

THE DROPZONE

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 1

JUNE 2005

60 years since the end of WWII

VE Day commemorating the Allied victory in Europe was celebrated on the 8th May 1945

The final document of unconditional surrender was signed at General Dwight Eisenhower's headquarters in Reims on 7th May. Prime Minister Winston Churchill and King George VI wanted Monday 7 May to be VE Day, but in the event, bowing to American wishes, victory was celebrated on 8 May. The USSR waited an extra day before beginning their formal celebrations. New Zealand also celebrated VE Day on the 9th May

However some confusion often exists over the date of VJ Day, the date of the Allied victory over Japan and the end of the Second World War. The Allies celebrated victory over Japan on the 15th August 1945 and this was marked by two days holiday in the UK, USA and Australia. However the Japanese administration under General Koiso Kuniaki did not officially surrender until the 2nd September 1945 Both dates are therefore known as VJ Day..

The 60th anniversary of the end of the Second World War will be officially marked by the National Day of Commemoration on Sunday the 10th July as it falls midway between VE Day and VJ Day.



Royal British Legion lapel badges are available at the Museum



Revellers outside the Bulls Head pub at Clipston

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Doug Walker at the Operations Building in 1987 before it was converted into the Museum



ROYAL AIRFORCE CHINOOK DROPS IN AT HARRINGTON

On the 24th January, this year, we were privileged to host a visit to our museum by an RAF aircrew from RWOETU (Rotary Wing Operational Evaluation & Training Unit) who are tasked with developing new systems / tactics for RAF helicopter crews.

Their CO, Wing Commander Mick Laver was due to be posted from the Unit and as such they were planning a "grand day out" to see him on his way. His particular interest was in SOE operations from WW2, so they wished to visit our museum. In addition they

also planned to visit Shuttleworth (to inspect the Lysander) and Tempsford (to see the Barn)

The crew consisted of Wing Commander Mick Laver, Flight Lieutenant Paul Kennard and navigator Adam Robinson. The Chinook was based at RAF Odiham in Hampshire and had flown in to Harrington from RAF Station Benson in Oxfordshire.



W/C Mick Laver, Ron Clarke, Flt/Lt Paul Kennard & Adam Robinson in front of the twin rotored Chinook

On the appointed hour a welcoming committee of our members were nearby on the old airfield to greet the members of the crew when they landed in the Chinook and our staff, headed by our Chairman Ron Clarke, gave the visitors a tour of the museum as well as passing on details of its illustrious history. The event was covered by the Kettering Evening Telegraph together with photographs and, as pointed out on a number of occasions, the publicity generated can do nothing but good as far as we at the museum are concerned.

Absent Friends

It is with deep regret that we have to inform you that another of our founder members passed away on the 29th May. Ethel Ager, 'Nan' to those who knew her, was the Mother of Barbara Reeves. Barbara, our former Secretary, passed away last year. We extend our most sincere condolences to her Son-in-Law Tom, her grandson Jason and the rest of the family



Ethel 'Nan' Ager



THE BEAUTIES OF NORWAY AT NIGHT

By Col Robert Fish

The following article is reprinted from "Memories of the 801st / 492nd Bombardment Group" and was written by Colonel Robert M. Fish. It gives us an idea of the stresses suffered at the time and the fact that not all the operations were carried out from Harrington.

It must have been in early 1945 that I flew my first mission to Norway. My memories of the flight are clear, many of the details have faded. I can no longer recall whose crew I flew with.

We left Harrington and flew to Leuchars where we were assigned our mission and were briefed on the details. We carried only cargo, no "Joes". Our drop zone was in the far northern part of Norway.

We entered Norway at a point west of Oslo at an altitude of 8,000 feet. The night was very clear and the moon was very bright. We could have been a very easy target for a night fighter in the moonlight. Fortunately we encountered no fighters.

I vividly recall the beautiful grandeur of the snow covered mountains in the moonlight. It was almost as bright as day.

About fifty miles short of our drop zone we began to encounter scattered clouds. A few more miles and we were in solid cloud.. We turned back to the clear area in an attempt to go under the cloud . It was impossible because the clouds covered the mountains and filled the valleys. More cloud cover was rolling in from the west. There was no way we could get into the high valley to our target location. We had no

choice but to return to England. The weather was turning bad as we flew southward toward the North Sea. We were flying at 8,000 as we crossed the coastline. Just as we crossed there was a loud explosion in the number 3 engine in the right wing. My first reaction was that we had taken an anti-aircraft shell in that engine. We immediately pushed the propeller feathering button and the propeller came to a full feathered position and the engine stopped.

Simultaneously with the feathering procedure I threw the aircraft into some violent evasive maneuvers. There being no further evidence of anti-aircraft gunfire, we decided that we had blown a cylinder on number 3 engine and I therefore stopped evasive action. We leveled off and checked the condition of the entire aircraft. The only damage we could ascertain was the dead engine.

By the time we were in clouds over the North Sea we began to pick up ice on our wings. Because we were now reduced to the power of only three engines I knew we could not continue flying at 8000 feet with a heavy load of ice forming on the aircraft. Fortunately our radio navigation systems were working and our navigator could determine good positions.

I descended to an altitude of 1000 feet. At this altitude we were in and out of clouds. We caught occasional glimpses of the white caps on the water. Our navigator reported that we were flying into a seventy mile per hour head wind. This wind would extend our flight time to Leuchars by almost an additional hour. We just had to sit

there and hope we didn't lose another motor. If we did we faced the possibility of a forced landing in a rough sea driven by seventy mile per hour winds. Our chances of surviving such an event were practically nil.

Fortunately our three remaining engines kept running. We eventually made a landfall on the coast of Scotland. This fact relieved much of our stress. If we had to bale out we would at least be over land.

Without any further adversity we landed at Leuchars just as the daybreak was arriving. The landing was without incident and we all breathed a big sigh of relief as the B-24 coasted to a stop. We went to bed and slept for a night and a day. An aircraft was sent from Harrington to take us back to our home base. Our B-24 remained at Leuchars for an engine change.



C130 Angelfire anti missile flares



.303 BRITISH SERVICE CARTRIDGE

By Roy Tebbutt

The .303 British Service cartridge, commonly known as the .303 or .303 British was originally adopted by Britain in 1889 although the Mk 7 ball round, which most people may be familiar with, did not come into being until 1910 and this was used throughout both world wars until the 1980s by the British armed forces. Many other countries, including the Japanese during WW2, produced the round which is also known as the 7.7 x 56R.

This round was used on land, water and in the air in a wide variety of weapons during WW2, including rifles, carbines, magazine fed light machine guns such as the Lewis Gun and Bren, and belt fed medium machine guns like the Vickers and Browning

In addition to the jacketed ball round, tracer, incendiary, armour piercing and blank

rounds were made in very large numbers and several different Marks. Since the introduction of the .303 cartridge in 1889 it has been manufactured in at least 20 countries and in nearly 200 military variants as well as in numerous experimental and sporting cartridge configurations. It may be of some interest to learn that during the First World War British factories alone produced more than 7,000 million Mk 7 ball cartridges.

Although the United States of America did not officially adopt a .303 rifle, it did produce, under the Lend - Lease scheme of World War 2, nearly a third of the wartime production of No 4 rifles used by British troops. US Lend - Lease production for the UK was 1,196,706 No 4 rifles whereas the total British wartime production of this rifle was 2,021,913. This of course

was not the total number of .303 rifles produced in the UK during WW2, as the SMLE Rifle No 1 was still being manufactured, BSA alone producing nearly a quarter of a million No 1 Mk III and III* rifles. The USA should therefore, along with Australia, India and the United Kingdom, be considered as one of the major producers of both .303 rifles and ammunition

The head stamp on a British military 303 round contains a wealth of information about it. This includes the year of manufacture, the manufacturer, the type of bullet (projectile) and the type of propellant in the cartridge

During WW2 several organisations manufactured .303 ammunition in the UK and they used the following identification codes

United Kingdom Manufacturers of .303 Ammunition

B- E or BE



Royal Ordnance Factory, Blackpole, Worcester.

This factory was part of the 1939 - 1945 war emergency expansion plan and was situated at Blackpole on the site of the earlier Government Cartridge Factory No 3 of 1916. Initially ICI Ltd were to have operated this plant but they were advised in 1940 of the change in plans and the factory was run as a Royal Ordnance Factory by the Ministry of Supply. This factory made and marked cases but filling was carried out at the Royal Ordnance Factory Swynnerton, Staffs.

CP



Crompton Parkinson Ltd, Guiseley, Yorkshire.

although filling took place at Doncaster (see below). This factory was set up as part of the 1939-1945 war emergency expansion plan.

C-P



Crompton Parkinson Ltd, Doncaster, Yorkshire.

This company was already in existence but unconnected with ammunition manufacture when the 1939 - 1945 war broke out. It was selected to produce small arms ammunition as part of the 1939-1945 war emergency expansion plans.

United Kingdom Manufacturers of .303 Ammunition



GB

Greenwood and Batley, Leeds.

This company manufactured ammunition from an early stage, finally ceasing production in the late 1950s. They had a filling factory at Abbey Wood and later during the 1939-45 war a filling factory at Farnham.



H- N

Royal Ordnance Factory, Hirwaun, South Wales.

This factory was set up as part of the 1939-45 war emergency expansion plan. It was involved in the production of .303 cartridges in only a very limited way



K

Kynoch & Co, Witton, Birmingham, UNITED KINGDOM.

This firm was first formed by George Kynoch at Witton in 1862 as a manufacturer of percussion caps. It was changed to a limited company in 1884 as G. Kynoch & Co Ltd and by then was manufacturing metallic ammunition. A further reorganisation and expansion followed in 1889 when George Kynoch was ousted from the management and this then culminated in a further change of title to Kynoch Ltd in 1897. During the period ending with the 1914-18 war Kynoch, which by then was the largest of the British commercial ammunition manufacturers, owned rolling mills at Witton; at Lodge Road, Birmingham and at Eyre Street, Birmingham.



K2

Imperial Chemical Industries Kynoch factory at Standish, nr Wigan, Lancs.

This factory was set up as part of the 1939-45 war emergency plans and produced its first complete .303 rounds in October 1940.



K4

Imperial Chemical Industries Kynoch factory at Yeading, Hayes, Middlesex.

This factory was also set up as part of the 1939-45 war emergency expansion plans. Cartridge cases were being produced by late 1940 but the ball bullets were still being imported into the factory in 1941



K5

Imperial Chemical Industries Kynoch factory at Kidderminster, Worcestershire.

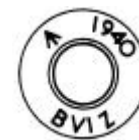
Set up as part of the 1939-45 war emergency expansion plans.



RG or -

Royal Ordnance Factory, Radway Green, Cheshire.

This factory was part of the 1939- 45 war emergency expansion plans being situated near Crewe and is still in operation. Production of the .303 cartridge commenced in 1940 and the last known production of this cartridge was in 1973 with Mk 7Z Ball and Dummy Drill cartridges. Initial Radway Green production used a single arrow as the head stamp code and this was replaced in 1942 by the RG code.



RH

Raleigh Cycle Co, Nottingham.

Known to have produced .303 cartridges 1941 - 1945



R- L

Royal Laboratory, Woolwich Arsenal, Kent.

Woolwich Arsenal, of which the Royal Laboratory was only a part, is situated in South East London on the River Thames. The Arsenal dates from 1670 and has manufactured many different items of warlike stores for the armed forces. Ammunition was made at Woolwich long before the adoption of the .303 cartridge in 1889.

United Kingdom Manufacturers of .303 Ammunition



SR or --

Ammunition production ceased completely at Woolwich in 1957, the last known production of .303 ammunition there being Mk 7 Ball in 1957.

The Woolwich site apart from containing all the supportive facilities for the research, design, development, inspection and testing of ammunition also included an extensive range complex on the Plumpstead Marshes. In addition there was a filling area not far away in the vicinity of Abbey Wood

Royal Ordnance Factory, Spennymoor, Durham.

This factory was part of the 1939-45 war emergency expansion plan. It began production of .303 ammunition in 1941 initially with the head stamp code of two arrows replacing these in 1942 with the code SR. The Spennymoor ammunition was filled at the Royal Ordnance Factory, Aycliffe, Durham.

Ammunition used by British forces included that made in the USA and other parts of the British Empire. The following WW2 manufacturer's head stamp codes may therefore also be encountered



CAC Colonial Ammunition Co., Auckland, NEW ZEALAND

D Dominion Cartridge Co., Brownsberg, Quebec, CANADA.

D- I or D- F Indian Government Ammunition Factory, Dum Dum, Calcutta, INDIA. This factory manufactured cartridges for use by the British Army in India as well as the Indian Army.



DA Dominion Arsenal, Montreal, CANADA.

DAC Dominion Arsenal, Quebec, CANADA



DAL or LAC Dominion Arsenal, Lindsay, Ontario, CANADA.

DC Defence Industries, Brownsburgh, Quebec, CANADA

DCC Dominion Cartridge Company, Montreal, CANADA
This later became the Dominion Ammunition Division of Canadian Industries Ltd.



DI Defence Industries, Verdun, CANADA.

F- or A- F Small Arms Ammunition Factory, Footscray, Melbourne, AUSTRALIA.



K- F or K- Indian Government Ammunition Factory Kirkee (or Kirkee Arsenal), near Poona, INDIA.



MF Small Arms Ammunition Factory No 1, Footscray, Melbourne, AUSTRALIA.

MG Small Arms Ammunition Factory No 2, Footscray, Melbourne, AUSTRALIA.

British Empire & USA manufacturers of .303 ammunition



MH Small Arms Ammunition Factory No 3, Hendon, AUSTRALIA

MJ Small Arms Ammunition Factory No 4, Hendon, AUSTRALIA

MQ Small Arms Ammunition Factory No 5, Rocklea, AUSTRALIA.



MS Small Arms Ammunition Factory No 7, Salisbury, AUSTRALIA.

MW Small Arms Ammunition Factory No 6, Welchpool, AUSTRALIA



P or PC Peters Cartridge Co., Kings Mills, Ohio, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

U South African Mint, Pretoria, SOUTH AFRICA



WCC Western Cartridge Co., East Alton, Ill., UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

WRA Winchester Repeating Arms Co., New Haven, Conn., UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.



COLOUR CODING of .303 AMMUNITION

Colour coding appears in several forms on small arms ammunition. The most common system with the .303 cartridge used coloured bullet tips or colour around the annulus of the primer cap. Other methods include colouring of part or the whole of the cartridge case. Originally colour markings arose from the need to make a quick visual check of the arrangements in a machine gun belt and they are now universally applied. Most countries do not, unlike Britain, identify the bullet by the head stamp, so such colour markings are often the only way to identify the bullet in use. As a general rule the absence of a colour coding indicates a standard ball cartridge.

<u>Bullet Type</u>	<u>Colour of Tip</u>	<u>Colour of Annulus</u>
Armour Piercing	Green	Green
Ball		Purple
Incendiary	Blue	Blue
Observing	Black	Black
Proof		Yellow
Tracer Short Range	White	Red
Tracer Dark Ignition	Grey	Red
Tracer Long Range	Red	Red



Not strictly speaking a .303 round but this is a .303 separated case extractor. If the head of a 303 cartridge comes off in a weapon leaving the remainder of the case in the chamber this cartridge shaped tool is used to remove the separated portion of the case using the weapon's normal case extracting mechanism

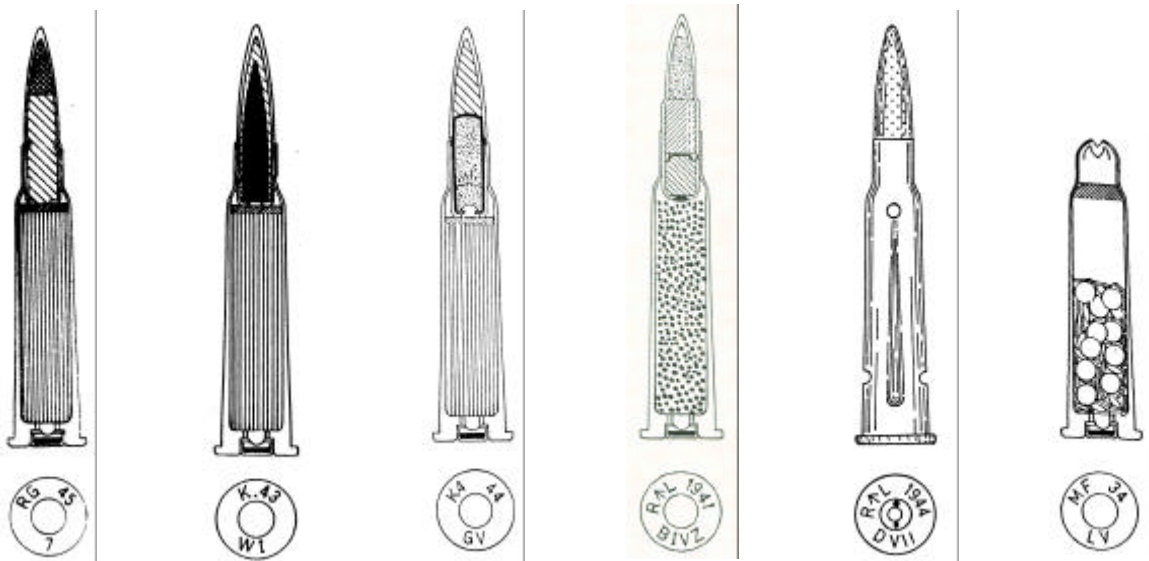
LETTER CODES, OTHER THAN MANUFACTURER'S CODES, WERE ALSO INCLUDED IN THE .303 HEADSTAMP MARKINGS AS BELOW:

- | | |
|--|---|
| B denoted an Incendiary bullet | O denoted an Observation bullet |
| D denoted a Drill round | P denoted a practice round |
| E denoted a Smoke bomb projector | Q denoted a proof round |
| F denoted a Semi armour-piercing bullet | R denoted an Explosive bullet |
| G denoted a Tracer bullet | U denoted a Dummy round |
| H denoted Grenade Discharger | W denoted an Armour piercing bullet |
| L denoted Blank | Z indicated a nitrocellulose propellant charge |



.303 British round alongside a 5 round loading clip used in the Lee Enfield Rifle. Normally 50 rounds in such clips were carried in a cotton bandolier

Diagrams showing different types of 303 ammunition



303 Ball

303 Armour Piercing

303 Tracer

303 Incendiary

303 Drill

303 Blank

THE GOLD STREET STIRLING

By Keith Taylor

If one walks up Gold Street towards All Saints' Church in Northampton it appears normal enough, like any other main street around the town centre. There is nothing to make you suddenly stop and ask yourself "What is that and how did it happen?". As you approach the Grand Hotel, look up at the window sills and the brickwork and you will notice slight damage and chipping. Was it caused by a careless builder or clumsy scaffolders? No, my friends, this was caused by a Short Stirling Mk 1 bomber aircraft of the Royal Air Force. JULY 14th / 15th, 1941. R.A.F. OAKINGTON, CAMBS. No. 7 SQUADRON. STIRLING Mk 1 N6033.

Six crews were briefed to bomb Hannover. Their bomb load was to be 30 x 1,000 lb and 33 x 500 lb H.E. and 42 x 250 lb incendiaries. After take-off they were to rendezvous with the main force of 67 Wellingtons of No.3 Group plus 33 Hampdens and 30 Halifaxes of No.4 Group. Out of these six Stirlings only

one was able to make it back to Oakington. Hannover was heavily defended and several aircraft were damaged by flak. Their return journey became a nightmare, storms and strong headwinds causing the aircraft to use more fuel than they had anticipated, for the Stirlings could not climb above the weather. An Air Ministry ruling that the Stirling's wing span must not exceed 100 ft (so that they could fit into existing hangars) resulted in the aircraft struggling to exceed 16,000 ft. Stirling N6022 MG-D flown by F/O D.T. Witt DFM had two engines shot out, with the third engine misfiring, was planning to ditch in the sea but managed to make the coast just SSE of Norwich. F/O Witt gave the order to bale out. The aircraft crashed at 0340 hrs. at Shotesham Park, Newton Flotman, south east of Norwich. The flight engineer Sgt. J.T. Prentice broke his back but made a good recovery and was later commissioned, rising to the rank of Wing Commander. P/O Keith Deyell DFM broke his ankle but recovered and completed a tour of ops. with No. 38 Squadron.

F/Lt. D.A.J. Sanders in N6036, short of fuel, landed at Bircham Newton but overshot and ran through the hedge, fortunately without injury and too much damage.

Sqn/Ldr. Speare, also low on fuel, landed safely at Waterbeach. F/O K.O. Blunden landed at Honington although the tailwheel doors were ripped off.

Meanwhile, F/Sgt. B.K. Madgwick was coaxing N6033 MG-Z along with flak damage, navigation instruments u/s, wireless u/wireless u/s and the aircraft icing up. Looking for Oakington

seemed impossible but, in fact, they had actually flown right over the airfield and were now heading towards Northampton. With the wireless u/s, Oakington were unable to contact them and with fuel gauges reading zero, things were looking serious. The flight engineer, Sgt W.H. Robinson had been juggling the balance cocks trying to make use of the small amounts of fuel that remained in the tanks. The pilot, F/Sgt. Madgwick had trimmed the aircraft to fly "hands off", the early auto-pilots being unreliable.

When the fuel pressure lights started to glow red, he checked as well as he could that they were clear of any towns and gave the order to bale out. Unknown to them they were approximately east of Northampton somewhere near Billing and Moulton.

Tragically, when Madgwick baled out, he somehow slipped out of his harness. He may have loosened the straps to become more comfortable when sitting at the controls and omitted to readjust them prior to jumping. He fell to his death, coming down in Kingsthorpe recreation ground. His parachute was found one and a half miles away.

While descending, Robinson saw the aircraft bank to the left then straighten up but getting lower all the time. He finally lost sight of it as it merged with the dark background, then a few seconds later came a flash as the aircraft crashed and to his horror he saw it had come down in the town. I do not know if Robinson had recognized it as Northampton or not, but he did come from this area, but exactly where I am not sure.



No 7 Squadron Stirlings

The GOLD STREET STIRLING (cont)

It is possible that the port outer engine cut because of fuel starvation. That would cause the port wing to drop slightly causing a yaw to the left and if the starboard engine cut out seconds later that would straighten it up but on only two engines would be losing height rapidly. Apparently the Stirling came in over St. James' end, dead in line with Gold Street, getting lower and lower until it hit Burtons and the Grand Hotel. The port wing demolished some buildings in College Street which now houses a very nice fish and chip shop. The rest of the aircraft, or what was left of it, finally came to rest alongside All Saints' Church in Mercer's Row. Amongst the wreckage lay two unexploded 500 lb. bombs. There could be two reasons for this, one, a mechanical fault in the bomb release gear or, two, the release gear was iced up. The two bombs were removed by the R.A.F. bomb disposal team.



Debris from the Stirling littered about Gold Street. Note the possible bomb in the middle of the street, this was edited out of the photograph when it was published in the local newspaper in 1941

A photo of this happening appears on page 95 of "Aviation in Northamptonshire" by Michael L. Gibson.

Sgt. W.H. Robinson came down in Abington Park and was picked up by a police car, they

wanted to take him to hospital but Robinson assured them that he was O.K. and requested the police take him to the crash site. He was very worried about the damage they might have caused. Upon arriving at the crash scene he was shocked to see bodies strewn around Gold Street but, thankfully, they turned out to be tailors' dummies from Burtons. In fact, apart from the pilot there was only one person injured, a Mr. E. Gross who fell off his bicycle as he was returning from work, he suffered a broken leg and a badly gashed head. It was fortunate that the crash happened at 0415 when there was hardly anyone about.

It is recorded in No.7 Squadron O.R.B. (Operational Record Book) that the Chief Constable of Northampton, John Williamson, phoned Oakington saying "I can't have this!"

The six surviving aircrew went back to Ops. but on the 28/29th August 1941 were in trouble again. Returning from Duisburg in Stirling N3666 piloted



Damage to the shops in Gold Street

THE GOLD STREET STIRLING (cont)



N3666 after crash landing at Newmarket 28th August 1941. Note that the Squadron code MG-Z has been given to N3666 after the crash of N6033 at Northampton on 25th July 1941

by F/L Lay DFC they were shot up by a Me 110 over the North Sea. The rear gunner was wounded and baled out. The pilot made an emergency landing at Newmarket racecourse where the undercarriage collapsed. The racecourse was used as an airfield during the war. A Bellman hangar still survives alongside the A 14 and is now used for storing goods for the Homebase group.

The crew members of N6033 MG-Z were :

Pilot: F/Sgt B.K. Madgwick. Died when parachute failed to open 14/15 July, 1941 at Northampton.

Bomb Aimer: Sgt. C.H. Tourville. Killed in action on later date.

Flight Engineer: Sgt. W.H. Robinson. Survived the war. Died near Huntingdon 2001.

Navigator: Sgt. M. Roach. RCAF. Later awarded the DFM. Survived the war. Killed in car crash in Canada, 1961.

Wireless Operator: Sgt. A. Chambers. Killed in action. Date unknown.

Mid upper gunner: Sgt. J.M. Donlan. Survived the war. Died in the early 1980s.

Rear Gunner: Sgt. H. Macrae. Killed in action. Date unknown. A friend of mine, Bob Pointer, of Wolverton, Milton Keynes, served as a mid-upper gunner with W/Cdr. Hamish Mahaddie (pilot) whilst on No 7 Squad-

ron. They both knew Robinson and met him at re-unions. They gave me Robinson's address who said he would be pleased to see me but, unfortunately, he passed away in 2001 before I managed to see him. Bob Pointer passed away in 2002 and Hamish died on January 17th, 1997. I met Hamish and Bob through a workmate at Ford Motor Co. at Daventry where I used to deliver as a lorry driver 1984 - 1998. He was Brian Clift whose father Alex Clift flew in their crew as a rear gunner. He, sadly, lost his life in March, 1943 whilst flying with S/Ldr. Thwaites. They were shot down in France, returning from Stuttgart with a new crew since Hamish and Bob were tour-expired. Hamish flew on 76 Operations and Bob did 46. They both did the mandatory 45 Ops. per tour for the Pathfinders plus one for luck on March 8th, 1943 to Lorient. Hamish had already completed a tour with No.77 Squadron (30 Ops.) on Whitleys.



Debris and damage to shops in Gold Street

HARRINGTON AVIATION MUSEUMS

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Wer'e on the Web!
WWW.
harringtonmuseum.org.uk



Ambrose Crew at Harrington.



Ceremony at the St Cyr-de-Valorges memorial on the 60th Anniversary of the crash, 2nd May 2004

Museum Visitors

As at the end of May we have had 741 visitors this year from all over the UK as well as Republic of Ireland, USA, Austria, Zimbabwe and Holland. Therefore since 1994 we have received a total of over 28,500 visitors. Unfortunately attendance figures were not recorded for the first year that the museum opened in 1993



Norman & Marcy Stoll along with Fred West at the memorial

Several Carpetbagger Veterans or their families have so far visited the museums this year including:

Clay McCutchan Historian with the Headquarters of AFSOC, Florida USA - the modern day American Carpetbaggers

Norman Stoll, Navigator with the McKee crew of the 492nd BG at Harrington during WW2

Virginia France, daughter of Robert R France, Bombardier on the McKee crew and also 856th BS Bombardier at Harrington during WW2

Morris John Caudle son of S/Sgt Morris James Caudle who flew with the Winburn crew of the 492nd BG from Harrington

Alan Ambrose, nephew of George Ambrose who was killed on the night of 27/28.4.44 when his aircraft crashed at St Cyr de Valorges, France on operation Lackey 3A from Harrington



Al Ambrose during his visit on 20th March

George Ambrose's plane crashed after a wing hit the ground at the dropzone .

Killed were:

George W. Ambrose, pilot

Robert H. Redhair, copilot

Arthur B. Pope, navigator

Peter Roccia, bombardier

Charles M. Wilson, engineer

Survivors were:

James C. Mooney, dispatcher James J. Heddleson, radio operator

George W. Henderson, tail gunner

Mooney was apparently thrown clear of the crash, he was found later with a broken back and taken to a hospital by the Germans. He survived the war in Stalag Luft IV after healing, but never saw Heddleson or Henderson again in his lifetime.

Henderson was thrown from the tail-turret into the bomb bay by the force of the crash, while Heddleson, preparing to assist the dispatcher at the time of the crash, was entangled in wiring and cables in the hold. Henderson helped Heddleson get out of the wreckage, and they began to run away from the scene, the airplane exploding a few minutes later. Their successful escape and evasion, widely publicised in squadron histories and many books, is a testimony of their perseverance and the bravery of the French who sheltered them while in hiding. On 8 August 1944, they were returned by an RAF Lockheed Hudson to the UK. The crash occurred near St Cyr-de-Valorges, where today a monument is present.