



The Association of  
No 43 (Fighter) Squadron,  
Royal Air Force



## Newsletter – February 2018

### MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

It was a great pleasure to assume the Presidency of the 43(F) Squadron Association in April last year. We are making efforts to keep the Association thriving for as long as possible through routine events and special projects. This is especially important as it looks extremely unlikely that 43 (Fighter) Squadron will ever reform. Therefore, it is up to us to maintain friendships and linkages from our working past, and to maintain and promote a wider awareness of our fantastic Squadron history and personal memories of key events.

Along with the other 70 persons present, I greatly enjoyed our annual reunion dinner last year – it is a superb event where many old comradeships are maintained or rekindled. Last year we had great representation from across the Hunter, Phantom and Tornado generations with several people travelling from far abroad. Our all ranks Association is unique and I was most impressed to see that the reunion holds true to the ideals of the Klagenfurt Protocol. The table planning puts people together from the same working generations and the added bonus of mixed ranks made for a raucous and friendly evening that naturally spilled out into Mayfair once the formalities were over. The reunion is not only about the annual dinner. Many take the opportunity for a sociable weekend in London and informal drinks always start from lunchtime on the Saturday of the Reunion in Ye Grapes in Shepherd's Market, a short walk from the RAF Club. Last year we were aware of a number of people who could not make the event but really wanted to join us. My challenge to all this year is to seek out at least one colleague from your era on the Squadron and encourage them to join us on 19<sup>th</sup> May at the RAF Club. We hope to have Angela Findlater joining us, the daughter of Capt John Lightfoot Trollope who shot down 6 German aircraft in one day, one hundred years ago. Hopefully, we will also receive an indication of what the future holds for the RAF from a Fighting Cock now involved in the F35 Lightning II programme. It would be great to catch up with you in a full, noisy and fun-filled ballroom in the centenary year of the Royal Air Force.

### ARRANGEMENTS FOR ANNUAL REUNION 2018

Venue: RAF Club, 128 Piccadilly, London

Date: Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2018

Dinner: 1800 for 1930

Dress: Lounge Suit, Squadron Tie

Ladies most welcome

The menu for this year is:

**Duck Liver Parfait with Rhubarb Chutney and Toasted Brioche**

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**Fillet of Pork Noisette, Mushroom Forestière and Tarragon Cream Sauce**

*With Lyonnaise Potatoes and Broccoli Almondine*

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**Apple Tart with Calvados Crème Anglaise**

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**Coffee and Petits fours**

The cost is **£43.00** per person.

Please make cheques payable to 'No 43 (F) Squadron Association' and send to:

Mr W R Preece, 17 The Steadings, Ford, Salisbury, Wiltshire, SP4 6BH. Alternatively, please email [bill.preece43@gmail.com](mailto:bill.preece43@gmail.com) for bank details if you'd prefer to make a BACS transfer.

So we may confirm numbers, the closing date for booking with the Secretary is 5th May 2018.

For VEGETARIANS and/or if the menu is not to your liking, please contact the RAF Club direct to make your own arrangements. Telephone: **020 7399 1000**.

For those planning to stay at the Club, I suggest making the earliest booking to secure your rooms!

## ISSUES TO REPORT

Last year we reported that Tornado F3 ZE996 had been procured by the Tornado Heritage Centre at Hawarden Airfield, Chester. This was the 800<sup>th</sup> Tornado and 160<sup>th</sup> ADV built and 43 Sqn's first Tornado with the tail letters 'GF'. The aircraft served on 11, 43 and 56 Sqns. After a near 4 month restoration, the aircraft is now on permanent display and looks superb.



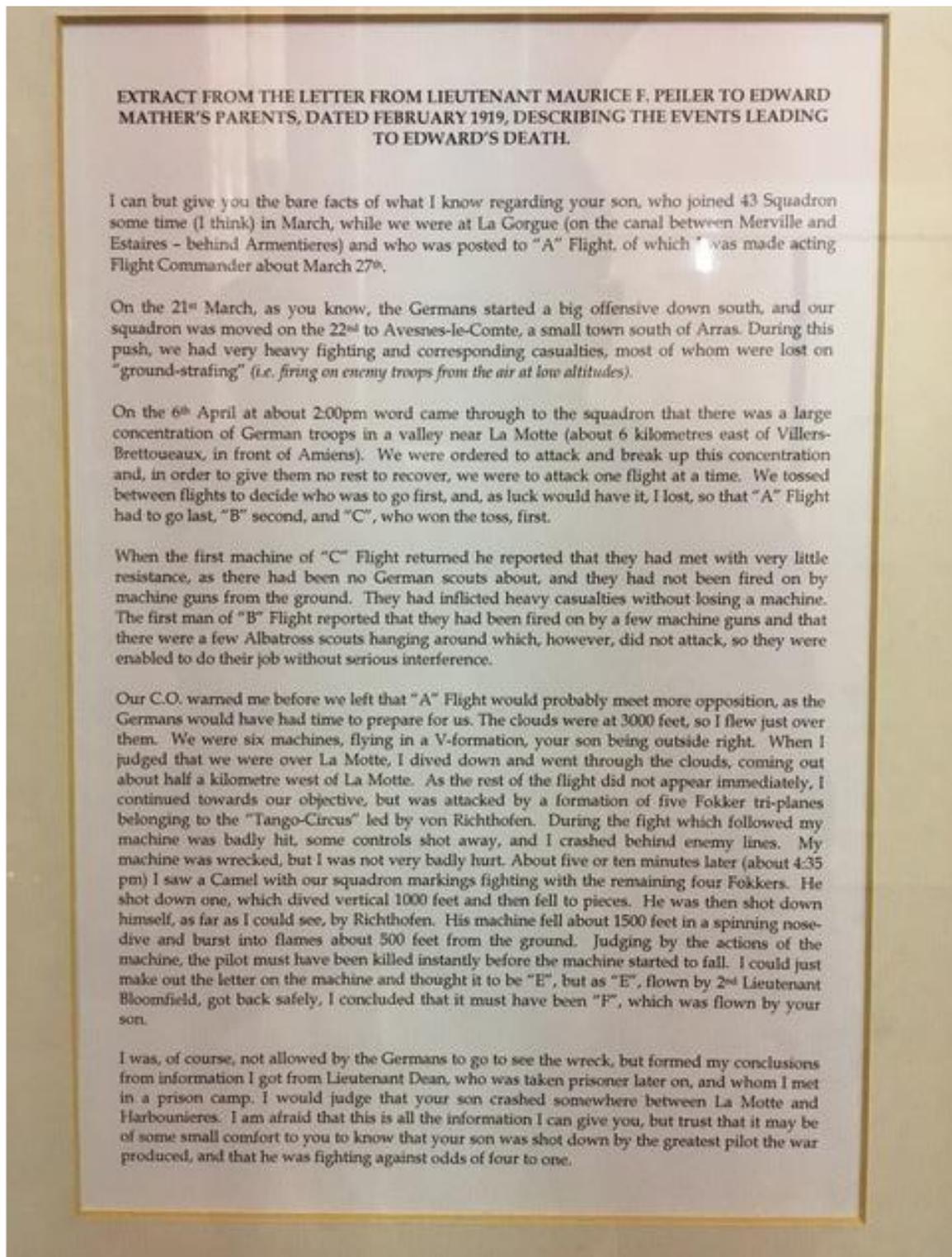
We were contacted by Sqn Ldr Iain Gray, a former 43 Sqn liney in Tornado F3 days and now OC Aircraft Systems Training Squadron at DCAE Cosford. He located several items of Sqn silverware in the Defence Store at Donnington in April 2017 and arranged for them to be loaned to the Officers' Mess at Cosford. The silver cockerels and Sopwith Camel were badly damaged during their time in storage. Iain repaired the items and remounted them on new oak plinths in time for the DCAE Cosford Battle of Britain Dining in Night. They will be displayed regularly at Officers' Mess functions.



Out of the blue, we were contacted by Angela Findlater, the daughter of Capt John Lightfoot Trollope, who shot down 6 German aircraft from his Sopwith Camel on 24 March 1918. Andy Moir visited Angela with Katherine Campbell (Sholto Douglas' daughter) in early December 2017. Angela has all of Capt Trollope's personal records of the time and part of the Sqn's official war record. We are having these records transcribed for safekeeping.

Staying with the WWI theme, Rev George Vidits, Minister, St Stephen's Comely Bank Church, Edinburgh used his Remembrance Sunday Sermon to pay tribute to Lt Edward Mather, 43 Sqn. Rev George approached us requesting further information giving us some very basic details of Lt Mather's Service Record. It appears he was on the Sqn for only 5 days before being shot down on 6 April 1918 whilst flying Sopwith Camel C8248. On that day, 5 of the Sqn's 10 Sopwith Camel's were

shot down by von Richthofen's JG1. We unearthed some more detail for Rev George and an extract from a letter written to Lt Mather's parents is on display at the church.



The Squadron's notable collection of paintings has been transferred to the ownership of the Association and a detailed inventory prepared. Four of the paintings have been loaned to the East of Scotland Universities air Squadron both to maintain our strong links with Leuchars and hopefully to provide inspiration to UAS cadets contemplating a career in the RAF. The remaining paintings continue to be stored on our behalf at the RAF Museum's Reserve Collection at Stafford.

### **On this day anniversaries...**

100 years ago on 24<sup>th</sup> March 1918, Capt John Lightfoot Trollope, flying a Sopwith Camel from Avesnes-le-Comte, near Arras, shot down 6 of the 12 German aircraft killed by the Sqn with no loss.  
100 years ago on 1<sup>st</sup> April 1918, the Royal Air Force was formed.

86 years ago in the summer of 1932, the crowd at the Hendon Airshow 'was staggered by the wonderful formation flying of 43'. The aerobatic team tied their Hawker Furies together and provided ten different formations without making a mistake or losing a moment.

30 years ago 24<sup>th</sup> Feb 1988, John Brady and Mike Pugh's flew a record breaking run from Land's End to John O'Groats in a Phantom FG1. 523.13 nm flown in 46 min and 44 sec 671.64 kts.

30 years ago on 26<sup>th</sup> May 1988, HM The Queen presented a new standard to the Sqn.

20 years ago in December 1998 a Sqn 4-ship of Tornado F3s flew over London to mark the memorial service for ACM Sir Frederick Rosier at St Clement Danes.

## **OBITUARIES**

It is with much regret that I report the following deaths:

Allan Carlaw on 6 July 2017. Served on the Sqn in 1956 and went on to form Sqn Prints, his successful aviation art company. A member of the Association committee for over 20 years and a principal collaborator in the updated edition of the Sqn history. His other enduring legacy to the Association is an archive of over 3000 photographs tracing the history of 43 Sqn over its lifetime.

Ernie Constable in Aug 2017. Served as a Hunter pilot 1956-58 and went on to fly for BEA, BA and Cyprus Airways.

Air Chief Marshal Sir Peter Bairsto, 24 October 2017. Served as a flight commander and leader of the Fighting Cocks Hunter Aerobatic Display Team between 1954 and 1958. Went on to a distinguished RAF career and became President of our Association. Lord Craig, Sir Paddy Hine and Sir Menzies Campbell were amongst the many luminaries to attend his funeral in November 2017. Ian Hughes, a fellow Fighting Cock and Pipe Major of the Leuchars Pipe Band, played a lament at the interment.

Col Skip Yohe USAF, on 30 Oct 17. USAF Exchange pilot on Phantoms 1971-74, crewed with Jack Haines.

Chief Technician Dave Martin on 22 November 17. Airframe Technician.

Air Cdre Jack Haines on 12 December 2017 after a long illness. Served as a navigator on Phantoms 1969-72 and returned to RAF Leuchars initially as Stn Cdr and then promoted to AOSNI.

Chief Technician Ron Drury on 17 December 2017 after a long illness. 1992-1996 and then settled in St Andrews.

Bob McLaughlin, former Hunter pilot. No further details.

## **SECRETARY'S NOTICES**

Every member should receive a newsletter at least once a year. The preferred method of distribution is via email as this reduces the Association's costs to a minimum. That said, we realise that a small number of members do not have access to the internet and rely on receiving the newsletter by post. As time goes by some members change address or sadly pass away and your secretary is often unaware of such changes. Should you wish to continue to receive the newsletter by post, please confirm this with the Secretary. Please would all Association members ensure that their email details are up to date. Any changes may be made via the contact form on our website, [www.43squadronassociation.com](http://www.43squadronassociation.com), or directly to the Secretary via email, telephone, text or letter!

The annual Tornado F3 reunion will take place on Friday 18th May at the Knights Templar in Chancery Lane, London.

The annual Phantom reunion will take place on Friday 9th November at the Lord Moon on the Mall, Whitehall, London.

Best regards to all

Bill Preece

Secretary and Treasurer

43(Fighter) Squadron Fighting Cocks Association

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