



# NZ Bomber Command Association

**Patron:** Les Munro (617 Sqn), CNZM, DSO, QSO, DFC

**Honorary Chaplain:** The Venerable Neville Selwood Archdeacon Emeritus of Dunedin

**President:** Ron Mayhill DFC (75 Sqn)

**Vice Presidents:** Bunny Burrows (15, 622, 487 Sqn), Keith Boles DFC, pff (109 Sqn)

**NEWSLETTER** June 2015

**NZBCA CHARITABLE TRUST 2561560**

**WEB SITE:** [www.nzbombercommand.co.nz](http://www.nzbombercommand.co.nz)



Warm greetings to all you veterans on these rather cold days. We've reached the winter solstice and the shortest days of the year.

Age may weary us at times but with the setting of the sun each day, it's comforting to know that daylight hours are getting longer and it will soon be warmer.

2015 has been a memorable year of important centennials, notably Gallipoli and Anzac which have become etched in New Zealand history.

There is another centennial, one that is little known but of significance to us, the 100th anniversary of the strategic bomber. In 1914, aircraft were used mainly as Fighters and for tactical support such as Air Reconnaissance, Artillery Spotting, and dropping bombs in support of ground operations. It was 1915 when aircraft were first organised as strategic bombers to fly beyond the Front Lines and attack industrial towns and transport centres.

The recent BC Commemoration Service in the Auckland War Memorial Museum was once again well attended. Our special guests include the Tamaki MP, and Representatives of the Consulates and High Commissions, and the Armed Forces, and of course, the general public were there in numbers. We have received many letters of appreciation and our thanks go to the chaplains, and especially Phil Furner, one of our Trustees, for his splendid organisation.

Over a dozen veterans attended, some with wheelchairs, walkers and sticks, and there were a few lucky ones who were able to negotiate the marble steps to lay their poppies unassisted. Your President made it with both hands holding our wreath although this presented a greater challenge than last year.

The service ended with the Last Post and a recording of a Fly Past, the throaty roar of the Merlins interspersed with Noel Coward's discerning verses, "Lie in the Dark and Listen."

*"... Lie in the dark and let them go,  
Theirs is a world you'll never know..."*

It brought back memories of 2012 when the NZ contingent of 32 veterans journeyed to London to see the Queen unveil the statues in the BC Memorial, and next day visit the Runnymede Air Forces Memorial, a special place on a lonely wooded hill. Names of 20,300 airman are engraved on the cloister walls, honouring those who were lost with no known grave in earth or sea. After searching for names we stood at the central viewpoint to gaze beyond the woods and marshes to the Thames. Reflecting and remembering, we listened to planes approaching from Heathrow, to gradually fade away. We veterans are not the only ones who remember. There are a lot of people out there who leave poppies, photos and personal messages at the foot of the Green Park Memorial; there are many, many families that still remember sons "missing on operations".

After so many years of criticism by people who seem to have forgotten there was a war on, a total war that had to be won, and that Bomber Command alone had the means to attack Germany in those dark years after Dunkirk and the Battle of Britain. The daily headlines in the British papers regularly featured the latest operations of Bomber Command. This did so much to lift the spirits and maintain the morale of the nation.

We veterans remaining are acutely aware how much the general public is now far better informed of the achievements and sacrifices of Bomber Command.

## Your Subscription is Due!

The Subscription Form is attached.  
Renewal is \$25 (NZ), \$30 (Aust),  
\$40 elsewhere.

For overseas members we can send a Paypal invoice.  
Please email us. Veterans and widows are exempt.



## CONTACT US

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

## Your Executive Board

Following the Memorial service, the NZ Bomber Command Trust Board met in the Auckland Museum board room. Brief (as ever) the accounts were received and positions confirmed.

**Seated: Les Munro, Phil Furner**

**Standing: Keith Boles, Ron Mayhill, Jon Pote, Roy Montrowe and Neville Selwood**

Missing: Bunny Burrows (sick leave), Des Hall (taking tea), Peter Wheeler (behind the camera).

Ian Barron was invited to join the Board.

A set of accounts for members is included with this newsletter.



## Just 70 years ago

### RAF TIMELINE 1945

**1 Jan 1945** - The Allies are caught by surprise German fighter-bombers strikes on airfields in Europe (Operation Bodenplatte (Baseplate)). A total of 465 aircraft are destroyed on the ground, but the Luftwaffe loses 62 aircraft to Allied fighters and 172 to light AA (including RAF Regiment gunners). Whilst Allied losses are quickly replaced, the Luftwaffe fighters arm is effectively destroyed.

**1 Feb 1945** - Allied forces cross the Irrawaddy River and take the crucial airfield of Meiktila in central Burma. The airfield is defended against strong Japanese counter-attacks by the RAF Regiment, enabling supplies and reinforcements to be flown in.

**22 Feb 1945** - Allied Air Forces launch Operation Clarion, a concerted effort to wipe out all forms of transport available to the Germans in 24 hours. Nearly 9,000 aircraft, operating from bases in England, France, Holland, Belgium and Italy attack over 250,00 square miles of territory, targeting railways, bridges, ports and roads.

**14 Mar 1945** - No. 617 Sqn drop the first 22,000lb (9,980 kg) Grand Slam bomb on Bielefeld viaduct in Germany.

**24 Mar 1945** - Operation Varsity, the crossing of the Rhine begins. The operation, involving 1,500 aircraft and 1,300 gliders was successful - the harsh lessons of Market Garden had been learned. Fighter cover was provided by 2nd TAF, but less than 20 enemy aircraft were sighted.

**April 1945** - By the second week of the month, Japanese resistance had virtually crumbled in light of devastating attacks by Allied fighter-bombers. On the 3 May, the Burmese capital finally fell to the Allies.

**10 Apr 1945** - An Arado Ar234 makes the last recorded mission by a German aircraft over Britain; its reconnaissance mission takes it from Scapa Flow in the Orkneys to the Firth of Tay, Scotland.

**26 Apr 1945** - The first of some 75,000 ex-prisoners of war are flown back to the UK by aircraft of Bomber Command.

**29 Apr 1945** - The start of Operation Manna. Bomber Command aircraft air drop 6,500 tons of food and clothing to Dutch people. The operation continued until 8 May.

**2/3 May 1945** - Bomber Command carries out its last offensive action of World War II when Mosquitoes of No. 8 Group attack enemy airfields.

**3 May 1945** - Typhoons and Tempests of 2nd TAF carry out devastating attacks on enemy shipping in the Baltic. Large numbers of flying boats and transport aircraft, attempting a massed evacuation to Norway, are also destroyed.

**4 May 1945** - The last day of air operations in north-west Europe; 2nd TAF aircraft claim to have shot down 141 enemy aircraft during anti-shipping operations in the Baltic.

**8 May 1945** - VE Day. Germany surrenders unconditionally, and the war in Europe ends. The Royal Observer Corps is also stood-down from its war footing and assumes its peacetime role. At this time there were 32,000 observers based at 1,420 posts around the UK.

**15 Jul 1945** - The 2nd TAF is reformed as the British Air Force of Occupation, Germany.

**21 Jul 1945** - Ten thousand Japanese troops are killed whilst trying to escape

### Aircraft, Band and Autumn Showers Farewell New Zealand Draft

Shouted messages across the widening gap between ship and England's shore, a gap that will have stretched to 13,000 miles in a month; coppers showering on to the deck, and a band playing familiar tunes; aircraft roaring in farewell and handkerchiefs waving down below—these provided the setting for Southampton on Sunday afternoon for the departure of the liner *Andes* carrying 1,500 New Zealand Air Force men, 37 New Zealand soldiers and 1,000 Australians.

Crowded as the 26,000 ton *Andes* will be, the roomy deck the removal of blackout, and an extensive programme of sports, films, music and shipboard recreation should make the journey more comfortable than have been many troopship trips during the war. Men experienced in shipboard welfare and entertainment have been posted to the ship for this purpose.





from Burma in an attack lasting nine days by aircraft of 3rd TAF.

**6 Aug 1945** - An American B-29 bomber, Enola Gay, drops the worlds first atomic bomb on the city of Hiroshima in Japan. The device produced an explosion equal to 15,000 tons of TNT and killed 75,000 people.

**9 Aug 1945** - A second atomic bomb is dropped by the B-29 Bocks Car on the city of Nagasaki in Southern Japan; 35,000 people were killed.

**15 Aug 1945** - VJ Day. The Second World War finally ends with Japans unconditional surrender.

**23rd September 1945, RMS Andes leaves Portsmouth with 1476 New Zealand aircrew**

# Accidents

Not all the losses occurred over Occupied Europe. Here is the crash log for a few days in 1944 in Lincolnshire.

Courtesy Graham Platt and the Bomber County archives.



DATE	TYPE	SERIAL	UNIT	LOCATION	NOTES
1st January	Beaufighter X	LZ440	No. 236 Sqn	North Coates	Swung on takeoff in rain, ran into a pond.
1st January	Beaufighter X	NE346	No.236 Sqn	North Coates	Lost height after takeoff and crashed.
2nd January	Lancaster III	JB738	No. 460 Sqn	Binbrook Village	Coded AR-T, airborne 2330 from Binbrook for Berlin. The aircraft crashed 6 minutes after takeoff near Binbrook village. Finn gives the date as 1st, serial as JB 378 Lostbombers does not list it although refers to it. F/L B.A. Knyvett DFC RAAF, KIA, Sgt R.D. Trett KIA, F/S J. Dobinson RAAF KIA, F/S J.W.A. Farthing RAAF KIA, F/S H.J. Gill RAAF KIA, P/O E.J. Ross DFM RAAF KIA, F/O C.R. Pickworth RAAF KIA.
2nd January	Lancaster I	DV345	No. 550 Sqn	Whaplode Drove	Coded BQ-? Airborne 0005 2nd Jan from Grimsby for Berlin. Took fire and crashed 0708 at Whaphole Drove, 8 miles SE of Spalding. Sgt Taylor and Sgt Capel are buried in Cambridge City Cemetery; the others are buried in the UK, the Irish Republic and Melveren (St-Truiden) in Belgium. F/O de Menten de Horne, just one of a handful of Belgians serving in the RAF, having been brought here 25th Oct 49. F/O R.H. Mawle KIA, Sgt P.P. O'Meara KIA, F/O G.M.H.F. de Menten de Horne KIA, Sgt J.E. Rounding KIA, Sgt C.W. Taylor RCAF KIA, Sgt E. Skelton KIA.
3rd January	P-51B Mustang	43-12174	CCRC2-8tgFC	Kirton Lindsey	Coded FT: 1 from the 353FS/354FG, this aircraft was flown from Goxhill to Kinton-in-Lindsey on a trip for administrative duties by pilot Cpt Wilson V. Edwards. At 1052hrs the aircraft bounced on touchdown and during Cpt Edwards' recovery actions, the left wing dropped, damaging the flying controls. Cpt Edwards elected to try to go around again, but caught the undercarriage on the airfield perimeter fence, causing it to crash through a hedge and cart-wheel across the road into another hedge.
4th January	Halifax V	EB193	1667 HCU	Faldingworth	Airborne from Faldingworth at 2012 for a night navigation exercise. During the flight, oil problems were experienced first with the starboard outer, and then whilst on approach with the port outer, which then burst into flames. Unable to reach the runway, the aircraft force-landed in a field near the airfield under the approach at 0047.
4th January	Beaufighter X	NE226	No.254 Sqn	Donna Nook	Engine lost power, landed wheels-up in sleet at Donna Nook.
5th January	Spitfire II	P8367	53 OTU	Kirton Lindsey	Force-landed near the airfield.



8th February	Spitfire	NK	NK	Kirmington	No details recorded.
12th February	Lancaster I	W4119	No.50 Sqn	nr East Kirkby	Coded VN-Q. Airborne 1510 12th Feb from Skellingthorpe for a fighter affiliation exercise. During the course of the sortie, a fire broke out in the port outer engine and the order to bale out was given. Before all could comply, part of the outer section of the port main-plane broke off and the Lancaster spun and crashed 1555 12th Feb near East Kirkby Airfield. Sgt Puddock is buried in Cambridge City Cemetery, while the others who were killed were taken to their home towns for burial. F/L M.J. Beetham, P/O D.A. Jennings RAAF, Sgt E.D. Moore KIA, F/O Swinyard, F/S Bartlett, Sgt R. Payne, Sgt Higgins, Sgt F. Ball KIA, Sgt H.G. Puddock KIA, Sgt C. King KIA, Sgt Payne draws attention to the fact, that his Skipper, F/L Beetham became ACM Sir Michael Beetham GCB CBE DFC ADC. Chief of Air Staff F/S Bartlett was to be the sole survivor albeit injured whilst serving with No. 186 Sqn.
15th February	P-38 Lightning	42-67500	554FS-496FG	nr Goxhill	Coded CLM, this aircraft force-landed 2 miles northwest of the airfield. Pilot 1st L Ernest R. Wilson took off from Goxhill at 1545 hrs on a check ride during his conversion to the type. Visibility was poor on the day so he remained in the vicinity of the airfield. Not long into the flight, he noticed fuel pressure problems, and then in quick succession both engines stopped, with Wilson being unable to restart either. He made a forced landing at 1618 hrs, during which the aircraft was written off. The crash was attributed to pilot error due to inexperience on the type.
16th February	Lancaster III	ED655	No. 619 Sqn	Old Bolingbroke	Coded PG-? Loaned to 619 Sqn, Berlin 15/16 Feb aircraft crashed whilst attempting to land at Coningsby on return. Squadron ORB states, visibility poor on return to base, and after overshooting due to another aircraft being slow to clear, it made another circuit at 700 feet. When coming into the funnel it hit the ground, the rear-gunner being severely injured and the aircraft wrecked. The rest of the crew suffered minor injuries. P/O K. Roberts (RAAF), Sgt J.F.J. Forrest, Sgt J. Lott, Sgt DeVeill, Sgt J.H. Tucker, Sgt L.E. Williams, Sgt L.F. Virgo.
16th February	Lancaster III	JB534	No.106 Sqn	Timberland Fen	Coded ZN-? Airborne 1720 15th Feb from Metheringham for Berlin. On return to base crashed 0010 16th Feb, while avoiding another Lancaster on Timberland Fen near the Lincolnshire villages of Timberland and Martin, some 11 miles SW of Horncastle. Sgt Hills died that same day from his grievous injuries. Those killed were buried in their home towns. F/O R.W. Dickerson KIA, Sgt G.H. Boffey KIA, F/O R.H. Lewis KIA, F/S F.O.W. Pauley KIA, Sgt W.C. Hills inj, Sgt B. Krukowski RCAF inj, F/O W.H.C. Ramsay injured.
19th February	Blenheim I	L8371	12 (P) AFU	Harlaxton	Crashed on landing.
19th February	Halifax V	DG314	1667 HCU	Sandtoft	Airborne from Sandtoft at 2215 for night flying practise. At 2245 whilst accelerating along the runway to go around for another circuit, the port tyre exploded. Despite attempted corrective action by the pilot, the aircraft left the runway and the undercarriage collapsed.
20th February	Lancaster III	JB530	No.103 Sqn	Elsham Wolds	Coded PM-? Airborne 2322 19th Feb from Elsham Wolds for Leipzig. On return to base and while preparing to land, collided with another aircraft from the Sqn (ND334). Despite the damage caused, F/S Gumbrell managed to crash-land without serious injury to his crew. F/S H. Gumbrell, Sgt T.V. Shaw, F/O H.J. Heam, Sgt F.G.F. Osborne, F/S J. Seward, Sgt D.W. Evans, Sgt R.A. Boulton.





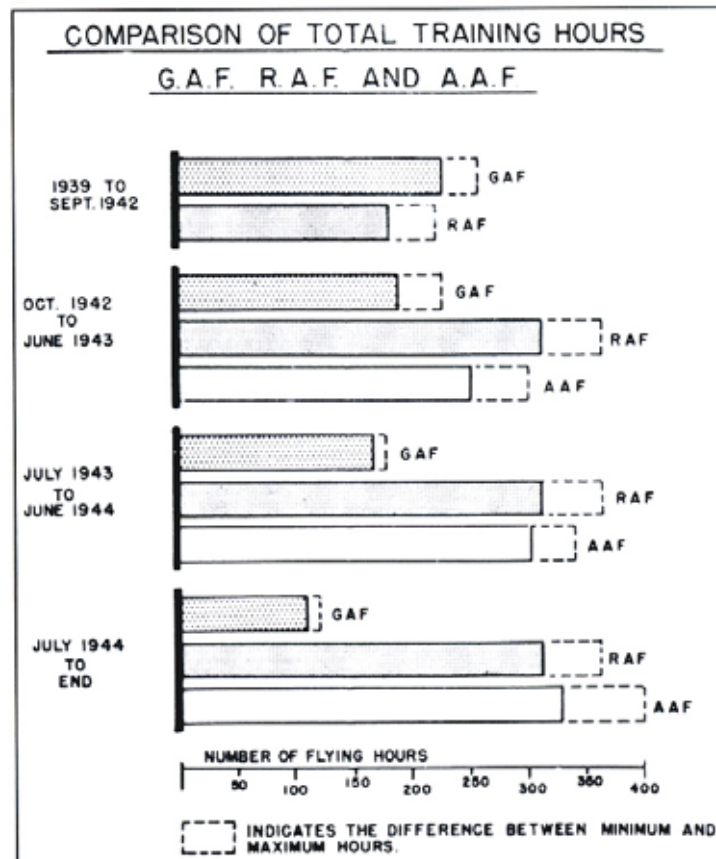
**Canada**



**New Zealand**



**Germany**



**Training Chart - German Pilots and Allied Pilots**

# A Tough Month for 156 Squadron

Month: October

Year: 1943

Rank	Initials	Surname	Decorations	Unit	First Mention	Last Mention	Deceased	Missions	Subsequent
S/L	D C	ANSET	DFC	RAF	9/08/1943	22/11/1943	22/11/1943	17	K.I.A.
F/Lt	C O	AUBERT	DFM	RAAF	7/10/1943	16/12/1943	16/12/1943	10	K.I.A.
F/O	E C	BAGOT		RAAF	22/09/1943	14/01/1944	14/01/1944	18	K.I.A.
W/O	P	BATMAN		RAF	22/09/1943	30/01/1944		15	POW
F/Lt	D O	BLAMEY	DFC	RCAF	29/09/1943	12/07/1944		49	Completed Tour
P/O	G P R	BOND	DFC	RAF	18/10/1943	1/01/1944	2/01/1944	12	K.I.A.
P/O	J	BORLAND	DFC	RAF	20/10/1943	2/01/1944	3/01/1944	12	K.I.A.
F/O	C G	CAIRNS	DFM	RAF	20/10/1943	2/01/1944	3/01/1944	11	K.I.A.
F/Lt	P A	COLDHAM	DFC +	RAAF	4/05/1943	20/12/1943		37	Completed Tour
S/L	A S	COOK	DFC DFM	RAAF	8/04/1943	4/10/1943	4/10/1943	26	K.I.A.
P/O	J D R	CROMARTY		RAF	1/10/1943	2/01/1944	3/01/1944	18	K.I.A.
F/Lt	J A	DAY	DFC	RAF	4/10/1943	24/02/1944		19	POW
S/L	L C	DEAN		RAF	22/10/1943	26/11/1943		2	
S/L	R E	FAWCETT	DFC	RAF	8/07/1943	1/01/1944	2/01/1944	28	K.I.A.
P/O	F J	FRY		RAF	15/08/1943	8/10/1943	9/10/1943	13	K.I.A.
W/C	G F	GRANT	DSO + DFC	RAAF	18/04/1943	8/10/1943		23	
F/Lt	J H	HEWITT	DFC	RAF	12/08/1943	14/06/1944	15/06/1944	35	To 582 Sqn K.I.A.
F/Lt	L	KILVINGTON	DFC	RAAF	22/09/1943	21/01/1944		19	POW
S/L	G L	MANDENO	DSO DFC +	RNZAF	26/04/1943	2/12/1943		32	Posted to 139 Sqn
F/Lt	W G	MANIFOLD	DFC +	RAAF	27/08/1943	3/12/1943		19	Completed Tour
W/C	N R	MANSFIELD	DFC MID	RAF	8/07/1943	14/01/1944	14/01/1944	24	K.I.A.
P/O	R	MCLEAN		RAF	23/09/1943	24/03/1944		28	to 582 Sqn
F/Lt	L W	OVERTON	DFC +	RAF	8/04/1943	23/12/1943		40	Completed Tour
F/O	G	PALMER		RAF	12/08/1943	14/01/1944	14/01/1944	21	K.I.A.
F/Sgt	J G	REDFERN		RAF	27/09/1943	2/12/1943	2/12/1943	10	K.I.A.
F/Sgt	D H	ROYLE		RAF	17/08/1943	8/10/1943		4	
W/O	J E	RULE		RNZAF	18/10/1943	30/01/1944	30/01/1944	14	K.I.A.
F/Lt	M J	RYAN	DFC +	RAAF	23/05/1943	26/11/1943		36	Completed Tour
S/L	H F	SLADE	DSO DFC BS	RAAF	7/08/1943	28/07/1944		59	Completed Tour
F/Lt	J L	SLOPER	DFC +	RAF	23/05/1943	10/04/1944	10/04/1944	40	K.I.A.
F/Sgt	T G	STEPHENS	DFM	RAF	7/08/1943	22/11/1943	22/11/1943	12	K.I.A.
S/L	R G F	STEWART	DFC	RAF	6/11/1942	1/01/1944	2/01/1944	50	K.I.A.
F/Lt	M C	STIMPSON	DFC	RAF	24/07/1943	15/02/1944	15/02/1944	34	K.I.A.
F/Lt	M A	SULLIVAN	DFC	RNZAF	3/04/1943	20/12/1943	20/12/1943	36	K.I.A.
F/O	W T	TIMPERLEY	DFC	RAF	24/06/1943	20/10/1943		19	
W/C	J H	WHITE	DFC	RAF	3/03/1943	18/11/1943	18/11/1943	43	K.I.A.
P/O	A C	WISHART	DFC	RAAF	28/06/1943	20/10/1943		22	
S/L	J L	WRIGHT	DSO DFC	RNZAF	28/06/1943	20/10/1943		26	Completed Tour

Killed In Action: 21 = 55%

Prisoner of War: 3 = 8%

Survived: 14 = 37%

Total: 38

## In One Month:

21 Aircraft Lost, 147 Aircrew

3 Aircraft Lost, 21 Aircrew (POW)



courtesy: [http://www.156squadron.com/display\\_captains.asp?](http://www.156squadron.com/display_captains.asp?)



## **Bomber Command Memorial Service**

Our annual service was held in the Hall of Memories at the Auckland War Memorial on June 7th.

Attended by twenty veterans, senior representatives from the RNZAF, RAF and RAAF together with MP Damian O'Connor and diplomatic representatives from UK, Netherlands and Poland. Over 150 family and friends gathered for a very moving service. Our thanks to Phil Furner for the great organisation.

Memorial services were conducted in Canberra, Toronto and Lincoln that weekend.

### **Our Veterans**



**RSA  
Auckland President  
Pat Johnson  
with Patron  
Les Munro  
and  
President  
Ron Mayhill**



**RNZAF  
Chaplain**

**Stuart Hight with NZBCA Hon. Chaplain,  
The Venerable Neville Selwood**

***This address was given by Group Captain John Davidson RAAF.***

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It's not well known that ten percent of RAF Bomber Command was composed of Australians and New Zealanders. As such, it is a great privilege to be here today to represent my nation, and more broadly, those who continue to serve in the air.

I became a pilot following the footsteps of a man I never met. That man was my grandfather, who was a navigator in Mosquitos, Harold Davidson, DFC and bar.

My parents and surviving grandparents stoked my enthusiasm to be a pilot - often gifts of Airfix models - but were always light on the details of my grandfather's service and the war itself.

For many years, I remained ignorant of Bomber Command's history. When I eventually did my own research, I understood why my parents were perhaps circumspect.

In the darkest days of 1943, one in six would survive their first tour of 30 missions and one in forty would survive their second. Front line infantry officers in WWI had a far better chance of survival.

Service in Bomber Command at that time was close to suicidal - but it was far from futile.

Albert Speer, the Third Reich's Minister of Armaments and War Production said in 1959:

*"The real importance of the air war consisted in the fact that it opened a second front long before the invasion in Europe ... Defence against air attacks required the production of thousands of anti-aircraft guns, the stockpiling of tremendous quantities of ammunition all over the country, and holding in readiness hundreds of thousands of soldiers, who in addition had to stay in position by their guns, often totally inactive, for months at a time ... No one has yet seen that this was the greatest lost battle on the German side."*

Bomber Command did much to shape the course of the war, but Bomber Command's relevance does not end with VE Day.

Arguably, the airmen of Bomber Command represent the greatest collective act of bravery and commitment in modern times. There have been examples throughout history, where units have faced impossible odds and probable death. But usually, these were a warrior class seeking immortality through martial deeds, actively embracing death.

Not so the men of Bomber Command. They were ordinary men from all walks of life and all corners of the globe. They did not seek death, but understanding fully the likelihood of that outcome, they still launched, again, and again, and again.

Knowing as they did, the faceless terror that awaited them each time, I think that those of Bomber Command are truly the bravest of the brave. The inner strength they required is something I can barely imagine.

This example of courage is perhaps the most enduring gift left to those of us who now enjoy the freedoms they bought at such a terrible price. They show us the extraordinary strength of free men united against tyranny. It is a lesson we cannot afford to forget.

That perhaps is why we are here today - to remember. ***Lest we forget.***



***Lest We Forget***



***Polish Consul Mr Boguslaw Nowak***

11 June 2015

Dear Mr Mayhill,

I wanted to thank you for your recent letter regarding the RAF Bomber Command Memorial and the Les Munro medals. All I can say is that it has been an honour. I am very proud to have been able to contribute in some way towards the preservation of the memory of such courageous individuals.

The NZBCA Aircrew Badge that you have sent me will be my constant reminder of the respect I hold for all involved and I feel privileged to have received this first Honorary Award. I thank you for that, and I very much look forward to an on-going relationship with your Association. My best wishes to you all.

Kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

***Michael Ashcroft***, Lord Ashcroft KCMG PC



***Lord Ashcroft visits our Lancaster***



***L to R: Doug Taylor(m/ug), Wally Halliwell (RAF Haultan), Allan Taylor (Korea). Graham Turner (Pilot), Roy Montrowe (Pilot)***



***Lord Ashcroft and PM John Key, Les Munro and MOTAT CEO Michael Frawley***



## ***Legion d'Honneur***

Congratulations to all those who have been presented with this award.

There have been a number of ceremonies throughout New Zealand and at a recent event in Auckland, five of the eight were Bomber Boys.



## ***A Note for our RAF Veterans – from the Daily Mail***

With the 71st anniversary of D-Day falling this Saturday, exactly a year after the French government announced it would give its highest award to all surviving Normandy veterans, only a fraction of the 3,000 who applied for the medals via the Ministry of Defence have received them.

The veterans, who have an average age of 95, are dying at a rate of more than 10 per week, meaning at least 500 are likely to have died without seeing their medal.

The Legion d'Honneur, France's highest award for bravery, cannot be awarded posthumously, meaning the medals will not even be sent to the families of those who have died waiting. Peter Lloyd, secretary of the Midlands branch of the Normandy Veterans Alliance, said: "For a start this has come 70 years too late but when the French did decide to award the medals there was far too much red tape. They should have given them out last year to all the veterans who were in Normandy for the 70th anniversary of D-Day.

The announcement caught the Ministry of Defence unawares, as all applications have to be vetted by the MoD before being passed on to the French. The MoD admitted it was short of manpower to process the applications, meaning few of them were sent to France before Christmas.

After reaching Paris they have to be sent for translation, causing another bottleneck in the process.

Mr Barfoot, 67, whose father was an RAF Flight Lieutenant in a Halifax that towed gliders to the landing beaches on D-Day, said: "Part of the problem is that the veterans aren't the type of people to make a fuss and chase up the MoD. I know my father would be quietly proud if he receives his medal, but like most veterans he is too modest and frankly too old to ring up and complain."

Cyril Blondel, a spokesman for the French Embassy in London, said: "Honouring those who fought for its liberation is extremely important for France, and it is making a special effort to honour those who distinguished themselves during the Second World War.

"However there is a specific British procedure to follow and applications concerning British veterans need first to be approved by the MoD. Once the MoD has processed an application the French Embassy transfers the dossier to Paris.

"We ensure that, once the procedure is completed, veterans do get their decoration quickly."

The applications are now being prioritized on age and health grounds, meaning the oldest and most infirm veterans will receive their awards as a priority.

## ***Battle Dress Tops and Trousers . . .***

*are needed for a new NZBCA Crew display at MOTAT. If you have either lurking in a back cupboard we would welcome them.*

## Air Crew Posing With the Bomb Due to be Dropped on the Baltic Port Of Kiel

An historic photograph of what may have been the last British bomb dropped on Germany by the RAF in the Second World War has been discovered 70 years on.

The newly found photograph shows crew posing with the bomb due to be dropped on the Baltic port of Kiel, in what would turn out to be Bomber Command's last raid on the country, six days before V-E Day.

Brian Emsley discovered the photograph of the bomb being loaded onto an RAF Mosquito in a family album, but says his father who is seen in the left of the picture, had never mentioned it before he died in 1979.

The RAF's Air Historical Branch have now confirmed the Kiel raid by Mosquito bombers of 608 squadron based at Downham Market in Norfolk was the last of the war.

Bombers were sent to hit the port in the final stages of the war when Adolf Hitler was already dead, but the German war machine was still fighting. Reports had reached British commanders that German troops were gathering at Kiel and intending to make a break for Norway, where they would then make a last stand against the Allies.



## Just for a Laugh

### ROUTINE ORDERS

**From: CAS** **To: AO GP**

1. On Friday evening at approximately 1700 hours, Halley's Comet will be visible in this area, an event which occurs only once every 75 years.
2. All ORs are to assemble on the parade ground, wearing safety helmets, and I will explain this phenomenon to them.
3. In case of rain, we will not be able to see anything, so assemble the ORs in the canteen and I will show them a film of it.



***AOC's inspection with Dick Lambert awaiting either the rain or a rocket***

**From: AOC** **To: Station Commander**

1. By order of the Chief of Air Staff, at 1700 hours, Halley's Comet will appear over the parade ground.
2. If it rains, assemble all ORs in safety helmets and proceed to the Canteen where this rare phenomenon will take place, something which occurs every 75 years.

**From: Station Commander** **To: Adjutant**

1. By order of the Chief of Air Staff in a safety helmet, at 1700 hours on Friday the phenomenal Halley's Comet will appear in the Canteen. In case of rain over the parade ground, the Chief of Air Staff will give another order, something which occurs every 75 years.

**From: Adjutant** **To: Station Warrant Officer**

1. On Friday at 1700 hours the Chief of Air Staff will appear in the canteen with Halley's Comet, something which happens every 75 years if it rains. The Chief of Air Staff will order the Comet into the area over the parade ground.

**From: Station Warrant Officer to all ORs**

1. When it rains on Friday at 1700 hours, the phenomenal 75 year old Bill Haley accompanied by the Chief of Air Staff will drive his Comet through the parade ground and into the canteen, wearing a safety helmet.



## **Glyn Powell**

Photos of the second Mosquito fuselage ordered by Avspecs just off the moulds at Glyn Powell's workshop, Drury South Auckland. This is the fourth airworthy fuselage Glyn and his team have built. The wing is currently being built at Ardmore using Glyn's wing jig.

***From Gary Bridger***



***Fuselage half being lifted off its mould. Made of a composite of ply and balsa as original specs. It took Glyn Powell five years to build the two moulds.***



***The two halves are glued together, just like they were 70 years ago!***



***Fuselage half on assembly jig. Note the crew's door.***



***Glyn Powell receiving his Queen Services Medal (QSM) from the Governor General on 21st March 2014 'for services to aeronautical heritage preservation'. The NZ Bomber Command Association provided a supporting letter for Glyn's Royal Honour.***



## English Village Honours Wellington Bomber Crew

The village of North Marston in England honoured the lives of six young airmen on Saturday 25th April (ANZAC Day) when a memorial plaque in St Mary's Church was unveiled by Air Marshall Sir Colin Terry KBE CB DL, Deputy Lieutenant of Buckinghamshire. The church service was attended by one hundred and sixty people including members of the British Legion, the Royal Air Force, the Army and members of the Royal New Zealand Air Force. Thirty relatives of the crew attended the service, including seven who had flown over from New Zealand.

The men who lost their lives were the crew of a Wellington bomber that crashed in North Marston on the night of 4th January 1945. They were in Bomber Command training at nearby RAF Westcott and had just taken off for a night navigation exercise when the plane fell from 5,000 feet. The cause of the crash is unknown. The plane crashed in a field on the edge of North Marston and the site of the crash was marked by flags and opened to the public on the day of the Dedication Service.

The crew on board Wellington HE740 that night comprised three members of the Royal New Zealand Air Force: the pilot, Flight Sergeant Michael Reece aged 21; the wireless operator, Flight Sergeant Donald McLennan aged 21; and the air bomber, Flight Sergeant Alexander Bolger aged 23. Also on board were three members of the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve: the plane's navigator, Sergeant Ian Smith aged 22; and two young air gunners, both aged 19, Sergeant John Wenham and Sergeant Reginald Price.

North Marston villager, Chris Holden, who had vivid memories of the crash back in 1945, had always expressed sadness that there was no memorial in the village to these young men. When Chris died, his daughter Jayne Springer donated the money collected at his funeral towards the cost of a memorial plaque. North Marston History Club raised the rest of the funds from local contributions.

The North Marston History Club has been constantly in touch with all the relatives in New Zealand of Alex Bolger, Donald McLennan and Michael Reece as well as with Neville Selwood, former Lancaster navigator, who was a friend of Alex Bolger and trained at the same place in England. He has sent over his old log book and numerous photos and bits of information.

Tina Reece, the great-niece of the NZ pilot, travelled to the service from where she lives in Wales but seven of the relatives of Alex Bolger travelled from abroad specially for the service, and one other from London. The attendance of the RNZAF made the day extra special as it was also ANZAC Day. One of Alex's relatives discovered that her son (a photographer in the RNZAF) was a friend of one of the members of the RNZAF there that day – such a small world! Also, until the North Marston History Club drew the NZ families together, the Reece and Bolger families (who had known each other for years) didn't realise that their great-uncles had died in the same plane!

The North Marston History Club arranged for the relatives to visit the graves in Oxford, the crash site and the training base at RAF Westcott, from where the crew flew the night they were killed.

**Photos: Charlotte J. Chappell**



**Flt Sgt Alex Bolger,  
Air Bomber**



**Flt Sgt Michael Reece,  
Pilot**



**Flt Sgt Don McLennan,  
Wireless Operator**



**Air Marshall Sir Colin Terry Memorial Plaque**



**Bolgers**