

Newsletter No. 4 – March 2016

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Reflection

Today, March 6, is the UK Mothering Sunday (Mothers' Day) held on the fourth Sunday of Lent (three weeks before Easter Sunday). Originally people returned to the church where they were baptized (their 'Mother Church') resulting in family gatherings. Young people who were working as servants in large houses, were given a holiday on Mothering Sunday to visit their own mother and often took a gift of food or hand-me-down clothing from their employers. This has led to the modern meaning of Mothers' Day when people still visit and take gifts to their mothers.

Traditionally, people did not eat sweet, rich foods during Lent. On Mothering Sunday, this was relaxed and a Simnel cake prepared. This is a light fruitcake topped with marzipan. Marzipan is also baked into the middle. Legend suggests it was named after Lambert Simnel, who worked in Henry VII's kitchens around 1500.

Mother's Day in the United States is annually held on the second Sunday of May. With more secular origins, it focuses on a celebration of motherhood and it is a time to appreciate mothers and mother figures. Many people give gifts, cards, flowers, candy, a meal in a restaurant or other treats to their mother and mother figures, including grandmothers, great-grandmothers, stepmothers, and foster mothers.

The 5BFTS cadets, mostly away from home for the first time, would therefore have had two occasions when their distance from home, and their mothers, would have had extra poignancy. In Flypaper¹, May 7, 1942 (for the US Mothers' Day) Jack Hobler, a Flypaper Associate Editor, put some of those feelings into verse, but also gave a new perspective to the meaning of Mothers' Day. The full poem is at the end of the newsletter, but the last three lines read:

¹ Embry Riddle Flypaper "Stick to it" - the official newsletter of Embry-Riddle 1940 through 1957 During WW2, the newsletter was published weekly. It included information about Riddle Aeronautical Institute at Carlstrom Field and Dorr Field, Arcadia, and the Riddle-McKay Aero College, Riddle Field, Clewiston.

Five 5BFTS Facts

Opened in July 1941 at Carlstrom Field

Moved to Riddle Field September 25, 1941

26 Courses

1434 graduates (1325 RAF and 109 USAAF)

Closed in September 1945



*“Defending other mothers, sons, he's fighting now in air.
God's blessing on you, Mother dear, for giving such a son;
We can't repay the debt we owe to you when this war's won”.*

So true!

**‘Their efforts to preserve the freedom of the world were not in vain
and will never be forgotten’**

Jenny Harding

Useful websites:

Clewiston Museum: <http://www.clewistonmuseum.org>

Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University Archives: <http://www.alumni.erau.edu/archives>

#5 British Flying Training School: <http://www.5bfts.org.uk>

‘George Hogarth – Clewiston and Beyond’. Memoires of George Hogarth, 5BFTS Course 3
<http://commons.erau.edu/clewiston-beyond/1/>

US Contact: Harold Kosola – hkairplane@aol.com

Memorial Day, May 30, 2016, is a very special 5BFTS day

So, please come and join us at the British Plot, Oak Ridge Cemetery, Arcadia, for the 60th Annual British Memorial Service to remember the 23 cadets who died in training and never left Florida, AND at the same time, thank the Rotary Club of Arcadia, and the many others who contribute, for organising the service for 60 years.



The service starts at 10am

The Service is organised, as it has been for the past 60 years, by the Arcadia Rotary Club

Mailing address: PO Box 1492, Arcadia, FL 34265-1492

Telephone for information at 863-444-0664

Email: BritishMemorialService@gmail.com

EVERYBODY IS WELCOME

And afterwards: Please join us for lunch at Mary Margaret's Tea and Biscuit, 10 South Polk Avenue, Arcadia, Florida 34266.

Mary Margaret's Tea and Biscuit takes us back to the grandeur of the Victorian era. As well as lovely soups, salads and sandwiches, desserts include traditional British favourites, which 5BFTS cadets would instantly recognise, such as White Chocolate Bread Pudding (although the strict rationing of sweets and sugar in war time Britain meant that chocolate in bread pudding was a luxury not enjoyed by people back home), Sticky Toffee Pudding, Chocolate Log with Raspberry filling and of course, Scones with clotted cream and Strawberry Jam. Their tea selection includes Earl Grey and English Breakfast, and having been there, I know that they make tea British style with warm pots and boiling water poured directly on the tea!



If you would like to join us for lunch, please let me know as soon as possible, preferably by email (jen@jennyharding.co.uk). Mary Margaret's has a relatively small dining room and places may be limited and allocated on a 'first come first served' basis.

For more information about Mary Margaret's Tea and Biscuits, and details of their menu, please visit: <http://marymargaretsteaandbiscuit.com>

In Memoriam

Dr Ray Kerry (Co 5) died August 9, 2015



Ray Kerry Course 5 Cadet 1942

Dr Raphael (Ray) James Kerry died on August 9th at home aged 94. His wife, Margaret predeceased him. Ray had three sons, John, Bob and Peter, and grandchildren. His family requested family flowers only at his funeral, but asked for donations, if wished, made payable to the Bomber Command Memorial, indicating his lifelong interest in the RAF.

Ray graduated from 5BFTS on June 17, 1942. After WW2, Ray became a Consultant Psychiatrist and worked at the Northern General Hospital, Sheffield. His first recorded link with the 5BFTS Association was in 1984 when the membership list shows him living in Ranmore, a suburb of Sheffield. He remained as a member of 5BFTS Association until it was disbanded in 2013, and was still living in Ranmore when he died.

Stanley M Haswell (Co 20) Died December 13, 2006



Stanley Haswell Course 20 Cadet

Stanley Matton Haswell died suddenly and peacefully at his home in Ontario on Wednesday, December 13, 2006 in his 85th year. He was the husband of Ingrid and father of Linda.

Stan joined AVRO Canada in October 1952, after a distinguished career with the RAF. Flying as many as five test flights a day, he flew virtually every AVRO CF-100 Jet Fighter that came off the line between 1952-1959. He also flew the legendary Avro Jetliner, North America's first Jet Airliner, and was at the controls of the Jetliner in December 1952 during rocket testing of the CF-100. In addition to thousands of flights in CF-100s, he often piloted the DC3/Dakota-Avro Canada's company plane. In December 1957, he ferried an MK.5 CF-100 to Pt. Magu, California and was involved in critical fire control testing. He was one of the few to co-pilot the Avrocar flying saucer and was a member of the Avro Hall of Fame.

Stan's first recorded link with the 5BFTS Association was in 1997 when the membership list shows him living in Ontario. He remained associated with 5BFTS until he died and was included in the final membership Directory of 2005.

Eric J Mowser (Co 17) Died November 13, 2013



Eric Mowser Course 17 Cadet

Eric James Mowser, a retired BWIA (BWIA West Indies Airways Limited) Captain, died on November 13, 2013 in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad. His widow, Elizabeth, four sons and five grandchildren, survived him. Eric Mowser was born in England and joined the RAF during WW2. After Clewiston, he was reportedly the youngest Flight Instructor in the prestigious Central School of the RAF.

At the end of WW2, there were no jobs for pilots in England and he went to Canada. After just one Canadian winter, he went south to Florida and the family whom he knew during his time in Clewiston. There, Eric obtained his commercial pilots' licence and found a job with British Caribbean Airways in Jamaica, but within a short period of time the airline was bought out by BWIA/BOAC, which brought him to Trinidad on November 11, 1949. He stayed in Trinidad for the rest of his life, flying DC3's, Viscounts, B-727's, B-707's and finally wide-bodied L-1011s', rising through the ranks as Training Captain, Fleet Manager and finally Head of Flight Operations. He also served on the Board of the Airline Pilots Association.

On November 11, 1999, at age 75, while still doing what he loved most, working in the aviation industry, Captain Eric James Mowser suffered his first stroke and sadly, his aviation career, which he really loved, ended.

Like Stan, Eric's first recorded link with the 5BFTS Association was in 1997 when the membership list shows him living in Trinidad. He remained associated with 5BFTS until he died and was included in the final membership Directory of 2005.

We remember with thanks these three pilots (and other pilots known to us) who have handed in their logbooks, and to friends known to us who have done so much to keep their memories alive.

WE ARE HERE BECAUSE THEY WERE THERE!



5BFTS Grove - UK National Memorial Arboretum (NMA)

In the Christmas Newsletter, I was able to report the good news that the Arboretum has agreed to replace the old 5BFTS information board at the entrance to the 5BFTS grove of three North American birch trees and two English Birch trees (5 for Number 5) with one of their standard dedication plaques at their expense. This is now underway and the proposed artwork is with the designers. I should be able to include a photograph of the new plaque in the next newsletter. I have expressed our thanks to NMA on behalf of 5BFTS.

New Exhibition for 2016 - Women of RAF Defford – Heroines of Croome at War

At first glance, this sounds like a very interesting exhibition – but what connection does it have with 5BFTS? Read on...

RAF Defford, the secret airfield with buildings in the grounds of Croome Park, Worcestershire, was the centre where British airborne radar, based on the inventions of the scientists at Malvern, was tested, developed and proven by flying trials, during WW2 and afterwards. The outcome was a series of remarkable achievements, which played a crucial role in victory for the Allies in the War, and later, the defence of the West in the Cold War.

By 1945, there were well over 2500 people at RAF Defford and of these, up to 600 were women. The women included WAAFs, Wrens (who as expert radar operators flew as aircrew in Fleet Air Arm aircraft based at Defford), distinguished women scientists who flew on radar trials, technicians and other women civilians in essential roles. After the War what these women had achieved tended to be forgotten.

Croome Park now belongs to the National Trust who has meticulously restored WW2 RAF buildings remaining in the Park. One, which housed the Decontamination Annex of the WW2 Station Sick Quarters, is now the RAF Defford Museum, which opened to the public in September 2014. This new Exhibition is in the Museum and is the story of the Women who worked at RAF Defford. It consists of eight large display boards and a costume case displaying the uniforms of Wren Petty Officer Wendy Hogarth and her husband Flt Lt George Hogarth. George and Wendy are my parents. They met at Defford in February 1944 and married later that year.

And the link with 5BFTS? My father, George, who died in 2011, was a 5BFTS Course 3 graduate, and was in Clewiston from October 1941 to March 1942. At Clewiston, George discovered a talent for night flying and became an operational night fighter with 25 Squadron. He was then posted to Defford where he flew planes fitted with experimental radar equipment; he met my mother (a Wren Radio/Radar mechanic) and the rest, as they say, is history! The photograph below shows my mother looking at 'herself' in the costume case as 'she' stands alongside 'George'.



For more details about the RAF Defford Museum and Croome Court (National Trust), please visit <https://deffordairfieldheritagegroup.wordpress.com> or <http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/croome>



#5 British Flying Training School Clewiston, Florida. Website Update



Enquiries.

We have had quite a few enquiries via the website so we do know that people are reading it and finding useful information. One particular enquiry was from someone who is documenting fuselage markings. We were able to send him some photos of the aircraft at Riddle Field.

Editor's note: This enquiry was from John D. Voss, Los Gatos, California. John is interested in photos of anything to do with WWII military aviation. If you want to get in touch, his email address is vossj@comcast.net and his website is <http://www.fuselagecodes.com/id63.html>

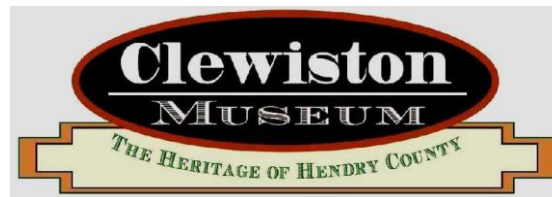
Data Error

The cadets from Course 22 Flights C&D were missing from the database of cadets. This error was spotted by a visitor to the website and has now been rectified. There are now 1989 names on the database.

Photo Gallery

We are putting together a lot of photographs of life around Clewiston and Riddle Field and these will be published as a gallery on the website. If anyone has any photos that they would like to be included, would they please let us know.

The 5BFTS website can be found at www.5bfts.org.uk



Clewiston Museum Update

Jeff Barwick writes: "Things at the Clewiston are going well. The City of Clewiston updated the Garden of Remembrance area in Civic Center Park with an expanded area, an impressive archway and cleaned and remounted the two 5 BFTS plaques. The plaques are now mounted on lower structures, which allows for younger citizens to easily read the information. The City plans to add additional plaques to honor Clewiston natives who served their nation in times of war. Floral arrangements are being planted and eventually the entire area will be a lush garden of color and peaceful solitude."



Garden of Remembrance March 10, 2016
© Jeff Barwick



Dedicating the Plaques October 27, 1975
© 5BFTS Archives. Photographer unknown



Plinth with larger 5BFTS plaque



Floral planter with the No 5BFTS plaques in the background

The Museum continues to receive a steady flow of request for assistance from surviving family members of 5 BFTS cadets. And we still have occasional visitors with 5 BFTS connections. The Museum website www.clewistonmuseum.com has display information and links to connect to photographs and other archives on the subject of 5 BFTS.

Local dentists have purchased the Dixie Crystal Theater, where many Cadets have fond memories of viewing movies while training in Clewiston. They are leaving the existing exterior structure in place while going about remodeling the interior for a modern dental office. We are lobbying for popcorn after, but not during, dental procedures!

Jenny Harding writes: *“On behalf of 5BFTS, please can I, once again, thank Clewiston Museum, Jeff Barwick and Curator, Butch Wilson, for looking after the 5BFTS archives and doing such a wonderful job keeping 5BFTS alive for the visitors to the museum. I should also like to thank the City of Clewiston for the wonderful job they have done in updating the Garden of Remembrance.”*

Stop Press: Dina Moore (5BFTS Association Family Associate) has recently donated her husband’s flying jacket to the museum. Lawrence Moore (Course 17) was wearing this jacket when he crashed in his Lancaster in 1946. The jacket has been bagged up, unused, since then. The museum is hoping to get it on display for all to see. Read the full story next time.

Restoring Carlstrom Army Air Field

The September Newsletter had some information about Carlstrom Field in Arcadia, Florida, and the connection between Carlstrom Field and Riddle Field in Clewiston. I also reported the good news that The American Ideals Foundation, Inc. was taking on the responsibility of preserving Carlstrom Field and the remaining buildings on the site. I promised that there would be more photos in this edition, so...see next page.

A reminder that Frank Baltra (archivist) and the American Ideals Foundation are still appealing for support and encouragement as they restore Carlstrom Field. Frank is particularly asking for help in three ways:

1. Copies of any contemporaneous photographs (of Carlstrom and Clewiston) showing the base, the cadets, the aircraft, etc; in fact, anything connected with Carlstrom Field and Riddle Field;
2. Artifacts that people might wish to donate for the new museum;
3. Letters of endorsement from organisations in Florida, the wider US and the UK.

Can you help? If you can, please contact Frank at email: mvpaffc@gmail.com



A 1941 aerial view looking north at Carlstrom Field showing a row of Stearman trainers in front of the hangars (www.airfields-freeman.com)



A 1998 aerial view looking southwest at the buildings of Carlstrom Field © Lou Thole



Summer 1941: British airmen enjoying orange juice and donuts at an American club, Arcadia (©IWM)



Carlstrom Field - RAF cadets take a break beside Stearman PT-17 primary trainers (©IWM)

Air Transport Command (ATC)

In September, I wrote about Fred T Renshaw, an American cadet on Course 12. Upon completion of his training, (April 1943) Fred was commissioned as an RAF Pilot Officer and as a 2nd Lieutenant in the US Army Air Corp and assigned to the Air Transport Command. He served in the ATC, in the US, North Africa and Europe until discharged in 1946.

I promised I would write more about the ATC as most, if not all, of the Americans who attended 5BFTS were assigned to the ATC. ATC was an US Air Force unit created during WW2 as the strategic airlift component of the USAAF. It had two main missions, the first being the delivery of supplies and equipment between the United States and the overseas combat theaters and the second was the ferrying of aircraft from the manufacturing plants in the United States to where they were needed for training or for operational use in combat. ATC also operated a worldwide air transportation system for military personnel. It was inactivated on 1 June 1948 and was the precursor to what is now the Air Mobility Command.



ATC C-47 Skytrain flying over the Egyptian Pyramids January 1, 1944

Tuck Renshaw, Fred's son, writes:

"When leaving Clewiston most American graduates were sent to Alpena, Michigan, for further training and reassignment. Prior to crossing the Atlantic, many were also marshaled at Homestead Air Force Base, Florida; hence references to Alpena and Homestead in the following "A.T.C. Alma Mater". Seems the 'boys' wanted to get to the 'action'."

THE A.T.C. (Air Transport Command) ALMA MATER (WW2 ditty about the A.T.C.)

Take down your service flag mother
Your son'll never go overseas
Keep your blue star in the window
Your boy's in the A.T.C.

Keep your blue star in the window
There's never a cause for alarm
For as long as he stays in Alpena
He's safe as back home on the farm

As long as he's flying a Douglas
A safer job couldn't be found
Because when he's in the Air Transport
He'll spend all his time on the ground

He'll stay in Alpena and Homestead
Sleeping and sipping the brew
In fact just initialing a roster
Is the only job he will ever do

The Transport Command is efficient
Eager and right on the ball
When the Washington office is questioned
It's "sorry, we know nothing at all"

Now take our Alpena for instance,
A dark spot on anyone's shield,
Three hundred pilots here sittin'—
And not a damn ship on the field

And when this long war once is over
And peace comes again to this land
When they ask where I did my fightin'
I'll say "In the Transport Command"

Once again, thank you Tuck – it is so interesting to know what cadets did after Clewiston.



Hey, Do You Read Me? By Donald (Don) W Mangold

Don was a mechanic at 5BFTS from 1943 to 1944. In 2006, he published a book called 'Hey, Do You Read Me?'. One section relates to his time at Riddle Field and Don has kindly given permission for me to reproduce this section so that we can all enjoy his words.

Part 1 - BFTS No. 5, Clewiston, Florida 1941-45

During World War II in 1941, the British Royal Air Force (RAF) realized that attempting to train pilots in Great Britain was very difficult due to German interference. The solution was to move pilot training away from Britain.

Since the colonies were already supplying all their spare pilots to the RAF, the British government approached the United States to ask if civilian flight schools in the U.S. could take over the primary and advanced flight training of English [British] cadets.

The United States agreed to undertake this task, and approached several existing civilian flight schools with the proposition. Several British Flight Training Schools (BFTS) were established across the southern half of the U.S. This story is about BFTS No. 5 which was located between Clewiston and Moorehaven in Florida. This area is adjacent to Lake Okeechobee in southern Florida. The field was named Riddle Field, after the man who financed it, John Paul Riddle. It was located close to the northern end of the Everglades.

I went to Riddle Field in 1943 at age 18, after six months training as an aircraft mechanic at the Williamsport Technical Institute. That might not sound like much training, but at this time they were making flight instructors out of pilots with 35 hours – *we were at war!* My first job was on the inspection line where we ran 100-hour inspections on Stearman PT-17 and North American AT-6 aircraft. Later, I was moved to the sheet metal shop, and after that I went to the flight line as a flight line mechanic.

My brother Neil Mangold was a Primary Flight Instructor when I arrived; he later was moved to Advanced, on AT-6s, teaching groups of five cadets each class. Each class would have sixty cadets and we would have three classes there at one time. The cadets, it turned out, were from all of the British colonies from South Africa to Australia, and later American Aviation Cadets were included.

While I was there several British cadets were killed in crashes, but no Americans were lost. One night during night flying, one instructor lost all five of his cadets. I think now, that the reason the American cadets didn't suffer losses was that they had been given some training in J-3 Cubs before coming to BFTS No. 5.

Since we were all civilians, the U.S. draft boards located in every town in the country were quick to fill their quotas out of our ranks, rather than the young kids just becoming eighteen years old at home. I can understand that since we were no longer local. But the British didn't like to continue losing people involved in their flight-training program. They approached the U.S. government to help with the problem. The solution that the U.S. came up with was to put all of us in the U.S. Army Air Corps reserve, and send us directly back to Riddle Field.

There were sixty pilots and sixty mechanics sent up to Keystone Field north of Jacksonville, Florida to be enlisted. We flew up in AT-6s and I got to ride with my brother. On the way up we were in a flight of three airplanes.

Our flight leader tried to take us under another flight that we had overtaken. We were in a Line Astern formation, and Neil and I were in the Tail End Charlie slot; this put us on the bottom. As we started under the other flight, their flight leader began to force us down until we were flying in a river channel, down below the cypress trees. I was looking over and sometimes up at limbs two feet in diameter, Neil took this for a few seconds and then broke out and climbed.

We flew on up to Keystone Field alone to enlist. After the physicals and swearing in, Neil and I flew back to Riddle Field alone. We had enough of that flight leader's leading. When we got down to the prairie that used to exist in central Florida, I asked Neil if we could do some of the low flying that I had heard him talk about. He dropped down until we were at the altitude they taught cadets to fly at. We were at street level; we flew by ranch cattle at less than ten feet. You couldn't drop the gear at this height. He had to pull up to clear the barbed wire fences! They taught this type of low flying so that pilots would be below German radar in Africa.

In 1944 I joined the Regular U.S. Army Air Corp and was stationed at Craig Field, Alabama, where I met my wife, Joannah. In 1945 Neil joined Eastern Airlines, and he flew for them until he retired at sixty years of age with 35,000 hours.

Riddle Field no longer exists; the hangars are gone, along with the cadet barracks, the classrooms, and the dispensary (where I received my first sulfa tablet). At this time, the

Airglades Airport is located where BFTS No. 5 once was. I plan to visit it sometime.

More from Don Mangold in the next newsletters...

Riddle Field Remembered

In May 1943, Lois Heflin was 16 years old. She had just graduated from high school and was about to start her first job as a secretary at Riddle –McKay Aero College. Many years later, she told The Clewiston News all about this time which was reported on February 11, 1981.

Today, Lois lives in E. Ventura Avenue, Clewiston and, in October 2015, wrote to me with a copy of this newspaper report and other information. It makes fascinating reading, which Lois has given permission to share.

Lois recalled that she starting working in Personnel in the administration building on the airfield, and then became secretary to EJ Smith, general manager, and James Durden, assistant manager of the Field. Some of her duties in the administration office included working the Western Telegraph at the Field, operating the small switchboard and other secretarial duties. She earned \$75 a month – *'not bad for someone fresh out of high school'*. The aero college employed a lot of local people from Moore Haven and Clewiston. There were buses that went to and from Moore Haven and Clewiston for those who worked at the field and for the cadets to ride into town.

The community felt for the boys [cadets] because that is what they were - mostly young men between 18 and 21 years of age. The boys would go to town for church and families would invite them home to dinner. It was a real treat for the cadets to have a home cooked meal.

They were used to strict war rationing and drank hot tea. Lois remembered that whenever a tea bag came out of a cup, the cadets would exclaim, *"you can use that again"*.

Ice cream and milk shakes were favourites of the cadets who would ride the bus into town and visit the drug stores and movies for entertainment. They dated local girls, but this didn't please the local fellows, *"They used to call them those 'darn limeys'"*. For a while, Lois dated a cadet from Edinburgh, Scotland. They would eat supper at the canteen, then take a bus to Clewiston and see a movie for 25 cents. *"There was a meeting place, a club for cadets in Clewiston. I think it used to be in the old Pioneer Building where the engineering building of USSC is now"*, she said. Mrs WC Owen ran the club for the cadets and it used to have a jukebox and everything.

The cadets had tennis courts and a swimming pool on the base and would gather in the canteen. On their last day, when they got their Wings, which were cloth Wings sewn on the uniforms, the canteen would be packed with that graduating class. They would all pile in the canteen and gorge themselves on ice cream and milk shakes, because they would soon be back in Britain and *"wouldn't ever get to do that again"*.

In 1981, Lois said that she still got letters every now and then from one of the cadets and corresponded regularly with one of the cadet's wives in England. She recalled a visit in 1973 and the plaque laying ceremony in Civic Center Park (see Clewiston Museum update). She remembered seeing one of the old trainer planes flying over the ceremony piloted by the son of a local man who worked at the airfield during the war.

When the airfield closed in 1945, Lois got a job at USSC and married Lewis Blount in 1950. In 1981, Lewis was still employed by USSC and worked as a crane operator. They had three sons; the eldest of whom is a pilot - maybe due to the influence of Riddle Field??

Editor's note: In 1967, my father, George Hogarth, corresponded with Lois when he was working with Lamar Philpot on a book about 5BFTS. In a letter to him, Lois wrote about two cadets she dated. The first was WA 'Bill' Lindsay who may be the Edinburgh Cadet Lois mentioned to the Clewiston News reporter. Like George, Bill was from Edinburgh University and was a member of Course 3. Sadly, Bill died from a brain tumor just after returning to

Edinburgh University at the end of WW2. Lois also mentions a Course 2 cadet – W R 'Ron' Painter. Ron also sadly died young following a car crash in India where he was stationed.



L-R Tempe Ange and John Garlick (Course 23), Lois Heflin and Clifford Mitchell (Course 23). Tempe also worked at Riddle Field, and she and John were married in 1946. John died around 1977.

Photographs from family collections

Since the last newsletter was published, I have heard from Brian Hastings, son of William J Hastings (Course 24) and Nick Jordan, son of John Jordan (Course 13).

William J Hastings (Course 24 – January to August 1945)

Brian, who was born in Rotherham and left the UK in 1970 (living in Brisbane, Australia since 1980), wrote to me in October 2015. Sadly, William, who came from Rotherham, died in the UK on April 25, 1995, but Brian has been able to share some information about his time in Clewiston. The first selection is below. If anyone reading this knows anything about the other Course 24 cadets in these photographs, Brian would love to hear from them.

Editor's note: Gordon Newsham, 5BFTS Archivist, was also on Course 24. He recalls that after VE Day on May 8, 1945, they were expecting to be sent to help in the fight against Japan when they graduated. When Japan suddenly surrendered, these plans changed and Gordon was then sent to help with reconstruction work in Africa. No flying involved!

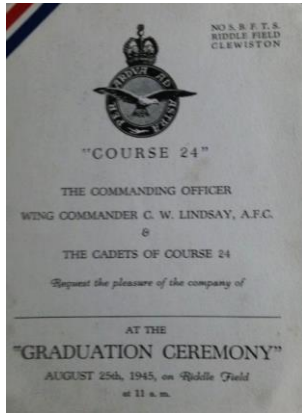
Proud Course 24 cadets wearing their Wings on Graduation Day, August 25, 1945



William is standing second from the left



William is second from the left



John Jordan (Course 13 – January-July 1943)

Early in January 2016, I heard from Nick Jordan, whose father, John Jordan was a member of Course 13 (January – July 1943). Nick wrote that he had his father's RAF log books from his service career and a scrapbook of photos John took whilst in Florida. Nick has given permission for me to share these in the newsletter. So below are the first four...

Three of the photos show the names of the cadets and, for the first photo, the name of the flying instructor. We know a little about Eric Denham. Eric lived in Oxford and seems to be the only person shown in these photos to become a member of the 5BFTS Association. He is listed in the last 5BFTS Association Directory in 2005 and as far as is known, was still alive in 2012. If anyone reading this knows anything about any of the other Course 13 cadets, Nick would love to hear from them. Also, if anyone has any idea who the three cadets are standing on the front of the locomotive in the fourth picture, Nick would love to hear from them too.



Cyril Oettinger, E A Richards, S Stanton and John Jordan with Flight Instructor, Dave C Fair in the centre. (In 1967, Dave Fair lived in Peru, Indiana)



L to R: Don Gaastra, John Jordan and Johnnie Muraille



John Jordan and Eric Denham



In transit from Moncton to Clewiston Jan 1943.

Do these photographs jog any memories? Please let us know. You can get in touch with Brian and/or Nick via me (jen@jennyharding.co.uk). There will be more Clewiston memories from Brian and Nick in the next newsletter.

Postscript:

Flight Lieutenant Roy Mather DFC AFC (Course 12)

Rob Mather, Roy's son, and Peter Allam, whose father trained at No 1 BFTS (Terrell, Texas), have been in touch, both seeking information about Roy. Peter's interest was because his father, Bert, later flew Lancasters on 227 Squadron and while researching the squadron, found that Roy flew with the same Squadron. We were able to put Roy and Peter in touch with each other and also with Tuck Renshaw, whose father, Fred, was also on Course 12.

Mother's Day 1942 (Flypaper, May 7, 1942)

She held him with tender care, her heart so filled with love;
She had no thought someday this babe would roar through the skies above.
Nor did she know those little teeth that pushed through gums in pain
Would someday grit as jaws set hard o'er far, war-torn terrain.
Who'd think that downy, childish head – in helmet now encased –
Would house a mind intent to see oppression from Earth chased?
Those tiny, pudgy hands and feet – so soft, pressed to her lips –
Have grown in strength to firmly grasp controls of combat ships.

Oh how she watched, protected, fed and guided him those years!
Now on his own, her love for him but magnifies her fears.
Her man-child, grown, sweeps back and forth 'mid chatt'ring guns so bold,
And bullets whining 'round his head her heart pierce hundred-fold.
But other mothers' sons are there – in peril, same as he;
Their hearts are also torn and stabbed for boys they'll never see.
This Mother's Day brings grief to them; there's naught that they can do
To once more guide, protect, assist their sons; they're helpless to.

So turn your fear to courage, you who've given birth to men;
Their job's protecting YOU right now as you've protected them.
They're likewise sad – they'd like to be at home with you and Dad;
Have courage, then, and lift a prayer for him: your stalwart lad.
He misses you; he's grateful for that tender loving care;
Defending other mothers, sons, he's fighting now in air.
God's blessing on you, Mother dear, for giving such a son;
We can't repay the debt we owe to you when this war's won.

Jack Hobler

The next newsletter will be published in September 2016. Please can you let me have any articles, information, etc, by the end of August. The more you tell me, the more interesting the newsletter will be – and I would especially like to hear if anyone worked with, or knows, any of the people mentioned in this newsletter. Anecdotes, stories and pictures would be great. So - over to you!

“Until we meet again, “good-bye to y'all”.