

Newsletter No. 10 – March 2018

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Reflection

As I write this, I am looking out of the window onto a very snowy scene – for the third time since New Year, we struggle to drive down our road. It's rather cold for March. Which makes me think of Clewiston where the temperature is hitting 28°C or 82°F just now – very pleasantly warm!

Hugo Trotter (Co 11) was in Clewiston in March 1943. Hugo has allowed me to see his photograph album containing photographs taken between September 1942 and May 1943 (between arriving in Canada as a cadet and leaving Canada as a pilot). Wonderful memories for those who were there, and such an interesting archive for those who were not and only know Riddle Field when the buildings were empty and deteriorating, or from historical pictures or as the empty field it is today. The first tranche of pictures is in this newsletter. Thank you Hugo.

Three other people who are significant in the life of the 5BFTS Association were also on Course 11. One is John Jorgenson who died in January 2016 but whose death is included in 'In Memoriam' this time. The other two are John Potter (died 2011) and Fen Charlesworth (died 2006). Please read 'In Memoriam' to find out why.

I promised that this edition would focus on the Instructors – without whom the cadets would not have become the excellent pilots that they were. The civilian instructors could all fly when they arrived at Riddle Field, but many were not much older than the cadets they taught, and some had to be taught to teach! They represented nearly half the States in America and produced 1,434 graduate pilots. They didn't win the DFCs, they weren't mentioned in Dispatches, but without them, the cadets would not have been the pilots that they became and in the words of my father, George (Co 3) "*I feel it would be difficult to have had any better experience that we had in Florida*". Thank you to them all.

Jenifer Harding

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

Five 5BFTS Facts

Opened
July 1941
Closed
September
1945

Riddle Field
was 2,500
acres in size

Cost \$2
million to
build

1434
graduates
(1325 RAF
and 109
USAAF)

23 RAF
cadets died
in training



Useful websites:

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

Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University Archives: www.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/>

Frederick J Brittain (Instructor): Flying was my Life 1918 – 2002 - www.frederickjbrittain.com

Roy Mather DFC (Co 12): "A Pilot's Story – A Chesterfield Hero" www.vickersvalient.com

US Contact: Harold Kosola – hkairplane@aol.com

Annual British Memorial Service 2017

The 'Thistle' is the newsletter of the Sarasota Caledonian Club. Their End of Summer 2017 edition records the Club representation at the British Memorial Service on May 29. For those of us who had relatives at Riddle Field, it is very humbling to know that so many still remember the cadets by honouring the 23 cadets who remain in Florida and didn't make it home. Thank you to the Caledonian Club and St Andrew Society for providing a piper each year and to representatives of all the other organisations who come to honour these cadets.

Pictures from the British Plot – May 29, 2017 - in Thistle End of Summer 2017



Annual British Memorial Service 2018

The next **Annual British Memorial Service** will be held on **May 28, 2018**, at the British Plot, Oak Ridge Cemetery, Arcadia, when we gather to remember the 23 RAF cadets who "*Crossed the river to rest in the shade of the trees*". They died during training and never left Florida to return to their homeland. John Paul Riddle's ashes are buried alongside the cadets.

Every annual service is special and we owe an ongoing debt of gratitude to the Rotary Club of Arcadia for the organisation of the service and to the many others who contribute. I should like to thank Judy Fitzpatrick for all her hard work in organising the service.

And afterwards: If you feel in need of refreshment, can I recommend lunch at **Mary Margaret's Tea and Biscuit**, 10 South Polk Avenue, Arcadia, Florida 34266. Reservations are a good idea – phone 863-494-0615 or email nbruden@msn.com. For more information about Mary Margaret's Tea and Biscuits, and details of their menu, please visit:

<http://marymargaretsteaandbiscuit.com>

	<p>The service starts at 10am</p> <p>The Service is organised, as it has been for the past 61 years, by Arcadia Rotary Club Mailing address: PO Box 1492, Arcadia, FL 34265-1492 Telephone for information at 863-444-0664 Email: BritishMemorialService@gmail.com</p> <p>EVERYBODY IS WELCOME</p>
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In Memoriam

Thomas Masano (Co 16) died January 7, 2016 aged 98



*Tom Masano Course 16
July 1943*



*Listening Out – January
28, 1944*



Tom Masano in centre of group – Egypt 1944

Thomas (Tom) Masano of Wyomissing Park, Reading, PA, was one of 109 US cadets who graduated from Clewiston earning both AAF and RAF Wings. Tom was a member of Course 16 from July 30, 1943 to February 5, 1944. Born on August 28, 1917, Tom had learnt to fly before America entered WW2, and so was accepted into 5BFTS for further training alongside RAF cadets. After graduation, he served as a captain in the USAAF. Like many of his USAAF colleagues who graduated from 5BFTS, he joined Air Transport Command and flew C-46s, C-47s and C-54s in the China-Burma-India Theatre, ferrying supplies into China. The operation over the Himalayas was known as 'The Burma Airlift' or 'Flying the Hump' for which Tom was awarded the DFC in 1945. In August 2015, Embry-Riddle informed Tom that he was the oldest living US graduate of the Flight School.

After WW2, Tom and his brother Bruce started the Tom Masano Auto Group in 1947, which is now run by his son. In 1964, Tom acquired Galen Hall Corp, Wernersville, which includes Galen Hall Woods. He loved riding his golf cart through the wooded trails.

Tom married Louise R Mastrolia on September 5, 1953. Louise died on May 20, 2015. Tom and Louise had four children, Thomas, Andrea, Louise and John and four grandchildren.

For more information: <https://obitree.com/obituary/us/pennsylvania/west-reading/edward-j-kuhn-funeral-home-inc/thomas-masano/2333803/>



Louise and Tom Masano - 1964



Thomas Masano 1971



Tom aged 96 at Galen Hall

John Jorgensen (Co 11) died January 2016



Course 11 – September 1942



Course 11 Listening Out – April 2, 1943

John was a member of Course 11 and was at Clewiston from September 25, 1942 to April 8, 1943. This was to be a significant Course for the post-war life of 5BFTS - as also on Course 11 were John Potter, Hugo Trotter and Fen Charlesworth, all of whom would play very active roles in the future 5BFTS Association. And the catalyst wasJohn Jorgensen.

In July 2005, John Potter (then President of 5BFTS Association) wrote about how the Association started. When John and his family were enjoying a holiday in Sussex, they came across an old church in the heart of nowhere, and as they walked in, John accidentally bumped into someone with a very familiar, but unidentifiable, face. The 'face' was clearly puzzled, but neither John nor the 'face' said anything to each other. After the 'face' drove away with his family, John's daughter asked if she could put their names in the Visitors' Book – and the mystery was solved – the 'face' was Johnny Jorgensen – also from Course 11.

John and Johnny met for lunch, and in between many "do you remember", they decided to gather Course 11 together for a reunion. So, on April 9, 1964, the acorn was planted from which the mighty oak tree called 5BFTS Association spread. Twenty-one years after Graduation, 21 ex-cadets dined at the Royal Aero Club in London. Shortly after this, John heard about Tony Linfield (Co 18) who was seeking help to form an association of former 5BFTS cadets. The first Committee – chairman John, secretary Tony, treasurer Fen and honorary solicitor Hugo worked on 'Project Association'. And the rest, as they say, is history!

Charles (Chuck) A. Neyhart (USAAF Co 17) died November 12, 2017

Chuck Neyhart lived in the Blue Skies Air Force Village in San Antonio Texas and died in November 2017 aged 94. Like Tom Masano (see above), Chuck was one of the 109 US cadets who graduated from Clewiston earning both AAF and RAF Wings. A member of Course 17, Chuck was at Clewiston from October 4, 1943 to April 15, 1944. In "A Living History" (Lift Spring 2017 –ERAU Alumni Magazine), Chuck is quoted as saying "*The RAF training was more stringent than American training, including night flying, solo flying and*

navigation". After Clewiston, Chuck served as a WW2 ferry pilot and later in the Korean War and in Vietnam. He retired from the US Air Force as a Major in 1968.

Chuck's wife of 53 years Shirley, who survives him, comes from the UK (Sutton in Surrey). She was in London during the London Blitz and was bombed out three times. Shirley was a nurse and midwife.



Course 17 Cadet October 1943



Chuck Neyhart wearing RAF and USAAF Wings



©Bob Owen, San Antonio Express 2014

Robert (Bob) Leslie Cecil Lasham DFC and Bar (Co 4) died December 10, 2017



Course 4 Cadet November 1941



2005: Bob and Joe Cope at RAF Coningsby



January 2016: L-R Eric Glennon Bob Lasham and Norman Iredale

Bob Lasham was a member of Course 4 and was at Riddle Field from November 1, 1941 to May 2, 1942. Bob wrote to me in January 2017 with some memories of his time at Clewiston and brief details of what he did after WW2. I included these in Newsletter 7 (March 2017) but have repeated some for the benefit of new readers.

Bob remembered that Course 4 was the first course to travel from Canada to Clewiston in uniform (Courses 1 – 3 were issued with grey 'Burton' suits to meet the strict US laws on neutrality). Bob said, *"the earlier course cadets [in Clewiston] were very surprised to see us entering the Mess for breakfast after travelling from Jacksonville wearing Air Force Blue"*.

Bob was posted to 97 Squadron Bomber Command. He was awarded a DFC on September 15, 1944, and a Bar to his DFC on February 16, 1945. He joined the 97 Squadron Association and was an Honorary Life Vice President at his death. In 2005, he was reunited with his rear gunner Joe Cope when a stained glass window was dedicated to the 97 (Straits Settlements) Squadron in the church at RAF Coningsby (see picture above).

In June 2014 (70 years since D-Day) French president Francois Hollande pledged to honour British veterans who served in France, and the French government has been awarding the Legion d'honneur to surviving veterans of the Normandy landings and other 1944 campaigns to liberate France. On January 12, 2016, Bob was one of three D-Day heroes who received

the medal from the French Ambassador to the UK, Sylvie Bermann, at Tatton Park in Cheshire. The other two veterans were Eric Glennon (Naval Petty Officer who landed on Juno beach) and Norman Iredale (Able Seaman on ship escorting troops and supplies).

On June 6, 1944, Bob was a Flight Lieutenant serving with 97 Squadron Bomber Command. As pilot and captain of a Lancaster he took part in the bombing of a coastal battery at St-Pierre-Du-Mont and a German supply depot at the town of Argentan. He flew a further 12 sorties against German targets in France before the liberation of Paris.

Bob attended the presentation with his son Michael. He said, *"We [the three recipients of the medal] talked about our experiences of D-Day, and got a bit emotional at times when we talked about the losses that occurred. I feel highly honoured to receive the medal, and it is nice to know our actions were appreciated."* See picture above.

When WW2 ended, several RAF pilots, including Bob, were seconded to the BOAC No. 1 line. After a couple of trips to Cairo, Bob was at RAF Northolt operating European routes and waiting for release, when he and a number of others were headhunted by BEA. Bob was released from the RAF on August 18, 1946, signed a BEA contract that same afternoon and started his command (as captain) the following Monday! Operating out of Northolt, Bob's likened the early days of BEA as being back on the squadron as there were so many "bomber boys" around. In the spring of 1947, Bob became the pilot for one of three crews flying Dakotas and the De Havilland Dragon Rapide, *"with a radio officer and up to seven passengers depending on their combined weight"* mostly between Guernsey, Jersey and Alderney. As Bob says, "There can't be many of us left who flew into Croydon, and into the old grass airfield that became Gatwick which to us was long-haul on the Rapide".

Bob returned to the mainland in 1958 and retired in 1973 after flying the Vickers Viscount and Hawker Siddeley Trident; however, through the 'Old Boys Network', Bob joined Air Bridge Carriers in 1979 and flew for another two years, finally hanging up his Wings in 1981. Duncan Wilson (Course 3) Peter Cowell (Course 5) and John Pickard (Course 4) also flew for BEA. Bob remarked that it was *"A wonderful way to earn a living"*.

Bob finished his letter to me as follows:

"I must stop rambling but not before saying what wonderful and generous hosts the Americans were. They really went out of their way to look after us".

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

WE ARE HERE BECAUSE THEY WERE THERE!

Notes from the 'Old World'	
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The RAF at 100

Aviation in warfare evolved rapidly during the First World War. What started solely for reconnaissance, quickly adapted into new roles. Fighter aircraft were developed to shoot down enemy reconnaissance aircraft and others were adapted to drop bombs on the enemy.

In 1917, the South African General Jan Smuts conducted a review of the British Air Services, a report that would become known as the Smuts Report. Smuts recommended that air should be treated as separate from the Royal Navy and the Army, and a new force should be

created that would be solely responsible for conducting warfare in the air. Following the report, Parliament debated and passed the Air Force (Constitution) Act 1917, which was given Royal Assent by King George V on November 29, 1917.

On April 1, 1918, the Royal Naval Air Service and the Royal Flying Corps were merged to create the RAF as a separate Service, independent of the British Army and Royal Navy – the first time any country had an entirely separate and independent air force. The new Service had its own ministry under a secretary of state for air. The RAF was the most powerful air force in the world with more than 290,000 personnel and nearly 23,000 aircraft. It fought effectively from April 1 over the Western Front in support of ground forces.



On April 1, 2018, the RAF, the world's first independent air force will be celebrating its 100th birthday.

The centenary itself will be marked by special events, activities and other initiatives at local, regional and national levels running from April to the end of November 2018.

The centrepiece of RAF100 will take place on 10 July, with a centenary service in Westminster Abbey, followed by a parade in The Mall and spectacular flypast over Buckingham Palace.

The first celebration - in Florida!

The 23 British military personnel from the Royal Navy, British Army and Royal Air Force who are currently serving at MacDill Air Force Base have already marked RAF100 by visiting Oak Ridge Cemetery on March 14, 2018. They laid a wreath and paid respects to the 23 cadets who lost their lives whilst in flying training in Florida. Details to follow in September.



The 5BFTS section on the American Air Museum Internet Archive continues to expand thanks to Anne Hughes, a volunteer researcher at Imperial War Museum, Duxford. There are now 30 biographies of 5BFTS people (cadets, instructors and John Paul Riddle himself) on the website.

Thank you Anne for all your hard work in developing the 5BFTS Archive.

To read about the 30 5BFTS people on the American Air Museum Internet Archive, please visit <http://www.americanairmuseum.com> and search on 5BFTS and/or Riddle Field.

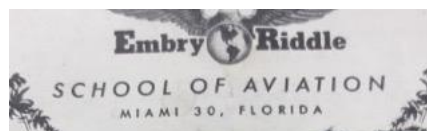
Duxford Battle of Britain Air Show – September 22 and 23, 2018

The Duxford Battle of Britain Air Show is an official partner of RAF100. Duxford was an important station defending Britain from aerial attack in 1940 and in September, if you go to Duxford, you will hear the roar of the Rolls-Royce Merlin engines in Spitfires and Hurricanes, see a Home Front themed village and generally will have a great British day out. In addition to the famous historic aircraft, Duxford will also present its modern capabilities with contemporary aircraft in service today. For more details, please visit <https://www.iwm.org.uk/events/duxford-battle-of-britain-air-show-2018>

If you haven't been to Duxford yet, I strongly recommend that you visit if you are in Cambridgeshire – but allow a full day, as there is so much to see there! Visit iwm.org.uk for more information.

The Instructors

If they hadn't been there – would we have been here?



The first of a series about the instructors.

©David Brannan (Peter Brannan Co 25)

Civilian or Military Instructors – which was best?

Before WW2, about 300 pilots a year were graduating from the US Army Air Corp (which became the US Army Air Force – USAAF) pilot training programme, but in 1939, some thought that many more would be needed – and the idea of civilian instructors was born. This “outlandish” idea came from General H. H. (Hap) Arnold himself, Chief of the USAAF. Many were horrified - how could a bunch of civilian “crop dusters” be expected to instill USAAF tradition in the carefully selected students chosen for pilot training. The very thought of civilian instructors made hidebound USAAF “lifers” shudder in their Sam Browne belts and double their rum-and-cola highball intake (a popular drink in that era) at the various officer clubs. Career USAAF officers sounded like a needle on a broken record: “It won’t work. It won’t work”. They thought that cadet pilots could only be successful if their training was undertaken by USAAF pilots who themselves had been trained by USAAF pilots.

But work it did – and it was especially successful in the BFTS programme where the discipline was that of the RAF, but the cadets were taught to be pilots by civilian instructors. These instructors hailed from different states and came with their own distinct personalities, but they shared one aim – to bring “their students” all the way through to the Wings Parade.

As well as training pilots, Riddle Field also had an instructor school and at any given time at Riddle there were twenty to thirty people in the flight instructor school.

Riddle Instructor Fact 1

A snapshot of the Riddle Field instructors showed they represented at least 21 States and DC as well as Florida: Connecticut (Amoss); Florida (Ahern); New York (Bennett, Brittain, Carlson and Graves); Rhode Island (Bishop); Michigan (Bridger); D.C. (Cockrill); Illinois (Davis); Indiana (Fair); Massachusetts (Flynn); Vermont (Garcia); Virginia (Hawkins); Alabama (Hayes); Georgia (Heffner); California (Hunziker and Smith); Pennsylvania (Moore); Mississippi (Morrison); New Jersey (Piermattei); Iowa (two Richardsons); Arkansas (Sanders); Tennessee (Veltri); Ohio (Krell, Mougey and Walsh); and South Carolina (Witt).

Riddle Instructor Fact 2

In January 1943, there were 95 Flight Personnel and with Link and Ground School Instructors, well over 100 people were involved in teaching the cadets how to be pilots!

A number of promotions and changes in the Flight Personnel were made late 1942 and early 1943 and on January 16, 1943, the General Manager’s office released an up to date list of 95 names, which was published in Fly Paper, January 29, 1943.

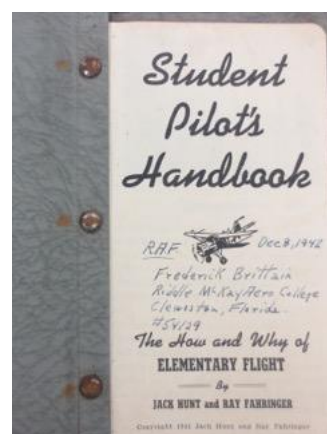
- Director of Flying - Hunziker
- Squadron Commanders – Cockrill, Miller, Smith, Johnson, Cousins
- Flight Commanders – Lehman, Davis, Woodward, Ellis, Schneider, Brink, Perry, Middleton, Raciner, King and Mason
- Assistant Flight Commanders – Reahard, Westmoreland, Langhorne, Bing, Day, McCravey, Walker, Place and Garcia with Acting Assistant Flight Commanders – Leftwich and Mangold (this is Neil Mangold, the brother of Don Mangold whose memories have been included in earlier newsletters).
- Advanced Instructors – 41 named including Fritz Sebek and Bill Fisher (who part owned an Aeronca C3 airplane with Fred Brittain – see below)
- Primary Instructors – 26 named including Fred Brittain and Harold Curtis (who was the fourth part owner of the Aeronca C3)

FREDERICK J BRITTAIN FLYING WAS MY LIFE 1918 – 2002

Last year, I met up with Vicki Brittain at Clewiston Museum. Vicki's father was Frederick J Brittain, an instructor at Riddle Field from December 1942 to December 1945. It was so interesting talking with Vicki and seeing the photos she had brought with her. Since we met, Vicki has developed a website dedicated to her father.

Fred was born on July 17, 1918 in Brooklyn, New York. Until he was 12 years old, he built model airplanes using rubber bands, bamboo paper and spruce sticks. But then, his Uncle Charlie took him for a short flight in a real airplane – and his love of flying was born.

In September 1937 (aged 19), he flew solo for the first time. On July 5, 1941 he gained his private pilot's certificate and in December 1942, came to Riddle Field as an instructor. He taught elementary and advanced flying skills to RAF and USAAF cadets there on Stearman PT17s and Harvard AT6s (known to Americans as the Texan or North American AT6).



His only trouble is, that he likes to fly.

Frederick J Brittain – Taken at Riddle McKay Aero College February 1943

Fred's copy of the Student Pilot's Handbook

Fred Brittain's Riddle Field Timeline

Date	Activity
Dec 1942	Arrived at Riddle Field. Flew a PT17 for the first time on December 3. During December, Fred undertook refresher training.
Jan 1943	Finished refresher training and started primary instruction. First cadet instructed was J Wilkinson (Co 12) for a night flight on January 6. First group of cadets was from Co 12 – J Jowett, SW Coles, R Mather, LM Emmett and RB Smith (the only USAAF cadet in the group). On January 20, Fred started a second group of cadets from Co 13 – JFC Cowan, FM Robertson, E Thorpe and USAAF cadet, GW Morse.
Jun19 1943	Fred gained his Commercial Certificate
Oct 17 1943	Final check flight with W/C Greaves to instruct in a AT6 – Fred "Passed OK". First pupils on October 19 for Advanced Training – JP Sunley, AN Osmond and E Bradshaw. CL Norman was also part of this group from Co 16.



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The boys with me after just completing a Formation Flight. Bradshaw the quiet fellow, the worlds worst formation pilot. Sure can land a plane though. Osmond the nervous guy with sporting ideas. Me? Haggas a regular boy that can not be scared. Norman a real pilot with a keen mind.

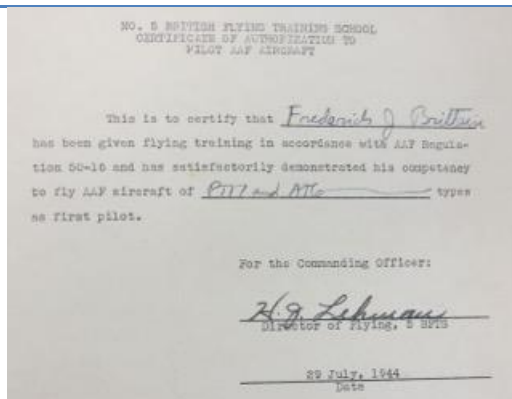
Jan 44 Class 16

Oct 24 1943 Bought a quarter share in an Aeronca C3 (number WC 13003) with fellow instructors, Fritz Sebek, Bill Fisher and Harold Curtis. "First hop in New Super Ship" taken on October 30 which lasted for 15 minutes. The following day, Fred flew the "Super Ship" again, this time for 1 hour 45 minutes.



December 1943

July 29 1944



Certificate signed by H J Lehman, now Director of Flying at 5BFTS, to show Fred is competent to fly as a first pilot on a PT17 and AT6

Jun 2 1945 Appointed Assistant Flight Commander - Primary

Jun22 1945 Record of instructing EJ Brennan (Co 25) on AT6 but no record of Peter Brannan who started with Co 25 but transferred to Co 26 because of illness. See Peter Brannan 'In Memoriam' and report on meeting David Brannan – September 2017

Jun30 1945 Example of a local solo flight in an AT6 - Flew in formation with F Sebek



June 30-45
Clewiston, FL.
You can really see the beauty of flying in this shot. Sebek came out good. Altitude is about 4500'. The clouds are early morning cumulus. Time is 0935.

Aug25 1945 Fred wrote in his Log Book: "Last Day of Primary flying at Riddle Field". Last cadet named in Log Book for PT17 instruction was LA Alder (Co 26) on August 16.

Sept 7 1945 Fred wrote in his Log Book:
"Last day of Flying at Riddle Field. Training ceased at 1200 Hours – Forever"
Last cadet named in Log Book for AT6 instruction was J MacIntosh (Co 25) on September 6; he was one of a group of Co 25 cadets instructed by Fred in those final Riddle Field days. The others were ER Sambridge, RJ Payne, N Roberts, LF Holmes and WJ Hutton.

Sept 13 1945 Reference letter from R.V. Walker, Operations & Engineering Officer Riddle Field:
" Mr Brittain has never been involved in an aircraft accident at Riddle Field. He has flown more hours in Riddle Field aircraft than any other pilot at Riddle Field"

There will be more about Fred in the next newsletter, but for more in the meantime, please visit: Frederick J Brittain Flying was my Life 1918 – 2002 - www.frederickjbrittain.com

Riddle Instructor Round-Up

- **Alfred William (Pappy) Archibald** - In May 2017, Bill Archibald wanted to know if we knew anything about his father. Known as Pappy and in his 30s, he probably seemed very old to the cadets. Bill remembers very little – he was aged one when they arrived and just four when they left! He does remember seeing lots of airplanes though! Pappy was definitely instructing at Clewiston in January 1943 – he was included in the list of primary instructors published January 16, 1943.
- **Bob Lasham** (see 'In Memoriam') told us his Primary instructor was Mr EE (Tom) Carpenter (who instructed Bob and three other cadets), his Basic instructor was Mr Frank Derigibus and his Advanced instructor was Mr Charlie Miller. Bob commented that all four of Tom Carpenter's cadets got their Wings – *"he must have been good!"*

More about the Instructors in September 2018.



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



It is a great pleasure to receive requests via the website from people asking about relatives. Recently, we have heard from two people asking about their uncles and several asking about their fathers. It is lovely to receive photos and hear the stories behind the pictures.



This is one of the photos we received recently.

Denis Alan Page was a member of Course 6. He graduated in August 1942, but sadly he was killed on January 21, 1944. His niece wrote to us to try and find out some more information about his time in Florida, which has resulted in a very interesting correspondence. There will be more about Denis in the next newsletter.

Denis Alan Page, Flying Officer 1942
©Judy Barradell-Smith

Any photos that are passed to us will, with the owner's permission, be uploaded onto the 5BFTS website and if relevant, to the American Air Museum Archive at Duxford so that we can all share them. The 5BFTS website can be found at www.5bfts.org.uk

The Hugo Trotter Photographic Archive

Last October, I heard from Hugo Trotter who told me about his photo album which contained photographs of Course 11 from the time they arrived in Canada to the time they left to sail back to Britain. He asked me if I was interested in seeing it – for me, this is a 'no-brainer' question as I am interested in all things connected with Riddle Field and the more, the merrier! So Hugo sent me the album to look at and what follows is a first selection of photographs for us all to share and enjoy.

Hugo was at Riddle Field from September 25, 1942 to April 8, 1943. He and his fellow cadets arrived in Canada in September 1942 and travelled south from Moncton in New Brunswick, Canada, to Clewiston via Boston and New York. While in Moncton, the cadets took a trip to Shediac (Lobster Capital of the World). Shediac is about 14 miles from Moncton on the strait between New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island.

The cadets were billeted in Clewiston in groups of four. Hugo's roommates were Pete Varley, Puff Train and George Watt. Hugo tells me that he met Pete at Glasgow on an RAF

University Short Course in September 1941 and that he, Pete and Puff were on the same RAF Induction Course at Regents Park in April 1942. He can't remember first meeting George, but the four were probably friends by the time they arrived in Moncton!



Moncton September 1942



Shediac September 1942



*The Boys in Boston
L-R: Pete, Puff and Hugo*



*On top of the RCA in New York.
Empire State in background!*



*Florida at last!
Postcard bought by Hugo 1942*



*Made it to the Camp!
Riddle Field Control Tower*

The Camp in 1942

Today, the diamond perimeter road, a few internal camp roads and bridges over the canal surrounding the camp, and the odd concrete base are still there but nothing else remains.



Just in case there was any doubt!



*Riddle Field from the air. The road on the bottom
RHS leads to the main road (Route 27)*



Camp from the Control Tower. The road out to Route 27 is in the distance



Administration Block – first building seen when entering the camp from Route 27



Ground School



Mess Hall



Swimming Pool and Mess Hall 1942



*Swimming Pool as it was in 1973
Ian (Jock) Blue (Co 3) is poised to dive!*



Swimming Pool and Mess Hall 1942



Swimming Pool in 1989

Hugo and his roommates at Clewiston



Hugo and Pete outside their billet



Pete relaxing in front of their billet



L-R: Pete, George, Hugo and Puff

Hugo remarks that, “we all shared the same room at Clewiston which meant that none of us at the end of the Course were Officer Material!”

In the end, Puff, Hugo and Pete were all commissioned as officers and Hugo won the DFC. After WW2, Puff became a doctor and lived in Essex. He died between 2001 and 2005. Pete became a test pilot with the Gloster Aircraft Company in 1955 and then with Armstrong Whitworth. He died in 1989. Hugo became a solicitor. George’s career in the RAF and afterwards is unknown.

More photos in the next newsletter including Clewiston ‘then and now’ - and even some showing aircraft!



Clewiston Update

The big clear up in Clewiston after Hurricane Irma is now complete. Debris and fallen trees have been removed from public areas, although individuals are still making repairs and counting the cost. A few trees were lost from Civic Park (where the 5BFTS Memorial is located) but they have recently been replaced with three new flowering trees.

The Museum website www.clewistonmuseum.com has display information and links, which connect to photographs and other archives on the subject of 5 BFTS.

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.*

Lois Heflin Blount - Riddle Field Remembered

A reminder for new readers – Lois worked at Riddle Field during WW2 and lives in Clewiston. I heard from Lois in October 2017. She told me that she still walks about half a mile every morning – not bad for 91! She evacuated during Irma but fortunately, her home suffered no major damage, just a few trees down.

Lois's son is called Richard. Richard's daughter Brittany just had a baby boy – Lois' fifth great grandchild in that family. Richard's son-in-law is an engineer on the South Central Florida Railroad running from Clewiston to Sebring and beyond. Many of the cadets would have known that railroad route well as they travelled into and away from Clewiston.



Lois Heflin 1944

In March 1943, **Keith Martin** from London arrived in Clewiston to start pilot training on Course 14. In May 1943, Lois started working at Riddle Field. She and Keith became friends and often shared a milk shake in the canteen or rode the Riddle Field bus to see a movie in Clewiston. After WW2 they lost touch, but in September 1993, they met again at a 5BFTS reunion in Clewiston proving (as reported in Clewiston news, May 11, 1994) that friendship, like fine wine, increases in value with the decades.



Keith Martin by the swimming pool 1993

Thank you Lois – more information planned for future newsletters

Good news about Carlstrom

In October 2017, I heard from Robert Moffa who gave me the very good news that the American Ideals Foundation had at last acquired the Carlstrom site in Arcadia and is now preparing to restore the Carlstrom Army Air Field and Base. The development will include a large museum and a national/international job-training centre. Even better, about 15 years ago, the Governor of the State of Florida, Governor Chiles, designated the property as an Historical Site. Today, it is designated as an International Historical Site.

I heard from Frank Baltra (Military Historian of the American Ideals Foundation) in December who told me that there had already been a service in the church on the base at which Robert Moffa played the piano for the choir, and that everybody is working very hard on the project.

Carlstrom Field was of course another Embry-Riddle Flight School, used from July 1941 onwards for Arnold Scheme RAF cadet training; however, 5BFTS Courses 1 and 2 had to start their training here because Riddle Field wasn't ready for them. Arnold Scheme cadets undertook their 10 weeks primary training at one base following USAAF discipline and then moved on to another base for basic and advanced training. BFTS cadets did all their training at one base under RAF discipline and with civilian instructors.

Frank has sent me some pictures of the Flight Room at Carlstrom as it is now compared with some drawings of what it was like when Arnold Scheme RAF cadets in Class 42 (A, B C, D and so on) were there.



Then.....



Now.....

We look forward to pictures of an updated 'now' to show the changes that are being made.

Thank you to everyone who has shared memories. I'm sorry if there hasn't been room in this edition for everything I have been sent, but please keep it coming – your interest is keeping the memories alive!

Coming soon! Dina Moore (Dina's husband was L O Moore Co 17) has sent me a lot of information about various Reunions they attended. We have also been hearing more about Cyril Oettinger (Co 13) and June this year is the 70th Anniversary of the start of the Berlin Airlift in which Roy Mather DFC (Co 12) was involved (www.vickersvalient.com) – see future newsletters for more details.

Does anything in this newsletter jog any memories? Please let me know and keep sending pictures and information especially if you know anything about anyone or anything mentioned. You can get in touch with anyone contributing to this newsletter via me (jen@jennyharding.co.uk).

The next newsletter will be published in September 2018. Please can you let me have any articles, information, etc, by the end of August 2018. 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 and

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