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***No 50 & No 61 SQUADRONS
ASSOCIATION
NEWSLETTER***



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EDITORIAL

The next reunion fast approaches and it is amazing how quick they come round each year. Peter Jacobs has mentioned in his piece about the change in the weekend. The itinerary for this is included with this newsletter.

There is a request in this edition for information on Wg Cdr William McFarlane Russell. This man was the C.O. of 50 Squadron during the war but we knew little of his exploits, which were quite amazing, loosing his life on his 13th operation flying an SOE operative into occupied France on his 60th operation overall. The association would also like to know more about him so we may put a piece in the veterans section of the web site. We would hope to have more on this man in future editions of the newsletter.

As we go to press, it has just been announced that the appeal for the Lincolnshire Bomber Command Memorial will be launched on May 30/31 at the Lincolnshire Aviation Heritage Centre at East Kirkby. The full text giving details of the memorial are printed on the back page. This will be a wonderful achievement and asset to the county of Lincolnshire.

The content of our newsletter is from various sources, both from members and from people with an interest in the aircraft and the crews who flew them. We always welcome any comment or item of interest which is suitable for publishing. So if you have a comment to make or an interesting story, let us have it. We will do our best to publish it.

MC & RJ

SECRETARYS CHAT

Looking forward to meeting our members on parade wearing the Bomber Command Clasp. For those who have not yet applied, I can post them a form to complete. Please either email me or phone me with your request. Should some of you like to either lay or have a wreath laid by a cadet, at the Birchwood or Skellingthorpe services on 9th June, then they are available, either Type B; £16.50 or Type C (With insert); £18.00, with something added on please as a donation– you are always very good!

Cheques should be made out to **RBL Poppy Appeal.**

Gerry Collins

CHAIRMANS COMMENTS

I hope this latest edition of the Newsletter finds you all well. At the time of writing the clocks are about to go forward, which means we are hopefully through the winter months, although we have only just got through yet another period of snow and cold temperatures; that was the sixth time this winter that we had been hit by snow here in Lincoln.

Since the last Newsletter the government announced the award of a Bomber Command clasp. My understanding is that the clasp will be worn on the 1939-45 Star and can be claimed by veterans or next of kin, although I have yet to see the eligibility criteria. I have read personal views on various websites and in newspapers as to whether recognition should have been through a medal – i.e. a star – or a clasp, as has been decided, and also whether the ground crew should receive the same recognition as the air crew. No doubt the discussions and debates will continue for years to come but in the space of this past year Bomber Command has received its memorial and its clasp.

As we now look forward to the Spring, it is not long before our Reunion Weekend. It hardly seems possible but, once again, we look forward to seeing as many of you here as possible. This year will see a slight change in format and the most notable changes are the time of the AGM, which will now be in the afternoon of the Saturday rather than in the morning as we have done in previous years, and the Saturday evening event will be held at the Skellingthorpe Community Centre rather than at the Assembly Rooms. The move of the AGM to the afternoon will create less work for the Leslie Manser School and the Saturday evening function will create a less formal occasion and a more relaxed environment so that we can circulate more easily amongst friends. These changes also enable those of you who want to reduce the weekend to one night away to do so.

There are two other notable events I wish to draw your attention to, both of which are birthdays as our President, Sir Michael Beetham, turns ninety in May and our Vice-President, Jimmy Flint, will be 100 in the same month. Fantastic and my heartiest congratulations to both - well done Sirs!

Peter Jacobs

THE MYSTERY OF PB759

I recently had an email from Ken Stone who's Father Ted Stone flew with 61 Squadron and flew ED860, QR-N on the Nuremburg raid.

He highlighted the fascinating story of PB759. This aircraft was the replacement QR-N, when ED860 was written off on take off on its 131st operation. Our Roll of Honour states that this aircraft was lost on a raid to Politz on 8/9th February 1945, this was taken from the 61 Sqn ORB. The captain being F/O Tasker. It now transpires that there is an error on the ORB. PB759 is now known to have failed to return on the night of 30th December 1944, on a raid to Houffalaize, the crew all baling out safely over friendly territory.

According to the form 78, PB759 was delivered to 61 Sqn. On 9th Nov 1944 and agrees with the story that it was lost on 30th December, being SOC on 11th Jan 1945.

Further investigation now shows that the aircraft that went down with F/O Tasker and his crew was ME443, which was the replacement QR-N for PB759.

According to the Form 78, ME443 was assigned to 61 Squadron on 8th February 1945, flew on its first operation that night to Politz and failed to return, being SOC on 22nd Feb 1945

This may explain the error on the ORB as the aircraft lasted on the squadron less than a day.

The mystery now of course is who was flying PB759 when it went down? So if anyone can help identify this crew it would be appreciated.

Mike Connock

ASSOCIATION MEMORABILIA

The following are available from the treasurer, Mike Connock:

Association Ties, blue with crests of both sqns: £10 inc p&p

Operation Fail to Return (Birchwood memorial): dvd £5 inc p&p

Rolls of Honour: £5 + p&p

RAF Skellingthorpe by Derek Brammer. £10 inc. p&p

Research for squadron members

We regularly get requests for information from relatives of former members of either squadron for information on their service history. As unfortunate as it is **we do not keep any records** of former squadron members and any requests should be submitted to either the National Archives at

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/>

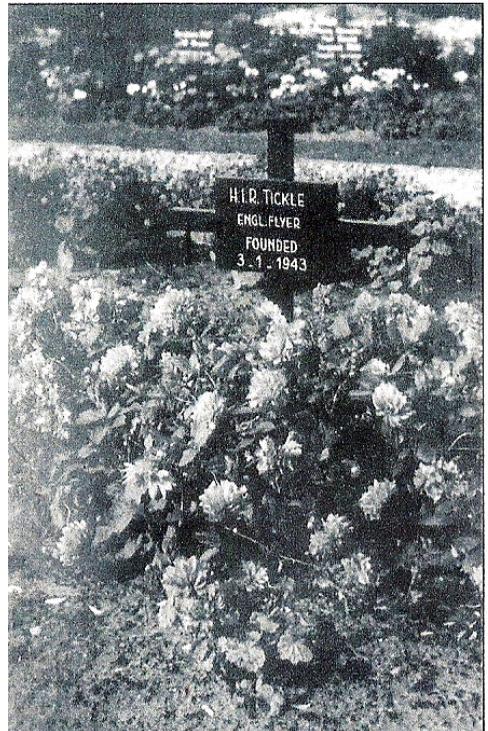
Or possibly try the Air Historical Branch at <http://www.raf.mod.uk/ahb/>

One source of information which is very helpful is the Squadron Forum at <http://squadronforum.freeforums.org/no-50-and-no-61-squadrons-association-forum-f3.html>

Mike Connock

Lancaster W4769 of 61 Squadron.

Lost on a raid to Essen 3 January 1943. Mark Hakvoort of Koningin Beatrixiaan has contacted me with details of the crash which was watched by Ben Viersen, who is planning to return from Canada to Holland with many memories of his young years. The 7 crew of W4769 were originally buried in the cemetery in Huisduinen, but after the war, the Dutch government moved the cemetery to Ijsselsteyn. The picture shows Flying Officer Tickle's original grave, a simple wooden cross with a board attached. **“H.J.R. Tickle Engl Flyer 3.1.43”** Mark is looking for help to provide more information on the families. He can be contacted at; Mark.hakvoort@interflow.nl



Gerry Collins

Dear Mike,

Thank you for putting my request for information re. P/O Cockerell into the December Newsletter. Surprisingly, I've found the answer myself today, in the 'Lincolnshire Echo' of 20 June 1940.

In case anyone is interested, P/O Kenneth Andre Cockerell, Pilot No. 50 Squadron Royal Air Force was killed in a head-on collision between two vehicles on the A15 near Temple Bruer, 19 June 1940 while driving in black-out conditions. He was 21. Also killed were P/O Alan Lawton RAF aged 20 and WAAF ACW1 Barbara Williams aged only 17. What a tragedy.

Thanks again,

Alan Tocock

**P/O Cockerell is listed in the associations Roll of Honour.
Ed.**

REMEMBERING

I now have a lot more time to sit and think of things that have gone by since loosing Freda.

One of the events that I often think about, and I feel has never been given any praise, is the help that our No.50 & No.61 Association Memorial Committee received during our meetings in Lincoln.

Our committee including Les Bartlett, Charles Swain, Eddie Davidson and myself, were always welcome at the Avon Guest House, run by David & Carol Jackson.

She always managed to squeeze us in at times when our meetings had to take place at the same time as a meeting with Lincoln City Council.

To raise money she hung prints of my aircraft paintings in her lounge and sold them to her guests, we thought she was wonderful.

We were sorry when she passed away and Freda and I attended her funeral.

She solved all the problems of where to stay when we were urgently required at a meeting in Lincoln.

I feel that Carol should get a thank you.

Reg Payne

LOST CREWS HONOURED

I was pleased to be contacted recently by a teacher from a school in France, regarding two crews who crashed near their village.

Much has been said about the relationship between the British and the French, I think it has obviously evolved from the battles between Napoleon and Wellington, because my experience of the French people has been very friendly. I have travelled all over France in the last three decades and have met nothing but pleasant, friendly people. On one of these trips reported in a previous edition of the newsletter was to accompany Betty Bascombe to the village where her Husband crashed, and the reception there was overwhelming. A service is held there every year to remember the crew who died.

This leads me onto the school, in a small village called Moliens, in the north west of the Oise department near Amiens. There they have a service each year to remember the two crews, one from 50 Sqn and one from 61 Sqn who crashed in the area on the same night and same raid.

The teacher is now doing a project with the children to honour and remember these crews, and has requested information.



School children and residents remembering the aircrew in Moliens.



Vincent Herpin with the children and residents of the village



The original grave marker

The teacher Vincent Herpin has much information already and I have put him in touch with relatives of some of the crew through the Forum. The information in this article was supplied by Vincent is that which he had already collated.

One aircraft crashed at Moliens :

Lancaster III of 61 Sqn, Serial QR-V, ND867.

The crew were;

F/L William E. GRANTHAM (Pilot) KIA – age?

F/S William J. HOBBS (Nav.) KIA – age 23

F/S Ronald TOWNDROW (W.Op) KIA – age ?

Sgt Charles A BALSER (A. G) KIA – age 23

Sgt Peter H BAIGENT (A.G) KIA – age 19

Sgt G.A BERRY (Flt Eng.) POW – age ?

F/S T.C YOUNG (B.A.) Escaped – age ?



William Grantham crew with HCU Stirling

The second aircraft crashed at Rederie, near Moliens.

Lancaster III of 50 Sqn Serial VN-L, DV227.

The crew were;

Sgt Edgar C P Lloyd (Pilot)

KIA- Age 25

Sgt George H Tucker (Flt Eng.)

KIA- Age 22

F/S Clifford Jackson (Nav)

KIA- Age 23

F/S Charles J O'Connor (B.A.)

Canada, KIA- Age 28

F/S Eric J W Stirling (W. Op.) NZ, KIA- Age 24

Sgt Kenneth G Allsop (A.G.) KIA- Age 20

Sgt George A Higgins (A.G.) KIA- Age 19



Edgar Lloyd Crew

It is a privilege to be able to help this school with their project and is an indication how many communities in France show appreciation for the sacrifice made by all branches of the armed forces during the Second World War.

If you have any information that might add to the children's project you can contact Vincent Herpin at herpin.vincent@wanadoo.fr or at Ecole Elementaire, 23 Rue Des Ecoles, 60220 Moliens, France.

Should you travel to France the village is only about 1.5 to 2 hrs drive from Calais, situated about 52Km SW of Amiens and 37Km NW of Beauvais. I am sure you would be made very welcome

Amazingly the children are only 8 or 9 years old, and a credit to their community. I asked the question, would it happen here? but then I think about the Leslie Manser School, and the children from the two schools in the Village of Skellingthorpe who attend the services each year and realise yes it does happen here, although I do understand the poignancy of it happening in an occupied country.

Mike Connock

ASSISTANCE REQUIRED

I am trying to gather information on my late father in law **F/Sgt Frederick Garland Brook** who was in 50 Sqdn. He was taken POW 08/09/40 and was in camp 357. The family believe that his last flight was a leaflet drop. We know he was awarded the DFM. I would welcome any further information. Best Wishes,

Gwyneth Brook gwyneth.brook@o2.co.uk

Wing Commander William McFarlane Russell. C.O. 50 Squadron.

Edwin Bryce is after information on W/Cdr Russell who was C.O. of 50 Squadron. Following which he was posted to RAF Tempsford flying SOE operations, and failed to return from his 13th operation with them, this was his 60th operation. Edwin runs the RAF Tempsford Association and his uncle, F/O A F Bryce flew with W/Cdr Russell. If anyone has any information or pictures of him he would be most grateful. Contact him at Edwin.Bryce@kilsbywilliams.com

Pilot Officer Clough & Crew

A request has been received to try and contact relatives of the crew of Lancaster DV186 of 61 Squadron, captained by Pilot Officer Clough. The aircraft crashed in Normandy on 16 August 1943.

A memorial is to be unveiled in late summer this year, and it is hoped that relatives of the crew will be able to attend. Any relative wishing more information, please ring Alan Biggs on 01522 751690

Bomber Command Clasp

Further to our Secretary's offer to supply the necessary application forms, the form can also be downloaded from the veterans web site at:

http://www.veterans-uk.info/arctic_star_index.htm

Alternatively it can be downloaded direct from our web site at;

<http://www.no-50-and-no-61-squadrons-association.co.uk/>

LANCASTER ME 725 (QR-G) 61 SQN

We have a story from a different perspective. On 6 Dec 44, QR-G was tasked to attack Giessen. Unfortunately it was shot down and crashed near Ilschhausen, between Giessen and Marburg in Germany. The photographs below show an unidentified German officer inspecting the wrecked aircraft.



QR-G's crew were:

Fg Off C A Donnelly
RAAF (POW)

Sgt A H Steers (KIA)

Flt Lt J H Vincent

RAAF (POW)

FS R G D Brock

(POW)

FS F D Green RAAF

(POW)

Sgt L Ayres (KIA)

Sgt J T Kerrigan

(POW)

Sgt Albert Steers and Sgt Leonard Ayres appear in our Roll of Honour.

We are indebted to Horst Jeckel for the pictures and information. Horst is an aircraft historian and a friend of one of our members, Les Loosemore, who sends Horst our newsletter. Horst hopes one of our members may be able to provide information on



Sgt J Thomas Kerrigan or Sgt Ronald Gerald Devereaux Brock, who evacuated the stricken aircraft and landed close to the village of Ilschhausen.



Sgt Kerrigan stayed overnight in a small farm owned by a Mr Mann, whose son is still alive. Mr Mann took Sgt Kerrigan to the local police station the following day; but he got into a spot of trouble because he shook Kerrigan's hand and said goodbye! Kerrigan gave his sergeant's stripes to Mr Mann's son. Sgt Brock

used a part of his parachute in the wedding dress of his future wife.

Given the state of the wreckage, it is testament to the skill of the pilot that there were not more fatalities.

Horst has provide us with a rare glimpse of the other side of operations and shown the care and respect given to downed allied aircrews by German civilians.

We do hope that 61 Sqn members may be able to help Horst, who can be contacted via email: viperbj30@aol.

Richard Jones



ABSENT FRIENDS

A W Hadley.

His son Clive advises us that his father Albert William Hadley passed away on 24th November 2012.

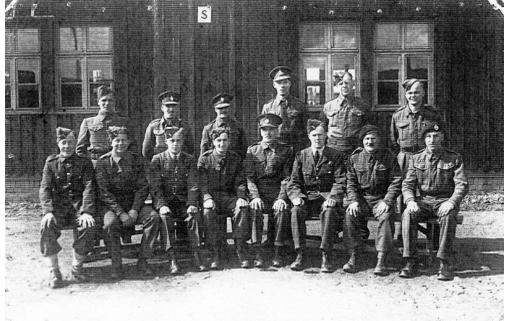
Albert William Hadley D o B 21st June 1920 Died 24th November 2012

Rank & Service No. - Sergeant 941666

Crew position - Wireless Operator

POW No. 24776

Stationed at North Luffenham



My father volunteered for the RAF in early September 1939, serving on No. 61 Squadron

He flew in a variety of aircraft, but was shot down in a Manchester on night of 31st January 1942, which had taken off from Woolfox Lodge at 18.45. They (see crew below) were on an operation over Brest, whilst after the Scharnhorst and Gnesenau (pocket battleships). Apparently, 72 aircraft were on this operation and 2 Hampdens and 2 Manchester's failed to return. He was one of six survivors, two having been killed in action or drowned and was taken prisoner of war.

He was taken to Stalag V11B (later Stalag 344 Lamsdorf), which was near Krakow in Poland. He was held there until 22nd January 1945, when the camp was evacuated, because of the nearing Russians from the east, and was part of the Longest March (according to the book "Last Escape" - John Nichol & Tony Rennell - those from this camp marched the longest distance of all allied POWs). He ended up at Fallingbostal and was liberated from there in May 1945.

Crew of Manchester L 7472 on 31st January 1942 was:

F/L Fraser (Pilot); Sgt. Marshall (2nd Pilot); F/Lt Hannigan (Bomb Aimer); F Sgt Shorrock (Navigator); Sgt Hadley (1st W.Op); Sgt Mullen (2nd W.Op); Sgt Walsh (1st A G); Sgt McLean (2nd A G).

Finally, may I take this opportunity to thank your organisation for the visits made to Dad over the years and may it go from strength to strength.

Clive Hadley

Arthur Smith 24 may 1925-24 Dec 2012



Sadly Arthur passed away on Christmas Eve, with the funeral service at Croydon Crematorium on 18th January. The Association was represented by Pam & Mike Connock. Sadly because of the weather and distance his last surviving crew member James Flowers was unable to attend, but his condolences were passed on to his relatives, his closest being his nephew. As well as the association there were representatives from the Bomber Command Association, and of course his good friend Sylvia and her husband, who has accompanied him to many reunions.

Arthur G Smith was the F/E in John Strathern Lawrey's crew. This being:
Pilot F/O J.S.Lawrey NZ
Nav. Sgt Jack Morrison Scot.
B/A Sgt Frank Wallis NZ.
F/E Sgt A.G.Smith English
WOP Sgt H.W. Kent NZ.
MUG Sgt Henry J. Flowers. Welsh.
R/G Sgt H.James Flowers English.

As a member of The Bomber Command Association, Arthur was very much involved with the progress of the memorial in Green Park, indeed he is very prominent in the Memorial book published to commemorate the unveiling. He also attended the Sun Military Awards in 2010, representing Bomber Command who received an award at the Imperial War Museum. At this years Festival of Remembrance in the Royal Albert Hall, he was again present when an image of a Lancaster was projected onto the floor and in each crew position stood a veteran, and Arthur was stood in his position as Flight Engineer.

A lovely man who will be sadly missed.



Arthur Smith with his Rear Gunner James Flowers at the 2010 reunion.

Les Morton

Chris Keltie has advised us that Les passed away peacefully in his sleep in Australia after a long battle with Leukaemia. Les flew with Bill North, and just leaves Mid-upper Dennis Bartlett as the surviving member of the crew.

Lincolnshire Bomber Command Memorial project. This is the brainchild of the Lord-Lieutenant of Lincolnshire, Mr Tony Worth. Tony has strong family connections with the RAF: his grandfather was ACM Sir Arthur Longmore, an uncle (Wg Cdr Richard Longmore) was killed in action and his father flew Halifaxes. He feels that a central memorial, to honour the effort and sacrifice made by the County's Bomber Command personnel during WW2, is long overdue: 25,611 of the 55,000 fallen Bomber Command aircrew were lost from Bomber County's airfields. Having held off until the Green Park Memorial was complete, detailed planning has now begun. We have secured a stunning site high on the ridge between RAF Waddington and Canwick. It overlooks the City of Lincoln and the Cathedral, and is visible from across the City and the surrounding countryside.

The site will become the hub of the Lincolnshire Aviation Heritage Trail, and have strong connections with the Bomber Command Association, the RAF Museum etc. The Appeal will formally be launched at the East Kirkby Aviation Heritage Centre on 30/31 May this year, under the wing of its Lancaster 'Just Jane': we hope to open on the 70th anniversary of the end of the War in Europe (May 2015). Lord Trenchard is the Appeal's Patron, and the Trustees include Lord Taylor of Holbeach and ACM Sir Stuart Peach (Commander, Joint Forces Command and soon-to-be Vice Chief of the Defence Staff. We have a small Working Group, which I chair, and enthusiastic support from the University of Lincoln, the County and District Councils, and Lincolnshire's RAF stations.

The aims of the Memorial are:

- To honour the 25,611 Bomber Command aircrew who were lost flying from Lincolnshire airfields, and those Bomber Command aircrew from Lincolnshire who flew from bases outside the County.
- To recognise the effort and sacrifice made by all who served on Lincolnshire's wartime Bomber Command bases.
- To educate and inform younger generations of the bravery displayed and suffering endured by all sides between 1939 and 1945.

We plan to build an Interpretation/Visitor Centre alongside the Memorial, to provide the 'educate and inform' function. The German perspective will be important, especially eye-witness accounts of the horrors of aerial bombardment, and the Lord-Lieutenant and I recently visited Berlin to start this process. A architectural design competition, funded by the Arts Council for England, is under way; and will be followed next month by a public consultation across the County and on the web site.

The site is www.lincsbombercommandmemorial.com, where there is further information, an on-line shop and details of how the project can be supported. Overall, we need to raise in the order of £3M. Fund-raising will begin in earnest after the official launch in May, although we need modest funding to meet expenses until then. More importantly, it's vital for us to win public awareness and support, so please visit the web site, and spread the word to all your friends and contacts, perhaps by forwarding this email. Oh, all right; a donation would be good, too.

Do let me know if I can give you any more information, or if you'd like to get involved.

Yours,
Paul

AVM P A Robinson
Chairman, LBCMA WG