



57 / 630 Squadrons Association

*President: Group Captain David Houghton
Vice President: Group Captain (retd) Tony Gunby*

Secretary: Gordon Lodge



2013 Newsletter



57 Squadron Standard Party at East Kirkby on Reunion Sunday

In Memoriam

Buck Buckley
Frank Cork
Fred Panton

George Sawyer
Walter Upton
Arnold Yates

Once again I have to report the loss of some Members during the year. A sad occasion reflecting on the people I have known or had contact with over the years. In particular Fred Panton who was so instrumental in the facilities for the Assoc. At East Kirkby. Buck Buckley, one of the founder members of the Assoc. George Sawyer who attended every Reunion.

Gordon Lodge

Lady Jessica Broom

I am sorry to inform Members that Lady Jessica Broom, widow of our first President Sir Ivor Broom, died on 29th November.

Lady Broom continued with her support of the Association attending many events over the years.

She will be missed by the Association.

Gordon Lodge

PRESIDENT'S PIECE

I start this short note with a belated "happy 70th birthday" to all our 630 Squadron Members. Formed on 15 November 1943 from B Flight of 57 Squadron, 630 may have had a relatively short active Service life, but its impact alongside 57 Squadron operating from RAF East Kirkby was immense. The Squadron's motto 'nocturna mors' (literally, 'Death by Night') could not have been more apt.

We remain fortunate that the unbreakable ties between 57 Squadron and 630 Squadron, and the spirit that links our Association to those who serve in today's RAF, are recognised by successive OCs 57 Squadron (now Squadron Leader Nick Lambert) and Squadron personnel. That camaraderie between past and present will, I am sure, be in evidence again at a Dining-In Night to be held at RAF Wyton on Thursday 13 November 2014, which Squadron Leader Lambert has kindly invited Association Members to join (details provided to Members by separate e-mail/post). That event will again give us the opportunity to meet the young men and women who represent the very bright future of the RAF and who show that, while the body may indeed change, the spirit of a Squadron remains unchanged with the passing of time.

I also would like to highlight the fantastic work our erstwhile Secretary, Gordon Lodge, carries out on almost a daily basis to keep our Association vibrant and evolving. In an era when many other Associations are folding, we are fortunate to have Gordon (supported by Diana) working tirelessly to keep us in good shape.

For those who are unable to attend the Association Reunions, I hope that the information in this Newsletter about the 'goings on' at Woodhall Spa/East Kirkby and RAF Wyton will show that the spirit of 57 Squadron and 630 Squadron remains in rude health. I end by wishing all Association Members my very best for a peaceful Christmas and Happy New Year from a chilly Poland where I am serving as the UK Defence Attaché. I look forward to seeing all those who can make it at the Annual Reunion in July 2014. Until we meet again, my best wishes to you all.

Group Captain David Houghton

Secretary's Note

After a few poor Summers the weather for 2013 returned to perfect conditions. Alas the RAF Band was unable to attend due to a prior engagement with the Queen !! The usual wonderful turnout at East Kirkby on the Sunday and an excellent display by the 57 Squadron Standard Party.

You will see that The Petwood have agreed to hold costs for 2014 at 2013 levels. The levels of attendance at the Dinner and Dinner Dance being a negotiating point, although the levels supporting the latter are waning. The Functions are a really good evening and on an informal basis. Members can attend either or both Functions, so if you have not been you will be very welcome.

The Web Site became up and running during the year and has received many "visitors" from members and future members. There are a large number of Articles and previous Newsletters available.

Unfortunately by far the majority of members still wish to receive the Newsletter by post. We will of course continue to provide this service, but of course postage costs continue to increase at an alarming rate. On this front the donations from members are not only very welcome but becoming increasingly essential.

As you will have seen from the recent Flyer on Dining in Night at RAF Wyton the Squadron has not yet relocated to RAF Cranwell, expected during 2014.

I look forward to seeing you all at the Reunion in July. Have a good year.

Gordon Lodge

Reunion Weekend 2013

The Saturday Dinner, attended by around 100, featured speeches by our President Group Captain David Houghton, and OC 57 Squadron Leader Wes Wesley. The Toast to Absent Friends was proposed by Group Captain Wendy Rothery and the Loyal Toast by Wing Commander Mike Bracken.

Annual Accounts were approved by Members, proposed by Allen Hudson and seconded by Alex Fraser. It was then proposed by the President, seconded by Wing Commander Bracken, that the Assoc. donate £1000 towards the upkeep of the Bomber Command Memorial. All were in favour.

Steve and Maureen Stevens celebrated their 70th Wedding Anniversary in 2013 and Maureen was presented with a Bouquet of Flowers during the Dinner.

Following a successful Raffle an Auction of memorabilia took place, our President leading the Auction with panache and a certain amount of coercion!! Sunday saw the Reunion Day at East Kirkby following the usual programme. Our Hon. Chaplain Richard Benson leading the Service with the 57 Squadron Standard Party in attendance - they can be seen on the front page of this Newsletter. A Flypast by the BBMF Lancaster was made and wreaths were laid at the memorial by Helen Davies for 57 Squadron and by Tom Lockett for 630 Squadron.

Sunday evening Dinner Dance attended by 65 Members with quite a few appearing on the Dance Floor!!

Gordon Lodge

Reunion 2014
Friday 4th July-Monday 7th July



Petwood Hotel

Dinner and Dinner Dance in the Woodland Suite. Afternoon tea will be served in the lounge from 2.30pm followed by the RAF Band playing in the grounds.

Chief Guest & Speaker

Officer Commanding 57 Squadron.

Saturday Dinner

7.30pm Lounge suits/blazers

Sunday Service East Kirkby

11.45am March Past/ Standard Party/ Inspection
Remembrance Service-Medals
Service- Rev. Richard Benson- Hon. Chaplain
Memorial- Last Post= Laying of Wreaths
3.00pm B&B Flypast
7.00pm-7.30pm Informal Dinner Dance Petwood Hotel

Petwood Hotel Costs

4 nights £295pp (incl.function costs)

3 nights £235pp (incl.function costs)

1 or 2 nights £50pp per night

Reunion Dinner £30pp

Dinner Dance £30pp

For B&B at the Petwood or staying elsewhere please send cost of functions for the numbers you have attending.

Please note any dietary requirements on the form. For all forms, with or without a cheque please send stamped addressed envelope so I can acknowledge receipt.

Gordon Lodge

THE LOSS OF 57 SQUADRON VICTOR K1A XH618 – 24 MARCH

1975

On 24 March 1975 a 57 Squadron Victor K1A operating from RAF Marham was conducting Air-to-Air Refuelling (AAR) 'dry' contacts (i.e. although the receiving aircraft's in-flight refuelling probe would make contact with one of the Victor tanker's refuelling hoses, no fuel would be passed between the aircraft) with a Buccaneer when the aircraft collided. The result was the death of 4 of the Victor crew and the only loss to date of an RAF tanker aircraft while undertaking AAR.

The accident was, of course, the subject of a full RAF Board of Inquiry. However, this was before the era of many military aircraft being fitted with Flight Data Recorders (FDR) and Cockpit Voice Recorders (CVR) (commonly referred to in the press as an aircraft's 'black boxes'), so finding out what happened relied to a great extent of the recollections of the crews involved in the incident.

The aircraft that struck the 57 Squadron Victor was a Buccaneer (XH156) from RAF Honington. The first dry contact between the aircraft (using the Victor's starboard wing refuelling hose) went well. The pilot of the Buccaneer then manoeuvred his aircraft to carry out a dry contact from the Victor's port wing refuelling hose. However, it seems that, as the Buccaneer approached the basket at the end of the Victor's hose, the Buccaneer pilot realised that he was approaching too fast to make a safe contact.

He pulled back on his control column and the Buccaneer's AAR probe hit the Victor's basket. Still trying to lose speed, the Buccaneer climbed between the trailing edge of the Victor's port wing and the leading edge of the tail plane and struck the tailplane. This effectively rendered the 57 Squadron uncontrollable, and the aircraft bunted over into a nosedive towards the North Sea.

The 'g' forces experienced by the Victor crew during the nose dive were such that the 3 'rear crew' (Navigator Radar, Navigator Plotter and Air Electronics Officer (AEO)) stood no chance of escaping the aircraft. In common with all the original V Bombers, only the pilots of the Victor were provided with ejection seats. The theory was that, following any incident which necessitated the crew abandoning a Victor, Vulcan or Valiant, the pilots would retain sufficient control of the aircraft to allow the rear crew to escape from the aircraft via an escape hatch (and 'booster seat' mechanisms which pushed them towards the open escape hatch) before the pilots ejected. Of course, on very many occasions this idea proved to be nonsense and over the life of the 3 types of V Bomber aircraft many navigators and AEOs perished because they did not have ejection seats.

Of the 2 pilots, only the aircraft captain, Flight Lieutenant Keith Handscomb (who died in early 2009), was able to eject, and then only after great difficulty reaching his lower ejection handle. He was rescued from the North Sea by a passing merchant ship. The Buccaneer was able to land safely, but the flight was the last for the 4 remaining Victor crew members;

Flight Lieutenant David Hallam Crowther

Flight Lieutenant Peter Joseph Leo Slatter

Flying Officer Terence Patrick Evans

Flying Officer John Arthur Price



Picture of 57 Squadron Victor K1A XH618 refuelling a Buccaneer



57 Squadron Victor K1A XH618 pictured at Luqa, Malta in 1968

Wing Commander 'Wings Day' Letter

Our President David Houghton came across a most fascinating letter sent by 'Wings Day'

'Chatting to the Director of the local museum the other day, he kindly sent me a copy of a letter written by Wing Commander 'Wings' Day (OC 57 Sqn at the start of WWII, shot down in October 1939, eventually ended up at Stalag Luft III, Zagan and took part in the Great Escape), in July 1945 about what happened to him and a fellow escapee (the letter is to the latter's widow) after the 'break out'.'

This is a typed copy of a letter my Mother Jadwiga received from "Wings" H.M.A. Day in 1945.

My Dear Mrs. Tobolski

I regret I have not written to you before, but I have no excuse except that I had hoped to be able to give you more details after I had spoken to others who might have seen your husband.

I had better introduce myself. I am Wing Comdr. Day and your husband was my companion on the escape of the 25 March 1944 from which he lost his life.

To begin from the beginning, your husband and I became companions because both of us had decided to make it to Stettin & neither wanted to go there direct but by Berlin in order to throw of the German Police of the scent. We thought that if our tickets showed that we came from Sagan on our arrival in Stettin it would arouse suspicion but if we broke our journey & took new tickets from Berlin we would not be so suspect. Also I had some people in Berlin who I thought might help us. Again my German wasn't much good while your husband spoke extremely good German. Again I new your husband quite well from the time he became a POW some time in early 1941. *(Actually 23/ 24 June 1942).*

On the night of the escape, all who were going out collected in a Barracks where the tunnel started from. I was dressed as a civilian & your husband as an airman in the German Air Force. His disguise was very good indeed -- the whole uniform being almost perfect although it was made up from R.A.F.. uniform made by prisoners in the camp. We both carried small suitcases with some extra food & clothes.

We were about Nos 30 & 31 to go through the that tunnel. I went first. While we were down there, an Air Raid warning must have been announced as the electrical lights all went out & we were left in the dark. The electric circuits was tapped into the main lights of the camp, which were always put out during Air Raids. However, eventually we got some home made lights down & we could get on. After I had got clear of the tunnel entrance & crept out of sight of the German sentry into the wood, I waited for your husband. We cleaned ourselves up, as it was dirty crawling around, & had even then about an hour to wait for our train which left from the Sagan Station at 1.2 a.m. It was very cold & there was about a foot of snow on the ground. When it was time we walked down to the station & found the station hall full of people -- German Service men, civilians, women & girls who, as a matter of fact, were singing some song rather prettily, also amongst this crowd I recognized about a dozen POW who had come out of the tunnel just before us. I knew that most of them were going to Breslau & their train must have been late. We bought our tickets separately without any difficulty & and when our train was announced we went onto the platform & got into it. I in one compartment which was extremely full, in fact I had to sit on the floor & your husband in another compartment, which was just as full. The occupants would have been surprised if they had known, who we were. We arrived in Berlin at Schles---- Station about 9 a.m.& left the platform in the crowd and met up again outside.

From the station we left by underground railway to see the man who I hoped would help us. The man was a Dane but he was living with a German family so we decided we would act a part in order & not to arouse the suspicion of the German family. Our plan was that I was to be a renegade British Officer & your husband was to be my escort who had just brought me up to Berlin to start to work for the Germans. Our plans worked beautifully & we were very kindly entertained by the German family who consisted of a man & wife, who gave us food & found a room for us to sleep in that night. The part of Berlin in which we were had been very badly damaged & the flat of the German family had been hit & they could only use a few rooms. Your husband was marvelous, as it was mainly through his fine acting & the plausible story he told that we aroused no suspicions. During that night there was a heavy Air attack on Berlin but both your husband & I were so tired that we could not be bothered getting up & going into the shelter. The noise of the bombs & guns woke us up but I didn't think either remembering it ending so we must have gone to sleep again.

Next day we made a tour of Berlin & looked at the damage & places of interest. Later as my Danish friend could not help us any more, we decided to go on to Stettin where your husband has a sister whom he hoped to see & who could perhaps help us. So we again took tickets, after having had lunch in a restaurant just opposite the station, for Stettin. We had two or three meals in the restaurants but they weren't much good as we had no food coupons & so could only have dishes, which required no coupons. Their dishes were either soups or made of vegetables & not very interesting. The train again was again very crowded & we arrived in Stettin about 8 p.m. in the dark. At Stettin your husband had to carry out another big bluff. As I have said your husband was disguised as a German Airman & and it is apparently the custom of the German Air Force that when an Airman goes on leave he must report himself to the military authorities of the town he is spending his leave & get his leave papers stamped to show that he has done so, other wise if he doesn't he is arrested if his papers are not found stamped. So your husband had to report to the R.T.O. Office in Stettin for this purpose. I waited outside the station at the prearranged place in fear & trembling in case his forged leave "pass" would be discovered. However everything went swimmingly & had no difficulty & his forged papers were stamped by the Officer on duty. From there we went to find your husband's sister. I did not go to the house but waited in a pub, so I don't know what happened at the meeting. Anyway about two hours later your husband came to the pub & said that she could not help us in any way. It was very essential that we got shelter for it was well below the freezing point & snowing. As it was getting late, being nearly 11 p.m., we decided we must try and contact someone preferably a Pole & ----- & get shelter. It was risky but we had to take the risk. Eventually as a last resort I contacted two French P.O.W. -- my French being much better than my German at that time. Nearly all the French P.O.W. were allowed to walk about in the town & country side as long as they reported back to their camp each night. There two men said they could shelter us & led us off & put us into a room in a factory where there were about 30 other Frenchmen. We were given some straw bedding and it was warm. Our two friends said that all the other Frenchmen in there were friends. So we went to sleep quite happily under the straw. However the next morning about 10 a.m. there was a great commotion, & two men in plain clothes & waving pistols came walking in, shouting for the "two Tommie's" (i.e. us). As we were in the corner of a room without any outlet we were completely trapped & also all the other Frenchmen had left & gone to work leaving us two alone. So in view of the pistols there was nothing to do but to give in. We were led off with our hands above our heads through the streets of Stettin -- both feeling very angry and disappointed. We were taken to Police headquarters where we were given a short interrogation -- they were not harsh with us. It was during the interrogation that the German police officer told us that a Frenchman had informed on us. When I said it was a "dirty trick" he quite agreed with me, but said that the informer would get his desserts, because as soon as he was of no further use to the German police they made it their business to let the informer's comrades know what he had been up to & the other

Frenchmen would probably kill him.

I hope this has happened. After the interrogation we were taken away & put in the town jail. We shared the same cell. It was beastly uncomfortable as we had no where to sit down except the floor & at night there was only one narrow board for us both to sleep on. The food was a thick slice of bread in the morning with jam, thinly spread on it & ersatz coffee - - lunch , a bowl of thick vegetable soup - - supper, a bowl of soup & a thick slice of bread with margarine. It wasn't much but sufficient as we never left the cell all day & thus took no exercise. The worst part was the bed bugs in the bedding. We remained in the prison for about 5 days, when we were suddenly called out of our cells at about 6 a.m. & taken down to the Chief Warders room where there were two plain clothes men & two uniformed SS men, who said they were taking us away but would give no destination. We were given back our suitcases etc. & led off eventually arriving at the Stettin railway station. We got into the train which after it started soon showed us that we were going back to Berlin. We tried to engage our guards in conversation, but they were not talkative & so we could find out nothing. However we thought we heard them discussing trains to Sagan. At Berlin I was separated from your husband. - - I was put into one car with the plain clothes men & your husband into another with the two SS men. I was taken to Gestapo HQ's but at that time I felt quite happy about your husband & thought he was being taken back to Stalag Luft 3, Sagan. My reasons being (a) your husband had no previous record of escapes & I saw no reason for the Germans being severe with him (b) I thought I heard the guards , that took him off, discussing trains to Sagan. However as I learnt later I was wrong.

My history after I was parted from your husband I will tell shortly. At Gestapo HQ' I saw a Police General who told me that I have been a great nuisance to them & that they were going to put me somewhere I could not escape. I was led away & put into a car & eventually arrived in Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp about 18 miles N of Berlin. There I met 3 other men from the Sagan escape - - Major Dodge, F/Its. Dowes & James. In June that year we heard for the first time from a Colonel Churchill - - a Commando officer, whom the Germans had just captured & thought was Winston Churchill's son - - that about 50 R.A.F. officers had been killed in the Sagan escape & we also saw some paragraphs in the German papers regarding Mr. Eden's protest, but we had no names or details. Later we escaped from the Concentration Camp, but were again recaptured & put into the Concentration Camp prison where we gained aa fairly good idea of how the Gestapo worked. Eventually after being evacuated into various other Concentration Camps we escaped to Italy.

Through my experience in Gestapo prison I know that the Gestapo have as traits & do not tell their prisoners what their fate will be. Although I know it is of small consolation to you, I feel you can be certain that your husband had no idea of the fate in store for him until it actually happened. I am sure he had not hours of wretchedness thinking of the anxiety & sorrow that would come to you when you got no news of him. It would be the thoughts of you that would worry him while his own fate I know he would face without the least fear.

I have the greatest admiration for you husband & it was through the cool & clear headed way he acted that got us through many critical incidents, which I have not been able to include in my story above. If we had not meet that treacherous informer we would have been in England that March, because the Stettin Police Officials said we had the hardest part of our journey behind us, the getting of a ship to Sweden was comparatively easy. As you can imagine the disappointment was gigantic to us both, but there never was a word of complaint against fate from your husband. He never let me see how hard he must have felt it. He was always cheerful & he set a great example even at the worst period when we were in the cell together. He was unselfishness personified, & always wanted to give up the best place or the biggest bit of food. I had to watch him, otherwise, I don't think he

would have kept anything for himself.

I got to know your husband very well in those days we spent together & I know how you must feel to have lost such a gallant & good man. I wish to extend to you my sincerest sympathies.

If you wish further information which you think I can give you please let me know, or if I can be of any other assistance, I will do my best, but please don't hesitate from writing to me.

Yours very sincerely

H.M.A. Day

Typed from an original letter in the possession of Paul Tobolski

Typed 2008 August 02

The real-life 'Allo 'Allo! Teenage tail gunner spent three months hiding in French cafe after his Lancaster bomber was shot down during raid

- Len Manning, from Sudbury, Suffolk, spent three months hiding in a French cafe after his bomber was shot down in July 1944
- The cafe was one of the Gestapo's favourite haunts
- He has finally received a medal for his bravery - 69 years later

By [SOPHIE JANE EVANS](#)

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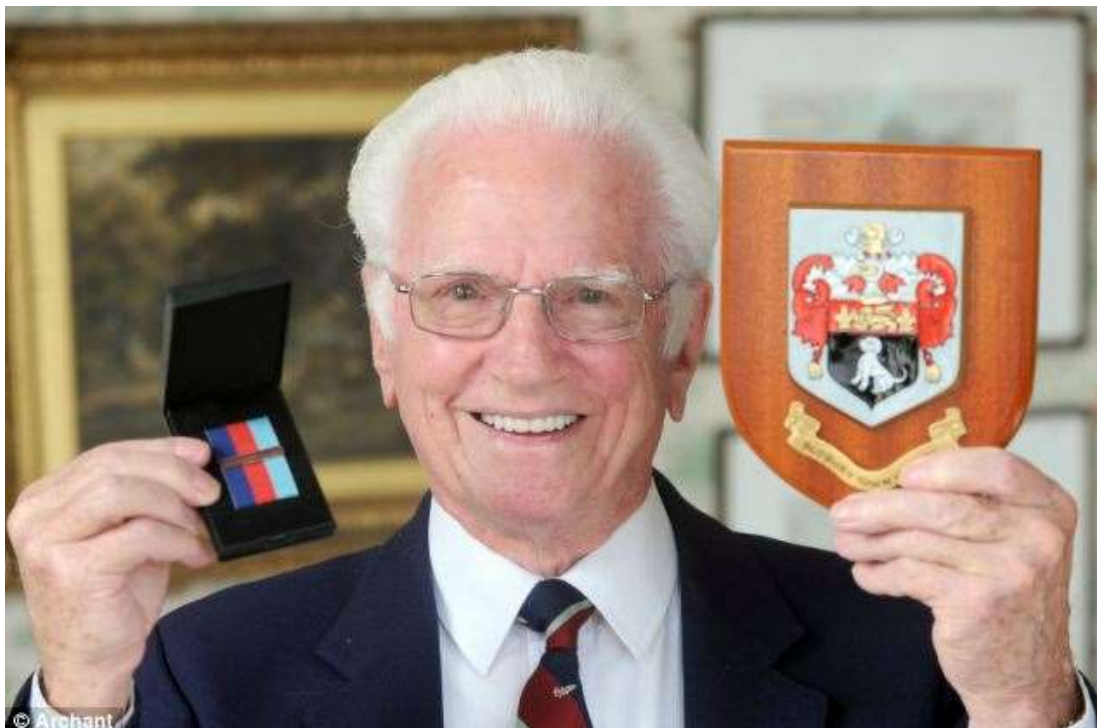
It could have been a scene in the BBC's 1980s sitcom 'Allo 'Allo'.

Teenage war hero Len Manning spent three months hiding in a French café after his Lancaster bomber was shot down in July 1944 - despite it being one of the Gestapo's favourite haunts.

Now, the RAF veteran has finally received a medal for his bravery - 69 years later.

'People often liken it to the TV series 'Allo 'Allo! but it was a really risky experience,' said the Tail End Charlie rear gunner today.

Hero: Len Manning, 88, spent three months hiding in a French cafe after his Lancaster bomber was shot down during a raid. He has finally received a medal for his bravery



'I spent three months living in a café/hotel in Basseville, hiding from the Germans who frequently used the café and stayed at the hotel.'

Mr Manning, from Sudbury, Suffolk, fought in the RAF's savagely-battered Bomber Command during the Second World War.

His 57th Squadron, based in East Kirkby, Lincolnshire, played a vital role bombing key strategic German targets as the Allies turned the tide of war against Hitler's Germany. The airman, who was 19 years old at the time, was lucky to survive when his giant Lancaster was blasted out of the skies over northern France in July 1944 - killing four of his comrades. He plunged from the blazing bomber at 4,000ft with a burning parachute and was badly burned before going on the run from his German hunters.



Fighter: Mr Manning, from Sudbury, Suffolk, fought in the RAF's savagely-battered Bomber Command during the Second World War
He told the East Anglian Daily Times: 'The plane was hit by a German fighter and immediately caught fire.'

'After I climbed out of the turret into the fuselage which was burning furiously, it was like looking down the flames of a blow lamp. It was the most terrifying experience of my life. 'Although I managed to get out of the plane, the parachute had also caught fire and as a result, I was badly burned.'

Four of Mr Manning's fellow crewmen died in the stricken Lancaster. However, he was fortunate to be rescued by French Resistance fighters - although the unlucky navigator, who also survived the catastrophic crash, was captured by the Germans and sent to a Prisoner of War camp.

Mr Manning kept his head down in Bassevelle until American troops liberated the town months later.

'They took us to a hotel and then flew us back to the UK where we were interrogated by M15 and bomber intelligence to make sure we weren't Germans,' he recalled.

'I was given nine months sick leave because of the injuries I received and was then medically discharged.'

He has always believed he and his comrades should have been given a medal because the air crew and particularly rear gunners – known as Tail End Charlies – stared into the face of death time and again.



Lucky: The airman was fortunate to survive when his warplane was blasted out of the skies over northern France by a German fighter in July 1944. Above, the fallen Lancaster bomber

'I was only 19 at the time and you couldn't dwell on the possible dangers although it was at the back of your mind because every raid was risky,' he said.

'You literally had people shooting at you from the ground and fighters coming at you from all around – there was nowhere to escape so you had no choice but to go through it.

'I only did three raids before I was shot down and that was enough. Every raid was a trauma.'

Mr Manning said angry Bomber Command members were not given medals because Prime Minister Winston Churchill believed it could have been seen as 'condoning killing civilians' after German cities were mercilessly bombed.

'We didn't think it was fair because all of the other services – the Battle of Britain, the Land Army – were given campaign medals,' he said.

'More than 30,000 air crew were killed in the war and we always felt it was a bit of an insult not to be deemed worthy of a medal. There are not many of us left now and we felt really let down.'



Award: Mr Manning received his Bomber Command clasp at Ipswich Town Hall yesterday. He was presented with the medal by Ipswich Mayor Hamil Clarke (right), watched by Sudbury Mayor Adrian Osborne (centre)

'So about five years ago, we started a campaign to push for them (the government) to issue a medal – it was really about the principle of it.'

Mr Manning has finally received a Bomber Command Clasp to mark the service he gave to his country as he risked his life time and time again.

He was presented with the medal in a special ceremony at Ipswich Town Hall yesterday. He was accompanied by Sudbury Mayor Adrian Osborne, one of those behind the push to get rightful recognition for Bomber Command.

Mr Osborne said: 'I have great respect for anyone who took part in the Second World War, especially in RAF missions, which were particularly dangerous.'

'Those awful memories will live with the airmen forever and they will never lose the horror of what they've been through.'

'It's important to recognise the sacrifices they made and it's a good reminder to younger generations.'

'I'm really over the moon for Len that he has finally received the recognition he deserves.'

When is a 57 Squadron Hawker Hart not a 57 Squadron Hawker Hart?

Visitors to the Royal Air Force Museum, Hendon, London may have seen the splendid Hawker Hart in the Milestones of Flight Hall, resplendent in the markings of 57 Squadron.

The Hart was one of the mainstays of the RAF during the early 1930s, with over 400 examples of the type (designed by Sydney Camm) equipping squadrons across the globe, including 57 Squadron at RAF Netheravon from 1931 to 1936, when the squadron re-equipped with the more advanced Hawker Hind.

However, all is not as it appears with the RAF Museum Hart as, despite the aircraft being painted as a 57 Squadron 'kite' (and as J9941), the aircraft never actually served with 57 Squadron or, indeed, any RAF squadron.



In reality, 'J9941' started life in 1930 as the 13th Hawker Hart of the production line in Kingston, Surrey, before being granted a Certificate of Airworthiness (CofA) on 8 January 1931 and beginning life as a civilian demonstration aircraft for Hawkers.

For the next 40 years, the aircraft carried out a variety of roles for Hawkers, before being retired (and effectively grounded) in 1971 and then transferred to the RAF Museum in 1972. During its life, J9941 did make a flying appearance at RAF Marham (then the home of 57 Squadron, operating Victor tanker aircraft) in 1966 to mark the 50th anniversary of the formation of 57 Squadron.

A full record of the life-and-times of J9941 is reproduced below, with all the data taken from publicly-available information (but which remains copyright the RAF Museum, 2012) on the RAF Museum's website.

HAWKER HART II G-ABMR/J9941 MUSEUM ACCESSION No.74/A/29

- 8 Jan 31** Issued with CoFA. Fitted with 525hp Kestrel IB. 13th Hart off the production line. C/N H.H.1. - built as a civilian demonstration aircraft for Hawkers under works order 214/30. Built at Kingston, Surrey. One of 4 Harts built as demonstration aircraft in 1930.
- 28 May 31** Registered as G-ABMR
- 1932** Fitted with Fury-style wheel spats for that years' RAF Hendon Air Display. Overall silver c/s. Spats removed soon afterwards. Photos: Aeroplane Monthly Dec 80 p.654; Aeroplane Monthly November 1988 p.669.
- During the period 1931-1936, MR acted as test bed for most of the RR Kestrel series of engines, including 1S, 11S, 11B, 11MS, V, VDR, VIS, XFP, XDR, XVIFP, XVIDR and XVI (special). Also flew with an Osprey tail (1938), Audax message pick-up hook, Hardy low-pressure tyres and Hind tailwheel, and was used as a photo platform by Hawkers. Flying still in overall silver, the Osprey tail trials added RAF style rudder stripes. (Photo - Flying Review International Apr 64 p.55). The aircraft was flown by Hawker test pilots Bulmar, Hindmarsh, Lucas and Sayers and up to 1936 demonstrated in 15 European countries.
- In 1933, the aircraft was photographed at the RAF Reserve Course at Hatfield.
- Photo with wheel spats c. 1934; Aeroplane Monthly Nov 88 p.669.
- 1937-39** Served as Hawkers' photographic platform aircraft; fitted with 525hp Kestrel II.
- 31 Aug 39** CoA issued to H G Hawker Engineering Co Ltd, Brooklands, Surrey.
- c.1939** Painted in dark earth/dark green camouflage with trainer yellow undersides and civil registration G-ABMR underlined by broad red, white and blue horizontal bands on the fuselage and RAF style fin flashes. Used as company hack ferrying test pilots between Hawker factories at Langley and Brooklands and RAF maintenance units, and as a photo plane by Cyril Peckham. Photos: Aeroplane Monthly Dec 80 p.654; Flying Review International Apr 64 p.55; The Aeroplane Spotter August 24th 1946 p.196.
- 9 Feb 40** CoA expired but progressively renewed to 04 Apr 41, May 42, and 20 Aug 44.
- 11 Oct 43** Last CoA extension withdrawn and MAP Permit No.6 issued valid to 10 Oct 44, extended to 5 Nov 45 and 14 Nov 46, then lapsed.
- 22 Aug 46** Pilot's Flying Log Book of F/O W Humble (Doris ref. X001-2301) records 45-minute local flight from Langley.
- c. Nov 46** Withdrawn from use, when final permit to fly expired.

- 8 May 49** Flown again at Royal Aeronautical Society Garden Party at White Waltham, Berks, in front of a crowd of 5,000. Photo - Flight 9th May 1949 p.596. The 'Aeroplane' for 13 May 49 reported that the aircraft 'Thundered around and was made to cavort in the most polished manner in the hands of Sqn Ldr Wade'. The aircraft was repainted in silver and was fitted with a Kestrel XVI derated to 560hp111S standard. In this, its first outing for some three years, it gave an eight-minute display. Normally based at Dunsfold. Flew in matt silver over all with dark blue letters. Photo: Aeromodeller Oct 54 p.536. In same scheme; Air Enthusiast Nov/Dec 2001 p.26.
- 23 Jun 51** Aircraft entered by Princess Margaret, together with Hawkers Hurricane IIC 'Last of the Many' for the Royal Aero Club-organised Kings' Cup Air Race at Hatfield, Herts both to have been flown by Gp Capt Peter Townsend (The Hurricane in the Jubilee Trophy), but bad weather caused the racing to be abandoned. For this event the Hart gained a royal blue and gold c/s and had the rear cockpit faired over, but with the projecting lip of the gun-ring fairing visible. The large race number '91' was carried on rudder and fuselage. Photos: Aeromodeller Oct 54 p.536; Warbirds Journal 35 p.21; Flying Review International Apr 64 p.55; Aeroplane December 2003 p.87; Scale Models Oct 83 p.529 (minus fairing).
- 19-21 Jul 51** Displayed at Daily Express 50 Years of Flying display at RAF Hendon. Photo – Flypast June 2007 p.63.
- 23 Sep 51** 'MR placed 53rd from a field of 55 when flown by Fg Off G F Bullen in the Daily Express South Coast Race, flying from Shoreham.
- 19/20 Jan 52** Flown at the first rally of the Vintage Aeroplane Club, at Denham airfield. Photo - The Aeroplane 1 Feb 52 p.141.
- 25 Jan 52** 'Flight' of this date reported recent use of 'MR by John Yoxall to photograph 1 Squadron Meteors in formation, still in its Blue/Gold c/s. Photo starting up for this flight; Aeroplane Monthly Nov 88 p.669.
- 12 Jul 52** Aircraft entered in Kings Cup Race, flown by Flt Lt Bullen, who Sat coaxed the aircraft to an average speed of 169mph, coming 18th from a field of 23, when 'the sprightly old Hart set course in a lively fashion' in the words of 'Flight'.
- 14 Jun 53** Flown at Royal Aeronautical Society garden Party at Hatfield in formation with Hawker Hurricane and Tomtit. Photo: Flight 19 Jun 53 p.787.
- 20 Jun 53** Flown by Frank Murphy, averaged 163mph in the Kemsley Trophy race, Southend, Essex.
- Sep 56** Engine failure at 600 feet over Wiltshire piloted by D M S (Duncan) Simpson. Forced landing in clover field - supercharger seizure due to bearing failure. Took three years to find replacement parts for the Kestrel, a replacement supercharge casing coming from the owner of a Kestrel powered dragster.
- 2 Feb 59** Civilian registration cancelled.

- 1959** Restored in military markings as first production Hart, J9933 with undersize wing roundels. Ailerons not slotted and non-standard. Usually flown at this period by Hawker test pilot Duncan Simpson. Photos: Aeromodeller Feb 60 p.70; Aeroplane Monthly Nov 88 p.668.
- 1960** Fitted with modification to alleviate carburettor icing - de-icing fluid tank, operated by cockpit kigass primer.
- 6 Jul 60** Flown in its new markings at RAF Duxford, Cambs Air Display. Photo Air Pictorial November 1960 p.378.
- Sep 60** Flown by Duncan Simpson at RAF Chivenor Battle of Britain day; Photo Flight 7 Oct 1960 p.596.
- 18 Jun 61** Flown by Duncan Simpson at the Pilot's Rally at Elstree Aerodrome, Herts. Photo – Elstree Aerodrome The Past in Pictures p.189.
- 16 Jun 62** Flown at Golden Jubilee of U.K. Military Flying Display at RAF Upavon. Photos: Flight International 21 Jun 62 p.968; Aeroplane Monthly Nov 88 p.670; Aeroplane Monthly Sep 98 p.23; Airfix Magazine Aug 62 p.68. Colour photo; Aeromilitaria Summer 2000 rear cover.
- 7 Jul 62** Appeared at RAF Little Rissington for 50th Anniversary of Central Flying School display. Photo – RAF Little Rissington – The CFS Years (Bagshaw et al) p.136.
- 20 Jul 62** Flown by Duncan Simpson to RAF Marham, Norfolk for ceremony of standard presentation by HRH Princess Marina to Nos.55 & 57 (Bomber) Squadrons. Photo: V Bombers (013299) p.75.
- Oct 63** Repainted as former No.57 Squadron Hart J9941, B Flight, 1932-33, from the logbook of Gp. Captain H.N.Hampton. J9941 also being from the first production batch. Photos: Airfix Magazine Jan 64 p.140-141; Warbirds Journal 35 p.20; Flight International 5 Dec 1963 p.944; Flying Review International Apr 64 p.55; Aeroplane Monthly Nov 88 p.669.
- 18 May 64** Photographed at RAF North Weald, Essex. Photo; Action Stations Vol.8 p.188.
- Sep 64** Flown at the SBAC Show, Farnborough. Photos - Air Britain Archive No.4 1980 p.99; RAFM PC73/59/146.
- 18 Sep 65** To RAF Colerne for the No 24 Squadron celebration of 50 year's flying, but went u/s for the display, as reported in the local press.
- Sep 66** Flown at RAF Marham, Norfolk for the celebration of the Golden Jubilee of Nos. 55 and 57 Squadrons. Photo - Royal Air Force News w/e 24th September 1966.
- 14 Jun 68** Performed in fly-past at RAF 50th Anniversary Royal Review at Abingdon.
- 12 Jun 70** Displayed at RAF Cranwell, Lincs. Colour photo: Aircraft Illustrated Dec 70 p.474.

- Sep 71** Appeared as J9941 at Little Rissington Open Day. Colour photos as J9941 - Aeroplane Monthly Dec 80 p.654 and Oct 81 p.553; Aircraft Illustrated Apr 72 p.168-9.
- 26 Sep 71** Appeared at Wycombe Air Park (Booker) display. Withdrawn from flying later in 1971.
- 1972** Transferred to RAF Museum Hendon, on loan from Hawker Siddeley Aviation Ltd, Dunsfold. Displayed in Camm Hall with Hart (T) and Hind. Still airworthy when presented.
- Apr 1982** To Abingdon for minor refurbishment and display at Abingdon's 50th birthday display 18 Sep 82. Photo: Control Column Dec 82 p.173; FlyPast Nov 82 p.44. Photos being moved from Hendon FlyPast Jul 82 p.7; Air Extra 39 p.20; Aircraft Illustrated Aug 82 p.349. Returned to Hendon Oct 82.
- 1983** Briefly displayed in Bomber Command Hall prior to despatch to Cardington. Photo at Cardington, 1984; Aeroplane Supplement, Museums Guide 2002.
- c. Sep 84** To Hendon after restoration at Cardington. The aircraft was damaged when loaned to RAF Abingdon when incorrectly de-rigged resulting in bending of top mainplane. It reappeared at Hendon briefly after the Abingdon loan then went to Cardington for repair.
- 1992** Moved from Camm Hall to opposite Stranraer, with later moves around the main aircraft hall.
- 9 Apr 2003** Moved to new Lottery funded Milestones building at Hendon for suspended display. Photos as displayed; Wingspan International 20 p.65; Royal Air Force Celebrating 90 Years p.123.

In his memories of flying Hawker aircraft,

[http://cammfollowers.org/general/pilots_and_flying_organisations.html#Flying Sir Sydney Camm aeroplanes from the Hawker stable](http://cammfollowers.org/general/pilots_and_flying_organisations.html#Flying_Sir_Sydney_Camm_aeroplanes_from_the_Hawker_stable)

Duncan Simpson OBE recalls with fondness his tixme (some 18 years) flying the '57 Squadron' Hart, and includes some wonderful pictures of the aircraft that reflect its long service. These are reproduced below, and show the aircraft in its original civilian registration (G-ABMR, which it retained until 1959), and two pictures of the aircraft at Duxford in 1972, when it was wearing the markings of 57 Squadron and the registration J9941.





Finally, as you can see from the RAF Museum records relating to the aircraft, the registration J9941 was chosen in memory of Group Captain (later Air Commodore) Herbert Nind Hampton DFC, who flew with 57 Squadron in 1932/1933 as a junior officer and who went on to be the Officer Commanding RAF Aldergrove.

Group Captain David Houghton

Archivist/Historian's Report 2013

Once again the time has come when I write my report on my activities for the year 2012/2013, and this year it will be quite a difficult task. The past year has been the most quiet I can recall since taking up the post of Information Officer. Checking my records, I notice that since July of this year, I have only had to deal with two UK requests for information, and as one of these was from a relative of a 57 Squadron navigator who wanted to obtain the citation for the award of a DFC to his grandfather, you can see that I have not been overworked.

I did have a good number of letters and emails from the Continent, in the main, from organizations who visit the site of crashed aircraft and dig down to recover bits and pieces of the plane. It would seem that our Association is now in the records of a large number of these continental organisations and many of the queries received are in respect of other Squadrons in Bomber Command. As I have the complete set of Loss Registers and the Bomber Command Diaries, it is indeed a pleasure that I can offer information and advice as to their next move.

I visited Holland again 2013 to attend the Liberation Day ceremonies in Dronten. The same seven 'old lags' were there and as I thought, this was the last official visit by the Air Gunners. The town is now twinned with the City of Lincoln and some thirty representatives from Lincolnshire were present. Nevertheless old habits die hard and we were afforded a great welcome, and as we left the town square after the ceremony to go to the Meerpal (a sort of large recreation club), we were loudly applauded by the four to five hundred present in the square. Talking to other ex Air Gunner's, I gathered that most of us have received an invitation from our host families to visit them again in 2014. I certainly have and will do so.

As I had a spare day in my programme, I arranged to meet Chris Van den Linden, an avid crashed aircraft excavator and we once again drove out to the Rheinberg Military cemetery. I was able to visit the graves of my crew, and I was delighted that all five of the old rough cast headstones had been replaced with the new shiny finished version, which means that keeping the headstones clean will be so much easier. As is always the case, the cemetery was maintained to a first class standard. Chris Van den Linden had been asked by a New Zealand organisation if he would photograph the headstones of all of the New Zealand aircrew who are buried there, and I helped him locate each one (some ninety-two in number) out of a total of three thousand, two hundred graves. A very satisfying task.

And so I end my short report. Any information on 57 and 630 Squadron is very welcome. I collate this and most of it is copied and passed on to the East Kirkby museum organisation.

Look forward to meeting you again at East Kirkby in 2014.

Allen Hudson.