



LAA NEWSLETTER

Serial 30

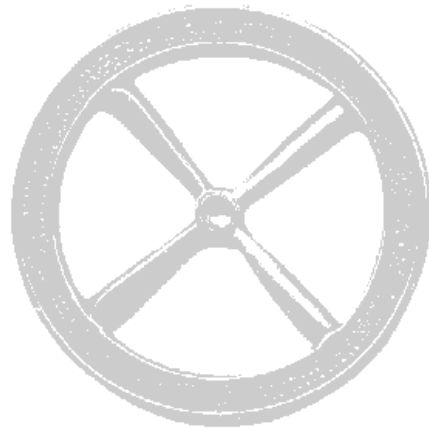
July 2001

HIGHLIGHTS IN THIS ISSUE

AGM 2001 RAF HENLOW, COMMITTEER MEMBERS LIST, AUTUMN SOCIAL, OBITUARY PLUS — POLISH APPS AT HALTON, 6 TSU, THORNEY ISLAND , 83RD AT LOCKING

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The Apprentice Prayer

Teach us good Lord, to be thankful
For all the good times we had,
The skills we have learned,
The friendships we have shared
And the companionship we have enjoyed.
May all who have served the apprenticeship of the Wheel
Be ever mindful of the needs of one another.

Amen

AGM — MARCH 2001

A REPORT BY THE SECRETARY, ON THE SEVENTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE RAF LOCKING APPRENTICE ASSOCIATION, HELD AT THE OFFICERS MESS ROYAL AIR FORCE HENLOW ON SATURDAY 31ST MARCH 2001 AT 15:00 HRS

The meeting, attended by approximately 60 members, was opened by the Chairman, Bert Davies, who then invited the President, Martin Palmer, to address the meeting. During his address Martin welcomed everyone and said how pleased he was at the level of turn out for the first venue away from Weston-Super-Mare. He thought the decision by the Committee, given we could no longer return to RAF Locking itself, to vary the venue every other year allowed members nationwide to meet in a wider choice of geographic areas and this could help stimulate attendance in the longer term. Martin paid his respects to George Burville, following the sad event of his death, and passed his condolences to George's family. He went on to point out that the Association would not prosper as well as it has, without the dedicated support and hard work of the Committee, and expressed his personal thanks, echoed by those present, to the Chairman and committee members. Martin then presented the RAFLAA Trophy and cheque, accompanied for the first time by a framed certificate, to

Flight Sergeant Swainston. The presentation was for outstanding work undertaken in managing the move of CE Training from RAF Locking to RAF Cosford.

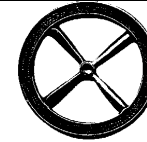
CHAIRMAN

The Chairman then presented his report to the members, and thanked the membership for the trust they had showed by voting him in as chairman elect at the last AGM even though he had not been fit enough to attend the meeting. Bert thanked Joe Holroyd for holding the fort until January and for handing the association over in such fine fettle. During his report Bert asked to put on record his appreciation of the President's service to the association and to formally thank him for agreeing to remain as president despite the increasing pressures of his day time job.

Bert then mentioned the move of the AGM out of Weston super Mare, the postponement of the September AGM and asked the membership for ideas on suitable projects to publicise the Locking Apprentices Association, saying that other associations have done such things as dedicated a window in the local church or planted trees in the shape of the wheel in the national arboretum. He said that he looked forward to timely responses from the membership so that the committee could provide costed proposals to the next AGM.

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THE



NEWS

Entry Box Holders

**Amendment to the April List
81st Entry Box
Holder is Dennis Stewart, 99 Woodside, Rainham, Kent, ME8 OPW**

Coasters

Tony Horry can obtain coaster with the No 1 Radio School crest on them for between £1-5 and £2.00 depending on order quantities. Anyone interested should contact Tony direct.

AGM2002

AGM2002 is to be held on Saturday the 13th of April 2002 in Weston-super-Mare at Daunceys Hotel which lies on the seafront to the North of the town.

The hotel is family run and offers a good standard of accommodation. The current price is £33 per night per person for bed and breakfast and the majority of rooms offer outstanding views to Brean Down and Weston Bay. A discount for the 2 nights will be available. There is a lift to the upper floors and the bar has a most comprehensively stocked bar. Well, it would have being the HQ of the Weston `Lions.' The cost of the Dinner Dance will be around £20 and it is hoped to stage all the events in the Hotel starting with a meet and greet before the meeting. A buffet lunch will be available and after the meeting tea will be served.

RAFLAA COMMITTEE

APPOINTMENT	NAME	ADDRESS	TEL/E-MAIL	RE-ELECTION DUE	ENTRY
President	M a r t i n Palmer				91 st
Chairman	Bert Davies	20 Lakefield Ave Little Paxton St Neots Cambs PE19 4NZ	(01480) 217243 bertdavies@netscapeonline.co	Sep 02	79 th
Secretary	Glyn Price	"Sentosa" 9 Blake Hill Way, Abbeymead Glos GL4 4QR	(01452) 615265 glynprice@09sentosa. freeserve.co (home) gprice@technology.serco.com (work) (01452) 726300	Sep 02	102 nd
Treasurer	Tony Horry	Hillside Cottage Kewstoke Road Kewstoke W S M BS22 9YD	(01934) 628383 horrycorp@aol.com	Mar 03	76 th
Membership Secretary	John Farmer	8 Glenmore Road Minehead Somerset TA24 5BQ	(01643) 705443 RAFLAA@aol.com	Mar 03	77 th
Service Rep	Joe Holroyd	Well Cottage 36 High Street Guilden Morden Royston SG8 0JR	(01763) 853742 patandjoeholroyd@tesco.net	Sep 02	85 th
AA Rep	Charles Hart	9 South Road W S M BS23 2HA	(01934) 621969 charhart@supanet.com	Sep 02	71 st
General	Vic Gibbs	8 Old School Road Royal Lane Hillingdon Middlesex UB8 3WE	(01895) 235 076 Gibbsvic@aol.com	Mar 04	88 th
Craft Rep	Graham Beeston	87 Hornbeam Road Havant PO9 2UT	Home (023) 92346242 Work 0778 8795358 graham@mapleOak.co.uk	Sep 02	209 th
Tech Rep	Andy Perkins	107 Balmoral Way Worle W S M BS22 9BZ	(01934)417323 aperkins@schaaffner.com	Sep 02	109 th
Newsletter Editor	Colin Ingram	Poundfield Stamford Hill Stratton Bude Cornwall EX23 9AZ	(01288) 353840 cwingram@aol.com	Sep 02	88 th

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Additionally Bert mentioned the planning of a church service at St Clement Danes followed by a luncheon at the polish club in late may or early June 2002 and stated that more details would be available after the 2001 FABEA meeting due in July. The Chairman pointed out that FABEA have now adopted the "Apprentice Prayer" as an opening prayer for future FABEA meetings in AOB and suggested that the RAFLAA may consider doing the same.

Bert informed the meeting that for two years now he and the president had represented the association at the cenotaph as part of the RAF Apprentice and Boy Entrant contingent and he urged the membership to consider attending the national armistice parade as he would dearly like the RAFLAA to outnumber, or at least match, the Halton contingent this year.

The Chairman then formally paid his respects to George Burville, thanked his colleagues on the Committee and introduced the new Membership Secretary John Farmer.

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

John opened his report by thanking his predecessor Mike West for his effort in making the hand-over as easy as possible. In short, he said that there were 564 names on the 'Members' database. Of these 400 are active members, 16

have resigned and 13 are deceased and 135 are considered to be 'ex members' (this means that they have not renewed their memberships for at least 2 years).

John commented that recruitment came almost entirely from the 'appbe' web site, as was run by the late George Burville, and that this site continued to generate 2 or 3 enquiries a month. He asked that the membership keep him informed of any changes in their personal details, especially those that may affect delivery of the newsletter.

At the end of the report, which was accepted by the members present, the Chairman invited Tony Horry, the Treasurer, to present his report. :

TREASURER

Tony presented two sets of accounts. Those for 1999/2000 having already been published in a recent Newsletter and those for the year 2000/2001 which were made available to attending members. In summary, Tony stated that with the healthy state of our assets, he saw no reason to recommend any increase in the annual subscription.

CHAIRMAN

The Chairman then introduced the matter of the election of committee members by expressing his thanks to Joe Holroyd and Charles Hart for the

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work they had done in serving the association for 6+ years as Chairman and Secretary, and for their vision and efforts prior to that, in creating the association. Bert proposed that the meeting gave a vote of thanks to the two individuals, and Tony Horry seconded this and the membership was unanimous in endorsing the proposal.

Bert stated that three committee posts had to be confirmed or filled. 1) The post of General Member, vacated by Peter Crowe, 2) the Treasurer's post filled by Tony Horry, and 3) the post of Membership Secretary, filled by John Farmer. The only volunteer for the General Member post was Vic Gibbs and no additional volunteers came forward for the other two posts. Colin Ingram proposed that the three posts be filled by the single volunteer for each post. Colin Bell seconded this proposal and the meeting gave this proposition a unanimous vote.

The Chairman then stated that the geographic split of the committee made it necessary to alter the committee member posts authorised to sign cheques and he also considered that the timing of the AGM was too restrictive. With the approval of the membership at the meeting, two elements of the Constitution were amended as follows:

CONSTITUTION

Para. 12: Final sentence amended to read " the Treasurer is empowered to open a bank account on behalf of the association and, together with the Chairman or any nominated committee member, to sign cheques or other instructions authorising payments".

Para. 17 Opening sentence amended to read "the Annual General Meeting will take place at a time and date as decided by the committee but this shall be no more than 18 months from the previous AGM."

Bert then explained that the committee felt that there was a serious omission in the constitution, as it stood. There was no mechanism, other than a vote of thanks, for showing appreciation to a member who has made an outstanding contribution to the association. He pointed out that other associations cater for this by creating honorary life vice presidents or the bestowing of honorary life membership. Bert asked the meeting to consider the addition of the following sentences to paragraph 9 of the constitution to remedy this situation. "Honorary life membership may be granted to individual members of the association in recognition of their outstanding contribution to the association. This honour may only be granted with the unanimous approval of those members present at the AGM where the honour is proposed" The Chairman said that although he had put

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OBITUARY – DAVID RESTALL – 71ST ENTRY

David Restall was born in Portsmouth in 1937 and spent his early youth dodging shrapnel and other odd bits of ordinance which at that time fell out of the sky at very regular intervals over the town and naval dockyard. So impressed was he by the aerial display it was inevitable that he chose to join the RAF at the earliest opportunity. Thus it was that he came to Locking on 30 April 1952 to join 83 other teenagers who collectively formed the 71st entry of Aircraft Apprentices, the first apprentice entry, incidentally, to arrive at Locking. The main part of the wing moved from Cranwell 8 months later.

David, then known as George since he used his middle Christian name, quickly made his mark in the apprentice trumpet band. Being a Salvationist, he was already a practiced musician and although trumpeters were never popular, since it was they that woke us each day with reveille call, we admired his fortitude in putting his lips to a freezing mouthpiece on the sort of winter's mornings that we never experience now.

David's first posting after passing out was to Stoke Hammond near Bletchley which proved to be a very good first tour since it was there that George met Betty. In no time flat they were married and posted to RAF Chigwell, a noted Essex haven, lying between Wanstead and Loughton. Today we call this site the M11. In

those days there were few quarters but happily they were allocated accommodation after a short spell in a caravan and commenced a marriage lasting 44 years before David sadly died of a stroke on 12 April.

David completed 15 years in the Service during which time he and Betty enjoyed further postings to Stanbridge, Compton Bassett, Locking and Tangmere plus 2 tours in Aden which was not the most popular of overseas tours. On leaving, David continued in the electronics field moving between Plessey, Marconi and Cossors before ending his working life at Crossfields, Hemel Hempstead. Ill health enforced an early retirement but never daunted, David was able to undertake charitable work and followed Betty's lead by becoming active in the SSAFA, RBL and RAFA organisations.

David continued to enjoy being a member of a band and played euphonium in the Callington Town Band near to his home in Cornwall where he and his family had retired some 3 years previously. And it was in fact whilst in concert with the band that David was suddenly taken ill and rushed to hospital in Plymouth where he died the following night. David and Betty had a happy marriage as evidenced by their large family of 3 boys and 2 girls, one of whom was adopted and all miss David very much.

AGM — MARCH 2001*(Continued from page 4)*

forward the proposal for “thought only” at this meeting, it would have to be formally notified to the membership via the Newsletter and then voted on at the next AGM.

The Chairman then advised that there is a requirement for the annual subscription to be decided by the general meeting. Harry North proposed that the annual subscription remained at £7-50 and this was seconded by David Hazel and given unanimous approval be the membership present.

Bert advised those present that no written questions had been received from the membership and invited items from the floor

WEB SITE

Colin Bell paid tribute to George Burville and read out a brief history of him. Phil Mills told the membership that he was planning to take up where George left off. He explained the difficulties but stated that he would be doing his best to keep George’s site alive and kicking

COASTERS

Tony Horry explained that he had a contact that could obtain coaster with the No 1 Radio School crest on them for between £1-5 and £2.00 depending on order quantities. Interest from members will be invited via the Newsletter.

VIDEO

Barry Dinnage explained that he had put together some video footage of the last march past and that he had 12 videos for sale at the meeting. The membership agreed that advertising would be done via the Newsletter with the Secretary consolidating any orders.

The Chairman advised the meeting that it was likely that the Next AGM would take place in Spring 2002 and that it would probably be in the Weston super Mare area. Further discussion would take place about future events through the Newsletter. The meeting then closed

NOTE: If any member would like a full copy of the minutes and the associated reports please contact the Secretary

AGM 2002 News

See the news page for latest information.

APPLICATION FOR AGM DINNER/DANCE TICKETS			
Venue: Dance Scene Weston Super Mare Date: 29th September 2001			
Please return this form to Mr. Tony Horry: Hillside Cottage, Kewstoke Road Kewstoke Weston Super Mare BS22 9YD			
Name		Entry	
Address :			
No of Tickets @ £12.50 each		I enclose payment of	

POLISH AIRCRAFT APPRENTICES ASSOCIATION DAY AT RAF HALTON

Bert Davies 79th RAFLAA Chairman

On the 15th May I was privileged to represent the Association at The Polish Aircraft Apprentice Day at RAF Halton. The programme for the day included the Dedication of the Polish Aircraft Apprentice Association Window in St George's Church and the Pass Out Parade of 193 Recruit Course.

The Service of Dedication was a most moving occasion, made all the more so by the obvious pride and comradeship exhibited by the Polish Ex Apprentices and their ladies. It was quite humbling to see so many of them gathered together, particularly when one considers that less

than 300 of them went through apprentice training from Jan. 1944 to Feb. 1948.

The Pass Out Parade for No. 193 Course of Initial Recruit Training was reassuring. After only 7 weeks instruction the standard of turnout and drill was incredibly high and did a lot to reinforce my own belief that given the right guidance the youth of today has all the qualities that we had in our day.

The airmen and airwomen of No 193 Course were a credit the instructional staff of RAF Halton and I have no doubt that, after completing their trade training, they will go on to make a useful contribution to the Service.

MEMORIES AND PEOPLE

Mike (Ernie)Fiske 71st Entry Locking

That photo of Chas Hart with the late Flt.Lt Rippon did bring back memories — Chas does not look a day older than he did in 1954.

I can remember the first day Flt.Lt Rippon appeared — as is written in number one dress and a beret — tight and smart as worn by a Cpl McLean of the RAF Regiment and of course a gleaming Pathfinder Badge. His shoes shone : their toecaps gleaming.

One thing I am sad about is that there seems to be no mention of those who joined from Pakistan — of course I can never forget Cooray because his bed space was beside that of Horror Davidson — and when the Royal Ceylon Air Force got a new cap badge — with a bird of enormous wings — there was no stopping Cooray trying on his hat — to get the right jaunty angle — wonder if he did the same with his judges wig ?

Sorry for the quote Mike but thought it appropriate after the above article.

Ed.

AUTUMN SOCIAL DINNER-DANCE DETAILS

As outlined in the last Newsletter, an Autumn Dinner Dance is planned for Saturday the 29th September 2001 at 'Dance Scene,' in Whitecross Road, Weston-super-Mare starting at 7-00pm for 7-30.

The cost to members is only £12-50 and the Menu will be:

**Leek and Potato Soup
or fruit juice**

**Pork a la Dance Scene
Carrots, Peas and French Beans
Roast and Buttered New Potatoes**

**Death by White Chocolate
on a Raspberry Coulis**

Coffee and Mints

Red and White House Wine

Music will be provided by the Dance Scene resident Disco

Special needs can be met provided they are notified in good time. The Event will be held in the smaller dining room so the number of diners will be limited and therefore tickets will be available on a first come first served basis. Accommodation in Weston-super Mare is abundant and very competitively priced in September, so why not have a weekend away with an opportunity to meet up with some old friends. Enclosed is an application proforma; get that cheque book out and send off for your tickets now before you forget. Tony Horry is waiting to hear from you.

83RD ENTRY B SQUADRON

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Those involved will remember Jeff Bradford climbing the drainpipe on the Odeon Cinema to drape a 'Boots for Women' banner (an old sheet with a boot on the corners) over the front of the building. There was also 'Mr Plod', who followed some of us past the shops, removing posters as we put them up.

At last we made our final Term, and with such a small number of us now in the Entry, nasty rumours started to circulate that we could be faced with a Joint Passing-out parade with the 83rd Entry at Halton. Horror of horrors.

Happy to say, some members of the 82nd who were held back to re-take their final exams (82Z), helped to boost the number on the pass out parade on the 24th March 1959 to a grand total of twenty nine.



Brian Cunningham & Tom Regan



83 C February 1958

Brian Jeff Robbie Brian Johnny
Togwell Bradford Robinson Waring Aston
Tony Brian
Berridge Cooke



Our BIG DAY Tuesday 24th March 1959

CHAIRMANS CONTRIBUTION

Bert Davies 79th RAFLAA Chairman

I must admit to being a little disappointed at the contents of the last Newsletter; a report of the January Committee meeting, two obituaries, two parish notices, two commercials and only two contributions from the membership. This is not a criticism of the editor, who has the unenviable task of producing an interesting Newsletter with little or no help, but of us the membership. For a Newsletter to be worthwhile and sustainable it must be an interactive device expressing your views, reminiscences and anecdotes as well as passing on information from the committee. So remember what we were told as young AAs. We are the crème de le crème who have been trained to think for ourselves and to express our views without fear or favour. So get your minds in gear, pens in hand and make the editor earn his keep by having to select and edit the best inputs for the next Newsletter rather than look for fillers.

We have had our first AGM and Reunion social outside of the Weston super Mare area and I am pleased to report that an enjoyable time appeared to be had by all those that attended (However, I would welcome feedback on the subject). The facilities provided by the Officers' Mess at RAF Henlow were superb and the quality of the evening meal and ambience of the surroundings will be hard to beat. I do not

intend to say any more about the AGM as the Secretary has summarised the Minutes for you later in the Newsletter.

You will have seen the geographic spread of the membership that I produced for the last newsletter. Based on this, it is the view of your committee that we should seriously consider having AGMs and social events in a variety of locations.

Our ties with Locking and Weston Super Mare must never be forgotten and we believe we should aim to alternate the AGM between W S M and any active RAF Station that is willing to host us, the Autumn Social, if it continues to be supported, could also alternate between W S M and the regions. However, this is only the opinion of the committee and I plead with you to let us know your views.

As I said at the AGM we are a democratic association of 400 plus kindred spirits but if you do not let us know what you want, your committee will have to act in an autocratic way and plan the way ahead as they see fit. So don't wait until we get it wrong and disappoint you and then vote with your feet, use your democratic right and tell us what you want so we can get it right.

H M ARMED FORCES PENSION ACTION GROUP

The following is a précis of the information that I have acquired. I offer it as a statement without any further comment or opinion.

My interest was attracted to the following letter in the Civil Service Pensioners Alliance magazine "Pensioner" - edition No 199 December 1999.

"The enclosed information from the Royal British Legion magazine states that REGULAR military service between 1949 and 1975 may be counted towards a Civil Service pension. Yet, it goes without saying that an ex national serviceman, like myself is entitled to nothing." Edward Goode, Crystal Palace.

The copy enclosed by Mr Goode urges regular service personnel, who subsequently joined the civil service, not to "lose out on pension rights". Ed.

I e-mailed the editor (editor@orchards2.demon.co.uk (Alan Perkins)) for further details. The reply stated that a great deal of correspondence was received on the subject. The General Secretary has made enquiries and has been assured by the appropriate authority that there have been no changes in the rules governing pensions, nor are they anticipated. The reply included the full article referred to by Mr Goode.

"Losing out on pension rights. Those who joined the civil service after regular military service between 1949 and 1975 may be losing out if their military service has not been counted towards their pension. For full details of your rights, write to 1 Peacock Close, The Elms, Fiddler's Green Lane, Cheltenham, GL5 0XH".

I wrote to the Royal British Legion on 26 Jan 00 and received a reply dated 28 Jan 00 included: "I regret to inform you that a great many 'rumours' half truths and 'legend' attaches itself to Civil Service and Forces Pensions being lumped together". The reply went on to say "the article within the 'Legion' was from a firm of Solicitors who are pursuing cases through the Courts, there are fees involved!" A copy of the letter from RICHMONDS, the Solicitors (dated 12 Aug 1998) was enclosed.

(Richmonds, Solicitors, 34A High St, Keynsham, Bristol, BS31 1DQ

Tel: 0117-986-5715)

Extract from RICHMONDS letter. 'Pension Transfer Rights pre -1975'.

"I am now in apposition to advise you that I intend issuing proceedings on behalf of my clients in respect of the above".....I am anxious to trace all those servicemen who could be effected in order to give everybody an equal opportunity to benefit from the action. A meeting held in Cheltenham

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83RD ENTRY B SQUADRON

Brian Cooke 83rd Entry

A brief history of one of (if not the) smallest entry to pass out from Royal Air Force Locking

One afternoon early in May 1956, a rather nervous 15 year old, I boarded the train at Paddington bound for Weston-Super-Mare and entered a compartment occupied by another lad who looked about the same age as myself.

My new acquaintance introduced himself as Jeff Bradford, and we soon struck up a conversation, finding that we were both travelling with the aim of joining the Royal Air Force as an Aircraft Apprentice at RAF Locking.

Later that day, we joined approximately 60 other hopeful lads and on the 9th May, were sworn in and became the 83rd Entry of Aircraft Apprentices as U/T Radio Fitter.

During the next seven months, this number was reduced as some decided the life of an Apprentice was not for them, and others fell by the wayside for other reasons.

At the commencement of our third term in January 1957, our now somewhat depleted numbers were increased to more than 70, with the addition of 'FTs' from the 82nd Entry.

By the end of March 1957, our ranks were again depleted with some of our number joining the 84th Entry etc. At this point, we were allocated to one of three class groups according to our

nominated final Trade Specialisation.

As a 'U/T' Ground Wireless Fitter, I became a member of Class 83C. This consisted of six original members of the 83rd, and two who joined us from the 82nd.

The six original 83rd members were: Johnny Aston, Brian (Twid) Cooke, Brian Waring, Brian (Toggy) Togwell, Malcolm (Jeff) Bradford and Malcolm (Robbie) Robinson.

The ex 82nd members of the class were Mick Berry and Tony Berridge.

As with most other entries, members of the 83rd Entry continued to drop by the wayside, some to pass out with following entries, and some joining the ranks of the 'Boggies', the highest depletion of our numbers taking place after the 5th Term examinations.

Of course, no Apprentice Entry was complete without its mascot and slogan, and the 83rd was no different.

The mascot adopted by the 83rd was a Fred Flintstone type character named 'UG'.

Members of the entry were often heard shouting our slogan - 'BOOTS FOR WOMEN', and we had a poster campaign in Weston to promote it. We went around Weston the early hours of the morning, sticking posters up all over the place.

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THE LAST DAYS OF 6 TSU

(Continued from page 15)

The pending closure of RAF Seletar and its handover to the Singapore Armed Forces accelerated the run-down of 6 TSU, meaning my family had to move out of our excellent bungalow (previously the SWO's). By late 1970 the Unit was moved to RAF Changi as a Tactical Signals Flight with a new Flt Lt as C.O who was a good leader, great at rugby, but not well up on tactical signals needs. We were based initially in a large wooden hut, sharing the other half with the remains of the FEAF Band. The constant instrument practice made us greet any deployment glad fully, luckily we did not stay there long. At this time, the 'Tac. Sigs. Flt. had reduced in size but remained with a staff of about 35 in a fully operational condition.

At the beginning of 1971, while on a 12-hour standby basis, the Flight was deployed to Bangladesh as the RAF's signals element at Chittagong during the international Bangladesh flood relief operation. This was maintained for a number of weeks, with a small base re-supply and any other deployment needs capability left in Singapore.

Before the deployment, I had been tasked by FEAF HQ with taking a group of our men to Chittagong air traffic control tower, take over the running of it and see our C 130 Hercules flood relief transports in. It took a lot of 'discussion' before Command HQ accepted that the Bangladeshis would

not take kindly to an uninvited group taking over their ATC, and that I would not take in the group without either armament or army support. We ended setting up our signals unit on the sea sands of the Bay of Bengal, with the aircraft landing there with no trouble.

In spring 1971 we moved TSF (Tactical Signals Flight) to a site on Changi airfield, near their Signals Squadron and shared their Flt. Lt. (another ex-app). From this time although we were ready at any time to deploy, we were not really called on in earnest except for a number of small jobs including ones at the Singapore Naval Base and at RAAF Butterworth near Penang.

During the last three and a half years of tactical signals in the Far East, 6 TSU then TSF, served on many different and diverse tasks and in many countries, such as Australia, Bangladesh, the Thai border, Penang and the Philippines.

The FEAF tactical signals capability (with backup from 38 Group in the UK for any really big tasks), was fully ready and capable right up to the day, prior to the 10 remaining men being posted back to the UK late November 1971. The following day I handed the remains of the FEAF tactical signals inventory back into stores.

H M ARMED FORCES PENSION ACTION GROUP

(Continued from page 8)

a short while ago attended by approximately 100 ex-servicemen and they have all voted as a group to open to membership to all their former colleagues who are also suffering from the financial loss resulting from the lack of ability to transfer their pension rights from their time in the services to the Civil Service. The majority of members are those who transferred to GCHQ".

Co-incidentally, a few days later I received a letter dated 31 Jan 00 from RICHMONDS! Within the letter, it was stated that a preliminary hearing was due on 22nd February using a member as a "test case", with Cherie Booth & Witold Pawlak appointed as Counsel, but went on to say that of a postponement in light of a case pending in the European court.

The letter went on to say that the Steering Committee of the Action Group invites all those with potential claims to become part of the group, provided they share the cost of litigation on an equal footing and abide by the terms of the Action Group's constitution. A general information letter on behalf of the "HM Armed Forces Pension Action Group" was attached, which stated that £185 has been paid by members, to date, towards the legal costs and invited the payment of this amount and confirm instructions that RICHMONDS on behalf of the members.

The last communication I have received is again from RICHMONDS dated 1 March 2001. This states (Quote) "The Government has sought to have our Action dismissed by way of Preliminary Hearing. Last week we succeeded in convincing the Chairman of the Bristol Employment Tribunal that this Preliminary Hearing should be converted into a Interlocutory Hearing for Directions only, whereat a timetable would be set for various stages to be completed within the context of litigation. Now that a timetable has been set, this matter will progress with greater alacrity."

The letter continues to again to urge people to join in order that the Action may be funded to its completion, stating that fully paid up members have contributed £185. "The more who join, the lesser the financial burden" "...We cannot emphasise too strongly the fact that if a decision or settlement is reached which is favourable to the Action Group, the Government will be bound to pay out only to those members who are party to the proceedings. Anyone who is not party to the proceedings will not stand to realise any financial gain".

The March 2000 edition of the "Pensioner" magazine included a further article, with a summary provided by the Head of the Superannuation Division of the Cabinet Office. I reproduce that summary as printed.

(Continued on page 10)

H M ARMED FORCES PENSION ACTION GROUP

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“Civil Service and Armed Service are different employments with their own terms and conditions of service. Pension arrangements for the two employments are, and always have been, totally separate and are governed by different legislation and rules.

Prior to the Social Security Act 1973, there was no legal requirement for preservation of accrued pension benefits, and those who left an occupational scheme before retirement age normally lost all eligibility for pension rights. There were generally no arrangements under which any accrued pension benefits could be transferred to another scheme. Civil Service pension arrangements anticipated the preservation and transfer requirements of the 1973 Act and the preservation of benefits, for example, became available in 1972 for those who left having served a qualifying period of 5 years (later reduced to two). However, preservation under Armed Service arrangements was not introduced until 1975 and those who left before this, if they were to qualify for a pension, had to have completed 22 years service if they were in the ranks and 16 years service if they were an officer. If they left before completing the required period of service they lost all eligibility for a pension (although they could be paid a lump sum gratuity).

Beyond the 1973 requirements, there have been a number of special arrangements that have allowed service with the Armed Forces to count for Civil Service pension purposes. The first was introduced by Section 1(1) of the Superannuation Act 1946 which allowed service in the Armed Forces to count if the individual immediately entered the Civil Service after war service. The intention was to provide those whose entry to the Civil Service was delayed by war service the same opportunity to accrue pension benefits as those who entered the Civil Service during the war in a temporary capacity and who subsequently gained established status. Under these arrangements, service in the armed forces counted in the same way as “unestablished” service, i.e. it reckoned at half its actual length. The 1946 Act provisions were not however intended to provide a right to reckon war service for pension purposes whenever a person entered employment in the Civil Service, and the concession was therefore brought to an end on 30 June 1950 under the terms of the Superannuation (War Service) (End of Period Order 1950).

The Superannuation (Treatment of Compulsory National Service of Civil Servants) rules 1949 allowed those whose entry to the Civil Service was delayed or interrupted by call up to the Armed Forces to count that service provided it commenced after 1 January

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THE LAST DAYS OF 6 TSU

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land rover trailer and considerable effort to man handle the wide range of kit and equipment. The Unit had a wide range of intercommand transmitters, receivers and communications centres in large Airtech containers, assorted radio beacons, all sizes and types of mobile and ‘portable’ radio equipment all with supporting power generators. Ex Apps who served with 6 TSU will remember the American KWM2 transmitter/receivers in their smart Samsonite protective suitcases and the excellent PRC-47 transceiver also the A43R backpack transceiver which occasionally did survive being dropped from a helicopter at 100 feet. I recall the Sqdn. Ldr on an unexpected visit up country, being unimpressed that my flight had the only air-conditioned tent in Malaya whilst he sweated in the usual 98 degree C, 95% humidity. To say we were adaptable states it all and was proved by our ability to go under our own power or by air, any where in the Far East and be fully self-supporting.

Posted to 6TSU as a sergeant and promoted to Chief Technician three weeks later, put me into a very different ball game. After a very few deployments, I was expected to perform at 100% capability together with the other chiefs, and take responsibility for detachments, exercises and planning in addition to running our own sections. This included everything from specifying appropriate radio equipment, cut-

ting aerials to the correct frequencies, providing food and water (and beer), tents shovels, land rovers with trailers (or trucks) etc. etc. etc. One 76th entry ex-app, Ray Cole made a name for himself by inventing the ‘droopy dipole’. It used a single 30 ft. mast to give a dipole aerial an all-round communications capability, it was efficient, and saved the weight of another 30 ft. aerial mast being carried on deployment. Such were the challenges.

Most people can reasonably reach 95% efficiency with effort and frequently peak to 100%, but the amount of work needed to achieve and sustain that extra 5% is awesome. At 6 TSU the boss expected that 100% all the time and usually received it.

The Unit carried on its work throughout 1969 and 1970 with a wide range of tasks such as ground/air support and ground /ground communications during RAF and Army bombing, strafing and howitzer exercises. Jungle warfare training for the Australian and New Zealand regiments with the Royal Marines and Ghurkhas, and later with the Malaysian and Singapore air forces. By this time the Unit had moved to a spacious hanger near the Seletar airfield and at the commencement of the FEAF run-down was at the peak of its capability.

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THE LAST DAYS OF 6 TSU

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years I learned to enjoy.

Early in 1969, 6TSU consisted of about 230 men, tasked to provide tactical signals support throughout the Far East, working with flying squadrons, the British, Australian and New Zealand armies and air forces, the Royal Navy and the Royal Marines. Previously it had been part of a FEAF Tactical Support Wing, with all the capability of a medium sized country's air force.

The Unit at the time of my arrival, was lead by Sqdn. Ldr Jack Arnold (to date still alive and kicking in Locking village). There were two Flt. Lts., three warrant officers, four chief techs., assorted sergeants and lots of men. All well trained to do their thing for Queen and country!

Considerable time was spent at the Unit's premises just inside the Selatar camp gates (a minutes walk from the numerous bars in the nearby village of Jalan Kayu!), assuring that equipment was serviceable and that everyone knew their job on deployments. Many weeks each year were also spent working in the Malaysian jungle and with other armed forces throughout the Far East to ensure that peak efficiency was maintained.

Many adventures and tales grew from these visits away from base. Like Flt Lt Harrison's reconnaissance trip to northeast Australia,

where he had to sleep up in trees at night to keep away from the many sea crocodiles in the area. Like Flt Lt (RAAF) Silcock's aversion to snakes. When on a deployment in mid-Malaya he instigated a snake drive through the campsite, during which they killed amongst others one of a pair of cobras. Unfortunately over the next couple of weeks, the surviving mate kept appearing in the tents looking for its partner. Not nice if you have to go to the loo at night!

Of the three W.Os one was a telegraphist (Bill Plant) who looked after the flight of telegraphists and two technical warrant officers each called Jim Wilson. A tall one and a short one known respectively as Big G and Little G (the G standing for god!). The chief techs were in charge of the various flights that made up 6 TSU: the mobile/portable, heavy telecommunications, electrical, mechanical transport, and maintenance section. However rank or trade never stood during the setting up of tents, aials, generators, equipment, digging latrines and the many other jobs on reaching a deployment site. All ranks always pitched in. This helped considerably in building 6TSU's excellent esprit de corps.

The equipment even then looked to us as antiquated and very heavy. I remember it needed four large men to lift an air conditioning unit into a

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H M ARMED FORCES PENSION ACTION GROUP

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1946 and before 29 April 1965

The third provision (still available) allows those civil servants called out under the Reserve Forces Act 1980 to count that service for Civil Service pension purposes provided it does not also reckon under the Armed Forces Pension Scheme.

None of the above provisions were intended to give all those who had previously served in the Armed Forces with pension benefits in respect of that

period of service. All three arrangements were intended to ensure that those who were pursuing, or had intended to pursue, a career in the Civil Service did not suffer detriment compared to those civil servants who had not been required to serve in the Armed forces."

Tony Horry
76th Entry
RAF Locking Apprentices Association

EDITORS COMMENTS

Colin Ingram 88th Entry
RAFLAA Newsletter Ed.

Wow, so my deliberate mistake was spotted in the last edition of the Newsletter, I demoted Mike Collier, our most prolific contributor, to the 70th. (sorry 70th), that certainly set the e-mails buzzing.

Sorry Mike my dyslexic keyboard has now been reprimanded. Mike's idea for 'Wish I was not there' articles has been followed up by a 'Glad I was there' story by Allan Williams of the 88th – was there ever a better Entry!

The visit to the Museum at RAF Henlow, after the AGM, proved to be a popular venue, although time did not allow sufficient browsing amongst the exhibits. I have never seen so many grown men standing around a Console

64 trying to remember how to release the catch to lower the display unit.

If anyone holidays in Cornwall and is interested in Telecommunications they may like to visit the underground Cable and Wireless Museum at Porthcurno where the history of the development of Submarine Telegraphy is situated.

I am sure we must have a few more best/worst case stories from Locking that have yet to be unearthed, surely our three year sojourn was not that boring.

Keep looking for this editions deliberate mistake.

Ed.

QUITE GLAD I WAS THERE

Allan Williams 88th Entry

A balance to Mike Collier's unfortunate experience detailed in the April 2000 Newsletter.

In 1975, Harold Wilson's Minister of Defence, who's name escapes me, threw the dice, examined the tea-leaves or consulted the runes, whatever it is that politicians do when seeking expert guidance for defence cuts, and closed a whole clutch of RAF stations. Amongst them was Thorney Island, once the most sought after posting in the UK.

The Andover squadron ceased trading overnight and therefore, of course, so did the Andover Flight of 242 Operational Conversion Unit, but the Hercules Flight was to go on for a few months before being assimilated into the hub of the Hercules universe at Lyneham. (Nice little aside: There was always an element of rivalry between Andover and Herk crews at Thorney. With the closure, the Andover air load master instructors, grizzled old Master aircrew to a man, were all immediately put on the next Herk ALM conversion course, the last at Thorney. On the first morning, the Herk instructor entered the classroom, looked pointedly at the ex-Andover OCU men and said, "Would all you students please remove your cars from the instructors' car park." Apparently he survived what followed!)

The OCU Hercules eventually flew to Lyneham in the November, I think, leaving Line Flight ground crew with – well, not a lot to do, as posting dates were mostly in the New Year. So, in true Service fashion work had to be found. Working parties were established and I was fortunate enough, as Chief of All the Fairies, to ensure my guys were with me. I don't remember who had the idea or the contact, but somebody whispered in my ear that Sqdn Ldr X was O.C Sailing Club, the only bit of Thorney destined to remain in RAF hands, right over the other side of the airfield away from patrolling SWOs. Sqdn Ldr X wanted it painting. "Could be a good number, Chief". So I phoned Sqdn Ldr X, convinced him that he wanted my team of expert interior designers and decorators, and we had the job. So when the Warrant allocating jobs got to me, I able say more or less truthfully "Sorry, Sir, we've been detailed to paint the Sailing Club."

Sqdn Ldr X was old-school aircrew, a man who believed in keeping reasonable hours. It was arranged that each day I should collect the key from his office, but 'not before 10 a.m.'. So for a couple of hours each morning, we painted gently, not too fast, it had to last. Then shortly after midday, the good Sqdn Ldr would turn up to admire the progress and more impor-

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QUITE GLAD I WAS THERE

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tantly, to open the bar. At two we resumed the careful brushwork, stopping in time to wash equipment, pack up and return the key before 15.45 hours as he didn't believe in working late. I began to take the dog to work with me, as he could wander the foreshore to his heart's content while we slaved over a hot tin of emulsion. As December advanced, the various sections, disintegrating as folk were posted, began to hold Farewell-cum-Christmas parties in the Sailing Club and the dog was always first in, in the morning to see what delights remained from the previous night's buffet. He wouldn't touch the beer, though, must've been his strict Chapel upbringing, he was a Welsh sheepdog.

Eventually Christmas arrived, we finished off the last few bits of our masterpiece, handed back the key for

the last time and went our separate ways, me and the by now, fat dog to Wyton. The other working parties ...? Well they spent a few weeks putting leaves onto the only vehicle MT could supply, a flat back Karrier, Bantam. Of course, they just blew straight off again to be picked up again next day.....

I often wonder what happened to the Sailing Club, and to Thorney Island. The station was mentioned once as a home for refugees from Idi Amin, and then later I recognised it as the 'redundant South Coast airfield' where some boffins blew up a column of gas with 'Tomorrow's World' watching. It was a good posting and I think it's appropriate that I remember its passing fondly, and not as a battle with dead leaves in a cold December wind!

THE LAST DAYS OF 6 TSU

Brian M. Davies, 76th Entry

On receiving my posting from RAF Thorney Island to Singapore in February 1969, I spent weeks trying to find out what 6 TSU was and where it was based. Eventually it was located at RAF Seletar a large airfield on in the north of the island, large enough to have a sprawling 18 - hole golf course and a yacht club. But the best guess from people who had been

to Singapore was that my posting was to some type of technical support unit.

It was not until I arrived at Seletar, that I found that I had been posted into the ranks of the Far East Air Force's 'action man' outfit, 6 Tactical Signals Unit. Possibly one of the most exhilarating postings that one could get, and one that over three

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