



NEWS SHEET

Stay safe whilst we are in "Lockdown"

Ed: *This time I am starting with a story from Ian Mason, yes I know he was an Andover pilot as well, but this was after that as he became a Staff Pilot at Finningly, mainly flying Navigators and AEO's around but here is another story.*

Ian Mason writes:



HS 125-2 Dominie T1

It was on a peaceful sunny day when I was stationed at RAF Finningly tasked with flying the Dominie. Each year the Aerosystems Course would be given an exercise that entailed a flight or two. In this case the task was to fly at 500 feet on a route around the northern part of the country and one of the student members would map read me to a series of landmarks such as a small bridge on a footpath and then log the time between sighting and passing overhead. Afterwards they would take their results back to the classroom and



come up with answers that filled the exercise requirements.

On that particular day the course member was an Air Electronics Officer (AEO) sitting in the right hand seat. For him, it was a trip of great excitement because, being a member of the V Force, he had great pleasure in telling me that this was the first time he had ever had a seat facing forward, the first time that he had a window to look out of and it was the first time that he had ever had a map in his hand.

The trip was progressing nicely and we were getting results from the various landmarks when suddenly a dirty big black bird impacted on the flightdeck window where there was not much to see other than blood. At the same time I heard a strangled cry and the body of this AEO lying across my lap. As I pulled up I could not help saying "you see, this is what happens if you sit in a seat facing forward, have a window to look out of and go round the country with a map in your hand".



We abandoned the trip at this stage and diverted to Edinburgh to land and see if the aircraft had received any damage. Fortunately, all was well and we recovered to base at normal transit heights. On saying goodbye, he said to me that this was going to be a trip that he would remember for the rest of his life".

The Night Flying Ginny & Madam Shoo Shoo Came For Tea

On the 7th June 1944 two B-24 Liberators of the US 490th Bomb Group based at Eye, suffered a ground collision at RAF Feltwell. I am very grateful to Mr Eric Swain for providing the background information for this story. This account was written in 1998 by Jim Cunningham the Co-pilot in Lt Brown's aircraft, which had been named "Flying Ginny"

We got back to the base at about noon of the sixth after our D-Day mission. Needless to say, we were dead tired and after putting our equipment away and doing all the various things that must be done after a mission it was about 2:30 PM. Of course we had no sleep the previous night and went to bed as soon as we could and slept clear through until the next morning. We figured we would go on another mission that day but we weren't sure when. Apparently the staff didn't know either so we had to go to the briefing room and stand by until the received the battle order from headquarters.

It finally came at about 2:30pm (June 7th). We were briefed on the target for over half an hour and had to take off at 4:00pm. This did not give us much time but we made the take off time OK. The primary target was a railroad bridge at Tours, France and if we could not bomb that then it was to be the bridge at Nantes. We had complete overcast at Tours but there was a hole in the cloud at Nantes and got our bombs off there. They were right on the target. That sure gave us a good feeling, especially after our problems on D-Day. The flak was certainly heavy and accurate around both of those targets. The bottom of our plane looked like a sieve but luckily no severe damage and no injuries. The mission was a success, but it was by no means over for us.

It was about 11:30pm when we returned to the base area and found that there were enemy fighters waiting to shoot us down as we approached to land. We received orders to fly west and land at the first field we could find that was a reasonable distance from here. We were very low on gas and weren't anxious to make another single engined landing, especially at night. Another thing on our minds was the "Q" sites that had been set up to look like airfields to fool the enemy. At night these looked like lit runways but in reality they were dumps meant to wreck an enemy plane attempting to land.

We were fortunate that the runway we picked was an RAF field with a grass runway, which made the landing pretty rough, but it wasn't a "Q" site and we got down without a problem. As soon as we got off the end of the runway, Lt Brown sent Cooper out to guide us off, (it was pitch black out there). We had no way of knowing, but Lt. Heath had landed just behind us and just as we were starting to taxi we heard and felt a terrific crash. Heath's plane, (Named Madam Shoo Shoo), ploughed through ours and the nose ended up between our number 3 and 4 engines. Lt. Brown ordered everyone out and we didn't stick around to talk thing over. I fully expected an explosion. I cut the switches and got out of my seat the fastest ever. The crew gathered on the runway, all except Brown, Robarge and Meek. Bill Brown stayed in the plane to check on the crew and found Robarge and Meek pinned in the wreckage. There was no explosion or fire and we got the two men out in about 15 minutes, all cut and bleeding.



The RAF people were soon on hand and got them to their hospital. Robarge had a sprained shoulder and cuts to his face. Meek had a broken hand, broken pelvis and cuts on his face and eye. Lt. Heath and his co-pilot Lt. Simpson were pinned in their plane for a while, but the RAF people were on hand right away to help them out. Both planes were a complete wreck and it's a miracle that we weren't all killed.

We spent the night at the RAF base and were treated royally. We didn't get much sleep, but we were pleasantly surprised in the morning by being awakened by an RAF enlisted man with a cup of delicious tea! After a meal at the base and some pleasant conversation with our RAF counterparts, we returned to our base at Eye.

This had been our fourth mission.

Tom Payne's version from RAF Feltwell

I had been sent alone to Feltwell, then the home of Lancaster Finishing School (LFS). Yet another posting whilst waiting for Advanced Flying on Oxfords. At the time it felt like there were too many pilots but our Commonwealth lads got moved on quicker.

At Feltwell I had some passenger flights in Lancs but my basic duties were in the caravan at the start of the runway. I had some 'erks' to run errands and light the flares as we had a grass runway and underneath was 'Somerfield Tracking' on both runway and taxiway (for you new chaps it was like PSP). The gooseneck flares (paraffin) on both sides of the runway were lit by hand.

On 7/6/44 we were called on the tannoy about 100.00pm to prepare to receive diversions of USAF aircraft. They were diverting alone, having flown across the Channel, to Feltwell and other training bases in Yorkshire.

Operational personnel and the OTU were not alerted as they had their own orders. The initial diversions eventually found our lights, the flight path lights were set for Lancs not USAF Liberators. They came in at varying heights and speeds. After two or three came in too close to each other I flashed and fired red very lights at them but without response. With a hump in the early part of the runway we had no sight of the aircraft once they had landed but we heard a crash. I sent a driver and new an aircraft had stopped short and had been hit by the following one. I contacted ATC Tower and discussed goose necks and fired off all of the red cartridges. I then went to the Tower to report the problems. A ambulance was sent but having spoken to the crews found most were OK and sent to the Officers' Mess. I learnt that nobody had been killed, the react gunner, two waist gunners and mid upper gunner had all got forward before the crash.

In daylight I took a ride to the wreckage by Landerover, all 'loose clocks' etc had been collected by the crew and a Sqn Ldr of LFS. I managed to collect two Pop on thick padding panels of heavy packed 'sheeting' about 40" x 30" subsequently used in a cot for my first nephew in December 1944 and the other for my first baby in June 1946.

The collision could have been avoided if the first plane had continued along the runway to the Landerover waiting at the turnoff 150/200 more yard to go. We never heard of any Court of Enquiry or

even a meeting. The ground cleared in 5" ammo got cleared up eventually. The aircraft were broken up on the spot and the runway was cleared for use by 10/6.

I then got a posting to Filey on the east coast south of Scarborough with 50 others, billeted in terraced houses on the sea front. Our dining area was an old garage with oil still on the floor. The houses had sash windows which rattled and we had to wedge with newspaper. The satiation was RAF Hunmanby Moor and post war it became Butlins Filey holiday camp. We did commando like training in the local ravines and it was the worst camp I was ever on!

Had a better time at Perth/Scone on Tiger Moth's before going to Cambridge on Oxfords. Then a further week at Feltwell as they by then had a beam approach, so we flew a figure of eight pattern along and across the beams.

Then to Lancasters!



"That's Henderson our Rear Gunner"

This cartoon was published in a recent Newsletter of The Australian Bomber Command Association and was sent via their editor Geoff Raebel

What What did you do on VE Day 1945

Tom Payne now continues with his VE Day memory:

VE day, I with my full crew, plus different Mid-upper as original "lost it" on a night cross country on Wellingtons. Taken from us at dispersal - never seen again - assume "LMF" applied with immediate effect.

All of his effects taken by RAF Police from barrack room same night.

*Now the memories of our Air Traffic man **Tony Brown**, I think his report may include a typo but we will not argue about his age!:*

Well I'm only 45 now so things are a bit hazy! We lived in Suffolk in a village on the River Deben which ran out to sea at Felixstowe. We were surrounded by airfields the nearest being RAF Martlesham Heath. During the war I can still remember a German plane that had bombed the airfield but had been damaged by anti aircraft fire. Its very difficult to believe but I can still see it so clearly as it came over the house and subsequently crashed on the other side of the river.

On the river was a boat building firm which had been involved in providing various naval vessels for the Royal Navy. In the lead up to D Day they had made numerous dummy boats which were moored on the river and were apparently made to look like landing barges and the Germans were invited to bomb them!

On VE Day all the children in the village were told to go down to the boatbuilders. We were then instructed to board one of the tender boats and not to move around. No health and safety in those days and no life jackets. Petrol was like liquid gold but obviously permission had been given to use a few gallons and we chugged our way down to Felixstowe and back. Quite exciting as we had not enjoyed any treats for a long time. I think we were given a banana or orange when we got off. No one knew what they were!

Sorry Graham but memories are a bit limited. I don't think any children really appreciated what it all meant.

Geoff Hulett was of course serving in India and Burma

I do remember joining the chorus 'thank god for that', now we can expect spare parts urgently need for AOG'

Roger Almond sort of remembers VE Day

Although I'm not quite one of the 'elder brethren' I have a firm memory of what must have been VJ Day. VE Day had been announced at 3.00 pm but VJ Day was at midnight.

As an 8 year old I was fast asleep only being awoken to the sound of the local coalman ringing a very loud handbell. My parents came into my bedroom

to tell me that the war was over, to which I rather sleepily replied 'Why couldn't they wait until morning'.

My younger sister and I were quickly dressed and went into the centre of Bristol where we joined in the dancing and even had a photo of us published in the Bristol Evening World newspaper.

Ed: *Thank you to all those who sent me their memories. Of course there were many like Geoff, for whom the war was far from over, so we will wait for their memories of VJ day.*

PIA Flight 8303

A PIA Pakistan International Airlines A320-200, registration AP-BLD performing flight PK-8303 from Lahore to Karachi (Pakistan) with 91 passengers and 8 crew, had aborted the approach to Karachi due to problems with extension of the nose landing gear (in fact, when the crew read the landing clearance for runway 25L back the sounds of a master warning can be heard) and performed a go around. While on a left downwind for a second approach to runway 25L, about abeam the threshold of runway 25L the crew requested to turn left immediately reporting they had lost both engines (CFM56) and repeatedly declaring Mayday about 5 minutes after the go around, the RAT (RAM Air Turbine) deployed. Tower cleared the aircraft to land on either runway 25 (25L or 25R). The aircraft lost height and impacted a residential area called Model Colony, featuring concrete multistorey buildings on second final approach east of the aerodrome (presumably while on final approach to runway 25L) and burst into flames at about 14:40L (09:40Z). On the ground, near position N24.9116 E67.1881 about 1350 meters/0.74nm short of the runway threshold, five multistorey houses - including the Allied School Airport Campus - are being reported to have been de-roofed and set ablaze, debris is distributed over the streets. Two passengers survived with injuries, the bodies of 89 passengers and all 8 crew were recovered from the crash site, 4 people on the ground were injured. A number of houses were damaged, none of the houses destroyed, a number of vehicles in the streets were damaged or destroyed.

Now read on about the accident on P5.

The above was as reported by the respected Flight Safety website "Aviation Herald" and they have continued to update as the news becomes clearer.

Why is this accident so important and why did it happen. The final answers may take over a year to come out as the Pakistan authorities will wish to cover every aspect of the accident leading as it did to the aircraft crashing less than a mile from the runway on it's second approach.

At first glance it appears that it was a number of things that all came together to have such tragic consequences. Thankfully the fact that, at the moment, there appear to have been no fatalities on the ground, seems almost impossible and also 2 passengers survived the crash.

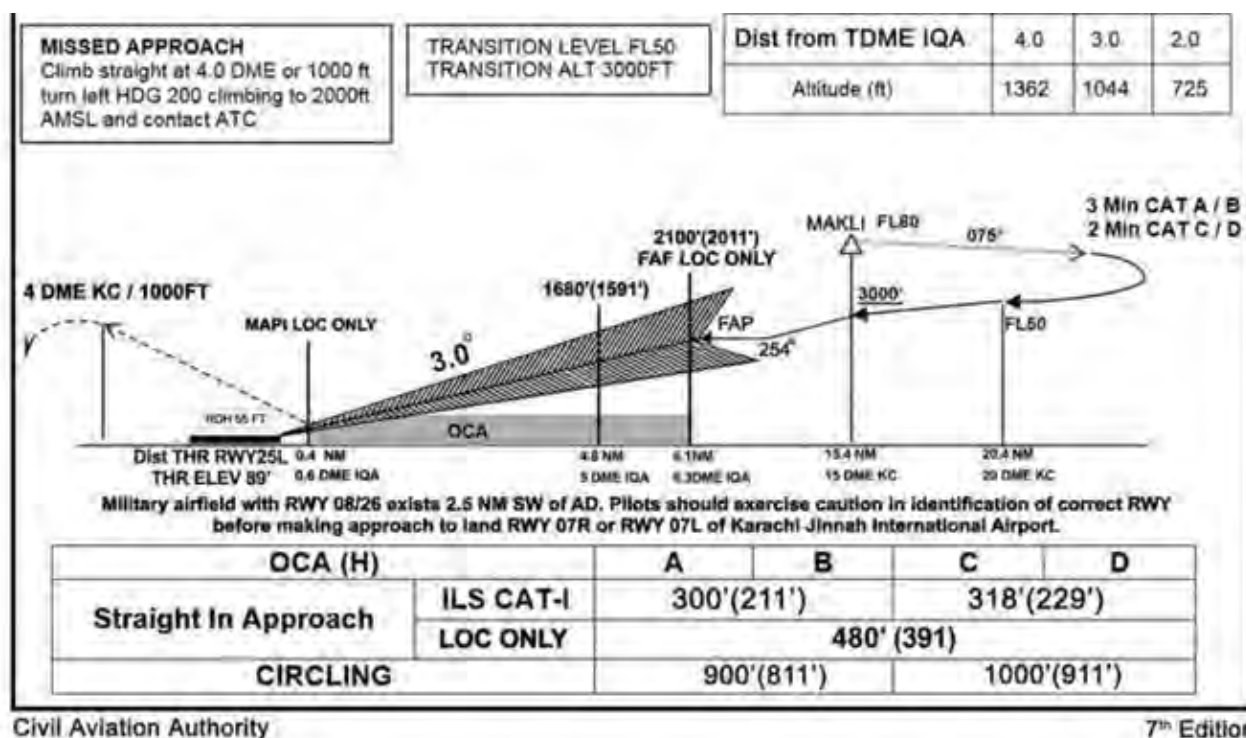
Some official and semi official comments have been reported since and two are published here:

On May 24th 2020 Pakistan's media quote a CAA official speaking on condition of anonymity that the aircraft made two attempts to land. During the first approach it appears the landing gear was still retracted when the aircraft neared the runway, the pilot had not indicated any anomaly or emergency, emergency services thus did not respond and did not foam the runway as would be done in case of a

suggest the engines made contact with the runway surface, it is possible that the engines were damaged during that contact with the runway surface leading even to possibly fire.

On May 24th 2020 a spokesman of the airline said, the landing gear had not been (partially or fully) lowered prior to the first touch down. The crew did not call out the standard operating procedures for an anomaly and no emergency was declared. Most likely the crew was not mentally prepared for a belly landing and went around when they realized the engines were scraping the runway.

So what went wrong? Well it appears the aircraft was well above the normal descent profile, either due to a late start or a non standard rate of descent. For most approaches the descent will start approximately three times the cruising altitude, in this case FL 340, so one would normally brief to start descent about 102nm from touchdown and depending on the wind a few miles either way of that figure. The idea being if positioning for a straight in ILS the aircraft would be stabilised on the centre line with some flap down just prior to the glidepath intercept. As the approach continues speed would be steadily reduced the landing gear would normally be selected down just about the Final Approach Point (just over 6 miles from touch-



gear malfunction. The marks on the runway between 4500 feet and 7000 feet down the runway

down) or sometimes the outer marker (approx

5nms) and the aircraft stabilised at the pre designated approach speed.

In this case none of these things appeared to have happened. At 5 miles from touchdown (advised by ATC) the aircraft should have been just about 1,500 ft and it was actually well over 3,000 ft. He may have been established on the localizer but in no way could he have been on the glidepath. Did this high speed, high profile take too much away from the pilot's normal operating procedures that the undercarriage call was not made or missed by the Pilot monitoring? Either way the gear was not down for the first approach and the aircraft touched down on the engine nacelles over a third of the way down the runway. A go around was made after both engines had contacted the runway. We will have to wait for the report to find out what damage was done and if it was this that caused both engines to shut down. The gear was certainly down on the second approach, seen from the videos of the aircraft's last moments.

So what factors need investigation? The PIA internal services had only just restarted from a limited number of airfields. How long had the crew been off flying? The seniority of the crew and what was the cross cockpit challenge and response like? There has been in some Asian accidents a 'press on' to save 'losing face', did this happen here? Why were they so high on approach, yet told ATC they were happy to continue?

Alas the Board of Inquiry is packed by Pakistan Military, to the extent there is no representation from a commercial qualified pilot nor anyone with Airbus experience! The final report will make interesting reading for sure!

Community Action Dacorum



We have been contacted by Deborah Fogden (Community Transport Manager) to say if you are in the Dacorum area and need help with Shopping Delivery, Prescription Collection or Health Appointment transport they are very willing to help.

I have full details or if you wish to contact Deborah she is on: 01442 617634

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Please, if you have any problems do not hesitate to get in touch with any member of the committee.

In the meantime, stay safe and our best wishes to you all. I will try to get another issue out before too long