

Chris Laidlaw-Bell



We sadly have to say farewell to Phantom Tiger Chris Laidlaw-Bell, known to all as Laidback or simply L-B, who died at home in Florida after a long battle with cancer on the 26th October. His squadron colleagues were quick to pay tribute to him.

OC 74 Dick Northcote wrote: 'L-B was the epitome of the personality requirement to be a fighter pilot – a 'stable extrovert'. I loved having him on 74. Always upbeat and keen to take on anything thrown at him. He will be missed but well remembered at reunions.'

OC 74 Cliff Spink said: 'I was the most privileged guy to command a squadron full of the most outstanding people. L-B epitomised the wonderful spirit – indeed he was a true free spirit and we all loved him for it. God bless L-B. We have lost a true fighter pilot.'

Robin Birtwistle – 'He was one of a kind, a unique member of our squadron and a Tiger till the end.'

Neil Dedman – 'He certainly got his money's worth out of life. Good on him for that. What a dude and tanned till the end.'

Russ Allchorne – 'Great guy, great aviator and great party animal, always getting a tan wherever he could. Great memories.'

Kev Wooff – 'I spoke with him online just two weeks ago. We talked and laughed about the usual stuff. We also talked about a visit out there (Florida) by the usual suspects as soon as possible after his latest round of chemo. Sadly, not to be, but beer and reflection needed. We must stop waiting until people leave before we say anything nice about them. Mind you L-B would have told us to FO if we'd said anything nice about him to his face! It will be hard to match the stature of this legend, but we have to go for it. Tiger Tiger.'

There were many more tributes. And stories abound about the extrovert and consummate professional that L-B was. A full appreciation of his life will appear in Tiger News 81.