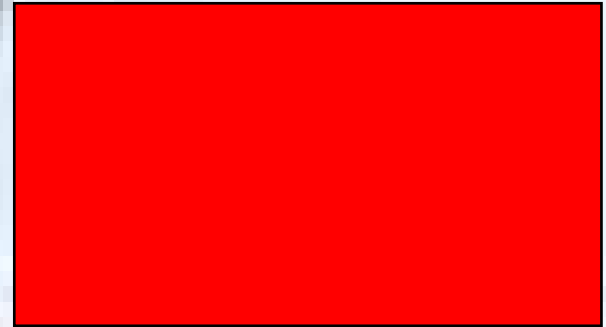


FLASHPOINT

ROYAL AIR FORCE & DEFENCE FIRE SERVICES ASSOCIATION MAGAZINE



Brief History Of The Association

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 ex-service personnel got together to remedy the fact, that there wasn't an organisation relating to the trade of firefighter when most other trades had one of their own many years ago?

On that day, those founder members turned up from all over the country, and went on to form the inaugural committee of the Association and elected the Officers and Committee and Area Coordinators to cover the U.K.

Since, many changes have taken place as the Association established itself over the intervening years and, with its formation, old comrades, 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 with updates information, news, articles, anecdotes, photos. and stories.

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 has become the Defence Fire and Rescue Service. Together we are the Royal Air Force and Defence Fire Services Association.

Associate Membership is open to ex and serving personnel having a minimum of three months service with the Civilian Aviation Authority (CAA) Licenced Aerodrome Fire Services.

* 1987, Royal Navy founded the Aircraft Handlers Association and Website: www.chockheads.org.uk/

Brief History of the RAF Fire and Rescue Service



years until reinstated as an independent Trade.

Uniform, equipment, technology and appliances have developed since, and today's personnel are doing exactly what those early pioneers did, whilst still maintaining essential high standards of training, expertise and efficiency.

They are carrying on the same traditions, skills, expertise, enthusiasm and dedication, to which we can all relate from our own personal experiences.

Today, the service is 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 cut back to the service levels of today.

The Trade of Fireman was first introduced in 1943 within Trade Group 9, to train personnel in Aircraft Crash Rescue and Firefighting techniques and included an Advanced Trade in Air Traffic Control. Prior, personnel on general and aircraft handling duties were used to carry out fire fighting responsibilities; with vehicles driven by M.T drivers.

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. The School then moved to RAF Catterick, North Yorkshire and later, to RAF Manston in Kent, as the Central Training Establishment, (CTE), then the Fire Services Central Training Establishment (FSCTE).

In the late 1950's, the RAF Fire Service was amalgamated with the RAF Regiment for several

Brief History of the Defence Fire and Rescue Service



The Air Ministry Fire Service, (AMFS), became the Air Force Department Fire Service, (AFDFS), with a badge change, then the Defence Fire Services, (DFS), with another badge change and, is now the Defence Fire and Rescue Service, (DF&RS).

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.

Many recruits hadn't experienced service camaraderie before; although it developed by nature of the job itself. This is no reflection on those individuals whatsoever, or on their abilities as fire fighters, 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.

Like the RAF Fire and Rescue Service, reviews are ongoing and the future is unsure. Hopefully it will remain a viable force?

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Co-ordinator Vacancies - East Yorkshire - Midlands, Scotland (1), South East and other areas as necessary. It's not too arduous, just a matter of keeping in touch, and promoting the Association when able to do so. If you can help, please contact a Committee member.

HOW TO JOIN - For more information about the Royal Air Force & Defence Fire Services Association and to request an application form contact :-

**John Hanley, Membership Secretary,
27 Laburnham Close, North Hykeham,
Lincolnshire LN6 8JQ**

Tel: 01522 884 054

email - john.hanley13@ntlworld.com

or

Visit our website at - www.fireservicesassociation.net

Front cover photo and the one below, is an Avro Shackleton airframe on the fire ground, probably at St Mawgan, Cornwall, but aren't sure who sent them or when, as they've been in the archive for a long time waiting to see the light of day?

If anyone can enlighten me on their origin, I'd be obliged - Ed.



Flashpoint Editor Not Standing for Re-election



If you can remember my last editorial in the autumn 08, (September issue), or the insert detailing the forthcoming AGM committee vacancies, you'll be aware that

I'm not standing for re-election at the October AGM; and can't anticipate the outcome, and this may well be my last editorial?

If so, I most humbly apologise, to all those members who've sent in their precious photos, stories and memories, and which have not yet been published, and wish that it weren't so. I will try to ensure that any items in the archive are handed over to the new editor, or returned to the members.

Ongoing personal and family health problems, and commitment to the Association serving on committee and later as Flashpoint editor, coupled with other events, all took their toll resulting in my decision not to stand for re-election. I then needed to give plenty of notice of my intention, to both the committee and the membership.

Flashpoint has proved to be a resounding success and far beyond what I initially envisaged when I created my first draft, in May 2004, published in August 2004. Originally, I intended a minimum of 12 and a maximum of 24 pages but, due to the magnificent response of the membership, the first was a 20 page edition and since, I've been working at the maximum of 24 pages. I considered reducing the pages to a more manageable number of say, 16, but failed to do so, mainly due to the archive back log.

Coupled with this, I gradually introduced more photos, including full colour, which adds to the workload, and takes up far more time than mainly text.

I must thank the committee, and the membership, for their fantastic support since May 2004, when I first took on the role as acting editor, and for enabling Flashpoint to continue to be the 'Flagship' of the Association. The backing was crucial to the success of Flashpoint and **I've achieved my aims of providing a quality magazine, with full colour, to be proud of,** and members look forward to receiving and **which, is the only direct contact with every member,** as not everyone can attend the twice a year reunions.

I also take this opportunity of personally thanking Raysul Print, York, and the Staff, Tim, Gill, Jill and all others there, for all their help and guidance, without which, Flashpoint wouldn't have become the quality magazine that it did, and which the members deserve.

Overall, I've enjoyed the role and my motivation was high, but now that I've made my decision, I've become demob happy and my motivation has waned. **To aid any handover, I've agreed to start the next edition due out in January 09** but, whoever takes on the role, may wish to take over without delay? I believe that I've taken it as far as I can, and an injection of new blood and ideas is needed to evolve Flashpoint for the future, and it's time for me to stand down, take a rest, and enjoy my retirement!

In the last edition, both the Pub Quiz on page 14 and the Q&A's on page 22 didn't get much response and, to put as many members' items into this edition, as possible, I've left them out.

Finally, as much as I'd like, it's impossible to thank everyone personally for their support and input. I can sincerely say that I've enjoyed being your editor, and wish my replacement every success and ask that you give them the support that you gave me. **Thank you one and all.**

Regards and best wishes,

Dave

Useful Contact Numbers

RAFBF - The Heart of the RAF
Family:- 0800 169 2942

RAFA - The Royal Air Force
Association - 0800 018 2361

SSAFA Forces Help - The Soldiers,
Sailors, Airmen and Families
Association:- 020 7403 8783

The Royal British Legion - RBL:-
08457 725 725

RAF Records and Medals Section
- Building 248A, RAF Innsworth,
Gloucester GL3 1EZ

Public Records Office Kew,
Richmond, Surrey TW9 4DU

VETERAN'S BADGE - 0800 169
3458 Overseas callers - +44 1253 866
043

**British Wireless For The Blind Fund
(BWBF)** - BWBF, Dept. RAFM08,
Freepost, Chatham, Kent ME4 4BR
01634 832 501 Website:www.blind.
org.uk

BLESMA - British Limbless Ex-
Service Men's Association -
020 8590 1124 Email:headquarters@
blesma.org Website: www.blesma.org

**Congratulatory Messages from the
Queen, for 60th, 65th, and 70th
Wedding Anniversaries,** and every
anniversary following, and birthday
congratulations to celebrate 100th,
105th and following birthdays,
request an application form from: the
Anniversaries Office, Buckingham
Palace, London SW1A 1AA

CHANGING ADDRESS OR BANK DETAILS?

Please don't forget to let the Membership Secretary know your new address or bank details.

The most important thing is to always give us your new details in writing, or email, quoting your membership number.

We don't want to lose contact with you, so please try to remember to inform us as soon as you can? Thank you.

DID YOU KNOW?

**IT'S 55 YEARS SINCE
THE QUEEN APPROVED
THE RAF FIRE SERVICE
BADGE, IN 1953.
THANKS FOR THE
REMINDER TO ARTHUR
ELTON, MEMBER 771**

Chairman's Report August 2008



90 years of RAF Service!

I wish to record on your behalf our admiration for the sterling work and devotion to duty of the fire fighters of Royal Air Force and Defence Fire Services during the 90 years since

the formation of the RAF in 1918 and to those of all services that fought the fires since the start of military aviation.

Vacant committee posts - We need volunteers to be considered for election to the vacant posts of General Secretary, Treasurer and Flashpoint Editor at the AGM in October. These posts have been very enthusiastically and competently filled for the last few years by George Edwards, General Secretary, Geoff Varley, Association Treasurer and Flashpoint Editor, Dave Kenyon. The three members have been the backbone of the Association during some very difficult times and have steadfastly helped to drive the Association forward to where we are now. We will thank them formally at a later date. All three officers have graciously pledged to give every assistance during the handover period.

Normal term of office is two years, however, you could, if re-elected, stay for as long as you wish. We tend to have committee meetings in addition to those held during the reunion weekends and all reasonable travelling expenses will be reimbursed. None of these jobs are easy, however, with the help of the rest of the committee you will find the work very rewarding.

October 2008 reunion - There is already a tremendous response to the idea of our return to Bracklesham Bay, I was concerned that we were returning there a little too quickly but it looks like being a popular decision, so get your bookings in to ensure a good weekend.

We had hoped to have a remembrance service at the church at Tangmere RAF Museum, but that will now not happen, but we will have a service at the Holiday Village, as we did on our last visit, so consider bringing your medals etc.

Do remember that **Sunday lunch is included in the package, which makes staying on that few extra hours a little sweeter.**

Our return to Bracklesham in October again has the advantage of sole occupancy, which allows us to do our own thing and select good quality entertainment.

Reunion hotel bookings - At recent reunions those of you that informed us that you were not happy with your rooms were immediately offered alternative accommodation, and seemed content with the outcome.

The Association Committee and our booking agents, Isle of Wight Tours, make every attempt to ensure you have an enjoyable weekend. It is our intention to try and resolve any problems immediately it is brought to our attention and to strive to get an acceptable solution.

Our aim, as always, is to ensure everyone has an enjoyable weekend and that

they will want to return for future reunions.

March 2009 reunion - We are considering a return to the Royal Court Hotel, Coventry, on the 20th to the 23rd, those of you that attended the reunion there in October 2006, will recall that **this is a luxury hotel with good quality rooms and amenities.**

National Memorial Arboretum - A coach will be laid on to visit the National Memorial Arboretum to see the tree planted on behalf of the Association in honour of departed colleagues.

October 2009 reunion - Isle of Wight tours, and I, are looking for a venue in the South East to secure, for example, a trip to France by coach through Euro Tunnel for your duty free, and/or a visit to RAF Manston to the Defence Fire Services Training Establishment, member Steve Shirley's Fire Museum, the Spitfire Museum with the WOT1 fire truck, (see Flashpoint back cover, issue May 2007, for photos & info), and the RAF Museum, all this at the one location and, for the shoppers, Ramsgate and Margate. **Watch this space!**

CRASH Vehicle restoration team - In order to ensure the future of the CRASH Team and the splendid work that Wilf Longmire and his team are doing to maintain the fire vehicles, namely the Mk 7, the Mk 6 and the DP2, **I ask you all to consider sending in those pledge forms that came with the last Flashpoint.** The cost of running this venture is in excess of £2000 per year but when you see the condition of the vehicles you will agree that it is money well spent.

REUNION HOTEL BOOKINGS - AIMS & OBJECTIVES?

In our endeavours to take the reunions to the majority of Members we have been looking for cheaper venues. This seems to be pleasing most of the Membership, however, we are aware that some of the hotels might not be to everyone's taste.

First the Bracklesham Bay Holiday site: we believe that we made it very clear to you all that this was exactly as advertised in the booking forms and that the rooms were basic but comfortable. Much the same with the Norbreck Castle Hotel at Blackpool: those of you that informed us that you were not happy with your rooms were immediately offered other rooms and seemed content with the outcome.

Unlike some of the other more expensive hotels we have used in the past, I have received no complaints about the food or entertainment at either venue.

Our return to Bracklesham in October again, this October, has the advantage of sole occupancy, which allows us to do our own thing and select good quality entertainment.

For those of you that prefer the more upmarket hotels, we can assist with finding hotels near our venues that will give you the quality that you wish, and you can then join us at the main venue for Association activities. Should you require any assistance in this regard, please contact me direct and I will liaise with the booking agent to try and to meet your requirements.

Every attempt is made by the Association Committee and the Booking Agents to ensure you have an enjoyable weekend. It is our intention to try and resolve any problems immediately that are brought to our attention and to strive to get an acceptable outcome. Our aim is to ensure everyone has an enjoyable weekend and that they will want to return for future reunions.

John Goupillot Chairman

Membership News FROM JOHN HANLEY, MEMBER 69



Welcome to the September issue of Flashpoint. Please enjoy reading it. Since my last report for the summer issue of Flashpoint it has been a quiet period for the Association. Applications are well down on previous years.

In May this year on behalf of the Association, I attended the Military Funeral of Warrant Officer James (Jim) Barron, as Standard Bearer, a gesture that was very much appreciated by his immediate family and friends gathered. There was a large turn out for his funeral and the Wake was held in the WO's & Sergeants Mess at Royal Air Force Wittering, and was well attended. Jim was very popular, in and outside the Fire Service, and the Royal Air Force. Jim will be missed.

It is with sadness that I have to inform you all of the following resignations through health and personal issues:

857 Stephen Axworthy, 501 David Bramall, 805 David Brown, 689 Stan Humphreys, 469 Ian Harrison, 185 Paul Hay, 323 Anthony Carr, 815 Mr Raynor, 768 Mr Stevenson, 179 Mr Conlon, 719 William Elder, 584 Patrick Wood, 496 Jim Baldwin.

We have "Recruited" 5 New Members, details as follows: 946 Mr J B Barry, 947 Mr M Clayton, 948 Mr D 'Andy' McDonald, 949 Mr P McGhee, 950 Mr E P Wibberley.

I have been trying to make contact with Big Jim Crabtree, member No 275, but with no success and, if any member knows of his whereabouts please let me know.

I have sent out 295 subscription reminder letters to members; let's hope we have a great response. Please remember that all SUBSCRIPTIONS fall due on the 1st of September 2008, which is the beginning of our FINANCAL YEAR.

If any member requires a Standing Order Mandate (STM) please contact me. By using an STM you will save the Association very large postage costs as, this year, reminder letters cost £84.88!!!!

This is my report. Hope to see you at BRACKLESHAM.

Best regards,

John Joseph Hanley.

In Memoriam - a sincere tribute to those recently passed away

W/O 'JIM' BARRON



In Memoriam Warrant Officer 'Jim' Barron RAF Fire & Rescue Service

It is with great sadness to announce the tragic death of Warrant Officer Jim Barron, on 12th April 2008. A prolific and very popular character and utmost professional and over 500 mourners attended the Military funeral at Wittering Village Church on 1st May 2008, followed by a family service at Peterborough Crematorium. The Association Standard was in attendance with Mr John Hanley.

David Rose

WILLIAM 'BILLY' HAYWOOD

Member, Bob Dickinson, has informed the Association that Billy passed away on Thursday 26th June. At one time he served at Middleton St George, and wasn't a member, but was considering joining.

On behalf of the Committee, and membership, our heartfelt condolences go to family friends and colleagues, and many thanks to Bob for the information.

GLYN MILLS

This following information was received in an email to Ron Brown and, to date, is the only details on Glyn that we have.

Dear Mr Brown,

I would like to inform you that member 912, Glyn Mills, died on 23rd May 2008.

Yours truly,

Regina Kessels-Mills

Is Peter Gaskin the oldest ex RAF Fireman?

Peter Gaskin, member 678, who lives in Co Dublin, Ireland, joined the Association on the 20th August 2003, and hoped to meet old comrades at the March 2008, Blackpool reunion, from the time he served as an RAF fireman in the 1940's. He met some 'oldies' from the same era and enjoyed a chat, but was disappointed not to find someone he knew.

During his trip, Peter was accompanied by his grandson, Adrian Bradley, who wrote and said that they'd had a great weekend and really enjoyed meeting all the people, who seemed like a great bunch of guys, and hearing the different stories. Peter wishes members all the best and looks forward to meeting up with us again if, as he puts it, "He is still above ground?"

He joined up on the 17th February 1943 as 2205216 Aircraftsman Gaskin P, and was discharged in May 1947 with the rank of corporal. His postings were as follows:

- Basic Training & Square Bashing, Padgate and Hull, 1944
- Fire Training, 1943, Reykjavik 1943
- 205 MU Charton Hall, Newbridge, Edinburgh – from May 1943 to September 1943
- Camp Geck, Iceland - September 1943 to September 1944
- Ballymoney, Northern Ireland, October 1944 to 1945
- Limavady, Northern Ireland, 1945
- India, Madras, 1945 to - ?
- Java, Batavia, 1945 to 1946 & remembers Sgt 'Yorkie' Roper but can't remember any others?
- Singapore, RAF Seletar, October 1946 to - ?

Peter Gaskin, member, 687

Photos: Top - Peter with members, Allan Gilchrist & Peter Knaggs on the left.



Bottom - L/R - Allan Gilchrist, Roy Friel, John Hanley, Peter and Adrian Bradley, grandson.



Footnote: Maybe our webmaster, Ron Brown, could find room to put Peter's details on the Internet and see if he can make contact with any of his old comrades still out there - Ed?

MEETING UP WITH OLD COMRADES? - Dear Dave, I was quite saddened to read that two old friends, and members of our Association, attended Bracklesham Bay and sadly didn't 'bump' into each other, (page 11 Flashpoint Summer 2008). Surely, the main reason for attending these reunions, is meeting up with old comrades. In my mind, every effort should be made to achieve this aim.

May I suggest, that a list be made available, (on a notice board), for members attending our reunions. This would enable them to recognise names rather than faces as, unfortunately, faces do change with the passing of time.

Hoping my suggestion would make it easier for old mates to meet up and add to the enjoyment of our reunions? I've already booked for Bracklesham Bay for our next meeting. Thank you for your wonderful work put in on behalf of our Association.

Yours sincerely,

Pat Mulready, member 40

Hi Pat,

You are right about the reunions being an opportunity for old comrades to find each other which is enshrined in the current Constitution & Rules under Objectives. To give members an opportunity to make contact, at previous reunions we've had a printed list on view of those booked in. Even that doesn't always work, as members aren't always aware of its existence and, as you say; don't always recognise faces and even names. We try to have a 'meet and greet' policy for the Friday and Saturday nights to try and identify first time reunion members and introduce them to others but sometimes they still slip through the net. We try our best but don't always get it right. Thank you for your input and comments.

Best wishes and regards,

Dave

Letters to the Editor

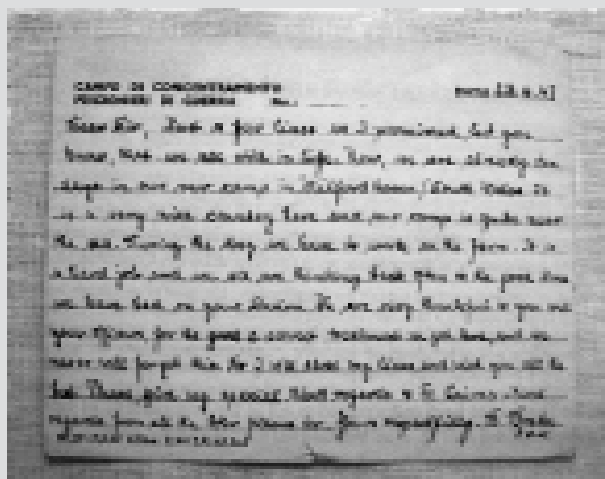
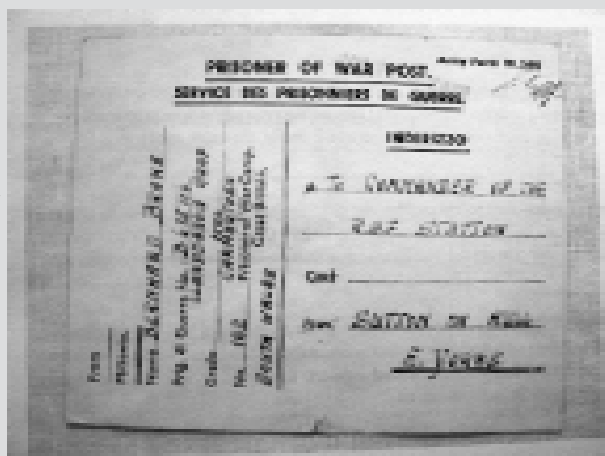
Subj: RAF Sutton on Hull
Date: 29/04/2008 13:58:14 GMT Daylight Time
From: JBUNGARAYA
To: Rafdfsaeitor

A few weeks ago while searching the web; I came across the site for Sutton on Hull. This was very interesting as my wife's father, S/Ldr Robert Flegg, was Commanding Officer there in 1945 to 1947. I found his name and photos on the site in a book written by Mr Bacon.

One of those was taken by Ray Blackburn, one of your association members, who was a Sgt Instructor at the camp in the Fire Section at that time. As he lives only about six miles from me I contacted him and we have met a couple of times. It was such a coincidence that the notes written about him in his release book, that he still has, were written and signed by my father in law. He doesn't actually remember my father in law as he was more connected with the Fire Section.

Amongst my father in law's old photographs we have a postcard written in June 47 to him as CO from a German POW, Bernhard Brake, who had been at Hull and was then posted to Milford Haven in Wales. As he spoke well of his time at Hull I thought the story might be of interest to your members and Ray Blackburn kindly gave me your Email address. I will copy the postcard to you and hope it may prove of interest, and hope it copies okay? It would be good if, through your association, you have any contacts with anyone in Germany who could possibly track him down? Looking forward to hearing from you.

John & Alma (nee Flegg) Weeks - Tel: 01775 750 179



Royal Netherlands Air Force, Navy & Airport Crash Vehicles

While visiting the open day with Airshow at Den Helder Airport / NAS The Kooy (the Netherlands) on the 15th of September, Don Witte (member No.498) took the opportunity to have a good look around one of the new RNIAF crash tenders.

These <E-ONE> vehicles are 8 x 8 and carry 12000 litres of water - 750 afff - 250 kg powder. The roof monitor delivers 5000 lit/min, and the bumper monitor 2000 lit/min. Vehicle dimensions are 12m long and 3.6m wide. The Engine has 1000 hp, which gives a top speed of 125 km/hr. They are crewed by three firemen. The driver remains in the vehicle, and on arrival at the crash scene operates the monitors while the two other crewmembers dismount for handlines/rescue.

The sales rep for E-ONE must have had a good week because the RNIAF ordered 23, the RNIN 3, and Schiphol/ Amsterdam airport 9 vehicles. Obviously the large total order of 35 vehicles gave a nice price reduction.

With the new vehicles came the new looks. The basic colour for the Air Force remains yellow and red for the Navy. Maybe the Air Force is going to give some of the vehicles a tactical paint scheme as they have done in the past.

The civilian vehicles at Schiphol Airport have (at last, I think) changed from yellow for the past 40 or so years to red. Keep up the good work.

Regards,

Donald Witte, member

498

Footnote: See back cover for full colour photos of the Crash Vehicles - Ed.

HOTEL KEY CARDS!

Ever wonder what is on your magnetic key card? Answer:

- Customer's name
- Customer's partial home address
- Hotel room number
- Check-in date and out dates
- Customer's credit card number and expiration date!

When you turn them in to the front desk your personal information is there for any employee to access by simply scanning the card in the hotel scanner. An employee can take a hand full of cards home and using a scanning device, access the information onto a laptop computer and go shopping

at your expense.

Simply put, hotels do not erase the information on these cards until an employee reissues the card to the next hotel guest. At that time, the new guest's information is electronically 'overwritten' on the card and the previous guest's information is erased in the overwriting process. But until the card is rewritten for the next guest, it usually is kept in a drawer at the front desk with YOUR INFORMATION ON IT!

The bottom line is: Keep the cards, take them home with you, or destroy them.

NEVER leave them behind in the room or room wastebasket, and NEVER turn them into the front desk when you check out of a room. They will not charge you for the card (its illegal) and you'll be sure you are not leaving a lot of valuable personal information on it that could be easily lifted off with any simple scanning device card reader.

For the same reason, if you arrive at the airport and discover you still have the card key in your pocket, do not toss it in an airport trash basket. Take it home and destroy it by cutting it up, especially through the electronic information strip!

If you have a small magnet, pass it across the magnetic strip several times, then try it in the door: it will not work as it erases everything on the card. Information courtesy of: Police Service. **Please forward to friends and family.**

BEWARE NEW CAR JACKING SCAM!

A friend sent us this advice: Just last weekend on Friday night we parked in a public parking area. As we drove away I noticed a sticker on the rear window of the car. When I took it off after I got home, it was a receipt for petrol. Luckily my friend told me not to stop, as it could be someone waiting for me to get out of the car. Then we received this email yesterday:

WARNING FROM POLICE - BEWARE OF PAPER ON THE BACK WINDOW OF YOUR VEHICLE - NEW WAY TO DO CAR JACKINGS (NOT A JOKE)!

You walk across the car park, unlock your car and get inside, start the engine and select reverse. When you look into the rear view mirror to back out of your

parking space, you notice a piece of paper stuck to the middle of the rear window. So, you select neutral, unlock your doors, and jump out to remove that paper, (or whatever it is), that is obstructing your view? When you reach the back of your car that is when the car jackers appear out of nowhere, jump into the car and take off and practically mow you down as they speed off and, guess what, ladies, I bet your purse is still in the car, so now the car jacker has your car, your home address, your money, and your keys? You're home and your whole identity is now compromised!

If you see a piece of paper stuck to your back window, just drive away. Remove the paper later, and be thankful that you read this e-mail. I hope you'll forward this to friends and family, especially to women. **A purse contains all kinds of personal information and identification documents, and you certainly do NOT want this to fall into the wrong hands. Please pass this on.**

Trevor Hayes, member 419

RBL VETERANS LAPEL BADGE WARNING!

Members may wish to note that the RBL, (Royal British Legion), have warned all ex-servicemen, via the Veteran's Agency, that **there are two versions of the badge.**

One is official, and available from the MoD **at no charge**, and **the other is being sold from a commercial source at markets.**

They are even being offered for sale on E-Bay! The MoD discovered that the badge was being sold at markets and the police and British Standards were advised.

The MoD have taken action to deter this practice and as a result, **future stocks of the badge held by MoD, will have an imprint on the reverse side showing a design registration number**, which will make it a criminal offence to offer badges for sale that do not show the imprint.

Stocks of badges which do not have the imprint can be seized.

Footnote: Thanks to the Changi-Ite Newsletter for this information, which I thought was useful to members - Ed.

Letters to the Editor

A CALL DOWN UNDER

It's a Tuesday morning, and as I drive through the morning traffic on my way to work in Melbourne Australia, my mobile phone rings and the caller asks if he could speak to Bob Potter. "Speaking" I reply, the caller's voice becomes louder and exclaims "I have been looking for you for 34 years!" Unsure who this is, I pull over and to my astonishment, learn it's Bob Feather calling me from England. Well, this was a blast from the past!

I should start at the beginning. Early in 1967 two young men, (both called Bob, (Feather and Potter), met in a classroom at RAF Catterick to start their basic trade training and subsequently became good friends. Like others, we were soon given nicknames from the counties we came from (hence my nickname of "Geordie"). After our trade training, Bob Feather was sent to Fighter Command and I went to Bomber Command. We did not meet again until 1970 where we were both stationed at RAF Sharjah. After this posting, we were both sent back to RAF Catterick to complete our 'tour of duty' in the RAF. We were both discharged from there and Bob Feather went home to York. I stayed locally in Darlington.

We did stay in contact for a while, but as things often do, we lost touch, but have now found each other again, through your site, because another old RAF friend, Ted Stott, (that I have stayed in touch with since leaving the RAF, and who has visited me and my family regularly over the years), emailed me in 2007 with the

details of a site for ex RAF Firemen. After looking at the site I left my contact details there, which is how Bob Feather found me after all this time! How nice, that the two Bobs can now catch up on their lives. In February this year (2008) Ted Stott visited my family and I in Australia (which is where I have lived for the past 26 years) and brought with him copies of 'Flashpoint' and a copy of 'Scouse' Edward's book.

My family from the UK, who were also visiting us at the time to attend a family function, were surprised to see me in photos in the book (and with hair!). So many nights, whilst they were here, were spent discussing those days that seem so long ago now, and the coincidences of all these 'young' men learning of one another's whereabouts years later, and all within a few short months. You see, Ted was stationed with 'Scouse' Edwards at RAF Church Fenton, and I was stationed with Bob Feather and 'Scouse' Edwards at RAP Sharjah.

To all those that may know me, (especially George Edwards - who will always be 'Scouse' to me), all the very best and would love to hear from any of you.

Robert 'Bob' Potter (Geordie)

P.S. I enclose two photos of B Crew, (I think?), in RAF Sharjah, and one of the boys on the beach, (the same beach George Edwards has in his book, Out of the Blue: it's Sunday, as the Army boys are there as well).

GIBRALTAR FIRE SERVICE and REQUEST FOR INFO?

Dear John,

I've not yet had any feedback on Gibraltar but recently visited Ron Shearn ex W/O and senior instructor at the old Fire Squadron at RAF Catterick, who lives in Catterick village.

Ron was also technical editor of the RAF Catterick Fire Magazine when it was first produced, (1969?), and he kindly lent me some copies of the magazine.

When browsing through an issue, I came across some info on the RAF Fire Service on Gibraltar, which also includes some detail of other fire services on the Rock, and thought you ought to have a copy.

I hope it is of use to you and have included Ron's phone number in case you wish to contact him: 01748 818 399. I don't know if he can help any further but would probably enjoy having a chat with you.

Yours sincerely,

Dave, Flashpoint Editor,
Sunday, 13 July 2008

Dave,

I received your most welcome letter this morning, and I am so pleased that you show me such courtesy and interest to get any information on the GFR.

My kindest regards,

JackMcDonald

Footnote: Ron is pictured right, enjoying himself with friends at a local hotel.

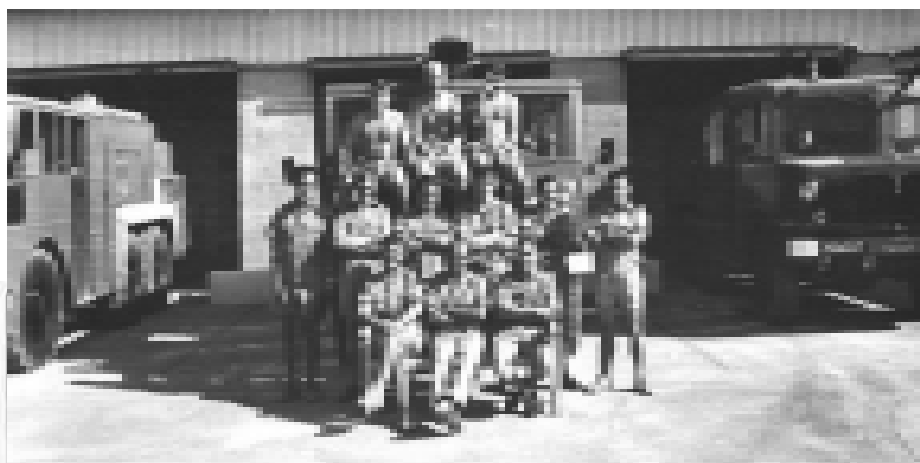


For those of you who may remember him, his eyesight isn't

too good these days and is limited in getting out and about.

He says he would be pleased to hear from any old comrades he's served with, and any of his old Fire Squadron recruits, instructors and permanent staff?

If you are going to be in the area of Catterick Village, please give him a ring on, 01748 818 399 and arrange to call, as he'd be delighted to see you - Ed.



Memories of Tangmere 1965 & 1970 & Wittering 1968

Hi Dave,

I note from the last issue of Flashpoint that the next reunion may visit my old station at Tangmere?

Just in case they do, I attach our Crash line up in 1965 at the fire section, and manned by the Air Force Department Fire Service. It is still standing and was used as offices in early 2008.

For comparison, I also attach the fire section after the station closed in 1970.

Kind regards,

Terry Mayes, member 298

Footnote: Many thanks for the photos and info and, sorry to say, that the visit to Tangmere isn't now going ahead. (See Chairman's report on page 5 of this edition) – Ed.



RAF Wittering Fire Section December 1968 - The photo was taken in December 1968 at the time of the disbanding of the two Victor bomber squadrons, (100 and 139). The incoming No1 Squadron used Harrier's and fewer firemen were required. Most of the lads are here, but not all. Not long after the photo was taken most of the lads (myself included) were posted out. All ranks are SAC's unless otherwise stated.

Back Row Left to right: Bob Gibson, Dave Boyd, Paul (Paddy) Neilands, Eric (Woody) Woods, Frank Mycock, John Savage, Cpl 'Lofty' Boyer, Cpl Sid Humpherys, Cpl Jeff Cook, Ian Armstrong, Alec (Sandy) Findlay, Jim Palmer, Ken Ratcliffe, Fred Ashurst, Ivor Runnicles, Pat Loan.

Centre Row Left to right: Bob (Geordie) Potter, Ted Stott, Jerry Parkin, Ron Slone, Maurice (Spud) Tainton, John (Shoey) Cormack, Elliott Murray, Dan Magee, Reg (Chalky) White, Bill (Dusty) Miller, John (Taff) Beard, Harry Maglochlan, Alan (Jock) Bruce, 'Slim' Beresford, Henry Gordon, 'Bill' Bailey.

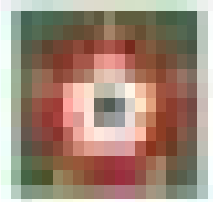
Front Row Left to right: 'Jock' Rhind, Dave Austin, Cpl 'Sandy' Sanderson, Cpl Derek Fairhurst, Cpl Ted (Dinger) Bell, Cpl Bob Donaldson, Sgt Derek (Gus) Burnage, Flt Lt Kendal, Sgt Bill Williams, Jerry Schofield, Douglas Carstairs, Jim Currie, Norman (Paddy) Johnson.

Known to be missing are: - Sgt Dave Johnson, Cpl Mick Fielding, 'Geordie' Lindholme, Joe (Geordie) Alsop, Dave Pearson. **Small photos right - Top: RAF: Middle: Rochdale Fire Department - Bottom: At the Bar!**

Note. After all these years some names may not be spelt correctly? The appliances are two Mk VI's and a Bedford Water Tender.

Ted Stott, member 922

Catberick Garrison Open Day Programme



Something for
all the family
The **Junior Football**
parachute display



ASSOCIATION SHOP, DISPLAY & DFS TACR2 CRASH

WELCOME TO THE ARMY OPEN DAY 2008 CATTERICK GARRISON

I would like to take this opportunity as Commander of Catterick Garrison to welcome you to the Army Open Day here at Marne Barracks, particularly as we were unable to have an Open Day last year due to the level of commitment to operations.

This year we have still continued to deploy soldiers from the Garrison on Operations in Iraq and Afghanistan and this summer will see the move of 19 (Light) Brigade to Northern Ireland and the arrival of 4 (Mechanized) Brigade from Germany, who also have just completed a busy operational tour in Iraq. The Infantry Training Centre Catterick continues to train the Army's infantry ready to take their places in infantry battalions, many of whom following further training, deploy straight to operational theatre.

At the same time much infrastructure work is ongoing in the Garrison with new accommodation, working areas and a Sports and Leisure Centre being built. The Open Day offers you a chance to see the Army, some latest equipment and meet its soldiers.

There are a wide variety of attractions and displays which we believe will make for a very interesting and enjoyable day for the whole family.

An important aspect of today is the help and support it will give to both local and national charities; and I ask that you give generously. I feel sure that you will all enjoy the events and attractions that have been brought together for your entertainment.

Colonel Nick Millen
21 June 2008

Programme cover & text courtesy of The Ark Design & Print Ltd.
Photos thanks to Geoff Varley.



Larnaca Fire Update from Flashpoint January 2008

Following on from the Larnaca article in January's Flashpoint, (page 14), written by Alex Bramley, concerning the Shell Installation Fire in October 1965, and having been at the same incident, I feel Alex was somewhat modest with his recollection of this major incident.

I was living in Limassol and was woken at 2am by the RAF Police and was told to be ready to be picked up at 6am to be taken to Larnaca, with no further explanation other than that my locker had been broken into and my entire firefighting kit would be waiting for me. Having been picked up by an RAF bus, along with a number of other fire service personnel from RAF Akrotiri, we proceeded towards Larnaca and on the coast road out of Limassol, towards the old cement factory, we could see a black line of smoke at about 2000 - 3000 feet stretching many miles south over the Mediterranean. You can imagine our excitement. A few miles before reaching Larnaca we saw for the first time what we had been brought here to deal with. There was one huge column of black smoke rising from the northern end of the town. The closer we got, the bigger the monster appeared, the like of which I've never seen first hand, until the Buncefield Oil Storage Explosion (December 2005) in Hemel Hempstead - 4 miles from where I live.

On arrival, we were informed that terrorists had come in by sea and had planted bombs on two half million gallon tanks, which were totally destroyed and flattened. This had set alight two more tanks, one a million gallon tank and the second somewhat smaller. Both were burning furiously. The Cypriot Fire Brigade were pumping sea water on the other 8 -10 unaffected tanks that surrounded the 2 burning tanks, keeping them cool. There was fire within the bund wall of the large tank which was also burning from a hole in the partially collapsed roof. The smaller tank was burning from two safety valves in the top resulting in a huge jet of flame.

Our first job was to get foam onto the top of the flaming oil within the bund wall to try to get the fire under control. The problem was, when you pushed the flames one way round the tank, they just appeared round the other side until more FMB's were brought into play on the other side of the tank. We constantly ran out of foam and had to retreat to the bund walls or beyond for safety until fresh supplies arrived. On that first day, food took a long time to be organised from the local RAF station, so when some Cypriot firemen offered us some unleavened bread and a chunk of

dirty goat's cheese full of flies and straw, it seemed like a banquet. We were starving and I believe would have eaten anything! We had a very good rapport with the Cypriot firefighters. The RAF fire service personnel were divided into three crews, as I recall, 4 hours on, 8 hours off, (or was it the other way round?), for eleven days. Our kit was constantly being put on wet, with no time to dry in between shifts. It was work, sleep, eat and more work.

I was positioned on a bund wall on the north side of the large tank using a 2FMB attached to a hose from a DP1, along with another member of our crew. Behind us were two smaller tanks containing high octane petrol and, which we discovered 3 days later, had unexploded bombs found on them.

Over time, the valves at the base of both the large and small tanks which were on fire, were damaged through heat and flame and began to leak. This created a continuous problem of running fuel, causing flames within the bund wall for many days and nights.

Some days later, like Alex Bramley, I also got caught in waist deep water, within the bund wall, when the flame I was pushing one way crept up behind me without my knowledge. My colleague (whose name I cannot remember) who was on the bund wall, saw what was happening and pulled the hose I was holding, pulling me backwards into the water. He had tried to shout to warn me but I couldn't hear and visibility was limited through my visor so I couldn't see him either. I was now underwater with my helmet full and staggered up and the helmet emptied, and I turned around to see why he had done what he did, to be met by a huge wall of flame. Fortunately, I had a working FMB pipe in my hand and as I lifted it out of the water it instantly started working again and pushed the flames back allowing me to get back to the ladder and safety. Afterwards, I found the back of my jacket badly singed and the back of my neck and hair burned. One close call!!! My colleague obviously thought that drowning was preferential to burning!! However, I was most grateful for his actions on that day.

After nine days or so, a scaffold gantry was built up the side of the large tank and a 20 FMB was attached to many hoses by a collecting head and sprayed foam into the gap in the top of the tank for several hours but failed to extinguish the flames, so this application was terminated. Some time later, as I believe, the entire stock of

foam-making compound in the Near East had been delivered to this site and a 40 FMB (I believe to be known as a Foam master) replaced the 20FMB (or was used with it) and after many hours pumping, the flames were finally extinguished. The only two members of the crew attending this incident that I do remember were Dave Ross and "Dusty" Parkin. I am enclosing copies of photographs taken at the time. Trevor Hayes, member 419



Fire Service Heroes Gordon Ditchfield 40 Years On!

heat generated by the fire, which was aggravated by the naturally hot climate of the Persian Gulf, placed a severe strain on the physical endurance of the fire fighting party, especially when working in confined spaces between decks. It was not always possible to relieve the RAF members of the fire fighting party by trained firemen and on several occasions Flight Sergeant Ditchfield had to work with members of the Station Emergency Guard who were not trained in the most elementary form of fire fighting. The ships crew were similarly extended and had to use all hands, skilled or semi skilled, to assist with the task.. Flight Sergeant Ditchfield personally made four attempts to enter the main hold to locate the seat of the fire and he remained in charge of the operation for five days and nights until the fire was extinguished. He fully appreciated that these attempts were fraught with danger and that had an explosion occurred in the hold the consequences would have been catastrophic for him and ultimately the ship. No members of the ships crew would venture as far into the ship's hold because of the high risk involved. Despite fatigue, irregular meals and very little sleep, Flight Sergeant Ditchfield directed his limited resources, and his largely inexperienced fire fighting force, with energy courage and determination. Throughout under exacting conditions he displayed outstanding devotion to duty. His calm and efficient leadership gave inspiration, and personal example, were major factors in countering this major emergency, which might well have led to the loss of the ship His performance was in accord with the highest traditions of the Service.

Supplement to the London Gazette, 22nd October 1968 (11327) Air Force Department Central Chancery of the Orders of Knighthood St James's Palace London S.W.1 22nd October 1968

The Queen has been graciously pleased to approve the award of the British Empire Medal for gallantry (Military Division) to the under mentioned:

L4101163 Flight Sergeant Gordon Frederick Ditchfield, RAF Regiment.

On the 27 March 1968 the Master of the SS Daphne called upon RAF Masirah for assistance in fighting a serious fire, which had broken out on board his ship. Sea conditions were difficult with a long running swell and the ship was moored some three miles off the coast.

Shade temperatures averaged 87 degrees and in the sun at midday temperatures rose to 130 degrees. A party of three Royal Air Force Firemen was despatched to the SS Daphne. Upon arrival Flight Sergeant Ditchfield assumed control of the operations of his own party plus the crewmembers detailed for fire fighting. His difficulties were immense. He was working in an unfamiliar environment the ships motion made working conditions difficult particularly when carrying equipment along narrow corridors and down steep walkways. He was not trained in fighting ship fires and was completely unaware of the details of the ship's fire fighting equipment, the structural layout between decks and around the holds, and the disposal of the nature and layout of the cargo carried. The fire was intense and gave off much thick smoke.

The combination of the smoke plus the

OPERATIONS RECORD BOOK OF RAF MASIRAH FOR PERIOD MARCH 1968 COMPILING OFFICER Flt Lt A.E Howard

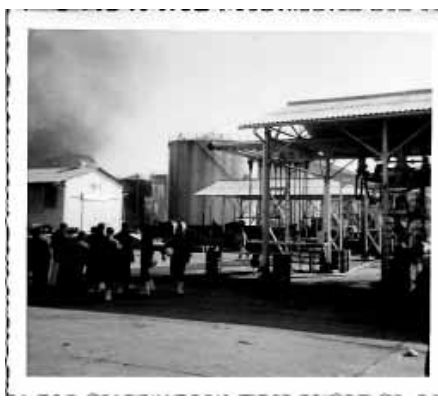
Dated 27 March 1968

Squadron Leader RJ Spears left the station on the 27 March after handing over to the new CO Squadron Leader R.F. Gratton. Half an hour after the departure of the Argosy the events aboard the Daphne began.

The SS Daphne anchored off the coast of the Island preparatory to discharging cargo for Messrs Wimpey. The Master Paulos Ambietles radioed RAF Masirah requesting assistance in fighting a fire on board his ship. RAF Masirah responded by sending men and equipment, which were taken by sea to Daphne by a detachment of the Royal Corps of Transport using Uniflotes. A rough sea hampered operations and the men of Masirah and RCT displayed resource and courage in a dangerous and difficult situation. The fire was located in No 4 Hold and between the decks area and although hampered by bulky deck and hold cargo the fire was extinguished at 14.30 on Friday the 29 March. During operations, the No 4 Hold had to be flooded and the Master requested assistance in pumping out. Pumping out now complicated by a mass of loose floating cargo continued until the hold was clear at 06.00 on the 31 March.

The ship weighed anchor at 10.15 on the 31 March and sailed for Daman. It is very doubtful whether the ships crew using their own inadequate equipment could have prevented the Daphne from becoming at least severely damaged and probably a total loss. **Footnote:** Thanks to George Edwards for this item - Ed.

Larnaca update continued from page 14: Trevor Hayes kindly agreed to loan me his original photographs of the event and also provided the text. However, there isn't room to display all 11 shots but the ones chosen well illustrate the event - Ed.



RAF Idris, Tripoli BFPO 57

Dave,

I was posted to Idris in May 1961, from RAF Luqa, Malta, as it was part of Malta Command. Personnel were: Sgt Lloyd in charge - Cpl George, Northern Ireland, (forgot his surname)? - Cpl Eric Harboard, Malvern, Worcestershire – Cpl Leo Kennedy, southern Ireland - SAC ‘Nobby’ Clark from Nottingham – SAC Richardson, Epsom, Surrey – SAC Robert ‘Bob’ Dickinson, Durham.

In 1962, as time went by, Eric Harboard got demobbed and ‘Nobby’ Clark was posted to Cranwell, Lincolnshire. Leo Kennedy signed on to do another year, and Cpl George was posted to RAF Tak Kali, Malta.

A lad called, Taylor from Wrexham, North Wales was posted in; then a ‘Paddy’ Kell from Dublin. About 3 months before I got repatriated, a Cpl Dick Stiff was posted in, but I didn’t get to know him very well, as he lived in married quarters in Tripoli, where there was another Cpl, but can’t remember his name, (members George Edwards and Ron Brown knew him)?

Idris was a small staging post and all kinds of aircraft came in, including all the V bombers, and Canberra’s by the squadron. It was also, and Overseas Experimental Unit, (OEU), for new aircraft coming into service, such as: Argosy, Buccaneer, Lightning, MK20 Hunters and MK3 Shackletons.

Like I said to member, Wilf Longmire, it’s hard to remember everything and, when I got demobbed, I went back to the shipyard and forgot all about the RAF, until I saw an advert on Channel 4, Service Pals from Joe Shackleton, and the rest is history! Since, I’ve been lucky enough to meet up with friends from days at RAF Dishforth, North Yorkshire, in the days of the Blackburn Beverleys.

Bob Dickinson, member 154

Here are some photos of RAF Idris, Tripoli, from 1961- 62:

1. Me next to Leo Kennedy’s Ford Taunus.
2. Bedford Domestic & Austin 1 Ton ACRT.
3. Camp site shot.



TREASURER’S STATEMENT

- Contrary to what was printed in the “Notification of Committee Vacancies” sent out with the summer 2008, issue of “Flashpoint”, I will not be seeking re-election to the post of the Association’s Treasurer at our AGM in October 2008. My reasons for this decision are many, some are Association related, but most involve my increasing workload within the Air Cadet Organisation (ACO), as a Wing Treasurer and Financial controller.

As some of the older members will remember, as an experienced treasurer in the ACO, I was asked by the then standing chairman (Roger Brooks), if I could help out the committee, by sorting out the Association’s Financial Accounts following the sudden death of our founder Treasurer, John Knight. This I agreed to do, but only on the understanding it would be for a temporary period, owing to all my other voluntary commitments. That temporary period has now lasted for five years (one year as the Treasurer Designate), mainly because there were no volunteers from the general membership, at any of the past AGM’s to take over this very important committee post.

Now at the age of seventy, I feel I must reduce my voluntary commitments, and although it has been a honour and a privilege to be the Association’s Treasurer over the past years, I have now elected to spend all my voluntary time supporting, what I feel is the premier uniformed youth group in this country, the Air Cadet Organisation, (Air training Corps), and try and help them continue to produce future Royal Air Force recruits and good citizens.

May I take this opportunity to thank the majority of the membership who have always been very supportive of my work and accounting methods, and I hope during my tenure, I have fulfilled the promise I made on my appointment, to strengthen and control the financial standing of our Association, by mainly reducing the totally unacceptable amount of outstanding subscription payment the Association was experiencing at that time.

It is my intention at this time, to remain a member of the Association and hopefully attend future reunions. May I wish every success to my replacement?

Geoff Varley (221)

Armed Forces Memorial Tribute

Source: The Sun Online Sunday 29th June 2008

Prince Charles joined the families of British servicemen and women killed on duty last year for the first of what will become an annual commemoration for the armed forces.

Work was recently completed on carving the 102 names of the personnel on the walls of the Armed Forces Memorial, at the National Memorial Arboretum, in Staffordshire.

It was the first addition of names to the monument, and each one was read out by representatives of their respective services during a ceremony there today.

It was followed by a two-minute silence and wreaths laid by the Prince of Wales, Veterans Minister Derek Twigg and Vice Admiral Peter Wilkinson, deputy chief of the defence staff.

The service will become an annual event for the armed forces, said the Ministry of Defence, honouring those personnel who lost their lives during the previous calendar year.

Speaking at the ceremony, Mr Twigg said: "Today's service highlights the dedication and sacrifice of our servicemen and women around the world." It is right that the nation pays tribute to those members of our armed forces who have died while on duty in 2007.

"I hope that the addition of their names to this magnificent Armed Forces Memorial will provide a focus and comfort for their families and friends, and will be a fitting tribute on behalf of the nation."

Among relatives of the 102 killed in 2007 at the service was Christine Bonner. Her son, Corporal Darren Bonner, 31, 1st Battalion, The Royal Anglian Regiment, died in an explosion while travelling in convoy in Helmand Province. She said: "The memorial is absolutely fantastic. It's beautiful, very peaceful.

Senior Aircraftman Christopher Dunsmore, of 504 Squadron Royal Auxiliary Air Force Regiment, was one of three service personnel killed by a mortar attack at the Basra Contingency Operating Base on July 19 2007. His father, Geoff, said: "It means Christopher will be remembered for ever and his courage and dedication to service in the RAF Auxiliary Air Force has been recognised."

According to the Ministry of Defence, nine members of the Royal Navy, 85 members of the Army and eight members of the Royal Air Force lost their lives in 2007. The newly added names sit alongside those members of UK forces who have lost their lives since 1948. The Armed Forces Memorial was dedicated by the Queen in October last year.

Harrier Aircraft Crashes in Rutland

Source: MoD Tuesday, 17th June 2008

The Ministry of Defence can confirm that a Harrier GR7 aircraft has crashed on farmland in Rutland yesterday.

The aircraft, from RAF Cottesmore, came down on open farmland just before 1350 hours near the village of Ashwell.

The pilot, from the Royal Navy, ejected prior to the crash and has been taken to hospital by air ambulance. There is no word at this time on the condition of the pilot, whose next of kin have been informed. There are no reports of casualties on the ground. At this stage it is too early to say what might have caused the incident. However, a Board of Inquiry is being convened.

<http://www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/DefenceNews>

VULCAN XH558 ON A SPECIAL MISSION

An iconic aircraft honoured the team that returned it to the skies with a flypast. Vulcan XH558 swept over the Marshall's staff at Cambridge airport to celebrate the completion of a 15 year project, which ended last week when the plane was awarded its permit to fly. Now almost 50 years old, XH558 is the last airworthy Vulcan in the world after the £6 million restoration.

Marshall's engineers have been involved in the project since 1993, and will continue to be responsible for the plane's maintenance.

Chairman, Michael Marshall said: "I am very proud of the important contribution provided by the Marshall Aerospace team which has enabled the Vulcan to return to flight, and we look forward to seeing this iconic aircraft delight crowds at air displays this year."

XH558 was one of 136 Vulcans to serve with the RAF during the Cold War. Marshalls worked with the Vulcan to the Sky Trust, which bought the aircraft for £25,000 from the RAF. Robert Fleming, the trust's chief executive, acknowledged Marshall's "huge technical and financial support."

Thanks to member, Geoff Varley for sending the newspaper clipping.

Text courtesy of www.cambridge-news.co.uk

Photo: courtesy of www.cambridge-news.co.uk

Footnote: Congratulations to everyone involved for a fantastic achievement - Ed.



WANTED – SPONSOR FOR THE ASSOCIATION WEBSITE?

Would you care to sponsor our website? The cost is approximately £100 per year and, for this, you will have your name/company/business etc, advertised on the home page. At present, the site is paid for by the Association so, if we get a sponsor, it will save Association funds.

Anyone interested, should please contact the Webmaster, Ron Brown, on our website: www.fireservicesassociation.net or at ron@brown3840.fsnet.co.uk

Thank you.

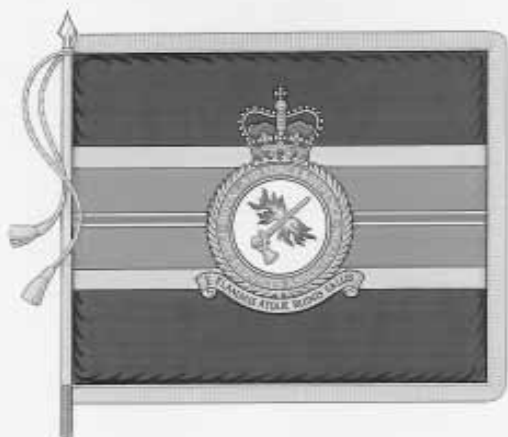
Ron Brown, member 294



QUESTION & ANSWERS - MK 6's photo Summer (published May) Flashpoint page 22. Apart from member Brian Harris, who supplied the info, only one member sent in an answer, and that was Treasurer, Geoff Varley who said: This is a photograph of a fleet of Salamanders, (known as G19's), lined up outside the Pyrene factory on the Great West Road. Identified by the absence of BCM hosereels and were destined for the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF).

Brain Harris, member 393's, fuller answer is: MK6's outside Pyrene, destined for Canada and called J19's, (Geoff said: G19's?), without CBM or BCF provisions. However, the Royal Canadian Air Force stipulated that they must be capable of producing 'foam on the run' and was how we got our MK6A's.

Does anyone else out there, know better? More than likely our late founding president, John Arthur, would have put us right, as he was heavily involved with the MK6 Research & Development



The President, Vice-President, Officers of the Committee and Coordinators, would like to extend sincere seasonal good wishes to the members, their families and serving firefighters everywhere. Also, good health, a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year for 2009, the 14th year since the formation of the Association on the 13th May 1995 at Shoreham Airport, Sussex.

**DEADLINE FOR ENTRIES
FOR NEXT FLASHPOINT
ISSUE DUE AUTUMN 2008
IS 1st DECEMBER 2008**

Invitation to all members - Let's 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 out there. If your article requires a photograph, remember to enclose it along with your article, and send to the Editor by mail, or email, at the address detailed on page 3 – Who to Contact. Please enclose an SAE for the return of photos etc. Thank you. Dave Kenyon Editor 239

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Next Issue - October Reunion - Remembrance Parade 2008 - More photographic memories - Laarbruch visit update - Gibraltar Rocket Assisted Firemen and more?

Remembrance Day Parade

REMEMBRANCE DAY PARADE WHITEHALL - LONDON - SUNDAY 9th. NOVEMBER 2008



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

All ticket applications should be sent to me as soon as possible but no later than 29th September 2008

Surname: First name: Membership number:

Address:

..... Postcode: Tel No:

Signed: Dated 2008

To avoid damaging your copy of Flashpoint, photocopy it, or print the details clearly on a separate sheet of paper.

*Please enclose an SAE with your application for the return of your ticket and assembly details etc.

Send to:- Ron Brown, 38 Sedgebrook, Liden, Swindon, Wiltshire SN3 6EY - Tel: 01793 496 307
or email: ron@brown3840.fsnet.co.uk

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

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. 01793 496 307

Note:- Travel and accommodation are your responsibility, but the following might be helpful:- **The Union Jack Club, Sandell Street, London Tel. 020 7928 481 or Victory Services Club, 63/79 Seymour Street, London W2 2HF Tel: 020 7616 8302 Fax: 020 7616 8344 email: mem@vsc.co.uk Note: Please check prices before booking.**

Preferred Dress: - Blazer & Badge, Tie, Medals, Veteran's Badge and Beret with RAF or Crash Fire Rescue Badge.**

- 1)** It helps to show up the badge on Parade by placing a circle of red material behind.
- 2) Badges are available from Allan Brooke, via the RAF&DFSA Shop page at a cost of £8 plus P&P, unless you are going to attend the AGM at Bracklesham Bay in October when you could buy direct?

Important Note: Mobile phones must be switched off before entering Horse Guards Parade. Please make every effort to attend. Thank you.

Ron Brown, member 294

STRADISHALL 1956/58

Dear Dave,

It was rather a surprise to receive the letter with the photographs. Thank you very much indeed.

I joined a few weeks ago, after I got in touch with Ben Zaccardelli, and applied to join. Ben does not live far from Brian, (Hooper ASTRAL Editor - Ed.), and myself. Brian has always passed on the Flashpoint magazine to me, which I do find interesting. I'll be pleased now to be getting them on a regular basis as a member.

I've just written to Ron Shearn at Catterick, and I'm 100% certain that he was with us at Stradishall as our Flt Sgt in charge of the section, that would

be 1957/1958 sort of time? In fact, whenever I mention him, it is with high regard. He earned and I'd say, got great respect from the lads. He reformed our section, which in hindsight wasn't very organised.

We never had rescue training until he came, only driver training, which 2 or 3 of us took, mostly on Sports afternoons but never lads who hadn't got 'full permits'. The actual Fire Rescue Training was done regularly during night flying with the 'last one in' and in the hangars using spare aircraft. Often air crew came down to 'join in' especially when there was bad weather.

Anyway, Brian Hooper and I get on well at the National Service (RAF) Association, and are going to

start looking for fresh plans for the 'Air Day' at ex RAF North Weald, next year. I thought, maybe the Association were able to join in with some kind of display, marquee, whatever?

Once again, thank you for returning the photos.

Regards,
Dennis 'Andy' Mc Donald, member 948

Footnote: Thanks for your letter and confirmation that you got the Stradishall photos back OK, and hope you like the item in this Flashpoint and welcome to the club. Apologies for having them since 2006!

See page 21 for Stradishall photo display - Ed.

Photographic Memories! - RAF Habbaniya 1956/57

Dear Dave,

I thought perhaps you would be interested to see the enclosed photos. Habbaniya was a large RAF station built in 1937 on the bank of the river Euphrates, 50 miles west of Baghdad and near Faluja.

The station became the headquarters of the Iraq Command taking in the then RAF station in the Persian Gulf, Jordan and Pakistan.

Not much was known as to the handover of Habbaniya in 1958; until a few American servicemen became interested in the history of the station and contacted our RAF Habbaniya Association and, subsequently, we now have many 'before and after' photos.

A few vehicles look familiar from my time there in 1949, and I think the first one is the Gas Truck, the offices and accommodation block were to the left of the picture.

If you think that you could reproduce the photos in Flashpoint, the Association can furnish much better versions digitally on CD. If they are published, then acknowledgment must be given in the form adjacent to each photo. If I can help further, do let me know.

Yours sincerely,

Roy Wright, member 715



From top right clockwise:

Plateau Fire Section front & rear - John Powell 1956/7

Fire Section - Norman Denman 1956/7

Iraqi Fire Dept - John Powell

Plateau Air Traffic Control - Flt Lt Bill Verralls

Plateau Air Traffic Control 1956 - John Powell

Many thanks to member, Roy Wright for his initial input and to Dr C D E Morris, Honorary Secretary, RAF Habbaniya Association. 48 Brookhouse Road, WALSALL, WS5 3AD for supplying photos and details - Ed.

raf.habbaniya@btinternet.com www.habbaniya.org

RAF Stradishall 1956/58 & Kemble 2008



Dear Dave,

THE NATIONAL SERVICE (ROYAL AIR FORCE) ASSOCIATION, ASTRAL MAGAZINE.

One of our local members, Denis 'Andy' McDonald, gave me these photos at our last get together. Unfortunately, other than a few names, there is no text or story to go with them. As they are of Stradishall fire crews, I thought they might be of interest to you and your members. If so, please make use of them. If not, perhaps you would be kind enough to return them to Andy or myself?

Best wishes,

Brian Hooper, Editor



Photo detail clockwise from top left: Group of 5 on ACRT - left to right: Cpl Arnold 'Nolly' Lee – Denis 'Andy' McDonald – Jimmy Winters – Eddie 'Ned' Dawson – Pete Dunlevey - CO2 Gas Truck – Cpl Eddie 'Ned' Dawson, (1958), with parachute, 'Bonedome' and leather flying helmet? - MK5A 21AG96 & ACRT 63AA54 (Note the Gloster Javelin in the background) - Large

KEMBLE CRASH BAYS 2008

Dear Dave,

If you have room, here's a bit of news for your next Flashpoint?

'Boys', look what they've done to the Crash Bays at Kemble! They have turned them into a Club called the AV8, where you can get a drink and a meal, while watching the local flying club! The crash tenders use a bay on the end of the club.

Ted Davis, member, 755



CRASH Team & Shop update & 2008 pledge/donations

The 'Working Parties are in full swing, and thanks must go to Roy Potts, John Sanders and Wilf Longmire who regularly pop up to Barkston to keep the restoration of our vehicles on track. Wilf is intending to have a really good display of Crash Tenders at RAF Fairford - particularly as it is the Royal Air Forces 90th Anniversary. Providing nothing goes badly wrong, the vehicles we hope to take are Mk 6, DP 2, Mk 10, 3 different Bedford Domestics, WW2 U.S. Navy International Crash Tender, and WW2 45 monitor. Phil Webb is joining us with his TACR so we hope for a good show.

We are displaying some of our vehicles twice a day on Saturday July 12th and Sunday July 13th in the arena and I shall be providing the commentary, as usual. Over the last couple of months working parties have included Graham Laws, Sam Gill, Roger Brooks, and Mike Shenton as well as the regulars. It makes for a very happy band of men!

The response to the appeal for cash to pay next year's rent is slow, and at this point I should like to say thank you to everyone who has sent in a donation and/or a pledge. However, as one member pointed out - he could not pledge an amount due to increases in his cost of living charges, but enclosed a donation. We do realise that our pensions are not going as far as they did last year, and understand the financial constraints everyone is suffering. If we are unable to raise enough money for the rent, we will have to reappraise the situation, so we shall keep members posted.

Work is well under way on the Mk 7 and the bodywork is down to the aluminium ready for painting, and work has commenced on the engine and running gear. **If anybody wishes to see what we are achieving, go to on to the You Tube Website and type in CRASH, and the page should open, which shows our move from Halfpenny Green to Barkston, and we are hoping to add to this.**

Best wishes,

Allan Brooke - CRASH Treasurer (and labourer!)



FIRE TRUCK 23 AG 76 SUMMER 2008 - Dear Dave, I read with interest the article on page 10 of the summer 2008 magazine about the Fire Truck, which Vic Golding had seen at Hendon. I thought the following story might be of some use in the magazine relating to my finding this vehicle and my memories of riding in it as a young fireman. As I'm not much good with computers, I'm sending a photograph taken at the time of the visit, and you have my permission to reprint it if you think it's any good?

In 2001 whilst living in London I took a trip up to Hendon to visit the Museum and the various artefacts there. As I was heading for the exit I stopped in my tracks - my wife thought I had taken ill - but it was the shock of seeing a registration plate - **23 AG 76** - which brought me to a standstill. Sure enough, as we neared the old girl, we began to read the plaque describing her history, there it was in black and white - RAF St. Mawgan, Cornwall.

After joining up in 1960 and doing the usual rounds of training camps for firemen, I landed at St. Mawgan in 1962 - 63, under Warrant Officer Crabtree and Crew Sgt. Enwright. Unfortunately, due to maturity, many of the names I worked with on camp have left my memory but I often wondered what happened to Joe Labouch-Ardiere, who seemed to have a permanent job being best man to many weddings taking place at that time on camp? Finding a bit of my past in a museum has hit me a bit hard, seeing as it was only about forty two years since I was a crew member on the Mk.6 Salamander. If anyone remembers me, or knows anything about Joe, please get in touch.

Yours sincerely,

Tom Armstrong, member

291

Footnote: If you can help Tom with any names, then



RAFDFA Shop

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

Regards and best wishes, Allan and Marilyn

Contact details: - Allan and Marilyn Brooke, 20 Chestnut Grove, Farndon, Newark, Nottinghamshire NG24 3TW Tel: 01636 688 680

No personal callers please. Email: allana.brooke@ntlworld.com or marilyn.brooke@ntlworld.com

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

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

STOCK AND PRICE LIST @ SEPTEMBER 2008

RAF & DEFENCE FIRE SERVICES ASSOCIATION

BASEBALL CAPS with Assn logo.....	£6.00
POLO SHIRTS (Navy) SM,M,L,XL, XXL.....	10.00
T SHIRTS (Navy) L, XL, XXL.....	£6.00
BLAZER BADGE.....	£12.50
TIE - NEW DESIGN Dk Blue + Red/White stripes & Ass. Badge.....	£9.00
CAJ BAGS.....	£6.50
DOCUMENT BAGS.....	£8.50
KEYRING.....	£1.00
MUG.....	£4.00
CAP BADGE.....	£8.00
LAPEL BADGE.....	£3.00
SELF CLING CAR STICKER.....	£1.00
RAF FIRE SCHOOL of FIREFIGHTING STICKER.....	£0.50
EMBROIDERED RAF FIRE SERVICE PATCH BADGE.....	£3.50
LANYARD AND WALLET.....	£2.50
CUFF LINKS (RAF ROUNDEL).....	£5.50
LEATHER BOOKMARKS.....	£1.00
FIRE ENGINE PRINT (New Design)*.....	£5.00
FIRE ENGINE PRINT 1940-1960**.....	£5.00
METAL FIRE ENGINE MODELS 1/76TH SCALE Price on request.	

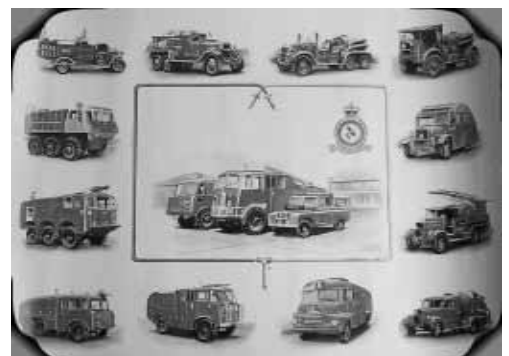
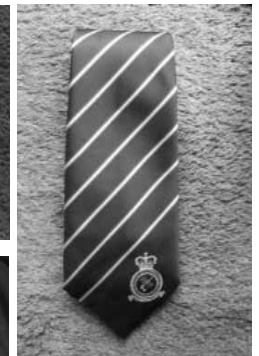
Note: All models need constructing and painting.

CRASH TEAM items - Prices on request

CONTACT US TO SEE WHAT WE HAVE IN STOCK? Other novelty items will change over a period of time so it is best to either contact us to see what we have in stock, or come to the Association reunions or one of the shows where we are selling, (no list of dates and venues yet)?

***The New design Print above right** depicts vehicles from 1960's to present day. **From top left clockwise** - Mk10, Mk11a Tacr1, Tac-T, Tacr2, Major and Mini Angus Bedford Domestics, Queen's Squadron TQF Scania, Falklands Bv206 tracked vehicle, Mk7, Mk8, and Mk9, with MFV and RIV in the centre.

****The Print bottom right** depicts vehicles from 1940 to 1960. **From Top left clockwise:** 30 Cwt Crossley, Fordson, Crossley 6 x 4, Crossley PE 1, Crossley (Streamline), 1944 Fordson Monitor Conversion, 1945 Fordson Monitor, Bedford Domestic, 600 gallon, Thornycroft MK5A, & Dual Purpose Tender MK 2 (DP2), Alvis Pyrene MK6, Alvis Stalwart, **Centre: Left to right:** Dual Purpose Tender MK1, (DP1), Thornycroft MK5 and ACRT, (Aircraft Crash Rescue Truck).



Netherlands Air Force, Navy & Airport Crash Tenders



Left column from the top: Royal Netherlands Air Force Crash Trucks, (RNIAF).

Right column first three from the top Royal Netherlands Navy Crash Trucks, (RNIN).

Last two are: Schiphol/Adam Airport Crash Trucks.

See page 9, Letters to the Editor for extra vehicle info and details from overseas member, 498, Donald Witte. There wasn't enough space for all the vehicle shots he sent, but thought these were quite impressive - Ed!

