



Friends of RAF Skellingthorpe
(Home of No.50 & No.61 Squadrons)
Newsletter
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Facebook—Friends of RAF Skellingthorpe (Home of 50 & 61 Squadrons)

www.no-50-and-no-61-squadrons-association.co.uk

OTHER USEFUL CONTACTS/REFERENCES

<https://www.helloblackswan.co.uk/>
<https://internationalbcc.co.uk/>
&
<https://internationalbcc.co.uk/history-archive/losses-database/>

[Operation Failed to Return](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QNEMHp_c8Vg)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QNEMHp_c8Vg

<https://raflincolnshire.blogspot.com/2013/05/hidden-gems-of-housing-estate.html>

Chairmans Report.

Spring is upon us and our June memorial service fast approaches. This year it is on Sunday 8th June with the AGM on Saturday 7th at 17.00hrs.

The service on Sunday commences at 11.30hrs, after which we go to the village community centre for lunch, courtesy of the Parish Council which is followed by the village service at 14.00hrs. Invits will be going out to the various organisations,

Inspection of the memorial shows it to be in a fairly good condition, so no remedial work is needed, apart from a clean and tidy up before the service in June.

We have made very little progress both in the feasibility of having our own museum and heritage centre and the siting of the RAF Skellingthorpe sign. One is the city council and the other is the Count Council and response has been difficult to say the least.

We had some concern recently when the Leisure centre closed at short notice, supposedly because of financial difficulties. However we have been assured that our display in the centre has been noted as belonging to us and is safe pending new people to take over the running of the centre.

Our Facebook page goes from strength to strength and at the time of writing we have 928 members. If they were all paid up members of the Friends of RAF Skellingthorpe association we would be very healthy indeed, sadly the success of facebook is detrimental to the membership of the association.

I hope to see as many of you as possible in June

Mike Connock

REMEMBRANCE SERVICE 2024

Fantastic turnout for our Remembrance Service yesterday at our 50/61 Memorial on Birchwood. Thanks go to our Chaplain Kevin Hart for taking the service and to the Civic Party, the Air Cadets and the scouts for supporting us. Special thanks goes to members of the public and relatives of those who served with the Squadrons.





Thanks once again to Gordon Layton for looking after the flower beds



With the 82nd anniversary of The Dams Raid on 16-17 May 1943 very soon, we thought we would take a look at the members of both 50 & 61 Squadrons that transferred over to 617 Squadron at RAF Scampton and actually flew of the famous raid.

Dambuster Crews From 50-61 Squadrons.

(Had flown or were flying with)

From 50 Squadron

**P/O Harlo Taerum DFC RCAF
P/O Fred Spafford DFC RAAF
F/L Richard Trevor-Roper DFM & DFC**

Flew The Dams Raid in ED932G AJ-G in the crew of W/C Guy Gibson. They bombed the Mohne dam and returned safely to RAF Scampton after overseeing the successful attack on the Eder Dam. Sadly, none survived the war.

P/O Taerum & P/O Spafford were killed in action on 16th September 1943 attacking the Dortmund Ems Canal at Ladbergen in the crew of W/C George Holden. There were no survivors.

F/L Trevor-Roper was killed in action on 30th March 1944 flying with F/L D Rowlands DFC in 97 Sqn on the disastrous Nuremburg Op, crashing at Ahorn. Again, there were no survivors.

**F/L Harold (Mickey) Martin DSO DFC RAAF
P/O Ivan Whittaker DFC & Bar
F/L Jack Leggo
F/L Bob Hay DFC & Bar RAAF
P/O Bert Foxley DFM RAAF
F/Sgt Thomas Simpson DFM RAAF**

These were 6 of the original crew of F/L Martin who flew a full tour with 50 Sqn 1942-43. They flew the Dams Raid in ED909 AJ-P. They returned safely to RAF Scampton after bombing the Mohne Dam.

F/L Bob Hay was sadly Killed in action on 13th February 1944 flying with the above crew to the Antheor Viaduct when an AA shell exploded directly under his bomb aimers compartment showering him with shrapnel. It was the last operation of their tour of duty. The others all survived the war.

S/L Henry Maudsley DFC
Sgt Jack Marriot DFM
F/O Robert Urquhart DFC RCAF
F/O William Tytherleigh DFC
Sgt Norman Burrows
W/O Alden Cottam
P/O John Fuller

S/L Maudsley flew ED937G AJ-Z on the Dams Raid and were badly damaged by the blast of their own bomb over the Mohne Dam and then hit by flak on the return journey. They crashed at 0236 at Netternden. There were no survivors.

P/O Les Knight DSO RAAF
Sgt Ray Grayston
F/O Sydney Hobday DFC
F/Sgt Robert Kellow RAAF
F/O Edward Johnson DFC RAAF
Sgt Fred Sutherland
Sgt Harry O'Brien

P/O Knight flew ED912 AJ-N on the Dams Raid and the crew returned safely to RAF Scampton after dropping the mine that breached the Eder dam. Sadly, P/O Knight was killed in action on the night of 16th September 1943 whilst attacking the Dortmund Ems Canal at Ladbergen, crashing at Den Ham. The rest of the crew were able to bale out and survived., 2 becoming POWs and 4 evading

F/O Kenneth Earnshaw RCAF
P/O John Fraser RCAF

Both flew in the crew of F/L John Hopgood in ED925G AJ-M. Their Lancaster was damaged by flak on their approach to the Mohne Dam and it was further heavily damaged when caught in the blast from their bomb exploding. The Lanc crashed at 0034hrs at Ostonnen, 3.5 miles from the Dam. Sadly, F/O Earnshaw was killed along with 4 other members of the crew. P/O Fraser managed to bale out and survived to become a POW at Stalag-Luft 3 Sagen along with P/O Burcher who also survived.

Sgt Brian Jagger DFM

Sgt Jagger flew on the Dams raid in the crew of F/L David Shannon DFC RAAF in ED929G AJ-L. They landed safely back at RAF Scampton after attacking the Eder Dam and scoring a direct hit, before it was breached by P/O Les Knight. At the end of his tour, Sgt Jagger was posted to the Bomb Development Unit at Newmarket and from here, he was sadly killed while on active service flying in a 49 Sqn Lancaster when the dinghy was accidentally jettisoned whilst in flight and fouled on the tailplane. He is buried in Cambridge Cemetery.

From 61 Squadron.

**F/L Norman Barlow DFC RAAF
P/O Leslie Whillis
F/O Phillip Burgess
F/O Charles Williams DFC RAAF
P/O Alan Gillespie
F/O Harvey Glinz RCAF
Sgt Jack Liddell**

Flying in ED927G AJ-E, the entire crew were killed in action when they flew into high tension cables on their outward journey and crashed near Haldern at 2350hrs. Their Upkeep mine survived the crash and was taken away by the Germans to be examined.

In total, there were 133 brave men who flew on the operation. 33 had flown with either 50 & 61 squadron. 15 of the 33 men from 50 & 61 Sqns were killed on the operation and 1 taken prisoner. A further 5 were lost before the war finished either on operations or flying accidents.

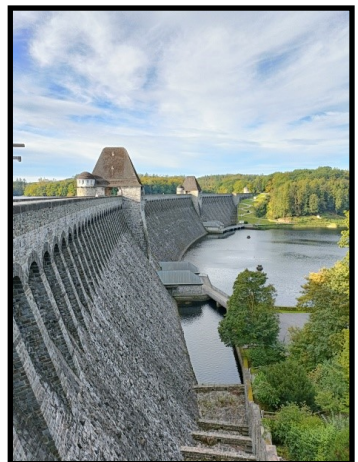
On the Dams Raid itself, 8 Lancasters failed to return resulting in 53 men being killed in action and 3 men taken prisoner.

Both the Mohne Dam and the Eder Dam were breached during the operation, causing major disruption to the German war effort.

At the going down of the sun and in the morning, we Will remember them.



Photos of the
Mohne Dam by
Jon Taylor
showing the
approach taken to
bomb the dam
and the dam itself
(L-R)



ABSENT FRIENDS

Harry Cammish



We are saddened to hear that one of the very last WWII veteran members of the New Zealand Bomber Command Association, Harry Cammish of Orewa, passed away at 10.10pm on Sunday evening 15th December, aged 101.

Harry was British and served with the RAF. Harry trained as a flight engineer on Lancasters, posted to No. 50 Squadron. On the 25th February 1944 his aircraft was shot down by Fw190s and Harry bailed out. He was fortunate to meet a local station master, Monsieur Collin of Embermenil, who

took him home. Monsieur Collin hid Harry in his bed with his wife, and then clothed Harry in railway uniform and got him started on a long path to evade the Germans and reach freedom. At the end this involved Harry making a solo climb over the Pyrenees to Spain. He then made it to Gibraltar and was taken back to Britain.

On his return to UK, he could not return to operations and eventually moved to Air Traffic Control until being demobbed.

Harry and his wife moved to NZ in the 1950s where he spent a lifetime as a builder. Well known in Orewa for his community work, Harry remained in the home he built till last year illness saw him go into care. Harry was an awesome chap and one of the stalwarts of the New Zealand Bomber Command Association in its heyday. He will be very much missed.



Rodney Higgs



F/O Rodney Higgs

20/09/1924-18/03/2025

Rodney flew with 50 Squadron RAF as a wireless operator serving 3 years in the RAAF.

Born in Sydney he returned to Australia to lead a very successful life as a businessman, husband and father.

Rodney was one of the 107 Australian veterans to attend the Dedication of the RAF Bomber Command Memorial in London's Hyde Park. His service in the U.K. led to lifetime friendships with members of his crew. For many years he was Honorary Secretary of the Bomber Command Association in Australia (BCAA). As a committee member and later as a member of BCAA he was committed to ensuring the Service of those in Bomber Command was always remembered.

PD339

Having flown 16 operations with 50 Squadron, PD 339 and its crew were tasked with repatriating ex POW's from France towards the end of the war. On 26 April 1945 they were sent to France to bring back some of these men. They were dropped off at RAF Wing and the crew took off to return to RAF Skellingthorpe. Shortly after take off the pilot turned to avoid some power cable and the aircraft hit a tree and crashed killing five of the crew, both air gunners survived. An eye witness at the time says that the back of the aircraft broke away which is why the air gunners survived. The memorial also remembers two local men who tried to rescue the crew and were subsequently awarded the BEM for their bravery.



The crew were;

Flying Officer C J Evans
(RNZAF)

Sgt D H Millichamp (RAFVR)

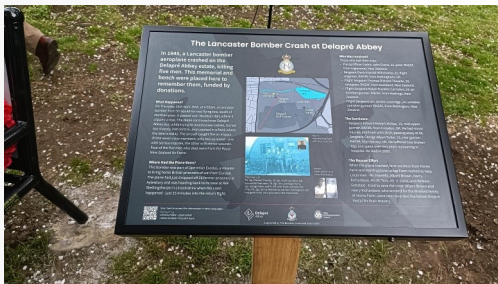
F/Sgt T R R Thwaite
(RNZAF)

F/Sgt R F Carrodus (RNZAF)

F/Sgt I J Loverage (RNZAF)

Sgt E R McRae (RAFVR)

Sgt G A Fuller (RAFVR)



The two farmworkers
were;

Mr Albert Brown BEM

Mr Harry Richardson
MM BEM

On 26th April 2025 a
memorial bench and
plaque were unveiled

at Delapre Abbey on whose land the aircraft had crashed. The funds were raised for the memorial by donations from various sources. The unveiling was done by Sue McRae daughter of Sgt McRae and Vicky Lyndsay Neice of Sgt Loveridge.

The ceremony was attended by relatives of the crew and representatives from Friends of RAF Skellingthorpe. During the ceremony Vicky Lindsay played "Flower of the Forest" on the bagpipes.

Thanks also go to Roger Kirkham for researching and organizing the event ably assisted by Bill Lockerbie.