



Après Moi

The 617 Squadron
Association Newsletter



Spring 2019



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Cover Photo: The late Fred Sutherland at his home in Rocky Mountain House, Alberta, Canada, taken in 2013.

Editorial

Welcome to the Spring edition of *Après Moi*. This edition is once again packed with interesting information and articles that I hope are of interest to you. Please tell me if not!

One of the most important events in 2019 is the 75th Anniversary of Operation TAXABLE – the D-Day diversion plan to create the impression of a grand invasion fleet of ships moving towards the coast of France at Cap d'Antifer. 617 Squadron Lancasters, under the command of Leonard Cheshire, took off from Woodhall Spa during the night of 5/6 Jun. To read more about this mission, the D-Day Revisited website is excellent. You can access it at:

<http://d-dayrevisited.co.uk/d-day-history/d-daylandings/operation-overlord/>

Later in 2019, we will also be commemorating the sinking of the Tirpitz, which was sunk on the 12 November 1944. We will share as much information about commemoration events as we can.

In addition to these two events, this edition provides plenty of interesting material, although, as always, I am interested in hearing your story. Please get in touch via my email clarke318@gmail.com to discuss how we may be able to incorporate your 617 Squadron experience. The feature is not just for our senior members, as I am seeking stories from across the decades. Thanks to those who have contributed already and shown the way.

I hope you enjoy this edition and would welcome any feedback.

Yours

Stu Clarke

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Deadline for Next Newsletter
31st July 2019
email: clarke318@gmail.com

Walters' Warblings

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I'm glad to report that your Association continues to be very active across a broad range of activities. Looking back at the Squadron's founding members, you may recall that the membership decided at the last AGM to allow close relatives of Squadron personnel to become Associate members. This has resulted in many new joiners, including Guy Gibson's nephew and Leonard Cheshire's children, amongst many others. As a result, we have had several tables at our recent Petwood reunions made up of relations of specific Lancaster crews. I think this is a marvellous way of maintaining our links with our founding members, while also enriching our reunions.

I was initially hopeful that there would be no need for any Final Landings in this edition of *Après Moi*. Sadly, you will have no doubt learnt of the passing of Fred Sutherland RCAF, Les Knight's front gunner in AJ-N on the Dams Raid, whose crew breached the Eder Dam. The loss of Fred reinforces your decision to invite descendants to join our Association; to paraphrase George Eliot, people never really die until they are forgotten, and this is an important role of your Association.

Looking forward, I have passed on your congratulations to all the members of 617 Sqn for their declaration of Initial Operational Capability on 10 January 2019. Bringing a revolutionary new aircraft into service so swiftly was a remarkable achievement, especially given the additional burden of the Squadron's high public profile and numerous VIP visits, as well as important ceremonies and anniversaries in both the US and UK.

The Association has the strongest links with the Squadron as a result of the outstanding support from OC 617 Sqn, Wg Cdr John Butcher. You may recall from my last Warblings that the Squadron consecrated a new Standard last September. Several members accepted OC 617's kind invitation to attend the retirement of the old Squadron Standard (under which many of you will have served and fought) at Marham Church on 5 March 2019. In particular, Wing Commander (retd) Peter Day, who was OC 617 Squadron when the Standard was presented by The Queen Mother, attended to see the Standard layed up.

We now have a Lightning Rep on your Committee – Flt Lt James 'Bally' Ballantine, a pilot on 617 Sqn. Equally importantly, we have recruited a

Groundcrew Rep, Cpl Alix 'DC' Dennett-Cook, who is also currently serving on the Squadron. Alix is taking the lead with recruiting groundcrew who have served on the Squadron, so that the Association's demography better reflects all those who have contributed to the Squadron's success over the years. So, please do spread the word. We have also created another new Committee position, the Funding Rep, to help us with our charitable endeavours. The first joint incumbents are Heather Allsworth and Nigel Favill, who have been great supporters of the Association and have already raised significant sums. I'm sure you will join me in welcoming Bally, DC, Heather and Nigel.

Despite the growing number of members at our reunions, the Association remains fundamentally a charity. Our main current endeavour is the Guy Gibson VC flying scholarship, whereby the Association funds a young, disadvantaged ATC/CCF cadet to go solo in a light aircraft. I'm glad to announce that our latest scholar is David White. Our first scholar, Annie Cleve, was voted in as a 'friend' of the Association at the last AGM and has been very supportive with our Facebook page. I must also thank our Official Historian, Dr Rob Owen, for all the presentations he has given, which have not only educated the public about the Squadron's achievements but have also raised a significant amount for other charities.

Our plans are coming together for the 75th anniversary commemorations of the sinking of the Tirpitz. We intend to hold this in Tromsø, Norway, over the period 11-13 November. We are piggy-backing on an RAF battlefield tour, along with the IX(B) Sqn Association. We do not want to be outnumbered by another Squadron Association with historically dubious claims about sinking the Tirpitz, so I hope that many of you will be able to join us to mark this important historic event in what is assured to be a fascinating and enjoyable three days!

Finally, I would like to thank all the Committee members on your behalf for their hard work in ensuring that the recent anniversaries have been suitably commemorated and for growing the Association's membership.

Yours,
Andrew

Dams Dinner 2019

The 2019 Dams Dinner will be on Saturday 18th May 2019, at the Petwood Hotel. A memorial service will be held at the Squadron Memorials on Sunday 19th May at 10.30am.

617 Squadron Update

2018 was a momentous year for 617 Sqn. The last six months has seen the first nine Lightning aircraft arrive at RAF Marham along with the Squadron receiving a new standard and taking on the mantle of the UK's first front-line "fifth-generation" fighter Squadron.

Immediately upon arrival at Marham we were buoyed by the enthusiasm on base surrounding the Lightning and the reception we received was fantastic. It's important to realise that operating the Lightning in the UK is still very much in its infancy, and while the aircraft may have arrived, the hangars, runway, landing pads, maintenance facilities, and the computer infrastructure required to operate successfully are still yet to be fully delivered. This will all change in the coming months and we are all excited to see an uplift in the rate of flying.

Members of the Dambusters have not just been conducting their daily duties, but also acting as the pathfinders for how Lightning will be operated in the future. Each new hurdle that appears has had to be dealt with and new suggestions, requests and procedures put forward to make for efficiencies moving forward. Working from a temporary building with limited connectivity has been especially challenging and we are all looking forward to moving into a 21st century building, hard wired with the bandwidth and computers required for fifth-generation operations later this year.



Practice loading of a Paveway IV prior to the first live-drop

Learning to operate a highly classified US aircraft in the UK has also taken time and patience. Simply getting the right number of people the security approvals from the USA required to work on the aircraft has been a challenging process.

However, along with laying excellent foundations for 2019, the Squadron has also taken part in exercises supporting land forces with close air support, and last month also marked the first live weapons drop from a Lightning in the UK with the successful release of a Paveway IV at Aberporth range off the Welsh coast. Outside of flying, October and November saw the pilots take part in two simulator exercises at Fort Worth in the USA and at MOD Abbey Wood in Bristol which has enabled us to develop UK tactics prior to the delivery of new software for both the aircraft and simulator.

Aircraft availability has unfortunately been a struggle in the run up to our Initial Operating Capability declaration at the start of this year. Fortunately, the brand-new Maintenance and Final Finishing Facility is now open and helping to alleviate the aircraft maintenance burden. Managing the morale of the engineering department who are so eager to deliver has been important as they wait for the parts and support they require.

Away from Marham, the Squadron made the national news at the end of November by participating in EX POINT BLANK. This multinational exercise was the first-time UK F-35s have worked together with Typhoon, USAF F-15s and French Rafales. UK, French and US media were on hand capturing footage from an RAF Voyager and plenty of great airborne shots were captured.



USAF F-15 in formation with a 617 Lightning and a French Rafale

Squadron work-up culminated in a simulated 'War Week' in November where a range of different missions were conducted as a proof of concept for future Lightning ops with an assessment of how far the Squadron has come in its short

time. Whilst there is still much training to be conducted before 617 first deploys, the week was an exciting and excellent indicator of things to come!

Of course, in amongst the hard work of setting up a new force at Marham, the Squadron has found time for socialising and letting off steam. Sgt Dave Roberts and AB Emily Buchanan led the organisation of our first Squadron Christmas party at Barnham Broom near Norwich. A fantastic and festive evening enjoyed by everyone on the Sqn. The excitement surrounding a new capability for UK defence has also meant a steady stream of visitors to the Squadron, from station visits and holding officers to MPs and DCOM Ops!

A standout moment of the year for the unit was the consecration of the Squadron's new standard in September. I thoroughly enjoyed leading the parade which we quickly created as the Station Commander and I decided five hours before the ceremony was due to begin to move it inside due to unforeseen winds! Being presented a new Standard at this point in our work up was very symbolic of our new beginning as a unit and helped immensely I believe in assisting the Sqn cohesion and understanding the importance of the journey the Sqn is currently on. The dinner in the evening was fantastic as well, being attended by the Chief of the Air Staff, Rear Admiral of the Fleet Air Arm and several executives from BAE and Lockheed Martin. A great opportunity to reflect on what we had achieved to that point.



ACM Sir Stephen Hillier observes the Squadron receiving its new standard

The next few months and years are incredibly exciting both for the Lightning Force and RAF Marham. On top of that, we're all looking forward to working with HMS Queen Elizabeth towards the end of this year and operating from her deck on operations in due course.

Wing Commander 'Butch' Butcher
OC 617 Sqn

Of Marks and Markings or “What’s in a Name”?

The establishment of No. 617 Squadron at its new home at RAF Marham makes this perhaps an appropriate time to reflect on the name and markings allotted to the RAF’s latest strike aircraft.

The Lockheed Martin F-35B is to be known to the Service as “Lightning”. It was originally allotted the name “Lightning II” - the “II” acknowledging the earlier supersonic interceptor produced by English Electric (Later the British Aircraft Corporation) which served the RAF in various marks for nearly 30 years until 1988. Purists might even argue that the F-35B should be called Lightning 7 or even 8 – since the RAF operated no less than 6 versions of the BAC Lightning.

Not only that, but in March 1940 the RAF had previously ordered 143 American P-38 Lightning Mk Is, the distinctive twin boomed fighter aircraft which was an earlier product of the Lockheed aircraft Corporation. Three of these, were delivered for evaluation purposes, only to be rejected and returned to the USAAF. A subsequent order of 524 P-38s to be known as Lightning IIs was also cancelled.

But aside from such pedantry of mark numbers, and the fact that the “II” would inevitably be dropped in everyday reference, the choice of Lightning is an excellent descriptor for a military strike aircraft. The very name is synonymous with might, power, speed and striking capability.

Descending from the sky, lightning bolts symbolise the destructive capability of aerial bombardment, as demonstrated by their use as a device in RAF heraldry. The badge of Bomber Command embodied two lightning flashes superimposed on a winged bomb with the motto: “Strike Hard, Strike Sure”, echoed by that of its successor, Strike Command; two flashes and a sword: “Defend and Strike”. Employing similar allusion, the Squadron badge employs three lightning bolts to represent the explosive force which destroyed the German dams.

Wartime security precluded the marking of squadron badges on aircraft. Between 1943 and 1945 the Squadron’s aircraft were identified only by combinations of code letters, “AJ”, “KC”, and “YZ”, depending on the type and period. “KC” continued to identify the tropicalized Lancaster VIIs used by the Squadron for their detachment to India.

Codes continued in use after the Squadron converted to the Avro Lincoln in 1946, but the Squadron’s Goodwill Tour to the USA during July – September the following year demanded more formal and overt recognition of the their

identity. As a result the Squadron badge was positioned beneath the cockpit of the Lincolns, leaving the Americans in no doubt as to the Squadron's illustrious past.

The switch to the Canberra B2 in 1952 marked the Squadron's introduction to the jet age and with it a change of image. A new motif appeared on the nose of their Canberra B2s in the form of a stylised red lightning flash. The marking was adopted by the Binbrook Wing, with each squadron adopting a different colour. It was transferred to the silver finished Canberra B6s with which the Squadron re-equipped in 1955, but by the end of the year the Squadron had disbanded.

Re-formed in May 1958 as the RAF's third Vulcan unit the Squadron reverted to Lincoln practice, carrying the Squadron badge on their gleaming white noses aft of the national marking. Given the aircraft's size and lack of any other unit markings this was hardly a distinguishing feature. After the Squadron re-equipped with the Vulcan B2 in September 1962 a bigger and bolder insignia was introduced. Again, taking inspiration from the Squadron badge, the new marking comprised three large lightning flashes, this time gracing either side of the Vulcan's tail fin, above the national marking.

It had been realised that the bright paintwork of the national markings compromised the Vulcan's overall white "anti-flash" finish and they were toned down to muted pastel shades. Accordingly, the markings on the fin appeared not in bright red, but pale pink. Any subconscious thought that the diluted colour reflected a reduction in striking power was rebutted in the Spring



Early Vulcan lightning flashes

of 1963 when it was announced that the Squadron was now operational with Britain's air launched stand-off nuclear missile, Blue Steel.

Subsequent years saw the Vulcans switch to low level tactics for survivability. Out went the overall white scheme in favour of a grey/green camouflage. A period of centralised servicing pooled the aircraft into the Scampton Wing; the Squadron's three lightning flashes now appearing on the crew door alongside 27 Sqn's elephant, 83 Sqn's antlers and the Scampton station badge. A later reversion of aircraft to "squadron ownership" saw the three vertical lightning flashes reinstated to the fin - this time in various forms and cut from adhesive dayglow material positioned above the national marking. These were notorious for peeling off and by 1972 the Vulcans, now again with low visibility national markings, had their fins graced by a new design – a stylised representation of the Squadron badge – breached dam, water and lightning - in a diamond frame. Use of this striking design continued until the Squadron disbanded in 1982.



1972-82 Diamond badge

During the inter-war period fighter squadrons displayed their squadron motif/colours on panels either side of the RAF roundel. This was resurrected in the 1950s and adopted by the Squadron when it re-formed in January 1983 with Tornado GR1s. A red lightning flash, now firmly established as “squadron property” appeared on a black rectangular ground (symbolic of the Squadron’s WWII night operations) edged in red, either side of the forward fuselage roundel. As a nod to previous incarnations, a large single red flash was applied to the black fin tip antenna fairing.



Tornado GR1 Badge

The roundel and bar device was modified when the low visibility grey scheme was adopted for the GR4, with a further variation of the dam, water and three flashes replacing the earlier RAF central roundel, but the red fin tip flash remained, carried in various forms by the Squadron’s Tornados for the entire 32 years of the aircraft’s service with the exception of the period when the aircraft adopted a desert scheme of Operations Herrick and Telic in the Middle East.



Tornado GR4 Badge



The ultimate manifestation of the Squadron's lightning flash motif surely must be the commemorative fins given to two Tornados for the Squadron's 70th Anniversary in 2013: a large stylised representation of the heraldic breached dam on a black painted fin with three red flashes, silhouettes of Lancaster and Tornado and the legend "617 Sqn Dambusters 70th"

So, what for the future? The F-35's finish, an important element in achieving its stealth capabilities, may be compromised by the application of additional markings. At present it remains undecided whether Squadron's latest aircraft will carry any unit identification. Although this has not been entirely ruled out.

Although the Squadron's aircraft may no longer carry their evocative motif the thirty-two year association will continue, if only in name, while they continue to fly the F-35B – Lightning.

Dr Robert Owen
Official Historian
No 617 Squadron Association

Tirpitz 75th Commemoration – 11-13 November



The Association intends to hold the 75th Tirpitz Dinner in Tromsø, Norway, over the period 11-13 November 2019. We will be piggy backing on an official RAF 'staff ride' in company with the IX(B) Squadron Association.

It is hoped that the event will be an a similar format and scale to last year's Dams 75th commemorations, but with an additional historical perspective. The planned itinerary is as follows:

- Mon 11 Nov 19: Fly out to Tromsø (TOS) and settle into accommodation.
- Tue 12 Nov 19: Carry out staff ride with RAF & IX(B) Squadron Association, followed by Tirpitz Dinner.
- Wed 13 Nov 19: Conclude staff ride and depart PM.

Members are requested to make their own travel and accommodation arrangements, as there is the opportunity for a longer stay in this lovely area.

However, the following flights are available:

- **Norwegian Air Shuttle** fly direct from Gatwick to Tromsø, with flights from £130 return. See <https://www.norwegian.com/uk/>.
- **Scandinavian Air Services (SAS)** fly from Heathrow to Tromsø via Oslo, with flights from £200 return. See <https://www.flysas.com/gb-en/>.

There is lots of accommodation available in Tromsø which is easily booked through websites such as www.booking.com and www.airbnb.com from about £160 for two nights. Car hire discounts are available for serving personnel and veterans through the Defence Discount Service (see www.defencediscountservice.co.uk).

We very much hope that there will be a good turnout from members at what should be an impressive event. IX(B) Squadron Association are attending in force.

Andrew Walters


Dambuster Portraits


The Welsh artist who painted portraits of the 133 airmen involved in the Dambuster raids has described families' reaction to his work as "moving". Dan Llywelyn-Hall's idea was to "reunite" the men in time for the 75th anniversary of the war-time raid. Gratefully, funds have been secured to keep the collection together. "It would have been terrible to split them up," he said.



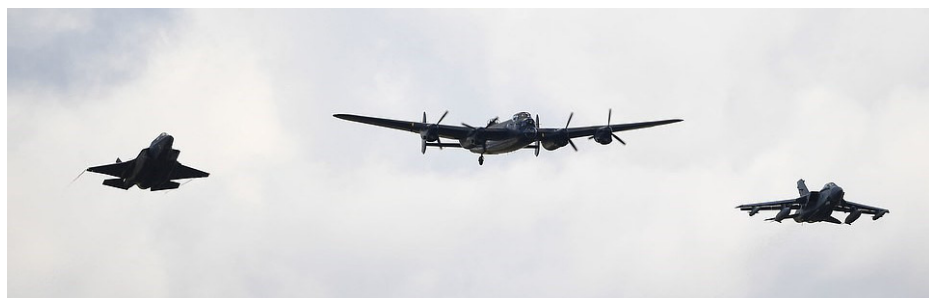
Among the portraits is that of front gunner Sgt Gordon Yeo, aged 21, from Barry, Vale of Glamorgan, who never returned from the mission. He and 52 other airmen died and eight of the planes were lost during the famous mission.

Families of the crews began discussions about trying to keep the collection as a whole after they met, many for the first time, to see the portraits unveiled at the International Bomber Command Centre in Lincoln in May. Dan, originally from Barry but now based in London, said: "It became something far bigger than I imagined." A special gala dinner was held at the RAF Club on Friday 7 September 2018 to raise funds for the collection's upkeep in the years to come after it is gifted to a gallery or museum.


**DAMBUSTERS &
617 SQUADRON
GALA DINNER**



**FRIDAY 7TH SEPTEMBER 2018
RAF CLUB
PICCADILLY, LONDON W1**



617 Squadron Heritage flypast at the Duxford Airshow



Dambusters & 617 Squadron Gala Dinner - 7 September 2018

L-R: Flt Lt Clarkson (Lightning), Dan Llywelyn-Hall, Dr Robert Owen, Charles Foster,
Gp Capt Keith Walters RAF (ret'd) (Vulcan), Sqn Ldr David Moore MBE RAF (ret'd) (Vulcan).
Wg Cdr Mark Still RAF (Tornado)

Glenn Atkins (Lincoln), Sqn Ldr George 'Johnny' Johnson DFM MBE RAF (ret'd) (Lancaster),
Sqn Ldr Lawrence 'Benny' Goodman Ld'H RAF (ret'd) (Lancaster),

Vulcan Reunion

There will be a Vulcan get together in Lincoln on Saturday 6th July 2019. The venue will be Lincoln Rugby Football Club which is located at Longsdale Park, Lodge Lane, Lincoln, LN2 2RS.

Please call Tony Smith (ex-IX(B) Sqn 1976-82) on 01243 553079 for further details.

Final Landings

Fred Sutherland



Fred Sutherland was born in Peace River, Alberta, Canada, in 1923, the son of a doctor. His mother, a nurse, was of native Cree stock – a fact Fred only learned after her death. As a boy Fred developed a passion for a free, outdoor life. His ambition to become a bush pilot was thwarted by the outbreak of war but as soon as he was able, at the age of 18, he enlisted in the Royal Canadian Air Force and volunteered for aircrew.

An excess of applicants delayed the start of his training until August 1941, when he was sent to the Manning Depot at Brandon, Manitoba. Assessed as a potential air gunner he was posted, after further delay, to No. 2 Bombing

and Gunnery School at Mossbank, Saskatchewan. On completion of his course at the beginning of 1942 he was promoted to sergeant and posted to serve overseas.

Arriving in the UK in the late spring of 1942 he passed through the RCAF reception centre at Bournemouth and was posted to No. 7 Air Gunners School at Stormy Down. There he completed his gunnery training, initially using a free mounted gun in Fairey Battles before transferring to the turret of a Whitley. In July he transferred to No. 14 OTU at Cottesmore and teamed up with pilot, Sgt Les Knight. Knight was an Australian and other members of the crew were British, at least one of whom had trained in South Africa, the newly formed crew symbolising the Commonwealth of Nations' contribution to the war effort.

After consolidating their teamwork on the OTU's Wellingtons, the crew were posted to No. 1654 Conversion Unit at Wigsley where during August and September they converted to the Avro Manchester. There they discovered that the Manchester's notorious reputation was well founded. After taking off on night flying practice one engine failed, starved of fuel. The aircraft refused to maintain height, necessitating a wheels up landing a mile from the airfield.

By the end of the month they had been posted to No. 50 Sqn at Skellingthorpe. There the crew were relieved to find that the Squadron were converting to the Manchester's successor, the Lancaster. Over the next six months they were to complete 25 operations, well on their way to completing their tour when they found themselves posted to a newly forming unit at Scampton on 25 March 1943.

After six weeks intensive, low level navigation and bombing training the crew entered the briefing room to learn of their target. The Squadron was to attack the major dams of western Germany. Les Knight and his crew were detailed as part of a wave which would initially attack the Möhne Dam and, if that was breached, then turn their attention to the Eder Dam.

En route to the Möhne Dam they ran into defended positions east of the Rhine. The formation became separated and reduced in number when Flt Lt Astell was lost after colliding with high tension cables north of the Ruhr. They witnessed the breaching of the Möhne Dam and continued on to the Eder. After seeing Flt Lt David Shannon make his attack without result and the apparent loss of Sqn Ldr Henry Maudslay as his Upkeep detonated on the parapet, Knight then commenced his attack. A number of runs were made, trying to perfect the tricky approach. On each occasion Fred, in the front turret experienced a front row roller coaster ride as the aircraft dived, twisted and climbed perilously close to the surrounding hills. Finally, Upkeep was released. It was a perfect drop but as the aircraft turned away Fred was unable to see the moment that their Upkeep punched a hole in the dam wall, releasing 202 million tons of water.



This limited edition print by Robert Taylor shows the Eder Dam being breached by Fred's aircraft.

The crew returned safely to base and did not operate for over a month. On 29 July they took part in a shuttle raid to Turin, flying on to land and refuel in Algeria before returning to Scampton via Morocco.



Fred Sutherland (centre rear without hat) and his crew

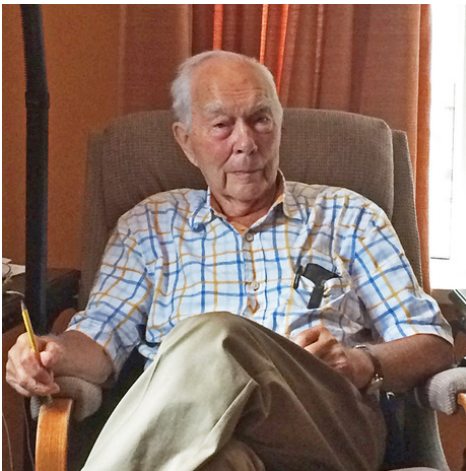
The Squadron moved to Coningsby at the end of August 1943. Now equipped with Lancasters capable of carrying the new 12,000lb HC blast bomb they were detailed to make a low-level precision attack against an embanked stretch of the Dortmund Ems Canal near Munster. Setting out on the evening of 14 September the force was recalled over the North Sea on account of bad weather over the target. The following night they tried again. On route Sqn Ldr George Holden was shot down and on reaching the target area the remaining crews found it shrouded in mist and heavily defended by light flak. Forced to fly multiple orbits at low level as they searched for the target Knight's aircraft struck a tree covered ridge. Two engines were put out of action and the tail unit damaged. Realising that a return to base was impossible, Knight struggled to control the crippled aircraft while the remainder of the crew escaped. Once they had gone, Knight attempted to put the aircraft down in open countryside. Touching down, it hit an earth bank and exploded, killing him instantly.

Descending by parachute, Fred landed near the Dutch village of Den Ham where he was hidden by a farmer before being passed onto the underground and into the escape network, along with Sydney Hobday, the crew's navigator. Equipped with false identities, and in Fred's case, given a stout pair of leather shoes, they travelled across Belgium and France, travelling on foot, by bicycle and train, evading patrols and running the gauntlet of security checks. Enduring the arduous crossing of the Pyrenees they reached neutral Spain on 4 November. After a brief period of internment, they were sent to Madrid, finally

reaching Gibraltar on 26 November, from where they were flown back to the United Kingdom.

His return to England marked the end of Fred's operational career with Bomber Command. He was commissioned and posted back to Canada, setting sail on 23 December and spending Christmas Day at sea. On arrival he made his way to Alberta, meeting his parents and girlfriend, Margaret Baker, in Edmonton on 4 January 1944. Fred and Margaret were married the following day and went on to enjoy 73 years together.

After a period of leave Fred was posted as an instructor to No. 4 Initial Training School at Edmonton, and in May transferred to No. 5 Operational Training Unit at Boundary Bay, British Columbia, which trained B-24 Liberator crews. Shortly after his arrival back he met the mother of Wg Cdr Gibson's navigator, Flt Lt "Terry" Taerum, whose death in Sqd Ldr Holden's aircraft Fred had witnessed. Explaining to her that there was no chance that any of the crew had escaped 'was the hardest thing I ever had to do.'



Fred left the RCAF in 1945 and took a clerical job, attending evening classes to complete his education. Enrolling to study Forestry at the University of British Columbia, he graduated in 1952 and worked for various logging companies before joining the Alberta Forest Service in 1958. He remained with them for 28 years, retiring in 1986 as Superintendent of the Rocky Clearwater Forest – an area three quarters the size of Wales. In retirement Fred and Marg travelled extensively, enjoying a range of outdoor pursuits until Margaret's death in 2017.

Fred's passing leaves Johnny Johnson as the last survivor of the 133 young men from five different Allied nations who participated in Operation CHASTISE and whose skill and courage set the foundations for the Squadron's illustrious history.

Dr Robert Owen

See also: <http://elinorflorence.com/blog/dambuster-fred-sutherland>

617 Squadron Association

Registered Charity No 1141817

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Overseas Committee Representatives

Shere Fraser McCarthy - North America/Social Media

www.617squadronassociation.org

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Published by the 617 Squadron Association
Layout and Typesetting by Chris Henderson