

Friends of 75 (NZ) SQUADRON RAF ASSOCIATION UNITED KINGDOM

August 2013

Chairman

Kevin King
49 Greystones Road
Bearsted
Maidstone
Kent
ME15 8PD
Tel: 01622-739842
E-Mail: kevinfking@talktalk.net



FROM THE SECRETARY, Margaret Still

Welcome to you all and I hope the beautiful summer hasn't affected you too much. What a dilemma—either too hot or too cold.

We went to Northern Ireland for Norman Allen's Memorial Service in April staying with Marshall and Margaret Allen. There were over 200 at the service and our John McFarland spoke for the 75 NZ Sqn - it was both touching and sad. Norman had his fingers in many pies and was well respected in the area. What a wonderful country Northern Ireland is with beautiful homes and scenery to die for - they say its like New Zealand and they may be right.

We also attended Mike Molony's funeral in Leatherhead, Surrey on the 15th of April. What an amazing life Mike had that unfortunately we only found out about at his funeral. Apparently he could have played cricket for England, but war broke out. On November 10th, Mike and Pam Molony's ashes will be scattered at the Mepal plinth. Mike Molony and Norman Allen were long time members of the Association and came to many of our reunions, so they will be sadly missed by us.

We had a very generous donation from the late Herber (Bert) Morgan, who passed away suddenly at his home in Cardiff. Herber and Eeva, we thank you for the money which will be used for the upkeep of the Memorial Gardens at Mepal.

Just after our Summer Reunion, our honorary padre Ernie Barlow organised a table top stall at the Mepal Primary School—so Roly, myself and Peter Walker drove up early Saturday morning to help. It is thanks to our members contributing items to sell that we took £85 which is enough to pay for four wreaths for the year. We still have a few boxes to sell and will go to a boot sale in the next month which will hopefully give us another £8. As one leading supermarket says, 'Any thing little helps'.

SUMMER REUNION 2013

In May we had our summer reunion at Brandon. On the Saturday night we went to Mildenhall Air Base for the dinner, which was organised by the Mildenhall Register. There were 23 members of the Friends of the 75 NZ Squadron Association, one of the largest groups at the reunion. It was a very enjoyable evening, with RNZAF Wing Commander Nick Olney from New Zealand House in London also attending.

WINTER REUNION 2013

We are having our winter reunion at The Dolphin Inn in St Ives, Cambridgeshire from Friday the 8th November to Sunday 10th November. The cost is the same as last year £118 for both nights and that includes dinner bed and breakfast so call me on 01621 843 935 or e-mail me at mstill81@talktalk.net.

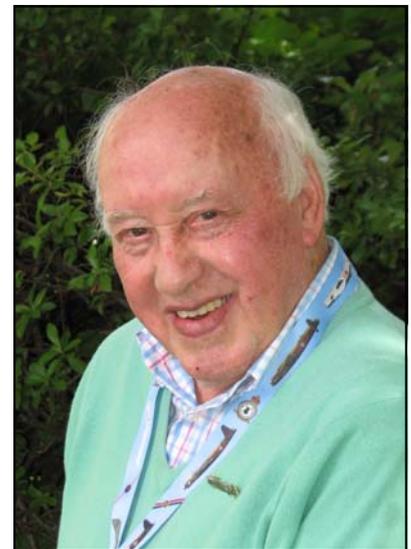
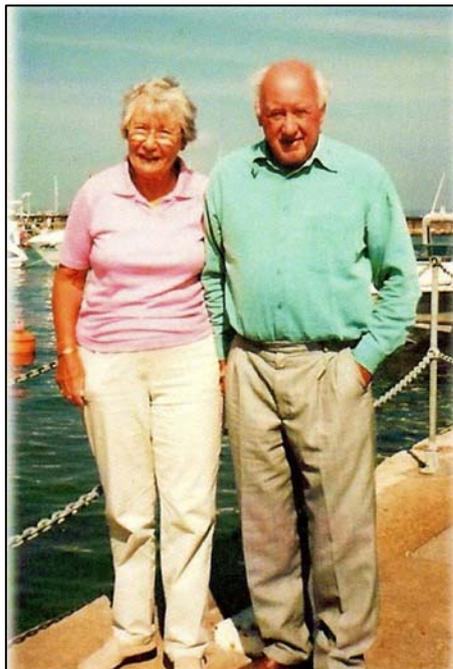
OBITUARIES

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

Michael (Mike) Dennis Elwyn Molony

Mike was born in India early in 1925. He and his twin brother were sent to the Himalayas and then England for their education. Mike excelled at Cricket creating several local batting records. Trials to play for Somerset had been arranged, though did not eventuate when he joined the RAF in 1943 at the age of 19 yrs old. As a Sergeant Air Gunner (1852898), Mike arrived at Mepal's 75(NZ) Sqn RAF on the 23rd June 1944 as Mid Upper Gunner for the crew of Flt Lt V.J. Andrew, DFC, RNZAF. Having survived a crash landing at Woodbridge in July his luck ran out on the 26th August 1944. Whilst attacking Kiel their Lancaster I (LM544) was hit by flak, severely wounding Mike in the leg. The Kiwi Navigator, Fg Off Eric 'Ossie' Osborne was quick to give Mike first aid which saved his life. On landing, it was thought that Mike had not survived, but he was rushed to Ely hospital where they saved his leg and he spent the next three years, most of it in plaster. After his recovery Mike was invalided out of the RAF in 1948, worked for KLM for five years, and then BOAC for twenty five years. His great passion became golf which he started playing in 1950. He met Pam Davis whom became his great golfing companion and they married in 1974. Mike and Pam played the best courses all over the world, with Mike amassing many championship wins and becoming Club Captain of the Leatherhead Golf Club.

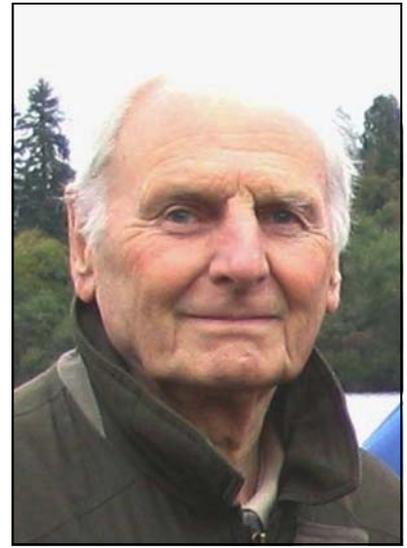
Mike and Pam joined the 75(NZ) UK Association about ten years ago, and they became regular and devoted attendees at the Squadron reunions. Mike was a member of the Richard III Association and interested in heraldry and country village signs. However, in 2010 Mike lost his beloved wife Pam, brother Barry and sister Pat. Always polite, he was the perfect gentleman. Mike passed away peacefully on the 15th April 2013 in Surrey. His funeral was attended by the following members of the Association. Kevin and Dawn King, Margaret and Roly Still, Dave and Jean Church, Colin and Margaret Gray and Dee Boneham. After the funeral a reception was held at Leatherhead Golf Club, and his nephew John read the eulogy and put on a photographic display of Mike's life.



Obituaries continued...

Arthur Reginald (Reg) Gunn

Reg was born in August 1924, and joined the Air Training Corps in 1939. Enlisting on his 17th birthday into the RAF as a Flight Engineer (SGT, 1583849) he became the FE for the crew of Flt Lt Eric Witting, DFC, RNZAF. They arrived at New Market onto 75(NZ) Sqn RAF flying Stirlings on 4 Sep 1943. On one of his first **operations** his aircraft was attacked, killing the Rear Gunner. Reg and his crew later converted to Lancasters and moved to Mepal where



they completed their tour of operations in August 1944. They also featured in the film '*Maximum Effort*', which was filmed at Mepal. Reg took up a commission in the RAF Regiment in 1946 and served two tours in Aden and time in Wildenrath, Germany where he met his future English school teacher wife. He later served at the school of AAA Defence in Watchet, Somerset as an instructor, was promoted to FLT LT in early 1952, and retiring on 29Feb 1962 as A/SQN LDR. Reg was known to the Association but he was unable to attend reunions because of failing health. Reg passed away on the 24th May 2013 due to pneumonia. Members Ann and Andy Kirby attended the funeral in Westerliegh, Bristol on June 12th.

Herber Miles (Bert) Morgan

Bert was an RAF Flight Engineer (SGT, 1837208) and a member of Flying Officer William (Bill) Evendon's crew. They flew on 75(NZ) Sqn at RAF Mepal from March to July 1945. Bert and his wife Eeva have kept in contact with their Rear Gunner Roly Williams and Navigator Neville Staples in Christchurch, NZ. Sadly Neville passed away last December. Herber (Bert) passed away on the 10th February 2013 at his home in Rhiwbina, Cardiff, aged 88 years. His funeral was held in Heath, Cardiff on Feb 22nd.

That is all from me for now, but we are looking forward to seeing you at the next reunion.

Regards

Margaret

FROM THE CHAIRMAN, Kevin King

Mark Rae

I was contacted some time ago by Mark Rae whose grandfather was killed on the squadron. Mark is a record producer in London and has written a special song in remembrance of his grandfather. He will be attending the reunion where the song will be performed by professional artists. I'm looking forward to it very much.

Committee

Welcome to Rory Viner and Margaret Gray as new members onto the Committee. They will, I'm sure make a valuable contribution.

Memorial and Association Fund

I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the Memorial fund and the Association fund. It is very much appreciated.

Request for information.**Glenn Miller**

I have received a request from Dennis Spragg in the USA for information from members with regard to the loss of Glenn Miller. He is currently preparing a book for publication, titled,

“ Resolved: The Disappearance of Glenn Miller, December 15, 1944”.

There was an abortive raid on this day in which 75(NZ) Sqn took part. Bombs were jettisoned into the English Channel and North Sea. It has been suggested that bombs that were jettisoned hit Glenn Millers aircraft.

If any member has any recollections please contact Dennis at :

Glenn Miller Archive

American Music Research Center

University of Colorado Boulder

Norlin Library M450F

University of Colorado

Boulder, CO 80309-0184

Phone: 1 (617) 99-5421

Email: dennis.spragg@colorado.edu

Peenemunde Raid 70th Anniversary Commemorative Walk

A fundraising walk took place on the 17/18 August 2013 from the Runnymede Memorial to the Bomber Command Memorial in Green Park. The participants are looking to raise £5000 towards the maintenance of the memorial.

I was contacted by Cpl Hayden McEwen, a Kiwi serving in the RAF Police. He has taken part in the walk and is looking for sponsors. Donations can be made at <http://www.justgiving.com/Hayden-McEwen>

Scouts research

Simon Sommerville has had a request from Charlie Hale, who is the Scout Leader of the 1st Sutton (Cambs) Scouts. He is researching the group's history and has found that it was formed by three members of 75 (NZ) Squadron in 1943. On the registration form of the group they are listed as:

Scout Master John W Perry, C Flight 75 (NZ) Sqd RAF Mepal

Assistants George Franks, Flt Section 75 (NZ) Sqd RAF Mepal

Edward Sims, B Flight 75 (NZ) Sqd RAF Mepal

If you knew any of these airmen please let Simon know at info@75nzsqadron.com

Thank you to John deHoop and Dee Boneham for representing the Association and providing the following articles.

Kindest regards to you all.

Kevin.

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Bomber Boys Fundraisers, John deHoop

About three years ago a group of Bomber Command veterans (12) was organized out of our local Aircrew Association to raise funds for the building of the BC Memorial in London. A super lady PR was recruited and also a number of authors of WW2 books, a collection of prints and other pictures of WW2 aircraft.

A venue for the display and sale of the items was investigated and we were lucky to find a keen aircraft enthusiast in the owner of a string of Garden nurseries. On each occasion a stall is set up to sell the memorabilia which are signed by the veterans with name and Squadron. With some publicity, large numbers of people have come—often being the same people who have previously attended. Up to the moment we have raised in excess of £30,000.

Although the monument is now built, the RAF Benevolent is left with the task of the maintenance of the structure so we are carrying on with the fund-raising for as long as we can.

Some of us veterans who were in the TV programme "Bomber Boys" broadcast last year, have been in demand to give talks to various organizations for which we have received extra donations for the Fund. One very rewarding venue (not monetary) has been visiting schools to talk to the children as part of the national curriculum.

Last week our team was invited to a Garden Party at Buckingham Palace and we were introduced to Princess Anne which was a nice recognition of our efforts.



John in the hat, at a signing

John talking to Princess Anne

Markelo Magic Carpet Ride, Dee Boneham

Back in June 2011, I first met Benny Scheurs and his lovely wife Rika. Later I then met his daughter and Egbert one of the other members from the Markelo Missing Airmens Memorial Committee. At the time Glen & I were shown round the Memorial and grave site for the crew of EF399 of 75 (NZ) Sqn and Benny said "You must come in 2013 as we are unveiling another memorial!". Well how could I refuse...

I arrived on the Thursday after using the rail and sail option from Stenalink (pew thank goodness I wasn't on DFDS!) and was collected by my host family Erik, Annie, Tanja and Wilbert. Erik is the local organiser for the Keep Them Rolling group (KTR) but more of them later. There was a meet and greet at Herbert de Pot (which everyone just called 'The Pot') and we were handed a whole pack of stuff including a t-shirt, peaked cap, bag, pens, card packs and information booklets all linked to the Memorial! Wow they had been busy. Great to meet some of the families but there was so many of them! I had had a Skytoon picture of Stirling EF399 made and this I presented to Benny as I knew he was going to be busy on the following day. I also collected the lovely tribute, which Benny's sister in law had done for me, so I could lay it on behalf of the 75 Sqn Associations (both UK and NZ). Much nicer than the plastic wreath I could have got from British Legion and just the same price!



Friday morning Annie & I joined Benny, some of the families and some of the school children from the 5 junior schools of Markelo for a presentation morning. There were gifts aplenty for the schools which look after the graves of the fallen in Markelo. There was a lady called Ada from Canada who brought a book about a Lancaster bomber and Operation Manna, Darryl Robertson (NZ artist and 75 Sqn family member) had pictures for them all and then the Burbidge family had books with pictures of New Zealand.

The families from the 12 & 35 Sqn crews had also brought gifts too. After coffee and a chat we all went home so we could change for the main event of the afternoon. Everyone who was invited to the Memorial officially gathered at The Pot. There was the NZ Ambassador, George Troup, RNZAF Air Attache Nick Olney, RAAF Air Attache Peter Wood, Barrie Davies and Tiny Claessen (from Beesel), an RAF Representative, representatives of 12 Sqn & Wickenby Associations, a Lieutenant Colonel from the Dutch Air Force, the Mayor of Markelo, but the most important people were the 60 family members who had travelled from New Zealand, Hong Kong, Australia and from all over the United Kingdom. Benny and Darryl Robertson had done a great job of getting all but one family represented. Some of the family members had never known about their relative till Darryl had contacted them!

We were taken to the Cemetery in the vehicles of the KTR, which was good as it was raining. In fact it rained most of the day!! Benny obviously didn't put the correct weather indent in! There were many people already there from the town of Markelo including children from the schools. There was also an honour guard from the local Royal Netherlands Air Force Unit.

Benny's daughter Karin was the master of ceremonies and played it just right. There were lots of wreaths and floral tributes from families, the children and the dignitaries. There was also lovely reading and speeches from family and dignitaries. One thing that was reiterated was that the families were the most important part of the proceedings and I have to agree. I was very honoured to have been asked to lay a wreath on behalf of the 75 Sqn Associations and to read out the Exhortation and a special reading that is read out in Markelo in commemoration of all who died in the area.



Afterwards, there was the chance for people to take pictures and have their own time with the graves and memorial (including interviews with Dutch and New Zealand TV for Keith Burbidge) we were all transported back in KTR vehicles. The procession at one point was preceded by the piper and drummer while we passed in front of a residential home. All the residents from there and the road were out to wave us past including one gentleman who is 100 years old. Back at The Pot we were treated to drinks and cake and conversation. It was great to have a chance to get to know the family members a little better as some had only come for the day as had several of the dignitaries. A very tiring and emotional but uplifting day for all and there was more to come!

On the Saturday we did a tour round the Dutch countryside including all three crash sites in the KTR vehicles. A mixture of sadness and happiness as each crash site now has its own memorial plaque (75 Sqn crash already had one) and a wreath was laid at each provided by the Memorial Committee. Lots of pictures taken. We ended for lunch at Holten outside the Canadian War Cemetery there. We had time to browse the cemetery and its museum about our Canadian compatriots. Benny and his family sponsor one of the graves there and visit it regularly. We found two Australian graves to visit, in the spirit of ANZAC co-operation.



As a bit of light relief and fun for the KTR drivers they were allowed onto the Markelo Motocross circuit at the end of the race day. Some of the vehicles struggled a bit until they got used to the circuit. They gave rides to anyone who wanted to have a go. In the evening there was a social gathering with a Dutch style Buffet, the local Markelo Band (with singers) and entertainment from Dutch Clog dancers (including my host Erik-he gets everywhere!) and a group of female acappella singers from Germany. Great fun for all and a late night but worth it. More gifts were given to the committee and others by the families from New Zealand.

The next day, Sunday, was a very chilled out day starting with a church service in Markelo Town Church. I will never forget young Jayden's "Look what I did!" after he lit the remembrance candle in the church. Afterwards we went to the church hall for drinks and biscuits where a smaller remembrance candle was lit from the big one for each of the families to take home. After that we had lunch in a little restaurant next to the church. In the afternoon those who wanted to and weren't leaving, went with Benny, Egbert and Erik for a memorial walk. One of the places we visited was where one of the crew parachuted down from EF399, but did not survive, making an indent in the ground which had been commemorated in concrete and then a second visit to the memorial for EF399. Next morning I very sadly had to leave Markelo while those families that were left and members of the committee went to visit the Aircraft Recovery Group Museum just outside Amsterdam. Wish I could have gone to that one! I would like to thank Benny and his committee for treating us all to a wonderful time in Markelo and the Dutch people for their care and commemoration of our 75 (NZ) Sqn aircrew. Anyone wanting further information about the memorial can find it on www.memorialmarkelo.nl which is run by Benny.