



FLASHPOINT

ROYAL AIR FORCE & DEFENCE FIRE SERVICES ASSOCIATION MAGAZINE



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**RAFDFA 20 YEARS ON – GAN CRASH – BEDFORD TK APPEAL –
NATIONAL MEMORIAL – MORE NUCLEAR EXPERIENCES**

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Cover Picture

I am grateful to the member who sent in this picture of twins at the school, but who are they?



May I start by thanking all the members who have contributed articles to this edition, it has made my job so much easier and has spared you guys having to read too much about my trip to India!

This just confirms you all have a story to tell, and I know instinctively that there are further tales behind those submitted. So get on it lads, don't worry about spelling and formatting we can sort all that for you. If you want the magazine to survive get writing.

I would like to draw your attention to the museum article by Steve Shirley, Steve and his team are hoping to secure a piece of our heritage and can only do this with our help, so please give generously to the TK appeal.

Optimistically I was hoping to have a piece in this edition about the successful restoration of my TACR2a, sadly that is not going to be the case. I know I don't need to tell the museum team this, but when planning a restoration you need to be realistic in your expectations. I purchased the truck in February, when, on closer inspection, I discovered the condition to

be graver than I feared.

Since then it spent 9 weeks in a workshop with nothing happening to it, because I foolishly told the guy I was in no hurry! Anyway I took it away from him and got another guy to do the work and there has been some progress.

So far the floors have been replaced on driver and passenger side, there are new inner and outer Cills on both sides and the roof directly above the windscreen has been replaced. Both door A posts have been replaced and she has been undersealed.

Last time I saw her she had been rubbed down and was awaiting respray, it's now been 9 months since I first got her, and I hope in the next edition to be able to show you the finished job, watch this space but don't hold your breath!

Since the last edition the Rugby World Cup has been and gone, and as I said, I was a volunteer for the tournament. I ended up being at all three games at St James' Park in Newcastle and have to say it was a thoroughly enjoyable experience.

Members may wish to note that volunteers were of all ages and from all walks of life and all over the world, the uniforms were issued free and we all got; Polo shirt, Rugby Shirt, Trousers, Rucksack, socks, trainers and waterproof coat (the coats cost £270!!) so if you get an opportunity to volunteer at a sporting event go for it.

For the second year I was able to join our band of brothers at the annual national service of remembrance at the Cenotaph. Some 25 of us were there, sadly 5 colleagues were unable to attend. I would like to express my personal thanks to Ron Brown for organising this every year and would urge all members to attend at least once.

Elsewhere in the magazine is a piece from a serving colleague, Flt Sgt Steve Pickston concerning the National Memorial and a further piece from Trevor Hayes our Treasurer. This memorial is do-able and if we all contribute it will happen sooner rather than later.

Finally, I would like to wish you all a merry Xmas and a prosperous New Year.

Dave Kirk

I am pleased to include this item from the DFRMO newsletter "Outlet" congratulations Dave

FIREFIGHTER DAVE KIRK RETIREMENT D04 RAF FYLINGDALES

After over 40 years service with the RAF Fire Service (20 years) and DFRS (20 years) FF Dave Kirk retired on 27th May 2015. Dave was innovative in the creation of a Web Site for the Fire Section at Fylingdales long before the introduction of MOSS which was utilised by many fire stations to access many fire related documents. Dave had been a keen First Aid instructor during his career and influenced the First Aid training

at Fylingdales including specialist AED training. SDM Alex Middleton attended the Fire Station on 7th May where a letter of appreciation from the CFO was presented. A retirement function was held at Whitby Rugby Club on 29th May 15 which was attended by family, friends and work colleagues both current and old where Dave was presented with an engraved Hip Flask and vouchers for golf equipment.



Pictured are: Dave with his crew mates from L to R: FF Dan Watson, FF Martin Harrison, FF Dave Kirk, CM Mark Storr and FF Paul Hutchinson.



Pictured are: SDM Alex Middleton with Dave and SM Jim Davis

Letters to the Flashpoint editor

Hi Adrian,

Just read the last edition of the mag and saw a reference WO McCaffery, I was stationed with him at Marham 1974-77. Perhaps I could use the following to expand on my experience of him.

From Dec 1961 - OCT86 my period as a Fireman, I was at different times involved with Bloodhound, Blue Steel, Thor, Sidewinder, etc etc then there was the Pocket Rocket, yep! He was that and some more.

I remember fixing the front wheel bearings on his car (in the bays) ready for the weekend and with disruptions, (as you do with the job), I put it in the wrong way round, OOPS!! Taking it out of the bay it sort of broke but I saved the day and worked extra hard that he was able to get away.

The last info I had of Eddie was he failed to get home one weekend and they found him in his car on the Road side!!!! that was after his wife rang asking of his whereabouts...???

I was posted in February 77 and lost touch. Yes he left a lasting good impression on my career and many others.

Perhaps you could find space in the mag for this small acknowledgement to a fellow fireman and many others that are great memories for me, many who are I'm afraid

nameless, as the fog is slowly gaining ground, and many have been consigned to the obituaries but never forgotten.

I will try to send a few more entries for consideration in the near future.

I should ask if there is anyone out there who can remember a Fireman called JIMMIE stationed at Ballykelly 1963-65, he passed away while I was there but I cannot remember his Last name. He was from ELGIN and they returned him home in a Shackleton. Mk 2. There was a cross placed on the surround in Westminster Abbey last remembrance day relating to him, memories are grand when you can share.

If you wish to contact me, in addition to e-mail mobile 07772247295 or 01269594065

Regards
Brian E Jones Ex Sgt



Dear Adey,

I have just noted in the RBL publication that an old colleague, Jim Crome, is looking to contact old colleagues. He is looking for pals he served with at RAF Oakington 1953-54. Name that Truck.

Kind regards Ray Wood 118

Hi Adrian,

This attached photo I found on the rails in the Westminster Abbey garden last year. I remember Jimmie but not his last name, he had a girl friend in the Coleraine area and I had given him a lift back to camp. On one of those events it was pouring with rain also high winds and he was walking up the hill towards Limavady, with only his jacket over his head.

With the car full he ended up in the boot, he used to sleep some times in the Gas Works and get a lift to camp with another fireman who lived locally in Port Rush, John McGonnagall!!! I think that was his name, if spelling is correct. Another young life lost too soon. I was Stationed at Ballykelly from 1963 -65

Another memory from my near 26 years while stationed at St Mawgan 1970-72 was the confusion created when someone shouted JONES!!!! there were 4, yes 4 joneses: 813; 248; 007; and the last one I cannot remember. 007 was called Killer (James bond).... and came from North Wales. Myself 813 from S Wales; 248 was English if memory is correct; the last and just as important I cannot remember.

To avoid confusion we were put on different crews and I ended up in the Stores/ maintenance/crew relief, perhaps this position was because of my senior time or I was volunteered for my scrounging ability!!!!?? We will never know!!



Does anyone know of a greater number on one section? On another thought the Welsh Guards passing through the checkpoint to Berlin in the 1960's had, so I've been told, 83 Jones's now we know why the Russians always looked confused and they called it the Cold War. They are having a larf govner.

While on the location of St Mawgan does anyone out there remember The Fire Officers red merc modified by a fireman....fitted with a large clockwork KEY, the same car was driven to Newquay before it was noticed, I do believe in his defence the Boss wore glasses!!!! Pete Davies shame on you, OOPS!! but I love to share a Larf.

Thanks Adrian hope you find space in one corner or other there are many more

Regards
Brian E Jones 813 - Member 79

Dear Adey,

I am happy to say that once again my old mate donkey dick commonly known as AP 957 or Alan Price will be here with us again from UK. I would be only too happy to hear from anyone who remembers me (Spike Lynch) and even happier to put ex water rats up especially old Sutton on Hull men if there are any still around. My mail is arthurhlynch@hotmail.com. Anyone know the whereabouts of the following Tom Scanlon Bob North John Lightfoot Paddy Piggott

National Memorial Arboretum

Royal Air Force Fire & Rescue Service Memorial

From Flt Sgt S Pickston RAF

The national memorial Arboretum is situated in Staffordshire on the edge of the National Forest and is the UK's year-round centre of Remembrance. The memorial grounds are set in a woodland landscape and is home to over 300 memorials including the Armed Forces Memorial. Each of the Armed Services has its own area where trade and squadron memorials are placed for family, friends and colleagues to have a place to remember their loved ones.

In 2008, WO Martin Harris came up with the idea to create an RAF Fire & Rescue Service memorial within the RAF section of the memorial grounds. There is a set of hedges made to look like an SAC rank and the RAF Regiment and RAF Police have a memorial each using 2 parts of the propeller and the idea was to have the third as RAF Fire & Rescue Service memorial meaning of course that the 3 elements of trade group 8 (TG8) had memorials together.

Fund raising started and around £6,800 was raised by serving members of the trade and over the last 2-3 years members of the RAF & Defence Fire Services association have raised a further £3,300 bringing the current raised funds to £10,030. The account itself is in the process of moving across to Lloyds bank where it will attract more interest than the current account (increase from 0.5% to 1.75%).

The potential costs of the memorial have increased since the idea was born and the initial £20,000 cost has increased to nearer £30,000 for a plot, memorial stone and lifetime maintenance fee. With that FS Steve Pickston has recently taken on the role of lead serving member to work alongside Mr Trevor Hayes from the RAF & Defence Fire Services association who has been hard at work fundraising with the association. Steve is in the process of forming a committee with members from each TG8 fire station elected to drive the project forward towards its target.

We plan a number of charity events and initiatives to raise the funds as soon as possible. We have started a just giving crowd funding page for ad-hoc donations and hope soon to have standing order



scheme where persons can donate a small amount each month for continued funds to roll in. A 3 monthly update is also to be produced to keep everybody informed on how the project is looking. For any details or if you would like to help please feel free to contact FS Steve Pickston on 07770721144 or email bnz-tacatfiremgr@mod.uk.

The link for the just giving page is:

<https://crowdfunding.justgiving.com/raffrsmf>

If you haven't visited the memorial it's a special place to visit, with a number of touching memorials, both Military and civilian based in beautiful surroundings. The memorial wall from Camp Bastion has recently been relocated to the memorial site and as most will know the RAF Firefighters who served in Afghanistan met

and carried almost every wounded casualty to leave the battlefield from their aircraft so this is a particularly special place for those personnel but equally a place for all to reflect on those who made the ultimate sacrifice for their Country. Group visits are welcomed and the visitors centre has excellent facilities.



From our Treasurer Trevor Hayes

As at the 31st October, the Memorial Fund stands at £10,310.92. the target is £30,000 +.

I have forwarded copies of the Standing Orders (SO) for the Memorial Fund with a start date of 1st December to Ft SGT Steve Pickston who will distribute them to all Senior Fire Officers at all RAF Stations. So it is a case of watch this space!

I am hoping this will only take 2 more years or so. The maths are simple, for every 100 people giving £3 per month this will equal £3,600 per year, £4 a month will equal £4,800 per year. The average value of the SO's I have received so far is £4.50.

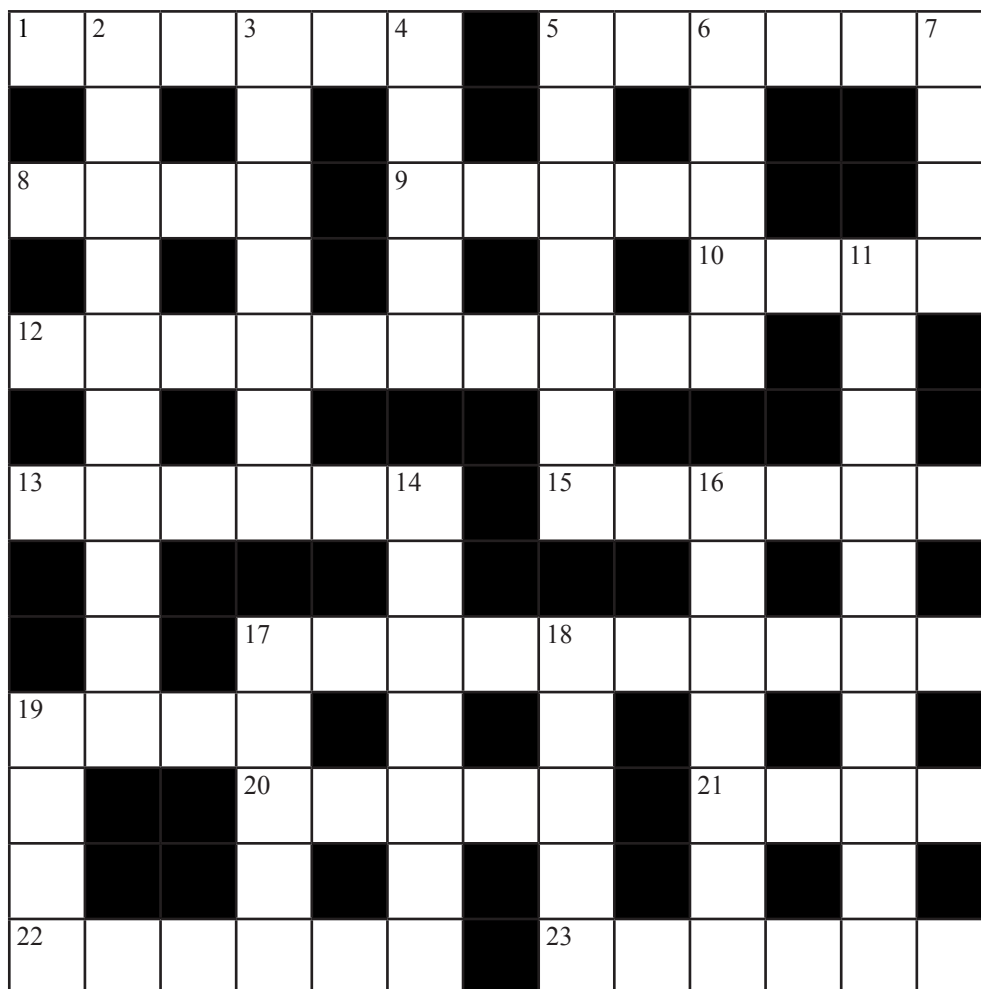
At the AGM, following the example shown by the RAF, I spoke at the meeting to the members regarding making a small donation of between £2 to £5 monthly to the RAF Fire & Rescue Service Memorial Fund by Standing Order (SO), which was very well received and I gave out some 40-50 (SO) forms.

I received 3 completed forms on the day and I have had a number through the post totalling £460 per year.

With the exception of Brian and myself, I have not received any completed SO mandates from the rest of the committee, so, just in case you have forgotten or lost your form, please find one attached for you to copy.

*Best Regards to all
Trevor*

Flashpoint Crossword No 3 by Firefly



Across

1. Boy the German used to climb. (6)
5. Snag, unknown found hauntingly popular. (5)
- 8 & 9. Confused manacle of equipment used to penetrate weapons bay. (4, 5)
- 10 & 22. Shoot stag and alien filled with sand or water? (4, 6)
12. Drunkenly match stair in Limburg Treaty City. (10)
13. "Yes Boss" said the northern matelot. (3, 3)
15. Hang about or tile. (6)
17. Mothers ruin in large mound leads to famous Kentish fighter station. (6, 4)
19. 10 perhaps is a ringer. (4)
20. Adu perhaps, all to change. (5)
21. Touch down on terra firma. (4)
22. See 10
23. Hotel in faith measures jet engine rating. (6)

Down

2. The end is now according to film title. (10)
3. Miss Ted clears ones windscreen? (7)
4. Twelve inch monarch? (4)
5. Suction eye strainer could be laconic. (7)
6. Pinching the foot? (5)
7. Lock university. (4)
11. Plants leer strangely at mosquito coils for instance. (10)
14. Weed in drag worth solving. (7)
16. Her nail splits asthma medication. (7)
17. Fifty in stern is dark. (5)
18. 20 perhaps mixed tiles. (5)
19. Endless doll is spiky. (4)

GET INVOLVED- WE NEED YOUR HELP!

The Museum of RAF Firefighting is trying to save examples of as many RAF and MOD Fire Vehicles as we can and as such we now have a large collection going back to 1943 with the WOT1. Everyone thinks of the Crash Tenders of course, but the Domestic Fleet is just as important. With our limited funds we do what we can when we can, but just occasionally something crops up that is so important we just don't know what to do for the best.

Our current funds are already earmarked for the next year, but we now have the chance to save an important part of our history and we have to come to the membership of our Association to ask for help. We have the opportunity to acquire a Bedford Domestic vehicle which last served at RAF Nocton Hall! We believe that there were only 22 of these vehicles built exclusively for the MOD and as far as I am aware this is the last known survivor.

You may have worked with this type of vehicle if you served on a domestic unit, but many of you will have used it when you went through your basic training at Catterick or Manston. It has slipped through our fingers once before, but now it sits in a dealers yard with first refusal being offered to us. The vehicle is sound, although it will require work to get it up to show condition. I am making a direct appeal to you all to make a donation towards to purchase of this vehicle.

If you can spare any amount of money, no matter how small, I am hopeful that we can get enough money together to purchase this appliance. If you make a donation, we will ensure that your name is recorded either within the appliance or on a display board which will accompany this vehicle where-ever it is exhibited! If you support us in our endeavour would you please send your donation, cheque (made payable to The Museum of RAF Firefighting) or cash, to Steve Shirley, 16 Rutland Way, Scampton, Lincoln. LN1 2UJ. A receipt will be issued back to you by return of post. If we don't get enough money to purchase the vehicle, you will be offered your money back or given the chance to simply donate it to the Museum anyway.

Please dig deep and don't delay. She's currently sitting in a yard out in the open! Lets see if we can all do something positive to save an important piece of our firefighting heritage.



Over the last few months we have continued to make improvements within the Museum with enhanced displays with more items coming out of storage and being exhibited. Visitors continue to bring artefacts and our photographic library continues to grow. There is no doubt, that in years to come this really will form an important part of our attempts to tell the story of RAF Firefighting and that within the MOD to the full.

We must never forget that the Museum tries to tell the story of MOD Firefighting as a whole and with that in mind, it was a real pleasure to welcome the Deputy Chief Officer of DFRMO, DCFO Joel Grey and 11 senior DFRMO officers to the Museum as part of their Service Delivery Board meeting which was held at RAF Scampton and RAF Cranwell over a two day period. Everybody was suitably impressed and the trip down memory lane for many was almost overwhelming. The Deputy was delighted to find a picture of himself on his basic course (as were all of his colleagues!).

We have recently featured on a BBC Radio Lincolnshire show hosted by Melvyn Prior. The interview was split down into daily instalments and broadcast every day. We are hoping to get a link to the entire interview and post it onto our web site for you all to hear.

We are delighted to welcome two more volunteers to the Museum, both ex RAF Firefighters. Kev Brereton and Mick

Goulding have already set to work on a variety of projects and are already wondering what ever happened to their spare time!

We have attended a number of shows with vehicles and our travelling exhibition where we continue to spread the word about MOD Firefighting to the general public. It is a great opportunity to meet new friends along the way and the number of ex RAF Firefighters who come along to say hello is heart warming.

We are hoping to have an open day/ weekend, exclusively for members of the Association next year where the vehicles will be taken out of the display hangar and displayed to the full. Lunch will also be available. We plan to make it a ticket only event with a nominal cost of around £10.00? More details to follow as our plans develop.

Everyone at the Museum would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and would like to close by thanking you all for your on-going support.

WO Steve Shirley MBE, GIFireE.

RAF GAN, HASTINGS AIRCRAFT CRASH: A FIREMANS VIEW

The weather that night, 1st of March 1960 at approximately 20.30 hours was terrible. We all know how bad a tropical storm around the equator can be. The airfield was open, we were expecting a Hastings shortly to arrive and visibility was down to around 20 yards.

I can recall we moved to our normal stand by positions to the side of the runway, and were aware by sound and very limited vision of the aircraft doing a low pass over the runway and consequently over the whole length of the island. It was expected to turn around of course onto its final landing approach, this did not occur.

The crash combine were instructed by air traffic control to enter the active and proceed with caution as it was thought that the aircraft had crashed.

I didn't like that idea very much because with visibility of only a few yards, in the dark and a tropical storm in progress we may have had a coming together with horrible results. We did of course obey and a very nervous travel was carried out along the runway with no crashed aircraft being found.

I radioed back and reported and air traffic control asked if it would be possible to enter the sea and carry out a search. Now all firemen worth their salt know every blade of grass on their airfield, and at Gan at that time there wasn't any grass. But we did know every grain of sand and knew the threshold of the runway, which ran into the sea, was littered with builders' debris as the runway had only recently been built.

It would have been impossible to gain more than a couple of yards into the sea, which would have been no advantage at all so using a more sensible and reliable system I instructed that we swept the approaches with our 13 and 8 inch floodlights.



Although we could not see anything, the survivors of the aircraft, which had indeed crashed into the sea, were in dinghys' and could see our lights. It gave them considerable reassurance that we were aware of their situation and that help was at hand.



The Marine Craft section did sterling work, with contact I believe from a Shackleton which had taken off to search for survivors. While I'm not sure of the timescale I think survivors were being landed at the jetty form around 23.00 hours which seems remarkably quick considering the circumstances we were all working under.

The crash combine had by then been dispatched to the jetty to provide lights and assist people ashore. The first person I helped onto terra firma was Fireman Cpl Bill Grundie who I had previously served

with at Ballykelly. I don't think either of us could believe it!

Bill had lost everything and I recall loaning him 10 shillings. (if you should read this Bill, I definitely don't want my ten bob back. Just the interest will do)

The second and third survivors I helped were two sailors who made some rather disparaging remarks about being in the Navy for 12 years and never even got their feet wet, but the first contact They had with the Royal Air Force we damned near drowned them. (Well at least we pulled them out!)

I'm not sure what timescale the whole incident took, it is 55 years ago after all, however everyone concerned did their very best and I think all of us in the RAF fire service who did their bit that terrible night maintained the high standards expected of us.

More detailed information about the incident may be obtained by visiting www.splashdownontheequator

Regards
Roger Stevens Member 559



RAF Coningsby Station Commanders Cup 2003-2006

I have many memories of my 31 years service in the best trade in the RAF, however I would like to share a sporting one with you all. The Fire Section at Coningsby was part of the Operations Wing, and as such we were used sparingly during the Co's cup campaign.

In sports like swimming, X-country, it's a knock out, the good sports such as football, volleyball (yes even Volleyball) squash, rugby etc etc...the officers and other ranks trades within the Ops world took it upon themselves not to include us.

Needless to say the wing rep was Flt Lt ATC, and she did not like us and used us only when desperate. I have to mention when ever we did take part we usually ended up winning or coming close to winning that event. Anyway the last straw came when football was the event of the month and as usual they decided not to use any firefighters.

Now considering I ran the station football team and had several 1st and second team players in the section, they played the event without us and lost heavily, and came bottom of the competition. I approached OC Ops and asked if the Fire Section could go it alone the following year.

He was not happy with that idea and said we would not be able to fulfil our commitments as the section was too small to compete all 12 sports, so that was the end of that or so I thought. As luck had it we changed bosses and the new boss was all in favour of us going alone especially when I told him how we had been treated over the previous years.

He did say don't let me down and participate in every sport and play fair (mmmm ok boss will try). Now taking into account that Ops Wing usually finish top 3 every year (mainly with our help) we were expected to finish bottom at the end or so the rest of Ops Wing kept telling us.

Our main problem was fielding a team



The Basketball team

for every event and to do that we had to drag the non sporting types on duty to cover the lads whilst they participated in each event, this included the WO on many occasions to man control the room, Fire safety SNCO's to cover SAC Drivers, you get the picture, I think at one point we had a crew of WO I/C 3 X SNCO' drivers and Two day staff Cpls. Every one did their bit to ensure we fielded our strongest team for each event, the result was that at the end of the year we came top of the CO's by a country mile winning 7 out of the 12 disciplines.

Where did Ops end up? Yep you guessed, it bottom of the pile, point proven don't you agree? Now as if that was not achievement enough, we went on to win it three years in a row, peeing a lot of people off, who said we would never survive outside the Ops umbrella, in fact the Station Commander was so impressed that the smallest section on the camp dominated for so long that he let us keep the Cup at the Fire Section permanently, and introduced a shield for the following year. I was very privileged

to have a great bunch of lads and sportsman at my disposal, but without the WO and the other lads who gave up their off duty time to cover the guys it would not have been possible.

It just goes to show that not only do we work well under pressure at work, we work well socially, and that's why we are the best trade in the RAF..... The picture shows us winning the Basketball, now taking in to account Engineering Wing had 3 station players in their team we beat them in the final, through brute force and ignorance, they did not like it up them, none contact sport my Ar\$&.....

Unfortunately I was posted on promotion to Benson 2008, and no one took up the mantle, and why would they as the next O/C Ops ordered us back into fold and the lads lost interest, and did not want to become bit part players again, who can blame them.....

*Terry Monaghan
Sports Rep RAF Coningsby
Fire & Rescue Service
CO's Cup Winners 2005 2006 2007*

I Married a Fireman nearly 60 years ago!

I met him at an engagement party and he said on that first meeting that he was going to marry me, cheeky devil.

He was a soldier then serving in the Royal Scots Greys stationed in South Wales so we didn't see much of each other.

When he was demobbed in 1957 he applied for a job as a fireman at the then Middlesbrough Fire Brigade. He failed the entrance exam and was given six months to pass or he would be out, together we worked on his English and he got through OK. He finished training on Friday, we married on the Saturday and both started work on the Monday.

We lived in digs until we bought a caravan in 1959, an old banger at first then a new 28ft Bluebird Defiant, that was posh but we still had to dig a hole to empty the Elson toilet!! We lived on various sites in the North Riding of Yorkshire.

We both worked in Middlesbrough and travelled to work 20 odd miles each way on an old James, BSA and Norton motorbikes in all weathers, we have scars to prove it!!

We were on the council housing list and in 1962 we were offered a Fire Station house, we were delighted and planned to stay in the service for the duration.

He came home from work one morning in damp smelly cloths with red skin and blood shot eyes after fighting a chemical fire all night. He was furious, I thought it was because of the fire, but no, he had been told that morning another fireman from outside of the Middlesbrough area had been given the house one week before we were due to move in.

That was the end of his time in Middlesbrough Fire Brigade; he went straight off to the recruiting office and in 1962 signed up as an RAF Fireman for 22 years, probably the best decision he was to make!

Bridgenorth for square bashing, easy for an ex soldier, then to the Catterick Fire Squadron for fire training, again easy for an ex civil fireman.

We lived in a RAF hiring in Richmond

whiles at Catterick until he was posted to RAF Carnaby a missile unit and moved into a hiring on the promenade at Bridlington.

We couldn't believe our luck when we received £50.00 disturbance allowance. To put that into perspective, his last week's wages in the fire brigade was £9.00, his first in the RAF, £14.00 with marriage allowance, imagine our delight when we received that 50 quid right out of the blue.

After a few months we moved into our first house at RAF Driffield and we stayed in the same house when he was later posted to RAF Leconfield.

33 Airman's married quarter (AMQ) rent free in those days and all repairs, decorating etc free of charge. These good quality houses were fully furnished including bedding, with solid oak furniture, the floors were linoleum that required polishing and buffing all the time and with small bits of carpet.

We were issued with large 1 x 1mtr boxes to move our personal stuff from station to station, there were no white goods provided, these we had to buy ourselves.

1964 Gan in the Maldive Islands on a twelve month unaccompanied tour for John, it could have been worse, he could have been dead from radiation poisoning by now if he had gone to Christmas Island or Edinburgh Field!!

I moved in with my mum for the year, it was very hard for me and the two kids. Mum was ill for some of the time, and with 10 living in a three bed roomed house it was a crush, but I preferred that to living in special quarters at some RAF station.

Back together again in 1965 John is posted to RAF Finningley, first into digs in Doncaster then into married quarter on camp, (Hazel Avenue).

It was here that we were asked to attend a parents meeting for the Cub Scouts were our son Michael had joined, they needed leaders to replace those posted out, and as there were no other parents there we had to very reluctantly

volunteer to become Cub and Scout leaders respectively.

This was the start of a lifetime in Scouting and we have loved every minute of it, John and I are still involved as members of the Executive Committee at the Rawdon Scout Group. Once a Scout always a Scout even in our seventies!!!!

Next posting RAF Marham because they were short of Mk6 drivers, John hated it there as most people seem to do, However, I became heavily involved as a gang boss and with a Bedford Dormobile we went with wives from the married quarters and with fireman drivers, fruit and vegetable picking and made some useful extra cash to help out.

RAF Scampton on promotion to corporal for John, with Vulcan bombers revving engines all the hours God sends, but we soon got used to it and had a good time scouting and other social activities.

1970 three years in Germany at RAF Gutersloh living on a farm ten miles from camp.

Michael aged 11 and Julie 6 loved working with the animals and going to the English school in a taxi. The scouting there was great, we started with the Air Scouts at Gutersloh and finished looking after the children at the Army Barracks because they had no scout leaders.

Whilst camping in Belgium we visited Antwerp and were entertained by American sailors' on a US Destroyer, the sailors' wanted our hats so we swapped our scout hats including my expensive Cub leaders hat for silly little white sailors' hats, we still have them.

I couldn't believe it; we were posted to RAF Bishops Court in Northern Ireland in 1973 at the height of the troubles. At first to Ardglass village in County Down and later we were moved into converted barrack blocks on camp as the troubles got worse.

Still in the village during the general strike of 1974 we had no services at all, no water, gas, electric and only food from the RAF NAAFI shop on camp,

and we had to collect water from the well in buckets. The local people were very good to us supplying fish and any other food they could get.

We had difficulty running scouts in the village because of the segregation of religions so we started a section of the St John Ambulance Brigade on camp in order to cover all religions and this was supported by the RAF and local children and was very successful.

We also started a Youth Club, had discos (fireman Pete Masia Pink Elephant disco!!!) and camping weekends on the airfield with the help of others in particular the fire section personnel.

Back to RAF Catterick for John as an instructor, there for seven years, promoted to Sergeant and then to Flight Sergeant .

We became heavily involve in on camp and local village social life, scouting, St John Ambulance brigade, discos and some posh mess does. Helping to look after other families that were having difficulties seemed to take up a lot of our time but we were happy to help were we could.

1982 posted back to RAF Scampton, three fire trucks 20 firemen and only the Red Arrows left to look after. John was bored and wished to return to instructional duties at Catterick, no chance he had to serve 2 years operational service first.

Although there were very few personnel on camp we still managed to have good social life and good stuff for the kids including scouting of course.

We had a trip to Chatsworth House with the Cubs and how some delicate vases were not damaged by our lot is a mystery. As we prepared to return to Scampton Johns old Vauxhall estate car broke in half and he had to fasten the back doors together to keep them shut and drove back to Scampton hoping not to be stopped by the police. The kids had to be brought back in other cars. The next day the old car was on the fire ground for training purposes.

The Red Arrows training would mess

up the washing out on the clothes lines, however, through the Wives Club, we managed to get Station Orders to include the times when the Arrows were going to use smoke, thus preventing the outbreak of World War Three!!!!

1983 early release from the RAF when John was offered a post at the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) Fire Service Training Collage as a Station Officer instructor, he was released early on the grounds that, at that time, there were no officer commission posts available in the RAF Fire Service trade group.

We moved from married quarters into our first house near Darlington and had to purchase all new furniture.

It was strange at first being away from the RAF family of friends and adapting to civilian life was difficult for me and the children. We missed the camaraderie and the willingness to mix socially with neighbours as we had had in the airforce. I started working full time in Darlington to help fill in the time.

In 1990 John was promoted to Divisional Officer and became the Fire inspector of licensed civil airports based at Aviation House near Gatwick Airport.

We moved into a nice new house near Horsham in West Sussex with financial assistance from the CAA. Sadly when John eventually retired we lost £180.00 on the sale of the house in Horsham, this meant we had to take out a mortgage, not something we had planned in retirement.

I went with John on some of his inspections in particular when he visited the Isles of Scilly; we flew by helicopter to St Marys and on to Tresco by motor launch.

I loved the Abbey gardens on Tresco, the wildlife and the clear pollution free atmosphere of the islands. On one occasion the weather was too bad for flying so we had to come back on the Scillonion ferry boat, a rough passage on that old flat bottomed tub. As we approached Penzance we were joined by a shoal of Dolphins, sadly it was too dark for photographs. We were starving when we landed, the Penzance Airport manager took to us for a meal would

you believe, to the “Hungary Horse”!!!!

John was promoted again to Senior Divisional Fire Office and was preening himself in the mirror, as men do, when I brought him back down to earth when I draw his attention to that fact that the guy in the mirror is the one that failed his entrance exam for Middlesbrough Fire Brigade in 1957, aren't I awful???

Six months prior to John's retirement at 60 he went down with Post Traumatic Stress as a result of poor management at the CAA and his Military and fire service experiences, mainly in the Army and in the civil fire brigade. Sadly in those days stress was a dirty word and John wouldn't even talk to me about the things he had to deal with in combat nor at fire incidents, some of which must have been particularly horrendous.

I had to nurse him through over three months of pain and distress, eventually after counselling and medication he started to recover, but even now has down days, He knows now when it is coming on and normally just goes to bed out of the way.

At 60 John retired from the CAA Fire Department and was almost immediately asked to become a fire consultant with the International Branch of the CAA. By then we had moved to Leeds and the consultancy work soon paid off the mortgage.

We now live happily and enjoy working as committee members of a nearby sheltered housing group, John is a tour guide at Kirkstall Abbey and of cause our Scouting.

John now dresses up as a Victorian Fire Officer with the Steam Fire Engine.

I don't know when but I will nail his fire boots down at some stage!!!!

Vera Goupillot

A Story of Phil Cooper (1932-2015)

Philip Henry Cooper RAF Fire-Fighter aged 82 member 799 of the RAF & Defence Fire Services Association sadly passed away on the evening of May 12th 2015 after a battle with leukaemia.

Sometime after the funeral, which Neil Slade and I attended, Phil's daughters, Karen and Pauline invited me to see some their dad's photos and memorabilia.

They also recalled their childhood memories about the different places they had seen following their dad around and the antics which they got up to. Along

with this information I thought I would include some photographs and Phil's service history.

Phil, after he joined in 1950 and after training went to Uxbridge until 1952 then Duren (Germany) 53-56 Hornchurch 57-60 Gibraltar 60-62 Bicester 62-65 El Adem 65-67 Locking 67-69 Laarbruch 69-72 Marham 72-73 Stanmore 73-73 Fairford 73-74 and Thorney Island 74-76.

I saw that he had been mentioned in dispatches for his and his crew's actions when attending a Hastings crash at El

Adem in 1966. Below I have retyped the report which I believe was from a Flight Safety magazine in which Phil and his crew are mentioned. I wonder if any other of our members were on that crew? Or did you serve with Phil at any other time it would be nice to know.

At the end of the report is a little more startling information that I found out about the incident!!

Steve Harrison

MAJOR FAREWELL to 575



Hastings TG575 note the Mk6 on the left of the photograph it would have been either 03 AG 75 or 76

The crew was briefed on the morning of 3rd May for a paramedic exercise to take place near El Adem the next day. All members stood down by 1330 hours and were adequately rested for a take-off at 0230 hours.

The flight was normal, except that only two parachutists were dropped before it was decided that the wind was too strong for further jumps. There were therefore 32 passengers and crew on board, when the aircraft returned to El Adem. The weather at El Adem was good with a wind of 10 - 13 knots and within 10 degrees of the runway. The GCA was normal as was the round

out except that the aircraft dropped a short distance on to the runway to touch down in a three point attitude. The impact was nothing out of the ordinary, but the failure of the starboard undercarriage began at this point.

The aircraft bounced a short distance and came down with starboard wing low and No4 propeller touched before the starboard wheel. Fire started in No3 engine. The aircraft veered to the right, left the runway and slewed round, coming to rest on its belly. The fire spread to No 4 engine. The passengers and crew vacated the aircraft safely through normal fire escape exits.

The fire did not spread any further due to the rapid reaction of the Crash Rescue Team. By their prompt and efficient handling of the fire, this team stopped the spread of fire which would have been highly dangerous had any crew member or passenger been delayed in evacuating the aircraft.

Cause

The landing, although heavy, was no heavier than many executed on this type of aircraft every month. It was not as heavy as a normal tactical landing, and this has been firmly ruled out as a cause of the accident.

The cause in fact, was the failure, after a normal landing, of an undercarriage support strut. Failure of this member cause the inevitable collapse of the undercarriage and the breaking of oil and fuel components which led to the fire which broke out in No's 3 and 4 engines

Comment

The strut which failed was a pre-mod 1442 item. This was introduced as a class C4 modification to be embodied on replacement of the struts. Therefore no blame is attached to serving personnel.

As a result of this accident, all NEAF Hastings are being modified to 1442 standard during periodic servicing. This in effect, upgrades the modification to B2, although officially it is still only a C4 mod throughout the service.

The investigating board was particularly impressed with:

- a. The Air Quartermasters, especially Sgt I Richardson for their handling of the passengers.
- b. **The El Adem Fire Crew, under the leadership of Sgt Cooper whose speedy reaction and efficient handling of the emergency prevented a more serious fire.**

We at Headquarters endorse these views



This one taken in Gibraltar, anyone recognise anyone.

When I did a little more research on the internet it turned out that the aircraft had indeed come to rest on the top of an old WW II ammunition dump kindly left by the enemy and on trying to clear it, the bullets and shells started to explode and they had to give up. I wonder if Phil ever knew that. I expect he did if he was still there when they tried to clear it. It could have been a different day if the fire had not been suppressed so quickly!!!!



Above Air Commodore Foxley Norris congratulating the crew on their actions on the Hastings crash.



Taken at RAF Duran I believe I just love these types of photographs. It doesn't matter what era you look at you will always find fire-fighters filling in those long standby hours by entertaining themselves.

General Service Medal 51 years later.

In July 2012 the Government appointed Sir John Holmes to review the policy governing the award of military medals. He reviewed a number of cases. One of these was Cyprus 1963 to 1964 when a Civil War broke out between the Greek and Turkish Cypriots.

This was due to President Makarios terminating the Constitution that had been in force since 1960 and thousands of Cypriots were killed on both sides. This was a very difficult time for British Forces, particularly those with families.

As a result, British Forces were under martial law from 21st December 1963 to 26th March 1964 and a curfew was in place until late December of 1964. Those servicemen who served in Cyprus during the period 21st December 1963 to 26th March 1964 are eligible to be awarded the General Service Medal with clasp CYPRUS 1963-64.

Sir John Holmes stated that their case had not been properly considered, if at all.

If any of our members served in Cyprus during that difficult period, they should write to "Ministry of Defence Medal Office, Imjin Barracks, Gloucester. GL3 1HW."

The photograph shows our Treasurer, Trevor Hayes, being presented with his Cyprus 63-64 GSM from our Patron, Sir Roger Austin, at the AGM at Hinckley on October 17th, just 51 years late.



COVENTRY TRANSPORT MUSEUM by Howard Harper

As part of the Royal Air Force and Defence Fire Service Association's Twentieth Anniversary at Sketchley Grange Hotel over the weekend of 16th to the 19th of October 2015, a half day outing on Saturday was arranged to visit Coventry City Centre.

After the A.G.M. we boarded the coach and headed for Coventry, after passing through the road improvements we finally arrived at our destination, after much discussion our party divided into groups, some heading for the shops, some to the cathedral, and the rest of us to the transport museum, as we had no time to grab a bite at our hotel before our departure we made time for a quick coffee and cake.

Pleasantly, the cost of admission was free, the museum is laid out on three levels, our first "transport" encounter was with the bicycles, I had no idea that there could be so many bikes under one roof (over two hundred) ranging from bone shakers and hobby horses right through to the most recent of cycles, including a Carbon fibre example, I noted a Carlton racing cycle one of which I owned in my younger days.

Moving on we came to the car and motor cycle section, every class of car was on display, from the many manufactured in the Coventry area, there being over 250 cars and commercial vehicles on show, together with 100 motor cycles, some of which had sidecars attached, those were the days with the wind in your hair.

Of note were three "Fire engines" plus a Coventry Climax trailer pump believed to have been used during the bombing of Coventry in world war two.

Coventry was the manufacturing base for famous name producers of anything that could be listed as "transport" Triumph, Hillman, Jaguar, Humber, Talbot, Standard, Daimler, Ferguson, Massey- Ferguson, Francis – Barnett, Rudge- Whitworth, Karrier, and Coventry Eagle .

There was a small collection of military vehicles, including a Humber "Pig" personnel carrier, a couple of scout cars, an Alvis Stalwart, and a world war one recently restored Maudsley lorry, that area would not have been complete without examples of the famous "Fergy", and

"Massey Fergy" tractors, also of note was the bus that Coventry City Football Club players were paraded round the city when they won the F.A. Cup in 1987.

There were also cars owned and used by the rich and famous, including Princess Diana's Mini, King George 6th and Queen Mary's Limousine, and General Montgomery's staff car.

Another interesting exhibit was the DeLorean DMC 12 car of "Back to the future" film fame. Two land speed record "cars" namely Thrust 12 and Thrust SSC were on exhibition, as were two ex rallying cars, and a Jaguar formula -1 racing car.

All too soon our time in the museum came to an end as we had to return to the hotel to prepare for the Gala dinner and entertainment.

I didn't have time to visit the Cathedrals on this occasion, my memory takes me back to 1968 on my last visit to Coventry when my late wife and I spent time looking round both the old and new Cathedrals.

HOWARD HARPER (MEMBER 682)

WEB SITE REPORT

The rafanddfsa.co.uk web site now has over 50 pages to browse, and is available to view wherever and whenever you can log into the World Wide Web. When I first took over the design and development of the site, I wanted to manage a fresh and up-to-date resource, which would provide members with current information as well as show-casing our association to anyone with an interest in what we do.

However, with the explosion of social media programs in recent years, most web users turn to Facebook or Twitter to find the latest gossip, so to that end I have created a Facebook Page and a Facebook Group where RAF & DFSA members can interact along with other fire-fighters and relatives. To date we have over 1000 members of the group, and the page is approaching 1000 likes.

In the meantime the main site has continued to grow at a steady pace, and provides a more permanent source of information for members and visitors alike. The following describes some of the pages that make up www.rafanddfsa.co.uk and what you can find in them.

Home Page. The Home page is designed to be visually eye-catching and contains links to the rest of the site.

About Us. This page describes what RAF & DFSA is all about and provides joining information for potential new members.

Action Page. The Action Page contains galleries of fire-fighters in action at home and abroad.

Articles of Interest. This page was created for members to publish information they want to share with other readers of the web site.

Biographies. A place to post your memoirs.

Classified. A page for sales and wants. Folk who restore fire appliances tend to use this page to help with their hobby.

Contacts. A page listing the officers of the Association and their contact details where appropriate.

Flashpoint. A page dedicated to our Association magazine with scans of previous issues. I would like to include downloadable versions of old editions, but as yet this has not been approved.

Guest Page. A place where anyone can leave any message. People announcing functions or seeking old comrades tend to use this page.

History. This contains a brief history of our trade and how it evolved within the military.

Incidents. A number of fires and prangs attended by our members with illustrated accounts.

Links. This page provides hyperlinks to other sites of interest.

Membership. An alphabetical list of RAF & DFSA Members both past and present.

Memories. The memories page subdivides into a further seven pages full of photo galleries, video clips, and other items of interest from over 150 locations world wide.

Museum. A page dedicated to Steve Shirley's fantastic collection at Scampton.

Obituaries. Dedicated to those who are no longer with us.

Reunions. This page provides details of up and coming get-togethers as well as archive pictures from previous events.

Shop Pages. A catalogue of items available for sale in the Association Shop including images and details of how to order.

Vehicles. Nineteen pages packed with hundreds of pictures of fire vehicles old and new.

Needless to say a lot of work has gone in to creating and maintaining the web site, so I would urge everyone to spend a bit of time browsing the pages that may be of interest. Input and feedback is always welcome so if you have anything that would enhance the site in any way, please get in touch with me at webmaster@rafanddfsa.co.uk.

*Happy browsing.
Dave Kirk
webmaster*



ONE OF THE FEW from Ron Brown



Royal Air Force

31st August 1940 Aged 25"

These words, recorded on a simple white headstone are the memorial to a pilot, born in Swindon and killed in action during the battle of Britain.

Harold Starr was born in 1914 and joined the RAF in 1934 and rose rapidly through the ranks to attain the rank of Squadron Leader commanding 253 Squadron at RAF Kenley. Early in the morning of August 31st his Hurricane was hit and he bailed out at 15,000 feet only to be machine gunned by enemy ME 109's as he descended in his parachute. He was

dead before he hit the ground; subsequent investigation showed that he had been shot through the heart.

Harold Starr was buried on September 6th, just two days short of his twenty sixth birthday and eight months after his marriage to his Welsh wife Betty Reese, who was carrying their first child.

Battle of Britain 2015

Swindon, like so many Towns and cities, choose to commemorate the Battle of Britain by paying special tributes to Squadron Leader Starr; a Great Western locomotive was named Squadron Leader Starr, a display; in the town square of full size Hurricane and Spitfire and vintage vehicles and a special remembrance service was held at his grave with the Duke of Gloucester and other dignitaries in attendance. The highlight of the occasion being when three Hurricanes and three Spitfires flew past in formation to salute their fallen comrade

Our unsung Hero

One of our members, Robert ("Dan") Gurney richly deserves recognition for the part that he and his wife, Janet have contributed to the preservation of this heroes' memory.

Dan is an avid amateur historian and, realising that there were ex Battle of Britain Pilots buried in a Swindon cemetery, he set about locating the graves and the history of the interred



After locating the last resting places he became horrified at their condition and he and Janet set about cleaning and tidying the headstone and surrounds.

The astonishing thing is that they have carried out this ritual for 40 years!!

I was saddened to hear that at the Remembrance Ceremony Dan was introduced to the dignitaries simply as "the man who looks after the Stones"

More Nuclear Experiences from Tony Eaton

I found Geoff Varley's article 'My Nuclear Experience' quite interesting as I was stationed at RAF Leeming at the time and recall seeing a rather large bomb plus Valiant bomber.

I believe Geoff contacted me some years ago for me to confirm that he had actually seen the bomb. I confirmed that he had and his call confirmed that I had as we both were unsure of the event.

However my recollections differ a little to Geoff's. The vehicle I saw an RAF blue pantechnicon was either used to take the bomb from or to bring the bomb to the Valiant [not sure] and I recall talking to a 'strange' RAF fireman about it, You Geoff? I use the word strange as Leeming, during that visit by the Valiant, had an influx of firemen from other units.

Also we were all mixed crews in that little red and white circular hut at the 'Crash Lines'. Incidentally the hut was an Altent complete with central coke stove and the usual family of rats living beneath the duckboards, and was a relic of the doomed African groundnut [monkey nut] scheme of the mid 40s.

He says that the crash line-up was a 45 Monitor and gas truck which according to Geoff had been brought in from an MU. Not so, the gas truck was there when I arrived at Leeming in 1956 along with a MK5A, a Land Rover, a water bowser with trailer pump for domestic. When I left in 1959 the gas truck still did not have a radio.

I may be wrong but Leeming may have had the MK6 with a DP by then but the years do get in the way so I might defer.

I must accept his mentioning there was a 45 Monitor on the line but I do not recall it. Leeming was 228 Night Fighter Operational Conversion Unit flying Javelins and was within 11 Group but was also a 'Bolt Hole' for the Valiant and later Vulcan.

If I might be allowed to mention a techy point, the bomb that we both saw that day was an atomic bomb not a nuclear bomb. The nuclear weapons did not enter service until the 1960s. I'm grateful to Geoff for his memories and for putting a month and year to our joint viewing of that event.

*Tony Eaton.
Northallerton.*

Lest We Forget - Members who have sadly left us

William Elder (Mem No: 719)

Sadly I have to inform you of the passing of my friend William (Bill) Elder. Bill joined in 1951 and was a Sutton trained Fireman. He served at the following RAF Stations:

Coleerne 1951-1952

128 Mu Abu Sultan (Suez) 1952-1954

Middleton St George 1954 1956

A good Mate who will be sadly missed

RIP Bill

Dennis

John Dunn (Mem No: 796)

It is with a feeling of deep sadness, that I have to report the death of Corporal John Dunn, who passed away in April of this year.

John was trained at Sutton -on-Hull in 1956

Posted to Valley 1956-60

Butterworth 1960-63

Medmenham 1963 64

Khormaksar 1965-66

Waddington 1966-68

Joined DFS Valley as SUB OFFICER 1968-74

RIP Mate from Brian Ford

Allen Brooks (Mem No: 1043)

It is with deep regret that Julia Brooks has informed me of the passing of her father, Allen Brooks on 25/07/15. Allen served for many years before leaving the service in 1979 as a Sgt stationed at RAF Newton.

Rest in Peace Brother.

Archie Carter

Brian "Bill" Bailey (Mem No: 119)

It is with deep sadness that I have to report that one of our oldest members, Brian Bailey passed away on 16 November. Brian joined the RAF in 1957 and did his recruit training at Bridgenorth. Following completion of his Fire training at Sutton-on-Hull he served at the following Units:

Khormaksar	1958-1960
Church Fenton/Breighton	1960
Benson	1960-1963
Labuan	1963-1964
Marham	1964-1966
RAAF Edinburgh Field	1966-1968
Finningley	1968-1970
Waddington	1970-1972
Masirah	1972-1973
Northolt	1973-1974
Gütersloh	1975-1978
Wittering	1978-1980

Clear to stand down lads, duty done RIP

The Epic Saga of the Blocked Valve by John Dicks

Early in 1958, whilst stationed at RAF Station Changi, I passed my driving test and was promoted to SAC. National Service firemen were not sent to the Weeton driving school in Lancashire, we had to learn on the job.

A couple of weeks later I was put on day shift domestic fire duties, driving the standby domestic tender, a 500 gallon Bedford water bowser pulling a trailer pump, complete with four additional firemen as crew, two being RAF and two Malaysians. All went well until about 1100 hrs when the alarm bells rang. "Take the bowser I was told, there's a fire at the Fuel Storage Depot, the front line tender, a DP1, will take over as soon as they get back."

Evidently the No. 1 crew were at the far side of the camp on another call-out, pre-

arranged I later found out. So we loaded up and headed off to the Fuel Depot and discovered that it was a practice run. I was instructed to act as though there was a fire and to make foam, so I put on the knapsack tank, which was always kept full of compound, grabbed the No. 2 F.M.B. and connected it up, meanwhile a fire hose had been run out and connected and the trailer pump fired up.

I went down on one knee, as taught at Sutton-on-Hull, and signalled for "Water On" and opened the compound tank valve. Water jetted out of the branch pipe but no foam, no matter which way I turned the valve. Worse was to follow, the senior Malay fireman started to top up the compound tank, as he had been trained to do, but as we were using no compound he

managed to pour about half a gallon down my neck into my trousers and boots, a not very comfortable position to find one's self in as can be imagined.

We were advised by the officer present to make up and return to the Fire Section, where the S.N.C.O. i/c W. O. Walker was livid as he had been given a rollicking by the Fire Officer, Flt. Lt. Grogan. I was sent away to get cleaned up, as I smelled slightly offensive. After lunch we were made to perform pump drill for a couple of hours in the heat of the afternoon sun.

The cause of our problem was later discovered to be congealed compound in the valve, rectified by an addition to the daily check list, we had previously only checked that the tank was actually full to capacity.

Flashpoint - winging its way to you three times a year.

When Adrian has waved his literary and magical skills in preparing the articles for Flashpoint, and then forwarding these to the printers who then do all the art work and then go to print, they hang each page for a day to dry.

They then bind all the pages together and staple them into the Flashpoint that you know. The printers, Focus4print, box the magazines up into four or five boxes and have them delivered to me. After labelling



and stamping each envelope and placing any flyers into each copy, the magazine is placed into your addressed envelope and then posted.

The first photograph shows 500 copies piled up stamped, sealed, and ready to go. The second shows 5 full bags in my car on their way to the post office, ready to start

their journey to you. To keep this going, all Adrian needs now is your stories and photos for future issues. Adrian will spell check and correct, so don't worry about grammar or spelling.

Trevor Hayes- Treasurer

Why you should always observe protocol (Because not to, might bite you on the Bum)

A few days ago I was doing some painting. A door, not some great work of art. I thought to myself why do I hate painting so much, after all it's not hard work and with gentle strokes it should be quite soothing. Then my mind went back to my youth and my early RAF days' and I realised I am suffering from PPTSD (Post Painting Traumatic Stress Disorder)

This is why

We had the NEAF (Near East Air Force) barrack stores at Tobruk and there were thousands of soda acid water and foam extinguishers being sent to Cyprus. The W.O i/c. Barrack stores had a word with the W.O I/c Fire at El Adem) about getting them painted before they were put on a boat to Cyprus, (he completely ignored the Sgt i/c the Fire Section at Tobruk) (R A F Tobruk was a detachment from R A F El Adem) So our Sgt at Tobruk, got told by the W O Fire at El Adem to get the off duty crew to

paint them (as they didn't have anything better to do)

We knew our Sgt was a bit miffed about being by- passed but he never said anything to the troops on the section. Well to cut a long story short, the on and off duty crews painted for days and days and days. The extinguishers then got packed in crates by Barrack Stores personnel and the crates were then lifted on the trucks by the Firemen !

They were then taken to Tobruk docks and eventually sent to Cyprus. 5 or 6 months later they appeared back on the dockside at Tobruk, returned as u/s , fit only for scrap !! Well the shite hit the fan because we had painted extinguishers that were rusty on the inside. We had already told Jim Walsh our Sgt that they were no good and he had told the WO at El Adem the same, but the order came to paint them and shut up.

We don't know, but were pretty sure Jim let one of his mates in Nicosia know they

were crap and the result was the WO Fire El Adem was sent for and had to go to Nicosia to see the C F O who was also a mate of Jim Walsh's (They were Cpl instructors together at Sutton on Hull in the late 1940s and, early 50's)

The WO Fire El Adem had an interview with the C F O , without tea and biscuits. And Lo, Gods Face shone on the Fire Section at RAF Tobruk and here was much rejoicing in that section called Fire and all was well with the World !!!!

So now you know why I hate painting

Postscript:- Sgt Jim Walsh a few months later was awarded the B E M for services in Maintenance Command, so he went to Cyprus to receive the award, it is believed he got tea and biscuits!.

In 1968 he died whilst serving at RAF Wildenrath Germany and was buried at the military cemetery , Rheindahlen .RIP Jim

The Formation of our Association

In May 1995 a retired Royal Air Force Fireman put an advertisement in the British Legion magazine asking if any RAF Firemen would like a get together at Shoreham Airport.

25 of us turned up and in no time we were having a mug of tea and a good chat with friends we hadn't seen for years. The person who organised this was John Arthur who before remustered to our trade was a bomber rear gunner known as Atoll and Charlie in the war. By the time we drank our second cup of tea we decided that we needed somewhere we could meet on a regular basis and our Association was born.

The late Keith Penfold stood up and volunteered to be Chairman and then volunteered me to be Secretary, John Knight to be Treasurer and John Arthur was to be our President. Our first meeting took place in the museum at Shoreham Airport which was run by a chap whose name was Ken Rimmel. Ken went on to help us in so many ways - providing rooms for our meetings held twice yearly. We spread the word of our Association and reunions by advertising in the following magazines: Air Mail, RAF News, British Legion and the "Yours" magazine.

Telephone calls came in daily and each one not only asked to be a member but wanted a long chat. One of the callers was Alan Alsop who was really keen on the idea of an Association. He mentioned that he had a computer so (suggested that it would be a good idea if we could have a newsletter that we could send out to members and Alan became our first Editor with a vision



of developing a magazine in the future. We agreed that it needed a name and as I was really into "Command Fire" competitions and used to make sure the lads knew what ignition point and flashpoint meant so the name of our magazine just had to be "FLASHPOINT".

The magazine went from strength to strength and is one that we are really proud of and our thanks go out to all our Editors both past and present for doing such a grand job and each bringing their own particular skills to the task.

The photographs show all our founder members at Shoreham Airport - owing to senior moments I am unable to name them all. The Association has grown over the last 20 years from 25 people to well over 400 members. Long may it continue.

It was a great privilege to be able to celebrate our 20th Anniversary at the reunion at Hinkley on 16th- 19th October 2015 and to make a toast to all past and present members. Once again it was a great weekend and is what our Association is all about - meeting up with old friends and making new ones.

Thank you to you all for entering into the spirit of it so wholeheartedly.

Dennis McCann

Photographs from Dennis McCann and Kath Penfold.





ASSOCIATION CO-ORDINATORS COMMITTEE MEMBER AND AREA CO-ORDINATORS

There is a vacancy within the Association for the post of Co-ordinators Committee Member as I am standing down as of Saturday 17th of October 2015, at the A.G.M. I have served in the post for two years.

This post is open to any member of the Association.

In addition the posts of Area Co-ordinator for Cambridgeshire and Suffolk and North West and Wales have become vacant.

These posts are open to any member of the Association.

Any person wishing to apply for either of these posts should contact our Chairman Neil Slade.

We have Area Co-ordinators in the following areas, The North East, Lincolnshire, Norfolk, Essex, London, Kent, The South, Devon and Cornwall, Cumbria, Scotland Northern Ireland, and the Royal Air Force.

Other areas that would benefit from an Area Co-ordinator are Kent, The Home Counties, The Midlands, Lancashire, and Wales.

Again anyone interested in taking on an Area Co-ordinators position in these six Areas please contact our Chairman Neil Slade.

*HOWARD HARPER (MEMBER
682)*

The Travels of a National Serviceman by John Dicks

My travels to the Far East and back were not as straightforward as one would have expected, especially as, when I was asked which counties would I like to serve my two years in, my response had been Home Counties, Essex or Cambridge and then being told that I was needed in the Far East!

A further complication was added, when, during my first week of kitting out at RAF Cardington, the government decided to invade Egypt, resulting in the closure of the Suez Canal. So after trade training, as a crash fireman, I next found myself at RAF Innsworth being issued with more kit, this time tropical K.D's, and being given more jabs.

Then onwards to Southampton to board a troopship, the Empire Orwell, where we were informed that as the Suez Canal was closed we would have to travel around South Africa and across the Indian Ocean, which would take about five weeks during which time, along with five other "rooky" firemen, I would be a go-fer in the ship's hospital.

Our duties were not too onerous just fetching and carrying and generally keeping the place tidy, although we did have an epidemic of measles amongst the officers children which kept us rather busy at one time but on the plus side, whilst on duty, we ate the same food as the officers and senior NCO's which was a vastly superior to what was served to the other ranks on the troop deck.

On our travels we stopped at several interesting places, the first being Gran Canaria in the Canary Islands, where we had an afternoon of shore leave. Then on to Cape Town where we experienced the wonderful hospitality of the South Africans, during a whole day of shore leave. As three of us were walking around we were picked up by a gentleman in a car who took us back to his home for lunch, he then offered to take us around the sights of Cape Town and better still, as he was the chauffeur for the Mayor of Cape Town we used the official car, a brand new Buick, complete with the Mayor's crest on the front. He eventually took us back to the ship after a really great day, although we never saw Table Mountain as it was shrouded in mist.

Our next spell ashore was in Durban for a day, which was quite uneventful apart from a couple of instances when, because

of our shirt sleeve order, including big daft best blue caps, we were mistaken for local policemen. The last port of call, before Singapore, was Colombo in Sri Lanka but I did not get ashore here as I was on duty in the ship's hospital.

The day before we arrived in Singapore we were told that us six firemen were not required on any of the Singapore camps and that we would be going on to Kai Tak in Hong Kong, but this part of our journey would be by air. So after leaving the ship we were taken to RAF Changi and put into block 121, the Transit block, where we were left to kick our heels.

Three days later we reported to the departure area, with all of our worldly possessions, where we were briefed on our flight to Hong Kong and told that we would be flying in a Vickers Valetta and would be stopping at RAF Labuan for lunch then onwards, that afternoon, to spend the night with the Americans at Clarke Field air force base in the Philippines, completing our flight, to Hong Kong, the next day.

The RAF realised that in those days, 1957, none of us had ever flown before, so to ease any fears that we may have had we were told that although the Valetta had only two engines, in the event that one engine should fail records would confirm that the second engine would always generate sufficient power to get the aircraft safely to the site of the crash. How he kept a straight face, while imparting this information, I'll never know.

We arrived at Kai Tak, in Hong Kong, after an uneventful journey, in the middle of a tropical downpour and had to run with all of our baggage to the booking in section, and afterwards to the Fire Section where the NCO i/c, Sergeant Liebermann, informed us that we were surplus to requirement here due to the closure of RAF Sek Kong several months earlier, we would only be staying until arrangements could be made transferring us to where we were needed.

Six months later I was on another troopship, the Nevasa, for the three day cruise back to Singapore. About twenty of us RAF personnel would be travelling with the regiment of the Kings Own Scottish Borderers, or Kosbies, who were going back to the UK after completing their tour of duty. They were seen off, from the quayside by the pipe band of the Ghurkhas, and the rumour went around the

ship that the Ghurkhas were really there to ensure that all of the "Jocks" left the colony, evidently they were not very good ambassadors for the military.

There were three Crash Rescue Firemen sent back to Singapore, two were going to RAF Seletar and I was to spend about ten months at RAF Changi, finally doing the job I had been trained for. Going home was to be on yet another troopship, this time the Dilwara, which again would be a five week journey, even though we were going the shorter way, through the Suez Canal, but we were on a slower vessel, the Dilwara could only average about 280 miles a day whereas the Empire Orwell regularly achieved 400, sometimes even more.

Going home we stopped at Colombo again and this time I got ashore, but did not think that I had missed anything on the outward passage. I was not overly impressed with shore leave at Aden either, which was very hot and dry, and, in my opinion, lived up to its description as being the "A***hole of the World". Then up through the Red Sea and Suez Canal, which we did at night, so I never saw anything until we arrived at Port Said, first thing in the morning.

Then it was through the Mediterranean Sea, where the weather became decidedly cooler, well it was October. Our last stopping place was to be Gibraltar, where I got ashore for about three hours in the afternoon. I remember sitting in a bar in Gib. where a small musical group was playing, and I was intrigued by the fact that the sax player was the only musician who appeared to be reading music from his stand, It wasn't until the end of the number, when he picked up his music sheets, that I realised that he had actually been reading a newspaper while he was playing. Evidently he had never been informed that men could not do more than one thing at a time. We sailed across the Bay of Biscay, which was fairly calm, the same as it had been on my outward journey and eventually arrived back in Southampton, where we were taken to the cleaners by Customs and Excise.

John Dicks, M0603

RAF & DFSA No. 495

Tales from India Part 4 by Adey Tearle

Sunday 19th April

Bloody hell! Still having difficulty sleeping, woke at 4 so decided I would lie in when I did get back to sleep. No bloody chance, the staff went round at 7 to wake everyone and take breakfast orders! I suppose that's what comes of staying in a hotel owned by monks. Problem is every hotel room in India has a doorbell so you cant ignore them knocking.

I ordered just a black coffee and will be interested to see what turns up. It was real coffee in a cafetiere!

Once I had got myself organized I went temple viewing, before I got to the centre of the village I had been in the Thai, Burmese, Indonesian and Japanese temples.



Thai



Japanese

Outside the Bangladesh temple they had this :-



Now for the main event, I went to the Mahabodhi Temple where the Bodhi tree is.



The Mahabodhi Temple



Inside the Mahabodhi



The tree is round the back of the temple so I went and sat under it for a few hours. It

was quite windy and I was lucky enough to collect 5 fallen leaves.



While I was at the tree I saw an Indian couple with 6 monks performing some sort of ritual involving the couple giving the monks gifts. Sitting close by me was a western woman who also appeared to be keeping a journal, so perhaps that's the done thing when you undertake a spiritual journey in India.

Poverty levels here are absolutely astonishing, there are hordes of beggars at the entrance to every temple, which seems a wise move on their part, because that's where all the rich tourists are going. Mostly they are very very old, or very very young. Also lots of deformed and disabled people.

It is difficult to understand why this poverty exists in a country which is supposed to be emerging as a leading player on the world stage. Certainly there is plenty of arable land for farming and they have an abundance of natural mineral resources. Perhaps if they had the oil it would be a different story.

Notwithstanding this, my overall impression is that the Indians are a proud and happy people. They are suspicious of foreigners, particularly the English, which given our atrocious history here is not surprising. What has puzzled me is why the sikh population looks at us particularly malevolently. I don't think its personal, but you never know.

I am sitting outside a famous restaurant in Bodhgaya, The Om, and there is a bloody mosque near by because I can hear the unmistakeable call to prayer.

Those of you unable to attend reunions should be aware that we have a range of RAFDFSFA and CRASH goods for sale, which are also available by mail order via us 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: - David and Christine Hughes

Email: rafanddfsashop@yahoo.co.uk

Telephone: 02380 660995

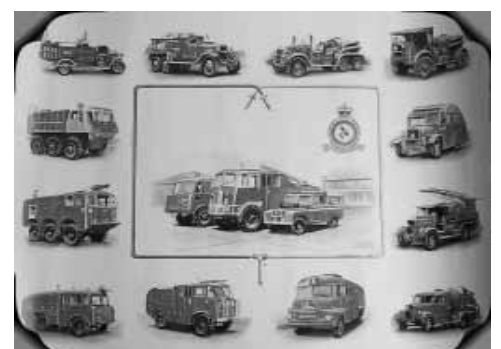
Note:- For Mail Order - All items will be subject to postage and packaging, which will be calculated per individual order. A customer will be informed of the cost and, when payment is received, the order will be despatched.

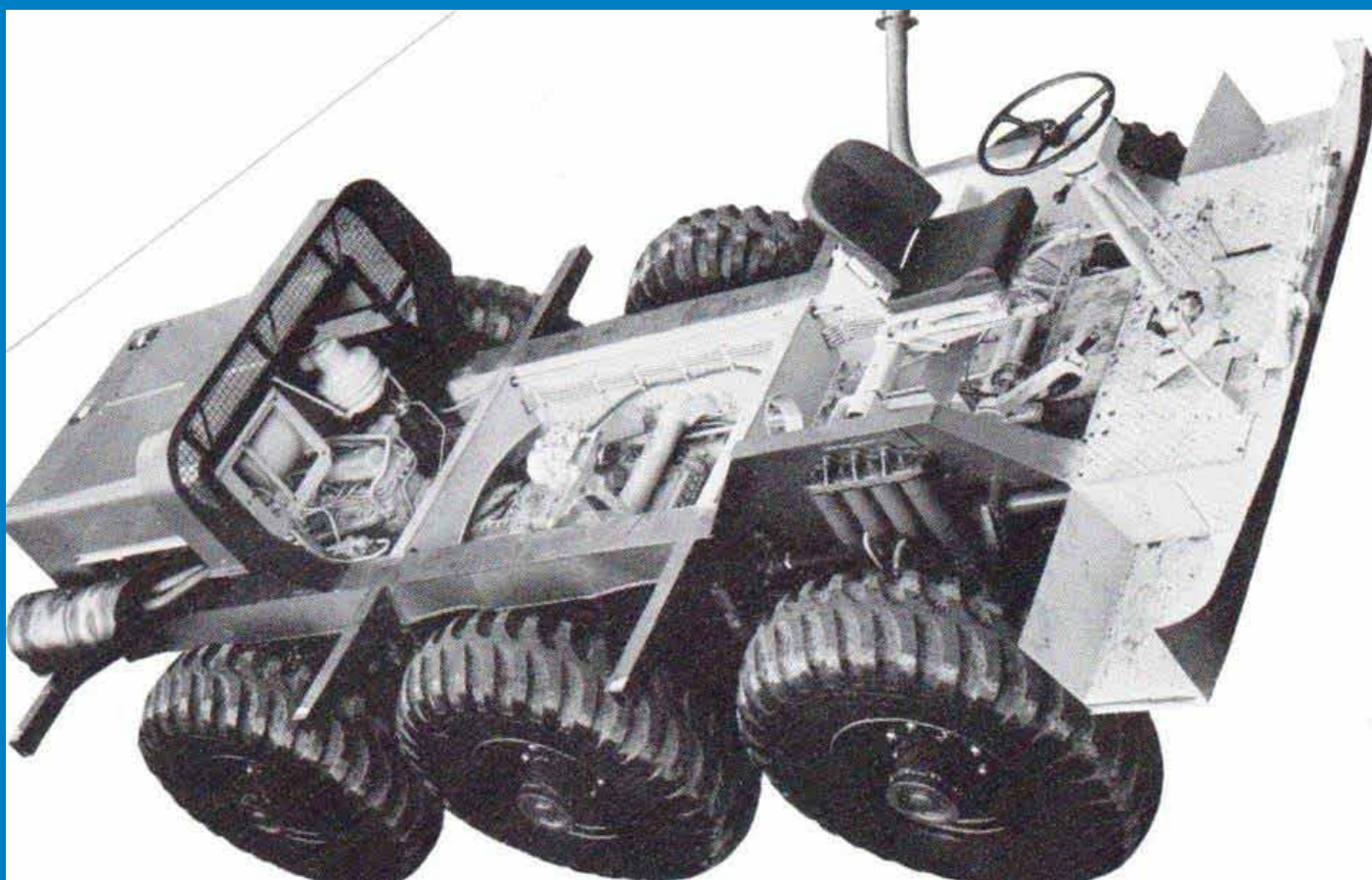
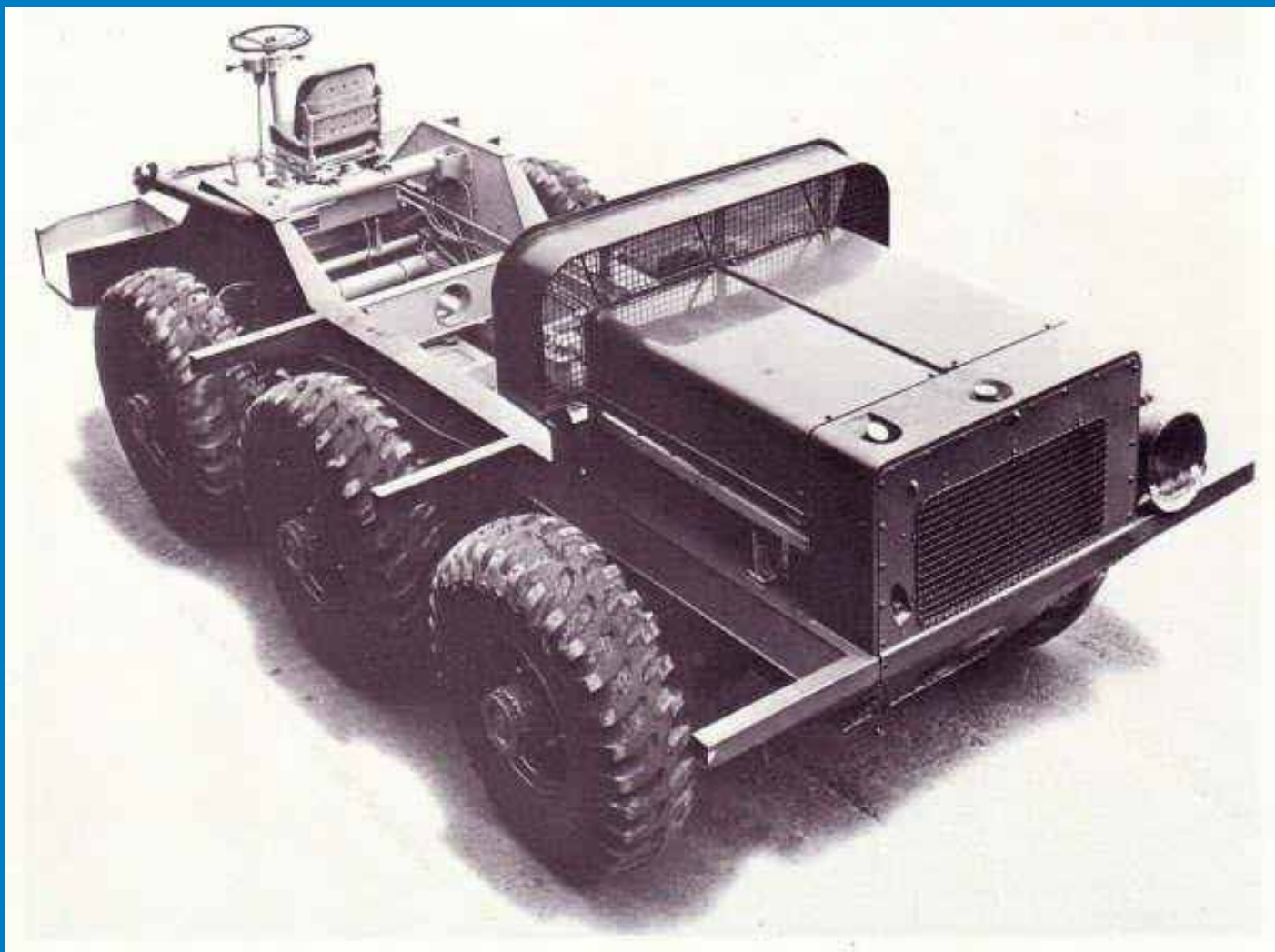
Cheques & Postal Orders made payable to RAF&DFSFA Shop Account.

Amendments for autumn 2012 Flashpoint

RAF & DFSFA SHOP PRICE LIST 1.10.12

BASE BALL CAP	£10.00
KNITTED HAT	£10.00
KNITTED HAT (LG BADGE)	£10.00
FLEECE HAT	£10.00
RUGBY SHIRT	£21.00
SHORT SLEEVE POLO SHIRT	£14.50
LONG SLEEVE POLO SHIRT	£17.50
SHORT SLEEVE T SHIRT	£6.50
SHORT SLEEVE T SHIRT (EMBROIDERED BADGE)	£11.50
LONG SLEEVE T SHIRT	£10.50
LONG SLEEVE T SHIRT (EMBROIDERED BADGE)	£13.00
WHITE SHORT SLEEVE SHIRT	£15.00
SWEATSHIRT	£16.50
HOODED SWEATSHIRT	£17.50
FLEECE JACKET	£23.00
FLEECE BODY WARMER	£21.00
ASSOCIATION TIE	£9.00
ASSOCIATION SHIELD	£29.50
BLAZER BADGE	£13.00
PATCH BADGE	£3.50
CAP BADGE	£8.00
LAPEL BADGE – ALL TYPES	£3.00
FIREMAN KEYRING	£3.50
CLOTH KEYRING	£3.50
RED ARROW FRIDGE MAGNET	£3.00
LEATHER BOOK MARK	£1.00
PRESENTATION PEN	£3.50
PRESENTATION PAPER KNIFE	£2.50
CUFF LINKS	£5.50
ASSOCIATION CAR STICKER (INSIDE WINDOW)	£1.00
ASSOCIATION CAR STICKER (OUTSIDE WINDOW)	£1.00
FIRE SCHOOL STICKER (OUTSIDE WINDOW)	£0.50
JUTE BAG WITH EMBROIDERED LOGO	£7.50
DOCUMENT BAG	£8.50
NYLON BAG	£6.50
SPORTS BAG	£17.50
WASH BAG	£11.50
HAND TOWEL WITH LOGO	£10.00
BUTCHER'S APRON WITH EMBROIDERED LOGO	£14.00
RIPPER WALLET	£8.50
ASSOCIATION MUG	£4.00
FIRE ENGINE COASTER	£1.50
RAF FIRE CARDS	£2.00
FIRE ENGINE PRINT SERIES ONE	£5.00
FIRE ENGINE PRINT SERIES TWO	£5.00
FIREMAN PRINT	£3.50
NOVELTY TOYS PIN BADGES AND WHITE METAL MODELS AS PRICED	
ASSOCIATION SHIELDS AS PRICED	





From Steve Harrison, it's not often you see a Mark 6 like this!