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Chairman:

Mr Steve Mullis

Vice Chair:

Mr David Routledge

Hon Secretary:

Mr Phil Boulton

Membership Secretary:

Mr Gerwyn Thomas

Hon Treasurer:

Mrs Mazza Jesty

Welfare Officer: Grp/Capt. (Rtd)

Mrs Nick Loveday

Social Events Coordinator:

Mr Steve Signorelli

Wings Appeal Organiser:

Mr Graham Croft &**Mr Simon Chadwick**

Conference Delegate:

Mr Steve Mullis

Newsletter Editor:

Mr Bryn Holland

Webmaster:

Mr Kris Mercer**From the Editor:**

Once again a warm welcome from a Sunny and warm summers day in New Zealand and our first issue for 2018 which I hope you enjoy. I trust everyone had a great Christmas and New Year with lots of goodies and gifts. It's summer holidays here

at the bottom of the world, so lots of full camping grounds, traffic hold up's, plenty of beach time, and lots and lots of ice cream and cold drinks. Plenty to get into this year, starting with the AGM this month, I am sorry that I can't be with you in person, but will be in spirit, with the help hopefully of a 'live stream on the Branch Facebook page'?

I would like you to note that the cover picture and the article on pages 4 and 5 depict the Airbus A330 MRTT Voyager, a fascinating aircraft conversion, with so many roles that it can achieve whilst in service, something we need here in New Zealand with the RNZAF which would certainly assist with the flights down to the Ice and Scott Base, where there have been some close calls after reaching the point of no return with their Boeing 757 on a couple of occasions.

Well I will leave you to read the rest of the Newsletter, and I hope you enjoy my efforts for this quarter, the next issue is planned for April.

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RAF Airbus A330 MRTT Voyager

Special points of Interest:

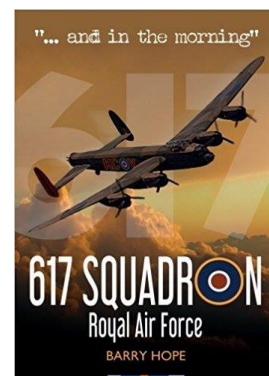
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Disclaimer - The views and opinions expressed in this Newsletter are not necessarily those of the RAFA Global Branch, the Newsletter editor, Branch Committee or membership and therefore should not be construed as such.

A BIG Global Welcome to:

Ann Pearce
Barry Cook
Craig McMurrough
Damian Harriss
Dave Stephens
David Whittaker-Smith
Denise Meek
Gordon Speirs
Helen McKenna
Jack Baron
Ken Herts
Kevin Pearce

Les Ryan
Mark Hacker
Mark Whewall
Mike Hancock
Paul English
Paul Grimshaw
Paul O'Brien
Peter Roberts
Phil Small
Robert Walker
Tony Plunkett

Book of the Month**617 Squadron RAF: Volume 4 (...and in the morning...)**

Paperback – 30 Aug 2017

by Barry Hope (Author)

Barry Hope's series of Bomber Command squadron compendia continues with the iconic 617 Squadron RAF. The book contains tables of all casualties and losses suffered by the unit in WW2. The compendia in the series are intended to

supplement narrative histories of the units they describe, such as those in Chris Ward's Bomber Command Profiles series. To stand in front of a

Commonwealth War Grave and read the headstone or to read a name on a war memorial or commemorative plaque is one thing, but to understand the reason and circumstance why a name is there is another matter.

It is hoped that the reader will want to ask the pertinent questions of 'What, Who, Where, When, Why and How?' It is also intended that this book answers many of these questions for the families and members of the squadrons that served in Bomber Command and will be used as a source/reference document for the amateur and professional historian/researcher of Bomber Command.

Paperback

£9.99

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/617-Squadron-RAF-4-morning/dp/1911255223>

Meet Your Committee

Name Known by Steve "Siggi" Signorelli Enlisted June 1980



Trade A Tech E (Aircraft Technician Electrical – Yes, I was a Direct Entrant, so left training as a JT) (I believe that now, as a standalone trade, it no longer exists)

Postings – After Basic at Swinditz I went to Halton for my Technical training, I was so good at my metal work phase (locally known as "hacking and bashing" I got recoured to do it again (don't think they understood THAT's why I joined as a Leckie!).

Finally left there after filling in my "postings preferences" form – I requested a flying Squadron, I asked for St Mawgan, Chivenor and I can't recall the last one, with my negative choices of NOT WALES and NOT SCOTLAND... but I did mention that I was about to get married (to a WRAF Dental Nurse who had just been posted to a NON-AIRCRAFT unit in London!), so the RAF, in its infinite wisdom, posted me to RAF SEALAND... an ALL MALE UNIT (so they told me), which is technically in Wales (only the married quarters are in England! PMC NOTE!!).

So on marriage my wife demobbed and moved to a B&B in Chester and after about 2 weeks (after we had checked out the married quarters and noticed which were empty), she filled a flask with tea, made some sandwiches and

camped out in the WO i/c Married Qtrs.' allocation Office until he allocated us a house..... (it didn't take long, she was very persuasive) .. and the funniest part.. she ended up with a job on the station in the Dental section doing the same job she did in the RAF but as a Civvi. How mad is life!

After 14 months I started doing Tornado courses prior to my favourite posting, to RAF Laarbruch, German food, beer and lifestyle all agreed with me, and if you are ever bored I'll pull up a few sandbags, swing the light bulb (or Filament as we Leckies call it) and I'll amuse you (?) with a few tales.

After just over 3 ½ years there I was posted to RAF Brize Norton where I worked on VC10's in Base hanger. After just over 10 years I was demobbed from there. (For reasons I won't bore you with but suffice to say some people in the medical branch don't know as much as they try to make us believe they do!)

So, what happened next... Well, before I left I had secured a job in Civy street as a Field Engineer, the role was installing and fixing cutting machines used by the clothing, Technical textiles and furniture manufactures (that was 27 years ago), my role expanded to include installing software, fixing pc's and dealing with networks and pc issues, until my final title as an engineer was Senior Field Engineer (I think because I was old), CAD team Leader and UK Leather and Colour Management Expert. I am still with the same company but have changed jobs (I'm too old to be getting covered in grease and dirt, after all I was a LECKIE!) and I am now the UK Manufacturing Consultant (possibly because I know where the bodies are buried? ;)).

As far as other things, well, I am now the RAFA Global 1370 Social Sec', I also enjoy things like Photography, drinking, Magic, Whiskey, Sci-Fi, Aircraft, Good Wine, RAFA, Visiting nice places.

Finally, if you've reached this far – three things –

1/ PLEASE, if you have any ideas for visits or can provide a prize for any of the various raffles we hold, please let me know (I am very approachable, ask any policemen!)

2/ PLEASE – if we organise a visit or AGM, try and turn up, even if you cannot stay overnight and partake of a bevvie, we'd love to see and meet you.

3/ PLEASE – don't forget ANY of you can help raise funds for both RAFA and our branch, just ask either myself or Steve (The Chairman) or Graham – and there are ways you can do it without even leaving home!

4/ If you did anything out of the ordinary, (like fly the Vulcan down to Stanley for the strafing run) PLEASE let me know, I've love to interview you for the club!

(I'm a techie, I never had to count correctly!!)

Take care folks and I look forward to meeting you all one day. Siggi



The RAF Airbus A330 MRTT Voyager

A330 MRTT / KC-30A Voyager A330 MRTT / KC-30A Voyager



Role: Aerial transport and refuelling
Manufacturer: Airbus Defence and Space
First flight: 15 June 2007
A Royal Air Force Voyager in 2016

Introduction: 1 June 2011
Status: In service
Primary users:
 Royal Air Force
 Royal Saudi Air Force
 Royal Australian Air Force
 United Arab Emirates Air Force

Produced: 2007 - present
Number built: 28 as of November 2016
Developed from: Airbus A330

The Airbus A330 Multi Role Tanker Transport (MRTT) is an aerial refuelling tanker aircraft based on the civilian Airbus A330. The A330 MRTT has been ordered by the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF), Royal Air Force (RAF), United Arab Emirates Air Force, Royal Saudi Air Force and Republic of Singapore Air Force. The EADS/Northrop Grumman KC-45 was a version of the A330 MRTT proposed for the United States Air Force.

Design and development

The Airbus A330 MRTT is a military derivative of the A330-200 airliner. It is designed as a dual-role air-to-air refuelling and transport aircraft. For air-to-air refuelling missions the A330 MRTT can be equipped with a combination of any of the following systems:

Refuelling other aircraft

Airbus Military Aerial Refuelling Boom System (ARBS) for receptacle-equipped receiver aircraft.

Cobham 905E under-wing refuelling pods for probe-equipped receiver aircraft.

Cobham 805E Fuselage Refuelling Unit (FRU) for probe-equipped receiver aircraft Being refuelled Universal Aerial Refuelling Receptacle Slipway Installation (UARRSI) for self-in-flight refuelling.

The A330 MRTT has a maximum fuel capacity of 111,000 kg (245,000 lb) without the use of additional fuel tanks, which leaves space for the carriage of 45,000 kg (99,000 lb) of additional cargo. The A330 MRTT's wing has common structure with the four-engine A340-200/-300 with reinforced mounting locations and provision for fuel piping for the A340's outboard engines. The A330 MRTT's wing therefore requires little modification for use of these hardpoints for the wing refuelling pods.

The A330 MRTT cabin can be modified to carry up to 380



passengers in a single class configuration, allowing a complete range of configurations from maximised troop transport to complex customisation suitable for VIP and guest missions. Available configurations include 300 passengers in a single class and 266 passengers in two classes. The A330 MRTT can also be configured to perform Medical Evacuation (Medevac) missions; up to 130 standard stretchers can be carried. The main deck cargo configuration allows carriage of standard commercial containers and pallets, military, ISO and NATO pallets (including seats) and containers, and military equipment and other large items which are loaded through a cargo door. Like the A330-200, the A330 MRTT includes two lower deck cargo compartments (forward and aft) and a bulk area capability. The cargo hold has been modified to be able to transport up to 8 military pallets in addition to civilian Unit Load Device (ULD).

An optional crew rest compartment (CRC), located in the forward cabin can be installed for a spare crew to increase time available for a mission. The passenger cabin of the A330 MRTT can be provided with a set of removable air stairs to enable embarkation and disembarkation when air bridges or ground support equipment are not available.

Standard commercial A330-200s are delivered from Airbus Final Assembly Line in Toulouse (France) to Airbus Military Conversion Centre in Getafe, Spain for fitting of refuelling systems and military avionics. The tanker was certified by Spanish authorities in October 2010. It was first delivered to Australia on 1 June 2011. Qantas Defence Services converted the remaining four A330-200s at its Brisbane Airport facility on behalf of EADS for the Royal Australian Air Force.

On 30 September 2016, Airbus Defence and Space completed the first flight of the new standard A330 MRTT. The new standard features structural modifications,

The RAF Airbus A330 MRTT Voyager Cont.

aerodynamic improvements for a 1% fuel-burn reduction, upgraded avionics computers, and enhanced military systems. The first delivery is planned for 2018.

United Kingdom

Royal Air Force Airbus Voyager at the Airbus factory in Getafe, Spain

In January 2004 the UK Ministry of Defence announced that a variant of the A330 MRTT had been selected to provide tanking service for the RAF for the next 30 years under the Future Strategic Tanker Aircraft (FSTA) programme, replacing the RAF's existing TriStar and VC10 tankers. The Ministry of Defence then began negotiations with the AirTanker consortium.

On 27 March 2008 the UK Ministry of Defence signed a deal to lease 14 aircraft under a private finance initiative arrangement from EADS-led consortium AirTanker, with the first aircraft to enter service in 2011. There are two versions, designated Voyager KC2 and Voyager KC3; the former will be fitted with two Cobham 905E under-wing refuelling pods, the latter with a Cobham 805E Fuselage Refuelling Unit (FRU) in addition to the under-wing pods. None of the RAF aircraft are fitted with the Aerial Refuelling Boom System (ARBS). Both versions of Voyager are powered by a pair of Rolls-Royce Trent 772B-60 engines.

As of May 2014, nine aircraft had been delivered, completing



idea of fitting a boom to at least some of the Voyager fleet, bringing the RAF's aircraft into line with other A330 MRTT operators around the world. Fitting a boom would not only allow operation with those types in the RAF not fitted for probe and drogue, but would also extend the flexibility of the RAF Voyager fleet in aerial refuelling operations for other air forces that operate boom refuelled aircraft.

Specifications

Data from A330 MRTT, KC-30, Airbus A330

General characteristics

Crew: 3: 2 pilots, 1 AAR operator

Capacity: Various passenger configurations are available including 291 passengers (United Kingdom) and 8 military pallets + 1LD6 container + 1 LD3 container (lower deck cargo compartments)

Payload: 45,000 kg (99,000 lb) non-fuel payload

Length: 58.80 m (193 ft)

Wingspan: 60.3 m (198 ft)

Height: 17.4 m (57 ft)

Wing area: 362 m² (3,900 ft²)

Empty weight: 125,000 kg (275,600 lb)

Max takeoff weight: 233,000 kg (514,000 lb)

Powerplant: 2× Rolls-Royce Trent 772B or General Electric CF6-80E1A4 or Pratt & Whitney PW 4170 turbofans, 320 kN (72,000 lbf) 320 kN each

Fuel capacity: 111,000 kg (245,000 lb) max, 65,000 kg (143,000 lb) at 1,000 nmi (1852 km) with 2 hours on station

Performance

Maximum speed: 880 km/h (475 knots, 547 mph)

Cruise speed: 860 km/h (464 knots, 534 mph)

Combat radius: 1,800 km (972 nmi) with 50 tonnes of fuel for 4 hours

Ferry range: 14,800 km (8,000 nmi, 9,200 mi)

Service ceiling: 13,000 m (42,700 ft)

~Wikipedia~

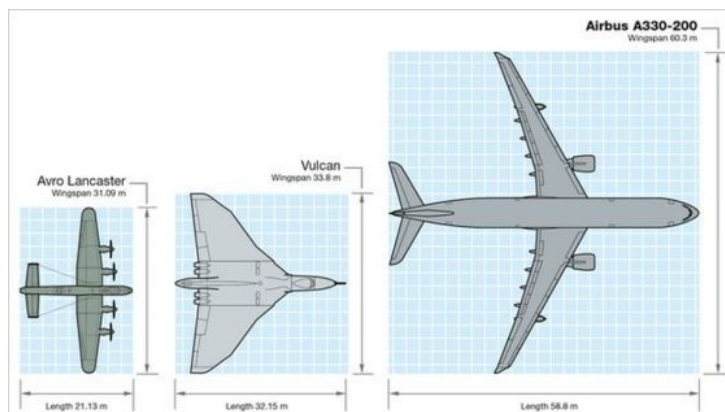


Webairtanker - MSO Station

the "core fleet" of RAF aircraft. By August 2014, ten had been delivered with one for civilian purposes. The remaining deliveries are to be a "surge capability", available to the RAF when needed, but otherwise available to AirTanker for tasks such as "release to the civil market, less its military equipment or to partner nations in a military capacity with the MoD's agreement". As of 14 March 2016, all 14 Voyagers had been delivered to the RAF.

In November 2015, it was announced that an RAF A330 MRTT would be refitted to carry government ministers and members of the Royal Family on official visits. The refit would cost £10m but would save around £775,000 annually compared to the current practice of chartering flights. The aircraft, nicknamed "Cam Force One" by some in the media, will be fitted with 158 seats.[36] The aircraft entered service on 6 May 2016, with the then Prime Minister David Cameron making his first flight on it to visit the 2016 Warsaw summit.

Because the RAF's Voyagers are only capable of probe-and-drogue refuelling, they are unable to refuel RAF aircraft that are fitted solely for refuelling from the flying boom, including the RC-135 Rivet Joint, C-17 Globemaster, and P-8 Poseidon. In April 2016, the RAF stated an interest in the





The Association of Royal Air Force Fighter Control Officers

Blazing a Trail for Women in the Royal Air Force

On the 8th August 1945 the Air Ministry issued a communique revealing the existence of radar and in that communique the Ministry acknowledged the role that women had played in operating the system of air defence which became known as the 'Dowding System.'

"Working under the closest secrecy since 1939, over 4,000 Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF) personnel have played an important part in the air victories achieved by radiolocation (Radar). They tracked hostile and friendly aircraft, flying bombs and rockets, German E Boats and Allied Merchant vessels, and have guided British and Allied fighter pilots on to enemy aircraft. Trained to use and service some of the most delicate and complicated instruments ever invented, they have carried out their duties with enthusiasm, often under uncomfortable conditions and sometimes under enemy fire."

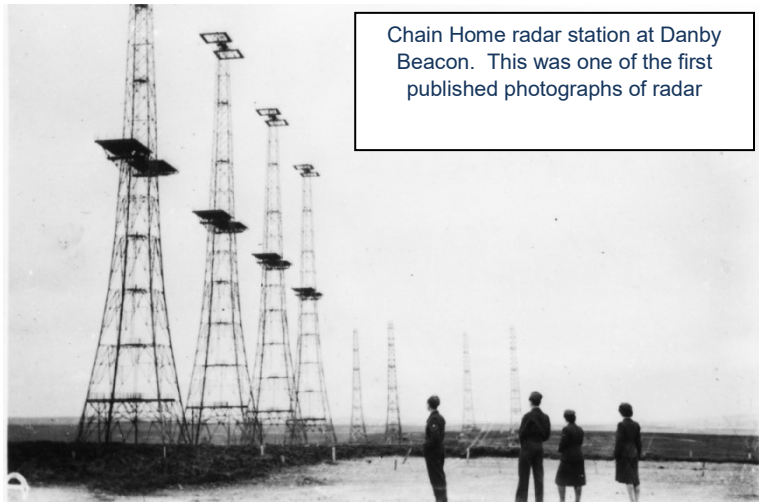
Communiques are usually fairly bland and this one is no exception and it hides the true ground breaking work carried out by WAAF personnel and the pivotal nature of the operational roles that were increasingly turned over to women in Great Britain as the war progressed.

Churchill's oratory about the Battle of Britain helped define the nature of the victory but one remark that has not become part of the lexicon of the battle as such is quoted below:

"All the ascendancy of the Hurricanes and Spitfires would have been fruitless but for this system which had been devised and built before the war. It had been shaped and refined in constant action, and all was now fused together into a most elaborate instrument of war"

This instrument of war was the 'Dowding System' which was a complex compound of new and secret technologies, intricate and extensive communications, new ways of managing information, new processes and procedures and last, but not least, the highly skilled personnel who operated the system and who made it all work. By any standard the system was large and grew much larger as the war progressed and both the skills and the manpower necessary to operate it were in short supply. It is against this backdrop that women were given the opportunity to undertake operational roles and it is one they both seized and performed with conspicuous success.

Now as any commander who has to fight a battle will attest it is vital to have as clear a picture as possible about what is happening in the battle space; to paraphrase Wellington, he once famously said that he seemed to have spent his whole military life trying to see what was over the hill. A considerable amount of effort is usually directed at achieving this understanding. For those concerned with the defensive air battle there are two additional complications, first, the need to work in a very large three dimensional space and, secondly, the pace of the events. The 'magic sight' as Dowding called the radar system, which was known generically as Chain Home, provided the tool necessary to detect enemy movements in time for commanders to deploy their forces to counter the threat. Once again this statement hides much complexity in that the interpretation of the radar display was complicated, and aircraft could be detected by a number of radar stations which could lead to considerable confusion; there was also a need to understand whether the track was hostile and then to understand its vector, height and the number of aircraft involved. Once all the information had been analyzed and a clear tactical picture produced it had to be faithfully and rapidly transmitted and displayed at numerous operational headquarters at all levels of command so that commanders could manage their part of the battle from a common picture.



Chain Home radar station at Danby Beacon. This was one of the first published photographs of radar

It is here that the story of the operational employment of women begins. On the 28th June 1939 The WAAF was created from the forty-eight RAF companies of the Auxiliary Territorial Service. They were initially offered fairly mundane jobs although this was to change as the war progressed. One job that was offered was far from mundane but so secret that not many knew about it. The job was Clerk Special Duties; this title covered the plotters and tellers of the 'Instrument of War.' Men were scarce and so increasingly women were used for this task. After training at Leighton Buzzard, which was the headquarters of 60 Group, Fighter Command, they were posted to operations centres throughout the system. Yet once again the bland name of plotters and tellers hides the reality of what they did; they were members of the operational staff of a commander and they were responsible for the timely and accurate display of the tactical picture from which the commander would make tactical decisions – there was no room for error.



WAAF Operators at work in an Operations Room

The Filter Centre was the heart of the system and in 1940 there was only one for the whole country. It was at the Filter Centre where radar and movements information was analysed and a recognised air picture compiled; this was a pivotal and crucial role and if they got it wrong a great many more people would have died and if they had got it wrong often enough the Battle of Britain would have been lost. In addition to compiling the air picture the Filter Room was responsible for issuing air raid warnings which saved countless number of lives and cueing and directing air sea rescue for aircraft that crashed at sea.



The Association of Royal Air Force Fighter Control Officers



Hazel Gregory joined the WAAF in 1940. After training as a plotter she was posted to the operations staff at HQ 11 Group just before the Battle of Britain. She was on duty on the 15th September 1940 and plotted all the raids that attacked Britain that day.

Churchill spoke to all the girls before they went off watch that day.

Hazel Gregory is pictured on the right during the 70th anniversary year of the Battle of Britain discussing the finer points of plotting at the Air Defence Radar Museum.



Initially the filtering process was developed and designed by scientists and it worked well. When it was transferred to RAF control the performance deteriorated markedly because the personnel were drafted into the job at SNCO level from other trades without any appreciation of the skill required to make it work. This was rectified by recruiting personnel with a scientific or mathematical bent and elevating the

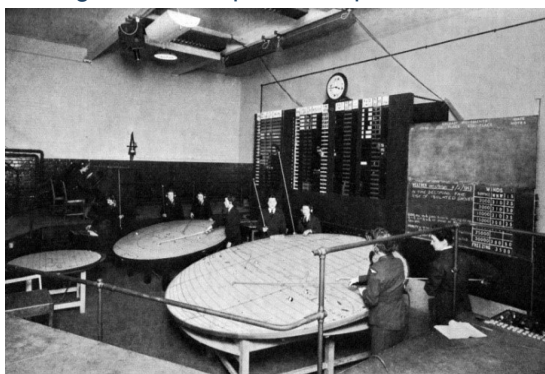
status to that of officer in recognition of the importance of the task. The first 14 Officers took up post in June 1940 and things began to improve. These officers were directly commissioned as Filterer officers and were the de facto birth of a Royal Air Force Specialisation called Fighter Control now called Aerospace Battle Management.

The number and type of radar systems were multiplying rapidly and by the end of 1940 the Filter Room could not cope with the volume of work and it was decided to decentralise the task to Group level – there were four groups in 1940 although this number increased during 1941. A pacing factor in this decentralisation was that there were just not enough trained officers to meet the demands of this rapid expansion and there was also a rapidly growing need for skilled personnel for the Chain Overseas and mobile radar units that were being deployed in all theatres of operation. It had been noted that some of the WAAF plotters and tellers were very dexterous, quick and had very good situational awareness. It was decided to train some as Filterers as an experiment; it was an inspired decision because they proved to be in the main very good indeed and so women took on one of the most crucial operational roles in the system and went on to provide the majority of the manning of Filter Rooms as the war progressed. At the same time women were being trained and commissioned to operate the radar system – the front line of the air defence system and they were subsequently also employed on Wing staffs responsible for the operational effectiveness of a number of radar stations. The story becomes even more amazing because the Filterer Officers were very skilled and when the country came under attack from the V2 ballistic missile they were used to calculate the launch points for counter attack. Some WAAF officers were deployed to Malines when Antwerp came under fierce attack from a great many V2 weapons. Eileen Younghusband, pictured right, was one of the WAAF Filterer officers sent to Malines and she recalls that some 200 more V2 missiles were fired at Antwerp than London over a shorter period of time. By this time the rockets were being fired from mobile systems and there was a very limited time to respond and so they had to analyse detections, calculate the launch point and transmit it to bomber operations for targeting and attack under considerable time pressure. During 1940 Air Chief Marshall Dowding wrote his famous order that under no circumstances were women to be allowed to talk to pilots in the air. Fortunately this order became an historical idiosyncrasy.



famous order that under no circumstances were women to be allowed to talk to pilots in the air. Fortunately this order became an historical idiosyncrasy.

During 1941 the rapid development of radar and the development of the Plan Position Indicator, which allowed air contacts to be viewed in plan position, provided all the technology necessary to achieve precise ground control interception of hostile aircraft by day and by night; this was the birth of another strand of the Fighter Control specialisation and the one that gave its name to the branch. The development of GCI was the key element in countering the night raids by the Luftwaffe. As the war progressed the additional operational role of controller opened up to women.



WAAF Operators in a GCI Operations Room

Within the Royal Air Force, the Fighter Control branch continued to offer an operational role for women through the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. It was only in the late 1980s that women were admitted to aircrew specialisations and even in this the Fighter Control branch had forged the way by gaining acceptance that women Fighter Controllers could fly in Airborne Warning and Control aircraft before women were accepted as aircrew.



The Association of Royal Air Force Fighter Control Officers

Many women only served on a short service commission in the branch but some forged a full career. Until 1963 the highest rank achieved by a General Duties Fighter Control officer was wing commander. One of these was a woman called Claire Legge; she bridged the gap between an increasing number of women entering the specialisation in the recruiting surge of the mid-sixties and those that had operated the Dowding System in the War where she started as an operations room plotter. As a wing commander Claire commanded the influential evaluation team, known as 'the trappers,' whose role it was to standardise and ensure best practice across the whole air defence system. At the time women were still not allowed to serve in overseas theatres of operation and there was a move to prevent her leading her team on an evaluation visit to the Far East; It is understood that she much enjoyed the trip! She was also the only Fighter Controller special adviser on the production of the 1969 film "Battle of Britain."

It is, however, the career of Joan Hopkins who joined the WRAF in 1955 that illustrates best the way the branch opened operational opportunities for women. On the 18th February 1982 the first ever Fighter Control Air Commodore was appointed and the second followed a few years later but both served in appointments not related to front line operations; Joan Hopkins was the third having served as the first ever woman Station Commander and, more significantly, the first woman Sector Commander, responsible for the air defence of the whole of Southern England and its sea approaches. She is shown on the right in a picture taken on her appointment. In the late 1980s she became the first Woman to reach the rank of Air Commodore within an operational specialisation rather than as the titular head of the then Women's Royal Air Force



An ink sketch of Claire made by one of her 'trappers' circa 1968



(WRAF). Most significantly she was appointed Air Commodore Air Defence responsible to the Commander in Chief United Kingdom Air (CinCUKAIR) for all aspects of air defence. This was all the more amazing when viewed against the fact that under the NATO command arrangements the Commander in Chiefs only operational role was air defence. Joan

left the RAF in January 1990 when the first women aircrew were only just emerging from training! Some 22 years later another female Air Commodore Aerospace battle Manager was appointed to an operational staff appointment.

The whole journey started with the WAAF Clerks Special Duties and most particularly the WAAF Filterer and radar officers and it is fitting that their work should be recognised and commemorated. Bentley Priory is synonymous with air defence and the building has been saved for the Nation by the Bentley Priory Trust. 'The Association of Royal Air Force Fighter Control Officers has supported the important work of the Trust and sponsored a stained glass window which commemorates and honours the role of the 'instrument of War' and, particularly, the role of WAAF personnel who played such a significant part in its success and victory in the air.

Released for publication by the Chairman
The Association of Royal Air Force Fighter Controllers

~With Thanks to **Nick Loveday**~

When VETERANS Retire!

Not my words, but poignant I think....

When VETERANS Retire!

When a VETERAN leaves the job and retires to a better life, no matter how long he served the Colours, many are jealous, some are pleased and yet others, who may have retired, wonder. We wonder if he knows what they are leaving behind, because we already know. We know, for example, that after a lifetime of camaraderie that few experience, it will remain as a longing for those past times. We know in the Military Life there is a fellowship, which lasts long after the Queen's Cloth is hung up in the back of the closet. We know even if he throws the uniforms away, they will be on him with every step and breath that remains in his life. We also know how the very bearing of the man speaks of what he was and in his heart still is. These are the burdens of the JOB. You will still look at people suspiciously, still see what others do not see or choose to ignore and always will look at the rest of the Military world with a respect for what they do; only grown in a lifetime of knowing. Never think for one moment you are escaping from that life. You are only escaping the JOB and merely being allowed to leave ACTIVE duty.

So what I wish for you is that whenever you ease into retirement, in your heart you never forget for one moment that you are still a member of the greatest fraternity the world has ever known.

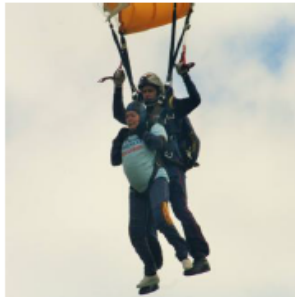
A Fellow Veteran

Chairman's Challenge 2018

AKA The Dirty Dozen Tandem Parachute Jump Saturday September 1st 2018

Peterborough Parachute Centre, Sibson Airfield, Peterborough, PE8 6NE

The Chairman's Challenge for 2018 is for twelve members of the branch, including the Chairman, to do a tandem parachute jump on the same day, at the same location, and so the Global Branch's Dirty Dozen was so formed!! Very quickly 12 members were "volunteered" to partake in the challenge, from people who had jumped before to those who had only ever dreamed on doing this challenge. But they all had one thing in common, the desire to raise money for RAFA's Wings Appeal in the 100th Anniversary year of the RAF. Some of the volunteers needed to lose a "few" pounds in weight, one is registered disabled & will be jumping with her colostomy bag fully



attached, the Chairman has had MS since 1975 & had a hip replacement in July, the list goes on & on.

But there is one other thing that links them all together, & that is they need YOUR help in making this challenge work. If you could take a couple of minutes to copy & paste this link onto your Facebook timeline,

www.mydonate.bt.com/events/dirtydozenskydive & ask whether your friends & family could help with a small donation

towards this worthwhile cause, then I am sure that all those taking part in the jump will be very grateful.

It would of course be quite acceptable if you decided yourself to make a donation as well but of course we would never actually say that!! To those who do make a donation, may I, on behalf of all those taking part, take this opportunity of passing on our thanks.

Branch members are of course more than welcome to join us at Sibson Airfield on the day. Full details will be posted on the Facebook page & Branch Website nearer to the day.

This Months Smiles

EVERY DAY, THOUSANDS
OF
**INNOCENT
PLANTS**
ARE KILLED BY VEGETARIANS.
HELP END THE VIOLENCE.
EAT BACON.

The Fact That There's A
HIGHWAY TO HELL
And Only A
STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN
Says A Lot About Anticipated
Traffic Numbers.

I'M ONLY
RESPONSIBLE
FOR WHAT I SAY
NOT FOR WHAT YOU UNDERSTAND

Have you ever
listened to someone for a
while and wondered...
"who ties your
shoelaces for you?"

YOU KNOW THAT
LITTLE THING
INSIDE YOUR HEAD THAT
KEEPS YOU FROM SAYING THINGS
YOU SHOULDN'T?
**Yeah, I don't have
one of those.**

**MY PEOPLE SKILLS
ARE JUST FINE.**
*It's My Tolerance To Idiots
That Needs Work.*

SO WHEN IS THIS
**"OLD ENOUGH TO
KNOW BETTER"**
SUPPOSED TO KICK IN?

**I PREFER NOT TO THINK
BEFORE SPEAKING**
*I like being just as surprised as
everyone else by
what comes out of my mouth.*

The Chairman's Ramblings

Well, I can honestly look back on the last year with great pride as far as the Global Branch is concerned. The 2017 Chairman's Challenge, gave members the opportunity of selling just 15 RAFA Wings badges around the world & you people did not let me down. Nearly £1,100 was raised from this alone, which along with the sterling efforts, from various members around the country, during the Wings Week meant that the branch raised over £5,000, a 150% increase on 2016. Well done & thank you!!



This now presents us with an interesting challenge for 2018. But what with the major work being done by our uniquely travelled RAFA teddy bear, Sgt Eddie Raffles, (left) plus the 2018 Chairman's Challenge of having a dozen branch members doing a tandem parachute on the same day I am hopeful, no confident, that we can come close to doubling our 2017 total. But it does need the 100% help of you, the members to get the raffle tickets sold plus to help get the necessary sponsorship for the Chairman's Challenge.

Also looking forward into 2018 I must mention that the branch will be having a stall at the Abingdon Air & Country Show on Sunday 6th May, which hopefully will enable us to gain more sponsorship for the Chairman's Challenge plus raise money for the Wings Appeal. Branch members are welcome to join us there on the day.

A week later, we have a table within the main reception area of the Annual RAFA Conference at Yarnfield, Staffordshire, where once again we will be promoting the Dirty Dozen's Tandem Jump plus Sgt Eddie Raffles will be making guest appearances!! Details on how you can attend the conference appear within this newsletter.

During 2018, three of our members are getting married, thankfully not all to each other!! However our Treasurer, Mazza Jesty will have married Steve Holland by the time you read this newsletter & John Hannaford is getting hitched to Jemma Grayson just after Easter. I am sure that you will all join me in wishing them all the best in the future.

Pleasingly our membership over 2017 has continued to grow and at this moment in time our membership currently stands at over 260 members in more than 25 different countries. This includes the 15 new members who have joined us since the start of the year. Please remember if your membership runs out at the end of each year that you only have until the end of January to renew before it becomes a lapsed membership. If in doubt whether yours needs renewing now, check with your Membership Secretary, Gerwyn Thomas. If you know anyone who wishes to join the branch please ensure that they ask to join the branch's pending membership Facebook page first on www.facebook.com/groups/131803370702410/

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the members of your branch committee, without whom, this branch would not have continued to grow & to flourish since its inception. Each member of the committee gives their time & energy unstintingly, for that I am totally grateful.

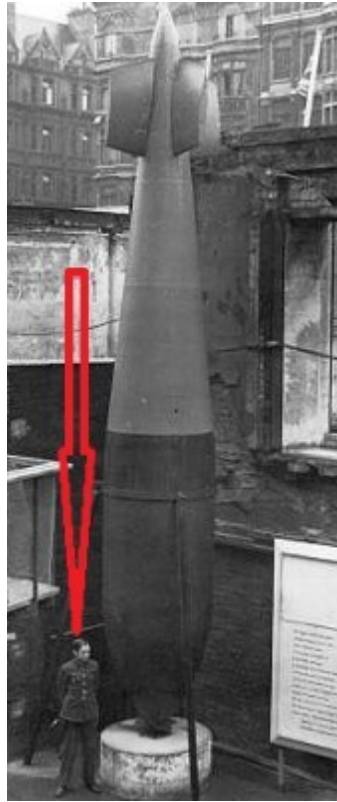
Please remember though that this is your branch & we look forward to meeting up with as many of you as possible throughout the year. If you want anything to be raised at the monthly committee meetings, just message any of the committee members & they can do it on your behalf.

RAF Scampton's Gate Guard

Vintage News

Strangeness, 6 November 2015

The RAF discovered that a 15 year-old 'Gate Guard' Grand Slam bomb – was actually LIVE!!!!



entire RAF Station, most of the northern part of the City of Lincoln, including Lincoln Cathedral, which dates back to 1250, would have been flattened.



The Grand Slam was a 22,000 lb (10,000 kg) earthquake bomb used by RAF Bomber Command against strategic targets during the Second World War. It was the most powerful non-atomic bomb used in the war. Known officially as the Bomb, Medium Capacity, 22,000 lb, it was a scaled-up version of the Tallboy bomb and closer to the original size that the bombs' inventor, Barnes Wallis, had envisaged when he first developed his earthquake bomb idea. It was also nicknamed "Ten ton Tess".

When the success [of the Tallboy bomb] was proved, Wallis designed a yet more powerful weapon... This 22,000 lb. bomb did not reach us before the spring of 1945, when we used it with great effect against viaducts or railways leading to the Ruhr and also against several U-boat shelters. If it had been necessary, it would have been used against underground factories, and preparations for attacking some of these were well advanced when the war ended. - Sir Arthur Travers Harris (1947).

On 18 July 1943, work started on a larger version of the Tallboy bomb, which became the Grand Slam. As with the original Tallboy, the Grand Slam's fins generated a stabilizing spin and the bomb had a thicker case than a conventional bomb, which allowed deeper penetration. After the hot molten Torpex was poured into the casing, the explosive took a month to cool and set. Like the Tallboy, because of the low rate of production and consequent high value of each bomb, aircrews were told to land with their unused bombs on board rather than jettison them into the sea if a sortie was aborted.

After release from the Avro Lancaster B.Mk 1 (Special) bomber, the Grand Slam would reach near supersonic speed, approaching 1,049 ft/s (320 m/s), 715 mph (1150 km/h). When it hit, it would penetrate deep underground before detonating. The resulting explosion could cause the formation of a camouflet (cavern) and shift the ground to undermine a target's foundation.

Unlike Tallboy, Grand Slam was originally designed to penetrate concrete roofs. Consequently, it was more effective against hardened targets than any existing bomb. The first Grand Slam was tested at the Ashley Walk Range in the New Forest, on 13

Apparently when Lincolnshire County Council were widening the road past RAF Scampton's main gate in about 1958, the 'gate guards' there had to be moved to make way for the new carriageway. Scampton was the WWII home of 617 Sqn, and said "gate guards" were a Lancaster...and a Grand Slam bomb.

When they went to lift the Grand Slam, thought for years to just be an empty casing, with an RAF 8 Ton Coles Crane, it wouldn't budge. "Oh, it must be filled with concrete" they said. Then somebody had a horrible thought No!..... Couldn't be? ... Not after all these years out here open to the public to climb over and be photographed sitting astride! Could it? Then everyone raced off to get the Station ARMO. He carefully scraped off many layers of paint and gingerly unscrewed the base plate.

Yes, you guessed it, live 1944 explosive filling! The beast was very gently lifted onto an RAF 'Queen Mary' low loader, using a much larger civvy crane (I often wonder what, if anything, they told the crane driver), then driven slowly under massive police escort to the coastal experimental range at Shoeburyness. There it was rigged for demolition, and when it 'high ordered', it proved in no uncertain terms to anyone within a ten mile radius that the filling was still very much alive!

Exhaustive investigations then took place, but nobody could find the long-gone 1944, 1945 or 1946 records which might have shown how a live 22,000 lb bomb became a gate guard for nearly the next decade and a half. Some safety distance calculations were done, however, about the effect of a Grand Slam detonating at ground level in the open. Apart from the



“and in the morning” - Buzz Hope



‘and in the morning...’

No. 141 Squadron was formed on Tuesday 1st January 1918 at Rochford, Essex as a Home Defence Squadron for the London Area. The Squadron moved to RAF Biggin Hill on Friday 8th February 1918. On 1st March 1919, it moved to Tallaght County Dublin Ireland and on 14th December 1919 moved to Baldonnell and was disbanded the following year, on Saturday 1st February 1920. Monday 4th October 1939 saw the reforming of No.141 Squadron at RAF Turnhouse, Edinburgh, Scotland, initially equipped with Mk.I and Mk.II Gloucester Gladiators the Squadron converted to Blenheim If's during November 1939, then during April 1940 converted to Boulton Paul Defiants and became operational on Monday 3rd June 1940 with the first operational sortie being flown on Saturday 29th June 1940. Operating out of RAF Turnhouse, Edinburgh from Wednesday 4th October 1939, transferring to RAF Grangemouth, 3 miles NE of Falkirk, Stirlingshire on Thursday 19th October; returning to RAF Turnhouse on Friday 28th June 1940. After the fall of France and at the opening phase of the Battle of Britain the Squadron moved to RAF West Malling in Kent on Friday 12th July 1940. Friday 19th July 1940 was a ‘black day’ for the Squadron! On a single daylight encounter the vulnerability of the Defiant was identified; No.141 Squadron struck off charge seven aircraft with 12 aircrew casualties; 10 killed and 2 injured after a severe mauling by Me.109's during a Convoy Patrol off Dover all within a 15-minute time-period. The Squadron being withdrawn to RAF Prestwick on 21st July 1940 and re-designated a night fighter unit. On Saturday 4th December 1943, the Squadron moved to West Raynham, Norfolk, its role changed to ‘intruder’ operations, flying Beaufighter's over occupied Europe, using the Serrate radar detector, becoming a ‘Founder’ Squadron of the newly formed No.100 Bomber Group. The Squadron serving in Bomber Command flew a total of 223 operations; flying 1,214 sorties for the loss off 17 aircraft (1.40%), a further five aircraft were struck off charge due to non-operational incidents. The Squadron serving in Bomber Command suffered a total of 35 casualties. The Squadron claimed a total of 70 German aircraft destroyed, four probable and 21 damaged in the air with a further seven claimed as destroyed and three damaged on the ground. In doing so saved many a bomber from an untimely demise. The Squadron also claimed attacking 58 trains, seven ships and a number of motor transports.



Resting Places of the dead that died in Bomber Command: 23 airmen rest in five different Countries in 15 cemeteries, the remains of Captain H.J.B. D'Hautecourt and Lt. C.E. Kocher were repatriated to France after the cessation of hostilities. Two airmen have no known grave and are remembered on the Runnymede Memorial.

The average age of those that died was 25 years, 22 days.

No.141 Squadron can also be credited with performing a very valuable service in the development of the ‘Serrate’ system and its introduction to No.100 Bomber Group. The Royal Air Force, Fighter Command and Bomber Command can be very proud of No.141 Squadron and its achievements during the Second World War.

Per Ardua Ad Astra

(Extracts from ‘and in morning...’ series and from the ‘and in morning...’ data base.

Photographs – Crown Copyright)



“...and in the morning...”



No. 141 Squadron

Royal Air Force

December 1943 – May 1945

‘Definitive Compendium’

Researched, Compiled and Written
by Barry Hope

RAF Association Annual Conference 2018

The RAF Association's Annual Conference is the largest membership event in our calendar. The Annual Conference, held in May each year, is the Association's AGM which sees delegates from branches all over the world gather together to renew old friendships, debate the business of the day and most importantly, enjoy themselves! The 2018 Annual Conference will be held at the Yarnfield Park Training and Conference Centre from *11 to 12 May 2018*. This is your Conference and your chance to contribute to important debate on the future plans for the Association. It is also an excellent opportunity to catch up with friends.

As one of the largest conference and training centres in the UK, Yarnfield Park Training and Conference Centre is situated in the heart of the Midlands in Stone, Staffordshire. Please visit their website www.yarnfieldpark.com for full details on the venue's facilities.

Registering Your Attendance:

Registration is now open, so [please click here to visit the Eventbrite booking system](#).

Here you can register delegate details for yourself and all guests who would like to attend.

In order to use Eventbrite, you do need an email account. Therefore, if you do not have an email account, please contact our reception team on 0116 268 8750. They will happily take your booking details over the phone.

Once you have registered, you may receive an automated email from Eventbrite asking you to create a password in order to login and print your tickets. To clarify, you do not need tickets to attend Conference but you do need to register. Once registered, we will have all the information we need and therefore please disregard this email.

Accommodation:

We are pleased to inform you that we have secured the same accommodation rate for you at the 2017 price, which provides excellent value for money.

This is priced at £55.00 a night for single room or £75.00 a night for a double/twin room based on two people sharing. This price includes breakfast, lunch, dinner and each room offers an en-suite bathroom, TV, hairdryer, unlimited tea/coffee & biscuits and Wi-Fi.

Your accommodation can be booked through our reception team on 0116 268 8750.

Please do not contact Yarnfield Park directly as all the accommodation has been allocated to the Association for this event and must be booked directly through our reception team.

Please note, fully accessible rooms are limited and we would advise booking early to avoid disappointment.

Car Parking:

There are over 600 car parking spaces available on site at Yarnfield Park and parking is free for all those attending the Conference. Although there are limited official disabled parking spaces available, we will allocate normal car parking spaces for blue badge holders. In addition we will provide transport and support for you/ your luggage on arrival and departure.

Upcoming Events



Raffle Draw for Teddy Bear aka Sgt Eddie Raffles*



Sgt Eddie Raffles has already flown in Red 3, the BBMF Lancaster (3 times), met the RAF Falcons & hopefully by the time the draw happens will have added to flights & experiences including a Tandem Parachute Jump.

Draw being made at 20.00hrs on Saturday 1st September 2018 after the Global Branch Dirty Dozen Tandem Parachute Jump**

Tickets are available at £2 each, or in books of 5
Money can be paid direct to Promoter, the branch committee members or transferred to: -

Sgt Raffles 1370 20-59-14 43214931

If purchasing via the internet, on receipt of transfer, the promoter will scan your exclusively numbered tickets & email the copy to you. If you require the physical tickets, please add 56p to each purchase for postage of the tickets to you. Please ensure your correct address is sent to the promoter. The promoter is not responsible for any loss of tickets.

All monies raised from the raffle will be donated to the Global Branch 1370 Wings Appeal
YOU MUST HAVE A UK ADDRESS TO PURCHASE TICKETS!!!!

* Included in the prize are various photographs & certificates authenticating Sgt Raffles various flights & experiences in 2017/18.

** Should the Global Branch Dirty Dozen Tandem Parachute Jump be postponed for any reason the draw will be moved accordingly.

Full Terms & Conditions are available on request to the promoter.