

77 Squadron, Royal Air Force 1916 - 1963

Formed initially for the defence of Edinburgh in 1916, apart from a period on anti-submarine duties with Coastal Command in North Devon in 1941, the squadron was based in the countryside of North Yorkshire from 1938 to May 1945 as part of Bomber Command.

Flying Armstrong Whitworth Whitleys, the squadron carried out the most sorties: 1,909, and lost the most aircraft: 107, with 285 casualties...more than any other squadron. This included a fateful night at Driffield when, with 102 Squadron, 12 aircraft were destroyed and 11 ground staff lost their lives in a Luftwaffe bombing raid. But its worst period was still to come.

In October 1942 the squadron was the first occupant of the newly-built RAF Elvington airbase. Here the crews had to re-train on the Handley Page Halifax. 14 airmen lost their lives in accidents before the squadron resumed operations in February 1943. During the following 18 months they carried out 3,692 sorties, lost 82 aircraft and a further 450 aircrew—more than half the squadron's total fatalities in the whole war.

77 Squadron consisted of both regulars and volunteers who were supported by hundreds of ground crew and technical staff, both men and women. Amongst the aircrew were young men from Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

Operations included leaflet drops (code-named Nickels), mine-laying and petrol runs, as well as bombing raids.

77 handed Elvington over to the French squadrons in May 1944 and moved to Full Sutton. A year later it transferred to Transport Command with Dakotas and hence to Mauripur, India. It took part in the Berlin Airlift in 1948 and finally disbanded in 1963.

77 SQUADRON ASSOCIATION exists to keep the squadron history alive and to commemorate the fallen.

Of approximately 1,800 aircrew who served with 77 Squadron during the 2nd World War, 890 died in action, including 4 as prisoners of war, 216 were captured, 20 successfully evaded.

230 have no known grave and are commemorated at Runnymede; 104 are buried in the UK and Ireland, 322 in Germany and the remainder in Belgium, Denmark, Holland, France and Poland.



Aircrews at Elvington in November 1943 (Photo Yorkshire Air Museum)

If you would like to help us to preserve the memory of the squadron, if you have relatives who served and would like to know more and meet others, we would be pleased to welcome you to the Association. We are run by a small, volunteer committee with associates in Canada, Belgium and Australia.

**77 SQUADRON ASSOCIATION
MEMBERSHIP / DONATION FORM**

‘Lancaster’s Own’

Esse potius quam videri

NAME (please include title and any decorations):

.....

ADDRESS.....

.....

Post Code:..... TEL NO:.....

EMAIL

IF YOU ARE A VETERAN OF THE SQUADRON, OR RELATIVE,
OR HAVE ANOTHER CONNECTION, PLEASE GIVE DETAILS

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TO GIVE A DONATION ONLY, PLEASE TELL US YOUR REASON /
INTEREST (OPTIONAL)

.....

I should like to join the Association / or just donate £.....
(please indicate)

I am sending a cheque with this form to the Treasurer, Rachel Semlyen,
24 Blakeney Place, York YO10 3HZ (to be made out to ‘77 Squadron
Association’).

I am paying direct to the bank Santander with reference: Sub/donation:
Account Name: 77 Squadron Association
Account Number: 92348036
Sort Code: 09 01 28

Subs are a minimum of £10 per year (donations welcome!), due on joining and
thereafter on 1st January. Subs for overseas are £15 per year for a printed, mailed
magazine; £10 for an emailed magazine. THANK YOU!



77 Squadron, Royal Air Force
‘The Night Bombing Specialists’

Memorial (by the entrance) & Squadron History Room at the
Yorkshire Air Museum, Elvington, York YO41 4AU

Memorial window: Holy Trinity Church, Elvington

Website: www.77squadron.org.uk
Also on Facebook