

Washington Times

Newsletter

Issue 11

Winter 2007



Cover Photos

Top WF512 (44 Squadron) at dispersal, RAF Coningsby (*Ernest Howlett*)

Bottom The Queen inspects the massed ranks of aircraft at the Coronation review. See page 20 for an alternative perspective on the Royal review by Douglas Cook who, by then, had swapped his Washington for a Shackleton. (*John (Buster) Crabbe*)

This Page **Bottom left** Shot of the Control Tower, summer 1953. Note how close the Fire bay was to the Tower.

Upper right: John Moore talking down a recalcitrant, American Major, in his Auster. At that stage Coningsby was in the throes of converting from B29s to Jets with the Jet Conversion unit in residence as shown on the board behind John. The other boards show 57, 15 and 44 Sqdns. Presumably 149 is on the hidden board! Note the old G.C.A still in use! (*Both photos John Moore*)

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Letters

John Crabbe wrote:

Thinking of your latest "Times" and just for laughs, thought I'd send you this shot taken with my wife's tiny camera - I think - in 1953 when my Mum and Dad visited us at Marham (In front of 'My' B29 – unfortunately the quality is not very good!) By now I'd left 207 via 35 and was now a Flt/Sgt Crew Chief on 115 Sqn.



I actually flew back to the States with this A/C to its final resting place at Davis Monthan- The Captain on that occasion was one F/O Joe Locharane (May be miss-spelled) The rest of the crew as I remember were - Flt ? 'Goose neck' Nav. Flt/Sgt Wally Kermes - Rad Nav, Flt/Sgt Smith - Engineer, Signaller ?? Can't remember who else. Joe at the time was the most senior Flying Officer in the whole of the RAF!! (Exams not his thing).

We flew from Marham to Prestwick then Prestwick -Goose Bay, G/Bay to Dover Delaware, and finally Davis Monthan. Most memorable moments were - going forward through the tunnel from aft, to find everyone asleep (halfway over the Atlantic) as also had been the Rad Nav. behind me.

Good old "George" - after a little consideration, I went back aft and did the same! Then there was following Route 66? across Texas for over an hour, completely arrow straight road. Finally - the Skipper this last time, was determined to show the USAF how a B29 should be landed - in all my life I have never experienced a smoother landing - he literally gently flew it onto the ground without even a judder - marvellous.

Just thought I'd share that with you for Christmas, and the picture. Have read the 'Times' which was very good, printed out a copy for Jack Lunan as his PC isn't up to unloading the W/Times.

Well Chris wrote a little more than I set out to do. Here's wishing you all you wish yourself for the Festive season. Best Regards John (Buster) Crabbe.

PS Just remembered, I bought the Corgi Classic Model B29, which was a replica of my A/C except they've numbered it WF448 instead of 445. - sad but all the rest of the details make it mine - it had also been Billy Butts before me.

Cheers again Buster

John Williams wrote,

You put me in a quandary asking for memories of the past, it all seems so long ago since my 'scanner' days (National Service I may add!). Unfortunately I have lost many of my photos etc but with the aid of a failing memory and my log book which I've still got on the bookshelves I've dredged together the following.

I served with XV Sqn at Coningsby between Oct 1952 and April 1953 on WF513. I then moved to 207 Sqn at Marham between April 1953 and Feb 1954 on WF564 and WF565 (although we tended to fly whatever had both wings and all 4 engines).

My 'skipper' for a lot of the time was a Flt/Lt R. Cunningham, Co-Pilot PO S. Mellinl. The other gunners were Harry Lyons (F/Sgt), Isaac (Ike) Cundall (Sgt) and Brian Morris (like me a 'Widget'). The W/Opp was a W/O called 'Yorkie' Walker but I can't recall the others.



Left: "Cunningham's Crew"
207 Sqn.
Standing L to R: P/O Tom Parsons (Radar), Harry Lyons (Gunner), "Ike" Cundall (Gunner), John Williams, Brian Marris (Widgets)
Seated L to R: ? FE, ? Navigator, F/L R. A. Cunningham (A/C), P.O. "Stan" ? (Co-pilot), "Yorkie" Walker (WOP)
(John Williams)

I did take part in the Royal Revue Flypast at Odiham and (along with a lot of others) assisted in polishing the aircraft. The rest was the usual mix of fighter affiliation and High Level Bombing with the odd 'exercise' thrown in.

As a comment on the 'black bottom' Washingtons I can remember one or two on 15 Squadron. WF498 was one and a couple of times I flew on WF497 and WF499 which I believe also had this scheme. We also had one aircraft with the name 'SABU' on its nose. I believe it was WF513 but clear memory doesn't exist! Can anyone else remember? Most of the planes I remember had their serial number on the fin.

The news sheets certainly brought back a load of memories, not just the 'when I took over from the winco' sort but the run of the mill fighter affiliation, HLB and plain circuits and bumps.

The ones that meant most were the little gems: the taste of the flanked coffee, making up flying ration packs with the aim of ‘winning’ a few tins to use in the billet, or to take home as rationing was still on! My first trip on a B-29 when I presented myself in outer and inner flying suit and roasted for 4 hours, at least it got a laugh! Climbing out of the top hatch to do ‘top checks’ finding frost all over (hoping not to end up straddling the fin!!). Oh and many other bits and pieces which all went to make up the privilege of being a WIDGET.

The map of 15 squadron dispersals brought back a lot of memories, mainly of washing in the gardens of the houses on the Dogdyke road being given that extra drying breeze! Incidentally there are a few aircraft missing – WF513, WF509 and WF551 being three but I have no dates other than 1952, early 1953 to go on.

It was good to see our ‘top brass’ again especially ‘Judy’ Garland. Again does anyone remember the ferry at Dogdyke?

I was pleased to see the item on WF513’s home run having flown on her in 15 Sqdn and later on 207 Sqdn. I lost track of her in April 1953 when my old crew (Flt/Lt Cunningham and Co) went onto WF566, WF564 and finished off on WF567. Nice to know she made it home!

All the talk about Stiffkey also sets the memory banks gaining – we tried all the tricks we could think up but we never got near the target drones either! I seem to remember some towed targets too but used mainly by the Army types down the range.

Right: Stiffkey gunnery range
(*Geoff Fielding*)



Regarding the volley-ball at Marham, we used to play all the time when we were “stood down” in summer – I’ve even got the same photo somewhere in my records – and knew Geoff and Kevin Grant very well. I can’t remember Alf Edge though but the story of his farting puts me in mind of a guy on 49 course at Leconfield who used to lie on his bunk at night emitting masses of gas which he tried to ignite with his lighter! Sometimes to our delight he succeeded! (Can anyone else remember his name?).

The enclosed photo is of Geoff Fielding and me (I am on the right), I think its at West Kirby. If I’m wrong then I apologise! Incidentally we used to call him “wing nut” but I can’t remember where that came from either!

Thanks again for revisiting memories of the old days – were we really that young?



Above: Geoff Fielding and John Williams at West Kirby.
Above right: Gunner's eye view of a "Spit" from camera gun film, 49 course Leconfield.
(John Williams)



49 Course at Leconfield. Most of those depicted were at Marham
Back row: Blondie Williams, Johnny Walker, Mike Medwell, Ray Adams, Jim Murray, Cedric Chapman
Middle: Bob Eckersley, Les Harrington, ? Hartley, Ian MacBain (who was injured but survived the crash of WF570 at Swaffham on 14/12/52. The stabiliser and tail broke off and the rest of the aircraft slid on and exploded killing all those forward of the waist), Keith Hand (posted to Watton for ELINT Washingtons I think), Jock Halliday
Front: Dave Macy, Geoff Fielding, Brian Slevin, Colin Wright, Jack Tomlinson (*Geoff Fielding*)

Doug Cook wrote:

FLYING RATIONS

In Issue 10, winter 2006, of the Washington Times I was challenged to comment on Flying Rations in Coastal Command after John King's remarks about those given to us when we flew together in Washingtons on 44 Squadron in 1951.

As I recall, the scale of flying rations was fairly similar in both Bomber and Coastal Command, and indeed in the RCAF's maritime force where I served on an exchange tour in 1958-60. Flights over two hours duration bought you a chocolate bar; over about four hours you got a packed lunch and over eight hours you qualified for another meal. Coffee, tea and squash was thrown in.

I must say that in my time on Washingtons with John King I do not remember the heating urn in the back. What I do remember is heating the soup using the two angle poise lamps on the navigator's table. Positioned to hold the can of soup between them, with the lamps full on, they took 15 to 20 minutes to heat the cans of soup provided. The lack of adequate heating facilities accounted for most of the tinned rations being brought back after the flight and magically appearing in married quarters kitchens!

I also do not remember any 20 hour flights in Washingtons. Most of mine were six to eight hours at most, with one flight of 10 hours and five minutes. Accounts in WT of the American operations in the Pacific showed that the flight durations from their island bases to Japan and back were 14 to 15 hours. Many landed back at base "on the fumes" with virtually empty tanks. Others not so efficient in their engine management fell short and ditched in the sea. So operationally, 15 hours to dry tanks seemed to be the limit. Where did 20 hours come from? Were bomb bay overload tanks used?

I do remember 20 hour flights in the Shackleton and the Canadair Argus, although 15 and 18 hours respectively were the norm.

The Shackleton with a normal crew of 10 had a galley - of sorts. There was an electric urn to boil water, a small oven and hot plate on which to concoct warm delicacies, and a small sink in which to wash the dirty crockery. Rations consisted of chocolate bars, fruit, coffee, tea and squash; plus a boxed lunch, plus the makings for one or two more meals, depending on the planned duration of the sortie. To an extent the crews could choose the raw materials for their meals, but I do not remember many steaks! Mostly there was bacon and eggs for a fried breakfast some time between midnight and mid day or sandwiches of the same; a staple was "Atlantic Stew" which was warm and filling, but the taste of which depended on the culinary skills of the duty galley wallah (mostly signallers). Later the oven was modified to take pre-frozen meals for re-heating. Easier to handle but not to everyone's taste. Moreover, as there was no table, apart from that covered in navigation charts, there was nowhere to eat it except on ones lap in ones seat. The biggest problem, one which was never solved (or even looked at?) in the development of the type through the Marks 2 and 3, was the stowage of pots, pans, crockery and cutlery, together with the crew's own supplies of the makings for drinks and things like salt, pepper, spices and sauces with which to improve(?) the taste of meals. This lot amounted to not an inconsiderable volume for crews of ten and up - we sometimes flew with 21 aboard. The answer was a Crew Box, usually a recycled ammo box, customised to each crew's needs or ingenuity. It was heavy and unwieldy to get to and in the aircraft and formed an obstacle in the passageway through the galley, and a potentially dangerous unrestrained flying object in an emergency landing or ditching.



Doug Cook flying Shackleton "Q" in a formation of 220 Squadron a/c returning to their base at St Eval in Cornwall. (*Doug Cook*)

On the Canadair Argus my crew's first trip outside the circuit after converting to type was a patrol of 20 hours and thirty minutes, but our routine sorties were either a six hour training trip, or an 18 hour patrol along the Canadian East Coast. This effectively kept at least one Argus in the air at all times - my crew of 15 did Christmas Day 1959! By the way the 18 hour sortie was from 1530 to 0930, what you might call unsocial hours. The Argus, based on the Bristol Britannia, was in many ways similar to the Washington. It had the same engines and the same wing flap system (which produced the nose down attitude when approaching to land), had bomb bays fore and aft of the wing spars, and it was about the same size but a bit heavier. However, there was a 3 foot wide flat aisle down the length of the fuselage. The front was home to the flight crew of pilots, engineer, radio operator and geographic navigator. Then came a galley area and four bunk beds (the air mattresses of which were inflated by the aircraft pneumatic system!) with behind them a row of airliner seats over the mid-wing area. Behind that came the Tactical Crew compartment with the operators facing sideways, and in the rear were the beam lookout stations and chutes for launching sonobuoys, markers flares etc.

The Argus galley was a dream to my Shackleton eyes. On the port side was a four cubic foot fridge and drawers to stow the rations and crockery, etc. There was a water heater, an oven and grill, and my crew at least had an electric frying pan. On the opposite side was a four seat dinette with table, bolted to which was a toaster. As I mentioned earlier, the scale of rations was similar, the amount and variety depending on the duration of the sortie. Again it was chocolate bars, fruit, a boxed lunch and the makings for one or more meals. For our 18 hour flogs we got a dinner meal and a breakfast in addition to the boxed lunch.

Flying over the Gulf Stream in winter at low level was not very pleasant. It was bumpy. Very bumpy. We had a great problem with air sickness, particularly with the Tactical Crew down the back, in the dark, looking at CRT screens. As a consequence, many otherwise keen appetites were blunted.

The crew of 15 included a spare of each category, so the off duty pilot or whatever could cook his own meal to taste. I remember going back to the galley, putting the electric frying pan on the right temperature, getting a fillet mignon steak out of the fridge and placing it in the pan together with half a tin of potatoes, some mushrooms and peas. Then placing two slices of bread in the toaster and making a cup of coffee. A short sit down, and the meal was cooked. After such a repast I would walk down the fuselage, checking on activity in the Tactical Crew compartment, then repair to my bunk for a rest and perhaps a short sleep if it was the middle of a long night. - always in the lower starboard bunk, so that the crew knew where to get me if there was an emergency.



A Mk1 Argus (with the big radome hiding the APS-20 radar) photographed from a Neptune flown by Doug Cook in 1959 during the time that the Canadian East coast Squadrons, 404 and 405, were converting from Neptunes to Argus. (*Doug Cook*)

Just before I was tourex, the Canadian nutritionists visited and declared that fillet mignon was not really necessary and began to replace it as a menu item with cuts of lesser attraction, such as lamb chops. I knew it was time to leave.

Jeff Brown wrote:

Flying rations – initially they were virtually non existent, a sandwich or two (usually dried up), a thermos of horrible coffee, a bar of chocolate etc.

Later we got some heater units and tins of soup. Our crew (gunners) on long nav flights, sometimes 10 – 15 hours we bought tins of baby food, pierced the lid, tied down the trigger of the signal lamp, put the tin on the glass – it soon heated up – served and delicious!

On the question of the number of gunners per crew:- Initially on 149 Squadron at Marham, August 1950 we only had two. In 1951 at Coningsby we got a National Service A/G making three. For any big exercises etc we roped in a spare A/G to make four but three was the norm.

The exile of Phil Rivkin to RAF Coningsby by Phil Rivkin.

Shortly after completing the WCU course, Flt Sgt George Stephenson (of Darlington Co. Durham – where else with such a distinguished name!?) and myself, were having a learned discussion about Newcastle United's FA cup wins (which shows you how long ago that conversation took place!) when our skipper, Flg Off Dormer said "you two have just volunteered to do the runway control caravan duty today".

For the uninitiated, this is the large red and white chequered caravan with a sort of glass astrodome on top and the job was to prevent traffic from crossing the threshold of the active runway when aircraft were landing or taking off and also to assist with any emergency that would impinge upon the safety of aircraft using the active runway such as flocks of birds. Lapwings were the worst offenders and we had to fire off a series of red very lights if necessary to prevent a flock of these birds hazarding a landing or take off.

No one ever mentioned horses and with the exception that my late father had been a cavalry man in the Imperial Russian Army of Tsar Nicholas II during the Russo / Japanese War and later, when he came to England, just in time to be a gunner in an 18 pounder gun crew in the Royal Horse Artillery in the British Army during the 1914/18 War and between spending the greater part of my boyhood on a farm in the lake district, and that which Pa taught me about horses, George Stephenson and I had no official endorsements for dressage, milk delivery or general horsemanship entered into our respective Flying Log Books.

Thus it was to our joint surprise that a riderless chestnut hunter, around 17.5 hands at least, made an approach from the threshold of the active runway, ignored all laid down airfield traffic procedures and galloped straight down the active runway.

Being a master of wit and repartee, and having received a classical education George exclaimed "F*** my old boots" almost at the same time as the SATCO came up on the landline with the orders "you two, get off your arses and get that bloody horse off the airfield before it causes any damage. If you can't catch it I've sent you a couple of rifles from the station armoury and you'll have to shoot it".

Being an inveterate punter there were a few horses that I could have cheerfully shot, along with the jockeys and trainers but this particular nag had done neither George nor I any particular harm except cause us to forego our mid morning dish of Orange Pekoe (we had a Calor gas stove in the caravan).

So we quickly devised a plan between us for the capture of the riderless chestnut. We had a long wheel base Landrover at our disposal which had the goosenecks on the back which I got out. There was also a metal wire tow rope. I wrapped the wick material around the noose I formed on the tow rope and fastened the other end to a strong point just behind the driver's seat. George drove the Landrover and I stood in the back, hanging out over the edge of the rear wooden side wall with the noose ready to slip over the horse's head.

Now whilst this action takes some time to record, in fact it all happened within a couple of minutes of the horse galloping onto the active runway and the orders given to catch it.

And so we set off after this nag, with me adopting my customary role of following the horses, this time with the intent of encouraging the hayburner to stop instead of earnestly entreating the horse to go like the wind!

We chased that nag all over the airfield and finally, as it got tired (I was used to this as all the horses I

followed were tired even before the ‘off’!) I managed to slip the well padded and improvised noose around its neck. I shouted to George to steadily slow down so as not to strangle or injure the horse and good fortune and a spot of quick thinking won the day. George and I and the Landrover came to a blessed halt in the middle of Marham airfield where the grass was long and lush. I tore up some grass and clover and spoke gently and stroked his nose and muzzle and fed him the grass and he calmed down. I then led him to the control tower where I tied him up to the bicycle rack and got him a fire bucket full of water. Whilst George and I were giving the horse a bit of fuss and TLC a large puce faced gent clad in tweed hacking jacket, jodhpurs and riding boots (highly polished) came storming up to George and I and, in the middle of his tirade about “you two clowns and what the bloody hell do you think you are doing” I cut him off in mid rant and said “For your information” (poking him in the stomach with my forefinger to emphasise the point) “this happens to be Air Ministry property (the Ministry of Defence having not been invented at that point in the ice age) and civilians are not permitted to ride horses willy nilly onto busy RAF airfields and people are only permitted entry after entering through the main gate and reporting their presence to the guardroom” (another poke in the stomach drove home my point).

Then George chimed in with his contribution “and if you want to play cowboys, do us all a favour and go play somewhere else. We were going to have to shoot that horse if we couldn’t catch it and, if I had to shoot something, I’d rather shoot you than the horse”.

“Do you two clowns know who I am?” came the irritated reply.

Now as Flight Sergeant and Sergeant aircrew, RAF Bomber Command HQ at High Wycombe, rarely, if ever, discussed the career movements of Group Captain Station Commanders with George and I and this puce faced gent in the riding outfit did indeed turn out to be the newly appointed Group Captain of RAF Station Marham.

We went back to our runway control caravan where, within about ten minutes, two fellow aircrew NCOs from 35 Squadron were dropped off in the SATCOs Landrover and they said “George, Riv, you are both relieved, the boss wants to have a word in your shell-likes”. “What its about?, Search me, but the Boss wants you over sharpish”.

Some ten minutes later, Flt Sgt Stephenson and I stood at attention in front of Sqdn Ldr O’Flynn, the Officer Commanding 35 Squadron, who was a very decent one and we could both see that he seemed a bit embarrassed. In the end he said “I wont beat around the bush lads. This is not my decision or doing but the new Group Captain is not best pleased with you and you are to pick up your clearance chits and the Group Captain wants you both off the premises before the ensign comes down. So get your kit on and report to station flight where the Oxbox will transport you to Coningsby. I’m sorry lads but it is out of my hands”.

As we were going out the door Sqdn Ldr O’Flynn said “Oh, and bloody good show about the horse”. “Thank you sir” we chirped up, somewhat miffed at our banishment in what we thought was a good cause. As we clutched our clearance chits and everyone seemed so eager to sign us off I recalled that which a grizzled and bemedalled Flg Sgt with the DFM over his air gunner’s wing said to us pilgrims when we had signed up for aircrew training at Cardington several years ago “Two things to remember lads to help you fit into the Royal Air Force; don’t expect too much justice, there aint a lot of that around at the best of times and second, you might as well be happy because no one gives two monkey’s f***s if you aint!”

Then it was station flight, Oxbox to Coningsby. Upon landing, not a soul around at 20.00 hrs at Coningsby. No transport so the two of us had to tramp from the end of the runway, in our flying gear,

carrying kit bags and all our earthly goods to Coningsby sergeants' mess. The place was floodlit. "Fly me to the moon" was wafting out of the open Sergeants mess windows as we entered through the two main doors into the rather magnificent foyer of the Coningsby Sergeants' mess with the huge and imposing Royal Air Force crest embossed into the floor. It was filled with guests from the officer's mess and their ladies, senior NCOs and their wives all in their mess dress decorations and the ladies in their finery as it was the mess summer ball.

Quite suddenly a hush descended upon this jolly assembly and a small but very imposing officer stepped forward. He only had one arm and he was a Group Captain with so many decorations that his wings were nearly worn up the seam of his shoulder. "Wotchit Riv, that gob of yours", George hissed 'soto voice' into my lug hole as the Group Captain held out his one and only hand to me. As we shook hands he said "now let me guess. Flt Sgt Stephenson and Sgt Rivkin, late of 35 Squadron Marham. I am Group Captain Walker, Station Commander here. You two will do well here and welcome to Coningsby. By the way, there's not a single horse on the inventory so that's a bit of temptation removed!"

Everyone had a good laugh and Group Captain Gus Walker ordered "Get these two chaps a drink and you two join in and enjoy yourselves, never mind the flying overalls"

Well that meeting with this great and very decent officer and gentleman of the old school proved to be a turning point in my life and led me on to a very successful career as a professional electrical and nuclear engineer and all down to this great man – but that's another story!



Left: Signaller Phil Rivkin.
Bottom Right: Gerry and Wilf dipping the tanks.
Bottom Left: An airborne study of Flt Lt Maurice Hickmott entitled "Piss of Rivkin and don't touch anything!"
(All photos – and captions – Phil Rivkin)



Looking for information on Sqdn Leader Sloane, O/C 90 Sqdn January 1950 – January 1953

Sheelah Sloane wrote to me as she is looking for information on her father, Squadron Leader Sloane (O/C 90 Squadron) who, along with the other 9 members of his crew, tragically died when Washington WF502 crashed in North Wales on 8 January 1953.

If anyone has any information regarding Squadron Leader Sloane she would be delighted to receive it. She can be contacted at:

106 George Crescent
London N10 1AJ

or via e-mail at sheelah@btinternet.com

Co-incidentally **Wendy Chilcott also wrote:**

Wendy is the sister of Sgt Ken Reakes who also died in the crash of WF502. Perhaps even more tragically, Ken was only married on 22 December 1952 before dying in the crash on 8 January 1953. Wendy, who has visited the area supplied the following photo of the graves of 6 of the 10 crew in Harwarden cemetery. Ken's grave is marked with the small pen cross second from the right. Wendy is looking for any information on her brother.

Wendy can be contacted at:

Apt 39
East Quay House
17 Marrowbone Slip
Plymouth
Devon
PL4 0HX



Sheelah supplied the following photo of her father in happier times, and the newspaper cutting relating to, her father receiving the Minot Bombing Trophy for 90 Squadron during a parade at Marham in 1952. Bottom another photo from Sheelah of the same event.



BELFASTMAN C.O. OF WINNING SQUADRON
Bombing trophy

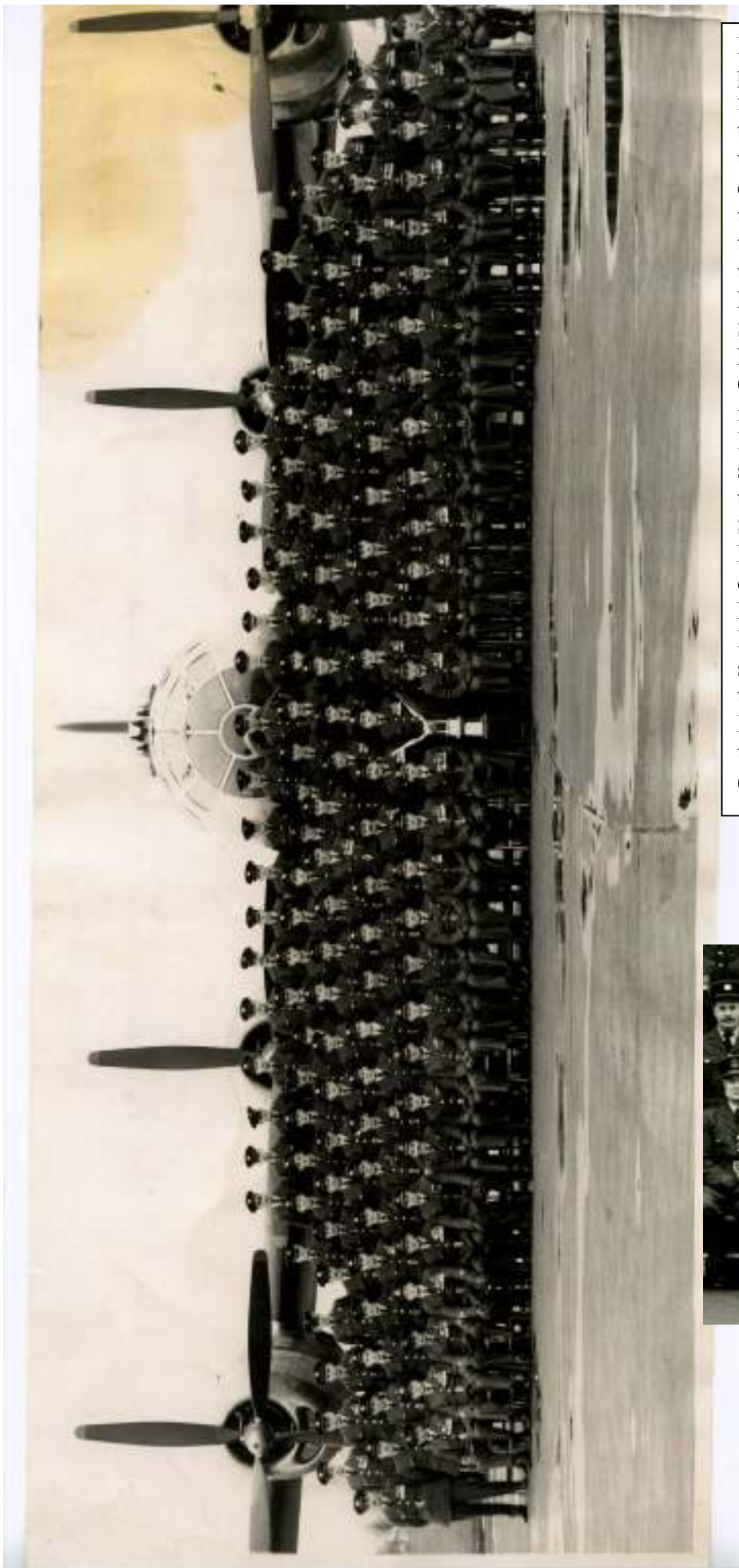
Chief of the Air Staff, Marshal of the R.A.F. Sir John Slessor, will present the Laurence Minot Bombing Trophy to the Officer Commanding, No. 90 Squadron, Bomber Command (Squadron-Leader W. R. Sloane), at R.A.F. Station, Marham, Norfolk, on October 15. The C.O. of the Squadron, Squadron-Leader W. R. Sloane, is a Belfastman.

The trophy is awarded annually to the best visual bombing squadron in Bomber Command. This year's competition required squadrons to complete four separate night cross-country flights, each made by a different crew, terminating with visual bombing at a range.

Runners-up were a squadron of the 7th Air Division, United States Air Force, who were invited to participate.

The Laurence Minot Trophy was presented to the Royal Air Force in 1926 in memory of Captain Laurence Minot, M.C., who was killed in air combat over Flanders in 1917.





Left: Don Neudegg supplied this photo of 115 Squadron posing in front of one of their B-29s with the Laurence Minot bombing trophy proudly displayed at the centre. 115 Squadron won the trophy in 1953 and Don reports that “the rumour at the time was that the Air Ministry wasn’t happy that a Washington Squadron had won the trophy. It had been hoped that the new Canberra bombers just coming into service would have taken it. If that was true then it made our success that much sweeter. The trophy was presented to 115 Squadron by Marshal of the Royal Air Force The Lord Tedder on 4th December 1953 at RAF Marham, Norfolk. Squadron Leader Holmes D.F.C. A.F.C. is sitting immediately to the left of the trophy as we look at it.”

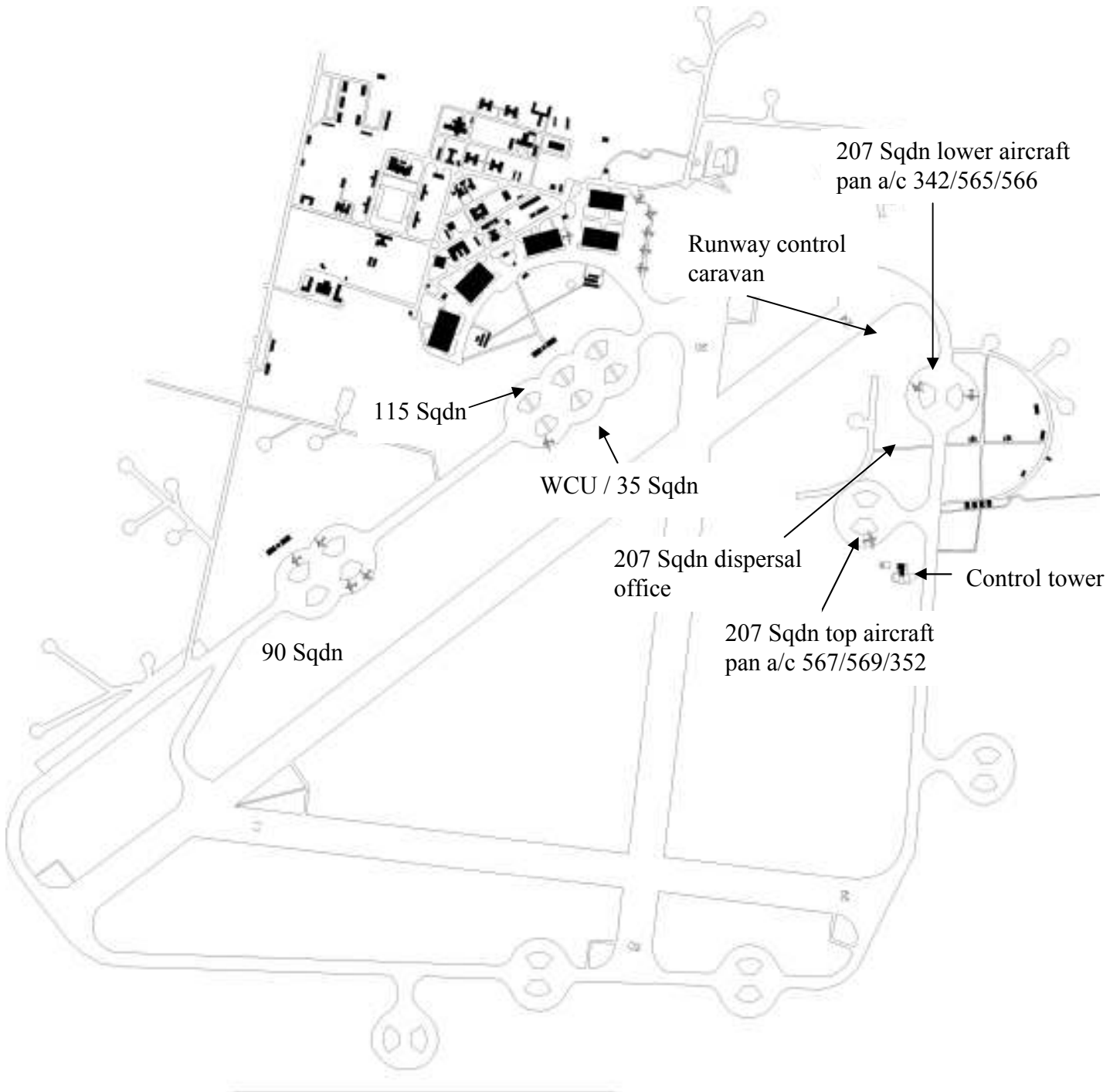
Below: Enlargement of the trophy.

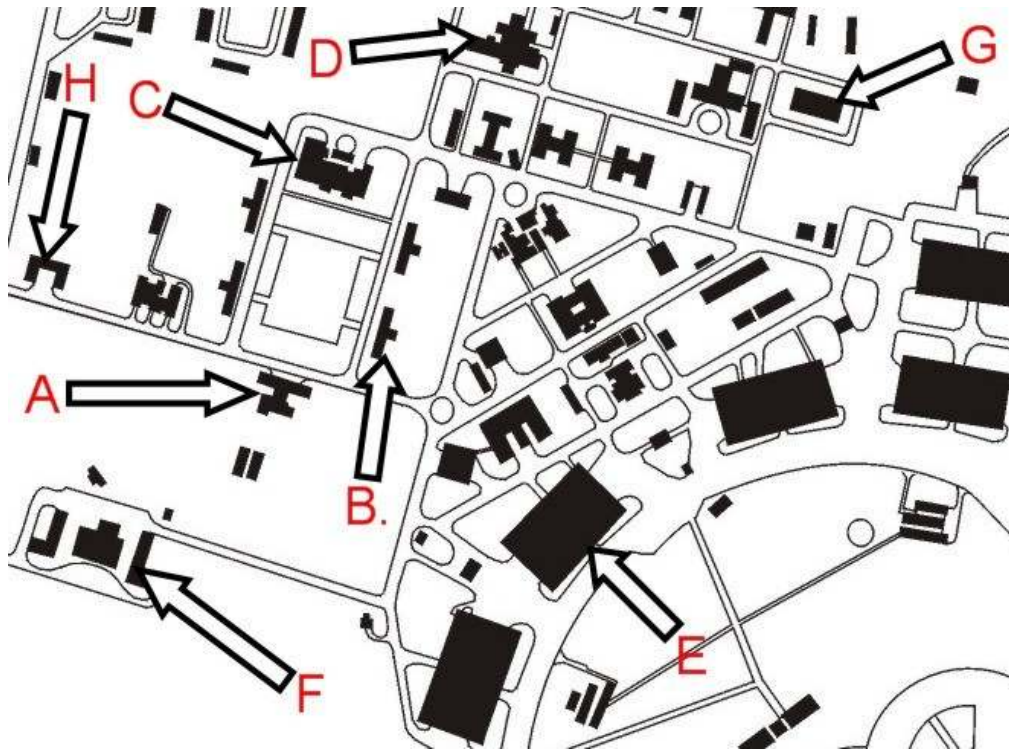
(Don Neudegg)



RAF Marham

Below is a revised plan of RAF Marham. Many thanks to John Broughton and John Hanby who supplied the information.





John Broughton (207 Squadron engine fitter), supplied the following information on some of the buildings in the main camp area (see enlarged plan above):

- A. Station HQ was to the south end of the parade ground.
- B. 207 Squadron ground crew barrack block 36.
- C. NAFFI
- D. Hospital - spent some time in there after I damaged my back, (about 2 weeks). At the same time we had Bomber Command Athletic Championships at the camp.
- E. 207 Squadron Office and Crew rooms in Number 2 Hangar, also the Squadron Flight Sergeant's office which was one place we tried to avoid.
- F. Officers Mess - never got there.
- G. Cinema - Since I was in the station band (played the trumpet at that time) I didn't do guard duty, but had to do fire picket at the cinema instead (not a bad deal)
- H. Guard Room - Never came through that way after midnight during the week - used a hole in the perimeter fence.



Left: Marham from the Sergeants' mess water tower.
(*John Williams*)

John Moore wrote:

Nov 5 1952 saw me report for my 2yr stint of N.S and after the usual formalities, kitting and square bashing, reported for duties in the Air Traffic Control at Coningsby, there were 4 Sqdns based here all with B29s; they were 15, 44, 57 and 149. I stayed at Coningsby until mid 1954, when the station was placed on upgrade basis, if memory serves me correctly, Cottesmore was the temporary location.

Being in A.T.C I am left with an endearing memory of Coningsby; when Fog/Mist closed down flying "Ops" and all the B29s' fins standing up from the field of "Cotton wool". Quite spectacular!

Another memory concerns "Tirpitz" Tait - it is quite true as I was present on the day in question, on duty in the tower.

As you may be aware, at that time (1953) there were a lot of Polish pilots still flying with the R.A.F. and very good they were too if I might say. On this particular day, one of the Polish pilots was, shepherding, converting Tait to the B29. They were on "circuits and bumps". It was about lunchtime when they arrived on finals, on TWO engines. No problems in that but Tait suddenly decided to take off which as most people know is an extremely hazardous action to initiate!!

Suddenly over the open radio came the desperate plea and command "For Christ's sake all 4, all 4". At the end of runway "26" was situated a farmhouse, it had survived the war, but was it going to survive this pilot!! It did and does to this day but it was only by "literally" inches that the B-29 cleared the roof. I am only pleased that I wasn't in the farmhouse because if you were and the B-29 had hit you wouldn't have stood a chance.

90 Squadron Reunion

In the year 2006, a few friends and members of 90 Sqdn paid homage to fallen comrades by the laying of a wreath at the Sqdn Memorial at Tuddenham St Mary's on Sunday 10th September 2006.

The same tribute to 90 Sqdn. will take place on Sunday 9th September 2007 at 1100 hrs at Tuddenham Sqdn Memorial.

On Saturday September 8th a dinner has been arranged at the Plough Inn Icklingham, 1900hrs for 1930hrs.

For further information ring Mike Davies or Stanley (Jock) Johnston on 01603 764483.



Finally, Jock Johnston is researching the squadron history and if anyone has any information on 90 Squadron's use of the Washington's smaller brother, the B-17, between May 1941 and February 1942 he would be most interested in receiving it. He can be contacted on the number above. Interesting to note that, unlike the Superfortress, the B-17 seems to have escaped the attention of the re-naming committee and remained the Flying Fortress when in RAF service!

A Culture Shock

Training for the last war, an accusation often made against our military hierarchy and one which many aircrew must have felt to be justified because there was plenty of training, which was on and with equipment which was past its 'use in combat' date. To some extent it is understandable to use older equipment for the basic teaching but the transition to the real thing can be a culture shock involving a steep learning curve.

In 1951 I found this to be the case when having opted to be an air gunner for my National Service, rather than suffer the longer pilot's course, I found myself at RAF Leconfield where I was, along with nine others, to be initiated into the mysteries of Bolton Paul hydraulically operated turrets in the dear old Wellington. The armament and the aircraft being thoroughly out of date, but only slightly more so than the Lincolns which were soon to replace our canvas covered Wellingtons which strangely enough we sprog gunners felt proud to fly in. Maybe it was the thrill of it all and at least it allowed us, at subsequent reunions, to say "but we learned on a real aircraft".

In addition we learned about machine guns, starting with the .303 Browning because that was what we had in the Wellington and it was a suitable introduction to the .5 version which was then, along with the Hispano 20mm, the RAF's standard defensive armament in Bomber and Coastal Command. We also learned to deal with fighter attacks from Spitfires and Typhoons and I suppose their closing speed on us would be relative to MiGs on the aircraft in squadron service. Nevertheless we seemed to be training for some previous conflict and even so did no night training whatsoever and after, as far as I can recall, fourteen weeks [total flying time 22 hours 25 minutes] eight of us passed the course* and awaited news of our posting fully expecting to go on to Lincolns or even better to Shackletons in Coastal Command where we would have some considerable further training for about six months.

It was with a sense of shock and surprise that we learned that we were posted to 207 Squadron, which was being reformed at RAF Marham and converting to the Washington, the name the RAF gave to the B-29s which Britain had borrowed from the USA. Our colleagues, all regulars, came from Lincoln squadrons and even for them the 'aluminum tube' came as a culture shock because the B-29 was for the RAF a highly advanced aircraft. Pressurised with all controls servo assisted and, much of the equipment, especially for us gunners [now designated scanners] controlled by what the Americans called tubes, pronounced toobs, and which after the initial incomprehension we realised were; valves, electronic, weapons system, for the control of.

An equally dramatic change was the isolation from our .5 Brownings housed in barbettes some distance from the sighting stations from which control of the guns could be switched to another station. The system was so sophisticated that the CFC [Central Fire Controller] could take over the whole system, and run it from his 'mid-upper' position, should the need arise, provided everyone could find the right switches. Only the tail gunner had no control of other gun stations presumably because of his vulnerability and isolation from the other three gunners who were stationed amidships. My recollection is that in the tail station the gunner had a switch by which, perhaps with his dying fingers, he could pass control of his guns to the other stations but there was no way he could control any of the other barbettes.

The B29 was an aircraft with a degree of comfort not found in the RAF of the early fifties. What a difference from our draughty Wellingtons on which I trained and the noisy Lincolns from which the bulk of the other crewmembers came. How good was it? Well the Americans thought it good enough to use in Korea where its fire power, strong though it was, could not match the 37 mm cannon which the MiG 15 carried, four or five shells from which, in the right spot, could bring down a B-29. Even

though one team of gunners was credited with five MiG kills the US Air Force went over to night bombing to cut losses to the MiG 15s.

Though the RAF never had the opportunity to test the Washington in action the US Air Force staff who came to Britain to teach us how to fly the beast had to admit that we were teaching them things about the B-29 that they did not realise it could do. It could with evasion tactics leave an attacking jet pilot hopelessly out of position and exposed to the concentrated fire of several .5 Brownings, and I have a distinct recollection of one being flown low across Marham airfield on one engine as a riposte to a low flying display by some US Thunder Jets or it may have been Sabres. The Americans on the base just could not believe that the B-29 could cope on one engine, though I must say that I would not like to have been on board!

Though by 1951 the B-29 was becoming out dated, it served the RAF well as a stop gap and while we thought it was an advanced aircraft, a navigator colleague, Arthur Haines, was given a look over a B-45 found that an even greater culture shock. This is what he had to say.

“In appearance it was more like a fighter, though not as large as a B-29, [it had a wingspan of 89 feet and was 75 feet in length]. With four turbojet engines it gave an impression of menacing power and its performance was another generation ahead. It could carry a slightly greater bomb load than the B29, fly at almost 600 mph and climb at nearly 6000 ft/min, to a service ceiling of 43,000 ft. The pilot and navigator sat in tandem and it carried only two other crew, the bombardier and the rear gunner. I can’t remember the specific radar and bombing systems but I recall the navigator demonstrating them and compared with what we were using they put the APQ/13 and Norden bombsight almost back into the stone age.

Having thought that I was flying in a very advanced aircraft it was a rude awakening emphasized by the fact that by then the B-45 had been in service with the USAF for four years and much bigger and faster bombers, such as the B47, were already in the American arsenal. In other words the B-29 was obsolete! It made me wonder what was to come.”

* What happened to the chap who failed? He was the course senior man, a failed pilot and was destined to get the prize for best cadet which proves that the best laid schemes of RAF officers are no better than those of mice and men. Viv passed the next time round and went on to Coastal Command by which time he would not have too long to serve.

John Laing



Trainee gunners pose beside their Wellington X at RAF Leconfield.
(Les Feakes)

The Queen's Review of the RAF - July 1953 by Douglas Cook

Having spent a year doing my bit for the introduction of the Washington into RAF squadron service, a year as a co-pilot on No 44/55 (Rhodesia) Squadron at RAF Conningsby, I was posted to play a similar part in the build-up of the new Avro Shackleton into Coastal Command, replacing its old Lancaster and Halifax reconnaissance aircraft. This meant a series of courses at opposite ends of the country aiming to change pilots from relying on pin points and navigators with three minute Gee fixes, to ones able to fly over the seemingly empty sea, reading the wind from the waves to assist the navigator to plot his course on dead reckoning and very little else. And to do that for fifteen hours at a time. At the OCU we were constantly being reminded what a big aircraft the Shackleton was. Yes it was big compared to the Lancaster and Halifax, but to us ex-Washington pilots, it was small. True, the nose wheel was at the back, but the view over the nose was excellent and the aircraft had few vices. So it was that eventually I joined No 220 Squadron at RAF St Eval in Cornwall in the middle of 1952.

A year later I was told off to take a composite crew, drawn from all the squadrons at St Eval, and a newly re-sprayed Shackleton Mk 1, to RAF Odiham for the static display at the Queen's Coronation Review of the Royal Air Force. This review was to be only the second Royal Review of the Royal Air Force, the first one having commemorated the Silver Jubilee of King George V, at Mildenhall and Duxford on 6th July 1935. Photographs of that event include one of King George V alighting from his Rolls Royce in front of a Handley Page Heyford bomber of No 90 Squadron, accompanied by his sons Edward (later King Edward VIII) and Bertie (later King George VI).

The Queen's Coronation Review was to be on 15th July 1953 but we got there on the 2nd to meet the programme for getting over 300 aircraft of all types lined up and shiny by the time the Queen arrived. The Coastal Command Shackletons were represented by four aircraft on the ground, three Mark 1s and a Mark 2. To digress a little, the Mark 2 was WL747 and was almost new. It had first flown in February 1953 and had been delivered to No 269 Squadron, Ballykelly, in April, so it was hardly run in by July! After nearly 20 years stalwart service in the maritime reconnaissance role, this aircraft became the first production conversion to AEW Mk2 standard in 1972 and for the next 19 years was known as Florence on No 8 Squadron. It also was one of the three Shackletons that saluted the Queen's birthday by flying up the Mall and over Buckingham Palace in somewhat inclement weather on 14th June 1991, just two weeks before the Shackleton marque went into honourable retirement after over 40 years front line service. The fly past plan had also included a flight of all-weather fighter-bomber Tornados. They were cancelled on the day, but then it was raining...

But back to the Review.

The air and ground-crews of the aircraft used in the static display were housed in a tented city pitched on the south side of the airfield. One of the black metal-clad hangars had been converted to a field kitchen and messes for airmen, SNCOs and officers. Big boilers steamed all day to provide the necessary hot water and the ovens had to cope with three hot meals a day. The sleeping accommodation was in large khaki marquees, using the then new steel spring framed camp beds with issued blankets. No sleeping bags in those days. As I recall, the weather was pretty good most of the time, but the only problem was the swarms of earwigs that roamed the tents. At night they climbed up the sides and thence along the sloping roof canvass, until they lost their grip and fell, with a resounding plop, onto the beds below. They were so notorious that somebody formed the Earwig Club, complete with tie, for those who had been at the Review.

The static display consisted of 318 aircraft which were aligned along the NE/SW runway with jet fighters filling the front row, mostly Vampires and Meteors, but including some RAAF Meteors and RCAF Sabres. Then the big stuff, 4-engined Lancasters, Lincolns, Washingtons, Shackletons and

Hastings in the second row. Then in Row 3 were more Vampires and Meteors and behind them came the twin engined types; a RNZAF Bristol Freighter, Neptunes, Varsities, Valerias and Canberras at one end, and Devons, Oxfords, Ansons and the last 6 Vampires at the other. This is well depicted in the photo on the cover of Washington Times Issue 3, Summer 2002. Imagine a mirror image arrangement down the other end of the runway. These two wings flanked four rows, in a semicircular formation, of single engined trainers and examples of specialist equipment, such as a barrage balloon and a mobile tactical radar unit, situated on the big aircraft servicing pan in front of the semicircle of hangars, typical of 1930s airfields. The space in the middle of the runway thus left was used as a parade ground for a formal parade at the start of the Review.

It was interesting to see my old type, the Washington, lined up alongside the new Shackleton. The Washington certainly towered over everything else there, its large rudder being visible from all points of the compass. The aircraft were WF545 of 90 Sqn, WF572 of 35 Sqn, WF526 of 115 Sqn and WF565 of 207 Sqn. All the air and ground crews spent their days before the Review in cleaning their aircraft, touching up the paintwork and polishing what would polish. We Washington and Shackleton crews had the largest acreage to clean by far and how some of us yearned for a little Vampire or Chipmunk at times. Eventually, however, order appeared out of disorder and we spent more time on polishing buttons and ironing creases in uniform trousers. As time went on there were rehearsals for the flypast to watch and criticise. The Shackletons and Lincolns flew in 9-ship formations, three vics in close line astern. The Washington formation was provided by Nos 35, 90, 115 and 207 Squadrons who flew vics of three in a diamond box four formation which seemed to cover most of Hampshire!

On the morning of the Review, a lovely summer day with only a few fluffy cumulus clouds, the Review started with a parade of some 1200 officers, airmen and airwomen representing all Commands, branches and trades of the RAF. Music was provided by the massed bands of the RAF and WRAF as the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh inspected the parade and then took the salute at a march past. The Queen and her party then went to lunch with the Air Force Board and the crowd of spectators was given a glimpse of the RAF going about its everyday business. A cadet in a Tiger Moth on his first solo cross country flight, a Spitfire of the Civilian Anti-Aircraft Co-operation Unit, a RAF Flying College Hastings returning from a flight over the North Pole, another Hastings returning on a CASEVAC flight from Korea, and a Canberra returning from Malta to which it had flown earlier in the day. These were but some of the set pieces giving a broad view of the RAF's tasks and capabilities.

After lunch it was our turn in the Static Display. The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh slowly toured the lines of parked aircraft in an open-topped Rolls Royce, stopping every now and again to talk briefly to the crews and ground crew standing to attention in front of their aircraft. Their route took them up the other side of the display, round the semicircles at the back and then down our side before returning to the saluting dais. We had a long wait in front of our Shackletons and Washingtons and it was a little disappointing, therefore, that when they came past my shiny Shackleton the Duke was discussing the merits of the upholstery of the car rather than the gleaming finish on our airframes!

Then came the Flypast of 197 piston engined aircraft and 444 jets representing all the Commands of the RAF and including representatives of Commonwealth Air Forces. The Flypast started at 3.39.50 precisely with a Sycamore helicopter trailing the RAF Ensign at 75 knots. This was followed by formations of the single engined trainers at 85 knots, twin engined trainers at 120 knots and 145 knots for the Valerias and Varsitys. The Sunderland vic of three sailed past at a stately 130 knots, to be followed by the five formations of Lincolns at 150 knots. Washingtons and Shackletons flew a respectable 170 knots before the seemingly never ending stream of jet fighters piled in from behind at 265 to 300 knots. The Flypast concluded with the appearance of the prototypes of the V-bombers, the Vulcan doing 400 knots and then the Hunter and the Swift at 580 knots in re-heat. Timing was everything if this plan was to work. Clearly the later, faster formations would overtake the earlier,

slower ones. So formations were given heights to fly of between 800 and 1600 feet to give the necessary clearance in time and space. Times over the Reviewing Base for formations were staggered by between 10 and 50 seconds, and this in the days when such precise navigation was done by topo map and stopwatch. It worked on the day, and was a triumph.

Two stories from the Flypast. Firstly, as the first Shackleton formation was approaching Odiham the leader, Squadron Leader Bob Laband, OC 220 Squadron, said to his copilot, "Throttle back to zero boost". Whereupon the navigator interjected, "What's that for, Skipper? We are bang on time." The Skipper answered, "Oh, I just want to close up the formation a little." Close it up he did, but the serene passage of the formation over the Reviewing Base belied the thrashing of hands, arms and legs in the other eight cockpits! Secondly, soon after passing Odiham the Swift engine seized and pilot Mike Lithgow had to do a deadstick landing at Chilbolton. Definitely not part of the act!

The whole Flypast was very impressive I am told, but we in the Static Display saw none of it as we were all standing to attention and facing front at the time! (We were allowed to watch the Dress Rehearsal, though). After that the 40,000 crowd was let loose to wander round the Static Display, which kept us busy for the rest of the afternoon.



Line up for the Queen's Review of the RAF, Odiham 1953. It is a much published MoD photo, taken from either a PR Canberra, or a Tiger Moth.

The B-29s were, from the top: WF545, 90 Sqn; WF572, 35 Sqn; WF562, 115 Sqn; WF565, 207 Sqn. Then come the Shackletons: WL747, 269 Sqn (one of the earliest Mk2s. This a/c became one of the AEW conversions and was in the 8 Sqn flypast for the Queen's Birthday in 1991, after which they all retired and were replaced by AWACS); WB828, Doug's Mk1 with a composite crew from RAF St Eval, Cornwall; WB824, another composite crew from St Eval WB819, Mk1 from 269 Sqn again. For interest, the Hastings were: TG560 from 116 Sqn and WJ327 from the RAF Flying College, Manby, then home to ETPS. (**Doug Cook**)

Tailpiece. There then came the problem of unraveling all the aircraft from the static park to let the CO of Odiham have his airfield back. I was first aircraft to leave Odiham, simply because my Shackleton was parked on the intersection of the runways and pointing in the right direction. My slipstream sent dust and grass clippings showering over the nearby pristine aircraft, but by then we did not care.

Now as I write this, I recall that the Flypast for the Queen's Golden Jubilee visit to the Services at Portland was a total of 28 aircraft (the Flypast for the Queen's Silver Jubilee review was a bit larger but not so much so, see below – *Chris*). I wonder when next the RAF will be able to muster nearly 1000 aircraft at one place at one time with over two thirds of them flying?

For the Record.

The Washington formation in the flypast operated from Marham and was:

35 Sqn: Wg Cdr HNG Wheeler in WW351, Sqn Ldr FR Flynn in WW344. and Flt Lt RA Patterson in WW348.

90 Sqn: Sqn Ldr RG Wilson in WF563, Flt Lt FN Ramsey in WF558 and Fg Off RW Stafford in WF550.

115 Sqn: Sqn Ldr LG Holmes in WF560, Flt Lt JB Cowton in WF513 and Fg Off KM Williamson in WF552.

207 Sqn: Sqn Ldr GW O'N Fisher in WF566, Flt Lt EM Stewart in WF 569 and Flt Lt CJ Petheram in WF567



Above: Airmen swarm over 207 Squadron's WW342 as they polish her in preparation for the Coronation review. See page 28 for another photo of WW342.

(John Hanby)

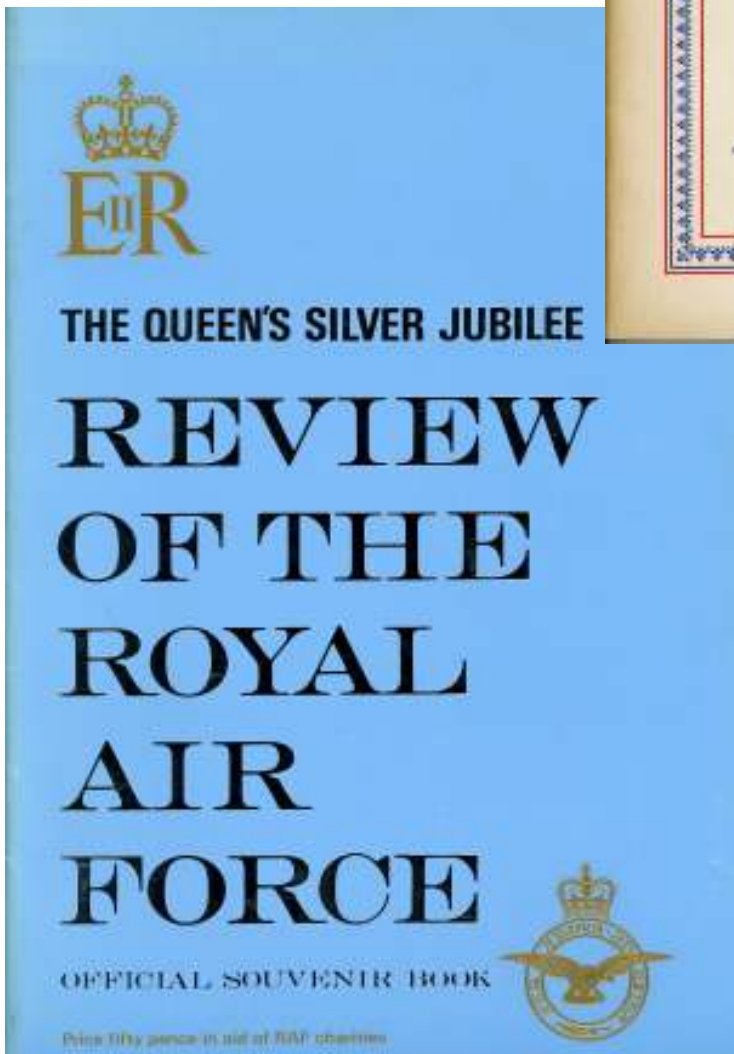
How things change

Below are copies of the covers from both the Queen's Coronation review, RAF Odiham July 1953 and the Queen's Silver Jubilee Review, RAF Finningly July 1977.

Right: Front cover of the official programme for the Coronation Review of the Royal Air Force, 15 July 1953.
(*Eric Butler*)

Below: Front cover of the official programme for the Queen's Silver Jubilee Review of the Royal Air Force 29 July 1977
(*Chris Howlett*)

In both cases the proceeds went to the RAF Benevolent Fund – 2 shillings and 6 pence in 1953 and 50 (new) pence in 1977 – and 4 times increase in price!



Next three pages: Flying display / flypast for the Silver Jubilee Review and then the Coronation Review flypast. The 1977 flypast comprised, including the BBMF and some display aircraft interspersed with the fly past, 126 aircraft. The Coronation flypast comprised 446 aircraft including 216 Meteor 8s!

Memorable displays from the 1977 review for me at least were the Blanik Glider that seemed to do impossible aerobatics at improbably low altitudes, the 4 x Vulcan scramble (ear shatteringly impressive) and the RAAF F-111 who flew the length of the runway while jettisoning fuel in a giant plume of fire behind it – almost too hot to face even from several thousand feet away.



FLYING DISPLAY PROGRAMME



- 1330 Red Arrows (Folland Gnats) Formation Aerobatic Team
1348 Pitts S2A Solo
1357 RF 4 (USAF) Phantom
1358 Blackburn B 2
1404 F 5 (USAF) Freedom Fighter
1406 Messerschmidt ME 108
1412 F 111 (USAF)
1413 6/10 Scale Spitfire
1419 Jaguar
1425 Jubilee Duo (Pitts S2A)
1441 Lightning
1449 B 17 Flying Fortress
1457 Canberra PR 9
1458 Phantom
1505 Akro
1516 Condors Parachute Display Team
1520 Buccaneer
1526 Falcons Parachute Display Team
1537 Blanik Glider

Whirlwind + 2 Gazelles flying the Royal Air Force Ensign
"25" flown by Jet Provosts of Training Command
Lancaster Spitfire and Hurricane of the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight
Training Command Formation consisting of: 4 Chipmunks, 8 Bulldogs,
4 Jetstreams, 8 Dominies, 4 Hawks, 4 Gnats, 4 Hunters
Hawk Solo Display
Transport Formation of 4 Hercules + VC 10
Helicopter Display comprising 3 Wessex, 2 Pumas and 1 Whirlwind
Shackleton leading an Air Defence Formation of: 2 Victors, 2 Lightnings,
4 Phantoms and 3 Canberras
Maritime Formation consisting of: 5 Nimrods, 2 Phantoms and 2 Buccaneers,
Vulcan x 4 Scramble
Strike/Attack Formation made up of: 3 Vulcans, 3 Jaguars, 1 Buccaneer,
1 Canberra and 1 Harrier
Tornado Solo Display
RAF Germany Fly-Past of: 2 Phantoms, 2 Buccaneers, 5 Jaguars and 2 Harriers
Harrier Capability Demonstration

- 1617 F 111 (RAAF)
1631 C 130 (RNZAF)
1639 Jet Provost Solo Aerobatics
1645 Tiger Moth
1653 Frecce Tricolori (Fiat G 91) Formation Aerobatic Team
1719 Puma Helicopter Display
1725 Hot Air Balloon Ascent
1730 Sunset Ceremony



1*
1 Sycamore (helicopter)
Fighter Command
Height 500 ft
Speed 85 knots



2
16 Chipmunks
Home Command
Height 600 ft
Speed 85 knots



3
12 Prentices (above)
12 Chipmunks
Flying Training Command
Height 800 ft
Speed 85 knots



4
12 Harvards
Flying Training Command
Height 600 ft
Speed 120 knots



9
6 Valettas
Transport Command
Height 1,100 ft
Speed 140 knots



10
3 Sunderlands
Coastal Command
Height 1,900 ft
Speed 120 knots



11-15
9 Lincolns (each)
Bomber Command
Height 1,400 ft
(odd no. formations)
Height 1,900 ft
(even no. formations)
Speed 145 knots



16
12 Washingtons
Bomber Command
Height 1,900 ft
Speed 145 knots



22
12 Vampire 5's
Royal Australian Air Force
Height 1,200 ft
Speed 265 knots



23
12 Vampire 5's
Flying Training Command
Height 700 ft
Speed 265 knots



24
24 Venoms
2nd Tactical Air Force
Height 1,200 ft
Speed 300 knots



25
12 Meteor 7's
Flying Training Command
Height 700 ft
Speed 300 knots



41 and 47
8 Swift F 1's (first)
Fighter Command
Height 700 ft
Speed 300 knots
1 Swift F 4 (second)
Ministry of Supply
Height 1,200 ft
Speed 380 knots



42
1 Victor
Ministry of Supply
Height 1,200 ft
Speed 250 knots



43
1 Valiant
Ministry of Supply
Height 1,200 ft
Speed 300 knots



44
1 Vulcan
Ministry of Supply
Height 1,200 ft
Speed 400 knots



5
12 Oxfords (above)
12 Ansons
Flying Training Command
Height 800 ft
Speed 120 knots



5
12 Oxfords
12 Ansons (above)
Flying Training Command
Height 800 ft
Speed 120 knots



6
12 Balliols
Flying Training Command
Height 600 ft
Speed 140 knots



7-8
6 Varsities (each)
Flying Training Command
Height 1,100 ft (first)
Height 600 ft (second)
Speed 140 knots



17-18
9 Shackletons (each)
Coastal Command
Height 1,400 ft
(first formation)
Height 1,900 ft
(second formation)
Speed 170 knots



19
5 Neptunes
Coastal Command
Height 1,900 ft
Speed 170 knots



20
3 Hastings
Transport Command
Height 1,900 ft
Speed 170 knots



21
12 Vampire NF 10's
Fighter Command
Height 700 ft
Speed 265 knots



26-34
24 Meteor 8's (each)
Fighter Command
Height 1,200 ft
(even no. formations)
Height 700 ft
(odd no. formations)
Speed 300 knots



35-36
18 Meteor NF 11's (each)
Fighter Command
Height 700 ft
(first formation)
Height 1,200 ft
(second formation)
Speed 300 knots



37-38
24 Canberras (each)
Bomber Command
Height 700 ft
(first formation)
Height 1,200 ft
(second formation)
Speed 300 knots



39-40
36 Sabres
Royal Canadian Air Force
Height 700 ft
24 Sabres
2nd Tactical Air Force
Height 1,200 ft
Speed 300 knots



45
1 Javelin
Ministry of Supply
Height 700 ft
Speed 300 knots



46
1 Hunter
Ministry of Supply
Height 700 ft
Speed 380 knots

THE NUMBERS OF EACH TYPE TAKING PART

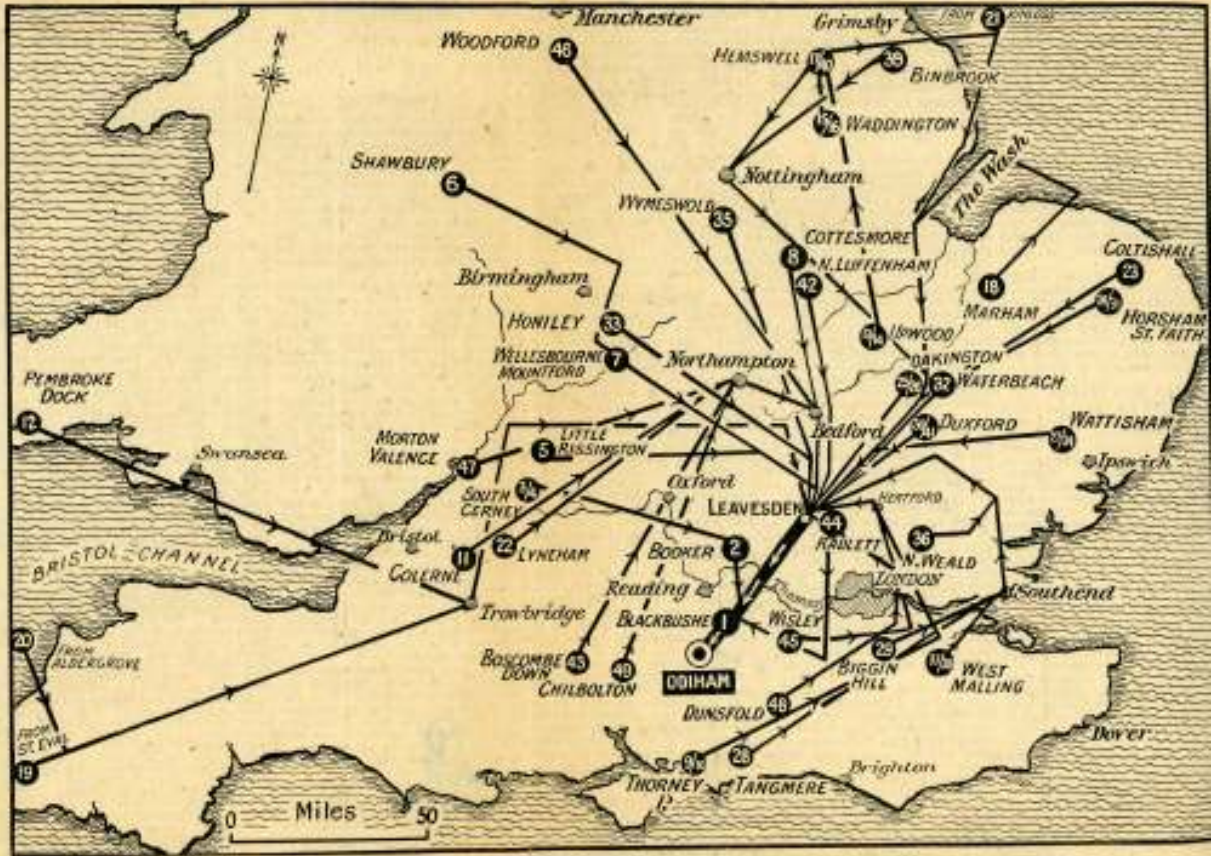
<i>Piston-engined</i>		<i>Tur-propelled</i>	
Sycamore	1	Vampire NF 10	12
Chipmunk	28	Vampire 5	24
Prentice	12	Venom	24
Harvard	12	Meteor 7	12
Oxford	12	Meteor 8	216
Anson	12	Meteor NF 11	36
Balliol	12	Canberra	48
Varsity	12	Sabre	60
Valetta	6	Swift F1	8
Sunderland	3	Victor	1
Lincoln	45	Valiant	1
Washington	12	Vulcan	1
Shackleton	18	Javelin	1
Neptune	5	Hunter	1
Hastings	3	Swift F 4	1
	193		446

* Bold figures refer to formation numbers

HOW FLY PAST FORMATIONS WILL SALUTE THE QUEEN

LANES numbering 43 will fly past in the order below at the R.A.F. Royal Review at Odiham Airfield, Hants, on week-to-day. The diagram indicates how the aircraft, coming from bases throughout Britain, join formation.

1. 1 Beaufighter
2. 10 Spitfires
3. 10 Spitfires
4. 12 Pterodromes
5. 12 Hurricanes
6. 12 Mustangs
7. 12 Mustangs
8. 12 Mustangs
9. 6 Mustangs
10. 6 Mustangs
11. 6 Mustangs
12. 5 Spitfires
13. 4 Spitfires
14. 5 Mustangs
15. 9 Mustangs
16. 9 Mustangs
17. 9 Mustangs
18. 12 Mustangs
19. 9 Mustangs
20. 9 Mustangs
21. 9 Mustangs
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33. 12 Mustangs
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36. 12 Mustangs
37. 12 Mustangs
38. 12 Mustangs
39. 12 Mustangs
40. 12 Mustangs
41. 12 Mustangs
42. 12 Mustangs
43. 12 Mustangs
44. 12 Mustangs
45. 12 Mustangs
46. 12 Mustangs
47. 12 Mustangs
48. 12 Mustangs
49. 12 Mustangs
50. 12 Mustangs



Top: Map published in a daily newspaper showing the routes taken by the flypast participants to Odiham for the Coronation review.

(Eric Butler)

Above: WW342 of 207 Squadron gleaming on its dispersal at RAF Marham. Despite the work done to her, WW342 was a reserve aircraft and did not participate in the review!

(John Hanby)

Contacts

A list of those people who have made contact with me (**new contacts in bold**) – if you wish to contact any of them, let me know and I will pass on your request:

Michael	Achow	
David	Alexander	ASF Marham
Ken	Alderman	Bristol Aeroplane Company, Filton
Derek	Allen	192 Squadron
Trevor	Allwork	149 Squadron Engine Fitter
Roy	Arnold	44 Squadron Air Gunner
Phil	Batty	44 Squadron Signaller
Gerry	Beauvoisin	57 Squadron Air Gunner
Ray	Belsham	ASF Engine Fitter Marham
Cliff	Bishop	115 / 90 Squadron Engine Fitter
Bunny	Bowers	Crew Chief WF437
Joe	Bridge	Webmaster, RAF Marham Website
John	Broughton	207 Squadron Engine Fitter
Jeff	Brown	149 Squadron Air Gunner
Michael	Butler	Son of Harry, 207 and 35 Squadron Signaller
William	Butt	115 Squadron Crew Chief
John	Care	149 Squadron Pilot (<i>deceased</i>)
Katie	Chandler	Widow of Vern Chandler, A/C 44-69680 (WF437)
Pat	Chandler	Daughter of Vern Chandler, A/C 44-69680 (WF437)
Brian	Channing	149 Squadron Navigator
Wendy	Chilcott	Sister of Ken Reakes Air Gunner 90 Sqdn
Bob	Cole	149 Squadron Electrical Fitter (WF498)
Terry	Collins	XV Squadron Engine Fitter
Doug	Cook OBE	44 Squadron Co-Pilot (WF508)
John	Cornwall	192 Squadron aircrew
John (Buster)	Crabbe	207 Squadron Crew Chief
Don	Crossley	90 Squadron Signaller
Bernard	Davenport	90 Squadron Air Gunner
Mike	Davies	90 Squadron Air Gunner
Gordon	Dickie	35 Squadron Airframe Mechanic
Keith	Dutton	90 Squadron Air Gunner
Peter	Fahey	35 Squadron Electrician
Tony	Fairbairn	Lived near 23MU, RAF Aldergrove
Les	Feakes	149 Squadron Air Gunner
Geoff	Fielding	Air Gunner
Ken	Firth	44 Squadron Air Gunner
Charles	Fox	Bombardier 42-94052 (WF444)
Dave	Forster	Researching RAF ELINT Squadrons
John	Forster	207 Squadron / WCU Air Gunner
John	Francis	192 Squadron Engine Fitter
Ray	Francis	57 Squadron Association
Gordon	Galletly	44 Squadron Navigator / Bombardier
Norman	Galvin	XV Squadron Engine Fitter
Alan	Gamble	90 Squadron Radio Operator
Brian	Gennings	Ground Maintenance Hanger

Bob	Goater	XV Squadron Instrument NCO
Tony	Goodsall	90 Squadron Air Gunner
Kevin	Grant	207 Squadron Air Gunner
Ken	Harding	44 Squadron Signaller
Alan	Haslock	ASF Turret Armourer
Roy	Hild	Pilot 42-94052 (WF444)
Tony	Hill	Archivist P&EEE Shoeburyness
John	Hobbs	149 Squadron Air Gunner
Julian	Horn	RAF Watton Website
Henry	Horscroft	44 Squadron Association
Brian	Howes	115 Squadron
John	Howett	A/C 44-61688 (WF498)
Ernest	Howlett	44 Squadron Engine Fitter (WF512)
Paul	Hunter	Flight Engineer 42-65274 with 40 th BG (WF442)
Jimmy	James	Engine Fitter
Ron	Jupp	Vickers Guided Weapons Department, Weybridge (<i>deceased</i>)
David	Karr	Nephew of William Karr, XV Squadron Air Gunner
J.	Kendal (Ken)	90 Squadron ??
R (Dick)	Kent	35 Squadron
Andrew	Kerzner	Tail Gunner 44-69680 (WF437)
John	King	44 Squadron Flight Engineer
John	Laing	207 Squadron Air Gunner
George	Lane	Navigator 44-69680 (WF437)
Peter	Large	Brother of Edward Large, Pilot 44 Squadron
Pete	Lewis	149 Squadron Engine Fitter
David	Male	Bristol Aeroplane Company, Filton
Gerry	Maloney	44 Squadron Navigator/Bomb Aimer (WF508)
Patrick	McGrath	115 Squadron Pilot
P.	McLaughlin	Engineering Officer, Pyote Texas
John	Moore	Air Traffic Control, RAF Coningsby
Peter	Morrey	57 / 115 Squadron Air Gunner
Mo	Mowbrey	57 Squadron Air Gunner
Pat	O'Leary	Coningsby Armourer
Brian	O'Riordan	192 Squadron Ground crew
Ralph	Painting	57 / 192 Squadron Flight Engineer
Harry	Palmer	44 / 57 / 115 Squadron Air Gunner
Tom	Pawson	35 Squadron Signaller
Bob	Pleace	XV Squadron Pilot
Chris	Petherington	207 Squadron Pilot
Harry	Rickwood	149 Squadron Electrical Fitter
Harold	Roberts	Witness to crash of WF502
Ivor	Samuel	207 Squadron Air Gunner
William	Santavicca	Gunner 'Look Homeward Angel', 6 th Bomb Group Association
Sheelah	Sloane	Daughter of Sqdn Ldr Sloane, OC 90 Squadron
Steve	Smisek	Son of A/C of City of San Francisco (K-29, 330 th Bomb Group)
Joe	Somerville	Engine Fitter Marham
Paul	Stancliffe	192 Squadron Co-pilot

David	Stanford	192 Squadron Radar Mechanic
Derek	Stanley	57 Squadron radio Engineer
Jim	Stanley	
Bill	Stevenson	35 / 635 Squadron Association
Harry	Stoneham	44 Squadron / A.S.F. Engine Fitter
Tim	Thewlis	General interest in Washingtons
Albert	Urquhart	Left Gunner K-39, 330 th Bomb Group
Dave	Villars	44 Squadron Electrical Fitter
Peter	Walder	44 Squadron Radar Fitter
Geoff	Webb	57 Squadron Engine Fitter (WF558)
Colin	Williams	XV Squadron Navigator / Bombardier
John	Williams	XV / 207 Squadron Air Gunner
Robert	Willman	A/C 42-93976 (WF440)
Charlie	Woolford	90 Squadron



RAF Odiham and massed ranks of gleaming planes await the Royal inspection.
(Patrick O'Leary)