K

Prior to D/Day on the 4th and 5th of June 1944, the roads and lanes outside Southampton were crammed full with vehicles and troops. Southampton Water was jam-packed with all types and sizes of ships, including Troopships, Landing Craft Tanks, (LCT's), Landing Craft Infantry (LCI's). You couldn't see the water for ships.

On getting up on the morning of the 6th June, there wasn't a ship to be seen; then we knew that the invasion had started! On D/Day Plus 2, we got a call to go out on the Fire Float to pump out an LCT, (Landing Craft Tank) which had been hit by a shell. That was *our* little bit towards D/Day.

Ken Hird member 491



Photo shows Ken now and about 60 odd years ago
Footnote: - I originally met Ken when giving him a lift to his first reunion at the St. Nicholas Hotel, Scarborough in October 2000. He told me he had served in Australia and Calshott in Hampshire on Southampton Water with Sunderland flying boats.

It was only when Ken rang me on Saturday 6th June 2004 and I asked if he was watching D/Day on the tele, and he said, "What are you talking about, I was there on D/Day and saw it all for real!"

Up till that point, the penny hadn't dropped that here was someone who had served during the D/Day invasion build up. All right, he hadn't gone to France, but he had been there on the day to see it all happening; and I immediately said he should get something onto paper for Flashpoint. This is part of our History and Ken, who is now turned 80, may be pretty unique in his experience, unless there are others out there who know better? If so, let us know about any similar experiences you may have had in your service career. Ed.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

I am enclosing a few photographs, which, I hope will be of some interest to all.

It would appear, that the photo I have enclosed, and that sent in by Ray Wood (118), have been taken at the same spot, that is, the Crash Bays at RAF Akrotiri in 66. I was stationed there from November 65 to November 68. Shamefully, I can't remember all the names.



Front Row L/R: Paddy Mullen(?), Tony Maggs, Myself, W/O Stan Burr, Behich (Turkish fireman), Pete Chapman,
 Middle Row L/R (Here I am very vague!):
 Ron ?, 'Hoppy' Hopkins, Unknown?, Roger ?, Unknown Jock?, Flt Lt ?, Unknown?
 Back Row L/R: Air Vice Marshall, Lofty Dunkling



The photographs of St Mawgan are from 1961 to 1964. Quite a large Fire Section. The one bloke I will always remember is Joe Labouch-Ardiere. He was my Best Man at my wedding. I think he was posted to Butterworth.



St Mawgan Crash Bay 62 - ACRT, DP2 & MKVA & in line outside ATC - 2 x 6's, DP1 & DP2



Colour photo - Johnny Ferguson & 'Brock' Brocklehurst with "Lofty" Dunkling in background - Akrotiri 67



The photo of myself at Sutton-on-Hull, 6 October 1958, may bring back memories!



The photos of Duren, 2nd TAF, Germany. Great times here as my first permanent Station.



1st photo is Sgt Bill Slattery, a really good bloke.

2nd photo - I am with Cpl. Tex Jauncey and a Mercedes Fire Truck.



Final photo - we were on-line at St Athan 1964, but I can't remember many names, apart from Sgt Platt & SAC Roche.

A big thank you to all the Committee for all their efforts. All the best, Jimmy Newell member 632.

Thanks for the article and photos Jimmy, I hope members can help you out with names and maybe the whereabouts of some of your ex-mates - Ed

A fairly typical day in the life of a Royal Air Force Gutersloh Fireman

The following is an extract from the RAF Gutersloh Fire Section Occurrence Book dated 22 June 1976. The article was submitted to the RAF Gutersloh Station magazine 'Zeitung 47' by Flight Sergeant Steve Davey and is reproduced by George Edwards BEM

- 07.30 Oncoming crew arrive for duty.
- 07.55 Morning parade men detailed to duties, vehicle and equipment checks commence.
- 08.16 Crash one to runway to raise RHAG cables.
- 08.40 Practice crash Belfast aircraft.
- 08.50 Daily inspection run around airfield.
- 09.35 Wash down Bravo line.
- 09.38 Wash down at 7 hanger.
- 09.40 Man Up state 3 precautionary landing Lightning aircraft.
- 09.42 Man Up State 2 Pan Call F104 short of fuel, vehicle deploy to East Side.
- 10.00 Emergency cancelled.
- 10.05 Crash 3 providing cover at reheat-pan.
- 10.37 Man Up State 3 precautionary landing.
- 10.38 Man Up State 2 emergency, Lightning returning, no greens indicating on undercarriage.
- 10.58 Aircraft lands ok revert to normal standby.
- 11.00 Wash down Bravo line.
- 11.20 Wash down 18 squadron.
- 11.52 Crash one to lower western RHAG.
- 12.26 Crash one to lower western RHAG.
- 12.39 Man Up State 3 precautionary landing Lightning aircraft.
- 12.50 Emergency call via 222 telephone. Fire in Lightning aircraft on bravo line, crash alarm sounds repeat of 222 message engine starter fire, extinguished by ground crew with Co 2 extinguisher.
- 13.01 Wash down Bravo line.
- 13.40 Crash 3 standby engine run on reheat pan.
- 14.03 Combine deploy to west end RHAG and de-rig the barrier.
- 14.14 Wash down Bravo line.
- 14.40 Combine carry out FOD run. Canberra aircraft lost a navigation light.
- 14.50 Wash down transport loop Victor tanker.
- 15.15 Crash 3 standby reheat at pan.
- 15.48 Emergency call via 222. Aircraft reported on fire outside 4 Hanger. Combine deploy (false alarm).
- 16.00 Crash on to lower both RHAG cables.
- 16.15 Refuel all vehicles, prepare for shift change.
- 16.55 End of shift.

I served at Gutersloh from 1975 to 1997 and without doubt the station was very much at the sharp end of the then cold war. I think it was only a few minutes flying time for the Lightning aircraft to the eastern bloc border. Life on the fire section was very hectic and quite dangerous especially if you were on the opposite side of the volleyball net to Flight Sergeant Dolman. According to Steve Davey's Zeitung article, (and who could ever doubt what Steve said?), there were 62 domestic fire incidents in 1976, 4054 airfield incidents and an average of 60 wash downs a month. Despite what was a fairly arduous shift pattern and demanding job with no opportunities to participate in station sport under the redoubtable Mr Morrell's regime, I have some very fond memories of the place and the people I met there. I have a copy of the Fire section nominal role for June 1976 and I look now at the names of the four Flight Sergeants, twenty one Corporals, yes 21, (and I was the most junior when I arrived). The eleven Sac's, not to mention the German civilian Firemen, and I either laugh to myself or cringe at some of their antics. How could I ever forget the wonderful Lofty Bower, Spud Murphy, Bill Bailey, Ron Brown, Dingerell, Geordie Donaldson, Heinrich Bunte, and Alvis Teale, to name a few. What a difference between the Flight Sergeants. There was one, who shall remain nameless, but he called

himself the 'poisoned dwarf, and that was nothing to what we called him; and then there was gentleman Steve Davey, the fireman's favourite chief, still as handsome, debonair and charming as ever.

Many Gutersloh incidents come to mind, but two in particular may be of interest to readers. I remember our crew deploying to an F104, (or it could have been an F111?), and, for practice purposes, carried out a defector exercise. We deployed to the aircraft and the crash one Corporal pitched his ladder against the canopy, climbed up to the cockpit and, with his pistol, indicated to the pilot to leave the aircraft. As a Mk 9 * driver I watched as Corporal Whippe insisted the pilot left the aircraft immediately and I remember some waving of arms from the pilot, but Tagg was a determined individual and I assume the pilot thought it best to disembark. The F104 (or 111?) has a hinged canopy and it was difficult not to laugh as the hinged canopy opened and Tagg and his ladder were seen heading

backwards to terra firma. My second tale; one afternoon we were sat in the crew room and completely out of the blue the station commander burst in. Before we could do or say anything, the CO said words to the effect, "This is my last day in post and, before I leave the station, I would just like to thank you all for vital support you and your colleagues have provided me and my fellow aircrew," and shook hands with all the crew. Ain't that nice?

It goes without saying it is a delight to meet up with Gutersloh colleagues at the reunions; perhaps Spud, Ron, Bill, Steve and I, should throw out a volleyball challenge for the next reunion. The opposition must be over fifty-five and on some form of legal medication, Bob Feather in his day was a ruthless volleyball player so he can't play against us.

*George Edwards BEM
member 238*



MK 9 Crash Truck Gibraltar circa 1975 – Roger Pennington

“Our man in New Zealand” -

Dear Dave,

Congratulations on your appointment as Editor. I was most interested to read the letter from George Edwards published in the last [April 2004] Flashpoint, particularly as I agree with him wholeheartedly! While there were always one or two people who turned up for work between pub opening times, I found the majority of the people I met in two air forces to be totally committed to the job, and not all of them were reprobates. I left Sutton-on-Hull in April 1958 for Innsworth to be kitted out for a posting to Kenya, and during that kitting-out, I was issued with a size of shorts, which fitted perfectly, but which the resident tailor said didn't and sent me back to change them. Being now a bit wiser in the ways of the service, I simply rejoined the inspection line and was passed as a perfect fit! I believe that instinct came from the excellent people at Sutton, who instilled in you the need to do things right. The end result in my case was that I wanted nothing more than to do the right thing and be the best at whatever I did.

Now I've never met George Edwards, and I note he joined a bit after me, but I think his experience and what he has said mirrors mine exactly. I was very fortunate in my time to be able to attend lots of 'accidents and incidents' as they say, and almost invariably the people you were with were dependable, and you knew that. Sure, there were exceptions, in both directions. There were those who lived, breathed, and slept firefighting, and were always slightly frantic when on duty, and others who, it must be said, just turned up at the appointed time and did what was required of them and nothing more. In my own case, I loved going on duty! There were the people you

worked with and Eastleigh, my first posting, was anything but dull. Perhaps I was lucky, but the whole section was relatively happy, and though we didn't do parades, none of us were scruffy or negligent, in or out of uniform. If you look at any off-duty photos of those firemen at any function off base and they are effectively still in uniform, all wearing long-sleeved white shirts with a tie, and long trousers! I don't know if any of you remember them, but I was on a crew with Cpl Alec Bramley, a pretty reasonable bloke, and of course the inimitable Cpl Jim Davy,



from Glasgow. None of them were scruffy, and nor were we. Later, there was Sgt Graham Bones, with whom I have just had a phone conversation some forty years after we last met.

To get to the point George made, I found that when the chips were down these people were at their very best. If the job consisted of long periods when not a lot happened, then it was made up for in the times when something did. I mentioned once before that in the middle of my tour the station was on full alert as a result of a firebug. We had a whole series of fires, some serious and others relatively minor, though the last one had the potential to kill one of us.

The arsonist was a fireman as it turned out, and though we felt a bit sad at that, he was actually a very good fireman. His downfall was that he somehow managed to be at the forefront of every fire, even when he was off-duty! His five-year sentence would no doubt have given him time to reflect.

That the rest of us performed as well as we did, like professionals in fact, was due in no small part to the excellence of the training at Sutton, and the quality of the NCOs both there and in the service itself. All right, I'll concede there were the odd

one or two who caused you to wonder that not everything in life had a purpose, but by and large we were well served. The same applied when I got to Cottesmore. I was as keen as mustard to learn everything there was to know about my new posting, with three squadrons of Victors. People recognize that and take the time to help you. Believe me, the first time you have a brake-fire on a Victor, at night, in winter, in pouring rain, and it's as black as the inside of a cow, you are very conscious of the fact that people more experienced than you are watching your every move. That in itself is an acute learning experience.

I attended to off base crashes at Cottesmore while off-duty, that's how keen I was!

When I left Cottesmore, and the RAF, in 1962, the OC admin wrote that "the RAF was losing a good airman", he also wished me well with the RNZAF, which is where I was going. When I arrived I was already in a trade group, which recognized my RAF experience, but it wasn't the top layer, which was Senior Fireman, something the RAF didn't have, so I insisted they send me on the next course so that I would be at least as good, officially, as anyone on whatever crew I was on! It was a tough course, eight weeks, but I did it and was posted not long after to RAF Tengah as one of two firemen on 14 Sqn RNZAF. We were attached to the Fire Section of course, and immediately I sought to get up to speed with the vehicles I hadn't seen for three years. There was one fireman there who recognized a fellow enthusiast, and the late Pete Lee and I used to disappear all the drivers drills so that I was as good as anyone else. Pete Lee and Joe Dennison, whom I had known from Kenya, also brought me up to speed with the Tiger! The Fire Section wore jungle greens, and they could be a bit shapeless, but mine were ironed and starched, because I didn't want to be considered scruffy! When 'my' squadron was stood down for essential leave once, I took off to the Asahan range because it seemed like a good idea, and all the RAF lads were a bit sick of it and none of them wanted to go. Again, the people I worked with up there were neither scruffy nor reprobates.

It was at Tengah that I was approached with a view to attending an OCS course, and it wasn't surprising that, after the RAF did some initial pre-

Brief History Of The Association

selection on behalf of the RNZAF, it was Pete Lee who first got wind of it. I'm sorry Pete died before I could catch up with him again.

I was eventually commissioned in 1968 as a Fire Officer, and later became CFO and a Sqn Ldr. That wasn't easy. I had to attend Staff College, and do the thousand and one things that junior officers get lumbered with regardless of what branch you're in.

As a senior officer, and a Fire Officer, I noticed many occasions when young firemen placed themselves in positions of risk and came to realize that perhaps this was the trend rather than the exception. The difference was that I always made sure they were told that, something which rarely happened in my experience!

I've never met George Edwards, but who knows! One of these reunions might find us lucky. It'll be his round of course!

*Colin Hall Sqn Ldr
RNZAF Rtd.
[former Course 336
Member,
Sutton-on-Hull]*

Formation of the Association

The formation of the Royal Air Force & Defence Fire Services Association took place at Shoreham Airport in East Sussex, on the 13th. May 1995, when 23 ex-service personnel got together to settle the question of why there wasn't an organisation relating to the trade of firefighter when most other trades had formed one of their own many years ago?

Inaugural Committee Formed

On that day, when those founder members turned up from all over the country, they went on to form the inaugural committee of the Association and elected the following Officers and Committee :-

	Member	
President	John Arthur	11
Vice President	Ken Rimmel	20
Chairman	Keith Penfold	9
Vice Chairman	Mick Clark	2
Secretary	Dennis McCann	7
Treasurer	John Knight	21
Editor *	Alan Alsop	49

*The position of Editor was first introduced in 1995, when Alan Alsop took post as founding editor, but after the formation of the Association in May of that year.

Area Co-ordinators Elected

Area Co-ordinators were subsequently elected to cover the U.K. as follows:-

	Member	
Devon & Cornwall	Wilf. Longmire	83
Lincolnshire	Roger Smith	32
Midlands	Graham Kennedy	10
Norfolk	G S Bridges	18
North	Joe Shackleton	22
Northern Ireland	John Hanley	69
RAF	Gordon Smith	64
Scotland	Jim Souter	106
Scotland	Richard Callanan	52
South	Barry Poulton	14
Wales	Reg Silcock	24

N.B. See page 2 for details of those in post to date.

The Intervening Years

Many changes have taken place since then as the Association established itself over the intervening years and, with its formation, colleagues, past and present, now have a better chance of finding each other again, renewing old friendships and making new ones.

The Association publishes Flashpoint magazine 3 times per year, 'Flashpoint' with information, news, updates, articles, anecdotes, photos. and stories.

The Association membership is made up of ex and serving firefighters and includes those personnel who made up the Air Force, Army and Royal Navy Fire Service Departments, which became the Defence Fire Services.

Together we are the Royal Air Force and Defence Fire Services Association.

Associate Membership is also open to ex and serving personnel having a minimum of three months service with the British Airports Authority (BAA) Airport Fire Services.



Association Standard at Hull reunion Saturday 18 October 2003

Invitation to all members

Let us have your personal stories, anecdotes and photographs for publication. Remember, it's *your* Association, and Flashpoint is produced for your enjoyment. That's why we need to tell of all those many experiences that are out there. If your article requires a photo. remember to enclose it along with your article and send to the Editor at the above address. Please enclose an SAE for the return of photos.

Chance for Ladies to have a say!

Recognizing the fact that many wives, and partners, regularly attend the twice yearly reunions, the Committee have decided to allocate space in Flashpoint to "air their views." We do organise trips for the Ladies but, maybe they have different ideas as to what they would like to do together as a group on a Saturday when we are attending our meeting. It is designed to allow them a little more say in what *directly* affects them.

Over to you ladies! If you have any views or ideas on what you would like to see, or do, at a reunion, let me know by e-mail, phone or write to the address below.

**Brenda Paterson, 18 Plover Court,
Rossington, Nr. Doncaster. DN11 0HU
telephone 01302 864 742
e-mail james@dunromin18.freeserve.co.uk**

So Ladies, let me have your views. Phone after 6 p.m. when I will have a good chat with you. If I'm not available, please leave your details, and I will ring you back as soon as possible.

Brenda

WANTED EX-RAF & DEFENCE FIRE SERVICES VEHICLES & EQUIPMENT

Do you know the whereabouts of any ex-RAF or Defence Fire Services Vehicles and related equipment? Then David Hughes, member 683, would very much like to hear from you!

If you hear about, or have any information on such gear, please inform the Editor in the first instance via the usual channels.

All information received, will be passed on to David for his attention. Thank you in anticipation -Ed.



Eulogy to John Arthur BEM DFM 1921 - 2004*

John Arthur died on Wednesday 24th. March 2004 aged 83 years. He lived, and breathed, the RAF - joining up after leaving school - apparently against his parents wishes, and it was a long while before his mother was told!

John was a private man regarding his RAF service, and did not often talk about it. He flew in Lancasters as a rear gunner and, in this position, was affectionately known as a "Tail End Charlie." He also took part in the Berlin Airlift of 1948 carrying fuel, food and essential supplies to the people of Allied occupied West Berlin to enable them to survive the Russian blockade. He was also involved in a couple of bad air crashes which had a marked effect on him.

After the war, John transferred to the Royal Air Force Fire Service where he proved to be a stickler for discipline, and later, the Defence Fire Services, and was eventually awarded the BEM and DFM. John was very knowledgeable on all aspects of fire protection and prevention equipment and vehicles. In later years he became an Instructor/Demonstrator of fire equipment, and would travel miles regarding equipment and vehicles and for his RAF Fire Service colleagues.

He attended every

Remembrance Parade he could in London and, pre- May 1995, had a discussion with a British Legion colleague about starting off an Association for the RAF & Defence Fire Services, and then placed an advert in the British Legion magazine. This led to a meeting of 23 ex- RAF firemen at Shoreham Airport in May 1995 and the Association was formed. John Arthur was elected President, Keith Penfold, Chairman, Dennis McCann, Secretary, John Knight, Treasurer and Joe Shackleton, Vice-Chairman. Since then, the Association has gone from strength to strength and there are now well over 500 members. Reunions are held twice a year and have proved very popular and enjoyable.

This is all due to John Arthur having taken the initiative, and the lead, to get the Association started. He will be greatly missed. Dennis McCann, Founding Secretary, friend, and member 7.

*The Eulogy was given by Dennis at John Arthur's funeral held at Oxford Crematorium on 2nd April 2004.

See **In Memoriam** elsewhere in this edition of Flashpoint.

John Arthur - 1921 -



photo courtesy of Ken Hird member 491 *

On Friday 2 April 2004, friends, colleagues and Association members converged on Oxford Crematorium to support the family and pay their respects to John Arthur, RAF Fire Service retd, who died on March 24th 2004. He leaves four children, Irene, David, Christine and Susan.

John was Founding President and a powerful driving force behind the Royal Air Force & Defence Fire Services Association from its inception on 13th May 1995 to the present day with around 600 members. A great tribute to his character, personality, foresight, and determination.

A Eulogy was given by Dennis McCann, friend and Association Founding Secretary. (See page 12 for full version)

We salute you John. You will be greatly missed by all who knew you and our heartfelt sympathies go to the family from your Association members.

*Photo taken Saturday 18 October 2003 in St James' Church, Sutton-on-Hull at dedication of Association Standard.



Guard of Honour forming up prior to escorting hearse to Chapel.

L/R - Kevin Doyle - Alan Alsop - Geoff Varley - Roger Brooks (Standard Bearer) - Joe Shackleton - Bob Feather - Ron Brown - Dave Kenyon

Photo courtesy of Terry Matson member 401

Jim Souter - 1933 - 2004



Photo courtesy of Terry Matson member 401

The funeral took place on Saturday 8th May 2004 at 10.45 at Barn Church, Culloden, Inverness, Scotland and, according to his good friend Joe Shackleton, 'the turnout was unbelievable' and included Association members, friends, ex-work colleagues from Shell & BP and the Austin A30/35 Owners Club.

Joe and Jim met again in

1996 after 38 years and picked up where they had left off. They also reunited with friends from those days, some of whom took part in the Fighter Command Fire Rescue Competition held in 1954, when Jim's crew emerged victorious. *

Members may recollect seeing Jim and Evelyn with Joe, and his late wife Jean, at our

Association reunions. They had kept in touch and met frequently since finding each other after all those years.

Jim, will be sorely missed by those who knew him, and our heartfelt sympathies go to the family on behalf of Association members.

Lead me gently home, Father,
Lead me gently home!
When life's toils are ended,
And parting days have come,
There to rest for ever,
From all earthly gloom,
Lead me, O my heavenly Father,
Lead me gently home!

The poem was chosen by Jim's wife Evelyn as part of the Funeral Service.



* Winning crew shown below with the Flt/Sgt. and Thornycroft MKV Crash Truck, Trailer Pump and Hose equipment.

Fighter Command Fire Rescue Winners 1954

L/R - Flt/Sgt. Williams - Jim Souter - Mike King - Joe Shackleton - Eddie Mashiter - Tom Seller

photo courtesy of Joe Shackleton member 22

RAF & Defence Fire Services Association RAFDFA ENTERPRISES - Our "Shop"

Those of you who have been able to attend the reunions will be aware that we have a range of promotional RAFDFA goods for sale, all profits of which go to Association funds. Goods also available by mail order via Bob or Sue and the Association website (See bottom of page). As requested by members, we have several new items this year including mugs and self cling car stickers, as well as new fire engine thimbles and keyrings.

Looking forward to seeing you at Stoke-on-Trent, regards and best wishes, Bob Feather and Sue Brooks.

Below is an updated stock and price list for your information.

PRICE LIST 2004

Note:- For Mail Order Postage & Packing please add 17% to prices quoted. Minimum Postage charge £1.00

RAF FIREFIGHTING & RESCUE

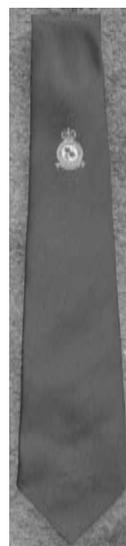
STICKERS x 2 (RAF Fire Service).....	£0.50
CAP BADGE (RAF Crash Fire Service).....	£10.00
EMBROIDERED PATCH BADGE.....	£3.50
ACRT CORGI MODEL.....	£10.00

RAF & DEFENCE FIRE SERVICES ASSOCIATION

CAR STICKER.....	£1.20
KEYRING.....	£2.00
MUG.....	£4.75
ASSOCIATION PEN.....	£0.50
THIMBLES.....	£1.50
Set of 4.....	£5.00
POCKET CALCULATOR.....	£3.99
WALL PLAQUE.....	£26.00
OLD SUTTON-ON-HULL MAGAZINE.....	£1.00
BLAZER BADGE (Gold Wired).....	£10.00
LAPEL BADGE.....	£3.00
TIES (Blue, Grey, Burgundy, Green).....	£6.00
SWEATSHIRT (Navy, Grey, Green, White) (Sm. Med. Lg. XL. XXL).....	£16.99
POLO SHIRT - Navy (Sm. Med. Lg. XL. XXL).....	£10.00
T SHIRT (Red, Black, Navy, White) (Sm. Med. Lg. XL. XXL).....	£6.50
FLEECE (Navy - to order only) (Sm. Med. Lg. XL, XXL).....	£35.00
BASEBALL CAP (Navy, Black, Green, Natural).....	£6.00

MISCELLANEOUS

FIRE ENGINE PRINT.....	£6.00
FIRE EXTINGUISHER LIGHTER.....	£2.50
CHRISTMAS CARDS - REDUCED TO CLEAR	
Pack of 10.....	£1.50
Special Offer - 4 packs.	£4.00



REMEMBRANCE PARADE WHITEHALL - LONDON SUNDAY 14th. NOVEMBER 2004

THE ROYAL BRITISH
LEGION

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 Alan Alsop without delay.

All ticket applications must be in to me no later than early September 2004.

Surname: First name: Membership number:

Address:

..... Postcode:

Tel No:

Signed: Dated.....2004

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

Tickets will be dispatched as soon as I receive them from the Royal British Legion.

***Send to :- Alan Alsop, Kita Rumah, 4 Clock Inn Park, Lydeaway, Nr. Devizes, Wiltshire SN10 3PP**

Late application - 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!

Tel. 01380 727 643

Note:- Travel and accommodation on the Saturday, are your responsibility, but I may be able to help as follows:-

The Union Jack Club
Sandell Street
London
tel. 020 7928 4814

The Allison House Hotel
82 Ebury Street
London
tel. 0170 730 9529

Union Jack Club - Single room without breakfast, shower/bathroom or T.V. £30 per night.

Allison House Hotel - Single room with breakfast, no shower, washing facilities in room £36 per night.

(It is basic, but clean and a short walk from Victoria Station).

Dress on this special occasion - Blazer & Badge, Medals and Beret with RAF Crash Rescue Badge please.**

1)** It helps to show up the badge on Parade by placing a circle of red material behind it as per photo.

2) Badges are available from either, Bob Feather, Membership Secretary, or Sue Brooks, and cost £10 plus P&P, unless you are going to attend the AGM at Stoke in October when you could buy direct. See RAFDFSAs Enterprises Shop page for mail order details in this issue of Flashpoint.



Mobile phones must be switched off before entering Horse Guards Parade.

Please make every effort to attend. Thankyou.

Alan Alsop member 49

Committee Meeting Update

On Saturday 8th May 2004 the committee held one of their many meetings at Cambridge. This was thoughtfully organised by our new treasurer Geoff Varley. Roger Brooks Chairman, Jim Paterson Vice Chairman, Geoff Varley Treasurer, Ron Brown Secretary, Bob Feather Membership Secretary, Alan Alsop Editor, Ernie Fisher PRO and Keith Penfold Vice President attended the meeting.

Before the meeting commenced, Roger Brooks presented the CO of 104 (City of Cambridge Squadron) ATC, Flt Lt Richard Slack, with a print of various RAF crash trucks as a token of our

appreciation for the use of the premises. (See photo below *)

Geoff and Hazel Varley very kindly provided all the committee with light refreshments after their long journey. As most of us had travelled for around 2 - 3 hours the light refreshments were heartily devoured. Hazel was ably assisted by Sue Brooks (Roger's boss!). These two kind ladies made sure the committee did not die of thirst or hunger during the meeting.

The meeting took place in the drill hall. Our first thought on entering was, "Can we remember how to march?" But then someone shouted to, "Sit down," which was good, as I don't think any of us would

have remembered all the moves. After around 4 hours, and many items on the agenda, plus some that weren't, the meeting finished. We all said our goodbyes and went our separate ways.

On behalf of myself, and the rest of the committee, I must send a very large thank you to Geoff and Hazel for their hospitality. Another one goes to Sue for helping to look after us and making sure Roger didn't get lost: not like the rest of us!!

Text and photo courtesy of Bob Feather Membership Secretary member 218



* Photo: Left to Right : Ernie Fisher, Jim Paterson, Flt Lt Richard Slack, Keith Penfold, Roger Brooks, Alan Alsop, Ron Brown and lastly behind the camera myself, Bob Feather

TREASURER'S COMMENTS

Following my official appointment in March, as treasurer of our Association, I felt my first priority was to try and address the problem of the very large amount of **outstanding** subscription payments for 2003/04.



With this in mind, and with the full approval of the Committee, reminder letters were sent to all members who, from our records, had not renewed their membership.

This exercise, I must admit, brought forth a few, "Strong" letters, twelve in total, regarding the workings of the committee, but I make **no** apologies for sending the letter out, as it resulted, in I feel, a very good **cleansing** exercise, and I think the following figures say it all.

Number of Subscription Reminder Letters sent out = **172**. Number of payments made = **96**. **Equating to income of £1200.00**.

In most cases members had "Just Forgotten" subscriptions are due on the 1st September, each year, or their banks had not made Standing Order Payments.

It has now been decided at Committee level, to send out a "Reminder" in the future, in August. These reminders will **not** be sent to any member who has paid their subscriptions in advance, or have a "Standing Order Mandate" on record.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the many members who sent **very kind** comments on the work of the committee and its members, along with their subscriptions.

Hope to see you all at Stoke in October.

Geoff Varley member 221

NEXT ISSUE

- | RAF Changi Association letter & photos of fire service personnel & Crash Bays 1958/9
- | 'Letter from our man in New Zealand Colin Hall member 27, "How did I get there?"'
- | RAF Waddington Airshow & 'Shop'
- | Tattershall Weekend & RAF Coningsby visit as Guests of the Fire Section - PRO
- | Stoke-on-Trent AGM & Reunion
- | Remembrance Day Parade Sunday 14th November 2004.

The Fireman's Prayer is reproduced at the request of Jack Shepherd member 615.

FIREMAN'S PRAYER

When I am called to duty, God
Where ever flames may rage
Give me the strength to save a life
Whatever be its age
Help me embrace a little child
Before it is too late
Or save an older person from
The horror of that fate
Enable me to be alert
And quickly and efficiently to put the fire out
I want to fill my calling and
To give the best in me
To guard my every neighbour
And protect his property
And if according to your will I have to give my life
Please bless with your protecting hand
My children and my wife

~Author Unknown~

Flashpoint Update

From April 2004 - Page 19 and Fire Section Football Team at RAF Seleter in 1963 George Harley, member 540, recognised himself as part of the team shown and sends the following info:-

L/R - Back

Larry Lamb, Johnny Booth, ?, Dave Bradley, Mac, Sandy Skinner

L/R - Front

Jimmy Desilva, Terry Coll, George Harley, Brian Curwen, Tony Bricklebank

Thanks George, a great result with 10 out of 11 named from the photo.- Ed.

FOR SALE

Avondale Quantock Caravan

Two berth 15ft, rear end shower/toilet, washroom & wardrobe.

- Hot/cold water system, warm air heating.
- Four hob cooker, oven and fridge.
- Side locker gas bottle storage (2) and underfloor spare wheel storage.
- Included in sale, top of range awning with four zip out panels & ground sheet. and some cutlery/crockery.

Excellent condition, reluctant sale, virtually ready to roll.

For anyone in the Devizes area buying, there is guaranteed indoor/outdoor storage available.

Price £4,650 OVNO

ROYAL AIR FORCE & DEFENCE FIRE SERVICES

To cater for our serving members, and encourage potential recruits to join the Association, space is to be allocated in Flashpoint to include News, Views and Updates that, hopefully, will keep all of us in touch with what is going on in today's service. To that end, I have contacted the Chief sub-editor of the Royal Air Force NEWS, Terry Palin, and he has agreed to send us copies of photographs for use in Flashpoint. By e-mail, we send details of photos required, and he'll arrange to send them

on. We then extract the text from the copy in the newspaper as necessary. All we have to do in return is give them an acknowledgement for any article we do. So, as they say, watch this space for future articles! Other ideas for news items etc; are already in hand. Might even recruit certain members as Service News providers! Who? Several names readily spring to mind, and I'll be having words with them very soon! - Ed.



REMEMBRANCE PARADE

Sunday 14 November 2004

See page 15 for details and if you wish to attend.

OCTOBER REUNION 2004

WHEN? - Friday 22nd, Saturday 23rd & Sunday 24th October 2004.

WHERE? - The Stoke-on-Trent Moat House Hotel, Etruria Hall, Festival Way, Etruria, Stoke-on-Trent ST1 5BQ

Full details are available from the Membership Secretary. Members should have received their own personal copy.

**DEADLINE FOR ENTRIES FOR NEXT ISSUE OF FLASHPOINT
1 NOVEMBER 2004**

Ray "Taff" Elliott

Dear Ed,

I'm writing this letter in order to fulfil a promise I made a couple of years ago. The delay in getting this story to you was caused by a combination of misplaced letters, overseas detachments, house moves etc. But a promise is a promise!

Enclosed is an article published by the "Times of Malta" on 27 Oct. 01 regarding a rugby match for the Ray Elliott Super Cup. The league champions & cup winners from the previous season play the first match of the new season for this cup, much the same as our soccer clubs play for the Charity Shield.

Ray served as a RAF Fire-fighter for 23 years before returning to Malta to live. As a Welshman, Ray always had a passion for rugby. So it was only fitting that the club he coached, played in, & won the inaugural trophy match. I know that there are many members, our chairman included, who knew Ray well & will be pleased that such an honour was bestowed upon one of our "Brothers in arms".

Ray "Taff" Elliott (Member No 407) fought his illness (Brain tumour) bravely, without complaint & always retained his sense of humour. My apologies to his widow Carmen & children Rhys, who presented the trophy & Gemma for the length of time it has taken me to get this story to you, but I hope you will find it worthy of publication.

Enjoyed the last edition of "Flashpoint", keep up the excellent work. Yours sincerely, Paul "Ginge" Bell member 379

Thanks for the item Paul & your *request re copies* is noted - Ed.

Rugby - Ray Elliott Cup with acknowledgement to

"THE TIMES OF MALTA" - "A MATCH WITH SIGNIFICANCE"

The first match from the Barclays League 2001/2002 will be played today (2 p.m.) at Marsa. Two teams likely to rank among the contenders for the honours, Kavallieri Blue Label and Overseas Ryans, will be involved in a contest with a special significance.

In fact, today's encounter is dedicated to Ray Elliott, a former Kavallieri coach who passed away in 1998. Elliott played rugby all his life. In fact, as soon as he was old enough to kick a ball, he immediately took to the sport he always preferred.

When he joined the

RAF he played rugby and represented each station that he was posted at. Elliott, who served the RAF for 23 years, had a passion for rugby and played competitively before moving to Malta with his family in 1995.

He started playing for Kavallieri and was soon asked to be their-coach, an undertaking which he accepted with great pride and full commitment. He took his job very seriously and immediately gained complete respect from his team and rivals alike.

Today, both teams will be down at Marsa, to

play' rugby in his honour and offer a good start to a season Overseas is a fairly new team, with some ex-Phoenicians players in their fold. Their strengths will lie in their technical ability whereas the Kavallieri will be using their solid fitness to outplay their opponents over 80 minutes.

Tomorrow, Stompers Tetleys will be playing against Alligators Cisk Export at 3 p.m:

Match Result - Kavallieri 21 - 19 Overseas Ryans

Vice-Chairman, Jim Paterson, sent this photograph of a W.O.'s & Sgt's Seminar at RAF Catterick in the late 1980's. He thought it might be of interest, particularly as some of them are Association members. "There are a lot of faces I can't put a name to, but am sure someone can? Of the 37 W.O.'s & Sgt's, I can only name 21. I do believe there are 10 members on the photo. Let's see if



someone can come up with all the names?"

The "civvy" Command Fire Officer 4th from the

1960's. - Ed.

For those members who don't know Jim, he's 7th from the left back row. (Keeping

left front row, is Pat Gaunt, ex-RAF and MOD with whom I worked at RAF Shawbury in the

well Jim! - Ed.)

Brief History of the Royal Air Force Fire Service

The Trade of Fireman was first introduced in 1943 within Trade Group 9, to train personnel in Aircraft Crash Rescue and Firefighting techniques. Prior to this, personnel on general and aircraft handling duties were used to carry out fire fighting responsibilities; with vehicles being driven by M.T. drivers. It was mainly a case of turning up for duty and being detailed on the day.

No insult intended, but it was down to the "Odds & Sods" to do the best they could in the circumstances. This they certainly did, if listening to some of our "Elder Statesmen" is anything to go by! A School of Firefighting and Rescue was then established on an RAF Balloon Unit, north of the City of Hull, as RAF Sutton-on-Hull, until its closure in 1959, when the School moved to RAF Catterick, North Yorkshire and, later, to RAF Manston in Kent as the Central Training

it's not! Today's personnel are doing exactly what those early pioneers did then, whilst still maintaining necessary high standards of training, expertise and efficiency.



Establishment (CTE) which still continues to this day.

When you see the way uniform, equipment, technology and appliances have developed since then, it seems a very different job today. But

They are carrying on the same traditions, skills, expertise, enthusiasm and dedication, to which we can all relate from our own personal experiences, via whatever branch of the Fire Services we did our time.

Today, the service is very much depleted from those days following the War years plus, when the Cold War eventually came to an end, many Overseas and Home Stations closed, with the choice of postings being reduced and numbers of personnel and equipment being gradually cut back to the service levels of today.

Like the Defence Fire Services, (DFS), reviews are ongoing and the future role of the RAF Fire Service is unsure. Hopefully it will remain a viable force in the long term. - Ed



RAF Coningsby fireground demo using Training Module and Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) on a simulated aircraft crash rescue exercise using light water foam via the monitor on the Alvis Rapid Intervention Vehicle (RIV) - Sunday 25 June 2000.

Photo courtesy of Dave Kenyon member 239

Brief History of the Defence Fire Services (DFS)



In the late 1950's, the RAF Fire Service was amalgamated with the RAF Regiment for several years until being reinstated as an independent Trade in its own right.

The early 1960's also saw the gradual civilianisation of certain Stations starting with Flying Training Command. Many personnel recruited were ex RAF, Navy and Army, and formed an experienced nucleus for the change over. Some recruits hadn't experienced service camaraderie before; although it developed by nature of the job itself. This is no reflection on those individuals whatsoever, nor on their abilities as firefighters; it was just a complete change in the way things were done when previously manned by Regular Volunteers and National Service personnel.

Some of those early recruits went on to become Senior Officers, Training School Commandants at Manston, and Command Fire Officers throughout the RAF and DFS, both home and abroad. Another change was that many recruits were now older, married and lived off camp, so the days of the young, single, living on camp serviceman sadly, in my opinion, came to an untimely end!

Today, the service is in a state of uncertainty as to its future with

rumours of privatisation of both the RAF and DFS. Whatever the outcome, the job will still tend to attract those personnel with similar characteristics, personalities, and vocation, as all those who have gone before.

Long may it remain so! - Ed



RAF Linton-on-Ouse Defence Fire Services (DFS) Alvis Rapid Intervention Vehicle (RIV) and Victor Wheel Brake incident at Elvington Airshow 26 August 2001

Photo courtesy of Dave Kenyon member 239

Your Stories

Dear Sir,

I recently read the latest copy of Flash Point and although I enjoyed reading the articles, I could not help but notice that the stories did tend to give a 1960s feel to it: and I can't help but feel that the younger generation might enjoy reading about something they can better relate to; i.e:- a name they might be familiar with, an incident they might recall. So, I hope you don't mind, but I would like to send details with photos of a more recent event which took place on Sunday 2nd June 1984 at RAF St. Mawgan. A date I will never forget as my son was born 2 days later on the 4th June 1984. I feel the best way to explain what occurred that day is to give the official report, which was part of the citation given to each member of the fire crew on duty that day.

**NIMROD INCIDENT - ST. MAWGAN -
1109HRS - SUNDAY - 2 JUNE 1984**



NIMROD XV257

"At 1109 hrs on Sunday 2nd June 1984 Nimrod XV257 landed with a fire in the rear bomb bay. The seat of the fire was amongst a number of 5-inch reconnaissance flares and directly under a fuel tank. The A/C contained 43,000 lbs of fuel and carried a crew of 14 men. As the unit was undergoing 'Tactical Evaluation, the fire vehicles had been dispersed to pre planned war locations, some which were away from the airfield. In the 5 minutes available from the emergency being reported to the A/C landing, W.O. Alan Quayle concentrated his vehicles from the dispersed locations and deployed them round the A/C as it stopped. The fire crew quickly carried out immediate fire fighting action, extinguishing the fire and cooling the fuel tanks over the bomb bay while rescuing the 14-man crew from a smoke logged fuselage.

Throughout the operation W.O. Quayle maintained total control and his confident demeanour was an inspiration to his subordinates, all of whom carried out their duties very quickly and with highly professional competence.

The rapid intervention of the fire section undoubtedly prevented the destruction of the A/C. The conduct of Warrant Officer Quayle and his crew in response to this Emergency were in keeping with the highest traditions of the RAF Fire Service."

Now a small note that was not mentioned in the write up, and I am sure there are other members of the crew that day that can relate to the incident I am about to describe. It occurred while the A/C bomb bay was well ablaze and I, for one, realized the main concern was not just the fuel tanks but the LOX. (Liquid Oxygen) tank directly above the fire! If I remember it correctly, I felt utterly exposed on the end of a TACR 2 hose, when there was an almighty BANG - BANG!!! I don't mind admitting I nearly did a whoop'sy, and I am not sure I was the only one! Once I realized I was still in one piece, I sheepishly looked round to see everyone was just as relieved as me to be in one piece, and so the show went on. Mind you, those fuel pipes have a lot to answer for!

Mick Fotherby member 592

Duty Crew

Sgt Ian Syme	Sgt Dave Roach
Cpl Joe Birt	Cpl Martin Trafford
Cpl Robby Robinson	Cpl All Jeff
SAC Steve Brown	SAC Kev Pateman
SAC Nigel McCullough	SAC Derek Burnett
SAC Mick Fotherby	SAC Sammy Packer
SAC Jock Giffney	SAC Steve Westhead
SAC Matt Haley	SAC Willy Hutchinson
SAC Nyland	SAC Dave Remington

Excellent article Mick - Ed.