



NEWSLETTER

Happy New Year to all our readers

Christmas Lunch (See photos on Page 2)

Forty Seven members and friends attended a very successful Christmas Lunch at Greenacres on Wednesday 18th December 2019.

The tables, as usual, had been decorated superbly by Stephanie and her staff. As people arrived they helped themselves to a free drink from the bar before sitting down just after 1230. Ian Mason said Grace and before long we were tucking in to our traditional Christmas fayre. It was interesting that the room was a little quiet, definately down to everyone enjoying their food so much. You could even occasionally hear the splendid CD of Christmas songs by the 'Next Stage Choir' , including our very own Membership Secretary Ian Mason and his wife Judy. The service was slick and it was good to see some old friends amongs those serving us.

After the meal we had the usual toasts, Graham Laurie with the Loyal Toast, Rod Finn with Absent Friends and our Chairman after a few words toasted The Chiltern Aircrew Association.

Following the toasts the Landlord Dave Boggins was presented with two pictures one featuring a Pathfinder aircraft and signed by Roy Briggs and Harold Kirby. Then came a drawing of Flt Lt Bill Reid VC, presented on behalf of Tom Payne by Graham Laurie and Roy Briggs See Page 3 for pictures and details of the presentations.

A fitting end to our year with thanks to all the staff at Greenacres, who as always made us so welcome.

Membership

You will shortly be receiving a new membership form which we ask all members to fill in and return to the Membership Secretary. If you are unable to fill in the form on your computer please let Ian have all the details requested. Please also note a change this year the BACS payment is available, so if you chose this method please advise the Treasurer of the date you sent the request to your bank. If you wish to pay by cheque please send it to the Treasurer.

To sum up:

Membership Forms to Membership Secretary

Sunscriptions to Treasurer and advise him or send him a cheque payable to Chiltern ACA.

Please also note that WW2 members, as last year, are given free membership to the Association.

If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact the Membership Secretary or Treasurer (details on Page 6).

NOW PLEASE SEE BELOW AND PAGE 5 AND MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO ATTEND OUR ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



Remember 15th January 2020

Annual General Meeting

Meet @ Greenacres 1030 for 1100

Christmas Lunch 18 December 2019



Some shots of our very successful Christmas Lunch, apologies to my table (Table 2) but for some reason I forgot to take a photo, so apologies to the Mason's, Gilson's, McKay's and of course to Mrs Laurie ... doh!

You may notice that the Chairman was missing from his table and replaced by Bill George who is seen explaining to Helen Keeling all about his ^{364.40} hourss flying! In fact our Chairman was gallivanting around the tables speaking to our guests and can be seen on Page 3!

I must say that it appeared to be a very happy occasion, so do remember our next Luncheon in May 2020.

CHILTERN AIRCREW ASSOCIATION

There he is!



Our Chairman having been unseated by Bill George is seen chatting with some WW2 veterans

Presentations

After the lunch the Chiltern ACA made two presentations to Greenacres, as a thank you for their splendid support over many years.

The first picture was of a Pathfinder Lancaster and it has been signed by our two ex Pathfinders, Roy Briggs and Howard Kirby, who were both on hand to present the picture to Landlord Dave Boggins.



The Pathfinder painting being accepted by Dave Boggins from our two Pathfinders Roy Briggs and Harold Kirby

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The second picture was gifted by Tom Payne, who sent his best wishes to all along with a stunning charcoal drawing print of Bill Reid VC.



Dave Boggins receiving the Bill Reid print from Graham Laurie Roy Briggs (representing Tom Payne).

Flt Lt Bill Reid VC

Bill Reid won a Victoria Cross in 1943 for his heroism on a bombing expedition to Germany.

On the night of November 3 1943, Reid was serving with 61 Squadron as captain of a Lancaster bomber on the way to Dusseldorf when it was attacked by a Messerschmitt 110 nightfighter as it crossed the Dutch coast.

His windscreen was shattered, the plane's gun turrets, steering mechanism and cockpit were badly damaged, and Reid himself sustained serious injuries to his head, shoulders and hands. The plane dived 200 ft before he managed to regain control.

Saying nothing about his injuries, Reid called his crew on the intercom for a damage report and proposed that they forge ahead regardless. As the Lancaster continued on its mission, it was soon attacked again, this time by a Focke-Wulf 190, which raked the plane with gunfire, killing Reid's navigator, fatally wounding the wireless operator and knocking out the oxygen system. Reid sustained further injuries to his right arm, but still refused to turn from his target.

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Sustained by bottled oxygen from a portable supply administered by his flight engineer, Sergeant J W Norris, Reid pressed on for another 50 minutes. He memorised the course to his target and continued in such a normal manner that the bomb aimer, cut off from the cockpit by the failure of the plane's communications system, had no idea his captain was injured. After reaching Dusseldorf, he released his bombs right over the centre of the target - a ball bearing factory - then set course for home.

Semi-conscious at times, freezing cold because of his broken windscreen, and half blinded by blood from a head wound which kept streaming into his eyes, Reid, assisted by flight engineer Norris, somehow kept the plane in the air despite heavy anti-aircraft fire over the Dutch coast and the physical effort required to hold the control column steady.

As they crossed the North Sea, all four engines cut out and the plane went into a spin. Luckily Norris remembered in the nick of time that he had forgotten to change over the petrol cocks to a full tank, and swiftly rectified the fault.

Eventually they managed to find their way home, taking their bearings from the Pole Star and the moon. As he came into land at Shipdham air base, Reid had to use an emergency pressure bottle to hand-pump the undercarriage down, and this exertion and the aircraft's descent into warmer air reopened his wounds. As the Lancaster touched down, the undercarriage collapsed and the bomber skidded along the runway for 60 yards before coming to a halt.

His citation read: "Wounded in two attacks, without oxygen, suffering severely from cold, his navigator dead, his wireless operator fatally wounded, his aircraft crippled and helpless, Flight Lieutenant Reid showed superb courage and leadership in penetrating a further 200 miles into enemy territory to attack one of the most strongly defended targets in Germany, every additional mile increasing the hazards of the long and perilous journey home. This tenacity and devotion to duty were beyond praise."

William Reid was born at Baillieston, Glasgow, on December 12 1921, the son of a blacksmith. He was educated at Coatbridge Secondary School and studied metallurgy for a time, but then applied to join the RAF.

After training in Canada, he received his wings and a commission in June 1942, then trained on twin-engined Airspeed Oxfords at Little Rissington before moving to OTU, North Luffenham. There, his skill as a pilot led to his being selected as an instructor, flying obsolete Wellington bombers, albeit with the promise of a posting to a Lancaster unit.

The posting did not materialise until July 1943, when he was sent to 1654 Conversion Unit, Wigsley, near Newark, where he flew his first operational mission as second pilot, in a Lancaster of 9 Squadron, in a raid on Munchen-Gladbach.

In September he was posted to 61 Squadron at Syerston, Newark, to commence Lancaster bombing operations, and flew seven sorties to various German cities before the raid on Dusseldorf.

After a period in hospital, Reid went to C Flight 617 ("Dambuster") Squadron at Woodhall Spa in January 1944 and flew sorties to various targets in France.

In July 1944, 617 Squadron was linked with 9 Squadron for a "Tallboy" deep penetration bomb attack on a V-bomb storage dump at Rilly-la-Montagne, near Rheims. As Reid released his bomb over the target at 12,000 ft, he felt his aircraft shudder under the impact of a bomb dropped by another Lancaster 6,000 ft above. The bomb ploughed through his plane's fuselage, severing all control cables and fatally weakening its structure, and Reid gave the order to bail out.

As members of his crew scrambled out, the plane went into a dive, pinning Reid to his seat. Reaching overhead, he managed to release the escape hatch panel and struggled out just as the Lancaster broke in two. He landed heavily by parachute, breaking his arm in the fall.

Within an hour he was captured by a German patrol and taken prisoner. After various transfers, he ended the war in Luckenwalde PoW camp, west of Berlin.

Thank You Tom

You can see from the amazing story of Bill Reid and his courage how well earned his VC was. Our thanks must go to Tom for his tenacity in sourcing the picture and donating it to Greenacres.

Tom was of course one of those young men who lied about his age in order to join the RAF as aircrew! He joined the local ATC in Hemel Hempstead but when it came to hand in his request, the man on the other side of the desk was his former Headmaster! 'You are not 18 Payne' said the head but Tom said 'I know and you know but I really want to fly'. One signature later and 'Good luck Tom' and as the say, the rest is history.

Illness during training in Canada meant Tom was delayed in returning to fight but the will and tenacity were there for all to see. Thank you Tom and Best wishes from us all.

Our AGM and the Future AGM 15 January 2020

This is formal notice of our AGM for 2020 is to be held at Greenacres on Wednesday 15th January 2020 at 11.00am.

The purpose of the AGM is to discuss how we are running and seek any views on the future and in any way we can improve. Also to listen to each committee members inputs and then to approve or otherwise the future of the Committee, and vote on its continued membership for which we need a vote.

1. Chairman's Introduction
2. Committee reports
Welfare: Any concerns relating to our members
Secretary/Editor: Newsletter, arrangements with Greenacres, possible visits and when.
Treasurer: Accounts review and Raffle success
Membership: Speaking/projection machinery (do we need to improve?)
Speaker Secretary: Any points on speakers?
Continuation of role?
3. Election of Officers (President takes Chair)
4. Constitution: A discussion prior to Committee revising current edition, if required.
Members see attached file
5. The future of the Association to include Membership
6. Any other business

If you have any matters for 'Any Other Business' please ensure they are with the Secretary by **Friday 10th January 2020.**

The 737 Saga

We have been following the story of the 2 fatal 737 crashes and the subsequent grounding. Now the CEO of Boeing has been sacked because of his handling (or lack of it) highlighted recently by the burials of many of the Ethiopian casualties, without the knowledge of the families.

Boeing fired CEO Dennis Muilenburg just before Christmas, saying in a statement: 'The Board of Direc-

tors decided that a change in leadership was necessary to restore confidence in the Company moving forward as it works to repair relationships with regulators, customers, and all other stakeholders.' David Calhoun, a current Boeing board member, will take over as CEO.

The removal of Muilenburg comes a week after Boeing announced it will halt production of the 737 MAX starting in January as it seeks recertification of the aircraft from regulators around the world.

The 737 MAX has been grounded worldwide since 13 March 2019 following two deadly crashes linked to the aircraft's MCAS system. The manufacturer has continued to produce around 40 planes per month with approximately 400 now in storage at various facilities.

Storage has now become a major problem and other suppliers are also feeling the pinch of the grounding. Spirit Aero Systems have been advised to stop all 737 MAX deliveries to Boeing effective Jan. 1, 2020, due to Boeing's announced temporary suspension of 737 MAX production. Accordingly, Spirit will suspend 737 MAX production beginning on Jan. 1. Spirit will continue to communicate with Boeing regarding the timetable for resuming production.

Because revenue from 737 aircraft components represents more than 50 percent of Spirit's annual revenue, this suspension will have an adverse impact on Spirit's business, financial condition, results of operations, and cash flows. Additional financial information related to the suspension will be provided in Spirit's fourth quarter/full year 2019 earnings release.

Spirit is evaluating all potential actions to align its cost base with lower production levels expected in 2020. Decisions will be guided by a focus on what is best for the long-term interests of Spirit's stockholders and other stakeholders, including employees.

This is all in addition to the repercussions in the aircraft certifications circles around the world. There is no doubt the American FAA have caught a cold and subsequently this will mean a more thorough certification programme for this and future aircraft. This should in turn mean safer air transport instead of cutting corners to achieve slipping delivery dates. Couple this with better pilot training programmes and the 737 could yet play its part in the future safety of commercial aviation. Let us hope so for all concerned.

Graham

Programme 2020

Events at 1030 for 1100 at Greenacres unless (*)
15 Jan 20 AGM and 'Open Mic' & a surprise DVD

We plan to mix meetings with visits again this year but as numbers are decreasing we are planning to rely more on our members to give us the benefit of their 'life experience - it does not all have to be flying.

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Chairman

My thanks to Graham, supported by Ian and Rod for a very successful Christmas Lunch. They are in grave danger of being re-elected at the AGM!

At this meeting on the 15th January, I would like to open a discussion on the way ahead. The ACA was created by the comradeship generated mainly by bomber crews and those days are fading. The question is how do we maintain a similar spirit to keep the Association active and enjoyable. Attendances need to be maintained and speakers found. So, at the AGM, let us see if we can generate a positive discussion.

If any other "branches" who I know some read our Newsletter on the ACA Website, ideas from them would also be welcome!

A Happy New Year!

Des

Welfare

Sorry to have missed the Xmas Lunch with a leg injury but I have managed a ring round. Denis Swains has not been too well and we send him our best wishes.

David

Secretary

See details of our AGM on Page 5.

Graham

Membership Secretary

You may pay your subscription direct to our account by BACS or a cheque to our treasurer. Please let me and Rod know you have paid so we can update the records accordingly

Ian

President

Congratulations to the Committee on another rewarding Christmas Lunch, so well attended.

January sees the AGM and the chance to re-elect an enthusiastic committee.

Look forward to seeing a record attendance.

Happy New Year.

Geoff

