



# "STICKY FINGERS"

## IPMS HORNCHURCH - NEWSLETTER

### Ken's "Korner"

Greetings fellow modellers

### "Situation Vacant"

The May meeting brings the Annual General Meeting round once again. As the caption says a vacancy will occur, as I have decided not to seek re-election to the small committee as Secretary of the IPMS Hornchurch Branch. I have enjoyed my period in office, but now feel it is time to allow new blood to have a bash.

I am sure everybody enjoyed a most successful lecture and slide show by the Chiltern group, who came to see us at the March meeting. They certainly know their subject, and kept everybody interested in a subject near very much to our hobby. Most people that are invited to speak to us on any chosen subject allow time to answer questions at the end of their talks, so it was a great pity when they are interrupted in the middle of a talk with controversial questions. For those people who have lectured, to any amount of people at whatever level it might be, will know that these interruptions are the quickest way to put a person off their train of thought. So I would like to request that in future, please let the speaker have the floor, and ask questions at the end. Thankyou. I have written a letter to the people who came and gave us the talk, to thank them for their efforts, and how much we appreciated it. Also apologising for the untimely interruptions by a certain member of our club and hoped it didn't offend them in any way.

I have recently been scanning the Web for relevant items on aircraft etc and have discovered that there is a "Skyhawk Association" in the USA. There is a fair amount of information and details available on the A-4 and I shall be going back to this on a very frequent basis: - watch this space.

My next door neighbour was visiting our local hospital and discovered in the waiting room a pile of handouts of 3 page news letters called "Contact" on a windowsill. Knowing my interest in these topics he picked them up for me. I propose to introduce them a few pages at a time to "Sticky Fingers".

It would be nice to see a few more members of the club contribute to the contents of our newsletter. At present it is down to Peter Bagshaw, Ricky Prager, Alan Wright and myself. I am sure there is much more talent out there somewhere just waiting to be tapped. Let's face it Ted Taylor writes for one of the model magazines, Alan Carr & Peter Quinn put out a newsletter together for their SIG. So chaps give us all a dig out and put a few lines together and let Peter Bagshaw have them.

Well Southern Expo has been and gone for another year; it was nice to see all the usual faces helping Wally to set up on the Friday evening. There was some panic for a little while when nobody seemed to know where the table covering was for our stand, until Ian Brown went home and found it in his garage. Thank you Ian for going back for it.

Our stand had the usual display and variety of models that seems to be our speciality, it's a pity we couldn't have a little more room so that a couple of club members could be actually modelling. I am sure all members would like to thank Sue, Wally's wife, for providing the refreshments on



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Friday evening, this was most appreciated. Last but not least, congratulations to Wally for going to the trouble to put on the show in the first place.

### Article from the Daily Mail newspaper

#### QUESTION

What has

become of the Fairey Gannet that stood patiently with its wings folded in a back garden beside the Cirencester bypass for many years?

This aircraft was built at the Fairey factory at Hayes, Middlesex, as a Mk4 Gannet, delivered to the Royal Navy on January 15, 1957. It served with 814 Squadron as No. XA459 aboard the aircraft carrier HMS Eagle.



Fairey good show: Gannet 768's been restored to its former glory

It retired from service to become a ground instruction airframe at Lee-on-the-Solent in Hampshire, and later at the School of Aircraft Handling in Culdrose, Cornwall.

In the late Seventies, the aircraft was sold to the Wales Air Museum at Rhoose, near Cardiff, and it was put on display with the museum's other two Gannets.

To raise funds, the museum sold the Gannet to vehicle dealer Gordon Godsell who moved it to his home on the eastern bypass near Cirencester, where it stood for nine years.

His planned restoration never took place and he sold the aircraft to enthusiasts Jeremy Snowball and Denis Woodgates who moved it to a site near Membury, Devon, last year, intending to restore it to its former glory.

Barry Gregory, Bristol.

Another Gannet is stationed in the grounds of Kelsterton College, between Connah's Quay and Flint in North Wales.

I first came across this type of aircraft during the war when I was working on the MKV Fairey Barracuda at Fairey Aviation in Stockport. I ventured into the experimental department and was shooed out in seconds, but not, before I'd noticed a very bulbous, fuselage with twin propellers and tricycle undercarriage.

The props were driven by twin-jet turbine Mamba engines and this was one of the first aircraft to be turbine propelled. Gannet 768 has recently been repainted in the correct squadron colours and markings and is in fine condition.

J. Williams

*Ken*



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### Peter's Prattlings

I, for one, would like to thank Ken for his time as Branch Secretary. It is a difficult juggling act to perform and I think Ken has been a successful secretary for our club. I do not intend to put myself forward for the vacancy despite some gentle arm twisting by some members of the club, but would be more than happy to stand again for my current post as Deputy and compiler of the monthly magazine "Sticky Fingers".

News this month from the Net is that Tamiya are branching out into 1/72<sup>nd</sup> scale in what could be a big way. Apparently all their recently released 1/48<sup>th</sup> tooling will be rescaled. They have recently issued the F4-D Skyray and the Republic F-84 is due soon. A picture (but not a brilliant one alas) shows this model.



Following on from last month's emoticons there are other shortcuts, which have sprung up in use when conversing over the Net. These shortcuts are abbreviations of frequent phrases used in conversation in the same vein as TLC (Tender Loving Care).

AFAIK	As Far As I Know
IIRC	If I Remember Correctly
IMHO	In My Honest Opinion
OOTB	Out Of The Box

More to follow as I come across them. TTFN

*Peter*



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### Ricky's Ramblings

#### HEAVENLY SURPRISE

In the early days of jet planes, back in the 1950's, the skies above 25,000 feet were uncrowded. The few bombers and fighters who flew that high seldom had to worry about other traffic. What everyone today now accepts as normal high altitude flying, for commercial jetliners and numerous military aircraft, used to be unique and special.

It was the summer of 1957 when the 92nd Bomb Wing at Fairchild AFB, Washington got its first brand new B-52D's. Each of the three squadrons (325th, 326th and 327th Bomb Squadrons) had but one aeroplane for months, though they'd eventually get 15 per unit. Newly trained flight crews took turns flying those enormous shiny birds. That was an exciting and fascinating time. The last of the 92nd's old B-36's were gone and learning the all-jet Stratofortress was a real challenge. Cruising at 40,000 or even 50,000 feet was new territory, and how wondrous it was. There in the wild blue yonder, above the clouds, the weather and most other traffic, you could see forever. The deep blue sky was almost unreal, unlike the murk at lower altitudes. Zipping along at 600 miles per hour, with the ground slipping along below at more than eight miles per minute, the sensation was almost ethereal. And looking up at the stars from way up there invoked even more amazement. Those fortunate astronauts later saw even more, of course.

One of the most unique and interesting phenomena experienced back then, in the late 50's, was watching the sunrise in the west from 45,000 feet. One aircraft returning to its Washington State air base from Massachusetts, cruising across Canada's prairies, well above 50 degrees north latitude, experienced an exciting phenomenon. It was after sunset when it took off, but the farther north and westward it flew, the brighter the sky gradually became. Soon the crew noticed the sun rise ahead of them, from the west. That was weird, for at that latitude and at that speed, it was over-taking the setting sun.

On other flights, up and down the West Coast of Oregon and Washington, other phenomena of interest were discovered. In the early evening, while watching the sun set over the Pacific, it was found that high altitude twilight occurred almost an hour later than for those on the ground. It was pitch black below us, but still light up in the heavens. That was quite something for those who'd begun flying days in propeller-driven planes seldom going above 15,000 feet. It's a wholly different experience at 40,000 feet and higher.

People today think nothing of the things that were wondrous just 40 years ago. Now the big jetliners routinely fly above 35,000 feet. It's no longer so unique or special to the hundreds of thousands of airline passengers. Most people don't even think about the environment that's just inches away, outside the window. So much now is taken for granted.

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There are models, and then again there are references, but never the twain shall meet.

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## IPMS HORNCHURCH - NEWSLETTER

### GREAT MOMENTS IN ARMOUR HISTORY (part 1)

#### The A-40T Krylia Tank

Consider the truly great failures of military vehicle design: the major mistakes that stand as cautionary signposts on the road to more refined mature designs. These failures should serve to guide, and to admonish generals and engineers who have ever, even briefly, chosen to flirt with truly loony solutions to very real problems.

Take, for example, the problem of how to provide armour support for paratroops. In the 1930's the Soviet Air Force and Army were very keen on airborne operations, and also very keen on tanks. Like peanut butter and chocolate, they seemed an ideal subject for joining together. The initial attempts revolved around strapping T-27 tankettes under the bellies of TB-3 bombers and flying the little tankettes to their destination. In combat, it was presumed, paratroops would land and release their tracked cargoes for use in support of the paratroops. This, at least in theory, was a workable plan.

In 1935 a series of tests was carried out to determine the practicality of air dropping tanks, *without the use of parachutes*, into shallow bodies of water. (Gives a whole new meaning to the word "splashdown," doesn't it?) During the 1940 Soviet invasion of Romanian Bessarabia it is reported that low, slow-flying TB-3 bombers actually dropped unmanned light tanks to airborne troops on the ground. Waiting on the ground while some one in a plane dropped a tank near --if not actually on --- their position would tend to keep troops at an extremely high state of alertness. Alertness bordering on paranoia.

In 1942, the Soviet Air Force assigned O. Antonov, the famous aircraft engineer, the intriguing task of designing a glider, capable of carrying tanks, for use in airborne operations. Antonov, in a momentary lapse of good judgement, decided to take a unique approach to the problem. Rather than designing a glider that carried a tank, Antonov set to work trying to convert a tank into a glider. Using a T-60 light tank as his starting point, Antonov designed a biplane wing, forked tail assembly and detachable Mounting cradle which would serve to (hopefully) convert the tank into a temporary glider. This truly strange Hermaphrodite was type classified as the A-40T Krylia Tank (Flying Tank). Sadly, the prototype of this design failed in trials. Even with it's clutch in neutral, the tank's tracked suspension provided too much resistance during the towed run to take off. The project was cancelled and Antonov went back to more conventional aircraft designs.

As with most failed projects, we are left with tantalising questions. What would the flight characteristics of the A-40T have been? (You can imagine the pilots flight notes: "It flies like a tank!") Whom would they have found to fly it? (Of course, Stalin's secret police had a way of encouraging people to do, and say, the dandiest things.) How would it have faired in combat? Envision an embattled German commander, his forces already hotly engaged by Soviet paratroops, confronted by the spectacle of dozens of lumbering TB-3 bombers towing A-40T tanks. The shock value of such a sight might indeed have been enough to turn the tide of battle. Either that, or the German commander would have merely turned to his artillery officer and told him to open up with the 88 mm guns. Then the only question would have been, "*Herr General*, Shall we use anti-aircraft rounds, or anti-tank?"



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### GREAT MOMENTS IN ARMOUR HISTORY (part 2 )

#### The Atomic Tank

The heady decade of the 1950's! It brought America rock 'n roll, tail fins on cars and some very odd ideas about the utility of nuclear power on the Battlefield. This was the period in time when it seemed that the Pentagon had established a Department of Really Bad Ideas for Use of Atomic Power. Nuclear powered aircraft were actively contemplated. Nuclear powered ships and submarines were already in the works. The Army, not wishing to be left out, investigated the uses of nuclear artillery. "Atomic", was the word of the day, whether it was on the battlefield, or the name of a humble household vacuum cleaner.

The Cold War was in its first, frosty stages when, in April 1952, the first Operation Question Mark conference was held at Detroit Arsenal. The Question Mark conferences were intended to provide advanced planning for future American armoured vehicles. With vast fleets of Soviet tanks already deployed in Europe. and new Soviet designs coming out of their factories. America was anxious to get its engineers, Manufacturers and the U.S. Army working together to counteract Soviet armoured superiority.

The next two Question Mark conferences, held in 1952 and 1953, dwelled on self -propelled guns and on the need for heavy tank designs to counteract the threat of the Soviet JS4 series. A bewildering series of tank designs were generated, most armed with a potent 120 mm gun, and boasting heavily sloped cast armour. It was at Question Mark 111 that the possibility of a nuclear powered tank was first raised.

Designated TV-1, the tank was estimated to weigh 70 tons, armed with a 105-mm gun and armoured with 14 inches of cast front hull and turret armour. It's nuclear powered, open air, Gas turbine would have operated at full load for some 500 hours before needing to refuel.

Blessedly, the TV-1 never got out of the study phase, but the August 1955 Question Mark IV conference hinted that a 50 ton atomic tank, designated the R32, was possible. The R32 would have a 4000-mile cruising range, but only 4.8 inches of armour. Perhaps the idea of a lightly armoured atomic pile wandering around the battlefield caused the conference to reconsider, or perhaps it was the sheer cost of such a weapons system, in either case the R32 was heard of no more. Thereafter, interest in atomic tanks seems to have dwindled - though as late as 1959, studies were being made, on the practicality of mounting a nuclear power plant in a turretless M-103 heavy tank chassis.

The atomic tank idea was a remarkably dumb idea that had a limited life. With the reactor technology of the time, and the limited weight of radiation shielding, crews would have had to be rotated frequently in order to avoid radiation exposure. In combat, even lightly damaged tanks could have proved a major health hazard to friendly infantry support. More important, a damaged atomic tank could have "brewed up" in a truly spectacular fashion, rendering large portions of the battlefield radioactive.

*Thanks to Southern Maine IPMS America site.*

*Ricky*



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### Wrighty's References

This month it is the turn of the USAAF, largely as a result of a recent request, this month's article is a detailed briefing as to the tactical organisation of that service.

As you have seen in previous issues we have covered

- a detailed checklist for an in depth study of the FAA
- a detailed full history of the Brewster Buffalo in RAF service
- RAF code letters
- An insight into the Flying Tigers (Mercenary Group)
- A look at the Zerstorers Ju-88s of V/KG 40

And now a breakdown of USAAF organisation of their Air Forces.

Apart from some kind comments from Ken & Ricky in "Sticky Fingers" and a couple of comments from others that they liked an article, I am really playing in the dark to the silent majority.

What do you like? What would you like to see? Which of the above did you like best?

I have tried to bring you things that are not available elsewhere or would be difficult to obtain. Some of the suggestions for future articles that I have in mind are

### **The History of the Luftwaffe Night Fighter Force (1939-45)**

This is the full story of all NJG's, where they were fought, where they were based, how they were formed, mainly by aircraft used and Gruppen involved. This would be in 3 parts due to the size.

### **Focke Wulf FW-190 in Schalt Groups**

The Schaltgeswader (Ground Attack) SG1 etc. gets very little coverage. How many of these groups were there? How did they evolve and why were many FW-190s allocated to them when the Defence of the Reich had first call for the Luftwaffe's top fighter?

### **Junkers Ju-87 Stuka Tactical History**

Have you ever noticed in Luftwaffe books all those pre war Stuka Geschwader like St/G 160, 165, 186 etc, what happened to them? They didn't appear in W.W.II did they? It's quite interesting to see who became what and when it happened.

### **Staffel Colours in the Battle of Britain**

In 1940 the whole of the Jagdwaffe were in France facing England, record books would have us believe that Staffel colours were WHITE, RED & YELLOW. Command markings took only a few forms (double chevrons etc). Not So! An in depth look at each fighter JG and their colours.

### **Decals of the Luftwaffe**

Perhaps you're a model only man, do you know of the multitude of fighter and some bomber decals on the market and the colour schemes of the individual aircraft. I can give you unit, colour schemes on a total of 10 foolscap pages of individual aircraft and then decal manufacturers.



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### **RAF Operational Training Units**

Have you every wondered how many training units there were? Obviously Fighter and Bomber, but what about others? Coastal? Army Recon? It's a story that's never been published, but a very interesting one. All the units, their allocated aircraft and establishment, codes allocated, their bases and purpose. It will also cover a lot of those airfields that never had an operational Squadron (e.g. Catfoss). Again due to size about 4 parts may be necessary.

### **RAF Heavy Conversion Units**

What were they, you may ask? Well you can't just step into a heavy bomber and set off for Germany. Originally Bomber squadrons had their own conversion units, but these were expanded into HCU's with their own bases, aircraft, code letters, no. 1651 onwards. I have the full details of 30+ units that existed by 1944/45. Note: no Heavy Bomber crews were trained by OTUs.

### **USAAF Squadron Codes of 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> AF.**

On arrival in England all USAAF 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> AF Squadrons were allocated a code from the British RAF units. Do you know them all? Do you want to know them? Fighter, bomber, PRU, troop carriers etc. Wrighty "CAN DO" to borrow a USAAF motto. "CAN DO" – the motto of 305<sup>th</sup> (H) Bombardment Group USAAF based at Grafton Underwood.

### **Japanese Colours etc**

I had planned a partial coverage of markings, fleet unit identifiers etc, but a new series has started in Scale Aviation Modeller on this subject. I have asked Peter to collect these articles (in a 6 part series). Then maybe we can add comments to them from the Japanese marking specials by Don Thorpe for JNAF & JAAF, currently the best books I know on the subject.

### **Coastal Command Aircraft & Units**

Coastal operated long range reconnaissance, short range & torpedo bomber units, fighter units and flying boat units, each having a large number of squadrons. These could be looked at, with what aircraft they used, their bases, code letters etc, again a part for each section (4 parts).



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Please tick the 5 you would most like to see

	The History of the Luftwaffe Night Fighter Force (1939-45)	
	Focke Wulf FW-190 in Schalt Groups	
	Junkers Ju-87 Stuka Tactical History	
	Staffel Colours in the Battle of Britain	
	Decals of the Luftwaffe	
	RAF Operational Training Units	
	RAF Heavy Conversion Units	
	USAAF Squadron Codes of 8 <sup>th</sup> & 9 <sup>th</sup> AF.	
	Japanese Colours etc	
	Coastal Command Aircraft & Units	

Could you also rate in order of preference 1 being the most preferred, to 6 the least

Fleet Air Arm Study	
Buffalo in RAF Service	
RAF Codes '39 & after	
Flying Tigers	
Ju-88s of V/KG 40	
US Air Forces in W.W.II	

### My Request to You

We have a number of U.S. Navy "buffs" in our midst; I would like to see an article on W.W.II U.S. Navy tail markings and carriers they refer to etc. How about it lads?

### My Thanks

May I take this opportunity to thank Peter Bagshaw for the excellent work on computer to present my articles in a very professional style, encompassing the drawings etc within the text makes the presentation really good, from the basic sketches and notes I supply to him.



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### USAAF Air Forces in W.W.II

Tactically the USAAF formed Air Forces for the various theatres of operation in which it was engaged operationally, Air Forces 1, 2, 3, 4 & 6 were home based training organisations and do not form part of this particular survey.

#### **Fifth Air Force**

Formed in September 1942 with 3 fighter and 5 bomber groups, which by August 1945 had grown to 6 fighter, 9 bomber, 2 PRU, 1 night fighter and 5 transport groups.

Its area of operations was the Pacific area covering Borneo, the Philippines, New Guinea, New Britain, etc.

#### **Seventh Air Force**

Formerly the Hawaiian Air Force and largely destroyed at Pearl Harbour the 7<sup>th</sup> AF was formed from the remnants in February 1942, the first AF to become combat operational. Starting with only 2 fighter and 2 bomber groups, the seventh was built up from odd squadrons, but rarely had more than 4 fighter and 5 bomber groups. Some of its units were transferred to the 13<sup>th</sup> AF as the war progressed across the Pacific. Based largely on Hawaii the changing battle scene saw a number of units pass through this AF.

#### **Eight Air Force**

It is assumed that members are fully conversant with this outfit!

#### **Ninth Air Force**

A group of B-24 Liberators on their way to China, were held at their Middle East stopping point and thus the 9<sup>th</sup> AF began life in the Western Desert. From June 1942 to January 1943 this AF was operating in Tunisia, Sicily and Italy. The area was later the province of the 12<sup>th</sup> AF.

In October 1943 a new 9<sup>th</sup> AF began operating from England with fighters, medium bombers and troop carrier units. 18 fighter, 15 troop carrier, 11 medium bomber, carried the war to Fortress Europe until surrender in May 1945.

#### **Tenth Air Force**

The 10<sup>th</sup> AF was activated in early 1942 to serve in India and China, with only 1 group from April 1942 and 1 fighter group from July by the end of the year. Even in 1943 the build up was slow, only 2 new groups joining, but in 1944 transfers from the 12<sup>th</sup> AF whose job was now done helped build this force. The Combat Cargo Groups and Air Commandos were added in 1944, operations covered the CBI theatre.

#### **Eleventh Air Force**

When Japan invaded the Aleutian Islands in 1942, the 11<sup>th</sup> AF was formed as a composite group to operate in this area off Alaska. The war they carried out was as much against the elements of the weather as the Japanese, who eventually abandoned the Islands, the force was then rundown.

#### **Twelfth Air Force**

Activated in August 1942 for Operation Torch (November 1942) the 12<sup>th</sup> AF was equipped by January 1942 with 8 fighter groups, 2 heavy and 6 medium bomber groups, 2 reconnaissance groups and 3 troop carrier units, successfully driving the Axis out of Tunisia and back across the Mediterranean. When the new 15<sup>th</sup> AF was formed over a dozen of the 12<sup>th</sup>'s groups were



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transferred to it. Also other units went to the Pacific to bolster AFs out there. 7 fighter, 6 bomber, 1 reconnaissance and 3 troop carriers were still on hand at the war's end in May 1945.

### **Thirteenth Air Force**

In 1942 a few units took up station in the South Pacific theatre in the area below the equator and to the east of Australia and New Guinea, including New Zealand, Fiji etc. Only a few squadrons of fighters and bombers were available, by the end of 1942 only 2 groups of bombers were on hand. Never very large 2 fighter, 4 bomber, 1 reconnaissance and 1 troop carrier at its zenith, which had reduced to 7 groups by August 1945 at the wars end.

### **Fourteenth Air Force**

Formed in March 1943 to carry on the work of the AVG (Flying Tigers) the 14<sup>th</sup> began in May with 1 fighter and 1 bomber (medium) group. Based in the area of Burma and China largely where their operational efforts were expended against the Japanese. In the autumn of 1944 they expanded to 4 fighter groups, but only ever operated 1 heavy and 1 medium bomber group until the cessation of hostilities.

### **Fifteenth Air Force**

With the desert war over, it was decided to split the 12<sup>th</sup> AF into 2 units, a tactical (the 12<sup>th</sup>) and a strategic bomber force (the 15<sup>th</sup>), this force to complement the efforts of the 8<sup>th</sup> AF by bombing Germany from the south. The 15<sup>th</sup> was formed in November 1943 with 4 fighter and 66 heavy bomber groups, it built up over the period to mid 1944, when it boasted 21 heavy bomber, 7 fighter and 2 tactical reconnaissance groups, which it employed until the war was won in May 1945.

### **Twentieth Air Force**

XX bomber command was originated to fly the B-29 Superfortress in November 1943, probably why the 20<sup>th</sup> was so named, thus missing out the intervening four numbers. It was activated to bomb Japan from the Bonin and Marianas Islands in June 1944. Starting with 1 wing comprising 4 heavy bomber groups, it enlarged to 5 wings, plus the composite group who dropped the Atom bombs. Late in 1945 it operated a total of 7 fighter groups. Its bombing devastated Japan and forced their surrender in August 1945.

I do have the official histories of all of the above units, but they are card covers and very fragile, they do contain markings and camouflage sections. It actually surprised me when doing this article that they are over 20 years old, most published in the 1970's. Which means it's nearly 25 years ago when I prepared tactical histories of each air force showing its groups, its component squadrons and periods of service during W.W.II, so the figures quoted here are very accurate. "Where did he get all that from?" you're probably wondering. Well I can only remember a large dark brown covered book rather like a dictionary by Mauser & Mauser, it took me about 6 months to extract the necessary information, although not as detailed, the histories do confirm the accuracy of Mr Mauser and his brother.

*Alan*