

Gerry Rich

Reflections on a murky past



After finally passing out from Locking I had a wide variety of postings starting with 2 years in Swinderby, then I was posted to Compton Bassett where I was teaching RAF personnel who had been in the same rank for yonks and couldn't get any further. I was supposed to be teaching them basic electronic theory so they could become mechanics. It was mind boggling!! I then went to Yatesbury and did much the same thing there but after 3 months somebody on high thought I had been punished enough and I

was posted to RAF Gutersloh as NCO i/c the transmitter station.

I played a lot of rugby at this posting and we won the RAF Germany cup three years in a row. I did hardly any work during this time.

I left Germany for a posting to RAF Shawbury where I was seconded to Marshall's Flying School who were teaching air traffic controllers. I was supposed to be keeping the ATC radios working but I had a nice little side line sitting alongside the pilots in the Meteors they were using to do the training. I was supposed to warn the pilot if there were any other Meteors intent on doing him damage. I realise now that it was probably very dangerous, but I'm still here.

I then had the posting of a lifetime. RAF Labuan in Borneo. I was supposed to be i/c ATC Signals but after a few days I saw a notice asking for volunteers to work on the radio station which broadcast daily to the island so I applied, passed the audition and spent the years posting as an announcer ending up as chief announcer. Unfortunately



all this excitement had given me a duodenal ulcer so I was casevaced home to RAF Hospital Wroughton where I spent a month before being posted to RAF St Athan as NCO i/c on job training. 20.

The RAF finally decided that they had had enough of me and my ulcer in 1971 and I was invalided out with a nice medical pension.

Not long after I saw an ad in a newspaper looking for a Chief Engineer to work for Airwork Services Limited at the airfield in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. I was given an interview and after the interview was over the guy who was giving it , who was a retired air comm., asked me why I wanted a job as an engineer when he could see from my RAF book that I had been teaching. He then offered me a job on the spot as a technical instructor at the Saudi Air force Military Academy. I spent 10 happy years there finishing as Head of Examinations. While there I met my wife who was a nursing sister at the local hospital and we were married in Jeddah by special decree in 1973.

I returned to England in 1981 with a wife and three sons and was offered a job by British Aerospace as Project Controller at their new works in Nailsea, Somerset, only 10 miles from RAF Locking. I also bought a nursing home with the money I had made in Saudi which was run by my wife.

My daughter was born in 1983. She is still living with us. If anyone wants her five camels should do it.

They closed the works down in 1991 and I was made redundant which suited me fine and for a while I helped my wife in the nursing home but soon became disenchanted with this.

I saw a notice in the local paper for a vacancy for a planning enforcement office to work in the planning department of the local council. I had no idea what it was about but applied for it anyway because I had been working for some time as a special constable and this seemed to do the trick because amazingly I was offered the job.

I retired in 2005 as a senior Enforcement Officer with a final salary pension and here I am typing this resume in 2009. You couldn't make it up.

I am now approaching my 69th birthday, I have 5 lovely grandchildren, including twins, and spend my time trying to earn more money by working as a planning consultant and if I had realised how much can be earned I would have done it years ago.

My leisure time when I get any is split between visiting our holiday cottage in Southern Ireland and our canal boat which is moored on the Avon and Kennet canal.

As a footnote I'll just mention that last year I was awarded a medal by the Malayan Government for services to Malaysia during the Confrontation. As I said, you couldn't make it up.