

550 Squadron & RAF North Killingholme Association

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Websites:

<http://www.550squadronassociation.org.uk/>

<http://550squadron.wordpress.com/>

28 May, 2010

Newsletter No. 46

Annual Reunion, North Killingholme, Saturday, 3 July, 2010

Hull University Weekend, Friday, 2 July - Sunday, 4 July, 2010

Armistice Services, North Killingholme, Sunday, 14 November, 2010

Dear Member,

It is time to circulate details of the Annual Reunion and forms for those who will attend to complete and return. Please do your best to return the forms to Jim Lord as early as possible and certainly before the middle of June.

2. Things are not a lot different here. A recently acquired electrically operated bed has enabled Bobbie to rest for several hours a day with her feet higher than her hips. This has helped to reduce the swelling in her legs. However, this is just a side benefit and her main problem, incurable cancer in the abdomen, remains and makes her very weak and short of mobility. She is very sad that she will not be able to attend this year's reunion (the first she has missed) but, with Bobbie's family moving in here, I will be there but for a shorter time.

3. I am not too bad physically. Once a month, Bobbie's daughters come in here to allow me to play 18 holes of golf in a Veterans Competition. In April, 60 ~~was~~ played and I got 2nd prize scoring 42 points - the best golf I have played for years. Mentally the picture is slightly different as I am aware that I am slowing up considerably, making lots of typing mistakes and getting very inefficient with the paper work. This points to me needing assistance.

4. I am glad to report that I am getting plenty of help. Jim Lord is organising the Annual Reunion. Mike Leeman is a very active Treasurer and is acting increasingly as our "contact man". George Turner acted as Spokesman for the 550 Group visiting Westerlo in Belgium and, with Mike Leeman, has done a lot of work setting up the 550 Squadron Museum in the Village Hall. There are many other "local" helpers who do the flowers in the church and the teas. In the future, I think it is inevitable that the focus of our Association will switch to the North Killingholme area.

Annual Reunion, North Killingholme, Saturday, 3 July, 2010

5. The newly refurbished Ashbourne Hotel, opposite the church in North Killingholme, has made a special offer to those who might wish to stay on the nights of Friday, 2 July and/or Saturday, 3 July. A double room will cost £65 per night including breakfast (£32-50 per head if two people occupy). 37 double rooms are available but the hotel does not have a lift. To book, mention the "550 Offer" and contact Andrew Smith (General Manager) or Robert Walton (Assistant Manager) at the Ashbourne Hotel, Vicarage Lane, North Killingholme, Immingham, N. Lincs DN40 3JL Tel: 01469 541010, e-mail address reception@ashbournehotel.co.uk

6. Our Saturday timetable is built around the flypast of the Lancaster from the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight. This can change if an event is cancelled at a late stage but our latest information is that our flypast

is timed for 3-20 p.m.. So our timetable will be:-

11-45 a.m. Bar at the Amethyst Hotel, East Halton opens.

12-15 p.m. Buffet lunch at the Amethyst begins. Pay £7 per head on the spot. As an alternative, the Ashbourne Hotel (contact details in previous paragraph) can provide bar food but notify in advance.

1-20 p.m. Leave the Amethyst Hotel for St Denys' Church, North Killingholme. The car park at the rear of the Ashbourne Hotel has been extended and should be able to accommodate all our cars.

1-45 p.m. Church Service starts. Medals can be worn.

2-35 p.m. Service ends.

2-55 p.m. Form up outside the Village Hall behind the Immingham Air Cadet Band and march up to the 550 Squadron Memorial Stone. There will not be a bus this year so those who cannot walk and have to use cars can park on the apron of Somerscales Haulage further up in Lancaster Approach.

3-20 p.m. Lancaster flypast.

3-30 p.m. Service at Memorial Stone starts.

3-40 p.m. Service ends.

3-55 p.m. Follow Air Cadet Band back to the Village Hall.

4-15 p.m. Tea in Village Hall.

5-00 p.m. Everyone disperses.

7. Will those attending the North Killingholme services please complete the enclosed form and return it to Jim Lord with the appropriate cheque as soon as possible.

Hull University Weekend, 2 - 4 July, 2010

8. The Lawns is undergoing major refurbishment this summer so Hull University will be accommodating us in THWAITE HALL, Cottingham Village where we were quartered in 2008. Approaching from the south, the directions for finding Thwaite Hall are:-

- (a) From Humber Bridge, take A164 (Beverley road). Pass the Willerby Shopping Park and turn right at the next roundabout into Castle Road.
- (b) Pass Castle Hill Hospital on your left and at the bottom of Castle Road turn left at a mini-roundabout.
- (c) Within a short distance, turn right at another mini-roundabout into South Street. Go straight ahead through traffic lights, over a mini-roundabout, over a railway level crossing to a mini-roundabout at the end of Thwaite Street.
- (d) Turn left at mini-roundabout and the entrance to Thwaite Hall is immediately on your left.

9. If you would like a map showing the precise location of Thwaite Hall, please ask for it on the form to be returned to Jim Lord.

10. The Hull University charges will be £26 per head for bed and breakfast, £11 per head for the Friday evening meal and £20 per head for the Saturday dinner. Please enter up your room and meal requirements on the enclosed form and return it with the cheque to Jim Lord

email jimlord@ntlworld.com as soon as possible.

11. The Hull University programme will be:-

Friday, 2 July

4 p.m. Arrive. Tea. Collect room key, weekend programme and Attendance list.

6 p.m. Bar opens.

7 p.m. Dinner. Totally informal - no seating plan. Please be punctual.

Saturday, 3 July

8 - 9 a.m. Breakfast.

No bus this year - make own way to North Killingholme.

6-30 p.m. Bar opens.

7-30 p.m. Seating plan. No medals. Order wines beforehand. Please be punctual.

Sunday, 4 July

8 - 9 a.m. Breakfast.

No AGM this year. Numbers getting rather small and in future important matters to discuss or announce will be aired in newsletters.

12. If you cannot face University student accommodation, possible hotel alternatives near Thwaite Hall are:-

Ramada Jarvis Hotel, Grange Park Lane, Willerby, Hull HU10 6EA Tel: 01482 656488. A large hotel which can be very busy with wedding receptions and weekend parties.

Willerby Manor, Well Lane, Willerby HU10 6ER Tel: 01482 652616.

Remembrance Sunday, 14 November, 2010

13. Please note that the 2010 Remembrance Services at the Squadron Memorial Stone and in St. Denys' Church will take place on Sunday, 14 November. Timings and other details will be circulated in a newsletter about a month beforehand.

Subscriptions

14. Our annual sub is £5-50. The next subscription year starts on 1 July 2010. Some of you have set up bank standing orders but those who have not are now invited to pay up for next year. Those attending the July reunion can add their sub to the reunion dues and send a combined cheque to Jim Lord when returning the reunion form. Those not coming to the reunion are requested to send their cheques direct to Mike Leeman at the address on the top of our notepaper.

15. In the past, we have not sent out subscription invoices. This has led us into a situation where some members have overlooked paying their subs.. A recent review of subscription records by Mike Leeman has revealed that over 40 members and associate members are in arrears, some not having paid for the last 5 years. We feel that this situation should be rectified. Would those members who feel that they might fall into the arrears category please examine their cheque book stubs or financial records and get themselves up-to-date. Please send cheques direct to Mike Leeman. We will re-examine the position in 2 or 3 months time; if any laggards then remain, we will be in touch.

Membership

16. Since the last newsletter, there have been no changes of address and no new subs have been received although we understand 2 or 3 new members are about to join. The newsletter sent to James H. Andrews (P/F/E with the F/O A.C. Bothe crew, 3/45-11/45) at Plymouth was returned "gone away" and one hopes it is a change of address not notified. Does anyone know?

Lancaster Tapestry Kits

17. The wife of Leslie Gee is searching for a cross-stitch tapestry kit of a Lancaster bomber. There are plenty of Spitfire kits but she has not been able to track down a Lanc kit. If anyone knows of a Lanc kit supplier, please contact Leslie Gee [REDACTED]

Bomber Command Memorial

18. Westminster City Council recently agreed that the Memorial to Bomber Command Aircrew should be sited on the north side of Green Park, London opposite the RAF Club. Unveiling is expected in the autumn of 2011. The Memorial will cost £4 million and £2 million has been raised already. The 550 Squadron Association has already given £1000 to the memorial and we propose to donate a further £500 to help the final fund raising stage. I hope everyone agrees with this step.

550 Squadron Museum, North Killingholme

19. Mike Leeman and George Turner have been working hard with the NK Parish Council to set up the 550 Squadron Museum in two rooms at the front of the Village Hall. There are a number of items on display, including donations from family of former 550 aircrew but much more display work will be done in the next year or two.

550 Lapel Badges

20. Mike Leeman has some 550 lapel badges but they now cost £6 each as a special order was required. **Badge, postage & packing will cost £6.50 unless collected in July.**
550 Squadron Association Tie **Cheques should be payable to "550 Squadron Association".**

21. Sam Lipfriend [REDACTED] has one Association tie left, cost is £10.

New Belgian Memorial to a 550 Squadron Crew

22. We know that the Belgians have a high regard for Bomber Command crews and are good at setting up Memorials to those shot down in their vicinity. Another Memorial is scheduled for unveiling on 7 May 2011.

23. When the crew of P/O E.C.Purney, RCAF joined 550 Squadron in April 1944, their wireless operator was Sgt. T.G.P.Cruikshank. Cruikshank flew with the crew on their first 4 ops but must have gone sick because from their 5th op onwards, he was replaced by another wireless operator. The crew were shot down by a night fighter on their 7th op to Aachen on the night of 27/28 May 1944. When they crashed at Rebecq-Rognon, 25km south-west of Brussels, the following five were killed

P/O E.C.Purney, RCAF	Pilot
Sgt. J.L. Sheahan	Flight Engineer
P/O T.E. Flanagan, RCAF	Navigator
Sgt. P.C.M. King	Wireless Operator
Sgt. K.H.F. de Lengerke	Air Gunner

Sgt. D Yardley, Air gunner was thrown out of the aircraft and badly injured. After receiving first aid in the village, he was taken Prisoner by the Germans. Sgt. E.J.Molnar, RCAF, bomb aimer, was the only one to get out by parachute and when he landed he was sheltered from the Germans by the Belgian Resistance in the village until September when Allied troops reached the village and Molnar could return to England. Members of the Resistance were not so lucky; the Gestapo arrested a number who were sent to concentration camps where 3 of them died.

24. The village of Rebecq intends to unveil on 7 May 2011 a Memorial to the aircrew and the three members of the Belgian Resistance who lost their lives over this incident. The organisers are seeking photographs of the whole crew or individual members of the crew and any information relating to the raid or the crew. Regarding the 3 Canadians, I will be seeking the help of the Defence Attache at the Canadian High Commission. For the 5 RAF aircrew (including Cruikshank) I have to get their 1944 next of kin addresses, find local papers in the towns concerned and ask the editors to print a piece seeking family members. If any Association member has a photo of this crew or of individual members of the crew or can provide useful information, please let me know. Association members will be invited to attend the 7 May 2011 unveiling.

Worst 550 Losses on a Single Raid

25. Many heavy bomber squadrons suffered terrible nights when the losses on a single raid reached catastrophic proportions. For example, 101 Sqn. lost 7 Lancasters on Nuremburg 30/31 March 44; on the same raid, 51 Sqn lost 6 Halifaxes and 514 Sqn. lost 6 Lancasters; 460 Sqn. lost 6 Lancs on the Mailly-le-Camp raid of 3/4 May 44; 78 Sqn lost 6 Halifaxes going to Berlin on 24/25 March 44. Losses of 4 or 5 a night from one sqn were common.

26. 550 Sqn was lucky enough to escape that sort of carnage. 550 never lost more than 3 Lancs on a single raid and those losses occurred on 4 raids:-

23/24 Dec 43 Berlin 17 took off. F/sgt. H.F.J.Woods and F/Sgt. W.R.Cooper collided soon after take off; P/O D.C.Dripps, RAAF shot down.

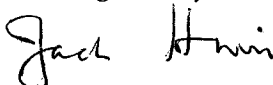
21/22 May 44. Duisburg 18 Took off. P/O G.W.Hinde, P/O P.J.Dukelow and Sgt. K.A.Essex all shot down.

16/17 June 44 Sterkrade 19 Took off. S/Ldr.G.S.Smith, DFC, F/O D.F.Neilson, RCAF and P/O G.H.Packham all shot down.

7/8 March 45 Dessau 26 took off. F/OC.J.Jones, RCAF, F/O R.D.Harris, RCAF and F/O S.W. Nielsen, RAAF all shot down.

26. 550's worst month for losses was March 45 when 8 aircraft were lost but a record number of 321 operational sorties had been flown in the month. Also the night fighters had a much smaller area of Germany to defend and could concentrate their efforts.

Best regards,



Jack Harris

550 SQUADRON/RAF NORTH KILLINGHOLME ASSOCIATION REUNION, 3 JULY, 2010

Full name of member
Address
.
Telephone number
E-mail address
Accompanied by

Saturday, 3 July, North Killingholme Events

Please book . . . places at the Buffet Lunch at the Amethyst Hotel,
East Halton (Pay £7 per head cash at the hotel).
Please note that we require . . . places in the village church.
Cheque enclosed for £... at £5 per head to cover costs of
wreaths, flowers, band, etc. Total

Hull University Weekend, Friday 2 July-Sunday 4 July

Rooms required, number and whether single or double
.
Do you require ground floor accommodation and for how many
.
Please book .. . places at the Friday evening dinner
at £11 per head Total
Please book . . . places for bed/breakfast on the Friday night
at £26 per head Total
Please book . . . places at the Saturday evening dinner
at £20 per head Total
Please book . . . places for bed/breakfast on the Saturday night
at £26 per head Total
At the Saturday evening dinner, please indicate whom you would
like to be seated with
.
Any special requirements, e.g. diet, wheelchair access,
special beds, etc.
.
Anything else ?
Would you like a map showing location of Thwaite Hall?

Total for reunion weekend _____

Optional subscription for year 1 July 2010-30 June 2011 _____
at £5-50 per head; please give names the subs cover

Subs total

Grand total _____

Cheques to be made out to "550 Squadron Association" and sent
with this form to
Jim Lord,



E-mail: jimlord@ntlworld.com

Please return the form as early as possible and not later than 19 June.

People attending from overseas can pay at the reunion.