



‘We will remember them...’

Graham Lowe becomes our first non-serving 33 Squadron Association representative at the Maleme Memorial
Crete, Saturday 19 May 2018



While holidaying in Crete with his wife recently, Graham Lowe found time - and luggage space - to represent the 33 Squadron Association during the annual commemorations taking place across the island to remember the events associated with the German airborne invasion in May 1941.

On a hot Saturday morning, and resplendent in Association ‘No.1 Dress’, Graham accompanied the small contingent of 33 Squadron personnel to the Maleme memorial site near the Tavronitis Bridge, an important tactical location at the start of the invasion for both sides. Under the experienced and watchful eye of Master Air Loadmaster Gareth Attridge, a serving Association member who has represented us in Crete on previous occasions, Graham took part in a short service of remembrance at 1100 hrs (local time) and had the honour of laying a wreath on behalf of the Association at the 30 and 33 Squadron Memorial. Also in attendance were relatives of the 30 and 33 Squadron personnel who perished during the battle, members of the related associations of the Battle of Crete and, poignantly, the relatives of Jack Baker of 30 Squadron, who survived the battle and went on to live a full life until his death earlier this year at the age of 100. Jack's ashes were laid at the Memorial during a short committal ceremony after the service of remembrance.

As mentioned above, this was not the only commemoration held on Crete to mark the 77th anniversary of the battle. There were several others at notable locations around the island, and Graham also accompanied the 33 Squadron contingent to the Closing Ceremony held on Maleme airfield.

Graham would strongly recommend any member of the Association looking to have a holiday in Crete to consider doing so to cover the Saturday of this period (possibly between 17 - 23 May*). The Service only took an hour out of his holiday and he found it a most rewarding experience. Although on this occasion he wore his blazer, tie and beret, he believes that smart/casual dress would be quite appropriate, especially when considering the weight restrictions now imposed by holiday companies; on this occasion just 15 kgs per person.

The Association Committee is now putting together a list of useful contacts which will be published on the Association website. Graham pointed out the importance of maintaining a close association with the people of Crete, and especially those organisations that commemorate the battle. Graham was told many times that they all wish for this connection to continue, especially as the dwindling numbers of Crete veterans will all be gone before too long. Lest we forget!

* Websites associated with the Battle of Crete > www.livingincrete.net/battleofcrete <. Also Mikes Hotel, which is in Maleme, has a full itinerary of events, which includes the 30 and 33 Squadron Memorial Service > www.hotel-mike.com/en/about-crete/battle-of-crete <