

# **ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER**



## Chairman's Report

Well, another six months have flown by since the last Newsletter and we are heavily into the planning for the Reunion at Leconfield in early May. As you know we had planned to have it later in May at Boulmer. But, at the committee meeting in November, our new Squadron Liaison Officer, who is a pilot on the flight at Leconfield, told us that he had managed to persuade the powers that be that the Officers mess could host the Reunion "*At a reasonable Cost*". So, we decided to go for it.

I'm particularly looking forward to the Reunion because it was at Leconfield that I first joined 202 Squadron in 1966, a couple of years after it had reformed with Search and rescue Whirlwinds. I'm also looking forward to meeting 'Iggy'

A number of people had mentioned 'Iggy' to me in passing, and then at the Coastal Command Reunion last year, I and a couple of other ex-OC's 202 met Mike Davies, another previous 'Boss', who told me he was in regular contact with 'Iggy' and that he was sure he'd love to come to the next Reunion

I reported this to the committee, a number of whom remembered 'Iggy' themselves, and we agreed that we should invite him to become Honorary Life Member and to come to the reunion as our guest. I'm delighted to report that he accepted both invitations and, all being well, he'll be at Leconfield with us

When we're at Leconfield, we'll take the opportunity to have an Annual general Meeting, the first formal one. As well as receiving reports on how we're doing - you'll have the opportunity to confirm the committee. A little late, I know, but now that the Association is on a firm footing, it's timely. If there are any topics you'd like to see on the Agenda please let me or Dave Carey know. You can contact me via the website.

I think I have mentioned it before, but I believe that to make this association dynamic, we need to have a change in people on the committee now and then. I had a couple of offers, but, unfortunately, neither of them are able to be there in May. I am sure we'll get them eventually, but if there are any more of you willing to help, I'd love to hear from you.

See you in May

Pete Chadwick

## RAF Leconfield

It is probably apophorical, but I was always told many years ago (in National Service Days), that RAF Leconfield was the best station in the Service. Apparently when all those war films were being made in the late 1940s' and 1950s', Leconfield was the Station often "loaned" to film companies by the Air Ministry. Mysteriously accommodation was of a much higher standard than was normal then and the crushing, almost mindless discipline that passed for management in those days was very toned down. I wonder, has the accommodation changed in the subsequent fifty years.

HC

### Membership -A Stirring Story

This year has seen a large increase in the number of members of the Association. We are now nudging the 100 mark, with 23 life members included in that total.

There are now only a few (20 at the time of writing) who have yet to pay their subscription up to September this year, and I hope their ears will be burning.

Our membership spans eight decades, at least one stalwart tells me of times on 202 Squadron in Malta, and so I hope their will be much to talk about at the reunion in may.

See you in may

Dave Carey

*From the webmaster*

## The Flight Shop

The A Flight Shop has a lot of very attractive items of Squadron Memorabilia that are available to Association members.

202 Squadron Plaque	£24.00 *
202 Squadron Embroidered Badge	£4.00
Sea King Enamel Badge	£3.00
Large Sea King Print	£2.00
Sea King Mountains Print	£1.00
Sea King Postcard Print	£0.25
Tankard	£15.00*
Pen	£0.40
Key Ring	£1.00
202 Squadron Sticker	£0.50
RAF Crest – Enamel Badge	£3.00
Bookmark	£1.00
202 Squadron Crest Enamel Badge	£3.00
Sea King Sticker	£0.50
Sea King Embroidered Badge	£4.00
T Shirt (all sizes)	£8.50
Polo Shirt (all sizes)	£14.00
Tie	£7.50
Cummerbund	£20.00

*\* For ordering information  
Mail the webmaster*



If you know anyone who would like to be a member, either point them at the web site, or if they are not web enabled, email me and I will pass their details on to the membership Secretary.

# ***ASSOCIATION***

## ***NEWSLETTER***



*Iggy with Helen at a Squadron Wedding (John Malcom's) in 1962.*

### *Squadron Leader Kajestan Ignatowski AFC DFM VM*

Sqn Ldr Ignatowski, known to many in Coastal Command as "Iggy", was born in 1919 near Warsaw and in 1938 he joined the Polish Air Force. In September 1939, when the Germans attacked Poland and his EFTS was bombed, he and many hundreds of his fellow students made a mass escape via Roumania where they were briefly interned by the Roumanian Army. There then followed a roundabout journey by several trains and ships which took them to Bucharest, the Black Sea, Istanbul, Malta and Marseilles winding up at Lyon. When the Germans invaded France, attacked Lyon and bombed their airfield, Iggy's group escaped again, this time via Perpignan to Oran, Casablanca and Gibraltar from where a British cruise liner took them to England arriving in Liverpool in June 1940.

Then followed a long period of schooling, learning English and being assimilated into British ways, including a brief spell at Leconfield, after which Iggy resumed his training at Hucknell on Tiger Moths and then at Newton on Airspeed Oxfords, concluding with his Wellington conversion at Bramcote and a posting to 365 (Polish) Squadron at Hemswell as an aircraft captain with the rank of Sergeant. On his seventh operation he lost an engine to anti-aircraft fire over Wilhemshaven, but could not feather the propeller, so, after a

The task of 202 was to provide a daily meteorological reconnaissance sortie to look for and measure up the most active weather system which Met Office Dunstable (later Bracknell) expected to affect the UK within the next 24 hours or so. Starting with Halifaxes then converting to Hastings, 202 Squadron had a fine reputation for reliability. Sorties averaged about nine hours and varied from gentlemanly flying to hard work coping with heavy icing, severe turbulence, lightning strikes and long forgotten navigational aids such as Loran and Consol beacons. To lighten this task the Squadron also provided a back-up air transport facility for Coastal Command, so Iggy was happy to undertake occasional visits further afield; one example being to take a replacement propeller unit to a marooned Shackleton in the Caribbean, flying out via Iceland, Canada and the USA and returning by Bermuda and the Azores. He took the C in C Coastal Command for a US liaison visit to Keflavik and on another occasion he flew the AOC 18 Group to Bergen in Norway. During this period he was awarded the AFC.

In 1952 Iggy was posted to 210 Squadron flying Lancasters and Neptunes. Later that year, while on a Lancaster detachment to Malta for exercises with the Navy, during a dummy bombing run

long struggle to maintain altitude, he had to ditch off the East Coast where after a few hours in their dinghy they were all picked up by a RN fast patrol boat which eventually landed them at Lowestoft. In November 1943 Iggy completed his full tour of 30 operations including three visits to Hamburg where they were nearly shot down again, but escaped after some vigorous evasive action. By now a Flight Sergeant, he received the DFM and later the Polish Government in Exile awarded him the Virtuti Militaire.

Next, after OCTU, he was commissioned as a Pilot Officer in May 1944, and, despite having volunteered for a return to operations, he was trained as a QFI spending the next two years on training duties, teaching other QFIs. Finally he was transferred to 301 (Polish) Squadron on Halifaxes and made numerous trips to Italy and Greece where, because the two currencies had been ruined by the war, he regularly carried vast quantities of new currency. By then the war was fast becoming history and Iggy was transferred to the Polish Resettlement Corps and was demobbed in 1948.

For many East European nationals a return to their home countries was out of the question so Iggy, with his wife Helen, settled down in the Blackpool area. After a brief spell, however, he was invited to join the Royal Air Force which he did in 1949 and following refresher training at Finningly he was posted to 202 Squadron on Halifaxes, beginning his long association with the Squadron, and incidentally acquiring British nationality in 1950.

on a submarine, and in a steep turn to port, the outer section of his starboard wing folded up. A crash landing into the sea followed from which Iggy escaped with a nasty head injury. Despite that, after a hard swim to the dinghy, he and most of his crew were picked up by the duty destroyer. Following his return to flying duties Iggy was practising formation flying when the co-pilot, taking his turn at the hard work, suddenly lost all aileron control and a vigorous recovery had to be made from the left hand seat. On another occasion flying a Hastings from Aldergrove in bitter weather Iggy's hydraulics locked solid due to water in the system and he made a successful wheels up landing. That episode earned him a green endorsement.

During his long career Iggy managed to fit in four tours with 202 Squadron and three tours as air traffic controller. His eight log books record over 10,000 flying hours and nearly 400 weather sorties with 202, several years as a QFI tutoring scores of would be-pilots and other QFIs, hundreds of instrument rating tests and numerous check-outs of new squadron pilots, including several Squadron Commanders, and a year as an MU test pilot. He was promoted Squadron Leader in 1971 and retired in 1974 – with much regret – after 25 years in the Royal Air Force.

## Part one - Meteorological Reconnaissance Pre 202 Squadron



*I have learned to my horror at our social functions that many (most?) of our members are very vague about 202's raison d'etre pre Search and Rescue. While I know little about the early Coastal Command work, I can help on Meteorological Reconnaissance. This note gathers together, from many sources, including The Met Office Library, John Malcolm and personal memory, the story of Meteorological reconnaissance in the Royal Air Force from the early days of World War 2 till the mid sixties particularly as practised on our Squadron. It does not pretend to be a precise history; it is only information and entertainment for our younger members. Perhaps someone will have to do the same some day for Search and Rescue!*

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Even now with the advent of remote sensing systems like artificial satellites, the main method of finding out about the weather over the oceans is still to persuade merchant ships on passage to observe and report the weather every six hours. Sixty-odd years ago there was nothing else.

With the outbreak of the Second World War, ships in the North Atlantic could no longer report their positions and weather and the Atlantic



In 1943 Halifax and Ventura aircraft were approved for long and medium range reconnaissance and new squadrons, 517, 518, 519, 520 and 521, were formed or moved into the reconnaissance field subsuming the earlier Flights. Brawdy, Tیره and Langham were added to the stations operating Met Flights.

You will believe that the above is actually a drastic simplification of the formations, amalgamations and moves that took place then and the re-equipping was nothing like as simple as I suggest with each Command and Squadron claiming higher priority for available aircraft.

Two operational successes other than weather watching were recorded about this time: In April 1941 Flt Lt Douglas Bisgood was nearing the end of a RHOMBUS (fig 1) sortie when he came across three Junkers 88 returning to Germany from a raid over England. Bisgood, a former fighter pilot, gave chase and one of them was shot down with the Blenheim's forward firing gun. He was awarded the DFC (or probably a Bar).

On 12 August 1942 the EPICURE (fig 1) flight from St Eval (Flt Lt Dennis Wykeham-Martin) spotted a u-boat on the surface and attacked. The boat crash dived, but was blown out of the water by two anti submarine bombs and sunk. The crew were commended by AOC 19 Group.

An indication of the spirit on those early Met

became what is known in the jargon as a "data sparse area".

As an aside, the rate of attrition of merchant ships in wartime is demonstrated by the size of the British Voluntary Observing Fleet: the 995 British ships reporting weather in 1939 had been reduced to 480 when peacetime reporting restarted in 1945. The target number in 1945 for a reasonable network of ocean observations was 1000 British ships.

Knowledge of the weather, particularly predicted weather, is essential to the prosecution of modern (1900s onwards) warfare and those countries who had weather data during the war classified them SECRET. Other sources of information had to be found. One method used was long range aerial reconnaissance and, in Britain, the bulk of the task fell to Coastal Command.

The use of aircraft for sounding the atmosphere over a spot from ground level to their ceiling began in the 1914-1918 war, mainly as an aid to artillery work, and had been routine since 1925; these provided early examples of the acronym - "THUM" from "Thermal Upper-Air Measurement" and "PRATA" from "Pressure and Temperature Sounding". (Nowadays we would have used the letter "S"). One such sounding was made at Worcester using Spitfires for many years until well after the war.

Long range reconnaissance, the kind done later by 202, began in Spring 1941 with three Met Flights, 1403, 1404 and 1405, being established at Bircham Newton, St Eval and Aldergrove respectively to fly Blenheims. Soon afterwards 1407 Met

Flights (and an inkling of what it must have been like to be Flight Commander) comes from the No 1403 Flight Line Book: "If the cloud base is more than 10 feet, a Blenheim can land because it is only 9 feet high".

Initially the weather observing on RAF flights was done by the Navigator - a class of men that I have long regarded as the brains of the RAF. The decision to create a Meteorological Observer Section of the General Duties Branch of the RAF(VR) was promulgated late in 1942 and sufficient volunteers rapidly came from the mostly civilian Meteorological Office. Training began early in 1943. By the end of the war 20 RAF officers and 80 NCOs had been trained in addition to a number for the USAF.

In addition to weather observing, training included navigation and air gunnery; in fact the first observers wore the AG Brevet.

They didn't hang about in those days: from basic training to operational was not much over two months!

Sorties varied from day to day to suit operational requirements, but a typical triangular flight would be two low level legs with one high level one. The first, outward leg, would be about 700 nautical miles in length and would be flown at a pressure height of 950 millibars. This was achieved by the Met Observer using his barometer to talk the pilot onto that height and then the remainder of the leg was flown on the altimeter with no alterations to the sub-scale. If the mean sea level pressure made 950 MB an unwise height, 930 or even 920 could be used.

Weather observations were made every 50 NM with a descent to 50 feet asl at every fourth position to measure the sea level pressure. On these "sea level" runs the height was estimated by the pilot. Enough said, though radio altimeters did come along later!

In addition to the barometer, the Met

Flight was formed to operate out of Reykjavik. 1406 Met Flight was formed at Wick and absorbed 1408 Met Flight. These, however, were PRATA flights using Spitfire 2s.

Flights were also formed to operate out of Tiree and Gibraltar. Figure 1 shows the network of long range meteorological reconnaissance flights available in the latter part of the war, by which time some thirty flights a day were being made. There were also flights operated by the United States Army Air Force (and possibly Navy?) from Burtonwood, Newfoundland, Bermuda and the Azores. The principal Squadron involved was the 652nd Bomber Squadron of the 25th Special Reconnaissance Group operating Flying Fortresses. 269 Squadron RAF also operated out of Lagens from 1944.

Initially these Flights were equipped with Blenheims, but soon progressed through Hampdens to Hudsons allowing them to progress towards truly long range work.



Fig 1

Observer had two main instruments: the psychrometer and the air speed indicator. This latter was essential to apply corrections for the effect of air friction to the temperature readings. The psychrometer was an aviation version of the familiar dry and wet bulb set and was mounted on a strut outside a window close to the observer with water being supplied to the wet bulb by pumping from a tank inside the aircraft.

Another example of the spirit (or something) prevailing in those days happened at Gibraltar when the Halifaxes were being modified and were not available for Met use and the Met Air Observers (as they were then called) flew with 202 Squadron on Catalinas. There was no provision to mount the external psychrometer strut and the temperatures were obtained by the MAO strapping the psychrometer to his arm and leaning out of a hatch for some minutes until the thermometers settled down and could be read accurately.

At the end of the low level leg a climb was made from 50 feet to 500 MB with temperature measurements being made every 50 MB. More details of this procedure will appear in part 2 of this article.

The return, low level leg was a near mirror image of the outward one.

## Master Air Loadmaster Dave Bullock G.M.

*MALM Dave Bullock lost his life in 1980 on service with 202 Squadron in tragic, but heroic circumstances. Stewart Cameron Forbes has laid a wreath on his grave on behalf of the Association.*

I was very surprised that I did not know the history of this tragic mission – out of the country is my excuse. For those of you who also did not know, the following is from the RAF Coltishall Station History. "Tragedy struck RAF Coltishall and the Search and Rescue fraternity on 18 November 1980 when Master Air Loadmaster David Bullock, a winchman on 202 Squadron, lost his life whilst trying to save the life of an American airman, Lieutenant Colonel William Olson.

Lieutenant Colonel Olson's A10A Thunderbolt II collided with a similar aircraft in mid-air over Itteringham. The pilot of the other A10A ejected over the collision scene and parachuted to safety. In the meantime, Olson attempted to fly his aircraft back to Woodbridge. Near Winterton, he lowered the undercarriage on his A10, but the damage sustained in the collision allowed all the hydraulic oil to drain away, making his aircraft totally uncontrollable. He was then left with no alternative but to eject over the coast and was quickly blown out to sea in the 40 knot winds.

With the Sea King scrambled from Coltishall they were soon on station over the downed airman. MALM Bullock was lowered into the sea near the unconscious pilot. As gales whipped up 15 foot waves MALM Bullock hooked himself onto the pilot and proceeded to cut away the entangled parachute which by this time was inflating in the gusting winds. Despite the numbing cold, MALM Bullock almost succeeded in detaching the parachute when another gust of wind caught the inflated canopy with such force that it caused the rescue cable from the Sea King to snap. MALM Bullock tried desperately to keep the pilots head above water, but eventually succumbed himself and lost consciousness as the parachute continue to drag them both under the water.

With the Sea King out of action due to the winch cable snapping, the two airmen were finally recovered by an CH53 'Jolly Green Giant' from the rescue squadron at Lieutenant Colonel Olson's home base, RAF Woodbridge.

For his supreme sacrifice in this tragic rescue, MALM Bullock was posthumously awarded the George Medal, one of the countries highest awards for bravery. The citation said that he could have saved his own life, but consciously and with conspicuous courage chose to stay with the pilot in the hope of saving his life.

On 29 October 1981, Mr Patricia Bullock and her two children, Richard and Melenie, went to Buckingham Palace to be presented with her late husbands George Medal by Her Majesty the Queen. In addition, the United States Air Force bestowed one of their highest honours, the Airmans Medal. The medal was presented to Mrs Bullock by General Baxter, 3<sup>rd</sup> Air Force Headquarters Commander, at RAF Mildenhall on behalf of a grateful United States Air Force. The Prince Phillip

Helicopter Rescue Award and the Sir James  
Martin Memorial Medal was also presented to  
Mrs Bullock on behalf of her late husband."

## *From The Squadron*



Since I took over the reins as Liason Officer from Graham Stewart last summer, life on 202 Squadron has continues very much "business as normal".

Despite a somewhat tight manning plot throughout the Squadron, scrambles have continued unabated and during 2000 the Squadron had a total of 606 scrambles resulting in the rescue of some 553 people - a slight increase in the 1999 figures. So far this year, the Squadron has responded to 160 scrambles with 82 rescues. The most notable was the E Flight response to the tragic train crash at Selby in East Yorkshire, when two Sea Kings were scrambled to the crash scene.

202 Squadron continues to supply roulement manning to 78 Squadron, which is still deployed at Mount Pleasant Airport in the Falkland Islands. With effect from the summer however, each Flight will supply a complete crew for a reduced 6-week deployment instead of the old rolling roster for 8 weeks. The Squadron Engineers and Support Staff will continue to deploy for 4 months, but on a much less frequent basis.

The reunion weekend planning is progressing well from my point of view and so far I have been able to comply with pretty much all of Pete Chadwick's requests/queries. Two camp maps will be sent to those attending with your "joining instructions".

NB. Please be aware of the camp traffic circuit, we in E Flight are convinced it is designed to confuse even the most astute motorist/orienteer.

After the Lunch at E Flight OC 202 Squadron, will address and brief Association members on the current state of the Squadron.

During dinner, once again the Squadron Standard will be present.

Finally, all of us here at E Flight are looking forward to meeting all of you during the reunion weekend.

Martyn

## *The Editors Final Bits*



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### **Yorkshire Helicopter Preservation Group**

Dave Carey has been contacted by Alan Beattie of the Yorkshire Helicopter Preservation Group. His team has just completed the restoration of Whirlwind Mk 10 XP345, and they would welcome any of our members who care to visit their museum at Elvington near York. You might like to call in there in transit to the reunion in May, their times of opening are 10:00 to 17:00 on Saturdays and Sundays. As well as rotorcraft, they have some fixed wing aircraft including Halifax, Victor and Buccaneer.

#### ***Webmasters Note***

***Click on the link below to visit the  
Yorkshire Air Museum***

[www.yorkshireairmuseum.co.uk](http://www.yorkshireairmuseum.co.uk)

### **Next Edition**

The next edition of this Newsletter will be in late September. News, views and other pieces are very welcome; if you don't want to write up a piece, just let us have the idea and we'll take it from there. You can either snail mail your entries to Hugh at the address given in the hard copy newsletter or in the contacts section

[mailto:hugh.cumming@202-sqn-  
assoc.co.uk](mailto:hugh.cumming@202-sqn-assoc.co.uk)