

The

WHISPERER

The Newsletter of the Beaufighter and
Boston Association of Queensland

DECEMBER 2004

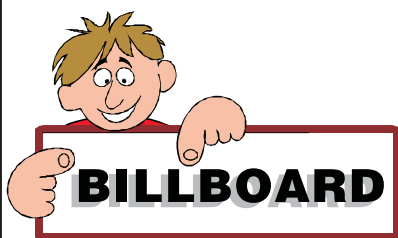
FOUNDING PATRON REMEMBERED



Unveiling a memorial at RAAF Amberley, to the Association's founding patron,
Group Captain Raymond Smith RFD, AE, LLB.

From Left to right:

Stan Curran, Peter White, Geoff Rose, Michael Smith, Jack Chamberlain, Rebecca
Smith, Frank Smith, Barbara Smith, Joan Chamberlain, Betty Rose, Joan Ind and
Ralph Ind



RAAF Memorial Service 2004

The annual Mass honouring those who have served in the Royal Australian Air force in peace and war, especially those who gave their lives, was celebrated at St Thomas Aquinas Church, 87 Central Avenue, St Lucia at 10.30 am on Sunday November 7th.

The church was dedicated as a memorial to members of the RAAF who gave their all in World War II. This was the fourteenth year of this very special mass. President Ralph, Stan Curran, Bill O'Connor and Hon Sec attended. Once again the Mass was celebrated by RAAF Chaplain Wing Commander Paul Goodland. It was seen that numbers attending are continuing to fall and as a consequence Chaplain Goodland announced that the service in 2005 will be the final one in this format. There will be a service but of a different nature.

As the service began a storm broke and there was a great flash of lightning followed by a very loud thunderclap and all the lights in the church went out momentarily. It surely was a great surprise to all. Once again it was a pleasure to join in with the excellent church choir in the hymns, and the rendering of the oath was again impressive.

The morning tea and sandwiches were right up to the usual standard, however as morning tea was served downstairs in the church hall, accessible only by outdoor stairs most of us got a little damp from the downpour from the storm when heading for the morning tea.

2005 AGM

A date has not yet been agreed to for our AGM Barbecue, however consideration is being given to hold it at the barbecue area of Greenbank RSL. Robert Williams has told me he will be glad to do the barbecue again this year. When a date is set, which will be in January I will get in touch with members and advise them of the date and the venue.

A Christmas Message

Another year has nearly slipped us by, so quickly that it is hard to know what you may have achieved in the passing year. We have lost some members who have passed on and many of them have spent much time in hospitals. We are all ageing rapidly. I take this opportunity to thank members for their continuing support, and wish you all A Happy Christmas and a Healthy New Year.

Hopalong to Hand Over

Thanks for your kind sentiments Peter. Felt that unless I took the bull by the horns all that has been achieved in the years gone by would be lost when I go to the big hangar in the sky. The tradition must be passed on to those with the petrol in the tank to stay airborne for a few more years.



In addition I owe it to Wendy to spend more time with her and goodness knows at this time of our lives she needs it. She has been the cement between the bricks for over 61 years and of late her health has not been that wonderful. In fact we are seriously considering an offer to take a unit in the local retirement village and start a new period in our life together. I do want her to have the trauma of having to sell here and make a new life for herself should I drop off the twig before her. I am sure you would understand my thinking on that issue.

Anyhow Peter I expect my experience and knowledge of Association matters will be helpful to the new Committee from time to time.

Again Pete thanks for your message on behalf of the Qld. B&B men. If I have done nothing else to have gotten the idea that a great need existed for a Group of Beau chaps up north was one of the best I ever had.

Cheers Mate and God Bless you for having carried the Banner with such fervour and dedication for so long.

Young Fred.



COMMITTEE

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Ralph Ind	5564 0181
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William O'Connor	3286 1067
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President's Corner

Dear Members,

Peter is still recovering from another two weeks in Greenslopes - you would not know it as he never complains & tries to make a joke of his serious complaints however I know he is enjoying fiddling with the new computer, courtesy of DVA, & has now mastered its intricacies. It has considerably eased the burden of preparing the editions of the *Whisperer* for Peter. I only wish we could do more to assist him.

On Sunday the 7th of November the Royal Australian Air Force Memorial Service was held at St. Thomas Aquinas RAAF Memorial Church St. Lucia. Stan Curran, Peter & myself were present to represent the Assoc. & on this occasion we were pleased to have Bill O'Connor present also in spite of his severe personal problems.

It was interesting to note that the occasional address was given by a member of one of the Beaufort Squadrons inspired no doubt by a reported comment of Air Marshall Angus Houston, Chief of Air Force, that the RAAF may not have been given proper credit for the serious & sustained efforts of its aircrews against the Japanese in WWII in the SW Pacific. I must confess I have always had a sneaking admiration for those who flew Beauforts as they appeared rather underpowered & slow for the jobs they had to do: eg, attacks on heavily fortified Rabaul, Gasmata etc.

While I am very well aware that Beaufighters had some serious problems I am very glad I flew them on operations rather than the Beauforts

Unfortunately time is catching with a lot WWII bods & at the conclusion of the Memorial Service we were advised that next year, being the sixtieth Anniversary of the end of the latter conflict & because of the diminishing number of attendees, the Memorial Services would be discontinued. The thinning in the ranks of RAAF veterans has been particularly noticeable at St. Lucia over the past three to four, years I guess it's a sign of the times.

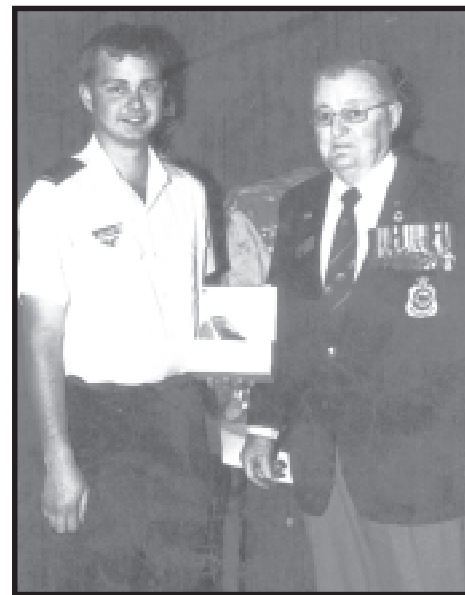
Regards Ralph



Combined Associations Day 2004 at RAAF Amberley

This year's Combined Association's Day took a different pattern to what had been the usual custom. The program had to be varied because of the increased number of Associations and groups that were invited. The day commenced with a Memorial Service at the Memorial Garden at the front gate of RAAF Amberley. The service was conducted by Chaplains Paul Goodland and Murray Earl. This was followed by the unveiling of a Memorial Plaque that we had been mounted in the Memorial wall, to the memory of our late Patron Group Raymond Smith RFD, AE, and LLB. Ray's family attended and placed a wreath together with our Association to his memory.

This was followed by morning tea in the Officers Mess and then the presentation of trophies took place. A light buffet lunch was then partaken before we all departed from Amberley. There was a very large attendance this year, and it would not have been practical to follow the normal pattern of guided tours of the base etc.



Pres. Ralph presents the Personal Pewter Mug to the 2004 winner of the Beaufighter Shield, A/c Ben Carter from the Strike Reconnaissance Systems Project Office

Hon. Secretary, Peter and Patricia Hawkins, Personal Secretary to the present Officer Commanding 82 Wing, Group Captain Mike Smith.

Patricia has been secretary to more than seven Officers Commanding the Wing and puts the 'hard yards' in to make the Combined Associations Day at Amberley the successful and enjoyable day it has always been.

TARGET TOWING AND SPECIAL DUTIES

This is probably an aspect of the Beaufighter operations that few of our members are aware of. The unit experimented with many different types of targets, some like small gliders with a wing span of about eight feet. A lot of these were destroyed on takeoff or landing but we always reverted to the good old reliable drogue. The winch was fitted to the starboard side of the fuselage just forward of the observers position. Of course it was the observers job to operate it.

Special duties amounted to any and everything. Often the squadron was called upon to calibrate radar for the RAN. I'm not quite sure what this entailed. The navy unit was based on South Head of Sydney Harbour. I went on one of these exercises. We flew over South Head then the pilot flew on different headings out to sea. The exercise took about two hours. At the completion of the exercise, we were just above sea level. Beaufighters seem to fly about 10 miles from the South Heads, which are rock cliffs about 200ft high. The pilot was heading straight for the base of cliffs in no time I was beginning to get quite alarmed. The cliffs were approaching at a tremendous speed at the last moment the pilot pulled hard back on the control column. The navy bods seemed impressed they were all outside waving to us.

Later on another radar calibration exercise a Beaufighter came back with part of a radio aerial from a small boat in the port wing, flying a bit low I suspect.

Rain making was another of our special duties. We had scientists attached to us from Sydney University. The idea was that dry ice crystals could be scattered on certain clouds and it would cause rain. It wasn't very successful and the idea was abandoned.

In the experimental stages scientists flew in the beaufighters and chased clouds all over the sky

experimenting dropping dry ice. I went on one of these exercises much to my disappointment. The scientist was behind the pilot, he was like a jack in the box directing him to fly to various clouds.

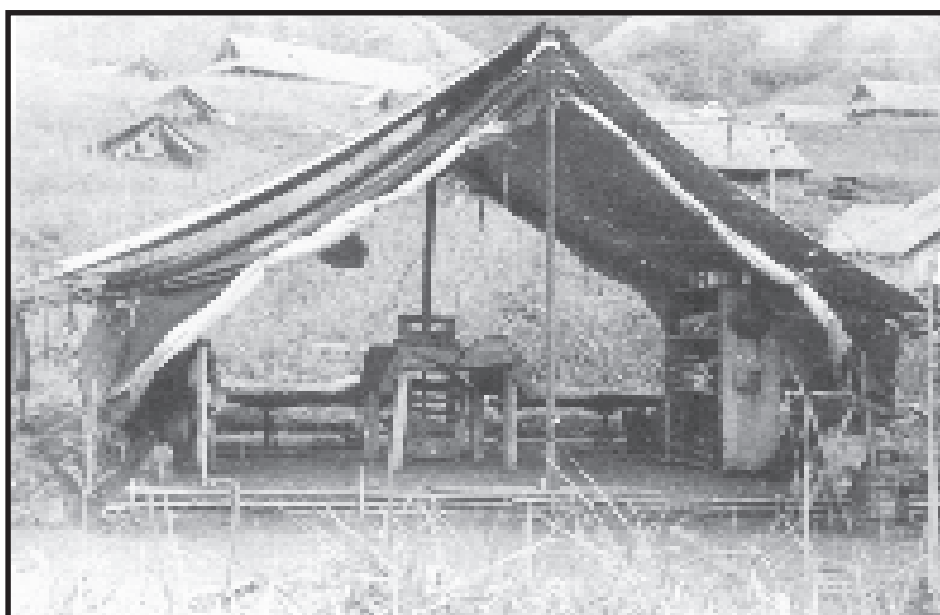
There was no room for me so I went back near the observer and sat on an engine cover. I had only just settled there when the observer threw his hands in the air with a few unsavoury remarks, then said to me 'I'll swap you seats when they are finished I'll do some navigating'. So we swapped seats. He pulled a western soft cover book out of his navigation bag and read it while I admired the scenery.

As we were the only flying unit at Richmond at the time, about 1947, our job was to service all visiting aircraft.

On one occasion a visiting aircraft was coming in with some high ranking officer on board. The senior officers from Richmond were lined up to welcome him. I marshalled the aircraft in, chocked the wheels and was standing by in overalls.

The officer got out and was heading for the reception committee. He saw me and came straight over, shook my hand and had a few words. It was Dave Calhoun who had been a Sqn Ldr flying instructor at 5OTU. I had flown with him on a number occasions mainly test flights in Beauforts and as they had dual control he would let me fly the aircraft. We got to know each other fairly well.

STAN CURRAN



If this is the neatest tent in the 30 Squadron camp site on Goodenough Island in 1943 can any of our readers lay claim to be the occupants?

31 Squadron's Cec Taylor's Memories. .

It was good and hot. The iron roof did little towards keeping out the heat. Somebody was trying to coax Vera Lyn to sing "That lovely weekend" for the umpteenth time and she was working under difficulties with the needle on its hundredth record.

"I'll make it six hearts" said Bill, as he deftly flicked the ash off his cigarette. "Six hearts" says Phil, "Well I'll go seven spades". "In that case, I'll pass", says cunning old Flossie (probably sifting on the fence with a hand full of spades). I opened my mouth to say "No trumps", when the speaker in the corner of the mess crackled, and we listened as the voice droned: "Attention all personnel: Attention all personnel"

The following aircrew report to Operations Room immediately". Forgotten were the cards. "Even money I get a Guernsey" says Bill. "Yeah, me too" says Phil. It was on alright!

As the names came over the loud speaker, I speculated as to what our target might be, and the thought of that long trip over the water bored into my mind.

The boys grabbed their flying gear, and soon we were listening to the C.O. giving us details of our target: "Well gentlemen your target today is, shipping in this harbour." We knew what he meant as he pointed to the map that the Intelligence Officer had pinned up on the wall for reference. The particular place indicated had four or five nests of heavy ackack batteries protecting it; but it was our job to go in at tree top level and bash the shipping.

After more minute details, as to position of ships, the proximity of the target to an enemy air strip, possibility of interception by enemy fighter aircraft etc., the Old Man's query, "Any questions?" seemed almost facetious after such a thorough briefing. As usual, we had the G.G. straight, for no one spoke. "Cripes I mustn't forget to grab a new map. The one I had last time's ripped. Better take a spare log too." "Well that is all" said the C.O. "Good luck gentlemen, and good results"

In a matter of minutes we were on the strip where our planes were parked ready for the job. The ground crews had them in perfect condition. Even as we were arriving the boys were putting the finishing touches to the polishing.

"T for Teddy Doug Got all your gear?."

"G for George Don't forget your Mae West Phil".

Everybody settles in their cockpits. There's routine checks to be made. "Contact port and starboard" comes from forward. A couple of rasping coughs are the labour pains that announce the birth of power in our engines. The roar subsides to a steady purr as the seconds tick by to "take off". Suddenly my thoughts

turn to home, and I realise that it is my young son's birthday. I wonder if he will be sick from eating too much. Now it's our turn. "OK Phil take her away."

From two thousand feet, we slide down to twenty feet from the deck. Everything is keyed up now... The cannons are cocked and ready for use.... I'm swinging my rear gun to and fro as I search the sky We don't want to be jumped...., The formation is packed in tight, and looking out through my cupola I see the other boys hugging the water until it seems as if their propellers must touch it.

Here lies the reason for the success of the "Whispering Death". Coming in so low, with our wonderful Bristol Hercules engines whispering, we're on the Nip before he knows it. What a feeling of confidence it inspires in one to see the formation skimming the water. How awe inspiring it must look to the Jap, to see us cut across his own stamping grounds on the treetops with our guns belching.

Momentarily I let my gaze drop to watch the water flashing by beneath us and marvel at my pilot's judgement. It's good to know you have such dependable and daringly skilful men in your team. After all, this is really like a football game it is teamwork that works out in the end.... twenty minutes to go! wonder if the ackack will be as severe as we think? supposing we get hit in the petrol tank! What if a motor fails remember how old Mac went in - cut it out!

Everything will turn out OK ten minutes to go! we'll get those ships no matter what happens. They'll have to be good to hit us with their ackack What's that?. A damn bird! Gosh they look like aircraft! wish the sun wasn't so strong. the Nip usually comes in down sun, so I must keep watching.... Five minutes to go this is it, nearly there! come on you yellow beds Let's see how you are going to like this party. This is going to be another instalment on account' credit my brother.

We cross the coast with a surge of power as the throttles are increased. Trees flash past beneath us so close I could reach out and touch them. Our nose is depressed and I hear the cannons crack out their song of death. Hope there's no stoppage. I'ts bloody hard to recock them when the kite's bouncing around. Then I see a target just as we skim over it. A Jap building, smoke pouring out of it, and two forms lying prostrate outside. Still one minute to go to our real target. A quick look ahead there they are three big ships anchored in the harbour with small craft unloading them. A hurried look up in the sky to see that there's no Nip aircraft, and I watch the target come into our sights. There is another plane ahead of us, strafing the ship, his cannon shells exploding on the deck like a million red lights

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and pieces flying off the sides. Now Phil is firing. One long burst and the ship's bridge is almost obscured by the brilliant explosions, smoke and flame. As we close in, it looks like we must surely hit the ship's superstructure dead centre. The stick comes back and we clear the vessel by the narrowest margin.

Now, for one fleeting second, can see the damage wrought by our concentrated fire power. The bridge is smoking and hungry tongues of flames are licking the superstructure. Around one gun position I see three forms slumped over their shield. I spy several yellow figures crouched together in the well deck and automatically give them a squirt from my Browning as 1 whiz past. My vision is blurred as we take violent evasive action from any possible following fire from our victim. A voice breaks through the crackling in my headphones "Leader to formation transport over to our port turning left over". Yes there it is. We do a very steep turn to port and our wingtips create some beautiful vapour trails.

I can't help but marvel at the perfect formation flying and the speed at which the transport seems to be rushing up to meet us. That old tub is throwing everything but the kitchen sink in our direction, but boring in at better than 300 m.p.h, sitting behind four cannons, and six machine guns, one has a wonderful feeling of confidence. Soon the white tracer and spasmodic orange flame from the transport are hidden in the midst of our exploding cannon shells. We haven't pulled out of our run yet and that horrible feeling again Soon we're airborne and closing up in formation. Gone are the thoughts of home now... Work to be done:... Job ahead.... Those little yellow b's.

As I figure outcourses, airspeed etc. I find time to enjoy the fresh coolness of the atmosphere, so different from the ground Drift checked ...altitude right ... airspeed OK.... The sea looks so blue as we leave the coast and head for enemy occupied territory. Who was it said "Time drags?" Water; water as far as I can see. Blue shades intermingling with the green...the black shadows where the magnificent white billowy cumulus clouds cast their silhouettes....Funny how one can see the natural beauty in such ordinary matteroffact things under such circumstances. It takes war, in all it's stark realities, and gambling with death to make one really appreciative of the seemingly small things of nature. With a "How long to E.T.AT" from Phil, my thoughts are rudely broken and I comeback to the more serious jobofthemoment."Forty minutes to go time to get on the deck Phil," I reply.

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But "F" for Freddie responds beautifully to the touch and we lift. up and over, we then zoom down again to water level. Now I can hardly see anything as the smoke rises from our target and there's still three more Beaus to have a go at it you beaut!. As I look there's a terrific explosion someone has hit a 'soft spot' and a huge orange flame leaps from the ship with great clouds of dirty black smoke. The Beaus are lost from sight, and then through the smoke one of them appears. I am sure he must have taken the vessel's wireless aerial with him.

Something made me look upwards into the sky, don't ask me what, and then I saw them, four dots on the horizon, enemy aircraft. A quick twist of the wrist and I'm screaming on the RT "Enemy aircraft, six o'clock, at two thousand feet!" Then again more intelligibly as they become more visible, "Four twin engine enemy aircraft at six o'clock at two thousand feet"

"Leader to formation close up line abreast." The throttles are pushed forward and I feel a mighty surge as the Hercs bring in few more horses and we are soon in our position. My lips are dry and caked as I sight my gun on the enemy leader waiting for him to come in "come on you yellow ... come and get it". They seem to be hesitant about engaging us (probably have recognised us as "Honourable Beaufighters". Here they come! They're diving in, concentrating on our leader in A for Annie. Ratatattat, my gun is jumping in my hands as bullets wing their way towards the yellow sons of Nippon. I can see the tracers from the other Beau's rear guns, crisscrossing at the rear of mine, just in front of the Nip plane. Ha Ha, they don't like that. They break away at four hundred yards, their fire failing in the front of "A" for Annie. They're going for height well let them. What the hell!. They're slow rolling, and going to come in head on these must be new pilots, they don't realise our forward fire power. Even money there'll be widows in Tokyo tonight

CEC TAYLOR..

Christmas in Australia.

If you have food and a beer in the refrigerator ,
Clothes on your back a roof overhead and a place to sleep
You are richer than 75% of people in the world
If you have money in the bank, or in your wallet,
And spare change in a dish some where
You are among the top 80% of the worlds wealthy,
If you woke up this mornings with more health than illness,
You are more blessed than the millions who will
Not survive this week
If you have never experienced the danger of battle,
Loneliness of imprisonment agony of torture and pangs of starvation
You are well ahead of 500 million other people in the world
If you can attend a church meeting of your choice
Without fear of harassment, arrest, torture, or death
You are more blessed than three billion other people in the world
If you hold up your head with a smile on your face
And are truly thankful,
You are blessed because the majority can, but most choose not to
If you can hold someone's hand, hug him or her
Or even touch him or her on the shoulder
You are truly blessed because you can offer the healing touch.
If you can read this message, then that is a blessing
You are blessed, because over two billion people,
In this world, cannot read at all
Have a Merry Christmas, count your blessings,,
And remind yourself and your family how blessed,
We all are in this great country called Australia

FOR VALOUR

Compiled from published sources and the Internet by Ashley Owen

Britain became involved in the costly Crimean War with Russia in 1854, its first major war since the British victory at Waterloo in 1815. Neither side distinguished itself during the war and the British army was found to have degenerated in crucial areas of leadership and administration including a lack of any appropriate recognition for gallantry in battle.

In 1856 Queen Victoria signed the warrant instituting a new medal to award officers and soldiers who deserved recognition. Eligibility for the award was made retrospective to 1854. The warrant stated that the Victoria Cross would only be awarded to officers and men who have served in the presence of the enemy and who had performed some outstanding act of valour and devotion.

Furthermore, neither rank nor long service nor wounds nor any other circumstances whatever other than the merit of conspicuous bravery was to be held to establish a sufficient claim for the order. The Victoria Cross has evolved into the supreme decoration for gallantry in battle awarded to the forces of the Commonwealth.

The first person to be awarded the Victoria Cross was Lieutenant Charles Lucas of the British warship H.M.S. Hecla for gallantry in the Baltic on 21 June, 1854 during the Crimean War when he threw a live shell overboard during an attack on shore batteries. A battle on 20 September, 1854 on the bank of the Alma River near Sebastapol produced the first awards to the army, when the gallantry of six officers and men was later recognised by the award. The first Victoria Cross awarded to an airman was made to Second Lieutenant William Rhodes-Moorehouse, posthumously in 1915. Eligibility for the award set out in Queen Victoria's original warrant of 1856 has been changed several times over the course of its history. Six Victoria Crosses have been awarded for bravery when not in combat, as a result of a broadening of the original criteria in 1858. This allowed several awards to be granted for bravery in circumstances such as fire fighting but the warrant was re-written in 1881 to restore the original concept of bravery in the face of the enemy.

Initially Colonial officers and soldiers (Australian, New Zealanders and the like) were not eligible for the award of the Victoria Cross. However, during the Maori Wars, a New Zealander, Major Charles Heaphy performed an act of valour on 11 February, 1874 for which he was recommended for the Victoria Cross. Initially the British Government refused to grant the award, but after considerable debate, Queen Victoria extended her original warrant to include Colonial forces. Although the initial warrant of the Victoria Cross did

not allow for posthumous awards, this policy was reversed in 1906.

The largest number of Victoria Crosses awarded in a single action is seven, to the South Wales Borderers of the British Army in 1879 during an engagement commonly known as the Battle of Rorkes Drift in the Zulu War. In 1915 during the Gallipoli landings, the Lancashire Fusiliers were awarded six VCs in the space of a few hours fighting.

THE MEDAL

Ever since its institution, the medal has been manufactured by jewellers, Hancocks and Co. currently of Burlington Gardens, London. The medal itself consists of a Maltese Cross of bronze with the Royal Crest in the centre, and underneath, a scroll bearing the simple words

"For Valour". Initially the ribbon was blue for the Navy and red for the Army, however by Royal Warrant of 22 May 1920, signed by King George V, the ribbon was changed to red for all the services. When the ribbon is worn alone, a miniature of the cross is pinned on it, with a bar (second award) being indicated by a second miniature worn beside the first. The cross and suspender are first cast in gunmetal and then chased and finished by hand. The cross is 1.375" wide and together with the suspender bar and link, weighs approx 0.87 oz troy although chasing and finishing may cause slight variations in these figures. The design of the cross is attributed to H.H. Armstead who at the time of its inception was working at Hancocks. The company retains in stock, small quantities of the gun metal and manufactures twelve medals per production run. Ample stocks of the original gun metal are still held by the Royal Army Ordnance Corps Central Depot in Shropshire U.K.

SOURCE OF THE METAL.

It is a common belief that all Victoria Crosses have and are still manufactured from small ingots smelted from parts of two bronze smooth-bore muzzle loading cannon captured from the Russians during the Crimean War (1853-56). This is fact, however the guns were of Chinese manufacture, erroneously provided when Russian guns were requisitioned for the production of the medals. It was noticed years later that the pieces of metal cut from the guns clearly had Chinese markings although it is possible that they were used by Russian gunners. Unconfirmed reports also claim that for a short period during the 1914-18 War some medals were manufactured from Chinese guns captured during the Boxer Rebellion (1900-01)

MANUFACTURING PROCESS.

The hardness of the metal necessitates casting at a temperature of 2000 degrees fahrenheit as no other process such as pressing with dies produces satisfactory results. The temperature of the molten bronze is critical. If it is too hot the mould will be damaged and if it is not hot enough, the bronze will not flow evenly. The hanging suspender bar, decorated with laurel leaves and bearing the "V" from which the cross hangs is cast separately. After the newly cast crosses have cooled, each is finished by a skilled craftsman who improves the lettering to make it stand out clearly, engraves the more minute details and adds the makers secret mark to protect against forgeries. The medals are cleaned and bronzed to a uniform colour and sent to the British War Office for approval. The engraving of the recipients particulars - rank name and date of action is carried out by Hancocks from their stock of crosses.

RECENT AWARDS.

Although not widely publicised, two SAS soldiers of the British Army have been awarded the Victoria Cross for gallantry whilst engaged in hand to hand fighting during a classic rescue mission in the Tora-Bora mountains of Afghanistan. The names of the soldiers will not be released for security reasons whilst they still serve with their regiment. Prior to these awards, the most recent have been to Lieutenant Colonel Herbert Jones and Sergeant Ian McKay of the British Army's Parachute Regiment for their actions during the Falklands War in 1982.

AUSTRALIA:

On January 15 1991, Queen Elizabeth 1, re-instituted the Victoria Cross for Australians.

Ninety-six Victoria Crosses have been awarded to Australians since its original inception. Of these, twenty-eight were conferred posthumously. This number includes six awarded to Australians whilst on service with other than Australian units.

Many of those Australians awarded the Victoria Cross have died in doing so and all but two who lived to receive the award have not survived the march of time. The two surviving Australian Victoria Cross recipients are Edward Kenna who was awarded the VC in New Guinea in 1945 and Keith Payne in South Vietnam in 1969.

ASHLEY OWEN.

Somewhere in Australia

Somewhere in Australia, where the sun is like a curse,
And each long day is followed by another slightly worse;

Where the brick red dust blows thicker, than the shifting desert sand;

And all men dream, and wish for, a fairer, greener land.

Somewhere in Australia, where a woman's never seen,

Where the sky is never cloudy, and the grass is never green;

Where the dingo's nightly howling robs a man of blessed sleep.

Where there isn't any whisky and the beer is never cheap.

Somewhere in Australia, where the land is made of love,

Where the moon is like a searchlight, and the Southern Cross above.

Sparkles like a diamond on a balmy tropic night,

What a shameful waste of beauty, when there's not a girl in sight.

Somewhere in Australia, where the mail is always late,
And a Christmas card in April, is considered up to date;

Where we seldom have a payday, and seldom have a cent,

But we never miss the money, cause we'd never get it spent.

Somewhere in Australia, where the ants and lizards play;

And a thousand fresh mosquitoes replace each one you slay,

So take me back to Longreach let me hear the Church of England bell.

This god forsaken strip, is a substitute for hell!

Cpl CLIVE HARBURG



SNIPPETS FROM HAROLD ROWELL'S DIARY

SLEEPING DEFENDER

"You are to be on standby for the defence of Townsville!" (Not very reassuring for any local citizens in the know.)

The Japanese had been showing fairly regular interest in the area by sending a high level (20,000 feet) reconnaissance aircraft over on most evenings. The powers that be planned a reception for this intruder, and the following is an indication of the state of preparedness of this country, even nine months after Pearl Harbour.

My 'seniority' was the lowest commissioned rank, and of course, I was not permanent RAAF. At briefing I was instructed to climb to 20,000 feet - immediately the alarm was raised. I replied that I couldn't/wouldn't - "If have no, 1 oxygen fitted" (this was installed later). The reaction seemed to be - "Do what you are told - what do you need oxygen for anyway?" I offered to go to 10,000 feet - higher for brief periods.

Then there was a difference of opinion as to where I should spend the night - under the Boston's wing in the dust and noise - or I noticed a relatively comfortable stretcher in the Operation's room, which was much more attractive. I established all the Operations staff were on relatively healthy shifts - and that the plan was to run out to my aircraft - wake me if necessary - brief me - and away we'd go.

I countered that I was younger, fitter and could run faster - and could receive the briefing in better circumstances if I occupied the stretcher. And quietly added - sleeping on duty was surely not practiced in these parlous times!

The Japanese reconnaissance plane droned overhead - and I was allowed to sleep on!

IT HELPS TO HAVE FRIENDS

I was wandering - probably vaguely - in Port Moresby early 1943 after a bout of malaria when a Merchant Mariner hailed me with "Hello Bob - what are you doing here?" My eldest brother Bob had been working in Derby since 1937 and was, among other duties, representative for the Blue Funnel Line. They called at Derby regularly in the dry season.

We had a yarn - one thing led to another - and eventually I was offered 60, or was it 70 dozen, bottles of beer at one shilling two pence halfpenny a bottle - as is, where is! Where is, was on board his ship in the middle of the harbour. He expected to up-anchor within 48 hours.

All we had to organise was labour, land and sea transport, cash, and to remember the minor fact that officially Port Moresby was still a 'dry' area. One thing in our favour was that the wharves seldom worked at night - the flood lighting attracted attention from the enemy.

So it was that in the wee small hours a boarding party was transported in an R.A.A.F. crash boat out to our Blue Funnel steamer. Up the side - down into the hold, up again loaded with a multi-walled bag of 12 bottles of beer!

After a few trips my post-malarial symptoms caught up with me and I faltered momentarily - but...since breaking even one bottle of beer would probably be regarded as a capital offence, I jammed myself and the bag of beer against the ship's side for a few moments respite - and nothing was broken.

Everyone shared in the booty, but the Officers' Mess paid the bill.

I had not seen my brother for more than three years - but we all had kind thoughts about him and the Blue Funnel Line for several days. The then black market for beer was more than 10/- a bottle!

OUTDOOR BATHING AND OTHER FACILITIES

At one stage our camping area at Goon Valley Port Moresby seemed to be on the track between a native village and their vegetable garden. Both theirs and our schedules varied.

Our showers were just three or four uprights with shower 'roses' above a square of concrete. No more. Sunshine was the best eliminator of most tropical bugs, and one would sometimes spend quite some time enjoying the sunshine and the water.

But the all-feminine gardeners would stop and admire the attributes of each of us - even manoeuvring to allow authoritative comparative values to be discussed, with much feminine giggling.

As a result one of our number became known as "Oosa Barda" New Guinea dialect for what was obvious on this particular occasion, I presume.

Dare I say it? Like most ladies the locals seemed to delight in a conversation. Their village garden track also took them past our open air 'four seater'. No real problem except when it was 'burning off day. Regularly combustibles would be poured into the dark depths and set alight. The surrounding earth would heat up - and if needs must - well, needs must!!

Well two or three minutes were tolerable, but any longer and you perspired in odd places and finished up with a rear end like that of a rhesus monkey.

We did wish those happy native women would not want to talk too long on such days.

The Army was less refined. One unit just had a deep-holed trench, with a single rail providing seating accommodation for perhaps five or six.

One disgruntled fellow sawed through the rail expertly gauging the combined weight of four or more - with disastrous results.

BEAUFIGHTER / BOSTON ASSOCIATION

NOMINAL ROLL - 2004

Anderson F/0 F MID	58 Peridon Village Daleys Point 2257	
Angus D	21 Maders Avenue Kogarah 2217	
Atkinson LAC W	Coolac Court Deception Bay 4508	3204 1667
Beadle LAC F	11 Tuggerah Street North Booval 4304	3281 3928
Bedford Mr P	P O Box 5420 Port Macquarie 2444	
Blain Mr G	47 Warner Road Warner 4600	3264 4142
Boehm T M	45 Carbeen Avenue St. Ives 2075	
Brassil FSGT J	46A Melbourne Street East Gosford 2250	02 4322 7576
Brazenor FLT R	7Virginia Street Mt. Waverley 3149	03 9807 2697
Campbell CPL C	22 Wangawallen Road Eagle Heights 4271	5545 1980
Castle J	41/7 Oatlands Esplanade Runaway Bay 4216	5537 9699
Chamberlain FLT J	120 Dudley Street Annerley 4103	3848 2184
Clark LAC	Lake Sherrin Homes Boundary Rd. Thornlands 4164	3206 4146
Clark Mrs M	92/42 Ridley Street Bridgeman Downs 4103	3263 5412
Close FLT G	7 Chaley Street Aspley 4034	3253 5387
Coleman FLT MID E	100 Kirkwood Rd West Tweed Heads Sth 2486	5524 9379
Collin s FO R	101 Christian Street Clayfield 4011	3262 8179
Corbett Mrs D	2 Bellbird Street Wellington Point 4160	3207 3398
Cranley Mr K	1 Maroola Street Calamvale 4116	
Curran SLDR S	6 CaloolaDrive Springwood 4127	3388 6053
Cutler FLT S	14 Turner Street Ipswich 4305	3281 3145
Dallitz Mr W	69 Eucalypt Street Bellara 4507	
Darbyshire D	8A Parkhill Drive Ashwood 3147	
Donnelly W/O A	15/4 Britannia Avenue Broadbeach 4218	0738 1626
Drury F/Lt G	5 Hanlon Cres. Sandown Vil. Sandy Bay 7005	
Cassidy F F/Lt AOM	1/64 Boundary Road Mortdale 2223	02 9580 2944
Hall FO G R	403 Levitt Road Upper Kedron 4055	3351 4052
Hamilton FO J	135 Victoria Street Mackay 4740	4957 4002
Hamilton Mrs B	2 Hammersley Circuit Alexander Hills 4161	
Hayes Mrs J	8 White Street Gladstone 4680	4955 1313
Hill LAC A	39 Stewart Street Bundaberg 4670	4152 0637
Holt Mrs Y	34 Charles Street Baulkham Hills 2153	02 9639 9862
Houlson Mr J	90 Ackama Street Algeester 4115	
Houston WO F G	47 Plover Street Slade Mackay 4740	
Hunt Mr B	60 Bosun B'ldvd. Banora Point 2486	5524 1785
Hunt Mrs N	PO Box 123 Tweed Heads 2485	5536 6767
Inches CPL R	Village on Downs 5/63/65 Drayton Rd. T'mba 4350	4636 7705
Ind FLT R MID	49 Atlantis West 2 Admiralty Dr Paradise Waters	4217 5564
Jacobi FO J	27 Tilquin Street The Gap	3300 2090
Jensen CPL C	MS 963 Langebecker Road Bundaberg	4159 7356
Jensen MS P	PO BOX 2388 Bundaberg 4570	4159 6866
Johnson FO G	2/9 Hall Avenue Bongaree Bribee Island 4507	
King FLT C	127 Britannia Avenue Morningside 4170	3399 3540
King LAC F	2 Megan Street Tweed Heads 2486	5524 3637

LAC Masson	Wilderness Yeulba 4427	4624 4034
Lawson LAC R	2186 Wynnum Road Wynnum 4178	
Loveband WO J L	PO Box 494 Batemans Bay 2536	02 4471 3853
Lovell S	PO Box 770 Mossman 4873	4098 8406
Lyons WO D	318 Beaconsfield Terrace Brighton 4017	3269 1331
Marks K	1/13 Grenada Crescent Varsity Lakes 4227	
Masterson FO W	4/5 McKean Road Scarness 4655	4124 4034
McClymont Mrs S	151 Nth Creek Rd Lennox Head 2478	02 6687 7304
McDonald K F/Lt DFC	5 Grosvenor Street Frankston 3199	03 9787 6962
McMillan Mr D	42 Vergulde Road Regents Park 4118	3402 3528
McMinn SGT V	4 Kurrawa Avenue Mermaid Waters 4218	5572 2805
Merrotsy SGT J	17 Murphys Road Kingscliffe 2487	02 6574 2830
Miller FO A	18 Fairway View Catalina 2536	02 4472 2083
Moore L	PO Box 2060 Innisfail 4868	4063 3557
Morgan LAC H	119 Madsen Street Grovely 4054	3356 6596
Nixon Mrs B	"Phiara" Rolleston 4702	4984 3163
Nye Mr Tony	61 Sussex Road Acacia Ridge 4110	
O'Connor WO W	26 Coburg Street Cleveland 4163	3286 1067
Quinn FSGT K	23B Tweedale Road Applecross 6153	08 9364 1343
Robertson FLT DFC G	189 Quarry Lane Rockhampton 4700	4921 2171
Rose FLT G	16 Novar Court Robina 4226	5562 0202
Rowell FLT H	10 Duncraig Road Applecross 6153	08 9364 7656
Scheckenbach Mr A23	Brigden Crescent Theodore ACT 2905	02 6292 8782
Shaw Mr D	21 Exeter Street Hadfield 3045	03 9306 1986
Smith Ms B	PO Box 1371 Southport 4215	5502 8387
Smith SLDR C	2/438 Cooloongatta Road Tugan 4224	
Snell Tec Rep	50 McLean Gulliver 4812	4779 5042
Tanner Mr D	68 Evelyn Road Wynnum West 4178	
Thomson DFC SLDR A	323 Myers Road Merricks North 3926	03 5989 7219
Tritton MID SLDR N	142 Yabba Street Ascot 4007	3262 5965
Turnbull FLT L	40/7 Oatlands Esplanade Runaway Bay 4216	5537 7965
Turton F/O	5/37 Monaco Street Surfers Paradise 4217	
Wardlaw Mrs E	30 Curramundi Road Caloundra 4551	5493 4374
Wells Mrs K	13 Considine Street Rockhampton 4700	4922 6260
Wemyss Ms A	78 Stuart Street Bulimba 4171	3395 7210
White F/Lt MID	9 Scott Street Beenleigh 4207	3287 4588
Wicks Ms B	1/40 Ian Avenue Hervey Bay 4655	4194 0149
Wilson J	184 Bryants Road Cornubia 4130	3801 5064
Mrs M Whelan	63 Rumrunner Street Mermaid Waters	5575 2404

Please check & correct any errors or omissions.

Please put name on all raffle tickets. Show on sub form if you want any more than the five given.

First Prize: A Great Beaufighter Print.

Second Prize. A DVD "Ghosts of War" The restoration of Harold Rowell's Boston "Jessica", at RAAF Base Amberley.