

THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION RIDERS

Attending this year's ANZAC ceremony at Stonefall Commonwealth War Graves, we were delighted to welcome a large contingency from the Royal British Legion Riders Branch. As their website mentions, they are "... united by a shared passion for motorcycling and a commitment to supporting the Legion's charitable mission". The RBLR Branch has a membership that stretches from Cornwall to Scotland, across Europe and into North America and Australasia.

Part of their mission is to encourage members to become involved with "building friendships, supporting one another, and keeping the spirit of service alive." In doing this, members combine their passion of service with their passion for motorcycling, fundraising and raising awareness. Since the Riders Branch was formed, members have raised more than two million pounds in support of veterans, serving personnel and their families.

To that end, we were delighted that the Riders offered to help with the laying of ANZAC crosses on the graves of Australian and New Zealander WW2 aviators spread in small cemeteries and churchyards around the U.K. On Sunday July 26, RBL Riders Steven Upton, Dave Hunter, Brian Lewis and Graham Kearton took off on the A.R.C.I.O. mission to lay ANZAC crosses across the county of Derbyshire. In total, 14 ANZAC crosses were laid in four different cemeteries on what appeared to be quite a rainy day!



Riders Dave Hunter, Brian Lewis and Graham Kearton line up after having paid homage and thanks at the Commonwealth War Graves section at Buxton Cemetery



ASHBOURNE CEMETERY



RNZAF Sergeant 405803 George Howard McIlraith – age 23

RNZAF Flying Officer 403957 Archibald Douglas Vincent Forsyth – age 23



Archibald was born on 21st November 1919 in Frasertown, Wairoa in the Hawkes Bay. Named after his father Archibald, his mother was Irene. Educated at Wairoa District High School, Archibald enjoyed golf and cricket as well as playing for the First XV Rugby. Archibald worked as a Post Office employee before he enlisted in Levin on 26 October 1940. Having completed his training as a pilot, Archibald embarked on 21 November 1941 for the U.K. Assigned to 115 Squadron he took part in operational missions to France, Holland and Germany. Archibald also took part in missions along the African coast, Malta and Egypt. Transferred back to the UK, he was a Flying Officer, training men on Oxford and Anson aircraft. Archibald was piloting an Oxford aircraft when it crashed in Derbyshire on Friday 21 May 1943. He had served 769 hours as a pilot.



SCROPTON (ST. PAUL) CHURCHYARD



Steve Upton salutes Australian and New Zealand aviators...

RNZAF Flying Officer 404002 Ralph Holland Tye – age 30

RAAF Sergeant 413999 Sergeant Raymond Knight Hodson – age 23



RAAF Sergeant 405737 Sergeant Kevin Vincent Howes – age 22

RAAF Sergeant 413210 Sergeant Kenneth Barton Killeen – age 30

RAAF Sergeant 409080 Sergeant William Alan Catron – age 19



RAAF Sergeant 408737 Sergeant Ian Ross McDonald – age 28

RAAF Sergeant 401884 Sergeant Frederick George Bell – age 25

RAAF Sergeant 409191 Sergeant William Raymond Wearne – age 20



REPTON (ST. WYSTAN) CHURCHWARD



Just one Kiwi is buried at Repton

RNZAF Sergeant 4213820 William Seymour Barton – age 24



William was born in Auckland, New Zealand on 28 April 1920 and was educated in Mount Eden where he lived with his parent.

On leaving school he worked as a carpenter until he enlisted on 31 October 1942, undertaking pilot training in Ashburton. William embarked for Canada to continue training before eventually arriving in the U.K. on 7 May 1944.

William was posted to No.16 Elementary Flying Training School in Burnaston, Derbyshire where he flew Tiger Moth aircraft.

On 31 August 1944, Pilot Barton was flying a Tiger Moth when it crashed mid-air with another aircraft. William had only been in the U.K. for some 14 weeks. He was 24 years old.



BUXTON CEMETERY



RNZAF 403566 Sergeant James Wilfred Beavan – age 31

RNZAF 411919 Pilot Officer Andrew Donald Mackay – age 22

RNZAF 405331 Sergeant Wilfred Hubert Smeaton – age 28

A HUGE THANK YOU TO ROYAL BRITISH LEGION RIDERS...

STEVE UPTON, DAVE HUNTER, BRIAN LEWIS AND GRAHAM KEARTON