

Tiger News No 91

Edited by Bob Cossey

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Tony Clay



The 74 Squadron displays at the City of Norwich Aviation Museum are in the process of being updated and this is the first of two cabinets to be reorganised, the better to tell 74's story. Thanks to the volunteers at the museum, especially Ian Woodruff.

Farewells

Jim Jewell

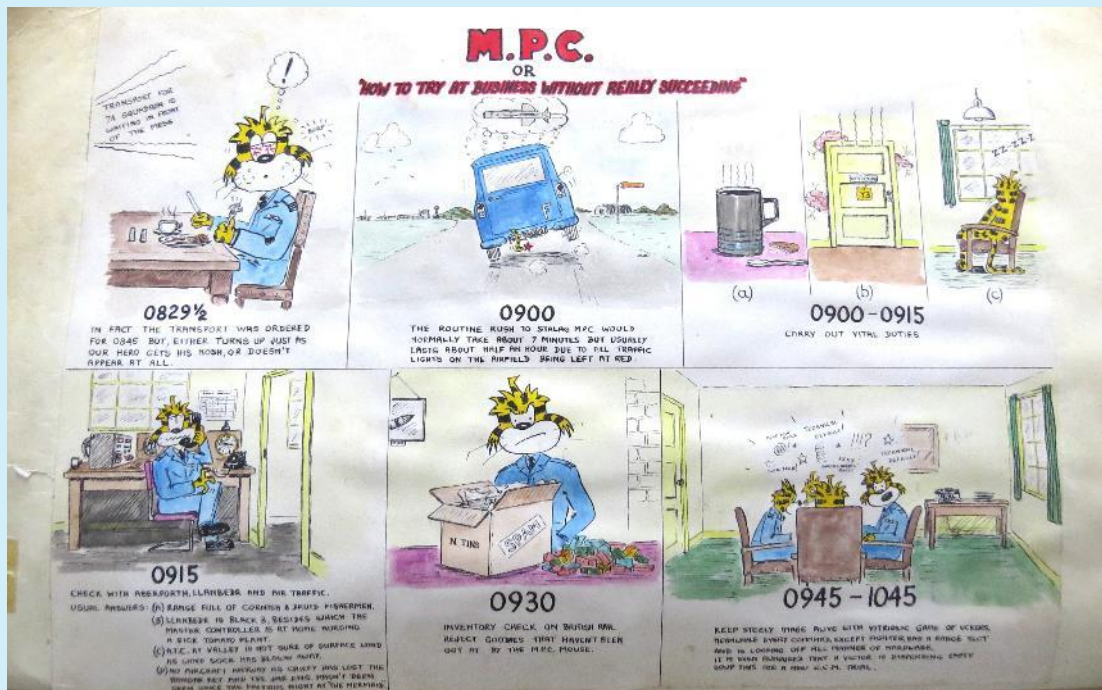


Peter Jewell, who was always known as Jim after the actor and comedian of the 20s to the 50s, was born in Hongkong in 1933 and was captured there when the Japanese invaded at Christmas 1941. His father, who was serving in the Royal Navy, was killed in the invasion and the child and his mother were then interned by the Japanese until liberation in 1945. Jim remembered the period as dreadful, with beatings being common for 'failure to bow' or 'failure to salute'; meals were scant and generally foul, with small amounts of rice and weevils. Although the camp also housed J G Ballard, the author of the book 'Empire of the Sun' and, incidentally Anthony Fraser, who later joined the RAF, flew Buccaneers and became Commandant of The RAF Central Flying School, the conditions were nothing like that portrayed in the film of that name.

Jim and his mother returned to the UK and after leaving school he joined the RAF and trained as a pilot in Canada, being commissioned in 1954. Jim converted to the Lightning in March 1962 at RAF Middleton St George, then commanded by Ken Goodwin, and later flew with 56 Squadron before joining 74 in 1966 just as the squadron was taking delivery of the Lightning F.6. Following the

fighter tradition of 'naming' their aircraft, Jim was allocated XR770 with the tail letter of 'Charlie', but BAC Warton 'borrowed' it for the summer and painted it in full Royal Saudi Air Force colours to represent a Mk.53, displaying it in the SBAC flying display at Farnborough that year, as the contract to sell the type to Saudi Arabia and Kuwait had just been agreed. Jim, who had just taken over as the squadron diarist from Heinz Frick, inserted a picture from the display into the diary and claimed that all 74 Squadron pilots were now qualified on the Mk.53!

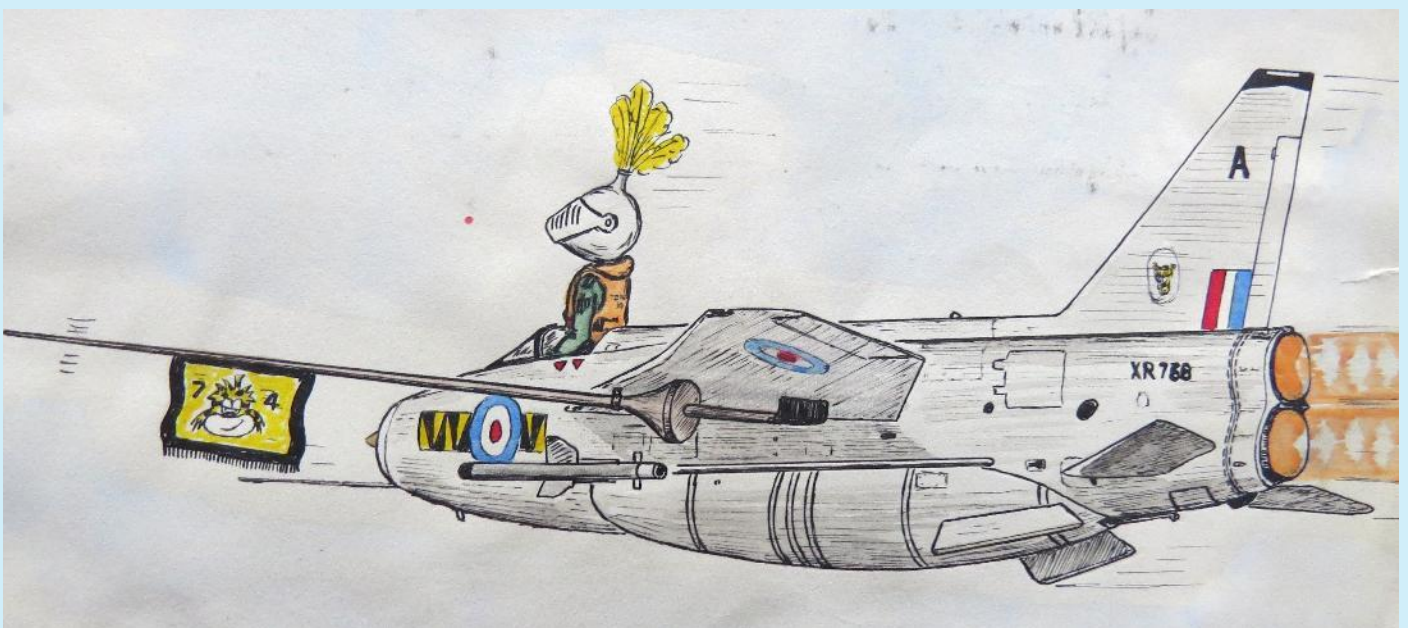
Mention of the diary is very appropriate, as Jim turned this large scrapbook into a work of art, with every page chronicling events of note, both serious and humorous. A detachment to RAF Valley to fire missiles (a Missile Practice Camp) early in 1967 resulted in a two-page cartoon (page one right) describing the highs and lows of the fortnight.



In mid-1967 the move of the entire squadron from Leuchars to Tengah was similarly recorded. Then when Tony Doidge had the arrester hook on his aircraft drop one night (the Lightning hook was a one-shot affair and could not be retracted in flight) and tried to land beyond the approach end cable (he landed a foot short and found himself stationary in the published 1,200ft!), Jim's highly detailed drawing of a Lightning ripped in half, with the lower half stopped in the cable and the upper half, with Tony's feet protruding below the cockpit, still travelling ahead down the runway, recorded the event.



Likewise, when Rick Lea, learning how to take on fuel from a Victor tanker, hit the drogue too hard and left the head of the probe broken off in the 'basket', the diary showed a medieval knight in full armour and brandishing a lance, with the caption 'a little too enthusiastic' Incidentally, the tanker squadron, 214 from Marham, presented the probe head back to 74, mounted on a wooden plinth and sporting a plaque saying 'Tiger, tiger, burning bright, did you blunt your end last night?'



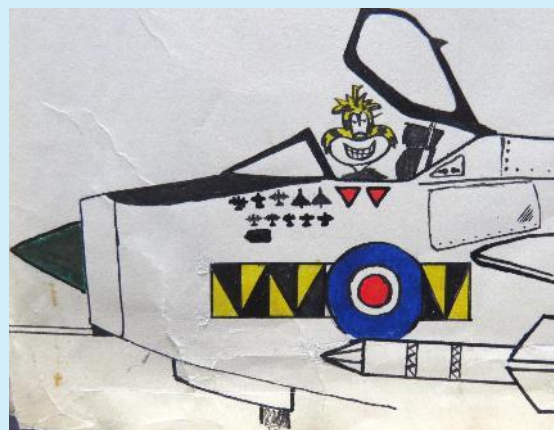
Jim would take a minimum of two hours per page of the Diary, as Dave Roome, who would take on this responsibility when Jim left, would testify, having learnt at the feet of the master.

Jim was quite a reserved character who did not agree with the high-spirited activities so beloved of Ken Goodwin, preferring instead to do such productive things as the design he produced at Tengah for a hi-fi unit. These drawings were converted in Singapore into a thing of beauty, a three-piece wooden cabinet upon a wooden base. The three identically shaped units for a record deck, a tuner/amplifier and a reel to-reel

tape deck, were built and were so popular that very many others followed from the carpentry works downtown.

There were many social events during the squadron's time in Singapore and one very popular trip was for a group of families to go over the causeway into Malaya and drive up the east coast to such beaches as Jason's Bay, camping out on the beach for a long weekend. However, on one of these trips, Jim wandered off from the group and returned a short time later carrying a rubber sandal in which was a (real) lower leg. He deposited it in front of Ken Goodwin, saying "What do you want to do with this, Boss". The foot was taken to the local police station and handed over to a policeman who simply put it in under the counter and said, 'Thank you, goodbye'. The following week the newspaper 'The Malay Mail' reported the find and added that the leg was from a body of a Malay which had been found having been tied hand and foot to a railway line. The body also showed signs of having been shot in the back. The article ended with the Chief of Police for Johor State saying "foul play has not yet been ruled out"!

Jim left 74 to return to the OCU staff at Coltishall in mid-1969, where he also flew the Spitfire and Hurricane with the Battle of Britain Flight, later going on to Brize Norton to fly the VC10, and after leaving the Service, the B-17, 'Sally B' on the display circuit (right at Norwich in 1987). One amusing story which came out at his funeral and memorial service in February concerned Jim's early days on the VC10, when his new boss asked him what the last aircraft was he had flown before coming to Brize. Jim answered truthfully that his last flight at Coltishall had been in a Spitfire, at which the Wing Commander said "I hope you don't find the speed of the VC10 too much for you!"



With thanks to Dave Roome for this remembrance of his Tiger friend and colleague.

John Greaves

John died on 6th March 2026.

This is a personal memoir of their father by **Christopher and Andrew Greaves**.

Our father graduated from his apprenticeship at Halton (64th entry) in December 1952. On pass out he was awarded best tradesman. Shortly afterwards, he was stationed at Allied Air Forces HQ Fontainebleau France under Sir Basil Embry (C-in-C Allied Air Forces Central Europe). At some point early in his career he was offered

a commission. He turned this down and did wonder whether he had made the right decision but said that he wanted to do what he loved doing most, that is making things work using his engineering skills.

John's RAF postings included Holland, Germany (Geilenkirchen), Watton, Coltishall, Leconfield, Tengah (1969-1971 with 74 Squadron as a Chief Tech), Cottesmore, BAC Warton (as an instructor of Saudi Arabians on Lightnings) and finally Lossiemouth.

He first worked on Lightnings in 1964 at Coltishall and became a specialist in power controls. He loved this aircraft and the nature of the work, even though it was gruelling at times in the heat and humidity of Singapore. 'The kites had to fly seven days per week,' he said. 'Sometimes you had to fix what you had with intuition, engineering skill and occasionally Araldite!' He always said his posting to Tengah with 74 Squadron was the highlight of his career. It was a combination of the aircraft (below), the place and the camaraderie.



Some of 74's groundcrew aboard a Lightning wing at Tengah as photographed by John. Photography was one of his great hobbies.

'For us as young lads, Tengah and the Lightnings were special,' writes Christopher. 'I remember one day seeing something at the age of 10 that must be unique. My friend and I, on hearing the bang of an engine being started, knew that we had about ten minutes to get from the married quarters to see the aircraft take off. At the end of the runway was a long grassy slope. Being the miscreants that we were, my friend and I crawled on our bellies up to the top of the long slope, ignoring the warning signs. Being careful to keep our heads down to avoid the RAF police, we laid on our backs and awaited the show. We were not disappointed. Two Lightnings took off and when overhead they were on full reheat going near vertical as we stared directly up their exhausts and felt the power! What a sight it was.'

John and a colleague enjoying some liquid camaraderie during a formal evening out at Tengah.

Flight safety was always the first priority of course and John earned recognition on several occasions including being awarded a Strike Command Flight Safety Certificate at Lossiemouth for identifying a lethal control fault on Jaguars. He carried that attitude into civilian life and we have always admired the way he did any job once and did it properly. John appreciated quality and always had the best tools & equipment.



John was one of the contingent who accompanied CO Dennis Caldwell and two aircraft to Bangkok in September 1970. John took this photograph of the CO on arrival.

After John retired from the RAF in 1976 after 26 years' service he ran his own refrigeration service business before fully retiring. He enjoyed golf, caravanning, photography, showing prize cats and gliding. He took up gliding after his 70th birthday, obtained his Sailplane Pilot's Licence and flew gliders until he was 75. Later in retirement he started model engineering. With a lathe, a mill and some hand tools he created six superb working model

steam engines from lumps of metal- a real tribute to the skills he learnt throughout his career on airframes.

John leaves his wife Sheila who he married in 1956, three sons, John, Christopher and Andrew, and five grandchildren.

John had a superb collection of photographic slides from his tour at Tengah including many of Lightnings in the air and on the ground. He had a state of the art camera for its time - a Nikon Nikkormat "F", fully manual of course, but it did have an in-built light meter and depth-of-field feature. At the time it was one of the best you could buy. In the next Tiger News there will be a further selection of the fine photos he took whilst at Tengah.

John Yeo



John Yeo and Debbie Parker (pictured here in 2010) have been ever present at squadron reunions - until this year that is. Sadly John died a few days before the reunion. He had been seriously ill for weeks and his determination to attend was not to be realised.

When it came to compulsory National Service John chose the RAF, which began with square bashing at Padgate. Then, although he was newly married to Pamela, he was swiftly posted to Germany. He trained as an instruments engineer and then became a dual trade electronics engineer. He always asked for West Country postings (John was a Devon boy), but he always seemed to get Norfolk! But then came a posting to Aden before returning to Norfolk again and from there to Tengah and the Tigers. This was for John his most exciting posting of all, working on Lightnings. He loved this and he kept his connection with this group of lads, especially via reunions until the day he died. (**Below are the Tengah Tigers pictured in 2011. John is seated second from the right,**) John was at Tengah for three years after which came a posting to St Mawgan (nearer home) but then further postings to Berlin, Binbrook, back to Norfolk. And then to Civvy Street after 22 years' service. For the record his RAF career took him to RAFs Coltishall, Swanton Morley, Binbrook and Gatow as well as 131 MU at Aden.



Having left the RAF, John became a quality inspector in Torquay and he kept working his way up the ladder until he ended up with a top job at Aircraft Materials. A settled life meant he could indulge his passion for watches and cars via a Ferrari, a Lotus and later a DeLorean. But Pamela became very ill with cancer. John looked after her and did all that was needed before she died in 1999. Now he was a widower at 65 and for the first time in his life he was alone. What should he do? Travel! All over Europe and back up to Norfolk (of course!) Then he met Debbie in 2002 at the 74 Squadron reunion in Stratford upon Avon. They were surprised to find that they both lived in Newton Abbot and often ran into each other in town, stopping for a chat and a catch up. In 2006, Debbie's husband sadly died and John was very supportive of her, having been through the process of widowhood himself.

In 2007, Debbie asked John if he would like to come to her house for dinner. He never left and John became a very loving step-father to Debbie's children as well as being a loving father to his own.

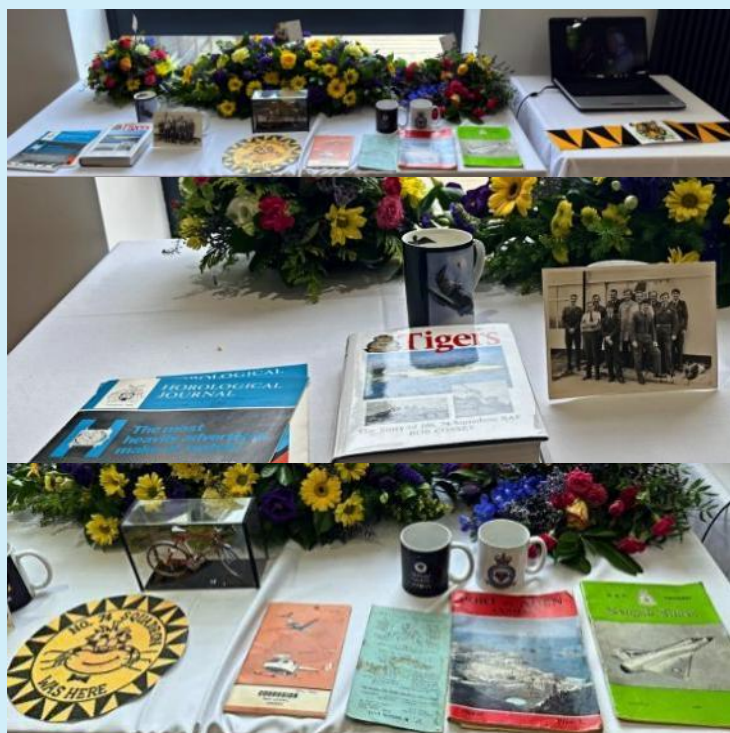
He and Debbie enjoyed their life together surrounded by John's seven grandchildren, twelve great grandchildren and Debbie's five grandchildren which they loved dearly (photo right). They travelled a lot in the UK and Europe and looked forward to reunions every year to meet with their long-time friends, but in later life John's health deteriorated. He became less mobile and with failing sight he had to stop driving and sell his beloved Ferrari and Lotus. They no longer travelled, other than to the reunion, and during John's last time in hospital he focused his recovery on being well enough to attend this year's reunion back at Stratford upon Avon once again. He didn't make it. He got within a day of discharge and then suddenly fell ill with a chest infection and despite his determination to get well again, he was simply worn out. Five months of fighting his illness had taken its toll.

With thanks to Debbie and John's daughter Barbara and son John Paul who wrote the eulogy spoken at John's funeral on 28th April 2026 from which this farewell is taken.



Jim Jolly was at the funeral and he writes:

John had a very good send off. His large family arrived at the crematorium behind the sleek silver coloured hearse in a fleet of four matching silver limousines. The celebrant gave a lovely depiction of John's life with photos of him with his family coming up on a screen. At the hotel afterwards there was an excellent buffet table and it was a pleasure for my wife Angela and me to spend the afternoon in a welcoming and friendly atmosphere, meeting and chatting to Deb and her children and John's sons, daughters, in-laws, grandchildren and great grandchildren. John was a most loved and respected family man, and of course, a 74 Squadron Tengah Tiger that he was so proud to have been. RIP John.



At the hotel a display of items concerning the Tengah Tigers and Lightnings was laid out for all to look at.

John had an RAF life beyond 74 of course. Here he can be seen on the right of a group of Station Flight colleagues at RAF Gatow.



74(F) "Tiger" Squadron RAF Reunion 2026



Thanks to Jim Jolly for arranging this spectacular flypast to welcome members to the Welcombe Hotel for this year's reunion on March 28th. What can we expect next year?



The Welcombe Hotel at Stratford upon Avon was just that. A very welcoming hotel in our search for a new permanent home for our reunions, one which met the approval of those attending as it met all the requirements we have been looking for - location, accessibility, comfortable accommodation and good service.





**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the 74(F) Tiger Squadron Association.
Saturday 28th March 2026**

Apologies for absence were received from Cliff and Caroline Spink, Graham and June Clarke, Stew Price, Henry Lether, Ted Edwards, Kev Wooff, Barney Barnard, Trevor McDonald Bennett, David Jones, Mike White, Paul Lightbody, Matt Ford, Pete Johnstone, Robert Johnstone, Dave Best, Andrew Cowderoy, John Bletcher, Es George, Steve Smyth and David Ketcher

Our Chairman welcomed all attending the AGM. The minutes of the previous meeting as published in Tiger News were agreed. There were no matters arising.

Treasurer's Report

Presented by Rhod Smart. The accounts to March 2026 show that the Treasurer's Account/Interest Account held £4136.03 The Association will donate £200 to the Leeds Civic Trust towards the placing of a blue plaque at the site of Battle of Britain pilot and former Association member Johnny Freeborn's birthplace.

Election of Officers

The committee will continue during 2026-2027 as currently. Chairman - Dick Northcote
Treasurer - Rhod Smart Secretary - Bob Cossey

Any Other Business

This is the first year that the reunion is being held at The Welcombe Hotel , the seventh we have tried with a view to trying to satisfy all the necessary criteria that we have identified as the ideal venue. A decision will be made after this reunion as to which of the most recent three hotels - the Maids Head Norwich, The Bedford Swan or The Welcombe Hotel Stratford - will be the preferred option for the 2027 reunion onwards.

It was agreed that the proceeds of the evening's raffle should once again be the Disasters Emergency Committee Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal. (*£365 was raised on the night thanks to everyone's generosity. Gift aid will increase the donation to the Ukraine appeal.*)

Date of Next Reunion.

To be advised and venue to be confirmed.

Date of Next AGM. To be confirmed

Captain Kiddie



Dr. Yvonne Malan represents the Association at an annual memorial service for Sailor Malan at the Kimberley, South Africa, cemetery where he is buried and arranges the laying of a wreath on the Association's behalf. She has recently discovered via the Kimberley branch of the SSAFA that another Tiger is buried in the same cemetery - that of Captain Andrew Kiddie (1889-1964)

(above) who joined 74 Squadron in early 1918, moving with them to France in March 1918 and ending the war with a dozen victories, the first of which was with 32 Squadron prior to his joining 74.



Yvonne writes: 'thanks to SAAFA (Kimberley), we discovered that Andrew Kiddie is buried near Sailor in the West End Cemetery. The cemetery and Kiddie's grave (left) are in a terrible state overall but the area around Sailor's grave is cared for thanks to the Scouts, SAAFA and others. The plan is to include Kiddie's grave in future ceremonies also.' Sunet Swanepoel and the McGregor Museum have provided these three combat reports by Captain Kiddie. The squadron CO Keith Caldwell (see next page) has countersigned the report on the far left.

Form: **Combats in the Air**, Army Form W. 3148

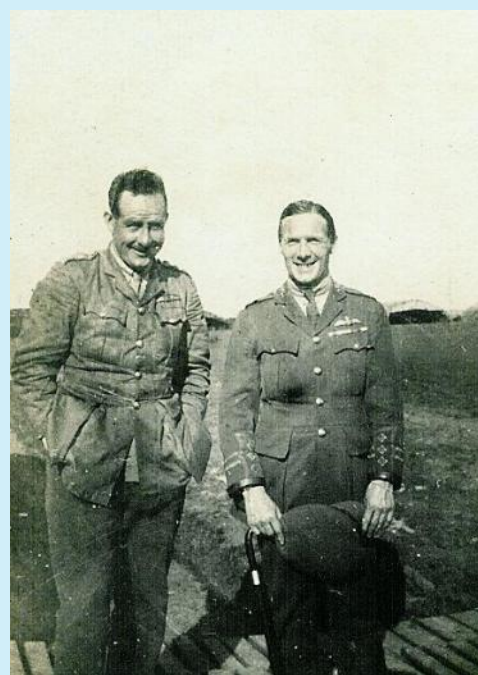
Squadron: No. 74
 Type and No. of Aeroplane: Tiger
 Armament: 1 Vickers 1 Lewis
 Pilot: Capt. A.G. Kiddie
 Date: 20.7.18
 Time: 11.45 a.m.
 Location: Somme
 Day: O.P.
 Height: 8,000

Observer: ---
 Result: Destroyed
 Remarks on Hostile Aircraft: ---
 Pilot's Report: ---
 Narrative: ---
 Signed: A.G. Kiddie, Capt. Royal Air Force.
 Countersigned: K.L. Caldwell, Major, 74 Squadron.

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Observer: ---
 Result: Destroyed
 Remarks on Hostile Aircraft: ---
 Pilot's Report: ---
 Narrative: ---
 Signed: Royal Air Force, Captain.



Captain Kiddie and his Tiger colleague Sidney Carlin, taken at Clairmarais in 1918.

Form: **Combats in the Air**, Army Form W. 3148

Squadron: No. 74
 Type and No. of Aeroplane: Tiger
 Armament: 1 Vickers 1 Lewis
 Pilot: Lt. S.D. Little
 Date: 20.7.18
 Time: 10.45 a.m.
 Location: Somme
 Day: O.P.
 Height: 8,000

Observer: ---
 Result: Destroyed
 Remarks on Hostile Aircraft: ---
 Pilot's Report: ---
 Narrative: ---
 Signed: Lt. S.D. Little, Royal Air Force.

The discovery of Kiddie's grave adds more to the squadron story.

Keith Caldwell



For those of you who collect die cast models of 74 Squadron aircraft, in the Corgi Aviation Archive series you'll find this fine Royal Aircraft Factory SE5a as flown by Keith Caldwell (right), the Squadron CO in 1918. His story is quite remarkable, not least because of the following (partly apocryphal perhaps) incident.



Already celebrated as a brave and tenacious pilot, New Zealander Caldwell surpassed his own high standards of airmanship when he was involved in a mid-air collision in September 1918. With his SE5 damaged and spinning earthwards, Caldwell climbed out to stand one legged on the wing of his fighter as he attempted to pull the wing and strut closer together! At the same time he kept his other foot on the rudder bar trying to keep the aircraft under control. Miraculously the SE5 started to respond but continued falling at an alarming rate. Although it was now something of a controlled fall, that control wasn't enough for him to make a safe crash landing, so Caldwell brought the damaged fighter in low over Allied lines, jumping clear of the aircraft seconds before it hit the ground and disintegrated. The watching Allied troops could scarcely believe what they saw and later told how, as the SE5 hit the ground seconds later, Caldwell picked himself up, dusted himself down and calmly strolled towards the Allied positions. He returned to the squadron and was immediately back flying operational patrols once he had been checked over by the station doctors. As any Tiger would be!

Meteors

Eric Dickens was a long-time member and supporter of the Association. He served on 74 at Horsham St Faith when the squadron flew Meteors and those years on his National Service with the Tigers meant a great deal to Eric. So much so that his ashes are scattered at the City of Norwich Aviation Museum which is located on the former Horsham St Faith airfield. Now Eric's son Lyndon has been in touch and he says: 'I have recently been working on my music. My hobby has always been making music, specifically instrumental using keyboards and synths. I've made quite a lot of amateur albums over the years, all for fun. Way back in 1993 I wrote a track called Meteor. Years later my dad got hold of a DVD of cine film which contained footage of 74 Squadron Meteors flying. So I set out to make a new version of the tune and called it 'Meteor 74' and make a video to go with it. That was back in 2005. As it's coming up to 40 years since I made my first music album I decided to make a new version of it and other albums too and release them to my family and friends. As some of the earlier stuff was done on basic equipment I've remade many of the old albums to bring them up to date with the far better equipment I have today. Meteor was one of the tracks I've re-recorded and together with that I did a new version of the video which I've uploaded to You Tube.'

Have a listen and look via this link. <https://youtu.be/eU1KT9bnF3A>. Fascinating old film and great music. John Whitehead who took the cine film was an exchange Australian pilot. Thank you Lyndon!

Cheers!



David Taylor sent these photos of an item he purchased way back in the early 1990s. Apparently there was a short production run of the liquor which was advertised in one of the aviation magazines. To this day the bottle remains fully sealed but nevertheless the contents are clearly evaporating. David wasn't tempted because he never touched the stuff again following a very bad experience during his late teens!

