

	<h1 style="margin: 0;">The <i>Dash</i></h1> <p style="margin: 0;">Charity Number 1139128 News and Views of The Channel Dash Memorial Trust</p>	
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Welcome to your Spring newsletter

Sad to relate but this will be the last Dash newsletter with your current editor at the helm. I have to follow-up other commitments relating to a future publication. As you can see from the last issue of the Channel Dash Memorial Newsletter we hope to cover all aspects of "Operation Fuller". I have been busy putting together articles relating to the two major conflicts of the 20th Century. The memorial at Dover when in place will form and become a focal point for future generations. I would be happy to receive any material or text relating to the 'Channel Dash' and the events of February 12th.1942. Speaking for myself, I have an abiding interest in aviation within Kent from 1909 up to the present day. I am a member of the Kent Aviation Historical Research society and spend my days checking out facts and figures relating to flying within the county. Well, that's all you need to know about your editor. Should you wish to contact me my details are as follows:-

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For your bookshelf

Osprey Aircraft of the Aces. No.83.
Malta Spitfire Aces.
 By Steve Nichols.
 ISBN 978-1-84603-305-6.



A Fairey Fulmar Mk.I landing on an aircraft carrier.

The siege of Malta is one of the great epics of aerial warfare. In 1942, it was described alternately as a "fighter pilot's paradise" and "the most bombed place on Earth". In the brutal and unforgiving air war over Malta only the very best fighter pilots succeeded. Flying under conditions of extreme hardship and physical deprivation, an international team from Britain and the Commonwealth, as well as the USA, prevailed against overwhelming odds in one of the most decisive air battles of World War Two.

In this issue:

Hurricane operations from
RAF Manston.



J T Williams

Next Meeting:

11th April 2011

Future features for your news-letter

Hello everybody, I hope you all had a really wonderful Christmas.

Let me take this opportunity to wish you all a belated "Happy New Year". As you are now aware, we are now operating as a registered charity which means we can approach other organisations for funding. This is really good news it will help towards raising funds for our Dover Memorial.

The other day, I was watching television when a local news-team asked some school children if they had any knowledge regarding the Battle of Trafalgar. Sad to relate, not one of them had a clue relating to the date or why the battle was fought. We must ensure that these who took part in 'Operation Fuller' must never be forgotten. I would hate to think that in fifty years or so the Channel dash would all but be forgotten (as Trafalgar was to a twelve year-old).

The English Channel witnessed two major conflicts during the 20th Century at a very high cost in lives, ships and aircraft. We have a duty to perpetuate the memory of these conflicts.

As I stated in the last issue of the "Dash"- this is your news-letter, let's hear year view-point and input.

John T.Williams.
Editor.

A/C	CAPT.	DUTY	LOAD	DEST	A/B	ETA/LAND
H	H. S. LAMONDE.	Williams, Winston	5984	H5UH	X	
L	Sgt. KINGSMILL	SAMPLES BUNSE	5907	H5UL		
G	Sgt. ROSE	Mr. LEE JOHNSON	5983	H5UG	X	
F	F. Thompson	Tankinson Topping	4523	H5UF	X	
K	Woop.	WRIGHT WHEELER	5985	H5UK		
M	BLIGH.	Mr. BEYNON. SMITH.	5978	H5UM		

"Operational Board" - No.825 Squadron, Fleet Air Arm. Feb 12th 1942. Channel Dash.

Fleet Air Arm Aircraft under the spotlight.

The Fairey Fulmar

Until the Fairey Fulmar entered service with the FAA in the summer of 1940 there had been no carrier-borne fighters with an armament (eight wing-mounted machine-guns) to match the spitfire and Hurricane then in RAF service. The aircraft was designed to Spec 8./38 and was developed from two 'light bombers', the prototypes being K5099 which first flew in late January, 1937 and K7555 which first flew on the 19th April, 1937. Marcel Lebel, the man who headed the design team behind the Fairey Swordfish also headed the same team designing the Fulmar. Terence Hersley's publication "Find, Fix and Strike" states the following: - 'There was never anything wrong with the eight-gun Fulmar. It was a fine aeroplane, maneuverable, with a good takeoff, moderate climb, and plenty of endurance. It satisfied the demands for a navigator's seat and several wireless sets considered essential for Fleet work. It merely lacked the lighter's first essential quality-speed. Unless the pilot's first burst made a kill, he rarely got a second chance'.

The Fulmar was to see extensive service with the Fleet Air Arm throughout the war. In September 1944 and again in March 1945 the Fulmar took on the role of "night-fighter" covering several Russian convoys. The aircraft was powered by a Rolls-Royce 1,080 horsepower Merlin giving a maximum air-speed in the order of 246 mph at 9,000 feet. She had a maximum range of 830 miles with a service ceiling of 22,400 feet. Without doubt the Fulmar filled a very important gap prior to the arrival of the Supermarine Seafire (deliveries to the royal Navy covered the period-January 1942 to July 1943). The original prototype Fulmar can still be seen at the Fleet Air Arm Museum, Yeovilton.



A Fairey Fulmar Mk.II

‘A Small dose of Political Stupidity’

'How long is the Minister prepared to hold up the skirts of Wrens for the convenience of His Majesty's sailors?' (**Dame Irene Ward MP** - on delays in providing uniforms for the Woman's Royal Naval Service).

Hurricane Squadrons at Manston, February 12th, 1942:

No.32 Squadron.

Date at RAF Manston: - 27th November 1941 to 5th May 1942.

Squadron Code: - GZ.

Commanding Officer:- Squadron Leader.K.L.Smith (December 1941 to April 1942).

Aircraft Type: - Hawker Hurricane Mk.IIB (in service to November 1942)

Hawker Hurricane Mk-IIC (in service to August 1943).

The Squadron flew defensive missions from RAF Manston until the unit began night-training in May 1942.No.32 Squadron moved to RAF West Malling, Kent on the 5th May 1942.

Members of "B" flight,
No.32 Squadron. April
1942



No.607 Squadron.

Date at RAF Manston: - 10th October 1941 to 20th March 1942.

Commanding officer: - Squadron Leader.Noel Joseph Mowat DSO (awarded 16th March 1942).

Aircraft Type: - Hawker Hurricane Mk.IIB (to March 1942).

The Squadron moved to India, arriving at Alipere on 25th May,1942. The unit flew the first 'Hurribomber' operation on 30th October to a transformer station near Tingry. The unit took part in Operation Fuller. The following is a list of Squadron casualties

No.607 losses. 12th February 1942.

Pilot officer Ernest John Staerck - Age unknown. Service Number: - 110569. Runnymede memorial. Panel 71. Shot down by flak. Hurricane IIB.

Warrant officer R.J.Ommaney - Shot down by flak. Hurricane IIB.

Flight Sergeant Noel McClean - Age unknown. Service Number: - 938283. Runnymede memorial. Panel 75. Shot down by flak. Hurricane IIB.

Flight Sergeant Edward Preston Walker - Age: - 21 yrs. Service Number: -997639. Runnymede Memorial. Panel 76. Shot down by flak. Hurricane IIB.

No.32 Squadron. Manston, February 12, 1942.

Our Chairman has managed to borrow a log-book relating to Squadron Leader. Wilfrid Thomas Page. On the 12th February he was flying Hurricane BD768, a Mark IIC of the sixth production batch of 1,350 aircraft built by Hawker Aircraft Ltd., (Kingston, Langley and Brooklands) during 1941-42, powered by a Rolls-Royce Merlin XX engine.

Commissioned in May 1941, Wilfrid Thomas Page hailed from Epsom, Surrey. He joined No.1 Squadron at Wittering on 1st October, 1940. On the 29th October his Hurricane (P3318) force-landed at Orten, near Peterborough, having been damaged by return fire from a Dornier Do17. He was killed on air-operations on the 16th November 1943 whilst serving as a Squadron Leader with No.126 Squadron, operating Spitfires from Grottaglie, Italy. He was only aged 29 years at the time of his death and is remembered on the Malta Memorial, Panel 6, Column 1.



Pilots of No. 32 Squadron, taken at RAF Manston early 1942 - possibly a few days after the "Channel Dash". Many thanks to Mr. William Page for the photographs relating to No.32 Squadron

French Aeronaut's Adventure. Crossing the Channel by balloon in 1901.

M. Georges Latruffe, a well-known French aeronaut, has celebrated his 130th ascent by accomplishing the rare feat of crossing from France to England in a balloon. He ascended in the balloon "La Patrie" at Dunkirk at 1.45 on a Sunday afternoon and safely landed in a field at Southminster, Essex, at eight o'clock the same evening. He had singularly eventful and perilous passage, which he has described thus: - "I made the ascent at the conclusion of the festivities in honour of the Czar, intending to reach Dover about five o'clock. The weather was extremely favourable and a brisk breeze blew in the right direction. I had a beautiful send-off. The sailors in the war vessels lying at anchor shouted 'Bon Voyage' and kissed their hands to me, and the bands played the 'Marseillaise'. As I soared higher and higher the music gradually faded away until I was in absolute solitude. Then I leaned back in the car and smoked a cigarette. For some miles I kept in a direct line for Dover.

Suddenly the wind veered round and I was carried further north, and I soon knew that I should not reach my objective. I passed near Margate just as it was getting dusk, and I had hopes of being able to land somewhere there, but the wind took me but to sea, and for a long while the course was zigzagging. At one time the balloon descended so near the water that I was able to speak to a passing stranger, but apparently no one on board could speak French, and so I could not get a reply. Later I got within speaking distance of another vessel. By this time it was quite dark. 'Where am I' I shouted. Just then my balloon suddenly ascended and the only words I could hear in reply to my question were 'Vous etes trois' (You are three) - the remainder of the words being quite lost in space. I drifted on and on further north, and at length came to a large town showing many brilliant lights. I think it was Clacton or Brightlingsea.

As I passed near the coast I blew a whistle several times and listened for a response, but none came and all was quite still. I was very hopeful of effecting a speedy landing, when I was startled to find that my balloon was being blown out to sea again. Of course I recognised the danger and fastened a lifebelt round my waist, lighted a cigarette and sat back in the car waiting anxiously and patiently for a favourable turn of the wind. It soon came. The course, which eventually brought me off the Essex coast. Then I sailed over Foulness Point and across four miles of marsh land, and looking through my glasses I saw a favourable place to descend. I dropped the grappling iron, which tore slices off the top of three haystacks and then firmly held in an oak tree. The balloon came gently to the ground, and I jumped on to firm soil minus my hat and a medal, both of which were lost in the sea.

Three residents kindly came to my assistance and we packed up the balloon and went to the hotel. What a sensation I caused in the village. Just think, I could not speak a word of English. I looked like - I do not know what I looked like. They must have exclaimed, "He is mad". But they treated me very kindly and even went to the extent of searching for people who could speak French. Three came forward, but alas, I could not understand one of them. I must learn English."

A must have publication

The Squadrons of the Fleet Air Arm

by Ray Sturtivant

Published by Air Britain

ISBN 0851301207

This book represents the culmination of nearly forty years research into the histories of the squadrons of the Fleet Air Arm. The first of these was formed in April 1933 to replace the carrier-borne flights which had existed for the previous ten years.

By the outbreak of war in 1939 the present system of first and second line squadron numbering was fully in use, the successors of many of those existing at that time being still in operation.

The present work sets out to list every squadron which has ever existed, however briefly, giving a concise narrative account of its history and detailing its movements, equipment and commanding officers. For the first time it is possible for historians to identify the location, role, aircraft and commander of all Fleet Air Arm squadrons on any given date.

No serious student of modern naval aviation history can afford to be without this book, which also includes coverage of Australian, Canadian and Dutch naval air squadrons numbered in the same series as those of the Fleet Air Arm.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:

Gift Aid

The chairman is awaiting a response from Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs for £431.87

The Planning Application for the Dover Memorial

The decision day was February 17th, but the Planning Officer concerned has found reasons to defer a decision at this stage. It is being actively pursued and members will be advised as to the outcome.

12th February 2011: 69th Anniversary Wreath Laying

The weather was very agreeable and a very good attendance was witnessed. Laura Sandys MP laid a wreath and has stated that she would be both honoured and delighted to serve as a Vice-Patron. All the Thanet Mayors and the Deputy Leader of Thanet District Council attended. 'The Oak' also did us proud providing warmth, comfort and sandwiches and hot drinks.

My resignation as Chairman

It was proposed and accepted that Mr. Peter Nixon return to the chair now that he is not returning to Newcastle. Newcastle's loss is our gain.

Members Meeting

Our next members meeting will be on the 11th April 2011, at the Ramsgate Small Boat Owners Club. (1900 hrs for 1930 hrs)