

FLYING-BOAT VETERANS MEET AGAIN

Forty-seven years after they last flew together, three members of a 210 Squadron Sunderland crew — one of them Pembroke Dock Flying-Boat Reunion co-organiser Bill Millar — met up again at 'PD' on Sunday.

Wing Commander Guy Van der Kiste, DSO, met again with crew colleagues Derek Buley of Wells, Somerset, and Bill Millar and they recalled some of the flights they had made together in 1939 and 1940.

This was just one of many such link-ups over the Flying-Boat Reunion weekend — no less than five members of a 228 Squadron crew, including skipper George Bunting, DFC, also coming together again.

It was a weekend when a most significant link was re-established between the town of Pembroke Dock and two Dutch Navy squadrons which formed as part of the Royal Air Force at RAF Pembroke Dock in the wartime summer of 1940.

Nos. 320 and 321 Squadrons, of the Royal Netherlands Naval Air Service, can trace their 'roots' back to July, 1940, when both formed at Pembroke Dock out of Dutch airmen who had escaped after the invasion of the Netherlands.

APPROPRIATE

And, 47 years on, the Dutch recognised the importance of the reunion gathering by sending 20 members of both the squadrons in an Orion aircraft. They were led by the respective squadron C.O.'s, Commander Hans Goemans and Commander Jan Jansen.

The Dutch airmen were honoured guests at the 'Web Footers' evening on Friday and they were also welcomed by Mayor Charles Thomas at the civic reception on Saturday evening.

Councillor Thomas and the Mayor of Pembroke, Councillor Roger Baker, along with the Mayoresses, were chief guests at Friday's Flying-Boat evening at Pembroke Leisure Centre, along with Councillor Wilf Hardy, chairman of South Pembrokeshire District Council, and Mrs. Hardy. It was a very appropriate gathering for Councillor Hardy to attend as he served in the RAF Marine Craft Branch for many years.

The civic guests were joined by Commander Fred Hatton, RN. The Queen's Harbourmaster; Lieutenant Colonel Patrick Lort Phillips, Commandant of Castlemartin Camp; and Squadron Leader Tony Burkby of 79 Squadron. RAF Brawdy, who represented the Station Commander, Group Captain Roy Humphreyson.

Also present — and reflecting another link with PD's flying-boat history — was Flight Lieutenant Phil Coulson of No. 201 Squadron, a former flying-boat squadron which now flies Nimrod aircraft from RAF Kinloss. Scotland.

Magnificent plaques presented by No. 422 Canadian Squadron Association and the 10/461 Australian Squadrons Association were received by the president of No. 648 Pembroke Dock branch, RAFA, Mr. Ken Phillips. The Canadian plaque is made out of Walnut with the Sunderland design and wording being created using the latest laser art technology. The Australian plaque is made out of bronze and weighs all of 130 lbs.

Presenting the plaques were Mr. Jack Logan for the 422 Association and Mr. Bill Tilley of the 10/461 Association.

The Crests of Nos. 320 and 321 Squadrons, Royal Netherlands Naval Air Service, were presented by Commanders Jansen and Goemans, along with a photograph of a Dutch Orion and a book on the 70 years of the Dutch Naval Air Service.

One of the reunion's furthest travellers, Colonel Ian Bergh from South Africa, presented the crest of South Africa's only flying-boat squadron, No. 35. Colonel Bergh, who served at Pembroke Dock with 230 Squadron, RAF, recently retired from the South African Air Force and he and his wife, Molly, were attending their second PD reunion.

In return, reunion co-organiser John Evans presented copies of No. 648 branch's limited edition print of a Sunderland over PD to the 422 and 10/461 Squadrons Associations and to the Dutch party.

During Saturday's memorable evening at the RAFA branch a photograph of a 201 Squadron Nimrod was presented by Flight Lieutenant Phil Coulson, and aviation artist Dr. Arthur Banks, who served on a Catalina squadron, presented a fine painting of a 422 Squadron Sunderland on the slipway at Pembroke Dock.

UNIFORMS

At the civic reception for the overseas visitors at the Pater Hall on Saturday evening the mayor presented town crests to Mr. Jack Logan for the 422 Association; Mr. Ken May for the 10/461 Association; Commander Hans Goemans for 320 and 321 Squadrons; Colonel Ian Bergh for No. 35 Squadron, SAAF, and to Mr. Dave Meadows, the only New Zealander to attend the reunion. He will, in turn, present it to an association in his home country. The Mayor received a Dutch Naval Air Service crest from Commander Hans Goemans.

A town council crest was also presented to Air Vice-Marshal Brian Young of Didmarton, Avon, who did much of the work in the UK to organise the visit by the party of 60 members and wives of the 422 Canadian Association — 44 of whom travelled from North America to attend.

Among the various uniforms seen at the parade and memorial service on Sunday was the distinctive blue of the Royal Australian Air Force. Representing the RAAF was Squadron Leader Greg Ballard, Assistant Air Force Advisor at the Australian High Commission in London and Colonel Desmond Lowless representing the Pembroke and Pembroke Dock branch of the Royal British Legion.

- The Canadian and Australian plaques were handed into the care of Pembroke Dock Town Council to on display at the Pater Hall.



On Saturday evening Pembroke Dock's Mayor, Councillor Charles Thomas, hosted a reception at the Pater Hall for a number of Canadians, Australians and one American who were all based locally during the war. The Canadians and Australians were in the town for the RAF flying-boat reunion. Also present at the function were 20 members of the Royal Netherlands Marine Air Arm, who had flown into RAF Brawdy in a giant Orion aircraft to attend the reunion. In this photograph the Mayor is pictured with, left to right: Brigadier General Robert E. Peters, US

Army (retired), Commander Hans Goemans, Commanding Officer 320 Squadron, Royal Netherlands Navy, and Air Vice Marshall Brian Young, who was Flight Commander of 422 Squadron at Pembroke Dock during the war. In the group standing are Flight Lieutenant Jack Logan, chairman of the Royal Canadian Air Force's 422 Squadron Association, Dave Meadows, 423 RCAF Squadron, and John Dick, Ken May and Wally Dann, all of 461 Royal Australian Air Force Squadron.