

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, 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

Brief History of the RAF Fire and Rescue Service



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 detailed 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 1950s, the RAF Fire Service was amalgamated with the RAF Regiment for several years until being 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.

Brief History of the Defence Fire and Rescue



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, now is 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 visible force.

CONTENTS

- 2 Brief Histories of the Association RAF & DF&RS
- 3 Who to Contact and front cover photo
- 4 Editor
- 5 Brief History of the RAF
- 6 Letters
- 8 Ray Blackburn
- 9 Fire Section Pets
- 10 From the Archive
- 11 Gutersloh 1948
- 12 Letters
- 18 More from the Archive
- 19 Lest We Forget
- 20 Mike Goupillot
- 21 Letters
- 22 Crash Team & Shop Update
- 23 RAFDFSA Shop
- 24 RAF & Defence Fire Services Association Tree and Plaque at the National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas, Staffs.

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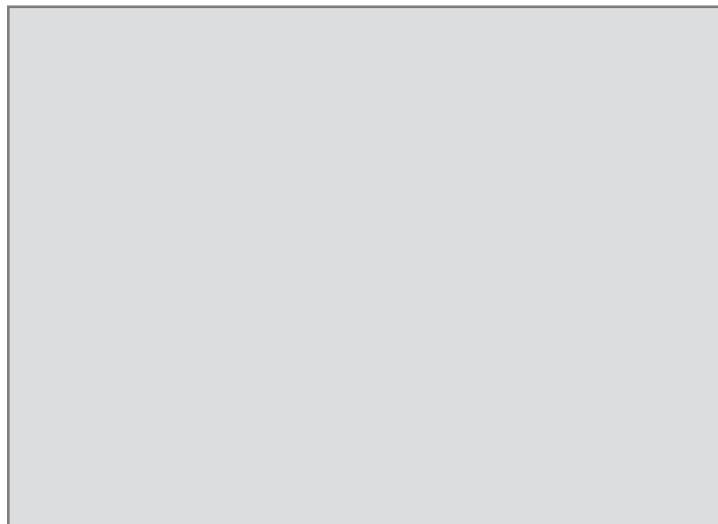
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**Co-ordinator Vacancies - East
Yorkshire - Midlands, Scotland
(1), South East and other areas
as necessary. It's not too arduous,
just a matter of keeping in touch,
and promoting the Association
when able to do so. If you can
help, please contact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



Front Cover Photo.

**I am informed the real reason for the
very expensive aircraft trying to climb the wall
is as follows.**

**The Brand new A380 had been delivered
from the factory and was being checked over.
For some reason the brakes had been released
with the engines running. Possibly the same
person OPENED the THROTTLES?**

**Hence a very nice photo. It cannot be blamed on
a Fireman, they would not have been so careless ?**

Flashpoint Editor

An Appeal for Help?



Now that the spring magazine has been safely received by everyone and enjoyed (I hope) **I am well into preparing the next, which will be Summer 2009, the only trouble is a lack of STORIES!**

At the moment, we have approx 600 members, which means that if everyone submitted one story I would

have enough for years to come?

If you don't have a computer, send me anything by Royal Mail 'snail mail', and ask your good lady what she can remember about the night the boys brought you back from the NAAFI in a wheel barrow, or maybe something more exciting? Your brushes with the SWO, what you acquired to make the section more comfortable, and fires, crashes etc, you attended? If you like, send it anonymously and don't worry about the spelling and grammar as I have a marvellous tool on the computer, which can help sort it!

When I wander round at meetings I hear comments about what happened to old Charlie, or do you remember when he fell out of the crash tender or have you seen Bill, do you remember etc, etc, and so on?

Someone might recognise an event and reply to it, then you can enjoy remembering that part of your life. You'll enjoy seeing your name in print, and make my postman moan about the amount of mail I keep getting every day. I like to hear the letterbox crash open in the morning!

I've been receiving a few items for the Summer issue from various sources but **the important thing to remember is that unless I get enough input from members, (photos as well), I may have to consider reducing the number of pages or start using more stories and photos from previous issues? The floor is yours.**

I've been looking at a magazine called ASTRAL, for the National Service (Royal Air Force) Association, and it's 44 pages in size and has approximately 30 pages of stories and hope you'll send me yours for Flashpoint?

Wethersfield 20th TFW in 1959

Now for a piece following Geoff Varley's story on page 17 of this edition, of his meeting with the 'A' Bomb?

At Wethersfield 20th TFW in 1959, I was employed in the Communications Sqn as a clerk working on providing landlines and telephones installed by the GPO. When a request came in, it was my job to survey the site or building to see if the work was feasible? If so, I then wrote a work order to the G.P.O. and fixed a time suitable for installation.

On this particular occasion the request was for an explosion proof telephone in the bomb dump. At the time the Squadron had a new C.O. arrive and was making the rounds of sections when he found my office. He was an ex WW2 P-47 pilot over in the U.K. and he went on to Korea flying P-51s and then converting to F-86, finally to Vietnam flying F-4 Phantoms.

We had a cup of coffee and he asked about the work I did, and I explained roughly what it entailed and he said he would like to come with me next time. I suggested we both go to the bomb dump, and knew he had security for the Communications Centre and also the C.O.C. during alerts, so I thought no more about it. The funny part was that I had no security whatever but could get in anywhere! The reason was, the Americans loved their telephones and keyboards, and the only way they could get anything was to let me in to check positions and cable sizes etc.

Off we went in his large Dodge car, (mine would have probably fitted in the boot), and arrived at the double barbed wire fence, and the first guard called the Sgt i/c who let me in, but when he checked the security pass of my boss he said, "Sorry Sir, I can't let you in with that pass", so the Col told me he'd wait, and promptly lit one of his large cigars.

After passing two more guards, I arrived at the building and the Sgt i/c came to escort me and when we arrived at the room for the telephone, there was one of the nuclear weapons with which F-100s were armed. It had the casing stripped off, and the Sgt said, "You haven't seen anything here today, have you?" We settled on a position for the telephone and I left.

On the way back the Col could not get over the fact that I could go where he could not, and I had the same privilege on visiting the Q.R.A. area, where two aircraft were always loaded and ready to go. They had a red line painted on the floor around them and the guard on each aircraft had orders to shoot anyone without authority. During practice alerts the pilots sat in the cockpit with a telephone in contact with the ops room, and as soon as they got the word, they threw the telephone to the ground, which naturally broke. I had to cross the line one day to

sort out a different arrangement, when I had finished I said to the guard, "I don't think I will buy this one, it's passed it's sell by date!"

Regards,

A Brief History of the RAF Fire Service



To provide and fulfil its role in the nation's Defence, the Royal Air Force has to keep abreast with advances in all branches of aviation technology. This commitment therefore requires the training of specialist officers and airmen and the provision of modern aircraft and its associated equipment to maintain the high standards required. This inevitably leads to a large financial outlay from the Defence budget to enable the RAF to keep alongside other world Air Forces.

Any loss of manpower or equipment to the RAF would therefore place restrictions on the efficiency of the RAF, and therefore the nation's defence. One risk the RAF faces is that of fire, a risk that is ever present in society. The RAF therefore makes provisions for its own Fire Service to combat the threat of fire.

The RAF Fire Service is common to all other Fire Services in that their primary aim is to save life. In war, aircraft may return from their missions badly damaged and, if they crash on return, their crews must be saved. If possible, multi-million pound aircraft must be saved also. To do this, amidst burning fuel and exploding ammunition, a well-trained Fire Service is required. The firefighters also watch over the

RAF's interests in peace, when the fortunately rare, but potentially disastrous occurrence of an aircraft crash, threatens life. Therefore the RAF fireman is trained for combat against fire, which he must face with calmness, determination, courage and fitness, so that he may save life. The RAF Fire Service also provides fire prevention facilities and a whole range of firefighting activities, which take place on RAF stations.

Aviation has been present in the Armed Forces since the early 1900s, and the risk to loss of life is as great today as it was then. To trace the roots of the RAF Fire Service it is therefore necessary to go back to the early days of Military Aviation.

THE STORY SO FAR

May 1912 saw the formation of the Royal Flying Corps, and even in those initial days it was necessary to provide some form of fire protection for the Aircrew. At this time the only military fire service in existence was the Army Fire Service, which had been formed at Aldershot in 1864. Initially the RFC was to use the Army Fire Service to provide fire cover. Their references and training were taken from the Army Fire Service manual of that period. The use of Army personnel ceased in 1916 when the RFC took the firefighting operations into its own hands. The personnel tasked with firefighting were taken from many different trades, with firefighting becoming their secondary task.

To combat the threat of fire, the landing stations of all the RFC's Home Defence units were equipped with 30/40-gallon chemical foam fire extinguishers. These were manhandled to the incidents when required. Vehicles were established at the Store Depots of the RFC, unfortunately these were only fitted with hand held fire extinguishers. So some advances were made albeit slight, with the RFC taking some measures to offset the risks to life from fire. Incidentally they still used the Army Fire Service Manual as the reference for firefighting.

Military aviation was now moving along rapidly and the need for a specialist air service was being fought for, and at the forefront of the battle was Lord Trenchard. The fight was won, and on 1 April 1918 the Royal Air Force was officially formed. During the formative years of the RAF the loss of aircraft and equipment due to fires was caused a great deal of concern. This can be said to have been the foundation stones of the present RAF Fire Service.

The year 1918 was to prove very costly for the RAF with the loss of many aircraft in storage. Consider that at this time an airframe and an engine was priced at around £1000. Bearing this in mind, the monetary loss from fires at Shotwick and Ternhill totalling £57,000 can be considered expensive. Other units also suffered equipment loss due to fire: Wyton £23,239. Upavon £9,109, and Drayton Manor £16,128. These losses compelled the Air Ministry to order a number of fire fighting vehicles with pumping facilities and with these measures against fire, it was hoped that the financial loss would start to decline.

On the 21st May 1919, a fire at Ligescourt resulted in the loss of a Handley Page aircraft, (0/400 D8314), and the hangar in which it was accommodated. This fire again prompted the Air Ministry to take further action following the results of the Court of Enquiry. During the enquiry several deficiencies came to light, including that personnel were poorly trained in firefighting and lacked effective fire fighting equipment. It was decreed that every permanent station had to be equipped with a fire vehicle with its own housing, with vehicles being adapted for this role. In 1921 the RAF MT Repair Depot at Shrewsbury began a modification programme, and modified Crossley 6X6 tenders to be fitted with crash rescue equipment, which included a single 30 gallon chemical foam extinguisher and 'Fire Snow', (foam), hand held extinguishers. By 1922 the modification programme was completed.

In 1930 the RAF ordered more Crossley and Morris B1 chassis for conversion to fire tenders. During this decade Crossley IGL 6X4 vehicles went into service with the RAF, many other vehicles were introduced including the Fordson foam and CO2 tender. After 18 years at RAF Cranwell the Fire Training unit was moved to RAF Weeton in 1940, in the hands of W/O Pascoe. The School only remained there for 3 years until August 1943, before moving to Sutton on Hull. This was where the Fire Service was to see the immense changes to its structure and organisation. The training unit was to be known as the RAF School of Firefighting, and was commanded by Sqn Ldr Booker MBE.

Around this time aircraft and armaments were becoming more complex, and to meet this, more effective and sophisticated crash vehicles were introduced. These in turn were to require specialist handling, and so it was that on 31st December 1943 that an Air Ministry Order promulgated the trade of Firefighter, (later changed to fireman). A sub specialisation of the Officers Support Branch that of 'Fire and Anti-Gas Officer' was set up to command the new trade. The School was renamed as the RAF School of Firefighting and Anti Gas. During this period a second school was opened at Ismalia, being closed at the end of the second World

Letters to the Editor

RAF Exhibition Celebrates Fewest of the Few

His daring exploits were typical of Fighter pilots during the Battle of Britain; he shot down Messerschmitts, was forced down twice and lost a lung flying at altitude. But how many other Squadron Leaders used to keep a spare turban in their cockpits? His daring exploits were typical of Fighter pilots during the Battle of Britain; he shot down Messerschmitts, was forced down twice and lost a lung flying at altitude. But how many other Squadron Leaders used to keep a spare turban in their cockpits?

Mohinder Singh Pujji was one of 16 qualified Indian pilots to join the RAF in 1940. Now 90 years young he is the only one left to tell the tale, and is still disgusted at the lack of recognition given to the role of black and Asian airmen and women during WW2. Mohinder Singh Pujji was one of 16 qualified Indian pilots to join the RAF in 1940. Now 90 years young he is the only one left to tell the tale, and is still disgusted at the lack of recognition given to the role of black and Asian airmen and women during WW2.

Pujji was treated as a hero in wartime Britain, he was ushered to the front of cinema queues and often treated to free meals in restaurants, but after the War, films such as the Dam Busters presented a white only view of the RAF, a fact that appalled him. Pujji was treated as a hero in wartime Britain, He was ushered to the front of cinema queues and often treated to free meals in restaurants, but after the War, films such as the Dam Busters presented a white only view of the RAF-a fact that appalled him.

In an attempt to put the record straight a new permanent exhibition was opened at RAF Cosford in Shropshire, called Diversity in the Royal Air Force, the launch comes in a week when Prince Henry's comments have reunited the debate about racism in the Armed Forces, and the RAF is hoping that the exhibition will help to challenge negative perception by celebrating the racial diversity of its history. In an attempt to put the record straight a new permanent exhibition was opened at RAF Cosford in Shropshire, called Diversity in the Royal Air Force, the launch comes in a week when Prince Henry's comments have reignited the debate about racism in the Armed Forces, and the RAF is hoping that the exhibition will help to challenge negative perception by celebrating the racial diversity of its history.

It features men such as Indra Lal Roy, who fought in biplanes over First World War trenches or Princess Noor Inayat Khan, who served in the WAAF before being parachuted behind enemy lines to become the first woman wireless operator to infiltrate occupied France. It features men such as Indra Lal Roy, who fought in biplanes over First World War trenches or Princess Noor Inayat Khan, who served in the WAAF before being parachuted behind enemy lines to become the first woman wireless operator to infiltrate occupied France.

The exhibition, in Cosford's fighting planes hangar, tells the story of the role of ethnic minorities in the RAF, using their own words and displays of their papers and medals. The exhibition, in Cosford's fighting planes hangar, tells the story of the role of ethnic minorities in the RAF, using their own words and displays of their papers and medals.

It includes a personal combat report by Vincent Bunting, from Panama, after he shot down a FW 190, "I last saw the aircraft still spinning at 3,000 feet as it entered a cloud" It includes a personal combat report by Vincent Bunting, from Panama, after he shot down a FW 190, I last saw the aircraft still spinning at 3,000 feet as it entered a cloud.

Al McLean the museum's Curator, said "There is a comical stereotype of the RAF as full of Tally Ho chaps, During the Second W.W. there were lots of University students going into combat with 21 hours, but there were also lads from factories, and men from all over the Commonwealth who made up Aircrews".

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Pujji was the guest of honour at the launch of the exhibition, and tales of his wartime exploits stole the show, "I loved flying and I wanted adventure," he said "I didn't mind when I was shot at, it didn't frighten me at all." He related that once his dashboard was shattered over France in a dogfight with a Messerschmitt by a bullet that had passed through 4 layers of his uniform, and in 1941 he was forced to land in the desert in the North African desert, and was picked up by British troops Pujji was the guest of honour at the launch of the exhibition, and tales of his wartime exploits stole the show. I loved flying and I wanted adventure, he said, "I didn't mind when I was shot at, it didn't frighten me at all." He related that once his dashboard was shattered over France in a dogfight with a Messerschmitt by a bullet that had passed through 4 layers of his uniform, and in 1941 he was forced to land in the desert in the North African desert, and was picked up by British troops

He later recounted how his turban filled with blood once when he had to land in France, after that he always carried a spare one, but he stopped wearing one in the 1960s, "Times changed" he said. His son said that because of his father's insistence of wearing a turban in combat had cost him a lung, it meant he could not wear an oxygen mask and so one of his lungs was irreparably damaged at high altitude. He later recounted how his turban filled with blood once when he had to land in France, after that he always carried a spare one, but he stopped wearing one in the 1960s Times changed he said, his son said that because of his father's insistence of wearing a turban in Combat had cost him a lung, it meant he could not wear an oxygen mask and so one of his lungs was irreparably damaged at high altitude.

Asked if he faced prejudice, he replied, "Only in my favour, in the restaurants people wouldn't charge me, in the cinemas they would let me go to the front of the queue", he added, "Everyone loved me and I fell in love with England.

After a career as a Commercial pilot he retired to England, and now lives in Gravesend. After a career as a Commercial pilot he retired to England, and now lives in Gravesend.

MOD ORACLE. News/22/01/2009.

From Ron Mason. member 56, this article was first published in Flashpoint Vol. 1, issue 3, and I think is well worth repeating.

Whilst attending evening classes on the evening of the 5th of November 1991, our tutor using the date inspiration said, "Write an essay about GuyFawkes." I foolishly mumbled, "I can remember what I was doing on Guy Fawkes night 38 years ago." She pounced on that saying, "That's your opening sentence." So, I hope you all enjoy the following story.

When I got to the Fire Section at lunchtime, I found that the stand by crew had been given a job to do at 23.30 hrs. For about a month, loads of combustible waste had been dumped on dispersal at the far side of the airfield, the makings of a bonfire and fireworks display, Officers for the use of. We were detailed to put it out when the fun was over.

Harry the Corporal i/c of our crew had worked out a plan of campaign for the evening. We were to set up a hydrant at 'A' flight hangar to fill the water bowsers after tea. Unfortunately, this was the nearest to the dispersal, which left about 22 miles to fetch and carry our water supply. In his wisdom he reckoned we should get there earlier than ordered so that we could get started as soon as the party was over. Hopefully it would have more or less burnt itself out by then. By taking two Bowsers they should only need filling once to do the job, and we should be finished by 00.30 hrs and in bed by 0100 hrs.

It seemed a good idea at the time; we could go to the Camp cinema then to the mess to cadge a supper. The first indication of trouble started while we were having supper; fog started rolling in, thick and without warning. It seemed a good idea at the time, we could go to the Camp cinema then to the mess to cadge a supper. The first indication of trouble started while we were having supper, fog started rolling in, thick and without warning.

I had a real scary drive back to "A" flight hydrant, as I was on my own with visibility down to about ten yards. By the time I had returned to the fire the second Bowser had emptied and gone. The rest of the crew were warming themselves by the fire, I had passed the other Bowser without seeing it. By 02.00 hrs I was on my fourth return trip, we had pumped 3000 galls of water on to the fire without visible effect. Bad news on my return, where was the other Bowser? Harry had problems. 1. The fire was still burning merrily away. 2. A Bowser was lost somewhere on the fog bound airfield. 3. He had a cold, wet, tired and hungry crew. The first two problems he couldn't do much about. For the third, he made the right decision; he went off and got some food and hot drinks while we made ourselves comfortable by the fire. He returned about an hour later with food and tea, but of the missing Bowser there was still no news.

While discussing what to do next we heard our missing Bowser, then saw the headlights, but not from the direction we expected. Jock had missed the turn off for 'A' flight dispersal and not wanting to turn back to look for it in the fog had carried on and driven 7 miles round the peri track, arriving back where he started from well over an hour later and still empty.

He had just finished telling us the story when the Duty Officer arrived. Being a keen type of wingless wonder who could be found in any Station Headquarters or Officers Mess he had no idea of the Airfield layout, it took him three hours to find us. He listened to our problems and looking at the fire he sensibly decided to let it burn itself out. To save himself further embarrassment, he waited until we had hitched up the pump and followed us back to civilisation.

We crawled into our beds at 04.30hrs with the knowledge that we were to be back on the airfield when flying started at 0700. There was also the possibility that the fire was still burning and we may have to start all over again with the 45 Monitor. With visibility reducing all the time our convoy of Land Rover, 2 Water Bowsers, and trailer pump crawled it's way across the airfield, eventually down to first gear. We got to within two hundred yards of the fire before we saw the faint glow through the fog. Only fools and owls go out on nights like this. One look at the fire was enough for us to realise that Harry's idea of a quick job was off target. The fire covered an area of about thirty square feet and was about ten feet high, it was still going well and nowhere burnt itself out. We set to work, but needless to say, by the time my Bowser was empty we were wet, cold and my cold and my 500 galls had not made the slightest impression at all.

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I was at Silverstone for the first Guy Fawkes after the War and most of the Aircrew were firing off Verey cartridges behind a hangar loaded with highly inflammable Wellington bombers, loaded with high-octane petrol. We were extremely concerned. EDI was at Silverstone for the first Guy Fawkes after the War and most of the Aircrew were there firing off Verey cartridges behind a hangar loaded with highly inflammable Wellington bombers, loaded with high octane petrol.

RAY BLACKBURN - a short history of his RAF career



Not long after put on a draft for overseas, which turned out to be Egypt, eventually posted to R.A.F

Ray Blackburn mem no 39 and a short history of his Royal Air Force Career

A cadet in the 1406 Squadron A.T.C., in 1941 a messenger boy the Auxillary Fire Service, Feb 1943 he volunteered for Air Crew (Flight Engineer), medical April and took the oath to the King, put on the reserve until September, then reported to Aircrew receiving Centre, St Johns Wood.London, Billeted in the Viceroy Court,Hotel Six weeks Basic training, Blood Test, Night Vision, innoculations and swimming.



After 6 weeks posted to 21 I.T.W.



Fire Section Pets!



I acquired this rather nasty tempered dog in 1947 when the Wing moved to Gutersloh and left me behind to mind the shop on my own. It originally belonged to the Cpl who once every two weeks paid. It originally belonged to the Cpl who once every two weeks paid a visit to the Section with his travelling shop. He carried our free tin of 50 cigs, donated by Lord Nuffield, and our 200 ration of Players for which we had to pay.

Also on the vehicle was our sweet ration for 2 weeks, again we had to pay for these, with any spare cash spent on possibly 2 razor blades, soap and any other luxury items available? Remember my pay was 2/3d, (approx 12p), per day, and the rest of the boys were a lot richer with 4/6d per day, and we knew how to live it up in those days.

When the Cpl had to dispose of the dog he asked me if I would like it as I used to give it a stroke each time they came, and he seemed friendly enough, so he moved in. My Germans organised a bed with old blankets in my room next to the office.

It was then that I discovered he hated Germans, and the first morning he chased the German crew all round the section when they came in to tidy up. He did not like the idea of being shut in the Office out of the way. That's when he started on me, and is why you see me wearing flying boots! After a while he realised he could not win and became friendly with us all.

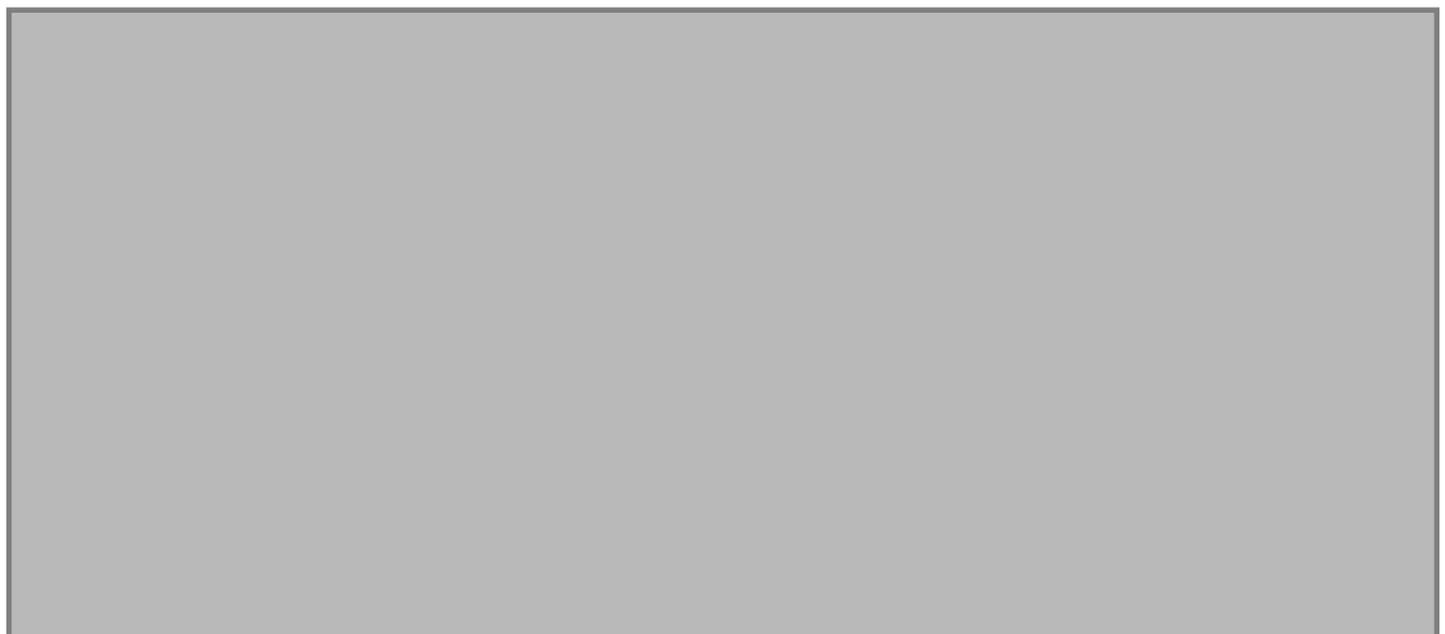
When I went to the mess for a meal, I used to drive down with the W.O.T.I. and a German crew of four, just in case? On the way we passed the S.W.Os office and often noticed he would watch us pass, so I got them to stand to attention on the running board, and one day I saw him shake his head as much as to say, I'm not a bit surprised at anything the Fire Section do anymore?" On the first day with the dog, I put him on the passenger seat, and as we passed I saw the SWO glance out and the look on his face was of complete disbelief.

I asked the Sgt cook for food, as the food he served up was for animals only, so the dog would be happy. He wanted to have a look as he professed to be an animal lover, and we went out the back and he was instantly nipped by the dog.

Wherever I went, I became quite well known with the dog following in my footsteps, and it was mentioned several times that it was illegal to have pets without permission, I got over that one by saying he was my Guard dog. Upon visiting the NAAFI, he always made for the back door first, apparently his previous owner had chatted up the girls because they used to keep a lot of left overs for him, so between them and the Cook House he did very well.

I forgot to ask John Arthur what happened to the dog after he took over from me.

Steve Doran - Editor



The Cat and the Police car?

While serving with the Cheshire Fire Brigade we were sent on stand-by to Wilmslow Fire Station, which was empty of fire appliances. After getting settled into a game of snooker we got a shout to a Hair Dressers Salon, a lock up type with flats above. It was about 23.30 on a Friday night and the revellers were staggering home when they stopped to watch the entertainment.

Two of the lads forced the lock and hit the blaze pretty smartly whilst myself and another donned BA sets and proceeded to check the flats above, which were smoke logged but thought not affected by fire? After doing our BA pressure checks and leaving the BA Tallys with the Sub, we made our way up. It was a bit hairy with no light at all and floor to ceiling smoke but there was no one there, except for a very large cat, seemingly gone to the cat's version of heaven?

I carried the cat out and was greeted with a load of ooh's and aah's from the appreciative audience that seemed to be getting more each time I looked. I reckon the blue flashing light on top of the appliance was attracting them? Anyway, the Sub decided we should give our tipsy audience the full benefit of our expertise, and out came the Stephenson 'Minuteman' Resuscitator!

While one held the mask close to the cat's face, the other worked the front legs up and down rapidly until its tail started twitching, which got lots of sympathetic sounds from a couple of giggling teenage girls at the front.

I must admit though, we were feeling quite pleased with ourselves, that the cat was going to make it, which it did but not for long. As soon as it came round, it took one look at my mate and promptly bit him, raking his wrist with its claws. At the same time, he gave an almighty yell and dropped the cat, which promptly fled between the feet of our astonished audience and, as it crossed the road, it was **flattened** by a police car arriving to make the premises secure. **Some you win. Some you don't!**

You could never make one up like that, and was from the late Alan Alsop, I think - ED?

WAITING FOR DEMOB!

Flying had finished for the day, and we had all been to the mess for the item listed as food, and were settling down for the night in the office, making decisions as to what card game would be on for tonight, which all depended on how much money we had left?

I was sitting at the desk making up the daily log, and was a bit of a job to keep looking back to see what lies had previously been entered? This was the way it was because we had no Sgt i/c, as he was a drunkard and a few days before, had been arrested: never to be seen again. He had come back to the Section roaring drunk, abusing everyone in sight, promising to get me because I had told the boys to sit tight after he wanted everyone outside on parade after midnight.

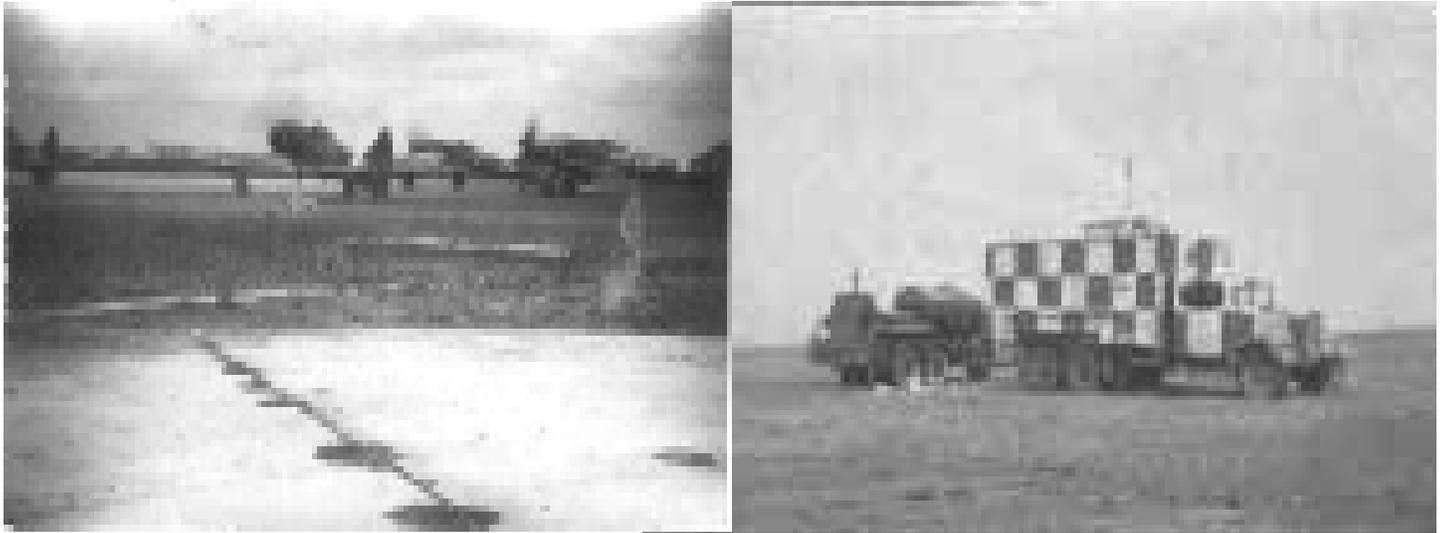
I rang the Guardroom and spoke to the Sgt i/c, and he told me to "Hang on I will be round." A little later he turned up with 2 SPs and the S.W.O. The boy's approved; as they had never seen anything like it before.

Next morning, the S.W.O. turned up once again, and I gave him the full story, as I knew it. The Sgt had been giving the boy's a hell of a life before I arrived; in my time I had learnt that an NCO i/c could not treat his men like that. Later on, the S.W.O. came back again to have a chat with us about what would happen, and told us not to worry. As I was going on Demob in a few days, he asked me to keep an eye on things until the new man turned up. I was delighted; as it was my third time in charge of a Fire Section as an AC/l and with an English crew.

Two days later a new NCO i/c arrived after we had settled down for the night, this being also my last duty and a chance to win some of my money back! A knock came on the corridor door and someone called out, "Come in if you're good lucking?" and went back to the cards, the door opened, and a black face appeared, announcing, "I'm your new boss, Sgt Ford."

He asked, "Who's in charge?" and I pleaded guilty, and he then told us to carry with the cards, and he would see me in the morning. The next morning, everyone was up bright and early to face the whatever was coming? The Sgt arrived asking me to show him the airfield, which I did in the Jeep. He was very impressed, especially when we stopped for the Wg/Co taxiing out for take-off, who gave us a thumbs up. The Sgt looked at me and shook his head. If I had taken the 2 stripes offered, I might have ended up as the boss to some of you? Would I still have been a nice person? Perish the thought -Ed!

GUTERSLOH 1948



GUTERSLOH 1948

The photo on the left was taken from our pan the opposite end to the Canal, as you will see, we are rather close to the runway, and it could be rather hairy when there was a cross wind. The runway control van was to our left, if there was a problem with an aircraft, we could hear the conversation between the pilot and the ground. That way we could hear what the intentions of the pilot were and we could be prepared for him.

On this particular occasion 26 Squadron were lining up to go and relieve the Squadron in Berlin, they used to do two weeks at a time. Just off to the left was the Wing Commander Flying in his all silver Tempest, the only one in Germany, and he was also a Battle of Britain pilot.

The right hand photo was taken at the canal end of the runway, and I took it just after I arrived there in 1948 and you can just see the metal track runway in use at the time. We preferred that end because no one could see us from the Tower plus we could watch the girls swimming in the water through the Controllers binoculars. It was that end when Don Bennett of Path Finder fame landed with three of his boys because there was no room in Berlin. One of the aircraft lost its dinghy on the landing run, at the same time, the Wing Co was waiting to take off for Berlin. As the Tempests started to overheat, he gave the order to shut down while we recovered the dinghy. It was a very large one, about 10 man size, and we struggled with it, but could hardly move it: to save time I pulled my knife and slashed it, problem solved.

On getting back all the aircraft that had started, bar one, and he had used all of his cartridges, and waved for help, so being a very obliging person I climbed up on the wing to find out what I could do for him? He told me where the cartridges were and asked me to load a few, and the engine was still very hot and these things had to go in through the exhaust opening. Job done, I jumped down and put my thumbs up to the WingCo, he smiled, clipped his mask up and away they went.

Another problem we had was getting from the Section straight across the grass to the runway. I tried one day in the jeep, but the ground was so rough it was virtually impossible, so there was no chance of getting across with the Crash Tender. I appealed to the F.C.O. and the answer I got from him was, "I will see what I can do" so, without the knowledge of him and the boy's in the section, a few days later I waylaid the WingCo Flying. I just happened to be at the Sqn Hangar where he parked his aircraft, and after he taxied in and climbed down, I gave him one of my best salutes, (we didn't do much of it these day's) and went over to him, his words were "What do you want from me this time"?

I explained the problem about the waste of time getting to the runway from the section in an emergency because of the inability of cutting across the grass. Next day there were 2 German workmen looking around the area, and the following day after flying had finished, the same 2 men appeared with the German version of a digger and scraped a lane straight across where I had mentioned. I didn't have the nerve to ring and thank the WingCo, but the following day I was relieving the Crash Crew for dinner when who should appear on the taxiway in his Silver Tempest, the great man himself, as he lined up in front of us he looked over and gave us the thumbs up, one of the boy's made the remark, "He seems friendly today" and I never told anyone what I had arranged with him.

One of the Sgt pilots was designated to fly the WingCo's aircraft for test purposes only, and he also used to come along to the section to join in the card games, and he had the habit of cheating, and one of the controllers was in the habit of pulling our legs when he got the chance? The day in particular was when the Winco's aircraft was taxiing out for take off, the controller called down that it was the Sgt pilot flying it. We lined up in front of the tender and turned our backs on him, and when we turned back the pilot had pulled his mask down and we saw it was the WingCo, smiling: a few days later I managed to tell him a little white lie about the occasion - ED.

Letters to the



Ray Faires sent in the photo of the first Mark 5 to arrive on Sutton on Hull soil in July 1956. The boys up front are Course 264.

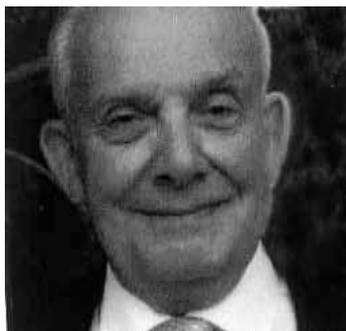
The only two he remembers the names of are GEORGE CARTER (back row 5th from left),and himself (centre row second from right). He and George were posted to Alhorn in Germany. **Below is a recent photo of Ray , and if anyone can recognise themselves in the photo you can contact him through me.**

In 1947, I was stationed at Fassburg with the only Mobile Wing in B.A.F.O. and three Squadrons equipped with Tempest 2s. The idea was that if the Russian's decided to get nasty, we could move closer or further away from them, so we had to prove we were mobile.

This meant a move to Alhorn for a only one permanent fixture, and that was and were prepared to get our heads down, offered us the job of supplying all the area

It was not because he liked us but Water Bowser. The person who volunteered when there was something to do, and we

It all came clear at the end of the seen heading our way, which to us was very was seriously wrong somewhere? We had the guilty person looked very guilty, with the was given the option of returning the cigs and no more would be said. The following day he repaid the cigs and asked if anyone else wanted to deliver the water?



practice at being mobile, and the airfield had one hydrant. After we had pitched our tents the S.W.O. strolled up and very generously with water.

the fact we were the only section with a for the job was one who was always missing were very suspicious about his motives? following day, when again the S.W.O. was suspicious, two visit's in two day's, something no idea until he told us what was happening, mighty person looking him in the eye, and he

=====

POINTS TO PONDER?

Don't be irreplaceable, if you can't be replaced, you can't be promoted.

Before you criticise someone, you should walk a mile in their shoes. That way, when you criticise them you're a mile away and you have their shoes.

The quickest way to double your money is to fold it in half and put it back in your pocket.

If at first you don't succeed, skydiving is not for you.

Letters to the Editor

R.A.F.Firefighters in Basra Charity Run

Two RAF firemen and a RAF physical training instructor all currently deployed to Iraq have run a half-marathon wearing full firefighter uniform around Basra's Contingency Operating Base for charity.

Senior Aircraftman Andy Braid, Corporal Jim McNally, both firefighters, usually based at RAF Kinloss, and Physical Training Instructor, CPL Tom Healing, usually based at RAF Cosford, all completed the 13.1 mile (21km) course in just over two and a half hours.

The trio raised over \$500 for Rachel House Childrens Hospice in Kinross, Scotland, part of the Children's Hospice Association Scotland (CHAS)

SAC Braid said,
"My mother always thought highly of the Charity, so when we decided to stage a charity event I also wanted to support Rachel House"

Cpl Mcnally said
"People were great on the way around, we were stopped loads of times so people could give money to us"

CPL Healing said
"The guys came to me for ideas for a charity run, and the next thing I knew I was running it with them!"

"It was great, it went far better than expected, the time two and a half hours was far quicker than planned", he added.

Margo Shearer-Smith, Regional Fundraising Manager for CHAS said,

"We wish Andy, Jim, and Tom, all the best for their fantastic and energetic fundraising efforts out in Iraq. The money they raised for CHAS will help us to provide vital respite care, terminal care and bereavement support for children with life limiting conditions and their families in Scotland."

Letters to the Editor

Tactical ATC Ops in Iraq

Whilst the Army provided a steel ring of Force Protection and armoured transportation for troops, the RAF Firefighters controlled the cross-loading operation.

As well as providing emergency fire and rescue capability and additional force protection, the firefighters also assisted with runway clearance, but most importantly they organised the movement of personnel and cargo to and from the rear of the aircraft.

-

As an Air Traffic Controller in command of the Fire and Rescue section, it was an unfamiliar yet exhilarating experience to be detached to the HQ MND(SE) Camp Abu Naji, referred to simply as CAN. As an RAF detachment we were in many ways a self controlled unit, responsible for all matters relating to getting an aircraft on to and off the runway. The RAF Firefighters provided crash and fire response capability to each and every aircraft arrival and departure, as well as extra force protection and emergency services for CAN. As Air Traffic Controllers we were considered to be the experts in airfield operations and there to provide a specialist service to the Army. In terms of controlling the aircraft, the task was straight forward and consisted primarily of making preparations prior to the aircraft's arrival.

-

We established a good rapport around the camp primarily as the RAF Firefighters were able to provide a range of services from assisting in post-attack UXB disposal, hosing down the

Warriors and Challengers and on occasions the field kitchen, carrying out fire safety evaluations to even actually extinguishing fires !

We developed and maintained our own section, had our own armoury and, to the envy of the of the camp a plunge pool - a godsend after spending four or five hours in full body combat armour! Doubtless that any RAF Firefighters reading this won't mind the observation that **they are amongst the finest scroungers the forces have to offer** and as such our section was never short of brew supplies.

They also proved to be tireless and dedicated operators despite constant exposure in soft skinned vehicles with little modifications for desert operations.

I am glad to see the skill of scrounging etc has not been lost since I was in 60 years ago. ED

ITEMS FROM AN RAF MAGAZINE

'SPIRIT of the air'

Sent in by Howie Marson mem 556

Passed to him by his wife who works in ATC at Colerne Airfield

-
Do not walk behind me
for I may not lead
Do not walk ahead of me
For I may not follow
Do not walk beside me either
Just pretty much leave me alone

Letters to the Editor



I promise you gentlemen, would I lie to you?

Only 200,000 on the clock.

Very clean, well maintained,

Reason for sale, the government has run out of money!

Easy payments arranged, if there is any left in the Bank?

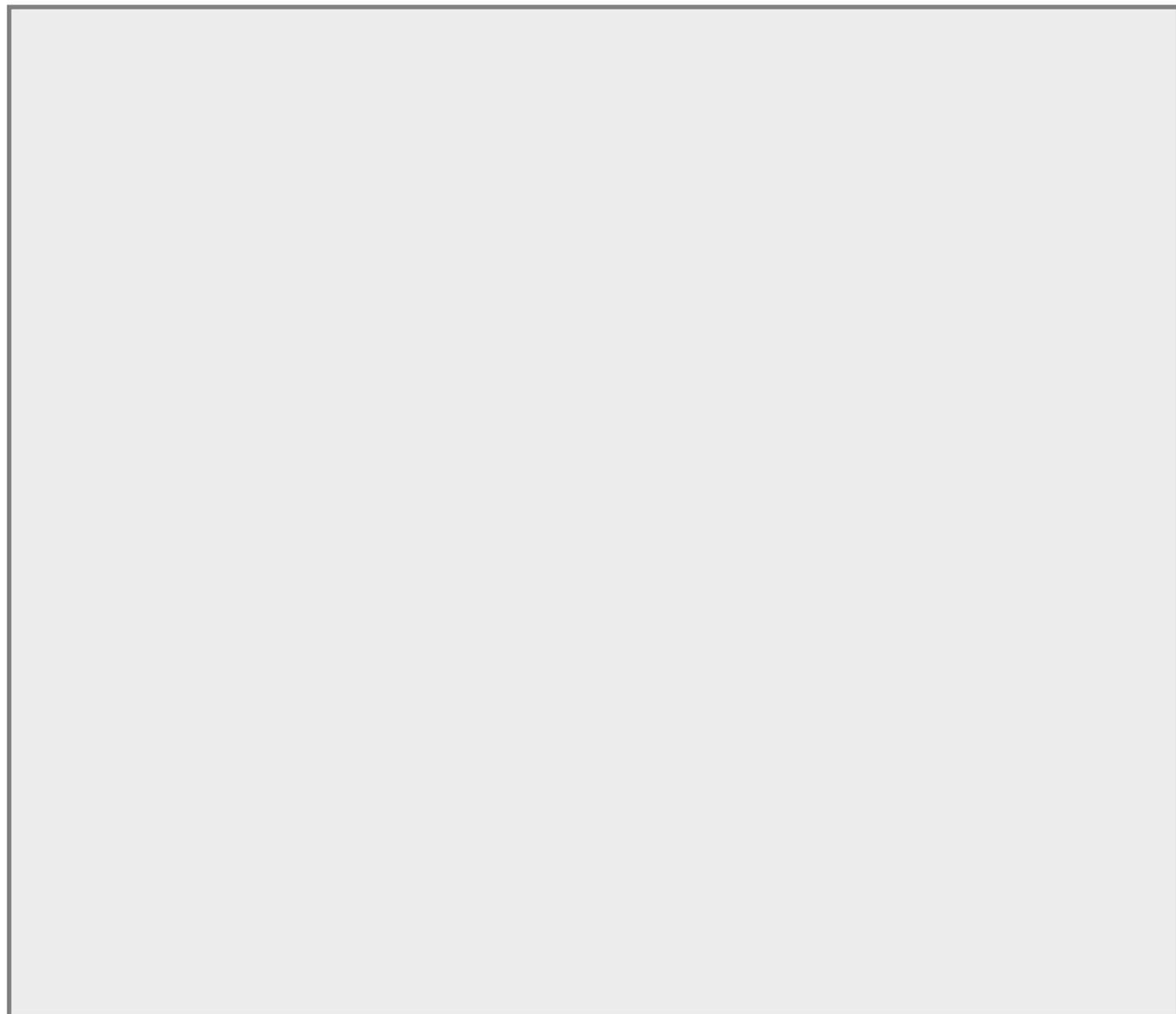
Saves the bother of queuing for Easy Jet.

Just a few left.

The only problem will be the space to store and play with it, so a few nice words and a pint or two might loosen some Group Captain to

allow you a bit of space on his Airfield? Mention that you are an ex R.A.F. Fireman and he will be eager to help you out, if you buy?

With the price of fuel at a low level it will be a very cheap way to travel, plenty of room for luggage, you could even do a booze cruise. The Customs would be so surprised at your arrival that they would forget to check you out.



Letters to the Editor

RESPONSE to Atom Bomb by Anon in Flashpoint issue Winter/Spring page 9!

Dear Anon,

Many thanks for getting in touch and I'm very pleased to hear that you are keeping well, and many thanks for making contact with me, (Good old Dave Kenyon, never let's you down), following your piece in that edition of "Flashpoint" (Atom bomb by Anon).

Back in 1996, I sent a short item to "Flashpoint" regarding a very strange detachment that I was sent on to RAF Leeming, way back in the summer of 1958, (May/June, as it was light evenings) but to date there has never been any response to my appeal for any other members to make contact who were also involved?

Whilst stationed at RAF Wattisham, at very short notice and very much to the displeasure of our i/c section, W/O "Willy" Williams, (as I was his only trained Mk6 driver at the time, and the delivery of the section's new 6 was imminent), as I was to be detached to RAF Leeming.

On arrival at Leeming, I was to discover that I was one of a number, (at least 20), of RAF firemen, mostly Cpls or senior SACs, that had also been detached in to Leeming (again at very short notice), and all from RAF Fighter Command Stations within 13 group.

If my memory serves me correctly, there was a F/Sgt i/c of the Fire Section when we reported in, and he was not best pleased with this sudden influx of additional troops, as he was not expecting us. In an effort to keep us all "dutifully" employed, he set us all a task of manning a "second" string of duty Crash Crews, all with senior Cpls as crew I/Cs, and all to be exiled out to an old Red and White octagonal Crew hut situated on the western edge of the Airfield, (adjacent to the old A1), and using a very old CO2 Gas Truck and a 45 Monitor, both were on loan to Leeming M.T. section, (from I know not where), but neither had a radio fitted to contact ATC, (no change from 1946 ED)?

Our first duty shift, (and last as it turned out, and if I remember correctly), was on a Thursday evening? We made our way to our "exiled" stand-by location, and on arrival at the correct point indicated on the supplied "Crash Map", we were all surprised to discover we had been located to a point that was only a short distance from a white Valiant V Bomber, parked on a dispersal, approx 150 yards from the Crew Hut, (with field telephone), that we had been instructed

to use.

I and another chap on our crew, being very intrigued why a Valiant V bomber was located on a known Fighter Unit Station, climbed up on to the back of one of the Crash vehicles, to get a better look as to what was happening? The Valiant appeared to be surrounded by large trailers and a number of very active personnel, many of them RAF "Snowdrops", (some with dogs).

As we watched, a large bulbous bottle green coloured object with fins, was removed from one of the trailers, and manoeuvred under the Bomb bay area of the Valiant aircraft, it was then we both became aware that some of the "Snowdrops" were looking very sternly in our direction, so fearing the worst, we scarpered down off the crash vehicles, and into the crew hut to await our fate, but none came, and the "Snowdrops" returned to their duties.

About an hour later the phone rang and we were instructed that the planned "night flying" had now been scrubbed, and we could "stand down" and report back to the Fire Section, and then go to the mess and get a duty supper.

The next morning our crew dutifully reported to the F/Sgt i/c, only to find we were not required for any further duties that day and could take a weekend pass. A lad from RAF Waterbeach, whose hometown was York, invited me to stay with him over the weekend, so off we went. On our return on the Sunday evening, the other members of our detached crew advised us, that our detachment was at an end and we were to return to our Home Stations.

Whilst at RAF Leeming we only had contact with the TSgt i/c, and never met any of the Section's crewmembers, which I feel is very sad, as I now understand that you and other members of our Association would have been serving on the Fire section at that time.

It was only in later life that I was able to identify what we saw being loaded was an early "A" bomb.

Very best regards,

Geoff Varley, Member 221

Note: Above photo shows Blue Steel missile on a modified Vickers Valiant trials aircraft. Two Valiants were used for the trials, although missile was designed for Avro Vulcan and Handley Page Victor.

A little old lady goes to her Doctor and says "Doctor, I have this problem with gas, but it doesn't bother me too much. They never smell and are always silent. As a matter of fact, I've passed gas at least 5 times since I've been in your office, and you probably didn't know." The doctor says, "I see. Tell you what, take one of these pills each morning and come back and see me next week!"

So the week passes and the lady goes back to see the doctor, "Doctor" she says "I don't know what the heck you gave me, but now when I pass gas, they are quite silent, but they smell awful." "Good!" says the doctor, "Now that we've cleared up your sinuses, let's work on your hearing."

Compliments of Ron Brown

Letters to the Editor - Whoops - who did this then? The secret revealed.

In reply to the item on page 13, of the Winter/Spring 2009 Flashpoint, may I submit the following: the Mk 6, 23 AG 83, accident did not actually happen at 4 FTS, (Flying Training School), RAF Oakington but at the Relief Landing Ground, (RLG), at the former RAF Waterbeach. It was then the home of 39 Royal Engineers, Airfield Construction Regiment who were created from the former 5001 and 5003 Sqn Airfield Construction Branch, RAF. In fact, many of the Officers and SNCOs were ex RAF who had remustered to the Army on the disbandment of the RAF A/C Sqn.

On the morning of 30 May 1973 our crew was detailed off to the RLG at Waterbeach, some 15 miles from Oakington, I was a new and shiny acting Cpl just posted back from Akrotiri on promotion and had been at Oakington for 3 weeks. Normally, I would have sat in the passenger seat of the ACART, (400lbs Dry Powder L/ Rover) but the Sgt i/c crew, "Tex" Brewer, wanted to nip in to the shop at Cottenham village to get bits and pieces, (put on a bet) He told me to ride on the Mk6 and when we got to Waterbeach, to take the 6 and DP1 straight out to do the weekly foam test before flying started. He and the ACRT driver would collect the keys from the Guardroom and open up ATC and get the tea on. At Waterbeach the crash rest room was the ground floor of the tower, and the DATCO used to come across from Oakington in the crash ambulance.

We got to Waterbeach and went straight out to the rough area the far side of the drome. On board the MK6 were the driver, SAC Ted Durance, and crew, SAC John Jack, LAC Ray Hill, and another but can't remember his name, and myself? We got to the foam test area and the driver, Ted, I'd only met the day before, (as he'd been on detachment at Wyton with 51 Sqn. "Corp, can we have a run over the rough", I asked, "Is that normal practice?" and the reply came back "Yes." So I said, "Okay, we will do the run before the test"

We set off and had a steady run, with no drama, got to the disused runway, turned round and headed back on relatively flat grass, Ted got the 6 in second gear with third pre-selected, so we were not doing anything stupid or speeding but, after about thirty yards the back of the 6 started to lose traction and began to slide round on the wet grass. Ted took his foot off the accelerator, and the 6 started to pull itself back in a straight line, I thought that was exciting?

At the same time Ted put his foot on the brake pedal quite firmly, and the next thing we were going sideways, unfortunately, the soft ground started to build up against the wheels, and the next thing was the 6 fell on it's side, almost stopped, then rolled onto it's roof.

As it did, the monitor pushed the roof down and shattered the windscreen. I can remember saying to the lads " Take it steady and get out of the windscreen", and they did, or at least 3 of them. Then, being the Cpl, I left the ship last, until I heard a voice from behind me say, "f***** hell Corp, you are kicking me to death", One of the crew had come from the right hand side of the truck and ended up behind my seat, but don't ask me how, as I haven't a clue.

When we were all out the engine was still running, (MK6's work upside down as well as the right way up), and I turned the engine master switch off. That afternoon the board of inquiry convened and the chairman was the MTO from RAF Scampton.

The next day I had to go to Waterbeach with them so that they could decide what had happened? The RE's were waiting to lift it back on its wheels, after the board of enquiry had made all their examinations and took measurements etc. They gave the RE's the O.K. to lift it, however, they couldn't move it because it was still full of water! This upset the MTO because he was convinced we had been travelling with half a tank of water and the surge had tipped the 6 over. Unfortunately, (for him) the RE's had ripped up all the Flashpoint Magazine - Summer 2009

ground with their mobile crane.

The photographer from RAF Wyton then turned up and took photos of the truck, but he couldn't take any of the slide marks because of the ripped up ground. Sometime later (weeks) the RAF MT Assessors came to write the 6 off, but couldn't, as the damage was restricted to the roof of the cab, windscreen, and the monitor were broken off, all of which were repairable. (This was 1973 and MK 9s had just started to come into service. So was AG83 ever repaired and brought back into service?

Move on now to Feb 1974 and the Section SNCO i/c. Flt Sgt Trevor Chambers, came to the Crash Bay one afternoon and said I, and SAC Durance, had to be at the guardroom in Best Blue the next day. I naively thought I was to be Ted's escort for his charge of putting the M6 on its roof? Next day the Station S.W.O gave us the once over and marched us to the C.Os office, The SWO said, "The Group Captain will see you first Corporal", and marched me in. The Groupie said to me "Do you know why you are here Corporal Yates?" I replied, " I thought I was to be SAC Durance's escort sir." "No" he replied " You are here because the Board of Enquiry found you equally guilty of negligence as the driver, because you were the senior passenger" I was gob smacked and asked if I got a chance to address the person who had found me guilty? The reply was "NO" but then said, "Command want a pound of flesh and I'm afraid it's yours."

He admitted that he wasn't happy about the verdict and thought it was unjust, so I should consider myself interviewed by a Senior Officer and that was the end of the matter. Except, he then said, "By the way, sign this form." As I did, I read it and could not believe what I had just signed, as I was promoted to substantive Corporal backdated to Jan 1st 1974! Ted got fined £10, mainly due to the fact that he had only been a 6 driver for about 6 weeks prior to the accident, and had been on detachment for a month and hadn't had enough time to practice his driving skills. So the answer as to who did this was, SAC Ted Durance but there is always more to a story than just a photograph!

Brummie Yates, Mem 36

Photo below is for those of us who did not have the good fortune to be in the Fire Service at the time these magnificent machines were in use. It's a MK 6, but please don't hesitate to correct me if I am wrong? Note the Fearnought suits, & tin helmets with asbestos protection. Names L/R - ? - Dave Langton - Sid Anderson - Brian Ford - Pancho Glenister. Front kneeling - L/R - Joe Bush - ? - Nat Webb - Ed?



More from the Archive



On the left is the late John Arthur, founding Association president and Keith Penfold, Founding Chairman, now, Honorary Life President, at what is believed to be the Brighton reunion in October 1997. In the background is, the late Alan Alsop, founding Flashpoint editor.

If it hadn't have been for them, and the founder members initiative in attending the meeting for the inauguration of the Association on the 13th May 1995, there wouldn't be any reunions, or the same chance to meet fellow firemen from our service

Again from the left, is the late John Arthur with Keith Penfold and, far right, the late Barry Poulton, who made the Roll of Honour board, and donated it to the Association.

An inscribed plaque with a dedication to Barry, is fixed to the board.

At the time of going to press, the other member's identity on the photo, 2nd from the right, isn't known. Perhaps someone can let me know and I'll include it in the next issue of Flashpoint - ED.



Thanks to Peter 'Scouse' Carter for another early archive shot of a MK 6, number, 23AG90, and including a Fearnought suited crash crew from 1959 at RAF Oakington. Other than Pete, standing 3rd from the right, I'm not sure who the other crewmembers were?

So, if you recognise yourself, or know who they are, then please let me know and I'll update the info in the next issue?

Do you have any similar shots of crash vehicles from the same or more modern era, as I'd like to see them?

Thank you - ED.



Lest We Forget ?



Just ordinary people, some who'd seen it all before
With shadows, still, of suffering and smoke
And some restrained by adult hands who wondered why it was
That Grandpa's voice should tremble when he spoke

No military orders would have mustered this parade
These are townfolk with a mission of their own
Expressing by their actions to the grieving and the lost
There are strangers who'll ensure they are not alone

One town, one group of people, they can hardly change the world
Yet their gesture speaks for countless of their kind
For that commonplace majority whose voice is rarely heard
And whose qualities are rarely underlined

If the powers-that-be would listen, how much wiser they'd become
How much closer to the populace they serve
They could gain a new perception, treat the tawdry with contempt
And real heroes with the honour they deserve

RAF&DFS Association at Wootton Bassett

It's midday and sadly I am on my way to Wootton Bassett again and my journey is to meet with other like minded people to pay our respects to the fallen heroes of Iraq and Afghanistan as they pass through the town from RAF Lyneham to their last resting place.

Mike Goupillot's last RTA & Armed Response Team etc!

MICHAEL GOUPILLOT'S LAST ROAD TRAFFIC ACCIDENT OR HOW TO FRIGHTEN A POLICEMAN FROM THE ARMED RESPONSE TEAM?

At what may well be the last Major road traffic accident that Michael will attend with the Specialist Rescue Unit of the Bedfordshire & Luton Fire and Rescue Service before he retires, a Policeman from the Armed Response Team came to him and said, "What do I do with this young lady in my patrol car." Michael said, "I didn't think your car had been involved in the accident." "No it wasn't, we were the first on the scene and we took the girl from her car and put her in ours"

Michael reacted immediately and ordered his crew to get the rescue cutting gear ready. They then responded by surrounding it with all the paraphernalia, including the vehicle crane and the monster Jaws of the Life cutters, gas cutting gear, grinding wheels and the largest fireman's axe you ever saw.

He explained to the policeman that they could only remove her with a neck collar and a spine board and that the roof of the Police car would have to come off in order to achieve that, and that they should have left her in her own car. "You can't do that, my car has arms and explosives on board." "Tough, shift them," says Michael. The paramedic who was in on the ploy, agreed, and by this time, the policeman was having kittens.

They were about to start cutting when Michael called a halt. Apparently these were two policemen that he respected, and had been a good help over the years. He explained that he was about to retire in a few weeks and this would be a great way to leave the service as it would be all over the media, and in every Fire, Police and Ambulance magazine, he would at last have his 15 minutes of fame. Oh yes, the girl was fit enough to climb out of the police car on her own.

STRANGE CHARACTERS, these firefighters. Ask the Armed Response Team in Bedford??

Member 359 Michael Goupillot 33 Years In The Job - Nine years in the Royal Air Force Fire Service and Twenty Four years in the Bedfordshire & Luton Fire & Rescue Service. Is it tie to nail down his boots. No chance, heard his wife Sue have created a Fire Safety and Health and Safety consultancy company, SMG, Sue and Mike Goupillot.

Michael retired early April 2009 and Sue retires in May as a Fire Service Control Manager/Instructor after 29 years with the Fire Brigade.

RAF Fire Service - At the age of seventeen Mike started a career in the RAF Fire Service that was to last nearly ten years where he attained the rank of Corporal, promotion did not come early in those days.

Throughout his time in the RAF he served in various Strike Command Stations on aircraft Crash Rescue crews supporting nuclear weapon carrying, air to air refuelling aircraft, and many different types of fighter, reconnaissance and support aircraft. These included duties at the Queens Flight, Port Stanley and Goose Green in the Falklands, and in Londonderry, Northern Ireland at the height of the troubles, and at the RAF Fire School Catterick as an Instructor.

The Loss of a Victor Tanker - The biggest aircraft crash fire he had to attend in the RAF was with a fully laden Victor Refuelling Tanker that caught fire on the runway at RAF Marham.

The Fire crew assisted the Aircrew to safety before entering the cockpit to close down the engines, fuel cocks etc, then attempted to extinguish the fire using all the foam from the large foam tenders but without much success.

After a risk assessment was made, the aircraft was obviously a write off, and because of the risk of explosion, the Crash Crew and supporting local authority fire crews were ordered to withdraw.

A sensible decision on someone's part as there were still a number of explosive devices on board that did explode violently and would almost certainly have caused injury or worse as the fire progressed.

The Queen's Flight - Michael was detailed to report for Fire Fighting duty to the Queens Flight at RAF Benson. He served the normal 2 years on the flight as part of the VIP Helicopter Support unit (HSU). His duties brought him in to direct contact with all members of the Royal family with whom the fire fighters had a good rapport, they also met other VIPs that used the aircraft from time to time, including members of Parliament, foreign royalty and other dignitaries.

His first visit to the enchanting Royal Balmoral Castle in Scotland was a real experience for Michael. As they arrived in their Royal Blue Range Rover fire vehicle for an early morning flight by the helicopter from the lawn of the Castle, the Queen's highland piper was playing the haunting tune, Highland Cathedral, and other tunes reverberated through the valley. A mighty stag with massive antlers leading his herd over the lower slopes of the snow covered ragged mountains provided the backdrop.

The trees in the grounds of the Castle were white with frost and the wood smoke from the Castle chimneys drifting over the beautiful gardens with the rich fragrance of pine. Only the Scottish Highlands are capable of creating such sights and sounds.

The Hanging Bomb - A Tornado returned to RAF Marham with a high explosive bomb that had failed to leave the aircraft over the bombing range. The bomb was only secure at one end and was swinging about like washing on a line and still primed to explode. As CPL

i/c of the crew, Mike had to make contact with the aircraft with a talk mike lead to sort things out with the aircrew, in order that the station armourers could disarm and remove the offending, very dangerous 500 pounder.

As he set off towards the aircraft he could hear his crew trying to decide who would sort out his personal effects should things go wrong ! Don't ya just love em ???

THE RAF&DFSA - Although Mick didn't serve on Committee, he and wife, Sue, have worked very hard behind the scenes, developing items of interest for the members, including the fantastic display about the 1982 Falklands Conflict at Bracklesham Bay, book marks, picture display boards, policy documents, Remembrance book and many other bits and pieces for our enjoyment.

John Goupillot

VISIT TO THE NATIONAL MEMORIAL ARBORETUM

Saturday the 21st of March dawned bright and sunny at Coventry, which was to favour our visit to the National Memorial Arboretum. After an early breakfast, George and Anne Edwards, Geoff and Hazel Varley, Kevin "Smiler" Meeson, and Howard and Kate Harper, drove the short journey to the Arboretum, and got a guidebook from the souvenir shop, which helped us locate the different walks.

Our first stop was the Armed Forces Memorial, which is dedicated to all theatres of war from 1946 to the present day in which serving members of our Armed Forces are remembered by a surname and initials only, (no ranks or units are recorded).

Next was the section dedicated to the Royal Air Force, and we eventually located the Tree and Plaque donated by our Association, in memory of our colleagues, who lost their lives in the service of this country. Almost all of the RAF Squadrons both past and present have remembered their fallen comrades with either a tree and plaque, or in the case of the RAF Police and the RAF Regiment, to name but a few, have a stone memorial.

We stopped at the Royal Auxiliary Air Force Memorial and chatted with the local Air Cadets who have taken on the task of looking after some of the RAF Memorials. We only visited a small section of the site, as time pressed us to return to the hotel. In my humble opinion this site has to be a must FOR A FUTURE VISIT?

Howard Harper, member 682

Note: Many thanks to Howard for his report and photo of the Association plaque and tree, which is shown in full colour on the back cover of this edition - Ed.

Author, Colin, (date unknown) - At 5 F.T.S. Oakington, all courses of Officers on flying instruction were given a talk on fire and safety equipment, and what they could expect from the Fire Section and what the fire section expected of them.

This was normally done in the R.A.F. Regiment classroom by the F/Sgt i/c of the Fire Section. When he was posted out, a W/O took over and he passed that dubious duty on to me as the senior corporal, and when I objected he told me that the Fire Section was soon going to be taken over by the Regiment and I would have no choice. This was in early 56, and as I came out in June of that year it did not affect me, but it was already on the cards at that time.

The author was asking if anyone remembered the Commer Carrier, which eventually replaced the Austin domestic, and the answer was yes but it was so slow we considered that they should give us advanced warning when they were going to have a fire.

ED's note: When I was at Silverstone, there was a Commer Carrier there with no equipment on the back, and was officially used for salvage. The only time I can remember it being used as such was when we had to clear a load of Wellington aircraft batteries to the dump. First of all there was a discussion on the section as to if we could sell them privately off camp, and the decision was that they would probably be a bit big to fit in an Austin 7?

Crash Team & Shop update



SPRING 2009 SHOP REPORT

Telephone and postal orders have been a bit slow recently, which is perhaps just as well as we have temporarily lost our local post office. Instead of popping down to our lovely little shop about 5 minutes walk away, we now have to drive in to Newark, find somewhere to park ,(and it's all Pay and Display in Newark), then depending on where we have parked will depend on whether we have a 10 minutes or even fifteen or twenty minute walk. Whatever.....What we are trying to explain is that it's not as easy to fulfill the orders. However, we shall (hopefully) be getting our post office back when it will be moved to another local shop, but in the meantime, please be patient. We shall sort out your enquiries as soon as we can?

The bad news is, does anyone know where we can sell lots of ear defenders? After a very successful

RAFDFA Shop

Those of you unable to attend the reunions will be aware that we have a range of promotional RAFDFSA 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 No personal callers please.

Tel: 01636 688 680 **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 @ MAY 2009

RAF & DEFENCE FIRE SERVICES ASSOCIATION

BASEBALL CAPS with Assn logo.....	£6.50
L,XL RUGBY SHIRTS	£16.50
SM, M, L, XL,XXL,3XL, POLO SHIRTS.....	£10.50
M,L,XL,XXL,3XL T-SHIRTS.....	£6.50
L,XL,XXL,NAVY SWEAT SHIRTS.....	£10.00.....
L,XL,XXL,WHITE SHORT SLEEVED SHIRTS.....	£10.50
L,XL,XXL,3XL.....	£20.00
PREMIUM FLEECEs.....	£24.00
ASSN TIES.....	£9.00
BLAZER BADGES.....	£12.50
PATCH BADGES.....	£3.50
CAP BADGES.....	£8.00
LAPEL BADGES.....	£3.00
ROUND BADGES.....	£3.00
UNION JACK BADGES.....	£3.00
VULCAN BADGES.....	£3.00
SUPPORT OUR SERVICES BADGES.....	£3.00
GREEN GODDESS BADGES.....	£3.00
FIREMAN BADGES.....	£3.00
METAL I LOVE FIREMEN KEYRINGS.....	£3.50
CLOTH, I LOVE FIREMEN KEYRINGS.....	£3.50
RED ARROWS FRIDGE MAGNETS.....	£3.00
PRESENTATION PENS.....	£3.50
WOODEN PLANES.....	£2.50
DOCUMENT BAGS.....	£8.50

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).

