

57 & 630 Squadrons' Association



President: Group Captain David Houghton

Acting Secretary: Tony Gunby
Email: secretary@57-630sqnassoc.org

Inside this issue:

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| The View from Down Under | 2 |
| The President's Piece | 3 |
| From the V-P | 4 |
| In Memoriam | 5 |
| Gordon Lodge | 5 |
| News from the Frontline | 6 |
| Research Update | 8 |
| 57 Sqn History - a New Project | 10 |
| Harold Panton BEM | 10 |
| Danish 75th Commemoration | 11 |
| Remembering our Uncles | 12 |
| Eyes in the Night | 15 |
| The Last Victor K2P | 19 |
| Money Matters | 19 |
| From the Petwood to Showaddywaddy | 19 |
| RAF Scampton Memorial Window | 20 |
| 2nd Lt Sydney Leete | 21 |
| Fg Off Noel Culpan | 25 |
| 2020 Reunion | 27 |
| Stop Press | 28 |
| Our New Secretary | 28 |
| Book Reviews | 29 |
| 57 Sqn Tie | 29 |
| 2020 Reunion Return | 31 |

The 2019 Reunion



The Association enjoyed a weekend of mixed weather in early July as members gathered at the Petwood Hotel in Woodhall Spa for the 2019 Association Reunion.

The absence of our President and Secretary - both 20+ year veterans of the Association weekend - was keenly felt by those attending but thanks to Gordon's meticulous planning, the weekend ran on rails and followed the tried and tested format. After a lively opening Friday evening of casual dining and drinking, around 80 members and their guests sat down to dinner on the Saturday night.



This included Harvey Stewart and family members who had joined us from New Zealand for their first reunion experience.

We were pleased to welcome members of the Panton family as our guests for the evening and to see a full table from 57 Squadron.

There was no music during dinner this year, as our usual pianist, Helen, was unable to join us due to illness - we wish her a full and speedy recovery.



During dinner, our raffle ticket sellers did a sterling job and after the last piece of cheesecake had been eaten, Chris Morffew proposed the Loyal Toast and Mike Bracken 'Absent Friends'.

After dinner speakers included our Vice President, Tony Gunby, and OC 57 Squadron, Squadron Leader Mike Waring.

Mike updated members on the Squadron's year and its future development, now that it has taken delivery of the new Grob Prefect training aircraft.

A great range of prizes were available for the Raffle which followed, conducted by Mike Bracken and Wendy Rothery. In all, £700 was raised thanks to the generosity of those donating prizes, those buying

tickets and the Panton's for donating the taxi run in Just Jane - won by Harvey Stewart.



The party continued in the bar and the last to head to their beds did so in high spirits at around 3am - with the usual spiritual guidance in attendance!

Sunday morning saw a good turnout for the memorial service at East Kirkby, conducted by our Honorary Padre Richard Benson following a welcome from Phillip Panton.



The 57 Squadron Standard and Standard Party added to the sense of occasion, and at the Guardroom memorial, wreaths were laid on behalf of the

The 2019 Reunion (continued)

Association by Alistair Sutherland and Tom Lockett, and on behalf of 57 Squadron by Squadron Leader Mike Waring.

The NAAFI and ice cream van proved to be popular as Members watched a series of taxi runs from Just Jane, but were disappointed by the cancellation of the BBMF Lancaster flypast later in the afternoon due to unserviceability.



Guests at Sunday evening's dinner dance were entertained by Cleo Ridgeway and her father, Kenneth, with some excellent singing which provided

the encouragement necessary for some guests to strut their stuff on the dancefloor.

Cleo was superb and has been booked (along with her Dad) for next year's dinner/dance.



Next year's Reunion will be on the weekend of Friday 3 July – Monday 6 July 2020. Further details and a booking form are at the rear of the Newsletter and also on our website at www.57-630sqnassoc.org

Remember to book your accommodation early to avoid disappointment!

The View from Down Under

We were delighted to welcome one of our newest Association members to our Reunion this year. Spearheading a lively party of Kiwis, Harvey Stewart's visit was something of a pilgrimage in honour of his father, Ronald Walter Stewart who had served with 57 Squadron during World War II.

Ron Stewart signed up with the RNZAF in 1939 and was mobilized in March 1941 at the age of 21. Already proficient in radio and morse code, after basic training in New Zealand, Ron trained in Canada as a Wireless Operator and Air Gunner, under the Commonwealth Air Training Plan.



Ron Stewart (far right) and his 57 Squadron Wellington crew - Steeple Morden 1942

Arriving in the UK in November 1941, Ron attended No 2 Signals School and an OTU prior to serving with 57 Squadron from June 1942 - July 1943, first at RAF Scampton and then RAF East Kirkby. During this peri-



Ron Stewart (top left) and his Lancaster crew - 57

od, Ron completed 16 Operational sorties in the Wellington and 18 in the Lancaster.

He was awarded the DFC in August 1943 and promoted to fit it in October the same year. Ron married a Lincoln girl, Dorothy, in December 1943 and after a spell as an instructor on 83 OTU was appointed as the signals leader on 103 Squadron based at Elsham Wolds from February - October 1944. Returning to RAF Scampton, he saw out the War as the signals leader on 153 Squadron.

Ron and Dorothy returned to New Zealand on a troop ship with their baby son (Harvey) in August 1945.

A summary of Ron's experiences in Bomber Command can be read in the book "Mates and Mayhem" by Lawrence Watt. This includes his dealings with Guy Gibson when they were at Scampton at the same time. <https://www.amazon.com/Mates-Mayhem-World-Frontline-Remember/dp/1869502043>

The View from Down Under (continued)



Ron (right) collect pigeons to be used for emergency messages if aircraft was downed

Back at the Petwood Hotel, Harvey was delighted to win the raffle for the Sunday taxi ride in Just Jane and, below, shares his thoughts on his experience:

“For me, the prospect of taking a taxi ride in the East Kirkby Lancaster was that it would be interesting and even enthralling.

I was not expecting the emotional event it turned out to be. As I sat at my father’s station (the WOp seat on the port side just behind the navigator), I was surprised to see how well I could see out of the windows on each side which are in line with the leading edge of the wings and which give a good view of each engine.

As the four Merlins started up and the noise possessed me, I became my father setting off on a mis-

sion and experienced a cold shiver of foreboding as the probability of not returning struck me. The crews must have experienced a similar emotion every time they set off time after time.



Ron Stewart at the Lancaster WOp station - an official RAF photo

I can only admire their fortitude and persistence as they did their duty month after month, year after year.

This ride was the highlight of my trip to the UK and my only regret was that Just Jane didn’t take off when the captain put on full power at the end of the runway.

My sincere thanks to the Pantons who donated the ride for the Reunion raffle.”

Article and photos by kind permission of Harvey Stewart, New Zealand 2019



David Houghton

The President’s Piece

In a nod to our increasingly on-line world, most Association Members will, I hope, be reading this year’s Newsletter on the Association’s website rather than, as has been the case until now, on a multi-page document posted to each Member. The move to an on-line Newsletter was originally mooted by our former Secretary, Gordon Lodge. Sadly, Gordon’s untimely death earlier this year meant that he did not see his idea come to fruition, but our Vice President, Tony Gunby, has taken Gordon’s vision forward.

The move to a predominantly on-line Newsletter is clearly good news for the environment (and the Association’s coffers), but also allows us to introduce a wider range of articles linked to the numerous (and seemingly increasing) requests for information from various sources about specific crews or events linked to 57 Squadron or 630 Squadron.

Our Association Information Officer, Air Commodore Wendy Rothery, works incredibly hard to answer the multitude of queries she receives, and I know that she (and 57 Squadron) would welcome receiving any

photographs or documents (originals or high-quality copies) of historic interest that Members (or their families) may have and wish to donate to a good home.

Elsewhere in this edition of our Newsletter, you will see an update from the Officer Commanding 57 Squadron, Squadron Leader Mike Waring, about current happenings on The Phoenix. Mike is undoubtedly the longest-serving OC 57 Squadron (he may move onto pastures new next year.....or maybe not!), and has ensured that understanding the

The President's Piece (continued)

rich history of 57 Squadron and the shared history and ethos of 57 Squadron and 630 Squadron forms part of the training for his young pilots.

As I have said on many occasions, we are very fortunate that our Association has such great links with the current incarnation of 57 Squadron. The role of The Phoenix training the next generation of pilots, ready, willing and able to follow the example set by their predecessors, is critical to the RAF's continued evolution.

For those who are unable to attend the Association Reunions or Dining-In Nights, I hope that, as ever, this Newsletter, including the information about the events at Woodhall Spa/East Kirkby, RAF Cranwell and on today's 57 Squadron, will show that the spirit of 57 Squadron and the enduring spirit of 630 Squadron remain in robust health and in safe hands.

Finally, I send my very best wishes to all Association Members and their families for a peaceful and happy 2020 from Vietnam, where I am coming to the end of a 3-year Tour as the UK's Defence Attaché. I look forward to seeing all those who can make it to the next 57 Squadron-led Dining-In Night at RAF Cranwell in 2020 (date to be confirmed), or at the Association's Annual Reunion in July 2020.

Until we meet again, my very best wishes to you all.

Group Captain David Houghton, Hanoi, October 2019

From the Vice President

It has been very encouraging to get a positive response to the new Newsletter format which was used for the first time last year. The Committee and I are keen to respond to your needs though, so if you have any suggestions for changes to content or format, please do let me know.

When you cast your eyes on the 'In Memoriam' report which follows, you might be forgiven for thinking that our Association is on an inexorable slide downwards, but the truth is very different with unprecedented levels of interest being shown in both squadrons by relatives and amateur researchers.



Group Captain (retd)
Tony Gunby

Wendy Rothery's report gives you a flavour for the level of this interest. I'm also frequently humbled by the efforts of individuals and communities in both the UK and Europe to recognize the sacrifices made by 57 and 630 Squadron personnel. Again, you might think that the number of these activities - from new memorials, to research publications and annual commemorations - might be in decline as we move ever further away from 1945. However, the reverse seems to be the case. You will read elsewhere of events that the Squadron has been able to attend, and most of you will

know about the book published this year by Association Member Carole Widdicombe on Tom Lockett's life in service of King, Queen and Country.

Our membership remains vibrant and enthusiastic, with our annual Reunion the pinnacle of the Association calendar, and the Remembrance Sunday service at East Kirkby also providing an opportunity to remember those who have served on one of the two squadrons.

We have always encouraged relatives of former Squadron personnel to maintain a contact by joining our Association and

attending our functions. Similarly, we have a number of members who are active in researching one or other Squadron, and in supporting commemorations and memorials to Squadron personnel. The cost of membership is, after all, very competitive! Over the past 12 months, we have been delighted to welcome to the Association:

Steve Austen, Alan Bowman, Dave Clifton, Paul Macro, Peter Sharpe, Colin Meadows-Smith, Harvey Stewart, Janet Taylor, Brian Martin and Ken Wallwork.

Our Association is very much 'Alive and Kicking'.

In Memoriam

Sadly, we continue to lose many friends through the inevitable passage of time but who will remain in our memories for many years:

Chris Chester-Jones - Chris was a stalwart attendee at our Reunions over many years and a great friend to many Association members.

Joe Cook - an Upper Gunner who served with 630 Squadron, Joe was a keen supporter of the Association.

Tom Lockett - a Mid-Upper Gunner who flew 36 missions with 630 Squadron, and as a policeman after the War was awarded the George Medal for bravery. Anyone who met Tom was struck by his photographic memory and humility,

Gordon Lodge - our Secretary for over 16 years, whose father was killed in action with 57 Squadron in 1944. Everyone will miss Gordon's friendship and humour.

We also remember:

Peter Austen, Raymond Charlton, Keith Ganney, Ted Gregory, Walter Hunt, Jim Lewis and Bill Wharf.



We will remember them

Gordon Lodge



As Members will know, our Association Secretary of 16 years, Gordon Lodge passed away on 4 August 2019 after a short battle with cancer.

Gordon's father, Flying Officer Abraham Gordon Lodge RAFVR, was killed along with the rest of the crew of 57 Squadron Lancaster DX-J NE 126 which was lost over Hoogkerk, Groningen, Netherlands on 23 May 1944. Gordon Senior was the aircraft's navigator and just 28 years of age, while Gordon Junior was only 14 days old at the time of his father's death.

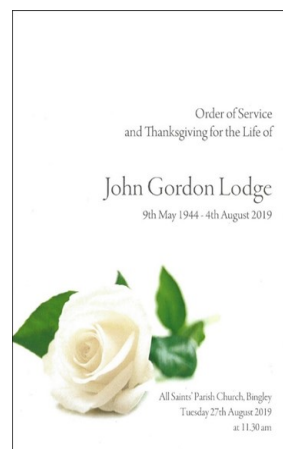
After winning a scholarship to study at Bradford Grammar School, Gordon began his working life in the financial services business, becoming one of the youngest assistant branch managers with the Bradford & Bingley Building Society. A variety of assignments around the country included Northampton where he met and married Diana.

A family followed with sons Alastair and James, and he packed everyone into the car one summer and headed for Holland in search of his father's last resting place in Hoogkerk, a pilgrimage which Gordon was to continue until his death. There he met the Noordhof family who had tended to his father's grave, and who became frequent attendees at our Reunions. Further moves and promotions led to his eventual appointment as the Managing Director of the company and a return to his native West Yorkshire. There he was able to feed his passion for golf, regain his single figure handicap, and subsequently to return to his 'comfort zone' of ledger sheets and numbers as the Treasurer of the Shipley Golf Club.

An Association Member for around 25 years, many may recall that, in 2004 Gordon took-over as Association Secretary from Squadron Leader Mervyn Davies when Mervyn became Association President – big shoes to fill, but Gordon did it with style. Always ready to chat and reminisce with Association Members scattered around the world at any time of the day or night, Gordon's humour was a highlight of our Reunions, and his organisation of the events was impeccable.

To everyone in the Association, Gordon was a true friend. Of course, being a typical Yorkshireman, it was sometimes difficult to prise a pint from Gordon, but he would always weaken eventually! During our Reunions, Gordon could invariably be found on the terrace of The Petwood Hotel at 3.00 am chatting and laughing. That is the memory many of us will have of Gordon, a warm, caring

man who was intensely proud of his father's service and of being Association Secretary. And so, on Tuesday 27 August 2019 the sun was blazing down on All Saints' Parish Church in Bingley as Association Members and partners, and a 57 Squadron party led by the Officer Commanding, Squadron Leader Mike Waring, packed into the church to join family and friends in paying their last respects to Gordon.



During the service led jointly by the Vicar of All Saints', The Reverend Martyn Weaver, and the Association's Honorary Chaplain Richard Benson, there was much reflection and laughter, and this continued during the reception held at Gordon's beloved Shipley Golf Club. As you would expect, most of the fine details had been planned by Gordon himself and while the day was obviously very sad, it was a genuine celebration of his life – a life cut short but well-lived.

Rest in peace Gordon

Gordon Lodge

9 May 1944 - 4 August 2019

News from the Frontline



Squadron Leader
Mike Waring

2019 has been another busy year for 57 Sqn, with changes and growth everywhere. We have trained a large number of Qualified Flying Instructors (QFIs), and an increasing number of students on an increasing range of courses. We have held numerous Force Development events, raised considerable sums for the RAF Benevolent Fund, won multiple sports competitions and maintained that unique 57 Sqn spirit through countless social events.

As an organization 3 Flying Training School (3FTS) is tasked to train 182 students per year but, as you may have heard in the media, despite our best efforts we managed to train only 132 this year. Significant projects are always vulnerable to unexpected challenges and the transition to the UK Military Flying Training System (MFTS) has had a few. However, as you see from this report, the exceptional staff of 57 Sqn are embracing these challenges.

This time last year I reported on how we had converted from the Tutor to the Prefect aircraft, moved into new accommodation (the Sykes Building) and were in the 'building phase' of our instructor cadre.



The Grob Prefect

During this phase we have grown from 7 to 20 QFIs on the Prefect, many of who have had to undergo additional training as the breadth of courses that we offer has increased. The Sqn is now responsible for: Multi-Engine Lead-In to prepare students for training on the Phenom; Basic Fast Jet Lead-In to prepare students for training on the new Texan TR6; a Fixed-Wing refresher course for rotary- and fixed-wing pilots who have been away from flying for extended periods; and 'training' for Weapon Systems Officers (WSOs; the successor to Navigators) to expose them to the airborne environment and develop their Airmanship. In addition to these tasks we were responsible for delivery of the English Language Reinforcement & Orientation Course (ELROC) for eight qualified Qatari air force pilots in preparation for them providing Combat Air Patrols during the 2022 World Cup.

As is often the way in military aviation all this expansion was achieved on the back of some challenges. Just as we were expanding it was decided to re-surface RAFC Cranwell's runways which required us

to deploy to RAF Barkston-Heath for 5 months to operate with our sister sqns 674 AAC and 703 NAS.

Aircraft serviceability has fallen well short of expectations, and the Prefect is proving to be a challenging aircraft in other ways. It does not have 'care-free handling', which means you can over-temp and over-torque the engine easily, and the flaps can easily be over-stressed. As a result, serviceability has not matched our requirement, and manning problems have also meant that unserviceable aircraft took too long to be fixed. Air Traffic manning issues have also impacted our output with restrictions to airfield opening hours.



The Sykes Building - home to 57 Sqn

Things, however, are now looking significantly more positive with runway re-surfacing complete, ATC and engineering manning addressed, and our understanding of the risks associated with the aircraft better understood.

The upshot is that over the past year, 57 Sqn has trained a total of 82 students (33 EFT, 7 Elementary Navigator Training, 15 Multi-Engine Lead-In, 4

News from the Frontline (continued)

Fixed Wing Refresher, 6 Fast-Jet Lead-In and 8 ELROC) with the other EFT Sqns training the rest.



OC 57 Sqn with Fg Off James Bell

Over the next year, syllabus changes should increase the throughput of students to the numbers required.

The decision to reduce flying hours has not been taken lightly but there is an expanding Front Line demand to meet, and the impact of reduced flying hours is mitigated by the increased use of synthetic training - including traditional simulators, virtual reality and 360 camera footage.

We continue to develop our Junior Officer's officer qualities by encouraging them to take on projects and to participate in wider station activities. In the 100th year of the RAF Benevolent Fund, I challenged every course to raise money for this fantastic organisation, which they have done through charity cake sales, dog shows and sporting challenges, raising a total of £2000 in the process.

Our sporting success has continued; we currently sit at the top of the Commandant's Cup and won the annual Inter-EFT ski and swimming competitions. Staff and students have also visited HMS Queen Elizabeth and the International Bomber Command Memorial, welcomed British Judo Champion Nekoda Smythe-Davis as part of a Performance Coaching Event, and hosted a visit from the French Air Force which helped maintain Anglo-Franco relationships in this difficult Brexit era!

Fostering spirit and ethos in the staff and students is one of my biggest priorities and these activities have gone a long way to doing this. However, nothing develops military ethos better than military memorial events, commemoration services and the Force Development activities that go along-side them. In the last year we have sent groups of staff and students to the 100th anniversary of the Battle Of Amiens; to



57 Sqn party at Ejby, Denmark

Belgium for the 100th anniversary of the liberation of Wevelgem; to Poland to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Great Escape; to Ejby in Denmark to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the loss of 57 Sqn Lancaster DX-I; and to Bourghtheroulde-Infreville in France to celebrate its liberation and the loss of 57 Sqn Lancaster LM626. All these events had a significant impact on those attending and served to reinforce the inspiring history of 57 Sqn. I was fortunate to attend the Belgium and Denmark events, both of which were outstanding in their own way, but the Denmark trip was an event I shall never forget.

So, it's been a hectic, challenging but extremely rewarding year on the Sqn, and to cap the year in style, our efforts were recognized at the annual 3FTS Dinner, when 57 Sqn was awarded the 3FTS Sword for the best EFT Sqn; suitable recognition for all the hard work of the fantastic team that is 57 Sqn.



The 3FTS Sword is presented to 57 Sqn by Air Cdre Hunter, Director of Flying Training

Finally, it seems highly likely that I will see many of you at the 630 & 57 Sqn Association events in 2020 as my replacement still has not been found, it looks like I will be OC 57 Sqn into 2021! I look forward to catching up with you all at some point in 2020.

Research Update



Air Commodore
Wendy Rothery

The high level of interest in and enquiries relating to 57 and 630 Sqns has continued over the last 12 months. I have been pleased to provide many relatives of those who served on 57 and 630 Sqns with a detailed account of their loved ones' time on the Squadrons, together with information to support a number of memorial services across Europe marking the 75th anniversary of D-Day.

As we gathered for the annual Association Reunion in July, we recalled the Squadrons' activity 75 years earlier. With the exception of a successful mission by 57 Sqn on 3 June as part of a force which destroyed a German signals station at Ferme D'Urville, the two Squadrons operated together on night operations throughout June and July 1944. There were raids against gun emplacements at Maisy on the night of 4/5 June and La Pernelle on 5/6 June in what would now be known as shaping operations. Maisy lay between Omaha and Utah beaches; La Pernelle (on the Cherbourg peninsula) was hit around 2 hours before the first troops came ashore on D-Day.

As part of the battle for Normandy, support and interdiction operations followed on the night of D-Day (bridges at Caen), the Tank depot at Forêt de Cerisy on 7/8 June and the railway junction at Etampes on 9/10 June. Caen (bridges) was revisited on 12/13 June and a rapidly planned raid on troop and vehicle concentrations at Aunay-sur-Odon took place on 14/15 June.

The 21 June, the longest day, proved to be East Kirkby's worst night of the war. A force of 133 Lancasters and 6 Mosquitos attacked a synthetic oil plant at Wesseling, just south of Cologne. Night fighters made contact with the bomber stream and the result was a 27.8% casualty rate, 37 Lancasters being lost. 57 Sqn lost 6 aircraft: 23 aircrew were killed, 7 became POWs and 5 managed to evade capture. My Grandfather's crew, captained by Pilot Officer Nicklin, ditched in the North Sea and were rescued the next day. 630 Squadron lost 5 aircraft, 4 with the loss of all on board. Flying Officer Rackley's crew were forced to abandon their aircraft near Henlow on their return and all survived. So, for East Kirkby, 51 killed, 7 taken POW and 5 evaders on a single raid.

The Wesseling raid was a disaster for 5 Group. Middlebrook and Everitt's 'Bomber Command War Diaries' records "133 Lancasters and 6 Mosquitos to attack the synthetic-oil plant at Wesseling; all the aircraft in this force were from 5 Group except for 5 Lancasters provided by 1 Group. The weather forecast for the target area (and for the attack on Scholven/Buer which took place at the same time) predicted clear conditions, but the bombing force encountered 10/10ths low cloud. The planned 5 Group low-level marking method could not be used and the reserve method, in which the Lancasters bombed on H2S radar, was used instead. German night-fighters made contact with the bomber force and 37 Lancasters were lost - 44,

49, and 619 Sqns each losing 6 aircraft. The casualty rate represented 27.8% of the Lancaster force." This was the worst casualty rate of any raid since May 1940. From crew reports, it seems that the German night fighters found the back of the bomber stream on the way into the target and followed them all the way back out over the North Sea.

As noted above, my grandfather was on the same raid with 57 Sqn and was also shot down that night. DX-A was forced to ditch in the North Sea, but the crews' dinghy was only discovered by chance after they had been afloat for more than 12 hours. All the distress calls had gone unheard, but they were spotted by an aircraft searching for dinghies that had been dropped the day before for other reasons. They could so easily have been posted as 'nothing heard, missing without trace'. Their survival was attributed to the fact that they had practiced the crew dinghy drill the previous afternoon, but they would also have been helped by being on just one engine, reducing the rate of descent, the relatively calm seas, and enough light for Nicklin to judge the moment of ditching. They were extremely lucky.

630 Sqn lost 4 aircraft that night, 57 Squadron lost 6, albeit with 2 crews recovered. Purely by coincidence, I recently met a relative of John Maunsell DFC, a Navigator on 57 Sqn whose aircraft was shot down over Belgium during the Wesseling Raid. He managed to evade capture and his fascinating story of spending months in hiding, supported by the Resistance, is captured at the link below; I would commend it to you. John died in 2010, well into his nineties, and I regret not having met him as he would undoubtedly have remembered my Grandfather; their crews flew 13 operational missions together and I have recently taken their Log Books to the International Bomber Command Centre (IBCC) for archiving.

<http://aircrewremembered.com/bayley-alan-frederick.html>

Research (continued)



The IBC Memorial



IBC Spire Memorial



The East Kirkby Tree

A further enquiry linked to the Wesseling Raid struck another very emotional chord, where twin brothers had both been killed on operations. Sqn Ldr Arthur Edgar Foster DFC (Ben), a pilot with 630 Sqn, died flying Lancaster 1 ND531 (LE-K) on the night of 21/22 June 1944. His crew was:

- Flt Sgt L Lawrence DFM (Flight Engineer)
- Flt Lt R Adams DFC (Navigator)
- Fg Off F L Hewish (Bomb Aimer)
- Fg Off F R Stone (Wireless Op)
- Sgt D G Bradd (Mid-Upper Gunner)
- Fg Off L G Davis DFM (Rear Gunner)

Ben and his brother were both commissioned on 1 November 1941. Ben had completed a tour of operations with 61 Sqn, for which he was awarded a DFC gazetted on 12 March 1943. He was posted in to 630 Sqn with several other members of his crew in May 1944; the Operational Record Book does not show the exact date but it was likely to have been late in the month as they did not fly on operations until 6 June (D-Day).

His missions with 630 Sqn were:

- 6/7 Jun ND531 – night, targeted against comms centres at Caen
- 7/8 Jun D797 – night, fuel dumps at Foret de Cerisy
- 12/13 Jun ND531 – night, tank park, Caen
- 21/22 Jun ND 531 – Wesseling, Failed to Return. His aircraft took off at 2230 but nothing further was heard from them.

The probability is that Ben's crew fell victim to one of the night fighters and came down in the sea, although there were no corroborating claims in the German records. This was not unusual if the aircraft had been damaged and kept flying for a while – as it was dark the fighter crew might not have seen their attack prove successful if there was no immediate fire caused.

Ben's twin brother Pilot Officer Alec Leonard Foster (Bob) was killed operating as an Flight Engineer on a 61 Sqn Lancaster on 3 Sep 1942, age 21. His crew was:

- Sqn Ldr D S Forsyth DFC (pilot)
- Plt Off R C Taylor (Navigator)
- Sgt T A Jeffries (Bomb Aimer)
- Plt Off H O Peel (Wireless Op)
- Sgt J Wright (Mid-Upper Gunner)
- Plt Off C W F Underwood (Rear Gunner)

They were flying in Lancaster Mk I, W4136, which would have borne the 61 Sqn code letters of QR-, although there is no record of the tail letter itself. They took off from RAF Syerston at 2330 hrs for a raid on Karlsruhe but nothing further was heard from them. Their mission took place just over 2 weeks after the Pathfinder Force was formed, so theirs was an early part of an operational concept that proved to be very successful in later months. Some 200 aircraft were launched that night, and suffered the loss of 4 Wellingtons, 2 Lancasters, a Halifax and a Stirling. Three of those aircraft are known to have fallen to a single night-fighter, which shows that night fighters were operating in the area. It is not known whether the loss was down to night fighters, flak, or both.

My visit to the International Bomber Command Centre (IBCC) in Lincoln in August gave me an opportunity to stop and reflect on the outstanding service of all members of 57 and 630 Sqns throughout WWII.

The aim of the IBCC is to tell the personal stories of members of Bomber Command, ground crew and civilians impacted by the bombing campaigns during the War. The Centre will also provide a comprehensive record of the role of Bomber Command's squadrons and digitally display historical documentation and photographs relating to the activity of Bomber Command.

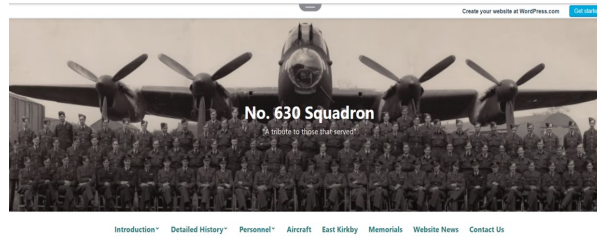


Lincoln Cathedral

The city of Lincoln was selected for the location of the IBCC because 27 RAF Bomber Command stations (over a third of all Bomber Command stations) were based in the county during WW II, leading it to be nicknamed "Bomber County".

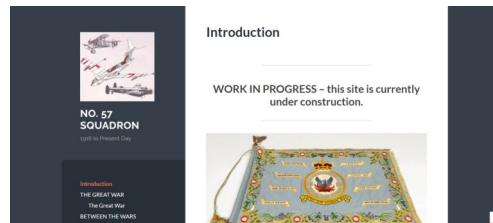
The Centre has already collected more than 800 personal experiences of Bomber Command veterans from around the world. You can find more details at <https://internationalbcc.co.uk/> and I would encourage you to visit and contribute to the archive collection.

57 Squadron History - a New Project



The 630 Sqn Research website

An exciting new project to create a day-by-day history of 57 Squadron has been started by Association Member Peter Sharpe. Peter and the 630 Squadron Research group have published their tribute to those who served with the squadron at <https://630squadron.wordpress.com/>. It contains a night by night history of 630 Squadron from formation through to its disbandment, details of all operations flown, combat reports, evaders and escapers, masses of photos of the aircrew and their aircraft, honours and awards, a Roll of Honour, and a list of all aircrew who flew on Operations with the squadron.



The 57 Sqn Research website

Now they are turning their attention to 57 Squadron, with a second website, <https://57squadron.wordpress.com/> which is again a tribute to all who have served in the squadron. It will cover the entire life of the squadron from 1916 to date and it is hoped will attract offers of photos and information which can be loaded onto the website (credits given). Currently a framework has been built for the Great War, the "between the wars" period, and basic material for WW2. Around this framework content will be added; the Wellington and Lancaster years will be the first focus alongside building a framework for the post-war years through until today.

Peter invites everyone to get in touch via email at history57and630@btinternet.com if you have an enquiry, point of interest or would like to offer information or photos. The sites hope to raise funds for the RAF Benevolent Fund and the Commonwealth War Graves Commission by answering research enquiries and if a donation is offered then it is requested to be paid direct to one of these good causes.

Harold Panton BEM



The Association was delighted to learn that Harold Panton at East Kirkby had been awarded the British Empire Medal 'For services to Heritage in Lincolnshire' in this summer's Queen's Birthday Honours List.

Harold established the Lincolnshire Aviation Heritage Centre at East Kirkby in 1987 along with his late brother, Fred, who had himself received the MBE in January 2002 for services to aviation history.

The Centre was founded as a commemoration to their brother, Christopher, who was killed along with the rest of his crew on the Nuremburg raid on 30 March 1944 while serving as a Halifax Flight Engineer with 433 Squadron. Nowadays the home to Lancaster 'Just Jane', the Centre plays a key part in our Association's Annual Reunion memorial service to those that served with 57 and 630 Squadrons.

Speaking to local reporters after news of his award broke, Harold, aged 85, said "it took quite a while for the news of the BEM to sink in..." He went on to thank those people that have supported the Centre over the past 31 years saying, "It's very humbling to receive the award.... I cannot thank enough the people who nominated me and have supported the aviation centre over the years."

Congratulations Harold – a richly deserved honour.

Danish 75th Commemoration

On the night of 21/22 May 1944, 57 Squadron Lancaster ND960 (DX-I) was tasked on a mine-laying mission to the Kiel Canal.

| | |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| Flt Lt A T Richards | Pilot |
| Fg Off W T Woodall | Navigator RCAF |
| Plt Off A W C Budgen | Flight Engineer |
| Fg Off G Ferguson | Bomb Aimer |
| Sgt T Edwards | Wireless Operator/Air Gunner |
| Sgt H de Gray Griffiths | Gunner |
| Sgt C J Woodmass | Rear Gunner |

While en-route to its target, the crew of ND960 were attacked by a German night fighter, and the aircraft exploded in mid-air, scattering debris across fields near Nakke/Emtekær, in the parish of Tanderup, Denmark. Tragically, Jørgen Brandt, a young farmhand was subsequently believed to have been killed inadvertently setting off one or more of the magnetic mines that remained within the wreckage.

Only 3 of the crew members were found, and only 2 of these could be identified – air gunners, Sgt Harold de Gray Griffiths and Sgt Cyril James Woodmass who were buried locally on 22 May 1944.

In 1946, the local community erected a memorial stone to the 7 airmen that had lost their lives.



The memorial stone to the crew of ND960, 57 Squadron, at Emtekær, Denmark. Beneath the crew names, the inscription reads "They died also for Denmark"

To mark the 75th anniversary of the crash, the local communities of the parish of Tanderup and the town of Emtekear held a ceremony at the memorial stone on 22 May 2019.



The ceremony was attended by local people, the Mayor of the Middelfart Community, Johannes Lundsryd Jensen, local reserve and veteran's organisations, a party from 57 Squadron, led by Squadron Leader Mike Waring, and the niece of rear gunner Cyril Woodmass.

Remembering our Uncles



Plt Off Ronald Bailey



Flt Sgt Charles Richardson

In the early hours of 22 May 1944, Lancaster LL950 of 630 Squadron, was returning from a mine-laying mission in Kiel Bay, when it was attacked by a German night fighter over Jutland, caught fire and crashed near the Danish village of Vesterlund. All seven members of the crew lost their lives.

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| Plt Off R W Bailey | Pilot |
| Flt Sgt J M Henderson | Bomber Aimer |
| Sgt J Lindsay | Air Gunner |
| Sgt M E Murton | Air Gunner |
| Flt Sgt C H Richardson | Navigator |
| Fg Off A E Truesdale | Wireless Operator |
| Plt Off J M Whiting | Flight Engineer |

On the 75th anniversary of the crash, on the sunny but breezy evening of 22 May 2019, more than 150 residents of Vesterlund and further afield, gathered around the memorial to the crew: one large and seven small stones, deep in the woods near the crash site.

Two days earlier Rosemary Gotch and I had flown from Bristol to Billund Airport in North Jutland. Rosemary's uncle, Ron Bailey, was the pilot of the aircraft and just 22 years old. Joining the Air Cadets as a teenager, he had worked as an engineer and had married a few months earlier. My uncle, Charles Richardson was the navigator and 26 years old. Although in a reserved occupation as a London policeman, he had felt the need to do even more to protect his family from the bombs falling on London where his parents and siblings were living.

Katrine Vestergaard was the young daughter of the farmer in Vesterlund. She could speak and write English, enabling my mother to correspond with her, resulting in a friendship between the families which has lasted throughout the generations to the present day.

We met the Vestergaard family for the first time in 1975 when ten members of my family made the journey to Denmark. Rosemary's grandmother and aunt had visited soon after the war, and her parents later.



1975 - Angela's mother kneeling by the large stone, Katrine stood behind



Katrine & Peder Vestergaard pictured in 1993

Whether it has been attending the 50th and 70th Commemorations, or while holidaying in Denmark, there has always been time to visit Vesterlund and the Fovrfeld Cemetery in Esbjerg where the crew members are buried. Fellow Association Member, David Whiting, was just 6 years old when his father, Max, the flight engineer was killed.

Remembering our Uncles (continued)



Plt Off Max Whiting

In 2014, David was able to travel from his home in France for the 70th anniversary and joined by his two daughters. Although David was unable to join us in person this year, he was able to make an appearance via Skype from Portugal!

Arriving in Billund this May, we were met by Niels Vestergaard, whose family had tended the memorial since it was erected. Also meeting us were Verner Pedersen and Lars Henrik Hansen, Head of Security at the Airport, both from the local 'May 22 Committee' and responsible for all aspects of the organisation of the event including maintaining the memorial and its surroundings in immaculate condition. Together with their wives, our hosts went out of their way to look after us throughout our stay.



The Tirpitz Museum at Blavand near Esbjerg

The next day we were taken to Esbjerg and then to the Tirpitz Museum amongst sand dunes on the west coast. The Tirpitz bunker started construction in 1944 as part of the defence around Esbjerg.

In 2017 the museum was expanded to include four exhibition areas, telling wartime and west coast stories as well as geological developments from thousands of years ago. It also houses Denmark's largest collection of amber.

On the day of the anniversary, we were taken first to the town of Jelling, which was the royal seat of the first Christian monarchs of Denmark in the Viking Age, King Gorm

and his son Harald Bluetooth, whose runic symbol we are familiar with today!

Returning to Vesterlund, there was time to rest and gather our thoughts before gathering in the woods for the Evening Service, where we were welcomed by the sound of beautiful singing from the Kildenes Kor, a Gospel Choir from the local region.



(L-R) Angela, Verner, Lars and Rosemary

There were representatives present from the Home Guard District South East Jutland, including its head, Kim Dalgaard Poulsen who gave a moving tribute, the local Air Force together with the 'Air Priest Emeritus' Kaj Ross-Hansen, himself once a pilot, who struck just the right note with his cheerful but touching speech.



Evening Service at Vesterlund



Memorial to the crew of LL950

Pilot Thomas Dam flew an RV8 aircraft overhead with a white smoke trail which delighted the audience.

Remembering our Uncles (continued)

I managed to learn eight separate Danish words which formed a framework for my speech which was warmly welcomed, judging by the newspaper write-up the following week. Rosemary offered our joint thanks and it was good to hear David on Skype. Verner thanked everyone present for their support and the many sponsors from the Municipality, including numerous businesses. He also thanked 'higher powers' for the good weather! Following wreath-laying, the evening was rounded off beautifully with the 'Last Post', before we moved on to the Vesterlund Assembly House for refreshments and more entertainment from the choir.

The following day, we were invited to lunch with journalist Niels Schaiffel. Now quite an old man, Niels has written several travel books and accounts of his service in the Danish Air Force. He wanted to record our 'stories' and explained to us how grateful the Danes will always be to the British who came to their defence in the Second World War. That has certainly been my experience, made even more apparent this year.

We were sad to say goodbye to all our friends, and Denmark, the next day. Others have spent time and energy researching details of aircraft, flight paths and statistics. They are important, especially for historical records, but in writing this I wanted to show a more personal aspect. Rosemary and I know our uncles only through members of our families who were close to them and who are, themselves, no longer with us. Ron, Charles, Max and the other four, worked closely together. Rosemary, David and I must now keep memories alive through our links with Denmark, our own friendship and the Squadron Association.

One of the songs beautifully sung by the Gospel Choir was written by the Danish musician Hans Christian Jochimsen. He has a Christian music ministry, both writing and performing his work. Here is the first verse of 'Teardrops'..... for our crew, with grateful thanks.

Teardrops falling, in the morning
I see darkness has taken hold of you.
Let me hold you, let me love you
and know I'll never leave you on your own.
I will be there when you call
I will be there when the teardrops fall
You will never be the same
since the night you cried and called My Name.



Niels Vestergaard and Verner Pederson pictured at Fovrfeld Cemetery, Esbjerg

Eyes in the Night – the loss of 630 Squadron Lancaster LM269 (LE-I)

This Newsletter records the passing of Walter Hunt who served as a rear gunner with 630 Squadron and who, along with 4 other crew members, survived the crash of 630 Squadron Lancaster LM269 on 18 August 1944, just 2 months after the crew had arrived on the Squadron.

Last year, the Association was contacted by a retired French Air Force officer, Yannick Julien, who shared with us results of his research into the loss of this aircraft and the fortunes of the seven crew members who parted company with their aircraft that fateful day.

| | |
|-------------------|---------------------------|
| Pilot | Plt Off John Bolton |
| Navigator | Sgt Alan Bullock RCAF |
| Flight Engineer | Sgt Charles Goodman |
| Bomb Aimer | FS Ronald Bishop |
| Wireless Operator | Sgt William 'Duke' Durber |
| Air Gunner | Sgt Taffy Gurney |
| Air Gunner | Sgt Walter Hunt |



Crew (from L-R: Bullock, Durber, groundcrew, groundcrew, Bolton, Gurney, groundcrew, Bishop, Hunt.
Absent: Goodman)

At around 1500 hours on 18 August 1944, 26 Lancasters had taken off from East Kirkby to join the attack on fuel depots and the German submarine base in the Bacalan district of Bordeaux. This was to be the 27th and final mission for 630 Squadron Lancaster LM269 (LE-I) *'Eyes in the Night'*.

LM269 was hit several times by the intense German flak over the submarine base. Bomb Aimer Ronald Bishop was fatally wounded, the landing gear was damaged, 3 engines were taken out of action and the fourth began to smoke. The hatch on the bomb bay was blocked, the radio was unusable, and a fire broke out inside the plane but was contained by the crew.

Attempting to evade north towards American-held areas around Nantes, the aircraft quickly lost altitude. At about 5000 feet and above Archingeay, Johnny Bolton ordered the crew to bale out. Walter Hunt was first to go and landed in a nursery. Durber was second, landing in swamps near Boutonne; Taffy Gurney was next, landing nearby. Navigator Allan Bullock did not want to leave Ronald Bishop in the plane, so he strapped Ronald's parachute on and dropped him above Genouillé. Bullock followed, but his parachute failed to open properly, and he fell to his death. A first hand account was made by a local gendarme, who confirmed that Alan Bullock had fallen from the aircraft, hit an oak tree and died.

Eyes in the Night (continued)



Burial of Alan Bullock in Muron cemetery – 20 August 1944

Flight engineer, Charlie Goodman baled out and landed 500 yards from a German observation post near Surgères. Finally, John Bolton emptied the fuel tanks and steered the aircraft towards a clear zone before jumping at very low level, leaving the aircraft to crash at Petites Chaumes, close to Surgères.



The crash site of LM269 at Petit Chaumes

Remarkably, 5 of the crew had survived and Yannick Julien and his colleagues were able to track the subsequent fortunes of the surviving airmen.

Walter Hunt was recovered by the village teacher in Archingeay, Edouard Bourdery, and some friends and was immediately hidden in nearby woods. He linked up with Duke Durber later that night and the local Maquis took them both to an isolated distillery near Burie where they stayed for a few days before being taken by another Maquis team and helped to return to the UK.

Eyes in the Night (continued)

Duke Durber was killed in a flying training accident in March 1945, when serving with No 1 Radio School. Walter Hunt returned to the scene after the War and became close friends with Edouard Bourdery; he was to return many times until his final visit in November 2015.



Edouard Bourdery, M. Flies, Walter Hunt and Jacques Péroche - August 1988



Walter Hunt pays his final visit to France - November 2015

Taffy Gurney landed in Puy-du-Lac and although slightly injured was ridden by bicycle to a resistance group at Rochefort before returning to the UK. He died in 1981.

Charles Goodman was hidden immediately after he baled out and moved progressively to join an escape network in St Martin de la Coudre.

Eyes in the Night (continued)



Ronald Bishop, John Bolton and Alan Bullock

Unusually for crewman that died in the same crash, Sergeant Alan Bullock RCAF and Flight Sergeant Ronald Bishop rest in different cemeteries, although both are in Charente-Maritime. Ronald Bishop, killed by German flak above Bacalan, is buried at St Crépin and Alan Bullock is buried in Muron.

Pilot John Bolton, the last to jump, was assisted by a local, Jacques Péroche, and taken by night to resistance fighters before returning to the UK. He was killed in a flying training accident in June 1951, while serving with No 2 Air Navigation School.

About the story of LM269 and her crew, Yannick Julien, remarks that

'Many people took risks, devoted themselves and when asked why, they simply said, "We could not let them be taken by the Germans".'

The Association is grateful for the research and photos to Yannick Julien, Edouard Bourdery, Jacques Péroche and Walter Hunt (RIP Walter)

Postscript: The association was very recently contacted by Pete Harden who has taken it upon himself to visit and places crosses of remembrance on war graves in Europe. He has now visited over 500 such graves, including that of Ronald Bishop at St Crépin



Ronald Bishop's grave at St Crépin

The Last Victor K2P

Inside Hangar No 5 at Duxford, can be found the sole remaining example of a Victor K2P – XH648 which was first delivered to 57 Squadron in December 1959. The aircraft was originally built as a B1 variant but underwent modification to K2P standard during its service life where it also spent time with 15 Squadron and 55 Squadron before being retired to Duxford in 1976.



XH648 Nose assembly



Armstrong Siddeley Sapphire



XH648 Bomb Bay

Concerted restoration work is now underway, as the Association's Neil Brookes found on a recent visit the Imperial War Museum Duxford. The work is scheduled to last until the end of 2022 and to cost around £450,000 to complete. If we have a few £ to spare and would like to contribute to this work go to the IWM website at <https://www.iwm.org.uk/support-us/donations/conserving-Handley-Page-Victor-XH648>

Money Matters



Clare Gillard

As Members are aware, the Association does not levy a membership fee, but rather relies predominantly on the generosity of Members, their relatives and friends, who make donations throughout the year, to fund its activities. The Reunion Raffle and Sunday collection also helps with income; this year amounting to £833. Donations from all these sources was £300 lower than last year and, when combined with one-off expenses such as repairs to the East Kirkby Memorial and support

for the purchase of the new 57 Squadron tie, overall Association funds have fallen by over £1000 in the past 12 months. As at 1 September 2019, the Association account stood at £5427 credit.

The annual accounts are presented to, and approved by, Members at the annual Reunion. If you would like a copy of the accounts please contact our Treasurer Clare Gillard (Treasurer@57-630sqnassoc.org).

You can also contact the Treasurer if you would like to discuss legacies.

From the Petwood to Showaddywaddy!

Did you ever wonder how the Association manages to get its Annual Reunion functions broadcast in marvellous Dolby stereo? Here, Harold Houldershaw reflects on 40 years of audio/visual support for our Association.

My great grandfather lived in East Kirkby, the next generation in West Keal and then to Stickford, where I still live. As an 18 year old in 1979, I had left college and become self-employed providing sound system hire and mobile disco's. Harry and Edna Ely of the Mill in East Kirkby had been friends of the family before I was born, as were the Chattertons at Old Bolingbroke. I was approached by Harry Ely to provide a sound system for the dedication of the new Association Memorial at East Kirkby, an event organised by Gerry Monk. It was of personal interest to me as my father would often talk of the Lancasters, but until then the old derelict aerodrome was a place of curiosity and as kids we would often get sent packing by one of the farmers.

One thing that really sticks out in my mind is that these men were of my father's generation, hardly a grey hair, and my perception at the time was that WWII had been put to bed, and people didn't talk about it in general - so a related event was unusual.

At the start, I leaned towards becoming a professional sound engineer, but given the financial uncertainty, I decided to take a safer option and went to work in the family coal business. I sold most of my equipment but kept one small

amplifier so that I could continue to provide the system at the Memorial as a friend of the Association. I have provided the sound for every Reunion service at the Memorial since.

Some years later I was approached by Les Ovens who needed some amplification to help with the speeches at the Petwood. I lent him an old Ferrograph tape recorder which did the trick and that was the first time I was directly aware of the Petwood event. This went on for several years and as my personal interest continued, I bought myself video equipment and did some casual filming at the Memorial Service.

By the early 90s, attendance at the Reunion had grown so that 2 rooms were now needed for the Dinner (this was in the days before the Woodland Suite), and Les called me to ask "could I wire the two rooms together for sound." I decided that I could do better than that and would wire them together for two-way video! With my cobbled together resources this was actually a massive challenge, and it would take me about four hours to wire up and I would be taking it down at around 2.30 am. Despite the complexity involved, this continued for several years - I seemed to be up for a challenge.

By this time Eric Snell was my Association contact, and for the dedication of the memorial to the Bomber Group he asked if I could relay radio from the BBMF Lancaster through the PA as it flew over, which it did with it calling out Gotley G. I was very pleased with myself, but Eric had noticed how I struggled for equipment and he approached Tom Mackay to see if the Association could purchase any to help me. Tom's reply was a brilliant one from a business man - rather than buy equipment I was to do the job on a professional footing and would be paid accordingly.

Although still in full time employment, and spurred on by Eric's response, I found myself doing other things. The Petwood engaged me to do the link up for other organisations, the video footage from the association link up became the formal video. In turn, I did the formal video

for the BCair Japan association at Coningsby and got a flight in the Dakota, and I filmed the occasional wedding and pantomime. I also started doing the sound for horse events and carnivals in local towns.

In 2006 with changes to the family business I once again became self-employed, I was contracted to Voiceprint Records and then Gonzo Distribution filming, creating DVD's working with artists such as Barbara Dickson, Rick Wakeman, Showaddywaddy and many more. The heights were producing a DVD of a concert in Symphony Hall in Birmingham and I was even flown to Memphis to produce a DVD.



A rare photo of Harold!

I still do work for the record company but the market has changed drastically with technology. The sound systems cannot support me alone and I have now taken my skills into the charity sector and am employed driving and operating a big Purple Sensory Bus for disabled adults and children.

So, as I am about to turn 59, I ask myself what I might have missed had I not kept my hand in with the 57 & 630 Squadrons' Association.

Harold Houldershaw, Stickford, November 2019

RAF Scampton Memorial Window

A project is underway to commission a stunning stained glass window at Scampton Church to mark 100 years' relationship between RAF Scampton and Scampton Church (1918 – 2018), and thereby also create a lasting memory to all who served in squadrons at the base, both in peacetime, during the two world wars and the Cold War.

The Association Committee has agreed to donate £100 to the project in recognition of the time 57 Squadron spent at the base. This donation will pay for one of the pieces of stained glass and the Association's contribution will be recognised in the official Commemoration Book.

More details about the project and how to donate can be found at <https://scamptonchurch.org/raf-stained-glass-window/>



2nd Lieutenant Sydney John Leete - 57 Squadron RFC

Our 2011 Newsletter contains an article written by David Houghton on the origins, whereabouts and eventual return to 57 Squadron, of the Laurence Minot Memorial Trophy. The full article can be found on our website in the 57 Squadron 'Gallery & Archive' area and listed under '2008-Present - Flying Training'.

The article recounts the loss of Captain Laurence Minot MC on 28 July 1917 while serving with 57 Squadron. On that fateful day, Minot's observer, 2nd Lieutenant Sydney John Leete was also killed in the action which followed the bombing of the German aerodrome at Ingelmunster in Belgium.

In Spring this year, the Association was contacted by John Gosling, the great nephew of Syd Leete, who continues to research the service history of his great uncle and the circumstances which surrounded his loss in 1917. Drawing on archive materials and family correspondence, this is Syd's story.

Sydney John Leete was born in Walthamstow on 8 June 1893, the youngest of four surviving children. His father, Joseph Leete, worked his way up from being a London dockyard worker to, eventually, a shipowner and successful businessman, and by 1914 the family was living in a substantial house in Wickford, Essex.

When war broke out on 4 August 1914, Syd was 21 Years old and he immediately volunteered for the Army, travelling to Scarborough on 16 August and joining the 20th Hussars as a private soldier.

Perhaps disillusioned by life in the cavalry, Syd subsequently won a commission as an infantry officer with the 2/8th Worcestershire Regiment and was posted to the Western Front. There, Syd saw action on the Somme in 1916 and was twice wounded, including while on a patrol trying to enter the German trenches on the night of 6/7 September 1916, near Neuve Chapelle.



2nd Lieutenant Sydney Leete

After 18 months in the trenches and having witnessed a rapid expansion of the Royal Flying Corps, Syd was keen to transfer to 'an exciting alternative'. Although he wanted to become a pilot, he was first required to qualify and gain experience as an observer. Following training in England, Syd was posted to 57 Squadron in June 1917, where he remained an officer in the Worcestershire regiment, but on attachment to the Royal Flying Corps.



De Havilland DH4

At this time 57 Squadron was in the process of re-equipping with the de Havilland DH4, a 2-seat biplane, for use on photographic reconnaissance, artillery observation and bombing. On his arrival with 57 Squadron, Syd was teamed up with an Irish pilot, Lieutenant Irwin. In a letter home Syd wrote **"...I've got a young Irish pilot and he's some pilot, he does every mortal thing with the bus and we get on well too, which is a great thing."** The pair were assigned to "B" flight; commanded by Captain Laurence Minot.

Laurence Minot's early flying service is documented elsewhere but arriving on 57 Squadron as a flight commander in May 1917 as a 20-year old, he was already an experienced combat veteran. As the Squadron took delivery of the DH4 with its forward-firing machine gun, Minot was now able to take the fight to the enemy aggressively when the situation allowed.



Captain Laurence Minot

Syd Leete (continued)

Summer 1917 was a period of intensive operational activity for 57 Squadron as preparations were made for the opening of the 3rd Battle of Ypres. Photographic/reconnaissance missions and various bombing raids against German aerodromes were conducted, some deep into enemy territory and correspondingly hazardous, although the DH4's high service ceiling and speed gave it a measure of protection from German fighters.

However, this was also a period when the Germans were reorganising their fighter squadrons into larger units and Jagdgeschwader 1 (famously known as the 'Flying Circus'), the elite unit headed by Baron Manfred von Richthofen ('The Red Baron') was also operating in the area. There were many encounters between 57 Squadron and German aircraft.

On 30 June 1917, Syd wrote home to his sister, **"....yesterday had my first scrap but I couldn't get the blighter as he sheared off after the first few rounds were fired. I was so disappointed...."**



Syd Leete - Lewis gun training: May/June 1917

On 3 July, Laurence Minot wrote home **"...I led an offensive patrol of four machines today... I met six Albatross scouts and fought them for 25 minutes. I shot down one in the first five minutes and my observer got one down in flames about ten minutes after. The others then pushed off..."**

On 9 July, Laurence wrote home again, **"...I led a bomb raid the day before yesterday on a Hun aerodrome.....We got into one of the famous 'Circus', about twenty Albatross Scouts of the latest type, and had to fight back to the lines.....We were scrapping hard for 15 minutes; it was quite the most exciting time I've ever had, these Huns coming at one from every corner. I couldn't keep the machine on a straight course for half a second, or I should have been as dead as mutton. As it was I shot down one and the other fellow, who was above me, shot down another, which jolly nearly fell on my machine."**

Casualties and injuries were commonplace. On both 11 and 12 July, the Squadron had aircraft shot down behind enemy lines; all four crew members survived but were taken prisoner. The following day an observer was wounded.

On 27 July the Squadron raided Heule aerodrome. On their return five DH4s (including the aircraft of Minot and Leete) were involved in a long running dogfight with an estimated 25 fighters from "the Circus". 57 Squadron was credited with shooting down six German aircraft, including three for Minot and his observer Lieutenant Arthur Britton, and two for Irwin and Syd Leete.

Of the combats Lieutenant Britton subsequently wrote, **"...Captain Minot shot down two, one of which was flying at us nose on, firing for all he was worth, the tracer bullets seemed all round us, and Captain Minot was also firing at the Hun, who went down turning over and over, completely out of control....One machine painted like a chess board looped over us, and as he came down out of the loop I got him, and the pilot fell out. During the scrap I got hit three or four inches below the right knee, so signalled to Captain Minot, who got away from the remaining Huns..."**

But in addition to Britton's wound, 57 Squadron had sustained other losses; one pilot brought his plane home but subsequently died of his wounds, and two observers were killed. Syd's pilot, Lieutenant Irwin, had also been wounded in the foot.

The next day, 28 July 1917, the Squadron was tasked with a bombing mission against the German aerodrome at Ingelmunster, but with Britton and Irwin in hospital, Minot was without an observer and Syd Leete without a pilot. So Leete was assigned to fly as Minot's observer - probably the first time they had flown together.

The Squadron took off in the afternoon, with Minot and Leete in DH4 A7540. Just after dropping their bombs on Ingelmunster, they were intercepted by Albatros DV fighters from Jasta 6, led by Oberleutenant Eduard Dostler and his deputy leader Lieutenant Hans Ritter von Adam, both with a number of "kills" already to their credit. Minot's flight became split up and, seriously outnumbered, three of the DH4s were shot down over the next half hour. Above the Belgian village of Meulebeke the aircraft piloted by Captain Minot and Syd burst into flames or exploded while still in the air and the airmen were either thrown out or jumped to their deaths in preference to being burnt alive. There were no parachutes for British airmen in the First World War.

The fight and aircraft crashes were witnessed on the ground by locals (taken from Gustave Vuylsteke's diary dated 28 July 1917):

This evening around 7.45 pm as many as 50 allied airplanes flew above Meulebeke, as well as some German planes. Suddenly they began to fight and to shoot with machine guns; some of the planes showed smoke. All at once a plane, a white one, flew towards Ingelmunster and when above the neighborhood called Turkijen, we saw smoke, at least 20 m. All of a sudden it turned and a huge flame came out of the plane and the plane broke up in pieces; a burning wing and another piece (smoking) fell down. It was terrible to see and it lasted for about 10 minutes.

Syd Leete (continued)

At the same time a plane, also smoking, flew right towards the burning one, turning towards the ground, and began to shoot to the (German) soldiers who ran up to the crash site; then it flew away. They said it was an American plane.

Everybody hurried to the crash site. The plane had crashed in a carrot field at the neighborhood called Hulsvelde. One piece of the plane had fallen there and 15 m away were lying two English pilots. It was said that they either had fallen or jumped out of their plane.

The Germans came and everybody had to leave the site. They searched the English pilots' pockets and took all their possessions; a lot of money, was said. Then a picture was taken, with the German soldiers standing next to them. Thereafter the pilots were carried to a farm nearby and guarded by a German soldier.

It was said that a German and an English plane had crashed at Oostrozebeke and another English plane at Wielsbeke. They had been bombing Ingelmunster.

The two English pilots were buried in a square box at Meulebeke cemetery on Monday 30 July 1917.



Duitse soldaten en nieuwsgierige Meulebekenaren bij het vliegtuigwrak van de Engelse vliegeniers Laurence Minot en Sidney John Leete. (© Godfried Vuylsteke)

The Minot/Leete crash site - 28 July 1917

(from a book by Inez Demarrez)

The only survivor, Lieutenant Mallock, was wounded and taken prisoner.

As the action had taken place behind enemy lines, there was understandably some initial uncertainty over the fate of the 3 aircraft and their crews, but their non-return led the Officer Commanding 57 Squadron, Major L A Pattinson, to write to Syd Leete's father the following day:

Dear Sir,

It is with the greatest regret that I have to inform you that your son 2nd Lieutenant S.J. Leete has been missing since yesterday evening. He was upon a bomb raid with his Flight Commander Captain Minot, who is one of the best pilots whom I have ever seen. On the return journey some German machines were seen below ours and Captain Minot with

2 other machines, dived to attack.

This was the last seen of them as the remainder of the formation were engaged with a number of the enemy above them.

They had the advantage over the machines they were attacking so I expect they got some of them down. I expect that they were compelled to land either owing to engine failure or because the engine or petrol tank was hit.

Captain Minot is such a good pilot that I think it unlikely that he was shot down and the machine wrecked.

I cannot tell you how sorry I am to lose your son. He had been doing particularly splendid work with his usual pilot, 2nd Lieutenant Irwin and had shot down a German machine the very day before. He is quite one of the very best observers I have ever known. I will let you know any further news which I receive and trust you will inform me should you hear anything. His kit will be returned through Cox's Shipping Agency in the usual way. It will probably take a month or more to get home.

Please accept my most sincere sympathy with you in your anxiety.

Yours very truly

L.A.Pattinson (Major)

P.S. 2nd Lieutenant Irwin has been recommended by me for the M.C.; the honour of which is shared by your son.

On 13 August Major Pattinson wrote to Syd's father again:

Dear Sir,

I am very sad that I have to inform you that I have heard through a message from the German Flying Corps that "2/Lieut S. E. Leete" was killed on 28 July. I am afraid there can be little doubt that this refers to your son, and that the information is accurate. No mention is made of the fate of Captain Minot, his pilot. I think it most probable that he is all right as they would surely have mentioned the pilot's death as well if he had been killed.

I feel the loss of your son very deeply as he was one of the very best officers I have dealt with out here and a splendid fellow in every way. I do not think that he felt any fear as to his fate and seemed always to take his duty steadily and thoroughly as a matter of business.

Please accept my deepest sympathy for you in a loss which is irreparable.

Yours very truly

L.A. Pattinson.

Syd Leete (continued)

It was to be Spring 1918 before it became known that Captain Minot had not survived to be taken prisoner but had also been killed in the combat.

In 1919, Syd's father (Joseph Leete) was contacted by a family who lived in Meulebeke, the Vanderoughstraete's, who had witnessed the combat. During a subsequent visit to Belgium, he was able to visit the crash site on a farm and the graves of the men, and he wrote to Laurence Minot's father, with whom he had made contact earlier, telling them of what he had found.



Joseph Leete alongside the graves of his son and Laurence Minot - Harlebeke Cemetery, late-1920s

During the war it is believed that at least three British aircraft were shot down near the village of Meulebeke and their crews killed. These were Minot/Leete, Lieutenant Cecil D Hutchinson also of 57 Squadron (shot down on 10 August 1917 and died of wounds two days later) and 2nd Lieutenant W R Bishop/2nd Lieutenant G Macintosh of 55 Squadron (also in a DH4).

The crews were originally buried with military honours in the municipal cemetery in Meulebeke by the Germans and in the 1920s moved to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission cemetery at Harlebeke. Bishop, Mackintosh and Hutchinson rest side-by-side in the cemetery and Minot and Leete side-by-side just a couple of graves away.



The final resting place of 2nd Lieutenant Sydney Leete and Captain Laurence Minot

The Vanderoughstraete family hosted relatives of all 5 airmen after the War. Although contact was lost with four of the families over the years, they have been friends with the Mackintosh family for 3 generations and 100 years! Recently the Bishop family got back in touch and now, through John Gosling's research and help from the Bishop family, the Leete connection has been also restored.

It is sobering to reflect that in the five short weeks that Syd had been with 57 Squadron, 12 pilots and observers were killed, 4 wounded and 5 captured. As John Gosling puts it:

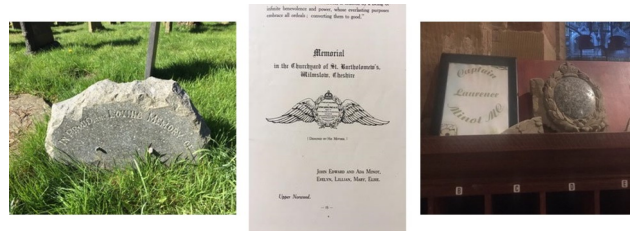
'...by 1917 the war in the air was, in truth, a desperate and brutal affair. Nevertheless, it seems that those who experienced it did so bravely and the survivors were able to recall good times. Lieutenant Arthur Britton recovered from his wound and subsequently reminisced; "We had at the squadron tennis.....and everyone played. We lived comfortably – were a very happy crowd."

Corpus non animum muto.

John Gosling, April 2019

Epilogue. Following confirmation of Laurence Minot's death, his family produced a memorial book and, in 1926, presented to the RAF the trophy which was subsequently to be known as the Laurence Minot Memorial Trophy and which today is retained by 57 Squadron at RAF Cranwell.

Within the book is reference to a memorial, designed by Minot's mother, and erected in the churchyard of St Bartholomew's Church, Wilmslow, Cheshire. By bizarre coincidence, this is John Gosling's local parish church, and while the plinth is still in the churchyard, the central part with the inscription and the wings is broken and on a shelf in the church.



The memorial stone to Laurence Minot in St Bartholomew's

However, thanks to John's work, the Chester Diocesan Board of Finance has given its approval for the memorial to be repaired.

This article can also be found on the Association website in the 57 Squadron 'Gallery & Archive' area and listed under '1916-1918 (WWI)'.

An Absent Friend - Fg Off Noel Summervell Culpan RNZAF

In 2009 Pete Chicken (24 Sqn and 57 Sqn) was browsing through the catalogue of an auction house in Wiltshire when he chanced upon a map used by a 57 Sqn Lancaster crew on a trip to Munich on the 17th of December 1944. Over the past few years Pete, Rob Fullerton (74 Sqn and 201 Sqn) and myself (230 Sqn) have tried to piece together as much as possible about that one night in December.

The Operational Record Book shows that 57 Squadron lost two aircraft on this operation. The first, piloted by Captain Niels Evensen, a Norwegian, crashed into the Channel on the outbound leg. As far as we can tell only one of the crew, Sgt A R Powell an Air Gunner from Kent, survived the ditching, but died of his injuries a few weeks later. The second (DX-B LM626) was flown by Fg Off Alfred Donkin and crashed in Northern France having turned back unable to climb over the Alps.



Lancaster DX-B (LM626) of 57 Sqn, pictured at RAF East Kirkby - December 1944

This was an experienced crew coming toward the end of their first tour, they had transferred into 57 from 106 Sqn, the 5 Group 'Pathfinder Nursery', and Donkin had been a flying instructor before that. For this trip they had with them a young pilot, Noel Culpan, on his first operational experience sortie.

Culpan's personal diary was donated to the RNZAF museum in Christchurch sometime in the 1990s, and after seeing our research they very kindly granted us access to it. It is one of the most moving documents I have ever encountered.

When Culpan opened the blank Air Ministry hard-back notebook he was 19 years old. A bright, articulate, newly qualified Sergeant pilot on a troopship with hundreds of other newly qualified aircrew being transferred from Australia and New Zealand to the

UK. On an inside page he wondered what 1944 would bring, his flying career and the uncertainties of war stretched ahead of him. A schoolboy drawing of a cartoon pilot under a question mark says it all. When he put pen to paper he didn't know, as I knew, that it would be his last year on Earth.



Fg Off Noel Culpan RNZAF

The diary makes compelling reading, but one of the first things that struck me was the utter normality of it. His entries detail poor food at railway stations, the bad English weather, good trips to the cinema and the slim chance of getting a lift back to the main gate after a night in the pub. He sat by the river in Oxford, got lost in Northampton and fell asleep on the grass in Stow-on-the-Wold.

His attitude to service life was ambivalent. He writes frequently of what he calls 'bullshit parades' and sitting through interminable lectures delivered by time expired ground instructors; but he also writes of months of high quality technical ground school and periods of flying training during which the pace of learning was frenetic and exams came thick and fast. He was sharp enough to avoid the dull stuff, and cram like mad for what was essential. Culpan became engaged to Betty just prior to leaving Auckland in 1943, and from what I can see he wrote to her every evening.

In these entries he comes across as extremely likeable. He seldom drank alcohol, except to relieve the boredom or when on leave in London, rarely swore, never did any form of PT if he could avoid it, and kept a meticulous tally of his income and expenses. Nevertheless, he is funny, cultured, popular and good at his job. His exam results were all well above average and in the summer of 1944 he received a green log book endorsement for being the only pilot to have executed

Noel Culpan (continued)

a low altitude go-around in a Stirling with two engines inoperative. This was a low hour pilot flying at night with a trainee crew relying upon him for their lives.

His diary entry for the day that he is told of being posted to the Lancaster makes for difficult reading; for him it's a bombshell, he knows the loss rate of heavy bomber crews up to this point makes it pretty much a death sentence, and so it came to pass.

"Thursday 11th of May 1944. "Up at 7.45 am, and off to Reserve Flight after breakfast. I piloted FS Stringer (NZ) on a nav trip over the Welsh coast and finished at 1pm. I got my posting today – to 17 OTU on Wimpeys for Lancs. What a bastard. After tea I was fed up with the bloody RAF, so I had three beers and went to bed".

He is crewed-up, completes the Lancaster Finishing School, receives a commission and arrives at East Kirkby on the 25th of November 1944.

On the 29th of November he is present at the 57 Squadron birthday party which appears to have been pretty riotous. However this is the one light interlude, from then on the diary focusses on the losses and the near misses. The tone is unremittingly grim.

"Tuesday 5th December. Did a long cross country [flight] this morning. A war on this evening and I was down for a second dicky but it was cancelled for me. Just as well because the boys got shot up to hell and the bod I was going with is in hospital. All came back though".

His final diary entry is for Saturday the 9th of December 1944, eight days before he was killed. This is odd because up to this point he wrote an entry every day either on the day or the following day. I assume that whilst he was not yet flying operationally, life on an operational squadron had become too busy or too traumatic, we will never know. It's a shame he hadn't been able to write to the end.

"Did odd jobs all day and there's a war on this evening and I was supposed to go 2nd Dicky with FO Smith. To the Heinbach dam. Got briefed and airborne at 5pm and got one hour out when we were recalled, so we had to go out

into the North Sea to jettison 9x1000 to get the AUW down to landing level. Got back at 7.30. had some tea and into bed."

Over the course of 249 handwritten pages I really came to like Noel Culpan. I have read the diary in its entirety twice and skimmed it a third time. I wish he did not die at the age of 20, I never met him, but I miss him.

Our research has resulted in a written blog and a series of podcasts (... of somewhat variable quality!). It's very much work in progress, but you can read more about Noel Culpan and the events of that night at www.onenightindecember.wordpress.com

Adrian Woolrich-Burt, September 2019

Addendum: on the 25th of August 2019 the Donkin crew were commemorated by the French village of Grand Bourgtherold in Normandy. A plaque funded by the local mayor was unveiled, and six serving Officers of 57 Sqn joined families of the crew and representatives of the Air Engineer Association in paying their respects.



Pete Chicken

Pete, Rob and I would like to take this opportunity to thank both OC 57 Sqn and Tony Gunby for their help in achieving this. I know that this gesture was very much appreciated.

F/O Noel Summervell Culpan 427019 RNZAF, 57 Squadron RAF. Son of Rae and Blanche Culpan, of Auckland, New Zealand. d.17.12.1944. Buried at CWG St Sever, Le Grand Quevilly, Rouen, France.

(Photographs and diary extracts by kind permission of the Culpan family)

2020 Association Reunion

| July 2020 | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday | Sunday |
|-----------|--------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|----------|--------|
| 27 | 29 | 30 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 28 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| 29 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| 30 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 |
| 31 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 1 | 2 |

The 2020 Association Reunion will be held over the weekend of Saturday 4 July and Sunday 5 July. Prices have once again been frozen at 2018 levels.

Further outline details are below. A Reunion form is available at the back of this Newsletter and also on the Association website. Please note the deadline for returns.

Rooms are always at a premium at the Petwood Hotel, so do remember to book early.

We look forward to welcoming a contingent from 57 Squadron, led by OC 57 Squadron who will be our guest speaker during the Saturday Dinner, and the Squadron Standard Party at our Sunday Memorial Service.

It would be good to see more Members attend the Sunday evening Dinner/Dance when the excellent Cleo Ridgeway will be entertaining us once again.

Saturday 4 July - Petwood House Hotel

- 3.00pm Afternoon tea (Petwood Suite)
- 7.00pm for 7.30pm Dinner – dress lounge suits/blazers (Woodland Suite)

Sunday 7 July - East Kirkby/Petwood House Hotel

- 11.45am Memorial Service in Hangar – medals may be worn
- 57 Squadron Standard Party
- Memorial - Last Post & Laying of Wreaths
- 3.00pm BBMF Flypast (To be confirmed)
- 7.00pm for 7.30pm Informal Dinner Dance (Petwood Suite)

Accommodation and Function Rates

Petwood House Hotel Residents

4 Nights

B&B, 2 restaurant dinners, 2 function dinners (Sat & Sun) £410 pp

3 Nights

B&B, one restaurant dinners, 2 function dinners (Sat & Sun) £315 pp

2 Nights

B&B (Fri & Sat), one restaurant dinner, and one function dinner £210 pp

B&B (Sat & Sun), 2 function dinners £215 pp

1 Night

B&B and function dinner £115 pp

Non Residents

£45 pp for each function dinner

Stop Press

RAF Cranwell Dinner



OC 57 Squadron has confirmed that Association members and their guests are invited to join the Squadron at a Dinner Night to be held at the RAF College Cranwell on Friday 27 March 2020. Further details will be published on the website as soon as they become available.

Steve Stevens



Members will be delighted to know that Steve Stevens has made an excellent recovery from the stroke which he suffered last January. Although he has had to move in to full time care, he is in excellent spirits. We understand that his nurses and carers at Saxlingham Hall in Norfolk dote on Steve and love his sense of humour. One of Steve's former neighbours recently suggested via Facebook that people should visit Steve and listen to his stories - he has been inundated with visitors from far and wide, including the local TV station which has run two stories on Steve's wartime exploits. You can see and hear more by clicking this link <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-england-norfolk-49656116/dozens-come-forward-to-hear-the-terrifying-tales-of-lancaster-pilot-stevie-stevens-97>

Our new Secretary - Chris Morffew

We are very grateful to Chris Morffew for volunteering to take on the role of Secretary to the 57 & 630 Squadrons' Association.

For those of you who may not have met Chris before, he was commissioned into the RAF in 1969 and on completion of his Navigator training completed three tours on the Vulcan B2.

In 1980, after a ground tour in Germany, he was promoted to Squadron Leader and posted to No 57 Squadron as the Navigation Leader. The squadron was then operating Victor Tankers and during his tour Chris flew extensively on operations during the Falklands War.

After a staff tour at Brize Norton, attendance at the RAF Staff College and staff tours at Strike Command, and the RN Staff College he was posted to RAF Akrotiri, Cyprus, as Deputy Station Commander and Officer Commanding Operations Wing; he spent the last 5 months of his tour as Station Commander.

Subsequent staff tours included Headquarters Allied Forces Northwestern Europe, Chief of Air Operations at the UN Protection Force Headquarters in the Balkans, the staff of the Canadian Forces Staff College in Toronto, the Western European Union in Brussels, and a secondment to the EU to be a member of the team which established the EU Military Staff.

Chris retired from the RAF in 2002 to join the International Staff of NATO Headquarters in Brussels. Widowed in 2011, Chris

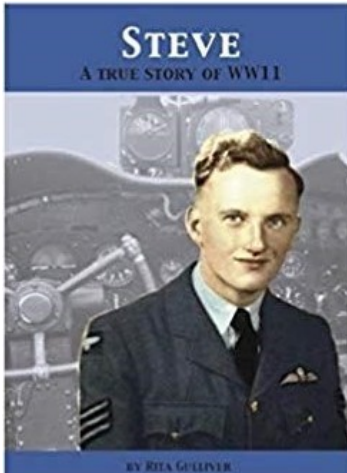


Chris Morffew

returned to the UK on retirement from NATO in 2012. Chris married his wife Nancy in 2014 and between them they have three sons, two daughters and seven grandchildren. In his spare time Chris enjoys golf and walking; in 2012, he completed a 5 day trek across the Andes to Machu Picchu to raise money for Cancer Research.

I am sure that Members will join the Committee in wishing Chris every success, as he takes on the role early in the New Year.

Book Reviews



STEVE – A true story of WWII

By Rita Gulliver (reviewed by David Houghton)

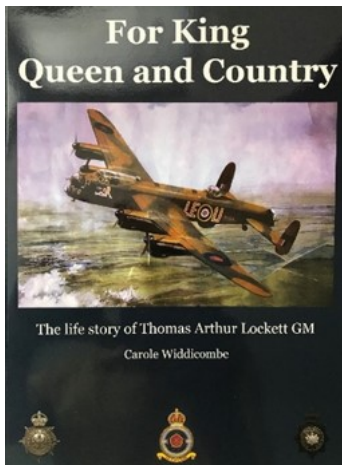
Many Association Members will know Flight Lieutenant Steve Stevens DFC, who served with distinction with 57 Squadron as a Lancaster pilot in WWII.

Steve's niece, Rita Gulliver, has written a short book about the life-and-times of Steve and Maureen Stevens. The book is based on interviews with Steve and Maureen and a transcript of an official recording Steve made in 1943 about a bombing raid on Essen on 25/26 July that year.

The book is a fascinating and very readable account of parts of Steve's life, and perhaps also stands as testament to all those who flew with Bomber Command. They were all just ordinary men, called upon to fight in extraordinary circumstances and to become fearsome warriors.

In typically understated style, Steve recounts many tales of his Service that, to us, seem hair-raising but which Steve says are "not worthy of great record"! On this occasion I must disagree with Steve – his story is worth recording not just for him, but also for the men from Bomber Command who did not live to tell their story.

The book is available from Amazon at the bargain price of £3.82 for a hard copy, or just £2.39 for Kindle. Follow this link to place your order https://www.amazon.co.uk/STEVE-Mrs-Rita-Mary-Gulliver/dp/1096644088/ref=sr_1_1?keywords=rita+gulliver&qid=1566872469&s=gateway&sr=8-1



For King, Queen and Country – The life story of Thomas Arthur Lockett GM

By Carole Widdicombe

The Association's Carole Widdicombe has published her book on the life story of fellow Association Member Tom Lockett who sadly passed away on 10 October this year at the ripe old age of 98.

Tom served with 630 Squadron as a Lancaster mid-upper gunner, completing 36 missions. After the War, Tom joined the Manchester City Police as a constable on the beat and in November 1957, he was awarded the George Medal in recognition of his bravery apprehending an armed robber.

The 128 page book is full of Tom's recollections of a life spent in the service of the Country - at war and in peace - and a host of photographs from these times. It is available for £15.95 inclusive of UK postage & packing and copies can be obtained directly from Carole by contacting her at carole3567@hotmail.com

57 Squadron Tie



A newly designed 57 Squadron tie is now available, Priced at £20 inclusive of UK P&P, the tie is made of 100% silk and bears the Phoenix motif. There are limited supplies of the tie available, so place your order quickly. You can do this by contacting the Squadron Adjutant by telephone on 01400 227154 or by email to 3FTS-57Sqn-Adjutant@mod.gov.uk

57 & 630 Squadrons' Association



57 & 630 Squadrons' Association – Committee Members

President:

Group Captain David Houghton

Vice-President/Webmaster:

Group Captain (retd) Tony Gunby

Secretary:

Wing Commander (retd) Chris Morffew

Treasurer:

Clare Gillard

Membership Secretary:

Wing Commander Mike Bracken

Information Officer:

Air Commodore Wendy Rothery

Following a discussion between interested parties at RAF Scampton in 1977, the 57 & 630 Squadron's Association was formed and on 7 October 1979, the memorial to 57 and 630 Squadrons was dedicated on the former site of the RAF East Kirkby guardroom.

The Association provides former members of these two historic squadrons, their families and friends, with a forum through which to honour and remember those that have served with one of the squadrons. It also maintains the link between the two squadrons and their wartime airfield base at RAF East Kirkby which, for over 20 years, has been home to the Lincolnshire Aviation Heritage Centre. The association is fortunate to remain closely linked with today's 57 Squadron based at RAF College Cranwell. The Association holds a Reunion in early July each year, in Woodhall Spa/East Kirkby, Lincolnshire.



57 & 630 Squadrons' Association - Reunion 2020

| | | | |
|----------------|--------------------|-----------------------|--|
| Surname | | First Name (s) | |
| Address | | Telephone No | |
| | | Email | |
| | Squadron No | | |

| | |
|---|---------------------|
| If staying at the Petwood, function costs will be included and charged to room | |
| Function | No attending |
| Dinner (Saturday 4 July) | |
| Informal Dinner (Sunday 5 July) | |

| | | | |
|---|----------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| If staying elsewhere, cheque payable to Association when submitting Reunion form | | | |
| Function | Cost pp | No attending | Total Cost |
| Dinner (Saturday 4 July) | £45.00 | | |
| Informal Dinner (Sunday 5 July) | £45.00 | | |
| Sub Total | | | |
| Donation to Association funds | | | |
| Total Enclosed | | | |

| | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| Memorial Service – Sunday 6 July | Number in your party attending |
| | |

Signature:.....

If you require a receipt, please enclose a stamped and addressed envelope with your reservation form and cheque.

Petwood residents will have function (s)) charged to rooms, however any donations would be appreciated prior to the Reunion.



57 & 630 Squadrons' Association - Reunion 2020

| Special Requirements | |
|---|--|
| Names of party – Surname and First name | |
| Number of vegetarian meals required for party | |
| I wish to sit with | |
| I require additional facilities (e.g. wheelchair) | |
| Any other remarks | |

Payment

Petwood residents will have function (s) charged to rooms. Those staying elsewhere should send cheques to the Vice President, Tony Gunby, **NO LATER THAN 30 April 2020**.

Donations to the Association, in addition to function costs, are always gratefully received.

All cheques should be made payable to '**57/630 Squadrons' Association**'

Tony Gunby
 1 Farm Piece
 Stanford in the Vale
 Faringdon
 SN7 8FA

Email: vicepresident@57-630sqnassoc.org