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Association Memorial

Work on the relocation of the Association Memorial to the new plot is now underway, the following is a report on this project.

As you will be aware, changes have been taking place at the National Memorial Arboretum with regard to the movement of the Association Memorial to a new site. This was necessary due to the need to enlarge the main building where our memorial was sited.

Work is proceeding well and all the work on the new site is scheduled to be completed in time for us to rededicate the memorial when we have our reunion in September of this year. We wanted to update you on the changes that will take place when the memorial is relocated. When the memorial was taken down from its original site it was found that the concrete construction was in poor condition, at no cost to us it will now be replaced to the same dimensions with one made from polished stone,

The 39 trees are unable to be moved mainly because they had been planted too close to each other, also the new site would not be able to take 39 new trees at the correct planting distance. These will be replaced with 39 engraved slabs to represent the three air corridors.

The original four dedicated trees and seats will be moved to the new site. The new site retains its prominent position close to the main building. Janet Howard and David Hildred have done very well in dealing with this change with the NMA and achieving the movement to the new site, I am sure we all extend our thanks to them.

The Committee hope that as many of you as possible will be able to come to the reunion this year, so that we can have a good representation of both Veterans and Associate members at the re-dedication. We will be holding the reunion at the Dolphin again and a coach has been booked to take us to the NMA, Janet has booked the Chapel, so we just need you to be there.

Colin Cottle

Westminster Bridge

Following the Terrorist attack on Westminster Bridge on the 22 March this year I received this message from members Karl and Rosemarie Rosenkranz in Fassberg.

Dear Colin and all our friends in England, We would like to tell you that we were shocked about the terrible attack in London. We feel so helpless that no town in Europe is safe anymore. In London we have crossed Westminster Bridge very often and many tourist do every day. Nobody knows what will happen tomorrow. Our thoughts and prayers are with the victims and their families

With love Rosemarie and Karl

Association Future

For several years now, we have only just been able to cover the costs for the re-union, this is mainly due to the decreasing numbers of Members that are able to attend and ever increasing costs. As you will be aware, Janet Howard our Treasurer has taken on the task of arranging the reunion, which includes not only the hotel bookings, but venues to visit on the Friday and Saturday, and trying to get the best deal on coach hire. This does cause her to worry about being able to cover the overall costs. In 2015 and 2016 there was a small surplus left over from the re-union, however each year the Committee have been concerned that they may have had to endorse a shortfall which would need to be made up from Association Funds, a situation we do not wish to find ourselves in.

Our Constitution states that we have to have an AGM each year, and we could not ask members to come along without the reunion days as well, and to have these days we have to provide places to visit. I am sure you understand that the committee are worried about Janet having to undertake this task every year, where the attendance numbers are only going to get worse. I know that this information will be a great disappointment to you all, and this is shared by your committee.

The reason I am highlighting this problem to you now is that there is the possibility that some Committee Members may not wish to stand for re-election at the AGM this year, rather than leave it until then I thought it best to let you know that there may be places to fill on the committee, many of you receiving this newsletter will not be at the reunion, so will not be aware of the situation. Unless we are able to fill these places then our Constitution would not allow the Association to continue beyond the end of the year.

Colin Cottle

Lunch Groups

Some members get together for lunch and the opportunity to meet up. As well as the group who meet at the Dolphin Hotel in St Ives, another group meet at the Union Jack Club in London.

On Saturday, the 1st of April the London group were joined by a lady I invited along who is trying to put together a story based on the Berlin Airlift. She hopes to get this taken up as a film, so some of you may yet become stars, but I guess you will need a stand-in

Colin Cottle

When Nations Unite—The Berlin Airlift

Recently I was sent this poem by member Bob Mather. It was written by ex member Bill Ball. I thought it would be nice to print it again for you.

After the war when so many died
There we were working side by side
The greatest lift by air in history
How it was done is still a mystery

Aircraft came from near and far
Some with a roundel, some with a star
Forces from all nations, civilians too
Ordinary people with a great task to do

The German nation working with us
Night and day without any fuss
Flying a corridor, not very wide
Steady Skipper we're drifting outside

To get to Berlin was every planes goal
Some loaded with flower, some loaded with coal
In all weather they battled, crews gave their all
The lifeline to Berlin must not fail

Rightly so there is honour and glory
But in peacetime it's another story
They died to keep the peace preserved
These sort of heroes are never heard

I returned to the city not long ago
Had they forgotten? The answer is no
Berlin has a monument and carved in stone
Are the names of the men who failed to come home

William (Bill) Ball

Contacting Your Committee

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Donations

From time to time your committee are reminded by our members of what our Association mean to them.

We do receive donations from the families of members who are no longer with us. Recently we were notified by, Kevin son of Terry Crowley, who sadly passed away in 2016 that his Dad had left in his will a donation of £200 to the Association. This is a reminder to us all the strong feelings some members have for this Association and how much it meant to them when they were with us.

The committee try hard to make sure that we all remember that we are part of the group that helped the people of Berlin survive in their hour of need in 1948-49.

Colin Cottle