



NZ Bomber Command Association News

March 2017

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Honorary Chaplain: The Venerable Neville Selwood Archdeacon Emeritus of Dunedin
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Vice Presidents: Bunny Burrows (15, 622, 487 Sqn), Keith Boles DFC, pff (109 Sqn)

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From our President

A Happy New Year to everybody and may we march on. Peter told me the Newsletter would feature Brighton PRC and that brought back many hazy memories of long, long ago. Back in 1943 I was one of a large contingent of Aussies and New Zealanders ('Newsies' perhaps, but I don't recall ever being called 'Kiwi'), newly arrived by a blacked-out train, after an Atlantic crossing in the 'Queen Mary'.

The Canadians, 'Canuks' went to nearby Eastbourne. Officers stayed in the Royal Albion annexed and NCO's in the large luxurious Grand Hotel.

Brighton even in wartime was a pleasant and peaceful place and still a rather select beach resort. The celebrated beach to our astonishment, was pebbles not sand. Occasionally the peace was shattered by a daring FW190 with raking machine guns setting off land mines that were concealed along the southern coast.

Apart from morning parades we had a lot of leisure time and there was much intermingling amongst the various aircrew trades, catching up with former friends and the making of new ones. The only places out-of-bounds were the sealed off waterfront and two bars, one frequented by the legendary 'Primrose'.

A popular attraction was the Royal Pavillion, the lavish retreat of George IV built in extravagant Oriental style with its glittering ballroom and secret passages.

Although we enjoyed Brighton, the first home in Britain for most of us, we knew it was just a prelude for what was to come and we were all very keen to be on the 'Postings List' and go to an advanced flying unit, join up into a crew, and then on to a Squadron. Little did we really know what lay ahead.

Seventy something years later it is our privilege to look back on those days, the good and the bad, with mixed emotions, wonder tinged with thankfulness included.

Best wishes to you all, **Ron Mayhill**



Ron in his skipper's seat, John Aitken and crew flew AA-U from Mepal.

Visitors

The Bomber Command displays at MOTAT continue to attract many Bomber Command families and groups every month. Recently we have had the Chairman and Secretary of the Lincolnshire Lancaster Association spend a day with us. The Association kindly donated hundreds of postcards and posters to sell with the proceeds going to the Lancaster repair fund.

There are restriction on coming aboard the Lancaster.

No children

Only two visitors with an approved guide.

No high heels or tight skirts!

Veterans and their children have an automatic invitation (but call us first).

Other relations, authors, film crews and special groups - on merit.

All of this is aimed at having a safe tour while ensuring that the aircraft survives damage free. Book a visit with NZBCA.



Ron and Janet (LLA) with Bellamy now with three Lancaster's in his logbook. One with airtime.



Clive Lane who selected a visit to our Lanc for his Win a Wish in 2014



The RAF's first four engined heavy bomber was a major advancement on the types in operation at the time.

That's My Stirling

Often written about in most un-Stirling terms, this heavy bomber did great work and had the respect of its crews. Roomy, very agile, not temperamental and often contrasted with the Lancs that replaced them being noisy, cramped and hot.

While RAF Squadrons quickly disposed of them 75 (NZ) Squadron soldiered on into 1944 when a letter from Bill Jordan (NZ High Commissioner), to the Air Ministry asking when it's premier bomber squadron would be allowed to convert to modern equipment sparked a change.

Yet those models discarded from Bomber Command found a new life as Glider Tugs both at D-Day, Arnhem and the Rhine crossing.

Noel Sutherland flew Stirlings on 190 Sq and happily towed cargo and troops over the Rhine in 1945. Stirlings were also first on the ground in Norway. Their Merlin engined competitors could not operate in the Middle East to India route. Alongside radial engined Halifaxes, Stirlings were the work horses for Transport Command well after VJ Day.

So our VP, Bunny Burrows, navigator on Stirlings with 15 Squadron - "lovely, roomy and built like the proverbial".

Obviously the product of the ship building trade, even the control wheel seemed from a tug boat! But Charlie Shepherd (an RNZAF Armourer) remembers that the bomb bay was an awful long way off the ground.



7 Sq bombing up at Oakington

So in memory of those who flew Stirlings, here are some pictures of Bomber Commands most photogenic aircraft (but only when airborne).



75 Sq Stirling at Mepal

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Contributions to the NZBCA news are always welcome.

Family and friends of Bomber Command servicemen and women are very welcome to become members. contact us fro details



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**AT THE-NEW-ZEALAND-
BOMBER-COMMAND-
ASSOCIATION**

From Thetfords Aircraft of the RAF

	RANGE	LOAD	ALTITUDE
Hampden	1885	2000	19000
Blenheim	1460	1000	22000
Manchester	1630	8000	19000
Wellington IC	1200	4500	18000
Whitley	1650	3000	17600
Stirling	2010	3500	17000
Halifax VI	1500	12000	24900
Lancaster I	1660	14000	24500
B17 G	1740	6000	35000

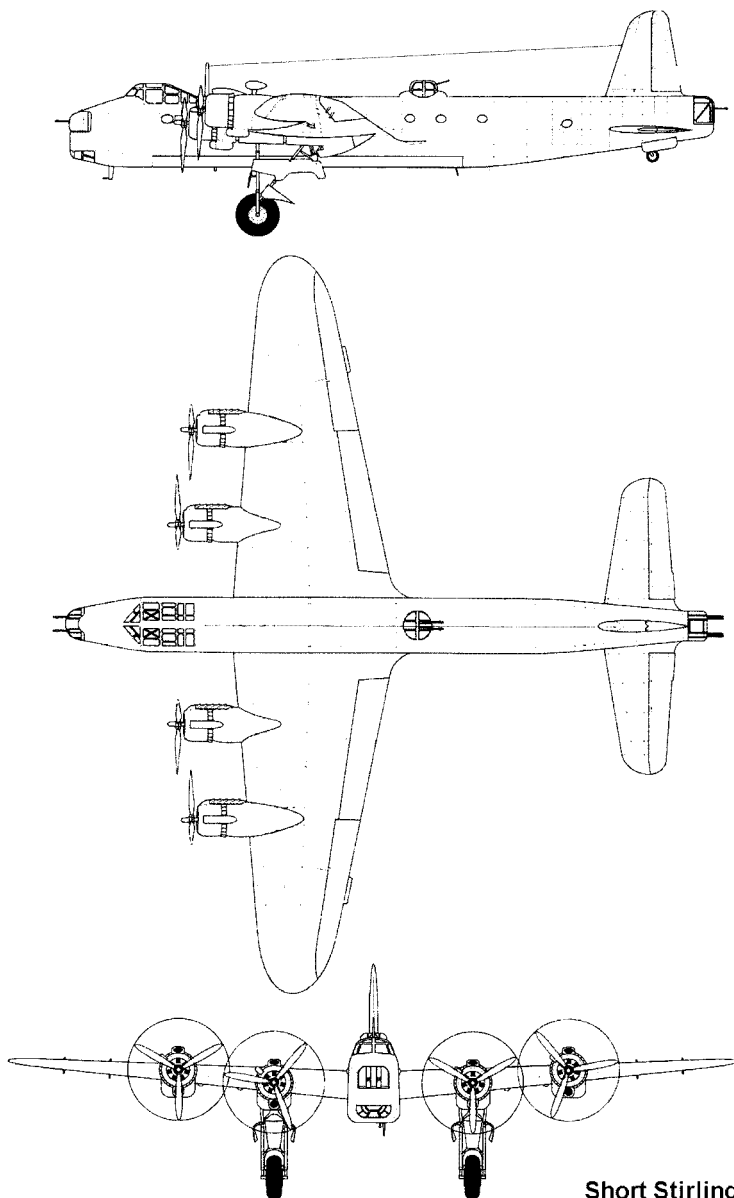
Compared with the wars early twin engined bombers, the Stirling offered greater range, putting more targets within reach. But compared to the later heavy weights it was outdated, having to make three ops to deliver the same bomb load.

Notable is the performance of the B17 G, low on load, good on altitude and the weight of explosives on a target being made up by the sheer number of aircraft tasked with the job.

The Stirling story being the first RAF heavy bomber, was repeated with the next generation of aircraft for Bomber Command, the V Bomber. The jet engined Vickers Valiant wasn't a spectacular design (compared with the later Vulcan and Victor). And while it couldn't compete with the later designs it too introduced a whole new game, this time the Nuclear Bomb.

But the Stirling had another essential life taking most of our now veteran members through Heavy Conversion Unit. Their first taste of a heavy bomber (26 tons loaded), four engines and a crew of seven to manage. It gave crews their first taste of bombing (on the ranges) and fighter affiliation. Good lessons learned for later.

The Short Stirling, got RAF Bomber Command into the business.



Short Stirling

Remember

And the Lord said, Behold a trumpet shall blow and men shall say, one to the other, Lo my wheels are up, and they, being the blessed shall straightway lower them and perceiving them shall say I, even I have a wheel, the Lord is good.

And there shall be other among ye, who perceiving a red light shall say one to the other, Lo my wheels are up, and they also shall straightway lower the, and perceiving both the wheels and a green light shall say Verily I have a wheel, Rama Rama Sarbec Cammathatim, which being interpreted means The Pause That Refreshes.

But there shall also be men among ye who say I give not a shit for any man, shall land with their wheels up and they shall say Thus and thus I did it, verily it was not my fault, it was but the pupils. Hell everyone does it once.

Rodney Williams 90 Sq

In Hampdens it was necessary for the navigator to stand behind the pilot for take-off. Judge then my- and my pilot's- horror one day when we watched the altimeter wind up rapidly to some thousands of feet on the runway whilst the air speed indicator remained stubbornly at 0 m.p.h! It was only by feel that my pilot got the aircraft safely into the air to do a low level circuit at some indicated 8,000 feet and 20 m.p.h. It was with enormous relief that we touched down at 5,000 feet, and decelerated quickly to ground level! (For the technically-minded, the explanation given to us was that someone-never identified- had connected the tubes in the pitot head the wrong way round!)

Lou Woodward at OTU

Bomber Command Sorties and Losses 1939-45 (from RAF Bomber Command summaries 1949)

GRAND TOTALS		
	Night	Day
Total Despatched	297663	66851
Total Missing	7449	876
Total Damaged, February 1942-May 1945	13778	
Estimated cause of Loss, July 1942-May 1945	2278 by fighters 1345 by flak 112 not by enemy action (mainly collisions) 2072 from unknown causes	
Estimated cause of Damage, February 1942-May 1945	1728 by fighters (163 wrecked, 1565 repairable) 8848 by flak (151 wrecked, 8697 repairable) 3159 not by enemy action (876 wrecked, 2283 repairable) 43 from unknown causes (37 wrecked, 6 repairable)	

ANNUAL TOTALS				
Year	Total Despatched		Total Missing	
	By Night	By Day	By Night	By Day
1939	170	163	4	29
1940	17493	3316	342	152
1941	27101	3507	701	213
1942	32737	2303	1291	109
1943	62736	1792	2255	59
1944	113352	35096	2349	224
1945	44074	20664	507	90



A Lanc in trouble at Fiskerton, the coding is from an HCU

BOMBER COMMAND AIRCRAFT STRENGTH 1942-1945								
	Operational			Training			Miscellaneous	Grand Total
	Heavy	Light or Medium	Total	Heavy	Light or Medium	Total	established types; Medium, Light or Fighter	
February 1942	224	702	926					
January 1943	654	313	1247	291	1091	1382	449	3078
January 1944	1298	167	1465	583	1277	1860	479	3804
January 1945	1873	371	2244	531	970	1510	617	4362
May 1945	1994	422	2416	468	915	1383	585	4384

Westcott

Hello I'm Ed Andrews. I have worked at Westcott for over 50 years now and know the place and its history quite well, but I still lack much detail of life here during the war. Pictures of the crews in training and any off duty activities are extremely rare so I'm always on the lookout for them and any other memorabilia.

Many NZBC crew members did some of their training at Westcott and Oakley before moving on to a HCU. For them Westcott was probably just another training station that holds no special place in their life, but for some it does. I know these days we get visits from the children and grandchildren of the crews that trained here and it gives us real pleasure to show them around to see what is left. Please regard this as an invitation to visit, but please give me a few days notice.

Westcott these days is owned by a Property Investment Company who will only invest in buildings or infrastructure where they can see a return on their clients investment, so getting money to renovate and turn the control tower into a museum is not in their remit. That being said there is hope: Westcott after the war was the home of rocket propulsion research, that is still continuing today. We hope that very shortly we will be home to some exciting new developments that could be a catalyst for a museum of rocket propulsion research carried out at Westcott and that would also include its RAF history. The control tower is already earmarked for this. Fingers crossed as they say.

Contact details from NZBCA, just ask

Ed

That Wimpey Song

It seems there were other variations, one member claimed there was a Waipapakauri version referring to Vincents and another about 'Freddy Stirling'.

Below are a few lines which resemble the main text:

'She creaks along the for part and rumbles down the back,
But when we go out raiding our Wimpey brings us back'.

and:

'One night across the Wilhelmstrasse
old Wimpey took his way
My God, said bloody Hitler, here's Wimpey, 'Let us Pray'
So down upon his knees he got and prayed with all his might,
But Wimpey threw a bomb at him and blew him out of sight'

And totally a different one:

'Just an old fashioned Wimpey, with old fashioned ways,
With a fuselage tattered and torn
Two old fashioned turrets with old fashioned guns
That the gunner DI'd every morn
Though she don't look so swell, she can drop bombs like hell
As the people of Essen can tell
When she's up there on high, She's the Queen of the sky
Is that old fashioned Wimpey of mine'

Squadron Song

As we go zooming through the skyways,
You'll hear the people say,
There goes Wimpy Feltwell,
best you watch her sway.
Her engines are so noisy,
They make a fearful crack,
And you no sooner see her going,
Then she is coming back.

Her name is Wimpy Feltwell
And you may ask me why:
But I really cannot tell you
So don't ask me to try.
She rattles in the front part,
And squeaks along the back,
But when we're over Berlin,
Good old Wimpy will bring us back.

One day we went a flying,
Across the cold North Sea,
But Wimpy saw a U boat,
And said "Oh gosh, Oh gee"
She went into a power dive,
And dropped three bombs, oh yes.
They lot that sub right on the nose,
And oh boy was she a mess.

A Messerschmitt went flashing by,
With a rat tat tat of her guns,
But Wimpy only shook her head,
And said "I'll fix those Huns."
She gave them a burst with her front guns,

And raked them with her rear.
And that Messerschmitt went down in flames,
As we all gave a cheer.

Now Wimpy never grumbles,
No, Wimpy never cries,
For she is a perfect lady
With two sparkling eyes.
She's got a voice like Cyrus,
And a face like Good old Buck.
Yes she's the girl for me,
Because she'll always bring me luck.

One night across the Wilhelmstrasse,
Our Wimpy made her way,
"Mein Gott," said dirty Hitler,
"Here's Feltwell! Let us Pray"
So down upon their knees they sank,
And prayed with all their might.
But Feltwell dropped their load of bombs,
And blew them out of sight.

And now you have heard the story,
Of our Wimpy, brave and bold.
For she is the greatest Wellington
that Vickers ever sold.
In time we'll go to heaven, - we hope!
With happiness to spare,
But Heaven won't be nothing unless,
Our Wimpy is also there.



D. Donoldson 149 Sq.



115 Squadron at Marham



300Sq at Hemswell

S/L J.B. Starky

Jim left New Zealand to live in South Africa with his son. We were able to assist him to obtain a replacement of his lost DSO and other medals. The DSO caused problems but a replacement was eventually sent to South Africa only to be stolen after delivery in the diplomatic bag to Pretoria and another had to be obtained. The following citation by his CO resulted in his DSO, the DFC having been awarded when he completed 42 sorties. His first tour in 1941-42 was on Wellingtons in the UK and later in the Middle East. On one occasion he collided with another aircraft over enemy territory and lost a large piece of his starboard wing but succeeded in bringing his badly damaged Wimpy back to base.

“On 5/6 Sept 1943 A/Sqn Ldr Starky took off in Lancaster DS682-Y, 115 Sqn, for Mannheim. This was his 47th trip, the rest of the crew having about 20 to their credit. At 0150 hrs the aircraft with starboard elevator almost fully shot away, the Nav and WOP missing and two more crew wounded, force landed at Ford. The trip went like this:

About 20 miles from the target in clear weather, the aircraft was at 19,500 ft when without warning a fighter dived in a head on attack. The a/c was badly hit, the cockpit filled with smoke and a bright light gave the impression of fire. It went into a violent spiral with the control column rocking violently and the Capt. gave the order to abandon aircraft. The Mid upper gunner Sgt Tugwell called to say the RG was stuck in his turret and had become jammed in the tail unit blowing free and the Capt made a desperate effort to regain control. The stick eased due to the dinghy which had become jammed in the tail unit blowing free and the Capt regained control. The N/F a JU88 attacked again from the rear; both tail and MUGs held their fire and shot it down in flames. Sqn Ldr Starky then tried to take stock, finding that both the WOP and Nav had baled out, his Engineer was wounded in the shoulder and the 2nd Pilot in the arm and head. The BA F/O Beer had tried to jump from the front exit but was unable to jettison the escape hatch. When halfway out he heard the Capt say “Hold on”. The RG was now manning the MU turret while MUG and BA attended to the wounded.

The Capt then attempted the difficult task of bringing his badly damaged aircraft back to base without the assistance of the WOP or Nav. He set course for home and flew this for over 30 mins.

The BA had now gone to tackle the Nav but the log had gone. However he produced an air plot and gave the Capt an amended course for base. Crossing France they were repeatedly fired at by AA and, without inter-com, the Capt took evasive action only from judging the gun flashes. On one occasion the BA went forward to tell him that shells were bursting dangerously close to the tail. In this precarious state the damaged Lancaster made its way through the enemy fighter belt. The MUG manned the WT and managed to get an acknowledgement to a laborious SOS. The BA tried without success to work the Gee. Finally they reached the Channel and near the coast flashed SOS on the lights, receiving a green as they crossed the shore. Sqn Ldr Starky effected a masterly landing of his now uncontrollable aircraft, bringing it into Ford at 140 mph.

The story is an epic and the safe return was considered primarily due to the superb airmanship and captaincy of Sqn Ldr Starky as well as to the magnificent cooperation of the rest of the crew. Sqn Ldr Starky has already been recommended for the DFC for his really magnificent work during two tours of operations and I consider that his latest achievement is worthy of the immediate award of the DSO.”

- He completed 47 Ops!

A good show by a first class captain. Jim was to become Chief Test Pilot for Armstrong Siddeley after the War. In a book about the Empire Test Pilots School, he was said to be the first New Zealander on that course - No. 2 in 1945. Jim, however, asserts that he was only the first from the RNZAF as a New Zealander in the RAF was on NO 1 Course!

Sqn Ldr J.B. Starky, DSO, DFC, MID, NZ401789, served on 148, 149 and 115 Squadrons.

NZBCA News March 1994.

Jim Starky had a distinguished career, serving with 148 Sq in the desert where he was awarded MID after his fully laden Wellington suffered a double engine failure after take off. In 1943 on 115 Sq he brought his Lancaster home after a collision taking off a large part of the wing followed by the episode above.

Jim died in Cape Town in April 1996.

Records

Hidden amongst the boxes of material we were loaned have been many surprises. Superb target photos and recently a pilot's new card. Very rare and very historical.



S/L Graham Mandeno DSO, DFC.
Trip to Berlin, 139 Sq Mosquito



The rail, a great grouping on junction at Rheydt
Rodney Williams 90 Sq 27/12/44

PRC and OTU

The last issue touched on Brighton and Westcott bringing a lot of memories back for many of you.



Ahhh ... the Grande and Metropole, Aussies in one, Kiwis in another. So here are two before and after pictures.



Westcott and Oakley, home to the new bods and recycled tour expired old hands. Log books hold instructors names that just a few months before were sprogs themselves now old men, almost worn out but ready for recycling.



Course photo 62 amongst the group are VP Bunny Burrows, and the late Merv Carter, Trevor Dill. Pilots seated at front.



An unhappy end but very common.

From the 1980s Newsletter

The 'Lancaster' Building at MOTAT

Construction is under way at Keith Park Field with the aim of completion in August and official opening in December. It is hoped to complete the interior exhibits by December and space allocation is going ahead now. We need to make our bids for space and therefore need your help urgently.

The building will measure 30m X 35m (98 1/2 ft X 115 ft) so not excessively generous once the Lancaster is inside. We hope to have about 50 metres (164 ft) of all for displays, showcases, Diorama, Ops room etc. This is crunch time and your President can no longer do it all alone so he sends out a despairing cry for help. Members who have usable items including but not limited to the following list, please send NOW to Box 25-043, St Heliers or deliver to St Heliers after phoning 580-467 first.

PHOTOS: Crew, Squadron, personal, target, bomber aircraft in air, on ground incl. prangs. NZ course photos, station photos depicting quarters, messes, dispersals. Negatives would also help where available.

MAPS: Nav charts and plots, posters, news cuttings etc.

SQUADRON: notices, battle orders and the like you may have filched.

CITATIONS: Any interesting citations and operational stories.

FLYING KIT: Of every kind - jackets, overalls, helmets, boots, gloves, goggles, Nav bags. Mae Wests! Chute harnesses! (some hope)

BATTLEDRESSES & UNIFORMS: Preferably dry cleaned first please to remove years of dust. Caps of all types. Both Officer and NCO gear wanted. Also Ground crew clothing. (We want to clothe models of air and ground crew around the aircraft)

MODELS: of all Bomber Command aircraft but training aircraft also welcomed. Any size.

FORLORN HOPES: Bomb sights, machine guns, bomb trailers and bombs (unarmed!). Old bikes.

Send what you can anyway and if not required it can be returned later or surpluses donated to the RNZAF Museum. Outright donations preferred as this is YOUR exhibition and we want to get it right. If unable to help any other way, cash will find a good use.

Today things haven't changed

We always welcome donations and the current appeal is to cover repairs to our Lancaster's outer wing shackles.

Donations by post or direct to our Charitable Trust Account: BNZ 021 206 0064186-00 NZBCA Charitable Trust.

All donations are tax deductible.

One recent bequest of some significance was from the estate of Elspeth Hope. Sadly we know little of the reason for the generosity but be assured that it will be dedicated to keeping our Lancaster in prime condition for another 50 years.

And don't forget those old photo albums and log books are very historical. Our copy project is now a decade old and the archives of over 20,000 digital images is used by authors, researchers and publishers worldwide. It's a free service.

So if you have a box or two of goodies please let us copy it. Just give Peter a call or email.

Odds & Sods

BOMBER CREW DEFINITIONS: Sundry botched-up German definitions have appeared elsewhere, eg

Aircraft - der fliegenwagon; Propellor - der airfloggggenfan;

Pilot - de tailschwingen puschenpullen werker.

So let's try these:

Navigator - der schmart pensilpuscher trienen finden der flughaven

BA - der bombendropper lukin fur ein targeten fur hitten

WOP - der radiotechnik mit der puschenbutton tellen der Bomber Fuehrer der bombenlode hitten der targeten okay

F/Eng - der technikerfuehrer helfen der piloten flugenkapitan keepen der airfloggenfans turnink

Rear Gunner - der kanonier sitendaun in der backkanonelpatz

Eng Fitter - der motorenschlossen mit der schpanner

Any further offerings welcome!

A new book

by Vic Jay (whose father flew with Bill Mallon)

The Mallon Crew - The service of Bill Mallon's Crew (which included four RNZAF airmen on 75 Squadron.

Available at the MOTAT ADH Shop

Calendar

JUNE 11TH

The annual Bomber Command Memorial Service

Auckland War Memorial Museum
10.30am

*Things to plan for -
a reminder will be sent out*

MID YEAR

5 Squadron (P3K Orions) host us for a tour and lunch.

Remember 5 Squadron is the RNZAF heavy bomber squadron and have adopted the NZBCA as their veteran partner.

CHRISTMAS LUNCH

A long way to go.



Our RAF vets with the Panton brothers at East Kirby

Fred Panton poem, Good Morning

I am God. Today I will be handling all of your problems. Please remember that I do not need your help.

If the devil happens to deliver a situation to you that you cannot handle. DO NOT attempt to resolve it. Kindly put it in the SFJTD (something for Jesus to do) box. It will be addressed in MY time, not yours.

Once the matter is placed into the box, do not hold onto it or attempt to remove it. Holding on or removal will delay the resolution of your problem.

If it is a situation that you think you are capable of handling, please consult

me in prayer to be sure that it is the proper resolution.

Because I do not sleep nor do I slumber, there is no need for you to lose any sleep. Rest my child. If you need to contact me, I am only a prayer away.

Fred Panton was the co-founder of the Lincolnshire Aviation Heritage Centre at East Kirkby where Andrew (the next generation of Pantons) and their team are restoring Lancaster 'Just Jane' to fly. This aircraft is a sister of ours on show at MOTAT. It was one of four Lancaster's used by the French Aeronavette based at Tontouta, New Caledonia.

The Line Book

Early return due to failure of four engines.

R. Rhodes 35 Sq.

Out of fuel, out of height, out of hope.

P. Roseman 109 Sq.

The flak, fog, smoke (your choice) was so thick we landed on it and waited for a bit.

Various famous people.

The cockpit had so many holes I had to call for a raincoat.

Why are you going to the main gate instead of slipping under the fence?
Because I'm the CO.

A Wilshire 75 Sq

Remember The Wednesday Boys Song at MOTAT

Does anybody have a copy?