

Why I've become a Platinum Member of the Army Flying Museum

As the years roll on there is time for reflection on what we've done with our lives and what highlights we've had for major parts of it.

Army flying has been in my family for over 80 years, my father having joined the Air OP in 1941 as a Scottish Horse TA officer. He won his spurs with 655 Sqn at Anzio, co-incidentally supporting the Scottish Horse, and was awarded a DFC in the field. After the war he stayed with the AOP in a TA role, commanding 666 Sqn based at Perth and finally retired in 1955.

So, I suppose I had to join the AAC, after trying accountancy in Glasgow after school and opting out as soon as possible, I was offered a DSSC, and no doubt with some influence from my father! I was commissioned at Mons OCS and joined the Corps at Wallop on 193 course in April 1967. I was 20 years old, did no Regimental attachments and was very immature!

I passed the course with no distinction and was posted straight to the Life Guards Air Squadron in Singapore in Jan 1968 as a Sioux pilot. I was as green as the jungle.

A year later and after a Scout conversion, I was off to Sharjah and 13 Sqn AAC for 9 months. April 1970 saw the completion of a QHI course and back to Wallop to join the Scout flight doing conversion training for 2 years and then to 653 Squadron at Netheravon as Scout Flight commander/Sqn QHI until I left the Regular Army and trained as a Land Agent and moved back to Scotland.

So, I hope that gives a picture of how the AAC /Army changed me from an immature but keen lad into something a bit more grown up!

Anyway, I had enjoyed it so much, I joined the AAC(V) pool, staying with 653 Sqn but later with 9 Regt, joining 666 Sqn AAC(V) on formation at Netheravon, until 1993 when 7 Regt was formed with a detached flight of 4 Gazelles at RAF Turnhouse, Edinburgh, and in 1995 the flight moved to RAF Leuchars, and which I commanded from 2000 until my time eventually ran out in mid 2005.

I don't think many Short Service officers had as much variety, fun and I dare say a bit of responsibility too. 38 years of continuous flying appointments with the AAC.

I have seen the Museum grow from the 'home made' affair in the main camp, in I think, a wooden hut to what it is now.

The sadness is the buzzing aviation hub that Wallop was has reduced so markedly, and how the Museum has grown and matured and how hard everyone managing it work to keep it in the public eye.

They are doing a fantastic job!

I live too far away to be any help on the ground, but at least I can offer token financial support.

Andrew Gordon.