

## Tribute to New Zealand World War Two pilots laid to rest in Cumbria

By Phil Coleman Chief reporter

Last updated at 10:34, Friday, 18 September 2009

Heroic war-time pilots from New Zealand who served at an airbase near Carlisle and were laid to rest in the county are to be honoured for making the ultimate sacrifice.



Former RAF bomb disposal expert Fred Knox puts poppy crosses on the graves

-  **Video:** Fred Knox pays tribute to the pilots (click on Link to watch)

[http://www.newsandstar.co.uk/tribute-to-new-zealand-world-war-two-pilots-laid-to-rest-in-cumbria-1.615208?referrerPath=home/news\\_star\\_search\\_results\\_page\\_2\\_1962&resourceView=video&index=1#video](http://www.newsandstar.co.uk/tribute-to-new-zealand-world-war-two-pilots-laid-to-rest-in-cumbria-1.615208?referrerPath=home/news_star_search_results_page_2_1962&resourceView=video&index=1#video)

Many of the 10 young airmen, whose ages range from 18 to 28, were stationed with the Operational Training Unit at Crosby-on-Eden.

All died while serving during World War Two, but their bodies were never repatriated and they were buried in all but one case at cemeteries in Carlisle, and Silloth.

Now a former RAF bomb disposal expert has arranged a moving tribute, which saw crosses made from New Zealand reeds placed on the men's graves.

The tribute was timed to coincide with events across the country that will mark the anniversary of the Battle of Britain, regarded by historians as a turning point in the war ó the battle that prompted Winston Churchill's memorable words: "Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few."

Although the pilots buried in Cumbria did not die in that battle, they lost their lives while serving here.

Mr Knox said: "During the war, 55,000 people from Bomber Command lost their lives. They should be remembered, no matter where they served. The New Zealand air crew who are buried in Cumbria found resting places a long way from their homes, so it seemed only right that they should have a little bit of home – that's how the idea of these New Zealand reed crosses came about.

"These crosses have been sent over as a way of showing that these people and the sacrifice they made will not be forgotten."

The New Zealand pilots buried in Carlisle Cemetery, at Dalston Road, are:

Sgt William Brownlie, 24, of Christchurch;

Sgt Donald Fraser, 21, of Auckland City;

Warrant officer John Reginald Harvey, 23, of Ponsonby, Auckland;

Sgt George Frederick Hillier, 23, of Christchurch;

Sgt Bristow William Tully, 23, of Wellington;

Pilot Officer Alexander George Wicks, 28; and Flight Sgt Bernard Clive Williams, 27, of Auckland.

Buried at Silloth Causeway Head Cemetery are:

Flt Sgt Owen Ernest Dudley Loudon, 18, of Hamilton, Auckland; and Flying Officer Denis George Mann, 22, of Wanganui, Wellington.

Laid to rest at Long Marton Churchyard, Eden Valley is Flying Officer Andrew Noble Gardiner, 28, of Hawkes Bay.

A New Zealand reed cross will also be placed on the grave of Private Norman Gough White, 21, from New Plymouth, who died during World War One in 1916 and is buried in Stanwix Cemetery, Carlisle.

Every year, the RAF Association Wings Appeal raises about £2m. The money pays for vital welfare support for those in need from World War Two through to today's serving RAF personnel and their dependants.

Visit [www.wingsappeal.org.uk](http://www.wingsappeal.org.uk) for more information about the fundraising effort and how to contribute.

**First published at 05:18, Friday, 18 September 2009**

**Published by <http://www.cumberlandnews.co.uk>**