



# HEREWARD

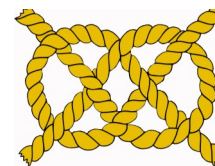
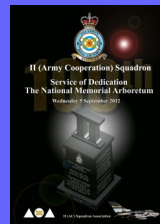
*The Newsletter of*  
**No. II (Army Cooperation) Squadron Association**

**II (AC) Sqn  
Association**

October 2012

Issue 24

**No. II (Army Cooperation) Squadron  
Royal Air Force  
Memorial Dedication Service  
5th September 2012**



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*"A Gentleman is somebody  
who can play the bagpipes  
but chooses not to"*

Anon





## Squadron Memorial Dedication 5th September 2012

As the oldest of the RAF's flying Squadrons, this year has been particularly significant for Shiny Two, with a number of events taking place to commemorate the Centenary, these culminating in the placing of the Memorial in the National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas, Staffordshire.

It was therefore on a warm and sunny day that members of the Association and II (AC) Sqn rear party, gathered together at the National Memorial Arboretum, to witness the unveiling and Dedication of the Memorial to those who have both served with and fallen while serving with the Sqn, since its formation on the 13th May 1912.



The service of Dedication was conducted by AVM, The Venerable Ray Pentland, the RAF Chaplain in Chief, with the unveiling of the Memorial being done by the President, ACM The Lord Stirrup, who as many Association members will know commanded the Squadron while it was based in Germany in the 1980s. A reading was given by ACM Sir Sandy Wilson, also an ex Sqn Boss from the days when it was equipped with the Jaguar.

ACM Phil Sturley, another of the ex Sqn Bosses was in also in attendance, together with a large number from the Association, including those who had been instrumental in designing the Memorial and raising the necessary funds, for which grateful thanks go out to all of the personal donors and to the Sqn's industrial partners who provided some large contributions, without which this would not have been possible.

The service started with a flypast of a Spitfire PRXIX, from the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight, a photo reconnaissance variant of the iconic aircraft, which actually flew with the Sqn shortly after the end of WWII, while it was based at Wunsdorf in Germany at the start of what we now refer to as the 'Cold War'. The service was very fittingly concluded with a flypast of the II (AC) Squadron Tornado in the Centenary paint design.



Major Gary Walker, who until recently served with the Squadron as its Ground Liaison Officer and who had been working on the project for sometime, said that "the day was a fantastic success and after three years of design, planning and fund raising it was an honour to be able to witness the unveiling of such a significant Memorial to the longest serving of the RAF's front line Squadrons".

He added, "the unveiling was made all the more poignant in the knowledge, that 'Shiny Two', which was currently serving on operations in Afghanistan, was also conducting a service of Thanks-giving at the same time, albeit in far more austere circumstances than those that we were able to enjoy, in the magnificent setting of the National Memorial Arboretum".

For those who wish to visit the NMA to see the Memorial or wish to find out more about this fantastic site, full details can be found at: <http://www.thenma.org.uk/>





## Centenary Weekend Photographs





## II (ARMY COOPERATION) SQUADRON

UPDATE - SEP 2012



As I write this in the searing heat of Afghanistan, I am conscious that some of you in the UK are yet to have an Indian summer before the autumn leaves begin to fall.

For many on the Squadron, this will be the third summer without rain and more significantly the third away from families and loved ones. You will not be surprised to hear however their spirits are not dampened and that their professionalism remains as positive now as ever.

The stories from Afghanistan will no doubt follow after the tour has finished and it would be remiss of me now to spoil the opportunities for others to recount many of them on their return to the UK. I will however just mention one activity that is close to many in theatre, with a positive impact on home life. The Engineers have set up a charity challenge to honour the distance travelled back in 1913 when II(AC) Squadron deployed their aircraft from Farnborough to Montrose. The instigator (Cpl Zenko) has calculated a 'round robin' distance of 1,074km and has thrown the gauntlet down to compete 107,400km by any self propulsion means in the Gymnasium. This requires at least 100 individuals within the Squadron to complete 1,074km each and already there are a number who have amazingly surpassed the total with many more close to doing so. As everything within II(AC) Squadron, the spirit to support 'Scotty's little soldiers' a worthwhile charity within the local area around RAF Marham, is second to none.

Others within the confines of Kandahar are completing the time-honoured Operations known to many as 'Bronze' whilst the sun still remains firmly in the sky and 'Massive' just in time to celebrate Christmas with room to spare in current clothing! Both are worthwhile to maintain the morale of those taking part and the only thing that concerns me is the few who have chosen to undertake Operation Turkey, but that is a story for the bar.

The picture accompanying this article is particularly poignant in this our hundredth year. It depicts the Kandahar II(AC) Squadron memorial and myself with the Padre after our Squadron and Expeditionary Wing service on 5 September 12. We planned the time of day to match that of the unveiling of the Memorial at the National Arboretum. An unplanned impromptu fly past from numerous aircraft marked the minute's silence with almost perfect timing. Although the latter was not planned it was a fitting moment to reflect on the past, the present and the future.

I intend to update the association once more during our time in Kandahar with a view to summing up the tour and the events of the year.

Until then, remember that the best wishes of the Squadron go with you wherever you are and whatever you do. If you feel like sharing experiences past and present with the wider Squadron family, then please pass them to Clive Brooks or Gary Walker for inclusion on the website or Association magazine.



Best wishes,

The Boss.







## Newsletter Editor Visits Normandy



On a recent trip to Normandy I decided to pay a visit to St Rigomer des Bois, to see the crash site of Lt William (Bill) Black's Mustang II and to visit the memorial to Bill in this small Norman town.

I was met on arrival by Dominique Cosmao, who together with his friend Paul, have been instrumental in, not only investigating the site, which lies within the Perseigne Forest but also the background to the story of Bill Black's final low level reconnaissance sortie over France, not long after D Day in Jun 1944. However, before going to St Rigomer we called in to the museum on Mont Ormel, this being the site where the Poles held out so magnificently during August 1944 on the northern flank of what we all now know to be the Falaise Pocket. The Museum is dedicated to the fighting in the area at that time and graphically describes the final days of the German Army in Normandy as the Allied Armies closed in on them from the North and South while the Typhoons of the 2nd TAF wrecked so much havoc on the trapped German forces in the pocket. The site has excellent panoramic views of the area where so much destruction took place and is recommended to anybody touring the area with an interest in the part of the fighting in Normandy.

Moving on, we eventually reached the heavily forested National Park where Bill's Mustang crashed during those eventful days in 1944. Interest in investigating the site came from local stories of the event and of German activity in the area, which it was rumored, was a major ammunition and fuel storage site for V weapons.

The search for the crash site itself had commenced under the direction of a local who, being a child at the time, had seen

smoke rising following the crash and with a wave of the hand had pointed to the rough area in the forest that he now thought it had come from. Three months of intense searching later and small remnants of the aircraft were found! It appeared that, as the aircraft was at low level and had crashed into forest with the trees breaking the fall, much of the debris had been scattered on the surface rather than being buried.

Flt Lt Black's body was recovered by the Germans at the time and is now buried in the CWGC Cemetery in Le Mans. Although most of the larger parts of the aircraft were also recovered at the time for scrap, much still remained and after a lot of painstaking searching a large amount of the aircraft found, sufficient to enable identification of the actual airframe and thus its history together with details of its fateful final flight.

Much of the effort in identifying the various parts was done by Dominique who obtained copies of the original Mustang engineering manuals enabling him to trace part numbers while serial number plates also allowed identification of the actual aircraft. Indeed his garage was taken over as a mini air crash investigations centre and is now packed with all the items recovered, most of which have been cleaned and are all carefully documented. Some items are still to be looked at and despite the fire which engulfed the aircraft when it crashed, a certain amount of live 0.5 inch ammunition was recovered! In addition, some of the spent shell cases had been struck, indicating they had perhaps come from test firing of the weapons, as there was no log of any offensive activity taken by either Bill or his wingman.

A visit was also made to see the memorial, in the company of the Town Mayor.

That the town had gone to so much effort to investigate and commemorate the tragic death of Flt Lt William Black RCAF, then serving with No. II (AC) Sqn, is testament to the grateful thanks that the French people have for the individual sacrifice made by so many in the cause of freedom.





## Assistance Required

Classic Aircraft magazine is about to start a series on Squadrons celebrating or about to celebrate their Centenary.

The emphasis of the article will be the post WWII Cold War period and they would especially like to hear from any pilots who served with the Sqn during this period.

In addition they would like to hear from anybody from that period who may have photographs that could be used.

The point of contact at the magazine is Ben Dunnell who can be contacted at: [ben.dunnell@keypublishing.com](mailto:ben.dunnell@keypublishing.com)

## What Next?

With the Sqn Centenary celebrations having occupied the time of the Committee for a considerable period, our thoughts are now turning towards how we can continue to gather and enjoy the company of our old Sqn friends in the future.



One suggestion is for us to arrange, on an annual basis, a black tie reunion dinner with guest speaker, to be held each year in a different region of the country, thereby enabling a fair spread and variety of locations for Association members to get to.

Hotels would be sought offering both reasonably priced dinner and accommodation.

Moving on, another suggestion has been for us to organise what are commonly known as Battlefield Tours, visiting different sites of historic interest both within the UK and abroad, again on an annual basis.

These are, however, but two ideas and the Committee would be pleased to hear from any member with any other suggestions for future gatherings of the Membership.



## Squadron Watches

A number of enquiries have been received from those who ordered the limited edition Sqn watches during the Anniversary weekend.

I am pleased to announce that although there had been some delay in getting approval from MOD for the face design but this has now agreed and the watches should soon be with the Sqn for mailing on to the recipients



## Squadron Ties

Sqn ties are available in blue and in red, priced at £17.50 each inclusive of postage and packing. Applications via the Association Treasurer. Contact details can be found on Page 6.

## Back Copies

Back copies of "Hereward" are available from the Editor whose contact details can be found on Page 6.

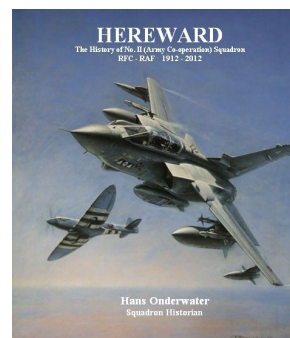
## SHINY TWO WEBSITE

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

*The Association Website is well worth a look and the Webmaster is always looking for interesting items and articles to add to those already published. Please do contact Clive if you have anything you wish to add.*

## II(AC) Squadron History

### Third Edition



It is hoped to launch the new Squadron History in February 2013, when pre-orders can be taken.

The price is expected to be about £15 + p&p.



## Hereward

**Do you have an article that you would like to see in the next Edition of Hereward?**

**Please contact the Editor with the details**



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