

Newsletter No. 28 – Spring 2024

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Reflection

As I write, the sun is shining. As the UK has experienced the wettest February on record, with March and April being pretty wet as well, it is lovely to see the sun although it may not last the day! It won't be long however, before we are complaining that it is 'too hot'!

Here in the UK, we love talking about the weather! We can be wrapped up against the elements on Saturday, picnicking in shorts and t-shirts on Sunday and battling torrential rain on Monday. Each year, we hope for a White Christmas (possibly thanks to Bing Crosby) – never mind the fact that the UK has only experienced a widespread, Dickensian-like Christmas snow four times in the past 51 years. We can have snow in summer and wear t-shirts in November.

For some people, the weather forecast is vital, but arguably, never more important than in Summer 1944. The 80th Anniversary of D-Day is on June 6. Deciding the date was critical to success. Air operations required clear skies and a full moon, Naval operations required low winds and calm seas and ground troops needed to land at low tide. D-day was set for June 5, but poor weather delayed it until June 6. Although not ideal, as strong winds and rough seas caused problems for the landing craft with the tide coming in more quickly than anticipated, it went ahead as a second postponement meant a 2-week delay – and maybe operational failure for many reasons. Over 8,000 RAF personnel took part in the Normandy landings, and 11,590 Allied aircraft were deployed; I know that some of the pilots were 5BFTS graduates. Please read about Ian Blue in Riddle Round-Up who was in Normandy a few days after D-Day.

This was the largest Naval, Air and Land Operation in History and we now know that it led to the liberation of north-west Europe from Nazi occupation. In the UK, amongst other celebrations and remembrances, the bravery and sacrifices made in 1944 in securing the peace and freedom we enjoy today, will be marked with the lighting of beacons across the country.

And we remember all those who were graduates of 5BFTS and took part, or supported someone taking part, in the Normandy Landings in whatever capacity.

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

Five 5BFTS Facts

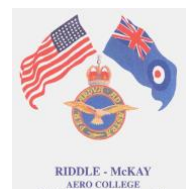
Opened in July 1941 at Carlstrom Field

Moved to Riddle Field September 25, 1941

26 Courses

1434 graduates (1325 RAF and 109 USAAF)

Closed in September 1945



Jenifer Harding

67th Annual British Memorial Day Service May 27, 2024

I am looking forward to Memorial Day this year; meeting old friends, making new ones and taking part in the British Service to remember and honour John Paul Riddle and the 23 cadets who were killed in Florida and are buried in Oak Ridge Cemetery, Arcadia. We owe an ongoing debt of gratitude to the Rotary Club of Arcadia and many others who contribute.



Annual British Memorial Service May 27, 2024

The service will start at 10am

The Service is organized, as it has been for the past 66 years, by Arcadia Rotary Club

Address: PO Box 1492, Arcadia, FL 34265-1492

Telephone for information at 863-444-0664

Email: BritishMemorialService@gmail.com

EVERYBODY IS WELCOME

And for lunch, try **Mary Margaret's Tea and Biscuit**, 10 South Polk Avenue, Arcadia, Florida 34266. Reservations are always a good idea – phone 1-863-494-0615. For more information about Mary Margaret's Tea and Biscuits, and details of their menu, please visit:

<https://www.facebook.com/MaryMargaretsTeaAndBiscuit/>

<https://www.facebook.com/MaryMargaretsTeaAndBiscuit/>

In Memoriam

Hugo Trotter DFC: Course 11. Died February 27, 2024, aged 100



Hugo fishing on Lake Okeechobee

Hugo Trotter, DFC, member of the Order of the Légion d'honneur and founder member of the 5BFTS Association, died peacefully at home in February.



From Course 11 Listening Out. April 2, 1943

He was the beloved husband of Lisa and loving father of Alexander and Rupert. He had five grandchildren. The family held a private cremation followed by a service of thanksgiving which was held at the Hospital of St Cross, Winchester on April 26, 2024.

A full obituary will be in the Autumn Newsletter.

Two family members of the 5BFTS Association have died recently.

Shirley Neyhart: died February 26, 2023, aged 87

Shirley Carole Cluett was born in Britain on December 12, 1935, and married Charles (Chuck) A Neyhart (USAAF Cadet Course 17. Obituary: Newsletter 10, March 2018). They married in

Clark County, Nevada on August 14, 1963, and had been married for 53 years when Chuck died in November 2017. Shirley came from Sutton, Surrey, UK. She remembered the London Blitz and 'flying bombs' very well and was bombed out three times. *"I was dodging bombs in London and helping out at the local hospital as my mother was a nurse there and she put me to work"*. Shirley's father worked at the Hawker Siddeley factory (probably in Kingston-on-Thames, Surrey). She qualified as a Registered Nurse and Midwife at Guys Hospital, London.



Shirley Neyhart



Chuck Neyhart

Shirley moved to Canada and worked in the Northwest Territories of Canada at Yellowknife on the west and Baffin Island on the east. There was so much snow in the late 1950s and early 60s, that the only way to get to the villages was by air, in trucks that looked like tanks or by dogsled *"which was fantastic - those huskies and malamutes just loved to run"*.

Shirley became a Physician's Assistant in Edmonton General Hospital, Alberta, where she worked for 6 years and was awarded a degree from the University of Edmonton in Alberta. In August 1963, she headed south to Las Vegas, Nevada on a visitor's visa, met Chuck and a month later they were married. Chuck took Shirley to the USAF Military Academy at Colorado Springs where he was teaching aerodynamics. Shirley said, *"That was a real change as I did not know a sergeant from a general in US ranks"*.



Chuck and Shirley lived on air force bases in New Mexico, Oklahoma and finally in Delaware at Dover AFB. Chuck flew the C-141 (Lockheed C-141 Starlifter) on Air Evacuation flights from Dover AFB via Alaska to Vietnam and died from cancer attributed to the effects of Agent Orange that was sprayed all over Vietnam and caused so many deaths. Shirley flew on Air Evacuation flights in the same squadron, helping to evacuate the wounded and also, sad to say, the dead, but whereas Chuck flew all over southeast Asia, Shirley only flew from Tanson Nhut Saigon, which is why she was not exposed to Agent Orange.

Chuck and Shirley retired in 1970 (Shirley after 55 years in the medical profession) and travelled worldwide and eventually came to live at Air Force Village, San Antonio, Texas (now called Blue Skies of Texas) in 2003.

After Chuck died, Shirley generously made donations in his name to the USAF Emergency Fund, Embry Riddle Aeronautical University (ERAU) and Penn State University:

- At ERAU, Shirley set up the 5BFTS Scholarship Fund to assist young people, who needed financial help, to (in her words) “*become excellent pilots*”.
- The Neyhart family comes from Pennsylvania and Penn State is in the centre of Pennsylvania at State College; 44 members of the Neyhart family have graduated from Penn State over the last 100 years! Chuck’s father, Amos, started Driver’s Education Course for Penn State.



In March 2022, Bill Thompson (*Executive Director Engagement Initiatives & Eagle Heritage Project*) and Steve Bobinsky (*Executive Director, Philanthropy, Prescott Campus*) visited Shirley and spent a very happy four hours chatting about Chuck and Shirley’s life together.



A reminder that should anyone wish to support the **Major Charles A Neyhart No 5 BFTS Memorial Scholarship**, please go to givingto.erau.edu/bfts to donate to the scholarship fund.

Chuck and Shirley are buried together in Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery, San Antonio, with one headstone marking their graves – Chuck is remembered on one side and Shirley on the other. Chuck’s side reads, “**Still Flying, In The Wild, Blue Yonder**” and Shirley’s side reads, “**A Survivor, With A Feisty Zest For Life And A Sharp Wit**”.

Chuck and Shirley – RIP

Shirley and I corresponded for several years after Chuck died, and I will write more about Shirley and Chuck’s life in the next newsletter.

Wendy Hogarth: died October 17, 2023, aged 100½



Wedding Day August 1945



Buckingham Palace July 2013



100th Birthday Lunch Party – March 2023

George and Wendy Hogarth were my parents. George (5BFTS, Course 3) died in 2011 a few days before his 90th birthday, but Wendy made it to 100 (Reflection, March 2023 Newsletter).

She died peacefully in her sleep after a fall, having remained in the house that she and George bought in 1956. They had three children, two daughters and a son (who died in 2017), six grandchildren and 9 great-grandchildren.

Wendy Elizabeth White Hogarth (née Jones) was born in Stourbridge (then in Worcestershire) on March 9, 1923. She joined the WRENS (Women's Royal Naval Service) in September 1942. She became an Air Radio Mechanic (ARM) and after training, her first posting was to RAF Defford (on the Croome Estate in Worcestershire). This was a joint RAF and Royal Naval station, known to the WRENS as HMS (His Majesty's Ship) Daedalus even though it was almost as far away from the sea as you could get in England. RAF Defford was a 'secret station' as it was the main station for development of airborne radar during WW2. It carried out flight trials for the Telecommunications Research Establishment (TRE) which had moved to Malvern (about 20 miles away) in May 1942. Wendy was one of a small group of about 20 WRENS, most of whom were ARMs and had been specially selected to work with radar equipment.

Wendy was at Defford until March 1944 when, having learnt how to service the new Air to Surface Vessel (ASVX) radar, she was posted to various Fleet Air Arm Squadrons. She left RAF Defford with many regrets as in February 1944, she met George Hogarth, a dashing young pilot from Edinburgh who had recently been posted to RAF Defford. Wendy and George married in September 1944.

After VE Day, Wendy was demobbed and when WW2 ended, George returned to RAF Defford to continue airborne radar flight trials. They lived near RAF Defford until George was demobbed in 1946 and then, in 1947, set up home in Bromsgrove, Worcestershire. They remained living in Bromsgrove until they died, in the house they bought in 1956.

In the mid 1960s, when the 5BFTS Association was established, George became the archivist and in 1973, set up the Midland Group ably supported by Wendy. In the early days, the Midland Group met several times during the year. Later they had one or two meetings a year, usually an outing to somewhere in the Midlands with lunch before or afterwards. They ran this group together until 2009, when Gordon Newsham (Course 24) took over.

Wendy and George attended many of the annual reunions in the UK and joined in the reunions to Florida in 1973 and 1989. After George died, Wendy attended the Bedford reunions in 2011, 2012 and 2013.



In 2015, we loaned George and Wendy's WW2 uniforms to the RAF Defford Museum at Croome Court, Worcestershire. George's uniform shows his rank of Flight Lieutenant and Wendy's shows her rank of Petty Officer. The uniforms are permanently on display for all to enjoy.

Left: Wendy looking at 'herself and George' at RAF Defford Museum in 2016

We must also remember a member of the Gulf Coast St. David's Welsh Society in Sarasota who recently died. The Sarasota Welsh Society is a great supporter of 5BFTS, and their members always attend the British Service on Memorial Day at Oak Tree Cemetery to lay a wreath in remembrance, and poppies and a Welsh flag by the headstones of three cadets who

are known to be Welsh and died while at Clewiston. They are Alfred Thomas Lloyd, Thomas John Parry and Mervyn Hugh Ernest Thomas. Rhianon's Obituary was published by the Sarasota Welsh Society on February 25, 2024.

Rhianon Catherine Jones Hardy, died February 10, 2024, aged 104

Rhianon Catherine Jones was born on April 6, 1919 at Botegir Farm in the North Wales, Welsh-speaking village of Llanfihangel Glyn Myfyr. Welsh was her first language.

She was educated at Howell's School in Denbigh, trained as a Registered Nurse (RN) at Chester Royal Infirmary and then received a midwifery certificate from the City of London Midwifery Hospital.

She married Patrick Stanley Hardy 63 years ago on February 25, 1961, in a small chapel in the walls of Denbigh Castle. Patrick is from Bournemouth in the Southwest of England. After his service in the British Army, he trained as a physical therapist. They met when both were on the staff at Greenwich Hospital.

Pat and Rhianon went to Accra, Ghana, Rhiannon as a clinic nurse for United Africa Company and Pat was physical therapist at the military hospital with the Ghana Army. After 2 years in Africa, they went to Canada and worked in hospitals in northern Ontario.

The Hardys came to Siesta Key in 1970 where Pat continued working as a physical therapist for 20 more years.



Rhianon on her 104th Birthday



Rhianon and Pat at a St David's Day Celebration

Rhianon and Pat are active members of the Gulf Coast St. David's Welsh Society in Sarasota and also of the Suncoast St. David's Welsh Society in St. Petersburg. For 18 years Rhianon was Corresponding Secretary in the Sarasota Welsh Society, and she and Pat hosted Welsh Society meetings and parties in their home. They are members of St. Michael the Archangel Catholic Church on Siesta Key.

In 1991 Rhianon was honored as the "Arweinydd" (Leader) Cymru Ar Byd (Wales in the World) at the Eisteddfod at y Wyrgrug (Mold), in Wales. In 1999 she was inducted into Gorsedd Green Robe in Llangefni Shirfon (Anglesey), Wales for her contribution to Welsh language and Culture.

She celebrated her 104th Birthday in April 2023.

We remember all pilots who have handed in their logbooks, and to other 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!

1BFTS, 4BFTS and 5BFTS – working together at the National Memorial Arboretum

In 2002, the 5BFTS Grove of five birch trees was dedicated at the National Memorial Arboretum (NMA) during the 5BFTS Association September National Reunion which was held in Derby that year. In 2006, the 1BFTS Association dedicated a tree and a bench.

The recent New Year Newsletter mentioned that there is nothing at the NMA to remember the 4BFTS Association, and that the Falcon Field Association: *The Next Generation* had decided to rectify this. I explained how I asked four 5BFTS Association members if they agreed to 4BFTS placing a plaque by one of our trees. They all immediately said 'yes'. The good news is that the 4BFTS plaque is now made and a date has been fixed for its dedication at the NMA by one of the 5 trees in the 5BFTS Grove – which will be on October 19, 2024. This small area of the RAF section at the NMA really will stand as a quiet place of remembrance not just for those at numbers 1, 4 and 5, but for all those who were at any of the BFTS locations in America.



The former RAF airfield played a leading role in some of the most dramatic days in 20th century history. And one of their shows for 2024 is 'Duxford Summer Air Show D-Day 80' on the weekend of June 1 and 2.



They are paying tribute to this momentous anniversary by welcoming **ten historic Dakotas** – the aircraft synonymous with the D-Day landings – to the skies of Duxford for a series of dramatic flypasts over the weekend and a mass historic parachute jump over the historic airfield on Saturday 1 June.

Left: RAF Dakota III (C-47A) – known as Skytrain in America.

To mark the 80th anniversary of Operation Overlord, the **world-famous D-Day Squadron** will return to the skies of historic Duxford. The formation will include seven Dakotas from the D-Day Squadron (DDS). The participating DDS aircraft are expected to include 7 Douglas DC-3s and C-47s from the USA and Europe.

A reminder that there is a 5BFTS section at the Imperial War Museum, Duxford on the American Air Museum Internet Archive, set up by Anne Hughes several years ago when she was working as a volunteer researcher at Duxford. To read about 5BFTS people on the American Air Museum Internet Archive, please visit www.americanairmuseum.com and search on 5BFTS, Riddle Field and/or Clewiston.

RIDDLE ROUND-UP

Ian (Jock) Blue: Course 3 (October 1941 to March 1942)

With the 80th anniversary of D-Day fast approaching, I heard from Ian Blue's son, Kyle. In April 2023, Kyle, his brother Ranald and others spent a week to cycling from Cherbourg to Caen.

In June 1944, their father, Ian, was with 182 Squadron stationed at ALG (Advanced Landing Group) B6 at Coulombs. This was the largest aerodrome in Normandy and was home to the B6 Second Tactical Airforce consisting of 124 Wing (137, 181, 182 and 247 Squadrons) flying Typhoons and 141 Wing (264 Squadron) flying Mosquitos. Kyle wrote:

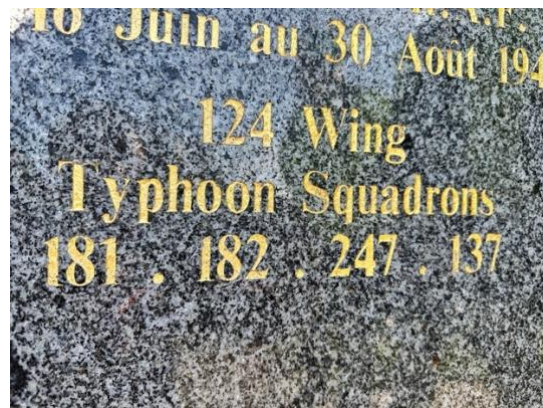
“A few days after D-Day, 182 squadron was moved from RAF Hurn in Dorset to B6 Airfield near the village of Coulombs, Bayeux. This was a quickly manufactured airfield on some type of mesh surface and enabled the aircraft to arrive at a target more quickly and spend more time in the air. Unfortunately, it was a little premature as the proximity to the front meant it was easily in range of guns and German aircraft. This resulted in losses to both Typhoons and more importantly personnel. As a result, they had to be removed back to Hurn until the front moved forward. A number of squadrons then returned and spent a few months here”.



Ian died in 1981 and Kyle recalled that his mother, who died in 2022, described an attempt to locate the airfields position many years ago and described being dragged by Ian through an overgrown orchard. She was unconvinced they had found it.

Left: Kyle and Ranald by the Memorial to the Typhoon Squadrons

Kyle continued, “It was thus with not a great deal of optimism that our cycling expedition detoured from the coast inland to Coulombs. The countryside around here is rather featureless and we soon became hopelessly lost. However, passing through a small hamlet near Coulombs we suddenly stumbled across this wonderful memorial to Typhoon Squadrons 181, 182 (Ian’s squadron), 247 and 137. In fact, all of 124 Wing.



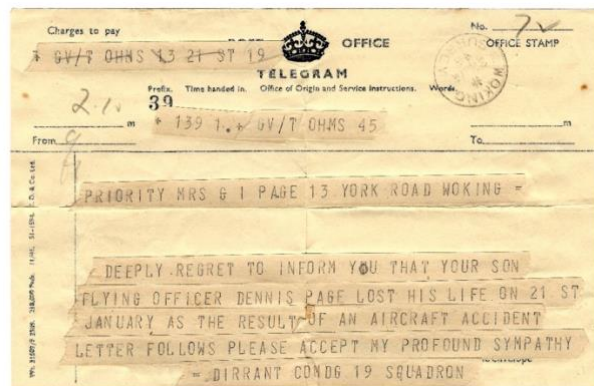
The actual airfield was in the huge field [see picture above] behind the monument running

across to Coulombs. We were overjoyed to discover this and must thank whoever placed this wonderful memorial in this position. Many pilots and ground crew were lost here, and it was wonderful that we were able to remember them and all those who survived the war.

This was a fascinating and quite moving episode in our D Day tour from Cherbourg to Caen which we accomplished in a week and was planned by my brother Ranald”.

Dennis Page: Course 6 (January 1942 to August 1942)

In January, I heard from Judy Barradell-Smith who told me that her family were going to visit a remote field in Kent on January 21 which was the anniversary of the day when her Uncle Denis Alan Page died. Having done some good investigative searches with the help of some keen local villagers and historians, they had pinpointed the exact spot where his plane crashed at about 4.45pm on 21st January. He was flying a new American Mustang P-51 C and had taken it up for a test flight when it developed a mechanical issue, and the plane could not be brought out of a steep dive. Dennis and his plane crashed into a field near the village of Snodland, Kent where he lost his life.



We look forward to hearing more details about the expedition to Kent!

Frank Handford: Course 21 (June 1944 to January 1945)

In February, we heard from Graham Handford whose father, Frank Guthrie Handford was on Course 21. Graham and his wife, Mary, were planning a visit to Florida and were hoping to visit Clewiston and Airglades.



*Cadet Frank Handforth
Clewiston*



*AT Clewiston – with an AT-6
Frank is on the LHS*



Frank after Clewiston

Frank Guthrie Handford gained his wings at 5BFTS in January 1945. When he came back to the UK, he completed his Spitfire conversion on 16th May 1945 but as the war in Europe had

ended, he then converted onto Mustangs and joined 19 Squadron flying P51Ds until April 1946 when the squadron converted to Mk16 Spitfires. He briefly flew Tempests in Europe before being assigned to the weapons training unit at Lubeck where he remained until his demob in May 1947.

Before he left for Florida, Graham sent me some photos that his father took while he was in Florida. Some show the cadets being entertained at 130, Chilean Avenue, Palm Beach. This is probably the home of Mrs Florence Nesmith, the wife of Ira L Nesmith, who was born in Canada and whose favourite nephew was killed in action while serving with the Royal Canadian Air Force. She used her influence to provide housing and hospitality for the 5BFTS cadets, in her own home or in those of her friends and arranged lavish fundraising functions at such places as the exclusive Everglades Club and The Bath and Tennis Club.



130, Chilean Avenue (pictures from a real estate website 2024)



Mary in the centre of Palm Beach with Chilean Avenue behind her. March 2024.



*Is this the same staircase as the picture above?
It certainly looks like it!*

*Frank wrote on the photo: 'Friends at 130
Chilean Avenue. September 1944'*

On his return from Florida, Graham wrote, *"Mary and I have returned from our holiday in Florida. We travelled south from our accommodation near Kissimmee, calling at Palm Beach and visited Chilean Avenue where Florence Nesmith lived. We stayed at Clewiston overnight and met Jeff [Barwick] the next morning at the museum. He was so knowledgeable and explained everything in detail, at the museum, the airfield and round Clewiston. We couldn't have wished for a better day. He took us to his house to meet Carlota [Jeff's wife] and even presented me with a No5 BFTS side cap"*.

Graham sent me some pictures of his and Mary's 5BFTS odyssey.



Clewiston Museum. Jeff and Graham



Graham and Mary with Fred Renshaw's uniform on display behind them.



Airglades Airport March 2024: Jeff and Graham

The Instructors

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



©David Brannan (Peter Brannan Co 25)

Frederick J Brittain:

"Don't worry if your job is small and your rewards are few - remember that the mighty oak was once a nut like you."

Donald C Day and Douglas Laning Day:

The brothers were both instructors at 5BFTS. Douglas (the younger brother) sadly died in April 2023 (Obituary September 2023 Newsletter) while Donald was 104 in November. The photographs below are some donated by Donald to the 5BFTS archive many years ago. It is not known if Donald is flying the planes or took the photographs. When 5BFTS started, the Vultee 13-A was used for basic training (between primary training on a Stearman and advanced training on a Harvard). The Vultee was a difficult plane to fly and after a crash in January 1942, which killed Roger Crosskey (Course 3), and other reports of potential dangers,

the plane was withdrawn from the training programme for BFTS schools, and all basic and advanced training was undertaken using the Harvard.



Harvard AT-6



Vultee BT-13A



Harvard AT-6



Vultee BT-13A

In 2018, Douglas Laning Day told me about life after working for the Riddle Organisation.

Douglas had 2000 hours flying time under his belt and was qualified to fly multi engine planes and so joined Nationwide Air Transport flying DC3s and C46s. He flew charter flights in the US, Caribbean, and South America, flying people, cargo, and livestock.



In 1951, Nationwide Air Transport bought Resort Airlines. Douglas was now flying the "Suncoast" - passenger tour flights, with tour guides, from the east coast of America to the Caribbean and Central America still flying C46s along with DC4s.

Left: Resort Airlines Dakota DC4 at Oakland California. January 1954

This stopped in 1955, and he and Ruth moved to Oakland, California where he flew military cargo coast to coast in DC4s. He also flew military passengers to Hawaii, and cargo to Japan in Lockheed Constellations.

Resort Airlines went out of business in mid 1960, and the family moved back to Florida. Douglas then worked at the local airport in Lantana as a flight instructor and charter pilot, flying single and twin-engine aircraft.

In 1962, he again flew C46s, this time for Southern Air Transport, flying charters in the US, Caribbean, and South America. A few years later, he was back to DC4s, and sometime after that, the company acquired two DC7s, and began flying world-wide. Along the way, Douglas discovered that Southern Air was owned or controlled by the CIA – which explained some of the help they were getting from the military!

Finally, in 1968 the company bought three Lockheed Hercules for world-wide charters. They added more 'Herks' over the years until they had about 25. For the last five or six years, he

was a training and check pilot for the 'Herk' crews. Douglas retired in 1987 with 10,000 hours flying 'Herks' and over 31,000 hours total flight time.

And a story to end with! Douglas told me, "Before we had radar, we were flying a DC4 to Miami from Panama, and when we were passing Jamaica, we ran into heavy rain and turbulence. The engines were cutting out from too much cooling, and we were being bounced around a bit. Then suddenly, we were in the clear, the sun was shining, and the air was smooth. We reported the weather and our position and braced ourselves for entering the wall of rain ahead of us. After unloading cargo in Miami, I was about to leave for home, when I was told *'oh no you have to take the plane back to Jamaica'*. The company wanted the plane out of Miami before the storm hit. When I filed our flight plan, I was told about a pilot report giving the position of the storm. I said, *'yes, I know, that was my report'*. The wind was blowing at 70 mph when we took off for Jamaica". But Douglas survived to tell the tale!

5BFTS DIGITAL ARCHIVE



<https://commons.erau.edu/british-flying-training-school/>

With thanks to so many people, the 5BFTS Digital Archive is now available for viewing, sharing, contributing, etc. It is very early days and there is a huge amount of material to be added (and much of this still to be scanned), but we have made a start and there are currently several collections being populated.

A lot of people have been involved in setting up this website, but there are three people in particular that I want to thank – because without them, we would not have even been able to start – let alone get as far as we have! So - thank you to:

- **Bill Thompson**, Executive Director Engagement Initiatives & Eagle Heritage Project, who has provided funding;
- **Dr Sally Bloomstrane**, ERAU Professor of Communication, Humanities and Communication Department – and Bill's wife - who is supporting the project;
- **Chip Wolfe**, ERAU Scholarly Commons Administrator, Hunt Library – without whom, nothing would have happened and who has been patiently instructing me in the basic skills needed to upload and manage documents in a website.

A reminder that it is early days, but I should love to hear what you think. Any ideas, comments and offers of source materials all gratefully received.

If you want to know more about the history and development of 5BFTS, please read:

RAF Flying Training USA 1941-1945 - In 1999, Derick Croisdale who was at 4BFTS in Mesa, Arizona, wrote this brief history on behalf of all 6 BFTS Associations. Representatives of all six made contributions to the document at the time. Derick's original work has stood the test of time and remains an excellent summary of RAF training in the USA during WW2, but an appendix has been added to bring the document up to date and includes information that was not available to any of the BFTS Associations in 1999. The appendix is written by me with contributions from the 'next generation' of representatives from #1BFTS and #4BFTS.

<https://commons.erau.edu/bfts-history/4/>

Who Do You Think You Are (WDYTYA)?

This is the name of a British television programme in which genealogical experts help a celebrity to explore one or more of their ancestors. The celebrity does not have any idea of what they will be told until it is revealed on screen and inevitably, they will be led to a place where their ancestor lived, worked or died. This is usually a place they have never been to before and many immediately feel a connection between these places and themselves.

I have recently been to Belfast (where I had spent some time a few years ago) and stayed in the Titanic Hotel. Breakfast was taken in one of the two preserved Harland and Wolff drawing offices, with much of the rest of the hotel in other H&W offices. The hotel was full of wonderful photographs of their Belfast shipyards and the ships they built – not just Titanic!



The breakfast menu in the hotel was presented in a folder and one morning, I turned the folder over to see what was on the other side.

It was another 'WDYTYA' moment! I found myself looking at a poster of the Union and Castle liner 'Capetown Castle' built by H&W in 1938 and converted into a troopship at the start of WW2. This was the ship in which my father (George Hogarth Course 3) and other Course 3 cadets sailed to Halifax in September 1942 on their way to Clewiston. I have never seen a picture of it nor did I know the ship's heritage. But the name 'Capetown Castle' just stood out and beckoned me to read more!

Left: The poster describing 'Capetown Castle'

	<p>#5 British Flying Training School, Clewiston, Florida. Website Update</p>	
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As always, it is a great pleasure to receive requests from people asking about relatives.

Any photos that are passed to us will, with the owner's permission, be uploaded onto the 5BFTS website and the Digital Archive at Embry Riddle Aeronautical University so that we can all share them. The 5BFTS website can be found at www.5bfts.org.uk and the ERAU Digital Archive is at <https://commons.erau.edu/british-flying-training-school/>



Clewiston Update



Practice drills of saving each other are what kept so many Cadets alive.

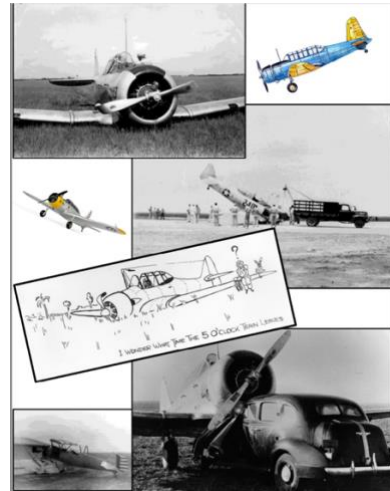
In November 2023, I heard from Leigh Woodham, who told me about a new 5BFTS exhibition she had curated. The display was about crashes – always a popular topic, but with a very serious side as the majority of the cadets buried at Oak Tree Cemetery, Arcadia, died following an air crash.

As we approach the British Memorial Day Service at Oak Tree Cemetery, it is a good time to reflect on the words of Murray Cash, Flight Surgeon at Riddle Field, *“I don’t want to remember, but I can’t forget, the fatal crashes, where we would walk out into the swamp, filled with tall saw grass, dreading what we would find. They were so young, so very young, and seemingly unafraid”*.



Leigh sent me these pictures of the exhibits.

Thank you Leigh.



You may recognise the flying jacket in the showcase as it was the one that Lawrie Moore (Course 17) was wearing when he crashed his Lancaster at Christmas 1946 and pictures of this jacket have been in earlier newsletters. It was donated to the museum by his wife Dina Moore and their three sons. Dina told me that the tear on the shoulder was made when Lawrie was pulled out of the wreckage. After nine unsuccessful operations, Lawrie’s leg was amputated. He never flew again, and the flying jacket remains as it was that day when he crashed.

Left: Lawrie’s flying jacket at home in the UK before it went to Clewiston

The Museum displays information and links, which connect to photographs and other archives <https://www.theclewistonmuseum.org>. Click the ‘Exhibit’ tab and the 5BFTS logo takes you to photo archives and clicking on, ‘Clewiston and beyond’ takes you to my book about my father in the ERAU archives. Look in Digital Archives for copies of ‘The Clewiston News’ published between 1941 and 1945 – a great way to find out what was happening at Riddle Field!



The showcase at Clewiston Museum

On behalf of 5BFTS, please can I, once again, thank Clewiston Museum, Jeff Barwick, Leigh Woodham, Director of the Museum and the Museum Board for looking after the 5BFTS archives and doing such a wonderful job keeping 5BFTS alive for the visitors to the museum.

And finally – a date to remember. Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University will be 100 years old in 2025. Watch this space!



The Embry-Riddle Company was founded by T. Higbee Embry and John Paul Riddle at Cincinnati's Lunken Airport on Dec. 17 – exactly 22 years to the day after the Wright brothers' famed flight at Kitty Hawk.

Useful websites:

- Clewiston Museum: <https://www.theclewistonmuseum.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'. Memoirs of George Hogarth, Course 3](http://commons.erau.edu/clewiston-beyond/1/)
- Frederick J Brittain Flying was my Life 1918 – 2002 www.frederickjbrittain.com
- Roy Mather DFC (Co 12): "A Pilot's Story – A Chesterfield Hero" www.vickersvaliant.com

The next newsletter will be published in Autumn 2024. Please can you let me have any articles, information, etc. by the end of August 2024. 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. And for now.....

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