

# "NIGHTJAR"

## NEWSLETTER

of

No.214 (FMS) SQUADRON ASSOCIATION

**President:**

**Marshal of the Royal Air Force  
Sir Michael Beetham GCB CBE DFC AFC FrAes**

**Chairman:**

**Squadron leader J A Dixon DFC**

**Chairman Elect:**

**Squadron Leader G W Moffatt RAF (Ret'd)**

**Secretary:**

**Mr Peter M Walker  
21 Beverley Road, Brundall, Norwich, NR13 5QS (01603 713754)**



WINTER/SPRING 2002

Minutes of the 13th. AGM of 214 (FMS) Squadron Association held at the Maids  
Head Hotel, Norwich on September 29th. 2001.

Present

Sqn./ Ldr. G.W.Moffatt	Acting Chairman
Wng./ Cdr. W.A,Wilkinson	Treasurer
Peter M. Walker	Secretary
Jock Whitehouse	Historian
Flt./ Lt. John Gulliver	Committee
Roy Monk	Committee
Ian Coates	Committee

and 51 Members

**Apologies.** Apologies had been received from : MRAF Sir Michael Beetham, ACM Sir David Parry - Evans, AVM Jack Furner, AVM E.H.Macey, Gp./ Cpt. P.G.Hill, Mrs. Reynolds (re Gordon Reynolds ), Mr. A.N.Craven, John Bates, Maurice and Cicely Webster, C.A.Renney, Wilf Clough, Colin and Mrs. Preece, Neil and Mrs. Scott, F. Alan Wilkes, Alan F. Mercer, Mrs. Joyce Hughes, Mr. and Mrs. B.E. Hooke, Mr. D.F. Robson, Mr. B.A.Mowlem, Mr. and Mrs. R.E.Mackett, Mr. P.R.Stevens, Mr. A. Shankland, Mr. S. Nessner.

Members who had booked but for various reasons had to cancel :

Sqd./ Ldr. J.A.Dixon and Mrs. Robinson, Paul and Mrs. Henry, Alan Haworth, Roy and Mrs. Sales, Mrs. Olive Lax and Ms. Galbraith, Sqd./ Ldr. J.A. Brown, H.P.Jowett.

**In Memoriam.** Three of our members had died in the past year.

R.H. Chappel, aged 87, Wimborne, Dorset  
Ernie Cullum, Teddington.  
Wng./ Cdr. S.R.Hodge, Swansea

**Welcome.** The chairman welcomed all members and guests to the meeting including those from overseas. Keith and Norma Evans from Dunedin, New Zealand and as always Gerhard Heilig from Austria.

**Minutes of the Last Meeting.** The minutes were read and agreed, John Morton proposed that they be adopted and this was seconded by Stan Bayliss.

**Chairmans Report.** Acting as Chairman in the absence of Jack Dixon Moff was sure that we would all wish to send our regards to Jack and wish him a speedy recovery from his recent illness. Moff also mentioned that the Association and the annual reunion dinner was kept going by the " behind the scenes " hard work by the committee and especially our secretary, Peter Walker, Jock Whitehouse, our historian and Bill Wilkinson our Treasurer. Peter had organised this years reunion dinner with a great deal of help and advice from Jock Whitehouse. Recruitment of new members had been successful and 12 new members had joined within the past year.

**Treasurers Report.** Bill Wilkinson reported that the current financial situation was in a healthy state. At the close of business on September 28th.2001 our bank holdings were :

No. 1 Account	----	£ 2577.12
No 2 Account	----	£ 238. 93
Total	-----	£ 2816. 05

Adoption of the Accounts was proposed by Gerhard Heilig and seconded by John Gilpin.

The Treasurer, as in past years, requested that members consider paying their annual subscriptions by Bankers Order. For those members wishing to use this method the details are as follows.

Name of organisation. ----- No. 214 (FMS) Sqdn. Ass' n.  
Bank and Branch name ----- LLoyds Bank. Lewes  
Account No. ----- 1265287  
Sort Code ----- 30 - 95 - 01

The Treasurers Address.

Wng./ Cdr. W.A.Wilkinson  
" Charlcombe ",  
8, The Paddock,  
Maresfield  
Uckfield, East Sussex. TN22 2HQ

On behalf of the Association the Chairman thanked Bill for all his efforts in preparing such precise and detailed accounts.

The Treasurer also mentioned the fact that we are indebted to Vic Pheasant for carrying out the required audit of the books of account and for producing the copies of the balance sheet.

**Historians Report.** This is on separate sheets attached on the back of this report.

**Election of Officers.** With the Committee agreeing to continue in office the members voted that they be re-elected en bloc. This motion was proposed by George Cox and seconded by John Morton.

**Any Other Business.** It was resolved to make two donations as follows. -----

- £ 214 to the SALLY B FUND ( The B17 Fortress flown from Duxford )
- £ 214 to the RAF and Dependents Disabled Holiday Trust

Any member wishing to know further details of these donations or requiring copies of the accounts please write to the Treasurer.

A lively discussion took place regarding the amount of cash currently on hand in the Association's two accounts. ( a total of £2816.05 ).

Vic Pheasant thought that there was too much in the fund and £1000 should be sufficient to run the Association. He proposed that , A, part of the fund be used to pay for the reunion costs for certain members , and, B, that a donation be made to the RAF Benevolent Fund.

Bob Davies proposed a donation to a suitable charity.

Gerhard Heilig that we support the RAF BEN. FUND.

John Gilpin , Clare Pollard, John Gulliver, Bill Johnson - Biggs and Stan Bayliss indicated that that they would favour using the funds to helping our own members, perhaps by funding part of the cost of the reunion/dinner.

Norman Storey passed the opinion that perhaps we could fund two or three members who for financial or travelling reasons could not attend the reunion.

The Chairman mentioned that we could put a notice in the Newsletter offering to help any members who would like to attend the reunion. Numbers would be strictly limited and in strict confidence between the member and our treasurer.

It was finally agreed that the Fund should have a base of not less than £1000 and any surplus use would be decided by the committee.

Stan Bayliss thanked the Chairman and Committee for organising this years AGM and reunion dinner.

## SECRETARY 'S REPORT

At the 2000 AGM it was suggested that I should take over as Secretary from Martin Staunton, who at that time was laid low in hospital and could not carry on into the immediate future. Despite my protests that I had never used a typewriter or any form of computer I was cajoled into the job.

Having committed myself the first task was to find out the best means of producing letters, reports, etc. without great complications or expense.

I took advice from people with experience of typing and secretarial work and the answer seemed to be a word processor. Fortunately a daughter - in - law had an almost new machine which she rarely used and so I have it on long term loan.

A friend offered to give me some basic instruction and now I am able to carry out my duties as Secretary, albeit with the odd spelling mistake and taking about two hours to write something that a good typist would complete in 20 minutes.

Having been Secretary, officially since February 2001, I have had a very interesting time organising the reunion/ dinner and dealing with many telephone calls from a wide variety of enquiries ranging from the reunion to historical and family connections.

I could not have managed all this without a great deal of help from others, especially Jock Whitehouse who has given me a lot advice and guidance.

Of course I only agreed to do the job on the understanding that after 40 years I would likely receive the MBE with the possibility of a knighthood after 50. ???.

Eighty six members and guests sat down for the reunion dinner on September 29th., ninety seven having booked, but some had to cancel, mainly due to illness. I hope that they all make a good recovery and will be able to attend the 2002 reunion.

Our guest speaker was Air Chief Marshal Sir Anthony Skingsley accompanied by Lady Skingsley. Sir Anthony outlined his most interesting career from 1955 until retirement in 1992.

He commanded 214 Squadron from July 1972 until December 1974 and explained the peculiarities and thrills of flying the Mk. 1 Victor tanker. He also showed that very senior officers do not lose touch with real life by amusing us with a couple of spicy stories.

I am informed that the reunion was a great success and the musical latter stage of the evening was much enjoyed. Stan Bayliss, George Cox and John Gilpin sang themselves hoarse, and many others, including the ladies, were in good voice. Lili Marleue, Tipperary and many of the old songs were sung wiyh great gusto. ( and a lot of wine ).

It is my intention to obtain the services of a good pianist / keyboard player for the next reunion. Any volunteers. ?

The Maids Head Hotel is not perhaps the best in the Norwich area and yet many of our members find it comfortable and very central for the excellent shopping and other attractions. With the new and much enlarged hotel car park there was plenty of space for all, even for Bob Davies ' s Cadillac. ( or was it a Buick. ? )

The 2002 reunion / dinner has been booked for the weekend of September 27th. / 28th. Details will be sent in the Spring.

Thank you to those of you who wrote or phoned thanking me for a successful reunion and I hope to see you all in September 2002.

PETER M. WALKER

## HISTORIANS REPORT 2001

On Remembrance Weekend Saturday ( 2000 ) an Association wreath was laid at Stradishall plus one at Chedburgh, funded by Mrs. Olive Lax in memory of her brother, Sgt. Ventham, a navigator. All being well, the same arrangements will be repeated this year and we again thank Olive for her donation.

Some items of "historical" interest have already been mentioned on the Summer Newsletter, which incidentally we hope was to your liking. Remember, it is Your N/L so if you have any material ( brief as possible ) which might be included in the next one please let me know.

We still receive a steady flow of " Help " items ( more awaiting me today ) and it seems that Moff's name is now well known on the various modern communications.

In January a Mrs. P.A. Knott wrote asking for information ( family history ) on her uncle Sgt. Quinn ( air gunner ) who was killed in a Wellington crash near Oakington in November 1941. The a/c had diverted to Driffield after " ops " and was returning to Stradishall. Sgt. Quinn was buried at Haverhill. I replied at length including a brief history of 214, but received no acknowledgment. I wrote again explaining that it was practice to report to members on the outcome of such requests etc. Again no reply. A rare example of perhaps modern attitudes. I only hope that the information was of some use.

Mr. Mike McNeill asked for information on his cousin, F/Sgt. RJA Trevillian KIA on the disastrous raid of 1/2 April 1942 when the squadron lost 7/14 Wellingtons. Mr. McNeill acknowledged the data supplied.

Captain Glen Mackay ( Canadian Armed Forces ) sought information on his uncle, F/Sgt. J.P. Mackay RCAF, KIA 3rd. March 1941. Details supplied and Cpt. Mackay wrote a nice letter of thanks.

Have been in touch by letter and phone with a Mr. Munro acting for a Mr. Gilson who flew a few " ops " with 214 from Stradishall before undertaking a ferry flight to the Middle East where unfortunately he was shot down on 38Sqn. Put them in touch with Lew Parsons of the POW Association and all help was appreciated.

Harry Baldock wrote from Australia for any details of his father Sgt. Harry Baldock, lost from Chedburgh on 5th. March 1943. Information forwarded.

Have maintained contact with George Stevens ( Kent, Washington DC ). George sent a photo of his crew with a second pilot of " very short " stature. Chris Jary was able to confirm that this was indeed Jack Wetherly in his early days with 214, Jack later became a captain on the Squadron but was later lost on Halifax operations and his story was the subject of Chris's excellent book; Portrait of a Bomber Pilot. George sends us his best wishes for our reunion.

I keep in touch with Steve Nessner ( Murrey Pedens SO ), alive and well in Canada, and I know that he has only just missed being with us. He returned only yesterday from a family trip to the UK. Alastair McDermid also keeps in touch with Steve.

Steve also keeps in touch, as I do, with Irene Moore, " Dinty's " widow, and he also sent me a photograph of Abe Levine, who in spite of health problems managed to visit Durnbach War Cemetery in Germany to pay his respects to a known 214 crew.

I still have detailed requests from researchers ( especially the Czechs ) for complex information reference squadrons, aircraft etc. No doubt they are now able to engage on their own publication projects but I can only help within the parameters of personal requests and cannot get involved in complex programmes. My only personal exception is Chris Timmer a Dutch friend with whom I have worked for many years and who has a special respect for 214. Chris originally made contact with us via Harold Bidmead.

I must welcome Simon Read whose interest in 214 started when he was talking with his late grandfather Michael " Jinx " Elelman, an air gunner at Stradishall and no doubt known to some of you. " Jinx " was certainly at the first reunion at Chedburgh in 1988. Simon is keen to record any " tales from 214 " so do help him if you can. We are also pleased to welcome Mrs. Elelman and Simon's father.

The date of the next Chedburgh Reunion (as mentioned in the N/L) will now be on the weekend of 17/18 August 2002. Although normally attended by mainly ex- 218 Sqdn. members this next one celebrates the tenth anniversary of the dedication of the Memorial and Book of Remembrance and naturally ALL ex- Chedburgh squadron personnel are especially welcome. Let us hope that 214 be well represented and we will keep you posted of details of the weekend programme. NOTE THE DATE IN YOUR DIARY.

Some recent entries from the Stradishall Visitors Book

Mr. S. Farrell, Morley St. Botolph, Wymondham, Norfolk. Fitter 11E 214Sqdn. 1941-45

Mark Rushby, great nephew of Jack Collins (rear gunner) squadron number is given as 142 ! which may be an error for 214 as 142 was a Lincolnshire based Wellington unit in 1940. We do not have a J. Collins listed.

Gareth Meredith, nephew of Sgt. Meredith KIA on 5th. Sept.1942. Stirling BF337 (P/O J G Smith) ( Contact Derek Meredith on 01495 200284 )

Dave Greatrex is asking if anyone remembers F/O Lionel Cragie-- Halkett, killed from Stradishall in August 1940. This officer flew Harrows from Feltwell and his crew was the first to be lost on ops in WW2. Buried in Halle, Holland. ( Tel. 01344 423540 ).

As "custodian" I have brought along some of the Squadron memorabilia which was originally "obtained" by Harold Bidmead from Marham in 1988. My retained soldiering skills keep the tray in "shining order". The wooden crest makes a welcome return.

At last year's reunion, Margaret Rix showed me two remarkable pictures, the work of Ron Douglas, the rear gunner in her late husband Norman's crew. To be brief a printer friend and I have managed to reproduce them both, and I them here with me on display. Margaret has kindly given permission for copies to be made available to Association members, although I am sure they might also be attractive to 100 Group members. Anyone interested please see me. Although the print here is framed for display prints will be sold "unframed" and they will be a rare and unique piece of 214 history. NOT to be missed. They will be advertised again in the next Newsletter.

A new venture for us. Michael Rondot, the well known local aviation artist and ex- Gulf War Jaguar pilot will be with us this evening. Michael has just produced an excellent study of a Valiant taking off but is actually donating one of his Victor prints to be raffled after dinner. The print will be unframed for the addition of signatures, but a high quality frame is included with the prize. Do support the draw and keep Bill happy as proceeds go to Assn. funds

May I also remind you that as from now , Ian Coates is taking over as Supplies Officer, and if you require any Assn. "goodies" please see Ian . ( Tel. 01928 717206 )

Jock Whitehouse. Sept. 29th. 2001

## REUNION 2001

28,29,30 September 2001.

The venue for the 2001 Reunion was again the Maid's Head Hotel in Norwich when Association members, guests and friends (old and new) met together to chat, eat, 'support the bar', look around the 'Fine old City' or head out for Oulton- country. Great efforts were made and many miles covered to attend especially by Keith and Norma Evans (New Zealand) and Gerhard Heilig(Austria). The much improved hotel parking facility was a relief but be warned, you will now have barriers and 'disc' machines to master (no machine-gun towers--yet!). Once in, never out!!

The AGM was well attended (Minutes and Historian's report attached) and eighty-six sat down to a very enjoyable meal on Saturday evening. 'Moff' stood in for Jack who was not too well. Guest speaker was ACM Sir Anthony Skingsley (accompanied by Lady Skingsley) who recalled, with some interspaced humour of a somewhat coloured hue, his time as CO of No.214(FMS) Squadron and having to learn very quickly the behaviour of the Victor MkI Tanker. Also 'guesting' was Michael Rondot, the well known Norfolk-based aviation artist (and ex-Jaguar pilot who believed that he had been 'topped up' by 214 on numerous occasions!). Although Michael had originally offered to simply donate one of his 'Victor' prints to be raffled for Association funds, in fact he set up 'his stall' in the foyer, made sure most present signed the print, and even sold the raffle tickets. The stunning, framed print was won by Jean Handbury's grandson Matthew (a Captain in the Royal Tank Regiment) and we were delighted to see Jean back with us. Matthew apparently enjoyed his evening so much so that he hopes to join us again. The raffle proved a great success, much to the satisfaction of our Treasurer!

Other attractions included a display of Squadron memorabilia, a splendid Reunion cake and a totally spontaneous late evening session by our new 'Glee Club' who denied that their renditions of all the old favourites were solely down to a 'few glasses.....'. Accompaniment was by a very professional wandering minstrel -Peter Walker, who by chance(?) had his harmonica with him. Better things are promised for 2002!

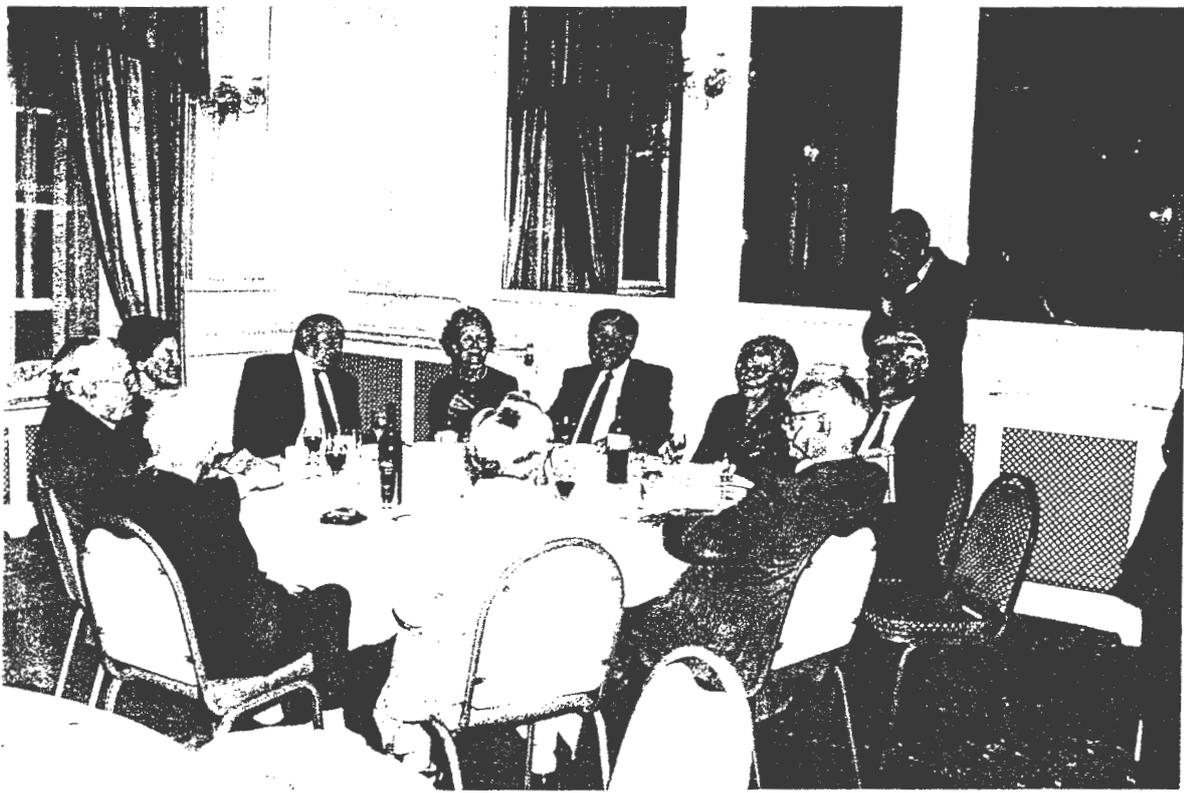
## REUNION 2002.

This will be held at the Maid's Head Hotel, Norwich on Friday, Saturday, Sunday 27,28, 29 September 2002. Full booking details (special requirements, sleeping, selected rooms, diet etc) will be mailed later in the year but if you do elect to book direct with the hotel PLEASE advise Peter Walker and note that for our administration purposes , you WILL be required to complete the necessary booking forms later on.

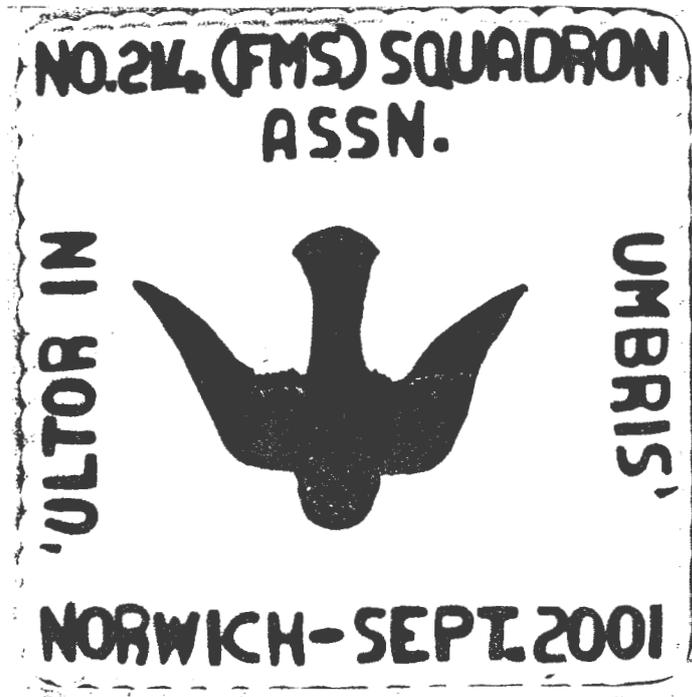
Maid's Head Hotel. 01603 209955

Any queries please contact Peter Walker. 21 Beverley Road, Brundall, Norwich NR13 5QS ( 01603 713754).

Look forward to seeing you in September.



Norwich 2001. The 'Glee' Club in full swing.



Jock's daughter, Keely's cake designed and donated for the 2001 Reunion. A different design this time but with talk now of air-brushing what for 2002?

## **CHEDBURGH REUNION : AUGUST 2002.**

Planning for the above event is well under way and it will take place at Chedburgh on the weekend of Friday, Saturday and Sunday August 16,17,18.

No.218(Gold Coast) Squadron have always held their Reunion and Service of Remembrance in July (although all have always been welcome) but this year have chosen August, and have decided to specifically invite members from the other Chedburgh-based units (No.214(FMS) Squadron, No.1653 HCU and Nos.301 and 304 (Polish) Squadrons) as 2002 marks the TENTH anniversary of the Chedburgh memorial dedication and 60 years since RAF Chedburgh became operational when No.214 moved in from Stradishall in October 1942. We may recall that we were at Cambridge in 1992 (October) for our own Reunion and came over to Chedburgh on the Sunday for the service.

There will be various functions over the weekend (dance, buffet, BBQ etc.) but the actual service will take place on Sunday (18 August). It is hoped that the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight will make an appearance on the Sunday afternoon.

All ex-squadron personnel, friends and guests are welcome, but obviously travel and accommodation is the responsibility of the individual(s)

For more information please contact:

Mrs Margery Griffiths, Honeysuckle Cottage, Langham Road, Badwell Ash,  
Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk, IP31 3DS. (01359 259253).

E-mail [squadron218@hotmail.com](mailto:squadron218@hotmail.com)

## 'Valiant Days'

A tale of 214, by Peter M Walker

I had been at Marham as an engine mechanic on No.35 Squadron's Canberras since March 1954 but in December 1955 was sent to Gaydon to learn about the Vickers Valiant, the first of our new 'V'- bomber fleet, and as a result returned to Marham in the Spring of 1956 posted to No.214(FMS) Squadron.

These early Valiants had previously served either as trials aircraft or with other units, and when delivered to 214, their 'high speed silver' finish was beginning to look more than a little weathered and by the summer of 1956 the paint surface itself had become very rough.

As official service cleaning materials proved almost useless, the Squadron CO, W/Cdr. Leonard Trent VC, offered a magnificent prize of five shillings (25p) worth of National Savings Stamps to any airman who could come up with a practical method of bringing back a gloss finish to the troublesome paint. Various products were tried including 'Duraglit', which, while certainly bringing back the shine, removed far too much paint in the process. Eventually the best-selling washing powder of the time 'Tide' proved best in returning the paintwork to its former glory, but even this method failed to provide a permanent solution and after a few months, the finish was as bad as ever, this in spite of a never ending supply of packets of 'Tide' (good for trade no doubt) gallons of water, rags and elbowgrease!

I seem to recall that some of the 'younger' aircrew took part in Operation 'Rubadubdub' which inevitably ended with wet rags being thrown at each other, a practice shunned by their 'older' contemporaries (all of 28-32 years of age) who of course did not take part either in the actual cleaning task!

What a wonderful picture, thirty or so young airman scrubbing away at one of Britain's latest nuclear bombers, would have made for the squadron photograph album. (perhaps there is one, but where ARE those albums?). I often wondered whether the Soviets had similar problems with their aircraft?

About one year after leaving the RAF in September 1958, I was working for an Anglo-Dutch company buying and selling agricultural and horticultural equipment (close to home as I was a farmer's son) my work frequently taking me all over Britain and the Continent including behind the Iron Curtain and particularly East Germany. I always travelled with the head of the firm in his Dutch-registered Jaguar and crossed into the DDR via the infamous Berlin 'Checkpoint Charlie'. I made the crossing seven or eight times during the 1960's usually heading for the Leipzig or Dresden areas.

With collapse of the Soviet Bloc. in 1989/90 and the subsequent revelations of the files of the Stasi (East German Secret Police) I have often pondered on the possibility that if they had known that I was a recent member of a 'V'-bomber squadron, they could well have arrested me on some trumped up spying charge or whatever, and during interrogation one could anticipate the dreaded question: 'Vot vas ze secret formula for polishing ze RAF's nuclear bombers? We know zat it vas called 'Tide' but zat was obviously only ze code name'.

Equally, if British Intelligence had known that I regularly travelled behind the Iron Curtain they might well have asked me to 'keep my eyes open'. I did occasionally see DDR aircraft and various forms of military transport during my travels, but we were restricted as to where we could venture and always had a DDR official with us if we were away from towns and autobahns.

As far as I am aware the secret of 'Tide' was never revealed!

## SEARCH FOR A STIRLING

The journal of the Stirling Aircraft Association describes the continuing efforts to locate and recover either a whole Stirling airframe or as many useable parts which might be used in a possible re-build. A tall order, but evidently one site in the check list is that of BF516 a 214 Squadron machine (F/Sgt. H E Hall) which ditched in Pevensey Bay on 10 August 1943 with the loss of two crew members (Sgts Smith and Buckle). Our Bob Moorby was one of five survivors. It is unlikely however, that much of the Stirling remains in such an unfriendly environment.

The editor of the SAA journal also mentioned our last Reunion with the wish if possible for a few details of the event. This will be done.

## THE STIRLING PROJECT

This very long-term and independent project, aimed at an accurate re-construction of as much of a Stirling airframe as possible is quietly progressing in the wilds of Cambridgeshire, but Guiseppe Lombardi, a major force within the project, reports that all being well, the project is to be offered larger and better working facilities at nearby RAF Wyton.

## RAF COSFORD

Cosford is quickly becoming a major site for aircraft preservation, and as an 'out-station' of the RAF Museum, Hendon, is well worth a visit. boasting a superb collection of unique aircraft, weapons and engines plus an excellent visitors centre.

The refurbishment and conservation facility of Hendon, originally housed at Cardington and for a short time at Wyton, is re-locating at Cosford in brand new accomodation. The new facility, with the welcome inclusion of a public viewing gallery and due to open this year, will be known as the Michael Beetham Conservation Centre after MRAF Sir Michael Beetham, our President, who was Chairman of the Trustees from 1983 until 2000.

An apparent delay in the publication of Michael Bowyer's new 'Stirling' book,, means we can do nothing but await its arrival in hopeful anticipation.

*An Association wreath was laid at Stradishall on Remembrance weekend plus one at Chedburgh, again kindly donated by Mrs Olive Lax with an appropriate message: remembering those who were lost from RAF Chedburgh.*

*The number of entries in the Stradishall visitor's book grows steadily and is regularly checked in case of 'action needed'. It is pleasing to note that younger family members are now quite evident and entries in the 'comments' column always make interesting reading.*

A one-hour video has been produced on the history of RAF Chedburgh mainly covering the period of No.218(Gold Coast) Squadron (Lancasters, December 1944-July 1945) with special interest in the (then) last complete surviving Lancaster crew of WW2. (sadly, one member has since died). However, the producers claim to 'profile, in some detail the other squadrons that were based at Chedburgh during the war, which of course includes No.214(FMS) Squadron'.

Copies available from:

Ochreon Productions Limited, West Bank House, School Street, Honeybourne, Evesham, Worcs. WR11 7PL. (01386 832665).

Price: £12.99 plus £1.00pp Cheques payable to Ochreon Publications Ltd.

Association (Squadron) 'Goodies'

The store of squadron 'bits and pieces' (ties coasters, windscreen stickers etc.) is now held by Ian Coates, who will be pleased to deal with any orders (however large).

Ian Coates. 61 Wharfedale Runcorn Cheshire. WA7 6PS (01928 717206)

#### NOTE FOR YOUR DIARY

Guild of Aviation Artists. 2002 Annual Exhibition.

The 32nd Annual Exhibition will have a special section dedicated to Bomber Command in addition to the normal range of aviation subjects so will be worth a visit.

VENUE: Mall Galleries (near Admiralty Arch) DATE: Monday 22 July--Saturday 28 July 2002.

## HELP

### **P/O William Ralph Harding (184635)**

Lost his life on 6 November 1944 flying as navigator in the crew of F/O J M S Jackson. ✓

All ten members of the crew of Fortress HB788( BU-B) were killed.

John Harding, nephew of P/O Harding would welcome any information on his uncle's time at Sculthorpe and Oulton especially from anyone who may have known him. Unfortunately the family do not have a flying logbook to help them but John has been put in touch with Clare Pollard whose father was also in the crew. John can be contacted at:

1 Thorton Close, Newham, Daventry, Northants NN11 3HW.

### **Sgt. Elwyn Meredith (568070)**

Lost his life with two other crew members on 5 September 1942 . Flight engineer in the crew of P/O J G Smith (Stirling BF337 BU-B).

Anyone who may remember Sgt. Meredith, please contact Mr D B Meredith (an Association member) Well House Service Station, Ynysddu, Gwent, NP11 7LJ (01495 200284)

### **Sgt. Peter Doig Scott (104442)**

Mrs Sheila Byrne(USA) is trying to clarify information on her father's career, especially a number of untitled photographs which he left. Peter was a W/Op/air-gunner at Stradishall (May 1940-February 1941) and recorded a lot of flying not least his 30 operations (5 August 1940 with F/Lt Boffee and P/O Filleul - Hamm marshalling yards, to 10 February 1941-Hanover, with S/Ldr Smythe and Sgt Meadowcroft)

Some success has resulted, due to our three 'sages' namely: Ray Glass, Mervyn Leyshon and Geoff Cole, but Sheila would love to hear from anyone else who might have remembered 'Scotty'.

Peter's regular crew was: Sgts. Alan Brown, Aubrey Cattle, Ken Bolton, Bill Crofts and Len Poole but other names appearing in his log book are: P/O Berry, S/Ldrs. Balsdon, Sellick and Smythe, F/O Statham, W/Cdrs. Healy and Nuttall, P/O Simson, F/Lt Wells, P/O Hartford, P/O Dean., P/O Cunynghame, F/O Craigie-Halkett, P/O Perioli, Sgt Fry, P/O Filleul, F/Lt Boffee, F/Lt Kaufmann, F/Lt J L Beck, Sgt Meadowcroft, P/O Paterson, Sgt Chapman, Sgt North, P/O Cranswick and F/O Dawes.

After No.214 Sqn. Peter instructed at Moreton in Marsh and Edgehill (flew on the three '1000-bomber' raids) and then flew a second tour as gunnery leader with No.150 Sqn. in North Arica, finally returning to various post-war duties.

If you can help, Sheila (likely to join the Association) in her quest, she can be contacted at Mrs. Sheila Byrne, 347 West lake Road, Oswego, NY13126 USA.

### **P/O Norman Lewis Casely (116071)**

Mr Steve Casely is researching the career of his uncle P/O Norman Casely who flew a full tour as a navigator with No.214 Squadron at Stradishall from 26 April 1940--17 July 1941. ✓

He is known to have flown in Wellington L4326 (BU-K) which was later lost. The name is unfamiliar and as yet the name of the pilot has not been identified although Steve is aware of the PRO facility. P/O Casely was sadly killed in 1942 in a flying accident whilst on pilot training.

If you can help please contact Steve Casely on (01626 351490 ) Newton Abbott.

## SUCCESS

In January 2000, Mrs Sylvia Harding of 2 Albert Street, Woonona, New South Wales Australia, saw our Association's notice in an aviation magazine, and having had a wartime connection with 214, decided to join and duly sent off her application.

Similarly, in July 2001, Mrs Julie Carr from Hereford saw our notice and also with a wartime connection with the squadron, decided to join. Julie Carr is the former wife of the late John Flack an ex-squadron member who had sadly died in 1980.

In October 2001, during a 'phone conversation with Peter Walker, querying why she had not received a newsletter (one was quickly dispatched), Mrs Harding asked whether we had a Julie Flack amongst our members. Peter was able to confirm that indeed we had, although the lady member had since re-married and was now Mrs. Carr.

The background to this is that in 1944 Sylvia Harding (nee Dribbus) had been bridesmaid when Julie married John Flack. Both girls were WAAF's on the Officers' Mess staff at Stradishall, Chedburgh and Downham Market and attached to No.214 Squadron. They had kept in contact for a time after the war, but had then lost touch ---until now, and by the time you read this the 'girls' should be in contact again for the first time since 1948. Peter has since spoken to Julie who is delighted to be in contact again with her wartime friend and bridesmaid ---all via the Association! What better advert?

However, better still is that there is a distinct possibility that the two friends will both be present at the September 2002 Reunion. Fingers crossed for this very special occasion.

John Flack's experiences and suffering as an air-gunner are well documented in the squadron history and he would be proud to know that his grandson, Jonathan Flack (an Association member since last year) has gained his 'wings' and should be graduating from RAF Cranwell this coming Spring.

## OBITUARY

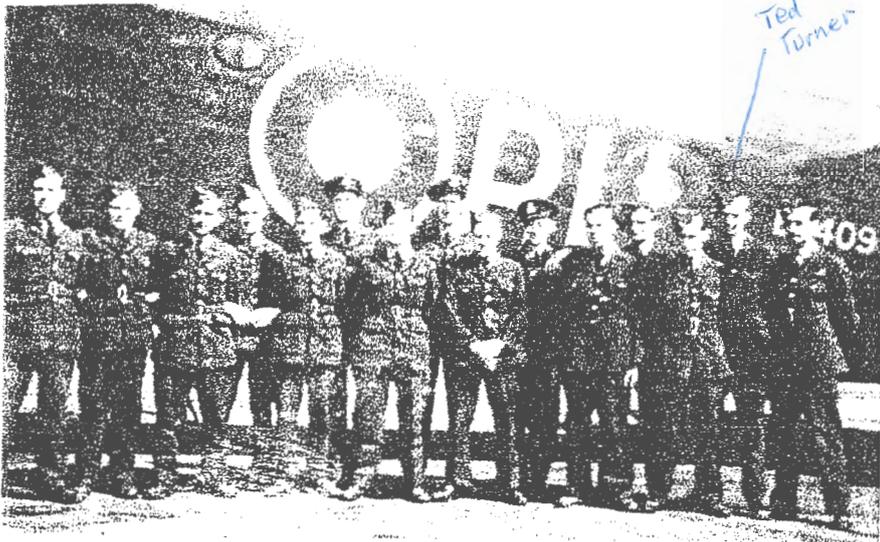
**Mr. Spencer Adams. Haverhill, , Suffolk. Died 25 November 2001. Aged 69 .**

The sad loss of a life-long devotee of aviation in its many aspects: photography, model-making, books and pictures but especially for his respect for and interest in the RAF. He worked with me for 18 years compiling the histories of both Stradishall and Chedburgh and remained a Trustee for the Stradishall Memorial Trust. A meticulous researcher, Spencer was deeply involved in working on the ancient history of his home town, Haverhill, at the time of his death. Donations in his memory from various sources were made to the RAF Benevolent Fund and RAFA.

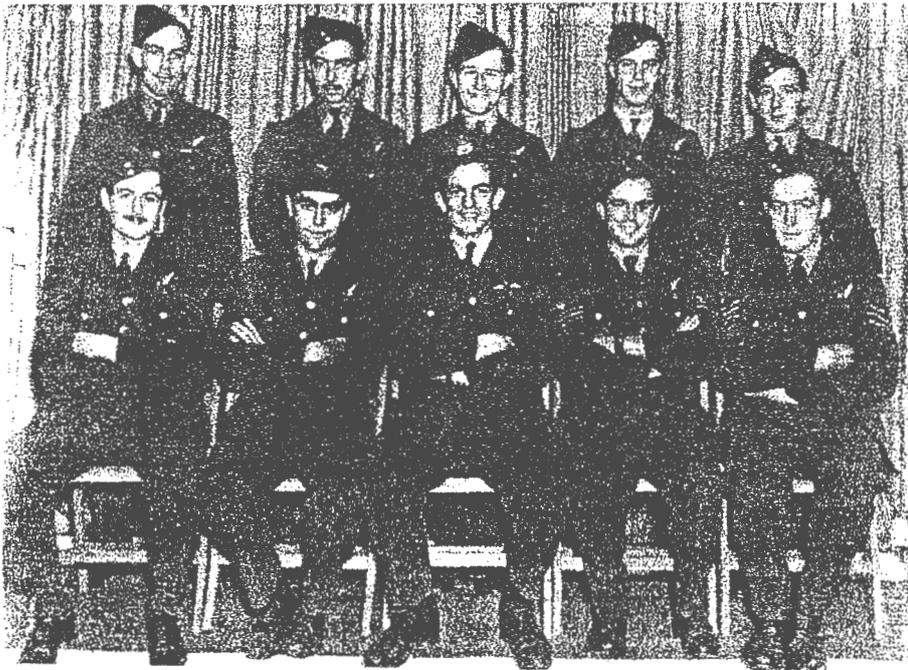
JMW



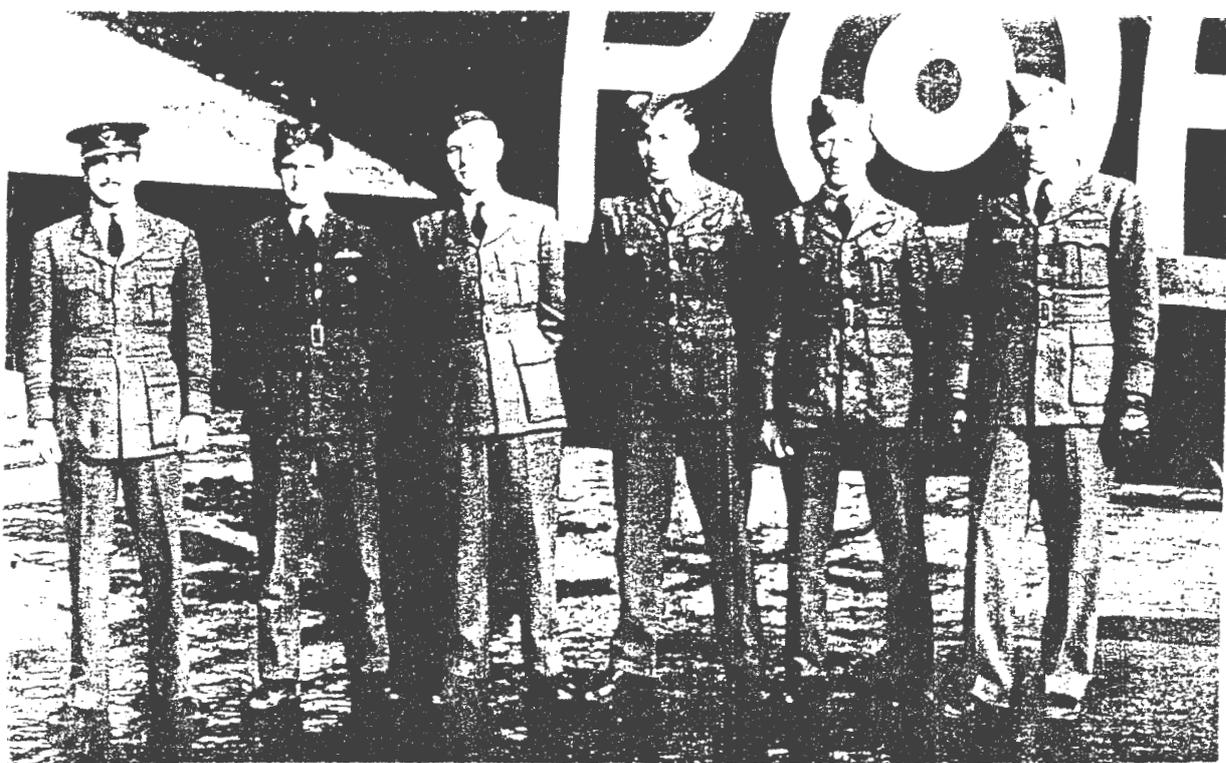
The first shows a suitably attired group of Sergeants Mess staff at Oulton Christmas 1944. Sylvia is extreme right, standing. (ME!)



The second is of unidentified Stirling air and ground crew. BU codes confirm 214 Sqn. and very likely EF409, the only '409' on the squadron. If so, this is Chedburgh. EF409 was abandoned off Wilhemshaven on the 3 August 1943 (Hamburg operation) due to severe icing and electrical storms. Five crew were lost but the captain, Sgt A A McGarvey, a Glaswegian policeman, swam one and a half miles to shore towing Sgt A B Grainger to safety. Both survived as PoWs, Sgt McGarvey winning the George Medal for this superhuman feat.



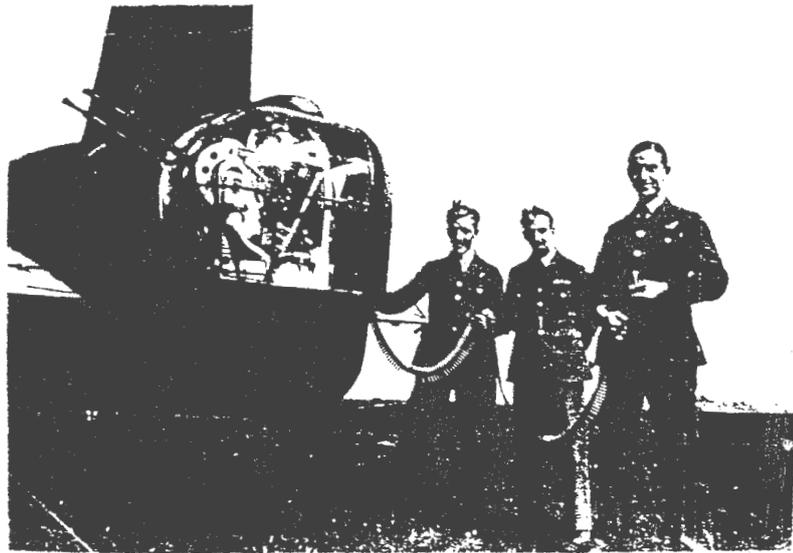
Number three is an unidentified Oulton crew. Any thoughts/suggestions welcome.



A group at Stradishall.  
 L-R. S/Ldr A H Smythe, Sgt Sid Meadowcroft,  
 F/Lt. Keith Falconer (Navigator), Sgt Tim Yates (W/OP)  
 Sgt Peter Scott (AG), Unknown.(F/O or P/O)



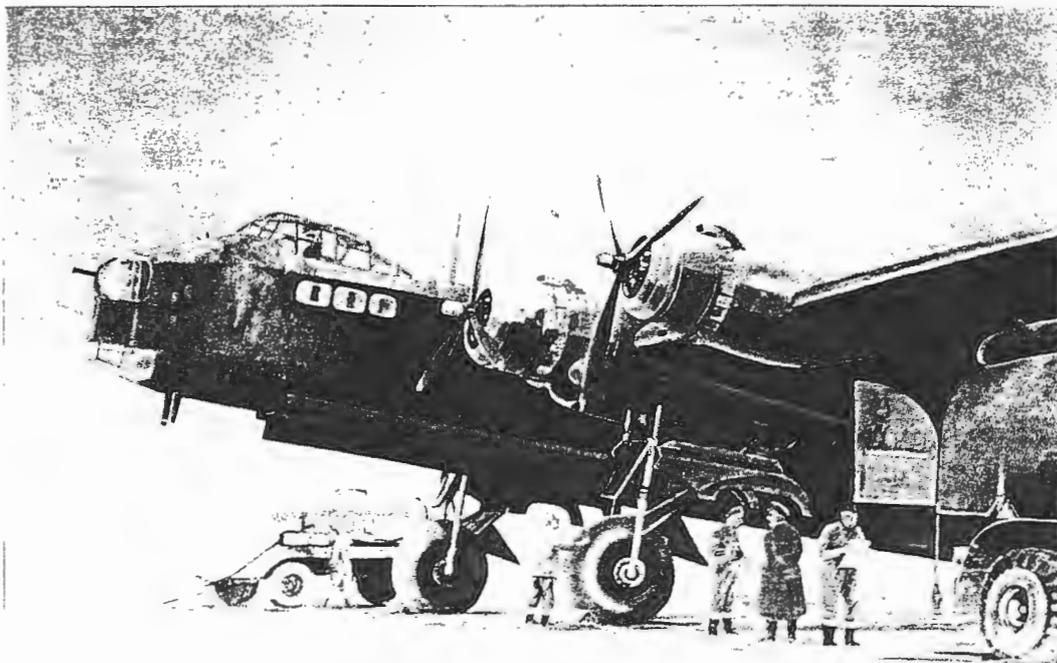
Sgt Peter Doig Scott at Stradishall.  
 Why the white cross?



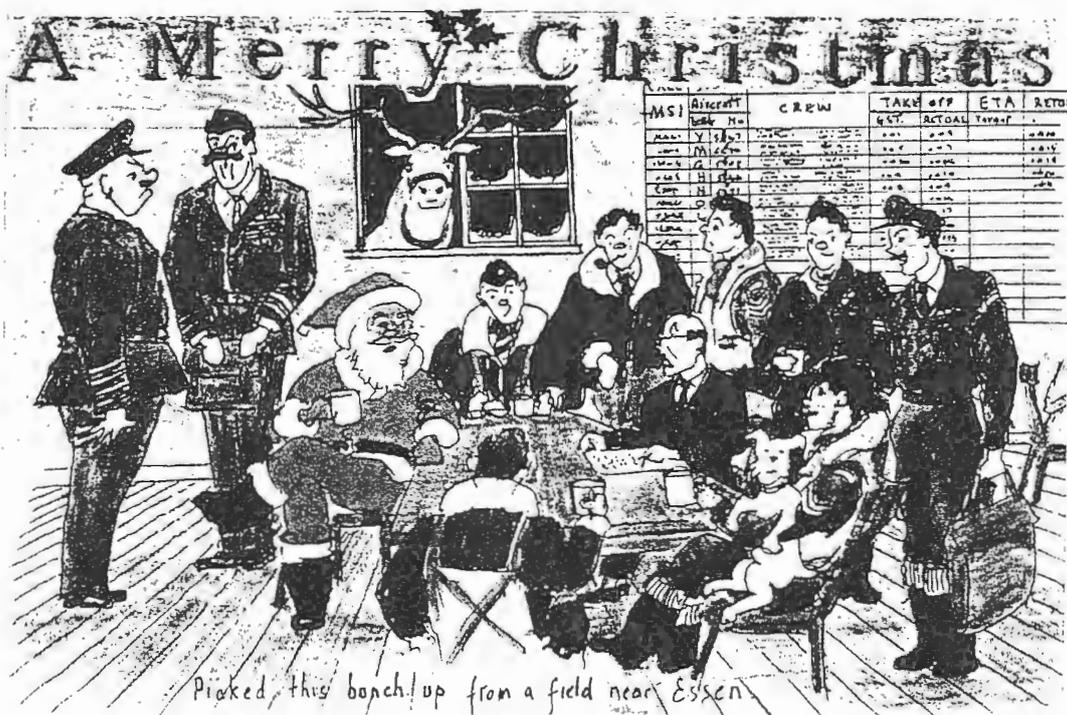
Three of the crew at Stradishall.  
 L-R. Peter Scott, rear-gunner Aubrey Cattle, pilot,  
 Bill Crofts, W/Op. (later Signals Leader at Chedburgh)

Sgt. Peter Doig Scott. ('Scotty') RAF Stradishall 1940-1941.

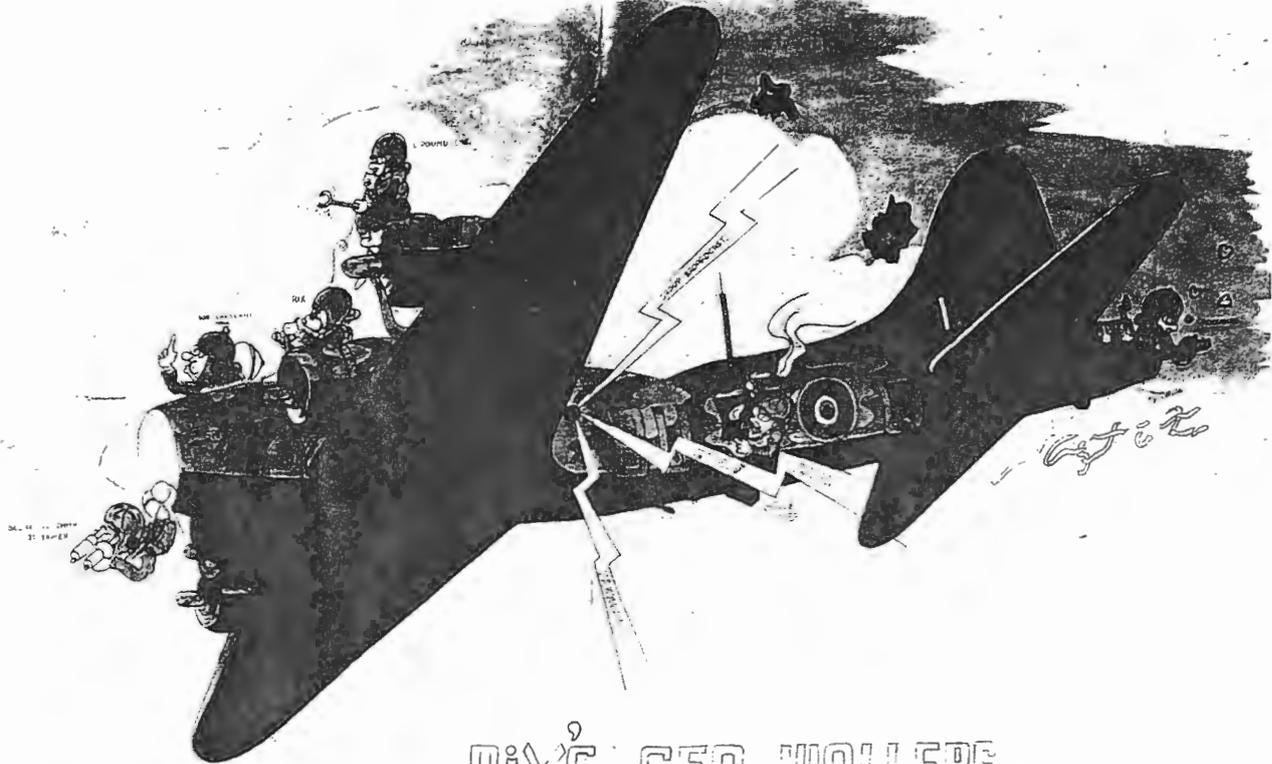
Photographs via Mrs. Sheila Byrne USA.



A fine study of a Stirling with groundcrew!  
 Original painted by the late Charles Hall ('Holly')  
 the well known and respected Ipswich-based aviation journalist  
 cartoonist and artist, and now available as a blank message card  
 (in colour and a useful 8"x 6") and reasonably priced from:  
 Mrs Vicky Gunnell (01473 720004).



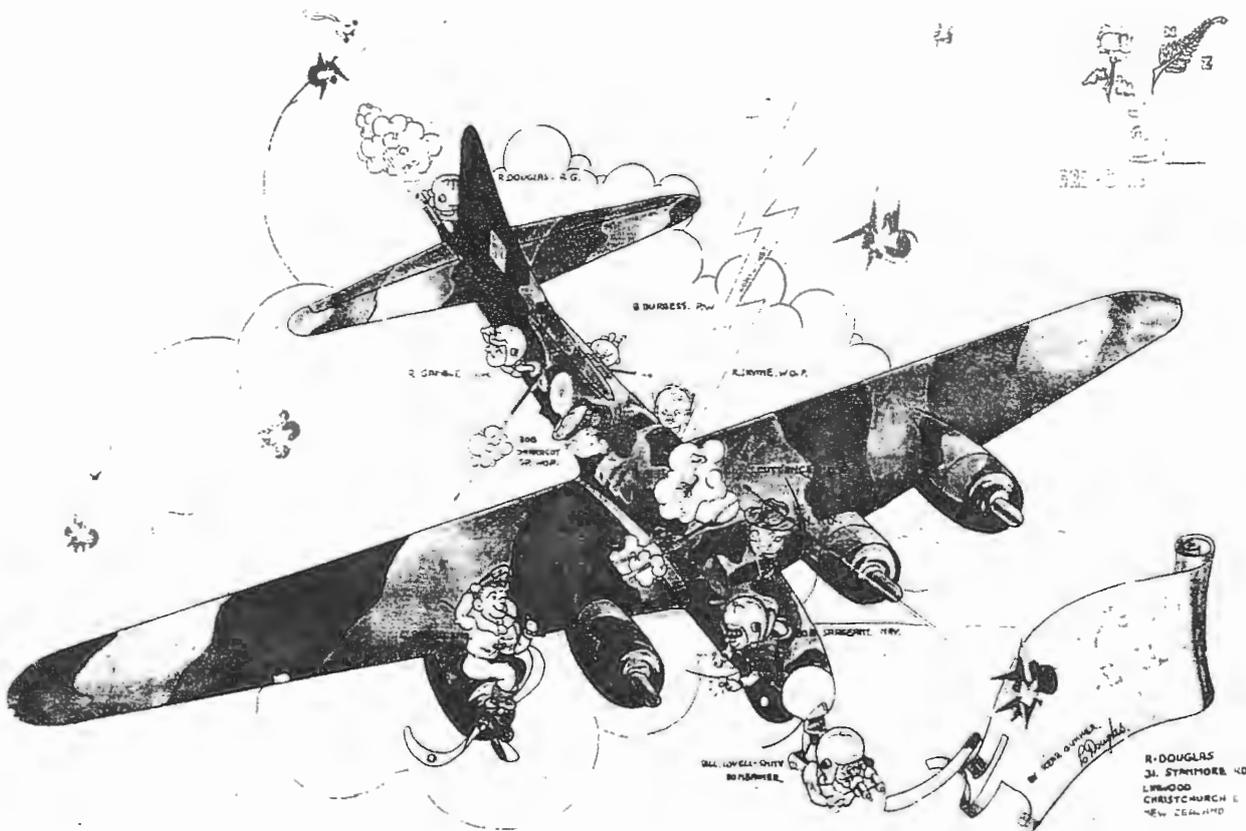
A marvellous Christmas card via the Cleveland Branch of the ACA  
 and reproduced here by kind permission of the artist, Mr Shuttleworth.  
 The last of a trilogy, the theme is self explanatory but the first two  
 evidently depicted the 'collection' and then the 'journey back'.  
 The details are worth a very close look. Brilliant.



• RIX'S GEN WALLERS •

*R Douglas New Zealand rear-gunner*

Prints of these two unique wartime studies by Norman Rix's New Zealand rear-gunner, R Douglas, (the first one is in colour) are now available. Price: £12.00 inc. pp. (Contact Jock : 01440 786266) Our grateful thanks to Mrs Margaret Rix for permission to reproduce the prints. Sale proceeds will go to the Norwich Aviation Museum.



R. DOUGLAS  
31. STYRMORE RD  
LITTLEWOOD  
CHRISTCHURCH 5  
NEW ZEALAND



No.214(FMS) Squadron Victors at Marham. 1973.

From a collection of photographs covering a visit to the station's tanker units by the East Anglian Aviation Society.

The unique (red) squadron logo is on both the tail fins of the aircraft and the vehicle.

This particular Victor is K1. XA936. Also at Marham at the same time were several American B52's over for a bombing competition accompanied by their own tankers and support aircraft.

(late John Webb via Wendy Webb and Jock Whitehouse.)