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



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EDITORIAL

To mark the centenary of the First World War, we will have the plaque of the soldier, cross and poppies on the first page of the Newsletter until the August 2018 edition.

It has been a very busy period since our last newsletter and reunion. It started with a request from a team from the Flying heritage museum in Washington USA, wanting to interview some veterans. This was followed by the arrival of the Canadian Lancaster, Displays by the two Lancasters, the turf cutting ceremony for the new Lincolnshire memorial, the 3 Lancasters event, the departure of the Canadian Lancaster, and the Remembrance Day services. All these momentous events are covered in this newsletter.

In addition, and especially for ex-members of 50 Sqn (serving between 1961 and 1984), we show the mighty Vulcan in formation with V-RA (Vera) (the Canadian Lancaster) and PA474 (the BBMF Lancaster).

There is also a piece about the Ypres Salient memorials to mark the 100th Anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War. The annual Remembrance Service at the RAF Skellingthorpe memorial took place on 11 Nov; also the centenary of the 22nd day of the first Battle of Ypres. It was this battle that saw the destruction of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF). The BEF was the regular army and it's loss of some 90,000 men, meant that for the rest of the war the troops, who fought so bravely, were mostly volunteers. Sadly there were three more battles at Ypres before the armistice in 1918.

It could be said the First World War started and ended at Mons. The first British soldier to die was believed to be Pvt John Parr, killed at Mons on 21 Aug 14, aged 17 years. The last British soldier to die was believed to be Pvt George Ellison, also killed at Mons, on 11 Nov 18, aged 40 years.

The comments in this newsletter are those of the contributor and not necessarily those of the Association or the editorial staff.

Richard Jones & Mike Connock

CHAIRMANS COMMENTS

At the time of writing we have just held this year's Remembrance Service at the Association Memorial. The weather was good to us, as it so often is, but what caught my attention most was the number attending this year has gone up yet again. In addition to the usual attendees - members of the Association, the Mayor and local councillors, and the cadets – there were also many new faces from the local community. There were others, too, and when talking to some of them before and after the service, I found out they had travelled from further afield to spend time with us at this important time of year. It really was wonderful to see.

On the subject of remembrance, I was pleasantly surprised to learn recently that our late Vice-President, Wing Commander Jimmy Flint DFC GM DFM AE, kindly left our Association some money in his will. It was a wonderful gesture from a truly remarkable and brave man. As a committee, we have decided to spend some of that money helping the Skellingthorpe Parish Council by restoring the RAF Skellingthorpe Memorial outside the community centre in the village. Those of you who have been there will know the memorial as it is where we hold our Sunday afternoon service at the end of the Annual Reunion weekend, and is where, for many years, we have been so lucky to enjoy the Lancaster flypast. I personally know just how important the village of Skellingthorpe has been to Jimmy over so many years and we were extremely fortunate that he was able to join us just about every year - he rarely missed a year - including his last visit to Skellingthorpe to celebrate his 100th birthday. I know Jimmy would be delighted to know that we are to use some of his money to help the community in this way.

Looking ahead to next year's Annual Reunion weekend, there has been a small increase in cost due to the change in catering arrangements for the Saturday evening annual dinner. I am sure you will understand but I am pleased to inform you that the committee has granted a small subsidy per head to help keep the cost down.

Finally, work on the Lincolnshire Bomber Command Memorial is progressing and money continues to be raised. We should be able to update you further on the progression in the next newsletter. It only leaves me to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, wherever you are.

Peter

SECRETARYS COMMENTS

Remembrance Sunday was a nice sunny day and this helped to swell the our congregation around the Birchwood Memorial with the 204 (City of Lincoln) Squadron ATC attending in good numbers. Also in attendance were the Mayor and Civic Party, City Councillors, and the County Council Chairman and his Lady, joining us having come from the Cathedral service. Our Padre Rev Brian Stalley took the service with the Mayor reading the lesson and four wreaths were laid.

Musically we were bereft, as Michelle was away in Scotland, but a CD was used for the Last Post and Reveille.

Cadet Sergeant Lambert carried the Aircrew Association standard, both at the Cathedral and at Birchwood.

We do not have a march past at this service, but the police kindly provided a quiet time for us.

Thanks go to Kate Fenn for the refreshments, and to the Leisure Centre for their ever helpful ways.

On Remembrance Day the 11th, the association joined the villagers of Skellingthorpe at the RAF Skellingthorpe Memorial for the Last Post, Silence and Reveille. Richard Jones gave us a succinct “sermon” to complete our homage.

Back to Birchwood in the early evening a few of us went to the Methodist Church where the Rainbows (5-7yr) came to our memorial for a short silent vigil and their wreath is now in the families room.

One final point, if anyone is planning a visit to Birchwood Leisure Centre, the upstairs room, which forms part of the museum will be closed for a couple of months as the roof is being repaired to remove asbestos.

Gerry Collins

International Bomber Command Centre

The latest item of news on the centre is that they are introducing a “Ribbon of Remembrance”. A stone can be purchased commemorating a lost relative. Details of this can be found on the web site;

www.internationalbcc.co.uk/ribbon-of-remembrance

Mike Connock

WASHINGTON MUSEUM

On 30th July this year we were delighted to welcome a production company who were working in partnership with the Flying Heritage Collection, located at Paine Field in Everett, Washington, USA.

The collection is owned by philanthropist and Microsoft Co-Founder Paul G Allen. Vulcan Productions is working on The Oral History Project, and requested that they interview and film some of our veterans. To this end they were entertained at the Skellingthorpe Community Centre, where they did the filming. Those interviewed were Reg Payne, James Flowers, Kenneth Green and Alan McDonald.



Reg Payne

taking place over the last 15 years, honouring the veterans of WWII, as well as the Korean and Vietnam wars. The object of the collection is to make these recording accessible through



Kenneth Green

museum presentations, museum archive material, along with film, television and digital productions. Further information on the collection can be found on their web site at www.flyingheritage.com/



James Flowers

CANADIAN LANCASTER VISIT



The 8 August 2014 saw the arrival of the Canadian Lancaster VeRA to RAF Coningsby. Completing an epic journey for Hamilton, Ontario, via Goose Bay, Newfoundland and Reykjavik, Iceland. The 2014 tour was sponsored by Thwaites brewery, celebrating it with their Lancaster Bomber Ale.

Several of our veterans were invited to welcome the aircraft in, including as above Wing Commander Jim Wright shown with the crew who flew her in and right, James Flowers and Reg Payne

V-RA had many events planned for the visit which lasted about six weeks, flying with the BBMF it proved to be a most spectacular and moving occasion. Displaying all round the country.

Some of the highlights were the flypast over the Derwent Dam, over East Kirkby for the 3

Lancaster event and the Avro formation with the Vulcan for the Turf Cutting ceremony for the new Lincolnshire Bomber Command Memorial. These last two are reported separately in this issue. The trip was not without incident having had an engine go down up on Tyneside. The faulty engine was removed and a replacement loaned by the BBMF was fitted, in a very short time and she was back in action with the minimum of disruption.





On 4 September a Charity Gala Dinner was held in the BBMF hangar between the two Lancaster and many of the veterans were invited. The proceeds of which were to go to the new Lincolnshire Bomber Command Memorial.

We eventually said goodbye to V-RA on 23 September, when she was escorted part of the way on her first leg by the BBMF, consisting of the Lancaster, two Spitfires and two Hurricanes. Leaving Coningsby they flew over Waddington, and Lincoln Cathedral on their way out. Watching this proved to be a very moving experience.



3 LANCASTERS



A memorable event during the visit of the Canadian Lancaster was a fly past over East Kirkby by the two Lancaster whilst the Lancaster at East Kirkby did a taxi run. The sound of three Lancaster was amazing. It is always hoped that one day this Lancaster will fly.

LINCOLNSHIRE MEMORIAL



Veterans line up for the ceremony

On 21 August 2014 the turf cutting ceremony took place at the proposed site at Canwick, Lincoln.

Once complete, the centre will provide a world-class facility to serve as a point for recognition, remembrance and reconciliation for Bomber Com-

mand. It comprises of several inter-related elements: the Chadwick Centre, the Memorial Spire, the Bomber Command Archive and the International Peace Garden. Work on the construction element of the project is due to start in December 2014 with the first phase being completed by June 2015, to coincide with the 70th anniversary of the end of the Second World War. The rest of the costs for the £8 million project, including the construction, are being raised through other means. £1.2 million has already been raised since the launch in May 2013.

The first turf was cut by several of the veterans present, also a Time Capsule was buried and all the veterans helped to fill in the hole. While this was taking place the event was privileged to have a fly past by the two Lancasters and the Last flying Vulcan XH558.



Avro trio



Betty Bascombe arrives escorted by Alan Biggs

The latest news we have is that during the initial excavation, 2 graves were discovered of roman origin, this has resulted in the need for an archaeological survey at considerable cost.

REMEMBRANCE



Following the Remembrance Day service at the Cathedral, which was attended by our own Gerry Collins and Alan Biggs, a service was held at the Association Memorial at Birchwood. This was attended by various dignitaries from the city and supported by 204 (City of Lincoln) Sqn ATC, and apologies to them for referring to them as 207 Sqn in the last issue.

Unfortunately this year our Bugler was unable to attend as Gerry Collins has reported in his article, but we were able to play the Last Post and Reveille from a CD.

Cadet Sergeant Lambert proudly carried the Aircrew Association Standard, both in the Cathedral & at Birchwood, and is shown on the right

with 204 Squadron Commanding Officer Flt Lt Ivan Murfin.



The assembly at the memorial for the service and Act of Remembrance



On the 11th of November at 11am an Act of Remembrance was held at the RAF Skellingthorpe Memorial in the village. Our Vice Chairman Sqn Ldr (ret'd) Richard Jones, kindly addressed those present and spoke of the purpose of being there in that it remembered the fallen from all wars and conflicts, and he reminded us of some of the levels of casualties from the first conflicts of WWI. We are very grateful to Richard for this. As with Birchwood the Last Post and Reveille was from a Pre recorded source.



This montage was created by John Roberts, who placed a cross in memory of his Father Sgt A E Roberts, who failed to return whilst flying from Skellingthorpe. John also placed a cross for an Australian member, Ray Gregg, who's Father Sgt Stan Gregg also failed to return. John performs this ceremony every year on the 11th November.

Wreaths were laid on behalf of the

Squadrons Association, the Parish Council, and the Youth of the Village. Representatives from the local Holt primary School also planted memorial crosses. Two children from the Holt School are shown on the right. The memorial Garden is main-



tained by the Scout group and we are grateful to them for this.

After the ceremony at the memorial, all were invited in to the Community Centre for refreshment and the picture on the left shows the children of the Holt School with their head teacher Julie Leach.

FIRST WORLD WAR MEMORIALS - YPRES SALIENT

On 11 Nov I was privileged to lead the homage at the annual Act of Remembrance at the RAF Skellingthorpe Memorial. This year, the Centenary of the outbreak of the First World War, was especially poignant. After the wreath laying, I spoke about the Ypres memorials.

Menin Gate. I served with NATO in Mons, Belgium, for four and a half years in the early 90s and my wife and I visited many of the memorials in the Ypres Salient. We were also very fortunate to have been invited to the annual Remembrance Service at the Menin Gate in 1994. Although this was 76 years after the end of the First World War, there were still several veterans and BEF Old Contemptibles, in their 90s, who made the journey to remember comrades. The laying of wreaths by these gallant old men was intensely moving. They ignored their walking aids to lay their wreaths.



The Menin Gate Memorial to the Missing was built on the Menin Road (left) where 2 stone lions were sited; and where the men marched to the Western Front. Two smaller replica lions can be seen inside the Memorial. There are some 55,000 names inscribed of those British and Commonwealth soldiers killed on the Ypres Salient, with no known grave.

This magnificent Memorial was inaugurated on Sunday 24 July 1927 by Field Marshal Lord Plumer. The distinguished guests included Albert, King of the Belgians and Marshal Foch. In addition, there were many relatives of those soldiers whose names were inscribed with honour. Lord Plumer was very conscious of the grief of



those who's loved ones had no known resting place. He therefore ended his address at the ceremony with the words: "This memorial has been erected which, in its simple grandeur, fulfils this object, and^{1,2} now it can be said of each one in whose honour we are assembled here today: **'He is not missing; he is here'.**"



The Burgers of Ypres wanted to ensure the memory of the bravery and sacrifice of the fallen lived on. Thus it was decided that the Last Post would be played in the evening. The tradition took hold and from 11 Nov 1929 the Last Post, followed by a minute's silence and Reveille, has been played at 8pm every evening by buglers of the Ypres Fire

Brigade. The only interruptions were the result of the occupation of Ypres by German Forces from May 1940 to September 1944.

The Town of Ypres. Ypres, or Wipers to the tens of thousands of British and Commonwealth soldiers, is an ancient cloth town in Flanders. It was in utter ruins by the end of 1918. For centuries it was famous for weaving cloth and the Cloth

Hall (on the left in the picture), was completed in 1308. The cathedral of St Martin (on the right in the picture), was completed a century earlier. The original medieval plans for both buildings miraculously still exist. The cathedral plan included a spire, but due to a lack of funds it was never built. However,



as a part of the reparations after the War, the Germans rebuilt the town. The Cloth Hall and St Martin's Cathedral were restored using original plans (including the missing spire). It may have taken 700 years, but Ypres finally got their cathedral completed.

Tyne Cot and The Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC). The Tyne Cot cemetery, the largest of the CWGC cemeteries, contains some 12,000 graves and a monument with the names of the 35,000 men with no known grave. Unlike the French and Germans, the British and Commonwealth dead are buried not in communal graves or ossuaries but in individual plots. The CWGC

cemeteries are all essentially the same, only differing in size. The Commission ensures that 1.7 million people who died in the two world wars will never be forgotten. They care for cemeteries and memorials at 23,000 locations, in 153 countries. Their values and aims, laid out in 1917, are as relevant now as they were almost 100 years ago.



Tyne Cot was constructed on the site of an old farm building known by the Northumberland Fusiliers, with typical Tommy humour, as Tyne Cottage. This name, now in French, was retained for the cemetery for those killed on the Ypres Salient.

During the construction, the graves of 18 men who fell in 1917 were found. Those graves remain today, in the same spot as 1917, with the addition of the CWGC headstone. These are the only graves that do not follow the regimented lines (picture on the right).



The cemetery also contains the remains of 3 holders of the Victoria



Cross: Capt Clarence Smith Jeffries VC (Australia); Sgt Lewis McGee VC (Australia); and Private James Robertson VC (Canada). Those graves containing an un-named soldier have “A Soldier of the Great War Known Unto God” engraved on their headstone.

The reason I chose this subject was because my eldest granddaughter, Hannelore, aged 13, visited the Ypres Salient at the end of October as part of the government initiative to provide funds for young people to see the sites for themselves. She was so moved by the Menin Gate ceremony and the sheer size of Tyne Cot and the number of men resting there that she wept. She is not a girl usually given to such shows of emotion. But I knew exactly how she felt; for I was the same during my visits.

Richard Jones (Acknowledgments to Stad Ieper (Trji Capoen) and the CWGC for the photographs)

NEW MEMBERS

Sue McRae

Sue is the Daughter of a current member, Ted McRae, who served with 50 Squadron. All the family now attend the reunion each year.

LINCOLNSHIRE

Lincolnshire has long been known with affection as **Bomber County** due to the large number of Bomber airfields of WWII. Famous for its agricultural quality especially in the Fens, which was drained from the wash by the Dutch and parts of that area of Lincolnshire are known as **New Holland**. The county and the City of Lincoln also has a great Engineering heritage.

Lincoln is home to the “**water Carrier from Mesopotamia**” as it was code named, the first Tank that so changed the course of WWI was designed and built in Lincoln. Tritton Road in Lincoln runs through what was known locally as “The Tank Field” where they were tested. Named after Lord Tritton who’s company produced the Tank.

During WWI, Lincoln was one of the major manufacturing area for aircraft, in fact during the Great war Lincolnshire based firms produced more aircraft for the RFC, RNAS and RAF than any other county. The **Sopwith Camel** was produced in some numbers and flew from the West Common, the Grandstand was the Officers mess and evidence of its existence is still there with the RFC wings painted on one of the walls. Many of the engineering companies in Lincoln produced aircraft. Among these was **Ruston Proctor**, which also produced motor cars. Other include Robey, Clayton & Shuttlesworth and Marshall & Sons of Gainsborough.

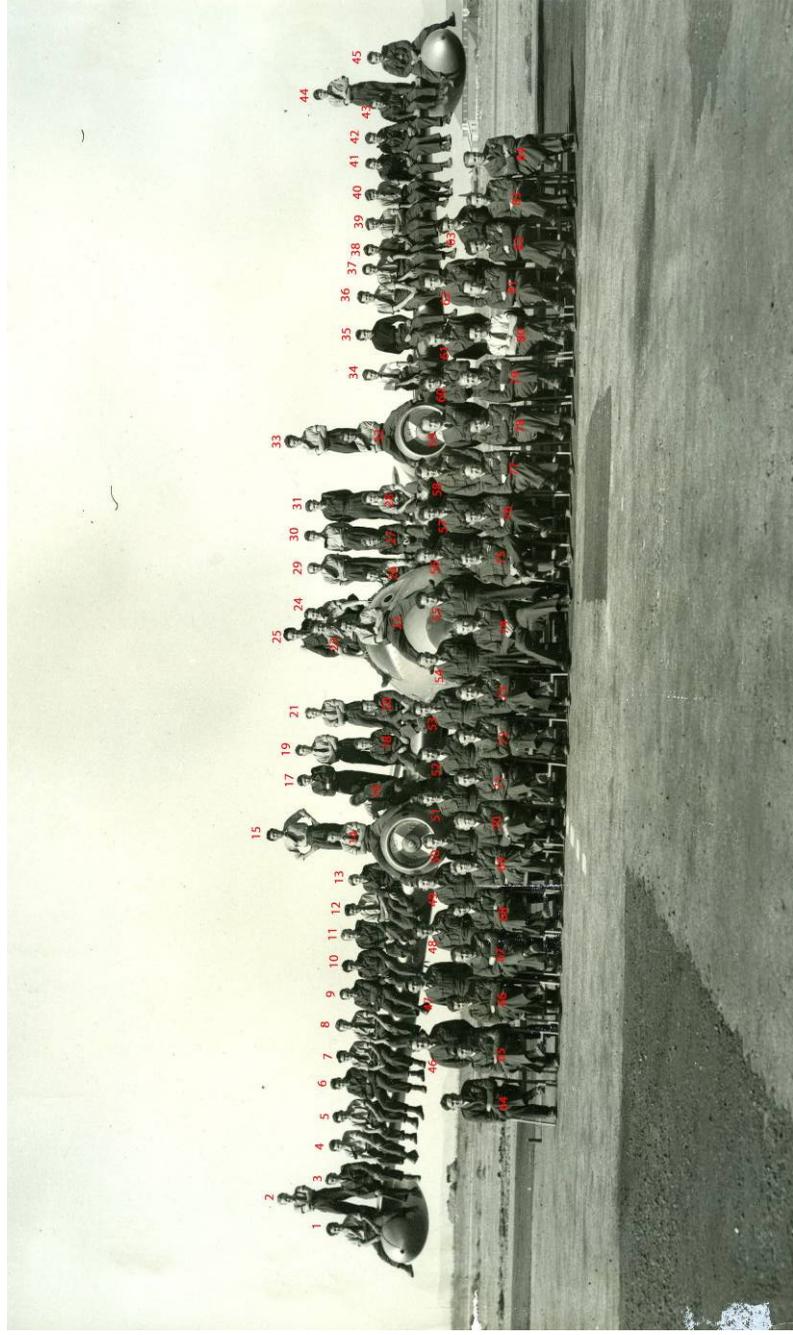
Peter Small hopes to do more on this story in future issues.

Ruston Bucyrus was world famous for its excavators and there is probably not a country in the world where you wouldn’t see one.

A V Roe also had a site just outside Lincoln where there was a repair depot for the Lancaster during WWII, formerly **RFC Bracebridge Heath**.

Lincolnshire people are referred to “**Yellow Bellies**”, the term apparently comes from the Lincolnshire Regiment, who have as one of their many battle honours, the American War of Independence in 1776 and in those days the officers of the regiment wore yellow waistcoats and were referred to by the Americans as Yellow Bellies.

Mike Connock



This picture of 61 Squadron was taken in Cyprus at the time of Suez. Martin Goodman is looking to identify as many people as possible. The picture was supplied by Mr A S Burrell who is No. 45. If you can help, please contact Martin at 69 Long Lane, Finchley London, N3 2HY. Telephone 0208 349 2867, or 07849419377. email; hlco@hotmail.co.uk