

A Heroes Return

**A Presentation for
Their Past - Your Future**

A Lottery Sponsored Initiative

Memories of World War II

Flight Lt. Ken Turnham's Experiences in the RAF

The Crew of B Flight and a Lancaster RAF 115 Squadron Witchford near Ely



Completing 29 missions 1944 to 1945 helping to end WWII

One Man's World War II

*The Accounts and stories of
Ken Turnham's Two very different roles
and His Hero's Return*

Contents

Part 1 - RAF Bomber Crew

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The Heroes Return Lottery Grant

Heroes Return is part of a special Lottery Funded Programme called "**Veterans Reunited**". This has been set up to make grants to commemorate the 60th anniversary in 2005 of the remarkable events that led to the end of Second World War. Hopefully new generations will understand and learn from their experiences. The Heroes Return grants are awarded to help those who were involved in WWII to make commemorative visits to places all over the world where they were involved in war activities. Participants in the **Heroes Return** are encouraged to contribute with links to the associated scheme '**Their Past, Your Future**' which funds activities for schools and schoolchildren and youth groups.

Ken Turnham's Booklet and Presentation

The CD and this book has been created as part of Ken's contribution to Their Past, Your Future. His hope is that future generations may understand not only something of what it was like to go to war in the air but some of the activities which were necessary after such a conflict. Both the CD and the book were created as a collaboration between Ken and a family friend, John Payne, who accompanied Ken on his return. In the process of assembling this information Ken has contributed to a book called 'Bomber Command Missions 1944' by Kevin Wilson and has taken steps to ensure his memorabilia have been left for future generations. Information on the Lottery schemes is available on 0845 00 00 121.

The CD presentation provides the background to support the comments of the presenter. This booklet provides a more detailed account to support the presentation and allows those without a computer to read of Ken's war.

**Cover Photo by Ken Turnham, Signals. - The Lancaster Crew of Flight B Bomber Command Witchford Ely 1944
Left to Right - Jock Thompson Rear Gunner, Jimmy Jock McTavish Mid Upper Gunner, Geoff Chadwick Bomb Aimer,
Dick Briggs Pilot, Andy Glass Flight Engineer, Harry Beardwell Navigator. Coloured and retouched from b/w photo.**

Part One RAF Bomber Crew

Ken with his Kodak Box Camera which provided many of the illustrations for this project.



Ken Turnham's War record

1940 - Applied to join the RAF

1942 - 1943 AC Signals and radar

1944 - Sergeant 115 Squadron

1945 - Pilot Officer completed Tour

1945 - Fl. Lt. posted to Germany

1948 - Resigned post in MREU

Ken Turnham - A Career Summary

Ken's childhood and youth was spent in St Albans. At the outbreak of WWII in 1940, Ken volunteered to join the RAF. Even with his experience gained in the Air Training Corps his application was refused, being under the age the government set for war service.

In 1942, aged 18, his application was accepted and as an AC undertook the mandatory 'square bashing', drill, combat and fitness training. This took several months in London and Bridgnorth.

He was then selected for training in Signals and Radar. At No2 Radio School, Yatesbury, he qualified as a sergeant in Jan 1944. After flying in De Havilland Dominties, Perceval Proctors and Avro Ansons from the Isle of Anglesey he was stationed at Lossiemouth for training on Wellington Bombers. Here at No20 OTU in October 1944 he joined his colleagues for the rest of the war under their skipper Dick Briggs and they completed their conversion training course No1669 flying Halifax bombers. In November '44 they were sent to No3 Lancaster Finishing School. With only 12 hours flying time they were posted to Bomber Command operational Squadron 115 at Witchford near Ely. Now as a Sergeant, Ken flew his first mission in December '44 just days after test flights and bombing exercises.

The above highlights the length of time it took to

train many of the crew and service staff even though training periods were reduced to the minimum. The terrible loss of aircrew created acute shortages of personnel with the skills to fly, navigate and maintain mechanically and electronically rapidly advancing aircraft and communication systems.

After their first few missions Ken was commissioned with a rank of Pilot Officer. Immediately after the war he was promoted to Flight Lieutenant.

Ken's RAF career following WWII.

As a Flight Lieutenant he worked in the UK and Germany as a Release and Resettlement Officer. Following this he accepted a post working in Germany for the MREU (Missing Research and Enquiry Unit). His final post was in Heidelberg in the American zone and it was here he met his wife, Madge. His work with the MREU was the motivation for his recent visit and Return to Germany and is the subject of Parts Two and Three of this presentation. Ken and Madge resigned their commissions in 1948, returning to Madge's home City of Manchester. Ken pursued his career in Engineering with Reynold Chain as a Production Controller in Burnage Manchester. They had a son named Peter. Ken is presently retired, lives in Stockport and looks forward to his 81st birthday in 2005.

The Introduction to Part One - RAF Bomber Crew

In part one it is hoped to provide an insight, a glimpse, into what it was like to be part of a bomber crew in the RAF during World War II. To do this we will be introducing readers to the people who joined the RAF during the war and who flew with Ken Turnham. Where the words used are not quotes of Ken, all people, their stories and events are as reported to me by Ken. All the events in part one are based on this one crew. They were one of thousands of units working for the British Government's Ministry of War. At the time these units were working under what is known as Bomber Command. Ken Turnham's unit details:-

**Bomber Command - 115 Squadron RAF Witchford Ely - Cambridgeshire England
Lancaster Bomber Crew B Flight - Squadron Leader E A Morrison.**

Part One

RAF Bomber Crew

Some General Points.

The following accounts are as reported to me by Ken over the period of several months discussing his life during this time.

It wasn't the glamorous life of Black Labradors, MG Sports cars and sweeping young ladies off their feet at village dances that you may have seen in old war films. It means that after months of training you and six other men had to fly to Germany in a noisy very cold big tin can for up to eight hours as others tried to shoot you down. If you got to the target area the plane descended to drop it's bomb. It took up to 10 minutes, the longest minutes in your life.

"We were sitting on top of and just feet away from up to 10,000 pounds of high explosives. The plane was surrounded by the noise, blinding light and smell of exploding shells trying to blow you out of the sky. We were always very frightened and scared until our bombs were dropped and we could turn for home."

The facts are for every 10 aircrew who undertook these missions 5 died. The eternity of the four hour return to base was followed by waiting and praying your other friends would return. "To try and forget and face the next day we did drink a lot. Many air crew became reliant on drink to overcome the terrible stress of the work involved." In the next few pages we can meet some of the men who did this for us.

Introducing Ken's Crew

The Pilot - Dick Briggs (First Back Briggs)

Dick was a few years older than the rest of the crew. He was a pilot in the RAF before the war started.

How did Ken's crew survive their 29 missions. Lots of luck - A talented pilot who refused to obey orders was key factor.

After dropping bombs, orders were to fly to 20,000 feet and take a direct falling line to base. Dick never did this. As soon as possible he took their bomber down to 2 to 3,000 feet and flew as close to the ground as possible. Fighter planes did not like to attack at so low an altitude. If they misjudged their dive they could easily hit the ground. It also meant they had to attack from above where the crew and the gunners could keep a careful watch. The ground guns (ack ack) were looking for planes higher and could not adjust quickly enough to a low level high speed target.

Dick was also an expert at diving his Lancaster into a spiral to get out of the German search lights - Being caught in the glare of the 'lead blue' search beam was the dread of all air crews. Caught in blue would mean all the other searchlights would focus on you. Shells and bullets would follow quickly. Dick was a skilled, brave and talented pilot and unusually his home was very near the base, in Peterborough.



The Navigator - Harry Beardwell

End up in the wrong place - A lone bomber - poor chance of surviving. The Navigator, his charts and orders. He was responsible for lots of complicated calculations and observations having to be accurately carried out with freezing fingers and the noise of the plane and intercom chatter. His job was to ensure his plane got to the drop zone and then home again. Being lost meant, running out of fuel, being found by German fighter aircraft.

Mission Abort. On occasions, usually bad weather the crew were told to return to base. The navigator would then have to find the 'dump' location. It was too dangerous to land planes with bombs on board. On the day Glen Miller, the famous wartime band leader died in a plane crash it flew under Harry's dump zone. No one will ever know if it was hit by these bombs being dumped in the Channel.



Part One RAF Bomber Crew

Signals Officer - Ken Turnham

Contact by radar, radio, signal by Morse code. Where to join the other groups, your bombers place in the raid. There were up to 1000 bombers on some operations. Warnings of possible attacks on route. Normally there was limited use made of morse of radar signals as these could be overheard by German listening stations. For Signals between planes Ken would use an Aldis Lamp.

Ken's favourite message for the crew - Mission Abort. They could go home. The bad news these aborted missions didn't count towards the 30 mission Tour.

Lancaster Bombers were not air con jumbo jets. The serious cold required special boots, jackets, hats, and essentially gloves. There was not enough air to survive at 20,000 feet. All crew were connected to an oxygen supply. It was fixed to your station. If you were injured, trapped or needed help, other crew had only four minutes supply with a portable set to come to your aid. Many died of blood loss. On one raid the plane was hit by an explosion. Ken noticed he was bleeding and he was told by Andy Glass it was only a small amount of blood he was losing, he would be OK. On landing he was taken to the 'sick bay' (hospital). A few pieces of metal were removed from his forehead. The rest would have to be left there he was told. He was back at his post within days. 30 years later after an X Ray they were rediscovered and are still there.



Flight Engineer - Andy Glass

Will the plane get us there and back. The Engineer would know that there were lots of parts worn or not working. There was pressure to get it fixed and take off. The risks would have to be balanced. Enough fuel, too much weight, engines and landing gear OK. All the responsibility of the Engineer. During the flight the engineer would have to ensure fuel was always in the correct tanks to keep the engines running as well as keeping the plane balanced. A fully laden bomber with no engines, even for a few moments would not take long to descend.

What were the worst parts. Much of the time the crew suffered serious nervous and sick feelings. Even taking off was fraught. Fully laden planes seemed if they would never get airborne before running out of runway (some didn't). As they thundered up the runway all the crew would be willing the plane to get off the ground. Would the engines keep going? Would they be attacked by fighters. Being surrounded by searchlights and shells in the drop zones was probably the most demanding but there was also the real and serious risk of being hit by bombs being dropped by other planes in the raid. This was because bombers were stacked in layers above each other. In poor visibility or by error planes above could advance over the lower layers and many were hit by bombs being dropped from above. Even getting back to base and landing was always tense as crews were never sure if tyres or landing gear had been damaged in combat. If the damage was causing pilots handling problems they were diverted to special areas with extra fire and landing aids. Many crews perished as bombers crashed on landing. It was only after touchdown and a safe taxi it was possible to relax.

The awful facts were that of the 120,000 aircrew that flew with Bomber Command in WWII, 55,000 crew lost their lives. Many became prisoners of war and of course many were injured, physically as well as mentally.



Part One

RAF Bomber Crew

Rear Gunner - Jock Thompson

His headset would crackle "Bandits". His heart would race, get it wrong and he and his crew may die as enemy fighters tried to shoot them out of the sky. Sitting exposed in a bubble of clear plastic as the Gunner you felt very exposed.

On one occasion Jock was hit by exploding shells. No one could come to his aid immediately, he had to attend to his wounds to prevent further loss of blood. In doing this he took his gloves off. His wounds healed up, but he had to have two fingers removed because of frost bite. He claimed they were not important, neither were his 'trigger finger' and he was allowed to continue his job.

Part of the reason for this was the crews belief in keeping together so that their luck could continue.

Many gunners were labelled as crazy. Jock never let his team down. He saved his crew by persuading around 6 Messersmitts they should go home. Three were sent directly to the ground.



Mid Upper Gunner - Jimmy McTavish

The same plastic bubble as the rear gunner but a full 360 degrees of sky to scan. There was also the frustration of fighters approaching from below the angle the guns would work and naturally it wasn't wise to shoot off the bombers tail plane. A lonely, exposed job, lose concentration at the wrong time and life could cease or at best a short period of parachuting would end in a prison camp.

How did they manage this stress. There were more light hearted times. Crew would collect current magazines and throw them out for the troops on the ground as they passed over northern Germany. There was also the psychological problem of the damage and death that was being caused by the fire storms and bombing of the towns that were clearly visible to the crews. Some crew members who could not carry on were released from their duties - But their service records, in most cases it could be argued, unfairly stamped LMF (lack of moral fibre)



Bomb Aimer - Geoff Chadwick

If the bomb aimer did not complete his 10 minutes work - All the risks were in vain. But it took tremendous courage from all the crew. Signals confirmed the zone. The navigator would set the route, the pilot would take the bomber down.

The bomb aimer laid at the front with his maps holding the release button for up to 10 minutes as he directed the pilot to the target. Meanwhile ALL HELL surrounded their vulnerable hold on life. The longest minutes in your life. With 10,000 lbs of high explosive it may take just one bullet for the whole plane to blow up. Everyone waited for the Aimer's words - "bombs away". The engines roared, the plane soared upward with it's loss of weight, concentrate on returning home. Just 10 minutes work. - The really bad news was a no drop decision. Geoff twice did this during their time together. The price - a repeat bomb run. Circle back into the formation and a of repeat the whole horrifying bomb run.



Part One RAF Bomber Crew



Above the Crew of B Flight after a mission with their Squadron Leader. Photo taken by the groups Pilot Fl Lt Richard Briggs.

Left to right. - Flight engineer Sgt. Andy Glass, Wireless operator Pilot Officer Kenneth Turnham
Rear gunner Sgt. Jock Thompson, Squadron Leader E A Morrison, Navigator Fl Sgt Harry Beardwell
Bomb Aimer Flying Officer Geoff Chadwick, Mid-upper gunner Sgt. Jimmy (Jock) McTavish.

B Flight's Last Mission.

Ken's crew stayed together for what the RAF ironically named 'A Tour'. - Normally this was 30 missions, which if you survived you were invited to 'stand down'. To do 30 missions you had to fly many more. If a raid was terminated 'mission abort', prior to the 'drop' zone it didn't count. A trivialized but funny version is the subject of the book - 'Catch 22'. In the case of B Flight Witchford this was reduced to 29 as the war reached it's final phase they returned from a night raid on Potsdam and were informed their Tour had been completed.

Following the release from their tour which they had completed together they volunteered for a non combat mission in Asia. However at the last minute one of the team could not commit to this and as they considered their luck may run out if the whole team did not go together they withdrew from the mission.

In May 1945, their role in the war completed, the group of fliers disbanded to go their separate ways. They were left with relief that they had survived and the sadness that so many of their Squadron like their Lancasters had not. The plane they used most was nicknamed 'Umbriago'. It was hit 47 times on a raid to Cologne, like the crew in April 45, it was also retired.

Some of Ken's Recollections of Operations over Germany.

The accounts below are Ken's own words transcribed by Kevin Wilson for inclusion in his book regarding Bomber Command during 1944 and 45.

SIEGEN, December 15th 1944. "It was my first trip, a day operation and the weather was atrocious, just like one of the old fogs in Manchester, you couldn't see a hand in front of you. We were recalled and given a designated area in the North Sea to jettison our bombs and that's what we did. Nobody will ever know what happened to Glenn Miller, but it's likely his aircraft iced up. The following day we were briefed for Siegen again."

Part One RAF Bomber Crew

DRESDEN, February 13th, 1945. "We were quite a long way back in the second wave. The crew remarked they had never seen such an intensive fire before, usually you just saw the explosions of bombs ahead. By the time we were over the target it was a mass of fire. It was just like a bush fire spreading and was the most impressive target I saw. As a target it was so clear. The glare was so bright it was like daylight. We were at 20,000ft and at that height there was no buffeting from the heat. We dropped our bombs in the middle of the fire and put the nose down to get away. Our skipper, Richard Briggs, was known as 'First Back Briggs' on the squadron because instead of making a slow descent with the stream to the coastline he used to dive to about 3,000ft, giving us airspeed, then fly all the way back at that height. The night fighters wouldn't come that low and the ack-ack radar would have a hell of a job picking us up. He was a clever skipper. When we got back it was obvious it had been a very successful raid. It wasn't a doddle, no target was a doddle, but when you get a target lit up like that as you approach there's no way you are going to miss it."

COLOGNE, March 2nd 1945. "Going in to the target we could see a lot of flak coming up and the aircraft was vibrating. I was very apprehensive, worrying about fighters. I could hear the pings of the flak coming through the fuselage, which put the wind up you, and a piece came through where I was sitting at the radio and Fishpond set. One piece hit me in the arm and other pieces in the face. I could feel something trickling down and I didn't know how badly I was hurt. I reported I had been hit as did the rear gunner, Jock Thompson, who had been wounded in the leg at the same time. He took his gloves off to investigate, getting frostbite in the fingers, but he didn't know then. We continued on the bombing run and the navigator went back to the rear gunner with a portable oxygen bottle to put a tourniquet on his leg and the flight engineer, Andy Glass, came to look at me. He told me it was just a flesh wound and I wasn't bleeding to death or anything.

When we landed at Witchford we discovered we had a burst tyre and later it was found there were 47 holes in the fuselage of the Lancaster. An ambulance was waiting for us and Jock Thompson and I were taken to sick bay. There was a piece of flak in my arm and in my nose and forehead. The doctor got me on the table and was waving a cut-throat razor and said, 'Close your eyes in case I slip'. I thought, '*My God, what's going to happen*', but he shaved off my eyebrows and said there was a piece of flak in one eyebrow and a piece in the base of my nose too deep to extricate, so I told him to leave it. About 25 years later I started getting sinus problems and an X-ray showed I still had metal in my head. The rear gunner had two fingers amputated because of frostbite, but they weren't his trigger fingers so he continued flying with the crew and finished his tour. We always said we wanted to complete our tour as a crew, that was the camaraderie we had."

POTSDAM, April 10th, 1945. "It was the last major raid night of the war, but still pretty well defended with lots of flak and searchlights. It wasn't a pushover and I saw an aircraft going down, trailing smoke. I didn't know when we took off that it would be our last operation because this was our 29th trip and normally you did a tour of 30. It was only when we got back to base that we were told we had completed our tour. It was so memorable because we suddenly realised we had survived as a crew. We went out the next night and really got sozzled."

VE DAY: "I was in hospital in St Albans. I had a very sore throat, but my feelings were absolute elation. I had a brother in aircrew, who did 47 operations on Wellingtons and Halifaxes, and another brother in the Navy and we had all survived. That was my mother's war effort, three sons in the services. We patients had a bit of a party with all the nurses on the ward. I think I could have done with staying in hospital a bit longer."

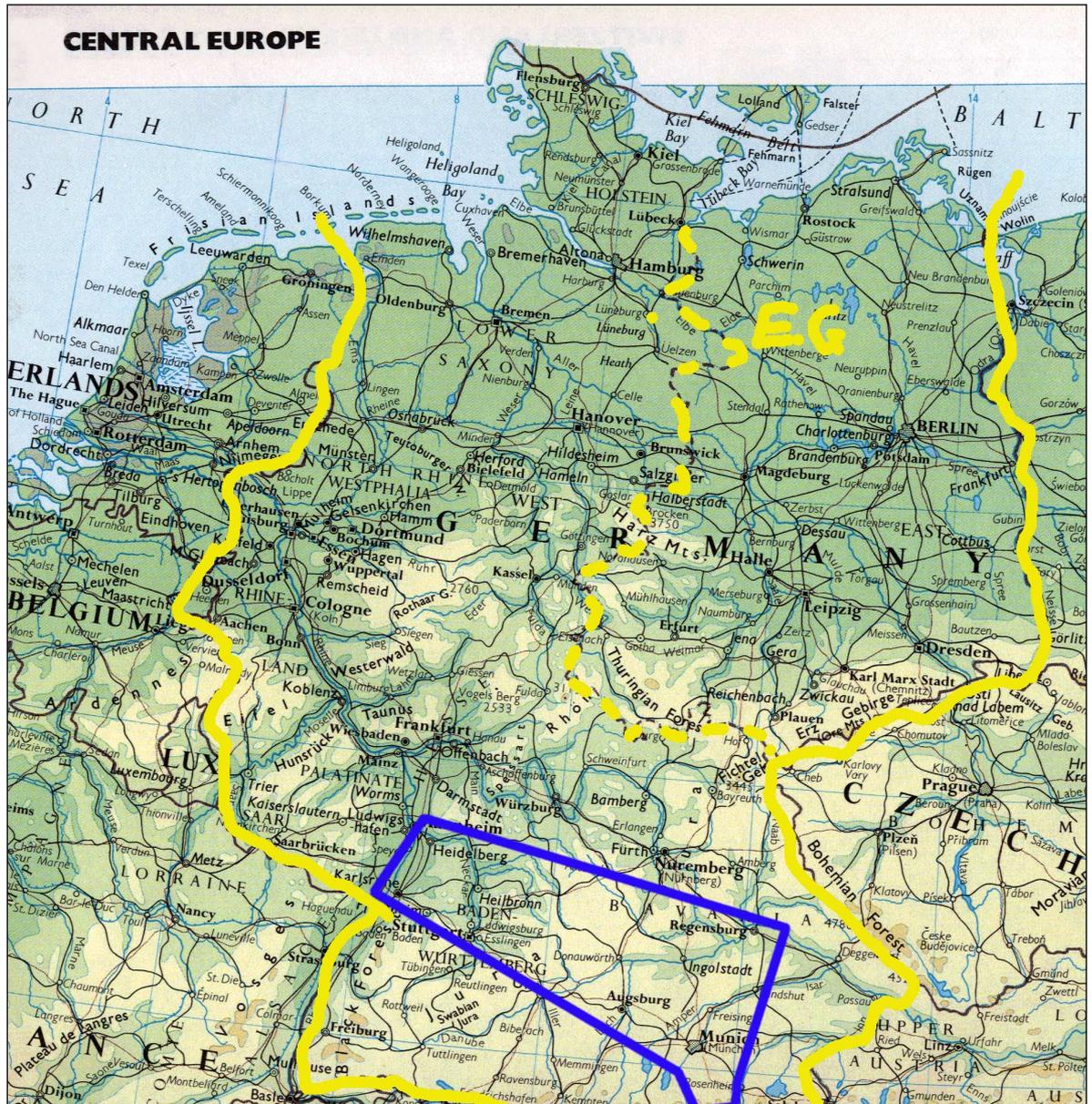
GENERAL: "Our rear gunner, Jock Thompson, was a glorified poacher. In our billet we always had a bottle of vinegar, pepper and salt and raw eggs to take as a pick-me up if we had a hangover. If we were short of eggs not only would he go out and find the eggs he was likely to bring you back the chicken as well. I met him about five years after the war and he was a policeman."

Part One
RAF Bomber Crew

Bombing Missions December 1944 to April 1945

- Siegen
- Siegen
- Trier
- Trier
- Rheyot
- Cologne
- Vohwinkel
- Nuremberg
- Ludwigshaven
- Neuss
- Duisberg
- Weisbaden
- Dortmund
- Hohenbudberg
- Dresden
- Chemnitz
- Wesel
- Wesel
- Cologne
- Satzbergan
- Dessau
- Essen
- Henrichshatte
- Nurs
- Brughstasse
- Munster
- Hallendorf
- Kiel
- Potsdam.

- Key
- German Borders
 - Return area



Ken Turnham was promoted to Flight Lieutenant in 1945 and moved initially into work as a Resettlement Officer. Later he joined The MRE Unit as an investigator working in Germany. This role will be the subject of Part Two of this Presentation.

Part Two

RAF - Missing Research & Enquiry Unit - (MREU)

Ken's Work in Southern Germany 1946 - 48



Bomber Crash site - Flight Lt. Turnham investigates

Part Two Missing Research & Enquiry Unit

An Introduction

Kens words regarding his work for the MRE Unit.

I completed a full tour of duty of operations flying Lancasters with RAF Bomber Command 115 Squadron. POST-WAR with "In 1946 I was posted to the northern part of Germany, Cuxhaven down to Osnabruck, as a release and resettlement officer when this job came up with the Missing Research Enquiry Unit I was stationed at Karlsruhe then moved to Regensburg and Heidelberg.

At the end of the war Germany was split into 4 zones controlled by the Allied Forces, namely, British, American, French, Russian. I was then posted to MREU Duties (Missing Research and Enquiry Unit), firstly No 3 and 2 and onto No 16 MREU. These covered areas such as Gutersloh, Beilefeld, Osnabruck in the British zone and then Karlsruhe in the French zone. Next onto Saal / Kelheim nr Regensburg and then finally Heidelberg which was in the American zone."

The work of the MREU.

Missing Research and Enquiry Unit

"Basically the objective was to investigate and determine what had happened to the missing personnel of aircrews. There was no official training - Not a forensic pathologist - More of an investigator. We would receive a file from Air Ministry. Information that a certain aircraft went missing or had been lost over a particular target or area. Last seen and reported by other aircraft on the raid based on the reports of returning crews at debriefing. Also listing of all the crew members."

Finding the Crash Sites

"It was our job then to trace the flight route and approximate time it was last seen. Using local resources and information this was followed up by a process of interviewing and investigating such people as the Bergomeister (Mayor) and people such as priests and they would tell us if any RAF aircraft crashed nearby and where the bodies were buried. We would try to ascertain if any of the crew had been buried in the local cemeteries, whether they had escaped or been taken prisoners of war. After locating sites, next came the task of carrying out an exhumation when we would use the local grave diggers to assist with the donkey work. Next the task of carrying out the process of identification."



Above

Fl. Lts Turnham and Smith - Do they look like detectives? Below Ken surveying bomber wreckage on a case.

Below

Flying Officer Archie Garvin with the only record we have of the classified paper work that accompanied each case.



Part Two
Missing Research & Enquiry Unit



Identification.

It was a morbid type of job, sometimes there would be three or four legs and two arms and you had to try to identify who they were. There were many ways of identifying crew members. In respect of service personnel one relied on such things known as 'Dog Tags', identity discs worn around the neck. Service number marking on clothing, any personal effects. Often you would find conflicting evidence, for example a crew member may have borrowed a clean collar from another member, hence his collar would be marked with a different number to that of his shirt. The laundry marks weren't reliable for identification because often aircrew borrowed clothes from a mate for a night out and the next night flew off wearing his mates clothes. It was very satisfying to identify missing airmen and that outweighed the morbid aspect.

The ultimate positive proof of identification, which happened in 90 per cent of cases, was by means of dental records. Fortunately all aircrew had to have their teeth in good order because of the reduced air pressure of flying at altitude, so a careful record was kept of the work done on an individual. We filled in the charts and the Air Ministry verified that person against their dental records as a positive member of that crew. This was the most efficient and positive means of identification.

Some cases it could take weeks or months to discover exactly what happened to the crew members probably buried in blankets in fields where they had been shot down, others escaping or taken POW. Many of our cases involved visiting the wrecked aircraft and many of the crew had been left where they crashed and covered by simply moving nearby earth over them.

Shots circa 1947 of scenes near cases Ken was persuing.

L to R - Gungolding, Ingolstadt, Unknown.



Top of Page
Left - Flying Officer Archie Garvin with the groups Humber Snipe.

Right - Ken's RAF ensigned company car. A jeep courtesy of US Army. When he resigned he gave it to Paul, his German mechanic.

Part Two Missing Research & Enquiry Unit

Getting on with it!

There was myself and another officer with two drivers. We had Jeeps or Humber Snipes or three-ton trucks to move around and we carried out the exhumations using local labour. I worked on as many as 10 or 12 exhumations in a day. We often worked late into the night if they were buried in cemeteries. The Army had searchlights on their vehicles which they would shine over the site to allow us to keep working. I worked on hundreds all told. I was a bit queasy about going on my first exhumation, but the colleague I was with who was teaching me the job just threw some knives to me and said, 'Get on with it'. We didn't have any forensic or pathology training, it was a matter of carrying on. I had to cut away clothing to look for laundry marks, signet rings or any personal effects in pockets. Aircrew were always told to leave any personal effects behind before they went on an operation, but I found quite a lot of items - photographs and letters and so on. It seems many aircrew ignored that instruction and not all wore their dog tags as they were ordered to. I never did for instance.

Re - Burial

Once the exhumation had been completed the bodies were handed over to the Army Liaison Officer for transportation and re-internment in the war graves cemeteries. When each individual case was finalised all details, personal effects and files would be returned to the Air Ministry, highly confidential. Therefore we would not be able to know the name or area of the final resting place. Air Ministry on receipt of the completed file were then able to inform the relatives where their loved ones had been interned. Though this was a morbid type of work one had the satisfaction and reward of helping those who had lost their loved ones. You then moved on to the next case. I never found evidence of a war crime against an airman, but quite a few people on this job did go round the bend and start hitting the bottle.



*Some of Ken's colleagues at MREU HQ.
Villa Cetto - Saal near Kelhiem*

Part Two
Missing Research & Enquiry Unit



MRE Unit Headquarters
Saal near Kelhiem Southern Germany

Villa Cetto in 1947

- Left - The front Entrance to Cetto**
- Below - The rear gardens.**
- Centre left - A band in the lounge.**
- Lower right - Staff house for local workers**
- Lower left - Ken under the water supply.**



Some time to Relax
Post War. Some time to begin to enjoy life
again. A pictorial record of Germany shortly
after the war.



Madge - Ken met his wife while serving in the MREU. She worked for a Colonel in the US Army. Her accomodation was at the Reichspost Hotel Heidelberg photo below.



Above - The Red Oxen Inn Heidelberg where Ken and Madge went to eat, sing and relax in the evenings.

Left - Madge visiting Villa Cetto.

Part Two
Missing Research & Enquiry Unit

Some time to Relax
Photos of recreation facilities in Garmisch - Bavaria



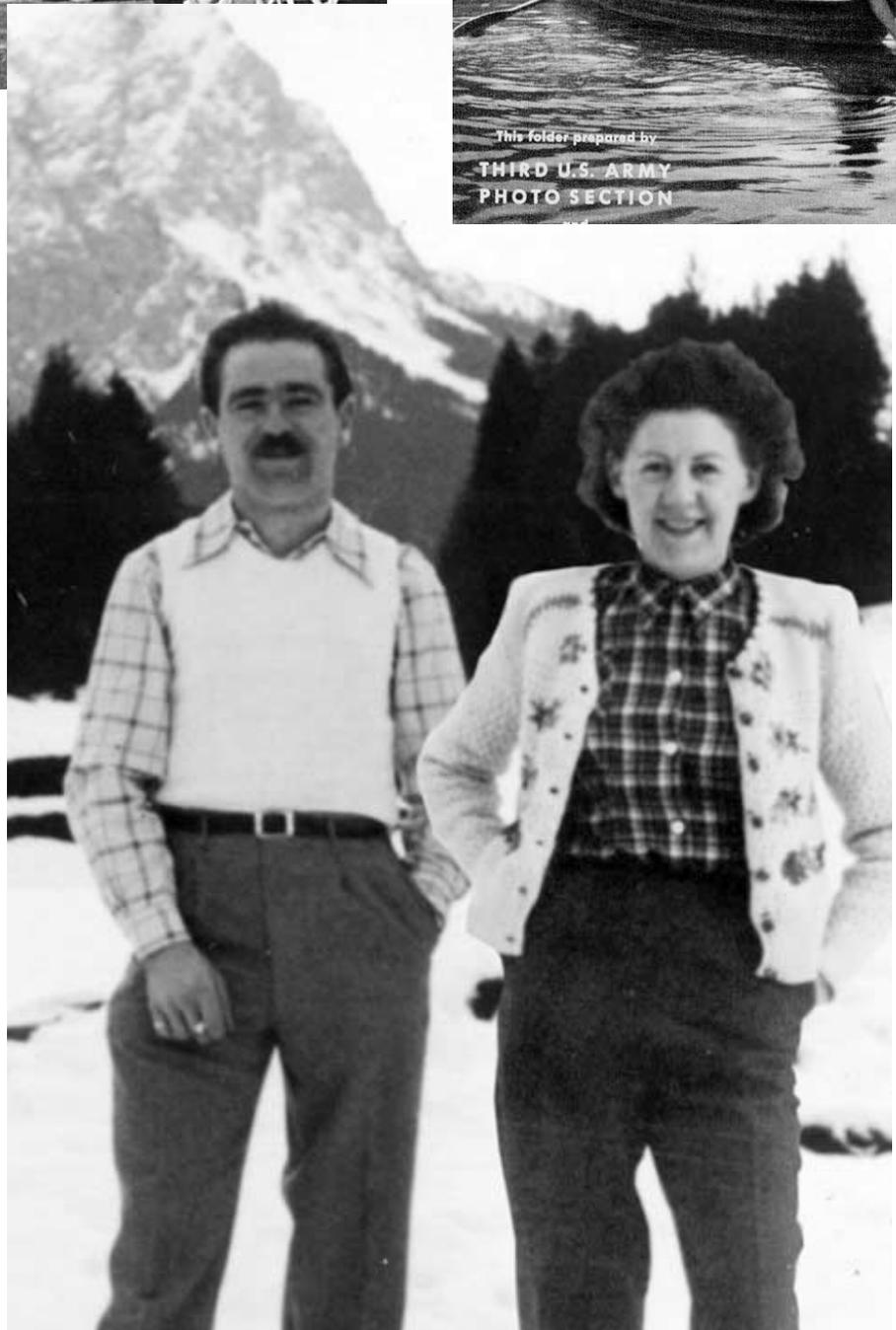
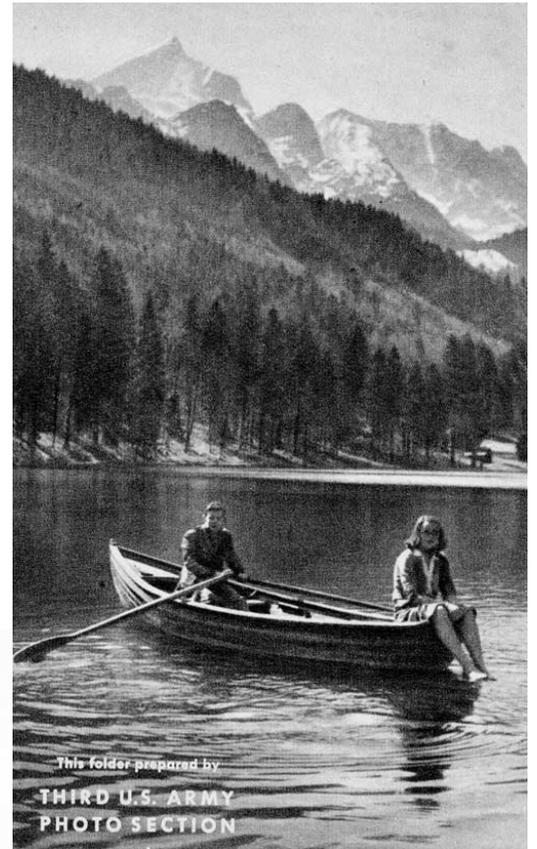
Above
The Riessersee Hotel. Used by US and RAF staff. Ken and Madge would drive down from Heidelberg in the jeep to spend time relaxing there.

Right - *A US Army brochure advertising facilities at Garmisch for staff which included cycling, skiing, absailing, climbing as well as the boating illustrated.*

Main photo.
Ken and Madge enjoyed the mountains at weekends and holiday times.

The Last Post

Faced with a posting to Poland which he was unable to persuade any of his friends to accept Ken and Madge decided to stay together and they both resigned their posts. Their war efforts and experience in the armed services ended in 1948 and they returned to the UK.



Part Three

A Hero Returns

The story of Ken's Return - March 2005



*"Memory Lane" - Durnbach WWII Memorial Cemetery - Bavaria - S. Germany March 2005
Flight Lieutenant Turnham surmounting snow drifts to pay his respects.*

Part Three
Ken's Heroes Return

Story of the Return

Planned celebrations in 2005 to mark the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II included funds from the UK's Lottery fund. A Lottery supported scheme was launched to encourage and support members of the armed forces who were active in World War II to return to places all over the world where they were stationed or saw active service. There were various objectives in addition to enabling people who served their country a chance to remember their exploits and colleagues of these times.

One major objective was to try where possible to link these 'Heroes Returns' to the related scheme of 'Their Past - Your Future'. An initiative to encourage awareness of young people of all the aspects of WWII. As part of this educational and learning experience and as part of our obligation to participating in Ken's Return we have tried in parts 1 and 2 in this book and the presentation to bring you something of what it was like to live and participate in the World War during this period of our history.

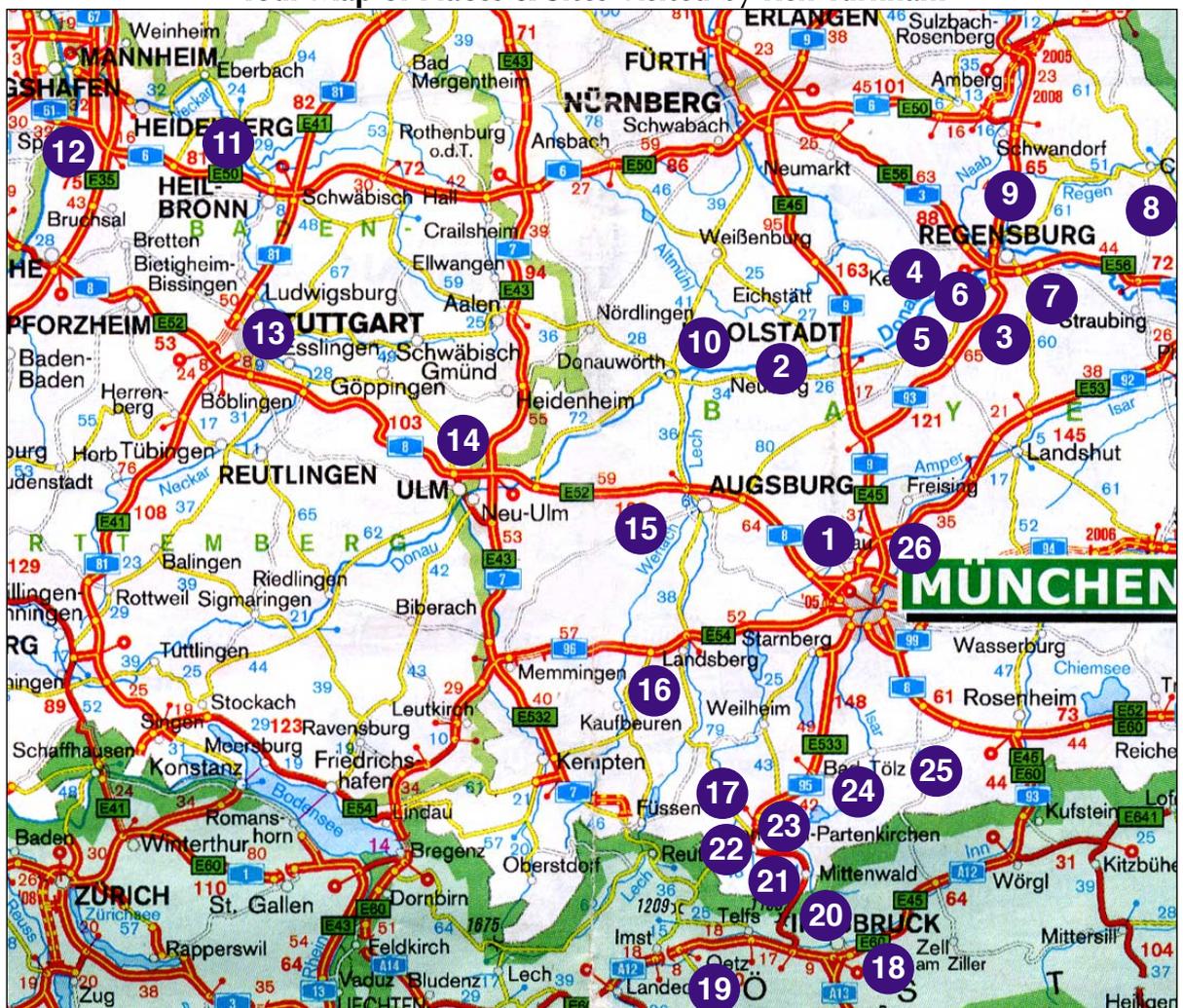
For his return Ken chose not to revisit the towns and cities it was his task to bomb during conflict but to the villages, towns and sites where he carried out the valuable and humane duties for his fallen comrades and their families while working for the RAF - MRE Unit, in Southern Germany. This is also where he met his wife Madge in 1947. As Madge can no longer recall any of these places or times the visit also had very important personal reasons for Ken to make his return.

In Part Three we can trace our route through Southern Germany on the map below. In the remaining pages it is intended to celebrate Ken's Return in the form of a pictorial record of our visit. Using some of Ken's 60 year old photos it will highlight not only advances in photography but hopefully show how little or much the places where Ken was stationed after World War II have changed. Commentary will be mainly confined to the captions to this photographic record.

Places, Villages, Towns, Cities & sites visited. In tour order.

- 1 Munchen
- 2 Inglostadt
- 3 Saal
- 4 Kelheim
- 5 Weltenburg
- 6 Gunterhausen
- 7 Bad Abbach
- 8 Viechtach
- 9 Regensburg
- 10 Grufpling
- 11 Neckargemund
- 12 Heidelberg
- 13 Stuttgart
- 14 Ulm
- 15 Memmingen
- 16 Landsberg
- 17 Garmisch - Partenkirchen
- 18 Innsbruck
- 19 Neustift
- Return Journey
- 20 Innsbruck
- 21 Garmisch
- 22 Riessersee
- 23 Eibsee
- 24 Bad Tolz
- 25 Durnbach
- 26 Munchen

Tour Map of Places & Sites Visited by Ken Turnham

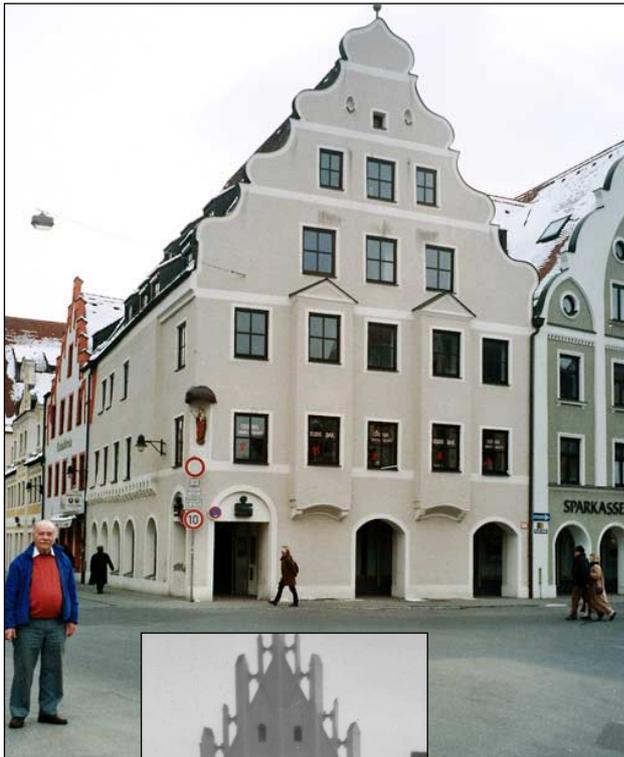


Part Three
Ken's Heroes Return

Organising our Return - Our first contact with the Heroes Return fund was by phone in January 2005. By Jan 18th a schedule of planned visits and application was submitted together with air and car rental bookings. Prior to departure on March 6th 2005 the grant was approved and Ken's Return took place from 6th to 13th March 2005. Flights were by Lufthansa from Manchester to Munich. The success of this very satisfying and important 'Return' for Ken was our strategy of travelling by car with the flexibility to change destinations and overnight accomodation in response to progress and the importance of exploring areas important to recalling memories of Ken's time in this region.

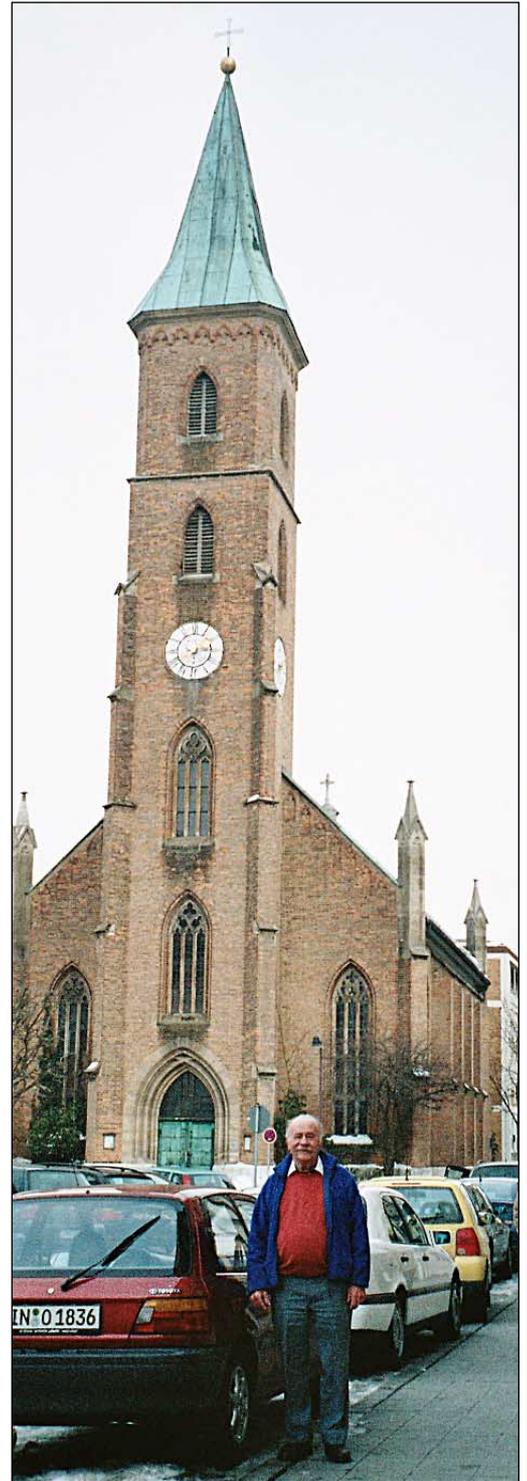
Arriving in Munich

Careful Ken! Leaning on car doors and accidentally making salutes like this are now against the law in Germany.



First Stop Ingolstadt

An immediate successful revisit to a site photographed in 1947. Not until we got home did we realise it was not the same building.



After a break for coffee we departed Ingolstadt and it's spendid Church

*Part Three
Ken's Heroes Return*

After directions by villagers in Saal there was no doubt we had found Villa Cetto. A most significant return to where Ken spent many months using it as home, offices and the HQ of MREU.

**Villa Cetto Saal
RAF HQ - MREU 1947**



The centre for RAF Crash Investigators is now an IT company office



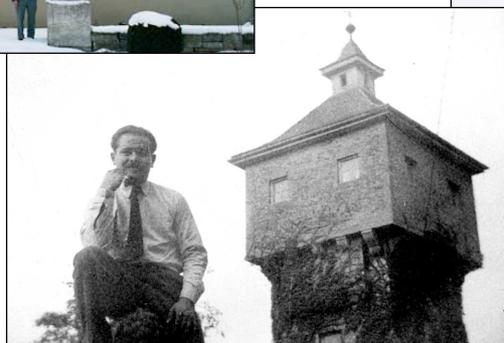
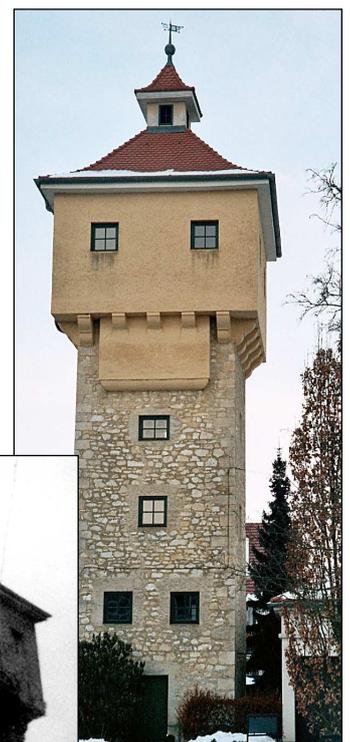
Villa Cetto - The front in 1947 and 2005. No doubt we had found Ken's base and HQ.



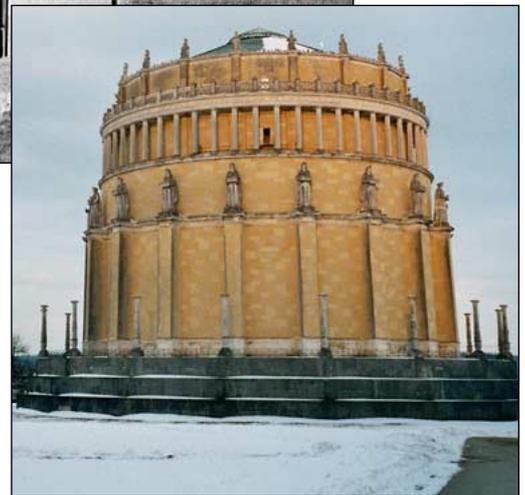
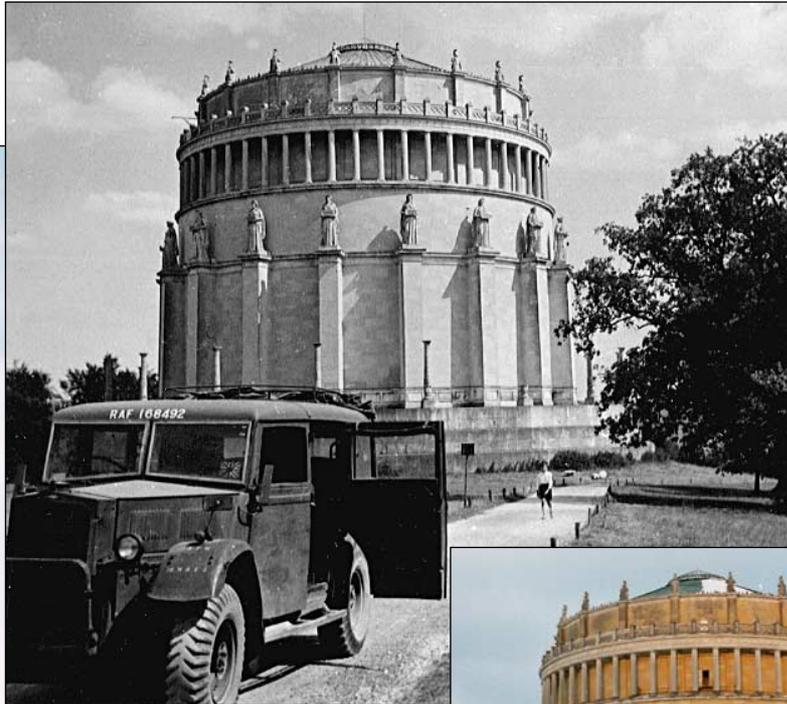
Rear perspective of Villa Cetto '47 & '05. Just a couple of chimneys missing now.



Right - These RAF types liked their statues. This one with the water tower in the background. All the statues and buildings, like the Hero, are in excellent condition 60 years on.



Kelhiem - Bad Abbach & Weltenburg



Kelhiem the nearest market town to Saal is famous for its monument. The only change in 60 years is its in colour!

A view south of the Monument at Kelhiem of the River Donua to Weltenburg where Ken and Madge used to take boat trips.



Bad Abbach - All the residents need strong legs to get to the castle. Ken inspects the village legs.



Viechtach & Gunterhausen Investigation Sites

Below - Ken in Viechtach taken in 2005. He must be standing near the same place as he did in 1947 as he also took the photo top right while on a case there. Return Completed.



The carer / driver / photographer John Payne seen at the church at Viechtach where Ken 'Worked' in 1947. I like the old Polo painted in National colours.



We made a vain search for Gungolding (right) the site of case number X952. We found no village with the same name. Gunterhausen above came near in name and typography but not convincing enough to be a 'Return'.



Part Three
Ken's Heroes Return

Heidelberg

We eat in a 'Return' venue - Other sites and plans fall literally on stoney ground.



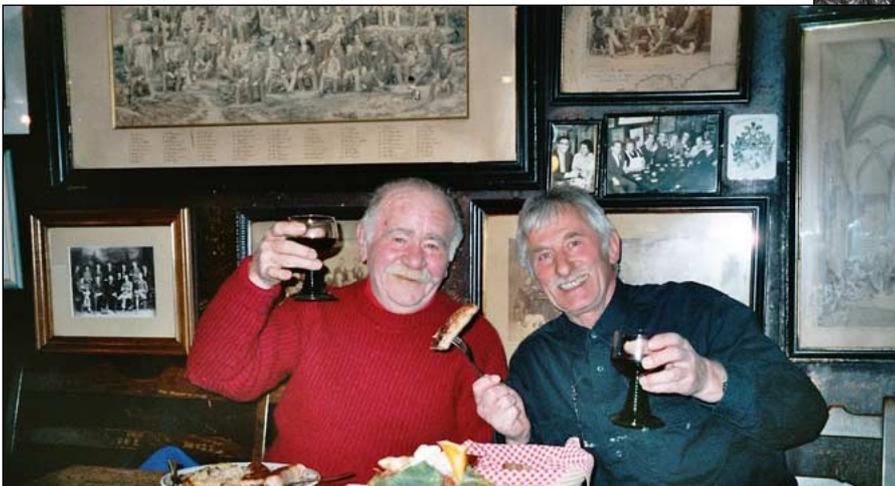
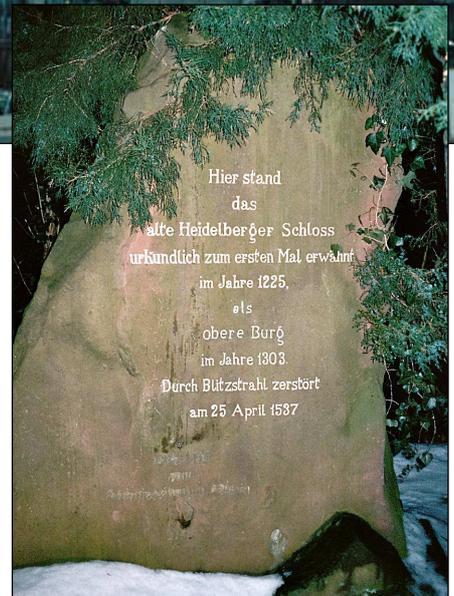
The Reichspost Hotel - Madge's home on Bahnhof Strasse in Heidelberg now replaced by lots of glass and a very large Aluminium Horse. Times change. Even more changes for Ken's HQ, the street has been removed. Some you win.....!



We went to the Schloss, it's been open since 1225 but was closed on the evening we called for a meal.

The Red Oxen - Madge and Ken's favourite bar in the 40s never let us down. We found it by asking taxi drivers and students in the University area of the city. Ken was very happy in surroundings that have not changed for 60 years.

From Hero and Carer - Prüst



The postcard above dates from the 40s. Thankfully the sausages were fresher than the decoration.

*Part Three
Ken's Heroes Return*



Garmisch Partenkirchen

In the late 1940s a delightful mountain area for recreation with many memories for Ken where he and Madge would holiday and stay for weekends.



Ken and Madge with the Kreuzeck in 1948



Mountains change slowly, so it seems do hotels. Black and white taken by Ken in 1947 and the coloured photos on his return span 60 years. The main difference is the price of a room. In B & W it was free to RAF Officers. The coloured refurbished Riessersee is 150 Euros per night, no discount for service staff!

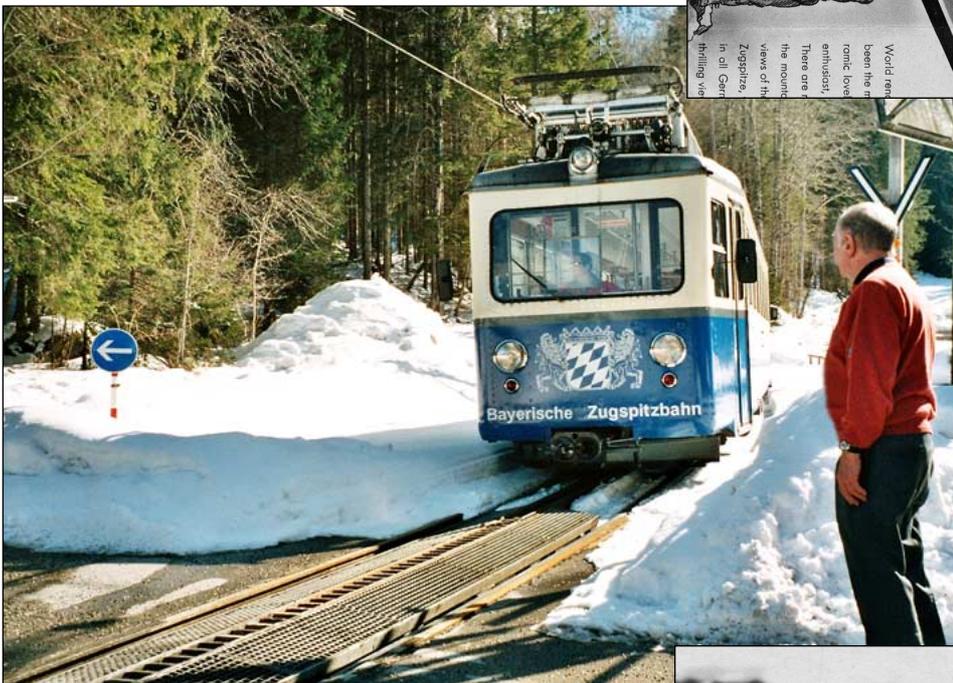


Part Three
Ken's Heroes Return

Garmisch

The US Forces made their outdoor recreation centre. The US Army still have a garrison here. We didn't dare take a photo.

Ken's notes on our Garmisch Return. Riessersee Hotel and Lake. Picnic. Cable cars connect to Kreuzeck then to Eibsee Lake and Hotel at the base of the Zugspitze. Cogwheel Railway via tunnel to Schneefernermouse at 8,676 feet which provides a panorama of the Bavarian, Tyrolean and Italian Alps. The Zugspitze can only be reached by cablecar.



**Above
The US Services 40s Brochure on the Garmisch recreation facilities.**

Left - Chest out, stomach in, well something similar. Ken waiting for a free ride on the Zugspitze Cogwheel Railway he used in the 40s. You could be there sometime, only 80 year old Hero's get free uphill travel now.



Above - In 1947 Ken skied in Black and White. In 2005 we picnic by Lake Riessersee in colour. Both memorable in their own way.

THE WORLD WARS OF 1914-18 AND 1939-45

During the two World Wars of 1914-18 and 1939-45, millions of lives were lost. The majority of the servicemen and women who died in those wars lie buried in the countries where they fell. Most of the members of the Commonwealth forces who died in Germany are buried in war cemeteries such as this, which are maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission with the assistance and goodwill of the German people. Those whose graves are unknown are commemorated on memorials to the missing.

Durnbach War Graves Memorial Cemetery

Created & maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission



Our final visit - Where fliers Ken identified were laid to rest.

The Durnbach War Cemetery and Memorial. Contains 2,960 of WWII, mainly aircrew. 2,020 British. There are also service men from Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, France, Norway, Poland, Russia, and America.

It is a beautiful memorial in a peaceful rural setting. Most are RAF personnel who died in Southern Germany. We were convinced this was the memorial where most of the air crew Ken identified were laid to rest.

Entries in the Visitor's Book show just how important Ken's work was for the families of the Fliers laid to rest at Durnbach.

One entry reads
"I am so pleased at last to have been able to visit this beautiful resting place. It means so much to me that 'dad' is at peace here."



Part Three
Ken's Heroes Return

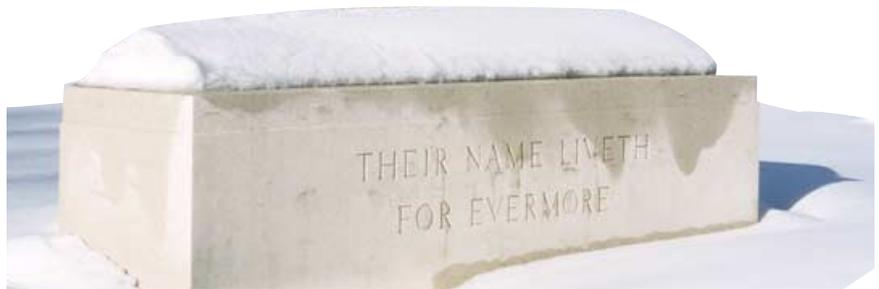
Durnbach War Graves Memorial Cemetery

After the revisit to Garmisch we arrived at the Durnbach War Cemetery in the afternoon of our return to the UK. The skies were azure blue, the soft light of the low spring sun and a metre of snow brought a tranquillity to the site. The same snow made it impossible for Ken to actually enter the cemetery. By using a track beside the cemetery created by a tractor Ken could walk along and pay his respects. The 'carer' donned his 'snow shoes' (two plastic bags) and on behalf of Ken signed the visitors book and took some close up photos.

A very moving and appropriate visit to conclude our Heroes Return.



Even Heroes get grounded. - Too much snow for take-off.



Some images of Durnbach Cemetery

Lest we forget the sacrifice these brave men made so we could live in freedom.



Flight Lt. Ken Turnham, Durnbach Memorial Cemetery - March 2005. Paying his respects to missing aircrews he searched for and identified after WWII. A most fitting and appropriate place to leave this 'Hero who Returned'.

Part Four **Supplementary Family Photos**

The following pages were added in 2007. They consist of photos taken or acquired by Ken on visits he made to meet his family in New Zealand. Most images are scanned from duplicated non-photo quality inkjet prints and of very moderate quality.



Ken with niece Joan (Hart) Drummond - Rotorua New Zealand.



Ken with Samantha Rose - Stillioater New Zealand

Part Four
Supplementary Family Photos



Ken Turnham - Rotorua New Zealand



Ken with Great great Niece Samantha Rose Kingsbeer New Zealand

Part Four
Supplementary Family Photos



Nephew in-law James Drummond Hutchison (Jim) and Great great Nephew Cody - West Coast New Zealand



Sister Rose (Turnham Hart) Jacobi, Ken and George Jacobi (brother in-law. - Papatoetoe New Zealand

Part Four
Supplementary Family Photos



Nephew Jim Dummond, Bill Drummond, Keith Semenoff and Ken Turnham - Top of North Island New Zealand



Ken Turnham - New Zealand Trip

Part Four
Supplementary Family Photos



Edna Burgess, Joan Drummond (neice) and Ken's sister Rose Jacobi - New Zealand



Mary Turnham (sister in-law) Ken's brother Len Turnham (R N Navy) - Bridge near Canterbury Kent



The Turnham family house "Karloops" Tittenhaunga Village St Albans Herts UK.

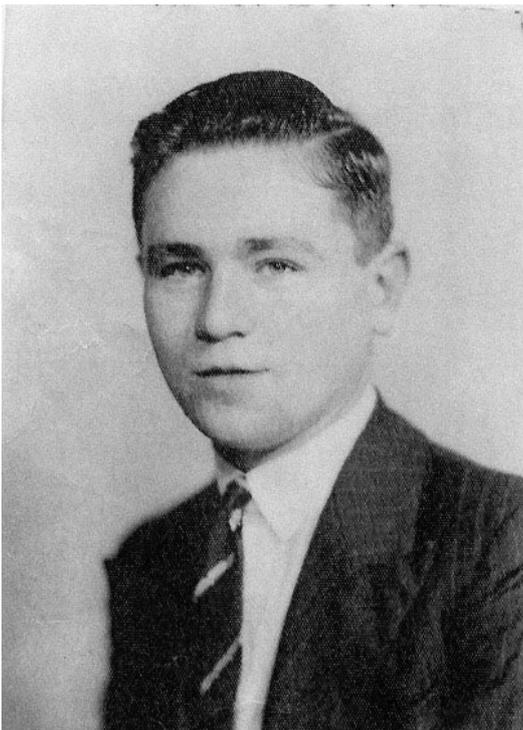
Part Four
Supplementary Family Photos



Rose Turnham formerly Parker



Ken Turnham aged 19 years. RAF



Bill Turnham aged 20 years.



*The Turnham Family circa 1936.
Back row - Peggy and Bill. Sitting - Rose, Bill (senior) and Ken*

Part Four
Supplementary Family Photos



*A similar plane to ones that Ken Turnham flew in during WWII.
The Avro Lancaster B Mk1 - PA 474 of the Battle of Britain Flight flying in the markings of a 9 Squadron aircraft WS - J
Photo sponsored by Digital Works and published by MOTAT Auckland New Zealand*