
TEAM BRIEF

ISSUE 28

EASTER 2021



New UKMAMS Headquarters?



CHAIRMAN'S NOTES SPRING 2021

Welcome to this Spring Edition of Team Brief - hopefully this issue finds you all safe and well. Having missed our Christmas publication due to a lack of content, we are back with lots of articles for your enjoyment. My thanks to all contributors.

With the present lockdown dragging on for the past few months it has been testing times for everyone. Keeping to the Government "Stay at Home" message the committee has continued to use the zoom app to carry on with live meetings and you will see that our website has had a total revamp and facelift. My thanks must again go to our Webmaster John Belcher (JB) for his time and great effort in completing this worthwhile project. The reason for the change was twofold. Firstly, to bring the site up to date and secondly to make it a more secure platform with access only for members. I hope you will enjoy the new layout and I encourage you, if you have not already done so, to log on and take a look for yourselves.

Recently we have seen our membership increase which is great news for the Association's future and hopefully this trend will continue. Looking through some earlier editions of Team Brief, I noted that we used to get rather more regular letters/photos and memories from members about life in the Movement's Family. We would welcome more of these for publication in future editions.

Proposed lockdown exit plan has been published by the government, we are hopeful that we can move forward with events. This year is the 30th Anniversary of the formation of the Association, and to mark this occasion (subject to lockdown restrictions being lifted) the committee have rescheduled the postponed Biennial Dinner for Sat 09 Oct.

2021. You should have received details of this event from our Editor John Conduit (JC) by email recently. We have already had a great initial response from members, so if you would like to attend (the more the merrier) please contact JC. Full details are in this issue.

Again, on the proviso that restrictions are lifted, the 25th Dave Wall Golf meeting will go ahead 14-17 Sep 2011 at Trethorne Golf Club, Cornwall and after the cancellation of our participation in last year's RBL Annual Remembrance Parade in London, we are hoping this will resume in November.

Another future date for your diary, although a long way off is Fri 10 Dec 2021 for the Association's Christmas Meet & Greet, full details of all these events will be available on the website at a later date.

Some memory photos from the past



1988 Airport Unit HKG: Alex Simpson and Ben Walters



1988 RNZAF Base Ohakea, Palmerston North, NZ:
Bravo Team: L-R Dave Salmon, Jon Gould, Tony Geerah, Ian (Plug) Harvey

With the clocks going forward, spring and summer on the way and thankfully positive signs within the UK that the Covid-19 pandemic maybe easing, let's look forward to being allowed to meet again, in person, in the very near future.

Stay Safe,

Warmest regards,

Tony

Continuing with the list of disused RAF Bases

RAF Acklington

RAF Acklington, is a former Royal Flying Corps and Royal Air Force station located 3.2 miles (5.1 km) south west of Amble, Northumberland and 8.8 miles (14.2 km) north east of Morpeth, Northumberland.

The airfield was operational initially from 1916 being used by the Royal Flying Corps (RFC) and from April 1918 its successor the Royal Air Force (RAF) before being closed in 1920 however it was reopened in 1938 being used by the RAF until 1972. After 1972 the site was turned over to Her Majesty's Prison Service for the creation of two new prisons.

History

First World War

Acklington was an aerodrome during the First World War and known as Royal Flying Corps Station Southfields.

Second World War

The airfield was reopened on Friday 1 April 1938 being renamed to RAF Acklington where No. 7 Armament Training Station was formed which on 15 November 1938 transformed into No. 2 Air Observers School. During September 1939 the school moved to RAF Warmwell and the airfield was handed over to RAF Fighter Command as part of 13 Group where it became a sector airfield.

The following squadrons were at some point posted or attached to RAF Acklington: 43, 46, 111, 152, 245, 258, 600, 607 and 609.

On 3 February 1940 three Hawker Hurricane fighters from 43 Squadron at Acklington intercepted and shot down a Luftwaffe Heinkel He 111 bomber at Whitby. The formation was led by Flight Lieutenant Peter Townsend. It was the first German aircraft to fall on English soil in World War II (although it was not the first to be shot down in the United Kingdom, that having occurred in Scotland). The intercept was based on a plot by operators at RAF Danby Beacon, a radar station about ten miles west of Whitby. Townsend visited the German rear gunner in hospital the next day, and visited him again in 1968 when Townsend was writing his highly-successful book about the Battle of Britain, "Duel of Eagles," which recounts the incident in detail.

On 21 October 1942 well known test pilot Gerry Sayer departed from RAF Acklington in a Hawker Typhoon to test a gunsight during gun firing into Druridge Bay Ranges, and was accompanied by another Typhoon. Neither aircraft returned and it was assumed that they collided over the bay. Sayer was replaced as Gloster's chief test pilot by his deputy, Michael Daunt.

Battle of Britain

RAF Acklington was home to the following squadrons during the Battle of Britain:

72 Squadron between 6 June 1940 and 31 August 1940 with the Supermarine Spitfire Mk I before moving to RAF Biggin Hill.

79 Squadron between 13 July 1940 and 27 August 1940 with the Hawker Hurricane Mk I before moving to RAF Biggin Hill.

32 Squadron between 28 August 1940 and 15 December 1940 with the Hurricane Mk I before moving to RAF Middle Wallop.

610 Squadron between 31 August 1940 and 15 December 1940 with the Spitfire Mk I before moving to RAF Westhampnett.

October 1940–1945

The following squadrons were at some point posted or attached to RAF Acklington:
1, 25, 43, 56, 63, 74, 130, 141, 164, 167, 198, 219, 222, 263, 266, 278, 288, 289, 291, 309, 315, 316, 317, 322, 349, 350, 406, 409, 410, 504, 539 and 609.

Postwar use

The following squadron were at some point posted or attached to RAF Acklington:
18, 19, 23, 25, 29, 41, 54, 56, 64, 65, 66, 74, 85, 91, 92, 130, 140, 202, 219, 228, 247, 257, 263, 264, 266 and 275.

Airfield units

The following units were at some point posted or attached to RAF Southfields/Acklington:

No. 1 Fighter Command Servicing Unit RAF
No. 3 Aircraft Delivery Flight RAF
No. 3 Tactical Exercise Unit RAF
No. 4 Aircraft Delivery Flight RAF
No. 6 Flying Training School RAF
No. 13 Group Target Towing Flight RAF became No. 1490 (Target Towing) Flight RAF
No. 24 (Base) Defence Wing RAF
No. 59 Operational Training Unit RAF
No. 147 Airfield
416th Night Fighter Squadron
No. 1460 (Fighter) Flight RAF
No. 1630 (Anti-Aircraft Co-operation) Flight RAF
Fighter Armament Trials Unit RAF
No. 2718 Squadron RAF Regiment
No. 2738 Squadron RAF Regiment
No. 2741 Squadron RAF Regiment
No. 2765 Squadron RAF Regiment
No. 2799 Squadron RAF Regiment
No. 2800 Squadron RAF Regiment
No. 2803 Squadron RAF Regiment
No. 2820 Squadron RAF Regiment

RAF Acklington closed in 1975 and the main camp became the site of Acklington and Castington prisons. These have since been amalgamated and transferred into private ownership and are simply known as H. M. P. Northumberland. The airfield is virtually unrecognisable today having been subjected to open cast coal mining.

FUNCTION INFORMATION

ASSOCIATION XMAS MEET & GREET

The annual Association Xmas meet and greet has been finalised for the following

Friday 10 December 2021
The Blunsdon Arms
Swindon
SN25 2NA
1200 onwards

ASSOCIATION 30th ANNIVERSARY DINNER

The association 30th anniversary Biennial dinner has been rebooked to the following

Saturday 9 October 2021
Cricklade House & Spa hotel,
Cricklade,
Wiltshire,
SN6 6HA

This is for members and guests. Price is £35 per person, this will include a 3 course meal and a half bottle of wine per person.

Meals will be selected from a choice on the menu that will be prebooked.

There will be rooms available to hire and these will range from £90 for a standard room to £110 for a superior room, these both include breakfast.

The hotel also has a 9 hole golf course the green fees will be £10 per person for those that are staying the night.

There is also a Spa at the hotel, but you will need to contact the hotel for those prices.

If you would like to attend then please email me on editor@ukmams.co.uk

The Dave Wall Golf competition has now been confirmed as the following

Trethorne Golf Club

September 14—17 Sep 21

Further info is available from

WO Mark Vaughan

Mark.Vaughan855@mod.gov.uk

National Service of Remembrance 14 Nov 2021

The Royal British Legion (RBL) and the Government are planning for the National Service of Remembrance followed by the March Past at the Cenotaph to take place as usual. This is obviously subject to any Covid restrictions that may be in place in November.

Normally, I would have asked for names at the beginning of March but have held off pending more details from the RBL. As soon as I have some information, I will send an email with details on how to register your name for the March Past.

This year marks the 30th Anniversaries of the end of the Gulf War in 1991 and the formation of this Association. If numbers are limited by the RBL, priority will be given to those who served in the Gulf.

The plan for the weekend remains:

Sat evening Pre March Past recce at The Porcupine, 48 Charing Cross Rd, Covent Garden, London WC2H 0BS. Open to all

Sun morning National Service of Remembrance

Post March Past Meet and Greet for anyone in the area at the Porcupine. This will include the toast to Absent Friends toast at 1330Z shown live via the RAF Movers Facebook group

RAF Aldergrove

Joint Helicopter Command Flying Station Aldergrove is located 4.4 miles (7.1 km) south of Antrim, Northern Ireland and 18 miles (29 km) northwest of Belfast and adjoins Belfast International Airport. It is sometimes referred to simply as Aldergrove which is the name of a nearby village. The military flying units share the Aldergrove runways but have their own separate facilities and helipad.

The site was formerly **RAF Aldergrove**, a Royal Air Force station which was in operation between 1918 and 2009.

History

Inter-war years

RAF Aldergrove first opened in 1918 but was not designated as an operational RAF station until 1925.

Various squadrons were posted here during this time:

A detachment of No. 4 Squadron RAF between 30 April 1920 and 26 September 1922 again with the Bristol F2B.

No. 2 Squadron RAF initially at full strength between 2 June 1922 and 27 September 1922 and then as an detachment until 17 September 1923 flying the Bristol F2B Fighter.

No. 502 Squadron RAF was formed here on 15 May 1925 and used various aircraft types including Vickers Vimy's, Handley Page Hyderabad's, Virginia X's, Westland Wallace's, Hawker Hind's, Avro Anson I's, Blackburn Botha I's and Armstrong Whitworth Whitley V's until 27 January 1941.

A detachment of No. 214 Squadron RAF between 15 October 1935 and 1 October 1936 with the Virginia X.

No. 9 Squadron RAF between 15 January 1936 and 1 October 1936 initially flying the Vickers Virginia X until April 1936 when they started converting to the Handley Page Heyford III.

No. 85 Squadron RAF with the Hawker Hurricane I between 18 October 1938 and 4 November 1938.

Second World War

Aldergrove's location made it an important station of RAF Coastal Command in the Battle of the Atlantic during the Second World War. From the base, long-range reconnaissance aircraft were able to patrol the Eastern Atlantic for U-boats. Some of these patrols ranged as far out as the distant islet of Rockall



A picture taken of Rockall by an RAF crew based at Aldergrove on 11 March 1943

.Various squadrons were posted here during this time:

A detachment of No. 224 Squadron RAF between 1 September 1938 and 15 April 1941 with the Hudson I and III version's.

A detachment of No. 235 Squadron RAF with the Bristol Blenheim IVF between 24 June 1940 and 4 June 1941.

No. 231 Squadron RAF between 1 July 1940 and 15 July 1940 with the Westland Lysander II.

No. 245 Squadron RAF with Hurricane I between 20 July 1940 and 14 July 1941.

No. 233 Squadron RAF between 3 August 1940 and 14 September 1940 with the Hudson I.

No. 102 Squadron RAF with the Whitley V between 1 September 1940 and 10 October 1940.

No. 272 Squadron RAF reformed here on 18 November 1940 with the Blenheim IVF and stayed until 3 April 1941.

No. 252 Squadron RAF between 6 April 1941 and 15 June 1941 with Beaufighter IC.

No. 254 Squadron RAF using Blenheim IVF between 29 May 1941 and 12 December 1941.

No. 143 Squadron RAF reformed here on 15 June 1941 with the Bristol Beaufighter IC, and stayed here until 24 March 1944.

A detachment of No. 48 Squadron RAF between 3 August 1941 and 20 October 1941 with the Lockheed Hudson V & III's.

No. 206 Squadron RAF between 12 August 1941 and 1 July 1942 using various versions of the Hudson including the I/II/III/IV and V.

No. 311 Squadron RAF between 28 April 1942 and 12 June 1942 with the Vickers Wellington IC.

A detachment of No. 120 Squadron RAF between 21 July 1942 and 24 March 1944 with the Liberator III.

No. 220 Squadron RAF with Boeing Fortress II between 14 February 1943 and 30 March 1943.

No. 86 Squadron RAF between 18 March 1943 and 6 September 1943 using the Liberator IIIA & V versions.

No. 59 Squadron RAF between 11 May 1943 and 15 September 1943 with the Consolidated Liberator V's.

A detachment of No. 547 Squadron RAF between 25 October 1943 and 13 June 1944 with Wellington XI and XIII's and Liberator V's.

Post war

Aldergrove was designated as a dispersal airfield for the RAF's V bomber force in the 1950s and was included in a reduced list of 26 airfields in 1962. In 1968 No. 23 Maintenance Unit RAF was responsible for the maintenance of McDonnell Douglas F-4 Phantom IIs in RAF service, with 116 aircraft passing through on their way to front-line service. Aldergrove was also the main servicing and reconditioning station for the English Electric Canberra from their introduction in 1951. In 1976, the station had a staff of 2,500 RAF personnel and 1,500 civilians.

Various squadrons were posted here between 1945 and 1985:

No. 518 Squadron RAF operated the Halifax III, Hurricane IIC, Spitfire VII and Halifax VI between 18 September 1945 and 1 October 1946 when the squadron was disbanded here.

A detachment of No. 280 Squadron RAF between 3 November 1945 and 21 June 1946 when it was disbanded. It operated the Vickers Warwick I.

No. 502 Squadron RAF reformed here on 10 May 1946 and operated various aircraft types including de Havilland Mosquito B.25 & NF.30's, Supermarine Spitfire F.22's and de Havilland Vampire F.3's, FB.5's and FB.9's until 10 March 1957.

No. 202 Squadron RAF with the Halifax GR.6, A.9 and Met 1 version's from 1 October 1946 and 28 August 1964 when it was disbanded.

No. 214 Squadron RAF reformed here on 1 March 1948 and operated the Handley Page Halifax GR.6 until 18 October 1948.

No. 240 Squadron RAF reformed here on 1 May 1952 with the Avro Shackleton MR.1 and stayed until 27 May 1952.

A detachment of No. 275 Squadron RAF between 18 November 1954 and 1 September 1959 when it was disbanded. The detachment operated the Hiller HTE-2, Anson T.21, de Havilland Canada DHC-1 Chipmunk T.10, Sycamore HR.14, Westland Whirlwind HAR.4 & 2.

No. 1913 Light Liaison Flight of No. 651 Squadron RAF between 1 November 1955 and 4 April 1957 operated the Taylorcraft Auster AOP.6. The flight was renamed 13 Flight No. 651 Squadron AAC on 1 September 1957 and stayed here until November 1952 when it was replaced by 2 Reconnaissance Flight, 2 Royal Tank Regiment.

No. 118 Squadron RAF reformed here on 1 September 1959 with Bristol Sycamore HR.14 before being disbanded here on 31 August 1962.

Royal Air Force operations

No. 72 Squadron operated Westland Wessex HC.2 helicopters from Aldergrove from 12 November 1981 until its disbandment in 2002.

No. 230 Squadron RAF was re-deployed from Germany to RAF Aldergrove in 1992, where it operated Westland Puma HC.1 helicopters until its relocation to RAF Benson in November 2009.

No. 18 Squadron RAF also operated detachments of Boeing Chinook during the late 80s in support of the British Army in Northern Ireland.



United States Air Force (USAF) Boeing C-17 Globemaster III operating from Aldergrove in support of U.S. Presidential visit, 2003.

Army Air Squadron Operations

The 17/21st Lancers Air Squadron based at RAF Aldergrove from 1969 to 1971 operating with Sioux Helicopters and a Fixed Wing Beaver aircraft.

The following units were here at some point:

No. 1 Armament Practice Camp RAF
No. 1 (Coastal) Engine Control Demonstration Unit RAF
No. 1 (Coastal) Operational Training Unit RAF
No. 2 Armament Training Camp RAF became No. 2 Armament Training Station RAF became No. 3 Air Observers School RAF became No. 3 Bombing & Gunnery School RAF
No. 4 Coastal Patrol Flight RAF
No. 5 Service Flying Training School RAF
No. 9 (Coastal) OTU RAF
No. 15 Group Communications Flight RAF
No. 22 Air Crew Holding Unit RAF
No. 23 Maintenance Unit RAF
No. 61 Group RAF
No. 67 Group Communications Flight RAF
No. 67 (Northern Ireland Reserve) Group RAF
No. 203 Gliding School RAF
No. 226 Maintenance Unit RAF
No. 278 Maintenance Unit RAF
No. 402 Meteorological Flight RAF became No. 1402 (Meteorological) Flight RAF
No. 405 Meteorological Flight RAF became No. 1405 (Meteorological) Flight RAF then absorbed by No. 1402 Met Flight in 1942.
No. 651 Squadron AAC
No. 655 Squadron AAC
No. 665 Squadron AAC
No. 671 Gliding School RAF
No. 1361 (Meteorological) Flight RAF absorbed by No. 521 Squadron RAF
No. 1362 (Meteorological) Flight RAF
No. 1363 (Meteorological) Flight RAF
No. 1364 (Meteorological) Flight RAF
No. 1674 Heavy Conversion Unit RAF
No. 2707 Squadron RAF Regiment
No. 2850 Squadron RAF Regiment
HQ RAF Northern Ireland
Queens University Air Squadron

Army Air Corps operations

The Army Air Corps also operated Westland Lynx and Westland Gazelle helicopters as well as de Havilland Canada DHC-2 Beaver aircraft in its joint operations with the RAF's Reconnaissance Intelligence Centre (Northern Ireland); the Beaver was replaced by the Britten-Norman Islander late in 1988.

During 1991, No. 655 Squadron AAC moved from RAF Ballykelly to Aldergrove with the Westland Lynx AH Mk 7 helicopter.

On 1 October 1993, the Northern Ireland Regiment Army Air Corps was retitled 5 Regiment Army Air Corps.

On 4 August 2008, 651 Squadron Army Air Corps moved back to Northern Ireland from RAF Odiham almost 50 years after its first deployment there.

Post Operation BANNER

During the latter years of Operation BANNER, 5 Regiment Army Air Corps and 230 Squadron RAF came under the control of the Joint Helicopter Command (JHC) and formed the Joint Helicopter Force Northern Ireland (JHF(NI)). As the site was no longer a major RAF establishment it became Joint Helicopter Command Flying Station Aldergrove.

After the end of Operation BANNER, a number of other Army units were relocated to Aldergrove. The base was no longer therefore administered by the JHC and became 38 Brigade Flying Station Aldergrove.

5 Regiment Army Air Corps continues to operate at Aldergrove, providing Gazelle, Defender and Islander aircraft in support of the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and military units for Operation Helvetic, and for other operations abroad.

Due to the closure of RAF Machrihanish, the base is now used for University Air Squadron and Air Training Corps cadets as a training camp, where cadets from Scotland and Northern Ireland Region gather for flying experiences, fieldcraft, shooting, first aid and other activities.

During 2003 Air Force One arrived at the airport in support of U.S. Presidential visits to Northern Ireland.

Aldergrove officially ceased to be an RAF Station on 20 September 2009 when, after the annual Battle of Britain parade, the RAF ensign was lowered for the last time and the Joint Helicopter Command flag was hoisted in its place.

Based Units



A British Army Air Corps Gazelle helicopter similar to that now based at Aldergrove

Units based at Aldergrove:

British Army

Joint Helicopter Command / Army Air Corps

5 Regiment

No. 665 Squadron – Westland Gazelle AH1

Reconnaissance, Intelligence and Geographic Centre (Northern Ireland) (RIGC)

Royal Logistics Corps

11 Explosive Ordnance Disposal and Search Regiment

321 Explosive Ordnance Disposal & Search Squadron

Royal Air Force

No. 502 (Ulster) Squadron (Royal Auxiliary Air Force)

Northern Ireland Universities Air Squadron – Grob Tutor T1

No. 13 Air Experience Flight - Grob Tutor T1

No. 1 Group

No. 651 Squadron Army Air Corps/Royal Air Force personnel – Britten-Norman Defender AL2/3 and Britten-Norman Islander AL1

Civilian

Police Service of Northern Ireland Air Support Unit
Eurocopter EC135T2

Eurocopter EC145

The origins of the RAF Uniform.

Whilst on a recent weeks Hotel break, in Coventry of all places. I got talking to two ex-Naval chaps, who with their ladies occupied the dining table next to SWMBO (She Who Must Be Obeyed) and I.

Well, would you believe that one of these guys had been in the RAF for 6 years, before joining the Royal Navy, in which he served for 24 years.

When he left school he joined the Merchant Navy as a Cook, Left that to go to work in a Hotel , where he went to Night School to take his 'City and Guilds' In Catering, which he obtained.

So, to continue, I was fascinated with his story, he had to undergo two lots of square bashing, but because he had the catering qualification when he joined the RAF, he soon became a J/T.



you will learn, after reading my book, (FLYING ON THE GROUND) is where I sweated some.

He left the Navy as a Fleet Chief (Warrant Officer) and was a really good egg to talk to, we shared a jar or two, reminiscing about, who knows what? Mostly being told by SWMBO that she had heard it all before and change the record!



During our discussions in which we sorted out the world's problems, and amongst other things I asked him, if being ex RAF in the Navy, was he referred to as a 'Crab Fat'?

This is a term used by the Royal Navy when referring to 'Blue Jobs.'

The origins of this term, 'Crab Fats.' Goes back to 1918, For those of you not in the know, It's when the RAF was formed..... OK..OK..., do not shout!

The reason the RAF are called crab fats by the Royal Navy lies in the fact that naval personnel used to use the grease that the gun shells were caked in to get rid of crabs which they had picked up after visiting brothels or ladies of the night, you know them lot, a girl in every Port.



The term crab fat derived from the grease they used, it happened to be the same colour as the RAF uniform. Hence the term. It has been suggested that the pale blue colour of the RAF uniform was adopted as the cloth had been intended for use by the Imperial Russian Cavalry and, following their disbandment after the Bolshevik Revolution it became available at low cost. I mean just look how smart these three-airman looked in their new uniforms, gosh the girls must have been excited ...Don't you think?



Here are a couple of early RAF Recruiting Posters.

Gerry

Message from the Membership Secretary

If you have know of anyone that used to get emails from the association, but no longer get them, then please get them to contact the membership secretary.

membership@ukmams.co.uk

Current membership stands at 543

While we are on the subject, does anyone know where the following are

Gary Basterfield

David Snyder

both have Canadian e mail addresses of shaw.ca

Ken Logan

No details on him

Many thanks

A WARM WELCOME TO VEGAS...

In mid November 1980 I was tasked as part of a half team (3 people) to travel on a VC10 to Nellis Air Force Base in Nevada. For those who don't know, Nellis is 16 miles outside Las Vegas. The task was to deliver a load on behalf of a Government Agency who are located halfway between Newbury and Reading! We were to stage via Goose Bay, Labrador, Canada, to deliver an aircraft pallet load of urgently needed duty free alcohol! Then continue via McClellan Air Force Base, Sacramento, California and then eventually to Nellis.

From Nellis we would then travel on to Barksdale AFB to meet up with another half team. The task then was to recover the personnel and equipment of 9 Squadron who operated Vulcan's. Ultimately everything had to be returned to RAF Waddington, Lincs. This was after the culmination of Exercise Giant Voice, an annual bombing competition hosted by SAC (Strategic Air Command) Wing, USAF.

As part of my team we were taking a Sgt with us on his very last task – a swan song. I didn't really know him that well as we all belonged to a team of six and consequently we normally flew and worked together. I also ascertained that he lived in Lincoln where he owned and ran a fish & chip shop.

We departed Brize Norton on the 19th November utilising XV103. The flight to Goose was uneventful and took just over five hours. The weather at Goose was a pleasant -2C with no real lying snow. Once we were parked we quickly had the freight door open, attached door and sill guards and then offloaded the pallet which was fortunately right by the door. Everything was then stowed away and the aircraft secured for the next leg. I might add that we had to do everything pretty quickly as from experience, if the freight door is left open too long in freezing conditions the condensation around the door seals may freeze and then the fun begins trying to lock the door!



The RAF Support Unit at Goose Bay are located in two very large aircraft hangars. In earlier years they used to house any V Bombers staging through. Now they can still accommodate a dozen Tornados, all the support equipment and still have room for a couple of C130s. Whenever possible, the aircraft are put inside in winter months because of the severe conditions outside. Until you get used to it, unloading/loading a C130 whilst indoors is a novelty.

We then departed Goose on time for McClellan AFB in California. McClellan was part of US Air Force Logistics Command and is located 7 miles outside Sacramento, the Capital of California. There was very little to offload here and all of what we did was for the use of the RAFLO (Western) USA who was based there. As we had a fixed arrival time at Nellis it was also an excellent place to night stop on security grounds. Flight time from Goose was 6hrs 20 mins.

VC10 YELLOW DOOR GUARDS AND RED SILL PROTECTORS IN PLACE

I was lucky that the young Flying Officer Team Leader who was with me knew the RAFLO and so we were able to meet his family that night. (Incidentally, McClellan AFB closed in 2001 and the RAFLO is now located at Travis AFB, near San Francisco).

The next morning (20th) saw us depart McClellan for Nellis AFB. A flight duration of all of one hour. On arrival we were directed to a remote spot on the far side of the Airfield. This again was on safety grounds as well as security as no prying eyes could really see what was happening! Over the years I enjoyed these kinds of tasks as because of their sensitive nature there was always the minimum of bureaucracy and any ground or loading equipment needed of any kind was always there in abundance. By the time we had finished offloading the aircraft there was just ourselves and the Ground Engineer left. The VC10 was heading off in a different direction in the morning and we were going to connect with a C130 to head on to Barksdale AFB, Shreveport, Louisiana.

USAF transport collected us from the aircraft and delivered us at Base Ops from where we could meet a taxi to go "downtown". To get things in perspective, this was my third visit to Nellis in 7 years but I had never managed to get off the base before. This time we were definitely staying "downtown" and had been booked into Aladdin's on the famous "Vegas Strip". It certainly is the City that never sleeps and the casinos operate 24 hours a day. Once inside there are no windows or clocks and a constant ringing of bells is heard from the slot machines.

Neil Diamond was actually appearing at the Aladdin but when the choice is to use your allowances to see him or convert to food and alcohol there is no competition! As most RAF visitors do in Vegas we started at the bottom of the strip (Circus Circus) and worked our way up popping in to most of the Casino's. If you play it right and are at a slot the same time a waitress passes you get a free drink. By the end of the night we had finished our trek to the top of the strip by calling in to Excalibur's and then across the walkway over the strip to the MGM Grand. Eventually we retired to Aladdin's, which was next door for a few hours sleep before preparing to go back to Nellis.

I had agreed to call in on Hope, who was the Sgt on my team to make sure he was both up and about and ready for breakfast. His room was on the ground floor and when he let me in he was up and covered in shaving foam being halfway through his ablutions. His room was in semi-darkness as he had the curtains closed and the TV was switched on. I stared at the TV which was showing live "feed" of a fire at the MGM Casino which was next door. Hope shouted from the bathroom that it looked serious! I then opened the curtains to be confronted by a real "Towering Inferno!"

Across the quite large expanse of waste ground and a car park smoke was pouring out of the building. I could see several helicopters circling and landing on the roof. Others were flying around the hotel at different floor levels and people on the balconies were also being winched out and up. I recognised Hueys and Sea Kings (Jolly Green Giants) of the USAF and other smaller types from the Sheriff's Department and other civilian owners. One after the other the larger helicopters were landing in the car park in front of me and disgorging those rescued. The whole scene was surreal. I then told Hope to look out the window, all he said was it looked better on the TV!

Notwithstanding all this excitement we had to eat and pack as the Base had confirmed our C130 was on time and so we had a deadline to meet. So, in the middle of all this excitement we had to climb in a minibus and follow the detours to get back to Nellis, leaving a smoking building in our rear window. (In the following days when the situation clarified it transpired that sadly 82 people had lost their lives in what was the third most tragic hotel fire in the USA. Most were from smoke inhalation. It was an electrical fire and began in the Foyer area blocking any exit. The hotel also did not have a sprinkler system. A total of 18 helicopters were also involved in the rescue and 9 of them were from the Rescue Squadron at Nellis.

As well as recovering survivors from the roof they were also dropping off at the same time fire fighters and equipment.)

So later that morning (21st) we boarded C130 XV291 and flew on across to Barksdale AFB, a flight time of 3hrs 45 mins. We hardly knew the crew as we had just climbed aboard before start up and setting off. We arrived at Barksdale on a Sunday evening and it was already dark, wet and miserable.

On landing we were not met by a "Follow me" vehicle and had to follow instructions from the Tower. The Tower itself was an 80 foot building with a control room on the top. Eventually we reached a floodlit apron and were directed to a parking spot by following the beam of a searchlight operated from the Tower! We eventually halted opposite a row of parked B52 Bombers. We shut down the aircraft and patiently waited for someone to meet us with hopefully a power set so as to see what we were doing inside the aircraft.

20 minutes later still no appearance of anyone. The crew were getting a bit "tetchy" and none more so than the Aircraft Captain. The rear of our aircraft was open and so some light filtered in. The Captain then turned to my pal Hope, the lowest rank on the aircraft, to "Go and bring one of those power sets from over there". His response was "No chance!" The Captain, quite taken aback by this said "I am ordering you!" Once again Hope responded in the negative. Just as things were looking ugly, Hope, who was as fed up as the rest of us said, "If I go over there I will be shot by a trigger happy Military Policeman!" Unknown to the Captain the B52s opposite were rope fenced off and had signs in front of them stating "Use of deadly force is Authorized".

A frosty silence ensued and no apology given. Eventually Transient Alert eventually turned up with a power set and a crew bus. The crew and Ground Engineer then departed for their hotel whilst we went looking for the other team. We found them in an aircraft hangar where all the equipment left by the Vulcan Detachment was prepared ready for loading. The other team had flown up on a VC10 from Homestead AFB in Florida where they had deployed a Nimrod Detachment. On arrival at Barksdale they had reloaded the VC10 with passengers and baggage of 9 Squadron which had now departed for Waddington via Gander.

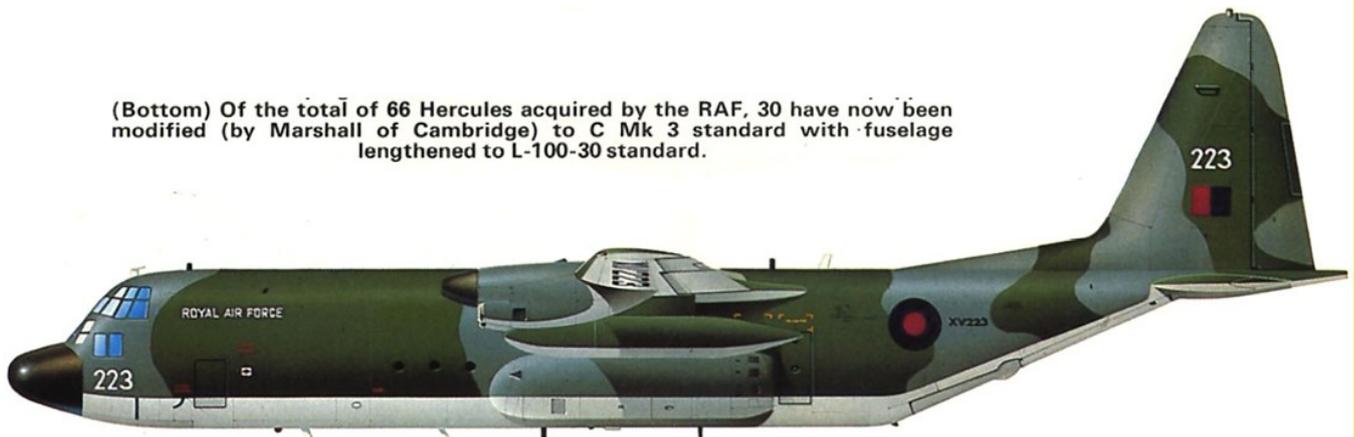
The amount of equipment left in the hangar to be recovered by 2 x C130s looked horrendous. The aircraft we had arrived on was roled "Flat Floor" meaning it had a winch fitted and was primarily roled to take wheeled vehicles and the like ranging from cylinder trolleys, power sets, and hydraulic rigs up to a kitchen sink. Once we had the C130 half loaded it was obvious we were going to struggle to get everything in. It was then that the penny dropped! The two C130s we had to load were Mk1 whereas the C130s that deployed the Squadron were Mk3. A Mk1 is 15 feet shorter!!

It took six great minds and a lot of cussing and effort to finally complete the loading of the first C130. You don't just throw things on neither and when finished the aircraft has to be in trim to fly. The second C130 aircraft XV191 had also flown up from Homestead and this aircraft was roled to accommodate 5 x 108" x 88" aircraft pallets. A Mk3 could carry 7. Once again an awful lot of effort was expended in making everything fit and leaving nothing behind. Add to this the fatigue we were now feeling as it was now about 4am and several sense of humour failures had been encountered!

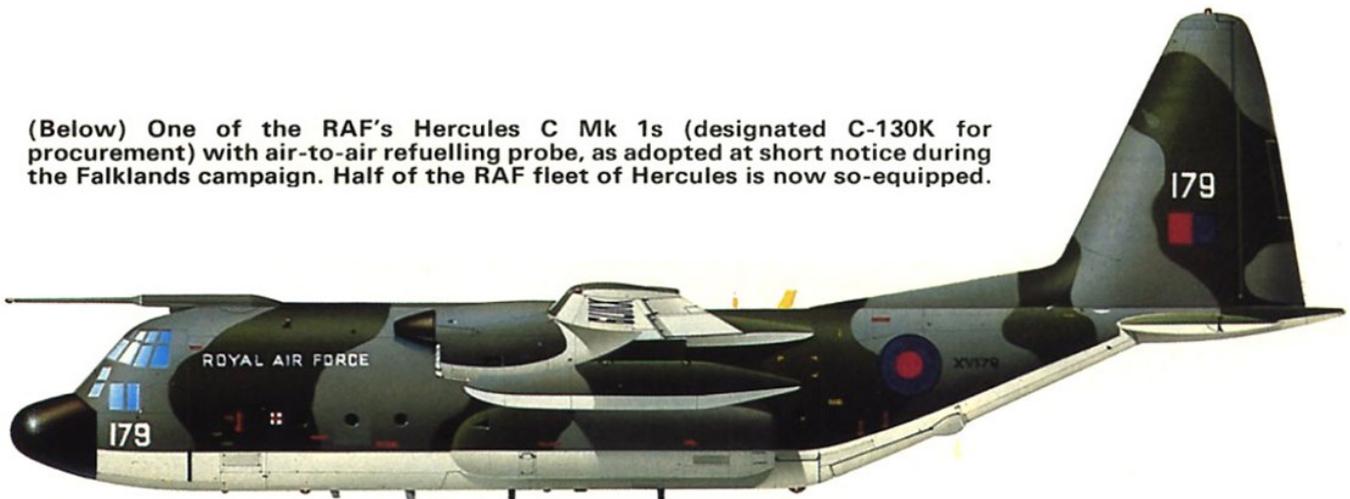
We eventually loaded the five pallets to the C130. Although no weight limits were exceeded the pallets were built to their maximum limits and so the minimum clearance inside the aircraft was realised. This left some 6 ins down the sides and an some 10 ins over the top between the load and the roof in the wheel well area. Forward of the load just two side para seats could be fitted. Aft a further set were intended to be used but could not be securely anchored to the floor! This whole effort would be derailed if we did not have a sympathetic and flexible Loadmaster and Aircraft

THE CAUSE OF OUR GRIEF – 2 X MK3 DEPLOYED THE LOAD AND 2 X MK1 WERE TASKED TO RECOVER THE SAME!

(Bottom) Of the total of 66 Hercules acquired by the RAF, 30 have now been modified (by Marshall of Cambridge) to C Mk 3 standard with fuselage lengthened to L-100-30 standard.



(Below) One of the RAF's Hercules C Mk 1s (designated C-130K for procurement) with air-to-air refuelling probe, as adopted at short notice during the Falklands campaign. Half of the RAF fleet of Hercules is now so-equipped.



Captain willing to take the load with the highlighted limitations. That, we would know later in the day when we met them back at the airfield.

So it was that after an exhausting long night, 6 untidy, greasy, tired individuals headed for their hotel. The other team had managed to bring along a slab (24 cans) of Budweiser and so we shared the contents as a "Sundowner". After a few hours sleep we were washed, refreshed and heading back to Barksdale. The first task being to despatch the C130 we had arrived on and the happy crew. Not long after the crew of our aircraft arrived. Fortunately they were quite flexible and with only a few observations which we addressed they accepted the load. The Aircraft Captain was quite new and did have a sense of humour. Whilst passing up their bags which we squeezed down the walls of the aircraft he pointed to his new stainless steel Samsonite and said "Look, MAMS proof", intimating a previous case has suffered damage at some stage.

Usually after take off the Air Loadmaster carries out a check of the rear of the aircraft. Checking for security of the load, any hydraulic leaks and the levels in the reservoirs. This time the checks were carried out on start up and once he was happy he vacated by the side para door and we locked ourselves in. The reason being that he could not climb over the load once airborne. Soon after this we were on our way to Gander, Newfoundland. The flight took 5hrs 25 mins and any food and drinks for the team at the rear were passed over the top of the pallets.

On arrival at Gander we were able to open the back side para door and proceeded to pass out all the baggage. One of the cases seemed to be wedged in quite firmly and a strong tug was required... off came the handle but the suitcase remained in situ. We eventually go it out and guess who it belonged to? We sheepishly passed out the suitcase followed by the handle. The Captain just looked stunned! The Corporal on the team asked "Is it still under Warranty Boss?"...

Downtown Gander we checked in to the Albatross Hotel. The RAF had been using this hotel for several years and a unique smell pervaded the corridors. This in fact was due to the fact that the Cubans also used this hotel when night stopping on their way to and from Angola. The smell was from their saving allowances and cooking their own meals.



CUBANA IL62 (VC TENSKY!)



ALBATROSS HOTEL GANDER

Once settled in, washed and refreshed three of us met up and headed over the road to the Gander Mall. A very small affair compared to many in the USA but did have a supermarket called Canadian Tire where all manner of hardware items could be purchased. On our way through the Mall, who should we meet but the Aircraft Captain. He was clutching a large paper bag and promptly said, "You can't break this" and dropped it on the floor. Inside was a teddy bear for his daughter! Great to see he maintained a sense of humour. After a few beers in a local bar we retired for the night.

The next morning we were still getting updates on the MGM fire and the tragic results. No more dramas and we were all ready for the flight back to UK. The procedure of locking ourselves in was repeated and off we set for RAF Waddington where we arrived some 6hrs 40 mins later. On arrival at Waddington a last minute addition to our task was to recover to Lyneham a Henley Hercules 10,000 lb forklift weighing over 14 tons. However, as our aircraft was roled in a pallet fit, no winch, the timber dunnage required to spread the weight of this piece of equipment was not available and the 'crew duty' clock ticking we couldn't recover it.

Finally, after an eventful trip with several unplanned events, we departed for Lyneham and home. This task had proved quite a challenge to recover the load from Barksdale back to UK. Leaving equipment behind was not an option and you have to deal with the hand you are given. With a lot of ingenuity and sometimes short tempers , we managed to recover all there was without endangering the aircraft or their occupants (including us). In this instance the task still only was accomplished with sensible flexibility from the aircraft crew.

The team had decreased by one as we departed Waddington for Lyneham. Hope had got permission to remain at Waddington and go directly home from there to start his terminal leave. I never saw him again.

Ian Berry

The teams:

Fg Off Bob Parker
FSgt Ian Berry
Sgt Hope Irvine

Flt Lt Alan Ovens
Sgt Hugh Curran
Cpl Stu Whitton

Sarajevo – Revisited



I thought I'd put pen to paper (key to screen?) after reading the article about Op Cheshire – the Sarajevo airlift in the last Team Brief. I had spent a month on det in Ancona in 1994 loading the thrice daily Hercules flight taking relief supplies into the city and had managed to get on a flight to see Sarajevo airport. That trip meant a total of 15 minutes at the airport and about 30 seconds of feet on the actual ground when I lifted the stool back onto the ramp. The Herc had been offloaded by the French Foreign Legion using a MAMS Henley and another set of forks.



Suburb of Sarajevo on approach to the airport



The mountains surrounding Sarajevo



“Romeo and Juliet”
Bridge

Last year, I was able to get a nightstop in Sarajevo and planned on visiting some of the sites which had featured in the news during the Civil War. Yes, a spot of war tourism. The flight was via Munich as there were no direct flights from the UK to the Sarajevo. It was certainly different to my last flight there; no Khe San approach, still a steep descent though as the city lies in a valley between mountains.

I was met and taken to my hotel. After checking in, I donned my walking shoes and set off to explore. Less than 100 yards and I was on the 6 lane road heading straight into the city. This was the infamous sniper alley.

A short walk along the road before I turned off Sniper Alley and headed towards the Mijacka River as I wanted to see the Vrbanja Bridge. This was renamed the Suada and Olga bridge in 1999, after the first 2 people, Suada Dilberović and Olga Sučić, who were shot and killed by Bosnian Serbs. This bridge was also the scene of another tragedy and is also known as the Romeo and Juliet Bridge.



Admira Ismić was a Bosniak (Muslim) who had made the mistake of falling in love with Boško Brkić, Bosnian Serb (Christian). Their religions meant they should have been sworn enemies in the civil war. An arrangement was made on the 19 May 1993 that no one would fire on the couple as they crossed the bridge so they could leave the city. But as they crossed the bridge, Boško was a shot by a sniper and killed instantly. A second shot wounded Admira. She was seriously wounded and managed to crawl to the Boško's body. She embraced him and died about 15 minutes later. The scene of her holding her lover was captured on film

by a Japanese TV crew and a photo journalist, Mark H Milstein.

Their bodies lay on the bridge for 7 days while arguments went on over who had shot the couple. Finally under cover of darkness, the bodies were removed by Serb forces. They lie next to each other in the Lion Cemetery among the thousands of other victims of the siege of Sarajevo.

A documentary was made about the couple and their deaths and shown on the US PBS channel. It is also on YouTube. <https://youtu.be/jnQ1ITAVjhw>

Archduke Ferdinand



Corner where Archduke Ferdinand was shot



Memorial plaque

Possibly the most famous spot in Sarajevo is where the “shot heard around the world” was fired. This was the corner where Archduke Ferdinand was shot and led to the First War. When I got there, the corner was busy with lots of tourists jostling for a photo of the corner while the traffic drove past in the narrow street.

War Relic Park



I found a bar next to a small park down one of the streets off "Sniper Alley". The park was like a small museum with various military vehicles including an armoured train. These vehicles were a reminder that Sarajevo had been the scene of fighting during the Second War as well as the First and the Siege

Roses of Sarajevo

I had heard of the Roses of Sarajevo and were high on my list of things I wanted to see. These are memorials in the streets where mortars had landed and killed at least 3 people. After the siege, the Government decided to make the damage left in the ground where the mortars exploded into memorials by filling in the damage with red resin. There are around 200 of the Roses located around the city. Some are more prominent than others as they are part of the pavement.



Markale Market



On 5 Feb 1994, a mortar landed in the Markale Market killing 68 people. The Serbs denied responsibility and accused the Bosnians of firing it at their own people in order to put international pressure on the Serbs. As a result of this, reinforcements were sent to UK UN force including mortar tracking radar. The flights were sent at short notice on the 18 Feb 1994 meaning a scratch team were called out and deployed to Split for 3 nights to assist the Det there. I was interested to see the market as that incident had led to me



being deployed to Split as part of the team with F/O Andy State, Floyd Patterson, Neil Beck, Shuggie Shewan, Ade Tew, John Belcher, Tony Folwer, Dave Wilson and Paul Crake.

The spot where the mortar exploded is marked with a Rose. It was thought provoking to stand next to the spot where 68 people had been killed while doing something so normal as shopping in a market. They are named on panels next to the Rose. A tail fin was put in the hole left by the explosion after the war. In my opinion this was not necessary as the Rose is enough of a memorial.

Holiday Inn

The Holiday Inn was well known as the press base during the Siege. The bright yellow hotel was at the end of Sniper Alley and became a feature on the news as the journalist would broadcast from there. It was badly damaged in the fighting but has been repaired and is now called the Hotel Holiday. It is opposite the Parliament buildings which were also badly damaged during the siege.



Memorial of the Murdered Children of Besieged Sarajevo 1992 – 1995

There were over 1300 children killed during the siege from all religious groups. This memorial is dedicated to all those children. Behind the memorial are tubes which name 521 children and give their ages. The memorial is made formed by a glass structure in the centre of a pond surrounded by a metal beach. The beach has hand and foot prints of children. These are taken from moulds of the siblings of some of those killed. The beach is made from shell fragments that were collected and melted down. The glass structure represents a mother and child and is made from glass which was recovered from broken windows throughout the city.





Rose outside the Parliament building



Reminder of better times for Sarajevo



Old blue tram passing the Holiday Hotel on "Sniper Alley"



Many other buildings still shown damage similar to this one.



*Memorial stone opposite the Holiday Hotel. It reads
Not to be forgotten and not to be repeated.
Nermin Divovic
1987 – 1994
.... 18 November 1994 at this place during the siege an aggressor sniper
killed a seven-year-old boy!*

RAF Bruggen

The former **Royal Air Force Station Brügggen**, in Germany was a major station of the Royal Air Force until 15 June 2001. It was situated next to the village of Elmpt, approximately 43 kilometres (27 mi) west of Düsseldorf near the Dutch-German border. The base was named after the village of Brügggen, the nearest rail depot. Construction began in mid-1952, which involved the clearing of forest and draining of marshland. The station became active in 1953 during the rapid expansion of NATO forces in Europe. In 2002, it was handed over to the British Army and renamed **Javelin Barracks**.

317 Supply & Transport Column

In 1953, the 317 Supply and Transport Column arrived at RAF Brügggen from Uetersen. This followed the decision to supply all RAF stations in Germany through the port of Antwerp. In 1954 the unit was redesignated as a Mechanical Transport Squadron and was responsible for equipping and supplying all RAF stations in Germany and The Netherlands. The unit remained at Brügggen until 1963, when it was amalgamated into the 431 Maintenance Unit which continued to operate until 1993. The demise of 317 MT Squadron marked the end of an era, as it had been on the continent shortly after D-Day under its previous title of 317 Supply & Transport Column. It had built itself an enviable reputation and following the cessation of hostilities carried out convoys to Prague, Warsaw and Moscow. In the 1950 Review of the Royal Air Force, the unit was described as the Carter Paterson of the autobahns.

Throughout its life, 317 carried out a number of humanitarian operations; the first being medical supplies to Bergen-Belsen. This was followed in 1947 by *Operation Woodpecker* in which timber and peat were supplied to the civilian population of northern Germany in one of the coldest winters on record. This was followed by the return of displaced persons and POWs to their home towns and cities within the British Zone. They were called upon again at the start of the Berlin Airlift (*Operation Plain Fare*), and lastly, in the winter of 1962/3, the Squadron took a convoy of fuel trucks to the oil refineries in Rotterdam for heating oil which was delivered to hospitals in Germany during the great freeze when the canals were inoperable.

1954–1998 – Strike/Attack role



Hardened Aircraft Shelter at RAF Bruggen, 1981

From 1954 – 1957 the fighter squadrons at Bruggen were 67, 71E, 112 & 130, equipped initially with Canadair Sabre F.4s, later re-equipped with the Hawker Hunters. These squadrons were either redeployed or disbanded in 1957 with the arrival of 87 Squadron, equipped with Gloster Javelins.

The initial strike capability at RAF Brügggen was provided by the English Electric Canberra from the summer of 1957. From 1969 to 1975 the Phantom FGR.2 operated in the strike/attack role and was replaced by the SEPECAT Jaguar from 1975. The squadron Jaguars were replaced by the Panavia Tornado GR.1 beginning in 1984. With a total of four Tornado GR.1 squadrons at Brügggen, and 2 more at its nearby sister airbase RAF Laarbruch, Brügggen and Laarbruch formed the largest Tornado force in NATO. Hardened Aircraft Shelters were equipped with the U.S. Weapon Storage Security System (WS3), each able to store up to 4 WE.177 tactical nuclear bombs, for delivery by Tornado aircraft.

1984 – Nuclear Incident

On 4 September 2007, the British military admitted that there had been an accident with a nuclear weapon at RAF Brüggen on 2 May 1984. The nuclear weapon fell from a transport truck, as the missile wasn't securely attached to the truck. The weapon was 8 times more powerful than the bomb that was dropped on Hiroshima in 1945. The casing was x-rayed after the incident, and found to have been undamaged. The six people who were responsible for the accident, received a reprimand for their actions in the incident.

1998–2001 – Attack role

Following reunification of Germany, the RAF announced plans to reduce its presence in the country by half. One major part of this was the reduction of Tornado squadrons in Germany from seven to four, No.9, No.14, No.17 and No.31 squadrons. No.9, No.14 and No.31 squadrons took part in the Gulf War and operated from the base during NATO's air operations in the Kosovo War, supported by Vickers VC10 tankers.

The decision to remove all RAF assets from Germany was taken in 1996. As a result of the Strategic Defence Review No. 17 Squadron disbanded on 31 March 1999 and began the gradual drawdown of the base. No. 14 Sqn relocated to RAF Lossiemouth in January 2001. A formal ceremony on 15 June officially ended a continuous Royal Air Force presence in Germany since World War II and all of the remaining Tornados had left for RAF Marham by 4 September 2001.

Brüggen squadrons

No. 9 Squadron RAF (1 October 1986 – July 2001) – operating Panavia Tornado GR.1, GR.4.

No. 14 Squadron RAF – operating Phantom FGR.2, SEPECAT Jaguar GR.1/T.2, Panavia Tornado GR.4.

No. 17 Squadron RAF – operating Phantom FGR.2, SEPECAT Jaguar GR.1/T.2, Panavia Tornado GR.1 (1985–99).

No. 20 Squadron RAF – operating SEPECAT Jaguar GR.1/T.2.

No. 25 Squadron RAF – operating Bloodhound missiles.

No. 31 Squadron RAF – operating Phantom FGR.2, SEPECAT Jaguar GR.1/T.2, Panavia Tornado GR.1, GR.4.

No. 37 Squadron RAF Regiment – operating Rapier.

No. 67 Squadron RAF (1954? – 1957) – operating Canadair Sabre F.4s and later Hawker Hunters.

No. 71 Squadron RAF (1954? – 1957) – operating Canadair Sabre F.4s and later Hawker Hunters.

No. 80 Squadron RAF – operating English Electric Canberra PR.7 (up to 1969).

No. 87 Squadron RAF (1957–1961) – operating Gloster Javelin FAW.1.

No. 112 Squadron RAF (1954? – 1957) – operating Canadair Sabre F.4s and later Hawker Hunters.

No. 130 Squadron RAF (1954? – 1957) – operating Canadair Sabre F.4s and later Hawker Hunters.

No. 213 Squadron RAF (1957–1969) – operating English Electric Canberra B(I).6.

No. 431 Maintenance Unit RAF – 431 MU.

Handover to Army

With the Royal Air Force having no use for site of the former RAF Brüggen, the base was handed over to the British Army on 28 February 2002 to become **Elmpt Station, Javelin Barracks**. The 18-hole RAF Brüggen Golf Club became West Rhine Golf Club.

Former units

7th Signal Regiment

16th Signal Regiment

Support Squadron

207 Signal Squadron

230 Signal Squadron

255 Signal Squadron

628 Signal Troop

1st Military Intelligence Battalion

HQ Company

Operations Support Company

16 Military Intelligence Company

Final closure

The barracks was closed in November 2015 and the site returned to German authorities. Since December 2015 the accommodation units have been used by the German government to house refugees.

RAF Belize

RAF Belize was the Headquarters unit of all Royal Air Force units of British Forces Belize from the mid 1970s to mid 1990s when RAF Belize was subsumed into the remaining British Army garrison.

Units included Hardet Belize 1975–6, 1977–1981; No. 1417 Flight RAF (1417 Flt), 1981–1993; Pumadet 1975-1981; No. 1563 Flight RAF (1563 Flt), 1981-mid 1990s; RAF Regiment Shorad squadrons, 1975–1993; Butcher Radar, 1975–6, 1977–1993; various support units: MT, Supply, Medical, ATC, Catering, etc. etc.. The vast majority of units were garrisoned at Airport Camp, adjacent to Philip S.W. Goldson International Airport, but some were deployed at other locations attached to British Army units; typically, Tactical Supply Wing (TSW) for refuelling helicopters, with Tactical Communications Wing (TCW) and Tactical Air Operations Centre (TAOC) providing dispersed communications and close support comms with transport helicopters and ground attack aircraft.

Aircraft flown by RAF Belize units included the Westland Puma HC.1 and Hawker Siddeley Harrier GR.3, with occasional detachments from No. 39 Squadron RAF with English Electric Canberra PR.9 photo-reconnaissance aircraft. Logistical support from the UK was provided by Vickers VC10 and Lockheed C-130K Hercules transport aircraft and, occasionally, Short Belfast C.1 Strategic Transport aircraft. In the late 1970s and early 1980s some non-urgent logistical transport tasks were sub-contracted to civilian cargo airlines, such as: Redcoat Air Cargo, flying Bristol Britannia freighters. Other British military visitors included Westland Wasp helicopters from various Royal Navy (RN) Caribbean guard-ships. On other occasions flypasts were made by aircraft from HMS Ark Royal before her retirement in 1979.

The Harrier ground attack aircraft of 1417 Flt were dispersed around the airport in camouflaged hides, (hides A to J), initially, but later concentrated at two locations either side of the runway in self-supporting sub-units: C-D hide (colloquially known as Charlie-Delta) and F-G hide (known as Foxy-Golf). The Puma helicopters of 1563 Flt were based at Williamson Hangar, operating from the airport until provided with their own helicopter operating platforms in 1986. Williamson Hangar also formed the hub for all engineering and supply support operations. Weapons storage was co-located with British Army Royal Army Ordnance Corps (RAOC) units at a weapons storage area near Airport Camp. Air traffic control, air defence and fighter control was based at Butcher Radar, with its own surveillance radar, opposite the airport aircraft servicing pan (ASP). Not part of RAF Belize was the Army Air Corps light helicopter unit, "Teenie Weenie Airways", which operated, variously, Westland Scout, Westland Lynx and Westland Gazelle helicopters.

RAF Belize was disbanded in 1993



1AMW's activation of Dakar (Senegal) as an interim technical stop for the South Atlantic Airbridge.



Flt Lt Maughan, SAC Howlett and Ground Handlers

On 11th March 2020, the World Health Organisation declared COVID-19 a pandemic, which within week's was accelerating at an unprecedented pace. As countries began closing their borders and announcing international travel restrictions, Cape Verde was no different. Unfortunately for UK Defence however, degradation of the Ascension Islands runway in 2017 resulted in Cape Verde being used as an interim technical stop for South Atlantic Airbridge (SAA) flights and a hub for Tactical Air Transport into Ascension Islands until the runway repairs could be completed. With Cape Verde's borders and hotels closing, this posed a very real operational risk to SAA operations and the 2-person, Individual Augmentee (IA) movements detachment established in Cape Verde to support it.

When SAA operations through Cape Verde ceased, the IA detachment were recovered back to the UK on 22nd March to be administered by 1AMW and held at readiness to redeploy to Cape Verde or with suitable preparation and agreement, any future SAA technical stop location.

In order to maintain critical air lines of communication between the UK and the BFAI Joint Operating Area (Falkland Islands and Ascension Islands), an alternate mid-route technical stop needed to be established. Dakar in Senegal was selected and on 26th March 1 AMW were activated to deploy to Dakar to re-establish the SAA until such a time that it either reverted back to Cape Verde or could be taken over by IA's. A team of 5 UKMAMS personnel (1 x Flt Lt, 1 x Cpl and 3 x SAC) armed with copious amounts of mosquito repellent departed RAF Brize Norton bound for Dakar. Their mission was to establish a new interim technical stop to enable the essential continuation of the SAA.

Led by Flt Lt Pete Maughan, over the course of the next 48 hours the team experienced several challenges including the prospect of a previously unknown requirement to go into 14-day quarantine upon arrival in Dakar. Fortunately, OC 1AMW, Wg Cdr Tom Walker, was able to do some swift, late night negotiating with the Defence Attaché to secure the freedom of movement which the team would require in order to successfully do their job. After a comprehensive brief by the Defence Attaché and Deputy Defence Attaché on the local

climate and regulations in force (including a very strict, daily curfew between 2000-0600L), the team were dropped off at their hotel.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions the lived hotel experience was very different to normal expectations with the team restricted to one single floor (including during meal times), which was enforced by the full-time presence of Embassy security staff. Nevertheless, the hotel staff and quality of catering was excellent throughout.

The next day, the Deputy Defence Attaché escorted the team to the airport. Whilst there, the team despatched the Voyager which they initially arrived on back to RAF Brize Norton, and then received/despatched a second Voyager, which was on its way to Mount Pleasant in the Falklands Islands. The ground handlers were exceptional throughout and the team were aided by the fact that the airport had no other commercial aircraft to support. Content with the service received from the ground handlers and the assessment of operations in Dakar, 3 of the UKMAMS team returned on the first aircraft, leaving Flt Lt Maughan and SAC Howlett in situ.

The day's work was far from over however. Flt Lt Maughan and SAC Howlett began meeting with airport authorities, Embassy staff and ground handlers, liaising closing with DSCOM to establish time scales, agree flight schedules within curfew times and confirm all services required to support Voyager aircraft. There was one hurdle which the team couldn't overcome however. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, there was no authority for passengers to disembark the aircraft under any circumstances, so as well keeping all passengers on board while it was being refuelled, the team were also heavily involved in the creation of contingency plans for several different scenarios including aircraft unserviceability which would require all passengers to remain on board overnight until a rescue flight could be generated.

Thanks to all this work and the superb support received from the Defence Attaché and his Embassy staff, and the Senegalese government, on 29th March, UK Defence once again had a safe and effective Airbridge through Dakar, capable of supporting 2 scheduled aircraft per week and additional frame swap aircraft. By the third rotation, the SAA was adding even more value and on 2nd April, on behalf of the Senegalese Government it provided the first of several repatriation flights back to the UK for FCO staff, British Nationals and vulnerable persons.



British Embassy Tweet during Repatriations

Unfortunately, the plan to backfill IA's into Dakar on 6th April did not work out. UKMAMS therefore continued to support the detachment until 1st May, when 1AMW Operational Support Sqn (OSS) RAFLO's (Flt Lt Chris Jacobs and Fg Off Rachael Brook) took over from UKMAMS, freeing up their capacity for other contingent tasking. Albeit later than originally planned, on 12th May IA's were deployed to take over the detachment from 1 AMW and the OSS RAFLO's returned to the UK.

Establishing Dakar as an interim technical stop as successfully and swiftly as 1 AMW did prevented what would have otherwise been a crippling effect on BFSAL operations. It is a great example of 1AMW's role in supporting wider UK Defence.



Flt Lt Maughan and SAC Howlett presenting the Ground Handling Manager with a token of 1 AMW's appreciation for their support

RAF Akeman Street

RAF Akeman Street is a former Royal Air Force Relief Landing Ground located 2 miles (3.2 km) north east of Minster Lovell, Oxfordshire, England. It was named after the Roman road which crosses the airfield.

The airfield was a Relief Landing Ground (RLG) for RAF Brize Norton, with building starting in 1939 and opening on 10 July 1940. Active flying stopped on 15 August 1945, and the site was closed on 1 February 1947

Based Units

Units that used the airfield were No. 2 Service Flying Training School RAF (2 SFTS) from Brize Norton with Airspeed Oxford aircraft and then No. 6 (Pilots) Advanced Flying Unit RAF based at RAF Little Rissington (later became 6 SFTS) between 1942 and 1945.

Other unit posted to the site included a sub site of No. 3 Maintenance Unit RAF between 9 April 1938 and January 1947 and a sub site of No. 21 Heavy Glider Conversion Unit RAF.

A German bombing raid on Brize Norton on 16 August 1940 forced the Advanced Training Squadron to move to Akeman Street.

I found this little item in the Royal Air Force Historical Society Journal No 35 and thought that I would share it with everyone. This is only up to 1992(Ed)

MOVEMENTS AND THE SUPPLY BRANCH

Gp Capt Duncan Grant

Duncan Grant joined the Service as a Halton apprentice and was commissioned in 1966. He served at Sharjah, Marham and MOD Carlisle. He helped to hand over Little Rissington to the Army. He commanded the Movements Training School at Brize Norton and then the Tactical Supply Wing, where he worked on concepts of operation for the Chinook. After several tours in Plans and Movements, Duncan retired in 1994 and now runs his own consultancy business.

‘There is little romance or glamour about the duties which they (the Movers) have performed, unless one sees in the maintenance of the long lines of communication, something of the romance of the merchants who travelled the trade routes in days gone by. Their battle has not only been against the enemy, but against geography and the weather, and most of all, against time.’

Pre-WW II

From the formation of the Equipment Branch until 1942, movements was an ad hoc affair organised either locally or piggy backing on arrangements made by the Army. However, as early as 1916 the RFC and RNAS were air dropping food and supplies to the besieged garrison of Kut el Amara in the Middle East. Indeed within the space of fourteen days nearly 9 tons were air dropped. The use of troopships for posting of personnel and freight movement by sea to the far flung outposts of the Empire were the order of the day. Large transport aircraft tended to be temporarily converted bombers with no inherent capability until the late 1920s and early ‘30s. Rather topically, it was the RAF mandate to police Mesopotamia that began to change the emphasis of operational deployments from surface to air means through the use of converted in-theatre bombers such as the Vernon. Mobility did not start in the 1960s!

WW II

The Advanced Air Striking Force deployed by air, land and sea to France in September 1939. Air elements in part used civil aircraft. All of this was achieved without a structured movements organisation. Prompted by the threat of invasion, a network of RAF Movements Units was established at ports of embarkation and at the Headquarters of the Regional Transport Commissioners, the Army Commands and certain key railway junctions and railheads. So, from its early days, the movements specialisation was used to working in a joint service environment. However, it was not until May 1942, as the momentum of global warfare gathered pace, that the Directorate of Movements was formed within AMSO’s bailiwick. Air Cdre F H Sims was the first Director. In 1942 three MT companies, operationally controlled by the Directorate, were established at strategic points in the UK in support, primarily, of the bomber offensive, while control of the other movements units became more centralised. The impact of Luftwaffe bombing on the UK’s industrial base caused considerable disruption, particularly on the delivery and distribution of raw materials critical to wartime production. The RAF movements organisation was tasked with ensuring that materials affecting the production of RAF equipment were moved with the minimum of disruption. This extended to acting as the importer and forwarding agent for the Ministry of Aircraft Production, covering the importation of all aircraft, spares, munitions, production equipment, raw materials and machine tools.

Two representative figures: 28,993 aircraft and 2,838,000 tons of equipment. Of course, the increasing challenge of logistics operations meant that training could not be forgone and, following the formation of RAF Transport Command in 1943, the RAF Movements Traffic School was formed at St Mawgan in March 1944. It provided a five-week course on surface and air movements for officers and SNCOs – more of training later. One of the less well known roles undertaken during WW II was the reception in the UK of some 70,000 Dominion and Allied air force personnel who were received at the port of disembarkation, entrained (a lovely word!) and distributed to their nominated UK bases. In addition, a continuous stream of trained aircrew returning to the UK from training in the USA, Canada, South Africa and Rhodesia were processed through the RAF Movements Organisations. In contrast, RAF movements staff embarked on troopships to assist in the administration of RAF personnel. Indeed Movements Officers were the nominated Commandants on a number of vessels. Away from the UK, RAF movements featured large in the successful operations in the Far East, Africa and Italy. In the Far East India was, of course, the base from which Slim's Army was supported by land and air, with the Dakota being the in-theatre workhorse. Between October 1942 and June 1944 over 6,000 vehicles and 350,000 tons of equipment were shipped to the North African theatre prior to the landings on Sicily and Italy. RAF Movements personnel were formed into beach units to facilitate the transit of men and material to the front; a forerunner to the D-Day landings. The movements contribution to D-Day saw the establishment of an RAF Concentration Area at Old Sarum through which all RAF personnel and vehicles were processed before moving to the ports of embarkation. By then RAF Transport Command, with the ubiquitous Dakota had introduced an air freight service which gathered momentum as the battles for Northern Europe rolled east. In the last three months of 1944 an average 4,000 tons of stores per month were airlifted from the UK into France.

The Immediate Post-War Years

The first post-war challenge faced by the RAF movements organisation was in 1948-49 in support of Operation PLAINFARE, the Berlin Airlift. During the operation some 65,857 sorties were flown by RAF aircraft. This massive task was supported by movements personnel in both the UK and Germany. Loading aids were minimal, muscle power and initiative being the order of the day, particularly with sacks of coal and potatoes! In July 1949 101 RAF transport aircraft (including the newly introduced Hastings) were augmented by forty civil registered aircraft. The use of the civil air fleet was a foretaste of things to come in the decades ahead. By the end of the airlift an RAF movements presence in Germany was firmly established at RAF Wildenrath in the west and Gütersloh to the east of the British Zone, with Gatow in Berlin itself. Collocated with the Movements Staff at HQ BAOR was the in-theatre RAF Movements Staff of HQ BAFO, later HQ 2nd TAF and ultimately HQ RAF Germany. By the end of the Korean War, which saw movements in the Far East controlled from Singapore, using the resident transport squadrons of the Far East Air Force, there were Movements Staffs in all of the key areas required to keep the Russian Bear and Chinese Tiger at bay: with HQ FEAF in Singapore; HQ MEAF at Aden; HQ NEAF in Cyprus and HQ RAF Germany at Rheindahlen. Here in the UK, HQs Bomber, Transport and Maintenance Commands all had Movements Staffs, complementing these overseas commitments. In the case of Maintenance Command its task focused on surface movements and transportation, continuing the historic WW II task of delivering to, and collecting from, the aerospace industry. During this time, and well before industry had conceived its 'Just In Time' concept, the surface movements organisation provided the key components of a Priority Freight Distribution Service—primarily in support of the V-Force. . No 16 MU at Stafford became a major transport nodal point with distribution tasks met principally by No 2 MT Sqn. In the South East, the London Movements Unit undertook similar work, initially operating out of Kidbrooke before moving to Woolwich. By 1956 the majority of troopships had been phased out and the deployment of personnel for both administrative and operational movement changed from one focused on surface movement to predominantly air movement. Initially, air trooping was undertaken by charter companies, but with the introduction of more sophisticated long range transport aircraft such as the Comet, Britannia and VC10, Transport Command (to become Air Support Command in 1967) took over most of the long-haul routes.

This was a sensible optimisation of the Air Transport Force's war mobility capacity. However, the need to deploy most of the British Army from the UK to Germany in the event of an outbreak of hostilities meant a significant reliance on the British civil air transport fleet managed by the RAF movements organisation – a policy predominant to this day and applied during both Operations CORPORATE and GRANBY in particular. During this period, movements personnel were also employed in support of the UK's nuclear deterrent. Bomber Command stations had specialist officers and airmen geared to supporting deployed operations, while a number of Movements Officers acted as Convoy Commanders for special weapons movements. Of course, by the early 1970s the V-Force task had changed. Even so, Mobility Supply Flights, as they were by then known, offered support in deployed operations across a range of aircraft types. An integral part of this change in emphasis was the recognition that, in the case of passenger movements in particular, the shape and size of the services, particularly after the end of National Service, did not warrant a single-service approach to movements management. Although the RAF had primacy, the Army, through the staff of the Quartermaster General, acted as an 'Intelligent Customer'. This was effected in the main by two joint service units under the functional control of the Director of Movements (RAF). They were the Joint Services Air Trooping Centre (JSATC) at Hendon and the Joint Services Booking Centre, later to be restyled as the Services Booking Centre (SBC), at Albert Embankment, London. The JSATC provided day to day contract supervision of all civilian air trooping flights mounted from civil airfields, particularly the London airports, compassionate travel support and manpower for employment at civil airports in a crisis. It also offered a military (and family) stopover facility as required. Complementing the JSATC, was the SBC which provided a passenger reservation and booking system for travel from the UK.

The Impact of the Labour Government Defence Review - The Late-1960s and Early-1970s

Following Dennis Healey's Defence Review our world wide commitments based upon a strategy of Empire policing had changed. Flexibility and mobility, with operations mounted through rapid deployment from the UK Base, were now the order of the day. A somewhat familiar concept that has stood the test of time. To support this concept, the RAF's strategic air transport fleet of VC10, C-130, Belfast and Britannia aircraft supported by the tactical transports, the Beverley and latterly the Argosy and Andover, offered an inter- and in-theatre airlift capability second only to that of the USA in the western world. At their peak these fleets were based in the UK at Abingdon, Benson, Brize Norton, Colerne, Lyneham and Thorney Island, with additional Argosies, C-130s and Andovers located in the Near, Middle and Far East. Deployed support of these air transport assets was provided by Mobile Air Movements Squadrons (MAMS) based in-theatre, with UKMAMS being the centre of excellence and now sole such organisation. Originally based at Abingdon, it moved to Lyneham in 1974 and has the proud boast of being 'First in and last out'. The capability for deployment and mobility support was tested in 1970 during Exercise BERSATU PADU to the Far East. This exercise involved full deployment by air of a range of air assets to Malaysia and follow-on support in-theatre. Some 2,800 passengers and 900 tons of cargo were deployed over a ten-day period with 4,000 passengers and 650 tons of freight being recovered. A sea change in capability and support of deployed operations from the UK base had been successfully demonstrated.

The 1980s and 1990s

By 1980, the effects of the 1975 Defence Review had filtered through to the movements organisation. The need for economy drove rationalisation of fleet management and aircraft utilisation. This resulted in the acquisition of a Global Information Technology based Movements Management and Reservation System operated by British Airways on behalf of the MOD. The system offered global aircraft scheduling visibility and capacity availability for both RAF and MOD charter airlift.

Booking centre staff world wide had instant capacity and availability information for the first time. Key Point Indicators showed utilisation to be as much as 92% for scheduled services, while in terms of operational planning visibility, allowed prompt management decisions to be made. Indeed such was the capability and flexibility of the system that the British Military Train operating on the Berlin Corridor during the Cold War was managed through the system. On the equipment front the exceptional wide-bodied airlift capability of No 53 Sqn's Belfasts had been sold off to commercial operators, while the multi-capable turboprop Britannia had been retired. However, the Cold War had not yet been won and the need to ensure sufficient manpower for support of the lines of communication into Germany and outloading of men and material saw the formation of No 4624 Sqn Royal Auxiliary Air Force to provide a cadre of personnel to reinforce the range of movements units requiring support in what was then known as Transition-to-War. The formation of the squadron came too late for the heavy tasking occasioned by Operation CORPORATE, the recovery of the Falkland Islands. Movements personnel served on the troopships *Uganda*, *Norland*, *Cunard Countess* and other vessels, just as their predecessors had done fifty years previously. Wideawake airfield on Ascension Island played a pivotal role in the 8,000-mile supply chain and remains so today. During CORPORATE the availability of the civilian air fleet, including the large capacity Belfast, by then commercially operated by HeavyLift, ensured that shortfalls in military capacity were bridged. One beneficial outcome of the lessons learned from Operation CORPORATE was the acquisition of nine Lockheed TriStars which, although mainly converted to the air-to-air refuelling role, offered a modern dual-capable airlift capacity for personnel and materiel. Operation GRANBY, the first Gulf War, depended in equal measure on air and sea re-supply and saw movements resources managed in a joint environment on a significant basis by both MOD and the Joint Headquarters at High Wycombe. In-theatre Joint Helicopter Support Units were an integral part of the Chinook force, while UKMAMS teams operated in support of the tactical air transport effort both in-theatre and at Akrotiri. RAuxAF personnel of No 4624 Sqn provided reinforcement here and elsewhere in the supply chain. Yet again the civil airlift capacity proved essential to meeting the military shortfall. However, the lack of a heavy lift capacity was to prove a disadvantage in moving heavy equipment in the right quantities to the right place at the right time. The need to deploy large quantities of freight by air also reinforced the need for more effective cargo handling equipment and associated asset tracking systems. During the crisis there was an early decision not to use Powers of Direction for the Civil Air Fleet-mainly because there was no effective legal tool to ensure that aircrew were willing to fly into designated war zones! Accordingly, normal commercial procurement of airlift by competitive tender still applied. The competition for air freight capacity was quite severe, although one well known UK airline ultimately declined to fly east of Cyprus on MOD business. These lessons learned reinforced the case for additional in-service capacity, particularly that of large cargo carrying aircraft. However, it is of interest to note that, notwithstanding the challenges, the airlift was not insignificant, amounting to some 45,579 personnel being deployed by air along with 52,661 tonnes of freight (including munitions). This airlift bill was met by both the Air Transport Force and the Civil Air Fleet, including chartered Antonov 124 aircraft, not all operating from the UK as their home base. In-theatre a deployed fleet of C-130s was supported by an in-theatre movements staff and UKMAMS personnel on the ground at Main Operating Bases and various tactical locations, including Forward Operating Bases supporting the re-supply of 1st Armoured Division. Much has been said of the challenges, tasks and achievements of the RAF Movements Organisation. However, without the right quality of people and associated training, as with the rest of the Royal Air Force, little could have been accomplished. From its origins at St Mawgan, through Kidbrooke, Abingdon and now Brize Norton, as an outstation of the Defence College of Logistics, the RAF Movements School has provided this training and it currently offers a range of courses for more than 1,000 students of the three Services each year.

As the majority of airmen in the movements trade, and most of the officer throughput, is geared to first appointments in a front line environment, attitudinal training plays an important part in the training

process for *ab initio* students. Given the exposure of this element of the Supply and Movements Staffs to the operational environment and on-aircraft work this is designed to ensure safety, accuracy, timeliness and responsiveness under pressure. It also offers the Supply Officer direct exposure to the front line with its attendant pressures which stands him (or her) well in career development. Pressures manifest themselves in many ways. During the early 1990s pressures became particularly political within both the Army and the RAF, covetous eyes being directed on the place where the movements organisation should most properly rest; either in the logistics or operational structures of the downsized Services. With the establishment in 1992 of the Directorate of Logistics Operations, as the successor organisation to the Directorate of Movements, the RAF finally recognised at MOD level the synergy between movements and mobility.

Acknowledgements:

1. Air Historical Branch.
2. Wg Cdr Dennis Micalleff.
3. Sqn Ldr Mike Brown.

Muharraq Airfield

Muharraq Airfield is a military base located adjacent to Bahrain International Airport. It is run by the United States Navy (USN) and usually ships supplies in and out of the airport with many of them from other countries as well. The USN, the United States Marine Corps (USMC), the Ministry of Interior, and others run the security at the airfield. Often referred to as the nearby city of Manama, Muharraq Airfield was the last stop for most US troops headed to join the NATO forces in Afghanistan.

It was previously established by the Royal Air Force as RAF Bahrain (later changed to RAF Muharraq) in April 1943 and remained in use until 1971 when Bahrain declared independence.

History

The Royal Air Force's history with Bahrain can be traced back to 1924, with flights originating from Shaibah Air Base in Iraq. The perceived strategic importance of Bahrain by the British led to the signing of a civil air agreement with the King of Bahrain in 1934.

The Royal Air Force established a base there in the area as RAF Bahrain on 22 May 1943, as part of RAF Iraq Command. It was later renamed RAF Muharraq in 1963. The base was formally shut down on 15 December 1971.

The base was used by a detachment of Vickers VC10 tankers from No. 101 Squadron RAF during the Gulf War training with Royal Air Force Panavia Tornado GR1's.

From May 1997 a detachment of VC10's returned supporting Operation Jural and later Operation Bolton over Iraq. It became part of No. 83 Expeditionary Air Group in the Middle East.

UKMAMS Task 482 – Turkey PPE Recovery April 2020



At the start of 2020, COVID-19 began to sweep across the globe becoming a major pandemic that ground society as we knew it to a halt. Lock downs, social distancing and the furlough of workers became common place as the disease reached its peak infection rate in the UK, and the NHS became overstretched with the shortage of life saving PPE becoming headline news.

In response to the crisis, NHS suppliers began searching for new PPE manufacturers in order to quickly plug the gap but were in direct competition with other Nations increasing the need to quickly secure potential suppliers. At short notice, UKMAMS were mobilised to deploy to Istanbul in Turkey, where Foreign Office and NHS staff had secured a contract for an initial batch of 400,000 items from a new supplier.



Because of the scale of the load and the tight timescales involved, 20 UKMAMS personnel were deployed on the initial A400M with the order to plan, accept, paperwork, build and load the entire consignment to a further 2 x C17's and 2 x A400M's.

They say no plan survives first contact, well this resonated perfectly with this task! On arrival at the airport it was clear that the expected delivery from the Turkish supplier was not going to be met and that the initial plan had to be torn up and started again from scratch. To make matters worse, strict COVID-19 restrictions in Turkey and the sudden arrival of National Turkish media made this task far more complex than the usual UKMAMS task.

After the first day the decision was made to send whatever PPE we had on hand back to the UK on the initial A400M with the UKMAMS team remaining in Turkey on the understanding more PPE was being secured by the NHS team at DE&S and more aircraft would follow as soon as we had a confirmed plan.

As the days passed the PPE orders started to slowly be received and we ended up with enough to fill to capacity a C17 and an A400M. On the fourth day of negotiating with all stakeholders, which included breaking through a severe language barrier (Google translate has become a team favourite) and eating rations in hotels rooms cooked in kettles, we were finally in a position to recover back to the UK with the task achieved.



By the end of the task the team recovered 24 aircraft pallets worth of essential PPE. As soon as the shipments arrived at RAF Brize Norton, Air Movements Squadron and an RLC team were on standby to quickly rebuild the loads for ground transport directly to the NHS PPE distribution depot. In summary, this was a fascinating task that provided the team with a series of unique challenges that were made even more complex due to the political fallout in the UK and local language barriers. Overall though the team operated in the usual MAMS manner, acting professionally throughout, and making the very best of a bad situation.

British Army Bell 212 Helicopter Heads To Brunei Found in Pathfinder International Magazine



Moving a Bell 212 helicopter to Brunei by Royal Air Force Boeing C17 requires a lot of planning.

Key to this is making sure the helicopter, when it is loaded onto the giant aircraft, is securely tied down for the mammoth journey.

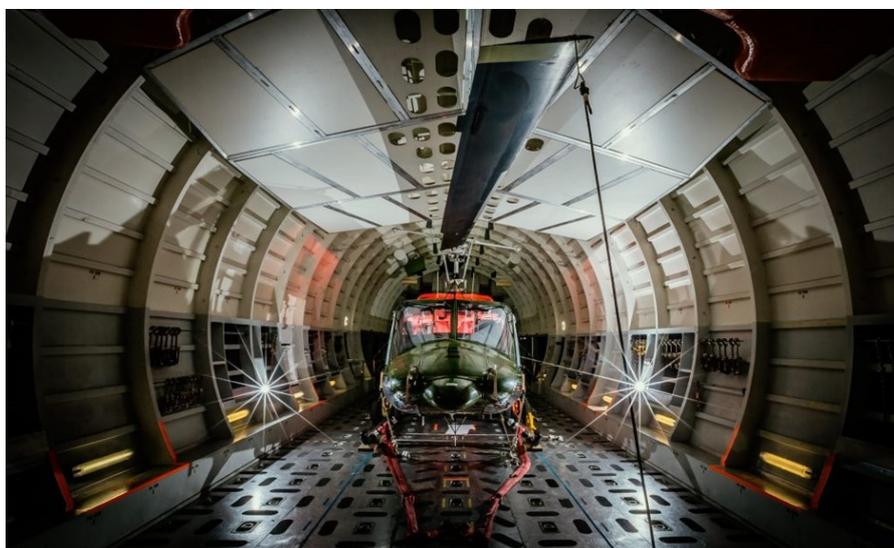
Engineers and Logisticians at the Joint Air Delivery Test and Evaluation Unit based at RAF Brize Norton are tasked with this important job. Using the exact replica 'mock up' of the C17 in their hangar; the team first work out a tie down scheme for the safe transport of the 212 before it is loaded onto the real thing.

From the moment it arrived, a dedicated team of military and civil service personnel swarmed over the helicopter; manufacturing loading beams, calculating restraint requirements and generally ensuring the valuable cargo would arrive in Brunei and be ready to fly with no issues.



A team of military and commercial contractors will travel to Brunei to offload and assemble the helicopter where it will be used by the Army Air Corps at the British Army's training base.

The primary role of Joint Air Delivery Test and Evaluation Unit (JADTEU) is to conduct operational trials and evaluation to develop the delivery by air of personnel, machines and materiel on behalf of sponsors. In addition it provides advice/recommendations to MOD sponsors, other government departments, civilian industry and foreign governments on all air transport matters.



The Bell 212 is used by the Army Air Corps in the jungle areas of Brunei. A winch on the side of the aircraft also enables medical evacuation in otherwise difficult terrain. Consequently the Bell 212 is currently employed in predominantly jungle areas where its performance is a great advantage.

1AMW and RAF Brize Norton support to Operation BROADSHARE 2020

By Flt Lt Anne Scott 1AMW

At the beginning of 2020, way before lock-down (if we can all remember what life was like back then), RAF Brize Norton was tasked to support Operation BROADSHARE; a task to repatriate British Nationals from Wuhan Province, China at the start of the COVID-19 outbreak.

It was a task that not only pulled on resource throughout Brize Norton including 1AMW, RAF Police, Stn Ops and Air Traffic Control, but an effort that spanned several governmental agencies to assist the Foreign Commonwealth Office (FCO). Brize Norton's task was to plan and facilitate an airfield to allow the repatriation at a time when other airports were cautious to receive such an aircraft, with the unknown virus gripping world media. As the perimeter fence was surrounded by numerous news agencies, behind the gates of Brize the Station pulled together to assist and facilitate the arrival of the first WAMOS Airlines Boeing 747 aircraft.



The repatriation was given the green light in late January and the evacuation of Brits from Wuhan Province started when the World Health Organisation declared an international public health emergency. The first B-747 arrived on the 31st January carrying more than 80 British Nationals. As the FCO, Public Health England (PHE), Police and Ambulance services from surrounding areas anxiously awaited the inbound flight to land, 1 AMW's Air Movements Squadron were ensuring the correct aircraft handling equipment was in place and prepared themselves to get 'hands on'. Before the Duty Air Movements Officer (DAMO) could authorise the opening of the aircraft doors, the PHE representatives had to assess the on-board situation to ensure that passengers were showing no signs and symptoms of Covid-19. Once the clearance was given, the DAMO signalled for the crew to open the aircraft doors to finally allow for the offload of all passengers to the pre-positioned coaches which would take the passengers to the isolation facility on the Wirral.



This set the tone for further flights, with the second aircraft landing into Brize Norton late on Sunday the 2nd of February, this time carrying 11 passengers. Again, representatives from several organisations came together to assist the flight upon arrival. Due to a passenger developing suspected symptoms in flight, this required a slightly different handling approach. Personnel were ordered to use the PPE that was provided and once the DAMO had given the ok for the doors to be opened the AMS team then arranged and assisted in the offload of baggage from the hold. The final B-747 arrived at Brize on the morning of Sunday 9th February, this time carrying more than 200 people. With the arrival falling within the midst of Storm Ciara, the task presented a number of additional challenges for Movements team, not least the ability to safely use the passenger steps, operating on the very edge of their limits. Slightly different from the previous tasks, this flight had repatriated not just British Nationals, but also passengers from a host of other European nations. Whilst the UK passengers were all transferred to Milton Keynes, the other passengers boarded European military aircraft to take them on to their final destination, adding to the complexity of the morning's already busy flying programme.

Thanks to the hard work of Brize Norton personnel and those from other governmental agencies, over 300 personnel were repatriated within a period of 8 days. This being only the start of the military's support to the governments fight against COVID-19.

RAF Ahlhorn

RAF Ahlhorn, is a former Royal Air Force station located 1 mile (1.6 km) south east of the centre of Ahlhorn, Lower Saxony and 11 miles (18 km) north of Vechta, Lower Saxony, Germany Originally, it was a German airbase for Zeppelins. The Royal Air Force (RAF) disestablished the station and it was closed down in the autumn of 1958 and was transferred to the Bundeswehr.

History

World War I

Originally, the site was a German base for Zeppelins during World War I.

World War II and beyond

During World War II the airfield was used as an Advanced Landing Ground before becoming a permanent RAF station.

No. 14 Squadron RAF	Hawker Hunter F.4/F.6
No. 16 Squadron RAF	Hawker Tempest F.2
No. 20 Squadron RAF	Hawker Hunter F.6
No. 26 Squadron RAF	Hawker Tempest F.2 & Hawker Hunter F.6
No. 33 Squadron RAF	Hawker Tempest F.2
No. 96 Squadron RAF	Gloster Meteor NF.11
No. 149 Squadron RAF	English Electric Canberra B.2
No. 193 Squadron RAF	Hawker Typhoon Ib
No. 197 Squadron RAF	Hawker Typhoon Ib
No. 213 Squadron RAF	English Electric Canberra B(I).6
No. 256 Squadron RAF	Gloster Meteor NF.11
No. 263 Squadron RAF	Hawker Typhoon Ib
No. 266 Squadron RAF	Hawker Typhoon Ib
No. 302 Polish Fighter Squadron	Supermarine Spitfire XVI
No. 308 Polish Fighter Squadron	Supermarine Spitfire XVI
No. 317 Polish Fighter Squadron	Supermarine Spitfire XVI

Current Use

Jagdgeschwader 73 was formed at Ahlhorn and Oldenburg on 1 April 1959. Jagdgeschwader 71 of the German Air Force were to take residence from June 1959 with 50 Canadair Sabres, Germany's first operational jet fighter unit. They remained at Ahlhorn until 1961.

A number of solar panel are now located on the former site

Gibraltar gets the Covid Vaccine

The RAF has delivered a second batch of Pfizer Vaccines to RAF Gibraltar on behalf of the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office. A total of 4,875 doses were kept in temperature-controlled packaging with 50kg of dry ice on board the A400M. Having been loaded and flown from RAF Brize Norton, the vaccines were then handed over to members of the Royal Gibraltar Regiment to rapidly transport the vaccine to St Bernard's Hospital, Gibraltar Health Authority. They will be used to vaccinate Gibraltar's front line workers and the most at-risk population





NOW I KNOW....

In April 1974 my team was tasked with travelling to RAF Odiham by road and then load four Wessex Helicopters of 72 Sqn onto two Belfast C1 Freighters which would then take them to RAF Masirah, an island off the coast of Oman in the Persian Gulf. We were allocated four hours to load each Belfast and then recover by road back to RAF Lyneham. Having completed this complicated loading procedure a few times before we were not anticipating any problems, and neither was there.



WESSEX READY TO BE LOADED, BLADE BOXES BEHIND TEAM

All four helicopters, XR511, XR525, XS678 and XT675 had been well prepared by the 72 Sqn personnel. The rear pylon and tail rotor of the helicopter is removed and fitted in a castored crate. The four rotor blades are removed and stowed in their transportation box and the rotor head is removed and placed in another castored stand, this is to reduce the overall height of the load. The main fuselage is then bolted on top of a “sledge” with its two mainwheels still fitted. Inside the fuselage the space is used to accommodate extra role equipment, aircraft documentation and safety equipment.

As soon as we arrived at Odiham things got quite hectic prior to the arrival of the first Belfast but these “moves” were also “old hat” to the squadron and the preparation was faultless. What was novel to me was the fact that all the helicopters and support vehicles were sprayed in a new desert camouflage scheme I had not seen before. As they were headed for Oman, I thought nothing of it. I also didn’t notice the lack of roundels!

We had already briefed the Station Aircraft Handling Party and they conveniently marshalled and parked the first Belfast as close as they could to where the load was waiting. The aircraft ramp was lowered to the ground and the vehicle “toe ramps” were installed. Ground power was applied and then the aircraft winch cable was extended out of the aircraft. The rotor blades were located on the main floor and then the first rotor head and tail assembly was winched onto the main floor and then positioned and restrained. Prior to loading the first helicopter a set of aircraft roller conveyor and beams are located offset from the aircraft centreline all the way from the front of the aircraft back to the sill, on to the toe ramps themselves and continuing for another 16 feet on the pan itself. The distance between the rollers is pre-set so that the skids on the sledge beneath the helicopter align with the centre of both rollers.



WESSEX XR525 BEING WINCHED IN NOSE FIRST



**WINCHING IN WATCHING THE CLEARANCE,
NOTE ROLLER**

We had already briefed the Station Aircraft Handling Party and they conveniently marshalled and parked the first Belfast as close as they could to where the load was waiting. The aircraft ramp was lowered to the ground and the vehicle “toe ramps” were installed.

Ground power was applied and then the aircraft winch cable was extended out of the aircraft. The rotor blades were located on the main floor and then the first rotor head and tail assembly was winched onto the main floor and then positioned and restrained. Prior to loading the first helicopter a set of aircraft roller conveyor and beams are located offset from the aircraft centreline all the way from the front of the aircraft back to the sill, on to the toe ramps themselves and continuing for another 16 feet on the pan itself. The distance between the rollers is pre-set so that the skids on the sledge beneath the helicopter align with the centre of both rollers.

Once this is done the first helicopter is then slowly manhandled up to the rear of the Belfast until the front of the skids connects with the pre-laid rollers. At this stage the winch is connected and the sledge is slowly winched onto the ramp. Once the helicopter mainwheels have left the ground, winching is halted and the mainwheels removed.



SECOND ONE ABOUT TO GO IN TAIL FIRST



READY TO WINCH IN – TAIL FIRST

Winching is then continued until the helicopter is completely on the Belfast ramp and the top of the helicopter is now close to the upper door of the Belfast. Once again, all is stopped and then the helicopter is secured in this position on the ramp so that it cannot move.

The toe ramps at the rear of the Belfast are now disconnected and the ramp is raised to the horizontal. Once this has been achieved the helicopter is now slowly inched forward to its final location on the main floor of the aircraft and restrained against movement using chains & tensioners.

Once this has happened we are ready for the second Wessex. Prior to winching this one in the Belfast ramp is once again lowered to the ground and the toe ramps fitted. This time the helicopter is loaded first. It is also winched in tail first and as the roller has been offset to the other side of the first helicopter the two actually interlock. This enables us to gain extra room on the aircraft main floor.

Once the second helicopter fuselage has been restrained for flight the other equipment is then located. Rotor blades, rotor head and tail section. Once the restraint of the helicopters has been completed the loose roller and other equipment used to achieve the load must be then stowed and restrained ready for use at the arrival airfield. Sometimes this task takes longer than the loading of the helicopters themselves. We managed to complete the load within the four hour window and the first Belfast was then on its way.



WESSEX XS678 IN OMANI MARKINGS

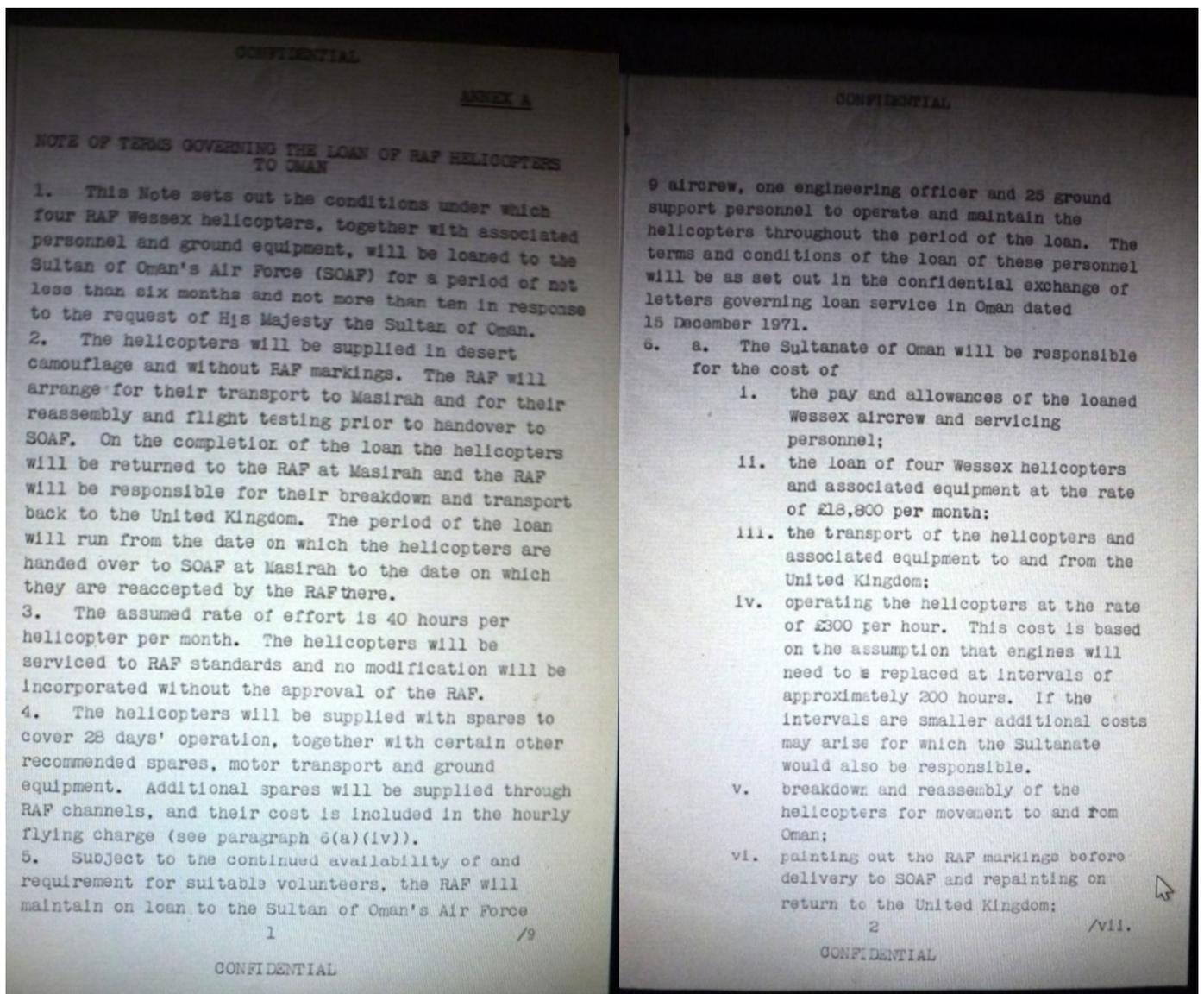
I recall we had at least an hour before the arrival of the second Belfast and were able to have a coffee and quick debrief on any snags we encountered and suggestions to improve the next turnaround.

Once again all went well (not always the case!) and the Belfast departed for Masirah via Akrotiri on schedule. In addition to the four Wessex helicopters deploying to Masirah there were also 9 aircrew and 25 engineers and support personnel. A C130 Hercules had also been tasked to deploy these personnel and all their support equipment including a Landrover, power sets, spare Gnome ECU and a spares pack up. The latter is known as a FAP – Fly Away Pack. Most of this is packed in Lacon containers, suitably marked for ease of identification.

After quite a long day but a feeling of “Job well done” we reloaded our own equipment back into our $\frac{3}{4}$ ton trailer and recovered back to Lyneham in the early evening. Just another task, but many years later I did some research.

In the early 70s, Oman, especially in the Southern Dhofar region which included RAF Salalah was under threat and attack from communist backed rebels. To assist the Omani Government, the UK had supplied a small military force, including the SAS to counter this threat. The small Omani Air Force, operating Strike-masters, Skyvans and Bell 214 helicopters was operated by ex-RAF or seconded RAF personnel. Remarkably at this time the Iranians were also offering assistance. In early 1974 the situation in Oman became serious as most of the Omani helicopters were grounded and action was needed.

NOTE; BEFORE ANYONE CHOKES ON THEIR CORNFLAKES THE FOLLOWING LETTER WAS DECLASSIFIED IN 2005 AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC. I COPIED IT FROM THE FCO FILE FCO8/2229 ONLINE AT www.agda.ae



ANNEX A OF THE AGREEMENT SIGNED OFF BY THE THEN FOREIGN SECRETARY JAMES CALLAGHAN

After a lot of covert negotiations by MOD and the FCO the solution was to “loan” four Wessex helicopters operated and supported by the RAF but funded by the Omani Government. The loan would be for eight months. The helicopters were to be delivered to RAF Masirah, reassembled and then flown to RAF Salalah from where they would operate. At this stage the helicopters had Omani markings applied. From all accounts the detachment acquitted themselves well and helped “save the day”. In December 1974 the four helicopters returned to Masirah, were stripped down for recovery by air and then transported back to Odiham. Now I know!



A VERY RARE SHOT OF ONE OF THE WESSEX COMPLETING AN ENGINE RUN AT RAF MASIRAH

I initially wrote this article for the Swindon U3A Aviation Group and so to them Team names are immaterial. The first picture does show three of them though – FS Dave Barton, Sgt John Illsley and SAC ‘Farmer’ Tucker. Ian Berry

The following photos were sent in by Martin Jones, they are of the IALCE, Erzerum Turkey, 1983
Name remembered are Martyn Turner, Duggie Melton?, Jeff Haynes Mams Eng?, Chris
Simkins, Al (Jock)Rae, Steve Williams, John Kilpatrick, Dave Roberts, Hoss (with crutches),
Martin Jones







The following were sent in by Martin Jones they are of Bravo Team Las Vegas 1983
Martin Jones, Jo Joseph, Ginge Barrett, Roy Bolton, Kev Sullivan, Colin Allen







Oh my gosh! Am I really going to divulge this? Well tis like this me handsome. On a weekend, especially on 'Gods day', and of course after the marching to the bands down to those holy places to sing and praise the Lord. Although I cannot understand why the Padres wanted paying for this, they disguised this by calling it a collection! You'd be lucky mister, what on my pittance!

Well to continue...I as most of us at this stage in life, as young lads, growing at a phenomenal rate, used to get these strange urges within our growing bodies. (Me thinks that they haven't passed over yet either)

These (Urges) were possibly thrust upon us lads even after fighting off the effects of all that 'Bromide' secretly stirred into our (What was described as) tea.

On these hallowed days of sunshine and bliss after getting past those vengeful devils of the white hat variety, who leapt from their slumbers to chastise and bolster-up their aggressive bullying technics from within those dungeons, which were loosely called guardrooms; we set off into the big wide-world....., to chase skirts.

Yep its true! Well me dears, every Sunday a train load of these lovely beauties came from that city of sin and debauchery, Woverhampton. I mean come on...., these trains were full of beauties seeking me out; well others were involved too, but what an experience. I am of course telling you all this for a friend, who wishes to remain incognito. (Where the hell is Cognito?

But listen up, I gesture not, this is Kosher stuff, it was even reported in the 'News of the World,' so it must be true. Some of the girls even gave interviews...., thankfully my name wasn't mentioned.

Liaisons were fostered either on the Cosford Holt station or the little Café down the road. We were of course, given instructions 'NOT' to be seen holding hands, (Or anything else) by those with stripes or rings on their arms. Bugger: don't think anyone took any notice of that, anyway these girls might have escaped.

These liaisons were also carried out, sometimes, on a Saturday and even for short periods on a weekday evening, after digging a hole under the fence at the back of the camp....., so I was told.

Years later at an airfield which housed the Screaming Argosy's, one of my team had developed a friendship with the young lady who I became besotted with, after I left Cosford, made her pregnant and after a short marriage dumped him...Life is good though innit?

There is more, but I'm not telling.

Gerry

FROM THE 540

By Ian Berry



1966 – 55 YEARS AGO...

Formed as a section at RAF Abingdon in 1958, consisting of 4 teams (a team being 1 officer, 2 SNCOs, 1 Cpl and 2 Airmen). No headquarters was established and all programming and administration was done by the officer i/c teams. Progress has been made since June 1965, a headquarters has been established and the teams increased from 4 to 7. On the 1st May 1966, Squadron status and the title UNITED KINGDOM MOBILE AIR MOVEMENTS SQUADRON (UKMAMS) was attained. The 'squadrons' primary role is to provide a mobile force of highly skilled air movements specialists capable of establishing, or reinforcing, air movements sections when required, as an essential pre-requisite to the flexible employment of Air Transport. The present officer commanding is Squadron Leader W Jacobs.

UKMAMS is now suitably scaled for clothing adequate to permit their operating in Arctic and tropical climates. Land rovers and trailers have been established and a recent addition has been the tractor rough terrain with a forklift capability coupled with 5 ton trailers. The next item needed is an efficient 2 way radio, capable of establishing a link between load control and aircraft loading parties. It is hoped that a suitable piece of equipment will be available soon.



ROUGH TERRAIN FORKLIFT (RTFL) AND 5 TON TRAILER



RTFL OFFLOAD (NARROW AXLE/WIDE AXLE!)

During their many deployments on all major Air Exercises and Operations supported by Transport Command, MAMS teams apart from working at all the RAF staging posts across the world, have been deployed to assist in Operations in Cyprus, Borneo, Radfan, East, Central and West Africa, and British Guiana. They have assisted in various relief operations some being earthquake relief at Skopje and Agadir, also hurricane relief at Kingston Jamaica.

On Exercises, apart from deployment to airfields and airstrips throughout the British Isles, MAMS have supported the Transport Force during NATO Exercises, CENTO Exercises, Joint Service Exercises and Army Exercises. This has meant deployment to all corners of the earth. From Portugal a Beaufighter was loaded into 2 Beverley aircraft and brought back to this country as a museum piece.



BEVERLEY OF 47SQN AT RAF ABINGDON 1966



BEAUFIGHTER RD253 AT THE RAF MUSEUM HENDON – THE ACTUAL AIRFRAME DONATED BY THE PORTUGUESE NAVY AIR ARM

During the crisis over Rhodesia 4 MAMS teams were deployed for duties at Nairobi, Dar-es-Salaam and Lusaka. This has now been reduced to 2 teams, 1 at Lusaka, and the other at Nairobi, the teams serving 6 weeks at a time loading and unloading oil for Zambia.

MAMS teams are also established in MEAF, FEAF and NEAF. The UK teams have worked with all these teams as well as with the RCAF, USAF, RCAF and many other Air Forces. They were also engaged at Copenhagen in assisting in the changeover of the Danish contingent of United Nations peace keeping force in Cyprus.

It is an interesting feature that most members of UKMAMS have logged over 300 flying hours in one year's activities; this speaks for itself and leaves no doubt as to why the word MOBILE is included in their Squadron title.

MAY

East/Central Africa – Zambia Fuel Lift. Lusaka, Flt Lt Nigel Healey plus 4. Nairobi, Fg Off Glen Morgan plus 4. Movement of oil drums from Nairobi to Zambia utilising Britannia aircraft.

Thorney Island – Special. Flt Lt Gordon Spiers plus 2. Loading of Cabin Cruiser and Trailer for His Majesty, King Idris, of Libya.



LUSAKA – OFFLOADING OIL DRUMS FROM A BRITANNIA UTILISING A BFLP (BRITANNIA FREIGHT LIFT PLATFORM)

JUNE

Queen's Birthday Honours List 1966:

Fg Off David Stevens – awarded AOC in C Transport Command Commendation

Sgt (Currently O/Cdt) Arthur Rowland & Cpl Charlie Cormack – awarded AOC 38Gp Commendation

Teheran – Operation Olympus Special. Fg Off Ian Stacey plus 4. Deployment of servicing team and equipment from RAF Cottesmore to Iran to recover a u/s Victor.

West Raynham – Exercise Sea Bird. Fg Off Ian Stacey plus 3. Recovery of 1 Sqn (Hunters) from El Adem to UK.

JULY

Valley – Special. Fg Off John Furney plus 2. Recovery of a Bristol Centaurus engine from Wales to Abingdon after removal from a Beverley.

Luqa – Exercise Forthright 56. Fg Off J.M.Dunn plus 1. Positioning of personnel and equipment of 39 Sqn (Canberras) from Malta to Italy.

AUGUST

Prince George – Exercise Prairie Hop. Fg Off M Green plus 1. Deployment of 21 & 23 SAS from UK To Vancouver Island.

Kufra – Special. Fg Off Glen Morgan plus 4. Movement of building materials from Benina (Benghazi) to Kufra Oasis on behalf of the Libyan Government.

SEPTEMBER

Wattisham – Operation Aloe. Fg Off Ian Stacey plus 4. Recovery of 29 Sqn (Javelin) from Zambia to UK utilising Argosy aircraft.



JAVELIN FAW9 OF 29SQN AT NDOLA, ZAMBIA 1966

Fairford – Special. Fg Off Glen Morgan plus 9. Trial loading of Whirlwind helicopters into a Belfast Freighter.

OCTOBER

Odiham – Exercise Tiger Balm. Fg Off Bill Halford plus 3. Recovery of helicopters and equipment of 230 Sqn (Whirlwind) from Labuan (Malaya) to UK.

Tangmere – Special. Fg Off J Dunn plus 2. Loading of a special Beverley aircraft.

1971 – 50 YEARS AGO...

MAY

Montijo – Exercise Rusty Razor. Flt Lt Bill Wellman, FSgt Reg Carey, Sgt Eddy Leonard, Cpl Dave Wilkin, SACs Harry Jones & Polly Parkin. Recovery of 42 Sqn (Nimrod) from Portugal to St Mawgan.

Blackpool – Special. Fg Off Paul Steiner, FSgt Ken Browne, Cpl Sandy Sandiford, JT Gordon Gourdie & SAC Bob Tring. Recovery of 1Bn Lancastrian Regiment from the Isle of Man to Blackpool.

JUNE

Embakasi – Exercise Fable. Flt Lt Meikle, FSgt Lamb, Sgt Merv Corke, Cpl Keith Simmonds, SACS Keri Eynon and Fred Kitts. Deployment of 1Bn PWO (Prince of Wales Own) from Cyprus to Kenya.

Teeside Airport – Exercise Sky Blue. FSgt Taff Thomas, Sgt Ivan Gervais, Cpl Tom Blues, SACS Bob Thacker and Bob Ford. Deployment of RAF Regiment Wing from Catterick to Germany.

JULY

Geneva – Red Cross Special. Fg Off Brian Shorter, FSgt John Evans, Cpl Eddie Mottram plus 3. Pick up Red Cross supplies at Geneva utilising VC10 2784 & Belfast 6974 and offloading at Calcutta.



Geneva—July 1971
Left to Right
Sgt Tony Pyne
SAC Peter Spears
SAC Alan Pratt
FSgt John Evans
Cpl Eddie Mottram
Fg Off Brian Shorter

Honington – Exercise Piracy. Fg Off Knight plus 4. Recovery of 12 Sqn (Buccaneers) from Akrotiri to UK.

AUGUST

Accra – Exercise Weatherby Willis. Flt Lt Gerry Keyworth, FSgt Bob Hope, Sgt DK Henderson, Cpl Jimmy Jones, SACs Ian Place & Tim Newstead. Recovery of Ghanian Regiment from UK to Ghana and UK troops from Ghana to UK.

Valley – Special. FSgt Baz Shatford, Sgt Arthur Taylor, Cpl Jim Gallagher, SAC Gordon Wood plus 1. Recovery of 228 OCU (Phantoms) from Valley to RAF Coningsby.

SEPTEMBER

Lima – Operation Attune. Fg Off Glen Morton, FSgt Dave Eggleton, Sgt John Bell, JT Ted Moore, SAC Jimmy Barr plus 1. Recovery of personnel and equipment of 543 Sqn (Victors) from Peru to RAF Wyton. The squadron had been collecting radioactive samples from the French Atomic tests in French Polynesia.

Odiham – Exercise Hellenic Express. Flt Lt Meikle, FSgt Reg Carey, Cpl Dave Wilkin, SACs Terry Fryer & Polly Parkin. Recovery of 2 x Wessex helicopters (72 Sqn) from Greece to UK.



EXERCISE HELLENIC EXPRESS - 72 SQN WESSEX HELICOPTER BEING OFFLOADED FROM A BELFAST AT RAF ODIHAM

OCTOBER

Luqa – Exercise Deep Furrow. Fg Off Paul Steiner, FSgt Ken Browne, Sgt Ross McKerron, Cpl Sandy Sandiford, JT Gordon Gourdie, SAC Bob Tring. Deployment of personnel and equipment of 203 Sqn (Nimrod) from Malta to Souda Bay, Crete.

Kinloss – Special. Fg Off Brian Clucas, Sgt Ivan Gervais, SAC Bob Ford. Relocation of a Nimrod pack up from Kinloss to Machrihanish. Recovery of 360 Sqn (Canberras) from Lossiemouth to Cottesmore.

.1976 – 45 YEARS AGO...

MAY

Belize – Reforce. Sgt Gerry Meijer, Cpl John Tudor plus 2. Air Movements support at Belize Airport.



BELIZE AIRPORT 1976

Bandar Abbas – Special. Wg Cdr John Lambert (OCUKMAMS) , FSgt Dave Barton plus 5. Deployment of 51 Sqn (Nimrods) from Wyton to Akrotiri and recovery of RN personnel and equipment from Iran to UK.

JUNE

Benbecula – Special. Fg Off Andy Spinks plus 5. Recovery of 37 Sqn RAF Regt Rapiers from Hebrides Ranges to Bruggen.

Eskihir – Sqn Exchange. Flt Lt Dick Finch, Sgt Ian Berry, SAC Ian Bell. Recovery of 31 Sqn (Jaguar) from Turkey to Bruggen.

JULY

Odiham – Special. Flt Lt Geoff Elliott, Sgt Terry Titterington plus 4. Load/Unload 2 x Puma helicopters (33 Sqn) on Belfast Flt 3550 between UK and Belize.

Decimomannu – Special. FSgt Terry Hoy, Sgts Ian Berry & Syd Avery. Recovery of Royal Engineers Heavy Plant from Sardinia to Germany utilising Belfast Freighters.

AUGUST

Stornoway – RN Special. Fg Off Dick Leonard plus 5. Recovery of 814 Naval Air Squadron (Sea King) from Outer Hebrides to RNAS Culdrose.

Belize – Special. FSgt Keith Davies plus 5. Delivery of generator and Sioux helicopter to Belize and collection of explosives from Dover AFB for UK.

SEPTEMBER

Karup – Exercise Teamwork/Coldfire. Flt Lt Mike Perks plus 8. Deployment of 41 Sqn (Phantoms) from Coningsby to Denmark.

Lossiemouth – Exercise Coldfire. Fg Off Forbes Paterson, FSgt Terry Hoy, Cpl Ian Bell plus 3. Deployment of 8 Sqn (Shackleton) to Coningsby.

OCTOBER

Coningsby – Special. FSgt Derek Coles plus 4. Recovery of a damaged Belgique Mirage F5 into 2 x BAF C130H.

Mashad – Special. Fg Off Glew plus 5. Recovery of 13 Sqn (Canberras) from Iran to RAF Luqa, Malta.

1981 – 40 YEARS AGO...

MAY

Ottawa – Special. Fg Off Ian Russell plus 5. Onload of a Lynx helicopter into a c130 Hercules Mk3, involving the first authorised tipping of a Hercules CMk3.



LYNX TIPPING AT OTTAWA



LYNX TIPPING AT LYNEHAM

Palermo – Exercise Ghost Trail/Dogfish. FSgt Ian Berry, Cpl John Purkis, SAC Jim Rice. Deployment of 57 Sqn (Victors) to Sicily and recovery of 203 Sqn (Nimrod) from Sigonella to UK.

JUNE

Kleinbrogel – NATO Sqn Exchange. FSgt Mick McMahon plus 3. Recovery of 23 Sqn & 43 Sqn (Phantoms) from Belgium to UK

Coltishall – Exercise Jude Stay. FSgt Mick Day plus 5. Rotation of 6 & 54 Sqn (Jaguars) on deployment from Norfolk.

JULY

Greenham Common – Tacomex. FSgt Syd Avery plus 2. Redeployment of TCW from Greenham to Lossiemouth.

Upavon – Exercise Navy Lanyard. Fg Off Bob Parker plus 5. Engine running offloads at Upavon and then recovery of the same plus “evacuees”.

AUGUST

Jever – Exercise TLP. Fg Off Neil Cromarty plus 5. Deployment of 111 Sqn (Phantoms) from Leuchars to North Germany.

St Mawgan – Special. FSgt Dave Wright plus 5. Movement of Vintage aircraft between St Mawgan and St Athan.

SEPTEMBER

Coltishall – Exercise Amber Express. FSgts Liam Devlin & Ian Thompson, Cpl Bruce Oram plus 3. Deployment of 6 Sqn (Jaguars) to Tirstrup, Denmark.

Manston – Operation Banner. FSgt Ian Berry, Sgt George Elliott, Cpl John Purkis, SAC Keith Jevons. Deployment of UK troops from Connaught Barracks, Dover, to N Ireland.

OCTOBER

Leuchars – Special. Fg Off Neil Cromarty, FSgt Terry Roberts, Sgt Brian Connellan, Cpl Bruce Oram, SACs Kit Kitson & Steve Perry. Rapier onload demonstration for a party of US Senators.



1 TONNE LANDROVER TOWING A RAPIER LAUNCHER

Honington – Exercise Trial Mammoth. FSgt Adams plus 2. Deployment of 208 Sqn (Buccaneers) from UK to Cold Lake.

1986 – 35 YEARS AGO...

MAY

Sigonella – Exercise Distant Hammer. Fg Off Neil Mackay plus 2. Recovery of 42 Sqn (Nimrods) from Sicily to St Mawgan.

Benbecula – Squadron Rotation. Sqn Ldr John Faulconer plus 4. Recovery 9 Bty RA (Rapier) from Hebrides ranges to Germany.

JUNE

Patrick AFB – Exercise Rum Punch. Wg Cdr Richard Mighall (OCUKMAMS) plus 5. Recovery of the Nimrod Detachment from Florida to Kinloss.

Turin – Exercise Monty Bianco. FSgt Rod Bradley plus 2. Deployment of UK Intelligence personnel from UK to Italy.

JULY

Murcia-San Javier – Exercise Britannia Way. Fg Off Farnsworth plus 2. Recovery of 1Bn Irish Guards from Spain and recovery of Spanish Paratroopers from UK to Spain.

Tyndall AFB – Exercise Copper Flag. Fg Off Goss plus 5. Recovery of 19 & 92 Sqn (Phantoms) from Florida to Wildenrath.



92 SQN PHANTOMS TAKING OFF FROM RAF WILDENRATH

AUGUST

Whenupai – Exercise Silver Anvil. Fg Off Jones plus 2. Recovery of elements of UKLF from New Zealand to UK.

Frankfurt – International Air Cadet Exchange. Fg Off Simon Hawkins plus 2. Movements assistance to Air Cadets travelling from all NATO countries.

SEPTEMBER

Tirstrup – Exercise Bold Guard. Fg Off Mark Stephenson, Sgt Norman Gage, SAC Dinger Bell. Recovery of 54 Sqn (Jaguars) from Denmark to Coltishall.

Calgary – Exercise Medicine Man. FSgtt Tony Dunphy plus 5, FSgt Jim Cunningham plus 2. Rotation of Armoured Battle Groups in Canada.

OCTOBER

Benbecula – Exercise Eternal Triangle. Fg Off Mark Stephenson, FSgt Charlie Marlowe, Sgts Norman Gage & Taff Owen, Cpl Phil Ingham, SAC Gough. Recovery of 68 Sqn RAF Regt Rapiers from Hebrides Ranges to Gutersloh.

Lossiemouth – Exercise Game Spirit. FSgt Tony Last plus 5. Deployment of 12 & 20 Sqn (Tornados) from Scotland to Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico and 1Bn Queens Own Highlanders to Nairobi.

1991 – 30 YEARS AGO...

MAY

On 1 May 91, UKMAMS celebrated its 25th Anniversary. To mark the occasion a commemorative plaque was unveiled at the Sqn HQ by the first OCUKMAMS, Sqn Ldr Bill Jacobs in the presence of the Stn Cdr, OCUKMAMS and Sqn personnel.



SQN LDR (RETD) BILL JACOBS – THE FIRST OC UKMAMS UNVEILS PLAQUE IN FRONT OF UKMAMS HQ 1 MAY 1991

Diyarbakir – Operation Safe Haven. MAMS Det in Turkey in support of the Royal Marines.

JUNE – OCTOBER

Unfortunately there is no information of useful value that can be extracted from this period of the 540. NO names or places and in fact very few tasks are listed. If anyone wishes to fill in the gaps or send me tasks they completed in 1991 I would be most grateful. IB

1996 – 25 YEARS AGO...

MAY

Exercise Purple Star – Conducted in the Eastern seaboard of the USA centred on Cherry Point MCAS, North Carolina. Other strategic hubs for AT were at Pope AFB, Oceana NAS and Norfolk NAS with Cecil Field and Beaufort the focus for SF operations. By the end of April, all UKMAMS elements had deployed along with the other support elements of the Hercules force based at Cherry Point with 'Camp Albert' accommodating some 600 AT-related personnel under field conditions at its peak. Seventeen Hercules were based at Cherry Point and two Hercules at Cecil Field. UKMAMS peaked at 52 personnel in theatre and operated from alongside the flight line at Cherry Point with block accommodation a short distance away. More than 12,000 personnel were deployed on Exercise Purple Star, the largest deployment since the Gulf War, and the task was a significant challenge to UKMAMS both for strategic AT operations and tactical operations.

The tactical phase started with a TALO assault into Camp Davies airstrip, followed by the Rapid air land of 67 x 5AB sorties in 18 hrs. The airflow was repeatedly interrupted for many hours to deconflict AT ops with nearby SH operations., and this affected the recovery, where only 34 chocks were recovered by air. The second tactical phase was intended to test the air deployment of the 5AB light air orbat, which involved the deployment of over 200 sorties into an FOB. This phase was also heavily disrupted, largely by bad weather and exercise play., though 101 sorties were flown into Mackall AAF, and Holland LZ, a desert type strip. In both phases, the mobile teams sustained an outload rate of 4 sorties per hour in the hot, strenuous conditions and using ERO procedures. Liaison with ATLO personnel was particularly good and both organisations integrated well at the FMB and at the FOBs. The exercise was a huge success for MAMF and its reinforcements, and proved the teams' ability to sustain a high rate of air movements operations under difficult field conditions. The strategic recovery phase was challenging in itself, as many units redeployed to a variety of locations in North America, including California and Alaska. A small mobile team left in MCAS Cherry Point handled a wide range of civil aircraft in addition to RAF AT.



EX PURPLE STAR – US ARMY ENGINEER EQUIPMENT



EX PURPLE STAR – US ARMY ENGINEER EQUIPMENT



X PURPLE STAR – 5 AIRBORNE BRIGADE ARRIVE BY CHARTER



EX PURPLE STAR – RM GAZELLE REDEPLOYING TO CALIFORNIA

JUNE

Elmendorf – Exercise Distant Frontier. Sgt Derek Grayson plus 2. Deployment of 8 Sqn (E3 AWAC) from Waddington to Alaska.

Eilson – Exercise Distant Frontier. Flt Lt Lee Matthews plus 3. Deployment of 1 Sqn (Harriers from UK to Alaska and recovery of 3 Sqn (Harriers) from Alaska to Gutersloh.

JULY

Abu Dhabi – Exercise Red Gold. Flt Lt Curry plus 5. Recovery of a Puma helicopter of 33 Sqn back to Odiham after desert exercise.

Diego Garcia – Exercise Aroma. Sgt Blue Hughes plus 2. Deployment of elements of 101 Sqn (VC10) and TCW to the Maldives.

AUGUST

Aalborg – TFW96. Flt Lt Fiona Morgan-Frise, FSgt Steve Walke, Sgt Terry Davies, Cpl Gareth Beynon, SAC Charlie Rance. Recovery of 6 Sqn (Jaguars) from Denmark to Coltishall.

Riga – Special. Flt Lt Wilcox, FSgt Dave Williams, Sgts Derek Grayson & Ian Robinson, Cpls Sandy Sanderson & Dinger Bell. Delivery of equipment to Latvian Baltic command.

SEPTEMBER

Dijon – Exercise Volcano. FSgt Martyn Turner, SACS Baz Thompson & Chris Hoskison. Deployment of 1 ACC (RAF Boulmer) from Newcastle to France.

Trabzon – Exercise Ardent Ground/Dynamic Mix. Flt Lt Fiona Morgan-Frise, FSgt Floyd Patterson, Sgt Dave Salmon, Cpl Sandy Sanderson, SAC Simon Clarke, JT Williams (MAMS Eng). Deployment of UK Forces to NW Turkey participating in both the above exercises.



TRABZON AIRPORT TURKEY – RAF TRAFFIC DOUBLING THE MOVEMENTS

OCTOBER

Sibul Turnisur – Exercise Royal Chamois. FSgt Steve Walke, Cpl Thompson, SAC Waite. Exchange of RM and Romanian Alpine troops for mountain warfare training.

Wallops Facility – Special. UKMAMS Training Team. WO Ian Berry, Sgt Al Randle, Cpls Deano Dawson, Mick Cocker & Keith Richards (MT), SAC Day. Delivery of freight to Nellis & Albuquerque and then recovery of missile parts from Wallis, Virginia, back to UK. (During this task Al Randle illicitly used the training cam corder in Circus Circus where he recorded a hilarious scene when an acrobat fell off his props. We shared the £250 from “You’ve been Framed!”)

2001 – 20 YEARS AGO...

MAY

Sliac – Exercise Lone Eagle. Flt Lt Harris, Sgt Gareth Beynon, SAC Disotto. Deployment of 11 Sqn (Tornado F3) personnel and freight from Leeming to Slovakia.

Belize – Exercise Raw Deal. Flt Lt Symons, Cpl Gerrard, SACs Hooper & Lewis. Recovery of a Chinook of 7 Sqn from Belize to Odiham.

JUNE

Bahrain – Operation Argentic. Flt Lt Crabtree, FSgt Sykes, Cpl Thomson, SAC Woods. Recovery of 51 Sqn (Nimrod R1) back to Waddington.

Salalah – Exercise Saif Sareeah 11. Flt Lt Brooks, Sgt Wigan Johnston, Cpl Wiseman. Delivery and recovery of exercise freight in Oman.

JULY

Curacao – C17 Trainer. Sgt McHenry, SACs Bidwell & Graham. Recovery of 2 x Navy Olympus engines from Curacao and a Tristar RB211 engine and change kit from Dover AFB.

Eilson AFB – Exercise Cope Thunder. Sgt Gary Beynon, Cpl Muff Mufford, SACs Brown & Jones (RAuxAF). Deployment of 11 Sqn (Tornado F3) from Leeming to Alaska.

AUGUST

Rovaniemi – Exercise Long Kestrel. Cpl Lishman & SAC Woods. Deployment of personnel and equipment of 20 Sqn (Harrier OCU) to Finnish Lapland.



FINNISH F18 HORNET AT ROVENIEMI AIR BASE, LAPLAND



FLAG OF FINNISH LAPLAND COMMAND

Freetown – Operation Silkman. Sgt Mick Cocker, Cpl Muff Mufford & SAC Hooper. Rotation of UK units on UN duties in Sierra Leone.

SEPTEMBER

Marrakesh – Exercise Jebel Sahara. Sgt Steve Burke, SACs Fisher & Horrigan (RAuxAf). Deployment of Gibraltar Regiment to Morocco.

Salalah – Exercise Quicksand Charlie. Sgt Kinghorn, Cpl Booth, SACs Squibb & Wakefield. Deployment of 2 x CH47 Chinook helicopters from Odiham to Oman.

OCTOBER

Banja Luka – Operation Abalate. FSgt Duncan Andrews, Cpl Booth, SAC Wright. Rotation of AAC Gazelle helicopters in Bosnia.

Norfolk NAS – Operation Cosmo. Sgt Mick Cocker, Cps Craig Fitches & Baz Thompson, SAC Knight. Rotation Of TLAMs (Tomahawk Missiles) between Prestwick and USA.

2006 – 15 YEARS AGO...

MAY

Thumrait/Goa – Exercise Konkan. FSgt Al Stacey, SAC Warriner, LAC Dennis. Redeployment of personnel and equipment of 800 NAS (Sea Harrier) from Oman to Goa to connect with HMS Invincible.

Kingston – Exercise Red Stripe/Calypso. Sgt Ian Mackay, Cpl Lewis, SAC Plant. Deploy elements of 1Bn Royal Irish to Jamaica and recovery of elements of Jamaican Defence Force to UK.

JUNE

Bogota/Belize – Exercise Waterfront. FSgt Ferguson, SACs Ainley & Temple. Delivery of S&D freight to Columbia and recovery of 69 Ghurkha Engineer regiment from Belize to UK.

Brno – Exercise Flying Rhino. Sgt Dave Wilson, SACs Johnston & Cooke. Recovery of 13 Sqn (Canberras) from the Czech Republic to Marham.

JULY

Istres – Exercise Red Flag. Sgt Joiner, Cpl Cheesewright, SACs Buckingham & Harrison. Deployment of 4 x French Air Force Mirage fighters from France to Nellis. Aircraft refuelled outbound using Tristar KC1 aircraft.

Aqaba – Exercise Saffron Sands. Flt Lt Cole, Cpl Wright, SAC Atkin. Deployment of 2Bn RRF from Cyprus to Jordan utilising 4 x VC10 aircraft.

AUGUST

Zhambyl – Exercise Crimson Eagle. FSgt John Magill, Cpl Atkins, SAC Warren. Deployment of 6 Apache helicopters and 3 Lynx helicopters from UK to Kazakhstan. Utilising 3 chartered AN124 Ruslans.



AAC LYNX ON BOARD AN AN124 RUSLAN

Balad – Operation Crighton. Sgt Ray Wallace, SACs Stirling & Dennis. Rotation of Puma helicopter of 33 Sqn between Benson and Iraq.

RAFMAMS Association Tie



The RAFMAMS Association Tie is now on sale, they are in the style of the "Swift to Move " previous Logos and their cost plus postage as follows:

UK £12.85
Eur £13.55
ROW £14.55

Can be obtained through BACs to UKMAMS Association, Sort Code 20-84-58, Acct No 90981370

Then email ties@ukmams.co.uk with your address for delivery of the ties

Please allow up to 28 days for delivery