332 Oct 20

**MINUTES OF IX(B) SQN ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON 29 SEP 20 VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE.**

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| Present | Air Marshal Evans  Air Cdre Hay  Gp Capt Nixon  Gp Capt (Ret’d) Ferguson  Gp Capt Sharrocks  Wg Cdr Batt  Mike & Eve Pritchard  Sqn Ldr (Ret’d) James  WO (Ret’d) Wood  CT Swanson  Members:  Gp Capt Turk  WO Inder  Gerry Cowell  John Fox  Monty Montgomery  Bryan Parsons  Ian Walsh | President  Chair  Vice Chair  Vice President  Chair (Des)  OC IX(B) Sqn  Treasurers  Historian  Sec  Dep Sec |
| Apologies | Wg Cdr (Ret’d) Lenihan | Charity Commission Advisor |
| **Item 1 - Welcome**   1. The Chairman opened the Meeting and welcomed those members who had been able to connect virtually to the 2020 IX(B) Sqn Assn AGM. The Chairman outlined what had happened in the last year and discussed what would happen in the next year. He also encouraged more engagement with the Vulcan and Canberra eras and requested that members from both contribute to the next edition of TABS!   **Item 2 – Minutes of the last meeting**   1. The minutes of the last meeting were reviewed. The only outstanding actions were the update of the Association Website and movement of the ALARM Memorial at RAF Marham. The Dep Secretary was able to update the AGM on both matters:    1. The Website update is well underway and the overall feel of the site has been modernised. The Dep Secretary requested that members forward photos and IX(B) Sqn stories for inclusion.    2. The ALARM Memorial move from the old IX(B) site has been further delayed due to the COVID-19 crisis. The move is complicated as the civil engineering personnel undertaking the activity are doing so as a favour to the Association at zero cost. The Dep Secretary would make some more enquiries about when they can fit it into the work schedule.   **Item 3 – Financial Situation**   1. The Treasurers provided an overview of the Financial situation and informed the Membership that the Assn accounts were in a healthy condition; whilst current income from subscriptions is 1% lower than planned, donations run at a 511% surplus. The Treasurers stated that some of the membership were still paying only £5 membership and requested that all members check their bank direct debits to ensure that they were paying the correct £10 per annum amount. There was a further plea for all members to complete Gift Aid forms and to send them to the Treasurers Assn email account; [association.treasurer@9sqn.co.uk](mailto:association.treasurer@9sqn.co.uk). It was noted that unsigned Gift Aid forms were restricting the Treasurers from claiming a significant amount of money from HMRC, on subscriptions alone this amounted to a loss of £806.45. The Chairman took the opportunity to thank the Historian for his considerable work throughout the FY, which helped the Assn meet its Charity Commission aims. 2. The Treasurers stated that the balance carried forward was £30,790.64, however, there is an outstanding payment of £13, 280 for in perpetuity maintenance of the IX(B) Sqn Memorial at the NMA, which will leave a balance of £17,510.64. 3. In conclusion, the Association has met all bar one of its targets for the FY and took forward a 35% increase on predicted funds into FY 20/21. 4. Assn members were asked to accept and ratify the accounts for 2019/2020.   Proposed – Dean Wood. Seconded – Nick Hay  Carried unanimously   1. Members were informed that due to the COVID-19 restrictions in place, it had not been possible to complete a face-to-face handover between outgoing and incoming treasurers, therefore the Financial Plan for FY 20/21 had not been completed in time for the AGM. The Chairman requested the Treasurers provide the FY20/21 forecast and plan at the next scheduled Committee meeting in Nov 20, regardless of handover completion.   **Action:** Treasurers to provide FY20/21 Forecast and Plan for Nov 20 meeting.   1. The Treasurers also informed the meeting that the Assn Bank account will transfer from the Royal Bank of Scotland to Unity Trust at the end of this FY. The Treasurers had assurances from the bank that members direct debits/standing orders for annual subscriptions would transfer automatically.   **Item 4 – NMA Memorial**   1. The Vice President gave a detailed brief on the recovery action taken to remedy the problems that the weather had caused to the soft Chinese sandstone and recovery of the poor workmanship provided by the Chinese craftsmen at manufacture. Mr Nick Johnson, the Stonemason, has completed the work in two phases and to an incredible standard that has produced a memorial for all associated with IX(B) Sqn to be proud of. He has:  * Re engraved all of the crests, painted them Gold and applied Gold lettering to the top sections. * Four new panels have been manufactured, which include the Sqn’s latest Battle Honours, and they have been cut in and inserted in lower sandstone section and stand 12mm proud of the existing memorial. * Laid cobble stones into the periphery of the memorial base, to protect the base from NMA lawnmowers.   10. The Vice President went on to state that NMA staff had reported to him how delighted they are with the transformation of the Memorial.  11. The Chairman thanked the Vice President for his dedication in getting the Memorial restored to the vision John Fox, the artist, had all along.  **Item 5 – 2021 Reunion**  12. Assn members were informed that the 2021 Annual Reunion will be held at RAF Lossiemouth over the weekend of 1 – 3 Oct 21 and members will be hosted by the Serving Sqn. The Reunion Dinner will be held in the Officers’ Mess on the evening of Sat 2 Oct and tickets will be subsidised, by the Assn, to £40 per person. Alfie Ferguson kindly offered to be the Project Officer (ProjO) for the 2021 Reunion and requested those wishing to attend contact him at [alanferguson.southcosford@gmail.com](mailto:alanferguson.southcosford@gmail.com) the Secretary was requested to inform the membership via email.  **Action:** Secretary to email Membership regarding 2021 Reunion including ProJo contact details.  **Item 6 – Remembrance Sunday Events**  13. The Chairman reported that the planning for Remembrance Sunday at Bardney and a follow-on wreath laying at the IBCC was progressing but the local Reverend was unable to confirm arrangements due to the COVID restrictions. Planning will continue as per previous years whilst awaiting confirmation but refunds will be made available should the Parish need to cancel. For those wishing to attend there is a deadline of 14 Oct 20 to notify the Secretary or Chairman and the Chairman will inform everyone by 30 Oct 20. As the Serving Sqn is located in Scotland, they would be unable to attend, so Mike Inder volunteered to carry the Assn Standard at this event.  **Action 1:** Dep Secretary to publish 14 Oct 20 deadline on Social Media and Assn Website.  **Action 2:** Secretary to inform Membership requesting potential attendees contact by 14 Oct 20.  **Action 3:** Chairman (now Vice President) to inform potential attendees of arrangements by 30 Oct 20.  14. Cenotaph 2020 ProjO, Assn Secretary Dean Wood, informed the meeting that 23 Assn members had volunteered to participate in the Cenotaph March on 8 Nov 20 but the numbers have been restricted to 8 per Association by the Royal British Legion due to COVID restrictions. The 8 members selected to march this year had been chosen on a first come, first served basis in response to the ProjO’s email, as the fairest way of selection.    15. The Vice President, Alfie Ferguson, will lay the wreath at the Sqn Memorial at the NMA on Remembrance Sunday. The ambition is to hold a Memorial Rededication Service prior to Remembrance but at present the NMA have not made their plans for the day known, due to COVID restrictions. The Secretary was requested to publicise the event to the Membership in the hope that some members, local to the NMA, may be able to attend. Deadline for notifying attendance to Vice President [alanferguson.southcosford@gmail.com](mailto:alanferguson.southcosford@gmail.com)  is 14 Oct 20 and confirmation will be returned by 30 Oct 20.  **Action 1:** Secretary to email Membership publicising NMA Memorial Rededication Service being held on Remembrance Sunday with contact details for the Vice President.  **Action 2:** Alfie Ferguson to confirm arrangements to potential attendees by 30 Oct 20.  **Item 7 – Petwood Dinner 2020 and 2021**  16. The opportunity to attend the 2020 Dinner with the Junior Squadron had been withdrawn due to restrictions on numbers because of COVID-19 and the Vice Chairman reported that the Dinner had in fact now been cancelled. However, planning for the 2021 Dinner continues and it will be held on Sat 13 Nov 21 at the Petwood Hotel, Woodhall Spa. The Function Room at the hotel is sizeable and the expectation is that the largest Assn in the RAF family will equally rival that of the Junior Sqn hosts. One of our very own and former Assn President ACM Sir Stuart Peach will be the Guest Speaker.  The Vice Chairman remains the ProjO and the Secretary was requested to publicise the Dinner to the Membership via email with a cut-off date of 31 May 21.  **Action:** Secretary to email Membership publicising 2021 Dinner with the Junior Sqn Assn.  **Item 8 – Serving Squadron Update**  17. OC IX(B) Sqn updated the Membership on current Sqn activities.  The Sqn now has 9 pilots (including 2 reservists), 110 engineers and 7 aircraft, has settled into their cycle of operations and has been selected to take part in a number of exercises in the Aggressor role, flying the tactics of Russian air forces to provide more realistic tactical training to Typhoon, F35 and Royal Navy crews. One of the IX(B) Sqn Typhoons has been painted in the new Aggressor colour scheme named Night Grey but already more aptly nicknamed Dark Knight. Unfortunately, the repainting plan is aligned to Depth Maintenance so it will be some time before all of the IX(B) Sqn aircraft are in the same colour scheme.    18. Whilst the runway is being resurfaced at RAF Lossiemouth, all flying units have been ‘Boltholed’. All IX(B) Sqn training is being conducted from the former RAF Kinloss, where 18 aircraft are deployed from all 4 Lossiemouth based sqns; 6 of the aircraft are from IX(B) Sqn, recognised as a sterling effort by the Sqn Engineers. The Sqn is also leading the Quick Reaction Alert defence of the UK from RAF Leuchars and has been extremely active since deployment, including the recent interception of Russian Tu-95 ‘Bear’ Strategic Bombers.    19. The rebuild of Gotham has passed a critical phase and the contractors are on site commencing the demolition phase. The £30M+ project is on target for completion in Q1/Q2 2022.  20. **Future Plans:** November 20 will see members of the Sqn deploy on exercise to Turkey and the first OC IX(B) Sqn of the Typhoon era will end his tenure in Jul 21. It was noted that the appointment of an OC IX(B) named Batt is extremely unlikely to happen again.  **Item 9 – Historian Update**  21. The Assn Historian gave a comprehensive precis of the extensive research carried out over the past year covering assisting the authors of books; primary acknowledgment in ‘Lancaster’ by John Nicol reads “Squadron Leader Dicky James, the IX (B) Squadron Association Historian for his incredible assistance in locating veterans, memoirs and photographs”, through to assisting families of veterans from around the world. Of note is the deep research for German national Bernd Schmit to identify a IX(B) Sqn Lancaster which crashed in the village of Buchfart on 14 Mar 45. Not only was the aircraft identified as NG 235 but the fate of the crew and their final burial place was uncovered.  22. The Historian also reported that he is building a comprehensive historical record of the ‘Bulkhead Stories’. When complete, the plan is to publish and donate the book to charity.  23. Gp Capt Turk posed a question regarding support to the IBCC and the AGM was informed that the IBCC is seeking input from Cold War veterans and those of more recent conflicts (Op GRANBY 1991 onwards) as they look to expand their focus into continued personal sacrifice beyond WW2. The Chairman (Des) volunteered to touch base with the IBCC, Assn Historian and LHM John Fox, to see how the Assn might assist.  **Action:** Chairman (Des) to contact IBCC, Assn Historian and John Fox regarding potential future support to the IBCC.  24. The Chairman thanked the Historian for his outstanding commitment and hard work, this vote of thanks was met with resounding applause from those present.  **Item 10 – Governance**  25. At the close of the AGM the final Committee changes will take place; Gp Capt Ian ‘Rocksy’ Sharrocks replaces Air Cdre Nick Hay as Chairman and Air Cdre Nick Hay replaces Gp Capt (Ret’d) Alfie Ferguson as Vice President. Email changes would be effective from 2 Oct 20. The Board, effective from 30 Sep 20 will be:  Trustees:   * President – Air Mshl Stu Evans * Vice President – Air Cdre Nick Hay * Chairman – Gp Capt Ian ‘Rocksy’ Sharrocks * Vice Chairman – Gp Capt Jon ‘Lenny’ Nixon * Treasurers – Mike and Eve Pritchard * Secretary – WO (Ret’d) Dean Wood   Advisory Members:   * OC IX(B) Sqn – Wg Cdr Simon Batt * SNCO IX(B) Sqn – Chf Tech Mark Couling * Dep Secretary – Chf Tech Rob ‘Swanny’ Swanson * Charity Advisor – Wg Cdr (Ret’d) Paul Lenihan   Era Secretaries:   * Lancaster – Vacant * Lincoln – Vacant * Canberra – Air Cdre (Ret’d) Spike Milligan * Vulcan – Gp Capt (Ret’d) Alfie Ferguson * Tornado – Sqn Ldr (Ret’d) Dicky James * Typhoon – Wg Cdr Simon Batt * Assn Historian – Sqn Ldr (Ret’d) Dicky James   26. OC IX(B) Sqn, Wg Cdr Simon Batt kindly volunteered to become the first era secretary for Typhoon and was welcomed warmly.  **Item 11 – AOB**  27. In light of the cancellation of the 2020 Reunion Weekend and opportunity to hold the traditional raffle during dinner, the Treasurers have kindly offered to organise a Virtual Raffle for the enjoyment of the Membership and to raise funds. OC IX(B) Sqn informed the meeting that the Sqn has donated half a dozen prizes and the Chairman reiterated that the Committee had already approved £200 for the purchase of further prizes. If there are any further donations please contact [association.treasurer@9sqn.co.uk](mailto:association.treasurer@9sqn.co.uk). Outline plans are:   * Prizes collected by end of Oct 20 and publicised via Assn website * Raffle goes ‘Live’ early Nov 20 – ticket numbers can be obtained from Treasurers at [association.treasurer@9sqn.co.uk](mailto:association.treasurer@9sqn.co.uk) * Ticket sales (numbers from 0001 onwards will be issued in lieu of tickets) to close end of Nov 20 * Virtual Raffle will take place on 9 Dec 20; winning numbers will be ‘drawn’ by a non-repeating random number generator   **Action:**  Deputy Secretary to publicise Virtual Raffle on Facebook pages and Assn Website.  28. The Vice Chairman, as Editor of TABS, requested that all normal contributors send in their articles by the end of 2020. He also put out a plea for IX(B) Sqn Gulf War 1 stories to commemorate the 30th anniversary in Jan 21. All articles to be sent to [association.vicechairman@9sqn.co.uk](mailto:association.vicechairman@9sqn.co.uk). The Secretary was requested to email veterans asking for contributions and asked the Deputy Secretary to likewise update the Assn Facebook pages and Website.  **Action 1:** Secretary to email Membership requesting articles for TABS.  **Action 2:** Deputy Secretary to update Facebook pages and Website requesting articles for TABS.  29. The Historian fed back to the meeting how delighted Mr Harry Brittlebank is at being awarded Life Honorary Membership (LHM) of the Assn in recognition of his continued, outstanding support for the Assn and the work it undertakes.  **Item 12 – Date for next meeting**  30. The next meeting would be held at RAF Lossiemouth on 2 Oct 21, during the Annual Reunion weekend.  **Item 13. Closing Remarks**  31. The Chairman thanked the Secretary and Deputy Secretary for turning life ‘Digital’ and finding a way to maintain governance by holding the AGM.  32. The President took the virtual floor and thanked all current Committee members for their efforts and in particular those recently departed in Gp Capt Andy Turk and Wg Cdr (Ret’d) Paul Lenihan. He also thanked the Historian, Sqn Ldr (Ret’d) Dicky James, for his sterling efforts and the Secretary and Deputy Secretary for staging the AGM, extending those thanks to everyone for making the effort to attend ‘virtually'.  33. As the Chairman transitions to the Vice President position, the President conveyed thanks to Nick for all of his efforts in the Chairman role and his appreciation for him taking on the Vice Presidency.  34. The President then thanked Gp Capt (Ret’d) Alfie Ferguson for his huge and outstanding contribution to the Assn and its members, over an incredible 30 years. As he steps down from the Vice President role, it was suggested that the Historian should research his unbroken service to the Assn as his next major project. The President expressed his gratitude to Alfie for remaining in the Vice President position for continuity, as he took over the Presidency and heaped justifiable praise on him for the way he had willingly taken on and completed major projects over the years, to the benefit of us all. The President then announced that Alfie is awarded LHM of the Assn in recognition of his outstanding contribution over so many years.  35. The final word went to the outgoing Vice President who stated it had been a pleasure and a privilege to serve and that he leaves the Assn in a better place than it was 30 years ago, down to the efforts of us all as we had pulled together. It is by far the best Assn of the Royal Air Force family.  There being no other business, the Meeting was closed at 2115 hrs. | | All Members  Dep Secretary  All Members  Treasurers  Treasurers  Alfie Ferguson  Secretary  Dep Secretary  Secretary  Vice President  Secretary  Alfie Ferguson    Secretary  Chairman (Des)  Deputy Secretary  Secretary  Deputy Secretary |

***Dean Wood***

D A Wood

WO (Ret’d)

Assn Secretary