

**MILDENHALL REGISTER ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
HELD ON FRIDAY 14<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2010 AT 8.00 PM  
GALAXY CLUB USAF MILDENHALL**

**MINUTES**

The AGM was opened at 8.00 pm by Chairman John Gentleman who welcomed all members. Our usual venue of Middleton Hall should be available next year. As the standard of catering at the Galaxy club has been very good, John will pass our thanks on to the catering staff.

- 1. Apologies:** Don and Win Clark – Don has been ill for some time, but sent his best wishes via Jim. John will write to Don on behalf of the Register.

Fred Coney – Fred has a bad leg and is not very mobile, but he also sends his best wishes and asks for phone calls from those that know him.

Geoff has received apologies from “Swiftly” via e-mail, who sends his regards to all his friends and thanks to the USAF.

Apologies also received from Fred Shepherd.

- 2. Minutes of the AGM held on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2009:** The minutes of the last AGM were presented to the meeting. Proposed as a true record by Mr Richardson and seconded by Alan Fraser.
- 3. Matters Arising:** Nil.
- 4. Chairman’s Report by John Gentleman:** Last year’s events went very well indeed, including our visit to East Kirkby. At the committee meeting held in October, the joint secretaries Andrew and Sue Bridgewater felt they were unable to continue in their role and Geoff Reynolds agreed to take on the role of acting secretary. John proposed that Geoff should be put forward for the post of secretary if there are no other interested parties.

The Committee meet once a year and a great deal of time is spent in producing the newsletter. John gave his thanks to all those who had contributed to the newsletter and requested any photos taken at the reunion this year be sent in for the next issue. John then thanked his wife and all the ladies for their support and to Sue for all her hard work on the database, which now holds over 600 names. The USAF has appointed Jonathan Reid as our liaison officer; he will be present at the dinner tomorrow night. Thanks were given to our American hosts for allowing us to hold our reunion at Mildenhall and for their support. There are approximately 50 members attending this year’s AGM, with 99 expected at the dinner tomorrow evening.

We now have 3 historians currently seconded to the committee – Martyn Ford-Jones (XV Sqn sqdn), Alan Fraser (149 Sqn sqdn), Howard Sandall (622 Sqn sqdn), and it is proposed that Sam Mealing-Mills join us for 90 sqdn, with the rest of the Committee being made up of the Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer, along with Clare Moore and Jim Coman. All are happy to continue in their roles.

- 5. Secretary’s Report:** Geoff firstly gave his thanks to Sue and Andrew for their work, and for the database which had proved a very good basis upon which to build. We now have over 600 members, and this year’s mailing was a success. We heard from 127 people who had previously not contacted us, unfortunately there have been 32 deaths this year. These will

be recorded in the newsletter at the end of the year and letters of condolences have been sent to the families with an invite to join the register. There have been 27 members 'gone away' and 3 people wish to have their names removed. As of yesterday, we had 635 members and 27 other new members from various sources. The meeting was asked to approve a further mailing for next year along with a questionnaire. Proposed by John Cox and Seconded by Claire Moore.

Geoff has also followed up on all enquiries received, including a number from Australia and New Zealand. We have also received a number of stories and pictures to go into the newsletter. 2 wreaths were laid on behalf of the Register & 622 sqdn historian at a ceremony in France, and a propeller blade from the crashed Stirling has been donated to the Newark museum. Geoff also put Clare in touch with Jeremy Powell whose Father was OC 149 Sqn, and Clare will check to see if anyone knew Jeremy's father and contact him after the reunion. Membership numbers are doing well, and it is hoped that these will increase. John thanked Geoff for his hard work and for the contacts that had been facilitated by the Register.

**6. Treasurer's Report:** A copy of the Financial Statement was presented to the members. Currently we have £7,630.80 in the bank with approximately £3,000 being spent on the reunion this year. Donation numbers have doubled over the last 2 years, and letters of thanks have been sent to all who donated. The point was made that the register is free to join, as there have been a number of queries about our subscription costs. The Treasurer then outlined details of the wreaths that we propose to lay over the next year, on behalf of the Register.

**7. Election of Officer's:**

**Chairman** – John Gentleman to continue in this post. Proposed by Alan Fraser, seconded by John Cox. Elected unanimously. John gave his thanks to the meeting.

**Secretary** – John proposed that Geoff Reynolds be confirmed as Secretary. Seconded by Martyn Ford-Jones. Elected unanimously.

**Treasurer** – John proposed Smiley Mildwater continue as Treasurer. Seconded by George Thomson. Elected unanimously.

**Committee Members** – Clare More, Jim Coman and the historians Martyn Ford-Jones, Alan Fraser, Howard Sandell and Sam Mealing-Mills all proposed by John to be re-elected. Seconded by Sue Bridgewater. All elected unanimously. Thanks given to Jim Hammond and Douglas Kebbell, who have resigned from the Committee.

**Auditor** – Mr Robert Oakley proposed by John. Seconded by Clare Moore. Elected unanimously.

**8. Report on the Web Site:** The web-site has now been running for over a year, and Alan Fraser reported that it has been receiving between 750 and 800 visits per month, including repeat visits. Many of these have been from Australia and Canada with a few from Germany. There are 4 projects in 'the pipeline' for the site, but new material is always needed, especially stories or picture. These can be sent to either Alan or Geoff. Comments and feed-back on the site should be e-mailed to Alan. Thanks were given to all those who have already contributed.

The site has been very useful to Howard the 622 squadron historian, whilst writing his book which is due to be published in October. A review of this book and also of the one written by XV squadron Historian, Martyn Ford-Jones will be put on the web-site.

- 9. Next Year's Reunion:** The preferred dates are the week-end of 13/15<sup>th</sup> of May 2011. John will confirm this with our American hosts as soon as possible. If these dates are not suitable then it will be the week-end of 20<sup>th</sup>/22<sup>nd</sup> May 2011. If all are in agreement the Saturday outing will be continued.

Arrangements for this Sat/Sun were outlined.

**10. Any Other Business:**

- a) Martyn Ford-Jones told the meeting that discussions had taken place about erecting a memorial inside St. John's Church at Beck Row to all those who fought and served at Mildenhall. After seeing a memorial placed outside the church at Fairford he recommended that the memorial at St John's be placed outside also. Martyn proposed that this be taken further and we look into the design. Seconded by Howard.
- b) John and Elizabeth Cox have a signed copy of Vera Lynn's autobiography to donate in aid of the Bomber Command memorial fund. This will be raffled tomorrow evening.
- c) John Cox informed the meeting that the City of London "Salute to Veterans" parade and march past is being held at St Paul's on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> September. Any members of the Bomber Command Association who wish to attend should apply now with an SAE.
- d) Smiley Mildwater informed the meeting that a wreath was laid on behalf of the register at St Nazaire this year. Agreement was also made that a wreath on behalf of XV squadron would be laid this year, and also one at a CWG site in Normandy for a 149 crew. The meeting was also informed by Alan Fraser of a contact he had received from the relatives of a 149 crew who were shot down in 1943 over the sea near Holland. The site of the crash is now to be filled in and efforts have been put in place to recover the remains of the crew members before this is done. The Dutch Government has been very supportive but no support has been offered by the British Government, despite letters to ministers, the press and also Prince Charles. It is suggested that a wreath be laid at the site on 26<sup>th</sup> June when relatives of the crew from all over the world will gather for a memorial service. It was agreed that it is right to lay wreaths and hopefully photographs will be in the newsletter and on the web-site.
- e) There is to be a celebration at Methwold in August – John will find out more details.
- f) The committee are proposing that invitations should be made to members of other squadrons who also served at Mildenhall to join in our reunion celebrations, as many of them are suffering from low membership numbers. This proposal was agreed and John will make further investigations.
- g) Howard gave the meeting an account of his research on 622 squadron. His book will go to the publisher's in June and will hopefully appear in print in October. Howard gave his thanks to all those who had made contributions to the book.
- h) Mention was made of the photo albums that had been in the possession of Don Clark. Unfortunately, no one now seems to know what has happened to them. There were about 5 albums. It may be possible that photos and documentation can still be obtained and possibly copied. However, in future all our records will be kept electronically for preservation.
- i) A suggestion was made that squadron numbers be added to the name tags for next year, especially if we are joined by members of other squadrons.
- j) It was decided that a member of the Register would attend the AGM of the Aircrew Association.

There being no other business, John thanked everyone for coming. A vote of thanks was then given to the gentlemen of the top table.

The meeting was closed by John Gentleman at 9.40 pm.