

Stan Folds



Aug 1959. Posted to Neatishead (satellite of Coltishall) with Trog, working on shift maintaining heads and radar office equipment.

Feb 1960. Newton for Mk1 Bloodhound launch control post course with Copper, Dick Cheeseman, Trog Gillott and Jack Hobbs.

Oct 1960. Woodhall Spa (222 Sqn) (satellite of Coningsby) , promoted to Cpl in December.

Early 1961, detached to RAF Brighton (112 Sqn) (satellite of Church Fenton) for a couple of months to assist with coordination of the new equipment. Trog was posted here as well and his first baby was born while I was there, I was best man at his wedding.

Oct 1963. Bawdsey maintaining radar office and trainers/recorders. I got married just before this tour.

Mar 1964. Newton for a Mk11 Bloodhound Technical Supervisors course. Paul Rawdon (Dinkey) on the same course.

Late 1964. West Raynham (41Sqn) with Paul Rawdon, Nobby Clarke and Nick Parker, promoted to Sgt in 1966.

1969. A posting to Cranwell was cancelled and I was sent to North Coates (25 Sqn) working with a small team on old MK1 equipment Redifon photographic recorders and T83 radars as a Radar Theodolite for the linesman system. I took over the section from Len Hodby.



Apr 1970. 25 Sqn moved to Germany in something of a hurry and I was on the advance party at Laarbruch, a case of first build the barbed wire fence. Promoted to Chf/Tech, Roy O'Connell posted in, first wife left.

Oct 1973. Bawdsey again, this time in charge of the radar heads section. Married second wife.

Jan 1975. Locking for a Digital fundamentals course (a waste of time as I had been working with digitals since 1959 and my first son was born 5 days after the start of the course, I had 10 days leave and still passed the course). I was then posted to West Drayton Air Defence Data Centre working in the control room of what was at the time the largest online computer system in the world, an interesting job that was known to give people nervous breakdowns, but I enjoyed it. Mike Shilcock worked in programming wing here and we sailed together a few times.

June 1980. Gatow 26 Sigs Unit, i/c 2nd and 3rd line servicing of special receivers and video recorders (that's what the book said and I'm saying no more). Eric Jolliffe worked in another part of the unit as a linguist. 2nd wife left.

Dec 1983. West Raynham again, i/c third line of T86 radars (industrial archaeology by this time but a challenge as they no longer taught the J/Ts how to solder, drill and tap in workshops at Locking). I had the odd visit from Roy who was something to do with the Bloodhound school.

Jun 1987. North Luffenham, Development Flt working up the third line facility for the T93 radar and then into the GRSC for the running of the section. Keith Runakers was my sponsor at Command and Roy O'Connell and John Moncur were also here on their final tours. I think I met Bob Locke in the G as well.

July 1995. Demob after 39 years, 24 of them spent as a Chf. Tech., it's amazing how relaxed life can be when you opt out of the promotion race. I now live in Norfolk and spend my days doing very little apart from playing with my boats on the broads and visiting friends.

The characters I have met have been many and varied but one who stands out was with me on a Mk 1 Bloodhound course and I was later posted with him to 222 Sqn, here was a man who inspired such loyalty in his troops that it bordered on devotion, we would have followed him over a cliff. Note that we would have made him go first but we would have followed his leadership. I discovered so much more about man management from this man than any other I have met.

In later years the service placed great store by "Management" a skill which they thought could be taught to many, unfortunately the idea of leadership which relies so much on personality was sidelined to the detriment of service life. This comment reminds me of the time that I told my Sqn Ldr that he was demoralising the troops by attempting to staff the RAF with back stabbers and trumpet blowers while I had to try and get them to work. I enjoyed that but it did nothing to improve my promotion prospects in my old and bold year, this didn't worry me as I had already opted out the promotion race after taking a good look at many of those above me and I enjoyed being in charge of a workshop full of "the lads".

We all know that refusal to carry out an order is not permitted, a court marshal offence, but I found a way round this a couple of times when ordered to do stupid or unsafe things, I said yes Sir can I have that order in writing, and on each occasion the order was withdrawn.

I started sailing at Locking and continued throughout my service and beyond in dinghies, on sailboards and in offshore yachts. Expedition training in the Med, Baltic and across the Atlantic was great fun, I think I visited more countries by RAF yacht than I did on normal duty. I was an instructor in all 3 skills and passing my knowledge on to beginners who enjoyed learning was a great feeling for me.

The low points in my career were when I had to identify the body of one of my watch to the Pathologist in Cyprus after he had been killed while working on a radar and giving first aid to a JT who's' eye had been ripped apart by an exploding electrolytic capacitor.

My main memory of an ex - 84th member during my time was when I was

working in Development Flt at North Luffenham. The section was manned by Sgts, Chf Techs a Flt Sgt and a Flt Lt, all of whom were in the large office. In walked the new WO from GREDIT, one Roy Oconnell, he came straight over to me and kissed me on the lips. He then turned to my boss and said "it's OK I'm allowed 2 a year.

I have been single since 1984 having been married and divorced twice. I have 2 wonderful sons, one of whom sensibly joined the Navy. I have 2 grandchildren by my eldest son and one on the way by the youngest (I always knew he had it in him but I didn't know how far). I have lived in Norfolk since 1995 and live on my wits and my pension, both of which are inadequate.