



# NZ Bomber Command Association News

April 2018

**Patron:** AVM Peter Stockwell ONZM, AFC  
**President:** Ron Mayhill DFC (75 Sqn)  
**Vice Presidents:** Keith Boles DFC, pff (109 Sqn)

**NZBCA CHARITABLE TRUST 2561560**

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## From our President

Welcome everybody to a summer that was full of surprises. I suppose we Vets should be used to wondering what will happen next. Our early years were certainly exciting and eventful. We formed strong bonds within a crew and learned the importance of working with the ground crews that serviced our planes, indeed the value of all the support teams, the WAAFS of course, in fact all the many departments of an Air Force Station.

How many times we recalled the old adage, 'flying is quite safe, unless you come to a sudden stop.' That was the fate of so many in Bomber Command.

At 11 OTU Westcott, December 1943, ten new crews were quickly reduced to six. One strayed too far south and hit near-invisible barrage balloon cables. Another just disappeared on an exercise off the North Sea coast. A third Wellington tangled with a low flying Stirling returning from its first operation. A fourth crew sent on a 'nickelling' (leaflet dropping) over Paris was badly shot up and crashed on return. The fortunate six remaining crews proceeded to HCUs to convert onto the huge looking four-engine Stirling bomber. On our first dual take-off the screened pilot reported a strange 'bang' but attempts to inspect the tires proved inconclusive. An emergency

landing swung the aircraft left, the undercarriage collapsed, the port wing-tip screeching on the tarmac, the violent lurching ending in ground loops, showers of sparks and orange flames. Ambulances quickly took us off for medical checks. We were lucky but the Stirling was a complete write off.

It was not long before we were posted to an operational squadron to take part in the Bombing War. Here we were opposed by an equally determined and efficient enemy, vastly increasing the demands on aircrew, ground-crew, WAAFS and all.

Little wonder there will always be strong bonds between all of us in Bomber Command, having so much in common yet each with their own memories of incidents and challenges.

– Ron Mayhill



John Aitken and crew. Left to right: Henry Monk (MU), Gordon Grindley (WOP), Duncan Hodgson (N), Aitken, Taffy Taylor (FE), Ron Mayhill (AB), William Monk (RG).  
 (VIA D. W. HODGSON)

## Subscriptions please

Yes it's that time again. The last call for your dues was in 2015 so we have been very frugal with the Association funds.

All of your contributions go towards printing and posting hard copies of this newsletter to the veterans (and their widows). Any balance is used to cover the cost of producing the Order of Service for our annual June Commemoration.

Amount due \$25.00

If you donate \$50.00 or more, the funds are lodged with the New Zealand Bomber Command Charitable Trust, and a receipt is sent for tax deduction purposes.

Please Send to NZBCA PO Box 317-111, Auckland 0664  
 Or deposit to BNZ account 02 0261 0081531 00



## 2018 RAF Bomber Command Memorial Service

10:30 Sunday, June 3,  
 Hall of Memories,  
 Auckland War Memorial Museum.

Invitations are now being sent out. Please contact us if you do not receive one by post or email by mid May. This year we will be joined by Ex 75 Squadron members holding the reunion over the Queen's birthday weekend. All friends and family are welcome.



## **Anne Crone: memories of Westcott**



Of all the places I could have spent most of my war service, I think I was lucky to have been posted to Westcott. I had just turned 21 and most of the people at the Air Force Base were young too. Air crews from all over Great Britain, Canada, Australia, Poland, to name some – in the transport section we were all young, too, and there was a spirit of camaraderie amongst us all.

The air crews were in their final stage of training before going on full operational duties. They flew in Wellington bombers and would then move to Lancasters for the bombing raids over Europe. But that was still to come and they were a happy crowd without the tensions of the final stages of their training. This was BOMBER COMMAND (11 O.T.U).

Our driving training over, we were then in a position to drive almost anything from cars to coaches – the latter for when we drove to the living quarters of the crews who were waiting to be taken to the airfield. Depending on the size of your vehicle, you could pick up one or two crews. Their flying gear was very bulky, so they took up quite a lot of room. They always wanted to know the name of the driver so we became familiar with them all and there were many comments about our driving, especially as the coaches or trucks had very noisy gear boxes and we had to double de-clutch whenever we had to change gear. A quiet gear change would often bring applause and you can imagine the comments if you missed one and had to rev up again.

We drove out to wherever each aircraft was 'parked' and left the crew there and it would be hours before we saw them again when their flight was over. Sometimes they flew during the day and sometimes at night, consequently we worked on shift duty. If we were on night duty the kitchen staff would make sure we

had enough food to prepare a cooked meal during the night. We had a wood burning stove and used to cook on the top of it – mostly fried food which would be frowned upon now, but tasted good at that time. The air crews had their own 'Mess' where they had breakfast after debriefing. They had time-out just as we did and there was always transport provided to take us to the local station for the train, usually up to London and to meet the train at the end of the day and take us all back to our sleeping quarters.

Talking of sleeping quarters – well how shall I describe these. They were somewhat of a shock when one first saw them and realized that this was to be your home come fine or wet weather, snow or hail. They were made of corrugated iron with one small wood-burning stove in the centre. I am trying to think how many of us slept in one hut – possibly about 8 each side (so 16 in all). We had iron bedsteads and the mattress was in three parts (called biscuits). We had to stack these and the blankets and pillows each morning in case there was an inspection. The hut had to be left in a very neat state.

At that time smoking was not considered to be dangerous, so quite a number of the girls smoked. You can imagine the atmosphere with a heater burning.

Our ablutions (a name given to the place where you washed or showered) were some distance away – say the distance of a small field. One learned to bathe quickly and hurry down to breakfast which was in another building called the 'Cook house'. Owing to food shortages some foods tasted rather weird, e.g. scrambled eggs made with powdered milk.

Our worst scenario was driving when it was foggy. On night duty I had to drive out and pick up a crew which was landing and the fog had come down. I could scarcely see a few metres ahead of me. Suddenly out of the mist came an aircraft taxi-ing to its parking bay. To my horror, I realized I had taken a turn too early and was on the runway instead of the perimeter. I had to swing hard left to avoid the wing. No harm done but just as well he was not taking off – he might have taken me with him!

On night duty we used to be given supper by the cooks in the kitchen. Bad habits developed as often they provided bacon and eggs and potatoes, and we only had the top of a wood fired room heater to cook on. We used to call them our fry-ups. We would be on duty from about 8 pm until 6am when it was night duty.

There were other things of course. Officers to drive to other camps – sometimes one had to stay the night. It was a good way to see parts of England although Bomber Headquarters was the best place for long trips in ordinary cars but I will come to that later.

Westcott was a village in southern England, not too far from Aylesbury in Buckinghamshire, and not too far from London by train – close enough to go up for the day.

The countryside around Westcott was lovely. Small villages with village greens, thatched cottages and the inevitable small pub which was the meeting place for relaxation of the Air Crews. We had dances too at one of the villages which had a large hall. English pubs were cosy places where one could take one's time and sit around log fires. During the war, I suppose was the time when women joined men there, but when I was young it was frowned on for women even to be seen in a pub.

I really think I was lucky to be posted there. The amazing thing

was that I should meet Noel there, who incidentally had joined the New Zealand Air Force in August 1942 and I had joined the Royal Air Force in August 1942. From two different countries our future emerged, although we did not know it then. Perhaps our stars collided.

Another exciting thing happened – two, actually. The first was the arrival of United States troops (an Infantry division) who set up camp not too far away from us. They were there for only a short time but had lots of trucks and the men even acquired bicycles if they wanted them. They were invited to come to our dances and we to theirs. It was all good fun. They were mostly from North and South Carolina. Just as quickly as they arrived they disappeared. It was D-Day and they were on their way to France.

The only evidence that they had been there was a few bicycles left in a field or in a ditch alongside – signs of a hasty departure. One of the boys I remember was called Frank Pruitt, from South Carolina. He wrote me one letter from France but I often wondered if he survived as there were massive casualties from the first landings. We were just getting to know them and then they were gone.

The second was the return of Prisoners of War following V.E Day (Victory in Europe) Day. Some of them landed at Westcott Airfield and it was quite an emotional time. Most of the men were thin and dishevelled and jumped out of the aircraft and kissed the ground – they were so pleased to be home. We had a special fumigation area which was their first port of call before they eventually got clean clothing and had a good meal. Then they were interrogated. There are some days which one never forgets, and this was one of them. There were great celebrations all over England and especially in London where crowds gathered outside Buckingham Palace. As far as we were concerned the war was over in Europe but it did not end until the Atom Bomb was dropped on Hiroshima and then we had V.J Day (Victory in Japan). Another celebration of course!

My final posting was to the Headquarters of Bomber Command in High Wycombe -the Residence during the war of Air Chief Marshall Sir Arthur Harris (BOMBER Harris, as he was known). No flying activity from here – strictly a Headquarters and the place where decisions – sometimes debatable – were made. Who will forget the “Thousand Bomber Raid” to name just

one.

This was, for me, a different kind of adventure. Our duties mostly involved driving Officers to different parts of England. We had very nice cars instead of the heavy trucks and coaches of Westcott. This was the place where I met Nan Walker (eventually Nan Myles) and we have enjoyed a lifetime of friendship. Neither of us expected at that time that we would eventually settle in Australia and New Zealand.

Some of the people I was asked to drive were most interesting.

One day I was sent to collect “Bomber Harris” – can’t remember where I took him – I must have been so overcome to see this man in resplendent uniform who had been so involved and had to make such big decisions.

Then there was an American Officer who was black. At that time, in England, believe it or not, it was unusual to see couples of mixed colour – there was even an almost racist feeling about it. We stopped, for morning coffee and doughnuts (my suggestion) at a café on the way north and the expressions on the faces of the other people in the café were rather startled. He was incredibly courteous, something I could not always say about our own Officers but they were the exception.

We had more time off too and I used to go up to London with Nan to see her family who lived in Kensington – they

were living there during the war and during the air raids had a fire bomb land on their roof. Fortunately, they were able to put it out. To be able to go up to London and to know that the bombing had ceased was wonderful in itself. To feel the excitement of a war-free England and wonder what lay ahead in the future.

I had one more short posting to Norfolk (a town called Thetford) but this was just a Unit from where we were finally provided with all the things we would need to prove our discharge from the Air Force. By then it was 1946 and I had been in the Service for almost four years. Time to say goodbye and move on.

*Thanks to her daughter, Philippa Werry for this article.*

*If you playing to visit Westcott there is plenty to see. Ed Andrews worked on rocket development since the 1950s and is now the site’s historian.*

Contact him on [family\\_andrews@hotmail.com](mailto:family_andrews@hotmail.com)





## Association Officers

The current officers of the Association and Charitable Trust are

Patron	AVM Peter Stockwell	Hamilton
President	Ron Mayhill *	Remuera, Auckland
VP	Keith Boles *	Howick, Auckland
CEO	Peter Wheeler *	Hobsonville
Executives	Ian Barron *	Waimauku
	Phil Furner *	Napier
	John Gaumbly	Waikato
	Bruce Hebbard *	Wanaka
	Barbara Hunter	Waiheke and Lincolnshire
	Chris Newey *	Devonport, Auckland
	Jonathan Pote *	Beachhaven Auckland
	Graham Pullyn *	Nelson
	Glen Turner	Bulls

\* Members of the Charitable Trust Board

### TRAVELLING TO THE UK?

The Association is fortunate to have two UK based members who attend services on our behalf and provide contact to visitors from New Zealand.

Both Barbara and Dee are happy to assist veterans and their families.

Contact



Barbara Hunter  
Woodhill Spa, Lincs  
barhunt1950@gmail.com



Dee Boneham  
Honington, Suffolk  
deeboneham@gmail.com

## New Zealand Bomber Command Association

### AIMS IN THE 1984 FOUNDATION DOCUMENT

#### A) SOCIAL AIMS

- To facilitate fellowship amongst those surviving veterans of RAF Bomber Command in perpetuity
- To address any needs of those veterans. Not having sufficient funds of its own, this will be by lobbying those authorities and institutions that control suitable funds on behalf of the veterans
- To ensure any possible recognition of the courage and sacrifice of all members of Bomber Command (both on the ground and in the air) both by obtaining those medals and awards due to veterans and information in the press or other forms of communication

#### B) PHYSICAL AIMS

- To act as Custodian of Avro Lancaster NX665 currently at the Museum of Transport and Technology in Auckland, ensuring its care long-term keeps it in authentic and mechanically sound condition and to fight for its needs when others question them.
- To act as Custodian for all archives, memorabilia etc acquired on behalf of The Association ensuring their long term conservation whilst allowing access particularly to those with a personal interest in the Command and to bona fide historians

### Membership

- Veteran Members: these comprise any air or ground personnel who served in Royal Air Force Bomber Command 1936 — 1968 .
- Service Members: These comprise any member of any Armed Force of any Country who supports the aims of the Association. Additionally, any person who in the opinion of the Executive has knowledge and attitudes comparable to an ex-service person may be offered full membership
- Associate Members: Any other person who supports the aims of the Association and agrees to abide by its rules may be an Associate member
- Cadet Members: Any young person who is interested in military aviation, and whose parents support his/her interest, may be a Cadet Member. The long term future full Members of the Association may be expected to be ex-Cadet Members
- In 2018 we are preparing an amendment to permit any member to serve on the Executive and Trust Board.



"Hey, half a minute, half a minute! 'Shooting a line', 'Putting up a black', 'Going for a burton', 'Taking a dim view' -- what kind of language is that?"



## 81st Anniversary

The Royal New Zealand Air Force celebrated its 81st Anniversary in Old St Pauls Cathedral on March 28, April 1st falling on Easter Sunday this year. The New Zealand Permanent Air-force was formed in 1923, so perhaps it was the 95th Anniversary of an independent air force in New Zealand, up there with the pioneers.

From a peak of one thousand operational aircraft In 1945, Today it is much reduced although very strong and versatile force for peace. Along the way, World War II, Korea, Malaya, Vietnam and the Gulf have featured, with many peacekeeping missions as well.

Its motto is apt:

*Te Tauaarangi o Aotearoa, "New Zealand Warriors of the Sky"*  
(previously *Te Hokowhitu o Kahurangi, "War Party of the Blue"*)

The Service in the beautiful wooden cathedral was led by Chaplain Wing Commander Di Woods, who has a magnificent singing voice. It began with the Queen's Colour of the RNZAF, followed by the Standards of No 14 Squadron, No 5 Squadron, No 40 Squadron and No 3 Squadron and finally the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan Commemorative Pennant being paraded to the Sanctuary and mounted therein.



Air Vice-Marshal Tony Davies.

The RNZAF Maori Cultural Group provided the Waiata, Hareruia and Whakaaria Mai, and during the Offertory Hymn the Air Training Corps (who were prominent in several roles) a collection was made for the *Missing Wingman Trust*.

The Last Post, Ode and Rouse completed a Service that was both commemorative and reflective, joyous and sad, and an honour to be present at.

The reception was held in the Westpac stadium in very plush surroundings. By now the capacity congregation in the Cathedral was reduced to perhaps one hundred, the upper echelon of the RNZAF, The Honourable Ron Mark, Minister of Defence, and just a handful of people not in uniform, retired officers, were present to mingle and listen to the RNZAF Maori Cultural Group and a 'State of the Nation' speech by the CAF,



It was indeed a singular honour that our President Ron Mayhill was invited, and an even bigger one for me to represent him.

Royal Air Force Bomber Command and its large contribution from New Zealand is still acknowledged.

— Jonathan Pote

Photos RNZAF News

## RAF 100



On April 1st the RAF commenced its 100th year of operations and several hundred celebrations will be held throughout UK. The parade and flypast up London's Mall on July 10 will be a highlight.

From a foundation force with perhaps 5000

operational aircraft in 1918, by the end of 1944 this had grown to over 8000, all able to carry more and fight further and higher than ever before. Sadly today the RAF has shrunk to around 130 operational aircraft in a total of 300 of all types, but the pride and passion remain.



## Feeling lost?

Recently some members were provided upgraded alert and tracking bracelets that utilise satellite GPS technology rather than a local link to a telephone. So they work anywhere.

The unit is an Oyster GPS and Veterans Affairs Support will assist. Contact them directly for advice, or call your case manager.

## Where next?

As Veteran members age, our family membership expands and our archives and collections just keeps growing. So what next? We would like to hear from all of you with your thoughts on how the Association should continue, where should our collection ultimately go, and of all the museums remembering Bomber Command, which is the most respected. Feedback please.

## What's happened



**Master Air Crewman  
Andrew Burrows**

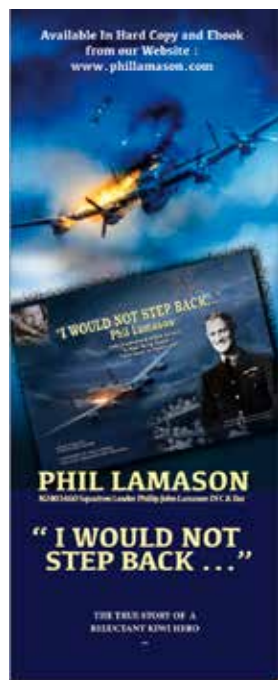
Our Christmas high tea was very pleasant, sadly a real lack of Veterans, but a real showing of current RNZAF and RAF air crews.

Master Air Crewman, Andy Burrows, RAF on secondment to 5 Squadron RNZAF, was presented with honorary membership for his great support and keen interest in the Association. Our close bonds continue with 5 Squadron and two previous COs are now base commanders

In February we supported a major book launch in front of the Lancaster at MOTAT (And many thanks to the team).

Squadron leader Phil Lamason should be known to you all, as the senior officer of over 100 Allied airmen condemned to the Nazi Camp at Buchenwald. His stand against the German Gestapo eventually reached the Luftwaffe who rescued the survivors.

This is a very well produced to book about a very brave and staunch New Zealander. Copies are available online or from MOTAT.



**Phil Lamason's son John  
meets Fred Martini, whose  
USAAF father, was one  
of those Lamason saved  
from extermination.**



## Services

Your service continues to be remembered and honoured. Amongst the invitations received in the recent months was one from the British High Commission and another from the RNZAF to formal functions.



Unfortunately your president was unable to attend but Executive Committee member Jonathan Pote was able to travel to Wellington for RNZAF 81st Anniversary service.

With 2018 being the centenary of the RAF, a special part of the formation of the NZBCA this June's service will recognise the event.



## ***Final salute for Nelson's bomber command veterans***

The perils of war could not take them down, but time has finally taken its toll on Nelson's veterans of the Royal Air Force Bomber Command.



***World War 2 Royal Air Force Bomber Command veterans John Beeching, David Knight, Rex Waters and Geoff Pattenden gather for the last ever Bomber Command lunch in Nelson, at the Rata Room at the Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology.***

Four of the five surviving World War 2 servicemen attended their 50th and final luncheon on Friday 17 November.

RNZAF Lancaster pilot Rex Waters, RNZAF Lancaster navigator Dave Knight, RAF Mosquito ground crew engineer Geoff Pattenden and RAF Mosquito pilot John Beeching gathered at NMIT's Rata Room Restaurant for a final reunion, 72 years after their war service in Europe concluded.

Lancaster pilot Buzz Spilman was the only absentee from the event because ill health.

Spilman and Knight were members of the No. 75 (New Zealand) Squadron, which flew more sorties than any other Allied heavy bomber squadron, and suffered the second most casualties of all Allied squadrons.

Joining family and friends of the crewmen were Nelson MP Nick Smith, deputy mayor Paul Matheson, representatives of the Returned Services Association, Royal New Zealand Air Force, and the NZ Bomber Command Association.

The first lunch gathering in 1993 drew around 20 servicemen.

Almost a quarter of a century later, the numbers have dwindled and with those left now in their 90s, the men have decided this will be their last time together.

London-born Beeching said while "natural attrition" had shrunk the local membership, the camaraderie had not

diminished over the years.

"We never seem to run out of things to talk about, it's a perennial subject that keeps on being perennial."

Beeching said he still vividly recalled the feeling of flying Mosquito planes on numerous bombing missions over Germany that lasted up to six hours at time.

"It had probably the worst aircraft seat ever devised – the seat went up and down but the arm rest stayed still – there was less space in the cockpit of a Mosquito than there was in a Morris Minor."

Knight – now 93 – said the nature of air operations gave little opportunity to forge close bonds during the war.

"It's not like the army where you make friends because you're living with them over a long period – with an air crew you're busy doing your scheduled activities – crew members came and went and of course many of them perished."

Air crew that served on the command suffered one of the highest fatality rates on the allied side during WW2 with over 40 per cent of the 125,000 air crew killed and 8,325 aircraft lost in action.

Luncheon organiser Graham Pullyn, whose father Phillip was a bomber command veteran but died in 1999, said the sacrifice of the command went largely unrecognised following the war but has attracted growing recognition in recent years.

Beeching and Spilman were present when the bomber command memorial was unveiled by the Queen at London in 2012, while the crews' efforts were finally recognised in the medal system with the issue of the bomber command clasp in 2013.



***Graham Pullyn with Geoff Pattenden***

While the acknowledgement was not forthcoming in Pullyn's father's lifetime, he was proud to finally have some recognition in his family's possession.

"We owe you and your colleagues a huge debt of gratitude for the sacrifice and contribution you have made to allow us to live in our free societies today," an emotional Pullyn said in addressing the veterans.

– Tim O'Connell



***BCA Nelson Branch Group 1993***



## Landing the correct way

Pilots have a broad interpretation on a successful landing but the ground crew have to clear up the mess. Here are some photos of less than successful returns to earth taken exclusively by the 'erkes' including Wally Halliwell and Joe Tomlin.



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## THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS OF NAVIGATORS. No. 5.



Failing to check position.

264



## Remnants of Crashed Avro Lancaster Unearthed in Germany has links to Christchurch



Fragments from Avro Lancaster EE126 were recently discovered near the town of Bassum, Germany, where it was shot down on February 20, 1944.

The Lancaster, which served with 207 Squadron, departed RAF Spilsby along with its seven man crew to conduct a raid on Leipzig. Before reaching its target, the aircraft was captured by search lights near Meppen and was intercepted and downed by Luftwaffe night fighters. While four crew members managed to escape from the bomber, the remaining three were killed in the crash.

Historian Volker Urbanski made the discovery while scanning the area with a metal detector, and news soon reached Kevin Matley, secretary of Friends of RAF Spilsby and former secretary of the 207 Squadron (RAF) Association, who received it with mixed emotions.

"In acknowledging

the work by Mr Urbanski in identifying the crash site of a Spilsby-based Lancaster 'The Friends' reflect on the loss of three young lives – Air Gunners Sgt LT Linton RCAF and Sgt SP Rogers RAF(VR) and wireless operator Sgt JT Morey RAF(VR). They remain in our minds as war heroes and part of a generation, who at that time saved civilisation. It is a debt we shall always owe."

The news also reached 94-year-old Maurice Askew, the lone survivor of the Lancaster's crew. Askew, who now lives in Christchurch, New Zealand and works as a renowned artist, was reportedly "overwhelmed" by the discovery of the crash site.

Maurice spent over a year as a POW in Stalag Luft 3



## Then and Now





## It must have been the oxygen

Over past four years we have celebrated some of the 'boys' reaching their century – Still Not Out.

The latest is Doug Smith officially Capt. Doug Smith DFC. L de H, Residents of Orewa and owner of a very quick turbo Nissan Doug served on 88 Squadron flying Bostons (like fighters) so was posted into Lancasters.



He has great sense of fun and his two red endorsements are "balanced" by two greens.

Fair enough to!

With over 20,000 hours logged he has been grounded except for his racing red scooter.



NO.	NAME	DATE	REMARKS	SIGNATURE	DATE
1	LANCETER 54003	SELF	REKETH, LITTLE	SPECIAL TRAINING X COUNTRY	
2	LA 716		WHEELER, MURDOCK	M.L.D.	
3	LA 716		BOAD, PETER, BONE	CLERK - INCH - S.H.W. WORK	
4	LA 716		CHOW	M.L.B. + R.S.F.	
5	LA 716		HUMPHREY, JAMES, 1970	SPECIAL TRAINING X COUNTRY	
6	LA 716		CHOW	AD TEST	
7	LA 716			STUTTGART	
8	LA 716			N.F.T.	
9	LA 716			FRANKFURT	
10	LA 716			N.F.T.	
11	LA 716			FRANKFURT	
12	LA 716			BERLIN (LANDS DANKENHILL)	
13	LA 716			DUNKERQUE - BASE	
14	LA 716			ESSEN	
15	LA 716			NORBERG (1840 H.C. MINSNET)	

# THERE'S ROOM FOR YOU



# ENLIST TO-DAY

– Thanks to  
620 Squadron South African Air force Reunion 1996



**Wingco** "You're the pilot, Smithers, why did you return early?"

**Smithers** "Well, sir, the bomb aimer fell asleep. We couldn't wake him up. The flight engineer has arthritis and could not hold any controls. I had a funny turn and went round in circles. The Nav. lost his spectacles and could not see a thing. The Wireless op. went stone deaf. The Mid-upper had a touch of the trots and locked himself in the toilet, couldn't get him out. The Rear gunner, trying to help, tripped over the carpet and broke his leg"

**Wingco** "Hm. You seem justified but I will still have to enter it as returned early due to LMF."

**Smithers** "You mean, Lack of Moral Fibre, Sir?"

**Wingco** "No. LMF. Lack of medical facilities)"



## ***Instructions to former aircrew in the event of another outbreak of hostilities (Top 'Secret)***

**REPORTING** In the event of another War, all former aircrew must report back to their last operational unit. Where airfields have been closed, since 1945, they will be instructed to report to special reception centres, for re-allocation to squadrons.

On arrival all personnel must pass an initial fitness test, comprising 3 basic standards, i.e.

**EYESIGHT** Must be able to see, recognise, and describe a double-decker bus at 25 yards.

**HEART AND LUNGS** Must be able to cover a distance of 10 yards in under 5 minutes. (2 minutes allowed if in a wheelchair.)

**HEARING** Must be able to hear a Merlin engine at full power at 30 yards.

If successful, personnel will be issued with uniforms at their last-known rank and relevant flying badges. They will be formed into 7 man crews, including their original members, where possible

**EQUIPMENT** From old AVRO blueprints a force of 800 Lancasters will be built, termed PS. (Pensioners' Specials). They will be considerably modified for present day conditions and crews' needs, as follows:

1. The front cockpit areas will be double-glazed and centrally heated.
2. Fuselage will be carpeted throughout.
3. Inbuilt stowage for collapsible wheelchairs and walking sticks.
4. Rest bed fitted aft so that a crew member can have an afternoon nap on long trips.
5. Flying boots will be replaced by electrically-heated carpet slippers.
6. The old Elsan toilet has been removed, and replaced by a proper cubicle, with Vacant and Engaged signs and a flush lavatory. However, all occupants will be required to wear a seat belt, and hold grab handles in the toilet in case of a violent movement, e.g. a corkscrew, and the toilet must not be flushed whilst the aircraft is stationary on the ground.
7. The dinghy will be considerably enlarged to provide a separate lounge, have wall-to-wall carpeting, with inflatable armchairs and television set, and the emergency rations will include 2 Harrods hampers and a selection of choice wines.
8. Gunners will be issued with hot water bottles.
9. It is expected that elderly bomb aimers, laying prone, will tend to drift off to sleep. A special alarm clock has been fitted which can be set to go off and wake him up 10 minutes before the target.

### **OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES**

1. Identity cards are abolished. Personnel will have to identify themselves by producing a pension book (a sub-post office will be installed each base so that pensions can be encashed)
2. For those short of breath, a portable oxygen bottle oxygen mask can be worn, whilst outside aircraft
3. First aid kit will include the usual items, plus painkillers, sprays for angina, tablet for arthritis, insulin syringes for diabetics
4. Escape kit. In addition to the usual maps, emergency rations, etc there will be pensioners' travel cards, to obtain bus and train discounts, plus a note in six different languages saying "I am an English pensioner. Where is the nearest office of

the Department of Social Security? If you looked after me, the RAF will give you £10 worth of vouchers for your local supermarket".

5. Boarding the aircraft. Disabled crewmen can be lifted up by forklift truck. Once inside, to avoid hernias and ruptures climbing over the main spa, each man will be laid flat on a stretcher and ground staff will carry him gently up the fuselage and pass him slowly between the gap of the main spa and the roof after which he goes to his usual crew position.
6. All wireless operators will be issued with an hearing aid.
7. All navigators will be issued with a large magnifying glass so that they can actually read their maps. \_
8. The pilot's control column will be adjustable and able to be set back 10 inches so as to allow space between it and his seat, to accommodate those with protruding stomachs.
9. The former flying meals of eggs and bacon, etc will be discontinued. Instead crews will have a choice of menu. Typically like the following:  
Fresh fruit or soup  
Medallion of Lamb with redcurrant gravy, roasted onion, cocotte potatoes & sugar snap peas  
Baked Pear Flan  
Selection of cheeses  
Coffee, Tea and chocolates  
Plus wines: Comtes de Champagne 1986,  
White Burgundy-Chevalier Montrachet 1991  
or Tawny Port 1975
10. If you end up in a prisoner of war camp you will be issued with proforma postcards with pre-printed messages, to send to your loved ones (similar to those in the first world war). You tick those you wish to send and cross out those you don't. An example:  
To .....(wife, mistress, girl friend, co-habitee, or boy friend)  
1. I am safe and well. Detailed letter to follow. -  
2. Weather here. Wish you were beautiful.  
3. The local water has upset my stomach. I have Dysentery, Diarrhoea, Dry Rot, Woodworm, (delete those inapplicable). Please send some medicine.  
4. Please tell the secretary of the Golf, Darts, Bowls (delete where necessary) club that next week's game will have to be postponed, and I will pay my sub. as soon as I can. Tell.....(insert name) I will pay him the fiver later.  
5. I send my love to you and miss you and/or my mistress very much.  
6. Don't tell the children I am a POW. Tell them, as usual, I am working late at the office.  
7. Cancel the paper. Don't forget to put the cat out.  
8. You will have to mow the lawn yourself for the time being, and take the dog for its walks.  
9. Decorating the bathroom and fixing that squeaky door will have to wait.  
10. Thank God I don't have to go shopping with you any more. Finally, very important. If captured by the enemy and interrogated, under the Convention you have to tell them 3 items only:  
YOUR NAME,  
YOUR RANK,  
AND YOUR NATIONAL INSURANCE NUMBER.

## Obituary

It is with great sadness we record the passing of our Honorary Chaplain, The Reverend Neville Selwood, Archdeacon Emeritus of Dunedin on April 19 in Dunedin.



Neville (NZ 4215767) trained as a navigator and was posted to 75 Squadron at Mepal with F/O Russells crew. They finished the war with 22 ops and later flew on Mana drops and

POW repatriation flights. The crew flew Lancaster PB418 coded AA-C (it had 100 ops up) and carried the tail markings of a GH Leader.

Neville didn't return home empty handed as an English rose named Betty Box soon joined him in the south.

Neville was a foundation member of the original RAF Bomber Command Ass NZ and gave much to his role as our Association Chaplain and also as carer for the Bomber Boys of Otago. Always full of life Neville went flying again for his birthday in 2015 and was formally recognised for his war service with the presentation of the Legion of Honour in 2017.



We will remember him well, and part of this years service will carry his own prayer to those now gone .

*Godspeed Neville.*



*For those  
who have passed on*

### FOR OUR MEN OF AIR

They felt the call to mount up high,  
With valour fly the trackless way,  
High in the vast expanse of sky,  
Young men they flew by night and day;  
Through cloud, through fire, o'er land and wave.,  
From hell, this world they strived to save.

So many never made it back,  
Their lives their final sacrifice,  
They fell from cannon fire and flack,  
For peace they fought, but at what price;  
Those who returned bore wounds unhealed,  
Mates never forgot, griefs kept concealed.

Though sadly they must leave us now,  
Their spirit will live on, if we,  
Let this be know our solemn vow,  
Their love, their honour, courage be;  
Our heritage through all our days,  
And strive for peace in all our ways.

*NZBCA Chaplain Neville Selwood 18/05/2016  
Archdeacon Emeritus of Dunedin*



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