

Tiger News No 45

Compiled by Bob Cossey

Association President	AVM B L Robinson FRAeS FCMI
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THE TIGER SQUADRON MUSEUM APPEAL

Plans are progressing as regards fund raising to enable the establishment of the museum dedicated to 74(F) Tiger Squadron at Norwich (RAF Horsham St Faith).

Our main effort initially will be in the form of a major raffle which we will be asking all our members to promote country wide. We will also involve other museums, flying clubs, enthusiasts' societies, aviation magazines - in fact any person or organisation that would be willing to sell or promote the sale of tickets for us.

Top prizes pledged so far include a Harvard flight (courtesy of Air Marshal Cliff Spink) which will also incorporate a 'guided tour' of Cliff's Spitfire on the ground. There is also the probability of a Pitts Special flight (or should I say a Pitts Special 'experience') from another sponsor - details to follow once confirmed.

If any of our members can offer further headline prizes such as the above please contact Bob, Dick or Rhod (addresses on Page One).

We are looking for other smaller prizes as well. So would all members please consider donating something to the prize list - be it in kind or perhaps to sponsor and act as host on a visit to an aviation related attraction near them for example? If you would like to do so please contact Bob, Dick or Rhod.

Other initiatives include the following.

- The sale of the Hunter T7 print by Jon Harold as described in Tiger News and at www.74squadron.org.
- The publishing of a high quality pictorial history of 74 Squadron by Bob Cossey with all proceeds being donated to the appeal. This will be available next year.

- Donations from members in return for a `plug` for their business on our website and a link to their own website. Ray and Marianne Jones were the first to do this - please follow their very generous lead!
- Members organising their own local activities to raise funds. Please contact Dick, Rhod or Bob to discuss this further.
- Members within the aviation industry who may be able to persuade their Company to sponsor the museum in various ways. Please contact Dick, Rhod or Bob to discuss this further.
- An E Bay auction of members with holiday homes here or abroad which they would be willing to donate for a week's occupancy to the highest bidder.

We would also like to put forward another idea which would raise substantial funding. We have a membership in excess of 200. We have given ourselves a tentative five years in which to raise the amount required. If members would be prepared to donate an additional £5 per annum on top of their annual subscription (or more if they wished) and in the case of Honorary Members if they would like to donate £5 per annum (or more if they wished) over the next five years, we could raise in excess of £5,000. Watch this space!

Once again I have received a wealth of information, photographs and articles for possible inclusion in Tiger News for which I most heartily thank you all. Please be patient though! I try and use everything I receive but that may not be immediately!

Farewells

Tengah Tiger **Paul Shannon** (pictured overleaf) passed away on April 16th. Paul was a radar technician with the Squadron but after he left the RAF he became a Master Thatcher and lived quietly in Suffolk. A very kind and decent man, Paul will be greatly missed



[With thanks to Ray & Marianne Jones]

The Tigers have lost one of their wartime Commanding Officers. New Zealander **Squadron Leader James Chilton Francis Hayter** - known to all as `Spud` - died on October 3rd last year, passing away peacefully in the nursing home in which he spent the last years of his life. Spud was always interested in the fortunes of his squadron after he left it in 1944 and that interest carried on through the years. **Doug Tidy** served under him when he was in the Middle East and he prepared this obituary for the website and Tiger News.



James Chilton Francis Hayter DFC* joined the RNZAF in 1938 and in 1939 and came to England to join 98 Squadron flying Fairy Battles. He next went to 103 Squadron in France but when in June 1940 the Squadron was withdrawn he was posted to 615 Squadron for 14 days before joining 605. After a spell at 52 OTU at Debden he joined 611 at Hornchurch. Awarded the DFC in October 1941 he commanded 274 in March 1943, before a spell in Turkey instructing Turkish pilots on Hurricanes.

He took command of 74 at Meherabad on April 1st 1943, the 25th anniversary of the founding of the RAF. `A` Flight had moved from Abadan to Shaibah the previous day

from where Spud flew a newly-rebuilt Hurricane Mk I on Sunday 18th April despite the fact that Shaibah did not work on Sundays! He came up to Teheran to meet the chaps of `B` Flight on 22nd April and on 21st May he led 14 aircraft to Heliopolis via H3 and Aqir whilst the rest of the Squadron went from Habbaniya to El Daba by Dakota where we shared LG 106 with 237 (Rhodesia) Squadron. In September he led 9 aircraft to Antimachia on Kos Island in the Dodecanese with disastrous results. Suffice to say that he escaped with two pilots, a Squadron Leader from Ops and an MT driver. They wandered the hills and with the help of a shepherd made a raft - Spud had farmed in New Zealand and he killed a sheep with his bare hands which they cooked as they started to build it. Eventually they escaped to the Turkish coast with the Special Boat Service's help on 7th October 1943. Squadron Leader C F Frank Bradley had taken over 74 on its arrival at Peristerona and flew 4 sorties in Squadron aircraft but when he learned of Spud's return he immediately drove to Limassol, picked him up and gave him back his Squadron! Returning to Egypt we moved from Idku to Palestine, back to Idku again, and sent detachments to Cyprus and Cairo West, losing Sgt Gray killed in a Spitfire and F/Sgt Wilson interned in Turkey after baling out while on a sweep from Cyprus.

By April 1944 Spud led the Squadron back to Europe and new Spitfire IXs at North Weald. In May we moved to Lympne and on D-Day carried out uneventful patrols over the invasion fleet. On 1st July Spud led the Squadron against flying bombs and on 3rd it was transferred to 2nd TAF and Tangmere with 134 Wing. In August he led them to ALG B8 at Sommervieux. On 30th December 1944 he was posted out after 21 months as CO, considerably longer than any other of our wartime COs.

Cuthbert Orde who drew so many of the Few said of him "tough, steady and a damn good type. He is one of the chaps who make me grin when I meet them".

*

Sir James Henry Brook, late of the Manor of Hadlow, passed away on the morning of 30th April after a short illness. James was 68. His funeral was held on May 15th at Hawkinge. A regular attendee at reunions Sir James was always ready with a story to tell, not only of his time in the RAF and with 74 but also of his many other interests outside the service. Our thoughts, as ever at times such as these, are with his family.

*

Dr. Gerald Arthur Fieldsend spent his national service as the Medical Officer at R.A.F. Horsham St. Faith with 74 and 245 Squadrons between 1953 and 1955 when both squadrons were flying Meteor F8s. Dr. Fieldsend had a stroke in December 2006 followed by a second on Saturday 12th May after which he died. His son Nigel passed on this information for all those on the Squadron who would have known the doctor when they were at St Faith. Our commiserations go to the Fieldsend family.

*

Fred Page, who died on Monday 16th July, has featured several times within the pages of *Tiger News*. Fred was a loveable Cockney with a wealth of stories about his time in the army in Palestine and about his days as an entertainer. Who he hadn't met and sometimes worked with is an easier listing than those he had - from Max Bygraves to Morecombe and Wise to Warren Mitchell. He was a cleaner on the squadron between 1988 to 1993 at Wattisham. Quickly endearing himself to everyone, he was adopted by the Tigers and after their disbandment on Phantoms in 1992 he kept those (mainly groundcrew) left in the Wattisham area up to date with news of promotions and postings of their former colleagues. Squadron CO Graham Clarke - always known to Fred as 'The Boss' - was best man at his wedding to Edna (both were in their 80s at the time!)

Fred and Edna's little bungalow in Needham Market in Suffolk was a shrine to the Tigers with the walls of the lounge adorned with pictures and prints of 74's aircraft, tiger's heads, scarves and stickers and all those serving on the squadron who Fred knew. He kept in contact with air and ground crew alike after his retirement and he always looked forward to his birthday and Christmas when he knew that he and Edna would receive a sackful of cards from ex-Tigers the world over wishing them well.



Our sympathies and condolences go to Edna who over the time she knew Fred soon realised she had found a very special companion. She will miss him greatly, as will we all.

Fred in full flow! Flanagan and Allen were amongst his favourites and he always gave a great rendition of their songs.

As we go to press comes the sad news of the death of **Hugh Rees**, a Tiger of the Meteor era and an ever present at Squadron Reunions. An appreciation of Hugh's life will appear in the next issue of *Tiger News*.

Bobby Laumans' Last Combat.

Belgian Bobby Laumans was a Tiger in 1941/1942, having arrived in England after the Germans invaded the Low Countries. Then when 74 were preparing to leave for the Middle East Bobby was posted to the newly formed and Belgian manned 350 Squadron. In Tiger News 43 Bobby told the story of his final flight with 350 but unfortunately a section of the middle paragraph on page 10 was omitted. Bobby has asked that this be put to rights. The paragraph should have read:

Suddenly there were only four FW190s in the sky around me. Did I hit the first one which I fired at? I can't say but he had gone. As they had got together again I tried a 'head on' attack. The risk was a collision but as I was certain to die during this combat it was the best solution. Now it was also time to head back to England if I could. And so there followed a succession of engagements. Between each of them I was able to gain a few miles towards the UK until it was time to face them again. But I was losing altitude each time. Finally we were well over the sea quite a long way from the coast. During one of those engagements another Focke Wulf had abandoned the fight so there were 'only' three left. After about twenty minutes of combat and many 5g turns I was getting very tired. But another FW190 passed in front of me and the opportunity was too good. I got myself in position for a shot but I didn't know if I had any ammunition left. Before I had time to fire my aircraft shuddered under the impact of bullets and cannon shells from the other two Germans following me. It was the tactic of sending a decoy in front. In seconds bullets tore into both my wings and I could hear them hitting the armour plating in my back. A few seconds later a cannon shell entered the fuselage from the left, went through the dashboard destroying the instruments and exploded in the petrol tank located between the cockpit and the engine. As there wasn't much fuel left the air-fuel ratio was very explosive. In no time at all my aircraft was burning. There was little time left to bail out. A few moments earlier I had a glimpse at the altimeter and saw 900 feet set at Debden's QFE. I jettisoned the hood, undid my harness and pulled off my helmet. It was too much bother to disconnect the oxygen and RT. I turned the Spitfire upside down and dropped out. But the aircraft was badly trimmed to fly on its back. I got half out of the cockpit when my parachute got stuck at the back and I couldn't reach the stick any more. So I gave the stick a hefty kick creating a negative g and was projected out of the plane. I pulled the opening handle and fortunately the chute opened normally. No, I was not going to die that day!

Another 90th Celebration!

There will be a lot of talk about our 90th Anniversary Reunion in 2008 over the next few months as flagged up in the last issue of Tiger News. **Colin Hales** responded to that by tendering his early apologies for not being able to attend then - but for a very good reason. Colin writes:

As next year the Annual Reunion celebrates the Tigers 90th birthday I would very much have liked to be there. However on 5th March I too celebrate my 90th birthday and I do not know what celebrations our children and grandchildren may wish to arrange. Also Saturday 1st March is my Lifeboat Coffee Morning. I am the local organiser but after next year's appeal I am retiring after over 25 years involvement with the RNLI, so I must be there. Please tender my apologies to the AGM and all those gather for the Dinner - and especially to John Freeborn who was a Pilot Officer on B Flight when I joined the squadron in early Spring 1940. Paddy Treacy was Flight Commander supported by amongst others Mungo Park, Sammy Hoare, Sgt Skinner and Brian Draper. They were all splendid men. I had many happy days with 74 and shall never forget them.

May I make one suggestion Colin? Persuade your family to treat you to a weekend in Stratford for both your, and the squadron's, birthday!

Biggin Hill Photocal

At the reunion in March we showed a short newsreel film which had been taken on the day of the shooting down of Biggin Hill's 600th enemy aircraft by 74's H M Stephen and John Colin Mungo Park. Part of that film constituted a group shot of squadron pilots. In response to many requests I have reproduced that shot again on the next page and have named the pilots concerned. An historic photograph indeed.



Left to Right

Bob Spurdle, John Freeborn, Sgt Freese (or Sgt Parkes?), Sub Lt Hutchinson, Sailor Malan (with back to camera), H G R Poulton, Sgt Morrison, H M Stephen, Bill Franklin (mostly obscured), John Colin Mungo Park, W Armstrong, Henryk Szczesny (Henry the Pole aka Sneezy) and Ben Draper.

And to complete the picture, H M Stephen and Mungo Park (**below**) looking pretty pleased with their early morning exploits!



A Request for Help



Dear Bob,

I hope you will not mind me writing to you but I really need some help and advice. You see I'm trying to gather info on my grandfather who served in Malta and North Africa during WW2. His name was Charles Langridge 1924- 1961 and he was from Kensington North London. I'm hopeful to find someone who knew him or to find someone who might have a second photo of him as the one I have is the only one my family own.

Thank you for your help and understanding in this matter and I hope to hear from you.

Many thanks

Natasha.

It's very much a long shot but one of you may just recognise the face or name from contacts with other squadrons in North Africa?

*

Tiger Lightning at East Midlands Airport

See http://www.airliners.net/search/photo.search?regsearch=ZF588&distinct_entry=true for some excellent photos of ZF588 (an ex Saudi Arabian Air Force Lightning) which has been painted up in 74 Squadron colours at East Midlands. With thanks to Nigel Champken-Woods for the tip!

Stan Krol



Doug Tidy has been looking into the career of one of 74's wartime Polish pilots and has been able to track down through a Polish correspondent, the photograph reproduced here. It was taken in September 1939 probably in Bucharest to where **Stanislaw Krol** found his way after his escape from Poland when the Germans invaded. This particular photo was used in his fake ID and passport which he used as he followed his escape route from Bucharest via Beirut to France. It's a little known fact that Poles who were part of this escape `odyssey` as it was termed were called "Sikorski's tourists." From France Stan was taken to England.

P/O Stanislaw Krol was born in 1915. He was commissioned as a *podporucznik pilot* or *Pilot One* in September 1939. He joined 74 Squadron in the UK after the Battle of Britain had been fought. Later shot down and captured Stan took part in the Great Escape but was sadly captured and shot by the Germans. His ashes were buried on Poznan's Citadel Hill.

One of the Last

Dr Ray Racy returns to the site of his forced landing in Holland April 1945

‘For you the war is over!’ The young Luftwaffe officer greeted me with evident satisfaction shortly after I had been captured and I could not miss the implied irony that for him the war was far from over. Earlier that day I had made a forced landing in a field near Meppel in occupied Holland (as recounted in an earlier edition of *Tiger News*). I had recently joined 74 Squadron based at Schjindel, an advanced airstrip near Hertogenbosch. We were flying Mk XVI clipped wing Spitfires as part of the 2nd Tactical Air Force. Our job was interdiction - a euphemism for bombing railway tracks, shooting up trains and trucks and anything else that moved. We were part of the widespread air strikes at the German retreat across the north German plains towards Berlin. My own brief experience with the Squadron had not been uneventful. One morning after returning from an armed recce I was greeted by an apoplectic maintenance sergeant. ‘Did you know you dropped a bomb on the runway?’ he exploded. Evidently the bomb had come loose on take off though I was not to know that. Fortunately it had not detonated.

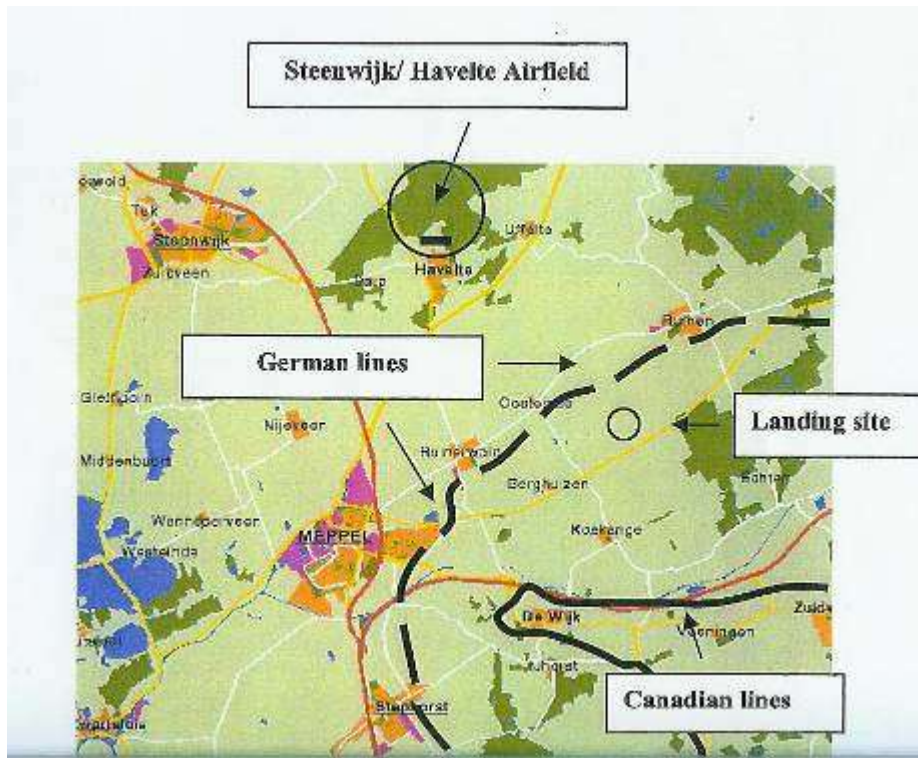
At evening briefing on the 24th March we were given the news that our appointed task was to destroy the anti-aircraft guns across the Rhine to protect the armada of gliders due to land the next morning. I cannot recall any comments being made afterwards but if everyone thought as I did, it was bound to be a suicide mission. The briefing was cancelled the next morning. Our instructions were to fly at 12,000 feet and provide cover, no doubt to everyone’s relief.

Next day we had the honour of escorting Winston Churchill from Venlo back to Northolt after the Rhine crossing. A pleasant diversion for those who took part, though in my misguided enthusiasm to be protective I was told off for flying too close to his Dakota.

On the fateful day, 5th April 1945, Flt Lt Peet and I had taken off on an early morning reconnaissance. After about an hour’s uneventful flying Peet signalled to switch over the long range fuel tank to the main supply. Seconds after I had done so the confident roar of the engine gave way to an uncanny silence. The four bladed prop windmilled feebly in front of me. I was not unduly worried. It could be an airlock in the fuel system. I reached for the plunger under the instrument panel and pumped it several times. Nothing happened. I pumped it again and again. Nothing. I swore explosively and cursed the American built Packard Merlin engine with which this model was equipped. I had two choices - to bail out or make a forced landing. I opted for a forced landing.

I released the long range tank, trimmed the aircraft into a gentle glide and selected a suitable field. In Holland one was spoiled for choice. I circled the field and at 1,000 feet I slipped back the hood and secured it, banked to port and lined up for the approach. With the undercarriage up I reduced speed to about 90mph, switched off the ignition and raised the fuel cocks to OFF. Anxious not to overshoot, I judged the distance a bit short and just cleared the boundary hedge before jolting to a shuddering stop. I switched on the intercom and spoke briefly to my recce leader. ‘Have landed safely. Am OK. Over and out.’ I switched off. The less said the better. No point in giving away one’s position.

My next move should have been to destroy the aircraft. I had visions of a massive explosion which would blow it up and take me with it. A further risk was that a fire would give away my position, the last thing I wanted to do. I reasoned it was too late in the war for the plane to be of any use to the Germans. So I left it as it was. As I walked away I noted that the starboard wing had been partly ripped off and the fuselage had broken in half behind the cockpit. I had a broken nose and had gashed my face from hitting the giro gunsight. But my real problems lay ahead. Which way to go? Empty fields all around and not a soul to be seen. I now felt lonely, exposed and vulnerable.



Map showing where Dr Racy force landed relative to the nearest town, Meppel, and the German and Allied lines

I stumbled across fields in a westerly direction towards Meppel, the nearest town according to my map. Eventually I came to a small shack. An elderly couple came out. I asked for some water to have a wash. They seemed completely indifferent to my condition but gave me a bowl and indicated a pump outside. Then they went back in. Perhaps they thought I was German. I trudged across more fields until I came to the outskirts of a village. After much indecision I succeeded in making contact with some Dutchmen. One of them spoke a little English and I explained that I wanted to pass myself off as a Dutch peasant.

`We can talk about that later,` he said. I was shivering. It was still early morning in April. Only much later I realised I was suffering more from concussion than the cold. The man must have seen my condition and he motioned me to a nearby bungalow. He showed me into a bijou living room and indicated a couch to lie on. I was so glad of the rest and the security I lay down and fell asleep at once.

Suddenly I became aware of two burly men in grey green uniforms standing over me. So this was it. They grunted something in German and ordered me outside. They led me to waiting truck and hoisted me over

the tailboard. The truck revved up and drove away. Shortly it stopped at a small railway station. I was escorted into the booking hall and told to sit on a luggage trolley. There were a few other Wehrmacht soldiers there. So far I had not been ill treated. They appeared to be more interested in laughing and joking among themselves than paying much attention to me. I was not kept there long. I was moved again to a guardroom on a Luftwaffe airfield. It was there that I met the young officer who appeared so pleased to announce that for me the war was over.

Actual experience is one thing. Recalling it is another. I had long wanted to retrace my steps to make clear to myself what it had been like nearly sixty years ago. I returned to Holland in August 2003. I was fortunate to have the expert assistance of Philippa, a friend, and Jan Mennink, a local Dutchman, both experienced researchers into crash sites. I could have had no idea of the remarkable details which came to light. When I had landed there appeared to be nobody about. In fact two boys had watched me come down. They hid in a hedge fearing I might be German. They ran to a farmhouse belonging to the Weide family. At first they thought the boys were joking but soon realised their story was true. In September 1982 Mr Weide wrote `A brief history of a mysterious Spitfire.` In summary his account goes as follows.

In the distance we saw the silhouette of a fighter aircraft down on the field. We went to it and recognised the British roundels on the fuselage. I never was so close to a fighter aircraft in my life. It was a remarkable machine and it even smelled good..... We waved in the direction the pilot had gone and I made a short sharp whistle. A few minutes later we went home because you never knew when the Germans popped up.....Late in the evening a neighbour and I pumped out 20 gallons of petrol which went to the local doctor at Ruinerwold who was without fuel for his car.....The next day a huge explosion took place. The Germans had blown up the Spitfire.

We had no trouble in identifying the field. With maps and photographs Jan had carefully located it long beforehand. He related one incident not mentioned in that account. Some Dutchmen had approached the aircraft and one of them climbed into the cockpit. Accidentally he pressed the button on the control column. The two canon and four machine guns blazed into action. No doubt he was suitably startled!

I went to the far end of the field where I guessed the shells might have landed. After a few minutes searching with the metal detector I got a signal. I shouted to Philippa who had the entrenching tools. We quickly dug up the cartridge of a 20mm cannon shell. It was dated 1944. A promising start. A few minutes later we unearthed a torn scrap of aluminium. But the best was yet to come. Philippa gave a shout and I ran over to her. She had found a circular piece of metal inscribed *RAD C MK VIIIH No 503* and the numbers 4 to 14 clearly etched on it. We were in no doubt this was a genuine piece of the aircraft itself. We were jubilant with our finds

Philippa and I returned to the field the next day. We spent hours in a nearby crop of sweetcorn and dug out a number of components, including a live cannon shell and a cap from some electrical component marked in volts. Altogether we collected about three dozen pieces.

Our next step was to locate the shack I had first stumbled upon. Not surprisingly it had been replaced by some small dwellings. In front of them stood an old water pump. This had to be the actual pump where I had washed the congealed blood from my face. With Jan as our driver and interpreter we then took soundings in the village of Koekange. We were shown the house where I had taken refuge and been captured. When I saw it I was unconvinced it was the same one. It looked much larger than I remembered

it. In fact it had been extended and was being redecorated inside. It was occupied by a young woman, her child and her mother. We asked if we could see the room I had been shown into and where I had fallen asleep. It was empty with only a tiled floor and plastered walls. There was one door into it from the hallway. I remembered it had two. The girl pointed to the far corner and told us they had replaced a door there with a window. That clinched it for me. It was through that side door the German soldiers had appeared and through that door they had taken me out to the waiting truck.

Finally Jan took us to the guardroom on the airfield at Havelte. It too had been rebuilt into a modern bungalow. We also visited the now overgrown airfield which had been the base for Me109s, FW190s, Me110s, Ju88s and Me262s, the latter the twin engined jet, one of which I had seen fly over my cell.

I was deeply moved by all these discoveries. Even more significant was what I did not know at the time. That German soldiers were quartered on farms less than a mile from my landing site. That they had between 2,000 and 2,500 troops in the area. That there was a Gestapo HQ in Meppel. And that about half the troops around Meppel were members of the SS. Mercifully I had no idea at the time that I had landed so close to a hornet's nest.

According to Jan, writing about these events, `for a force-landed British pilot, Meppel had very little to offer.`

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More about Hunter T7 XL568

1. Bob Lightfoot writes:

XL568 was on 74 Squadron's inventory at Leuchars when I arrived. Through a posting muddle, I had completed the Lightning F2 phase at the OCU and the CO deemed that I could not fly the Lightning F3 until I had completed the F3 ground school (the Lightning T5 did not exist at the time). Pending the F3 ground school with 56 Sqn I was appointed as the 'Hunter Pilot'. This surprised me somewhat as I had no proper Hunter experience - only one supersonic dash in a Hunter F4 from CFS. As a Flight Lieutenant it was simply assumed I had some Hunter time before a posting to Lightnings!

I chose my early passengers from the many at Leuchars with years of Hunter time and discovered the key points and became a useful ferry pilot to all and sundry. After a while the Hunter was moved to the corner of the hangar and little used but the day came later for its final flight to RAF Kemble for disposal. No one had flown it for a year and it fell to me as a QFI to do the trip. I took Captain Pieri our USMC exchange officer as co-pilot and duly delivered XL 568 to Kemble on 21 July 1966 where we understood she would be destroyed.

On that 'last flight' XL 568 was in T7A configuration with a second inverter for the OR 946 instrument display as fitted to the Lightning F3. It is very pleasing to hear that she was not destroyed as I had expected. Maybe there was another 'last flight' to Cosford?

2. Prints for sale!



New Tiger Squadron Association member **Jon Mosen** is a fine artist as you can see. The Hunter is 74`s XL568. As part of our appeal to raise funds towards the proposed Tiger Museum Jon is very generously offering to donate **£10** for every print of this painting sold, each of which has been signed by Tigers Boz Robinson, David Jones, Geoff Steggall, Martin Bee and Ian Cadwallader, all of whom flew the aircraft.

To order at the special Association Member`s price of **£85 (inc p&p)** call Jon on **01929 426830**. For non members the price is **£108 inc p&p**.

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Tiger Hurricanes

Photos of the Hurricanes which 74 flew whilst awaiting the arrival of Spitfires to replace those lost at sea en route to the Middle East are rare indeed. So when the offer of some such photos arrived in my mail box I jumped at the chance! **Mike Betro** writes:

I have been researching my father in law's service in the RAF during WWII. Maurice Keenan was not part of 74 Squadron but I have found some photos of a Hurricane serial number BP708. If my research is correct the plane was a 74 Squadron machine in the Middle East. One photo shows the plane on the ground after a wheels up landing with a number of (unidentified) individuals posing on it. Maurice can no longer recall any of the details of the incident. The other photo is an individual shot of my father in law clowning around! I'm sure there is a story to go along with the photos but unfortunately I don't know what it was.



To complete the story, Maurice was a flight mechanic for 73 Squadron to which he was posted in late 1940. In November of that year Maurice and the squadron found itself in Egypt. He remained with them until early 1943. According to the *History Of 73 Squadron Part II* by Don Minterne a detachment of planes, pilots and ground crew moved to El Bassa in Palestine on August 10th 1942 and returned on the 17th of that month. Maurice's service record shows a movement to 235 Wing on the 10th followed by an undated return to 73. It is possible that the photos were taken at that time.

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Mystery Spitfire

Ian Simpson is a good friend of the Association who is very good at seeking out the unusual, rare and obscure. He saw the photograph overleaf in *Aeroplane* (as some of you may also have done) and writes:



The officer looking into the cockpit is Captain Jack Hall who won a George Medal on 2nd August 1940 for, it is believed, some action involving an unexploded bomb. He had amongst other jobs the post of 'Assistant Mooring and Wreck Raising Officer' at the Port of London Authority. Tom Hall, who supplied the photo, thinks he can make out PLA on the lifebelt.

From the style of the cockpit door stencilling it could be a Mk I or Mk Va Spitfire with the former more likely due to the radio mast. Additionally the underside of the wing fillet is possibly painted black dating it pre-the Battle of Britain period. I started to look through the early mark Spitfire serial numbers

and so far have come up with K9869 as a possibility. This had an accident at Rochford 5th May 1940 and was ditched off Hamble while being ferried by 3FPP, so was strictly speaking not lost with the Tigers. I could of course be barking up the wrong tree - that's not unknown! - but hopefully one of your members will have details. It will certainly be interesting to know more of the circumstances behind this photo.

Over to you.

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Tiger Wedding!

Isn't it always nice to report good news! And what could be better than to record the marriage of Tiger Group Captain Sir Henry Riley to Lady Antonia Riley at St Clement Dane in London. As the photos show they were a very happy couple indeed and (Antonia tells me) it was worth the 19 year wait to tie the knot! Here she recounts in diary form the story of the build up to their day interspersed with photos of the happy couple. Enjoy!



A Wednesday in April 2006, aboard our yacht `Sparrowsong.` Yesssss!!! Skipper has announced to self that time has come to tie knot. Mistook meaning in that have not tied the ropes properly into seaman-like knots for'ard and aft. Was wrong: Skipper meant marriage, wedding, the works. Ooh, party-time! Am busy thinking about who, what, when and where. Not good idea as am on helm and am veering off course dramatically. Would not do to perish at sea just when Skipper has come to momentous decision. Must pay attention!

Thursday. Have got over initial shock and was capable of mooring `Sparrowsong` without uttering the word "wedding" once. Skipper much pleased: had thought his action had seriously unhinged self. Must not want to make Skipper take it all back. Caution advised.

Friday. Have called all girlfriends to announce Big Event. Reactions uniformly positive although some doubt as to why it took 19 years for Skipper to see light. Ignored that. Wedding should be painless: am used to hosting big events and already have wedding dress in closet. Came upon fab outfit years ago when wedding was mentioned first. Jumped gun. Must see if dress still fits. Skipper has it easy: will marry in RAF Uniform.

Saturday. Have bent Skipper's ear about venues and services and guests. In order to gain peace Skipper has agreed to all of the above except guest list. Could be 20-400 guests. Depends on what nations to include. Would not do to include all of America, for example, says Skipper. Will see! Now need small matter of Special Marriage Licence to be okayed by Archbishop of Canterbury. Set date for Wedding of

the Century on 30th November, should give ample time for Bish to put rubber stamp or calligraphy on Licence. Now have lots of time to go shopping as well. Skipper not thrilled with latter idea. Advises self that daydream over, deck scrubbing is now order of day.

A Tuesday last year. Aaargh! Church Office called and said Divorce Papers lost. Must-have items for Special Licence. Will maintain calm exterior when reporting to Skipper. Wedding must be serene and elegant thing, no drama involved. Others do drama, not self.

Friday. After many phone calls papers remain lost. Lawyers to re-issue papers. Padre of RAF Church somewhat worried about time-line. Bishop of London to okay Archbishop's decision re special licence. Special licence did not work in Prince Charles' case. What makes self think can get married in Church of England after all, if Camilla stuck with Registry Marriage?

1st December. Is now clear that Wedding has to be rolled. 14th February seems good date, as Skipper and self always love St Valentine's ball in RAFYC and find good excuse to celebrate Skipper's Birthday in same week, preferably on top of Eiffel Tower or Alp. Can add wedding to festivities. More champagne that way. Am calm about papers, have been promised they will arrive this week. Skipper makes plans to spruce up `Sparrowsong`. Rolled wedding gives opportunity. Picks weekend of 15th December to do good works, self off to Chandlery to acquire Bilge Cleaner (super-strength), Deck Cleaner (anti-skid), Rust Remover and any manner of ropes (lines), tell-tales, bungees and other knick-knacks Skipper has promised `Sparrowsong` to keep her quiet about the Upcoming Event. `Sparrowsong` decidedly jealous at times!

12th December. Skipper breaks leg ice-skating at Somerset House, self black and blue after lout pulverized small group of polite skaters waiting to get off rink. Thoughts of Champagne in Somerset House Bar cruelly replaced by tea (tea??) in St Thomas' Hospital. `Sparrowsong` not known to have used voodoo before.... Wonder about Skipper's ability to walk purposefully down aisle. Must not think this way, is selfish and should remind oneself about own broken ankle, previous year.



14th February 2007. Would have been nice day for Wedding. Papers as yet nowhere, but did get call from Padre: is being posted to the Middle East. Padre furious. Skipper more furious. Wedding rolled to 18th May when Padre is back from Theatre of War. We hope. Am going to check out wedding dress now. Wonder why am putting off final check, i. e. wearing the thing. Subconscious fear of fat quotient strongly suspected. When on scales, fear no longer subconscious. Will diet forcefully to get into dress. Need shoes. And call 200 people again re moving of wedding date.

Especially Admiral who is to give self away for lack of papa, because he has to change military strategy of UK all the time in order to make our wedding date(s).

9th March. Call from Lawyer's Chambers that papers have arrived today. Call from Church office that Padre's departure has been brought forward to 10th March. Skipper and self land at Gatwick on 9th March back from Finca in Spain. Takes little time to add 2 and 2. Skipper's white-knuckle drive from Gatwick to the Inns of Court and then St Clement Dane makes self remember why love Skipper. Skipper

flaunts all of London's parking regulations and pulls up with roaring engine outside venerable buildings containing ancient Chambers and Church Offices, then sends self to run up 86 staircases (as venerable buildings do not sport elevators). Mission accomplished, drinks all around, the papers are on their way to Archbishop. The Padre is on his way to Theatre of War. Well, I am after all marrying intrepid RAF fighter pilot. Tiger Tiger and that sort of thing! Stiff upper lip! Cups of tea in face of surefire disaster.

Two Weeks Later. Have called Church Office. No word from Archbishop. Serenity a bit tested. Skipper maintains cool, but have seen same cool exterior when `Sparrowsong` was about to hit seawall of Alderney. Have own problems to contend with, never mind Archbishop. Have tested dress. Took great fortitude! Great relief: can squeeze in after 19 years! However: dress had been lent out to god-daughter in America for wedding. Remember very well how dress was carefully dry-cleaned by specialist in the field, Messrs Nibble and Knuckle in Mayfair, wrapped in acid-free paper and dispatched to the US in pretty box with ribbons. Also remember when dress returned in Jiffy bag....

Dress on way to Messrs Nibble and Knuckle for second time for cleaning and small repairs. Am given name of Messrs Bagneedle and Tapefield in Kensington for necessary work. Also take Skipper's uniform. Am very upset: self on draconian diet to fit in dress, Skipper's uniform to be taken in! Lots of time for alterations to be done. Feel good, am on top of things. Serenity takes hold once again.

One week to go. Archbishop's Office says papers are with Bishop of London's Office. B of L Office say the opposite. Papers are lost between two floors of Westminster Abbey. Remember earlier lost papers and feel `Sparrowsong` is taking charge of events again. No greater wrath than a boat scorned....

Wedding day minus 4. Papers found and emailed to appropriate channels. Padre by now fairly sure will make wedding but still in Qatar. Approval of B of L still pending. Self whizzing between destinations as was unable to get leave for wedding. Long distance preps exacting but manageable. Skipper too busy to bother much. `Yes, Dear` is often used expression. Witnesses call to find out if wedding still on. Admiral moves Defence of the Realm in anticipation of date-change.



Wedding day minus 2. B of L has approved Special Licence. Prince Charles 0 - Skipper 1. Status of Dress and Uniform as yet unknown. All other elements fall in Serene Category: music, reception, service, dinner, all present and correct.

Wedding Day minus 1. On way into town, Skipper urges self to make military-type check on tailors as to status of frocks before assigned pick-up. Phone call met with mild surprise. Could one come in tomorrow? Aaaarhg!!! Tomorrow wedding day. M25 suddenly too small for wrath of Skipper. Have visions of surprise visit to John Lewis for off-the-peg creation. Skipper remembers and implements rules of war and by 1800 hrs on day before wedding can collect wedding dress and uniform.

Wedding Day. Resounding success. Have not felt so calm in months! Was right to expect serene and tranquil wedding day.

Happy ever after and that sort of thing. Now all that's needed is for Skipper to apologize to `Sparrowsong` for neglect!

Henry and Antonia have a beautiful holiday home in Spain which they would be only too pleased for fellow Tigers to make use of. Very appropriately named Finca los Tigres all details can be found at www.renting-andalucia.com and www.riding-andalucia.com. The finca is set in the rugged coastal landscape of the Cabo de Gata Natural Park in Andalusia, the only real desert in Europe. The location within the Natural Park, yet only five minutes by car from the sparkling beaches of the white fishing village of Agua Amarga, guarantees an unspoilt holiday. If you don't have internet access and would like further details please let me (Bob Cossey) know and I'll forward your request on to the Rileys.

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Tiger at the Pole.

John Crow has been on an amazing journey as he explains.

On July 2nd 2007 I became one of only about .0003% of the world's population to have reached the geographic North Pole or 90 degrees north! There is little doubt I am the first 'Tiger' to have done so. Please excuse the brief exposure of my left breast in order for the photograph overleaf to be taken. You can be assured I did not suffer any frostbite as a result!



Why do we do these things? The old cliché `because it is there` could probably be applied, along with a spirit of adventure which I have had throughout my life. Since I have also ventured to the Antarctic and Everest I think the only major challenge left would be a trip into space, so I may be contacting Richard Branson quite soon!

The geographic North Pole has been reached by many modes of transport including balloon, aircraft, dog sled, snowmobile, nuclear submarine, nuclear powered ship, ski and on foot. There is some debate as to who first reached the Pole on foot with claims from both Frederick Cook in 1907/1909 and Peary in 1908/1909. However science has discredited these claims. The first time the true 90 degrees north appears to have been reached was probably as late as 1977 although it is thought some Russian explorers may have achieved it prior to that. The geographic North Pole

is a mathematical point where the imaginary line of the earth's axis of rotation passes through the earth's surface. At that location the sun is seen to circle the horizon without setting for six months a year followed by twilight and then six months of darkness. At the exact location 90 degrees north there is in fact no time as such so it is possible to walk around the earth in a minute. I actually did this just to prove the point.

The Pole itself has no length, width or breadth and because the sea ice is constantly moving there can be no permanent flags, plaques or markers to indicate the spot. An adventurer has to locate the Pole by either celestial navigation (beyond me) or GPS satellite positioning, as indeed I did. It is not possible to reach the geographic North Pole by compass since the magnetic North Pole is also constantly moving and is currently about 550 miles from the geographic North Pole. Whereas the Antarctic is a frozen land mass surrounded by water the Arctic is an ocean, frozen to depths of up to nine metres although sadly I witnessed at first hand the effects of global warming - pools of water on the surface of the ice at the North Pole.

This was truly an unforgettable and privileged experience.

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This Unmanned Aerial Vehicle has a pilot on board

This UAV has a pilot on board - well some of the time anyway - as **Martin Bee** explains.

Boeing and Gulfstream have joined forces to investigate the merit of converting a top of the range Gulfstream 550 into a UAV for special missions. The concept is simple. A regular crew flies the G550 to the operational area. The aircraft is then launched as a UAV without the crew on board for the more dangerous operations over sensitive, denied or hostile territory. The camera or electronic take is brought back to the forward operating base, the G550 is refuelled and the crew hop back on board and ferry the aircraft back to their main deployment base. Why a G550? Well, it has enormous range, routinely flies some 10,000 feet above most airliners and is seen at airports all over the world. It also has considerably more payload capability and useable volume than the few UAVs that are now entering service status. The arrival or departure of a sleek Gulfstream at say Quetta in the north west of Pakistan or into a UAE airport would raise little concern - the passengers are going hunting houbara with their falcons or perhaps returning from shopping in Geneva.

The G550 already has a paperless cockpit, so why not a pilotless cockpit? As standard, it comes with the most modern autopilot, autothrottle system and navigation systems available. True, it currently has no autoland facility but this should not be too difficult for Boeing to install. Boeing has thousands of such systems in daily use, notably on the 737 which uses only the pitch and roll channels.

I was able to ride the jump seat of this G550 from Northolt to the Royal International Air Tattoo at RAF Fairford in July. Much of the start and pre-flight process such as the flight performance computations is automated. The ride is smooth and the Rolls Royce engine power is fantastic. The autopilot is engaged some twenty seconds after lift off then, having flown the programmed route and speeds in automatic flight mode, the G550 descends to make a coupled ILS and the autopilot is finally disengaged about twenty seconds before landing.



This is certainly a UAV that I would like to fly!

Ex Lightning Tiger Martin was a Gulfstream IV pilot with the Royal Flight of the Dubai Air Wing from 1983 to 2000. He first flew a G-III for a couple of years before picking up the brand new G-IV - serial No 11. Martin was also a Lockheed U-2 pilot when on exchange with the USAF.

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COMMEMORATION



A year after the Association commemorated the life of John Colin Mungo Park at De Panne in Belgium, **Johny Recour** organised a similar service at the request of **Doug Tidy** who felt that it would be appropriate to again honour the former Tiger CO's memory. In company with Derek Morris, John Yeo and Debbie Parker, Doug made the journey across the North Sea on June 17th to participate in the service at Adinkerke Cemetery.

This time the memory of crew members from other squadrons buried at Adinkerke were also honoured. These were Sqn Ldr Desmond Hayward Sidley Kay and his navigator Fl Off Keith Frederick Hynes RAAF of 109 Squadron who died when their Mosquito (of the Pathfinder Force) crashed in Moeren nearby in the early morning of October 19th 1944. Although Belgium had been liberated by then the war was far from over and for the Allies and some Belgians the Battle of the Bulge was still to come.

Sqn Ldr Kay had already made his mark during the Battle of Flanders and the Battle of Britain with 264 Squadron. The fortunes of war had him buried some four miles from his colleague and fellow airman Plt Off Guy Lewis Hickman whose grave is at Coxyde Military Cemetery and to whom the party paid their respects after the short ceremony at Adinkerke.

The Tigers paid their respects to Sqn Ldr Kay, Fl Off Hynes and Plt Off Hickman when Doug, Derek and John laid wreaths for them as well as for Sqn Ldr J C M Park. In the photo above Doug addresses those present at Adinkerke

Pilgrimage to Tengah

For some time now some of the lads who once served as groundcrew with 74 at Tengah, Singapore, have had it in mind to return to see the base again and to see for themselves just how much Singapore itself, which is part of the thriving Asian economy, has changed. In June Pete Johnstone with his wife Mary: Robert Johnston with his wife Linda: and a friend of Linda's, Julie MacPherson together with Association member Nadine Jackson Croker, did just that. They had a wonderful time and at Tengah were very well looked after by Major Winson Teng who, after the six returned to the UK, sent an e-mail which said:

It was my honour to host a few of your associate members on a visit to Tengah Air Base on 7th June. I was delighted to learn and hear great stories about my own heritage of Tengah which is still much the same as in the 1970s - and the swimming pool is still as much fun!!

The six also took the opportunity to visit the famed Tiger Brewery and presented a plaque to them as a memento of their visit and a thank you to the brewery for the enjoyment they have given to many Tigers over many years! The following photographs, courtesy of Pete give a taste of what they all saw and did.



Tengah today. The mission statement (‘an ounce of loyalty is worth a pound of cleverness’) looks to be rather different to that of RAF Tengah - if it had one! With Pete and Robert is Major Teng Kai Hong who with MSG Derek Chang hosted their visit. Association memorabilia was presented to Major Teng and this will be displayed in the Station Headquarters pictured overleaf.



Courtesy of the Tiger Brewery, a good night out by the look of it! On the right Pete and Robert present an Association shield to the brewery's David Lim. We hope to cultivate this renewed contact between Association and Brewery.



Custody of the Tiger`s Head



You may recall from a Tiger News long, long ago that there remains a magnificent painting of a Tiger's Head on the wall of 74`s old hangar at Horsham St Faith - those of you who served there will probably recall it in its original context. Once Horsham St Faith closed the hangars were turned over to other users. One became part of Anglia Windows manufacturing base, others were taken over by civil aviation concerns as the old RAF base became Norwich Airport - Air Anglia, Air UK, Sprayavia and latterly KLM have occupied them. Through all this and indeed throughout extensive re-organisation and re-structuring of the interiors to accommodate their new

tenants the Tiger's Head has survived. That is largely due to Rob Mills (left), a workshop supervisor with KLM Engineering and who is passionately interested in keeping such little pieces of history safe and secure. Even to the extent of some structural work of his own! Close to the Tiger's Head is the old entrance to 74's crew room and on the lintel of the door the words `Crew Room` can still clearly be seen. That lintel has now been removed by Rob, bricks and all, and is safely stored until such time as the Tiger Museum, on the other side of the airfield, opens. The Tiger's Head itself was protected by a wooden frame and glass some years ago. Indeed, two crews flew into Norwich in F4's to represent the squadron in a short dedication ceremony which AIR UK (the occupiers of the hangar at the time) had sponsored.

The local newspaper recorded the occasion and pictured Ned Kelly and John Campbell with AIR UK's Andy Beale (**below left**).....



Bob Cossey's camera (**above**) captured Graham Williams (left) and Iain `Buster` Walsh.

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The Cat Bows Out

Whilst we are not strictly talking Tigers here, we are talking about another big cat, so on those grounds I think we can include this report by Associate Member **Paul Forbes**! Paul's grandfather, William Ronald Forces, served as a Tiger from 1938 - 1946 as an armourer - quite an exceptional time to spend with one squadron during the wartime years. Paul writes:

After 33 years service the SEPECAT Jaguar gained for itself a reputation for being reliable and as tough as they come and capable of flying in bad weather to find its target with deadly accuracy as a strike/attack or reconnaissance fighter bomber. The Jaguar was used in combat during the Gulf War and

in the Balkans conflict and was based in Germany and the UK during the years of the Cold War. The spiritual home of the Jag was Coltishall.

The world's longest unbroken squadron service history of 93 years came to an end on 30th May 2007 at RAF Coningsby when 6 Squadron, The Flying Can Openers, were disbanded. This happened on the back of a decision to retire the Jag from operational service from 30th April with all flying to cease by the end of May. The last year of Jaguar operations was a busy one for the squadron with deployments to Oman, Cyprus, Jordan, Belgium and the UAE.

A Farewell to the Jaguar day was held at Coningsby on June 29th which gave those present to see in close up the aircraft that is to replace it - Typhoon. The following are just a selection of the aircraft I photographed on the day. If you want a copy of any of them Bob has them on disc and will be able to send them to you.





All photos by Paul Forbes

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The Squadron Standard

A recent visit to Ringshall Church which lies adjacent to the former RAF Wattisham (now home to the Army`s Apache helicopters) gave me the opportunity to check on the condition of the Standard which was laid up there in July 1992 following the presentation of a new Standard by AVM Boz Robinson to the Squadron CO at the time, Wing Commander Graham Clarke (below right). All is well and it has safely survived the ensuing fifteen years as can be seen.

