

No 74 (F) Tiger Squadron Association

Tiger News No 31

Compiled by Bob Cossey

See us on the Internet at www.74squadron.org.uk

Association President AVM B L Robinson FRAeS FCMI RAF Ret'd

Association Chairman Dave Roome OBE

Association Treasurer Rhod Smart

Association Secretary Bob Cossey

Your Contributions

It is a continuing feature of Tiger News that we include items of Members news. This also encompasses, of course, stories and anecdotes which you may wish to share with us. I know from personal experience that you all have a wealth of these!

I look forward to hearing from you. I may not be able to include all of them immediately but rest assured they will find a place in time.....

Photo Archive

I am in the process of consolidating the Association's photo archive - scanning the photos we have and putting them on disc for safe keeping. I am also seeking to enhance what we are holding by asking individual Tigers whether they would be prepared to let me scan their own photos for the same purpose. It seems to me that to be able to hold a central archive of photographs is a super way of safeguarding the Squadron's pictorial history. I have approached some of you individually about this - but would like to appeal to everyone in the Association with 74 Sqn photos to consider entrusting me with them for a few weeks so that I can get them all onto disc. Once completed copies of the disc would of course be available to anyone who wants one. The photos would also be a good resource for the BBC Remembrance project - see later in this issue for details. I look forward to being swamped with photos from all eras of the Tigers!

Tales of a Wandering Tiger

Denzel Beard was a Meteor Tiger but had an eventful career prior to that. Here he recounts some of his adventures! First off though, to set the scene Denzel spent some (considerable) time with his log books and compiled this list of aircraft types flown and the number of different aircraft of each type.

13 Tiger Moths	58 Harvard Mks 1, 3a and 4	29 Hurricane 2bs and 2cs
10 Kittyhawk Mk 4s	46 Spitfire Vs and IXs	2 Albacores
1 Proctor	1 Fairchild Argus	3 Corsairs
5 Martinets	2 Oxfords	6 Expeditors
27 Ansons	35 Baltimores	7 Beaufighters
3 Wellingtons	15 Meteors	

In addition to this impressive tally, Denzel flew as 2nd pilot on the following:

26 Wellingtons	5 Marauders	7 Hudsons
5 Venturas		

And as a passenger on:

- 1 Sunderland and 2 Empire flying boats returning from Karachi to Cairo**
- 1 Valencia from Habbaniyah to Basra and back (trucks on the ground overtook them!)**
- 1 Lodestar from Rhodesia to Cairo**
- 1 Ensign**
- 1 Curtis Commando from Coimbatore to Karachi**
- 17 Dakotas**
- 1 Liberator from Cairo to Oakington. Home at last!**

"We used to say only fools and birds fly - and birds don't fly at night," Denzel told me. He recalled an incident in which he had to take something or someone to landing ground H3 on the pipeline from Iraq flying the Communications Flight Baltimore. Things got a bit delayed and once airborne it quickly became apparent there was no hope of making H3 so he had to land at Lydda and stay the night. It had been some time since he had done any night flying - and that was on Harvards in Rhodesia. On final approach in the gathering gloom he throttled back and was amazed to see flames coming from the exhaust stubs which are not far from the eye in a Baltimore. He couldn't see a thing for a bit - but did get down OK. You don't notice flaming exhausts during daylight of course. Another incident involved some Spits. "We were next to a storage MU at Landing Ground (LG) 237, known as Kilo 40 (the distance from Cairo up the road to Alexandria) and also known as Gebel Hamzi. There were up to 300 planes of all types standing in the sand there waiting for use. On this particular day nine of us were detailed to move nine Spits to Helwan for preparation for squadron service. Off we all went but the fun started at the other end. Two landed successfully, six did wheels up landings and I had to do a one wheeler! The two who had landed first were so busy watching me that one taxied into the other and sawed his wing off! The undercarriage locks on rotating bolts. They were all jammed with sand, so none of us got into trouble except for the pair taxiing who spent two months serving behind the bar and got red endorsements. The CO said to me - 'I hear

you made a good job of your one wheel landing, but next time knock the switches off and then you'll only break one prop blade instead of two!`"

They aren't all happy or amusing times in the service by any means. Some are outright sad, almost tragic. For example, Denzel had delivered a Spitfire to Mersa Matruh and on asking control about getting back he was told that `one of your chaps is here taking a Beaufighter back to Cairo in the morning. Be ready at 0900.` At the appointed time a very scruffy chap appeared and introduced himself as Geoff. They got in and Denzel sat on the main spar behind Geoff's seat. It was only then he began to suspect there was something odd going on. The cockpit had begun to smell like a distillery. Geoff started up and taxied out and by then the fumes were overpowering. He was now sweating profusely and shaking. He was obviously drunk and Denzel was very glad to arrive safely. But that wasn't quite the end of the tale as he recalls. "When I started moving Beaufighters myself - always to Cyprus and Famagusta where there was an OTU for the type - I learned about the Three Barrels. The Officers' Mess, the NCOs' Mess and the Airmens' Mess in Cairo each had a barrel - obviously in the proper proportions of 18, 12 and 6 gallons. If the barrels were empty, whoever took the next Beau to Cyprus took the barrels with him. He would walk the main street in Famagusta where there were a selection of bodegas each containing three vats of 1, 2 and 3 star brandy. You were supposed to sample the 3 star barrels and decide which was the best and then get the barrels filled. The brandy cost £1.00 per gallon and was sold in the Mess for£ 1.00 a bottle! Now Geoff had had a Dear John letter from his wife who had gone off with a Yank, a loss from which he never recovered. As a result he used to consume two bottles of brandy every night and then try and run over various unfortunate tents which quite often collapsed as a result, causing considerable uproar and language which had nothing all to do with Egyptian! Whilst progressing down the lines like this he would be shouting `Whey Hey` at the top of his voice! If you had a day off in Cairo you had to report to the CO to show that you were properly turned out. He would look at Geoff in his booze stained shirt, sagging socks and distorted forage cap and shout words to the effect that `you are a f----- disgrace, get out of my sight before...`etc etc.

"A few years later, sometime in 1948, my wife (then my fiancée) and I were sitting in the lounge bar of the Marine on the seafront in Sidmouth, enjoying a glass of Pimms, when I heard `Whey Hey` from the public bar. It was Geoff. The landlord fetched him round. He was travelling in furnishing fabrics that he imported from Belgium. He drove a sit-up-and-beg Austin 16 with old fashioned radiator flaps down each side of the bonnet. About six months later I went to a 2 ADU reunion and learned that Geoff was dead. He tripped over a doorstep, drunk, and broke his neck and died poor soul. For him it was a happy release. His life had finished a long time previously in the desert."

Denzel went on to tell me of another occasion in which he was about to set off with others from Gibraltar in Martinets en route to Coimbatore. The Flight was waiting for take off clearance when the Met Flight Gladiator came in. At the Rock the wind doesn't always blow very true and as he touched down he did a big bounce again and again and again. "Each time he drifted a bit more towards Spain," recalled Denzel. "Eventually the Gladiator hit a concrete blockhouse on the edge of the runway. The petrol tank split, the

pilot was smothered in fuel, couldn't open his canopy, the airfield's fire engine wouldn't start - and he was dead within a couple of minutes." Denzel's Flight postponed their departure until the next day. Their first stop was Bone, then Tunis. In Tunis the `other ranks` always tried to stay in the US Transit Centre - the Hotel de Gink. It was always clean and the food was good. But on this occasion it was full and they had to go to the RAF place where the food was disgusting and the place filthy. The result was that Denzel quickly contracted some form of food poisoning but nonetheless the next morning they all set off for Castel Benito. "After half an hour I was in deep trouble, doubled up with pain and being sick. I called up the Boss and said I would have to force land. We came upon Sfax where there was a primitive landing ground and I was told to go in first. The other eight landed in hot pursuit and we all rushed off into the dunes to do what we had to do. We arrived at Castel Benito two hours late. The MO came to greet us and suggested we should have got the first aid kit out of the tail locker. I told him that would have been a bit difficult flying a single seat aircraft....."

First flight in a Marauder was made with a Fl Off `Tiger` Camplin although Denzel cannot recall why he was so called. Both pilots were taken to Kasfereet in an Anson to pick up the Marauder. Neither had seen the type before - a dark green monster recalls Denzel - let alone flown one. Particularly significant was the complete lack of experience with a tricycle undercarriage! Like many other aircraft, particularly American built aircraft, the Marauder was popularly known as a widow-maker. Amongst other things, the port side prop was alleged to go out of control and fly into the cockpit. Kasfereet had the longest tarmac runway in the Middle East. Messrs Camplin and Beard started up and taxied to the runway's end. By that time both had decided it was a very comfortable cockpit with nice seats, individual ashtrays and lovely quilted green padding around it! They were not very impressed with the red long range fuel tank, half full, reclining in the bomb bay. They set off down the runway and Tiger had the stick right forward to get the tail up of this tricycle carriaged aeroplane!! Nevertheless, they somehow left the runway behind, probably courtesy of hitting a fairly substantial bump which got them airborne! By this time they were both quite definitely in a state of shock and were passing over Alexandria - `hardly ice cold,` adds Denzel! - before they got wheels and flaps up. Panic over, they discovered they could pick up superb dance band music on the radio and the Yankee K rations were very tasty.

A final tale for now concerns Denzel leading a few Harvards in a Communications Flight Anson down to Khartoum. He had with him the usual Navigator and Wireless Operator/Air Gunner. They landed at Khartoum mid morning, had some lunch and prepared to return to Wadi Halfar. Denzel went to the Met Office to find out about the weather. Wonderful all the way to Cairo they said. They had not been long airborne when they hit a most tremendous thunderstorm! The WOp had the trailing edge aerial out and there was lightning running about all over the place. The Anson was climbing at 2,500ft a minute. Airspeed read 50mph. Looking down he could see the sand rolling along like an enormous breaking wave. Denzel executed a sharp turn to port, picked up the Nile and followed it all the way to Wadi Halfar - but doing it that way was something of a diversion. He landed and taxied to dispersal. When the erk signalled for the engines to be shut down they did so of their own accord. Denzel had run out of fuel!

Spitfire 1 P9306

Proudly displayed in the Museum of Science and Engineering in Chicago is a Spitfire that flew with the Tigers during the Battle of Britain. Craig Brandon has been doing some research into which of 74's pilots actually flew it, when and doing what. His findings are listed below:

1940

7th July	P9306 delivered to 74 to Hornchurch.
9th July	Laurie White. Air test of the new aircraft
10th July	Peter Stevenson. The first day of the Battle. Flew sorties at 0655, 0900 and 1035. Destroyed one Me 109 and damaged a 109 and two Me 110s.
11th July	Sub Lt Wallace. Flew a recce at 1120. On secondment from the FAA to 74.
11th July	Peter Stevenson. Practiced No 2 attacks 1830
12th July	Sub Lt Wallace. Practice 1130
12th July	Sailor Malan. From Manston. Patrol 1810. Shared an He 111.
12th July	Tony Mould. From Manston to Hornchurch 2045.
13th July	Tony Mould. Patrol 1230
13th July	Sailor Malan. Patrol 1445
13th July	Douglas Hastings. Convoy Patrol 1745
14th July	Douglas Hastings. Air drill. Escort to Magister 1455 (to and from Dengie Flats gunnery range)
14th July	John Freeborn. Formation practice 2000
15th July	Peter St John. To Manston 1250
15th July	Douglas Hastings. Manston to Hornchurch
16th July	Douglas Hastings. Patrol 1400
17th July	Thomas Kirk. Formation practice 1235 and 1545
18th July	Piers Kelly. Air test 1125
18th July	Ben Draper. Patrols from Manston 1310, 1955 and 2050. Returned to Hornchurch.
19th July	Ben Draper. Patrols 0830, 1610 and 1830
20th July	Peter St John. Patrol 0710
20th July	Ben Draper. Patrols 0930, 1130 and 1545
20th July	Piers Kelly. Patrol 1155
21st July	Thomas Kirk. Practice 1845
25th July	Laurie White. Air test 1125. Patrol 1345.
28th July	Laurie White. Air test 1000
28th July	Peter St John. To Manston 1245. Combat 1955: Me 109 damaged. Interception 2105. Pilot passed out through lack of oxygen.
29th July	Peter St John. Patrols from Manston 0940, 1105, 1330 and 1355
29th July	Willie Nelson. Local flying 1530
30th July	Peter St John. Patrols 0515 and 0925
31st July	Don Cobden. Patrols 1255, 1910 and 2100. From Manston.
1st August	Don Cobden. Patrol 0845 and 1330. From Hornchurch.
1st August	Thomas Kirk. Recce 1515.
1st August	Don Cobden. To Manston. Patrols 1600 and 1730. Convoy patrol 1910.
2nd August	Don Cobden. To Manston 0530. To Hornchurch 0900
3rd August	Peter St John. To Manston 1255. Patrol 2050.

4th August	Peter St John. Patrol 1510
5th August	Peter St John. To Manston 0550. From Manston 0830.
6th August	Henryk Szczesny. Experience flight 1620. Joined 74 5/8/40. Polish.
7th August	Thomas Kirk. Local flying 1800
8th August	Willie Nelson. To Manston 0500. To Hornchurch 0910.
8th August	Jan Rogowski. Local flying 1320. From 303 Polish Squadron.
9th August	Thomas Kirk. To Manston 1300. Patrols 1845 and 2040
10th August	Thomas Kirk. To Manston and patrols 0920, 1120, 1305 and 1420.
11th August	Thomas Kirk . Patrols 0510, 0750, 1000 and 1430. One Me 109 destroyed and one damaged on third sortie.
14th August	Jan Rogowski. To RAF Wittering for R&R
16th August	Thomas Kirk. To K3 Satellite Landing Ground 1055
19th August	John Mungo Park. To K3 1550
21st August	Thomas Kirk. To Kirton in Lindsey 1740
23rd August	Sgt Parkes. Air drill
27th August	John Freeborn. Air test 1800
28th August	Peter St John. Patrol 0545
28th August	Walter Franklin. Recce 0930
28th August	Ben Draper. Air drill 1610
29th August	Peter St John. Camera gun intercepts 0915
29th August	Willie Nelson. Camera gun intercepts 1055
29th August	Ben Draper. Filming for The March of Time 1620. Patrol 1750.
30th August	Walter Franklin. Anti Aircraft Co-operation 0935
30th August	Bob Spurdle. Anti Aircraft Co-operation 1030
30th August	Ben Draper. Patrol 1610
7th Sept 1940	Stanislaw Brzezina. To Wittering 1815. To Kirton in Lindsay 1925
8th September	Thomas Kirk. Formation practice 1045
8th September	Stanislaw Brzezina. To Coltishall 1015. Patrol 1435. To Duxford 1910.
11th September	Stanislaw Brzezina. From Duxford 0700. Patrol 1540. To Coltishall 1900.

This is the last mention of P9306 in the 540s. It was around this time that 74 began to re-equip with Spitfire IIs.

Stanislaw Brzezina

One of the great pleasures of being Secretary of the 74 (F) Tiger Squadron Association is to be able to make new contact with any Tiger, or the next of kin of any Tiger, especially perhaps those older Tigers amongst you. Thanks to the good offices of Doug Tidy I have been able to talk to Andrew Brzezina, son of Stanislaw Brzezina whose name appears at the end of the above listing of those who flew P9306. Andrew has been telling me something of his father's story.

Stanislaw Brzezina was on 74 Squadron at the same time as another Pole, Henryk Szczesny, in 1940. Because of the difficulties in pronunciation of their names, the two of them were known to all as Breezy and Sneezy! Stanislaw was born on March 5th 1904 in Lodz and when old enough joined the Polish army prior to which, as a fifteen year old, he took part in the Polish Bolshevik war between April 1919 and November 1920. He joined an Infantry Officer Cadets School course in 1924 and moved on to the Polish Air

Force Cadets School in 1925. In 1927 he was posted to No 3 Air Regiment, completing his pilot's course at Deblin in 1929. Thereafter his service record reads as follows:

Rejoined 3 Air Regiment July 1920 to May 1930.

Attached to 2 Air Regiment May - June 1930

Reassigned to 3 Air Regiment June 1930 to October 1931

Posted as a Navigation Instructor at the Air Force Officers Training Centre Deblin April 1931

Posted to 4 Air Regiment November 1935 to March 1938

Attached to the Flying School at Grudziadz from March 1938 to March 1939 and the Flying School Air Force Training Centre from March 1939 to September 1939.

As a brief aside at this point, for those amongst you who are interested in aircraft types, Stanislaw's log book for the years he flew in Poland lists some familiar and some very unfamiliar names. Light aircraft he flew included Morane Saulniers, Bartel Vs, PZL 5s and 26s, RWD 5s, 6s, 8s and 9s, Tiger Moths and fifteen different types of glider. Fighters he flew included Spad 57s and 61s, Avias, Urbaults, P7s and P11As and Cs. In the aerobatic role he became familiar with PWS 14s, 16s, 18s and 26s as well as the Jungmeister. On Army Co-operation work his log book lists Bristols, Breguet XIVs, Potez XV's and XXV's and Czaplas.

Stanislaw was captured and held prisoner for two days by Polish Bolsheviks at the outbreak of the war with Germany but escaped and together with other officers forded the River Dniester and crossed into Rumania on 24th September 1939, where he was interned until November 1939. He was released and took ship for Marseilles. He joined the Polish Air Force which had fled Poland and established itself at Lyon under French command. But with the relentless advance of German forces and the inevitable fall of France, the Poles moved to the United Kingdom and Stanislaw joined the RAFVR at RAF Eastchurch, transferring to RAF Blackpool in May 1940. He was assigned to 5 OTU in July 1940. 74 was his first posting to an operational squadron and he joined the Tigers at Hornchurch on August 5th 1940 when they were in the thick of things.

Stanislaw's log book for the time he was with the Tigers - from August 5th to 19th September - shows that his first flight or the Squadron was in a Master (N7681) on the 6th for circuits and landings. On the 9th he was at Sutton Bridge for air to air firing. The real business began on the 11th August, the most successful day in the squadron's history as far as downing enemy aircraft was concerned. Stanislaw made three interceptions.

Interception flying Spitfire coded E. Fighting patrol over the Channel. First meeting with German bombers. Combat. I fired. Did not see the result.

Interception flying Spitfire coded E. Dog fight with the enemy. Cooling system shot up. Fired at Messerschmitt but did not see the result.

Interception flying Spitfire coded D. Did not meet the enemy.

On the 13th, flying N3091, Breezy tangled with the enemy again during a 60 minute patrol.

Shot down two Do217s. Was shot down myself. Parachute jump. Concussion.

He was back at Hornchurch and back in the air on the 15th when the Tigers were pulled from the `front line` and sent to Wittering for recuperation. Thereafter it was a case of sector patrols, formations, practice intercepts, DF homing (by this time they were at Kirton in Lindsay). On the 9th September the Squadron moved to Coltishall and operated for a few days as part of the Big Wing concept, flying down to Duxford to do so. During the course of one of these on September 11th -

1 hour 35 mins flying Spitfire coded D. Dog fight over London. Fired at Ju88. Did not see result.

September 15th.

1 hour 10 minute patrol flying Spitfire coded D. Intercept Do 17 and Messerschmitt. No combat.

And finally on the 18th.

55 minute patrol flying Spitfire coded F. Intercept Me 109.

Stanislaw left 74 on September 19th and joined 308 Sqn. Thereafter he had a very varied and interesting career with the RAF.

306 Sqn	11.10.40
HQ 12 Group	21.10.40
HQ 9 Group	13.01.41
317 Sqn	26.02.41
RAF Exeter	10.08.41
HQ Fighter Command	01.09.41
RAF Heston	25.09.42
149 Air Command	15.02.43
RAF Heston	14.03.43
Polish Inspectorate General	27.03.43
HQ Polish Air Force	01.10.43
No 2 Polish Despatch Centre. Departure to USA.	13.03.45.
General Staff School Fort Leavenworth Kansas	19.03.45
Polish Air Force Depot Blackpool	26.06.45
HQ Air Command	01.07.45
HQ British Air Force of Occupation Germany	19.09.45

Types flown with the RAF were Tiger Moth, Hector, Harvard, Master, Spitfire I, II, Vb and IX, Hurricane, Magister, Blenheim, Stinson, Oxford.

There is a tragic end to Stanislaw Brzezina`s story. After the war he could not return to Poland so he arranged for his wife Bozena and his son and daughter to escape from their country. Shortly after their arrival in Germany Stanislaw, in his capacity as Polish Liaison Officer with BAFO, had to attend a conference in London. The aircraft on which was travelling crashed in fog. There were no survivors. His family continued to the UK for Stanislaw`s funeral and remained in this country.

How sad that having endured the sadness of the war years, just at the time when it seemed as though some normality could return to the Brzezina's lives Stanislaw should lose his in the way that he did.

The Prostate

Members John Crow and David Jones contracted Prostate Cancer and have been through a very difficult time as they have combated the problem. Both have survived to tell the tale and felt that it may be useful for the rest of us to know what to look for and what to expect if the disease is diagnosed.

Small Gland, Big Problem

British men have a 1 in 12 lifetime risk of developing Prostate Cancer (PC), roughly the same as a woman developing breast cancer. The risk is expected to rise to around 1 in 4 by 2020. There is an increasing risk with age. It is rare in men under 45 years. Currently over 10,000 men die annually in the UK as a direct result of PC. Unfortunately, there may be no symptoms until the disease is well advanced. It can also be confused with less dangerous conditions such as an inflammation of the prostate (prostatitis) and a gradual increase in size of the prostate without any cancer present (benign prostatic hypertrophy - BPH). You may experience:

Poor flow of urine

Frequent trips to the toilet even during the night

A persistent feeling of 'not quite emptying the bladder'

Blood in the urine or semen.

A severe backache for no obvious reason

Contrary to popular belief, PC is not restricted to the over 70s but is now becoming more common in the 50 plus age group. There is an increased risk of developing PC if you have a close family member who has suffered from the condition. There is great debate over the value of screening for PC. The best test for PC is the prostate specific antigen (PSA) test which measures the levels of a prostate protein in the blood. When this test is combined with a digital rectal examination (DRE) (a doctor checking the back passage with a gloved finger), the accuracy of the detection rate of these tests ranges from 80% - 90%. PSA testing is even more valuable when carried out on an annual basis since a series of tests can reveal those who have a PSA that is rising rapidly and are thus most likely to have PC. If the level rises above 4ng/ml you should talk to a urologist. DO NOT be put off by the GP that sends you away with 3 months supply of antibiotics.

The argument against screening is that the PSA test is not 100% accurate, and the subsequent tests that have to be carried out to investigate the reason for a high PSA result are both unpleasant and invasive. It can cause a great deal of unnecessary worry to the patient whilst these tests are being carried out. Furthermore the tests may have to be repeated on an annual basis which leaves the patient living under a cloud.

If the tests show cancer to be present then a decision has to be made regarding treatment. There are two main choices: surgery or radiotherapy. The surgery option involves a 3-hour operation and several weeks with a catheter. The radiotherapy option involves intensive sessions on a daily basis for 6 weeks. Both are unpleasant and can cause impotence and incontinence. Additionally, hormone treatment can be used to slow down the growth of the cancer. A new treatment, Brachytherapy - implanting radioactive seeds - is another option but, as yet, is not widely available and is usually only offered to patients with a PSA of less than 15ng/ml. This is even more reason for early detection as Brachytherapy is, in most cases, the least unpleasant of all the treatments currently available. Unfortunately, there are no easy options or 'best buys'.

Both John & David have PC. In both cases the PSA test saved their lives. John has been down the radiotherapy route and David has had surgery. They are both very happy to talk to anyone who would like more details of their experiences, especially anyone who is worried about PC. John has studied the subject in quite some depth and is currently investigating alternative treatments (nutrients and supplements) both as preventative and after care options. If members feel that they would like more details in a future Tiger News, please advise Bob and John and/or David will be happy to oblige.

Alan Ricalton

74 Squadron's Alan Ricalton's grave is to be found in Sittingbourne cemetery -it is well tended and Stuart Downs of the Duxford based Tiger Association made a point of visiting it on Remembrance Day. He is asking whether we know of any other Tigers' graves in the Sittingbourne area - and indeed whether there are any relatives of Alan Ricalton still living in the vicinity. Perhaps you can let me know or contact Stuart directly on tigercub@blueyonder.co.uk. Alan incidentally flew with the Tigers during the Battle of Britain. He was killed when shot down near Hollingbourne on the 17th October, two days after the squadron had taken up residence at Biggin Hill having flown down from Coltishall.

Locksley Hall

I came across a bit of Tennyson recently in which he commits to paper a vision he has of the future - this was written at the beginning of Queen Victoria's reign - and which I will share with you now. It's to be found in his Locksley Hall.

And at night along the dusky highway near and nearer drawn,
Sees in heaven the light of London flaring like a dreary dawn:
And his spirit leaps within him to be gone before him then,
Underneath the light he looks at, in among the throngs of men:
Men, my brothers, men the workers, ever reaping something new:
That which they have done but earnest of the things that they shall do:
For I dipt into the future, far as human eye could see,
Saw the vision of the world and all the wonder that would be:
Saw the heavens fill with commerce, argosies of magic sails,

Pilots of the purple twilight, dropping down with costly bales;
Heard the heavens fill with shouting, and there rained a ghastly dew
From the nations' airy navies grappling in the central blue:
Far along the world-wide whisper of the south wind rushing warm,
With the standards of the peoples plunging thro' the thunder-storm:
Till the war drum throbbed no longer and the battle flags were furled
In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the world.
There the common sense of most shall hold a fretful realm in awe,
And the kindly earth shall slumber, lapt in universal law.....

And he actually used the word 'pilot'! A vision of the future indeed.

The Remembrance Project

The BBC are embarking on an exciting new long term initiative under the working title of The Remembrance Project and its aim is to build a unique, personal record of Britain during World War Two on the internet. It is to be a community based project with everyone being encouraged to access it and contribute to it and by so doing it will ultimately provide a stimulating environment for World War Two research and will become a unique new record of Britain at war. The aim is to launch the site fully in the autumn of 2003 although there will be what the BBC terms a 'soft launch' in May of next year which will give all contributors a chance to evaluate the site and if necessary suggest refinements before the autumn 'hard launch' which will be open to everybody. The site will of course never stop growing and developing - or at least that is the hope! I am told that a whole new range of programmes concerning World War Two are scheduled for the next two years on BBC TV and radio and this site will be an adjunct to them.

The point of telling you all this is that the 74 Squadron Association have been invited to contribute. I attended an initial meeting at Duxford in November on behalf of the Association when the whole concept was explained. On the website will be posted, initially, the squadron history. There will also be a prominent link displayed to our own website, www.74squadron.org.uk - and that represents another major feature of the BBC site. Links will be established to huge numbers of other organisations - both military and civil - for this is not purely a military project, it's a social and family history one too. Anybody who has an input about those years as an individual will be as welcomed as the museum, regiment, ship or squadron.

When it is fully developed, there will be the ability to search on line for relatives and friends who fought in the war - or find out about the unit they fought with. It will not duplicate what already exists. It will complement and supplement it. And it will have benefits for all those organisations who participate too. In our own case for example it will create another avenue by which ex Tigers can get in touch with us.

I hold a considerable amount of written and photographic material in the Association's archive. All that you have all told me about your times with the Squadron over the years is safely filed away! Thus, apart from the published books on the Tigers we are

accumulating a lot of additional material besides. Questions about 74 will be asked of the Association via the new site. More information will I am sure be posted about 74 on the site.

As it develops I will certainly keep everyone posted. If I get stuck for an answer to a question that may be asked I know who to come to! The one thing I can't tell you at the moment though is how to access the site - no web address has yet been allocated. As soon as there is something to see I will of course let you all know! And finally let me emphasize that even if you are not on line at home you can still participate. Most libraries, museums (and probably your children or grandchildren!) allow free internet access.

High Flight 2002.

With thanks to Dave Roome

Notes supplied by the CAA and FAA.

Oh! I have slipped the surly bonds of earth [1] and danced [2] the skies on laughter-silvered wings. Sunward I've climbed [3] and joined the tumbling mirth [4] of sun-split clouds [5] - and done a hundred things you have not dreamed of [6] - wheeled and soared and swung [7], high in the sunlit silence [8]. Hov'ring there [9], I've chased the shouting wind [10] along and flung my eager craft [11] through footless halls of air [12]. Up, up the long delirious [13] blue, I've topped the wind swept heights [14] with an easy grace where never lark, nor even eagle, flew [15]. And while, with silent lifting mind, I've trod the high untrampled sanctity of space [16], put out my hand [17] and touched the face of God.

[1] Pilots shall ensure that all surly bonds are duly slipped before taxiing commences.

[2] Movement around the cabin should be minimised and sky dancing is not encouraged. Crew shall wear shoulder harness whenever seated.

[3] Sunward climbs must not exceed the aircraft's cleared maximum altitude

[4] Passenger aircraft are not permitted to join the tumbling mirth

[5] Pilots flying through sun-split clouds when under VFR shall maintain applicable minimum clearances from cloud

[6]and don't declare or perform these hundred things in sight of CAA/FAA staff

[7] Wheeling, soaring and swinging shall not be attempted except in aircraft rated for such activities and within cleared weight and balance limits.

[8] If silence is experienced it is likely that a total engine failure has occurred

[9] Such action is to be attempted only by helicopters and Harriers

[10] Shouting wind forecasts are available from the local FSS and any unexpected encounters with shouting winds are to be reported immediately

[11] Pilots flinging their eager craft are reminded that they are responsible for maintaining separation from other eager craft

[12] Pilots are reminded that although halls may appear footless, the surface may simply be obscured and observance of safe altitude is essential unless the foot is visible.

[13] Any experience of delirium while in the blue shall be reported on landing.

[14] See note 10

[15] Any impact with larks, or even eagles, shall be reported on landing

[16] Any flight in the high untrampled sanctity of space shall be conducted under IFR

[17] Any person who attempts to open a cabin window or door in flight shall be restrained in order to prevent loss of cabin pressure.