



# LOYALTY

The 33 Squadron RAF Association Newsletter

Issue 7 Autumn



**ASSOCIATION BATTLEFIELD TOUR 2017  
REPORT INSIDE!**



**DISCOVERED IN NEW ZEALAND!!  
MORE WARTIME PICTURES OF 33 SQUADRON AT MERVILLE**

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Cover Picture: 20 June 2017\_ Team photo of the 33 Squadron Association, and the 33 Squadron personnel participating in 'Exercise Walcheren Loyalty 17', outside the 'For Freedom Museum' at Knokke-Heist in Belgium. Above: Picture by Gareth Attridge of the Pumas in action during Operation RUMAN in the British Virgin Islands post-Hurricane Irma.

## From the Chairman / Editor...

When we went to print for the last edition of 'Loyalty' in summer there were some key events about to happen: the AGM, 33 Squadron's annual deployment to Crete and the Association's inaugural Battlefield Tour to 'Walcheren'. In the months that followed there was a 20th Anniversary Party to celebrate 33 Squadron's move from RAF Odiham to RAF Benson. More recently nearly 50 of our members, their spouses, partners, children and friends enjoyed an excellent guided tour at the Tower of London and watched the ancient Ceremony of the Keys, and on 12 November the Association took part in the 2017 Remembrance Day Parade. In the same period, 33 Squadron personnel deployed to the Caribbean at very short notice in C-17s to assist in the humanitarian relief operation, Op RUMAN, and were operating a couple of weeks before the televised arrival of the Chinooks. The crews have since returned to discover that HM The Queen had approved the award of the Battle Honour 'Iraq 2003-2011', to 33 and 230; official recognition, in my opinion rather belatedly, of both Squadron's outstanding participation in Op TELIC. In this age of 24 hours news coverage what a pity it is that you have had to wait for so long to read all about a rather busy yet satisfying 6 months.

The twice yearly production of our 'Loyalty' Newsletter has meant that I have had to wait for months for the opportunity to thank those of you who voted me in as the Association Chairman, for a 12 month period that is very nearly halfway through already. It was a great honour for me and with your continued support I intend to build on the foundations established by our previous Chairman, Rick Burke-Smith. I am extremely fortunate to have the support of an excellent Committee, whose dedication in taking the Association forward year on year will be evident as you read through this edition. To those of you who voted for Dick Brewster, I hope that you were not too disappointed, but rest assured that his turn will come! One of my first decisions was to establish the role of Deputy Chairman, and I am pleased that Dick accepted the role and will agree to step into the Chair at the next AGM when I step down.

You may have sensed my frustration in the opening paragraphs over the time it takes to inform you about news, events, sales and articles that involve 33 Squadron and our Association, something that the 33 Squadron 'Past & Present' Facebook page has tried to resolve. Yet it became evident at the AGM that many Association members do not have Facebook accounts and were therefore

missing out on what was going on or being planned for the future. Consequently, at the AGM I stated a desire to establish an Association website that could be used by the Committee and the members to inform the Association about news and events, provide a forum for discussions and act as a research archive for future generations and I am pleased to say that thanks to work undertaken by Dode Dahroug, Gareth Attridge and the Association Committee, the 33 Squadron Association website will go live a day or two before this year's Puma Reunion. Please take a look at website and let us know what you think. You can find it at 'www.33squadronassociation.co.uk'.

With the website up and running, it is my intention that we use it to publicise forthcoming events and publish news items and stories as soon after an activity, deployment or visit has taken place as possible. I see the 'Loyalty' Newsletter being used more like a magazine, filled with articles that cover 33 Squadron's history and stories about Squadron and Association members. For example, two articles in this edition covering this summer's activities - LAC Becky Garbutt's report on Crete, and Chief Tech Paula Cil's report on 33 Squadron's Tour to Walcheren - would go straight to the website whereas the 'No. 33 Home Defence Squadron 1917' article which follows on from the previous 1916 article, would be published in 'Loyalty' and then archived later in an appropriate section on the website. Before I forget, congratulations Paula for receiving your STEM Ambassador award, you fully deserved it.

These are the first tentative steps in trying to provide you with a website that will allow you to access and receive information far quicker, and also interact easier with the Committee and the other Association members. Your contributions, suggestions and feedback will be vital if the website is to succeed and the Association is to prosper. So I ask you again, once you have read this edition, how about contributing something to the website or to 'Loyalty'?

Once again in this edition there is a mixture of articles involving the Association, mixed in with some historical articles about 33 Squadron, ranging from 33 Squadron RFC in 1917 to its time in Malaya. Research into George Roney's time on the Squadron brought an unexpected link with the family of his close friend, WO Evan MacDonald, which has provided us with new photographs of 33 Squadron over in France



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and Belgium, helping to solve some questions but raise a few new ones.

You will notice that there are couple of articles in this edition that, as an exercise, we have added to the front page of the website to see how they look. The content of the rest of the website is up to you. Up till now many of you have been feeding pictures and news items to the 33 Squadron Past & Present Facebook page, please start directing them to your own Association website once you have read this edition.

Proud to be...33,

*Dave Stewart*

# *From the Hart - OC 33 Squadron*

I have now been in post for 23 months and sadly, for me at least, I have a mere 3 months left before I am forced to handover the RAF's finest Sqn to my successor. As I look back on what has seemed like 5 minutes in command, I can reflect on what has honestly been a once in a lifetime experience. The professionalism, courage and enthusiasm of 33 Sqn personnel is as impressive as it ever was, and due to the small size of today's Sqn, the people are as busy as ever.

In my short period in command, 33 Sqn has continuously had engineers and armourers on Operation TORAL in Afghanistan; the aircrew of 'A' and 'B' Flt's have cycled through twice each; the Sqn has led 3 environmental training exercises to the USA; we have conducted 3 overseas Force Development or 'Staff Rides' to Crete and Holland to study our Sqn's history; I have visited our oldest living veteran, Jan Linzel, in the Republic of Ireland; we have had our centenary and centenary concert; and of course most recently, 33 Sqn deployed to the Caribbean on a humanitarian mission where it created a fantastic stir in Whitehall with the speed of its response.

The Sqn is as relevant now as it ever has been, with our standby commitments here in the UK and our support to overseas operations at the very forefront of Defence's requirements. Of course none of this would have been possible without the ethos, hard work and pride that goes into making a squadron a Squadron, and with 33 Sqn, we have one of the best. This is reflected in the ever growing Association and I hope that during my tenure I have helped to bring us closer together. The pride of today's 33 Sqn was more than reflected in the tremendous 33 Sqn Association march-past at the Cenotaph this month, where it reflected on the 'Mixed Pickles.'

The immediate future continues to look busy for the Sqn, with ops in Afghanistan continuing and a return to the USA on exercise already planned for early next year. For those of you around in 2001, it looks as though SAIF SAREEA is on the horizon for 2018 and mixed in with all of this will be the superb RAF 100 celebrations which have already begun.

In closing, I wish you all well and hope to see many of you at the usual place on the last Friday in November. I have been truly honoured to command 33 Sqn to date, and with just 4 months left, I intend to squeeze every last drop out of it before I go!

Loyalty

Andy Baron

OC 33 Sqn

# Jan Linzel...still going strong!

## Turns 102 next month

How timely that OC 33 mentioned 33's very special veteran, Jan Linzel, who will be 102 years old on 7 December. Our Dutch reporter, Jan Westhoeve, picked this story up on the Dutch Veterans Facebook page recently, which said that the Dutch CAS, Lt-Gen Dennis Luyt, had flown out earlier this month to Glengarriff in Ireland to make a very special visit to one of the last survivors of World War Two, Major Flyer, B.d. Jan Linzel and his wife, Marianne.

CAS was accompanied by the Chairman of the Army Instructor Association and the CO of 322 Sqn, Olivier Bok. 322 Sqn was the squadron that Jan returned to at the end of war, having escaped to England to fly Spitfires and Tempests with 33 Sqn RAF before being posted on 26 June 1945 to 322 (Dutch) Sqn, at that time part of a Polish Wing based at Cloppenburg. With Jan went three more of 33 Sqn's Dutch 'Mixed Pickles' pilots, Dick ter Beek, Adolf Schiff and Joop Wansink. 'Lang zal je leven in de Gloria' Jan, as they say in the Netherlands, 'Long may you live in the Glory'.



Jan Linzel and Lt-Gen Dennis Luyt, Dutch CAS.



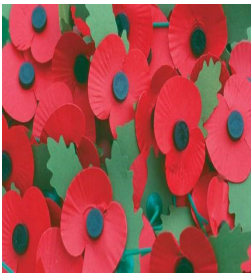
Jan Linzel holds court at the dining table.



OC 322 Sqn, CAS, Jan, Marianne, daughter in law?



Jan escorts CAS to the car, as he did with OC 33 last December!



# Lest We Forget

## 33 Squadron Association at the 2017 Remembrance Day Parade



Following on from the success of last year's Remembrance Day Parade in London, where for the first time in its history a 33 Squadron Association presence was recorded, our treasurer, Jez Reid, contacted the Royal British Legion early this year to register our intention to attend again. This year we increased our representation and planned to have 20 members marching past the Cenotaph on Sunday morning, 12 November.

As you will see from the photographs, it had been agreed that headgear would be worn this year. As the Chairman was quoted £194 for a bowler in a hat shop in Jermyn Street it was suggested that the aircrew wore forage hats to represent the six nations that provided 33 with pilots during WW2. In late 1944 in Europe, the multi-national 33 had gained the nickname 'The Mixed Pickles', a fact that was discovered in Jan Linzel's book. The Chairman sent out emails and made several calls around the globe in an effort to obtain suitable headgear, and thanks to Jan Westhovee (ex-RNLAF/33 Squadron Association Associate member), Bill Denehan (ex-33 / USA), Captain Aaron Noble RCAF (Exchange Instructor MSHATF) and some great work by the NZ Defence Attaché in London, Wing Commander Lisa D'Oliveira, who provided an RNZAF and a RAAF hat, we managed five out of six. Getting hold of a South African hat proved too difficult, so with lapel flag pins being issued to assist the bystanders to identify which hat was which, Chris 'The Cat Whisperer' Perkins wore a South African lapel badge to augment his chip bag.

By 0900 there were veterans streaming in from every direction to form up on Horse Guards Parade at the prescribed time. Getting through security proved painless, queueing to use the one set of portaloos allocated for the 10 000+ attendees proved less so. The RBL had changed the column locations this year, but 'Chief Whip' Dick Brewster made sure everyone was there at the right place, at the right time, even if it meant phoning people who had finally made it into the portaloos!

When we eventually made it out onto a very chilly Whitehall we lined up just yards away from the Lord Moon, where we knew that Paul Davies would be waiting from 1200 onwards with pre-ordered refreshments. As we waited for the go, the new Association hip flasks, another lesson learned last year, were passed around generously to keep out the cold, and we finally started marching at around 1135-1140. Well done to Chris Cutting, our wreath bearer, and Chris Perkins with his stick. The support from the public around the route was fantastic, and once back at Horse Guards we quickly made our way to the Lord Moon to find Paul. It was another wonderful occasion and a real privilege to march with the group. Lesson for next year's Parade: Eamonn, bring your pace stick when you fly in from Spain! Ladies, Gentlemen, the list for 2018 is already open, contact Jez if you are interested.





## From the Front... Operation RUMAN



The first R2 contingent on deployment for Puma 2 saw the Puma Force under command of OC 33 Sqn in the Joint Helicopter Force HQ. Puma aircrew came from 33 Sqn A Flt, with a mix of 33 and 230 Sqn engineers. In less than 4 days after receiving a call in the UK, 33 Sqn were carrying out tasking in the Caribbean in wake of Hurricane Irma. The aircraft, crews, engineers and support functions went on to complete almost 200 flying hours of demanding tasking across 19 operating days, in locations spanning hundreds of miles, despite tough conditions and the onslaught of another hurricane!

The Puma Force holds a permanent R2 commitment to Defence. This is a 5 day notice to move requirement however in 18 hours there were 2 Pumas with 100 flying hours available on each cab at Brize Norton, along with Engineers and essential JHF 3 personnel and support functions. A third aircraft would be ready just days later.

2ic 33 Sqn gathered his four crews for the Op, made up of 33 Squadron, A Flight aircrew who were holding the R2 commitment following their return from TORAL just 2 months previously. Despite traditionally being known as 'Arctic' flight, the 2ic was confident they would be at home in the warm seas, sandy beaches and tropical climate of the Caribbean.

The call forward for the main body came on Saturday 9 Sep and the eagerness to get going was only slightly dampened by finding out we would be leaving at 3am on Sunday morning to go via JAMC South Cerney. A Voyager to Barbados was followed by a C17 taking us and a full load of aid to our destination airfield on St Croix, US Virgin Islands.

St Croix had not been badly hit by Irma but the Island's small airport was already crowded with US military assets, working to support their islands further north. Accommodation options were limited, with a choice of pitching a tent on a grass area next to the airfield, or sleeping on the floor of the working hangar which the det was sharing thanks to the National Guard Blackhawk unit based there. Undeterred, the det got down to business and the first Puma was carrying out tasking in support of 40 Commando RM on the British Virgin Islands (BVI) less than 24 hours after arriving in Theatre.

The first crews to fly out to the BVI came back describing islands that had been completely devastated. Where St Croix was lush, green and the vast majority of buildings were untouched, the BVI were brown and stark, hardly a leaf on any tree or anything green surviving. Man-made structures were destroyed with debris littering the whole area. Clearly the people living on the islands were in a lot of need; they were without power and clean water and, prior to the Marines arriving, there had been looting and the situation could have quickly destabilised. Tasking was challenging. In flying terms, there was nothing that crews don't routinely train for, operating in and out of confined areas, mountainous terrain and changeable weather. However the combination could be tricky and finding suitable landing sites on an island where anything loose had been ripped away and strewn about the place was challenging. The last thing we wanted to do was make the situation worse or injure someone. Comms were poor all round and it was often a frustration to try and effectively task initially – at times the crews would be handed a tourist map with a finger pointing or an X marked on it, which marked the location of a supply drop. On arrival at the



(very approximate) location it would be a challenge to find a suitable place to land on an island where the hills slope down in to the sea – beaches often became a go to option!

Typical tasks at this point were troop movements for 40 Commando and moving supplies to sustain them, moving support equipment, moving aid and shelters around the islands for the Marines to distribute and moving government personnel on recces. There was also a MERT capability that could be based at the APOD on the islands and provide cover for the Marines and islanders if required. This capability was put in to practice with a patient transfer between the hospital and the airport on Tortola in the early days of tasking.

No sooner had tasking got in to full swing when the news broke that hurricane Maria was headed our way. After some deliberation, PJHQ confirmed that the aircraft should be moved away from the storm track in case of damage if they were left hangered at St Croix. Three brave crews and nine engineers were chosen to evacuate the aircraft and run away. The US exchange officer was 'voluntold' to stay as our US translator.

The aircraft returned behind Maria to an island that had been devastated and the work that had been put back in to improvements was back to square one. Nevertheless, tasking picked up again with plenty of supply moves, including carrying over 1.5 tonnes in an underslung load – a first for Puma 2 operationally since the limit on the hook had previously been just a tonne. Some more out of the ordinary tasking came up including a night medevac in poor weather from one of the outlying islands; giving a reccé of the affected areas for CJO on his visit and landing on the helipad at Sir Richard Branson's private island.

A few more days of tasking back in the BVI saw tasking beginning to wrap up. Roads were clear, and the airport was reopening along with ferry services between the islands beginning to run again. The emphasis began to move towards handing back control to local government and focusing on redeploying the considerable amount of manpower and equipment back to the UK.

As always, 33 Sqn and the Puma Force did the country proud and made for some nice pictures on various media outlets; even a mention in Prime Minister's Questions no less. Testament must be made to the engineers; not one task dropped in the whole 4 week deployment – just outstanding work.

Hopefully this has secured in the minds of our Government and Defence, the importance of a rapidly deployable, medium sized and medium lift helicopter.



# *Exercise CRETE LOYALTY 17*

## *76 years on from the Battle of Crete*

The Battle of Crete was a significant and, at the time, unique World War Two battle which took place late May into June in 1941. It began on the morning of the 20<sup>th</sup> of May when the Nazis launched the first ever mass airborne invasion, under the code name of OPERATION MERCURY on the Greek island of Crete.

The savage and bloody battle involved Australian, New Zealand, British and Greek soldiers, as well as the native Cretan civilians. The locals joined in the battle armed with whatever they could gather from their kitchens or barns, resulting in high losses for the German paratroopers.

The second day of fighting, due to miscommunication and the failure of allied commanders to grasp the situation, saw Maleme airfield fall into the hands of the Germans. Each year, Crete remembers the fallen with a week of commemorations.

As an LAC Aircraft Maintenance Mechanic, my week usually consists of servicing, refuels and 'seeing-off' aircraft. However, 76 years ago, the LAC's of 33 Squadron had a very different experience. 33 Squadron were based at Maleme airfield at the time of the German invasion and showed incredible bravery, with many paying the ultimate sacrifice, in trying to defend the airfield. It is for this reason in particular why 33 Squadron attends the annual commemoration whenever it is able.

For this year's commemoration, it was an early start for the seven members of 33 Squadron who were on their way to Crete. After a few minor issues/delays and the obligatory SH shuffle, we eventually arrived at the NATO base at Souda Bay where we immediately began ironing, brassoing and bulling in preparation for the week ahead.

Of course we managed to fit in a few pints of the local beer before lights out, just to replace the fluids lost during the day's travels!

The flag raising ceremony held at Firkas was the first memorial service attended during the visit and was done so in full uniform. The Venetian-built fortress offers a stunning view of the harbour, and I found it quite surreal to be standing next to the Mediterranean Sea in my finest, but not the coolest (temperature wise) uniform. The Greek military played each of the Greek, British, New Zealand and Australian national anthems as the flags were raised; it truly was a humbling sight in the presence of the ever dwindling number of veterans.

After the ceremony, we were invited for to tour the Bay of Galatas by a 33 Squadron 'Battle of Crete' Association member, who was able to take us to the exact locations where members of our own Squadron valiantly fought the German invaders. We were shown many items that he had collected from the battle, including old shells and the remains of a German machine gun, with the terrain helping to depict the layout and vantage points of the battle. Standing exactly where the battle occurred all those years ago, it was very hard to imagine what it must have been like, as the bay was so calm and so peaceful.

The highlight of the Exercise for me was the commemoration at the 30 and 33 Squadron memorial, and I felt extremely honoured to have the privilege of laying a wreath on behalf of 30 Squadron. I can't really find the words to describe how I felt standing in the front of the memorial with the names listed of all those who had given their lives for us; not only this, but those who served on the same Squadron as I myself am serving on now. It was especially poignant reading the names of those who were the same rank and age as me. It made



me feel so grateful to be given the opportunity to take part in this year's commemorations, and also to be there on behalf of 33 Squadron, remembering those members of 33 and 30 Squadron 76 years on.

The final formal commemoration for us was held at the Commonwealth War Grave at the extremely beautiful Souda Bay. Assisting the British Embassy staff from Athens, we spent the evening handing out programmes, directing people to their seats and assisting with the laying of all of the very many wreaths. The landscape was quite remarkable, with the mountains surrounding the bay in an almost perfect horseshoe. This was the largest commemorative event with people travelling from around the world to attend and many wreaths were laid next to the memorial.

On the final day of Exercise CRETE LOYALTY 17, we visited the German cemetery overlooking Maleme. The gravestones are laid on 'Hill 107' amongst a bed of red flowers overlooking the coast with the White Mountains in the background. Hill 107 was a huge vantage point for the Germans during the battle of Crete, as from this point Maleme airfield and the main bridge at the time were clearly visible. Whist Churchill saw the airborne invasion as a success, later to be replicated at Arnhem, Hitler saw it as a disaster due to significant losses. It is easy to understand his sentiment when looking at the vast number of gravestones, with 2 soldiers buried in each grave, all of whom lost their lives at some point during the invasion, many on the first 2 days. In the evening, we gathered for the main Greek event held at Maleme airfield. It was a huge event supported by many Service personnel and local Cretans. To conclude the event, there was an air display by the Greek Air Force F16 which was a fitting commemoration to proceedings.

Exercise CRETE LOYALTY 17 was a great success and a fantastic opportunity for 33 Squadron to remember. The exercise helped me capture the overwhelming sadness, the raw history and the sheer scale of the battle. This was helped by being able to stand and picture where the

battle had actually taken place and by discussing the timeline of the Battle at each location. Paying our respects at the memorials really hit home to me the scale of losses on both sides, and by talking to the Cretan locals it helped me understand the resilience of the community and the legacy it has left behind. I'm extremely thankful to have been given the opportunity to take part in this exercise. Being granted this insight into the history of my Squadron, learning about the lives and last moments of those who fought 76 years ago will make me walk a little taller, and makes me even more proud to belong and serve in the Royal Air Force and on 33 Squadron.

LAC Becky Garbutt  
33 Squadron

# From the National Archives at Kew:

## No. 33 Home Defence Squadron 1917

In the previous Newsletter there was an article that covered the formation of the Squadron, its operations and losses up to the end of 1916. Once again the following paragraphs are a transcription of a document in the National Archives in Kew:

By the beginning of 1917, the number of Home Defence Squadrons had grown to twelve and it was found that decentralization of control had become necessary. Accordingly in March 1917, these squadrons were divided into two wings, the Southern Home Defence Wing and the Northern Home Defence Wing. No.33 Squadron was allotted to the latter wing. Under this new organisation the Home Defence Wing became the Home Defence Group with headquarters in London. In August approval was given for the formation of an additional wing to be designated the Eastern Home Defence Wing. In September the Home Defence Group became the Home Defence Brigade.

A further reorganisation took place in October. In consequence of the large area covered by the Northern Home Defence Wing, various difficulties in administration became manifest, and approval was obtained in September for the creation of an additional wing known as the Midland Home Defence Wing. This wing was formed with headquarters at Stamford on 1st October 1917, by the transfer from the Northern Home Defence Wing of No.33 H.D. Squadron at Gainsborough, No.38 H.D. Squadron at Melton Mowbray, and No.51 H.D. Squadron at Marham. No. 192 Squadron in process of formation was also allotted to this wing. A fifth wing, the North Midland Home Defence Wing with Headquarters at Gainsborough was formed with effect from the 17th October, by the transfer of No.33 H.D. Squadron from the Midland Home Defence Wing and Nos. 199 and 200 Depot Squadrons from the Northern Home Defence Wing. These wings were then given numbers as follows:

Northern Home Defence Wing - No.46 (H.D.) Wing  
Midland Home Defence Wing - No.47 (H.D.) Wing  
North Midland Home Defence Wing - No.48 (H.D.) Wing

Eastern Home Defence Wing - No.49 (H.D.) Wing  
Southern Home Defence Wing - No.50 (H.D.) Wing

Towards the end of October the Home Defence Brigade was redesignated VI Brigade and the qualification 'Home Defence' was dropped from the titles of Wings and squadrons.

To return to the activities of the squadron. On the afternoon of 21st August 1917 eight naval airships left the North German Sheds and made for the Yorkshire coast, apparently bound for a raid on Hull. Arriving about fifty or sixty miles from the mouth of the Humber they remained out at sea until midnight when one essayed an attack on Hull. The airship came in at Tunstall but failed to penetrate further inland than Hedon on which she dropped five H.E. bombs, injuring one man. A Primitive Methodist Chapel was destroyed and eleven cottages damaged. She was eventually driven off by A.A. fire and aeroplanes went out north of Withernsea at 1.40 a.m.

'A' Flight despatched three aeroplanes from Scampton between 10.44 p.m. and 12.50 p.m., 'B' Flight three from Kirton-in-Lindsey between 10.20 p.m. and 12.55 p.m., and 'C' Flight three from Elsham between 10.40 p.m. and 12.55 p.m., and three aeroplanes ascended from the landing ground at Gainsborough at about 1.30 p.m. Continuous patrols were maintained on the line Hedon - New Holland - Elsham - Kirton-in-Lindsey - Brattleby - Market Rasen - Stallingborough, the last machine descended at 5.15 a.m. Only two pilots, however, sighted the Zeppelin. This was no doubt due to the height at which she was flying, viz: 16,000 - 18,000 feet. Second Lieutenant H.P. Solomon flying a B.E.12 ascended from Kirton-in-Lindsey at 11.25 p.m. with orders to patrol from Scampton to Bellasize and Hull. At about 12.30 a.m. whilst patrolling at 15,000 feet in the vicinity of Beverley he sighted the airship north-east of Beverley steering east at what he estimated to be at 20,000 feet, and being heavily engaged by A.A. fire. He gave chase but could not climb and keep pace at the same time. He then



A F.E.2b plane with officers believed to be from 33 Squadron. Lt Harman was flying F.E.2b plane B416, a plane very similar to this, when he crashed. This plane is A5654 and was being flown by Lieutenant Thomas H. Coupe (from Blackburn) when it crashed at Scampton on 26th July 1917. He is one of six members of 33 Squadron killed in 1917 and 1918 who were not buried at Gainsborough, instead they were taken to their home towns in England and Scotland for burial. The officer in the pilot's seat looks remarkably like Lt. James Menzies (see following pages). Photo courtesy of Mark Parker, Australia.

fired three bursts at it from his Vickers' gun but was too far below to make effective shooting, he continued the pursuit twenty miles out to sea but could not catch up with the raider. He was then forced to abandon the chase owing to lack of petrol.

At about midnight on the 24th September ten hostile airships approached the coasts of Yorkshire and Lincolnshire, of these, six came inland, three of which (L.35, L.41, L.52) attacked the areas defended by No.33 Squadron.

The L.41 came in at Hornsea at 1.27 a.m. on the 25th, and made for Hull on which she dropped seven H.E. and nine Incendiary bombs which did surprisingly little damage and slightly injured three women. The airship then turned and went out to sea north of Tunstall at 2.50 a.m. The L.52 came in over the Lincolnshire coast at Theddlethorpe at 1.20 a.m. At 2.35 a.m. she dropped six H.E. and three incendiary bombs on Beelsby Top, followed at 2.40 a.m. by sixteen H.E. bombs east of the village of Cuxwold. These were intended for the R.F.C. landing ground which was lit up, but they fell well to the south of the lights and did no damage. She went out to sea near Tetney at about 3 a.m. The L.35 crossed the Lincolnshire coast at Anderby at 12.50 a.m. After a devious flight north to Winterton, she turned west and at 2.30 a.m. was heard midway between Barnsley and Doncaster. She then made straight for the brilliant lights of the Parkgate Iron and Steel Works and the Silverwood Colliery, north of Rotherham, but the lights were promptly extinguished and the bombs dropped missed their mark, and the only damage effected was the breakage of a few windows. The airship was eventually driven off by A.A. fire, searchlights and the presence of aeroplanes and went out to sea near Aldbrough at 4.50 a.m.

'A' Flight sent up three aeroplanes from Scampton between 11.20 p.m. and 3.35 a.m., 'C' Flight five from Elsham between 11.40 p.m. and 3.30 a.m. Continuous patrols were maintained between Elsham and Hedon and from Scampton to Blyborough. The Squadron Commander Major A.A.B. Thompson ascended from Gainsborough at 3.15 a.m. and patrolled on the line Gainsborough - Elsham - Hedon - Grimsby until 5.30 a.m. The sky was exceedingly cloudy during the raid and although

it hampered the activities of the airships it afforded them protection against the aeroplanes, the pilots of which were unable to locate the raiders.

It was during this raid that the squadron suffered its first casualty. Second Lieutenant C. Pinnock who ascended in a F.E.2.d., struck a tree on landing and his observer Lieutenant J.A. Menzies was killed.

Although aeroplanes could not always locate and engage the raiders, their appearance exerted a major influence on the airship's commander who at times gave up all thought of continuing on a straight course and avoided dropping bombs in the hope of concealing his whereabouts. He was also compelled to operate at such heights as to preclude any certainty of aim when dropping bombs.

One of the most ambitious raids on the industrial towns of the Midlands and North Midlands was attempted on the 19th/20th October when eleven naval airships crossed the North Sea heading for a rendezvous to the east of Flamborough Head. The weather on this night is of great interest, as the peculiar meteorological conditions exercised a dominating influence on the raid and were the direct cause of the downfall of four of the enemy ships. While conditions on the land surface and at low altitudes over England and the North Sea were quiet, with light north-westerly winds (15-20 MPH) up to 10,000feet, above that height the wind suddenly increased to 35 - 40 m.p.h. and progressively increased at higher altitudes, till at 20,000 feet it was blowing a gale from north and north-west. The airships, after rising above 16,000 feet in order to avoid A.A. fire and aeroplane attack, were caught in this wind. In spite of their endeavours to work westward in order to attack the North Midlands, they were carried over the south-eastern counties and eventually over France, whence four of them were unable to regain their own territory. Two airships only were able to make their landfalls in the vicinity of Hull. The L.41 came inland at Cleethorpes at 7.15 a.m., steering south and at 7.40 dropped two H.E. bombs at North Carlton, north of Lincoln, killing two sheep. She then continued her journey south. The L.45 made her landfall over the Yorkshire coast near Withernsea at 8.20 p.m. Her course seems to have been considerably interfered with by the presence



**2nd Lieutenant Carey Pinnock, 33 Home Defence Squadron, Royal Flying Corps.  
Killed in FE2d crash at Elsham, 30th November 1917.  
Buried in Gainsborough Cemetery .**





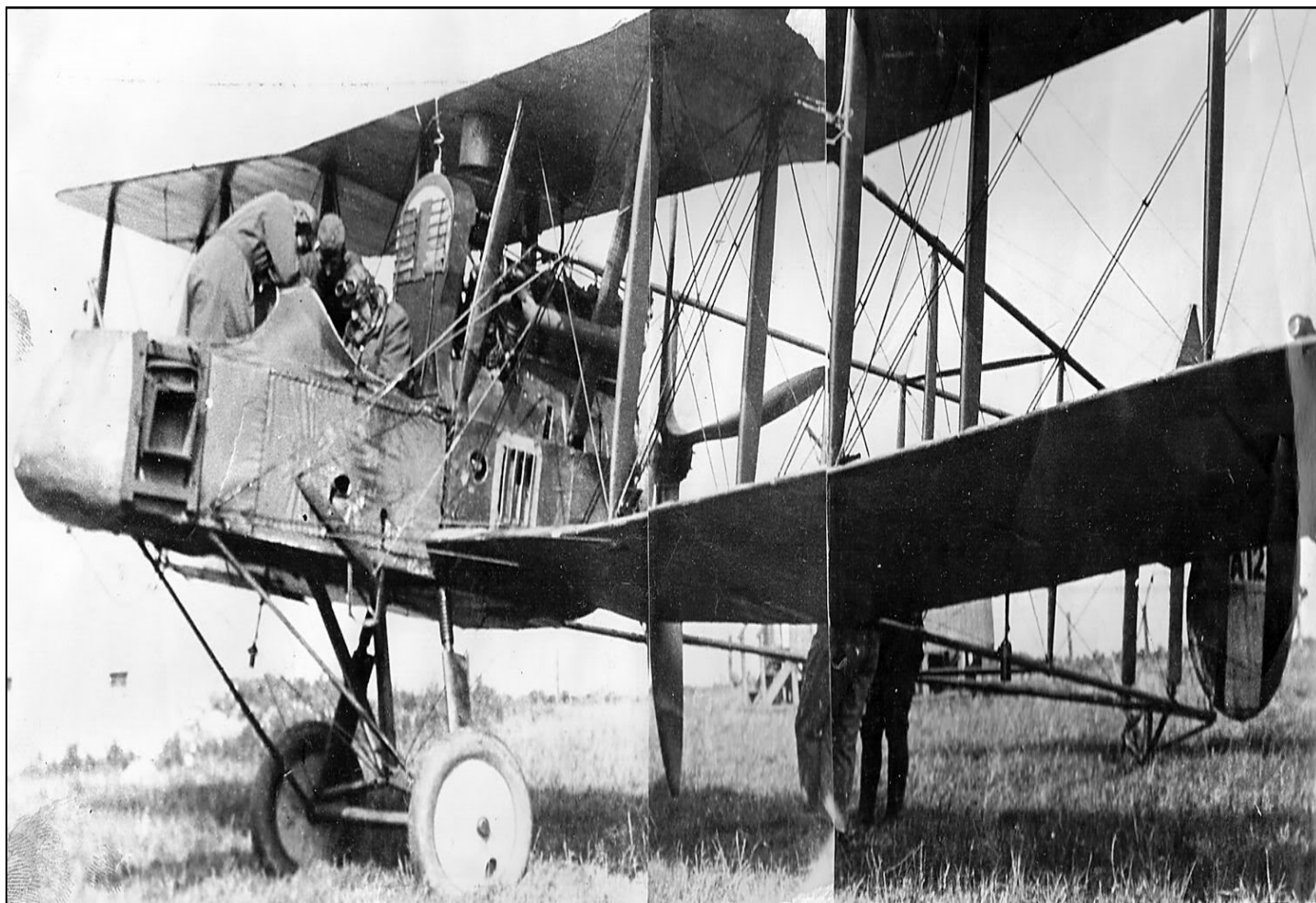
**Lieutenant James Arthur Menzies, 76th Battalion, Canadian Army, attached Royal Flying Corps.  
Killed in FE2d crash at Elsham at 3.30 am on 24th September 1917.  
Buried in Gainsborough Cemetery Saturday 29th September 1917.**

of aeroplanes which had gone up in pursuit of the L.41 an hour previously. She was able to avoid them by rising to a height of approximately 19,000 feet, at which height she navigated most of the time she was over England. After hovering in the vicinity of the mouth of the Humber until 9.10 p.m. she also turned south, dropping no bombs until she arrived over Northampton at 10.50 p.m.

A' Flight despatched five aeroplanes from Scampton between 7.55 p.m. and 1 a.m., 'B' Flight, six from Kirton-in-Lindsey between 7.10 p.m. and 1 a.m., 'C' Flight five from Elsham between 7.10 p.m. and 10.30 p.m. Two aeroplanes ascended from Squadron Headquarters at Gainsborough, one of which, piloted by Second Lieutenant H.P. Solomon, who distinguished himself in pursuit of L.42 on August 22nd/23rd, caught fire just after taking off and crashed, the pilot being killed.

Patrols were kept up between Scampton and Hedon until 1.45 a.m. on the 20th, but pilots had nothing to report. They were again frustrated by the great altitudes to which the airships ascended. The greatest height reached by any of the aeroplanes was 13,000 feet, which was some five or six thousand feet below that at which the airships were operating. This raid proved to be the last airship raid on England during 1917.

On the 21st November Major A.A.B. Thompson handed over the command of the squadron to Major C.G. Burge.



**F.E.2d A12 This plane was being flown by 2nd Lt. Carey Pinnock when it crashed into trees in a wood near Elsham. It was being flown on Zeppelin patrol "during air raid action." Lt. Pinnock survived the crash but his observer, Lt. James Arthur Menzies, was killed. Lt. Pinnock was killed in another crash two months later. Both are buried in Gainsborough.**

Photo courtesy of Mark Parker, Australia.



**2nd Lieutenant Hubert Philip Solomon, Royal Flying Corps.**

**Killed 20th October 1917.**

**Buried in Gainsborough Cemetery.**



**Lieutenant John Augustus Harman, Royal Flying Corps.  
Killed 17th November 1917.  
Buried in Gainsborough Cemetery.**

# EXERCISE WALCHEREN LOYALTY 17

## *The Battle of the Scheldt*

Between 2<sup>nd</sup> October and 8<sup>th</sup> November 1944, a series of military operations involving Britain, Canada, Poland, and including 2<sup>nd</sup> Tactical Air Force, sought to open the Port of Antwerp to enable a supply route to North-West Europe. During this battle, 12,873 Allied soldiers, sailors and airmen lost their lives and 41,043 German prisoners of war were taken.

Personnel from 33 Squadron joined with members of the 33 Squadron Association, in what we believe is the first joint Association/Squadron Force Development event, to explore the history of 33 Squadron's involvement in the Battle of the Scheldt, and the liberation of Walcheren Island in 1944.

### **15 Jun - Day 1**

As we departed RAF Benson, the sun was shining and the traffic was in our favour. En-route to the Eurotunnel we made our first Force Development stop at The Air Forces Memorial at Runnymede. A poignant start to our journey, we reflected as a past and currently serving group, on those who played a part in the air warfare of WWII and who ultimately gave their lives. All named within the walls have no official resting place, including Plt Off D W GARLAND, who sadly would not be the only member of the Garland family we would visit on this exercise. The onward journey commenced with a quick trip through the Eurotunnel to France and the first part of our continental driving and the first accommodation stop in Lens.

### **16 Jun – Day 2**

After a hearty breakfast, bags packed and rooms checked out, the days adventures began in earnest. Back on the road, we seized an opportunity out with the scope of our exercise, and headed for the Canadian Memorial at Vimy Ridge, a beautiful and serene location to remember the inter-continental teamwork of a significant battle of WWI; of the 11,243 men who fell the youngest was only 15 years old and 85 were from the UK. With links to Canadian Forces, we would learn the significance they played in the success of the Battle of the Scheldt some 27 years later. It was here that became the backdrop for the first Force Development stand of our trip, SAC

Andrea Whitmore and LAC Sophie Doyle explained 33 Squadron's involvement in WWII's Middle East theatre, equipped with Gloster Gladiators, through to the redeployment to Northern France equipped with the Supermarine Spitfire Mk9.

The scene was set as we headed to our next destination of Allied Landing Ground B-53, now known as Merville-Calonne Airport. Once here we enjoyed a delectable lunch whilst waiting for the rest of the adventurers to arrive, which included the travelling members of the 33 Sqn Association and Air Commodore Paul Lyall, Head of the British Defence Staff (France) and Defence Attaché Paris, a previous Station Commander of RAF Benson, a previous Commanding Officer of 33 Squadron and the current President of the 33 Sqn Association!

Lunch completed, Sgt Andrew Casey shed light onto 33 Squadron's deployment to Northern France, how the Squadron arrived at Merville and the conditions experienced during that period. This inciteful account led nicely into the first of many open discussions on the comparisons between then and now, with focus on how morale was kept high during that time. Sqn Ldr Neil Scott then gave an in-depth explanation of the role 33 Squadron played within the 2nd Tactical Air Force during the Battle of Scheldt, with lessons on the advantages/disadvantages of combat air support, its links with the roles the RAF plays today and the potential of the future.

Next, a guided tour of the airfield which included the original hangar that 33 Squadron had operated from. We then travelled on to Belgium, visiting the location of Advanced Landing Ground B-65 at Maldegem and the original headquarters building, tucked away in what is now a modern industrial estate. Chris Perkins of the association gave an insightful explanation of all the sites visited with original photographs a plenty.

### **17 Jun – Day 3**

An early start to Day 3, our next destination was the 'For Freedom' Museum at Knokke-Heist. Our guided tour was by led by the lovely owner, Mr Freddy Jones. The unique museum immersed you in the region's history through true to life dioramas. Amongst the impressive

collections of original vehicles and uniforms, the battle on land, at sea and in the air resonated throughout. The allotted time sadly past quickly in the museum, with a quick bite for lunch we were back on the road again and heading for the Leopold Canal.

Once in place, Chf Tech Paula Cil explained the significance of the location and the important part it played in 'Operation Switchback' and the push to regain the River Scheldt. It was after this stand that the heart of our staff ride was to begin; the Netherlands and Walcheren. Our first destination saw us heading to the crash site of WO George Roney 33 Squadron RNZAF, at Dekker Farm, Groeneweg.

On arrival, we were met by the land owner's daughter and three elderly Dekker sisters who had witnessed the crash in 1944. WO Roney's nephew, Rob, and his wife, Trish, had joined the tour on Day 2 having flown in from New Zealand, and they laid a wreath at the site, accompanied by a fly past and all filmed by a local TV crew. This was the first of the tributes to WO Roney that our exercise had the humbling pleasure to be part of. Homemade lemonade was drunk and stories told before moving onto the wreath laying and commemorative service at George Roney's grave in the small municipal cemetery in the town of Schoondijke. The cemetery saw tributes paid by the Roney family, Burgemeester of Sluis, 33 Squadron and the Association with Dave Stewart, Chairman of the 33 Squadron Association, being the key note speaker, addressing those in attendance in English and Dutch.

Sadly, the time came for the tour to continue as we said our farewells to the local hosts for their hospitality and moved onto our next stop at the Breskens Pocket viewpoint. Here, discussions focused on the use of amphibious vehicles that led to the capture of the Breskens Pocket and the efforts used to secure success. This led to the end of Day 3, with the group heading to our final hotel stop in Middelburg.

#### **18 Jun – Day 4**

The penultimate day started with the aim of understanding 33 Squadron's part in the liberation of Walcheren Island, one of the most heavily fortified places in the world at that time. Our day commenced with a quick stop at the 'Op Vitality' Memorial before moving across to Vlissingen and Uncle Beach, with its Oranjemolen (Orange Windmill). The first stand of the day was delivered by Flt Lt Petra Matthew-Brown,

recapping the battle so far and the key timeline leading up to final part of the liberation of the island, 'Op Infatuate I.' During our visit to Uncle Beach we savoured the early morning sun and soaked up the history of the area by visiting the Jewish Memorial, a preserved submarine, as well as touring a German operations bunker, all of which remain a stark reminder of the fight that was fought on the shores of Walcheren.

From here we moved along the coast where the battles would have raged towards Westkapelle, and Sqn Ldr Richie Wright presented the final stand of the tour; the allied plans for 'Op Infatuate II'. With a Sherman tank memorial as his backdrop, his insightful account of the operation highlighted the key role air power played in the battle, ultimately cemented its success. This account generated a heartfelt discussion on today's air power roles and whether in the people's eyes, the attack methodology of that time, could still be seen as morally correct today.

#### **18 Jun – Day 5**

The final day saw us on the road once again, this time heading to Bergen op Zoom war cemetery, where over 1,000 UK personnel have their final resting place. Amongst them is Flt Lt P J Garland, the Brother of Plt Off Garland we visited on Day 1. The heat of the early morning sun gave a chance to reflect on those who made the ultimate sacrifice, especially when faced with so many unnamed graves.

The final stop of the tour and our last act of remembrance, was conducted at the Schoonselhof Cemetery. It was here that our 33 Squadron brother, Flt Lt Godfrey Addison Argument RCAF, rests peacefully. Sqn Ldr Richie Wright led a moment's reflection and today's 33 Squadron personnel laid a wreath to remember one of our own.

With our journey finally over, we arrived back at RAF Benson with a chance to understand the significant impact of the humbling acts of 33 Squadron and many others during WWII.

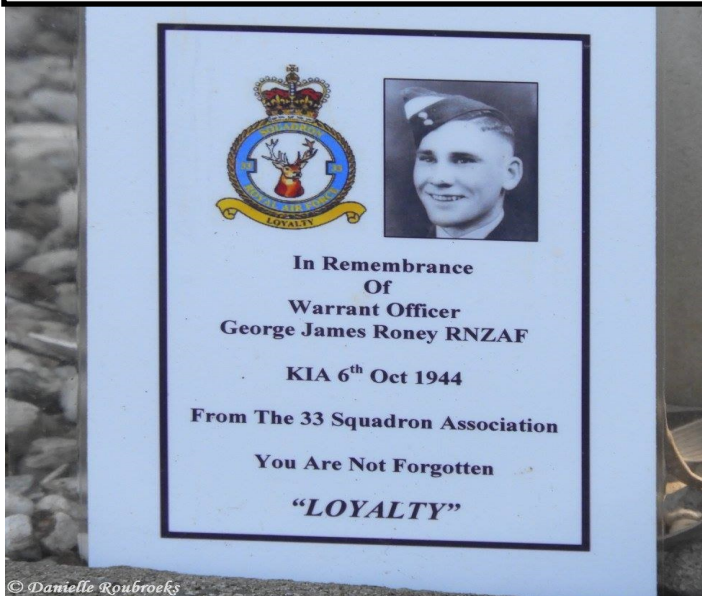
Written by: Chf Tech Paula Cil  
ProjO: Sqn Ldr Richie Wright  
Photographs by: Sgt Andrew Casey  
Group Photograph by: Jan Westhoeve



Above: Jan Westhoeve (Guide), Rob and Trish Roney, with 33 Squadron and 33 Squadron Association personnel at the 'For Freedom' Museum at Knokke-Heist, Belgium.  
 Below: Upper Left - Air Forces Memorial, Runnymede; Lower Left - The Leopold Canal, sight of Operation SWITCHBACK;  
 Right - Building used by 33 Squadron as its HQ Building while operating at Maldegem Airfield, Belgium.



Below: Upper Left - Memorial Card for W/O Roney, left at the Steenhoven crash site and at Schoondijke Cemetery; Mid Left - Royal Marine Commando Memorial, Uncle Beach, Vlissingen; Lower Left - Flt Lt G A Argument's grave, Schoonselhof Cemetery, Antwerp. Upper Right - W/O Roney's grave, Schoondijke Cemetery, Netherlands; Lower Right - Flt Lt P J Garland's grave, Bergen op Zoom Cemetery, Netherlands, the last of three brothers to be killed while flying with the RAF during WW2.





# THE FORGOTTEN BATTLE: THE SCHELDT 1944

## THE ASSOCIATION RETRACES 33 SQN'S STEPS INTO EUROPE

33 Squadron Association's inaugural Battlefield Tour in June 2017 had two main aims. The first was to retrace the Squadron's progress through France and Belgium and discover the background to the Battle Honour 'Walcheren' that is displayed proudly on the Squadron Standard. The second aim was to pay our respects to one of our pilots who was shot down during the battle and whose remains were not found and buried properly until June 1948. Many of you are now aware of George Roney's story, having read about his journey in previous editions of 'Loyalty'. We also visited another 33 Sqn pilot who was shot down a month before the Battle of the Scheldt started, Godfrey Argument, who lies buried at Schoonselhof Cemetery in Antwerp, having originally been buried near the site of his Spitfire crash in Wommelgem.

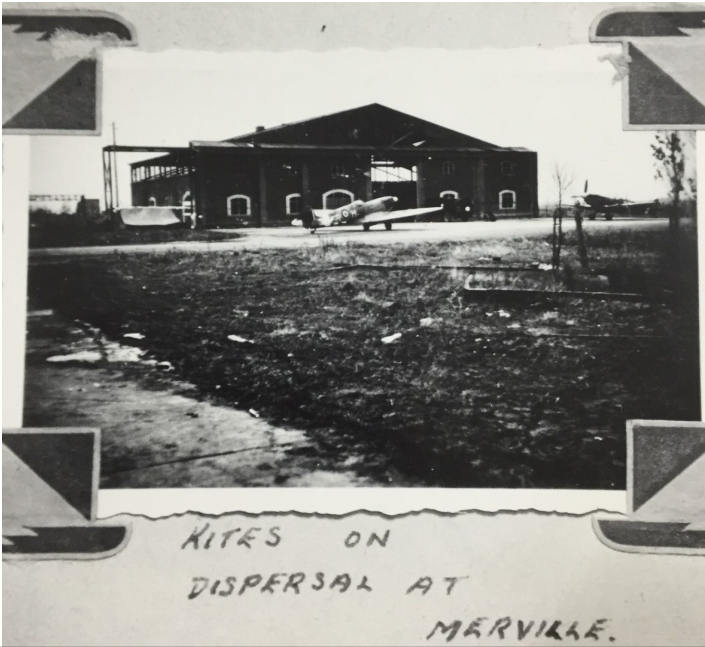
By necessity the detailed Guide Book and Reader that was given to the attendees for this trip was a big document, and instead of trying to inform the reader of the background to the Scheldt campaign and describe every Stand we visited, I have placed a copy of the Guide Book on the new Association website for your reference. Paula Cil's report of the Tour, written from a serving 33 Squadron member's perspective, offers the reader a good day-by-day account of the trip. Despite an 0600 departure from Benson on Friday 16 June a ferry delay meant that we were running nearly two hours late when we finally docked at Calais. We caught up with the 33 Squadron group at Merville –Calonne airfield, where our President, Paul Lyall, accompanied by his wife Lynne, had driven up from Paris to meet the two groups and our very special visitors from New Zealand. Rob Roney, son of George's Roney's brother, had been one of the Roney family who had supplied me with so much information about 'Uncle George' and had asked if he and his wife, Trish, could join us when we went to visit George's grave. Having a relative of George Roney for the entire trip gave the tour an extra special feeling.

We were hosted at Merville by a group of historians from the 'Anciens Aerodromes' group, men who study and publish the history of First and Second World War airfields across France. They were able to access the airfield and walk us to two locations that 33 Squadron used while based at Merville; the photographs at Merville in the Guide Book were taken from the albums in the 33 Squadron History Room. For Rob and Trish

Roney this first Stand had particular relevance, as George had taken off from here on his last sortie, flying north to attack the Breskens defences as the Canadians attempted to cross the Leopold Canal on 6 October 1944. The Spitfire parked in front of the hangar appears to be 'M' and from his log book we know that George had flown that aircraft. We gave the historians copies of the photographs, which they treated rather like valuable ancient documents, then Chris Perkins and I briefed them with information that they had not heard before about 2 TAF 135 Wing's activities in general. We also asked if they knew anything about the infamous 33 Squadron party in the Officers' Mess in the town on the opposite side of the airfield. Jan Linzel had recounted the story in detail in his book, recalling cheap booze and even cheaper women, but sadly we received a Gallic shrug and a 'Non'!

Still trying to catch up on our original timings we drove to the site of Maldegem airfield, now an industrial park with very little evidence of its time as a Luftwaffe, later an Allied, airbase. However, we were able to stop at the Commanderie, the HQ building, and 33 Squadron's Dispersal HQ, which you can see in the article about the 'Mixed Pickles'. We were well behind schedule when we finally arrived at the hotel in Blankenberge, but in true military style we very quickly booked in, dumped kit and managed to get to the restaurants along the seafront. Blankenberge also appears in the 33 Squadron history. In February 1945 it was where the engineers had spent their first night back in Europe as Squadron deployed the new Hawker Tempests from Predannack to the new 135 Wing operating base at Gilze Rijen.

Day Two was a scorcher, a day when the Association members were going to parade at Schoondijke Cemetery across in Zeeland in blazers and ties. First stop though was at the 'For Freedom Museum' at Knokke Heist, where we met up with our Dutch tour guide, Jan Westhoeve. Jan's help during the planning and recce period had been excellent, but he had even bigger surprises in store that day which we knew nothing about at this point. From the Museum, which is well worth a trip if you are ever in the area, we moved to Sint Laureins on the Leopold Canal, where an original WW2 Bailey bridge marks the area of the hard fought Canadian crossings that 33 Squadron was supporting from Merville. The peaceful Canal, shaded by tall trees and



Above left: 33 Sqn Spitfire 'M' parked in front of the hangar at Merville. Right: George and Trish Roney stand in front of the same hangar that George Roney would have known and flown from.

Below left: The Association President, Air Commodore Paul Lyall, awards Rob Roney his Association Members badge, to be worn throughout the trip! Right: The marvellous framing job done by Paul Davies, showing George, his medals, and the piece of 'pounamu' stone presented to us by Rob Roney on our last night. This picture was later presented to 33 Squadron at the '20th Anniversary at Benson' celebrations.



with green well-tended fields stretching as far as the eye can see on both sides of the bank, belies the reality that faced the Canadian troops in the early hours of 6 October 1944. Huge areas of land were flooded, all high ground and roads were covered by German defensive fire, key points and defensive positions had been zeroed and registered for defensive artillery and mortar fire, and the Germans had been ordered to hold ground at all costs. Failure to do so would lead to repercussions against soldiers' families back in Germany. Consequently, instead of a few hours, it took the Canadians days and weeks of vicious, hand-to-hand fighting and big losses before progress was made, crossings were established and the German defenders pushed back towards the coast.

Sticking to the schedule we then drove to a maize field on the Groeneweg south of Schoondijke, where the Dekker family continue to farm, just as they were doing in 1944. Following Jan Westhove we turned off the road to find a specially prepared parking area, along with a spectators' area with seats, umbrellas, cold drinks and a small buffet. There was also a large crowd, made up of many members of the Dekker family and the local community, along with press and TV crews. Jan and Suzie Dekker had pulled the stops out for us. We were all greeted with great warmth, especially Rob and Trish Roney, who were taken over and introduced to three little old ladies sitting under a large umbrella, shielding them from the sun. The three ladies turned out to be Suzie Dekker's aunts, three sisters who remembered George's aircraft crashing in their father's field. They were 8, 10 and 12 at the time and as the aircraft apparently sank deeper into the sodden ground they were warned not to go and look in the hole.

After a very welcome cold drink we then had another of Jan's surprises - a flypast by three vintage aircraft from the local Aviation Society based at Midden Zeeland airfield. This group runs the 'Wings to Victory' website from their small museum at the airfield, and the site contains an archive with incredibly well researched and detailed reports on every aircraft crash on Dutch soil during WW2. We had sent them a copy of the 'In Memorium' book about George Roney, which is now part of their archive, and Jan Westhove had undertaken a huge amount of liaison work with them and the Dekker family to arrange this treat. As the vintage WW2 training and spotter aircraft flew overhead they performed the 'Missing Man' flypast, with one of the aircraft pulling up and breaking away as a salute to George Roney.

To draw this particular Stand to a close, which had turned into a much bigger event than we had expected,

Rob and Trish Roney were then led to a small, cleared area in the maize field which the family and the Aviation Society had confirmed as the crash site and marked with a memorial card. Paul Davies had cleverly brought along a spare wreath, which was given to Rob and Trish to lay. This poignant moment was filmed by the local TV crew, and then Rob gave an interview. Subsequently the 'Groeneweg Memorial' was shown as the lead story on local TV that evening and published in the local press the following day. Dick Brewster's chat with a journalist was also captured, translated into Dutch and published, making comments which Jan Westhove described as, '....right on the money'!

It was then time to change into our ties and blazers, jump into our air-conditioned bus and head to the next Stand, which was George Roney's grave at Schoondijke Cemetery. We were expecting some civic representation there, and were hoping for some local interest, but what followed exceeded our expectations. Once again Jan Westhove's liaison with the civic and church authorities paid dividends, and the Roneys and our groups were able to pay our respects to George, whose burial at Schoondijke on 12 June 1948 had been witnessed by just a handful of people, in the company of the local Burgermeester (Mayor) and minor dignitaries from the municipality. There were people who had been at the Dekker's Farm, including all of the Dekker family, people from the community and more press and TV crews. A number of speeches were given in both English and Dutch, and wreathes were laid on behalf of the family, the Squadron, the Association and the municipality before the pastor led a small service. While Rob spoke again to the press and camera crews, everyone else was ushered into the church where refreshments had been laid on. Speaking to Rob and Trish afterwards, they said that they felt overwhelmed with the generosity and the warm welcome they had received from the community of Schoondijke that afternoon.

Eventually we had to take our leave from the church and head to the next Stand above Breskens, overlooking the harbour, with the peninsula of Beveland to the right and the island of Walcheren to the left. Breskens was a key objective in the overall operation to gain access to Antwerp, and planners had it earmarked as the launching point for an amphibious assault to capture Walcheren and gain access to the great port of Antwerp. The Germans realised the importance of Breskens to the Allies too, and it was taken at great cost to military personnel on both sides as well as the civilian population. Opposite Breskens on the north side of the estuary lies Vlissingen, known at that time as Flushing, and the port there was also a key objective. With



Above left: Marking George's crash site in the maize field on the Dekker Farm. Right: Rob and Trish lay a wreath to the memory of 'Uncle George'. Below: Rob and Trish listen to the speeches at George's grave in Schoondijke Cemetery. Right: The Burgermeester of Sluis lays a wreath on George's grave.



Canadians advancing from the east along the Beveland peninsula the German forces were being pushed back onto Walcheren, and the Allied plan was to land forces at Vlissingen, drive north to meet the Canadians at Sloedam and west to meet the forces who were due to land in another large amphibious assault at Westkapelle.

To assist in the capture of the Breskens Pocket, which had stalled due to fierce German resistance at the Leopold Canal the Canadians had devised a flanking manoeuvre from Terneuzen across to Biervliet and Hoofdplaat using amphibious landing vehicles, and the site of this amphibious assault, which took place under the noses of some of the biggest guns along the Atlantic Wall, was our last Stand for the day. Unlike the poor soldiers in 1944, we were then able to cross over to Beveland by driving underneath the Scheldt through the Terneuzen Tunnel. We had two nights booked in Goes, Jan Westhoeve's home town, while the 33 Squadron group drove on to Middelburg, the capital of Walcheren. The study of the operation to cross from Beveland into Walcheren and capture the island would be covered on Day Three.

Modern development, especially in a country as small as the Netherlands, tends to obscure, remove or build over much of the wartime landscape that we had seen on the Movietone coverage of the time. In late-October/early-November 1944 the crossing from Beveland into Walcheren, known as the Sloedam, was a single track road and railway line on a raised embankment above the water. Today there is a wide four-lane motorway and a large railway there, all built on land reclaimed from the sea, and it is difficult to appreciate the carnage that took place as wave after wave was pushed across a narrow, well-defended causeway with no cover, exposed to heavy machine gun, armour and artillery fire. Leaving the Stand where the defensive line of bunkers is still clearly visible, we headed to Vlissingen to look at Uncle landing beach, the *Oranjemolen* (Orange windmill) and a large German bunker that was cleverly disguised as a house, as many of the German bunkers on the island had been disguised in the hope of fooling the photographic interpreters.

As we drove to Westkapelle, passing yet more huge bunker systems which have been restored by the Dutch in many places, not only does the scale of the German defences on the island become apparent, but the realisation that what the Allies did to unlock the German grip on the island made sense when viewed from where we were - below sea level. What was very apparent as we drove closer to Westkapelle was the dike wall, very high and stretching for miles across the horizon. The interior of the island is like a saucer, and the rim of the saucer, the dike walls, holds back the North Sea. And the

decision was made - break the walls, flood the interior, flood the German defences. From our Stand above the Poldermuseum, next to a Sherman tank that took part in the amphibious assault on 2 November 1944, the scale of the breach made by Bomber Command here at Westkapelle is still evident. The Allies breached the dike walls in four places: Westkapelle, Veere and Vlissingen. The scale of flooding was immense, as was the damage it caused, but it did not deliver the killer blow that was hoped for, as the biggest German batteries had been built on high ground and in dunes along the dike. Despite the enormous amount of bombs that fell on the positions, obliterating much of the civilian infrastructure around them, in the face of naval and air bombardment they were able to provide stiff opposition to the Allied landing at Westkapelle until ammunition ran out or the Commandoes overran the Battery.

We followed the route of the Commandoes advance northwest towards Domberg before turning inland to Middleburg, the city where many of the civilian population that was left on Walcheren fled to for safety after having their villages and homes destroyed. We ended the day outside the German HQ in the Dam, where General Daser fell to a ruse played on him by a quick-thinking British officer and surrendered to a far weaker force than his own. After a quick look at the main square we headed to Mideen-Zeeland Airfield where we had hoped to meet up with the 'Wings For Victory' team. Unfortunately the airshow season was in full flow and the vintage aircraft that we had seen the day before were all away, but the coffee and cake in the airport restaurant were worth stopping for!

Back at Goes we arranged to meet up with Jan and his wife, Renate, and the Roneys, at Jan's favourite restaurant where we all enjoyed a Dutch '*rijsttafel*', an Indonesian meal which is to Dutchman what a curry is to a Brit. The 'all you can eat and drink' buffet menu at a very reasonable price was very well received. After the meal a number of presents were given out to our guests, with Rob Roney receiving a bottle of 33 Squadron centenary whisky. For all of the fantastic work Jan had done for us, along with a number of smaller gifts he became the first Associate Member of the Association, a well-deserved honour. Rob Roney then surprised us by making a speech to thank the Association for all that we had done to revive the memory of his uncle, not only within the Roney family in Australia and New Zealand, but in a broader global sense. He then presented us with a piece of *pounamu*, a semi-precious greenstone revered by the Maoris, which we agreed should be part of a presentation picture of George that we had planned to present to 33 Squadron.

Day Four was departure day back to the UK via the CWGC Bergen op Zoom Cemetery, where Jan said his final goodbyes to us, and then to the Schoonselhof Cemetery in Antwerp to lay a wreath at Godfrey Argument's grave. We had agreed to make a quick stop at Ypres on the way back to the ferry, where Rob and Trish Roney said their goodbyes as they had planned to spend a couple of days tracking down Trish's grandfathers details, having been part of the New Zealand Army sent to France in World War One. When Trish showed Chris Perkins a list of all the places he had fought at, where he had been wounded, which dressing stations and hospitals he had been to, he could have led her to every location with his eyes closed! When he asked her why she hadn't shown him the list earlier, she simply said, 'That first part of the trip was for Rob and the Roney family'. In many respects it is a great pity that the first years of 33 Squadron's RFC, then RAF, history lies here in England, not in France, as the countryside, the cemeteries and the museums in the region look fascinating.

Jan Westhoeve had one last surprise up his sleeve for us, delivered to us a few months later. He had been liaising with the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and the 'Wings for Victory' Museum after we returned to the UK, and the 33 Squadron Association has now have officially adopted George Roney's grave.

#### LOYALTY / LOYALITEIT



**Above: Jan Westhoeve, the man who made so much of this trip possible and memorable, was awarded Associate Membership of the Association on our final night in his home town of Goes. Here Jan is receiving his Association blazer badge, member's badge and tie from the Chairman, Dave Stewart, while Jan's wife, Renate, looks on.**



© Danielle Roubroeks

### • Tribute to deceased pilot from New Zealand

# ‘This feels like recognition of my family’

From the other side of the world they came to a small place in a cornfield near Schoondijke. Here George Roney crashed with his Spitfire on the 6th of October 1944. He did not live past the age of 22.

A company of New Zealanders on folding chairs in a meadow in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen. Colleagues of Roney's No.33 Squadron. The same unit, but different generations. In a way, just as much family as nephew Rob Roney, who is also present. "Yes, it means a lot to me", he is left speechless by the salute brought by old aircraft to his uncle by passing low over the cornfield. "I did not expect this. It's really special. My father never talked about the war or his brother, who was killed here. This feels like recognition of my family. That this is here now in Zeeland makes it extra special. Somehow this feels like the old country". That his father and uncle dove into a war thousands of kilometres away from home is something Rob Roney can understand. "I think people from New Zealand have a strong sense of good and evil. Maybe because it's a pioneering country in origin, where people had to trade to survive. Fighting on the other side of the world, they didn't think about that. They just did it".

After the official part, where a wreath of artificial poppies is placed at the crash site, Dick Brewster is standing a bit isolated from the group, staring over the field. Together with his fellow veterans of the 33rd he is following the route his squadron made during the Second World War, as a tribute and out of interest. "It looks so lovely now. Difficult to imagine these were actual killing fields". Brewster (69) was born after the war, but he knows what his predecessors had to endure. "Field Marshal Montgomery thought this was going to be an easy victory for the Allies." He shakes his head. "It was



deeply bloody". Brewster continues, "All the attention always goes to other operations, Market Garden (the landings near Arnhem) for example. It's a stolen glory. This here was very difficult and not just because of the Germans. The topography too, the water, the islands. How many young men died here? The people who survived are all in their nineties now. Hard to imagine that in five years almost no one will be left".

Yes, New Zealanders fought too. Brewster is used to it being a lesser known fact. It doesn't get to him anymore. "People who came from tens of thousands of miles away to liberate other people. And you know what? We would do it all again."

(With thanks to Jan Westhoeve for the Dutch-English translation.)

# 'Mixed Pickles'? The Quest Continues....



Back Row (L-R): Sqn Ldr Matthew (OC 33) Fg Off Linzel, Stakey(Starkey), Clark(e), unknown (Argument), Smith, Leeming (or MacFarlane?)  
Front Row : Unknown ( W/O pilot, 3rd left, probably Sutherland , 4th from left, possibly Flt Lt Chappell?)

The photograph above was taken from the book *'Oorlogsvlieger'*, written by Dutch author Jan Houter about Major Jan Linzel RNLAf, formerly a pilot with 33 Squadron from 1944-45, which was a marvellous source of information regarding 33 Squadron's movements from the D-Day work up period to the end of the war. The photograph carries the caption 'No 33 Squadron France 1944' and the author listed the names that were presumably given to him by Jan Linzel himself, who would have been in his early 90s when the book was being researched and written. So who were the other people in the photograph? Were they also 33 Squadron pilots?

While researching for the Walcheren Battlefield Tour, and with help from two new sources in Canada and New Zealand, Chris Perkins and I were able to correct or question some of the details given about the gentlemen who were part of the 'Mixed Pickles' of 33 Squadron:

Linzel - Dutch; Starkey - Canadian; Clarke - Australian; Argument - Canadian; Smith - Canadian; MacFarlane? - Australian. If the W/O on the front row is Sutherland, he too was Australian.

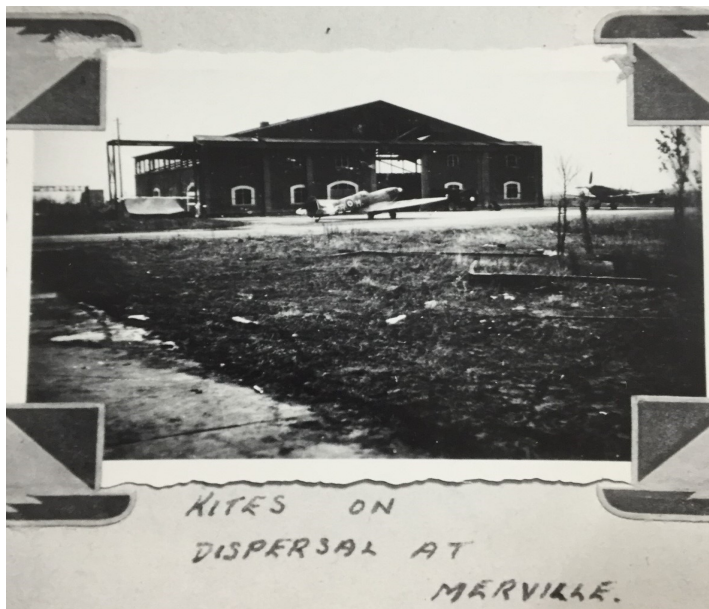
The misspelling of some of the names above, compared to those given in the 33 Squadron ORB, is hardly surprising, as Jan Linzel did not start speaking English until he escaped from the Netherlands and arrived in England in June 1943 and he had had no contact with pilots from around the Commonwealth up to that point.

The photograph caption had also said 'unknown, killed soon afterwards' after Clark's name, and a look at the ORB soon revealed that on 17 September 1944 33 Squadron launched an attack on the Roosendaal railway yards from Merville airfield, "...the flak encountered was very heavy and F/O G. A. Argument was hit before his attack and did not return". Chris Perkins' cousin in



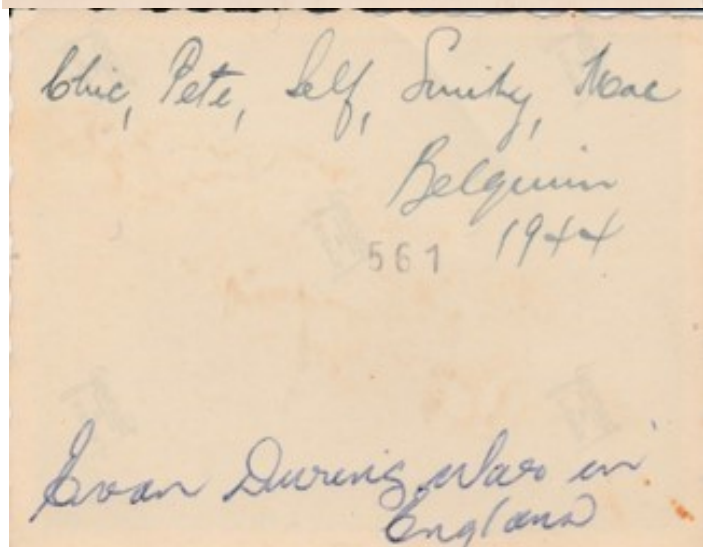
Canada is an amateur genealogist and once she had a name, rank and crash date she was able to provide us with a huge amount of information regarding Godfrey Argument's career, even leading us to an English wife and child living in the north east of England. We are still investigating that line but have a number of official documents that include the letter written to Godfrey's widow by OC 33 Squadron, Ian Matthew.

The next source of information came from a lead on the Auckland Museum Online Cenotaph while I was searching for information on W/O Neil Evan MacLeod MacDonald, (Photo top left, opposite) who was the W/O who had written to George Roney's family from London describing him and George as being like brothers. It was W/O MacDonald who had acted as George's Personal Effects Officer after George was killed on 6 October 1944. The Online Cenotaph had a number of photographs showing W/O MacDonald which matched those on the Hawker Tempest website, so just as I had done with the Roney family, I sent a couple of emails to New Zealand and very soon afterwards I received an email back from W/O MacDonald's great nephew, who sent me some photographs he had of 'Evan', as the family called him. The first one I opened, shown opposite, was Evan and George standing next to each other, leaning against the wing of a Spitfire. Bingo! Another showed a group leaning against a Spitfire on dispersal, and closer examination shows the Spitfire in the lower pictures as 'M', so the lower right picture could be from Merville.



33 Squadron was based at Merville from 12 September to 2 November 1944, flying many sorties during October and early November in support of the Canadian forces trying to capture the Scheldt Estuary in order to allow the Allies access to the vital port of Antwerp. It was from Merville on 6 October 1944 that George Roney took off on his final sortie, a mission to Breskens that also saw Fg Off Clarke and Sgt McNee shot down but survive.

By 2 November the Breskens Pocket had been secured and amphibious landings onto Walcheren were underway. 33 Squadron was finally able to move forward from France into northern Belgium. They moved to the former Luftwaffe base at Maldegem, close to the Dutch border, which gave 135 Wing far more loiter time in the



**33 Squadron Dispersal HQ Building , Maldegem  
Association Battlefield Tour Final Stand Day One**

immediate Scheldt battle zone and less transit time to strike further afield in the Netherlands and Germany.

Evan MacDonald's photographs record his time with his fellow pilots at Maldegem between 2 November to 15 December 1944, with several shots taken outside the 33 Squadron HQ building that we visited during the Battlefield Tour. It was these photographs that provided some more clues, and questions, about the 'Mixed Pickles'. The top two photographs show a group of pilots standing together, the names of the group and their location is shown on the reverse: "Chic, Pete, Self, Smithy, Mac Belgium 1944 Evan During War in England". We might assume that the name 'Chic' for the W/O on

the left of the group, is short for Charles. We know from the ORB that between October and December there were only four W/O pilots on 33 Squadron's strength: GJ Roney RNZAF (died 6 Oct 44) , NEM MacDonald RNZAF('Self' on the photo), BG Leigh RAF and NC Sutherland RAAF. It appears that 'Chic' has shoulder insignia at the top of his right arm, appropriate for RAAF personnel, so I think that 'Chic' is W/O N C Sutherland and is the W/O pilot on the front row of the large photograph at the start of the article. As you will see overleaf he was still parting his hair on the left and , like Evan MacDonald, he had grown a moustache! There were two Macs on 33 Squadron during the same period, MacDonald and Macfarlane, and as 'Self' is Evan MacDonald, it is a safe bet that the other 'Mac' on the photograph above is Fg Off V J MacFarlane DFM RAAF.

The chap with the dark wavy hair, 'Pete', is more of a mystery. He can be seen on most of the photographs here and there is only pilot on strength whose initial was 'P' - Flt Lt P D Chappell RAF. My online searches have not produced anything on this officer to date, so if any of you can discover anything about him it would be appreciated, especially a photograph to match the name.

There are two other unknown men on the main

photograph, and Evan's photographs have given no clues to their identity. There are two more people below who are also unknown, one of whom is a Sgt. There were four Sgt pilots in this period: J McNee (promoted FS 29 Nov 44), CP Nisbet, C Peters and PWC Watton. FS Peter Watton's experience as a Tempest pilot with 33 Squadron one day in April 1945, shortly before the end of the war, can be read in the following article.



**Above L-R: MacDonald, Sutherland, Chappell? Starkey far right?**



**Above L-R: MacDonald, Sutherland, Clarke, unknown Sgt, unknown officer.**

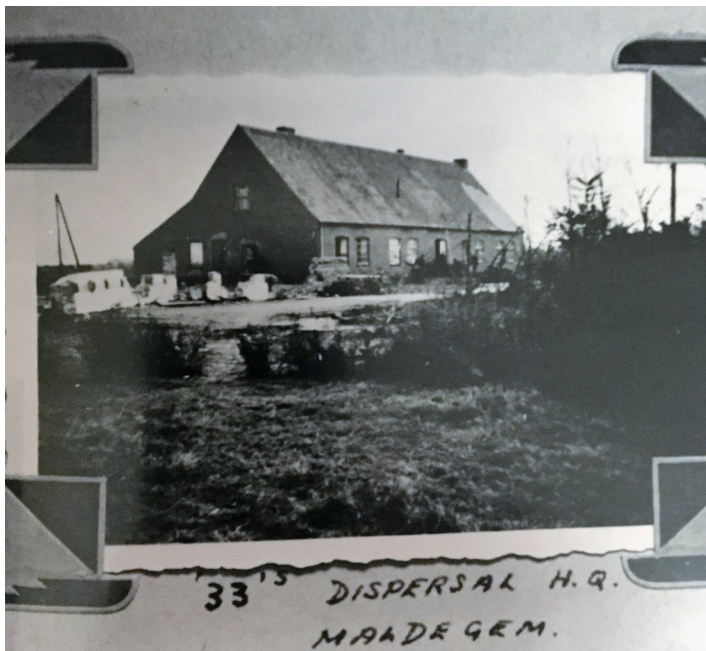


**Above L-R: Chappell? MacDonald, MacFarlane.**



**Above L-R: unknown, Chappell? MacDonald, Clarke, MacFarlane, MacDonald.**

Evan's aircraft was hit by flak north of Arnhem on 11 November but landed safely at base. Bad weather halted flying operations for six days, and Evan must have dashed back to London to sort out George's affairs, as the letter to the Roney family was dated 17 November. He was back at Maldegem and bombing German positions in Dunkirk on the 18th. He flew eight more operational sorties before 33 flew their Spitfires back to Lasham on 15 December and moved down to Predannack in Cornwall to convert to Hawker Tempest Vs. Conversion commenced on 20 December, they had Christmas Day off and started flying again on Boxing Day. On 28 December 1944 Evan's Tempest crashed and he was killed. He was 23. He is buried in Haycombe Cemetery, Bath (Plot 51 Sec H. Row V. 236).



Above: Group photograph outside the Dispersal HQ at Maldegem in Belgium, November or December 1944.  
Below: W/O Neil Evan MacLeod MacDonald's funeral at the Haycombe Cemetery in Bath, January 1945.



# Easier by the Minute by Simon Watton

## A story about FS Peter Watton, 33 Squadron, April 1945

According to Norman L R Frank's excellent book 'RAF Fighter Command Losses of the Second World War Vol 3 1944-1945' on 12 April 1945 33 Sqn lost three of their Tempest Vs near Uelzen, a town approx. 100 kms NE of Hannover. One pilot flew his aircraft back to base but it was damaged beyond repair. One pilot was killed and one is listed as 'evaded'. Thanks to WW2 People's War, an online archive of wartime memories contributed by members of the public and gathered by the BBC ([bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar](http://bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar)) we can add some detail about the pilot who evaded, FS Peter Watton, courtesy of his son who wrote this story in 2005:

"The corporal's northern tones bounced around the timbers of the sparse barrack hut, "Oh-seven-thirty, gentlemen; briefing at oh-eight-thirty." As his fellow fliers coarsely cajoled each other from their slumber Peter shook the sleep from his head and eased unwilling feet down onto the bare floorboards.

He reached for his wash gear and plodded over to the flimsy window frame, pressing his face against the cold panes. Beyond the edge of the forest a nascent spring day awaited, the early morning mist already clearing from the airstrip and disappearing into the kindling blue above. Today's weather wasn't going to stop their Tempest mark V's taking to the air in pursuit of the fleeing German Army. The squadron had only been at Kluis, near Nijmegen, for five days, and already it looked like they'd be moving forward again.

Ready in their flying kit Peter and his comrades joined the other young RAF men assembled for the briefing. Higher powers had cancelled the 09.00 take off. 33 Sqn, with the rest of 135 Wing, was stood down, rescheduled to take off later in the day.

Yesterday, Peter had safely completed his twenty-sixth op - a multiple of the dreaded thirteen; and tomorrow, Friday the thirteenth of April, he was going on leave. The day's only flying would be sitting safely in the back of the squadron Dakota as it rattled its way across the channel to RAF Odiham. He'd be in a cosy guest house in Bournemouth with his mother and sister by lunch time. All he had to do today was keep safe; and, judging by the instructions coming down from above, that was getting easier by the minute.

A few minutes after midday, with Peter holding the No 4 position of Yellow Section, the twelve aircraft of 33 Sqn, along with the Tempests of 222 and 274 Sqn - the other units of 135 Wing — roared down the strip at the edge of the Dutch forest and climbed into the air. The thirty-six aircraft flew eastward through the cloudless skies, instructed to sweep the German air force bases at Munster, Osnabruck and then Quackenbruck in an effort to force the remnants of the once mighty Luftwaffe into the air. There was no air activity around the three bases, the Luftwaffe were staying on terra firma. The Wing attacked the few ground targets, receiving the customary ferocious reception from the German gunners; and was then detailed off in sections.

Captain Thompson, with the new boy Sgt Staines tucked in behind him, led the four aircraft of 33's yellow section off eastwards in search of troop movement. Dirk ter Beek, a hard-nosed Dutchman, held the No 3 position. Peter was glad to get clear of the enemy air bases; they were always hotly defended, and today had been no exception. Sqn Ldr Lyons of 222 Sqn had been temporarily knocked unconscious by a shell over the first base and forced to coax his stricken aircraft back to Kluis.

After fifteen minutes of fruitless flying Thompson turned the section northwards on the penultimate leg of their triangular sweep. Peter wanted a quick look at the map, they were a long way from base and although not responsible for the section's navigation, he felt it sensible to know where they were. He quickly slipped off his left glove and ran his fingers over the map, glancing at his watch as his sleeve rode up his out-stretched arm... 12.28... Yellow section were a few miles west of Uelzen. Before replacing his glove Peter once again glanced ahead at ter Beek's tailplane, checking on his position in the formation. As he made a small correction Thompson's clipped and economic South African tones crackled over the R/T: "Ground target ahead, down to attack."

Staines and ter Beek opened their throttles and followed, the three aircraft racing towards a line of thirty-odd grey-green vehicles moving sedately eastwards along a country road. Peter wrapped his fingers around the bare metal of the throttle lever and slid it forward, his glove still on his lap. He guided his gunsight onto a vehicle. The screaming aircraft were spotted coming out of the

midday sun. A convulsion passed through the column and it juddered to a halt.

In the shaking black circle on the perspex in front of him, the young airman watched grey-clad figures spew out from the canvas-covered sides of the truck and jump frantically over the field-gun hitched behind. He held the aircraft steady. His cannon fire hit the body of the truck and he pulled the mark V up following the three aircraft in front as they turned westwards in a huge circle over a sea of deciduous woodland and commenced a second run on the exposed column. Ter Beek's aircraft had already cleared the line of vehicles as Peter lined up a second truck in his sights. Hitting the gun button early he watched as his fire ripped up the ground in front of the vehicle. A second row of fire tore up the ground - he could smell cordite. At the very instant Peter worked it out for himself, Thompson's voice echoed flatly over the R/T: "Look out No 4, he's up your tail!"

Peter's head span round. Just ten yards from his tailplane was the snarling prop of a Focke-Wulf 190. Holding the stick forward with his left hand, he reached out for the round head of the drop tank release. The aircraft lifted slightly as the tanks fell away. Bringing his hand back to the controls, he hauled the stick towards him and slid the throttle forward with his left hand, sending the Tempest soaring to fifteen hundred feet.

The Focke-Wulf had disappeared. Had it flown into the falling drop tanks? It had certainly missed its chance. The Tempest was intact. Pete quickly scanned the skies - a melee of twenty odd Messerschmitts and Fw's buzzed around his comrades. The next day's rendezvous in Dorset sparked forlornly across his mind - this far beyond the lines his leave had gone with his drop tanks. Before the thought had even left his mind, he chillingly realised that it was likely to be far worse than missing out on his leave; against such odds, he was probably going to die in the bright spring skies of northern Germany, just nine weeks before his twenty second birthday.

Within seconds two German aircraft were on his tail vying for a shooting chance. Instinct took over and Peter kept the manoeuvrable Tempest turning inside the pursuing aircraft as a third German aircraft joined the foray. An Me109 screamed through his gun sight. He let off a burst hopelessly late and banked hard right trying to shake off the closing trio on his tail, his gunfire having slowed the Tempest. A 190 flew into his sights. He pressed hard on the gun button and fancied he saw cannon ripping into its cowling and cockpit-side before he quickly turned the Mark V away.

Machines cavorted through the clear ether in the April sunshine, Peter letting bursts of fire off at the fleeting chances the odds gave him. Coming out of a tight right turn a Focke-Wulf came into view above him. Peter kicked left as the Luftwaffe man slipped a tight turn and fired a burst. The turning Tempest juddered violently as cannon shells tore into the underside of its nose. It was only a few seconds before Peter knew the radiator had been hit, the overheating engine oil igniting and filling the cockpit with a searing, acrid heat. This was it. He wouldn't even get chance to crash-land the aircraft now. It was time to bail out. He straightened up the dying machine and tore off his helmet, leaving the R/T lead attached. If a burst of gunfire slammed into his back as he clambered out, so be it; he was certainly going to die if he stayed where he was.

Holding the stick between his knees, his ungloved left hand fumbled with the new style harness-release clamped tight on his lower belly - it wouldn't give; with rising terror he reached forward with his right hand and yanked at the hood jettison toggle. As the slipstream ripped the canopy clear, a blow-torch of flame exploded into the cockpit from the engine. Peter desperately tore at the harness-release mechanism, the flesh on his exposed hand sizzling in the thundering inferno and his uncovered hair crackling as the flames swept out of the cockpit. Now, Now, he had to go Now.

The harness suddenly gave and his training took over. Still holding the stick between his knees he frantically trimmed the aircraft nose-heavy and ripped off his mask. The aircraft fell away as he released his grip, his right knee ripping open on the cockpit lip as he tumbled out. Twisting through the air he could hear an inner voice, "Calm, stay calm... don't hit the release buckle like in the crew-room... Only 1500 feet. Rip cord... The rip cord... Pull the rip cord." Peter watched the nails fall away from his roasted fingers as he yanked at the cord.

A sudden jolt and then silence. Silence and pain. He glanced down. The tattered remnants of his trousers flapped uselessly in the breeze as he hung suspended under the open canopy. In the forest, a thousand feet below his gently rotating feet, five fires burned. The fight over, two Focke-Wulfs cruised towards him — he froze - had he only escaped the burning cockpit to be butchered whilst helpless in his chute? A chivalrous enemy dipped their wings and flew on northwards. As the Luftwaffe machines diminished to soundless dots in the distant blue and silence returned to the German countryside, Peter wondered if this foe had broken off the pursuit of his doomed aircraft, giving a fellow airman a chance to save himself.

He returned his gaze to the ground; he had floated clear of the forest. The burning column was only half a mile away. The dogfight had not drifted far. The red-brown furrows of a freshly ploughed field rushed up towards him. Peter crumpled in the soil. As he staggered to his feet a host of slave labourers came running from the neighbouring fields. He painfully hit the chute buckle. The billowing canopy pulled the straps away from his body. Wisps of smoke drifted from the padded seat beneath the parachute bag as it was dragged bumping across the ruts. He knew he could only have been seconds from the fire reaching the parachute itself. Whatever happened now, it was all bonus - somehow, much against the odds and despite the severe burns to his hands and face, he'd survived.

The closing hordes split in two, the women pouncing on the flapping silk, shredding it in seconds; the men surrounding the wounded airman. Peter's charred and useless hands began to shake uncontrollably. A jabbering Czech, fingers encrusted with soil, understood Peter's pleading and gently reached inside his burnt tunic, pulling out his cigarette case, lighting one and holding it to Peter's lips. He led the ragged group along a field-side path towards the farmhouse.

After a few minutes, through the slits of his swelling eyelids, Peter could see a rotund soldier plodding towards them - he was going to be a prisoner of war. As the soldier met the group the Slavs closed ranks around the helpless Englishman, pushing away the German's attempts to reach him. The soldier made no attempt to unshoulder his rifle and resignedly let the group past.

Peter was left with the farm owner. The 35 year-old had worked for Lord Roxburgh in Scotland before the war and spoke good English, he got Peter into a bed on the ground floor of the farmhouse, doing what he could for the wounded airman. The German knew what it was like, he had been wounded in the knee at Dunkirk and invalided out of the army.

Within less than an hour, two tall, blonde Hitler Youth were at the foot of the bed firing a string of incomprehensible questions at the farmer. Throwing sneering glances at Peter one of them repeatedly cocked his Luger. The fear Peter had felt at the approaching Focke-Wulfs as he hung helplessly in his 'chute roared again in his mind. Was he going to be shot in cold blood by a kid after getting this far?

The conversation ended abruptly and the uniformed teenagers left the room. Peter guessed it wouldn't be long before they were back. In the evening a middle-aged

Viennese doctor was brought to the farmhouse to treat him. She was professional and unhostile. She intimated that his engagement ring would have to be cut away to have any chance of saving his swollen finger. The farmer slipped out of the room, returning with a neighbour carrying a pair of bolt cutters. After some agonising manoeuvring the ring was removed. Peter's burns were dusted with antiseptic powder and he was left alone for the night.

Although in pain, he was unfazed by the extent of his injuries or his predicament. As he stared into the darkness and the day's maelstrom of terrifying images rushed through his mind for the thousandth time, he just couldn't believe he was still alive - nothing else mattered. He came round in the middle of the night desperate to urinate. They had made no provision for him and, unable to shuffle more than a few steps from the bed and barely able to handle himself, was forced to relieve himself in the corner of the spartan room.

The following day the farmer's daughter, a pretty girl in late adolescence, tended to Peter, bringing a schnapps and raw egg - the local cure-all. Through the following nights two of the Slavs sat with him, bringing ersatz coffee and finding cigarettes made from coarse tobacco dust. Peter appreciated their kindness. For these people they must have been rare luxuries. There was no doubting whose side they were on.

Each morning the farmer's ageing father, a proud man who had served the Kaiser in the 14-18 war and seemed to consider himself an expert on all matters military, kindly came to the bedroom armed with a map, pointing out the positions of the armies. Early Tuesday morning, with Peter's wounds now septic and stinking, despite another visit from the over-stretched doctor the old man came to his bed, explaining that SS units had dug-in on the nearby Autobahn. Peter braced himself for another twist of fate. They heard distant artillery through the morning, but none was close. Just after eleven, two giants in blue-grey uniforms burst into the room ahead of the farmer - the SS had found him.

Peter would never forget the words he heard next - "You all right, laddie. Are they treating you all right?" the elder of the two enquired in the tones of a brusque Scottish country schoolmaster. "Yes, they're treating me all right." Peter faltered. The man shoved the German across the room. "They'd better be laddie, they'd better be." The German began pleading desperately not be sent down the diamond mines. Reassuring the begging man, Peter told his compatriots that the farmer had done all he could to help. He asked incredulously who his saviours

were, explaining that he thought they were SS. They were a British Forward Ambulance Unit and had got word that a wounded allied airman was in the farmhouse. The ordeal was over.

Peter was taken to Celle where he spent the night, before being transferred to Brussels. He was going to have plenty of time for reflection. He had been lucky. From the moment Yellow Section had been bounced his fate had been studded with good fortune. Why had the first Focke-Wulf missed such a sitting duck and where had it gone? Had Peter's falling drop tanks, by some freak, struck the German aircraft? Why had none of the Luftwaffe gunfire hit the cockpit of the Tempest when the odds were so much in their favour? How had he managed to bail out without being shot in the back or tumbling into the propeller of a pursuing aircraft? Why was the 'chute intact when everything else was burned? There would also be time to reflect on the bizarre: the scramble for the silk from his spent canopy; the apathetic soldier who chose not to use his rifle, perhaps having one eye on the end of the war; the Hitler Youth who never returned; the uniforms of the British Forward Ambulance Unit; the beaten German farmer who had shown nothing but kindness.

Peter knew how lucky he had been. Many allied pilots had been shot out-of-hand after bailing out behind the lines. None of it would ever be explained - nor could it be. It was just the way the kaleidoscope of fate had turned... It was how war was. And on that clear spring day, the colours of the turning kaleidoscope had shone brightly on a young English airman. Peter eventually found himself at RAF Cosford only twenty miles from his family's home. A nurse volunteered to telephone his parents; they had still not heard that he had been found. His elated mother was at his bedside within two hours, picking out her son as soon as she walked onto the ward by a tell-tale lock of hair protruding from the bandages around his burnt face.

His mother and sister had stayed on in Bournemouth until Tuesday 16th April, in the vain hope that he might appear. His father had received the telegram posting Peter as 'Missing in Action' at the family home in Kings Norton that morning and immediately drove down to find them. Peter's parent's marriage had broken down into near hostility and the appearance of his father charging down the Dorset beach madly waving a piece of paper, meant only one thing. They all returned to Birmingham that day.

Peter's face healed completely, although he lost the finger on his left hand. The use of two other fingers was also severely impaired. The only place where hair grew

again on his left arm, was in the neat shape of a wristwatch. Luckily, he didn't suffer the emotional nightmares that many experience after the trauma of being wounded in combat, and led a happy and balanced family life. He never let his injuries hamper him and enjoyed the pleasures of playing village cricket for many years, being an able opening batsman. He also maintained a respectable golf handicap well into retirement. Not long after the war Peter's father, Ronald, found the German farming family who had looked after his son, although a 1987 attempt by Peter himself, failed.

Of the action that day: Captain Thompson limped back to Kluis and crash-landed. He received a bar to his DFC. The new pilot to the Squadron, Sgt Staines, was killed in the action. The Dutchman, ter Beek, returned to base unscathed, but was shot down and taken prisoner on the 24th April. Little is known of the German casualties that day although it is believed that the aircraft belonged to 1/JG26. Oberleutenant Hans Dortenmann was credited with destroying Peter's Tempest, taking his tally up into the middle thirties. It is not known if the gallant Oberleutenant survived the war.

A few minutes after 4 a.m. on Monday the 22nd February 1999, as heavy snow fell outside his Birmingham home, Peter died peacefully in his sleep after a long struggle against leukaemia".

**Editor's Note:** On 29th March 1945, Oberleutnant Hans Dortenmann was appointed *Staffelkapitän* of 3./JG 26. He was awarded the *Ritterkreuz* on 20 April for 35 victories. During this period he flew 28 ground-attack missions claiming a transport glider, two aircraft, one tank car, seven trucks, three armoured infantry vehicles and an anti-aircraft position destroyed. Dortenmann flew his last combat mission of the war on 27 April and shot down a Russian Yak-3 over Berlin. He was credited with 38 victories, 16 on the Eastern Front and 22 on the Western Front. He died on 1 April 1973.



# Memories of Malaya

## by Wing Commander F D Hoskins (582491) OBE RAF

Readers who attended the 33 Squadron Centenary Dinner at RAF Benson may recall the speech given that evening by Wing Commander Hoskins. Fred Hoskins was an aircraft apprentice before graduating from Cranwell in 1951. He subsequently flew Hornets in the Far East with 33 Squadron, was a QFI at Cranwell and a Canberra PR pilot before training on helicopters. From 1965 to 1968 he commanded No 103 Squadron, flying Whirlwinds, in the Far East. Later on he was OC Flying Wing at Sharjah before, as OC 33 Squadron, introducing the Puma into service. His staff appointments were concerned with Intelligence, the Army and OR. Prior to his retirement in 1975 he studied to become a solicitor, a profession which he subsequently practiced for over 20 years. This article is reproduced from the 'RAF Butterworth/Penang Association' Autumn/Winter 2002 Newsletter.

"After getting my wings, and that so thin as to be almost invisible ring on my sleeve, I moved all the way from Cranwell to Swinderby to join No 204 Advanced Flying School with which I was transferred to Bassingbourn. Having completed the course on the Mosquito T3 and FB6, I was sent to the Far east training Squadron (FETS) at Seletar, Singapore, where I converted on to the Hornet, another de Havilland design. From there I was fortunate

enough to be posted to No 33 Squadron at Butterworth in the north of Malaya, on the mainland right opposite Penang. Butterworth, in those days, was a small station commanded by a Wing Commander. Effectively, it comprised just 33 Squadron, an Armament practice Camp and the support for those units. No 33 was my first squadron and in due course it turned out to be my last as I had the added good fortune to command No 33 at RAF Odiham from 1971 to 1973 when it was equipped with Puma helicopters.

At the date of writing, 1952, No 33 Squadron was equipped with the Hornet f3 and a few Mk F4s which could carry a vertical camera for photographic reconnaissance but the role of the squadron was fighter/ground attack. The Hornet was, to put it simply, a smaller single seat derivative of the Mosquito, with a wingspan of 45 feet instead of 54 feet and entry to the cockpit through a sliding canopy instead of squeezing up through a small hatch in the bottom corner of the cabin. In my eyes, the Hornet was one of the best looking aircraft ever built, its sleek lines enhanced by the De Havilland trademark, the elliptical tail fin and rudder, which in the case of the Hornet was enhanced by a dorsal fairing into the fin. The Hornet was designed for long range bomber



AC Hoskins (back row, 2nd from left), two weeks after arriving at RAF Halton, 1945.

escort in the war with Japan, but that war ended before the Hornet could be used in that role. In the Malayan emergency (Operation Firedog) it was employed on strikes against the Communist Terrorists (CTs). For that purpose it was armed with two 500lb bombs, four 60 lb rockets and four 20mm cannon. It was fast (420 knots) and as its two engines were 'handed' (turned the propellers in opposite directions) it had no tendency to swing on take-off.

Butterworth in 1952 had the reputation of being somewhat 'wild'. This reputation had something to do with its remoteness, far from the delights of Singapore, and something to do with drinking Tiger beer, I seem to recall. Indeed, the instructors on FETS had advised us that we would have to be prepared to play liar dice and drink Tiger beer when we went to Butterworth for the armament training phase of our course. Without those attributes we would lack what is now known as 'street cred'. In fact, the favoured tippie was Anchor and those who drank Tiger were thought to be a bit on the rough side, even by Butterworth standards. Anchor was so popular that there was a hush of disbelief and horror when the Padre referred one day to St Paul, when caught out in a storm at sea, as 'casting out three anchors'. Anchor was even consumed at table on dining-in nights without the knowledge of the top table; all that was necessary was for those preferring it to wine to ask the bar boy (a non-PC expression then common in the east and perfectly acceptable to all concerned, including the 'boys' themselves) to bring 'Chateau Anchor', whereupon a bottle would be produced wrapped in a napkin and poured very carefully to minimise the head.

But I digress. Butterworth's reputation was also related to the fact that, until just before I arrived, everyone had been living in attap huts and also to the fact that during the emergency all the aircrew and officers carried pistols at all times. At lunch time these weapons were deposited ie left lying about, on a table in the mess entrance.

So it might be said that there was a certain element of the Wild West, particularly as it was known that a few of the more unconventional souls would think little of firing at, for example, a snake if such were seen in the mess. A few of us rode BSA Bantam 125cc motorcycles and an air traffic controller named F. Howard Stirling (we never did know what the 'F' stood for) would occasionally take a friendly shot at these with a Verrey pistol as they crossed the runway going to or from the squadron; once he hit a rear wheel. Howard also liked to produce a pair of sabres at the end of a dining-in night and fence without helmets or protective clothing. In my mind's eye I can still see a target figure scratched on the wall of the billiard room,

and a few ripped shirts.

It was Howard who crammed a Sten magazine in his pistol holster to give him a 'quick draw' capability. When, during the AOC's inspection, he demonstrated this to the great man on the balcony of the ATC tower the weapon left the holster at great speed when the flap was flipped open, just as intended, but unfortunately, Howard failed to catch it and as he had not fitted a lanyard the pistol fell to the ground outside. Then there was the boat or hydroplane he built out of two Sunderland wing tip floats with a structure of 3 inch rocket motor tubes supporting a salvaged engine and the propeller from an Auster. It was not a success.

A quirk of Howard's was to give ATC instructions in rhyme e.g. "Aircraft waiting with engines turning, take off by permission of F. Howard Stirling". Howard was not alone in his ways in air traffic and I recall Ken Duke's ready wit as regards rhyming R/T. It was Ken who deflated one of our number who had just come from a course at the Day Fighter Leaders' School and, having flown the mighty Meteor, felt himself undervalued by being posted to a Hornet squadron. He brought with him all the latest jargon. His name was Crowe and one of our pilots was named Duck so, when Jim Crowe led six aircraft one day and after take-off called, in DFLS fashion it would appear, "How many chickens have I airborne?", Ken replied, "Four chickens, one duck and a crow!"

All in all Butterworth was an interesting and exciting place to be, with Penang for off duty pursuits and most of us belonging to the Penang Swimming Club for the swimming and some social life. With rugby on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons and perhaps two games of water polo on Sunday mornings I can see now why I was just a little slimmer in those days. As to work we had plenty of opportunity for dive-bombing, rocketing and firing on our own ranges near some islands to the north of Penang and, this being the height of the Emergency, we also had plenty of the real thing on strikes against the CTs.

Although a number of brick buildings had been erected by the time I arrived at Butterworth, the squadron offices were still in tents and the crewroom was an attap shelter with no sides – much more romantic than the brick edifice that took its place and a sight cooler. It was in one of those tents that I had my arrival interview with the Squadron Commander, Squadron Leader CCF Cooper. After the usual exchanges he said, "Tell me, have you ever had an accident?" "Oh, no sir!" I replied, forgetting about the Prentice in the cabbage Patch to which he responded, "Good. Keep it up.." or words to that effect.

Thinking back, he might well also have said, "Then make sure you don't start now".

Our aircraft were parked in line along the disused north-south runway, which was not very wide, and it was necessary to taxi into line from the front and then execute a tight 180 degree turn to end up facing forward. The entailed using a lot of brake on the inside wheel and a lot of power on the outside engine. Not long after my interview I returned from a flight to find that I was being marshalled into a rather narrow gap in the line. I started my 180 degree left turn and could see that it was going to be tight but had the reassurance of an airman at the starboard wingtip giving me the thumbs up. By this means I managed to slide my starboard wing tip over the port wingtip of the next aircraft. Looking back, I wonder if the national serviceman thought he would get his revenge for being called up, was bored and thought it would be funny to see a very new pilot getting into trouble or whether he put his thumb up in mistake for down. Nevertheless it was my fault, but I did not receive any punishment for this offence. In fact, I do not believe that the situation became known beyond the flight commander because good old Chiefie Sinfield (ex-Halton) just took off the wingtip fairings, knocked out the dents and screwed them back on again.

With its 'handed' engines, the Hornet was unlike the Mosquito. To take off in a Mosquito it was necessary to repeatedly lead with the port throttle and bring up the starboard. If you opened both together you would find yourself going at right angles across the grass instead of along the runway. In addition to the Hornets the squadron also had two Mosquito T3s for dual checks and for instrument flying training. They were not very serviceable and so one did not get the chance to fly them very often and when the day came it all seemed a bit difficult after the sweet little Hornet. Shortly after joining 33 I was detailed for some solo instrument flying in a Mosquito, which entailed flying out to sea north of Penang to find a cloud to fly about in. However, that was not the problem. The only useable runway at that time ran east-west. There was a taxi track running to the east end of the runway and it was here that the trouble started. I thought to myself that it would save a lot of time if I were to do my checks before take-off while taxiing instead of at the halt just before moving on to the runway. I got to the bit where you check that the flaps are up and reached for the flap lever ... you've guessed!

The undercarriage, flaps and bomb doors were controlled by three levers grouped together in the centre of the bottom of the Mosquito's instrument panel. To avoid confusion (and thereby offset what I suggest was a

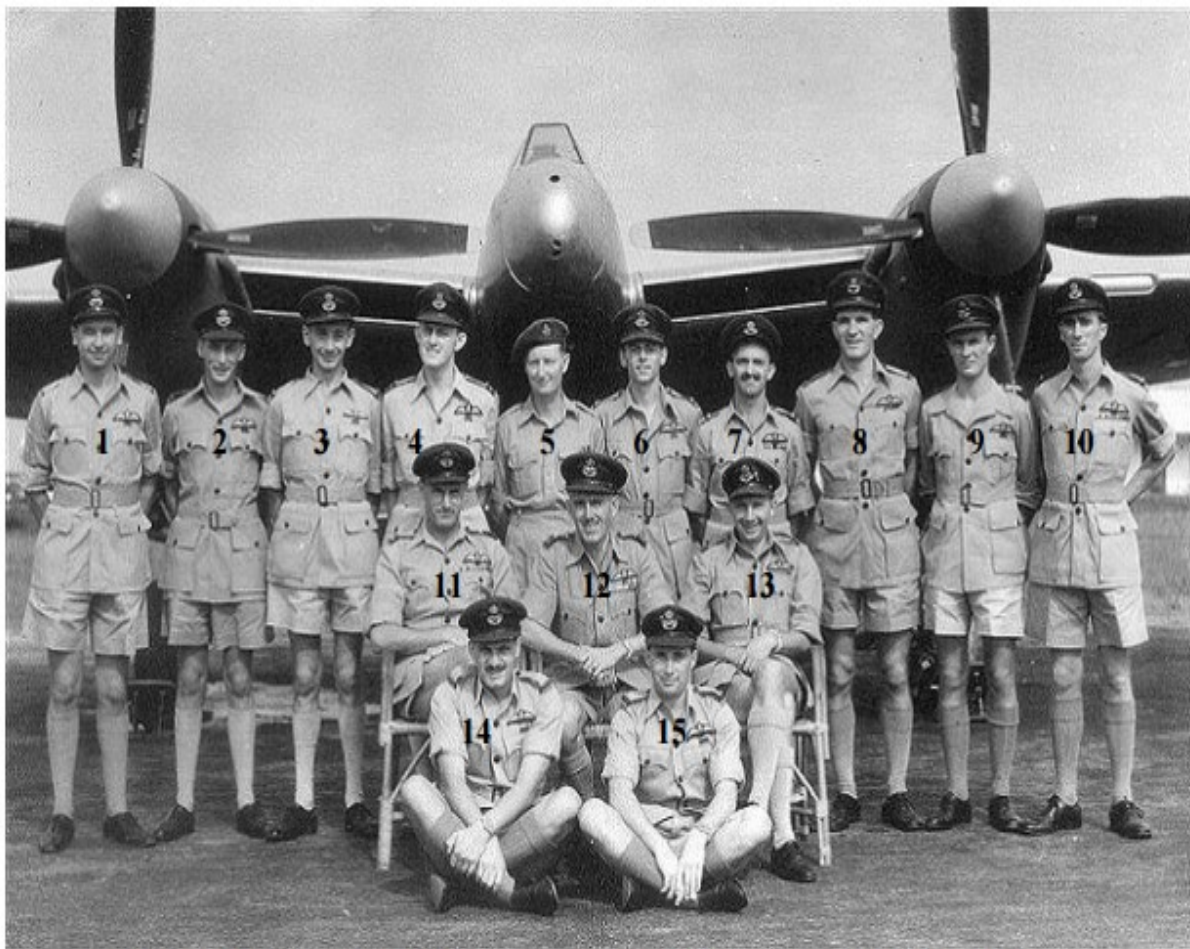
serious design fault) each lever had a different shaped knob and the undercarriage lever also had a safety catch on it which had to be depressed in order to unlock the lever and lift it. This was intended to prevent the lever being moved by mistake – vain hope! Taxiing along I reached out my right hand and grasped the undercarriage lever instead of the flap lever, released the catch and raised the lever. Immediately there was an amazing loud noise in my earphones coming from the undercarriage warning horn. This device came on when the aircraft was below a certain speed if the undercarriage had not been lowered and locked down and was intended to prevent pilots from inadvertently landing with the wheels up. Obviously taxiing speed was well below the operative speed! Fortunately the shock of the noise caused me to jam the lever down again, but when I looked at the undercarriage indicator lights I saw that one was red and it would not return to green. I ought to have done the sensible thing, namely stopped the engines, told the tower and waited for someone to come out and put in the undercarriage locking pins. Remember, the Mosquito had a tail wheel so the backwards tilt of the fuselage and the undercarriage legs created a geometric lock and there was really no likelihood of the undercarriage collapsing if I shut down.

But this did not occur to me. My thought processes were dominated by the noise in my ears and my reaction was to think that everyone at Butterworth could hear it and must know what an idiot I was. My one thought was to get into the air as soon as I could! Therefore, I continued to taxi, cautiously, using the brakes as little as possible and pushing down on the undercarriage lever every few seconds. I simply cannot now remember whether I ran up the engines and checked the magnetos before turning on to the runway, but I suppose I must have. The red light was for the port wheel and the turn was to starboard so at least the brakes were not acting against the unlocked leg. On the other hand, it might be argued that the extra power on the port engine for the turn would have the same effect. In the event, the port leg held as I lined up for take off and began to open the throttles.

As I have explained, the Mosquito had a marked tendency to swing and to prevent this it was necessary to lead with the port throttle and then bring up the starboard. This, in itself, could be a little challenging for a relatively new pilot who did not have much continuity on the Mosquito. I was also intent on changing hands from throttles to stick so as to free my right hand to push on the undercarriage lever as often as possible. Also, the wretched horn was still blasting away at me! Suffice to say that there was a decidedly dodgy feeling about the take-off run. Fortunately the port leg still held until I

attained flying speed- just. At that moment I felt the leg go and the wing drop. I put on opposite aileron to lift the wing at the same time as I eased back the stick to get off the ground.

After climbing away and settling down I found a cloud and did some IF as if nothing had happened – well, almost. Then I returned to base and was lad to find that the undercarriage came down satisfactorily and locked with both warning lights green. It had not occurred to me that the undercarriage system might perhaps have been damaged by the lurching take-off but luckily there was no harm done. The landing was not too good and after signing the Form 700 my flight commander told me so. I acknowledged this with due humility and forebore to say what I was thinking, “You should have seen the take-off!”



1 Harry Walker 2 Bill Topping 3 John Davison 4 Fred Hoskins  
5 Johnny Lloyd 6 Giles Baker 7 Arthur Ashworth 8 Paddy Thompson  
9 John Williams 10 Pete Davis 11 Geoff Young 12 S/Ldr Hancock OBE DFC  
13 Jim Crow 14 Donald Duck 15 Jim Proud

**33 Squadron Hornet pilots at Butterworth 1954**



Wing Commander Fred Hoskins (2nd from left) with SASO 38 Gp (far right) during Exercise SKY WARRIOR, Otterburn, July 1972. Note a very young Sgt Chris Perkins maintaining a respectful distance. The other two pilots are Flight Lieutenant Tom Mutch (3rd left) , a WW2 Typhoon pilot, and Flight Lieutenant Jim Clarkson, ex-72 and 78 Squadron.

Exercise SKY WARRIOR was a six-week long exercise, utilising 60 SH helicopters to support No 5 Airportable Brigade on what was reported at the time in Flight International as the biggest air mobility exercise in British Service history. (see article in Flight International 2 November 1972 pages 618-621).

**We are looking for contributions, either to the Association website or to 'Loyalty'.**

**Submissions to '33sqnassociation@gmail.com' or via the Forum on 'www.33squadronassociation.co.uk'.**



## 33 Squadron Association supports the Michelle Jurd Memorial Trust Fund Raising Ball

Many of you reading this edition of 'Loyalty' will remember Michelle Jurd and that wonderful smile, which lit up many an SH crewroom and deployment. After retiring from the RAF to spend more time with her family, we were all shocked to hear that she had been killed in a car crash. Michelle's husband, Neil, an Army officer who she met in Belize, set up a Trust in her name and since 2010 he has organized an Annual Fund Raising Ball, the most recent being last Saturday, 18 November. The Association donated a couple of prizes for the auction, a bottle of whisky and a visit to the MSHATF, which raised £1 000. Neil has been kind enough to send us an advance copy of the Press Release:

"More than 130 guests attended the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Michelle Jurd Memorial Trust (MJMT) Ball that was held on Saturday night at the Netherwood Hotel in Grange over Sands.

The MJMT was founded in memory of Michelle Jurd, a mother of 2 and former RAF helicopter navigator who was killed in a collision in 2009. Since then the MJMT has raised over £125,000. The money raised goes to promote adventurous training and arts based extra curricular activity for young people, and also makes large donations to military charities including the RAF Benevolent Fund and Gurkha Welfare Trust.

Ball guests arriving at the Netherwood were welcomed by the Corps of Drums of Lancashire Army Cadets, who lined the very grand steps up the Netherwood Hotel's imposing entrance. The MJMT has previously made donations to both Cumbria and Lancashire Army Cadets. Once inside guests were welcomed with champagne, before a bugler played to announce dinner.

After the 3 course dinner Neil Jurd spoke to guests about the purpose of the charity, and thanked Ball organiser Alison Read for her hard work and dedication. Guests then saw the short film that the MJMT has produced, showing the work of the charity.

The auctioneer, Mr James Leeper hosted the auction of a number of very special prizes, including a private tour of Windsor Castle, a trip in a flight simulator, a VIP tour for the Aston Martin factory, dinner for 4 at Holbeck Ghyll Hotel and a helicopter flight over Windermere.

Next year's ball will be on the 24 November".

Neil is always on the lookout for donations, assistance, auction prizes for the next Fund Raiser, and people who would like to attend the Ball. Information on the Trust, and a donation page link, can be found at '[www.michellejurdtrust.org](http://www.michellejurdtrust.org)'.



Sam Dawson, Alison Read, Neil Jurd and Jane Sampson.