



THE WAR GRAVES PHOTOGRAPHIC PROJECT



In Association
with the CWGC



News from the Front line

July 2012

Its' been a few weeks of celebrations and commemorations over the Summer period. I suppose we should celebrate the fact that the reservoirs are now topped up as it seems to have rained persistently since the drought was announced and I installed a large rain butt in my garden for the bathwater. I was one of those that braved the rain and damp conditions along the Thames for the Jubilee pageant and discovered that the Commonwealth was still alive and kicking with the amount of, dare I say, 'Colonials' lining the embankment cheering the queen as she passed in the Royal barge. Not quite sure when the Americans joined but there seemed ample of them dressed in Union colours as opposed to Stars and stripes. The last I heard was in 1976 when I was in the States celebrating a Bicentennial of Independence!



To me one of the most significant commemorations of late was the unveiling of the new Bomber Command Memorial at Green Park in London that took place on June 28th. Yet again Commonwealth Forces were well represented along with other allied forces who were involved in the Bombing campaigns of WW2 that seemed to be left out of any official recognition since the war. It has taken some time for these men to be commemorated but having been to the unveiling, the memorial is quite fitting and well worth a visit. It was great to see so many airmen able to attend and I know that there were many thinking of their mates as a Lancaster flew overhead and dropped thousands of poppies over London.

One of our volunteers, James (Jim) Foulds, was able to attend along with Mrs Elizabeth Gibb who was remembering her uncle Billy McConnell, an Air Gunner who died on his second sortie to Cologne on the 4th July 1943. They had recently travelled to the War Cemetery at Rheinberg in Germany to visit his actual grave.

Accounts of these bombing raids detail what the allied air forces endured with losses that would just not be accepted these days. They make incredible reading (*I'm currently on Martin Middlebrooks 'The Berlin Raids'*) and shocking to learn how many actually died during take off or on the return to England where fog covered many of the airfields during the autumn and winter months.

If you can make the journey to London please visit the memorial. You will not be disappointed.



Steve