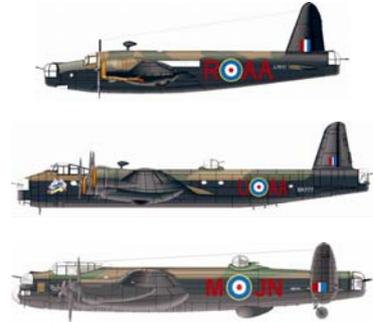


**Friends of
75 (NZ) SQUADRON RAF
ASSOCIATION
UNITED KINGDOM
JANUARY 2008**

Chairman

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REUNION – SUMMER 2008

This summer's June reunion is once again being held at the Heathcourt Hotel in Newmarket. The prices have gone up but not by much. Dinner Bed and Breakfast for Friday and Saturday night is £76.95 per person per night. Dinner for Saturday evening will be £22.00 per person.

**Please ring me Margaret Still on 01621 843 935 or
send the form to 28 Wantz Road, Maldon, Essex CM9 5DE**

Friday night Menu: Starters: Prawn Cocktail or Grilled Goats Cheese, **Main:** Pot Roast Breast of Chicken with smoked bacon or Famous Newmarket Sausages with rich gravy and champ potatoes, **Desserts:** Strawberry Cheesecake or Dark Chocolate Pudding with white chocolate Sauce and chocolate shavings. Coffee & Dinner mints after meal.

Saturday Night Menu: Starters: Belgium Pate with cranberry sauce and crisp breads or Cream of Vine tomato soup with basil and topped with herb Focaccia croutons, **Main:** Roast Sirloin of Beef with Yorkshire pudding and horseradish sauce or Pan fried breaded port escalope with Madeira, mushroom and shallot sauce, **Desserts:** Baked Vanilla Rice Pudding with Brulee style topping and raspberry Jam or selection of farmhouse cheeses served with tomato chutney and crackers. Coffee & Dinner mints after meal.

Saturday morning we have a bus booked for 10.45 to take us up to Thursford museum with it's many attractions. Then Jack Richards is to take us on a short mystery tour. Lunch will be organised at museum.

Sunday we are hoping to have a memorial service at the plinth at Mepal for Group Captain Roy Max and Colin Burch whose ashes will be scattered at the plinth. We have arranged for memorial plaques to be put on the new memorial wall, and those who have already had their loved ones ashes scattered can get in touch with either Margaret or Kevin with their own personalised wording and we will arrange for the plaques to be made. It looks like the cost of these will be about £40. For those that wish to attend the service will start at 11am.

OBITUARIES

It is with great regret that three New Zealanders living in England died last year, I will miss my conversations with them. Basil Cecile Pritchard was one I used to speak to regularly but never met him, he was coming to Mepal last November but became ill and did not attend, I said to him how will I know you and he said look for the Bentley with NZ1 on the number plate. We used to get our wires crossed, well me really, when he said he had a home in Christchurch I of course said do you go home often, but you have guessed it was Christchurch England, I am sorry I never got the opportunity to meet him personally. The other New Zealander was Dave Pritchard, before we went to Feltwell Dave rang me saying how h would love to go back as he was in Command there. He told me about the Gate House and when I got to Feltwell it was all still there. Dave won the first DSO on 75 in June 1941. The target was Cologne. On the outward leg they were attacked by a night-fighter and sustained serious damage. Dave pressed onto the target and successfully bombed it. With great airman ship Dave managed to reach Feltwell were on landing the under carriage collapsed. Thankfully no members of the crew were injured. Dave went on to make a successful carrier in the RAF. He will be much missed by all those that knew him. Four of our RAF members have passed away. They are, Stan Galloway DFC, Peter Goldie, Colin Burch and Ron Hunwicks. All four were strong supporters of the association and will be greatly missed. Colin was a navigator who stopped in the RAF post war rising to the rank of Squadron Leader. In the 1960's Colin was in charge of the Thor missile site at Mepal. Ron was seriously injured, losing a leg, when his aircraft crashed on return from operations in Feb. 45. Ron never let his disability stop him leading a full and active life. He became quite an accomplished ballroom dancer.

Margaret

REMEMBRANCE WEEKEND, 9-10-11 NOVEMBER 2007

On Friday the 9th about 30 of us gathered at the Heathcourt hotel at Newmarket. Friday was an informal day spent in the bar and enjoying each others company.

On Saturday about 40 took a coach to the village of Sutton, where a service was held in the chapel within the church set aside for the Squadron. At the end of the service both the British and New Zealand National Anthems were sung.

From Sutton we took the short journey to Mepal. Mike Moloney, had suggested earlier in the year of having the Squadron plaque placed under the village sign. This was proposed to the parish council and approved. A plaque was ordered, and put in place. We gathered around the village sign for the unveiling. Our president, Jack Richards, spoke of the strong ties that still bind 75 and the village of Mepal. Jack then asked Mike Moloney to unveil the plaque, which was covered in the New Zealand National Flag. This is the only village sign in Britain to have an RAF Squadron plaque attached to it. Another first for 75. We then went to the Three Pickerals pub for lunch.

The return journey took us to Barry Aldridge's museum at Witchford, dedicated to 75 and 115 Squadrons. Although small it is one of the most impressive of its kind. Barry and his wife, Sue, was most attentive and answered the many questions put forward.

The evening saw 60 sit down for dinner. We were very pleased to see so many at the evening function. Jenny Ellis, who is on the committee, and the wife of our treasurer, John, was with us after a long period of ill health. Everyone was pleased to see her back amongst us and looking so well. We were pleased to welcome a new member, Anthony Freeman, whose father, Carl, was killed on operations in November 44. Another member Dr. David Lyons (a Brit) had come over from Canada, and also brought his mother with him. David's father served on 75 during 1944. David gave a speech which was very well received. The raffle raised £360 towards Association funds. £92 of this was raised by auctioning a set of crystal tumblers engraved with the Squadron crest and the aircraft flown by them. These were kindly donated by Molly Kurton, thank you Molly.

Sunday saw us gather at the Squadron Plinth at Mepal for the Remembrance Service. The Squadron wreath was laid by David Lyons nephew, Joe, who has just passed out of Cranwell. We then moved on to the village War Memorial for a short service, where the Squadron wreath was laid by David Lyons. From here we went to the Chapel for a full service. Light refreshments were served afterwards in the Village hall. As always the villagers of Mepal made us very welcome. The bond between the association and Mepal seems to get stronger each time we are there. Long may it continue.

From time to time I get requests for information or help with regard to former members of 75. One such request was from a lady in Australia, Frances Wilson. Frances father, Sgt. F.F. Allen, a flight engineer, was killed in February 43. Frances was born after her father's death. Her mother remarried and immigrated to Australia. Having never known her father she was keen to find anyone that might have known him. Of the eight crew, four were killed and four made POW. Of the four made POW, three have since died. One however was still alive in NZ. He was the Wop/Ag, Sgt K.J.S. Smith. She has been in touch with Mr Smith, and I await further details. Mr Smith's son is Ian Smith, the New Zealand wicket keeper and Sky sports reporter.

Norman Didwell has had an inquiry from John Radcliffe, who was a W/O pilot on the squadron circa 1943. He would welcome news from anyone that remembers him. He can be contacted at 66 Hillside Drive, RR No1, Little Britain, Canada, KOM 2CO.

Vera Lynn, the forces sweetheart, paid a visit to Barry Aldridges museum at Witchford. Jack Richards, our President, and his wife, Gladys represented the association. Vera was very impressed with the museum. Please see the attached photos.

DAVID LYONS

David Lyons gave a speech at the reunion. For you that were unable to attend here is the speech given by David.

In Canada we have had a government department for Veterans Affairs since WW II finished and also a Minister of Veterans Affairs. It has been my great experience to work with this department trying to improve the quality of life for many veterans and serving members. Government Departments however are never that easy to work with and as time has passed, unfortunately the bureaucracy that goes with government has become less and less aware of history and how events many years ago forged the world we live in today. The attitude of many officials leads a lot to be desired and as the aging veteran population requests more help from the Department the more difficult it becomes to access that help. Government employees have little knowledge of history (as a direct result of changing education policies to reflect the "new world"!) and so do not have or show the compassion

to deal with this population. I have had the same experience with the British Veteran's Agency when dealing with British Veterans who reside in Canada. Nevertheless the Canadian approach to treating veterans is still excellent and once approved for medical and other services they receive the best care possible. It is the continual battle to get a decent level of service and comfort in their advancing years that is hard on this group. The form filling with its legal language and jargon, the difficulty recalling and transcribing those events from years ago and the lack of understanding of young employees does not help!

Veteran's issues have always been front and centre in Canada and in Canadian politics over the years, but perhaps worst of all is that the contribution some of them made to victory in the Second World War should be called into question.

For more than a year veterans have been angry with the Canadian War Museum in Ottawa because of a plaque describing the campaign waged by Bomber Command against Germany.

The veterans said the wording left the impression the effort, which cost the lives of 80,000 Allied Flyers, among them 10,000 Canadians, was ultimately futile. Even worse, they felt, it made them seem like war criminals. A month ago the museum agreed to introduce a new plaque, one with a positive tone and better context. It was a major reversal, considering the original version had the blessing of academics and historians who have decided there *is* doubt as to just how effective the bombing was.

The response of the public was tremendous and support for the veterans immense. The consensus was that Canada's young men did what they were asked. This action by the Museum was shameful. It was the public pressure that changed this and the very strong support given to the veterans.

Recently there has been a plethora of books about Bomber Command and with the release of previously held material from government sources these books now document the times of these young men and women serving on Bomber Stations. Patrick Bishop's book "**Bomber Boys**" brilliantly captures the character, feelings and motivations of the bomber crews and pays tribute to their heroism and determination. They were among the best of their generation, who were called on to carry out one of the grimmest duties of the Second World War. Bishop brilliantly restores these men to their rightful place in our consciousness.

The treatment of Bomber Command veterans after the war was a travesty and this book by Bishop has helped to put the whole period in perspective. I recently returned from Germany where I visited Dresden. I also had at the time a book by Frank Musgrove who was a navigator on that raid. I knew of Frank Musgrove as he taught at Manchester University but nobody knew about his RAF days. He indicated he did not even mention it when applying for jobs after the war. However he continues to say that his time in Bomber Command was the most important time of his life. Philip Matthew, the Bomb Aimer who flew with my father from Mepal told me that his "Bomber Crew Family" had an everlasting influence on his life. As Musgrave says when he looks back over the past 60 years "I weep for the 55,000 men of Bomber Command who have not lived to enjoy them".

It is for this very reason that I am so happy to be here tonight to show my support for Bomber Command Veterans and their families. The men of Bomber Command and other veterans deserve nothing less.

In our ENT & Hearing Clinic and we have over 700 active veterans as patients ranging from WW II to young veterans from Afghanistan.

George Robertson, a member of 75 Squadron, who was at both Mepal and Stradishall the same time as my father, also attended the clinic. Our office is veteran friendly and we have books of Remembrance and pictures on the walls, invariably given to us by the veterans themselves.

On the office wall hang pictures that are an appreciation and a personal daily reminder to all of us of how fortunate we are. My father rarely spoke of his experiences at Mepal with Bomber Command nor did he attend squadron reunions. When he started flying combat operations with 75 Squadron he was 33 years of age. Many of his crew members were only 19 years old. The men of Bomber Command had a 1 in 4 chance of survival. My father and crew were lucky as they completed their tour. Many crews did not. What odds but what courage in the face of such adversity. All of us are here today because we either flew with, or know of someone who was in 75 Squadron. We are here because of what they did for us those many years ago.

When the war was over, the men and women, fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, uncles and aunts who had been involved, in uniform and in civilian capacities, joined in joyous and short-lived celebrations, then immediately began the task of building their lives and the world they wanted. They were mature beyond their years, tempered by what they had been through, disciplined by their military training and sacrifices. They stayed true to their values of personal responsibility, duty, honour and faith.

This time of the year, around 11th November is at one level a sombre time when we all reflect on those who gave their lives and those who served. To the men of Bomber Command, both living and dead, we owe so much. It is a real privilege that you have given me tonight and my thoughts can be summed up by the words of Tom Brokaw, NBC Newsman, when he said that "This is the greatest generation any society has produced".

Dr David Lyon

Son of Albert Lyon, 75 (NZ) Squadron 1943-1944.

Mepal.

Please let Margaret know in good time if you are attending the reunion as it will make her job much easier.

I look forward very much to seeing you in June when once again we can join in the spirit that is 75 (NZ) Squadron.

God bless you all

Kevin

Ake Ake Kia Kaha



Mike Molony unveiling the Squadron plaque



Mike and Jack Richards



Laying of wreaths at the Squadron Plinth



David Lyons, his mother and nephew Joe



Vera Lynn thanking Barry Aldridge



Vera Lynn, the forces sweetheart, with guests at Witchford museum