

THE DROPZONE

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Publisher: Fred West

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The Red Lion Mystery Solved!

'Leo G. 'Red' Monaghan, who was stationed at Harrington and Bassingbourne with the 8th Air Force, took this photograph in 1944.

If you know where the Red Lion Hotel was located, if it still exists or if it has been renamed then we would be very pleased to hear from you.

The brewery appears to be Ind Coope & Allsop who operated from Burton on Trent.'



The above notice and accompanying photo was published by Roy in a previous issue of the Dropzone, but no one came forward to identify the establishment or its location.

At last we got lucky, for during the summer one of our visitors, Mr Robert Ward, told us that the Red Lion is situated on the old A6 at Rothley, Leicestershire.

Rothley is north of Leicester, near Mountsorrel. On page 2 is the latest picture of the refurbished Red Lion.

Web address is: <http://www.pubtopia.com/pubs/L/Leicester/Rothley/The%20Red%20Lion%20Inn/>



The Red Lion, Rothley, Leicestershire, 2010

A Letter to Roy from Lawrence

My name is Lawrence Blum. I was stationed at Harrington with the 492nd Bomb Group in 1944/1945 and served as a waist gunner and operated "Carpet" radar spot jamming equipment. I was credited with ten night bombardment missions while flying with the 857th and 858th Bomb Squadrons. My first three missions were with the Melinant crew, six were with the Akerheim (sp?) crew, and one was with a crew whose name I can't recall.

Those of us who served in WWII are getting few in number, and we owe thanks to museums such as yours which help to keep alive the memory of our efforts. It is hard for me to realize how long ago were those days at Harrington, and I am somewhat dismayed when I read inaccurate accounts of the war, or see some ridiculous depiction in film or TV. Still, it's better than being forgotten.

I am now 87 years old, and my wife and I live in my old hometown of Beaumont, Texas. We enjoyed several trips to the UK, but I regret failing to pay a visit to Harrington to see how the place looks these days and enjoy the exhibits at your museum. Carry on the good work.

Sincerely, Lawrence H. Blum

Roy's Reply

Thank you for your email Lawrence and the sentiments expressed in it. I believe that I had the honour of meeting you at one of the Carpetbagger reunions that I attended in recent years, however I was not at the reunion this year.

Unfortunately little remains of the airfield at Harrington these days and the former Group Operations Block in which our museum is housed is the only substantial building left from the wartime era. The runways were broken up in 1965 with some sections of perimeter track being left as access roads to the farmland.

If you have access to Google Earth or Google maps <http://maps.google.co.uk/> on the internet just type in the UK postcode NN6 9PF and this should give you aerial views of the base as it was in May 2009. The Thor launch pads which were constructed on the main runway in 1959 can be seen as can crop markings for the old runways.

Best wishes to you and your family,

Regards

Roy Tebbutt

CORRECTION!

In which Fred eats humble pie

In the last issue of The Dropzone I published the story of the Orkney Crash 1945. This was supplied by Dave Earl, an aviation historian living in Stalybridge, near Manchester.

The pilot of the Harrington based B-24, 42-50331, was Second Lieutenant Henry 'Hank' Polansky, but I referred to him as Second Lieutenant *Eugene* 'Hank' Polansky.

As I explained later in the same issue, following the accident, Hank Polansky was referred to in a report as Eugene Polinsky. Eugene Polinsky was a navigator with the Ellis crew, who in March 1945 had completed his 36 missions and returned to the USA.

This mix up in names was referred to by Ben Parnell in the revised edition of his book *Carpetbaggers* published in 1993. And it was from this book that I obtained the name *Eugene* Polansky and changed Dave's original (and accurate) wording. It is not known how Ben got the names wrong.

This has been a useful lesson: if there is any doubt about any information written in books, search for the official records!

However, the following extracts from Harrington records will go some way to explaining how the original mix-up could have been caused.

Surname Polansky

Fname Henry

Unit 856th BS

Surname Polinsky

Fname Eugene

Unit 36th & 856th BS

Surname Polanski

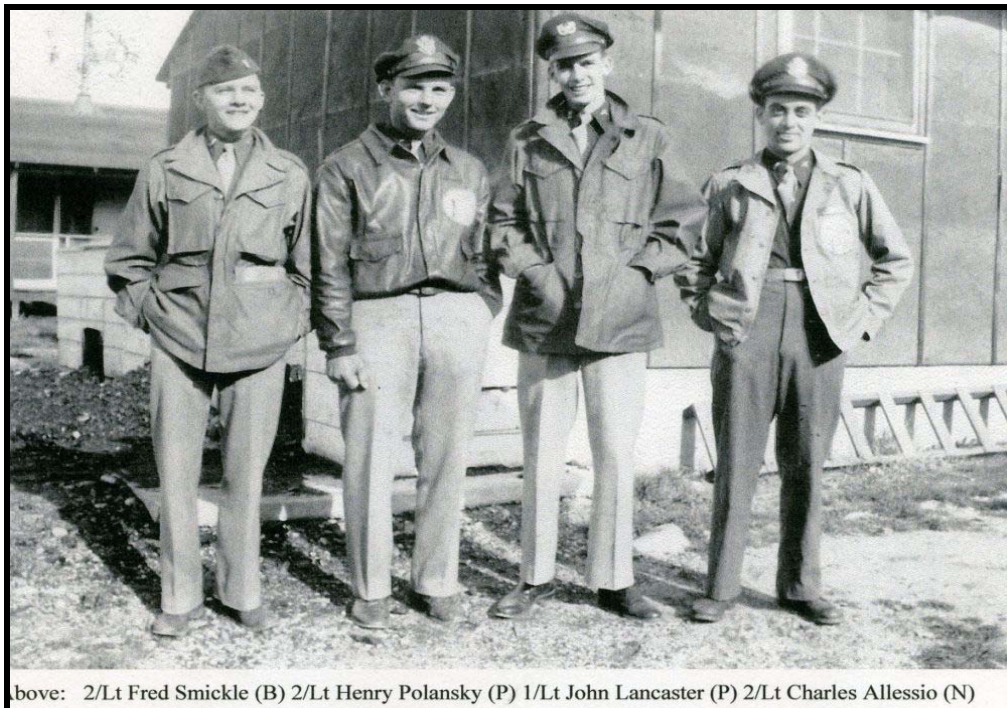
Fname Walter

Unit 406th Night Leaflet Squadron

Surname Polinski

Fname Theodore

Unit 834th Air Engineering Squadron



above: 2/Lt Fred Smickle (B) 2/Lt Henry Polansky (P) 1/Lt John Lancaster (P) 2/Lt Charles Alessio (N)

The original four officers of the Polansky crew. Lt. John Lancaster was transferred to Lt. Robert H. Fesmire's crew shortly before the Orkney crash. He was replaced by Lt. Peter C. Pulrang, the only survivor of the crash.

Remembrance Sunday 2010

On Sunday 14th November, members of the museum society were joined by villagers from Harrington for the annual Remembrance Service, held at The Carpetbagger Memorial.



The service was conducted by the Rev. Douglas Spencely, curate to the Faxton Group of Churches. At five minutes to eleven, Rev. Spencely called the assembly to order and gave a short address, and a prayer. This was followed by the Two Minutes Silence.

The silence was broken by the traditional Verses of Remembrance and then the wreath laying ceremony began.



The first wreath was laid by Ron Clarke on behalf of the 801st/492nd Bombardment Group Association. Then a wreath from the Carpetbagger Museum, dedicated to all who had served at Harrington from 1943 to 1963, was laid by Keith Taylor.

A third wreath, presented by the residents of Harrington & Thorpe Underwood, was laid by Fred.



Jason Reeves laid the first wreath presented by Northampton Aviation Society and dedicated to the memory of all members of the 801st/492nd BG who gave their lives in the defence of our country. His daughter, Amber, laid a wreath in memory of Polish airmen, after which the Service of Remembrance then continued.



In spite of the cold weather, a large group of members and friends came to pay their respects and their dedication is much appreciated. They were rewarded after the service with warm refreshments, served at the museum.



EDITORIAL

As this is the season of goodwill to all, I was going to forgo my usual rant at senior politicians, but their continued stupidity doesn't make that an easy task, so I'll have one small dig.

At a time of rising tension in the world, defence spending is cut, thereby diminishing the effectiveness of all three of our already overstretched Armed Services. This in the name of national spending cuts. Sending aircraft carriers and jump jets to the scrap yard will of course save billions of pounds, so it will all be worth it in the end – won't it?

Well, it will certainly go some way to help to pay for the top quality meals promised to those poor people incarcerated in Her Majesty's Prisons, and provide them with the National Minimum Wage of £5.93 per hour for sewing mail bags. I'm sure that the lads and lassies on the front line will be pleased to know they are doing their bit to help the less fortunate back home! I was about to mention the increase of more than 30% in Overseas Aid, but I remembered the 'season of goodwill.'

The museum has had a busy year with attendance figures similar to previous years. Visitor numbers for the season are 2006 adults, and 252 children. Overall, 20 less visitors than 2009, but 30 more adults. There have been less school visits this year, and no scout groups.

The majority of casual visitors to the museum are still able to have a guided tour, provided none of the volunteers who undertake the role of guide are on holiday, or away sick. We have tried hard all year to attract new volunteers, but only managed to recruit one, a teen age student who will be leaving us next year to go to university!

This lad has been willing to tackle most tasks and at the moment he is helping Roy to photograph all the museum exhibits. If only we could find more like him.

All the ladies who help in the canteen do a brilliant job of combining that role with Front of House duties, but they can't be guides as well. So, is there anyone out there who will make a regular commitment to the museum before the last guide turns his toes up?

Winter maintenance is well under way, and the refurbished library will be ready for use by next spring. In addition to dozens of books, the library is also equipped with a computer, scanner and LASER printer, so we hope to see many members making use of these facilities.

Have a happy, peaceful Christmas, and may the New Year bring you good fortune.

Fred West.

Then as Now

In 1931 Britain was due to take part in the Schneider Trophy competition. A team from the Royal Air Force had won in 1928 and 1929, and a third win would permanently secure the Trophy. A High Speed Flight had been formed in anticipation of the competition. (The Schneider Trophy race had been an annual event, but in 1929 it was decided to hold it every two years.)

Early in the year the Government of the day decided that due to the world depression savings had to be made, and the £100,000 needed to cover the costs of the RAF team could not be found. (£100,000 in 1931 is approximately £3.3M in 2010.)

It was pointed out to those in authority that investing in this competition made sound sense, as winning would result in increased demand for British made aircraft. This argument was rejected, short term gains being more important than the possibility of long term profits.

The money was eventually put up by a very patriotic Lady Lucy Houston, the widow of a millionaire ship owner. The team won, and the Trophy was retained in perpetuity.

The 1931 winning aircraft was the Supermarine S6.B, designed by Reginald J. Mitchell, and fitted with a Rolls-Royce 'R' engine of 2,350 hp. During the competition a new world record was set by Flt. Lt. GH. Stainforth when he attained a speed of 407.5 mph.

The development of the S6 series led to Mitchell's design for the Supermarine Spitfire, that first flew in 1936. Mitchell died at the age of only 43 years in 1937, and all variants of the Spitfire were designed by Joseph Smith, and a team of engineers and draftsmen.

For more information go to:

<http://www.rjmitchell-spitfire.co.uk/schneidertrophy/1931.asp?sectionID=2>

(Sorry no pictures, the only ones I could find were all subject to copyright.)

In 1930, Sqn. Ldr. Frank Whittle took out a patent on his jet propelled engine. He attempted to get the Air Ministry interested in the development of his invention, but to no avail.

When the patents were due for renewal around 1934, he couldn't afford to pay for them so had to let them expire. Although he formed his own company and successfully developed the jet engine, with a little Government support for this project, millions of pounds could have been made from licences sold to other countries.

And Now, The Item You Have All Been Waiting For—The Quiz!

I have decided to take pity on tired brains at the end of the year, so the quiz is very easy. To make it even easier, you only have to get three correct answers to pass.

It really is 'childs play' this time. Once again **NO** cheating

W O R L D ' S E A S I E S T Q U I Z !

(Remember, Passing requires only 3 correct answers out of 10!)

- 1) *How long did the Hundred Years' War last?*
- 2) *Which country makes Panama hats?*
- 3) *From which animals do we get cat gut?*
- 4) *In which month do Russians celebrate the October Revolution?*
- 5) *What is a camelhair brush made of?*
- 6) *The Canary Islands in the Atlantic are named after what animal?*
- 7) *What was King George VI first name?*
- 8) *What colour is a purple finch?*
- 9) *Where are Chinese gooseberries from?*
- 10) *What is the colour of the black box in a commercial aeroplane?*

Check your answers on page 12

Wing Commander Bill Stoker

The following article is published by kind permission of **The Daily Telegraph**.

Wing Commander Bill Stoker, who has died aged 74, provided crucial air support to an SAS team involved in a desperate action at Mirbat during the Dhofar campaign in Oman.

On July 19 1972 nine SAS soldiers had their backs to the sea at Mirbat, on the coast of Oman. From 5 am they had been under attack from several hundred well-armed Communist guerrillas who had swept down from the mountains to wipe out their British Army Training Team (BATT) and Omani government forces. The BATT commander called for air support from the largely British-manned Sultan of Oman's Air Force (SOAF) based at Salalah, 20 minutes' flying time away.

The very low cloud base was below the limits for the rocket-firing Strikemaster aircraft. But Stoker, who commanded the squadron, threw away the rule book and launched two of his pilots into a counter attack. The low cloud prevented the aircraft from climbing above small arms range to deliver their weapons in a dive. Aware of the urgency of the situation, they immediately carried out a level strafe and rocket attack at 200 feet, an extremely dangerous manoeuvre.

With the situation on the ground becoming desperate, Stoker decided to launch two more aircraft and took off in the lead. He attacked the guerrillas with rockets and guns, but on his fourth low-level attack his aircraft was badly damaged by ground fire. His aircraft started to lose fuel rapidly and he was forced to return to Salalah, where he made a difficult emergency landing.

The SOAF sorties saved the day. As Stoker and his pilots were striking from the air, a team of 23 SAS soldiers were loaded aboard helicopters and put down at Mirbat beach. They advanced in two groups, wiping out a ridge position held by the guerrillas. By this time the enemy was in full retreat. Never again did they attempt a frontal assault on the coastal plain. The Oman war henceforth would be fought inland, in the mountains.

The Sultan of Oman awarded Stoker the Distinguished Service Medal for his actions at Mirbat.

William Ian Charles Stoker was born in Hong Kong on November 6 1935. With other civilian dependants he was evacuated to Australia in 1940. He was later educated at Dollar Academy (Perth, Scotland) before gaining a cadetship to the RAF College, Cranwell.

Stoker flew the Hunter fighter/ground attack aircraft in Germany before joining No 92 Squadron, where he was a member of the "Blue Diamonds" aerobatic team of 16 Hunters flying in formation.

In 1961, as a flight lieutenant, he served briefly with Brixmis, the British military mission to Soviet forces in East Germany, which maintained an espionage role. RAF officers were expected to conduct close ground-reconnaissance of Warsaw Pact airfields and aircraft.

Then in 1963 he joined No 43 Squadron and was in the front line of the British withdrawal from Aden, flying air operations in support of the Army in the Radfan Mountains. One veteran of 43 Squadron commented: "We were laying down fire as close as 25 yards to our own army positions."



Wing. Cmdr. Bill Stoker
1935—2010

Stoker was in the thick of many of these operations and was awarded the Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service.

After two years as an instructor with the US Air Force, flying the F-100 Super Sabre fighter-bomber, he took command of 8 Squadron in Bahrain. As a wing commander, he was CO of 16 Squadron, operating Buccaneer strike aircraft from Laarbruch in Germany. Stoker also served at the National Defence College, Latimer, and held a staff appointment with Nato's northern command in Denmark.

Bill Stoker was a regular competitor on the Cresta Run and a life member of the St Moritz Tobogganing Club.

Aged only 50, he fell victim to a crippling illness requiring treatment in a nursing home until his death on April 23 this year. His wife Kay, a model, died of cancer in 1991. He is survived by two sons and a daughter.

Harrington Wind Farm

In February 2010, Daventry District Council rejected the proposal from Nuon Renewables to develop a wind farm on the former Harrington Air Base. Nuon lodged an appeal, and the hearing commenced at Daventry on the 13th July.

Harrington Aviation Museum Society were represented at the hearing by the secretary, Fred West, who made the submission that if the appeal was allowed, there should be a condition that turbines three and seven (shown ringed in the picture) be relocated. The proposed location of these turbines was to be close to the track of the old main runway and the Thor missile sites.

Visitors to the museum often stand at the top of the main runway facing south, and these turbines would have seriously spoiled the view. Most of what remains of the former air base is in this area, and we consider this to be a memorial to all who served at Harrington between 1943 and 1963.

The position of these two turbines would have been a desecration of this memorial.

The representative from English Heritage, Dr Ben Bradshaw, also made a strong case for retaining the site in its present form, referring to the historical significance of the Thor missile sites. Of the sixty original sites in the east of England only a few remain, and not all are as complete as the ones at Harrington.

The appeal was heard by Mrs. E. Fieldhouse, from Bristol, who visited Harrington on two separate occasions during the appeal hearing, (July 13th to the 25th) and carried out a thorough inspection of the airfield and surrounding areas. On her second visit, she was shown around the museum by Ron Clarke and Fred.

Mrs Fieldhouse must have been favourably impressed by all the arguments against the project, for she eventually dismissed the appeal. And the old base slumbers peacefully once more. (But, don't be surprised if the question of wind turbines crops up again in the future.)



How it might have been. Numbers 3 and 7 turbines with a Thor missile site in the foreground.

Visitors

The museum remains a popular venue for various interest groups. These range from schools, history societies, retired professional associations to war history groups. Between Easter and the end of October we entertained more than twenty different groups, either during the day, or in the evening.

There were eight 'Secret War' groups this year between April and October, who visit Chicksands, Bletchley Park and Harrington. Six of these groups made Harrington the last port of call, arriving about 2.15 pm on Sunday afternoon.

Two of our members, Clive Bassett and Harry Verlander, act as guides with the Sunday groups, travelling with them throughout the weekend. These particular groups can number between thirty five and fifty people, so they keep us very busy!

Early this year Harry's book *My War In SOE* was published and copies are on sale in the museum's gift shop. On his first visit of the year, in addition to explaining to the visitors the significance of his own display, Harry had to devote some time to signing copies of his book.



Harry book signing, supervised by wife Liz and Ron Clarke.

On a sunny spring day we had a visit from Clipston Junior School. The pupils spent the morning studying the exhibits in the museum, and after a picnic lunch, played the games that were popular with children in the 1940s.

This was a very well planned exercise devised by their teacher, Ms Jenny King. A few weeks prior to the visit, Ms King visited the museum and spent an hour looking at the exhibits and studying the programme that we have for schools. On the day of the visit, Ms King and her staff took complete charge of the children and all the guides had to do was be on hand to answer any questions.

Christmas Dinner 2010

On Monday 6th December we gathered at the Market Harborough Golf Club for the annual Christmas dinner. In spite of fog, snow and ice, only three people failed to arrive, and they would have been travelling from darkest Leicestershire!

As always, Vera did a superb job of organising the event and everyone had a jolly good time. Mick Gray ran the raffle, assisted by wife Mary, so many people went home clutching a prize.



Jenny with one of her pupils (and teachers clip board). No black marks, we hope!



And it's eyes down for the first course.



What's that for Graham?



Who's a lucky boy then?



A well earned break.



Shall I take the chocolates?

Follow That Star

By Harold Watson

This story first appeared in the October 2004 edition of The Dropzone and is reproduced for the benefit of new members.

Harold is a member of the Harrington Aviation Museum Society who lives in Lowestoft and during the war flew with 161 Squadron from RAF Tempsford.

Owing to bad weather during December 1944, the two Special Duty Squadrons, 161 and 138, based at RAF Tempsford were unable to carry out many operations. Because of the advance of the Allied Armies through France and Belgium the SOE operations were now mainly concentrated on Holland, Denmark and Norway, and adverse weather over these three Countries during this month, caused the crews, on many occasions, to be briefed and then stood down from the planned operations. Fog was also causing problems over Tempsford and it was necessary on one or two occasions to use the FIDO facilities at the nearby Pathfinder Unit.

As the month progressed so did the weather deteriorate, and it was not long before rumour began to circulate among the crews that the Station was going to stand down and that Christmas Leave was on the cards. This rumour however was soon scotched and all crews were informed that they would remain on Station in case there was a break in the weather. Plans were therefore being arranged by the crews for parties in the Officers and Sergeants Mess on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

Towards the end of the month the Germans mounted a breakthrough in the Ardennes and were striking for the Belgian Coast. The weather continued to deteriorate with snow now falling over the Ardennes, and air operations were proving difficult over that area. On the evening of the 23rd December, there was a slight break in the weather and 4 aircraft from 138 and 2 from 161 Squadrons were sent on a spoof raid over the German advanced headquarters at the rear of the Ardennes salient. This entailed dropping dummy parachutists in the area to simulate an airborne landing. Very little opposition was met with but the weather over England closed in very rapidly and the aircraft were unable to return to Tempsford, all being diverted to Tangmere.

The morning of the 24th December dawned fine and clear and it was possible to air test all available Stirlings, but the weather did not last and by late morning the fog once more had blanketed the airfield. The arrangements for that night's parties were now put into full swing, then word came in that the bowsers were filling up the aircraft, and this was followed by a call for all crews to report to the Squadron briefing room. It was important that a further spoof raid be made on the German advance headquarters. A break in the weather was forecast for that night and all available crews were to be

operational. Bomber Command aircraft would be carrying out a raid on the Rhur and would be flying at high altitude but the Special Duty aircraft would go in at low level on the German side of the Ardennes Salient. The Tempsford aircraft would plot their own course but it was imperative that they stayed away from the bomber stream. It was expected that there would be heavy German fighter activity in the area.

Our crew was allocated area 2 and Stirling Mark 4 aircraft, MA-Zebra. Take off was in thin fog, which on crossing the North Sea, changed into heavy snow showers. As we approached our target area at low level, Bomber Command could be seen very clearly attacking the Rhur, with the sky being lit by bomb flashes, anti aircraft fire and target indicators. An uneventful run into the target area was made but after releasing the spoof parachutists, the aircraft came under machine gun and light anti aircraft fire. A check was made of the aircraft but no damage could be found.

On leaving the target area the aircraft climbed to 3000 feet and a course was set for Tempsford. A short time later a call was received from the rear gunner, "Skipper, we have a follower. I cannot see what it is and it is out of range, but there is something there". We dropped to 2000 feet and did a 'Dog Leg' but the gunner reported that he was still with us and had followed us down. Heavy snow showers were then being encountered, and it was decided to go down even lower to make an attack from above and astern dangerous. Again the gunner called "He's still with us, but not in range" A radio message was then received from Group that Tempsford was now fogbound and that all Tempsford aircraft were to divert to Lyneham.



Short Stirlings 161 Squadron.

An alteration of course was made for Lyneham and a further 'dog leg' was carried out but still our shadow remained. By this time the English Channel had been nearly crossed and on approaching the coast, it was decided to inform Group that it was thought that a 'bandit' was following us. The wireless operator had just begun

his transmission when a further shout was received from the rear gunner –“ I can see him Skipper. It's definitely twin engine and coming closer – hang on, it's a b..... Lanc!”



A 'lost' Lancaster?

We landed safely on a snow-covered runway at Lyneham followed in by our 'trustworthy shadow'. Later it was revealed that our Lanc was a new crew on their first operation who had become totally lost in the bad weather and had lost all radio contact.

Their Flight Commander had told them that if they got lost they were to follow any aircraft they found. They had seen a light ahead and discussed whether it was a star or a light. After deciding that it was a light from an aircraft they decided to follow it, but were totally perplexed by our actions.

On examination of our aircraft we found that part of the exhaust baffle on our port outer engine had been shot off causing the exhaust to be seen from the rear. A lucky escape for both of us?

Regretfully the festive parties did not take place, as owing to the bad weather the aircraft were grounded at Tangmere and Lyneham until the 28th December. On the night of the 31st December, all crews were engaged on Special Operations over Denmark and Norway.

The mighty Stirlings could carry eighteen 350 lb containers in their massive bomb bays, but after the war they were mostly sold off for scrap at just a few pounds each.

When they first came into service, despite problems with the undercarriage, the Stirlings were well received by their crews, but it soon became obvious that they had many problems.

The main one being vulnerability in the bomber role! Due to the short wingspan in relation to the size of the aircraft generally, with a full load the Stirling had great difficulty in attaining a ceiling of 17,000 feet.

. Cost cutting by the Air Ministry is no new thing as has been mentioned earlier in this publication. But if it wasn't so serious it would be laughable that a combat aircraft had to be made to fit the standard Air Force hanger!

In service with Bomber Command Stirlings flew 14,500 operations, dropping 27,000 tons of bombs, with 582 lost in action and a further 119 written off.

By the end of 1944 the Stirling was mostly employed for cargo carrying and as a glider tug. It is reported that a Stirling could tow two Horsa gliders, or *five* Hotspurs for ferry or training purposes.

The final variant (Mk.V) was designed to carry large payloads. Fitted with a hinged nose and loading ramps for the rear door, they could transport vehicles, field guns and a wide variety of other equipment. They were eventually replaced by the Avro York.

Consolidated B-24 Liberator

The Liberator has fared slightly better than the Stirling. Although it survived in various guises after WWII, there would appear to be very few complete aircraft in existence now.

According to Wikipedia there are only two flying B-24s in the world, a B-24A named *Ole 927* (ex *DIAMOND 'LIL'*) of Commemorative Air Force kept at Addison, Texas and a B-24J named *Witchcraft* at the Collings Foundation in Stow, Massachusetts

There are twelve complete B-24 airframes (six B-24s and six PB4Ys) on static display in the United States and a further five complete B-24 airframes on static displays outside the US.

Located in various parts of the world, there are said to be fifteen partial airframes. These are comprised of twelve B-24s, one British Liberator II and two PB4Ys. There are also eleven wrecked airframes; four B-24s, and seven PB4Ys.

But this is the one we remember the best.



QUIZ ANSWERS

- 1) *How long did the Hundred Years War last?* **116 years**
- 2) *Which country makes Panama hats?* **Ecuador**
- 3) *From which animals do we get cat gut?* **Sheep and Horses**
- 4) *In which month do Russians celebrate the October Revolution?* **November**
- 5) *What is a camelhair brush made of?* **Squirrel fur**
- 6) *The Canary Islands in the Atlantic are named after what animal?* **Dogs**
- 7) *What was King George VI first name?* **Albert**
- 8) *What colour is a purple finch?* **Crimson**
- 9) *Where are Chinese gooseberries from?* **New Zealand**
- 10) *What is the colour of the black box in a commercial aeroplane?* **Orange (of course)!**

What do you mean, you failed?

Me, too...!

(And if you try to tell me you passed, you lie!)

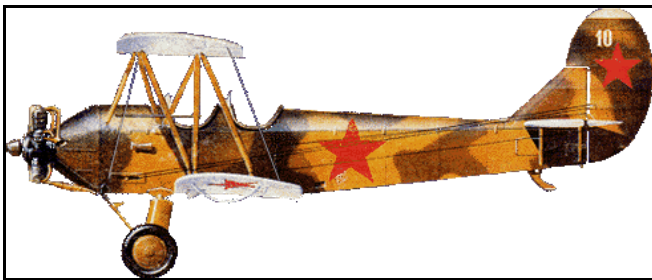
Pass this on to some 'brilliant' friends, so that they may feel useless too!

The Russian Army

In 1942 the Soviet Union formed three regiments of women combat pilots who flew night combat missions of harassment bombing, attacking German rest areas behind the lines.

These missions were so successful that the Germans named these women 'De Nachthexen' The Night Witches.

They flew obsolete Polikarpov Po-2 bi-planes that could only carry 2 bombs weighing less than a ton altogether.



Meet The Ladies



A group of Night Witches from the 588th Night Bomber Regiment returning from a successful raid behind enemy lines. In the centre is the 588th's commander, Major Yevdokia Bershanskaya.

They were advised to commit suicide if they were shot down behind enemy lines, as capture resulted in a very unpleasant death.

The Air Transport Auxiliary

The ladies section of the ATA is not exactly comparable to the ladies section of the Russian Army, but they did a fantastic job, ferrying aircraft.

With no instruction in the use of instruments, no radios and no armament, they found their way around purely by map reading and by following railway lines.

Pauline Gower was the founder of the Woman's Section of the ATA.



In the late 1920s and 30s, Pauline was to be seen regularly at the Sywell Air Pageants.

Here are a few more of these formidable ladies; and dare I say, looking more glamorous than their Russian counterparts.



This picture was taken on the day they were finally given permission to wear trousers for flying, rather than skirts!

HARRINGTON AVIATION MUSEUMS

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Northamptonshire
NN6 9PF

Phone: 01604 686608

Email: cbaggermuseum@aol.com



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



A Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to One and All



This is Stefan, our latest volunteer. Not many of our readers qualify for teenager status, but they could still make themselves useful in the museum.

So, who will be our first volunteer for 2011?

If you are making New Year Resolutions, then why not make one to come and help us at the Carpetbagger Aviation Museum? Let's see you there. Remember, entry and tea are both FREE to members!

(All typographical errors, and any late delivery, are entirely the fault of the publisher.)