



NZ Bomber Command Association News

October 2017

Patron: AVM Peter Stockwell ONZM, AFC
Honorary Chaplain: The Venerable Neville Selwood Archdeacon Emeritus of Dunedin
President: Ron Mayhill DFC (75 Sqn)
Vice Presidents: Keith Boles DFC, pff (109 Sqn)

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From our President

Welcome to Spring. We veterans are not too old to dream we still get a spring in our step, but Spring also brought sadness in the loss of several comrades, including our former President, Bunny Burrows. I was privileged to say a few words at his Service, recalling his kindly nature, ready smile and quiet humour.

We veterans have so many memories. The excitement of going overseas at 18, (little air travel then), seeing strange places, sights and especially the people. The very long, luxurious train steaming north to Canada glued us to the picture windows. We still in summer shorts enjoyed the sight of men standing in deep snow, dressed in bulky fur coats, fur hats and mittens.

Our training included navigation flights along the St Lawrence Valley to St Jean in Quebec where everything was French and we had great difficulty trying to make ourselves understood. We had a lot of fun.

There was greater urgency training in Britain but again few dull moments. At Westcott Bucks, we could never find bath plugs so improvised with wads of paper. A plane crash brought MPs to the barracks to sort the belongings of a course-mate and there were the plugs, each one apparently, a 'must' lucky charm before a flight.

My tour of ops stopped abruptly at 27 when I was taken to Littleport Eye Hospital. Our ward contained several interesting characters, all with wounds from shattered perspex. There was Svend, a Norwegian who had escaped by small boat to Britain and who admired the pretty nurses with noisy enthusiasm. He kept making leather handbags which he took on week-end leaves, never explaining on return how he disposed of them. Next bed was Mojmir, a Czech who entertained us with how he was going to line up all the capitalists after the war, "bang-bang-bang" shoot the lot. In his book he describes how he returned to Prague triumphant only to be imprisoned by his fellow communists as a suspected spy.

Indeed, our experiences in WWII Bomber Command were unique. Such massive heavy bomber air raids will never be repeated.

Yes, war is horrible but it did provide some wonderful comradeships and so many things we shall never forget.

Many, happy memories, fellows.

Ron Mayhill

Legion of Honour services

The French Government has been honouring many WWII Veterans with presentation of the Legion of Honour. Many of those in New Zealand have now received the award most being presented by the French Ambassador and her



Consuls. Among them recently were four in Auckland and our Honorary Chaplain, Neville Selwood in Dunedin. The contrast between the wonderful French action and that of the British with the BC clasp is striking.

The New Zealand BC Memorial Trophy: awarded to 5 Squadron in 2015 but not presented last year (RNZAF Operational delays). Our pick for 2017 is 40 Squadron.

Their vintage C130 and 757 aircraft operate worldwide always on call for military and disaster relief operations. Let's hope some new equipment in realistic numbers will provide this very hard-working squadron with the means for another Seven decades of service.

As veteran numbers fall every year, as they must, the 60 who now remain now depend on, and expect friends and family to maintain their memories of the service, loyalty and sacrifice.

This issue features some of the many stories we have been honoured to share and some from Europe where every month the sites of RAF Bomber Command crashes across France, Belgium, Holland, Norway and Denmark are remembered by the local people.

Remember we are on Facebook with weekly updates and photos of bomber command life.

Just Google in *nzbombercommand* for the link.

A digital version of this newsletter can be found on www.nzbombercommand.co.nz and can be copied and emailed.

My apologies for the lateness of this newsletter, I was in for major servicing.

Our thanks to Cathie Wells of Kotare Design who donates her skills to produce this newsletter

Social notes

Friday 17th of November

Nelson Branch 50th and final lunch. NMIT Rata Room, Nile Street, Nelson. Phone Graham Pully 03 547 8272

Sunday 28th November

High tea for veterans, family and friends at the Remuera Club Oninerau St, Green Lane – just off the motorway, lots of easy parking. Donation only.

The Boys visit Five Squadron RNZAF

The RNZAF "Heavy" Squadron had had close links close links with the NZBCA for over a decade and are current holders of the NZBCA Memorial Trophy.

On June 27 we took up a long standing invitation to join the squadrons family day.

Following a welcome by new CO, DJ Young (soon to be promoted to Wing Commander). President Ron Mayhill was presented with the 5 Squadron Crest. Sgt Mark Brain gave a detailed briefing and MAC Andy Burrows was our host (helpful as ever).



Around 30 Veterans, family and friends enjoyed the squadron's hospitality and where are able to get hands on in a P3 – K2 Orion, a remarkably capable aircraft.

The highlight was

seeing the sparkle in Graham Gleeson's eyes once he was in the left hand seat of NZ 4202. As a past V bomber and 747 captain he seemed bemused by this shining things (Propellers) on the wings.

Our sincere thanks to all the team for a great afternoon.

An interesting aside but 5 Squadron commanding officers seem to do very well Nick Olney and DJ Hunt

are both now Group Captains and Base Commanders.

So it seems being a BCA friend is good for your career.



Rules of the Air

This appeared in the June issue of the Australian Aviation Magazine

- 1 Every take-off is optional. Every landing is mandatory.
- 2 If you push the stick forward, the houses get bigger. If you pull the stick back, they get smaller. That is, unless you keep pulling the stick all the way back, then they get bigger again.
- 3 Flying isn't dangerous. Crashing is what's dangerous.
- 4 It's always better to be down here, wishing you were up there, than up there, wishing you were down here.
- 5 The ONLY time you have too much fuel is when you're on fire.
- 6 The propeller is just a big fan in front of the plane used to keep the pilot cool. When it stops, you can actually watch the pilot start sweating.



FLAK and the 88



Sources quote FLAK caused more RAF Bomber Command losses than fighter attacks until early 1944. The ORB analysis showed that 41% of losses 1939 to 1945 were due to FLAK.

The USAF losses in daylight raids were 40% but the visible FLAK barrage increased

"bombing errors" (misses) to almost 50% of the total dropped. In 1943 the German armaments industry delivered 133 million Reichmarks worth of weapons, 30% were FLAK guns.

In August that year 10,004 were in place each requiring a ten man crew. This defence of the Reich meant that a third of all armament production was diverted from the front lines and that 100,000 trained gunners plus their supply and support teams were also kept from the advancing Allies.

The famous (or notorious depending on your viewpoint) 88 could throw a 20 pound shell up to 24,000 feet while the multi-barrel 20mm to 10,000 feet. Statisticians calculated that it took



4000 shells per one aircraft shot down, however aircrew especially were not concerned about that statistic.

This high velocity weapon wasn't limited to FLAK and

became a very effective anti-tank weapon. It's low recoil enabled it to be mounted on vehicles resulting in a very mobile artillery battery.

Bombing of the Bezuidenhout

From September 1944, the German Army had been launching V2 rockets almost daily from the vicinity of The Hague, in the Netherlands, targeting English cities. The Haagse Bos (The Hague Forest) is a large forest park within the city of The Hague. The Germans had found that its dense cover, good road network and proximity to rail made it a perfect location for storing, preparing and sometimes launching V-2 rockets. Between Christmas 1944 and January 31, 1945, as many as one hundred V-2 rockets were reportedly staged here, although the use of mobile truck-mounted launchers (Meillerwagens) meant that they could be fired from any location, with all trace of launch removed in 30 minutes or so.

Spitfire fighter-bombers were initially used to attack suspected V-2 storage and launch sites in Haagse Bos because of the proximity to residential areas, in particular the Bezuidenhout neighbourhood. However their effectiveness was limited by bad weather over the winter, and V-2 strikes on London continued to increase in number. It was not just the threat to London, V-2's regularly mis-fired and fell (or zig-zagged wildly) into the surrounding streets and houses.

Air Marshall Hill, C-in-C of Fighter Command, made the decision to change tactics and attack the Haagse Bos with medium bombers of the RAF's Second Tactical Air Force. This caused some discussion at high levels and misgivings over the increased risks to civilians – assurances were sought that sufficient accuracy could be achieved. The decision to go ahead was partly based on confused interpretation of a 500 yard safety margin, and incorrect advice that civilians had been evacuated from immediately adjacent residential areas – in fact, the neighbourhood was more densely populated than usual with refugees.

On March 3, 1945, forty-three B25 Mitchells and twelve Boston medium bombers of 137 and 139 Wings, including aircraft from 320 (Netherlands) Squadron, flew to The Hague, targeting two aiming points inside the Haagse Bos. Apparently the C/O of 320 (Netherlands) Sqdn, Kees Witholt, asked to be stood down from this op, having family living near the target area. Because of a combination of factors – cloud cover, incorrectly transcribed aiming point coordinates (in the case of 137 Wing), and stronger winds than forecast, the first bombs were dropped to the southeast of the Haagse Bos instead of northwest, 1,250 yards from the correct target, and the second group were scattered to the north of the target. Two aircraft had their bombs hang up, and had to jettison them past the target.

Houses in the Bezuidenhout quarter suffered heavy damage,

with over 500 civilians killed, 340 seriously injured, and 12,000 made homeless.

Fighter Command reported the damage to civilian areas over the next few days, however because it had been assumed that the area had been evacuated, it took some time for the scale of the catastrophe to be appreciated in London. Churchill was furious when he found out.

The Dutch government (in exile in London) had not been informed of the attack and protested to the British, estimating numbers of homeless at 10,000, and deaths at 800. "The temper of the civilian population has become violently anti-Allies as a result of this bombardment."

One can only imagine the politics, but for whatever reason, and despite the mistake not being of their making, Bomber Command was given the job of delivering an apology to the people of the Bezuidenhout district.

Three weeks after the event, a lone Lancaster from 75 (NZ) Squadron took off from Mepal and flew a high altitude run over The Hague, dropping thousands of leaflets expressing the apologies of the British Government.

This is the entry in the 75 Sq ORB Form 541 for 25/26 March 1945:

25/26.3.45 – Nickel raid on The Hague

One aircraft was detailed for a nickeling raid on the Hague, carrying 12 x 350 Munroes. The operation was successful and uneventful.

Lancaster III PB424, JN-O

Up 20.40, down 23.21

F/O Herbert Wilfred HOOPER (NZ40111) RNZAF, Pilot

Sgt Royston Edgar LANE, RAF (195332) Nav

Sgt E HOLT, RAF, A/B

Sgt A GORDON, RAF, WO/AIR

Sgt J PETRIE, F/Eng

Sgt R STURROCK, RAF, M/U/Gnr

Sgt J SPIBY, RAF, R/Gnr

Bomb load 12 x 350 Munroe* (Type H.10)

Primary target – The Hague (Scheveningen)

Consider dropped accurately on centre of target.

**"Munroe"s (correctly spelled 'Monroes') were "bombs" which contained only leaflets, usually for propaganda purposes, quite commonly included in bomb loads during 44-45.*

Compiled by Chris Newey from 75 Squadron Association records, operational record books and online sources.





Mosquito Down

Gordon Hudson (NZ413419) was born and educated in Taranaki and was training at Auckland Teachers College when he volunteered for the RNZAF. On receiving his pilots badge in October 41 he was posted to the UK. He became a specialist navigational instructor on AFU, BATF, HCUS and operational squadrons. He was awarded an AFC for this specialist work. Posted to operations with 571 Squadron based at RAF Oakington and part of the LSNF 8 Pathfinders Group.

At the time of his last flight he had completed 12 operations, seven to Berlin.



Maike Van Wijk in front of the farmhouse, pointing to the ditch she jumped in together with her brothers and sisters, when the Mosquito came over. The plane went from right to left over the farmhouse.



In 1945 the road was sandy path. Directly left of Maike Van Wijk, about twenty meters from her, is the crash site.



Maike pointing to the crash site. About 20 meters from where she is standing. "Of course the plane hit the ground before, but here it ended. Here was the small hole in the ground."

The story of his 13th op is described here.

F/O Hudson with his Canadian navigator F/O Gant took off from Oakington at 19:07 destined for Berlin. Reports record that over Zevenhuizen a propeller was lost and the Mosquito crashed and disintegrated. The aircraft was a Mosquito BXV1 (RV1326/L) carrying a 4000lb cookie.

Maike Van Wijk was a young girl living close to the crash site and has made this photographic record of the event for the families of the two airmen.



Maike Van Wijk at the cemetery in Zevenhuizen, where the crew is buried.

Hudson and Gant are buried here.

A Tribute to the Ground Crews

Few people realise that whereas some 50,000 air crew, before and during the period of my command, were killed in action against enemy, some 8000 men and woman were killed at home in training, in handling vast quantities of bombs under the most dangerous conditions, in driving and dispatch riding in the black-out on urgent duty and by deaths from what were called natural causes. These deaths from natural causes included the death of many fit young people who to all intents and purposes died from the effects of extraordinary exposure, since many contracted illnesses by working all hours of the day and night in a state of exhaustion in the bitter wet, cold and miseries of six war winters.

It may be imagined what it was like to work in the open, rain, blow, or snow, in daylight and through darkness, hour after hour, twenty feet up in the air on the aircraft engines and airframes, at all the intricate and multifarious tasks which have to be undertaken to keep a bomber serviceable.

And this was on wartime aerodromes, where such accommodation as could be provided offered every kind of discomfort and where, at any rate during the first years of the war, it was often impossible even to get dry clothes to change into between shifts.

Marshall of the Royal Air Force
Sir Arthur T Harris

Air Officer Commander-in-Chief, Bomber Command
February 1942– September 1945

*The above extract has been printed with the kind permission of William Collins Sons & Co Limited. London. England Publishers of the late Sir Arthur's book **Bomber Offensive 1947** This tribute is dedicated to the outstanding efforts by the men and women who, directly and indirectly, supported the air crews of all the squadrons of the Allied Air Forces during World War II*

Obituaries

Something that we rarely feature as details are posted online (Wings over in New Zealand) and in print (RNZAF and RSA) but amongst a number of very well known and respected BC boys who have passed on in the last three months are.



NZBCA Vice President Norman Burrows

Known to all is Bunny. A wine in his hand and a ready smile Bunny was one of the Association founders. A wartime navigator in 15 Squadron (Stirlings) 622 (Lancasters) and 87 (Mosquitoes) He served Post-war becoming Adjutant of Shelly Beach and Laucala Bay.

NZBCA Trustee Roy Montrowe DFC

A pilot with over 22,000 hours up, 43 (perhaps 44) Ops in Wellingtons in the desert and another 50 in 692 Squadron Mosquitoes, a remarkable tally for a real aviator.



And Doug Radcliffe who gave many of us a personal tour through the RAF museum, and gave his total commitment to raising the RAF BC Memorial in London.

Godspeed gentlemen

Hē Kōtuku Rerenga Tahi

The White Heron Seen Only Once In A Lifetime

Hē kōtuku rerenga tahi
Kōtahi manu e kitea e te kanohi
Ngā tama toa o Aotearoa
E rere ki te rangi rere ki te pō
Haere haere haere

The white heron of a single flight
The white heron seen only once in a lifetime
New Zealanders heroes and legends of democracy
Fly upon the pure white wings of Te Kōtuku
Your land below and the sky above honour you
Goodbye — you live in us forever/

Tihei mauri ora!

Through you I live

Maori honour those gone to the spirit world, carried upon the pure white wings of Te Kōtuku gone to the Great Spirit above. In our lifetime, we are given the rare distinction of seeing the white heron only once, and when we do, we recall the exploits of great men and women.

Farewell — fly upon the wings of your greatness.

Haare Williams

This NZBCA Memorial Service Address by J Pote 11th June 2017



Distinguished veterans,
Your Excellency, Mayor Goff,
Honoured Guests, ladies and gentlemen

Royal Air Force Bomber Command existed for about three decades, from 1936 to 1938, but today we focus on the Second World War, when by far the most casualties occurred

Over the decades, there was a shift of emphasis from the crude technology early on, only made effective at all because of the

personal qualities, skill and bravery of those who served

Whilst at the end the technology was very advanced and lethally effective, but although there was much less numerical need for crews, the bravery and fortitude required became no less: The Vulcan and Victors with which Bomber Command was equipped at its end did not have enough fuel to return to Britain, even if Britain still existed: Each crew had to decide, should they survive delivering their weapon, which way to head thereafter, where to crash but with faint hope of survival

We are privileged to have some distinguished veterans with us, alert if elderly, be-medalled, the last witnesses, yet these are less than two percent of those who survived the war

Worldwide, I estimate maybe two thousand are still alive, so what of the rest, over one-hundred and twenty thousand?

About one half were killed

Many who survived continued to suffer, not just from their physical wounds, but even more from their mental ones. They found difficulty communicating with those who had not endured what they had. Until recently few ever discussed their experiences. Marriages suffered, mental health suffered, and many died early, sometimes by their own hand.

Those who survived in both health and mind became the leaders of post-war society

WHO were these people before they volunteered? Their diversity is nothing less than extraordinary.

They were the cream of their generation.

At the onset of war, many were already starting promising careers in the professions, in industry, in commerce.

Some were in reserved occupations and could have safely but honourably seen the war out as civilians

Others had no real hope of great success in life until the war broke down the invisible but very real social and educational barriers and allowed them to show their potential under great pressure

As the war progressed, more and more were school-leavers, the rest of the recruiting pool drained

It was a chance to travel, to fly when few had, and for Service to Country. All feared the war would end too soon for them to reach action

"It sounded exciting, a real adventure" Thus said Basil Williams, whose family are here today. Like most he had little secondary education – many were not educated to their full

potential then – but like others caught up with classes in mathematics and sciences in their spare time until they could pass the recruitment tests

But dig not very far and you would have found true altruism: As has been said, "The true soldier fights not because he hates what is in front of him, but because he loves what is behind him"

Was it dangerous? Well, sitting on five tons of high explosive, ready fused, surrounded by eight tons of petrol, in an aircraft that had been built as quickly as possible by a newly recruited labour force, from a runway built as short as acceptable, for economy, was certainly not for the faint hearted. If they did get airborne – and many died trying – then they still had to face appalling weather at night for six to ten hours, face being the target of formidable German defences, until they finally made it home

Most heavy bombers lasted only a few weeks until they, and usually their crew, were destroyed. Some lasted for twenty years and flew thousands of hours, a tribute to that hastily trained labour force, many women

A 'Tour' was thirty operations, lasting three to five months. Today we are in June, so if you started in January, you were reaching the end now. If you were starting now, you had to survive that cauldron of fire until Christmas, knowing that most of your compatriots would not.

It was rare – but not unknown – for a squadron to lose five or six aircraft in a night, almost half. Early next day, the huts would be half empty, all traces of those 'missing' erased by the RAF police. Next night a man might sleep in a bed, already made by another – who was now dead

A tour survived, six months of training newly qualified crews often followed.

Many felt this more dangerous than operations over Germany.

Then a second tour, usually twenty more operations but assigned more dangerous roles because of increased experience. Maybe a third tour

It is well documented how many aircraft survived one hundred operations, but not how many men did. I think it is probably only half a dozen, but one achieved an amazing one hundred and forty.

Yes, it was VERY dangerous, and 60% became casualties, over fifty-seven thousand young men in the eight thousand Bomber Command aircraft lost.

THEIR AGE:

The average age of those lost was twenty-one – but bear in mind they had spent two years training already.

Most were between nineteen and twenty-five, but the age range was sixteen to sixty-seven – teenage boys who today would be at school to one who should have been drawing the old age pension

Several had seen combat service in the First World War, which had ended over twenty years before

YOUTH:

Possibly the youngest person killed on active service was Flight Sergeant Edward Wright of the Royal Canadian Air Force, who had altered his date of birth from 1928 to 1925 to thwart the recruiters. Joining aged fifteen, he was sixteen when he died.

Thomas Dobney falsified his birth certificate by four years and joined at fourteen, flew solo just after his fifteenth birthday,

and was operational on twin-engine Whitleys, commanding a crew his seniors, before he was sixteen, making him the youngest documented military pilot in the world ever. When his father found out by chance what his son was doing, he was immediately honourably discharged, but not before he had completed twenty bombing raids. He worked with an aircraft manufacturer until he was of age, became operational again but was badly hurt in a crash on operations. He flew in the Berlin Airlift and then joined the King's Flight.

Sergeant Evill was killed in action aged seventeen. His age must have been known – his father was Air Chief Marshal Evill, the Senior Air Staff Officer of Fighter Command, which caused his son to have a hard time as a recruit.

Wing Commander Fraser Barron, a New Zealander (from Dunedin), was commanding 7 Squadron Royal Air Force, a Pathfinder unit, when he was killed acting as Master Bomber. He had completed seventy-nine operations, and been awarded the DSO and Bar, DFC and DFM (having been commissioned from Sergeant). He was still just twenty-three.

SOME WERE OLDER

Wing Commander Wheeler, MC and Bar, DFC and Bar had flown in the Royal Flying Corps, badly injuring a hand but being awarded the Military Cross and bar before the age of twenty. He was forty-six and most of the way through his second world war when he died.

Flight Sergeant Kadir Nagalingam from Ceylon was forty-eight and a wireless operator when he was killed

Sir Arnold Talbot Wilson was aged fifty-six and serving with no 75(New Zealand) Squadron when he died near Dunkirk as tail gunner in a 37 Squadron Wellington. He had served in India during the First World War and been made a Knight Commander of the Most Eminent Order of the Indian Empire before he became British High Commissioner in Bagdad. The legacies of his decisions there still affect the Middle East today.

Becoming a British Member of Parliament, he personally met both Hitler and Mussolini. He later joined the Royal Air Force as a Pilot Officer – the lowest commissioned rank in an unfamiliar Service – when serving as a senior Army staff officer in a safe headquarters would have been patriotic enough. He said "I have no desire to shelter myself and live in safety behind the ramparts of the bodies of millions of young men". And was aged fifty-six when he was killed, the third sitting Member of Parliament to be killed in the War.

William Wedgewood Benn, DSO, DFC, Viscount Stansgate, the oldest man to fly operationally, was born in 1877. He served as an observer and pilot, arguably overage even then, in the Royal Flying Corps after seeing action at Gallipoli. At the outbreak of the Second World War he immediately rejoined the Royal Air Force also as a Pilot Officer. He rose rapidly through ranks to Air Commodore but somehow managed to get trained as an air gunner, flying several operations at the age of sixty-seven before higher authority realised and grounded him.

On leaving the RAF in 1945, he immediately became Secretary

of State for Air in Clement Atlee's labour government.

His son, Michael, was killed flying a Mosquito.

DESTINY

Every person who joined as aircrew was a free man and a volunteer – until he joined. Thereafter he had little control over his destiny. It was as if he had jumped into a fast flowing stream that carried him where it did, sometimes rapidly, sometimes almost drifting, sometimes over dangerous rapids. The stream became larger as others – other Countries – joined it, until eventually it became an unstoppable torrent. Those destined for Coastal Command trained with those for Bomber command until the very end, when they were siphoned off for further navigational training before facing a lonely war over the sea, as dangerous as their former colleagues now in Bomber Command. Those for Fighter command separated earlier, numbers dictated by need, not preference and with only scant recognition of suitability.

THE NATIONALITIES

There were so many – about two dozen. British of course, but also Irish, Canadian, Australian, New Zealanders, South Africans, the United States, Poland, Czech, French, Belgian, Danes, Dutch, Norwegian, Indian, Singhalese, West Indians – and more.

Of the British, there were almost two nationalities, the classes, but a member of the aristocracy might find himself flying with – and taking orders from – a former farm labourer or factory worker.

The British of course dominated in sheer numbers, but in percentage of national population, Canada, Australia and New Zealand gave as much if not more. South Africa sent very few to Bomber Command, a round dozen, but for a very good reason: Their compatriots went mainly to South African Air Force, fighting with the Desert Air Force, manning medium bomber squadrons, Bomber Command in all but name.

But they sent their best: Captain Edwin Swales was an experienced bomber pilot with the Distinguished Flying Cross when he was appointed 'Master Bomber' in a raid at the very end of the war. Making one bombing run across the target is almost suicidal but the 'Master Bomber has to arrive first, assess the Pathfinders target indicator accuracy, and instruct the following bombers by radio to obtain the greatest effectiveness. He would be the last to leave, up to an hour later.

Edwin Swales' aircraft was hit badly and on fire, but he stayed until the last wave dropped their weapons before he tried to make for the nearest allied forces. His crew baled out and survived but he was by then too low to get out himself and died in the crash. He was awarded the Victoria Cross most deservedly but posthumously.

Those from different Countries arrived by different routes. Although the many Irish could easily travel to England, their Country was never legally at war with Germany. Recruiters turned a blind eye, as they did to the hundreds of Americans, who before Pearl Harbour, travelled to Canada and joined the



Royal Canadian Air Force. The Czech Republic was occupied by Germany without resistance (except by one pilot who fought a lone three-day war before fleeing) but many Czechs went to France to fight their personal war against Hitler. The Poles defended their Country against both Germany and Russia, brave beyond belief but overwhelmed. When Polish airmen evaded to France and then England, they were not only fully trained but alone brought that invaluable asset, experience of fighting the Luftwaffe.



Those from Norway faced a difficult enough voyage across the North Sea even without German intervention and whilst those from Western Europe faced a lesser voyage, there was great danger.

Most unlikely were two German citizens, already refugees in Britain. They joined the Royal Air Force under assumed names and were both shot down. One was captured but continued to resist so strongly that he was later awarded the Military Cross. The other, parachuting down near his parents' house, went home to change into his own civilian clothes before successfully evading.

Let us not forget that during the accepted duration of the Battle of Britain in 1940, more members of Bomber and Coastal Command (718 and 280 respectively) were killed attacking occupied France than pilots and gunners of Fighter Command. That is not to decry Fighter Command, but they were not alone in their sacrifice.

Nor must we forget the fifteen hundred RAF ground-crew members who died on Active Service, ninety-one of whom were women.

One who survived, Section Officer Pippa Doyle, is here today. Many more women worked in the aircraft and munitions factories, and as pilots in the Air Transport Auxiliary delivered completed bombers to the Squadrons.

Was there ever such a disparate group gathered together so closely to fight a common foe? I think not.

Was it all worth it, or was their sacrifice in vain?

Between 1940 and 1944, only Bomber Command and the United States Army Air Force could effectively take the war to Germany. This was not merely in spite: Their efforts meant that millions of soldiers and airman had to use a large portion of the munitions manufactured by their industry to defend the Reich, weakening and eventually crippling the Front Line fighting forces as a result. Did they gain the respect of their enemy?

"Intelligent tactics as well as the discipline and bravery have been remarkable. We had severe problems in trying to defend Germany from the air". Thus said Adolf Galland, General der Jagdflieger

Thank You

Jonathan Pote, is an executive member of the NZ Bomber Command and organiser of the annual Memorial Service in Auckland



912475 Sgt. Corbett Norman George Drew, Lancaster ND783, No. 576 Squadron

My uncle, Sergeant C N G Drew RAFVR, was born in Kenya, East Africa on 21st October 1917. He was the Flight Engineer on Lancaster ND783 of 576 Squadron when it crashed

in France, 7 May 1944, killing 6 airmen including my uncle. Unfortunately my mother, Claire, never did know much about what had happened to her only brother. Finding answers to her questions has been a wonderful experience and one I would like to share with readers.

The story about this particular Lancaster crash makes for compelling reading and is documented in the book *High Endeavour: The life of Air Chief Marshal Sir Ronald Ivelaw-Chapman*. Lancaster Mark III, Serial no. ND783, Code letters UL-C2, of No. 576 Squadron, Bomber Command, took off from RAF Elsham Wolds, Lincolnshire, UK, at 00.15 hours on 7 May 1944. It was one of 52 Lancasters of No.1 Group sent to attack an ammunition dump at Aubigne Racan, near Le Mans, France. Records show it was shot down by a Fw 190A of Schnellkampfgeschwader 10 (though Ivelaw-Chapman thought it was a Messerschmitt 110) and crashed at St. Rémy du Plain, (since renamed St Rémy du Val), 9km West of Mamers, France. Only one of the crew, Joseph Arthur (Joe) Ford RAAF, and a distinguished guest observer, Air Commodore Ivelaw-Chapman, CBE DFC AFC PSA, survived. *High Endeavour* mentions the extremely difficult situations Ivelaw-Chapman found himself in while hiding from the Germans and the generosity of the French Resistance who offered him food and shelter. It talks about him being captured and becoming a Prisoner of War and then his arrival safely back in the UK. It also mentions that Churchill, after hearing Ivelaw-Chapman had escaped the crash, gave orders to silence him – permanently if necessary, as he was privy to extremely sensitive information about the planned D-Day landings.

The crew comprised the New Zealand pilot, a Kenyan, four Australians and an Englishman.

Linking up with relatives of these crew members and with Joe Ford's children was gratifying for me and my family, made possible by my genealogist sister-in-law, Daphne. This has opened up a whole new level of understanding about what actually happened to the Lancaster and the surrounding circumstances. Daphne firstly found Tony McLeod in Canberra, nephew of Flight Sergeant Jack McLeod RAAF, via a posting he had made on a Kenyan themed web site regarding Corbett. Tony thrilled me by connecting me with Bob Yates RAAF in Perth, an earlier member of the crew who was later posted to 12 Squadron. Bob (d. 2012) gave me a personal account of what my uncle was like and what they got up to while on leave together! Tony also put us on to Geoff Mercer in Wellington, nephew of the Pilot, Flight Lt Max Shearer RNZAF who was from Napier. Geoff loaned us the book *High Endeavour* to read and put us in touch with Paul Ford in Melbourne, son of Sergeant

Joe Ford RAAF who had survived the crash. Paul told us of Joe's amazing escape story and the strong bond that has developed between the Ford family and with families of the French Resistance who helped hide Joe. I also learnt about the deep connections they have had with Ivelaw-Chapman's son, author of *High Endeavour*, and how they have attended commemorations in St Rémy du Val over the years.

Through these connections my family was invited to attend the 70th Commemoration held at St Rémy du Val in 2014. My husband Gary, sister Noreen and myself were thrilled to attend this amazing occasion where there was so much respect shown for our airmen. There were two locations where we honoured the crew – The Cenotaph in the town centre with the names of the crew who died inscribed on it, and the stèle beside the field where the plane came down.

The Cenotaph also records the priest who buried the crew – he was deported by the German authorities and died in a concentration camp. The whole experience was quite moving, followed by such incredible hospitality from the Mayor, families of the French Resistance, and friendly people from St Rémy du Val. They put on a large lunch and spoke of their appreciation for the airmen and the lives that were lost to save their country. Many had stories to tell: some were alive at the time and remembered the horror of the crash. Some referred to a piece of the Lancaster which is on display in the excellent small museum, Musée de la 2ème Guerre mondiale in nearby Conlie. While staying in St Rémy du Val, we visited Bayeux War Cemetery where the crew were later re-interred after being initially laid to rest in the St Rémy du Val Cemetery.

Unravelling what happened to my uncle and his fellow crew members in the crash, the evasion of capture by Joe Ford, Ivelaw-Chapman's dramatic capture and all the events that have happened since, has been an amazing journey for my family. The story has seemed like something out of a movie! My biggest regret is that we were not able to tell my mother about these revelations but it is not too late to pass them on to our grandchildren.

I hope this account may inspire others to find out more about their loved ones who died fighting for freedom and to pass on their stories to younger generations so information is not lost.

Lesley Carol Henderson



The costly raid on Mailly-le-Camp



NOTE: MAILLY-LE-CAMP

While we were in France we also attended the Mailly-le-Camp commemoration to honour the crews of the 42 Lancasters shot down on 3 / 4 May 1944. My uncle's Lancaster was one of the lucky ones to escape this raid a few days before it crashed. This solemn occasion was well worth attending, marking the enormous loss of life. The mission involved 346 Lancasters dropping 1930 tons of bombs which destroyed barrack blocks and vehicle maintenance buildings. We noted that a NZ flag proudly flew alongside Australian, British, Canadian and French flags at this commemoration but unfortunately there was no NZ wreath laid; it was made obvious by being the only one absent.

WEBSITES:

www.conlie.fr/conlie-notre-ville/musee-roger-bellon

<http://community.lincolnshire.gov.uk/MaillylecampMemorialCommemoration>

Postscript

James Shearer NZ415721. Napier born in 1922 joined the RNZAF in 1941 and completed his pilot training in Canada in August 1942 before crossing to the UK in March 1943. After AFU and OTU training he was posted to 576 Squadron On 19 December 1943 for operations on Lancasters.

- Returning from a Berlin raid on 25 March 1944 his aircraft crash
- landed and James was
- hospitalised until April 11.
- He returned to operations
- and was captain of ND183
- on the Aubigne raid. This
- was his 15th Op and he was
- just 21-years-old. (ND183
- was the only one of 52
- Lancasters on this raid)



Operation Manna and 75 Squadron

Compiled by Chris Newey

A large pocket in Western Holland was still in German hands and the population was approaching starvation; many old or sick people had already died. A truce was arranged with the local German commander to get aid in to the people. 115 Squadron, RAF, was given the task of developing suitable techniques for this role and one or two Lancasters were detached to RAF Netheravon for the purpose. Panniers were manufactured, five of which could be carried in a Lancaster's bomb-bay. Each pannier held 70 packs containing up to 25lbs of tinned meat, flour, milk, high vitamin chocolate, tea, sugar, bread and other general food stuffs.

The dropping procedure normally adopted, involved flying over the dropping zone between 200 and 500ft with half flap selected, at an indicated airspeed between 110 and 120 knots. No parachutes were employed therefore many of the packs would unfortunately break open on impact in the DZ.

On the 28 April 45 the code word **Operation Manna** was signalled to Lancaster and Mosquito bases (to mark the dropping zones) throughout Bomber Command and in the course of the next 12 days, 17 Lancaster squadrons flew no fewer than 3,165 sorties to Holland, dropping 6,684 tons of food supplies to the civil population before the Germans in Holland finally surrendered at the end of the war, allowing ships and road transport to enter the area. It was one of the largest humanitarian operations carried out during the war.

Preparations at the squadron, as described by 75 (NZ) Squadron's Bombing Leader, F/L Grant Alan Russell, DFC, in his book, "Dying For Democracy":

"Late in the evening of this same day (7 April 1945), three large motor trucks arrived at Mepal. The food they carried was in large wooden crates, and these were unloaded into a hangar. Some of the food was in well packed cloth bags, although much of it was in brown paper bags.

The newly arrived food was packaged firmly in both cloth and quite strong, brown paper bags. Even so, trial and error disclosed that the paper bags in particular, burst on impact with the ground,

even if dropped from only hand height, let alone from 1,000ft, and at a Lancaster's cruising speed of 180 knots.

The largest packages were the 25lb cloth bags of flour. Oatmeal, sugar, dried eggs and potato mash powder, were in smaller quantities and also in cloth

bags. Everything else was in the strong brown paper bags. The variety of food included tinned cheese and tinned bacon and even slabs of chocolate.

The Dutch wouldn't know themselves!



Experiments of repacking the food so that the bags did not burst on impact with the ground was our next trial. For that purpose, we acquired from the Stores Depot of the Squadron a quantity of the same sized paper and cloth bags that the food was already packed in.

Unfortunately in every case, the contents of the paper and cloth bags burst inside the kitbags as they landed on the airfield. So did some of the kitbags which contained the heavier loads.



A variety of experiments were then carried out during the next three days, until a system was perfected.

Trials proved that with loose packaging, all of the packages dropped without bursting.

For loading up the food packages, by opening the bomb compartment doors very little more than a foot (just wide enough for a man standing on trestles below the parked aircraft, to stand through the doors with only his head and shoulders in the Bomb Bay of the aircraft) we found that we could load onto the bottom part of the doors, which were horizontal across the base of the kite when they were fully closed. So the packages were passed, relay fashion, by a team of men, to three or four of their number standing on trestles with head and shoulders inside the bomb bay of the aircraft. The sealed, loosely packed food packages, were stacked several layers deep onto the bottom part of the bomb doors, which were finally closed by the hydraulic control in the pilot's cockpit.

From a height of 1,000ft, the bomb aimers learned how many seconds it took from the time of calling for the doors to be opened, for them to be wide enough open to allow the load to fall on the chosen dropping area.

Wing Commander Baigent phoned through to Group



Headquarters the results of the experiments, which were passed to several of the other food-carrying squadrons of No 3 Group.

On 28th April 1945, nine 75 (NZ) Sqdn Lancasters were each loaded with up to 5,500 lbs, almost two and a half tons, of packaged food. Some carried even more depending on what type of food was in the packages.

It was all to be dropped the following afternoon in Holland.

The flight on the 29th was to be a complete contrast to past operational bombing experiences, many of which had been carried out in darkness and from the maximum achievable ceiling of a fully loaded kite. Now the flying over enemy territory was to be in broad daylight, close to the 'deck', and without having to dodge weaving search lights, anti-aircraft guns, or enemy fighter planes."

29 Apr 45 Supply drop – Delft Daylight op

Nine unit aircraft (Lancasters) were detailed to participate in Operation Manna by dropping emergency food supplies in defined areas of Holland.

Aircraft and crews involved in the first of these sorties, were:

NG448 Mk I S/L McKenna & crew,

RA510 Mk I F/O Bone & crew

MR531 Mk II F/L Alexander & crew

PB132 Mk III F/O Good & crew

RF127 Mk I F/L Taylor & crew

PB820 Mk I W/O Flamank & crew

PB421 Mk II F/O Rangiuaia & crew

RF129 (possibly NE181) Mk I W/C Baigent & crew

HK561 Mk I F/L Banks & crew

These aircraft were airborne between 12.34 – 12.46hrs.

Food supplies were carried in 5 panniers per aircraft

The dropping zone within the allocated Delft area, was marked by a white cross and red Target Markers. Crew comments were:

NG448 – Both the white cross and T/I were visually sighted and panniers released in train. One hang-up. Dutch people greeted us with cheers and waving.

RA510 – Supplies dropped as briefed. Waving Dutch crowds seen south of The Hague.

MR531 – Red T/I and white cross visually sighted. 2 Panniers hung-up. Appears the food is too tightly packed. Crowds waiting for aircraft greeted each drop with great jubilation.

PR132 – White cross visually sighted. Supplies dropped although 3 Panniers hung up. Crowds waving south of The Hague.

HK561 – Dropped on red flares and white cross. One Pannier hung up.

RF127 – Sighted visual markers and dropped Panniers as briefed. Appears the packing is the cause of hang-ups. Crowds of Dutch people on house-tops and in the streets.

PB820 – Sighted cross and ring of lights. Loads dropped as briefed. 2 Panniers hung up. Crowds of cheering Dutch.

PB421 Loads dropped on white cross. Welcomed by many Dutch with an enthusiastic reception. One Pannier hung up.



RF129(NE181?) – Successful effort although the marking was seen at the last moment – needs to be clearer. 2 Panniers hung up.

All aircraft returned to base, landing between 15.00 – 15.20hrs.

F/L Russell's account of that first Operation (he flew as Bomb Aimer with Wing Commander Baigent):

Delft. Holland. 29/4/1945.

Mark III Lancaster NE181.

Pilot. W/C Baigent.

Load carried. 4,800lbs (2.14 tons) of a variety of food.

Distance flown. 471 miles. Time airborne. 2 hrs 25 minutes.

The day dawned fine and clear over East Anglia and Mepal Aerodrome. At 12.46hrs, Wing Commander Baigent, at a speed of nearly 120 mph., lifted his fully laden Lancaster off the end of the runway, and was the leader of our benevolent exercise. I was also aboard as the leading aircraft food

dropper. My aiming point was to be an open area in the middle of the Dutch town of Delft.

The eight other 75 (NZ) Squadron Lancasters played follow the leader, and flew in line astern behind us as we crossed the wider part of the English Channel, where it merged into the southern end of the North Sea. We then flew over Holland and along a Dutch corridor which the Germans had indicated would be safe from anti-aircraft gun attack for the time being. The afternoon was fine and clear with a canopy of light cirrus stratus cloud high over head.

At our 'target' there did not seem to be many people down below on the streets or the open area of Delft. Maybe nobody wanted to be the victim of a food parcel attack.

Over Delft, Wing Commander Baigent lowered his aircraft to as low as 200 feet to make our delivery, and cut our cruising speed to just 70 knots. The eight other trailing aircraft followed our example. Over the rest of Holland, we flew at exactly 1,000 ft as briefed, but climbed somewhat higher for the passage across the North Sea and over England.

30 Apr 45 Supply drop – Rotterdam Daylight op

The continuation of emergency food supply dropping was carried out by 21 unit aircraft in the Rotterdam area of Holland.

Aircraft and crews were:

NG448 Mk I F/L Adamson & crew

HK806 Mk I F/L Westerbrook & crew

RF190 Mk I F/O Wilson & crew

HK579 Mk I F/S Rust & crew

PB418 Mk III F/O Russell & crew

NN773 Mk I F/O Carroll & crew

RA510 Mk I F/O McLernon & crew

ME531 Mk I F/O Elliott & crew

PB765 Mk I S/L Parker & crew

LM276 Mk I F/O Plowman & crew

PR427 Mk I F/O Ohlson & crew

HK562 Mk I F/O Scott & crew

RF127 Mk I F/O Brinsden & crew

HK561 Mk I F/L Clarkson & crew

PK132 Mk III W/O Ulrich & crew

NG322 Mk I F/O Thompson & crew

RF129 Mk I P/O Ware & crew

PB424 Mk I Turnbull & crew
PB820 Mk I F/L Peryer & crew
PB663 Mk I F/S Perry & crew
NK981 Mk I F/O Opie & crew

These 21 aircraft were airborne between 16.49 – 17.04hrs for the Rotterdam area.

Supply loads were carried in packs – 3 – 5 packs per aircraft.

The target for supply dropping was a white cross and a red T/I. The target appeared to be close to a lake and some packs



were seen to drop in the water requiring rowboats to go out and 'rescue' them. In a short time, so many packs had been dropped, the white cross signal on the ground was practically obscured.

A house was seen on fire 500yds to the right of the A/P (aiming point). Most aircraft dropped all five packs. Hang-ups were fewer in number than on the previous day's operation.

Crowds of people were waving vigorously in appreciation of the life-saving food packages.

All aircraft returned to base on completion of their drops, landing between 19.24 – 19.48hrs.

01 May 45 Supply drop – Delft Daylight op

Emergency food supply dropping continues, with planned drops by 21 unit aircraft at Delft, in the Netherlands. Aircraft and crews employed, were:

NG448 Mk I F/S Drummond & crew
HK806 Mk I F/S Fairbairn & crew
NM747 Mk I F/S Hamilton & crew
RF190 Mk I F/O Bone & crew
NM773 Mk I F/O Wagstaff & crew
HK573 Mk I F/O McLeod & crew
ME531 Mk III F/O Morgan & crew
HK562 Mk I F/O Cook & crew
PH763 Mk I F/L Taylor (RAF) & crew
LM728 Mk I F/L Banks & crew
PB427 Mk III F/L Watson (RAF) & crew
RF127 Mk I F/O Butler & crew
HK561 Mk I F/O Shearer & crew
NF981 Mk I F/O Lumsden & crew
NG322 Mk I F/O Sinclair & crew
RF129 Mk I F/L Thompson & crew
HK597 Mk I F/O Woodcock (RAF) & crew
PB424 Mk III F/O Reddish & crew
PB421 Mk III F/L Stevenson & crew
HK593 Mk I F/S Meharry & crew

LM728 Mk III F/O Baynes & crew

These 21 aircraft were airborne between 13.50 – 14.03hrs

Bags of supplies were carried in either 3 1/2 or 5 packs per aircraft. Target marking used was a large white cross laid out on the ground and a red smoke Target Indicator.

Apart from RG448 having one pack hang-up and NG322 with three packs hung-up, all other aircraft dropped their assigned loads successfully in the target area.

Everywhere, messages or expressions of thanks were displayed, including some on roof tops with "Thank you boys" painted in large bright letters. Or flags of Allied countries flying. And masses of people gathered, waving with joy.

All aircraft returned to base after the last of the packs were dropped, landing between 16.07 – 16.29hrs. DCO

02 May 45 Supply Drop – Delft Daylight operation

A continuation of supply dropping to Dutch citizens at Delft by 21 unit aircraft. Aircraft numbers and crews employed, were:

NC448 Mk I F/S Drummond & crew
NM747 Mk I F/L Westbrook & crew
RF190 Mk I F/O Milsom & crew
HK573 Mk I F/O McLennon & crew
NN773 Mk I F/O Carroll & crew
ME531 Mk III F/L Alexander & crew
RA541 Mk III S/L McKenna & crew
PB763 Mk F/O Good (RAF) & crew
LM276 Mk I F/O Clarkson & crew
PB42 Mk III F/O Ohlson (RAF) & crew
RF127 Mk I W/O Ulrich & crew
LN728 Mk III F/O Plowman & crew
PB132 Mk III F/O Brindsden & crew
RF157 Mk I W/C Baigent & crew
HK593 Mk I F/S Hunt & crew
HK600 Mk F/O Opie & crew
N/A Mk III F/O Flamank & crew
PB820 Mk I F/O Rangiuia & crew
HK597 Mk I F/O Ware & crew
NF981 Mk I F/O Turnbull & crew
PB421 Mk III F/O Thompson & crew

The above crews were airborne between 11.11 – 11.58hrs.

All aircraft carried supply bags in loads of either 3 1/2 or 5 Packs. Target marking as previously with a white cross and the use of red smoke T/I's.

There were more hang-ups of packs than the last mission; two aircraft having 2 hangups and 3 aircraft experienced one hang-up; another reported '12 bags' hung-up. It seems that each pack contained a large number of supply bags.

Most aircraft achieved good, concentrated drops very close to, and even right on the target markers, with the bags bursting open occasionally.

The crowds were slightly less in number than previously but all were as enthusiastic as ever to receive the 'parcels from heaven'. Crews noted that even the Germans were waving white flags or sheets, or cheering from their barracks. They also were seen waving from their gun-posts on the coast.

All aircraft returned to base on completion of their tasks, landing between 13.04 – 14.26hrs.

03 May 45 Supply drop at The Hague Daylight op

10 Unit aircraft & crews were detailed to continue the dropping of supplies to the Dutch, as follows:

PB763 Mk I F/L Taylor & crew
 LM276 Mk I F/L Banks & crew
 PB427 Mk III F/O Scott & crew
 HK600 Mk F/O Sinclair & crew
 PB424 Mk III F/O Shaw (RAF) & crew
 HK593 Mk I F/O Cleminson & crew
 MG448 Mk I F/O Cox & crew
 HK806 Mk I F/O Bader & crew
 RF190 Mk I F/O McLeod & crew
 NN773 Mk I F/O Lukins (RAF) & crew

These aircraft were airborne Mepal

at or about 11.20hrs.
 A total of 50 supply packs were carried – 25 for Delft and 25 for The Hague.

Crews had no difficulty identifying the targets at each dropping zone. Of the 10 packs dropped, 4 hung up. The packs contained an undisclosed number of food bags many of which fell free of the packs and burst open on impact. One of these bags contained flour which burst in mid-air. Other bags falling directly on the white cross, broke open scattering the contents.

Fewer people than on previous days were now turning up, but they still were enthusiastic in their praise for the aid. At one DZ, crews noted the field appeared to be guarded by soldiers.

In general, all crews reported well-concentrated dropping of supplies taking place.

The 10 aircraft returned to base safely on completion of the task, landing between 13.24 – 13.59hrs.

4 May 45 Supply dropping – The Hague and Delft Daylight op

A continuation of dropping food supplies to the Dutch at The Hague and Delft.

Six unit aircraft and crews detailed today, were:

HK600 Mk I F/O Thompson & crew
 PB424 Mk III W/O Turnbull & crew
 F981 Mk I F/O Lumsden & crew
 PB427 Mk III F/O Evenden & crew
 NG448 Mk I F/O Bone & crew
 NN747 Mk I F/L Adamson & crew

These crews were airborne between 12.11 – 12.35hrs

A total of 30 food packs were carried (5 per aircraft) – 15 for Delft and 15 for The Hague.

Once again the number of people gathering at the dropping zones were fewer than on earlier occasions. The drops were carried out in fine conditions. Four of the packs 'hung-up' (3 from one aircraft). The remainder were all released on target.

All six aircraft returned to base on completion of their drops, landing between 14.30 – 15.02hrs.

Russell's account of this operation:

Delft. Holland. 4/5/1945.

Mk I Lancaster NG445.

Pilot. F/O Bone.

Load. 6,270 lbs (2.80 tons) of a variety of food.

Distance flown. 464 miles. Time airborne. 2hrs 25 min.

Just five days later I was again in the leading one of six aircraft, all flying line astern and again we flew to Delft. This time my pilot was another New Zealander, Flying Officer Bone.

I particularly wanted to check on the accuracy of the food dropping. It was impressive to watch such a large aircraft as a Lancaster with its 104 foot wing span, soar slowly down to as low

as 200 feet above the ground, then move even lower, and open its bomb doors. As I watched quantities of packages tumbled out and fell to the ground below, it was gratifying to notice that all of the packages fell accurately onto the large square in the centre of the village. If only I had been permitted to carry a camera!

Our load on this occasion was more than two and three quarter tons. The weight of

the food carried by each aircraft depended mostly upon the food itself. The different packages varied a great deal in both weight and size. Lancasters could lift more than double the amount of food weight that was being stacked into them, but not of course on their doors. It was remarkable how the aircraft doors were standing up to the abuse the loading heaped onto them.

To comply with my prearranged request, my pilot did one tight circuit around the dropping area so that we could watch the dropping of several loads of food.

For this trip, the distance flown, and the time taken, was indeed almost exactly the same as for my first food delivery flight. Aircraft from other squadrons were also flying along the German-appointed corridor. A right-angle turn to port, (the left), was to be taken at the furthest point of permissible penetration into Holland, then a short run to Delft, from which a further German-defined corridor led the aircraft back to the northern end of the English Channel.

On this particular flight, some distance ahead of our Lancaster another aircraft, from a different squadron, instead of turning to port at the appropriate spot, flew straight on and was promptly shot at from ground level. Neither F/O Bone nor I were able to see the final result of that shooting.

5 May 45 Supply dropping -The Hague Daylight op

A continuation of supply dropping at the Hague was carried out by 4 Lancasters. Unit aircraft and crews engaged in this task, were:

PB763 Mk I F/S Reay & crew
 LM276 Mk I F/O Trevarthen & crew
 RF190 Mk I F/O Carroll & crew
 NN773 Mk I F/S Hamilton & crew

These aircraft were airborne at or about 06.05hrs

Each aircraft carried 5 Packs of supplies but only PB763, F/S Reay & crew, dropped all their packs successfully. The other three aircraft each had 1 or 2 hang-ups.

All crews had no difficulty sighting the white cross and red T/I markers.

On completion of the drops all aircraft returned to base, landing at or about 08.26hrs.

07 May 45 Supply dropping –Delft (26 a/c) Daylight op

This was the largest number of 75 Sqn Lancasters detailed for supply dropping to the starving people of Holland, in this series of humanitarian aid operations.

Unit aircraft and crews employed for this task, were:

NG448 Mk I F/O Lukins & crew
 HK806 Mk I F/S Iles & crew
 RF190 Mk II F/O Cox & crew



NM773 Mk I F/O McLernon & crew
 HK573 Mk II F/O McLeod & crew
 RK541 Mk I F/L Westbrooke & crew
 MK531 Mk III F/L Alexander & crew
 PB418 Mk III F/O Russell & crew
 PR427 Mk III F/O Ohlson & crew
 LM276 Mk III W/O Ulrich & crew
 PB763 Mk I F/O Cooke (AUS) & crew
 BK562 Mk I F/S Young & crew
 RF127 Mk I F/L Stevens & crew
 RF157 Mk I F/O Shearer & crew
 LM728 Mk III W/C Baigent & crew
 BK561 Mk I F/O Scott & crew
 RF129 Mk I F/O Shaw & crew
 NF981 Mk I F/O Rangiua & crew
 PB421 Mk III F/S Parry & crew
 NG322 Mk I F/O Woodcock & crew
 BK600 Mk I F/O Opie & crew
 PB424 Mk III F/O Flamank & crew
 HK554 Mk I F/S Meharry & crew
 HK593 Mk I F/O Cleminson & crew
 PH663 Mk I F/L Stevenson & crew
 LM276 Mk I F/L Banks & crew

These 26 aircraft were airborne Mepal between 12.14 – 12.30hrs
 Supply loads carried were either 3 1/2 or 5 Packs per aircraft.
 A total of 116.5 packs were carried of which 114,5 packs were
 dropped successfully – only 2 packs hanging up.

On this occasion there many more people about the dropping
 zone and as enthusiastic as ever with their displays of thanks.

Crews had no difficulties in picking up the white target cross
 and red T/I's .

Crew observations included the presence of oil patches and
 yellow objects in the sea near the Dutch coast.

All aircraft returned to base safely, landing between 14.11 –

15.06hrs.

08 May 45 Supply drop – Rotterdam Daylight op

The last of the unit's food supply drops to local inhabitants of
 Holland took place today when 8 aircraft of 75 Sqn carried out
 drops at Rotterdam. Aircraft and crews involved, were:

NG448 Mk I F/O Morgan & crew
 PB418 Mk III F/O Bader & crew
 NN773 Mk I P/O Wagstaff & crew
 LM276 Mk I F/O Clarkson & crew
 PB763 Mk I S/L Parker & crew
 HK554 Mk I F/O Trewheela & crew
 BK593 Mk I F/O Lumsden & crew
 PB663 Mk I F/O Ware & crew

These aircraft were airborne between 12.41 – 12.48hrs for the
 195 mile flight due East to Rotterdam.

Each aircraft carried 5 food Packs. Crews had no difficulty
 sighting the drop zone near the River Lek beside the city,
 marked by a white cross and a red T/I. Crowds of people were
 waiting and there was much flag waving. One crew reported
 that there was considerable water in the dropping area.

Although the 8 crews carried out the task as briefed, a total
 of 5 Packs failed to release from 4 aircraft, but the remaining 35
 Packs were dropped successfully on target.

All aircraft returned to base, landing at or about 15.15hrs. DCO
 Summary – Supply Dropping

75 (NZ) Squadron completed 164 sorties dropping 656 Pannier
 loads of food supplies during the nine days engaged in this task
 from 29 Apr – 8 May 45.

Chris Newey is an executive member of the in the NZBCA and
 specialises in 75 Squadron history. Much has been recorded in
 the unpublished history compiled by its committee members
 over many years.

Photographs from NZBCA Archives and C Baigent Collection

Bomber Harris's VERY elegant bunker

18TH CENTURY HOUSE WHICH WAS HOME TO ROYAL AIR FORCE MARSHAL ARTHUR HARRIS IS UP FOR SALE



- Springfields, in Great Kingshill, Bucks, was rented by Air Ministry in 1940
 - Sir Arthur Harris ran Bomber Command in 1942 and used it for Allied strategy
 - Charles de Gaulle, King George VI and Queen Elizabeth all visited the property
- Excerpts from an article written by Brian Claridge for The Mail On Sunday*

PUBLISHED: 25 June 2017

It has a bomb-proof bedroom, doors reinforced with steel, and a shower screen made from the toughest bullet-proof glass. Parts of Springfields – a spacious mid-18th Century house near the village of Great Kingshill in Buckinghamshire – are impenetrable, providing a haven from any type of attack.

The former Air Ministry first rented the property in 1940, and during the Second World War it was the grace-and-favour home of Royal Air Force Marshal Arthur Harris, commonly known as

'Bomber' Harris.

Harris, a former First World War pilot, was appointed to run Bomber Command in 1942 during the height of the Allied campaign against Nazi Germany. Cities such as Dresden were devastated as the RAF played a vital role in reversing the tide of the war.

When Harris lived at Springfields, the house was a focal point for Allied strategy. Among the politicians and top brass who visited were Anthony Eden, Clement Attlee, Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery, US Allied commander-in-chief Dwight Eisenhower and French leader in exile Charles de Gaulle. King George VI and Queen Elizabeth also paid an official visit to the house in February 1944.

The eight-bedroom house was owned by the Ministry of Defence until 2002 when it was sold to private ownership .



When Harris lived at Springfields, the house was a focal point for Allied strategy

Boguslaw Nowak,



Honorary Consul of Poland in Auckland reflects on the life of Capitan Witold Bukowski, a Polish pilot from WW2 who passed away 20 years ago. Service No P0666

**Cross of Valour Airforce Maedal (Pol)
Born Kowalewo, Poland 2/2/19**

I met Witold Bukowski in Auckland in 1993. I visited him and his wife at their house in the Auckland suburb of Ellerslie, where I was also living with my family at the time. I enjoyed talking to him and liked listening to his war stories. Witold was in my opinion a war hero. Real heroes are humble and modest. He was just such a person.

He was born in 1915 in the small Polish village of Kowalewo, near the district town of Golub-Dobrzyn. His career started quite typically: as a young boy he dreamed of becoming a pilot, like many young men. As a secondary school student he became a glider pilot and continued his education at a prestigious Polish Air Force Academy in Deblin. One year before the start of WW2 he graduated as Primus Inter Pares – first in the academy, and became a second lieutenant and a pilot.

During the German invasion of Poland in September of 1939, he served in the 42nd squadron in Torun, in northern Poland, close to the German border. In the first hours of the invasion, Witold made a reconnaissance flight and spotted German forces marching toward Warsaw. He reported this straight to the commander of the Polish Air Forces. Soon after his airfield was bombed the remaining pilots and planes left Torun.

Polish air forces could not match the mighty Luftwaffe. Those pilots who survived, crossed the border and escaped to France via Romania. They hoped that they would stay in France longer. France was a special place for Polish pilots. During the Great War, on the outskirts of Paris, the first Polish squadrons were formed. Polish pilots were called Orly (Eagles). To honour them, the French named one of the international airports in Paris 'Orly', a name which it still bears today. France was invaded in May of 1940, and the Polish pilots had no opportunity to fight in its defence. They were evacuated to England, and among the 17,000 Polish pilots and flying personnel was young lieutenant Witold Bukowski.

Soon the first Polish squadrons were formed as a part of the RAF, with Blackpool becoming their main base. For Witold, a new chapter in his life began. He completed a school for pilots in Hucknall near Nottingham (he trained on one and two engine planes) and was promoted to the rank of captain.

Between 1940 and 1943 with the 301st Polish squadron, Witold participated in numerous missions over Germany. As Witold told me, the task for bomber crews was to reach their military targets in Rostock, Hamburg, Essen, Bremen and other places, drop their bombs and come back as fast as possible to England. They flew at night and their missions took from 4 to 6 hours. During the summer months, when the night only lasted 4 hours, it was very dangerous, especially as the planes, old Wellingtons, were slow

and reached a maximum speed of only around 110 miles/180 km per hour.

A lot of Witold's friends – not only Polish but also English, Czech, Canadian, Kiwi and American were shot down. Some were lucky and were rescued from the cold waters of the sea; others were captured by the Germans and taken to POW camps – oflags or stalags. Many however did not survive, being killed by enemy fire or drowning.

Witold was a lucky man. He survived all his raids over Germany. As one of the most experienced pilots, he was sent to the British school of flight instructors in Montrose, Scotland and started to train young pilots.

In Great Britain he fell in love with a nice Scottish lady called Eileen. The affection was mutual. They married in Blackpool and after the war they decided to look for a new life on the other side of the globe — in New Zealand.

They loved their adopted country and lived a happy life

together here. They had one son John, who became a very successful architect. Capitan Witold Bukowski was a great Polish patriot, always interested in Poland's affairs and events. He visited Poland. He tried to keep in touch with his brothers in arms, who survived and lived in many different countries after the war. In Auckland he was a member of the NZ Bombers Command Association.

For his outstanding service he was awarded the Polish Cross of Valour and the Polish Air Force Medal.

Witold passed away 20 years ago, on the 6th of August, 1997. His wife Eileen died in 2003.

Both are buried at the same site at the Purewa Cemetery in Meadowbank, Auckland.



Witold Bukowski	
New Zealand, Archives New Zealand, Passenger Lists	
Name	Witold Bukowski
Event Type	Immigration
Event Date	10 Apr 1948
Event Place	Wellington (other ports also listed), New Zealand
Gender	Male
Age	33
Marital Status	Married
Nationality	Poland
Occupation	pilot
Birth Year (Estimated)	1915

The Art of Pathfinding

Wing Commander A (Artie) Ashworth RAF survived 110 operations over enemy territory during World War II as a bomber pilot. He was one on New Zealand's most decorated pilots. He finished his RAF service in 1967 with a DSO, two DFCs and a MID for war time bravery, and was awarded two AFCs for meritorious peace time service.

He first joined in 1939 when he gained a short-term commission with the RAF. He trained in New Zealand and was awarded his Wings at Wigram. After the war, he took a permanent commission with the RAF where he continued his distinguished service until ill-health forced his retirement in 1967.

Following the completion of his third Tour and his second with No. 75 Squadron by which time he had survived a total of 64 Operational sorties, Artie found himself posted as a staff officer to the Headquarters of the Pathfinder Force at Wyton. His next operation, for which he volunteered, was to be perhaps the most memorable of all.

He took up his role at Wyton, the Headquarters of the Pathfinder Force, on 28 August, 1942. His sixty fifth operation proved to be more than a 'normal' experience. Artie's bravery and skill on this Op received wide publicity. Several variations of the story have been recorded all of which include inaccuracies. The following is the story as recorded by the man himself. Hopefully this will set the record straight.

'My 65th' sortie was flown in September 1942, which began as a normal working day. The target came through from Bomber Command to the operations room at Pathfinders Headquarters, Wyton, where I was now one of Don Bennett's merry men. The target was Saarbrücken and I got permission from the Group Captain to fly that night. So I rang Wing Commander T.S. Riott-Carnac (known as "Nuts & Bolts") the CO of No. 156 Pathfinder Squadron at Warboys, and asked for the loan of a Wellington and crew. This was readily agreed. Unexpectedly, later that morning, my brother Corran, a fighter pilot in the RNZAF, phoned from the railway station at Huntingdon to say that he had arrived to see me.

'We took off from Warboys with a load of 12 three-inch flares and six 250 lb bombs. The flares were used to illuminate the target for the rest of the bombers. I'd never seen the crew before and it was to be quite a long time before I wanted to do so!

'The first sign of trouble was a smell of burning; no smoke, or at least none where I was. We were somewhere near the target at the time and had been for quite a while, flying up and down,



**The complete story can be found in "A Legend of His Time, The Artie Ashworth story".
V Ashworth, Nationwide books.**

trying to get the reflection of the moon in the river. There was haze on the ground and we needed the river to pinpoint our objective. A few seconds after I'd noticed the smell of burning, the Wireless Operator came through on the intercom with the information that sparks were coming through the floor. I wasn't at all worried, it might have been anything, say an electrical fault.

'All sorts of odd things happened

to one in the air over wartime Germany. So we went round again still searching for the river, which took five minutes, then the Wireless Operator came through that there were more sparks coming through the floor. He also said he was standing by with a fire extinguisher. I realised then that we must be on fire somewhere and guessed it was one of the flares. These being in the bomb bay under the floor and unreachable from inside the aircraft, I decided to jettison the flares.

'The bomb aimer let them go and suddenly there was a blinding light all round the aircraft and what appeared to be flames underneath us. Looking over my shoulder through the window it seemed to me that the whole of the rear of the aircraft was on fire. I had enough experience, this being my 65th Op in a Wimpy, of watching Wellingtons being destroyed by fire in the air. They seldom lasted long so right away

I said "OK bale out."

'I felt the rear gunner go at once because his turret turned. The rest seemed to take a devil of a long time. I yelled and swore at them to get on with it but I doubt if they heard me. It was possible that here the confusion over parachutes arose, and one of them may have got the impression that I was letting him take mine. At last all the others were clear. I saw a couple of them sliding out in the light from underneath me, just for an instant I could see their bodies falling.

'It was now my turn and I came dashing out of my seat to follow, but horror of horrors, my parachute had gone. It should have been in the stowage just forward of the cockpit on the starboard side, but I quickly realized that one of the others had taken it in the confusion.

'I went back along the fuselage — it's amazing how quickly one can move in an emergency—to see if I could find a parachute. The glare was still with me and now a great deal of smoke. I looked in the Navigator's and Wireless Operator's stowages and the rear stowage above the bed—nothing—and all I could do was return to my seat.

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