

## Adrian Kyte



For myself, Life began after Locking. My posting to RAF Patrington was akin to being released from a Borstal institution. Having never been a smart apprentice it came easy to adopt the uniform dress of my colleagues; Wellington boots and bicycle clips. I remember my first night shift and being dropped off at the closest point to what was called, "The Remote Type 7". The shift bus stopped at a gate and I was informed that I would find a bicycle around the hedge and flashlight would be helpful. I found the bike OK, but alas no flashlight. The idea was that I would cycle down a dirt track through a couple of fields and I was to ensure I closed each gate securely. The local farmers did not want their animals butting heads with our radar. The Type 7 was straight ahead. My senses warned me of being in proximity. First there was a squeaking noise, very rhythmic and secondly there was an unpleasant aroma which became worse the closer I got. The aerial rotated at 4 rpm and overlapped the entrance to the underground chamber where I was to spend the shift. Those mathematically minded will see I had 7.5 seconds maximum in which to enter the vertical ladder, or the other half of the aerial would move me along. Once I had gained that ladder I came face to face with the source of the smell (a toilet.) If one was not careful going down that ladder one could step right into it. Talk about getting into shit! I found it very easy. Tuning the Type 7 seemed to be a matter of adjusting the TR-Cell gap to about the width of the cardboard of a cigarette package. I finally did my last shift there when I managed to get the Type 79 (IFF) radar going around 90 degrees lagging the Type 7. Servos were not my metre. Around this time I received a summons to appear at Buckingham Palace to receive the Duke of Edinburgh's Award from the big guy himself. I asked my F/Sgt for time off and was refused. So by working a double shift on the Type 80, FPS6 and types 13 and 14, hence the need for wellies

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to walk around the radar field in; I took an overnight train to London, arrived at 03:00. I then walked to the Union Jack Club and slept for a while on a bench, all the time in my best Blue outfit. The same day I got a haircut, short back and sides only (leaving the rest of the unruly mop on top) as I felt sure the investiture was a hats-on affair. (NOT!) Then I very carefully shaved around the acne and shone my service shoes and pressed the uniform. Having arrived on time at Buck-house I was amazed to see brass hats galore and was informed by a footman that the presentation was very much a hats-off affair. Oh Lord! When I actually met HRH he recognised I was an actual Airman, not an app/be or scout. He said "Oh! You are in the Air Force". Now with plenty of sleep I could be a little sarcastic at times. With little to no sleep, exhausted, ashamed of my drooping hair and petrified by the presence of Generals, Admirals and Air Marshals, I probably blew my chances at a career there and then. The worst part was falling asleep sitting in the 2<sup>nd</sup> row of the throne room while the Duke addressed the crowd.

A couple of days after my return to Patrington I was summoned to the Station Commanders Office. No less than Group Captain Johnny Johnson himself. (I did not have the nerve to ask for his autograph.) He gave me a dressing down for not having informed him I was to go to London. What a situation! He didn't have to work for my F/Sgt. Discretion being the better part of valour I was not going over the F/Sgt's head to the station CO. As it was the F/Sgt referred to me as "The Duke".

A couple of months later Lew Llewelyn arrived at Patrington. He passed out with the 85<sup>th</sup>. We had one great season of Basketball winning the local trophies. Poor Lew got a bad electric shock when underground in the com-centre and working on a console. An airman went to touch the HT Voltmeter and Lew brushed him aside and managed to touch the Post deflection Anode (13.5 Kvolts). He didn't look too happy and it must have had an awful effect on him as the next time we met, he was a Fl Lt Nav on a Vulcan Squadron at Scampton. When asked, no he did not want to play Basketball. (Some of us grew to adulthood earlier than others).

I was then sent to RAF Newton. There I met Brian Hobbs, Dick Cheeseman, Stan Folds and Roger Gillot. We had to sign a paper saying we were volunteering for training on the Mk1 Bloodhound LCP. There were other

options but all the other options were deleted. Thus the RAF of yesteryear worked. There were some Australian Airmen on the course also. Upon completion I was sent to RAF Marham #242 Squadron. This was Douglas Bader's first command in WWII. I was to spend 4+ years there. One remarkable event was when 2 of us Corporals actually signed for receipt of the Squadron one weekend after the BAC/AEI workmen were finished. I didn't think that was possible. Then there was a real stink when my F/Sgt discovered I was earning 2x the trade pay he was. I was anxious to go onto greater things and for the 3<sup>rd</sup> and last time of asking was firmly rejected for aircrew. Someone had heard of my behaviour at Buckingham Palace. I even volunteered to speak Russian at Tangmere, but failed that selection as the selection board reckoned I could not speak English! That good old Birmingham accent. You know! It's the place where 3 million people have a speech defect! All in all I remained with #242 until it was disbanded in 1964.

From Marham I was sent to Gatow but landed up in Cap Gata 280 Signals Unit at Akrotiri. Eventually my papers were forwarded on from Gatow. I soon fell foul of the Wing Commander i/c. Thus I ended up in my monk's cell at RAF Troodos. 18 months of doing anything to keep busy. I worked with the 9 Signals troop weave-tying a communications cable from tree to tree that stretched from Troodos to Olympus. Then I volunteered to drive the ambulance or anything with 4 wheels.. Eventually 280 sigs at Akrotiri needed someone to moth-ball the old radar convoy when the new com-centre was being completed and I was repatriated to Akrotiri. I immediately volunteered for Mountain Rescue and the second half of my tour was very enjoyable indeed. I travelled extensively around the Med either as a member of a sports team or with Mountain Rescue. While at Troodos I had a penfriend in Beirut. Eventually we met and so it went. Upon my return to England my posting was RAF Locking as an instructor in 4T block. I got married to my Lebanese girl friend and spent the last 2 years in an undistinguished career at RAF Scampton. The biggest challenge there was taking over the F/Sgt's inventory for all ground wireless equipment on the base. I even bought his motorcar. I was to find out later that any part of that Vauxhall Velox that could have been stolen from the RAF was. Even the 12 volt battery came from the CPN4. On the 20<sup>th</sup> June 1970 I was demobbed and arrived at RAF Seletar, with my family on June 26<sup>th</sup>. I was

to refurbish the equipment of the Type 82 radar that illuminated targets for the Singapore Armed Forces MKII Bloodhound Systems. In  $2\frac{1}{2}$  years we implemented 700+ modifications and when we fired-up the first completed radar we were able to lock-on to the rotors of a helicopter on the tarmac at Seletar airport. We had visions of touring the globe embodying these modifications as it was a successful refurbish contract.

True to sod's law the RAF mothballed the lot and upon return to AEI at Leicester I was engaged on Naval Destroyers tuning power regulators. I became familiar with Battle class and Daring class destroyers that had been sold to South American Navies. I worked at Wallsend-on-Tyne, Birkenhead and Barrow-in-Furness; the latter being described as a town on the end of a 73 mile cul-de-sac. I even worked on HMS Sheffield spending a nervous night with the Fleet Chief testing the load/no load responses on the Sheffield. It was in a floating dock and there was a bomb scare which meant we were the only ones on board and it had to be done at night so as to avoid the striking dockyard workers. Later it was interesting to work on the Sea Wolf radar as it was my first experience of an semi-automated tune up. There was a morale problem there and at Leicester aerodrome and guys kept quitting AEI/Marconi as it then was. Soon I became interested in a company called Univac.

2 weeks after joining Univac with a 60% pay hike over AEI, I was alone at the East Midlands Gas Board working 12 hour shifts 4 days on and 4 days off. I had no idea what was going on, but I did have a list of phone numbers to call if there was a problem. There was lots of training (unlike AEI) most of which was in Zurich. It took 3 years for me to figure out what was what. Vivian and I had 3 children by 1976 when her family disappeared from Beirut at the commencement of the civil war and reappeared in Montreal Canada. In order to help out over there we applied to emigrate to Quebec. In a most unlikely event I was interviewed in the Canadian Embassy by an ex Brigadier General who had served in Cyprus at the same time as myself. Amazingly all the red-tape disappeared and it became very easy for the Kytes to enter Canada.

We arrived on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Nov which was just when the Parti Quebequois was at its ridiculous worst. Eighteen months later a Law was passed making the

use of French Language in the workplace mandatory. En-bloc all of the Anglo-Canadians were offered employment in other provinces all expenses paid. Now in my mind that kind of loyalty from an employer earned loyalty from us in return.

The Kytes moved to Mississauga and my career continued with lots of rewards until Burroughs took over. The Headlines at this event should have read "Two bricks tied together cannot float". The downsizing began shortly after. I remained the Customer Satisfaction manager for Canada. That was where my apprentice training really paid off. I found I was able to make good decisions and get rewarded for them. Alas with free trade in North America and the demise of the mainframe systems my position went to the USA and for the first time in my life I was retired.

I found that Canada would re-train me whilst I was whiling away my settlement. So it was I became a Microsoft NT4 specialist. I found the learning part hard work and family tragedies in the UK did not help. Still I did manage to work for 4 more years before the company I was with went bust being undercut drastically by other large companies. At this time I experienced TIAs (a miniature stroke) and for a few months enjoyed a summer off. Then it came to mind I should do something I enjoyed and that was helping out. I joined the Corps of Commissionaires and became their Finger-Print specialist at the Canadian Refugee centre in Toronto. The hours became longer than I was willing to work though the \$\$\$ supplemented my pension. After 4 years I requested a 3 day a week job and found one at the Appeals Board Tribunal in Toronto. This was a task that required a Policeman. They settled for me.

I worked with judges, lawyers, murderers and scalawags and only once had to be physical. Eventually arthritis took over and I slowed down a lot. Frankly, I felt I could not do justice to the job; so I retired again and joined a Golf Club.

For 2 years I was very happy. Now I have to re-think my activities. I have begun Taoist Thai Chi in order to keep as limber as possible and spend one day a week at the Canadian Warplane Heritage working wherever they put me. Very interesting stuff. Quite a few of our airworthy aircraft are older

than we are.

Vivian and I now live in a comfortable little bungalow in Burlington, Ontario. Harvey Morton can attest to our having room for the odd guests should anyone wish to see Niagara Falls, less than 1 hour away. Our children all got the education we envisaged when we came to Canada in 1976, and we are proud grandparents to Max and Avery. Our daughter earned her PHD at St Michaels and both boys got honours degrees in English at their respective universities. No-one in Canada has referred to them as Anglo-Arab, which is another reason from coming to Canada.