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No 50 & No 61 SQUADRONS' ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

50 SQN 100TH ANNIVERSARY



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FOREWORD

Our Association was formed in 1946 and initially the Presidency was voted annually. But in 1961 the Association agreed to have a permanent President. Until a few months ago, the permanent Presidency was held, for almost 55 years, by just two very distinguished WWII 50 Squadron members: Sir Augustus Walker and Sir Michael Beetham. Shortly after the latter's death last October, I was asked to become the third permanent President. I accepted with great humility.

Since we last met, Sir Michael's passing, and that of other WWII veterans, makes our reunion this year even more poignant. We who remain have a constant responsibility to revere the memory of all those who served on the two squadrons both in war and peace. In doing so, we will also revere the memory of two of the most famous and distinguished Squadrons in the RAF's history - which itself is approaching its centenary.

AVM Nigel Baldwin Association President (OC 50 Sqn 1977-79)

I was delighted to see recently that the International Bomber Command Centre (IBCC) has been awarded just under £3 Million from the Heritage Lottery Fund. This will allow the creation of the exhibition, community engagement, education programmes and the digital archive; all key parts of the project. There remains, of course, more money to raise and so the appeal goes on but we as an Association will continue to do all that we can to support this most worthwhile cause.

Peter Jacobs Association Chairman

Lady Patricia Beetham died on 23 Jan. Charles Swain, our Vice-President for many years, died on 17 Feb. We also regret that Fred Jones (50 Sqn pilot) and Les Loosemore (61 Sqn MUG) have also recently passed away; their obituaries will be in the Aug Newsletter.



AVM Nigel and
Jenny Baldwin

We not only owe a debt of gratitude to our late President, MRAF Sir Michael Beetham and our new President, AVM Nigel Baldwin, for all their support and guidance over the years, but to Jenny Baldwin too. Jenny is always at her husband's side at our reunions and is a staunch Association advocate. We also salute our wartime veterans of both Sqns for doing their duty with exemplary fortitude and modesty.



We will have Centenary lapel badges for both sqns on sale at £2 each during the Reunion Weekend. (A badge will be presented to our wartime veterans). 50p from the sale of each badge will be donated to the IBCC Appeal.



If you wish to have a wreath in memory of a family member or loved-one available during the Centenary Reunion weekend, please contact our Secretary, Gerry Collins; his details are on page 2. You may have the wreath laid on your behalf.

I'm grateful to all who have helped me with the writing of 50 Sqn's proud history. Larry Wright, who freely provided so much information about the early days of 50 Sqn; Jeff Jefford for the RAF Bekesbourne CD; our wartime veterans for their memories; and Malcolm Barrass at RAFweb. Special thanks to Tim, Alison and Freddie Rooke for the RFC Bekesbourne Prints.

Richard Jones Association Vice-Chairman

50 SQUADRON ROYAL AIR FORCE - 100 YEARS



Motto: "From Defence to Attack" Thought to indicate the change from the Defence role in the First World War to the Attack role in the Second.

Badge: The Sqn formed at Dover and adopted their town badge, whose arms include St Martin and the beggar with whom he divided his cloak. The mantle is also indicative of the protection given to the UK by the RAF.

Authority: HM King George VI in March 1940.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

May 16	Maj M G Christie	Oct 52	Sqn Ldr J S Owen
Feb 17	Maj A T Watson	Jul 54	Sqn Ldr G Hampton
Oct 17	Maj A de B Brandon	May 56	Sqn Ldr G E Kerridge
Aug 18	Maj F Sowrey	Dec 56	*Wg Cdr E P Landon
Dec 18	Maj A T Harris		(Sqn Disbanded 1 Oct 59)
	(Sqn Disbanded 13 Jun 19)		
Jun 37	Sqn Ldr R B Sutherland	Aug 61	*Wg Cdr B A Primavesi
Jul 38	Wg Cdr L Young	Jul 63	#Wg Cdr W J Stacey
Apr 40	Wg Cdr R T Taafe	Jun 65	*Wg Cdr J F Pembridge
Jun 40	Wg Cdr N D Crockart	Jun 67	*Wg Cdr M G Bradley
Jun 40	Wg Cdr G W Gollledge	Jul 69	*Wg Cdr G T Smeaton
Dec 40	*Wg Cdr G A Walker	Dec 70	*Wg Cdr D W Lowe
Oct 41	Wg Cdr R J Oxley	Apr 73	*Wg Cdr A Parkes
Oct 42	Wg Cdr W N Russell	Jul 75	*Wg Cdr D Ward
Aug 43	Wg Cdr R McFarlane	Jul 77	*Wg Cdr N B Baldwin
Dec 43	Wg Cdr E Pullen	Jul 79	*Wg Cdr T Garden
Jan 44	*Wg Cdr A W Heward	Jan 81	*Wg Cdr C P Lumb
Jun 44	*Wg Cdr R T Frogley		(Sqn Disbanded 31 Mar 84)
Mar 45	*Wg Cdr J Flint		
Jan 46	Wg Cdr R M Coad		* On 1984 disbandment photograph
May 46	Wg Cdr G A V Kuyvett		
May 47	Sqn Ldr T W Rippingale		# ACM Sir John Stacey died 1981
May 49	Sqn Ldr A C Peach		
	(Sqn Disbanded 31 Jan 51)		

50 SQUADRON STANDARD



The Standard was presented by HRH Princess Marina, Duchess of Kent, on 15 Jan 67 at RAF Waddington. It is lodged in the Rotunda at the Royal Air Force College Cranwell.

The eight battle honours on the Standard are:

Home Defence 1916 - 1918
 German Ports 1940 - 1945
 Berlin 1940 - 1944
 Normandy - 1944
 Channel and North Sea - 1943
 Rhur 1940 - 1944
 Fortress Europe 1940 - 1945
 France and Germany 1940 -1945

50 SQUADRON DISBANDMENT 31 MARCH 1984 - FORMER COs



(Standing L-R) Gp Capt Parkes(33); Gp Capt Ward(34); Gp Capt Baldwin(35); Gp Capt Garden(36)

(Seated L-R) Gp Capt Lowe(32); Wg Cdr Bradley(30); Air Cdre Smeaton(31); Wg Cdr Flint(18);
 Wg Cdr Lumb(37); ACM Sir Gus Walker(11); ACM Sir Anthony Heward(16); Gp Capt Landon(26);
 Gp Capt Frogley(17); Gp Capt Pembridge(29); Gp Capt Primavesi (not confirmed)(27)

((xx) indicates order of Sqdn COs from Maj M G Christie(1) in May 1916)

50 SQN COMMANDERS I HAVE KNOWN

On taking command of 50 Sqn in 1977, I was told that, in the late and much revered Wg Cdr Jimmy Flint's time around VE Day in 1945, with the Squadron at RAF Skellingthorpe alongside 61 Sqn, the idea was formed that members, in order to stay in contact, would meet every year in the autumn at Ye Olde Cock Tavern in Fleet Street for a bash.



AVM G A Walker
CBE DSO DFC AFC

So, soon after arriving, I was summoned to the party not least to tell the assembled company what we were up to on the modern 50 Sqn. It was there, in a noisy, smoke-filled pub room, I met for the first time Air Chief Marshal Sir Gus Walker - the then President of the Association. Classically penetrating blue eyes, the famous one arm - how did he ever fly a Vulcan, which he did when he was AOC 1 Group in the late 1950s? - he strode around the room shaking every hand and seemingly knowing every veteran by first name. He commanded 50 Sqn the year I was born so I always felt I had an private link with the great man who, of course, was a role model to so many young officers of my generation.

When I was OC 50 Sqn at RAF Waddington, it was he and Air Mshl Sir Mickey Martin (Wg Cdr Guy Gibson's No 2 on the famous Dambusters' raid and another 50 Sqn Hampden, Manchester and Lancaster pilot) who encouraged Association members and the City of Lincoln to name the newly built school on the ex-RAF Skellingthorpe airfield "The Lesley Manser Primary School". We also raised funds to commission a beautiful book case to hold hymn and prayer books at the then brand new, St Luke & St Martin's church on the same Birchwood estate. The book case has the 50 and 61 Sqn's crest carved upon it.

In the late 1960s, I got to know the Station Commander of RAF Coltishall - a Lightning station. He was Gp Capt John Stacey (who went on to become CinC RAF Germany as an Air Mshl). Knowing I was a Vulcan pilot, he used to tell me stories of when he commanded 50 Sqn at RAF Waddington just after it had been reformed to fly Vulcans. Learning about Fg Off Leslie Manser, who was posthumously awarded the VC in May 1942 for sacrificing himself in order to save the save the lives of his Manchester crew after the aircraft had been hit by flak over Cologne.

The then Wg Cdr Stacey visited Lesley Manser's elderly parents in their home. When he got up to leave, they gave him a small parcel to take away. It contained the Victoria Cross. It hung in OC 50 Sqn's office at RAF Waddington for several years. It is now in the Ashcroft Gallery in the Imperial War Museum.

AVM Nigel Baldwin (OC 50 Sqn 1977-79)

CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

Those of you who read the last Newsletter, or heard through some other way, will remember the sad news of the passing of our President MRAF Sir Michael Beetham, one of the RAF's greatest post-war leaders. With a career spanning five decades it is all but impossible to summarise here but it ranged from the wartime days of the Lancaster through the dawn of the jet age to the Falklands campaign of 1982. During that time Sir Michael achieved so many things; both personally and for the Service he so dearly loved. By the age of twenty-one he had completed a tour of operations with Bomber Command, for which he was awarded the DFC, afterwards he remained in the post-war RAF.



Flt Lt M J Beetham DFC
50 Sqn 1943-44

With promotions and opportunities slower in peacetime than in war, it was not until he was nearly thirty-five that he reached the rank of wing commander. By then, though, he had seen so much, including witnessing part of Britain's atomic bomb development programme at Maralinga in Australia. This experience, in particular, would shape Sir Michael's thinking in his later more senior career. Things then started to move quickly and eight years later he was an air commodore having served at the heart of Bomber Command's affairs when the V-Force was at the forefront of the nation's defences, with the most critical time coming during the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962. Sir Michael had been given command of Khormaksar, the RAF's biggest overseas station in 1964, and his arrival coincided with the start of a terrorist campaign against British forces in Aden. More senior appointments followed, notably as Commander 2nd Allied Tactical Air Force and Commander-in-Chief of RAF Germany, but the highest accolade came in 1977 when he was appointed Chief of the Air Staff. In 1982 came the Argentine invasion of the Falkland Islands when, as acting Chief of the Defence Staff, Sir Michael was involved in the decision to send the Task Force to battle. Then, with victory in the Falklands secured, he handed over as CAS and was appointed Marshal of the Royal Air Force. It had been the longest tenure of any CAS since Lord Trenchard formed the RAF.

Only space prevents me going on but having said farewell to Sir Michael, I must now welcome Air Vice-Marshal Nigel Baldwin as our new President. I know you will all agree that the air marshal is the most worthy successor to Sir Michael. In all my years of involvement with the Association, the air marshal has always participated actively and been at the forefront of its matters and so I was delighted that he accepted the committee's invitation to become President. And so I thank him, on behalf of us all, for helping to keep the Association alive. Finally, this year marks 100 years since the formation of 50 Squadron - a milestone for any squadron - but while many squadrons have long disappeared, with no active organization to help keep the memory alive, I consider us extremely fortunate to still have an Association to make sure this moment in time does not pass unrecognized. It is, indeed, a momentous year but it has only become possible because of your continued support. I hope to see you in June.

Peter Jacobs

50 SQN 1916 - 1984

First World War



OC 50 Sqn's BE2c with Skull and Crossbones

50 Sqn Royal Flying Corps (RFC) was formed on 15 May 1916 from the nucleus of 20 (Reserve) Sqn at RFC Swingate Down, Dover. It had become one of around only 25 squadrons within the RFC. Classified as a Home Defence Unit and initially equipped with the Royal Aircraft Factory's single engine BE2c and BE12 biplane fighters (known as Scouts). The main task of the Sqn was the defence of the Port of Dover, London and the Home Counties.

As shown in the photograph, Royal Naval Air Service and RFC aircrew did train together.

By October the Sqn had settled into a routine of training and operational sorties. However, in December the Sqn was relocated to nearby Harrietsham. Flying detachments were soon dispatched to Detling, Bekesbourne and Throwley. It is unclear how long these detachments were for or for that matter if they occurred at the same time or not. During this period the Sqn had a single Vickers ES (Experimental Scout) 1 aircraft at Detling as a trial (only 3, designed by Harold Barnwell, were built). The pilot's upwards and downward vision was poor, it was difficult to land and tiring to fly. It was not supported by the RFC.



Vickers ES 1 at RFC Detling

Christmas 1916 appears to have come early, as replacement Royal Aircraft Factory single engine BE2e and BE12a biplanes began to arrive in December. However, both aircraft proved to be a disappointment and were replaced only 5 months later. In early April 1917, orders had arrived to begin a trial to evaluate the Bristol M1B monoplane (only 4, designed by Frank Barnwell (brother of Harold - see above) were built). Unfortunately, this aircraft also proved to be a disappointment and in any event, monoplanes were not trusted; the landing speed was considered too high. This trial aircraft was also not supported.

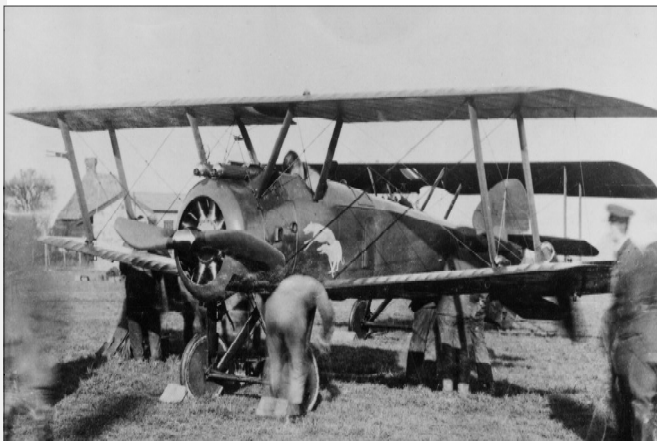
Therefore in May, 2 new types of aircraft arrived: the Armstrong Whitworth FK8 and the Royal Aircraft Factory RE8; both types were single engine biplanes designed for

reconnaissance and bombing duties. The powers that be must have been extremely popular with 50 Sqn flying and ground crews around this time. For no sooner had May turned into June than orders were received for the Sqn to convert yet again. This time to the single engine biplane, the Sopwith Scout (commonly called the Pup). With conversion to the Pup complete and with the return to regular flying, some stability appears to have returned. As no further conversions or movements appear to have disrupted the Sqn for the remainder of the year.



Sopwith Scout (Pup)

As January 1918 dawned and the Sqn entered what was to turn out to be the final year of the war, orders were once again received to convert to a new aircraft type, the Pups were to be exchanged for the Royal Aircraft Factory's single engine, BE12b biplane. On 18 February new orders again came through, this time ordering the Sqn to relocate to Bekesbourne, Kent. The airfield they had previously been detached to in 1916.



Sopwith Camel F1 with the Dingo emblem

May soon arrived and with it yet another set of orders to begin conversion to the Royal Aircraft Factory's single engine SE5a biplane. As spring gave way to summer and with the improved weather, it seemed only fitting that orders be received for the Sqn to once again convert to a new aircraft type. In July the SE5a was exchanged for the single engine Sopwith Camel F1 biplane.

Their final conversion at

Bekesbourne, after the cessation of hostilities on 11 November 1918, was to the Sopwith Snipe 7F.1. 50 Sqn had flown 13 aircraft types and Marks in a mere 3 years, including 2 trials aircraft. The Sqn was disbanded on 13 June 1919 and would not stand up again for almost 20 years. The Sqn would then go on to operate 10 more aircraft types and marks, and experience three more disbandments.

Second World War

By the mid 1930's, the threat of war arose once again and the Royal Air Force began to expand its front line strength and re-equip its existing squadrons. It was only a matter of time before 50 Sqn was re-formed.



Hawker Hind formation

RAF Waddington was originally opened in November 1916 as a Royal Flying Corps training station and had continued operationally throughout the peacetime period. By May 1937 the station had only just been re-opened after being almost totally rebuilt to the RAF's Expansion Scheme Standard. Its grass runways had been replaced with 3 concrete/tarmac runways; the permanent building structures had been upgraded; and 5 new C-Type hangers had been added. It was only fitting that with a newly opened station, a newly formed

squadron should take up residence. On 3 May 1937 orders were issued instructing various key personnel to report and equipment to be delivered to RAF Waddington. The first re-formation of 50 Sqn had begun in earnest.

The Sqn became an integral part of 5 Gp, Bomber Command. It was obvious that whereas the Sqn had served in a Home Defence fighter role during the First World War, its new role was envisioned to be strictly offensive in nature. With the arrival of the first of the Sqn's single engine, open cockpit Hawker Hind biplane light bombers; the Sqn settled down to the lengthy task of becoming operational.

The process of becoming operational normally takes longer for a newly formed, or re-formed, squadron to achieve than one that is already considered operational and is simply re-equipping with new aircraft. Such squadrons can become operational again in a fairly short period of time, namely the amount of time required for the aircrews to be converted and its ground crews to be trained from one aircraft type to another.

For the new, or re-formed squadrons, not only do the aircrews need to be trained and familiarised with their new aircraft types, but also its aircraft servicing, administration, motor transport, armoury sections et al, to achieve operational status. It is not clear when the Sqn completed this work up period and was classified operational. By December 1938 the Sqn returned to its First World War tradition of re-equipping and exchanged its Hinds for twin-engine Handley Page Hampden bombers.

With yet another period of non-operational time under their belt, but now fully converted to the Hampden, the Sqn was temporarily transferred to Coastal Command to assist in patrols against U-boats and blockade runners. This was not popular and to make matters worse their aircraft and crews were separated and detached to Lossiemouth, Wick and Kinloss.

These detachments must have made for much extra strain upon both the air and ground crews. Servicing facilities often had to be shared with other resident squadrons or were extremely primitive. Accommodation would usually be a case of wherever a spare bed could be found, or resulted in off-station accommodation having to be arranged. While off-station accommodation were somewhat inconvenient, they did usually allow for a warm and somewhat more comfortable bed. Personnel were to become quite creative in travelling to and from the station. Bicycles carrying 2 or more airmen became a familiar sight. It must have been with some relief that around the spring of 1939, orders were issued transferring the Sqn back to Bomber Command. With the transfer and its return to RAF Waddington completed, the Sqn returned to its regular routine of training and undertaking various degrees of offensive bombing and sea mining operations.

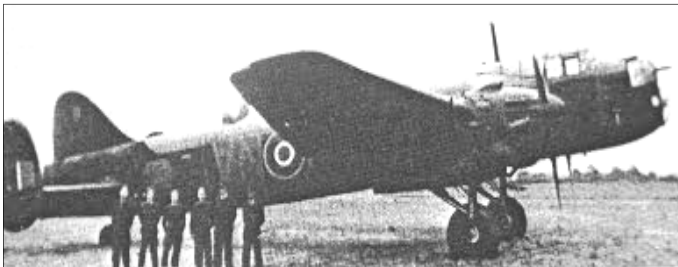


Hampden at RAF Lindholme: Wg Cdr G A Walker with aircrew and ground crew

On 10 July 1940 the Sqn was ordered to move to RAF Hatfield Woodhouse, a newly opened station in Yorkshire. The airfield was equipped with 3 concrete/tarmac runways and 5 C-Type hangers. Unfortunately, the majority of the accommodation for both ground and aircrew personnel were the cheaply built, and nearly always cold, Nissan huts. By August 1940, the airfield had been renamed RAF Lindholme and was to be the Sqn's home for the better part of the next year. Although, from June 1941 onwards the station was shared with 408 Sqn RCAF.

With the anticipated formation of No 6 Gp, RCAF, various airfields in or around Yorkshire were re-grouped and resident squadrons transferred to new stations within the operational areas of their respective Groups. It is probable that this is one of the reasons why on 20 July 1941 orders were received to move to RAF Swinderby in Lincolnshire. The move appearing to have been completed with normal RAF efficiency and it is very possible that operational flying was undertaken within 24 hours of the move's completion.

50 Sqn's stay at Swinderby was to be short, however, and only 4 months later, in November, the Sqn upped sticks and moved to RAF Skellingthorpe. Completed in October 1941 as a satellite airfield to RAF Swinderby, RAF Skellingthorpe, like many of the other stations to which the Sqn had been relocated, was a newly opened airfield. Furnished with 3 concrete/tarmac runways, one Type B1 and 2 Type T2 hangers; accommodation were once again in the form of the now standard, but much disliked, Nissan hut.



AVRO Manchester R5748 (VN-A)

By the spring of 1942 the Sqn's Hampdens were beginning to show their age and limitations. Their lack of range, bomb lifting capabilities and self defence being the most critical drawbacks. However, new orders arrived in April and the Sqn began to receive the

new twin-engine Avro Manchester medium bombers. It is unclear whether there was some excitement amongst the Sqn's aircrews or feelings of some trepidation and unease.

Whereas the Hampden had its operational drawbacks, the aircraft was by and large a safe and dependable one. The Manchester, conversely, which had entered squadron service in November 1940, had already built a reputation as a disappointing, if not fatal, aircraft to fly. Even though it had an enormous bomb bay and was capable of carrying 10,350 lbs of bombs almost 1,000 miles. From its conception it had been plagued with hydraulic problems and was often incapable of flying for extended periods on one Rolls-Royce Vulture engine. Neither of these shortcomings could have instilled much confidence in the Sqn's aircrews. With the conversion process complete, the Sqn returned to operational status and continued to carry out bombing and mining sorties until May 1942. At which time orders were received for the imminent re-equipping of the Sqn with the four-engined Avro Lancaster. Without a doubt, the most iconic bomber of the War.

The Lancaster was basically a Manchester fuselage with a larger wing and 4 Rolls-Royce Merlin engines. Thus Avro was able to produce an aircraft that had good handling characteristics, long range, an immense bomb lifting capability and most importantly was liked and respected by the aircrews who flew them. By the war's end no less than sixty-one sqns, plus numerous training and specialist units, were equipped with various marks of the Lancaster. The aircraft was probably the best the Sqn and Bomber Command had ever had.

On 20 June 1942 new orders were received and 50 Sqn was again on the move, this time back to RAF Swinderby. According to the station records, no units appear to have been in residence from February 1942 until this time. It is possible that the Sqn's return may have

coincided with the re-opening of the station after some kind of renovations. Possibly the lengthening of the 3 concrete runways to allow for the longer take-off required by heavy bombers. With conversion and the relocation of the Sqn complete, bombing operations were once again undertaken and continued on an almost continuous basis.

The autumn of 1942 was coming to an end and with it the arrival of the longer nights of winter. The Sqn prepared itself for the upcoming operations that would see far deeper penetrations into German-held territory. However, as the morning of 16 October dawned, so did the arrival of new movement orders. 50 Sqn was once again to return RAF Skellingthorpe, the station they had left only 4 months earlier.



Lancaster LL744 (VN-B) over RAF Skellingthorpe
Pilot: Flt Lt (later MRAF Sir) Michael Beetham
(From a painting by Reg Payne VN-B W Op)



Lincoln VN-C Low Level Fly Past of
Lincoln Cathedral in 1948

Again the station records show that during the period of 50 Sqn's absence, no other units had taken up residence. It appears that it had been temporarily closed for renovations, which probably also included the extension of the 3 runways. 50 Sqn was joined by 61 Sqn in November 1943, and would conclude its wartime operations at RAF Skellingthorpe. In May 1945, following the end of the European War, fourteen 50 Sqn aircraft joined other sqns in ferrying home thousands of British POWs from the continent as part of Operation Exodus. 50 Sqn was not disbanded at the end of the War.

Plans were put in place to form a bomber force capable of attacking the Japanese mainland from bases located within the Pacific theatre. It is possible that the orders issued on 16 June 1945 for both Sqns to move to RAF Sturgate was a prelude to the Sqns' joining this Tiger Force. But the dropping of the 2 atomic bombs in August 1945, by American B-29 bombers, resulted in the capitulation of all Japanese forces and consequently ending all hostilities. The Tiger Force was not destined to operate against Japan. On 26 October 1945 the RAF Skellingthorpe Stn Cdr, Group Captain Forbes, declared the airfield clear of all aircraft.

Post War



Canberra B2 WH 725 at IWM Duxford
Note the 50 Sqn emblem on the tip tank

50 Sqn returned to RAF Waddington, from RAF Sturgate, in January 1946 and was re-equipped with the Lincoln Mk II. The Sqn was disbanded on 31 January 1951.

The second re-formation was on 15 August 1952, returning the Sqn to its wartime role of offensive bombing; seeing action in the Suez Crises. Equipped with the Canberra B2 and stationed initially at RAF Binbrook and re-locating to RAF Upwood in 1956. Disbandment came on 1 October 1959.

The third re-formation, on 1 August 1961, saw 50 Sqn return to RAF Waddington and continue in its offensive bombing role. It was formed from a nucleus of Vulcan B1a aircraft and aircrews taken from 617 Sqn, including the CO, Wg Cdr Basil Primavesi. (617 Sqn was re-equipped with the Vulcan B2). In January 1966, 50 Sqn's aging B1a airframes were replaced by the Vulcan B2. 50 Sqn would continue to fly the B2 for 18 more years.

In April 1982 the Sqn was ordered to prepare several aircraft for possible operations during the Falklands Conflict. 50 Sqn aircraft, air crews and ground crews played a vital role in the Black Buck operations. With the end of hostilities in June 1982, six 50 Sqn Vulcans were modified to the tanker role to become the B2(K); This variant was flown until the Sqn disbanded on 31 March 1984, ending 23 years of continuous Vulcan operational flying.



Vulcan B2(K) XM571 with Dingos on the Tail

The RAF Vulcan Display Flight flew 2 aircraft: XL426 (sold in 1986) and XH558, until 1992. The latter was sold in 1993 and next flew in 2007 to become the star attraction at air shows all over the UK. Withdrawal of industry support, due to high aircraft fatigue life and difficulties in spares provision, ended her flying days on 28 Oct 2015. She is now based at Doncaster Airport. She joins XL426, at London Southend Airport, and XM655, at Wellesbourne Mountford Airfield, as the last taxiing Vulcans. Thus the "Vulcan Roar" will still thrill crowds for some years to come.

(The aircraft shown (apart from the Sopwith Pup) are the actual aircraft flown by 50 Sqn)
(Richard Jones Sgt Electrician 50 Sqn 1976-79)



ORIGINAL BEETHAM CREW OF LANCASTER LL744 (VN-B) IN 1943

Fred Ball (Rear Gunner); Les Bartlett (Bomb Aimer); Mike Beetham (Pilot);
 Frank Swinyard (Navigator); Reg Payne (Wireless Operator);
 Don Moore (Flight Engineer); Jock Higgins (Mid-Upper-Gunner)

Fred Ball and Don Moore were lost in VN-Q due to an engine fire during a
 Fighter Affiliation Exercise at East Kirkby on 12 Feb 44

Gunnery Leader John Blott and Flt Eng Leader Ted Adamson
 made up the crew for their final 16 operations

ROLL OF HONOUR

The 50 and 61 Sqns' Association is justifiably proud of its Roll of Honour which was compiled by Peter Jacobs in 1991. It records the rank, name, aircraft, target and date of the 1,002 aircrew and ground staff from 50 Sqn and the 974 aircrew and ground staff of 61 Sqn who made the ultimate sacrifice between 1939 and 1945. The Roll was dedicated by the Dean of Lincoln on Sunday 2 June 1991.

The bravery of the 50 Sqn crews is reflected by the 191 decorations awarded in the Second World War: One Victoria Cross; 6 DSOs, 70 DFCs and 114 DFM.

- The Sqn's combined aircraft types (Hampden, Manchester and Lancaster) carried out the most operations (raids) in Bomber Command (767).

- 50 Sqn suffered the 8th highest total aircraft losses in Bomber Command (176).

- The Sqn dropped c21,000 tons of bombs, representing the highest total of any 5 Group sqn and believed to be the 4th highest total within Bomber Command.

FG OFF LESLIE THOMAS MANSER VC RAFVR



Fg Off Manser took off on his 14th operational sortie on the night of 30/31 May 1942; target Cologne. He was pilot and captain of 50 Sqn Manchester L7301 (VN-D). Manser decided to make his bombing run at 7,000 feet rather than the briefed height of 12,000 feet and bombed his target successfully. The



Manchester was caught by searchlights, and then hit by flak which blew off part of the bomb doors. The aircraft was hit by flak again and the port engine caught fire.

He was able to continue homeward on one only engine, but this became overheated and he soon realised that the aircraft was doomed. He gave the order for his crew to evacuate the aircraft as he fought valiantly to keep the aircraft flying. The last crewman out, having stayed behind to assist Manser, was Sgt Baveystock, the second pilot. Manser eventually lost control, and was killed when the aircraft crashed near Bree in Belgium. Five members of his crew evaded capture and told of Manser's bravery: Sgt Baveystock; Plt Off Horsley (W Op); Sgt Naylor (rear gunner); Sgt King (2nd W Op); and Sgt Mills (front gunner). Fg Off Barnes (Nav/BA) was captured. There was no Mid Upper Turret fitted.



Wg Cdr John Stacey (OC 50 Sqn) receiving Leslie Manser's Victoria Cross from Manser's brother Cyril on 31 May 1965. The medal hung in the CO's office for many years. The only VC ever held in trust by the RAF.

Manser was awarded the Victoria Cross posthumously on 20 Oct 1942. The VC Citation read: "In pressing home his attack in the face of strong opposition, striving against heavy odds to bring back his aircraft and crew and, finally, when in extreme peril, thinking only of the safety of his comrades, Flying Officer Manser displayed determination and valour of the highest order." Leslie Manser was 20 years old. He rests at Heverlee War Cemetery in Belgium. His memory lives on in the Leslie Manser School in Lincoln. The VC is now on display in the Lord Ashcroft Gallery at the IWM.

MEMORIALS TO BOMBER COMMAND AND 50 SQN



BOMBER COMMAND MEMORIAL IN GREEN PARK, LONDON

(Unveiled by HM The Queen 28 Jun 2012)



50 AND 61 SQNS' MEMORIAL AT SKELLINGTHORPE

(Sir Michael Beetham 2 Jun 1991)

← 50 AND 61 SQNS' MEMORIAL AT BIRCHWOOD, LINCOLN ON THE SITE OF THE FORMER RAF SKELLINGTHORPE
Op Failed to Return - (Sir Michael Beetham and Eddie Davison DFM 3 Jun 1989)

CAMROSE BOMBING TROPHY

The Camrose Trophy is a silver model 12,000lb Super Blockbuster bomb and was originally presented to No 5 Group in 1944 by Lord Camrose as a mark of appreciation. It was awarded for high-level bombing. Latterly it was included in the trophies awarded during the Strategic Air Command Bombing Competition.

We believe this to be the inaugural award of the Camrose Trophy to 50 Sqn in 1944. The trophy is being presented by the RAF Skellingthorpe Stn Cdr, Gp Capt Jefferson, to Sqn Ldr Stubbs. It was won twice by 50 Sqn during the War.



STRIKE COMMAND BOMBING AND NAVIGATION COMPETITION 1980

50 Sqn has had many more successes over the years in competitions within Strike Command and against the US Strategic Air Command. An example is the

Vulcan crew which won the General Precisions Trophy in 1980. Awarded to the best individual crew in navigation.



Rear:

Sgt Townsend (NBS)
Fg Off Clark (co-pilot)
Sqn Ldr Jefford (Nav Plotter)
Ch Tech Belshaw (ASC)

Front:

Flt Lt Cocking (Nav Radar)
Flt Lt Greggs (Captain)
Flt Lt Pilkington (AEO)

ORIGIN OF THE 50 SQN DINGO BADGE

While the RFC/RAF made extensive use of radio during the First World War, this was largely confined to air-to-ground telegraphy (ie Morse via W/T). By the summer of 1918, however, some tentative use was being made of two-way telephony (ie voice communication via R/T). Leading the field in this context were the Home Defence Squadrons of General Ashmore's London Air Defence Area which had been set up as a counter to the Gotha raids which had begun in 1917. After some trials work in August 1918, the system was deemed to be operational by late September. Transmissions were not always of the highest quality, although 50 Sqn is reported to have played gramophone records to entertain its patrolling pilots! Nevertheless, operational messages were kept short and encoded – for brevity as much as security.

Each airfield had a code name, as did each unit (always an animal in this case). Thus No 61 Sqn (*Grizzly*) flew from Rockies (*Rochford*), No 44 Sqn (*Hippo*) from Hainault Farm (*Niger*), No 141 Sqn (*Rhino*) from Biggin Hill (*Dollar*) and No 50 Sqn (*Dingo*) from Bokesbourne (*Bark*). All of these units, and another five within the London Air Defence Area (there were, in addition, five more Home Defence Squadrons assigned to the Northern Air Defence Area were subordinated to HQ 6 Brigade and the collective call sign for all units was *Menagerie*). There was a selection of refinements and instructions. For instance, a message specifically addressed to *Gulls* was meant for the two highest aircraft on patrol; *Penguins* related to all other aircraft. Changes in patrol height were indicated in thousands of feet by 'Step up one (or two, etc)' or 'Step down one (or two, etc)'. *Rum* signalled a recall.

The 'running dogs' emblem is said to have been designed by No 50 Sqn's Capt G S M Insall VC and is presumed to have been inspired by the squadron's *Dingo* call sign, although they actually look more like greyhounds than the wild dogs of Australia. The emblem on the Camel aircraft (see p9 and enlarged below) did not involve any prey and there was no inscription. That said, I seem to recall that, on the wall in the aircrew Crew Room in the later 1970s, there was a painting (or a plaque?) that featured what might have been a dingo puppy – but I have no idea of the date or provenance of that image.

(Wg Cdr Jeff Jefford Nav(P)
OC 50 Sqn's Crew)

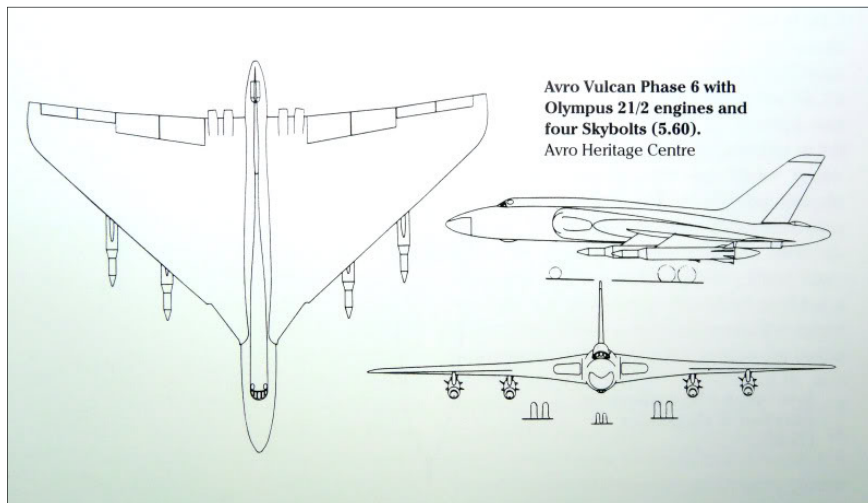
(In 1916, Maj Malcolm Christie, 50 Sqn's first CO, had his BE2c aircraft painted lamp black with a white skull and crossbones emblem. This is believed to be the first sqn emblem ever recorded.) (See p8).



Running Dogs (or Greyhounds?)

WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN

In 1960 the Air Staff approached Avro with a request for a study into a Patrol Missile Carrier armed with up to six Skybolt missiles capable of a mission length of 12 hours. Avro's submission in May 1960 was the Phase 6 Vulcan, which if built would have been the Vulcan B3.



The proposed aircraft would have had an enlarged wing span of 121ft (B2 - 111ft) with increased fuel capacity; additional fuel tanks in a dorsal spine; a new main undercarriage to carry an all-up-weight of 339,000lb (B2 - 204,000lb); and reheated Olympus 301s of 30,000lbf thrust (B2 - 20,000lbf). An amended proposal of October 1960 inserted a 10ft 9in plug into the forward fuselage with capacity for six crew members including a relief pilot (but no crew chief), all facing forwards on ejection seats, and aft-fan versions of the Olympus 301 engine. But the proposal was not accepted by the Air Ministry and thus there was no Vulcan B3. The US DoD also cancelled the missile in 1962 due to frequent Skybolt failures and the development of submarine-launched ballistic missiles.

How different the V Force might have been had the Vulcan B3 and Skybolt become operational. The Royal Navy would presumably not have taken sole UK responsibility for the Nuclear Deterrent. One wonders if the B3 would have flown with the Skybolt missiles as a matter of course. At the time the USAF was permanently patrolling the skies close to the USSR border with B52s armed with nuclear weapons (Operations Chrome Dome, Round Robin, Head Start, Hard Head and Giant Lance). Maybe it was better that there was no Vulcan B3 and Skybolt; there was enough tension between East and West already.