

BIGGIN HILL MEMORIAL TO FALLEN PILOTS

"In thankful remembrance of the pilots of this sector from Great Britain, the British Dominions and Allied Nations who by their sacrifice helped to win a great victory I unveil this memorial in their honour and to the glory of God."

With these words Group Captain A.G. Malan, D.S.O., D.F.C., Sector Commander, today unveiled a reredosⁱⁿ memorial chapel at Biggin Hill station of Fighter Command. It commemorates the dead and missing pilots of the Biggin Hill sector, whose number exceeds 200. Group Captain Malan was thus paying his own tribute to pilots, many of whom he led before, during and since the Battle of Britain.

Many of their comrades who now carry on the struggle heard the dedicatory words. The congregation included Marshal of the Royal Air Force Viscount Trenchard and Lady Trenchard, Air Marshal D.C. Donald (A.O.C., Maintenance Command), Air-Vice Marshal H.W.L. Saunders (A.O.C. 11 Group, Fighter Command), and Col. C. Molinier, one of the seniors officers of the Fighting French Air Force in Great Britain.

As the cover fell away from the reredos the congregation stood in a minute's silence in tribute to the men who fell. Air Commodore the Rev. M.H. Edwards, O.B.E., Chaplain-in-Chief of the R.A.F., dedicated the reredos. It carries the names and squadron numbers of the fallen pilots. The Chaplain-in-Chief also dedicated the hand-made and hand-inscribed Book of Remembrance, each page of which recalls the name and squadron number of a pilot.

The memorial chapel, named the St. George's Chapel of Remembrance, is for the joint use of Church of England and Non-Conformist personnel.

The suggestion for the memorial came from Squadron-Leader Chesham King, the padre of Biggin Hill station. During part of the Battle of Britain he was also the Chaplain at Manston, Kent, and was personal friend and adviser to many of the pilots whose names are now on the memorial.

The pilots of the famous "few" came not only from Great Britain but from Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, America, Poland, France, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, and Norway. The memorial therefore symbolises the unity of the free nations in sacrifice and their fellowship in remembrance.

The central band and orchestra of the R.A.F. conducted by Wing Commander R.P.O'Donnell, Director of Music, played during the ceremony.

Many of the Biggin Hill station personnel have helped to equip the chapel. Flying-Officer W. Wylton Todd gave the original design for the memorial, an R.A.F. Regiment Squadron-Leader designed the gold leaf decoration of the Book of Remembrance, and local affiliated squadrons of the A.T.C., who were represented at the ceremony, subscribed for Chapel fittings.

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NOTE - Pictures are available from P.N.A. (Fox)