

# *The 4Tiger*



*The 49 Squadron Association Magazine  
February 2007 Issue 5*



**Two LAC's from RAF Scampton display the  
49 Squadron Standard in Berkhout, Holland.**



**IN MEMORIAM**

**C. Campbell    C. Robinson  
D. W. (Nobby) Clarke    R. Usher**

**WE WILL REMEMBER THEM**

**WELCOME TO:**

**NEW MEMBER**

**John Gunn (USA)**

**NEW ASSOCIATE MEMBER**

**Margaret Walsh (Eire)**

**NEW FRIENDS**

**Diana Rakshit    Don Coomber  
Midge Gosset    Karl G. Morgenthaler (Germany)**

**NEW HONORARY FRIEND**

**F/Lt. Garry Mennell**

**GONE AWAY**

**Mrs L W Mitchell**

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**This poignant address by Mary Hamilton was read by her daughter  
Sheila at the service in Holland, 8th November 2006**

**In loving memory of Sgt. John Edward Kehoe, 49 Squadron,  
RAF Scampton.**

I was very fortunate to meet and fall in love with one of the brave young men who took to the skies each night on bombing missions over enemy territory, but very tragically our love was cut short by the action of the enemy. I was very lucky to have known and loved him. He will always be remembered with pride and affection. Our love for each other was sadly cut short. The memories we have, are in the hearts forever of all who knew him.

**My dear sweetheart will never be forgotten.    Mary**

## EDITORIAL

I must start by thanking all of you, on behalf of Barbara and myself, for all the Christmas cards and warm wishes that you sent to us. We would so like to thank you all personally but I'm afraid it is just not practicable. Thank you, it is a privilege to be your secretary.

Once again, our thanks to those who have sent postage stamps and donations. If you haven't made a donation in the last year then please reflect on the fact that we use over one thousand five hundred postage stamps a year and each issue of The 4T9er costs on average £150 to produce. Including overseas postage that equates to nearly £1,300 per year. Are you having a free ride at the expense of your fellow members? Whilst I appreciate that some are on State Pensions and have financial constraints I can't believe that this applies to sixty percent of the membership. If this is the case then the future of the Association is bleak. Cheques should be made payable to; 49SA Petwood.

Now that I've got that off my chest let's turn to other things.

We welcome new Member John Gunn who flew fifteen ops. as Mid Upper Gunner with F/Lt George Abbott in 1945. We also welcome new Associate, Margaret Walsh who is the sister of Sgt John Kehoe and one of the principals in the story of Hampden P1206. Our new 'Friends' are; Dianna Rackshit, daughter of Member, Ken Gibson, reunion regular Midge Gosset and Don Coomber, of whom more later. To show our appreciation to F/L Garry Mennell for arranging Scampton's presence in Holland, I invited him to become an Honorary Friend of 49 Squadron Association and I am delighted to tell you that he has accepted. In addition to his 'Day job' as Fighter Controller at RAF Scampton, he is curator of the RAF Scampton Museum. If any members wish to visit he can be contacted on;

Home tel; 01522 682903 Work tel; 01522 733243.

Bert Cole has proposed Karl Morgenthauer as a 'Friend'. His father was a Captain on the flak battery that was shooting at Bert's aircraft.

Sadly we have lost one of our 'Hampden Members'. Cecil Robinson died on December 11th. His flying career was ended by serious injuries received, June 8th 1940, when they lost power on take off. His pilot P/O E.D.Parker was awarded the George Cross for rescuing Cecil. Also "posted out" are reunion stalwart 'Nobby' Clark, Canadian Colin Campbell and, on January 12th, Ron Usher. As always I have sent our condolences to their relatives.

I received a letter from Betty Baird of Carlisle to say that her husband Bill, Service No 742402, is now in a nursing home as he has Parkinsons. On behalf of all 4T9ers we wish you both well.

I mentioned earlier the costs involved in producing and distributing The 4T9er. Australian Robert Barnes has for sometime received all the magazines for our Aussie Members and sent them on by internal post. This saves a considerable amount of money for the Association. Have we a volunteer in Canada / USA to do likewise on that continent? This would entail sending on about ten copies per issue.

Enclosed with this issue is the latest Membership List. In order to protect member's privacy and confidentiality it is strictly forbidden to divulge personal details from this list to anyone outside the Association. If you have a particular reason for wishing to pass on information then this can only be done with permission of the Association Secretary who will in turn obtain the agreement of the person concerned.

#### THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS TO THIS RULE.

If you spot any errors or omissions in the list please inform me. For instance, there are quite a few postcodes missing.

After completing his tour with 49 Squadron, Bill Carman went on to 83 Pathfinder Squadron. His Lancaster was shot down 26th August, 1944. It was originally arranged that he would visit Heusenstamm, near to where his aircraft came down, on the anniversary of the event but this was postponed because of terrorist activity at Heathrow. Bill's visit eventually took place in early November 2006 and we are pleased to feature his return in this issue.

Also in this issue is an account of the 4T9er's visit to Holland. We featured Sheila Hamilton's report in the last issue which gave the emotional side of the visit from one who has close family connections. Our report in this issue gives the wider view of the event and other activities whilst in Holland.

A few weeks before he died, Uncle Will passed to me the huge archive that he had created over the past sixty years. Ed Norman bravely volunteered to carry on the work and a marvellous job he is doing. I asked Ed to write a report on his 'labour of love' and we include it in this issue to give an insight into some of the work that goes on in the background.



I have been asking, and still am, for your recollections and anecdotes for us to publish. John Ward, has expressed keen interest in compiling such an anthology but for general publication. John is of course our Hon. President, Historian, artist and author of 'Beware of the Dog at War' and 'The Dunholme Lodgers'. So, if you want to be preserved in print, 'Get some in'! Our thanks to those who already have.

R.S.'Jim' Bridger sent in an account of a dodgy "Dodge" trip that he remembers from 1945 which we have filed for possible inclusion. Jim also says, " I was Wireless Operator in the Robson crew at this date and five of us are still in contact. Rear gunner Roy Goff and Bomb Aimer Harry Waterson, who was an Association Member, are " In Glory", we love their memory." Can any crew beat 'Five' still standing?

In 'Reader's Letters', Jock Irving mentions that his crew were adopted by a Lincoln family. Ted Cachart has also told me that his crew were adopted by a family in Reepham. As far as I know, these kind acts have not received much coverage. Has anyone any experience of being adopted? Incidentally, Betty Grundy, nee Wilcox, a 'Friend' of the Association, is the daughter of that Reepham family and she confirms Ted's story that her mother said to one of the crew, "Would you please ask your pilot to park his aeroplane the other way round so that it does not blow dust onto the washing".

This prompts me to thank all of you who have written in. I am particularly pleased that Reader's Letters has become one of our biggest features. A couple of themes have struck a chord with a number of people resulting in on going correspondence, not only through The 4T9er but also on a personal basis. This is what the Association is all about, our *raison d'être*. Keep the letters coming, it is amazing how an apparently innocuous comment rings a bell with someone and leads to much bigger things. Besides, this is your magazine, your Association, and the more that you send in then the less I have to write which can't be a bad thing.

During one of our January 'gales', the Chairman and I were engaged in one of our almost daily telephone conversations. The weather prompted us to discuss the prevailing wind on the east coast. Ted remarked that he does not remember ever taking off from Fiskerton from west to east. This set me wondering just how rare west / east take off and landings were. I would appreciate hearing of your experiences, not just from Fiskerton but also from other airfields in the UK.

New 'Friend', Don Coomber has sent in some photographs from his time at Eastleigh. We will be publishing these over the next few issues.

Whilst on the subject of Don and Eastleigh, Kenya, you will see in the Reader's Letters section a transcript of Don's letter admonishing FlyPast magazine and suggesting that they publish a piece about 49 Squadron's activities against the Mau Mau. In response to that, John Ward plans to submit an article. Has anyone got any recollections or photographs that might be included? Keep 'em clean!

There is a letter from Allan Copping regarding a photo that included John Crabb. Knowing how helpful John has been in Valerie Seal's search for her half brother (The 4T9er, November Issue) I am delighted that John has gained some benefit himself.

I received an e-mail from Cpl. Vicky Sharpin of RAF Scampton and North Hykeham Air Training Corps, she is alongside Dot in the Bransby photo The 4T9er issue 4, to say that she was surprised to see herself in the magazine. On being asked how she came to see it she said that it had reached the Station Commander's desk. Apparently John May printed a copy for him as it featured Scampton Station personnel. Gosh, I hope that HM Queen enjoyed reading her copy!! John tells me that, as he receives the magazine by e-mail he prints off fifteen copies for circulation within the station, most gratifying.

Model makers, Corgi, have introduced a hand painted white metal figure of "Bomber" Harris. Standing 2.5 inches (6cm) high it retails at £9.99 and is available from shops which are Corgi stockists

If you wish to attend the 2007 Reunion in June then please let me know. We have a short waiting list for accommodation at Petwood Hotel but can arrange alternative accommodation at a hotel five minutes away if desired. If you decide on this option you will automatically go on the Petwood waiting list and be reallocated should a vacancy arise. There are still places available for the banquet only.

I have sent out an e-mail giving the address of a petition that is being assembled to campaign for the Bomber Command Medal. If you are sympathetic but are not on e-mail then please find someone who is and sign on via theirs. The address is....<http://petitions.pm.gov.uk/bombercommand/>

**'Til the next time**

# **BILL CARMAN'S RETURN TO HEUSENSTAMM**

The following piece appeared in;  
Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 4th November, 2006

## **VISIT AFTER 62 YEARS**

In 1944 Bill Carman bailed out of his Lancaster over Darmstadt

Bill Carman was 21 years old when he and his comrades were shot down in their Lancaster by the Germans. At one o'clock during the night of 26th August 1944, the burning plane crashed near the castle in Heusenstamm. The British wireless operator was able to save his life by parachuting out beforehand near Darmstadt. Trees cushioned his fall. It was a very dark night. He was in the middle of a wood. He was in enemy country. The young Briton had no idea where he was. He knew only that the operational target was Darmstadt.

As it became dawn flies and mosquitoes appeared. It was hot and a blister on his left foot made him limp. He had a terrible thirst. Carman wandered around, avoiding people and houses but the next evening he was discovered, arrested and interrogated again and again. Passers by swore at him and shook their fists. He was frightened.

62 years later Carman has come back to the place where the Lancaster was smashed to pieces and where five of the crew lost their lives. It is true that the small, slightly built man has already been several times to Durnbach near Munchen to visit the graves of his comrades, but it was his first time to Heusenstamm. The Mayor, Peter Jakoby, spoke about his great personal courage in overcoming any feelings of anguish, at a small reception at the Town Hall on Thursday. He said, "We can learn from you that it is possible to forgive and to distinguish between The Prophets of Doom and those who believe in peace", and recalled the twinning link with Tonbridge

Carman lives about ten miles away from there at Larkfield. By chance he had learned about the Friendship Circle in Tonbridge, which is responsible for the link between Heusenstamm and the twinned town. The visit resulted from this. "It is one thing to get to know and like, fair minded people from other countries, it is another, to do the same for those who have a dark side and painful memories", said the Mayor.



He continued, "It is important that there is a human face to the story so that it can become a part of everyday life". Carman, who was accompanied by the chairman of the English Friendship Circle, David Packer, said that if anyone had told him sixty two years ago that he would be returning to Germany, not as an enemy but as a friend and honoured guest, he would have said, "You are crazy".

At the site where it is believed that the plane crashed, close to the Schlossallee, near a pond, Carman placed some flowers and a simple wooden cross, on which "Olly" (For pilot. Oliver John Meggeson) the name of the dead pilot, was written. Overcome by his emotion, the eighty-three year old had tears in his eyes. He blew his nose, and then embraced the Mayor, who placed a protective arm around Carman's shoulders. The journalists and television reporter from the BBC in London, who were filming every step, appeared not to notice.

Until the end of the war, Carman was in a POW camp for allied prisoners of war at Barth on the Baltic Sea, where he spent nine months with about 9,000 British and Americans.

During this time he remembered above all the constant hunger - "Food was near starvation point". The commanding officer disobeyed the order to evacuate the camp at the beginning of April 1945, and thereby prevented an unnecessary loss of blood. On 1st May the first Russian tank appeared. Carmen and the other prisoners were free, but it seemed to them to be safer to stay in the camp for the time being.

Meanwhile things were going badly for the German people. Under the Russian occupation they suffered, "Rape, robbery and general brutish treatment", Carman remembered. After the war the former wireless operator earned his living as a driving instructor, publican and warehouseman. He took early retirement at fifty-six. Carman is married, has one son, three grandchildren and four great grandchildren. He was sorry that his wife Marie was not with him. The eighty four year old was not in good health. Moreover she would have found all the emotions too much, he believed. *(As reported in the Christmas issue of The 4T9er, sadly Bill's wife Marie died a few days after his return. Ed.)*

Carman said he didn't feel any resentment or hatred towards the Germans. On the contrary he was saddened by the immense damage done by the bombing, "Which we British did to you". He went on, "We had to do it because there was no other way to end the war".



He showed understanding towards the hostile behaviour of the people at that time. "It was only natural in view of what they had gone through." And then he said, "It should never have happened".

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In addition to the above, Mayor Jakoby also said, " On May 8th 1945 the German High Command surrendered unconditionally. The weapons fell silent. We Germans look back with feelings of horror and shame at the fact that Germany had unleashed WWII. My generation, which was born after the war, must learn to cope with such feelings.

In the time after the war there was much that we Germans kept quiet about. 'Don't say anything. Don't ask questions', was the way it carried on. This approach often united the guilty and the innocent alike. It was perhaps necessary for people to come to terms with themselves before they could make a fresh start.

We owe a debt of gratitude in the first place to the people in those countries who defeated Germany to free her from Nazism. They gave Germany the possibility of a fresh start after the war. Other countries wanted us, and expected us to change."

When Bill sent the report to The 4T9er he told us that his short reply, "The Mayor's speech had taken the wind out of my sails", ended with - "You may remember, some years ago, American President, John F. Kennedy, making a speech in Berlin and he finished with the words 'Ich bin ein Berliner'. Well today this is Bill Carman, and I would like to say, Ich bin ein Heusenstammer. By the applause they seemed to enjoy the last bit."

Bill told us that at one reception he was introduced to, and sat next to, ex Luftwaffe night fighter pilot, Peter Spoden. They are now good friends. I, the Editor, met Peter at an art gallery in Wendover eighteen months ago and he is a most charming man. He presented Bill with a signed copy of his book, 'Enemy in the Dark' which I recommend as a most interesting insight to life on 'the other side'.

In addition to the various receptions, Bill addressed fourteen-year old pupils at Adolf-Reichwein School followed by a talk to the senior pupils, "All of whom listened intently". He also addressed the Heusenstamm Elders who included three eyewitnesses to the crash.

## **4T9ers VISIT HOLLAND**

We have published two articles regarding Hampden P1206 that crashed in Holland, November 8th 1941, the first by Colin Cripps telling how he first became involved and the second by Sheila Hamilton describing her personal side of the event.

The Association was represented at the Service of Remembrance by Ted Cachart, Colin and Pam Cripps, Alan and Estelle Walker, Sheila Hamilton, Klasse van der Heide, Ed & Marja Ijsbrandij, Douwe and Bouwina Drijver, Barbara and myself. I felt that a short account of that visit would be appropriate.

On Monday 6th November 2006, Ted, Barbara and I flew from Birmingham to Schipol where we met Colin and Pam who had arrived from Heathrow.

With Colin at the controls of our hired Ford Galaxy and me navigating, naturally Ted was in the back between the two ladies, we set off for Hoorn.

At breakfast the following day we met Margaret Walsh, the sister of Sgt Kehoe, her two daughters and her grand daughter.

We 4T9ers spent the morning checking out the location of Berkout Church, our rendezvous for the service on Wednesday. On returning to the hotel we found that Sheila had arrived having spent a few days sightseeing in Amsterdam.

In the evening we met Ed Ijsbrandij and some of his colleagues from DARE who briefed us on the events of the following day.

We arrived at Berkhout on the Wednesday morning and met a large gathering of local people and officials. Ted spotted the RAF contingent from Scampton and called me over. We were amazed to see that they had brought the 49 Squadron Standard with them. For RAF Scampton to have sent five personnel was touching enough but to bring the Standard.....!

As I have remarked before, the way that the Royal Air Force respects its predecessors is truly amazing. Not surprisingly the young Standard Bearer never let it out of his sight, I wouldn't be surprised to hear that he slept with it and who could blame him.



Sheila has already described, in the Christmas issue of The 4T9er, the service at the crash site. The touching address that she read out on behalf of her mother is published on page two of this issue.

A Dutch film crew were present, making a programme about the personal side of allied aircrew losses. They later interviewed Margaret regarding the feelings experienced by the family on being notified of her brother's loss.

Following the service we had refreshments that were provided by Annette and Dick Schilder, the landowners of the crash site. Our hosts had put on display various artefacts from the crash plus items of interest. We next went into Berkhout village for lunch which was followed by welcoming speeches to which we were pleased to respond.

In the evening we met our newfound Irish and Dutch friends in the bar of our hotel and spent a pleasant evening cementing our friendship. On dispersing, Douwe Drijver's charming wife Bouwina told me that the Dutch kiss three times on departing. This very pleasant practice took me a few attempts before I got the hang of it. That's my story and you're stuck with it.

W/O Saunders DFM, the pilot, and Sgt D'Arcy, the navigator, are buried in Bergen Cemetery on the North Sea coast. Ed took Sheila and Sgt Kehoe's relatives there after the Berkhout service. We 4T9ers went back to Schipol via Bergen on the Thursday morning. After paying our respects to the two 49ers we wandered round the cemetery, as you do, and I was surprised to see the graves of "Dinghy" Young and five of his crew who had perished on the Dams raid.

A photograph of the graves of W/O Saunders and Sgt D'Arcy appears on page 18.

There was a feeling of optimism that next year perhaps the bodies of Sgt Kehoe and Sgt Mullinger will be recovered and the young airmen given a proper burial. If so, we will be there.

I cannot speak too highly of the kindness, friendship, gratitude and remembrance of all the Dutch people whom we were privileged to meet. This is perfectly illustrated by Ed Ijsbrandj's words that I saw written in the Bergen Cemetery visitor's book;

**'WE WILL REMEMBER THEM – I PROMISE.'**

# ARCHIVIST'S CORNER

By Ed Norman

I began indexing Uncle's correspondence as soon as I took over his role and wished I had been able to chat with him about being a 'Records Collator' as he referred to himself in his many letters. I gather from his correspondence that Uncle was the seminal influence in forming the Association.

I soon realised what a prodigious task Uncle undertook in travelling to the Public Records Office (to collect & copy the Operational Record Books), on a regular basis covering several years, and set up the Association for his fellow 4T9ers. It is not an easy task to read text hour after hour on blurred microfiche – I should know, having done so myself. Colin Cripps our Researcher, I dare say, will corroborate this.

When I was fortunate to meet Uncle years later, it was he who initiated contact in order to pass on info on my father, Ron Norman, a wireless op in 1943. Needless to say, I have immense respect for the 49ers and immeasurable pride in having known Uncle. I accidentally came across his memoirs posted on the internet a few months back showing he was a darn good author to boot.

Over the years, Uncle has pencilled in corrections to the huge number of mistakes, though some have slipped past his vigilance. The Alf 'Ridpuff' story in the last magazine is one such that I have found. Uncle was also an invaluable font of all wisdom for a Doctor John Allin whose father also served. John Allin produced an A - Z of 49 Squadron personnel and along with other indices they constructed between them, are my first port of call on receiving an enquiry.

We also lost Tom, another giant in information and organisation, but perhaps not so many knew of the contributions from Trevor Simpson whom we also lost around the same time. I became the recipient of his smaller collection of 49 recording and correspondence. It rapidly became clear – as I indexed his letters – his profound knowledge of all things aviaional. Trevor was a Sergeant Fitter who knew much about the Lancaster and the airmen who flew them, but more importantly, he knew and could identify the 'erks' who maintained the airframes; yet by-and-large, still remain unknown warriors.



Over the years, the records have become well-thumbed and I have a task ahead to copy and maintain them and perhaps transfer them to computer. (Brian Taylor – Why didn't I believe you!!)

In between indexing and helping to field enquiries from international sources, I have made a few visits. The first was to Anne Vallis who was a gracious hostess and allowed me to copy the service photos of her father – fitter J.A. Priestley. Ken Read and Myrtle also accorded me a favoured status when I visited them in Thetford, and collected his service photos for the 49 Archives. In return, I have been allowed to assist with his queries about certain dates and 'ops' he undertook. I understand his memoirs are virtually completed.

A.F. (Andy) Anderson lives quite near and allowed me an insight into his time with the squadron (shot down Peenemunde August '43). I gained valuable memories, photos and memoirs from Andy who has a copy of the April 1943 Squadron Photograph on his wall, taken to commemorate W/C Slee handing over to W/C Johnson.

Next I paid my respects to Squadron Leader Tom Bennett who also lives close by. He completed his tour with Gerry Fawke, as his navigator, later rejoining his skipper to buzz around Europe in Mosquitoes.

Eric Jones kindly donated a copy of his memoirs to our collection and much of his humorous and friendly personality comes through in it's reading. Correspondence with the families Browning, McCracken and Wade produced more photos and many thanks to them. My apologies to those not mentioned.

I hope to take the photos and maybe some of the books I have collected along the way to the reunion in June for members to peruse. These include the excellent book by Paul Crucq on the Walcheren Raids for which Uncle supplied the details for 49 Squadron.

In the meantime, I am also an Associate Member of the Stalag 1VB Association where my father relaxed from the tedium of war for some eighteen months (shot down Kassel October '43). They hold their reunion on Liberation Day, April 23rd, the day of their 'release' by the Russians. In actual fact, they became prisoners of the Russians until mid May and were among the last to be repatriated.

## CHRISTMAS ISLAND - 50 YEARS ON'

Following the Remembrance Sunday Service at Fiskerton, our Padre, Tony Buckler gave me a copy of 'Christmas Island-50 years on'.

This montage was commissioned from artist Michael Webster by Anthony Stannage who served with the Royal Engineers on the island. Anthony has set up a charity to help the children of Christmas Island with their education.

On the centre pages of this magazine we illustrate the montage which must bring back memories to 'Christmas Island 4T9ers'.

Prices are;

Large (A3) print with margin surround;	£15.00
Large (A3) print without surround;	£10.00
Small (A4) print with margin surround;	£12.00
Small (A4) print without surround;	£8.00

Post and packing is extra.

Copies can be obtained from;

Anthony Stannage,  
Mill Cottage, Sutton Road, Hottoft, Alford, Lincolnshire LN13 9RG  
Tel 01507 490376

Cheques should be made payable to; Banovallum School Acc

Please mention The 4T9er when replying.

Every penny of the profits from the sale of these prints will go to the Banovallum School, Horncastle, Lincolnshire, who will be donating books, teaching aids and equipment to the schools and children of Christmas Island.

As Anthony kindly sent me a copy, which I intend to present to 'The 49 Squadron Lounge' in the Village Hall at Fiskerton, I have sent a donation on behalf of the Association.

Footnote – Anthony has expressed interest in becoming a 'Friend' of the Association.





Mayor Jakobý presents Bill with the Heusenstamm Plaque whilst Enno Buss, the German Friendship Circle Leader, applauds.



Bill Carmen with Bill Packer left & Mark Norman (BBC Camera man and reporter) right, outside the Town Hall.



Barrage Balloons that were used to raise the weapons for airburst tests

A Canberra B8 of 100 Sqn used for radioactive cloud sampling

Coastal Command Shackleton Mk1  
The church at Beach  
Main Camp

Hastings aircraft maintained the links to Honolulu and Australia

Ateira and Naunta-two of the Indigenous Gilbertese people whose home was Christmas Island

The Army, The Royal Engineers, REME, ACC, RASC, ROAC,

Royal Signals and a Postal Unit were on the island from May 1956 until 1964 alongside 300 Fijian troops of the RMMF. The Royal Engineers Regiments and Squadrons were- 28 Reg 55 Sqn, 12 Sqn, 71 Sqn, 64 Fld. Pk. Sqn, 51 Port

Sqn, 1956/58 25 Reg, 37/39/51/59/73 Sqn 1957-58, 38 Engineers Reg 12/ 20/24/46/61 Sqn 1958-59, 73 Sqn, 17 Ind Fd Squadron 1959-60

The Starmix plant today

HMS Messina

Airfield Construction  
A Vickers Valiant

The aircraft that dropped Grapples 1,2 and 3 over Malden Island and Grapples X,Y, Z (Flagpole and Halliard) over sea. Grapples Z Pennant and Burgee were Balloon suspended airbursts over the island

Frigate Bird

Whirlwind Helicopter

RAF Dakota

D.U.K.W.

Royal Navy ships included:  
HMS Warrior, HMS Messina  
HMS Cossack, HMS Cook  
HMS Salvictor, HMS Narvik  
RFA Fort Beauharnois,  
RFA Gold Ranger (tanker)  
Troop Ships- TS Dunera  
SS Charlton Star, SS Ben  
Wyvis, HT Devonshire,  
SS Reginald Kerr

H.M.S Warrior

Captain James Cook landed from the ship HMS Resolution on the uninhabited island Christmas 1777. It was settled by coconut producers in 1881.

TS Dunera

RFA Fort Beauharnois

one of the nine Nuclear Devices tested on the island



Eating Irens, Tray and Mug

28 CRE 1956  
25 CRE 57-58  
38 CRE 1958  
36 CRE 58-59  
73/17 Ind Fld Sn 1959-60

Target Indicator  
South Eastern Point

'Freddie Flit'





The graves of W/O Saunders DFM and Sgt. D'Arcy in Bergen Cemetery, Holland.



On the 50th Anniversary of the Bransby crash the Station Commander, RAF Scampton, studies the entry for February 24th 1942 in Eric Clarke's logbook. A youthful John Ward looks on.

## READER'S LETTERS

***After seeing the photo of Dot Smith at the Bransby Memorial in Issue 4 of The 4T9er, Eric Clarke wrote;***

I am particularly sad every Remembrance Sunday, especially in recent years since I have been unable to attend the annual ceremony with which I have a personal, if not unique affinity,

On February 24th 1992, exactly 50 years after our 'B' Flight Hampden crashed at Bransby, I was asked by Tom Gatfield to attend and lay some flowers at the Dedication by RAF Scampton's Padre accompanied by the Group Captain and other senior Officers. (The enclosed photo shows the Group Captain looking at the entry, for the night of the crash, in my logbook.) Incidentally I believe the brass plate memorial was supplied and paid for by the Trustees of the Bransby Home of Rest for Horses, headed by Mr Cliff Marshall, and at this juncture I hasten to say that Cliff, and his staff have been outstandingly kind and considerate to me in the following years when I conducted the annual ceremony. Even when I had no car, bike or helicopter Cliff offered to collect and take me to the ceremony, a round trip of some 80 miles. On the night of the crash I was Wireless Operator to the B Flight Commander, S/L P D S Bennett DFC.

In my view Bransby Home of Rest for Horses surely merit an invitation to our Honorary Friends list. (*Invitation sent. Ed*) For several years I corresponded with 2 sisters of the crew (one of them Hibbitt) but maybe they are no longer with us.

The incident is reported on page 119 of our famous 'Dog at War'. I think I told you that I received a phone call from our famous 4T9er W/C Jim Flint GM DFM and we had quite a long chat on our Hampden and 'Gadsby' days.

***In the November issue I asked Jock Irving to tell us more of the Lincoln Tea Dances. His reply;***

...To get back to the Astoria Tea Dances though, whenever I had time off from the Squadron I filled it in attending same. I loved dancing and that's where all the good dancers seemed to hang out. I made many good friends there. My crew by this time had been adopted by a family in Lincoln, where their wives and girl friends stayed whenever the opportunity arose. The only times I remember going was when I went on the motorcycle to tell them to get back to Fiskerton because we were on the Battle Order. Needless to say they always did. The Astoria has many pleasant memories for me and many others I'm sure.



***Jock also wrote;***

The night after I received your letter I had a phone call from Allan Morgan my ex flight Engineer, (The only pal I have from my Air Force days). 'Darky' certainly seems to get around. We have always been in touch. Our WOP Frank Campbell will be ninety-three next birthday and is still going strong We exchange Christmas cards every year although I don't think he is a member of the Association.

*No, he isn't! Ed.*

***Following Ed Norman's e-mail in the last issue Alf Ridpath wrote;***

I am pleased to read that Don Harwood, F/O Edgar's rear gunner, has joined our ranks- I chat to him from time to time. He should have a laugh about the HARDWOOD tale. God knows what he will think about the misspelling of my moniker. I've often had REDPATH – RIDPATCH – RIDWALK – REEDPATH, but NEVER I'm glad to say has my sexuality been questioned with the "puff" bit.

*I have nightmares about typing it RUDEPART. Ed.*

***Alf continues;***

I've recently received a visit from New Associate Member, Pip Harrison, (nee Edgar) and her husband Nigel. She spent about six hours quizzing me about her father and our exploits whilst with 49 at Fiskerton, March '44 to end of June '44. She is apparently compiling a dossier of his RAF service from 1940 to 1961 when he retired from the Force. She has two sons who are keen to learn all about their Grandad's WWII deeds of "derring do". I was able to tell her in detail how he earned his immediate DFC 'cos I was with him - all I got was a sever dose of the galloping "ab dabs".

***An e-mail from Bill Carman reads;***

Thanks for that picture of G/Capt Evan Evans. (*The 4T9er, Issue No. 4, page 20*) On the 30th July '44, he 'borrowed' my crew, lock stock and barrel, much to my skipper's consternation, on a daylight on Calioques. It was aborted due to bad visibility, for fear of bombing our own troops. I remember the abort signal was 'Marmalade', when I told him, he just said "Oh! Bloody, bloody, give me a course back to bloody base". We were diverted to Desford as Coningsby was fogbound. G/Capt Evans was the Camp Commander there and we were with 83 Squadron by then. He got the DFC for that one and decided to do another one on 21st Feb '45, on Gravenhorst. He was shot down by a fighter near Eindhoven, took the whole of the Squadron Section Leaders with him. They were all killed apart from the Gunnery Leader in the rear turret, P/O Hanson, he baled out. What a waste!



*Allan Copping wrote;*

Further to our telephone conversation and with reference to the photo of P/O Millar's crew furnished by John Crabb and published in the November The 4T9er. Immediately I clapped eyes on it I recognised the faces, particularly Millar's. That photo has quite a little story attached to it. There were actually two photos taken, the published one of the crew only, the other a group Aircrew and Ground-crew;

- (a) The photo of the crew helped Valerie Seal to extend her records of Sgt. Phillips.
- (b) I was a Rigger on that plane and appear in the group photo, a framed copy of which has been hanging in my house all these years, minus the names of the crew. (I could not remember them.) As a result of the photo in the November mag I can now fill them in.
- (c) John Crabb, who was a member of P/O Millar's crew, too has a copy of the group photo minus the names of the ground-crew. However, we have been in correspondence and I have provided him with the missing details to complete his.

I notice in magazine number 4 that you have changed my name to "Conning". Don't let that worry you the variety of names that I have been called is nobody's business; Coping, Coppin, Coffin, Colpin and even Alan Cobham.



(L - R) Sgt R Burnett      Sgt DW Bettison      F/O JG Millar AFM      Sgt JL Crabb  
    Sgt L Phillips      Sgt R Goodyear  
 (L - R) LAC Johnson (E)    LAC Robertson (A/F)    Sgt Freeman    LAC Sutcliffe (E)  
    LAC Copping (A/F )    LAC Sugg (E)  
    Key;                      (E)....Engines                      (A/F)....Airframes

***Allan also wrote;***

There is one other incident linked to the chaps appearing in that photo. At the time my wife was working at the Ruston works canteen in Lincoln. She took the group photo to show the girls there who gave it the going over debating who in the ground-crew was single and who was not and concluded that my pal Robertson was a possible. One of them said that she would like to meet him where upon we arranged a meeting and they were introduced and were eventually married.

After demob we all split up and lost track and I have never seen or heard from the old lads except for one occasion. A few years ago Robertson's daughter carried out a search for me. After drawing a few blanks she settled on Ed Stewart, the BBC DJ, who put out a call for me on his 'Where are you now' programme. I received a number of calls telling me, "You're wanted". So through the courtesy of old Ed a reunion did come to pass.....End of story.

***A letter from George Moses includes;***

....I was WOP in Les Hammond's crew. Les was an Australian who died about four years ago. By the way I pass the magazine on to a man who did a tour with a Canadian squadron but has had no news from them since 1945.

*Aren't 49ers lucky. Ed.*

***Ed Smith e-mailed from Canada;***

Thank you for Special Edition.

Re Page 15 - I agree Aircrew Europe Star should suffice as only 12,000 were awarded Vs. some 250,000 F&G Stars. Problem???? Try and convince SOMEBODY????.

I attempted to obtain A.C.E. Star 18 months ago through Canadian Dept Veterans Affairs. I Imagine, my enquiry was sent to archives who gave me the usual bureaucratic response. Told me the complete history which I already knew!!!.

Since I was serving as Chair for the "Veterans Advisory Committee" to Canadian Ministry of National Defence (Hon. David Pratt etc) I put the question to him. His investigation resulted in the same response. Aircrew starting their tour post 6th June '44 not qualified for A.C.E Star. Advised that the Medal was awarded by the British Govt. who would not entertain a change in award regulations. So if you can mount a campaign to change the regs., for all of the reasons you have quoted, please do not forget the colonials "Who also served". Believe me it requires a lot of pressure, publicity, and a large enough following to get the attention of the politicians.

(Cont.)

We are having our own battle with our Canadian War Museum re Bomber Command history and we are not changing the curator's mind despite the backing of the Royal Canadian Legion.

So best of British Luck and PLEASE keep me advised.

Same page - Re P/O Mynarski VC. Perhaps since 49 Sqn. Assoc. now has some 94 Associate & Friends etc. they may not know that P/O Mynarski was a member of the Royal Canadian Air Force. The letters RCAF should be attached after VC. I hope that I'm not being "picky" but Canadian Airmen accounted for approx. 25% of Bomber Command Aircrew. Not often acknowledged!!!

Best of luck for future editions and reunion.

*Thanks we will keep trying and I note your final point. Ed.*

***The following letter appeared in the Flypast, January 2007 issue,***

*It was written by Don Coomber who lives in Childrey, Oxfordshire. I phoned Jack Joslin who lives in Wantage and he located Don for me. I then phoned him and he gave permission for me to print the letter. Don has joined the Association as a 'Friend'. Ed.*

"If you remember back to February 2006 FlyPast published an article covering my period of service with the Royal Australian Air Force in Vietnam, which gave me my 15 minutes of fame whilst bemoaning the fact that the Aussie input seemed never to be mentioned.

Well you have done it again! This time it involves your Forgotten Bombers (October) articles with particular mention to the Avro Lincoln. As previously described in my earlier letters to you, my first service time was spent with the Royal Air Force from 1952 until 1957.

Following my "square dancing" at East Kirkby I was posted to RAF Upavon, which was then HQ Transport Command. Then in February 1954 I was ushered to RAF Eastleigh, which I thought was great until it was brought to my notice that it was in Kenya and not near to the sunny south coast of England!

On arrival in Kenya after a stop at Khartoum for refuelling (having had to change from Air Force Blues to civilian clothes) of the Hermes (HP Hastings with a nose-wheel) we were taken to a large hangar with lines of beds, lockers and wardrobes where we shared with about 80 other 'erks'. We were duly advised by those already in-situ that we must be wary of the sound of the patter of bare feet during the night as it could well be 'Mickey Mau Mau', when in fact it turned out to be the exodus of 'erks' who had spent the evening sampling the local 'Tusker' brew.

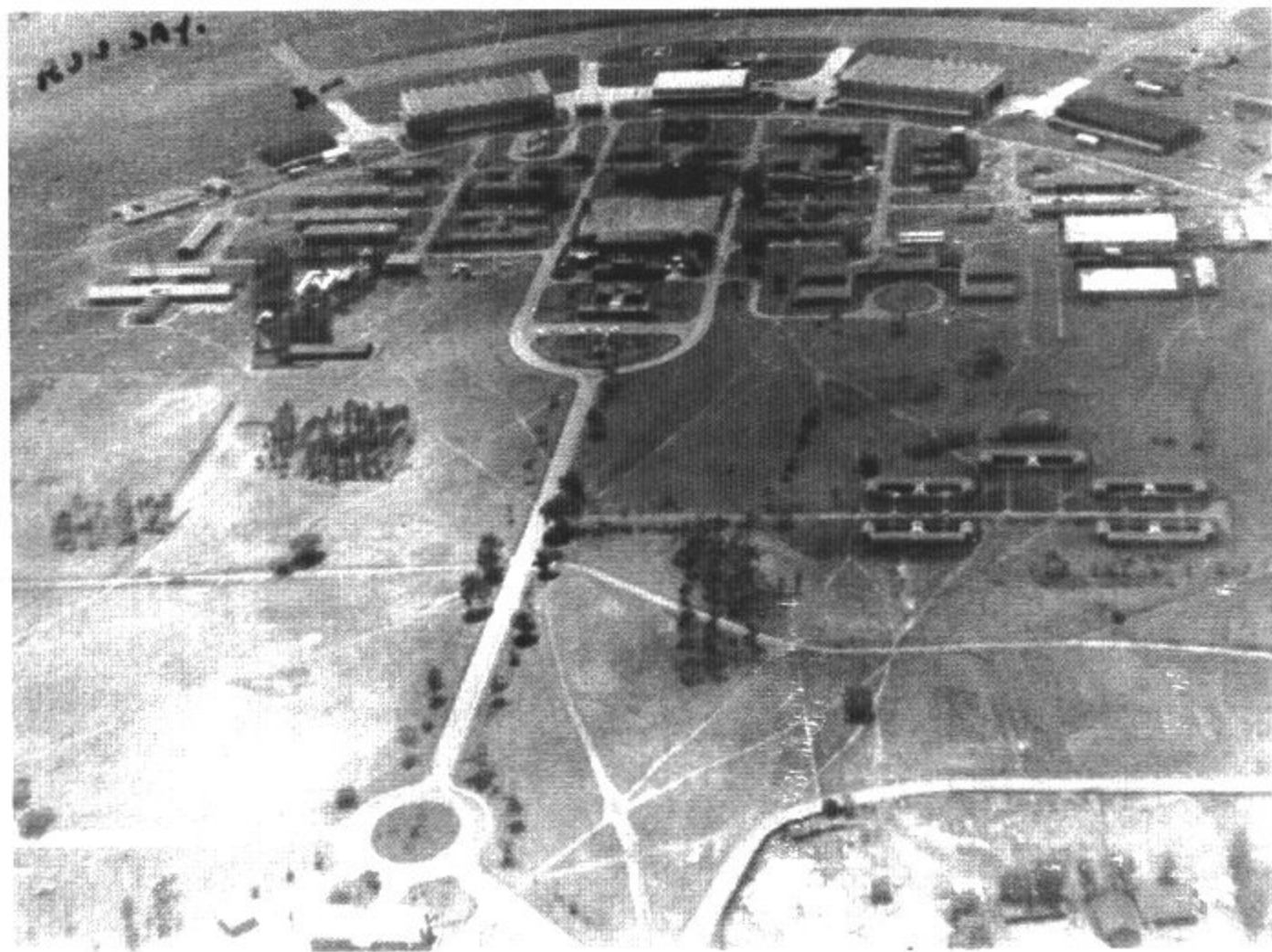


Come the morning, however, it seemed that the roof of the hangar was being lifted due to the crews of 49 Squadron winding up their Merlins attached to six Lincolns parked right outside the hangar door. The racket was added to by three or four Harvards, so you can imagine I was totally unable to hear my Frankie Lane and Doris Day music.

After a couple of days of this I decided to join them and volunteered to help throw out millions of 'Give Up' leaflets at the same time as the rest of the crew were either pushing out a 'few' rounds of 0.303 and the bomb boys were dropping 250 'pounders' into the forest. All this was done with the 'guidance' of the Army chaps (who I think were the Black Watch and the Devons), but what good we did we will never know.

It would be nice, however, if sometime in the future a feature could be written honouring the excellent work of 49 Squadron and the Harvard lads. This Kenya emergency period never gets a hearing and it seems that it never took place. However, I have the AGSM (Kenya Clasp) to prove it did."

*Thanks Don for flying the 49 flag. See EDITORIAL regarding the proposed article. Ed.*



Eastleigh Airfield, taken through the window of a Vickers Valetta (Don Coomber)



(Left)  
Dave Harrison, Eastleigh Airfield c 1955  
(Dave Harrison)

(Below)  
A local newspaper photograph of the crash site of  
Lincoln, SX984 (D A Colquitt)



***D A Colquitt was prompted to write from the Isle of Man;***

Re; Dave Harrison's e-mail.

This brought back memories about the crash of SX984. I remember being in the billet the night of the crash when the Duty Officer came in looking for volunteers to guard the crash site. However it was much earlier than June, the crash actually happened on 19th February 1955 at Kiambu, Kenya when all six crew were killed. The story was that they were 'beating up' a police post and misjudged it. A copy of a picture that I cut out of the paper is enclosed. The funeral of all six took place at the local cemetery where full military honours were accorded. Much different to today when all servicemen killed abroad are brought home.

## CAN YOU HELP?

***We received the following request from Josephine Williams, daughter of Member, Owen Trevor Williams;***

.....my father joined 49 Squadron on June 30th 1944 and completed his first tour in January 1945. He was WOP in the following crew;

Pilot F/O J.W.Cannon F/E Sgt. C.W.G.Lusty Nav. P/O F.Picking

B/A F/O F.T.Lane M/Gnr. F/Sgt D.J.Myers R/Gnr. P/O W.E.A.Salter

He flew from, or was stationed at, Scampton, Skellingthorpe, Fiskerton, Fulbeck, Syerston, Metherringham, Woodhall Spa, Coningsby, Cranwell, Bruntingthorpe, Warboys, and Woodhouse Eaves. Although he's lost contact with old comrades I know he would be delighted to hear from/about them or their families who might remember him. He is full of nostalgia for his flying days 'the best days of my life', as he says. *(Photo below)*



***Non Member Jan Gambling e-mailed;***

My Dad was a Bomber Pilot with 49 Squadron in the War. He was killed in 1951. I have been left lots of his letters that he wrote during the war. If anyone knew him I would love to hear from them. His name was Len Coxill. *We have since established that Sgt., later P/O, Coxill flew 25 ops between 3rd July '43 and 21st Jan '44. Ed.*

**LOST.** A photo wallet at a dance in Fiskerton on Saturday, June 19th 1943. If deceased would the finder please contact 908 Sgt. Robert Slaughter. If living please contact the editor !



**Regarding our STOP PRESS query in the Christmas issue,**

*'Frontline and Bullseye Exercises', I'm amazed at the apparent amnesia as we have only received one contribution. Harry Cowan phoned saying that according to his logbook he did three Bullseyes. Two were from his HCU at Wigsley and the third from Syerston which took 5.35 hrs. He says that they were bombing exercises on London, the target he believes was St James's Park. All took place at night.*

*According to my uncle's logbook, he flew four Bullseyes, one from Upper Heyford – Base, Northampton, Bournemouth, Southampton, Norwich, Base – 6.35 hrs. One from Wigsley – Base, Bicester (Start point), St Tudwall, Ireland, Dumfries, Base – 6.3 hrs. Two from Fiskerton – Base, Holyhead, Liverpool, Newark, Norwich, Sheffield, Newark, Base – 4.3 hrs. and Base, Pos A, Sheffield, Wrexham, Weymouth, Birmingham, Base – 4 hrs. All these exercises were at night. His first Bullseye at Fiskerton was two days after arriving and his second there was the night following his first operation. Could Bullseyes be tests for trainees and 'rookie' crews?*

*Incidentally, I see that he did his first operation, Krefeld, only three days after being posted in. Was this unusual? Ed.*

**Ed Norman sent in this query from John Beck;**

John Beck (who was at Fiskerton in the second half of 1944) believes that the Airspeed Oxford there was given to the Squadron to train F/E's in the skills of piloting and to take over if the pilot became disabled. Skipper John Barrie took John Beck up for an hour, but then someone nearly took out the control tower so the Oxford had to go. Does anyone remember the Oxford's short stay?



**Non Member, Matt Marshall e-mailed the following;**

Does anyone remember my great - uncle, 1145697 'Bert' Greenwood? He served with 49 Squadron, A Flight, from 1941 to 1945 when he was an LAC on being discharged.

## Obituary

Air Commodore Wilf Burnett DSO, OBE, DFC, AFC

Wilfred Jasper Burnett was born on November 8 1915 at Fredericton, New Brunswick. He learned to fly a ski-equipped Moth before working his passage to England to join the RAF in 1937. After gaining a short-service commission, he trained to fly the Hampden bomber before joining No 49 Squadron as war broke out. When German forces invaded Holland on May 15 1940, the RAF mounted its first bombing sortie east of the Rhine, and 99 bombers were sent to Dortmund. During this flight Burnett doubled his night flying experience and, passing near Rotterdam, which was still burning from the heavy German bombing, realised that the "phoney war" was over.

Over the next few weeks he attacked many targets in Germany and France and dropped mines in the Kattegat. After 32 operations he was awarded the DFC. Air Marshal "Bomber" Harris, his group commander, described him as "a fine type of bomber captain who does consistently excellent work".

Following a rest as a bombing instructor, Burnett became flight commander of the second RCAF bomber squadron, No 408, which was also equipped with outdated Hampdens. While returning in bad weather from Hamburg in January 1942, his aircraft ran out of fuel after 10 hours and crashed in the Yorkshire Dales. He was thrown clear and seriously injured, but his three crew were killed.

After a period as an air staff officer at HQ No 3 Group, Burnett volunteered to return to operations as commander of No 138 (Special Duties) Squadron, flying Halifaxes on clandestine sorties in support of SOE. He arrived shortly before D-Day and, although not required to fly often as a CO, regularly undertook missions to supply the Maquis, who were trying to stop German reinforcements reaching the Normandy beachhead. No 138 then made drops to the "Linge Group" of the Norwegian Resistance; and Burnett was awarded the DSO and Croix de Guerre with Palm.

.....Burnett described his RAF career as "the best a man could have". In addition to his decorations for gallantry, he was three times mentioned in dispatches. On leaving the service he was appointed secretary of the Unit Trust Association; in 1980 he was appointed OBE.

.....Burnett was an expert fly fisherman, maintaining a rod on the Itchen, which he fished until his 90th year. He was a fine woodworker, specialising in the old craft of Tunbridgeware, and, as well as being an active great-grandfather, was a keen photographer.

Wilf Burnett, who died on November 26, married, in 1939, "Joy" Wenham; she survives him with their son and daughter.

*Thanks to Ed Norman for drawing this to my attention. Ed*

## Obituary

Air Chief Marshall Sir Lewis Hodges KCB, CBE, DSO and Bar, DFC and Bar

.....Lewis Macdonald Hodges was born in Richmond, Surrey, the son of Arthur Hodges. He was educated at St Paul's School and RAF College Cranwell, from where he was commissioned into the RAF in 1938 and joined Bomber Command.

On September 4th, 1940, he was flying a Hampden bomber of No. 49 Squadron home from an attack on Stettin when his aircraft was damaged by ground fire. Realising that he could not nurse it home he ordered his crew to bale out and crash landed the Hampden in northern Brittany. He and an air -gunner who had not heard the bale out order set off on foot in a southerly direction, keeping away from farms and eating what they could scavenge in the fields.

Having walked for as week and been given civilian clothes they crossed the Loire east of Nantes with the help of a fisherman and continued on to Parthenay. There a chateau owner provided more clothes, shoes to replace their flying boots and money to catch a bus to Limoges and a train to the Pyrenees, but before they could cross into Spain the Vichy police arrested and imprisoned them.

Hodges eventually escaped and crossed the Pyrenees only to be arrested again and confined in a Spanish prison. After some diplomatic negotiations, he reached Gibraltar and returned to his squadron in June 1941.

In May, 1942, while commanding a flight in No 49 Squadron, he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for operations that included an attack on the German battle-cruisers Sharnhorst and Gneisenau during their dash up the channel in February, 1942. That winter he took over command of the Whitley and Halifax flight of No 161 Special Duties Squadron, flying sorties into occupied Europe in support of SOE.

.....His first Hudson landing in France was in July, 1943 on a short flarepath of torches north of Angers. Hodges landed Hudsons successfully by moonlight on French meadows five more times. He brought to England two future presidents of France, Vincent Auriol and Francois Mitterand.

Such pick-ups were but a few of the many operations that he flew, mainly parachuting agents into occupied Europe. In recognition of his exceptional skill and courage as a pilot and his leadership of an elite squadron he was awarded a bar to his DFC and a DSO in 1944. He was Commandeur, Legion d'Honneur in 1950, and advanced to Grand Officer in 1988.

In December 1944, after a rest from operational flying of only nine months, he volunteered for another flying tour and was given command of No 357 Special Duties Squadron at RAF Jessore near Calcutta.

.....In his home village near Sevenoaks, he was active as a churchwarden and as a successful gardener and beekeeper. He married Elizabeth Blackett in 1950. She survives him with their two sons.

*My thanks to Eric Clarke for sending this to me. Ed*



## 49er CHUCKLES

*Bill Carman sent in the following quotations;*

"A slipping gear could let your M203 grenade launcher fire when you least expect it. That would make you quite unpopular in what's left of your unit." - Army's magazine of preventive maintenance.

"Aim towards the Enemy." - Instruction printed on US Rocket launcher

"If the enemy is in range, so are you." - Infantry Journal

"When the pin is pulled, Mr. Grenade is not our friend." - U.S. Marine Corps

"Cluster bombing from B-52s is very, very accurate. The bombs are guaranteed to always hit the ground." - USAF Ammo Troop

"It is generally inadvisable to eject directly over the area you just bombed."  
- U.S. Air Force Manual

"Whoever said the pen is mightier than the sword obviously never encountered automatic weapons." - General MacArthur

"Try to look unimportant; they may be low on ammo." - Infantry Journal

"You, you, and you ... Panic. The rest of you, come with me."  
- U.S. Marine Corp Gunnery Sgt.

"Tracers work both ways." - U.S. Army Ordnance

"Don't ever be the first, don't ever be the last, and don't ever volunteer to do anything." - U.S. Navy Swabbie

"Bravery is being the only one who knows you're afraid." - David Hackworth

"If your attack is going too well, you're walking into an ambush." - Infantry Journal

"If you see an armorer running - follow him."

"The only time you have too much fuel is when you are on fire."

A SPECIAL POEM FOR SENIOR CITIZENS

A row of bottles on my shelf  
Caused me to analyse myself.  
One yellow pill I have to pop  
Goes to my heart so it won't stop.  
A little white one that I take  
Goes to my hands so they won't shake.  
The blue ones that I use a lot  
Tell me I'm happy when I'm not.  
The purple pill goes to my brain  
and tells me that I have no pain.  
The capsules tell me not to wheeze  
Or cough or choke or even sneeze.  
The red ones, smallest of them all  
Go to my blood so I won't fall.  
The orange ones, very big and bright  
Prevent my leg cramps in the night.  
Such an array of brilliant pills  
Helping to cure all kinds of ills.  
But what I'd really like to know.....  
Is what tells each one where to go!

There's always a lot to be thankful for if you take time to look for it. For example I am sitting here thinking how nice it is that wrinkles don't hurt.



Tom Hawkins (Australia) sent this photograph of his car, "A touch of nostalgia that I couldn't resist".

Tom said that the State was looking for ways to raise some revenue and offered people the choice of their own numbers, at a price!

**Hon. President & Historian**

**Chairman**

**Association Secretary**

**Archivist**

**Researcher**



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All enquiries to the Association Secretary.

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