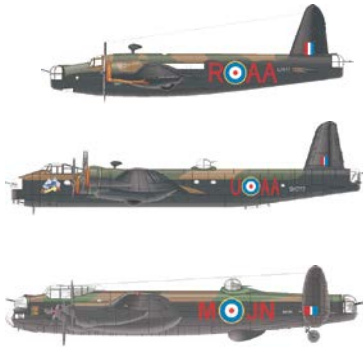


Friends of 75 (NZ) SQUADRON RAF ASSOCIATION UNITED KINGDOM

January 2013

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FROM THE SECRETARY

Another year has come and passed - just where have the days, weeks and months gone. We have had two successful reunions with the New Zealanders being present at our summer reunion. We had a tight squeeze for our dinner on the Saturday night but when we booked we initially thought only the members of the 75 Squadron were coming but with the food being so delicious no one complained. I had organised to have roast butternut squash and sweet potatoes with our pork roast but forgot to tell our UK Branch what they were eating, New Zealanders eat these vegetables all the time.

WINTER REUNION 2012

Our 2012 Winter Reunion was held at the Dolphin Hotel in St Ives Cambridgeshire and every one really enjoyed it—the hotel and meals were excellent. On the Saturday we went to the Pathfinders Museum at RAF Wyton which was really interesting, especially when they said a code word was Wanganui, a Province in New Zealand. Bet the Germans wondered what planet that name came from. Well worth a visit. We presented our veterans with mugs with the squadron emblem and their names on them. Then I thought what about the wives who have a lot to put up with and then those who have helped us over the years.

So in all, we gave 16 members a new mug each. It was wonderful when a few of our lovely ladies had a cry—not in sorrow but happiness. But when I heard Jack Richards saying he was going to put his in his museum I thought, “Jack its for you to have a cup of tea and think of us!” Not that Jack needs reminding with all the work he has put in over the years, and he is still contributing. We had 45 for dinner Saturday night and our thanks to Helen de Hoop who did a wonderful photo album of our get-togethers over the years which we auctioned off. We asked members for £10 each just to help the funds along, this is a one off at this stage as we raised quite a bit from that night, we asked for donations when we first started the Friends so we have done well. We were pleased to welcome Denis and Margaret Jacobson, who came over from Spain to be with us.

On Sunday at our Memorial Gardens in Mepal we had about 150 around the plinth and our Marshall Allen who brings his Dad over from Northern Ireland did the service in the chapel, but bless him he forgot the NZ National Anthem so me with my terrible voice had to start singing it and every one joined in. What is amazing is the number of families coming to the service to remember their fathers who have had their ashes scattered there. Freda, (Lew & Phil Parson’s daughter), Peter Wilkes, (George & Dolly’s son), Ron Hunwick’s daughters and grandchildren, Ann Parry (Roy Max’s daughter) and Vera Rouse sent her son along. We have already booked in again at the Dolphin Hotel in St Ives for the 2013 Winter Reunion. The dates are November 8th & 9th, and hopefully the cost will be similar to 2012.

SUMMER REUNION 2013

Our 2013 Summer Reunion is being held on May 17th & 18th in Brandon, near Mildenhall Air Base. The hotel is the Brandon House Hotel where we have stayed before and we will be having dinner Saturday night there. The cost is £59 single and £79 double, per night for bed and breakfast. If you wish to attend please phone me (Margaret) on 01621 843 935. We require the first nights accommodation for a deposit, which I will pay and you can pay me. We are looking at getting a bus to take us to the base which is likely to cost about £10 return, and **don't forget to bring ID to get into the base.**

OBITUARIES

It is with sadness that I have to report the deaths of the following members;

Connie Rattle. Connie died just before our winter reunion. Connie and Ray (a past secretary for us) had both done a lot for 75 UK Sqn Assn, so we went to Derby for her funeral.

Mac McKellow. Mac who was another past secretary of the Assn, died on the 4th of December. We went to his funeral at Braintree.

Joan Didwell, MBE. Joan, wife of Norman Didwell, passed away after a short illness. She was very supportive of Normans involvement with the 75 and 99 Squadron Associations. Joan was awarded the MBE for her services with the Bedfordshire police.

Norman Allen. Norman who had been at our winter reunion, died in Northern Ireland just before Christmas. Norman loved coming to our reunions and always bought his family, Marshall, Margaret, Ron, Janet and her husband. 'So glad you loved your mug Norman, and hope you had a nice cuppa.' Norman fulfilled his wishes to go to the Bomber Command Memorial unveiling in London, but unfortunately he died before his 90th birthday due in February!



Norman Allen, with daughter Janet in February 2012.

That is all from me for now, but we are looking forward to seeing you either at our summer reunion or at Mepal for the Remembrance Weekend.

Regards **Margaret Still**

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Myself (Kevin), Margaret and Roly Still attended a very moving special commemorative service conducted by Ernie Barlow—at the Mepal Memorial Garden on Wednesday the 29th of August 2012, by the family members of the crew of RAF 75(NZ) Sqn Lancaster HK594. On the 29th August 1944 Lancaster HK594 was lost on operations. The aircraft crashed near Svenskop in Sweden with only one survivor, Doug King RAF, the pilot.

Jack Drummond was responsible for organising the memorial event at Mepal and writes:

It took a bit of work trying to find family members for all of the crew but when I'd almost given up hope of finding the last one. Pauline Probyn made contact via Genes Reunited, replying to a post I'd made some months before looking for the family of **John Patrick Callan, RAFVR, Flight Engineer**. She made the trip from Luxembourg to be with us in memory of her uncle. Within days I then heard from Lin Tallis, yet another Callan family member so they were glad to meet up for the first time. Pauline's father Sidney Bell was shot down on the same night on the Konigsberg raid and became a prisoner of War.

Travelling from her adopted home in the far north of Scotland, native New Zealander Reay Campbell laid a wreath for her uncle **Jock Fitzgerald, RNZAF, Air Bomb Aimer** on the plane, yet another contact made very near to the deadline! Her cousins in New Zealand sent messages of greetings and regret that distance did not permit their being at Mepal.

Evelyn Causley, sister of **Herbert Causley , Tail Gunner** made the trip from the south along with her stepson and his wife, and stayed through both days of our visit and enjoyed her time with us all. Despite her 'advanced years' she managed very well through two pretty tiring days.

Walter Watson, RNZAF, Navigator of HK594, was represented by his niece Isobel Pearce and husband Roger, who brought with her a wreath from Walt's nieces in New Zealand, who so wished that they could be there. I'd found many of the New Zealand relations of Walt and Jock (both of Scots blood) with the help of the Otago Daily Times reporter Dave Cannan, and reader Bruce Malcolm who knew the Fitzgerald family from Port Chalmers and was in contact a day later!

The family of **Derrick Moon, RAFVR, Mid Upper Gunner** was difficult to find, despite the unusual surname! But his niece Gilda Glithero was with us on the day to lay her family wreath, travelling up with her husband to spend both days in the company of a group of people fast becoming friends.

Charles Burton Hill, RAFVR, Wireless Operator/Air Gunner on HK594, was born in my home village and his nephew Annan Bisset and his wife travelled down from Fife in Scotland to lay a wreath for his uncle Charlie. We had travelled many miles together, to Sweden and back in November of 2011, and the run from Scotland clocked a few more, with yet another Swedish trip in the planning to see the unveiling of a mural in the Municipal Hall in Horby which will feature, among other things, the images of the crew of HK594 and their Lancaster.

Douglas King, RAFVR, the Pilot survived the crash, to be interned for a while in Sweden. He lived life to the full when he returned to the UK, flying Spitfires until the end of the war and serving as an Air Traffic Controller in the Channel Islands until his death in 2003. His daughter Sally had hoped to be with us, but was unable to be at Mepal on the day.

Lars Ahlkvist, Mayor of Horby, and his wife Helene took time off from their Anniversary celebrations and travelled from Sweden to lay a wreath on behalf of the Svenskop Municipality where Lancaster HK594 crashed.

The morning of the Mepal ceremony was dull and drizzly but the weather cleared to allow Ernie Barlow to conduct the Service and wreath laying ceremony in fair weather. We and the families, were supported by the Flag Bearers of the British Legion, the local villagers, and even a passing council lorry which stopped and the crew stood silently while we reflected on the moment as Kevin played the Last Post. After the ceremony however, the rain began again. Fortunately for us Isobel and her friend Dorothy had prepared a lovely buffet lunch in the Mepal Village Hall in the company of many of the villagers and guests, before we headed off to Witchford to have a look around the lovely museum there. It is well worth a visit and needs support to keep open such a wonderful tribute to the crews who flew from RAF Mepal and RAF Witchford. An evening meal in the Witchford Village Inn, which everyone attended and enjoyed, rounded off an eventful and emotional day.

We visited the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight at RAF Coningsby the following day and spent a few hours as guests of the BoBMF. When the Lancaster's mighty Merlin's burst into life there were few of us without a tear in the eye or lump in the throat. The most touching moment for me was seeing Evelyn Causley with hands clasped as if in prayer, looking towards the aircraft as it sat on the apron in the pouring rain. I wonder what her thoughts were..?

It is to Lars Ahlkvist - who began his search for HK594's crew members on the Lancaster Archive Forum - and Kevin King - who advertised in our local paper for the family of Charlie Hill - that we must thank for starting the journey which brought us all together at Mepal last August.

I wish however it had not been necessary; I wish that Charlie, Derrick, Herbie, Jock, Walter and John Patrick had survived the war - and that none of us had to know such sorrow.

From Paul Scott's poem at Runnymede, I took solace in his words...

*"And, as evening comes, And mists, like quiet ghosts, rise from the river bed
and climb the hill to wander through the cloisters, We Shall not Forget them.
Above the mist we shall see the memorial still, and over it, the Crown and single star.
And we shall pray, as the mists rise up and the air grows dark,
that we may wear as Brave a Heart as they."*



Andrew Garry and step mother Evelyn Causley (sister of tail gunner Herb Causley) Gilda Glithero (niece of Mid Upper Gunner Derrick Moon), Jake Drummond (organiser), Betty Bisset, Reay Campbell (niece of Bomb Aimer Jock Fitzgerald), Isobel Pearce (niece of Navigator Walt Watson), Pauline Probyn and Lin Tallis (nieces of Flight Engineer John Patrick Callan), Annan Bisset (nephew of Wireless Operator/Air Gunner Charlie Hill) and Mayor of Horby, Sweden, Lars Ahlkvist.
Pictured at the 75 New Zealand Squadron Memorial Garden in the village of Mepal, Cambridgeshire.
Photo by Richard Walker

IN SEARCH OF...

I have received some requests for information from family members of airmen that served on 75 (NZ) Squadron RAF.

F/O William Henry GOODRIDGE, DFC, DFM, mid, AG; served on 75 in 1944/45. Crewed with R.C. Earl. Commissioned in May 43. Awarded the DFM in July 43 and the DFC in February 45, after completing 91 sorties as an air gunner. Goodridge stayed in the RAF post war, retrained as a pilot, retiring in 1954. He married and had a son, Gary. However, Gary's parents divorced and his mother remarried. Gary took his adoptive fathers name, Ward. While researching his father, Gary found that his medals had been sold at auction in London in 1995. They were bought and sold by a Canadian dealer the following year. Gary is anxious to trace the medals and buy them so that he can pass them on to his grandson. If you knew William Goodridge or can help Gary Ward in locating the medals please contact me.

F/O Harold George HOWELLS, DFC, AG; served on 75 from Aug43 to Jun44 and Mar to Jul 1945. Crewed with F.P. Lndon. Harold Howell's son Geoff, would be pleased to hear from anyone that knew him.

If you can help Geoff please contact me.



P/O Richard PICKUP, WOAG, served on 75 from Oct44 to Apr45. Crewed with S/L J.M. Bailey as W/OP. Richard's (Dick) sons Tony and David Pickup have joined the Association. Anyone who knew Dick or can provide information please contact me.

SGT Douglas C, BOX, AG, served on 75 from 20Aug to 1Sep43. Crewed with D.C. Henley as MUG, shot down returning from Berlin, Doug was a POW in camps Dulag Luft, Stalags IV and Luft III. Promoted to F/S while a POW. Amazingly, the late Lew Parsons was Doug's Flight Engineer. Doug's son Ian Box has joined the Association, welcome Ian. Anyone who knew Doug or has information please contact me.

VETERANS WELCOME.

A very warm welcome to **SGT Frank BALL, AG** who served as a mid upper gunner March-August 1944. His skipper was Colin Megson. And to his son David, who made contact with me. Frank would be pleased to hear from anyone that remembers him.

And welcome to **F/O Jimmy Wood, AB** who served as an air bomber 1945. His skipper was Russell Banks. Also to his son Barry who made contact with me. Barry gave me the crew list that his father flew with. The mid upper gunner was only known as Paddy. I passed this information on to Simon Sommerville whose father was also an bomb aimer in 1945 on his second tour. I thought Jimmy may have known his father. Simon, who has been doing a lot of research in the periods that his father flew on 75 discovered that Paddy was in fact Norman Allen. As in Obituaries, Norman died just before Christmas, so it is very sad that Norman did not live to see his old crew member, Jimmy.



Jimmy Wood's crew. Jimmy is back row second from the left, Norman Allen is front row first left.

STIRLING III, R9248: 23JAN1943, St Thegonnec, FRANCE.

On the 23rd January this year a Memorial was unveiled and dedicated by the people of St Thegonnec, to honour the crew of 75(NZ) Sqn RAF, Stirling R9248, which was lost on operations to Lorient 23rd January 1943. The aircraft was hit by flak and crashed at St-Thegonnec (Finistere), France. Those that died are buried in the St-Thegonnec cemetery. A poppy wreath, and letter of appreciation on behalf of the Association membership, thanking the people of St-Thegonnec for their kindness in remembering our fallen airmen was sent to France for the service. It is very moving to think that people still remember after all these years, the sacrifice of our young men.

The crew of R9248;

Sgt R.M. Kidd, RNZAF. Evaded.
Sgt G.F. Mitchell, RAF, Killed.
Sgt J.W. Schofield, RAF, Killed.
Sgt B. Torrence, RAF, Killed.
Sgt E. Berry, RAF Killed.
Sgt P.D. Fowler, RAF, Killed.
Sgt J.E. Brewster, RAF, Killed.

W/C Artie ASHWORTH, DSO, DFC*, AFC*, mid.

Vince Ashworth, the younger brother of Artie Ashworth has written a book detailing his brothers service career. "The Artie Ashworth Story – A LEGEND IN HIS TIME"

Artie, a NZer, served on 75 in the early days of the Squadron, followed by the Pathfinder Force. Staying on in the RAF post war and commanding a V bomber Squadron. In the forward for the book Air-Vice Marshal Charles Gibbs, RAF (Rtd) CMG, DFC and Bar writes:

“This book should be read by all young New Zealanders. It is a story of uncommon bravery and sacrifice made in an earlier time and which, who knows, they may one day be called upon to emulate.”

The cost of the book is NZ\$40 plus NZ\$16 postage. It is cheaper if payment is made through Paypal.

The book can be ordered from the author at: 18 Maple Place, Morrinsville 3300, New Zealand

Tel: (64) 7 889 1970, E-Mail: vashworth@clear.net.nz

P/O Gwyn MARTIN, DFM, OBS; David Martin, the son of the late Gwyn Martin DFM, has republished his father's autobiography, “Up and Under”. I obtained a copy when it was first published and can highly recommend it. Gwyn served on 75 in 1941, but later during his second tour was shot down and made POW. All hard copies are now sold. It is available however, as an E Book on kindle, and can be downloaded from Amazon. The price is just 79p.

MEPAL MEMORIAL GARDEN

A big thank you to all who have donated to the Memorial Garden fund. Just over £2500 has so far been raised.

RUNNYMEDE MEMORIAL ANNUAL SERVICE

The annual service of remembrance at the Runnymede Memorial in Surrey is being held on the 12th May this year. Attendees are to be there by 10.30am. 289 members of 75(NZ) are commemorated here.

Just left for me to say thank you for your continued support of the Association. Although we have lost members recently, more are joining the Association and taking an active interest. This can only bode well for the future.

With all good wishes

Kevin King

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