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



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EDITORIAL

As usual this edition is mainly taken up with the reunion weekend, with the pictures telling the story of another successful reunion. It was good to see some new veterans faces, including Wg Cdr Jim Wright, unfortunately Jim could only attend the Saturday supper due to other commitments. We were pleased to have the Lord Lieutenant of Lincolnshire, Tony Worth, as one of our guests on the Saturday evening, giving us an update on the Lincolnshire Bomber Command Memorial. There are more details on the back page.

By the time you receive this newsletter the Canadian Lancaster may well be at Coningsby for its UK visit. One of our veterans, James Flowers (MUG), has been selected to make up the representative Lancaster veterans crew. We've asked James to take plenty of photographs and he will doubtless help us with an article for the Dec newsletter.

What a beautiful sight 2 Lancaster will be in formation, with a Spitfire on one wing and a Hurricane on the other, perhaps. Ten Merlin engines: something to dream about. It is a sight unlikely to be repeated. Although there is still hope that NX 611 (Just Jane) at East Kirkby will get a C of A and be fit to return to the air. As we go to press we have been advised that the two flying Lancaster are to over fly East Kirkby, while Just Jane does a run down the runway, so we will have 12 Merlin engines, that will definitely be a sound to experience. Sadly we have also been advised that all tickets for the event were sold out on the morning of their release. However, Mike and Pam were fortunate enough to get tickets so we will have a reporter "on the spot". Our own correspondent will doubtless take pictures of this unique event for us.

Please do let us have any reminiscences you may have that we can share with others through the newsletters. We like to keep a "bank" of articles so we can fill a space and often surprise other members with details of exploits that many of you have had. This is your magazine and Mike and I want it to reflect the stories and views of as many members as possible.

Richard Jones & Mike Connock

CHAIRMANS COMMENTS

As I reflect back to our annual re-union weekend, I am delighted it was, once again, another great success. We are lucky as an Association to have so many people here in Lincoln who are prepared to give up their valuable time to support us. Without them, weekends such as the ones we enjoy so much would not be possible and so I am sure you will all join me in thanking the Head Teacher and staff at the Leslie Manser School and the local Skellingthorpe community for all that they continue to do for us. I must also thank the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight. Those of you who attended the Sunday afternoon event at the Skellingthorpe Community Centre will know that the Lancaster went unserviceable soon before it was due to depart RAF Coningsby. While it would have been easy to have left us without a flypast, the BBMF arranged for a Spitfire that was airborne at the time, flown by Squadron Leader Andy Millikin, to come over to see us. It was a marvellous piece of quick planning and a moment of poignancy as Milli's grandfather flew with No 50 Squadron during the Second World War; so thank you Milli.

I would also like to thank the Association Committee for agreeing to stand for another year. I look forward to continue working with them all but I am particularly delighted to welcome Pete Small to the team as our Skellingthorpe member. Many of you will know that Pete has been a valued supporter of the Association for so many years and I am personally looking forward to having him on board; he is a welcome addition to the team.

As we look forward to the coming year, our main focus will be to support the Lincolnshire Bomber Command Memorial. Those of you who attended our annual dinner in June will have listened with interest to what the Lord Lieutenant had to say about how the project is moving forward. If all goes well then our reunion next year will be around the same time as the Bomber Command Memorial is due to be unveiled. We will let you know more.

Next year we return to our traditional second weekend in June, and so the annual reunion will take place over 13/14 June 2015. We plan to follow the same format as the past couple of years – it has worked extremely well. We will, however, be looking at the catering. Those of you who attend the Saturday evening and Sunday lunch events at the Skellingthorpe Community Centre will know just how much of a demand it is on Pam Connock and her team. Using external caterers for the Saturday night will ease the work load for the weekend and so I must thank Pam and her team for all they have done to ensure the annual dinner has been such a great success since we moved the event to its rightful home at Skellingthorpe.

That's all from me. Enjoy the rest of 2014 wherever you are and whatever you are doing.

Peter

SECRETARYS COMMENTS

Thinking back to our weekend – was it a success – of course it was! Chris Goldson started it off by showing us how to leave an aircraft very quickly!

Pam and her helpers again provided us with a very good meal, and it was pleasing that the Lord Lt & his wife Jenny were able to regale us with the latest redesign of the LBCM on Canwick Hill opposite Lincoln Cathedral.

On the Sunday we had another good turnout of members and civic dignitaries, with 204 Sqn Air Cadets helping with many jobs. Alan Biggs had many ex-Service Standard Bearers. RAF Waddington Band played for us and padre Revd Brian Stalley ably took us through the service.

At Skellingthorpe, 1237 Hykeham Sqn Air Cadets were in control of the car parking and other duties, with the vicars of both churches conducting the short service, after which, a Spitfire flew over, as the BBMF Lancaster was u/s. Once again, we were indebted to the ladies of the village who provided the buffet lunch and tea.

Gerry Collins

TREASURERS REPORT

The accounts were presented to the AGM and they showed a deficit on the year of £432.46.

Income was £1881.00 and expenditure £2313.46.

The deficit was as explained, due to mainly the fact that the year incurred the costs for 4 newsletters, this occurs purely due to timing of the invoices which fall around year end for the April edition. We also paid out an increase in donations mainly down to a donation to the Lincolnshire Bomber Command Memorial. Further to this the subscriptions were down, by some £222.00.

However the funds remain relatively healthy with £2030.39 in the general account and £3025.62 in the memorial account.

Membership has fallen to 177, from 190 this time last year. Of these 100 are paying members and 77 are non paying members. Some 12 members had not paid their membership at the time of the AGM.

Reunited after 69 years.

At Birchwood a veteran asked: "Do you know me", should I? was my reply. "Yes, I am Ted McRae, we were in the same billet at Skellingthorpe in 1945. You was on the next bed to me. I was a mid-upper- gunner in Jack Evans crew. We crashed returning from an Exodus operation on the 26th April 1945. I tried to find you at the reunion last year".



James Flowers left with Ted McRae

Lancaster PD339 (VN-J), captained by Fg Off C.J. Evans, RNZAF, were returning to Skellingthorpe after an Exodus trip, but whilst flying at low level, the aircraft hit a tree and crashed at Hardingstone, approx 16.55 hrs, one mile from Northampton. Five of the crew were killed, and the Mid Upper and Rear gunner were injured.

Crew as follows.....

F/O J. Evans, RNZAF, Pilot. killed

Sgt D.H. Millichamp, F/Eng, killed.

F/Sgt T.R. Thwaite, RNZAF, Nav, killed.

F/Sgt R.F. Carrodu, RNZAF, A/B, killed.

F/Sgt I.J. Loveridge, RNZAF, W/Op, killed.

Sgt E.R. McRae, M/U, injured.

Sgt G.A. Fuller, R/G, injured.

The four New Zealanders, were buried in Botley Cemetery Oxford, and Sgt Millichamp was buried in Arnold Cemetery, near Nottingham.

James Flowers

Memorabilia

We still have items of memorabilia for sale including the DVD "Failed to Return" telling the story of the Birchwood memorial. We also have a number of association ties both at £10 including postage.

THE AGM & LESLIE MANSER SCHOOL



Members attending the Association AGM (some twice!)



“Delivering the Morning Milk” - A George Formby standard splendidly performed by the children.



Vice-Chairman Richard Jones presenting the annual 50 and 61 Sqns' Association Achievement Award to Tilly McCaughan, wonderfully dressed a la 1940's fashion.



The visit to the Leslie Manser School on Saturday was the usual splendid affair. A good AGM followed by a light buffet, the children singing (a treat) and the George Formby skit. I do wonder what the children will think if they ever realise the double entendres. Oh, the wonderful innocence of childhood! The afternoon was a delight, good food, good company and a sing-song too.

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Richard Jones

BIRCHWOOD SERVICE



The veterans on Parade, led by our Vice Chairman Sqn Ldr Richard Jones. We still managed to assemble around fifteen veterans for the march past, with the salute being taken by Air Vice Marshal Nigel Baldwin CB CBE, and the Mayor of Lincoln, Patrick Vaughan.

As ever the weekend would not be the same without the future of the RAF, the Air Training Corps, who always support the reunion. Here we see the cadets from 207 Squadron ATC



A group photo at Birchwood, which includes two of our veterans, Jamie Barr on Richard Jones' right and Reg Freeth, standing on the far right

SKELLINGTHORPE SERVICE



Children of the Holt School in Skellingthorpe, ready to lay their roses, with head teacher Mrs Julie Leach at the rear. The Holt School choir also performed at the service. So moving.



Unfortunately, the Lancaster went unserviceable for the flypast but at short notice the BBMF re-routed this Spitfire, flown by Squadron Leader Andy Millican, who's Grandfather flew with 50 Squadron in WWII.

SATURDAY SUPPER



Tony Worth the Lord Lieutenant of Lincolnshire was among our invited guests and gave a comprehensive update on the current status of the Lincolnshire Bomber Command Memorial. The design has changed since its original conception and further information on the memorial can be found at: www.lincsbombercommandmemorial.com/memorial
It will certainly be a wonderful and fitting tribute to the brave.

Three veterans in deep discussion. Left Jim Wright, centre Reg Payne and right James Flowers.



The unsung heroes of the Saturday night. Local villagers who helped with the preparing and serving of the meal. Without whom.....

THE 3rd OF LES LOOSEMORE STORIES OF LIFE IN THE RAF

Royal Air Force Syerston Nottingham, England No. 5 Lancaster Finishing School
Arrived at L.F.S on 11-12-1944 Flying commenced on 29-12-1944
Flying ceased on 08-02-1945

The purpose of this course was to prepare us, as a crew, to serve and survive on an operational Station with a squadron.

Much had to be learnt about putting the finishing touches to our flying training in such a large aircraft. very important for our eventful survival in such a dangerous time. Most exercises while in flying short distances, were for the benefit of the Pilot, to practice his landings and take offs, known as Circuits and bumps, followed by flying on 3 engines to simulate engine failure on operations.

We did go on a special training flight, to simulate the conditions of carrying a very heavy bomb load to the target.

A trip to the Wash, just off the East coast to drop a flare, for any of the other crew members who would like to fire our guns at it, then the long climb started by heading to the south coast turning West for Cornwall at Wadebridge in Cornwall. We turned North and had gained a very good height, unfortunately our flight path took us over Milford Haven and Pembroke Docks! A very sensitive area.

We carried on flying North and climbing all the time, till we reached the point where we could not climb any more. It got that cold, I could not move my mid upper turret I checked with the rear gunner, and he had the same problem. This taught us to keep our turrets moving, as we would not be able to defend ourselves over enemy territory.

One frosty day, while joining the circuit to land, I noticed a large black shadow on the ground, it was edged in a blood red band no one was to talk about it. Prohibited, keep out. I noticed a live shell burst 200 yards to our starboard side and notified the Pilot and informed him he was over enemy territory from a rugby playing point of view, Just like N.Z, and Australia. We watched as the Gunners below adjusted the height of the shells to explode at the same height as us, they only used about 4 shells to match our height.

The reporting of crashed or missing aircraft, on training or operations, were discouraged so as to avoid lowering the morale of the surviving crews, even though you may have witnessed many aircraft go down, it could always be said, the missing aircraft had gone to another station to form a new Sqn.

Having successfully completed the L.F.S. course, we were posted to 61 Sqn. at Skellingthorpe, Lincoln, where a spanking brand new Lancaster awaited us courtesy of His Majesties Government, Its delivery test and checks had been carried by the ground staff, so we did our own ground test, such as running the engines, checking turret manipulation etc. Each crew member would check and set up his own equipment.

Records prove, we lost our aircraft, QR-T, 4 times when taken out by other crews, it was decided not to issue the letters any more as they had become jinxed.

As we had successful trips with QR-T, and many other aircraft of B flight I mentioned it might have been we were alerted to the possible dangers awaiting us each trip however we got our QR-T letters painted on our new aircraft, and no one else flew in it from then on. and here we are still living to tell the tale.

WG CDR W M PENMAN DFC AFC OC 61 SQN 1943



Some members may have looked through the outstanding Veterans' Album on-line, put together by James Flowers and Mike Connock. If you have you may have noticed that we are very fortunate to have Wg Cdr William Mitchell Penman's daughter as a member. Susan, married to David Jellett, has been a staunch supporter of the Association for many years and was our dining secretary, with David, for a long time. David showed me this charming picture of Susan with her father taken only a few months before he was killed in action. The dog was the 61 Sqn mascot (Timmy Moff), who appeared with Wg Cdr Penman on the back of our last edition. I recommend any members who have not looked at the Veterans' Album to do so.

While researching Wg Cdr Penman's life I found another Wg Cdr Penman, who served on 97 Sqn. A quick call to David Jellett confirmed that this was William Penman's younger brother, David. A Lancaster pilot too, David Penman took part in the famed Augsburg raid (Op Margin) in Apr 42, when 12 Lancasters from 44 and 97 Sqn, led by Sqn Ldr John Nettleton, attacked the MAN submarine diesel-engine works. Only 5 aircraft returned. The raid earned Nettleton his VC and the captains of the surviving aircraft, including David Penman, were awarded the DFC.

Sadly William Penman was killed in Oct 43 whilst taking part on the raid to Kassel, he would have been promoted Gp Capt the following day. He and his gallant crew of QR-Z are interred in the Hanover War Cemetery. Susan proudly wears her father's medals at the services during our Reunion Weekends.

ASSISTANCE REQUIRED



New member Jacquie Watts has asked if anyone knew her uncle Wing Commander Douglas Chopping DFC & Bar, AFC. She is hoping that there may be someone out there who can tell her a bit about him. He flew with 50 Squadron. Wing Commander Chopping had 2 Brothers all pilots in the RAF, F/O Stanley Chopping 51 Sqn who was KIA, and Will Chopping, who she believes flew the DC3.

The 3 Brothers are shown left with Douglas Chopping centre.



If you can help in any way you can contact Jacquie at wattsgang@hotmail.co.uk

Wing Commander D Chopping DFC & Bar AFC

ABSENT FRIENDS



John Forsgate

John joined the RAF in 1949 and trained as an Instrument Fitter following which he was posted to 50 Squadron at Skellingthorpe and Waddington. He then went on to join 45 Squadron in Tenga, Butterworth and Singapore, leaving the RAF in 1953 he joined BOAC in 1957, which became British Airways and John worked for them for nearly 40 years as an Avionics Technician. John passed away on 28th August 2013. His wife Muriel remains as a member of the association.

ABSENT FRIENDS

Flight Lieutenant Dennis James Lundy DFC



In 1940 Dennis was in a reserved occupation working for an engineering company but in 1941 he volunteered for aircrew at his local recruiting office. Having been accepted he was sent to Malton, Ontario, Canada for his flying training, obtaining his wings in February 1942. At this point he should have returned to England but was chosen to be a staff pilot at the Bombing & Gunnery school in Mountain View, Ontario, he was there from June 1942 till

1943 at which point he was posted back to England.

He flew several different aircraft during his flying career with the RAF, including; Tiger Moth, Avro Anson, Fairey Battle, Airspeed Oxford, Vickers Wellington, Avro Manchester and Avro Lancaster.

On his return to the UK, he was posted to 50 Squadron at Skellingthorpe and did 31 operations and finished in April 1944 and in May 1944 was



posted to RAF Syerston to be a Lancaster instructor and was there until May 1945. Then back to 50 Squadron as instructor and on to RAF Sturgate in late 1945, and in June 1946 did a victory parade flypast over Buckingham Palace, because of bad weather the full flypast was cancelled and Dennis volunteered to fly Richard Dimbleby and Raymond Glendenning over the palace while they did the commentary.

After his service with the RAF he joined BOAC in June 1947 and was with them for 27 years, during which he flew the Avro Lancastrian, Canadair Argonaut, Douglas DC7c, De Havilland Comet 4, and the Boeing 707, retiring in 1974.

Dennis passed away on 12th July 2014. Aged 92

We are grateful to his wife Phyllis for this information.

NEW MEMBERS

Ian McFarlane, Edinburgh

Ian is the son of Wing Commander Robert McFarlane DSO DFC & Bar, former C O of 50 Squadron 1943-45.

Duncan Gillespie, Queensland, Australia

David William McCray is the uncle of Duncans wife. He was a navigator on VN-W, LM676 which failed to return from a raid to Munich on 16.12.1944. we were fortunate enough to have him visit us at the reunion during his visit to the UK.

Dennis Kerrison Smith MBE, Haimps, France

Dennis served on 50 Squadron 1977-79, being a colleague of AVM Nigel Baldwin and Sqn Ldr Richard Jones.

Bill Flint, Nottingham.

Bill is the nephew of the late Wing Commander Jimmy Flint DFC GM DFM AE, another former C O of 50 Squadron, in fact Jimmy was the last war time C O.

Paul Martin Whitchurch, Bristol

Pauls Father was Flt/Sgt Herbert Reginald Martin W/Op on 50 Sqn. 1944/45

Mrs June Mulvaney, Ontario, Canada.

June is the Sister of a current member John Roberts, their Father was Sgt Albert E Roberts 50 Sqn. W/op/AG. ED482. Whose aircraft failed to return form a Minelaying operation on the night of 2/3rd April 1943.

Angela Westwell

Angela is the niece of Wing Commander Douglas Chopping DFC & Bar AFC.

Jacquie Watts, Wimborne, Dorset

Jacquie is the sister of Angela Westwell

LINCOLNSHIRE BOMBER COMMAND MEMORIAL

Since its inception and final design decision, there continued a public consultation, such that the design was changed. Still maintaining the spire but with the names of those who failed to return engraved on walls around the spire. The spire and the memorial walls are to be made of Corten steel. What is just as impressive is the interpretation centre, with the roof in the shape of the Lancaster's wings. The height of the spire is the same size as the wing span of the Lancaster. See the web site; www.lincsbombercommandmemorial.com



An artists impression of how the Memorial walls will look surrounding the spire, with the 25,611 names engraved into the steel walls. Here the spire height is the same the Lancaster wing-span, 102 Feet and the width at the base the same as the width of the Lancaster wing, 16 feet.



The “Chadwick centre” as it has been named, after the designer of the Lancaster.

The concept for the design of the roof on the Chadwick Centre, being the same as the wingspan 102 Feet, and height of the Lancaster, and the roof has the same chord profile.

