



# 600

*Praeter Sescentos*

## ***“Wappenbroeders Special”***

600 (City of London) Squadron RAuxAF Association Newsletter Supplement

*Patron: The Viscount Trenchard of Wolfeton*

*Affiliated Members: 601 & 604 Squadron Associations.*

July 2012

“They shall not grow old,  
as we that are left grow old.  
Age shall not weary them,  
nor the years condemn.  
At the going down of the sun  
and in the morning  
We will remember them.”

*- Laurence Binyon*



## **Mission**

10/05/1940: Waalhaven, NL

In the morning of the 10th May six Blenheim 1F fighter-cruisers from Squadron 600 (Squadron Leader James Wells) had been directed to Waalhaven. The planes left Manston at 1030 hours. They would never reach Waalhaven, for the Messerschmitt Bf-110's of 3/ZG1 [Cmdt: Oberleutnant Streib] would intercept the British planes over Pernis. Five of the six Blenheims were shot down; the sixth plane, the BQ-O (F/O Hayes and Cpl Holmes) escaped with heavy damage.

Type: Blenheim 1F

Serial number: L6616, BQ-R

Operation: Waalhaven

Lost: 10/05/1940

Squadron Leader James M. Wells, RAF (Auxiliary Air Force), 90081, 600 Sqdn., age 31, 10/05/1940, Rotterdam (Crooswijk) General Cemetery, NL  
Corporal (Air Gnr.) Basil A. Kidd, RAF (Auxiliary Air Force), 800235, 600 Sqdn., age 30, 10/05/1940, Rotterdam (Crooswijk) General Cemetery, NL  
Sergeant David survived the crash and escaped from Holland by HMS Hereward.

Type: Blenheim Mk IF

Serial number: L1335, BQ-W

Operation: Waalhaven

Lost: 10/05/1940

Flying Officer Charles R. Moore, RAF (Auxiliary Air Force), 90098, 600 Sqdn., age unknown, 10/05/1940, Rotterdam (Crooswijk) General Cemetery, NL  
Corporal Laurence D. Isaacs, RAF (Auxiliary Air Force), 800520, 600 Sqdn., age 20, 10/05/1940, Rotterdam (Crooswijk) General Cemetery, NL

Type: Blenheim Mk IF

Serial number: L1515, BQ-L

Operation: Waalhaven

Lost: 10/05/1940

Pilot Officer Michael H. Anderson, RAF 90497, 600 Sqdn., age 23, 10/05/1940, Spijkenisse General Cemetery, NL  
Leading Aircraftman Herbert C.W. Hawkins, RAF 800567, 600 Sqdn., age unknown, 10/05/1940, Spijkenisse General Cemetery, NL

Type: Bristol Blenheim

Serial number: ?, BQ-K

Operation: Waalhaven

Lost: 10/05/1940

F/O (Pilot) Rowe, PoW

Pilot Officer (Air Gnr.) Robert W. H. Echlin, RAFVR 77117, 600 Sqdn., age 36, 10/05/1940, Piershil Protestant Churchyard (Zuid-Holland), NL

Type: Blenheim Mk IF

Serial number: ?, BQ-N

Operation: Waalhaven

Lost: 10/05/1940

P/O Haine

P/O Kramer

Crashed at Herkingen, NL. Both crew members survived the crash and escaped from Holland by HMS Hereward.

The other two aircraft were L1401 and L1515, have not been able yet to link them to BQ-N and/or

BQ-K. Example found on a RAF site (code seems to be wrong).



### Crash

On 10 May 40 because of the heavy Ju 52 transport movements near Waalhaven/Rotterdam 600 Squadron detailed 6 Blenheims IF to this target. At low level the airfield was attacked and one Ju 52 of KGr zbV 172 was set on fire.

At the very same time a formation of Ju 52s headed for Waalhaven. These were escorted by Me 110's of 2. and 3./ZG 1. Very heavy dogfights started - only one Blenheim (piloted by F/O Hayes) managed to escape and return. The others were shot down by the Me110's.

Early in the afternoon of May 10th the RAF attacked Waalhaven airport with *Blenheim-1F* fighter-bombers of 600 squadron. One of the *Blenheim* had strafed the airbase when on the way back a *Messerschmitt* attacked them. According to reports from citizens of Hoogvliet and Spijkenisse was the *Blenheim* was able to shoot his attacker down and the German crashed with a big splash in the Oude Maas near the bridge of Spijkenisse.

Two months later, parts of the wreck was secured by the son of the Bridge guard.

The British *Blenheim* was also damaged by German return fire and forced to land. It was to be a crash landing. Just outside Hoogvliet the *Blenheim* hit the ground, both crew members were killed. The pilot was found beheaded and missing a leg, the air gunner was found dead in the turret.

The crew of the *Blenheim* L1515 L-BQ consisted of *Pilot Officer* [equivalent to second lieutenant pilot] Michael H. Anderson and *Leading Aircraft (s) man* [equals Soldier 1st Class] HCW Hawkins. The man could not be identified on 10 and 11 May 1940. On May 11 when the two appear to have been recovered, they were recorded as two British soldiers of unknown origin in the rank of *Leading Aircraft man*. It was decided to bury the two airmen in Spijkenisse.

The story has a special follow-up. Until 1981 both pilots were known as "unknown British pilots" at the General Cemetery of Spijkenisse. Only then local historian Hans Underwater together with British archives was able to establish the identity of these two airmen buried in Spijkenisse. It also provided direct identification of two other - until then - unknown British pilots; *Flying Officer* [1st Lieutenant] Moore and *Corporal* Isaacs. They had crashed at Waalhaven and had remained unidentified until then.

<http://www.zuidfront-holland1940.nl/index.php?page=ijsselmonde-2>



## Crew

Pilot Officer Michael H. Anderson, RAF 90497, 600 Sqdn., age 23, 10/05/1940, Spijkenisse General Cemetery, NL

Leading Aircraftman Herbert C.W. Hawkins, RAF 800567, 600 Sqdn., age unknown, 10/05/1940, Spijkenisse General Cemetery, NL

Name: ANDERSON, MICHAEL HERBERT  
Initials: M H  
Nationality: United Kingdom  
Rank: Pilot Officer  
Regiment/Service: Royal Air Force  
Unit Text: 600 Sqdn.  
Age: 23  
Date of Death: 10/05/1940  
Service No: 90497  
Awards: Mentioned in Despatches  
Additional information: Husband of Priscilla Ann Anderson (nee Troughton), of Kingston, near Lewes, Sussex.  
Casualty Type: Commonwealth War Dead  
Grave/Memorial Reference: Grave 26.  
Cemetery: SPIJKENISSE GENERAL CEMETERY

Name: HAWKINS, HERBERT CHARLES WILLIAM  
Initials: H C W  
Nationality: United Kingdom  
Rank: Leading Aircraftman  
Regiment/Service: Royal Air Force  
Unit Text: 600 Sqdn.  
Date of Death: 10/05/1940  
Service No: 800567  
Casualty Type: Commonwealth War Dead  
Grave/Memorial Reference: Grave 25.  
Cemetery: SPIJKENISSE GENERAL CEMETERY



*Photo: Pieter Schlebaum*

## Claim

The claims were made by:  
Oblt Werner Streib 1  
Fw Paul Gildner 1  
Uffz Müller 2  
Oblt Möller 1

Other sources also mention Leutnant Knacke with one claim - he flew in the Schwarm of Streib, Gildner and Müller.

Olt. Moeller made 3 claims and Viktor Moelders from 1/ZG2 claimed in space of one minute 2 Fokker T.V shot down. One from his claims was not confirmed and the other concerns T.V No.855 which crashed in North Sea. Another Fokker T.V was only damaged. The next victories (3?) came on the 12.05.40 (or 13.05.40?) - on this day Moelders claimed one Spitfire shot down but again this victory was not officially credited. On the 13.05.40 I/ZG1 claimed 26 planes destroyed on the ground on the airfield Hamstede.

**Wenzel, Werner Hptm** 14 6/JG-27(5/40), 9/JG-27(8/41 S.U.), 9/JG-3(7/42 S.U.), Adj III/JG-7(3/45), Stfkpt 9/JG-7(4/45 to end) Bf 109E in JG-27, Bf 109F in JG-3, Me 262A-1a in JG-7 EP, EK 1 & 2, Fighter Operational Clasp One known victory, his 1st, a Blenheim over Rotterdam, 10 May, 1940. His first known Soviet victory, an I-16 on 14 August, 1941. A Soviet double on 18 July, 1942; both Il-2's. An Il-2 at Kalatsch on 27 July, 1942. An SU-2 at Tingula on 5 August, 1942. An Il-2 N of Nadeshda on 19 August, 1942. An R-5 at Stalingrad on 24 August, 1942. A P-2 at Orlowkoj on 7 September, 1942. His 14th, a LaGG-3 on 1 October, 1942. Magnus Report, victory count may be 18 or higher.

10-05-40 00:00 "Ltn." "Werner" "Wenzel" 06-11-09 "JG 27" "Blenheim" "Rotterdam" "14.35" " 1st" 6 "yes" "OKL" "Prien/Bock"

**Uebe, Heinz Uffz** 2 6/JG-27 Bf 109E EK 1 & 2, Fighter Operational Clasp One known victory, his 1st, a Blenheim south of Rotterdam, 10 May, 1940. His 2nd, a Morane 406 at Montdidier, 6 June, 1940.

10-05-40 00:00 "Uffz." "Heinz" "Uebe" 06-11-09 "JG 27" "Blenheim" "S. Rotterdam" "14.20" " 1st" 4 "yes" "OKL" "Prien/Bock"

I/ZG 1 intercepted six Blenheim IVs of RAF 600 Squadron over Walhaven airfield, five were shot down with only one escaping. Falck describes his experiences as he tries to bag the one that escaped.

*"I was on patrol in the area of the Hague when I spotted a Blenheim and tried to catch him. I chased him around church spires, around sand dunes, around trees, round and round we went only 10-15 meters high. I was right behind him but couldn't get a shot at him. When he broke for the open sea I thought 'Now I'll get him!' I began closing in on him but after a few kilometers he began circling a steamship at only a few meters above the waves. Round and round the ship and I couldn't get a shot at him. Finally he again broke for the open sea toward England but now I was low on fuel and had to break off my chase. The last I saw of him he was skimming the waves as fast as he could towards home. That Englishman was some pilot."*

F/O Hayes was that "brilliant pilot", who could run alive from Falck under his fire.

10 May 1940 Oblt. Werner Streib shot down Blenheim bomber, his first and last day victory. I./ZG 1 pilots intercepted a formation of 6 Blenheims, and only 1 could avoid death. All rest was shot down.

Strangely Streib is not credited for destroying any planes on May 10th.

**Streib, Werner Obst 6/13/1911 Pforzheim/Baden** 65 2/ZG-1, 4/NJG-1, Stfkpt 2/NJG-1 (7/40), Kdr I/NJG-1 (10/40-7/43), Kdr NJG-1 (7/43-3/44) Do 17Z-7, Bf 110G-4 Werk # 5317 (lost 5/5/43), He 219A-0 Wk# 190009 (lost 6/12/43) RK(10/7/40)-EL (2/26/43)-S(3/11/44), DK-G(3/9/42), EK 1 & 2, Night Fighter Oper. Clasp in Gold Approximately 150 combat missions. 65 Night victories, 1 Day victory. One known victory, an RAF Whitley V bomber on 20 July, 1940, flying the only Do 17Z-7 built. His RO/Gunner, Uffz Lingen. Another Whitley and perhaps a Wellington on the night of 22 July, 1940. A Hampden the night of 30-31 August, 1940, no location. Two Wellingtons and a Hampden over England the night of 30 September, 1940. A Hampden the night of 14-15 October, 1940, no location. Another, a Hampden at Venlo, 10 March, 1941. Two Wellington's at Panningen, southeast of Eindhoven the night of 13-14 March, 1941. Two Hampdens in the Roer/Limburg vicinity the night of 10-11 April, 1941. Another victory, a Whitley V on 1 July, 1941, no location. A Lancaster and a Whitley V on 17 August, 1941, no location. A Wellington and a Whitley V the night of 27-28 December, 1941, no location. He crashed his Bf 110G-4 at Hegelsom Holland, SW of Horst, NW of Venlo, on 5 May, 1943, cause and pilot/crew disposition unknown (DeSwart). Crashed his He 219 at the Venlo Holland airfield on 6/12/43, cause and injuries unknown (DeSwart). Deceased 15 June, 1986.

Werner Streib (The first night fighter ace to receive the Knight's Cross, post-war Brigadegeneral in the Luftwaffe)

A claim on a Blenheim is made by; Uebe, Heinz Uffz 2 6/JG-27 Bf 109E EK 1 & 2, Fighter Operational Clasp One known victory, his 1st, a Blenheim south of Rotterdam, 10 May, 1940. His 2nd, a Morane 406 at Montdidier, 6 June, 1940.



*Tim O'Brians "Final Destination Waalhaven". The central Blenheim, BQ-O, was flown by Norman Hayes and was the only aircraft to return.*

## **A brutal awakening**

On 10 May 1940 the Netherlands were roughly awakened by the invading German army. Prior to the invasion with ground forces, airborne landings took place at strategic locations such as airports and bridges.

German parachute troops overpowered the Dutch defences during their surprise attacks. One of the strategic locations was Waalhaven airport near Rotterdam. After this airport had fallen into German hands, more and more German ground troops were flown in.

Soon after fighting had started, the Dutch Government contacted Britain and France through the air attachés in The Hague. The British attaché reported on 10 May 1940 at 9.45 am in London that Waalhaven airport had fallen. "A bombardment was desired". Two hours later, the request was repeated. Also the airfields Ypenburg, Ockenburg and Valkenburg were to be attacked.

The Dutch request was picked up by the RAF. For this attack, No. 600 City of London Squadron were chosen. It was stationed at RAF Manston. This squadron was part of the so-called Auxiliary Air Force, a corps composed of citizen volunteers, which was founded in 1924.

The British attack on Waalhaven of 10 May 1940 was executed by six Bristol Blenheim Mk IF hunters. Despite the limited speed of the RAF Blenheim, the RAF used this aircraft quite often when the war rolled over the low countries and France. A major reason for the widespread use of this aircraft was that to preserve the more capable Spitfire and Hurricane fighters for the defence of England itself.

## **The attack on airport Waalhaven**

Once the news of the German invasion had come through to England, 600 squadron as well as many other squadrons, went on a state of alert. It was clear that the quiet months had passed. "A" Flight of 600 Squadron were warned that they were to attack targets in Holland. Before the briefing took place, this was cancelled. Later that morning the order was given to "B" flight. The leadership was given by the 31-year-old squadron leader James Jimmy Wells. The navigator of Wells' aircraft was Sergeant Davis and the gunner was Corporal Kidd. The six aircraft got off on a beautiful spring morning to a height of 2,000 feet. There they waited for some time for a promised Spitfire escort. This escort never came. Jimmy Wells decided to attack anyway because he knew that the Dutch forces would attempt to attack the Germans simultaneously with the air assault.

After a successful trip across the North Sea, the British pilots descended from 3,000 feet and formed two assault groups ("echelons") of three aircraft. They attacked the German planes which were parked and scored hits on several parked aircraft.

After this first round, they reformed for a second attack. It never came because German fighters arrived on the battlefield. The German fighters were from the 3. / ZG1 (VG = Zerstoror Gruppe; long distance hunters) and flew under the leadership of Oberleutnant Streib.

The British still flew low because of the first attack on the airfield and they tried to gain height to oppose the Germans aircraft but it was too late. Because of their lack of height and because the German planes ("Messerschmitt Me-110") were superior to the Blenheim, they really had no chance. Within minutes, five of the six Blenheim's were shot down. Four of these crashed in the vicinity of Rotterdam-Pernis. The fifth got as far as Herkingen on the island Goeree-Overflakkee, south of Rotterdam.

The sixth aircraft got back to England was badly damaged and had to be written off.

The crew paid a high price.

- Of Blenheim BQ-R ", the aircraft of Jimmy Wells, only Sgt. John Davis survived the crash. He returned to England.
- Of BQ-K pilot Hugh Rowe was captured. Gunner Sgt. Echlin died in the crash.
- The fate of the crew of the Blenheim BQ-L and BQ-W were extensively studied by Hans Onderwater. (See the book "And then there was silence") He identified the four crew 41 years later. The crew members were:
  - F / O Moore and Cpl. Isaacs (BQ-W)
  - F / O Anderson and Cpl. Hawkins (BQ-L)
- The fifth aircraft was the BQ-N of Haine and Richard Kramer.
- The sixth aircraft, the BQ-R and was flown by P/O T.N. (Norman) Hayes and P/O G.H. Holmes. Their aircraft was heavily attacked, but was the only one of the six aircraft to return to England.

Of the total of thirteen airmen that took off on May 10, seven did not survive. Only five got back to England and one was imprisoned. All in all, the sometimes called "weekend flyers" paid a high price.

Later that day, Waalhaven was attacked again by the RAF. This attack took place around 13.20 hours. This time, nine Bristol Blenheim Mk II light bombers were deployed. According to reports sixteen German aircraft were destroyed during the bombing. The nine aircraft were deployed for this attack, all returned safely to their base.



*Above: The remains of the Blenheim on the mudflats near Herkingen (collection WO2GO Foundation)*

### **The escape of Haine and Kramer**

After their attack on the airport Haine and Kramer were also under attack by German aircraft. In the first attack the Perspex canopy and Haine's instrument panel was shot to smithereens and shrapnel hit Haine's helmet. Haine set in an evasive manoeuvre but there was a second attack already. This time the right wing and engine were hit, and shortly after the engine stopped. With only one engine, there was no longer any power for sharp manoeuvring.

When a German aircraft prepared for a third assault on the battered aircraft, Haine dived to the ground in order to shake off the attackers. He was hit once again, losing a part of the right propeller. His aircraft began to vibrate uncontrollably.

Haine was now fighting to keep his aircraft steady. At this point, along came a Messerschmitt Me-109. The German pilot must have thought that the Blenheim was about to crash because he was not going in for another attack on the British. Kramer, the gunner of the Blenheim, tried to open fire, but his weapon initially faltered. When the weapon finally began working, he fired a volley at

the Messerschmitt still flying alongside their plane. It hit the German aircraft which turned off. It must have crashed?

In the meantime Haine struggled with the heavily damaged aircraft. He had to make an emergency landing somewhere. He saw a row of trees and barely missed them. Then he saw a seemingly endless expanse of mud flats and salt marshes, they had reached the island Overflakkee. This was an ideal place for a belly landing. Like a dying swan, Haine set the aircraft on the mud banks. Fuel was leaking everywhere so Haine and Kramer somewhat hurriedly tried to leave the aircraft. Although they both had injured to their faces and their hands by glass shards from the instrument panel and shattered windows, they managed to climb out of the aircraft.

Fortunately there was no sign of any German aircraft. The men tried to set fire to the aircraft but curiously the Blenheim refused to burn. Even when they shot at it with a flare cartridge, it failed to ignite.

Because they feared that the flares would attract attention, they abandoned the scene and waded to the nearby shore. After three days of travelling through Holland, they arrived in the Hook of Holland. Once here, they went aboard the British warship HMS Hereward, where returned to England. On board this ship were also some famous guests, including the Dutch Queen Wilhelmina ...escaping German forces.



Above: Local residents near the aircraft of Haine and Kramer (collection WO2GO Foundation)

The Blenheim of Haine and Kramer lay in the water for months. The local youths played in the aircraft and gradually more and more parts were removed until eventually, the remnants were removed by the Germans.

Richard Haine and Mark Kramer both received the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC) for their action on 10 May 1940. Haine said, "This was a very proud moment. We were almost overwhelmed with the splendour of the occasion and the magnificence of the palace".

Richard Haine played an important role in the development of the British night fighter capability during the war. He had a long career with the RAF and wrote a book about it; *From Fury to Phantom, an RAF pilot's story 1936-1970*

Richard Haine died 30 Sep 2008, the day before his 92<sup>nd</sup> birthday.



CENTRAL CHANCERY OF  
THE ORDERS OF KNIGHTHOOD,  
ST JAMES'S PALACE, S.W.1.

20th August, 1940.

Sir,

The King will hold an Investiture at Buckingham Palace on Tuesday the 3rd September, at which your attendance is requested.

It is requested that you should be at the Palace not later than 10.30 o'clock a.m.

DRESS—Service Dress or Morning Dress.

This letter should be produced on entering the Palace, as no further card of admission will be issued.

Two tickets for relations or friends to witness the Investiture may be obtained on application to this Office.

Please send an immediate acknowledgment to the Secretary, Central Chancery of the Orders of Knighthood, St. James's Palace, London, S.W.1, on the enclosed card.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient Servant.

Secretary.

Pilot Officer Richard C. Haine,  
D.F.C., R.A.F.



Above: the invitation to Richard Haine for the presentation of the DFC  
(Kees Stoutjesdijk collection via R. Haine)





*The Blenheim BQ-N of Haine, displayed during a training flight over Reculver Castle, Herne Bay, north coast of Kent near RAF Manston  
(Painting by Kees Stoutjesdijk)*

### **Marcus Kramer**

Less is known of Marcus Kramer. The Bristol Blenheim had a standard crew of three. Besides the pilot and the gunner there was a navigator / bombardier on board, but not on 10 May 1940. Beside the pilot R. Haine there was only a gunner on board - this was Marcus Kramer.

Marcus Kramer was born in 1911 in Bermondsey. He was the son of Mr and Mrs Emmanuel Kramer, who lived at 3, Marine Parade, Southend-on-Sea. The Kramer family were of Jewish origin and were active in the Jewish community.

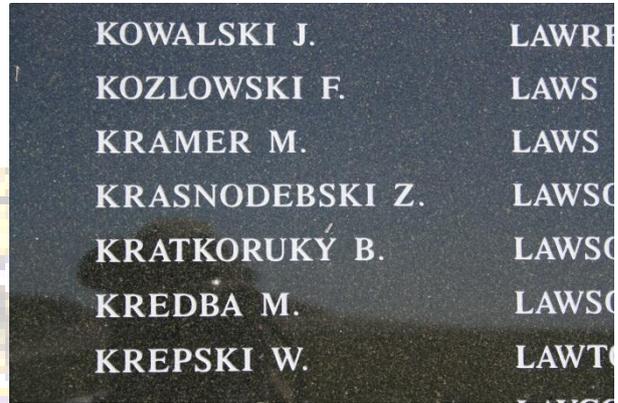
Kramer joined the RAFVR in March 1939. His background and concerns about the German threat to the Jewish community will without doubt have played a role because he gave up a confident and comfortable existence as a pharmacist. After the actions of 1940 he and Haine parted ways. Haine was posted to 68 Sqd on 14 January 1941. Kramer was reassigned to 29 Squadron RAF 10 Group. RAF 29 Squadron had the specific task of night patrols using the Bristol Fighter Beaufighter.

Unfortunately, Mark Kramer did not survive the war. Together with Squadron Leader William John Methven he lost his life on May 21, 1941. He was 29 years old.

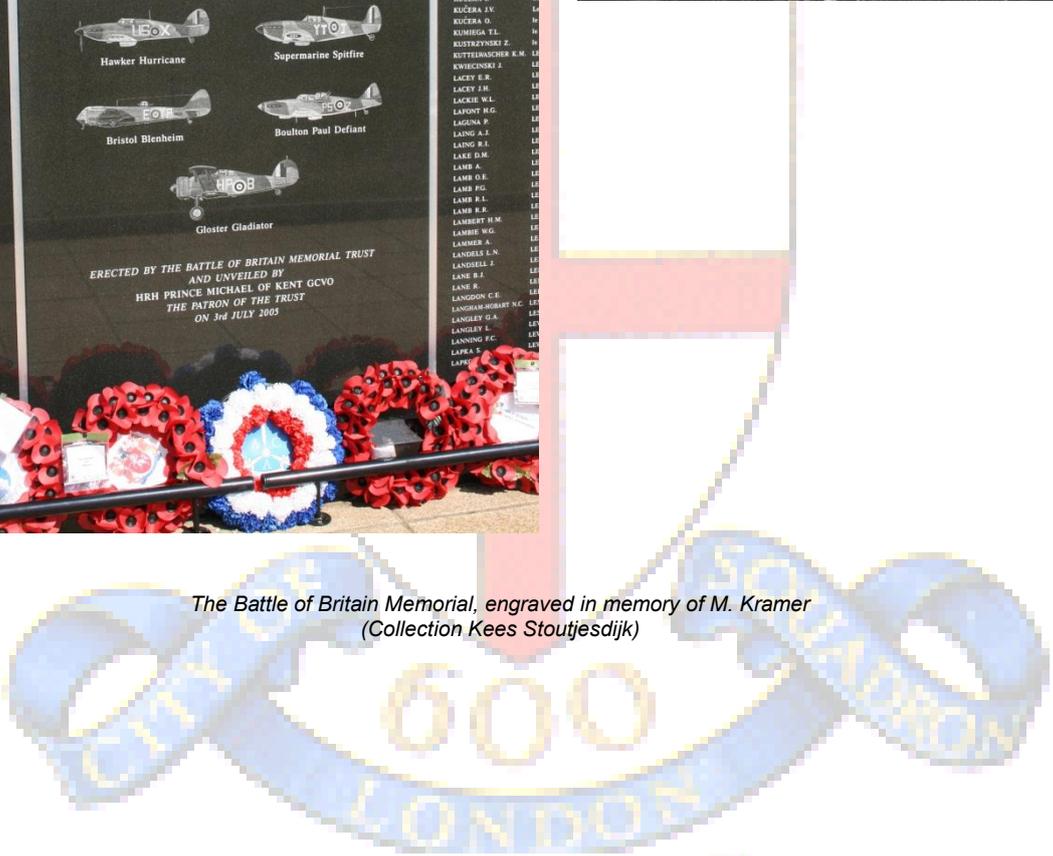
They flew in bad weather when their De Havilland DH82A Tiger Moth N6853 (production number 82 108) crashed in the river Severn near Beachley / Chepstow. According to his AJEX card,

eyewitnesses saw the aircraft crashing. Only the tunic of Kramer washed ashore. The death of Kramer was published in The Times of 31 December 1941.

Marcus Kramer was never found. His name is listed on both the RAF Runnymede Memorial (Panel 29) as well as on The Christopher Foxley-Norris Memorial Wall, the memorial wall of the very beautiful Battle of Britain Memorial at Capel-le-ferne in Kent, England.



The Battle of Britain Memorial, engraved in memory of M. Kramer (Collection Kees Stoutjesdijk)









## 600 Squadron Visit to Holland 2012 by AC Dan Moriarty

I started my journey with the rest of the squadron with little appreciation of why I was going, what was I representing and how? I returned as an educated airman, respectful of the sacrifices made in the face of adversity by these few RAuxAF airmen and officers in the summer of 1940 alone over Rotterdam.

We made our way to Holland on the first day and stopped at Bergen op Zoom Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery.



### *Historical Information*

*Bergen-op-Zoom War Cemetery contains 1,284 Commonwealth burials and commemorations of the Second World War. 116 of the burials are unidentified. Many of the casualties are as a result of the Battle for Walcheren (Operation Infatuate), at the beginning of November 1944. Walcheren was an island that dominated the entrance to the River Scheldt, which the Germans fortified to prevent the allies gaining access to the vital deep water port at Antwerp. After a hard fought battle, that principally involved units from the 52nd (Lowland) Division, the 5th Canadian Infantry Brigade and the 4th Special Service Brigade, the island was secured on the 8th November 1944.*

*There are also seven First World War burials (one airman and six unknown sailors) and 21 war graves of other nationalities.*

This did not have members of the squadron buried there but the sheer amount of British War graves in one area was incredible. The beautiful landscaping of the area as well as peace and quiet was becoming of the site in which so many young men lay. Their ages ranged from 18 to 45 and ranked from AC to Brigadier.

Moving on to our accommodation we were made welcome at the Marine Korpes barracks in Rotterdam where we met our acquaintances of the 600 Squadron Association. These two previous 600 squadron servicemen are so devoted to what the Squadron stands for and their passion for keeping our history alive was contagious. That night's dinner setting along the river Meuse was a brilliant experience get to know officers, NCO's and the association members.

On the first real day of remembrance the Squadron visited the Crooswijk Cemetery where the graves of four of our comrades lay in peace;



#### *Historical Information*

*In May 1941, the local civil authorities set aside for Allied war casualties a plot in the immediate vicinity of the Dutch war graves. A number of British airmen were moved to this plot from other parts of the cemetery and from scattered graves in the surrounding countryside; and subsequent Allied casualties were buried there.*

*These graves were constantly tended and provided with flowers by the people of Rotterdam, in contrast to the German graves which were ignored. The enraged Germans therefore caused them to be removed, in May 1943, to the remotest corner of the cemetery. They were fenced off by wooden hurdles, and even for a short time guarded by an armed sentry to keep away visitors. There is 1 Commonwealth burial of the 1914-1918 war and a further 124 Commonwealth burials of the 1939-1945 war, 5 of which are unidentified. There are 11 Polish burials.*

The venue is a quiet, calm cemetery where they rest with other members of the British Forces and Dutch Nationals. I had the great privilege of laying a wreath on the grave of Corporal Basil Kidd, an Air Gunner on board one of the Blenheim's that took part in the ill-fated raid of May 1940. It's hard to describe the pride you feel in having the honour to lay this for one of our airmen. It also showed to me how important it is that that the Squadron continues to do this every year.

Once we had finished at this site we moved onto Korendijk Town Hall, where we were greeted by a Wing Commander in a RAF Jeep and the town's mayor Mrs R.W.J. Melissant-Briene. Obviously the Wing Commander was in fact a friend of the squadron dressed up in character, but I had to look twice before deciding a salute was not required! The mayor and her staff were so welcoming of the Squadron and the appreciation they expressed in what our Squadron did in 1940 was clear to see and hear. We were treated to lunch in the council chambers and then marched down to the nearby Church and cemetery to lay a wreath on the grave of Pilot Officer Robert Echlin.



The most touching parts of the trip were now beginning to happen in front of me, with large numbers of local people of all ages keen to pay their respects to the young pilot officer. The overwhelming appreciation shown by the locals was amazing to see with everyone wishing to meet and greet members of the squadron and show their profound gratitude that our squadron was there in their time of need. I hope that I will be able to take part in the trip again and I would urge others to do so.

Our next stop was the town of Spijkenisse, where the squadron had the honour of taking part in the town remembrance parade. We attended a service at Dorpskerk Spijkenisse; this church is the oldest building within the town.





The Church was both filled with local veterans and young people. We then marched to the cenotaph with the rest of the procession; the Dutch made us so welcome singing our national anthem along with us.

After Flt Lt Rebbeck laid a wreath at the Vredehofstraat memorial we marched to the graves of 23 year old Pilot Officer Michael H Anderson and Leading Aircraftman Herbert C W Hawkins. These two members of 600 squadron lay alongside a Dutch soldier. There was an enormous sense of unity and pride as we lay our wreaths on these three graves. It was clear what these graves meant to the population as a line of over 100 people moved along to pay their respects; it was a truly moving moment.



The Vredehofstraat a war memorial is located at the entrance of Spijkensse Communal Cemetery at. It contains a stone pillar and two steel columns. Inscribed on the pillar is;

COMMEMORATE THOSE WHO FELL  
1940-1945  
IN THIS CITY  
IN OUR COUNTRY  
IN INDONESIA

The two columns contain the names of those who were killed in Spijkensse during the Second World War.

## **Holland Memorial Visit Day 2 by SAC Tom Oades**

On the Saturday we attended something the Squadron had never attended before. This was the Dutch liberation day celebrations (including March) at Wageningen! As the only members of the RAF attending, we didn't know what to expect. After meeting the Dutch people over the past few days, one thing was abundantly clear. This was their absolute adoration, respect and appreciation for the RAF, and what it did for them during World War 2. Whilst they were the finest hosts I have come across, we knew they would inevitably have high expectations of us! We were to take part in the long march around the city and give an eyes right to the Dutch Defence Minister on live television. This made marching the 3 mile route all the more difficult. Oh and did I forget to say the heavens had opened up!?

When we arrived, we quickly realised how seriously the Dutch take their Liberation day! There were members of several different nations' armed forces, including past and present members and hundreds of enthusiasts, veterans and vehicles taking part in the parade. The size of the celebrations were vast, and celebrated by everyone. When you put everything into context, you realise that many of the people present vividly remember the German occupation and its horrors. They worship their armed forces, and those who liberated them with passion, quite understandably. This is why liberation day means so much to them, and remembering and celebrating their freedom all the more important.

The flypast of Dutch aircraft kicked off the event, and the long parade of marching troops started just after. None of us had ever seen such a vast collection of all the different types of people and vehicles present. It was particularly moving to see the veterans quite rightly welcomed and cheered on by the Dutch public. We were marching just behind our hosts' old RAF jeep, which proudly held the Squadrons colours and members of the 600 Squadron Association.

As we marched around the route, the crowds never died down in size or enthusiasm. It was quite a common occurrence to see people hanging out of windows and standing on their roofs! The Dutch colours were well and truly out, and quite rightly so. The event was well worth the visit, and the Dutch were extremely grateful for our attendance.

As participating in the parade took up most of the day, we thought we had run out of time. However, on the way back from the parade we were honoured to be able to visit Arnhem Oosterbeek War Cemetery, where many of the fallen heroes who took part in Operation Market Garden were laid to rest.

### *Historical Information*

*Following the Normandy landings of June 1944, the Allied advance through northern Europe was extraordinarily rapid and on 11 September 1944, the Second Army entered the Netherlands just south of Eindhoven, the first Allied troops to set foot in the country since its fall in May 1940.*

*Their next aim was to cross the Rhine before the Germans had time to reorganise after their recent setbacks, securing crossings over the rivers and canals that stood in their path at Grave, Nijmegen and Arnhem. 'Operation Market Garden' would involve the United States 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions, the Commonwealth 1st Airborne Division and the Polish Parachute Brigade.*

*On 17 September 1944, the 1st Airborne Division began landing west of Arnhem, but German resistance, bad weather and problems with supplies and reinforcements led to heavy losses, and their objectives were not taken. They were forced to form a perimeter at Oosterbeek which they held stubbornly until 25 September, when it was decided to withdraw the remnants of the division across the lower Rhine. Arnhem Oosterbeek War Cemetery contains the graves of most of those killed during the September landings, and many of those killed in later fighting in the area.*

*There are now 1,680 Commonwealth servicemen of the Second World War buried or commemorated in the cemetery. 245 of the burials are unidentified and two casualties are commemorated by special memorials. There are also 73 Polish, three Dutch and three non-war (former Commission employees) graves in the cemetery.*

What made this visit all the more moving and poignant was that one of the members of our own group had a personal connection to one of the graves. The father of Mr Kevin O'Shaughnessy (a past member of 600 Sqn, and now a member of the Association) lay in this vast cemetery. We were honoured to say a few words and lay a wreath for someone who had paid the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom. Being a fan of the all time classic movie "A Bridge too far", this visit made everything seem more real. I realised that the men who lay here, were the men I had idolised from when I was a small child and were the real heroes. We were all pleased to have been given the opportunity to visit this fitting memorial to some very bold and brave individuals.

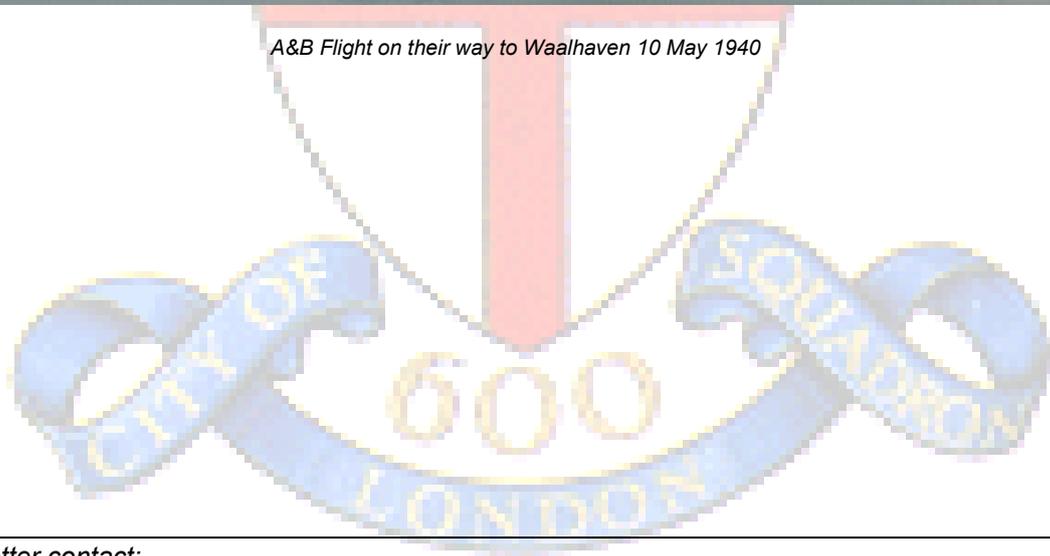
On the final day, before we swung back to Calais on our long drive home, we also found time to visit the graves of none other than Wing Commander Guy Gibson and his navigator Squadron Leader Warwick. Another true legend in RAF history whose exploits need no introduction. Finally at Calais we were able to visit a member of 600 Squadron's own airman who was shot down at the young age of 19. To our knowledge no one had visited his grave, which made the visit extremely worthwhile and moving. We were pleased to be able to lay a wreath at his grave.

Finally and after an activity packed few days, we boarded the shuttle home (after trying in vain to gain some duty free on a Sunday), and arrived back at Northolt in good time. One thing I would say about this trip if anyone reading is considering going next year, is that it is completely worthwhile, and rewarding. It is also fantastic for our relations with the Dutch people, who will for a long time be held in as high regard as they do us.





*A&B Flight on their way to Waalhaven 10 May 1940*



*Newsletter contact;*

*Andy Cameron  
53 Telford Crescent  
Woodley  
Reading  
Berkshire  
RG5 4QT  
Email; [andyandjulie.cameron@btopenworld.com](mailto:andyandjulie.cameron@btopenworld.com)  
Tel; 0118 962 8118*

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Andy Cameron, 53 Telford Crescent, Woodley, Reading, Berkshire, RG5 4QT

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