



FLEET AIR ARM ASSOCIATION



“THE AIREY FAIREY”

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NATIONAL FLEET AIR ARM ASSOCIATION

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Contributions for inclusion in "The Airey Fairey", the official journal of the National Fleet Air Arm Association, are most welcome and should be submitted to the Hon. Editor prior to the deadline shown below. Whilst every effort is made to include them, due to space limitations, this is not always possible. However no article is wasted as those not used are retained for possible future use. Where there are events of general interest and dates for these are after the issue of the magazine, they will of course be included. Should you wish for articles and/or photos to be returned then please enclose a S.A.E.

DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT (SUMMER) ISSUE IS
30st APRIL 2001

EDITORIAL

The time to sit at my computer and set about preparing The Airey Fairey for printing seems to be becoming more frequent. I think on this occasion it is possibly because, for a number of reasons, the last issue was later than usual. To make it even worse some three or four weeks following the distribution we received orders from three branches who, although having ignored letters and in one case a phone call, decided after all that they would like their copies. Unfortunately and in order to keep costs to a minimum, we do not hold spare copies. In order to avoid disappointing them it necessitated us approaching the printers for more copies. This they were able to do since they still had everything on disk. However, because of the small run the cost were very much higher than normal. So please make sure your requirements for 2001 are with Ted Cuff in plenty of time.

On a brighter note, many of you will already know that our Association sent a Telemessage to the Queen Mum on her 100th birthday. This read: **“Your Majesty, The National Fleet Air Arm Association and its members send loyal and sincere greetings on this momentous occasion. Many happy returns on your 100th Birthday”**.

We received the following reply: **“I send to you and to all your members of the National Fleet Air Arm Association my warmest thanks for your kind message of loyal greetings on my 100th birthday. Elizabeth R. Queen Mother”**.

I do need to apologise to the Rev. Eric Miller, Chaplain to the Angus Branch for omitting to acknowledge his contribution “The Value of the Standard” which appeared in the last issue also for the misspelling of Mike Crosley’s name. I know how this feels since my name is frequently spelt incorrectly.

It has been announced that the sale of Daedalus has finally got the go ahead. No decision as to its future use has yet been made but agreement has been reached for the two emergency services, the Police spotter plane and HM Coastguard helicopter to continue on the site until July 2002.

The Ministry of defence Veterans Advice Unit, which was formed in 1998 and is manned by 3 serving Warrant Officers, one from each of the Services wish to take the opportunity to reintroduce themselves. They will answer questions from veterans and their dependants on a diverse range of topics. Their telephone number is:

08456 020 302 with office hours Monday to Friday 0900 to 1700.

They may also be contacted by e-mail on < veteransadvice@veterans.mod.uk>.

The Spitfire Goes to Sea

(Final part)

'D' Day for us was 17th July. One hundred sorties were planned for the 48 Seafires of 801 and 880 squadrons. Our first take off was 0530. The fog had merged with the low cloud in places so that we could not keep low enough to avoid enemy radar on our first ramrod to our target in Choshi harbour.

On 'D' 2, 18th July, our ramrod target was Kanoiki airfield. Peter Arkell, my number two for most sorties over Japan until the war's merciful end on 14th August says: "You could often see the tracers coming up as you dived and you got shaken around by their 40mm too as you approached sometimes. But with our newly invented attack scheme, it was all over in 30 seconds. We fired everything at them and never came back. We made a fair bit of mincemeat. Some of our targets were marvellous dummy aircraft. I think the real ones never had any fuel for they seldom caught fire properly."

During the night the fleet retired to about 300 miles off Japan to refuel from tankers alongside. By 23rd July we had all finished refuelling with oil and water and, joined by Indefat hot foot from Sydney, our four carriers, with Seafires forming 90 out of a total of 250 British aircraft, set sail once more for Japan.

'D' 3, 24th July. Briefing for the first trip started the night before. We learnt that the Japs had now reinforced their airfields with new aircraft. Some airfields had 60 or more and the total, from photo analysis, had risen to near 1,000. Take-off was in darkness. Our first target, in company with four flights, was Tokushima airfield in the Inland Sea. I aimed at a twin-engined aircraft. It was encouraging to see our cannon shells exploding with bright flashes in the dawn light as they hit the slipways around our targets.

At 1100 it was 801's turn for a ramrod. They attacked the seaplane base at Suta on Shikoku. Their target was 'Mavis' airfield in the Inland Sea area.

Our third trip that day was to Takamatsu aircraft supposedly crammed with 50 aircraft. I aimed at a 'Myrt' and Morgan Goodfellow, our senior pilot, finished his strafing run by chasing a train into a tunnel. He said he couldn't resist it as it steamed its way peacefully along the coastal railway by the airfield. We landed in near darkness at 1950 having completed 5.30 hours flying on this typical day.

'D' 4, 25th July. My diary said: 'Today's targets were in the southern Honshu area. After an uneventful 'CAP' in the early morning, my 3 flights were hurriedly told to

Escort an Avenger strike taking off from Formidable in 30 minutes. We had no idea where they were going. It was a difficult task too. The Avengers usually progressed onwards and slightly upwards for an hour or so at a speed of about 170 knots. This was far too slow for us to have been any use in trying to catch and shoot down any aircraft making an attack. We either had to weave at 250 knots or give the whole thing up and forsake the close escort task hoping to meet with the Avengers in the target area with enough fuel for us to return to our ship. In this case we pulled off from the close escort job and managed to set a small coaster on fire and hit two tugs in the Inland Sea in what we thought may have been the proper target area.

'D' 5. Our fifth and sixth ramrod in my division was on 28th July. The harbour in Maiato was the target and we managed to sink a few more junks.

'D' 6. 30th July. Our main target was Susuka near the Mitsubishi factory south of Nagoya supposedly covered in Jap aircraft and AA guns. We did our usual quick, combined dive on the airfield, diving through cloud cover at 2,000 feet to achieve complete surprise. Our second duty was a strike escort of about 40 aircraft. Not knowing until too late where we were supposed to go, we stumbled across the Japanese coastline at a very dangerous 7,000 feet altitude and advanced slowly with the Avengers to the far side of the Japanese mainland. Breaking off over their target area (Maizuru Naval base) we looked downwards into the funnel of a Japanese destroyer under way at high speed and heading for the open sea. My diary says: 'We let him have everything and on the pull out from a very steep dive we managed to fasten a bead on some flying boats at their moorings on the north side of the fjord. Then setting course for home, aiming to the south of Fuji Yama which was visible above the clouds from 40 miles away, we climbed faster than the Jap gunners could compute our height. All their shells exploded beneath us and we eventually made the ship with about 10 gallons of fuel left, having been further frightened by being given the once-over by the American Tomcat CAP'.

'D' 7. August 9th. We had, unbeknown to us in the fleet, been purposely taken clear of the Hiroshima area for the last 7 days because of the danger of fallout from the A-bomb dropped on 6th August. After the Nagasaki bomb we again entered the strike area after taking on more oil and delivered a Seafire ramrod to Matsushima in a trip lasting 3 hours and twenty minutes.

'D' 8. 10th August. My diary says: 'Up again at 1330 escorting some Avengers to Onagawa Wan. Lt.Cdr. Nelson-Gracie, our new Air Group Commander, led this trip. I now found myself as CO of both squadrons, 880 being absorbed by 801 with Stuart Jewers being required to train more pilots ashore near Sydney in preparation for the expected invasion next month.

Losses in 30 wing since leaving the UK had been 15 pilots killed. 7 of these had failed to return from raids against the Japanese mainland and Truk. Of these perhaps only 1 or 2 had been shot down by flak, the others having died following fuel supply failure when changing tanks or when attempting to bail out from an inverted and unstable Seafire and getting trapped in the cockpit. 2 aircraft had broken up in mid air in pullouts from dives. One pilot had caught his glove in the hood on take off and another had collided in mid air whilst in cloud. One more died from suffocation caused by a cockpit fuel leak and another when his engine stalled on the deck landing approach. By having to use the Seafire in the tropics on tasks for which this beautiful aircraft had not been designed and with its C of G dangerously aft of its designed position due to the weight of the arrester hook, these things had contributed as many casualties to us as its excellence as a fighter (once in the air) had saved when fighting enemy aircraft. 30 wings' 48 Seafires had carried out 3,000 training and operational sorties between March and September 1945 with barely two dozen deck landing write offs. They had also carried out 55% of the total sorties of the 4 RN carriers off Japan with but 33% of the aircraft.

By 12th August, Implac had begun her return to Sydney, as the original pre bomb programme had required, to pick up more aircraft, including 25 Seafire XV's and more pilots ready for the intended invasion. Meanwhile, in the absence of a Japanese surrender, Indefat's Seafires had carried out further CAP's and tactical reconnaissance missions over Japan, shooting down three enemy fighters sent up to intercept them but losing one pilot who bailed out over Japan and was finally a victim of local terrorists. The Japanese were still attempting to find the US fleet with their Kamikazes. Our carriers' radar watched them approaching off course, running out of fuel and diving into the sea as they failed to find their targets.

The war came to a fitful end by September 2nd when the Japanese Emperor signed the surrender. Indefat's Seafires came back to Sydney and she, like Implacable, set forth to ferry countless prisoners-of-war from the death camps and back to civilisation.

The End

Cdr. R.'Mike' Crosley DSC RN. (Rtd)
Isle of Wight Branch.

I have read Mike's book 'They Gave Me A Seafire' about the Fleet Air Arm's contribution in World War 2 and recommend its reading.

Ed.

RULES OF THE AIR

1. Every take off is optional. Every landing is mandatory.
2. If you push the stick forward, the houses get bigger. If you pull the stick back, they get smaller. That is unless you keep pulling it back when they get bigger again.
3. Flying isn't dangerous – crashing is.
4. The only time you have too much fuel is when you are on fire.
5. The propeller is just a big fan in front of the plane used to keep the pilot cool. When it stops, you can usually see the pilot start sweating.
6. When in doubt hold on to your altitude. No one has ever collided with the sky.
7. A 'good' landing is one you can walk away from. A 'great' landing is one where they can use the plane again.
8. Stay out of the clouds. The silver lining everyone talks about might be another aeroplane going in the opposite direction. Reliable sources also report that mountains have been known to hide in the clouds.
9. Always try to keep the number of landings equal to the number of take offs.
10. Its always a good idea to keep the pointed end going forward as much as possible.
11. There are simple rules for making a good landing. Unfortunately no one knows what they are.
12. Helicopters can't fly; they're so ugly the ground repels them.
13. Remember, gravity is not a good idea. It's the law and it's not subject to repeal.
14. Good judgement comes from experience. Unfortunately the experience usually comes from, bad judgement.

Extracts from the Australian Aviation Magazine.

NEWS FROM BRANCHES

FORD

The annual ukkers marathon at Littlehampton raised in excess of £1,250 of which half is donated to the King George's Fund for Sailors and half to the Historic Flight. We would like to express our thanks to those Association members who either came to observe this intensive competition or indeed, participated.

Sam Peake

ANGUS

John Oulton, who is a member of the Angus Branch, has, at last, been given the accolade from the Governing Body of his chosen sport. In the Millennium Awards for coaching by SportsScotland, John was awarded a commendation in his category 'Male coaching individual performers or a team'. He received his award from Rhona Brankin, Deputy Minister of Sport. Although John is very much involved with disabled athletes and athletes from Dundee Hawkhill Harriers, he is perhaps best known as the coach of Caroline Innes (British 100 metres champion, 200 metres champion and record holder and 400 metre champion and world record holder). Caroline will be competing in the Paraplegic Olympic games in Sydney.

This item from Angus Branch was purposely delayed till after the Paraplegic Olympics so that we could include the details of Caroline's performance. She won 3 medals: **Gold in 200 metres, Gold in 400 metres and Silver in 100 metres.**

DERBYSHIRE

In August the RN contingent had a tent at the Vintage Fire Service Show at Markeaton Park and our Chairman arranged for some posters and other information relating to the Fleet Air Arm to be displayed. These were provided by the Swordfish Heritage Trust and in appreciation a donation was sent to them.

Sea Cadet Lawrence, who the branch sponsored towards a visit to HMS Ganges, has told us that he received a level 2 sailing certificate. The branch agreed that such a sponsorship was very worthwhile.

BOURNEMOUTH

We are still keeping to our 40 Members plus a good turn out of Associates which make for an enjoyable evening. Norman Thomas gave a talk on the HMS Dasher disaster: it was so good that you could hear a pin drop. The book 'They Were Never Told' makes compelling reading.

Jo Fowler

THE BUCCANEER

- 1 *Oh, fine sad thing you Buccaneer,
Who ne'er again will take the air.
No more in supersonic flight
To roll and swoop in mock dogfight.
No more to loop the fleecy clouds,
And frighten kids in Airday crowds.*
- 2 *Remember all those Norfolk Fens
And roaring through the Scottish Glens.
The stalkers there did curse and moan
As stags turned tail and ran for home.
The hiker cast a placid eye
As like a bullet you flashed by.*
- 3 *He muttered "Rather him than me",
As you bore on in ecstasy.
Out to the ocean in a trice
And there below, your ship – how nice!
Twinkling lights and friendly chat
Telling you of this and that.*
- 4 *Flight deck ready, in you go,
Not too fast – not too slow
Not too low and not too high
Creamy white wake rushing by.
Suddenly a mighty thump -
Safe on deck – but what a bump!*
- 5 *All that's over Buccaneer,
How long have you been standing here
Gathering dust in this dark corner,
No team of men to fuss and bother?
Yet you will feel that deck again
By courtesy of a dockyard crane.*
- 6 *And on celluloid your feature
To become Flight Safety teacher.
When they push you o'er the side
Down thro' the waters you will glide.
It's not an ignominious end,
We salute you honoured friend.*
- 7 *Perhaps it's not so bad at all,
You'll be the belle of Davy's ball
And fishes in and out will swim
And rub their backs upon your fin
There in your new world you will reign
Fair Buccaneer, you'll fly again.*

Submitted by Ron Morris (Angus Branch) on behalf of his brother Cefin (Kevin) who was a Maintenance Test Pilot.

LEEDS SWORDFISH SUPPORT GROUP

The Leeds Swordfish Support group was founded in 1997 with the naming of Swordfish W5856 "City of Leeds".

The Leeds City Council gave a generous donation to help keep her flying.

The group was provided with a meeting room in the Civic Hall and the running of it then handed over to the lay members of the council. The committee is chaired by a retired marketing executive and comprises of an artist, a scientist and five ex Fleet Air Arm Members four of whom are members of the Yorkshire Branch.

In addition to purchasing products from the Historic Flight for sale, we have also developed some of our own. Royal Hampshire, a quality British Company, has produced a scale model of the Swordfish in fine English pewter. Another collectors item is a tot measure engraved "ROYAL NAVY HISTORIC FLIGHT". In 1945 all who had worked at Blackburn Aircraft for 3 or more years producing the Swordfish were presented with an alloy Swordfish brooch. We have had this replicated in Stirling silver and to go with it is a copy of the original letter from the Ministry of Aviation. Our artist member, Kevin Walsh, a member of the Guild of Aviation Artists, has made an oil painting of W5856 flying across the front of Leeds Civic Hall naming it "Coming Home". As a matter of interest 1699 wartime Swordfish were produced in and around Blackburn. A Leeds printer, coincidentally named Blackburn, produced 1500 and presented them to the Group.

Robert Blackburn's grandson, Professor Blackburn, gives active support to our efforts and travels from London to be with us. We were also pleased to have as a guest at a Civic Reception the Commanding Officer of HMS Ark Royal.

Sherburn Aero Club, the birthplace of the Swordfish, invites us to take part in their veteran car and aircraft day when we take the opportunity to display our 'Historic Flight' stand. Whenever W5856 is in this area it is accommodated overnight free of charge and a generous donor provides the fuel and entertains the crew in his home.

Further details of activities and goods can be obtained from Ales Hodgins on 0113 2588473 or on www.SWORDFISHLEEDS.com.

In our 1st trading year we had a turnover of £4680 and made a donation of £1500 to the Historic Flight, which was presented at a conference held at BAE, Brough.

Alex Hodgins

MY WAY TO THE FAA

By Zvi Avidror, Yeovil Branch.

(Final part)

Soon after my first month at a technical high school I saw on the notice board a request for candidates to join "The Palestine Flying Club" – I didn't think twice before applying. Two weeks later I was invited for an interview. I was enrolled for a trial period. I made a model sailplane in record time having got sound advice from one of the instructors. Once, having put it through its paces, I was included in the club's main activity of flying gliders.

After my second year at the club I was asked if I was prepared to give a lot of my spare time for an ambitious project to build a fully-fledged glider. A year later a Polish designed Chaika glider took to the air and I was very proud to qualify for my 'C' rating in something I had helped build.

Rommel was at the gates of Alexandria and the Nazis were rolling down the Caucasus aiming to close the pincers in Palestine. The British decided to create a redoubt based on the Carmel mountains, as a delaying tactic to keep 'Jerry' busy until reinforcements were brought up from Britain. They made a secret agreement with the Haganah (the Jewish underground army) to hold this redoubt. The Haganah created and trained a group of young fighters named the Palmach (commandos) to hold this redoubt. It had three sections covering land, sea and air. I quit school and joined up. We made camp in a kibbutz about 4 miles east of Nazareth. We worked for half a day in the fields and flew gliders for the remainder. Like most of my mates we loathed farming but loved flying. The latter was no easy task as launching them meant that six chaps on each side had to pull on rubber ropes while a couple of boys were holding on to the tail skid until the instructor yelled "let go" and off we went over the valley. Of course this was exhilarating but lugging the glider back up the hill in a temperature of 35C was backbreaking. This went on for some months until Monty gave the 'Desert Fox' his marching orders when GHQ told us we were no longer needed. However we tended to ignore that.

However, out of the blue, disaster struck. The Haifa CID were suspicious that despite being ordered to cease by the authorities we continued our gliding activities but he could not prove it since we claimed we were "The Palestine Flying Club". But Inspector Tomlinson would not easily give up. He kept pouring over king's Regulations until he found a suitable chapter: "all appliances or machines that can fly may be requisitioned for the duration of hostilities".

One bright morning 4 'Queen Mary's' with RAF markings rolled up accompanied by none other than Insp. Tomlinson. His first question was "who's in charge" Walter Front our CO replied "I am" upon which he was presented with the necessary order

and forthwith loaded our 4 gliders onto the awaiting transporters. This brought an end to my flying career, at least for that time.

All the Palmach were posted back to their units while all club members were sent for reallocation to Haganah HQ in Haifa. I was then interviewed by the Deputy Commander to discuss my future.

It was just after El Alamein and after much pressure from the leadership of the local population that the Lords of the Admiralty finally agreed to accept volunteers (HO) for service in the Royal Navy. The requirements were for selected trades such as ERA, MM, Shipwrights etc. The Deputy Commander gave me a chit which said: "you are to volunteer for the RN as a Shipwright, but you are to do everything possible to be posted to the FAA and learn to fly aircraft off carriers". This sounded a bit outlandish but in the manner of the Haganah even a simple soldier could ask his CO the reason for such an unusual order. Taking into account that it was 1942 his reply was outstanding. "One day we will have a country of our own and because we have a long shoreline we will need aircraft carriers to defend our shores". At the time I thought that this chap had not seen a carrier in his life or he wouldn't have given me such an order. But an order is an order. This brought me to the downtown recruiting office, where I was inducted into the Royal Navy. Next day I presented myself at HMS Moretta the Navy's base in Palestine and thus started my 5 years in the RN. On a friendly word from the RPO I accepted his advice that Henry would sound less Germanic than my given name of Hans. Equipped with a brand new name I passed through basic training and 3 months later I was posted to HMS Nile in Alex.

I hardly had time to take in the wonders of Egypt before I was included in an "Advanced Naval Party" attached to the 8th Army and to follow them and to investigate the state of each harbour as it was captured and report our findings to the Admiralty at Ras-el-Tin in Alex. I found out later that my inclusion was that I was fluent in German which was needed daily to avoid some nasty 'presents' left by the retreating Jerry. On reaching Tobruk I had the unpleasant experience of observing the sad remains of the landing craft which I had helped to build in the Haifa shipyards. Those LC's were part of the ill-fated assault from the sea in an attempt drive the Germans from Tobruk.

I soon found out that the FAA was considered to be a superior branch of the Senior Service and to get transferred was almost a "mission impossible". This only strengthened my resolve but I did not know at that time it was to take 3 years and many requests.

During numerous drafts I still plugged away with my requests which were invariably rejected on a number of pretexts like "Born in enemy occupied territory", "Not a

British subject”, “If posted to sea duty liable to be taken prisoner of war and divulge valuable information to the enemy”.

On my release from hospital, where I had been following bad injury suffered during hostile action, I received a draft to HMS Grebe, RNAS Dekhelia. I felt like sprouting wings at the sheer joy. I already saw myself in the cockpit of a Seafire before taking off from a carrier. I was soon to find out that nothing could have been farther from the truth.

I was put in charge of the woodworking shop with a staff comprised mostly of Egyptians. Quite a few of them had worked for Miser Air, the pre war Egyptian Airline whose base Dekhelia was. Since I had had some considerable experience in aircraft construction I got saddled with repairs to Miles Martinets. There were very many of these based here.

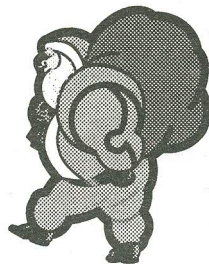
I got involved with many sporting activities, even trying my hand at cricket. My real sport was water polo at which the RN team won the inter-services cup in 1944 and 1945.

However, I did not relent on my quest to be trained for flying duties. The local head of manpower at Ras-el-Tin must have become fed up with my continual pestering and finally called me for interview. This took the form, more or less, of a talking to. I was informed that as it was now the end of 1944 the FAA was no longer in need of new aircrew but, to pacify he would send me to HMS Phoenix to be checked out for flying duties. To what I think was his amazement, I qualified for aircrew specialization. I was told that there were no vacancies for trainee pilots but that there might be an opening for Observer of TAG. I had already had some time flying in “stringbags” since my oppo, a CPO Pilot, often let me fly with him on milk runs to Cairo, Beirut and Cyprus. A number of TAG friends on the Station thought I was mad wanting to fly when the war was practically over and everyone was eager to get back home. I wasn't prepared to give up my dream so I requested another interview. This time I was told that I could not be considered for an Observer, as you must have a commission for this. The only choice I had left was that of a TAG which I gratefully accepted only to be then told that there were no TAG courses in the M.E., and anyway the end of the war was in sight so there would be no need for new TAG's.

All this time I was jumping on any flight I could with a number of pilots who knew about my craze for flying. I thoroughly enjoyed every minute. During this time a number of my flying mates discovered that I had about 28 w.p.m. in Morse from my Aero Club days so they took me in hand and put me through naval radio procedures. They also gave me some 'private' tuition on various aircraft mounted

(cont'd on page 16)

A HAPPY CHRISTMAS
AND
A GOOD NEW YEAR
FROM
ALL AT BOURNEMOUTH BRANCH



A HAPPY CHRISTMAS
AND
"A GUID NEW YEAR TO ANE AND A' "
FROM
THE ANGUS BRANCH



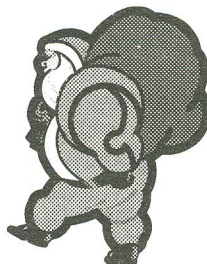
A HAPPY CHRISTMAS
AND
A PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR
FROM
THE GREATER MANCHESTER BRANCH



TO ALL MEMBERS AND THEIR FAMILIES
A HAPPY CHRISTMAS
AND
A PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR
FROM
ISLE OF WIGHT BRANCH



A MERRY CHRISTMAS
AND
A VERY PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR
FROM
ALL AT SUNNY EASTBOURNE



STRESSED SANTA

One Christmas a long time ago, Santa was getting ready for his annual trip but there were problems everywhere. Four of his elves were sick, and the trainee elves did not produce the toys as fast as the regular ones, so Santa was beginning to feel the pressure of being behind schedule.

Then Mrs. Claus informed Santa that her Mother was coming to visit. This stressed Santa even more.

When he went to harness his reindeer he found that three of them were about to give birth and two of them had jumped the fence and were nowhere to be seen. More stress.

Then when he began to load the sleigh, one of the boards cracked with the result that the toy sack fell to the ground scattering the toys everywhere.

So frustrated Santa went into the house for a pint and a tot of rum. On going to the cupboard he discovered that the elves had hidden the hard stuff and there was nothing left worth drinking.

In his frustration he dropped the empty rum keg which shattered into many pieces all over the kitchen floor. He went to fetch a broom only to discover that the mice had eaten all the bristles.

Just then the doorbell rang and standing there was a little angel with a very big Christmas tree.

The angel then said "Merry Christmas Santa. Isn't it a lovely day. I have have this beautiful tree for you, where would you like me to put it?"

Thus began the tradition of the little angel on top of the Christmas tree!

guns. Whilst I had what I thought was all the qualifications for a TAG this was unofficial and I did not have the 'Wings'.

Suddenly it was VE day and the PO's Mess celebrated in the traditional manner and by midnight there were very few still on their feet. A few days later I was due for my annual leave and left by train for Haifa. On the way I got a lot of dirty looks from the local populace but I gave them suitable remarks in gutter Arabic. In the meantime the situation in the M.E. rapidly deteriorated and British service men, especially officers, got attacked daily. After the Carlton Hotel massacre the HQ decided that they would relocate non-essential personnel to the Canal Zone.

I had had just a few days leave when two burly Naval Patrolmen arrived to inform me that I was being recalled from leave and had to return to Dekheila. I said I would get changed into uniform and get the next train from Alex'. I was almost floored by their reply: "No need for trains there is a plane waiting for you at Haifa Airport". Obviously there was some badly wrong at HMS Grebe. On arriving at Haifa Airport there was a "Stringbag" parked alongside which was my friendly CPO Pilot. His greeting was laconic: "'Chippy' you are really coming up in the world, private plane and all". We immediately took off arriving at HMS Grebe a couple of hours later.

I had to report to the C.O. who explained: I know that you are HO and therefore are entitled to discharge, but we have a difficult problem. We have to dismantle all aircraft which cannot be flown out and ship them to Malta". I was asked if I would consent to a deferment of my discharge as he wished to put me I/C of the job. I agreed and was given a 'free hand'. I gathered together a workforce of about 150 ex Air Miser fitters etc. and we dismantled and crated about 42 aircraft in something less than 3 weeks. These were loaded onto a fleet carrier for transfer to Malta. During this time the station was cleared of nearly all British personnel. The Egyptian Government kept demanding the immediate return of the base as it was the main airport of the pre war Miser Air.

In early February 1946 I was called to the CO's office and congratulated on the crating job whereupon he dropped another bombshell. "'Chippy' I've got another job for you. At the end of the month we shall be handing back the base to the Egyptians and I want you to hand over the keys to the representative of the Egyptian Authorities". I was flabbergasted but 'orders is orders'.

I was given a form by the MAA which gave the order of lining up the remaining Polish ('Anders Army') contingent who used to provide the guarding of the camp and to give them the task of providing the guard of honour at the handing over of the keys.

Close to the end of February the date was set and by this time there were no British personnel left on the base.

On a bright spring morning I lined up the 'honour guard' in front of the main gate, it being composed entirely of Polish Captains, Majors and their CO a Colonel. A week before I had been rated temporary CPO, I was told to suit the occasion, and was briefed on how to proceed.

At 10am an Austin 7 of pre war vintage rolled up. From it stepped a Lieutenant of the Egyptian navy bedecked with gold "frogs" and quite a few "gongs". He wasn't a day over 20 and I was wondering in which sea battles he had won them. He was holding the door for his boss a full commander even more bedecked with gold shoulder boards and a chest full of gongs. He took one look at the 3 brand new buttons on my sleeves and hissed to the Lieutenant in Arabic "This one is not an Officer and I will not accept the keys from him. You take them.

I made the Lt. Sign the acceptance document; the guard then saluted after which I dismissed them.

My kitbag was handy so I hurriedly departed to Alex. Station and took the train to Haifa. I had a glorious 6 weeks accumulated leave and then I went to Sarafand where at the end of May 1946 I received my release from the RN. My dream of flying from carriers had not materialized but it had an interesting sequel.

Following the UN decision to create the State of Israel in November 1947, the Hagana's purchasing agents' were informed that a surplus carrier, the USNS Attu was for sale the asking price being \$125,000. She was purchased immediately. One day an ex USN pilot presented himself to the Hagana recruiting office. When he heard about the carrier he roared with laughter. He asked those present from where would they get 21 naval aircraft and how would they recruit the 800 officers and men for the crew not to mention the \$3,000,000 needed to commission it? The vessel was sold for scrap for \$50,000. This put an end to Israel's naval aviation.

I became a member of the Air Force and served for some time as a member of 69 Squadron, flying B17's. On chatting with an ex French Navy friend, we discussed the need for the Israel Air Force to have a Naval Arm. There and then we decided to write a paper and send it to the HQ, IAF extolling the virtues of our proposition. I promptly forgot all about it. In 1945 I resigned from the IAF and went to Scandinavia to complete my studies. When I returned in 1953 and went to the squadron, I was shown with great pride 3 PB4 Catalinas. Soon after that HQ decided to sell the Catalinas as they were taking a heavy toll of the Air Force Budget. Thus, sadly this was the end of Naval Aviation in the IAF.

Zvi Avudron (Formerly PO H. Z. Freir)

BATTLE OF BRITAIN MEMORIAL TRUST

60th ANNIVERSARY MEMORIAL DAY.

On Sunday 9th July 2000, our National Standard together with the Standards of Eastbourne, Essex, Hanworth and Solent Branches were paraded at the Battle of Britain Memorial at Capel le Ferne, Kent and being the Senior Service our Standards led the parade. We were very pleased to see that Rear Admiral I.Henderson CBE, Flag Officer Maritime Aviation was among the VIP's. Wreaths were laid on behalf of both our Association and Essex Branch. Coincidentally when the wreath laying took place both of the wreaths were laid below 804 and 808 Squadron Crests. These two squadrons, together with a number of FAA pilots flying with RAF squadrons, took part in the battle.

At previous ceremonies the fact that the FAA took part has been totally ignored, but for once this year the part taken by the FAA was at last acknowledged. Was this due to the fact that this was pointed out to the Secretary of the Memorial trust by myself when I agreed to publicise the day?

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

Our Association was represented this year by about 25 members including 2 from Scotland and 2 from Wales. We were also joined by 2 TAG's. It does seem a pity that we cannot muster greater support for the occasion.

Unfortunately, despite Haydn Taylor's sterling efforts the BBC again ignored us.

Following the ceremony at the Whitehall Cenotaph a number of our members together with members of the Handlers Association proceeded to the Fleet Air Arm Memorial in the Victoria Embankment Gardens where at a short informal ceremony wreaths were laid on behalf of both Associations. Earlier in the day both the FAA Officers' and the Armourers' Associations had laid wreaths.

Many members departed for some well-earned refreshments at a convenient hostelry, unfortunately I was unable to accompany them, as I had to swiftly return to Eastbourne to take part in an evening Festival of Remembrance.

DO YOU REMEMBER WHEN??

By Terry 'Stacks' Heaps (RNA Southern Ontario, Canada)

We had eighteen Aircraft Carriers in ship-shape, plus numerous in moth balls,

Albion, Bulwark, Hermes, Centaur, Illustrious, Implacable, Indomitable, Indefatigable, Theseus, Perseus, Glory, Victorious, (our two giants) Eagle and Ark Royal, Vengeance, Ocean Triumph and Warrior.

Indeed, those were definitely the days of glory and Britain prided herself on her Navy. These were the 'fifties' and our battle fleet was awesome... Remember Dainty, Diana, Daring, Delight, Diamond and Duchess to name just a few of that class. Remember the cruisers Bermuda, Belfast, Birmingham, Ceylon, Cleopatra, Cumberland, Devonshire, Gambia, Glasgow, Jamaica, Kenya, Liverpool, Newfoundland, Sheffield, Superb, Swiftsure and Tiger. We had Destroyers, Frigates, Minesweepers and Submarines with three-quarters of a million men to man them.

There were Manxman and Apollo which always filled us with pride because of their speed. Can you remember when our ships lined up in the Solent for the Review of the Fleet by Her Majesty in June 1953? That was a sight to see, one which we will never forget for as long as we live. It is amazing that these happy times are almost fifty years ago and I very much doubt if I could find my way around the 'Eagle' or 'Bulwark' as I did in those "good old days." I try to remember myself navigating along those passageways and up and down ladders by the score (no wonder we were slim) but it's no use – I just can't remember how to get from Eagle 63 mess to the cafeteria, or from Bulwark 14 mess to the hangar... Ah well, time marches on.

I was in Cairnryan though when Eagle was there for scrapping back in '79. That was a sad time, the once proud Eagle was empty and her island gone. Her nameplate on the port side aft was still there and hand-written, or should I say hand painted, as it was in 1953. A workman on the jetty offered me a brass scuttle for fifty pounds but I had no way of getting it back to Canada.

A few years later I was in Portsmouth on board HMS Victory when I asked a naval rating "what is that carrier anchored upstream" "Bulwark" he replied (that was in 1983) less than a year later she met the same fate as Eagle and was shipped off to be scrapped.

It seems a pity that we couldn't have kept one of these gentle giants just for Naval reunions, it would have been tremendous right now to take a tour with a video camera on one of those beauties. Pity we did not have video cameras in our days. The lads today are much luckier, they'll have great tapes to show their children and

grandchildren. Let's hope that in future we will not be too hasty to destroy these icons of our past. Imagine the interest that would be generated today if "Illustrious" were around for visitors, especially with her track record – Taranto and the virtual destruction of Mussolini's fleet. Benito used to call the Mediterranean an "Italian boating lake" (what a shock he got that day). Or how about Victorious and the part she played in stopping the Bismarck in her tracks allowing the fleet to catch up and destroy it?

Remember the runs ashore in Gib, the tombola in the Fleet Club, the swimming in Malta and the crystal waters to fifty feet. Who could forget Invergordon with the pubs closing at 2100? Remember splicing the mainbrace on the day of the Fleet review – the only time I remember getting a double tot.

Seems like all the things I do these days is to remember things that happened many years ago. I think the Navy years quite possibly stand out as possibly the most memorable time of our lives. Think about the job you had for the last twenty years and you don't give it another thought or even the people you worked with. But – think about the Navy even if you were only in for seven years or for that matter even twelve! It's even harder these days trying to remember what it was like 'under punishment' and having 'stoppage of tot' for fourteen days. What about the last time you had a kit muster (wasn't that a joy) scrambling around trying to borrow pieces of kit that didn't have names on? Dreading an Admiral visiting the ship knowing full well that would mean kit musters. Forever trying to find somewhere that you could hide for a few hours until the effect of the birthday tots wore off? Remember the lads in the mess getting their 'Dear John' letters and the long faces for a month? I remember my good pal getting one telling him that he was going to be a proud father and another letter from her mother screaming that he had better marry her daughter – or else! That really was panic stations. We all laughed for a month. That baby would be 42 years old by now. Knowing Norman B, I bet he did eventually marry that girl, he thought the world of her and I bet they are still happy.

Time marches on and we still laugh at the antics which we got up to. It would be nice to go back and add the names on the backs of all those photographs with the faces staring up at you whilst trying to put names to faces and even have the address or two of your closed oppos!

I wonder if the young sailors of today enjoy themselves as much as we did? They probably have more money than we ever had and possibly a lot brighter academically but not necessarily wiser. You couldn't pull the wool over our eyes. Still, I wouldn't have traded it for anything else and I still spend a lot of time just trying to remember (dammit!).

A SIMPLE TALE OF
"NOT SEEING THE WOOD FOR THE TREES"

From The Greater Manchester Branch Newsletter.

Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson went on a camping trip and after a good meal and a bottle of wine they lay down for the night and went to sleep. Some hours later, Holmes awoke and nudged his faithful friend.

"Watson, look up at the sky and tell me what you see?" Watson replied, "I see millions of stars."

"So what does that tell you?" asked Holmes.

Watson pondered for a moment then replied "Astronomically it tells me that there are millions of galaxies and potentially billions of planets. Astrologically I observe that Saturn is in Leo. Horologically I deduce that the time is approximately a quarter past three. Theologically I can see that God is all-powerful and that we are small and insignificant. Meteorologically I suspect that we will have a beautiful day tomorrow. What does it tell you Holmes?"

Holmes was silent for a moment then he spoke.

"Watson you dickhead, some b-----d has nicked our tent."



No you CAN'T be excused divisions. You're the Captain
aren't you!

NATIONAL REUNION
21st ANNIVERSARY
OF THE FORMATION OF THE FLEET AIR ARM ASSOCIATION

DATE: 14th – 17th September 2001

VENUE: ALVESTON HALL, NANTWICH, CHESHIRE.

COST: MAIN BUILDING £149 limited to 50 couples. These will be allocated to the first 50 couples to send in their deposits. Remainder @ £135. This is for half board and is inclusive of a Gala Dinner on the Saturday evening inclusive of wine and port. There is also cabaret entertainment.

DEPOSITS: A DEPOSIT of £30 per person is required by 26th January 2001 and cheques must be made payable to:

THE NATIONAL FLEET AIR ARM ASSOCIATION, Number 2 Account.

The deposits should be forwarded to:

*Mr.R. Wintle,
7 Snowdon Drive,
Fareham,
Hants.,
PO14 1QL.*

Tel. 01329 282123

e-mail RWintle@Freenet.co.uk

Out of our total membership of over 1000 we only need to get 150 plus partners to fill the hotel. Less than this number and the hotel will be filled by outsiders.

It is the intention to hold a church service in the Hall on Sunday the details have yet to be finalised.

The hotel has a Heated Indoor Pool and Spa Pool, Health and Fitness Club, Archery, Billiards, Darts Card and Pub Games, Lounges, Gift and General Shop together with Bars. For those requiring beauty treatment?? There is a hairdressing and beauty salcn. All rooms have direct dialling facilities.

Don't forget please book early to avoid disappointment.

Hope to see you there.

A LITTLE HISTORY LESSON

From Southdowns Branch newsletter.

800 Squadron, the oldest Naval Air Squadron, was formed on 2nd May 1933 from 402 and 404 Fleet Fighter Units. It was initially equipped with Hawker Nimrod and Osprey aircraft. Since those days, the squadron has flown fifteen different aircraft types including some notable firsts – the first squadron to be equipped with Hellcats and the first to fly jet aircraft (the Supermarine Attacker).

The squadron's adherence to its motto, 'Nunquam non Paratus' (never unprepared) is reflected in its involvement in some of the well-know naval events of World War II. Skuas from 800 sank the Konigsberg, dive bombing at an angle of 65 degrees, and were also involved in the bombing of the Scharnhorst. Fulmars of the Squadron were responsible for shadowing the Bismark before it sank and Hellcats from 800 helped in the Tirpitz Strike. After the war the Squadron took part in the Korean conflict, the Suez crisis, the Aden withdrawal and, in 1966, the Biera patrol.

800 Squadron was the first Sea Harrier Squadron to be embarked in an aircraft carrier, HMS Invincible in 1980. They then transferred to HMS Hermes and were involved in the Falklands conflict of 1982. In May and June of that year, the Hermes Air Group destroyed 15 Argentine aircraft in the air thereby bringing the Squadron's total kill since its formation to 50. The highest of any Naval Air Squadron.

1983 saw the Squadron embarked in HMS Illustrious and in 1989 they returned to HMS Invincible, In 1993 the Squadron was involved in a series of deployments to the Adriatic rotating with 801 Squadron. 1995 saw the Squadron re-equipped with the new Sea Harrier FA2 and they returned to the Adriatic in HMS Invincible having been involved in a number of exercises in that area and also in the Arabian Gulf.

Did you know that....?

There is more technology in the average mobile phone than the first lunar astronauts took to the moon?

A flea can jump a distance 150 times its own body length – equivalent to a human jumping the length of a football pitch?

Mount Everest is as high as 19.8 Empire State Buildings?

HMS TRIUMPH. HONGKONG, SEPTEMBER 8th 1949.

On Wednesday 8th September 1949, HMS Triumph, a Light Fleet Carrier of the Colossus Class, with the 13th Carrier Air Group embarked was anchored in Junk Bay, Hongkong after completing Flying Exercises. A report was received that a tropical depression reported earlier was now 150 miles ESE of Hongkong.

At 2130 that same evening the Royal Hongkong Observatory reported winds of 40 knots with gusts of up to 50 knots. Triumph was brought to immediate notice and nominated "Senior Ship to Force X."

At 2315 it was reported that the depression had become a Typhoon and would reach gale force by dawn and hurricane force later. The ship proceeded to sea with all possible speed.

By this time it was dark and raining hard with the wind blowing at 50 knots. Off Tathong Point, where the ship cleared the lee of the land, a series of huge, steep and breaking seas met the ship head on with terrific thumps which stopped her dead. It was clear that the ship had struck a typhoon twelve hours ahead of schedule – a very unpleasant predicament with rocks a matter of cables on either side of the ship. The sea was very large, very confused and the wind 80 knots plus. With revolutions for 10 knots and steering a course of 110 degrees, the ship made little headway from the land. Fixing was very difficult as visibility was almost nil, but an ND Officer manipulated the Radar and managed, despite a very confused picture, to produce enough ranges and bearings to give an idea of our progress. This showed we were making directly for Wangalang Island on which we should ground in some 10 minutes.

A drastic alteration to 045 degrees and an increase of speed to 14 knots with a risk of structural damage had to be made. There were some very nasty bumps and the ships motion became very violent. Flooding caused numerous electrical fires and consequent failure of associated equipment. The 293 radar aerial gave up the struggle but fortunately the 277 took up the fight. By this time the wind had reached 100 knots.

By 0130 the ship was fairly clear of immediate danger so speed was reduced to spare the ships' structure. A new course was set to the south so giving the ship more sea room once clear of Tan Kan point.

The small ships of Force X were having a very rough passage, with radar and radio failures and numerous electrical fires. One reported that sea down her funnel had put out her boiler which fortunately re-flashed at once.

At 0325 the barometer began to rise and although it blew harder, if anything the wind began to veer and at 0345 the storm centre could actually be seen on the PPI some 35 miles SW of the ship.

From now on the steady improvement cheered everyone up, especially as all the smaller ships seemed to be clear of any immediate danger. Movement was still very violent with water up to the sills everywhere from the compass platform down, swishing to and fro with extraordinary force making life very difficult.

Dawn showed us a high, steep and confused sea. One whaler had disappeared and the other, mounted on the flight deck level, had its back broken by the mere weight of water with the stem and stern posts remaining forlornly in the crutches and the rest of the boat gone. Bofors mountings and gun sponsons were bent and distorted, motor boats, motor cutters and dinghies smashed or gone.

Below decks things were pretty indescribable with water sloshing everywhere but luckily the ship survived with no structural damage.

All the aircraft in the hangar survived without serious damage. A deck park of 4 aircraft abreast of the island had, apart from excessive sea-water, also stayed the course except for the leading aircraft which had been assaulted by a fork lift truck on its way over the side. The Kelvin sounding machine which had broken away from its four securing bolts had also joined the fork lift truck.

During the forenoon the course was altered to the NE. All ships of Force X were contacted and with the help of radar and D/F a number were given their positions. By this time the wind and sea were down sufficiently to enable most of the very weary and battered and bedraggled to return to harbour.

I experienced this Typhoon and I can tell you it was a very frightening experience.

Peter Campbell, Isle of Wight Branch.

This article was taken from the HMS Triumph Commissioning Book of April 1949 November 1950.

FLEET AIR ARM ASSOCIATION LAPEL BADGES

Lapel Badges with your name engraved within a 40 x 10 mm rectangle mounted under a 30mm diameter Fleet Air Arm Association crown over anchor in winged laurels emblem, are available from Ron Frost, 10 Charfield Road, Kingswood, Wooren-under-Edge, GL12 8RL at £4.50 ea. Please PRINT the name that you wish to be engraved. Cheques, made payable to R.G.Frost, with order please. Will you also include your telephone number for use in the event of a query. All profits go to the Swordfish Heritage Trust.

WANTED PLEASE. 1957 814 Squadron photograph taken at RNAS Culdrose before embarking in HMS Eagle. A replacement is required by the widow of L/Tel.(Air) Ray Llewellyn who was killed on 20th August 1957. If anyone has one which I may copy please contact me either by telephone or e-mail. Telephone number 01273 890757 e-mail brenda_watson@cwcom.net. Please note underscore between brenda and watson.

Eric Mutton, one of our members in Australia and a frequent contributor of articles for 'The Airey Fairey', would like to hear from "any old timers who may have served with him." He promises to reply to any he hears from. His official number was FX77441 and his e-mail is emutton@southcom.com.au.

Bill Grice wishes to trace old shipmates. He served as AM(E) in 812 Squadron and along with 804 Squadron toured the Far East with the 14th CAG aboard HMS Theseus. His address is 4 Newfield Close, Normanton, W.Yorks, WF6 1SJ. Telephone 01924 892246.

**IT IS WITH REGRET THAT WE ANNOUNCE THE NAMES OF
THOSE WHO HAVE "CROSSED THE BAR"
MAY THEY BE GRANTED SAFE ANCHORAGE.**

BILL BANNER - Solent Branch

REG DeLOREY - Angus Branch

IAIN DORIAN - Ford Branch

SID FOREMAN - Vice Chairman and founder member Bournemouth Branch.

ROBERT GEERE - N.E.Hants & District Branch

KEN GRIFFIN - Derbyshire Branch Chairman

JOHN HOCKING - Solent Branch

JOHN HOPE - Hanworth Branch & ex Standard Bearer Hanworth RNA

DOUGY KEEN - Bristol Branch

MERVYN KING - Yeovil Branch

GORDON LILLEY - Derbyshire Branch

TREVOR (PINCHER) MARTIN - Greater Manchester Branch

J.MUTTER - Solent Branch

TED PRICE - Bristol & District Branch

JAN YOUNGS - Angus Branch

LIST OF ACCOUTREMENTS ON SALE FROM THE TREASURER.

4th March 1999.

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>Cost (Incl. P&P)</u>
Ties	£7.25
Gold Wire Blazer Badges	£11.00
Silk Emb. Blazer Badges	£8.50
Life Member Lapel Badges	£1.00
Members Lapel Badges (Gilt)	£1.50
Associate Members/Spouse Lapel Badges (Chrome)	£1.25
Ladies Head Scarves	£8.50
Beret Badges	£7.00
Car Stickers	£1.25
Membership Cards	£0.15

ITEMS BOUGHT TO ORDER

Short Sleeve Pilot Shirt	£15.00
Acrylic Sweaters	£16.75
Lambswool Sweaters	£23.75

Colours Available: White, Navy, Red, Light Blue (Acrylic ONLY), Black, Grey, Bottle Green and Royal Blue.
Sizes when ordering: 32" to 56" in 2" stages. Shirts S, M, L, XL and XXL.

Orders to the Treasurer. **PAYMENT WITH ORDER PLEASE.** Cheques made payable to the Fleet Air Arm Association (National).

Items will be ordered by the Treasurer and sent direct from the supplier to the purchaser. The invoice will be sent to the Treasurer in order to prevent non Members of the Association from purchasing these items.

Note: Berets may be obtained from:

Uniform Clothing Store
H.M.S. Collingwood
Newgate Lane
Fareham, Hants.

Last known price - £6.71

Tel: 01705 722351

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HMS INVINCIBLE 1980
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