



**THE ROYAL AIR FORCES
ASSOCIATION**
Rutland Branch
THE FLYING HORSESHOE



Branch Newsletter

January 2013



On Thursday 13th December 2248 (Rutland) Squadron held their Annual Awards Presentation evening. The event was well attended by officials from the town council, parents and families and RAFA Rutland member's .The officer carrying out the parade revue was Air commodore Gary Waterfall, President of the squadron, who had travelled up from RAF High Wycombe for the evening. This year the trophy's where jointly presented by the Air Commodore and Dr Laurence Howard, Lord Lieutenant of Rutland. The Rob Toy trophy as presented by Diana Toy a RAFA Rutland branch member.

A full programme of events took place after the traditional Christmas reading, and carol service officiated by Canon Michael Wilson. A highlight of the evening was a demonstration of the drill movements performed by the colour guard which included presenting arms. The culinary skills of the cadets were revealed and guests were invited to taste what was on offer.

The guests were encouraged to participate in the mulled wine and mince pies on offer which was customary for the time of the year.

A resounding success for all involved and congratulations to all the cadets who the received awards

Photographs from left to right: Air Cdre presenting first aid certificates: Di Toy presenting Sgt Richards with Best NCO (Rob Toy) Trophy: The Lord Lieutenant presenting Sgt Bloor with Lord Lieutenant Certificate. Finally the colour drill display with cooking in background.

Derek Bury

New Associate Member

We wish to welcome a new member Mrs Jackie Towl of Oakham and Mr Sean Cullen of Cottesmore

Angie Humphrey

National Service with The Royal Air Force Per Ardua ad Astra

Conscription had been ended at the end of the Second World War but was reintroduced on the 18th July 1947, (in those days before sexual equality) for men only, in order to enlarge the armed forces in the face of a perceived threat from the Soviet Union. In the 50's, therefore, as boys came towards the end of their time at school, decisions about further education or the development of a career were blighted by the looming prospect of an extended period of servitude (which, on 1 October 1950, was increased from 18 months to full two years duration).



National Service Cutlery
Image courtesy of Brain Bouchard
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The process began at the age of 18 with a requirement to register, followed by medical assessment and an opportunity to express a preference for the Navy or RAF rather than the Army. One then waited, without deferment, for about 6 months before being called up. Eventually, in my case, a rail warrant arrived with instructions to report to RAF Cardington.

When a disparate group of nervous young men de-trained at Bedford they were assembled to board a blue RAF bus to be driven to the camp. There, divided into batches of about twenty individuals, they were lined up in threes and directed to one of the many barrack-huts. These had lines of iron beds lined against each wooden wall and divided one from another by a narrow wardrobe and locker. Next the recruits would be led to the Bedding Store to be issued with blankets, sheets and pillow-cases. Further essentials were a set of knife, fork and spoon ('eating irons') with an earthenware mug (pint pot) in time for an evening meal. Finally left to their own devices we could find the NAAFI to relax and take stock

Over the rest of the following seven days the recruits were attested before being moved around from section to section in one of the vast old airship hangers to have their 'irons' (and minds) impressed with their respective service numbers and collect various other items of equipment - battledress, 'best blue' uniform, shoes, studded boots, pyjamas, underwear, 4 pairs of woollen socks, a housewife (pronounced 'huzzif') containing darning materials, and a kit bag to hold it all. In the NAAFI the airman's needed to obtain, at his own expense, padlocks to secure his locker and duffle bag, black boot polish, Brasso, soap etc. Ultimately he was instructed to parcel up his civilian clothes to be returned home by post.

After induction came basic training at one of five camps in the North of England [Hednesford, Padgate, Wilmslow, West Kirby & Bridgenorth], each recruit's destination being determined by the weekday on which he had arrived at Cardington. So I came to be herded with a number of uniformed 'sprogs' into a troop train waiting at Bedford. It departed to wend its way slowly through the English countryside heading for Merseyside, ultimately arriving at tiny Meols station on the Wirral peninsula. From there we were taken in three ton lorries to be deposited on the parade ground of RAF West Kirby where the conditioning by Corporal Drill Instructors began immediately.

The training establishment was based on four squadrons each divided into five 'flights' of 22 men allocated to a particular billet. Each hut was similar to those described for Cardington. The central space between the two opposing ranks of beds had been provided with two tables, having respectively four wooden chairs. Towards each there stood a black solid fuel stove on a stone plinth with a coke container. Two long green painted racks were provided to hold rifles. The hut had two small private rooms at one end used by NCO's and was connected via a spinal corridor, to ablution blocks. The floor had been covered brown linoleum and highly polished (with the aid of a long handled 'bumper'); each bed-space was provided with a thin mat. Small squares torn from old blankets were piled by the entrance on which the occupants shuffled around to preserve the lino's burnished surface.

Basic training, extending over eight weeks, consisted saluting, marching, bayonet drill, shooting with rifle and bren gun, exposure to tear-gas, lectures on the hazards of a nuclear attack and sexually transmitted diseases, guard duty and so on. Inevitably there was 'bull' - cleaning the hut and equipment for regular inspection. It was a bitterly cold Winter but the stoves were left unlit, partly because fuel was difficult to obtain but mainly to avoid the chore of cleaning and re-polishing to the standard demanded. Pay parades took place in a huge echoing shed: stand in line, wait for name to be called, step forward and come to attention, state 'last three' of service number, salute the officer and bring right hand down to collect a note and few coins from the table. The rate was then 4 shillings a day or a total of £1.40 per week in decimal currency. Having been vaccinated, inoculated and lined up to donate blood, we were granted leave home over Christmas on the strict condition that full-dress uniform was to be worn when 'walking out'. Finally we began preparations for the passing out parade and took aptitude tests for trade training. Having demonstrated that I was not colour blind, it was possible to proceed to No.1 Radio School, RAF Locking, Weston super mare, for instruction in the duties of a Ground Wireless Mechanic (C).

During 12 weeks at Locking under technical training one could get back to Surrey on the occasional 48 hour pass and conditions were generally relaxed. Guard duty, however, needed to be taken seriously because of threats from the IRA. As the course moved towards its end each man's thoughts were turned to what next? Could one be given a 'cushy' billet close to home or posted to a trouble spot in the Near or Far East?

Taken from www.epsomandewellhistoryexplorer.org.uk Jan 2013

Written by Brian Bouchard © 2010 Member of [Leatherhead and District Local History Society](http://www.leatherheadanddistrictlocalhistorysociety.org.uk)

What memories and photographs do you have of conscription?

A reminder of the questions

RAFARUTLAND CHRISTMAS QUIZ

1. Who was the first British monarch to broadcast a Christmas message to the nation? (in 1932)
2. Child star Jimmy Boyd sang which hugely popular 1950's Christmas song,
3. Who banned Christmas in England between 1647 and 1660?
4. Who are the four ghosts in Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol? (One point for each correctly named ghost and a bonus point for all four).
5. What liqueur goes into making a 'snowball' cocktail?
6. What is the English title of the carol written in 1818 by Austrian priest Josef Mohr originally called Stille Nacht?
7. What is the popular name for little baked sausages wrapped in rashers of streaky bacon?
8. Which of the Wise Men was said to have brought the gift of gold for the baby Jesus?
9. The 1954 movie White Christmas was the first to be made using what new Paramount film format?
10. What changed in 1752 which caused England to have a White Christmas less frequently thereafter?
11. Traditional in Germany at Christmas, what sort of food is stollen?
12. According to the UK National Meteorological Office what year (prior to 2007) was the last White Christmas in Britain?
13. How many gifts are given in total in the song The Twelve Days of Christmas?
14. The words "Myrrh is mine, its bitter perfume breathes of life, of gathering gloom..." come from which Christmas carol?
15. Christmas Island in the Indian Ocean is a territory of which country?
16. Which diarist noted on 25th Dec 1662, "(Christmas Day). Had a pleasant walk to White Hall, where I intended to have received the communion with the family, but I have come too late

17. John Callcott Horsley designed what first commercial Christmas item in 1843?
18. In Victorian England what people were popularly called robins because of their red uniforms?
19. Which token vegetable is often included in the ingredients of a Christmas pudding?
20. Yorkshireman William Strickland is believed to have brought the first what to Britain from North America in 1526?

Derek Bury

Christmas Quiz 2012 Answers:

1. George the Fifth (in 1932)
2. I saw Mommy kissing Santa Claus.
3. Oliver Cromwell.
4. Christmas Past, Christmas Present, Christmas Yet to Come, and Jacob Marley (one point for each correctly named ghost, and a bonus point for all four)
5. Advocaat.
6. Silent Night
7. Pigs in blankets.
8. Melchior.
9. Vista Vision.
10. The calendar.
11. Cake.
12. 2004.
13. 364.
14. We Three Kings of Orient Are.
15. Australia.
16. Samuel Pepys.
17. Christmas Card.
18. Postmen.
19. Carrot.
20. Turkey.

A maximum score 24

Derek Bury

- WHATS ON -

Forthcoming Events: If you have any requests or details on forth coming events then Tel: 01572 755969 or email rafarutland923@yahoo.co.uk

RAF Waddington Air Show - Saturday 6th – Sunday 7TH July 2013

Derek Bury

DATES for Your DIARY

February 6th	Ken Ellis Editor Flypast Magazine	Spitfire Heroes
March 6th	None	AGM
April 3 rd	Air Commodore Peter Gover Chairman VAR	VAR & It's Services.
Wed 1 st May	DTUS RAF Student Cadets	Defence Technical Undergraduate Scheme (DTUS)

Branch Meetings are 1st Wed every month – Next Meeting February 6th 2013

Venue: Cottesmore Sports & Social Club – 7.00 for 7.30pm

Branch Contact Numbers

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The Branch web site is at www.rafarutland.org.uk