

Newsletter No. 11 – September 2018

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Reflection

“The Sky’s the Limit” – the theme for the 2018 Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo at Edinburgh Castle celebrated RAF100. The show included the history of flight; from birds through balloons to piston-powered flight, jets, rockets and space flight. We were there on one of the five nights when RAF Lossiemouth provided a Typhoon flypast. It was a very special event in a very special year commemorating achievement, courage and sacrifice.

I felt very proud to have known many of the 5BFTS RAF cadets. And knowing how they felt about the generosity of the Americans they met, the evening was made more powerful as the United States Air Force Honor Guard Drill Team defied gravity with precision and skill during their silent programme of intricate marching with weapon manoeuvres, precise tosses, complex exchanges and a walk through the gauntlet of spinning weapons. And the weapon they hurl and toss around is no lightweight, but an 11-pound M-1 Garand rifle (in service use from 1936-1959)



This edition has many stories about the cadets. All are inspiring – they sure were and still are an amazing bunch of guys! And so were their instructors who made them the pilots that they became. As we head towards RAF200, the motto ‘Per Ardua ad Astra’ – Through Adversity to the Stars - is still as relevant today as it was 100 years ago.

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

Jenifer Harding

Five 5BFTS Facts

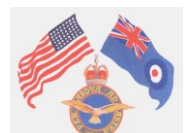
Opened July 1941
Closed September 1945

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.vickersvaliant.com

Annual British Memorial Service May 28, 2018



Once again, a wonderful and very moving day! Sub Tropical Storm Alberto was predicted to cause havoc in Florida and it was extremely wet in Clewiston during the Memorial Day weekend; however, although the storm peaked in intensity on May 28 and storm surges were reported on the Panhandle Gulf Coast, Memorial Day morning in Arcadia was dry and bright.

As always it was very humbling to see how many still remember 5BFTS by honouring the 23 cadets who remain in Florida and didn't make it home. Thank you also to all those who spoke during the service, placed a poppy and Union flag by each headstone and to the organisations who laid a wreath. Once again, it was a great pleasure to hear Ross Allen of the Jacobite Pipe and Drum Band of Sarasota play the bagpipes.



The British Memorial Day Service 2018 in pictures

Alan Cesar who took some of the pictures below represented Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. Thank you Alan for allowing me to use your pictures in the newsletter.



Welcome: Judy Wertz-Strickland, Arcadia Mayor



Singing: Terry Stewart, Arcadia City Administrator



Address: Brigadier General Bradley Swanson, MacDill AFB



Special thanks to Judy Kirkpatrick for a superb and very moving service.

Judy Kirkpatrick, Vicki Brittain (father: instructor Fred Brittain), Bradley Swanson, Susan Sweet Phillips (father: Charlie Sweet USAAF cadet Co 18) →



After the service several of us (including Vicki and Susan) took lunch at Mary Margaret's Tea and Biscuit. As expected, the food was delicious. A bit of sad news - Dennis and Bruce who have run Mary Margaret's for many years told us they were retiring; however, the good news is that Helen Cooke has bought the business and we were introduced to her mother, Maureen, who will be helping her. Maureen and Helen are British although they have been in America for some years and we look forward to seeing them next year after the service.

Meantime, thank you Bruce and Dennis for your lovely sandwiches and deserts, and for the great service you provided each Memorial Day. It has been a pleasure to know you.

Annual British Memorial Service 2019

The next **Annual British Memorial Service** will be held on **May 27, 2019**, 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 and especially Judy Kirkpatrick for the organisation of the service.



The service starts at 10am

The Service is organised, as it has been for the past 62 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

EVERYBODY IS WELCOME

And afterwards: **Mary Margaret's Tea and Biscuit**, 10 South Polk Avenue, Arcadia, Florida 34266. Reservations— phone 863-494-0615. <http://marymargaretsteaandbiscuit.com>

In Memoriam

Rodney Diran Scrase DFC (Co 3) died February 25, 2018 aged 96



Cadet R Scrase 1942



In the cockpit of a Stearman 1942



With Wings June 1942 (aged 21)

Courageous fighter pilot who won the DFC after 200 combat sorties in Africa and Italy and later ran the London Tourist Board (Times, June 1, 2018)

Rodney Scrase was born in South Croydon in April 1921. When WW2 broke out, he was at the London School of Economics. After evacuation to Cambridge, he joined the Cambridge University Air Squadron and volunteered for the RAF in May 1941. Three months later, he was called up and was soon bound for Halifax in Canada. He arrived in Clewiston in early October. The 50 cadets on Course 3 were all students from the University Air Squadrons of Edinburgh, Oxford and Cambridge Universities. As the Air Squadrons had taught the students the rudiments of flying, they were able to go straight to America for pilot training.

Rodney remembered the day after "Pearl Harbour". He went away for the weekend without identity papers [and in civilian clothes]; however, on his return, armed guards surrounded him and RAF personnel had to vouch for him! Rodney graduated on March 12, 1942. On his return to Britain, he was posted to a training unit in Scotland where he flew a Spitfire for the first time; his *"love affair with the Spitfire could truly be said to have begun"*.

With 72 Squadron, more than a year of combat in North Africa and Italy culminated in February 1944 escorting bombers over Monte Cassino. During 1943-44, he shot down four aircraft, damaged three and won the Distinguished Flying Cross. The citation reads: *"His aggressiveness, outstanding leadership and keenness to engage the enemy has resulted in many successful combats . . . his enthusiasm and devotion to duty were an example to the whole squadron"*. After operational service, Rodney went to Egypt as an instructor before joining No 1 Squadron escorting Allied bombers over northwest Europe.

After WW2, he completed his degree and in 1947, married Jean Oxon. They lived in Derbyshire, and had two children. The marriage ended more than 20 years later, but he remained close to his two grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. He worked in Switzerland, honed his French and Italian and gained an MBA. He met his second wife, Sue, when head of tourism in Gibraltar. Together for 48 years, they enjoyed walking and holidays in the West Country, as well as the odd gin and martini. Rodney and Sue had two children. They moved to Bromley when Rodney became chief executive of the London Tourist Board.

The air force was never far from Rodney's thoughts. He was a former president of No 72 Squadron Association and could often be found sharing memories at the Spitfire Café at Biggin Hill close to the wartime airfield. In 2010, The History Press published Spitfire Saga (www.thehistorypress.co.uk). Written by Angus Mansfield, it tells Rodney's story from Log Books and interviews with Rodney and other pilots. Rodney was a member of 5BFTS Association for many years and attended several annual reunion dinners. Although he never lived in the Midlands, he was also an enthusiastic member of the 5BFTS Midland Group.



Rodney's Spitfire RN-N flying with 72 Squadron



Rodney and a Spitfire in North Weald 2007

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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On April 1, 2018, the RAF, the world's first independent air force, celebrated its 100 th birthday.	The national celebration was on July 10, with a centenary service in Westminster Abbey, followed by a parade in The Mall (in front of over 70,000 people).	The parade was followed by a spectacular flypast over Buckingham Palace with over 100 iconic aircraft used by the RAF and including Spitfires, Hurricanes and a Lancaster



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, senior personnel 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> Search on 5BFTS, Clewiston and/or Riddle Field.

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

This was a celebration of 100 years of RAF history and a vision of its innovative future capability. Flying displays from the RAF included the Red Arrows display team, the Eurofighter Typhoon and the Grob 115E Tutor. In celebration of the prestigious 617 Squadron, renowned for the WW2 Dambusters Raid, there was a display of the squadron's

aircraft, past, present and future, featuring the Avro Lancaster, Tornado GR4 and F-35B Lightning II. The Battle of Britain Memorial Flight mustered around 20 Spitfires and six Hawker Hurricanes, and the rare Bristol Blenheim flew with a Lysander (which dropped agents into occupied France in WW2) as well as a Gloster Gladiator biplane. <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.



#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. I am also hearing from people who have accessed the website, read the newsletters and contacted me directly.

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

RIDDLE ROUND-UP

Robert Gordon Fallas Lee DFC (Course 4 - November 1, 1942 to May 2, 1943)

When I saw Jeff Barwick in May, he told me the incredible story of Flight Lieutenant Robert Lee as told by Ernie Pyle (a well-known American War Correspondent).

Ernie Pyle learned first hand about the mettle and determined nature of an airman who trained at No. 5 BFTS. Pyle was attached to an American force somewhere in France in the summer of 1944 (at the time, all such information was classified) when they came upon a crashed RAF plane. They thought they saw a hand waving through a hole in the side of the plane and discovered the pilot alive and conscious. He had been there for 8 days lying on his back and trapped in the cockpit with very limited movement and without food or water. He had a hole in the calf of his left leg caused by a shell coming through the side of the plane and exploding in his leg shattering the bone and the foot of that injured leg was pinned rigid under the rudder bar. Gasoline had poured out beneath him and his back was so badly burned that gangrene had set in. Other injuries included the fingers on his right hand, which were cut to the bone by a bullet before he crashed.

It took almost an hour to get him out. He was evacuated to an American clearing station, then a field hospital and three days later he was evacuated to England by air, first to an American general hospital for 16 days and then to an RAF hospital where he stayed for many months. Pyle followed this story with a series of articles on Robert's recovery and he marveled at the toughness, and the luck, of this young RAF lieutenant. The pilot's wife asked Pyle to keep her husband's identity from the articles because she felt that other pilots had not been so lucky. But his name was finally divulged as Flight Lieutenant Robert Gordon Fallas Lee of Surrey. Pyle wrote that Lee had strong leanings towards America because of his flight training with No. 5 BFTS at Clewiston, FL. Clewiston News reported on September 15, 1944 that Officers at Clewiston remembered him as "level headed and dependable and a natural leader as well as an extremely good pilot" with a temperament that would make him an outstanding night fighter. He had been flying combat missions for two years and his planes had been hit but never shot down until this event.

Flypaper of April 15, 1945 published a letter from Ft Lt Lee's father, Frank Lee. Mr Lee wrote that when his son was found, Ernie Pyle was with the America Red Cross who was extremely kind to Robert and to whom Mr Lee will always be grateful for their service and attention. Frank said that Robert had recovered from all his wounds except for his left leg, which would take some time to heal and be of use again.



Robert G F Lee Nov 1942



Ernie Pyle March 1944

Robert was awarded the DFC in October 1944. The citation starts, *“This officer has completed a large number of sorties, many of them during a phase of intensive air operations over Northern France. He has at all times displayed the greatest determination and his example of courage and devotion to duty has been of a high order”*.

London Gazette, October 31 page 4979

Denis Page (Course 6 – January 25, 1942 to August 14, 1942)



Judy Barradell-Smith (Denis’ niece) has sent me further information about Denis. Denis attended Oundle School, leaving in 1940 aged 17 to go up to Trinity Hall, Cambridge, so that he could join the University Air Squadron. Later, with 19 Squadron (based at Gravesend) his was one of 6 planes patrolling over Cayeaux and Cambrai (France). Coming across a lone Messerschmitt, they all *“had a pop at firing at it”* and down it came! Denis was killed in a flying accident January 21, 1944 while practicing manoeuvres on a dark night, coming down in Kent. His Mustang went into a steep nosedive and the tail separated from the body of the plane. Sadly, Denis was not able to exit by parachute.

LAC Denis Alan Page, 1942 ©Judy Barradell-Smith

Roy Mather (Course 12 – November 12, 1942 to May 24, 1943)

A Hero of the Berlin Airlift



After WW2, Roy remained in the RAF and in 1949, as Flight Lieutenant Roy Mather, he became the pilot who flew the most sorties during the Berlin Airlift – a total of 404, more than any other pilot, British, American or civilian. It is hard to put into words what a massive achievement that was. British aircraft spent more than 210,000 hours in the air, the equivalent of 24 man-years, and flew more than 30 million miles, which equates to flying to the moon and back 63 times.

Roy and WC Sidney Charles Sutton MBE seen walking away from his York C1 after flying the last of his record breaking 404 sorties during Operation Plainfare

After WW2, Russia, Britain, France and the United States jointly administered Berlin (110 miles inside the Russian zone). In April 1948, Russia began interfering with Allied movements to Berlin, and on June 24, 1948, closed all surface routes to Berlin. The Berlin Airlift (or 'Operation Plainfare') began two days later. The supply run was from RAF Wunstorf to RAF Gatow (in the British sector of Berlin) along one of three narrow defined air corridors.

At the start of the Blockade, West Berlin had just thirty-five days' worth of food, and forty-five days' worth of coal. When Russia lifted the Blockade on 12 May 1949, the Airlift had prevented the starvation of the city. Some 1,800 to 2,000 tons of food were flown in daily to support the population around 2 million, including the Allied Garrison, and more than 131,000 people, mainly children and the sick, were flown out to West Germany and beyond. Flights

continued for several months after the Blockade was lifted to ensure the city was well stocked in the event of further Blockades.

Roy's first flight for Operation Plainfare was on July 7, 1948 and his last was on August 18, 1949. There were many occasions when he flew supplies in three times a day, but on August 12, 1948, he flew the supply route 4 times. For his part in the Airlift, Roy was awarded the Air Force Cross (AFC)



Roy and his crew. Flt Lt R L S Hathaway AFC (Navigator), Flt Lt Richardson (Engineer) and Royston William Marshall AFM (Signaller),



The Grunewald Tower, south-west Berlin seen from Roy's York

For more about Roy Mather and his part in the Berlin Airlift, please visit Roy Mather DFC (Co 12): "A Pilot's Story – A Chesterfield Hero" www.vickersvaliant.com

William Charles Strong (Course 20 – April 20, 1944 to November 10, 1944)



*LAC William Charles Strong
Aberystwyth early 1944*



*At Riddle Field
April - November 1944*



*Graduation
November 10, 1944*

Joanne Strong contacted me in July to tell me about her husband, William Charles (Charlie) Strong and send me some pictures and information about him.

Charlie was born in 1924 in Hampshire and grew up on a farm. Leaving school at 14, Charlie worked on a poultry farm. As soon as he was old enough he joined the RAF where he was known as 'Bill' or 'Boggy' (his initials 'WC' linked with communal toilets known in the military as the 'bog!'). After time in Yorkshire and Wales, he went to Clewiston with 95 other cadets to join Course 20. Charlie ended WW2 as a link training flight instructor.

After WW2, Charlie chose not to train as an officer or fly gliders, but returned to the Hampshire village where he grew up. In March 1953, he married Doris (a childhood friend) and in May, went to Canada to be head dairyman on an Alberta farm. In 1956, they moved to Edmonton, and Charlie entered the world of refrigeration and air conditioning, eventually retiring in 1984. They became Canadian citizens in 1966. Sadly, Doris became ill and she was diagnosed with a brain tumour. They moved to British Columbia.

Charlie met his second wife, Joanne, and they discovered mutual interests in walking, music, nature, literature and Scrabble etc. They married in 2002 and Charlie turned their garden into a beautiful English garden. Two months later, Charlie took Joanne to England to see his childhood village and visit relations and friends. Joanne says that she was “*over the moon*”.



Pilot Sergeant W C Strong

Charlie's memory faded but he never forgot his training in Florida. They lived under a flight path and he would sit on the deck giving advice to the pilots of the approaching 747s! He also used his navigational training to visit 'dark zones' and identify the North Star and other constellations.

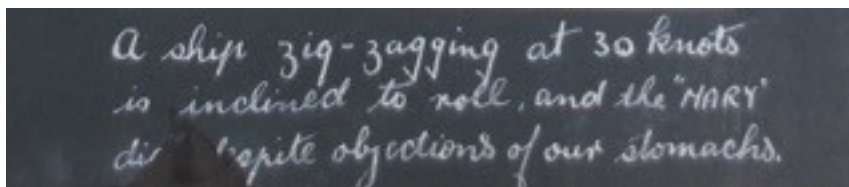


Charlie in 2002

Charlie reached his 80th birthday (an unlikely goal for someone with heart problems and memory difficulties) and his British nieces came over for a visit and shared the day. A special day to remember as Charlie died shortly afterwards in October 2004.

In 1944, Charlie sailed to America on Queen Mary. During WW2, Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth were converted into troop ships and used continuously from May 1943. They could sail across the Atlantic faster than a U-boat and so had no need of convoy protection; any U-boat captain catching sight of a Queen knew that attack was impractical. As an extra precaution however, she frequently changed tack, and according to Charlie this was about every three minutes! Charlie's wife, Joanne, told me that Charlie was emotional when he talked about this, remembering the fear he and others felt. Other ex-cadets told me that the tacking made for an uncomfortable journey and many of those on board were seasick. Those who were not seasick however, enjoyed the plentiful food available, especially the extra bacon and egg breakfasts provided but not required by so many!

Peter Brannan (Co 25) sailed from Greenock (Scotland) to New York on Queen Mary, March 6-11, 1945, and later wrote in his photograph album:



Bryan Gait (Course 24 – January 22, 1945 to August 25, 1945)

In April, I heard from Hayley Devereaux, a Home Admissions Advisor at Gracewell of High Wycombe where Bryan Gait lives. Hayley told me that Bryan reads this newsletter and loves sharing his memories and experiences. He enjoys recounting his life as a pilot in the RAF and flying planes for British Airways, to his fellow residents and the staff. In his room, his photo collection of special memories is prominently displayed for all to see. He is very proud of his time in the RAF.

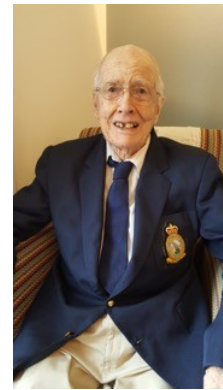
Bryan joined the RAF at the age of 17 in 1941 and began training at RAF Kinloss, in the north of Scotland. The base was used as a primary training ground for pilots during WW2. Bryan began his training in Tiger Moths and then Harvard aircrafts, shortly after arriving at the base and received his prestigious 'Wings' shortly after. For 5 years, he flew American built Lockheed P-2 Neptune then he flew Shackletons throughout the war – which were large planes with a wingspan of over 130ft and used to transport passengers and important supplies to other RAF locations across the world. After the war, Bryan joined British Airways as a commercial pilot, which allowed him to continue his love of flying. He continued to fly airplanes until he retired at 66 in 1990.



Cadet Bryan Gait



Bryan at the controls



Bryan today

More from The Hugo Trotter Photographic Archive

As a reminder, Hugo Trotter (Co 11) was at Riddle Field from September 25, 1942 to April 8, 1943. In November 2017, he sent me 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. The first batch of photos was in the March newsletter (see www.5bfts.org.uk) covering his journey to Riddle Field and the Camp in 1942. This second batch compares the City of Clewiston then with now and looks at the primary flight line in 1942.

Clewiston – then and now



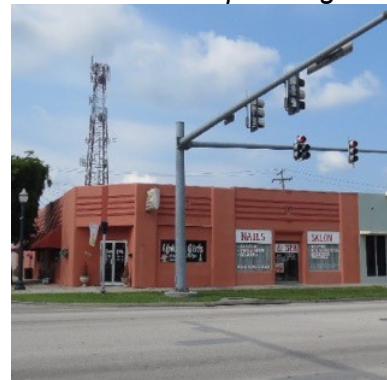
*Dixie Crystal Cinema – 1942
Showing 'Wildcat' (September 1942) about
the intrigues surrounding oil speculation.*



*The same building – 2018
On the historic buildings register and now a
dental practice called Captivating Dental Care*



*Seminole Soda Grill and Drug Store ('The
Club') opposite the Clewiston Inn 1942. The
cadets are unknown*



*The Drug Store is now a nail bar and spa.
Photo from 2012. In 2018, the Nail Bar is
coloured pale blue and the spa is beige.*



Water Tower 1942 on land adjacent to Clewiston Inn and opposite the cinema.



Civic Park 2018. The water tower would have been a behind the Garden of Remembrance

In the March newsletter, we met Hugo's roommates, Pete Varley, Peter 'Puff' Train and George Watt. A letter in Flypaper, February 15, 1945, from Elsie L Lewis, Puff's mother, said that the two Peters (Varley and Train) were now 'somewhere in India', each having taken a "Beau" [Bristol Beaufighter] out to the Chindwin (In Burma aka Myanmar). This time, we meet more Co 11 cadets including John Potter (5BFTS Association Chairman and then President).

Primary Flight Line 1942



Marching to the Flight Line



B T Johnstone and L Edwards



Hugo - Waiting his turn to fly



PT-17 with unknown cadet waiting for instructor



Johnny Potter



Hugo



George Watt



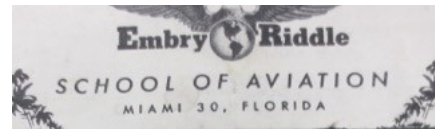
Pete Varley



Peter 'Puff' Train

The Instructors

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



The second of a series about the instructors.

©David Brannan (Peter Brannan Co 25)

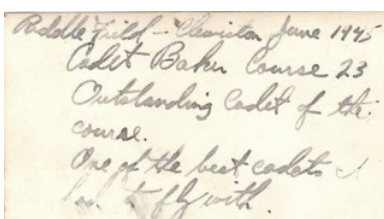
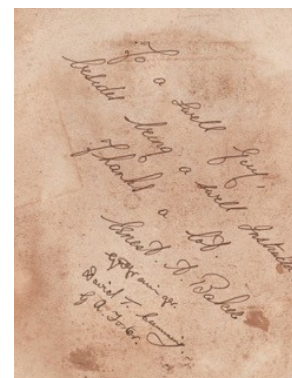
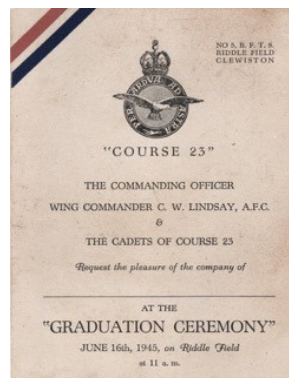
FREDERICK J BRITAIN FLYING WAS MY LIFE 1918 – 2002

This is the name of the website Vicki Brittain has developed dedicated to her father, Riddle Field instructor Fred Brittain. In the last edition I included a little about Fred's life and some information about his time at Riddle Field and more follows. www.frederickjbrittain.com



Fred in the centre with Co 18 cadets: W B Thomas, D A Skirrow, J Richards and D Stewart.

Co 18 started training on December 3, 1943 and graduated June 17, 1944. From March 30 to June 5, Fred focused on these four cadets. There were eleven days when he instructed all four; other days he would instruct between one and three of the group.



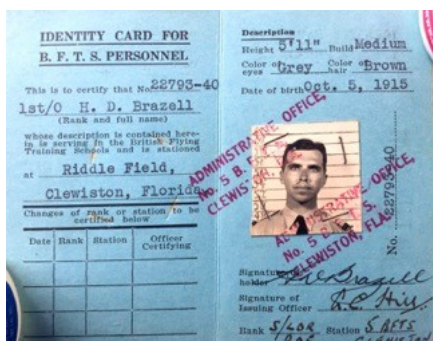
For Co 23's Advanced training, Fred focused on four cadets who signed the back of the invitation to their Graduation Ceremony. The 'Outstanding Cadet' Ernest A Baker (from Worcestershire), Gerald D Grainger (Edinburgh), David T Cumming (Dundee) and George A Foster (London) added a thank you to a "Swell Guy" and a "Swell Instructor".

Harry Brazell

In March, I heard from David Brazell, whose father was Riddle Field instructor, Harry Brazell. David sent me pictures and information – the first installment is below.

Born in 1915, Harry grew up in Atlanta GA. After high school, he moved to Danville, VA, where his father was working on extending Dan **River Mills** cotton mill. Although this was the Depression, Harry got work at the mill as a laborer pushing bales of cotton around the warehouse. A supervisor noticed his hard work ethic and moved him to the production floor where he worked his way up to supervisor of the spinning room. The company had a competition based on production and Harry won the contest - and the winner got a one-hour free flying lesson. Harry's logbook shows that from that day on, he flew every day.

When the war broke out, he enlisted in the Army and was transferred to the Air Corps Enlisted Reserve to train aviation cadets for the War Department. Under FDR's Lend Lease agreement with England, the United States agreed to train British RAF pilots in several sites in the U.S. and Clewiston was one of the locations. In 1943, Harry was moved to Clewiston to instruct where he would remain until the end of the war. He never spoke much about the actual training but preferred to talk about the cadets that he trained. He became close to many of them and regretted deeply the loss of several of them to crashes or war. One of his favorites was Milt Steuer who was killed in a DC-3 crash after graduation from Course 12.



Douglas L Day

I heard from Douglas, another Riddle Field instructor in April. The first part of what Douglas wrote is about what he did after Clewiston closed. He wrote:

We were on our honeymoon, when I received a wire asking me to return to work. We were to finish training the last class before Riddle Field closed. I then worked several months as a mechanic at Morrison field in West Palm Beach. I was called back to flight instructing by Riddle to help train French naval cadets, including Charles de Gaulle's son, at Homestead air base (just south of Miami). The aircraft we used were AT6s and Cessna.

As I had 2000hrs and a multi engine rating, I was able to fly DC3s and C46s for Nationwide Air Transport. We flew charter flights in the US, Caribbean, and South America carrying people, cargo, and livestock. The company bought Resort Airlines, and acquired their name in 1951, I believe. We flew what we called the 'SunCruise'. These were passenger tour flights,

with tour guides from the east coast US to the Caribbean and Central America. The aircraft were C46s & DC4s. SunCruise stopped in 1955 and we moved to Oakland, California. There, we flew military cargo coast to coast in DC4s. Also, we flew military passengers to Hawaii, and cargo to Japan in Lockheed Constellations. Resort Airlines went out of business in mid 1960, and we moved back to Florida.

I then worked at the local airport in Lantana FL as a flight instructor and charter pilot, flying single & twin-engine aircraft. 1962 found me again, flying C46s, but this time for Southern Air Transport flying charters in the US, Caribbean, and south America. A few years later, we were flying DC4s, and several years after that, we acquired two DC7s and, began flying worldwide. Finally in 1968, the company bought three Lockheed Hercules for worldwide charters. We added more Herks over the years until we had about 25. The last 5 or 6 years I was a training and check pilot for the Herk crews. I retired in 1987 with 10000hrs in the Herk, and over 31000hrs total flight time.

Marty Bennett

Bob Bennett wrote to me in June. Bob's father was Marty Bennett who was a mechanic and then an instructor at Riddle Field from summer 1941 to the end in 1945. Bob says that his uncle, A.R. Gunner Brink, was also an instructor at Riddle Field from the early days. Bob sent photos, some of which are reproduced below. One is of a group of instructors, some of whom are named; Bob's uncle, Gunner Brink is on the right hand side of the front row.



Gunner and Mary Brink

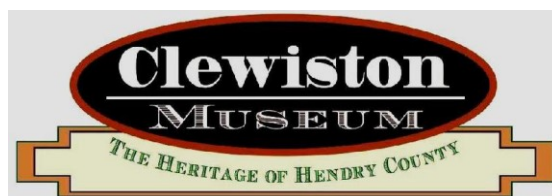


AT6s flying in formation



Marty Bennett Oct 1944

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this section – more about instructors in the next newsletters.....



Clewiston Update

Yet again, the Clewiston Museum hosted a mini 5BFTS Reunion Memorial Day weekend. This year, I met with Jeff Barwick, Tuck Renshaw and his lovely wife, Reiko, on Sunday May 27. Tuck's father was Fred Renshaw, Co 12; Fred was one of the first USAAF cadets at Riddle Field and his uniform is displayed in the museum. Pictures below from top LHS show Tuck and 'Fred', Tuck, Reiko and Jeff in the 5BFTS section of Clewiston Museum, Tuck and Jeff comparing notes in the museum and Reiko at Air Glades looking at the 5BFTS plaque.



After a good look round the museum, we had lunch at the Tiki Bar in Clewiston, and then drove out to Air Glades to look at the site of the Riddle Field camp. The weather was building up to sub tropical storm Alberto and was exceedingly wet, but it didn't mar our enjoyment of meeting and sharing our memories of our fathers and their contribution to WW2 (and afterwards). Tuck, Reiko and I met again at Arcadia on Memorial Day.

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

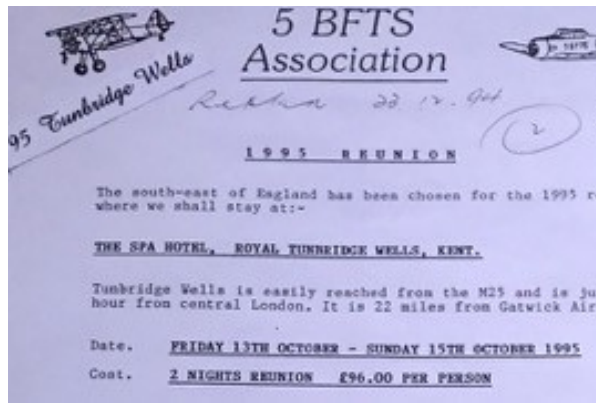
Jenny Harding writes: *On behalf of 5BFTS, please can I, once again, thank Clewiston Museum, Jeff Barwick and Curator, Butch Wilson, for looking after the 5BFTS archives and doing such a wonderful job keeping 5BFTS alive for the visitors to the museum."*

Royal Tunbridge Wells Reunion 1995

In November 2017, Dina Moore (Dina's husband was L O Moore Co 17) sent me a lot of information about various Reunions they attended. It was very hard to choose which Reunion to feature this time, so I have gone for one from 28 years ago – 1995. Two instructors, John S W Davis from Clewiston and Reed Clary from Miami attended the weekend. It was held in the Spa Hotel. This was originally built as a mansion in 1766 and has been an hotel since 1880. To stay for an equivalent weekend in 2018 would cost a lot more than the £96 charged in 1995.



Hotel in 1995



Extract from programme



Ronnie and John S W Davis

TUNBRIDGE WELLS KENT 1995

LIST OF MEMBERS

<i>Co. 1</i>	L. BRADSHAW	Co. 1	<i>Co. 18</i>	D. SKIRROW	X	Co. 18
	F. KNIGHT			F. WHITE		"
<i>Co. 3</i>	R. SCRASE DFC	Co. 3		J. BROOKE		"
<i>Co. 4</i>	F. DYSON DFC	Co. 4		F. NICHOLLS		Co. 19
	C. FRASER			A. STRAUGHAN	X	Co. 20
	J. RUSSELL			F. MATSON		"
	A. MORGAN			E. JACKSON		"
<i>Co. 5</i>	R. LEEKS	X	Co. 5	B. RUSSELL		Co. 21
	D. HOUGHTON MBE			J. AFFLEBY		"
	A. BALL			J. WHITE		"
	R. MURPHY			K. ROBINSON		"
	F. COWELL DFC			F. DARE		"
	K. MEECHER DFC			R. COX		Co. 22
<i>Co. 6</i>	G. MURPHY	Co. 6		D. MORGAN		"
	F. REES	X		W. LAWRENCE		"
	S. SLAPE	X		A. BELL		"
<i>Co. 8</i>	R. SHIELDS	Co. 8		I. SNEYTON		"
<i>Co. 10</i>	H. KELLY	Co. 10		J. STEPHENSON		Co. 23
	D. BUTTS			A. BOYD		Co. 24
	F. KENNEDY			G. BEAKSMORE		"
	B. SPRAGG DFC			J. MOXON		"
	J. MURRO AFC			G. NEWSHAM		"
<i>Co. 11</i>	F. CHARLESWORTH	Co. 11		J. DURRANT		"
	J. POTTER			D. COOKE		"
	H. TROTTER DFC			S. JACKSON		"
<i>Co. 12</i>	E. HARBESLEY	Co. 12		E. TURRENT	X	"
	H. WILKIN			B. GAIT		"
	H. STURMAN			E. WHITTLES	X	Co. 26
	G. RENVOISE	Co. 13		R. PETERS MBE		"
<i>Co. 15</i>	S. ARROWSMITH	Co. 15		MRS. M. LOCH		"
	N. OGLE					"
	T. RIGBY					"
	D. ROBERTSON					"
	V. CUMBERGEN					"
<i>Co. 17</i>	L. MOORE	Co. 17		J. S. W. DAVIS		INSTR.
	M. HARDIE ONE			R. CLARY		"
	R. BERKELEY					"

List of 66 ex-cadets, one Family Member and the two instructors attending.

If you are reading this on a computer, magnify this photo and you will be able to see a handwritten note of where everyone lived.

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! 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 regular newsletter will be published in March 2019. Please can you let me have any articles, information, etc, by the end of February 2019. 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”.