



# NEWSLETTER

April 1997

**Vote now!**

**Old Dux meeting 25th May**

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## Meeting

The date of the May meeting draws closer, so a reminder to those who are coming to give their car registration and passenger details to Bob as soon as possible. The list for submission to Duxford security must be compiled at least 5 days before the event so try and avoid a last minute rush.

## ID badges

Remember to wear your ID badges at the meeting, you may have a recollection of what someone looked like when you knew them at Duxford but time and sagging memories need the help of a name tag! If you need a badge please ring me on 01709-560771 and give me the name you want on the badge, this of course includes your partner, I will then be able to hand them out at the meeting.

## Subs

You may recall that at a previous meeting it was agreed that the renewal of subs would be an annual event and become due in the May every year. If you are coming to the meeting you may pay there, if not payment by cheque please to my address, (not to Bob). Receipts will only be given if specifically requested.

## Membership list

Due to a mix up with the Post Office, who seemed to be under the impression that they were supposed to keep the mail and not deliver it, some of you may not have got your membership list, if this is so, ring me (number as above) and I will post one off to you.

## Annual Dinner

The date for the dinner has now been confirmed as Sat 13th September, the initial confusion was because the Mess had taken a double booking that evening. Thanks to some hard bargaining by Bob we won the day, or evening, so book now and avoid disappointment later. A deposit of £3 per person is due now with the balance to be paid by the 1st of September, as before payment can be made by instalments, the exact amount per instalment is up to each individual to decide.

One of our new members, Ritchie Richards, who was heavily involved in the early development of radar has submitted the story about one of his 'experiences' whilst serving at Duxford during the war years. A future edition of the newsletter will tell his story in more detail.

## The bombs that hit Duxford.

It was approx 0100 hrs when I arrived back at Duxford, dead tired after an alcoholic evening in London, and after parking my car (A Rover 14 sports that I had recently purchased from the C.O. of 19 Sqdn for £75) I headed for my barrack block.

Snoring from all angles greeting me when I entered my room, situated on the first floor in a fairly new block, (I think 2nd on the left as you come in the main entrance) and within seconds had joined the chorus after I had crashed out in my pit.

The time was 0145 hrs when vast explosions hit the camp I woke up to see bright moonlight streaming through a hole that had once been a blacked out window next to my bed. The glass had shattered into small pieces and was all over my blankets, I shook it all off and went back to sleep! (The fresh air helped).

Fifteen minutes later, a lot of shouting, "All out of this room- go to the other end of the block" apparently an unexploded bomb had been discovered about 35ft from the end of the block. I shook the glass out of my boots, and crunching over the remains of the window, gathered together my 3 piece palliase and blankets deposited the lot in the corridor at the far end of the block and was soon once more in the 'land of nod'.

More urgent shouting "All out of this block", this is hell I thought, relocating my pit all through the early hours of the morning, so I took my bedding to the garage where I kept the car, moved the seats forward, and flung the whole lot in the back and slept like a log until the birds woke me up.

It appeared that the bomb disposal unit had discovered another unexploded bomb embedded in the foundations of the block immediately under where my pit had stood. Had it gone off I would not be writing this piece of history.

I had my own Radio/Radar workshop facing the runway at the side of the second large hanger to left of the guardroom and for administration reasons the bomb disposal unit was



I quickly discovered that the fuse was electrical and 'right up my street' and so two hours later was able to give him my report, - there was nothing wrong with this immaculate piece of German pyrotechnic engineering, the whole device was in perfect working order, and I eventually fired it, and blew the primary detonator to prove the point! I discovered that the Germans were very cunning as the system they had devised did not 'cock' the bomb until 4 to 6 seconds after leaving the bomb bay of the aircraft.

### How did the Germans do this?

Surrounding these ball assemblies were circular platinum contacts, the gaps between the contacts and the balls were minute and the slightest shock from any direction would complete a circuit through two or three balls touching their surrounding contacts.

So now after 56 years I am able to write about this event and explain the mystery. The German pilot spotted Duxford in the bright moonlight, swooped down, and released his bombs, a total of eight. The first five bombs exploded OK, but the last three did not - why? - because the second condenser in the bombs had insufficient time to reach a fully charged condition - **in other words the pilot was too close to the ground.** The fine platinum wire got hot, but not hot enough for ignition. - Thank God

