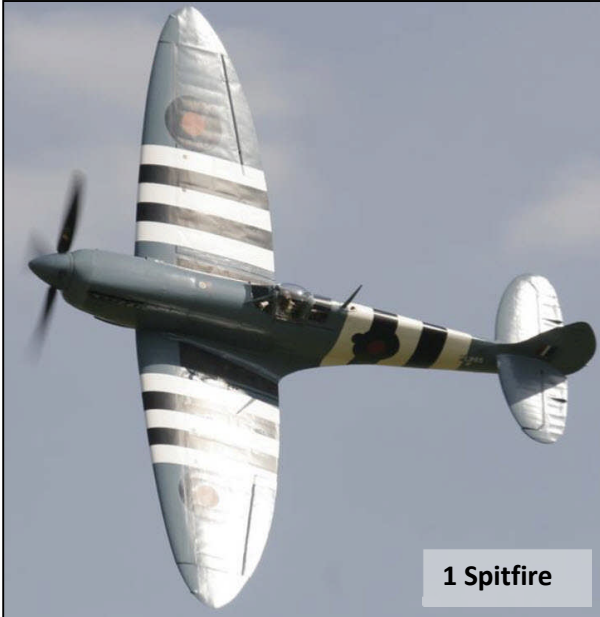


# Cliff SPINK

Pages 1-2: 16 Historic aircraft flown

Page 3: 10 RAF aircraft flown

Pages 4-5 Flying & RAF Career



1 Spitfire



2 Hurricane



3 Messerschmitt Fw109



4 Buchon



5 Mustang



6 Sea Fury



7 Corsair



8 Thunderbolt

# Cliff SPINK

## Page 2: 16 Historic aircraft flown



# Cliff SPINK

## Page 3: 10 RAF aircraft flown

RAF 1: - Jet Provost



RAF 2: Folland Gnat



RAF 3: English Electric Lightening F3



RAF 4: DH Chipmunk



RAF 5: McDonnell-Douglas F4



RAF 6: Panavia Tornado



RAF 7: BAE SYSTEMS Hawk



RAF 8: Lockheed C130



RAF 9: Westland-Sikorsky Sea King



RAF 10: BAE SYSTEMS Nimrod



## **Air Marshal Clifford SPINK CB CBE FCMI FRAeS RAF Retired**

### **Aircraft Flying Career**

Cliff started his flying career on the Jet Provost at Cranwell followed by advanced flying training on the Gnat. A period of tactics/weapons training on the Hunter preceded his Operational Conversion Training on the Lightning at RAF Coltishall. He then served with 111(F) Sqn at RAF Wattisham flying the Mk3/5 Lightning (weekends were spent as CFI of the local Gliding Club). Following a weapons instructor course he was reposted to 'Treble One' before moving to 56(F) Sqn in Cyprus on the Mk 6 Lightning. It was during this period that the Turks invaded the island and 56 Sqn were heavily involved in the subsequent air operations. The squadron returned to Wattisham in 1975 and Cliff finally left the Lightning Force the following year, having amassed 1,300 hours on the 'most exhilarating rocket ship any young man could wish to fly'.

A ground tour followed and during this period (playing truant from his desk) he reacquainted himself with the Chipmunk to stay sane. In 1979 a refresher on JP5 followed by some Hunter FGA 9 weapons training preceded his introduction to the Phantom FGR2 at Coningsby. After a short course it was back to 111(F) Sqn now flying a mix of FGR2/FG1 Phantom at RAF Leuchars. Cliff was to be associated on and off with the F4 for the next 10 years and this included 2 ½ years as the Squadron Commander of 74(F) Sqn, 'The Tigers', flying the F4J (UK), and a year in the Falklands as Station Commander of Mount Pleasant Airfield. Aside from flying the F4M in the South Atlantic, he also flew the Hercules and the Sea King helicopter.

Returning to the UK, he converted to the Tornado F3, before taking command of RAF Coningsby. A couple of weeks later he went to Saudi Arabia as the Tornado Detachment Commander at Dhahran for the duration of the Gulf War. Back at Coningsby in April 91, he had his first trip in a BBMF Hurricane and in the next two years he also flew the Spitfire II, V, XIX in addition to the Tornado. The end of 1992 was to see a drop in Cliff's front line fighter flying, although he stayed qualified on Tornado, Hawk and Nimrod until he finished as a Group Commander in 1998.

Importantly however, Cliff continued to fly the Warbirds following his introduction to them on the BBMF. The majority of this flying has been done at Duxford and he regards himself as one of the 'luckiest and most privileged pilots' to have flown a variety of famous and historic aircraft.

These include the following 16 types: **1.** Spitfire I, II, V, IX, XI, XIV, XVI, XVIII, XIX; **2.** Hurricane II, X; **3.** Messerschmitt Bf109G; **4.** Buchon; **5.** Mustang; **6.** Sea Fury; **7.** Corsair; **8.** Thunderbolt; **9.** Kittyhawk; **10.** Wildcat; **11.** Polikarpov I-153; **12.** T-28 Trojan; **13.** Vampire; **14.** T33 Silver Star; **15.** F86A Sabre; **16.** Hawker Hunter.

## **AIR Marshal C R SPINK CB CBE FCMI FRAeS RAF (Retired)**

### **Royal Air Force Career**

Air Marshal Spink joined the RAF in 1963 as an Aircraft Apprentice and joined No 104 Entry at Halton. He was awarded a Cadetship at the end of his apprenticeship and went to the RAF College Cranwell to train as a pilot. He graduated with his wings in 1968 and was selected for duties in fighter aircraft. Following advanced flying on Gnat and Hunter aircraft he was assigned to the Lightning and after conversion training at RAF Coltishall he was posted to No 111(Fighter) Squadron at Royal Air Force Wattisham.

In 1973, following the Lightning Weapons Instructor Course, he was briefly re-toured on Treble One Squadron before joining No 56 (Fighter) Squadron at Royal Air Force Akrotiri in Cyprus. As the resident air defence squadron on the island, No 56 Squadron was heavily involved in the 1974 conflict. In January 1975, he returned with No 56 Squadron to Royal Air Force Wattisham.

In July 1976, he was posted on promotion to the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst and, following short courses at the School of Infantry Warminster, he took up duties as an instructor on the Standard Military Course. In 1979 he returned to front line flying and, after converting to the Phantom, he joined No 111(Fighter) Squadron at Royal Air Force Leuchars as a Flight Commander. In April 1982 he joined the last course at the National Defence College Latimer, from where he was posted to staff duties at the Headquarters Royal Air Force Germany. Promoted shortly after his arrival, he then completed 3 years as Wing Commander Air Defence, responsible for air defence matters in West Germany, the Inner German Border and the Berlin Air Corridors.

In November 1986, he took command of No 74(Fighter) Squadron at Royal Air Force Wattisham which was equipped with the Phantom F4J. In January 1989 he was promoted to Group Captain but remained with the 'Tigers' until handing over command in April 1989. He assumed command of Royal Air Force Mount Pleasant in June 1989 and served for 12 months as the Station Commander and Deputy Commander British Forces Falkland Islands. Following conversion to the Tornado F3 he took command of Royal Air Force Coningsby in November 1990. Almost immediately he went to Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, as Detachment Commander of the Tornado Recce, Fighter Bomber and Air Defence aircraft for the duration of the 1991 Gulf Conflict.

In 1989 he was appointed to the Military Division of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire as an Officer, and in the 1992 New Year's Honours List, was appointed as a Commander. Promoted to Air Commodore in January 1993, he joined the Royal College of Defence Studies, and shortly afterwards was appointed as Senior Air Staff Officer at Headquarters No 11 Group, Bentley Priory. In April 1996, following a period as the Chief of Staff No 18 Group, he was promoted to Air Vice-Marshal and appointed the first Air Officer Commanding No 11/18 Group which was formed at Bentley Priory on that date; he assumed the position as Commander Allied Air Forces Eastern Atlantic at the same time. He took up the post of Director General Saudi Armed Forces Project on the 29 July 1998 and was promoted to Air Marshal in June 2000. Air Marshal Spink was made a Companion of the Bath in 2002 and he retired from the Royal Air Force in June 2003 after more than 40 years in RAF uniform. In all he has flown over 7000 flying hours, the majority of which have been on fighter aircraft but he is an experienced pilot in all aspects of Sport, Vintage and General Aviation and has flown over 65 /types/marks of aircraft.

Since retiring he formed his own Company dealing in a range of Aviation interests and is a Non-Executive Director of Eastern Airways. He has a Display Authorisation for Jet and Piston aircraft and is a Display Authorisation Evaluator for the Civil Aviation Authority. He is a Vice Patron of the Halton Aircraft Apprentices Association and President of the Royal Observer Corps Association and the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight Association. He is a Liveryman and Past Master of the Honourable Company of Air Pilots of the City of London.

Air Marshal Spink continues to fly both piston and jet vintage aircraft as his major hobby but in quieter moments enjoys golf and looking after house and garden. He is married to Caroline, a microbiologist, and they have 2 children, Laura 34 and Robert 31.