

101 Matters!

The Newsletter for the Members of
The 101 Squadron Association



Boxbergheide 2006 E-Newsletter Special Report

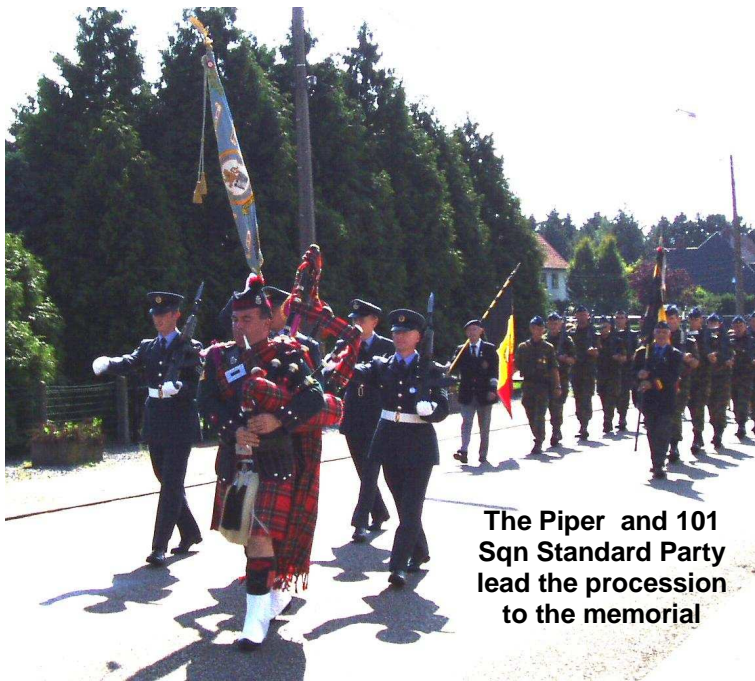
Boxbergheide is Back!

Since the darkest days of the second world war the children of Genk, in Belgium have placed flowers on a memorial to RAF air-crew killed in the crash of a 101 Sqn Wellington in September 1941. In 1970 an impressive permanent memorial was dedicated in Boxbergheide to the 193 RAF air-crew killed in action over the eastern Belgium province of Limberg.

Annual parades held every September culminated with hundreds of local children laying bouquets of flowers at the foot of the memorial. Belgium Air Force personnel were joined by the 101 Sqn RAF Standard Party to participate in this colourful ceremony almost every year since. However, in 2005 the future appeared bleak as the civilian organizing committee was forced to disband due to the age of many of its members. It seemed that after 65 years the Boxbergheide Memorial ceremony would end in the much scaled down event held that year.



Fortunately discussions between 101 Sqn and Colonel Wouters, the base commander at BAF Kleine Brogel led to an agreement that Kleine Brogel would take over the organisation of the event in co-operation with the municipality of Genk and planning for the 2006 ceremony could go ahead. This year the ceremony was back to its original format, starting with an impressive procession to the memorial that included the local band, a lone piper



The Piper and 101 Sqn Standard Party lead the procession to the memorial

in full highland regalia, the 101 Sqn Standard Party, an honour guard from 10th Wing BAF Kleine Brogel, standards from Belgium veterans' groups and hundreds of school children bringing their flowers. The 101 Sqn Standard party, Flg Off Ed Farndon, MEng Al Sutton, Sgt Paul Riley and CT Dave Gardner, took post by the memorial as the Mayor of Genk welcomed all participants. The ceremony included the lighting of a memorial torch followed by prayers and national anthems before floral tributes were laid by Sqn Ldr Jon Pugh, XO of 101 Sqn, and Kolonel Patrick Wouters, Commandant of Vleigbasis Kleine Brogel. They were followed by the children, some watched by their parents who had themselves laid flowers at the memorial over the years. Four F-

16 fighters from Kleine Brogel flew past to bring the ceremony to a close before the 101 Sqn Standard party led the parade back to the local "Schlame" or village hall for coffee and sandwiches. At the reception Sqn Ld Jon Pugh thanked Kolonel Patrick Wouters for his support and presented him with a print celebrating the 40th anniversary of 101 Sqn's current aircraft, the VC10. The following day the 101 Sqn party paid their own respects to the original 101 Sqn Wellington aircrew when they visited their war graves about 25 miles west of Boxbergheide in Schaffen, near Diest.



The first flowers are laid on behalf of 101 Sqn.

The good news is that the committee for the Limberg Provincial RAF Memorial has been reformed with enthusiastic young members determined to maintain this colourful annual memorial ceremony for many years to come.



Some of the younger children at Boxbergheide wait for their turn to place their flowers.



Sqn Ldr Jon Pugh makes the presentation to Kolonel Pat Wouters, Commandant Vleigbasis Kleine Brogel.