

# BOMBER COMMAND ASSOCIATION IN AUSTRALIA Inc.

BCAA 69 Autumn 2019



## Patron

Air Chief Marshal  
Sir Angus Houston  
AK AFC Ret'd

## President

Dr Ron Houghton DFC  
2502/37 Glen Street  
Milsons Point NSW 2061  
Tel. 02 9954 7000

## Secretary

Annette Guterres  
15 Flavelle Street  
Concord NSW 2137  
Tel. 02 9743 5794

## Treasurer

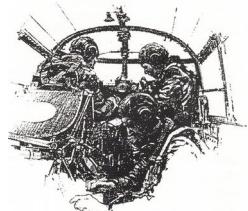
Anthony Trayhurn  
4 Fern Street  
Pymble NSW 2073  
Tel. 02 9488 7436

Editor – Geoff Raebel 1/27 National Avenue Loftus NSW 2232 Tel 029521 3070 email [raebel.g@iinet.net.au](mailto:raebel.g@iinet.net.au)



## President's Report

On Tuesday 12th March, I was very pleased to accept a request from Richard Munro to join squadron members, family and friends of 460 Squadron for lunch at Doyles restaurant at Watson's Bay.



**Last Flight of a Halifax – Painting courtesy Michael Lees – UK - Story Page 3**

There was much talk about aviation over the years, and in particular, discussions of RAAF airmen who left Australia and along with other Commonwealth airmen, became part of the RAF during WWII. Despite the passing of many years, there was considerable talking and recollection of some very good stories. Perhaps Bomber Command needs more occasions for all our members to come together when the yarns are just as enjoyable.

On Friday 29th March there will be a wreath laying ceremony at 11:00am at the Martin Place Cenotaph to mark the 98th Birthday of the RAAF. I will attend on behalf of the BCAA, but all members are welcome to attend if so inclined.

ANZAC Day is fast approaching and I can't believe 25th April is just around the corner. Bomber Command will of course be marching, followed by our traditional luncheon at the Automobile Club. I look forward to seeing you all there and please look out for the notices and information regarding times and bookings.

Best wishes

Ron Houghton



**VALE** – Cec Barlow 18/11/2018, Reg Chapman, 467 Squadron Pilot 24/11/18, Harry Brabin 15/12/18, John Eppel 550 Sqn 17/12/18, Margorie Mc Crossan (Hedges) WAAF, Alec Kerr 115 Sqn, 17/11/2018, Eric Barton Pilot 186 Sqn 28/3/2019

**WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS** – Peter Wood, Patrick Carracher (455), Catherine Cryer, John Humphreys (467/463), Jeremy Linton-Mann, Roddy MacKenzie, Liz McDougal, Jane Underwood.

### **MEMBERSHIPS – Renewals due 1/1/2019**

**Memberships fell due 1st January, and is \$20 pa** (plus an initial Joining fee of \$5 if applicable) Bomber Command Widows are gratis. Those who have paid ahead, will have that noted. Membership forms are available by email from the Editor by email or mail from the Secretary (Details Page 1). Cheques/Money Orders should be sent to our Treasurer, Anthony (Also on Page 1) or please Direct Deposit to BCAA – BSB **633000** Account no.**125530550**, being Bendigo & Adelaide Bank Ltd, Please put your name on the deposit reference. [ED]. For convenience, you can pay, **membership \$20**, and **if paying for a RAAFA subscription membership and Wings Magazine add \$15 ie \$35**

**ARE YOU MOVING HOUSE OR GOING INTO CARE?** Please mail or email our Secretary annette.guterres@gmail.com to keep our lists up to date so your newsletter can follow you.

**COMING EVENTS – For numbers**, Please advise Gwen Stead on 02 9630 1083 or 0411 554 359 (or email [gwenstead@optusnet.com.au](mailto:gwenstead@optusnet.com.au))

**Sydney** -Anzac Day Royal Automobile Club Macquarie St – ISC Room opens 10.00 Dining Room opens 12.30 pm. Lunch is \$70 ph and BC Widows \$55

Brisbane – Anzac Day 467-463 Squadrons Thursday, 25th April (for those wishing to march the banner will be paraded in the Brisbane City march as always) Luncheon Yeronga 27/4/19

Dianne (467and463raafsquadronsqld@gmail.com)

### **Bomber Command Commemorative Day**

**Sydney** - Sunday **26<sup>th</sup> MAY** – Cenotaph Martin Place 11am arranged by RAAFA

and afterwards at the Westin Hotel Mosaic Restaurant Sydney

Canberra - Sunday, 2nd June in the AWM Grounds 11am

Brisbane - Sunday, 2nd June RAAF Base Amberley

**Sydney** Autumn Lunch at Doyles Watsons Bay , Wednesday **10<sup>th</sup> July** at 12 noon – Pay on the day .

Spring Luncheon–Abbotsford Rowing Club Lunch, 12 noon Thursday **17<sup>th</sup> October** - a la Carte lunch

**BCAA & PFF Christmas Luncheon**– NSW Parliament House Sydney, Friday 6th December 12 noon

**Queensland** - Memorial Service & Christmas lunch - Sunday 24th November Anzac Square, Brisbane  
Dianne (467and463raafsquadronsqld@gmail.com)

### **THE MANY** by one of the FEW

Recently I was reading an obituary of Wing Commander ‘Tim’ Elkington RAF – one of *The Few* who fought in the Battle of Britain. He was paying tribute to *The Many*. The hundred or so groundstaff it took to get he and his squadron into the air. The cooks, the drivers, the clerks, the mechanics, the doctor, all those people that got him to where he had to be each day. It was a noble and humble tribute, he didn’t get where he was on his own.

### **Fourteenth OP – Night – Sterkade (Ruhr – Synthetic Oil)** – From the diary of P/O Michael Wilson 466 Sqn



“Briefed at 19.00, we took “H-How” off at 22.30, flew at about 2,000’ then began climbing before the enemy coast. Just on that coast we were surprised to see a Fortress pass just over our top. Not much activity was seen until we hit the target and then it was on with a vengeance. There seemed to be hundreds of searchlights and flak pushed up pretty accurately. “Irish” saw a kite go down over target and some bale out. We were hit by one burst of flak which entered the astrodome very close to Harry[FE], busted his gauges and tore his logbook. I was glad to get away from that target which, incidentally was well “pranged”. We were second last home and we were lucky once more, for while on the perimeter track, building up brake pressure the port tyre blew out, finally after interrogation and supper, got to bed 05.30”

*courtesy of his Nephew Daryl Martin of Corowa Operation No 14 19/8/1944*

## COVER PAINTING by Michael Lees



"The 51 Squadron ground crew have prepared the aircraft and are clearing the dispersal of unwanted ground equipment. The aircrew have been planned and briefed and have a few minutes to spare before the pre-flight checks begin. The Flight Engineer and the Engine Mechanic are discussing a slight overheating problem on No.3 engine. The remainder of the crew chat quietly, not in the boisterous tones that will come from those who return safely many hours later, but with a reserve metered by the unknown, a slight knot in the stomach as they wonder what the flight over Germany will bring. All have experienced it many times before - their minds are not really on the idle chat between friends, but are at 15,000 feet as the darkened coast drifts beneath a wing, thinking through every eventuality, every potential emergency.

Shortly they will climb the steps into the aircraft where the smells of fuel, ozone, paint and sweat mingle in this familiar environment. The engines will cough then crackle into life. They will taxi out, joining the other squadron aircraft, awaiting their turn. As the throttles are opened fully the machine will snarl to a crescendo, as the brakes are released and *L for Love*; will rumble down the runway at RAF Snaith to lift into the gathering night.

The aircraft did not return but crashed in Belgium. I was commissioned by a relative of the tail gunner to paint the crew and their aircraft before their last flight. I was a pilot in the 1970s and flew HP Victor tankers, not undergoing the same dangers as the crew of the Halifax in 1943, but certainly experiencing the same inner feelings of aircrew before a demanding flight."

**Michael Lees – Artist – UK Catalogue Site - <https://the-art-of-michael-lees.com>**

## THE 1939-1945 STAR FOR AUSSIE GROUNDCREW

A review of awards is free via the Australian Department of Defence website: <http://www.defence.gov.au/Medals/Content/ApplyOnlineInstructions.asp> For UK personnel, the process is more complicated and must be done by sending a paper request for a service history to the relevant service branch which costs around £30 and then a request to the UK MoD Medal Office for a review.

The 1939-1945 Star was denied to Australian ground staff serving in the UK during WWII. It appears that around the year 2000 there was a decision not widely advertised that ground crew now qualify, once the medal is awarded, it should come with the Bomber Command Clasp.

This news pricked up the ears of NZ BC supporter Peter Wheeler who writes "*Thanks for the update on the 1939-45 Star eligibility as it will affect some of our NZ veterans who currently wear locally issued ones. Like the pathetic BC clasp, where the criteria excluded crews who had conducted many operations, while a Battle of Britain or Alamein clasp needed one sortie or 24 hours in the front line. At the time the NZDF Awards Section petitioned the Government and the PM decreed that the count of the days of service should start at OTU and that regardless, any aircrew flying on one operation qualified. Sanctioned by the Governor General, the UK argument that the 1939-1945 Star was theirs and was not to have clasps added without permission, the NZ Government responded that it could be worn on the NZ Defence or War Service Medal. With this level of support, we issued all NZ BC aircrew with newly minted versions.*



### IBCC (International Bomber Command Centre)

To join the IBCC and receive a membership pack please email [members@internationalbcc.co.uk](mailto:members@internationalbcc.co.uk) To conduct research follow this link:- <https://internationalbcc.co.uk/history-archive/digital-archive/>

[ I have started to use the resources of the IBCC. An Internet search on Eric Barton led me to an interview he did a few years ago. It was great, being transcribed into text albeit literally from the conversation so it was necessary to think through words and small errors to sort out what was meant.]

## 467 SQUADRON SKIPPER HONOURED IN HIS HOME COUNTRY



In the Spring edition Adriano Baumgartner reminded us that Wing Commander Cosme Gomm, DSO, DFC was a Brazilian by birth. On 23<sup>rd</sup> October last year, Gomm received the posthumous award on Aviator's Day 2018 of *Order of Aeronautical Merit* (*Ordem do Mérito Aeronáutico*) along with Lt Oscar Lennox McMacking (the first Brazilian Ace ever, a WW1 veteran killed in action on the 11th September 1917). Gomm was nominated by Adriano and the award was received by Mrs. Irene Gomm, his 84 year old, eldest niece. On the 16th July 2019 Adriano has arranged to hold a memorial service at St. Désir Cemetery where Gomm is buried. On the 17<sup>th</sup> the Historians involved, will go to the local Memorial where the Lancaster ED998 crashed. The group plans to place four flags at the Local Memorial: French, British, Australian and Brazilian along with Commemorative Plaques.

## THE BOMBER COMMAND FAMILY IN AUSTRALIA - 250,000 STRONG!

People blink when I give that number. It is no more than the total of Australians in the RAAF - BC, times their two descendants, compounded by the next two generations and does not include the Uncles that died childless.



Recently I had an enquiry from W/C Jim Wright DFC, who I had the privilege of meeting last year and count as a friend. “*Can you find out from RAAF archives when Ray Banfield was at 16 OTU for crewing up on Wellingtons? I was also there at Upper Heyford, Oxon, from May 1943 and my skipper was Ken Ames. My navigator friend Mike Ward was originally crewed up with a pilot from Belfast but at a late stage they had a crash and the pilot from Belfast was held back for the usual Inquiry and Mike Ward became the navigator on Ray Banfield’s crew, then converted to four engined Lancasters as we also did. The next time we met after completing our first tour on Lancs with 61 and 630 Sqns was in June ‘44 when Ray and Mike both wore DFC and Pathfinder Badges at Coningsby on 83 Sqn while Ken and I also had a DFC*

*but had lost 2 months waiting for me to recover from a dicey “do” in October ‘43 before I could rejoin our crew on OPS. Whether Ray and Mike had gone directly from Lanc conversion to 83 Sqn I do not know. But if you can find out I would be grateful. Ray and Mike and crew were all KIA on a Stuttgart trip in July ‘44 and I never could find out to which squadron(s) they went before 83 Sqdn at Coningsby. I do know that Mike’s original pilot from Belfast found another navigator, did a Lanc conversion course and was posted to 207 at Spilsby and were told on arrival by truck at the main guardroom to rush into briefing for OPS that same night for a Berlin trip! They all went except for their Rear Gunner who was not allowed to fly because he had a bad cold. A replacement RG was found and ALL were KIA on this, their very first trip on 1 Dec ‘43. I met by chance the sick RG many years later when he was a survivor on 57 Sqn and I was a survivor on 630, both based at East Kirkby and we were both in Denmark for a Liberty Day, 5th May commemoration parade at Skarrild at the graveside of a 630 Lancaster crew buried there since being shot down on their return home after a trip to Koenigsberg or Kaliningrad as the Russians came to call it. We had just started work on 97 Sqdn as Pathfinders and had dropped flares ourselves that night on Koenigsberg”*

My research was fairly fruitless except to reveal the large hole Ray Banfield left in so many hearts.  
[ED-GR]

THE WEST AUSTRALIAN 6<sup>th</sup> April 1945

DEATHS - On Service.

BANFIELD Raymond Charles (Ray), F/Lt, RAAF. Pathfinder Bomber Command. Killed in air operations over Stuttgart, Germany, July 25, 1944. Buried at Durbach, Germany; only son of Violet and Charles Thomas Banfield (27 Leonard Street. Victoria Park): aged 24 years; devoted brother of Joy and Lorna; loving fiance of Joan Rodgers (Sydney). *Our darling boy. His duty nobly done.*

:- loving grandson of Mr and Mrs W. G. Barnfield (189 Berwick Street, Victoria Park).

*So dearly loved, so deeply mourned.*

:- loving nephew of Mr and Mrs C. Gray and Cousin of Joan and Don (Sydney). A gallant boy, loved by us all

*Greater love hath no man than this*

Grateful remembrance of Ray. Who gave his life over Germany. Ever remembered by Jim Langridge. :- A sincere tribute to the memory of Ray, killed in air operations over Stuttgart. July 25, 1944.



83 Squadron RAF taxying out on the peri(meter) track

## SOME TRAINING MEMORIES

Our flying training days were full of adventures and incidents and dicey bits, almost as much as those on ops. There always seemed to someone doing something untoward, such as landing where no aerodrome existed, as on a mountainside, or where one did exist but forgetting to lower the undercart - even raising undercart while parked. The following two incidents I recall from my period at 1663 HCU, Rufforth, where we were learning to drive 4 engined machines after completing OTU on Wimpies.

On a bright sunny morning I and my crew, being conscientious types, were out at one of the dispersal bays practising evacuating a "Halibag" in an emergency, such as ditching or belly landing. After a while the NAFFI wagon turned up so we took a break and were busy sipping the revolting brew loosely described as tea and attempting to consume NAFFI rock cakes without breaking teeth when the morning peace was suddenly shattered.

From behind the vehicle came an almighty BANG followed by slithery screechy grumbly sorts of noises, then silence again. Peering around the vehicle we observed one unhappy Halifax, resting in the adjoining hay field with dust and smoke exuding from every pore. Not only dust and smoke exuded, odd bogs appeared as if by magic through the pollution in seconds, proving that we had been wasting our time with practice - when life is threatened, will always finds a way!

The kite didn't burn, but they were taking no chances. As per tradition, the Captain was first to leave the ship - to race off for help of course!! The aerodrome was "L" shaped, with a farm in the angle. It was fairly obvious that the aircraft had swung on take off and the pilot had attempted to get off anyway but had only managed to get as high as the roof of one of the farm outbuildings. The initial BANG we had heard was the roof of said building being removed, leaving two very neat "U" shaped holes in the brick wall where a couple of Merlins had passed by. (We were flying Hali 2s and 5s, most of them well past their "Use by" date). The other miscellaneous noises were made by the aircraft making an unscheduled landing in an unauthorised field, greatly to the detriment of one of His Majesty's flying machines as well as the hay. No crew damage was sustained, and the Land Army girls who had been working in the field the day before had wisely found work somewhere else for the day.

Another incident occurred one foggy night when I was practising *circuits and bumps* - the only aircraft flying that night. After several circuits I agreed with flying control that the fog was getting too thick, so taxied around the perimeter track heading for the aircraft's dispersal bay. The track, having been designed by a sadist, had in it, an "S" bend to test our skill. Just as I approached this piece of nastiness my navigator decided to help by shining the Aldis lamp beam ahead through the perspex nose. As all English car drivers would appreciate, this turned out to be less than helpful, the light reflecting back and making visibility worse. So I managed to negotiate the first bend but failed the second. Being a very astute young airman, I knew something was amiss when past my window sailed a sign saying something about entry to the bomb dump being prohibited to Unauthorised Persons, which probably included me.

Having been taught obedience at a very early age (and having it further instilled into me by the RAF!) I immediately stopped the aircraft, assisted by the barbed wire entanglement and soft mud we encountered. I believe the Halifax was a very fine, well designed aircraft, with few faults, but one of those few was the lack of reverse in the gearbox. So I was in a quandary. I couldn't go back because

of the aforementioned design fault and forward was not on because of the stern warning and dire consequences implied by the sign. The only remaining option was to call for help, so I called up the kind little man in the tower - he was unaware of my predicament because of the murk.

I informed him that “*S for Sugar is in the soup*”. Soup, I remember, was not the exact word I used, but close enough for polite company. Eventually the duty ground crew put down their mugs of cocoa and ambled along with a tractor, hooked on a cable and rocked old Sugar further into the mire. Being unsuccessful with the tractor, they trotted off to return with a fuel tanker, with the same result or worse.

Time was getting on so we all agreed she would probably be OK till morning, no one was likely to steal her, so off we went to hit the cot. Next morning revealed her true pathetic state. Bogged to the hocks and barbed wire wrapped all around her underwear, like a snarled up fishing line. We wondered how we had all got out the previous night without doing ourselves an injury. As usual someone got her untangled and unbogged, but it wasn’t me. I was off trying other tricks as is expected of a trainee pilot. I did receive some acclaim though for that little effort - everyone was amazed at the dexterity with which I had threaded that sign through between the inner engine and fuselage without damage to engine, prop, or even the sign.                   **Max Langworthy, Ex 462 Sqn RAAF**

## BALL BEARINGS?

From a friend I have known for over 50 years, people who drive Bugatti’s and are pilots get noticed!

“There is a story with which I am familiar which I think your members will find interesting. I was born in 1938 before war broke out and my father joined the RAF and trained as a radar technician and was eventually posted to Peterhead in the North Eastern tip of Scotland, where there was a radar station and a RAF airfield.

My Mother and I went to live in Peterhead at a dairy farm to be close to Dad. The airfield had a couple of Spitfires as well as a Lancaster bomber. The Lancaster flew most nights to neutral Sweden to load up with high quality ball bearings, absolutely essential to the war effort and was used because of its carrying capacity and range. It was guided in even the worst weather by the radar station.

The Germans attacked the Lancaster with night fighters but never succeeded in bringing it down and the pilots used to love the worst weather conditions because the night fighters could not operate and the radar station allowed them to fly safely.

The Germans used to send a reconnaissance aircraft over every morning at exactly the same time to photograph the radar station and one morning a Spitfire pilot took off earlier and waited for the German plane and shot it down, which raised the ire of everybody at the site because they had just lost their very reliable alarm clock!

I remember the radar station very well with its radio valves the size of milk bottles and which glowed with a weird purple light. The ground around the station was electrified except for a path to the front door and another path at the rear from an emergency exit.

My job was to bring a pail of water from a horse trough quite some distance away for the men’s tea.

Having migrated to Australia after WW2, when I was 18 I was called up for National Service and I joined the RAAF at Archerfield in Brisbane, where I flew Tiger Moths and this was a highlight of my life.” Best wishes to all Frank Wetton

[I had known for years about the Ball Bearing Run and include the Wikipedia entry: **Ball-bearing Run** was the nickname of the war-time Stockholmsruten flight between Stockholm and Leuchars, Scotland between 1939 and 1945. After 1942 the flight was run by the Royal Norwegian Air Force, but for political reasons operated as an ordinary BOAC Flight, the unarmed aircraft having civilian registration and the Norwegian military crew wearing BOAC uniforms and carrying British passports.

*The Stockholmsruten was set up by the Norwegian Government, exiled in UK with the aim of transporting Norwegians having escaped from Nazi-occupied Norway. Several types of aircraft were used, but the backbone of Stockholmsruten was the Lockheed Lodestar*

Since the aircraft also carried ball bearings, of greatest importance to the British war industry, this is how the flight got its nickname in UK.

The service also carried other passengers, one of the most notable being Danish physicist, Niels Bohr, who was flown out in a de Havilland Mosquito in 1943.

Between 1939 and 1945, 6,000 passengers, and 500,000 tons of freight, were transported by BOAC between Stockholm and Great Britain. **Here I smell a rat!** - that is an awful lot of freight and passengers for a twin engined Lodestar or even a Mosquito. I strongly suspect Franks memory is correct and that Lancaster was somehow associated with 100 Group or another discrete unit.]

## TO THE COMMITTEE OF ADJUSTMENT (Responsible for dealing with the property of Deceased or Missing airmen)

"Dear sir,

'Hoping sincerely that I have caused you as little inconvenience as possible.

Please accept this meagre gift for doing a job that receives no thanks.

I was yours sincerely

Michael C Skarratt

PS - Keys for tin trunk and my car JU 7394 are in the ration bags in the briefing room."

The above letter in Michael Skarratt's handwriting is pinned to a board at the Lincolnshire Aviation Heritage Centre, East Kirkby as one of many personal aircrew exhibits. I was very moved when I read it. Here was a young man prepared and expecting to die for his country but concerned that disposal of his few earthly possessions would be a trouble to the authorities. Michael a Londoner, enlisted in the RAAF in 1941 and was lost on Christmas Eve 1944 aged 22.



via - Max Langworthy

## COASTAL CORNER

Dr David Sutton of the AWM has just had published an article in the March 2019 **Britain at War** magazine. It is largely drawn from my book *The RAAF in Russia* with additional research by David. The graphics are just great and the photo of the Squadron's aircrew newly transferred from Bomber Command is exceptionally clear with faces easily identified. Coastal had trouble with 455 Squadron. Issued with six 250lb bombs the crews were a bit disparaging when used to usually carrying 3000 lb. The Germans had just forced a convoy of their warships through the English Channel causing the British to realise they had not retained any torpedo bomber squadrons in the UK. No 50 Squadron at Swinderby had just replaced their Hampdens for new Manchesters. AVM Ralph Cochrane was happy to let go as many Hampdens as he could but was able to retain many experienced 455 crews, like Mickey Martin and Jack Leggo; later Dambusters.

## A TRIBUTE TO A LOST UNCLE



My Uncle Douglas Haynes was 21 when he joined the RAAF and after nine months of injections and generally being reshaped by the Airforce; he emerged as Sergeant Pilot Haynes RAAF. With further twin engine training on Airspeed Oxford's he went onto an Operation Training Unit and formed a crew, completing their OTU on Wellington 1C aircraft dropping mines and bombs.

Having completed that, the crew was posted to Heavy Conversion Unit and assigned an English Flight Engineer and completed their training on Short Stirlings.

Finally he was posted to 50 Squadron on 20<sup>th</sup> May 1944. They had previously been co-located with the Australians of 455 Squadron at Swinderby in Lincolnshire. He flew as second pilot on an Operation "just to get the "feel" of it. Numbers 467/463 and 50 Squadron were all in 5 Group under Air Vice Marshal Ralph Cochrane.

Doug's crew was reported missing on 13<sup>th</sup> August 1944 on an air-operation to Russelsheim, Germany. The crew's deaths were confirmed a year later. Due to enemy action their aircraft had crashed near Bas-Oha, Belgium. Their bodies had been recovered and buried together in the village cemetery by residents. My grandmother in Newcastle, NSW, had good correspondence with a family in Bas-Oha for many years after the war and also with the parents of one of the English boys in the Commonwealth "composite" crew.

I had many happy visits with the parents of that English boy when I was living in London 1960/61. I also visited Douglas' grave during that time and was warmly welcomed by members of the family in Bas-Oha . A few days later while looking at a map (with two other Aussie girls) on a Dusseldorf street corner, a cheerful young German offered his assistance..that was Hans! Much water under the bridge since then!

Hans and I visited the grave site while in Germany in 1995; we took some eucalyptus leaves and some soil from our garden. Hans found the experience extremely moving. My beautiful grandmother welcomed Hans so warmly into our family and he loved her very much:.she died age 96, outliving 3 of her boys.

On one of our visits to the Australian War Memorial in Canberra a volunteer helped me with a bit of searching and advised that the Bomber Clasp had to be applied for. I really think this was never done - my grandparents were very unsophisticated, undemanding people who mourned the loss of their boy in their own quiet way with their very close family. Two of my uncles had tucked a wad of Australian money into my pocket before I sailed away to Europe in 1960 to help with my very unsophisticated travel expenses. In the hope that I would find my way to Douglas' grave in Belgium, the first of the family to do so. I think the photo image of me some months later with my hand on Douglas' name meant more to them than any medal.

[My apologies to the contributor I have lost your name – interestingly Douglas was promoted twice after he went missing, first to Flight Sgt then then to F/O probably to get better conditions as a POW Ed – GR]

### **Eric Barton DFC**

[I've known and worked with Eric for several years. He was an ex-Pathfinder, an exclusive group of crews that had survived a first tour (usually 30 Ops) and were judged to be above average before it was offered to them. Eric had many near disasters, they had an engine fire one night and the Flight Engineer fired off the extinguisher on a good engine and they had to return home on two engines. On another occasion after losing an engine, escaping a nightfighter he had got low down on the water. When a second engine failed, they were too low to bale out. So Eric had to press on for RAF Manston, a very big airfield for receiving damaged bombers. They all got back okay

Eric continued to work with Pathfinders and the Bomber Command Association.

He was a staunch supporter of Pathfinders and the BCAA and well respected at RAAF Richmond.]  
Geoff Raebel



A Hercules from Richmond  
overflying Eric's Funeral

