

550 Squadron memorial service

Test your brain – puzzles P24



NEVER FORGET: Former pilot Jack Harris, centre right, shakes hands with Squadron Leader Edgar Pickles from Australia at the 550 Bomber Squadron and RAF North Killingholme Association Memorial Service at the Memorial Stone on Lancaster Approach, North Killingholme. Pictures by Ray Corke.



DRIVING FORCE: Former 550 Squadron driver Marjorie Grey, 91, from East Halton, at the service with her daughter Jennifer Grey.

Squadron remembers its 353 fallen heroes



TEARS were shed at an annual reunion as servicemen from the Second World War remembered their lost comrades.

Surviving men of 550 Squadron, who flew Lancaster bombers 68 years ago from North Killingholme, gathered with family and friends of their late colleagues.

The reunion took place in North Killingholme, with a service of remembrance and wreath-laying at the squadron memorial, in Lancaster Approach, as well as a procession led by the Immingham Air Training Corps band.

The former servicemen and their families then enjoyed a fly-past by the only surviving airworthy Lancaster bomber, of the Battle Of Britain Memorial Flight, before a service at St Denys' Church.

Attending the reunion was Marjorie Grey, 91, of East Halton, who was a driver for the squadron.

She said: "I was posted all over the place during my time in service, from Scotland down to London.

"I eventually became a flight commander's main driver and anyone else who wanted me to do something would have had to have asked him first.

"I come every year to the memorial

Lancaster fly-past at memorial tribute

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service. You cannot really describe the amount of emotion felt by everyone.

"When the Lancaster bomber does its fly-past, I always shed a tear at that point, to me, no other can top it."

As reported, 550 Squadron was based at Waltham before moving to North Killingholme airfield in January 1944, where it remained until it was disbanded in October 1945.

The squadron, which included members of the Canadian, Australian and New Zealand air forces, lost 353 of its members between 1944 and 1945 – with 13 Lancasters shot down over enemy territory and 13 crashing in Britain on their way home.

Among those remembering lost loved ones was Eve Dolphin, whose father died on March 31, 1944, when she was just 18 months old.

After travelling up from Devon for the reunion, the 69-year-old said:



"Attending the service gives me a sense of connection to my father, even though I never knew him.

"He is buried in Germany, the country his plane went down, in a place called Durnbach. It is a British war cemetery where about 3,000 men are laid to rest.

"My father, Ronald Johns, was a rear gunner on the plane and to this day I cannot believe how people fitted into such tiny compartments and went out to war.

"Through my own research and travels I have some small remnants at home from his plane that crashed.

"I have attended the service for around seven years now and each one is just as special to me.

"I used to hope that someone would attend that possibly knew my dad, but it has never happened.

"It is a heartfelt moment when the Lancaster bomber flies over us."

For more information on the squadron, visit www.550squadronassociation.org.uk

PAYING THEIR RESPECTS: Some of those who took part in the 550 Bomber Squadron and RAF North Killingholme Association Memorial Service.



SENSE OF CONNECTION: Eve Dolphin remembering her father Ronald Johns, who died on a sortie from Killingholme when she was only 18 months old.



WISE WORDS: The Reverend Mike Page-Chesney taking the service.

'I don't think I could ever miss this service'

THE first ever fly-past for this service was in 1993, the year I was born.

I live opposite the memorial stone where the reunion is held each year and I have not missed a service yet.

I used to get excited when I was younger as soon as I heard the band coming down the street.

Seeing the Lancaster bomber is definitely a proud moment, as it is a treasure of the village.

It is nice talking to people who lost relatives in the war and especially to those who served during it. Their stories are fascinating to hear.

My fiancé is in the Army so next year I am moving to Germany with him. However, I do

In your words



Katie Hedison, 19, of North Killingholme

not think I can ever miss this service so I will do my best to come back again for it.

It is a part of my childhood. I have grown up attending it so I never want to let it fade away from my life.