HUGH REAY
10 Squadron Wireless Operator
March 1925 - May 2020

RAF MELBOURNE – 1945

The Crew of HALIFAX Mk3 ZA-D

From left to right:

HUGH REAY (far left) Wireless Operator HEXHAM
RAY REED Engineer LEEDS
RALPH WILD Navigator WINNEPEG
LES HOLES Pilot SOUTHAMPTON
BERT JENKINS Bomb Aimer WIMBLETON
ANDY MCDINE Mid Upper BYKER
BILL KIDD Rear Gunner LEEK

Born in West Woodburn close to the eastern edge of the Kielder Forrest, in March 1925, Hugh left school age 14 and worked in his father’s local grocery shop until 1943 when he joined the RAF as Air Crew.

After operational training at RAF Lossiemouth on Wellingtons he was posted to RAF Melbourne flying Halifax bombers with 10 Squadron on bombing raids over Hamburg, Nuremberg and railway marshalling yards of the Ruhr.
Following VE-Day he converted to Dakotas and was sent to India in August 1945, initially based in Poona [now Pune]. He was involved in training Indian paratroopers and troop transport as well as famine relief air-drops in Burma during March 1946.

He left India on 23 April 1947, shortly before its independence.

After WW2 Hugh worked as Company Secretary for Matthew Charlton’s Builders Merchants in Hexham until he retired in 1995. During his working career he was also a leading member of the Royal Observer Corps. Before leaving the service, he received a Lord Lieutenant’s Good Service Certificate from the Duke of Northumberland.

Hugh was a keen (and good) young footballer and often played when posted to Poona, which proved exhausting playing on sand.

Always a staunch supporter of Newcastle United even though he would return from the occasional match and throw his coat on the chair with the words, ‘Why do I bother’? But he inevitably stuck with them.

He was also a stalwart member of 10 Squadron Association missing only two reunions since it was founded.

Hugh was the most loving, kind, gentle and generous husband, father, grandfather and great grandfather that his family could have ever wished for. He never let anyone down and fulfilled every obligation he ever undertook. Everyone who met him and was associated with him had the highest regard for his personality, generosity and good humour. His dignity in life was matched by his dignity at the end of it.

Hugh will always be sorely missed by his wife of over 69 years Doreen, his son’s Trevor and Alistair his daughter Lesley, his daughter in law Elsie, son in law Barrie. Grandchildren James, Stuart, Suzanne, Tom, Matty, Dan and Will. Partners Lee, Dana and Sammi, great grandchildren Vinnie, Niamh and Alfie and many friends who hold him dear.
Halifax Mk3

Memorabilia from India 1945-47
10 Sqn Dakota – India

RIP - Hugh Reay 1925 - 2020