



A Tribute to Nicolson VC

No 249 (Gold Coast) Squadron Association



The Real Thing



2015 Annual reunion at North Weald

The Annual reunion was held on 22nd August at North Weald.

Once again 249 Millennium ATC Squadron provided us with the Honour Guard. Our Chairman Roger Kissane read a list of members who had passed away in the last Year. The wreath laying ceremony was led by Jim Nicholson and Sir John Grandy's sons John and Bill. This years ceremony was also attended by Lady Angela Sutton. After laying the wreath we adjourned to the "Squadron" for refreshments and the renewal of old friendships.

Again our thanks go to those who brought prizes for the raffle, which raised a healthy £150 towards association funds.



Charles Wilson

6 — ESCORT TO BEAUFIGHTERS

Our mission today would be quite different from the usual bombing and strafing attacks on trains and motor transport. Instead, Nobby Clark and I had to escort four Beaufighters on their mission to a small town in northern Italy called Gargaro, near Gorizia. The meeting point with the four twin--engined 'Beaus' was just off the coast at Pescara: height 6,000 feet, time 11.20 hours, 26th March 1945. Nobby Clark and I, call signs, 'Blue One' and 'Blue Two', took off in our Mustangs at 11.05 hrs from Termoli. Our job was to act as Top cover' to the 'Beaus', who were to deliver one of their devastating rocket attacks on a building in the centre of Gargaro. Intelligence reports indicated that the building was being used by the Germans as their Headquarters. Unfortunately, the two 500lb bombs had not been removed from our Mustangs, and, if we were to keep our rendezvous time with the 'Beaus' it would not be possible to remove them before take-off. When we informed our Intelligence Officer of this, his reply was: "If you aren't attacked by enemy fighters and don't have to jettison your bombs, you can drop them on the target when the 'Beaus' have finished their attack".

A few miles south of Pescara we contacted Beaufighter leader, call sign 'Red One', on the R/T, and then took up our position about 4,000 feet above his formation. Instead of setting course direct for Gargaro, Red One headed for Zara on the Yugoslavian coast, with the aim of foxing the enemy listening posts. The cruising speed of the 'Beaus' (180m.p.h.) was well below ours, so we had to lower 10 degree of flap to keep our speed down and still maintain good control of our aircraft.

With Zara a few miles ahead on our right, Red One altered course again for Fiume, passing over the islands of Pag, Rab and Cherso. From Fiume we flew across the Istrian Peninsula in the direction of Trieste and Monfalcone, our training point, on the last leg of our flight to Gargaro.

We crossed the Istrian coast a few miles south of Trieste and over the Adriatic. Red One started losing height gradually to build up the speed of his formation. This increase in speed suited Nobby and I so we lifted our 10 degree of flap. A few minutes later, Red One's voice came over the R/T to inform his pilots that they would be over the target in 10 minutes.

The 'Beaus' would attack, one after the other, and when Red Four had fired his rockets he would call us up on the R/T, then it would be our turn to go down on the building. The 'Beaus' flew on very low towards their target while, up above, we were keeping our eyes open for enemy aircraft. The Luftwaffe still had a fair number of fighters in that area.



Again the voice of Red One on the R/T telling his pilots to get into line astern formation ready for the attack. From high above, Nobby and I had a bird's-eye view of the 'Beaus' as they went in, one by one, to fire their rockets. Within a few minutes the building had changed its shape with the walls starting to crumble. Then Red Four broke R/T silence. "Red Four to Blue One and Two, finished my attack. This was the signal for Nobby and I to go down. Our four 500 lb bombs, dropped on what was left of the building, finished the job. We didn't hang around in the area as we had to catch up with the "Beaus" as quickly as possible. This took only a few minutes with our faster speed and we formed up on them again as they were climbing to 6,000 feet on their way back to base.

Just before reaching Ancona on our return journey, a click in our earphones, and Red One's voice again; "Red One to Blue One and Two", "Thanks for your company. You can leave us now". "Blue One to Red One, Roger Out".

Nobby and I wagged our wings as if to say "Cheerio chaps", lifted our flaps, opened up our throttles, and speeded back to Termoli. The mission had lasted exactly three hours.

Final Take Offs



Mr Charles Wilson. Charles died towards the end of 2015, you can read of the Squadron's exploits in his days at Termoli which are serialised in the newsletter. Our Condolences to his family and friends

Squadron leader D.W.A. Stones, DFC. Our Condolences to his family and friends

Mr Bob Byrne who passed away last September. Bob was an Engine fitter with the squadron. Our Condolences to his family and friends

Mr John, (Dusty) Miller who passed away in November. He served on the Squadron as an instrument mech from 1959 to 1962. Our Condolences to his family and friends.



Squadron Leader D.P.F. McCaig, MBE, AFC, passed away in December last year. Mac served with the Squadron in Italy and the Balkans. Mac was the associations secretary for a lot of years before handing over to Terry Gill. Our Condolences to his family and friends.

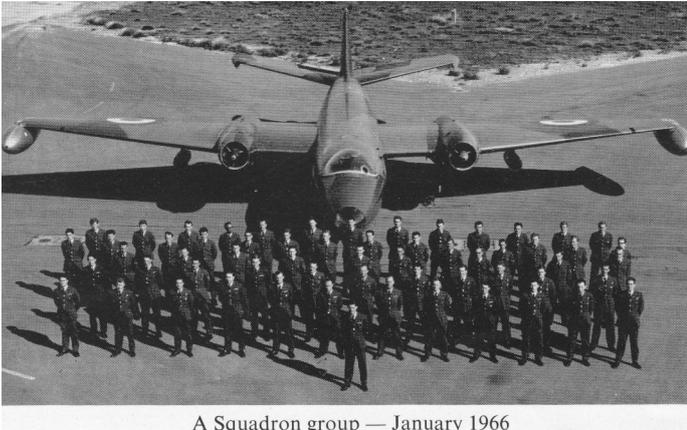
OUR LATE PRESIDENT SIR JOHN SUTTON

A Service of Thanksgiving for Air Marshal Sir John Sutton took place on Friday 22 May at Saint Michael and All Angels' Chapel at the RAF College Cranwell. Over 300 attended, some travelling hundreds of miles, and the congregation included many senior officers, including several former chiefs of the Air Staff. However, just as (if not more) importantly, a good number of ex-airmen from his squadrons in the early years also felt they had to pay their respects to a man they respected and admired as a superb pilot, exemplary leader and warm and generous human being. Many friends and neighbours from more recent times also gathered to pay their respects. 249 Squadron were represented by 18 members, Aircrew and Ground Crew



Air Marshal Sir John Sutton KCB KStJ

As we were



A Squadron group — January 1966



249 Sqn Personnel Dec 57



Group Photo Tobruk 1959



Squadron Crew on dispersal at Akrotiri



Summer Ball



Venoms of B Flight Akrotiri Jan



249 Ground Crew Boscombe Down August 1940



249 Aircrew Malta 1941



249 Ground Crew Malta 1941



Devesoir 1949 Sqn Ldr Scott Voss



SHARJA 1962



Our President Tom Neil at RAF Club

249 Hailsham Squadron ATC – 2014

Well, 2015 has come and gone and it has been another busy year. Frankly, I do not know how we staff members manage! I will not list every activity but talk about the highlights.

Once again, the squadron performed well at the Wing athletics competition as well as a number of other sporting events. The cadets returned from the athletics with five medals and as the year progressed, Cdt. Rebecca Crawford picked up three medals at the inter-squadron swimming competition and went on to represent London and South East Region at the Corps competition. Cpl. Ben Heulin received his "Blue" for representing the wing at shooting and as we go to press, I learn that Sgt. Josh Mayall has been selected to represent Sussex Wing in the senior football competition.

As in previous years, the squadron has attended a number of parades. Apart from our regular attendance at the Battle of Britain and Remembrance Day parades, we attended one on ANZAC Day, for the first time and were present at the Bomber Command Memorial day on Beachy Head. Perhaps the special one however, was the 75th Anniversary of the Battle of Britain parade held at North Weald. Because of the illustrious number we carry, we were honoured to have our banner at the head of the parade and the uniformed staff led Number 1 Flight. On top of these, the cadets have also collected for the RAFA Wings Appeal and the British Legion Poppy collection.

The cadets have participated in a range of activities on top of the regular training programme. After a break when the aircraft were grounded, flying has begun again and it seems that, as the Air Experience Flight has decamped from Wyton to Wittering, our normal flying station will now be Benson. That means just a couple of hours coach journey rather than the four hours each way we endured to fly at Wittering! Unfortunately, there has been no gliding as the gliders are still grounded. I understand that they should start to be available again later this year but, of course, the instructors will be out of hours and will have to undergo training before they can take cadets flying again.

We had about a dozen cadets attend annual camps last year, which was the highest number of places we have been allocated for some time. Camps were held at Northolt, Halton, High Wycombs and Cosford. Those cadets who attended made the most of their experiences.

We are keen to ensure that all our cadets have a grounding in first aid. To that end, 29 of them successfully completed a Heart Start course in the autumn. Instructed by the Eastbourne First Responders, attached to the ambulance service, the cadets were taught CPR, how to deal with choking and bandaging minor wounds. The hall looked a little like a battlefield on the night with "Ressusi Annies" scattered all over the floor!

A special event took place in May. We had been contacted by 249 Beausejour Squadron Royal Canadian Air Cadets who were visiting the First World War battlefields in France and Belgium. We invited them to visit us and about 30 staff and cadets spent an evening with us where both camps learned how the others lived. In that part of Manitoba where they are based, it is all prairie and the roads are long and straight. Indeed, the staff member who lives closest to the squadron has only one bend to negotiate on his 30 mile journey. They were a little surprised that our roads went round corners and up and down hills; they expected the 60 mile trip down from London to take an hour – some hope!

During August, the cadets helped, once again, at Airbourne, the Eastbourne air show. Apart from manning the ATC recruiting stand, they also made themselves useful helping at many of the RAF stands as well as the RAFA one. What made it particularly special for us was that one of the pilots in the Hawk display team was a former cadet of ours, Flt Lt Toby Keeley. Interestingly, the other pilot was also a former Sussex air cadet. They were based at Biggin Hill over the weekend but found time after their displays to drive down to Eastbourne to chat to the cadets. At Christmas, Toby was our guest of honour at our Mess Dinner and gave an inspiring talk to the cadets.

As far as staff news is concerned, in 2015, we lost one of our number, Plt Off (as he was then) Kirk Collison. He had joined the squadron at the age of 13 and stayed with us until he timed out and then gained his commission. In the early part of the year, he was asked to become CO of the recently formed 88 Battle Squadron. Originally a detached flight of Hastings Squadron and formed in the 1940s, it was recently granted full squadron status. So Kirk is now finding out what it is all about.

Some of you may remember Flt Lt Katie Calvert who is also a former cadet of the squadron. Early last year she was given her own command as CO of 304 Hastings Squadron.

Sgt. Alan Heulin has been promoted to Flight Sergeant but we are still waiting for it to be promulgated.

WO Tina Calvert and Sgt. Tom Edwards attended a training course at Crowborough Training Camp and are now fully qualified archery instructors. When we run out of ammunition, we can always turn to our bows and arrows!

So what of 2016? This could be an extremely full year. It is the 75th anniversary of the founding of the ATC in 1941 and there are many events that we are likely to be involved in. As well as that, as the result of our formal annual inspection in the autumn, the squadron has been chosen to be Wing's representative for the Lees Trophy. This is an annual competition to find the best squadron in the Corps. It will be a hard task, all the winners in recent times have been large squadrons with many cadets and staff but we will give it our best shot.



Canadian Cadets Visit



Flt Lt Thompson, W.O Calvert, Sgt Heulin, lead N0 1 Flight, North Weald BoB 75th Celebration



W.O Learning Archery



Cpl Langley With Banner Party at North Weald BoB 75th Celebration



Sgt Heulin and Cadet Poppy Appeal



Sgt Mayall, Football Rep

Secretary's Report

This past year has seen the deaths of four of our members including our founder Secretary Mac McCaig. Mac steered the association through it's early days and handed over a vibrant association to Terry Gill. Mac will be sadly missed.

The Squadron was represented at North Weald Community in Commemorating the 75th Anniversary of the Battle of Britain, our ATC Squadron took part and did the association proud.

This year saw another successful reunion at North Weald and the weekend reunion at Abingdon was another success. We are planning the weekend reunion to take place at Abingdon again in February next year.

There was some discussion as to the future of the association as we approach the Squadron's 100th anniversary in 2018. Some of us felt it would be a good time to officially close the association with a ceremony possibly at North Weald. If you have any feelings or ideas on the subject, please let me know.

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 160 and 24 associate members.

I am looking for contributions to the next edition, all are welcome to send me articles.

Hon Sec Tommy Cullen.

Association Accounts 2014-2015

Receipts

Carried Forward from 2014	146.20
Mail Donations	105.00
Donations	137.35
North Weald receipts	629.00
Abingdon Deposits	540.00
Total Receipts	1,557.55

Expenditure

Abingdon Payments	540.00
Postage, Printing and Stationery	250.99
Wreaths	105
ATC Expenses	30
North Weald	629
Total Expenditure	1,554.99
To Carry Forward	2.56

Abingdon Weekend Reunion

Once again our weekend reunion was at Abingdon. Our numbers were down on recent years mainly due to some of our regulars being away traveling the globe. There were thirty of us at the dinner on the Saturday Evening. All in all an excellent weekend.



