

**June 16th 2014**

I am writing to you to express our thanks to the people of Kirmington; I must apologize for the delay in doing so.

In August of last year, my wife and I, along with brother in law, travelled to Kirmington as part of a UK visit. Kirmington was the home of Dad's wartime squadron, as an aircrew member on Lancasters from Christmas 1943 until the end of March 1944. The purpose of the visit was, for me, to see where he served in those perilous times.

Unfortunately, very little remains of the wartime airfield after close to 70 years, at least as the way it was. We did, however, visit the town, and had a wonderful meal at the Marrowbone and Cleaver - only downside was they had run out of Lancaster beer!

We then visited the Memorial for 166 Squadron. Plenty of pictures were taken, and they were emailed to Dad. He still remembered many of the features of the pub although did remark he thought the glassed in patio at the rear was probably added in subsequent years. He was very taken by the memorabilia displayed in the pub, again, after all these years.

When we visited the Memorial, I was at first astounded by how well the grounds were kept-grass very neatly trimmed, no weeds to be seen, hedge trimmed very precisely, and the crowning touch, fresh flowers in a vase at the base of the Memorial. I mentioned that to Dad, he replied it did not surprise him. He went on to say that the people of Kirmington were very friendly and welcoming to the RAF.

One thing that he recalled was how the people of Kirmington stopped what they were doing, and made the utmost effort to attend the sad funerals of the men of 166 Squadron. He said it seemed like everyone in town and surrounding area left work or whatever they were doing to pay their respects. He went on to say this act was greatly respected by the aircrews, it was a terrific morale booster all around, getting up close and personal, knowing that their sacrifices were both noted and appreciated.

Even after close to 70 years, the awe in his voice was as he talked of the people of Kirmington spoke volumes, and for which I would like to thank you.

Regards

Jeff Bannister