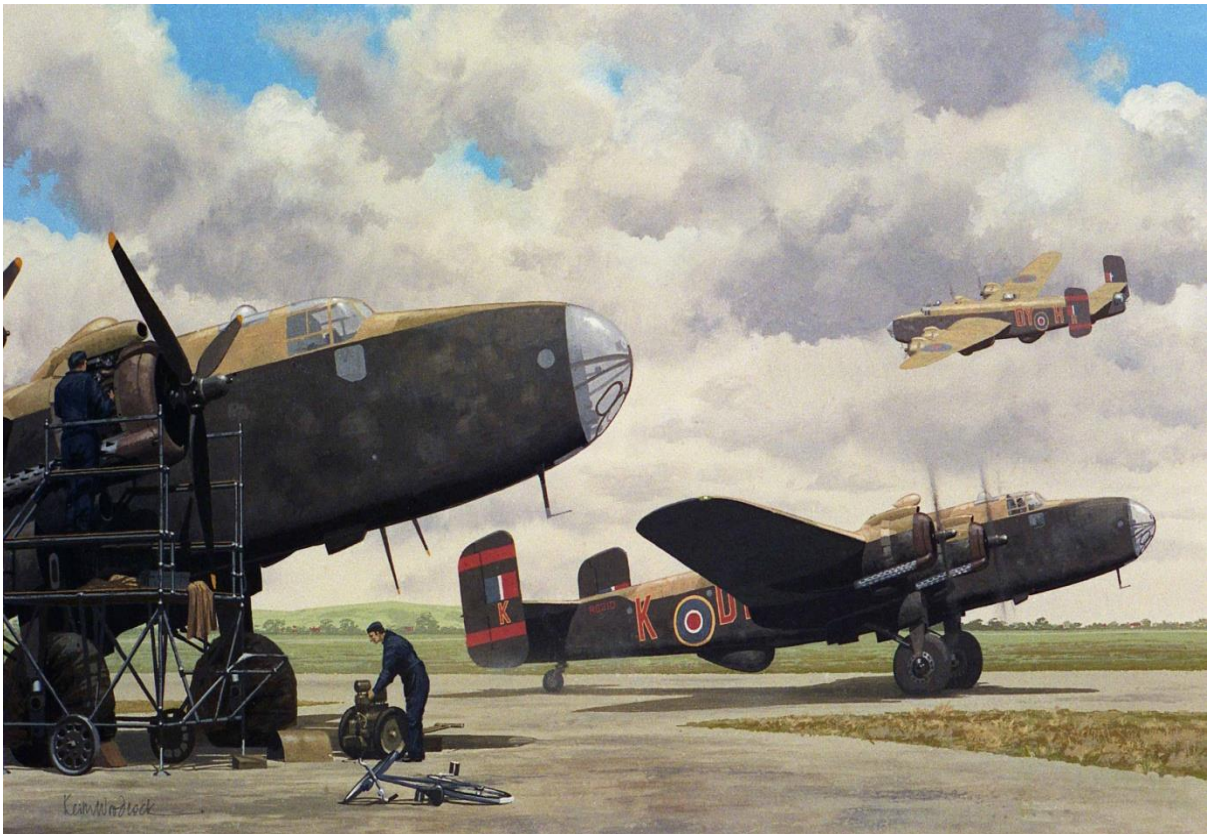




NEWSLETTER AUTUMN 2022

102 (CEYLON) SQUADRON ASSOCIATION



Hon. Secretary Harry Bartlett

Email: 102squadronassociation@gmail.com

Website: 102ceylonsquadronassociation.org



GRAHAM HORTON

Harry Bartlett writes that, “It is with great personal sadness that I have to inform you that our friend, and long serving Association member Graham Horton died yesterday afternoon, on the 5th November.

Graham had been ill for the last six months and despite a determined battle against his illness he lost that fight. He was a stalwart of the Association for many years and having served in the RAF he was also a long-term member of RAFA in the Luton area. Graham was a member of the recently formed Association Management Group having assisted my predecessors Tom Wingham and Simon Kularatne in keeping us going a few years ago.

I have sent the Association Members and friends condolences to his wife Brenda and his family.”

BELOW ARE THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR GRAHAM'S FUNERAL IN LUTON

Date and Time – 12 noon Thursday 24th November

Location – Vale Crematorium, Butterfield Green Road, Luton, LU2 8DD

Wake – The Pavillion, Bowling Green Lane, Luton, LU2 7HR after the service.

Funeral Directors – White Dove, 50, High Street South, Dunstable. LU6 3HD.

Graham was a member of the Royal Air Forces Association, and his designated charity is the Wings Charity should anyone wish to make a donation please:

Make Cheques payable to **Royal Air Forces Association Dunstable Branch**

Address them with an explanatory note referencing Graham Horton to :

Mr J Gilmour, Chairman RAFA (Dunstable Branch)

18, Montague Avenue,

Luton

LU4 9JG

Donations will be collected and forwarded to the Wings Charity.

There will also be a collection box in the Crematorium after the service.

For those attending the service please allow sufficient time for traffic in the Luton area.

John Williams, along with Dermot Allen and I, will represent the Association and a Squadron Association wreath will accompany Graham's family flowers.

Secretary's Ramblings

And so, we come to the time of year when the main aspect of our Association's duties requires our attention. Remembrance Weekend. The duty of Remembrance falls to us at all levels.

The National acknowledgement of the service and sacrifice of our Military Service, Civilian and Allied men and women at this time of year, is in our thoughts while, at the same time, our duty of Remembrance for those who served in our Squadron and, on the most personal of levels, those of our relatives and friends who were lost in the cause of freedom come to the fore.

Each of us has a reason to be grateful for the sacrifices made by those most special generations in both World Wars and since. Sadly, those freedoms and the liberty we take for granted today have been, and still are, tried and tested over time. We continue to see conflict and loss which makes our remembrance even more important and relevant in the present.

Our continued duty of Remembrance cannot be understated in troubled times and from that remembrance, instil hope for the relative peace we have enjoyed for many years, to continue into the future.

We will meet again in Pocklington and pay our respects at Saint Catherine's Church, West Green and Driffield to those we lost, and in doing so remember the words of Tom Sayer,

“We will remember them all”.

Harry Bartlett

Secretary

2023 REUNION WEEKEND

Just to let you all get your 2023 diaries up to date I thought that I would give you the early arrangements for our Annual Reunion Weekend.

Following the announcement of the Coronation of King Charles III now being on the 6th May 2023, the 2023 Reunion Weekend will be held over Friday the 2nd to Sunday the 4th June 2023.

The Wolds Gliding Club have reserved the evening of the 3rd of June for our Annual Dinner.

At the moment we have provisionally booked our after-dinner speaker, Mark Johnson, great nephew of 102 Squadron Navigator Flight Lieutenant John Blair who was a teacher in Jamaica at the beginning of the war. (Mark is the author of the book "Caribbean Volunteers at War: the forgotten story of the RAF's Tuskegee Airmen" published by Pen and Sword).

We are expecting some aircrew relatives from Australia over the weekend.

Our new Chaplain, Annie Harrison, is booked and ready for the Reunion Memorial Service at Saint Catherine's Church, Barmby Moor on Sunday the 4th June.

I am looking for suggestions (morally acceptable) for other activities over the weekend. There was a thought last year we could get a group visit to the Yorkshire Air Museum. I wonder how many may be interested in pursuing that idea next year?

See you there?

Remembrance Duties – Fontaine L’Etalon and Lyon La Foret

Well, after the Covid-19 enforced absence from France, John Williams and I went over the water for a second time this year to pay your respects to those we lost in the areas of Fontaine L’Etalon and Lyon La Foret.

Friday the 2nd of September saw us travelling over by ferry to Calais and, importantly, having to remember to turn left towards Rouen and not East towards Saint Quentin!

Heading South, I stopped off to introduce John to the joys of M. Leclerc Hypermarche at Boulogne. Cheapest fuel in the Pas de Calais area!

En-route to Rouen we diverted to the beautiful hamlet of Fontaine L’Etalon, to the West of Arras, mid-way to the Channel coast at Berck to pay your respects to the crew of DY-M (MZ753) who died in a tragic mid-air incident while on an operation against V1 rocket sites near Montorgueil, France. (*See the article by Albert Cattell in this issue.*)

We also took the time to pay our respects to the crew of the 77 Squadron aircraft LL549 who were also involved in the tragedy.



The roll of our crew’s names was read out and remembrance crosses were placed on each of the graves, the same being done for the 77 Squadron crew. (Sec’s note: The 77 Squadron Association sent a message of thanks for our visit.)

John and I then continued our journey to our hotel in the North of Rouen, to ready ourselves for the ceremonies at Lyon La Foret.

Now, I have to tell you of our bizarre experience at the hotel we chose, (second choice because I hadn't confirmed our reservation at our first!) The Hotel has a reasonable size restaurant so, on checking in, we asked if we could book an evening meal. No. They had, they said, a large coach tour group coming who had booked the whole restaurant. Strangely, a group that never turned up! Fortunately, we had had a reasonable lunch at Boulogne, so we coped. "Can we book an evening meal on Sunday?" "No, the restaurant isn't open at the weekend" What about the coach party tonight? "We haven't heard from them so far!"

So there you are, a first for me after over 40 years visiting France, a restaurant that doesn't open at the weekend!

Lyons La Foret.

Having attended this ceremony in 2018, I was well prepared to lay our wreaths at the three sites of remembrance and make a speech in French at the Farm of Huguette Verhague, in front of the usual ninety to one hundred people. Or so I thought!

Olek had contacted me on the Thursday before we travelled to tell me, in strict confidence, that the French Minister of Defence, Sebastion Lecornu, would be attending. This pushed the numbers up to over six hundred plus parading squads from the French Army, Air Force, Navy and Gendarmerie!

Saturday the 3rd saw us connecting with Olek Brezski, who lives in Lyon La Foret, to the East of Rouen and is a member of the Remembrance Group for the Lisors area. and represents the British Legion as well. Olek had gone into Rouen Railway Station to collect the Assistant Military Attaché (Air) from the British Embassy in Paris, Wing Commander David Fielder, and we were off to the beautiful area around Lisors, Mortemer and Lyon La Foret on a very pleasant 'reccie' to ready us for Sunday's ceremonies. We visited our 'new' memorial stone for the three members of the crew of DY-O (LW143), Nigel Campbell (Pilot), Jack Wilson, (Bomb Aimer), and Noel Pardon (Wireless Operator), who crashed in the forest nearby on the night of 29th of June 1944. The remainder of the crew were those rescued and hidden by Huguette.

Sunday the 4th, ‘posh frock and ballet slippers’ time and a very early start to make sure we were joined Olek and Wing Commander Fielder inside the security cordon, before the Minister arrived at the Abbaye Mortemer to join the rest of the participants.



Having been directed into the ‘VIP’ group of Prefects and Mayors, I was lucky to still be able to see John Williams in the distance, having a good old chat with some of the dignitaries. Not bad as John doesn’t speak French! I had been told that, due to the numbers and time constraints it would be unlikely I would make my speech at Huguette’s Farm. Given the size of the “Audience” gathered in the lane by the farm I made the mistake of relaxing. Wing Commander Fielder, amongst other dignitaries, laid the Embassy wreath and made his speech in French, (during which I noticed he’d copied some of my best bits!), and then, out of a clear blue sky, I hear my name called and the Parade Marshall, Jean-Marc, calling me forward to the microphone. All I can say is I made my speech in French, laid our wreath and the assembled guests seemed to understand our genuine expression of gratitude and admiration for the bravery of Huguette Verhague.



I must have been understood because we later got a mention in the press!



We then made our way to the most emotive memorial in the forest nearby. This is the Croix des Fusillier which commemorates the eight members of the local Resistance who were tortured and shot, then buried in the forest for their part in rescuing allied aircrews and sabotaging the German efforts following D Day. Terrible as this was, it was even worse when the German's refused to identify where in the forest they had buried them. Although in the years after the war some were found and buried properly, sadly, two were never found and remain there.



Following this part of the ceremony, we moved further up to the nearby crossroads where the memorial to the Deported Foresters and Members of the

Resistance from the Lisors area. Many didn't return after their enforced labour.

We joined the dignitaries as the Minister, M. Lecornu, made a very moving speech and presented medals to members of the French armed forces and Gendarmerie for service in Mali, security operations and criminal investigation.



The formal ceremonies over we managed to get some water to treat the dehydration in the 28-degree heat. Our Association received some very complimentary comments for our continued attendance at the remembrance of those who saved so many of our crews. (Before we began to attend, members of the Joyce, Leverington and Leslie families had attended to say thank you for the rescuing of their relatives.)

After the 'dust' had settled John, Olek, Wing Commander David Fielder, and I made our way to a much quieter act of remembrance at our memorial stone at the closest spot to the crash site of DY-O. Set at the side of a quiet forest lane, near to the Fontaine Sainte-Catherine, the stone represents those we lost in that area.



(NOTE: The stone is marked on Google Maps now. Shown as 'Stele Halifax' it is easy to find if you put in Fontaine Sainte-Catherine into mapping.)

And so, our duties done we returned to the village of Lyon La Foret for a late lunch and time to relax. With thanks to Olek for his invaluable help, we later took the Wing Commander to Rouen Railway Station for his journey back to Paris and our return to our hotel with no restaurant!

Again, throughout the weekend, I was made aware of the genuine gratitude the ordinary French people show for the service and sacrifice our aircrews made in the fight against tyranny in their country. There were no politics or egos on display this weekend.

“We remember them all.”

Sqn Ldr J W Ward AFC DFC (1912 – 1991)

Joseph William Ward was born in Skelton, North Yorks and after leaving school, trained to be a teacher. He taught in Grangetown for a short time and spent a few months in the Home Guard before enlisting in the Royal Air Force on 28th October 1940, training for aircrew. His training took place, firstly, at the Initial Training Wing, Torquay (5 ITW, 2 Squadron, A Flight) before moving to Marshalls of Cambridge Flying Training School to complete his training.

He qualified as a Sergeant Pilot and was subsequently commissioned on 1st April 1942. He was at Riccall in 1943 and on May 27th that year he was with 91 Group, Harwell Operational Training unit, flying his first operation in a Wellington 1c.

He then moved on to flying Halifax Bombers, first with 10 Squadron and then mainly with 102 (Ceylon) Squadron, 4 Group, Bomber Command from Pocklington (July 1943 to March 1944). He was with 1663 HCU at RAF Rufforth from April 1944 to May 1945. He was decorated with both the Distinguished Flying Cross (London Gazette 6th April 1944) and the Air Force Cross (London Gazette 7th September 1945). The Teesside Press reported the awards as follows:

*"Awards for Tees-side Air Heroes. Four North Yorkshire men have been honoured for gallantry and devotion to duty in the execution of air operations, three being awarded the DFC and the other the DFM. The DFC has been awarded to Acting Flight Lieutenant Joseph William Ward, of Saltburn, **Fine Example:** As Captain of Aircraft, Flight-Lieut. Ward has participated in attacks on many of the enemy's most heavily defended and distant targets. At all times, says the citation, he has displayed great skill and determination, and set a fine example of skilful pilotage, cool judgement, and courage in the face of the enemy. On one occasion, when his aircraft was damaged by cannon fire from an enemy night fighter, this officer flew back to base and made a masterly landing without flaps and with a burst starboard tyre. A./Flt.-Lieut. Ward was born in 1912 at North Skelton. He was educated at Guisborough Grammar School and St. John's College, York. He enlisted for air crew in 1940, was commissioned in 1942, and is entitled to wear the ribbon of the 1939-43 Star".*

"AFC for Saltburn Flier. S/Ldr. J.W. Ward, DFC, 36 Irvine Avenue, Saltburn, has been awarded the Air Force Cross. S/Ldr. Ward began flying in March 1941. After 18 months as an instructor, he joined a night bomber squadron and took part in the Battles of the Ruhr, Hamburg and Berlin for which he was awarded the DFC. He then took command of a flight devoted to Radar training of bomber crews, and he also helped to train many French crews".

At the end of the War, he left the RAF on 30th January 1946, rather than take an unaccompanied posting to India, and took up teaching for a short spell, firstly at a remand home in Kent (his address, on his driving licence, was Knotley Hall, Chiddington Causeway, Tonbridge) and then at a local school. He still rode a motorcycle. He then decided to re-enlist in the RAF (1st June 1949), initially in the Education Branch, and then the Aircraft Control Branch (13th August 1951). Whilst at Cosford he was invited (as The Sports Officer i/c Hockey) to attend the Opening of Lilleshall National Recreation Centre by HRH The Princess Elizabeth, Duchess of Edinburgh (June 8th, 1951).

In 1952 he was posted to Germany, firstly at Celle and then Sylt, returning in 1954. On his return to the UK he was posted to Linton on Ouse. He then moved

to Warton, Lancashire and then to Ripon. On retiring from the RAF on 31st March 1961 he returned to Saltburn and teaching, being Head of Maths at the Victoria Street County Modern Boys' School, South Bank, a Teesside Comprehensive.

He died on 30 November 1991 in the General Hospital, Middlesborough. He was 79 years old.

Compiled by Anthony Peter Ward



Our New Chaplain

Following the early retirement of our Chaplain, the Reverend Jan Hardy, we asked Annie Harrison, a Licensed Lay Minister of the Pocklington Wolds group of Churches, who has conducted a number of our Memorial Services, both Remembrance and Reunion Weekends, at St. Catherine's Church at Barmby Moor and the Airfield Memorial in recent years to take on the role. We are delighted to say that she has accepted the post of Honorary Chaplain to the 102

(Ceylon) Squadron Association. We asked Annie to write an introductory piece which reads:

“As with so many in life, mine has been a complicated route, to where I am now. I am a Licensed Lay Minister (LLM) in the Pocklington Wold group of churches, and live in the splendid village of Huggate, at the top of the Yorkshire Wolds.

I started life as the follower of the Forces Drum, my father was in the army, which took us as far as Malaysia, and then I married a chap in the army and this took me even further afield, and a posting to Australia. This gave me a wonderful insight to the world of those in the armed forces.

My career, has also been somewhat peripatetic, I started in advertising in the glorious 80s, a detour to Berlin as a nanny, followed by six years at British Rail. Later, I became a dinner lady and teaching assistant in primary schools and then, at last, I followed my heart and became an LLM. At last, I am home. It is my joy to share God’s love and invite people into the family of the church. I relish those services when there are those in the congregation who are not regular churchgoers, it is my opportunity to show them that church is a welcoming place and that Christ’s light shines on us all. I find the church is not so different to life in the armed forces, there is no time for barriers, your neighbours are immediately family, we may disagree, and not always be in the best of spirit, but we all look out for each other and know that we need never be alone.

It is such a privilege to have been asked to be 102 (Ceylon) Squadron Association’s chaplain, and I hope to be able to share in many moments and gatherings over the years.”

(Secretary’s note: She is a very good listener!)

102 (CEYLON) SQUADRON ASSOCIATION ARCHIVE APPEAL

We still have a lot of Archive information that needs transcribing. These range from logbooks to combat reports and photographs.

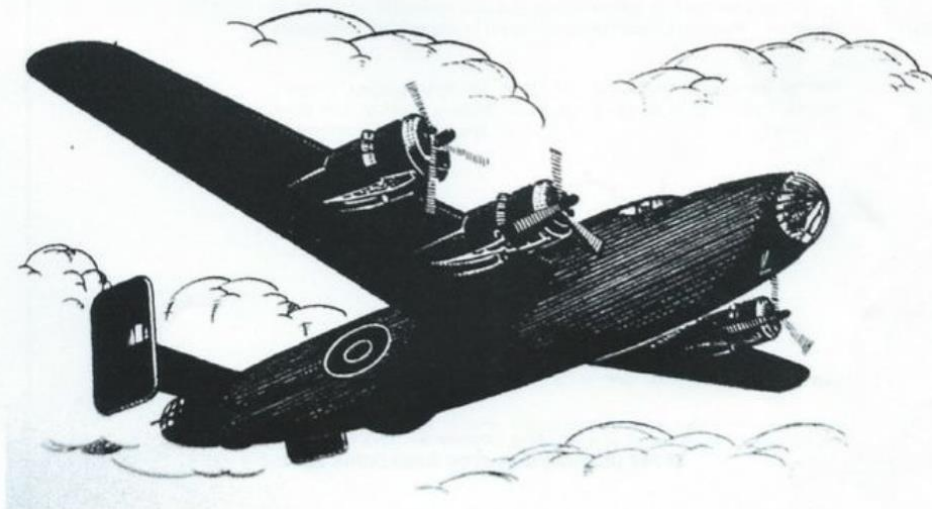
If you have a bit of spare time over the winter months and would like to assist then we would like to assist then it would be greatly appreciated.

Guidelines will be provided and we are also on hand if you get stuck with anything. Who knows you might even find a link to your own Family Member.

To find out more contact Clare at archive.102sqn@gmail.com NOW



Ensure your Relatives Story lives on forever, contribute their Service Record to the 102 Squadron Archive this November!



DON'T FORGET – WE ARE RUNNING THIS DRIVE DURING NOVEMBER, BUT IF YOU HAVE THIS TO HAND THEN FEEL FREE TO SEND IT NOW JUST IN CASE YOU FORGET LATER ON. THESE RECORDS WILL GO A LONG WAY IN ENSURING THAT YOUR FAMILY MEMBER IS REMEMBERED AND PERHAPS WILL EVEN SAVE THE ASSOCIATION FROM HAVING TO PURCHASE THESE IN THE FUTURE.

E-MAIL THESE ONTO OUR ARCHIVIST CLARE AT – archive.102sqn@gmail.com



*“And when you come to 102
And think that you will get
through*

*There's many a fool who
thought like you*

It's suicide but it's fun”.

Anonymous 102 Squadron member, 1941



Royal Air Force - Pocklington Airfield

The home of 102 (Ceylon) Squadron RAF and 405 (Vancouver) Squadron RCAF No 4 Group Bomber Command during World War II from where so many gave their lives in the cause of freedom.

This memorial was raised by Old Comrades in gratitude to all those men and women who served in both squadrons in War and Peace.

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