

# FLASHPOINT

ROYAL AIR FORCE & DEFENCE FIRE SERVICES ASSOCIATION MAGAZINE



# Brief History Of The Association

## Formation of the Association



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

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

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

The Association publishes Flashpoint magazine 3 times per year with updates, information, news, articles, anecdotes, photos. and stories, mainly supplied by the members.

Association membership is made up of ex and serving firefighters and includes those personnel who made up the Air Force, Army and Royal Navy\* Fire Service Departments, which has become the Defence Fire and Rescue Service.

***"Together we are the Royal Air Force and Defence Fire Services Association!"***

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

\* 1987, Royal Navy founded the Aircraft Handlers Association and Website: [www.chockheads.org.uk/](http://www.chockheads.org.uk/)

## Brief History of the RAF Fire and Rescue Service



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

They are carrying on the same traditions, skills, expertise, enthusiasm and dedication,

to which we can all relate from our own personal experiences.

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

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

A School of Firefighting and Rescue was then established on an RAF Balloon Unit, north of the City of Hull, as RAF Sutton-on-Hull, until its closure in 1959. The School then moved to RAF Catterick, North Yorkshire and later, to RAF Manston in Kent, as the Central Training Establishment, (CTE), then the Fire Services Central Training Establishment (FSCTE).

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

## Brief History of the Defence Fire and Rescue Service



The Air Ministry Fire Service, (AMFS), became the Air Force Department Fire Service, (AFDFS), with a badge change, then the Defence Fire Services, (DFS), with another badge change and, 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 viable force.

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



## **Front Cover Photo.**

Front cover photograph supplied courtesy of Chairman, Gordon Smith, showing Defence Fire and Rescue personnel on practice crash training using the Fire Simulator at Royal Air Force Leeming,



Since the last Flashpoint when I appealed for more input from members, I have received very little. However, there was one member, Dave 'Stevie' Stevenson, who offered, and has sent me a book full, and I thank him. I have read a little up to now, (9 May 09), which gives me plenty of time to find individual stories before I submit for printing. This also gives me a chance to submit a story of my own, which I will call - **My First Shout!**

It happened after I had stopped working at Wethersfield when they closed down, we had bought a small general store. By pure coincidence, it was about 100 yards from the local Retained Fire Station. A few day's later I was approached by a Leading Fireman who lived opposite the shop, and he suggested that, if I wanted to I could get in with my previous experience in the R.A.F. plus the fact they were desperate for day time members.

I had my interview with the D.O. and I was in. The initial training was easy, as I could still run out and roll a hose, climb a ladder and tie knots. In no time I was ready to go. At that time we had a siren for day calls and night time, and there were 2 large bells at the bottom of the stairs at home (they rung for 90secs at night and my wife and son never did hear them)!

On the particular day I was first in and took the message, it was about 7.30 in the morning and a chimney fire, the rest of the crew being very friendly and as it was only a chimney, they suggested I should be in charge. **At this time I did not suspect anything?**

I made my way to the kitchen door and knocked; inside I heard the usual family noise with several children, and a voice shouted, "Come in." When I opened the door, I saw nothing, the room was solid smoke, and I could hear voices but could see nothing. By now the boys behind me were laughing their heads off. I called out "Where is the fire", and I could hear it roaring away, but the visibility was like a good London smog, the kid's were still sitting at the table eating their cornflakes. I suggested to the father to get the kid's outside, and all he said was, "Don't worry about them, they are used to it."

The fireplace was one of the old fashioned ranges and was roaring like a furnace, the metal being nearly red hot. It came to me about what to do, and used

my mother's remedy. I nearly had a fit first time I saw her doing it when I came home on leave, as she had blocked the opening and the fire shot out of the top of the chimney.

I called for the ground sheet, and 2 of us held the sheet over the opening, and in a short while there was an almighty roar and the flames disappeared. By now all of us were suffering with smoke in the eyes, (this was before B.A. at every station), but the kids and the parents did not seem to be bothered.

A few day's later the D.O was paying us a visit during the training evening and he asked me how I was getting on? I started to relay the incident of the chimney fire, and he had a good laugh. He asked me who the crew were and I pointed them out saying, "Their time will come."

After that, whenever there was a shout and we had no Officers in attendance, they automatically looked to me to lead? I don't know whether it was because of the vast knowledge I had picked up as a Fireman sitting by the side of the runway for 3 years, or because I was older than they were?

Another training night we were being instructed on knots by a leading fireman whom nobody liked, and who very rarely attended a shout! I had tied the knot in question when he said it was wrong, and I corrected him by saying this was the way we did it in the RAF. He would not agree so I said, "I can go and get my manual", which I did, even then he reckoned the manual was wrong? Bye for now.

*Steve*

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**MY LUCKY NUMBER IS 73**

**IT WAS MY DEMOB NUMBER AND**

**IT WAS THE NUMBER OF THE  
FIRST HOUSE I LIVED IN AFTER  
MARRIAGE**

**IT WAS ALSO THE NUMBER OF  
THE  
RETAINED STATION**

**OVER THE YEARS I HAVE  
BOUGHT RAFFLE TICKETS  
WITH THAT NUMBER AND, AS  
YOU'D EXPECT, NOTHING!**

## Useful Contact Numbers

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

**RAFA** - The Royal Air Force Association:- 0800 018 2361

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

**The Royal British Legion** - RBL:- 08457 725 725

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

**Public Records Office Kew** Richmond Surrey TW9 4DU

**VETERANS AGENCY and BADGES** - Telephone: 0800 169 3458

**If hard of hearing:** 0800 169 2277  
**Overseas callers** - +44 1253 866 043

**BLESMA** - British Limbless Ex Servicemen's Association -

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

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## That's How The Fight Started

One year, a husband decided to buy his mother-in-law a Cemetery plot as a christmas gift. The next year, he didn't buy her a gift. When she asked him why, he replied, "Well, you still haven't used the gift I bought you last year."

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My wife walked into the den and asked, "What's on the TV", and I replied, "**Dust!**"

**And that's how the fight started!**

Ron Brown is guilty of sending

# U.S. Air Forces in Europe

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**Team Mildenhall assists  
RAF Airmen with speedy  
redeployment by Staff Sgt  
Austin M May, 100th Air  
Refuelling Wing Public Affairs.  
9/3/09**

## **RAF MILDENHALL, ENGLAND**

When service members return home after a six-month deployment, the fewer things standing between them and their loved ones the better.

Knowing that, Team Mildenhall wasted no time in helping about 150 Royal Air Force members returning from Afghanistan get through the necessary return procedures and on their way home, March 4th in fact, landing here had cut their journey by several hours.

“Flying into Mildenhall avoids a long bus journey and enables to be reunited with their families much more quickly,” Squadron Leader Rick Fryer, RAF Station Commander here stated in an e-mail “This is especially important after a long after a long deployment and already long flight”.

The group is part of 1 Squadron RAF Regiment based at RAF Honington, about 30 minutes from Mildenhall. They spent the last six months at Khandahar Air Base Afghanistan, where their primary mission was force protection.

Typically, the group would have landed at RAF Brize Norton, near Oxford, and boarded buses for a five-hour ride to their home station. The scheduled adjustment was well received by the returning service members. “This is very good for morale,” said Flight Sergeant “Scouse” Taylor, who said the entire group was “itching to get home.” He recognised Team Mildenhall’s contribution to their rapid return and said, “Thanks to the American

military for all their help.”

The junior members of the group echoed Flt/Sgt Taylor’s sentiment. “This is brilliant,” said RAF SAC, Judy Bloomfield, who was looking forward to having coffee with her mother, “One of the worst parts of deployment is the travelling back and forth.”

No matter where home is, coming back from a long deployment is something service members look forward to, and helping the members of 1 Squadron get home quickly was something Senior Airman Matt Brandt, 727th Aircraft Mobility Squadron, was more than happy to do it. “You can definitely see the look of appreciation on their faces” he said while he helped the returnees’ transition through Customs. “ You can tell they appreciate even seemingly small things, like taking luggage carts back so they don’t have to”

Arian Brandt, who has deployed himself, said “This shows how we we’re united”, he added. With brothers and sisters in arms, serving in locations around the world, today’s military members know all too well the stresses of being away from their families. The efforts put forth by members of Team Mildenhall are recognised at all levels. “This is a classic demonstration of the willingness

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and ability of the United States Air Force and the Royal Air Force to work together “ Squadron Leader Fryer said.

## **RAF Hercules The Last to Leave Iraq May 2009 Source: MoD**

As the drawdown in Iraq gathers pace, RAF Hercules aircraft and their crews will be the last to fly out

of the region later this year, - report by Neale Adams. (At the time of typing this report in June, it has already happened).

Having been the mainstay of operations since May 2003, the aircraft are helping transport more than 4,000 troops and their kit back to the U.K.

24,30,47 and 70 Squadrons based at RAF Lyneham have all been deployed to Iraq over the last six years, with the first two Squadrons using the ‘J’ variant of the C-130, spending the most time in Basra and the Middle East.

A permanent deployment of engineers, ground and air crew, (made up from all four squadrons), has been working through freezing conditions, sand storms and intense heat in Iraq since the beginning.

For those of 30 Squadron, the drawdown is business as usual, Officer Commanding 30 Squadron, Wing Commander Mike Wilson, said, “The drawdown is exactly like a Relief in Place, but just going one way. Troops are not being taken from the U.K. back to Iraq.

Certainly by the end of July our footprint in the Gulf will hopefully have gone completely as a Herc detachment. A major challenge will be to ensure the Hercules flights out of the theatre are on time to link up with Charter aircraft at another Base in the Middle East. They will then fly the troops back to the U.K. The Hercules has been vital in all areas of operations, including more recently of flying a greater number of VIPs in and out of Iraq. Major General Andy Salmon, the last British General Officer Commanding, was flown out as the British handed control of military operations at Basra Airport to the Americans earlier this year. “

Squadron Leader Dave Stewart, a C130 pilot, has recently

# C-17 Aircraft Flies To Milestone

**Team Mildenhall assists RAF Airmen with speedy redeployment by Staff Sgt Austin M May, 100th Air Refuelling Wing Public Affairs. 9/3/09**

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Squadron Leader Dave Stewart, a C130 pilot, has recently returned from Iraq and has spent what he

# Whatever Happened to RAF West Raynham?

**History** - RAF West Raynham closed for service use in July 1994 after 55 years of military activity. Situated six miles by road from Fakenham in the depths of rural Norfolk the station was isolated but for much of its life but a vibrant base for flying activity.

Built as a bomber station, construction started in 1938 with the first aircraft arriving in May 1939. During WW2 Blenheims were the main aircraft to use the station the first seeing action in July 1940. Two concrete runways were built in 1943, together with a perimeter track and aircraft hard standings. At its peak a total of 3114 personnel were stationed at West Raynham, least we not forget a total of 86 aircraft were lost on operations during the war and many souls perished.

Peacetime brought the Central Fighter Establishment to West Raynham, staying until 1962 but fighters would continue to be based there until 1969 (plus don't forget to ask where the napalm carrying Hunters that bombed the Tory Canyon flew from!), this period also saw development flying of the Kestrel (aka P1127 and Harrier), but by 1975 all flying operations had finished. The Bloodhound missile facility, which included both an operational battery and global servicing facilities, remained until 1991 and eventually the station was closed in 1994.

For nearly 15 years the only activity at West Raynham was in a section of the Married Quarters where units of the Norfolk and other Police Constabularies carried out 'closed to view' training activities, plus of course the sheep grazed the Airfield! In more recent years the Airfield and Technical Site reverberated to the sound of motor sport for one day each November as a local motor club held a single venue rally.

**My Experience** - My own tenure at West Raynham was brief; arriving in June 1971 (with brown knees from Akrotiri) I was surprised to discover that the camp was more or less under a 'care and maintenance' regime. With a staff of two in the Photo Section we fought over jobs that came in, although I had the upper hand – 50% of me belonged to the Missile Development Flight and my Corporal was only 100% Station Photo, although to the best of my recollections I only went to the Missile Site three or four times in the total of my 15 months at Raynham and one of those visits was for the AOC's Inspection.

My relaxed tour was interrupted by the arrival of 100 Squadron flying Canberras when the Squadron was reformed in February 1972, to provide target towing facilities for RAF fighter squadrons, later undertaking specialist electronic warfare training. A low point during my tour was the loss of a Canberra

of 100 Squadron crashing soon after take-off into the wood at Bradmore Herne after just two and a half miles of flight – both crewmembers were killed. I was detailed to be the photographer to accompany the senior investigating officer. I visited the crash site on a number of occasions, initially within hours of the accident. It was a sad and depressing place, I frequently pass the site on a near-by road and my thoughts are always drawn to the loss of the Pilot and Navigator who perished that day – casualties of the Cold War.

To fill the time in we refurbished the Photo Section (mostly D-I-Y) and to this day the blinds I installed in the Studio still hang square! I departed for Berlin in August 1972.

**The Future** - In the spring of 2005 the West Raynham 'estate' was sold for £9 million, but only after considerable pressure from the immediate population and support from the local MP. With its isolation and poor local road infrastructure and little hope of industrial development the future of the Airfield and Technical areas appears bleak, even the sale of the considerably dilapidated housing stock, some 172 dwellings appears difficult.

In November 2006 I signed on as an official for the once-a-year motor sport event, and promptly wandered off to re-visit the once vibrant station I had known. My single room in Block 104 still had its curtains hanging, furniture in place and key in door, considering I had last been there 34 years before it was a bit scary! Trees grow in the tarmac tennis courts, three inches in girth, sheep graze on the succulent grass in front of the Airmen's Restaurant (the SWO would be chuffed), wildlife abounds and the once managed trees and gardens have expanded to fill every available space. Guttering is blocked and overflowing, paint peels everywhere and pathways erode. Sad – no just nature just taking back its own.

**Today** - Our local radio station started in January 2008 running adverts for the disposal of Married Quarters, with two bedroom terrace houses available from £99k, tidied up with new uPVC doors and windows and the gardens managed. I don't know the lie of the land in your area but in Norfolk (even in an isolated location) that is as 'cheap-as-chips'! Plus it includes sports facilities (you could always run around the airfield!) and local shopping; I guess that means a re-borne NAAFI Shop!

**John Lewis – RAF 1961/75**

# Letters to the Editor - From Robert Folsom, Massachusetts, U.S.A.

My friend, Steve Doran, thought that the readers of Flashpoint might be interested in what we colonials did during WWII, especially my experience with Fire Fighting. Since the U.S. Navy made sure that every enlisted man knew about fire, and how to cope with it. In all, I had six weeks of Fire Fighting in my four years of duty. Eight friends of mine, all 16 and 17 years old travelled up to Boston and joined the Navy all at once, wrongly thinking we would all be together, it was June 14<sup>th</sup> 1944, and I had just turned 16 two days before.

Of the eight of us, I only saw two fellows afterwards, Ed Bushey was on the Missouri and we pulled up on the other side of the doc. I spotted his long nose. I yelled across the dock and asked him if he had Liberty and he said, "Yes", and we planned to meet later on, I went down to my compartment and heard noises that told me we were leaving dock, That's the last I saw of him, I looked at the local paper, many years later and found he had made President of the local bank.

The only other fellow that joined up at the same time was Joe Vittori, and he had changed over to the Marines, and he and I had spent a beer filled Sunday afternoon together. He later was killed in Korea, and won the Congressional Medal of Honour for his bravery. Anyway, I was sent to Bainbridge, Maryland for Boot Camp. Since I knew the manual of arms, close order drill, etc, having been in the Sea Scouts, Boy Scouts and Civil Air Patrol Cadets, and also having had a sail boat since I was eight years old, I really liked Boot camp; Knot tying was a cinch.

Then we had Fire fighting school, all of a sudden, Boot camp was no fun. I almost choked to death, lost my eyebrows, was scalded, almost drowned, and in general was scared to death. The week at Fire fighting school started off quite quietly with a day at classroom. They taught us the trinity of combustion, Fuel, Ignition and Oxygen. We were taught the various forms of fighting fire, the nozzles, the chemical extinguisher, even the new foam was demonstrated. We were amazed it smelled strongly of liquorice.

The next day all hell broke loose. They covered a large swimming pool with gasoline and then set it on fire, a large sailor appeared and dived in and swam under the flames, about half way he emerged with arms crossed above his head and fanning them outwards, pushing the burning gasoline away, he took a breath and continued to finish his swim. Me being first, fully

clothed, I dived in and began swimming under the burning gas. I was surprised how much my clothing slowed me down. I at last made it to the centre, but had to come up for air and with my arms crossed; out I came, pushing the burning fuel away from me. One thing, it was hotter than blazes, and the gasoline had pretty much used up all the oxygen.

I took a couple of breaths of rotten, hot air and continued on. I got three quarters and I had to breathe, I emerged and had the same unsatisfying result as the first time. I finally made it and a couple of sailors snatched me out of the burning cauldron. I was too exhausted to tell my fellow classmates what they were in for; I was trying too hard to catch my breath. Spent the rest of the day watching the rest of my boot mates variously getting roasted and asphyxiated number of them required Oxygen to restore their life. All great fun!

The next day was Napalm day. They took a tank and filled it with gasoline, put some purple powder in it and electrically set it alight, and we were set too close to it, our collective eyebrows vaporized and we all got an instant St Augustine tan. I grabbed the nozzle while two guys backed me up. I paid no attention to the nozzle settings and put it on fine spray, which turned out was the perfect setting for this type of fire. It cooled things off.

And so it went on, we put out aircraft fires using foam, Electrical fires using chemicals, all kinds of fires. We would go into a frame building and find the smouldering source of a fire. We learned Damage control and had to shore a bad leak in a bulkhead before we were drowned. The water got up to our necks in the compartment.

They saved the best thing for last, which was a burning Quonset hut, a bunch of smouldering mattresses provided both copious amounts of smoke and heat. The inside of the building was like engineering compartment onboard a ship with grating and railings but set on a maze. We went in and it was apparent that the railings were too hot to touch. The smoke was blinding and hurt your eyes; you got down low as instructed and somehow, backing against the railings found our way through.

We came out at the far end of the Quonset hut and would be retching for air, some passed out and a couple of guys got rid of their lunch. Some of the instructors would go in wearing RBA apparatus just in case someone fainted during their travels. It's been 65 years and I can still

remember the stench of the mattresses and the tangible fear I felt. I got lucky in my tests and was assigned to the Air Group and not the ships company, and felt that put the end to Fire fighting.

I went through Radioman's/Gunnery school at NAS Memphis, and had a rough time with Morse code but finally got my speed up enough to pass. We had to wait for assignment and would you believe it, they sent us to Fire Fighting School, and we repeated the things we had done in Boot camp, only this time we went inside a burning Airliner, and actually rescued dummies that weighed 200 pounds, and I only weighed 125 pounds, and that was some load to carry through the smoke.

Finally I got assigned to Jacksonville in Florida, which was in the A & R Division, and would take F4-U Corsairs, F6-F Hellcats and SB2C Helldivers. They would come to us as a shell with everything taken out of them, and we would proceed to make them flyable again. I was on the assembly lines for 8 weeks learning how the planes went together, the people that worked the assembly lines were all civilians, and I had the pick of sweet southern girl friends.

I then got transferred to flight test Hangar, and we would take the newly remanufactured aircraft and set them up for flight-testing. We would check out the electrics, hydraulics, run taxi tests, set the compass deviations and bore sight the guns. We had a guy from Maine, name of Bob Hanson; he was a fun guy to have around with his Maine accent but he was not too popular with the Leading Chief, and had came off a tour of mess cooking imposed on him by our Leading Chief for some infraction or other. Now we had changed over to FG-1D from F-4Us. The aircraft looked very much alike, however, the FG-1D had a more powerful engine with an updraft carburettor. Now you start an aircraft with the mixture full rich, sort of like starting your car with the choke pulled out for you guys that drove real cars. Anyway, depending how long you crank the engine, excess gasoline or petrol spills out in the cowl, the engine starts and suddenly you got an aircraft gloriously in flames, in that case close the cowl flaps,

**Continued on page 10**



# Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

I thought you would like to see this e-mail I received I only hope that if I live to her age I could write a letter like it. Subject is a bit long-winded but oh so worth it.

Best Wishes,

**Tony Smith**, 122 Note: Tony now lives in Thailand and his email address is: [bancha\\_tony@hotmail.com](mailto:bancha_tony@hotmail.com)

## SENIOR MOMENT?

(I HOPE I HAVE THEM LIKE THIS)?

An elderly lady actually wrote this letter to her bank. The bank manager thought it amusing enough to have it published in The Times and I thought we'd all enjoy it.

Dear Sir,

I am writing to thank you for bouncing my cheque with which I endeavoured to pay my plumber last month. By my calculations, three 'nanoseconds' must have elapsed between his presenting the cheque and the arrival in my account of the funds needed to honour it. I refer, of course, to the automatic monthly deposit of my Pension, an arrangement, which, I admit, has been in place for only eight years. You are to be commended for seizing that brief window of opportunity, and also for debiting my account £30 by way of penalty for the inconvenience caused to your bank.. My thankfulness springs from the manner in which this incident has caused me to rethink my errant financial ways

I noticed that whereas I personally attend to your telephone calls and letters, when I try to contact you I am confronted by the impersonal, overcharging, pre-recorded, faceless entity, which your bank has become. From now on, I, like you, choose only to deal

with a flesh-and-blood person. My mortgage and loan payments will therefore and hereafter no longer be automatic, but will arrive at your bank by cheque, addressed personally and confidentially to an employee at your bank whom you must nominate. Be aware that it is an offence under the Postal Act for any other person to open such an envelope.

Please find attached an Application Contact Status, which I require your chosen employee to complete. I am sorry it runs to eight pages, but in order that I know as much about him or her as your bank knows about me, there is no alternative. Assets and liabilities) must be accompanied by documented proof. In due course, I will issue your employee with a PIN number, which he/she must quote in dealings with me. I regret that it cannot be shorter than 28 digits but, again, I have modelled it on the number of button presses required of me to access my account balance on your phone bank service. As they say, imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. Let me level the playing field even further. When you call me, press buttons as follows:

1. To make an appointment to see me.
2. To query a missing payment.
3. To transfer the call to my living room in case I am there.
4. To transfer the call to my bedroom in case I am sleeping.
5. To transfer the call to my toilet in case I am attending to nature.
6. To transfer the call to my

mobile phone if I am not at home.

7. To leave a message on my computer (a password to access my computer is required. A password will be communicated to you at a later date to the Authorized Contact.)
8. To return to the main menu and to listen to options 1 through to 8.
9. To make a general complaint or inquiry, the contact will then be put on hold, pending the attention of my automated answering service.

Although this may, on occasion, involve a lengthy wait, uplifting music will play for the duration of the call. Regrettably, but again following your example, I must also levy an establishment fee to cover the setting up of this new arrangement. May I wish you a happy, if ever so slightly less prosperous, New Year?

Your Humble Client

---

Addendum from The Editor: IMPORTANT to REMEMBER that this letter was written by a lady who is a 98 year old woman;

DOESN'T SHE MAKE YOU PROUD!!!

Top Guns Arrive Back in town

Britains fearsome jump jet

Force return home from the

# Letters to the Editor - Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

Occupational hazards such as posttraumatic distress disorder are a modern event, not recognised in days of yore by the RAF, or any other Fire Service. Fortunately, work related stress, (as opposed to throttle your Sgt i/c) occurs only with a small minority of people. Most simply get on with the job, but, and it's a big but, idiotic legislation that has grouped everyone employed in a professional capacity together in order to cover the minority.

That's not to say we didn't have stress, we just did not recognise it, and therefore it was not a problem. Personally, I became an expert on stress from watching the behaviour of my fellow Firemen! Who among us didn't feel the rush of adrenaline when attending an incident, or even called out to one? We all loved it, but it was stress, for most of us it got better when we knew we had done a good job.

I attended the first V-Bomber crash, (A Victor at Cottesmore), from which all five crew survived, prior to that, the backseaters mostly did not, I relished the occasion, not only because I was off duty and was there because I flagged down a passing Mk 6, but because we had created our own stress relief by forcing a new entrance through a hedge into a field which the farmer later said was a perfect angle for his tractor!

We were so stressed, that we had to force ourselves to drink the two milking buckets full of Ruddles Best Bitter that two local cops offered free of charge from the backseat of their Police car. God was that stressful; do they still have policemen like that? Stress was coping in those quiet moments back in the section when you had loaded some poor sod into a body bag, then went for a beer afterwards. The smart ones shifted their concentration to who's round it was at the subsequent crew quiet drink, and promptly forgot about it, or did they?

There was one NCO who shall remain nameless, who was a nervous wreck each time the squawk box uttered it's dulcet tones, we should get some smokes in here for the nervous ones, He also did the most and loudest talking after the event. Another Cpl was filling in a crash report after a Javelin had unsuccessfully tried to leap a mossie ditch. "Which way is West" he asked? Numerous fingers pointed in the correct direction, "You sure" he asks? Yep, the sun comes up over there and sinks over there " silent chewing of pencil. " Is that in every country"? Very Stressful.

I witnessed an argument between a certain SNCO and the then Fire Officer, a Flt/Lt, which resulted in the Sgt grabbing the officer with both hands around the throat. Now as an airman, albeit an experienced airman, when you see such an event you tend to disbelief. Certainly when asked you quickly develop selective vision. "I was watching that Javelin falling over Sir, never saw a thing."

Javelin's, incidentally, had an armament safety brake in the starboard wheel well. The trainer version didn't, but when one crashed, carrying dummy missiles, one goes looking for the safety brake, only to be told, after spending pointless time under a hot, metal ticking, dead aircraft, that "T" birds don't have a safety brake, didn't we tell you"?

He bought his own bloody pint that night. Another somewhat overbearing Cpl, commenced a headless chicken like circuit around a Hunter which had just run into a barrier, screaming, "FOAM, I want FOAM" when there was no fire. His request was eventually realised by a solid jet of the stuff, close enough to flatten him. Very Stressful Driving back to the Crash bay with tears of laughter in your eyes was also, Very Stressful!

## Continued from page 8

gun the engine and blow out the flames, No big deal.

However, Bob did not follow procedures with the handbrake engaged. This is the reason for his lack of popularity with the Leading Chief; instead he was holding the aircraft with the toe brakes.

With all these flames coming towards him, Bob did the expected and baled out, hitting the ground running, the aircraft meanwhile unattended started to taxi all by itself fully ablaze. We all stood awestruck at what was happening, as it went down the ramp missing a couple of hangars but caught the wingtip on another, drove the nose into the cylinder block side of another. In spite of shards of propeller flying everywhere, the chief climbed in and shut the engine off, while 2 seamen who had been to fire School, put out the flames with CO2. **Many thanks for that, Bob - Ed.**

## Douglas Bader Honoured

**Wartime RAF hero, Sir Douglas Bader, has been commemorated with an English Heritage blue plaque outside the London home where he lived for more than 25 years.**

**The plaque marks Bader's outstanding wartime achievements, which is all the more remarkable given that he suffered a double amputation in 1931 following a horrendous aircraft crash.**

**In response to the accident, Bader committed a typically laconic reflection to his logbook, recalling 'Crashed slow rolling near ground. 'Bad show.'**

# Letters to the Editor - RAF Catterick - March 1966

In March 1966 I was posted to RAF Catterick to start my basic training as an RAF Fireman. It was a twelve-week very intensive course, which was to provide me with the basis for employment for the rest of my working life, not that I knew it at the time.

Naturally as with most things, sods law lends a helping hand, and our course was a one off, and instead of just a normal course of about ten or twelve trainees, we also had the same amount of lads from the Maltese Air Force on our course training to be firemen, which gave the course an extra element of competition.

Our instructor was a Londoner, Sgt Worthington, known to us behind his back obviously as Bass Worthington. As the course was about double the normal size we had a Cpl instructor whose name now escapes me, but I remember he was a Geordie with a sense of humour, I wasn't to know it at the time, but over the ensuing years I've found the majority of Geordies I have met are daft in a nice way, with a great sense of fun.

Fire Training was a fifty-fifty split between theory and practical, the difference between square bashing and trade training was enormous. Yes, we were still marched to everywhere, we still bulled our equipment and billet, but that is where the bullshit stopped, the emphasis was on turning out skilled Crash and Rescue Firemen.

Physical training I was pleased to find had now reverted to the normal RAF standard of once a week, which on a normal RAF station is voluntary, but compulsory on training units. It was done every Wednesday afternoon, but as I still hated sport this was once a week too much for me, and a way had to be found to dodge soccer in particular and sport in general.

The Army came to my rescue; even they have their uses, in the shape of a swimming pool at the Army garrison at Catterick. By the time we had got an RAF bus there and had a half hour splash around in the pool without military supervision, it was time to go back to Catterick and the end of sports afternoon for another week.

There was so much to learn, theory of every kind related to Fire Fighting was taught to us in the classroom during the working day and then we were expected to study every night because at the end of each week we had to pass a progress test.

Nearly all theory had to be done in practice from using fire extinguishers to fire pumps. One fire pump we used was laughingly known as a lightweight trailer pump but it took four men to carry it! With this basic pump we used to practice dry drills, as well as using it for what it was supposed to be for. We would go down to the river Swale, which ran straight through the camp. I seem to remember slipping in to it on a couple of occasions, which I didn't think was funny at the time, but it gave the others something to laugh at until they did the same.

We can now jump ahead to the first Posting, R.A.F. Scampton. It was sometime in July 1966 that I arrived at Scampton, and on my first night was in trouble. The previous night being so close to home I thought I would nip home for the night and report the next day, which would have been alright except I'd not taken into consideration the rural bus system, which wound it's way around Lincolnshire at a tortoise speed, meaning I was

late reporting in. So I got a quick ear bending from some pen pushing Cpl and started with the arrival procedure. **Note:** I am afraid this is where I have to leave the balance of the story to everyone, I have read the lot, (357 pages), and altogether it is fascinating reading up to year 2005, his early childhood years, pre RAF were very much the same as mine. ED

## Welcome to the Hot Seat

During my basic Firemans course at Catterick in 1966, we were given a lecture on the "Remote BA". I seem to recall that this piece of equipment consisted of a facemask, 2 lengths of corrugated hose, each 38 feet in length and a filter, which had a fairly large spike attached..

# The British Fire Services Association

Registered Office: 8 Clover House, Boston Road, Sleaford, Lincs NG34 7HD Tel/Fax: 01526 830255 - E.mail: CrouDerri@aol.com Web:www.bfsa.org.uk

Editor Flashpoint

Dear Editor,

## FIRE SERVICE VETERANS BADGE

I am pleased to advise you that a *Fire Service Veterans Badge* has now been initiated and made available to all qualifying personnel within the military criteria.

As you may be aware HM Government indicated that this project would be State funded and requested that The British Fire Services Association be the sole supplier: Unfortunately, Government funding failed to materialize, however the project progressed with valuable input being obtained from numerous sectors of the service. The final design was chosen and is now available for distribution.

The Military Services Veterans badge had no minimum service level attached to it however it was felt that for the Fire Service a minimum service of 5 years should be inserted unless required to retire earlier on the grounds of ill health or injury.

To enable the badge to be self-funding it was agreed that a nominal charge of £5 be charged for the boxed badge. **Please send your order including your full postal address and postcode and your cheque or postal order for £5 made payable to: The British Fire Services Association, 8 Clover House, Boston Road, Sleaford, Lincolnshire NG34 7HD**

**Note: Please do not send order and payment to the Association.**

Yours faithfully,



&

presentation box.

*Derrick Crouch*, General Secretary BFSA

for, National Chairman, 11<sup>th</sup> November 2008

Badge - 25 mm across – colours - Silver 8-point Star. Gold Fire Service Veteran Centre helmet with crossed axes on red background, in red

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**I read with interest the item about the Commer Carrier**, and remember driving the Bantam Carrier years ago, which was a bit of a nightmare as the suspension was so soft, if you hit a bump the thing would go bouncing down the road like a kangaroo and anything carried in the back would jump around unless it was tied down. I would hate to drive it at speed on modern roads with all the speed bumps, I doubt if you would be able to drive it safely at more than 20mph?

The Author also mentioned the Austin Domestic: well I was stationed at WRAF depot Spitalgate in 1961 when they took our Bedford Domestic and sent us an Austin Domestic in it's place. What a vehicle it was with canvas curtains at the back instead of doors. An MT driver drove it all the way from the Rehabilitation Centre in Surrey to Spitalgate. I reckon it must have taken a couple of days it was so slow. In the back the hose rack must have been made by a Fireman as it was made of pieces of 4 x 2, one of the nails was 6in with about 3in sticking out, and very handy for hanging things on?

In the winter of 1963 during the freezing weather, the 5 way valve froze solid, so our dear leader, Cpl Gideon "Jock" Webster, (a nut case if ever I saw one), got a small crowbar and tried to force the wheel round. We tried to tell him to thaw it out first, but being the Cpl he knew best, needless to say he broke it and it never worked again as long as I was there! A good removal truck but no good as a Fire truck!

**Ron Brown** Mem 294

# The Origins of the Fire Service badge



## The Fire Service Badge - Did you know?

The design of the British Fire Service badge is based upon the eight-pointed star with the points or 'tenets' of the star representing the following qualities: 1. Tact 2. Gallantry 3. Dexterity 4. Observation 5. Perseverance 6. Loyalty 7. Explicitness 8. Sympathy

**The eight-pointed star is in fact based on the cross of St John.** It originated in the Maltese Cross, the emblem of the Knights of Malta, and was used by the Knights of St John of Jerusalem at the time of the crusades.



The Knights of St John of Jerusalem were primarily a charitable, non-military organisation that existed between the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The knights or, 'hospitallers' adopted a white or silver cross on a dark background, as they were known, because of their charity toward the sick and poor in setting up hospices and hospitals. Later they did in fact assist the knights of the crusades with their goodwill and also military assistance in an effort to win back the Holy Land.

The Knights of St John eventually moved to the island of Malta and so the symbol became known as the Maltese Cross. The need for an identifiable emblem for the Knights was crucial, due to the extensive armour, which covered their body and faces. In battle the Knights were unable to distinguish friend from foe.

During the battles of the Holy Wars, one of the Saracens used fire extensively as a weapon. As the Crusaders advanced upon the walls of a city the Saracens resorted to throwing burning naphtha and oil upon the advancing knights. At sea, the Saracens would sail war vessels containing naphtha, resin and sulphur into the vessels of the knights.

Many Knights of St John were called upon to perform heroic deeds, as well as rescue fellow Knights and extinguish fires. In acknowledgement of their bravery, these Knights wore a Maltese Cross that was decorated and inscribed in acclaim for their actions. It is, perhaps, here that the first association of the cross with firefighters was born?

**Use by Fire Services** - The line between myth and truth is not exactly known, but it can be said without contradiction that the Maltese Cross and also any derivatives are regarded as a symbol of protection and courage. It does, perhaps, in simple terms identify with the fact that a firefighter who wears the badge could, and sometimes do, lay down his/her life for others in the same way as the Crusaders sacrificed their lives so many years ago.

It is not known when the star was first used in this country for the badge. However the earliest example found is, the brass eight-pointed star adopted for use by the National Fire Brigades Association in 1887. This Association, prior to the formation of the National Fire Service in 1942, was one of the main organisations that existed nationally who provided many of the uniforms, medals, rules, training and technical standards for fire brigades throughout the country.

**Auxiliary Fire Service** - In 1938 when the Auxiliary Fire Service was formed, the Home Office adopted the eight-pointed star and then, upon the formation of the National Fire Service in 1942, used the same pattern with the top 'tenet' being the King's Crown.

In March 1948, prior to the formation of the Local Authority Brigades, the Home Office published a National Fire Service Circular detailing the new rank markings and style of cap badge, which was to be based on the chromium eight-pointed star with the centre being of a design specific to each individual fire brigade.

**Note:** Information is courtesy of the British Fire Services Association and the 8-pointed Star forms the basis for many badges, including the RAF Crash Fire Rescue Service and the Defence Fire and Rescue Services, except for the top point being replaced by a Crown – Ed.

# Spottiest Bum in the RAF?

I did one very worthy detachment while at Seletar. This was to provide rescue cover for Prince Philip on a visit to Trengannau, in eastern Malaya. We had to cover HRH's visit and were to land one hour before the Andover aircraft, set up a rescue base, remain while the VIPs visited a Sultan, and then give cover during the take off.

My crew were Cpl Brian Hadfield and Senior Aircraftman, Malcolm Bulloch. We all assembled at my house at twenty to five (AM), where Jean had laid on hot breakfast and coffee. When we arrived at R.A.F. Changi, we found that our jeep had already been loaded into the belly of a Bristol Freighter, (Bristol 'Frightener'), of the Royal Australian Air Force, and we duly took ourselves to the departure lounge to await our call to emplane.

Among the few people in the lounge was a large swarthy character in Army uniform who kept himself well apart from us. It was when the 'Tannoy' announced the departure of the Bristol Freighter to Kuala Trengannau that he got up and joined us. It was then that we noticed the grey beret and S.A.S badge.

One important lesson that I learnt in the R.A.F. was that you never questioned their activities, so he joined us on the aircraft. The flight up was uneventful, but as we circled the jungle airstrip the S.A.S. type suddenly demanded from Brian Hadfield, "How big is Kuala Lumpur?" Brian told him it was a huge city. "Well, where is it" he asked, "Why" asked Brian. "Well, that's where I'm supposed to be," came the reply "Well mate, it's about seven hundred miles West of here, but you're S.A.S, so if you get your kit on, you should make it by sunset!"

The poor devil had only got himself on the wrong aircraft. Suppressed giggles followed this. Well, you can't go around upsetting the S.A.S. can you? Not with their reputations!

On landing we pulled the jeep out of the aircraft and after checking it, were informed that the Royal Aircraft would be landing in two hours. Great! time for a swim in the South China sea. So the poor old crash jeep transported eight men down through the coconut and rubber plantations to the most beautiful beach imaginable.

Laughing like schoolboys on an unexpected trip we stripped off to the buff and dived into the clear warm water. After a while I became aware of Malcolm shaking with silent laughter. I moved over and asked him, "What the hell was so funny?" "Have you seen the M.O.'s bum?" he spluttered? I admitted that I hadn't really been looking; just then the poor old Doc did a surface dive, which exposed his huge buttocks. I have never in my life seen such a sorry sight; he must have been suffering from terminal buttock Acne!

The whole of his rear end was covered in blue, red and mauve spots. Some arriving, some established and others departing. Malcolm spluttered, "You think that being a doctor, he would have cured that." Then Brian Hatfield joined in with his own brand of humour, which although aimed at this poor hapless individual, left us in paroxysm of laughter. The beautiful thing was that the M.O. never suspected that the source of our merriment was his nether end. Such was Service humour!

Eventually we returned to the landing strip to watch the Andover land. As we set up position, we were joined by the S.A.S. Cpl who informed us that he had been swimming in a "mSunger", (Swamp). Apparently he was too ashamed of himself to accompany us. The skippers of the two aircraft had a quick conference and with H.R.H.'s permission he disappeared into the VIP aircraft, which was going to Kuala Lumpur anyway.

The aircraft took off safely and after loading the crash jeep into the Bristol Freighter; we left this beautiful spot and returned to Singapore. We arrived home about eleven o'clock to find a meal laid on for us by Jean which was devoured to an accompaniment of snorts and giggles and uproarious laughter when Brian and Malcolm regaled the tale of, "The spottiest bum in the Royal Air Force." **The End!**

**Note:** If this item is yours, can you please contact me so I can acknowledge it? Thank you - Ed.

There was a man who worked for the Post Office, whose job was to process all the mail with illegible addresses. One day, a letter came addressed in a shaky handwriting to God with no actual address and opened it. **It Read:**

*Dear God,*

*I am an 83 year old widow, living on a very small pension. Yesterday someone stole my purse with £100 in it, which was all the money I had until my next pension payment.*

*Next Sunday is Christmas and I have invited two of my friends over for dinner but without that money, I have nothing to buy food with; I have no family to turn to, and you are my only hope. Can you help please?*

*Sincerely, Edna.*

The Postal worker was quite touched and showed the letter to all the other workers. Each one dug into his or her wallet and came up with a few pounds. By the time he had made the rounds, he had collected £96, which they put into an envelope and sent it to the woman. The rest of the day, all the workers felt a warm glow thinking of Edna and the dinner she would be able to share with her friends.

Christmas came and went. A few days later, another letter came from the same old lady to God, and all the workers gathered around as the letter was opened. **(PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 20)**

# Gutersloh 1948



**GUTERSLOH 1948**

The above photo is a Tempest 11 about to take off with 2500lb bombs, using the original metal track runway. Notice the paintwork on the front of the????? Can anyone put a name to the Crash Tender?

I think this was runway 9. Sometimes an aircraft would come back with a hang up, it was then that we moved round to the back of the tender, and sometimes even though the pilot would do his best and not do a heavy landing, the weapon would fall off. We did suggest to the Runway controller that when a pilot came back with a hanger, he should ask for him to touch down when he had passed us, then we would all survive for another day. Please excuse the quality of the photo; it is nearly as old as I am myself.

At this time with a metal track runway it caused us a lot of bother because of the worn joints, which used to work loose, and if an aircraft caught one it invariably caused a puncture. If it was a Squadron take off and an aircraft in the middle of the formation got a puncture, and we happened to spot it in time, the controller would notify the pilot. We would then dash out and help the pilot manoeuvre out of the formation to give room for the rest to take off. The things we did to earn a crust, but it broke the boredom up. The machine shown

above for those who have not seen it before has quite a story attached to it. Around 2000 I had an email from a German Soldier Fireman Instructor, who was writing a book about the fire appliances used by the Occupation

Forces in Germany. Somehow he had got hold of a copy of my book, and asked me if I could help with naming the machine above and where it had been used? I wrote back and said no such machine had

**“They refused the idea on the grounds that the tracks would tear up the perimeter tracks, even though on the half-track they were rubber?”**

existed as far as I knew. He then wrote back and said the photo had been sent to him from someone in the U.S.A who was also writing a similar book (the original photo showed RAF roundels on it). After a few more emails I thought there is

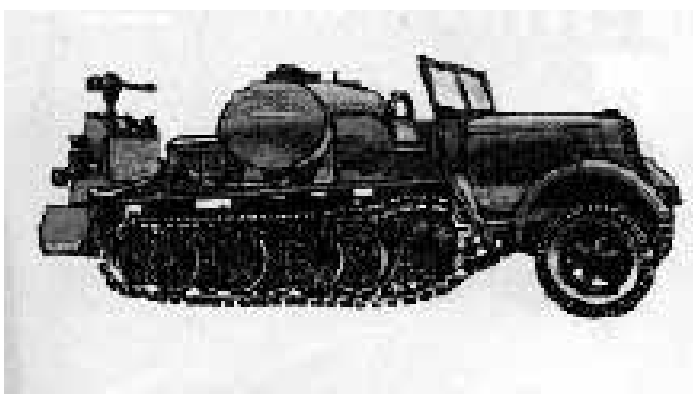
one man who would know about it if it really did exist? I phoned our late President, John Arthur, one night and explained the problem, and did he know anything about the machine. In his Scottish accent he said, “Yes of course I do, I built the B++++y thing.” About an hour

later I had the full story, as the say, “Straight from the horse’s mouth.” Which is as follows:

At Fassburg the bombing range was behind the notorious Concentration Camp of Belsen out on the Luneburg Heath, and there were lots of tanks left over from the War to fire rockets at. We could not get too close because of the condition of the surface, and the first time I saw it I questioned, “How are we going to get out there if needed?” There was no answer. John solved the problem.

As you leave the main road there was a R.E.M.E. depot and John knew the Major i/c, whom he said owed him a favour. In the forest behind the depot were a stack of German half-tracks and when you put the two situations together if you are John Arthur, you have an answer. So the magnificent machine was built, apparently he showed it off to other Airfields in the area, and they all liked it.

But when the Boffins who then existed in the bowels of the Air Ministry saw the machine, they did not like it because they had not had the same idea before



John. Never mind the problem of getting to rescue a pilot being solved, they refused the idea on the grounds that the tracks would tear up the perimeter tracks, even though on the half-track they were rubber? John was ordered to put everything back as it was! As you can imagine, while he was telling me all this, Magazines he gave those

# Another blast from the past – Afghanistan 2002!

The following is an incident, which occurred during my detachment to Afghanistan (2002) on “OP Fingal”. A detachment of RAF Firefighters was tasked to provide fire cover for the airfield and domestic site as part of a multi national International Security Assistance force.

On Friday 26 April 2002 I was duty crew commander at Kabul International Airport, having commenced the night shift at 2000hrs. My opposite crew commander, was over at the main APOD, (AIR Point of Disembarkation), building doing some typing, and one of the SACs was in the same area doing his weekly call home. Everyone else was at the Fire Section, which was set a fair distance from APOD. Most of the lads were in accommodation tents at the rear of the Section compound but I was in the Control/Rest room with the two firefighters that were our duty guard force, (we always had 2 Firefighters on “live armed guard” throughout the hours of darkness due to the then current threats, and our distance from the APOD). We also had our own personal weapons and ammunition, which was secured, in our own armoury.)

At approx 2250hrs, we heard a loud, unusual but vaguely familiar sound directly overhead. It took only a second or two for the memories of all the old John Wayne films to confirm what was going on, and a loud Scouse voice shouting, “ We are under attack”, as he ran through the vehicle bay towards the armoury. That was indeed the scenario being played out around us.

A quick head count revealed that only one person was unaccounted for, the BOSS! One of the lads stuck his head round the door of the SNCO’s bedroom to find the boss asleep. He was quickly alerted to the situation and joined the rest of us donning body armour, helmets and drawing weapons from the armoury. In his defence it was his first day in Kabul after a very tiring trip, but thereafter dubbed himself the “Cool Commander”.

Two of the Firefighters reported that they had heard and felt something fly between them as they made their way from the tent to the shelter. By 2255hrs everyone was booted and suited and armed, and we passed our status report to the ground cell at the APOD. At this point Dusty, Ray and myself climbed the old tower which is attached to the Fire Section to try and spot where the rockets were coming from, and to take up defensive positions should the Section come under small arms attack? Thankfully it didn’t and the attack consisted of three rockets.

At approx 0035hrs we concluded that the attack was over, and we came down from the tower to the main Fire Section building, and Cpl Higgins and mWysself moved out of the main building into the compound at the rear of the section to check for damage and UXB, by torchlight. Just a couple of minutes into the search I found a large piece of shrapnel lying against one of our accommodation tents. It had ripped through the tent material and come to rest on a down therm hose (hot air blower), which it had also ripped.

I am sorry I cannot finish the story until the next issue, and I hope the Firemen involved made good use



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.This incident happened when I was at RAF Luqa I was the Cpl i/c crash crew and had been on on all night and there was an exercise on DXM as it was called, we had a standown as there was no air movements pending when suddenly the crash bells sounded for no apparent reason,I got on the RT to the tower and was told an aircraft on the exercise had crashed at Paul’s Bay at the north end of Malta,we were given a map reference and off we went.

Taking the shortest route I could driving the Rescue landroverI was going as fast as possible on the road, not much better than a cart track when suddenly a farmer driving a donkey and cart loaded with hay came towards me, there was very little room to get by and had to brush by the load of hay which promptly fell into the open topped land rover covering both my mate Johnny wilson and myself ( A bit like Will Hay films years ago driving through a farm yard).

Anyway we got there to find an RN fighter plane had been diving in a mock shootup of some Army anti aircraft guns and failed to pull out and hit the deck and exploded,it had set fire to some wooden shutters on some nearby houses, nothing we could mdo for the pilot, the medics took him to mortuary,so ended another day in the life of an RAF Fireman, thinking back I would not wanted to miss it, I met some great mates many of whom I am still in contact with 50 years later.

TERRY WRIGHT



# Health advice/warning from George Edwards

**T**wo weeks before the October 2008 Association reunion I was diagnosed with skin Cancer, a Basal Cell Carcinoma and Cancer of the Oesophagus and stomach. During the examination with a skin Cancer Consultant, he asked if I had spent any time in the sun? I mentioned that I had completed two twelve-month tours in the Persian Gulf, (RAF Masirah and RAF Sharjah).

**The Consultant was of the opinion that the Cancer could be attributed directly to the time spent abroad in the Armed Forces and encouraged me to contact the Veterans Agency with a view to seeking compensation. I took the advice of the Consultant and duly contacted the Veterans Agency,\* (see contact details below), and have recently received a compensation payment of just over £2000.**

The signs and symptoms of this type of Cancer are easy to spot. In my case I thought it was a pimple that never seemed to go away. My wife Anne insisted I see my G.P. and when I eventually saw him, and asked him to have a look at the pimple on my back, he made an urgent referral to a skin specialist. As it was, the Cancer was not malignant, but had I left it any longer it may well have eaten it's way into my lung and caused irreparable damage. The Cancer was subsequently surgically removed.

**The moral to this little story is:** - To our colleagues currently serving in hot climes, protect your skin. I would never have thought that forty years after my sunny tours I would pay the price for the many hours spent on the volley ball court or swimming in the Indian Ocean, and then occasionally working on a blisteringly hot Airfield unprotected from the sun.

**To the old timers like myself, check your skin regularly ask a friend or family member to check your back, and if you do end up having surgery make sure that you claim for what you are entitled.**

If you need any further information obviously consult your G.P. or you can obtain information from the British Association of Dermatologists at [www.bad.org.uk/leafletsbasal.asp](http://www.bad.org.uk/leafletsbasal.asp)

In relation to my Oesophageal and stomach Cancer that was a significantly more serious and life threatening Cancer, but I live to tell the tale. As part of my recovery and coming to terms process I have produced a pamphlet entitled "Cancer a personal perspective."

One of the many disappointments I subsequently suffered as a result of my sudden demise was not being able to attend the 2008 Cenotaph Parade with my Association friends and colleagues. I had been selected by Parade Marshall Ron Brown to lead our contingent, a great honour, sadly that was now out of the question.

However, Ron arranged for Brian Ford to take on the mantle and I was delighted that the Union Jack Club agreed to transfer the room that I had booked about a year previously, to Brian.

I came out of hospital a few days before the Cenotaph Parade and was able to watch it at home. It did cheer me up enormously to see our lads on parade resplendent as ever but I was disappointed I couldn't be with them.

All being well boy's I shall be with you this year, and I promise to have some new jokes. Finally, Anne and I would like to thank all those Association members, too many to name personally who sent get well messages, which were greatly appreciated.

Every Good Wish,

*George Edwards member 238*

**In reference to above claims:** Some years ago my son was in the Territorial Army, and because of his training with weapons his hearing was damaged. He later tried to join the RAF, but because of his impaired hearing he was only offered Cook/Clerk etc, but wanted action. (With apologies to Cooks and Clerks).

During the second Association reunion at Shoreham it was mentioned about the claims procedure for people who were injured during their service etc. He made a claim and has been receiving a pension since- ED.

**The \*Veterans Agency have been contacted and confirmed they deal with skin cancer enquiries and you can ring them on: 0800 169 3458 or if hard of hearing: 0800 169 2277 text phone or Overseas**

# CANBERRA XM 244 Crash RAF Manston 9<sup>th</sup> June 1965

**History in Brief** - RAF History Museum, Manston Road, Ramsgate, Kent CT12 5DF T: 01843 825224



**The history of the airfield from 1916 to the present day,** and use by the RAF and civil airlines from the 1930's. In 1996, Manston's satellite station

RAF Ash was closed, and in 1999, it was decided to close the RAF Manston base. The MOD decided to keep the central fire training school (CTE) facility open, and almost the entirety of the 'domestic' side of the base became FSCTE Manston (Fire Services Central Training Establishment). The 'airside' portion of the base was signed over to the commercial operator of Kent International Airport.

**In 1916 Manston started its Aviation days as a Royal Naval Station, with a base at Westgate Bay for seaplanes.** The passenger terminal on the area now, occupied the early airfield.

**By 1917 Manston airfield** had grown to include four underground hangars, its own railway line to Birchington, a power station to generate electricity, barracks for 3,000 men and even an indoor swimming pool.

**After WW1, training of airmen in airframe maintenance and engine repairs was taught in the School of Technical Training.**

**1940 and WW2 brought the Battle of Britain. Barnes Wallis arrived in 1943 to test his bouncing bomb** at nearby Reculver, before the Dam busters carried out their famous raid. **Roland Beaumont arrived with the Typhoon,** which came to be the most successful ground attack aircraft in WW2.

**The first jet fighters arrived at Manston, to attack flying bombs** (1944's version of the cruise missile).

**The longest and widest runway in Southern England was built** to allow badly damaged aircraft returning from Europe a safe haven, **with the Fido fog dispersal system to allow landings**

**in any weather.**

**1950 saw the Americans arrive** and stayed for eight years.

**1960 saw Manston returned to the RAF as a major diversionary airfield for aircraft in trouble** and the **fire school was formed** to train RAF firemen in everything from aircraft fires to rescuing car crash victims. **Civil aviation companies arrived** and took 700,000 people on their first foreign holidays in one year.

**In the mid 1960's the first air-sea-rescue helicopters arrived,** and rescued many more holidaymakers than airmen. **The air experience squadron arrived with their Chipmunk aircraft** to give many an air cadet their first flight.

**1969: The RAF helicopters left** and a civilian company took over.

**1974: The RAF air sea rescue helicopters returned.** At the same time two of the prototype bouncing bombs were recovered from the beach at Reculver. The team who achieved the first man-powered flight across the English Channel carried out trials here. The next year another team did it using solar power.

**In 1980,** and after a 40-year wait, **new houses were built for married and single personnel.**

**1981: Ash radar station was rebuilt, and with the expansion of the Fire Training School, Manston was going through one of its busy periods.**

**In January 1982, 25 civil airlines were diverted to Manston.** 1982 also saw many aid flights to Africa and other war torn parts of the world.

**1988: Manston held its first air show since the 1950's.** 1996: It was decided that RAF Ash should be closed down, due to the end of the cold war.

**1999: The closure of RAF Manston was announced,** so after 80 years the RAF was leaving. The civil part of the airport was to continue, and offers for the remainder were sought.

**Manston closed on the 31 March 1999,** and is now a civilian airport called London Manston.

**Note:** An in depth full colour article on the MOD Fire Services Central Training Establishment, (FSCTE), was featured in Flashpoint, in the September 2007 edition, and both the front cover and centre spread photos were courtesy of the Fire School archive.

The following photographs show English Electric Canberra, XM 244, after crash landing at RAF Manston on the 9th June 1965.

Does anyone remember the incident or have any details such as, a foam path being laid and, if so, how and with what equipment? They are from the archive of the RAF Manston History Museum Website.

The photograph file sizes are quite small at around 20KB up to 25.6KB and will likely distort if enlarged the hope but that they reproduce well enough to be recognisable - ED



# News From the Past

## WHAT IS A FIREFIGHTER?

Between the security of childhood and insecurity of second childhood, we find a fascinating group of humanity called Fire Fighters. They come in all shapes and sizes. In red trucks, dirty crash kit, in various barrack rooms, in love, in pubs and always in debt.

Officers are never sure of them, the public tolerate them, and girls love them and government supports them.

A fire Fighter is Clint Eastwood when playing cards, Jenson Button when he drives a fire truck, he's Steve McQueen and will fight a Towering Inferno on only half a dozen pints.

He has the energy of a tortoise, the slyness of a fox, the brains of Einstein, the stories of a sea captain, the sincerity of a born liar and the inspiration of Casanova.

Some of his interests are girls, women, females, dames and members of the of the opposite sex and his favourite football teams.

His dislikes are CCS, wearing uniforms, getting his hair cut, Police NCOs, losing his beer leg and getting up in the morning.

No-one else could cram into one pocket of his fire tunic, a dirty handkerchief, a packet of crushed cigarettes, a picture of girl friend (wife or mother), a comb, a pack of darts, a bottle opener, a poster of his favourite football team and what's left of last months pay.

He likes to spend his money on women, beer, fast cars, slow horses, football pools and the rest, foolishly!

A Firefighter is a magical creature, you can throw him out of your home, lock him out of your office, but not your heart. You can scratch him from the nominal roll but not out of your mind.

He is your one and only bleary-eyed good for nothing bundle of worries.

But all your dreams become real again when your office door opens and he stands there with your mug of tea, looks you straight in the eye with those bloodshot eyes of his and say's: **Hi boss, can I have some leave???????** Originally from Fire Fighters at RAF Coningsby.

**IN DAYS GONE BY.** Fire Brigades were ruled with a rod of iron, and punishments for any breach of discipline were often Ludicrously severe, These were days of the 132 hour week, spent on duty, when permission had to be obtained from the Chief Officer to get married.

Some of the offences appearing in the Leeds Police, Fire Brigade Discipline Offence Book during the late 1880s and 90s make interesting reading.

PCs reprimanded for drinking in Public house whilst off duty.

PC48 fined 2/6d by the Chief Fire Officer for want of energy.

PC44 fined 2/6 by the Chief Fire Officer for being found coming out of a tripe shop smoking a clay pipe.

PC119 severely cautioned for swearing on the annual fireman's outing.

PC90 very severely cautioned for kicking a Fire Brigade horse.

PC118 suspended for 4 days and transferred to another station for allowing a girl on to the Fire Station and subsequently being seen drinking with her in a Public house.

PC3 awarded loss of one day's leave for gossiping with a colleague from 2.30 to 2.34 pm.

PC84 fined 5 shillings (25 p) for smoking and kissing a woman whilst absenting himself from his post.

Generally each offence also carried a reduction of service; as a result it took one fireman 33 years to reach the 10 years service award. Oh for the good

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old days?

## THE THOUGHTS OF A SENIOR MEMBER

A row of bottles on my shelf  
Caused me to analyse myself  
One yellow pill I have to pop  
Goes to my heart so it won't pop

A little white one that I take  
Goes to my hands so they won't  
shake

The blue ones that I use a lot  
Tells me I'm happy when I'm not

The purple pill goes to my brain  
And tells me I have no pain  
The capsules tell me not to wheeze  
Or cough or choke or even sneeze

The red ones, smallest of them all  
Goes to my blood so it won't fall  
The orange ones, very big and bright  
Prevent my leg cramps in the night

Such an array of brilliant pills

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Helping to cure all kind of ills  
But what I'd really like to know  
Is, what tells each one where to go?

## LINE SHOOTING

### NO 6 SQUADRON 1988

The squadron was deployed to the Danish Air Force base at Tirstrup, and the pilots were enjoying a pint or three outside a tent. A nameless Sqdn/Ldr Flight Commander had changed and appeared wearing a rather fetching T-shirt with the logo "Pratt and Whitney" (makers of aero engines). After a short lull in the conversation a squadron pilot interjected. "Hey boss I didn't know your wife was called Whitney?"

3 Squadron 1973 - Weather report for Leeming passed on by Odiham Met. Office. "Vertical visibility zero." From pilot, "Is that in feet or metres?"

Overheard in ATC, "Pilot to control Tower. What is your cloud cover?" Control Tower, "Ten eighths at 100 feet." Pilot, "How can you have ten eighths"? Control Tower, "Well, yesterday we had eight, eighths and today it is much thicker."

"Navigator to Pilot, come one degree to port please." Pilot, "Oh for Pete's sake that's impossible. I can't fly to one degree!"

After a couple of minutes silence, Navigator. "Four degrees starboard please."

Another one minute's silence then, "Navigator to Pilot, come five

# Remembrance Day Parade Sunday 8th November

## REMEMBRANCE DAY PARADE WHITEHALL - LONDON - SUNDAY 8th. NOVEMBER 2009

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

**All ticket applications should be sent to me as soon as possible and no later than mid/late September 2009**

Surname:..... First name: ..... Membership number: .....

Address:.....

.....

..... Postcode: ..... Tel No:.....

Signed:..... Date.....2009

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

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

**Send to:- Ron Brown, 38 Sedgebrook, Liden, Swindon, Wiltshire SN3 6EY - Tel: 01793 496 307**

**or email: brownie158@btinternet.com**

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

**Late application** - Anyone *not* applying for a ticket immediately but finding later, that they may be able to attend the Parade on the day after all, can ring me direct as I *may* have a spare ticket available, but don't leave it too late!

**Note:** Travel and accommodation are your responsibility, but the following might be helpful:-

**The Union Jack Club, Sandell Street, London Tel. 020 7928 481**

**Victory Services Club, 63/79 Seymour Street, London W2 2HF Tel: 020 7616 8302 Fax: 020 7616 8344 email: mem@vsc.co.uk**

**It is in your interest to check prices before booking.**

**Dress on this special occasion** - Blazer & Badge, Tie, Medals, Veteran's Badge and Beret with RAF or Crash Fire Rescue Badge please.\*\*

1)\*\* It helps to show up the badge on Parade by placing a circle of red material behind it as per photo right.

**Important Note: Mobile phones must be switched off before entering Horse Guards Parade.**

**Please make every effort to attend. Thank you.**

**AN EXPERIENCE NEVER TO BE FORGOTTEN!**

**Ron Brown** member 294

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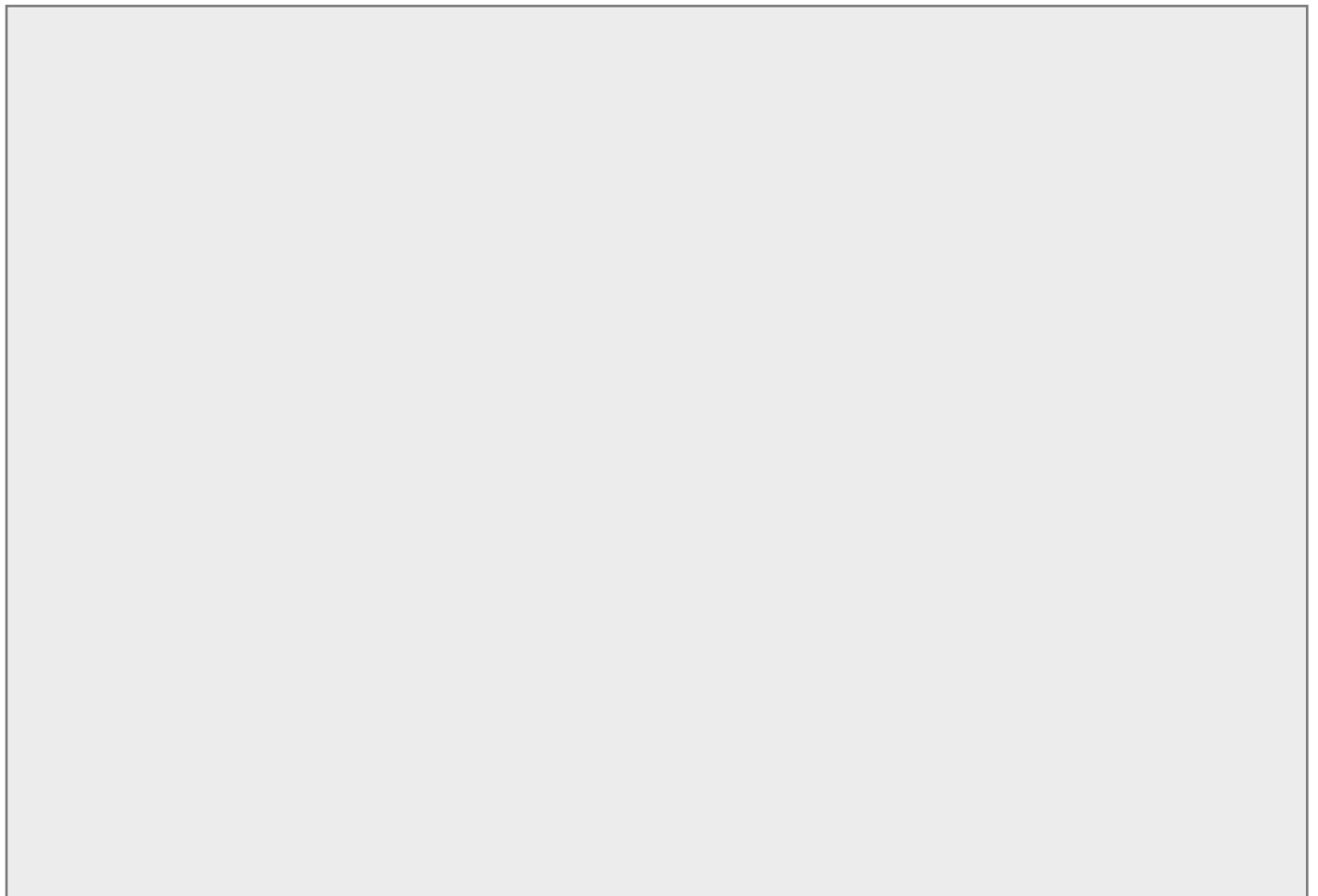
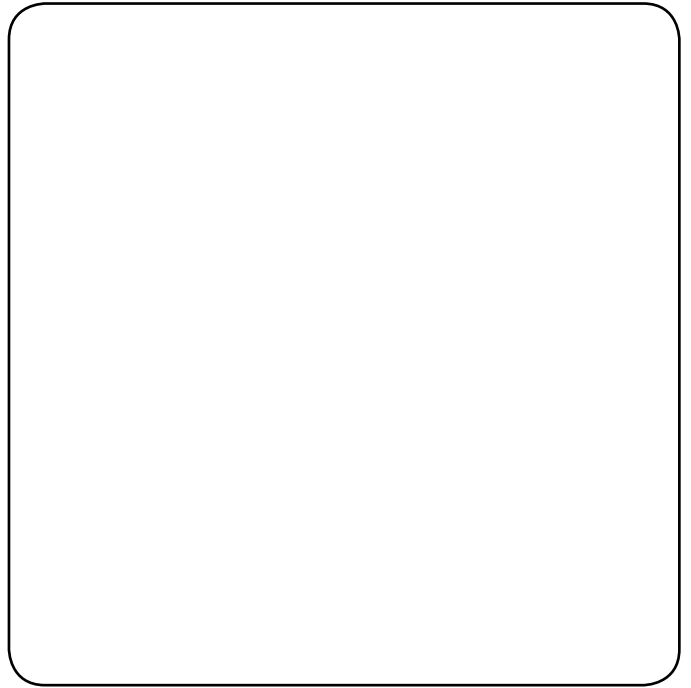
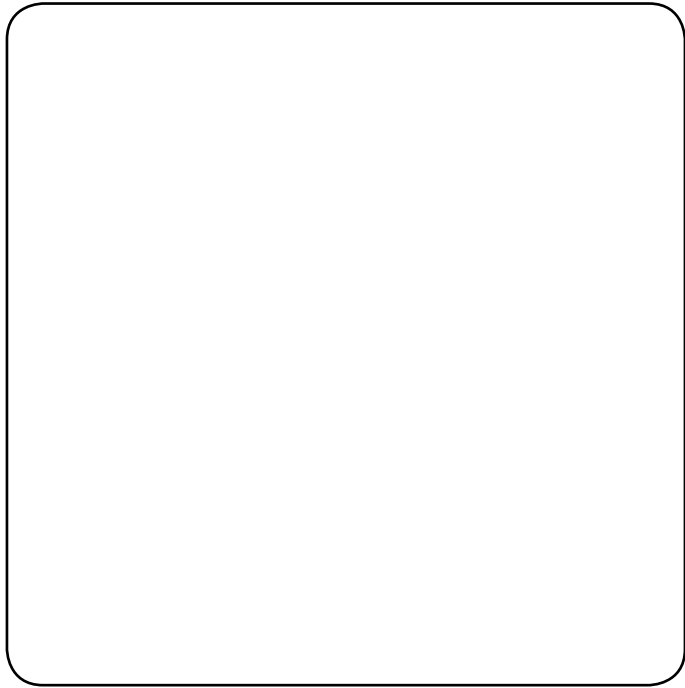
**Continued from page 14: -**

Dear God,

*How can I ever thank you enough for what you did for me? Because of your gift of love, I was able to fix a glorious dinner for my friends. We had a very nice day and I told my friends of your wonderful gift. By the way, there was £4 missing, I think it was those b\*\*\*\*\*s at the post office? Edna*

# In Memoriam - Obituaries

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# 'Smokey's' Tales of Yesteryear !

Time has marched on, there was justice in the world after all, and our labour for King and country had been duly recognised. An establishment had been made for Corporals in charge of Crash crews. Four of us had been elevated to the exalted and noble rank. Much swaggering was seen around the station, and even more around the local hostelrys and village halls.

We were Kings of the castle, Lords of all we surveyed, until the gang on the section of whom we had been a part of a little time earlier sorted that out, back to reality. I was on standby early one morning and on answering the phone, the duty Cpl at the guardroom on the WAAF site said, "Can you come down here straight away"? I was a bit surprised, for, although I knew her I didn't think it was well enough for her to ring and invite me at 4.30 am? She soon sorted out the delusion by saying "there's a b\*\*\*y great pig in the EWS tank, come and get it out."

So, casting fear aside we bravely set out to invade the holy of holies, the WAAF quarters, it was midsummer and broad daylight by now and as we arrived we were bedazzled by the sight of so many lovely ladies in various states of dishabille, (for you rough lot that means, partly or scantily clothed, I've looked it up in the dictionary, so there)

Many and varied were the pyjamas around that EWS tank as the ladies watched the aquatic display of a large white sow, we watched the display of many desirables, but we were quickly brought back to earth by a formidable lady, a Fsgt i/c discipline, who in her spare time could have worked as a chucker out in a fairground wrestling booth, told us to stop \*\*\*\*ing about and get that \*\*\*\*ing pig out of there, I think we quickly grasped what she would like us to do. So off came the ropes of the truck, and rather fancying ourselves as cowboys tried to lasso it. Ever tried it?

Roy Rogers made it look easy but he was away doing a film at the time. Anyway it was decided that one of us would go into the tank and get a rope under it so we could pull it out. I looked at the crew, and they looked back at me, and, being a very democratic section I was told, "You are the one with the tapes, you do it". So in I went to loud applause: I would have liked to have responded in a like manner, but it was difficult to bow from the waste down when you are up to your chest in water.

After a lot of splashing I managed to get a rope under it and it was pulled to the side and we got a second rope around it, and with about twenty WAAFs on each rope and lots of giggling and squealing (that was just the Fire crew) and a lot of heave hoing we hauled her out? She lay on her side for a while panting then got up and ran for the hills. By this time I was all wet and muddy, in fact, pig sick. I said, "What the heck, let her go as she will find her own way home." Then to our delight the F/Sgt actually smiled at us and invited us to the guardroom for a cuppa.

Later in the day I received a phone call and was "asked" if I would like to go and see the W/Co i/c Admin, (I will always love the way I was ASKED if I would like to go and see the W/Co admin). Like to go? I was terrified, you normally only saw him on the front row at church parades and ENSA shows.

I duly presented myself at the orderly room where I was ushered into the "Office" The last time I had been in such high office i had been marched in with my hat off. The Wingco smiled (I thought am I in the real world) and said he had received a phone call from a farmer who wished to thank the Fire crew who had pulled one of his sows out of the water tank and would we present ourselves at the Guard Room at 1500 that Sunday.

The Wingco said he knew we were off duty, (I didn't think he knew we even existed), that's all Cpl, dismiss. We duly reported on the Sunday and met the farmer who piled us into his van and took us back to his farm for a fantastic Sunday tea, a real treat, better than the cold stuff we got at camp on a Sunday.

As I mentioned earlier, this was a big sow and some weeks later I was handed an envelope that contained a £5 note, some days after he got her back she gave birth to 14 little porkers which would have been lost along with the mother if we hadn't got her out. Needless to say, 'some stuff was supped' and shared with the other crew.

An interesting sequel to this tale,....Many years, (many, many years), later when I was doing a stint on Gan, I was asked to do a desert island disc type program, during the course of which, I told the tale of "the pig in the tank".

The next day a young Cpl came to me and told me his mother told him about this incident from her time in the WAAF. I was pleased about this for two reasons, one, that someone remembered our brave deed

# RAFDFA Shop

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

Regards and best wishes, Allan and Marilyn

**Contact details: - Allan and Marilyn Brooke, 20 Chestnut Grove, Farndon, Newark, Nottinghamshire NG24 3TW 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 @ AUTUMN 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 FLEECEES.....	£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).



# RAF Leeming in Action

