

**76 Squadron gathering will be on Sunday 12th September.**

**12 noon at the Memorial, Skiff Lane.**

**Everyone welcome**

**So, what is the link with Holme on Spalding Moor?**



76 Squadron R A F - Memorial Window  
All Saints, Holme - On - Spalding Moor, York



**Please note that all photographs are copyrighted and cannot be used without prior permission of Ann Dowson.**

**Number 76 Squadron** was a squadron of the Royal Air Force. It was formed during World War I as a home defence fighter squadron and in its second incarnation during World War II flew as a bomber squadron, first as an operational training unit and later as an active bomber squadron. With the end of the war the squadron converted to the role of transport squadron, to be reactivated shortly in the bomber role during the 1950s. From 2007 to 2011, it was a training unit, equipped with the Short Tucano at RAF Linton-on-Ouse.

## **History**

### **First World War**

No. 76 Squadron, RFC was formed at RFC Ripon, Yorkshire for home defence duties on 15 September 1916 in the Yorkshire area, having detachments Copmanthorpe, Helperby and Catterick. It was equipped with Royal Aircraft Factory B.E.2s and B.E.12s, these being replaced by Bristol F.2Bs in 1918. The squadron disbanded at Bramham Moor on 13 June 1919, having seen no action during this part of its service life despite this it is largely seen in the film "Aces High" by Jack Gold.

### **Second World War**

#### **Wellesleys, Hampdens and Ansons**

The squadron was next reformed at RAF Finningley on 12 April 1937 from 'B' Flight of No. 7 Squadron, equipped with Vickers Wellesley bombers. These were replaced by Handley Page Hampdens and Avro Ansons in April 1939, the unit moving to RAF Upper Heyford at the outbreak of war. It performed an operational training role until 8 April 1940, when it merged with No. 7 Squadron to form No. 16 Operational Training Unit (OTU).

#### **Halifaxes**



No. 76 Squadron Handley Page Halifax B.I L9530 at RAF Middleton St. George, later shot down attacking Magdeburg.

The squadron reformed shortly on 30 April 1940 at RAF West Raynham as a Hampden unit before being disbanded on 2 May 1940. On 1 May 1941, the squadron reformed properly at RAF Linton-on-Ouse as the second Handley Page Halifax bomber squadron, part of the newly created No. 4 Group, RAF Bomber Command. The Squadron moved to RAF Middleton St. George in June 1941, returning to Linton-on-Ouse in July 1942. The squadron moving again, this time to **RAF Holme-on-Spalding Moor** 16th June 1943 as part of a policy to allow the newly formed Canadian 6 Group to use the better equipped RAF stations that had been built pre-war. The Squadron had a substantial number of Norwegian pilots and aircrew.

From August 1942 to April 1943, No. 76 Squadron was commanded by Wing Commander Leonard Cheshire.

#### **Dakotas**

With the rest of No. 4 Group, No. 76 Squadron was transferred to RAF Transport Command in May 1945, re-equipping with Douglas Dakotas, shortly thereafter moving to RAF Broadwell. It moved to India in September the same year, where it was disbanded on 1 September 1946 at Palam Airport by being re-numbered to No. 62 Squadron.

## **Post-war**

On 9 December 1953, the squadron reformed at RAF Wittering, equipped with English Electric Canberra B.2 bombers. The squadron moved in November 1955 to RAF Weston Zoyland, for Operation Grapple. Some of these aircraft were tasked with collecting air samples during the Operation Grapple nuclear trials in 1956/58. The squadron disbanded on 30 December 1960 at RAF Upwood.

## **Training**

The squadron remained dormant until 1 May 2007, when the Short Tucano T.1 Air Navigation Squadron at RAF Linton-on-Ouse was redesignated as No. 76 (Reserve) Squadron. In 2008, Prince William spent three months at Linton learning to fly. No. 76 Squadron continued to train WSOs (Weapons Systems Officers) until December 2010, and was disbanded in May 2011

**The above details are from Wikipedia 05/08/2021**

## **Additional information courtesy of Ann Dowson.**

The previous occupants of the Airfield were the RAAF 458 Squadron who moved onto the newly built airfield in October 1941 they flew Wellington bombers. The squadron was posted to the Middle East in 1942...

The land for the new airfield was requisitioned from the surrounding farms, public footpaths were closed and the laying down of the runways began in 1939.

There are two memorials on the plot by the main gate the 76 squadron and the Australian 458 squadron. Two plaques stand behind the memorials; one dedicated to 'Hank' Iveson Station Commander the other to Squadron Leader Leonard Cheshire VC.

The Memorial window in the church stands above the oak cabinet which houses the book of remembrance to the 76 squadron members who perished in the Second World War, The book is housed in this oak cabinet built by a former member of the squadron George Woods. George also built and donated a matching cabinet which houses the village copy of the Domesday Book which is kept in the primary school.

The annual memorial service happens each September after a morning service and wreath laying in the church. The veterans and their families move to the Airfield and lay their tributes to their fallen comrades around the memorial. The last post is played and a short service concludes the service. This is usually followed by the fly past.

Everyone is welcome, this year the service will be held at the airfield on Sunday 12th September. The veterans [who incidentally are now greatly diminished in number] love to meet and greet and show off their medals. My grand children loved to meet the retired flyers and were intrigued by the tiny gold caterpillars proudly worn on the ties of the veterans who had bailed out of their stricken plane. This year is a special year it is 75 years since Bomber Command was formed.

There are still some of the original buildings from the war on site; the hangers still stand proud clear of Skiff Lane. The majority of the runways have been reclaimed back to farming. The dispersal points have also gone.

Things in the village have changed in those 75 years since the bombs were transported from the station a frequently seen spectacle remembered by villages who are now in their 90's. If you know of an elderly person ask them about it.

The Cross Keys is no longer open, but another favourite drinking place was the Blacksmith's Arms,

the men laugh when reminded how they pushed the piano onto the High Street and broke it up, maybe it needed tuning. Who knows, they certainly deserved a lighter side to their lives.

The photograph below is of a Bücker Bü 131 Jungmann (freshman, young man) was a German 1930s basic training aircraft which was used by the Luftwaffe during World War II.



The **Embraer EMB 312 Tucano** - : [Toucan](#); [pronunciation](#)) is a [low-wing](#), [tandem](#)-seat, single-[turboprop](#), basic [trainer](#) with [counter-insurgency](#) capability developed in [Brazil](#). The [Brazilian Air Force](#) sponsored the EMB-312 project at the end of 1978. Design and development work began in 1979 on a low-cost, relatively simple new basic trainer with innovative features which eventually became the international standard for basic training aircraft. The [prototype](#) first flew in 1980, and initial production units were delivered in 1983.

Production was initially supported by a local order for 118 aircraft, with options for an additional 50 units in October 1980. It was later matched by an Egyptian licence-produced purchase in 1993 and subsequently by an improved variant known as the [Short Tucano](#), which was licence-produced in the [United Kingdom](#). The Tucano made inroads into the military trainer arena and became one of Embraer's first international marketing successes. It is hoped the above aeroplane will give a fly past.