

# XV SQUADRON ASSOCIATION



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## 2008 ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

### ***PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE***

By the time this newsletter is circulated No. XV Squadron will have received its new Standard from the Duke of York. I am sure that all members of the Association will wish to join me in congratulating the Squadron on the award.

I make no apology for taking this opportunity to remind members that the Association's primary aims are:

1. To provide a focus for arranging an annual reunion.
2. To keep members in touch through the publication of a Newsletter.
3. Where practicable to support No XV Squadron.

In fact, the Association is extremely lucky because it enjoys practical support from OC XV and his staff. This gives us a huge advantage when it comes to getting access to service facilities for the annual reunion.

Over recent years we have enjoyed the services of a series of excellent Secretaries the most recent of whom, Mark Vaughan, did a splendid job of arranging this year's reunion. He has now moved on to the Middle East and we wish him well. Our new Secretary, Flt Lt Mark Allan, is a flying instructor who hails originally

from New Zealand and, on your behalf, I would like to thank him for undertaking to do this important job on behalf of the Association. He has edited this newsletter and will be doing the coordinating work for our 2009 reunion.

As members will know, the pressure on the RAF and in particular in the Harrier Force meant that, this year, we had to change the venue for our annual reunion to Brampton. We were very well looked after by the staff there and a good time was had by all.

Next June, thanks to the kindness of the Force Commander (Station Commander to you and me), we shall be returning to Cottesmore.

The current support that the Association is giving to No XV Squadron is by meeting the cost of refurbishing the squadron photograph albums and other important historical records. On this topic, if any member has recollections of his/her time on XV Squadron that might be of interest to readers of the newsletter do please let the Secretary have the details.

Finally, as the festive season approaches I extend my very best wishes to all members and hope that 2009 will prove to be an enjoyable and peaceful year. I look forward to seeing many of you at next year's reunion.

Michael Simmons  
President

## ***XV(R) SQN SQN CDR'S REPORT 2008***

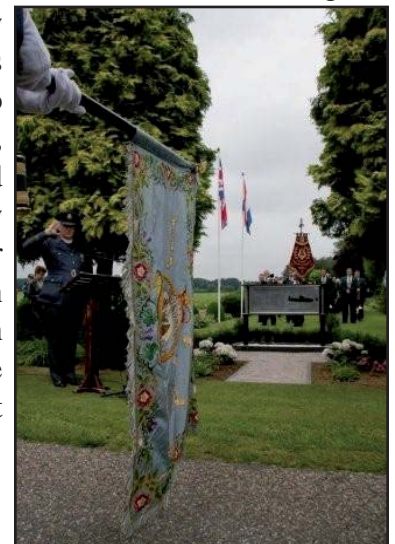
As I offer you this update on the current and future exploits of XV(R) Squadron, I cannot believe that I am also already entering my last year of tenure as the Officer Commanding; my replacement will be Wg Cdr Brian 'Sumo' James (with effect from 19th September 09). Following on from my comments in the last newsletter I can report that there has been no let up in the intensity of our efforts in supporting the whole of the Tornado GR4 Force in its undertaking of operations over Iraq and soon to be, as of April 09, flying from the base at Kandahar in operations over Afghanistan.

Throughout this past year, once again many Squadron personnel have been deployed for up to 4-months away from their families on operations in Iraq in support of Operation TELIC, Afghanistan on Operation HERRICK, or in the Falklands. For those personnel stationed within Iraq or Afghanistan they have continued to face the direct threat posed by rocket attacks and I remain extremely impressed with the pure courage that they have displayed under such pressure. As for the aircrew, the next challenge for some will be conducting operations over Afghanistan, with the Tornado GR4 due to replace the Harrier GR7/9s that have been operating from Kandahar Air Base for the past 4 yrs. From the outset, at least one crew from XV(R) Squadron will be joining No 12(B) Squadron on the first deployment in April 09. The sorties flown over Afghanistan will almost certainly require extensive use of close air support missions in order to provide life saving cover to our troops on the ground and we will be required to employ strafe gunnery and precision bombing against the Taliban fighters. In these busy times, all the students that graduate from XV(R) Squadron over the coming months and years will almost certainly be required to deploy very quickly on these demanding operations themselves; this commitment thus places a heavy reliance on the continued high quality of instruction that we provide to them during their time here on XV(R) Squadron.

To that end, here at RAF Lossiemouth we remain totally focused on delivering the best possible level of instruction and development for the trainee Tornado GR4 pilots and weapons system operators (navigators!!!) who subsequently are posted onto one of the seven front-line Tornado GR4 squadrons. Each year the students coming through our doors seem

to get younger (as do the instructors!!), yet they all continue to impress me with their sheer enthusiasm and the effort they all put in to graduate from this demanding part of their flying training. As they leave XV(R) Squadron they are certainly excited about the challenges that lie ahead for them and they are, to a man and woman, keen to deploy on operations and thus put all their good training into practice. Once again I must also congratulate all the personnel on XV(R) Squadron for their sterling efforts in providing the commendable level of instruction, engineering performance and administration required to achieve our task. Significant challenges are placed on the Armed Forces today and on the Tornado Force in particular, as there have been for many years; that said, I believe that morale on XV(R) Squadron is still at a good level, though I would never take this for granted and it remains a key focus of mine. The pressures placed on our people have not relented, both at home and on operations and we continue to ask a lot of them, with sometimes little offered in return; the fact that they continue to deliver such a strong and convincing performance deserves our strongest praise.

In honouring our past history, this year we once again respectfully paraded the XV(R) Squadron Standard at Odense (Denmark), Gellik (Belgium), Vraux (France) and also this year in Meerlo (Holland). I am consistently impressed with the very warm greetings that we receive each year from our splendid hosts and I am humbled by the absolute regard that our friends hold for XV(R) Squadron. This year in particular, I must mention that the unveiling of the new XV Squadron memorial in Meerlo, Holland, dedicated to our fallen comrades and with the sole survivor Jack Trend in attendance was an absolutely marvellous occasion; though my poor efforts to ride on one of the Airborne Brigades small scooters, in my No1 Uniform, was definitely a sight to behold. In addition, the Squadron Standard was also proudly paraded in front of Her Majesty The Queen at the RAF's 90th Anniversary parade and celebrations at RAF Fairford.





Duke of York here at RAF Lossiemouth on Wednesday 10th December. This parade will be undertaken alongside No 14 Squadron, who are also receiving their new Standard. Prior to this parade, I will be taking a small party, including our Station Commander Group Captain Al Monkman, across to Gellick in Belgium in order to lay up the old XV(R) Squadron Standard

More recently, it was again my privilege to preside over an All-Ranks Dining-In Night on the Squadron; with over 200 personnel in attendance, I was delighted to be able to present several members of the Squadron with their well-deserved operational medals, presented against the backdrop of the Squadron Standard, four Tornado GR4s and all those at the Dinner who looked resplendent in their uniforms and black bow ties. The spirit displayed amongst Airmen and Officers throughout the evening was marvellous and, once they had endured my short speech on the impressive history of the Squadron, further 'short-term history' was made in the bar, including setting off the fire-alarm; all those who attended had a great night. The following day, with hangovers to nurse, we held the annual Sean Casabayo Golf Challenge between the ground crew and the aircrew; Sean (and Dickie Wright) unfortunately lost their lives whilst flying on the Qualified Weapons Course several years ago and it is in his memory that we hold this event; this year the ground crew emerged as the winners. Earlier this year in March I was also delighted to welcome our Association Chairman Air Cdre David Bywater and Shelagh as guests at our Officers' Squadron Dining-In Night in the Officers' Mess here at RAF Lossiemouth. In addition, more recently Martyn Ford-Jones, our indomitable Squadron Historian, also spent a couple of days on the Squadron. We are always more than pleased to host any visits by the Association and I trust both David and Martyn found the Squadron in good spirits and enjoyed their visits. As I have mentioned before, it is important that we continue to take every opportunity to raise the profile of the XV(R) Squadron Association amongst the current Squadron members, and I therefore offer an open invite to you all to pop into the Squadron if you are in the vicinity.

Finally, I wish to mention our next major event on the Squadron, namely the presentation of a new Squadron Standard by His Royal Highness, the

in the church there on Sunday 23rd November. Given our very close ties with Gellick I hope you agree with me that this is a most fitting place for the old Standard to reside; I know the people of Gellick are extremely honoured that we have chosen this location. Following on from these two events, I would very much hope to be able to parade the new Squadron Standard at the Association Dinner at RAF Cottesmore next year.

In closing I wish to offer my own personal thanks to our out-going Association Secretary, Flt Lt Mark 'Frankie' Vaughan. Frankie did a great job during his tenure and I for one thoroughly enjoyed the Association Dinner at Brampton; I must thank him for pulling together the splendid briefing that he gave to us prior to the dinner on recent XV(R) Squadron and Tornado GR4 Force operations. Equally, a big thank you must also go to our out-going Treasurer Sqn Ldr Chris 'Snakey' Snaith; keeping the Association accounts in credit is no mean feat. Both the in-coming Association Secretary and Treasurer have hard acts to follow, but I'm sure they're both up for the challenge.

It now just remains for me to offer all XV(R) Squadron Association Members and your families a very Merry Christmas, a Happy New Year and good health. As ever, the Squadron is looking forward to celebrating Christmas amongst their close family and relatives, and we end the year in good spirits. We are looking forward to the challenges that next year will undoubtedly bring; **Aim Sure** in all that you do, and warmest regards from the current members of XV(R) Squadron.

Mike Saunders  
**Officer Commanding  
 No. XV(R) Squadron**

## **ANNUAL REUNION DINNER**

The next Association Reunion Dinner will be held at the RAF Cottesmore Officers' Mess on Friday 5 June 2009. We are in the process of costing the dinner at the moment and will endeavour to keep costs down as much as possible. At present there is no shortage of accommodation in the Officers' Mess as we have block-booked all spare rooms for the night, at a very favourable rate. These reunions have always proven to be popular and enjoyable occasions in the past, and it goes without saying that the more people that attend, the cheaper and livelier the evening will be. If you would like to attend or just get some more details don't hesitate to contact the Association Secretary, Flt Lt Mark Allan.

## **XV SQUADRON ASSOCIATION WEBSITE**

Those of you out there who have access to the internet may be interested to know that the XV Squadron Association has a new official website. It was kindly started up by Frankie Vaughan over the summer, but with his recent departure to Saudi the role of website manager has been taken over by Dom Parmee, the Graphics Officer on XV Squadron. The website is in a state of development at the moment with only limited content, but we intend to include information such as contacts, news, updates on the reunion dinner, membership details, an historical section for each of the different eras, a photo gallery and any articles of interest. The website address is:

[www.xvsqnassociation.co.uk](http://www.xvsqnassociation.co.uk)

Please have a browse and let us know how we can improve the site. It is for your benefit after all.

## **PROMOTIONS AND APPOINTMENTS**

The XV Sqn Association would like to congratulate the following members:

### ***Acting Air Cdre Simon Dobb***

Promoted to Air Commodore and takes up the appointment of Assistant Chief of Staff J3, Joint Force Command Brunssum, in December 2008.

### ***Gp Capt Bill Gibson***

Took up the appointment of Station Commander at RAF Leeming in July 2008.

## **ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP**

### ***Stan Franks***

The Association is very pleased to welcome our newest member, Stan Franks. Stan served on XV Squadron from 1944-1945, as a Flight Engineer on Lancasters. He flew a complete tour of 30 operational sorties, all with the same pilot, Flying Officer N Burns. He is thought to be the youngest member of XV Squadron to have completed a tour of operations, at the age of 19 years and 10 months. Following the war Stan served in various parts of India, including Bombay, Calcutta and New Delhi.

### ***Full Membership***

Although the XV Sqn Association has a healthy membership of around 280 the Committee is always keen to encourage new members and currently offers lifetime membership for a one time fee of just £15. Please spread the word and if you know of any past or present XV Sqn members who would be interested in joining the Association please don't hesitate to contact the Secretary for details.

### ***Associate Membership***

The Committee continues to offer associate membership to close relatives of former members of XV Sqn, such as partners or children and also to individuals who provided a strong supporting role to the Sqn, such as Army GLOs. Anyone interested in becoming an Associate Member of the XV Sqn Association is also encouraged to contact the Secretary for details.

### ***Change of Address***

While I would like to think that our membership database is up to date, I know that some of you may have received this newsletter in a roundabout fashion after some re-direction. If this is the case, I would be grateful if you could complete the enclosed change of address form and return it to the Secretary. Additionally, if you are aware of any fellow association members that have moved on, their new address details would also be appreciated.

## **ASSOCIATION TREASURER**

After taking over from Sqn Ldr Chris Snaith, and a short tenure as Treasurer this summer, Flt Lt Paul Richley has recently moved on and unfortunately retired from the post. Since then Mrs Valerie Ford-Jones has kindly volunteered to be the Treasurer for the foreseeable future, which will provide some long-term continuity in the post. Our thanks go to her for taking this on.

## ***XV(R) SQN MEMORIAL EVENTS - 2008***

For those who weren't able to attend, we've included below some photos of this year's Sqn Memorial Events.



**Wreath laying at Odense, Denmark, in May**



**The new memorial being unveiled in Meerlo, Netherlands, in June**



**Wreath laying at Gellik, Belgium, in May**



**The Squadron Standard paraded at Vraux, France, in July**

### **FORTHCOMING XV(R) SQN MEMORIAL EVENTS IN 2009**

Although the dates for the 2009 events have yet to be confirmed, we expect them to take place on approximately the same weekends as this year, as follows:

- Odense:** 5 May
- Gellik:** 9-10 May
- Meerlo:** 6-7 June
- Vraux:** 14 July

As more accurate details come to hand, we'll post them on the website, otherwise contact the Secretary.

# THE WESTERN FRONT

## A Pilgrimage Tour



As soon as I read the itinerary for the trip to the battlefields around Ypres, Arras and the Somme, which had been organised by the R.A.F. Club, I decided it would be of special interest to me and immediately sent off the booking form.

Given the early departure time from 128 Piccadilly I, along with all my other fellow travellers, spent the previous night at the

Club. I awoke around 4.00 a.m., but knowing it was too early to get up I rested a while longer. The next time I looked at the bedside clock it was 5.30 a.m.! It is amazing, even at that time of the morning, how quickly one can get out of bed and accomplish all that one has to do with just 30 minutes to go to the allotted departure time.

Feeling hot and flustered, I nonchalantly walked out of the lift at ground floor level and made my way towards the assembled party waiting to board the coach, hoping that nobody would be aware of the hectic pace I had endured, prior to leaving my room.

As the coach meandered its way through the streets of central and south London, I was able to relax and regain my full composure. The streets of London gave way to the countryside of Kent and ultimately the port of Dover, where we boarded the ferry to Calais. Swingate Down, an airfield close to Dover, was the aerodrome from which No.15 took-off in 1915, having being posted to France. The ferry crossing for the group was uneventful, except for the partaking of a hearty breakfast during the crossing, which set us up for the rest of the day.

The guide on the trip was Mike O'Connor, the aviation author, writer and ex-Concorde pilot, who made the whole tour come alive. For the first two days of the visit, Mike showed us around the former airfield sites occupied by the Royal Flying Corps, in the Ypres area, and the cemeteries where the casualties were laid to rest, including the German Cemetery at Langemarck.

We also visited Passchendaele Ridge and Tyne Cot Cemetery, the latter being where the remains of Captain V.H.N. Wadham are interred. Vivian Wadham, a pilot, was the first member of No.15 Squadron, Royal Flying Corps, to be killed in action. Prior to undertaking the trip, I had contacted Mike O'Connor to explain that I would like to place a wreath on Wadham's grave. I also contacted Wing Commander Mike Saunders to ask his permission to undertake the task on behalf of No.XV ( R ) Squadron. The Squadron Boss gave his full backing, which in turn led to Mike O'Connor revising that part of the itinerary. Back at Tyne Cot, as we approached the cemetery, Mike gave the group a synopsis of the events that led to the death of Captain Wadham, I, with due respect, placed the wreath against the headstone. Following the wreath laying, one of my fellow travellers introduced himself as Brian Murphy, an ex-member of No.XV Squadron from the Laarbruch days, when the squadron flew Buccaneer aircraft. Having made a number of visits to Laarbruch back in the 1980's, Brian and I were able to chat about some of the mutual characters we knew from those days.

On the third day of our visit we moved on to Arras, again, viewing former RFC airfield sites and cemeteries en-route. We made a stop at the German Cemetery at Annoeollin, where the remains of Captain Albert Ball, VC, are buried, before moving on to Vimy Ridge and the site of the huge Canadian Memorial.

The fourth day saw us viewing sites on the Somme including the Lochnager crater, the Thiepval Memorial and the crash site of Freiherr Manfred von Richthofen's Fokker Triplane. Richthofen, who is known to have shot down 80 Allied aircraft during the First World War, claimed a No.15 Squadron aircraft as his 70th victim on 26th March 1918. Later in the day, we visited the RFC/RNAS/RAF Flying Services Memorial To The Missing, in the Faubourg (Arras) Cemetery. This cemetery, like Tyne Cot Cemetery, was of special significance to me due to the fact that the names of ten members of No.15 Squadron RFC/RAF are recorded on the memorial. After a wreath had been placed at the foot of the memorial, we stood in silent tribute to all those whose name are recorded thereon.

The final day of the tour saw us heading back towards the Channel Coast, taking in visits to Longuenesse Cemetery, in which RAF casualties of both World Wars are buried, and the former airfield site of St.Omer. The latter location also held special significance, as on 13th

December 1915, No.15 Squadron, RFC, was ordered to prepare for a move to France. Ten days later, on 23rd December, ten BE.2c's from the Squadron left England and headed for St.Omer. The groundcrews, support equipment and transport arrived three days later. On 5th January 1916, the Squadron moved again, this time to its first war station at Droglandt.

A memorial, commemorating the site as a former RFC Airfield, has been erected, set back off the road, near to the airfield entrance. It was on this memorial that the final wreath was laid, again, in memory of all those who served and perished there.

Martyn Ford-Jones  
**XV Sqn Historian**

## ***WE REMEMBER THEM***

It is with great sadness that since the last issue of the newsletter in December 2007, we have learnt of the passing of the following members of the Association:

### ***Evan Thomas Jones, DFC – Bomb Aimer***

Pilot Officer Evan Thomas Jones, on completion of his training at No.1657 Conversion Unit, Stradishall, as a bomb aimer, was posted along with his pilot and crew to No.620 Squadron, which flew Stirling bombers and was based at Chedburgh. Unfortunately, the crew's pilot was shot down and killed whilst flying a 'second dicky' trip, during an attack against Mannheim. The crew, having lost its pilot, was returned to No.1657 Conversion Unit, where it formed up with a new pilot by the name of Flight Sergeant Alan Amies. Evan was promoted to Flying Officer, on 2nd September 1943.

On 4th November, the crew was posted to No.XV Squadron, at RAF Mildenhall. Within a few days of their arrival, they were told the squadron was converting to Lancaster bombers and they were to be attached to the Lancaster Finishing School, at Feltwell. They were one of the first crews on No.XV to complete the conversion.

The first of Evan's 31 operational sorties took place on the night of 14th January 1944, when he and the crew attacked Brunswick. Evan flew a total of 13 missions with Alan Amies, before the latter was killed, flying as screen pilot with a 'sprog' crew, on the night of 11th May 1944. By the time of his death, Alan Amies had risen from Flight Sergeant to Flight Lieutenant

and he and his crew were known as 'Amies Angels'.

Evan re-crewed with Flight Lieutenant Oliver Brooks, DFC, a highly respected and experienced pilot on 'B' Fight, No.XV Squadron, with whom he completed his tour of operations. Evan was posted from No.XV Squadron, to No.1653 Conversion Unit, on 13th September 1944. He was granted the award of Distinguished Flying Cross on 8th December 1944.

### ***Gerald (Gerry) Musgrove DFC – Bomb Aimer***

Gerry Musgrove was born in Calgary, Canada. Prior to enlisting for service with the Royal Canadian Air Force, on 30 January 1940, he had served as a member of the Royal Canadian Corp of Signals. On being accepted by the RCAF, Gerry was posted to various training units in Canada, including No.2 Wireless School and No.2 Bombing and Gunnery School. Having qualified as a bomb aimer Gerry was sent to England where he was posted to No.XV Squadron, equipped with Stirling bombers, during June 1942. Due to being injured in an aircraft accident in July, Gerry was hospitalised and off flying duties for some time. Records indicate that his first operational flight, a maximum effort attack against Wilhelmshaven, was carried out on 19 February 1943; his pilot on this raid being Sergeant C. Arkinstall.

On 3 June 1943 Gerry was granted a commission in the rank of Pilot Officer. He was later promoted to the rank of Flying Officer. Along with the other members of aircrew serving with No.XV Squadron, Gerry converted to Lancaster Bombers between December 1943 and January 1944. On 8 June 1944, whilst flying with Squadron Leader Lamason, their aircraft was shot down over France. Gerry evaded capture and managed to return to the squadron. On completion of his tour Gerry returned to his homeland.

Having been recommended for the award of Distinguished Flying Cross on 21 August 1944, the presentation of the decoration was made by the Governor General at Government House, Toronto, Canada on 12 June 1953. Gerry completed a total of 31 operational missions and amassed a total of 152 hours and 55 minutes operational flying time.

Although Gerry passed away in January 2007, news of his passing has only just reached the Association. It is with somewhat belated condolences to his family and friends that we honour his memory.

## *Keith Aspinall*

Although Keith Aspinall was not a member of XV Squadron Association, he had connections with the Squadron through the Mildenhall Register, with whom he visited R.A.F. Laarbruch, West Germany, on a couple of occasions.

Keith was a civil engineer by profession and held a top position in the Kent County Council's Highways Department. However, it was his ability with an artist's brush rather than a slide rule, which was to become his claim to fame. Keith's interest in art was kindled by a colleague with whom he worked. Taking the usual route of still life and then live models, Keith began to expand his repertoire and encompassed aircraft and aviation scenes.

During the mid 1980's, Keith attended a Mildenhall Register Reunion, where he met and became friends with a number of XV Squadron wartime bomber air and groundcrews. The friendships grew, as did Keith's interest in the aircraft they flew. Soon, some of those friends were commissioning paintings from Keith for display in their respective homes. Keith, who by now had joined the Mildenhall Register in his own right, also donated some of his work as prizes to raise funds for the Register funds.

On Sunday, 20th May 1990, during a weekend visit to No.XV Squadron, at R.A.F. Laarbruch, Keith presented an original artwork, depicting Tornado ZA549, adorned with 75th anniversary markings on its tail fin, to Wing Commander John Broadbent. The painting still hangs in the Squadron's Headquarters at R.A.F. Lossiemouth.

Over the years, much of Keith's work became available as prints, which were eagerly sought after. In 1999, he was commissioned to provide an artwork for the dust-jacket to the book, Oxford's Own – Men and Machines of No.15/XV Squadron RFC/RAF. In recent years, although stricken by a serious illness, which resulted in the loss of an eye, Keith continued to paint. He did not let his disability deter him from meeting people or his love of painting. He bore the pain and discomfort with great dignity and courage. Many people, both in the aviation art world and/or with No.XV Squadron connections were saddened and shocked to hear of Keith's passing on Friday, 11th April 2008.

## *Kenneth (Ken) James* – Flight Engineer

Ken James volunteered for service with the RAF three days after the declaration of war. Between his leaving school, at the age of sixteen, and signing up, he had studied engineering under the auspices of His Majesty's Civil Service. This experience stood Ken in good stead during his initial training with the RAF, especially the extra two shillings and sixpence he said was added to his (then) pay packet. Having completed his square-bashing at RAF Padgate, Ken was posted to No.3 School of Technical Training, where he got to know all about aircraft engines and the cockpit drills that went with them. The training also included learning how to swing the propellers of light aircraft! The former training was run by civilian instructors, whilst the propeller swinging instruction was given by senior NCO's and, in Ken's words, "Nobody got the chop whilst I was there".

For reasons Ken could never remember, around April/May 1940, he was posted to No.4 Initial Training Wing, at Squires Gate (Blackpool), for a very quick air-gunnery course. This found Ken flying over the Irish Sea in Blenheim Mk.1's shooting at trailed drogues. Equally quickly, Ken received another posting, as an engine fitter, to No.XV Squadron, based at RAF Wyton, equipped with Blenheim bombers. Eventually, the Blenheim aircraft were replaced with Wellington bombers and later Stirling bombers. During this same period, Ken had re-mustered to the aircrew position of flight engineer, where his extensive knowledge of engines was put to good use during operations over enemy occupied territory.

On completion of his tour with No.XV Squadron, Ken was posted to No.32 Operational Training Unit, Vancouver Island, Canada, where he instructed those straight from flying school. Apart from the theoretical studies undertaken in the classroom, there was the practical instruction, which was given in the air. For the latter, battle weary aircraft such as Handley Page Hampdens were used! Another part of Ken's duties at this time was to accompany pilots on air tests following repair or overhaul of a particular aircraft, making pertinent notes etc. In this task alone, he was to accumulate an approximate total of 1200 flying hours!

On posting back to England, Ken was sent to a fighter squadron based at RAF Manston, where both he and the Squadron CO agreed that he (Ken) would not be much use in a single-engined aircraft. A revised



posting was soon received to No.295 Squadron for a short while before being re-directed to No.242 Squadron, based at Stoney Cross, Hampshire. The latter posting pleased Ken as it would see him back as a flight engineer on Stirling aircraft, although on this occasion as part of RAF Transport Command. A year or two earlier, during the month of August 1941 Ken, whilst picking mushrooms near Wyton, saw a vision in the form of a tall, elegant, beautiful young lady named Margot. They met that night and again the following day. The friendship blossomed and shortly after his posting to No.242, Ken and Margot got married.

Although Ken received a posting to a Liberator Squadron in the Far East, this was rescinded when the Japanese surrendered in August 1945. Being a relatively newly married man, Ken was relieved to say the least. With the radial engines of which Ken had a vast knowledge giving way to the new in-line power plants, Ken was posted to RAF Henlow for a course on what made the new Rolls Royce engines 'tick'. After a day or two of doing nothing, Ken was informed by the Wing Commander that he was on the demobilization list, but added that Ken's name was on the retaining list and, by dropping a rank, he could stay on in the post war air force. Having thought about the situation, Ken chose to decline the offer and left the RAF.

Having served for virtually the whole war period, both as ground and aircrew, been commissioned and attained the rank of Flying Officer, Ken was justifiably proud of his service with the RAF. He was awarded the 1939-45 Star, Aircrew Europe Star with France and Germany clasp, War Medal and Defence Medal. During March 2007, Ken was the recipient of the 'Thank you Liberators' Commemoration Medal and Certificate from the people of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Having known him for nearly thirty years, I can confirm Ken, who passed away on Thursday, 17th April 2008, was a staunch supporter of both the XV Squadron Association and the Mildenhall Register.

Martyn Ford-Jones  
**XV Sqn Historian**

## ***FINAL NOTES***

Firstly, I would like to say how pleased I am to be taking on the post of Secretary and getting involved in this latest edition of the Annual Newsletter; I hope you have enjoyed reading it. My thanks go to those that have contributed, especially Martyn Ford-Jones for his continued support with all the historical input. We are always looking for interesting and relevant articles to put in the newsletter, so if anyone would like to contribute next year then please let me know.

Although we haven't yet finalised the timing and costs for the annual dinner, please feel free to contact me and note an interest. I will then let people know as soon as arrangements are confirmed; please also keep a lookout for updates on the new website. I hope you are able to join us next June.

As my thoughts drift towards packing my bags for Christmas in New Zealand, it just remains for me to wish you and your families the very best for Christmas and the New Year. Fly safe and Aim Sure!

Mark Allan  
**Secretary**

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