



# LOYALTY

The 33 Squadron RAF Association Newsletter Issue 6 Summer 2017

## 33 SQUADRON 20 YEARS AT RAF BENSON



*A KIWI WITH 33 - PART  
TWO OF W/O GEORGE  
RONEY'S STORY*



*Reflections: From Mersah to  
Merville \_LAC Norman Hands*

The Great Escape  
Roll of Honour:  
Flt Lt Reginald 'Rusty' Kierath RAAF  
(ex-33 Sqn Hurricane pilot)

**CENOTAPH PARADE 2017 DEADLINE - DON'T MISS YOUR  
CHANCE TO MARCH PAST WITH THE BOYS!**

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## From the Editor...

**Welcome** to the Summer 2017 edition of 'Loyalty', which is published in time for 33 Squadron's annual deployment of personnel to Crete for what will be the 76th anniversary of the battle. How laudable it is that a Squadron that proudly bears the motto 'Loyalty' is again finding time in a busy operational diary to send a party over to Crete in order to pay respects to fallen colleagues from so many years ago.

**Loyalty** is defined as, "... the quality of staying firm in your friendship or support for someone or something". Every November the nation pays homage to its fallen military personnel and I am glad to report that Association members will again parade at the Cenotaph this year to pay their respects to all those service personnel who have fallen over the years, including those who we had known and served with during our careers. We will all buy our poppies, lay our wreathes, march and pray, and we will recite together that at the going down of the sun, and in the morning, we will remember them. It is an act of loyalty. There must be a number of sites in Greece and North Africa where 33 Squadron personnel lie, too far away and too difficult for us to visit, but we can continue to research and discover the resting places of our fallen colleagues around Britain and Europe. For example, in this issue we reveal some stories that shed light on the whereabouts of some more of our World War Two comrades, with two graves being visited during the Association's Battlefield Tour in June.

So what does loyalty mean to you? I ask this question after almost a year on the Committee as the Newsletter Editor and I find myself reworking Winston Churchill's famous quote about 'The Few' to describe the situation that the Committee finds itself in, where so few try to do so much for so many. Will this be the year when 'the quality of staying firm in your friendship or support for someone or something' will rise within you and be strong enough to make you want to attend one of the Association's gatherings, march with us at the Cenotaph or lay a wreath at one of our fallen colleagues' graves, maybe put pen to paper to record your memories of your time on the Squadron, and get involved in some way to show that you do care about the bond that exists between the Squadron and the Association? I do hope so. As you will hear at the AGM next month the Committee has been working very hard to establish a number of regular functions and visits throughout the year in an effort to rekindle

that indefinable quality that draws so many of us back to The Lord Moon in The Mall every November to reminisce on all of those great times we had on 33. Let's show all of those brave fallen men, and all surviving ex-33 colleagues of ours, that we are continuing what they started, and if they were amongst us today they would be pleased and proud to see that we are remembering them, what they stood for and what they did, that we are made of similar stuff and that we also have plenty of stories to tell.

### Discovering the Past ...

Over the last 18 months I have had the pleasure of making contact with the relatives of several 33 Squadron pilots from the World War Two post-Crete period, a period that is not that well documented in the records held on the Squadron. My first approach, via the NZ Genealogy Society, was to the family of a young man, George Roney, who travelled across the world from New Zealand to fly with 33 for a few short months in 1944. Before Christmas I was honoured to meet another pilot, the Dutchman Jan Linzel, who flew with George in France. From information from the families, and researching the National Archives with Chris Perkins, we have been able to discover another pilot who was lost over Belgium and is buried in Antwerp, Flt Lt Godfrey Argument RCAF, an officer who appears on one of Jan Linzel's photographs yet had 'unknown' against his name. We are now trying to contact his family in Canada. The most recent correspondence has been with the family of Flt Lt Don Edy RCAF, a pilot officer who was flying Hurricanes with Lance Wade in January 1942. Don was shot down and captured on 23 January 1942 and spent the rest of the war as a POW, ending up at Stalag Luft III in Sagan, Germany. Sadly Don passed away in January this year, but he had written down his memoirs, just like Jan and Norman Hands. There must be more out there! From all of these families we have received thanks for the efforts that have been made to contact them. They were all surprised to hear that 33 Squadron was still operational and that its Association was proudly recording and remembering the exploits of their loved ones for future generations. Feel inspired to write a Reflections piece for future historians yet?

**Looking Ahead** I mentioned earlier that there are a number of events for you to add to your diaries. The first Association Battlefield Tour over to France,



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Belgium and the Netherlands will take place in June and I hope that trip will become an annual event. I found out today (1 May) that two members of the Roney family are flying from New Zealand to join us at their uncle's commemoration service this year. We also have the 20th Anniversary Party in July to celebrate 33's move to RAF Benson, a trip to the Tower of London, the Cenotaph Parade and the Puma Reunion. I must not forget the AGM on Saturday 10 June at RAF Benson, where among other topics I hope that we will discuss an Association presence in Crete in the future and another Battlefield Tour option. In my opinion, that all adds up to a pretty good return on your £1/month membership fee, and the Committee is very keen to arrange more events for the Association calendar! So once you have read this edition, how about some feedback and involvement? Your Association needs you! Proud to be...33,

*Dave Stewart*

## From the President ...

Thank you for the opportunity to write as the President of your Association.

I am currently serving as our Defence Attaché in France, so I can tell you how proud Airbus Helicopters are to have delivered the Puma Mk 2 to the Royal Air Force. I hope that the aircraft is now living up to all your expectations. The Puma is a great machine: one that has a character of its own; one that interacts with its crew; and one that I for one will never forget. Those of you who are currently operating the old girl should enjoy every minute of it. Treat her well!

Serving in France, I have also been privileged to attend literally hundreds of national and local commemorations of the First and Second World Wars. As we approach the hundredth anniversary of our Service, it is worth us all reflecting on how we got to where we are today, and the history that lies behind us. The thing that is most touching is the continuity between generations. When I was OC Benson, a party of RAF veterans visited. They came to an all ranks beer call in the Officers' Mess, where they drank and sang (quite a lot!). What struck me was how their spirit, their bearing, the glint in their eyes, was directly matched by the young airmen of the modern age, many of whom had just returned from Iraq and Afghanistan. The two generations, some 70 years apart, comprised of exactly the same type and quality of individual.

You can be proud of that. You, and the Squadron in which you serve, embody all that is best about flying, the Royal Air Force, and our proud history as a nation.

Thank you all for what you do today.

LOYALTY

Paul



**Burns Night in Paris - a fine collection of malts, 33 Squadron's own on the right flank, and an interesting haggis!**



**Le président a l'air très heureux, il retourne à nouveau un hélicoptère. Quel dommage, ce n'est pas un Puma 2.**

## *From the Membership Secretary ...*

Life as the Membership Secretary is never dull!! There has been a fair amount of turmoil since the last Newsletter which has certainly kept me on my toes. I feel incredibly privileged to represent you, the Association members, at a time when the Committee workload has never been greater and the Committee numbers fewer. Since the last Newsletter the Committee has, in no particular order, organised the replacement Chairman's Ballot, re-written the constitution, organised the AGM, a visit to the Tower of London, participation at this year's Cenotaph March Past, supported the Sqn event at Dorchester Abbey, identified numerous ex-33 Sqn members who fought for us in WW2, assisted in a visit to ex-33 Sqn Spitfire pilot Jan Linzel in Ireland, organised a truly breath-taking tour of Walcheren which included supporting a recce and, most recently, the designing and procuring of an Association Tie. All this has been completed alongside three of the most devoted, enthusiastic people I know. These are the good news stories that we have been involved in. There are numerous other pies that the Committee has had fingers in that have not come to fruition, but we are always striving to spread the good word of the Association and represent you in the best possible way.

As of 14 May 2017 the membership currently stands at 139 strong. We have gained a few and lost a few, as is the norm I guess. There appears to be no real reason why people leave other than they have not attended any events and therefore do not see it as good value for money. The Treasurer is presenting a breakdown of exactly what happens to the annual subscription of £12 at the AGM which will, of course, be presented in the Minutes after the event and made available to all. Not wanting to steal the Treasurer's thunder...but the current subscription represents excellent value for money!

From the Editorial and my Membership Secretary piece I hope you can see that the Committee is working hard to represent you. We welcome and encourage feedback, so do tell us how can we make your Association better and what, if anything, we are we doing wrong. If you have any thoughts or contributions please contact the Committee through [33sqnassociation@gmail.com](mailto:33sqnassociation@gmail.com)

I hope to see you at the forthcoming AGM, or any of the events that we have planned through 2017.

As always, Loyalty,

**Paul**

Paul Davies

Membership Secretary

## *From the Hart ...*

### **Squadron Commander's Comments**

As I write this on the last day in April, I have just worked out that I have completed 15 months in command of 33 Squadron; sadly this means that I have a mere 9 months left - gutted!

It has been superb so far and much busier and much more frustrating that I could ever have imagined, but I reckon almost all Squadron OCs would say the same. The good bits remain the good bits; the flying, the people and doing the job on operations, and the bad bits remain the bad bits; copious amounts of admin, not enough people and the ever present challenge for funds.

Two days ago (should have been three, but the Air Transport Force treated me to an additional day) I returned from visiting the Puma Force engineers (led by 33 Squadron) and 33 Squadron 'A' Flight aircrew on Operation TORAL in Kabul. I am very pleased to say that I found the detachment in great spirits and performing extremely well, punching well above their weight in Theatre and saving lives on a daily basis through keeping people off the roads. Whilst a very comfortable set-up, the team is as professional as I have ever seen and the flying is taxing due to very restricted helicopter landing sites, temperatures of 30 degrees plus and density altitudes above 8000 feet. The Puma is ideally placed for this important task, which is just as well as we may be there for some time to come!

Since I last wrote, 33 Squadron has said goodbye to the legend that is Eamon Geraghty from his role as Squadron WO and indeed from the RAF. Eamon has been a superb servant to our Squadron and the Service and served for 37 years in total. I was fortunate enough to accompany Mr Geraghty on a short flight on his last day in the Service, and true to the standards set by him throughout his career, he conducted his flight in full number one uniform!

Whilst the Squadron remains as small as it has ever been, we remain, relatively, as busy as ever and are currently in either Afghanistan or the USA on our annual desert training exercise. This is why, although June sees the official 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of

the move of 33 Squadron from RAF Odiham to RAF Benson, we will hold the party on 27<sup>th</sup> July when more than just the cleaner will be back at base. Please save the date for your diaries and I hope to see you there – details on the 33 Squadron Past and Present Facebook page. Before that, there will be a Freedom of Wallingford Parade for RAF Benson at 1600 hrs on 22nd June. The old Standard is in the St Mary Le More church and the parade ends at the Kincroft, where there is usually a beer tent and few stalls. For those of you unable to attend the Sqn WO's departure, Mr Geraghty has already said that he will be there in the front row, true to the Squadron motto.

Loyalty,

OC 33 Squadron.



## From the Front ...

### 33 Squadron 'A' Flt – Op TORAL

As the Afghanistan winter draws to a close, 33 Squadron 'A' Flight (3 crews) pack their bags and head to RAF Brize Norton for another 3 month deployment to Kabul. Pre-deployment preparations were only slightly affected by the standard British weather in January and February, but all training was eventually completed in time; urban training was completed in Liverpool and Manchester; gunnery completed at Donna Nook; and some night pairs over London ensured the Flight were all fully prepared for Op TORAL.

The Officer Commanding the TORAL Aviation Detachment (TAD) for 'A' Flight's coming months is our USAF exchange Major and experienced PAVE Hawk instructor and Distinguished Flying Cross holder from the United States. He has been on exchange with 33 Squadron for the past 24 months and in that time has successfully completed CFS(H) and returned to the Puma Training Flight (PTF) to help train our junior aircrew in their pursuit of Combat Ready (CR) status.

April has been an interesting first month for us on Op TORAL, where we have conducted medical transfer tasks and stand -in addition to our routine passenger and VIP moves. With an average of 75 hrs flown per crew in this first month, every member of A Flt has contributed to the 1829 coalition personnel who have not had to make the high risk road moves across Kabul – whilst not sexy, Op TORAL and the Puma Force saves lives, of that there is no doubt.

We will write again at the end of our tour; however, that is just a flavour of our first month in Theatre.



**Gareth Attridge and his last day, on the desk, at 33 Squadron before a sideways move on Station to take up 'pimping' duties - isn't that the right term to use when you are in charge of a bunch of hookers? Good luck Gareth!**

# 33 Sqn's End of Centenary Year Concert

12 January, 1916. 33 Squadron forms in inauspicious surroundings from the remains of 12 Squadron at Filton near Bristol, with a number of BE2C biplanes, for the purpose of Home Defence during the First World War.

Fast forward 101 years and 33 Squadron is now flying the modern Puma Mk 2 medium lift battlefield helicopter from RAF Benson, which has been its home for almost 20 years. As 33 Squadron approached the end of its Centenary Year, a concert was organised in its honour at the fabulous and historic Dorchester Abbey on 16 December. The concert was played by the Central Band of the RAF and was open to both military personnel and the extremely supportive local community. The opportunity was also taken for 33 Squadron to give a little back to the RAF community and all profits from the concert went to support the fantastic work of the RAF Benevolent Fund.

16 December 2016 was the day the majority of RAF Benson stood down for the Christmas Grant, heading home to a relaxing couple of weeks, save those on essential duties and National Standby commitments. By evening the cold and fog had well and truly rolled in, but the team had been setting up the Abbey and the Band had been rehearsing furiously for hours. Not only that, the British Forces Broadcasting Service, BFBS, had arrived and set up their tranche of equipment in order to record the full auditory experience for broadcast on Christmas Day. Dorchester Abbey has acoustics that are second to none, and with the addition of festive decorations and candlelight, looked and sounded amazing.

Guests began arriving early – enjoying the warmth and glow of the Abbey, and in the case of the 33 Squadron Association members, catching up with old friends. VIPs, including Warrant Officer 2 O'Rourke (Queen's Gallantry Medal) and his wife took up their seats near the front to enjoy the Band's performance up close, with the Abbey pews full behind them. The formal part of the evening began with a video screening two presentations of

two veteran centenarians with strong links to 33 Squadron – Mr Jan Linzel, ex-33 Squadron Flight Lieutenant WWII Spitfire and Tempest pilot had himself celebrated his 101<sup>st</sup> birthday just the week before and had recorded a special message for the occasion - and Mr Jack Baker, an ex-30 Squadron Leading Aircraftsman Safety Equipment Fitter celebrating his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday just the week before. Jack had fought alongside 33 Squadron's ground crew during the Battle of Crete. Then the Band Director, Squadron Leader Matt Little, began with gusto, striking up for the National Anthem before settling in to a first set of Christmas music, showing off members of the band with superb solos.

The Band broke for an interval, while the audience enjoyed warm mince pies and mulled wine under the stained glass and history of the Abbey, before the Band returned with the RAF Squadronaires – their brass section - and then a rare singing turn by the Central Band choir with *Follow That Star*. By now, the mulled wine had worked its magic and the audience was far more agreeable to singing along with some of the hymns! The Band finished with *Christmas Sleigh Bells* – having the audience break out the keys from their pockets and jingling along with the band, to make it really sound like a sleigh was riding in to bring everyone some Christmas joy! There was just enough time at the end for the RAF March Past to bring the wonderful evening to a close with a piece close to many hearts.

Back out into the cold and fog and the audience dispersed; some nearby, for those members of the local community; some further afield as RAF personnel headed home for Christmas with family (and some to nearby watering holes to finish off the catching up). With the Abbey and the Band safely packed up, there wasn't much more to do but thank everyone who attended and assisted in making the event such a success, and for their support to 33 Squadron and the RAF Benevolent Fund. Similar thanks go to the local organisations who supported the evening, including Waitrose, Sainsbury's and the Co-operative, and the 33 Squadron Association.





# LOYALTY

## A Poem written in May 1941 by Corporal, later Squadron Leader, W.F.J. Wilson

We're the famous 'Fighting Threes', and we're very hard to please,  
Though we've had our share of trouble, there's no doubt,  
What with sandstorms in the 'blue' and dodging Jerrys too,  
It's a wonder that our good luck still holds out.

You should have heard the clatter when we made those  
'Eyeties' scatter,  
For we didn't give 'em half a minute's peace;  
But our singing hearts grew sterner when they called us back  
from Derna,  
To keep the other 'Eyeties' out of Greece.

Our hearts felt just like lead as we crept across the Med,  
For we had a good idea what to expect  
As, with blankets, kit and rations, we disembarked near Athens  
And to Eleusis aerodrome we trekked.

We couldn't stand the pace, being left behind at the base:  
The front line is the place where we belong.  
So each Tom, Dick and Harry climbed aboard a 'garry'  
And set off to Larissa with a song.

One morning very early, we said 'Goodbye' to Curly  
As he set out with some Blenheims on a stunt;  
But although he's left behind, we shall keep him in our mind  
As another hero's lost on Greece's front.

We weren't at Larissa long when everything went wrong  
And some Messerschmidts screamed down in our direction.  
There was nothing we could do, and that's what made us blue:  
For three Hurricanes were very poor protection.

We lost Mackie and young Cheetham, but the third kite went  
right at 'em,  
And according to reports the pilot renders,  
He shot three down that day and chased the rest away—  
Incidentally, that was Sergeant Genders.

Before the day was done, Jerry had us on the run,  
And we knew that we were in for lots of trouble.  
But none of us felt sorry as we clambered on a lorry  
And went streaming down to Athens at the double.

I'll bet those Jerrys laughed as they came along and straffed,  
As we streaked like startled rabbits through the passes.  
But with faces veiled in frowns, we could picture all the towns  
We'd left behind in burning, smoking masses.

Though our ground staff fled with fright, our pilots stayed to  
fight, And their eight machine guns kicked up such a rattle.  
Against those fearful odds, their fates lay with the gods,  
And the man who lead them—Squadron Leader Pattle.

He was dark, and sometimes grim, but the Sqn worshipped  
him;  
They would follow in his footsteps anywhere,  
And despite this hero's fall, he's remembered by us all  
As the Squadron's Number One man in the air.

In the midst of this vain strife, Busy Holman gave his life -  
Another name in history's Book of Fame -  
His ever-eager guns taking toll of many Huns,  
E'er he cashed his chips in at this gruesome game.

We miss the dear old faces of the Squadron's would-be aces,  
For they all had something no-one could resist;  
And in spite of Starret's landing, we sighed an understanding  
As we grimly added his name to the list.

Odds were thirty-five to one when our last grave task was on.  
The Battle of Athens made us all turn pale.  
Though there's few that did survive, one is very much alive:  
Tubby Cottingham lives on to tell the tale.

We ended our retreat taking refuge out in Crete  
And our Blenheim came in gracefully to land,  
But it really made us wonder if there hadn't been a blunder  
When they sent us over there to make a stand.

There were aircraft on the deck—everyone a total wreck—  
Lying there in various states of disrepair,  
And with the few tools that we'd brought, no-one really could  
have thought  
Of a way of getting any in the air.

We worked for days and nights, 'till we'd serviced all our kites,  
But it would have been a superhuman feat  
If we'd managed in some way to hold the Huns at bay,  
And with eight machines kept Jerry out of Crete.

Those Huns came over daily, their cannons cracking gaily,  
As we cowered down beneath their leaden hail.  
But we stopped some of the revels of those vicious black-cross  
devils,  
Thanks to K.P., Woodward, Chico Woods and Vale.

We won't mention in our story the battles grim and gory,  
Which engulfed us when the Germans took command;  
Nor in language fair and flowery shall we describe the Maori,  
The finest fighting race yet seen on land.

But the sacrifices made, and the precious prices paid,  
Are things that no-one ever could forget;  
And when we think of what it cost, and the men this Squadron  
lost,  
We know that we'll get even with them yet.



**Pilots of No. 33 Squadron RAF at Larissa, Greece, with Hawker Hurricane Mark I (V7419).**

(left to right):

- Pilot Officer P.R.W. Wickham**
- Flying Officer D.T. Moir**
- Flying Officer V.C. "Woody" Woodward**
- Flight Lieutenant J.M. "Pop" Littler**
- Flying Officer E.H. "Dixie" Dean**
- Flying Officer F. Holman (k.i.a. 20 April 41)**
- Flying Officer E.F. "Timber" Woods (k.i.a. 17 June 1941)**
- Pilot Officer C.A.C. Cheetham (k.i.a. 15 April 1941)**
- Flight Lieutenant A.M. Young**
- Squadron Leader M. St.J. "Pat" Pattle (Squadron Commanding Officer, k.i.a. 20 April 1941)**
- Flying Officer H.J. Starrett (died of burns 22 1941)**
- Flight Lieutenant G. Rumsey (Squadron Adjutant)**
- Pilot Officer A.R. Butcher (p.o.w. 22 May 1941)**
- Pilot Officer W. Winsland**
- Pilot Officer R. Dunscombe (p.o.w. 22 May 1941)**

**No.33 Squadron Song**

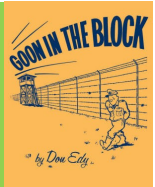
There is a RAF Squadron, it's called Thirty Three,  
Existing on sandstorms, at Mersa-on-Sea.

Far out in the desert, way out in the blue,  
Existing on sandstorms at Mersa Matruh.

(Tune: 'Red Sails in the sunset'.)

# FLIGHT LIEUTENANT DONALD LESLIE EDY RCAF

## 33 SQN



The 33 Squadron ORB records that on 1st January 1942 the Squadron moved from L.G.125 to Msus after its successful participation in Operation CRUSADER, known by the Germans as 'The Winter Battle', which had seen Tobruk relieved and Rommel retreat to Gazala. Due to low serviceability the Luftwaffe was fairly inactive until 21st–22nd January, when it supported Rommel's counter offensive from El Agheila. 33 Squadron Hurricanes flew sorties to attack Rommel's convoys, and an ORB entry on 23rd January 1942 states: "One Hurricane was lost to ground fire on the 23rd, when Plt Off Edy was shot down while strafing vehicles on the Antelat-Agedabia road."

Don Edy, a young Canadian, became a POW that day, and was taken to hospital in Tripoli for treatment to his injuries before being sent by ship across the Mediterranean to Italy. He was aboard the S.S. *Ariosto*, a crude prisoner ship, when it was torpedoed by an Allied submarine at night. Don was injured when the blasts blew him from the sealed hold, but he was able to time his leap into the debris-filled water and survived semi-conscious for several hours. He is one of the few eyewitnesses to the disaster; 138 fellow POWs died. He was picked up by an Italian cruiser, hospitalised again and was eventually placed in a prison camp in Northern Italy.

When the Allies invaded Italy and Sicily, Allied POWs were taken to POW camps in Germany and Don eventually ended up in Sagan. On the night of 24th March 1944, Don Edy listened from his bunk as 76 men slipped into the mouth of a hand-dug tunnel. More than 200 men planned a mass escape from the 'inescapable' Stalag Luft III camp in eastern Germany. It was the 'Great Escape'.

In his book 'Goon in the Block' written for his family to understand his adventures during the War, Don said that POWs, used to the action and adrenaline of war before their capture, were constantly hatching plans to regain their freedom passed the time and fulfilled a sense of adventure. It was a carefully choreographed routine, Edy said. "You try to escape, you get caught, or maybe you

get out. You get brought back, spend a week or two weeks in the cooler, the camp prison. And back into the camp. It was a great adventure." At least that was the dance played by prisoners and guards until the night of the Great Escape, when so many prisoners planned to begin their journey into underground tunnels and outside the camp boundaries to freedom. Don Edy was not part of the escape efforts, he thought that it was doomed for failure, so he wasn't sorry to stay behind that night. "I didn't figure they'd get very far," he said. "And of course, most of them didn't." Don Edy, and the rest of the PoWs at Stalag Luft III, saw the remains of 50 escapers delivered to the camp a short while later. Their deaths were to serve as a lesson to the other PoWs. "Hitler was furious," Edy said. "He wanted to shoot every last one of them."



The belongings of those slain in the Great Escape were put up for auction in the PoW camp, with the proceeds going back to the families of the men who were shot. Edy was looking for something to wear to the theatre when he bought British fighter pilot Thomas Kirby-Green's tunic. "Ever since I was shot down, I was just in battle dress. I kind of wanted to dress up," Edy said. The PoWs were surprisingly willing

actors, directors and stage crew, launching the Sagan Theatre from within the walls of the camp. Red Cross crates provided the base for 350 theatre seats. Lights were set up, German camp guards were bribed with cigarettes to help create a switch board, and sets were constructed for shows such as Macbeth or George and Margaret. "I was in quite a few of the productions myself," Edy said. He wanted to look sharp for his on-stage appearances and trips to the theatre. He paid for the tunic by sending a letter to Barclays Bank in England, asking for money to be wired from his account to another. Edy wore the tunic during his time being shuttled to other PoW camps, when he was stuffed into train cars with hundreds of other prisoners. The tunic kept him warm during the Forced March, when 80,000 Allied PoWs were evacuated by way of a march across Europe in the winter of 1944/45.

Having been a POW since January 1942, Don was released by British troops in May 1945, and after V.E. Day his family back in Canada waited anxiously for some news. Eventually a letter, dated 2nd May 1945, arrived:

Dear Mother and Dad,

We have just been released by an armoured car about 11 kilometres outside Luebeck and boy, are we happy! Next Monday will have seen us four weeks on the road, sleeping in fields and the last few days in barns. I'm healthier right now than I've been in my life before except perhaps when I was playing rugby.

We left Ralph Johnson at Farmstadt near Bremen when we marched, because he had a high temperature. He should be on his way home. Jack Morgan was in a different compound at Sagan and I haven't seen him since the day he had his tooth out.

You may hear from me by cable before this reaches you but we expect to be cleared from here in a day or so and then—well, words fail me. I'll be on my way home to you and a wonderful new life. Get my clothes out and cleaned darlin' - what's left of them—and then for that big dinner! This seems unreal to me, but it must be true because there's an armoured car outside with a real live Tommy in it!

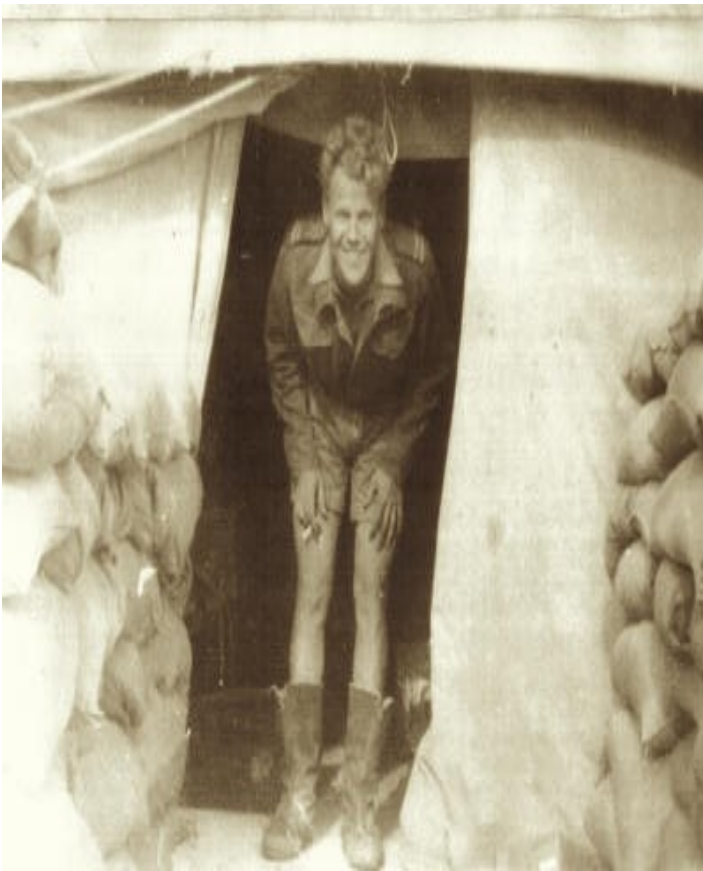
Love DON



When he finally returned home to Canada, Don Edy wore Thomas Kirby-Green's tunic at his wedding to Millie Jane Carr in London, Ontario, on August 11, 1945.

Reuniting the tunic with the Kirby-Green family is a fine example of the benefits of the Internet. Colin Kirby-Green was at an anniversary event for the Great Escape. His father Thomas had been shot dead when Colin was only eight. At that anniversary, Colin discovered that a young Canadian pilot had purchased his father's tunic for £100 in the PoW auction. Though Kirby-Green did not yet know that the man was Don Edy, he began searching online and eventually connected with Don Edy's daughter, Barb, who corresponds with people all around the world on her father's behalf, as she runs the website for Don's book. Kirby-Green's correspondence with Barb was the first indication to Don that his PoW acquaintance even had a family. "I didn't even know Tom was married," Don said. "I never even gave it a thought." Don Edy wrote in a letter to Colin Kirby-Green: "I knew your father in Stalag Luft III, not intimately, but as an acquaintance. He was tall, friendly and very handsome." Learning about the connection gave Don Edy an idea. Why not return the tunic, still carefully tucked away in a closet, to Kirby-Green's son in England? "Would be more use to him than it was to me. And of course it was," Don said. After about 90 days in transit and \$90 in customs fees, Kirby-Green was reunited with his father's tunic. "I owe a huge debt of gratitude to Don and only wish I could thank him in person," Kirby-Green wrote in a letter to Edy and his daughter. "Thanks to the Internet but mostly to their kindness they have become like family." Edy's other daughter, Jane Hughes, said, "We grew up with the whole story. Dad's jacket was always hanging in the attic, yet this tunic is all that Colin has of his father's life. Being able to reunite Kirby-Green with the priceless memento gave them all a thrill." From the Great Escape to the Long March to a wedding ceremony and finally back across the pond to Kirby-Green's son in England, the tunic still shows signs of the tailoring Edy did as a PoW but it's an important piece of history. More importantly, for Second World War veterans such as Don Edy and family members like Kirby-Green, it is a capsule of memories.

Unfortunately Don is another 33 Squadron veteran who caught our attention too late. Don passed away on 22nd January 2017 in his 100th year, aged 99. The Editor is now in touch with Barb Edy and is arranging the purchase of copies of his book, for further research and for presentation to the 33 Squadron History Room.



Flight Lieutenant Don Edy in front of his dugout.  
Bagush, Egypt, December 7, 1941



Don Edy with his Hurricane 'Bunty'



Pilots' Mess, Gerwala Landing Ground, Libya 13-19 June 1941  
- site of the first gathering of 33 Sqn pilots after Maleme, Crete.  
L to R: Don Edy, Doug Davidson, Rusty Kierath (shot after the Great Escape), "Mac" McKenzie.



Don Edy and Lance Wade with 'Tommy Guns'

## Postscripts

Flt Lt Thomas Kirby-Green took off from RAF Alconbury at 0106 hrs on 17th October 1941 on his 37th operational flight. Flying a Wellington Mk1c ("Z8862", 40 Squadron, BL-B) his mission was to bomb factories in Duisburg. The aircraft was shot down, all of Kirby-Green's crew were killed and he became a POW. Once he had arrived at Stalag Luft III he became closely associated with Roger Bushell, Big-X, who was running the escape activities. Bushell recruited Kirby-Green as the senior security officer for the escape committee, Big-S, and he introduced a 'duty-pilot' scheme which involved maintaining a watch on all German activities. Kirby-Green was a Spanish speaker and collated all available information on Spain, anything which might assist an escaper heading for that frontier. With his running mate Gordon Kidder the pair were part of the first wave of escapers and managed to reach the local railway station. They boarded a train for Breslau, where they then changed trains for Czechoslovakia, hoping for a further connection to Yugoslavia or Hungary where Kirby-Green had friends. But after crossing the border they were recaptured at Hodonin in southern Moravia (close to the Austrian frontier) on 28 March 1944. While held at Zlin prison they were the only prisoners interrogated physically and violently. The two escapers were taken away by the Zlin Gestapo in two cars which headed out onto the Breslau road, and shot near Mährisch Ostrava (later known as Moravská Ostrava and now just as Ostrava), their bodies being cremated in the local crematorium there. Urns returned to Stalag Luft III were marked with the date 29 March 1944 and the name of the town Mährisch. His remains are now in Poznan Old Garrison Cemetery.



Colin Kirby-Green proudly holds his father's tunic aloft.

Flt Lt Reginald 'Rusty' Kierath joined the RAAF to learn to fly on 2nd August 1940. After completing his basic training and preliminary flight training he was posted to Southern Rhodesia in December 1940 to complete his full flight training. His brother, Captain Greg Kierath, was serving with an Australian Anti-Tank company and was killed at Tobruk on 14th April 1941 on about the date when Rusty Kierath gained his pilot's aircrew brevet. Rusty Kierath graduated as a pilot on 10th June 1941 and was posted to No. 71 Operational Training Unit as a fighter pilot. In mid-August 1941 he joined No. 33 Squadron RAF in the Western Desert flying the Hawker Hurricane from Amriyah in Egypt. During his initial operational service he was once strafed while taking off and once had to crash land after being shot up by Messerschmitt Bf 109s. On the 22nd November 1941 he damaged two Luftwaffe Junkers Ju 88 medium bombers and in early December shot up an Italian Army transport column. On 20th December 1941 Kierath and a squadron mate shot down an Italian Air Force troop carrier aircraft. On 8th January 1942 he was posted to No.450 Squadron RAAF. He was commissioned in May 1942, completed his first tour on 31st July 1942 and trained as a fighter pilot instructor at Belvedere flying school before doing a five-month instructing tour in Rhodesia and being promoted to flying officer. Kierath requested a return to operational flying and on 23rd February 1943 he returned to No. 450 Squadron RAAF, still flying P-40 Kittyhawk fighters. He was flying with a flight of fighters on an anti-shipping strike on 23rd April 1943 about 15 miles off Cap Bon when they received heavy anti-aircraft fire from a German vessel and the strikes on his fighter caused the engine to seize. Kierath had to bail out and landed in the sea where he was rescued two hours later and taken prisoner by the Germans. He was checked out by the German medical team to ensure that he was unhurt before being placed in a temporary prisoner compound in Tunis and later shipped to Sicily for onward transit to Germany. He was eventually put into Stalag Luft III where he established himself as a 'hide specialist' constructing small hide-aways in the accommodation blocks to permit forged papers and other escape essentials to be hidden from the German search teams. Rusty and three other airmen made it to the Reisenberge mountains but were arrested by a mountain patrol as they were trying to cross into occupied Czechoslovakia. Taken to the Reichenberg prison. The four airmen were handed over to the Gestapo at 0400 on 29th March 1944, believing that they were to be returned to prison camp by road, but they were shot near Hirschberg, now known as Jelenia Gora. They were cremated at Brux (now Most in the Czech Republic) Rusty's remains are now in Poznan Old Garrison Cemetery.



German Criminal Police photographs, found by Guy Walters in the National Archives in 2012, taken 24 hours before the four airmen were executed.

Left to right: Flt Lt Reginald 'Rusty' Kierath RAAF, Squadron Leader John 'Willy' Williams DFC RAF, Fg Off Jerzy Mondschein RAF, Flt Lt Leslie Bull DFC RAF

A memorial to the four airmen was unveiled in Most on 25th March 2012, 68 years after the daring escape. The memorial, which brought the four men's families together for the first time, was the initiative of a Czech commercial pilot, Michal Holy, who said that the men should have been recognized years ago. Relatives of the four men retraced the airmen's footsteps from Stalag Luft III to the Czechoslovakian border, where they were intercepted and then secretly murdered on Hitler's orders. After the war tribunals in Hamburg and Nuremburg sentenced 20 former Gestapo officers for murders and jailed many more. However, no one was ever located or brought to justice for the execution of the four airmen near Most.





## *From Mersa to Merville*

*by LAC (ret'd) Norman Hands (1711912)*

This article was found recently in a manuscript in the Squadron History Room. The manuscript appears to be a draft outline for a book on the history of 33 Squadron, written by a gentleman called Lewis B. Richardson, and was entitled 'Heroes One and All – The History of 33 Squadron 1916-1919 / 1929-1955'. To date all attempts to track down Mr Richardson have been unsuccessful.

Norman Hands arrived on 33 Squadron in early 44, the day before the Squadron packed up and went home! He had trained as a Flight Mechanic (Engines) (FME) at Halton and been posted to Egypt. He was then posted from the Maintenance Unit at Aboukir to 33 Squadron. Consequently he found himself waiting at Alexandria Railway Station, along with two other chaps, wondering how to get Mersa Matruh. Fortunately they met Corporal 'Ducks' Draycot there, who had been recalled from local leave. He was with 33 and said he would deliver them safely to the airfield. On arrival they were told by the 'Chiefy' to sleep in an empty tent and not to unpack as a move was taking place early the next morning. It was April 1<sup>st</sup> 1944 and they were all told that they going home to Blighty.

(Norman's article is reproduced just as it was written, with only a few minor grammatical changes. Ed.)

"That was a nice few month's escape from a dreary wartime winter in England. On the way to the boat at Suez passing the Pyramids on the way, a night was spent at Helwan to dump our transport. By troopship down the canal with a convoy, then two weeks and hundreds of hands of Solo later 33 Squadron was threading through sunken ships in Liverpool harbour and welcomed home by a band on the quayside. We unloaded on a train and were delivered many hours later to RAF Station North Weald in Essex. Records say we reformed on April 23<sup>rd</sup>. After spending some time in a desert area it's surprising how green England is. The squadron was almost immediately issued with a dozen Spitfire Vs and, to the surprise of the old members the

squadron markings were changed from RS to 5R. Later we were reequipped with Mark IXs. The same efficiency didn't apply to our uniforms because North Weald soon ran out of blue outfits. Airmen in Egypt wore khaki, either drill or army serge (reason being I was told that airforce blue was too much like German uniforms and the natives got confused as to which lot to cheer). As we were having to wear a mixture of khaki and blue we were given a note to put in our paybooks saying that 'this airman has just returned from overseas and has not yet been issued with the correct uniform'. Local weekend leave was granted to anyone who could take advantage of it. I lived near Croydon and went home wearing a khaki shirt and blue uniform.

Then to Lympe in Kent, a small pre-war airfield overlooking Romney Marsh, with a nice line of trees at the end of the runway for the Spitfires to trim their propellers on. Lympe was a dream, billeted in commandeered bungalows right by the dispersal, complete with baths and hot water systems, the flight office was just outside on the main road, and a pub serving Fremlin's Beer (the pub was of course renamed 'The Gremlins') within a hundred yards. Folkestone was only a bus ride away. The only snag was the pub kept running out of beer, and being D-Day time we were working from 4 am to 11pm. We painted the D-Day black and white stripes on the wings and fuselage at this stage. Probably for the first time 33 Squadron had two WAAFs attached, wireless types, they were named 'Maisie Dotes and Dosie Dotes' after a popular song of the time. Some of the lads whose homes were a distance away were getting very bolshie because no leave had yet been granted and they hadn't been home for 3 or 4 years.

On to Tangmere and new Mark IX Spitfires, also new toolboxes, new tents, and an issue of Sten guns or rifles, you took your choice. Being on a mobile fighter squadron was much more democratic than being on an ordinary RAF unit, discipline was there but different. It was looking after each other and making sure that the aircraft were as serviceable as

possible so that the pilot could do his job. Ginger, the ex-butcher, tried his new Sten gun out one night with startling effect when, while on guard duty, a three tonner approached. Ginger signalled it to stop but the driver, being a Tangmere-based type, decided that he wasn't going to be ordered about by these people just passing through, so he kept going. They got a burst over the top of the lorry from the new Sten gun. The lorry stopped and out poured a number of pilots and a waffle of WAAFs, the lorry driver's feet didn't touch the ground.

The days were punctuated with Doodlebugs (V-1s) flying over, US Air Corps Fortresses going out and coming back later throwing out the colours of the day followed by many stragglers, bits missing, bits hanging off, engines with propellers feathered, some trailing smoke. Evenings were taken up filling the petrol bowser at the dump from five-gallon drums through chamois leather filters. The monotony was broken up by someone practising on the bagpipes, he had been chucked out of his billet by his mates. Ginger came in useful again! He had been a butcher and some of the lads had been rabbit shooting so he knew how to prepare them.

Had to go one day to an American airfield with a trolley acc, because two aircraft had force-landed there and needed starting – we were treated to a magnificent breakfast. The pilots took off with a very short take-off and gave their customary low buzz over the runway to say thanks, which certainly impressed the Yanks, the Spitfire being legendary by now.

The 33 Squadron aircrew organised a fantastic boozy party for all the groundcrew in a hall in Chichester just before we went across to France, this was one of many. Someone arranged for a large barrel of beer, which was emptied into a drop tank to which one of the mechanics had fitted a tap; a metal torpedo tank not the later compressed paper type. We used to pay for the beer when having a party and one of the aircrew would drop in to Lympne with the empty tank and have Fremains brewery fill it up, this went on a few times until we were in Germany when local beer became available.

Travelling to the marshalling yards on Salisbury

Plain we were surprised that considering it was now into August and D-Day was early June, the number of units lined up along all the roads in Wiltshire and camping along the hedgerows, obviously back up troops waiting to go across; there were miles of them. At the marshalling area there were lines of spare vehicles, if any of our lorries were in anyway defective it was all out and swap over. Most of our vehicles were Bedford or Chevrolet. Gosport to Arromanches, that climb up the sandy track from the beach with army engineers to give you a heavy shove with a bulldozer if you stalled, at the same time shouting for newspapers. Unfortunately, the only way most of the invasion forces could find out how the war was going was by second-hand newspapers, none of us had radios.

Just outside Caen (B.17) was our first airstrip, what were left of the hangars looked more like colanders. There must have been a battle here because in the distance we could see flamethrowers and found out that they were burning bodies that were in such a bad state that they were being disposed of where they fell. The German army must have used many horses because along the road many that had been killed lay there with their legs in the air. There was this terrible smell hanging about in the air, and the flies were enormous. There was a little recreation, however, some of us were given the opportunity to go to see the Bayeux Tapestry. A few army tank crews were on one occasion given a little light relief by being brought to see the Spitfire units that were giving them support. I made one tank driver's day by letting him sit in the cockpit and run the engine up. Bad weather had caused disruption to supplies at this stage and we were not getting any bread so were having to eat hard tack biscuits; these made your mouth very sore. We did, however, have plenty of cigarettes. The armourers, known as the plumbers, went out one day and shot a couple of chickens; their attitude being if the farmer had some left he must have been a collaborator.

Next move was 7<sup>th</sup> September, part of the advance party to an airstrip at Eu (B.35) near Le Treport, laid out by the airfield section of the Pioneer Corps. The noise of aircraft landing on the mesh was quite alarming. The Typhoons had a few problems, more

than one went over on its nose, but the Spitfires, despite their narrow and rather unstable undercarriage, didn't have much trouble. Before the main party arrived one of the flight commanders, I think it may have been Flt Lt Luckhoff, and a couple of pilots took us down to Le Treport in the aircrew truck, but it was very dead, nothing like the cheering crowds we saw in Rouen earlier. Two of us walked down to Le Treport a few days later, despite the warning that there were still some German soldiers hiding in the many clumps of woodland. They called them 'werewolves'. Rifles or Sten guns had to be carried at all times, however, no werewolves.

Next stop Merville (B.53) 13<sup>th</sup> September, passing through really dreary places like Bethune and Armenthiers. This was an airfield that had been badly damaged, the hangars were unusable but the hard standings were fairly intact. It's a good job they were because the mud was appalling. Although we were still under canvas the engineering officer had obtained a load of single metal bed frames which, when we had fixed legs to them, enabled us to sleep off the ground. Our stop there was for a few weeks and we got to know the people that ran the local cafe, the proprietor was English. He was stationed there in World War One and stayed on. It appears that the Germans never found out. The first Sunday turned out fine and so, it seemed, did the whole population of the area. We had run out of 100 octane fuel, something to do with PLUTO and Mulberry Harbour being damaged by bad weather. Not being able to fill the tanks caused condensation problems so filters had to be cleaned often to alleviate the danger of engine cut out on take off. The population turning out to see the famous Spitfires created another problem as it made the airfield unusable for some time but, as I said, we hadn't any fuel. Next day they flew some from England in Dakotas in jerricans wrapped up in foam, which made lovely mattresses, and to everyone's relief we had a change from hard tack biscuits because they had filled up any empty spaces in the transport aircraft with fresh bread.

On the move the most remarkable sights were seen of thousands of German troops trying to surrender.

There were plenty of prisoner of war cages to be seen but it appeared the number had been more than expected. Then into Holland, a country where everyone seemed to be starving. It was terrible to see normal people hanging round swill bins outside the cookhouse looking for food. A number of locals that were given temporary employment by 135 Wing were given a meal but they didn't eat it they just fed it to their children. Next stop the first place not under canvas since North Weald, Maldegem (B.65). Billets were a wooden school hut, we even managed to put the dartboard up – makes a change from Solo. Plus to help keep out the winter cold a leather jerkin each. Another Pioneer Corps runway, I seem to remember this was the only time I experienced the airforce regulation whereby if the runway was covered in snow everyone except the cooks had to clear it. We also saw V2 rockets going up in the far distance. Wilky, one of the regulars on the squadron, tried to marry the local Burgermaster's daughter but the C.O. wouldn't let him. When having local leave at that time we visited Antwerp and felt the full weight of the V2s, so decided to go on to Brussels. Coming back on the train it was an absolute shamble. 135 Wing was part of a group supporting the First Canadian Army therefore the leave train was packed with hundreds of drunken Canadians. Most of them, so history tells, joined because of severe unemployment in Canada. They pulled the emergency cord every few miles and when the train stopped some of them absconded into the countryside; it took hours to get back to base.

Then came a most unexpected move, the order came to put most of our surplus kit in a store and prepare to embark on Dakotas back to England, some will go by road. The worrying bit was that trades such as fitters and riggers had to be split up in case of accidents, apparently we were becoming an endangered species. There is nothing more alarming than going over mountains in a paratrooper type Dakota when a violent hail storm is taking place. Not being fitted with insulation, the noise is deafening. To make matters worse when we got over England the weather clamped in and we landed at Swindon instead of Predannack in Cornwall. Passing over Old Sarum, Salisbury Plain

was marked with the tracks of tanks and lorries that had assembled for D-Day. Dumped in the NAAFI with no English money and with nothing to do for hours while they organised a train, except to watch Horsa gliders doing circuits and bumps. Eventually someone tried to buy something with our British Occupation money and it worked.

As so many of the armed forces were abroad there must have been plenty of spare trains because transport was organized quite quickly, but we seemed to spend forever on that train to Penzance. Having got there, and because we had left a very muddy environment, we were wearing gumboots and having taken them off in the train our feet had swollen and we couldn't get them on again. What a sight, a very scruffy mob of airmen standing on the platform in dirty, white gumboot socks. What a bonus for a mobile fighter squadron that is usually on an airstrip miles from anywhere being next to the hotspots of Penzance and Helston. The Winter Garden dance hall was everyone's aim on a Saturday night. There was also a good pub down the road at the Lizard and, of course, we were rich. Most of us had drawn very little pay since Lympe. As it was getting near Christmas we were told that half of us could go on leave.

Almost immediately after we arrived about sixteen new Hawker Tempest Vs were flown in. It didn't take us long to realise that the Napier Sabre engine wasn't going to be as easy to maintain or even start as the good old Rolls Royce Merlin. At least Koffman starter cartridges were not as heavy as a trolley acc, which had to be lifted on to a lorry when we moved. We did have one devilish piece of equipment however to use if the engines got too cold, it was a box on a Commer chassis that was filled inside with a roaring petrol fire, it was called a pre-heater van.

Snow fell one day, nothing like they were getting back on the continent. The news wasn't good from there, the Battle of the Bulge had started and we learned later that one of the squadrons lost all their aircraft on the ground. Weather was not good for flying training or for removing spark plugs, which had to be done quite regularly as the Sabre engine was difficult to start and if it didn't with a set

number of fires of the cartridge, spark plugs had to be removed and hot oil injected into the cylinder to protect the sleeve valves. The powers decided they needed us back so as the weather clamped down we were taken on a long train journey to Hornchurch, marching in (about the only time I remember 33 Squadron marching anywhere) at 4 am in the morning and allocated beds to sleep in for a few hours. Never seen anything like it, beds made up with clean white sheets. Taken to an LCT, we left harbour and got our heads down for the night. Woke up in the morning, looked out, place looked familiar – we were back in Gosport again. The convoy had been chased by E-boats so they put back to harbour. Eventually into Ostend, which was just about open, and billeted in a large hotel in Blankenberg for the night.

135 Wing was joined at Tilburg (B.77), (Gilze Rijen is just to the west of Tilburg. Ed) they having moved there on 14th January after having a rough time of it at Maldegem\*. The C.O. by this time was Squadron Leader Bowers, a South African. There were always a number of his countrymen on the squadron. Routine until 7th April and then moved to a very sandy strip near Nijmegen (B.91), back under canvas amongst a pine forest, could hear artillery firing from here. Only stayed 13 days then moved into Germany; "No fraternizing" was the order.

**\*Editor's Note:** Maldegem was one of several airfields attacked by the Luftwaffe on 1st January 1945 in an attempt to cripple the Allied air forces and gain air superiority in the Battle of the Bulge, an operation known as *Bodenplatte*. When the designated Luftwaffe units arrived over the airfield at 0920, 135 Wing only had two squadrons there: No.349 (Belgian) Squadron and No.485 (RNZAF) Squadron. British anti-aircraft defences had been withdrawn the previous month, and the runways were not in use that day due to severe icing. Air and ground personnel used all available weapons to fire at the German aircraft, but could not prevent 15 Spitfires being damaged, of which 14 were 485's aircraft. Of the 15 damaged, 2 aircraft were assessed as Cat B (repairable at a Maintenance Unit), the rest were Cat E (Written off, salvage impossible).

## George Roney: The story of a Kiwi with 33 (Pt2)

No. 33 Squadron began flying missions to support Operation SWITCHBACK hrs on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> October 1944, the first of a series of operations designed to clear German opposition from the Scheldt Estuary and open up access to the port of Antwerp, creating a logistics hub close to the Allied advance into Germany. SWITCHBACK was the codename for the operation to clear the Breskens Pocket in order to launch Operation INFATUATE 1 and 2, the amphibious assault on Walcheren.

The Operational Records of the Allied Expeditionary Air Force (AEAF) and Air Defence Great Britain (ADGB) for 6<sup>th</sup> October 1944 state that fighters and fighter-bombers of both commands carried out more than 1 000 flights above the occupied part of Netherlands that day. In Zeeland, air support was provided for the Canadian ground troops' attack across the Leopold Canal. Air attacks were carried out on German targets near many places in Zeeland-Flanders, including Biervliet, Oostburg and Hoofdplaat in the Breskens Pocket.

The Air Branch War Diary of First Canadian Army states, "Friday—weather was good and a record number of sorties were flown today. On the ground the fighting around Tilburg and above the Leopold Canal has been very heavy. Operation SWITCHBACK began today and we now hold a small bridgehead over the Leopold Canal and most air support was directed into these areas...No 84 Group flew 719 sorties (armed recce 267, pre-arranged support 355, immediate support 8, tactical reconnaissance 42, photo recce 39 and artillery recce 8) and 123 Wing carried out most of the air support for Operation SWITCHBACK."

At around 1500 hrs on Friday 6<sup>th</sup>, No. 33 Squadron's second 12-ship of the day departed from Merville on an armed reconnaissance mission, led once again by F/O V.J. McFarlane DFM RAAF. George took off in PV160, a Spitfire Mk IXe. The good weather reported above also favoured the German air defence batteries in the Breskens Pocket, and during the mission three of No. 33 Squadron's Spitfires were shot down after they encountered very heavy flak. Pilot Officer Clarke RAAF managed to parachute to



George Roney in his flying kit, location unknown.

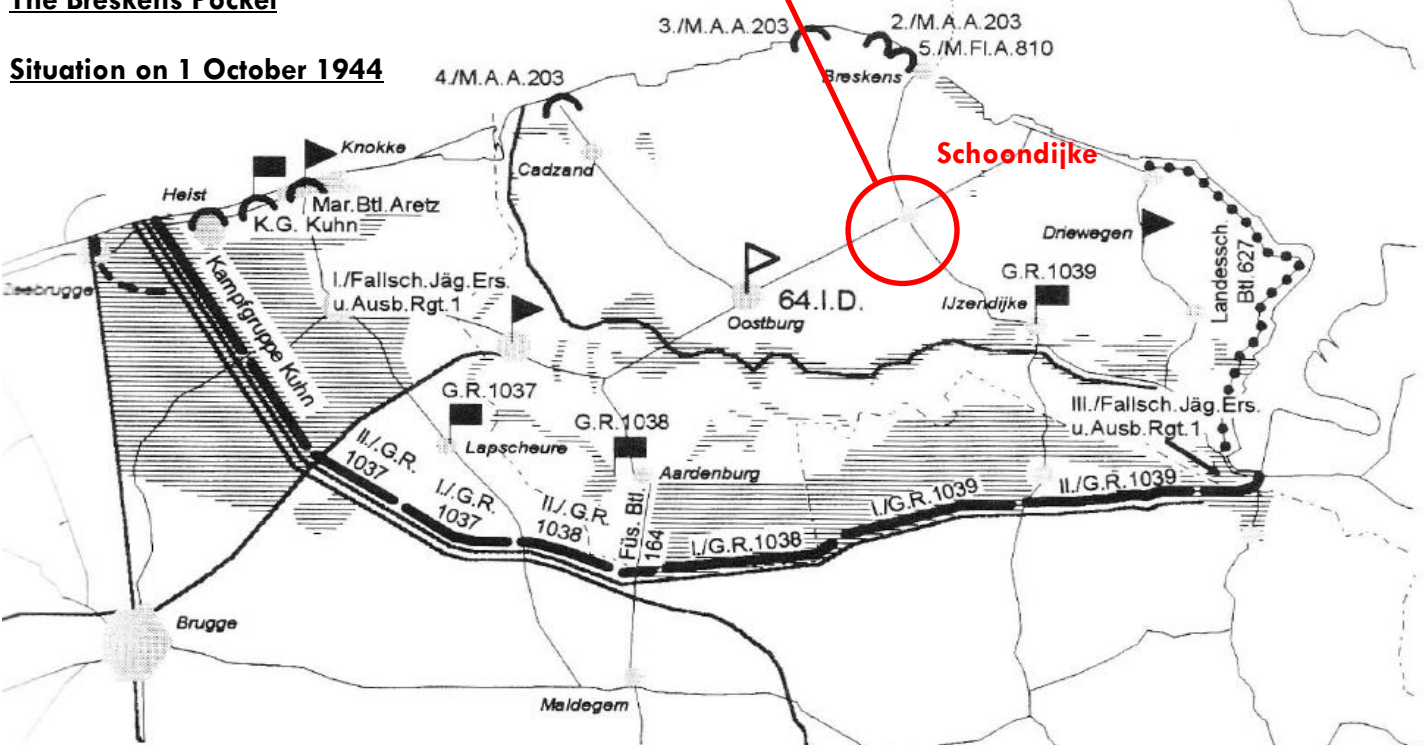
safety and evade capture; the whereabouts of his aircraft are still unknown. Sgt McNee RAF nursed his aircraft south in an attempt to reach Merville, but crash-landed near Kortrijk in Belgium. He got out of the aircraft with a slight injury. George Roney's Spitfire was seen by his section as it reformed south of Breskens to fly back to Merville, but he never joined the formation and his colleagues assumed that they would see him back at the base. Unfortunately, George never made it back to rejoin his colleagues. While many airmen were shot down but made it back to their Squadrons, recounting amazing tales of escaping and evading capture through luck and, very often, with assistance from civilians and the Underground Resistance movements, nothing was heard of George as the days and weeks passed.

On Monday 9<sup>th</sup> October, George's family in New



**The Breskens Pocket**

**Situation on 1 October 1944**



- 64. Inf. Div. HQ
- Bn. HQ
- Flooding
- Regt. HQ
- 64.I.D. Defence Lines
- Defence from troops in bases



Allied photo reconnaissance picture of Schoondijke after the battle. Official Dutch damage assessments written after the end of the war stated that Schoondijke had been virtually removed from the map due to the fighting in the Breskens Pocket.

Zeeland received the dreaded 'Missing on air operations' telegram from the New Zealand Ministry of Defence, containing a message of sympathy from the Prime Minister and his Government. A letter of commiseration followed later in the month from George's Squadron Commander, Squadron Leader Ian Matthew, written on 23rd October while the Squadron was still operating from Merville. On 17 November, two days after No. 33 Squadron had returned to Britain to commence its re-equipment with the Hawker Tempest down in Cornwall, George's close friend, Warrant Officer Evan MacDonald, who had been with George when they met the High Commissioner and who had been part of his section over Breskens, wrote from London. Both letters offer a vague picture of the events leading up to George's crash, stating that the bombing and strafing mission had been carried out successfully and the squadron was reforming to return to base. Warrant Officer MacDonald wrote that he had actually seen George turn away from his colleagues, and they thought he had returned to Merville ahead of them. From OC 33's letter it is clear that George had made a great impact during his time on the squadron and looked certain to be awarded a commission.

Unfortunately for the family back in New Zealand it was almost a year before the RNZAF officially acknowledged that George's death had probably occurred on 6<sup>th</sup> October 1944, at which point the New Zealand Evening Post of 12<sup>th</sup> September 1945 listed George, along with numerous others, on their Air Casualties Roll of Honour.

By combining amphibious and ground operations, supported by air whenever the weather conditions allowed, the Allies had managed to secure the Scheldt Estuary by 9<sup>th</sup> November. One hundred Royal Navy minesweepers then went into action to clear and open up the approach into Antwerp, an operation that was complete by 25<sup>th</sup> November. Three days later, on 28<sup>th</sup> November 1944, the first Allied convoy docked at the port, the first ship being a Canadian built freighter. The cost in civilian and Allied personnel and social infrastructure had been enormous, especially in the Breskens Pocket and on Walcheren island, which Bomber Command had flooded by breaching the dikes in four places in order to allow the North Sea to flood in twice a day

and inundate many of the German positions. In September and October 1944 the air forces had carried out over 11 600 bombing and tactical support sorties and had dropped 8 454 tons of bombs on Walcheren alone.

At the end of the war the Dutch Government declared that the damage sustained in Zeeland was among the worst in the country, with many of the cities and towns in the province more or less obliterated. It would take the islanders until 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1946 before the last breach was closed and the land started to dry out. House building started again in 1947, allowing people to move out of ex-military barracks, gun battery casemates and pre-fabs, with the last emergency housing unit finally closing in 1963. On 4<sup>th</sup> November 1947 there was an organised tree planting day across the island that had been known before the war as 'The Garden of Zeeland', the Dutch population having paid for the trees. Princess Juliana planted the first tree in Westkapelle that day. The following year her mother, Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands, planted the first tree in what became known as the Wilhelmina Forest to the south of Westkapelle.

Due to the extensive destruction in Zeeland it was not until 9<sup>th</sup> June 1948 that a Dutch Military Salvage Squad, alerted by a farmer, finally located the wreckage of George's aircraft in the hamlet of Steenhoven, near to Schoondijke, south of Breskens. The team was able to recover George's remains and personal belongings, from which they were able to trace his family in New Zealand and inform them that George's body had been found, carefully exhumed, identified, and given a proper burial in the Schoondijke General Cemetery in Zeeland. As you will see from the correspondence in the following pages, the gratitude felt by the people of the Netherlands for the delivery and liberation of their country is heartfelt and genuine, and to this day the Dutch have the deepest respect for all of the young men, like George, who made the ultimate sacrifice.

Like so many young men of his time, including George's brother, Stanley, who served with the New Zealand Army in North Africa, Egypt and Italy, seeing action at El Alamein and Monte Cassino, most had left their countries of birth with a spirit of adventure mixed with a sense of pride and duty at the



opportunity to serve their King and country. Unfortunately, like so many of those young men, George did not return to his homeland, nor have the opportunity of raising a family himself. It was left to the other members of the Roney family to remember his heroism and sacrifice, such a full and active life cut so incredibly short. By the end of the war, 3 635 RNZAF personnel had been killed on active service, 350 in the Pacific and 3 285 in Europe.

Warrant Officer George James Roney RNZAF is the only known member of No. 33 Squadron RAF who fell during the Battle for the Scheldt, and he now rests in peace just a few minutes' flying time away from Walcheren. He never received a burial with full military honours, watched by relatives and fellow colleagues. There was no 'Last Post', no 'Flowers of the Forest', no haka. It has taken us 72 years to find George again and recount his story, a man who can now take a deserved and lasting place in the Squadron's history, and receive due respect from the Association and serving members of the Squadron. In memory of the valour shown by so many during the bitter and extended struggle to wrest the heavily defended Scheldt Estuary from a determined enemy, it is up to us, and those who follow, to ensure that his sacrifice, and the sacrifice of so many others, is recognized and never forgotten.

In compiling this story I am extremely grateful to the members of the Roney family living in New Zealand and Australia who have been so generous in sharing their treasured memories with me while I researched George's life. Over the years several members of the Roney family have made the long journey over from New Zealand to pay their respects and leave a piece of 'pounamu' on George's resting place, the New Zealand greenstone that holds a special place in the hearts of the people of the South Island. One of his nieces had never met her 'Uncle George', as she was born just 3 weeks after he was shot down. However, on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2015 she and her husband made the journey from Australia to Europe to visit George's grave, where they left a New Zealand flag and a knitted poppy. I am pleased to report that the poppy, flag and stone were still there when Chris Perkins and I visited the grave during the Battlefield Tour reconnaissance visit in February.

As you will see from the photographs on the following pages, George's burial in June 1948 was a very quiet affair, so on Saturday 17 June 2017 a service will be held at George's grave in Schoondijke Cemetery, attended by our Association members, 33 Squadron engineers, parents and children of the local *Petrus de Wegwijzer* school who have adopted Warrant Officer Roney's grave, and Rob and Trish Roney, who are flying in from New Zealand specially for this commemoration. Rob and Trish will be joining us for the Battlefield Tour too. The New Zealand Ambassador in The Hague has been asked to attend, along with the local Burgomeester, and the Schoondijke pastor will conduct the service. Our Dutch guide for the Tour, Jan Westhoeve, is hoping to arrange pipers from the 'For Freedom Museum' Pipes and Drums Band in Knokke Heist. A full report of the Tour will be available in the November edition of 'Loyalty'.

The following pages record the official and unofficial correspondence that was sent to George Roney's family following George's loss, the first of which is the official 'Reported Missing' telegram. The next two letters, transcribed from copies of the original handwritten letters, are from OC No. 33 Squadron, Squadron Leader Ian Matthew, written at the end of October from Merville airfield, and George's New Zealand colleague and friend, Warrant Officer Evan MacDonald, who was in London following the Squadron's return to UK to exchange their Spitfires for Tempests. Sadly, Warrant Officer MacDonald was to be the only fatality during the conversion at Predannack, crashing on 28 December 1944.

The RNZAF Air Secretary informed the family in September 1945 that George was being officially presumed dead, a decision which allowed his name to appear on National Rolls of Honour. The family had to wait another three years before discovering that George's aircraft had been found and his body laid to rest. Once again the Dutch letters are transcripts from the originals, with original spelling and grammar. It is a moving record, indicative of the process endured by so many families around the world as they waited patiently for word of their lost loved ones.

60

IN REPLY TO COMMUNICATING OFFICER'S TELETYPE MESSAGE

**URGENT**

5/ 3/ 14773 DPR.

9th OCT. 1944

**MR. B. RONEY  
2 WORREN ST.  
DAMARU**

**FILE.**

11 OCT 1944

*B* Initials

REGRET TO INFORM YOU THAT YOUR BROTHER WARRANT OFFICER GEORGE JAMES RONEY HAS BEEN REPORTED MISSING ON AIR OPERATIONS ON 6th OCT. 1944. THE PRIME MINISTER DESIRES ME TO CONVEY TO YOU ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT HIS DEEP SYMPATHY WITH YOU IN YOUR GREAT ANXIETY. LETTER FOLLOWING.

**F. JONES  
MINISTER OF DEFENCE**

RECEIVED 12 OCT 1944  
JAN 27 1945

33 Squadron

R.A.F,

B.L.A.

23/10/44

Dear Mr Roney,

Before you receive this letter you will have been notified by the air ministry that your son was reported missing on the sixth of this month. I hope you will forgive my not writing before but owing to communications being rather difficult at present, it is quite some time before we manage to find out any particulars and I have been postponing this letter in the hope that some news of your son would be forthcoming but unfortunately we have received none at this present time.

The squadron was detailed to bomb and strafe enemy positions and had successfully carried out the operation and was reforming when it was noticed that your son's machine was missing. The section leader called him on the R/T several times and when he received no answer went back to the area to look for him but unfortunately failed to find him.

George was one of the most promising airman pilots in the squadron, and would shortly have been recommended for a commission which I am confident he would have received and his presence among us is very much missed. The other pilots wish to join with me in offering you our deepest sympathy on your very great loss.

I hope that by the time you receive this letter we will have some more definite news but if in the meantime I can do anything more to help you please do not hesitate to let me know.

Yours very sincerely

Ian Matthew

S/Ldr

OC 33 Squadron

NZ 42427 W/O Macdonald N.E.

33 Sqdn. B.L.A.

c/o NZ A.B.P.O.

London 17/11/44

Dear Mr Roney and family,

Naturally by this time you have had the news about your son George. I am writing this letter to try and give you some idea of what happened. George and I joined this squadron together, after many happy months together we always flew together and what we had we shared and in all we were almost brothers. I was flying in the same section as George 6 weeks ago today and after doing our job 3 of us broke one way and saw George break to the right. When we came to join up he wasn't there, and so we thought he had returned to base but no. I have waited all this time, just to get some more information will be a day or two yet. I won't endeavour to make the situation brighter or worse, because yourselves and we pilots here can only hope for the best.

I have written to the general manager of the P.O. Savings bank in London about George's bank book. £16.odd. and he advised me to send it to you and you can take the necessary action with it.

I had to go through his kit and I took care to put his very personal kit in the right hands. Parcels and cigs he owned I gave to his groundcrew, to whom he was very attached.

Well Mr Roney I will write as soon and as often as possible and hope in a short time you should have more definite news. I have some rather good photos of George which I will send to you. Meanwhile we shall keep on hoping and I shall close with kindest regards to all at Reed St.

Yours sincerely,

Evan MacDonald

:IMS

5/3/14773 DPR.

Mr. E.B. Roney,  
Box 417,  
WELLINGTON.

6th September, 1945.

Dear Mr. Roney,

Further to my letter of the 30th July, 1945, I regret to advise that Air Ministry has now officially presumed the death of your brother, Warrant Officer George James Roney, as having occurred on the 6th October, 1944.

The Minister of Defence desires me to convey to you on behalf of the Prime Minister and the Government his deepest sympathy with you in your great loss.

Yours faithfully,

(Sgd.) T. A. BARROW  
AIR SECRETARY.

DEPARTED  
date \_\_\_\_\_ sender \_\_\_\_\_  
signature \_\_\_\_\_ 6/9/45

6/9/45 16

*missed  
had forward  
with*

*DP*

## Letter received in 1948

still no word from air force but they sent back Georges logbook  
You could type this pencilled scrawl

To R Roney Dear Sir etc,

As commander of the civil defence of the ministry of Home Affairs of Holland I received a letter from the mayor of the village of Schoondyke, Province Zeeland, whereat he requested to dig up an English flying machine in which yet should be the pilot

Although I only have the charge to clear the south of our country of munitions which remained here after the war I regarded it as my duty to that young deliverer of our country who gave all that he had for us, to do my best to exhume him and give him a worthy resting place.

We found your brother George James and out of his paybook I read his and your name and address

Further I found on his body his identity card some French money a drive licence a flute I gave order to look carefully for some personal article because I thought you should like to receive these, but we found only the named articles

As soon as I perceived that we should find your brother's body I let it be known to the mayor and I confided all the found articles to his charge.

We have buried your brother on the cemetery of Schoondyke and I and my men have decided to adopt your brother's grave

I am feeling myself very happy that I could do something for one of our deliverers and that is also the sentiment of my men

Also I am pleased that I could find out the name of your brother so that you and your family at present know the last resting place of your brother

I hope to receive from you or any member of your family a notice that my letter has been arrived  
I beg you to give my salutations to your family

Yours faithfully

Clem Van Daelen

That letter to Ron was written in English by  
Mr Clem Van Daelen  
Afd CT Hulpverl. Dienst  
Parade 5  
Venlo, Holland

**Follow up letter, received sometime in 1948**

Translation

Dear Family ,

On 10 June 1948 the undersigned was appointed to survey the digging up of a spitfire which crashed round about 14th Oct 1944 near the municipality of Schoondyke, a village in the Netherlands, province of Zeeland, district Zeeuws—Vlaanderen

The main object of digging up the above plane however was to find the pilot because witnesses of this accident declared that they had not seen anybody jump from the plane.

After two days of hard work our labour was rewarded. Among the remains of the plane there were the remains of a human being After having dug up the pilot it could not have been anyone else. We could see from the paybook which we found on him the following name and particulars:

George James Roney Born -/-/- occupation of civil life motor mechanic Single

From other particulars I could gather that the above Roney came from N.Z.

Although all particulars regarding G.J.R. will be sent on by the local authorities of Schoondyke I myself also feel obliged to tell you of your son's death and to condole with you in your sad loss.

On June 12.1948 George was buried at Schoondyke I was there to.

Should there be anything you would like me to do for you I shall be only to pleased to help you.

The quarter master of the State police

(sgd) F Picavet

Frans Picavet

Midwoudsestraat 12

Schoondijke

Netherlands

GEMEENTE  SCHOONDIJKE

No. \_\_\_\_\_

To \_\_\_\_\_

Bericht op schrijven van:

Mr. G.C. Roney,

Onderwerp:

42 Reed Street

O A M A R U  
New-Zealand.

Bijlagen:

Schoondijke, 10th September 1948.

Undoubtedly you will have heard that in this community at the 9th of June 1948 is found the body of your son w/o G.J. Roney killed in action at October 6th 1944.

I hope you can excuse me for not writing sooner, but I had to wait for the pictures made from the burrial, which took place at June 12th in the morning at nine o'clock. The grave is kept bij the villa-ge of Schoondijke and I assure you that it always will be to find in perfect condition. A clergyman was present when the burrial took place.

The properties of your late son found in the plane will be sent to you as soon as possible. They are: some french banknotes a pay-book, some coins and a flute.

At September 9th an officer from the Royal Air Force took a visit to the grave and told me a cross would be placed next week with the following inscription: Spitfire IX PV. 160 33 Squadron NZ.417113 w/o G.J. Roney (RNZAF) k/a 6-10-44.

The enclosed pictures are taken at the day of the burrial just before and after it had taken place and represent numbered consecutively the following: 1. Coffin standing at the bier covered with pall and flowers, 2. Clergyman M.W.J. Schopenhauer holds the funeral oration on the opened grave; from right to left Clergyman M.W.J.Schopenhauer, Mr.F.A.van Rosevelt, Burgomaster of Schoondijke, Mr.F.Picavet, policeman, Mr.J. van de Walle, grave-digger, Mr.M. Marinisse, police-man, Mr.M.Bruijnooge, undertaker's man. 3. After the coffin was sunk into the grave Mr. F.A. van Rosevelt, Burgomaster of Schoondijke laid flowers.

Clergyman Schopenhauer promised me to write you personally.

If I can do anything for you or your family, I always will be to your service.

The Burgomaster of Schoondijke,

*J. A. P. van der ...*

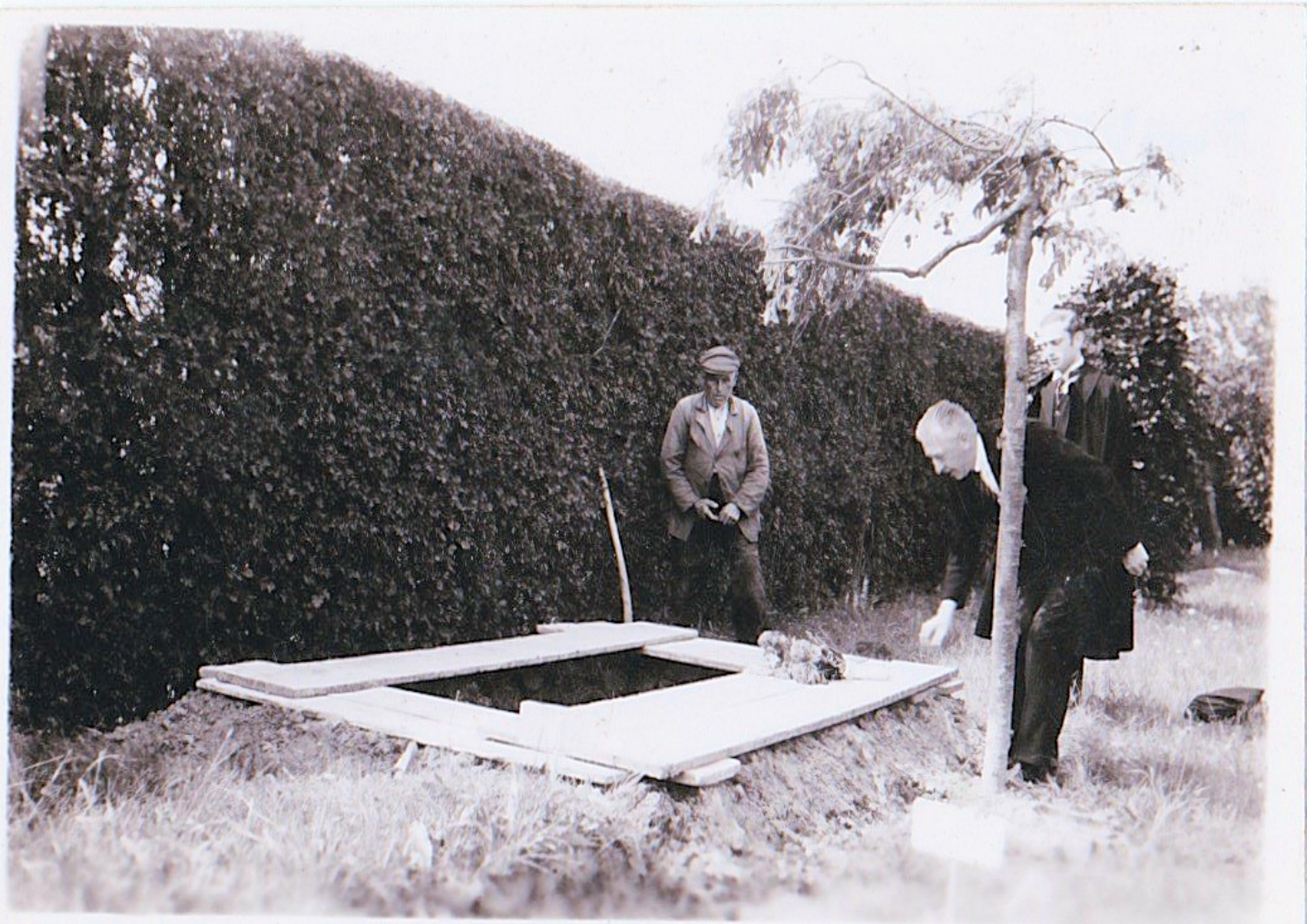




12 June 1948

Photograph 1 (Top of page). "Coffin standing at the bier covered with pall and flowers".

Photograph 2 (Bottom of page). "Clergyman M.W.J. Schopenhauer, Mr F.A. van Rosevelt, Burgomaster of Schoondijke, Mr F. Picavet, policeman, Mr J. van de Walle, grave digger, Mr M. Marinisse, policeman, Mr M. Bruijnooge, undertaker's man".



Above: Photograph 3. "After the coffin was sunk into the grave Mr F.A. van Rosevelt, Burgomaster of Schoondijke laid flowers".



Left: The suitably inscribed temporary cross that was placed on George's grave in September 1948, following an official visit from an RAF officer.

In the Air Secretary's letter to George's family, dated 18 November 1948, (see following page) assurance was given that a permanent headstone would be erected once labour and materials became available, and that George's grave would be carefully tended at all times.

5/3/14773- P.R.8.

18th. Nov. 1948.

Mr. G.C.Roney.  
42 Reed Street.  
OAMARU.

Dear Mr. Roney,

With reference to my letter of the 28th. July, 1948, concerning your son Warrant Officer George James Roney, I have to advise that additional information has now been received from Air Ministry.

This states that your son was pilot of the Spitfire, P.V. 160 of No. 33 R.A.F. Squadron, which took part in an armed reconnaissance in the area of Brestans on the 6th October 1944. The squadron encountered a large amount of heavy opposition from enemy flak, and two aircraft were hit and forced to land, the pilots baling out safely. W/O. Roney's aircraft was lost sight of during the operation, and it can only be assumed that his aircraft was shot down, and the pilot was unable to bale out in time.

Later investigation in this area confirmed that in July last, a Dutch Military Salvage Squad excavated the wreckage of an aircraft which had recently been reported by a farmer Mr. Dekker. This aircraft had crashed in the hamlet of Steenhoven. The remains of the pilot were also recovered from the wreckage, and from documents found on the body it was definitely established these were the remains of your son George James Roney.

The report states that the effects recovered from the wreckage were an R.A.F. paybook, a whistle, and French money to the value of 1475 francs (old style), these, the Burgomasters Secretary stated had been forwarded on to you.

Your son's remains have now been interred in the Schoondijk Communal Cemetery, Grave No. 303 (bis), and a suitably inscribed temporary cross has been erected. A permanent headstone will be erected immediately labour and materials are available, and I am to assure that your son's grave will be carefully tended at all times.

I am fully aware of the distressing nature of these details Mr. Roney, at the same time I am sure you would prefer to be given all the information received by this Department. I can only trust that the knowledge that your son's body has at last been recovered and given a Christian burial, may prove of some consolation to you.

Once again on behalf of the Air Board, I desire to express my deepest sympathy in your great loss.

Yours faithfully,

*J. Barrow*  
AIR SECRETARY.

FILE

19/11/48

Ints.  
19/11/48

573/14773

CAMPAIGN STARS AND MEDALS

DECEASED PERSONNEL (AIR)

NO. 417113 RANK WO NAME RONEY 9 J  
(Surname) (Initials)

QUALIFIED FOR:-

- 1. The 1939-45 Star
- 2. The Atlantic Star
- 3. The ~~Lincoln~~ ~~Trust~~ Star
- 4. The Africa Star
- 5. The Pacific Star
- 6. The Burma Star
- 7. The Italy Star
- 8. The France & Germany Star
- 9. The Defence Medal
- 10. The War Medal 1939/45
- 11. The N.Z. War Medal

GLASPS:

Battle of Britain ✓  
 Africa \_\_\_\_\_  
 Others \_\_\_\_\_  
 (number above)  
 (Delete those for which airman does NOT qualify)

Assessed by OTD

Checked by TO

STARS AND/OR MEDALS DESPATCHED WITH RIBBONS.

TO: W G C Roney 7  
42 Reed Street  
Damaru

DATE: 30 MAY 1950

INITIALS: [Signature]

SCHEDULE NO. 3895

R4. ISSUES NOTED ON FORM 543.

INITIALS: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / 50.



Above (L-R): The 1939-1945 Star, France & Germany Star, The Defence Medal, The War Medal 1939/45, The N.Z. War Medal.  
Below: The King George VI Memorial Cross, awarded to the next of kin of all New Zealand servicemen and women who were killed while on war service or operational service overseas .



417113 WARRANT OFFICER  
G. J. RONEY  
PILOT  
ROYAL N.Z. AIR FORCE  
6TH OCTOBER 1944 AGE 22



## 'Mystery Man' question solved - Flight Lieutenant Godfrey Addison Argument RCAF 33 Sqn



**Back Row (L-R): Sqn Ldr Matthew DFC (OC) Fg Off Linzel, Flt Lts Starkey and Clarke, unknown, Flt Lt Smith, Fg Off Leeming.  
Front Row : unknown, except for the W/O pilot, third from the left, who is probably W/O B.G. Leigh.**

In the article about Jan Linzel in the previous Loyalty newsletter this picture of 33 Squadron pilots was shown, naming all of the officers across the back row except for the officer with the red circle. In Jan's book he wrote that he did not recall the young man's name, but wrote that he was killed shortly after the photograph was taken. That comment took the Stewart-Perkins research team back in to the ORB to look for any pilots that had been killed while the Squadron was in France, and we discovered that a Fg Off Godfrey Addison Argument RCAF had crashed near Antwerp on 17 September 1944. Chris Perkins then discovered Attestation paperwork showing that Godfrey, born 28th August 1921 in Toronto to British parents, had enlisted in the RCAF with 'Special Reserve' status on his 19th birthday and was posted to No.2 Manning Depot as Air Crew (Pilot). His name appears as a No. 22 Course (5th Mar - 16th May 1941) graduate at No. 6 Service Flying Training School Dunville, and there is a photograph in an undated magazine article of a Sgt G.A. Argument (Air Gunner) from Toronto standing with a crew in front of a Boulton and Paul

Defiant, part of "...a Canadian night fighter squadron that prowls about in the dark looking for Hun bombers." From there the trail goes cold, until an entry in the ORB for 22nd August which records Fg Off Argument flying a recce along the French coast. The following month 33 was in France, and Fg Off Argument is mentioned as participating in an armed recce at Flushing on 11th September. On 17th September the ORB records an attack on the railway yards at Roosendaal, where heavy flak was encountered and Fg Off Argument's aircraft was hit after he had dropped his bomb. Despite the OC and his flt cdr flying to Antwerp on 17th and 20th September to enquire about Fg Off Argument's whereabouts, his name is not mentioned again.

We now know that Flt Lt Argument was eventually laid to rest at Schoonselhof Cemetery in Antwerp and we are trying to trace the family in Toronto to fill in the missing information, as we were able to do with George Roney. A wreath will be laid at his grave by the Association members participating in the Battlefield Tour in June.

# And Finally...

## **33 Squadron Association at the Cenotaph Sunday 12 November 2017**

Just in case you don't subscribe to Facebook, you will have to move very quickly after reading this if you want to be part of the Association party marching at the Cenotaph this year. Jez Reid needs your details by no later than 17 May in order to register the 33 Squadron Association members with the Royal British Legion; their rules state that any participant must be a paid up member of an Association to take part in the Cenotaph Parade. Register your interest with Jez Reid now!

Email\_ [jezr69@gmail.com](mailto:jezr69@gmail.com)

And along with your blazer badge you might want one of the new 33 Squadron Association ties. They will cost you £15 if collected in person at the AGM, before the Battlefield Tour or at the '20 years at RAF Benson' BBQ Party, otherwise the tie can be sent to you through the post for an additional £2.00 P&P. Please place your order with Paul Davies and note that there are only 50 ties available on this first run.

Email\_ [33sqnassociation@gmail.com](mailto:33sqnassociation@gmail.com)

Order early and avoid any disappointment!

Now, from the Lessons Identified after last year's event, what about some hip flasks for the Cenotaph Parade.....?







# 33 SQUADRON ASSOCIATION AGM



Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> June, 2017  
WO & Sgts Mess, RAF Benson

1200 Arrival (Bar Opens) – 1300 Food  
1400 AGM - 1800 Bar Closes

Cost £10 per member  
POC – Paul Davies  
[33sqnassociation@gmail.com](mailto:33sqnassociation@gmail.com)



## 33 Sqn

Celebrating 20 Years at RAF Benson



Save the Date:

**27 July 17**

33 Sqn will be marking its 20th anniversary at RAF Benson on 27 July 17 and would like to invite all 33 Sqn members both past and present to celebrate. On the day, there will be a welcome followed by a Puma HC Mk 2 brief and walk around, Sqn history and Simulator visits, then finishing off with a BBQ in the Sqn Bar, the Hart's Head.

ProjO - Sqn Ldr Seddon 95261 x7104 (01491 837766 x7104) [BEN-33Sqn-B-OC@mod.uk](mailto:BEN-33Sqn-B-OC@mod.uk)

**We are always looking for contributions to the Newsletter.**

**Submissions to '33sqnassociation@gmail.com'.**