



DAVE CHAPMAN

MOT

and...

Service Centre

- MOT's
- Air Conditioning
- Brakes
- Servicing
- Diagnostics
- Cambelts
- Tyres
- Exhausts
- Batteries

8 Betts Avenue : Martlesham Heath : Ipswich : IP5 3RH
Tel: (01473) 927927 Email: service@rpengineering.org.uk

Do you know a business that would like to advertise in this space? If so, please contact our Treasurer... Pat Lisseman or Martyn Cook

JACK RUSSELL DESIGNS

RUNWAY 22

Charity No: 1184409

Volume 1 No.29

www.mhas.org.uk

October 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

Phew! What a summer. As I write this at the start of autumn, my grass is completely brown. It hasn't seen a drop of rain for so many weeks.

Attendance at our monthly meetings is picking up. The subject for our August meeting was, "The Shingle Street Mystery", and we were surprised by a bumper turn out. The Community Hall was packed to listen to the speaker talk about several theories about what did actually happen. Whether German soldiers did actually land on that day in 1940 continues to be shrouded in mystery.

Clearly public interest remains intense and it says a lot for the work of our publicity secretary, Howard King that our advertising really is working!

Otherwise attendances are understandably down on pre-Covid times, but are steadily improving.

The August meeting replaced our traditional August outing because improvement work on the Community Hall was ongoing and our annual outing replaced the September meeting. Thanks again to Howard King, who organised the trip. We had an enjoyable day at Bletchley Park, the home of code breaking during WW2.

I have reported on the outing under my usual, Monthly Meetings Round-up. This will be the third trip by members of MHAS to Bletchley Park and we therefore realise just how vital it was.

Also, it attracted interest from Mr Chris Rodgers, a friend of the society and local Marls resident. I have included the fascinating story of his father's WW2 job as an RAF special Liaison Officer.

Our Open Day and Vintage Vehicle Meet on September 11th was a success. Steady flow of visitors throughout the day and everybody seemed to really enjoy themselves. Thanks are due to all our hard working volunteers and we made a reasonable profit which is so necessary for the upkeep of the society.

Keep up to date with our programme by visiting www.mhas.org.uk

Alan Powell Editor.

Most of us are aware of the enormous contribution made by the men and women at Bletchley Park in WW2 to decipher the secret messages sent by the enemy to their various command centres. The Germans underestimated us to the great extent that, although suspicions were raised from time

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....

Alan Powell - Newsletter Editor
16 Warren Lane
Martlesham Heath
Ipswich IP5 3SH

Tel: Ipswich 622458
E-Mail Address
alanpowell321@gmail.com

Other Committee Contacts...

Chairman	Martyn Cook	(01473) 614442
Vice Chairman	Howard King	(01473) 274300
Secretary	Alan Powell	(01473) 622458
Treasurer	Pat Lisseman	(01473) 611665
Program Sec.	Vicky Gunnell	(01473) 720004
Membership Sec.	Martyn Cook	(01473) 614442
Publicity Sec.	Howard King	(01473) 274300
Catering	Peter Morris	(01473) 415787
Clerk of Works	Colin Whitmore	(01473) 729512
Museum Manager	Ian Lisseman	(01473) 611665
Sound & Lighting	Allan Stimson	(07823) 492750
Engineering	Brian Gray	(01394) 383163
Groundsman	Robert Alexander	(07766) 336068

Membership Secretary Report

I would like to welcome 13 new members since our last newsletter...

Norman Boniface	Barry Broughton	Gary Carter
Chris Carter	Ian Fosker	Doug Grover
Edward Hampson	Priscilla Owen	Jennifer Smith
Steven Smith	Peter White	Christopher Allen
Patricia Allen		

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

'What's On' - Please Read

Our sincere apologies for the lack of speaker details for December, January & February (see the "What's On" information below).

Sadly, Covid and the death of HM Queen Elizabeth II has meant that we are behind with getting speakers to commit to dates.

You may also be aware looking at next years calendar, that Good Friday falls on Friday April 7th our meeting evening. We are however, trying to bring that meeting forward a week to Friday March 31st. We will keep you updated on our web site and at our monthly meetings.

Rest assured we will keep up the pressure and hopefully, we will be able to give you details of speakers and subjects as soon as we have them.

Martyn



WHAT'S ON



VICKY GUNNELL - PROGRAMME SECRETARY

7th October '22 Audio Visual Presentation **JOHN VASCO**

'The Messerschmitt Bf in the Battle of Britain'

4th November '22 Audio Visual Presentation **DAVID WARREN**

'David's talk features work on Orfordness & Early Radar'

By IRGON (Independent Research Group of Orfordness)

13th November '22 **'Service of Remembrance'** **BARRACK SQUARE**

'A Time for Reflection for those Lost in Battle'

2nd December '22 Audio Visual Presentation **CLIVE DENNEY**

'Tail's of a Tiger Moths Restoration + Clive's other Work with Restoration'

6th January '23 Audio Visual Presentation

'To be Advised'

3rd February '23 Audio Visual Presentation

'To be Advised'

Please check our website - www.mhas.org.uk - for any programme updates

to time, the fact was that they remained convinced that their "Ultra" messages were unbreakable. Ultra was the name given because such messages were beyond "most secret."

Of course we went to enormous lengths to hide the fact that their intelligence was known to us. If, for instance, Enigma traffic had revealed that a convoy was known to be on it's way to supply the Germans in the North Africa theatre of war, aircraft would be vectored to their known position so that they would be spotted. It would then be assumed that aerial surveillance had been the source of our information.

The distribution of Ultra information to Allied commanders and units in the field involved considerable risk of discovery by the Germans, and great care was taken to control both the information and knowledge of how it was obtained. Liaison officers were appointed for each field command to manage and control dissemination.

I have received a most interesting correspondence from Mr Chris Rodgers. A friend of the society, who lives in Martlesham. Mr Rodger's father was himself a Liaison Officer with a "Special Liaison Unit" and, with his permission I have included his story below.

Alan Powell ED.

The wartime service of George Norman Rodgers

By: Chris Rodgers

When my father Norman Rodgers died in 1993, I discovered much more of the wartime secret that he initially had kept hidden, even from his family, for all of 30 years. The information came in a letter written by a senior American intelligence officer shortly after the Second World War ended in Europe. Together with accompanying photographs and notes, the trove of material revealed my father's involvement in the extended web of intelligence activities, centred on Bletchley Park that became known as Ultra.

Victory in Europe, VE Day, was on 8 May 1945. Eight days later, Colonel H D Kehm, the senior intelligence officer of the US Ninth Army, wrote the following letter from the headquarters in Northern Germany to Captain Vineyard, who commanded the Special Liaison Unit of the US Ninth Army:

"For some time it has been my desire to express in writing our deep

appreciation for the superior work you and your unit have been doing and for the very material assistance your efforts have been in the intelligence work of this section. Throughout the period of our operation on the Continent your entire unit has been untiring and resourceful in overcoming the unusual and difficult problems of operation which have arisen. It is of particular pleasure to us, moreover, to note that your unit, composed of both British and American personnel has always operated as a well integrated team in which the men of both nationalities have helped to perform the unit's mission in a superior manner and that they made a material contribution to our campaign on the Continent."

An original carbon copy of this letter was among my father's possessions which I found after his death. He left the US Ninth Army in Germany on that same day, 16 May 1945, travelled via Maastricht and Brussels, to the Allied headquarters in Europe at Versailles near Paris. He finally arrived back home in Sheffield, England on 23 May 1945 for some well-earned leave.

Among my father's possessions there was also a photograph entitled, Lüneburger Heide April 1945, and some other wartime photographs.

The photograph and letter, although seeming quite innocuous, hide what is one of the most remarkable stories of the Second World War. The "unit" was composed of British RAF officers and an American officer. The "material contribution" was part of the endeavours of some 8,000 people, which many historians now accept shortened the war in Europe by a minimum of two years. The nature of the work of this unit on Lüneburg Heath and also by many other units and departments was secret or "Ultra Secret" for the next 30 years or, in some cases, nearly 60 years.

"Sensationalist nonsense".

In 1988, Max Hastings, the respected author, stated in his foreword to the book "Ultra Goes to War" By Ronald Lewin.

"As a keen student of the Second World War even in those days, I still blush to remember a telephone call from a literary editor in 1974. A new book was shortly to be published, he said, entitled, "The Ultra Secret", by somebody called FW Winterbotham. It seemed important, because the author claimed in its pages that we had been breaking most of the German codes for most of the war; would I care to review it? I said that it sounded like a lot of sensationalist nonsense and, frankly I was too busy to look at it".

flying boat. It was for the seriously rich!



Short "Empire" Flying boat.

The Sudanese were actually very friendly and trustworthy. Unlike my experience with at the time with the Egyptians. Now of course they have discovered the internet and no doubt look on their mobile phones to see the relative opulence of a western style of life and think to themselves, "I'll have some of that!"

Islamic fundamentalism has since gripped the Sudan and it is a very different environment to life there as I remembered it.

It's a sobering thought that I went to Khartoum just 65 years after General Gordon was slain on steps in the courtyard of the Governors Palace on the banks of the Nile. Now another 70 years have passed since I was there. Blimey!

Alan Powell



The hotel; (I believe it was called the St James), was probably kept going when I was there by the British presence in Khartoum, who were responsible for governing the country. The civil service was run on the same lines as in Britain and staffed mainly by Brits. No discernable colour bar. However, that may have not been the original reason for the existence of the hotel that so intrigued me.

Two years before the second World War Imperial Airways instigated a flying boat service from Southampton water to Marseille and on to Athens. Then Alexandria in Egypt to Durban in South Africa. On the way it landed on the River Nile and various lakes. It must have been a major task to make sure the landing strip was clear of local boats before landing these great flying boats.

The government were anxious to shrink the time between the various countries of the then British Empire and several "Empire Flying Routes", as they were called, were established to span the globe. An important and indeed major aspect of the service was the Royal Mail service. The British government subsidised the postage and it was possible then to send a letter for a penny ha'penny to any country in the British Empire. I suppose about half a new penny.

Short, (Short Brothers of Belfast), "Empire flying boats," would carry 17 passengers in country house comfort. The Egypt to the Cape route was from Alexandria in Egypt, landing on the Nile at Aswan (before the dam was built of course), and then on to the Nile at Khartoum, where passengers would be taken for an overnight stay by launch to this luxury hotel on the banks of the Nile. Then on to land on Lake Naivasha in Kenya. No doubt to deliver wealthy members of the "Happy Valley Set" on their way to the Kenyan Highlands.

I am not sure of the actual stoppages from then on, but the eventual destination was Capetown in South Africa and the journey took several days.

The standard of luxury was legend. It was usual to fly only by day and to spend the night at a luxury hotel.

However, there were fold up beds, presumably for emergency and also a viewing platform. The flying boats were not pressurised so they would be flying well below 10000ft. No doubt they would fly over landmarks like the Sphinxes' and herds of Wildebeest further down in Africa. A separate smoking lounge and first class cuisine was all prepared on board the

A few weeks later, amid the sensation that followed the book's publication I could only hang my head".

After serving as a pilot in the First World War, Group Captain Winterbotham was recruited into the Secret Intelligence Service (MI6) in 1929. During the Second World War he was responsible for organising the security of decrypted material to be passed to field commanders from Bletchley Park. He set up the special liaison units (SLUs). Group Captain Winterbotham no doubt had permission in 1974 to publish a memoir of his experiences, but there was much discontent among all those who had been keeping Ultra secret for the previous 30 years. One such person was my father, Norman Rodgers. In later life he acknowledged his role with the special liaison units, but we did not talk at length about any of his experiences. Like so many others, I believe he had kept the secret for so long he had got used to not talking about it and when he was allowed, he didn't really want to. Also, in his papers were some hand-written notes detailing all his movements with specific dates for all of his military service?

Recruitment

After a few months in the RAF, my father was recruited in March 1943 by Group Captain Winterbotham for duties with the special liaison units. Apparently it was because he had obtained a degree in French and German from Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge; the same College where Gordon Welchman had previously been Dean before he was recruited by the Government Code and Cipher School at Bletchley Park.

My father served in special liaison units with the Mediterranean Air Command in North Africa, the US Fifth Army in Italy, the US Seventh Army in France and the US Ninth Army in Germany.

After VE Day and leave, my father was then posted, in June 1945, to the special liaison unit in Brisbane, Australia where the war in the Pacific was continuing.

His passage from Liverpool took him via the Panama Canal, Pearl Harbour, Hawaii, Wellington, New Zealand, Sydney, Australia and finally to Brisbane on 12 August 1945.

By that time the two atomic bombs had just been dropped on Japan and VJ Day was to take place three days later on 15 August 1945. After some leave, he departed Australia in late October 1945 for a six week passage on the SS Stratheden via the Suez Canal, back to the UK; and a final release from the Royal Air Force on 12 December 1945.

The Long Silence

My father, like thousands of others, then started the long silence. To the question, "What did you do in the war, daddy?" The reply was, "I was in the Royal Air Force doing intelligence work". That was all. The principles governing the work of the special liaison units never varied throughout the war. They were defined by Group Captain Winterbotham and in his book, "The Ultra Secret" he laid out these principles.

"The SLU Officer was responsible for personally delivering the Ultra message to the Commander or to a member of his staff designated to receive it. All messages were to be recovered by the SLU Officer as soon as they were read and understood. They were then destroyed. No Ultra recipient was allowed to transmit or repeat an Ultra signal. Any action taken by a Commander on the information given him by Ultra was to be by way of an operation order or command or instruction, which in no way referred to the Ultra signal or could lead the enemy to believe his signals were being read... no recipient of Ultra could voluntarily place himself in a position where he could be captured by an enemy".

In theory the system was simple. After the Ultra signals had been deciphered, translated and evaluated at Bletchley, they were then encoded again for transmission by radio Morse code from Whaddon Hall, near Bletchley to the relevant headquarters in the field. The encoding method employed was either that of the onetime pad, or 'Typex' cipher machine. At a field headquarters, the small special liaison unit had two sections: a communications truck usually manned by soldiers of the Royal Corps of Signals, who received the messages from Bletchley and a cipher truck where the messages were decoded to be passed on by the special liaison

**Special Liaison unit 8.
Captain Hodge J Vineyard,
US Army is on the right
And
Flight Lieutenant Norman
Rodgers, Royal Air Force,
is in the centre.**



The RAF handled all civil air traffic down that side of Africa and it was also the home of the Tropical Experimental Unit. An offshoot of the Aeroplane and Armament Experimental Establishment at Boscombe Down, which, as we know, had been moved from Martlesham in 1939.

Whilst I was there, the first jet airliner, the Mk 1 Comet was there for tropical evaluation and also the Airspeed Ambassador, (later called the Elizabethan), and an early Viscount airliner. I had a few trips in the Ambassador and the Viscount, but they wouldn't let us near the Comet!

The Sudan in those days was ruled jointly by Egypt and Great Britain. We clung on to our colonial past, partly because the Sudan was a vital source of cotton. I remember the main streets were lined by trees and it was a peaceful environment.

The streets of Khartoum had been laid out in the form of a Union Jack in Victorian times. This was not for jingoistic reasons, but because it made it easier to defend. The design produces so many converging road junctions that could be defended simply by swinging the guns round.

The Nile at Khartoum is at the confluence of the Blue Nile and the White Nile and the river is about a mile wide at this point. The Blue Nile springs from the area of Lake Victoria and the White Nile begins in the mountains of Eritrea.

I belonged to an RAF sailing club and had some wonderful fun sailing on the river. Our "clubhouse" would you believe?, was an original gunboat that was part of several sent down the Nile to relieve Khartoum in 1885.

Sadly they arrived a day late and General Gordon was slain by the Mahdi's on the steps of the Governor's Palace.

However, this story is not supposed to be about me and my National Service days.

I had noticed a hotel on the banks of the Nile. It had an air of faded glory. Marvellous art deco in style and furnishings. With Sudanese waiters complete with fierce tribal gashes on their faces. They would have been born in the 20's and 30's and had been disfigured as children. They were black as your hat and well built, with flowing white jalabiyas with a broad green sash. We would sometimes visit the hotel in the evening, perhaps for a cup of Turkish coffee. The Sudan was, of course, a Muslim country. Although alcohol was available in the NAAFI.

again that is pure speculation. A vote of thanks was offered by our President, Mr Richard Barker.

Friday September 2nd. The Community Hall is undergoing maintenance work so in place of our usual public meeting we arranged a coach party to visit the famous WW2 Code and Cipher centre at Bletchley Park.

We enjoyed a guided tour around the site generously paid for by our President, Richard Barker. Some of us spent the afternoon at the refurbished computer museum. Another Bletchley Park guide explained the history of computing. Starting off with Colossus, the world's first programmable computer assembled by Tommy Flowers during WW2, a brilliant post office engineer. The way that computers have developed over the last relatively few years is just amazing.

Our thanks are due to Howard King for arranging the trip.



Some of our party in front of Bletchley Park Mansion

THE EMPIRE AIR ROUTES

It was 1950 and just three months after my 18th birthday when I was drafted into the RAF for my obligatory two year's National Service. After training to become a wireless operator I eventually found myself posted to Khartoum, in the Sudan. The temperature can regularly exceed 100 degrees Fahrenheit in the shade. Making it one of the hottest cities in the world.

unit officer. He was then responsible for recovering the text after they had been studied by the appropriate officers at his headquarters, and for destroying them.

Secret Limeys

The aim of the special liaison unit was to keep itself as discreet as possible, though there was a nickname going around some American headquarters calling the special liaison unit personnel the "Secret Limeys".

In 1943 a US air force officer, Lewis Powell, spotted at La Marsa, Tunisia," a little truck hidden among the trees with people occasionally going to and fro. I thought it was a direction finding unit". My father was part of that special liaison unit in 1943 so it is probable they saw each other.

Lewis Powell later became an Ultra Special Representative and was posted in 1944 to headquarters, US Strategic Air Forces in Europe. He was appointed a US Supreme Court Judge in 1972.

Cooperation

In May 1943, the American War Department and the British Government Code and Cipher School formally agreed to cooperate in their cryptologic endeavours and their exploitation of signals intelligence. Among the many points of their formal agreement was a section which required sending US "liaison officers" to their army and air headquarters to provide operational commanders with Ultra Intelligence. Colonel Alfred McCormack of the Special Branch of the US Military Intelligence Service recruited the American liaison officers, 28 in total, most of whom were lawyers. The recruits who served in the European and Pacific theatres were known as Special Security Officers or Representatives. Their primary duties were to receive and safeguard Ultra, present it to commanders and authorised recipients, and assist in fusing it with intelligence from other sources. The Special Security Officers assigned to Europe received training at Special Branch and at Bletchley Park. They were assigned to US organisations and were started to be deployed in mid-1944.

The small band of men recruited for this duty in the European theatre has been described by Stephen E. Ambrose in "Ike's Spies":

"The Army's selection process was superb. It managed to locate precisely the two dozen or so officers who were perfect for the job. They had to be diplomatic enough not to offend the senior generals to whom they reported, but firm enough to make sure the generals heard what they had to

say... Men who are absolutely trustworthy, mentally quick, tireless, and self-effacing are few in number, but America had enough of them, and the Army found them. To a man, they did an outstanding job during the war; to a man, they kept their trust, not one of them ever revealing the Ultra secret or his part in the war."

The Ninth Army

So in March 1945, when my father was posted to the US Ninth Army, he would have met and worked with the American Ultra Special Representative, Captain Hodge J Vineyard. The US Ninth Army was activated in May 1944 and played an important role in the campaign in North West Europe in 1944 and 1945. The first responsibility for the Ninth Army, upon its arrival in mainland Europe on 5 September 1944, was to take part in the final reduction of the German forces holding out in the French port of Brest. The surrender of the town took place fifteen days later and Ultra intelligence played a key part in the battle. On 2 May 1945 the whole of the Ninth Army's front reached the agreed demarcation point with the Russians and the advance ceased. The Ninth Army was commanded since its inception by General William Simpson. He was a charismatic officer and was highly thought of by General Eisenhower. Colonel Harold D Kehm, after the war headed the US Army's Strategic Intelligence School in Washington from 1950 until his first retirement in 1954. Shortly after he retired, Colonel Kehm was recalled to active duty for intelligence coordinating activities with the Central Intelligence Agency. He held that assignment until his second retirement in 1960. He died in 1979. Since Captain Hodge J Vineyard undertook the long silence, I wonder whether his descendants or relatives have seen his letter from Col Kehm or know of the nature of his wartime service. By my estimation he would have been born between 1910 and 1920 and might have been a lawyer on his return from the war in 1945.

The following was taken from the WWW and explains the work of the Special Liaison Units.

"The distribution of Ultra information to Allied commanders and units in the field involved considerable risk of discovery by the Germans, and great care was taken to control both the information and knowledge of how it was obtained. Liaison officers were appointed for each field command to manage and control dissemination.

Dissemination of Ultra intelligence to field commanders was carried out by MI6, which operated Special Liaison Units (SLU) attached to major

2004 when he was accompanied by Clive Denny. They launched a project to fly a Spitfire and a Hurricane to Malta. The story of this in on YouTube and is entitled, "Merlins Over Malta - The Defenders Return".

Howard's subject was, "How the Hawker Hurricane Came To Be." It was essentially the story of the development of aircraft from the wooden struts and canvas era of the Great War.

When the Great War ended we had by far the largest air force in the World, with some 22,700 aircraft and 200 operational squadrons. However, this was quickly reduced to a fraction of this number. It was the use of aeroplanes to bomb dissident rebels in the middle and far east that persuaded the powers that be that the RAF had an important part to play. Sending a few bombers to quell the uprisings was so much less costly than sending troops long distances.

The Hurricane was an aircraft consisting of a mixture of modern welded metal framework construction and fabric covered rear fuselage. It was a transition to modern manufacturing methods, whereas the Spitfire was a mostly metal design. It was far less maneuverable than the Spitfire, but was nevertheless an easily repaired and versatile gun platform that proved its usefulness throughout WW2.

A fascinating insight into the development of aviation between the wars and a vote of thanks was given by our president, Mr Richard Barker.

Friday August 5th and at our monthly meeting we were surprised by the amount of interest that is generated by the continuing speculation that German forces attempted to land at Shingle Street in August 1940. That they were confronted by army personnel who set fire to the sea with petroleum and many burned corpses washed up on to the beach. The Community Hall was packed to hear various versions of what did happen there early in WW2. Our speaker was Mr Ron Clayton and his talk was entitled, "The Shingle Street Mystery - Did the Germans really land on the Suffolk Coast in 1940?" Ron offered several possible alternative theories, but of course no hard evidence of what might - or might not have happened. The 'thirty year rule' applied to any official explanation, but when it was published several parts of it were ruled to be "not in the public interest", so not much help there! Of course Shingle street is adjacent to Bawdsey Manor and it is possible that the Germans staged an attack on that home of British Radar, but no evidence has ever been offered. Another theory was that the Political Warfare Executive, who were responsible for spreading misleading propaganda, were involved. But



MONTHLY MEETINGS ROUNDUP

Friday, June 3rd featured an illustrated talk by Mr Ken Delve. He gave a fascinating, informative and entertaining talk when, in the middle of a few days of general celebrations, he helped us celebrate 100 years of RAF Marham – located in West Norfolk.

Now the only operational RAF base remaining in Norfolk – it remains in the R.A.F. Front Line being the home of the new V.T.O.L capable F35 Lightning.

Ken went through the long and proud history of the Base – covering aircraft such as the Valiant and Victor “V Bombers”.

Ken could not miss out mentioning the Canberra Medium Range Bomber and the Tornado – both of which he flew in operationally, as Navigator.

He had so much experience that he became a Navigator Instructor for the R.A.F. His talk was peppered with entertaining anecdotes, some illustrated with a prop or two.

Friday July 1st featured an illustrated talk by Howard Cook. Howard is well known to us. This was his third visit. He first visited us way back in

army and air force commands. The activity was organized and supervised on behalf of MI6 by Group Captain F. W. Winterbotham. Each SLU included intelligence, communications, and cryptographic elements. It was headed by a British Army or RAF officer, usually a major, known as “Special Liaison Officer”. The main function of the liaison officer or his deputy was to pass Ultra intelligence bulletins to the commander of the command he was attached to, or to other indoctrinated staff officers. In order to safeguard Ultra, special precautions were taken. The standard procedure was for the liaison officer to present the intelligence summary to the recipient, stay with him while he studied it, then take it back and destroy it.”

The following Martlesham story by our late and long standing member, Charles Antell, has been submitted by his son, Keith, who is a member. Thanks for this Keith!

JOTTINGS FROM THE BOMB BALLISTICS UNIT 1946-47

When the war finished in 1945 I was serving with 149 Sqd. at Methwold we did some trooping trips from Italy, but with the bad weather at the end of '45 this came to a halt, At the beginning of '46 a vast number of aircrew were being made redundant. A reduced compliment of crews from our squadron reformed at Tuddenham and our Skipper opted to go with Transport command, this left me crewless and facing redundancy.

I was given two German POWs to help me clear furniture and flying clothing left by the retiring Squadron.

One of the requirements of the job to make certain that left and right flying boots were to be kept in separate heaps so that when sent away to be burnt they could not be used as pairs, very cunning!

My posting came through at the end of May, to report to the BBU, Martlesham, “where's that?” I asked. Blank looks all round! The orderly finally came up with Suffolk “What does BBU stand for?” Even blanker looks!

I got my rail warrant and headed off into the great unknown and to discover that the “BBU” stood for Bomb Ballistics Unit. After the sprawling airfields of Bomber command I found Martlesham Heath very compact and comfortable.

Our Unit composed, as far as I remember, one Anson, one ex 617 squadron Lancaster, two other Lances, a Mosquito, and later a Lincoln. Our duties consisted of flying to Woodbridge, bombing up, then flying on to

Orfordness, climbing to about 20,000ft and dropping our bombs into the sea. Simple. Most of the time, yes. I can only assume the reason we didn't bomb up at Martlesham Heath was that the runways were rather short and take-offs with a full bomb load would leave no room for error. Our routine generally was to fly over to Orford, climb to a designated height and fire some smoke-puffs so that the ground station could sight their cameras on our position.

One fine day we had an order through that a 22,000lb bomb was to be loaded and dropped off Orfordness. We went to Woodbridge to be bombed-up in the morning and everything went well, The only responsibility I had as Flt. Engineer was to visually see that the missile was sitting correctly in it's sling and the general aspect was acceptable. This completed we were ready to start up and prepare for take-off. We started the engines and warmed them up for our take-off run. Taxiing round the perimeter track it was very noticeable that the undercarriage oleo legs were under quite a strain with the load we were carrying. Taking it very carefully we slowly taxied to the end of the runway, lining up for our pre-flight checks. That done, we were cleared for take-off. We opened the throttles to maximum, and away we went. A nice middle line down the runway the bouncing movement becoming shallower and shallower, until, on the final touch of the wheels on the runway we shot into the air like a rocket.

My first reaction was what has happened? Looking out of the starboard blister above my panel it was obvious; the bomb had come adrift and was ploughing a lone furrow into the concrete runway. Flying Control were agog that we had lost our load, asking all sorts of questions about what went wrong. We were as much in the dark as they were. Seeing that it was a very wide runway and there was very little risk of explosion we were granted permission to land. Circling the airfield it looked as though the bomb had travelled about 100yds and become extremely warm because there was a faint mist around it, which I suppose could have been powdered concrete.

We landed, and the questioning began. Had we released it? Were the armourers to blame? Was it a malfunction of equipment? There were no answers to any of these questions at that time, and I never did find out during my time in the RAF what had actually happened. I expect if anyone wanted an explanation it could be found somewhere in RAF records. When the Coles crane finally lifted it off the runway the underside was all colours of the rainbow, showing that it had been extremely warm.



**Pictures from the
2022 Classic Car
&
Military Vehicle Meet**



for equipment etc. it's not easy to say CANCEL. We, like lots of other groups decided that cancelling was not an option, but to continue with due respect for our loss.

Steve and Dorinda Suttle our PA and music maestro's had worked hard on Saturday to re-produce a personal message that HM had delivered previously. This was followed by an opening address by yours truly. At the end we had a 1 minute silence followed by 'God Save the King' and then that classic song by Vera Lynn, 'Well Meet Again', this started the afternoon with due respect for the occasion.

Back to the start of the day. A misty start means that the sun will appear and it certainly did.

The food stands were the first to arrive and after setting up, began serving, bacon rolls which were just great to get you started.

Now it was time for the Classic cars to arrive and they just carried on arriving and what a show they made., well done boys and girls.

In between their arrival we saw the arrival of the Military vehicles and what a great show they put on, thanks Andrew.

The stationary engines had arrived and were setting up, they just go on and on, thanks guys.

As you are aware there are no fences or gates to collect an entrance fee, we rely solely on selling draw tickets and collection boxes and that has always been very successful, well done you guys and gals.

It's always nice to ring the changes and to this end we booked three very attractive young ladies called 'The Three Chordettes'. They were dressed in WWII clothes and with their hair styled to compliment the period they set about wowing the audience and what a great show they put on. Backed up by the Jive Dancers and yours truly they made a great show and were duly asked to appear in next years event.

Sadly we had some gaps in the stands. Some of those who had booked up did not arrive. I guess the sudden loss of HM prevailed and they felt that this was not the time to hold such an event and so stayed away. I guess by the number of phone calls some thought the event would be cancelled.

Never mind. Lets see some photographs taken during the afternoon...

This raises another question, were the bombs we used filled with Torpex, or, as someone said at the time, beeswax? Torpex and beeswax I believe were of a very similar texture; certainly the weapon would have had to have been the right weight for our trials. I don't think any detonators were fitted. There were some instances I believe, during the offensive against the battleship "Tirpitz" in late '44 where 12,000lb "Tallboy" bombs had been lost through slipping from their slings in the bomb bay. During the summer of 1947 all noncommissioned aircrew ranks re-vamped and were re-mustered into a trade designation which was highly unpopular. That, plus the fact there was talk of going to Woomera, Australia, I decided to cut my ties with His Majesties Royal Air Force and remain earthbound.

That ends the story of my time with the Bomb Ballistics Unit. I only flew once with BLEU. (Blind Landing Experimental Unit,) during my time at Martlesham. All ranks went about their duties with very little interference from other parties.

To finish on a lighter note, after the first working parade in the morning discipline for NCO aircrew consisted of being Orderly Sergeant about once every ten weeks or so. Not a great burden. One weekend tour of duty stands out my memory, Saturday night, we all want a free evening. Sequence of events; Meet Orderly Officer at airman's mess Me, "Attention, Orderly Officer any complaints"? Not a movement, Good. Right, we will continue to the Guardroom, on the main road opposite Station H/Q. I'm thinking...another ten minutes and that's Saturday's duty done Corporal of the guard comes out slightly flustered. Me, "Orderly Officer to inspect the guard" Corporal lines up 4 airmen, Orderly Officer walks round, eyes them up and down, they pass muster. Good. We go inside, it is 1800hrs. Orderly Officer, "Do we have any detainees or prisoners?" Corporal. "Yes, one" Orderly Officer, "We will inspect the prisoner."

It was at this point I knew we had a problem and the reason for the Corporal's unease. We went to the cell it was empty! Orderly Officer, "Where is the prisoner?" Corporal, "He's gone to Crown Point for Fish and Chips He will be back very soon!" It is now 1820 hrs and my quiet evening in has gone out of the window. From then on it was a question of who to inform first, if the prisoner was going to return he would have done so before the guard mounting had begun. He had dropped the corporal right in it. I informed our camp SIB man who informed the relevant authorities in Ipswich, I spent most of the evening waiting by the phone, the call finally came around about 2100hrs. to say that he had been picked up on Ipswich railway station waiting to board a London train. No trace of fish or chips!

CHARLES ANTELL

HUFF DUFF

With our recent visit to Bletchley Park and the extremely interesting article by Chris Rodgers of his Father's important role as a special Liaison officer handling most cret messages at the battlefront, this newsletter has covered the subject of our successes in the field of secret intelligence in some depth.

Indeed it is often claimed that our ability to read what the enemy were planning, shortened the war by perhaps two years.

A more cynical view is that it lengthened the war by two years! The reason for that is that our inability to read the German Kriegsmarine, (navy) Enigma messages until the beginning of 1943 meant that our supply line of food and armaments from the United States was being sunk faster than we could replace the ships. We may well have been forced to sue for piece. It was a close run thing.

By the middle of that year the U-Boat menace had been defeated and they were no longer deployed on that vital sea link. Bletchley Park was once more able to pinpoint where the submarine wolf packs were.

However two other vital reasons were behind our bitter battle for supplies. Long range B24 Liberators were able to finally patrol a section of the Atlantic that had been the "happy hunting fields" of the U-Boat. An area that had previously been impossible for the allies to cover due to distance.

The Germans always said that aircraft were the U-Boat's chief enemy because submarines by necessity spend the vast majority of their time at sea on the surface. By the time an aircraft had spotted a U-Boat it was often impossible to dive quick enough before the aircraft could attack.

Another reason was our ability to employ Huff Duff. Yes, you may well ask! What on earth was Huff Duff? It was a slang term for HF/DF, (High frequency direction finding).

HF/DF was primarily used to tune into enemy radios while they transmitted, although it was also used to locate friendly aircraft as a navigation aid.

It was possible to pinpoint the position of a U-Boat from several miles away whilst it was transmitting or receiving radio messages.

Many a U-Boat lookout was horrified to see a destroyer appear from nowhere to bear down and ram them.

It is claimed that Between 1942 and 1944, were common fixtures on

Royal Navy ships. It is estimated HF/DF contributed to 24% of all U-boats sunk during WW2.

Alan Powell

LET'S LIGHTEN IT UP A BIT - SEX AT 73

I just took a leaflet out of my mailbox informing me that I can have sex at 73.

I'm so happy because I live at 71 so it's not too far to walk home afterwards.

And it's the same side of the street. I don't even have to cross the road.

A 'plane is on its way to Toronto when a blonde in economy class gets up and moves to the first class section and sits down.

The flight attendant watches her do this and asks to see her ticket. He then tells the blonde that she paid for economy class and will have to sit in the back.

The blonde replies, "I'm blonde, I'm beautiful and I'm going to Toronto and I'm staying right here.

The co-pilot tells the pilot that he should probably have the police waiting when they land to arrest the blonde who won't listen to reason.

The pilot says, "you say she is s blonde? I'll handle this. I'm married to a blonde. I speak blonde."

He goes back to the blonde and whispers in her ear and she says, "Oh, I'm sorry," and gets up and goes back to her seat in economy.

The flight attendant and the co-pilot are amazed and ask him what he said to make her move without any fuss.

"I told her, first class isn't going to Toronto".

The ultimate sexist joke – so they tell me!

Classic Car & Military Vehicle Meet

Sunday September 11th. A misty quiet start to the day, a day that had been in the planning since September 2021 which saw our biggest event ever.

Sadly on Thursday September 8th we heard the sad news that HM Queen Elizabeth II had passed away. Once a day has been set and money paid