

## 609 Sqn ±Belgian Branch 2016- 2017report

Belgium, 20th of June 2017

Dear Chairman, members of the committee, dear 609ners, dear all,

We apologise for not being able to attend this \ H D UAGM as 609 Sqn Association Belgium needed to attend an official and important yearly activity at Ursel Avia / B67.

B-67 stands for one of the bases that 609 Sqn used in 1944 to do raids on Walcheren that was the beginning of opening the river Schelde. A place where a monument has been erected by the B-67 Group and where we will have a ceremonial event together with the many RAF pilots who will be attending Ursel Avia Air Show with their aircraft.

In the past 12 months, we lost some of our 609 Sqn friends but also lost many of our citizens in a world that is getting more violent and where terrorism is trying to take over our, trying to de-stabilize all our countries.

It was also a moment whereby the world got more united, together we are strong ´ and as  
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protect.

That is why 609 Sqn, as it is today, needs to continue their mission together with the other forces in Britain but also with the other military forces under Nato.

It is time to step up and show our teeth but more than ever show our love for life and appreciation for each other. No matter what origin, race, nationality.

609 Sqn Belgian Branch Office has also been busy over the past 12 months and very much active.

We are still being contacted by families that want to know more of the loved one who did not make

A memorial was set up for him this year by Arjan Remmers whom I will be meeting this weekend at Ussel Avia.

The Typhoon is deeply buried in a marsh land and is well preserved but the authorities + the lack of funds do not allow the Typhoon to be recovered. We are now going to put a case together to present to the Dutch government as well as the Dutch Air Force with the help of our contacts in Belgium (Belgian Royal Air Force and Support Groups).

That is just one of the many requests on information we received working together with the lads in the UK and France (Jocelyn).

That is why it is important to keep the memory alive and roots, going strong. We must never forget how 609 Sqn started off during the war and how courageous the squadrons pilots were.

In Belgium, we have the support of the Belgian Army as well as from the Belgian Air Component (Airforce).

But support groups like Ussel Avia, B-67, Wings of Memory are also a very important added value together with many more who sympathise with the Association.

It is therefore that we decided (Jeff, David Darley and myself) that we would give General Van Caelenberge (former head of the Belgian Army and Air Force General) the title of Honorary Member of the 609 Sqn Belgian Branch and B-67 Team) and Boomer (head of Wings of Memory).

These individuals, and their supportive teams, have done a lot for 609 Sqn Belgian Branch and will keep on supporting us.

That is why it is important to me and the association to recognise them for this for what they have done so far. They will also be involved with the recovery of the Typhoon of Jean Van Daele in Belgium.

The intention was that Jeff and David Darley would have come over to Ussel Avia this weekend to present these titles officially to these wonderful men. But due to the AGM this will be postponed to later this year.

We only have a few veteran pilots left but they are still going strong despite their age. Our Belgian veteran pilot of 609 Sqn General Albert Laforce is now nearing 96 years old. He does not do a lot of things in the garden anymore but enjoys watching his grandchildren doing the work in the garden. These men were carved out of a special type of wood and may we take them as an example for all of us.

I would like to thank my fellow team members in Belgium for their work and contribution this year.

Therefore, I would like to ask you to stand up, raise your glass and toast to them, to our lost friends and all the ones who sacrificed their today for our tomorrow.

Warm regards from the Belgians of 609 Sqn Belgian Branch to all of you.

Tally Ho !!!

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