

JABBERWOCK 108



SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

FLEET AIR ARM
MUSEUM

*The Magazine of the Society of Friends
of the Fleet Air Arm Museum*

**August
2022**



IN THIS ISSUE

Flt. Cdr. Paul Douglas Robertson and his Albert Medal • Derek Morten
- a Kiwi's war • My Falklands War - Ken Willingale • Tracking aircraft
on your own computing devices • Exercise Cold Response 22 •
Book reviews *Plus all the usual features etc.*

THE
NATIONAL
MUSEUM



The Society of Friends of the Fleet Air Arm Museum



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We are extremely grateful to all those who contribute articles and material to the magazine, even though it is not always possible to use every item!

ADMISSION

Members of SoFFAAM are admitted to the Museum free of charge, on production of a valid membership card. Members may be accompanied by up to three guests (one guest only for junior members)

on any one visit, each at a reduced entrance fee, currently 50% of the standard price. Members are also allowed a 10% discount on goods purchased from the shop.

Note: These concessions are provided at the discretion of the General Manager of the Museum and could be removed at any time.

FLEET AIR ARM MUSEUM

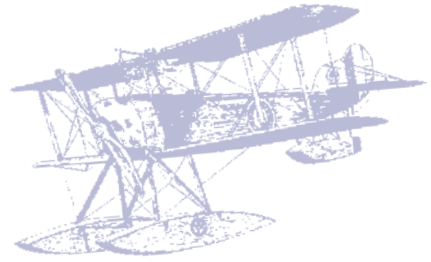
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Robertson and his Albert Medal



A Kiwi's war



My Falklands war



Exercise Cold Response

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COVER PHOTO

Westland Wasp HAS Mk1 XT420 of the Navy Wings collection. Painted as '606' of 829 Naval Air Squadron and ships flights of HMS *Ajax*, HMS *Aurora*, HMS *Hecate* and HMS *Nubian*. Photographed at RNAS Yeovilton while hover taxiing back to its hanger.
 © Richard Macauley

Editorial

The summer edition of your magazine is packed with a huge variety of material, much of it from members, either directly or indirectly.

Readers' letters, as always, provide interesting opinions. Our Chairman contributes another story of quiet heroism leading to the award of the Albert medal. We also carry varied first-hand accounts of flying in WW2 and the Falklands conflict. The military publisher, Pen & Sword, continues to publish a cornucopia of new books and we include a review of a little-known WW1 character, under the title of "The Boy Airman". We also review a newly-published volume by member Hugh Langrishe, who describes his contribution in 1945 to the support of the British Pacific Fleet, when he served with the MONAB organisation. You will have to read the review to discover what that meant. At the time of writing, our author is approaching 100 and is to be congratulated for producing this absorbing memoir at his stage in life.

Member Robert Heath continues to provide the most scrupulous and detailed summaries of the monthly

talks. Pressure on space means that these have to be seriously truncated, but you can read the full versions on our website. We draw your attention to the members' page on the website, where, amongst other things, members can access the entire Jabberwock archive.

The Society's Annual General meeting will be held as usual in September. Please refer to the notice for the details. All members are welcome to attend this event and it provides the occasion for all the Council members to be elected (or re-elected). We have commented before that, through retirement, the existing Council is well below the specified membership of 14. We hope on this occasion to attract new members. The Council is the Governing Body of the Society and all its members are Trustees. The policies of the Society lie in their hands and the AGM provides the opportunity for all members to contribute to their election.



Malcolm

Council snippets

From the June Council Meeting

FAAM has seen a satisfactory start to the season with the Museum open and operational, albeit with a small degree of COVID control measures still in place.

The Carrier Project continues at pace with the physical works starting to take shape. The works began on 16 May and will continue through to mid-July, with a formal opening to be held on 27 July. The archive volunteers have recently returned to work in the department, to assist with sorting and cataloguing incoming material and some of the backlog. The Museum re-opened the refurbished Falklands gallery in early April. This work, albeit on a small scale, was long overdue and given the space in Hall 4 a fresh look as well as repurposed displays as part of Falklands 40 commemorations.

The Chairman discussed the conduct of the AGM and there was general agreement that it should be held as planned on 29 September. There would be a need to plan for the re-election of Council members and we also needed to recruit additional members.

Our Zoom centric approach on how talks are delivered continues to be refined. When they work, they give a good experience within the Auditorium and on Zoom. The 2022 talks programme is full, with three speakers confirmed for 2023.

Current membership stands at 943, compared with 944 in March. New membership applications have picked up very slightly but continue to be disappointing. The number of members taking electronic Jabberwock has increased by 6, due to new joiners and represents 23% of members. The number of members with an email address is now 626, or 66% of the membership. We are owed £121 from underpaid standing order membership renewals, following the fee uplift 17 months ago. Jabberwock is being withheld from continuing underpayers.

The number of visits to the website appear to be encouraging. The entire back catalogue of Jabberwock magazines is now available in the Members' Area.

To access the 'Members Only' area you need to use the following details.

Username: **soffaam** Password: **Jabberwock**

The words are case specific and the 'o' of Jabberwock is a zero. You must not share these with anyone else. We wish to keep this area as a benefit to members only.

Letters to the editor

Dear Malcolm

In reply to Nick Greenall's letter in Jabberwock No 107, The use of the numbers 8 and 9 was discontinued when the Type 984 radar was introduced into the fleet in 1956. This radar was a Royal Navy system, designed by the Admiralty Signals and Radar Establishment. Type 984 was a 3D S band system used for both ground controlled interception (GCI) and as a secondary early warning system. It was the most sophisticated naval radar of its era. It was large and heavy, some 30 tons.

The 984 radar was based on the octal numbering system, i.e. using

numbers 0 to 7 only. We are all users of the decimal (0 to 9) and the digital (0 to 1) systems, but the octal system was a new one. Hence the restricted use of side numbers 0 to 7 only for aircraft side numbers. Once the 984 went out of service this restriction was no longer necessary. Ultimately, 984 was mounted only on the aircraft carriers *Eagle*, *Hermes* and *Victorious*. The photo is of HMS *Victorious* in 1959 with the 984 radar on the island.

Best Wishes
Chris Howat



HMS *Victorious*.

Dear Malcolm

Regarding the profiling of TSR2 and MRCA at the March lecture, TSR2's official logo never had a dash in its title as illustrated.

Our speaker didn't give prominence to the 1960's Terrain Following Radar (TFR) story but at the time it was ground-breaking. Ironically, naval Buccaneers were used to develop the TFR fit to be carried by each type during their trials programme. Ferranti used XK487 for the TSR2 trials, while in the 1970s XT272 had a Tornado nose cone fitted.

Interestingly, I have heard that Supermarine Scimitar XD324 was used at Gloucester as a fuel testbed for MRCA until 1975, which seems an odd location. As I mentioned in Jabberwock 99, the Scimitar's design during the

1950s saw Supermarine build a dummy rig to replicate the naval fighter's fuel systems at their Hursley Park office in Hampshire. This leads one to conclude that this proof-of-concept work was valuable and it was also used in MRCA's development phase. But can any of our readership provide more information on this aspect of MRCA's test programme perhaps?

Chris Penney
(Member 3474)

Editor's note: There was another attempt to introduce terrain following to the Tornado when it was upgraded to GR4 standard in the late 90s. This was called Terrain Reference Navigator (TRN) but after much development, was abandoned. Does anybody know the capability of the F35 Lightning in this regard?

TSR2 is capable of modern reconnaissance or of the pin point delivery of any kind of weapon. It is designed to operate at very high speed under the radar screen in all weathers, and has a high degree of invulnerability against any known defence. Its STOL capability frees it from large prepared bases and its long range gives it a flexibility hitherto unattained by any other aircraft. TSR2, which is now on the production line, will augment the operational power of the Royal Air Force in a wide range of roles.



Supermarine Scimitar XD324. © Keith C Wilson

Dear Editor

I refer to the article in Jabberwock 107 about the purchase by the Museum of a Rolex watch.

This is one of those that were given to aviator POWs by the Swiss company with the proviso that the owners paid for them if they survived the War. In this case, the watch's owner had been Midshipman Derek Martin. It was very gratifying to see that the Society contributed to this historic purchase, along with the medals and logbooks of Cdr Stanley Orr RNVR. You do not reveal the full purchase price of Martin's Rolex, but members may have seen the news that a similar watch has recently been sold for £155,000. It was owned by Flight Lieutenant Gerald Imeson, who was imprisoned in Stalag Luft III after his Wellington bomber made an emergency

landing off the coast of Belgium. The involvement by Imeson in the so-called "Great Escape" (although he did not himself succeed in escaping before the tunnel was discovered) seems to have inflated the sale value of his timepiece.

I wonder what price the Martin Rolex would have commanded if it had gone on open sale? His short operational career in the muddled Norwegian battles of 1940 ended when he was shot down in an attack on the *Scharnhorst*, but anybody who flew feeble Skuas in those days deserves mention. It seems safe to assume that the Museum achieved a bargain! (Helped by SoFFAAM of course.)

**Sincerely,
Trevor Robert Harris**

Dear Malcolm

Can I please put out a plea to all our Members who receive email communications from SoFFAAM that they check their Spam box within their email client software.

This also extends to those who

join our monthly Zoom Talks as some 'invites' appear to go missing, only to be found later in Spam.

**Many thanks,
Simon Websper**

Dear Editor

Jubilees have always been a time for the Royal Navy to celebrate and this year was no exception. Here are two completely contrasting carrier flight

decks almost 70 years apart. The top image shows HMS *Queen Elizabeth* with naval personnel marking Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee

in June 2022. Meanwhile from down under comes a photo supplied by the Port of Fremantle, Western Australia, showing *Colossus* class light fleet carrier HMAS *Vengeance* while acting as the Royal Guard Ship during Her Majesty's post coronation Commonwealth Royal Tour of Australia in 1954. During her short loan to the Royal Australian Navy *Vengeance* carried Sea Fury and Firefly aircraft and three Bristol Sycamore SAR helicopters. She was operated

by Australia as a replacement for the delayed HMAS *Melbourne* in both the aircraft carrier and training ship role for the majority of her three-year loan before being returned to the Royal Navy in August 1955. After viewing the aerial shot HM Queen reportedly sent the following message: "Thank you for the original forgery."

Chris Penney
(Member 3474)



HMS Queen Elizabeth.



HMAS Vengeance.

Flt. Cdr. Paul Douglas Robertson and his Albert Medal

By Graham Mottram



Flt. Cdr. Paul Douglas Robertson

Hornsea Mere is the largest freshwater lake in Yorkshire. Situated less than a mile inland and about 10 miles north of Hull, its 2 mile length of non-tidal water made it ideal for operating seaplanes.

It was used as a seaplane landing site from mid-1915, under the command of RNAS Killingholme, and became its own command in early 1918, with buildings and hangars on the eastern shore. Typically there were 10 seaplanes, mainly Short 184 and variants, based at Hornsea. When one of those, N1647, was prepared for patrol on February 2 1918, its crew were men who owed their country no further debt of service.

The observer was also the CO of RNAS Hornsea Mere, Flt. Cdr. Paul Douglas Robertson. The son of William and Emily Robertson, he was born in Hendon in 1891. His father was a Master Mariner and at the age of 16 Paul was indentured as a marine apprentice to George Thompson & Co., of London, owners of the Aberdeen Line. After the three years of his indentures were completed, he stayed at sea, gaining his Second Mate's Certificate in 1913 and his First Mate's in February 1915. He had a double reason to celebrate at that time, having married Edna Dalton in Kettering in the previous month. Somewhere along the line he must have been captivated by the idea of flying and despite an assured future in seafaring, and a new wife to support, he joined the RNAS in October 1915.

Surprisingly, he spent a month on a Gunnery course before beginning his flying training at Chingford in November 1915. He finally qualified as a pilot in February 1916, and it might have been a struggle. His report from advanced flying training at Cranwell said, "Graduated. The standard attained was not high". But he was sent off to Calshot for the seaplane course and then as an

instructor to the Northern Aeroplane School at Windermere, where his report said, "Very good officer and instructor". A quite exceptional comment which does not appear very often was, "Name noted for consideration at termination of hostilities for transfer to permanent list of RNAS". That was made in May 1917 when the prospect of a Royal Air Force was not on the horizon. By October 1917 he was in command of Hornsea Mere, later assessed as, "Good work at Hornsea, of which he has been in charge since 1.10.17, has been very noticeable, and has been largely due to the good organisation and very hard work of its CO who possesses exceptional powers of command".

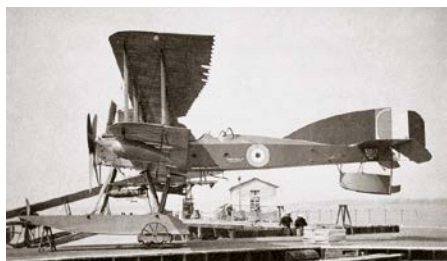
Piloting the seaplane that February day was Flt. Lt. Hubert Charles Lemon. Born in Chelsea in 1895 to a father who later became the Workhouse Master of Fairfield House in Mitcham, Lemon had started his working life as "Boy clerk to the Metropolitan Asylum Board" but when he joined up in November 1914 he gave his occupation as "motorcyclist". Whatever technical skills he had developed in the last few years saw him enlisted as an Air Mechanic and fairly quickly as a Petty Officer, at the age of



Flt. Lt. Hubert Charles Lemon

20. He is noted as having spent some time serving at the airship station at Luce Bay in Wigtownshire in Scotland.

In January 1916 he was discharged from the Royal Navy and appointed to the RNVR as a Sub.Lt in the RNAS for observer duties. Over the next few months he attended navigation and gunnery courses before going to 3 Wing RNAS in July 1916. This was the new 3 Wing, taking over the title from Samson's now disbanded Gallipoli unit, and tasked with the strategic bombing of German factories. The wing was delayed at Manston until sufficient aircraft could be gathered together, and



Short Type 184 at Calshot. © IWM



Killingholme



Breguet V.

their overseas base prepared at Luxeuil-Bains in France. It was October before the combination of Sopwith 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ Strutters and Breguet Vs could mount a raid, on the Mauser factory at Obendorf. Lemon flew many sorties as the observer and rear gunner in the fighter version of the Sopwith, the bomber version being only a single seater. No.3 Wing had a very high percentage of Canadian pilots and Lemon flew one raid behind Raymond Collishaw, later to become one of the highest scoring Allied fighter aces. On one occasion, flying a line patrol with FSL Redpath as his pilot, they were attacked by an enemy two seater whose explosive bullets severed the Sopwith's main petrol pipe and part of the elevator control. Lemon shot back when he could but his Lewis gun kept losing its gas regulator key and stopping. Redpath managed to cross the lines and make an emergency landing at a French airfield. Despite their efforts to keep going through a bitter winter and against strengthening German fighter

position, 3 Wing eventually fell foul to the demands of the RFC, which could not see beyond aircraft flying in close support of the army.

By the end of April 1917 this version of 3 Wing was no more and Lemon was back in England. He had submitted an application for flying training in August 1916 to which his squadron commander, Reginald Marix responded positively, "I think he would make a good pilot". Lemon was advised to renew his application when he had completed four months as an observer. That notwithstanding, he was taught to fly by someone out in France, on a Curtiss (probably a JN3), and was awarded his pilot's certificate on October 14 1916. It was probably the only one issued by "Headquarters, No.3 Wing, RNAS, France". Probably as a result of this certificate, Lemon was formally transferred from RNVR to RNAS, in January 1917. Back on home soil, his flying training was now formalised with a few months at Calshot and Killingholme on seaplanes before a

posting to Westgate (St Mildred's Bay, Kent). Much of his flying there was done on high performance aircraft, not only Sopwith Babies but also Bristol Scouts and even a Sopwith Triplane. Lemon flew several Home Defence flights in that summer, the Gotha Summer. On August 12 he was one of many fighters which took off to combat a major raid and he chased and spent 350 rounds from his Triplane's Vickers gun against a Gotha which escaped. Later in August 1917 he spent a month in the seaplane carrier HMS *Vindex* and in September 1917 arrived at Killingholme, thence to its outstation at Hornsea Mere. Throughout his time in the RNAS every assessment of Hubert Lemon was of the highest class. Here was a man of modest background who was being described as a "Very good aeroplane and seaplane pilot" and "An exceptional officer". It is sad that such a fine man should lose his life in such a mundane fashion, in a clumsy but relatively safe Short seaplane.

N1647 was a Short 184 with 240hp Renault engine and was fully laden for a war patrol on that day. It had been in service at Killingholme and Hornsea since October 1917 so it was a proven machine that was not yet worn out. One note about the crash said simply that, "At 2500 feet the aircraft spun out of control". Although these machines were fairly heavy to fly, they were generally docile and Lemon was a skilled pilot. Even a major engine failure should not have caused the pilot to lose control. Whether there was a structural failure or Lemon was taken ill and incapacitated

was never investigated at the time.

The King has been pleased to award the Albert Medal to Acting Flight Commander Paul Douglas Robertson, R.N.A.S., in recognition of his gallantry in endeavouring to save life in February last. The Circumstances are as follows:-

On 28th February 1918 a seaplane got out of control and spun to the ground. Acting Flight Commander Robertson, the observer, jumped from the machine just before it reached the ground and landed safely as the ground was marshy.

The pilot, Flight Lieutenant H C Lemon, was imprisoned in the seaplane, which, on striking the ground immediately burst into flames and notwithstanding that the vicinity of the seaplane was quickly a furnace of blazing petrol, and that heavy bombs, a number of rounds of ammunition, and the reserve petrol tank were all likely to explode, Acting Flight Commander Robertson returned and endeavoured to extricate the pilot, and only desisted when he had been so severely burned in the face, hands and leg that his recovery was for some time in doubt.

He displayed the greatest gallantry, self-sacrifice and disregard of danger in his efforts to extricate the pilot.

Although his severe injuries included the loss of one eye, Robertson was allowed to remain in the post-war RAF, where he specialised in navigation training, eventually retiring as a Group Captain in 1945 and with a WW2 CBE added to his medals. He emigrated to New Zealand in 1967 and died in Auckland in 1975, aged 84.

Derek Morten - a Kiwi's war

First published in *The Press* newspaper, Canterbury, New Zealand and supplied by Rosanne Crowther



17 July 1944: Corsairs of 1841 squadron preparing to take off from HMS *Formidable* for strikes against *Tirpitz* during operation Mascot, the Barracudas of 827 and 830 squadron are ranged aft. © IWM

Derek Morten has survived polio, heart attacks and two years flying Corsairs during World War II.

He remains in good order at 100 and can still recall his role in the bombing of the German battleship *Tirpitz*.

In the year Derek Morten was born, people were still recovering from the ravages of the influenza epidemic. Adolf Hitler had become leader of the Nazi party in Germany and Mahatma Gandhi

was beginning a mass movement of civil disobedience in India.

In New Zealand, William Massey was prime minister and the first scheduled airmail service took off from Christchurch for Ashburton and Timaru. The first radio programme was broadcast from a small transmitter at the University of Otago and the All Blacks played their first ever test against the Springboks.

Morten, who turned 100 on December 21, 2021, has lived through a lot of history. Reaching the century is no longer regarded as something particularly special in New Zealand even, if the Queen still sends her telegrams. It is believed the country has about 500 centenarians. But few would arrive at the big number in as good condition as Morten. His faculties are largely intact and he is still mobile, although he admits his hearing is "bloody awful".

He still recalls names and dates with amazing accuracy although he admits to struggling with what he did last week.

Longevity does not run in his family. He had polio as a child, has survived a few heart attacks but has outlived his siblings by 20 years.

"I never thought I would get here," Morten says. "I don't know the secret. He and wife Pam had four children, with three still alive. The oldest is 75. Morten was born in Nurse Overton's nursing home in Sumner, the last of four children to father Richard, a farmer in Yaldhurst, and mother Violet (formerly Bassett).

Derek Morten would end up a big cheese in the meat processing industry, spending a decade as general manager of Canterbury Frozen Meat company, but his war service remains the main talking point of his life.

His first job after leaving school was uninspiring, so when war broke out he was keen to go overseas.

His father refused to sign his application for the air force but relented for papers for direct entry to the Royal Navy. "I didn't tell him I was interested in the Fleet Air Arm" he says.

After testing, he was accepted for Fleet Air Arm training which began in February 1942 in Auckland.

"It was the first time I had been north of Wellington so it was all excitement." He and his draft of 20 prospective pilots sailed for Britain on the troopship *Capetown Castle*. His brother Dick, was already in the navy and brother Tom, who fought in Greece, Crete, North Africa and Italy, was in the Army. Tom would be promoted to Brigadier and awarded the Distinguished Service Order and Commander of the most Excellent Order of the British Empire for his five years of Military Service.

After a course at *St Vincent* airbase in Gosport, Morten's draft embarked on the *Queen Mary* for more training in the United States at the US Naval Airbase at Grosse Ile, Michigan, arriving in December 1942 to celebrate his 21st birthday. After that, training was constant - one week flying in the mornings and study in the afternoons. This continued in Miami and in Maine, where he had his first flight in the Corsair fighter, designed for carrier operations.

He joined 1841 Naval Air Squadron which comprised of British, Canadian and New Zealand pilots. Two of the Kiwis would be lost in combat, two badly injured, and three, including Morten, would return home physically unscathed. Two pilots in the squadron were killed during training.

The squadron, consisting of 18 Corsairs, was finally posted to active service on HMS *Formidable* in June 1944. Morten's first combat flight was in July, accompanying bombers

targeting the German battleship *Tirpitz*, hiding out in the Norwegian fjords. He was flight leader on his first operation.

The well-armed battleship the British were determined to neutralise to remove the threat it posed to Allied Arctic convoys, survived and Morten's squadron flew protection for more bombing raids in August.

"During one of those raids, I was leading my flight at low level and I thought we were really low when a Dutch Hellcat squadron came out underneath us. That gave me the biggest fright of the war."

On one raid, his close friend Clive Woodward was shot down in flames and killed. Morten earned a Distinguished Service Order for gallantry and devotion to duty for his part in the operation.

Aircraft from his squadron were kept constantly in the air above the British fleet at Scapa Flow, Orkney Islands, on anti-submarine patrols.

HMS *Formidable* then headed to

the Far East to join the Pacific Fleet. On shore leave in Sydney, he met Pam, who was to become his wife. On May 4 1945, as the *Formidable* neared Manus Island, north of Papua New Guinea, a kamikaze bomber hit the ship while Morten was in the air chasing "some mythical" Japanese intruder.

Repairs were quickly made and he landed on the ship some time later. The suicide bombing killed eight and wounded forty seven.

The ship was hit by another kamikaze five days later, with one fatality but little damage. *Formidable* then joined with the Americans for operations against the Japanese mainland.

These operations mainly consisted of escorting the Avenger bombers, ground and railway strafing and attacks on smallish sized shipping in the inland areas. "I never actually fought against any aircraft in the-air but did have the odd shoot-up on the ground" Derek commented.



10 March 1945: HMS *Formidable* with Corsairs parked on the aft end of the flight deck being moved into her berth in Woolloomooloo Bay, Sydney, Australia.



HMS Formidable after being hit by a Kamikaze suicide plane, a fire marks the spot where it impacted the flight deck forward of the island.

On a routine operation on August 10, north of Tokyo, his Corsair was hit by anti-aircraft fire. "I had petrol slopping around in the bottom of the cockpit and it was obvious I couldn't stay in the air for long. I headed out to sea and ditched the plane. It never occurred to me until later that if the engine backfired there could easily have been an explosion."

A US submarine, USS *Peto*, surfaced

alongside his rubber dinghy about five hours later and took him aboard. "I was on there for 12 days and was treated royally."

The Japanese operations were dangerous and some of the Corsair pilots were killed through accidents or shot down. "It just happened. You accepted it, it was never going to be me. You got used to having breakfast with someone who wasn't there at lunchtime. People used to get a bit strung up but it wasn't really a problem. Not with our lot."

The landings on the carriers were the most dangerous day-to-day part of the war for the pilots, he says. He chalked up 99 deck landings during his service.

Footnote: Lt. Robert Hampton Gray DSC VC a Canadian Volunteer Reserve Officer was also in 1841 Naval Air Squadron and flew Corsairs alongside Derek Morten on operations in the Far East. See Jabberwock 105, 'Formidable by name formidable by nature', which describes Hampton Gray's action where he tragically lost his life but was awarded the Victoria Cross due to his heroic action in attacking and sinking the Imperial Japanese Navy ship *Amakusa*.



This photo is captioned, 'August 1944: Some of the pilots from 1841 and 1842 squadron who took part in Operation Goodwood: HMS Formidable'. Unfortunately the pilots are not named, so we do not know if Derek is among them though he did fly on this operation. © Royal Navy Research Archive and IWM

My Falklands War

By Ken Willingale



Westland Sea King Mk.2s and Fairey Gannet AEW.3. © Ken Willingale

My Falklands War, well that's a bit of a lie, I was involved during and after the war in a significant upgrade to the Sea King aircraft.

It was on the 2nd of August that I sailed on HMS *Illustrious* with our two highly modified Sea Kings, to relieve HMS *Invincible* off the Falklands

So, what was I doing at the start of 1982? I was a CPO Mech (L)1 Air, instructing on a weapon we don't talk about. Yes an Electrician instructing a Weapons System! At the Start of 1982 I was drafted to HMS *Daedalus* for training and conversion to the Weapons Electrical trade. A bit ironic after my

last job! As we used to say I'm having my brain removed and made Weapons Electrical.

I completed the course in March and on my way back to HMS *Seahawk* at Culdrose, I stopped off at Trevol Rifle Range at HMS *Raleigh* Torpoint, for the South West Rifle Championships, that was completing that Friday. The last competition was the Sub Machine Gun (SMG) and as the Naval Air Command SMG Champion I thought I would give the Culdrose team a hand. If my memory serves me correctly, I won the SMG Individual Competition. More importantly we all commented on the

RFAs landing ships (LSL's) alongside Devonport Dockyard (the *Sir Galahad* type RFAs) they were loaded so you couldn't see the Plimsoll Line with a Gazelle on the deck. On arrival at Culdrose people were getting pier head pumps, report to 'X', be at Redruth station tonight and report to 'X'. Yes this is real, the Falklands war had been declared and we were mobilising to retake the Islands.

I didn't get any pier head jump, as I hadn't completed my "conversion" training. So in late May I had a draft to 824D Sea King Flight. What's that! its a new "Flight"? Yes, what were we going to do? There are no Sea King aircraft allocated to the flight. So we set about mustering toolboxes, Air Publications, updating publications, mustering some essential ground support equipment, some we hadn't even seen before. Still no aircraft, no indication of what we are going to be doing!! It was actually top secret and no one could be told. 824D Flt commissioned 14 June with no aircraft.

We were drafted to HMS *Illustrious* to join on Monday 2 August but still no aircraft!! The last week before joining *Illustrious* the senior rates were told we are going to the Westland Factory in Yeovil. I believed we arrived the Thursday before the ship sailed on the 2nd. On viewing the aircraft, it's got a great big bag/dome on the side, so the sharp ones guessed radar. The Westland Chief Designer Jim Schofield had cleared the modification and aircraft on the 22 July and on 23 July, XV707 had its inaugural flight. The Sea

King was declassified from top secret shortly afterwards on proof of concept of the Radar. It's a Sea King Mk2 Airborne Early Warning (AEW) with a Low Altitude Surveillance Task (LAST) EMI ARI 5980/3 Radar. With XV707's first flight, there was no Testing/Proof of Concept or Evaluation, this is what you have got, get it to work. XV707 was demonstrated at RNAS Yeovilton Air Day on 24 July. The second aircraft XV650 had been completed and on its maiden flight 30 July, there was a fuel booster pump failure which had to be changed before embarkation. With no squadron maintenance ratings it came down to Lt Glen Mackie our new Engineering Officer. Glen had to get involved because of Health and Safety issues with Westland engineers, there was no access to breathing equipment or operators as it was weekend. Remember this was after an 11 week intense modification programme. On Monday XV650 was test flown to RNAS Portland under Westland Pilot control, then handed over officially to the Navy for its acceptance and receipt test flight on route to join *Illustrious*, all in one go.

Since March Westland Helicopters had been on high alert, tasked with several urgent tasks across different platforms. On 21 May, an Urgent Operational Requirement (UOR) was raised for Westland Chief Designer Jim Schofield to convert two Sea King aircraft and install the Searchwater Radar in 3 Months. On the 25 May the UOR was signed by Jim, the same day that HMS *Coventry* and *Atlantic Conveyor* were sunk. This radar was originally

in the Nimrod and had been designed to detect submarine periscopes and identify ships by sectioning the ship and presenting it as a silhouette on the Radar Screen. I don't think the RAF gave up two Searchwater Radars lightly. The Radar had been adapted by Thorn EMI to detect fast jet aircraft and missiles. The equipment was mounted on a large pallet behind the Observers seats with the Bag/Radar Dome on an arm swivelled by a helicopter oleo jack. The bag was inflated by two air pumps.

When we received the two aircraft, there were no publications that related to this type of aircraft. We had two civilian technicians Mick Yeates and Ralph Herbert from Thorn EMI to service the Searchwater Radar. 'Off you go, make it work'.

XV650 and XV707 were Westland pre production trials Sea Kings, I believe one was found on the Isle of Wight and one came from Boscombe Down. They had service modifications for Orange Crop (Radar Warning) a UHF Radio relay

pod that went on weapons station 2 and an Interferometer, I believe on weapons station 1. This was used to measure the layers in the atmosphere with respect to Radar Propagation Efficiency. Plus there was extra UHF Radios to talk to fighter aircraft separate from the cockpit. There was one Searchwater Radar console that replaced the sonar operator's console. Initially, the original left seat Radar Console was retained.

The Observers under the leadership of Commanding Officer Lt Cdr Peter Flutter and Senior Observer Lt Cdr Phil Howarth got to grips with learning how to operate the radar along with two ex AEW Gannet Observers. They reported excellent results at an early stage, detecting aircraft at distances in excess of 100 nautical miles. A great improvement to the standard Radar, plus an immense improvement in detecting hostile aircraft and missiles that dogged the Falklands war, when HMS *Sheffield*; HMS *Ardent*; HMS *Antelope*; HMS *Coventry*; RFA *Sir Galahad* and *Atlantic*



Sea King AEW.2 with the wreck of Sir Tristram behind. © Ken Willingale

Conveyor were lost.

In HMS *Illustrious* the Radio Workshops Chief Petty Officer (CPO) office was converted into the Searchwater Workshop, how they managed to work in there was a miracle as there wasn't enough room to turnaround. Now the workshops are contained in a lorry container with not a lot of room to spare and just enough room for 3 people inside.

One of the problems discovered with the radar was in a banked turn the number 3 Vertical Gyro that controlled the Radar Scanner would precess and on return to straight and level flight the scanner would not point at the horizon. I developed a Local Technical Instruction, well it was actually a modification. I tapped into the fast erection circuit of the vertical gyro and provided a switch to activate the fast erection circuit to level the gyro. It worked, there is me thinking of a Herbert Lott award for innovation but I was quickly put down when an Engineer Commander came to 824 D Flt and said get rid of that, I'm going to fit a Ferranti FIN1110 Inertial Navigation Gyro that will fix the problem. Well I went on many trials to Boscombe Down to prove the FIN1110. I'm not sure we got all the benefits out of this unit.

In August, HMS *Illustrious* relieved HMS *Invincible* and were they glad to see us. We remained off the Falklands until 21 October where I had two short trips ashore, one in San Carlos Bay the site of the landings. I viewed Surg Lt.Cdr Rick Jolly's operating theatre and hospital in the milk shed. Plus the memorial to Lt Col H Jones and the



The author at the Lt Col H Jones Memorial.
© Ken Willingale

Paras that fell at Goose Green. Another was to Wireless Ridge. Alongside in the harbour was RFA *Sir Tristram*, a burnt out wreck.

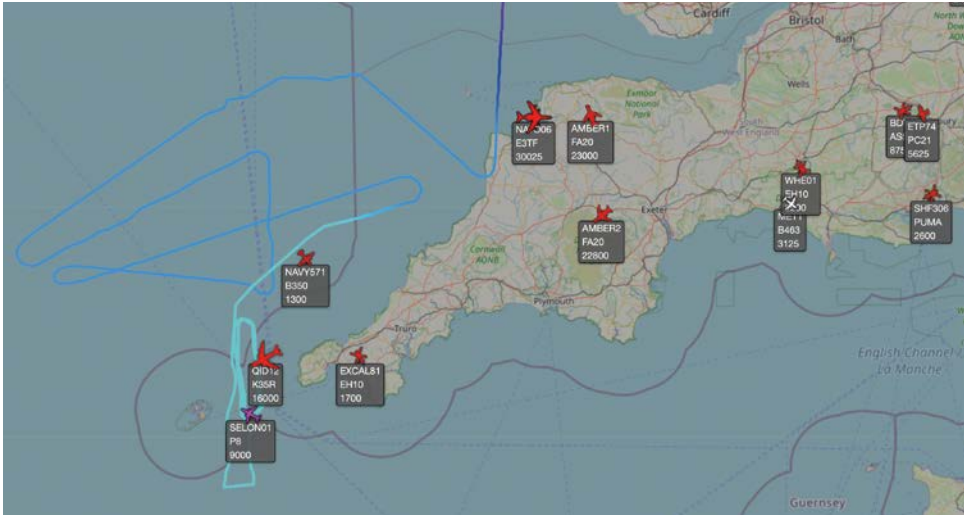
After 105 days at sea we docked at Puerto Rico for 'clean ship'. Then to Fort Lauderdale, Jacksonville and Norfolk before returning to the UK for Christmas.

I stayed with the Sea King AEW until the end of 1986. We introduced a second Searchwater Console along with many extra modifications. Many a trial was at Boscombe Down D Squadron. In 1984 849 HQ Squadron was commissioned to take this new capability forward. LtCdr Peter Flutter was awarded the Air Force Cross for his contribution to Helicopter Airborne Early Warning and Lt Glen Mackie was awarded an MBE medal. Later in 1993 as a Charge Chief my first job was as the Senior Maintenance Rating of 849B Flight with 3 Sea King AEW Mk2 aircraft.

Footnote: Later whilst reading a book by Westlands Chief Designer Jim Schofield, he had proposed a draft modification that introduced an AEW Radar into a helicopter. This idea was scotched by an RAF Officer who stated the RAF provide air cover for the Royal Navy in AEW Shackleton or Nimrod aircraft.

Tracking aircraft on your own computing devices

By Richard Macauley



The particular aircraft highlighted on in this image is an RAF P8A Poseidon ZP802, callsign Sealion01, flying at 9000ft. The various shades of blue line indicates his height changes, but shows his 'search mission' track having entered this area from the top. It departed from its Scottish base, RAF Lossiemouth. Other aircraft of interest is QID12, a USAF KC-135 just north of the P8 and NATO06, an E3 AWACs over N Devon.

Bill Preece, our monthly speaker from February 2021 "aluded to" "the radar picture" and being able to track aircraft across our skies.

He of course, enjoys the high tech professional equipment of a secure military specification that he operates within Draken Europe in their day to day operations in working with the Royal Navy and other agencies. They 'know' where any particular aircraft is at any given time.

But for we enthusiasts who are fascinated by aircraft, we also have options to 'see' aircraft that are airborne. The main opportunity is through the public domain of the internet. Several organisations and individuals 'capture' the data transmitted by aircraft and place it onto the internet or through apps for your mobile phone or tablets.

The key to this is the transponder onboard the aircraft which transmits all sorts of data a ground station can

use to track individual aircraft. The obvious ones are the UK's National Air Traffic Control Service (NATS) and Swanwick Military, the military side of this civilian agency. They used to rely wholly on radar to track aircraft, which is still an important part of the ATC network for information gathering. But with the advance of technology, these transponders create an 'Electronic Flight Strip' on ATC monitoring equipment, immediately signifying the aircraft type, height, speed, direction via the squawk codes* amongst other information.

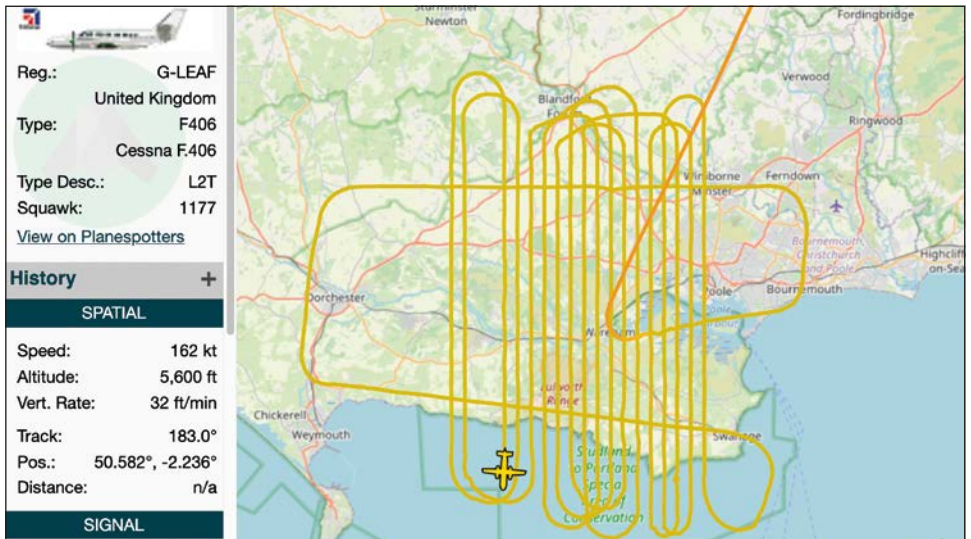
I am not versed in the technical details of these transponders and this is a layman's description of what is possible within the confines and purposes of this article. Transponders operate Modes A, C and S which the aircrew select according to their individual use and missions. A and C

modes allow the commercial hardware and software available to aircraft enthusiasts described here, to 'paint' and disseminate the aircraft information on our computing devices.

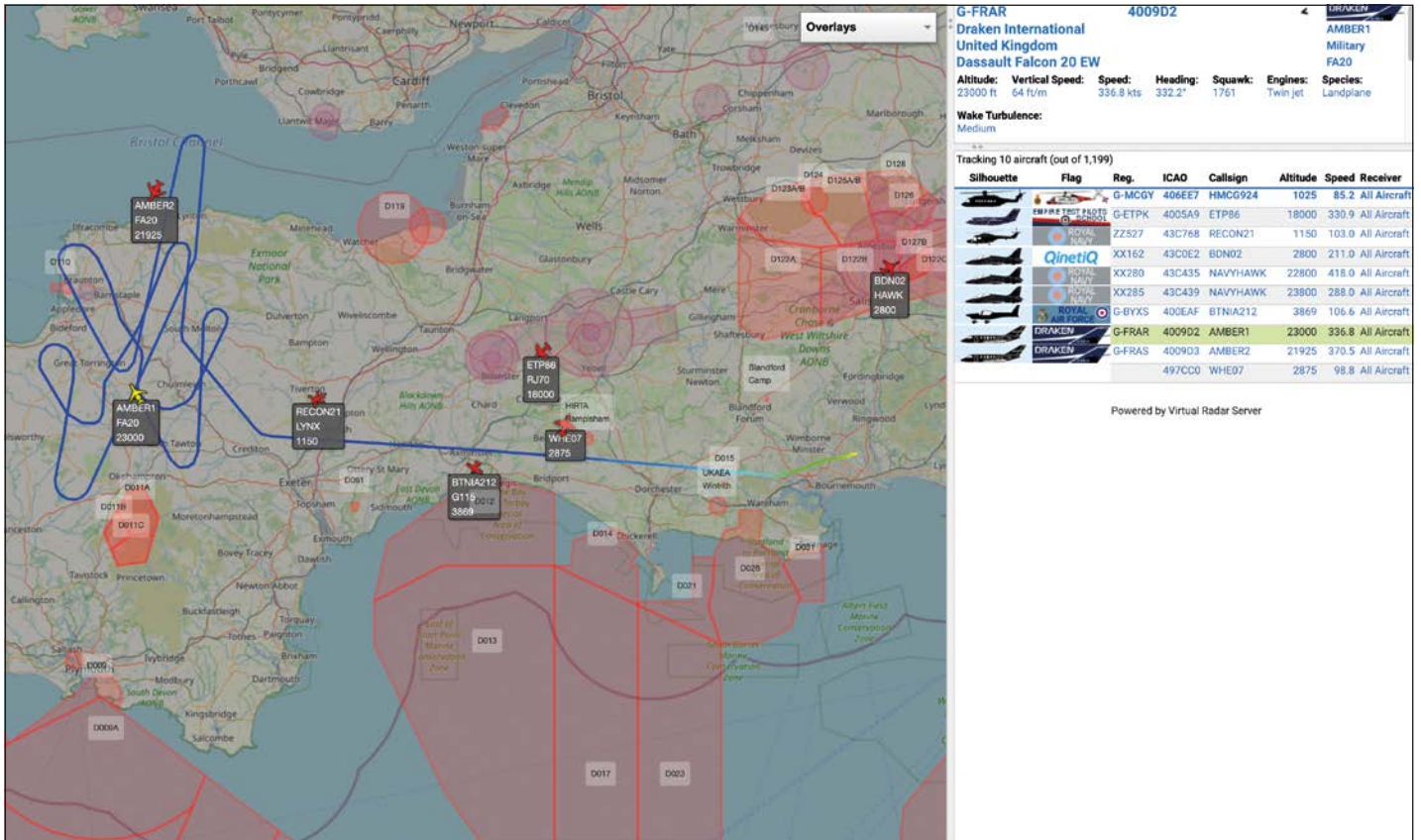
Mode S is 'Selective' and used by military fast jets and other aircraft which only want to make their presence known to authoritative agencies, so rarely 'paint' unless they also switch on and combine with their A and C modes.

As with any aerial activity, the pilots and aircrew also talk to other aircraft and ground agencies and there are many commercial airband radios on the market which also enables one to 'listen in' but that is another story.

All the screenshot images in this article are examples taken from my own desktop computer, laptop, iPad and iPhone to demonstrate what aircraft you can see and follow.



This aircraft flies on behalf of the Environment Agency's remote sensing team and captures aerial survey data used for flood mapping and environmental monitoring. Taken at 23:15 so few other aircraft are around to interfere with the precise tracks the orange line denotes in undertaking this survey work.



The aircraft highlighted here is Amber1 working with Amber 2 to the North as adversaries in combat air manoeuvring. Both are Falcon FA20's of Draken Europe operating out of their base at Bournemouth Hurn Airport. They are under control of the RN School of Fighter Control at RNAS Yeovilton, colloquially known as 'Freddie', in training junior warfare officers to become Fighter Controllers aboard warships. The blue line demonstrates the aircraft track and the manoeuvring this type of training involves. Overlaid on this map are the airspace zones to facilitate all types of military flying training.

Websites

There are several websites available. Some are free and others are subscription only or a mixture of both. I would suggest that you start with ADSB Exchange, an excellent free internet site. As you get hooked, try Flightradar 24 which has other layers of detail but

ADSB Exchange <https://globe.adsbexchange.com/>

Flightradar24 www.flightradar24.com

Planefinder <https://planefinder.net/>

Flight Aware <https://uk.flightaware.com/>

Freedar <https://radar.freedar.uk/VirtualRadar/desktop.html>

360Radar <https://signup.360radar.co.uk/>

Apps

Many are available for iPhone, iPad and Android equivalents. Just type in 'Aircraft Tracker' or 'Plane Finder' into the appropriate app application store on your device and you can pick from the multitude to choose from.

These are useful to have on your phone so when an aircraft flies over, you can instantly look it up and see

this times out every 15 minutes although you can 'refresh your screen' to continue or get a subscription, a basic option is free or upgrade for a more immersive experience. Freedar is a good option for Military flights and the subscription only 360Radar is another.

what type it is and maybe where it is going etc., because the app knows your location (if you allow your phone to know its position).

I have no commercial interest in any of the websites/apps I have mentioned in this article, just an unending fascination of all the aircraft that fly by above our heads.

*Squawk Codes

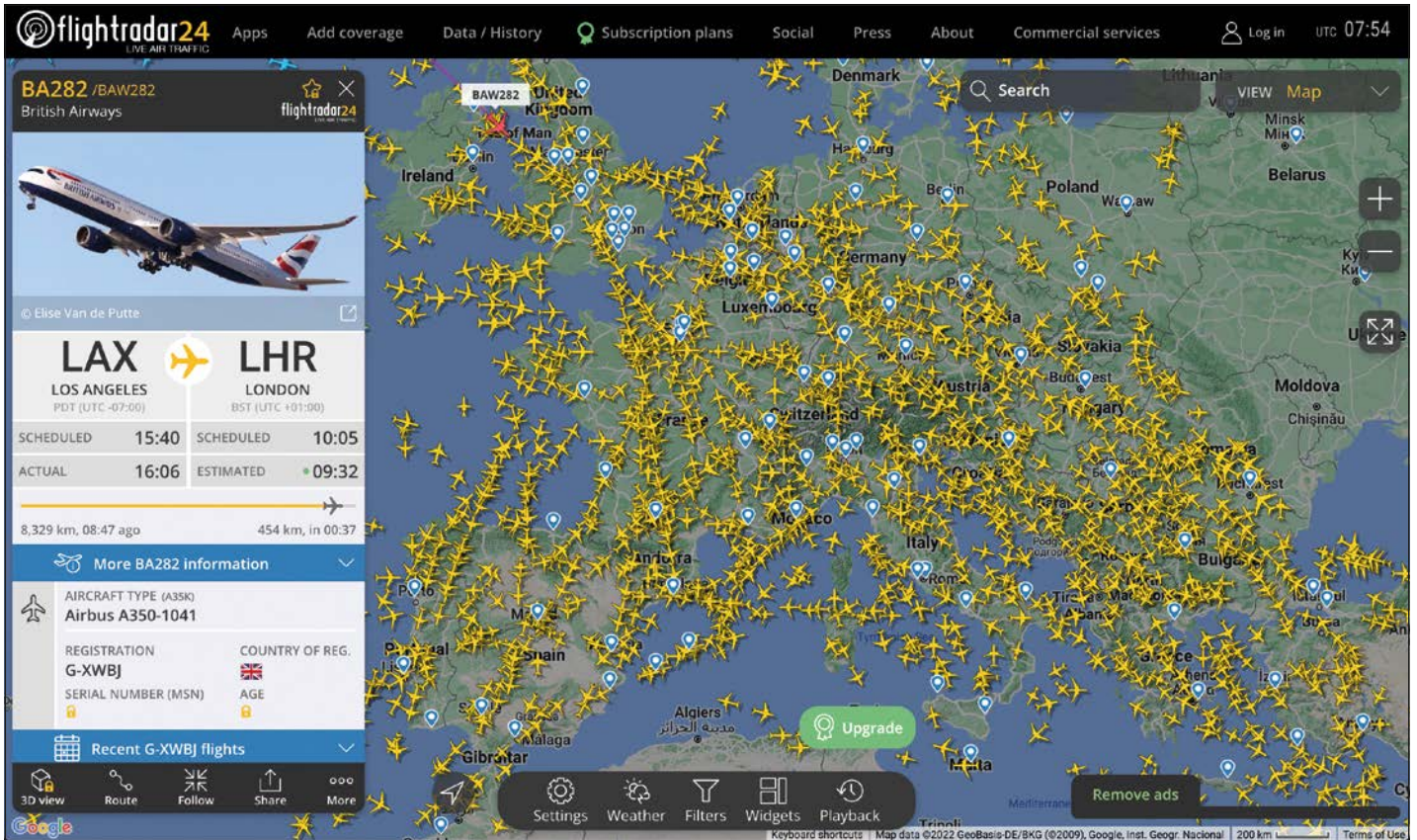
Air traffic control uses squawk codes to monitor aircraft positions on information screens. They are four-digit numerical codes given to aircraft in the airspace under their radar control.

Pilots have to enter the squawk code into their transponder to communicate with flight controllers. Only if the correct squawk code is entered into the transponder will it appear on ATC screens with the correct information. The transponder

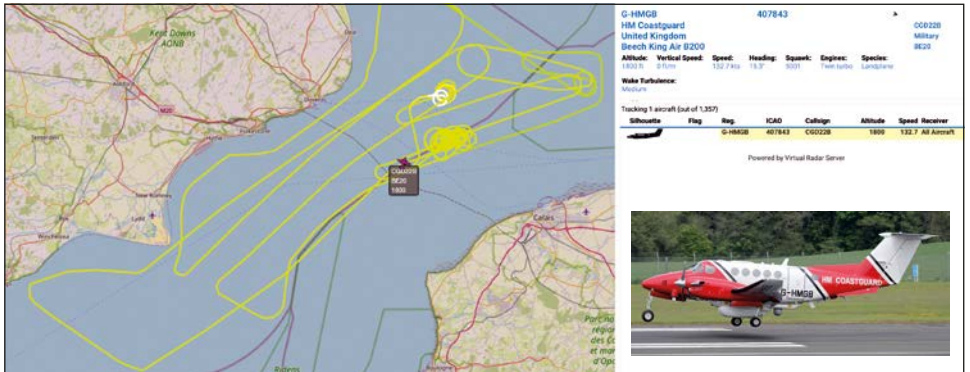
is constantly communicating with the ground and providing "pings" with the specific information on that aircraft.

This code will show up on ATC screens and helps provide basic information such as speed and altitude. Being four digits, this gives thousands of possible combinations for air traffic control to give to aircraft.

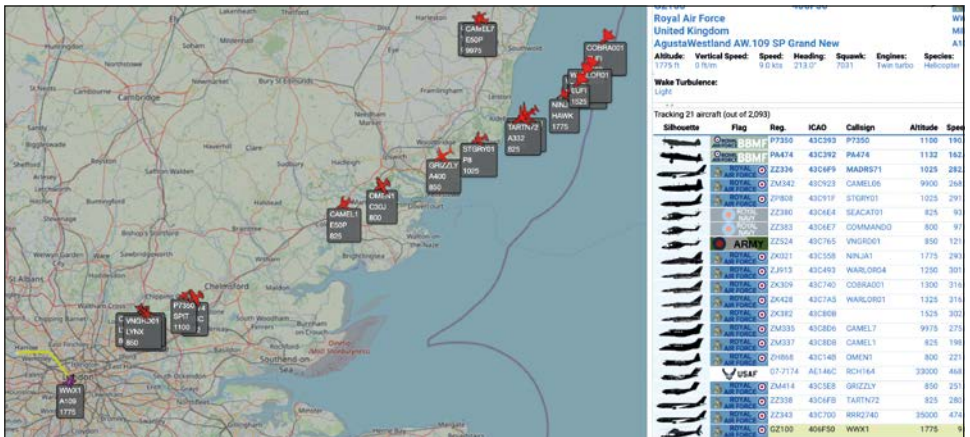
During the aircraft's flight, they will be asked to change their squawk codes along their route as they are passed from one agency to another, ensuring separation and safety.



This is the 'air picture' of Europe taken at 07:54am on 08/07/22 which shows the quantity of aircraft at that time in the air, it is even busier later in the day. Note the streams of aircraft heading down the Airways Routes to and from Spain. One can click on any of the plane symbols to highlight the particular aircraft and its flight details. This comes up in a pop-up panel on the left. Note the white/blue dots which are airports. Click on those to get amongst other things, live departure and arrival information of flights. Very handy when you have to collect friends and relations from the airport.



This aircraft is operated by HM Coastguard and regularly patrols the UK coastline. Here the aircraft is overhead the Dover Straits tasked with watching for illegal immigrant incursions. The patrol tracks are obvious while the 'swirls' of circular tracks indicate the aircraft is inspecting a particular area of interest.



This image shows aircraft lining up to perform the flypast down the Mall for the recent Queen's Platinum Jubilee. Not all the aircraft in the formations have their transponders selected to a mode that radar websites can see. Therefore the quantity of aircraft looks reduced compared to the actual number that took part.

Notice of our ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Society's 43rd AGM will be held at **19.00** on **Tuesday 27 September 2022** and will take place on Zoom only. All Society of Friends Fleet Air Arm Museum members are invited to attend.

Please email soffaam.joinup@gmail.com to request a Zoom invite. The meeting will include reviews of Society activities over the past year. The meeting concludes with the election (or re-election) of the President, Chairman and Council members.

If you require help with Zoom please ring **07768 562976**

Exercise Cold Response 22

By Chris Penney.



USMC and USAF Ospreys operated from the flight deck of HMS *Prince of Wales* during Cold Response 22. In the foreground is a Wildcat HMA2. © RN

The 30-member North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) held Exercise Cold Response 2022 in Arctic Norway this year.

A national defence exercise run by the Kingdom of Norway biennially, Cold Response took place during March and involved 30,000 NATO troops – twice the normal number. Future members Finland and Sweden contributed air and land forces while British, US, Dutch, French and Italian marines conducted multiple amphibious landings along the

Norwegian coast. It was NATO's largest Arctic exercise since the ending of the Cold War in the 1990s with 200 aircraft participating.

Norway shares a 121 mile (195 km) Arctic border with Russia and has hosted regular winter NATO exercises since the country joined the alliance in 1949 as a founder member. During the Cold War the 5,000-strong Allied Command Europe Mobile Force deployed to the region on several occasions. In 1949 HMS *Vengeance*

(R71) operated in Arctic waters to determine how well a carrier functioned in extreme cold. More recently in 2019 the RN marked 50 years use of the Norwegian Arctic by donating Sea King HC.4 ZE427 to Luftforsvaret (RNoAF) Air Station Bardufoss. Located between the ports of Narvik and Tromsø, this is where FAA Commando squadrons have learned to operate in extreme winter conditions during annual Royal Marines cold-weather training.

The scenario of Cold Response 22 was an attack on Norway, which invoked NATO's Article 5 collective defence clause. The certification of NATO's Very High Readiness Joint Task Force formed part of this year's exercise and while Russian observers were invited they officially declined to

attend. Leading the exercise was HMS *Prince of Wales* as NATO's command ship for the Maritime High Readiness Force, accompanied by the Italian Navy 13,500-ton carrier ITS *Giuseppe Garibaldi* and a French amphibious assault ship. The Royal Navy's 19,560-ton Landing Platform Dock (LPD) HMS *Albion* led the UK's amphibious contribution, together with the RFA Landing Ship Dock *Mounts Bay*.

The USN *Harry S. Truman* CVN-75 and her strike group was scheduled to join the exercise with her powerful carrier air wing, but subsequently remained in the eastern Mediterranean to reassure NATO nations neighbouring Ukraine. Instead, US Marine Corps 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing AV-8B Harrier and F/A-18C Hornet squadrons,



AV-8B Harrier of VMA-223 from MCAS Cherry Point, North Carolina, at Bodø Air Station just inside the Arctic Circle. © USMC

accompanied by KC-130J Hercules tankers, provided fixed-wing close air support from the Norwegian Air Force base Bodø just inside the Arctic Circle. Long-range strike missions were flown by USAF B-52 bombers from the 69th Expeditionary Bomb Squadron on temporary deployment to RAF Fairford. Their home base is Minot North Dakota. In the maritime role, the B52 carries a payload of naval Quickstrike shallow-water sea mines. Aerial maritime patrol and reconnaissance duties for the 25 warships taking part were performed by P-8 Poseidon and P-3 Orion MPA aircraft from Norway, the RAF and US Navy.

During the maritime phase, nine amphibious and eight accompanying airborne landings were undertaken by marines. Airborne support was provided by US Marine Corps MV-22 Osprey transports and CH-53E Super Stallion heavy-lift helicopters.

Each type carries 30 marines and both visited *Prince of Wales* during the exercise. *Albion* staged and maintained a significant level of littoral strike operations by 900 Royal Marines in the icy fjords of the High North. The ship can embark up to 700 marines and her 210ft-long (64m) flight deck can accommodate two Merlin Mk4s or two Chinooks. Supporting USAF Special Forces Ospreys utilised *Prince of Wales*' flight deck undertaking both day and night SF missions. The long-range V/STOL Osprey has a 400-mile radius of operation and flies at 275 knots.

NATO's aim for Cold Response participants was "to train the reinforcement [forces] of allies and partners under challenging climatic conditions, enhancing their readiness and capabilities." Two detachments of Royal Marines 3 Commando Brigade helicopter squadrons - otherwise known as Commando Helicopter Force (CHF)



A cheery wave to the cameraman from the rear crew member of this twin-engine USMC AH-1Z Viper attack helicopter. © CHF

left Yeovilton in February, heading 200 miles inside the Arctic Circle to undertake pre-exercise training. Three 845 Squadron Merlin Mk4s transited via refuelling points in other NATO countries to reach Norwegian Air Force base Bardufoss in five days. Meanwhile four partially dismantled Wildcats for 847 Squadron were flown out in two RAF C-17 Globemasters.

In temperatures down to -30 degrees Celsius, helicopter aircrews became acclimatised to typical Norwegian recirculation whiteout (near snow blizzard) conditions, which occur during landing. A Merlin's powerful rotor downwash can produce a disorientating wall of fine snow 50ft high and 200ft in diameter that can quickly deprive the aircrew of all visual references. During the exercise a US Marine Corps Osprey crashed while flying in poor weather

with the loss of all four crew, an accident that emphasised the need for crews to continually practise flying in such conditions. Both CHF squadrons were able to perfect underslung load lifting in an environment rarely replicated during such training at RNAS Merryfield, Somerset.

The Wildcat AH1s of 847 Squadron provided fire support for teams of disembarked marines. As a maritime squadron embedded within a littoral warfare task group, 847 primarily performs Strike Coordination and Reconnaissance (SCAR) in the anti-armour role. It is the only UK squadron fully configured for airborne Forward Air Controller (FAC) operations; a controller aboard a Wildcat directs naval gunfire support or directs other close air support on to the ground target. The squadron normally works



Commando Helicopter Force crews experienced challenging operating conditions during their Norwegian Arctic winter exercise deployment. © CHF

with the Apache Attack Helicopters of the Army Air Corps' dedicated maritime unit 656 Squadron and during Cold Response 847 were assisted by AH-1Z Viper attack helicopters of the US Marine Corps.

As we posted on the Society's Facebook page, 847 Squadron made history by taking a maritime ASW/Anti-surface Wildcat HMA2 to the NATO exercise. This non-battlefield Mark of Wildcat is normally operated by 815 Squadron from RN frigates and destroyers. In supporting Royal Marines, 847 Squadron's AH1s already have a lot of the role equipment fit of the maritime HMA2, but the AH1 lacks its anti-surface Seaspray radar. Seaspray provides crew with a real-time tactical radar picture in maritime, littoral and land domains via widescreen cockpit displays. Taking an HMA2 to Norway gave the squadron an opportunity to assess the utility of this additional

warfighting sensor over land and the littoral regions of the High North.

While the Wildcat HMA2 was incorporated and flown in the standard Commando air support role (like the AH1) during the exercise its Seaspray radar offered 847 dual high-level stand-off and low-level SCAR mission tasking. There are several combat advantages from operating the helicopter over the sea rather than the land domain and tactically it brings a very capable sensor to the fight, ultimately speeding up the target engagement chain. New Tactics, Techniques and Procedures (TTP) were derived as a result of the HMA2 trial and work on developing these will be ongoing before the squadron's next at sea deployment this autumn.

The Royal Netherlands Navy Landing Platform Dock HNLMS *Johan De Witt* is an assault ship, capable of transporting 550 marines and their equipment. Like HMS *Albion* the ship



A 847 Squadron Wildcat AH1 flies over the Dutch LPD HNLMS *Johan De Witt*. © CHF

can handle the heavy-lift Chinook that is in Dutch service. UK and Dutch marines regularly serve together as a seamless combined amphibious force in NATO, and recently *Albion* had a Royal Netherlands Navy exchange officer aboard to aid interoperability. HMS *Albion*, RFA *Mounts Bay* and a contingent of Dutch marines are part of the Royal Navy's newly designated regional Littoral Response Group (North). In supporting NATO LRG North's purpose is not only to forward deploy the UK's commando forces into the Norwegian Sea and Arctic but the Baltic Sea as well.

This large scale multi-domain exercise enhanced NATO Allies' interoperability. From the UK perspective it aided development of

the Royal Marines Future Commando Force that will include new battlefield capabilities derived from drones, innovative technology and Artificial Intelligence (AI). Although the Royal Marines have led the way in the High North for over half a century, the UK is currently redefining its Tri-Service Arctic strategy following activation of the Navy's Littoral Response Group. For NATO, Cold Response 22 was the shape of things to come. The soon-to-be 32-member alliance is meeting new strategic threats by strengthening Allied rapid reaction forces on short "notice to move" from the current 40,000 service personnel to over 300,000. As a result, larger more frequent multinational exercises in Europe will become the order of the day.



Russian nuclear missile-equipped Bear bombers regularly operate off Norway and this naval Bear Foxtrot is being shadowed by a Royal Norwegian Air Force F-35A. © Luftforsvaret

Future Talks

By Richard Macauley

One member kindly informed me that Jabberwock was the only way they knew of what was happening on the monthly Talks front.

Therefore I promised him that we'll always put details of the upcoming talks in Jabberwock to ensure everyone knows what's in store.

The SoFFAAM website is always primed with the latest information on Talks, so please have a look there for a more detailed explanation of what Talks are scheduled for the future.

Rod Dean and the development of the North American P51 Mustang
Thursday 29 September 2022 at 19.30

Alistair Hodgson on Geoffrey de Havilland and the de Havilland Aircraft Company
Thursday 27 October 2022 at 19.30

Michael Napier - RAF Tornado pilot and noted author
Thursday 24 November 2022 at 19.30

Talks are at the Fleet Air Arm Museum, Yeovilton and start at 7:30pm with access available from 7pm. We also run the Talks simultaneously on Zoom for those who cannot travel. See the website or phone 07768 562976.

Museum Archive Access

I have been in discussions with Barbara Gilbert, Curator (Archives) at the Fleet Air Arm Museum. This came about after a Speaker requested to visit for some research prior to his talk, so I make no apologies for putting this information in this column.

Barbara writes; the archives are now taking bookings for collections access after a closure of over three years. However, appointments at the FAAM archives can only be made for the second Thursday of each month and at present only documents are being made available, not photographs. We can, by request, make digital copies of specific photographs for researchers at a charge £20 for the request administration and a further £20 per image for personal use. Reproduction rights fees also apply if the photographs are intended for publication.

Any request for an appointment to consult the material must be made to Collections.Research@nrmr.org.uk which is now the route to access the archives. This is an Inbox common to all the NMRN archive sites, so commencing the subject line with the word, "FAAM" would be helpful.

www.fleetairarmfriends.org.uk/talks

Exceptional Raids - changing the courses of war

By Wing Commander (Rtd) Tony Davies.

April 2022 Talk summarised by Robert Heath



Tonight, our speaker described significant battles occurring over 2,000 years.

The Battle of Alesia in 52BC involved Gallic tribes under Vercingetorix, who placed his troops on a hilltop. He expected the Romans to climb the hill to do battle, but Caesar surrounded the base and laid siege to the tribes. There was no battle, Caesar simply starved out his enemy.

The Battle of Adrianople was fought in 378AD between the Romans under Valens and the Barbarians. Valens was confident that he would overwhelm the enemy, not knowing that their cavalry was close at hand. Valens' intelligence gathering was inadequate, and it lost him the battle.

In 1066, William, Duke of Normandy resolved to take an army across the English Channel to conquer Britain. King

Harold was aware of the prospect of an invasion but had to rush north to face Viking armies, depleting his resources. William landed near Hastings and when Harold marched south again to meet him, his army was defeated. The Bayeux Tapestry narrates the story.

Britain lost its American colonies in 1814 and decided to win them back via land battles and a blockade by the Royal Navy. During the conflict, the British set fire to the White House. In the Battle of New Orleans in 1815, British troops were landed by sea to take the city, but unfortunately for Major General Sir Edward Pakenham the war had ended a month beforehand.

In May 1943, 617 Sqn successfully attacked dams in the Ruhr valley in Operation Chastise. The aircraft flew in moonlight, at 60ft above the water to deliver the "bouncing" bombs exactly on target.

Tony concluded his talk by describing the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, in which eight US warships were sunk by 351 carrier based Japanese aircraft.

Thank you, Tony Davies for a very different look at how the courses of war have been changed.

Wings over Lee - Aviation at Lee-on-Solent 1917 to 2022

By Bob Wealthy of the *Daedalus* Aviation & Heritage Group.
May 2022 Talk summarised by Robert Heath



Facts, figures and illustrations rolled before us continuously during this absorbing talk.

HMS *Daedalus* is the familiar name of the airfield at Lee-on-Solent. The RFC established a Naval Air Station at Calshot in 1913 for testing seaplanes and by 1917 there were plans for Calshot's training facilities to be augmented by an interim site at Lee-on-Solent. Five sea plane sheds were built, which still stand to this day. Two slipways were built enabling aircraft such as the Short 184 and 827 to roll directly down to the sea.

In 1939 the base was formally commissioned as HMS *Daedalus* and concrete runways built. During WW2, *Daedalus* was at the forefront of fighting activity, hosting in all 81 squadrons operating numerous different types. For the D-Day invasion in 1944, it was the busiest air station on the south coast

of England and aircraft based there included FAA and RAF squadrons flying Seafires and Spitfires; three squadrons flying P51 Mustangs; one squadron operating a mixture of Mustangs and Hawker Typhoons; and one US Navy Spitfire squadron.

HMS *Daedalus* remained active after the war and operated a variety of naval aircraft. A permanent resident was 781 communications squadron of DH Dove and DH Heron aircraft. The last operational unit to form at Lee-on-Solent was 845 Squadron in December 1955, flying Westland Whirlwind HAS.22 helicopters. Thereafter the base became the home of the Air Engineering Establishment, the Central Air Medical School and the Naval Air Technical Evaluation Centre. In 1962 a slipway was brought back into use for the Joint Service Hovercraft Trials Unit.

HMS *Daedalus* was formally decommissioned in 1996 after 79 years of continuous operation. The air station now provides a base for the Police Air Support Unit, HM Coastguard Search & Rescue, private flying clubs, Britten Norman aircraft manufacturing and the Hovercraft Museum.

A Bridge too Far - and working for Richard Attenborough

By Group Captain (Rtd) Mike Jenkins.

June 2022 Talk summarised by Robert Heath



The background to this talk by Group Captain Mike Jenkins was the assault on Arnhem in 1944.

Codenamed “Market Garden”, which was intended to capture the bridges there by parachute assault, while Allied land forces would follow up by land. In 1975, film actor and director Richard Attenborough decided that the book “A Bridge too Far” by Cornelius Ryan, would make a good film. He approached the Ministry of Defence (MoD) to ask if they would allow the Paras to make the drop for the film sequences. The MoD chose Mike to work with Attenborough to co-ordinate the drops and the 1st Battalion of the Parachute Regiment was selected for the task.

The film was produced by Joseph Levine and shot on location in the Netherlands. It had an all-star film cast and Mike was struck by the immensity

of the budget and how much some film stars were paid for very brief roles. The aircraft used were Douglas C-47/DC3/Dakota aircraft from Portugal, Somaliland, Denmark and Finland, along with their pilots. One C-47 was fully equipped as the camera aircraft, with numerous cameras installed.

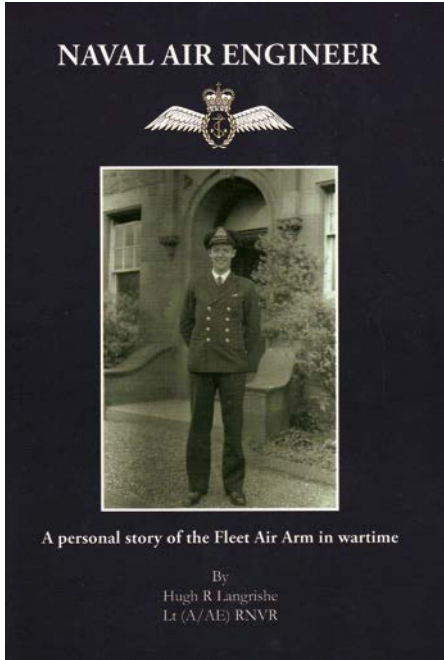
The pilots were professional, but some needed training in formation flying. 1,700 PX parachutes were supplied, which were not steerable and had a 13 kt wind limit. The first drop went well but was too spread out. More formation training was needed. Ultimately, 200 paratroops were used, but by creative camera work and editing these looked like 2,000. The aerial scenes took 18 days to complete.

In 1944, 478 gliders participated in the Operation. For the film, 8 Airspeed Horsa gliders were hand built mock-ups for the ground scenes. The airborne scenes cleverly switched from the cockpit view from a modern glider towed behind the C-47 tow plane to a mocked up Horsa on the ground, such is the magic of Hollywood.

Thank you to Mike Jenkins, for a very interesting and well-illustrated talk.

Naval Air Engineer

By Lieutenant Hugh R Langrishe RNVR.
A book review by Malcolm Smith



Hugh was awarded a temporary Commission in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve (RNVR) in March 1942.

He volunteered for service as an Air Engineer Officer (AEO) and, completed his engineering training at RAF Henlow. On qualifying as an AEO, in October 1944 he was appointed to RNAS Ludham in Norfolk, to join MONAB1, which

was just forming there. MONAB, he explains, stands for Mobile Operational Naval Air Base, of which ultimately nine units were formed. The MONAB concept arose from the decision of the UK Government to form the British Pacific Fleet (BPF) to support the USA in its conflict with the Japanese in the Pacific. By that stage of the war, aircraft carriers had become the capital ships of the fleet and, as the tide of war changed and the USN pursued the enemy across the vast stretches of the Pacific, there was a need to provide mobile shore-based support for the aircraft of the BPF.

RNAS Ludham had been an RAF fighter station, loaned to the RN for the purpose of forming up the MONABs. When our author arrived, he found that MONABs 1, 2 and 3 were already assembling. Each one was intended to be self-contained, with its own ship's organisation, from Commanding Office with regulating and administrative staff down to the catering and engineering organisations. People were arriving from various locations, with little formal introduction to the role of the MONABs. After a few confusing weeks, the men of the first three MONABs were given embarkation leave, during which they

had to equip themselves with tropical uniforms.

Hugh had been told that he was to command Mobile Servicing (MS) Unit 1, with responsibility for the Grumman Avenger. These units were expected to support a squadron of 12 aircraft for up to six weeks, but Hugh was concerned that neither he nor his team of maintainers had ever worked on the Avenger and its Wright Double Cyclone engine. MONAB1 was commissioned as HMS *Nabbington* and in mid-November the entire unit, of 31 officers and over 500 men, boarded a special train for Liverpool. Here they embarked in the ocean liner, the *Empress of Scotland*, joining the hundreds of other military people travelling to Australia to set up the base organisation there.

After taking Christmas leave in Sydney, Hugh's unit was established at the RAAF base at Nowra, New South Wales. Spares and equipment in limited quantities arrived and Hugh was pleased to see manuals for the Avenger and its engine, together with parts lists. On 10 February 1944, 60 aircraft arrived over Nowra from the 1st Aircraft Carrier Squadron, BPF. The disembarking squadrons comprised Avenger and Corsair aircraft and the disembarked squadrons started a hectic period of working up and re-equipping. Replacement aircraft were ferried in, most of which had been standing unused in the heat in Ceylon for weeks or even months. Hugh soon discovered that there were significant differences between the Avenger Mk I, built by its designer, Grumman, and

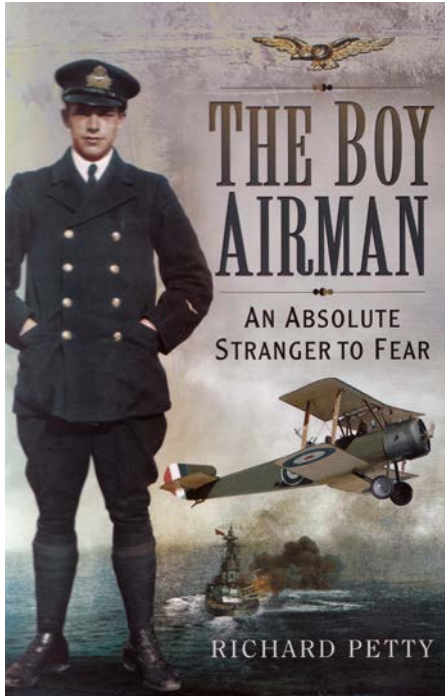
the Mk II, built under licence by General Motors. Not only were there significant differences in the build standard of the two manufacturers, but there were also discrepancies between two aircraft nominally built to the same design. This led to severe difficulties in finding matching spares, not helped by the lack of a comprehensive stores reference system.

At the end of February 1945, the squadrons re-embarked in their parent vessels and departed for the American-built base at Manus in the Admiralty Islands. Hugh was sent to Schofields, northwest of Sydney, where a new second-line squadron, 706, was being formed under the command of Lt Cdr "Bobby" Bradshaw. Facilities at Schofields were limited, with huddled accommodation and no hangars. Hugh spent the remainder of the war there and provides ample detail of the problems he encountered with lack of spares and the incompatibilities between the two marks of aircraft. 706 expanded as replacement aircraft and newly-trained aircrew arrived and at its busiest, Hugh remarks that the squadron dispersal held 36 aircraft. As compensation for the spartan existence at Schofields, Sydney was only a short train ride away.

This book provides an unusual insight into the enormous effort that went into supporting the BPF, most of it generally taken for granted in histories of the UK's contribution to war in the Pacific. The MONABs were formed up and deployed in a few short months and Hugh provides a most detailed account of their activities.

The Boy Airman

By Richard Petty. A book review by Malcolm Smith



The subtitle of this unusual book is “An Absolute Stranger to Fear”. It appears under a photograph of the eponymous young naval aviator, giving the impression that it is he who revels in this lack of apprehension.

The airman is Hugh Mortimer Petty, who was commissioned into the Royal Naval Air Service as a Probationary Flight Officer in July 1917 and the book is written by his son, Richard

Petty. Extracts from Hugh’s flying log book show a fairly typical progress as he learned to fly at the RNAS flying school at Eastchurch, including various forced landings in an Avro 504K. He progressed to embarked flying, taking off from the converted merchant ship, HMS *Nairana*, then qualified in the Sopwith 1½ Strutter. He was appointed to the battlecruiser HMS *Inflexible* in July 1918 and flew several times from that vessel, taking off from a platform over the guns. He practised one of the key roles for naval aircraft of the time - “spotting” the fall of shot and reporting to the firing ship, on one occasion getting a bit close to the trajectory of the full calibre shells. He made a forced landing in the sea and was lucky to be rescued, with his observer, by a Grand Fleet destroyer. He was present in *Inflexible* when the German High Seas Fleet surrendered, steaming to anchor in Scapa Flow and gives an eye-witness report of that momentous event.

Petty’s brief anecdotes are enlivened by a great many carefully reproduced photographs, taken by him on a pocket camera. These include some genuinely interesting “snaps”, such as Admiral David Beatty on the bridge of his flagship and other ships of the Grand Fleet. Other, more homely, pictures include

Hugh with his motorcycle and his first motor car, some time after the War.

The bulk of the book is taken up by a somewhat idiosyncratic history of the Royal Navy's aircraft's role in the First World War, written by Richard Petty. He describes the urgent need to counter the Zeppelin and includes descriptions of the flight characteristics of early military aircraft. There are brief notes on the RN's dirigible airships and their role in anti-submarine warfare. He comments on the performance of rotary engines and includes the comment "spins were usually fatal". He adds some musings on the introduction of "pink gin" and the way in which the British Army responded to the lack of feminine company for soldiers posted to France. He concludes by explaining that his father was a medical student when he was conscripted in 1917 and

later qualified as a doctor. After his death, Richard found many original negatives in the bottom of his father's sea chest. The camera was a Kodak "vest pocket" model, given to him by his parents. Richard had the negatives printed without digital manipulation or retouching and their inclusion in this book adds greatly to its interest.

The book is adorned with poems and songs from the period, supported by various quotations. The sub-title is taken from one of them, by George Brown Burgin in "the Idler" in 1918. In part, this reads: "The boy airman is the most wonderful of all the wonderful combatants in this war ... he comes into training as an absolute stranger to fear." Richard has produced a colourful memoir of his father's brief service, supported by a nostalgic glimpse into the great conflict of century ago.



Cross and Cockade International are pleased to announce their latest Aircraft Monograph publication is coming soon:

The de Havilland DH2 And The Men Who Flew Them

Beginning with its development by The Aircraft Manufacturing Company, this first major narrative explores the career of this relatively unknown but pivotal pusher single-seat scout. It fought over several major battlefields, which included The Western Front, Macedonia and the Middle East.

In 260 pages, with 300 photographs, colour profiles and scale drawings, the book considers and investigates every chapter of the DH2's fighting life, along with all the key pilots who took part, including at least three who won the VC at various times. The advent of the DH2 ended the scourge of the Fokker Monoplanes and then achieved considerable success through the Somme Offensive. Although already outclassed by late 1916,

when the Red Baron in his modern twin-gun Albatros claimed Lanoë Hawker VC as his 11th victim, the DH2 squadrons showed great courage, fighting on well into 1917.

The monograph includes a comprehensive Serials List, with matching Names Index, plus seven further detailed Appendices about its construction and deployment.



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Membership

By Simon Websper

We are currently owed £127 from underpaid membership renewals, since 1 January 2021. Please check that your standing order has been updated to reflect the current membership fees on the opposite page. Jabberwock magazine will be WITHHELD from November if not updated.

Standing Order payment membership cards for **August, September** and **October** will be sent separately, within the relevant month of expiry. (Receipt of a membership card does not confirm receipt of payment). Other cards are sent on receipt of payment only.

A big **WELCOME** to the new members who have joined us since the last journal issue:

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Total members as of 14 July 2022: **941**.
Members who have made a Gift Aid declaration: **693***

*Opting to Gift Aid allows us to claim an extra 25% of your subscription from HMRC

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If you "Go green" and receive a PDF Jabberwock via your e-mail saves us approximately £9 per member, per annum. Thank you to those who switched recently! This is very much appreciated as magazine production costs continue to rise alarmingly as with all things in life lately.

Gifting a SoFFAAM membership to a friend or relative is an excellent and inexpensive way of increasing our numbers, which have somewhat declined of late!

Please visit our website at www.fleetairarmfriends.org.uk

If you have any membership queries, please contact me, Simon Websper at: soffaam.mem@gmail.com
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The Queen's Platinum Jubilee Flypast, led by the Fleet Air Arm



As the senior air arm the Fleet Air Arm had the honour of leading HM Queen's Platinum Jubilee fly past of 70 aircraft over Buckingham Palace on 2 June following the Sovereign's Trooping the Colour Birthday Parade. A Yeovilton Wildcat HMA2 led two ASW Merlins from Culdrose, while the third formation comprised a Commando Helicopter Force Wildcat AH1 and three Merlin Mk4s. With special thanks to Commando Helicopter Force/RNAS Yeovilton for all the photos.