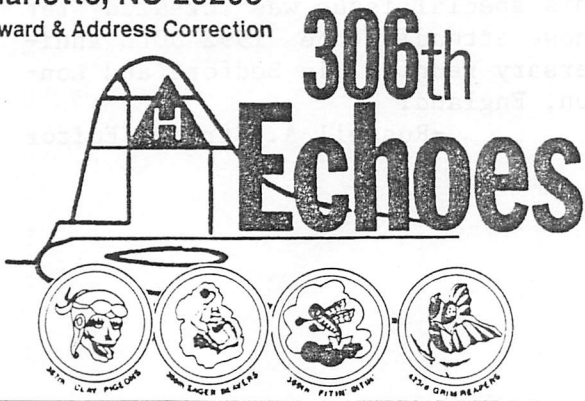


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## Special Bedford Edition

### VETERAN OF FIVE RAF COMBAT TOURS SPEAKS SUNDAY NIGHT

Air Chief Marshal Sir Christopher Foxley-Norris, an RAF veteran who flew five combat tours in Lysanders, Hurricanes, Beau-fighters and Mosquitoes, will be the speaker Sunday evening for the Annual Reunion Banquet. This will be held in the Cumberland Hotel, London.

Sir Christopher retired in 1974 as chief of personnel and logistics for the Ministry of Defense. Earlier he had commanded the RAF in Germany, and held numerous other leadership posts.

He is proud of his combat record, and was never posted to a staff post in that period. He went from the Oxford University campus to combat in France in 1939, and continued flying into 1945. Mrs. Foxley-Norris will also attend the banquet.

Judge Donald R. Ross, retiring president of the Association, will preside at the dinner.

### RECENT OBITS

Berthold, Walter G 423, 22 Oct 91  
Bryant, Glen R 369, 7 May 91  
Clark, Walter R, 367, 19 Sep 84  
Cofsky, Edmund R 1628, 25 Apr 92  
Edwards, Milton B 423, 28 Jul 92  
Elek, John F 423/369/368, 7 Dec 91  
Frisbie, Bryce C 367, 24 Jan 92  
Giles, Donald L 367, 27 Jan 79  
Hatch, George L 367, 30 Sep 91  
Kalb, John R 367, 22 Jul 92  
McLean, Donald R, 4 Jan 92  
McManus, George J 369, 13 Jan 92  
Roberts, James P 367, 31 Jul 92  
Simon, Jackie C 367,  
Stafford, Charles R 367, 3 Apr 91  
Teets, W Mel 423, 10 Nov 91  
Vought, William C 368, 25 Aug 87

### HOW MANY OF US ARE THERE?

A count of the roster discloses that we have about 385 people participating, and that's only the ones we know of for sure. Indications are that others may well appear at sometime during events. There are 302 persons who are involved in the full week's events, and another 72 persons are taking part in various segments.

Of the main group, 76 will be taking an extension tour for a week in Belgium and France, while 48 will be going to Scotland by bus. Both of these groups will fly home Sept. 7.

We believe that this is the largest reunion group participating in England in this 50th anniversary year of the arrival of the initial units of the 8AF ready for combat. The 306th was one of those units.

### A GRANDSON WITH A PAST

Keith McIntyre is among our tour group, and his special mission in being here is to represent his grandfather, Col. George L. Robinson, only living wartime C.O. of the 306th. Keith is now a college student living in Jacksonville, FL, where he serves also as a companion to his grandfather. Mrs. Robinson died two years ago.

Col. Robinson attended our 1988 reunion in Las Vegas. In a recent phone conversation with the editor he said that he is feeling fine, enjoying life, but is considerably slowed by his breathing problems. His oxygen tank is a constant companion.

### SPITFIRE TO PARTICIPATE

At a point late in the Wednesday morning service at the Thurleigh memorial, an RAF Spitfire will streak across the sky in a salute to the 306th. This is an unusual "bird", having been one of those taking part on our very first mission, 6 Oct 42.

---and SOME SURPRISES!

There are some features of Wednesday's events of which little has been said, and they will remain pretty much a surprise to most of you. Keep your eyes and ears open, and we think you'll enjoy the fruits of a lot of hard work by Ralph Franklin, who has valiantly served as our British coordinator for the past two years. The results of his hard work are all around you this week. Also, keep your CAMERAS ready for action!

## Station 357

Standing by the runway at England's Duxford Airfield as a cool autumn breeze blows from the low green hills in the distance, even the most unimaginative visitor may strain to hear the sound of Hurricanes and Spitfires returning from battle. It was from Duxford, a Royal Air Force Base in 1940, that Douglas Bader's "Big Wing" flew off to fight the Luftwaffe during the Battle of Britain. On September 15, a date now celebrated as Battle of Britain Day, the Big Wing flew three sorties, helping to break the back of the German air offensive.

There are still Hurricanes and Spitfires at Duxford, but their tasks today are those of educating and entertaining. The airfield is now a branch of Britain's Imperial War Museum and the centerpiece of the IWM aviation collection. Because of its rich aeronautical history, "the site itself is a museum," says Duxford director Ted Inman. Located just south of Cambridge on the M11 highway, it hosts some 400,000 visitors a year, who come to see everything from a Concorde SST to a World War I Spad VII.

The Imperial War Museum is funded mostly by the government. Its aircraft collection consists of "about 110 altogether, if you count major components," says Inman. Several private collections are also housed at Duxford, including the Stephen Grey fighter collection, which is flown at shows at the still-operational airfield. "We don't fly our own, generally," says Inman. "It's the best of both worlds. Other people are flying things that we couldn't afford to fly."

Duxford is currently in the middle of a substantial expansion effort. A Land Warfare Exhibition Hall was just opened, and the next big push, now in the fundraising stage, is for the American Air Museum in Britain, a showcase for U.S. aircraft. Most of the airplanes slated for the new museum are already at Duxford, including a TBM Avenger in the colors of the one President Bush flew in the Pacific. Some of the larger ones are kept outside. "We must get the airplanes under cover," says Inman, who points out that a B-52

donated by the U.S. Eighth Air Force in 1983 is already showing signs of deterioration from the elements.

The best place to start a tour of the current facilities is Hangar 1—the mammoth "superhangar" dedicated in 1986 by helicopter pilot Prince Andrew. Like most of the buildings at Duxford, it's a working hangar with restoration and repair work under way, permeated by the not unpleasant odors of paint and oils and

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*Duxford Airfield, Duxford, Cambridge CB2 4QR, United Kingdom. Phone Cambridge (0223) 835000. Open daily 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. (summer) and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. (winter), except December 24–26 and January 1. Admission about \$7.75; discounts for seniors, children, and students.*

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stuff that gets underneath fingernails.

Hangar 1 houses some seriously large airplanes, including a British Vulcan bomber and an American B-29. There's also a Sunderland flying boat that once served as a landlocked nightclub in France. There are smaller items too, like tanks and trucks, as well as the capsule Richard Branson and Per Lindstrand used in their 1987 hot-air balloon crossing of the Atlantic.

Outside the superhangar is Duxford's collection of civil aircraft, which actually belongs to a private group called the Duxford Aviation Society. Undoubtedly the greatest attraction is the supersonic transport. "Two million people have walked through this Concorde," says Duxford press officer Frank Crosby. This particular aircraft is one of two pre-production versions used for a variety of flight tests. The word "Maineiacs" emblazoned on the fuselage commemorates the civil transatlantic speed record the SST set from England to Bangor, Maine, in 1974.

Hangars 3 through 5 were three of the airfield's first buildings, erected in 1917 to provide an airbase during World War I.

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—Russell A. Strong, Editor

(The fourth of these original hangars was destroyed on film for the 1969 movie *The Battle of Britain*.) The wooden lattice ceiling supports and skylights of these older hangars give them an appropriately airy, old-fashioned feel.

Hangar 3 shelters a small exhibit devoted to the Eighth Air Force. From the end of 1942 until December 1, 1945, Duxford was taken over by the Yanks and became the Eighth's "Station 357." The Americans nicknamed the airfield "Duckpond" because of its poor drainage, but otherwise were satisfied with their temporary home. As one pilot recorded in his diary: "We are situated six miles from Cambridge and fifty miles north of London. The set up is practically a Shangri-Lal! The barracks are steam heated and of double brick. The hangar theater has an organ." The three P-47 squadrons of the 78th Fighter Group were stationed here, their aircraft noses decorated in a black-and-white check pattern. Eleven of those Duxford Thunderbolts were lost in a single day, during the Normandy invasion, and by the end of the war 128 pilots from Station 357 had been killed in action.

Another reminder of the war years is Duxford's operations room, which was restored from photographs to look as it did when Douglas Bader commanded the Duxford Wing against the Luftwaffe. The men and women who worked here kept track of aircraft—friendly and enemy—on a table-size map and directed the defending squadrons into battle. When Duxford became a museum in the 1970s, the room had been long dismantled, and its restoration in large part drew upon the memories of people who had worked there. Frank Crosby says, "It's an ongoing thing, really. People come in and say, 'That board shouldn't be there, it should be over there,' so we change it." Only a single detail jars: in the briefing area behind the operations room, a model Bf 109 is poised in the killing position behind a Spitfire. At Duxford, it seems the placement should be reversed.

—Tom Huntington