

# FLASHPOINT

ROYAL AIR FORCE & DEFENCE FIRE SERVICES ASSOCIATION MAGAZINE



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**NY FIRE DEPARTMENT VISIT  
RAF CHANGI ASSOCIATION  
FIREFIGHTER'S WEDDING  
PROPOSED GOLF SOCIETY  
ASSOCIATION SHOP**

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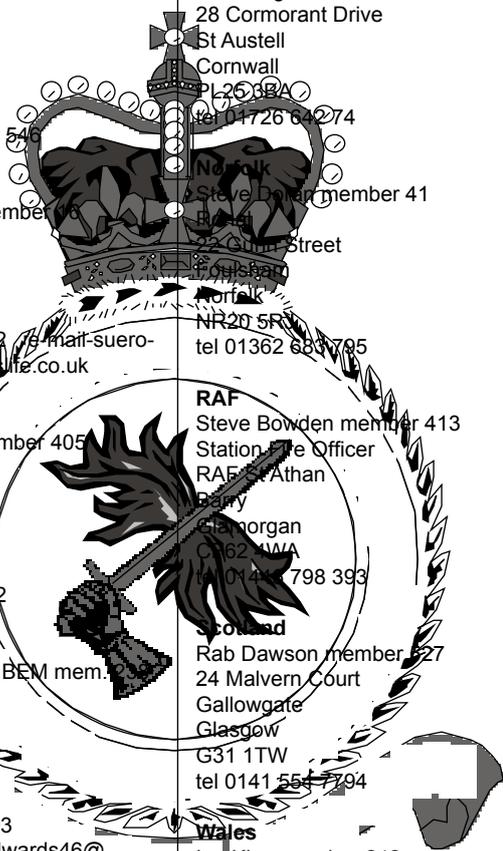
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## SPECIAL REPORT ON TREMENDOUS HONOUR FOR RETIRED 'HUNNY' BOBBY! 26 AUGUST 2004

A retired Hunstanton bobby could be the first Norfolk person to pick up a special civic award usually reserved for people living in an East London Borough.

John Savage (member 180) served as a policeman in Newham, London, for 21 years – for which he has already been awarded the MBE – but retired in February on his 60th birthday. He moved with his wife, Jeanie, to Mercedes Avenue, Hunstanton, two years ago.

Speaking of his special civic award, he said; "I'm absolutely chuffed, and it was quite emotional receiving it. I think I'm the first person, who does not live in the borough, to receive this award. I am genuinely grateful to receive this tremendous honour."

Presenting it to Mr. Savage, Newham Councillor, Patrick Holland said: "The decision to give John an award was an easy one – it was for all the extra help he has given to the police forum, and especially the civic office. John has organised quizzes acted as unpaid Toastmaster, and helped with many projects on a voluntary basis."



Superintendent Roger Smalley added – "This award recognises John's exceptional contribution to the forum, and its predecessor, the consultative group. It reflects well on John and on all police officers serving in the borough."

Mr. Savage was given the award last week at Newham Town Hall, East Ham. He began his service in the borough in 1982 as a home beat officer in West Ham, before transferring to the youth and community section. Last year, Mr. Savage received the MBE for his services to the police.

Note - This article was extracted from the Lynn News, King's Lynn, Norfolk.

*Congratulations John, you and your family must be very proud of the award – Ed.*

John Savage (third left) receives a special award from a London



Borough for his service to the local community. With him, from the left, are Supt Roger Smalley, Patrick Holland, civic ambassador, Patricia Holland, and last year's civic ambassador, Joy L.

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I would like to thank everyone who telephoned, wrote and emailed his or her congratulations on my first issue of Flashpoint in August. I was a little worried as to the response of members when I drafted it, but my fears proved unfounded. Members appear to like the format and presentation.

After the AGM, I was overwhelmed with the support I received, and was inundated with ideas, items, and photos for Flashpoint. I also heard quite a few stories from members, and encouraged them to put them on paper and get them to me. Even if it's only a small item, a memory, or a brief anecdote, it still needs to be told. Once it's published in Flashpoint, it's archived

and becomes part of our history for posterity. Long after we are gone, our memories, stories, anecdotes and 'Tales of Yester-year', will live on in those copies. Please keep your articles, anecdotes and photos coming. We need your input. If you want your items back, please ensure you include an SAE for their safe return, otherwise it falls to Association funds to subsidise the cost. Thank you.

Additionally, if the proposal to form a museum in memory of our late founding president, John Arthur, mentioned in this issue, gets off the ground, it makes for exciting times ahead! It's hoped that members of John Arthur's family will dedicate and open the



museum in April 2005, when it will become known as the John Arthur Memorial Museum. If more details are available before going to press, I will let you all know.

Regards and best wishes,

*Dave Kenyon 239  
Editor December 2004*



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Acknowledgement of the original front cover photograph showing a "Practice Crash" exercise by 'A' Crew RAF Marham April 1968 for USA Air Force firefighters. The photo shows, on the left, a Dual Purpose Tender MK2 (DP2) and right, an Alvis Pyrene MK6 Crash Truck producing foam with firefighters in full crash gear and bone-dome helmets. Photograph courtesy of Bob Feather Membership Secretary member 218.



## EDITORIAL NOTES

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

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

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

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

*Dave Kenyon member 239*

# A Note from the Chairman

## CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS AGM & REUNION

STOKE- ON - TRENT - 22nd to the 24th October 2004

Welcome to you all at our 2004 AGM. It's been quite an eventful year again. Unfortunately a few of our members have passed on including our Founding President, John Arthur. Our thoughts go out to their families.

Looking on the bright side, we have new members who have joined our Association and it continues to grow from strength to strength. A special welcome to any of you who have not been to one of our reunions before, I hope that you enjoy the weekend and meeting old (and not so old) comrades.

As you may be aware Alan Alsop has retired, as Editor of Flashpoint, and I would like to extend a big thank you to him for all his hard work over the last few years. Dave Kenyon has taken over this job and the Flashpoint you will have recently received was his first issue. Well-done Dave.

This year the Association attended the Waddington Air Show. It went reasonably well but the weather was not kind, high winds and rain, and most people packed up early. However, we did get a few new members signed up and made some sales from the shop. Thank you to our volunteers, and others who supported them, for sticking it out. (See brief report and photos on page 9 of this issue). As some of you are aware, we were going to be in attendance at the RIAT, (Royal International Air Tattoo), at Fairford in July) however, this unfortunately fell through. RIAT were expecting us to pay a daily ground rent charge for the shop marquee as well as physically provide manpower (and woman power) with the setting up and running of the show as well as vehicles for display. The Committee felt that this was unacceptable and withdrew from the show.

The project that we are funding at the RAF Museum at Hendon is going ahead and John Savage was due to attend to update the meeting but, work commitments prevented him from doing so. Basically, RAF Hendon are applying for funding for the Information 'Pods' (An interactive electronic information device, to be programmed with the history and details of the Association) and, for the time being, the project is in abeyance.

The Committee has been working hard for the Association and has moved our meetings to the ATC Headquarters in Cambridge. A big thank you goes to Geoff Varley, our Treasurer, for arranging this, and to his wife Hazel, for the food she puts on at lunchtime. My wife, Sue enjoyed her visit to Cambridge when we had our last meeting, especially when her eyes nearly popped out of her head when she spotted a naked cyclist. Apparently he had the best sun tan she has ever seen!

In order to further publicise the Association the Committee made the decision to send out a poster and supply of leaflets/membership forms to relevant museums across the country. We have set up a coding system so it will be interesting to see what response, if any, we get and from where?

This year, as the shop has been doing so well, we have put it on a more professional footing. You may not be aware that Bob Feather had been paying for the merchandise out of his own pocket and then claiming it back, so we decided to turn it into a small business generating income for the Association and being an instrument for recruitment at the air shows.

It is called RAFDFSA Enterprises, and has it's own bank account and three signatories for the cheques book. I would like to pay special thanks to Bob feather and Geoff Varley for setting this up and, of course, to the boss, my wife Sue. I would like to thank Bob and Geoff for their work in setting this up and, of course, to the boss, Sue.

### AIRSHOW VOLUNTEERS WANTED

In looking forward to next year, 2005 is the 10th anniversary of our Association, so the Committee will be attempting to arrange something special. We will be attending air shows at Waddington, RIAT and the Eastbourne 999 weekend at least. If any of you can help please give your name to Wilf Longmire for RIAT, Jim Paterson for Waddington or myself for Eastbourne. (Details on page 2 – Who To Contact).

We do have vacancies for Coordinators in some areas, it is not too arduous, just keeping in touch and promoting the Association when able. If you can help, please contact a member of the Committee.

To close, I would like to extend a personal thank you to all the Committee for their continued hard work and support and to you, our members, without whose backing, the Association would not exist.



Roger Brooks Chairman  
Member 16

### MARCH STOKE AGM AGENDA

1. CHAIRMAN'S OPENING ADDRESS
2. INTRODUCTION OF COMMITTEE
3. APOLOGIES
4. REVISED CONSTITUTION
5. MINUTES OF LAST A.G.M.
6. MATTERS ARISING
7. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT
8. TREASURER'S REPORT
9. ELECTION OF SECRETARY & EDITOR (See new Secretary's profile on page 6 of this issue)
10. FLASHPOINT EDITOR'S REPORT
11. MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT
12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

### Word of Mouth!

Again, I urge all members to pass on the word about our Association to all their friends who served with us. Not only RAF, but you lads who are serving or have served in the Defence Fire Services. Recruiting must carry on. That is why we need YOUR help!

# Membership News

Since my last report it is my great pleasure, on behalf of the Association, that I welcome the latest new members to our great Association. Listed below are their names and membership numbers:-



729	John Charlesworth	741	Dave Starkings
730	Mike Maker	742	Sam Fox
731	John Stanway	743	Frank Cassidy
732	Gordon Ayles	744	Andy Barnes MBE
733	Stan Hopkins	745	Michael Caffrey
734	Richard Duncan	746	Steve Briggs
735	Bernie Carter	747	Ronald Settle
736	Ian Langley	748	Peter Hencher
737	John Armson	749	David Hails
738	David Edwards	750	Janette Carter
739	Thomas McCrorie		
740	Martin Trafford		

*Bob Feather  
Member 218*

## Publicity / Membership Leaflets

The Association now has a stock of leaflets. They serve two main purposes:-

1 By helping publicise us.

2 They also act as an application form.

I would like to get these into as many places as possible e.g :- Museums, Post Offices, Libraries or anywhere the public may go, even corner shops.

The more we put into the public domain the better chance of finding new members.

If you can help please contact me and I will send you some leaflets.

Bob Feather Mem Sec.

## Remembrance Parade Report

The Saturday and Sunday of Remembrance weekend turned out to be just about the best you could wish for with clear blue sky, bright sunshine and not too cold. Sixteen tickets were applied for and I sent fifteen out to members. Unfortunately, two were unable to make it due to circumstances beyond their control. Bob Dickinson usually flies down to London on the Sunday morning, but he was taken ill on the Saturday and into hospital for observation. I phoned Bob when I got home because I knew it had to be something serious to stop him getting there. Bob was all right, but a bit shaken by the experience and pig-sick about missing the parade! Another regular on parade but unable to make it this time, was Gabriel Costello and I also phoned him for the same reason. In Gabriel's case, it was the vagaries of public transport that had him hopping mad and, believe me, he was hopping mad when I spoke to him. I reckon he would have liked to get hold of whoever was responsible, and demonstrated surgery without anaesthetic on some tender part of their anatomy!

Before the parade moved off from Horse Guards Parade, we had all agreed that, this year, we would make this the best yet in every way, always in step, always in line, heads up, shoulders back and arms swinging; and we did! Not only was this for our satisfaction and pride; it was also for the very reason we were there in the first place with the main motivation being in memory of two founder members, John Knight, founding treasurer, who passed away almost a year to the day, and founding president, John Arthur, who passed away earlier in the year and all those members recently passed away.

My wife had no idea of what was said, or agreed to, on Horse Guards parade, but she saw us quite clearly marching along Whitehall, and told me later that she was proud of us all. We looked so smart, all in step and in perfect formation. So it will continue, we have set our standard and will keep it; the day demands no less and we will continue to keep alive the memory of our departed members.

*Alan Alsop member 49*



## Please - Make yourself known at Peterborough March 05 Reunion

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

**Ask someone; we are a friendly lot!**



**The President, Vice - President, Officers, Committee and Coordinators of the Association wish to extend to the members, their families, and serving firefighters everywhere, Good Health, a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year for 2005, our 10th Anniversary Celebration Year.**

## Your Treasurer - Geoff Varley Member 221

Geoff joined the Royal Air Force Fire & Rescue Service in 1956 and trained at the Fire School at **RAF Sutton on Hull** near Kingston-upon-Hull, and then the Driving School at **RAF Weeton** near Blackpool, passing out as an Aerodrome Fireman/Driver in October 1956.

His first posting was to **RAF Acklington** (F/13) in Northumberland, then an Armament Practice Camp. Whilst there he attended a number of "shouts" involving Meteor NF 11's and Vampires, and also the "station hack", a twin-engined Avro Anson aircraft.

In May 1957, he was posted to **RAF North Luffenham** (F/81) in Rutland. The station was then an OCU, (Operational Conversion Unit), with Brigand T5's, Balliol T2's, Valettas, Meteor's, NF14s and Vampires NF10's.

Later, in February 1958, 111 Squadron (The Black Arrows), with Hunter F6s, arrived from

RAF North Weald, Essex. Although very exciting to watch 111 Squadron's flying displays; there were not many "shouts (call outs)."

In May 1958 Geoff went back to the Fire School (still at Sutton), for training as an Mk 6. Driver/Operator. On his return to Luffenham, he was to discover he, and all the rest of the section, had been posted to **RAF Wattisham** (F/11) in Suffolk.

At Wattisham, things really got hectic, (too many "shouts" to remember), with 111 Squadron Hunter F6s, 41 Squadron Javelin FAW4's & 5's, 29 Squadron Javelin FAW6's and 56 Squadron Hunter F5 & 6's.

It was whilst at Wattisham, that Geoff was sent on a short detachment to **RAF Leeming** in Yorkshire, for a very strange exercise, (see Flashpoint Vol. 1 - Issue No 5). This was much to the displeasure of the WO I/C the Fire Section at the time, Warrant Officer Williams, who

at the time) was expecting delivery of the station's Mk 6, and Geoff was one of only three trained Driver/Operators on the section.

For anyone who has served under WO Taff Williams, (one of Willies boys), will know that he was very active in Fire competitions, and Geoff was a member of his team (Mk 6 Driver/op), when it won the Fighter Command Crash Fire Drill competition in 1959.

Geoff left the service in 1960 intending to join the Civilian Fire Service but was invited to join the Transport Department at Marshall of Cambridge, later to become a manager within its Motor Spares Division.

In 1973 Geoff joined the Air Training Corps as a Squadron Warrant Officer, later to be promoted to a Flight Lieutenant in the RAFVR (T). and commanded the local 104 (City of Cambridge) Squadron until his retirement from the service



in 1995., but still keeps contact with the Corps, as Treasurer for the Beds & Cambs Wing, and Deputy Chairman of the Civilian Committee of his old A TC Squadron.

In 1985 Geoff was appointed Quality and Health & Safety Manager for the Marshall Motor Group, and later to the post of Group Safety Advisor, a position he still holds in his retirement.

N.B. F 11, 13 and 81 refer to Station identity numbers within Fighter Command.

## Your Newly Elected Secretary George Edwards BEM - member 238

As your new association secretary I would like to say that it did come as a complete surprise to hear my name being put forward for the post at the Stoke reunion; I had no idea that Ron was retiring and certainly no idea I was being nominated. I would like to say straight away, thanks to Ron for the work he did, as secretary, and I know I can always rely on Ron for advice and assistance.

I served as an RAF Fireman (with a tour on recruiting duties thrown in) from 1965-1987. On leaving the RAF I qualified as a Probation Officer and for the last sixteen years I have been employed as Probation Officer in my native Liverpool. Whilst in the RAF I, along with many other association members, participated in secondary duties and it was ironic hearing Dan McCann nominating me for the

post of association secretary; thirty years ago he nominated me for the post of entertainment's secretary at Llarbruch NAAFI.

Since leaving the RAF I have been involved in a number of "secondary duties". Up until two years ago I was the Officer Commanding 7F(1st City of Liverpool) Air Cadets. I was also Chair of the Liverpool Duke of Edinburgh's award scheme for ten years and a Duke of Edinburgh's award scheme expedition assessor.

I was also a voluntary caseworker for SSAFA for many years. My voluntary and professional activities brought me in to contact with many organisations and individuals, never the less, none of the people I have met come anywhere near those stout fellows I met during my RAF service.

Those I have most admired and respected are members of our association. My first crew chief Bob Burns, my WO at Llarbruch Dan McCann the dashing and debonair Steve Davey (that's another pint you owe me Steve) and the indomitable Bernard (Spud) Murphy.

My hobbies these days are relatively sedentary mainly spending time with my five grandchildren although I still participate in the occasional mountain walk and game of five a side football. I do enjoy writing (it takes my mind away from the bad mad and sad people I meet in my job) and I am coming to the end of my own book all about my time in the RAF, which I hope to have published in the New Year.

I look forward to my stint as secretary, as I know that the association has a dedicated hard



working committee and I will do my best in my role as secretary. I would ask if any members, particularly those unable to attend the reunions, have any comments or suggestions about the association to please contact me and I will raise those issues on your behalf at the next committee meeting.

*Best wishes, George  
Member 238*

## FIRST WEEK IN THE AIR FORCE 'The Mob' - 1953!

Can you remember your first week in the Air Force, in future known as 'The Mob!' I can; it was at RAF Cardington in Bedfordshire on the 27th. March 1953. It wasn't a training camp, but one for kitting out and introduction to 'The Mob!'

I was one of many, and we were all in the same boat, all strangers together. We were from the North, South, East and West and all there for one thing – to get into 'The Mob!' Cardington was a large station and had a great big hangar built for an Airship and also trained Airborne Troops there.

But, we were there for a different reason, me being an 18 year old lad from a little pit village, 5 mile outside of Doncaster. After we had all stopped walking about with mouths hanging wide open, we got down to the business of joining 'The Mob!' By the way, we were all regulars, no National Servicemen in sight!

### Home from Home!

The first thing is a place to sleep, and that is a wooden hut, (barrack room). It had two rows of iron beds and one black stove in the middle of the hut and no coal to burn in it! Just pick a bed and they all had one pillow and one mattress. It was then off to the bedding stores for pillowcase, two sheets and four blankets. There were about 30 of us in the hut, and we had the rest of the day off to settle down in.

### Medical Tests

The first test we had was the medical and that was a full days job. Boy, was it a laugh, if you can walk to the first table, you have passed the first test! Then a bloke in a white coat is sticking something in your ear and then in your mouth. (Sounds disgusting and doesn't bear thinking about Ron! – Ed.). If you can then stand up and not fall flat on your face, then you haven't got flat feet, (as if you could have round ones!). There were good parts and not so good. It was something to talk about at night in the NAAFI or on your pit, (bed to non-service members), in the hut.

### Taking The Oath

Day two was a big day as all the lads that had passed the medical, had to line up in a room and take the Oath of Allegiance to the Queen and her successors. Once it was over with, we were in, for good or bad.

### Burned Your Boats!

It was no good writing home to Mum, to sell the pig and buy me out, as she would have said, 'Pig gone, stick it out!' Rest of the week was taken up in I.Q. tests and a lecture on the history of the RAF.

### 'Sizing Up' The Uniform Issue?

Then a day in the stores for all that kit! All the lads in one long queue for one best blue and one working blue. The store bod said, 'Chest size?' and everyone looking at the lad next to him, as if he knows! Then the store bod said three words, 'Large, Medium or Small?' Next the cap and beret and that same word, 'size?' and that same look! This time, its not 'large, medium or small?' its feet and inches! No, just kidding! Its only inches – 7 ½ big! The unattached collar is inches too.

### Real 'Lambing Gown' Quality!

That over with we collate the rest of the gear. Greatcoat, with all them brass buttons; it was a real 'lambing gown', three vests and pants, three shirts, two black ties, PT vests and shorts, two cap badges, one pair of boots and shoes, and no end of brushes, one button stick and a housewife, (sewing kit), and one kitbag to put it all in. Then, back to the billet to try it all on. Did we have some fun? The collar and collar stud caused some right facial expressions to be pulled that day!

### Parcel Up Your 'Civvies'

Then its, "parcel up all your civilian clothing to be sent home."

### All Important Number!

The best part was getting your all-important number. You will never forget it for the rest of your life! It was, number, rank and name for the rest of your service.

### Off To Square Bashing!

After a week of all that, it was off to Bridgenorth for 'Square Bashing', but that is a different story! We were the best; we were invincible at 18 years old!

Regards, 'Ronnie from Donny'  
Ron Gaunt  
Member 696

On behalf of all our readers I just have to ask- What is a 'lambing gown?' – Ed.

## Proposed Association Golf Society!

It is proposed to start a golf society within the RAF & DFS Fire Service Association. The main objective would be to provide a database whereby fellow golfers can contact each other and meet up for a game of golf.

Provided there is enough interest, we would also be able to have regional and possibly national meetings and play friendly competitions.

To assess the feasibility of this proposal, would any golfers interested, please contact the undersigned with the following information:

- Your name and membership No
- Tel No
- Email address
- Home Club and location
- Handicap
- Whether or not you would be willing to assist in organising Society outings/meetings?

Providing there is a good response it is hoped to publish a list of members in a future edition of Flashpoint and efforts will be made to organise meetings next year.

Dave Kirk  
Member 414

1 Fyling Road, Whitby,  
North Yorkshire YO21 3NA  
Tel: 01947 604613  
davekirk55@hotmail.com

Me enjoying my favourite hole – the 19th



## WHERE ARE YOU NOW?

**G**eorge Edwards member 238 is seeking an old mate, namely **RAF Fireman Gerry Schofield**, who was a Cpl Fireman at Gutersloh and last heard of as a Recruiting Sergeant at the Inverness RAF Careers Information Office in 1982.

Anyone who may know of Gerry's current whereabouts please contact George at :-

8 East Close, Eccleston Park, Prescot, Merseyside. L34 2RA

or

email - george.edwards46@virgin.net

## 1966 World Cup - RAF Gutersloh A tale told by Roy Hammett

Dear Dave,

On the day of the 66 World Cup, I was on duty at RAF Gutersloh, Germany. Half of the crew were German firefighters! Luckily, there was little flying that day or, if there was, we never noticed it.

The crew room was a madhouse, as you can imagine, especially when the disputed goal came up, the place was then in complete uproar!

As the crew commander that day, I could see my career rapidly going down the tubes, if we'd had a shout!

I wonder if we have any members who were there at the time. I must admit, it was an experience I will never forget.

I can't think of a better place to have been on duty that day.

Congratulations on the recent edition of Flashpoint. I think it was an excellent effort and most enjoyable content.

*Sincerely, Roy Hammett  
Member 80*

What disputed goal Roy? Does anyone else remember one? The goals I saw were *all* clearly well in!

Anyway, we won 4 - 2, didn't we - Ed?

## Congratulations From One Old Friend To Another

Dear Editor,

May I through Flashpoint, and the Association, congratulate Ken and Pauline Leverett, on their 50th. Wedding Anniversary, which was celebrated in November 2004. Ken and I first met on a posting to



*Farewell to Ken and Pauline  
returning to the UK - Luqa 1955  
L/R - Phil, Pauline, Ken*

Malta. We met several times on and off duty. One such time while he was courting Pauline. He asked me to be his best man at their forthcoming wedding. "Delighted", I told them. On their return to the UK, in 1955, I lost contact with them for almost 40 years.

My dear friend, and mate, Terry Wright, started enquiring, and finding, a few old mates from Fire Sections 1953 to 56. Advertising in local free papers and RAF magazines, he found 21. Many of these are now members of the Association. One advert was for the whereabouts of Ken Leverett and Dennis McCann (member 7 and founding secretary) replied, who knew where to contact him and Terry passed it on to me. Answering the phone one day, to my surprise, it was my old friend Ken with plenty to talk about. We finally came face to face again at our first reunion at Stafford in 1995. Many more reunions followed.



So, on behalf of your old mates, 1953 to 56, with whom you have regular contact, and the many more friends you've made throughout your distinguished career in the RAF.

Best wishes and congratulations from your old friend Phil. member 71

God bless and hope you don't mind the photos?

# Letters of Appreciation to the Membership

## From the family of the late John Arthur - Founding President of the Association

We would like to thank everyone in the Association who sent messages of condolence and cards when our Dad finally gave up his fight to live. Thanks go to Bill Lawrence for providing such a fitting escort on Dad's last journey, to Roger Brooks for doing such a splendid job in bearing the Standard, to Dennis McCann for giving us an insight into Dad's RAF life & memories, to John Savage for the moving poem. Also our thanks to the Guard of Honour for their part and to everyone who journeyed far and wide to be with us, it was a very moving tribute and helped us all to give Dad the kind of send off he deserved. A total of £280 in donations was collected on behalf of The Diabetes Association, thanks again for your contributions.



A special thanks goes to Keith Penfold and Bill Lawrence for their continued support to the family and their help in sorting out all the memorabilia Dad left behind. How proud we all are that "The John Arthur Memorial Museum" is to be opened next March, it's wonderful to know Dad's memory will continue to live on in this way. It might even be a bit like home-from-home for us all, Dad was a true "Scot" and therefore quite a hoarder, his house was full of RAF "treasures and mementos" - as many of you may know only too well, so it's great to think these will be put to good use and may be of benefit too!

The Royal Air Force and Defence Fire Services Association was very much part of Dad's life and it gave him tremendous pleasure seeing it develop to what it is today, long may it continue to prosper and grow.

Regards Christine



On behalf of **Susan, Christine, Irene and David**  
Left to Right in photograph



## LETTER OF APPRECIATION FROM OVERSEAS MEMBER 276 TO ASSOCIATION FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES

— Original Message —

**From:** [thea ellicock](#)

**To:** [bob feather](#)

**Sent:** Wednesday, November 10, 2004 9:58 AM

**Subject:** Hello from Australia,

Hi Bob,

We are safely back in Australia after the long and tedious journey but it makes up that when you get home you can sit outside and talk about the trip and also the excellent weekend in Stoke and would like to have an inclusion made to the Flashpoint's next edition to thank everyone for the lovely reception we received. I would like this to go in as follows please,

Dear members,

I would like to thank the committee and all the members who made our weekend at Stoke-on-Trent such a memorable occasion. Seeing so many old friends and acquaintances and reminisce of old times will stay with me for a long time. As this was my first reunion, which happily coincided, with my visit from Australia, I don't think it could ever be repeated and the memories and friendships will last forever. This visit has given me something to talk about for years to come. Many thanks to all who made us both so welcome.

Yours Colin and Thea Ellicock.

As requested, this email of appreciation is reproduced on behalf of Colin and Thea. It's obvious that they really enjoyed their visit and the company at Stoke and returned home with many happy memories - Ed.

## RAF CHANGI ASSOCIATION

INCLUDING HQFEAF - FOUNDED MAY 1996

PRESIDENT - H A PROBERT - MBE MA RAF (RETD)

Archivist - Mr. J Dicks, 4 Langley Crescent, Kings Langley, Herts. WD4  
8EW Tel 01923 400 221 email - john.dicks@which.net



Complete Fire Section Personnel, circa 1959 after author returned to England. Back Row - L/R - Cliff Avis, Fred Kington, Bill Sullivan, 'Tex' Barnes, Derek Dunn, 'Swanee' Rivers, Dave Hutchinson, George Russell, 'Taff' Jones, 'Bearer' Ray Cammidge, Jock McDougal, Ken Burt, Jock Glencross, 'Yama' Moscrop Hussein, Nev. Jolley, Jack Graveson Middle Row - L/R - Alan Brandon, 'Taffy' Shelley, Bob Hamilton, Ken Bugler, Bill Murray, Pete Broadley, W/O Hughes BEM, Flt/Lt Fell, Geo. Roy Whitfield, Billy Selkirk, 'Brum' Greenwood, Pete Bransfoot, Chris Goddard. Trev. Southgate



41 names listed of Fire Section Personnel RAF Changi circa 1959

I have just finished reading the latest edition of "Flashpoint", (April 04 - Ed.) and found it a most interesting experience, as it seems to get better each time. I thought the pictures of the fire appliances were great and I wondered if it was possible to get copies, and if you'd considered putting the collection on to compact disc, and offering it for sale as part of the regalia. Or are there copyright problems? If there are no problems I would be willing to produce a small quantity to see how the membership responded, just for the cost of the discs, say about ten.

The names of the Firemen included three whom I believe used to be members of the RAF and Defence Fire Services Association, namely Terry Barnes, Dave Hutchinson and

Derek Moscrop. I think that they have now allowed their membership to lapse, the first due to pressure of work, whilst the other two are not in the best of health. I am enclosing a disc with some photographs on, which may be of use to you in future magazines.

All the best for now, let me know what you think of the Fire Tender disc.

*Kindest regards,  
John Dicks*

*Member 495 RAF&DFSA*

Thanks very much for this item John. I'm sure your article will spark off many memories for those members who were at Changi and maybe served with some of those personnel during their own service life - Ed.



RAF Changi Crash Rescue Bays, circa 1958.



SAC John Dicks and Corporal Lovett, in front of a Mk5a Foam Tender, circa 1958.

# Tattershall Weekend and RAF Coningsby Visit

## Coningsby Crash Crew on Standby for Shackleton Arriving Priority One

This is not about an aircraft at all but a special tribute to Joe Shackleton our member 22 and past chairman. For the past six years Joe has been the prime mover in organizing the annual get-together now held at Tattershall Country Park near RAF Coningsby, Lincolnshire.

We have just had such a weekend 25<sup>th</sup> 26<sup>th</sup> 27<sup>th</sup> June 2004 This once again turned out to be a popular event with members and partners from across the country it turned out to be an excellent weekend. Bad weather made Waddington a *nono!* However, we did get buzzed early in the morning by Spitfires, and later, a fly past by the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight. Saturday night is the usual get together time when we are all invited over to Joe's Cabin for the feast and drinking session, which goes on until the early hours, eating, drinking and reminiscing. At this stage, I



\*1945 Monitor 'On Parade' with our late founding President; John Arthur; a very remarkable man.

think it's only right that a special thank you should be given to Joe's daughters and family who prepare and serve the nosh. "Well done Girls!"

On the Sunday Joe had arranged a visit to RAF Coningsby to be hosted by the duty crash crew. We arrived at approx. 10.00hrs and, after the usual security clearance, were escorted by one of the Major Foam Vehicles (MFV) to the crash bays; and there met by Sgt Monaghan who then gave us the usual Health & Safety Briefing.

We then enjoyed an excellent instruction period involving the modern MFV and its equipment; this also included a practical demo of water production.

Perhaps the biggest highlight was when we were allowed to drive an MFV around the dispersal pans. As you can imagine, this brought back many memories of the past and certainly was a step up from the 1945 Monitor\* etc. Interesting though the Carmichael MFV was, it has a very clunky auto gearbox but still nice to drive!

The visit was rounded off with tea & 'bikkies' in the crew room, then the gang were invited to help themselves to the vast array of handouts, posters, CD's table

mats, pens etc; all depicting the RAF of course. A good day was had by all and the evening was rounded off with still more booze and food.

It only remains for me to say a big thank you to Joe and I trust he will continue with this annual get-together for many a year to come.



Ernest A Fisher PRO  
Member 385



RAF Coningsby on-duty crew  
O/C Sgt. Terry Monaghan Sunday 27th June 2004

## RAF Waddington Airshow Shop - Saturday 26 & Sunday 27th June 2004



26/06/2004



Volunteer Shop Staff - L/R - Sue & David Hughes - Bob Feather - Peter & Anne Tatler - Brenda & Jim Paterson - Dave Kenyon



25/06/2004



26/06/2004

Clockwise from bottom left - Overall view of site at rear of old Control Tower - Bob Feather setting up the goods for sale - Volunteer Shop Staff - TACR1 and Association Banner - Dave & Sue Hughes sorting out their TACR1 display

Text and photos - Dave Kenyon



26/06/2004

# “Our man in New Zealand” - How did you get there?

to Christchurch, and RNZAF Wigram, which was the Trade Training establishment, then to join a recruit course which had been running for three weeks without us. Needless to say, the people in London had told all 15 of us that we would not be Confrontation, we were on permanent detach-ment to RAF Tengah, alongside the various

that my name had come up in connection with a Commission, and as we were in Singapore, the RAF had been asked to do a pre-selection with the results to be sent back to NZ. Well, you could have knocked me over with a Tiger Tops! I had some serious thinking to do, and it must have showed, because both Pete Lee and Joe Dennison collared me

RNZAF Fire Service, There were quite a few ex-RAF people there, then, and they were, with one exception, very pleased to see me. So With a full head of steam. I set about re-equipping the vehicle fleet. First to gowas the Landrover, it was virtually identical o that of the RAF Fire Service, and every bit as overweight and slow. I replaced it with a Dodge, permanent four wheel Drive, 5.5 litre V8, Automatic, lightly laden with a AFF/Powder Fireboss unit, with real lights, not the Toc H lamps of old. During this time, I also managed to pass my promotion exams from Fg. Off to Flt. Lt., and got married, and bought a house. Then, in 1973 I was sent to Singapore to look at what was left of the UK Defence Fire Service, in the Australia, New Zea-land, United Kingdom, (ANZUK) organisation. After three weeks. I reported back to NZ, and my boss, an Air Commodore, told me I was going back again for two years, as the post of Fire Officer was available, and the RAF were unable to fill it. “Did I want to go?” He waited politely for me to stop cartwheeling around his office! So, off I went with my wife and two little girls to Singapore for two years.

Anzuk was a tri-nation organisation, with staff from the UK, Australia, and of course, NZ. The Fire Service was, in my humble opinion, a relic of

the Singapore Armed Forces. I was living in hyde Park Gate at Seletar initially, then in one of those huge ex-Royal Navy houses in Woodlands, near the Naval Base. Life was beaut mate! I never did get to like gin slings though! The two years passed quickly however, marked by two annual balls run by the resident British Battalion, the 1st Gordon Highlanders, and boy could those guys organise a pissup! They have being doing it for a while of course, like 600 years or so!

We all returned to NZ in 1976, with me attending the RNZAF Staff College, to qualify for further promotion. I remained undiscovered long enough to pass, and gain promotion to Sqn. Ldr. I was now the Boss, and could get stuck in to another vehicle replacement, the major Crash/Foam vehicle. I had to write a specification, get it approved by the money-lenders in Treasury, then monitor the contract once it was let. That did not happen at the same speed as it takes to read this, let me tell you. Those vehicles were built on a Unipower chassis, powered by a 450 Hp turbo diesel by Detroit, with permanent four wheel drive, and the ability to produce foam on the move. They have now been in service almost twenty years, so I think I got most of it right. A young fireman I met driving one at an airshow recently told me (and he didn't



*Victor line-up Cottesmore*

RAF squadrons located there. While at Tengah of course we were part of the RAF Fire Service, and when I arrived there, I duly went to meet the W/O i/c (Wally Hammond) and one of the first people I met was my old mate Joe Dennison from Kenya days. There was a Fire Section booze up taking place that night in the McGregor Club, and he took me along. I was bought a pint by the Fire Officer, so he must have been pleased. Tengah was a great posting. Lots of action on the airfield, and just as much off it! The late Pete Lee was a staunch friend, and one of the best operators I have ever met. He sadly died before I got to meet him again. Loved a pint did our Pete, and his slow verbal delivery belied a very quick wit! It was at Tengah however that I received the biggest surprise, which started in a relief coming up the Crash Bay so that I could go and visit the Fire Officer. Now technically, my boss was the 14 Sqn CO. RNZAF, and not the Fire Officer, RAF, but being an obliging chap, and curious, I turned up. My CO was there, and I was advised

over a beer. I don't really know what the RAF said, but when I eventually returned to NZ, having beaten the Indonesians into submission, I was sent on a proper pre-selection, (attending a fatal crash on the way) with two other firemen, both Cpls. I was an LAC, there being no SAC rating in the RNZAF, having been put through all the psychological hoops, as they do, I returned to my unit, and awaited the pleasure of their Airships. They would have to get a move on though, because I only had six months left, and the Charm School (OTC) course was six months long, if I went on it! Well, I went on the Course, and was shown how not to eat peas off my knife, (that's not true, but people expect to hear it!) and duly passed out in March 1968, almost five years to the day from leaving the RAF. I had gone from LAC to Pilot Officer, and was now a Fire Officer. In that year, I attended both a Station Officers, and Senior Station Officers Course at the NZ Fire Service Training School. Boy was I busy!

There was much to do in the



*Victor V Bombers taxiing Cottesmore*

the British Army which, given the fact that most of the real estate had by then been handed over to Singapore, was of little use. I had an RNZAF WO with me, and 50 locally employed, firemen, some of whom had been working for the Brits for many' years. Tengah, Seletar, and Changi were by then run by

know me from Adam) that it was the Bentley of crash trucks. Well, I never wanted it to be a Rolls, too unreliable.

Once all of that was in place, I sort of lost interest, and at the grand old age of 41, with nearly 25 years in. I decided I wasn't getting the laughs I used to and

# Continued with more of the same!

Dear Ed,  
The title "How Did You Get There?" comes to mind as a result of my attendance at two reunions, two years apart at Worthing and Eastbourne, and the many interesting people I met and conversed with over the two weekends. At the last one, in March 2001 at Eastbourne, I arrived at the hotel directly from Heathrow at about five o'clock and barely got through reception before I had a glass in one hand! As I said in a letter to Flashpoint, these are excellent occasions, and I'm a little disappointed that not more people attend, though that might strain the organizing committee and the resources of the hotel. I never seem to stop talking to interested people, and the most common question relates to how I came to leave the RAF Fire Service and end up running that of the RNZAF for fourteen years?

It's not such a difficult question to answer really, though some might find it a little simplistic. I loved my time in the RAF Fire Service; every minute. I found I was adaptable, responded conscientiously to responsibility, and got to work with some good people, some of whom I now see after thirty years, and we still get on! All I really wanted to be was a good fireman, not let anyone down, and to always do my job. A first posting to Kenya was really the icing on the cake. But all good things come to an end, and I eventually came to Cottesmore and Victors from sunny Kenya. I enjoyed that experience too, because we had lots of brake fires, two, serious prangs, and an excellent village pub within staggering distance of the main gate. You could even avoid the Snowdrops on the way home by walking through the Married patch. Times they were a-changing though, and towards the end of my mine, I was having to give serious thought to what I was going to do, if, I left the RAF. I would have to say that the Regiment influence was beginning to creep in, and, like many, I was unhappy at the thought of becoming a Gunner/Fireman. I think the trade lost a lot of good men because of

that particular piece of idiocy. The Fire Officer (Ford?) at Cottesmore at the time I left was Regiment, and a really nice guy who I think understood my reluctance to sign on. However, before we go to that discussion, I was wondering what to do when I spotted an ad. in the paper which said the RNZAF were looking for RAF firemen. Well, I thought, I've never been to New Zealand, so I'll give it a go. So I had my interview with Mr. Ford and told him I would not be signing-on, and was off to New Zealand. He stood up, shook my hand, and said he was envious of my opportunity. I think he meant it.

I left the RAF in November 1962, and was a member of the RNZAF in December, though acting, unpaid, until I arrived in NZ. All of the team that processed me in London were ex-RAF! In January 1963. I went back to London, then we were bussed to RAF Mildenhall to Join an RNZAF DC6 for New Zealand. There were some very noticeable differences between RAF/RNZAF procedures! The man who helped me locate my bag into an overhead locker I later learned was the Captain! This particular aircraft had been inherited from Air New Zealand when the airline bought Electras, so was not a military type. It had real seats, not at all like those in a Hastings or even the Britannia. It was however, short on legs which meant relatively short trips and a long way round to NZ. We left Mildenhall for our first overnight stop which was the USAF Base on the Azores. It was obvious the next day that some had been tempted by the cheap Port, (four pence a glass!) and they managed to sleep right through the next leg which was to another USAF Base in South Carolina. We had a day and a night in Charleston before we set off again, across the US, to Oklahoma and a refuel at another USAF Base, then on to San Francisco. It was on this leg that the first indications of lack of range of the DC6 began to show. We were heading for Travis Air Force Base, near San Francisco, but due to headwinds, had to



Victor taxiing Cottesmore

land short of our destination at another USAF Base outside Las Vegas. A quick refuel however, and off we went. Those same headwinds however, proved to be a nuisance as they effectively prevented the next leg which was from San Francisco to Hickham in Hawaii. That meant we had to stay at Travis for what turned out to be ten days! We were accommodated in the USAF version of Transit, and I can tell you that transit in any air force is the pits. Still, being an ex-RAF Fireman, I knew how to make do with what I had. We had been paid in US dollars before we left, but not allowing for a ten day stopover. I was nevertheless amazed one morning to find a Flt Lt from our crew turn up in Transit with a fistful of US Dollars to cover our expenses during the delay. It would be fair to say we were enjoying San Francisco, and Travis Air Force Base amenities, but they cost money. Travis itself was huge, with row upon row of B52's and other aircraft. The fire section was equally huge, with an establishment of 120 firemen, about half of whom were SSgt's! After ten days, we eventually got a tail wind and left for Hawaii, where we were to overnight.. Waikiki Beach proved irresistible, even in the dark, but we couldn't compete with the Yanks, of which there were thousands. The next day, we left for Fiji, where we were given a huge welcome. The RNZAF had a Sunderland Base there at the time, and the big white bird had proved the salvation to many an islander.

We eventually arrived at an RNZAF Station in Auckland, and were greeted by the Station Commander. He told us we were on an overnight train to Wellington, 400 miles away, that night, then an overnight ferry

left. I was a Bursar at one of the top four schools in the country for 14 years, then eventually got sick of that. I first heard about the RAF and Defence Fire Service Association through Joe Dennison, (mem. 129) and a letter to Dennis McCann (mem. 7) followed. The rest, they say, is history. I'll be back in 2004. Hopefully!

**Colin Hall**  
**Member 271**

*nobby@paradise.net.nz*

Another great tale well told Colin. I may have to ration you from now on and let others get a word in edgeways! So, come on out there, let's be having *your*



stories for *your* magazine - Ed.

**"ERK'S" PRAYER** Does anyone have a copy of the above? **Not the Fireman's Prayer!**

Ken Hird, member 491, had a copy which has been misplaced. Reply to Flashpoint Editor.

## RAF & Defence Fire Services Association RAFDFSA ENTERPRISES - Our "Shop"

Those of you who have been able to attend the reunions will be aware that we have a range of promotional RAFDFSA goods for sale, all profits of which go to Association funds. Goods are also available by mail order via Bob Feather (Membership Secretary) or Sue Brooks (Chairman's wife - (see WHO TO CONTACT on page 2 for full address details). Goods are also available via the Association website shown at the bottom of each page. As requested by members, we have several new items this year including mugs and self cling car stickers, as well as new fire engine thimbles and keyrings. Looking forward to seeing you at Stoke-on-Trent, regards and best wishes, Bob Feather and Sue Brooks.

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

**Cheques and Postal Orders payable to RAF&DFSA Enterprises**

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

### STOCK AND PRICE LIST 2004

#### RAF FIREFIGHTING & RESCUE

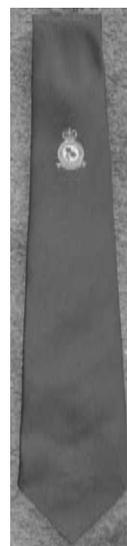
STICKERS x 2 (RAF Fire Service).....	£0.50
CAP BADGE (RAF Crash Fire Service).....	£10.00
EMBROIDERED PATCH BADGE.....	£3.50
ACRT CORGI MODEL.....	£10.00

#### RAF & DEFENCE FIRE SERVICES ASSOCIATION

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

#### MISCELLANEOUS

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



# Ground Zero & New York Fire Department 10 House

and can be seen on photograph No 3 below



“We can never know the extent of damage caused on the day terror struck America.”

“The dust did not clear for days, nor did the smoke, leaving thousands of residents displaced.” Anon

Although it is nearly three years since the destruction of the Twin Towers Trade Centre in New York, I still found my visit to the site rather daunting knowing the thousands that died, included many firemen, having been to the top of the North Tower on a previous visit. The pictures we all saw on television that day, will always be imprinted on our minds.

My visit to New York with my wife, and relatives from close by Staten Island and New Jersey was combined with a planned visit to the Fire Department, New York, having made prior arrangements with Lt O'Malley of 10 House, (Fire Station No 10).

10 House, a two-appliance unit, is located close to 'Ground Zero,' (World Trade Centre), on Liberty Street, just off Broadway. Ten House was damaged during the collapse of the Twin Towers, which gives you an idea of just *how close!* During the collapse of the Towers, no one was in the House as they were the first attendance unit to the incident. Six firemen lost their lives in the incident, and appliances were partly buried and severely damaged by debris. The new fire vehicles they have now have been dedicated to those who died. Their names are shown on the sides of each appliance,



the FDNY logo.

On arrival at Ten House, with my family, the area to the front and inside the House was swamped with tourists.

After finding a fireman in the crowd, I introduced myself and was ushered, with my family, past the fire vehicle bays to the Rest Room/Canteen to the rear of 10 House. To our astonishment it went very quiet, and we realised that the House had been closed and the tourists had dispersed. We were then shown hospitality, which was quite over-whelming. We were looked after with coffee, cold drinks, cookies and donuts etc. and, apart from myself, they extended their welcome to my wife and family.

Knowing I was making the pilgrimage to Ground Zero and the New York Fire Department, our Chairman, Roger Brooks, donated an Association plaque to present to the NYFD on behalf of all the members. I gave a short talk on the history of the Association and presented the plaque to commemorate the many firemen who died on that tragic day, and gave our condolences to all. The Royal Air Force & Defence Fire Services Association plaque is now prominently displayed at 10 House and can be clearly seen by all who enter.



Ten House firemen were all very pleased with the plaque and a fax was sent to all other New York Houses to mark the occasion and, before we left, an appliance from another House arrived to view it closely. As you can imagine, there are many Houses in New York, but I chose

10 House because of its close proximity to 'Ground Zero.' It was a very moving day in that Great City of New York where our Association is now easily recognised. It is interesting to note, that the Fire Department in New York, is the only one in the USA which has Fire Department shown *before* the City or Town i.e.: - FDNY. New York firemen are very proud of this distinction.

A visit I will never forget and, as I've found on many occasions, firemen are '*close families all over the world.*' Visitors are



always made welcome; a tradition taken to the limit in New York! If you are ever in New York, pay a visit to 10 House New York Fire Department.

*Ken Leverett  
Member 90.*

Congratulations Ken for a great article and representing the Association - Ed.

Ken's photos & picture details:-

1. Memorial to those from 10 House
2. Ken (2nd from right) & family
3. Association plaque presentation
4. Picture from 10 House Fire Dept.

library showing:-

Top - Wrecked fire vehicle and devastation at Ground Zero

Bottom - Scattered debris at adjacent Cemetery on Broadway

Footnote: - The January Issue of Flashpoint 2002, page 12, reported the handing over of the proceeds of an auction held at the Gala Reunion Dinner, Saturday 28th October 2001, at the Shap Wells Hotel, Cumbria, to raise funds for the New York Firefighter's Disaster Fund Appeal. On Monday 10th December 2001, Bob Feather (Mem. Sec.) handed over a cheque for £315 to fire-fighter, Bob Elliffe, of York Fire Station, to be processed through their local appeal fund and on to the New York Firefighter's Disaster Fund. On that day, the York Appeal

## Formation of the Association

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

### Inaugural Committee Formed

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

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

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

### Area Co-ordinators Elected

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

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

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

### The Intervening Years

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

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

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

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

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



Photo of inauguration of the Royal Air Force and Defence Fire Services Association on the 13th. May 1995 at Shoreham Airport, East Sussex. Only 21 members were recorded on the photograph, and included:-

Basil Cotton, Barry Poulton, Bob Good, Roger Brooks, John Knight, Joe Shackleton, Len Nightingale, John Arthur, 'Nobby' Clarke, Bob Hodgeson, Dennis McCann, Graham Kennedy, Keith Penfold. (Only 13 names on photo - who are the rest?)

### 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 photo. remember to enclose it along with your article and send to the Editor at the above address . Please enclose an SAE for the return of photos.

**PLEA FROM  
STEVE DORAN -  
1947/48**

**RAF GERMANY  
FASSBURG AND  
GUTERSLOH**

Hi Dave,  
Ever since I joined the Association, I've never met anyone with whom I served. I have lost the only contact I had from Fassburg, and that was the late John Arthur (Association Founding President). We never met there, but he took over about 2 weeks after I left for Gutersloh.

As I was at both places in 1947/48, they must have changed an awful lot since then. In my time we had at Fassburg a WOT1, 1945 Monitor, 1944 WOT1 conversion with ladder and a 1940 Crossley.

Gutersloh had a 1945 Monitor, Austin Gas Truck and a Bedford Water Bowser.

It would be nice if I could contact all those who were at Fassburg and Gutersloh and ex-change photos and stories about both Sections, and bring my memories up to date!

Best of luck with the editing, it must take a lot of spare time.

*Steve Doran  
Member 41\**

\*Steve is co-ordinator for Norfolk. See page 2 for full details of his address etc. Good luck with your quest Steve - Ed.

## RON ADAMS 1939 –2004



Photograph shows L/R –  
Ron, Pete (Scouse) Carter, Harry Dore and Taff Plant at his last Church Parade at St. James's Church,  
Sutton-on-Hull in October 2003 when attending the dedication of the Association Standard.

It is with great sadness that we report the passing of Ron Adams member 92, who died in August. The funeral took place on Wednesday 18th. August at Deal Crematorium, Kent. Harry Dore member 60, and Pete Carter member 77, represented the Association.

Ron commenced his career in 1957 and, during his 12 years service; was stationed at RAF Oakington, Cambridgeshire and Gutersloh, Germany.

According to Pete Carter, whilst stationed at Oakington, they set up a "Practice Crash" with the permission of the 'Chiefy,' Flt/Sgt Dakers, and arranged to film and photograph the event. The guy who was responsible for the filming was a Bernie Wright but, before it was ready, the 'actors

and extras' were posted and never saw the finished film.

However, there are some stills available courtesy of Pete, as per the front cover of this August's issue of Flashpoint, which is from that "Practice Crash" in 1961 at Oakington, and shows Pete Carter on top of the burning Swift aircraft, handing down the 'dummy' to Ron as part of the rescue scenario.

In 1969, Ron started a new career with Kent Fire Brigade, completing 25 years service before an injury forced his early retirement. Ron leaves a wife, Rosemary, and three children.

Colleagues from Kent Fire Brigade provided Pall Bearers and a Guard of Honour.

## ALAN COOP - 1951 - 2004

Alan joined up 18 March 1968 and was demobbed 10 January 1981

He served at	RAF Marham	1968 - 1971
	RAF Akrotiri	1971 - 1974
	RAF Fairford/Brize Norton	1974 - 1977
	RAF Machrihanish	1977 - 1978
	RAF Scampton	1978 - 1981

Alan lived at Mansfield, Notts. and joined the Association around two years ago. To date, I've been unable to contact the family for more details - Ed.

## REQUIEM

Weep not for me,  
I have travelled on.

Shed no tears in sorrow,  
but in your hearts,  
my memory keep long  
beyond tomorrow.

I am on life's last journey,  
removed from hurt and pain.

One day too,  
you'll take this road,  
perhaps we'll meet again.

Have but sweet thoughts  
of me now.  
Recall me at my best.

Don't think of me as having  
gone. Just in peace. At rest.

© John Bracken 18th January 1991

This Requiem was read by John Savage, member 180, on the 2 April 2004 at the funeral of John Arthur, Founding President of our Association. When preparing the article for my first edition, I couldn't remember exactly what happened on the day, and, regrettably, the Poem was missed out of the August edition of Flashpoint. My sincere apologies to John Savage, and the family, for that omission. See also the letter of appreciation in this issue.

Dave Kenyon  
Editor



## Secretary Ron Brown Calls It A Day!

Edwards is my successor, and I'm sure that he will be an asset to the committee. I hope you give him the same support that you all gave me during my term in office.

On the personal side, I retired from the RAF in 1980 after completing 22 years service, in such exotic places as Tengah (Singapore), Gibraltar, Gan, Bruggen and Gutersloh, as well as various U.K. Stations.

Starting in 1983, I then worked for a total of four years in Saudi Arabia, firstly at Jeddah International Airport with Northrop Support Services; then as Fire and Safety Officer for Hamard SA Ltd. at Al-Ju'Aymah, which is about 40 miles from Dhahran.

I ended up doing a two-year contract with Lear Siegler Inc. as an Assistant Chief Fire Officer at the King Fahad Air Base (Saudi Air Force), finishing in 1988. I then worked in the security industry for 14 years. I now work part-time for Swindon Police, as a mobile CCTV operator, (*not* speed cameras!). Thank you all.

By the time you read this, I will no longer be Secretary of the Association. I decided to resign from the post at the recent October AGM at Stoke. This is for personal reasons and not, as some think, because of any problems in the committee.

I've been your Secretary for three years and feel that it is now time for someone else to take over and join the committee. I have enjoyed the last three years, and like to think I've made a contribution to the continued success of the Association. I will still be an active member of the association and continue to run the website.

I first joined the association in 1997, and took over as coordinator for the South in 1998, and then, at the AGM at Shap Wells, Cumbria in 2001, I was elected as Secretary. I am now going to sit back and let my successor take over the secretarial duties, whilst I sink into the background as an ordinary member, just enjoying a drink, and a chat, with old friends and colleagues at reunions. George



## Airfield Services (ASSP) Project Dropped !

Plans to use a private company to provide airfield support - including fire, crash rescue and other key services - on RAF bases worldwide have been dropped.

Armed Forces Minister Adam Ingram has announced that the Airfield Support Services Project - ASSP - competition has been cancelled.

Instead, 'in-house' options will be used for airfield support that aims to offer value-for money while maintaining operational capability and safety.

At the same time, replacement of the ageing airfield vehicle fleet will proceed, while changes to Defence Fire Services will be introduced through the Fire Study 2000 initiative.

As first reported in RAF News in April 2001, the MOD was considering bids from civilian consortia to provide fire/crash rescue, cargo handling, refuelling operations and the potential outsourcing of the Defence Fire Service to create a single integrated fire service.

As previously reported, three consortia bid for the contract and since 2002, the MOD has been evaluating these bids against an inhouse solution.

A spokesman said: "This has been a complex task and taken longer than originally expected and, in light of recent changes, the decision has been made to competition.

"The Fire Study 2000 review was conducted separately from the ASSP to review the MOD's

fire services and develop an optimum organisation in line with the wider Strategic Defence Review.

"Staff at HQ Strike Command will be fully engaged in the implementation, so as to ensure any changes are consistent with RAF policy, the outcome of the Defence Airfield Review and the need to maintain operational fire service support including support to deployed operations."

These moves are likely to result in a small overall reduction in military and civilian posts, but no redundancies are anticipated.

Note - The original plans for ASSP were reported in Flashpoint October 2002 by Dave Kirk, member 414, and replied to in the February 2003 issue by Archie Carter, civilian sub contractor and ex-RAF Fire Service with 24 years service - Ed.

### Editorial Apology

There were a number of 'printing errors' in the August issue, all of which I've since tried to rectify. One concerned the Gutersloh item on page 9. By tilting the calendar of events, it slightly obscured some of the names. Here are those names again -

**'Lofty' Bower,  
'Spud' Murphy,  
Bill Bailey,  
Ron Brown,  
'Dinger' Bell,  
'Geordy' Donaldson,  
Henreik Bunte, and  
Alvis Teale.**

*My sincere apologies to all concerned - Ed.*

### MARCH REUNION 2005

**WHEN? - Fri/Sat/Sun 18th - 20th March 2005**

**WHERE? - Peterborough**

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

**DEADLINE  
FOR ENTRIES  
FOR NEXT  
ISSUE OF  
FLASHPOINT  
1 March 2005**

# Fire Fighters Wed - 11th. September 2004

From now on our family will remember this date for the wedding of RAF&DFSA member 359 Michael Goupillot to Susan Hinds, both of Luton & Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service. Hopefully it will take away some of the pain of 9-11 2001 in New York. Member 358 John Goupillot, father of the groom, with his wife Vera are in the middle of the picture. (See right). Also in the frame is member 180 John Savage MBE who kindly agreed to be Toastmaster at the wedding reception.



Left to Right - Michael, Sue, Vera, John & John Savage MBE - Toastmaster and member 180

Sue has been a Fire Controller with the Brigade for 25 years and Michael a Fire Fighter for 28.

For her work in Brigade Control, Sue has been awarded numerous commendations and letters of appreciation. In particular for her caring influence over anxious members of the public, and for using her initiative when controlling fire vehicle response and providing technical information to the fire ground. In March 2000, Sue was awarded the Fire Service Long Service Medal.

Michael served for 10 years in the RAF Fire Service; this included 2 years as an instructor at RAF Catterick, 2 years with The Queen's Flight and he also served in the

Falklands and Northern Ireland. Michael has been with Bedfordshire's Fire Services for 18 years. He is now the Brigade Rescue Specialist and designed the Specialist Rescue Unit (SRU). He was responsible for setting up the training schedule for all operational brigade personnel on the SRU. He also co-ordinates joint training with the medical profession, teaching accident site safety to Ambulance Crews and Hospital Accident Response Teams. He recently initiated a working group to instigate advanced trauma care training for Fire Service personnel and he has attended a number of paramedic courses.

Fellow fire fighter and best man Tony, said of Michael at the wedding, "That he

*could open anything to rescue the trapped and injured at work but he could not open the cufflink box on the morning of the wedding!!"*

Michael again followed in his father's footsteps, this time to the Maldive Islands, not to RAF Gan, but on honeymoon to an island near Male, the capital.

We all wish them a long and happy marriage.

*John Goupillot - proud father-in-law, father and member 358*

Footnote - Can anyone else lay claim to 'keeping it in the family' with such a fire fighters wedding? Maybe it's unique occasion and one for the record books; unless someone out there knows better? Congratulations to Sue and Michael and much happiness for your future - Ed.

## STOP PRESS

Since the last issue in August, I've received details of two coordinators not mentioned at the time.

They are:-

### South

John Hurl member 564  
34 Copt Elm Close,  
Charlton Kings,  
Cheltenham,  
Gloucestershire, GL53 8AE  
Tel - 01242 522 503

### Suffolk/Essex

Pat Clarke member 587  
108 Morland Road, Ipswich, Suffolk.  
P3 0LZ  
Tel - 01473 711 916  
email - patrickclarke4@aol.com

Welcome gentlemen. I will ensure your full details are available to members on the WHO TO CONTACT page in the next issue. My apologies to both, but didn't have the information until very recently - Ed.

## Next Issue

- 1 Peterborough Reunion 2005
- 2 10th Anniversary Celebrations
- 3 April 2005 Dedication of New Museum to the Memory of our Founding President, John Arthur
- 4 RIAT Fairford
- 5 Waddington
- 6 Eastbourne 999
- 7 Tattershall/Waddington weekend

## TATTERSHALL W/E AND RAF CONINGSBY VISIT JUNE 2005

Do you fancy a nice relaxing weekend in good company in the Lincolnshire countryside, the last weekend in June 2005 the 25 26 & 27th? With options for visiting the RAF Waddington Airshow on the Saturday, followed by a barbeque, beer and chat amongst friends and colleagues on site that same evening. All finished off with a 'not to be missed' visit to RAF Coningsby on Sunday morning as guests of the Fire Section.

Interested - then contact Joe Shackleton on 01642 285 098 for further details.

Don't hesitate - book early to avoid disappointment.

See report on this year's successful meeting on page 11 of this issue.



# Photographic Memories - Flashpoint August 2004!

Vice-Chairman, James (Jim) Paterson's photo on page 18 of Flashpoint August 04 jogged member 540 George Harley's memory into gear and he came up with 27 names:-

## Back row left/right

- 1 Roy Bennett
- 2 'Brummie' Yates
- 3 Dave Jowett
- 4 Henry Gordon
- 7 Jim Paterson
- 8 Colin Ellicock
- 9 Dick Williams
- 13 Garth Furmage
- 14 Ron Dickson

16 'Cos' Costello

## Middle row left/right

- 2 John Hanley
- 4 'Chick' Bebb
- 5 John O'Connor
- 6 Harry Halford
- 7 Brian Higgens
- 8 Bill McKay
- 10 Alan Quayle
- 11 Jan Metters
- 12 Fred Wood
- 13 Mick Traynor
- 14 Tony Maggs

## Front row left/right

- 1 Brian Baldwin
- 2 Bob Plumb
- 3 Ken Leverett
- 8 Steve Davey



- 9 Tony Doan
- 10 Eddie Ward

**Footnote**-Many thanks George for making the effort and sending in the names. Not a bad total out of the 37 on the photo.

Jim said he could only name 21, so he should be pleased. It goes to show that asking for help can work at times - Ed

## Flashpoint August 2004 - Page 8 - AKROTIRI 1966 UPDATE

**Ken Newell's** photo prompted two responses, one from **Gordon Wallace**, member 619 and one from **Dave Read** in Tasmania, Australia.

**Gordon**, who was at Akrotiri same time as **Ray Wood**, sends the following names -

**Front row** - mainly O.K. except that the Warrant Officer was Stan **Burrows**, not **Burr**.

**Middle row** - left to right - not 100% sure here - '**Hoppy**' **Hopkins** **Tug Wilson** **Roger Wooldridge** '**Jock**' was '**Spud**' **Murphy**.

Gordon isn't sure of the chap on the end, nor any of the RAF Officers, and only recognises '**Lofty**' **Dunklin** on the back row.

**Dave Read** sent the

following email -

Good day Dave,

Thanks a million for sending the latest Flashpoint. I have to say it is really good. You have done a great job. Congratulations! And thanks to Bob Feather also. Of particular interest to me is the photo on page 8, of the group in front of the Crash Bays at Akrotiri. For the life of me I cannot recall the name of the \*Flt. Lt. I tell you this though he was one of the best Fire Officers that I ever served under. A real Gentleman! ~~From~~ **Brocklehurst, Lofty and I were all on the same crew for a while**. Some of the other guys there at the same time were: **Cpl. Gerry (Stinky) Bush, Steve Nicholas, Cpl. Dave Johnson, Jimmy Thundercliffe,**



### **Cookie Wells, Sgt Johnnie Johnson.**

A lot of those guys in the photo lived in Limassol in married accommodation so I can't remember all of them myself.

The other native Fireman on the Section was **Ahmet**. So as you can tell, the magazine has brought back great many memories.

Although the name of the Boss still eludes me, I should remember him because I bogged the DP2 in the Salt Lake one afternoon and I was the object of his wrath!!!

However it may come to me sometime.

**\*Stop Press** - Dave Read emailed again when he'd remembered the **Flt Lt's**

### **name was Wood!**

Thanks very much to Gordon and Dave for their input and Dave's recent update with the name of the Flt Lt - Ed.

# Treasurer's End of Year Report - as loose leaf insert



As your new Treasurer, I have great pleasure in presenting, for your approval, my first end of Financial Year Statement of Accounts, for our Association.

Although the final figures show a marginal increase between the opening and closing amounts, a number of factors should be noted.

Firstly on the negative side, during our outstanding subscription recovery exercise carried out in May, a number of our members also made advance subs payments (listed as Future payments). This, with the refund received back from the Hotel, regarding the poor service some of us received at our Peterborough General Meeting (listed under General Refund), both these items must be considered as carry over amounts into the new Financial Year (FY).

But, on the positive side, there are a number of "one off" type payments, e.g. the College of Arms\* for registration of our Association Crest, and the Merchandising Account\*\* start-up Payments.

With all these factors taken into consideration, you will see a significant increase in the current account holdings.

Obviously, the poor interest rates being paid out by the Banks has affected our Business Reserve Account, but this will be an issue I am intending to try and address during this Financial Year.

If any member has a question regarding these accounts, please do not hesitate to contact me. Who to Contact details are on page 2 of Flashpoint.

As for the start of this FY... I am pleased to report that to date, 8th October 2004, 80% of our members have renewed their subscriptions for 2004/05 many of them using our Standing Order payment system.

It should be noted that **members that hold a Standing Order Mandate\*\*\* under the Association's old Account Number, will have to complete a new Mandate before September 2005, as the Bank will not continue to honour any old**

## Mandates on record.

I hope to be contacting all of these members, within the next few weeks on the new requirements.

In closing my report, I would like to thank all the members who have made a donation to our association's funds, but particularly to Mrs. Evelyn Souter for her most generous donation in memory of her late husband Jim. (Co-ordinator Scotland and member ).

*Geoff Varley, Treasurer  
Member 221*

\* College of Arms one-off payment for the registration of our Association Crest.

\*\* Merchandising – see Chairman's report on page 3 and SHOP page for further information.

\*\*\* **Standing Order Payments**  
Members wishing to use this method of payment, should contact the Treasurer for a form. Using this method, **means not having to remember to pay**

## SURPRISE ANNOUNCEMENTS

AGM Stoke - AOB and surprise announcements on the purchase of a MK 7 and MK 8 ex-RAF fire vehicles and proposed museum to be dedicated to our late founding president, John Arthur at an ex-RAF airfield at Halfpenny Green near Stourbridge, Worcestershire.

### Vehicle Purchase

Wilf Longmire (member 83), and Bill Lawrence (member 494), gave reports to the assembled members on the negotiations to purchase both the vehicles from somewhere in Northumberland, and the setting up of the proposed museum. Dave Hughes member 683, who has our MK6, is also closely involved with both projects.



MK 7

Dennis McCann member 7, immediately declared that he would purchase the MK 7, which left the prospect of raising a further sum for the MK 8. Members offered to pledge sums toward the target. The Treasurer,

Geoff Varley, set up a list and circulated it amongst members, and has already received some pledges; and intends to write to all members on the list. So, come on fellas, dig deep, if we don't, how can we expect others to save our heritage? It was announced at the Saturday Gala Dinner at Stoke, that the profit from the raffle was to be donated to the vehicle purchase fund.

### Proposed museum

Dedicated to our late founding president John Arthur - It's hoped that the museum will be ready for dedication in April 2005 by members of John Arthurs family. (See the Letter of Appreciation from the family elsewhere in this issue). It is hoped to have a progress report at the Peterborough reunion in March 2005 and a report and photographs of the dedication in Flashpoint due out in April 2005. This may delay it's publication slightly but will ensure that all the membership will have an update since the announcement made at Stoke in October 2004 - Ed.



# Making a 'Splash' in Basrah

## FIRE SERVICE EFFORT MEANS RAF CAN KEEP ITS COOL!

RAF Personnel in Basrah can keep their cool now – thanks to the efforts of the Fire Service

Earlier this year, the Theatre Welfare Fund provided a splash pool for the RAF accommodation area. But it needed time, and a great deal of effort, to turn the pool, boxed up in a series of crates, into a valuable leisure facility to cool people down in the hot Iraqi sun.

Step forward the 15 determined members of A Crew, who set about dealing with the permissions, health and safety legislation, pool supervision requirements, water hygiene and treatment regulations, with gusto!



*Man in charge of the Basrah Fire Section, WO Andy Pittock, who also helped deal with the tanker incident reported on the back cover of this issue*

Meeting all official requirements took some time, but they succeeded before finding a suitable site and transforming it from a corner of a dusty parking area, into an oasis of tranquillity. This involved a local contractor and a lot of manual labour by A Crew them selves. Building work and the final fit were all paid for from bar profits.

WO Andy Pittock, Officer-in-charge Fire Section Basrah said, “ This was a challenging project due to security and legal issues, but the guys here do get some free time in their shift pattern, and the Fire Service is always keen to try to use that time fro the common good.”

At the pools grand opening, detachment Commander, Gp Capt John mass said, “ This is self-help at its best. A tremendous effort by Mister Pittock and his team that will benefit everybody here at the APOD now, and in the future. It wasn’t long before that benefit was being fully appreciated under Basrah’s midday sun!



*Photo above -RAF fire-fighter, Toni Bloomfelt (in uniform) 'rescues' medic SAC Natasha Verrall of High Wycombe in the recently completed plunge pool at Basrah International Airport. The group includes some of the fire-fighters involved in the project, along with Cpl Lori Illston (left) and Flt Lt Nicola Hodgeson (right).*



*Photographic evidence of the alleged kidnappers as they made their getaway with Macmillan the Moose on a 'speedy Green Goddess!' - Ed.*

## Marham's fire fighters make off with the Mayor's Moose!

Kings Lynn Mayor, Paul Brandon, looked on in shock as two athletic kidnappers 'moosehandled' newly appointed staff member, Macmillan – a big cuddly moose – onto a Green Goddess during a break in the Mayor's Charity bike ride at Marham.

Witnesses to the well-planned incident later described the culprits as RAF fire fighters, as calm, cool and determined to get Macmillan at all costs.

Eyewitness, Flt Lt Jodie Hatch, said: “Out of nowhere, these two huge blokes jumped off a Green Goddess, snatched a stunned and defenceless Macmillan, then sped off in to the distance at lightning speed.” Acting Station Commander, Wg Cdr Jack Calder, said: “We are deeply distressed at what has occurred here at Marham and will spare no expense in bringing the 'moosenappers' to justice!” Personnel at Marham are waiting for a ransom demand, after which, it is understood, a suitable amount may be found to donate to charity.

**All text and photographs supplied courtesy of the RAF NEWS**

## FUN AT NORTHOLT



Northolt's Fire Section hosted a special joint visit with the Dog Section for the Pinner Cub Scouts. The visit was extra special for eight year old Lisa Kaufman who became a cub for the first time during an investiture ceremony held at the Station. There can't be many girls who join the cub scouts on an RAF Station! *Left - Some of the cubs having fun at the Fire Section.*

# Brief History of the Royal Air Force Fire Service

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

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

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



Establishment (CTE) which still continues to this day.

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

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

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

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



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

*Photo courtesy of Dave Kenyon member 239*

# Brief History of the Defence Fire Services (DFS)



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

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

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

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

rumours of privatisation of both the RAF and DFS (see ASSP report on page 18). Whatever the outcome, the job will still tend to attract those personnel with similar characteristics, personalities, and vocation, as all those who have gone before.

*Long may it remain so! - Ed*



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

*Photo courtesy of Dave Kenyon member 239*

## Your Stories - Firefighters Battle Basrah Fuel Blaze

The incident was initially attended by civilian personnel from the Defence Fire Service (Army). However, due to having insufficient water and foam to deal effectively with the main area of fire, they immediately requested the assistance of the RAF Fire Service.

On the arrival of the RAF fire-fighters under the command of WO Andy Pittock, a concerted effort using their combined resources, enabled the main fire to be extinguished.

Once this was achieved, the RAF Firefighters left the scene and the DFS (Army) remained for a further 24 hours extinguishing isolated fires and damping down the area to prevent re-ignition.

There is no doubt that the fire could not have been extinguished as quickly and effectively as it was, without the combined efforts of the Army and RAF fire services working together. This is proof of the co-operation that generally exists amongst the various elements of the MOD fire services. - Editor

Footnote:- Since the incident, a close relationship has developed between WO Pittock's team and the Basrah Fire Brigade - Ed.

Firefighters in Iraq were involved in a massive combined operation to bring an inferno under control following a multiple petrol tanker crash. The drama began when a convoy of 18 tankers was making its way north to Iraq from Kuwait. Fifty kilometres south of Basrah, the lead tanker crashed in thick fog on the Rout Tampa road, causing the other 17 tankers to slam into each other, or slide off the road. Within seconds, the leaking fuel ignited and a massive fireball engulfed the road with some tankers exploding. Text and photographs by kind permission of the RAF NEWS. Special thanks to Chief sub-editor, Terry Palin, for his help with the pictures. Below & Top:- Firefighters bringing the blaze under control. Pictures by Cpl. Rhos Edwards - Ed.