



NEWSLETTER

Travels of a National Service Airman

Ian Mason reports:

The speaker was John Dicks who spoke on the travels of a National Service Airman. In 1957, having undergone a six month training period as an airfield fireman, he was sent overseas on a troop ship. He was a young lad who had never been outside the UK and had previously been of the opinion that going overseas was a crossing to the Isle of Wight and that a foreigner was somebody from Newcastle. As the Suez Canal was closed at that time, his ship refueled in Grand Canaria where they were definitely made unwelcome by the Spaniards. Next staging point was Cape Town where he met up with a local who invited him home to lunch then, as the guy was the Mayor's driver, took him around the sights of Cape Town in the official car. The ship docked in Singapore having made a quick stop at Durban.

On disembarkation he was told that there was no requirement for him there so he was to be flown up to Hong Kong. The aircraft was a Valletta and as he had never flown before, he asked if the aircraft was capable of flying on one engine in the unlikely event of the other failing. He was told by the pilot that it was capable of maintaining a flying capacity to the crash landing site. They overnighted at Clarke AFB, Manilla where at breakfast, he was astounded to be offered not the usual one time expired greasy egg but how many would you like and do you want them sunny side up or easy over. So he eventually arrived at Hong Kong and was sent to the RAF section at Kia Tak. During his

period there he saw an increase in air trooping and a decrease in seaborne trooping. He was not only involved with land based aircraft but also the seaplanes, in particular, the Sunderland's where his section were responsible for removing debris and junks from the landing area before the planes arrived. He soon came to realise that as most departures were first thing in the morning, it was always the fire section who were last to be told should the movement have been cancelled the night before.

After a while the civilians took over full control of Kai Tak and John was put on a ship to Changi. He noted that although Changi had initially been built by the British prisoners of war, it was the Japanese prisoners who completed the project. He showed a number of photos of Changi village as it was in 1958 and what it had become today. When it was time to go, John was the last National Service fireman to leave Singapore. He travelled back on the MS Dilwarra which is the same ship that I travelled out to Aden in 1950. The route was via Aden (where there was a photograph where I had gone to School), via the Suez Canal and Gibraltar. The ship docked in Southampton and he was then put on a train to Innsworth where he was demobbed four days later.

All in all John had spent 6 months training, 9 weeks traveling and the rest on overseas postings. He is now President of the Changi Association who have been having biannual meets in Singapore but this year is likely to be the last due to decreasing numbers and the rising cost of travel insurance.



Remember 21st March 2018

**The Berlin Airlift 1948/1949
with Sqn Ldr Garretts**

10.30 a.m. for 11.00 a.m.

**The First World War Pilot J M (Jack) Mason
Part 7**

Ed: Here we continue further extracts from Jack's First World War Logbook, on Active Service. Awarde DSC on 18 Feb 18

JANUARY 1918

27	DH4	109 mins (PI)	Bombing Raid on Antrychi Aerodrome. Target obscured by a thick layer of clouds but all bombs were dropped on it. No results observed & no AA or Huns.
28	DH4	117 mins (PI)	Bombing Raid on Antrychi Aerodrome. All bombs dropped on target. One direct hit on shed in NW corner of the aerodrome. Five Huns but they did not attack. Very little AA fire.
29	DH4	124 mins (PI)	Bombing Raid on Oostecamp Aerodrome. All bombs dropped on target & a direct hit was obtained on the quarters on the NW side of the aerodrome. Very heavy AA fire & five or six Huns who did not attack.
30	DH4	121 mins (PI)	Bombing Raid on Oostecamp Aerodrome. All bombs dropped on target. Two fires caused by direct hits on the sheds on NW corner of the aerodrome. Very little AA fire but about 20 Huns. We had a fight with one & eventually shot him down completely out of control. F.S.L. Williams missing.
31	DH4	127 mins (PI)	Bombing Raid on Engel Aerodrome. All bombs fell on the south side of the aerodrome. Only one Hun seen & very little AA fire.

FEBRUARY 1918

2	DH4	119 mins (PI)	Bombing Raid on Varsenaere Aerodrome. All bombs dropped over target. All fell very close to hangers in the aerodrome but no direct hits on sheds or hangars. No Huns. The worst shelling I have ever had.
3	DH4	114 mins (PI)	Bombing Raid on Hattave Aerodrome. Went all the way to the target & made three circuits but could not induce the gunlayer to drop the bombs. So returned with them all. His excuse was that he had "lost his nerve". Heavy but inaccurate AA fire but no Huns.
4	DH4	71 mins (PI)	Attempted Bombing Raid on Zuidwege Dump. Washed out by the leader (Rupton) without crossing the lines on account of bad weather.
16	DH4	139 mins (PI)	Bombing Raid on Zuidwege Dump. All bombs dropped on target. Several observed to burst in the middle of the dump. No E.A. & very inaccurate AA fire. Edmond's (gunlayer) first trip the other side of the lines.

18	DH4	140 mins (PI)	Local. Testing engine.
18	DH4	130 mins (PI)	Bombing Raid on Varsenaere Aerodrome. All bombs dropped on target. One direct hit on a hangar on the eastern side of the aerodrome. I was attacked by three Huns who shot away one of my landing wires. This pull lodged between my aileron and the main frame, completely jamming the former & I could not use my ailerons at all, but I got home by using my rudder only "wind up" initially. AA fire fair. (Receive DSC for this sortie).
19	DH4	107 mins (PI)	Bombing Raid on Antrychi Aerodrome. All bombs dropped on target. One direct hit on shed on NE corner of the aerodrome. No Huns & very little AA fire.
26	DH4	93 mins (PI)	Bombing Raid on Engel Dump. Returned with engine trouble. The Squadron's 100th successful bombing raid.
MARCH 1918			
6	DH4	131 mins (PI)	Dunkirk to Amiens. Flying machine from Dunkirk to our new aerodrome at Amiens.
6	DH4	59 mins (PI)	Local. Learning the country round about.
7	DH4	127 mins (PI)	Bombing Raid on Mont d' Origny Aerodrome. Our first raid down south. All bombs dropped on target but no direct hits observed. AA fire very poor. E.A. Plentiful but they did not attack.
8	DH4	58 mins (PI)	Bombing Raid on Guise Dump & Railway Station. Returned without crossing the lines with an engine failure .
9	DH4	129 mins (PI)	Bombing Raid on Mont d' Origny Aerodrome. All bombs dropped on target. One direct hit on sheds on S corner of aerodrome. Attacked by numerous E.A. & all machines were badly shot about. I had holes & a wire shot away . AA nil.
15			
10	DH4	177 mins (PI)	Bombing Raid on Elimeout Aerodrome. All bombs dropped on target. No results seen. Very little AA & no Huns. F.S.L. Carter wounded.
11	DH4	110 mins (PI)	Bombing Raid on Elimeout Dump. All bombs dropped on target. Three direct hits in middle of the dump. No Huns & very little archie. Landed at our new aerodrome at Mons.

Chile's first female war pilot, Margot Duhalde, has died at the age of 97.



Ed: *Sometimes we hear of stories, too late to honour the person whilst living. Here is one veteran who did so much for Britain, although born far away.*

Margot Duhalde Sotomayor (12 December 1920 – 5 February 2018) was a Chilean pilot who served with the Air Transport Auxiliary of the Royal Air Force in World War II. She was Chile's first female pilot and first female air traffic controller.

Duhalde learned to fly with the Air Club of Chile in Santiago, gaining her Pilot's Licence in 1938. At the outbreak of World War II, Duhalde volunteered with a French-Chilean group and travelled by ship to Europe with the intention of joining the French Free Forces as a pilot. She arrived in Liverpool, England, in April 1941, and was initially detained in jail in London for five days as a suspected spy. Upon her release, she was informed that the French Free Forces did not accept women pilots, and she was instead assigned domestic work and kitchen chores. She subsequently learned that the Royal Air Force was willing to accept women pilots, and she applied to join the Air Transport Auxiliary of the RAF, an organisation responsible for transporting aircraft.

Although she spoke almost no English, she was trained as a transport pilot to enable her to fly both single and twin-engine aircraft, and both British and American machines. Over the next four years, Duhalde moved more than 900 aircraft, of 70 different types, from English bases to combat zones in France, Belgium and the Netherlands. She rose to become a first officer in the Women's Section of ATA.

"The work was very difficult," she said. "We had to fly in terrible conditions with a minimum of visibility."

"It was very dangerous, and we had no contact with the ground because the Germans were listening."

After the war, in 1945, Duhalde flew warplanes for the French Air Force. She was France's first female combat pilot. She served as a transport pilot for the French, based in Meknes, Morocco. In 1946, the French asked her to complete a tour of South America demonstrating French aircraft; she travelled to Uruguay, Argentina, Brazil and Chile.

She returned to Chile in 1947; however, the national airline LAN did not hire women as pilots at that time. Instead, she took a job as a private pilot for a prominent businessman until 1949. She later opened her own flying school and worked as a flight instructor and as an air traffic controller in the air force. She was Chile's first female air traffic controller, and continued until she was 81 years old. Duhalde died in Santiago at the age of 97.

She spent the war transporting planes into combat zones in continental Europe. Later she became Chile's first female air traffic controller.

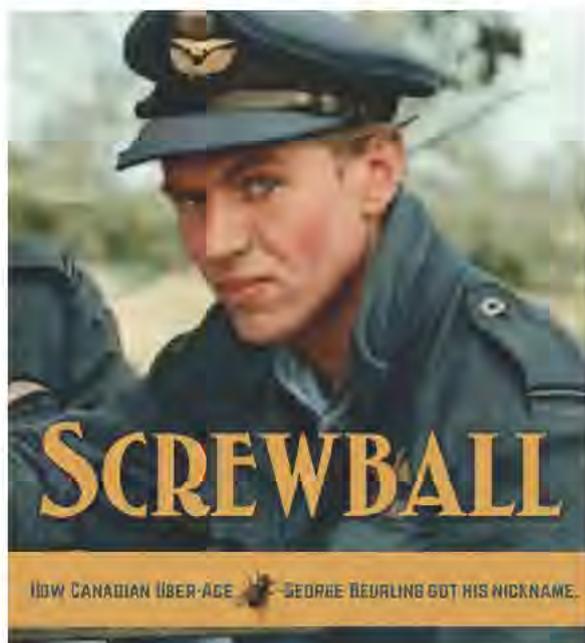
A government statement said: "We are grateful for the huge contribution she made to Chilean aviation and recognise the courage she had to fulfil her life's dream, breaking stereotypes and showing the way to other women."

Last year Mrs Duhalde told a Chilean TV station "the men were convinced they were the only ones who could do things".

"They always looked down on us women, it is only recently that they are beginning to realise we are equal and actually better than them."

In 1946 Duhalde was made a Knight of the Legion of Honour, and in 2007 she was made a Commander of the National Order of the Legion of Honour. In 2009 Duhalde received the Veteran's Badge from the British ambassador in Santiago, Howard Drake, for her work with the British Air Transport Auxiliary during World War II.

Ed: *An Air Traffic Controller retiring at the age of 81 - eat your heart out Tony Brown, you could have gone on for years, as I know you would have liked to!*



By Dave O'Malley (Vintage Wings of Canada)

On the island of Malta in the endless, hot and dusty summer of 1942, fighter pilots from the British Commonwealth fought and died to prevent the Nazis from bombing the Maltese into submission and to break the siege blockade. After the Battle of Britain, there was no greater battle of the Second World War in which air combat and superiority played the central role. Here in the brilliant, searing sky over Malta, reputations were made, lives were forfeited, stresses were multitude and legends were born.

Canadian fighter pilots played a crucial and outsized role in the defense of an island that hovered on the brink of collapse for two and a half years. Of the many great aces that wrote their stories here, many were Canadian and none more storied than Flight Sergeant George Frederick Beurling.

Of all the Canadians who engaged in the grim business of killing German airmen, Beurling is the most accomplished of all. There would be no one better at war's end. Beurling was then, and is today, a figure that inspires conflicting impressions, opinions and feelings—both suspicion and adoration.

In his eyes you can see, no feel, the spirit of the lone wolf, the practiced killer, the gifted predator. Both charismatic and controversial, introspective yet outlandish, he was a man who would not follow the normal arc of history. On Malta Beurling would become the greatest Canadian ace of the war, and the subject of legend, hero worship, bureaucratic manipulation and conspiracy theory.

With his preternatural abilities in the air, his odd and aloof behaviour and his unquestionable successes, Beurling attracted nicknames like flies on a biscuit. Today we commonly call him Buzz Beurling, but back in the day, Allied propagandists took to calling him The Knight of Malta or The Falcon of Malta, but his 246 Royal Air Force squadron mates knew him as Screwball.

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines the word 'screwball' as "a whimsical, eccentric, or crazy person". Considering his sometimes-quirky and insular behaviour, his icy blue eyes, withering glances, and disdain for bureaucratic niceties, one might be forgiven for thinking that the name Screwball was earned as a result of his character. I know I did. But that would be wrong.

Recently I was reading a short interview by columnist and aviation enthusiast Bruce West with another Malta icon, Wing Commander Percy Belgrave Laddie Lucas, CBE, DSO and Bar, and DFC Beurling's 249 Squadron commanding officer during his time on Malta.

Here is the statement of the man under whom Beurling during his Malta battles.

"Beurling came to us in Malta as a flight sergeant," said Lucas. "One of the fellow who had known him in England took me aside shortly after he arrived and told me that Beurling was likely to be rather difficult to handle." "Well, he was, for a short time, until he got into the pattern of our discipline," he said. "From then on he was a superb air fighter. One of my most lasting impressions of Beurling concerns his integrity. He was absolutely honest. He never made a claim for a plane shot down unless he was completely certain of it.

"As you may know, one of his familiar nicknames was 'Screwball.' There have been all kinds of stories told about how he picked up the nickname, but I was there when he got it and I know.

"In Malta," said Lucas, "the flies were simply scandalous. There were millions of them. When you put some food on a plate, they would swarm all over it. Shortly after Beurling arrived, we were sitting there eating our usual thin slices of corned beef. Beurling lifted his plate from the table and placed it on the floor.

"He'd wait there with his foot poised until there were sixty or more flies on his corned beef. Then he'd plant his foot down hard. He seldom got less than about 40 of them. Then he'd sit there looking at them and say 'The screwballs!'

Tales from the Tower**Re Overshoot/Go around**

Ed: Tony Brown writes:

The overshoot article was very topical. There is a story that shortly after "go around" was introduced, a foreign gentleman was told to "go around" on short final at Heathrow. The subsequent orbit was interesting to say the least !!

It must be hundreds of years ago when I read an article in a British Airways safety magazine on that very subject. The following stayed with me forever and I impressed it on my trainees as it applies to pilots and controllers. Here goes:

" a go around should never be seen as a loss of face. It is a professional response to a set of circumstances that have not gone according to plan"

I think that's brilliant.

Now to this month's Tale

When I started to tell Ingrid this story she immediately said "heard it, heard it." Well I wasn't really surprised as it quickly spread through the ATC world. Anyway for those of you who might like to hear it again here goes. It was a quiet Sunday afternoon some years ago. So quiet in those days that you could put your feet up and chat. It now helps if you can imagine a very broad Bolton accent.

A/c. "Hello " (nothing else)

Puzzled looks all round

A/c. "Hello Hello Hello"

ATC. " Station calling what is your call sign ?"

A/c. "Hello. Can you help me please ?"

ATC "Yes but I need your call sign "

A/c. " Hello. I passed my PPL yesterday and I am taking my family for a flight"

ATC "Are you lost?"

A/c. "Hello. No we are returning to Barton airfield "

ATC "That's fine but I really need the call sign"

A/c. "Hello. We have booked out but I can't remember what it was"

ATC. "You must have it written down somewhere"

A/c. "Hello. Yes I did but I left the paperwork in the clubhouse at Derby airport.

ATC. "Ok. Have a good look round the cockpit it's usually written somewhere"

A/c "Hello I've found it "

ATC. "That's great. Read it to me please"

A/c. "Hello GOLF ROMEO ALPHA BRAVO"

ATC " Thank you but there should be five letters"

A/c. "Hello. There's only four"

Interruption from an inbound BA flight. "Radar is that chappie anywhere near me.?"

ATC " No"

BA. "Thank you. Keep it that way"

By now all the controllers are listening to the frequency which is now on speaker.

A/c. "Hello . I have had a good look round and there's only four letters"

At this point one of the controllers who also was also an instructor at Barton had phoned to get the registration and pilot details and then explained everything. Apparently this particular aircraft was difficult to get into and pilots tended to pull on the control column to lever themselves up rather than use the "grip handle" which did not stand out very well. The club had decided to point this out with a clearly painted

"GRAB"



George was born on a farm in Gloucestershire. The main crop was apples, which probably explains his love of Cider as his preferred drink!

He joined the Royal Air Force as an apprentice in 1940 at RAF Cranwell. In 1943 he was selected for pilot training and sent on the Commonwealth scheme to RCAF Medicine Hat. Later he re-trained as a navigator, insisting it was because he was very good at maths!

He married Mary, who was a Sgt WAAF that he met at RAF Habbanya. They were married at the British Embassy in Bagdad.

He flew on Wellingtons and later Hastings in the Middle East, on occasion delivering gold - alas he was unable to claim any for himself.



He reached the rank of Master Navigator and later in his career he became an Air Traffic Controller at bases such as Brize Norton, finishing his RAF career at RAF Macrahanish on the Mull of Kintyre. On returning south as a civilian he got a job at No 1 AIDU preparing navigation and radio logs for The Queen's Flight.

During his service career he joined the Royal Ancient Order of Buffalos (RAOB) and later in civilian life became a Mason. Reaching high posts with a number

of lodges.

He also took up bowls and again did very well, judging by the number of badges on his bowls blazer!

A real gentleman, he was a long serving member of the Chiltern ACA ever since moving to Aylesbury and was a very regular attender at our monthly meetings

Lasers and Air Traffic Control

The Airport Operators Association (AOA) and NATS have welcomed the Government's amendments to the Laser Misuse (Vehicles) Bill that ban the shining of lasers at facilities providing air traffic services. The amendments were tabled by Aviation Minister Baroness Sugg and published on Wednesday 21 February 2018.

NATS Safety Director, Dr David Harrison said:

"Providing a safe environment for our air traffic controllers at airports to perform their duties is a priority for NATS.

"Working with the AOA, NATS is pleased to have persuaded the Government to make it an offence to shine lasers at air traffic control towers. Air traffic controllers are a vital component of aviation safety and they deserve to be protected by the law to carry out their duties, so this is an important step forward. "We are very pleased the Government has accepted our arguments and look forward to working with them on the implementation."

Chief Executive of the AOA, Karen Dee said:

"In the past five years, we have seen 13 incidents of lasers being shone at air traffic control towers at airports across the UK. While small in number, these incidents could have serious consequences.

"Incidents have resulted in, for example, a controller taking an unplanned break and having their duties temporarily taken over by a colleague. With rostering and breaks carefully planned to ensure that controllers are fully attentive and alert, someone having to cover an extra unexpected shift is disruptive and could have safety implications, though thankfully this was not the case in this instance.

"These amendments show that working with NATS, the AOA has persuaded the Government to recognise the vitally important role air traffic controllers play in ensuring aviation safety."

Programme 2018

Events at 1030 for 1100 at Greenacres unless (*)

2018

21 Mar The Berlin Airlift 1948/1949-Sqn Ldr Garretts
 18 Apr 40 years bomb disposal and still 10 fingers -
 Ian Jones
 16 May Buffet Lunch

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Welfare

David is still away for a few weeks but will be in touch on his return, once he can get used to seeing without all the corks round his Australian hat!

David

Membership Secretary

This is really a plea to all members to make a real effort to attend our meetings. The February meeting had just 10 of us. If this sort of numbers continue we will have to re consider having speakers, which really would be a great shame. It is up to you chaps!

Ian

Secretary/Editor

I repeat last month's plea. We are still looking for a new Chairman, so please consider your involvement with your Association and do not leave it to your current committee. If interested please get in touch

Graham

Presentation to Geoff Hulett

As those of you that attended the AGM will know, we presented Geoff with a Decanter and Glasses. At the February meeting Geoff was presented with the engraved Decanter Base with the words "From your friends at Chiltern ACA".

Thanks to Dominic Miller for the photo