

GEORGE BUCHANAN D.F.C.



The motivation for this story is similar in nature to the incident which sparked off the very extensive research on Group Captain Charles Appleton's RAF Career – ie an error in an author's entry in a book. This second case occurred during the recent preparation of the Roll Of Honour of Rhodesian Air Crew killed during World War II. In checking the names of Rhodesian Fighter Pilots in the book ACES HIGH (First Edition 1966) by Christopher Shores and Clive Williams it was noted that George Buchanan was reported as having been shot down and killed over Malta. Cross-checking against the Roll Of Honour in the PRIDE OF EAGLES and the Commonwealth War Graves Commission Web Site revealed that he was not killed during World War II. Christopher Shores was contacted by phone, and admitted that the account in the First Edition was wrong, but the error was corrected in subsequent Editions. During this time details from 'ACES HIGH' were circulated amongst various AFA Members, and the unknowns surrounding George Buchanan aroused much interest. It was decided to try and establish definitive details of his RAF Career, so the first step was to locate someone who had some direct connection. Thanks to ORAFs and the initiative of Alastair Honeybun – Webmaster of 'Rhodesians Worldwide', a 'request for information' was circulated and picked up by a MOTH Member, who passed it on to George's son Rob Buchanan at Hilton in Natal. Rob responded with enthusiasm, and it soon became apparent that he possessed a wealth of information on his father's RAF Career, including his RAF Log Book.

After some contacts via Email, Rob decided to send the Log Book and copies of documents to England. These were brought over by a close friend, John Whitaker – a Jumbo Captain seconded to Korean Airlines by SAA – who travels frequently between SA and the UK. It became his responsibility to take good care of the Log Book and return it to Rob. We met on three occasions, which provided ample opportunity to peruse the Log Book and review the documents. It became clear that this information would provide the bulk of the detail required to prepare a write-up on George Buchanan's RAF Career. As an additional source of information, George Buchanan's Gazetted Details and Record of Service were obtained from the RAF Personnel Management Agency at Royal Air Force Innsworth. The George Buchanan Story was prepared from a combination of these details.

1. The Beginning: George was born at Dundee in South Africa on 28 Nov.1912, and at the outbreak of war was employed by the Zambezi Saw Mills Co. at Livingstone in Northern Rhodesia. He applied to join the RAF as a pilot and after the necessary preliminary formalities he was accepted early in 1940. There were no Air Training Facilities in Rhodesia at that time, so in accordance with Government Policy he was sent to the UK. He left Livingstone in April 1940. Prior to his departure he was given a send off by the then Mayor and Mayoress of Livingstone, Mr and Mrs Orr. Mrs Orr suggested he look up her niece in Scotland, and this he duly did, and married her on 3rd May 1941 in Glasgow.

2. Arrival in England: George was enlisted on 25 May 1940 with the rank of AC2, and recommended for training as '(1) Pilot, (2) Observer, and for a Commission'. In the interim he was posted to No 3 ITW where he underwent elementary training.

3. Elementary Flying Training School: He was then promoted to the rank of LAC and posted to 14 EFTS at Elmdon, near Birmingham, where he undertook flying lessons on de Havilland Tiger Moths. After the war Elmdon became the site of Birmingham International Airport.

14 EFTS Elmdon: From 20 August to 2 October 1940.

Aircraft Type: de Havilland Tiger Moth.

First Solo Flight after 8.10 Flying Hours – Excellent

{Bill Dives - Belvedere: 17 Hrs 30 Mins – Testing the limit.

Bill Musgrave – Guinea Fowl: 11 Hrs 55 Mins – Mediocre.

Ewart Siegfried – Belvedere: 7 Hrs 55 Mins – Excellent}

Summary of Flying Hours:	Dual	Pilot	Total
	<u>Day</u>	<u>Day</u>	<u>Hours</u>
	<u>28.20</u>	<u>23.25</u>	<u>51.45</u>

Assessment – Ability as Pilot: AVERAGE

It is worth noting that the span of his time at EFTS corresponded with the most crucial phase of the Battle Of Britain, including the period of daily ground level attacks by the Luftwaffe on RAF Airfields. Flying Tiger Moths around the skies in the Birmingham/Castle Bromwich area during this period, would no doubt have caused pupil pilots to have some worrying thoughts of lurking Me109s.

4. No 8 SFTS: 7 October 1940 to 8 January 1941

Promoted to Sergeant prior to posting.

Aircraft Type: Miles Master

CO: Squadron Leader Slater

First Solo Flight after 2.05 Hours.

Awarded Flying Badge: 8.1.1941

Summary of Flying Hours at SFTS:	Dual	Pilot	Dual	Pilot	Total
	<u>Day</u>	<u>Day</u>	<u>Night</u>	<u>Night</u>	<u>Hours</u>
	<u>24.30</u>	<u>37.05</u>	<u>3.20</u>	<u>1.15</u>	<u>66.10</u>

Cumulative Flying Hours 52.50 60.30 3.20 1.15 117.55

Assessment – Exam Result: 71.30%
Ability as Pilot: AVERAGE
Comment: Heavy On Controls

5. No 55 OTU – Acton Down, Gloucs: 17 January 1941 to 7 March 1941

Commissioned and promoted to Pilot Officer prior to posting.

Aircraft Type Hawker Hurricane I + some dual instruction on Miles Master.

Summary of Flying Hours at OTU :	Dual	Pilot	Dual	Pilot	Total
	<u>Day</u>	<u>Day</u>	<u>Night</u>	<u>Night</u>	<u>Hours</u>
	<u>0.30</u>	<u>16.30</u>	-	-	<u>17.00</u>

Cumulative Flying Hours 53.20 77.00 3.20 1.15 134.55

Assessment – Ability as Pilot: AVERAGE

Log Book endorsed as a result of a crash landing attributed to 'Faulty Cockpit Drill, failing to switch over to full Fuel Tank'.

6. No 260 Squadron: 19 March to 28 April 1941. First Operational Posting.

Squadron based at Drem in the extreme north of Scotland.

CO: S/Ldr Mount DFC

Aircraft Type: Hawker Hurricanes Is

Main Duty: Convoy Patrols – but lack of enemy activity and adverse winter weather conditions limited operations. Log Book shows training flights and some false alarm “scrambles”.

Summary of Flying Hours 260 Sq:	Dual	Pilot	Dual	Pilot	Total
	<u>Day</u>	<u>Day</u>	<u>Night</u>	<u>Night</u>	<u>Hours</u>
	-	<u>24.10</u>	-	-	<u>24.10</u>

Cumulative Flying Hours	<u>53.20</u>	<u>101.10</u>	<u>3.20</u>	<u>1.15</u>	<u>159.05</u>
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Flying Hours First Operational Tour: 24.10

7. No 266 (Rhodesia) Squadron: 4 May to 27 August 1941

Second Posting/First Operational Tour.

Squadron based at Wittering – East Midlands.

CO: S/Ldr Jameson DFC. S/Ldr Beresford

Flight Commander: F/Lt Charles Green (Rhodesian: Future CO of Typhoon Wing DSO and Bar, DFC. Died 10 June 2001 in Durban.)

Aircraft Type: Spitfire IIas

Relatively dull period, with the odd Fighter Sweep, Standing Patrols and Advanced Training.

Off Sick + Sick Leave: 15 July to 15 August.

Summary of Flying Hours 266 Sq:	Dual	Pilot	Dual	Pilot	Total
	<u>Day</u>	<u>Day</u>	<u>Night</u>	<u>Night</u>	<u>Hours</u>
	-	<u>41.30</u>	-	<u>2.50</u>	<u>44.20</u>

Cumulative Flying Hours	<u>53.20</u>	<u>142.40</u>	<u>3.20</u>	<u>4.50</u>	<u>204.10</u>
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Flying Hours First Operational Tour: 67.30

8. No 41 Squadron – Tangmere Wing: 27 August 1941 to 8 February 1942.

Third Posting/First Operational Tour.

CO: S/Ldr Gaunce S/Ldr Petrus “Dutch” Hugo (South African: Future CO of 322 Wing, DSO, DFC and 2 Bars)

Aircraft Type: Spitfire VBs

The squadron joined the Tangmere Wing in July 1941. This led the squadron into ‘Rhubarbs’ – low level ranging patrols over the continent of single aircraft or pairs seeking targets of opportunity. This was interspersed with convoy patrols and offensive sweeps. Compared to previous postings these operations were hectic. In a sweep over Ostend, George was credited with a share in the shooting down of an Hs 123. He was involved in other interceptions - on 18 September he got in his first “squirt” at an Me 109e. Some time later he took part in an attack on a Power Station at Monteville, on 18 Nov he participated in the sinking of a sea-going tug in a canal at Caen, and on 21 Nov he was involved in a shoot-up of a Distillery in France.

8. No 41 Squadron – Continued

Summary of Flying Hours 41 Sq:	Dual	Pilot	Dual	Pilot	Total
	<u>Day</u>	<u>Day</u>	<u>Night</u>	<u>Night</u>	<u>Hours</u>
	-	<u>103.30</u>	-	-	<u>103.30</u>

Cumulative Flying Hours 53.20 246.10 3.20 4.50 307.40

Flying Hours First Operational Tour: 171.00

Assessment – Ability as Pilot: AVERAGE Signed S/Ldr P.Hugo

9. Transferred to 249 Squadron Malta:

To Malta via Gibraltar on Sunderland Flying Boat: 8 Feb to 20 Feb 1942

10. 249 Squadron – Malta: 21 February to 22 May 1942. Based at Takali Airfield. Without doubt this period was the toughest, hardest fought and most critical phase of the long siege of Malta. Daily attacks by the superior number of Axis Aircraft based in Sicily were taking an unsustainable toll on RAF Aircraft on Malta, particularly Spitfires. Statistics speak for themselves:-

Number of Serviceable Fighters on Malta on 14 April 1942: Zero (4 Fighter Squadrons)

Number of Serviceable Fighters on Malta on five separate days in April 1942: 1

Number of newly arrived Spitfires on Malta on 20 April 1942: 47

Number of Spitfires available on Malta five days later on 25 April 1942: 7

Average daily number of enemy aircraft over Malta between Dec '41 and April '42: 170

296 Tons of Bombs dropped on Takali Airfield in 24 Hours on 20-21 March 1942, making it the most bombed Allied Airfield ever.

During March-April 1942 more bombs were dropped on Malta (an island a fraction of the size of London) than were dropped on London during the entire Blitz.

Relief came with the delivery of 47 Spitfires flown off the US Carrier SS Wasp on 20 April – making up two additional Fighter Squadrons, 601 and 603, but this was short lived and Luftwaffe Reconnaissance Aircraft spotted their arrival and no sooner were they on the ground than the Ju88s and Bf109s arrived to attack. After 48 hours of Axis bombing, only 7 serviceable Spitfires remained. But a second batch of 64 Spitfires was flown off the SS Wasp and HMS Eagle more successfully on 9 May. This moment marked a turning point from which the strength of the defending squadrons was well defended and maintained, allowing each of the six Spitfire Squadrons to maintain an average of six aircraft on standby each day. The intensity of aerial battles increased dramatically but at least on equal terms. Another 30 additional Spitfires were flown off the Carrier HMS Eagle on 9 June. One of these was flown in by Sgt “Screwball” Beurling, who was also posted to 249 Squadron. Beurling entered the fray on 12th June 1942 and by October had disposed of 26 enemy aircraft – no other allied pilot shot down more planes in such a short period of time.

No 249 Squadron emerged as the top-scoring RAF Fighter Squadron of World War II, with 328 Aircraft shot down in aerial combat, of which 244 aircraft were shot down over Malta. The following awards were gazetted during operations in Malta:

DSO: 1

DFC: 21 Bar to DFC: 5

DFM: 4 Bar to DFM: 3

On the debit side, 44 Pilots were killed in Malta.

Details of 249 Squadron Posting: 21 February to 22 May 1942.

Fourth Posting/First Operational Tour.

CO: S/Ldr Turner DFC

S/Ldr Grant DFC

Flight Commanders: A Flight: F/Lt P.B. Lucas DFC

B Flight: F/Lt R.W.McNair RCAF DFC

Aircraft Type: Hurricane IIs to 6 March 1942

Spitfire VBs from 7 March 1942.

The new CO of the Squadron, S/Ldr P.S.Turner arrived aboard the same Sunderland as George Buchanan on 20 February, together with F/Lt Lucas, F/O Daddo-Langlois, F/Lt R.W. McNair RCAF, and P/O J.G. West DFM RNZAF – famous names. On joining the Squadron George found himself in the company of two other Rhodesian Pilots, P/O J.A. Plagis – who was to make a name for himself over Malta – and P/O Douglas Leggo.

The squadron was in a desperate situation, round-the-clock bombing continued, the Hurricanes were no match against Me109s and the number of serviceable Hurricanes was dwindling rapidly – and the situation made worse by the fact that Rommel's Afrika Corps was on the rampage in Libya. Steps were even taken to disband the Squadron, but in the nick of time the first Spitfires arrived in Malta on 7 March. In the early morning 15 Spitfire Mk VBs lifted off the deck of HMS Eagle at position 700 miles west of Malta, flown by 249 Squadron Pilots. So began a new chapter in the history of 249 Squadron. Due to recent incoming postings, numbers had become inflated and the squadron now comprised 29 pilots with Spitfire experience, including five experienced Flight Lieutenants.

George's posting coincided with the final few days of the Hurricane era, and during this time he was only involved on two uneventful flights amounting to 1.35 Flying Hours. With the arrival of the Spitfires the scene changed dramatically and the sky over Malta became a daily swarm of hostile aircraft involved in aerial combat and dog fights interspersed with heavy losses on the ground from bombing. The following are copies of entries from George's Log Book:

				<u>Credits</u>
10.3.1942	Scramble	45 Mins	Attacked Ju 88 head-on – no result. Attacked another Ju 88 quarter astern – hits along fuselage: 1 damaged	¼ German
10.3.1942	Scramble	40 Mins	Escorting Motor Launch- Attacked by 3 Me 109Fs. Received hits in fuselage & starboard wing. Crash landed on drome – 28 shrapnel wounds in legs – 4 days in hospital. Returned to duty 24 March	-
26.3.1942	Scramble	25 Mins	Reflector Site u/s. Squirted at Ju 88 and Me 109F	-
01.4.1942	Escort	35 Mins	Escorting PRU Spitfire returning from Sicily. Met Me109s – Plagis got one.	-
01.4.1942	Interception	35 Mins	Float Plane + Me109 Escort. One each shot down by Plagis/Hesselyn. S/L Grant/Self one each damaged. Trapped between 3 Me109s– Managed to evade them.	¼ German
01.4.1942	Interception	40 Mins	Ju87 Raid. Destroyed Ju87. Rear Gunner fired right to the end. Kept down to 6000 ft by 109s so took out Ju87s after they had bombed. 5 Spits got 5 Ju87s.	1 German
10.4.1942	Scramble	60 Mins	To investigate force of 74+ Incoming Bombers. Met Me109s before bombers. Squirted 15 second burst at Me109F – confirmed later by ground personnel – Pilot baled out, now in hospital. Log Book signed by Lt. Herman Neuhoff – leading Ace of JG53 - 40 Victories and recently promoted to lead 6 Staffel	1 German
19.4.1942	Scramble	70 Mins	To intercept Raid. Damaged Ju88. Disabled Gunner	¼ German
21.4.1942	Scramble	80 Mins	Incoming Raid – Attacked two Ju87s - one confirmed	1 German

02.5.1942	Scramble	60 Mins	Incoming Raid – Me109 Damaged	¼ German
05.5.1942	Escort	30 Mins	Came across two Me109s – had a good squirt at one in climbing turn and Hesselyn squirted at same. Later discovered it was damaged.	
09.5.1942	Scramble	45 Mins	Providing cover for new Spitfires flown off Carriers Attacked Me109F – Later confirmed as destroyed	1 German
10.5.1942	Scramble	40 Mins	Badly damaged Ju87. Squirted at 2 Me109s Spits smash Ju87 Force completely. Battle reaches climax.	¼ German
10.5.1942	Scramble	40 Mins	Collected 5 Spits from Luqa. Mixed it with 5 Me109s Two squirts – no obvious results.	
14.5.1942	Scramble	75 Mins	Intercepted Ju88 over Luqa. Attacked Me109 Escort, rolled over on my back & squirted at Me109 coming towards me but below. Confirmed by ground personnel as going down streaming glycol. Disappeared over Dingli Cliffs. 3 Spits attacked.	1¼ German
15.5.1942	Scramble	85 Mins	Intercepted Italian Bombers and MACCHI 202s. Attacked by 8 MACCHIs but managed to evade them	
16.5.1942	Scramble	55 Mins	Self and F/Sgt Verral intercepted 12 MACCHI 202s. Waded into them. 4 sec squirt at one. It spun down. Last seen at 2000' in flat spin. Closed to 50 yds of another. Guns packed up. One confirmed.	1 Italian
17.5.1942	Scramble	50 Mins	Incoming raid – Went looking for 109s. Then the Recco Job turned up with 2 Me109s. The 109s hopped it so shot down Ju88. 3 sec burst of cannon Went down in flames – crashed into sea.	1 German
Total Credits – Malta:				8½
Plus Credits 41 Squad:				½
<u>Total:</u>				<u>9</u>

During the above period of 3+ months 249 Squadron was credited with the destruction of 81 Enemy Aircraft, plus many more 'probables' and 'damaged'. Relating this to the total of 240 Enemy Aircraft destroyed over Malta in a period of 26 months, provides convincing evidence 'that the period Feb to May 1942 was an exceptionally fierce and critical phase of the long siege of Malta'.

George Buchanan's main claim to fame would probably be his shooting down of the famous Luftwaffe Ace Herman Neuhoff, who confirmed this by signing George's Log Book in Hospital. One author claims that Neuhoff could understand George because he spoke Afrikaans. On the sad side Herman Neuhoff was responsible for the shooting down and death of Douglas Leggo on 20 March 1942.

For the period under review 9 Pilots of 249 Squadron were awarded the DFC, including George Buchanan, whose award was gazetted on 5 June 1942 with the following Citation:

This Officer has displayed great determination in his encounters with raiding aircraft. One day, in April 1942, he shot down a Junkers 87 and damaged another in a single combat. Having expended all his ammunition, he carried out a series of feint attacks on Messerschmitt 109s and drove them away from some of his comrades who were coming in to land their aircraft.

The Investiture took place at Buckingham Palace on 17th November 1942, with awards being bestowed by H.M. King George VI. Among the messages of congratulation was one from General Smuts.

On the 22nd May George Buchanan was posted to 61 OTU as a Flying Instructor. Following his highly successful short spell in Malta this would have seemed a rather premature move. But the fact is that he had served his time on his first Operational Tour, and the RAF were rather strict on “resting” pilots when the time came.

Summary of Flying Hours 249 Sq:	<u>Dual</u>	<u>Pilot</u>	<u>Dual</u>	<u>Pilot</u>	<u>Total</u>
	<u>Day</u>	<u>Day</u>	<u>Night</u>	<u>Night</u>	<u>Hours</u>
	-	<u>23.35</u>	-	-	<u>23.35</u>

Cumulative Flying Hours 53.20 269.45 3.20 4.50 331.15

Flying Hours First Operational Tour: 194.35 Declared Tour Ex.

11. Posted to No 61 OTU :

Returned to UK as Passenger via Gibraltar and Hendon: 22 May to 14 June 1942

12. Instructor No 61 OTU: 8 July 1942 to 27 March 1943,

Based at Rednall, Shropshire
 CO: Wing Commander Watkins DFC
 Aircraft Types: Spitfire IIs
 Miles Master IIIs
 de Havilland Tiger Moths

Promoted to Flight Lieutenant & Flight Commander: 15 January 1943.
 Assessment as Single Seater Fighter Pilot: ABOVE AVERAGE
 Signed: Wing Commander Watkins DFC

Summary of Flying Hours 61 OTU :	<u>Dual</u>	<u>Pilot</u>	<u>Dual</u>	<u>Pilot</u>	<u>Total</u>
	<u>Day</u>	<u>Day</u>	<u>Night</u>	<u>Night</u>	<u>Hours</u>
	-	<u>103.00</u>	-	-	<u>103.00</u>

Cumulative Flying Hours 53.20 372.45 3.20 4.50 434.15

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At this point question marks arise regarding George’s next postings. He had distinguished himself with 249 Squadron in Malta and at 61 OTU was judged to be an Above Average Fighter Pilot. 61 OTU had provided an ample period of rest and it seems likely that he would have expected to be posted as a Pilot/Flight Commander to another Squadron in Fighter Command – as had happened with most of his surviving contemporaries from Malta.

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**13. 41 Group Kirkbride & Kemble – Conversion Course: 8 April to 20 May 1943.
 Conversion to Multi Engine Aircraft interspersed with Test Pilot Duties.**

Multi Engine Aircraft: Airspeed Oxfords
 Bristol Blenheims
 Vickers Wellingtons
 Test Pilot Spitfire Vs and IXs
 Miles Master IIs

<u>Flying Hours:</u> <u>41 Group</u>	<u>-----Single Engine-----</u>				<u>Multi Engine</u>		<u>Total Hours</u>
	<u>Dual Day</u>	<u>Pilot Day</u>	<u>Dual Night</u>	<u>Pilot Night</u>	<u>Dual Day</u>	<u>Pilot Day</u>	
	-	<u>16.05</u>	-	-	<u>12.10</u>	<u>14.10</u>	<u>42.25</u>
<u>Cumul. Hours</u>	<u>53.20</u>	<u>388.50</u>	<u>3.20</u>	<u>4.50</u>	<u>12.10</u>	<u>14.10</u>	<u>475.55</u>

14. Return to No 61 OTU followed by transfer to No.2 Personnel Dispatch Center:
21st May to 15 August 1943.

*Air Ministry Defence Test and Evaluation.
Temporary and Supernumerary Duties – no flying.*

15. RAF Del USA: (Del = Delegation?) 16 August 1943 to 5 June 1944.
There is no record of what took place during this period in the USA. At the end of his time at 41 Group there is an entry in the right hand bottom corner of the last page of his Log Book for that period, reading:

*Total Flying: Dual Day 6.15)
Solo Day 14.45) Not included in 'Log Book Totals'.*

It is possible that George might have had a separate Log Book for the USA. There is no evidence what his duties were during this posting. According to his Record of Service his duties were classified as 'Non-Flying Synthetic Training' This infers some connection with flight simulation – or a Link Trainer, but this does not provide a clear-cut answer. This period remains an unknown chapter of his RAF Career.

16. No.1 Personnel Dispatch Center West Kirby: 6 June to 26 June 1944
Headquarters Fighter Command Awaiting Posting: 27 June to 12 July 1944.

17. No 2 Flying Instructor School, Montrose, Scotland: 12 July to 20 September '44
No 51 Flying Instructor Course.
Aircraft Type: Miles Master IIs
19 September 1944: Officially categorised as a Flying Instructor.

*End Of Course Report: Pilot – Average
Flying Instructor: Below Average.*

<u>Flying Hours:</u> <u>No 2 F.I.S.</u>	<u>-----Single Engine-----</u>				<u>Multi Engine</u>		<u>Total Hours</u>
	<u>Dual Day</u>	<u>Pilot Day</u>	<u>Dual Night</u>	<u>Pilot Night</u>	<u>Dual Day</u>	<u>Pilot Day</u>	
	<u>35.30</u>	<u>42.00</u>	<u>6.15</u>	<u>4.55</u>	-	-	<u>88.40</u>
<u>Cumul. Hours</u>	<u>88.50</u>	<u>430.50</u>	<u>9.35</u>	<u>9.45</u>	<u>12.10</u>	<u>14.10</u>	<u>564.35</u>

18. No 9 (Pilots) Advanced Flying Unit – Tealing/Dundee Scotland:

30 September 1944 to 26 April 1945.

Acting Flight Commander – Flying Instructor Supernumary.

Aircraft Types: Miles Master IIs to Mid October

North American Harvards from Mid October.

Reduced Flying Jan to March 1945 due to bad weather.

Log Book Signed-Off by W/Com Schwel – W/C Training.

<u>Flying Hours:</u> <u>No 9 AFU.</u>	<u>-----Single Engine-----</u>				<u>Multi Engine</u>		<u>Total Hours</u>
	<u>Dual</u>	<u>Pilot</u>	<u>Dual</u>	<u>Pilot</u>	<u>Dual</u>	<u>Pilot</u>	
	<u>Day</u>	<u>Day</u>	<u>Night</u>	<u>Night</u>	<u>Day</u>	<u>Day</u>	
	<u>3.40</u>	<u>62.55</u>	<u>0.30</u>	<u>10.25</u>	-	-	<u>76.30</u>
<u>Cumul. Hours</u>	<u>92.30</u>	<u>493.45</u>	<u>10.05</u>	<u>20.10</u>	<u>12.10</u>	<u>14.10</u>	<u>642.50</u>

19. No 10 Air Gunnery School – Barrow: 3 May 1945 to 26 September 1945

Instructor and Pilot-Cine Shots

Aircraft Types: Supermarine Spitfires IIs and Vs – mainly cine shots.

Miles Master IIs and Martinets – Gunnery Instruction - Aerobatics.

<u>Flying Hours:</u> <u>No 10 AGS.</u>	<u>-----Single Engine-----</u>				<u>Multi Engine</u>		<u>Total Hours</u>
	<u>Dual</u>	<u>Pilot</u>	<u>Dual</u>	<u>Pilot</u>	<u>Dual</u>	<u>Pilot</u>	
	<u>Day</u>	<u>Day</u>	<u>Night</u>	<u>Night</u>	<u>Day</u>	<u>Day</u>	
	-	<u>31.10</u>	-	-	-	<u>1.00</u>	<u>32.10</u>
<u>Cumul. Hours</u>	<u>92.30</u>	<u>493.45</u>	<u>10.05</u>	<u>20.10</u>	<u>12.10</u>	<u>15.10</u>	<u>675.00</u>

20. At Nos 100 & 104 Personnel Dispatch Centers:

Class A Release: 7 December 1945

Effective Date of Release: 6 January 1946

Application to Resign Commission in the RAFVR Approved: 10 May 1946

- Permitted to retain rank of F/LT under AMO A627/41

Resigned Commission: 14 May 1946 – Retaining Rank of F/LT

Last Day of Service: 9 June 1946.

POSTWAR:

Shortly after being released from the RAF, George along with his wife and very young daughter returned to Northern Rhodesia where he purchased a farm through the Ex-Servicemens' Re-settlement Scheme. He along with other British Ex-Servicemen opened up a large tract of very fertile land in the Kalomo district. George farmed here for the next twenty two years, concentrating on cattle, maize and tobacco, with cattle being predominant. He was a highly respected cattle breeder, in particular for his research and development in the cross breeding of cattle using disease resistant Boran Bulls imported from Kenya. He took a keen interest in the affairs of the local community and in particular sporting activities. He played his last game of rugby at the age of 54 alongside his son and nephew. Also playing in the team was Springbok rugby player Andy Macdonald.

George packed up his farming in 1968 as a result of failing health, and returned to South Africa, where he succumbed to his illness in September 1973. According to certain medical opinion the cause of George's illness could be attributed to his involvement as a fighter pilot during the war years. After being released from the RAF, George never again touched the controls of an aircraft.

At the time of George's return to Northern Rhodesia, his wife May was 32 years old, and found herself plucked from the relative luxury of modern Glasgow straight into undeveloped Africa, where modern facilities such as flushing toilets did not exist. Accommodation consisted of a thatched hut with an outside bathroom and toilet. Water was heated on an open fire and cooking was also done on the same fire. She somehow managed to survive and became an absolute pillar of strength to George. In between bringing up the children she did all the farm administration and controlled the finances. May was secretary to the local Farmers Association for many years and will always be remembered for her piano playing ability which was put to good use at most evening gatherings by the local farmers. After their move to South Africa she insisted that as George had re-claimed his South African Citizenship she would apply for the same, since she considered that where George was, was her country. She went back to Scotland on only one occasion, after the death of their infant son, but returned later to be with George.

George and his wife produced four further children in Kalomo, two sons and two daughters. Their eldest son died as a result of a tropical disease while still an infant. May died in Durban in October 1997, leaving a legacy of four children, eight grand children and one great-grand child.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

First and foremost to the late George Buchanan's son Rob, living in Natal, who immediately responded with enthusiasm and willingness in participating in the preparation of The George Buchanan Story, and his initiative in sending details of his father's RAF Career including his RAF Log Book; and to his close friend John Whitaker, who acted as an intermediary in bringing the Log Book and other factual evidence to England and who was always very willing to help in any way possible.

To the authors Christopher Shores and Brian Cull for their help and suggestions.

Reference to the following books:

'Aces High' by Christofer Shores and Clive Williams

'Wings of War' by Laddie Lucas

'Duel For The Sky' by Christopher Shores

'249 At War' by Brian Cull

'249 at Malta' by Brian Cull

'Malta Spitfire' by George Beurling and Leslie Roberts.

'Fighter Squadrons Of The RAF' by John Rawlings.