

ME846 Family

Spring Newsletter 2022– Vol.13



*** Please see the bottom of page 4 for crew details*

Greetings,

Spring 2022 is here and Marjan and I want to share warm wishes to friends, family of 619 Squadron and the many crews that served. Around ANZAC Day April 25 it is a time of reflection and it's so important to understand the sacrifice so many made. Not just 619 Squadron but all the Squadrons and those who served and continue to serve. We thank them for their sacrifice. We hope this Newsletter will also shed light on those who are keeping memories alive.

Newark Air Museum is one such place and we are so grateful to Howard Heeley for keeping so much aviation history together from all over the world and for his commitment to remember the Squadrons that trained at RAF Winthorpe.

As the years pass so do members of our precious family – On February 9th Chris Cardose's father died. Chris's uncle Dennis Belshaw served with ME846 619 squadron and his family generously opened their home and hearts to my Australian father and the young Canadian P/O John Ernest Ralph "Porky" Bowering. So strong family ties go back to those years. Chris's Mum Vera remembered those days very well and her husband John Wright became very much part of the story.

We also have exciting news about a heliograph signalling mirror that has been recovered from the ME846 crash site.

News from Belgium

Further significant finds around the ME846 crash site have been located and catalogued by Wim Govers and his colleagues from the Battle for the Locks group www.battleforthelocks.be

Some of these items are pictured below and opposite; they help to provide a wider glimpse of a catastrophic aircraft loss that some were very lucky to survive. Some items such as the zip fastener are personal items, whilst others

are more generic like hundreds of aluminium structural fragments of the Lancaster that carried beloved members of the wartime ME846 Family.



We are grateful for the efforts being imparted on our behalf to further document this incident.

Additional input arrived in early 2022 from Adrian van Zantvoort in the Netherlands, and his is another thread to our story that is continuing to develop.

Newark Air Museum Update

In autumn 2021 in the UK the volunteers and staff at Newark Air Museum were once again able to host a Service of Remembrance in the Memorial Garden on the museum's Southfield Site.



As ever the crew of ME846 and the veterans from 619 Squadron that trained at wartime RAF Winthorpe, were in everyone's thoughts on Remembrance Sunday. Reinforcing these commemorations was the Weeping Lancaster commemoration in Lancaster Corner, which despite Covid was seen by around two hundred and fifty school children that participated in education sessions at the museum, that were hosted by Howard Heeley.



Earlier in the autumn, the museum also hosted a World War II themed event and our very own Neil and Sue Webster attended the event and put on a Homefront display in the museum's second display hangar; they are pictured below.



New 619 Squadron Book

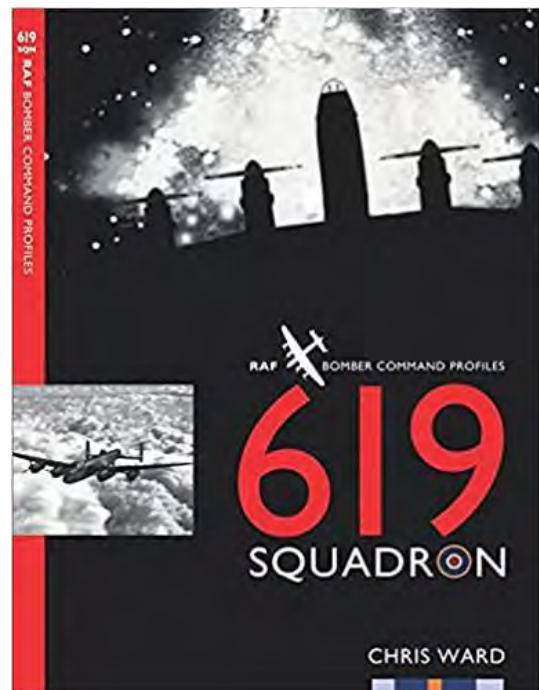
This new 619 Sqn book has been written by Chris Ward and is entitled: 619 Squadron (Bomber Command Squadron Profiles)

Here is the synopsis for the book:

619 Squadron came into existence when Bomber Command was expanding during the spring of 1943, its high number, like that of the famous 617 Squadron, reflecting the fact that it was not a reforming unit, but was brand new with no history behind it.

Like some other squadrons created within Bomber Command at this time, and later, in the autumn of 1943, it would not be awarded an authorised crest and motto during its relatively brief period of service, arriving on the operational scene as it did with just two years of conflict left.

The squadron was formed at Woodhall Spa in April 1943 under the banner of 5 Group, and it would serve as a standard "squadron of the line", beginning operations in June 1943, during the most intense weeks of the five-month-long Ruhr offensive. From that point on, the squadron took part in all the main bombing campaigns, including the devastating four-raid series against Hamburg under Operation Gomorrah at the end of July.



The squadron then participated in attacks against Italy, Peenemünde and the start of the Berlin offensive in August. Autumn saw the crippling attacks on Hannover, Mannheim and Kassel in September and

October, followed by the main Winter Offensive from November 1943 to the end of March 1944, including the sixteen further raids on Berlin.

At the start of 1944, the squadron moved to Dunholme Lodge, from where it participated in the Transportation Plan and other pre- and post-invasion campaigns, including those against oil refineries, railways and flying-bomb storage and launching sites along with tactical support for the ground forces.

The squadron played a full part in the second Ruhr offensive from October 1944, during which period the Command bludgeoned its way across Germany delivering the heaviest blows of the war against its industrial and communications systems. The squadron took up residence at Strubby towards the end of 1944 and remained there until the end of hostilities. 619 Squadron ended the war with a fine record of service, having made a telling contribution to Bomber Command's part in the ultimate victory.



“Chris Ward’s Bomber Command Squadron Profiles series continues with a comprehensively-illustrated, in-depth operational history of this fine unit.”

Publisher: Mention the War Limited (September 6, 2021)

Language: English

Paperback: 229 pages

ISBN-10: 191125586X

ISBN-13: 978-1911255864

Item Weight: 1.2 pounds

Dimensions: 8.5 x 0.52 x 11 inches

This is Jane Knox’s Amazon Review

“Chris Ward encapsulates the essence of 619 Squadron’s history, and includes comprehensive facts, figures, campaigns, battles and losses with pictures and stories of individual crews. His series is a great service to all those who over time will be searching for answers about ancestors who served in Bomber Command from many countries and will have well researched answers. Congratulations and thank you!”

New ME846 Lancaster Find

Around Christmas time we received contact about an interesting find from Belgium, that relates to ME846.

This is a damaged signalling mirror (heliograph) from the dinghy carried on ME846, which was found in the wooded area near the crash site by Dutch friends, Adrian van Zantvoort and Sjef van Dingenen. Pictured below is the artefact that will join other recovered items from ME846 that are displayed in Hangar 1 at Newark Air Museum.



The second photograph, downloaded from Wikimedia, shows an undamaged example for comparison.



For further details about Newark Air Museum please contact Howard Heeley or visit their website at www.newarkairmuseum.org <https://www.justgiving.com/newarkairmuseum/Donate> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-nottinghamshire-61277232>

Poem for John Wright – ‘Dad’

Bearpark in Durham was birth - place of dad,
Grace and John’s hearts so joyous and glad!
So close as a family, Aunts and Uncles abound,
And then baby sister Iris arrived, all safe and sound!

Dads interest in music, photography as well,
But his main love was Vera - it was not hard to tell!!
Marriage did follow in 1956,
Then in 1957 a baby girl to add to an already heady mix!

1960, a home established on Woodlands Park estate,
A hub for family and for friends -get togethers there were great!!
In ’67, ten years on, another baby girl!
Fair of face, marshmallow cheeks and cheeky auburn curls.



Trips to Seaton Sluice, evening walks we had,
Little voices calling ‘catch me catch me dad!!’
Then holidays in Scotland with a folding caravan,
Happy times with Iris cousin Geoff and Uncle Allan.

Girl’s marriages meant in laws, and extended family,
Get togethers’ and holidays, more fun as you can see,
Christmas always special, then there was Boxing Day!
With fancy dress - hilarious! Home - made skills came into play!!

And latter days his garden, time to stop and chat,
Catching up with neighbours in his sunny garden hat,
Memories we cherish of a dad much loved and lost,
Memories so precious, you cannot give a cost.

And dad a central figure of this close and loving clan,
A lovely dad, the best to be had, a very special man.

The family eulogy for John can be viewed by following this link: <https://jmp.sh/bPXDn85>

Some other interesting ME846 Web-links

Link to Story and Fate of Lancaster 1, PG-C, Registration ME846:
<https://jumpshare.com/v/L2Uz0lWuA0lJqacnteQd>

Heroines of WWII
Dimphna Sterckx – born April 24 1926
<https://jumpshare.com/v/eSgIhi2wTLekmGraPO6f>

ZosineVerstraeten Lafili – born 17th November 1902
<https://jmp.sh/S1TiWAC>

619 Squadron Association Dinner

This took place at the Petwood Hotel in Woodhall Spa in early April and below is a picture of Association stalwart Joe Dutton. Lest We Forget!



*** The crew at RAF Winthorpe, HCU in early March 1944 in front of their Short’s Stirling (left to right): F/S Peter Edmund Knox – A418433 RAAF – Bomb Aimer; Sgt Thomas. A. Newbery – 1602063 RAF – Wireless Operator; Sgt W. Dennis “Geordie” Belshaw – 1808996 RAF – Flight Engineer; P/O Mark Anthony Hamilton “Dave” Davis – 174023 RAFVR – Pilot; F/S Leslie E. J. “Tagger” Taylor – 1585057 RAF – Navigator; Sgt George Harry Moggridge – 1896779 RAFVR - Mid-Upper Gunner; P/O John Ernest Ralph “Porky” Bowering – J/88199 RCAF – Rear Gunner*

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