



Volavimus
Vocidimus
Vivimus

THE KRIEGIE

NEWS-SHEET OF THE ROYAL AIR FORCES EX-P.O.W. ASSOCIATION

Editor: CAL YOUNGER

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WARWICK REUNION 1991



Guests of RAF Stafford

Photo: RAF Stafford

WARWICK REUNION A SUCCESS

After the successful Southampton reunion it seemed to be tempting the fates for the Committee, a group of rather elderly gentlemen, to contemplate another. Some doubted the wisdom of it, but once the die was cast, there was no hesitation. The original venue chosen was Cambridge, but the fates were now on our side; Cambridge became too expensive and in the end we settled for Rootes Hall, Warwick University. There, the accommodation was superior to any we had experienced before; the reception area was spacious and welcoming, the bar was equally roomy and friendly, the food was excellent and the facilities, such as the theatre, were comprehensive. It would not be fair to staff at Oxford and Southampton to claim that we received better service at Warwick, for we remember the earlier venues most kindly, but certainly we had superlative service at Warwick. The staff were invariably cheerful and willing and, we are glad to say, enjoyed serving us. Many remarked that having us was much more fun than they usually experience with conference parties.

Transport was much easier than on previous occasions, partly because the numbers were down from about 600 at Southampton to 340 at Warwick, but also because the coaches were able to draw up in the University grounds. Again, at the end, the drivers went out of their way to tell us how much they had enjoyed our company.

It was disappointing that numbers fell below expectations. Worldwide recession and the Gulf war were largely responsible. Many Australians and New Zealanders who had planned to travel decided to attend next year's festivities at Vancouver instead, and many Canadians opted for their home ground. In the United Kingdom purses are leaner, with most of their owners in retirement, and age and illness took their toll. However, the reduced numbers made for a more intimate, more cohesive reunion and, for the Committee, a much more easily run affair. The dining room held the whole group comfortably and, for the first time, the finale dinner was in-house.

The Build Up

The Committee worked very hard for a good two years before the reunion and, of course, with their wives, during it. Charles Clarke orchestrated their efforts with his customary energy and attention to detail, his foresight and his unfailing courtesy. Doug and Mary Endors yet again spent endless hours over a two-year period dealing with every aspect of the finances, handling vast sums of money, keeping meticulous records, organising the accommodation to meet the varied requirements of those attending, and answering countless inquiries on the telephone, often in the early hours of the morning when people ringing from overseas forgot or miscalculated time differences. Bill Bloxham masterminded the budget, a great responsibility for the whole Committee, which invariably he approaches with caution, issuing stern warnings to the Committee about possible over-indulgence on spending.

In the event, there was an appreciable surplus, enabling repayment to people who had had to cancel their booking. As on previous occasions, the surplus stemmed from two main factors: the Committee simply cannot risk going into the red and, in estimating costs, they look at the worst scenario; nor do they include possible advertising revenue; secondly, when it comes to meeting the bills, we find that

we are offered generous reductions. Our visit to RAF Stafford cost almost nothing because station personnel raised hundreds of pounds, making donations themselves, arranging fund-raising plays and finding sponsorship from local firms.

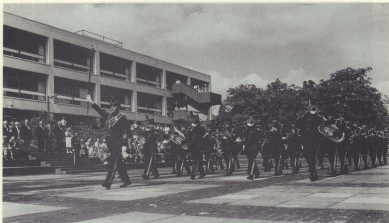
As ever, Batch Batchelder took charge of the church service and the finale dinner; he also organised the visit to Warwick Castle. Despite ill-health, Vic Gammon produced the concert and the programme — which attracted some generous advertisers, including the people of Kuwait, who took two whole pages, and Kuwait Airways which also took a page. We are grateful to all our sponsors, some of whom help in this way time after time. Phil Potts was transport chief and organised outings. Versatile Dave Bernard did so many things, often stealthily, from designing the stickpin reunion emblem to arranging details of the visit to RAF Stafford. Most successful were the easy-to-read identity tags produced without limit of time or patience by Graham Hall. Bob Hart persuaded his old firm, Booker, to donate £500 and also obtained from Allied Lyons liqueurs for the finale dinner — yet more examples of the generosity towards the Association of almost everyone with whom we have any contact. It is easy to overlook John Banfield because he has a way of melting into a background of modesty. The fact is that our Secretary beavers away in his quiet way smoothing the path for everyone else. It is not practicable to go on listing the contributions of every member of the Committee but the effort over all was quite remarkable.

Early Birds

Officially the reunion was to begin on Monday 12 August, but a number of people had arrived earlier, so Doug and Mary Endors, with the help of Cal and Dee Younger, set up the registration desk on the Sunday. They were kept busy until well into Tuesday when a delayed party from Calgary finally arrived. However, the great majority were in place around Red Square (named apparently for a large red sculpture standing in one corner of the square) when the Central Band of the Royal Air Force marched on. Two of their number were young women whose first appearance with the band had attracted much publicity a week or two earlier. Some days before the event, the Committee had met members of the Band on site to arrange security measures and on the day itself the sniffer dogs and the police did their stuff.

This was the first time the Central Band of the Royal Air Force had been available to appear at a Kriege reunion. At Oxford, and again at Southampton, the Royal Marines did us proud. Beating Retreat on both occasions was a memorable and moving event. Somehow, there was an even greater poignancy on this occasion and the band were glad of the opportunity to add Ron Goodwin's *Kriege March* to their repertoire.

On Monday evening the Lord Mayor of Coventry held a civic reception for us in the Museum of British Road Transport, a venue which most people found fascinating. The occasion did much to heal the wound we suffered when our application to hold our service of remembrance in Coventry Cathedral was refused. As it turned out, St. Mary's, Warwick was much more appropriate; nevertheless, we had felt slighted, believing as we did that we were taking the blame, vicariously at least, for Dresden and, by implication, for Coventry.



The Band Plays On

Photo: John Wright, Coventry

Glimpses of the Past

Warwick Castle was the focal point on Tuesday morning. It is only one of England's historic show-pieces, but the castle is redolent of mediaeval times, hinting at unseen ghosts and echoes unheard. In the afternoon the party moved on to the Black County Museum at Dudley. On an open-air site a village from the post industrial revolution era has been recreated complete with fairground, coal mine and pub. For some the Stygian blackness of the mine was just too much, but altogether it was a very interesting day.

Scenic Day

Wednesday also began with a journey into the past — though a past still in the memories of the likes of us. We were split into two parties to travel in opposite directions on the steam trains of the Severn Valley Railway which is run by volunteers. One party started from Bridgnorth, the other from Bewdley and they met halfway with an exchange of badinage. Packed lunches were eaten on the train. It was a short journey through very beautiful countryside and it offered a splendid opportunity to meet people and chat. A few unromantic souls were not impressed and one Canadian boasted that there are better trains in Canada. That could be but they haven't a pub like the one on the station at Bridgnorth. There was a poignant moment at Bewdley when we met Jeanne Hands. Jeanne was with a coach party of ladies who, by a strange chance, had chosen that very day to travel on the Severn Valley Railway. But for John's untimely death he and she would have been with us. Later, the coaches took us home by a scenic route and again there was a chance to talk.

Vic and Nigel do it again

In the evening there was the concert in the main theatre of the Arts Centre. Because of ill-health, Vic had had to leave most of the arrangements to Nigel Brooks who had given him stalwart support in the past. Vic did the fine tuning at rehearsal in the afternoon — while the rest of us were swanning through Shropshire — and between them they produced "A Musical Evening" — a very popular

success. The Nigel Brooks singers, accompanied by an instrumental trio led by Nigel Cook, touched hearts and memories with many old favourites, though modern songs also had a place.

At Home With the RAF

The highlight of the reunion for almost everyone was the visit to RAF Stafford. Some of us had been there before and experienced the wonderful hospitality of the station personnel of all ranks. On that first occasion we numbered about forty; to take on 350 was a risky undertaking and Group Captain Bob Dixon, the Station Commander, admitted that he had been apprehensive when Charles Clarke, himself a former Stafford station-master, persuaded him to take on the assignment — at very short notice — when for various reasons no operational RAF station could take us. It was a help that Wing Commander Dave Bernard, son of Wing Commander Dave Bernard, was on the station strength, for it made liaison easy and the programme arranged was quite marvellous. Group Captain Dixon welcomed us and coffee was laid on in marquees. Then came a flying display, with the weather, which had been threatening earlier, improving sufficiently to allow the full programme, though low cloud made life a little difficult for the Red Arrows whose ever-thrilling display was the climax of the morning.

Much had happened in the hour before those air-borne mathematicians demonstrated their theories about arcs and angles. First came the fabulous Falcons Parachute Team who, in their own way, are the equals of the Red Arrows. They carried down with them the flags of Canada, Australia and New Zealand as well as the Union Flag. Don Morrison, Jumbo Falkiner and Woody Woodroffe represented the old Dominions of the Commonwealth, Charles Clarke accepted the Union Flag.

Two quite dazzling aerobatics displays followed, one by a Jet Provost, the other by a Hawk, then it was lump-in-the-throat time as the Lancaster, Spitfire and Hurricane of the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight wheeled overhead.



At Bowdley Station

Master Carver

The beautiful wood carving of Charles Griffin has enabled the Association on many occasions to present a unique gift. For RAF Stafford Charles had carved the Association emblem with a surround of brevets. Group Captain Dixon was quite overwhelmed by the gift. Charles Griffin is a very modest man who would not appreciate lavish praise, much as he deserves it. So, on behalf of us all, I shall say, simply, thank you Charles Griffin.

The Kriegie Trophy Awarded

During the morning Charles Clarke took the opportunity to present the "Wings" Day Kriegie Trophy to Cadet Sergeant Wayne Bowcock of 60 ATC Squadron (Leek). It was sheer coincidence that this year's winner came from the Staffordshire Wing of the ATC. Aged 18, Wayne had hoped for a career in the RAF Regiment on leaving Westwood High School, Leek, where he had just finished his A-levels. But the Regiment is not recruiting, so he is now hoping to join the Army's Parachute Regiment.

There are 1,089 cadets, including 250 girls, in the Wing, which is commanded by Wing Commander John Bates, who is a volunteer. Squadron Leader Jim Le Moine is the Wing Admin. Officer. Both were proudly present to see Wayne receive the Trophy. So was one of our own members, Flight Lieutenant Vic Reynolds, now a civilian instructor. Vic is the Wing Radio Officer and has spent over forty years with the ATC. During World War Two he was an internee in

French Guyana. The morning programme completed, we were given drinks and lunch which was served by a host of eager ATC cadets of both sexes. During the day 150 cadets helped entertain us. Volunteers all, they had been selected from no less than 750 who had offered their services. This gesture from the generation to which our grandchildren belong moved us deeply and was greatly appreciated.

Logistic Support

Wing Commander Dave Bernard (Junior) was the commentator for the afternoon display of the Tactical Supply Wing which, with No 16 Maintenance Unit, a Mountain Rescue Team, the HQ of the Staffordshire Wing of the ATC, and No 2 MT Squadron, inhabits RAF Stafford.

The Tactical Supply Wing, The Station Commander explained, is "an operational unit which provides logistic support in the field, and on air fields where no supply organisation exists." The Wing was on active service throughout the Gulf crisis and some members were among the last to leave at the end of hostilities. In the desert their remarkable technique for supplying aviation fuel to helicopters and Harriers, a technique which was demonstrated to us, must have amazed friend and foe alike. The fuel is carried in what appears to be a huge plastic bag and is towed like a monster garden roller behind a van. Refuelling takes a minimum of time and the operation is guarded by members of the Wing. It was fascinating to see just how the Wing did operate during the Gulf war, and it was something of an eye-opener to the majority, though not all, of us whose experience of refuelling an aircraft was limited to wartime airfields in England.

A Time for Questions

Finally, we visited static displays of various kinds, ranging from helicopters, through weaponry to a tent with all the equipment used in the Arctic. Members of the Wing of all ranks answered our questions with obvious pleasure. Des Dunphy and Neville Northover answered some of theirs, for our Bristol members had set up their own static display, which included Des's splendid reconstruction of the Great Escape tunnel with its air-pump and earth-carrying railway.

We all felt that we had had a wonderful day and we were very conscious of the effort and patience, the planning and the organisation which had been put into it. When the fact that the Station also raised the money to pay for it is considered, we must account ourselves privileged indeed.

Kriegie HQ

Group Captain Dixon was a guest at our finale dinner the following day and, to cap all that had gone before, he announced that RAF Stafford had voted that the Association should have a room on the Station for its own headquarters.

Following dinner that Thursday evening there was a programme of light music, again arranged by Vic Gammon. The entertainers were Dennis Lotis and Paul Davis who, despite indifferent acoustics, performed as if they were really enjoying the evening — like the professionals they are.

Thanksgiving and Remembrance

Friday morning saw Batch in his element. He ought really to have made a career organising the great state occasions in St Paul's Cathedral and Westminster Abbey. He is probably the most creative user of churches in the country. St Mary's Warwick surrendered itself to him. Our large party filled the church to capacity and provided the perfect occasion for the Venerable Brian Lucas to fulfil his first engagement as Chaplain in Chief of the Royal Air Force. He gave a splendid Address, showing a remarkable insight into the mind of a captive. The lessons were read by Charles Clarke and Don Morrison.

Conducted by Rev. Stephen Little, the service of thanksgiving was moving, with full-throated singing led by the Choir of the West Midlands Police, elegant in their blue blazers. How Batch ever discovered that Psalm 46 could be sung to the tune of the *Dambusters' March* will ever be a mystery, but it was an inspiration.

Music was the feature of the occasion. The all-male choir sang the anthem, "Praise the Lord, His glories show" and, at the end of the service, we heard as we have heard many times now, the Adagio in G Minor for Violin and Organ of Albinoni-Gazotto. This time was different. In the past it was always our own Frank Hunt who played the violin part. So much of a tradition had it become that, when it was known that Frank was not well enough to attend the reunion, we almost abandoned the Adagio. Instead, we asked Frank and Jean for their opinion. Not only did they wish the music to be heard, but they recommended a young, very gifted violinist, Timothy Garland. Timothy and the organist, Simon Loke (Director of Music at St Mary's), found immediate empathy with the result that the Adagio was as haunting, as unbearably moving as ever.

We are immensely grateful to Stephen Little, Simon Loke and all at St Mary's. They charged us nothing but the congregation gave no less than £524 to a collection which was donated to the church.

Afterwards, Charles Clarke accepted on behalf of the RAF Benevolent Fund a donation of £1,000 from the Choir of the West Midlands Police.

New Kriegies at Finale Dinner

And so to the finale dinner. Always memorable (one remembers especially Oxford when Bomber Harris was our guest of honour and Jeff Glover, sole prisoner of the Falklands was also a guest), the last night of the Warwick reunion was distinguished by the presence of Gulf p.o.w.s Bob Ankerson, Robbie Stewart, Rupert Clark, John Nichol and John Peters. One had the feeling that they felt at home among men who too had experienced captivity in wartime. It did not seem to matter that we are elderly men who, it must be said, reverted to type as they chatted up pretty Chris Anderson, Tange Stewart and Helen Peters. Group Captain Bob Dixon and wife Sue, and Padre Brian Lucas and his wife Joy also were honoured guests. We had thought to repay a little of the marvellous hospitality we had received at RAF Stafford, but how could we possibly match the magnificent offer of our own HQ? The University staff produced a superb meal and the service was as friendly as it was efficient — as it had been throughout. During the evening, the Salon Orchestra of the Royal Air Force beguiled us with their discreet and very listenable light music. Finally, to our surprise and pleasure, the University presented a small gift to every one of us.

Appreciation

The Committee have every reason to be satisfied with their efforts, but they are very aware that many others contributed greatly to the success of the reunion. Mary Endors's sustained effort has already been mentioned. She has a prodigious memory and probably knows more about members of the Association than anyone else. The help of other Committee wives was indispensable. Betty Banfield, Betty Batchelder, Elaine Bernard, Sylvia Gammon and Dee Younger staffed the registration and inquiries desk, the office and our sales desk. They sold raffle tickets, acted as guides and generally looked after everyone. Unfortunately Eileen Clarke was not able to arrive at Warwick until Friday, but at the finale dinner she was, as always, the hostess *par excellence*, charming and vivacious.

The Committee is grateful to members who volunteered to help, as sidesmen at St Mary's, as controllers on coaches and in other ways; in particular, Ted Coote and Stan Courtmail helped on the registration desk, took orders for photographs and carried out various other useful chores.

Lastly the Committee wish to thank all those who have since written to say how much they enjoyed the reunion and appreciated the work which had gone into its organisation. One member wrote that he and his wife had had some reservations about coming but had enjoyed the reunion more than any other. He added, "Perhaps some of the others, who didn't come, had the same feelings. They don't know what we now know — that the special nature of Kriegie comradeship refines with age and declining numbers." That surely says it all.

CAPS ON

Parcelforce arrived at the Endors's one morning before the reunion with two large boxes which contained some hundreds of elegant, lightweight blue caps (American style) with our logo in front, and, for the ladies, slide-on eyeshades of the kind that Helen Willis-Moody made famous; these also carried the logo. Some of the ladies preferred to wear the caps and looked very dashing. The boxes were a gift from Tony Little and his Ottawa Kriegie band. This much appreciated gesture was not the only expression of Canadian good will: a substantial amount of Canadian dollars was available to staunch any financial wounds suffered as a result of the reunion. Fortunately they were not needed.

BARBECUE IN DEEPEST HAMPSHIRE

Unable to attend the Warwick reunion themselves, Paul and Gillian Hilton invited forty kriegie people to their delightful home on Sunday, 18 August. The way to "Dunelm" was carefully signposted along winding Rookery Lane, Broughton, and guests' cars swept into a lovely garden and parked on the spacious lawn. The weather was perfect for an outside luncheon which was provided by a local butcher who specialises in barbecues. He and his staff carried out as neat and efficient an operation as one could wish for.

Among those enjoying the occasion was Air Chief Marshal Sir Derek Hodgkinson, a member of the Association and a neighbour of the Hiltons. As the senior kriegie present, it was he who thanked Paul and Gillian for a wonderful day.

Sir Derek and some others who were there do not normally attend Association functions, and it was in Paul's mind to show that area reunions are worth considering, especially now that age, disability and financial considerations make travelling long distances to reunions impossible for many. This, of course, is already known to our branches but Paul suggests that individuals take the initiative to arrange something in their own neighbourhood. On this occasion he got the local press to come along and this is likely to result in more new members. Publicity of this kind still reaches old kriegies who for one reason or another have not known of the Association. This is why our numbers continue to grow despite inevitable casualties.



Photo: John Evans, Southern Daily Echo

Neither Paul Hilton nor Ivan Quine helped with washing up, contenting themselves with displaying the Association's tea towel.

WOMEN'S LIAISON GROUP

The majority of members' widows retain their interest in the Association and many join in activities. Several attended the Warwick reunion. This message is from the convener of the Group, DEE YOUNGER

My very best wishes to you all for 1992. It was good to see some of you at Warwick and also at the annual dinner in London. We hope that more of you will find yourselves able to take part in future activities. The need is growing for more Contacts... I am extremely grateful to those who have volunteered, even though some of you must be

wondering if you will ever hear my voice asking for help. The problem is that, with the Association covering such an enormous area, I have difficulty finding someone at the right spot at the right time. So little is required, but that little can be of enormous help to the person receiving it. So much of our lives over the years has been tied into the men's activities and it is this bond which can be of help to new widows. So if you would be willing to make a telephone call at such a time, PLEASE let me know. We are all fearful of imposing on our nearest and dearest and sometimes an outsider willing to listen and share can prove a Godsend.

ON BOTH SIDES OF THE WIRE

Like Henry Soderberg of Sweden, Chris Christiansen, a Dane, was employed by the World's Alliance of YMCAs and, from 1942 until the end of the war, he served as a YMCA representative to prisoners of war in Germany. He used to visit Stalag Luft 1, Barth, several times a year and Stalag Luft 4, Gross Tychow was also on his "patch". In May, 1945, Mr Christiansen was arrested by the Russians in Berlin and spent four months in a Moscow gaol and a further eight months with 3,000 German POWs in a camp on the outskirts of Moscow.

One would have thought he had had enough of prisoners of war by then but on his release in June 1946 he was posted to England to look after the interests of German P.O.s there. When the last Germans were repatriated from the Middle East, Chris Christiansen went into relief work with refugees in various parts of the world. In 1962 he was asked to join the Danish Foreign Service. Now retired, he has written a book about his seven years with prisoners of war, on both sides of the wire. A copy is available at the Imperial

War Museum — for those who can read Danish.

In 1990 Chris Christiansen and his wife were invited to a reunion of former American kriegies from Stalag Luft 3 in Norfolk, Virginia. More recently they visited Northern Germany, where friendly locals directed them to the place where Stalag Luft 1 used to be. Nothing remains except a simple memorial, a block of concrete on top of which is a black stone with the inscription:

"Hier befreite die Sowjetarmee im Mai 1945
Kriegsgefangenen aus den USA and
Grossbritannien"

Pine and Birch trees have been planted around the memorial and the area, partly gravelled, seems well maintained, Mr Christiansen says. The wooden crosses have long since been removed and no doubt the remains of those who died at Barth have been removed to a war cemetery. Mr Christiansen has kindly sent the photo reproduced here.



Chris Christiansen at Stalag Luft 1 Memorial

THE KRIEGIE

There has been no issue of *The Kriegie* since that of August, 1989 in which the life and work of Dixie Deans were commemorated. In that issue it was suggested that *The Kriegie* had become an annual report — but that was before it was realised that Association funds were running low because inflation had eroded the value of life membership subscriptions. Printing is costly and, with Vic Gammon's *Newsletter* appearing so regularly and punctually and, incidentally, becoming ever more interesting, it seemed that the practical and economical course was to make *The Kriegie* an occasional publication, producing it when there is some special happening to report rather than on a regular basis. It could perhaps appear more frequently but with fewer pages as it did pre-1976 when the *Newsletter* came into being. This year *The Kriegie* celebrates its 30th anniversary.

CAN YOU HELP?

In his Newsletter No.42 Vic published an appeal by Group Captain Arthur Hughes for anyone who knew his brother Stephen in kriegie camp to get in touch with him. Stephen Hughes was shot down on 31 March 1944. He was probably in one of the tents at Heydekrug, moved on to Thorn and Fallingbommel and was one of those who made a run for it during the final march. He was killed in a flying accident in 1948. Stephen was one of four brothers. One, a Hurricane pilot, was killed in the Battle of Britain, another flew in the Fleet Air Arm — on Walruses, Stringbags and finally Avengers in the Far East. Group Captain Hughes DFC, who flew Blenheims, is attempting to write the story of this remarkable flying family and would very much like to talk to anyone who remembers Stephen.

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RECCO REPORT

The oldest member of West Midlands Police Choir which led the singing so ably at St Mary's, Warwick, is 96-year old Ex-Chief Inspector Jim Reid BEM. Other members of the choir were adamant that Jim still has a fine voice and makes a genuine contribution. The choir, with a full strength of forty, combines with the Band of the RAF College to give an annual concert in Birmingham. Throughout the year the choir gives performances to raise money for charity.

Another police veteran at Warwick was JAMES (JOCK) MARTIN who lost a day of the reunion when his car seized up on the motorway. Repairs cost him nearly £100, so he was not in the most cheerful frame of mind until he found his old skipper, ANDY CARSWELL waiting for him. Jock was flight-engineer on their 9 Squadron, Waddington, Lancaster shot down on a Berlin raid in January 1943. Jock spent thirty years with Edinburgh police, twenty-five of them as a speed cop, working mostly in cars. Retiring from the police in 1975, he spent seven years as a Revenue Assistant in Customs and Excise in charge of bonded spirits.

An early kriegie who turned up at Warwick was LORNE CHAMBERS who now lives in California. A Canadian, he joined the RAF on a Short Service Commission in 1937 and graduated as a staff pilot at Farnborough. On the outbreak of war he was posted to 74 Squadron, Horsham, where as a Spitfire pilot he flew No 2 to Sailor Milan. Transferred to 242 (Canadian) Squadron at Church Fenton, he flew Blenheims and Hurricanes. In May, 1940, he went to France to fill a gap in 85 Squadron ranks. His Hurricane was jumped by ME110s near Cambrai, Lorne baled out, fell badly and also suffered burns. He spent two months in hospital in France before moving in July first to Barth and then to Sagan. On the final march from Luft 3 he became ill and was taken to hospital at Luckenwalde where his appendix was removed. It was discovered only then that he had a broken back. Returning to Canada, he transferred to the RCAF, went into hospital in Vancouver and was then discharged. He became a chartered accountant and in 1955 he and his wife, a nurse from Vancouver, went to Honolulu where they spent thirteen years before moving to Seattle. Lorne retired in 1981.

GEORGE HUCKLE has written a short account of his life as a kriegie, with a soupcon about his earlier career thrown in. George could have called his book "From Office Boy to Knight" but he has modestly chosen "Time to Go" instead. We hope it isn't! George was one of the prime movers in setting up the Barbed Wire University, from which many of us benefited. He was knighted in 1977 when he was Chairman of the Agricultural Training Board, a post he held from 1970 to 1980.

DEREK POLLEY believes that you are only as old as you feel. Not only does he tote his sax and clarinet to various gigs in Norfolk, but at the end of September he married Margaret, a headmistress and, in MAURICE BUTT'S knowledgeable opinion, a beautiful girl to boot. M. Butt, himself, married in early 1989 and Joan, who might well have wondered what she was coming into, has fitted easily and naturally into the kriegie scene. Despite occasional health

lapses, M. Butt is a very conscientious County Councillor and it is said that he is known as the Yeltzin of Norfolk.

Squadron Leader DEREK HODGKINSON was flying a Coastal Command Hudson, requisitioned for the second 1000 raid, on Bremen, on 26 June, 1942, when he was shot down by an ME110 off the Friesland Islands. Crash-landing in the sea, he got his badly injured navigator into the dinghy, which leaked badly and eventually overturned. They got ashore in the end and the navigator, Vic Cave, spent most of the rest of the war in hospital. Three years in Germany did not retard a brilliant career which began with a short service commission in 1937 and ended with the retirement of Air Chief Marshal Sir Derek Hodgkinson, as Air Secretary, in 1976. Sir Derek, who won the DFC and AFC, was knighted in 1971; he was appointed CBE in 1960 and CB in 1969. A member of the Escape Committee at Stalag Luft 3, he therefore had something in common with JOCK ALEXANDER who was also a guest at the Hiltons' barbecue. Jock headed the Escape Committee at Heydekrug and, until he reappeared at Warwick, we believed he was still in hiding. In fact, for many years he was disguised as the manager of Marks and Spencer's Weymouth branch.

In London recently, breaking his journey between Vienna and Harare, was B. "CHUM" KEYTER. Born in South Africa, Chum flew with 2 Squadron SAAF. He was shot down twice, first in Tunisia where he crash-landed his Kitty hawk, and then, flying a Spitfire, in Italy. After three months on the run he was betrayed and captured. He arrived at Stalag Luft 1 in April 1944. At the end of the war he was held by the Russians but eventually returned to South Africa. He did not stay long. After working for a newspaper and then a stint in the Civil Service, he returned to England in July, 1947 and joined the RAF. On the Berlin Airlift he met Fred Thake who did no less than 282 sorties, some with Chum whose next posting was to CFS, Little Risington, where he was an instructor. Chum resigned his commission in February, 1952 and flew with various African airlines until his retirement in 1987. He and Fred Thake did not keep in touch after Berlin but met again and got to know each other in Harare where Fred was, by this time, in Air Traffic Control. It was several years before they discovered they were both kriegies and had actually flown together on the Berlin Airlift. In 1987 Chum emigrated to Austria with his Austrian wife, a former flight attendant, but returned to Zimbabwe in 1990. Fred Thake returned to this country in 1988 and, learning of the Association from Bernard Warren whom he met in Bristol, promptly became a member. Fred joined the kriegie fraternity in June 1940 having been knocked out in a Mark IV Blenheim belonging to 59 Army Co-op. Squadron. He died in 1990 and his widow lives in South Africa.

Active in the Women's Liaison Group is Mrs EDITH LEWIS, a lady of great character whose husband Sydney was one of our few FEPOW members. Sydney, a Welshman, died on 3rd September, 1985. He was a Japanese prisoner for four years. A regular RAF type, he met and married Edith at Sutton Bridge, Lincs. before the war. Edith lived in London until her workplace was bombed during the Battle of Britain. She moved to Wales and joined the National Fire Service, becoming a leading firewoman. She left the Fire Service in 1947. There are moves afoot to obtain compensation for FEPOWs and their widows but Edith is not optimistic.

One of the few Aussies to make the reunion was Professor ALEX KERR, a development economist whose services have been sought by the governments of eighteen countries in Europe, Asia and America. As a kriegie Alex studied for the London University BSc(Econ) and sat the intermediate examination. When he got to London after liberation he went straight to LSE to check that his papers had been received. They had not but learning that an examination was imminent he did not hesitate; he took it again. Back in Australia, he was soon informed that he had passed both times. He completed the degree by correspondence and simultaneously took a BA at the University of Western Australia. Subsequently he took his Master's and then a Ph.D. Working his way up the academic ladder, he became Foundation Professor of Economics at Murdoch University in Western Australia in 1975 and Deputy Vice Chancellor in 1980. He has served on many review bodies and on the boards of a variety of companies, his interests ranging from Consumer Affairs to Trade Practices, from Post Secondary Education to Taxation. He was a Fulbright Fellow in 1960 and a Leverhulme Fellow in 1969. He is also author of a number of scholarly publications.

Alex Kerr was an early bird in the wartime RAAF. Another was RON DAMMAN who was on No 1 Course of the Empire Air Training Scheme and was one of the first group of pilots to train in Canada. Having completed EFTS in Australia, Ron sailed on the *Avoroze* to Vancouver, arriving in early September, 1940. The group had a memorable journey by train through the Rockies and on to Ottawa where he completed the Advanced Flying Training course. He arrived in England on Christmas Eve, 1940, did OTU at Bassingbourn and went on to 9 Squadron, Honington. His Wellington was got at by a nightfighter and Ron crash-landed at Ormen in Holland. Only the rear gunner, who baled out, was hurt; he broke an ankle. Ron and the crew burned the aircraft and then managed to evade capture for some days. Ron made several escape attempts and also swapped identity at 8B. Glemnitz spoiled the ruse when he recognised the other man at Sagan. With Tange Turnbull as his partner, Ron gave exhibitions of ballroom dancing in camp shows. He married in England on his return from Germany. Mary, his WAAF fiancée, was on leave and sitting on the bank of the Thames at Reading when police found her, gave her the news of Ron's release and drove her to the station to meet him. After the war Ron tried farming, then shop keeping, but finally moved to the Gold Coast in southern Queensland where he developed property interests. With Mary's help he has twice organised reunions on the Gold Coast for Australian and New Zealand kriegies. On these occasions even Ron's boat is pressed into service as accommodation.

DENNIS EAMES gave everyone at Warwick a fright when he became ill in the middle of the night. He was taken to hospital with a suspected heart attack but the latest news is that he is well.

DON MORRISON was in some pain at the reunion; his artificial leg was chafing. However, as always, he played a full part, representing Canada at Stafford and reading a lesson at St. Mary's. After his return home he fell victim to a clot on the lung and was hospitalised. We hear that he has been given the "all clear".

Another to get the same signal, with much relief, was DAN LONDON. He has completed a course of chemotherapy and

his oncologist gave him the good news on 23 December after a series of tests. It was, as Dan says, a wonderful Christmas present. Earlier in December, Dan and Joyce visited daughter Janet and her family in Brunei. Dan's Western Australian branch of the Association is going strong with about forty members. He is finding, as we are here, that as fast as some members fall off the perch, new recruits appear.

PHYLIS SUGDEN, wife of Don, was another Canadian to go on the sick list after the reunion, though we are not suggesting any connection. She had heart surgery in Vancouver. We hope all is well now.

GRAHAM HALL (still Nobby to many of us) is gradually becoming more mobile as he becomes accustomed to his replacement hip. More important perhaps is that there is no more pain.

On the Kiwi sick list are SKIN HUGGETT now in a war veteran's home, SLIM SOMERVILLE who has a heart problem, JOE GALLAND with eye trouble, MURRAY COULAM and KEITH GREGORY. Jack Garrett's latest newsletter also reports that TED WEST, PHIL (SPIKE) HOWARD and JACK DOBSON have died.

Since our last issue about fifty members have died. Their deaths have been recorded, issue by issue, in Vic's *Newsletter* and there is no point in listing them all again. However, some well-known names should be mentioned. Strangely, three men whose names are associated with the Great Escape have died. Canadian WALLY FLOODY was the engineering genius; LEY KENYON has left a visual record such as no other escapee has ever had and Australian author PAUL BRJCKHILL whose story of the Great Escape made him rich but seemed somehow to have brought him little happiness. Ley Kenyon DFC lived a fascinating life as artist and explorer of the Deep — often with Jacques Cousteau. A memorial service took place at Chelsea Old Church on 5 December 1990 and, as stated in the *Newsletter*, Mrs Jacqie Green is writing his biography.

We were delighted to learn that PAT, son of JOHN AND ELIZABETH O'REILLY has been promoted Air Commodore. Pat gave a very moving address at his father's funeral. John died on 1 August 1989, just as *The Kriegie* was going to press. His presence is still felt at Committee meetings where his sagacity was relied upon and his disapproval was something to avoid. As an Official Receiver, John knew a good deal about human nature. He was never cynical but shrewd and realistic, kind to the deserving, scornful of the spendthrift, the fraudster and the fake. As Association Secretary he did not spare himself, burning the midnight oil long and often. His immense experience, his ability to cut through to essentials was of inestimable value to the Committee. Sometimes when he thought we were stepping out of line his words had a cutting edge but a chuckle was never far behind. His record keeping was meticulous and his apprentice (and successor) John Banfield was well taught.

Although he enjoyed a very successful career, John set great store by his RAF days. He was a founder member of the London branch of the Caterpillar Club Association, a member of the Aircrew Association and also of his Squadron association.

JOHN BRISTOW died in July, 1990 after a long fight against cancer. He was 74. Probably Dixie Deans's closest friend, Bris, like other brave men in the camps, took his life in his hands in providing a daily service of BBC news to those who were with him at Barth, Sagan, Heydekrug, Torun, Fallingbostal and on the march to Luneberg Heath. His ingenuity, audacity and courage have been well documented and must have thrilled many youngsters who have read of his exploits. Bris had a laid back attitude and always maintained that kriegie life was "a doddle". But he had a serious side to him and expressed it throughout his life in the generous giving of his time, his money, his brains. It was typical of him that when he was befriended by a Danish doctor after bailing out during the ill-fated daylight attack on the Luftwaffe base at Aalborg in August, 1940, he declined to allow the good Samaritan to further endanger his own life by continuing to harbour him. To Dixie's chagrin, Bris received no recognition other than a mention in dispatches. A truer indication of his service to his fellows, not only in Germany but in the wider community in the years since the war, was that St Clement Danes was full for his memorial service on 17 November, 1990. The service was arranged by Bach at the request of John's wife, Daphne and sons Roger and Lee.

Two members who made outstanding contributions to the Association were IVOR NORRIS and JOHN HANDS. Ivor, who died on 1 September 1990, was one of the founder members of the Bristol Branch and he and Gladys always took a very active part in the splendid reunions in Bristol and at the various air shows where Neville Northover, Des Dunphy, Bernard Warren and Ivor, among others, set up Stalag Luft Filton. John Hands died on 13 March 1991. Despite the amputation of both legs, John never missed a Kriegie function. Invariably, with Dave Bernard pushing his wheelchair, he led our contingent on the Remembrance Day march. He was interested in all ex-P.O.W.s and was Secretary of the High Wycombe Ex-P.O.W. Association.

BARNEY RUNNACLES died on 24 March 1991. A 1941 vintage kriegie, Barney was shot down by a nightfighter and handed over to the Gestapo, who sent him to a slave labour camp. His leg, smashed by a cannon shell, became gangrenous. The CO of the nightfighter squadron responsible for his descent into Germany, with that chivalry of the air which still manifested itself in those days, checked with the Area Health Officer to make sure that Barney had made it safely to Dulag Luft. The Area Health Officer followed up the inquiry, personally dealt with Barney's leg and had him transferred to Oberursel, where the patient was delighted to receive a card from a French officer whom he had helped escape from Schloss Mitteln. In 1946 Barney married Jean, widow of a Lancaster pilot killed shortly before VE Day. All three were volunteers from Argentina. Back in South America, Barney was shot by a thug in a restaurant and crippled. "Crippled" he regarded as a "perfectly respectable English word" and he disclaimed present-day euphemisms. That was Barney, a straightforward man with no self pity and a rich sense of humour.

Another sad loss: MAURICE STRETTON, Moggie to his friends, died on 19 September, 1990 after a ten-year illness during which he was cared for by his wife Molly. Moggie was shot down in August, 1940 before he could collect the DFM he earned four days earlier. He received it in December, 1945. He had a successful post-war career as a maths teacher in Birmingham.

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GEORGE BOOTH died at the age of 80 on 24 May, 1991. George and Larry Slattery never really settled who was No 1 kriegie, though Larry was officially given the number. George was navigator and Larry radio operator in a Blenheim shot down on the Kiel Canal raid on the second day of the war. George spent six months in hospital and, according to the *Yorkshire Post*, spent time in eighteen prison camps. Vic paid him a warm tribute in *Newsletter* No 42.

An apology to KEN WOODROOFE who pointed out that, in reporting the death of E.R.H. Lyon, Ken's pilot and friend, I said he was better known as "Tiger". In fact, his sobriquet was "Leo". These days, attaching a name to a face, though each is familiar, is sometimes a problem. Although so much time has elapsed since my aberration, I should like the record straight.

For many years, JOHN and MARY DENNIS ran a pub in Sheringham and were renowned for their hospitality to ex-kriegies. John died on 22 March, 1990 a few months after their 55th wedding anniversary. Sharing that celebration were VIC KENT and ALAN HAWKES. John Dennis arrived at Heydekrug after six months in German hospitals. He was still on crutches and the MO thought he should go into sick quarters. Fed up with hospitals, and longing to live a "normal" kriegie life, John declined. However, he was in such a state that he could do very little for himself. Vic, Alan and the late Ken Kenworthy "adopted" him, fetched and carried for him and enabled John to survive outside the sickbay. Maurice Butt and Alf Jenner (who had once suspected John of being a "plant") also attended the celebration.

1992 AGM and REUNION

We would remind members that the AGM will take place on Saturday, 14 March at 1100 hours. You will remember that some time ago Batch sent out a questionnaire to obtain your views on the question of a lunchtime reunion. The response was such that the Committee decided to try it. It is hoped that members from outside London who cannot afford an overnight stay, or don't like travelling at night, will feel able to come. Note: The AGM and annual reunion is strictly a stag do.

THE VANCOUVER AFFAIR

We are told that over 500 people have signed up for the Vancouver reunion which, based at the University of British Columbia, will take place from 5-10 August, 1992. Over fifty people plan to go from this country and quite large contingents are expected from Australia and New Zealand. You may get a cancellation if you decide, belatedly, to attend, but you will need to hurry. For details see *Newsletter* No 43.

FRANK HUNT

Just as we were going to press we were shocked to learn that Frank Hunt died during the night of 5/6 January. Although he was 81 and had experienced heart and respiratory problems for some years, he seemed indestructible. Nothing got him down. He attended Committee meetings until a few months ago and was discussing grants from the Larry Slattery Memorial Fund on the last day of his life. He was one of the small group which established the Association and was a member of the Committee from its inception until his death. There is now only one survivor of that original Committee.

Frank was one of the most popular and most respected men in the NCO camps in Germany; indeed, he impressed everyone with whom he came in contact throughout his life. He was a very gentle man, thoughtful of others, courteous and humorous. Who could ever forget that rich laugh?

Frank was born in Watford on 15 May, 1910 and went to New Zealand at the age of 10. On 27 November, 1940 the *Rougetate* on which he was travelling to Canada for aircrew training, was sunk by a German raider commanded by the famous Count von Luckner. Women and children on board were landed on a Pacific island and later rescued by the Royal Australian Navy. The men were imprisoned in the hold of the predator for six weeks, then transferred to a supply ship. They sailed around Cape Horn and crossed the Atlantic to a French port and thence to Germany. They had been eighteen weeks on the way.

A gifted violinist, Frank quickly saw that music could be an antidote to the boredom, the frustration and the guilt of prisoners of war. As time went on, the Red Cross got through to camps in Germany musical instruments, records and books. When the theatre at Stalag Luft 3 came into being, converted by the kriegies themselves from an ordinary barrack building, Frank Hunt came into his own. With Larry Slattery as leader, he built up a very fine orchestra. Long hours of practice and their conductor's patient instruction brought many players to standards they would never have dreamed they could achieve. Frank also introduced gramophone records which attracted, not only the cognoscenti, but hundreds of kriegies who came for lack of something else to do and stayed because they were enthralled. For many of them serious music became a lifetime love. No-one contributed more to camp morale than Frank Hunt — which is not to belittle the contribution of many others.

In London at the end of the war Frank had a request from New Zealand to look after a young Kiwi pianist who was to study at the Royal Academy of Music. Frank thought that the best way to take care of the young Jean Anderson was to marry her. Jean went on to become a concert pianist and professor of piano at the Royal Academy of Music. She became also the mother of Gordon, now a world famous oboist, and of Susanna, also a talented artist and musician.

For about twenty years Frank worked in the insurance department of British Petroleum, then the lure of music became too strong. He took his teacher's qualification at the Royal College of Music and for some years taught violin at St Paul's Cathedral Choir School and elsewhere. He took private pupils until quite recently.

A Ham radio enthusiast for many, many years, Frank made friends all over the world. They, and countless others in many lands will never forget him.

COL. W.E. TUCKER, CVO, MBE, RAMC

BILL BLOXHAM remembers a very gallant gentleman

I met Bill Tucker, then a major, in March, 1943 when, for the first time, his large, firm hands inspected my shrunken leg and badly burned back. I was a new patient at Stalag 9C Obermassfeld, a German army P.O.W. hospital in the Thuringian Mountains.

I had already spent four months in Queen Wilhelmina Hospital, occupied by the Luftwaffe, in Amsterdam and a short time at Dulag Luft hospital before travelling painfully on a horse-drawn cart to Obermassfeld. Formerly a large agricultural school, Obermassfeld was a crude, ill-equipped building which, in 1943, housed about a thousand, mainly British, army prisoners and about fifty RAF kriegies, all seriously wounded from Dunkirk, Dieppe, the desert campaigns and air battles over occupied Europe and the Mediterranean.

Major Tucker, an orthopaedic surgeon, Major Smythe, a physician, Major Henderson, a neurologist, and a RAMC staff of about sixty ran the hospital under the control of a jack-booted Wehrmacht Colonel Doctor and his orderlies and guards. With inferior accommodation and a lack of equipment and medical supplies, the British doctors had worked unstintingly since volunteering to stay behind to care for the many seriously wounded at Dunkirk. They were destined to spend five years overcoming German restrictions and carrying out major surgery on many thousand undernourished prisoners in almost impossible conditions. Sterilisation of dressings, for instance, was done daily by two Welsh guardsmen using the boiler of a 19th century road steam engine which stood in an adjacent yard.

Following the Dambusters' raid in May 1943, all water supplies at Obermassfeld were cut off to punish the *Terrorflieger*s. Conditions were foul throughout the hot summer but Bill Tucker, a 40-year old former England rugby forward and Cambridge Blue worked on undeterred. Many of us owe our recovery from ghastly injuries to his innovative skill and devotion. He pioneered the practice of moving muscles and joints encapsulated in plaster casts, and insisted that patients exercised daily. With the assistance of a loyal orderly he taught me to walk again and after a year I was able, with the aid of sticks, to walk well enough to be transferred to Stalag Luft 6 and eventual repatriation. Bill saved my leg but warned me that my sporting days were over. I met him for the last time at the Blackheath Rugby Club where he was Patron and President for many years.

Colonel Tucker continued his great work after the war and in 1958 was elected Hunterian Professor at the Royal College of Surgeons. He published many papers and articles and successfully treated the damaged limbs of many sportspersons, including the famous Compton Knee, before retiring to the West Indies where he died earlier this year at the age of 87.

JACK MURRAY A GREAT NEW ZEALANDER

Jack Murray, who died at Dunedin in March of last year, was one of those men whose gritty integrity and sheer force of personality make them unforgettable. Like Frank Hunt, Jack was on the *Rangitane* when, in November, 1940, it was sunk by a German raider in the Pacific. Taken aboard the raider, and later transferred to a supply ship, the New Zealanders were landed at a French port over four months later. In Germany Jack was indomitable, one of those few people who were wise beyond their years, able to counsel and console. Among his many activities in prison camp he organised the church services and conducted the choir, but he was prodeust of the Handel's *Messiah* which he produced, using a score transcribed by hand.

Jack had a varied career, as a cub reporter and in New Zealand's Post Office and Railways, before he found his true metier, the Law. He took his degree at Otago University and became an urban lawyer and prosecutor and a lecturer in law before becoming first a stipendiary magistrate and then a judge. Judge Ross, a colleague from 1965, gave the address at Jack's memorial service. He praised Jack's strong sense of justice, his unbounding energy and high principles. Jack, he said, was "clear in thought, decisive in action". His mode of living was so ordered that people may have thought him inflexible. He was far from that. When sentencing offenders he knew that many were disadvantaged and he always looked for possibilities of reform. He was a long-term member of the Prisons Parole Board and, representing magistrates on a Commission examining the structure of courts in the 1970s, he put forward ideas which led to major changes. A wing of the Police College was named after him in recognition of his work as Chairman of the Police Appeal Board; he also chaired the Fire Services Appeal Board.

An Elder of the Presbyterian Church, Jack Murray was very active in church affairs, describing himself as "Jack the expediter". He was a keen Rotarian and the virtual founder and first chairman of the Otago Youth Adventure Trust in Dunedin, the aim being to help youth in trouble or at risk by extending their horizons — what would be called in this country an Intermediate Treatment project.

In the early 1980s Jack suffered a stroke and lost his speech. He fought back and from then on devoted much of his time and energy to comforting and assisting other stroke victims. Jack's own motto was "Try me first", and, in keeping to it, he was never found wanting.

THE KRIEGIE ROUND

Much has happened in the past two and a half years (how much shorter the years are than they were in the forties) and I can touch on only some of it. After experimenting with a commercial venue in London's refurbished docklands in 1989, we returned to Lords for the 1990 dinner. Both occasions were enjoyable, but by far the most memorable dinner in recent years was held on 9 November at the Royal Air Force Club. Over 100 kriegies, wives and families — among them several widows — relaxed in an atmosphere which always seems exactly right. Three of the Gulf prisoners were there. Bob Ankerson and Robbie Stewart, with wives Chris and Tange, had not found us too hard going at Warwick and they had brought along Dave and Claire Waddington, who were married the day after the finale dinner at Warwick. Also present, as guest of honour, was Peter Thomas, now Lord Thomas of Gwilyr, who made a splendid, light-hearted speech that everyone enjoyed. I recalled the previous occasion when he was our guest of honour. Then Secretary of State for Wales, he was introduced by the late, irrepresible Ken Bowden as "the fellow in charge of Birmingham's water supply."

The day following the dinner was Remembrance Sunday and our turnout of 31 members was probably the best we have had so far. We missed John Hands who usually led us in his wheelchair and Graham Hall in his capacity of drill sergeant. Dave Bernard strode out in front, giving a demonstration of marching that earned applause all along the route, and Peter Skinner made sure that Dave stayed in step with the rest of us. Peter had also arranged for the Savoy Tavern to open especially for us (though many more customers arrived) and to lay on sandwiches. This proved to be a very pleasant gathering and we were delighted that Pam Gregory, Norman's widow, joined us. She and Norman had not been married very long when he died.

The 1989 International Reunion in Ottawa took place from July 26-30 and just made the last issue. The UK contingent numbered close on 100. As always, Canadian hospitality was something to remember. The Committee, chaired by Tony Little, had arranged a full and interesting itinerary and the printed programme is worth having whether one was there or not. One item is the story of J. Gilles Lamontagne — Monty we called him. On his return to Quebec after the war Monty entered politics and eventually became Minister of National Defence. After his retirement from politics he was appointed Lieutenant Governor of Quebec. One of his friends and near neighbours in Block 40 at Sagan was Johnny Johnson whose sad death from a heart attack during the reunion cast a sombre cloud over what was otherwise a very agreeable occasion.