



NEWSLETTER

Is your subscriptions 'Overdue' - don't delay - Contact Gerry today

February Meeting

Bill Hyland reports:



Not the largest of gatherings on a cold February day at Greenacres, but those not present missed a very lively presentation by Paul Hewson, Regional Director of the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund who is based at Halton.

He took us on a whirlwind tour of his time as a navigator on the Hercules resupplying the Falklands from Ascension - a thirteen and a half hour air-to-air refuelled flight. A very rewarding time in Ethiopia dropping relief supplies from 15 (yes 15) feet! A tour in Germany in Army cooperation followed by interesting tours in the UK involving weapons development and eventually to Strike Command at High Wycombe.

He then moved on to his 'retirement' job with the RAFBF. Many of those present thought that they knew what the Fund did until this presentation and

were left amazed at the breadth and depth of the assistance that the Fund can provide, not only financial and physical help but also aid to

those with stress disorders and the like. It came across strongly that this was help for the RAF Family, from WW2 veterans to serving personnel, families and children. Paul also acknowledged strong ties with SSAFA and RAFA. It was pointed out that the Fund has many ongoing commitments such as the Princess Marina Home and other properties used for respite breaks, and has also recently taken on the task of maintaining the Bomber Command Memorial. These of course require a vast amount of money and a glance at recent balance sheets showed expenditure well above income. It was admitted that marketing the 'product' has perhaps been a weak point. Maybe it is down to us to help spread the word a little more.

In Memoriam

Sadly we have lost 3 members over the past few weeks, **Gordon Fountain, Charlie Wilson and Mike Pearson**. Although we had not seen Gordon for some time, you may recall he sadly lost his wife in December, so it was a double blow to his family. He was shot down on his second operation and was a POW, similar in many ways to Jim Copus' story on Page 2. Charlie was a member of No 115 Sqn and again we had not seen him for a while but both he and Gordon kept in touch through the Newsletter. Mike was a younger man and you will remember his excellent presentation on the rear crew of the Vulcan. Mike was a long term Vulcan AEO and forwarded his experience to many as an OCU instructor, as well as serving on a number of Vulcan squadrons.

We were represented at Gordon and Mike's funeral but Charlie's was a family affair. We send our deepest condolences to their families



LOTTERY FUNDED



Warrant Officer P J (Jim) Copus

97 Sqn

Part 2

Ed: *We continue Jim's story after his Lancaster was shot down by a German fighter.*

The Escape: I tear off my oxygen mask, intercom leads and harness and folding my small seat upwards and out of the way, manage to drop from my turret into the aircraft's fuselage where it is pitch dark.. Although we gunners wear the parachute harness at all times in the aircraft, there is no room for the parachute pack itself in any of the turrets and my own was stored on the port side of the aircraft, aft of my position and opposite the rear fuselage hatch. It took only a few seconds to find my parachute and to clip it onto the harness. The rear hatch was my emergency exit and I began wrestling with the release handle. The door was jammed! More determined wrestling. The handle broke off in my hand. I had to scramble virtually the whole length of the Lancaster's fuselage encumbered by parachute, heavy flying suit and boots. In pitch blackness! Although the entire fuselage is extremely confined and packed with equipment, this is nothing compared to the gymnastics required to wriggle over the wing-spar. All this must be achieved in the dark, making sure that the parachute rip-cord does not get snagged and cause premature deployment and with the knowledge that at any moment the aircraft could steepen it's dive, suddenly flip into inverted flight or simply explode as the engine fire touch off the fuel tanks in the wing. It is also possible that the fighter could attack again. Any chance of hiding in the night is now gone, our demise highlighted by sheets of flame. There are numerous other scenarios, none of which is likely to improve our chances of survival. I dismiss these thoughts and continue floundering towards the under-nose hatch, now the only means of escape. The hatch is in the very forward part of the aircraft and access to it is achieved by crawling under the pilot's instrument panel to the right of his seat. The manoeuvre can be likened to crawling through the

knee hole of a writing desk. The pilot is still at the controls, I can see him clearly. This forward part of the aircraft is illuminated by way of a hole in the fuselage admitting light from our engine fires. As I duck under the instrument panel I tap him on the leg and indicate that I am about to go. He nods briefly in acknowledgement. There appears to be no-one else in the aircraft, because I am able to walk upright towards the nose, still in pitch dark of course, until I simply plunge feet first through the open hatch! None of us is well prepared for the experience that follows. Training for bailing out had been limited to a little more than a few minutes, jumping from a bench in the Gym and attempting a landing roll. After all, we all knew for certain that it was only some of the other crews who would have to face the experience. That sort of thing only happens to the other chaps.....

This night, however, it is not the 'other chaps'. It is us. Our lucky mascots, our youthful confidence in ourselves and each other, our training, all now useless. What happens next is uncharted territory! The slipstream seizes me and whirls me around furiously and noisily. During one of my violent gyrations, I catch a glimpse of the aircraft as I free-fall away from it. I have kept hold of the rip-cord handle and knowing now that I am well clear of the aircraft, haul on the handle. The parachute explodes out of the pack as the airstream seizes it. The opening shock is immediate and extremely violent and I am wrenched into an upright position, completely winded and in some considerable pain from the contraction of the parachute harness. The sudden peace and quiet is extraordinary. The only noise is my own laboured breathing. I am hanging apparently nearly motionless. It is cold, very cold! We were flying at 18,000 feet when attacked and I imagine the aircraft was down to 15,000 feet when I bailed out.

Surprisingly my all-consuming thought is it will take a long time to get back home from this operation!

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The descent takes an enormous but unquantifiable time. I know the ground will be covered in snow and therefore easy to see. Straining my eyes I can see a vague brightness below. I brace myself and wait for the shattering crash of the landing. Nothing happens! What I take to be the ground is a thin layer of low cloud. Just cloud. As I begin to relax a little, comes the landing; surprisingly gentle. I am in a ploughed field covered with snow. My only injury is some bruising and scratching on my face as a result of pitching forward on impact with the ground.

To borrow the Germans' own favourite expression in these circumstances 'For me, the war is over'.

A Prisoner of War

The field in which I had landed was only yards from a row of houses. Their occupants were on me immediately I landed and I was dragged into one of the houses amid much shouting and bravado. It was widely known that German civilians were not exactly welcoming towards aircrew fell into their hands and I was very nervous about the whole situation. They shoved me into one corner of a room. My 'chute' had been gathered into an untidy bundle and was dumped beside me. In the other corner were grouped a cross-section of the neighborhood. They were gesticulating and shouting at me in unintelligible German. Some of the shouting, however, needed no translation! In the circumstances I did not feel at all like a 'Terrorflieger' as the Nazis called RAF bomber crews. Some young wide eyed children were among the crowd. As a gesture of goodwill I took some chocolate from my flying-suit pocket and offered it to them. They recoiled hastily, either not knowing what it was or suspecting it was poisoned, perhaps. To prove it was safe I ate a little myself and returned the rest to my pocket but the atmosphere was tense and I hoped that some sort of authority had been alerted and would remove me, before something unpleasant happened.

Fortunately, the civil police (they were referred to as 'gendarmes') arrived promptly and I was hauled off to the local police station, where I was thrown unceremoniously, without food and water, into a damp cell in which the only furniture was a bed. There was not even a blanket. I attempted to sleep but it was extremely cold. In an attempt to keep my feet from freezing I managed to squeeze both into one flying boot.

At some point during the night I was dragged out of the cell and upstairs to an office where I was confronted by the local Burgermeister (Mayor). There were, he told me, the bodies of several aircrew in the mortuary. If I would tell him the names of my crew he would let me know if any of them were among the dead. I felt unable to cooperate in this 'kind offer' which was, of course, a fairly transparent ruse to get more information out of me. My response was perhaps equally transparent but served well enough to show that I knew what he was up to. The crew I had been flying with, I told him, were completely unknown to me. My presence on the aircraft had been a last minute arrangement as a substitute. However, I added hopefully, I would be prepared to go to the mortuary and point out anyone I recognised. This offer was refused and I was returned promptly to my cell. In the morning, after an uncomfortable night I was brought a cup of ersatz coffee and something unidentifiable to eat. Shortly afterwards I was dragged out of my cell and outside, where a horse and cart was waiting. Surprisingly my 'chute' was returned to me and as I flung it into the cart saw Lund, the bomb aimer, already aboard. He had a leg wound. As I started to climb up into the cart with him, I was pulled back and told that I must walk behind, thus presenting the entire populace who had turned out to watch, with another opportunity to shout and scream abuse as we plodded slowly through the town.

We arrived eventually at some sort of holding area, a single room in an official building into which we were directed. Shortly after, Lund was taken off to hospital. My parachute was not returned to me and I suspect provided underwear for a 'Hausfrau'.

to be continued

Story Number 1

Many years ago, Al Capone virtually owned Chicago. Capone wasn't famous for anything heroic. He was notorious for enmeshing the windy city in everything from bootlegged booze and prostitution to murder.

Capone had a lawyer nicknamed "Easy Eddie." He was Capone's lawyer for a good reason. Eddie was very good! In fact, Eddie's skill at legal maneuvering kept Big Al out of jail for a long time.. To show his appreciation, Capone paid him very well. Not only was the money big, but Eddie got special dividends, as well. For instance, he and his family occupied a fenced-in mansion with live-in help and all of the conveniences of the day. The estate was so large that it filled an entire Chicago City block.

Eddie lived the high life of the Chicago mob and gave little consideration to the atrocity that went on around him. Eddie did have one soft spot, however. He had a son that he loved dearly. Eddie saw to it that his young son had clothes, cars, and a good education. Nothing was withheld. Price was no object.. And, despite his involvement with organized crime, Eddie even tried to teach him right from wrong. Eddie wanted his son to be a better man than he was. Yet, with all his wealth and influence, there were two things he couldn't give his son; he couldn't pass on a good name or a good example.

One day, Easy Eddie reached a difficult decision. Easy Eddie wanted to rectify wrongs he had done. He decided he would go to the authorities and tell the truth about Al "Scarface" Capone, clean up his tarnished name, and offer his son some semblance of integrity. To do this, he would have to testify against The Mob, and he knew that the cost would be great. So, he testified.

Within the year, Easy Eddie's life ended in a blaze of gunfire on a lonely Chicago Street ... But in his eyes, he had given his son the greatest gift he had

to offer, at the greatest price he could ever pay. Police removed from his pockets a rosary, a crucifix, a religious medallion, and a poem clipped from a magazine. The poem read:

"The clock of life is wound but once, and no man has the power to tell just when the hands will stop, at late or early hour. Now is the only time you own. Live, love, toil with a will. Place no faith in time. For the clock may soon be still."

Story Number 2

World War II produced many heroes. One such man was Lieutenant Commander Butch O'Hare. He was a fighter pilot assigned to the aircraft carrier Lexington in the South Pacific.

One day his entire squadron was sent on a mission. After he was airborne, he looked at his fuel gauge and realized that someone had forgotten to top off his fuel tank. He would not have enough fuel to complete his mission and get back to his ship. His flight leader told him to return to the carrier. Reluctantly, he dropped out of formation and headed back to the fleet. As he was returning to the mother ship, he saw something that turned his blood cold; a squadron of Japanese aircraft was speeding its way toward the American fleet.

The American fighters were gone on a sortie, and the fleet was all but defenseless. He couldn't reach his squadron and bring them back in time to save the fleet. Nor could he warn the fleet of the approaching danger. There was only one thing to do. He must somehow divert them from the fleet.

Laying aside all thoughts of personal safety, he dove into the formation of Japanese planes. Wing-mounted 50 caliber's blazed as he charged in, attacking one surprised enemy plane and then another. Butch wove in and out of the now broken formation and fired at as many planes as possible until all his ammunition was finally spent.

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Undaunted, he continued the assault. He dove at the planes, trying to clip a wing or tail in hopes of damaging as many enemy planes as possible, rendering them unfit to fly.

Finally, the exasperated Japanese squadron took off in another direction. Deeply relieved, Butch O'Hare and his tattered fighter limped back to the carrier. Upon arrival, he reported in and related the event surrounding his return. The film from the gun-camera mounted on his plane told the tale. It showed the extent of Butch's daring attempt to protect his fleet. He had, in fact, destroyed five enemy aircraft. This took place on February 20, 1942, and for that action Butch became the Navy's first Ace of W.W.II, and the first Naval Aviator to win the Medal of Honor.

A year later Butch was killed in aerial combat at the age of 29. His home town would not allow the memory of this WW II hero to fade, and today, O'Hare Airport in Chicago is named in tribute to the courage of this great man.



Chicago O'Hare International

So, the next time you find yourself at O'Hare International, give some thought to visiting Butch's memorial displaying his statue and his Medal of Honor. It's located between Terminals 1 and 2.

So what do these two stories have in common? Butch O'Hare was "Easy Eddie's" son!

Was it like this in your day?

In the age of the 707 or substitute your own aircraft!

Those were the good old days. Pilots back then were men that didn't want to be women or girlymen. Pilots all knew who Jimmy Doolittle was. Pilots drank coffee, whiskey, smoked cigars and didn't wear digital watches. They carried their own suitcases and brain bags like the real men that they were. Pilots didn't bend over into the crash position multiple times each day in front of the passengers at security so that some Gov't agent could probe for tweezers or fingernail clippers or too much toothpaste.

Pilots did not go through the terminal impersonating a caddy pulling a bunch of golf clubs, computers, guitars, and feed bags full of tofu and granola on a sissy-trailer with no hat and granny glasses hanging on a pink string around their pencil neck while talking to their personal trainer on the cell phone!!!

Being an Airline Captain was as good as being the King in a Mel Brooks movie. All the Stewardesses (aka. Flight Attendants) were young, attractive, single women that were proud to be combatants in the sexual revolution. They didn't have to turn sideways, grease up and suck it in to get through the cockpit door. They would blush and say thank you when told that they looked good, instead of filing a sexual harassment claim. Junior Stewardesses shared a room and talked about men, with no thoughts of substitution.

Passengers wore nice clothes and were polite, they could speak AND understand English. They didn't speak gibberish or listen to loud gangster rap on their iPods. They bathed and didn't smell like a rotting pile of garbage in a jogging suit and flip-flops. Chil-

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IPods. They bathed and didn't smell like a rotting pile of garbage in a jogging suit and flip-flops. Children didn't travel alone, commuting between trailer parks.

There were no mongolhordes asking for a "mu-fuggin" seatbelt extension or a Scotch and grapefruit juice cocktail with a twist.

If the Captain wanted to throw some offensive, ranting jerk off the airplane, it was done without any worries of a lawsuit or getting fired.

Axial flow engines crackled with the sound of freedom and left an impressive black smoke trail like a locomotive burning soft coal. Jet fuel was cheap and once the throttles were pushed up they were left there, after all it was the jet age and the idea was to go fast (run like a lizard on a hardwood floor). Economy cruise was something in the performance book, but no one knew why or where it was. When the clacker went off no one got all tight and scared because Boeing built it out of iron, nothing was going to fall off and that sound had the same effect on real pilots then as Viagra does now for those new age guys.

There was very little plastic and no composites on the airplanes or the Stewardesses' pectoral regions. Airplanes and women had eye pleasing symmetrical curves, not a bunch of ugly vortex generators, ventral fins, winglets, flow diverters, tattoos, rings in their nose, tongues and eyebrows.

Airlines were run by men like Howard Hughes and Juan Trippe who had built their companies virtually from scratch, knew many of their employees by name and were lifetime airline employees themselves...not pseudo financiers and bean counters who flit from one occupation to another for a few bucks, a better parachute or a fancier title while fervently believing that they are a class of beings unto themselves.

And so it was back then...and never will be again

Be a Beatty

You will all remember the BT adverts with Maureen Lipman encouraging us to use the phone. With the sad

loss of so many members recently, some more suddenly it begs into question, should we do more to keep in touch.

We have mentioned this before and I know some members do this regularly, in addition to Bill Hyland. Ron Doble, George Biggs, Tom Payne and our Chairman to name but a few please add your name. It only takes a few minutes and depending on your phone contract could be free after 7pm and all day at weekends so why not pick someone off our membership list and ring up for a chat. After all it will make a pleasant change from all those marketing calls about PPI insurance!

It takes a little effort but the pleasure it gives the recipient can be enormous and some of the stories and reminiscences can be fantastic. So make a pact with yourself today, that at least twice a month you will ring a fellow member for a chat. Many of course, only have this Newsletter to link them with The Chiltern ACA, as for various reasons, ill health, they are a carer etc, they are unable to attend meetings. **If they live locally you might be able to give them a lift**, so we can all meet up.

**Wednesday 20th March 2013
at 11.00am**



**Greenacres Tavern
The Cover Up
an illustrated talk
by
Tony Eaton**

Boeing suggests solution to Dreamliner battery problem



Boeing has presented measures it hopes will get the Dreamliner back in the air to the US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). The aircraft manufacturer proposed ways to fix the 787's battery problems which have led to its grounding at a meeting with the FAA on Friday. Boeing is reported to believe the measures could have the aircraft flying by late March or April. However, the cause of overheating in a lithium-ion battery on a Japan Airlines 787 has yet to be identified.

The 50 Dreamliners in service around the world have been grounded since January 16 after a battery fire on the Japan Airlines 787 parked at Boston and an emergency landing by an All Nippon Airways aircraft in Japan. Investigators believe a short circuit in one of the battery cells caused overheating that led to the fire which then spread through the battery. Boeing has proposed insulating the battery's lithium-ion cells from one another to prevent fire spreading, encasing the battery in a fire-proof shell and installing sensors. It also proposes a venting mechanism to remove fumes which led to the emergency landing.

Japanese investigators have identified the likely cause of the fumes which led to the emergency landing, reporting they found faulty wiring on the battery of the All Nippon Airways 787. The aircraft's auxiliary power unit was incorrectly connected to the main battery. However, the root

cause of the battery fire in Boston has not been found.

Japanese transport minister Akihiro Ohta said: "It's too early to say we are over the hump." US transport secretary Ray LaHood has warned the 787 will not fly again until the FAA is "1,000% sure" the batteries are safe.

Meanwhile, All Nippon Airways is cancelling all Boeing 787 Dreamliner flights until at least the end of May. More than 1,700 flights in April and May are affected, a period that includes Japan's Golden Week holiday. This takes the total number of affected ANA Dreamliner flights to 3,600. Unfortunately, it includes Golden Week (a Japanese Holiday week), but we have decided to inform our customers in advance as the prospect for their resumption is still unseen. "ANA is Boeing's biggest Dreamliner customer, with 17 of the world's 50 operational 787s, all of which have been grounded. International regulators grounded all Dreamliners last month in so that safety checks could be carried out on their lithium ion batteries.

Ed: *This is a much delayed project and one wonders if it was put into service a little early, but at least no lives have been lost.*

Happy Birthday Jack

Jack Easter reached the grand age of **98** last week and we sent a card to him on this auspicious day, signed by our Chairman Geoff. For someone who was the sole survivor of one wartime accident and then survived a second, it really is all the more special. Hopefully we will see Jack at our March meeting to hear some more stories of the man born during the First World War!

Whilst we are talking of Jack a big thank you to those who drive him to our meetings and other events, it is much appreciated.

Programme
Welfare

All events at 1030 for 1100 at Greenacres unless advised (*)

20 Mar	Rudolph Hess cover up - Tony Eaton
17 Apr	Fly Girl - Anita Mays
15 May	Guest's Lunch* 1200 Noon
19 Jun	Aeronautical Artist - Chris Sprent
17 Jul	Air Traffic Control - Peter Marks
21 Aug	S.O.E. - Hugh Davies
18 Sep	Guest's Lunch* 1200 Noon
16 Oct	Member's Meeting
20 Nov	TBN
18 Dec	Christmas Lunch

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Not much on the Welfare front other than to say we have rather a lot of ongoing ills. **George Carter** has had a further stroke and is almost certain to go to a care home. **Don Francis** is long term sick with the onset of dementia. **Derek Gurney** attended but I felt that he was putting on a (very) brave face. Have been in touch with **Christina Bunn** and she will keep in touch via Mavis or myself

Tom Payne, Ann and myself attended Gordon's burial at a very chilly Wigginton. Rosemary Calvert's sister was also present.

Sorry to report **Tom Payne** had a heavy landing at night in his flat, he reports it was a bounce but it led to an u/c failure. He has been jacked up, functionally tested and put back in service, but do take care Tom.

George Biggs, although confined to barracks is keeping in touch with the outside world by email and has had a lengthy exchange with the B of B Memorial Flight, more of that in next month's Newsletter.

Had a long call from Alan Dicker and he sounded more chirpy and 'with it' than he has in a long time. He would like to join us again but the 'waterworks' seem to be quite a problem.

Bill**Membership**

As you will have seen from Page 1 I am sad to report that Charlie Wilson, Gordon Fountain and Mike Pearson have all passed away, our thoughts are with their families. Perhaps we should mention that via Rosemary Calvert we hold an RAF Ensign that can be used at funerals, if it is required please let a committee member know and we will arrange for it to reach the undertakers.

There are a few subscriptions still outstanding, please do get in touch with me and send your £10, together with (as I always say) a stamped addressed envelope. Thank you in advance.

Gerry**Treasurer**

The handover of treasurers duties has taken place, we now just need the bank to ratify me to sign the cheque books. My thanks to Ian and also to wish him a speedy recovery from his operation.

Rod