



# THE HORNET

## The Newsletter of the 100 Squadron Association

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## Newsletter 113 May 2016

Dear Members,

Sadly in this edition we report the passing of two more stalwarts of the Association. The news from Canada that 'Doc' Watson has recently died reminds us that the numbers of World War Two veterans are dwindling fast. He had flown over to be with us at the 95th reunion in 2012 when over the age of 90! Brian Hulme, who died earlier this month, will be greatly missed at the reunion this year - he had attended every one for the last twenty years and took a great interest in and was very caring towards to WW2 veterans. We have also heard that Frank Ockerby has been unwell and we wish him all the best in his recovery. He will also be missed at this year's reunion, having also been a regular attendee, but hopes to be fit for the 'Big One' next March.

Plans for this year's reunion in August are outlined on pages 2 and 3 and hopefully a good number of you will be able to attend what promises to be an enjoyable weekend.

Nina Crane

(Editor of The Hornet)

# Reunions

## The Big One - 100 Years On

Just a reminder of the planned date for the 100th Anniversary Reunion - 17th/18th March 2017.

## The 2016 Reunion

The 2016 reunion will be held Friday/Saturday, 5th/6th August 2016 at RAF Wyton. Unlike last year, the format will revert to the usual plan used when holding our reunions on an RAF station.

### **Friday, 5th August 2016**

1100 – 1330 “Meet and Greet” and light lunch in the Officers’ Mess.

1345 – Visit to a local attraction or attractions.

1630 – Return to accommodation.

1900 – Reunion Buffet Dinner.

### **Saturday, 6th August 2016**

0930 – AGM at the Officers’ Mess, RAF Wyton.

1100 – Service at the St George’s Church.

1200 – Lunch and/or depart.

Tea/coffee will be arranged for the “Meet and Greet” and a light lunch will be available (almost certainly with Fish and Chips as an option) on a **“pay as you dine”** basis.

There are a number of attractions in the area for a possible afternoon visit: the American Section at the Imperial War Museum at Duxford has had a major update, as has the Swiss Garden at Shuttleworth, Old Warden, and the National Trust’s Anglesey Abbey is another possibility.

The cost for the buffet dinner, including wines, is £40 per person. Please make cheques payable to the “100 Squadron Association” and send them to the Secretary together with your application. **Please do not add any payments for lunches**; we just need to have some approximate numbers to warn the Mess kitchen.

The Officers’ Mess at RAF Wyton has a number of rooms available but, while these are in the main building, they are not en-suite and have not been modernized. Please do not contact the Mess directly,

but make your request for a booking through the Secretary on the application form. Remember that soap and towels are **not** provided. Other accommodation possibilities are shown below.

In these times of heightened security, it is essential that you bring photo-ID (Driver's Licence or Passport) with you when checking in at the Guardroom.

Norman Bonnor

President

### **Accommodation Suggestions:**

#### **4 Star**

Huntingdon Marriott Hotel, Hinchingsbrooke Business Park, Kingfisher Way, Hinchingsbrooke, Huntingdon PE29 6FL 01480 446000

I assume also contactable thru' the main Marriott website

Golden Lion Hotel, Market Hill, Market Ln, St Ives, Cambridgeshire PE27 5AL 01480 492100 [www.thegoldenlionhotel.co.uk/](http://www.thegoldenlionhotel.co.uk/)

#### **3 Star**

George Hotel, George St, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire PE29 3AB  
01480 432444 [www.oldenglishinns.co.uk](http://www.oldenglishinns.co.uk)

Olivers Lodge Hotel, 50 Needingworth Rd, St Ives, Cambridgeshire PE27 5JP 01480 463252 [www.oliverslodge.co.uk/](http://www.oliverslodge.co.uk/)

Dolphin Hotel, London Rd, St Ives, Cambridgeshire PE27 5EP  
01480 466966 [www.dolphinhotelcambs.co.uk/](http://www.dolphinhotelcambs.co.uk/)

#### **Value**

Premier Inn, Great North Road, Brampton, Huntingdon, PE28 4NQ  
0871 527 8540 [www.premierinn.com](http://www.premierinn.com)

#### **Pub**

The Cock, 47 High St, Hemingford Grey, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire PE28 9BJ 01480 463609 [www.thecockhemingford.co.uk/](http://www.thecockhemingford.co.uk/)

#### **B&B**

Cheriton House: Mill St, Houghton, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire PE28 2AZ 01480 464004 [www.cheritonhousecambs.co.uk/](http://www.cheritonhousecambs.co.uk/)

# Obituaries

## Sergeant Ronald (Doc) Watson



Sergeant "Doc" Watson arrived on 100 Squadron on July the 20th 1944, the bomb aimer in Flying Officer Lynton Bell's crew, which included no less than four Canadians. This was just after D-Day of course, and operations by Bomber Command in support of the Allied ground forces in France were in full swing. Doc's first trip was in daylight to Villers Bocage-Caumont on the 30th July, to attack German troop positions who were holding up the Allied advance. The Pathfinders dropped yellow skymarkers using OBOE to ensure accuracy and, at 08:35, Doc released his bombload from 3,500 feet, watching them fall into the fast-developing maelstrom below. They were judged to be "bang-on target" as Lynton swung the nose of the Lancaster eastwards to set a course for home.

In a rather unusual departure from the norm, Doc Watson and his pilot and navigator hadn't flown a "second dickie" trip before their first operation, but strangely flew one on their second operation, on the night of the 31st July/1st August 1944. For that trip, to the V-2 flying bomb launch facility at Foret de Nieppe, the entire crew flew with New Zealander - Flying Officer Lee in the driving seat. It is assumed that because the crew's first operation was in daylight they wouldn't need a "second dickie" trip, this consideration being delayed instead until this, their first night operation.

Further trips to oil storage and V-2 flying bomb sites followed as the crew started to build up their operational experience. On the 11th August, in an operation reminiscent of 100's earliest operations in WW1, the crew took part in an operation to Douai railway yards,

although rather than flying in low as those early 100 Squadron crews had done in 1917, Doc released his bombs from 16,000 feet, watching them go down into the "middle of the smoke and dust". The following day the crew went to the submarine pens at Le Pallice, as part of the on-going campaign to destroy the U-Boat fleet. On this operation they were the last-but-one aircraft to bomb. Lynton pushing the nose of the Lancaster down and the throttles "through the gate" to make good their escape from enemy guns as their bombs fell earthwards.

Two days later and Doc once more found himself peering through the bombsight at German troop positions, this time at Falaise, where the Germans were threatening to break through the advancing Allied lines. Another trip down memory lane for 100 Squadron occurred on the 15th of August, when Doc and his crew, along with fifteen other crews, attacked the German airfield at Volkell, which had previously seen aircraft of 100 Squadron in WW1. This airfield was home to the latest scourge of the German night fighter force, the jet-powered ME262, and Doc made good his bomb run, helping to put the airfield out of action for a considerable time.

On the night of the 16th/17th August, Doc and his crew went to a German target for the first time, attacking Stettin. A period of leave followed, before another trip to Germany for Doc on the 25th/26th August 1944. This time though the "gremlins" conspired against them when the starboard outer motor failed a little over an hour after take-off, and the crew were forced to abandon their mission. The last day of August 1944 saw Doc attacking another V-2 launch facility at Raimbert in a precision daylight attack.

September was a mix of daylight operations to France, and night operations to Germany. On the 17th September, Doc and his crew were one of fifteen detailed for an attack on German flak positions at Flushing, on the island of Walcheren. As 100 started to make their attack, the German gunners opened fire with all their might, and at least five of 100's Lancasters received varying degrees of damage. Doc and his crew escaped unscathed, but rather shaken at what had been their first serious encounter with enemy defences.

A few days later, the crew attacked the town and docks at Neuss. By now, they were considered an experienced crew, and were trusted to take new arrivals to the squadron on their "second dickie" trips. On this night, they took two new crewmen for their first taste of operational flying over enemy territory, pilot Dave Robb and navigator Ed Mosure. These two men would later complete a tour with navigator Arthur White, who would go on of course to be our own Association

Historian for many years.

The dangers of providing close air support to Allied troops on the ground were highlighted in September when two operations to Calais to bomb German troop positions were abandoned over the target by the Master Bomber shortly after they had started when smoke and dust made it impossible to bomb without risking killing Allied troops on the ground. Doc and his crew were relieved to hear that although they had been amongst the unlucky crews who'd had to return with their bombs on both occasions, the trips would still count towards their operational total of 30.

In October, with the Allied advance in mainland Europe now well underway, Bomber Command turned its attention back to Germany and, on the 12th, Doc and his crew went to Fort Frederik Hendrik on the River Scheldt to bomb German gun batteries. This was the second trip in two days to this target, that on the 11th being called off in the target area by the Master Bomber when low cloud made target identification impossible. This was in fact Doc and his crew's 30th operation, and they would normally have been "screened" from further operational flying.

The crew stayed on, however, for a huge daylight attack on Duisburg on the 14th October. "Operation Hurricane" was planned by "Bomber" Harris himself, to show the Luftwaffe that the Allies now had mastery of the air over Germany and could attack with impunity. At dawn on the 14th, no less than 1,013 Bomber Command aircraft took off from their airfields in the UK to attack the city. Although they encountered tremendous flak, they pressed home their attack, with Doc letting go of his high explosive bombload at 08:48. An attack by the American Eighth Air Force followed the Bomber Command effort, involving 1,251 B-17s and B-24s. Doc had returned from his trip to Duisburg shortly before midday on the 14th, and was surprised to see his name on the Battle Order again for yet another operation to Duisburg that night, as part of an attacking force of 1,005 Bomber Command aircraft. He was airborne again shortly after midnight, and guided his bombs onto the target a few minutes before 3:30 in the morning. Doc noted that he could see the fires in Duisburg burning from 100 miles away on the return flight.

On the night of the 15th/16th October 1944, Doc completed his 33rd, and final operation with 100 Squadron. Taking off at 17:35 in the evening for Wilhelmshaven, he dropped his bombs from 19,000 feet at 19:48 that evening, landing back at Waltham at 21:35, his tour completed. Doc would spend nearly a month at Waltham whilst the authorities decided what to do with him, but on the 14th November,

together with his pilot Flying Officer Bell and navigator Flying Officer Shewring, he was posted to the RCAF Depot at Warrington for repatriation to Canada.

Doc was born on 4th March 1922 and grew up in Hamilton, Ontario. As a teenager and young man he became a very keen cyclist, but this activity was interrupted by World War II and his desire to follow his older brother Charlie into the air force. Charlie was a fitter at RAF Leeming on one of the two Royal Canadian Air Force squadrons which formed part of No. 6 Bomber Group. In letters home, Charlie urged his brother to do well at high school so that he could enlist as aircrew. Doc did so and, after training and conversion to the Lancaster, joined 100 Squadron.

He briefly left the RCAF after the war but soon re-enlisted and continued his military career for many years including serving at a NATO Headquarters near Paris and retired as a Chief Warrant Officer. After his military service, he worked as a microfilm archivist for Department of Public Works and the city of Ottawa. Doc retired to Victoria where he returned to his love for cycling. He was an active member of Sidney Velo and numerous other clubs that inspired him to participate in long distance tours across the continent as well as New Zealand, Cuba and Hawaii. Doc was a keen supporter of the Association coming over for a number of reunions including the 95th in 2012, when he had a chance to reminisce with Ron Clark.



## **Flight Sergeant Percy Cannings DFM**

We have heard from the Station Adjutant at RAF Wyton that Percy Cannings DFM has sadly passed away. Percy arrived at RAF Grimsby (aka Waltham) from 1656 HCU to join 100 on the 3rd of February 1943 as the mid-upper in Canadian Pilot Officer Harvey's crew, making them one of the "founder member" crews when 100 reformed as a heavy bomber unit. He took part in the Squadron's first raid, a minelaying trip on the 4th/5th of March 1943. Percy and his crew went on to fly a further 20 operations with the Squadron, before being screened from operations at the end of July 1943, but considered to have flown a full first operational tour. Percy then spent a spell as an instructor, before joining 97 Squadron at RAF Bourne as part of the Pathfinder Force, where he earned a DFM for "great keenness and offensive spirit". His recommendation for a DFM, signed by his CO, was dated the 13th of June 1944, and details were announced in the London Gazette in September of the same year. Although not a member of the Association, we remember his contribution to the WWII Bomber Offensive and extend our sympathies to his family.

Greg Harrison.

## **Brian Hulme**

You will have seen in the news of members in the last copy of The Hornet that Brian Hulme was suffering from a serious medical condition requiring surgery. The surgery did not go well, and Brian was told that his condition was terminal. I phoned Brian when he got home soon after the operation, and he was bright and cheerful and still expecting to make it to the reunion in August. However, sadly Brian passed away on Tuesday, 3 May at about 1pm. The cancer had become aggressive over the last week, and he spent his last few days in a Hospice. His wife, Ann, said the Hospice staff were amazing, and there is no way she would have been able to care for Brian in the same way. She said he passed away peacefully with her by his bed side.

Brian served as an engine fitter on 100 Squadron at RAF Wittering in the 1950s working on both the Lincoln and Canberra and so was involved in the major change from the piston to the jet engine on bomber aircraft. He was a stalwart member of the Association and had not missed a reunion in over twenty years. He regularly produced specialised 100 Squadron memorabilia for sale at auction and as raffle prizes. We have sent a donation to The Hospice of The Good Shepherd in Chester as a tribute to his memory.

Norman Bonnor



# Station Dance Bomber Command 1943

Laughter, dancing and wine  
Toast at youth's sacrificial shrine  
Youth's the melody, loves the theme  
Music to make magic a golden dream.  
Capture moments sublime  
From old Father time  
Faster, faster, dancers swing  
Louder, louder, music ring  
Lest we should hear the fear  
Ever whispering in the ear.  
And what though youth's kisses be stale  
From wine and ale  
When in the eyes shines paradise?  
Tomorrow who knows?  
Life's golden chalice which now we hold so tight  
May ere another night  
Fall from lifeless finger tips  
And shatter forever, ere our lips  
Can taste again happiness that glows  
When youth's wind flows.  
We who so much give  
Tonight our birthright  
Is to LIVE!

# **News from the Squadron**

## **(Using extracts from Excalibur, RAF Leeming's Journal)**

The start of the year has offered a much needed quiet time for the Squadron before the onset of a very busy season of detachments. However, they have continued to support frontline squadrons by providing Red Air dissimilar air combat training.

This rare quiet time enabled all the Squadron personnel to achieve some Force Development requirements including the chance to study and discuss the Squadron's heritage and the advancement of Air Power strategy since World War I. The Ground Liaison Officer, Captain Rob Goatly, organised a trip to London on 22nd/23rd February.

The trip started with the arrival at Woolwich Barracks on the Monday evening. Tuesday included a busy programme of events beginning with a fabulous morning at The Kings Troop, Royal Horse Artillery, where the everyone enjoyed watching a display of skilled horsemanship. This was followed by lunch in the O2 Centre and an afternoon at the RAF Museum Hendon where, in the Claude Grahame-White Factory exhibition of "The First World War in the Air", Greg Harrison gave a talk on the formation of the Squadron in 1917 under the replica FE2b, the Squadron's first aircraft type. After a brief chance to view the many magnificent exhibits at the Museum, Air Commodore Norman Bonnor gave an illustrated briefing on the Squadron's role at RAF Wittering as part of the V-Force during the Cold War years of the 1960s.

Thursday evening into Friday 26th February saw the Squadron take to the hills in the Lake district, this time organised by Flight Lieutenant Nicky Moore. The Thursday evening began sedately with a hearty meal in a local Inn to fuel everybody in preparation for an early start for the next day's adventure. The weather had been fairly wintry which made for all the more exciting climbing on the Friday and gave a different kind of challenge from the day-to-day air combat sorties experienced by the aircrew. It also encouraged good camaraderie and bonding among all Squadron members.



The King's Troop, Royal Horse Artillery



The FE2b in the WW1 display at the RAF Museum Hendon

# **Babcock International Group Ltd**

Babcock provides engineering support to the Hawk T Mk 1 and T Mk 2 fleets. They ensure aircraft availability for fast-jet pilot training at RAF Valley, and operational training support at RAF Leeming, RNAS Culdrose and RNAS Yeovilton. Babcock employs highly experienced technicians and, over the last seven-year contract, they have worked closely with the aircraft manufacturer BAE Systems and engine manufacturer Rolls Royce to support 78 active Hawks. They have consistently delivered aircraft availability (measured as duty carried out) well in excess of the contract target of 95%.

Babcock has held the contract for engineering support to 100 Squadron since August 1995. From the 72 initial employees, 7 are still there (Terry Tucker included), and they were all recently presented with 20-year milestone awards. The current workforce stands at 66 personnel with over 75% of them having supported 100 Squadron for over 15 years. You may recall that the Squadron celebrated 100,000 flying hours of Babcock Engineering Support early in 2015,

As a result of Babcock's excellent performance, the Ministry of Defence has awarded an extension of the contract to continue supporting 100 Squadron out to 2020 with BAE Systems holding the Prime Contractor role, and Babcock continuing as a Sub Contractor. It has also recently been announced that the new out of service date for the Hawk is now 2030.

Babcock support detachments which continue unabated with a Corsica detachment carried out already this year, and further detachments to Sweden, Slovakia, Spain x 2, and Corsica again already planned.

The Association congratulates all Babcock staff at Leeming on their outstanding contribution to 100 Squadron's success over the last 15 years; long may it continue!

## Memorial Service in France

Doug Douglas has informed us that The Forced Landing Association is holding a memorial service at the graves of his cousin Pilot Officer Douglas Fairbairn and crew of Lancaster Mk3 ND 594 (HW-P) on 19th June in the cemetery of the French village of Serazeraux, near Chartres. The aircraft was shot down on the night of 10th/11th June 1944 on a raid against the railway junction and marshalling yards at Archeres, near Paris. Fairbairn and his crew had completed over 20 operations. Eight young men were lost as there was another pilot on-board, Pilot Officer Kenneth Wells, doing a "second dickie" ride. The others were: Sergeant Russell Millar - flight engineer, Flying Officer Frank Tovery - navigator, Sergeant Phillip Kemp - bomb-aimer, Sergeant Frederick Sedgewick - wireless operator, Sergeant Jesse Hancock - air gunner, and Sergeant Herbert Gee - air gunner. They are interned together in the cemetery at Serazeraux.



# **The Handley Page Bombers of WWI**

## **Part 2**

**by Rob Langham**

The increased performance of the O/400 allowed heavier loads to be carried. This included the new SN 1,650lb bomb. The SN (supposedly short for 'Essen', one of the intended targets) was an enormous bomb for its day; it had a riveted cylindrical body, weighed anywhere between 1,600lb and 1,800lb with a streamlined cone at the front and four large tail fins. It could not be carried internally and instead was carried on a mounting underneath the fuselage, so any smaller bombs carried internally could only be dropped after the SN bomb. At the other end of the scale, the Baby Incendiaries entered service in 1918 – 270 of these were carried in a single box and feared by those that carried them. Men didn't like handling them on the ground either, and the instructional notes for their preparation and loading conveyed just how dangerous they could be.

The night of 24/25th 1918 July saw the first SN 1,650lb dropped over Middelkerke; it actually detonated in a field half a mile from Middelkerke, but the large crater gave a warning to the Germans of what they could do when dropped on something more important than grass! Early August saw 97 Squadron, finally with Handley Pages, arrive in France to join 216 Squadron with Independent Force. Training accidents meant five out of 97 Squadron's ten Handley Pages were out of action before they started operations. 100 Squadron also started to receive Handley Pages in August. Their introduction to the type was not a happy one; on the night of 25th August, D4592 crashed on take-off on 100 Squadron's first Handley Page sortie, killing all three men on board. The crashed aircraft exploded as would-be rescuers neared, increasing the death toll. This did not stop 100 Squadron five days later from joining 215 and 216 Squadron's Handley Pages on an attack on Boulay airfield using two Handley Pages and three FE2bs. The continued operational use of FE2bs alongside Handley Pages until a full complement of new machines was received was also done by 58 Squadron who received their first Handley Page at the end of August but did not enter service with them until late September, after what would be the bloodiest night for the Bloody Paralyzers.

Large numbers of Handley Pages were airborne on the night of 17/18th September 1918, and as German efforts to bring down the night raiders by anti-aircraft fire or night flying scout aircraft were increased as the war went on, as well as more Handley Pages being active, it would only be a matter of time before losses increased. 97 Squadron survived the night unscathed, but 100 Squadron lost a Handley Page, the crew surviving and spending several days on the run before being forced to turn themselves in owing to lack of food despite an amazing effort to try and reach the Swiss border. 115 Squadron saw action for the first time this night with eight Handley Pages, but lost three of them. 207 Squadron suffered no losses, but 215 Squadron suffered the most of all the Handley Page units. Of the five machines due to be operational that night, one returned shortly after take-off with a fuel leak, but the other four did not return at all. Lieutenant Monaghan and his crew, one of those from 215 Squadron, also went on the run but were captured. Two Handley Pages were also lost from 216 Squadron. Ten Handley Pages were lost in total, with two men killed, others injured and nineteen men taken prisoner.

By this point, another Handley Page was in the Middle East – O/400 C9681 joined 1 Squadron Australian Flying Corps in support of Lawrence of Arabia and his irregular army. As well as greatly impressing the Arabs, from 16th September 1918, it undertook bombing sorties in support of Lawrence's 'road to Damascus' as well as proving highly useful as a transport aircraft. Lawrence was almost killed in a Handley Page during the disastrous move of 58, 214 and 216 Squadrons to Egypt in the spring of 1919. Eighteen Handley Pages in total were lost whilst in transit with eight men killed – Lawrence narrowly escaped death when the 58 Squadron O/400 he was travelling in crashed on take-off. The pilot and navigator were killed and Lawrence suffered broken ribs and collarbone, resulting in several weeks in hospital.

Whilst aeroplanes could be replaced, the lack of Rolls Royce Eagle VIII engines was an issue holding up Handley Page production until the Armistice meant their supply wasn't as sorely needed. Crews could also be replaced, but experience took time to build up. Apart from 58 Squadron previously mentioned, no new Handley Page squadrons reached the Western Front by the time of the surrender. Operations

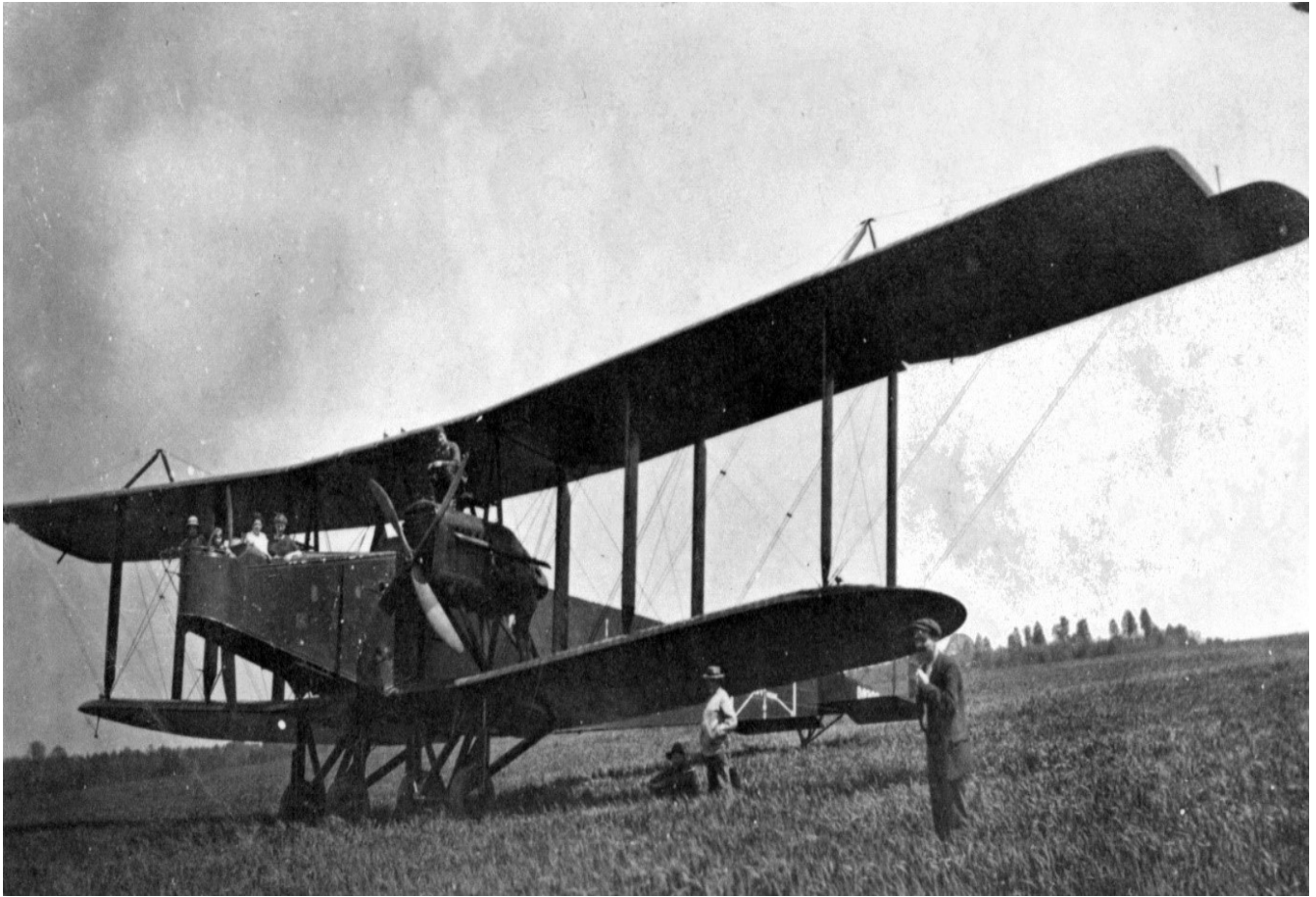
continued as usual, dropping more and more tonnage of bombs, with the onset of winter hampering operations. With the likelihood of Austria-Hungary surrendering before Germany, a plan was devised using 216 Squadron (as the most experienced Independent Force Handley Page squadron) whereby a special train loaded with spares, bombs, ammunition and stores was kept at thirty minutes notice in a siding near the airfield. After the expected Austro-Hungarian surrender, a specially chosen selection of officers and men were to fly to Prague, accompanied on the ground by the train, and operate from an airfield nearby (with enough rifles and pistols to try and keep any armed opposition at bay) focussing on raids against Berlin until they ran out of bombs. This interesting scheme never came to fruition despite Austria-Hungary surrendering on 3rd November, nor did the planned long-distance flights of the Handley Page V/1500s (four-engine monsters even larger than the O/400s) from RAF Bircham Newton to hit Berlin.

The last night of the war saw Handley Pages operating where weather conditions allowed, and the news of the Armistice was met on their return with mixed feelings. Some celebrated, wildly, others weren't sure how to react and were morose, and others were disappointed at the lost opportunity for the Handley Pages to strike Berlin.

The coming of peace saw a change of role for the Handley Pages. 216 Squadron found themselves being used as aerial postmen, and a number of aircraft were fitted with seated accommodation and tables for ferrying VIP's to Versailles in 1919. Frederick Handley Page, ever the entrepreneur, soon set about converting O/400s still on the production line into airliners, and 1919 saw Handley Page Transport Ltd take its first fare-paying passengers (after a large number of unpaying ones before the relevant act came into force). The O/400s and V/1500s were simply too big for the peacetime RAF struggling to justify its existence, especially with the smaller Vickers Vimy and Airco DH10 bombers fulfilling the need for bombers capable of policing the empire. This did not prevent the Handley Pages seeing some use but by the early 1920's the last of the 'Bloody Paralysers' were gone.

They were not of course the last Handley Page bombers – in the late 1920's the Handley Page Hyderabad entered RAF service, followed by the Hinaidi, Heyford, Hereford, Hampden and Halifax, and finally the last of the Handley Page bombers, the Victor.





The Handley Page O/400 (from the Fleet Air Arm collection)

**Operations in an HP 0-400**  
**Lieutenant Roy Shillinglaw, 100 Squadron,**  
**Independent Air Force**

**An extract from the Supplement to The Hornets' Nest**

'We would read our orders - find out our target, the bombs we were going to carry, meteorological reports and then we would work out our course during the afternoon. We would then get into our flying clothes which consisted of a pair of flying boots made of sheepskin, a Sidcot flying suit with fur collar, a helmet and fur lined gloves. Underneath my gloves I used to wear a pair of silk gloves. As it got towards dusk, we would go aboard and get into our aircraft. The pilot would sit on the right-hand side, and I should sit on the left of him. The mechanics would wave us away and we would taxi out to the far side of the aerodrome, turn into wind and then take off. We had no wheel brakes so once we were getting very nearly airborne

there was no stopping.

We'd fly for about three quarters of an hour circling round the aerodrome gaining height. We'd cross over the front lines towards our targets. We would arrive in due course. Sometimes we got to a height of 10,000 ft. but usually our bombing was from around 3,000 to 4,000 ft. It was rather cold because we had open cockpits with very small windshields. We would get a block of ice on our chests after two or three hours flying and, of course, it was very windy. We never thought anything of that. My job was to find the way, set the course, adjusting for any variation of wind. We were flying at about 60 mph air speed so that if we had a 30 mph wind (head) we only had a 30 mph ground speed. If the wind moved at all we would adjust our course.

We would carry on for an hour, two hours, perhaps three hours on that course. Then, as we approached our target, I would crawl through a hatch into the front cockpit where we had two machine guns firing on one trigger and our bomb sights and bomb release controls. To the rear of us we also carried a rear gunner who had two guns firing on the port and starboard; if we were attacked from underneath, there was a hole in the body of the machine with another gun firing from there. So he, poor chap, was running up and down if we ran into any trouble.

I would direct the pilot onto the target - right or left, or straight ahead, by signs with my hands. At the same time I would have my hand on the bomb release control and, as we got onto our target, away would go the bombs. We didn't always drop our bombs in one go. We would observe results and go round and do the same thing again. Then, of course, we tried to get home as quickly as we could. Unfortunately, generally we had a prevailing wind against us, from the south west, so it took us much longer to come home than going out.'

## **Deaf Wife Problem**

Bert feared his wife Peg wasn't hearing as well as she used to, and he thought she might need a hearing aid. Not quite sure how to approach her, he called the family doctor to discuss the problem. The doctor told Bert about a simple informal test he could perform to give the doctor a better idea about his wife's hearing loss.

'Here's what you do,' said the doctor, 'stand about 40 feet away from her and in a normal conversational speaking tone see if she hears you. If not, go to 30 feet, then 20 feet, and so on until you get a response.'

That evening, Peg was in the kitchen cooking dinner. Bert says to himself, 'I'm about 40 feet away, let's see what happens.' Then in a normal tone he asks, 'Peg, what's for dinner?' No response. So he moves closer to the kitchen, about 30 feet from his wife and repeats, 'Peg, what's for dinner?' Still no response. Next he moves into the dining room where he is about 20 feet and asks, 'Peg, what's for dinner?' Again he gets no response. So, he walks up to the kitchen door, about 10 feet away. 'Peg, what's for dinner?' Again there is no response. So he walks right up behind her. 'Peg, what's for dinner?' 'Bloody hell are you deaf - for the fifth time...IT'S CHICKEN!'

## **ASSOCIATION MEMORABILIA**

Squadron Association Ties, blue and maroon	£12.50
Blazer Badges (specify King's or Queen's crown)	£12.50
"The Hornets Nest" History of 100 Squadron	£12.50
Supplement to above	£4.50
"Aircraft of 100 Squadron" Montage	£5.50
DVD "100 at 90"	£5.00

Postage and Packaging is included in all of the above. Please make cheques payable to "100 Squadron Association". To order any of the above Association Memorabilia, please contact the Treasurer.

## **100 SQUADRON MEMORABILIA**

Cloth 100 Squadron crest badge	£5.00
Cloth skull and bones badge	£3.00
100 Squadron crest zap	£1.00
Skull and bones zap	£1.00
100 Squadron print (blank)	£5.00
95th Anniversary Squadron print (signed)	£10.00
100 Squadron shield (wooden)	£33.00
Framed embroidered crest	£33.00
Mini hip flask	£5.00
Skull and bones baseball cap	£7.00
100 Squadron T-shirt Skull or Hawk (state size)	£10.00
100 Squadron polo shirt (state size)	£14.00
(Sizes of T-shirts and Polo shirts are S, M, L, XL and XXL)	
100 Squadron cummerbund (blue-yellow check - other side Skull and Bones white on black) (state waist size)	£33.00
100 Squadron bow tie (blue-yellow check) S, M, L	£15.00
100 Squadron engraved tankard	Price on application

Please make cheques payable to 100 Squadron Aircrew Fund.

To order any of the 100 Squadron Memorabilia, please contact the Secretary.