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RUNWAY 22

Charity No: 1184409

Volume 1 No.27

www.mhas.org.uk

February 2022

Martlesham Heath Aviation Society

NEWSLETTER



RAF MARTLESHAM HEATH



THE MEMORIALS - BARRACK SQUARE



356TH FIGHTER GROUP

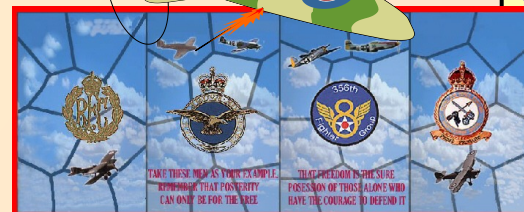
**Control Tower Museum
Martlesham Heath
Opened on the 23 September 2000**



Courtesy of Tarkey Barker

**Memorial Window
St. Michael & All Angels Church
Martlesham Heath**

**Dedicated on the...
23 September 2000**



EDITORIAL

On behalf of the members of the MHAS Executors, (Since becoming a charitable organisation we are no longer and quote; the committee) may we wish you all a belated Happy New Year.

Well, we have resumed our public meetings and enjoyed a trip to the Norfolk and Suffolk Aviation museum.

We have also had a very successful Open Day and resumed our annual Remembrance Service. Hopefully this is not a false dawn and we can once again look forward to life as we knew it before the dreadful Covid pandemic. We must thank Howard King for organising our trip and offer our thanks to all who helped make our Open Day a great success.

Martyn has included report's on the two Remembrance Service's that we were involved with, Gorseland Primary School and of course our MHAS service on the Barrack Square. Thank you Martyn and also for being the prime organiser of the MHAS event.

A lengthy and very interesting article has been submitted by our Berlin correspondent Stuart Yule. Thanks for that Stuart.

As we go to print we have just had our first monthly meeting for 2022 and I am very pleased to say that despite the current restrictions we had a most encouraging turn-out. Hopefully attendances will continue to improve.

As Martyn says, membership has held up quite well and we are grateful for the support of all our members. Without you there would be no Martlesham Heath Aviation Society.

Please keep your submissions rolling in.

Alan Powell, Editor.

As an addition to Alan's editorial I would like to add the following with out mentioning any names.

One of our long time members who lost his means of transport recently and who lives quite a distance from the meeting hall asked me to ask the membership if there was any member or members who were in a position to pick him up and take him home after the meeting.

I had a very quick response from a couple who recently joined the MHAS and who very kindly said they could help. That's the calibre of our members and this is not the first time this has happened.

Well done that couple.

Martyn, MHAS Chair & Membership Secretary

President: **Mr Richard Barker**

Newsletter Contributions

If you have an article or a story you would like to share with the other members of the Society then please send it to me...

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Engineering	Brian Gray	(01394) 383163
Groundsman	Robert Alexander	(07766) 336068

Membership Secretary Report

I would like to welcome 3 new members since our last newsletter...

Paul Calver

Alan Robinson

Yvette Robinson

Should you know of anyone wishing to join the following fees apply:

Single Membership cost: £8 on joining, £7 per year thereafter.

Joint Membership costs: £13 on joining, £11 per year thereafter.

Should you wish to contact me my details are as follows:

Martyn Cook : 4 Peel Yard: Martlesham Heath : Ipswich : IP5 3UL
Telephone: (01473) 614442 Email: martyn.mhas@gmail.com

Membership & RUNWAY 22 - Please Read

I hope you have enjoyed reading your extended newsletter.

But now for the crunch... Your newsletter will only arrive on your doorstep or in your hand if you renew your membership. So, why not take the opportunity to rejoin as soon as possible. You can pay by BACS through your own bank account the details are as follows...

MHAS Bank: **NatWest Ipswich**
Account Name: **Martlesham Heath Aviation Society**
MHAS Bank Account No: **14670909**
Sort Code: **60-24-45**
As a Reference: **Surname & Membership Number please**

You can of course send a cheque directly to me at my address below...
Martyn Cook - 4 Peel Yard - Martlesham Heath - Ipswich - IP5 3UL

If you could include a stamp that would be very helpful and save a little more money. But please, make sure that the stamp is on the Post Office paper in order that it can be easily peeled off. We have special cardboard envelopes to post your new membership card to you.

Alternatively, should you be in the area then you can put the cash into an envelope and put it through my door. The dog may bark but will not eat it.



WHAT'S ON



VICKY GUNNELL - PROGRAMME SECRETARY

4th February '22 Audio Visual Presentation **ANDREW LOCKE**

'The A-10 Thunderbolt II (the Warthog) & F-4 Phantom'

4th March '22 Audio Visual Presentation **MIKE LEMON**

A Vulcan Bomber Crew Chief, Mike talks about the 'Blue Steel Nuclear Missile'

1st April '22 Audio Visual Presentation **MARTIN BOWMAN**

Author, Writer & Presenter. 'The Glenn Miller Story & Legions of the Lancaster'

6th May '22 The Year Gone Bye **A.A.M.R.**

'Chairman and Treasurers Annual Report'

3rd June '22 Our Queens Platinum Jubilee **TO BE ADVISED**

'Watch this space and of course the web site'

Please check website - www.mhas.org.uk - for Programme updates

Look East – A Day out in the Former GDR

1. The Journey's Begins:

Dear MHAS members and Runway 22 readers. Stuart Yule here, the unofficial Chairman of the German Section of the MHAS. It is my great pleasure to be able to share with you all details of a recent aviation day that I enjoyed, where I had the good fortune to be able to fly in an Antonov An-2. Additionally, we made a visit to a museum dedicated to former East German military aircraft, many of which may be unfamiliar to you, although I am sure were not to the many RAF pilots of the cold war period.

As some of you may remember from my presentation a few years ago I am living and working in Berlin for Rolls-Royce civil aerospace. Our

facility is located approximately 6 miles south of Berlin in what was the former German Democratic Republic (GDR), or simply East Germany.

Over the years we have had many employees who had previously worked in the East German military, called the NVA (National Volks Army), specifically the Airforce. Also, we have had people who were previously working in the East Germany civil aerospace industry, most notably *Interflug*, the former GDR National Airline.

One such person was Frank, with whom I used to work, and who recently retired from Rolls-Royce.



Frank at the Moscow Airshow with an L-34 Albatros Jet Trainer

Before the fall of the Berlin Wall and the resultant disintegration of East Germany and reunification of the former East and West German states, Frank was a fighter pilot. He attained the rank of Major in the East German NVA Airforce, accumulating approximately 1500 flight hours on some of the most important Warsaw Pact fighter aircraft of the cold war period. Like many of his compatriots life after reunification was not easy, and unfortunately many former NVA personnel were unable to continue serving in the “reunified” German military. Frank, like many others, left the military in the early 90’s. However, he never left flying. He has continued to fly both privately and commercially, despite working for Rolls-Royce since the late 90’s when we first met.

Frank lives approximately 60 miles south of Berlin near a town called Cottbus, where he, and a few other pilots and mechanics, fly and maintain their own An-2 as part of an aviation association, providing flying services to local parachute clubs, and charter flying. Although Frank retired earlier this year Corona prevented him celebrating the event until recently. Therefore, this leads us to how I came to spend a glorious sunny August day flying in Frank’s An-2, and additionally visiting the nearby Cottbus aircraft museum, where Frank is also a helper and patron, and hence helped me write this article that I want to share with you today.

2. Anna get your gun:



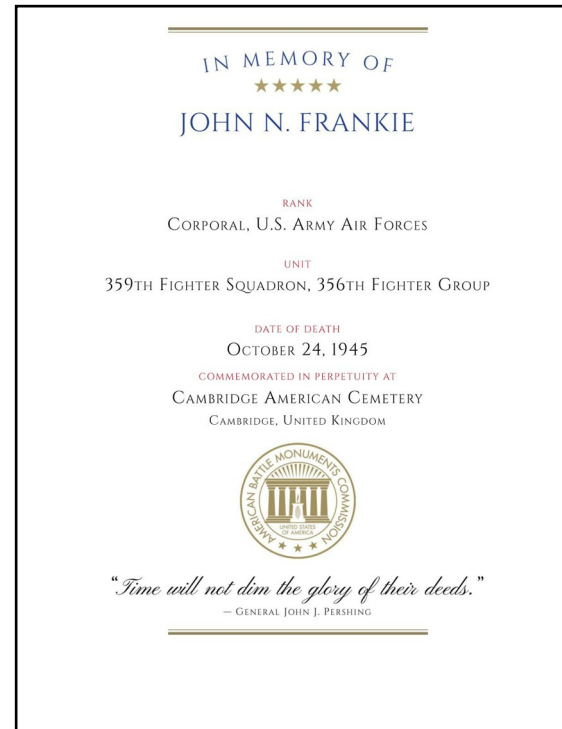
**An-2 at Cottbus-Neuhausen airfield
Nicknamed ‘Auntie Anna’ - NATO Codename ‘Colt’**

from Tibenham turned almost due east instead of east-southeast. As a result 35 bombers lost their fighter escort and 25 bombers were shot down. Only four bombers made it home to Tibenham. 118 Americans were killed, of whom 11 were murdered by civilians after parachuting to safety. 121 Americans ended up in German POW camps and survived.

This was the first public meeting that Eric Ratcliffe has made and was an altogether interesting presentation.

A vote of thanks was given by our President, Mr Richard Barker.

Alan Powell
Editor



**Picture courtesy of
Ashly Gant**

Sunday 14th November our Service of Remembrance on the Barrack Square was held again this year after the break necessitated by the Covid restrictions. Many thanks to all for the good turnout. We were blessed with mild weather and the service was held at 2.30pm this year so that it can end whilst there is still plenty of daylight. Our chairman Martyn Cook was the Parade Marshall and the reverend Toby Tate conducted the service.

Many thanks to Lt Col Damon Mace from RAF Lakenheath who represented the USAF. Many local organisations and representatives took part including the Royal British Legion, Kesgrave Army Cadet Force Parachute Unit, the No.356 (Felixstowe) ATC, 1st Martlesham Scout Group, Martlesham and Brightwell Guides and Rangers, RAFA, Air Crew Association, Suffolk Constabulary, Martlesham Parish Council and the Iron Crows. Our excellent Martlesham Brass supplied the music and we received a generous donation from the Martlesham Industrial Estate.

Mr Richard Barker was sadly unable to be present due to ill health, Mrs Pat Lissemann read Richards address.

Our monthly meeting on **Friday, 3rd December** featured an illustrated talk entitled, "Fifteen Years of Bush Flying in Africa" by Mr Peter Empson. Peter is an evangelist who spent 15 years flying an Auster light plane in Africa. He was accompanied by his wife Cynthia and she also spoke about her work helping him, which often entailed radio instructions as he attempted to find primitive airstrips way out in the bush, perhaps to pick up a casualty and fly them in his single engine Plane to the nearest hospital. This was in the days before GPS of course. Just relying on maps, a compass and stop watch. Peter is an entertaining speaker with a fascinating story and our currently much reduced audience had several questions for him.

A vote of thanks was given by our president, Mr Richard Barker.

Friday 7th January 2022 and we held our first public meeting of the year. Turn-out was most encouraging considering the restrictions we are living under.

We had a most entertaining evening by Mr Eric Ratcliffe. Eric is chairman of the Tibenham Gliding Club and is an authority on the history of the WW2 airfield. He has recently published a book entitled, "The Kassel Raid". The Kassel Raid, took place on the 27th September 1944 and resulted in the largest loss by USAAF Group on any mission in WWII.

283 Consolidated B-24 Liberator bombers from the USAAF's 2nd Combat Bombardment Wing were accompanied by 198 P-51 Mustangs. As the result of a navigation error, the lead ship of the 445th Bombardment Group

With over 18000 built between 1947 and 2001 the Antonov An-2, also known by it's nickname "Auntie Anna" or it's former NATO Codename "Colt", is the largest still in operation single engine propeller biplane in the world. Many are still in operation today, with at least 35 examples registered and still flying in Germany alone. One of these is aircraft registration D-FOJN, is owned and has been operated since 2014, by the private club "Tante Anne Cottbus" (Tante is German for Auntie) of which Frank is a founding member, and one of several pilots who fly her regularly. The An-2 was specifically developed for short take-off and landing from unprepared runways, and was, and continues to be used for a wide range of military and civil applications.

This particular example was manufactured in 1975. Like all An-2s she is fitted with a 9 cylinder 1000 hp 30 liter radial engine produced by the Russian engine manufacturer Schvezow. Using 180 to 230 liters of fuel an hour, depending upon the operation, and approximately 3 liters of lubricating oil an hour, the An-2 can reach a cruising speed of about 160 mph, and carry up to 12 people.

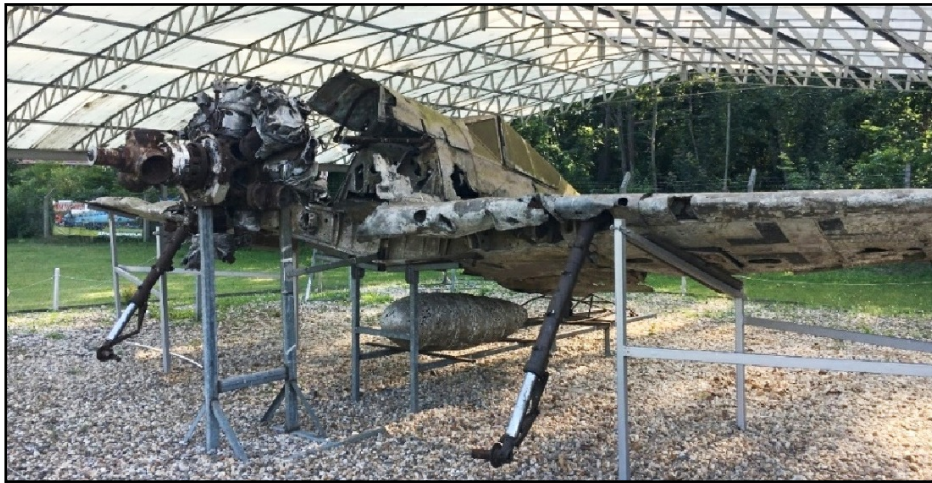
D-FJON's summer home is the Cottbus-Neuhausen airfield, and not far from Frank's home. At this point it is worth mentioning a little bit about the Cottbus-Neuhausen airfield, as like just about anywhere in this part of Germany, WWII and the cold war is never far away in history.

In nearby Cottbus the Focke-Wulf aircraft manufacturer had a factory producing the FW 190 fighter and the 4 engine FW 200 Condor. The factory had been relocated from Bremen in Northern Germany after it was bombed earlier in the war. This of course led to the new Cottbus factory again becoming a significant target in the later part of WWII as allied bombing raids probed deeper and deeper into Germany. In February 1945, after one such bombing raid by the RAF, the factory was so badly damaged that production, including the, at the time only recently developed, V12 powered "Long-Nose-Dora" FW 190D-9 variant, which many rate as being the best fighter aircraft of WWII, had to be relocated again, this time to the town of Sagan, now Poland, but at that time part of Germany. The town of Sagan (Zagan) was also the location of the notorious Stalag Luft III POW Camp, immortalized as the site of the "Great Escape", where local Martlesham hero Douglas Bader was held from early 1945 until the camps liberation in April 1945.

Prior to production moving to Sagan Focke-Wulf had used the nearby Cottbus-Neuhausen airfield as a test and delivery readiness facility. This led to one attack in January 1945 when US P-51 Mustang and P-38 Lighting aircraft strafed the airfield destroying 15 aircraft, including at least one FW 190. Later in April 1945 the airfield was overrun by the

Soviet Red Army and, like much of this part of Germany, was the scene of bitter and bloody fighting.

One such sad story only came to light many years later, as the airfield was being expanded and modernized in the early 90's after reunification, when the wreckage of a crashed FW 190 was uncovered buried under the grass airfield, untouched since 1945. Human remains of a male pilot were found in the cockpit. However, closer examination revealed remains of a second person, a female in her 20s or 30s. The assumption was that the pilot was trying to escape the Red Army and had managed to squeeze his wife or girlfriend into the cockpit, but was shot-down and/or crashed.



A Wartime Tragedy in East Germany

The recovered wreckage of the FW 190 is now on display at the Cottbus Aircraft Museum.

It is a sad story, and reminds us how desperate people do desperate things in times of war.

So, back to modern day Cottbus-Neuhausen airfield. In August 2021, Frank had invited myself and several other ex-colleagues from Rolls-Royce to celebrate his recent retirement. The plan was to do a 1 hour flight in the An-2, including a low fly past over his house and the Cottbus Museum, after which we would all visit the museum and then head back to Frank's house for a b-b-q and beers.

We met Frank and his mechanic/co-pilot at the airfield and readied the An-2 for flight. We were lucky that we had sunshine and only a few clouds. After a short flight briefing, during which Frank described the

Our meeting on **Friday, 1st October** featured an illustrated talk by Nick Black, who has made a study of an infamous incident which occurred just three days after war was declared in 1939, "The Battle of Barking Creek" as it became known was neither a battle nor had it anything to do with a mythical "Barking Creek". The title of Nicks talk was purely an abstract name. There is no Barking Creek any more than there is a "Wigan Pier".

How it got it's name is a mystery. It began with a false report from Canewdon radar station, which was part of the "Chain Home" radar defence system we employed and which was so successful. The station reported a blip on their radar screen which indicated that a possible force of enemy aircraft were approaching our shores. A large force of Hurricanes and Spitfires were sent aloft to try to find these aircraft. Without success because the radar reading which triggered the response was the result of a technical failure. It resulted in two of our fighters becoming victim of what today is called "friendly fire". A Hurricane in particular can resemble an enemy Messerschmitt 109. A radar defence system known as IFF, (identity friend or foe), had been developed at Bawdsey and this was to prove very successful. Unfortunately IFF was not available at that time and not even widely available during the Battle of Britain, in 1940. It was a very interesting talk particularly because RAF Martlesham provided the aircraft for the development of the Chain Home defence system and early airborne radar.

A vote of thanks was given by our chairman, Martyn Cook.

On **Friday 5th of November** we were delighted to welcome Simon Gladas, a founding member of the Bentwaters Cold War Museum, who told us about his extensive research on the early days of RAF Bentwaters.

Whilst many in the large audience knew much of the later story about RAF Bentwaters, (when it became an important "Cold War" American base from the early 1950's), many were unaware of its earlier story. Bentwaters and another local airfield Debach, were the last two bases built for the Americans in World War 2.

Debach became an American Bomber base – Bentwaters, (operational from Autumn 1944), became home to RAF Fighter Squadrons, mostly flying the outstanding North American P51 "Mustang". From the wind-swept and bleak runways mission, often in broad daylight, were flown escorting RAF Bombers and Fighter Bombers, deep into occupied Europe and as far as Berlin. Often on the return journey, the Mustangs flew "Ramrods" – basically shooting up German Airfields, Troop concentrations, Trains, and Ack-Ack gun emplacements.

entitled “Most Secret” the main thrust of which was the operations of the Special Operations Executive. Robert went into detail about the Norwegian SOE. The talk was accompanied by photo documents.

In his vote of thanks our President, Mr Richard Barker told us that he has met a small number of ex SOE people and how fascinating unassuming and fascinating they were in later life. He congratulated Robert on the tenacious success he used to put the talk together.

On **Friday August 20th** Howard King organised a visit to the Norfolk and Suffolk Aviation Museum at Flixton near Bungay. A party of us travelled by coach from Martlesham Heath to Flixton in great comfort as the bus was only half full. This is usually in place of our August meeting, but this year was an additional bonus.

We were greeted by enthusiasts from this remarkable museum with refreshments before looking around at the amazing number of aircraft and memorabilia. The Norfolk and Suffolk Aviation Museum is situated near to the site of the former RAF Bungay airfield. It was first established in 1972 and more than sixty complete or partial aircraft can be seen there.

The airfield was famous during WW2 as the home of the 446th Bomb Group, who came to be known as the “Bungay Buckaroos” after the name of their Suffolk base. They flew B-24 Liberators on strategic, support and interdiction missions over Europe.

On **Friday September 3rd** and we were able to host the second monthly meeting since the lock-down. Air Commodore, (retd), Phil Wilkinson was our distinguished speaker. Phil Wilkinson’s 40 years in the RAF involved thousands of hours in the air.

His time on the ground was equally challenging, including exchange appointments at both the French and United States Air Forces War Colleges, and assignment as commander of the RAF station in Berlin at the time of the Fall of the Wall. His final period of duty was based in Moscow, as Defence and Air Attaché, during the turbulence of Russia’s emergence from the Soviet era. Phil concentrated his talk on the ups and downs of our association with Russia between the Russian air force and politicians in a century of co-existence from the Russian Revolution of 1917.

He travelled widely across the former Soviet Union, including journeys to Murmansk and Archangel, accompanying RAF and other British veterans as they re-visited the scenes of their operations in World War II. 600 RAF men, and aircraft to form two ‘Hurricane’ squadrons, made up the cargo of the first-ever Arctic Convoy, in August 1941. Those veterans are still linked and supported by a Royal Air Force Russia Association, of which Phil is the director.

flight plan and route, we all climbed in, sitting down on benches running down the port and starboard sides of the cabin, Frank fired up the 1000hp radial engine, and we were off.

After a short taxi out along the grass runway we turned and following a brief power check, and an ok nod from pilot and co-pilot, we were off. The An-2 leapt into the air after only a short take-off roll and we were airborne.



Frank kept the aircraft at a height of about 1500 foot for most of the way, except for a hair-raising low fly past of his house and the museum. We flew over brown coal open cast mines, Germany still mines a surprisingly large amount of brown coal (lignite), and also acres of solar farms. Clearly showing the old and the new side by side. Many old expired brown coal mines are now flooded, hence the area has hundreds of lakes dotted all over the countryside like huge craters on a battlefield.

After about an hour in the air it was time to land back at Cottbus-Neuhausen. The landing was a bit bumpy, but the Antonov quickly came to a stop and we taxied back to the fuel tank area where she needed to be refueled for the planned flight the next day.

After she was fully tanked-up we pushed her over to her parking area, and helped put all the covers on and tie her down in case of bad weather.



**The Antonov An-2 at Cottbus-Neuhausen Airfield after the flight
Captain Frank at the front (4th from left) with the author (3rd from right)**

The picture above shows us all after the flight, with the picture below showing me in front of the large radial engine and 4 bladed propeller taken during the refueling.



OBITUARY JACK PECK

Jack passed away peacefully on the morning of the 23rd December 2021 aged 87 in the Prince George Care Home Ravenswood Ipswich.

Jack had spent some time following a fall at home in the Bluebird Care Home Ravenswood which is situated next door to the Prince George.

Jack made a brief visit home but suffered a stroke on his return to the Bluebird Care Home which left him incapacitated and he was later transferred to the Prince George for full time care.

Jack joined the society on the 2nd October 2009 and later became a valued member of the Wednesday gang meeting at the Control Tower Museum every Wednesday morning. Jack became the unofficial owner of the MHAS motor mower and could always be found cutting the grass on the Revetment wall or tinkering with the mower mechanics.

Jack during his working life helped build and equip the Cliff Quay power station and would relate stories of how snow ball fights took place using balls of asbestos, if only they new of the consequences of those play fights.

Jack later went to work for McNamara Motors a Vauxhall car dealership in Foxhall Rd. Ipswich were he honed his already excellent engineering skills.

Back to the here and now. With the grass cut Jack would sit with his tea and relate stories of his working life along with his boating skills, yes Jack was a very keen boat builder and sailor.

But age eventually restricts our activities and we then resort to our memories and Jack had plenty of those. Well Jack its time to sit back and watch the others cut the grass.

Rest in peace Jack your work is done but you will not be forgotten.

***Martyn
MHAS Chair on behalf of the trustees and members***

MONTHLY MEETINGS ROUNDUP

At last I am able to report on our monthly meetings, which were resumed last August

On Friday August 6th we were entertained by Robert Pearson, ex firemen and later a teacher at Kesgrave High school until he retired. Since retirement he had taken to researching and publishing books. Robert gave a talk



For those of you who attended passed services may remember Rod Caird the Scottish Piper.

Sadly in October this year Rod who was a member of the Ipswich Piping Society and who since 2013 has played “Flower of Scotland” at every service suddenly passed away. As a tribute to Rod MHAS played a copy of Flower of Scotland with the pipes disappearing into the distance at the appropriate time.

After a forced break of two years it was great to be able to hold our “Service of Remembrance” once again and thankfully the black clouds that threatened all afternoon never opened up but the sun did ap-

pear albeit for a short period.

*Martyn
MHAS Chair*

The highlight was of course flying her ourselves. Frank invited us all up to sit in the right seat and have a go. The plane was extremely responsive, the slightest movement of the controls gave an instant feedback. It was a great feeling and very enjoyable. In the picture I think you can see how happy I was.



It was then time to move onto the Cottbus Aircraft Museum, which was approximately 15 minutes away by car.

3. Condors and Wolves over Cottbus:

The Cottbus Aircraft Museum is located on the site of the former Cottbus Airfield, and home of the Focke-Wulf aircraft factory mentioned earlier. In April 1945 the Red Army overran the site and it was then used by the them as a fighter base. During the cold war period it was a training base for East German NVA pilots, and a base for helicopters. The Luftwaffe took the site over after reunification in 1990 and it was used as a maintenance base for the MiG-29 fighter, which the West German Bundeswehr had inherited from the East German Airforce. In 2003 the military vacated the site, ending almost 100 years of continuous military use.

The museum is focused on telling the story of military aircraft of the former GDR, the WWII and Cold War history of the site and the region, and restoration of historic aircraft from this period. The museum contains many aircraft that are probably not so familiar to you, but which featured heavily in the history of the Warsaw Pact defence against the West. I shall

focus on four in particular, two of which featured heavily in Frank's military flying career.

4. All Fresco in Drewitz:

The first of these is the MiG-17. With over 10000 produced in the 1950's and 1960's from the Soviet aircraft manufacturer Mikojan-Gurewitsch (MiG), this transonic fighter was in service with dozens of airforces around the world, including the GDR (NVA) where it was in service from 1957 to 1985. It was known by the NATO Codename "Fresco".



Frank with his MiG-17F - NATO Codename 'Fresco'

The particular example on display on the following page at the Cottbus Museum is the MiG-17F, which is a version fitted with an afterburner and auxiliary fuel tanks. However, this aircraft, Number 537, is special. It was Frank's own aircraft, in which he flew over 800 hours. He, and the aircraft were stationed at the nearby Drewitz airbase which was home of the Fighter Bomber Squadron No. 37 (JBG-37). Although in German, they have a really interesting website (<http://www.jbg37.de/>), which contains many photos from the squadron's history.

To see the aircraft and her long serving pilot together again after so many years was quite a humbling experience.

Richards address was read by MHAS trustee Pat Lisseman. I am very pleased to report that Richard has recovered.

Rev'd Tate took the service which he has done since done since 2016 and Martlesham Brass Band were in attendance playing exceptionally well as always.

Sadly there was no serving RAF representative despite my best efforts. However, Lt Col Mace from RAF Lakenheath gave his address which was very well received. My thanks to Lt Col Mark Ciero who you will remember from previous years for his help from across the pond in getting a USAF representative in the shape of Lt Col Mace.

With no RAF representation I filled in with a story that at this time has no conclusion and possibly never will but which asks the question, "Why was Cpl John Frankie of the 359th Sqd 356th Fighter Group 8th USAAF who died while serving at RAF Martlesham Heath not included in the 356th Roll of Honour or on the 356th Memorial Pillar", both created by Captain Hervey.

John Franke died October 24th 1945. His grave is in the American Cemetery Madingley Cambridgeshire (see page 28)



Once again the Stowell and the Dolan/Ziegler 356th families in the US provided a wreath on behalf of the 356th Fighter Group and very kindly included MHAS.

Pat Lisseman managed to talk Tesco into giving us some flowers and what lovely flowers they were just look at the previous picture. In previous years, we have always managed to get what we wanted from Ian O'brian-Baker who has a nursery at the bottom of Red Lion hill, but like all of us Ian has cut back although he did contact me asking if we wanted flowers this year so thank you Ian you have always supported us at this time (39 years to be precise).

With the flowers arranged it was time to leave the Barrack Square and get ready for the service.

Again some preparation is needed immediately prior to the service. We needed sound, step up Allan Stimson and Howard King. Help was needed to hand out to public the "Order of Service", it came.

Martlesham Brass took up their positions and began playing. Lt Col Damon Mace commander of the 48th Comptroller Sqd. arrives with his family then suddenly, or so it seems, everyone else arrives including the Iron Crows a motor cycle club affiliated to the Royal British Legion and things got a little hectic for a moment or two.

Its now 2.30pm and the band stops playing and yours truly the Parade Marshall begins by welcoming everyone and introduces the band folowed by the two military organisations who marched on. With every one in position the service began.

Sadly, our president Richard Barker who would never miss this service became seriously ill prior to the service and was unable to attend.



Richards wreath on the right RBL wreath on the left

Frank told us a story about when he made his first live firing exercise in "537", shortly after converting to the MiG-17F. He had to perform four air to ground attacks using machine cannons and unguided rockets. All the bullets and rockets banged into the zero point on the ground target, much to his delight and surprise. A further surprise came later he told us, an extra 4 days leave!

Frank remains very modest about his experiences, and was keen to stress that "537" was always good to him, and "... she never let me down".

5. Something Fishy:

The second aircraft of note on our brief journey through the Cold War aircraft of the Warsaw Pact is the MiG-21, of which the Cottbus Museum had several examples. The MiG-21 was a Mach 2 fighter interceptor aircraft, with nearly 11500 produced between 1959 and 1985 only the MiG-15, the McDonnell Douglas F-15 Eagle and the Dynamics F-16 Fighting Falcon jet fighter aircraft have been produced in larger quantities. Known by it's NATO Codename "Fishbed" it was in service with over 60 different nations around the world, including several who were not directly allied with the Soviet Union at that time, for example Finland. The MiG-21 was used extensively during the Vietnam War. It is still in service with about a dozen airforces today. The East German NVA operated a total of 557 MiG-21 aircraft in various versions between 1962 and 1989.



The MiG-21 a Mach 2 Fighter Interceptor - NATO Codename 'Fishbed'

With the fall of the Berlin Wall and demise the of the GDR a small number of aircraft were taken over by the “reunified” German Luftwaffe, however all were decommissioned by 1993. Between 1962 and 1993 a total of 126 aircraft were lost in the GDR, with at least 54 pilots losing their lives as a result.

The picture above shows one example on display at the museum, aircraft number 848. This particular aircraft saw service with the East German Airforce Fighter Squadron JG-8 based at Neuhardenberg, which is east of Berlin near the Polish border, entering service in 1977. Aircraft 848 is an example of the MiG-21bis variant, which featured an extra overboost afterburner. When used it gave the aircraft a slightly better than 1:1 thrust to weight ratio, and an incredible 50000 ft/min climb rate, over twice that of the BAC Lightning, although the engine power did reduce above 6000 ft. When used it produced a 40-foot blowtorch flame out of the engine exhaust, with 6 or 7 glowing shock diamonds clearly visible, leading the pilots to call it’s use “The Diamond Regime”. Because of the additional stresses induced on the engine this emergency boost was limited to only 2 minutes, but when it was used it meant that the MiG-21bis was a match for any aircraft in service at the time, including the F-16. Seeing the aircraft sitting quietly on the grass in the August sunshine belies the power that this awesome war machine once unleashed.

6. The Flogger:

The next aircraft on our journey is the MiG-23. Produced between 1967 and 1985 the approximately 5000 examples of this aircraft type were exported all around the world, and operated in many versions in multiple roles including as an interceptor, fighter and as a ground attack aircraft. Known by it’s NATO Codename “Flogger” this variable geometry swing-wing aircraft, fitted with advance avionics and over the horizon weaponry was a feared advisory of NATO airforces.

The NVA operated approximately 67 of these aircraft, stationed with the Fighter Squadron JG-9 based at Peenemunde in Northern Germany, once home to the V1 and V2 rocket manufacture and test facilities during WWII, and also at Frank’s old squadron JBG-37 in Drewitz near Cottbus. After the reunification nearly all of these aircraft were taken over by the German Luftwaffe, and remained in service for some time. In the early 1990’s at least two examples were sent to Nellis Airforce base in the US for evaluation purposes, and apparently one example was sent to the UK, although I am unable to find any record of where it ended up. Maybe the aviation detectorists among you can try and find out.

looking after the children.

Martyn Cook

The Barrack Square “Service of Remembrance”

Sunday 14th November. Once again the weather was very kind to us and for all the local services both in the morning and afternoon.

As usual the morning was taken up with clearing away two years of leaves etc. that always seem to gather around the memorial plinths rather like sitting in a cinema prior to the banning of smoking in cinemas where all the smoke seemed to come to where you were sitting, particularly if you were a non smoker.

Our last service was in November 2019 although we did lay wreaths in 2020.

This year we were down to just three of us preparing the memorial plinth, Pat & Ian Lisseman and myself. A few years ago we would have had around 10 members including Robert Dunnett, Russell Bailey, Frank Bright, Alan Powell and Don Kitt who always brought flasks of coffee. Apart from Frank Bright and Alan Powell they have all passed on and now look down on us mere mortals as we go about MHAS business.

Sorry to sound a little depressive but with things as they are it does knock you sideways particularly the news. Perhaps we should ban TV and the press.

Back to preparing the memorials.



The children laid a wreath they had made in school against the Drum Head Memorial.



It was a moving service in which all the children took part and showed a very high level of respect on this day of Remembrance. Well done Gorseland school children and staff.



Also thanks to Paul Reynolds, Pat & Ian Lisseman, Allen Stimson, Howard King and our bugler Phil Hubert for setting up the equipment and



The MiG-23 - NATO Codename 'Flogger'

7. A Fitting Finale:

The last aircraft on our journey is the Suchoi Su-22, NATO Codename "Fitter". The Su-22 was a supersonic swing-wing fighter bomber aircraft, with over 5000 produced between 1969 and 1990, like the MiG-17, MiG-21 and the MiG-23 previously, it was operated by airforces all around the world, and is still in service with many to this day.



The Suchoi SU-22M-4 No.365 - NATO Codename 'Fitter'

The aircraft carried a formidable array of weaponry, including the ability to carry nuclear free-fall or toss bombs, and a fully digital weapons and navigation system which was designed to be immune from the electromagnetic impulse experienced during a nuclear strike. The picture opposite shows aircraft Su-22M-4 number 365. It is fitting (sic) that our journey began with the MiG-17, and the actual aircraft that Frank flew, because the Su-22 was the aircraft type that Frank moved to next, and in which he finished his East German Airforce career in 1990 with the fall of the Berlin Wall.

Like MiG-19 number 537, this particular aircraft, with tactical number 365, one of 56 such aircraft of this type that the East German Airforce operated, also has special memories for Frank. On one fateful August day in 1988 when Frank was stationed with the Fighter Bomber Squadron JBG-77 located at Laage, near Rostock in Northern Germany, he was flying this actual aircraft “365” as part of a larger acrobatic flight formation. Whilst “365” was not designated specifically to Frank, like his MiG-19 “537” was previously at the airbase in Drewitz, he told me that he liked to fly “365” if he could because the ejector seat, an NPP Zvezda K-36DM seat, on par with some of the best Martin Baker designs, was adjusted to him. Incidentally, it was this seat which saved the pilots after the mid-air MiG-29 collision at Fairford Airshow in 1993. I recommend that you watch the video on YouTube if you are unfamiliar with it, and see how the two Russian pilots light a cigarette and walk calmly away!

Back to August 1988. The orders for the day were that they were to perform combat readiness training for combat in formation. The flight started well, with the formation practicing anti-ship attacks off the northern German island of Usedom. The formation then returned inland and began practicing aerobatic manoeuvres. Shortly after Frank took up the lead aircraft position another Su-22M-4 aircraft with the tactical number 641 suddenly came in high from Frank’s right side at high speed out of the clouds, crossed his path, and as it did the elevator on its right wing collided with the primary pitot-static boom on Frank’s aircraft, shearing it almost completely off in the process!

The primary pitot-static boom is clearly visible in the previous picture, it is the longer of the two probes located on the starboard side of the engine intake. The 2 small “wings” nearer the tip are the yaw angle and angle of attack sensors for the weapons systems, whilst the 4 “wings” located behind are the ILS receiving antennas. Adjacent to the primary boom, on the port side, is the shorter standby pitot-static boom. Frank’s primary boom was sheared off aft of the ILS antennas, leaving almost no boom remaining (see picture on page 14)

I would like to thank Stuart, Frank & Uli for giving us a different perspective i.e. A look at the East Germany NVA Airforce. We here at Martlesham Heath would love to welcome all or any of you at anytime. Thank you for a great article.

Gorseland School & MHAS ‘Service’ of Remembrance

Before I begin with my report on the MHAS service I would like to report on a service held on Thursday 11th November at 11.00am (Armistice day) at the Control Tower on Martlesham Heath with Gorseland Junior School.

This I believe is the second year that we have held a Service of Remembrance with Gorseland School but I maybe and probably am wrong, it may be more.

Thankfully weather wise it was a pleasant morning, no rain thank goodness. At around 10.30am around 400 children began to make the short journey clinging on to each other as they made their way class by class.

The headmaster had been coaching a small number of children who stood at the front of the Museum in front of the microphone ready to say at the appropriate time those immortal words by Laurence Binyon, “For the fallen” which they did very well.

On the bank close by was Phil Hubert a MHAS members with his bugle ready to play “Last Post” and after a one minute silence, “Reveille”.



in the Cold: Thinking the Unthinkable”, by Nigel Walpole. It is available on Amazon for 14.99 GBP. Nigel is a friend of Frank, and for those of you who read the book you will find several photos of Frank, and also some more detailed history of his time flying the Su-22 with the JBG-77 Squadron based at Laage in Northern Germany, once directly on the frontline of the Cold War. Following my research and conversations with Frank about this story I am now also in contact with Nigel.

Thanks of course to Frank for a wonderful day out, and for helping me with this story. Also, thanks go to Uli, another ex-Rolls-Royce colleague, and friend of Frank’s, who was stationed with Frank at Laage at the time of the mid-air collision. On that fateful day Uli was Lead Engineer on the Control & Repair Team, and who would subsequently spend many hours repairing Frank’s aircraft. Thanks to Uli for his memories of that day.

Maybe one day I will be able to persuade Frank to come over and share some of his stories from his time in the East German airforce with you all at one of our MHAS Friday evening lectures. However, for now this article, and maybe Nigel’s book, will have to make do.

Thanks very much for sharing this “Look East” journey with me, looking forward to sharing more stories with you all in the future. Best wishes from Berlin.

Stuart Yule

Unofficial Chair of the German section of the MHAS

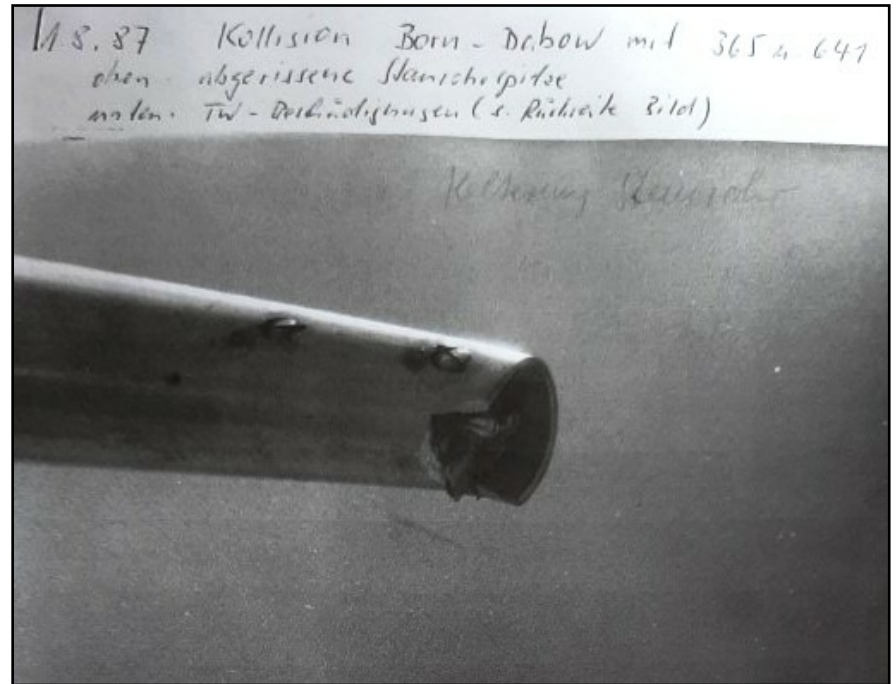
From the official Chair here in the UK.

When I first read this story it was like reading a ‘boys own story’ yes even at my age. It also reminded me of Peter Helmut Martin Rix. A few of you will remember Peter. Another name comes to mind Otto Schleip who flew Condors whilst serving with the Luftwaffe and gave us a talk based around his war years.

Peter was also a Luftwaffe pilot flying Focke Wolf 190’s during the latter stages of World War 2. We invited Peter to join us and deliver a talk on his military life which he did. He became a very popular member and later a Vice President.

In his spare time he worked at the IWM Duxford helping to look after WWII German aircraft. Peter passed away in October 1996.

I went to his funeral at Bury St Edmund’s Crematorium during which a single German Aeroplane from Duxford flew over and climbed away into the clouds, a moment to reflect on life.



Franks sheared Primary Pitot-Static Boom

Back to that fateful day in August 1988. Not only was most of the primary pitot-static boom sheared off, causing Frank to have to manually switch to the standby boom and system, but the severed boom end was subsequently ingested into the single Lyulka AL-21F-3 afterburning turbojet engine, which unsurprisingly the engine did not like very much at all. Frank tells how the engine and airframe started to vibrate violently, but miraculously somehow the engine kept producing power. Frank called an emergency, and prepared to eject. After seeing that aircraft “641” was still flying normally Frank elected to return to base, and made a rapid emergency landing.

After taxiing back to the stand Frank told me that his mechanic bounded up to the aircraft, and obviously unaware of the near disaster that had just occurred, climbed the ladder, and as Frank opened the canopy eagerly asked if everything had been normal. Not really explained Frank, pointing to the missing pitot-static boom. The mechanic turned white and Frank had to hold him to stop him falling off the ladder! The engine and the primary boom had to be replaced. He tells me that he is no longer in contact with “641’s” pilot, that the event had a serious impact on his career and that the inquiry was not a nice experience for all involved.

However, in a strange twist of fate, Frank is now friends with his younger brother, and occasionally flies aerobatics with him.

In the picture above we see Frank (front row left), with some of his fellow Fighter Bomber Squadron JBG-77 pilots standing in front of Su-22M-4 aircraft number 360 in 1990, after returning from live firing exercises in the USSR using laser and TV guided missiles.



Frank and his fellow pilots with a Suchoi SU-22M-4

The photo was taken not long before East and West Germany officially reunited on the 3rd October 1990, and Frank's Fighter Bomber Squadron JBG-77, and the entire NVA, ceased overnight to exist, and he, and the aircraft, were amalgamated into the West German Bundeswehr (Luftwaffe). Not long after they were taken out of frontline service. Some of the aircraft were sent to NATO airforces, such as the USAF, for evaluation and testing, some were scrapped, some went to museums. This particular aircraft "360" is now on display at the Museum of Aviation in Rimini, Italy.

Aircraft "820", the last to enter service with the East German NVA in Dec 1986 did however make an appearance at RAF Boscombe Down in June 1992. The aircraft was then under evaluation by the RAF Aeroplane and Armament Experimental Establishment (A&AEE) located at Boscombe Down. At that time the aircraft was flying in the colours of the Czech Airforce. It is a fitting (sic) end to this story, as Boscombe Down was of

course the location to which the RAF relocated the Aeroplane and Armament Experimental Establishment in 1939 from our very own RAF Martlesham Heath. Therefore, establishing a connection, albeit a tenuous one, between the Su-22 and MHAS.

The Cottbus Museum kindly opened-up the canopy on aircraft 365, and Frank sat in the cockpit and ran through the pre-flight checklist, he remembered it like it was yesterday. We all got the chance to sit in the cockpit and play pilot. The following picture shows me in the hot seat and imagining how it must have been to have been flying a treetop height at 850 mph with a full bomb load over the German countryside.



8. The Journey's End

That brings us to the end of this short journey through some of the most important aircraft of the Cold War, my visit to the Cottbus Aircraft Museum and of course the highlight of the day, our flight in the An-2.

For those of you who want to read more about these aircraft, and others, I can highly recommend the book "RAF and East German Fast-Jet Pilots