

Typhoon pilot's MG visits his memorial in France

Last winter Dennis Wharf's friends Brian and Julie Nuth purchased a one owner 1969 MGBGT as the owner had died some six months earlier at a good age, but with no descendants interested in taking the car over. Nothing unusual in that except the car's one owner was a former Typhoon pilot, Roy Crane, from WWII who is honoured for his bravery in the French village of Noyers-Bocage in France.

Flight lieutenant Roy Crane was featured in a BBC documentary some years ago, which told the story of the Typhoon pilots who took such a leading role in the D-Day landings in 1944, and then the push that followed across mainland Europe. Roy was in fact eventually shot down and although he managed to bale out, somewhat annoyingly he landed in a Nazi SS stronghold - as he said, "it just wasn't my day". Lucky not to be shot however, he spent the last few remaining months of the war in the notorious Colditz prison camp before the allies arrived to liberate the inmates. On learning about this Dennis suggested to Brian that it might be interesting to drive over to the French memorial site, and unite the car with its previous owner's memorial.

The tour over to France proved to be thoroughly enjoyable and most interesting, and the destination extremely attractive. Both cars - Dennis with his MGBGT V8 and Brian with the MGBGT - performed faultlessly, never missing a beat during the 1,000 mile return journey to Noyers-Bocage covering some impressive mileages on two of the days. Of interest the MGBGT V8 only consumed an additional 4 litres (a little less than a gallon) of super unleaded 98 octane when compared with the fuel used by the four cylinder car over the entire continental part of our tour proving, if it were ever in doubt, what a superbly economical grand touring car the V8 actually is.

The 1969 MGBGT has only covered 55,000 miles from new and



remains remarkably original, so much so that it was still on its original Pirelli Cinturatos when Brian collected it! Taken to Beers for a complete re-commissioning, Malcolm Beer was also quite impressed by the originality of the car, agreeing that MGBs rarely come along in such an unmolested condition today. Roy Crane also owned a 1976 Lotus Esprit from new, which had covered just 21,000 miles. Both cars were sold last December.

Apart from one misty morning we had bright sunshine all the way, the only negative being the inevitable hold ups on the M20/M25, both outward and on our return, requiring Dennis to make long detours to avoid the fifteen miles of road works on the M25. Fortunately Brian and Julie live in north Norfolk, so had an easier run on the M11 once clear of the M25.

Left: a steep section on the impressive bridge complex near le Havre and then on to the empty roads in Normandy. Above: Roy Crane's memorial. Below: the Typhoon is clearly held in high regard in the Caen D-Day museum.

