

Date

17 November 2009

## **PRESS RELEASE – REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY**

Remembrance Sunday for 1220 (March) Squadron Air Cadets is a busy day and the culmination of months of preparation and planning. The day starts at 8 o'clock when the cadets and staff all meet at the Squadron HQ in Gas Road. The squadron civilian committee are on hand to look after them by providing a breakfast of bacon butties, porridge, toast and hot drinks to sustain the cadets for the rest of the day.

During breakfast last minute preparations are completed giving uniforms final touches and shoes a final coat of polish. Afterwards the equipment for the day is taken from storage and given a final check. The band instruments are tuned and tweaked, the banner unfurled and .303 drill purpose rifles checked over.

Just before 9 o'clock the first group of cadets depart for the service at St Mary's church in Westry on the outskirts of March. This is the rifle party who are escorted by Sgt Andy Murray a Service Instructor from RAF Marham. After the church service they make their way into town so that they are ready to be at the war memorial ready for the town parade.

At 10 o'clock the rest of the squadron leave the squadron building to march through the town to the start of the parade. This is a good opportunity for the band led by Drum Major Cpl Simon Foster to have a final marching & playing practise before the main event. The civilian committee members again providing support by helping the police to stop traffic if necessary and carrying spare drum sticks just in case one of the drummers managed to drop one of theirs.

The town parade left Sainsbury's carpark at 10:30 am and paraded through town lead by 1220 Sqn band to St Peters church. On the way at the request of the Royal British Legion the band stopped playing so that they eyes right when passing the war memorial could be heard. Upon arrival at St Peters church it was standing room only but all were inside in time for a 2 minutes silence at 11 o'clock.

After church the parade marched back to the town memorial for the wreath laying ceremony and to observe another 2 minutes silence. During the service the rifle party were stationed on each corner of the war memorial and under the instruction of Sgt Murray reversed arms. This is a ceremony air cadets from 1220 Sqn have performed for nearly forty years. The first time being in approximately 1971 when one of the cadets was a nervous 15 year old named Paul Bower – now Wing Commander Bower and Officer Commanding Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Wing. Sadly, 2009 is the last year that the .303 DP rifles will be on parade. The squadron do plan to provide a rifle party in future years and will use same drill purpose rifles as used by the current day Royal Air Force.



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After the service at the memorial the band and squadron marched back to the Squadron HQ. The Rifle party fell out and then made their way straight to the Eastwood cemetery for another service at the War graves there. After this they too returned to the Squadron HQ.

Upon arrival at the Squadron building the civilian committee were on hand again and provided lunch for all of the cadets. The committee chairman Louise Ayres did a fantastic job in designing menus and preparing food that all personal could eat taking into account the needs of some individuals.

After lunch all cadets except the band and banner party dismissed. The band and banner party travelled to Downham Market to lead the two-thirty parade there. Amongst the parade in Downham Market were a contingent of Airmen and women from RAF Marham and other Air Cadets from the local squadron there. There was another short service at the war memorial, a march past and then into St Edmunds church for another church service. Again the church was full with over 400 people attending the service.

After travelling back to March and packing all instruments and other equipment away the cadets were finally dismissed at five o'clock. Before dismissing the squadron Flt Lt Kirsty Burnham commented that "*It was a long but very rewarding day and the cadets should be justifiably proud of themselves*".

K A Burnham  
Flt Lt  
OC Sqn

Photos:

1. Remembrance 06 Preparing Drums
2. Remembrance 12 Eyes Right
3. Remembrance 16 Reverse Arms



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