The 4Tger



The 49 Squadron Association Magazine August 2006 Issue 2

IN MEMORIUM

L Hay (Uncle Will) J L Matthews L Jones J Findlay

W Gill

D Tester

WE WILL REMEMBER THEM

WELCOME TO:-NEW MEMBERS

NEW HONORARY MEMBERS

NEW ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

NEW HONORARY FRIENDS

NEW FRIENDS

Leslie "Uncle Will" Hay

1917 - 2006

"Uncle Will" as he always liked to be called died after a short illness on Friday 19th May.

Uncle was born in Bromsgrove, Worcestershire but the family moved to Plymouth where he spent his early years. It was whilst he was at school there that he met Jessie who was to become his teenage sweetheart and companion for the rest of his life.

He was an extraordinary man who served in the Metropolitan Police before and after the war, retiring with the rank of Detective Inspector.



He continued a very active life right up to his death, competing in a bowls league amongst other activities. Uncle loved walking and together with his dear wife Jessie spent many holidays abroad. Perhaps the most surprising thing to many who only knew him in later life was that he wrestled for the Police during his service with them. In his later career he worked at the Law Courts at Westminster where he was involved in coordinating the activities of the police system with the courts. After retiring from the police he continued to work for the Civil Service until final retirement in 1982.

He joined the RAF in 1941 but he was not posted to 49 Squadron until August 44. He oft quoted "Hurry up, and wait" which he said was the theme of his early career.

Ed Smith remembers, "It was August 44 when Will and his crew were posted to 49 Squadron. He was a F/Sgt. Pilot and keen to get started on ops.

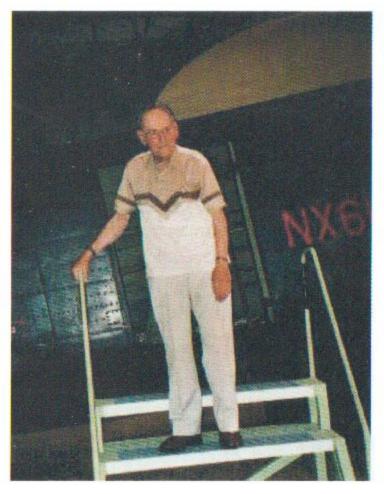
Since our crew were "OLD HANDS" (About five daylights) and Bob Walker our skipper was Deputy B Flight Commander Will asked a lot of questions pertaining to ops. Will was soon promoted to F/O as all skippers at that time were commissioned."

U-Uncle became Will's regular aircraft. It was inevitable that with the surname Hay he would become known as Will after the popular comedian of that period, and the "Uncle" was a natural progression.

Uncle Will was due to fly his thirtieth and final op on the 16th January 45. It was not to be as the aircraft went u/s. They were sent on leave and on returning were told that the requisite number was now thirty-six. The crew went on to finish their tour and Uncle Will was awarded the DFC having done thirty-seven ops including his second dickie trip.

After the war Uncle was a founder member of The 49 Squadron Association and for nearly forty years was it's Chairman. During this time he took it upon himself to research the Squadron History. He spent many hours at the PRO amassing information and is remembered by many for his patience and courtesy in helping find details of relatives careers with 49.

His legacy to the 49 Squadron Association is an Archive second to none. We are indeed truly grateful.



On the 8th June a Guard of Honour of 4T9ers lined the path up to the entrance to The Parish Church in Weybridge. As the service ended, with the RAF Ensign draping his coffin, the old warrior started his last journey to Weybridge Cemetery to the strains of The Dam Busters March.

Uncle Will is already deeply missed by us all and our thoughts are with Jessie his dear wife of sixty four years.

Uncle climbing out of the East Kirkby Lancaster during a visit in 2005.

EDITORIAL

What a terrible start to the year, first Tom and then Uncle. One cannot overstate the service that they both gave to the Association.

At Tom's funeral I was talking with Uncle about flying and he went through the whole sequence from arriving at the aircraft to climbing away. I was spellbound and said to him, "You must do that again at the reunion so that I can record it. You really felt that you were there." He was so intense. How crucial it is to get these things while we can, More on that theme later.

Following the loss of Uncle, our Chairman, I carried out a poll of those attending the reunion and I am delighted to tell you that Ted Cachart was unanimously elected to succeed him. I am equally pleased to tell you that, in recognition of his great service to the Association, John Ward has been appointed Honorary President. I have no doubt that you all concur and join me in congratulating them.

I will repeat a little anecdote that I shared with those at the reunion. Shortly after confirming Ted's appointment he phoned to say that we had not discussed remuneration.

"You can have what I get", I said.

"Oh, I think that the Chairman should get more than the Secretary", he replied.

"Ok, you can have twice what I get".

"That's better", he said. So that was agreed.

I hope that this does not prompt II Presidenti to call demanding thrice.

A huge thank you to all those who donated to our various appeals & Association funds. The total figure from all sources to Tom's Charities was just under £1700. Both Marion and Jessie thank you for your generosity and also for the kind letters that they have received.

Thank you to those of you who contacted me with compliments for our first issue, it makes the job so much more satisfying. Again, I thank Ted Cachart for without his efforts it would look much less professional.

Thank you also to those of you who have sent information for possible publication. Do not think that this is ignored, it will be published as space permits however, we do give priority to "current" news or to use the modern expression, "time sensitive material".

After the reunion I received a letter from Warrant Officer John May, The Adjutant of The Red Arrows, of which I would like to share a part with you.

"......I was particularly honoured to be offered membership of the 49 Squadron Association, an offer which I am proud to accept." John replied at the banquet on behalf of The Guests and Ladies, and goes on, "During my short speech, I expressed my admiration that the comradeship which was built up so long ago is still flourishing. Other squadron reunions which I have attended recently have tended to degenerate into excuses for consuming copious amounts of alcohol as opposed to the ethos of the 49 Squadron Association - an opportunity for old comrades and their families to meet and give thanks for friendships which have endured over the years. You are examples for all of us who wear Royal Air Force blue."

I am very proud to have received such a letter on behalf of the Association.

The Bomber Command Memorial, featured in the May issue, is to be unveiled in Lincoln Cathedral on August 27th 2006 at 3.45pm. If you wish to attend please contact: Scotty Scott, 2 St Mary's Avenue, Welton, Lincoln, LN2 3LM. Telephone 01673 860785.

Flypast calculated that, through the war years, an average of five aircraft per day fell on the U.K. It might be said that it was safer to be in the air.

Many of you will remember Jo Houlihan, now Tannock, who researched her great uncle F/Sgt. George Silvester DFM and visited Denmark to unveil the memorial to his crew in 2003. Well, whilst I was going through Tom Gatfield's papers I came across copies of the commendations for the Tickler crew with whom George was flying when he won the DFM. (See page193 of "the Dog"). At Uncle Will's funeral I gave these to Jo and she saw the name 'Matthews' and her thoughts went back ten years to a letter from fellow crew member John Matthews which was passed to her by Uncle. She then wrote to John's wife in Canada and received in reply a letter saying that he had died last year but enclosing some "Lovely photos of George" that she hadn't previously seen.

Mrs Matthews told Jo that Ted Lowans and Ted Tickler have died but said that she is in touch with their wives. As Jo is changing her name in August, "For the last time", and is honeymooning in Canada she intends to meet up with Mrs. Matthews and her daughter. Congratulations Jo on yet another step forward and every happiness as Jo Cockburn.

In April Barbara and I had the privilege of accompanying Ted Cachart and a number of ex RAF POW's, including one who "enjoyed the hospitality" of the Japanese, to RAF Cosford. We were met by two Warrant Officers who were to be our escorts.

Cosford is an engineering training establishment which serves all three of the armed forces. The C.O. is an Air Commodore who was away in London at the time so we were welcomed by the 2nd I/C, a Royal Navy Captain.

We first visited a class room where some eighty trainees were sat at attention, very smart. They formed four circles in which two or three Ex POW's sat and answered their questions. It was fascinating to see the interest and respect that they showed towards their visitors. As the Captain said afterwards, "They could be POW's themselves one day".

After a visit to a hanger full of redundant Jaguars we went into a large room in which to my amazement stood a Euro-Fighter or Typhoon as it is now known. We were told that it is an "emulation" not "simulation". On the wall of the room there is a large LCD screen upon which all control movements are displayed.

"Would anyone like to have a go", we were asked and I was on my feet and into the cockpit in a nanosecond. An instructor told me to flick a toggle switch on my right which activated number one engine start up sequence. The two throttles are on the left hand side and slide in parallel. Slowly I opened number one and the simulated engine sound began to roar and the airframe vibrated. Into reheat, the display on the right showed the reducing jet orifice area and also the fact that we were rapidly overheating. "Throttle back and start number two". Then both engines into reheat. What a thrill! That little toy cost several million pounds and as I climbed down I knew that my computer flight simulator will never feel the same again.

After lunch in the Officer's Mess, where we were joined by the Captain, three Wing Commanders and two Squadron Leaders, we visited the RAF Museum. Here Ted and I sought out the ex49 Squadron Valiant XD818, newly arrived from Hendon. See article and photographs.

I was most impressed by the hospitality and obvious respect shown by all serving personnel towards the RAF veterans, an attitude that I am beginning to realise runs through all the Service. On receiving our thanks for a marvellous day the Captain said "It is a two way street and the trainees will have received a great deal from it themselves".

In May I read in a newspaper that taxi and lorry drivers were objecting to being banned from flying the English Flag from their vehicles. "We are patriots and are being prevented from demonstrating it", said a spokesman. Following my comments in the May issue regarding the apathy shown on St. Georges Day I can only conclude that patriotism only runs as deep as a few soccer matches these days. I understand that the Beckham's asked the BBMF not to over fly their party at "Beckingham Palace" as it might upset the Germans! For crying out loud! Am I becoming a grumpy old man?

Roger Bedford was the first to write regarding our "deliberate" mistake in the May Issue. According to Eric Clarke, the second to write, ACH-IVIST is German for Archivist. *The 4T9er has gone multi lingual now and in colour too!* Eric also suggested that I try my spell checker with NONAGENARIAN. He's right. The things you learn in The 4T9er. By the way Eric, there is only one 'S' in OCCASION.

Eric goes on to say that Ted Cachart has come up with the idea that, "All 'oldies' in their 80's and 90's put £5 in a kitty. Last one out of the door turns out the light and scoops the lot".

That's pretty sneaky Ted as you only just qualify.

Eric also tells me that he has a nameplate on his house "CAVE CANEM" with a picture of a dog. His postman said "I have translated that, CAVE is a home for an animal and CANEM is a dog, so it means "THE DOG HOUSE". No comment!

On the subject of spelling, did anyone see the work of the graffitist on a wall adjacent to the M40 just before the junction to the M25? In three foot high letters there was a notice, "NO WAR, PEAS". Sadly it's gone now, it always made me smile.

Do you remember Cynthia Payne or "Madame Cyn" as she was known in the seventies? I don't mean personally, you would hardly be expected to own up even if you did! Well, I read a feature on her recently where she looked back on her life of illegal sex parties. "Today Cynthia still lives in that five bedroom house. 'Compared to what I've lived through, it's pretty boring now', she says from the kitchen in which a Squadron Leader (One who has now passed on) once banned a couple from having sex because they were too close to the sandwiches." I should think so too, who wants squashy sandwiches. I wonder who that S/L was though!

Finally, all cheques to the Association should be payable to 49 SA Petwood.

'Till the next time

CAN YOU HELP

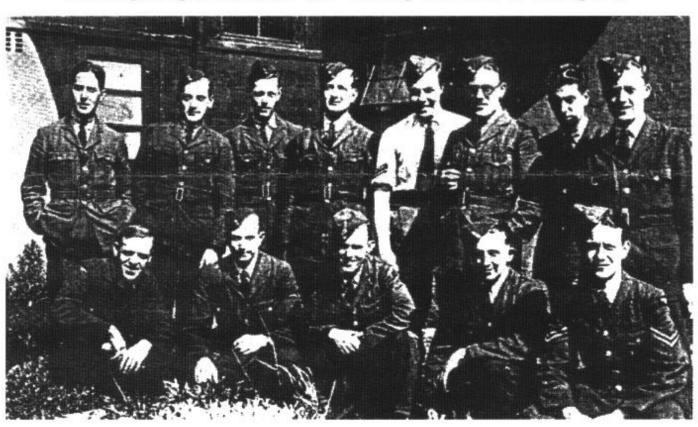
Following my query "Does anyone remember Mick Mills" I had a letter from Tom Reed, who does. I am told that they have been in touch which is another success for 49SA. Now, does anyone remember Tom Reed because he would like to hear from you?

Tom joined 49 on 13th January 41 as Cpl Armament Fitter. He was then promoted to F/Sgt. I/C Armoury and in May 43 took over from W.O. Spradbury at Fiskerton. From Fulbeck he received a compassionate posting after his father was torpedoed and lost on 19th March 45. After a tour with Fighter Command at Laarbruch he retired from Boscombe Down where he was F/Lt. Weapons Systems Development Officer.

Cecil Robinson writes that the Obituary to Peter Ward-Hunt prompts him to ask, "How many WOP/AG's are still "Standing" who were there at the same time (1939). Jack Gadsby was one but Cecil understands that he died two or three years ago.

Davyd Thomas has e-mailed me to ask if anyone remembers his grandfather and grandmother who both served at Fiskerton. His grandfather was 1527757 John Cope who was an Armourer and his grandmother was 2079951 Majorie Cope (Nee Hooper) who was a cook. (Was she in the Sgt's mess? - Ted)

Can anyone put names to this 'band of brothers' at Scampton?



Simon Muggleton, a member of the Orders and Medals Research Society asks if anyone can provide information on F/Sgt. James Norman Percy Martin who was awarded the DFM on 14th May 43 whilst serving as a Wireless Operator with 49. He is a collector of medals and logbooks and researches the airmen concerned. Copies of his research are sent to Hendon and the Imperial War Museums.

Alan Morgan asks if anyone took part in, and remembers, the raids on Leipzig and Stuttgart on Feb 19/20th and 20/21st 44 respectively. Alan was a Flight Engineer with 49 Squadron between Dec 43 and Feb 44. He reminds us that on the Leipzig raid we lost 78 bombers, two of which were from 49. On the Stuttgart raid the 12th Lanc from 49 crashed on take off and exploded. Alan's aircraft ran into trouble over Stuttgart, resulting in a landing at RAF Ford. As featured in "the Dog" Alan lost the fingers of both hands to frostbite and became one of McIndoe's Guinea Pigs.

Russell Rogers would like to know if anyone remembers his brother P/O Ormond Rogers RAAF who was lost 22/23rd March 44 during a raid on Frankfurt. He was a member of F/Sgt. Greig's crew along with F/Sgt. Kenneth Anderson who is pictured on page 316 of "the Dog". Russell was a ball Gunner on Liberators with the RAAF in the Far East.



P/O Ormond Rogers RAAF

AN APPEAL BY THE SECRETARY

No not for money, although that would be useful, but for your reminiscences. I know that many of you have already put pen to paper but there are still a great number who maybe think that it is line shooting. Let me be blunt, in the future there will be no one left to tell what happened. Many schools now include WW2 in their curriculum and there is a growing interest among the young, let us feed that interest. It is not my quotation but "Forget the past at your peril". Let me put it another way, there are more than 55,000 who cannot tell their tale, you owe it to them. I believe that it is crucial that the young people know why and how they made their sacrifice. Please do it now whilst there is still time.

By the way, this appeal includes the Lincoln and Valiant bods. The Cold War was a crucial time in our lives and you were at the sharp end. How about it? If any of you prefer not to have your memories published then I will respect that but write them down nevertheless, for posterity.

REUNION 19-22 JUNE 2006

Much to the relief of Barbara and myself the reunion went very well. We have had some lovely letters of appreciation which makes it all very

worthwhile.

On Tuesday 20th June Ted Cachart had arranged for us to visit the William Farr C of E School which is built adjacent to the site of Dunholme Lodge airfield. Here the Head Teacher has turned a classroom into a memorial to the squadrons that flew from the airfield.



Ernie Webb with Wm Farr students

We were shown a beautiful Roll of Honour and various pictures relating to the squadrons. I had the pleasure of presenting a copy of "Home at Dawn" to him. During the visit we were attended by a dozen or so senior students. They were most attentive, a credit to the school and we all agreed that they are testament to the fact that there is much good in the youth of today.

After we left the school we went to the farm of Mr Brian Wykes which is located on the airfield site. To his credit he has built a memorial on the site of a former generator station. A wreath was laid by Dot Smith, nee Everett, escorted by Vi Veness, nee Winters and Billie Watkins, nee I know not.



Vi Winters, Dot Smith and Billi Watkins

On the following day we filled the church at Fiskerton where the Rev. Clive Todd officiated. During the prayers we remembered three late reunion stalwarts, Len Bradfield, Tom Gatfield and Leslie "Uncle Will" Hay. A wreath was laid by Ted Cachart, escorted by Geoff Brunton and Jack Joslin.

After the church service we went to the Airfield Memorial where our Padre Tony Buckler first dedicated the Bill Blackstock memorial seat and then took the Service of Remembrance. A wreath was laid by Lou Crabbe escorted by David Boughton and Bert Cole.

Here I must thank Geoff Stuffins, Mary, Carl and Vernon for the wonderful job that they have done in obtaining and positioning the seat. They once again prepared the memorial area so that it looked truly magnificent. Our sincere thanks go to them all.



Tony Buckler dedicating the seat (Note the superb paving)

Our next stop was the new Village Hall where we were treated to a superb buffet. Following lunch, Ted Cachart and John Ward unveiled the two plagues in the 49 Squadron Lounge. I then presented a framed copy of "Home at Dawn" which was signed by all the WWII veterans present.

I was thrilled that Ann Chesman, who helps to run the local Scout Troop, asked if the scouts might lay a wreath at the Airfield Memorial Remembrance Sunday. Of course I agreed to this wonderful idea.

Following an afternoon resting, for some, the Banquet was held in the evening. Sixty eight sat down to a superb dinner served up by the Petwood Hotel and a most enjoyable evening was had by all.

Late on in the meal I was approached by the Lady Head Waiter Person, (Does that suit the PC brigade?) saying that a cake had been delivered for 67 Squadron but as we were the only squadron there it must be for us. On turning the label up the other way it was indeed for us or more precisely for Ted Cachart. This had been sent by his son and daughter in recognition of his appointment. Very nice it was too or so I am told, I never got to eat my piece as I was attempting to break the World Marathon Raffle Record.

(Thinks; I must streamline that raffle for Lou Crabbe, John Beck, Des Harris, next year).



John Aldridge and Ernie Webb

The following day we visited The BBMF and East Kirkby. Unfortunately the BBMF Lanc was stranded at Manston with a damaged tail wheel, hence no fly-over at Fiskerton, but we were able to get up close to the one at East Kirkby. Thanks once again to Fred and Harold Panton for their hospitality and also for their dedication to keeping alive the memory of the 55,000.

The next day we said farewell to all our friends in the firm hope that we will all meet again in 2007.

The 2007 reunion is now booked at the Petwood Hotel for the nights Sunday June 3^{rd} to Wednesday June 6^{th} . Sunday will be informal, then it is planned that the Church Service and Banquet will take place on Monday 4^{th} . Booking forms will be sent out with the November Issue of The 4T9er.





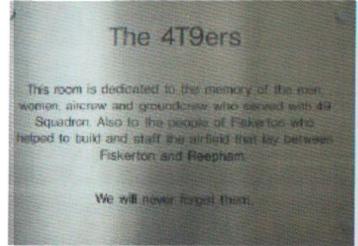
(Top) The 'Dirty (bakers) Dozen' 49 veterans (Bottom) The reunion group with local friends



Presentation of the 'Home At Dawn' painting



The buffet lunch in the main hall





The Plaque over the door of the 49 Sqdn lounge in the Fiskerton village hall.

And this one over the bar (I think it very appropriate - Ted)



Lou Crabbe lays the memorial wreath







"Your table is ready"

Il Presidenti waiting for someone to buy him a drink



Paul Strong, Head Teacher receives "Home at Dawn" from your Secretary



VISIT TO MAILLY-LE-CAMP 2006

By Geoff Brunton & Roger Bedford

On the night of 3rd/4th May 1944 Bomber Command attacked a French Military camp at Mailly-le-Camp about 100 kilometres east of Paris which was being used by a German Panzer Division. The attack was due to begin at midnight, when universally, troops are in their beds, and over and done with a few minutes later.

Things did not go to plan, there were delays over the target and also communications difficulties. Losses were high among the 330+ strong bomber force due to night-fighter actions.

49 Squadron put up 14 aircraft for this operation with no losses. "Beware of the Dog at War" records that Bill Green's aircraft was damaged as a result of another aircraft exploding in front of it. Geoff was Bill Green's F/E and Roger's late father, F/Sgt. George Bedford was F/E in P/O Edgar's aircraft.

Mailly-le-Camp is still an operational French Army Camp.



Photos:- (Above) The Mailly Ceremony (Right) Geoff Brunton laying the wreath

The annual Service of Remembrance took place on 3rd May, starting at 11.00am in the camp chapel. Following the service everyone met in the Officer's Mess bar for drinks. Here Geoff met several French historians. "They always need a few signatures"

Geoff continues, "Veteran numbers seem to reduce every year. At 1pm we moved to the Officer's Mess dining room for a buffet lunch. There is always an excellent spread. I estimate that 70 to 80 people attended including the contingent from 101 Squadron, RAF Brize Norton.

Following the meal there were several speeches, the first by the C.O. of 101 Squadron, then a number by the French. After a few photographs, everyone made their way to the Memorial site. Three high ranking officers from the French armed forces always attend. Part way through the ceremony, the four RAF veterans were called forward to lay their wreaths at the Monument."

After the ceremony, Roger, Geoff, his son Michael and his fiancée Nikki visited the churchyard at Herbisse where Bill Green and his crew are buried. Roger says, "Geoff was Bill Green's usual F/E. I knew that Bill Green and his crew had been lost in July 44 and are buried at Herbisse, a village not far from Mailly-le-Camp. It is ironic that they had a lucky escape over Mailly-le-Camp but now rest in a churchyard a stone's throw from there.

Geoff was more fortunate, he broke a leg in a motor cycle accident and therefore didn't fly when his crew were lost. Bob Brooks, Edgar's Navigator (4T9er who lives near Newcastle, New South Wales) has told me that Bill Green may have saved the lives of the Edgar crew when the squadron was diverted to Silverstone's satellite, Turweston, due to a crash landing at Fiskerton. Because of damage to the hydraulics Edgar needed to land without delay. He was told to join the circuit by Turweston but whilst he was in the funnel Bill Green heard of his predicament and told Edgar to take his slot."



MISSING IN ACTION

By Colin Cripps

On the 8th November 1941 five Hampdens of 49 Squadron were detailed for an intruder bombing raid to Essen. At about 9.07 p.m. Hampden EA-Z P1206 was attacked by a German night fighter and crashed at Berkhout, south west of Hoorn in Holland.

Due to the marshy ground in the area the wreckage sank deep, two of the crew's bodies were found, but unfortunately the bodies of Sgt. J.E. Kehoe and Sgt. S.G. Mullenger were never traced. It is believed that they remained with the wreckage and to this date are still posted as missing in action.

As you will have read in the last News Letter that Tom Gatfield compiled, he made mention that I had visited all 26 cemeteries in Holland where 49 Squadron aircrew are buried. After visiting the graves of the crew of my Uncle's aircraft, who were all killed in action on the 13th June 1943, I decided that I would visit other cemeteries in Holland where 49 Squadron aircrew lie.

At each cemetery where Commonwealth War Graves are situated there is a Book of Remembrance for visitors to sign. As a mark of respect, each time we visited a cemetery, I left my details and made reference to either the crew or crew member I had visited. I also made a point of endorsing the fact that I was an Associate Member of 49 Squadron Association.

To my surprise, towards the end of last year I received a letter from the Remembrance Society who, through Dutch contacts, found that I had visited Bergen General Cemetery. They were interested to know what my connection was with W/O Saunders and Sgt. D'Arcy, the two crewmen of P1206, who are buried there. I contacted David King, the sender of the letter, and explained the reasons behind my visits to Holland and my connection with the Association. David then explained to me that they had located the wreckage of P1206 and were in negotiation with the Dutch Government to have the aircraft recovered and the two crewmen buried.

Erring on caution, before I committed myself to anything, I contacted my Dutch friend Douwe Drijver who had so often helped me in the past with my personal research in Holland.

I explained the circumstances of receiving the letter and enquired if he had heard any reports of the aircraft being located.

Several days later after receiving a phone call confirming David King's story, Douwe posted a newspaper cutting to me. Douwe also informed me that there had been a local television news bulletin regarding the aircraft.

I contacted David King again and asked if he could reproduce any documentation that would be of interest to 49 Squadron Association Members in our quarterly magazine, this he duly provided. David also asked me if I would attend, as a representative of 49 Squadron Association, a Memorial Service for the interment of the missing two crewmen. Without hesitation I agreed.

They say good new travels fast, and when I recently spoke to Douwe about not only visiting him for a week, but that I would also be attending the Memorial Service, he also had some good news for me. One of Douwe's many and varied contacts is, in fact, the person in charge of excavating P1206. So now I have been asked to also attend the excavation of the aircraft.

As soon as I have any more information about my visits to Holland I will update you in future issues of "The 4T9er".

ALL THIS HAS COME ABOUT THROUGH ONE SMALL ACT OF REMEMBRANCE.

SEQUEL

Editor

Some months ago I was contacted by Associate Member, Sheila Hamilton saying that her Mother's fiancée, Sgt Jack Kehoe, is buried in Holland and there are wishes to repatriate him. Thinking that he is buried in a cemetery I advised that the chances were negligible. At this time neither Sheila nor her mother knew where he lay.

A month ago I was called by Alan Walker, a solicitor in Lincoln, who was making enquiries about a 49 Squadron Hampden on behalf of a Dutch group called DARE who are deeply involved in research and excavation of aircraft. They were trying to trace relatives of two crew members who are believed to be in the aircraft which lies in soft ground. It was not until he mentioned the sister of one of them wishing to bring him back to Ireland that "bells began to ring". I told him of Sheila Hamilton and her mother and the following day I received a telephone call from Ed Ijsbrandij of DARE. He was most excited at the prospect of bringing the sister and fiancée back together after more than sixty years.

Regarding the dig for the Hampden, no permission would be given without the approval of the families of both the missing airmen. However, a radio and newspaper appeal found the relatives of the other crew member, Sgt. Stanley Mullenger and they gave their approval.

At the present time the Irish, Dutch and British Government Departments are discussing the ramifications.

Whilst this story has some way to run there is the happy possibility that Jack Kehoe will one day return to Ireland.

ROBIN HOOD AIRPORT UNVEILS A HERITAGE MEMORIAL TO COMMEMORATE 10 YEARS SINCE THE RAF FINNINGLEY FLAG WAS LOWERED FOR THE LAST TIME.

Our ace reporter, Eric Clarke, was at the ceremony and sent this extract from "The Arrow". 'There were more than 150 guests including the Lord Lieutenant of South Yorkshire and other dignitaries and retired members of the RAF who served at Finningley during it's long history......' I was lucky enough to meet Eric...... 135007 Flight Lieutenant W E Clarke (Ret'd), who at 93 years old is one of the oldest surviving members of the RAF who served at Finningley.

I spoke to Eric about his memories and he told me, "I remember the opening of RAF Finningley in 1936 with the Hampden, Heyford and Whitley bombers flying around and the 'Brylcream Boys' frequenting the town." He remembers, "In early 1941 as a volunteer aircrew WOP/AG, I qualified as an AC1 Wireless Operator and was posted to RAF Finningley (Then 25 OTU) to await a posting to an air gunnery course and during my five weeks service there I had several familiarisation flights in Hampden bombers.

In August 1945, as a Senior Flight Lieutenant, I was posted to No. 1 Bomber Command Instructors School, based at RAF Finningley, as a staff lecturer having survived fourteen months operations with 49 Squadron at RAF Scampton and two and a half years as Senior Signals Leader and Signals Officer, 23 and 24 OTU."

On 25th September 1945 Eric got airborne for the last time with the RAF. He was called out of school to fly with School Commandant, Wing Commander Giles DFC, as his navigator in a MK3 Mosquito on a visit to 91 Group HQ at RAF Abingdon. He still holds dear the map he used that day. I asked Eric his secret to a long and healthy life (Eric has just stopped swimming and still keeps fit on a regular basis), his reply "Luck".

VALIANT DAYS

John Fray called to remind me that Monday 15th May was the 49th Anniversary of Operation Grapple, the dropping by 49 Squadron of the first British megaton bomb. Bob McWatt and Pete Williams have both e-mailed to tell of the 50th Anniversary events.

The Megaton Club plans to hold it's final reunion at Cosford to coincide with the 50th Anniversary of the Megaton test at Christmas Island.

The Valiant XD818, as previously mentioned now at Cosford, was the actual aircraft used for the test. It still carries the 49 Squadron Crest with the names of W/C Hubbard and his crew.

During 1960/65, 49 Squadron was based at Marham alongside 148 and 207 Squadrons. No 49 was one of three Valiant squadrons assigned to the SAQEUR Plan. Alisdair Campbell writes, "I was a young Navigator Radar at the time. We had to cover two strike plans in those days, the SAQEUR Plan, utilising US weapons and the 'National' plan utilising the UK weapon, code-named RED BEARD. We had four aircraft at Marham, loaded and ready, at permanent (24/7) 15 minutes readiness, to cover a variety of targets in the former Soviet Union.

The US weapons in the bomb bay were guarded by armed US custodians with very precise rules of engagement! Further weapons systems could be generated very quickly once an alert was transmitted. I recall that the US weapons seemed to be more sophisticated than ours (UK), with an ability to select variable yields in the kiloton range up to one megaton."

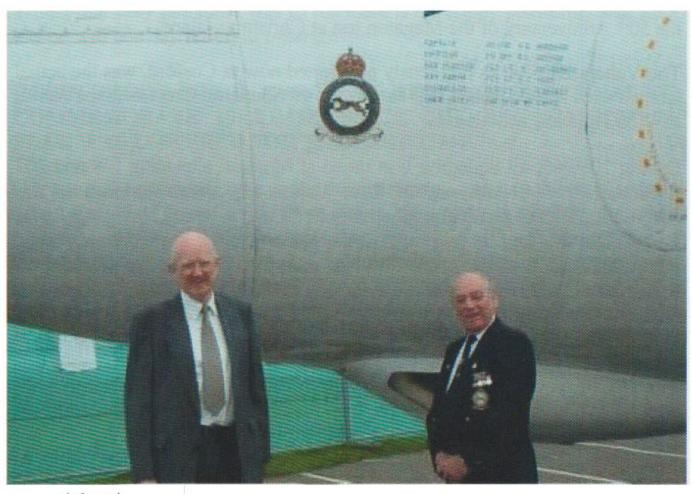
Alisdair goes on to say, "On Friday 5 th June 1964, at RAF Marham, HRH Princess Marina presented 'standards' to both 49 and 214 Squadrons at a parade held in No 2 hanger, because the weather was wet! There was a flying display after lunch including a scramble of four Valiants.

The 'Cold War' did not stop for events such as this because, along with three other crews, I was on 'Quick Reaction Alert' (QRA) at 15 minutes readiness throughout the day".

Regarding that four Valiant scramble, Brian Taylor, also a Navigator, tells me that a Valiant would start all four engines simultaneously when scrambling. The thought of sixteen engines starting together is truly tinitus making.

Writing of Brian reminds me that, following my mention of RAF Lichfield in the May issue, he sent me a photograph of himself, then a very young Pilot Officer, leaning nonchalantly on a sign at Lichfield. Brian did his navigator training there on Ansons and Valletas.

Our latest member, John Langston CBE was the penultimate C.O. of 49 Squadron. John was Commanding Officer at Marham from 1962 to 1964.



(above)
Your Secretary &
Chairman with
XD818 at Cosford

XD818 being re-assembled at Cosford



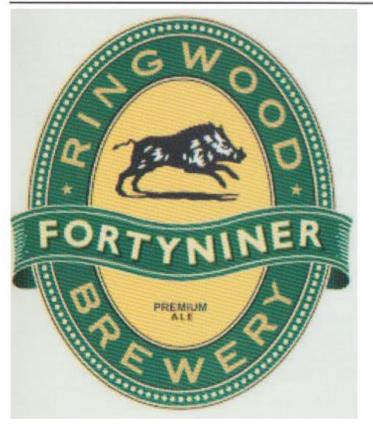
INHERITANCE TAX

Colin Cripps sent me a report from the Chairman of St. James's Branch of the Royal British Legion which says, "A special concession dating from 1694 can mean you pay no inheritance tax on an estate if death can be linked to an injury incurred on active service with British forces.

......This concession still exists, though in different wording. The present wording of the section and the interpretation by the courts has given the exemption a wide application. An estate is exempt from inheritance tax if the person's death can be linked to their service 'of a warlike nature of which..... involved the same risks.'.....

A cause of the person's death is an injury, accident or a disease which came about because of active service in it's armed forces. Or a cause of the person's death is a disease which they may have contracted before their service but which was made worse during their active service. Court cases have established that the event during active service does not have to be the only cause of death as long as it is a contributory cause.......

The exemption can only be claimed after the death of the person concerned. The personal representative should apply for a certificate of exemption from inheritance tax under section 154 of the Inheritance Tax Act to the Joint Services Casualty and Compassionate Cell, RAF Personnel Management Agency, RAF Innsworth, Gloucester, GL3 1EZ. (Tel: 01452 712612)."



Ringwood Brewery
kindly donated a
dozen packs of
FORTYNINER
Premium Ale to our
Reunion raffle

It is a beer worthy of the name

Try it!

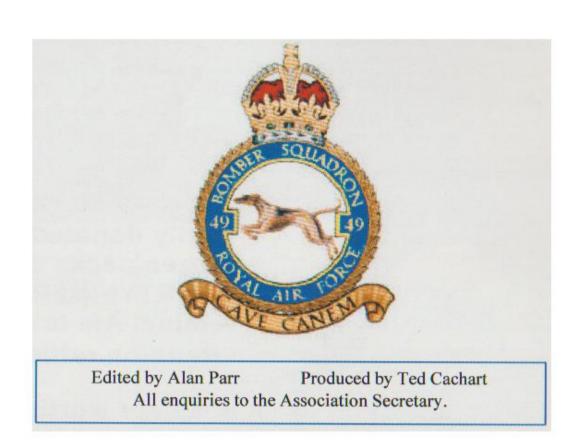
Hon. President & Historian

Chairman

Association Secretary

Archivist

Researcher



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