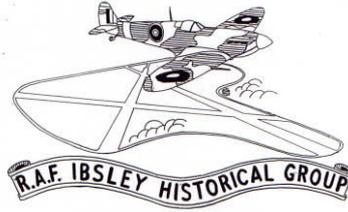


R.A.F. IBSLEY HISTORICAL GROUP

Patron: Stephen Young, Lord of Westbury and Waxham
President: Shirley Simmonds, MTC Driver, Ibsley, 1941
Vice President: Roy Chapman, R.A.F. Ibsley (Sopley) 1947

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NEWSLETTER

No. 94

January 2016

Our first event of the year will again be the

ANNUAL MEMORIAL SERVICE RINGWOOD PARISH CHURCH – SUNDAY 21st FEBRUARY, 2.30 p.m.

This year our Service will be conducted by The Revd. Dr. David Miell, Priest-in-Charge of the Parish of Ringwood, The Hyde Training Band will provide music before, during and after the Service, and standards of ex-Service organisations will be paraded.

Age is now taking its toll but we hope as many members as are able will make the effort to attend. Should there be any really severe wintry weather on the day please telephone Secretary Vera (01425 474026) after 11.00 hours when any decision as to whether the service may have to be cancelled will be made shortly before this time. We would also hope that Radio Solent may broadcast if cancellation is necessary.

Can you help please? We really do need a bit of help on the day, from about 1.45 p.m. This involves putting out tables and chairs in the Church rooms for after service refreshments, welcoming people to the church and showing some to their pews. Brenda Dow has kindly offered to help serve tea, coffee and biscuits but she really cannot do this on her own. Please ring Secretary if you can give us a hand. We hope to enlist a few cadets from the local ATC but at the time of putting this Newsletter together we do not know whether they are available.

DECEMBER 2015 GROUP MEETING

This was held at Group Secretary Vera's home. We had an interesting afternoon, as we watched a VHS video tape on the TV, an interview made for the Waccamaw Magazine, where people from South Carolina, U.S.A. remember the Second World War. Host Rod Gragg spent some time with veteran W.R. "Wally" Walling, in July 2001, as he recalled his fighting days as a pilot in England and Normandy, after D-Day and the amazing story of a young French girl, Yvette Hamill. Nibbles included mince pies, sausage or cheese rolls, pringles, biscuits and chocolates. Thanks to Wendy who served tea and coffee. A most enjoyable afternoon.

JUNIOR MEMBER MARK JONES ELECTED TO GROUP COMMITTEE

At a meeting of the Group's Committee on Thursday 14th January it was proposed, seconded and carried unanimously that 13 year old Mark, who lives in Mockbeggar, and is a pupil at Bishop Wordsworth School in Salisbury, become a member of the Committee. Mark is keen and asked if he could come to the Committee meetings with his father, Graham, who was elected at the 2015 Annual General Meeting. In October Mark brought along the file he has made on the Ibsley Motor Racing, round the perimeter track of the old airfield in the first half of the 1950's with famous names of the time, such as Mike Hawthorn and Roy Salvadori taking part, and with crowds of up to 20,000 watching. Mark's file was extremely well put together and of great interest. The Committee though are still able to co-opt two further members.

OBITUARY

WALLY WALLING, 94, ARMY FIGHTER PILOT IN -WORLD WAR II

(Excerpts from Coastal Observer (U.S.A.) Newspaper 17th September 2015)

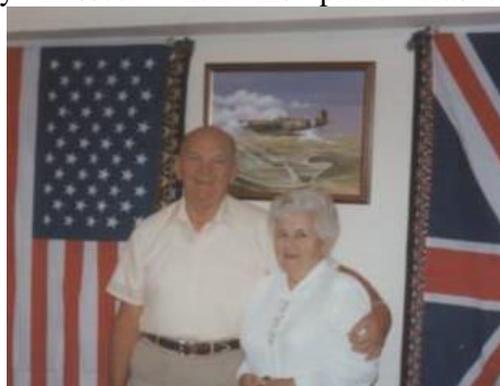
“Willis R. “Wally” Wallllng, a fighter pilot in World War II was born in Newark New Jersey, th son of Willis H. and Gladys R. Walling. He arrived in England in 1944 as a member of the 371st Fighter Group of the Ninth Air Force. They pitched tents at the site of what would become their air field (*Bisterne*) in southern England he recalled in a 2009 interview, as he prepared to represent the Air Force at a memorial to what became the first U.S and British air base. Wally flew P-47 Thunderbolts escorting bombers over Germany, flying from England and France.

In May 1944, his plane exploded after takeoff, (*from Ibsley*). Rather than bail out over a populated area, he managed a crash landing (*back at Ibsley*) and a doctor said he wouldn't fly again, but he was back in the air less than a month later, just after D-Day.

It was only 64 years later that he discovered that the fault of his crash when returning to land at Ibsley, was a faulty battery

Wally married the late Margaret “Peggy” Stager Walling, who predeceased him, in 1943 before leaving for overseas. They had met in high school. He is survived by three daughters, Susan, Jeanne and Diane, eight grandchildren and 12 great children.”

On one of several visits Wally and Peggy made to England the Group's Committee, in 1994, surprised them with a dinner at the ‘As You Like It’, which during the War was the R.A.F. Ibsley Station Hospital and Dentistry, and was where Wally was treated following his crash. They came again in the Summer of 1997, when we launched the first edition of “So Much Sadness, So Much Fun”, and Wally was filmed by local TV at Heather Cottage, Rockford. Here they met the owners, Mr. and Mrs. Sears of the house he so narrowly missed when his plane crashed. On their next visit to England Wally unveiled jointly with Major Mills of Bisterne, a Wall Plaque to the Advanced Landing Ground at Brixkeys Farm, Bisterne, which was Headquarters of the 371st Fighter Group. The Group transferred to Ibsley for a number of days, on two occasions, when their Somerfield tracking airstrip was too wet for the heavy P47s to take-off and land. Wally's final visit was in 2009 when he jointly with Shirley Simmonds unveiled the Roll of Honour on our Commemorative Plaque at Cross Lanes, the North East corner of the old airfield. A wonderful friend who is greatly missed.



Wally and Peggy pictured at the ‘As you Like It’ where Wally was presented with a painting by artist Geoff Bartlett, then Hon.Group Treasurer, of Heather Cottage, Rockford , the house he so narrowly missed.

WE WILL REMEMBER HIM

1st Lt. Robert D Fuller



Written and contributed by Iain Barnes.

It came to the attention of the Historical Group last year that, despite the very best of past efforts, there is a name missing from the Commemorative Plaque located at Cross Lanes, Ibsley. Robert Doren Fuller flew with 494th Squadron, one of three squadrons (alongside the 492nd and 493rd) that formed the 48th Fighter Group, part of the USAAF's 9th Air Force located at Ibsley in the months leading up to, and shortly after, the D Day invasion before their relocation to Normandy.

His omission from the Plaque was identified by the daughter of Eugene Baker who was a close friend and colleague pilot of Robert Fuller's in the 48th Fighter Group (Eugene was in 493rd Squadron). In studying a photo of the Plaque from her home in in the USA, she saw that Robert was not commemorated and mentioned this in an email to me as I had been corresponding with her about the 48th Fighter Group – she has been of immense help in providing details of their time in Ibsley

over the past few years. She knew that Robert sadly died flying from Ibsley as, on hearing the news, her mother travelled to console Robert's wife with whom she had become friends during the squadron's training in the USA

To pay tribute to Robert's service, the details below are recorded in full with expressed thanks to the Fields of Honor online database from which this information is taken.

Robert was born in Kansas and aged 22 when he was killed in action during a skip-bombing raid on 27th May 1944; 10 days before D Day. He was a first lieutenant flying a P47D Thunderbolt, serial number: 43-25521. The place in which he crashed was Couvin, Belgium and he is buried at the American War Cemetery, Ardennes. He was awarded the Air Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster and The Purple Heart.

The statements of witnesses state:

Statement (1) from Richard P. Morrissey, Captain, Air Corps.

" I, Richard P. Morrissey, Squadron Commander of the 494th Fighter Bomber Squadron, was in charge of 18 P-47D planes, five of which were loaded with 1000 pound bombs, including the plane flown by Lt. Fuller. We made a run on the target from approximately 8000 feet down to skip bombing level and dropped our bombs. We then made a climb for altitude and shortly after Lt. Price said he was bailing out, Lt. Fuller told me that his plane had been hit in the oil system and that his engine had stopped. He wanted to try to land the ship, but I told him bail out as he would have a better chance. I did not see him bail out, but his plane had enough altitude to land safely by parachute."

Statement (2) from Moss K. Fletcher, Captain, Air Corps:

" I, Moss K. Fletcher, Captain, was escorting our five Dive Bombers. After Lt. Fuller dropped his bomb, I heard him talking to Captain Morrissey, our Squadron Leader, telling him that his oil system was damaged by flak. He wanted to try to land the ship, but Captain Morrissey told him to bail out. Due to his plane being a few miles from the target at that time and his being out of sight, I did not see whether he did or not."

Statement (3) from Victor N. Cabas, Captain, Air Corps:

" I, Victor N. Cabas, Captain, was escorting five of our planes which were loaded with 1000 pound bombs. Shortly after I saw Lt. Price bail out of his plane, I heard Lt. Fuller calling to the Squadron Commander that his oil system was damaged by flak. He wanted to land the plane, but was told to bail out. I didn't see whether he did or not because I didn't see his plane after they dropped their bombs."

In researching Robert's death, I came across an online Belgian newspaper article in which the children of the local primary school and their teacher found out who it was that had crash-landed in the forest nearby. They subsequently erected a sign in his memory at the crash site. The article states that eyewitnesses at the time saw him attempting to parachute out of the plane but sadly too late.

The RAF Ibsley Historical Group would like to hereby commemorate Robert's service and his ultimate sacrifice. Although not one of those recorded on the Commemorative Plaque, he is not forgotten, and his name now appears on the Service Order for our Annual Memorial Service in Ringwood Parish Church, this year on 21st February. It is always held on the Sunday following the date Ibsley became an operational World War II airfield, 15th February 1941.

Thank you Iain for this contribution

IBSLEY PAST AND PRESENT, SATURDAY 6th and SUNDAY 7th AUGUST, 2016

This event will take place in Ibsley Village Hall and will be a mainly a photographic exhibition of Ibsley past and present. It will feature the history of Ibsley Church, now an art and craft gallery, Cross Lanes Chapel, Ibsley Bridge, the Village Hall from R.A.F. Gymnasium to present day. Past and present events, the big event for the opening of the new hall in 1965, local businesses from wartime to present day, evacuees, present day clubs and societies which use the hall. Some R.A.F. Ibsley H.G. pictures will be shown on a screen set up on the hall stage using the Historical Group projector and Microsoft Power Point programme. It is expected there will be hundreds of old photographs on display. The event will be complimentary to and not compete with what the Heritage Trust is planning at Moyles Court. There will be an area set aside for refreshments. Further information in April and July Newsletters. Thanks to Bill and John for attending two Village Hall meetings.

GROUP MEETING THURSDAY 14th APRIL AT IBSLEY VILLAGE HALL, 7.30 p.m.

Anthony Howard-Williams, will be our Guest Speaker for this meeting. In an e-mail just received he tells me that at the moment he has called his talk 'The Howard-Williams R.A.F Flying History'. Bit of a mouthful he says but it details everything rather well. Jeremy his father was a night fighter pilot in WWII and Peter his Uncle, also a pilot, was stationed at Ibsley 1941/2 and took part in the filming of 'The First of the Few' between operational sorties. The Howard-Williams family have 100 years of service with the R.F.C. and R.A.F. from the very beginning in 1915 to now, as carried on by his son Dominic who graduated from R.A.F. College Cranwell in 2015 and is now flying training at R.A.F. Cranwell.

A contribution from our Honorary Membership Secretary Owen 'Don' Blissett.

Article in the Kempshott Kourier magazine – **REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY 8TH NOVEMBER.**

It probably hasn't escaped your attention that this year has seen the 70th anniversary of both the end of the war in Europe and in the Far East. Whilst both of these anniversaries commemorate the successful, (albeit at great human cost) conclusion of the Second World War we have also remembered the 75th Anniversary of the Battle of Britain

This aerial battle took place when the outcome of the war was very much in balance. It was through the immense bravery and resilience of many young pilots drawn from around the world including many from European countries whose recent experience drove them on to resist so that a sea borne invasion of this country was averted.

Of course it took another five long and difficult years for the defeat of Germany and her allies to be a reality. Sadly many of those who fought in that conflict are no longer living but of course their memories live on through such things as books, detailing their personal experiences and audio diaries compiled after the war. For many the pain of those experiences was such that they felt unable to recall them, but some families have been privileged to have had those memories shared within them and so form part of their collective family archive.

One of the features of our national life since those days has been the work of various charities that work hard to support individuals and families who have had connections with the Armed Forces.

There are of course other ways of remembrance and which if we are directed to them can provide powerful links to the past. Quite rightly post war Britain did much to erase the physical memory of conflict but many examples remain. For instance the New Forest National Park in which many wartime airfields and troop encampments were sited still has traces of the airfields at least for us to visit.

One such physical memorial is situated near Holmsley just off the A35 where the Airfield Memorial has been built to commemorate the numerous airfields that were situated and to those who flew from them. It is very moving to visit after Remembrance Day to see the wreaths laid by representatives on behalf of countries such as the Czech Republic; whose airmen had escaped from their own conquered country to serve the cause of freedom in a foreign land.

However one of the most poignant for me is the Canadian Memorial near the deer sanctuary at Bolderwood. Here members of the 3rd Canadian Division held church services prior to D-Day. The memorial today holds precious memories of those soldiers whose lives were altered by war. It is a special place for me as my late father was a Canadian who volunteered at the outbreak of war and who served in such diverse places as West Africa and India.

The point is that in both of these locations each year and accessible throughout the year act as a reminder if those men and women who fought and in so many cases died on our behalf for us to enjoy the democratic freedoms of today. So wherever our memories come from of these conflicts and of course from those before and since we would do well to heed the message that they have for each of us. *Kelvin Taylor (Vicar)*

Membership Secretary Owen 'Don' wrote to the Editor of the Kourier as follows:

I refer to the November issue of the "Kourier" and the article by Rev. Kelvin Taylor regarding Remembrance Sunday and his reference to Holmsley Airfield in the New Forest, where a memorial has been built to commemorate all the Airfields that were in the New Forest from 1939 to 1945.

Any readers of the "Kourier" travelling in the Ringwood/Fordingbridge district can visit another Memorial to all the servicemen killed in action, who were stationed at R.A.F. Ibsley during 1939-1945, it also includes the names of two National Servicemen, and a Sergeant who were killed in a road traffic accident on New Year's Eve 1948 when returning to R.A.F Ibsley after doing duties at R.A.F. Sopley.

R.A.F. Ibsley was situated on the A338 roughly half-way between Ringwood and Fordingbridge, there are signs for Ibsley either way, then you turn off the A338 into Mockbeggar Lane, which is situated by a pub/restaurant called "The Old Beams", and a Chapel now used as an Arts Centre, carry on down the Lane until you reach a Cattle Grid, and the Monument is a few yards along on the right hand side, at the cross roads.

The Monument came into being in the year 2000, as a result of the efforts of R.A.F. Ibsley Historical Group. One of the names on the Memorial is Sgt. A.E. "Teddy" Joyce who was a pilot with 234 Squadron at Ibsley in 1942. He was shot down, taken prisoner, was in Stalag Luft III and when trying to escape in June 1943 was shot and mortally wounded. He is buried in Poznan, Poland.

I was stationed there in the winter of 1948, our living conditions are best forgotten. I still have connections with Ibsley as I am the Membership Secretary of the Historical Group.

Ibsley Airfield is now a massive lake as the Airfield sat on a large gravel bed, which was excavated and used in the building of the M3.

Owen