



NZ Bomber Command Association (Inc)

Patron: Les Munro (617 Sqn), CNZM, DSO, QSO, DFC
Honorary Chaplain: The Venerable Neville Selwood Archdeacon Emeritus of Dunedin
President: Ron Mayhill DFC (75 Sqn)
Vice Presidents: Bunny Burrows (15, 622, 487 Sqn), Keith Boles DFC, pff (109 Sqn)

NEWSLETTER March 2015
NZBCA CHARITABLE TRUST 2561560
WEB SITE: www.nzbombercommand.co.nz

FROM THE PRESIDENT



Last year I was invited to RAF High Wycombe, and RAF Halton as an 'honoured guest'.

The former Bomber Command Headquarters is well signposted at Walters Ash, 'RAF Headquarters, Air Command' with a replica

Spitfire mounted near the entrance. Within the large complex are some treasured memories.

The 'Bomber' Harris Conference Room, and the historic tunnels that linked the dispersed sites of Bomber Command, code named 'Hillside', were once well kept secrets, the buildings designed to blend into the village landscape and the tunnels used to reduce surface movement visible from the air. Indeed, the area was never bombed during the war.

The large office of Air Chief Marshall Sir Arthur Harris has been carefully preserved to its initial specifications with attention to the smallest details.

My imagination knew no bounds when I was invited to sit at the desk, the scrambled egg hat taken from its stand and placed on my head, the oversized greatcoat draped over my shoulders for a photo session. Yes, I did pick up the red telephone.

Next, I was conducted down the busy corridor and offices to stairs leading down to a locked door.

To my surprise the tunnels were quite large, clean and well-lit with a soft brown floor covering and lined on three sides by multi-coloured tubes, pipes and cables, the servicing ducts for the station.

A short walk brought me near the historic Operations Rooms but as I had been forewarned, access would be denied. A strong steel door barred the way.

NO ACCESS DANGER

Unfortunately the area had been allowed to run down, then abandoned, and declared structurally unsafe, closed to all ranks.

We retraced our steps and entered another tunnel that continued seemingly endlessly with regular ventilation-escape shafts, all hidden beneath the peaceful villages and beech forests of the Chiltern Hills, an area of outstanding natural beauty.

A short drive to Great Kingston and I could see 'Springfields',

the one-time home of 'Bomber Harris' and family which he shared with Lieutenant-General Ira Eker, USAAF.

The memorable day ended at the Officer's Mess.

RAF Halton is a dream station, formed on the bequeathed estate of Lord Rothschild. The grounds are park-like, a delightful setting for the Aircraft Apprentices Scheme. Here is The Lord Trenchard Museum, a storehouse of Air Force memorabilia, a nostalgic display that jolts the memory. Undoubtedly the show-piece is the Halifax Bristol Hercules engine, its see-through, cut-away fourteen pistons and cylinders working smoothly and noiselessly. It was a place to spend hours but my special programme scheduled me to meet the Commanding Officer and be shown around the former Rothschild home and then entertained in the Mess.

Another interesting visit in the area was to Hughenden Manor, now a National Trust Property but once the home of the Prime Minister, Benjamin Disraeli. By chance, its wartime secrets were recently revealed.

Here, skilled draughtsmen and cartographers were secretly recruited.

PRU aircraft operated from Benson and nearby airfields, the target photos developed and enlarged in the ice house and rushed to Bomber Command.

What a contrast between the simple and rather primitive photographic apparatus in the ice chambers and the luxurious rooms of the map makers! The basement rooms hold a well documented and illustrated Bomber Command map museum.

Footnote: Bomber Command existed for 32 years, from 1936 to 1968 when it merged with Fighter Command as Strike Command.

In 1978 a new and much larger bunker was created to the north of RAF High Wycombe, the NATO Underground Permanent War Headquarters, the self-contained area capable of being sealed off during the Cold War.

In 2007, Strike Command merged with Transport and other Commands to become Air Command.



TROPHY PRESENTATION

The New Zealand Bomber Command Memorial Trophy was awarded to Wing Commander Dan Hunt (CO 5 Sqn) by Chief of Air Force AVM Mike Yardley at a ceremony at RNZAF Whenuapai this month.

The presentation included an address by our President with veterans, families and 5 Squadron crew present.

The trophy is an annual award to the active squadron that exemplifies the spirit of airmanship, determination and achievement.

The bronze trophy was designed by Sir Richard Taylor and produced by Weta Workshops. Mr Ian Kuperus of Tax Management NZ kindly sponsored the trophy.

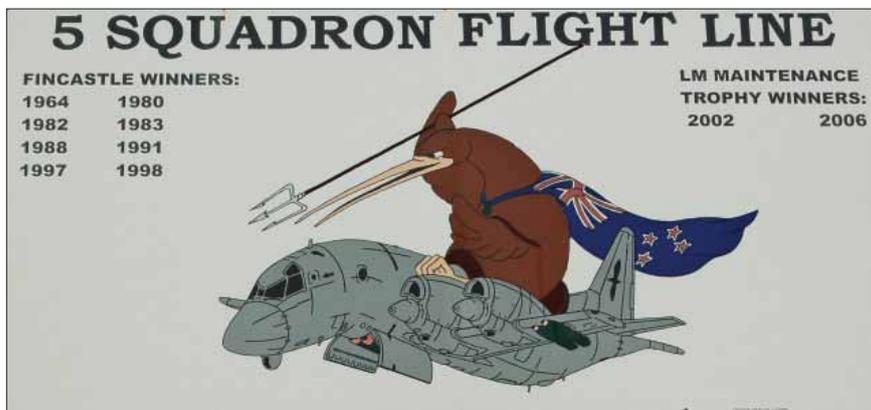
Unfortunately the Trophy had been left at HQ in Wellington, so red faces all round.



*Wing Commander Dan Hunt,
Les Munro, Ron Mayhill*



Harry Cammish, Des Hall, Trev Park



News

Our Patron, Les Munro, has accepted Lord Ashcroft's offer. His medal set and log book will be presented to the Bomber Command display at MOTAT.

The RAF Benevolent Fund charged with the London Memorial's upkeep will benefit from the \$170,000 donation. Thank you Les and Lord Ashcroft, well done those men.

Dates to Remember

Sunday June 7 – 1100 hours

RAF Bomber Command Memorial Service. More details by mail after Easter

July – To be confirmed. Unveiling and dedication of D for Duck display MOTAT.

FRANCE AWARDS LEGION OF HONOUR TO D-DAY VETERANS

France is awarding this decoration to servicemen of all three services who assisted in the liberation of France. If you were on operations over France between May 1 and August 1, please advise the Medals Office NZDF at Trentham.

CONTACT US

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

Membership is free to RAF Bomber Command Veterans. Family and friends are most welcome as associate members (\$15 fee).

Contributions to the NZBCA news are always welcome.

OUR LANC IS 50

Although produced in Austin's Longbridge factory for Avro it's fifty years since WU13 (NX665) arrived in New Zealand as a gift from the French Government to the people of New Zealand 'who fought for the freedom of all people and of France'.

Veterans will remember the huge effort fundraising the Association did, led by President, Bill Simpson. First the hangar at Meola Road to house it, then the years and years of restoration and re-fitting. At times there were 50 RAF Bomber Command veterans every Wednesday and 30 on Sundays. All ably led by John Barton and his notebook of job lists. A good time for all.

The ledger Bill kept shows over 40,000 man hours and \$285,000 (in 1998 dollars) in cash and kind donated. A truly great effort.



The BC display areas continue to be revamped following the minimal display that replaced the originals. Look for more items in the cabinets, a nose art display from Jack Wright's Lanc. Thomas Frederick Duck, and later a 617 Squadron area.

But as the ranks grow thinner, the interest from families, historians and from organisations in occupied Europe has never been stronger. They certainly have not forgotten.

Today the very smart ADH is world class and it retains the very same structures funded by NZBCA, Fleet Air Arm Association and afterwards, The Solent Society.



SHORT STIRLING HEAVY BOMBER

RAF Bomber Command's overlooked work horse, is normally criticized by writers today. The tall gangly looking goose on the ground became a very handsome and elegant flier in the air.

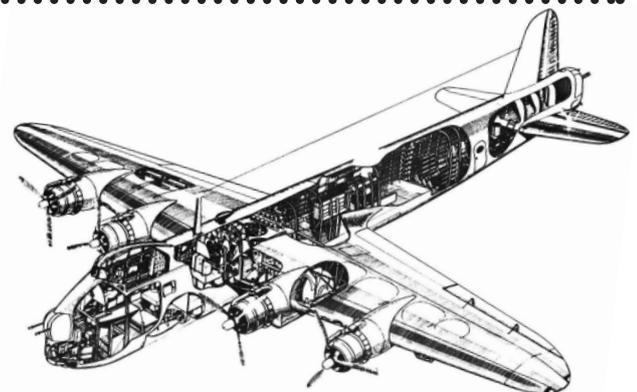
Those of you who flew Stirlings all seem to have a great fondness for them.

Bunny Burrows recalled them being lively, roomy, well-built and warm.

Ron Mayhill recalls their strength, especially after a mishap at HCU.

While many loved their maneuverability, the Stirling shortfall was its lack of altitude with a full bomb load. However it was a key part of the main force during 1943 and lasted on the front line with 74 Sqn until March 1944.

Sadly, no complete Stirlings exist today but there is an attempt to rebuild one (www.stirlingproject.co.uk)



A PRAYER FOR THOSE NOW GONE

**He kotuku rerenga tahi –
the white heron seen only once in a lifetime.**

Through you I live –

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

Farewell – fly upon the wings of your greatness.

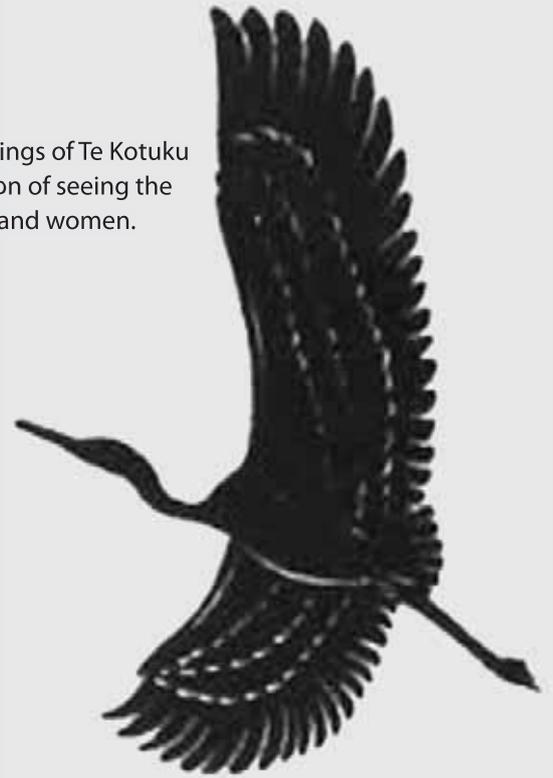
The white heron of a single flight

The white heron seen only once in a lifetime
New Zealanders heroes and legends of democracy
Fly upon the pure white wings of Te Kotuku
Your land below and the sky above honour you
Goodbye - you live in us.

**He kotuku rerenga tahi
Kotahi manu e kitea e te kanohi
Nga tamatoa o Aotearoa
E rere ki te rangi rere ki Te po
Haere haere haere**

Tihei mauri ora!

Haare Williams 2013



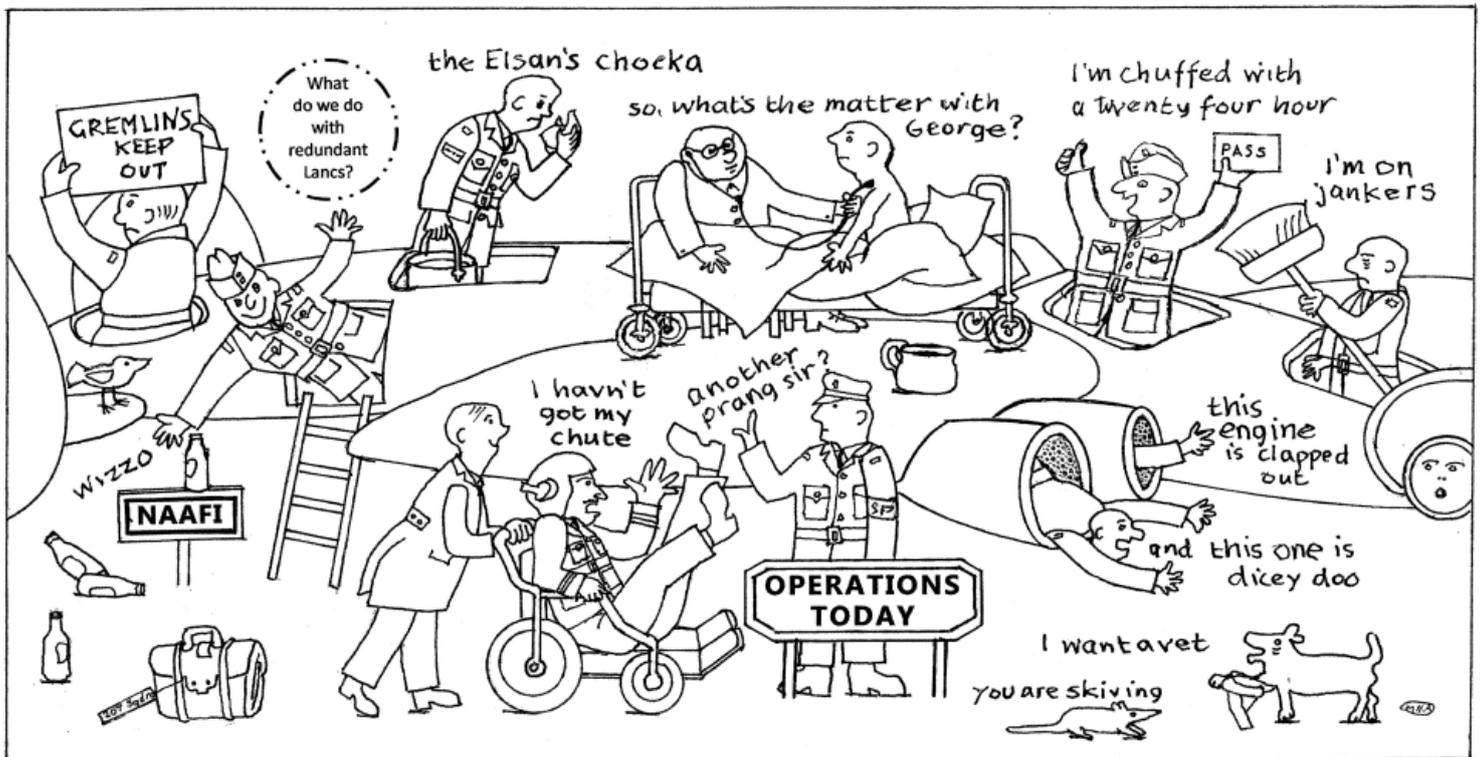
A FLIGHT ENGINEER

Six pounds the set I'm asking,
said the salesroom auctioneer
For the medals of an airman,
a Flight Engineer
No one very special, that I do concede
His name is one of many inscribed at
Runnymede
Six pounds for the set you say.
I think that's rather dear
For the medals of an airman,
a Flight Engineer.

Ken Forester (90 Sqn)

*Artist Don Wilkie.
Copies of other great sketches from
longforgan@xtra.co.nz*





Maurice Askew Flight Engineer 207 Sqn RAF and Stalag 6

WARTIME MEMORIES OF ROARING ENGINES –

North Shore Times, August 29, 2013

Beatrice Boyce's memories of World War II play to the sound of roaring engines.

From 16, she worked on Lancaster bombers for aircraft manufacturer A. V. Roe, near Manchester.

"Thousands" of them would pass over England, bound for Berlin, the Rothsay Bay resident says.

"You could feel the heaviness of the bombs in the roaring."

Wearing dungarees and a hairnet, she laboured alongside other young women, securing bomber doors and panels from 1942 to 1944.

"I was very slight then. I could kind of manoeuvre around."

Lancasters were manned by seven men with many sent on "suicide missions."

"We used to say 'gee, I hope our rivets are holding together'. There's someone's life relying on us to get it right."

"It's amazing how many came back. They were such great men."

"But 'all of our birthdays had come at once' when five male Air Force recruits turned up at the factory."

"It was the highlight of our lives when these boys turned up."

Mrs Boyce dated three, eventually marrying her final beau Ray.

It was good money, working 12-hour shifts, but finding the time to spend it was difficult.

She says she faked a bad back and got a doctor's note so she could go to Cornwall to see her husband and his family.

They were separated for a short time when Mr Boyce, her husband was recalled.

But one day he showed up "and he was keen," she says.

Mrs Boyce says she lost friends during the war, including a young man who was a tail-end gunner in a Lancaster.

But everyone knew what they signed up for, she says.

Mrs Boyce moved to the East Coast Bays in 1953 with her late husband, living in Campbell's and Murray's bays before settling in Rothsay.

She says she still has her friendships from the war.



SERVICE RECORD OF D.S.P. (DOUG) SMITH – SERVICE No. NZ 41948

I first applied to volunteer for the RNZAF in September 1940 and was accepted early in 1941 and sent to Levin on No. 11 course. After initial training was posted to No.2 EFTS at New Plymouth.

In March 1941 and after some 45 hours on DH82 and DH60 I was sent to Ohakea on 3 FTS flying Airspeed Oxfords, finishing this course July 1941.

On my journey north to Auckland by my motor bicycle I went to sleep and finished up on a railway crossing north of Huntly about 4am. A travelling share-milker found me and took me through to Waikato Hospital with a fractured skull and severe facial injuries which kept me there for five weeks. After recuperation at my parents home I was found fit for flying. I embarked on the SS Ceramic and arrived in Liverpool just before Christmas, 1941.

After a wait in Brighton I went up to AFU in Grantham, on Oxfords and then to 17 OTU at Upwood, converting onto Blenheims, both Mk1 and IV.

In July 1942 I went to 88 Sqn Bomber Command on Douglas Bostons. After a 20 minute passenger ride, my first solo followed. A navigator and w/op gunner joined me and we did eight sorties over France and Holland until May 1943. Arriving back from a low level exercise I shot up the Officers Mess when Viscount Trenchard was being entertained and he was not impressed and ordered my removal from the squadron forthwith. My CO couldn't save me so with my crew we were sent to a Wellington OTU at Cottesmore and then on to a HCU to fly Halifax and Lancasters.

In early December 1943 we finished up at 207 Sqn Spilsby and flew a further 22 ops over Germany which we were very fortunate to survive. Losses suffered by Bomber Command at that time were high and the nine trips to Berlin we did, Bomber Command lost 80 aircraft on average.

Our tour ended on April 22nd 1944 with a raid on Brunswick. A near miss with another Lanc we lost our fixed aerial and our poor navigator lost his nerve (he saw it all happening and was posted LMF). I was sent on my rest to 11 OTU Westcott and as no one asked me to go back to ops I didn't object. They had more crews than they wanted anyway so I saw out the war there. When the war ended in 1945, I managed to get a job with RAF Transport Command on Avro Yorks and finished at the end of 1946 with a total of 1474 hours in my log book with a green card for me to fly anywhere in the world. I was able to join NAC as a co-pilot before flying as Captain on Lockheed Lodestars, DC3s, Viscounts, Friendship and the Boeing 737. I finished up in 1973 with 17825 flying hours.

My Flying Log Book shows 4 endorsements. Two red ones for taxiing incidents and two green ones for avoiding an accident. One green was at the HCU when after a night training sortie with a full load of dummy bombs. We were on short final approach to land when the starboard outer merlin caught fire and we had to overshoot and put out the fire and make a successful landing. The other was with a York with fifty ex POWs on board. Taking off from Delhi, India when my flight engineer retracted the undercarriage too soon and we had to continue before the a/c was ready to fly. I got her into the air but she touched the runway again and the u/c was damaged and would not lock down. We flew around for several hours to get rid of most of the fuel and I talked to the poor POWs who thought they were going to be killed. But they were wrong and we landed on the belly with very little damage and no one hurt.

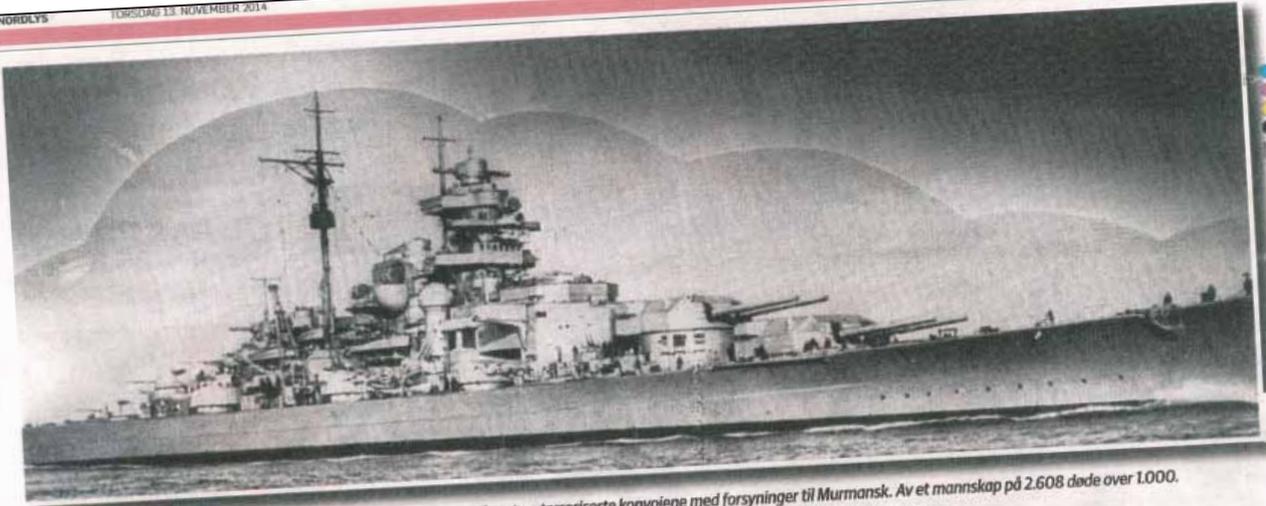


ALSO A 75 SQN WIMPY SONG

Just an old fashioned Wimpy
With old fashioned wings
And a fuselage tattered and torn
Two old fashioned turrets
With old fashioned guns
And an undercart battered and worn.

Though she don't look so swell
She can battle like hell
And she's known from Ruhr to Rhine
When she's way up on high
She's the Queen of the sky
That old fashioned Wimpy of mine.

**THE NORWEGIANS STILL REMEMBER 617
AND 9 SQUADRON RAID ON THE TIRPITZ 70 YEARS AGO.**



GIGANTISK: Det enorme tyske krigsskipet «Tirpitz» var 251 meter langt og terroriserte konvoiene med forsyninger til Murmansk. Av et mannskap på 2.608 døde over 1.000.

70 år siden Tirpitz ble senket

Tirpitz var det største slagskipet i den tyske krigsmarinen under andre verdenskrig. Tirpitz ble senket utenfor Tromsø i 1944.

Engelske Avro Lancaster bombefly fra RAF med «tallboy»-bomber senket skipet den 12. november 1944.



«Tallboy»-bombene veide 5,4 tonn og hvert fly kunne bare ha en ombord.

Over 1000 av mannskapet på skipet omkom

50 m



TIRPITZ: 251 meter lang • 36 meter bred • 52 600 tonn fullastet • Maksfart 29 knop
Rekkevidde: 6100 nautiske mil ved 15 knop • Panser 315 millimeter •
Mannskap 2608 • Byggeår 1941. Tirpitz angrep konvoiene til Murmansk.

KILDE: Tirpitzmuseet, snl.no

nyhetsgrafikk.no



12. nov. 1944: Senket i Håkøybotn

Kvæfjord: 22. sept. 1943 ble Tirpitz angrepet med dvergubåter. Bombet av fly i april 1944.

**POST BY LIFEBOATADAM
ON MARCH 7, 2015**

I have recently catalogued all the bits and pieces in my grandfather's collection. Amongst a lot of paperwork and personal reminiscences I came across the following poem. I know my grandfather didn't write it as it is a rear gunner's view of a bombing raid – My grandfather was a Nav/Rad in NF Mossies. I think it is a powerful bit of writing that really brings home the experience of a bombing sortie.

It may not be New Zealand related, but as there were plenty of Kiwis who flew in Bomber Command –who knew.

ANOTHER OP

Bumping down the runway
With the turret on the beam,
Flashing past well-wishers
Lit by the dem's dull gleam.

The pulling of the stomach
As we slowly climb on track
Setting course to eastward -
How many will come back?

The clipped command to alter course
As we cross the Anglian shore,
Then extinguish navigation lights
As the engines increase their roar.

The throbbing of the engines
Disturbs the fading light
As onward, ever onward,
We fly into the night.

Routine settles to a rhythm,
And those 'up front' dictate
The course, the speed, the height
And the passage of our fate.

Searching ever searching,
The turret turns to and fro,
Looking always looking
For our enemy and foe.

The sound of throbbing engines
Envelopes our immediate night,
And the clammy taste of oxygen
As I adjust the dull ring sight.

A quiet statement from Nav -
'Enemy coast ahead'
The blood flows quicker thro' the veins -
Our training stifles the dread.

Searching every searching,
For that darker smudge of black.
Looking for the fighter
That could stop us getting back.

The Nav again is heard to say
'Target. Dead ahead'.
The tightening of the stomach
Is the only sign of dread.

As a lonely, cold rear gunner
I always face the rear
And never see the target
Till the aircraft's there.

Flying ever closer, closer
To that awful scene.
Every nerve is strung so tight
You stifle the need to scream.

The observer now takes full control
And by his directed call.
Keeps the tingling nerves on edge
Till he lets the bomb load fall.

With the sudden upward lift
We all expect the worst,
But heave a sigh of intense relief
As the aircraft changes course.

Nose well down and increased speed
To escape from
that dreadful
sight.
We race across
the crimson sky
To the safety of
the night.

As those up front
now search the
sky
For the fighter
that lurks in the
dark.

While I at last see
the target fires
Where we have
left our mark.



**Doug Smith had
an exceptional
rear gunner,
Canadian Wallace
McIntosh.
He finished his
operational
service with 7
confirmed kills and
a bar to his DFC.**



Date	Time	Station	Target	Notes	Remarks (including results of bombing, gunner, weather, etc.)	Time
1945	11:00	P	F/O Smith	GENERAL	EXERCISES	1:00
1945	11:10	T	F/O Smith	"	NIGHT BOMBING	1:10
1945	11:20	P	F/O Smith	"	NIGHT CROSS COUNTRY	1:20
1945	11:30	O	F/O Smith	"	POP. DENSITY	1:30
1945	11:40	P	F/O Smith	"	AIR TRAT. CROSS COUNTRY	1:40
1945	11:50	B	F/O Smith	"	OPERATIONS BERLIN	1:50
1945	12:00	O	F/O Smith	"	OPERATIONS BERLIN	2:00
1945	12:10	H	F/O Smith	"	OPERATIONS BERLIN	2:10
1945	12:20	U	F/O Smith	"	AIR FILING	2:20
1945	12:30	R	F/O Smith	"	NIGHT	2:30