



NZ Bomber Command Association (Inc)

Patron: Sir Richard Bolt KBE, CB, DFC, AFC, pff
President: Ron Mayhill DFC, MA (Hons)
Vice Presidents: Frank Prebble DFC, pff (635Sq)
 Bunny Burrows (7, 622, 487 Sq)

NEWSLETTER August 2013

NZBCA Charitable Trust 2561560

Web Site: www.nzbombercommand.co.nz



President's Welcome

Greetings all,
 What a great job Peter Wheeler does with our much sought after newsletter, and what a worthy recipient of the Queen's Service Medal in the Birthday Honours. And I can tell you Peter was particularly 'chuffed' that the initiative came from us, the Vets, the Wednesday Boys.

The B.C. Memorial Trophy stands 400mm tall on my desk. It is perfect in every detail from flying boot zips to helmet straps. We await a handover date and will let you know when and where. We all know the famous words:

"Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few."

But so few know the rest of the speech. Winston Churchill in his review of the war, August 1940, went on to say;

"but we must never forget that all the time, night after night, month after month, our bomber squadrons travel far into Germany, find their targets in the darkness by the highest navigational skills, aim their attacks, often under the heaviest fire, often at serious loss, with deliberate, careful precision, and inflict shattering blows upon the whole of the technical and war-making structure of the Nazi power."

And finally;

"... bombing the military industries and communications of Germany and their air bases and storage depots from which we are attacked, which will continue on an ever increasing scale until the end of the war and may in another year attain dimensions hitherto undreamed of, assure one at least of the most certain, if not the shortest, of all the roads to victory. Even if the Nazi legions stood triumphant on the Black Sea or indeed upon the Caspian, even if Hitler was at the gates of India, it would profit him nothing if at the same time the entire economic and scientific apparatus of German war power lay shattered and pulverised at home."

Thus, Winston Churchill, the architect of the Bomber Offensive by the mightiest British fighting force yet seen, set forth the means to Victory.

And thus it came to pass.

Ron Mayhill,
 President

*Gentlemen,
 I am very proud to have been
 awarded the QSM and especially that
 you boys put me up for it.
 Thank you, Peter.*

Quote from Harris on the Economics of War

"One Lancaster destroys more in one raid than the cost and effort to make it. As each aircraft averages 20 raids the return is significant."

**As from 1st August we're on Facebook
 – check us out at
 The New Zealand Bomber Command**



**Find us on:
 facebook®**

If you would like to register your interest, please contact:
Aaron Hanley,
 Advisor Commemorations
 Veterans' Affairs New Zealand
 PO Box 5146, Wellington 6145
 Freephone: 0800 483 8372, Email: veterans@xtra.co.nz

CONTACT US

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Membership is free to RAF Bomber Command Veterans. Family and friends are most welcome as associate members (\$15 fee).

Contributions to the NZBCA news are always welcome.

Annual RAF Bomber Command Service - June 2, 2013

A very good turnout by veterans and family for this annual Commonwealth wide service. Attending were representatives of the RNZAF, RAF and RAAF.

The service was conducted by RNZAF Chaplain Paul Baines and numerous guests spoke in memory of those lost and also the many who have since passed over. The service was shown on TV1 and featured in Monday's New Zealand Herald.



Ex RAF crew meet

Lt Col. Tim Woodman UK Defence Advisor in the Pacific held an Armed Forces Day luncheon at the Senior NCO/WO mess at RNZAF Whenuapai on June 20th. The occasion was marked with a presentation of BC clasps to Auckland based Bomber Command veterans. Similar functions are to be held in Wellington and Christchurch.



The Boys Parade with Deputy Chief of RNZAF Peter Port and Lt. Col. Woodman. Lots of gold braid for our veteran Sergeants

Des Hall receives his clasp



The Boys at the Bar



The Bomber Command Clasp and Arctic Star

After a false start with applications called for from the UK, our Ministry of Defense in Wellington are handling the issue of medals. A further application form is enclosed with this newsletter for those who haven't yet got into gear yet.

There have been a few problems in Wellington too, with some veterans receiving letters stating:

"Your service file records show that you served a total of (84) days which is less than the required 60 days!" What! It must be the new approach to mathematics. This faulty letter has been sent to members already awarded the 1939 – 45 Star and in some cases one crew member got the clasp, the other was denied. We are chasing this up. Currently aircrew must have spent 120 days on Squadron.

Following the June 2 Memorial Service, a dozen of our Auckland Veterans were presented with their clasps at a service attended by friends and family. RNZAF representative Wing Commander Lisa D'Oliveira presented the awards. We understand that Prime Minister John Key had wanted every veteran to be personally presented with the award but this fine thought was just too difficult geographically. Hence at the Auckland service the selected dozen, publicly represented all.



**Bomber
Command Clasp**



**Arctic
Star**



One very rare award, the Arctic Star is to be presented to three of our members who were part of the Tirpitz raids at Tromsø, Norway in November 1944.

At a special ceremony at his Edmund Hillary Village home, Arthur Joplin (pilot 617 squadron) was presented with the Arctic Star and Bomber Command Clasp. Well done that man.

Two Team Mates

Until recently 75 Squadron held a record of sorts in that three of the same crew were with us, Harold Trewheela (Pilot), John Putwain (Nav) and Ray Parkinson (W/op AG). Sadly John passed away recently leaving a two man crew.

Another is Ian Petrie (B/A) and Geoff Bibby (Nav) a 101 Squadron Crew.

When I was with 101 Squadron at Ludford Magna in Lincolnshire, I was the Navigator of Bob Benton's crew which was made up of four New Zealanders, Ian Petrie and Pete Pedersen being the other two, and three RAF boys.

On the night of the 14th April 1945 we were put on ops, the target being Potsdam which is about thirty miles south west of Berlin.

Going out everything went well. I found that the winds were very steady, being from the north west at about 35 knots. We got to the target right on time and bombed very accurately! Even took a picture to prove it! However shortly afterwards, there was a loud bang at the back of the plane! We all thought we had been hit, either by ack ack or by a night fighter. Bob asked Pete to leave his radio and go back to see what damage had been caused but Pete found nothing. Later he did report that his radio was U/S and so were my Gee and H2S nav aids.

However I told Bob, the skipper, not to worry as I knew what the winds were and the compass was okay so we could quite happily go back on D/R (Dead Reckoning). With virtually nothing to do, I had a lovely rest all the way home! When I told Bob Base should be right below us, there it was!!

Feeling very pleased with myself, I went into debriefing where the Nav Leader's first question was; "Did you get the huge change of the wind on the way home? It went round 180 degrees and increased in speed! If you used the original winds, by rights you should be at this moment ditching in the sea north of Scotland!!"

There had to be an answer and we found it next morning when we did a compass swing, a procedure where we physically moved the Lancaster onto known headings and compared these with the compass readings. Sure



enough they were about 25 degrees different! But luckily for us the electrical fault we had just after the target had also affected our compass but it was in our favour and we had come back right on track!!

Ever since I have been convinced that an eighth crew member (invisible) was sitting alongside me that night. The next Sunday I went to Church and just said; "Thanks Boss!"

Geoff Bibby

2012 – 2013 Accounts

The annual accounts are shown below as prepared by Karen Tocher from the BNZ bank statements and the MYOB computer system used for NZBCA business.

In addition is \$120,000 Lancaster Reserve Fund held by MOTAT

since 2004, the interest earned being available for maintenance on displays and some C&M on the Lancaster.

As the Association is unable to hold a physical AGM (because of age and distance) please treat these accounts as approved. However should you have any queries do get in touch.

Financial Statement

New Zealand Bomber Command Association Inc. Year Ended 31 March 2013

NZCA CHARITABLE TRUST ACCOUNT 02 1206 0064186 000

| | |
|---|-------------------|
| <i>Beginning Balance as at 31.03.12</i> | \$0.00 |
| Income | |
| Interest Earned | \$0.86 |
| Donations Received | \$350.00 |
| NZ Fighter Pilots Assn Honour Dinner Auction | \$1,600.00 |
| <i>Total Income</i> | \$1,950.86 |
| Expenditure | |
| Cheque Book Stamp Duty | \$2.50 |
| <i>Total Expenditure</i> | \$2.50 |
| <i>Surplus/(Deficit) Balance as at 31.03.13</i> | \$1,948.36 |

Financial Statement

New Zealand Bomber Command Association Inc. Year Ended 31 March 2013

LUNCHEON AND GENERAL ACCOUNT (00)

| | |
|---|-------------------|
| <i>Beginning Balance as at 31.03.12</i> | \$1,618.18 |
| Income | |
| Interest Earned | \$3.75 |
| Sales of Cards and Ties | \$355.00 |
| Donations Received | \$235.00 |
| Registration Fees Received | \$395.00 |
| <i>Total Income</i> | \$988.75 |
| Expenditure | |
| Envelopes and Postage | \$36.60 |
| Cost of Badges | \$465.29 |
| Newsletter Printing | \$598.00 |
| Letterheads/Membership Cards | \$23.00 |
| <i>Total Expenditure</i> | \$1,122.89 |
| <i>Surplus/(Deficit) Balance as at 31.03.13</i> | \$1,484.04 |

Financial Statement

New Zealand Bomber Command Association Inc. Year Ended 31 March 2013

MEMORIAL AND PUBLISHING ACCOUNT (02)

| | |
|---|--------------------|
| <i>Beginning Balance as at 31.03.12</i> | \$13,099.66 |
| Income | |
| Interest Earned | \$31.63 |
| Donations Received | \$349.00 |
| Reimbursement - Aust. High Commission - Wreath | \$85.00 |
| Kiwis Do Fly Book Sales | \$762.56 |
| Sales of Cards and Ties | \$50.00 |
| <i>Total Income</i> | \$1,278.19 |
| Expenditure | |
| Postage and Shipping | \$34.41 |
| Wreath | \$170.00 |
| Reimburse Peter - Travel expenses - Wellington | \$786.00 |
| Cost of Medals | \$185.60 |
| Cost of Envelopes and Cards | \$851.00 |
| <i>Total Expenditure</i> | \$2,027.01 |
| <i>Surplus/(Deficit) Balance as at 31.03.13</i> | \$12,350.84 |

Prepared from Bank Statements, cheque stubs and invoices supplied. K Tocher

Some Memories

Dick is our remotest RNZAF aircrew member, living in Canada. He keeps in touch and did attend the London Memorial unveiling. Dick is a practising engineer and as a Lancaster pilot in 218 Squadron never lost his love of flying, he is still doing it. Update March 8, 2012 "Cessna 172 to Reno Air Races another 13 hours in my logbook."

Story of a uniform – as told by Richard Perry

I joined the Royal New Zealand Air Force (RNZAF) in 1942 and was drafted to the Air Force station at Rongotai, a suburb of Wellington. Prior to my leaving our farm at Longbush in the Wairarapa my father had given me the instruction; "When you are in Wellington, go to my tailor and have him make you a uniform and put it on my account." Shortly after settling in and being issued with uniform etc, I visited the tailor and was told that, yes, he would make me up a uniform but I would have to supply the necessary officers material. How to obtain this item?

I had got to know one of the airmen who worked in the stores and, while talking to him one day, I broached the subject of the material. Yes, they did have bolts of officer's material in the warehouse. Next was the problem of persuading him that procuring a bolt for me was all in a good cause, which I managed and surreptitiously, we transferred the bolt of material to the bunkhouse and from there, suitably wrapped, I took it past the guardroom at the gate, waving to the guards as I passed and down to my tailor. Two fittings later, the uniform was made up, patterned on the issued item but in officer's material.

From Rongotai I was transferred up to the airfield in Masterton and from there was put on a pilot's course at Rotorua. All of this time I had been wearing my new uniform whenever I went visiting friends and was surprised to note that other airmen were in two minds as to whether to salute me. Came the first Wing Parade at Rotorua. After the CO had given his usual pep talk he inspected the troops. he stopped in front of me, eyed me up and down, asked me to step forward and asked my name. Then he asked what I was doing in this uniform and I answered, truthfully, that my father had had it made for me. His comment; "AC-2 Perry, I never want to see you on parade in that uniform again. Off the parade, please." With that I saluted and marched off back to our billets at Brent's Hotel. I continued to visit friends in Rotorua wearing the uniform, but reverted to not wearing the issued item on Wing Parades.

When I was down at Harewood, in Christchurch, flying Tiger Moths, the standard apparel was shorts, socks and khaki tops so had no problem on the station but continued to wear the uniform whenever I went downtown. From Harewood we went up to Auckland, boarded the MV 'Bloemfontaine' and sailed for Canada. In Canada of course, things were different. I could get away with anything. I just told the Canadian officials that it was standard RNZAF issue and they believed me. Typical of instances where the uniform was queried was a course at Jarvis in Ontario. Here I was the only New Zealander in a course of Aussies. They all came on Wing Parade in their 'Goon's' (overalls) because they said that was standard wear back in Australia and I, of course, was in my non-issue uniform. The Canadian airmen were all spit and polish as usual. The Aussies were dismissed and told to go back to the barracks and then it was my turn. "Yes Sir, this is standard Air Force issue back in New Zealand." Again the remark; "I don't want to

see you on this parade ground in that uniform again." Neither myself nor the Aussies had to attend another Wing Parade.

The end of the story is that I received a commission, took the uniform to a tailor in Toronto, had patch pockets put on the sides and the braid sewn on the sleeves. That uniform is still hanging up in my cupboard in Vancouver.

There is a sequel. When we arrived in England we were stationed down at Brighton and while there, I took a trip up to London and visited a tailor who had been recommended to me. Could he make me a battledress out of the same officer's material as the uniform. He could and did, and for the rest of the war I paraded around in my beautiful battledress. Again, I always had the same answer; "Standard RNZAF issue, Sir."

Looking Back – Richard P. Perry (Flt. Lieut. Retired)

Looking back over 73 years of experience since I left school. Can you imagine, I was only 18 years old when I joined the New Zealand Air Force. Were those war years interesting? Of course they were! We were invincible. Let's look at the old Tiger Moth days. do you remember your first solo flight? The lead up to that solo was interesting also. The Flight Parades, the exams, the friends that one made, the friends that didn't make the grade, those that were killed in later years, not too many of us survived.

Of all the planes that I have flown, the time spent at EFTS on Tiger Moths was the most exciting. You are up there in the wild blue yonder, all by yourself with the wind blowing your hair and you could roll and do loops with nothing between yourself and the ground but your safety harness. GLORIOUS. This was summer of 1942-43. Where were we going from here?



In the summer of 1943 we travelled to Auckland and boarded the Bloemfontein bound for Canada. Nothing but snow and ice awaited us. From San Francisco we travelled up to Vancouver and from there took a train across the Rockies and onwards to the Manning Depot in Toronto. Winter was still with us before we knew where we were going. My destination was #6 SFTS in Dunnville, Ontario, and the aircraft were Harvards. Here was a different kind of beast. 650 horsepower up front for a start. Short course and then into the cockpit. What a different animal. With all that horsepower, rolls, loops etc were a snap. Many accidents. My new friend Jimmy Spanhake landed one on it's nose. I had the opportunity to do a ground loop. There were three courses going through there at the time and many accidents. I went solo after six hours of instruction!

The course lasted until Christmas. Just after Christmas when we had our Wings Parade we were told that a number of us, myself included, would be heading BACK TO NEW ZEALAND FOR MORE TRAINING. I had my heart set on the EUROPEAN THEATRE. How to get there? I went to see our CO and he said he would see what he could do. The answer was; "REMUSTER ON TO AN OBSERVER COURSE WHICH WAS STATIONED IN TORONTO." So that's what I did. I took that course, got top marks and received a Commission. Very interesting. I was the only one on the course with pilots wings and I made the most of the opportunity. We did a considerable amount of navigation around Ontario, attended a Bombing and Gunnery school and a Navigation school. Quite a collection. On a large number of the Nav. flights I would take the opportunity of getting into the pilots seat in the Anson. So onwards. At the end of 1943 we boarded the Mauretania bound for



Liverpool and onwards to Brighton . . .

Brighton was particularly interesting at that time. We stayed in the Grand Hotel and during the day we manned the Bofors Anti-Aircraft Guns along the coast. Our team had the opportunity of shooting down any low level raiders that attacked Brighton. During that time we did have one raider come directly in over the water but, by the time we got our gun aimed he was gone overhead of us. We had bombs dropped on us almost every night. The bombers going to bomb London would drop any that they had left over on us as they went home. One of my friends was walking home with his girl friend on one of the nights when the sirens went off and he dived into a doorway with his friend. She slumped into his arms and when the all-clear sounded, he found she was dead. A sliver of glass had pierced her heart.

During this period we played golf. I took a Commando course down at Sidmouth and then went on to Westcott and Oakley where we crewed up. I was very fortunate to get together with the only Australian on this intake. Robby Robinson had trained on Ansons in Canada. Robby and I split up and proceeded to find ourselves a crew. I went after a possible Navigator and a Wireless Operator while he went after the two Gunners. The final proof that we made the right decision was the fact that we survived a tour of 32 trips without any serious injuries or accidents. We went through the usual crew training at Westcott and Oakley and from there onwards to Wrating Common for the Con Unit on Stirlings and finally to 218 'Gold Coast' Squadron on Lancs.

Incidentally we kept in touch after the war and in 1984 I had a chance to meet with Robby in Melbourne shortly before he died of cancer.

My hopes are that there are still some of you around to spin the odd tale regarding your experiences during those war years.

Mess Treats

'This Airmen's Mess menu was organised by New Zealander Bill Montgomery (an armament officer at RAF Pembrey Wales).

He dispatched airmen to make deals with local farmers and others to pick wayside fruit and berries.

The ration allowance was 2 shillings and 10 pence per day and for once the 400 airmen based in the camp ate well.

... and at 582 Squadron this Ops officer gets the hurry up

From:- Officer Commanding, No. 582 Squadron, R.A.F.
To:- Operations Officer, No. 582 Squadron, R.A.F.
Date:- 26th July, 1945
Ref:- 582S/521/41.

Appended here below copy of a letter received from Station Headquarters.

2. It is requested that in future you will carry out the procedure laid down therein.

E. M. H. M.
Wing Commander, Commanding,
No. 582 Squadron, R. A. F.

Notification of Meal Requirements to Sergeants' Mess and Catering Officer.

Recently the operations officer has not been notifying the Sergeants' Mess or the Catering Officer of various facts essential to the proper provision of meals for flying personnel.

2. It is requested that instructions may be issued to the effect that the Battle Order is always to include a statement of the time the meal will be wanted before take-off and again after landing, if this time differs from the normal meal time.

3. Any last minute alterations in the Battle Order should be telephoned to the Catering Officer (extension 59) with a request that she will take the necessary steps with the Sergeants' mess.

I. Maynell S/L
Station Administrative Officer,
R.A.F. Station, Little Staughton.

72-725 2824. 444 T.S. 700
72-725-2824 3426. 1244 T.S. 700

ROYAL AIR FORCE.

AIRMAN'S MESS. BILL OF FARE. WEEK ENDING 14th August, 1942.

Unit No. 1 A.C.S. Station PABOBY.

| TURSDAY. | SUNDAY. | MONDAY. | TUESDAY. | WEDNESDAY. | THURSDAY. | FRIDAY. |
|---|---|--|---|--|---|---|
| Apple Juice, Cornflakes, Bacon and Fried Bread. | Porridge, Bacon and Beans. | TEA, BREAD, MARGARINE, Cornflakes, Scrambled egg on fried bread. | Porridge, Mutton Kidney, Butter Sauce. | Apple Juice, Cornflakes, Sauté Kidney, Sauté Potatoes. | Porridge, Pork Sausages, and Onion Gravy. | |
| Meat and Vegetable Pie, Potatoes, Turnips, Carrots, Apple Pudding, Custard Sauce. | Roast Beef, Yorkshire Potatoes, Cabbage, Carrots, Fruit Salad, Custard Sauce. | Brown Stew, Curried Stew, Potatoes, Carrots, Blue Peas, Baked Jam Roll, White Sauce. | Stuffed Roast, Mutton, Mint Sauce, Potatoes, Green Peas, Steamed Golden Pudding, Sauce. | Cottage Pie, Potatoes, Carrots, Cabbage, Apple Pie, White Sauce. | Cold Roast Beef, Potatoes, Tomatoes, Lettuce, Bread Pudding, Custard Sauce. | |
| Boiled Egg, Strawberry Duns, H.M. | Pork Sausages, and Gravy, Swiss Roll. | Welsh Rare-bit on Fried Bread, Cake. | TEA, BREAD, BUTTER, JAM, Preserved Meat, Pudding Sauce. | Ox Heart, Mash, Gravy, Rock Cakes, H.M. | Fried Fish and Chips, Vinegar. | Preserved Meat, Pickles, Tomatoes, Cakes. |
| Vegetable Soup. | Cold Meat, Cold Potatoes, Sauce. | Meat Pie, Gravy. | BREAD, MARGARINE, COCOA, Savoury Roll, Gravy. | Cheese and Sauce, Tomatoes. | Steak and Kidney Pie. | Cold Sausage, and Sauce. |

Approved *[Signature]* *[Signature]* *[Signature]*

President of Airmen's Messing Committee. Officer Commanding.

Newsbriefs

Archives

Many thanks for the welcome and hospitality when I have visited to share your photos, log books and memories. The copies taken are all lodged in the NZBCA archives and the photographs particularly (now 5,000 plus) are used almost daily by families, veterans, magazines and TV producers.

If I haven't yet been to see you and are happy to arrange some copying (we pay for it), please write or give me a call as once collections are dispersed through families so much is being lost.

Lincolnshire

For those who served in Lincolnshire, a new memorial is to be built to RAF Bomber Command. Nicky Barr the Appeals Director has been in contact and details can be found on their website. www.lincsbombercommandandmemorial.com



I Don't Want To Talk About The War

A dedication to all the soldiers that fought and lost their lives.

The soldier saw a flash,
There wasn't even time to ask,
What was taking place,
By the time that he could see,
The man from channel 3,
Was all up in his face,
Saying, "tell us how you feel about the things you've seen and done."
"Are you proud or are you sorry?"
"Did you have to kill someone?"
As he walked on toward the taxi cab,
He said over his duffle bag ...

Chorus

I don't wanna talk about the war,
Or the reasons that it started,
We've been down that road before,
And the only place it doesn't go,
Is back to my front door,
So I ain't walking down it anymore,
I don't wanna talk about the war.

She met him at the door,
The t-shirt that she wore suggested hugs not bombs,
He put his duffel down,
She threw her arms around him just like any mom,
The feeling sure was different the last time he was here,
And a battle of opinions brought both of them to tears,
And he starts on his apology,
And she says; "Baby please ..."

Chorus

I don't wanna talk about the war,
Or the reasons that it started,
We've been down that road before,
And the only place it doesn't go is back to my front door,
So I ain't walking down it anymore,
I don't wanna talk about the war.

So they talked about the neighbours and about the price of gas,
When she said; "Are you hungry?" He said; "I thought you'd
never ask,
Then just before they bowed their heads,
They shared a look that said ...

Chorus

I don't wanna talk about the war,
Or the reasons that it started,
We've been down that road before,
And the only place it doesn't go,
Is back to my front door,
So I ain't walking down it anymore,
I don't wanna talk about the war.

I don't wanna talk about the war.
I don't wanna talk about the war.

To see the you tube video go to:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BOptWYygKKY>

The Ashworths

This family of airmen had some amazing experiences and brother Vince has written of Fighter Pilot Corran Ashworth (65 Squadron) who was killed on August 3, 1944 attacking barges in France and related in 'For Our Tomorrow He Gave His Today'. His latest book about older brother Artie Ashworth who spent his flying career with the RAF. Artie was famous for his antics and magnificent moustache flying with RAF Bomber Command throughout the 1940's and 50's. Both books are well researched and illustrated. Copies directly from Vince: 18 Maple Place, Morrinsville 3300.

Last Thoughts

Your memories are valuable and worth recording. Do it now, and perhaps send us a copy for the newsletter ... or we will keep them private.

We still have Bomber Command Memorial Ties (\$10) and packs of greeting cards (6 cards with envelopes \$10).

Donations towards the cost of the newsletter are always welcome, and if you are feeling flush there's our tax deductible charitable trust available.

Thank you Dick and Geoff for your contributions to this newsletter -others are very welcome.

Dambusters Celebration – 70 years

Member Les Munro attended the celebrations and services and as the last surviving pilot on the raid showed great fortitude in facing all the demands put on him. Not bad for 90+ Les!

At the same time the BBC ran a 24 hour programme over the 16/17 May on what it was like, from interviews with the survivors. A number of our members were interviewed on air. Those long ago days are certainly not being forgotten by subsequent generations.



*Les at home in the cockpit
Lancaster 1944, 777 2013*



More Computer Links

What did we do before?

MOTAT Aviation Exhibitions Emily Green has completed a project started by John Barton and Allan Taylor nearly a decade ago by logging every RNZAF loss in Bomber Command. This is done graphically on screen and can be asked to find an airman by name. The site will be extended to allow personal footage, photos and interviews to be added.

Go to www.bombercommandmemorial.co.nz

Aviation Art

Pete West in Taupo is an illustrator of aircraft and many of his colour profiles are seen in Flypast and Aeroplane magazines. He will do a personalised, full colour print of any aircraft, certainly yours. Here's one done for Roy Montrowe of his 692 Squadron Mosquito.



Pete West

Photography, illustration, design.

4/504 Mapara Road, Taupo, 3385, RD5.

email: oneleggedpom@xtra.co.nz tel: 073783798 mobile: 0272829970

web: www.flickr.com/photos/oneleggedpom/

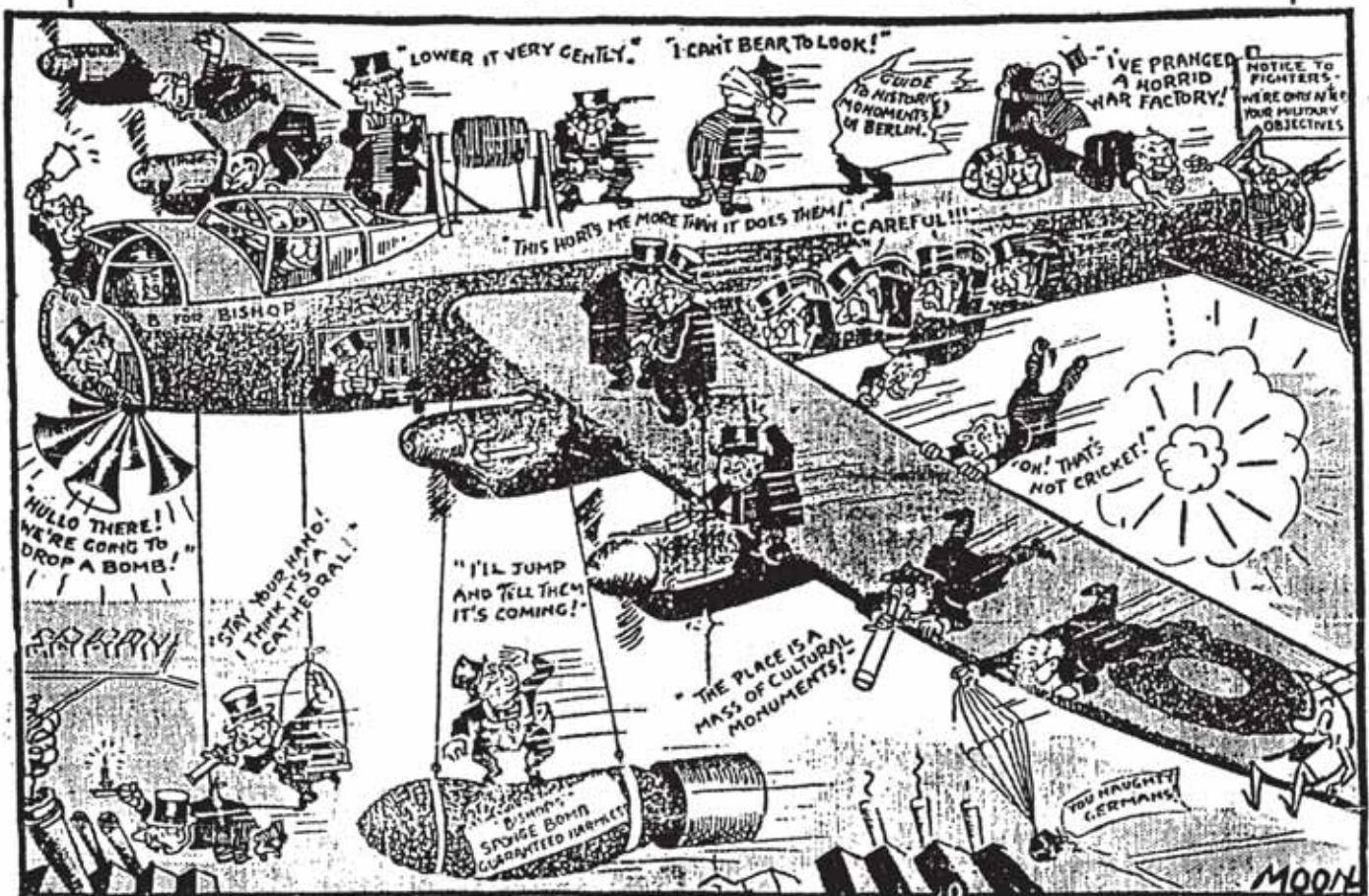


MOTAT Notes

Two screenings of the famous Dam Busters movie was enjoyed by veterans and enthusiasts in the display hall at MOTAT in May to celebrate the raid. The occasion was made special by our Lancaster looking on and June Brandon's talk. A great night. And what of Peter Jackson's remake – who knows?

Judgments based on poor understanding of wartime realities

'B' For Bishop Makes Its Bombing Run



The war itself was immoral. . . . We have now had almost 50 years with no major power conflict. Maybe we have learned at last.

TEMPER OF THE TIMES ↑
Criticism by the Archbishop of Canterbury of the Allied bombing of Germany came under fire in 1943 from the cartoonist of The Sunday Dispatch in London.

A WAAF's Tale

June Brandon started her service days as a great adventure but soon found the war had a dark side. She was one of the many photo interpreters who studied the thousands of target photos you brought back but her highlight was spotting "the" busted dam.

WAAF Photographers and Controllers Under Training

June Brandon born 12, September 1923

World War II broke out shortly before my sixteenth birthday. At this time I was living with my widowed mother and fourteen year old brother in the New Forest, England. The thatched cottage that was our home was four miles from the southern coast and three miles from the village of New Milton.

We waited for the air raids, but nothing happened. We did however have an enthusiastic Air Raid Warden who was always conducting practices. After one such practice, when all 'casualties' seemed to have been accounted for, it was discovered that one was in fact 'missing.' Stretchers and first aid personnel raced to his position but no 'casualty' could be found. Under a brick on the pavement, however, was a small note with the words; "Bled to death. Gone Home."

When France fell, her Air Force had been destroyed to prevent planes falling into enemy hands.

Unfortunately, however, not all planes could be destroyed in time. One afternoon my brother came in from the garden reporting that he had just seen a plane with very odd markings, red, white and blue on the wings but not in correct sequence. We went outside and watched in horror as this plane turned and flew above the village street dropping bombs as it went.

Next morning Mother asked me to cycle to the village to get her some items. Petrol was of course now rationed which necessitated the bicycle. Off I set with my gas mask in a box strapped to my back just in case. On reaching the village I discovered that the paint shop was still smouldering but what had completely gone were the fish shop, the little bakery, and its owner who had made delicious cakes and jams to sell in the shop. The raid had taken place late on a Friday afternoon when many people did their weekend shopping so the casualties were very high - fifty-three killed and seventy wounded in an area of approximately 4000 people.

On my way home I noticed men topping some of the trees. When I questioned them they replied; "Well, as you'll find out anyway ... it's the quickest way to retrieve any bits of people out of the tree tops."

At the end of the school term, and after my seventeenth birthday, I left school to go up to London to join the Royal Air Force. I had had to put my age up to eighteen as one could not join up until then. Of course my mother knew nothing about this. Later when my brother was old enough he joined the Navy and our mother went to live in London. I was sent to Gloucester where our uniforms were literally thrown at us. The only items for which we were measured were our hat and shoes. As far as I could tell the only place where our uniforms fitted was our shoulders.

I was then posted to Morecambe for endless drill up and down the waterfront. I found my shoes were very uncomfortable and I developed chilblains, so when it snowed that winter in Morecambe and we were told to put on our overshoes (galoshes), I was delighted of course.

Next day I did very well at drill until the sergeant said; "Take off your overshoes for inspection." I was caught standing in the snow in a pair of red moccasin slippers!

I was soon posted to Blackpool for six months to be trained as a photographer. Learning about the properties of light, cameras, developing, printing, and laying down mosaics (matching photos together).

After one week's leave I was posted to a fighter station just outside Newcastle-on-Tyne where I was given a bicycle painted

black and yellow stripes. It was my job to cycle out each morning to all the operational aircraft on the airfield to test the camera guns.

The first morning when I arrived, the ground crew burst out laughing, saying; "They've sent a girl!"

I was furious. Grabbing a wheel chock, I took it to the port wing of a Spitfire, stood on it, removed a screwdriver from my pocket and unscrewed a small panel between the cannon and the fuselage. I then asked a mechanic to get into the cockpit and push the camera only button so that I could check the camera itself. I screwed the little panel back in place again and we proceeded to the next aircraft. On occasions I would have to replace a film magazine I would then sign a form saying that all cameras were working. By my third morning, there was always a mechanic waiting - with a wheel chock.

Our photographic section was sited just outside the main airfield at Benson and had a sortie board in the main passageway. This showed each sortie number, the ETA and also the time that the film was handed in for developing. When the film was finished and printed, a line would then be drawn through that sortie entry. By the end of the day we knew how many planes had yet to return and how many men still to come home. Some days we knew that a sortie left on the board without a line through it meant that someone was lost. If we had lost two then we hardly dared to breathe as so often we would then lose a third.

We would go on duty and work until the last film had been finished. This might be only two hours work or it could be as late as 1am the next morning before we were finished. The weather was a great determining factor in this process.

All pictures were 8 1/2 inches by 7 1/2 inches with either 250 or 500 exposures on a film. They were all processed in long developing machines with chemicals that had to be mixed and changed. The chemicals were carried in buckets to the mixing room and those of us who worked there had to wear clogs otherwise these chemicals would rot our shoes.

Two of our photographers enjoyed spending their evenings off at the local pub. On one occasion when the pub ran out of beer they decided to switch to Red Devon cider, being completely unaware of its lethal qualities, thinking that it was merely apple juice. Eventually they tottered back to camp, nicely drunk, and as it was by now after ten o'clock they found the gates closed. Along the side of the road outside the camp, watercress was growing and ladders were used to harvest this. The photographers 'borrowed' one of these ladders, placed it against the fence and started to climb over it to get back in. The girl who was first up the ladder turned to her friend and said; "I feel like a fireman." Her friend quickly replied; "Where are you going to find one at this time of night?"

One day as I travelled up to London on leave I was caught in a big air raid and the train had to stop just in case the line ahead had been bombed. We sat for a whole hour in total darkness, trying not to fall asleep on a stranger's shoulder. Arriving in London eventually at 5pm we found the Underground crowded and permeated by a terrible smell.

There were still a few trains running but even so I had to alight one station early because of an unexploded land mine. I began to walk home. (By now my mother was living in London and driving ambulances). I walked down several back streets where tired firemen were rolling up hoses and as the odd brick was still falling I walked down the middle of the street.

Everywhere was the smell of burning soot. On one corner, sitting on a pile of rubble with a bag beside her was an elderly lady, maybe



WAAF photographers and controllers under training



One of Thousands

waiting for her family to come and collect her. As I passed by she said; "Don't worry Love, they'll never beat us."

We loaded a camera facing forwards in a Mosquito - it needed testing for height and exposure. I had fitted the camera earlier with the help of another girl and when the navigator failed to turn up I became concerned about the light fading. WAAF were not supposed to fly but the pilot said to me; "You can work the camera. Hop in!" I climbed in, strapped myself in, up and away we went.

As Oxfordshire is mainly flat, the tallest thing we encountered was the church steeple. We flew straight at it, banked, turned and came back again, changing the camera setting each time. Next day the vicar cycled up to see the CO and said that he had no idea what we had been doing but he would be very pleased if we would stop as the remnants of his congregation had been terrified!

Late one afternoon while I was at Benson, a friend and I were sitting on a wall in front of our section. Suddenly a Spitfire flew up from behind us and passed low over our heads. It then banked steeply and one wing went through a small shed on the edge of the airfield.



Mohne Dam after 617s visit

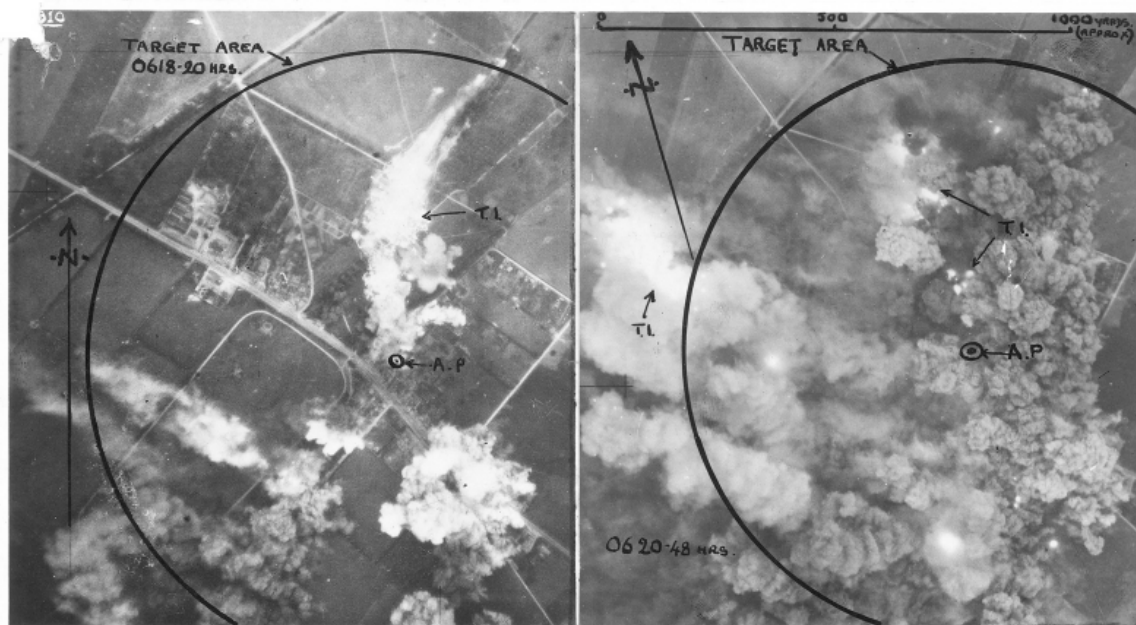
The Spitfire straightened up, then crashed. We saw the pilot's hand come up to open the canopy just as the aircraft burst into flames. The sight and smell were awful - we were both sick on the spot. At that moment we were called

back into the darkroom as the last roll of films had just come in for processing.

One day after being on duty for 24 hours, I was thinking of a lovely hot bath, a sausage breakfast, and bed. We used to say we had two kinds of bread - bread, and sausage. That was because the sausages had very little meat in them and were mostly made from breadcrumbs. Just then, to my disappointment, we heard over the loudspeaker that crews one and two were to return immediately to their section. I was given a film and back into the darkroom I went. When the film was set up and processing nicely I emerged from the darkroom to find a number of high ranking Officers milling about obviously waiting for some very important results.

I walked over to the viewing chamber where my friend was already checking her work and I began checking mine. As soon as I started my viewing one of the Officers came over and said to me, "What do you see?"

I looked at my friend, she nodded and I replied; "It looks as though someone has broken a dam." I was asked if I was sure, and I was. We had seen enough photos of this dam before it was broken. Sadly it was not until later that we learnt of the huge losses. Two dams were breached but not the third - this was confirmation of the success and sacrifice of the pilots and crew who became the 'Dam Busters'.



No.17 CAGNY (France) Daylight attack on the 18th July, 1944 showing T.I. at commencement of attack and concentration of bombing 2 minutes later. (3 & 8 Groups) Confidential.

I was then posted to Medmaham, a Central Intelligence unit. There was much more interpretation, enlargement and specialised work being done there for all three services. For interpretation we had special glasses mounted on a small stand and one would peer down at the photograph. As it was slower in 3D, damage was more readily recognisable. I spent one Christmas there and according to tradition, the Officers served the other ranks with Christmas dinner. Sarah Churchill was there and being very popular, she spent most of her time signing autographs.

At the end of the war I was posted to Hitchen in charge of 400 WAAF to do administration work of which I had little idea and was given an ex-parachute packer as my assistant. She was a lovely girl and we would spend all our time looking up King's regulations to see what we should do. At that time I still hadn't had my 21st birthday. There was plenty of work checking Lancaster bombers to see if they could remain in service or be consigned to the scrap heap. Really we all just wanted to get out of the Air Force and go home.

Once a fortnight or so, one had to be duty officer for the station. To my horror the CO said that he was coming with me to see what went on when we did what was known as 'Purity Patrol'. This was to see that the WAAF and Airmen went back to their respective barracks. Normally I would cycle up and down and call to anyone caught cuddling; "Break it up I'll be back in five minutes." The Air Commodore met me on the steps of the Mess with the most enormous torch and I thought, "This is going to be even worse than I imagined." He had a wooden leg below the knee and so off we went clicking into the darkness.

We had not gone far when we saw a couple having a lovely cuddle. Though I was the one on duty, I indicated politely that he should say something as it had been his idea to come along after all. So what did he do? He walked up to the airman, tapped him on the shoulder and said; "I say, isn't it time you two were in bed?"

And so it was that I had grown up with six friends - played tennis, picnicked in the New Forest and had fun. By the end of two years we were all in uniform. By the end of four and a half years one was wounded and two were killed. One of these was my cousin Janice Harrington who had learnt to fly before the war. When the Air Transport Auxiliary was formed she had joined it. They would pick up airplanes from the factories and fly them to any airfield at which they were needed. One day she hitched a ride with a friend in a Mosquito hoping to spend a night at home but something went wrong at the landing and they crashed. Both were killed. Janice was just twenty-three.

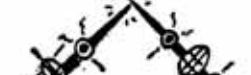
June attended the MOTAT screening of the Dam Busters and spoke of her time at Benson.

Taken from her memoirs by Cunitia Wikinson, Prue Dray and Brian Millett, Warkworth.

TEN LITTLE PUPIL BOYS



The Bomber Squadron sent a message to our O.T.U.
 'Send us Ten more Bomber Boys it all depends on you.
 The last lot you sent us were pretty b—— duff.
 So you'd best extract your digit, and turnout better stuff.'
 We gathered ten fresh pupil boys and started them off fine,
 Till one took off down wind and then there were nine,
 Nine little pupil boys each took up a crate,
 One forgot to check the chocks and then there were eight
 Eight little pupil boys went sailing up to Heaven,
 One climbed at sixty and then there were seven.
 Seven little pupil boys couldn't read the kicks,
 One landed off the beam and then there were six.
 Six little pupil boys trying to survive,
 One did a stall turn and then there were five.
 Five little pupil boys were shaken to the core,
 One couldn't take it, and then there were four.
 Four little pupil boys singing in their glee,
 Kept 'shooting up' their girl-friends and then there were three.
 Three little pupil boys were sailing through the blue,
 One forgot the colours and then there were two.
 Two little pupil boys their training nearly done,
 Tried too close formation and then there was one.
 One little pupil boy was out for some fun,
 He flew above a convoy and then there was none.
 Now all little pupil boys should this rule observe,
 Take note of instructions and the Knowledge well conserve,
 For reasons self-evident we lost all our crews,
 And the poor Bomber Squadron is out of the news.



W. Hooper R.A.F.