

The Association of
No 43(F)
Fighter Squadron
RAF



Newsletter March 2005

Last Years Reunion: In deference to members who had requested that some reunions should be unaccompanied, the gathering was confined to men plus ladies who had served on, or were currently serving on, the squadron. It was noticeable however that few of those who'd asked for the occasional 'stag' meeting took advantage of the arrangement. What did happen was that your secretaries got quite a lot of flack from couples denied the opportunity to be there! The attendance was very disappointing with just 39 attendees - 60% down on recent years. We think, perhaps, that the disappointed members chose to vote with their feet. That said, despite the small numbers, the evening proved to be a pleasant one.

Absent Friends: Seven of our number have died since the last newsletter. Two of them distinguished 'Battle of Britain' pilots, namely Group Captains' Frank Carey and Tom Dalton-Morgan – longest serving CO during WW11. Their obituaries can be found on the BoB Historical Society website, address: www.battleofbritain.net/bobhsoc/index.html.

The full list is as follows:

WW 'Wally' Beadle on Squadron 1936/(??), died January 2004: **F R 'Frank' Carey**, 1930/34 & 1936/41, died December 2004: **T F 'Tom' Dalton-Morgan**, 1940/41, died September 2004: **L L 'Lynn' Johnson**, 1945/45, January 2004: **J 'Joe' McLean**, 1954/55, November 2003: **W V 'Bill' Middleton**, 1943/46, December 2003: **E 'Pip' Reading**, 1941/45, March 2004: An omission from the 2004 newsletter: **J 'Thug' Thornton**, 1957/61, March 2003. **Gloria Finis**

The Reunion this year is in commemoration of the 60th Anniversary of the Association and is timed to coincide with our squadron receiving the Freedom of the Royal City of Stirling the following day:

The reunion is to be held in the **Great Hall of Stirling Castle** on **Friday 3rd June** timing: **1945 for 2015**. Dress: **Black tie or Highland Dress plus medals** with the option of **uniform** (for serving members). **Free transport** has been arranged with pick up points at various hotels, (detailed below). Carriages at **2300**. The cost will be in the region of **£35.00** per person (including a ½ bottle of wine). A small 'top up' amount may be required – attendees will be notified by post if this is needed. Because it is expected that it will be a very well subscribed event places will be allocated on a 'first come first served' basis. Also, extra guests will be limited (initially) to **one couple** per member. **Other highlights:**

Friday: 0900: An 8v8 golf match, the Squadron versus the Association. **1700:** An unveiling, by the Vice Chief of the Defence staff, of a cairn commemorating the fallen of 43(F) Squadron. **1930:** The RAF pipe band will 'beat the retreat' on the Castle Lawn.

On Saturday: (Times yet to be detailed). Having been honoured with the 'Freedom' and inspected by the VCDS and the Provost of Stirling, the Squadron will exercise it's newly given right by marching to the **Kings Field** where a Tornado singleton, timed to coincide with their arrival, will open a military event that will last for several hours including a short display by the **Red Arrows**.

Sunday morning: (Timing; y.t.b.d), a church service will be held at the **Church of Holy Rude, Stirling** in celebration of the Association's 60th Anniversary with the **Squadron standard** being

paraded. Afterwards the Provost will provide attendees with sandwiches and refreshments. (Venue to be notified).

Hotels in and around Stirling

(prices for June 2005 for the Fighting Cocks)

Stirling, Highland Hotel (4*Lux)

Tel: 01786-475444 Double/Twin room £110 Inc breakfast, Single room £90 Inc breakfast.

Golden Lion Hotel (3*) Tel: 01786-

475351/449837 Double/Twin room £90 Inc breakfast, Single room £69

Inc breakfast. **Park Lodge Hotel (2*) Tel: 01786-474862**

Double/Twin room £90 Inc breakfast, Single room £90 Inc breakfast.

Royal Hotel, Bridge of Allan (3*) Tel: 01786-832284

Double/Twin room £90 Inc breakfast, Single room £85 Inc breakfast.

Terraces Hotel (2*) Tel: 01786-472268

Double/Twin room £90 Inc breakfast, Double/Twin room single occupancy £64.50 Inc breakfast,

Single room £57 Inc breakfast

Travel Inn (Pirnhall) (2*) Tel: 01786-811256 All rooms £47

Breakfast is available for £7 pp

Holiday Inn Express (2*) Tel: 01786-449922 Double/Single occupancy room £60 Inc breakfast.

Other accommodation can be found using the Internet or contact the **Stirling Tourist Information Centre on 01786 479901**

For those attending the reunion

There will be a further posted update containing finalised timing of events, a souvenir booklet, published by the city in commemoration of the weekend and a finalised cost per head – which should be close to the £35.00 already mentioned.

Lottery 'HEROES RETURN':

Enables WW11 veterans & spouses to get National Lottery funds to revisit an area of interest to them from WW11. Call **08454 102030** for details. Applications must be in before **31st March 2005**

Association website: An Association website has been set up and, it is hoped, will be built upon to improve communications for computer owning members. The Website Address is: www.43sqdn-association.com

From the Squadron Diary:

EXERCISE MAPLE FLAG

Following an intensive work up period in spring 2004, 43(F) Squadron deployed to RCAF Cold Lake in west Canada in May 2004 for Exercise Maple Flag. It is one of the largest and most complex multinational air exercises in the world, second only to RED FLAG in the USA. The Exercise aims to stretch the capabilities of all participants by involving them in a series of complex and dynamic airborne sorties involving over 130 aircraft pitted against an increasingly capable air and ground threat. 43(F) Squadron had been selected to be the lead RAF fighter squadron to introduce the Advanced Medium Range Air to Air Missile (AMRAAM) into front line service and MAPLE FLAG was to be the proving ground for 6 months of hard tactical training. It soon became apparent that AMRAAM had given us a step change in capability and throughout the Exercise we impressed the other nations present by consistently achieving unparalleled kill ratios. Socially, we were well hosted by the Canadians and had several good weekends in Edmonton and Washington.

EXERCISE SPHINX In August 43(F) Squadron began its workup for its annual deployment to Armament Practice Camp (APC) at RAF Akrotiri. APC takes advantage of good weather, a huge amount of free airspace and a lack of major shipping lanes to give aircrew the opportunity to practise their live Air-to-Air Gunnery in a safe environment. This year, however, APC was to be preceded by Exercise Sphinx, a Dissimilar Air Combat Training Exercise with the Egyptian Air Force F16s. With 2 personnel in Egypt to ensure safe, effective coordination and training value, 43(F) Squadron flew an array of missions from Akrotiri against the EGAF over the Egyptian mainland. Operationally, Sphinx again proved what an improvement the AMRAAM has made to our capability and gave valuable experience to junior aircrew

in working in a Middle East environment. The EGAF were impressed with the conduct of the Exercise and were able to report that they had not had such valuable training in many years. Following this successful exercise the Squadron went on to post sound Gunnery scores that showed a marked improvement upon last year.

OP SOLSTICE During our deployment in Cyprus the Squadron learned that, at extremely short notice, we were to be the lead squadron for Op Solstice. This is a NATO Op concerning the AD of the Baltic States. With the inclusion of the 3 Baltic States into NATO, 7 countries have signed an agreement to patrol and defend their airspace from incursion. The deployment is a highly visible sign of the collective defence that lies at the core of the NATO alliance. The Belgians and the Danes were the first to perform this task with their F16s and the RAF was originally planned to take over from the Danes in mid August. The Tornado F3, however, requires a longer runway than the F 16 and significant improvements to the base at Siauliai, Lithuania were required before it was fit for F3 operations. When the order to deploy arrived 43(F) Squadron, with huge support from Leuchars, deployed to Siauliai with just 4 days notice. Currently 4 aircraft are in theatre where the RAF has attracted enormous attention and support from the majority of the local population and media. Four crews are in theatre at any one time with approximately 100 support personnel stationed in Siauliai and Vilnius, the Lithuanian capital.

43 (F) SON AT LEUCHARS

43(F) Squadron continues to work in the local community, fostering our relationship with the charity organisation Heartstone with whom we have been working for several years. Soon we will be partaking in their Festival of Flight exhibition in Edinburgh. Recently we have again hosted the Scotland rugby team and have a close friendship with the Scottish Rugby Union (SRU). The SRU often request that we give flypasts for Scotland's international matches and are keen and generous hosts when we are their guests. In early November the ex-Scotland international and Bath Rugby Club

player Andy Nichol visited 43(F) Squadron on a promotional tour to advertise the Heineken Cup Club Competition. The Heineken Cup Final will be played at Murrayfield and 43(F) Squadron is proud to be giving a flypast for this most prestigious event. During Andy Nichol's visit 43(F) Squadron had the privilege of taking the Heineken Cup supersonic on a sortie!

ADVANCED TACTICAL LEADERSHIP COURSE (ATLC)

In mid November the majority of the Squadron deployed to Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) for yet another large-scale multinational Exercise. ATLC gave crews a unique insight into operations in the desert, flying with the American and the French Air Forces as well as several Arab nations. The aim of ATLC is to expose junior aircrew to the complexities of planning, coordinating, executing and debriefing large air missions. Once again the Squadron was well supported by RAF Akrotiri on the staging flights to and from the UAE. During the ATLC detachment the Squadron entered a team in the prestigious Dubai Rugby 7s international tournament. This was partially funded by raffling a rugby ball donated by the SRU earlier this year. The Squadron has a core of committed rugby players and some have represented the RAF. The Exercise proved to be a huge success in all aspects, with 43(F) Sqn making the most of great flying, good weather and enjoyable sport.

THE FUTURE The next 6 months will see a slight drop in the frenetic tempo of the last half year as the Squadron concentrates on bringing its new aircrew to Combat Ready status in the New Year. Although The Falkland Islands and Quick Reaction Alert (QRA) will remain firm fixtures, the next major deployment will be to Mountain Home, Idaho, USA in late April 2005. In June 2005 the Squadron will receive the rare and distinct honour of being the only squadron in RAF history to be awarded the Freedom of any city when we shall receive the Freedom of the City of Stirling: **REPORT ENDS.**

Our best wishes to you all

Bob Iles: 01252 333386

Neil MacIndoe: 01252 792793

I wish to attend the 2005 'Stirling Castle' Reunion.

Name _____
With partner: Yes / No

Guests (maximum: 2 people) _____

I enclose a cheque for £35.00 per head (deposit)
Total Amount _____
(Payable to: No. 43 (F) Squadron Association)

Please send to: **R M Iles, 35 Hillside Road, Aldershot, GU11 3LX**

Tel: 01252 333386. Email: robertiles@lineone.net

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