THE CHAIRMANS COLUMN

Introduction.

Berlin Visit 2012:
A group of BBAA members and friends visited Berlin for the annual 12th May Airlift Commemorations. They were in Berlin for four nights and afterwards travelled to the Harz Mountains for a three night stay before returning to the UK. See the full report on page 3.

Tempelhof Airport:
The latest news we have about the current situation at the now disused Tempelhof Airport is that it may finally be redeveloped as a huge public garden area.

We understand (not confirmed) that two Architects have been awarded a contract to draw up plans for this scheme.

We will publish more details when they are to hand.

BBAA Website:
The BBAA Website has now had more than 8,000 hits. In other words more than 900 people have looked at the site in the last five months. We now receive numerous enquiries and complimentary comments via this route.

Several people have said that they find it very informative & most useful when looking for information & details about the Berlin Airlift.

An increasing number of Airlift sons, daughters and grandchildren are trying to find more information about their relatives involvement. However, we do need information to help to keep it interesting and up to date to those who use it.

If you have a story to tell we would be interested to receive it.

A recent enquiry was from a relative of Geoffrey Kell who was killed in the Avro York crash at Wunstorf on the 19th September 1948. He was trying to find the location of his grave. John Collier had the information and was able to let him know the location.

U.S. Airlift Veterans Newsletter:
We have heard from Lewis Dale Whipple, the Vice-President of the US Berlin Airlift Veterans that he has not been very well recently. We wish him better health for the future.

After chatting to his colleague Mike Doyle who we met in Berlin during our recent visit in May we have now made arrangements to exchange Association newsletters. Full details will be published in later newsletters.

Remembering the 28th June 1948:
On the 25th June 1948 eight RAF Dakotas arrived at RAF Wunstorf in the British Zone of Germany and at 06.00 hrs on the 28th June 1948 the first RAF Dakota took off from RAF Wunstorf heading for RAF Station Gatow in the British Sector of Berlin for the start of what was known as “Operation Knicker” and later became the Berlin Airlift.

During the following twenty four hours thirteen Dakotas transported 44 tons of food to Berlin.

On the 30th June 1948 the operation was renamed rather inappropriately “Carter Paterson” the name of a well known British removals company. This name was soon changed and on the 18th July became “Operation Plainfare.” which was retained right through to the end of the Airlift in September 1949.

So, the 28th June 2013 will be the 65th anniversary of the start of the Airlift which became for many one of the most memorable periods of their Service careers.

Hopefully, suitable events will take place to commemorate what helped to change history in Europe at that time.

If anyone has memories of that particular date we would be pleased to hear from you. Copies of photographs would of course be most welcome.

Although the Blockade had been lifted on May 12th 1949 the Airlift carried as usual and on the 30th June 1949 the Royal Air Force together with their Civilian colleagues carried out their highest daily total of supplies in a twenty four hour period. A total of 2,263 short tons and on the 3rd July 1949 the Combined Airlift Task Force (CALT) delivered the two millionth short ton since the operation began.

Geoffrey W. Smith. Chairman.
WEEKEND REUNION 2012
The Annual BBAA Reunion, 2012

As the visit to Berlin and the Harz Mountains was held in May this year the BBAA weekend Reunion for this year will be held in September 2012.
This will be from Thursday 20th September to Sunday 23rd September and will be at Principal Hayley Hotels, Horwood House, Little Horwood, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire MK17 0PH. This is the same hotel group as our previous weekends at Eastwood Hall, Nottingham.
The weekend will consist of a full day visit on Friday and a half day visit on Saturday. On Thursday, after the evening meal there will be a video update of the previous 12 months activities. Friday evening will be the traditional Meet & Greet and Saturday evening will be Annual Banquet.
Sunday morning will be the Annual General Meeting, followed by farewells.
There will be a number of very important items to consider and discuss, including the future of the Association, also the proposal to lay-up the BBAA Standard, plus it’s location afterwards and also where to retain and display the Association’s memorabilia.
An application form for the reunion has been mailed to members. If another application form is required please contact Janet Howard at 80 Park Street, Kings Cliffe, Peterborough PE8 6XN and also a booking form will be published on the BBAA Website at www.bbaa-airlift.org.uk.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Members are reminded that subscriptions are due on the 1st January each year. The Annual Rate is now £15.00, wherever situated. Cheques should be made payable to the BBAA and sent to:
The BBAA Treasurer, Mrs Janet Howard, 80 Park Street, Kings Cliffe, Peterborough PE8 6XN
However, if you wish to pay by Bankers Order. The details are as follows:
Payable to: British Berlin Airlift Association.
Bank: Lloyds/TSB Bank PLC Maidenhead.
Account No. 1223532
Sort Code: 30-95-36

REFUELLING FLIGHTS

From John Collier, Association Secretary.
188 Station Road, Cropston, Leicester LE7 7HF

Please note! We are sorry to report that no further Refuelling Flights are available at the moment due to the new safety restrictions now being imposed regarding the Royal Air Force carrying civilian passengers.
However, RAF Brize-Norton have stated that they would like members of the BBAA to visit the Station on a date to be yet arranged in 2013. Would you please let John Collier know that you will be interested in going on a visit to Brize-Norton if one becomes available.

EMAIL DATABASE

We have now set up a database of members Email addresses & telephone numbers. This will enable us to contact members more easily and also help to reduce the cost of mailing letters etc.
If you are willing to have your Email address on our database would you please contact Colin Cottle the co-ordinator.
His Email address is: cottle.c@talktalk.net

OBITUARIES

Ft Lt Alan Melvin - Gatow - GCA Director - Date of death not known
Betty Rolley - Widow, John Rolley - Glider Pilot Regiment - Died February 2012
Anthony W. Proverbs - Wunstorf/Buckeburg - TPO Royal Signals Regt. - Died November 2011
Gerry R. Clash - Wunstorf/Lübeck - Air Traffic Control - Date of death not known
Day One – Wednesday 9th May:
The tour started at 06.00 with the first people in our group meeting at the depot of coach operator Grey’s of Ely and then on to the Newark Hotel in Peterborough to pick up the second group. From Peterborough we travelled to the Union Jack Club in London to pick up our third group where we encountered heavy traffic causing us to be behind our scheduled time for the ferry at Dover. At Dover we caught the next available ferry to Calais and than set off through France and Belgium to stay at our overnight hotel in Dortmund.

Day Two - Thursday 10th May:
We had a full day travelling from our hotel in Dortmund to the Potsdammer Inn Hotel, Berlin for a four night stay, which being a city centre hotel gave Kevin, our driver a few overnight parking problems.

Day Three - Friday 11th May:
We visited the new Headquarters of the Cold War Museum which had been relocated at Kunersdorf to the East of Berlin. It was sited at a former East German army depot and was still being developed as a Museum. Our next visit was a long drive to the Luftwaffen Museum at the former RAF Gatow in West Berlin. The Museum is now being redeveloped as a Military Museum with the former Air Traffic Control and Passenger Building in our Airlift days now being converted to a Display Area. At the front of the building is the Memorial Stone which was formally sited near to the former RAF Gatow Main Entrance and Guard Room along with the RAAF Dakota. The RAAF Dakota has now been completely refurbished and together with the Memorial Stone both were due to be formally dedicated in their new locations. Unfortunately, bad weather, heavy rain and hailstones caused this event to be postponed. The Museum authorities took the opportunity to interview and film BBAA members in order to make a video record of their personal memories of the Airlift. Later, in the Museum hangar we met with Gail Halvorsen, the Candy Bomber together with the Hanover/Berlin Military Train group. In the evening a BBQ was held for all with entertainment being provided by a Scottish Pipe Band, an Irish Dancing Group and a lady singing “Forties” songs in a rather risqué style.

Day Four - Saturday 12th May:
This was the day for the Airlift Commemorations held at Luftbrücke Platz, Tempelhof. The ceremony was held with a very good attendance by airlift veterans. After the ceremony the BBAA group at the invitation of the Berlin President went over to the Berlin Parliament Building for lunch and a guided tour of the building. Later there was a presentation to the general public on a platform outside the building. Geoff Smith presented the Berlin President with a Thank You Certificate and a replica of the BBAA Memorial which is at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire.

Day Five- Sunday 13th May.
Sunday was a free day for all the members of the BBAA Group. Some opted for travel on the “S” Bahn or the “U” Bahn and went to places like the Brandenburg Gate, Alexander Platz or the Unter den Linden. The weather was perfect for just wandering along and seeing the sights.

Day Six - Monday 14th May.
It was now time to leave Berlin and travel to Goslar and the Harz Mountains. We went via the Berlin suburbs to the Berlin outer ring road and then on to the motorway towards Magdeburg and Brunswick, then headed south to Goslar, arriving there in good time to walk down to the Market Place at three o’clock in the afternoon to see the famous clock and the moving figures depicting the mining history of the area. It was then “Coffee & Cake time” We then travelled on to Hahenklee to the Berghotel, our place for the next three days.

Day Seven - Tuesday 15th May.
Several members of our group had asked if we could visit Bad Harzburg because during Airlift times they had been there when it was a British Forces Leave Centre. With thanks to Rosemarie Rosenkranz and the Mayor of Fassberg Hans Werner Schlitte arrangements had been made for our group to visit the Town Hall at Bad Harzburg and be given a guided tour of the town by the Mayor with refreshments in the Spa Pavilion. At the end of the tour we were able to have time for a walk around the town centre for lunch etc. Then it was back to Goslar for a shopping stop.

Continued on page 4.
Day Eight - Wednesday 16th May.
This was the day for our steam train ride up the Brocken Mountain from the main station in Wernigerode. Colin Cottle had been able to arrange for a reserved coach, so Colin and Janet were able to go and get the tickets prior to us getting on to the train. The weather was nice and clear when we set off, but as we neared the summit the weather changed with heavy mist and rain. At the Brocken Summit it was very cold with frost & hailstones on the grass verges. After walking up towards the hotel and having a meal in the refreshment area the weather still had not improved very much, so we walked back down to the railway station to wait for the train to take us back to Wernigerode.

When it was time for the train to leave we found that one person - a lady was missing. We decided to let everyone go on the train and three of us would get off and wait at the next station down the line to see if she had been able to catch the next train, leaving the rest of our group to carry on back to Wernigerode. When the next train arrived the three of us who had waited were delighted to see that both our missing lady and her husband were on it. She had been spotted by two German hikers who were able to take her back up the pathway to the railway station.

Our Hotel the Berghotel in Hahnenklee had said that they would prepare a BBQ for our final evening, but as the weather had not been suitable for an outdoor event they had prepared an excellent meal for us in the Restaurant.

Day Nine - Thursday 17th May.
It was time to depart Hahnenklee travelling over the winding mountain roads to pick up the motorway heading west towards Holland, then through Antwerp and our final night stopover, a very pleasant hotel in Diksmuide, Belgium.

Day Ten - Friday 18th May.
We left the hotel in Belgium, travelling to Calais for our return ferry to Dover. This time the ferry was only half-full so there was ample room to relax and have a meal prior to travelling back to London, Peterborough and then to Ely in Cambridgeshire. Kevin brought us back via the site of the forthcoming London Olympics. Thus ended another successful BBAA trip to Berlin and also the Harz Mountains.

Our thanks to Janet Howard and Colin Cottle for all their efforts and also Kevin Large, our coach driver who did a splendid job driving the coach.

THE COLD WAR MUSEUM - BERLIN

The Cold War Museum Berlin Exhibition Centre which was formerly situated at Harnekop to the north-east of Berlin has now been relocated to a new site at Kunersdorf which is to the East of Berlin.

It was formerly a secret Telecommunications Bunker and was used by the former East German government until the reunification of Germany.

After 1990 the bunker became surplus to requirement and all the equipment was removed. The bunker was sealed and the remaining buildings served as accommodation for refugees and the surrounding land was used as an ostrich farm.

The Rüsterbusch e.V Association now intends to open the bunker to the public as a museum and relic of the Cold War.

The official opening of the museum took place on the 30th July 2011 at 11am with a welcome by Mrs Anna Edith Haase

Further information can be found on the Cold War Museum’s website at www.thecoldwarberlin.info

AIRLIFT VETERANS INTERVIEWS ON FILM

We have been approached by a company who are recording on DVD video interviews of British veterans to produce an online military history archive.

The interviews will be placed on a website for use by schools, libraries, museums and the general public.

Each person interviewed will receive a DVD copy. The interviews will be filmed in high definition.

This will not be a scripted agenda, just veterans personal stories and memories of their time on the Berlin Airlift in 1948/49.

The filming will be carried out at suitable locations in the UK, such as museums etc.

We need to know who will be interested in sharing their stories about their time on the Berlin Airlift.

In order to arrange these interviews and if you are interested please let our Webmaster Colin Cottle know as soon as possible at: Colin Cottle, 27 The Crescent, Cranham, Essex, RM14 1JZ.

Telephone: 01708 224560. Email address: cottle.c@talktalk.net
**Honorary Freedom of the Borough of St. Helens**

The Honorary Freedom of the Borough of St. Helens in Merseyside was awarded to the British Berlin Airlift Association on Wednesday the 18th April 2012.

The BBAA, for a number of years have had a Berlin Airlift Display looked after by BBAA member Jack Steele near to Gullivers World on the former RAF Burtonwood site. Burtonwood was the UK Maintenance Base for USAF Airlift aircraft on the Berlin Airlift.

The award was given to recognise the contribution to freedom made by Servicemen and Servicewomen Past & Present in the St Helens area over the years.

Jack Steele who lives in St. Helens was to receive the award on behalf of the BBAA, but unfortunately two days before event Jack fell and broke his hip, which has meant a spell in hospital. Geoff Smith was also going to be present and was able to take over from Jack.

A rehearsal took place on Tuesday the day before the event and on the Wednesday eight people from the BBAA were able to be present.

David Hildred, the BBAA Standard Bearer along with nineteen Standards from local Service Associations led the way from the Town Hall to the Parish Church where in front of a packed congregation the award ceremony was carried out.

The Freedom Scroll (see picture, right) was presented to each representative after which there was a march back to the Town Hall where all present enjoyed an excellent luncheon whilst being entertained by a lady singing songs of the 1940’s accompanied by a pianist.

An excellent day was enjoyed by all who were able to be present.

---

**THE ALLIED MUSEUM - BERLIN**

Whilst we were in Berlin in May this year we met with Dr Helmut Trotnow whom we have known for many years. He told us that he had now retired and was no longer the Director of the Allied Museum.

We have had a long and happy relationship with Dr Trotnow from the early days of the Allied Museum in Clayallee, Berlin and wish him well for the future in his retirement.

---

**MEMORIES**

(By - W.L. Ball No 77 Squadron.)

After all the years only our memories fly
Cargo’s through corridors to Berlin sky
Memories of working from dusk until dawn
For maximum aircraft to become airborne
In the march of time our memories grow dim
We look to a friend, and think, do I know him?
Our memories are misty, sometimes thick fog
As to life’s end along the road we jog
Memories play tricks as life’s dim shadows fall
It’s like trying to see through a thick brick wall
We return to the airfields and we look around
Looking where old memories might be found
Was our billet there, or behind that wall?
After so many years it’s so hard to recall.
We supplied Berlin on a wing and a prayer
Our wings are now gone, but our prayers are still there.

=================================================================
Photo left: BBAA - Germany Visit to Berlin, May 2012.
The BBAA Group outside the Berlin Parliament Building the Geordnetenhaus after a meal and tour of the building, courtesy of the Berlin President. This was after the Airlift Ceremony carried out at Luftbrücke Platz, in Tempelhof on the 12th May.

Photo’s below - BBAA members after the Ceremony at Luftbrücke Platz.

Goslar Market Place - The famous clock with the figures showing the copper & silver mining history of the area.

Bad Harzburg - The Mayor presents a plaque to the BBAA to commemorate the visit to the town.

Centre left - Gatow Luftwaffen Museum. The Irish dancers who entertained after the BBQ.

Bottom left: The Black Kilts Scottish Pipe Band. The Band opened the evening’s entertainment by marching into and around the aircraft hangar.
PHOTOGRAPHS BELOW - THE BBAA VISIT TO BERLIN 2012.

Above: Outside the Parliament Building (the Abgeordnetenhaus) 
Where British & U.S. Airlift Veterans spoke to the Berliners

Photo above:
12th May 2012 - Part of the group at the Airlift ceremony in 
Luftbrücke Platz, Tempelhof, Berlin.

After the BBQ the audience were entertained by 
Miss Kitten Von Mew

Above: The BBAA wreath at the Airlift ceremony. 

Photo left:
The Candy Bomber Gail Halvorsen with BBAA member 
Colin Cottle

A NEW BBAA BOOKLET

We have a new Booklet entitled AIRCRAFT & AIRBASES of THE BERLIN AIRLIFT 1948 - 1949.  
With personal recollections by Air & Ground Personnel. It is A5 size and has a total of 62 pages and has been compiled over the past eighteen years by our late Chairman Sqn Ldr Frank Stillwell & current Chairman Geoff Smith from the time the BBAA was first formed in 1995. It includes stories and also photographs supplied by many members of the BBAA, some of whom however, sadly are no longer with us. 
The booklet is available from - Geoff Smith, 12 Tyesdale Court, Bretton, Peterborough PE3 9XZ. 
The cost is £7.00 each including postage
BRITISH BERLIN AIRLIFT ASSOCIATION

**A Unique Day in RAF History**

Friday `11th July 2008

The Royal Air Force marked its 90th anniversary in style with its biggest ever parade for the presentation of new Queen's Colours to the RAF in the United Kingdom and the RAF Regiment. Months of dedicated preparation and weeks of drill for around 800 personnel fell into place for the presentation made by the Queen, accompanied by the Duke of Edinburgh, during a visit to the Royal International Air Tattoo at RAF Fairford, Gloucestershire. Rain which had plagued parade rehearsals for most of the week even stayed away for most of the day – although a quick drenching was unfortunately in store for personnel and spectators during the final five minutes.

61 Squadron Standards were on display on the parade ground and personnel welcomed the Queen in the presence of 5,000 invited guests which included proud families, serving members of the RAF and its various associations and charities.

The event was the largest RAF parade since the Queen conducted a ‘Silver Jubilee’ Review of the RAF at RAF Finningley, Yorkshire in 1977. After the Royal salute four Typhoon aircraft flew past in formation, and the Queen was invited to review the Parade. The Colours were then escorted by the Queen’s Colour Squadron (63 Squadron RAF Regiment), augmented by other Royal Air Force Regiment squadrons and 34 Squadron RAF Regiment. They were supported by two further squadrons made up of RAF personnel from around the United Kingdom.

A drumhead blessing service was held for the new Queen’s Colours followed by a short speech from the Queen. “I am very pleased to be presenting my Colour to the RAF in this, your 90th anniversary year. The RAF can be truly proud of the level of service it provides and the considerable successes it has achieved. It continues to be an example to other Air Forces.

Peter G. Marriott writes:

I believe I was the youngest Civil Ground Engineer on the Berlin Airlift serving with Sir Alan Cobham’s Flight Refuelling Ltd, based at Tarrant Rushton, Dorset during 1948/49. In May 1948 I was 17 years old, but now at aged seventy-seven I still remember it well!

TO ALL THOSE WHO TOOK PART IN THE AIRLIFT WITH FOOD AND OTHER SUPPLIES THEY HAD TO SHIFT TO SAVE A CITY WAS THE TASK AND TO HAVE A LIFE WAS ALL THEY DID ASK COMING TOGETHER IN THIS TIME OF NEED ALL WHO WERE INVOLVED HAVE SOWN THE SEED NO ONE STOOD BACK AND SAID ‘NO, NOT ME’ BUT ALL WERE AS ONE TO HELP THEM STAY FREE WE ALL DID OUR BIT, SOME FROM A LONG WAY OFF SENDING OUR LANC’S TO WUNSTORF AND TO TEMPHELF THE FORCES FROM THE EAST THEN PUT UP A GREAT WALL TO PREVENT ANY ESCAPE, BECAUSE IT WAS SO TALL WHEN ATTEMPS WERE MADE, TO FOIL THE PLOT FEAR MADE THE PEOPLE AFRAID TO BE SHOT BUT, WITH THANKS FROM ALL ON A JOB WELL DONE SIXTY YEARS ON, THAT MEANS EVERYONE!!

P.G.M.
Jersey, C.I. 2008

BBAA Shop. Items for sale

Association Tie (Members only)
£11.50 UK
£12.50 overseas

Cloth Badge (Members only)
Large £2.00 UK - £3.00 overseas
Small £1.50 UK - £2.50 overseas
With magnetic clasp
£3.00 UK - £4.00 overseas

60th Anniversary BBAA Memorial Miniature Replica. It stands 9 inches high on a Circular wooden base. Made of matt and polished Pewter, with Bronzed Eagle And dated Anniversary Plaque at the base.
£20.00 each UK Plus £5.00 postage & Packing
Overseas cost on application’

To place an order, write to BBAA Treasurer Mrs Janet Howard, 80 Park Street, Kings Cliffe, Peterborough PE8 6XN

Photo’s below - The Berlin & Harz Mountains visit 2012.

Fred & Rosemarie Burrows in front of the Memorial Stone at its new location at the Luftwaffen Museum, Gatow, Berlin. In the background is the newly refurbished RAAF Dakota.

Sunday - A day of rest. Alexanderplatz Shopping Centre.
L to R - Laurie & Delia Kennedy Rosemarie Burrows Colin Cottle Geoff Smith Jose Cottle Joyce Rahim

The Steam Train ride up the Brocken Mountain. The BBAA booked a private carriage for the trip.

The Brocken train working very hard on the journey to the top. It takes one & a half hours from Werningerode to the summit.
The incident of the train was the very first indication that there were going to be real ructions with the Russians sooner or later. I've always thought that having 'won' over that little tiny scrap along the railway, the public got hold of the idea, quite rightly, that the Russians could close all the avenues to Berlin if they cared to take a bit of a chance. This was around the middle of '47.

I had taken the British train from Berlin down to the British Zone, about 150 miles west of Berlin. I had a sleeper, and I remember distinctly turning in. The train ground on slowly, because it was going through the Russian Zone, and parts of the track were not too good. I was deeply asleep when there was a thundering crash on the door of my sleeper, and as I went to open it, the door gave way, and in fell quite literally - an enormous Brigadier.

He told me we were at Helmstedt, near the border between the Russian and British Zones, and that the Russians were refusing to let the train proceed across the border. The Brigadier couldn't speak any Russian but someone had told him that I knew about Russians. So he had tried to open my cabin door, and had put his shoulder to it just as I was releasing the catch inside: he shot across the cabin, hit the wall with the side of his head, got a great big cut in his head which immediately began to bleed all over the place, but managed to explain what was going on.

According to the Flight-Lieutenant, Officer in Charge of Trains, when they'd drawn into Helmstedt station, a fairly senior Russian officer had appeared, who said: 'Before you go any further, I must inspect the passes of all the German people on your train'. The O.C. Trains knew that it was absolutely forbidden to allow any Russian to board any of our trains. Certainly they were not allowed on the German coaches - six or seven big day-coaches attached to the back of our train. So there we were: the Russian said the train couldn't go on till the passes had been inspected, and the O.C. Train could not let him on board to inspect them. The Brigadier, the O.C. Train and I decided to try and ring Berlin, so I went into the Russian office and eventually got through to a disgruntled Major General Brownjohn, deputy C-in-C, British Forces. He said: 'well... you'd better come back!'. I said 'I can't, I've got a whole cargo of British civilians, and half a train of German civilians and babies right at the tail-end. Also, I gather from O.C. Train that it would be highly undesirable to allow the Russians to check the German passes'. What I couldn't say over the phone was that in fact O.C. Train had told me that we had five spies on board, agents for the British, who were being whistled out of Berlin and taken down to the Zone, because the Russians had rumbled them. And if they were caught, they'd all be strung up.

Eventually Brownjohn got on to General Robertson, C-in-C in Berlin, who said he couldn't decide what to do, but that if we let the Russians on board the British train once, they'd be aboard every time, so he would get on to London. Well, heaven knows what the time was now, and I'd been sitting on the edge of this little table in the Russian station-master's office for hours. General Robertson rang up Lord Pakenham (Labour minister for all German affairs at the time) and the answer came back that we must not let the Russians see a single German pass, we were to send our German half of the train back to Berlin under guard (the 'guard' incidentally, consisted of about six young airmen with a rifle apiece) - and we were surrounded by about three divisions of the Russian army), and the British half of the train should continue down to the Zone. Well just at that moment, along came someone saying 'all our lavatories have run dry, there's no water for them, they are all bunged up with sewage, there's a most frightful smell brewing, and our engine has run out of water and can't make any more steam'. I managed to telephone down to the next station on the British side of the border, (Marienborn), and told them of our sorry state: no food, no water, an enormous number of babies in the German half of the train, and besieged. The voice at the other end of the line said: I will send you a brand new engine, full of coal and water, and I'll put a radio on board so that you can talk to us direct and we've got a big NAAFI coach ready filled, and I'm sure there's some baby food in it - I'll send that up too, be sure to give up hope when we found him in the Wagons-Lit attendant's tiny cabin, hidden inside a storage bench with all the blankets on top.

Continued on page 10.

========================================
A Berlin Train Incident - Continued from page 9.

Just then, along came the Russian officer saying: 'well, I shall just inspect your part of the train, purely cursory, and then you can depart'.

Later that winter, (1947-48), the Russians began regularly to send polite messages to the three Western Allies, saying first that the railway, then the canal and road routes into Berlin were too dangerous to use owing to the bitter winter weather, that repairs would be lengthy, and that the Western Allies would no doubt make other arrangements for bringing in supplies. Some saw nothing sinister in these events. But people I knew, and to whom I'd told the train story, saw a red warning light, and so did I. I went to my chief suggesting we get some plans out if all the task of feeding and transporting our garrisons and civilians was to be by air. We hadn't got many planes, the Americans planes were all working elsewhere around the world, and the French hadn't got any planes anyway. It would be difficult, but we should have a crack at it. Initially sceptical, General Robertson agreed. He persuaded his American opposite number to get hold of any available few transport aircraft, and let us fly really essential stuff into Berlin, and start quickly. Within 24 hours, we also had a squadron of RAF Flying-boats moored on the Elbe at Hamburg and delivering essentials to Berlin. About that time, the American C-in-C said he would be advising his American nationals to leave Berlin if they could: some of them might want to get their wives and families out. Robertson said: ‘Well, the British could do the same, but I don't think there's any point in telling them so because I expect they'd rather stay here and see it through’.

As a footnote to the above Joanna says that they went on the Military Train tribute trip to Berlin and Hanover and met a German gentleman who had been ‘removed’ from Berlin as a 12 year old along with his father who was a specialist in Gears and Gearing and his expertise was wanted in the Western Zone of Germany. He had travelled in 1947 at about the same time as Joanna together with her brother & sister were travelling in the opposite direction.

BRIEFING BOOKLET and BBAA - THE FIRST TEN YEARS

We have upgraded our popular Briefing Booklet on the Berlin Airlift. It is now 16 pages and includes photos of the BBAA Memorial at Alrewas, together with some of the British Airlift aircraft. It also includes details of Berlin Airlift museums and lists the British and Commonwealth casualties. The cost is £3.00 each.

BBAA - THE FIRST TEN YEARS:

We have produced a booklet describing the first ten years of the BBAA:

It contains a potted history from 1994 to 2004 and a number of photographs, which include the May 2004 group visit to Germany to commemorate the 55th Anniversary of the end of the Berlin Blockade. The cost is £5.00 each and includes postage. Both booklets are available from: Geoff Smith, 12 Tyesdale, Bretton, Peterborough PE3 9XZ.

THE NATIONAL MEMORIAL ARBORETUM

The Arboretum recently welcomed its millionth visitor and on the 17th May 2011 celebrated the 10th year since it was first opened by the Duchess of Kent in 2001. Following the opening of the Armed Forces Memorial by HM The Queen in October 2007 the visitor numbers have increased dramatically from around 20,000 to now 300,000 per annum and the NMA is now fully managed by the Royal British Legion.

The increase in numbers has caused the Arboretum to plan for the future by submitting a scheme to redevelop the car park and entrance area, enlarge the Restaurant, and create an “Armed Forces Pavilion & Heroes Square”. An appeal for donations to help fund the new concept was launched this year by HRH Prince William, who is now the Duke of Cambridge.

The appeal is going very well with donations & pledges being received from trusts, companies and also many of the Royal British Legion branches. If you wish to make a donation it can be made through the Arboretum’s website www.thenma.org.uk A cheque can be sent to the NMA Appeal Office, 1 Fitzgerald Road, London SW14 8HA. Cheques should be made payable to the NMA Appeal.

The Armed Forces Memorial now carries the names of over 16,000 Service men & women who have lost their lives since 1948, including some of those who were lost during the Berlin Airlift in 1948-1949. With the present ongoing conflict in Afghanistan more names are being added all too frequently.

==============================================

Air Cdre Rex Waite
The proposed new Entrance and Processional Way

We have been discussing with the National Memorial Arboretum their recent proposals for upgrading the entrance area at the Arboretum.

They say that following the dedication of the Armed Forces Memorial in 2007 the visitor numbers have increased dramatically.

From an average of 65,000 visitors per year they are now nearly 300,000 and still increasing. It has become obvious that the existing facilities were no longer adequate.

Their outline proposals mean that some of the existing plot-holders and their memorials will have to be relocated or amended.

Our plot is one that is to be moved but we have said that there are a number of items that have to be given consideration, such as:

1. Where will be the new location of the BBAA Memorial?
2. Resiting the two existing Plinths and the Name Plaques
3. The location of the two rows of thirty-nine Memorial Trees is very important. Each tree represents a British & Commonwealth casualty.
4. Relocating the Relatives trees.
5. Relocating the four Memorial Bench Seats.

The Arboretum have suggested that it may be possible to site our Memorial at the start of the proposed Processional Way with the Memorial Trees as shown in the above drawing.

However, these are only suggestions at the present time and further discussions will have to be held with the Arboretum management.

We have pointed out to Mr Charles Bagot-Jewitt, the Chief Executive at the Arboretum that when we first considered having our Memorial at the NMA we were offered the present site on the understanding that it was in a prime location and that it would be the first memorial the public would see when they came from the visitors car park to the entrance of the Arboretum.

We consider that these requirements are still valid and also that as over the years many members of the British Berlin Airlift Association have put in a great deal of effort and their own personal time in ensuring that the BBAA Memorial is kept in good order and helps to tell the general public the story of an event which many people do not know of or remember and possibly helped to stop a third world war.

As visitor numbers have risen dramatically in the past few years from 65,000 per year to the present total of nearly 300,000 the NMA state that they anticipate that they will in a few years be around the 500,000 mark. They say that the Visitor Centre, Shop and Restaurant will not be adequate for these numbers of visitors, so they are planning to increase the capacity of these buildings, plus a Learning Centre, a Functions Pavilion and an external area to be known as Heroes Square which will be used for such events as Remembrance Day and other outside events.

We will continue to liaise with the NMA to ensure that the BBAA is still well represented at the NMA.

====================================================================

The BBAA Memorial
A MESSAGE FROM DALE WHIPPLE IN THE UNITED STATES.

Dear Friends, Just an update on my health and activities. I am doing fine health wise having finished my radiation treatments to my brain. Face is burned as it would be from sun burn.

Now, an exciting event:

My wife, daughter and I were invited by Col. Gail Halvorsen to attend the Gathering of Eagles event held at Maxwell AFB, Alabama. This is the 31st year and Col. Halvorsen was inducted. Their purpose is to recognize distinguished aviators and to share their personal experiences. There were 14 inductees and over a 4 day period they are interviewed for 45 minutes to tell their stories. The reason Col. Halvorsen chose me was because I had never flown in a C54 during the Airlift as I was Ground Support. He knew the “Spirit of Freedom” was going to be there with Tim Chopp, the pilot and Director of the Berlin Airlift Historical Assn. He took me up and it was a wonderful experience. I am a truly blessed man. Hope all are doing well. Take care and keep in touch. I am hoping my health will improve as I would love to make the trip to Germany next year for the 65th Anniversary of the Airlift.

Regards, Lewis Dale Whipple - Vice President - U.S. Berlin Airlift Veterans Association

DVD - PETERBOROUGH REUNION 2008

We have a DVD available of the Weekend Reunion at the Holiday Inn, Peterborough on the 26/29th June 2008. It covers the group tours to IWM Duxford, Burghley House, the Cresset Big Band Concert, the Nene Valley Railway, the March Past through the city centre and the St. John’s Parish Church Commemorative Service.

To receive a copy write to Janet Howard, 80 Park Street, Kings Cliffe, Peterborough PE8 6XN with a cheque payable to BBA for £18.00 in the UK and £20.00 elsewhere.

We also have available, copies of the Souvenir Programme for the ‘Forties Night’ concert by the Johnny Harris Orchestra at the Cresset Theatre, Peterborough on the 28th June 2008. It is A4 size, 28 pages with photographs etc. (See page 8.) If you would like a copy they are available from Janet Howard, 80 Park Street, Kings Cliffe, Peterborough PE8 6XN at a cost of £3.00 each in the UK or £3.50 overseas. This includes postage and packing. **Note! Only £2.00 if ordered with the Peterborough DVD.**

Airlift Websites

There are numerous Websites with reference to the Berlin Airlift Some of which may be of interest to members are listed below. You may know of others that could be useful - Please let me know. Ed.

You know ours of course - bbaa-airlift.org.uk

Alliierten Museum, Berlin - www.alliiertenmuseum.de

Gatow Old Boys - www.gatow.org

Find a friend - www.servicepals.com

Forces Reunited - www.forcesreunited.org.uk


HQ BAFO & 2nd TAF - Bad Eilsen Association & Reunion - www.badeilsen.org.uk - Contact Geoff Lipscombe

Interpreters Dilemma - www.tonycunnane.co.uk

Royal Air Force Regiment Service Club - www.easynet.co.uk/feely/history_halwarren.htm

Members are reminded once again that subscriptions are due on the 1st January each year.

The Annual Rate is **£15.00**, wherever situated. Cheques should be made payable to the BBA and sent to:-

The BBA Treasurer, Mrs Janet Howard, 80 Park Street, King’s Cliffe, Peterborough PE8 6XN

**However, if you wish to pay by Bankers Order**, the details are as shown on page 2 of this newsletter:-

**Payable to: British Berlin Airlift Association.**

Bank:- Lloyds/TSB PLC, Maidenhead. Account No. 1223532 Sort Code: 30-95-36

**Note!** Would you please remember to amend your existing standing order if it is still paying the earlier subscription amount of ten pounds.

A small number of members are still having to send a separate amount of five pounds to the Treasurer

Photographs

We would like to thank the following for supplying photographs for this issue of the newsletter:

Colin Cottle - Joyce Rahim - Fred Burrows

Karin Brandes & Elena Herzberg (Berlin House of Representatives)

Note! The views and opinions expressed by contributors within this newsletter are not necessarily those of either the Editor or the British Berlin Airlift Association.