

ROYAL AIR FORCE ADMINISTRATIVE APPRENTICE ASSOCIATION

“MULTUM A PARVO”

Web Address: www.rafadappassn.org



NEWSLETTER No 93 - March 2013



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NOTE BY THE ASSOCIATION CHAIRMAN

I am very pleased to say that two members have agreed to serve on the Committee and will be attending the next Committee meeting at Boddington in April. They will both be introduced to the membership at the next AGM in June and hopefully elected onto the Committee. More volunteers are needed to serve on the Association Committee either now or in the future. Therefore, if you can give your Association a few hours a month as a Committee member and are able to attend the AGMs please contact me on 01933 443673 or chairman@rafadappassn.org.

Bryan Schofield (33rd)

ASSOCIATION NEWS

ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE MEETING

Your Committee will be meeting on Saturday 13th April at Boddington, near Cheltenham, and will cover, amongst other items, any propositions for the Annual General Meeting in June. If you have anything at all that you wish the Committee to discuss, please let the Secretary have your written request by 8th April at 3 Humphries Close, Carterton, Oxon OX18 3HS or by Email: r.wise285@btinternet.com. Bob Wise will acknowledge your request.

AGM 2013 – RESOLUTIONS AND AGENDA ITEMS

Resolutions for AGM 2013 (22nd June) or any items for inclusion in the AGM agenda should be forwarded to the Secretary not later than 8th April so that the AGM agenda can be finalised at the Committee meeting on 13th April and published in the June Newsletter. You do not have to attend the AGM to submit an item for consideration but it will require a proposer and seconder on the day.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

The 2013 subscription of £10 was due on 1 January; at the time of going to press 31 members have failed to pay this year's subscription. If you have yet to pay your 2013 subscription please forward your payment to the Treasurer. If payment is not received before the issue of the next Newsletter (June) no further Newsletters will be dispatched to non-payers and their membership will be considered lapsed.

NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTION

To help us to reduce Association running costs, if you receive this Newsletter by post and it could be sent to you by email (which means you receive it in glorious colour on the day it is issued rather than in black and white up to one week later by snail mail) please let us know your Email address at chairman@rafadappassn.org

ARMED FORCES INDEPENDENCE PAYMENT

On Monday 8 April 2013 the Ministry of Defence, in conjunction with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), will introduce a new benefit called the Armed Forces Independence Payment (AFIP) worth £134.40 a week to those eligible. AFIP is designed to provide financial support to service personnel and veterans who have been seriously injured as a result of service to cover the extra costs they may have as a result of their injury. Special consideration for those who have given the most for their country is a principle set out in the Armed Forces Covenant. Specific queries and advice relating to claims should be directed to the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency (0800 169 2277 or by e-mail at www.veterans-uk.info). Personnel wishing to find out more about the Personal Independence Payment (PIP) can obtain information at www.gov.uk/pip.

ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE CONTACT DETAILS

Current contact details for the Association President, Chairman and Committee are as follows:

President: W J (Jim) Wilcox - 01452 863935 - [no EMail](mailto:noEmail)

Chairman: B (Bryan) Schofield - 01933 443673 - chairman@rafadappassn.org

Vice Chairman & Secretary: R (Bob) Wise – 01993 212595
r.wise285@btinternet.com

Treasurer: G (Garry) Hoyland – 01594 860644 -
accountant@rafadappassn.org

Newsletter Editor: P J (Pete) Ralph - 07901 551753 or 01923 491785 - ralph82@ntlworld.com
82 Gammons Lane, Watford, Herts WD24 5HZ

Membership Secretary: A (Tony) Burchell – 01425 511378:
burchell.anthony@sky.com

Web Manager: A (Alan) Bell - 0033545 985074
administrator@rafadappassn.org

Social Secretary: B P (Bryan) Hoare – 01403 581324:
socialsecretary@rafadappassn.org

Archivist: M (Mike) Heritage – 01403 783360:
archivist@rafadappassn.org

Almoner: T (Tom) McKnight – 01302 831970:
almoner@rafadappassn.org

Golf Secretary: S (Steve) Sanders – 01527 878825:
steveksanders@googlemail.com

Publicity Officer: R B (Bob) Danes – 01751 473790:
publicityofficer@rafadappassn.org

Bircham Newton Heritage Co-ord: W G (Dixie) Dean – 01728 747878: williamdean907@sky.com

2013 REUNION ATTENDEES

As at 01 March, bookings have been made on behalf of the following members attending the 2013 Reunion at the Waltham Abbey Marriott Hotel on 21/22/23 June. Full Reunion details and a final attendance list will be published in the June Newsletter.

1st Entry - **J Green**
2nd Entry - **S Robathan**
4th Entry - **R Wise**
5th Entry - **J Wilcox, D Burlingham**
11th Entry - **M Heritage**
13th Entry - **J White**
14th Entry - **B Richards, J Gent**
16th Entry - **G Singlehurst**
17th Entry - **B Bullivant, G Wright, R Blundell, P Edmonds**
18th Entry - **B Cowell**
19th Entry - **D Hobden, A Cowan, J H Evans, A Parsons, I Thomson**
20th Entry - **P Follett, J Forshaw, R Shepherd**
24th Entry - **D Bulleid**
28th Entry - **I G Bell, M Owen**
29th Entry - **A Bell, R Burrow, D Davies, R Pipe, H Trumbell, G Masson, R G Anders**
30th Entry - **B Philpott, P Reed, P Williamson, F Harrington**
32nd Entry - **M Wilkinson**
33rd Entry - **R Danes, G Goddard, B Schofield**
34th Entry - **K Hendry, M Needham, R Orr, M C Ridge**
35th Entry - **R Dickinson**
36th Entry - **B Devecchis**
38th Entry - **A Burchell, P Dyer, D Linney, F Carroll, M Day**
40th Entry - **W Dean, P J Charnell, R Cleife, K Edwards, T Price-Rees, I Ritchie, S Stevens**
42nd Entry - **R Hedinburgh, K Green, W J Hoggarth**
44th Entry - **B Morrison**
46th Entry - **S Foley, P J Ralph**
301st Entry - **W Beedie**
304th Entry - **D A Ainsworth**
305th Entry - **A Hammonds**
307th Entry - **B Hoare, S Sanders**
313th Entry - **D Johnson**
318th Entry - **T McKnight**
330th Entry - **G Hoyland**
Honorary - **Mrs S Craycraft, Mrs S Hopewell**

There are still a few rooms available and if you would like to attend please contact Bryan Hoare, the Social Secretary immediately (or Bryan Schofield if Bryan H is away).

AMENDMENTS TO MEMBERS DETAILS

Ron Bell (51stR): arbel@talktalk.net
Al Cowan (19th): a_cowan3@sky.com
Arthur Rowland (19th): arthur.rowland@ntlworld.com
David Short (19th): d.short780@btinternet.com
Philip Tobbutt (24th): philidor@cytanet.com.cy
Joe Cope (26th): doreen-joe@talktalk.net
Gary Keat (37th): 01452 532924
John Wildish (39th): 01586 550032
Chris Pratt (40th): Kinloss, Forres: chrisspey@aol.com: 01309 690725
Barrie Loftus (41st): bl41@live.co.uk
Steve Long (324th): stevedeelong@msm.com: 01452 531424
James Lithgow (330th): james.lithgow@telenet.be

NEW MEMBERS

593213 **Michael James Owen** (28th): Grimsby, Lincs: mjandtownen@ntlworld.com
593442 **Eric Campbell Barty** (33rd): Marston Moreteyne, Beds: 01234 767952: eric.barty@gmail.com
595072 **Keith Charles Bell** (305th): St Peter Port, Guernsey: 01481 726466: wellbrook.lodge@cwgsy.net
Mrs **P Clarke** (Honorary): Keyworth, Notts
Meryl Preston (Honorary)

RESIGNATIONS

592508 **Alan Walker** (12th)
8001167 **David Gilmour** (319th)



It is with sorrow that we have learned of the death of the following members:

592168 **John Clarke** (2nd)
Kathleen Cameron (Honorary)

OBITUARIES

BOB ADKINS (2ND)
(Reported in Newsletter No 92)

I am sure that most of you, like me, have friends and relations whom we regard as indomitable. Bob was one such for me. He started in the 2nd Entry and graduated with the 3rd, and whilst I didn't have a lot to do with him, I always found him friendly and amusing - and he was almost universally liked. He told me at the Halton Window Memorial Window occasion, that after passout he became a rugby player, representing RAF Cyprus amongst others - he never let on to me at St A where I was always scraping around to get players, grrrh! There was one app in the 3rd with whom he did not get on! And as the song goes "A festival great was arranged for the date!" and the Staff organised a grudge boxing match. Every punch that Bob landed we cheered wildly and both gave blood! I can't remember if there was winner as such, but the other guy really looked the worse for wear! I won't mention the opponent's name, but will say that he was one of the few apps who were not particularly liked; the irony was that at the Passing Out Ceremony it was announced that this app had been awarded the Cadetship - there was a thunderous silence! And the dignitaries were all looking bemused! Vale Bob, those who knew you will miss you.

Bill Huggins (5th)

BOB WHITE (5TH)

(Reported in Newsletter No 92)

On 11 Oct 1948 Jim Wilcox, John Blighton, Alan Milestone, Don Burlingham, Peter Pendlebury, Derek Cattermull, Roland Pickering, John Pack, Paul Holmes, Bill Huggins and Bob were shuffled into Hut D24; what an illustrious group! Bob had blond wispy hair, a ruddy tan, and came across as a West Country bumpkin! Most of us were worried that we would not make it, with fortnightly tests in trade, shorthand, and typing, but Bob never seemed worried and sailed through these tests with a smile. A number of our Entry took risks! Whilst Bob didn't, he always had a look as if he knew something we didn't! He was always willing to try anything in the sports line, without taking it too seriously. Jim told me that he met Bob in the Canal Zone, just as Bob was returning to the UK to try for aircrew testing. Whilst he didn't make it, he won the 2nd Prize - for he was not sent back to Egypt (he must have guessed at this!). He met up with Pete Pendlebury at Innsworth, and they spent time and money at the local dog track, unsuccessfully, as both had to serve on in the RAF. On leaving the RAF Bob trained in a specialist medical field in which he continued for many years.

When we met up at a local get-together, he mentioned that he had a medical condition, but without any drama, and with his usual cheerfulness. He had hoped to go up to the RAF Bomber Command Memorial with us, but again, with humour, said he decided not to go and then "bail out" whilst there. Friendship is not measured in time, but rather in its depth. Vale Bob, your memory will remain with all who knew you.
Bill Huggins (5th)

REGIONAL GROUP NEWS

For information, (should anyone wish to attend a Group meeting) Regional Group Coordinators' contact details are:

CYPRUS: Ray Burrow (29th): (00357) 99-303572 or (00357) 26 621662: raymondo@logosnet.cy.net

DORSET: Shay Foley (46th): 01202 631652: heights73@talktalk.net

GLOUCESTER: Mike Day (38th): 01993 841026: mikeday28@hotmail.com

SPAIN: Frank Carroll (38th): (0034) 962800462: notreve@shajah.org.uk

SW HERTS: Trevor Moore (15th): 01923 232686: babstrevem@btinternet.com

CYPRUS GROUP

The group met on 17th December at the Captains Bay Restaurant in Pissouri on a cold and bleak day with the rain beating against the windows as we shared a few beers, a good meal and the mandatory tall stories. Four of us turned up which, out of six, is a pretty good percentage. There was myself, Ian Dennis, Ben Casey and Phil Tobutt and we enjoyed the craic inside the warm room. Luckily the rain stopped before we left so we only got wet on the inside. Dave Pyant is in the UK after having an operation. I talked to him on the phone prior to the meeting and he seems to be perky enough and hopes to be at the next meeting, scheduled for March 4th – a Monday. We all agreed that we would meet on the first Monday of the months March, June, September and December. I couldn't contact Brian Granville so will have to hope that he can make the March meeting. As usual we would extend an invitation to anyone who is in Cyprus at the time of our meetings to join us for a few hours of meditation. Give me a call on 99-303572 and I will confirm the time and place.

Ray Burrow (29th)



DORSET GROUP

The third quarterly meeting of the Dorset Branch was held on Saturday 23rd February in the RAFA Wings Club in Weymouth. Six "regular" members attended and we had a visitor – the Newsletter Editor (who had the gall to win the RAFA meat raffle!). Apologies were received from Bob Mussard (330th),

Derek Payton (24/25th) and Mike Heritage (11th). In accordance with our policy of moving the venue around the county, the next meeting will be in the Half Moon Hotel in Sherborne on Saturday 25th May – 1230 for 1300. Dress: Casual. Queries to Mike at MichaelHamill658@gmail.com or 01935 389932 or to me at heights73@talktalk.net.
Shay Foley (46th)



L-R: Standing: Tony Peters (34th), Peter Ralph (46th), Shay Foley (46th), Peter Reed (30th), Mike Hamill (40th). Seated: Tony Richards (14th), John White (13th).

SOUTH WEST HERTS GROUP

Our regular reunion was on Saturday 2nd February at the Three Crowns pub, Bushey Heath. A good show of ten members, with the help of London_Transport who decided not to have works on the Stanmore tube line that day. Some new real ales to imbibe with the usual Apprentice tales of yore! Our mascot, Guy, was ever present and displaying his two GCBs. We still have not determined when the award of the GCBs for Admin Apprentices (good conduct badges (stripes)) was initiated and ceased. Worn, inverted, on the left sleeve only - 8 months service for one stripe and a further 8 months for two stripes (provided you avoided the wrath of those above!). Certainly in award for the 11th - 16th entries. Any further evidence – letters to the Editor please. Our next meet should be on Saturday 4th May 2013 (first Sat in month) at the Three Crowns pub. However, plans are afoot to combine our next meet with a short visit to Bentley Priory and advice is awaited from the Project Manager, Battle of Britain Trust, as to a suitable Saturday date in May. All SW Herts Group members will be advised asap by Email, post, or tel. For any queries please contact me at: babstrevem@btinternet.com or on 01923 232686.

Trevor Moore (15th)



(L to R) Jack Marshall (56th Ruislip), Noel Hayes (31st), Tom Price-Rees (40th), John Forshaw (20th), Phil Gough (31st), Ken Roost (1st), Tony Parsons (19th), Trevor Moore (15th), Peter Ralph (46th), Gerry Singlehurst (15th)

ARTICLES

ENGLISH HERITAGE AND RAF BARNHAM

I have read with interest in the national papers and also referred to on TV what is described as “the first Atom Bomb Store” at Barnham is at risk of being lost unless repairs can be made and uses found to preserve these historic sites and buildings. It is also interesting to note that the storage buildings housing the bombs are now grade 2* listed by English Heritage. As a youthful Sergeant in June of 1954 I was posted to RAF Barnham in great secrecy having been security cleared in order to be employed at the new top security site based on Barnham Heath near Thetford. Having undertaken familiarisation training in various aspects of nuclear science at RAF Wittering I was put in charge of one of the main storage buildings at Barnham containing their lethal cargo. There were three such buildings which, because of the nature of the beast, were temperature and humidity controlled. For security reasons there were no external windows and so internal lighting was provided artificially, this led to a depressing working environment. The weapons themselves required being in a dust-free environment and part of our work then entailed constantly ensuring such dust-free conditions were achieved. As there was obviously no “turn-over” of stock(!) life became quite tiresome, we did however carry out some important mechanical tasks involving the bomb high explosive core which required some skilful input by us suppliers(!) as well as transporting the components to and from the laboratories, loading and off-loading specialised transport. On a holiday a few short years ago I returned to Barnham to find that it had been turned into a light industrial estate. My building which kept me entombed for over two years in the 1950s burned down in the 1980s! The remaining two buildings housing the “atom bombs” had been changed to provide small working areas such as workshops or small offices. The once secure system of gaining entry i.e. a double perimeter of fencing, observation towers, and electrically controlled main gate had all gone although I noticed the gate had been dumped to one side. The other buildings, originally used as laboratories, had again been converted into commercial premises. Although for my part my memories of the site with all its cold war implications and adverse working environment were frankly good riddance, it will be a crying shame if such an area did become lost to the general public. After all, the implications of the years of the cold war and the chance of nuclear attack seemed very real only 40 or so years ago, it would be a sad loss to lose that part of our defence strategy which is still unknown to so many including the present generation.

Stuart Robathan (2nd)

THE JOYS OF CRICKET

It was June 1966 and just six months after I returned to 16MU RAF Stafford (“Stalag 16”) from RAF Tengah, Singapore. My father, who was stationed at RAF Henlow near Hitchin, invited me one weekend to accompany him to watch a cricket match at the Bedford Cricket Ground. We found some benches to sit on and the match got underway. Ten minutes later, a dark blue coach pulled into the car park and from it alighted ten USAF airmen. A couple of these men sauntered over to where we were sitting and sat down next to us. I turned and said “Hello!” then asked where they were based. “We’re at RAF Chicksands” one of them replied. I knew it to be a US Signals Intelligence unit near Shefford, ten miles away. “It’s good to see you Yanks here at an English cricket match” I said and offered to explain the rules of cricket to them. The airman sitting nearest looked me in the eye and smiled. “Thanks, but no thanks” he declared, “we’re not here to enjoy it bud, we’re here as a punishment”.

Mike Hamill (40th)

LOOKING BACK – THE FUTURE FOR RAF APPRENTICES IN 1938

I recently acquired, via ebay, a copy of AM Pamphlet 36 (1938 edition). The content makes interesting reading, and I publish extracts:

“The Royal Air Force (RAF) exists primarily for the defence of the homeland, of the Empire and of the outposts of the Empire against attack in time of war, and is the guardian of peace in parts of the Empire which otherwise would be liable to tribal disturbances. It enables Great Britain to fulfill her obligations under the mandates given by the League of Nations, and it helps to police the Sudan, the North West Frontier of India and other parts of the world”

“Boys under training in the RAF are known as aircraft apprentices, boy entrants, and apprentice clerks.”

The part devoted to Apprentice Clerks states “The training establishment for apprentice clerks is part of the Record Office at Ruislip, Middlesex. Here apprentices are given approximately 18 months’ training as general or as accountant clerks. They learn the essentials of office routine and gain practical experience in the large Record Office by employment in the various sections. A progressive and carefully-graded scheme of instruction is followed, and ample supervision by experienced clerks is provided. In the school, which forms part of the establishment, the apprentice clerks are given instruction in English, shorthand and book-keeping, history, geography and economics. The prospects of a progressive career are similar to those open to an aircraft apprentice, save in the matter of cadetships at the RAF College. A strictly limited number of permanent commissions in the Equipment Branch may, for the present, be granted to ex- apprentice clerks who have attained at least the rank of corporal and are under 26 years of age. This avenue to commissioned rank is, however, subject to review from time to time. Apprentice clerks, like aircraft apprentices, if not selected for re-engagement, are given the option, on the satisfactory completion of their engagement at the age of 30, of entering the RAF Reserve for a period of four years, and receive a gratuity of £100 in lieu of the normal gratuity. Apprentice clerks are attested for a period of 12 years regular RAF service from the age of 18 years.”

Conditions of Entry. For Apprentice Clerks there were quarterly entries each year. Age limits 15½ and under 17¼ on entry by selection from among candidates who were in possession of an approved first school certificate or who had attained an equivalent educational standard at a secondary or technical school. Rates of Apprentice pay (then current) were 1s a day - 7s a week - for the first year, and then 10s 6d a week afterwards until classified as an aircraftman (on graduation). Group IV trade (clerks) initial rates were AC2 - 3s 3d a day rising to 11s 6d a day for a Warrant Officer. Accommodation, food, clothing and medical facilities were free. A family allowance, with additions for each child under 14 years of age, was normally issuable in respect of married airmen who had attained the age of 26.

(I note that typing/keyboard skills were not mentioned in the trade tuition?)

Trevor Moore (15th)

BIRCHAM TO GAN AND BACK TO OUSTON

After passing out from AATS Bircham Newton I was dispatched to RAF Wattisham in Suffolk, home at the time of two Hunter Squadrons (56 and 111) and a Javelin Squadron (41). My job was in the Central Registry run by a civilian (Len Overton) and, with the assistance of a National Service A&S Assistant (Roy Palmer) who lived nearby at Stowmarket and travelled home every night, I was also given the task of running the Stationery Store. I gradually developed a hatred of Suffolk so, after about 10 months, I volunteered for overseas and was

allocated to Gan, a staging post on Addu Atoll of the Maldiv Islands some 400 miles south west of Sri Lanka. In due course I was summoned to 5PDU at Innsworth to be prepared for overseas duty having had jabs for Cholera, Smallpox, Yellow Fever and of course TABT. At Innsworth we were issued with KD all of which was superbly tailored. Then it was decided that our draft (consisting of four RAF Police, four Clk Secs and four Teleprinter Ops) had been called too soon so after a few days on pool flight sweeping out empty billets we were sent home for a week, mother and sister got to work on my KD and it soon looked almost presentable. We all re-assembled at Innsworth then were sent to Lyneham via an overnight stop at Clyff Pyper. We flew to Gan in a Comet 2 via Cyprus and this was followed by a 48hr stopover at Karachi - BOAC had a transit hotel at Malir. We then proceeded to Gan. I managed to catch something very unpleasant and went straight into the Medical Centre for two days. Fit and well, I reported to the General Office where Barry Smith (3rd Entry) was Chief Clerk. My job was POR Clerk (remember them?) and I also prepared the F1369s for demobbed National Servicemen. We worked from 7 am till 1 pm because of the heat, swam in the lagoon after lunch and of course we had our turn as Duty Clerk sitting in the Office till 4 pm or later if a flight was expected to arrive. We had visitors to Gan: a Vulcan en route to Australia caused panic amongst the native Maldivian population when it just appeared in the sky and even more so when it took off (the local population were employed as room cleaners, dhobi wallahs and the ladies as auxiliary nurses in the medical centre and left the base every night for their homes on the other nearby islands). The frigate HMS Scarborough arrived for replenishment by the RFA vessel Wave Victor which was anchored in the lagoon, the crew drank everything alcoholic and cold on the island before fighting amongst themselves. However the most unusual arrival was a yacht manned by 4 Americans, the "Suzy Wong" en route from Hong Kong to Boston which had been storm damaged and needed repairs in the MCU boatyard. By this time a WRVS lady (Gwen Caton) was posted on permanent basis to the base to work as a Welfare Assistant. After about 6 months you were allowed two weeks leave in Singapore so off I went hoping to go to the Holiday Centre at Penang - as I had'nt booked in advance I was'nt allowed to proceed so instead stayed at the Toc H hostel on Orchard Road which was very pleasant. We went to the Turf Club to lose money at the races (there was a race every 15 minutes and betting was on the Tote only); also visited were the air conditioned cinemas, the Britannia club swimming pool, the Tiger Balm gardens, and as a special treat several milk bars (fresh milk was rare on Gan). There was some sort of industrial dispute ongoing which was quite violent so we were advised not to go to certain areas. However Changi village was a magnet to buy watches, cameras and the new transistor radios which were just appearing - I had money from my parents to buy a watch for my 21st -which is still working (you'd expect that from a Rolex). In due course the holiday ended and we reported to movements at RAF Changi, overnighed and returned to Gan. In due course my next posting arrived in the post and I returned on a Britannia via Khormaksar and El Adem to Lyneham where the customary greeting was extended to all passengers on the flight by HM Customs and on to RAF Ouston (now Albermarle Barracks) for duty at HQ 11 Group which moved to RAF Leconfield. Some other aspects of service on Gan: we were allowed to send our normal uniforms home at public expense to stop them rotting because of the humidity: sandals were issued to stop the cases of "foot rot" caused by wearing woollen socks and RAF shoes and also after we left we were called to go to RAF Halton hospital for checks to ensure that Filariasis (Elephantitis) had'nt been caught (it was widespread in the Maldives). There was also an outbreak of dysentery that was initially diagnosed as cholera and caused a panic at HQFEAF. Peter Reed (30th) followed me out to Gan and additional to his

General Office duties was the projectionist in the newly refurbished cinema, WO Kane who had been AATS warrant officer at Hereford came out to be SWO, and Dennis Murphy the SMO captained the RAF Rugby team on his return to the UK. **Mike Wilkinson (32nd)**

"MILLION METRE ROWING CHALLENGE" FOR

COMBAT STRESS

Combat Stress is a magnificent organization which helps our Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen. These are the guys who are not the obvious casualties of war - these are the guys who suffer the mental scars, who cannot sleep, have harrowing flashbacks, turn in on themselves and hide away with fear as a result of their experiences in battle. There are ever increasing numbers of these outstanding people who need our help. FOR SOME IT IS A LONG WALK BACK FROM WAR.

On 1st November 2012 I started on this "Million Metre Rowing Challenge". I hope to complete the challenge by the time of our Reunion 2013 at Waltham Abbey, earlier if possible. Any support that you feel that you can give me really would be very welcome and greatly appreciated. I obviously do not want or expect people to sponsor me by the Metre - just whatever you think I'm worth. Possibly zilch!! If you would like to support my challenge I would be extremely grateful and donations can be made on <https://www.justgiving.com/Bob-Danes> Thank you. **Bob Danes (33rd)**

(Note by Editor: This article is included because of the unique Service charity and should NOT be regarded as setting a precedent regarding applications for sponsorship etc.)

NEWARK AIR MUSEUM - SEPTEMBER 2012

Whilst visiting a relative in Newark and wishing to find an excuse not to go shopping, I decided to make a second visit to the Air Museum at Newark. It is very easy to find from the A1 turn-off to Newark, is well signposted from the A46 to Lincoln and is next door to the Newark show-ground, also well signposted. If you are interested in aircraft, aero-engines, radio and radar systems then there is plenty to see; give yourself at least half a day to see everything. Tea and a Wad available on site! I'm not going to bore you with a list of aircraft; you can find that on www.newarkairmuseum.org. I specifically wanted to look inside the Hastings and the Shackleton Mk 3. I flew home from Singapore in 1954 in the Hastings. Five eight-hour 'flogs' including three days at Negombo with a u/s engine - those were the days! I served my early years in Coastal Command, Kinloss and St Mawgan, flew a few times in the Shackleton Mk I and II but never the Mark 3, too secret for 'jollies'. I did manage a tour around the Mark 3, very enlightening from a historical point of view. The trips in the Marks 1 & 2 were mainly from Kinloss to Stornaway, Isle of Lewis, twice a year to play fifteen-a-side rugby, Stornaway's only opportunity to play the full game. Take-off Saturday am, play in the afternoon to quite a large crowd then drink until whenever. Those were the days of pubs closing at 9 pm but if you were a 'traveller' you drank as long as the hotel allowed. Return take-off before 9 am on the Sunday, the Free Church of Scotland were very insistent on this. Enjoyable weekends but I could not tell you the scores to save my life. I have digressed yet again but just to say there are two indoor displays of aircraft at Newark, the new one is a smaller version of the Museum at Cosford (another place well worth a visit). You may all realise that a visit to the Museum evokes some personal memories which is probably the best reason to go. My earliest memories of aircraft was a visit in 1937 or 1938, 6 or 7 years of age, to Yeadon Airport, now Leeds and Bradford, for an Empire Air Day. Mainly to see the 'Silver' Spitfires, not in RAF colours at that time, and I also remember being frightened by a very low flying Whitley bomber.

