

Good afternoon everyone

For those that don't know me - I'm Sue one of Jack Harris daughters - my sister Anne is here today as well.

I have been asked to welcome you all to the 2025 550 Squadron reunion events and to say a few words about dad - as he was so instrumental in setting up the 550 squadron association and starting these annual reunions

So firstly, a very warm welcome to everyone who has joined us this weekend from far and wide. Especially Paul and Bjorn Batenburg from The Netherlands.

I would also like to especially welcome my Uncle Brian and cousin Val with her husband Neil - they have not attended 550 events before, but are here to remember dad, Jack, with us.

Thanks also to Rev Trevor Reiss for taking today's service and organist Christopher Wilson who has kindly agreed to play for us once again.

My husband Andrew, myself and Anne remember with great fondness the many 550 reunion weekends we attended firstly with Bobbie (his second wife) and latterly with Angela (who was married to him until he died earlier this year). They have always been very enjoyable events, and poignant at times, bringing together the dwindling number of survivors and their families, remembering the lost, and celebrating the brave actions of all of them during 2nd world war.

Anne and I reflect that dad talked very little about the war, and his activities during that time, when we were young - and indeed our mum didn't either. It was really when dad brought together the 550-squadron association and the reunions that we started to learn more about the brave exploits of his crew and others. He was a very modest man and always credited his survival to having a guardian angel - but it did of course need great skill, courage and determination - as all RAF Bomber command crews had.

We know dad valued his involvement with 550 squadron association, from the very early days when he started the Association in 1990 and loved attending the reunions and Remembrance Sunday occasions - meeting everyone involved. He also enjoyed going to the Belgian events in Rebecq, Westerlo, and St Niklaas. He had great respect for the Belgian and Dutch people who kept the memories alive in these villages - as the wonderful people of NK do too here.

He was disappointed when age got the better of him and he really couldn't manage attending any more. However, we always knew he

looked back fondly on all the great times he had experienced. I think one of his greatest legacies will be that 550 squadron association continues to flourish.

Dad often would introduce short stories about the squadron's exploits, or his own experiences into these welcome speeches - something unfortunately I'm unable to replicate. However, I thought I would share a few personal memories of Jack.

I think as everyone might have experienced, dad loved a good joke and was always happy sharing his jokes in company. Anne and I can fondly remember his little book of jokes where he would make note of ones he heard or was told, and then he would have a ready source of jokes whenever needed. Indeed I think particularly at the 550 reunions he was liable to bring out a couple of funny stories or jokes. I think we can all fondly remember his warm and infectious laugh, something Anne, Angela, Andrew and I will always hold in our hearts.

Many of 550 members have been very great friends to Dad over the years - George and Ruth, Mike and Margaret, Don and Val and Peter and Sally as well as many others - for which we know he received great support.

Following on from this you are all welcome to enjoy the wonderful North Killingholme tea in the village hall which is something we always look forward to! Our special thanks go to Sylvia Pexman and her team who have provided us with tea and cakes after the service for many years. Sylvia and her husband Len have now moved across the water to live in East Yorkshire but were determined to be with us again today, - many, many thanks. I know Dad always appreciated and looked forward to the fabulous array of cakes on offer at the tea - he had a great love of cake!

We then look forward to joining you all for dinner tonight in The Ashbourne Hotel - for the culmination of this year's reunion, which is so special to our family.

Thank you so much.