

The Royal Air Force Servicing Commando and Tactical Supply Wing Association

Representing a Common Heritage

Newsletter Spring 2019

Chairman's Introduction

Last year, the Centenary of the RAF, was a great year for the Association. Although tempered with sadness at the passing of friends (see "In Remembrance", p.17) we did attract more new members than we have for some time, refreshed the Committee (p.17) with young blood and enthusiasm and enjoyed a few "firsts". We produced 2 asymmetric Newsletters marking our presence at the Stafford B of B/RAF100 Parade; and our 50-strong presence at the Cenotaph on the Centenary of Armistice Day. I hope you enjoyed these reports of our most significant events and on behalf of the Association, I would like to thank all who contributed to making these events the special days they were. I realise it is invidious to single out any individual, as much as I realise it is a mistake to put "invidious" and "individual" in the same sentence, but indulge my indolent inveigling: Your Committee now has an "Events Bloke" in Wayne Shelton and a more dedicated, tireless servant of the Association we could not have wished for. Thank you, Wayne.

As usual your Newsletter is packed with high quality journalese (!) especially from another new Committee Member, Secretary, Dave Christophi. His piece on the Cenotaph Event was excellent and here (p.11) Dave confirms his place as a chronicler of note by recalling some "Tales on the Wing". Two older members of the Committee report on visits to places of historical significance to the Association: David Packman visited the B3 Airfield in Normandy and laid a wreath on our behalf (p.2) and Neil Cromarty took the long road to Mandalay, marking our link to Burma with a poppy cross at the All Saints Church, Maymyo (p.3).

Wg Cdr Jamie Miller handed over to Wg Cdr Tom Stevenson in the Autumn, before heading off to the United States for a tour on the F35 Project Team. Tom is well known to many across the Wing community, having served in a variety of roles on the Wing and in the wider Defence Fuels environment. Here's hoping Tom sustains his ready smile and sense of humour throughout his tour! In January 2019, we welcomed back to the fold the Wing Warrant Officer Gaz Barlow, after his deployment on Operations in somewhere hot and smelly (not the NAAFI toilets...). We catch up on TSW activities on page 9 (Op Newcombe) and p.5 Ex Saif Sareea 3. I do wish they wouldn't number these exercises – I remember Exercise "Swift Sword" in Oman in Nov/Dec 1986. But then, thinking about it, I suppose "The Great War" never got a number until WWII came along.....



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We continue to enjoy fantastic support from TSW and I thank Wg Cdr Stevenson, WO Barlow and all the Wing personnel for being a key part of the Association family.

That Association family has some great older members. On page 7, you'll read about a Paper Boy who will be familiar to you as an armourer from 3210 Servicing Commando and stalwart supporter of our Association. Alan McQuillin will mark the 75th Anniversary of his landing on D-Day by making the trip again to Normandy as he has done so often over the years. While most of us can only imagine the horrors that faced them in 1944, some of us remember the horrors that faced Alan for the 70th Anniversary Association trip, where he was stuck in a car with Duncan Grant, Tim Newstead & David Orr at the wheel for 4 days.....

Talking of trips to Normandy, Events Bloke Wayne Shelton has organised a Leger Tour to Normandy in mid-May and a coachload of intrepid Association Members will doubtless populate Facebook with evidence of informative, stimulating, good times. Wayne also organised a Dinner at the Union Jack Club on Saturday 6 April, attended by about 50 Members who enjoyed a splendid evening with a raffle for a variety of interesting prizes – more about which in later publications. Photos and a write up from Wayne appear on Page 8, showing the good fun enjoyed by all. There will be a lunch on 18 Apr 19 to present the Matthews Sword to the JNCO of the Year. Ex OC Gp Capt Alan Matthews RAF (Retd) will present the award to Cpl McKinnon. The AOTY Award, under the continuing sponsorship of ex CO Gp Capt David Packman RAF (Retd), has yet to be announced, but will be promulgated when known.

The Annual Dinner and President's Airman of the Year Award will take place in the Sgts Mess at Stafford at 1900 for 1930, Friday 28 June 2019. This year, Members will pay £20 for the evening, non-members £25. The usual application form appears at the end of this Newsletter and I'd ask you to complete and return it (and payment) as soon as possible but at latest by 3 Jun 19, to allow planning to proceed. Please note, you may cancel until Thursday 13 June and receive a refund for the Dinner, Accommodation cancellations are between you and the Hotel! The Association Accounts, Agenda for Saturday 29 June AGM and other details appear also. Additionally, the summary of last year's (2018) Event is included.

Your Committee look forward to seeing you at the Annual Reunion Weekend and in the meantime, enjoy your Easter break, this latest Newsletter, and thanks for your continuing support.

David

Chairman

A Visit to Airfield B3 in Normandy

Airfield B3 at St Croix-sur-Mer was the first landing ground in France to be brought into use post D-Day (6 June 1944). It was operational by 10 June and from 6 until 15 June on-site engineering support was provided by No 3210 Servicing Commando. The first users of the airfield were the squadrons on No 144 Wing RAF/RCAF. The Wing was commanded by Gp Capt Denys Gillam DSO**, DFC*, AFC and the Wing Leader was Wg Cdr (later AVM) 'Johnnie' Johnson CB CBE DSO** DFC*, the highest scoring RAF fighter 'Ace' of the Second World War. The aircraft using the facility were Spitfires and Typhoons.

The history of the landing ground is marked even today by a memorial on the side of a minor road from St Croix-sur-Mer to Ver-sur-Mer just inland from 'Gold' Beach. It contains a brass plaque recording the presence of No 3210 Servicing Commando.

On 28 August 2018 Gp Capt David Packman (OC TSW 1975-77) laid an RAF poppy wreath at the memorial in recognition of the sterling efforts of the Servicing Commando. On a glorious late Summer day it was difficult to imagine what life was like in June 1940, even though emotion was very much to the fore.

Burma Revisited — Gp Capt Neil Cromarty

I was very jealous of Wg Cdr Tim Moss when I read that he had taken a Battle Field Tour trip to Burma....I can only apologise to the men and women of TSW in 1997-99 when, as OC TSW, I only got them as far as Stanta. But 20 years later I found myself with some friends jetting off to Myanmar (the new post colonial name for Burma) for what turned out to be a fantastic and memorable holiday – for more than one reason! But no member of the Royal Air Force Servicing Commando and Tactical Supply Wing Association could visit this amazing country without remembering those who served in Burma during World War 2 and, in particular, the Servicing Commandos.

During their trip a few years ago, Tim presented a plaque at the All Saints Church in Pyin Oo Lwin to commemorate the RAFSC's role in the Burma campaign and I wanted to leave a small memento to show that this memorial remains relevant. But a little history first. Pyin Oo Lwin is the new name for Maymyo; Maymyo was the British summer capital. In the summer the climate in Mandalay was unbearable, even for the stiff upper lips, so the staff all moved into the hills to a cooler, kinder climate. Maymyo means "May's town" as it was named after a Colonel May, a British Infantry officer stationed there in 1886. The current military government are trying to remove the linkages to the British colonial era hence the changes to place names.

I had arranged through our tour company that the itinerary must include a visit to All Saints Church and this was duly included as part of the "Day 1 activities". We set off from Dorset early one morning in time to catch our flight out to Bangkok and then, after a four and a half hour stopover, on to Mandalay. The trip out from Mandalay to Pyin Oo Lwin offered many interesting diversions – witnessing a novice monk ceremony and stopping for green tea and local nibbles in a road-side café. Much to my surprise, Mou Mou, our motherly guide, suddenly stated that, due to the time, we would go straight to the Church before even having chance to book in to our hotel and freshen up! I quickly changed my shirt and scrambled to find my Association tie as we bounced along the rough Myanmar roads so that I, at least, looked the part on arrival. Please don't look too closely at the photo – I had been on the go for well over 24 hours!



At the Church I made myself known and was soon introduced to the Reverend Philip. Conversation was limited, probably due to my fatigue, but I offered my small British Legion cross and poppy on which I had recorded my visit and link to the RAFSC veterans. But where to put this small memento? I couldn't get to balance on the plaque nor fit behind it but Rev Philip wasn't so careful of the Church infrastructure as he forced it n behind the plaque – perhaps not very dignified but future visitors will hopefully realise that the name of the Royal Air Force Servicing Commandos is remembered and, indeed, lives on.

The rest of our holiday was superb – this is a complex, fascinating and beautiful country with kind and happy people. Many have smart phones but, in the countryside, the fields are still ploughed with bullock and hand steered wooden blades. If you get the opportunity to go, grab it with both hands before its purity is lost to globalisation.

Burma Revisited



If you get the opportunity to go, grab it with both hands before its purity is lost to globalization.

Exercise SAIF SAREEA 3 – A TSW Viewpoint - by Flt Lt Dan Russell, OC B Flt

Energised by tales from Exercise SAIF SAREEA 2 and Operations TELIC and HERRICK, Tactical Supply Wing deployed 20 eager personnel to Oman to support Exercise SAIF SAREEA 3 on 14 Aug 18; we were planning on a busy 4 months!

Stationed across 3 remote sites spanning over 450km², TSW's role was to provide aviation fuel to JHC assets which were providing medical evacuation and under-slung load movements – although bread and butter business for the TSW, this posed a rare opportunity to undertake environmental desert training for those who had never experienced working in such conditions. However, the excitement somewhat stalled upon landing at Al Mussanah Air Base, as we had arrived on the eve of the Festival of Eid. With all our vehicles and equipment at Duqm Port some 550km south of our location, the absence of coaches over the festival meant we had no means of transport to retrieve it.



TSW HQ – Convoy Support Centre, Oman
Surprisingly cooler under the desert cannnet

Despite this setback, and maybe due to some naive optimism from a pair of young Logistics Officers, an idea was hatched with Benson's Deployed Logistics Flight. We presented our contingency plan that involved collecting just one Oshkosh refuelling vehicle and some Benson green fleet to return to Al Mussanah to carry out the first element of our role. Initially JFLogC were reluctant to allow our MTDs to transit to the port; they believed it was not possible due to driving hours as at that time the Convoy Support Centres were yet to be established. It's a good job we brought our MTO and a team keen for adventure! Eventually we were given the green light and the 1100km round-trip got underway; the drivers were happy for a cross country road move, the suppliers were happy they were about to refuel helicopters, the engineers were finally on the way to service all the vehicles, and all my worries melted into the desert... or so I thought!

...all my worries melted into the desert... or so I thought!



Sgt West, waiting to carry out a shutdown refuel of a CH47 at a Forward Air Refuelling Point (FARP)



Close Support Tanker – Waiting to deliver 20000lts of freshly blended AVTUR to the other TSW heli landing sites.

Exercise SAIF SAREEA 3

Fast forwarding a week, a small TSW team were successfully supporting 902 EAW providing fuel to both Wildcat and Puma; some fine Logistics interoperability. The mainstay of the team was finally on the move to collect the rest of the MT, so we were ready to accept fuel from the HN contractor, but then came the next hurdle; the fuel contractor's bowser had no couplings, hosing or buckets. Once again, the team created workarounds and succeeded in receiving the fuel; we then liaised with the contractor to procure the correct coupling.



Incoming Ch47 about to take a Rotors Turning Refuel.

Upon arrival at the Convoy Support Centre, which would be our home for the next few months, the Supply NCOs adapted the HLS so it was operational, MTDs established the fuel bridge, and we began re-fuelling aircraft in situ. Before we knew it the exercise finale soon came around; the Fire Power Demonstration. The joint show of force included aviation, fast air and armour from both the UK and Omani Forces. TSW provided vital rotors turning re-fuelling and HLS management to enable a seamless display to all the attending dignitaries, including CDS and CAS.

Despite some challenging logistics, the team benefitted a great deal from the experience. Adventurous Training was organised by the Brigade HQ and included climbing and canyoning in the Jebel as well as following the route taken by the Special Forces during the Jebel Akhdar War. Once the exercise was complete, we took some much-needed respite from the 40-man rooms and spent a day enjoying the shopping malls and hotels in Muscat before flying back to the UK in time for the TSW Christmas Party!



The Team outside TSW HQ, Convoy Support Centre

Many members will know Mr Alan McQuillin — ex 3210 Servicing Commando — from his dedicated support the Association and his annual visits to the Reunion at Stafford.

The following article is reproduced with the kind permission of the Western Daily Press

WESTERN DAILY PRESS Monday, February 18, 2019

Meet the paper 'boy' still doing his round at age of 95

ALAN McQuillin must surely be one of the oldest, if not the oldest, paper boys in the country.

At the grand old age of 95, he gets up at 5am each day and helps out at the post office and shop in Kemble, near Cirencester.

Mr McQuillin, who lives in Kemble, is out the door of the shop by 5.45am with a big bundle of newspapers. He does the job every day, apart from Sunday, and it takes him about three quarters of an hour.

While he still has to do some walking, much of his time is spent driving to certain drop-off points.

And the durable pensioner has been doing the job, on and off, since 1989.

He said: "I'm still doing it because I need to do something. If I don't do anything, I will just disappear."

Mr McQuillin said he had always been active and was used to getting up early. It was something he did for many years as a farm worker, before he had to retire when he reached 65.

That was in 1989 but, tragically, his

ROBIN JENKINS
news@westerndailypress.co.uk

wife Peggy died from cancer in the same year.

It left Mr McQuillin needing something to do and while he took up a job as a house-sitter, he also agreed to deliver newspapers for the shop when he could.

He has been happy to help out Mr and Mrs Chudasama, who run the post office and shop, ever since and says he has no plans to stop.

His son, Kevin, died from cancer in 2003 and his daughter, Sharon, lives in Devon.

Mr McQuillin served in the RAF in the Second World War and was involved in the Normandy landings.

He said: "I will carry on with the papers for as long as I can - the same as a I carry on going back to Normandy."

"I started milking cows in 1949. From then on, I've always got up early. I get up at 5am, even now. As long as I have two cups of tea, I can do the papers."



► Alan McQuillin on his daily round at the ripe old age of 95
Mikal Ludlow Photography

Alan tells us that this article led to a live TV interview on ITV's "This Morning" programme!

President's Annual Dinner: Union Jack Club, 6th April 2019

A gathering of the great and good, the old and bold, the young and not so young, saw different generations of TSW meet up in London for the inaugural President's Annual Dinner. All suited and booted, dicky bows tied, dinner jackets and Mess Kit's on with miniature's showing honours, awards and campaign medals from Ops and conflicts spanning decades, but that's enough about Mr McBey.

Groups of serving TSW members and Association members and their partners converged on London, intent on enjoying themselves and putting on their Sunday best. As has been the case through history, prior to meeting up 'officially' at the venue, these groups gravitated to the nearest hostelry, and that for many happened to be the Old Shades, where the TSW concept was dreamt up. Standing watching the fun, it was safe to assume how the evening would go.



Gaz Barlow, President AVM Graham Howard, Dave Christophi



Dave Christophi, Wayne Shelton, Yoof Hardy, Glenn Lumsden

Association Chairman, David Orr said Grace prior to the meal, in his own inimitable style and the occasion began in earnest. Food was served, wine was served, food was ignored and wine was drunk. The conversation between old comrades who hadn't seen each other for many years was flowing, as was the red and white on the tables. The food was very good as was the service and throughout it all, the conversation flowed some more. Everyone seemed happy. Most conversations started with "Do you remember..." or "When we..." as is often the case at these events and apparently every group of people on the Wing have it easier than the previous group. Who knew?

After the meal, the President of the Association, Graham Howard, spoke for a few minutes to the assembled guests and thanked them for supporting the event and the Association, stressing the importance of what the Association means and what it stands for, and everyone was in agreement.

We made it back in time to dress for dinner and make our way down. The tables were dressed, cutlery polished and glasses filled, all that was missing were most of the actual diners, who, once dressed had ended up in the bar upstairs taking advantage of the UJC and its renowned cheap ale. Dinner was called, we managed to pry Dai Miller out of the bar and we meandered in a good military fashion into the Gascoigne Room, where we found our seats, noticed a private bar, smiled and awaited dinner.



Peter Berry & Graham Howard

After the Chairman had sat down, Elaine Whiteley walked in with a surprise birthday cake for Bob McBey, who was celebrating his 65th birthday that day, and a rendition of Happy Birthday rang through the venue. We had to apologise to Bob because we couldn't get all his candles on the cake. He replied that he'd prefer a bottle of Scotch. He hasn't changed.



Bob McBey & Pamela Matthews

An outstanding day, with great people, in a brilliant venue with awesome food! What more could we want? Well, we want to do it again, and we want you to come. We had a brilliant time, and so would you I think. So, roll on next year and we'll see you there.



L to R: Neil Storer, Sharon Chambers, Pete Berry, Stu Chambers, Tiff Irvine, Kev Gladwin, Yvette Watson, Knocker Watson, Andy Spinks

Op NEWCOMBE – Gao, Mali

Since July 2018, successive 4-man teams from Tactical Supply Wing have undertaken 4-month deployments to Gao, Mali in support of Op NEWCOMBE; the UK's assistance to the French CT Operation - Op BARKANE. The teams augment the JHC Support Helicopter Force consisting of three CH47, the deployed HQ and its supporting elements. The teams' principal task is to conduct fuel blending operations to convert host nation F35 AVTUR to F34, however, they also conduct static and rotors turning refuels (RTR) alongside their French counterparts.



Op NEWCOMBE – Gao, Mali

The initial deployment required a lot of planning and preparation, utilising several modes of transport through numerous nodes; the Tactical Air Refueller (TAR) bowser was booked to the French RoRo sailing from La Rochelle, though it could not be driven to the continent so had to be degassed and prepared for carriage by road and sea. This began with a simple enough road move across the channel on a flatbed truck, and ended with a slightly more complex road move once it arrived at Abidjan Port in Cote d'Ivoire. All personnel and the remainder of equipment deployed via a combination of CivAir and Mil AT.

Due to the nature of the operation, the threat level is correspondingly high and the team is armed and ready to refuel under the threat of IDF 24 hours a day. With other contributing factors such as soaring temperatures, sandstorms and the indigenous wildlife, all daily tasks attract greater complexity. However, on arrival the team took this in their stride and successfully commissioned the fuel blending point quickly.

During the second team's residence, an increased allocation of flying hours reflected a rise in tempo to support several operations including logistical resupplies and the relief-in-place of French troops situated at numerous FOB locations. Forward Refuelling Points using the CH47 Forward Aircraft Refuelling Equipment System also came to the fore with the crew and team proving the capability to the French by refuelling Tiger and Cayman helicopters. This increase in operations and the consequent rise in the amount of bulking at the French depot allowed the team to foster closer relationships with their French fuels colleagues and has given the wider British contingent the opportunity to integrate socially with their French counterparts. The subsequent rapport has led to a standing invite to French Sunday evening social events. This is a welcome change for TSW personnel, as the nature of our business usually means deployments to isolated and austere locations.

These gatherings initially involved a few cold drinks and a game of French Boules, but eventually evolved into a quiz held in both English and French, which was created and hosted by the team at the Homborix Bar. This attracted upwards of 80 contestants with the winning team consisting of the UK Senior National Representative, CH47 Det Cdr and various aircrew, thus initiating a firm rivalry for successive intellectual amusements! In addition, The TSW team has certainly garnered a reputation for being where the good food is at; a hugely successful junior ranks breakfast was organised by SAC Tom Ducey where TSW undertook much of the catering for approximately 70 junior ranks from the CH47 Det and French troops attached to Groupement Tactique Desert (Aviation). The menu varied from bacon butties to chocolate croissants, from yoghurt drinks to fresh juice - all kindly provided by the French Mess. The team have now become the go-to people when it is the UK's turn to host the Sunday evening BBQ, ensuring food for 200+ hungry diners is ready to go come serving time!

SAC Tom Ducey also received news of his promotion to Cpl whilst in Theatre, and received word he is to be awarded an AOC 2 Gp Commendation for his outstanding work in Norway during Ex CLOCKWORK 17/18.



Cpl Davey Averall preparing food for the French



**The outcome of Cpl Averall preparing food for the French!
(Should have worn fuel-free clothes to cook in)**

TALES ON THE WING HURRY UP AND WAIT

CYPRUS, AUG - OCT 1990

BY DAVE CHRISTOPHI



RAF AKROTIRI

It's a well-documented affair, Op Granby and it's 'stateside' counterpart, Desert Storm... but what about the calm before the storm? Those days leading up to the Mother of all Battles, what were the trials and tribulations being endured by those Wing lads on the ground suffering in the heat and arduous conditions of Cyprus and all the distractions this Mediterranean hotspot had to offer?

Well this is my account, a couple of tales of how we honed our clandestine skills avoiding shifts in POL to breach the frontline of the strip in Limassol, equipped ourselves for the ordeal of wartime rationing by sharing just the one bottle of Hawaiian Tropic between eight and dealt with the political unrest due to shares in Keo rocketing as a result of unprecedented consumption.



**A rare moment in uniform 'prepping' kit, otherwise it was off to Kourion Beach, countless rounds of backgammon before hitting the Aki Arms at the top of the strip...
...then brandy sours in Rosie's all round!**

By the time I arrived in Akrotiri August 1990, fully jabbed up like a sausage ready for the bar-b-que, the first two advance parties of Wing detachments had already been deployed to the Gulf following a somewhat fortuitous 'right time, right place' battlecamp the Wing had carried out in Cyprus. Those of us kicking around aimlessly in Stafford had subsequently been rounded up and told we now had to head down to the Med in support of the ever-increasing threat of war to Kuwait's neighbours, apparently somewhere in the middle of a desert and next door to Saudi Arabia.

On arrival we were greeted in the NAAFI by a motley crew of sunburnt faces and tales of a hastily arranged selection process that had resulted in deciding who went forwards and who remained in situ till the next phase... there was also the by-now legendary account of the rather unsettling speech made by OC TSW, Wing Commander Bernard.

Tales on the Wing

Allegedly in his best 'we'll fight them on the beaches' Churchill (cue Tigger...) he had announced to the men, hands on hips standing on a Land Rover sporting a thousand yard stare "chances are some of you won't be coming home...", as the teams headed off for some winter sun / alcohol free war.



The Wing's very own wartime 'celebs' – Wing Commander Dave Bernard, Gary Morris & Pete 'Robbo' Robinson

Numerous pints sunk, beds allocated, and shifts assigned, we soon found comfort in our daily routine. Hours turned into days and days soon turned into weeks... however, looking back it's the shenanigans that can still be recalled today that I fondly remember.

CLANDESTINE TRAINING—GEORDIE v MACCAM

If ever there was a series of in-house clashes that encapsulated the desire to hone one's clandestine skills, it was the battle of the north east, between Newcastle's 'Geordie' Oughton and Sunderland's 'DP' (Dave Perry). I was fortunate(!) enough to be paired with Geordie on POL shifts and DP was generally working at the other end of the day, both were (probably still are...) dangerous animals when bored. Over the coming days and weeks, the pair embarked on a series of tit-for-tat attacks that can only be described as amusing at first to downright genius at the height of their conflict.

Daytime kips while away with the Wing always came with risks, regardless of whichever era spent on the Wing, so early incidents of waking up covered in shaving foam depicting phallic images merely set the tone for what was likely to come later. Likewise, coming in off shift in the darkness trying your best not to wake anyone up but wondering why on earth is the room was so hot, yet for some inexplicable reason the large ceiling fan was off, should have been obvious... nevertheless the amount of times the room was then showered in a talc snowstorm to the sound of sniggering beds never failed to amuse.

However, it was the final blow dealt by Geordie and then DP's subsequent retaliation that epitomised the lengths some were prepared to go just to keep themselves amused. Geordie's style, generally a crude 'in your face' approach, was characterised by his approach to clothes and his unique dress sense. The day he came excitedly into the block exclaiming he'd found the best shop in Limassol selling designer clothes (...and incredibly at such reasonable prices), only to pull a 'wife beater' out of his bag that had over a dozen individual brand names all over it, from

Tales on the Wing

Boss to Channel... tells you everything.

Nonetheless, there we were, not long off our day shift and Geordie's already in the process of luring one of the many wild cats into the room. His cunning plan, knowing DP would be returning off 'lates' during the early hours of the morning, was to capture the cat and shut it in DP's locker for an amusing surprise. However, what Geordie hadn't told the rest of us in the room as we lay there pretending to be asleep was the finishing touches to his plan.

Top: Geordie weighing up his next move while DP sleeps.

Below: DP insisting that Woofy comes into Limassol after an evening on the Pandemonium (St. Panteleimon wine)



In due course and as expected DP crept into the room in darkness, quietly unlocked his locker (all futile attempts to secure lockers with padlocks were easily overcome when removing back panels...) and as the door opened the most deathly of screams was heard as the now hysterical cat, coated in aluminous green Cyalume leaped out at DP and shot off zig zagging across the bondu for all to see in the dark. Not sure who was more frightened, the cat, DP or the entire room!

So how did DP retaliate, how any devious cunning mind would... Geordie and myself came off shift the very next day to find DP had systematically dismantled Geordie's entire locker with his Leatherman, creating the ultimate bed-pack of Formica panels topped with neatly folded clothes and accessories, military precision personified... they say it's a thin line between the mind of a genius and a complete madman.

AYIA NAPA ROAD TRIP

Looking back, I'm not particularly surprised the majority of military personnel were banned from visiting Ayia Napa, the sight of Woofy's infamous lilac shell pants alone was probably enough to upset most tourists. This coupled with Geordie in his denim mini skirt following a failed attempt to cut down a pair of jeans... without a pair of scissors they had simply torn up the inside leg seam and resulted in one leg flapping around so he resembled a lady of the night, ...extremely disturbing. Or perhaps it was as a result of Dan Douglas getting so 'confused' ('para') in Limassol he wasn't even able to make his way back to camp, instead had simply opted to 'bed-down' for the night on a comfy roundabout.

Nevertheless unperturbed off we went, dressed in our beach attire, armed only with our evening wear and a toothbrush, all crammed into our hired seven-seater... which, to be honest, I was amazed even made it to the camp gates, let alone the 90 odd miles to Nissi Beach in Ayia Napa!

Tunes blasting out, air-con on (all the windows wound down) and Sat Nav instructed (well, Geordie's words of "howay man, ha hard gan it be, it's 'anny a weeny island..." ringing in our ears) we soon found ourselves lost, heading inland and roasting in our oven on wheels. After what seemed like an eternity, we eventually rolled into Ayia Napa and spent the remainder of the afternoon on the beach.

Tales on the Wing



The fun bus – transport, bar and accommodation all rolled into one!

With dusk upon us it was then time to horrify those left on the beach as one by one we thought nothing of using the beachside showers as if in the block, brushing our teeth, shaving and generally preparing ourselves for an evening out on the town. Laughably they were coin operated and watching Mick Flynn, naked and covered in shampoo pleading for more money, whilst the rest of us just got stuck into the bottles of ‘Pandemonium’, was unsavoury to say the least.

I don’t even remember returning to the minibus at the end of the night (although there are still flashbacks of Woofy threatening to pull Stavros through the serving hatch when trying to purchase a nutritious gyros...) however, what I do recall is us all waking up in the middle of Ayia Napa square, slumped within our seats like sardines, cooking and half naked... moreover, the minibus now resembled a giant clotheshorse. Interestingly other than a couple of us the rest of the guys had thought it would be hilarious to throw themselves and all of the poolside furniture into one of the local hotel’s they had ‘visited’ on their way home and were now trying to dry out their clothes. Albeit not quite so hilarious now.

Holidaymakers were dotted around us like a Damien Hirst work of art – no doubt exploring the complex relationships between art, religion, science, life and death. Some were even enjoying the spectacle of us over their morning breakfast, but did we bat an eyelid... not a chance. We simply relocated to Nissi Beach and started the whole process all over again.

No doubt there will be those who’ll read this and feel half of it is factually incorrect (after all OCD comes with the territory...), some might even say embellished, well you’re almost certainly right but who really cares, no animals were harmed in the making of it, not even the cat. What is true though, is there will be a hundred more ‘tales on the Wing’ like this and it would be great to start sharing them via the Association Newsletter. If this floats your boat, then the Committee would love to hear from you and add some real depth and value to our Newsletter!



Top: Showered and ready for a night in Ayia Napa after a day on Nissi Beach.

Bottom: The not-so ‘fun bus’ journey home to Akrotiri.

TACTICAL SUPPLY WING CORPORAL OF THE YEAR 2018

Corporal Dave McKinnon, of the Personnel Support Trade, joined Tactical Supply Wing on promotion in March 2016. Since his arrival, he has consistently demonstrated the finest virtues of a more experienced Corporal. Working as part of a small team of 3, his duties have included fulfilling all administrative support and readiness requirements for a heavily tasked, operationally focussed Wing of 213 personnel. Of particular note, for over a year he has shouldered these tasks alone due to the long-term absence of the Sergeant Chief Clerk. Unfazed, he took on the full range of extended responsibilities. He maintained and progressed a multitude of complex Service Discipline cases, advising and guiding the Unit's Executives to ensure that all casework process and advice was strictly adhered to. In particular, during an emotionally demanding Service Inquiry into the death of a Flight Commander, Cpl McKinnon demonstrated tact and compassion when dealing with all the individuals involved, displaying utter professionalism when engaging with external agencies and the Service Inquiry team. He has also expertly managed a plethora of welfare concerns, encompassing family emergencies, serious injury and marital difficulties of personnel within the Wing. At all times he has exhibited impeccable leadership, compassion and expertise. His efforts and confidentiality when dealing with these sensitive matters have been a major contributing factor to the successful administration and continued ability of the Wing to field the full range of refuelling capabilities to Joint Helicopter Command.



Cpl McKinnon has also introduced a register for better tracking of Annual Personnel Reports, which he has used to hasten individuals at all stages of the process. Additionally, he has provided briefs to 'subjects' to guide them through all aspects of the appraisal, as well as delivering Joint Annual Report Workshops to Reviewing Officers. The outcome of his diligence and attention to detail is a notable elevation of the content, quality and timeliness of all reports, which are now also subject to greater scrutiny before finalisation. He has organised and controlled all Station Recall Days for personnel returning from operational deployments, which is a considerable task due to the highly deployed nature of Tactical Supply Wing, coupled with the lack of wider Station welfare support at MOD Stafford. Demonstrating impressive organisation and composure, he has ensured that these events have been completed as an essential element of the deployment welfare package. In addition to completing his own duties and the duties of a Chief Clerk, he has resolutely mentored two Leading Aircraftsman of the Personnel Support Trade who arrived on the Unit direct from Phase 2 training. His enthusiasm for work, relentless pursuit of perfection and amiable character, complimented by very impressive leadership, have facilitated the effective introduction of these personnel to an operationally focused unit and the wider Royal Air Force. This introduction will stand them in excellent stead for subsequent posts.

Cpl McKinnon's efforts have enabled the Wing to continue to operate during an exceptionally busy year. Operationally focussed units can become exposed where welfare and administration are concerned. Cpl McKinnon has ensured that this has not become the case, despite his lack of seniority and the absence of his only senior specialist. For his remarkable contribution to maintaining a key Defence output, Cpl McKinnon was presented with the Matthews Sword at a ceremony on 18th April 2019.

2018 Reunion Dinner and AGM

The 2018 Reunion Dinner and AGM was held at Stafford on 29th and 30th June. The events were very well attended, with 90 members and friends sitting down to dine in the Sergeants' Mess on the Friday evening.

The AGM was held on the Saturday morning; a résumé of the main points arising from the AGM is given below. Following the AGM and a buffet lunch in the Sergeants' Mess, members and guests were able to enjoy the TSW Families Day and, in the evening, the Hangar Bash.

The main points arising from the AGM:

- The Chairman welcomed Members, passed on apologies from absent friends and thanks to TSW for their support for the weekend's events.
- A moment of reflection for those members of TSW on active duty and Association Members who had passed away.
- CO TSW, Wg Cdr Jamie Miller, reported on TSW's year and the Chairman, David Orr, thanked CO TSW and placed on record special thanks from the Association for the continuing support and friendship of the Wing.
- The Treasurer's report for the Accounts for the year ending 31st December 2017 was read; the funds remained in a healthy state. Thanks were given to Tim Newstead for his 11-year tenure as Association Treasurer.
- Current paid-up Membership stood at 259, another small increase over the previous year.
- There being no volunteers, the incumbents David Orr and David Packman were re-elected as Chairman and Welfare Member respectively. The Chairman invited applications for his role as Chairman prior to the next biennial review in 2020.
- The Chairman highlighted that the Vice President the SC would remain as Gp Capt (Retd) Duncan Grant; however due to the loss of Gp Capt Craven-Griffiths the Vice President position for TSW was vacant. The Chairman explained that it was intended to combine these Vice-Presidencies in the person of Gp Capt (Retd) Neil Cromarty in due course.
- The format for the Annual Dinner continued to be a success and was to follow the same format and timelines for the 2019 Reunion weekend.
- The Special Events member proposed a 4 day trip to Normandy beaches in May for 40 personnel – costing around £300 per person—with specific site visits to include the British and USA D-day landing sites and Pegasus Bridge.
- The Association had secured 50 tickets to march on the Remembrance Parade at the Cenotaph in London on 11 Nov 18. There was huge interest and the contingent would be drawn by lottery,
- Association Members were due to march alongside current serving TSW personnel on 16 Sep at the Freedom of Stafford Parade.
- OC TSW reported that there was an aspiration to have the TSW Flts named after the Servicing Commando numbers,; however this, needed authority from the Air Historical Branch.
- SC Member Alan McQuillin asked the AGM to approve a letter of support to VP SC, Gp Capt (Retd) Duncan Grant.

Diary Dates

Don't forget to fill in the following dates in your new diaries and iPhones and Androids etc for 2019:

Friday 28th June 2019:

Reunion Dinner

Saturday 29th June 2019:

Association AGM

TSW Families Day

Hangar Bash

In Remembrance

We record with sadness the passing of the following members and friends:

3202 SC	Mr Jim Kidner	
3202 SC	Mr Eric Starling	
3207 SC	Capt Ken Nelson	South Yarra, Australia
3210 SC	Mr Ray Enness	
TSW	Mr Dave Linney	Died 30 November 2017
TSW	Mr Dave Heaver	Died 26 March 2018
TSW	Mr Ian Whitford	Died 26 March 2018

Your Committee

Chairman:	David Orr,	Tel: 07725 311115	E-mail: chairman@tswscdoasn.co.uk
Treasurer:	Libby MacKinnon	Tel: 07792 246243	E-mail: treasurer@tswscdoasn.co.uk
Membership Secretaries	Cliff Whiteley	Tel: 07714 461545	E-mail: membership@tswscdoasn.co.uk
	Geordie Lumsden		E-mail: membership@tswscdoasn.co.uk
Welfare	David Packman,	Tel: 01531 248294	E-Mail: welfare@tswscdoasn.co.uk
Secretary:	Dave Christophi	Tel: 07725 819614	E-mail: secretary@tswscdoasn.co.uk
Events Secretary	Wayne Shelton	Tel: 07905 662246	E-Mail: events@tswscdoasn.co.uk

Newsletter edited by Tim Newstead

**AGENDA FOR THE ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING TO BE HELD IN THE SERGEANTS' MESS
MoD STAFFORD AT 1100 ON 29th JUNE 2019**

1. Introduction and Reflections
2. Matters Arising from 2018 AGM
3. Tactical Supply Wing Report
4. Treasurer's Report
5. Membership Update
6. Election of Committee Members (Treasurer and Membership Sec)
7. Arrangements for 2020
8. AOB