

Wing Commander Joseph Graham Day
 Known as Graham
 49 Sqdn: June 1943 - January 1944

Graham was interviewed at the age of 96 over a number of days in October 2013 by his son, Michael, who subsequently referred to his father's log book and record of service to ensure factual accuracy. The words in the text are spoken by Graham.

Born in Southport, Lancashire, on December 16th 1916, I left school in 1933 at the age of 17 with a full School Certificate. I was advanced by one year. I would have liked to have gone on to university to study civil engineering, but that was not to be, my parents arranging instead for me to be a premium pupil gas engineer with Southport Borough Council. In those days it was not uncommon for people to work their way up through a profession. Many homes and factories were powered by coal gas before the War, and coal gas plants were a common sight on the edge of most towns. I was required to carry out routine laboratory testing of the gas, sometimes worked in the drawing office, and helped supervise the plant as an assistant shift engineer.

By 1937, however, it was clear that my career with Southport Corporation Gas Department wasn't going anywhere. My life lacked adventure and prospects seemed limited. War clouds were looming and the armed forces were actively recruiting. In the early part of 1937 I saw a poster in a Southport shop window advertising life in the Royal Air Force, and after a short discussion with my father, wrote to the RAF enquiring about becoming a pilot.

I remember the response was quick. Lots of forms arrived in the post, asking me about my personal history, my schooling and my parents. I filled it all in and was asked to attend a two day selection process in London which included a number of interviews. The interviewers went through my family history yet again. The emphasis seemed to be on finding out whether I was a 'good British chap' and an 'officer type'. I remember one of my interviewers had been to the same school as me, Wellington College, and that seemed very important. The medical test was rudimentary with much poking and prodding and tapping of joints, and of course the obligatory eye test. And shortly after that, I was in! Unsure of what the future held I elected to take a Short Service Commission.

Right from the start the RAF was utterly different to anything I had done before. In May 1937 I was sent to the deHavilland School of Flying at White Waltham Airfield, just to the south west of Maidenhead. I loved the whole experience from day one. It was a civilian flying school and we were based in a very comfortable club house run rather like a gentlemen's club, including lots of good food. I was 21, the other boys on the course were of a similar age or younger, all from public schools, and just like me. We were in the countryside on the edge of London and there were lots of local pubs. I remember the summer was hot and sunny. We made frequent visits to the Thames to go swimming in the evening after flying. Glorious weather of course meant lots of action in bright red Tiger Moths with silver wings. We flew alternate mornings and afternoons to avoid a string of foggy mornings, and when not flying we attended ground school, working on navigation, aero engines, and such like. We didn't fly on Saturdays and Sundays unless something had held up flying the previous week. I loved the Tiger Moth. I felt completely at home in the aircraft. It was a delightful aeroplane, so responsive. I remember being thrilled during aerobatic exercises, and I also enjoyed just 'poodling around' on numerous triangular navigation courses. I loved showing off, side slipping in to land and then executing a perfect three pointer on the grass ... well, it usually worked.

I finished the course in early July 1937 after 27 hours dual and 32 hours solo, and was sent to No5 FTS based at Sealand on the Dee estuary, where as a young APO I converted to the Hawker Hart light bomber and also flew the Audax army cooperation variant. I remember finding the Hart a far more imposing and powerful aircraft than the Tiger Moth. I was thrilled to receive my RAF wings in October 1937, and thereafter training shifted from simply learning to fly the aircraft to the more serious business of air to ground gunnery, reconnaissance patrols, air to air fighting and bombing practice, usually at Penrhos Practice Camp on the north Wales coast. I loved the sound of the Rolls Royce Kestrel, and despite the aircraft already being obsolete in 1937, to me it seemed to have real purpose. I felt I was making real progress. The aircraft was highly manoeuvrable and a delight to fly. We used to play 'silly buggers', diving and turning steeply around towering cumulonimbus, just for the sheer joy of it, and on Saturday mornings we polished the huge aluminium cowl. It was a glorious time. I was in the 'RAF flying club', and war seemed, well to us youngsters, a very long way away.

In February 1938 I was posted to 114 Sqdn at Wyton. This was my first experience of an operational squadron, flying the short nosed Blenheim I. It wasn't a good introduction to an operational squadron, we didn't actually do a great deal of flying. The squadron was having problems with the Bristol Mercury engines cutting out on take-off. I believe it was a carburation problem caused by opening up the throttles too quickly during an overshoot. I think the aircraft had been ordered straight off the drawing board and there were still teething problems. It was a nasty characteristic which could catch you out. On full power and with the aircraft just a few feet above the ground, one engine would cut and the aircraft would yaw, rolling the aircraft into the ground with rather bad results. I witnessed it twice. I'd only been there about a month when we were taken off flying altogether and put on the link trainer - supposedly to brush up on our night flying skills, which was a complete waste of time as we didn't learn anything that we hadn't already done! I actually quite liked the Blenheim. The view through the glazed nose was terrific and after Tiger Moths and Hinds, converting to a twin was another significant step for me. The aircraft was fast and the cockpit layout seemed very 'state of the art' for the time.

In May, as problems persisted with the Blenheim, I was posted to 98 Sqdn to fly Fairy Battles. The Battle was another matter altogether. It was a dreadful aeroplane, grossly underpowered and with all the flying characteristics of a brick. Most unpleasant. 98 Sqdn were based at Hucknall, a grass aerodrome on the edge of Nottingham and commonly known as 'mucky Hucknall' on account of the frequent low cloud and fog - a consequence of all the local coal-fired power stations and industrial pollution. Engine failure on take-off was not uncommon with this aircraft either, and we had it drummed into us NEVER EVER to turn back if this happened, but to land ahead. Words I was to later very wisely ignore.

Despite the poor flying conditions and a terrible aeroplane, life at Hucknall was like that on any other pre-war squadron. Based around a mess full of boisterous public school types aged 20/22 in very high spirits, it was all very chummy and great fun, and we completed endless navigation exercises, practised formation flying, and took part in camera bombing runs on various ranges and local towns.

War broke out in September 1939, and in November I was promoted to Flying Officer and posted to 35 sqdn at Bassingborne - still flying Battles. Inevitably, in just a few days of flying with my new squadron, my turn came and I too had an engine failure on take-off. We were on a cross-country flight which included a touch and go at my old base: Hucknall. At about 500 feet, with everything straining to lift the aircraft away from the airfield, there was a loud bang followed by a sudden ominous silence. A piston had shot through the engine block. Looking out the front all I could see was brickworks, chimneys, and

buildings, and I was losing height rapidly. Without hesitation I shoved the nose down to gain airspeed and turned steeply back towards the airfield to do a wheels up landing downwind on the grass. Despite having disobeyed all the advice, nobody said a word. I was certainly a lot better off than a fellow pilot who subsequently ended up with his nose buried in a wood and the tail wrapped around his front end. Although war had been declared, nothing much happened to change the routine of squadron life, although with the threat of invasion we now did more Home Defence exercises, often flying low level across country, as well as more night flying, but the social life of the mess went on.

Then in January 1940 my war was put on hold for three months. I suffered a serious throat infection which went septic. I was sent to a wonderful RAF hospital who as a last resort placed me on a new Sulfanilamide antibiotic which I believe was still being trialled. It worked brilliantly, and my infection, which was potentially life threatening as I could not eat or drink, cleared up rapidly.

After hospitalisation I was posted to No12 OTU at Benson in April 1940 to fly Ansons for a month, before being posted on to 215 Sqdn at Honnington, a conversion squadron flying Wellington 1Cs. By now things were hotting up a little. The course lasted just a month, focussing on night flying and night navigation, before I joined 37 squadron at Feltwell in June 1940 in order to fly operations against the Ruhr and northern Germany.

My first raid was against Dusseldorf on the night of 19/20 June 1940, followed by a raid on Dortmund's benzene plant on June 24 - and then an incendiary raid on woods south of Darmstadt on June 30. There were a lot of woods in Germany, and woodland made a large and easy target. The idea was that setting them on fire would tie up German resources putting them out, cause panic, and we also hoped the fire might spread to something important. All in all, I remember these early raids as really quite amateurish affairs. We were briefed as a squadron regarding the target, but then separated into crews as it was up to us to plan our own routes out and back, and decide how we would attack the target. It was difficult enough trying to find the target in those days, groping around in the dark 10,000 feet above enemy territory without oxygen and relying on dead reckoning and star sights to get there, without worrying too much about whether we ever actually hit it! Most of the targets were docks, factories and marshalling yards, but our success rate was dismally low.

I completed 21 raids in four months with 37 Sqdn - the most memorable being on August 3rd 1940. When returning from the Ruhr with little fuel left in our tanks, we tried to land at Methwold in Norfolk, but the airfield was fogged in. We pushed on to Nottingham, found that was also fogged in, and then finally tried Benson which I knew from my time with 12 OTU just a few months earlier. There was only rudimentary w/t in the early days of the war, so finding the airfield clear of fog and with no fuel left we happily settled into the landing circuit - only to receive a red Very light. Given our dire situation, we decided to ignore it. Our decision was confirmed as correct when turning finals both engines abruptly cut. We sailed on in despite yet more red lights being fired. No sooner had we settled on the grass than there was a loud bang, followed quickly by another, each accompanied by a sudden jerk. We had clearly hit something, but we had no idea what. In the morning, all was revealed. We had landed successfully on the grass aerodrome, but had then neatly tracked between two large drag line excavators which were establishing foundations for a new runway. Both jibs had removed our outer wing tips, first one then the other. Again, nothing was said, and we were back on squadron the following day with no questions asked.

Then in mid-September 1940, with over 560 hours of flying behind me, I was asked to help ferry a Wellington 1C out to Egypt via Malta and Suez, where I would join 70 sqdn at Kabrit

in the Canal Zone for night operations against axis forces in the Western Desert and Greece. On the way down we happily flew straight over occupied France - after all, there was not a lot anybody could do about us on a dark night in 1940 - only to end up crashing when we landed at Malta. Discovering no brakes we simply ran out of runway and ended up trundling into a blast pen. The rest of my journey to Egypt was aboard HMS Gloucester courtesy of the Royal Navy.

I was in the Western Desert from October 1940 until May 1942 - a fabulous period. Life was very relaxed, swimming in the Med and taking part in exciting off duty excursions into Cairo. I was flying Wellington 1Cs out of rough airstrips, usually against airfield targets, and we were endlessly trotting up and down the North African coast as the frontline advanced and retreated. For a short time I also flew an ancient Valencia on resupply duties from Kabrit to Khartoum in the Sudan - a long slow journey with many refuelling stops in a large cumbersome biplane from a previous era with wires everywhere, a fixed undercarriage, and plenty of built-in drag.

Promoted to Flight Lieutenant I subsequently completed a further non-flying tour as a staff officer at Battle Headquarters Western Desert, where I was responsible for the construction, maintenance and defence of various desert landing grounds. Not an easy task as we needed 1500 yards of flat ground - surprisingly a rare commodity in the desert. To carry out my duties I was issued with a Humber staff car, and I remember a fabulously powerful vehicle which ate up the desert miles with ease - although you had to be careful as dust flew everywhere and you could easily drop suddenly and dramatically into a steep sided wadi which had only been spotted at the last minute.

I returned to England in May 1942 by way of the New Amsterdam, a large modern luxury cruise liner converted to troop carrying duties. We sailed to Glasgow via South Africa and the Cape of Good Hope. In June I was Mentioned in Dispatches in recognition of my service in North Africa, and in August I joined No3 FIS (Flying Instructor School) at Chippenham, flying Oxfords. After graduating from the course I was promoted to Sqdn Ldr and posted to 29 OTU at North Luffenham as CFI for crews converting onto the Wellington III. This was a distinctly improved aircraft compared to the Wellington 1C I had flown previously. It had more powerful Bristol Hercules engines and a four gun tail turret, and was the mainstay of Bomber Command at the time. I did not greatly enjoy my time as CFI. I was flying endless cross country exercises at night in order to train pilots to fly on instruments. It was rather dull after the excitement of the desert and I was itching for some action.

After 9 months as CFI, and now with over 900 hours of flying behind me, I was greatly relieved to be finally posted to Swinderby to convert onto Lancasters. I took to the Lancaster from my very first flight. It was a pilot's aeroplane, responsive, powerful, easy to fly, and stable; it simply went wherever you pointed it. It was immensely strong. The aircraft was designed around the bomb bay. The bomb load was hung from two strong girders running fore and aft, and these were in turn lifted into the air by wings built around two very strong main spars which ran at right angles through the CG.

After 4 weeks of basic familiarisation, and learning how to do weaves, diving turns and corkscrews, plus mock bombing runs on various English cities, I was posted to 49 Sqdn at Fiskerton in June 1943 as A Flight Commander.

My first operation came quickly, on June 28 in ED719, a raid against Cologne. This was quickly followed by further raids against Cologne, Hamburg, Remscheid, Nurnberg, Stuttgart, Munich and Berlin. I completed 11 operations in Lancasters, including a raid on the Peenemunde V2 rocket establishment on the night of August 17th 1943. From September 1943 I was sometimes acting O/C 49 Squadron, covering for Wing Commander

Adams when he was called away on staff duty. This was the time when Harris had taken over Bomber Command. New heavy bombers were coming on stream, and we were doing to Germany what the Luftwaffe had done to British cities during the Blitz. The aim in our minds was clear - to bring the war to as early an end as possible.

A typical raid in late 1943 had a fairly common routine. We would know first thing after breakfast if operations were on for that night. A notice would be posted up in the mess around about 08.30 indicating the aircraft and the crews that had been assigned. By this time we were attacking Germany hard, and the requirement was usually full establishment, which meant every aircraft that could fly would take part. After the rather carefree atmosphere of Bomber Command in the earlier part of the war things were getting more serious. The aircraft was more technically demanding, the operations more tightly controlled, and with night fighters and effective radar controlled anti-aircraft guns in enemy territory, there was the very real possibility that this raid might be your last.

I experienced an immediate tightening of the stomach when I saw that list. Everyone did, but you kept it quiet and didn't share your feelings. The expectation was that you would get on with the job. I usually ended up with an upset stomach before every raid, but it quietened down immediately I got into the cockpit and started the engines. If ops were off, of course, the feeling of relief throughout the station was palpable and everybody disappeared into Lincoln. The pubs would be full that night.

As Flight Commander I was responsible for approximately six aircraft and their crews. I had the perk of an RAF car, and after breakfast would drive out to dispersal to meet the ground crews. The aircraft were dispersed on concrete hard standings all around the edge of the airfield and also beyond in surrounding fields. I knew the ground crew well, most by name and many by nick name. They were an integral part of the coming operation and aircrew were utterly dependent upon their skills and the serviceability of the aircraft they were about to fly. It was an important morale booster, for me as well as for them, to tour the aircraft in my flight and check on common failures such as magnetos and hydraulics.

Then it was back to the Flight Commanders Office to organise air tests with Flight Control and place these times on the flight noticeboard. All the crews would then meet in Flight Operations, and we would each go out to our aircraft for a short local flight lasting approximately 30 minutes. During the air test we would test fire the guns and check that the aircraft systems were operational. When we returned, the aircraft would be bombed up, serviced and fuelled ready for that night's operation.

Target briefing occurred after lunch, in a large hut anywhere between 14.00 and 18.00 depending upon our time on target, which itself depended on the distance to be flown, and were in any case deliberately varied to confuse the enemy. There was a separate pilot briefing and then a main briefing for all the crews. The main briefing had a lot of theatre to it. There was a large map of northern Europe at the front of the briefing room, obscured by curtains. Other maps and aerial photos were placed under glass tables, usually covered at the start. The briefing was led by the Squadron Commander who would dramatically unveil the map for us, leading to ribald groans and other comments as the target was finally revealed. He would then run through the whole operation with a pointer. This would include details of the track to be taken out to the target, and the track back, a number of very important heights, speeds and times including time on target, target indicator colours, known defences, and so on. There were also briefings from the Navigation Leader, Bomb Leader, Intelligence Officer and Met Officer on various finer details such as the likely weather, and various safety issues, particularly the danger of collision at turning points. Individual crews would subsequently study pictures of the target for about 30 minutes and make final preparations before dispersing. The

atmosphere was always professional, but a bit jittery. People were understandably very nervous and some would be a bit jumpy. My stomach was usually really churning by now.

There was quite a bit of hanging around before take-off time. The most sensible thing was to go back to your room and get some 'kip', but sleeping was a problem for everyone. Our sleeping program was permanently disrupted by frequent but irregular night flying. We were tired and anxious, and the moment you lay down you would find yourself wide awake and worrying about what was to come, wondering whether you would make it back - especially if you had had a bad time on the raid before.

Finally, and with some relief, it was time for night flying tea: bacon and egg, bread and butter, and a cup of tea. Eggs were scarce during the war, so this was a special meal for us, produce coming into the mess from surrounding farms.

Then there was more hanging around until one hour before take-off, which was either late evening or early night. You would then stroll over to the crew room and meet up with the rest of your crew, put on flying kit, pick up your parachute, and then drive out to dispersal. There were seven of us in a Lanc. Pilot, Navigator, Bomb Aimer who also operated the front turret, Flight Engineer, Wireless Operator, Mid-Upper Gunner and Rear Gunner. I would sign Form 700 to take responsibility for the aircraft, and then we would all climb up the short ladder at the back and work our way forward, hunched up with all our kit, climbing over the main spars which were by now becoming highly polished in the process.

As soon as I settled into the pilot's seat I felt at home and my stomach cramps would start to go as I strapped in. I would listen to the familiar clonks and bangs as the rest of the crew settled into their positions. My feet felt snug in their flying boots, and my body felt snug in my flying jacket and Mae West. Then it was leather flying helmet on and plug in the intercom. I never wore gloves; my hands were always warm enough.

Engine start was always a specific time, so while we waited I would check that all the crew were in position and happy. I liked the atmosphere in the aircraft to be professional. I wasn't keen on too much chit-chat, I'd rather people focussed on the task in hand without any distractions. Then it was time to start engines - inners first as they powered some of the aircraft systems, outers second. Run at 1200 revs to bring oil and coolant up to temperature, then carry out various checks, such as no spark plug failure, magnetos and boost pressures. The aircraft came alive at engine start, everything vibrating and the airframe bouncing slightly in the slipstream. I was busy now and the work successfully blocked out any worries of what lay ahead.

At the pre-arranged time, which was designed to keep us all about 3 minutes apart, I would ease the aircraft off its standing and follow the lights on a long and meandering route to the runway. Keeping on the taxiway was the biggest problem, direction being controlled on the brakes, although it became quite easy once you got the knack.

There would be a small queue for the runway and we would wait for the chap in front to go. Then we would swing onto the runway, line up, complete our final checks and wait for green light at the other end.

Once it came it was a firm but steady push on the throttles with the bomb aimer's hand following up behind. We were always fully loaded and needed every bit of power and every foot of runway we had. The Merlins were running flat out now at over a 3000 revs and everything was straining. The tail came up pretty quickly, but then it seemed an age before you felt the plane begin to lighten and finally ease herself gently off the runway at

about 100mph. We brought the wheels up quickly to reduce drag, but kept the aircraft low to gain the safety airspeed of 130mph before starting to climb gently away. You would fly away to clear the airfield, and then circle, waiting for the pre-arranged time for your wave to set course for the target. Everything was controlled by the clock.

Once over the North Sea all the guns were tested again. As the fuel burned off the aircraft was slowly climbing. We aimed to reach the correct height once we were at the target. We had an autopilot to help us but I much preferred to hand fly the machine using compass, altimeter and turn and bank indicator.

We would usually cross the enemy coast at about 20,000 feet, by then we would be on oxygen. You would often see flak coming up at you like beads of light - slow at first, and then faster and faster before they suddenly whipped by you. Usually it wasn't very accurate and you would simply keep an eye on it. Very occasionally you would see an aircraft go down even at this early stage, but not very often. Later on we were fitted with H2S, which was an early ground mapping radar. It was very, very good and gave us a clear picture of the shape of the coast so we knew where we were, as well as helping us later identify the target. It could pick out the difference between water, land and built up areas very well, and was not affected by cloud.

Eventually, after a pretty long slog, the target would start to come up over the horizon. Things got a bit more exciting now. The target was usually well lit with various coloured target indicators and coloured incendiaries - red, green, yellow and white. There was a steady glow from the city which looked as if it was entirely on fire. The anti-aircraft was intense now, and to help break the lock of any radar control we started to release bundles of tin foil called Window down tubes out the back of the aircraft. I can make a small claim to fame here. The original plan was to push it out through the rear turret, but it blew back. I suggested that we cut a slot in the floor and that the bomb aimer could push it out through that. The idea was adopted, and modified to two tubes to make the job easier. Radar directed gun fire was effective, and sometimes it was close enough for you to hear muffled thumps above the noise of the engines, and the whole aircraft would rock. You got twitchy when things got that close, the next shot could be the last.

The navigator would call out when we were approaching the target and the bomb aimer would go forward into the Plexiglas dome. He was in control now. He would call out directions to you - left a bit, right a bit, steady, steady, that sort of thing. Holding a straight and level course over a burning enemy city with everything being thrown up at you to try and stop you bombing was not a good experience, we were sitting ducks. Sometimes it seemed to take ages before the bomb aimer finally called 'bombs gone', and the aircraft would lift strongly as seven tons of bombs left the bomb bay.

I felt better instantly - time for home! Having been straight and level for so long I would pull the aircraft into a steep climbing or push into a diving turn so as to leave the target area as quickly as possible. There was a great feeling of relief amongst the whole crew as we left the target behind us and faced the long slog home.

The key thing now was to keep the crew awake and their eyes peeled for night fighters. I was only attacked once by a night fighter. Returning from a trip to Hamburg he came in from the port side pouring tracer across our bows - and then he was gone. Amazingly he didn't hit us. Another time we were tracked by what I now guess was one of the new jet fighters. We saw a small, steady round glow ahead of us travelling at the same speed as the bomber stream, and we wondered what the hell it was. The intelligence people were very interested in our report when we got back, but then the moment passed. Looking back I think we were staring down the jet pipe of one of the new jet night fighters.

Another very real danger was getting too close to another aircraft in the bomber stream. You couldn't see them, but you would start to feel the whole aircraft lurching in the slipstream, and you would ease out of there pretty damn quick. You saw all sorts of things going on around you both on the way in and on the way out of the target; beads of flack coming up, flares dropping down, target markers burning brightly, sometimes aircraft going down trailing flames. You didn't really think about it, you just got on with the job and hoped it wouldn't be you next.

A round trip to Berlin or Stuttgart and back took about 8 ½ hours, Hamburg was closer at about 5 hours. Hand flying in the dark all the way, much of it over enemy territory.

On our return we would call up base from a certain distance out and hope that the fog hadn't come down and that we wouldn't have to divert. As we drew near it seemed that the whole of East Anglia was covered by airfields, often the outer markers would intersect. It was confusing, and it was quite common for an aircraft to call up one aerodrome and land at another. We were stacked in strict order of arrival, strictly controlled around the circuit, and it was a great relief to finally put the aircraft back on the ground and to hear the screech of the tires. We'd made it through another operation - yet again. Then it was trundle back to dispersal and shut down the engines ... and silence, for the first time for hours.

We were ferried back to Flight Operations for de-briefing, and then the crew would disperse, me to the officers mess for bacon and eggs, and then to my room to try and get some sleep. It was very difficult. As soon as I shut my eyes the bed would rock with the same motion of the aeroplane, and I was so 'tizzed up' sleep would rarely come.

I completed my last raid on January 2nd 1944, going to Berlin in JB466, landing back at Rattin Common. And that was my 50 ops done. I was mightily relieved when my tour of duty came to an end. During my time with 49 squadron flying had become more and more technical, and everything was getting very serious. Losses were high and a lot of crews were failing to return. Towards the end my attitude became one of just getting through. When I joined the RAF in 1937 I knew there was likely to be a war, but I was young and didn't think very hard about it. My early experience of Bomber Command was great fun, lots of young pilots like me in very high spirits, and the flying was still essentially seat of the pants. 49 squadron was when it all started to get very serious, and it focussed my mind on just what I was really involved in.

After my last op in January 1944 I was awarded the DSO, receiving a congratulatory telegram from Air Chief Marshal Harris in the process, and posted to 54 Base, Coningsby, as Wing Commander Air. This was very different, and in itself a fascinating experience. I was involved with the development and practice of low level target marking and worked alongside Air Commodore Sharpe, and also Wing Commander Cheshire from the short-lived 627 Squadron who were flying Mosquitoes. A lot of our work was to do with establishing and evaluating low level precision marking techniques for bombing operations which were a prelude to the invasion.

In June 1944 I was posted onto a Naval Staff College Course, and after graduation joined Combined Operations Headquarters in Whitehall. I was a member of the Amphibious Warfare Committee, involved with the experimental development of techniques and equipment for long range assault on enemy territory. I was sent round numerous service establishments lecturing on landing craft and landing tactics.

When the war ended I joined 2 Group Headquarters at Guttersloh in Germany, where I was Wing Commander Admin carrying out routine staff work, and then I was posted to 2MRU

(Missing Research Unit) based at Amiens in France, commanding a team carrying out the rather grisly task of recovering and identifying missing personnel from various aircraft crash sites for burial.

By October 1946 I had become increasingly disillusioned with the routine desk work of staff operations in a post war air force and my rather depressing work in France, and I made the decision to retire from the RAF in order to join a Government Training Scheme with the intention of becoming a dairy farmer, which I subsequently did, in Lancashire ... but that's another story.