



FLASHPOINT

ROYAL AIR FORCE & DEFENCE FIRE SERVICES ASSOCIATION MAGAZINE



IN THIS ISSUE

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Cover Photo

Where does the time go between editions, it seems to fly by. 2019 is proving to be one hell of a year for me already. I have become a TV and Radio celebrity in the North of the country on ITV Border and on For as TV. I was asked by a wonderful lady, Debbie Calgie the HR officer at Phoenix House H4H Recovery Centre at Catterick Garrison if I was prepared to give my story and how H4H has helped me, along with my love of model building to aid my recovery. I had to give this a lot of thought as I did not want to end up taking on too much and setting my recovery back. After much deliberation I decided to say yes. My first interview was done on BBC Radio Cumbria which I was nervous about but got there. The next thing was an ITV News crew descending on my flat. They set up sound equipment and a camera. We had a chat about how it would be done and that was that. I asked if we could have a dummy run as I was so blooming anxious and that is what we did, or so I thought. I asked how it was and Hannah said that, that was that all done. The rest is history.

I will ask our webmaster to put the videos on the website. The next time I was at Catterick, some time in January, Mick Flemming the Careers Development Officer informed me that Cumbria Constabulary Citizens in Policing had come up with an initiative whereby they wanted to help veterans and military leavers to integrate back into civilian life. "you live in Penrith don't you Reg" "Yes Mick" "How do you fancy wearing a uniform again and becoming a volunteer with Cumbria Constabulary" I have Mick permission to give them my number and thought nothing more about it. A week or so passed and I had a call. "hello" "is that Reg Metcalfe" "Yes it is" the next bit was really strange, the Calder asked me if I fancied a game of volleyball. "Yes, but who is this" the gadgety on the end of the call said "Its Ian Chappell Cumbria Police ex RAF Police do you fancy a brew. I have made a very good friend in Ian and am now a Cadet Leader and volunteer so if you are in Cumbria please remember the speed limits. A big thank you to Sgt Tamara Tatton and DC Ian Chappell for

facilitating and giving me a purpose and identity.

However the best is yet to follow. I took up power lifting in November last year and entered my first competition in January coming Away with Silver in my category, yes there were more than two of us. At the end of January I had an email from H4H sports recovery saying that I was one of the 20 chosen to represent the United Kingdom at the Warrior Games in Tampa Florida this June. I kept checking the email to make sure it was real. Last year Darren Young represented our great trade at the Invictus Games so now it's my turn. I hope everyone is well and I hope you enjoy this spring edition .

I'm sure you will all join me in a moment's silence in memory of our President Dennis McCann who passed away earlier this year, a big loss to our trade. RIP Sir

Best wishes

Reg



Dear Reg,

I read with great interest reference D.Kirks article on Fire prevention and Mr Davey article on Grenfell both very interesting.I like Dave went on a course to Manston very much bewildered, but well worth it to advance your career.

I knew Dave,when we first met in Gibraltar in late 70s happy times.I think Dave was right I also look forward to the flashpoint coming through the door and as he says keep it up lads.

When I left R.A.F. in 90, I met an old friend when I visiting Bedford, I knew in Gutersloh who was the Fire Officer at Olympia in London and never looked back, I really enjoyed the next 15years+ thanks to David Vanstone.

Another new hat I had to wear, as it was working with British Standard's in the Exhibition world. Strange but enjoyable experience in civvy street, I also had pleasure of meeting Kevin Mason,whom I met before while he was on detachment to RAF Honington and then again in Gibraltar. Many friends in the RAF who I will not forget especially Geordie Dingle who I met in Bruggen on my last tour.

I hope you and the team have lovely Christmas and New year.

Dave Roach member no1062.

Hello Editor, the photograph in the Flashpoint Winter issue of the crew at RAF Gutersloh by Roger Stevens brought back memories of SAC Bernie Josling.

I worked with Bernie at Leeming for about twenty years and he was very popular and always had cheerful smile to accompany his 'cockney sparrer' accent and he always spoke up for favourite football team, Arsenal, and almost always pronounced with an Eric Morecambe cough.

Living in Ripon, Bernie didn't reach his natural retirement from the MoD as he was medically retired on health grounds. His health then spiralled downwards very quickly and he died at the early age of 58 years. He is sadly missed by all who knew him.

*Regards,
Tony Eaton.*

One dark night in BUFFALO, a fire started inside the local sausage plant and in a blink it exploded into massive flames. The alarm went out to all the fire departments from miles around.

When the fire fighters appeared on the scene, the sausage company president rushed to the fire chief and said, "All of our secret formulas are in the vault in the center of the plant. They must be saved and I will give \$50,000 to the fire department that brings them out intact."

But the roaring flames held the firefighters off. Soon more fire departments had to be called in as the situation became desperate. As the firemen arrived, the president shouted out that the offer was now \$100,000 to the fire department who could bring out the company's secret files.

From the distance, a lone siren was heard as another fire truck came into sight. It was the nearby Cheektowaga volunteer fire department composed mainly of Polish Firefighters over the age of 65.

To everyone's amazement, the little run-down fire engine,

operated by these Polish Firefighters, passed all the newer sleek engines parked outside the plant and drove straight into the middle of the inferno.

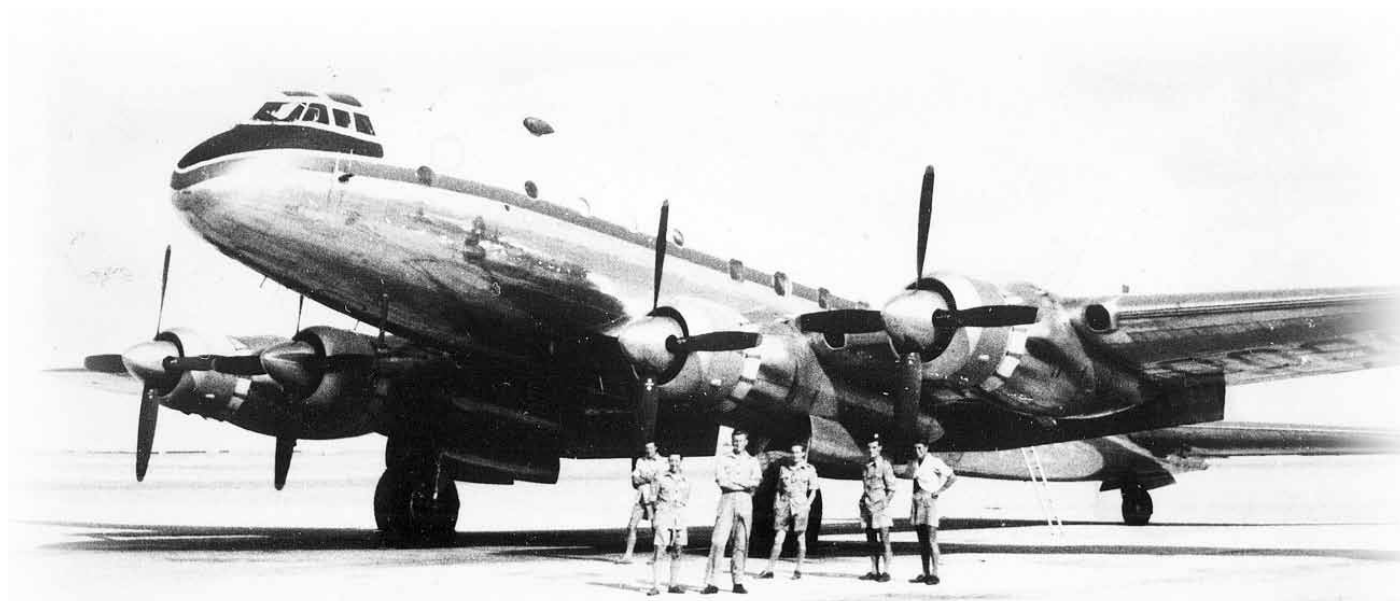
Outside, the other firemen watched as the Polish old timers jumped off and began to fight the fire with a performance and effort never seen before. Within a short time, the Cheektowaga old timers had extinguished the fire and saved the secret formulas.

The grateful sausage company president joyfully announced that for such a superhuman feat he was upping the reward to \$200,000, and walked over to personally thank each of the brave, though elderly, Polish firefighters.

The local TV news reporters rushed in after capturing the event on film asking, "What are you going to do with all that money?"

"Vell," said Stanley Kowalski, the 70-year-old fire chief, "da furst thing ve gonna do is fix da brakes on dat focking truck!"

AN ARABIAN ADVENTURE



RAF Handley Page Hastings at Masirah 1953

It's 1953 and a plane-load of young men, probably away from home for the first time, are heading for the Middle East. One of us is crying – not me! I'm a 19-year-old AC2 Felix Lennon, Aero Fireman Driver, eager to see a bit of the world.

1st stop: Malta – for a very nice few days

2nd stop: Egypt – for an interesting few weeks. At one point I was ordered to do night duty guard and was given a rifle. I looked like something out of a Spike Milligan sketch – “Halt, who goes there?”

3rd stop: Sudan – We were desperate to get out of the plane, because of the heat! They opened the door and we were desperate to get back in, because of the heat!

4th stop: Aden, our destination, - a barren rock.

We settled down in RAF Khormaksar, a lovely little Fire Section, where Abdul and Mohamed served us with tea all day. After a couple of weeks, we travelled by bus through Al-Ma'ala Village down to Steamer Point in Little Aden. I had never experienced such a stench in all my life! On the

way we stopped in the town square, and I watched a local Arab fashioning jewellery from raw silver. He was working in an alcove hewn out of rock and bought a couple of items from him.

One day in Steamer Point, some American Military Personnel arrived in port and challenged the RAF to a baseball match; we beat them!! They supplied us with cans of their beer, but it turned out to be pretty watery stuff, and we were not impressed.

On another occasion we got some terrible news from Steamer Point. The CO's wife had been the victim of a shark attack and had subsequently died in hospital. Apparently, she was swimming outside the shark netting. The whole station was reminded of Standing Orders not to swim outside the netting.

By this time, I had been promoted to the dizzy rank of LAC, and soon passed the RAF Education Test Part One to become an SAC.

During my time in Aden there was a crash on the salt flats, which we attended with all appliances, but unfortunately the pilot died.





netting there so we always had one person as lookout for sharks.

One day, a few of us decided to go fishing from a small boat with an outboard motor. About half a mile offshore our engine failed; we had no oars, so we just sat for a while deciding what to do. As we waited, we spotted a pod of dolphins crossing our bow, then they changed direction and came straight for us. We had been told that where there are dolphins there are sharks, and we were also briefed on the dangers that dolphins could create when they played around unusual things in the sea. There was a possibility that they could tip a

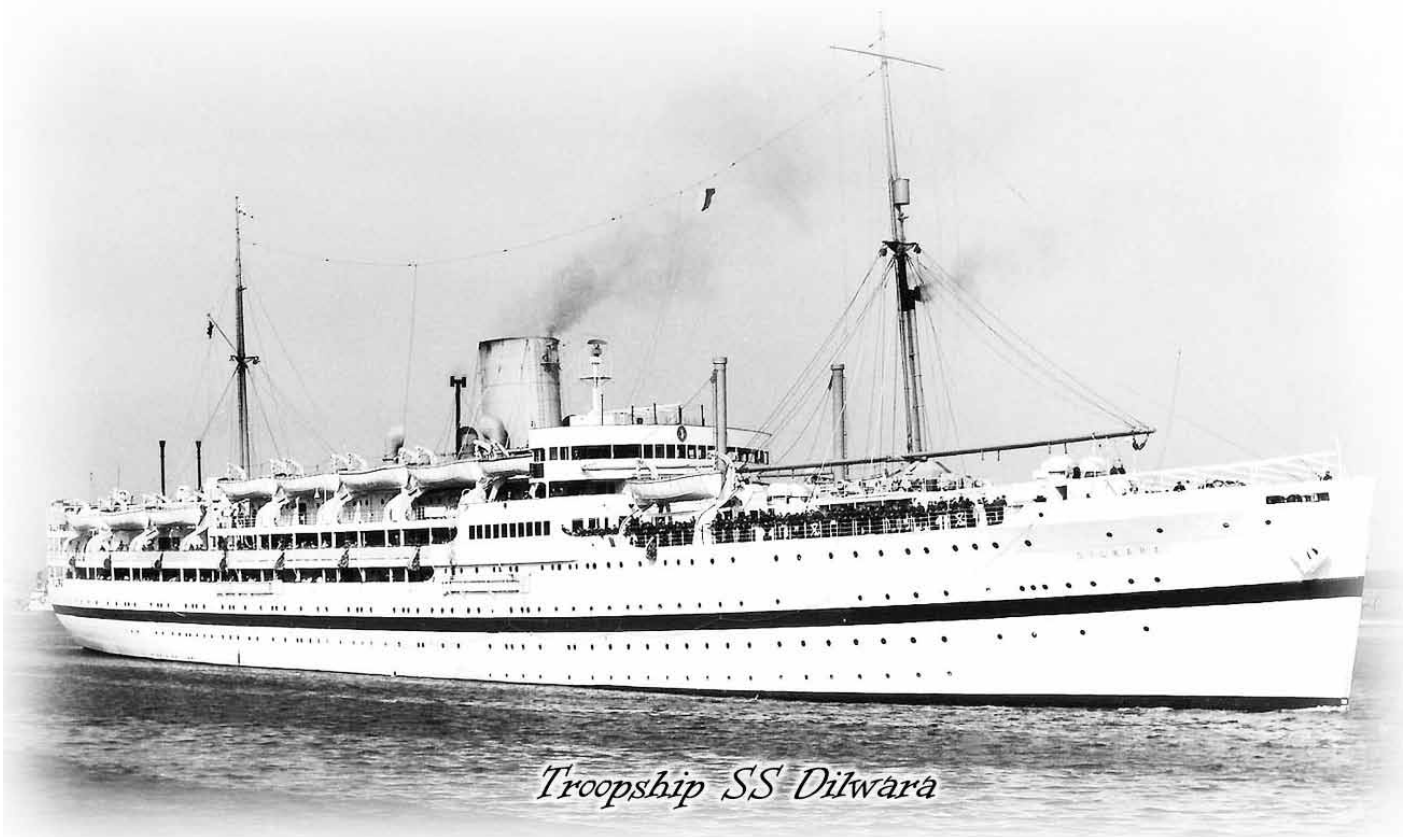
More promotion and I was posted to the Island of Masirah in the Sultanate of Oman. I had reached the dizzy heights of Corporal. It was a nice flight to get to Masirah, stopping off at Riyan and Salalah on the way.

I was in charge of the Fire Section which consisted of Water Bowser, Trailer Pump

and Landrover. Oh yes, and two locals who served and painted anything and everything belonging to the Section. The station consisted of one Pilot Officer and 12 NCO's.

Just about every afternoon we drove down to the jetty and had fun jumping off into the sea, but there was no shark





small boat and even sink it – after which the sharks would be keen to investigate! As it happened the dolphins swam by, rocking our little craft occasionally. It was getting to the stage where a change of underwear was needed, so we quickly tore up some wood which we had been resting our feet on, and used it to row back to the shore – very relieved to get back on terra firma.

One day, a supply ship arrived with foodstuffs and diesel drums and we were invited aboard by the captain. We readily accepted and using our little boat, now with a serviceable motor, we sailed out to the vessel. Once safely aboard, we headed to the captain’s cabin to find the skipper, a Scotsman like myself, sitting indulging in a “Gin session”! No whisky?!?! We were disappointed.

Anyway, after accepting the Captain’s hospitality, we saw some locals pushing diesel drums from the ship into the water and guiding them to shore. A few of us thought that it would be good fun to assist, so we duly dived in and having got a drum each, proceeded to swim in an attempt to guide the drums to shore.

I remember pushing my drum and just enjoying the experience floating in the warm Arabian Sea. However, I think the gin must have been taking an effect over me when I realised I was drifting out to sea instead of toward the shore. It was quiet now and I could hear a little splash at my side. Then, with my legs dangling down from the drum, I started thinking about the sharks. Tarzan couldn’t have beaten me to the shore that day, I was scared stiff!

Back at camp, we got together some food, cans etc, and left the next day with our lorry to head up the island and issue supplies to some of the native settlements. In the first village, the head man wanted to sacrifice a goat for a meal, but our interpreter said that was the only goat he had, so naturally we declined. Instead we were served lots of boiled eggs on a silver tray. In the second village we were served ... boiled eggs on a silver tray. And, in the third village: – boiled eggs on a silver tray! We were glad to return to camp that day.

After 6 months on Masirah, it was back to Aden where I boarded the troop ship

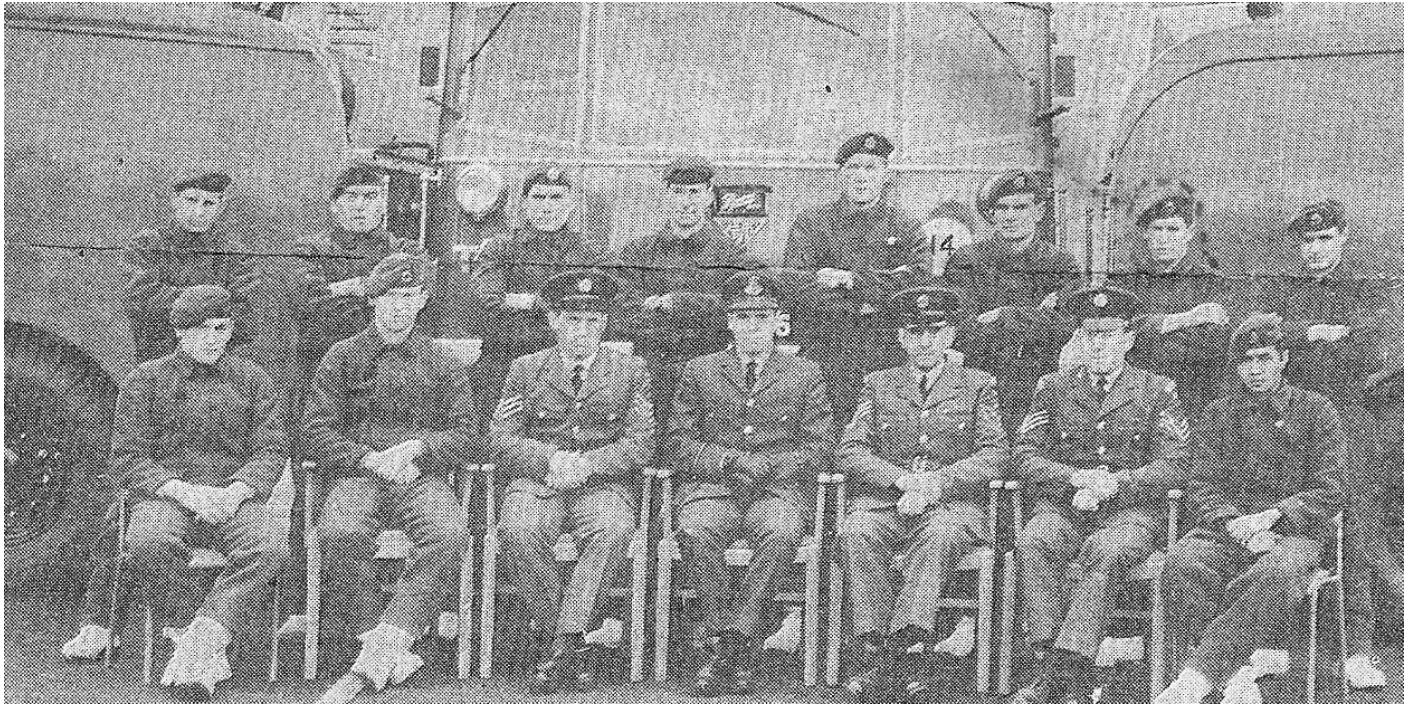
“Dilwara” for my voyage back to the UK bring my Middle Eastern adventure to a close.

I subsequently joined the Glasgow Fire Service and took part in fighting two of the biggest fires in the city; The Cheapside Street Whisky Bond fire, where 19 colleagues were killed, and the Kilbirnie Street Cash and Carry Warehouse fire, where 5 colleagues were killed.

Per Ardua ad Astra.

4091247 Cpl Felix Lennon

Chance Meetings



RAF Stubby Fire Fighters 1967 Winners

It is strange how chance meetings with strangers have some sort of link to your past; this has happened to me quite a lot. The latest was when I was in John Taylor's Auction House in Louth viewing some lots, this guy who was about the same age as me was looking along with me at a small watch maker's cabinet and we were discussing the contents of the drawers. In one of the drawers was an Ingersol pocket watch he remarked his dad had one and explained that he was in the RAF and he never saw him much and said this guy in a uniform just appeared now and again. Naturally I asked what his

dad did in the RAF the answer was that he was at RAF Pembroke Dock working on the Sunderland's. I then explained my background and the fact that I had just wrote a story about Peter Kinglake's experiences on the Fire Floats at Pembroke Dock (see Winter edition 2018) He then went to asked me what I did, I told him about my first posting to RAF Manby and working at RAF Strubby, he asked did you know Mick Mendham or Ted Firmager? I asked how he knew them and it turned out he worked at Airwork's (civilian contractor) I went on explain Ted was my first Crew Commander and Mick was on

the crew. He told me that Mick had passed away and explained to him about Ted's passing and that I had attended his funeral. He then asked was I at Stubby when they won the Fire Competition, I just started laughing and to explain to him that I had just left to go to Masirah but the shield had come into the museum via the association and I had refurbished it and I had written an article about it which is reproduced below as our new members may not have seen it. Mick Mendham and Ted Firmager both appear in the photographs.

Steve Harrison

Fire Fighting Proficiency Shield

A nice little piece of RAF Fire Service history came to the museum in further donations from the Association via David Hughes and that was a Fire Fighting Proficiency Shield which was first awarded to RAF Cranwell in 1954, there are some 17 winner's badges on the shield, the last one presented in 1972 to RAF Cranwell! Seeing RAF Strubby on the shield I remembered that I had seen a reference to it somewhere, low and behold Bob Ewing had posted an image of a newspaper clipping announcing the win on the Association website.



The restored shield, later the centre will hopefully be re-chromed

Strubby went on to represent the RAF at the Royal Tournament and carry out a display with an ACRT, Mk6, Mk7 and DP.

At some stage however the title of the Shield changed from FIRE FIGHTING PROFICENCY SHIELD to RAF FIRE SERVICES EFFICIENCY COMPETION. It says on the clipping that "Marks were awarded for efficiency in aircraft fire fighting and domestic fire fighting and for the professional knowledge of each fireman on the crash crews" The shield title mount at the bottom reads FIRE FIGHTING PROFICENCY SHIELD but on the reverse of the shield the new title mount is pinned on.

Was the competition format different before the change? I wonder if any of our members know. I suspect it may just have been pump drills but I am only guessing. It would be interesting to find out, as we intend to do a display with an explanation of the history of this competition.

All the stations on this shield were in Training Command; were there competitions in Bomber and Fighter Commands? I cannot clearly remember but suspect they may have been.

The full list of the winners are 1954 Cranwell, 1955 Hullavington, 1956 Valley, 1957 Valley, 1958 Valley joint with Cranwell, 1959 No winner, 1960 Thorney Island, 1961 Oakington, 1962 Valley, 1963 South Cerney, 1964 Topcliffe, 1965 Little Rissington, 1966 Syerston, 1967 Strubby, 1968 No winner, 1969 Cranwell, 1970 Strubby, 1971 Topcliffe, 1972 Cranwell.

It would be good if any of our members was at any of the stations at the time and have any photographic record, which I would like a copy of if possible, for the display in the museum.

On a personal note I left Strubby in May 1967 and Ted Firmager was my Crew Chief, Bob Ewing arrived in November and our President Dennis McCann took over from Flt Sgt Thompson.

**STRUBBY R.A.F.
FIRST IN
COMPETITION**

THE Fire Flight at R.A.F. Strubby are the Flying Training Command fire services efficiency champions for 1967. Neighbours R.A.F. Manby took third place in the same competition.

The competition, in which 17 stations participate, took place during September and November, and is judged on all aspects of fire fighting.

Marks were awarded for efficiency in aircraft and domestic fire fighting, and for the professional knowledge of each fireman in the crash crews.

Two fire officers visited Strubby and Manby on 4th October to set and judge the aircraft crash and domestic fire exercises.

Over the past three years, Strubby have improved their position from 11th to fifth to first.

The Fire Flight at Strubby provides a rescue and fire protection service for all aircraft operating from the station. This is a total of 17 firemen in the flight, some of them young airmen straight from basic training.

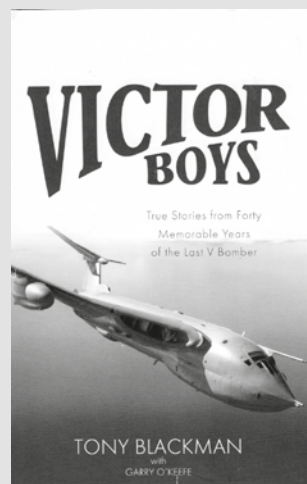
The N.C.O. is Flt. Sgt. C. Thompson, with Sgt. E. Firmager and Sgt. M. R. Lovett in charge of the two crews. F. Officer A. D. W. Grove, an air traffic control officer, is in charge of the flight.



This Image shows Strubby Fire Section Personnel awaiting the A.O.C. who visited the Section to congratulate them on winning the Shield.

BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS

I say this every time I have undertaken a book recommendation that "I am not buying any more books", but I failed again. At local antiques fair I came across "VICTOR BOYS" by Tony Blackman. (True stories from forty years of the last V bomber.) As I served with the Victors both at Wyton and Marham the draw was too much. It covers all the Marks of Victors B1, B1A, B2, K1 and K2 and includes chapters on the Joint Services Trials Unit, The Falklands Campaign including the Black Buck Mission also Tansor & Desert Storm. Appendix 1 contains details of accidents and I sure that some of you may attended these and may well recall some memories which I hope will not cause you any pain which I know it may. Still it is an interesting read. I went to Wyton July 72 in and all the chat was still around the crash which happened in the May involving Victor XL230. I was there when 543 Squadron disbanded and saw an amazing flypast of a Victor and a Spitfire which was the Squadrons first aircraft. Another I missed out on was Victor XL232 which fractured a turbine blade on No3 engine when starting to roll for takeoff and blew into the fuselage and the fuel tanks. Despite quick attendance by the boys it was destroyed. I had just gone off shift that morning after another horrible shift involving that awful word TANSOR!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!



The ISBN is; 13: 09781908117458 this reprint 2016 edition the 1st edition was published in 2012.

Happy Reading lads, Steve Harrison

MUSEUM MOVES TO NEW STORAGE FACILITY



The first load to leave Gainsborough

As reported in the last edition of Flashpoint we were in discussions about the lease of large depot which belonged to North Lincolnshire Council and it was offered to us rent free for a year, just as a storage facility. I am pleased to say that the amendments to the lease we asked for were approved. So in the space of two years we again moved the entire museum from the Gainsborough site to our new storage facility in Scunthorpe. As you can imagine this was a mammoth undertaking for all our volunteers who are less flexible than in their prime, with dodgy knees and backs due to our service lives or other occupations in Civvy Street. We had a team at Gainsborough loading and a team at Scunthorpe unloading, the logistics being led by our prime contractor L & K.R Thorpe. Keith and his Son Andrew (who own an ex-RAF TACR1 themselves) did the majority of the work using a low loader and a curtain sider. Additional support had to come from a sub-contractor, James Selby who supplied a bigger low loader to move the Mk11 together with

the museum bus. He also supplied a telehandler that was used to hoist the two museum porta-cabins into their new home. Using small family run businesses enabled us to achieve a minor miracle and we are so grateful for the professionalism that was shown throughout this mammoth operation. They were always on time, working long hours but always with a smile on their faces. Don't forget, they gave up their Christmas holidays as well! This operation started after Christmas and covered three weekends and days in-between, mainly the weather was with us although very cold, but not as vicious as our last move from Scampton. As you can see by the second image there is a huge amount of space (85,000 square feet) that we have available in the main part of the building for the vehicles. Apart from the vehicles don't forget we have some 20,000 artefacts, office furniture, display cabinets, trailer pumps and large extinguishers. A unique feature of one of the vehicles used in the move is that it can weigh its own load. We have calculated that we moved

over 100 tonnes in total!

As previously mentioned this is a storage facility that we cannot open as a museum (yet), as per the terms of the lease. However as North Lincolnshire Council are very keen to keep us in North Lincolnshire as part of the Aviation Heritage Trail they have allowed us to have five open days in 2019 in order to raise some money and to help us in moving forward with our aim in finding a new permanent home in the County. We hope to publish these dates as soon as possible. (So look at the Museums and Associations website and Facebook pages for news.) This site ticks a lot of boxes with us and as you can see, the potential to show off the vehicle collection is a very encouraging sight. There is also an additional 6,000 square feet of office space spread over two floors so the ability to display artefacts in a museum quality environment is already there! We are very keen for this building to become our new home and we will be working towards making this happen. The thought of having

to move again is a daunting prospect and halts progress of our end objective to have a successful and well attended museum.

We held our AGM in the new building on Saturday 16th February which was well attended by 30 members, so as you can see we remain positive after all our adversities. As with any agenda it included many items including re-election of Trustees varied committees, responsibilities and leads for workshop, vehicle management, and development and fund raising.

So looking forward in our planning we have decided to not take so many vehicles out on the road to shows because of the cost and the idea of an exhibition trailer came up as an idea. So within a couple of weeks of this discussion, Dave Allan went to Elite Workwear in Gainsborough in order to buy a Tee Shirt and saw a couple of trailers in the yard and asked the question, "Are you still using them?" As it turned out they were for sale and Steve Shirley went to have a look and thought that one of these was just what we needed.

So we sent Kev Brereton "The Resident Rottweiler" around to negotiate and he came away with it for £250. At this time we had very little funds and most of the volunteers dipped their hands in their own pockets to purchase it, seeing what a bargain it was and the potential it had. Kevin is currently Health & Safety Advisor at Lincoln College and they have an Air & Defence Career College which would take it on as a project and the students would restore it through their different departments. It will be fitted out with folders and posters showing the history of the RAF Service, vehicles and the range of exhibits that be seen when visiting the museum. Also a large TV monitor will also be fitted allowing us show fire fighting videos and photographs. The trailer, we envisage will be towed by the museum van and we would take a couple of vehicles and manikins in order to entice the public to come to the museum. It's an exciting development for us and we are certain it will be a great success for us in raising our profile.

Moving to this new storage facility has given all the volunteers a new lease of life and we now have to galvanise to make these open days a great success in order to show our supporters throughout the country (and the world) that we are still up and running and off course it will be an opportunity to raise some funds. At this stage we would like to thank the association members who have made contributions in the past and those who have recently started to make contributions via the standing order scheme (SOS). Some of our volunteers have also started to make extra payments, via the SOS scheme in addition to their annual membership fee, such is their commitment to see the museum succeed. We haven't had any paying public through the doors for nearly three years now, so these regular contributions each week/month enables us to have a cash flow in order to keep on top of things and move projects forward. So if you able to contribute through this scheme we would be very grateful. You can set up a standing order quite simply these days and



The new storage facility at Scunthorpe, (New Home???????)

once done, you don't have to worry about it anymore. The name of the bank account is Museum of RAF Firefighting, the account is with the National Westminster Bank, the account number is 53037545 and the sort code is 60-13-15. There is also a donate button on the museum website if you want to make a one off donation at any time. Please remember we are a registered charity.

After the move from the Gainsborough site the company did award us some compensation because of the money we saved them through the business rate reduction scheme via the council, so the funds are a bit healthier and the donation which the association gave was recouped. This money has been put aside for the future just in case we have to move again. This still leaves us a little bit of money to finish existing projects and start new ones. There are three more vehicles potentially coming to the museum and these will require low-loading for instance.



2019 AGM at Our New Premises

There is, of course, a massive challenge still lying before us but we are very encouraged by the fact that North Lincolnshire Council found us our new premises and the fact that they are committed to finding us a new permanent home within the County.

So in closing thanks again for your continuing support and we hope to see

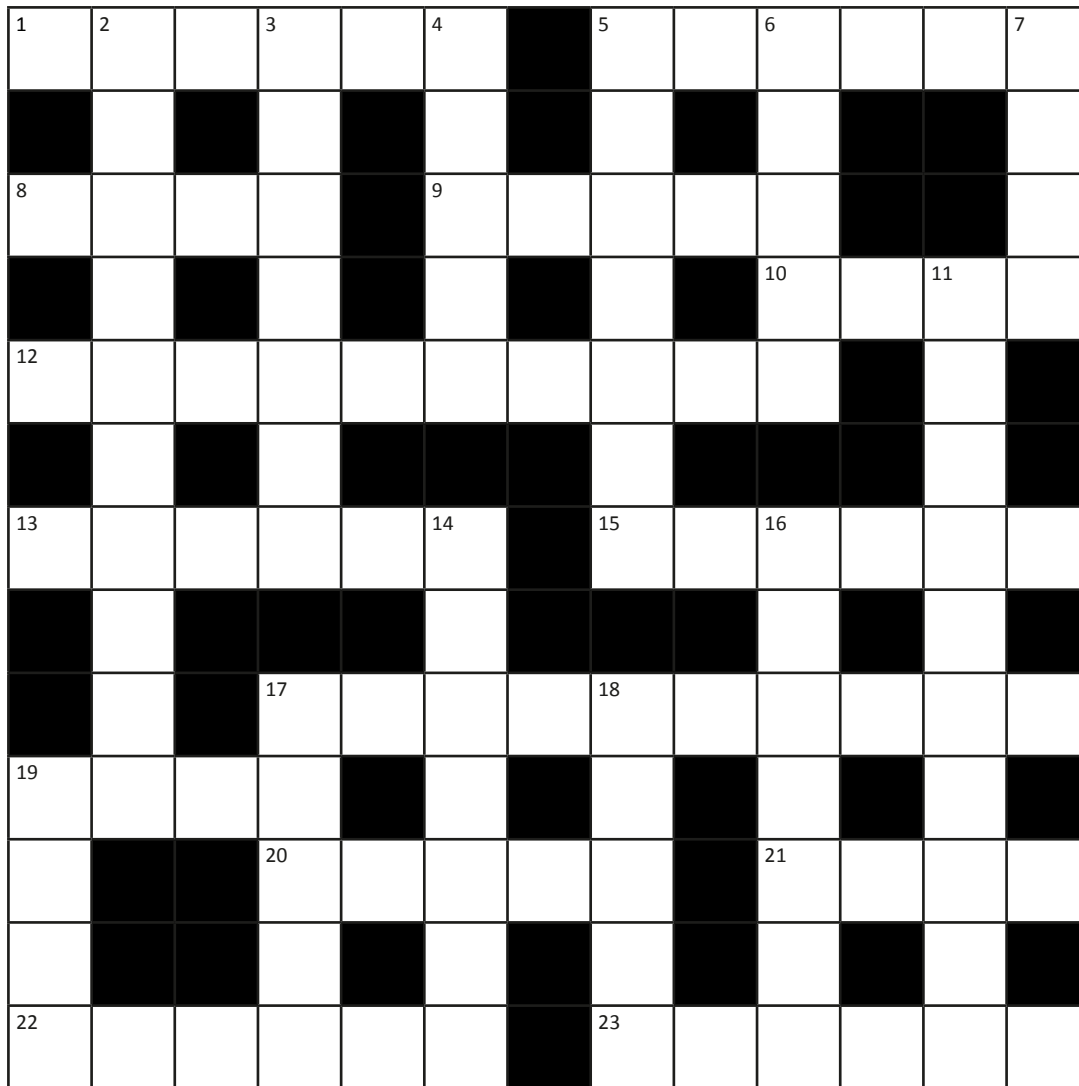
some of you on one of those open days, so keep a look out for news on the website or Facebook and when you get the news please spread the word to those members that you know who "don't do computers. Thanks.

Steve's Harrison and Shirley



Trailer before refurbishment

FLASHPOINT CROSSWORD No 12 BY FIREFLY




Across

1. Deed I've performed on service maybe. (6)
5. See 3 Down
8. Short place for broken trucks. (1,1,1,1.)
9. Junior airman acted strangely. (5)
10. Even after six years initially it's simple. (4)
12. Chocolate tools flown by officers. (10)
13. A doctor has emergency breathing apparatus for one celled organism. (6)
15. Southern moorland for stowing sword. (6)
17. Stuffing a hundred at old V Bomber Base.(10)
19. Wager a form of radiation particle. (4)
20. Junction can be found in dining room. (5)
21. Nine, no nothing in Bruggen perhaps. (4)
22. Sidestep 5 in sewer strangely (6)
23. Irregular engines lacking energy tend to flag. (6)

Down

2. East Midlands base found on scrambled Como Street. (10)
3. Deliverance by Gemini or Zodiac perhaps. (7, 5)
4. Two letters will shine on a spreadsheet. (4)
5. Religious Instruction before bell sounds for parts of Yorkshire. (7)
6. Places he refers to? (5)
7. Spot in Fireflies pyjamas. (4)
11. Fireman's place of work in Gateshead leads to compartmentation. (10)
14. German car bowls the French and is heard. (7)
16. Fire vehicles or their power plants. (7)
17. Art we mix to make fire extinguishant. (5)
18. Anger North Eastern girl. (5)
19. Inlets for parking appliances. (4)

Corporal Brian Murphy

Date:	15-APR-1957
Time:	
Type:	English Electric Canberra B.2
Owner/operator:	57 Squadron Royal Air Force (57 Sqn RAF)
Registration:	WJ575
C/n / msn:	HP162B
Fatalities:	Fatalities: 0 / Occupants: 0
Other fatalities:	0
Aircraft damage:	Written off (damaged beyond repair)
Location:	RAF stn Coningsby, Lincolnshire -  United Kingdom
Phase:	Standing
Nature:	Military
Departure airport:	RAF Coningsby, Lincolnshire
Destination airport:	



Narrative:

On 15/4/1957 Canberra B.2 WJ575 of 57 Squadron, was destroyed by fire in the hanger at RAF Coningsby, Lincolnshire.

The aircraft was in the hanger for rectification of a fuel leak and the fire was apparently started by fuel dripping on an unshielded inspection lamp.

A Corporal Brian Murphy of the Fire Section was awarded a George Medal for his bravery while attempting to extinguish the fire. Per a contemporary report in "Flight International" magazine 18/10/1958:

"George Medal Award

For displaying "courage and extreme devotion to duty" when leading firefighting operations on a Canberra in a servicing hangar at R.A.F. Coningsby, Acting Corporal Brian Murphy has been awarded the George Medal. One of the aircraft's fuel tanks was alight, but Cpl. Murphy unhesitatingly led his duty crew into the confined space of its bomb-bay, where — despite further hazard from the explosion of starter cartridges — they succeeded in localizing and controlling the fire."

WJ575 was struck off charge on 15/04/1957 (same day) as CAT 5(C) at No.54 MU Cambridge and scrapped.

Numb. 41195

5829



THIRD SUPPLEMENT TO The London Gazette OF FRIDAY, 4th OCTOBER, 1957 Published by Authority

Registered as a Newspaper

TUESDAY, 8 OCTOBER, 1957

CENTRAL CHANCERY OF THE ORDERS
OF KNIGHTHOOD.

St. James's Palace, S.W.1.

8th October, 1957.

The QUEEN has been graciously pleased to approve the award of the George Medal to the undermentioned airman:—

2432756 Acting Corporal BRIAN MURPHY, Royal Air Force.

On 5th April, 1957, a Canberra aircraft caught fire in a servicing hangar at the Royal Air Force Station, Coningsby. Corporal Murphy was in charge of the Duty Fire Crew which was called upon to deal with the fire. One of the aircraft's fuel tanks was alight and apart from the risk of this tank exploding the presence of 800 gallons of volatile fuel in the adjoining tanks made the situation extremely dangerous. Corporal Murphy, however, unhesitatingly led his crew into the confined space of the aircraft's bomb bay from which had there been an explosion, escape would have been virtually impossible. While operating in this dangerous situation, Corporal Murphy and his crew were subjected to further hazard by the explosion of powerful starter cartridges stored a few feet away, which blasted a hole in the fuselage and so caused the fire to spread rapidly in all directions. Despite this, and the increased risk of the fuel tanks exploding, Corporal Murphy remained at his post, though his overalls and uniform were charred by the intense heat. Corporal Murphy displayed courage and extreme devotion to duty, and by sustained effort in the face of great danger he and his crew succeeded in localising and controlling the fire while adjacent aircraft and equipment were removed from the vicinity.

Air Ministry, 8th October, 1957.

ROYAL AIR FORCE.

Air Marshal The Earl of BANDON, K.B.E., C.B., C.V.O., D.S.O., is appointed Commander-in-Chief, Far East Air Force, in succession to Air Marshal Sir Francis J. FRESSANOS, K.B.E., C.B., on the latter's retirement from the R.A.F. 13th July 1957.

GENERAL DUTIES BRANCH.

Appointment to commission (permanent).

As Pilot Officer (Branch List):—
645671 Flight Sergeant John Eric GARDNER (50463). 5th Sept. 1957.

Transfer to a permanent direct commission (scheme A).

As Flight Lieutenant:—
Anthony Ernest PAGE (4070457). 29th Apr. 1957 (substituted for notification of 30th July 1957 (p. 4503, col. 1)).

As Flying Officers:—
David John SPINK (4063819). 10th Jan. 1957 (substituted for notification of 23rd Apr. 1957 (p. 2471, col. 1)).

Eric DRINKWATER (4071813). 6th May 1957.
Eric James Alfred HUGHES (4067588). 8th Aug. 1957.

As Squadron Leader (Branch List):—
Jack WHITTLE, D.F.C. (121460). 10th Feb. 1957 (and reverts to the rank of Flight Lieutenant, 10th Feb. 1957 (seniority 4th Feb. 1946)) (substituted for notification of 2nd July 1957 (p. 3598, col. 1)).

Appointment to a direct commission (scheme B).

As Pilot Officers (twelve years on the active list and four years on the reserve):—

Donald Christopher READ (2765825). 27th Apr. 1957 (seniority 2nd Dec. 1956) (period of service to count from 26th Aug. 1955).

Fergus James Wallace HUNTER (277421). 15th June 1957 (seniority 28th May 1957) (period of service to count from 30th Nov. 1955).

Transfer to a direct commission (scheme B).

As Flying Officers (twelve years on the active list and four years on the reserve):—

Gordon Cyril DYER (4118072). 2nd July 1957 (period of service to count from 7th Jan. 1953).

Ronald Clive ETHERIDGE (2454968). 19th July 1957 (period of service to count from 9th Apr. 1952).

Appointment to commission (national service).

As Acting Pilot Officer:—
501465 Airman 2nd class Peter Desmond MORRIS LARKMAN (5011465). 5th Sept. 1957.

Regrading.

The undermentioned Acting Pilot Officers are regraded as Pilot Officers:

S. V. B. DOWNER (2728654). 30th Apr. 1957.

A. J. MARSHALL (4189830). 21st June 1957.

D. A. KIDD (4193449). 25th Aug. 1957.

25th Sept. 1957.

R. BEE (3523096).

M. W. CARPENTER (3523125).

B. F. COLES (4183891).

J. C. FOLLOWS (3620460).

T. S. FRANK (3608988).



R.A.F. CORPORAL GETS GEORGE MEDAL. — Corporal Brian Murphy, of Bradford, showing to his parents the George Medal he had just received from the Queen at an investiture yesterday. The award was for his part in getting under control a fire in a Canberra bomber.

GEORGE MEDAL FOR AIRMAN

Led crew into bomb bay to fight fuel-tank blaze

A BRADFORD MAN

A BRADFORD man, Cpl. Brian Murphy of the RAF Station, Coningsby, Lincolnshire, has been awarded the George Medal for courage and devotion to duty when a Canberra jet bomber caught fire at a servicing hangar on April 5. This award is announced in the London Gazette.

One of the fuel tanks was alight and in addition to the risk of explosion the presence of 800 gallons of volatile fuel in the adjoining tanks made the situation even more dangerous. The citation says: "Cpl. Murphy (whose home is in Bradford, West Yorkshire) led his crew into the confined space of the aircraft's bomb bay, from which had there been an explosion, escape would have been virtually impossible. The explosion of powerful starter cartridges scored a few feet away blasted a hole in the fuselage and caused the fire to spread rapidly, but Cpl. Murphy remained at his post though his overalls and uniform were charred. By sustained effort in the face of great danger, he had his crew succeed in localising and controlling the fire while adjacent aircraft and equipment were removed from the vicinity."



Cpl. B. Murphy

Aged 26, Cpl. Murphy has four brothers, three of whom have been in the RAF, and two sisters. He was educated at St. Mary's RC School, East Parade, and is a former member of St. Clare's Youth Club. A former woollor, he served his apprenticeship with John B. Ward and Sons (Bradford), Ltd.

A BRADFORD man who led a fire-fighting crew into a hangar where a jet aircraft was blazing with one of its fuel tanks alight and in danger of exploding has been awarded the George Medal for his bravery.

According to the citation, the blazing aircraft incident occurred on April 5 this year, at Coningsby RAF Station, where Cpl. Murphy—a regular airman on a 12-year engagement—is still stationed.

CARTRIDGES EXPLODED

Cpl. Murphy was in charge of a duty fire crew called to a blazing Canberra aircraft. One of the planes fuel tanks was alight, and apart from the risk of this tank exploding, a further 800 gallons in adjoining tanks made the situation dangerous.

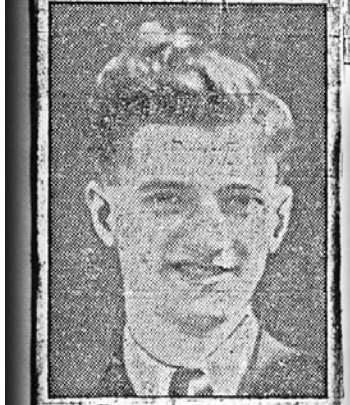
Despite this, Cpl. Murphy led his crew into the confined space of the plane's bomb bay from which, had there been an explosion, escape would have

uniform were charred by the intense heat.

The citation ends: "Cpl. Murphy displayed courage and extreme devotion to duty, and by sustained effort in the face of great danger he and his crew succeeded, in localising and controlling the fire while adjacent aircraft and equipment were removed from the vicinity."

Aged 26, Cpl. Murphy has four brothers, three of whom have been in the RAF, and two sisters. He was educated at St. Mary's RC School, East Parade, and is a former member of St. Clare's Youth Club. A former woollor, he served his apprenticeship with John B. Ward and Sons (Bradford), Ltd.

George Medal — Cpl. Brian Murphy, whose parents Mr. and Mrs. James Alfred Murphy, live at 25 Dalby Avenue, Fagley



Cpl. B. MURPHY

been virtually impossible. A further hazard came when starter cartridges a few feet away exploded, blasting a hole in the fuselage and causing the fire to spread rapidly.

In spite of the explosions, and the increased danger from the fuel tanks, Cpl. Murphy remained at his post, though his overalls and



THE PRESS 25 FEB 57



Courageous Brian Murphy

George Medal winner dies

GEORGE Medal winner, Brian Murphy, of Bradford, has died, aged 55.

Mr. Murphy, of Richardson Avenue, Wilbey, received the George Medal in 1957 while a corporal in the RAF at Coningsby.

He led a fire-fighting crew into a hangar at Coningsby where a jet aircraft was blazing with one of its fuel tanks alight and in danger of exploding.

There was also the chance of a further 800 gallons of fuel in adjoining tanks catching fire.

Despite the hazards, Corporal Murphy led his crew into the confined space of the plane's bomb bay. If there had been an explosion, escape would have been virtually impossible.

MURPHY (Brian) (George Medal) — A long-serving and devoted member of the RAF, Brian Murphy, son of Margaret, loving father of Bryan and James, died on February 25, 1957, at his home, 25 Dalby Avenue, Fagley, Bradford. He was 55 years of age. Funeral arrangements: Monday, March 4, 11 a.m., followed by service at St. Mary's RC Church, St. Paul's Avenue, Wilbey. Burial at St. Mary's RC Cemetery, Coningsby. Please pray for the repose of his soul.

Avro Lancaster NX611



The Lancaster landing at Biggin Hill on 13th May 1965

While on duty, sitting in the bays, one Sunday, with not much going on, no scheduled movements for a change, suddenly an emergency call was taken from air traffic for all vehicles to urgently block the whole of the main runway. This was very different and a first for all of the crew. All the crash crew shot out of the bays and on to the runway and we spread ourselves out along the middle of the runway. I was driving the 5A.

Looking east on the approach, far out into the flight path, we could just see a small aircraft. Air traffic informed the the fire crew by radio that a civilian aircraft was attempting to land and had been denied authority to land, but the aircraft just kept on coming and slowly became larger and larger. None of the crew could identify what aircraft it was. Slowly, it continued its flight towards the runway and us, as it got closer it became clear that it was a four engine aircraft but still nothing anyone recognised at that distance. A number of RAF police vehicles arrived and parked at both ends of the runway. This aircraft just kept approaching and we were getting nervous. Air traffic over the radio continued to deny authority to land, but it just kept on coming.



A close up of the logo's on NX611 of the companies who financed the flight from Sydney to UK.

When the aircraft was about a mile or so from the threshold, Air traffic called for all vehicles to clear the runway and all tenders raced on to the scrub at side of the runway.

As the aircraft passed we were all amazed to see a Lancaster bomber, painted white, pass us by and we followed it to its

dispersal at the west end of the runway.

This was Sunday 9th May 1965 at RAF Akrotiri ,Cyprus. The Lancaster had flown from Mascot near Sydney Australia on its way to Biggin Hill, Kent, a distance of some 12,00 miles.

This aircraft was to become quite famous



The aircraft NX611 doing a fast run at East Kirby



One of the 5A crew looking up at the aircraft on the pan.

in time. It was Avro Lancaster NX611 later to be come "Just Jane" of the Lincolnshire Aviation Heritage Centre at East Kirkby.

On 17th May 1974, on the 31st anniversary of the Dambusters raid, NX611 became the Gate Guard at RAF Scampton and remained for almost 14 years until May 1988. Many members must have seen NX611 standing proud at Scampton's main gate over that time.

NX611 was then dismantled for its journey back to its original war time station, East Kirby some 30 miles away.

NW611 was built by Austin Motors at Longbridge near Birmingham in April 1945. She was one of 150 B Mk V11 Avro Lancasters as part of the RAF's Tiger Force in the Far East. She was fitted with 4 X 1640hp Merlin 24's which are especially suitable for the climate of its intended theatre of operations. But due to Japan's early surrender, this meant these Lancasters were suddenly surplus to requirement and NX611 ended up in storage at 38 Maintenance Unit Llandow Glamorgan until 1952. In April of that year, NX611 was bought by the French Government, painted blue and flew maritime patrols for the French navy and was based at RAAF Buttworth vual Air Arm.

After 10 years, NX611 went to Noumeau, New Caledonia, and was then painted white and used for Air Sea Recue.

In 1964 the French Government presented NX611 to the Historical Aircraft Preservation Society and was flown to her new home at Mascot near Sydney where she was overhauled before being flown back to the UK.

She was fitted with extra fuel tanks in Sydney and on the 25th April 1965 took off for Biggin Hill captained by Wing Commander John Hampshire RAAF. The navigator was Sqn Leader Keith McCarthy.

The epic 12,000 miles took seventy flying hours over nine days to complete the journey back to its homeland, landing at Biggin Hill on 13th May 1965".

Trevor Hayes 419 Treasurer

(See Trevor I did it lol, ed)



A shot that I took while the Lancaster was parked at Akrotiri



The aircraft on the dispersal at Akrotiri



The crash crew at Akrotiri on a night out. L to R Dusty Parkin, Dave Ross, Trevor Hayes and Ted (surname unknown)

MEMORIAL DINNER



During the RAF's formative years, a fire occurred at RAF Ternhill resulting in £57,000 worth of damage; further losses followed totaling £50,000 after fires at RAF Wyton, RAF Upavon and RAF Lopcombe Corner. In light of these losses the Air Ministry felt compelled to order several fire-fighting vehicles with pumping facilities to be situated at each permanent RAF Station, it was hoped that with these fire safety measures, the financial loss would start to decline. The training of personnel to operate the vehicles started in 1922 at RAF Cranwell, where a small unit was established to train a trade known as Aircraft Handler / Fire fighter. In 1932 The Air Ministry published Air Publication 957 entitled 'Royal Air Force Fire Manual'. It was originally The London Fire Brigade, who provided the instructors and devised the training methods and schedules and controlled the Unit.

Aircraft continued to become larger with increased fuel loads which in turn required greater foam producing capacity from fire vehicles. The introduction of the jet aircraft presented new challenges, and this required improved firefighting techniques and more intense and specialised training of personnel.

The Air Ministry realised that there had to be significant changes made in the approach to aircraft fire fighting. So, just over 75 years ago, on 31 December 1943 the Air Ministry Order promulgated the trade of Royal Air Force Fireman.

We couldn't let this date go passed without a celebration. A small committee headed up by WO Simon Marsh was assembled to assist with all the planning and execution, WO Steve Pickston, FS



Lee Suggett, Sgt Shaun Davies and Sgt Mick Leinster all played their parts. First item on the agenda was location, we discussed at length the idea of using a variety of places that had an affiliation with the history of our beloved trade. Catterick, Sutton on Hull and Manston were all cited as potential locations, but were rejected for various reasons, mainly that they're all difficult to get to. The idea of utilising military messes was quickly dismissed due to security reasons and the thought of having so many RAF Firefighters in one place on a military camp didn't sound like a great idea.

It was agreed that being that this was a such a special occasion, we needed a special setting, it was unanimously voted in that the Union Jack Club in London would be a perfect setting, excellent, central location and that their experience in delivering formal military dinners.

The first problem that we encountered was who to invite, we were restricted to only 140 persons, at this point I would like to apologise to all those who didn't receive an invite to the event. We were conscious that many RAF Firefighters both past and present would love to have been present at the event, but you'll understand, it was simply not possible to accommodate all of you.

The event was primarily aimed at serving RAF Firefighters, with plans to offer places to ex-serving personnel who would represent the trade across the 75 years. In addition, we hoped to raise funds for the event by inviting companies who were owned by ex-serving TG 8 Firefighters to sponsor the evening. Veteran Fire Safety owned and operated by Mark Clayton, Reduce the Risk, owned and run by Steve Pickston and CLK Fire owned and run by Ant Lydon, Daz Craven and John Kearns all serving or ex serving RAF Firefighters. Without the kindness of these businesses, the event would simply not have taken place.

I walked into the bar to buy a beer and was not really surprised, despite the Admin Order stating clearly do not be in the bar before 1800, that the bar had been overrun by some 50 RAF Firefighters, enjoying a beer and catching up. The committee worked hard to set the room up in time for the event, each guest was gifted a smart engraved whisky glass, a slate coaster and a tie badge, the ensign and the RAF Fire banners really made the room a spectacle.

By 1800, the bar was full of very smartly dressed serving and ex-serving RAF Firefighters, the first job of the evening was to get all the guests outside for a group photograph. This was the hardest job of the night, trying to prise 140 RAF Firefighters out of a bar for a photograph was like herding cats! But I think you'll agree that the result is a fantastic picture that provides a keepsake for all of those who attended, this framed picture now hangs within the crash bays at RAF Brize Norton. Incidentally, there is one guest who is not in the picture, ex serving RAF Firefighter Andy 'Trendy' Bennett he must've been propping up the bar. He more than made up for it, appearing in many other pictures taken throughout the night.

The current TG 8 Command Warrant Officer, Mick Ratten, welcomed the guests and described the format of the evening, this followed a perfectly read grace from a familiar 'Re-joiner' FS Lee Goupillott.



Mick, went on to introduce the members of the top table, which included the previous Trade Advisor Sqn Ldr Rhos Edwards, the current Trade Advisor Sqn Ldr Eddie Wheeler, previous TG 8 WO/Flt Lt Phil Baker, WO Ken Leverett and a variety of VIP guests which included AVM Ian Duguid, the current AOC of newly reformed 11Gp and AM Roger Austin, the RAF & DFS Association Patron.

Once arrivals speeches were completed, SAC Callum Hennessey from Brize Norton bravely stood up in a room full of his peers and delivered a presentation on the formation of our beloved trade, this was followed by the first vignette of the evening, depicting a brave act by a TG 8 firefighter that resulted in a bravery award. This was very well read by Cpl

Steve Barrick, informing the guests about the actions Senior Aircraftman John Richard Yates.

The wine was flowing, and all were enjoying the splendid food that was being presented. Further vignettes depicting the bravery of FS Gordon Frederick Ditchfield & WO Steve Bowden were delivered by Sgt 'Brucie' Brown and FS Shaun Kerr.

2 further bravery vignettes describing the brave actions of Sergeant Conrad Cannan by WO Steve Shirley followed the brave actions of TG 8 Firefighters during the Battle of Bastion delivered by Flt Lt Matthew Rashley. Loyal toasts were made to Her Majesty whilst also acknowledging the King of the Netherlands for our colleague



Major Wijnand Klein from the Royal Netherlands Air Force Fire Service.

It was time for the top table speeches and awards ceremony. AOC 11 Gp spoke at length about the role of 11 Gp before reciting a story that illustrated his own personal connection with the trade of firefighter involving a very dear friend of the AVM. The quick action and bravery of TG 8 Firefighters saved the life of Flt Lt Tim Ellison, at a Harrier GR 3 crash at RAF Wittering in May 1992.

An award ceremony celebrated several members of the trade who had gone above and beyond their duties:

Cpl Richard Perry-Swinnerton - for his services to local authority first responder programme

TG 8 Fire Rugby team award – for their teamwork and positive effects on morale throughout the trade

SAC McWilliams – For producing excellent results within his local community

WO Steve Shirley – For his work with the TG museum and overall performance throughout his 30+ year career

Further awards were presented by FS Taff Bowen, of the accreditation centre for individuals who had supported the development of students throughout their learning progress

Sgt Neil Craggs – Over above duties of an assessor

Sgt Mick Leinster - Over above duties of an assessor

RAF Odiham – overall performance in student progression.

The last speech of the night came from the oldest guest. 85 year old WO Ken Leverett joined the RAF in 1951 with the trade only 8 years old, he retired in 1988 at the Station Fire Officer of RAF Brize Norton. Spirits were high with all the free wine consumed, despite this, you could have heard a pin drop in the room as Ken talked about how the camaraderie and professionalism levels within the trade are just like they were when he served. He made a special mention to RAF Brize Norton Fire Section who continued to accommodate Ken for cups of tea over the years, always making him feel welcome during his visits, he showed his appreciation for this by way of an engraved shield that now hangs proudly within the corridor of Brize Norton Fire Section.

The evening was a fantastic success and a fitting way to celebrate a trade with a proud history.

The first RAF Fire Fighters had a demanding task, fighting fires in aircraft was a new concept and required different methods from conventional firefighting.

Throughout the wartime years - they continued to provide a service to save life and fight fire involving numerous crashed aircraft. In a crashed aircraft, aircrew surrounded by fire have only three-minute survival time and this requires rapid response and suppression of flames in order to create survivable conditions to affect a rescue. The early fire fighters found themselves poorly trained and under equipped and they had to develop new skills with the equipment they had inherited which were not purpose built but converted standard fire vehicles. Those pioneers overcame these obstacles and paved the way for today's RAF Fire Fighters.

2 December 1953 saw the iconic Fire crest approved by Her Majesty The Queen and presented to the Fire School by Air Marshal Sir Victor Groome. The motto on the badge reads “E Flammi Atque Ruinis Salus” which translates to “Safety from Flame and Ruins”. In the post war years, some 5,000 Regulars and National Service Conscripts were trained as Firemen at the RAF School of Firefighting & Rescue based at RAF Sutton on Hull. A second school was opened at Ismalia in Egypt but was closed at the end of the Second World War, it was also at this time that the Air Traffic Control Officers branch assumed the responsibility of the RAF Fire Service.

On 7 October 1959 Sutton-on-Hull was closed and Fire-fighter training was moved to the Fire & Rescue Training School located within the RAF Regiment depot at RAF Catterick. The trade was then classified as RAF Regiment Fireman, Trade Group 22. In early 1976, RAF Firemen were moved to our current position, within Trade Group 8 and were no longer “RAF Regiment” Firemen. Ceremonial burning of “mudguards” was carried out at locations throughout RAF.

Today's RAF firefighters are trained to meet Defence requirements, therefore, meeting the National Occupational Standards for Fire Services and have the niche capability of being able to provide a combatant self-protecting Fire & Rescue response to a range of

incidents. RAF Firefighters at Brize Norton provide 24/7 ICAO 8 fire and crash rescue protection. We are organised and trained to respond to any emergency with highly specialised equipment.

Apart from aircraft rescue and firefighting (ARFF), RAF Fire Fighters are also trained in conventional firefighting enabling us to react to fires in technical areas and married quarters and on numerous occasions have assisted the Civil Fire service in local off base incidents and National Fire Strikes. Operation BURBERRY in 1977 saw RAF Firemen deployed nationwide in response to National Fireman's strike, as well as providing essential training for Green Goddess resilience crews from all three services, Breathing Apparatus Teams were sited in all major towns and cities. This was repeated during several autonomous local authority strikes as well as Operation FRESCO, a nationwide strike in 2002.

We also have been involved in two specialised units, providing fire cover to special safety team convoys on the UK roads & providing fire cover to The Queens Flight.

In April 2005, following a project known as Fire Study 2005, it was formally agreed that the new model for Fire Services in Defence would be created within the LAND TLB. On 4 September 2006 the changes took effect and the Defence Fire Risk Management Organization (DFRMO) was created at Andover to manage all MOD Fire Services worldwide including RAF Trade Group 8 Fire Fighters and Royal Navy Aircraft Handlers.

RAF Fire Fighters have served all over the world from Africa to the Middle East, India, Far East, Central America, Falklands, Canada and Europe and had to operate in hostile environments and conflict zones which always brings new challenges.

RAF Firefighters are classified as dismounted close combat troops and form an integral element of any RAF force protection capability. As military personnel, RAF Fire fighters provide

our own force protection and are trained to fight fire whilst under fire. Therefore, our personnel can operate semi-autonomously without the need for extensive external force protection or Fire & Rescue support, and as part of a coalition force, sharing vehicles and equipment with partner Nations.

As 'Key Enablers' RAF Fire Service personnel are usually one of the first ground assets to deploy to enable Air operations to commence. They provide a pivotal ground defence role in defending the airfield and beyond.

In Iraq and Afghanistan, RAF Fire Service personnel responded to incidents in hostile situations in support of Medical Emergency Response teams, saving lives in the most difficult of circumstances.

During our history RAF Firefighters have received many awards for acts of bravery, many of these were earned during WWII but many have been awarded in modern times. The awards include George Crosses, George Medals, B.E.M's and the highest was the Queens Gallantry Medal awarded in 2011 to Warrant Officer Steve Bowden for managing a large incident in Afghanistan in difficult conditions.

After the September 2012 'Battle of Bastion', the Trade became the first Military Force in the history of this country, to be presented with Campaign Medals at the Palace of Westminster.

Today, after Phase 1 training, Royal Air Force Fire firefighter recruits attend Defence Fire Training & Development Centre Manston, Kent; the course consists of 14 weeks basic Fire-fighter training. Successful completion of this course results in preliminary level entry into the Institute of Fire Engineers (IFE). Founded in 1918, the IFE assesses knowledge of fire and professional experience, awarding internationally recognised membership grades and fire-related qualifications. The IFE has successfully reviewed and recognised the general quality of training provided to RAF Firefighters, resulting in courses being accredited, currently the only Fire Service in the world to have this status.

RAF Firefighters can also be employed within fire safety roles throughout the world, UK Defence is currently operating in circa 40 countries. Many operations are small deployments of personnel employed in Defence Engagement; working with organisations such as NATO and the UN to develop militaries in third world nations. These small bands of determined men and women live in often austere conditions in host nation camps where the poor standards of fire safety present the greatest risk to life. Whilst UK standards are used as the benchmark, the need to use host nation infrastructure, in most cases demands a pragmatic approach to fire safety.

As senior military commanders become more aware of the risk that they hold, the RAF Fire Service has become increasingly essential in advising Duty Holders on fire risk and what mitigation should put in place. Having a military force to offer fire safety advice, compiling fire risk assessments and acting as project fire officers for new projects or refurbishments is essential to current UK military operations. A commissioning cadre was introduced in 2009 within the then Flight Operations branch. The branch continues to grow under the new Air Ops (Systems) branch with a steady flow of RAF Firefighters commissioning through the Internal Commissioning Scheme.

The future of the Royal Air Force Fire Service is positive, with a growing influence in Fire Risk Management and a continued requirement for a deployable military Fire capability.

I would like to finish off personally say how proud I am and continue to be, as a serving member of RAF TG 8 Fire, the behaviour of all who attended the dinner was impeccable, representing all those who have served and those who continue to serve.

After the success of the dinner, it has been proposed to organise a similar event every year, inviting serving and ex serving members of our beloved trade.... Watch this space

"E Flammis Atque Ruinis Salus"

As already promised from a previous article in flashpoint about my wartime exploits. I disembarked from a very crowded convoy of ships in the Bay of Naples, 1944 ready to take on the might of the German Reich,, fully loaded down with 2 kit bags would you believe 200 rounds of 9mm ammo and Sten Gun. Other items full uniforms, great coat, webbing equipment but most important of all Airmen's possessions, his irons, ie: knife fork spoon and mess tin and mug.

I might mention that all this equipment probably weighed more than me at this time. After negotiating a very steep gangway we were allocated a 3 ton general purpose truck and whisked away to transit camp, if I remember called Portici somewhere near the city of Naples, here we were taken to our accommodation 8 airmen to a tent no bedding just a very thin cotton mattress.

I buddied up with a fellow new arrival which happens quickly in service life and found out that we were to parade with all new arrivals at 0830 hrs the following morning. We then proceeded to the Airmen's Mess (a large tent for breakfast).

The daily routine at Portici was 0800 hrs Parade, Roll Call some hundreds of airmen on parade, took hours. We were then informed that we would be told about our new locations on a daily basis.

Well, days past and no posting, then several weeks and no posting. As can be imagined we became very bored.

Before joining the Royal Air Force an uncle of mine got me interested in the lost City of Pompei near Naples and I mentioned that this may be an interesting place to visit, but being wartime Pompei was closed for the duration of the war but clever boy Mulready was not to know this. Transport was no problem as hundreds of military vehicles were on the move

day and night. Food although mainly of bullybeef and hard biscuits was freely handed out by any military unit you happened to be near.

After travelling for many hours we finally found Pompei but much to our disappointment a large notice at the entrance, said 'closed due to war'. Just then a rather rough looking Italian sounding in a rather officious language which I could not understand a word "Cigarreta, Cigarreta" he repeated, I realised what he was saying and past a few cigarettes through the railings immediately the gate was open and our entry. I might remind you that cigarettes was the currency of Europe at this time.

My new buddy and I had a wonderful tour Pompei for the payment of three cigarettes, some years later accompanied by my daughter and husband wen had a wonderful motor tour of Italy and on this occasion, visit, cost much more than 3 cigarettes to pass into wonderful Pompei.

The next visit was to Selamo, a beautiful seaside resort but sadly very war torn from our recent invasion and occupation also by German soldiers. Before leaving, the Germans left behind an area of utter devastation. Undecided what to do next, the beach and Mediterranean Sea looked very inviting. Off with our sweaty uniform and into the nuddy we swam for a couple of hours in the luxury of the beautiful MEDITERRANEAN SEA.

Sitting on the beach in glorious sunshine the realisation of predicament came to us, AWOL was a very serious offence and thought up many extraordinary excuses including capture and made prisoners of war was unlikely.

Two worried young airmen now set out on our return to the transit camp and the fear of our punishment. After some hours of travel we arrived at Pompei, entered our tent and to our amazement where not missing at all. This was a

lesson well learnt and my growing up had commenced. Play to the rules whenever possible.

Couple of weeks hanging about the dispersal centre and at long last 049 AC1 Mulready was announced and to report to the Orderly Room/Admin Block. With full kit and mounting transport to my new unit, I loaded my kit and self onto a 3 tonner and was informed for by the driver that I was posted to 51 repair and Salvage Unit some hundred miles nearer from the defence line. One encouraging word from the driver I was lucky as 51 RSU was indeed a fine Unit.

On route to my new unit we travelled on very bad roads and the devastation on passing villages and towns was HORRENDOUS. People were almost starving and were continuously begging for food and cigarettes. The whole country was in a complete shambles. I felt sorry for the locals especially the children however we only had our daily ration of Bully Beef and hard Biscuits and could not spare much of that. One good thing a jock a Scotsman produced was a Demijar of Red Wine from nowhere and we emptied that lot whilst on the move. At least I enjoyed my journey and arrived very happy at my new unit.

I reported to the CO's office (in a tent) at 0930 Sqn Ldr D'Arcy and addressed as sir. "Now Mulready. We dont have any vacancies for an under trained armourer but we can fix you up as assistant cook...how would that suit you?. At least you will eat well. That will be all and good luck". So I became assistant cook and general dogs body awaiting an armourers course. I reported to the Cpl Cook and said I was his new assistant. " Right he replied your first job is to take 6 tins of bully beef to the local farmer in exchange for 7 Demmi Johns of the local Vino, one jar to the Officers Mess, 2 to the Sgt's Messes, 3 jars to the airmen's mess and bring the last jar

to me. So began my duties at my duties at number 51 RSU.

Some weeks passed and I was seconded to the senior NCO on the unit. Flt Sgt, and aircraft engineer, also a regular peace time airman. A stickler for discipline but a lovely person who was to become my Guardian Angel. The main task of 51 RSU was keeping the runway clear. Many of our aircraft returned very badly damaged by enemy action and crashed on the runway.

51 RSU had all the heavy lifting gear, cranes, hydraulic lifts and expertly trained personnel to lift drag or push the crashes aircraft from the runway so allowing the remainder of the Sqn to land. Another type of work was at times very dangerous, recovering crashed aircraft from behind enemy lines but at least neither German or British forces knew where the lines ended. We were all armed but fortunately never had to fire my Sten Gun in anger. Some months have now passed and the British have now occupied Rome and many more important towns. About this time the CO sent for me, my first thought was am I in trouble? What with the Black Market in cigarettes and other commodities. Perhaps I should not dwell on this subject, Black Market had now become the norm.

Mulready you are a Catholic are you not” , “Yes sir I replied, I might add a little bewildered”. “Well I’m sending you on a Firefighting course to Rome”. All good Catholics would like to visit Rome. That’s all good luck, dismissed”. So after 3 wonderful weeks time in the centre of Rome completed my course. Passed the course as AC1 Firefighter. It took a further 3 weeks to arrange transport and locate my unit 51RSU who had advanced so quickly it was difficult to find them. Finally I caught up with my unit, reported to the CO and found myself as assistant cook yet again, such is the queer happenings in wartime ha ha.

As the war progressed and the landing in Europe was successful a new type of emergency arose. Russia had ambitions to spread Communism throughout the World. Yes you have guessed, Mulready was rushed to the farthest North of Italy, Austria and Yugoslavia. Tito was the senior Communist Commander at this period and was ready to take over threats. The US and British were not agreeing to this plan and showed a mighty force to stop this happening. Eventually this scare was over and Mulready was off to another political hot pots, Egypt and Palestine(now Israel) but that is a further chapter in my life in the Royal Air Force. Also to be a contribution to Flashpoint.

P.S. Hi Reg would you please pass

on my few words to Flashpoint if you feel they are worthy of a mention. The future work is over a period of 34 years. Hope you have the space ha ha.

Sincerely yours,

*Pat Mulready still going strong at 94.
Member number 40*

What a pleasure to read your story and I look forward to the rest

Best wishes Ed(reg)

CROSSWORD SOLUTION

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