

Corporal Jim Guy

RAF Fire Service 1951 -1956

Jim joined the RAF on Monday 31st December 1951 on an engagement of five years full time service plus another four years reserve. He was just seventeen years of age at the time, and his parents were none too happy about it as some years earlier they had adopted a boy whose parents had died, and they had signed for him to join the RAF. The adopted boy had chosen a career in flying, and after completion of his training at Cranwell, he was posted to RAF Hemswell where he flew Blenheims. However, during the hard winter of 1939, heavy snow and ice brought his aircraft down and both crew members were killed. Jim's parents eventually agreed to him signing up as long as he agreed to keep his feet on terra firma.

On enlistment, Jim was sent off to Cardington where he was kitted out, sworn in with the Kings Shilling, and was given his trade as RAF Fireman. After a week at Cardington he was transferred to West Kirby for square bashing and on the way there he volunteered for the RAF band where he played the cornet. He was also trained on the assault course and firing range before going on to Sutton-on-Hull for trade training.

After passing out as a trained Fireman, Jim was posted to Martlesham Heath in Suffolk where he joined the crash crew at 18:30 on the day of his arrival. At 19:00 on the same evening a Lincoln fitted with experimental jet engines on its outboard mountings was due to depart. However, during the run-up prior to take-off the starboard jet engine glowed white hot and spewed molten metal out onto the runway threshold setting fire to the tarmac. The fire was promptly put out with CO₂ but provided Jim with his first shout just thirty minutes into his first shift; he had definitely jumped in at the deep end!

Keen to get on, Jim quickly learned to drive passing his test at Weeton in Lancashire. He also continued his career as a musician, joining the RAF Felixstowe and Martlesham Band with weekly practice every Wednesday. In the Autumn of 1952 he was promoted to SAC but before he had time to sew on his props he was



awarded the rank of Corporal by his Fire Officer. RAF Martlesham Heath was where Jim met local girl Margaret Howard who he later married. On 30th Jan 1953 he was sent to Canvey Island in Essex to assist with the terrible East Coast floods.

Jim's first overseas posting came in November 1953, and after six weeks in transit at Lyneham he flew out in a Hastings bound for Egypt. On landing at RAF Fayid the heat and the smells hit him hard as he disembarked, and he was glad when he was able to shed his blues in favour of tropical kit! Jim remained at Fayid for a further twenty months unaccompanied before he received the welcome news of a posting to Nicosia in Cyprus, where Margaret was eventually able to join him. Whilst serving in Cyprus he faced serious troubles caused

by the Greek EOKA terrorists, and was present at the fire bombing of Cyprus radio by that organisation. Despite the unrest, he spent a wonderful three years in Cyprus, an island which remained very dear to him in later life.

In May 1956 Jim flew back to the UK aboard a Hermes before taking up his final posting to RAF Ouston in Northumberland; he was demobbed in November the same year.

