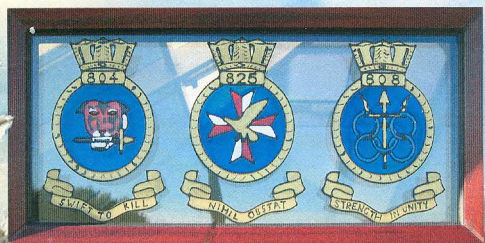


The Airey Fairey

Journal of The FLEET/AIR ARM Association



THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN MEMORIAL

Issue 13 Winter 2004 – 2005





**THE FLEET AIR ARM
ASSOCIATION**

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Contributions for inclusion in "The Airey Fairey", the official journal of the Fleet Air Arm Association, are most welcome and should be submitted to the 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.

Submission DEADLINE for the next issue (Summer) is 20th July 2005

With respect to originals the editor can scan a variety of photographic media, prints up to A4 in size are acceptable as are 35 mm or APS (as a complete cartridge not individual frames) film. Please enquire before submitting larger format negatives or transparencies.

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**Note: the term 'National' has been officially dropped from the title of the FAAA.
Back issues available: Issues 9, Issue 10 (limited numbers), Issue 11 and Issue 12.**

Outer cover images: Pictures taken by Solent Branch Standard Bearer John Grant at the Capel-le-Ferne Battle of Britain Memorial site with the badges of the FAAA Squadrons involved shown inset, two from the memorial and three from a top-light window of the visitor's centre.

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Alan Mathews	01952 813086
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EDITORIAL

Editor's of The Airey Fairey have a long standing arrangement with the Canadian Shearwater Aviation Museum Foundation (SAMF) for reciprocating journals. The Fall 2004 SAMF Newsletter's editorial column (entitled 'Editor's Grunts') was read with a degree of empathy. The gist of the thinking is that as you are not all dead, obviously from renewing your subscriptions, then you must generally be satisfied with the rubbish printed within these pages. What other explanation could there be for so little feedback which is the cause of much soul searching, and reflection, when composing each issue.

Having written that, I am grateful to those branches, Angus, Bristol, Derbyshire and Ford which regularly send copies of their newsletters and Greater Manchester Branch for keeping us informed on the Burscough, HMS Ringtail memorial. One thing that I am acutely aware of is the need to make this journal more attractive to the generations who came after most of our current membership. Keeping up the numbers will become a more difficult business as older members pass on and new intake has to be encouraged from an ever shrinking pool. Thus tales from the rotary wing and VSTOL fraternities will be most welcome.

I would like to thank Don Bryant of Bristol for sending a selection of photographs taken on HMS Fencer in 1943/44. Background information from some of the pictures would be useful. I may put them on my website to invite comment. Thanks also to Bill Williamson for a Barracuda Incident (one of many it would seem) that will be used at a later date.

A very special thank you goes to TUGG for the splendid cartoon which he kindly penned at my humble request.

News From Around the Branches

Angus Branch

Anyone know the whereabouts of ex-Chief Air Fitter, Ken Masters? Please advise on 01241 875644.

Cairniehill 'Joker' From Paul Mardle: Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day. Teach him how to fish and he will sit in a boat and drink beer all day. / Good judgement comes from bad experience and a lot of that comes from bad judgement. / There are two theories about how to win an argument with a woman, neither one works. / If at first you don't succeed, avoid sky diving. [Keep 'em coming Des -Ed.]

Some aircraft snags and solutions as actually logged by QUANTAS crews, (P – pilots report, S – servicing solution): P – Autopilot in altitude-hold produces a 200fpm descent, S – cannot reproduce problem on ground; P – suspected crack in windscreen, S – suspect you're right; P – No. 3 engine missing, S – engine found on right wing after a brief search.

[These remind me of one entry seen in the A700 of an F4K Phantom after a sortie from Ark Royal where in the How Found column was written 'In flight' for the snag 'Wings would not fold'. This same pilot was once known to have vacated his Phantom in Fly 1 leaving the engines running. -Ed.]

Des Mardle, Secretary.

Bristol & District Branch

Our 2005 Fly Navy Heritage Supper is booked for 17th September 2005.

Thanks to S/M Bill for presenting our standard at the Burma Star Association Parade and Service at St Mary's Redcliffe, Bristol on Sunday 15th August. Also in attendance at the well attended parade and service were S/Ms Reg, Harry and Evelyn Scott. Frank Webber, Stuart Bridges and I expressed thanks to the Filton Male Voice Choir for their help.

Heavy showers cleared for the Battle of Britain Parade and Service on Sunday 12th September at the RAFA Club Westbury-on-Trym. Our representatives were Reg, Bill and I with Sgt. Scott Simmons of 2152 ATC Squadron presenting our standard. There was no mention of the Fleet Air Arm's involvement during this year's service [see page XX of this issue – Ed.].

The Normandy Veterans Association Parade, and Service on Sunday 26th September took place in fine weather for the march to St Mary's Redcliffe Church. PRO Ron Sandry presented our standard, with S/Ms Reg, Harry and Evelyn and I in attendance.

Our thanks also to S/M Alan Matthews for presenting the FAAA Standard at the Bristol Festival of Remembrance, Colston Hall on November 6th 2004 and to the padre of South

Bristol RNA, Barry Smith, for presenting the branch standard. This was another good event with the bands of the Blues and Royals, the Gurkhas and the Kestrels.

Reg Veale, Bill Davis and I attended the Remembrance Day Parade at the Cenotaph on Sunday 14th November 2004. We were pleased to meet up with FAAA members from other branches including Fred Wadley and Doug Wyatt Chairman and Vice Chairman FAAA respectively. There was a brief glimpse of Reg, in wheelchair with Bill Davis driving [Terry Lowden of Hanworth Branch was also seen at least twice – Ed.]. Afterwards The Armourers, Handlers and FAA Association representatives and I, placing one from Bristol Branch, proceeded to the FAA memorial on the embankment to lay wreaths.

On a personal note, I was enjoying a few hours a month on Concorde at Filton [see page 8 of this issue – Ed.] showing visitors over the aircraft and giving them a few facts until that tragic accident when a man fell to his death from the stairway leading to the entrance. I cannot understand exactly how this could have happened but until investigations are complete all visits to Concorde have been cancelled. For further information and to book tickets call 0870 3000578 [I have contacted that number and bookings should resume shortly – Ed.], visiting days are Wednesday to Sunday. You can be sure of a warm welcome from members of the Bristol Aero Collection.

Now the following special piece from the Bristol Branch Autumn 2004 edition of their newsletter, which may be of much wider interest.

VJ Day 2005; for the last 10 years the Bristol branch of the Burma Star Association have invited us to commemorate VJ Day with them to remember those not only from the Burma campaign but also those from the Asiatic and Pacific campaign on the nearest Sunday to the 15th of August. The Government in their wisdom have decided that in 2005, because Parliament will be in recess, they will be moving the goal posts, it appears that VE Day and VJ Day commemorations will be on July 10th 2005.

Mr Kenyon, the President of the UK Burma Star Association, blasted the Government's move as "shameful". The Bristol City Branch states that they will boycott any event to commemorate VJ Day on the 10th July and will make their own arrangements for August 15th. They have attacked the decision to mark the anniversary early as "insensitive" and as a "slur" on all who took part in the Far East campaign [at the time, the men and women fighting in those theatres thought of themselves as forgotten and it looks as if the current 'breed' of politician is bent on re-enforcing that perspective –Ed].

I have contacted some of my old shipmates who served in the British Pacific Fleet and they, like me, cannot condone the Government's decision and suggest I make as many waves as possible and as a veteran of the Asiatic Pacific campaign, I intend to do so. At the request of members present at our October Branch meeting I have written to Dr Doug Naysmith, MP for North West Bristol. I have already enlisted some very influential people to make our feelings clear to the government. Your opinions on this [this being originally addressed to the Bristol Branch membership – Ed.] would be gratefully

received. Finally, I have it on good authority that over 200 vet's have been successful in receiving a grant for travelling to Sydney for the commemoration of **VJ Day on 15th August 2005**.

Eric Pit, Chairman

I have here what looks like the transcript of a broadcast by Vice-Admiral Sir Phillip Vian, KCB, KBE, DSO and 2 Bars, second in command British Pacific Fleet which went out on New Zealand national and commercial radio stations on Sunday 2nd December 1945. In the light of the situation highlighted by Eric above I could reproduce this in the next issue. This transcript came from the New Zealand Fleet Air Arm Association and I welcome clarification of the dates and source from that organisation. -Ed.

Derbyshire Branch

Revealed in November was that our latest octogenarian Tommy Knott was an archer of distinction reaching a very high standard. The following, in his own words, is his story:

My first lesson in archery was in 1948, after that I was on my own, self taught until 1950 as I was employed away from home and the nearest archery club. My first bow was a self degame flat bow, 50lbs draw weight. I was able to acquire a steel bow a little later. The tubular steel bow at that time was a considered to be the best available, but prone to breakage, I broke two, one of which left me on my knee, somewhat stunned! I attended my first 'Grand National' Archery meeting in 1950 and was in the winning County team (Hampshire) that year.

In 1952 I was to be first post-war Hampshire champion at the inaugural meeting of the Hampshire Association, the HAA being newly formed. My design was chosen for the HAA badge/logo at that time. In 1951 I top-scored (as a visitor) at the Berkshire Archery Association's Country Championship meeting, beating the then national champion. I was also third at the Berkshire Field Shoot. After that, I slipped quickly 'downhill' due to 'Archers Paralysis', or 'The 'Doom' as it was known, unable to get on aim before losing(sic). However, I did improve a little after some time and received handicap medals. In recent years, since belonging to the 'Anchor Bowmen AC' in Derby I have gained 5 handicap medals (club) and 3 handicap medals at the 'Grand National Archer Meeting' (GNAM). Also, I shot in the GNAM centenary and in the 150th I was asked to be the 'Gentleman Paramount' 2003 carrying out the prize giving, performing the same office at the Anchor Bowmen Open meeting.

Earlier this year I shot in the Merdon Draw meeting, the 50th anniversary having also shot in the first Merdon meeting in 1953. Not wishing to shoot in the new recurve bows, or compounds, I went back to using a wooden bow, the longbow, although still using a steel bow occasionally.

I assisted in the formation of several new archery clubs in the late 60's, also training a group of cub-scouts for a time. When unable to shoot at an archery

club range I have practiced in a garden, a cellar, under my work place, in the house roof space, across the landing from bathroom to bedroom in my home, anywhere there were a few yards of space

*I am still under the spell of the 'Witchery of Archery' and continue to devote some time to it, sometimes incurring the displeasure of my dear wife! [Not surprising when arrows are fired from 'bathroom to bedroom' – 'nothing dangerous' eh! – Ed.] It is a recreation, a sport, a discipline, a martial art, a hobby, a way of making friends and more. I have now, for the last year, started to change from right hand to left hand shooting as my vision is a little impaired – macula degeneration and cataracts forming inducing learning all over again. **T Knott***

Tom Bowen

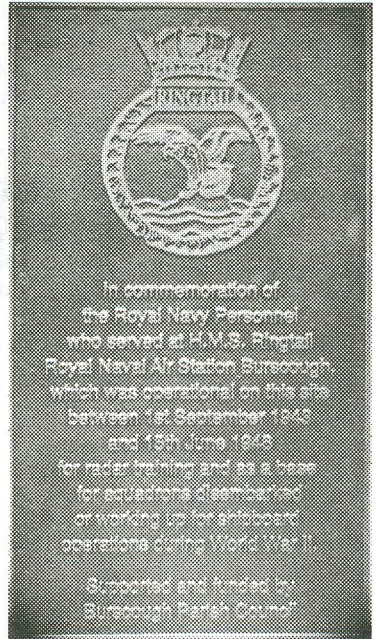
Greater Manchester Branch

HMS Ringtail – RNAS Burscough Memorial Dedication



Above: Greater Manchester Standard Bearer Len Millward, left and National FAAA Standard Bearer Alan Matthews, right, at the HMS Ringtail memorial dedication.

Right: Close-up of memorial plaque
Both pictures from prints supplied by Jim Buie.



The Dedication of the Memorial on the site of the former air station took place on Sunday 10th October 2004. The event was blessed with perfect weather and was attended by over four hundred people. Those taking part assembled at Burscough Royal British Legion, where a short film giving the history of 'Ringtail' was shown, an exhibition of photographs being on display.

A group of enthusiasts who refurbish old commercial vehicles provided a fleet of double-decker buses to convey everyone to the site of the memorial, where a contingent formed up led by our National Standard Bearer and the Greater Manchester Branch FAAA Standard Bearer followed by four other standards. The parade was led by the Skelmersdale Prize Band.

After a short service, the Memorial was unveiled by the High Sheriff of Lancashire, Mrs Gail S Stanley JP, DL. The Ceremony concluded with a march past with the salute being taken by Lt Commander HJM Lawrence MBE, RD, RNVR who had been a pilot at Ringtail. A 'Bulldog' of the University Air Squadron then performed a "Fly Past".

The participants then returned to the Royal British Legion for refreshments and a "Tot" provided by Crosby RNA. Mr Lawrence Critchley whose idea it was for the erection of the memorial is to be congratulated for all the work he and his committee put into what was a very successful and memorable occasion.

Jim Buie, Secretary

Hitchin Branch

The year 2004 has been a busy one, with monthly meetings at the Sun Hotel Hitchin and monthly midday lunches at the same venue. We have also raised money for naval charities at Northweald aerodrome in August with the help of Essex FAAA. In October we went to Duxford Air Show and raised money for the RNHF.

Ending on a sad note, we lost our vice chairman Alan Smith, Big Al to his mates, who crossed the bar on 19th November. Big Al was a one time POAF(AE) and he will be missed by all branch members.

Les Hutchins, Chairman

Postscript to Bristol Branch News.

Prompted by the celebration of 'A Century of Flight' Eric Pitt, Chairman, wrote to inform me of his long career working on a wide variety of aircraft, from the Wildcat to Concorde. From his letter I have extracted the following:

I joined the FAA in 1944 as an engine mechanic at HMS Royal Arthur, Skegness (Billy Butlin's having ceased to be a holiday camp).

The first aircraft I worked on were Corsairs, Hellcats, Wildcats and Avengers, moving on to Sea Mosquito, Seafire, Firefly, Sea Fury and Wyvern. I decided to continue working in civilian life and started for BOAC at Filton, Bristol in 1953 on Stratocruisers and Constellations.

In 1954, along with many other staff I moved to London Heathrow Airport to continue working on these aircraft. I also worked on the Bristol Britannia, Comet IV, VC10, Boeing 707 and 747. However the most spectacular aircraft I worked on was the Concorde in 1976 (by now with British Airways) operating from Terminal 3. She was developed at a time when a second generation SST was expected in the next millennium. Now that flying in the 'fast lane' has come to an end it makes Concorde an even more remarkable achievement.

I moved to Terminal 4 in 1986 to work on Tri-Stars, 727s, 737s, 747s and 757s until retirement in 1989 having witnessed great changes in aircraft during those year, from piston engine to jet.

Eric Pit

Association News

You will, of course, remember the Lynx helicopter crash last December. Once I got the address details right I wrote to the C.O. of the squadron on behalf of the members. I have enclosed copies of both my letter and the CO's reply.

My letter:

Commanding Officer,
815 Squadron.

Dear Sir,

It was with deep regret that I heard of the loss of the crew of the Lynx helicopter. On behalf of all members of the Fleet Air Arm Association I would ask you to convey to the families and squadron shipmates our deepest sympathy at such a sad loss. Be assured that our thoughts and prayers are with you all at this time.

Yours in sadness,

Fred'k Wadley,
National Chairman (FAAA).

C.O.s reply:

Dear Mr Wadley,

I was so touched by your kind and thoughtful letter following the tragic loss of four of my aircrew. This difficult time has been made easier by the huge support 815 Squadron has received in the form of messages and letters of condolence.

Our thoughts and concerns are, of course, first and foremost with the families of those lost and I shall pass on your kind words. This comes with best wishes for 2005 to all your members.

Yours sincerely,

W.N.Entwisle.
C.O. 815 Sqdn.

*Fred Wadley,
Chairman FAAA*

Ted Crispin, one time FAAA secretary passed away in January 2005. His funeral service took place at Portchester Crematorium on Monday 31st January 2005. The Solent Branch FAAA Standard was paraded by standard bearer John Grant, with National Secretary

Arnold Thompson and other members in attendance. The Solent Coastguard SAR Helicopter carried out a flypast.

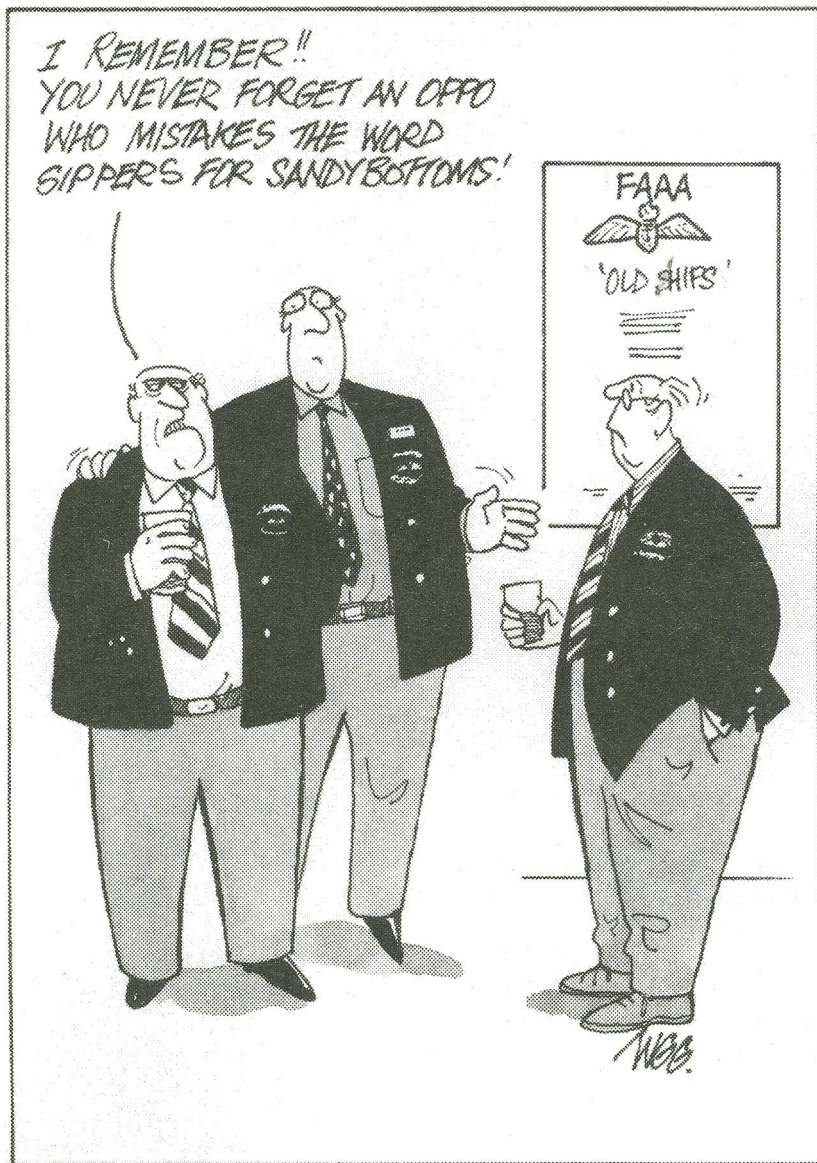


Ted Crispin was depicted in a group photograph on the occasion of the TAG Trophy Presentation on July 7th 2004, the photograph being published in the December 2004 edition of the TAGs journal.



Ed.

By unanimous agreement at the National Committee Meeting, held in at RNA Club Hanworth in January, the proposed FAAA donation of £250 was doubled to £500 (on the suggestion of Brian Bingham of Ford Branch) to assist in the recovery and display of Sikorsky S55 helicopter WV198 at the Fleet Air Arm Museum, Yeovilton. This helicopter was one of the very first 'Junglies' and used in the Malaya campaign. FAAA treasurer Ben Worship remembers this aircraft as he worked on it and flew in it many times. Derbyshire Branch FAAA had already donated £100 to the project and it is hoped that other large branches could also assist.



Tarrant Rushton Revisited

A letter arrived from Jim Jackson of Greater Manchester Branch, informing of his initiative in approaching the Memorial Committee for the setting up of a plaque, to commemorate all FAA members who served at Tarrant Rushton. Such a plaque is now placed at one side of the memorial. Jim, having attended Tarrant Rushton reunions since their inception accompanied the letter with a resume of his connections with that place. It is thought fit to reproduce Jim's account.

I was at HMS Jackdaw on Swordfish and Barracuda with shipmate Eric Bilton when we were put on draft to the RAF in Dorset.

On arrival we noticed that the airfield was full of Stirlings, Halifaxes, and gliders. No one knew anything at all about us and we were told we would have to be billeted in the WAAF site (sad). That only lasted a day and then we were billeted with the SAS and the Glider Pilot Regiment in the middle of a wood.

We reported after a day or so and were told that we were taking stores to an airfield at Keevil in Wiltshire. I thought great – at least three days each trip. We had to go to D Flight but instead of a lorry it was a Horsa glider.

After loading we piled into the glider and took off. The Stirling pulling us lost power on one engine and cast us off just as we got airborne. We just made the airfield with a bump. We were not allowed out of the glider as apparently it was still serviceable so another Stirling was hitched up and away we went. These trips lasted several days and when we were on the way back the glider pilot used to give us an unnecessary rough ride by flying in the slipstream instead of above it

My next 'volunteer' flying was in Halifaxes. An experiment was being tried which was to drop a Jeep and a Six Pounder Gun by parachute over occupied Europe with four SAS men. They had to do as much damage as possible and then make their own way back. I was a LA F/O and given the job of loading a Jeep and the gun on an 8000lb bomb rack in the bomb bay. As they were loaded the pilot, a Wing Commander, said that he wanted an NCO Armourer to fly with him to release manually in case of a hang-up and some bright spark said that the Navy chap was an NCO, so the pilot told me to get into the aircraft. We struggled on take off as the bomb doors were unable to be closed owing to the load hanging below the fuselage. We arrived at the Drop Zone and released the load but the chutes on the gun did not open as I saw it bury itself in the deck. After the first drop there were no further problems.

The squadron also dropped supplies to the French Underground then took part in the D-Day and Arnhem landings. I went back to Lee-on-Solent and then to the Far East.

A Stand-Eazzzy Word Search

If you thought the word search in Issue 11 easy then this one is a little different. Listed at the foot of the page are the names of FAA air station locations which had the RNAS prefix e.g. CULHAM. The words to be found in the grid are the corresponding HMS ship names e.g. HORNBILL. For the desperate there is a list of the latter on page 26.

C M W S R T M B Y O B U T D N E B E R G
 O E N I R G E R E P N M I B T S K L P B
 R I S Z L E R T S E K P R E A M W D A W
 B X H V X F C L W H P O F N E N A P C A
 Q E W G F S L S D E B D D R X T H G K C
 R R R W O J R I R I B E L L H E W F C A
 B U O T N G A S N K R I V W S Y O S A M
 K T D M E O J K Z L N O R U C L R H L Y
 W L N E K L T I I P A U W O L I R O B E
 A U O K I D H N U M G R R L I A A R F R
 H V C O R C G T P A I N O V A R P N A P
 A S N O H R I R N N C Z N T T D S B L S
 E S U R S E N N G R F F U L G N O I C O
 S H T R G S E T A W A R I M A A C L O G
 U E H A D T A K A E N A P R W L Z L N W
 R R A M H I E D V S T I W E E P V U Q S
 A O T L L M K T T N T T H K W E L R U C
 V N C U B C K O I E Y A K C O C E M A G
 E I H F A Q N P R Q G N I L S O G H I G
 N L I J F E G N B G J H C N I F D L O G

CAMPBELTOWN / MACHRIHANISH
 ARBROATH (Aberbrothock)
 NORTH FRONT (Gib')
 BALLYHALBERT
 WORTHY DOWN
 LOSSIEMOUTH
 NUTS CORNER
 DONIBRISTLE
 ABBOTSINCH
 GRIMSETTER
 EAST HAVEN
 HENSTRIDGE
 BURSCOUGH
 EASTLEIGH

YEOVILTON
 ST MERRYN
 ST MERRYN
 BRAMCOTE
 PORTLAND
 CULROSE
 STRETTON
 EGLINTON
 DEKHEILA
 MAYDOWN
 WATFORD
 ANTHORN
 HATSTON
 GOSPORT

TA KALI
 HAL FAR
 BRAWDY
 CULHAM
 BOOTLE
 RISLEY
 INSKIP
 TWATT
 CRAIL
 FEARN
 FORD
 AYR

Warship Eagle

A candid view of life on board HMS Eagle sometime in 1966

This article sets out to provide a very brief overview of the content of another of those nostalgic films that have been available on video tape and being moved to the DVD format and marketed by BEULAH, <http://www.eavb.co.uk/video> or write to: Editions Audiovisuel BEULAH, 66 Rochester Way, Crowborough. TN6 2DU.

This black and white video comprises sequences shot above and below decks during Eagle's voyage from Mombasa to Singapore in 1966 under the command of WWII submarine commander Captain John Roxborough DSO, DSC and Bar.

Nostalgia on the part of ex-big ship squadron men aside this DVD is of some value in helping younger folk get some idea of what life was like on such a vessel. Of course the smells and feelings of ship movement and of the vibrations from machinery and aircraft operation are impossible to reproduce. Also, sounds in general can only ever be a limited sub-set of those experienced and at muted volumes at that.

Remember all those sounds of chain-lashings being dragged around and fitted, paint chipping hammers and ship's pipe's whilst one is off-watch and trying to sleep? In time one became oblivious to such things and even the sound of an aircraft being launched from the catapult running directly above ones head, in the top bunk of a waist 2 deck mess, barely penetrated the slumbering sub-conscious.

Eagle's fixed-wing air-group at this time comprised 800 Squadron with Buccaneer S Mk1 plus Scimitar F1 aircraft (B Flight) for tanking, 899 Squadron – the first Vixen squadron to go to sea with the FAW2 and 849 D Flight. The Scimitars operating as tankers were near-essential for topping up the Buc' 1s which, with their Gyron Junior engines, were somewhat underpowered and had limited weight lifting ability on catapult launches, particularly in the tropics.

For those interested in such things the following aircraft were noted, (source Sturtivant, Burrow & Howard 2004, Ref^r The Airey Fairey Issue 12). 800 Squadron; Buccaneer S1 XN960 (100E), XN951 (101E), XN971 (102E)¹, XN959 (103E), XN963 (104E), XN968 (105E). 800 B Flight; Scimitar F1 XD271 (114E)², XD277 (115E), XD321 (116E), XD275 (117E). 899 Squadron Sea Vixen FAW2; XP923 (123E), XP924 (124E)³, XP925 (125E), XS577 (127E), XS579 (130E), XP958 (131E), XP959 (132E), XS584 (133E), XP955 (135E), XP956 (136E). This is not necessarily an exhaustive list.

1. This aircraft suffered a long sequence of (7) port engine related problems between June 1965 and March 1968. Anybody recall what was going on here?
2. This Scimitar is recorded as being on squadron strength from 8.7.66 but was at Yeovilton by 15.8.66.
3. Sea Vixen XP 924 is currently the only airworthy Sea Vixen civil registered as G-CVIX (See The Airey Fairey Issue 10), fortuitously perhaps given that an early sequence in the film shows it being given a wave off and then catching a wire (number four possibly) off-centre to port which surely made the camera-man consider jumping overboard.

849 D Flight were also present of course but the only numbers visible were the call signs 071 and 073 which have been related to serial numbers XL479 and XL493 respectively. This dates the filming as pre 11.7.66¹ as XL479 was lightered off to NASU Changi on that date, joining Victorious, after repair, as 261V. The COD would have been XG790 but with no call sign, this aircraft being filmed arriving on board with mail.

None of the 820 Squadron Wessex 1s caught on film could be identified [no reference work was available for helicopters although it is believed one is in the pipeline from Air-Britain (Historians)], despite numerous appearances including the eight aircraft fly-over whilst Eagle made her way into harbour at Singapore.

The film opens with a view, taken on the starboard forward quarter, of Eagle steaming towards the camera. This quickly leads into a sequence of PT taking place on the flight deck, complete with prancing PTI on the island and with the Chief PTI, RM bandsmen in the background, voicing instructions over the flight deck broadcast system from the top of the Flyco bridge wing. Some of the 'troops' on the deck appear to be taking things less than seriously, a few in 'fancy dress' – a Clark Kent/Superman character and another 'character' with head covered by a large conical straw hat – being spotted.

Interleaved with sequences from the flight deck, engine room, bridge and steering compartment are scenes below decks; ablutions, laundry, tailors and shoemakers. One sequence was of a steward listening to a musical request from lady friends ashore being played (doubtlessly to this chap subsequent embarrassment). Another sequence filmed a Petty Officer receiving, via radio link, the glad news of the safe arrival of a new addition, a son, to his family.

There are close in shots of aircraft maintenance being carried out in the hangars, care having been taken to include all air-group elements.

Some sequences will no doubt bring a smile to the lips of many such as, flight deck PT aside, the RAS commodity item shown at right and the high jinks at dinner in the wardroom with one officer being sent out by the commander.



Commanders rounds, Divisions and defaulters will doubtless make many cringe, as will the surgical operation and dentistry sequences for different reasons. This video/DVD is worth a look, particularly if you were on the ship at about this time.

1. With Scimitar XD271 on strength from 8.7.66 this could date the filming to within 3 or 4 days.

Anniversaries, Commemorations, Reunions & things.

With 2004 and its D-Day anniversary still fresh in the mind 2005 is shaping up to be an even busier year for veterans with VE and VJ day being celebrated, controversially on the same day. The most interesting TAG Journal, December 2004 Edition, which was kindly sent contained an excellent article 'The Sakashima Story', written by a TAG serving with the British Pacific Fleet (BPF) and which contains the following pertinent extract:

On the 9th May the whole of Britain was celebrating VE Day, and although we felt pleased for our loved ones back home we rather had our hands full and thought perhaps it was a little unfair to be celebrating already. Victorious was hit twice by Kamikazes with 3 killed and 19 wounded. Formidable was hit again with more casualties.

This was the third hit on Formidable. Each of the BPF fleet carriers being hit at least once by Kamikazes but quickly recovered to resume operations thus giving rise to the oft quoted comment from an American liaison officer, 'When a Kamikaze hits one of our carriers it's 6 months in Pearl. With you Limeys it's sweepers man your brooms.' War in the Far East dragged on for another three hellish months for those involved, not least the POWs, of whom thousands more were destined to die. This is surely why many consider that lumping VE and VJ together on one date is so inappropriate.

Before the VE/VJ Day events on 10th July however Trafalgar 200 celebrates the bicentenary of this famous battle with 6 days of events, from 30th June until 3rd July 2005, in Portsmouth. The programme of special events this year is as follows: 28th June – International Fleet Review & Son Et Lumière, 29th June – Drumhead Ceremony (at which the FAAA will be represented with standard), 30th June to 3 July – International Festival of the Sea, which is worth a visit in its own right. In 1998 one day proved inadequate to see all, so a second day was required, a pattern repeated in 2001. Visit: <http://www.trafalgar200.com/index.html> for more information on these events.

A bicentenary such as that of Trafalgar inevitably leads to a rash of biographies of the leading character and accounts of the battle itself. The most favourably reviewed recent biography is 'Nelson: A Dream of Glory' by John Sugden. The only drawback of this work, which according to Neil Hanson of the Sunday Times, '...will be the yardstick by which all other Nelson biographies will be judged for years to come...', is that it only takes the reader up to 1797, with the Nile, Copenhagen and Trafalgar left, presumably, for a further volume. Of complete biographies 'Horatio Nelson' by Tom Pocock and the older 'Nelson' by Carola Oman are most worthwhile looking up, though no longer in print.

On Trafalgar two recent books, 'Trafalgar the Biography of a Battle' by Roy Adkins and 'Trafalgar the men, the battle, the storm' by Tim Clayton & Phil Craig each take a different, yet interesting, tack, complimenting one another and not in the least wearing, although the latter title is probably the better of the two.

This year it will be 65 years since the Battle of Britain and it would appear that the role of FAA personnel, on the ground and in the air, still lacks common recognition.

With this in mind the pictures presented to me by John Grant, which form the cover of this issue, serve as a timely reminder, not that our members require such but then it is hoped that this journal may reach a wider audience during the coming months.

In the interim it is hoped that some members may be able to contribute their memoirs or impart their thoughts on any books or magazine articles which could be drawn from to produce an in-the-round account of FAAA participation in that campaign.

One very readable book currently in print is 'Finest Hour' by Tim Clayton & Phil Craig which grew out of the BBC Television Series of one-hour documentaries broadcast under the same name. The structure is chronological, from 10th May to 11th November but based around the experiences of participants from the three services and the civilian population too. The experiences of RAF personnel are meshed with those of the army on the ground and the navy at sea during the tense period of the Battle for France and the evacuations from Dunkirk and Boulogne, where naval crews exchanged fire with German troops and dive bombers, the navy losing a number of valuable destroyers.

The bombing, and long range shelling, of Folkston and Dover are reported through the eyes of the US Press Corps, the stories of which when published in the US did so much to dispel the gloomy predictions of some US hierarchy, including the US Ambassador to the UK, Joseph Kennedy. This was of considerable importance as it eventually led to the release of about 50 old US four-stacker destroyers (which were in bad condition) under Lease-Lend and held back those in the US who wanted to have the RN fleet destroyed before it fell into German hands. Few realise what a near run thing this was.

The protection of the all important convoys bringing in the food, fuel and raw materials so vital to a protracted campaign is not forgotten, with the unequal fight between the Admiral Scheer and the armed merchant cruiser HMS Jervis Bay being vividly told through the eyes of one of the few survivors. The terrible ordeal of the civilians in London's docklands, where much of the cargo carried by convoy was unloaded, during the onset of The Blitz is told with lucidity and compassion.

All in all this book serves to remind readers that the watershed year of 1940, and hence the Battle of Britain, was fought by not only those in Spitfires and Hurricanes but by those at sea and on the home front. This without wishing to diminish in any way the courage and fortitude displayed by all aircrew involved, whether in Fighter, Bomber or Coastal Command and not forgetting the efforts of naval aircrews that flew long arduous missions in Swordfish to mine the seaways used by German shipping.

One of the better books on the topic 'The Battle of Britain 50 Years On' by Michael JF Bowyer contains a chapter entitled, 'Forgotten Ones' includes commentary on these Swordfish and Albacore raids as well as mention of other FAA involvement.

In, 'The Battle of Britain' by Richard Hough and Denis Richards the authors state that, '...the Admiralty 'lent' fifty-eight Fleet Air Arm pilots to the RAF during the Battle ...'. This is at variance with official FAA News Release sources which states 56 FAA (RN & RM) pilots took part with just 22 being attached to RAF squadrons. Nine FAA pilots were killed during the battle, Ford airfield and dockyards at Devonport, Portland (where a naval gunner LS Jack Handle won a posthumous VC for his defence of HMS Foylebank) and Portsmouth hit.

Twenty two pilots served with 804 Squadron operating Gladiator, Sea-Gladiator and, from September, Martlet I aircraft from Hatston, Twelve pilots flew Fulmar Mk I aircraft with 808 Squadron out of Castletown, near Thurso. Did these 808 pilots fly their Fulmars solo? If not who were the other crew? 804 Squadron had some Brewster Buffalos on strength in 1940, did these take part at all?

Although Hough and Richards' narrative is detailed the former has a habit of describing events through the eyes of those who did not survive the experience. Judging by the narrative in Hough's, 'Captain Bligh & Mister Christian' which reads as if there were teams of camera men and sound engineers recording scenes from every vantage point simultaneously, such commentary is something of a hall-mark.

One could also take issue with Hough's assertion (pp.18), 'From 1919 to 1923 the War Office and the Admiralty waged a relentless campaign to dismember the new Service in the hope of recovering for themselves what they regarded as lost component parts.' This is far too simplistic and is well countered in, 'Air Power and the Royal Navy 1914-1945 a historical survey' by Professor Geoffrey Till.

The editor became aware of this seminal book whilst searching for something else altogether in The Mariner's Mirror on CD when a review by CB Lamb, Commander RN (retired), of Taranto and 'War in a Stringbag' renown, was discovered (Mariner's Mirror Volume 66 1980 Number 1). Charles Lamb's review is worth a read in its own right by mixing personal experience with pithy comments on the attitudes of higher authority.

Lamb recounts one exchange, shortly after WW2, when a senior Captain came on board and opened with (verbatim), 'As an ex-Deputy Director of Plans nobody has ever stated a case for the FAA which has convinced me that the ship-borne aircraft can achieve anything which cannot be achieved by the shore based aircraft. In other words I do not agree with the existence of the FAA; nor do I agree that aviators should be promoted beyond the rank of Lieutenant Commander; and I certainly don't agree that they should ever be in command of a ship. What have you got to say to that?'

Lamb recalls, 'My reply was to the point, since I felt that if this was the official opinion it was time that I shed my uniform and became a civilian, which happened shortly afterwards, to my sorrow at the time. That particular officer subsequently became one of the Sea Lords, and I am very grateful to Mr Till because in the closing chapters of his excellent book he has at last shown me why.'

1940 was a momentous year for Malta with the entry into the war of Italy on June 10th. The air defence of Malta at first being reliant on 4 Sea-Gladiators borrowed from the Navy by AOC Malta. These were shortly joined by 4 Hurricanes and then Swordfish from Hyeres in Southern France. During August more Hurricanes were delivered by HMS Argus in spite of fighter shortages in Britain. It was Malta based aircraft that carried out reconnaissance prior to the successful Taranto raid.

Malta has its own Aviation Museum Foundation which is currently running 'The Air Battle of Malta Memorial Hangar Appeal' for a small new second hangar by that name. The Foundation also produces a quality journal 'Malta FlyPast', Issue 6 of which has a strong WW2 and FAA element, reflecting the strong association between Malta and the FAA. It was from Malta that Charles Lamb made his fateful flight to North Africa, delivering an agent, and being delivered himself into the hands of the Vichy French after his aircraft had come to grief landing on a semi-fluid surface.

The "NOT FORGOTTEN" ASSOCIATION will be taking a party of 26 veterans to the Mediterranean for a Tour of The Battle for Malta. Two of our members will be flying out with the party on Sunday 24th April. It would be useful if a report could be included in the Summer 2005 issue of The Airey Fairey

Trouble remembering PIN Numbers?

Many of us have cause to remember more than one PIN number and now with CHIP & PIN the need to recall these numbers becomes acute. Writing each PIN down for reference is not advisable and neither is changing all your PINs to be identical. I have discovered the following helpful solution to this problem in 'Code Breaking' by Rudolf Kippenhah (1999). Constable and Company (UK Edition). ISBN 0-09-479890-7.

All one has to do is think of a 4 digit key (there is one number which every serviceman remembers from which a sequence of 4 digits could be used), to add to each of ones PIN numbers. Addition is carried out without carrying into the next column as with:

PIN Numbers:	3810	5741	6739	8422	6284
+ 4 digit key:	<u>6921</u>	<u>6921</u>	<u>6921</u>	<u>6921</u>	<u>6921</u>
En-coded Numbers:	9731	1662	2650	4343	2105

The key numbers can be recorded and identified with a particular account. To recover ones PIN numbers it is simply a matter of subtracting the chosen key number thus, adding 10 to a digit in the En-coded number if necessary but NOT subtracting one from the next column:

En-coded Numbers:	9731	1662	2650	4343	2105
- 4 digit key:	<u>6921</u>	<u>6921</u>	<u>6921</u>	<u>6921</u>	<u>6921</u>
PIN Numbers:	3810	5741	6739	8422	6284

There is an alternative method which could be demonstrated in next issue if interested.

The Book-Shelf

A selection of books that may be of interest.

Jones, Barry. (2004) 'De Havilland Twin-Boom Fighters Vampire, Venom and Sea Vixen', The Crowood Press Ltd., Marlborough, Wiltshire. England.
ISBN 1-86126-681-2

Although the Vampire and Venom were specifically developed to Air Ministry (thus RAF) specifications the Royal Navy took an early interest in both. Indeed a specially modified Vampire was the world's first jet aircraft to land on an aircraft carrier. Following initial trials at RAE Farnborough, which resulted in repairs and strengthening to the arrestor hook, Lt. Cdr. Eric (Winkle) Brown landed Vampire LZ551/G on the deck of HMS Ocean in December 1945.

Much of the book is necessarily taken up with RAF operation of the Vampire and Venom with some space devoted to overseas operators. There is however much of interest to all those who had dealings with these aircraft in the RN including the chapter 'Nautical Vampires and Venoms'. I cannot vouch for the accuracy of the narrative in the Vampire and Venom sections, with which aircraft I have little direct experience, although once going for a trip in a Sea Venom. Birtles (1986 & 1999) and Balch (2002) – see The Airey Fairey Issue 10 – being my only sources of reference. However some comment on the narrative in the Sea Vixen section is felt necessary.

Jones makes a number of surprising statements with respect to Sea Vixen development. The first is to state that, with reference to design considerations to satisfy specifications N.40/46 (Admiralty) and F. 44/46 (Air Ministry) that 'with over ten years experience of the twin boom configuration' De Havilland used such for the DH. 110. Considering that Vampire detailed design did not begin before 1942 then 'ten years' is something of an exaggeration.

A certain imprecision is apparent at times, for example with the statement that the radar operator was located 'in a fully enclosed compartment that was necessary as the AI signals at the time were not very bright'. The AI signals themselves were not of course visible but were the source from which a trace was made visible on a CRT and it was the CRT images of the day which were not very bright.

More problematic is his statement, '....the Red Top, which had originally been designated the Firestreak Mk IV. Red Top, carried on the outboard of the six under-wing pylons.' This is incorrect as the outboard pylons carried overload fuel tanks, a buddy-buddy refuelling pod or even an air portable Palouste engine air-starter pod. Missiles, as with other ordnance, were fitted to the two inboard pylons on each wing.

When describing the development and fitting of IFR in the Vixen Jones makes a chronological error when describing the introduction of the Sea Vixen FAW.2, 'An in-flight refuelling capacity was built into the new aircraft when in service with the FAW. 2 squadrons, the advantages were appreciated by the RN enough to be retrofitted on some FAW. 1s', this is not how it worked. IFR systems were trialled on 700Y and became more widely fitted on FAW1s on the production line and on some of pre-production batch as they went for modernisation, which also included avionic and electrical updates, during the very early 1960s.

Jones makes an additional error of quite a different type when describing the rain dispersal modification to prevent pilot's visibility being degraded as the result of rain and sea-spray on the

windscreen. Jones writes, 'This was rectified on the FAW. 2 by the fitting of a deflector ahead of the screen, which channelled the water aft on the port side beyond the rear of the cockpit canopy.'

That this modification was first fitted on the FAW. 1 aside, Jones has this system working in reverse – draining the rain from the screen. Intake de-icing air was tapped from the 7th compressor stage of each of the Avon 208s. On the port side a branch was taken off the de-icing air supply pipe to exit the top of the fuselage aft of the cockpit. This air was then led forward, with the pipe encased in a fairing extending across the front of the lower windscreen combing which ejected the air upwards over the windscreen to disperse rain and spray. This rain dispersal modification was also retro fitted to FAW1s when sent for modernisation.

The rain dispersal modification is clearly visible on the Sea Vixen FAW 1 depicted in the photograph, taken on HMS Ark Royal in 1961 and published in Adrian Balch's 'de Havilland Twin Booms Vampire, Venom and Sea Vixen' (2002), *Airlife*, page 89. This aircraft, 254R XN688 which first flew on 20th July 1961 and joined 890 on 2nd October 1961, also has an IFR probe. Thus both of these features were a production fit at least a year before the first flight of the FAW. 2 prototype.

Unfortunately Jones manages to get captions to photographs very wrong also. The photograph on page 148 is captioned, "At the 1962 SBAC display, 'Fred's Five' had an extra Sea Vixen FAW. 2 in this formation, ahead of No. 80 (sic) Squadron's Buccaneer S.2s..". The image is indeed of a 'V' formation of six Sea Vixen FAW. 2s followed by an 'anchor formation' of five Buccaneer S. 2s. 'Simon's Circus' ex-892 Squadron and the 'Phoenix Five' from 809 Squadron. This photograph is clearly of the 1968 SBAC display team which I delighted in watching at Farnborough, and the many practice sessions at Yeovilton, in that year.

Caption trouble is not restricted to the Sea Vixen content, as the captions to Sea Venom pictures on page 115 demonstrates. All three Sea Venoms depicted were operated by 890 Squadron at the time and not 892 as stated in the captions.

Another inaccurate caption appears on page 117, alongside a picture of a Sea Venom. The caption states; 'Sea Venom FAW.22 XG616 of 766 Squadron at Lee-on-Solent on 11 August 1962'. The stated date immediately rang alarm bells. A quick check in Sturtivant et. al. 2004 showed that by this time this particular aircraft was a Class II Ground Instructional (GI) airframe, having been further down graded from GI Class I which was its status after arriving at Lee-on-Solent by 30th July 1959 at the latest.

Such gripes aside, this book will be a welcome addition to the library of anyone interested in these aircraft not least because of the superb collection of photographs. The photograph of the centre-section DH 110 prototype WG 236 impacting the ground following the mid-air break-up at the 1952 Farnborough SBAC display is both remarkable and disturbing. The latter possibly why this photograph is not often published.

It is a shame that an aviation author of such long standing, as Barry Jones should allow such errors to creep into an otherwise most interesting work which is still worth having because of the excellent collection of photographs which it contains. That this book contains proportionally more content respecting naval aviation than that of the earlier book by Birtles is another point in its favour. Recommended with reservations.

Kershaw, Tim. (2004) 'Jet Pioneers Gloster and the Birth of the Jet Age', Sutton Publishing Ltd., Phoenix Mill, Thrupp, Stroud, Gloucestershire. ISBN 0-7509-3212-0

This book is the story of the company that produced the Gloster E28/39 aircraft that ensured that all the dedicated hard work, not to mention faith and determination, of Frank Whittle paid off by getting his jet engine airborne. The book is also thus the story of those who shaped the company and played such an important part in development work, including of course the test pilots.

The book is well written and full of interesting details, many of which will be quite new to readers. The numerous previously un-published photographs, which were fortunately saved from the bonfire at the time Gloster Aircraft was dissolving, are of great interest and it is to this happenstance that we owe the presence of so many photographs of personnel and of structural details. Without these latter then the superb cutaway drawing, just one example of the many excellent line drawings, would not have been possible.

Development work for the E28/39 and later the Meteor was almost certainly affected by Gloster taking on production of firstly Hurricanes (producing the majority of the metal mainplanes) and then the main manufacturer for the troubled Typhoon. It is a curious twist of history that the Meteor first flew with a pair of Major Halford's de Havilland Goblin engines rather than developed Whittle engines.

Development of the E28/39 aside the author traces the professional careers of the main participants in the story from Gloster's Chief Designer, George Carter, to each of the company's test pilots. The history of Gloster Aircraft Company described necessarily makes mention of Carter's predecessor the renowned Henry Folland who's last design for the company was the famed Gladiator. Folland also produced a clean lined monoplane floatplane one built to compete in the 1927 Schneider Trophy contest.

George Carter whilst working at Hawkers produced some outstanding designs and at one time took on as his deputy 'a thirty year old, hard swearing designer, called Sidney Camm'. Carter had considerable talent for designing fast machines that maximised power available and produced some racing types aimed at Schneider races in 1919 and 1927, the latter being a monoplane demonstrating that Camm was not alone in thinking along these lines.

Carter left Hawkers to find his way elsewhere in the British Aircraft Industry enticed to work with some leading engine designers of the period including Roy Fedden and Major E.B. Halford. Thus he became involved in some DH types including the less than sparkling DH72 Canberra and the DH77 interceptor. This latter used a Halford designed engine of a form which allowed easy streamlining this clean lined monoplane, which very nearly matched the performance of Camm's Hawker Hornet biplane but with only 60 per cent of the power.

With de Havilland concentrating on civilian projects the Air Ministry pushed their military projects to Gloster Aircraft, Carter going with them. Gloster's fortunes having ebbed they were taken over by Hawker, thus George Carter became subordinate to his former deputy, Sidney Camm. Soon after, Hawker's merged with Armstrong Siddeley bringing A.V. Roe and Gloster together under the same company of Hawker Siddeley.

Thus Carter was sent to work with Roy Chadwick where he, Carter, supervised the project design for the Avro Manchester, forerunner of the Lancaster. This is but one example of the many fascinating details, not commonly known, revealed by the narrative in this most welcome book.

Carter always had faith in the outcome of Frank Whittle's work and it was fortuitous that Carter had a design for heavily armed single piston engine fighter in the pipeline to satisfy specification F18/37. Carter's F18/37 design comprised a nacelle, containing front armament pilot and rear mounted pusher engine, between twin, small section, booms which looks rather like what an airscrew driven Vampire would have been. Was this inspiration for de Havilland I wonder?

Whittle, like Halford at de Havilland, was mindful of the need to minimise frictional losses by keeping the jet pipe as short as possible. Thus Carter's F18/37, as well as Carter's known support for jet propulsion, was what brought the two pioneers together.

Apart from the reversal of status between Carter and Camm it is another ironic twist of fate that the Gloster F9/40, Meteor, prototype first took to the air using a pair of Halford H1 engines rather than the Whittle engines that Carter had put so much faith behind and encouraging Whittle despite problems with lack of early official interest and thus poor funding for Power Jets. The H1 engine evolved into the de Havilland Goblin that powered later Meteor prototypes and the Vampire.

One curiosity is the reproduction of the Flight Test Report (FTR), signed by Gloster's Chief Test Pilot Jerry Sayer, for the E28/39's prototypes maiden flight. Curiosity is aroused by the fact that the appearance of this FTR reproduction differs in a number of significant details from that published in the book by Barry Jones¹ reviewed above.

In Kershaw the 'Gloster Aircraft Co. Ltd.' title at the top of the sheet has 'SECRET' over-stamped but above and parallel with the title whereas in Jones the 'SECRET' over-stamp is on a slant and slightly overlaps the title. There are clearly punched binder holes in the Jones version but not in Kershaw. Also the relative character position between lines varies between the two and the pilot's signature is different in significant detail.

One interesting feature of the Flight Test Report comes with the Engine Type and Number being specified as a 'Whittle Supercharger Type W.1.' Some supercharger!

All in all this is a very satisfying account of the birth of the jet age in Britain and of the company and characters which made it possible. A period which is kept alive by the Jet Age Museum; <http://www.jetagemuseum.org/>. This book is highly recommended is well produced and on quality paper allowing complete freedom for placing the many photographs and quality line drawings.

1. The Barry Jones version is also reproduced in that author's 'Hawker Hunter' (1998), also from Crowood Press. I have this book pencilled in for a review along with other Hunter books at a later date but would really like some helicopter input to keep the 'rotary wing boys' happy.

Oliver, David. (2005) 'Airborne Espionage', Sutton Publishing Ltd., Phoenix Mill, Thrupp, Stroud, Gloucestershire. ISBN 0-7509-3870-6

Although the cover depicts a Westland Lysander¹ fitted for its well known WW 2 role in landing and retrieving agents from France the sub-title, 'International Special Duties Operations in the World Wars' promises that this book has much wider scope. Indeed the scope is huge, from early ad hoc clandestine missions by both the RNAS and RFC for the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) and Military Intelligence Department 6 (MI6) during WW1 to missions in the Far East during WW2. The description of developments during WW1 and between the wars, especially in the years leading up to WW2, form a particularly enlightening introduction and provide a sound, indeed an essential, foundation for the remainder of the narrative.

That the geographical scope is as broad as the chronological, but deeper, becomes clear as one reads about the desert exploits in the Middle East and in support of T E Lawrence and his Arab cohorts during WW1 and of missions in support of resistance fighters and partisans from Norway to the Balkans, Poland and Czechoslovakia in WW2.

The minutiae of detail is incredible with the aircraft type, with often the serial number, names of all crew member and more prominent 'Joes' being included, along with descriptions of the subsequent experiences and fate of the latter. The variety of aircraft types used is astonishing, being much more varied than commonly realised with both sides using captured types for especially sensitive covert missions in both world wars but with this practice being much more widespread in WW2.

There really is too much detail in this book to do more than scratch the surface of the truly heroic actions of all involved, agents and aircraft crews both flying and ground based. The air crews often flew long missions, over difficult terrain in appalling weather conditions where accurate navigation, in order to arrive at a DZ (drop zone) at a pre-arranged time, was little short of miraculous. Missions of between sixteen and twenty two hours were common, particularly in the Far East. Enemy action aside, the attrition rate from accidents due to adverse conditions was high. Victims of such included the Chindit leader General Orde Wingate leading to the dispersal of this successful group.

An overshoot landing accident, at Ticevo, Yugoslavia, killed the pilot of 267 Squadron Dakota KG472 Flt Lt Gardiner and injured Winston Churchill's Special Operations Executive (SOE) agent son Randolph and Evelyn Waugh the author. The actor Christopher Lee was is another SOE staff officer mentioned. The multilingual Lee volunteered for the Finnish Forces during the Winter War against the Soviet Union, served later with the RAF before recruitment into the SOE.

Many missions only just managed to avoid disaster as was the case with Wildhorn III flown by Flt Lt George Culliford in a 267 Squadron (Black Pegasus) Dakota into Poland to land four Polish Army officers.² It was not unusual for aircraft to become bogged down at the landing site and this was the case with this mission. After an hour of digging, pushing, aided by local partisans, and applying full power on the engines, at the risk of alerting nearby German garrisons, the Dakota was freed sufficiently for take off.

Another well produced volume, also on quality paper giving full freedom with placing the large number of photographs that do so much to support the well written narrative. Highly recommended.

For those interested in the fractured nature of political situation in France, and her colonies (it is not commonly appreciated that the Vichy administration in French Indo-China was pro-Japanese) during WW2. 'Verdict on Vichy' by Michael Curtis (2002), Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London. ISBN 0-297-84224-2 could lead onto discovering how the Vichy and German regimes managed to successfully classify and record all those of Jewish extraction in, 'IBM and the Holocaust' by Edwin Black (2001), Little Brown & Company (UK Edition), London. ISBN 0-316-85769-6. 'Long Shadows Truth, Lies and History' by Erna Paris, Bloomsbury, London (2001 UK edition). ISBN 0-7475-5399-8 provides added insight and also a modern context for the principles at stake.

1. *A detailed account of one Lysander pilot, Hugh Verity, along with pictures of a veteran Lysander, then recently refinished in 161 Squadron colours and belonging to the Shuttleworth Trust can be found in Aeroplane, December 2001.*
2. *Aeroplane April 2004 carries a detailed account of this mission.*

Thomas, Graham. (2004) 'Furies and Fireflies Over Korea', Grub Street. London.
ISBN 1-904010-04-0

This long anticipated book (it having been initially expected in the autumn of 2003) has a subtitle; 'The story of the men of the Fleet Air Arm, RAF and Commonwealth who defended South Korea, 1950-1953', which gives a fair idea of the subject matter. The experiences of the British, and Commonwealth, naval air and ground-crew who served through this gruelling war is a subject which has begged thorough treatment for some time but does this book provide such treatment?

To be sure Thomas has taken the time to interview the surviving veteran aircrew of this conflict and to study the log books of others. However, what a shame it is that it seems that he has not conversed with those who made the flying possible, if he had done so then he would not have made so many fundamental errors.

Such errors appear in statements such as; 'The destruction of three aircraft reduced 810 Squadron's capability by twenty-five per cent but the remaining nine Fireflies regularly flew off on sorties. A real credit to the aircraft handlers.' (pp. 28), 'The handlers were bent double against the wind, working tirelessly to keep the aircraft serviceable ...' (pp. 35), 'Throughout the following day, Glory's aircraft handlers worked hard servicing the aircraft, ...' (pp. 62) and 'Skinner waited while the aircraft handlers re-armed the Fireflies' (pp. 128).

There are other similar instances where Thomas has handlers doing surprising things to aircraft. One such is found on page 121 with, 'Anson climbed into the cockpit, stiff with cold as the handlers began running up the Sea Fury.'

It is clear that Thomas has no idea about who does what around naval aircraft, this is surprising for a one time Chief Reporter for the MOD in-house 'Focus' publication who, according to the blurb on the jacket rear inside fly, 'has had numerous articles published on his speciality, aircraft and aviation,...'.

Surprisingly for an aviation specialist, other sections of narrative suggest that Thomas does not have a firm grasp of how aircraft work, or are worked. One example, referring to a Firefly, is, 'Skinner pushed the button that retracted the landing gear'(pp. 134). I believe a lever would have been operated rather than a button.

Another Firefly based example (pp. 136) is, 'On the way back to the ship, he had to pump his wheels and flaps into the down position in order to land because debris from the explosions had jammed the hydraulics.' This situation suggests more that hydraulic lines from the engine driven pump had been damaged but total fluid loss was prevented by an NRV in the affected lines thus enabling the hand pump to still operate. Of course the hydraulic pump drive could have been jammed but is a much less likely explanation.

'The RATOG malfunctioned on one Fury, only the rockets on one side igniting, which sent the Fury overriding the chocks...' (pp. 66), is a further example of, surely, inaccurate reportage. Would not the aircraft have been rolling and have reached a pre-designated point before the pilot initiated RATOG? Thus no chocks would be involved.

That the above statement is inconsistent with Thomas's own narrative is clear from an earlier explanation on the same page of a failed RATOG take off when no rockets fired. '... Shotton managed to use the little speed he'd gained from dropping off the flight deck to gain precious

height. On full power, the engine strained and the aircraft slowly began to accelerate as it burned off fuel.' There are two issues with this statement. One is that the aircraft would have begun acceleration from the start of its take off run and at this point would more likely be trading acceleration for height. The second issue is that the loss in weight from the quantity of fuel burned off in the time would have had a marginal influence on the climbing capability of the aircraft.

This following (pp. 28) is clear nonsense, 'During the landing, one Firefly missed the hook, jumped both barriers ...', for 'hook' substitute wire. The use of 'retracted' instead of lowered in, 'He retracted the main wheels, feeling them bump as they left the housings in the wings' (pp.40), is probably down to poor editing rather than ignorance.

Then there is this example (pp. 40), 'Pushing the rudder pedals almost to the floor, Bevans worked the controls quickly as he brought the aircraft in on a slow turn towards the deck.' In reality a pilot would only be pushing both rudder pedals towards the floor simultaneously when using the brakes, and then often only that portion under the toes.

Of course that latter example could just be another example of the careless use of language that runs, like mycelium in cheese, through this book, as with the overdramatic, 'Levelling out, he punched the release button, ...', (pp. 129). Another example of such (pp. 40) is, 'Lieutenant Commander Bevans felt his aircraft shudder harshly ...', 'harshly' nor being the best choice of word perhaps.

On the same page we find, 'As usual, the Furies didn't hang about to see the results of their anger, but quickly climbed away.' Can an aircraft truly see or express emotion? This is 'Boy's Own' stuff surely, as is (pp. 27, 28), 'If you fired the button too early the whole thing would fizzle out'. One would not fire a button. Now this is so characteristic of much of Thomas's narrative but is contained within a supposed quotation by Tommy Leece that it makes one wonder if such is indeed a verbatim quote or a reconstruction by Thomas. There are other examples that tend to reinforce such thinking.

More 'Boy's Own' stuff is evident in such statements as, 'The locomotive exploded into clouds of steam and flames....' (pp. 21), '....clouds of flames...' indeed. 'There is a fascination about war and regimental history, but there is another side to it besides the spit-and-polished shoes: the lives of the innocent and the good.' (pp. 30), is but one example of the clumsy, if not downright weird, constructs met throughout this narrative.

Inaccuracies and at times lurid language aside, Thomas is prone to ambiguities. One of the most striking is (pp. 26), 'HMS Theseus carried the first squadron of Sea Furies to take part in the Korean War. They replaced the Seafire 47s, which weighed twice as much as the old Seafires.' Now the Seafury weighed almost twice as much as an old Seafire but that is not what Thomas implies in this example.

Some of Thomas's ambiguities can be amusing for example (pp. 20), '...a Firefly failed to catch the arrester wire and rocketed into the barrier', 'rocketed' not being the best choice of words in the circumstances. Did the aircraft launch hung-up rockets into the barrier? My favourite though has to be (pp. 105,106), 'Turning north, Hawksworth attacked some hill installations diving on the targets, pounding them with his four cannon.' In the absence of any further amplification on these 'hill installations' we must consider the North Koreans cunning for thinking of installing hills.

There are numerous other examples which suggest a rushed, poorly edited work. I will not risk the reader's patience by citing each and every one but the following two errors I must include. On page 85 Thomas provides the Royal Navy with a new aircraft carrier; HMS Impeccable and eschews normal convention (which he himself adopts) of placing a HMS prefix in-front of 'Atheling' which would save the un-initiated from the confusion of thinking that, '... flying Seafires from Atheling ...' refers to an island rather than an aircraft carrier.

Thomas lists 'The Korean War' by Max Hastings in the bibliography, but did he actually read it? Thomas's assertion on page 39, '...the Chinese mounted a counter-offensive in late April and the Battle of the Imjin River took place with units of the British 29th Brigade taking the brunt of the fighting...', is surprising considering that the book cited explains that the Chinese offensive was met to the east of the 29th by the Commonwealth 27th Brigade and even further east by the US Marines. Indeed Hastings writes,¹ 'It is an irony of history that, because their battle [that of the 27th Brigade where 'For almost twenty-four hours men of Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry were surrounded and cut off, dependant on air-dropped supplies and ammunition.'] ended in success at small cost in Commonwealth lives, it is little remembered.'²

The index contains one surprising acronym expansion, especially for an aviation specialist, AEW being revealed as 'anti-electronic warfare' rather than airborne early warning.

This book, despite the impression it gives of being a rushed work is nonetheless a source for readers to pick up on the exploits of the FAA in the Korean conflict. However the reader would benefit from an alternative source of good maps of the area, specifically the western coast around and north of the 38th parallel, as the single map supplied, of the whole Korean peninsula, is of poor quality and of insufficient detail. I found such an alternative on the US National Geographic CD collection which is currently to be had for as little as £25 from some sources.

Indeed the reproduction of the map in this book is an object lesson in 'how not to do it'. It is an enlarged version of a bit-mapped image where place names lose clarity as a result. Creating a vector drawing version of this map would not have been that troublesome and have been infinitely scaleable and thus vastly superior.

It is also a shame that more information is not supplied with some of the plates where names of the aircrew depicted could have been included. As it is, one picture is not solely composed of pilots as the caption implies. Overall this book is something of a missed opportunity and thus also something of a disappointment.

1. *Hastings, Max. (1987) 'The Korean War', Pan Books, Pan Macmillan Ltd. London. ISBN 0-330-39288-3*
2. *The editor considers it worth putting the record straight despite being Gloucester borne, thus justly proud of the role of the Glosters (a part of the 29th Brigade) whose stand on the Imjin has since become legendary.*

HMS name list for Word Search on page 12

LANDRAIL, CONDOR, ROOKE, CORNCRAKE, KESTREL, FULMAR, PINTAIL, MERLIN, SANDERLING, ROBIN, PEEWIT, DIPPER, RINGTAIL, RAVEN, HERON, CURLEW, VULTURE, GAMECOCK, OSPREY, SEAHAWK, BLACKCAP, GANNET, GREBE, SHRIKE, TURNSTONE, NUTHATCH, SPARROWHAWK, SISKIN, GOLDFINCH, FALCON, GOLDCREST, HORNBILL, MACAW, GOSLING, NIGHTJAR, TERN, JACKDAW, OWL, PEREGRINE, WAGTAIL

It is with great regret that we deem it necessary to notify you of those members who have now "crossed the bar".

May they be granted a peaceful anchorage.

PETER ANDERSON ——— Yeovil Branch

ERIC BILTON ————— Greater Manchester Branch

R. BOULTER ————— Birmingham Branch

STUART BRIDGES ——— Bristol & District Branch

JACK HARRIS ————— Lt. (P) Bristol Branch

DANNY MACKINLAY — Ford Branch

ED MOSS ————— Angus Branch

TOM NEWTON ————— Greater Manchester Branch

DENNIS REARDON ——— Bournemouth Branch

ALAN SMITH ————— Hitchin Branch

PHILIP TEAL ————— Angus Branch

and

TED CRISPIN ————— Former National Secretary

It is with great sadness that we learned of the passing of Lady Pepper Lygo, wife of our patron. May she also be granted a peaceful anchorage.

We offer our condolences to Sir Raymond in his loss.

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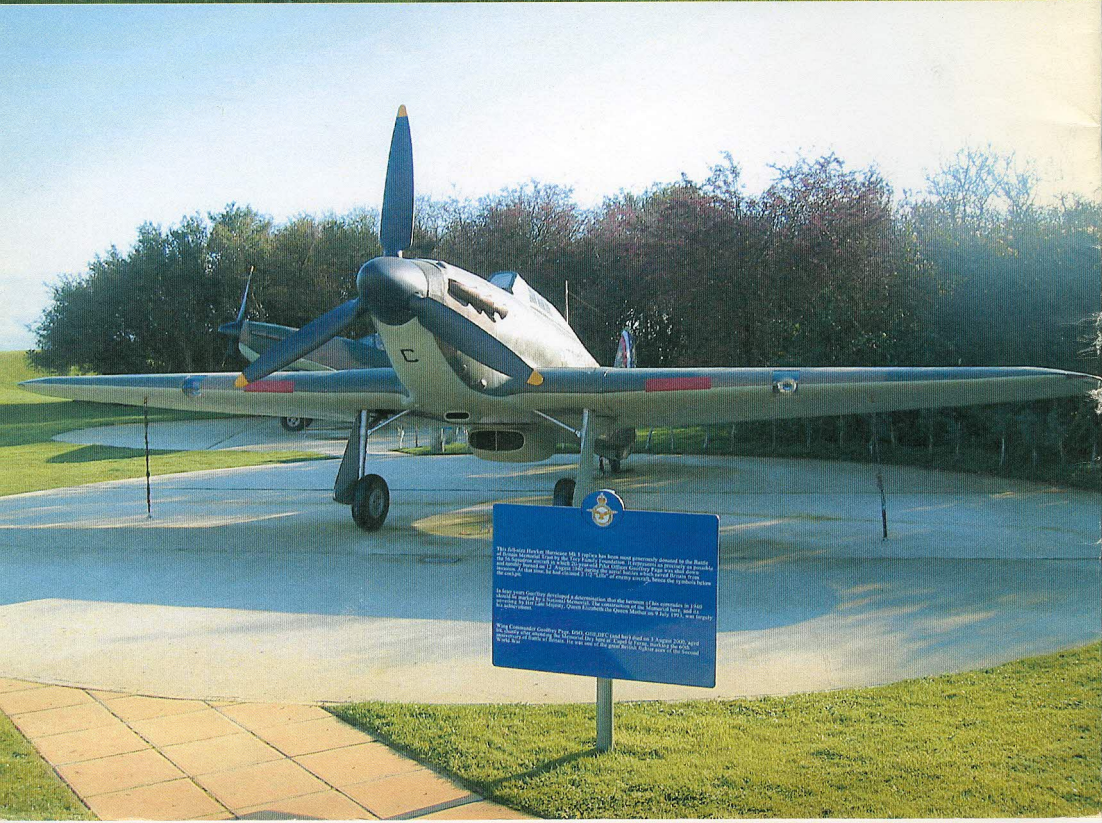
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 This Spitfire Mk Vc (N5194) has been most generously donated to the British Air & Space Museum by the RAF. It has been most generously donated to the British Air & Space Museum by the RAF. It has been most generously donated to the British Air & Space Museum by the RAF. It has been most generously donated to the British Air & Space Museum by the RAF.

In May 1945 the Spitfire Mk Vc (N5194) was the last of the Spitfires to be built. It was built by the Supermarine Aircraft Limited, Southampton. It was built by the Supermarine Aircraft Limited, Southampton. It was built by the Supermarine Aircraft Limited, Southampton.

Wing Commander Geoffrey Page, DFC, DSO, DFC, was killed on 2 August 1945, while flying a Spitfire Mk Vc (N5194) over the North Sea. He was the last Spitfire pilot to be killed in action. He was the last Spitfire pilot to be killed in action.