

From: **Sami THELLIER** <mf2020.presidence@gmail.com>
Date: Wed, Jan 15, 2020, 09:35
Subject: Ceremony WW2 project
To: Whitchurch on Thames (website team)

Dear Mr, Mrs from Whitchurch on Thames,

It is in my capacity as president of the association Mission Fraternité 2020 that I would like to write to you. Our association, founded and run by young French people aged 16 to 28, has the mission to hold a commemorative ceremony on 23 May 2020 in Brissy-Hamégicourt.

This ceremony will benefit five young Royal Air Force airmen who died in service on May 20, 1940 during a bombing mission in France. They died as heroes, far from home, leaving their families and loves behind. Despite a lifetime of life before them, they gave it to humanity. They were 20 years old, they were :

Flight Lieutenant **David William Hew OWEN**, 22 years old

Pilot Officer **Dennis Frederick Stanford HOLBROOK**, 19 years

Sergeant **Duncan Henry James BARRETT**, 21 years old

Leading Aircraftman **Reginald John NEWBERRY**, 20 years old

Aircraftman 2nd Class **Michael David DOLAN**, 19 years old

They died around 11:30 p.m., when their bomber hit the ground in France between the villages of Séry-lès-Mézières and Brissy-Hamégicourt. They died in the Whitley N1380 DY-R, 102 Squadron, which was the first RAF aircraft to bombard the Third Reich (March 20, 1940, Hornum, Sylt Island). So before the 102 Squadron DFS HOLBROOK served inside the 78 Squadron (also Armstrong Whithworth Whitley Mk.V bombers).

You are receiving this email because DFS HOLBROOK's parents and sister was residents of Whitchurch during the war (address : "The Lynches, Whitchurch, Near Reading"; from The National Archives). I only know his father's name : Major (Gloucestershire Regiment) Frederick Charles HOLBROOK.

Today, I wanted to introduce you to our project and tell you that you would like to invite you to the ceremony. We welcome any British authority with a connection to young heroes and maybe you can help us to find HOLBROOK's relatives.

Our project aims to put youth at the heart of the ceremony and allow everyone in the audience to pay a personal tribute. We wish to build a ceremony for all so that everyone can be inspired by the sacrifice of the young heroes. Accompanied by the BARRETT and DOLAN families (a sister still alive), as well as official representations, we would like to say, modestly, thank you to these young aviators. In addition, they will receive 3 British medals. To guarantee the durability of the memory we wish to realize an exhibition (in connexion with RAF and IWM museums direction), many documents and photographs are there to illustrate it. The ceremony will take place in a garden in front of the cemetery where the heroes are buried, with the RAF Northolt support.

We are expecting between 400 to 500 people. More if the French Army Minister grants us the Patrouille de France.

We are doing our best to find the Holbrook family, the last unknown. But it's difficult. We have asked the BBC for its help, we are waiting for an answer. So since four days a good news, Reginald NEWBERRY family open a contact with me, one brother and sister still alive and family members take part on May 23 2020 at the ceremony. And from yesterday David OWEN family is now known.

Please find attached :

1. CWGC war dead certificate of DFS HOLBROOK
2. Picture of the Second Pilot and Navigator DFS HOLBROOK
3. Picture of HOLBROOK (left) and OWEN (right)
4. Picture of the Whitley Mk.V N 1380 DY-R bomber
5. The Heroe's graves (in front of my home)
6. Document from MOD Gloucester about the crew medals rights

With my best wishes to you for this new year,
Truly yours,
Sami

Sami THELLIER

Association Mission Fraternité 2020, Président

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