

TT No.12: *Brian Buck* - Wednesday 7th August 2019; **RAF Regiment** v Thetford Town Reserves; Friendly Match; Venue: played at RAF Honington; Result: 10-1; Attendance: 140 approx.

This was far more than a friendly as in reality, as the colourful 8-page programme revealed, this was a Fund-Raising Match for one of their brethren, who has a brain tumour and he is likely to die within two to five years if it is not removed. His private healthcare insurance company won't pay up, nor will any other insurance company touch him. It seems that the operation he needs can only be done in Canada or the USA and his friends and everyone on the base are trying to help him get there and this match was one of the fundraising events for him.

RAF Honington is roughly between Thetford and Bury St Edmonds and access to the sports ground was straight forward if you could find the right entrance to it, which I did eventually, with grateful thanks to my Groundhopping friend from near Sudbury, who had got there before me. By kick off there were about a dozen of us present, which was good because we had plenty of time to kill before we got under way. I had arrived early, but Thetford hadn't and the kick off was delayed by half an hour. I elected to sit in the away dugout and overhead their players mumbling about how many they might get beaten by here as they warmed up.

Their fear turned out to be justified, contrary to the comments in the programme saying 'we hope that Thetford can give us a competitive game!' Well, they might have had Thetford first team not played a league game on the previous night and in fact it would have probably been very competitive. Because of the reasons I have already explained, there was a good crowd for the game. It was a nice night and many people just walked to the pitch from their houses on the base. But as a contest this was very soon one-way traffic and by half time it was 4-1 to the hosts. Quite how Thetford managed to score was a mystery. Soon after the restart three Thetford players turned up, one of whom (one of the subs alleged) was their manager and when he decided to get changed and play, they groaned! His presence made no difference as the RAF rattled in another six goals in this period, but it was more about the reasons for playing this game tonight than it was about the match itself.