



**JANUARY 2022**



The local authority have given the Memorial and Debt of Honour a smart new makeover that was completed late last year.

After over 20 years of good service the paving on the path leading up to the Norwegian Stone and the stone wall were beginning to show their age. Now the paving has made way for a smart modern acrylic surface that should be easier to maintain for the next few decades of the existence of the memorial those who served and died in the service of their country at RAF North Weald. Check out page 7 for how it looked before.



## FLYING HIGH

The Chairman of the North Weald Airfield Museum Peter Gardner indulged in a flight in a North American Harvard in the summer.

Slowly building up on the airfield is a whole year facility to allow well-heeled members of the public to fly in classic war-time aircraft. The gold standard is a flight in a two seat Supermarine Spitfire of course but other types are also available including the US wartime trainer, the Harvard and the de Havilland DH82 Tiger Moth.



Peter Gardner (NWAM)



This was no promotional event by the new occupier of The Squadron - "Aero Legends" - Peter was invited to accompany a friend who was paying to fly in a Spitfire and took others up to share in his special occasion.

Peter acted as 'wingman' and to take aerial photographs of the small formation of the other three classic aircraft. As they soared over the fields of Essex.

A great time was had by all—truly a day to remember.

## AFTER AFTER THE BATTLE

The North Weald Airfield Museum has long been associated with publisher Winston Ramsey. For the last twenty years he has been our very active Vice President, he has been a very prominent presence and hands on support at museum related events, in particular the North Weald Parish Council annual Armistice Day and Open Days. With others, he supported the setting up of Trust that instigated the magnificent Memorial and Debt of Honour directly outside the museum in 2000. He supported it financially and spent much of his time keeping it clean and tidy.

Winston has been the publisher of After the Battle Publications for decades. Originally it was as Plaistow Press – located near Stratford in East London – but more recently located closer to home at Hobbs Cross near Harlow. The business has been sold.

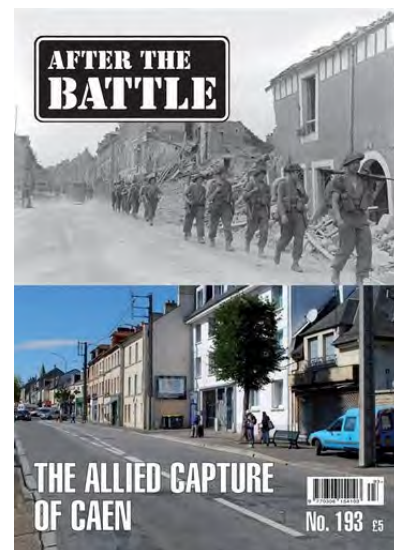
For nearly 50 years, 'After the Battle' has been presenting the history of the world's conflicts through 'then and now' comparison photographs. From the Zulu wars, through the First and Second World Wars; to the Falklands, all are researched on the actual battlefield to show how they appear today. The maga-



zines and books are always impressive in content, they go to reference work and prized possessions for the owners. There have been variations on the theme with publications on more local subjects including, West Essex, the East End and Murders. All seek to treat the subject in a Then and Now format.

A quarterly magazine concentrates on the Second World War, the comparison photographs adding a new dimension to recent history. As well as major battles, local actions are explored and other features include the recovery of aircraft and vehicles on land and sea, the making of war films and the preservation of military artefacts. Since he started *After the Battle* series in 1973, most articles have been led by Winston Ramsey, he either wrote the words or directed the focus of the publication.

Published quarterly in February, May, August and November, each issue contains 56 pages of text, uncluttered by advertisements, with an average of over 150 photographs. So far 184 issues have been published and in more normal times they are available in major National museums including the RAF Museum, Hendon. At the moment, due to the current global circumstances, the magazine has only been available for direct purchase from the editorial office in Old Harlow or its distributors in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States. Now a further major change has taken place, with Winston deferring to the passage of time and taking a step back from the publication.



The editorial office will remain at The Mews, Hobbs Cross in Harlow, very much on his doorstep, but that may change in time. Rob Green will be at The Mews during the initial transition period with the same E-Mail [hq@afterthebattle.com](mailto:hq@afterthebattle.com) and over in Holland Karel Margry remains as Editor of *After the Battle*.

*After the Battle*, its stock, publications and archive, have been sold to Pen & Sword. The last of the magazines under the old management, No. 193, included a sign off article.

## MUSEUM RESEARCHES

In mid-July 2021 I was in touch with a writer in the USA assisting with her enquiry about a Norwegian American, Sergeant Harold Ødman, who served briefly with 332 Squadron at North Weald.

Born Harald Ødman on 25<sup>th</sup> August 1919 in Trondheim, Sør-Trøndelag, he was the son of Sverre August Martinsen and Kirsti Olsdatter Ødman he had two sisters, Kathryn and Alice. The family moved to the USA when he was young. And the surname changed slightly to Odman to fit in with local convention.

The search for information started with the e-mail from Maryland....

*I am an American writer who is working on a memoir about my mother, who was in love with a Norwegian-American fighter pilot who was stationed at North Weald Air Base in 1943.*

*He died on July 15, 1943, and I was always told that he was shot down in Normandy by the Nazis, but I have since learned that he may have disappeared during a routine training exercise in Normandy on that date.*

*I would be grateful for any information you could provide that could shed light on this issue.*

*With best regards,*

*Rebecca Rice*

A little bit of research found him mentioned several times on the Norwegian Restoration web page as he trained at Little Norway in Canada. <https://www.norwegianspitfire.com/page/2/> The mentions were of him training alongside Finn Eriksrud. It is Finn's story of his own training, but he refers to Harald as a fellow survivor of the rigors of training in wartime Canada.

Several new trainees had arrived in Toronto at the same time. Finn and one other had arrived from Montreal, three others had worked in New York and arrived to volunteer. Another had travelled all the way around the world and had just arrived from San Francisco. Another had partly

walked and driven from Portland, Oregon on the west coast of the USA. He was Harold Osman. At the time the would-be Norwegian pilots were Norwegians and spoke their own language – only on arrival in Canada would most encounter a need to be taught English. So the man from Portland stood out from the rest in struggling with his Norwegian. As Finn described it 'he spoke a little sloppy' and was clearly a Norwegian-American. He had been born in Trondheim, but his Norwegian parents had left for America when he was very young. Later, when the English lessons started, he was to have a distinct advantage.

After initial military training - primarily marching up and down and being shouted at by the instructors they moved to the heart Little Norway and commenced reading numerous books on navigation, radio, meteorology, engines, weapons, and geography. Five months of study and drill took place in the late summer of 1942.

Finn bought a car and that allowed he and Harold to drive around Ontario during their time off. One weekend they went up to the Niagara Falls and other villages close by. There was nothing to do in Toronto on Sundays or holidays. Theatres and cinemas all closed. No places to go. The car lasted 6 months until it met a large truck and was wrecked.

Harold was one of those who walked around camp doubting his abilities to ever learn all the contents of the books and progress to becoming a good pilot. It was later proven that he was a very skilful. Harold continued to struggle with the Norwegian language, and he had problems understanding how to address different people the proper way. Every time he made a protocol mistake, laughter broke out. He approached the teachers the wrong way and had other issues with speaking in general. Later on, when all of them were sent to an English school, it was his time to laugh when the Norwegian speakers struggled.

All of the group passed the exams and would start flying for real. Each of them was issued with a parachute, packed a bag and left to undertake their training on the aircraft that Norway had put together.

## MEMBERSHIP DETAILS

We accept all currencies in welcoming you to museum membership—becoming a Friend of North Weald Airfield Museum as long as it means the same as £12.50p!

You can join through the museum website  
[www.nwamuseum.co.uk](http://www.nwamuseum.co.uk)

## MUSEUM OPENING TIMES

The museum season is April until November and it is closed for the winter.

In winter you can book on-line to enter. Rates will vary and be subject to staff availability.

When open entry is free for members.

Except on Special Event Days visitors will be charged standard rates for entry:

Adults	£5
Concessions	£2.50
Children [5-15]	£1.00

Group rates vary but generally there is a minimum charge of £50 per group.



## NORTH WEALD AIRFIELD MUSEUM

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## CONTACT US

### ADVERTISING AND THE HURRICANE

One way in which the NWAMA can earn income and to finance the production of hard copies of the Newsletter is advertising. Advertisers need circulation beyond the membership and they also need to know who is reading the Newsletter.

If you pass this edition on please let us know who to so we can help finance your reading!

*Copyright Notice: The content of this publication includes items that are the copyright of others. The source of words and images will usually be indicated together with the source of additional information that seeks to enhance the original information.*

*The Hurricane includes artwork produced for it by Ian J Commin of Insight Design of North Burnham, Slough SL1 6DS. In some cases it may not be possible to indicate the source of this material directly associated with the images used.*



More information comes in from America and I learned that Rebecca's mother met Harold in Canada, when he was stationed at Little Norway. Her mother, Rebecca's grandmother, was friends with the Vice Consul of Norway in Canada and invited the young Norwegian pilots to visit her island near Midland a town located on Georgian Bay in Simcoe County, Ontario, Canada. It was there that the two first met.

We lose sight of Harold at that point. After completing training in Canada Erik went off to fly on the de Havilland Mosquito and survived the war while Sergeant 1577 Harold Odman became a Spitfire pilot who undertook his own, all too brief, operational career at North Weald.

According to the sparse records we have Harold arrived with 332 Squadron at North Weald in April 1943. On Thursday 15 July 1943, after barely 3 months, he failed to return from a mission. He was in Spitfire MA409 marked AH-W. The Spitfire IX was issued new to 332 Squadron on June 6, 1943.

There was no known special operation on that day, but the squadron was over France, taking the war to the Nazis. The missions over there were very costly in terms of losses to the attacking air forces and Harold became just another statistic.

The majority of the offensive flights in the period were over France and the English Channel. They were single engine aircraft and any aircraft and pilot having trouble, damage or mechanical failure would struggle to get across the Channel. Coming down in the sea would need tremendous, good luck to survive a landing on the water, or parachuting into the same, let alone being found floating in a small life raft in hostile seas.

We now know that Harold was shot down by the enemy. We do not have the details but at the end of the war his remains were sent home to Norway and are now interred near his birthplace at Oranger, Sør-Trøndelag, Norway

On this day the enemy was Ludwig Jacobs a pilot flying with Luftwaffe 5./JG 2. Up to that point his war had been slightly more eventful. He had already lost an aircraft over Tunisia when hit by friendly flak fire on February 21, 1943, near Kairouan in Tunisia. He abandoned his Fw 190 A-4 # 469 to its fate; the engine was on fire.



Jacob's only known victory was Harold at 5:05 p.m. near new Sum on June 6, 1943.

In a new fight on September 16, 1943, against Spitfires to the Northwest of l'Aigle, in Orne. He was again injured. It is unclear but it is believed he again parachuted from his aircraft.

His final flight was at the end of the same year. Ludwig Jacobs crashed near La Ferté-Milon (02) on December 30, 1943, aboard the Bf 109G-6 # 19863. JG2 was based in Creil, and it appears he was hit while intercepting a raid of American bombers returning from Ludwigshafen. He is buried in the German military cemetery of Fort-de-Malmaison (France) Block 5 Reihe 19 Grab 846.

*Rebecca Rice is a writing and literature Professor from Hadley, MA USA. She is the author of A Time to Mourn: One Woman's Journey through Widowhood, referenced in several studies on memoir and grieving. She has published essays in The New York Times, Redbook, Cosmopolitan, and Women's Adventure Magazine. A member of Authors Guild and the American Society for Journalists and Authors she is an Adjunct Professor of Writing and Literature at Springfield Technical Community College.*



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Sue Reade, the daughter of Ølav Djonne (left) and Sylvia Paternoster the daughter of the squadron tailor in front of the new displays on North Weald from 1941-45 (NWAM)

While still on the subject of Norwegians at North Weald, time to mention the visit by two close relatives of those who served at the airfield in 1943-44 during the November Remembrance event on November 14. The daughter of pilot Ølav Djonne and the daughter of the Norwegian squadron tailor Inge Øvstedal who married and settled in Bognor Regis after the war.

Last year the extensively revised displays showing the effort put into the war by the Norwegians, Canadians and volunteer pilots from the USA opened for the first time. The affects of Coronavirus clearly affected access to the museum by visitors.





In June, before the surface of the area around the Norwegian stone was repaved, museum visitors included this Vespa scooter resplendent in some fine wartime commemorative artwork recalling Bomber and Fighter Command, The Desert Rats and more.. A great way to mark the 77th anniversary of D-Day!



June 6, 2021 (NWAM)



## WHAT 3 WORDS

Emergency services, including air ambulances, are encouraging the public to download a free app, (mobile phone application) to help crews attend the precise location of patients in an emergency.

This summer they took part in the #KnowExactlyWhere summer safety campaign to raise awareness of the free what3words app and how it can be effectively used in an emergency. Every year, emergency services join with local authorities and organisations from across the UK to encourage the public to download the app as a simple way to save time, resources, and in some cases, lives.



This year more than ever, emergency services across the UK were experiencing an exceptionally busy summer, as restrictions on travel resulted in a huge increase in Brits opting to holiday in the UK. Downloading the what3words app is one of the simplest actions the public can take to support stretched emergency control rooms.

what3words has divided the world into a grid of 3m x 3m squares. It has given each square a unique identifier made of three random words - a what3words address. **/// coffee.twin.shrimp**, for example, will take you to a precise square on the front doorstep of the North Weald Airfield Museum.

The app is free to download for both iOS and Android and works entirely offline – making it ideal for use in areas of the UK with an unreliable data connection, such as beaches, national parks and campsites which are incredibly popular during the summer months. what3words can also be used via the online map at [what3words.com](https://www.what3words.com). The app is available in over 45 languages and can be used anywhere in the world.

what3words is now used by over 85% of UK emergency services – police, fire and ambulance – and all services surveyed described what3words as ‘a reliable tool to have as part of the emergency toolkit’. While not intended as a replacement for the traditional ‘must-pack’ survival gear worth bringing along on all hikes, camping trips, and other outdoor adventures this summer, the technology has become a well-used partner to emergency services, saving dispatchers and responders precious time and resources in an emergency.

*Ed: With the supposed 85% of the UK Emergency Services already using the system it would seem that it is a done deal and surprising more has not been made of the App previously. Whether it remains free and an effective replacement for a long-winded GPS reference remains to be seen, it has been around for a few years now and effectively paid for by corporate and government users.*

## NEW HOME FOR THE OLD

It is well over 30 years since Epping Forest District Museum ran its RAF focussed exhibition ‘What if heaven falls.’ Using elements of the Miles Collection Airfield Museum on loan the exhibition told the story of PO Barclay of 249 Squadron and elements of the Battle of Britain. The Miles Museum was in store, having lost its exhibition rooms when the Basset Business Centre was built. When it

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reopened as the North Weald Airfield Museum in Ad Astra House several structures from that exhibition found their way into the Battle of Britain room in the relaunched collection after the show closed. They are still in use along with many of the images used in running "What if heaven fall." Several display cases were donated by the Waltham Abbey Police Museum and another in Harlow as they closed.

## WIRELESS PROGRAMMES IN THE SUMMER OF 1940

For many people in 1940 the wireless set (today known as the radio) was both the source of comfort and a vital link to the outside world, a world in which great events were occurring but in which information about those events was limited, and often shrouded in secrecy.

The long tedious evenings of the blackout could be enlivened by the wireless, by 1940 new wireless sets were becoming unobtainable and used ones fetched very high prices. It was less than 20 years since the BBC had started transmitting to the public and therefore many families were unfamiliar with what became a 'must have' public information service – they were obliged to share wireless sets with their neighbours. The government urged good neighbours to spend their leisure time together thus saving on fuel and electricity, it was after all cheaper to heat and light just one room than several.

Wartime broadcasting was limited. On September 1, 1939, the BBC announced that there would be a single wartime programme, the Home Service, the single television channel was closed down at 11 minutes past 11 on September 1<sup>st</sup> for the duration of the war. The purpose of wartime broadcasting was to cheer, strengthen, and to impart limited amounts of war news. It was also used for Government propaganda for example broadcasts aimed specifically at women urged them to 'do their bit' for the war effort, the Ministry of Food also broadcast its hints and directives on Home Service Kitchen Front programmes.

The value of wireless as a morale booster and as an escape from the monotony of the war and war work was soon realised.

Among the famous wartime programmes was *It's That Man Again* (commonly contracted to ITMA) a BBC radio comedy programme which started in the months before war broke out and ran over twelve series from 1939 to 1949. The shows featured Tommy Handley in the central role, a fast-talking figure, around whom all the other characters orbited. In June 1940 the Home Service introduced *Music While You Work* aimed at war workers in factories. The programme was transmitted for 2½ hours a day at 10-30am and 3-30pm, times at which it was found that factory production lagged. In 1941 workers were treated to *Workers Playtime*, a twice weekly comedy programme broadcast live across the nation from factory canteens. The survivor of all these is *Desert Island Discs*, still going strong after starting in the war years [January 1942].

The mainstay of the Home Service was however news bulletins, often a frustrating experience when there was virtually no war news that could be publicly broadcast that the enemy could not listen into and potentially use for its own propaganda purposes.

The nine o'clock evening news bulletin regularly attracted an audience of half (sometimes two thirds) of the adults in the population of some 48 million, newsreaders Alvar Liddell, Frank Phil-



Tommy Handley (BBC)



Workers Playtime came from factories across the country (BBC)



Gert and Daisy (BBC)



Roy Plomley the first presenter of Desert Island Discs (BBC)



lips, Bruce Belfrage, Joseph MacLeod and others – began to announce their names ('Here is the news and this is XXX reading it') so that listeners came to know and trust their voices. Trust was all important in wartime, the BBC was listened to all over Nazi occupied Europe (often in secrecy and at great risk to the listener) and was deemed to be the voice of freedom. A typical recording from the time can be heard at <https://youtu.be/xQN0ua5o4Ps>

British troops serving abroad were given their own programme, the Forces Programme which was introduced in February 1940. The Forces Programme concentrated on sport, variety and dance music, as well as the essential news bulletins. It became very popular with audiences at home as well as the servicemen abroad.

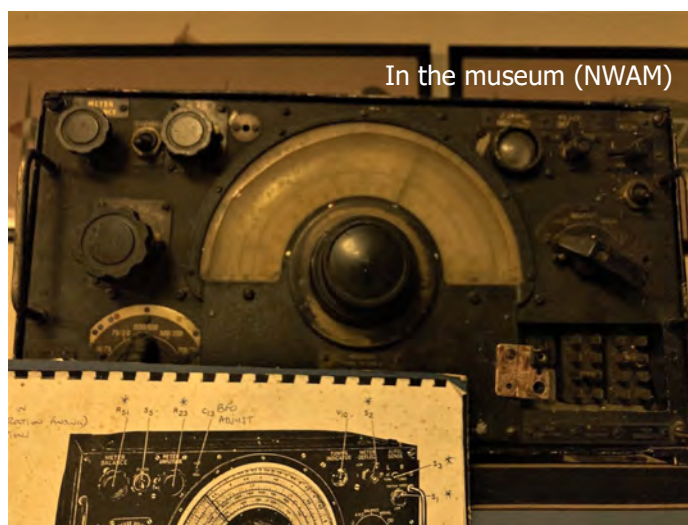
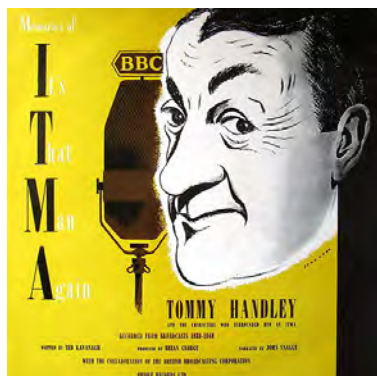
Many of the wartime programmes, including workers playtime, lived on into the 1960s only to be swept away by the popular music revolution.



For all listening to the wireless presented difficulties. Electricity was not generally available; gas lighting or candles remained the most prevalent option for illumination. This required the use of batteries, and not today's dry batteries, families had to obtain wet cell batteries (not unlike the principal of those still used in most motor vehicles today) which had to be charged weekly at the local dealer and carefully taken home.

Despite the impression given by modern movies and television, switching the wireless on was not an instant affair, it took around a minute for the valves to warm up and pick up the often crackling and unclear signal transmitted by the broadcaster. It is noteworthy that most movie makers today dispense with this lengthy period of silence when portraying the typical wirelesses of the 1920-60 period.

The museum has several examples of domestic and military wireless' on display and in store.





## ATLANTIC CROSSING

Though aerial crossing of the Atlantic was no longer a novelty by the mid-1930s, no round-trip flight by airplane had yet taken place.

The first-round trip by air was by the British airship R-34 in July 1919. This was just two months after the US Navy-Curtiss NC-4 flying boat completed the first crossing of the Atlantic and one month after British aviators Alcock and Brown made the first non-stop transatlantic flight in a Vickers Vimy.

The first effort to fly a round trip across the Atlantic was during 1932 by the well-known Scottish aviator, James Mollison. In August 1932 he completed the first Atlantic solo flight westbound but was unable to complete a return flight.



Henry Merrill (Wikipedia)

It was not until 1936 that the first double-crossing of the Atlantic by airplane was successful. The pilot was a well-known Eastern Air Lines pilot, Dick Merrill. Not only did Merrill succeed in 1936, but he would also repeat the round trip crossing again in 1937.

Henry Tyndall "Dick" Merrill, was born in Luka, Mississippi in 1894 and was drawn into aviation after seeing Katherine Stinson perform at an air show. During the First World War he joined the Navy and wanted to take up flying. He was sent to Pensacola and then over to France where he had flying lessons, but never got the chance to fly for the Navy.

Merrill's flying career began in 1920 when he purchased a war-surplus Curtiss Jenny for \$600. After learning to fly he spent about seven years barnstorming. In May 1928, he joined Pitcairn Aviation, Eastern Air Lines predecessor, as an airmail pilot, progressed to become chief pilot for Eastern Air Lines.

Merrill's demonstrated skill as a long-distance flyer led him to try and get backing for one of his personal goals – a round trip trans-Atlantic flight. But the Atlantic could not be crossed on his airline pilot's salary so he sought a financial backer.

Dick knew that Harry Richman, a millionaire entertainer and amateur pilot, was practically the only civilian who owned a plane capable of making the transatlantic flight. He flew down to Miami to present the idea to Richman, who owned a Vultee V-1 eight-passenger transport. The Vultee not only carried a large load, but it was also fast. Richman was up for the challenge, although he thought it was an outrageous idea.



Vultee V-1 (Wikipedia)

Eddie Rickenbacker, the head of Eastern Air Lines, assigned several of the line's top mechanics to work on preparing the plane for the flight. This included new fuel tanks and new electronics. Merrill made many test flights to calibrate performance. One modification was to fill many of the voids in the wings with ping pong balls to enhance floatation in case of a forced landing in the ocean.

The aviators departed New York on the afternoon of September 2. They settled down at an altitude of 11,000 feet at a speed of 210 mph. While over the ocean the radio went dead. As the



flyers had intended in using a radio direction course to England, it was a problem. Cloud cover stretched over most of the Atlantic and they never saw Ireland. With fuel running low, they landed in Wales.

Despite the problems that forced them down in Wales, they had crossed the Atlantic in a record time of 18 hours, 38 minutes. The pilots wired for fuel but had a lengthy delay as the fuel supplies had to come by land. After refuelling they were able to continue.

On September 14 they took off for the return trip in the dark facing a headwind of 25 mph. Half-way across the ocean the weather took a turn for the worse with gale force winds jostling the plane. Off the coast of America, they ran into torrents of rain, mist and fog. To make matters worse they discovered that the dump valve on the main fuel tank had been opened, releasing hundreds of gallons precious fuel.

Merrill then started looking for a place to land. It was mid-afternoon when the plane landed in a swamp 100 miles north of St. Johns, Newfoundland.

### **CORONATION FLIGHT**

In 1937 the resignation of England's King Edward VIII in order to marry American commoner Wallis Simpson received great media attention. The coronation of his brother as King George VI on May 10, 1937, would also command world-wide attention.

William Randolph Hearst Sr., founder of the Hearst newspaper chain, let it be known that he was interested in having coronation pictures flown back to the United States. Flying the pictures back to the U.S. would certainly make sensational news on its own and allow Hearst to scoop competitors who would have to wait for many days for photos to arrive by ship.

Two Wall Street brokers, Ben Smith and Jack Bergan, heard of Hearst's interest and decided that could be a profitable venture. They immediately thought about Dick Merrill and his famous round-trip crossing of the Atlantic the previous year. Upon being contacted, Merrill said that he would be interested in such a flight. He discussed the proposal with his boss at Eastern Air Lines, Eddie Rickenbacker, and found out that he also was enthusiastic about the flight.

Scouting for a suitable airplane, he learned that Harold S. Vanderbilt, director of the New York Central Railroad, had a little-used Lockheed 10E Electra. Vanderbilt agreed to part with the plane for \$40,000 and the backers allotted another \$6,000 for modifications. Merrill was pleased with the prospects of using the Electra as it represented the latest state-of-the-art technology, powered by twin Pratt and Whitney Wasp engines, each rated at 550 hp and equipped with constant speed propellers, a Sperry gyro autopilot, and two-way radio.

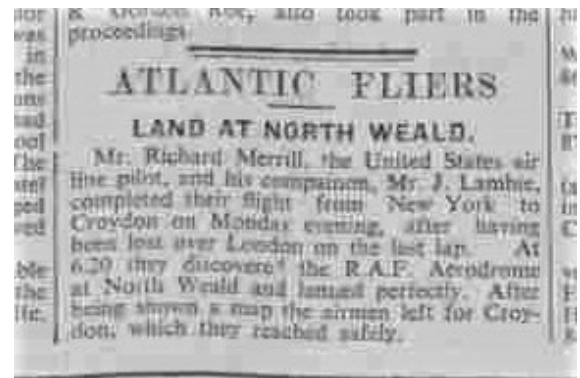


Lockheed Electra (Wikipedia)

After computing the necessary and reserve fuel requirements, Merrill installed six large fuel tanks in the fuselage which would provide a fuel capacity of 1,270 gallons. He figured this would provide a range of 4,300 miles. This was more than enough given the great circle round from New York to London was 3,022 miles. Merrill requested Jack Lambie, to accompany him on the flight.

The flight departed New York on the afternoon of May 8. Merrill took along with him photographs of the Hindenburg airship disaster, which occurred three days before the flight. After flying out over the ocean beyond Newfoundland thick weather set in and the crew would see nothing until they spotted the Irish coast.

They arrived over London's after a flight of 21 hours and 5 minutes landing at RAF North Weald to get their bearings for Croydon and then departed. On draining the fuel tanks Merrill discovered that he had about 100 gallons of fuel remaining, more than he expected.



ATLANTIC FLIERS LAND AT NORTH WEALD. Mr. Richard Merrill, the United States airline pilot, and his companion, Mr. J. Lambie, completed their flight from New York to Croydon on Monday evening, after having been lost over London on the last lap. At 6.20 they the R.A.F. Aerodrome at North Weald and landed perfectly. After being shown a map the airmen left for Croydon, which they reached safely.

Chelmsford Chronicle 14 May 1937 page 4

Haggard but smiling, Henry T. (Dick) Merrill and John S. Lambie, his co-pilot, stepped from their Lockheed Electra plane at Croydon Airport this evening as if their 3,500-mile flight to pick up films of the coronation, which they will fly to America on Wednesday, merely was part of an ordinary day's work.

New York Times 11 May 1937

After viewing the coronation, the pilots went to Croydon Airport to await delivery of the photos. By the time the airmen were ready to depart England on May 13, interest had grown so much that an estimated crowd of 10,000 people had gathered to watch them take off.

The western flight was through mixed weather. After 24 hours and 23 minutes they made a landing through a clear spot in fog at Quincy, Massachusetts. After checking on the weather they found out that Floyd Bennett Field in New York was clear, so they continued on to their destination.

The Hearst newspapers published the first pictures of the coronation. Even papers on the West Coast were able to publish the pictures on May 15.

The double Atlantic crossing made a great impression on the public and it proved the merit of commercial flying across the Atlantic although the war years altered the direction of travel considerably.

Called the "Coronation Flight" by the press, Merrill's Atlantic roundtrip also caught the attention of Hollywood. In 1937 the film *Atlantic Flight*, produced by Monogram Pictures, was conceived as a low-budget feature meant to capitalize on Dick Merrill's fame. Recreating the flight that made him famous, Dick Merrill was hired to star in the film. The movie is available on [YouTube](#) and features actual footage of the famous flight.

The type gained considerable fame as one was flown by Amelia Earhart on her ill-fated around-the-world expedition in 1937.

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

My Wing Commander son James Sjoberg sent me a link that I have forwarded to you. RAF Museum Hendon is offering 15 planes for loan to exhibit.

Among them are a Spitfire and a meteor. Both of these planes were at North Weald ion their time.

If NWAM thought big we could get a lottery grant for say £1M buy the other end of Bookers car park (never used) put up a new museum housing the meteor plus all the current exhibits we have (bursting at the seams. If there was a café , meeting room could be let out for local meetings (Yoga, business lunches etc.) I think there would be no problem getting such a grant and RAF Hendon may help towards it as they want to see their planes suitably housed.

My golf club upstairs dining room is in great demand for afternoon hire: I am sure the same would apply for NWAM.

Kind regards Neil Sjoberg

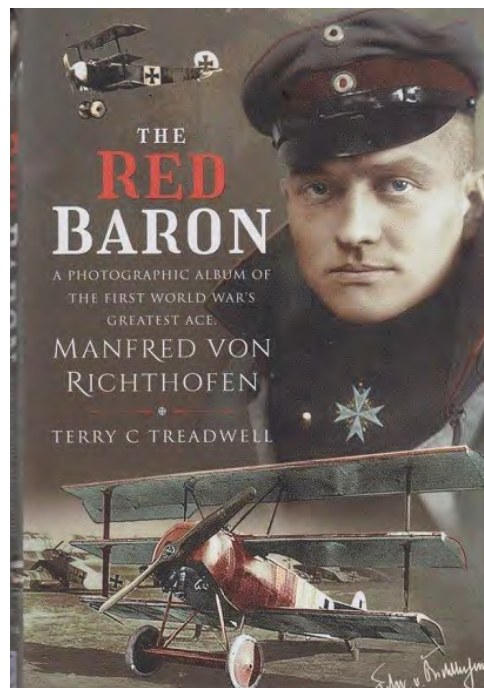
The Royal Air Force Museum is seeking loan partners for aircraft from its permanent collection. To that end they are making a selection of aircraft from the collections available to borrow for display. This will make them more publicly accessible.

Despite the positive vibes in the offer none of the types on offer fit our collecting policy and in any case none of them will easily fit inside the museum. We regret we are unable to accept this great offer.

## BOOK REVIEWS

### The Red Baron

Terry Treadwell is the author of this lavishly illustrated 157-page hardback published in 2021 by Air World an imprint of Pen & Sword Books. Terry is a former telecommunications Engineer with the RAF and European Correspondent for *Aviation News*, the official magazine of the United States Navy. He has subtitled the book "A Photographic Album of the First World War's Greatest Ace, Manfred von Richthofen". About 7,000 members of German Army Air Service died in the conflict one of whom was the Red Baron. Little has been written about these airmen and the author's aim is to correct this by featuring the life and times of this air ace. The first chapter deals with von Richthofen's life as a cavalry officer, learning to fly, and his combat victories in front line squadrons whilst the second chapter concentrates on his combat role in the German Jasta 11 Squadron when he had attained 40 aerial victories to when he was shot down. The author has helpfully included Appendices of a table of the details of the Baron's eighty aerial victories and his decorations and awards plus a glossary of terms referred to in the book and a comprehensive index including personal names and RFC and FAF Squadrons.

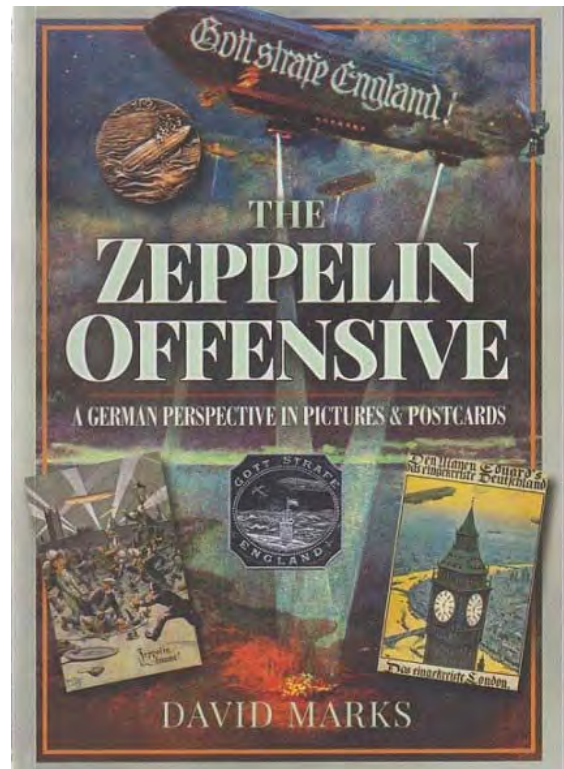


Using over 200 black and white photographs from when a young boy, to his decorations and medal collection, this book provides an insight into just how, in only 20 months, this airman, aged only 25 years, developed the deadly skills of a fighter pilot in a Fokker Triplane to shoot down eighty enemy aircraft to achieve a special place in Military history. Follow his remarkable life story from his early years to the fall day in April 1918 when he was most likely shot down and killed by an RAF pilot of 209 Squadron in a Sopwith Camel. The book (ISBN: 978-1-52678-321) is available from (Pen & Sword Books, Tel: 01226 734222, email: [enquiries@pen-and-sword.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@pen-and-sword.co.uk), Web: <https://www.pen-and-sword.co.uk>) at a recommended retail price of £19.99.

## The Zeppelin Offensive

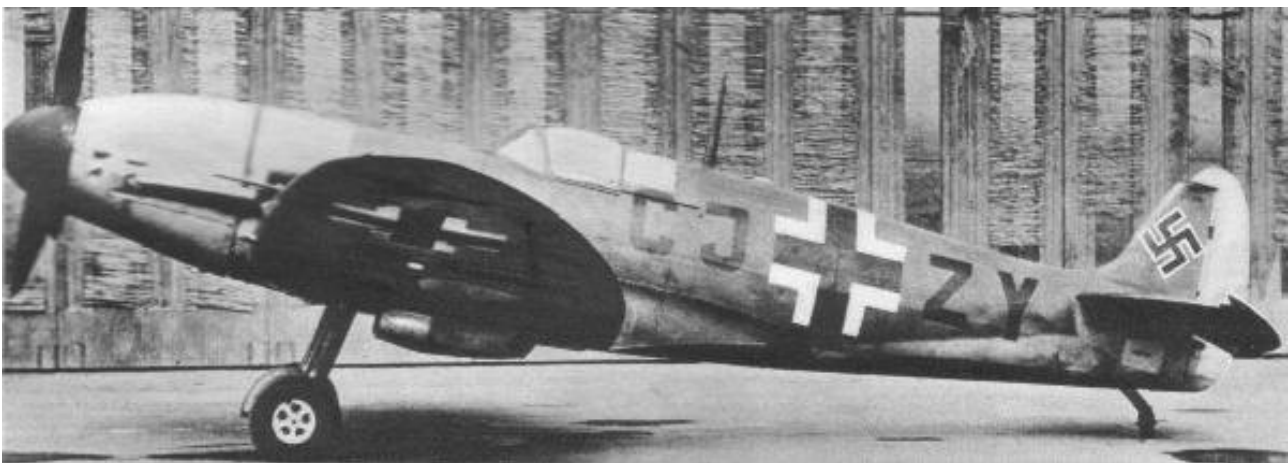
The author has given this title not one but two subtitles, namely "A German perspective in pictures and postcards". David Marks is a member of the Airship Heritage Trust and the first World War Aviation Historical Society and regularly contributes to its publication, 'Cross and Cockade', and many other magazines and journals on the Zeppelin raids on Britain.

The book has been compiled using the author's extensive collection of postcards and Great War memorabilia. In all there are nearly 100 illustrations – many in colour. Using these resources, the author explores the wide-ranging propaganda from Teutonic imagery to myths and legends. The book is arranged in 11 themed chapters. It commences with "The Zeppelins are coming" continues with "Strafing London" and includes a chapter on "Souvenirs from Belgium" as well as "It won't take long to defeat these leaders of the Allies". Subsequent chapters include "England will be destroyed by fire", "Zeppelins over London", "The Ruler of the sea" and finally "The new Gods of the air". The book is rounded off with a select bibliography of publications and just three websites plus an index.



Reading these colourful pages, you will not only learn of these fearful giants of the sky and experience humour, satire and patriotism but you will better appreciate the propaganda war through the high-quality German postcards sent home by soldiers at the front to form part of collections. A 98 page paperback with a recommended retail price of £14.99, it was first published in the UK by Air World (ISBN:978-1-52673-7205) in 2019 and is available from Pen & Sword Books Tel: 01226 73422, Email: [enquiries@pen-and-sword.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@pen-and-sword.co.uk). Web: [www.pen-and-sword.co.uk](http://www.pen-and-sword.co.uk).

## SPITFIRE SUPREME



In November 1942, Supermarine Spitfire VB EN830 NX-X of 131 Squadron based at RAF Westhampnett (now better known as the Goodwood Racing Circuit in West Sussex) made a forced landing in a turnip field in German-occupied Channel Island of Jersey.

The plane was repaired and extensively modified by German forces and re-appeared powered by a Daimler Benz DB 605A engine.

When the Rolls-Royce Merlin engine was removed the German engineers found that the fuselage cross section was virtually identical to that of the engine nacelle of a Messerschmitt Bf-110G. Consequently a new engine support structure was built onto the Spitfire's fuselage and the DB



605 engine and cowling panels added. A propeller unit and supercharger air intake from a Bf 109 G completed the installation.

Other changes made were to replace the Spitfire instruments with German types, and to change the 12-volt electrical system to the German 24-volt type. The modifications also saw the guns removed and this lightened the modified aircraft. In this form the Daimler-Benz Spitfire started flying as CJ+ZY in early 1944.

The installation of the two engines was different, both were V-12s, but the Merlin was upright and the DB 605 inverted. The ease of switching between upright and inverted V-12's should have been no great surprise since the first example of the Bf 109 was powered by an upright V-12 Rolls-Royce Kestrel engine as used by the Hawker Fury and Hart and the Handley Page Heyford.

The overall performance of the modified Spitfire was found to be greatly enhanced by the substitution of the DB 605A engine and reports suggest that the modified aircraft was liked by German pilots able to try it. For them the cockpit was slightly roomier than that they were used to in the Bf 109 and the familiar engine brought with it familiar characteristics. The improvements in performance were partly due to the aircraft having no armament. As the repair and modification of the Mark V airframe had taken a year the Spitfire back in England had also moved on in the form of the Mark IX and others which also improved the performance of the marque.

The DB 605 Spitfire flew for a few months before the aircraft was destroyed by USAAF bombing of Rechlin on August 14, 1944.

The sting in the tail was that perhaps the tables were turned after the war. The Bf 109 was built under licence in Spain as the Hispano HA1112 Buchon, complete with the original DB 605 engine. Later production in Spain shifted to the use of the Rolls-Royce Merlin engine and it was in that form that several examples of the Hispano "Bf 109" were snapped up to play a part on the 1969 movie Battle of Britain. Several Merlin 109s still fly. So it seems that while there was only one DB 605 Spitfire there were dozens of Merlin 109s. (Quora)

Bryn,

I thought you'd like the attached pictures. I recently stopped by the Fighter Factory, just outside of Norfolk, VA. They found this WWII control tower in England and moved it, piece by piece, back to Virginia to be part of the museum. The aircraft in the museum are all flyable, so the tower is installed next to a grass airstrip where aircraft from 1918 through WWII regularly fly on the weekends. The inside is a museum about England during the war, but the main control room has been restored to how it looked during the war based on press photos from the site. I thought it was a neat piece of history that you might like reading about.

### **Bryan Smith**

Airborne Public Safety Association  
Safety Program Manager. Florida

RAF Goxhill located in north Lincolnshire by the River Humber opened in June 1941 as an RAF Bomber Command airfield. The Eighth Air Force took ownership in August 1942, and used the airfield for operational training. It was officially closed in 1953. Several of the airfield's structures remain today.



Meanwhile the future plans for North Weald continue to be presented to the public for discussion by Epping Forest District Council. Covid has restricted the opportunities for free discussion but where difficulties arise Zoom steps in. The graphics for the development of the land to the east of the main runway are changing slightly.



**Statutory Consultation on Strategic Masterplan  
for North Weald Airfield Employment Site**  
December 2021 - January 2022

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### Masterplan and Vision

#### Vision

The overarching vision for the site is to create a new, high-quality, sustainable employment hub for North Weald and the surrounding area. It will be an attractive place to both work and visit, where people can enjoy the rich heritage of the Airfield.

#### Key Objectives

The development will be welcoming and accessible to everyone. It will provide a mixture of different types of buildings to suit a range of uses, able to fully meet local and regional demand. It will be well integrated into its surroundings, extending existing roads and pathways to ensure it is fully connected.

Alongside employment space, the site will encourage community uses. This includes the renovation of the Grade II listed Control Tower for an alternative use which could include community or cafe uses. There will also be open spaces located throughout the site to provide the opportunity to hold the outdoor market, car boot sale and other events.

#### Illustrative Site Layout Plan



No direct discussion on the future of the museum has taken place recently but as the museum location is in the 4th phase of development as currently planned it is clearly some few years away.

The airfield is served by a number of cafes including Wings and the Red Bus on the airfield. The development of The Squadron site for Aero Legends means their service is still erratic but will hopefully be ready for the coming summer.

New and right alongside the museum on weekdays is Nana's Lunch Box. They occupy the unit in the Bassett Business Units formerly taken by the minicab office.

A return to an item on the museum and Peter Gardner the Chairman. In November he was firmly back on the ground and acting as the public face of North Weald Airfield Museum at the Service of Remembrance organised as ever outside the museum at the Memorial and Debt of Honour by North Weald Bassett Parish Council.

Noticing that not everyone had arrived wearing a poppy — due mainly to the ongoing Covid restrictions — Peter is seen here with the museum's youngest member offering last minute Haig Poppies for those attending the Service of Remembrance.



Peter Gardner and Jack Holloway





The legacy of history has resulted in mutual exchange visits and, for the wider public, relatively easy access to F-16 fighters of the 331/332 Squadrons RNoAF at North Weald events. Members of the air force based at the northern town of Bodø maintained regular contact. More recently the refurbishment of the 1941-45 Allies Room in the North Weald museum was financially supported by Norway.

In recent months there has been a change in government in Norway. The new incumbents are from a Socialist Left Party, and likely to have attitudes somewhat different from that we experienced before. On 14 October 2021, Jonas Gahr Støre, the leader of Norway's centre-left Labour Party, was sworn in as new Prime Minister of Norway.

Militarily, changes are in place. The joint civil and military airport at Bodø is to close and be replaced by another near Trondheim. The F-16 fighters that graced the North Weald events for so many years have been swiftly sold off to Bolivia. They flew their last air defence sortie from Bodø on January 6 this year. Their task is now taken over by the F-35, a far more expensive asset. There was a certain amount of ceremony associated with the departure of the F-16s in that one was painted up in 1945 colours and an F-16 was flown in by the crown princess Ingrid Alexandra of Norway



The sign of changes may be clear to see. Last year the Norwegian Defence Attache was absent from the Remembrance Sunday Service at North Weald for the first time anyone can recall.

This and other details may reduce the scope for the Parish Council plans to mark the 70th Anniversary of the dedication of the Norwegian Stone in June 1952. With the marking of HM Queen's own accession to the throne being marked at the same time it was always going to be a difficult call but it is certainly going to be a "project".