



NEWSLETTER

MAY / June 2006

Compiled by Larry Cross

Was it May the 15th or November 15th the day of our last AGM? Weather-wise it was not easy to tell, at least it didn't rain, however we soon warmed up with 90 bodies attending the A.G.M.

The meeting was chaired by Bob Hope...who else? giving his customary address, introducing new members and remembering those no longer with us.

He was aided and abetted by Allan McRae and Jim Garlinge.

Notably absent were George & Kate Poole two valued team members who not only missed the dinner through a previous holiday arrangement but were also unable to travel because of a medical problem. Our thoughts are with you George and so a special thanks to Jenny & Ann for manning the 'money desk' in their absence.

Incidentally, Kate is holding an exhibition of her paintings at the Morgan Cole Building in Botley (Oxon) Last week in June-1st.week of July. So if you are local or in the area why not pop in!

Surprise, Surprise! The committee were re-elected for yet another year of office

We welcomed seven new members to our ranks, namely Brian Goodall '47-'49 R & I Peter Browne '55-'56 Cpl.Instruments on 64 & 65 Sqns. Daphne Buckley and Elaine Pinney A/M's(sister & niece of Mavis Baker) David & Jan Brown, David '59-'61 Cpl. S.S.Q & Noel Hammond A/M (Ass.Member)

Our membership now stands at the nicely rounded figure of **300**

Gone but not forgotten

Neil Ashworth Max Bacon, Archie Winskill ,Peter Trowell, Harry Prosser, R. Rodwell, W. Moss, John Smith(Cornwall) Dick Legget & J. Homer

The date of our next meeting is **October 15th.2006 at 1pm.**

Annual Dinner.

Heydon Grange Golf & Country Club, just off the A505 about 5 miles west of Duxford was the venue for this years annual dinner. The dinner was supported by 74 members and their guests and from all accounts all enjoyed the evening. Two radical departures from previous dinners was, that for the first time the menu was available for scrutiny before serving commenced! The other thing was the revised method of running the raffle which went smoothly and a darn sight quicker than on previous occasions. The chances are that we may well chose this venue for the 2007 dinner as the prospect of the Officers Mess re-opening seems quite remote **ALLAN**

I would like to add, on behalf of those that attended, a very special **thank you** to Allan & Jenny for their efforts and time spent in finding this venue, printing the (always amusing)place cards and organizing the raffle, which all contributed towards making the evening such a huge success. L.C.

Forthcoming Event

I am pleased to announce that we hope to launch our Website in the not too distant future. The Domain name has been registered and paid for for 2yrs by our more than generous chairman Bob Hope. Whilst this is being finalized I will be busy creating suitable web pages. Once published we can all be involved in the way we would like it to look. ...For those of you who have internet access the domain name is "olddux.co.uk"... so keep surfing!



The Veterans Badge (Pictured) is freely available to all who served in the armed forces. It is a quality item in white enamel and well worth having. Just call the Veterans Agency with your service No. and it should be in the post to you within a few days. **Ring 0800 169 2277**

Mainly for non Surfers Silver Surfer Week May 22-26th. is a collaboration between Age Concern & Digital Unite. It provides a week long forum when local organizations & groups, including Age Concern, provide computer & internet tasting sessions for older adults....Unfortunately it's an annual event, but....organisations like Help the Aged & Age Concern run suitable courses throughout the year.

Mainly for Surfers

Roger Darlington's Home Page (if you haven't already come across it) is jam packed with all sorts of information. Perhaps more interestingly is that he is the son-in-law of the Czech night fighter ace Karel Kettelwascher who flew with the RAF from Tangmere during WWII. He downed 15 German bombers and was twice awarded the DFC. Roger published KK's biography 'Night Hawk' in 1985,...there's lots, lots more...take a peek!

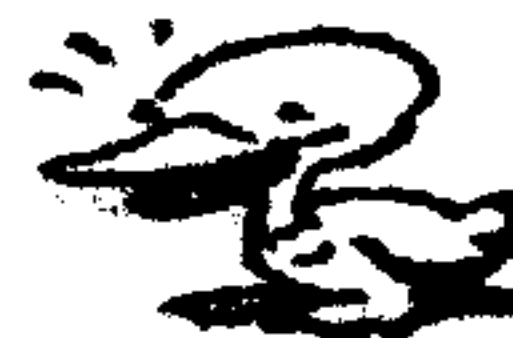
Chatting with David Brown at the meeting about his time at Duxford, he remembered going across to the airfield along with other off duty personnel on the day that 65Sqn took off in their Hunters for the very last time, heralding the closure of a fighter station with a proud history. That was in 1961 did they just fly off into the sunset; what happened to the ground crews, the supporting teams of Cooks, E.P.A.S, Clerks, Firefighters, A.T.C, P.B.X and all who contributed to maintaining Britains first line of defence; And who were the last ones to leave and switch off the lights?

No doubt the answers can be found in the Museums archives but if there were any other members who were there during that time, I would like to hear from them.

My email: larrycee@ntlworld.com Tel: 01903 539847

Free tickets... For any members wishing to attend one of the forthcoming airshows. Please contact Jim Garlinge on 01322 274245. email: jfgarlinge@aol.com

You will of course be expected to help him man our Recruitment Stand there!



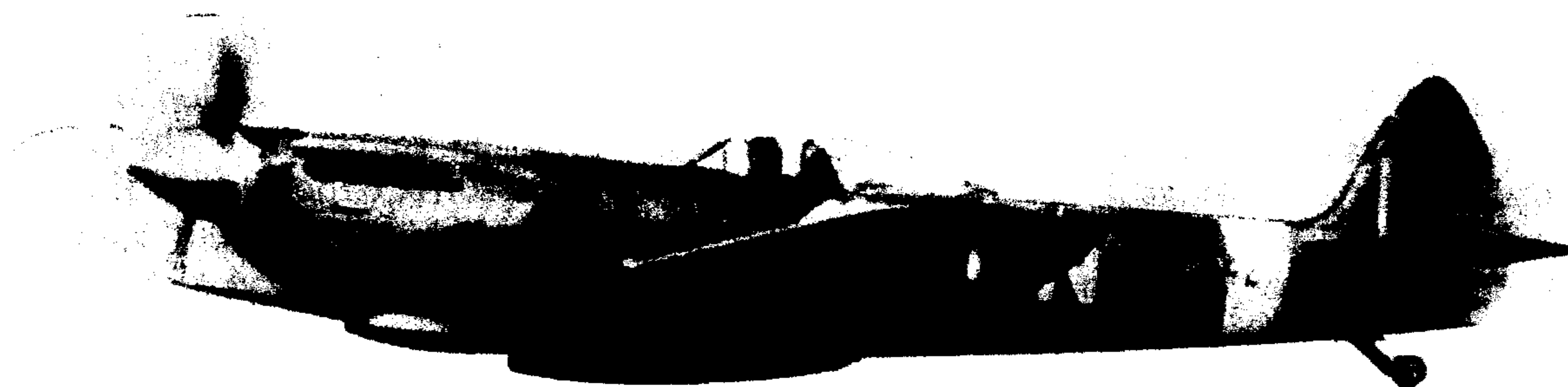
A 65yr old woman went for a check-up and the doctor told her that she was ok but should have more cardiovascular activity like...sex!...three times a week. A little embarrassed by this she asked the doctor to tell her husband. This he agreed to do and called the husband into the room to explain the situation."Well, on what days would that be?" asked the husband. "Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays would be fine," replied the doctor. The husband glanced at his wife and said, " Mondays & Wednesdays would be ok, but on Fridays..... she'll have to take the bus!"

Wife at breakfast: "I want you to make mad, passionate love to me ..now!"

Husband, now wide awake: "Wow !' what brought this on?"

Wife: "The egg timer's broken!"

The Story of SL542 a Spitfire Mk.LFXVle



The story so far...by M.C.'Bob'Hope

Introduction

Spitfire - Mk LFXVle (SL542)

(T)

What you may well ask, *has* an ex RAF and former SAC Engine Mechanic got to do with the history of this particular Spitfire? Answer; not a lot, or so I thought until I read in the June 1997 edition of *Flypast* magazine that it was in the process of being restored to flying condition for it's Canadian owner.

I first caught sight of SL542 in September 1957 inside the Station Flight hanger at RAF Duxford in Cambridgeshire where it presented me with the opportunity to pose for some 'illegal' box Brownie photographs standing on the wing and seated in the cockpit. Unfortunately I had arrived at Duxford some eight months too late as by that time her flying days with the RAF were over. However the *Flypast* article got me thinking about this fine aircraft's history, what she had done, where did she operate during her service life, and who flew in her. There was even the chance that I could see her flying again 50 years after our first meeting!

I initially appealed to the Old Dux Association whose membership is made up of Ex servicemen and women who had been stationed at RAF Duxford during their service careers. Several responded with their memories of SL542 and some even provided photographs, but a notable step forward was achieved when Jim Garlinge presented me with a copy of Air Ministry Form 1180 (Flying Accident Report) dealing with the crash that ended her flying career.

My thanks to Jim, Old Dux members, and others who have contributed letters and photos etc. to get me started on this story, that begins...

Cover photograph shows
SL542 'in her element'
bearing 695 Sqn coding.
© Peter Green collection.

In Service

Spitfire SL542 was built at the Castle Bromwich factory in 1945 under contract No. B981687/39/c23(c), Airframe serial No. CBAF1X4656, and was fitted with a Packard V-1650 Merlin 66/266 engine, but unfortunately I have been unable to trace the original engine serial number. Although basically a Mk IX airframe it was decreed that as the tooling required to maintain the Packard engine was A/F (Across Flats) whereas the British built Merlin used Whitworth tools it would be more practical to give this version a different mark designation i.e. XVI to avoid confusion when ordering spares etc. The LF prefix indicates she had a wingspan of 32ft - 7" (9.88M) and the 'e' suffix denotes that she carried an armament of two 20mm cannon and two 0.5" (12.7mm) machine guns. 'Our' Spitfire was built between Sept 1944 and July 1945 and was one of a total of 1,054 MkXVI spitfires produced.

On completion she was flight tested and 'passed' by Sqdn/Ldr. Peter Ayerst on 16th July 1945 at CBAF, and on 18th July 1945 was delivered to No.9MU at RAF Cosford where she was 'kitted' out with radio & armament etc, and subsequently issued on 30th August 1945 to start her service career with 595 Sqdn. based at RAF Aberporth on the west coast of Wales. Strangely the move to Aberporth is not recorded on the Movement Card but it is a matter of record that at the time of delivery 595 Sqdn. were based there. Also Form 540 ORB (Operations Record Book) for 595 Sqdn. does record that F/s Garner flew a Mk XVI from RAF Cosford to Aberporth on the 8th Sept. 1945, but unfortunately no serial number was logged.

595 Anti-Aircraft Co-operation Squadron was formed in December 1943 at Aberporth by merging 1607, 1608 & 1609 (target towing) flights. They operated from there until 26th April 1946 when they were transferred to RAF Fairwood Common near Swansea. The Squadron diary states that 27 of their aircraft flew in formation to RAF Fairwood Common on that day and on the following day commenced Co-op's for the Army School of Anti-Aircraft Artillery unit at Manorbier in Pembrokeshire. The same diary records that on the 17th October 1946 they were moved yet again, this time to RAF Pembrey in Carmarthenshire, South Wales. Apparently the accommodation was better at Pembrey as well as being nearer to Manorbier!

There was an incident involving SL542 that occurred on October 29th 1946 when it 'belly landed' after the pilot failed to ensure that the undercarriage was fully locked down prior to landing. All the details were recorded in the ORB for 595 (AAC) Sqdn. and on the F1180. The damage was certified as CAT A (Repair on site) so no entry was required on the movement card. SL542 suffered another incident in July 1947 although the Sqdn. ORB does not record the fact, nor have I been able to trace a copy of the F1180 which of course would have recorded all the details. However the movement card does record that it was a flying accident with the subsequent damage being classed as CAT3. A degree of uncertainty follows as the card entry shows both R/W (Repair in workshop) and ROS (Repair on site), however a small annotation reads 'Prob. RiW'. Either way it fell to 34MU to carry out the necessary repairs presumably in their workshop at RAF Stoke Heath following which the aircraft was returned to squadron duties with 595 at Pembrey in November 1947.

I have been in touch with a former 595 Sqdn. pilot E.W. "Jimmy" James who flew SL542 when at Pembrey in 1948, entries in his log book show that his flights were made during April and May of that year, I have also been fortunate to meet and talk with Claude Fryer

another former pilot from 595 Sqdn., who also flew SL542 whilst stationed at Pembrey. His flying log book shows he flew this Spitfire on 12 occasions recording a total of 23 hours in her. The last recorded date in his book is April 6th 1949 his flying time on that day being 55 minutes. But, the movement card indicates that the aircraft had been transferred to 695.

There are two possible explanations: First, the transfer was authorised and recorded but for some reason the actual move was delayed and 595 held on to the aircraft for 9 months? Secondly, the pilot's log-book entries are correct but the movement card has been incorrectly filled in.

A study of the card reveals that all the entries covering a period from 18th July 1945 to 31st May 1957, a period of 12 years, are all in the same handwriting. Is it possible that the same clerk was employed on this task all this time? Or is it likely that the copy I possess has been transcribed from an original that may have suffered the ravages of time and was open to misinterpretation by someone not familiar with this style of documentation?

Type of Aircraft SPITFIRE		Mark LF XVIe	R.A.F. Number SL 542	
Contractor VICKERS-ARMSTRONG CASTLE BROMWICH		Contract No. B 98168Y/39	Engine Installed MERLIN 66/266	
		Engine No.		
Movement Date	Location Cat'y.	Authority	Date	41 or 43 Co. Allot.
18-7-1945	9 MU			
30-8-1945	595 Sqdn			
3-7-1947	FA / Cat 3			
7-7-1947	RIN or ROS 34 MU			prob Riv
24-11-1947	Ex-repair			
27-11-1947	595 Sqdn			
28-7-1948	695 Sqdn			
7-12-1948	1 CAACU			
11-6-1951	29 MU			
1-3-1954	2 CAACU			
1-4-1955	Station Flight, Duxford			
31-1-1957	FA / Cat 3			PTO

A.M. Form 78

Type of Aircraft Spitfire		Mark LF.16c	R.A.F. Number SL 542	
Movement Date	Location Cat'y.	Authority	Date	41 or 43 Co. Allot.
31-5-1957	Re-cat 5			
	BOC for display at			
	RAF ...			

(35985) Wt. 19153/2M—8/52/B.F.Co.Ltd.38

595 Sqdn. was disbanded on the 11th Feb. 1949 at Pembrey and re-formed as No. 5 (F) Sqdn. but as previously mentioned SL542 had been transferred to 695 Sqdn. based at RAF Horsham-St-Faith just outside Norwich. It flew army co-op exercises from there along the East Coast until they too were disbanded on 11th Feb 1949 and re-formed as 34 Squadron but carrying out the same duties. In spite of what the movement card shows I have to assume she stayed at RAF Horsham-St-Faith with 34 Sqdn. until she was transferred to No. 1 Civilian Anti-Aircraft Co-operation Unit (CAACU).

This unit was formed on 7th Dec 1950 based at RAF Hornchurch and was operated by Short Bros & Harland Ltd to take over from 34 Sqdn. the task of providing AAC for Chatham RN Base. Records (not the movements card) show she joined No. 1 CAACU 7th Dec 1950 and remained with them until 11th June 1951 when she was withdrawn from service and put into storage with 29 MU at RAF High Ercall where she was to remain, mothballed, for 3 years.

On 1st March 1954 she was removed from storage and transferred to No. 2 CAACU operated by Marshals of Cambridge at RAF Little Snoring who were also involved in relieving 34 Sqdn. of their AAC duties. She was flying with them until the 1st April 1955 when she was transferred to the Station Flight at RAF Duxford. (No. 2 CAACU was disbanded at RAF Langham 1st Nov 1958).

To be continued

Next Issue. "The Crash"



Young George was sent to bed for being naughty, about ten minutes later, "D-a-a-d, can I have a drink of water please?"

"No you can't" yelled his dad "now get to sleep."...silence!..."D-a-a-a-d, I'm thirsty" insisted George. "If I hear one more word from you m'lad I'll come up there and give you what for" replied dad. A longer silence was suddenly broken with..."D-a-a-a-a-d!when you come up to give me what for, will you bring me a drink of water please?"

L.C.



A crusty old Flight Sergeant found himself at a gala event hosted by a local liberal arts College. There was no shortage of extremely young, idealistic ladies there, one of whom approached the Flight Sergeant for conversation "Excuse me, Flight Sergeant, but you seem to be a very serious man, is there something bothering you?" "Negative, ma'am., Just serious by nature. The young lady looked at his decorations and said, "It looks like you have seen a lot of action." "Yes ma'am, a lot of action". The young lady tiring of trying to start up a conversation, said, "You know, you should lighten up a little, relax and enjoy yourself". The Flight Sergeant just stared at her in his serious manner. Finally the young lady said, "You know, I hope you don't take this the wrong way, but when was the last time you had sex?" "1955, ma'am." "Well, there you are. You really need to chill out and stop taking everything so seriously, I mean, no sex since 1955." She took his hand and led him to a private room where she proceeded to "relax" him several times. Afterwards, panting for breath, she leaned against his bare chest and said, "Wow, you sure didn't forget much since 1955!" The Flight Sergeant, glancing at his watch, said in his matter-of-fact voice, "I hope not ma'am since it's only 2130 now."

Submitted by Bob Scott.