

Chapter 1

Early Life

Ernest Russell Lyon was born in Edinburgh on 19th December 1922 to Ernest Hutcheon Lyon (1891-1985) and his second wife, Elizabeth Wright Lyon (nee Pealling) (1886-1935).

Christened Ernest Russell Lyon, he was known as Russell.



1.01 Family photo Russell age 6 months - Lyon family collection.

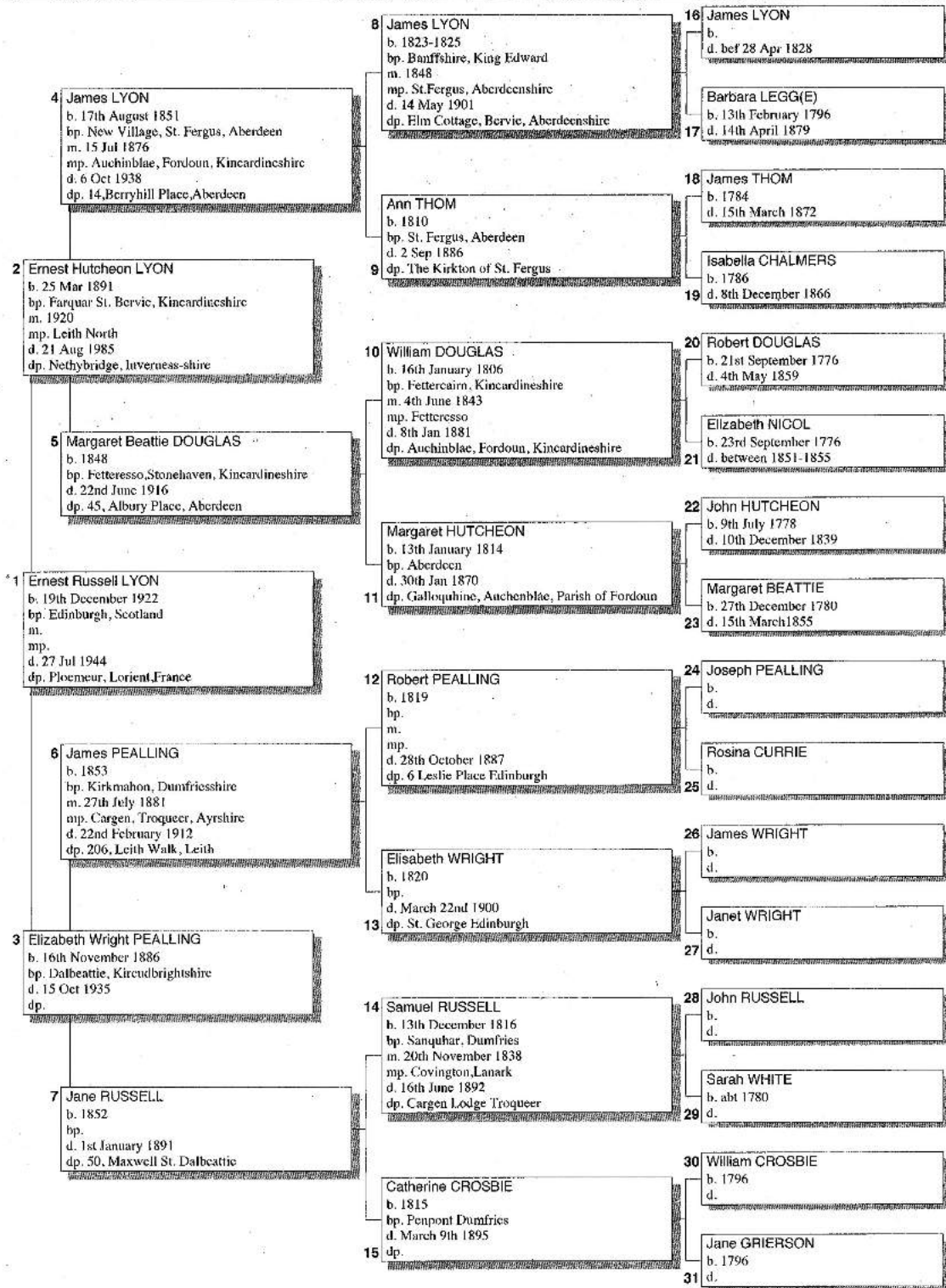
He had one older half brother, my father, Stanley Douglas Lyon (1917-1991), and a younger brother, James Gordon Lyon (1927-1956).

Stanley's mother Helen Wilson Kelly (1890-1919) died (of Bright's Disease) when he was still an infant. Helen Kelly's family came from Foveran, Aberdeenshire.

Ernest then married Elizabeth Pealling in 1920, whose family originated from Kirkcudbrightshire and south west Scotland, and who gave him his second and third sons, Russell and Jimmy. His Christian name Russell came from the surname of his maternal line great grandfather Samuel Russell from Sanquhar, Dumfriesshire.

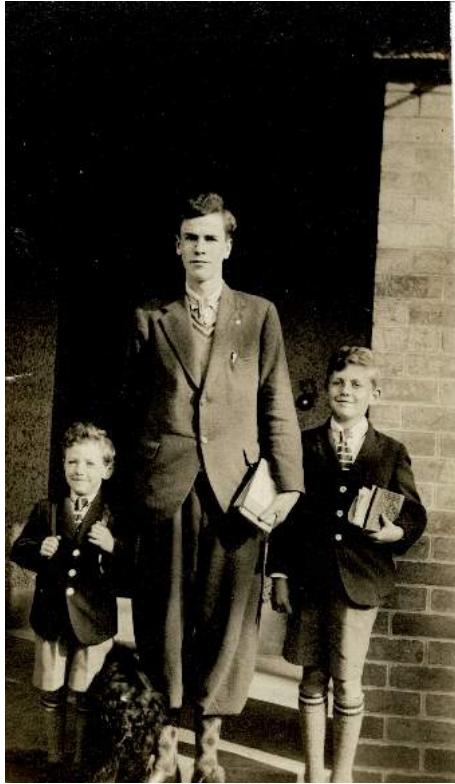
The three boys grew up in Edinburgh and attended local schools including George Heriot's School and George Watson's College.

Pedigree Overview



Created 13 Jun 2007 using Reunion for Macintosh

1.02 Russell Lyon's family tree - Lyon family collection.



1.03 Russell with elder and younger brothers Stanley and Jimmy - Lyon family collection.

Their father Ernest was born in 1891 in Inverbervie, Kincardineshire, and was the youngest of six children. He had two sisters, Jane Christie Lyon (1878-1966) and Margaret Ann Lyon (1883-1971) and three brothers, James Lyon (1881-1918), George David Lyon (1884-1972), and Arthur William Douglas Lyon (1886-1958).

Their grandfather, James Lyon (1851-1938), a landscape gardener, was born in St. Fergus and their grandmother Margaret Beattie Douglas (1848-1916) was born in Fetteresso.



1.04 Family photo Russell with father, brothers and grandparents - Lyon family collection.

Their great grandfather, also James Lyon, was born in King Edward (c 1823-1901).

At the time of the 1851 census, this James Lyon is at St. Fergus, address Londerton, which is a 343 acre farm in the southern portion of St. Fergus Parish, just north of Mains of Inverugie, owned by the Thomson family in 1881.

By the 1881 census this James is aged 57, a shepherd living at a dwelling in Seatown, Crimond, Aberdeen with Ann Lyon (nee Thom) age 70.

Studies to find earlier antecedents on the Lyon line have just one more James Lyon, whose origins and dates are unknown. His spouse, Barbara Legg(e), (1796-1879) is shown to have married for a second time to George Finnie in Pitsligo in 1828. Her death certificate indicates that she was the widow of James Lyon.

There is no record yet found of this James Lyon other than his marriage to Barbara Legg(e) in 1822 in Pitsligo, and an assumed death before 1828.

The birth Parishes for Russell's great grandparents on his father's side, James Lyon, Ann Thom, William Douglas and Margaret Hutcheon are, respectively, the Parish of King Edward, the Kirkton of St. Fergus, Fordoun and Fordoun.

Moving back a generation earlier to the great great grandparents of Russell shows there are birth parishes including Gamrie, St. Fergus, Fordoun, Fettercairn and Stonehaven.

Many of Russell's antecedents on his father's side are from the farming communities of North East Scotland. They will have endured hardships that are long forgotten. From the same area of North East Scotland the contents of "A Scots Quair" by Lewis Grassie Gibbon have provided me, comfortable now in 21st Century East Anglia, with much flavour of how hard existence was a hundred years or so ago.

Russell can be seen as a “grandson” if not son of North East Scotland.

Research on other members of this Lyon line shows that some, like many during the nineteenth century, emigrated from North East Scotland to distant lands, including to Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada; to Vancouver, Canada and to Millicent, Adelaide, Australia.

Russell’s great uncle, George Chalmers Lyon (1849-1929), moved south to live in Hastings, Kent, where he was the Head Park Gardener. In 1906 Russell’s uncle, George David, emigrated to Pennsylvania, USA, where he was also a landscape gardener.



1.05 Russell with father and mother, brothers and cousins, at Braemar c 1932 - Lyon family collection.

Holidays from Edinburgh for Stanley, Russell and James in the 1920’s and 1930’s often took them to Braemar, Deeside where they holidayed together with various cousins and where their uncle, the well known Aberdeen and Deeside artist George Melvin Rennie, (1875-1953), had a summer studio adjacent to the Invercauld Arms Hotel.

George married Margaret Ann Lyon (1883-1971), aunt to Russell, in Aberdeen in 1919 and with whom he had two sons and a daughter. George’s first wife Isabella Allan, with whom he had four sons and two daughters, had died in 1916.

Around Braemar and Deeside is the area where Clan Farquharson originates from, dating back many centuries. The surname Lyon is associated with Clan Farquharson, being a smaller sept comprising, and being part of, the Farquharson chief’s larger clan.



1.06 Russell with family at the Falls of Garbh Allt, Royal Deeside c 1934 - Lyon family collection.

Russell's early school years were spent firstly at Gillespies and then at George Heriot's School in Edinburgh. He entered Heriot's on 23 September 1930. In July 1932, he left George Heriot's School and started his next phase of education on 22 September 1932 at George Watson's College, also in Edinburgh.

George Heriot's School, Edinburgh



1.07 - George Heriot's School, Edinburgh, Scotland, seen from the Grassmarket just below Edinburgh Castle - © Wikipédia, Dave Morris from Oxford, England, FlickrLickr.

Founded in 1628 as a hospital school for impoverished orphan children, with an endowment from George Heriot, the school is located in central Edinburgh. The original charitable aim to provide free education to fatherless children still continues today although the school has also taken fee-paying pupils from the 1880's onwards. The School is now co-educational with 1600 pupils.

Motto: "Impendo" ("I Distribute Chearfullie")

The George Watson's College record shows that "He got the bronze medal for swimming in fourth year and by the time he was in sixth year he was in the rugby first XV where he gained his colours. He studied English, French, Physics and Chemistry in sixth year, was a patrol leader in the Scouts and was also in the Army Training Corps and played tennis and cricket. He was also a prefect".

George Watson's College, Edinburgh



1.08 – George Watson's College - © Website Watsonians Online -
<https://www.watsonians.org/page.aspx?pid=329>.

Founded in 1741 as a hospital school, with an endowment from George Watson the school is located in Colinton in south-west Edinburgh. As the hospital school system fell into disrepute the school was reformed in 1870 as a fee-paying day school for 800 boys. Amalgamation with George Watson's Ladies College in the 1970's the school now has some 2400 pupils.

Motto: "Ex Corde Caritas" ("Love from the Heart")

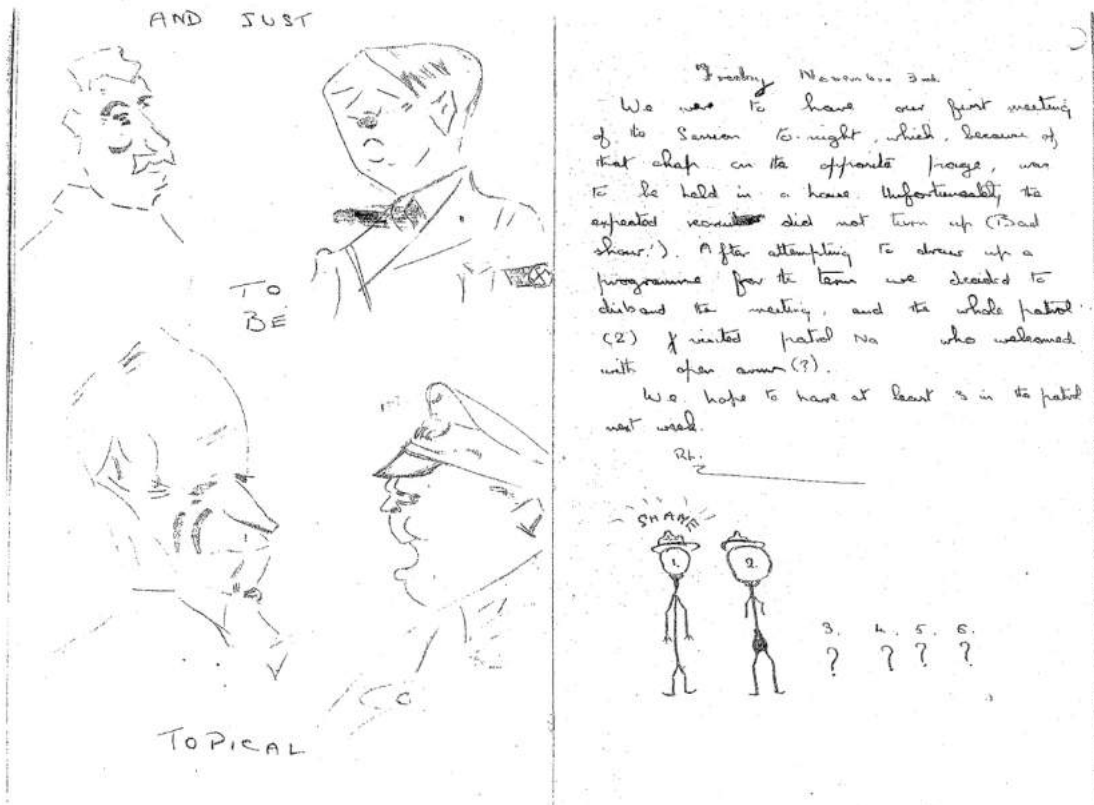
On 15th October 1935, when Russell was approaching his 13th birthday, his mother Elizabeth died following a sudden and severe stroke.



1.09 Russell with father, step-mother and brother Jimmy, Helvellyn c 1938 - Lyon family collection.

Amongst family history possessions is a Scout Logbook from Russell's teenage years in Colinton in Edinburgh.

Written in 1939/1940 this shows, amongst other comment, Russell's wry observations on the wartime disruption to every day life caused by WW2. For instance he blames the low turnout for an evening patrol meeting on "that chap on the opposite page" (he is referring to his cartoon of Hitler). He also sets out for each meeting of his troop, those who are present, those who have not been able to attend, and what the group has accomplished.



1.10 Page from Russell's Scout Log Book - Lyon family collection.

The page shows four lifelike cartoon figures of Churchill, Roosevelt, Hitler and Mussolini.

The logbook is well illustrated with stick figure diagrams, several of which have cartoon character displaying his artistic talents, and includes photographs of the troop's camping excursions.

Another entry in the scout logbook records that "my pals think I look like Clark Gable" so Russell clearly, handsome as he was, had a sense of humour.



1.11 Russell Lyon c 1940 - Lyon family collection.

Chapter 2

RAF Career 1941-1944

Soon after his 18th birthday Russell Lyon volunteered to join the RAF, and he enlisted in the RAF Volunteer Reserve on 1 March 1941.



2.01 Russell Lyon, RAF Wings awarded, 1942 - Lyon family collection.

His full Service Record is:

- 1 March 1941 enlistment Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve
- Held in reserve 7 July 1941 L.A.C.R.C. July to Sept. 1941
- Basic Training October 1941 to May 1942
- Canada and the USA Training 20 May 1942
- Awarded pilot's wings, promoted to Sergeant
- May 1942-March 1943 Pilot Instructor USA and Canada
- 4 March 1943 promoted to Flying Officer
- June to October 1943 Pilot Operational training
- 20 October 1943 Posted to 234 Squadron
- 26 September 1943 RAF Hutton Cranswick, 12 Group
- December 1943 RAF Church Fenton 2
- 9 January 1944 RAF Coltishall
- 19 March 1944 RAF Bolt Head 10 Group
- 30 April 1944 RAF Deanland 85 Group
- 19 June 1944 RAF Predannack 10 Group
- 27 July 1944 Missing in Action

Around March 1943 Russell volunteered to return to the UK and to be posted to an operational squadron.

When Russell joined 234 Squadron he acquired the nickname "Ben" Lyon. (after the Hollywood actor and agent Ben Lyon).

Brief History of RAF 234 Squadron



2.02 RAF 234 Squadron Badge - © Site RAF.

The Squadron was formed in August 1918, from Flights 350, 351, 352 and 353. Based in the Scilly Isles at RNAS Tresco, the Squadron flew Felixstowe F3 and Curtiss H12 flying boats to patrol the Western Approaches to the English Channel. Missions continued until the Armistice on 15th May 1919, after which the Squadron was disbanded.

On 30th October 1939 234 Squadron was reformed at RAF Leconfield again flying coastal patrols. For this work of giving protection to shipping, the Squadron was equipped with Magisters, a Battle, Gauntlets and Blenheim Mk1fs until March, 1940. Then, it began to be re-equipped with Spitfires that became operational on May 11th, 1940. During the Battle of Britain, the Squadron was based in the south of Great Britain. The Squadron suffered heavy losses but also high success rates with ace pilots such as Pat Hughes, Bob Doe and Keith Lawrence. In April 1941, the Squadron carried out missions in the north of France. It continued providing defensive patrols until January 1943. The Squadron was active over northern France during and after the Normandy Invasion. On 1st May 1945 234 Squadron was equipped with jets, new American Mustang F4s, and undertook long range bomber escort missions.

A few days before the end of war, the Squadron moved to the north of Scotland operating with RAF Coastal Command along the Norwegian coast, it then returned to East Anglia in July and was re-equipped with Spitfire MkIXs. In February 1946 these were replaced by Meteor F3s and on September 1st, 1946, the Squadron was renumbered as 266 Squadron.

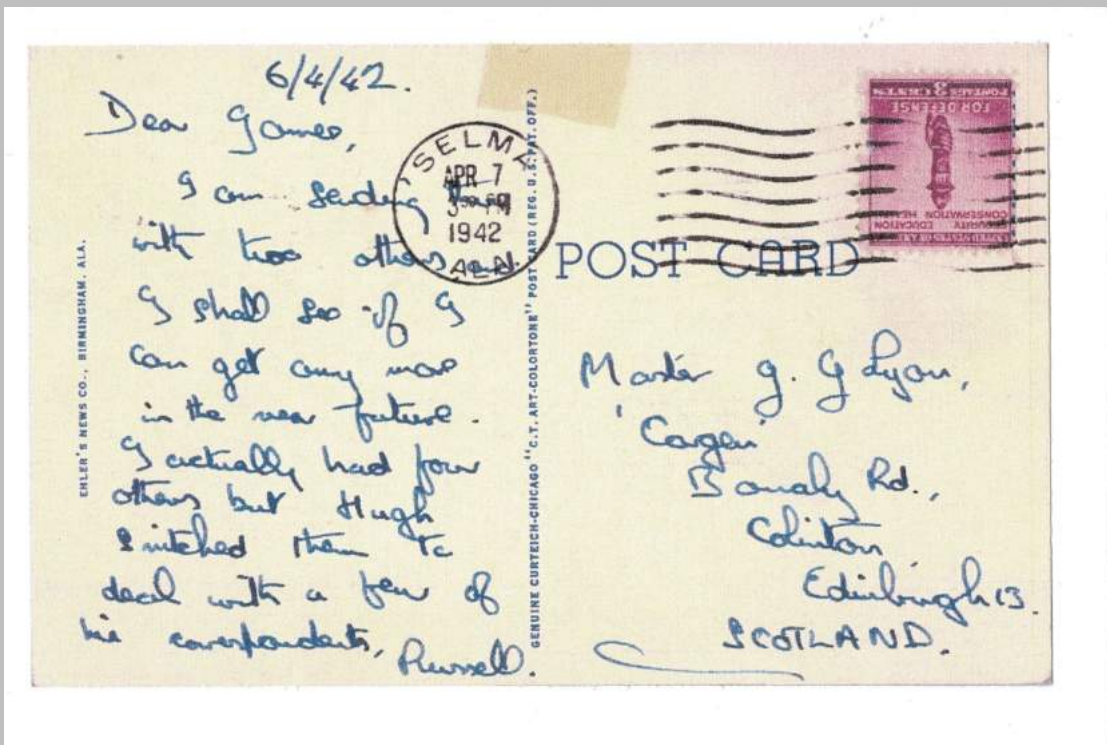
On August 1st, 1952, the Squadron was re-formed in RAF Oldenburg, in Germany, providing for a ground attack role, and was equipped with Vampire FB5s and FB9s. In November 1953, the Squadron received Sabre F4s, with these being replaced in May 1956 with Hunter F4s. On July 15th, 1957, the Squadron was dissolved.

The Squadron Motto is "Ignem mortemque despuimus", ("We spit fire and death"). Nicknamed "The Dragons" the Squadron's insignia shows a Dragon Rampant, with flames issuing from the mouth.

From this period the family has a series of postcards written by Russell and addressed to his younger brother James (Jimmy). These are all sent from the deep south of the United States. They have also passed through the Censor's Office. Some of these show airplanes and aerodromes in the Alabama and Georgia. One group, which would be considered not to be at all politically correct today, show images of Negroes at work in the cotton fields.



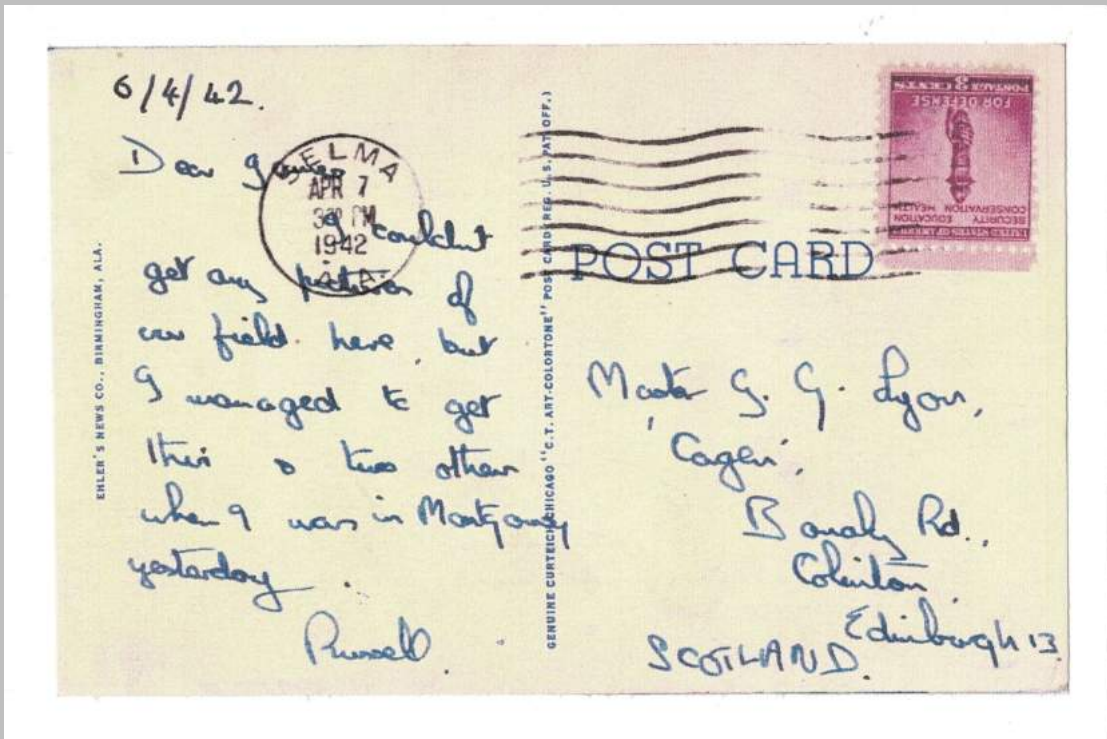
2.03 Front of postcard from Russell Lyon (Advance Trainer preparing for Night Flight, Maxwell Field, Montgomery Ala.) - Lyon family collection.



2.04 –Reverse of postcard from Russell Lyon starting with text “ 6/4/42 - Dear James, I am sending this with.....” - Lyon family collection.



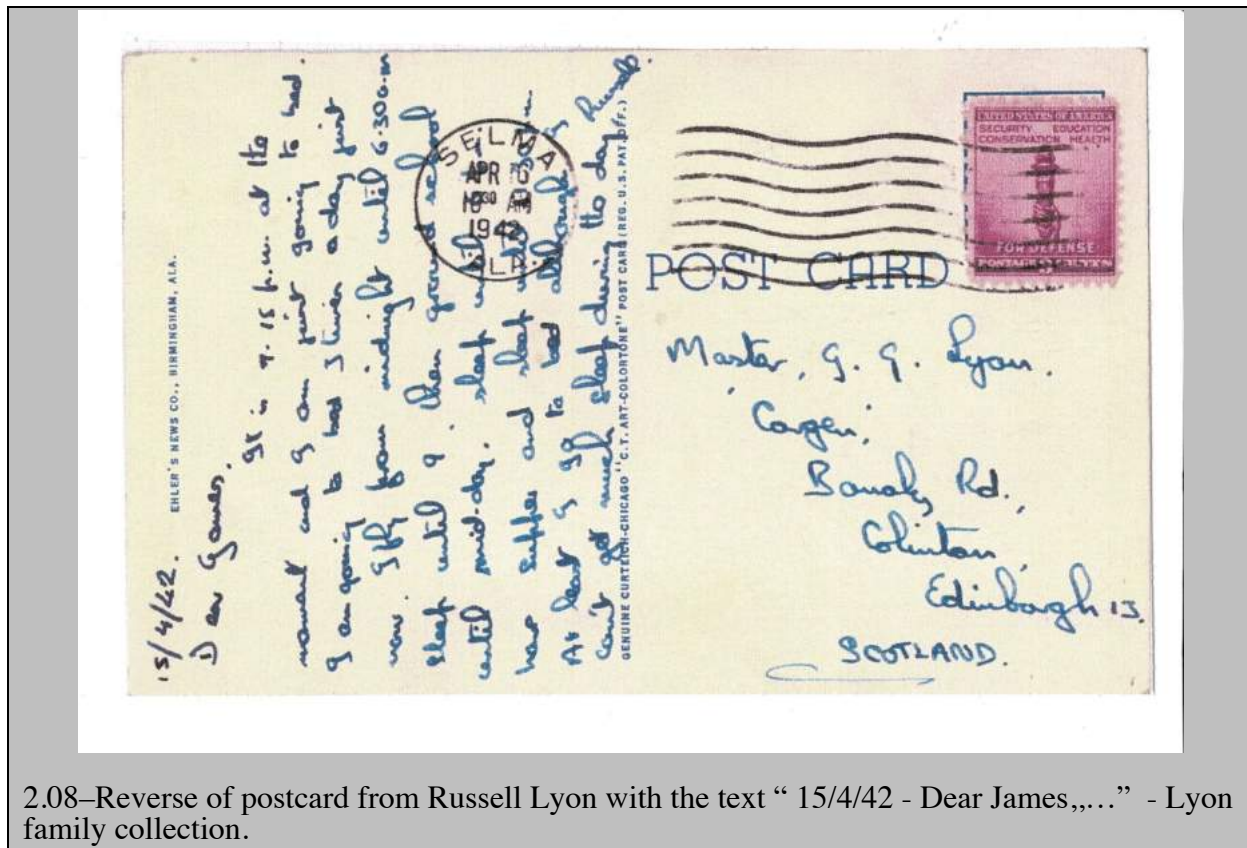
2.05—Front of postcard from Russell Lyon (Advance Trainers Taking Off for Flight, Maxwell Field, Montgomery Ala.) - Lyon family collection.



2.06—Reverse of postcard from Russell Lyon with the text “ 6/4/42 - Dear James, ...” - Lyon family collection.



2.07—Front of postcard from Russell Lyon (Post Operation's Building, Maxwell Field, Montgomery Ala.) - Lyon family collection.



2.08—Reverse of postcard from Russell Lyon with the text “ 15/4/42 - Dear James,....” - Lyon family collection.

Russell records in a cheery fashion what he is able to say without, apparently, raising the Censor’s umbrage.

RAF 234 Squadron performed strongly in the Battle of Britain but by June 1943 it nearly disappeared. However in August 1943 an overseas posting was cancelled and the Squadron was reformed and equipped with some rather old Spitfire MkVBs, often converted from Mk.Is and Mk.IIs. Russell joined the Squadron in September when they were posted to RAF Hutton Cranswick in East Yorkshire, and then to RAF Church Fenton, in North Yorkshire.

By this time Flight Lieutenant ‘Wally’ Walton, a veteran of the Defence of Malta, was Flight Commander and Squadron Leader Phil Arnott had taken command of the Squadron.



2.09 – “A” Flight RAF 234 Squadron, Russell Lyon fifth from right - Collection the late David Ferguson.

In 1944, when stationed at Bolt Head, in the South Hams area of Devon, as part of 10 Group, the officers of 234 Squadron were billeted at The Cottage Hotel in Hope Cove.

RAF Bolt Head

A satellite of RAF Exeter, RAF Bolt Head is a grass airfield located one mile south west of Salcombe, Devon.

Nearby was The Ground Control Interceptor Station, (CGI), RAF Hope Cove where, from 1941, Fighter Operations in the English Channel were directed. The installation and development of this radar station in 1941 was carried out by a young radar technician, Jack Nissenthal.

The Airfield at Bolt Head was notoriously difficult for planes to land as the approach was often from the seaward side and where wind currents on the high and steep cliff face of Bolt Head were unpredictable. Landings in poor weather often resulted in fatal crashes into the cliffs.

It is recounted that “ One night the Airfield was totally non-operational because of thick sea mist. A Squadron of Polish fighters returned from France; two were damaged and all were short of fuel. They asked us to help them to land at Bolt Head. They insisted they could get no further. The runways ran straight from the cliff edges, and in no time 10 had crashed into the cliffs. Two crashed on the runway and one pilot survived. The carnage on the sides of the cliff, found next morning, was appalling, and the words and cries of the pilots over the radio transmitter as they crashed were unforgettable, said Pam McNicol.”

On D-Day, 6th June 1944, the Operations Record Book shows that Russell flew with the squadron before dawn escorting the tug aircraft and gliders that were landing troops behind the invasion beaches in France and then later in the day giving air cover over Gold and

Omaha Beaches. The biggest risk to their lives then was friendly fire, despite the Black and White D-Day wing markings. The story goes that when these were first painted on the 234 Squadron MkVBs it poured with rain and all the paint, being water based, was washed off. A second paint application was then made.



2.10 1944, RAF 234 Squadron members, Russell Lyon back row left – the late George Sparrow family collection.

After D-Day 234 Squadron was posted to RAF Predannack, on the Lizard Peninsula, so that the pilots would have areas of Brittany within combat range. The MkVB Spitfire, has fuel tank capacity of 282 gallons providing for a total flight length of 1135 miles in fair weather. A 20% reserve would be normal for pilots to hold. This would not give pilots much time over a target such as one near Lorient, in southern Brittany. At best pilots might have some ten minutes over a target in the Lorient area before they would have to return to base.

There are two fuel tanks in the Spitfire MkVB. One is located immediately behind the Merlin engine, thus placing it immediately in front of the pilot's cockpit. The second is located just behind the pilot's seat.

Characteristics of the Spitfire MkVb



2.11 - Spitfire MH434 – Wikipédia, auteur Franck Cabrol, Ranger Steve.

Type: Hunter Fighter Monoplane.

Dimensions : wingspan : 36 ft 10 in (11.23 m) ; length 29 ft 11 in (9.12 m) ; height 11 ft 5 in (3.48 m) ; wing area 242.1 sq.ft. (22.48 m²).

Powerplant: 1 x Rolls Royce Merlin 45 supercharge V12 engine, 1,470 hp (1,096 kW) at 9,250 ft (2,819 m).

Performance: Maximum speed: 370 mph 595 Km/h at 20,000 ft 6095 m altitude ; service ceiling: 36,500 ft 11,200 m ; combat range: 470 miles 760 Km.

Armament: 2 x 20 mm Hispano Mk I/II and 4 x .303mm Browning machine guns placed in the wings.

Anon. Press Cutting: “The word “spitfire” originally meant a fiery tempered person, one easily aroused to anger. In the late 1930’s Sir Robert MaClean, chairman of Vickers, the company co-ordinating supplies to the Government, wanted a name for their new fighter plane, which suggested something “venomous” and started with an “s”, the first letter of the manufacturer, Supermarine. Other suggestions were Shrike and Shrew. The plane’s designer, R.J.Mitchell, who died young in 1937, wasn’t impressed: “It’s just the sort of bloody silly name they would choose”.

In the period from May to July 1945 RAF 234 Squadron were posted to RAF Peterhead also known as Longside Airfield. A fuller location of the Squadron’s role and postings is shown below, including two in north east Scotland:

- May-July 1945: Peterhead
- July 1945: Dyce

RAF 234 Squadron Duty

- 8 August 1940: No.10 Group; Fighter Command
- 6 June 1944: No.11 Group; Air Defence of Great Britain; Allied Expeditionary Air Force

Role: 1939-1945: Home based Fighter Squadron

On 1st April 1994 234 Squadron was disbanded.

RAF Predannack

RAF Predannack is on the Lizard Peninsula in Cornwall. It opened in 1941 as a satellite for RAF Portreath. Squadrons posted there initially undertook a defence role for the South West. There were occasional raids by the Luftwaffe, but later the Squadrons stationed at RAF Predannack took on more offensive roles including anti-shipping strikes over the Bay of Biscay. The base was used as a build up location for the European bomber offensive, it was used as an emergency landing location and as a jumping off point for operations in North Africa. As World War 2 receded fighter squadrons were posted there, including RAF 234 Squadron, as the location of the base allowed Spitfires the range to attack Axis Forces as far south as Lorient. Use of the base in the 21st Century continues with use by RAF 626 Volunteer Gliding Squadron Unit and by the Royal Navy School of Flight Deck Operations

for fire drill and crash rescue training on a number of older dummy, or now redundant, aircraft.



2.12 Memorial at the RAF Predannack site

The inscription reads:
RAF Predannack

This memorial honours all ranks and nationalities that serve here during World War II. While casting your eyes on this memorial spare a thought for those who flew from here and failed to return, many have no known grave.

“Like a breath of wind, gone in a fleeting second only the memories remain”
Simply dedicated June 2002

Another “Ben” Lyon

Meanwhile Russell’s brother Stanley, born 1917, was serving in another theatre of WW2.

Stanley had studied engineering at Edinburgh University and he then worked for a year with an engineering consultancy in Edinburgh. In November 1939, two months after the Declaration of War, he joined the Royal Engineers and soon was posted to 128 Company, (Tyne Electrical Engineers) E. and M. Company, Royal Engineers (Territorial), formed in 1940. This Company had a battle dress flash showing a fist holding an arrow against a background of thistles that led to the Company’s nickname – the “Nig-Nogs”.

The Story of the Tyne Electrical Engineers recounts “And why were we called the “Nig-Nogs”? Because on the shoulders of our battle-dress was the Crest of the Tyne Electrical Engineers. “What is that?” asks the blonde bombshell from Scarborough. A Nig-Nog says our Tynesider.

And this nickname then stuck.



2.13 Nig-Nog Crest of 128 Company

In the 128 Company Stanley Lyon acquired the nickname “Ben”, as had his younger brother Russell in the RAF.

Initially working on infrastructure installations around Cairnryan and Gareloch in 1942 the 128 Company joined the PAI force (British Army Persian and Iraq Command) and was posted to Basrah and Shaibah Air Base in Iraq working on provision of water supplies, refrigeration and ice plants, lighting and fan installations in both Iraq and Iran. The Company soon found itself spread between Mosul in the north, Andiminsk and Teherhan in the east, to Basrah and Abadan in the south before its HQ was moved to Baghdad.

Stanley was now appointed a Captain in the 128 Company and in 1943 this unit found itself in Palestine and then Egypt. Amongst their responsibilities was the maintenance of the Western Desert Pipeline. The Story of the Tyne Electrical Engineers records “This line had, since the days of Montgomery at Alamein, supplied water to the garrisons up to Mersah Matruh and beyond; also to the entire Arab population of the Western Desert, who treated it as a gift from Allah, after finding that when struck sharply with a pick in Mosaic fashion it gushed forth water for the gardens, camels and ablutionary activities of the Chosen.”

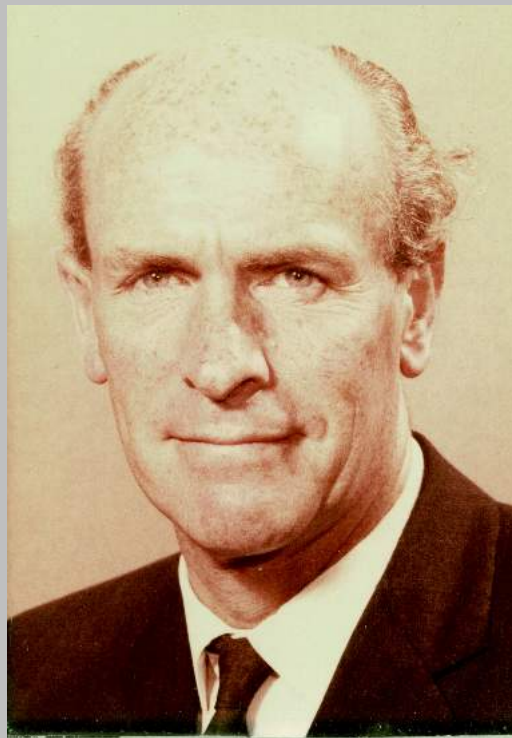
After six years of service with this Company of the Royal Engineers Stanley (“Ben”) Lyon was demobilized in December 1945 with the rank of Major.

In a reference letter written for Stanley Lyon at the end of World War 2 by a former Chaplain to HM Forces, attached to the Royal Engineers, W.G. Humphreys writes “Throughout the six years of service with the same company of Royal Engineers, at home and overseas, he has continuously attracted to himself the admiration of his fellow officers and the esteem of those under his command by reason of a nature that can happily infect men with a spirit of dogged persistence even in the face of untoward circumstances”.

Upon demobilization Stanley joined the Dyestuffs Division of ICI in Huddersfield, Yorkshire as a construction engineer. After two years he went to a similar post at ICI Billingham on Tees-Side. After another spell with ICI Dyestuffs he became Director of Engineering at ICI Wilton south of the River Tees. He then moved back to ICI Billingham as Director of Production. His obituary in The Times of 27th December 1991 records that “the timing of this

was propitious, for that division was wrestling with the problems of building a 300,000 tonne ammonia plant, nearly ten times the size of what had been attempted hitherto. Lyon played a major role in the success of that project, which was to wreak one of the biggest engineering transformations at ICI in the post-war era. This led to the lowering of the price of ammonia and made the company one of the world's leaders in the production of fertilizers. It was a pillar of the group's profits for years to come. The group later used the Billingham plant as a blueprint for similar projects in India, Australia and other countries around the world. In 1968 he was part of a panel of businessmen and industrialists appointed by the government to investigate manpower savings in the non-industrial civil service. Stanley was appointed to the Main Board of ICI in 1968, responsible for organization and services, and then for personnel. He rose to be a Deputy Chairman from 1972 to 1977.

The Times obituary records “ Stanley Lyon was one of that phalanx of able managers on whom ICI depended in the 1960's and 1970's; they laid the foundations for the company's subsequent success in the 1980's. And many millions of people in poorer countries will have been unaware of his unobtrusive contribution to the improvement in their diets because of better and cheaper agricultural products.”



2.14 Russell's elder brother Stanley Lyon 1917-1991

also nicknamed “Ben”.

Chapter 3 Mission of 27th July 1944 – Missing in Action

In the days leading up to 27th July 234 Squadron pilots were involved in a number of missions.

On the afternoon of 22 July 1944 four aircraft went on a reconnaissance mission of the Nostang area east of Lorient, and also attacked locomotives at Hennebont. After the attack one Spitfire, piloted by Flying Officer (F/O) John Coward, was reported as missing.

F/O Coward's Spitfire AD470 crashed near Auray. His body was recovered by the Germans, was identified and was buried at Guidel, in Row 6, Grave 32. The Guidel Communal Cemetery Old Register Record lists the burial of this identified casualty on 24 July 1944.

Flying Officer John Liversedge Coward, RAF 234 Squadron Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve

Son of Tom and Annie Coward of Barnsley, Yorkshire, and husband of Claire Coward of Barnsley

Shot down piloting Spitfire AD470 and crashed near Auray, and killed in action at 16.45hrs.on 22nd July 1944, aged 29.



3.01 CWGC Graves 32 and 33 Row 6 Guidel Communal Cemetery, Richard Lyon

F/O John Coward was buried two days later on 24th July 1944 by the Germans at Guidel in Row 6, Grave No.32 at Guidel Communal Cemetery.
His named CWGC headstone, erected after WW2, over his grave is to the right of this picture.
It carries an Inscription " Until the Day Dawns".
Grave 33 "RAF Officer Known unto God dated 29th July 1944 is to the left.

Auray is some 31 miles South East of Guidel

On a later mission on the same day eight RAF 234 Squadron Spitfires escorted three Mosquitoes of RAF 151 Squadron on a bombing mission of a German Naval HQ at Nostang, east of Lorient, the Spitfires attacking afterwards with cannon and machine gun. On that mission F/Lt. Walton (BM200) and F/O Lyon (BL563) flew as Red 1 and Red 2.

On 23 July F/O Lyon flew with three others on a shipping reconnaissance mission between Morlaix and the Ile de Sein. On 24 July he flew on with seven others on a bombing mission

on rail infrastructure. Unusually the Spitfires had been modified to carry 500 lb bombs for these missions. Later the same day he flew on a shipping patrol mission West of Ushant.

F/O Lyon with seven Spitfires flew a similar mission on the afternoon of 25th July attacking locomotives and vehicle movements in Landivisiau and in the area North of Quimper, Finistère.

The Squadron Record book also notes that the weather over the Channel during this week was not good.

This now de-classified Squadron Record Book shows eight Spitfires flying from RAF Predannack Airfield, on the Lizard peninsula in Cornwall, at 19.00 hours on 27th July 1944.

The eight Spitfires from 234 Squadron were:

- Spitfire BM200 Fl/Lt. W.C. Walton, DFC, Mission Leader
- Spitfire..?.. Fl/Sgt. P.J. Mall
- Spitfire AR343 F/O E.R. Lyon
- Spitfire BL646 Fl/Sgt. L.M. Stockwall
- Spitfire BL810 Fl/Lt. F.E. Dymond
- Spitfire AR364 Fl/Sgt. A. Morgan
- Spitfire BM238 F/O. G.F. Sparrow
- Spitfire W3320 Fl/Sgt. A.C. Buttler

This was a “Rhubarb 323” mission to attack the Luftwaffe base at Kerlin-Bastard and to disrupt the Axis forces that were retreating away from the Allied Forces who had now moved out of the Normandy beaches.

On this mission each Spitfire was also adapted to carry a 500lb bomb.



3.02 The Spitfire Mk. Vb was considerably less suited for dive-bombing mission than its more modern contemporaries equipped with C-type wing and had to be handled with care by the pilot during dive-bombing missions. It could only carry one bomb under the fuselage and its wings were not sufficiently stressed for high-g loads.

[Crown Copyright] and from the Spitfire Site

OPERATIONS RECORD BOOK

No. 234 (Infantry) Squadron

No. of pages used for day

Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	SECRET	Reference to Appendices
Prédannack.	25.7.44		The other four aircraft attacked 20 trucks ten miles N.W. of Quimper. On returning, these aircraft again strafed Landivisiau. Weather was excellent.		
	25.7.44		No Op. today, the weather changed right away but duty flight maintained the necessary state. Pilots went to the photographic section and saw our latest combat films. The ground crew also saw them. F/Lt. C.E. Lettiner and Lt. M. Bernard posted to HQ I.D.G.S.		
	27.7.44		Another Shipping Recon this morning. Aberwrach Coulet De Brest. Aircraft had to return when nil-chemical due to bad weather. Rain from 0 - 5,000 feet.		
			At 19.00 hours, eight aircraft were airborne on Rumberh 303. Squadron crossed in over Plouescat at 5,000 feet above cloud, this broke up in the E. Kerlin Bastard A/F was strafed and stations were seen on Bourges. Several area huts and watch office. No para seen. F/O Lyon was hit over Lorient by heavy flak at 5,000 feet and his aircraft was seen to dive away out of control and crash in flames S.E. of A/D. No parachute was seen. F/Lt. Wallon, P.C. was hit also by h.A. defenses of A/F when at 5,000 feet. He climbed to 5,000 feet and successfully bailed out in Quimperle area. Remaining aircraft returned safely.		
			F/Lt. F.W. Berry posted from 611 Squadron. W/O. R.A. Fairweather posted from effective to Prédannack.		
	25.7.44		Just a Shipping Recon today at 21.05 hours. Lorient - Uhart - Coulet De Brest. No shipping was sighted. Visibility good. Today we have heard that D/Sgt. Fergler had just got back to England from France. Good Show. Also F/Lt. Lettiner has received the D.P.C. Also a very good show. F/Lt. Johnston has taken over as Flight Commander of "A" Flight. F/Sgt. W.A. Livesley posted from No. 54 Squadron.		
	27.7.44		At 07.04 hours twelve aircraft were airborne on Rumberh 128. We crossed the French Coast at Plouescat, located target, village of Serizize, which was supposed to be occupied by German troops. All bombs were dropped on the target at 07.45 hours, but results were not seen due to masses of smoke and dust. 2 aircraft then strafed the target with cannon and machine gun. Power cables, a factory and gun posts were hit in area. No enemy reaction apart from a little flak. All aircraft returned to base by 08.30 hours.		

3.03 RAF 234 Squadron Operations Record Book, 27th July 1944, National Archives, Kew

After crossing the French coast at Plouescat at 6000 ft. altitude under clouds the Spitfires set direction for an attack on the installations at the Luftwaffe base at Kerlin Bastard.

This air base is now known as the Lann-Bihoué, a national base of the Marine and Air Forces of the French Ministry of Defence.

One part of this mission was also to observe to see what aircraft the Luftwaffe might have at this airbase.

Blue Section carried out a strafing attack, with damage being caused to the watchtower, barracks and hangars.

Following this Red Section proceeded a little further down the coast towards Lorient.

It was here that they were bracketed by accurate and heavy flak. At 19.54 hrs. Spitfire AR343 (Red 3) was hit at 6000 ft. by flak from the Quatre-Chemins Flak Battery located south of Plœmeur.

A little later Spitfire BM200 (Red 1) was also hit, by the Flak Battery at Kerlec, when flying at low level.

Red 3, piloted by F/O E.R. Lyon, was severely damaged and was seen to dive away out of control and crash in flames with no parachute seen.

	RM 217	P/Lt. W.M. Johnston		14.00	15.25	
	RM 253	P/Sgt. F.W. Bell		14.00	15.25	
	AR 243	P/O. H.R. Lyon		14.00	15.30	
26.7.44	No Operational Flying					
27.7.44	RM 200	P/Lt. W.C. Walton, ITC	Recon	05.55	06.45	Shipping Recon Ahercrash to Goulet De Brass but section
	W 314	Capt. F.A. Week		05.55	05.45	had to return mid-mission due to bad weather.
	RM 283	P/O. A.F. Frost		05.55	06.45	
	RM 646	Sgt. F.G. Stewart		05.55	06.45	
	RM 200	P/Lt. H.C. Walton, ITC	Sweep	12.00	12.00	Squadron crossed French Coast at Flouacast at 6,000 feet
		P/Sgt. F.F. Bell		12.00	12.50	above cloud. Merlin Bastard A/P was strafed with cannon
	AR 313	P/O. H.R. Lyon		12.00	12.00	and machine gun. P/O. Lyon was hit by heavy flak over
	RM 646	P/Sgt. L.M. Stockwell		12.00	12.50	10,000 ft and aircraft dived down out of control.
	RM 810	P/Lt. F.B. Dymond		12.00	12.50	No parachute seen. P/Lt. Walton hit when flying at 8 feet
	AR 364	P/Sgt. A. Morgan		12.00	12.50	and climbed and bailed out successfully.
	RM 238	P/O. G.P. Sparrow		12.00	12.50	
	W 3120	P/Sgt. A.C. Butler		12.00	12.50	
28.7.44	RM 430	P/O. G.P. Sparrow	Recon	02.45	10.25	Shipping Recon coast to Ahercrash but nothing sighted.
	RM 238	P/Sgt. A. Morgan		02.05	10.25	
	RM 253	P/O. W.E. Barnatt		02.05	10.25	
	W 3330	P/Sgt. A.C. Butler		02.05	10.25	
29.7.44	RM 593	P/Lt. P.L. Amott, ITC	Bombing	07.00	08.25	Squadron crossed French Coast at Elonnacast and located target which
	RM 253	P/O. K.R. Bennett		07.00	08.25	was the village of Sommeze. All bombs dropped on target
	RM 233	P/Sgt. A.C. Butler		07.00	08.25	at 07.46 hours. Two A/C then searched target which cannon

OPERATIONS RECORD BOOK

DETAIL OF NO. 234 SQUADRON

No. 234 (Medium) Reconnaissance Squadron

Form No. 1000 JULY 1944

SECRET

3.04 RAF 234 Squadron Operations Record Book, 27th July 1944, National Archives, Kew

Red 1 managed to retain control long enough and to climb to a height where Walton was able to parachute out.

He landed safely at Kerdanet, near Quimperlé, and Spitfire BM200 crashed to the ground in a fireball at Rédéné. Whilst at liberty for a short while, and being helped by the local resistance, Walton was captured by the Germans at around 21.00 hrs. He was a Prisoner of War for the remainder of World War II.

Formblatt 1

J

Dienst-Luft, Weibler
Eingang 1. CAAG 1944
Zentralkart. u. Meldes.

Angaben über Gefangennahme von feindlichen Luft-
waffenangehörigen.

Dienststelle: Fliegerhorstkommandeur N. (V) 226/XII
Ort: Lorient (Fliegerhorst)
Zeit: 27. Juli 1944

Beitrag: Abbruch einer britischen Flugzeug (Spitfire)
Wiederfindung bei Ros - Spinas Strasse Lorient-Quimperle
am 27.7.44 um 21,00 Uhr.

Name: W. I. T. O. N
Vorname: W i l l i a m
Dienstgrad: Fl.Lt.
Nr. der Erkennungsmarke: 119422 (nach seinen Angaben die Marke
verloren, wurde in Zivil gefangen)
Verbleib: gefangen
Ort und Zeit der Gefangennahme: am 27.7.44 21,00 Uhr
B.zeichnung des Lazaretts: Strasse Lorient-Quimperle
Ort und Zeit der Beisetzung: _____
(Ortsbeilage evtl. nachzuliefern)

Probst
Hauptmann und Offz.z.b.V.

Vorteile:

Auswertestelle West.
FLGK. Wfr. Ia
Astab Nord.
Kdo. Fl. II. B. 8/XII (level.
Entwurf.
Gerang. Varn. St. Chartres.

CAPTURE OF F. LT. W. WALTON
(SPITFIRE BM 200) AT 21.00 HRS
ON 27TH JULY 1944

3.05 German record of the capture of Fl.Lt. W. Walton on 27.7.44 at 21.00hrs

The crash site location of Spitfire BM200 was found and excavated in 2004 by local French enthusiasts. The recovered and broken Spitfire BM200 Rolls-Royce Merlin engine was donated to the Salle des traditions (Musée) at the Base Aéronavale de Lann-Bihoué where it has been cleaned by members of the French air and naval veterans association and has been put on display in the Salle des Expositions.

Six Spitfires returned to base at RAF Predannack at 20.50 hours.

Anne Shelton and Glenn Miller



3.06 Anne Shelton CD Cover, Thank You Captain Miller, - Kelly Richards, niece of Anne Shelton

As the remaining six 234 Squadron pilots landed safely back at RAF Predannack at 20.00hrs on 27th July 1944 they will have retired exhausted to their billets, and no doubt contemplating the fate of their two fellow pilots who had not returned. Live on the radio, moments after their return, they would have heard Anne Shelton singing a 30 minute broadcast (in which Anne was the guest artist) of The American Band of the Supreme Allied Command under the direction of Captain Glenn Miller. A little later in December 1944 Glenn Miller was the one for whom the luck ran out as his plane, a C-64 Norseman, went missing over the English Channel on a flight to Versailles. Anne Shelton was invited to accompany Glenn Miller but due to other commitments Anne declined the invitation.

A CD has been made from a recording of the 30minute broadcast of 27th July 1944, with the following tracks:

Tracks 1-7- The American Band of the Supreme Allied Command with Capt. Miller

Tracks 8-18 all by Anne Shelton

Track 8 Don't Misunderstand

Track 9 I fall in love with you every day

Track 10 Time may Change

Track 11 Take off the Coat

Track 12 Siberia

Track 13 I ain't got Nobody

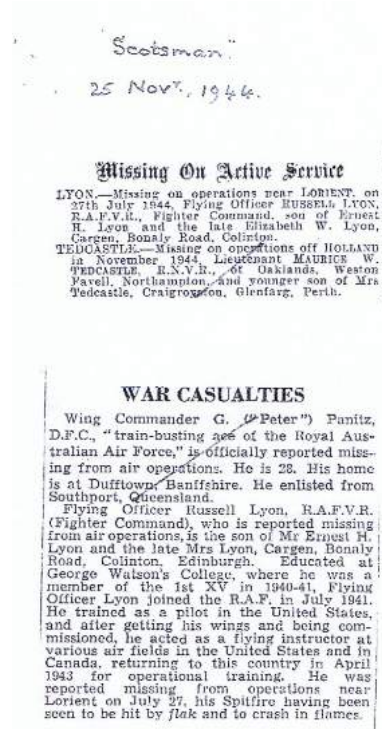
Track 14 Easter Parade (from 1944 broadcast with Bing Crosby)

Track 15 If there are Stars in my Eyes (Jo Shelton)

Track 16 Village of St. Bernardette

Track 17 Cross over the Bridge

Within the family papers are press cuttings from Scottish newspapers announcing Russell's fate. The cuttings indicated that Russell's Spitfire was seen to have been shot down crashing in flames near Plœmeur, Lorient, Brittany, in Western France. One cutting of 25th November 1944 in The Scotsman reports him as missing in action and then the next, of 30th June 1945, reports that he was now officially presumed killed.



3.07 Scottish Press Cuttings 1944, Lyon family collection

In the immediate post war era Russell's name was recorded on the Runnymede Memorial amongst the 20,400 Royal Air Force personnel who fell in combat in Europe and the Atlantic and who have no known grave. His name is also on the WW2 War Memorial in Colinton Parish Church Cemetery in Edinburgh, and his name is memorized on the gravestone nearby over his mother Elizabeth's grave, his mother having pre-deceased him in 1935.



3.08 Lyon family grave, Colinton, Edinburgh before 1985, Lyon family collection

The War Memorial in Colinton Parish Church Cemetery in Edinburgh

Ernest Russell Lyon is remembered on this memorial, located near to his family home.



3.09 WW2 War Memorial in Colinton Parish Church Cemetery in Edinburgh – Photo Andrew Paterson

Runnymede Memorial

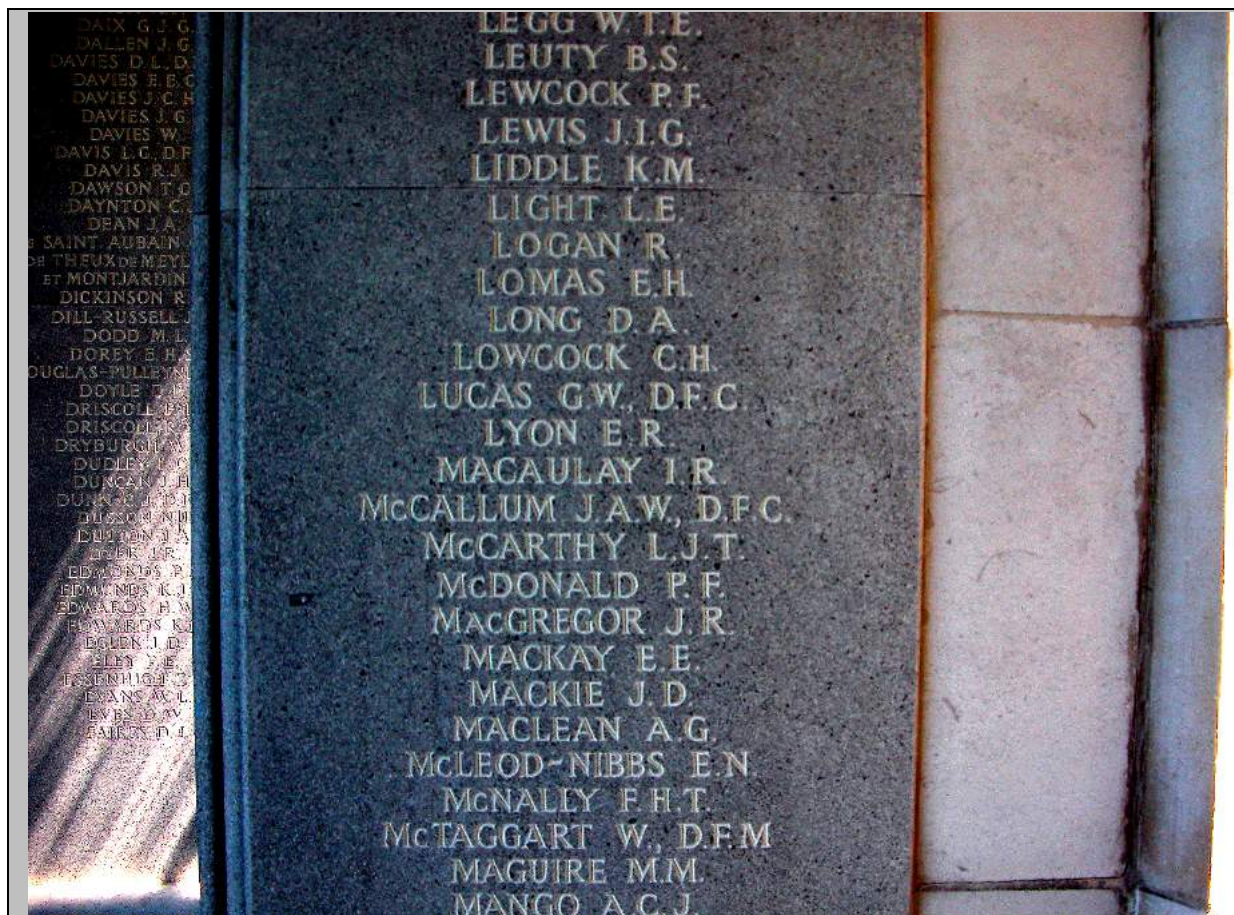
Also known as the Air Forces Memorial, it is located near Egham, Surrey, on high ground overlooking the Runnymede meadows on the south side of the River Thames, where the Magna Carta was sealed by King John on 15th June 1215.

The Memorial was opened on 17th October 1953 by HM Queen Elizabeth II, 4 months after her Coronation.

The Memorial commemorates some 20,456 Air Force men and women from the British Empire who lost their lives in WW2 and who have no known grave.

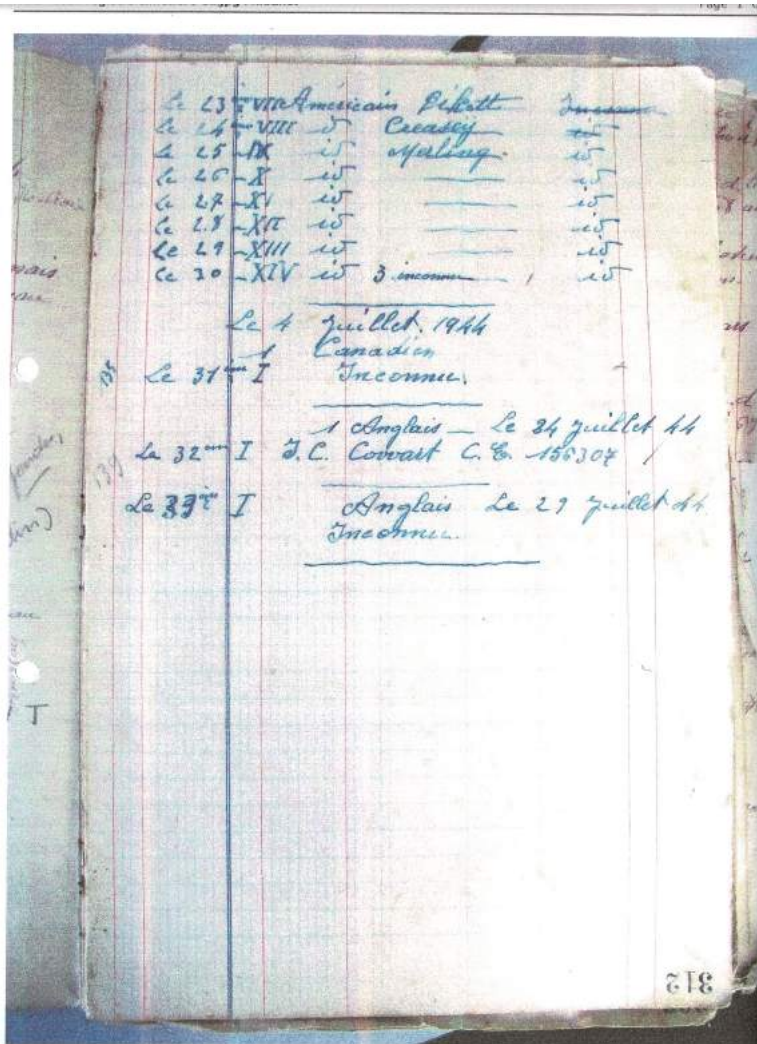


3.10 Runnymede Memorial, photo Richard Lyon



3.11 Runnymede Memorial commemorating Missing Air Forces personnel with no known grave, E.R. Lyon is remembered on this memorial. Photo Richard Lyon

On Saturday 29 July 1944 the remains of an "Inconnu" English Airman were buried by the German Military Forces in Grave No. 33 in Row 6 at Guidel Cemetery, just a few kilometres north west of the crash site of Spitfire AR343. A witness statement made by the farmer on whose land the Spitfire had crashed records (1) that one of the French-speaking Germans clearing the crash site told him that the body of the pilot had been taken to Guidel to be buried and (2) that on a visit to Guidel two days after the crash on his land the farmer spoke with the gravedigger of Guidel Cemetery who said that a grave was ready and he was going to bury a pilot.



3.12 Guidel Communal Cemetery record book, page shows burial of F/O John Coward on 24th July 1944 and "Anglais Inconnu" on 29th July 1944 Photo J.Y.Le Lan

It is poignant now to note that on 20th July 1944, a few days before the 27th July, there was an attempt to assassinate the Fuhrer, Adolf Hitler, at the Wolf's Lair Field Headquarters in East Prussia.

The code name of the conspirators assassination attempt was Operation Valkyrie. The attempt was led by Claus von Stauffenberg. Had it succeeded one wonders today how soon a negotiated peace would have followed with the consequent further saving of many innocent lives.

Posthumously the following medals were awarded to Ernest Russell Lyon and were sent by the Air Ministry to his father:

- 1939-1945 Star
- [Air Crew Europe Star](#) (Atlantic or France and Germany)
- Defence Medal (Silver laurel leaves (King's Commendation for brave conduct. Civil))
War Medal 1939-45 (Oak leaf)

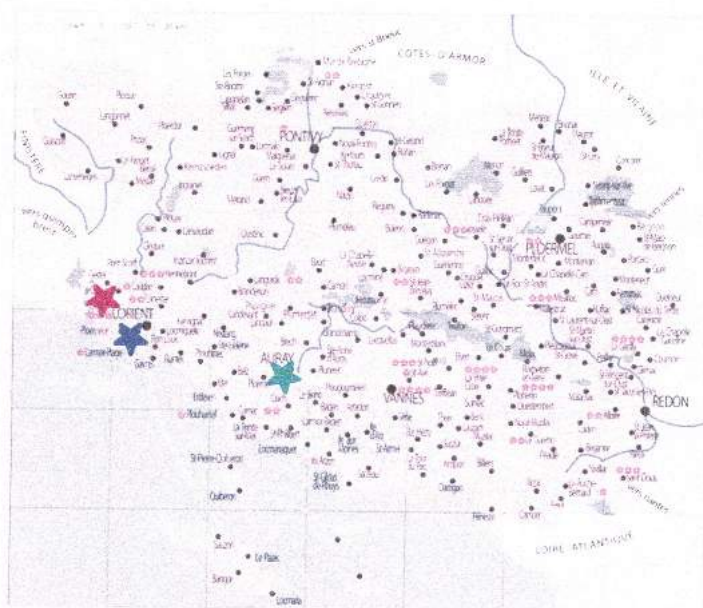


3.13 Medals awarded posthumously to Russell Lyon, photo Richard Lyon

Left to Right:1939-45 Star; Air Crew Europe Star; Defence Medal; War Medal 1939-45.



BRITTANY



THE MORBIHAN DEPARTMENT

- 1 ★ Guidel Cemetery
- 2 ★ Crash site at Kercaves, 27.7.1944, F/O Lyon, Spitfire AR343
Possible Burial " Anglais Inconnu in Row 6 Grave 33 at Guidel on 29th July 1944
- 3 ★ Crash site at Auray, 22.7.1944, F/O Coward, Spitfire, Burial Row 6 Grave 32 at Guidel on 24th July 1944

3.14 Map of Brittany with Guidel, Kercaves and Auray marked