



Malta Reunion 2013



249 visiting Party at The Ta'Qali memorial

There were 20 association members at the reunion which was led by our President and his Wife, Sir John and Lady Angela Sutton. The majority stayed at the Preluna Hotel in Sleima. The party visited the Malta Aviation Museum at the Former RAF Airfield at Ta'Qali on Friday. There was a small wreath laying ceremony in the commemoration chapel. There is a book of remembrance with the names of the all the Ta'Qali personnel who gave their lives in defence of Malta.

Following the visit, lunch was held at "The Point de View", the hotel in Rabat, at which 249 personnel were billeted. Unfortunately, some of our Pilots were killed here during a bombing raid, during the war.

Our Chairman, Terry Gill and His wife Muriel visited Kalkara Cemetery to pay their respects to members of 249 who are buried there.

We also had a dinner together on the Saturday Evening. All in all it was a very successful week.



Lunch at Rabat



Dinner at Preluna



Sir John Talking to the Museum Staff



Bryan and Trudy Montgomery at the Museum

2013 Annual reunion at North Weald

The 30th Annual reunion was held on 17th August. It was with great sadness that we learnt of the Tragic Death of Sir John Sutton's son Mark, our deepest sympathy goes to Sir John, Lady Angela and their Family.

Once again 249 Millennium ATC Squadron provided us with the Honour Guard. The wreath laying ceremony was taken by the ATC Squadron's Chaplain Rev Clark. Our Chairman Terry Gill read a list of members who had passed away in the last year then Wing Commander Tom Neil laid the wreath. Remembrance crosses were also laid for Tony Gronert and Jim Lingham. both were great supporters of the association and will be missed.

After laying the wreath we adjourned to the "Squadron" for refreshments and the renewal of old friendships.

Our Chairman announced that Air Marshall Sir John Sutton has resigned as our President, due family circumstances and that Wing Commander Tom Neil DFC* AFC had accepted the post. Terry also announced that Master Navigator Eddie Kelly had agreed to accept the invitation to become Honorary President. Both gave acceptance speeches.

Once again our thanks go to those who brought prizes for the raffle, which raised a healthy £137 towards association funds. In closing, the association would like to thank Sir John and Lady Angela for the support they have given the association during Sir John's Presidency and we hope to see them at future Squadron events.



Left to right Standing Jim Ellis, Tony Oliver,
Sitting rear, Chris Stagg, John Oliver
Front Hamish Harvey, Norrie Bell



Left to right rear Brian Terry, Brian De Vonald
Brian Bennett, Reg Mable,
Front, Perce Blakeney, Tommy Cullen, Herbie
Larkman, Al Hubbard, Dave Tisbury, John Cory



Tom Neil and the Honour Guard at the
wreath laying



Rufy Khawaja



Rev Clark, Pat De Burca.



Freda Hubbard, Joan Bennett Pat Mable,
Kathleene Cory

Charles Wilson

Flight Lt. Muir was dead. His Mustang had disintegrated on hitting the ground on the road running North-East from Zagreb towards Varazdin. All that remained of Muir's Mustang was a large black patch on the ground. The death of another R.A.F. pilot would be recorded in the records of Fighter Command.



How had Muir's death come about? What were the facts that led up to that ugly black patch on the ground? To find the answer we must go back to that morning of March 1st 1945.

Heavy concentrations of German motor transport and troops had been reported on the road running south from Lake Balaton to Zagreb. This was the reason for the mission programmed for the four Mustangs of 249 Squadron. Destroy as much transport and create as much damage as possible.

At exactly 07.15, the four Mustangs (RED 1-2-3-4) took off from the metal runway on the Adriatic coast just south of the little town of Biferno near Teroli. The mission did not get off to a good start. Nobby Clark (RED 3), had to turn back soon after take-off because of engine trouble. That left three Mustangs to carry out the strike; RED 1 Muir, RED 2 Jock and RED 4 Ted. Nobby's Mustang broke away from the formation and headed back to the airstrip. He didn't know then that he had seen Muir for the last time.

Jock and Ted moved in closer to Muir and the three Mustangs continued climbing towards the Yugoslav coast. At 10,000 feet the formation leveled out, and on crossing the coast, a slight correction of course was made. Muir's voice broke radio silence. "Keep, your eyes open. We don't want to get jumped". This was a pilot's first concern when flying over enemy territory. Hundreds of pilots were shot down without even seeing the enemy plane that had fired at them.

Muir's job as Red Leader meant that he was doing the navigating and covering the sky 180 degrees above, below and in front of him. Ted and Jock were also following the main landmarks on their maps, but their job was to cover the sky on their side of Muir and, in particular, to make sure that no enemy planes crept up or dived down on them from behind. Once over enemy territory the three pilots knew that the German plotters would be following them on their radar screens, trying to decide what target the Mustangs were going to attack.

At a point on the Varazdin/Zagreb road, about 30 kms. north of Zagreb, Muir took Red Section down to 1,500 feet and then flew along the road towards the ancient capital. Nothing of interest was seen, and when the anti-aircraft defences on the outskirts of Zagreb opened up on the three planes, Muir gave the order to turn round quickly and fly back up the road towards Varazdin. The Mustangs climbed to 5,000 feet, and soon after passing their original arrival point on the road, got their first glimpse of the heavy concentration of motor transport. One hundred-plus, lorries and cars - an ideal target for Red Section. There was no time to waste. The soldiers on the ground, knowing that an attack was imminent, had hurriedly parked their vehicles at the side of the road and were positioning their light anti-aircraft guns ready for the attack. Muir's voice came over the R.T. "O.K., there they are. We'll attack individually and then form up again at 2,000 feet north of this point. Give me time to complete my attack, then Ted, you follow me in, and then you Jock".

Mustang III



The six 500 lb. bombs made a mess of the motor transport and, as soon as the Mustangs had reformed, Muir's voice again on the R.T. ordered a strafing attack. "Just one pass across the transport". An attack along the line of trucks would have been too dangerous. After the strafing attack Muir told Ted and Jock to form up behind him as quickly as possible. Unfortunately, this was the moment that paved the way for Muir's death. Jock, the last Mustang to go in and strafe, got separated from Muir and Ted and a good few minutes passed before he sighted the other two aircraft and formed up with them again. At a low altitude the camouflaged top surfaces of the Mustangs merged well with the ground and made it difficult to see them. Muir was annoyed about the delay and told Jock to get into the number two position and keep his "finger out". The Mustangs, still with plenty of ammunition, headed north towards Lake Balaton in search of further prey. Flying at about 60 feet above the road, and at a dangerously low speed with 20 degree of flap down (Muir liked to do this, as it gave him more time to line up on his target while strafing, but, at the same time, made him and those behind him more vulnerable to enemy flak,) the formation came to a level crossing not far from Lake Balaton. At that moment a goods train was crossing the railway line over the road. Muir turned sharply to the left to get a good look at the train and trucks. That was the last move he ever made. Not a single sound came from him over the R.T. after he had turned sharply to the left. A lucky shot from the train or trucks must have hit him in some vital spot as he didn't even press his R/T button. His Mustang kept on turning, losing height, and flew straight into the ground. A blinding flash and it was all over.

Jock, still very close behind Muir, followed him down in his turn to almost ground level then, aware that Muir had been hit, broke away violently just before Muir's Mustang hit the ground. Death had come in an instant. To describe one's feelings at a time like that is difficult. Fear, uncertainty loneliness, self-preservation, responsibility, duty. Perhaps this was the sequence of emotions that Jock felt as he climbed to 4,000 feet to circle the area and pin-point exactly where Muir's Mustang had hit the ground. As he circled, a terrible thought began to grow in his mind. Hadn't he, Jock, been responsible for the delay in forming up after the strafing attack? Didn't that loss of time give fate its chance to arrange Muir's meeting with death at the level-crossing? But, on the other hand, wasn't it logical to think that no war operation could be predictable from start to finish? Couldn't it be argued that Nobby's premature return to base had something to do with Muir's death? Despite the logic, Jock had his conscience to reckon with and for a very long time that blinding flash, that ugly black patch on the ground, and, worse still, Muir's voice preyed on his mind. In silence, Ted and Jock set course for their long flight back to base.

I'm the only survivor of that mission. Ted was shot down and killed on another mission with me on the 29th of April 1945 — only nine days before the war in Europe ended.

There is, however, a very strange sequel to this story which revived the tragic event of Muir's death.

A few years after the war, Jock was still flying at weekends with the R.A.F.V.R. In the pilot's mess at the airport there was a notice-board on which, people who had cars, and were willing to give lifts, put down their names and destination. One Sunday evening Jock gave a lift to another pilot he had never previously met.

During the drive back to Glasgow, Jock and the other pilot spoke of their experiences in the R.A.F. The other pilot had flown with 213 Squadron, which had formed part of the same Wing as 249 Squadron, and had been shot down over Yugoslavia and taken prisoner. While being moved from Zagreb to Sarajevo by train the German guard in his compartment showed him two identity discs which he had found on the ground near Varazdin. The name on the discs was Flt. Lt. Muir. Fate again had programmed another meeting.



Spitfire Mk IX



Mac writes——

Three in one

Or

How to Qualify for full membership to three exclusive flying organisations in one involuntary attempt.

As a fighter element of the Balkan Air Force, No. 249 (Gold Coast) Squadron, we flew Spitfire Vcs and then Mustangs (P51's). All ranks lived in very primitive make shift conditions, with dilapidated tents for shelter and a forward PSP landing strip laid over the beach sand dunes, at Termoli in Italy, in 1944-45.

Our operations covered the whole hostile and mountainous area across the Adriatic Sea. We attacked the German forces by flying in aggressive support to the loyal partisan elements in Yugoslavia, Greece and the Balkans in general .

On one mission two of us were briefed for a dawn reconnaissance sortie following up on a partisan intelligence report. It had been reported that a flotilla of German (torpedo) boats had been deployed and were operating from the sheltered coastal port off Fiume Harbour at the Northern end of the Yugoslavian coast. This reconnaissance sortie was assessed as a relatively simple operation with a flight time of something more than two hours ,base to base, No heavy flak, nothing of special significance in the area. How wrong the assessment proved to be. It was to be the complete end of my involvement in WWII. as a fighter pilot.

We briefed for the operation and took off into a crystal clear, day breaking sky; layered stratus cloud delicately tinged with colour from the rising sun . All pretty peaceful until ---- .

----I qualified for the CATERPILLAR CLUB, baling out after being hit by intensive, light and accurate flak. The steep dive I took for a closer look at the harbour, and to strafe the E boats I had seen secured to the jetty, was a great mistake

----I qualified for the GOLDFISH CLUB by parachuting into a freezing Adriatic Sea and being enveloped by the canopy, struggling to save my life by inflating the pilot dinghy strapped to my bottom.

--- I qualified for membership to the RAF PRISONER OF WAR ASSOCIATION, courtesy of the German SS ; betrayed by the Italians, forced into working for them after they had pulled me out of the water, a half frozen, sodden and demoralized mess. I was soaked in sea water and covered; head to foot, in vivid green dye from the dinghy rescue kit. I was betrayed because I failed to meet the Italians plea to take all of them back to the Italian mainland as my POW s

One for all and all for one

Unknowingly at the time the group of Italians who pulled me out of the sea were manning a forward German observation post on the plateau high above the coastline where I had been aiming to reach safety. They had watched me bale out of the stricken Mustang, struggle to survive from the enveloping canopy, the wounded plane plunging into the sea, my frantic struggle to gain entrance to the dinghy and my desperate paddling for the shoreline, After landing, with their help, communicating was almost impossible. I was completely exhausted and they were completely Italian; jabbering and gesticulating excitably. Finally they produced an interpreter from their post camp above us. It was a tedious, very voluble and physical process. Arms waving, voices screaming and shouting at one another. Eventually we reached a measure of understanding . They expected me to be rescued and they wanted me to take them as my POW s when my rescue arrived? They hated their German masters. After a very long despondent wait, a Catalina, escorted by two Spitfire IXs and a Mustang, swooped overhead orbiting our position They were responding to my MAY DAY distress call. Once again communications air to ground, ground to air proved difficult and frustrating. My Morse code signaling ability was unpracticed. Eventually I was able to read they required me to swim out to sea two hundred yards. They had seen the Italians in their German uniforms surrounding me and the weapons they carried!! My captors let me know in no uncertain way the idea was totally unacceptable and they surrounded me . They wanted the rescue Catalina to alight and taxi to the shoreline. This soul destroying situation continued until, finally, all the rescuing planes, orbiting almost within touching distance overhead, flew off . I sat there on the shore rocks, soaked, cold, my spirits at rock bottom .

The light faded into sunset and the Italians took me up to their post location, gave me something to eat and plied me with their fiery. ouzo - to pick up my spirits ? The fiery liquid did more than that. I passed out. They carried me to one of their huts where I was dumped on a bed .

It was some hours later, well into the pitch black night when I was brutally wakened. The Italians had betrayed me and the German SS had arrived. I was their demoralized exhausted POW not knowing what was to come next. It was not to be the end of my war but the beginning of a further struggle between life and death, at times more frightening and life threatening than my air operations when flying in the relative safety of a Mustang fighter. As MRAF Sir John Grandy, the first CO of No 249 Squadron wrote in the preface to my book "FROM FIJI to BALKAN SKIES" Mac's life with 249 flying over inhospitable terrain was a constant struggle to kill or be killed, where losing the expendable nine lives that only a cat can claim had real meaning". At that time he was talking about flying operations. This was something else yet to come. ***

Added to an earlier experience when strafing and destroying FW 190s at a forward German airfield in Greece and suffering the accuracy of Luftwaffe defensive flak I had been through it all before ***

***Extracts from " FROM FIJI to BALKAN SKIES" .published by WOODFIELD PUBLISHING, Bognar Regis, West Sussex, P021 5EL, UK. ISBN 0873203470 . Priced at £9.95 plus £1 p & p. available on demand

Many thanks to Sqn Ldr D.P.F. (Mac) McCaig, MBE, AFC, for allowing this excerpt from his book to be used in the news letter, (T.C.)

Blast From the Past



249 Squadron Termali, Italy. Spitfire 'Vc 'R' Circa 1943



249 Squadron B Flight Malta 1942

Final Take Offs



Flt Lt Barry Wilkinson BEM.

Barry died peacefully and with great dignity on the 4th November 2013.

Barry served with 249 Squadron in Malta from January 1942 until April 1943. Our sympathy and condolences go out to his family.



Air Vice Marshal Peter J Harding CB, CVO, CBE, AFC.

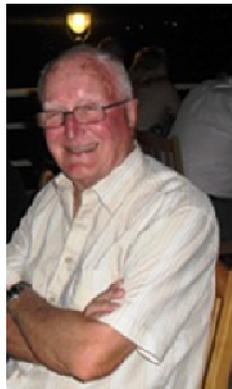
Peter Harding, a much admired member of 249 Squadron died December 27 2013 . Peter served with the Squadron Under Squadron Leaders Barfoot, Ewan and Sutton from 1961 until 1964. Our Sympathy and Condolences go out to his wife Morwenna and family,

Our New President Wing Commander Tom Neil, DFC*, AFC (RAF Ret)



We would like to welcome our new President Wing Commander Tom Neil. He has agreed to take up the position as Air Marshal Sir John Sutton has retired. We would like to thank Sir John for his support of the association over his period as Chairman and wish him and Lady Angela all the best for the future,

Our New Chairman Squadron Leader Roger Kissane (RAF Ret)



Roger has agreed to take over from Terry Gill as Chairman of 249 (Gold Coast) Squadron Association. Roger has been a staunch supporter of the association and we welcome him in his new position.

Our Thanks go out to Terry Gill who has served the Association for the last 14 years. He has nurtured the association leaving it stronger than when he took over as secretary in 2000. I would like to thank Terry on behalf of the membership for the huge amount of time and effort he has put into the association. We wish him and his family all the best for the future

Our New Honorary President Master Navigator Eddy Kelly



We would like to welcome our new Vice president Eddy Kelly. Eddy served on 249 under Squadron Leader Doug Barfoot's Command and has always been a great supporter of the association. Happy Birthday on your 90th Eddie,
5 Dec 2014

As we were

IN A brilliant display of sports know-how, the team from 249 Squadron, RAF Akrotiri, beat their opponents, the Fire Section from RAF Nicosia, last night in the semi-final of the Cyprus Mail-FBS All Island Sports Quiz at the Roundel Club.

The final score after a thrilling contest was 18 points to the team from Akrotiri, and Nicosia 15 and a quarter.

Right from the first question asked by Quizmaster David Dixon, the Akrotiri team forged ahead and steadily built up their points. By the end of the first round they were three points ahead and after the second round had scored 13 points against the Nicosia team's 9.

Tough questions

The fourth round hit both teams very hard, the questions given being extremely difficult. The Akrotiri team scored only 1½ points while the Fire Section did not record a single one.

All in all, however, it was a fine contest and 249 Squadron will now meet the Army's 655 Light Aircraft Squadron from Dhakelia on Thursday evening in the grand final.

Last night's team from 249 Squadron consisted of Fl/Officer Bob Stringer, Fl/Lieut. Mike Knight, Fl/Sgt. Andy Leddy and Cpl. Brian Terry. The losing team were: Paddy Egan, John Kirk, Mike Setell and Ron Roberts.

The show was recorded and will be broadcast over the FES tonight at 8.45.

Further 18 men detained under the South African emergency regulations were released from Worcester Jail, Capetown, where they have been held since March and April.



249 SQUADRON from RAF A krotiri last night beat the Fire Section from RAF Nicosia in the semi-final of the Cyprus Mail — FBS All Island Sports Quiz. Picture shows the winning team: F/O Bob Stringer, Fl/Lieut. Mike Knight, Fl/Sgt. Andy Leddy, and Cpl. Brian Terry



The Master Crew



Aircrew Room Circa 1959-60

249 Hailsham Squadron ATC – 2013

The year 2013 was, once again, a busy one for both cadets and staff. We participated in all the familiar events organised by Sussex Wing – the athletics competition, from which several medals were brought home, the swimming gala where we were not quite so successful and the Sussex Wing Field Weekend. This last is an event that includes a wide variety of activities from adventure training, through drill and aircraft recognition to first aid competitions. The squadron shooting team won bronze medals, target shooting with .22 rifles. This was particularly satisfying because it showed the huge improvement that the cadets have made in this area.

When your correspondent was OC of the squadron many years ago, one project set in motion was the construction and approval of an indoor air rifle range. Bureaucracy and interminable hoop-jumping took TEN years! However, it was finally approved and Sgt Allan Heulin and Civilian Instructor Mark O'Callaghan have spent a great deal of their time at weekends raising the standard of the cadets' shooting. They now participate in a national air cadet postal competition and although not yet at the top of the list, they are nowhere near the bottom.

In early summer, the cadets were invited to assist at a Fly-In at Deanland airfield. Originally built as an advanced landing ground in 1944, the first airborne sortie on D-Day was flown from there. It is now much smaller and is used for light aircraft. The day was organised to raise money for charity and the cadets pitched in enthusiastically. One aircraft to arrive was a Harvard and its departure caused an unfortunate incident. It is a powerful aircraft, particularly compared to the others attending and when the pilot opened up the throttle to leave, it blew the following aircraft, waiting to take off, on to its side, damaging a wing!

Over the summer holidays, there were opportunities for cadets to attend annual camps. This year, the locations were Benson, High Wycombe and in the autumn, St Mawgan. Sadly, the last one was cancelled because of a shortage of staff, but cadets from the squadron went to both of the other camps. As ever, there was much to do and see. This was especially so at RAF Benson, where there is much helicopter activity. At High Wycombe, there was an enhanced level of saluting caused by the high level of senior officer activity!

There was a cadet presence again at the Eastbourne air show – Airborne – and this was an occasion to not only interact with the public but also talk to members of the RAF as well as visiting pilots from other countries. Mention of Airborne reminds me that the previous year, the Squadron OC, Flt Lt Craig Thomson took some fine pictures of the Vulcan displaying at Eastbourne. In 2013, he entered one of them in the RAF photographic competition and it was Highly Commended.

In August, the cadets were privileged to attend the Association's reunion at North Weald and as in past years, paraded at the memorial outside the airfield's museum. Your correspondent missed this occasion, the first time in many years, owing to an inconsiderate daughter getting married on that weekend. However, the Squadron Padre, Peter Clark attended and it is understood, more than made up for my absence.

Throughout the year, the cadets frequently help in various ways in the community. They also help the local branch of RAFA with their fund-raising efforts and in September participated, as in previous years, in the Wings Appeal. They also attended the Battle of Britain service and parade. Later came Remembrance Day; this is the major public event of the year for the Squadron and there was a gathering in the town of six or seven hundred people on the Sunday. For a small rural town, this is very impressive. The parade included veterans, the Army Cadets and representatives of other youth organisations, as well as 249 Squadron cadets. Banners were paraded at the memorial and wreaths were laid; it was a fine sight.

Prior to the day itself, the cadets helped to sell poppies and together with the Army Cadets, helped to raise over £1000. I must point out that the Squadron has a good working relationship with the local Army Cadet Force platoon, with whom the premises are shared. One hears so many stories of ATC and ACF units in the same position not getting on together that it is refreshing to report that "combined opps" are alive and well in Hailsham. I am sure it has nothing to do with my elder daughter "stepping out" with the platoon commander!

The Remembrance Day parade would have been so much better if it could have been led by a band. Unfortunately, this was not to be the case. Later in the year, though, the Squadron was presented with a set of snare drums to form a corps of drums. This was a generous gift from a company that had recently opened a care home in Hailsham. With the addition of a bass drum and some instruments, assuming we can find cadets to play them, the Squadron may be able to lead the parade another year.

From time to time, the Squadron receives visits from RAF stations and other speakers. Two speakers who came in 2013 were James Nicolson, who spoke about his uncle, James Nicolson VC and one of our Civilian Instructors, Justin Baker. He is a member of the TA and he talked to the cadets about his two tours of duty in Afghanistan. A much enjoyed highlight was the visit of the armourers from our parent station, RAF Odiham. They use their own time to make these visits and that includes a trip of almost two hours each way. As well as coming to talk to the cadets, they were able to attend our Christmas dinner held at a hotel in the picturesque Sussex village of Alfriston. It was a memorable occasion, which was attended by the Lord Lieutenant of East Sussex, Peter Field, as well as the town's mayor and almost the whole Squadron.

2013 saw the return of powered flying to the Corps. Major problems with propellers over the last eighteen months or so, led to the grounding of the fleet of Grob Tutors. Once the situation had been resolved, then the pilots had to build up their currency on the aircraft before they could take cadets up again. The first detail before Christmas was cancelled because of bad weather but, just a few weeks ago, three cadets were able to fly from RAF Wyton. There had been some gliding available, though and this kept the interest ticking over. Occasionally, when there is sufficient capacity, members of staff are offered the opportunity of a launch – one of the few perks of a volunteer's life! Recently, on a gliding detail at RAF Kenley, Sgt Allan Heulin was offered the opportunity to try gliding. On the day, the thermals were so good that he enjoyed a 25 minute flight from a winch launch; an uncommon event.

There is so much more that could be included in this report but I hope that this gives a flavour of what activities and opportunities are available for the young men and women, for that is what they are, in the Air Training Corps today. I should add, without including myself in this, that nearly all of this would be impossible if it were not for the commitment of the volunteer staff, officers NCOS and Civilian Instructors, who, unpaid, give up so much of their time to support the cadets.

Flt Lt David Calvert RAF VR(T) Retd.



North Weald



Field Craft Training



Remembrance Day Parade



Sqn OC Craig Thomson with Sqn President, Peter Field, Lord Lieutenant of East Sussex.

Secretary's Report

Our President , Air Marshal Sir John Sutton, has passed the Baton on to Wing Commander Tom Neil who has graciously accepted the position as our new President. As you will all know Tom served with 249 during the Battle of Britain and the defence of Malta. We would like to thank Sir John and Lady Angela for the support they have give the association over the years. I would also like to welcome Master Nav Eddy Kelly who has agreed to take up the position as Honourary President, Eddy is a great supporter of the Association.

We would also like to welcome our new Chairman Roger Kissane who has taken over from Terry Gill

Last year we had three reunions, Petwood, Malta and the annual reunion at North Weald, all very successful. Once again I would like to thank all those who generously sent donations to help the Association's Finances. Again our main expense is postage, packaging and printing, any donations will be gratefully received.

Any future donations should be made to "249 Squadron Association" and sent to me at T. Cullen, 12 Bywell Avenue, South Shields, Tyne and Wear, NE34 6RP.

The membership of the Association stands at 170 and 24 associate members.

Some of you may already log onto our Web Sites, at <http://www.249sqn.co.uk/>, this is the main web site, there is a Blog site at <http://249squadron.wordpress.com/>, members are encouraged to take an active part on this site, and lastly, a Squadron photograph album at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/249squadron/>. I am trying to build a history of the Squadron in Photos, any help would be appreciated. In closing I would like to thank 249 A.T.C Squadron for the continued support they give the association

Hon Sec Tommy Cullen.

Association Accounts 2012-2013

Receipts

| | |
|----------------|---|
| £831.97 | Carried forward From 2012 Balance Sheet |
| £190.00 | Donations |
| £0.53 | Interest |
| £440.00 | Petwood Deposits |
| £120.00 | Membership |
| £433.72 | Malta, North Weald Petty cash |
| £380.00 | Bosworth Hall Reunion Deposits |
| £1,174.00 | North Weald receipts |
| <u>£22.00</u> | Sale of goods |
| £3,592.22 | Total Receipts |

Expenditure

| | |
|---------------|----------------------------------|
| £534.29 | Postage, Printing and Stationery |
| £140.00 | Payment for ties |
| £42.00 | Wreaths |
| £0.11 | Tax |
| £430.00 | Petwood Deposits |
| £69.82 | Web Site |
| £100.00 | Malta Float |
| £1,100.00 | North Weald |
| <u>£30.00</u> | ATC Expenses |
| £2,446.22 | Total Deductions |

Balance

£1,146.00 Minus Bosworth Hall Reunion Deposits

£380.00

£766 to be carried forward

Notes from The Squadron Record Book during the Battle of Britain

August 6th 1940

249 Squadron Operational Record Book, 6 August, Church Fenton

During the last few days a considerable amount of practice flying has been carried out and much attention paid to beam attacks and dog fighting practice. There seems to be very little activity in the North now, but things are boiling up in the South of England and attacks are being carried out by large numbers of e/a on convoys and South Coast ports. We are all hoping to get a move South.

August 9th 1940

249 Squadron Operational Record Book, 9 August

Friday morning boredom relieved at the sound of shots being discharged during the pay parade in the Squadron hangar, as a result of which no. 566614 Cpl Parry Jones of B Flight grasped his side and fell to the ground. He was found to have been wounded by a bullet and was taken to York Military Hospital by Ambulance. On subsequent investigation, it was found that a Hurricane aircraft of no. 73 Squadron was being loaded whilst in the flying position, pointing towards our hangar and 2 rounds had inadvertently been fired. This incident did a lot towards fostering the already excellent competitive spirit between the 2 squadrons on the station.

August 16th 1940

249 Squadron Operational Record Book – 16 August, Boscombe Down

A formation of Me109s were seen and Red Section, Flt Lt Nicholson, PO MA King, Sqdn Ldr King were ordered to investigate. Red Section unfortunately bought it, being heavily attacked by fighters. Flt Lt Nicholson, Red 1 was hit by a cannon shell and his aircraft caught fire. Flt Lt Nicholson remained in the cockpit in order to get a burst at a Messerschmitt 110 which appeared in front of him. He was then forced to abandon aircraft owing to the heat. He made a successful descent, but when about 40 feet from the ground he was fired at by a member of the LDV. He was very badly burnt and taken to Royal Southampton Hospital. PO MA King, Red 2 was attacked at the same time, and also abandoned his aircraft. His parachute had been severely damaged however by a cannon shell, and collapsed during the descent. Pilot Officer King was killed. Sqdn Ldr King's aircraft was hit in several places but he was able to return to base.

Note – Flt Lt Nicholson was subsequently awarded the VC – the only member of Fighter Command to receive this honour.

August 24th 1940

249 Squadron Operational Record Book – 24 August

2 aircraft of Blue Section ordered to intercept e/a over Bristol at 30,000 feet. No further information was given them by R/T, and no interception was made. It is worthy of note here that the controllers at Middle Wallop appear to be working under very difficult circumstances with untrained personnel and lack of equipment. On many of the patrols so far carried out, no information other than the original telephoned order and the order to land has been received.

3rd September 1940

249 Squadron Operational Record Book – 3 September, North Weald

09:00 hours Squadron ordered to patrol Chelmsford, Eastchurch, nothing seen, ordered to land by sections after 1 hour's patrol, and immediately after refuelling the Squadron was ordered off again to intercept a large formation of enemy aircraft approaching from the NE. Owing to being ordered off too late, the Squadron was unable to gain height in time to intercept this force, and we all had the most unsatisfactory experience of seeing North Weald being heavily bombed and being unable to do anything about it. The enemy carried out a pattern bombing attack from approx. 15,000 feet, which was very accurate, but it is interesting to record that although between 200 and 300 bombs were dropped on the buildings the damage to the buildings etc... did not in any way hinder the operation of the squadrons from North Weald. From the air, this attack appeared to have been far more effective than it actually was and no doubt the enemy pilots reported, quite justly, that they had knocked out North Weald. The Squadron brought to readiness during the afternoon, patrolled Eastchurch, Canterbury and Dover. 3 Me109s were seen well above but they sheared off towards France. We were fired at by AA from the Dover guns and Sgt Rowell's aircraft was apparently hit. He was unaware of this however, until his aircraft caught fire just before he landed on return to North Weald. He was slightly concussed but otherwise uninjured.

7th September 1940

249 Squadron Operational Record Book – 7 September

2 patrols were carried out in the morning, Flt Lt Barton, now leading the Squadron, owing to the Squadron Commander's absence in Maidstone Hospital. No contact made during these patrols. 11:30 hours third patrol at Rochester, 15,000 feet. Immediately on reaching patrol line, Squadron ordered to Maidstone in time to intercept a raid of 30 He111s with the usual escort of fighters above and at the sides. A quick flank attack was made on the bomber formation, but there was no time to observe the effect of the fire before breaking away. The Squadron was then attacked by Me109s and a dog fight followed. 6 serviceable aircraft returned to base and were ordered off again within quarter of an hour. As these 6 took off, a large enemy force passed over the aerodrome but did not bomb until they reached NE London at 15,000 feet. The 6 aircraft of the Squadron then attacked an enemy force of approximately 100 aircraft, as a result of which 1 Do17 was destroyed and several damaged.

By far the heaviest day's fighting the Squadron has yet had. Enemy casualties: 4 ½ destroyed, 1 probable, 3 damaged. It is worthy of note that during this, the enemy's longest full-scale attack on the London docks, POs Meaker and Loweth had motored to Maidstone to collect the CO from the hospital there. On their return they arrived at Surrey docks about 5 mins before these attacks took place and spent a very undignified forty minutes lying on the pavement at the entrance to the Blackwall Tunnel.

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1th September 1940

249 Squadron Operational Record Book – 11 September

Brought to readiness at 16:10 hours and ordered to patrol London Docks and Thames Estuary. Large formations of He111s with fighter escorts intercepted East of London. For the first time, it was possible to carry out a head-on attack, this resulted in 2 He111s being destroyed and 1 probable. Sgt Davis was wounded during this battle and had to bale out at Beneden owing to fire in his aircraft. Squadron patrolled Dover at 18:15 hours, and although a number of enemy fighters were seen high above, it was not possible to make contact. A stick of bombs was seen to fall slap outside the entrance to Dover harbour in the sea but no-one could see the enemy aircraft from which they were dropped.

15th September 1940

249 Squadron Operational Record Book – 15 September

Squadron patrolled with no. 46 Squadron at 12:00 hours and intercepted 20 Do215s South of London, and carried out a beam attack. Enemy casualties: 1 destroyed, 1 probable and 1 damaged. Our casualties: nil. At 13:40 hours, Squadron again ordered to patrol and intercepted 15 Do215s over South London. A beam attack cracked this formation wide open, the result being that 5 ½ bombers were destroyed and 8 ½ probable's and 3 damaged. One reason for this success was that the German fighters failed to do their stuff, probably due to their attention already being diverted by being attacked from above by Spitfires. Further patrol with 46 Squadron carried out over Shellhaven during the evening; nothing seen. This was by far the most successful day in the Squadron's history. Total to date 185 enemy aircraft destroyed.

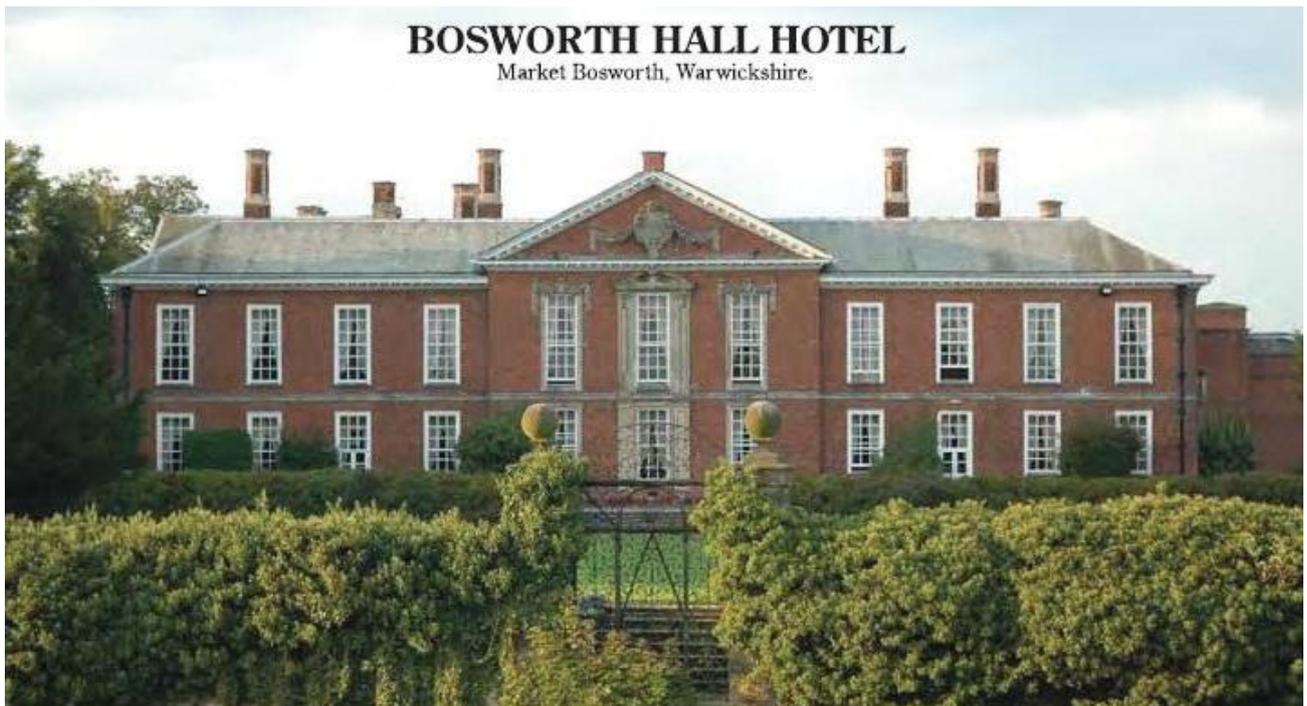
27th September 1940

249 Squadron Operational Record Book – 27 September

3 very successful sorties carried out with 46 Squadron. Our casualties were POs Burton and Meaker killed. Although 2 of our most gallant comrades were lost, to-day was a glorious day in the history of the Squadron. From reports later received it appears that PO Meaker attacked a close formation of 5 Ju88s on his own and his aircraft was completely shot up by the heavy cross fire from the cannons now fitted in the rear of these aircraft. From reports from the Hailsham district Observer Corps, it appears that PO Burton has been attacking an Me110 for some time and was seen to climb above it and dive down on to it, he rammed it and cut it's tail off and both aircraft crashed. PO A G Lewis, DFC on this day destroyed 6 aircraft himself and was subsequently ordered a bar to his DFC.



Weekend Reunion 2014



This years reunion was held at Bosworth Hall Hotel Market Bosworth. The dinner was held on the Saturday evening with 45 members present. The Honorary President Eddie Kelly announced the retirement of our Chairman Terry Gill, and Roger Kissane has now taken over that position.

Roger had attended an RAF 100 meeting with the Chief of Air-staff's office to discuss ideas on the forthcoming 100th anniversary of the RAF in 2018. We will be kept up to date with the arrangements via the website at RAF100.

It turned out to be a very successful weekend with members from the Venom element joining us for the first time.

A number of members visited the National Memorial Arboretum on Saturday, it is a very impressive site.

I would like to offer belated Birthday wishes to Master Nav Eddie Kelly who was 90 on the 5th December.

I would also like to thank all those who gave donations towards the associations postage cost. A very generous donation of £70 was received, this will be of great help.

Next years reunion will be at the Four Pillars Hotel Abingdon. We have used this hotel on many occasions in the past and the reunions have always been a success and well attended.

T.C.



National Memorial Arboretum



Moira Cullen at the National Memorial Arboretum

Bosworth Hall Saturday Evening Dinner

