

The

WHISPERER

The Newsletter of the Beaufighter and
Boston Association of Queensland

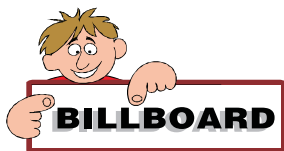
MARCH 2004

AIR COMMADORE WILLIAM HENRY GARING

CBE DFC DSC(USA) RAAF (Retired)



Lest We Forget



Vale

Air Commodore Bill Garing CDE DFC DSC (USA) RAAF (R'TD)

Air Commodore Garing passed away on the 1st January 2004, after a very long illness. A burial service was held at the Northern Suburbs Crematorium on 8th January 2004, Chaplain Cameron Smith RAAF conducted the service.

Bill had a distinguished career in the service both in Europe and the South West Pacific. He was Patron of 30 Squadron for a very long time.

May you rest in peace Bull.

RAAF Birthday March and Service

This will be held on 28th March 2004, with the March beginning at 0900 hours. Members are encouraged to attend his important Service. The service is held at our Memorial in Queens Park on the corner of George Street and Elizabeth Street. There is no official luncheon this year, and we may arrange to have lunch at Greenback Services Club after the service.

2004 Anzac Day Parade

The future participation of the Association was discussed at length because of the very few members marching. In the 2003 Parade there were nearly as many members taking part in trucks than marching behind our banner. It will be a sad sad day when we no longer take part.

In an effort to increase numbers all members were asked to encourage family members and friends of the Association to take part in 2004. Enclosed with this issue of the Whisperer is a form you are requested to complete so that the committee can make an assessment as to whether we will have enough members to participate. If the decision is in the negative I will advise all local members by letter, and advise the R&SL Anzac Day Parade committee that the Beaufighter and Boston Association will no longer be taking part.

If you normally require transport please indicate on the form, so that I can reserve the necessary transport of the committee's decision is in the affirmative.

Australia Day Honours List.

31 Squadron Association Hon. Secretary Jack Anderson was awarded a very well deserved AM. Congratulations to Jack for a job very well done and appreciated by all members of the Association, whom I am sure will join me in congratulating him. He has done a marvellous job as secretary for more than fifty years.

DVDs & Videos

I have two DVDs and one Video of the "Ghosts of War" They are a record of the restoration of two Bostons "Hell N Pelican" and "Jessica" at RAAF Base Amberley. "Hell N Pelican" which was presented to the New Guinea Government, at the official roll out at RAAF Base Amberley is still stored in 23 Squadron hanger. This is purely because as part of the deal in the restoration the New Guinea government had to provide suitable cover to protect the aircraft from the vagaries of the weather. To date this has not been done. "Jessica" is on display at the RAAF museum Point Cook The cost of the Video and DVDs is \$30 which includes postage.



SICK PARADE

Stan Curran is recovering from a triple bypass, which was performed at the Greenslopes Private Hospital Stan's big concern is when is the doctor going to tell him it's OK to drive. Great to see Stan looking so well.

George Drury is also recovering pretty well from serious heart surgery. We all wish you well George.

George Robertson tells me Pat is not very well, and is getting special medication. We all wish Pat well.

COMMITTEE

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Dear Members,

At the Annual General Meeting of the Assoc. held at the 219 Sqdn H.Q. Archerfield on Friday the 16th of January last, our previous Office-Bearers were re-elected. As I have mentioned on previous occasions in regard being appointed as your President a signal honour which I don't treat lightly. Thank you for expressing your confidence in the members of the Committee.

Peter White is once again our Secretary/Treasurer. Thank you once again Peter for the volume of work undertaken by you. In spite of his health problems as editor of the *Whisperer* he still manages to produce very interesting articles for our members. I don't believe I have seen a better newsletter for veterans than the *Whisperer*.

Stan Curran is making a steady recovery from his heart By-pass operation. We wish him a full & speedy recovery.

Please read Peter's article re Anzac Day. Unfortunately many of our members are now past the walking wounded stage & can only participate in the Brisbane March in the vehicles provided by the R&SL. This leaves our ranks very thin on the ground behind the banner.

On the 28/2/04 a ceremony to dedicate the RAAF section of the Memorial Walk at the Nirimba Educational Precinct in Sydney's outer west took place. This will finally recognise the RAAF presence, at what was RAAF Schofields. The site is of considerable historical to the RAAF. Some of its National Service Trainees were encamped there. In addition 14 RAAF Units occupied the base between 1942 & 1955 some of which were:

22 Sqdn-30 Sqdn-36 Sqdn-37 Sqdn-38 Sqdn-45
Sqdn-78 Wing-86 Wing HQ

114 Mobile Control & Reporting Unit-486 Sqdn.

With kind regards

RALPH IND

219 Squadron AAFC PASSING OUT PARADE 2003

President Ralph and four members attended the final Passing out Parade for year 2003, of the Squadron which was held at the premises of No 2 AAFC Wing at Archerfield airdrome on 30th November 2003. .

It is not unusual for some hitches to occur on these occasions. This year the Squadron's Commanding

Officer F/Lt B Haiduczok advised that the starting time was to be delayed awaiting the arrival of one of his important guests. This guest had not arrived by ten minutes after starting time and the parade then commenced. This guest is pretty well known to many of us, and arrived after the parade was over and in time for the barbecue. On arrival this guest said, "Hell I thought the start time was three o'clock, not two o'clock".

The parade was reviewed by Sqd/Ldr (AAFC) C Hewitt. In his address to the cadets he suitably praised their work, and thanked our association for its continued support of the Squadron. Once again it was a pleasure to see these youngsters carrying out a ceremonial passing out Parade with very good precision. They and the training staff are to be congratulated for such a fine performance.

Trophies were then presented, and President Ralph presented our Flying Scholarship, and an RAAF Plaque to Cadet R Caranalis, an outstanding cadet and very keen on flying. We have just learned that last year's scholarship winner; Cadet John Williams has now soloed and obtained his student licence. He is now a Sergeant and is currently studying for a cadet officer promotion. Congratulations John.

A special presentation was made to one of our members one of our members Doug Tanner: He was presented with a framed photographic collage, for his long service to the Squadron as a specialised trainer.

A great spread provided by Rob Williams and his helpers followed, to conclude a very enjoyable passing out parade.

PETER WHITE

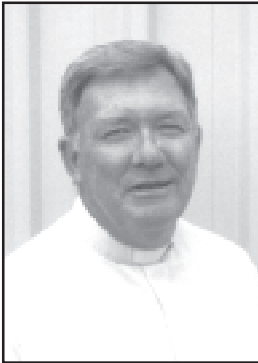


President Ralph presenting our Flying Scholarship, and an RAAF Plaque to Cadet R Caranalis.

CELEBRATION OF THE LIFE OF WILLIAM HENRY (Bull) GARING

SERMON DELIVERED BY CHAPLAIN CAMERON SMITH

The Readings: Ecclesiasticus 44, 1 - 15. John 14,1- 6.



There are two verses from the Ecclesiasticus reading which are the foundation of my comments: Verse 1, "Let us now praise famous men, the fathers of our people in their generations; to them the Lord assigned great glory", and, Verse 8, "Some there are who have left behind them a name to be commemorated in story."

In 1992, Australia commemorated 50 years on from the dark and threatening days of the Japanese invasion of New Guinea. While they were still able, many Australians revisited their battlefields and historians searched back into archives that had sat gathering dust for most of those fifty years. And you know, those historians dusted off some amazing information about some amazing people in some amazing battles. For instance, details emerged that Australia was involved in action against the Japanese at Kuantan, in north east Malaya, and 'Ossiel Diamond, of No 1 Squadron RAAF, had sunk a 5000 ton Japanese ship full of soldiers, and Thailand had capitulated, some hours before the first bomb was dropped on Pearl Harbour. The history with which we are most familiar is not our own.

Ecclesiasticus writes to the nation Israel: 'Let us praise famous men, the fathers of their people in their generations - some there are who have left behind them a name to be commemorated in story.' Australians generally would struggle to name the fathers of their people in their generations and know very little of those who have left behind them a name to be commemorated in story.

Fifty years on raised our awareness levels, and the establishment of a Committee in recognition of the Four Battles of Australia will carry that awareness forward, but more is needed, even from within the Services themselves.

How many people serving in the RAAF today, do you suppose might know anything of the history of Sir Richard Williams, founder of the RAAF, or know, even, who he is? How many people serving in the RAAF today, do you suppose, know anything of the Four Battles for Australia, or even the part the RAAF played in them? How Many,, do you suppose of those serving in the RAAF today, know anything of it's own heroes from those battles, or even, say, the name of Flight Lieutenant Bill Newton, who was awarded a VC for gallantry at Salaam For instance, details emerged that Australia was involved in action against the Japanese at

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You see, we are gathered here today - not many of us really - to farewell a national hero in William Henry Garing. Consider Bill's history. Service number 0356. A very early Victorian number. A product of both Duntroon and RAAF Point Cook, Bill trained and served under 'Dickie' Williams, the founder of the RAAF; was even appointed as RAAF Master of Navigation under him. Bill was intimately involved with the air power contribution in three of the four battles for Australia, in that he was in command of RAAF operations during the Battle of Kokoda Trail; in the thick of things himself and in command of RAAF operations at Milne Bay; the architect of the Battle of Bismark Sea, and was a colleague of VC winner, Bill Newton. And before he was ever in New Guinea, Bill Garing had served a lengthy tour of maritime operations with 10 Squadron in Britain's coastal war against Germany, and that squadrons unit history records Bills extraordinary experiences during his tour there. And just in passing, it is interesting to note that in the post war period of his service, Bill, besides having other appointments, served

as Officer Commanding RAAF Base Amberley, (the bomber group); Officer Commanding RAAF Base Edinburgh, (the maritime group); Officer Commanding RAAF Base Richmond, (the transport group), and Officer Commanding RAAF Base and Academy, Point Cook. Such a history of appointments is, I suspect, unique and will probably remain unsurpassed.

It cannot be that such an extraordinary, military aviation talent, outstanding contributor to the war and Australia's salvation, and to the RAAF in general, should be remembered only by a small lane bearing his name, adjacent to the Airmens Mess at RAAF base Richmond, a base long under threat of closure. This man deserves better than that because, more than many, he is a national treasure. But for him, and a handful like him, the battles for Australia might well have had different outcomes.

To describe Bill in a few words is almost impossible. Some would call him eccentric, as we have already heard - perhaps a reason why he was overlooked at air rank levels. Whatever, Bill was an extraordinary personality - a person who was devoid of any personal interests in destiny, yet seemed to be divinely appointed for the crucial role he played in New Guinea air operations. The line between strict observance of orders and doing what "savvy" in operations demanded is both thin and wiggly. Few called into service have the acuteness of intellect to know how to make that crossing; to know - as the commander of the Compass Rose said when he dropped depth charges on allied men in the movie *The Cruel Sea*, "to do what you have to do and go on." In war, in life, Bill did what he had to do and went on. He had his critics, but generals Kenny and Macarthur were certainly not amongst them - and in hindsight, neither is history. He went on, in fulfilled life, serving his community, Australian Sport, Masonry; enjoying his family and the countless number of friends he had world wide.

To ascribe to fate, the timeliness of Bill's arrival in New Guinea in 1942, or to regard his being there as lucky or accidental, would be to ignore the alternative that God provided the initiative and Bill, consciously or unconsciously, was the agent for divine will.

Let us praise this famous man, William Henry Garing, one of the fathers of this people in this generation.

Remember his charming smile, the glint in his eye when friends or a pretty girl was about; the boldness, forcefulness and passion of his speeches, his skill as an aviator, his profound military onus, his risk taking, his bark, his compassion, his friendships, his family, and his Marjorie. William Henry Garing was no ordinary man. All Australians are deeply indebted to him. We praise God for him and we praise Bill for his story to be commemorated. With Ecclesiasticus we say: ' his body we now bury in peace, may his name live forever. This nation should tell of his wisdom - the assembled people sing of his praise.'

In the name of God, Amen!

A VALEDICTORY EULOGY GIVEN BY HIS SON, ROBERT WILLIAM GARING

I welcome you all here today on behalf of Phillipa and Deidre.

Dad left a big family - four children, ten grandchildren, nine great grandchildren -and we're not finished yet!

Particular thanks to Acting Chief of Air Force for his generous words of praise and appreciation of my father's place in Air Force history.

To Chaplain Cameron Smith - I thank you for putting this service together and travelling from Queensland to take part.

To Chaplain Hugh Proctor, who watched over dad for the last three years in Northaven and prayed over him on the night he passed away: thank you for your care and compassion.

We are particularly indebted to SLDR Debbie Newman. Representing personal services organisation, she made the last week easier for us to bear. I acknowledge the various Air Force organisations for this demonstration of Air Force respect for my father's memory.

The family sincerely appreciates the attendance of so many of dad's friends, Bretherin Lodge and true supporters who have come here today to help us celebrate his life and give thanks to God for his existence.

At the end of this service, refreshments will be served at the Roseville Memorial Club. It's just south of the Roseville shops on the Pacific Highway. Marjorie invites you to attend and meet up with family and old friends. Dad hated funerals - he loved wakes!

Acting Chief of Air Force has given you an outline of dad's service career and the flavour of his legacy to Air Force.

But what really made Bill Garing a legend? what qualities did he possess that enabled him to lead such an extraordinary life?

what made the man we remember today?

One certain fact: dad always lived life to the full! He often claimed he'd led the lives of two ordinary men.

I disagree - there was life before flying (ended 1930);
life preparing for war (ended 1939);
life during conflict (ended 1943) life in the ordinary
Air Force (to 1964);
Life in the ordinary Air Force (to 1964)
and life in "civvie" street (up to now).

That's 5 lives ad! How he survived the first four - God only knows!

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William Henry Garing was born and raised in the high country - Mount Elliott - just east of Corryong in Victoria.

His mother, Amy, was a soft and loving woman. However she was extremely capable: a country lass who would make ends meet no matter what the challenge. Her Bill inherited all those qualities.

George, his father, was a hard man - a miner whose part-time job as local mail contractor provided cash income during lean years when local mines were closing. Their small farm provided only a basic subsistence.

Tragically, Amy died when dad was 14. Luckily, his older sister stepped up to run the household.

Soon after, George and his brother struck gold. They called the mine "Bread and Sugar" - it was about all they had left.

By this time, dad was already an expert horseman (in the Man-from-the-Snowy-River mould) and a crack shot with rifle and shotgun.

The family's lifestyle improved - but not enough to keep dad on the farm.

Determined not to follow in his father's footsteps, the eighteen-year-old Bill enrolled at RMIT in Melbourne to undertake Electrical and Mechanical Engineering. Drawn to the glamour of flying - for free - he joined the Citizen Air Force.

Now completely won over, life as a Wireless Operator/Air Gunner in DH 9As convinced him he had to become an Officer. He knew the competition for places was fierce. So, Dad doubled his study effort and gained entry (one of two Air Cadets I believe that year) to RMC Duntroon. He did it by sheer determination to succeed and through demonstration of his natural intelligence and common sense. Transferring to Point Cook in December 1930 for basic flying training, his log books record his first solo flight on 1 9th February, 1931, in a Moth A7. And so dad began to soar with the angels.

In 1991, on the 60th anniversary of his first solo, he checked out in command of a Cessna 172 with Chief Instructor Charlie Polain (who is here today and taught my sister Deidre to fly at age 16). Dad was over 80 years of age on his last solo flight.

During this incredible flying career dad flew nearly 4,000 hours total. logged 1,500 operational hours during World War 11; suffered only two minor prangs; and get this - I've counted 97 different aircraft types he flew as captain-in command, all noted in his logbooks!

He had remarkable flying skills. In October 1945, he flew a B29 Superfortress solo in command after only three short familiarisation flights. On successive days off the same strip in Albuquerque (USA) he flew a P63 King Cobra - first solo in type - and a B25 Mitchell

bomber. The Americans couldn't believe it. It wouldn't be allowed now. on reflection, it probably wasn't then!

Let me return to dad's second life in the 1930s. Flight Lieutenant Garing worked hard to become a maritime expert, flying seaplanes (any planes) and studying joint operations way before it was deemed fashionable - sorry - essential. He also studied and excelled in air navigation both in the UK '34-'35 and in Australia. Through sheer hard work he became our first master Air Navigator. Flying north of Darwin whenever he could, he became familiar with the South West Pacific area. He knew what was coming, but didn't know when. So, he prepared himself.

World War 11 was declared as dad was taking delivery of the first of nine Australian Sunderland flying boats from Rochester factory in Kent. During the next 15 months with 10 Squadron, he flew 75 operational missions in command of these aircraft. Some sorties lasted 14 hours. He was proud to declare: "I only ever lost one ship to a U-boat in any convoy I protected."

Courage under fire against the odds (this was the armed merchant cruiser 'WOOLTAW incident) won him the Distinguished Flying Cross. Demonstrated skill as a Pilot and Master Navigator made him the Squadron CO's first choice for difficult missions. He flew many - involving royalty, making landings off the coast of occupied France, ferrying War Cabinet Ministers and so on.

The most notable came in October 1940. It was a VIP passenger flight over occupied France, Spain and through the contested Mediterranean airspace to Cairo and return. He carried C-in-C Far East (Air Chief Marshal Sir Robert Brooke-Popham) outbound and Anthony Eden back to England.

Dad's favourite yarn, one he told many times on Anzac and Remembrance days, in RSL Clubs, Service Messes and the like, involved rescue of the City of Benares children. I'm not going to repeat it today except to tell you it was no fluke that he found the lifeboat 600 miles off the coast of England with 46 survivors (6 boys) on board, 6 days after the ship was torpedoed.

Dad had estimated the drift of wreckage and survivors (if any) and over flew that position. The rest is history.

Telling the story often brought tears to his eyes there was a soft side to Dad!

There are many more stores to illustrate his character - but I want to share with you what I judge to be his finest hours.

Dad arrived back in Australia as a Wing Commander in April 1941 - 12 days before I was born. Now certain that war with Japan was inevitable, he'd requested a posting to set up Northern Area HQ based in Townsville.

Co-ordination and personal relationships with American military officers he deemed essential. So, he flew a Catalina to Hawaii (this was just 3 months before Pearl Harbour) and met THE General Kenney (destined to be MacArthur's Army Air Commander). War on Japan was declared on 8th December, 1941.

To understand dad's impact and the way his persona was re-tempered in the fire of war, forget modern Australia - land of milk and honey - and let me try to describe Milne Bay in August 1942 to you. It was the wet season:

day after day of continuous rain; and 5 inches deep mud. There were no roads - though there were some walking tracks -and no bridges over flooded creeks.

There was malaria, dysentery and fever in abundance.

Some 4,500 Australian Militia and Regulars were deployed in defence of American Construction personnel who were carving two airstrips out of thick jungle. Two squadrons of Kittyhawks, 75 and 76 Squadrons, were flying combat duties off the partially completed No. 1 strip. There were 664 Air Force personnel working the base.

Allied code breakers informed General Clowes - the Army Commander - that over 2,000 crack Japanese Marines were training in Rabaul for an invasion. The Japanese plan called for a flank attack on Port Moresby in support of their advance over the Owen Stanleys along the Kokoda Track. The invasion commenced on the night of August 25th, 1942.

My father flew to Moresby arriving on day 2 of the battle. It was going badly for the defenders. The Japanese were advancing.

To protect the only decent fighter aircraft Australia possessed, he ordered them out to "seven mile" (Moresby) at dusk when they finished strafing runs for the day.

As No. 1 strip was not overrun during the night of the 28th he ordered the Kittyhawks back at dawn and flew in with them. (Typically, he had the planes cleaned and polished overnight.) Taking immediate command of a situation where morale had reached rock bottom, Bill ordered a muster of all personnel working around the airstrip and read the "It riot act" as the fighting continued not far from where they stood. "if anyone has an escape plan: tear it up now! If anyone has a kit packed to get away in the jungle: throw it away! We're staying and there's to be no talk whatever of escape."

An hour later he summonsed his officers and CO's of the squadrons and delivered his demands.

"Every necessary task has first got to be done. Every necessary risk taken. There must be no weakening or turning back!"

The Kittyhawks continued strafing runs until the

barrels of their guns wore out - which was daily.

Sick pilots relieved sick pilots.

Dad often told me of the wear and tear on his fighters: he never would discuss the eleven Air Force deaths.

On day 7 of the fighting, Melbourne HQ signaled that there had been a landing of Japanese reinforcements. This message was more of the code breakers' handiwork. (Luckily it was wrong.) Bill Garing took off in his TIGERMOTH with an observer (Lex Winton) to search the beaches. They drew fire from the Japanese- There were no new landing barges to be seen.

The next day he flew the Tiger Moth to Table Bay, landing next to three Japanese Type 99 dive bombers which had made a formation forced landing on the beach. The six enemy crewmen, armed with machine guns salvaged from the planes, were still in the vicinity as dad gathered intelligence data and took photos. When Australian troops repulsed the Japanese during the firefight at Goroni River crossing, the enemy began to retreat. Japanese atrocities emerged as ground was re-won. Dad saw the mutilated bodies the shock hardened him. On the night of Day 11, Japanese destroyers evacuated their remaining forces: they were beaten. The battle for Milne Bay was the first Japanese defeat on land in the Pacific War. It didn't finish there of course. In between attending to his command duties, dad flew fighter sorties in American Aircobra P400s and Australian Kittyhawks over the Buna/Popondetta battlegrounds. On the 17th September, Japanese troops advancing over the Kokoda Track were halted at Imita Ridge.

After further fierce fighting, the enemy withdrew from Papua on 4th January 1943, relocated their remaining forces to Lae garrison on the north coast of New Guinea. A week later, General MacArthur ordered Kenney to pin the Distinguished Service Cross (USA) on Dad's chest. I believe that was his finest hour.

Fighting intensified Japanese losses required them to plan for a major reinforcement of the Lae/Salamaua garrisons. Once again, Kenney and Garing knew they were coming and when. Bill Garing planned the massed aircraft, coordinated, multi-level attack on the Japanese armada which occurred on 3rd March 1943. This battle, known as the Battle of the Bismark Sea, was a turning point in the South West Pacific area. It sealed the fate of Japanese aspirations in New Guinea. Never again would the Japanese plan for an invasion of Australia.

The greatest challenge in my father's military career came in the next few days. I suspect that there may be some members of 30 Squadron (Beaufighters) here today who fought during those engagements. If so, they'll probably know what I'm about to say.

Dad was a fierce warrior - but he was a

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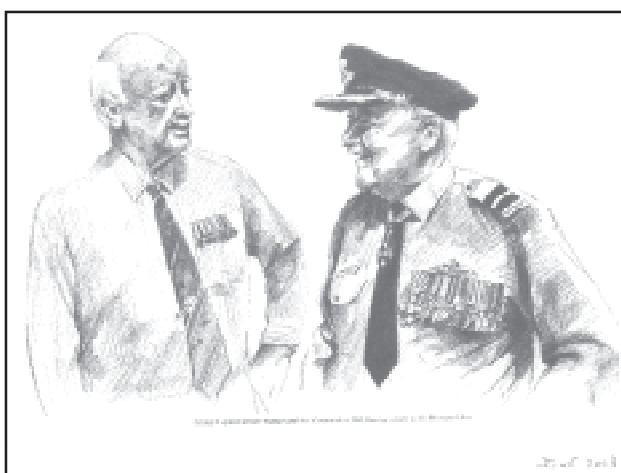
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compassionate man. Ordering the destruction of Japanese troops, who had not surrendered, off the sinking ships in the Bismark Sea was a necessary order. Nonetheless, it sickened him. Probably because he had to search his conscience, look deeply inwards and weigh up the ethics of the situation -whatever -I believe he began to mellow and soften from that day onwards.

Dad continued to prosecute the war until the day he was posted back to East Sale - as CO of 1 Operational Training Unit in August 1943. Belatedly (my word), on 19th October 1943, his own country finally recognised his contribution to the Pacific War when he was awarded the CBE. During the next two years until the war ended, dad threw his considerable energy into ever more flying, fixing problems, training others for war and specifying aircraft and materiel. He test flew new aircraft types in America and Australia. But it wasn't the same challenge war had brought. Leadership qualities that turned the tides of battles were not valued so highly away from the frontline.

When Bill left the Air Force in 1964 to join the Rothmans Sports Foundation as Director, he brought with him: thousands of contacts; high level organising skills; and a charming personality. The strict disciplinarian had vanished! In his latter years he became a trifle eccentric. so what? "Joe the gadget man" had nothing on dad. He was a bit politically incorrect - so he was honest! His legion of friends and Masonic Brethren found him appealing. He was fiercely loyal in the support of his friends. He did good works for others and made a mark on hospital and retirement village boards of directors.

I'll always remember him as a great guy to be with over a family meal - discussing and enjoying vintage wine.



Two old comrades-in-arms. Sqn Ldr Brian (Black Jack) Walker and AC William Henry (Bull) Garing.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF OF AIR FORCE WELCOME TO 2004

I'd like to welcome back to work all those who managed to take a break over the last few weeks and to thank those of you remained on duty over the same period. I would expect those of you who remained on duty to take some time off as soon as possible to ensure we tackle 2004 together fit, healthy and rested.

Before I look briefly to what 2004 may bring, I'd like to mention a few of the major issues that arose during the Christmas/New Year period. ,

Many of you will know of, or have met, former AIRCDRE W.H. 'Bull' Garing, one of the RAAF's most colourful and respected World War Two commanders. Sadly, Bill Garing passed away on 1 Jan 04 marking the end of a truly remarkable life. With service in both the European Theatre and the Pacific region, Bill Garing distinguished himself as an exemplary airman, a respected leader, and an intelligent strategist.

The history of the war in New Guinea and the Pacific, and in particular, the Battle of the Bismarck Sea, cannot be told without acknowledgement of the role played by Bill Garing. The use of concentrated air power was decisive in turning the balance of power in the region -and this was due in no small part to the foresight, expertise and personal strength of Bill Garing.

An indication of the significance of Bill Garing's contribution to the war in the Pacific came from General George Kenney, Commanding General of the Allied Air Forces in the South West Pacific Region. A handwritten note from General Kenney states: .

"To G/C Bill Garing with sincere appreciation for his loyal cooperation, brains, courage and leadership in the Allied Air Forces during the Pacific War. He made it easier for MacArthur to put 4 stars on my shoulder. George C. Kenney General USAAF."

DCAF represented me at the funeral, and I am told that the ceremony was a moving celebration of the life of a great Air Force officer.

.Another recent, sad passing was that of CPL Gutteridge, an Air Force Fireman from RAAF Richmond. CPL Gutteridge was a well respected member of Fire Section and will be sadly missed. The Base Management, his colleagues and my Advocate, WOFF Blu Hind and his team, have been providing assistance and support to Narelle Gutteridge and the family both before and following Steven's death from cancer. My personal condolences also to Narelle and the family during this difficult time.

Courtesy Air Force News

MEMORIAL TO A BRAVE AIRMAN



Flt/Sgt John Lyon

A memorial plaque has been affixed to the Memorial Wall at the RAAF Amberley Memorial Garden in honour of the memory of F/Sgt John Lyon. John was a member of the crew of a 22 Squadron Boston, piloted by F/LT Bill Newton that was shot down into the sea off Salamaua in New Guinea on the 18th March 1943. The third member of the crew was SGT Townsend.

All of the crew was reported as missing on that date. The service will be held, commencing at 1100 hours on 18th March 2004, on the 61st Anniversary, right to the day that the crew was shot down. RAAF Chaplain Wing Commander Paul Goodland will conduct the service.

Members of John's family will be attending, and members of our Association who will be attending are requested to advise me SAP, for security and catering purposes. Lunch in the Officers Mess will follow the service.

John Lyon was first Wireless Air Gunner to F/Lt Bill Newton, who was awarded a well deserved VC, which was the only one awarded to any RAAF airman serving in the South West Pacific area during WWII.

I am sure that all our members are well acquainted with the story of Bill Newton's award. However I am just as sure that very few of our members or any other WWII ex RAAF members are aware of the very bad deal handed out to John Lyon's widow, her two daughters and his parents following the advice to his wife from Squadron Commanding Officer that he had been shot down on 18th March 1943, and was reported as missing...

The VC award to Bill Newton was made because of his determined attack against the well-defended area of Salamaua in New Guinea, on 17th March 1943, the day before they were shot down. During this attack his aircraft was severely damaged by intense low level ack ack. In the face of this he pressed home his attacks causing severe damage to installations. During the attack John believing his pilot Bill had been injured assisted him to fly the aircraft out of the ack-ack zone, using the dual control. Bill then flew the badly damaged Boston back across the Owen Stanley ranges to home base at Wards Strip near Port Moresby. None of the crew was injured.

The next day, on 18th March 1943, the same crew carried out another attack on the same target, encountered the same severe and intense low-level ack ack, and was shot down. Bill made a crash landing into the sea just off Salamaua. The plane sank rapidly and none of the other crews on this mission reported sighting any survivors from the crash landing. It would be very certain that these crews would make every effort to find any survivors, and if sighted do what they could to protect them until help arrived. It was six months later that the posthumous VC award was made to Bill Newton for that attack on Salamaua on the 17th March 1943.

A few days after the crew were reported missing Mrs Lyon received a letter from the then 22 Squadron Commanding Officer Wing Commander Keith Hampshire advising her John was reported missing. The following is a paragraph from Wing Commander Hampshire's letter

: -only the day before the aircraft they were flying was very badly hit by the same A/A and your husband thinking his pilot was badly wounded, had by quick presence of mind, assisted to bring the aircraft through the A/A zone, by use of the dual control.

Your husband was a most popular and active member of our unit. Your husband's pilot often spoke highly of his ability and enthusiasm in his role of first Wireless Air Gunner, and I personally could not wish to have a finer crew, of which he was a member, and contributed highly to their success.

I have no hesitation in stating that the above coming from a Squadron Commander with the reputation Keith Hampshire had amongst those of us who served under him as our CO, is praise, great praise indeed.

One can only wonder why, when the pilot of an aircraft is awarded the highest bravery honour- The Victoria Cross, that a member of his crew so well regarded by both the pilot and his Commanding Officer is not honoured in some way also. F/Sgt Lyon flew 42 missions with his pilot, missions that he contributed a

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great deal in their success. One also wonders why rarely if ever one sees a mention of the crew or their names on plaques honouring Bill Newton's service history

It had wrongly been stated that John's remains were discovered a few days after Bill Newton's was found at Lae. This was later found to be incorrect, as his remains were not found until July 9th 1948. Mrs Lyon had waited all those years with a glimmer of hope that her husband would be found one day, alive somewhere,

A letter dated 28th July 1948 from Department of Air to Mrs Lyons contained the following paragraph:

We can now advise the recovery of his body by natives on 9th July 1948. I deeply regret to say the medical examination of the body reveals death was caused instantly by bayoneting through the back. The body of your husband was located by natives when they were digging postholes in preparation for the erection of a new fence around the Lae airport.

Arrangements are being made for the burial of you late husband at Lae War Cemetery and I shall advise you later in this regard.

Prior to the Burial Service the Newton family were advised and flown to Lae for the Burial Service but the Department of Air failed to advise the Lyon family of the arrangements that had been made. Mrs Lyon only found out the service had been conducted without their presence when she received some photos much later. The family had been denied the opportunity to say a final farewell to a loved son, husband and father.

To say the least this was indeed not only a very shabby treatment of the family, but also a dereliction of duty on some officer's part. It was not until years later that by winning a magazine trip to New Guinea, daughter Bette was able to take her mother to Lae to visit John's grave and bid him farewell.

At the service on the 18th March 2004 we will honour the life of a friend and a fellow airman by dedicating this plaque to him, and taking a very small step to correct the apparent failings of the Department of Air.

Lest we Forget.

PETER WHITE (Hon Sec)



CARIBOU TO FLY TILL 2010



Wing Commander John McGarry used his farewell speech to members of 38 Squadron to assure them of the long term viability of the Caribou aircraft.

"In the past two months the future of the Caribou the future of the Caribou has been confirmed out to 2010 McGarry said.

"38 Squadron's strategic goal was the restoration of the Caribou capability. The capability that that had been run down as a consequence of demanding operational deployments" he said.

Wing Commander John McGarry said he gained personal satisfaction from seeing the Squadron becoming fully prepared for it's very successful deployment to the Solomon Islands.

"The regaining of our customer's confidence is what has yet again saved the aircraft. Each of you: fitter, technician, supplier, clerk, painter, life support, metal basher, engineer, pilot or flight engineer, have played your part".

WGCDR McGarry said that seeing personnel of 38 Squadron achieve so much both collectively and personally was one of the significant highlights of his command.

Courtesy December "Defence"

Warning: this could be educational ...Airplanes vs Women:

- Airplanes usually kill you quickly, a woman takes her time.
- Airplanes can be turned on by a flick of the switch.
- Airplanes don't get mad if you do a "touch and go."
- Airplanes don't object to a preflight inspection.
- Airplanes come with a manual to explain their operation.
- Airplanes have strict weight and balance limitations.

2004 AGM BARBECUE

The 2004 AGM was held at the premises of No2 Wing (AAFC) at Mortimer Road Archerfield. We had an attendance of 25 members and partners, and was a most enjoyable day.

President Ralph opened the meeting and then gave his report. I presented the secretary/treasurer's report for the year. The current office holders were then all re-elected.

Some important items were then put forward for discussion; amongst the most important was what can be done to hold our present membership and ensure that the association continues to function. Members were asked to invite family members and interested friends to become members and take an active part in our functions. I have written to David Cooke, Secretary of 93 Squadron Association in Sydney expressing the desirability of combining, and he responded agreeing it would be a good thing. He is having discussions with 30 Squadron Association in Sydney and will advise his Queensland members of our invitation to them to join us. We have also had initial correspondence with the president of 93 Squadron Association, concerning the possibility of combining. To date we have had no response to our initial letter.

Because of the low attendance at the 2003 Anzac Day Parade a discussion followed on whether we should discontinue or not our attendance at future Anzac Day Parades. The committee was given the task to assess the number we can expect to attend this year, and from this make a decision on the future. There will be a form in the March Whisperer asking members to advise if they will be attending or not. Whatever the decision made from the response, all local members will be advised prior to the Parade.

Please make an effort to recruit family or friends of the Association with a view to continue taking part in our most important memorial parade: ANZAC DAY PARADE.

It will be sad that after enjoying a great Barbecue earlier in the year that I have to advise the Anzac Day Parade Committee that The Beaufighter and Boston Squadrons of World War 2 can no longer take part. We

now have well over 100 financial members scattered all over the country. This membership has increased each year, mostly by people who have seen a copy of Whisperer and ask to go on our mailing list. I feel that if we cannot make the numbers to join in an important day like Anzac day as a unit, it will be the start of the decline of our Association.



At the request of the family, a plaque will be installed on the Memorial Wall at the Memorial Garden at RAAAF Base Amberley, with a Memorial Service, to F/Sgt John Lyons, of 22 Squadron. John was first wireless/air gunner to F/LT Bill Newton VC, when both were executed by the Japanese after their capture at Salauma Peninsular New Guinea on March 16th 1943.

This has been approved and a Memorial Service will be held on 18th March 2003 at 1100 hours Exactly to the day of the 61st anniversary of when the crew were shot down. Lunch in the Officers Mess will follow the service.

A motion was passed to seek approval for the installation of a plaque to the memory of the late Air Commodore Bill Garing. Approval has now been received from RAAF Base Commander for the plaque to be installed. I thank members for the instant and generous response with donations to cover the cost of the installation. The plaque has been ordered, and a date will be advised by RAAF Amberley...

Daisy Curran drew the raffle as is her custom each year and the lucky ones were:

1st Prize Framed print of John Castle's painting "The Great Air Race".- Elaine Wardlaw

2nd Prize Copy of the Video "Ghosts of War" - Ron Collins

3rd Prize Copy of the Video "Ghosts of War"- Ursula Fanning

PETER WHITE

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- Airplanes can be flown at any time of the month.
 - Airplanes don't come with in-laws.
 - Airplanes don't care about how many airplanes you've flown before.
 - Airplanes and pilots both arrive at the same time.
 - Airplanes don't mind if you look at other airplanes.
 - Airplanes don't mind if you buy airplane magazines.
 - Airplanes expect to be tied down.
 - Airplanes don't comment on your piloting skills.
- However, they do have one thing in common. When either one of them gets quiet, it's definitely not a good thing!***

HAWK EYE HOPALONG SPOTS A DIGGER'S HAT.



Early In November 1942 E Troop moved up from Milne Bay In an old W.W. I American flush deck destroyer converted to a banana boat for the Central American trade. How it got to Milne Bay New Guinea one can only wonder.

At Wanigela, a little mission station, the ship stopped to unload supplies including steel rails. As it moved out into the open sea it struck a reef damaging a propeller shaft but proceeded with reduced speed around Cape Nelson to Porlock Harbour. Here E Troop gunners together with two of the guns ammunition and stores were loaded onto a captured Japanese barge, eventually reaching Oro Bay.

Going back in time to late September early October the Regiment aboard S. S. Katoomba was enroute to New Guinea to join 9 Battery at Milne Bay. The ship stopped off at Townsville, anchored off Magnetic Island (no leave allowed) for about a week. Somehow an army booklet in the identification of Jap planes showing front, side and top elevations of all fighter light and medium bombers, armament, engine type and sizes etc. came into my hands. I proceeded to spend the ample time to commit these details to memory. This little exercise was to have fateful consequences later on.

When the barge was loaded at Porlock Harbour a Bren gun was set up on the stem deck behind the helmsman's semi-circular steel shield. Just before getting under way, Captain Mueller said to me "alright gunner King you seem to know these Jap planes you can man the Bren" and from then to the sinking of the barge I stayed with the barge in its varied comings and goings moving other troops and stores up the coast as well as the gunners.

On about the 9th of November we had transported the 1st Australian Mountain Battery under Major O'Hare to a position about 1,000 yards north of Cape Sudest. This was done in darkness (just as well as later events proved) and in daylight the next morning we were proceeding, empty, back to Porlock Harbour with the skipper and engineer down below getting some much needed sleep while I remained on top steering and keeping watch.

Sometime that morning sailing in bright sunshine and clear blue sky I noticed a plane away in the distance behind us coming from the north low across the water. After a moment or two of unease I recognised it as a Beaufighter: "great plane, the Beaufighter, whispering death". Watching in admiration as it came towards us, suddenly I'm thinking "this is a Jap barge - Hell "!! In a flash without a thought I whipped off the Aussie hat and waved it side to side as the plane powered towards us, then with a wing-waggle and a rush and a mighty roar it was over us and off, leaving a very relieved young soldier to recover.

So much for the story, which I suppose has been in the mind all these Years as one of the escapes one had in the war at that time.

Then on the 29th July this year the Regiment's mid year reunion was held at the Sydney Rowing Club. As I walked into the dining room President Charles McGirr introduced me to Fred Cassidy 30 Squadron (Beaufighter Association President). After a few words I said I had a story about Beaufighters that might interest him. After the luncheon he came to our table and I told him the story. Fred said "when was that, in 1942? Was it September?" I said, "no, it was early November" he said "we were operating in that area at that time. I've got my log-book at home, I'll look it up tonight and give you a ring".

That evening sure enough Fred rang and said he had checked his logbook for the period and found the entry for 9th November 1942. His plane was patrolling the Buna area, strafing Jap barges between 1000 hrs and 1215 hours.

For sure it would have been his plane in that area at that time and but for the Aussie hat it would have been just another Jap barge to add to his tally for the morning. I was a very relieved Aussie at the time and believe me that feeling of relief was relived again somewhat keenly on Thursday night 29th July 1998.

ALLAN KING

Courtesy Mrs M Whittle (Allan King's sister)

A captured Jap barge

