

## Chapter 7

### Second World War

#### Others who Served – Royal Australian Air Force

*The early dawn has seen their first homecoming,  
Has seen them struggle grimly through the skies.  
The skylark hearkens to the engines' pulsing  
and feels akin to every man who flies.*

*The grazing beast lifts gentle eyes in wonder  
To gaze upon the victors' brave return  
But knows not of the dangers that beset them  
Who flew into the dark of early morn.*

*And winging back from out the far horizons,  
Now hidden deep in smoke from work well done  
The bomber crews give thanks to One Almighty  
Who gave them strength to battle till they won.*

Return at Dawn

Morris Marshall

(RNZAF)

The following note about training aircrew is from the Australian War Memorial and I acknowledge that source. I have edited it slightly.

At the outbreak of the Second World War the British government realised it did not have adequate resources to maintain the Royal Air Force (RAF) in the impending air war in Europe. While British factories could rapidly increase their aircraft production, there was no guaranteed supply of trained aircrew. Pre-war plans had identified a need for 50,000 aircrew annually, but Britain could only supply 22,000.

To overcome this problem, the British government put forward a plan to its dominions to jointly establish a pool of trained aircrew who could then serve with the RAF. In Australia the proposal was accepted by the War Cabinet and a contingent was sent to a conference in Ottawa, Canada, to discuss the proposal. After several weeks of negotiations, an agreement was signed on 17 December 1939 which would last for three years. The scheme was known in Australia as The Empire Air Training Scheme (EATS).

Under the scheme 50,000 aircrew would be trained annually, each dominion would conduct its own elementary training; advanced training would be conducted in Canada because of its closeness to the British aircraft factories and the war zone. From November 1940, some training was also conducted in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe).

Australia undertook to provide 28,000 aircrew over three years, which represented 36% of the total number required. The first basic flying course started on 29 April 1940 when training began simultaneously in all participating countries. The first Australian contingent embarked for Canada on 14 November 1940. The following Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) schools were established across Australia to support EATS:

- Initial Training (IT)
- Elementary Flying Training (EFT)
- Service Flying Training (SFT)
- Air Navigation (AN)
- Air Observer (AO)
- Bombing and Gunnery (BG)
- Wireless Air Gunnery (WAG)

Under Article XV of the agreement, it was proposed that each country's aircrew would serve in distinct national squadrons once they arrived in Britain. Eventually there were 17 Article XV RAAF squadrons, these being numbered 450-467 [but 465 was never formed]. Four of these units were in Fighter Command, seven in Bomber Command, and one in Coastal Command. Another five were also formed in the Middle East. However, despite article XV, the bulk of Australian aircrew served with RAF squadrons and not with a designated Australian squadron.

The agreement was renewed for an additional two years in March 1943, although by then it was evident that the RAF already had a large surplus of aircrew. Throughout 1944 Australia's contribution to the scheme was wound back, at Britain's instigation, and the scheme effectively ended in October 1944, although it was not formally suspended until 31 March 1945. By this time, over 37,000 Australian airmen had been trained as part of the scheme.

In the stories of our CRB airmen, mention is often made of them embarking for Canada. This is not a stopover for their eventual journeys to the UK - rather it was for them to undertake more advanced training in their flying skills. One of them journeyed in a different direction – to South Africa – to hone his skills.

The contribution of Australia to the war in the air was enormous. In Australia when we think of war we remember Gallipoli, Tobruk and Kokoda. But few think of the air force. However, thirty percent of all Australians killed in the Second World War – for all services – were members of the RAAF serving against Germany and Italy. Even more remarkable, 27,000 Australians served in the air war against Germany and Italy, which is three percent of the 900,000 Australians who served. Few Australians realize that three percent of Australia's service personnel suffered 30 percent of those killed in action.

According to the Imperial War Museum in London, the bomber war was fought mainly by young men in their late teens and early twenties. A quarter of them came from Australia, Canada and New Zealand. More than 8,000 men were killed in training and non-operational flying accidents.

Operational flying was perilous. During the war, 51% of air crew were killed in operations, 12% were killed in non-operational accidents and 13% became prisoners of war. Only 24% remained alive.

Since writing the stories of the CRB men in the RAAF, I have made a few observations which require more detailed research. Firstly, the RAAF appears to be the only branch of the services which requires evidence of the good character of the recruit - from the Police or an employer. This also applies to evidence that he or she has no communist sympathies. For example, my uncle's enlistment statement for the RAAF had the following statement from the Police Station in Colac.

*“The applicant is not recorded criminally or communistically at the Police Department. He is favourably known to the Police at this station as a person of good character, sober, honest and respectable.”*

I found similar statements on most (but not all) in the archives of the CRB airman. Presumably if you had a run in with the law or felt sympathetic to the communist cause, don't try the Air Force. You would have a better chance with the Army or the Navy.

The second observation was the RAAF's propensity for formal testing of technical skills and personal characteristics. In the case of the technical skills, especially for aircrew, mechanics and wireless/radio operators it is understandable that stringent levels of technical capability were required to keep aircraft in the air, on target and safe. Notwithstanding this, thousands of Second World War airmen died in aircraft accidents through structural or equipment faults in their aircraft. Based on what I have observed in the records of the CRB airmen, those who became aircrew were engineers, surveyors, draughtsmen or accountants – whereas ground support came from the less technically qualified. I hasten to add that this is a generalisation because there are a few exceptions.

The psychological testing – if I could call it that – was most likely used to assess suitability for promotion. These tests were set out in a grid pattern with criteria down the vertical axis and grading from poor to excellent on the horizontal axis. The tester ticked the appropriate box for the criteria and usually wrote a one line comment at the bottom – such as 'suitable for promotion' or 'doesn't take orders too well'. The procedure seems to include tasks during which the applicants are observed. They assessed personality factors, such as motivation, initiative, energy level, and self-confidence as well as general knowledge and quickness of understanding. The results of these tests seemed to seal the fate of the subject. I did not see similar testing for any of the army or navy personnel.

The stories below are of the CRB airmen who survived the war. They are listed alphabetically.

## **Flight Lieutenant Basil Richard Abery**

Basil was born in November 1903. He attended Melbourne High School and the University of Melbourne from which he graduated with a BCE Hons in 1925. He was awarded an MCE in 1933. Basil married Nellie West in 1923. He worked for the City of Melbourne and Australian Reinforced Concrete Engineering Company before joining the CRB in 1929. Basil had remarkable career in the variety of positions he held including; Manager of Mechanical Workshops; Asphalt Engineer; Assistant Highways Engineer; Divisional Engineer (Geelong); Chief Bridge Engineer; and Deputy Chief Engineer.

The DVA Nominal Roll shows that, during the Second World War, between 1940 and 1941, Basil served with the RAAF. He was a Pilot Officer and he was attached to RAAF Headquarters (W5 Section). At the time of his enlistment he was on loan from the CRB to the Department of the Interior for supervision of the construction of the runways at Point Cook and Laverton.

A Minute Paper written by the Department of Air stated:

*Mr Abery is a man of very high technical qualifications. On other papers it has been agreed in principle that the rank of Flight Lieutenant should be given to RAAF Officers whilst serving in this Directorate. It is understood that Mr Abery's family responsibilities are such that he cannot accept appointment at a rate of pay less than that of Flight Lieutenant.*

*Mr Abery's services will be invaluable to this Directorate, which is very much understaffed on the engineering side. It is essential that relief should be obtained immediately for those Officers now working up to 80 hours per week. It is recommended that Mr Abery be given the temporary rank of Flight Lieutenant, so that his services can be obtained immediately.'*



This photograph of Basil with one of his children is in his service file – 1940.

The following letter, dated January 1941, written by the Secretary of the CRB (Rolf Jansen) is also on file. It was addressed to the Secretary of the Air Board.

17-JAN-1941

AIR RECORDS

The Secretary,  
Air Board,  
129 Swanston-street,  
MELBOURNE C.1.

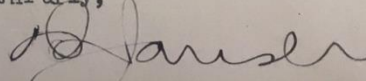
Sir,

Mr. B. R. Abery, one of the Senior Engineers on the Board's staff, has applied for leave of absence for the duration of the war, and has informed the Board that he has enlisted as a Commissioned Officer in the R.A.A.F. The Board was not aware that he was taking any action in this regard or objection would certainly have been raised immediately, as Mr. Abery is considered to be one of the key men of the Board's organisation. He has been seconded for some time to the Department of the Interior for work at Laverton, at the urgent request of that Department, but the Board's position is such that it had to write to the Department on the 23rd. December last, informing it that in view of the large proportion of the Board's officers who have enlisted for active service abroad, or who have been called up for the duration of the war, the Board was forced to ask for the release of Mr. Abery and two other officers.

The Board in its endeavour to further the national interest has not objected to the enlistment or calling up of some men who, in the earlier stages of the war, it had regarded as key men. It is now seen that in view of the large amount of work being carried out for the various Services this has resulted in severe strain on many of the senior members of the Board's staff, and inefficiency and delay in the carrying out of work. In case of emergency the position will be serious. While, therefore, the Board is very reluctant to ask for action in the case of a man who has already actually joined the Forces, it is felt that the release of this particular officer, who has had a wide and varied experience in the Board's work, is a matter of very great importance to it. I am, therefore, directed to ask that Mr. Abery be released from service with the R.A.A.F. and returned to the Board.

If further information on this matter be required, the Chairman of the Board would be glad to have an opportunity of discussing it with a responsible officer of your Department.

Yours faithfully,



This request was acceded to and Basil returned to the CRB after what was no doubt, one of the shortest careers in the RAAF. However there was one other connection that Basil had with the RAAF. In 1953, Basil had overall responsibility for the construction of the main runway, taxiways, access roads, drainage and building foundations at the Avalon airfield. The main runway was 3 km long and 46 m wide and had a total pavement thickness of one metre. The granitic sands were mined from the nearby You Yangs. The runway was used to test the new Canberra jet bombers.



Basil Aberly – on his retirement, 1968.

Basil died in August 1986 at the age of 83.

### **Flight Sergeant John Reginald Alford, 125497**

John come from Clifton Hill. He was born in October 1924 and enlisted in December 1942 not long after his 18th birthday. His Attestation Form states that he was a mechanic but I have not been able to find out anything about his career at the CRB. He married Margaret Alice Jones in 1948.

His archive is sparse. He became a ground mechanic and served in Canada between May 1944 and May 1945. The British Commonwealth Air Training Plan (BCATP) was a major program for training Allied air crews during the Second World War that was administered by the Government of Canada, and commanded by the Royal Canadian Air Force with the assistance of a board of representatives from the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and Canada.

BCATP remains as one of the single largest aviation training programs in history and was responsible for training nearly half the pilots, navigators, bomb aimers, air gunners, wireless operators and flight engineers who served with the Royal Air Force (RAF), Royal Navy Fleet Air Arm (FAA), Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF), Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) and Royal New Zealand Air Force (RNZAF) during the war. Most of the airmen from the CRB trained there *en route* to England.





John Alford at enlistment – 1942.

In May 1945 he went absent without leave for six days and six hours without any explanation and this insubordination brought about his return to Australia and eventual discharge. He was discharged from the 5 Service Flying Training School in October 1945.

John died in Melbourne in August 1989.

**Warrant Officer Peter Noel Anderson – known as Noel, 431490**

Noel was born in June 1925 at Hawthorn and enlisted in the RAAF in July 1943.



Noel's paybook photograph – 1943.

As a boy, Noel had a paper round each morning accompanied by his dog. 'Trixie'. He used a billy cart but his earnings enabled him to buy a bike so that he could complete the task much more quickly. To earn more money between leaving school and enlisting in the RAAF, Noel worked part time on milk and bread delivery rounds.

Noel attended Melbourne High School. In his Attestation Form he listed two occupations – cabinet maker and school teacher. He completed one year of a teacher training course in 1942 before he enlisted. He enrolled as a cadet on 16 August 1942 - at 17 years of age - and enlisted after his 18th birthday as a Corporal. In September 1943 he was promoted to Leading Aircraftman, and then Sergeant in June 1944. After attending No. 21 Operational Training Unit in England in November 1944, he was promoted to Flight Sergeant in December 1944 and finally Warrant Officer, in December 1945.

He trained in Australia at Parkes, Ballarat and Sale in Oxford Anson, Wackett and Anson aircraft, accumulating over 60 hours of flying. Later, in England, he was air crew in Wellington and Lancaster Bombers in 135 hours of operational flying. In December 1943, he attended the Wireless Air Gunners School (WAGS) in Ballarat. WAGS is described in more detail in the entry under Lloyd Lawson below. He also completed a course at the Air Gunnery School in April 1944.

He and his fellow servicemen left Sydney, Australia on 1 July 1944 and disembarked in San Francisco, USA. They caught a train across America to New York where they boarded the Queen Elizabeth for the Atlantic crossing to England. There were 20,000 servicemen on the ship. He said once you had queued and eaten your breakfast you had to join the next queue for your lunch. They arrived in England on 12 August 1944.

His bomber crew was unusual in that it was an all-RAAF crew that flew with the RAF's Bomber Command. Consequently, they were called the 'Odd Bods'. In England, they were stationed at RAF Station Whitely Bay (Northumberland), Moreton-in-Marsh<sup>1</sup> in Gloucestershire, 74 Base, Marston Moor and 71 Base at Lindholme – both in Yorkshire. Near the end of his service, Noel was posted to Gamston in Nottingham.

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<sup>1</sup> It is highly likely that the airfield inspired the title of the radio show 'Much Binding in the Marsh'. Two of its stars, Kenneth Horne and Richard Murdoch, served there as flying instructors.

Aircrew were first committed to a tour of 30 operational flights, not exceeding 200 hours actual flight, which could last for anything between four months and a year. A six month break was given between tours. Operational flying was perilous. Chances of survival varied during a tour, dependent on factors such as inexperience, fatigue, type of aircraft flown, and target. The most dangerous were the first and last five trips. During the whole war, 51% of aircrew were killed on operations, 12% were killed or wounded in non-operational accidents and 13% became prisoners of war or evaders. Only 24% survived the war unscathed.



The 'Odd Bods' – with Noel kneeling on the right.

Noel was a wireless operator/air gunner flying missions over Europe in Wellington and later, Lancaster, bombers. Noel became very affectionate when talking about the Lancaster, saying it was one of the best planes ever. Due to his smaller stature, Noel was assigned the job of Rear Gunner because this entailed crawling through the fuselage of the Lancaster to the very cold and exposed rear gunner position. It must have been terrible enduring long, cold, lonely flights over the Channel and into enemy territory, not knowing if they would make it back to England without being shot down or running out of fuel.



Warrant Officer Peter Noel Anderson

Noel embarked from England on the RMMV *Athlone Castle* and arrived in Melbourne on 3 January 1946. He was just 19 ½ years old when he returned to Australia. He was discharged from the RAAF in February 1946. He was offered training as part of his return to civilian life and he chose to do an Arts Degree at the University of Melbourne, but he swapped to Secondary Teacher Training instead. As a student teacher he was given a posting to Kyneton High School which he was very excited about, but it was revoked and he was sent to Campbellfield Rural School instead. He loved teaching, a skill which served him well throughout his career.

However, Noel joined the CRB in 1948 and worked in the Secretarial Section for two years before transferring to the Title Survey Branch and then the Plans and Survey Division to become a draughtsman. He spent the rest of his career at the CRB.

After the war, Noel met Margaret Louise Ginn at church. Noel confessed to me that he didn't have a car so he needed to find a girlfriend close to where he was living. Margaret fitted that bill to a tee and they married in 1950 and have been close together ever since. Their love for one another was palpable.



Margaret and Noel on their wedding day - 1950.

Margaret and Noel purchased a block of land in Chandler Grove, Burwood and commenced building their first home overlooking the back of the Burwood Tile Works and Gardiner's Creek. During this time Noel also began his career with the CRB. Materials were scarce after the war and after paying £100 for the land, they commenced building the house of their own design with the help of Noel's father whose occupation was house builder. Every Saturday Noel cycled from Camberwell to Chandler Grove with a rucksack of tools. Margaret walked and Noel's father arrived by car after he had played golf on Saturday morning. Progress was slow but after they married they were able to move in and complete the fit out while settling into their married life together.



Margaret and Noel Anderson – 2021

He retired in 1985 after 37 years of service.

Noel died on 22 May 2022 just short of his 97<sup>th</sup> birthday.

### **Leading Aircraftman Allen Stanley Archibald, 57452**

Allen's archive has not been digitised.

Allen came from Ballarat. He was born in 1921 and enlisted in June 1942. He married Joyce Evelyn Maddern in 1943 and was discharged from the RAAF in July 1945 from the 1st Engineering School.

No. 1 Engineering School was formed in March 1940 at the Melbourne showgrounds at Ascot Vale and later overflowed into Flemington racecourse. The school grew quickly and by December, 205 courses had commenced, with 2,600 trainees and 700 airmen and airwomen and 40 officers on staff. Training on Wirraway aircraft commenced in March 1941 and included RNZAF personnel. Courses started in April included those for cooks, drivers and intelligence officers. A milestone was reached in September when the total number of personnel completing training passed 10,000.

There was an increasing number of airwomen under training, especially wireless telegraphists. This resulted in female officers being posted in during March and by September there were 500 airwomen under training. By August 1942, 20,000 trainees had graduated, and in December 270 WAAAF telegraphists took part in a passing out parade. New courses commenced in 1943 included electrician instruments, instrument maker and fabric worker, reflecting the difficulty of recruiting personnel in specialist trades. Training for naval personnel on Allison engines commenced, as well as for WAAAFs as trainee flight mechanics. During 1943 over 12,000 tradesmen and women completed courses. Courses commenced in diesel mechanics for United States Army personnel in January 1944, and basic fitters courses for Netherlands East Indies (NEI) personnel in Apr 1944. The first WAAAF flight mechanics graduated April 1944. By November 1944, 50,000 trainees had graduated from the School. This heavy workload continued into 1945, and as fewer suitable candidates enlisted, some courses had high failure rates, not helped by a shortage of textbooks.

With the approaching defeat of the Japanese, Japanese language course commenced in August 1945. With the Japanese surrender, courses and training quickly came to a halt. From November, mass discharge of personnel commenced, and the removal of assets to the new training hub at Wagga Wagga began.

After the war, Allen was registered on the electoral roll as a farmer at Swan Reach near Bairnsdale in Eastern Victoria. His date of death is unknown.

### **Flying Officer Owen John Bugg, 408171**

Owen was born in Wynyard, Tasmania in 1921. At the time of his enlistment in February 1941 he was a butter factory employee. He was eventually to become a pilot flying Catalinas with 112 Air Sea Rescue Flight. His training record shows that he trained in Tiger Moths, Wirraways, Fairey Battles, Ryans, Airspeed Oxfords, Avro Ansons and finally, Catalinas. This training was conducted in both day and night conditions and as First Pilot and Second Pilot.

He attended the Initial Training School at Somers in Victoria in March to April 1941. The photo below shows the training group with Owen in the front row on the left. I have provided the names of all the airmen – to show respect for them and to indicate to the reader the dangers they faced in their service to Australia.

At enlistment Owen's rank was Aircrew but two months later he was promoted to Leading Aircraftman. Immediately after completing his initial training at Somers in June 1941, he embarked from Fremantle and disembarked at Durban, South Africa nearly a month later. This journey was obviously by ship, and not by aircraft, but I don't know why it took so long. It may have stopped off in Mauritius – a British colony – *en route*. He continued his training in South Africa until April 1942. He was hospitalised three times at the Memorial Hospital in Rhodesia – once for 18 days, once for 14 days and the last for five days but there is no mention of the nature of his ailments.

Owen was one of many RAAF airmen sent to Southern Rhodesia<sup>2</sup> as part of an agreement between the British and Australian Governments relating to the Empire Air Training Scheme.

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<sup>2</sup> Southern Rhodesia was a province of South Africa. In 1964 it reverted to the name 'Rhodesia' and in 1965 it unilaterally declared itself independent under the Prime Ministership of Ian Smith. In 1980, Rhodesia ceased to exist when the new country of Zimbabwe was formed.

He was posted to ITW Bulawayo and to No 26 EFTS *Guinea Fowl*. These were training units for initial training and elementary flying training. He served in South Africa for 10 months and arrived back in Melbourne in April 1942. On his return to Australia he continued training at Hillside, Ascot Vale and Deniliquin elementary flying training. His progression was steady. He was promoted to Sergeant in December 1942, to Flight Sergeant in June 1943, and Warrant Officer in June 1944. For most of this time his file states “On strength for training purposes only” which leads me to think that he was probably training others. Then in September 1945 he was discharged on receiving his commission as a Flying Officer. This did not mean he left the RAAF – it meant that he had left ‘the other ranks’ to join the ‘officer’s club’.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

AWM2018.125.4.6

Group portrait of No. 3 Flight who attended the RAAF Initial Training School conducted at Somers, Victoria during March to April 1941. Owen Bugg is in the first row on the left. Of this class, six were killed – in the UK, New Guinea, the Netherlands, Norway, the Mediterranean and Australia.

In May 1945, he joined 42 Squadron which was based on Melville Island in the Northern Territory where he served until October 1945. He then transferred to No. 112 Air Sea Rescue Flight operating out of Darwin until March 1946. In both these postings, he was flying Catalina Flying Boats. The Catalina flying boat is one of the most famous aircraft types ever built and served with



distinction in the anti-submarine, maritime reconnaissance, search and rescue, mine laying and Special Forces support roles in World War II. Designed during the 1930s, it was obsolete before hostilities started but proved essential once they did.

In Australian service, the Catalina is best known for its service during World War II as “Black Cats”. In the role of the Black Cat, the Catalina operated from Australia into South-East Asia at low level at night, mining harbours and supporting Z-Force<sup>3</sup>. As can be imagined, such operations were extremely dangerous.



A PB4Y Catalina of the RAAF – built by Boeing in Canada.

Initially, No. 42 Squadron focused on laying mines off Surabaya and Sumatra (now Indonesia). One of the squadron's Catalinas was forced to make an emergency sea landing after being damaged by Japanese anti-aircraft fire, but its crew was rescued by an aircraft from No. 43 Squadron. The Squadron also assisted in the repatriation of Australian prisoners of war from Manila and other Australian personnel from Labuan following the Japanese surrender. The squadron also conducted several reconnaissance flights over Japanese-occupied islands. No. 42 Squadron was disbanded at Melville Bay in November 1945.

Owen's archive has a fascinating list of all the missions he flew showing the number of people on board and the purpose of the flight and, usually, the destination. Many were ferry flights from Melville to Cairns, Rockhampton, Darwin and Roma Island but some of the other tasks included carrying medical supplies, bombs (of many types), leaflets (presumably propaganda) and one just said 'Transport of Christmas goods and Santa Claus'. There were search and reconnaissance missions where they noted Japanese shipping and strike and harassment missions – one of which,

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<sup>3</sup> Refer to Chapter 3 regarding Caleb Roberts who commanded Z Force.

over Celebes, they dropped eight 300-lb bombs, 60 lbs incendiary and leaflets. Some flights were aborted due to cloud and inclement weather and on one mission it noted that they were flying on one engine only.

They were heavily involved in medical evacuation ferrying patients back from Morotai to Darwin and one very badly burned patient from Groote Eylandt. They brought many POWs back and Owen recorded their names and home addresses which are now included in his archive. They were all Victorians. Destinations of missions included Manila, Balikpapan, Labuan, Morotai, Brunei, Ambon, Banda, and Timor. Some were just to sea – many for observation and one in search of a missing plane. One of the missions dwelt on Owen's conscience for many years later. He wrote to the Department of Defence on 7 October 1997 as follows:

*“Thank you for your letter dated 26 September 1997 forwarding RAAF Certificate of Service indicating my medal entitlements. On 9 January 1996 I was presented with the Philippines Liberation Medal at the Oakleigh Army Barracks and I have enclosed a copy for your records.*

*However I urgently wish to know the name of an “Extra Crewman” we had in the Catalina on the night he disappeared. The skipper of the crew requested that he check the “Identification Light” out on the starboard wing tip. While doing this, he slipped and fell into the water and was never seen again; presumably taken by a crocodile or alligator. Also what was the mery mission to Groote Eylandt on 15 October 1945, flown by First Pilot F/O Bennett and crew?”*

He wrote further on 24 October 1997 as follows:

*“I would be pleased if you could send to me a copy of my (a) Discharge Certificate, (b) provide the name of a Supplementary Airman who fell off the plane at East Arm Darwin in 1945, (c) what was the purpose and other relevant details of the flight to Groote Eylandt on 15-12-1945 in Catalina 24-355 of which I was the second Pilot.”*

There was no reply on the file.

Owen was discharged from the RAAF in March 1946. He returned to Tasmania and won the senior best and fairest award in 1948 and 1949 for the Cooee Bulldogs in the North West Football

Union in Tasmania (now the Burnie Dockers). In 1949, he appears on the electoral roll at Emu Bay, Tasmania, as a foreman and in 1954 as a boilermaker.

I don't know when he shifted across to Victoria but he was an Administrative Officer in the Road Design Branch at Head Office during the 1970s. Bill Thomas worked close to him and he said he never talked about the war, but he definitely remembered him as an avid supporter of the St Kiida Football Club where so many good Taswegians played.

I suspect that Owen had an independent mind and may have rubbed some of his senior officers up the wrong way. At the end of his archive are some confidential papers used to assess his potential for promotion. Some of the comments were:

*“Rather stubborn and hard to reason with but a likeable personality”* and *“Will make a good officer if kept in hand”* and *“Amenable to discipline and keen to do a job”*.

I'd take him on any day!

Owen died in March 2000 at Surrey Hills.

### **Flight Sergeant Kevin Alexander Bush, 410590**

After being shot down over Germany, Kevin was taken prisoner of war. His story is included in Chapter 10.

### **Leading Aircraftman John (Jack) Butcher, 159104**

Jack was born in Northcote and enlisted in the Royal Australian Air Force in January 1945 when he was an 18 year old student. It was noted on his enlistment form that he played the mouth organ. He was a Leading Aircraftman (LAC) and trained as a signaller in Shepparton, Adelaide and Point Cook before being posted to 76 Wing Headquarters in Darwin – and later to the RAAF Station there.



Jack Butcher's service photograph.

Jack did not serve outside Australia and was discharged in May 1946. On discharge, he was awarded the Returned from Active Service Badge and, in 1987, he wrote to the Air Office (Department of Defence) to see if he was eligible for the General Service Medal and/or the Defence Medal which were issued after the war. The answer was as follows:

*'As a result of your service in the RAAF, you qualified for the awards of the War Medal 1939-45 and the Return from Active Service Badge.*

*The Defence Medal was awarded to members of the RAAF who completed six months non-operational service in the Northern Territory, north of parallel 14.5° south latitude between 3 September 1939 and 2 September 1945.*

*The Australia Service Medal 1939-45 was awarded for eighteen months full time service between 3 September 1939 and 2 September 1945.'*

So, because he enlisted so late in the war, John did not qualify for these additional awards.

Jack worked for 38 years with the CRB. He started work at the Exhibition Building in July 1946, as a junior clerk in the Claims Section of Accounting Branch. He was 19 years old. He spent most of his career in the accounting field, except for a brief sojourn in 1951 in Benalla as the Divisional Engineer's Clerk. He eventually became an Allocations Officer (Municipal) in 1977 assessing

Councils' requests for funds and making recommendations to the Board. He retired in 1984 and died in 2005. He met his wife, Patricia Elliot, at the Exhibition Building where she worked for about five years, until they married in 1958.

Their son, Warren, also worked for the CRB/RCA/VicRoads from 1979 until 2006 in the Major Projects Division. He was initially a plant operator in Metropolitan Division and later became a Senior Surveillance Manager on major projects like the M80, Monash Freeway, and the Hallam and Pakenham Bypasses, among many other projects.

### **Leading Aircraftman Desmond (Des) Rupert Chapple, 450419**

Des was a Leading Aircraftman in 1 Personnel Depot (Staff) in the RAAF. He enlisted in January 1945 when he was 19 and was discharged in February 1946. Des was born in Auburn. He started work in the office at the South Melbourne workshop of the CRB in 1943.

Des told his own story about his service career in *Reminiscences of Life in the Country Roads Board*.

*"I went into the Air Force from South Melbourne. In those days the CRB was a protected industry and we weren't allowed to leave; you had to get special permission. Fortunately, a friend of my father was the head of Manpower in Brighton and Dad took me down to see him and he gave me the form which gave Desmond Rupert Chapple permission to enlist in the Royal Australian Air Force. I took this in to the powers that be who choked and carried on a bit and away I went. I was in the Air Training Corps for 12 months and I had to wait four months for a call up for the air crew.*

*I went into the Air Force but they dragged me out when the Germans capitulated. The Board applied to the Minister for Air for my immediate release. They sent their letter asking would I also apply for a discharge. I thought, 'Oh, yes. I will get out when I am ready.' The letter started off, 'Would you please apply for a discharge?' Then the final paragraph pointed out that the Board had applied direct to the Minister for Air for my early release. It took about three months before the letter caught up with me."*

Des had been listed to go to Canada to the Empire Training School but the war ended two weeks before his departure date. After his discharge, Des resumed working at the CRB. He shifted from South Melbourne to the Exhibition Building where he worked in the Trade Claims section and,

later, he became second in charge of the pay section. For about the last 10 years he managed the Board's correspondence registry.

Des was ineligible for any service benefits because he had not served in an operational area or rendered war-like service. If he had spent at least three months of service in the Northern Territory or experienced a single day of bombing, he would have been in an area when a Japanese attack occurred above the 14 degree 30 minute parallel.



Des Chapple.

Des died in Frankston in February 2005.

Des' archive has not been digitised.

### **Flight Sergeant Stanleigh Richard (Rick) Clarke, 11323**

Stanleigh (always known as Rick) enlisted in the RAAF in July 1940 and served until July 1947. He was born in Melbourne in May 1922 – so that his age at enlistment was just 18. At the time of his enlistment his occupation was as clerk with Gregory Steel Products in Collingwood.

There is also confusion about his name. On some forms it is 'Richmond' rather than 'Richard' but on others, 'Richard' has been crossed out. But on two statutory declarations that he completed on the file and elsewhere in his archive, he referred to himself as Stanleigh Richard Clarke. I also

notice on the file that there are different spellings of his first name – ‘Stanleigh’ and ‘Stanley’ – both of which he has put his signature to at various times.

Flight Sergeant Clarke’s training as a pilot started at Laverton (Victoria) in July 1940 and he attended an Air Crew Course at Air Force headquarters in October 1940. Further training occurred, flying Tiger Moths (50 hours of elementary training) and Avro Ansons (130 hours of service flying training). This training was undertaken in Sandgate (Brisbane), Benalla (north central Victoria), Ascot Vale (Melbourne) and Bradfield Park (Sydney).

He embarked from Sydney for the United Kingdom on 16 May 1942. He didn’t arrive in England until 14 August – a journey of three months. There are no details that I can see about how he got there but I suspect that it was via America. In England, he gained further flying experience flying Airspeed Oxfords at Hankerton, Wiltshire, and Wellingtons at Moreton on Marsh, Gloucestershire. The Airspeed Oxford was a twin-engine monoplane aircraft developed and manufactured by Airspeed. It saw widespread use for training British Commonwealth aircrews in navigation, radio-operating, bombing and gunnery roles throughout the Second World War.

In February 1943 he embarked for the RAF Middle East Command in Egypt. He was attached to Ferry Command. This was the secretive RAF command formed to ferry urgently needed aircraft from their place of manufacture in the United States and Canada, to the front line operational units in Britain, Europe, North Africa and the Middle East.

In June 1943, he was discharged on being granted a commission, and sent to Air Head Quarters in Calcutta, India, to join 215 Squadron. He was now a Flight Lieutenant. Following the outbreak of war with Japan, 215 Squadron (RAF) was re-formed as a bomber unit in December 1941. Equipped with Wellingtons, it was posted to India in 1942 and was involved in bombing operations in the Burma Campaign. It was later re-equipped with Liberator aircraft. During this period, it included a significant proportion of aircrews from other Commonwealth countries, many of whom, like Rick, were RAAF personnel. The squadron suffered significant losses of personnel and aircraft on operations over Burma. In April 1945 it assumed a transport role and was re-equipped with Douglas Dakota aircraft.



Rick's enlistment photo (left) and another taken later during his service.

In India, he flew, as a pilot, on 25 sorties comprising 21 night bombing raids (in Wellingtons), two supply drops (in Dakotas) and two day bombing raids (in Liberators). This service was between 23 March 1943 and 25 November 1944. Altogether he logged 174.30 hours on operations. In RAF squadrons aircrew were committed to a tour of 25 to 30 operational flights not exceeding 200 actual hours, over a period of four to twelve months. A six-month break – usually spent as instructors – was followed by a second and final tour.

Instructing had its dangers too, as it involved flying with inexperienced pilots, usually in old or superseded planes. In the RAF, more than 8,000 men were killed in training or non-operational flying during the war. Throughout the stories in this book, it is clear that operational flying was extremely hazardous for a variety of reasons in addition to enemy firepower from the ground and in the air. Other factors included the target location, fatigue, the type of aircraft flown, and maintenance and airworthiness of the plane. Statistically, the most dangerous sorties were the first five and the last five. Only 24 per cent of aircrews survived the war unscathed.

Bomber operations were extremely stressful with random chances of death or terrible injury. It was physically and mentally demanding and required intense concentration for many hours, even on the return journeys from their targets. Not only did they have the danger of hostile enemy firepower, but adverse weather conditions could also cause damage and destroy planes. There were other hazards too such as frostbite, lack of oxygen and lower air pressure at height and the crews



needed equipment to keep them warm and breathing. These dangers were exacerbated when flying at night.

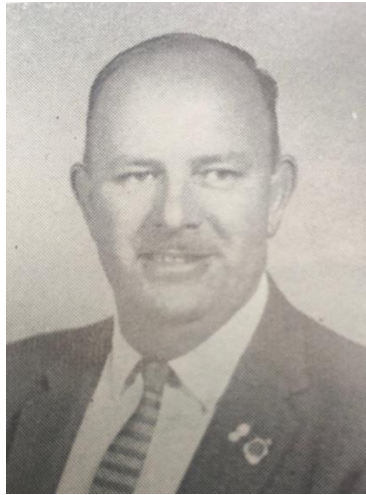
Not all aircrew made it home to their base. Some planes were forced down in the sea. If men were able to escape, they could not survive in the water too long. If survivors were spotted, or if their distress signals were heard, rescue by ships or seaplanes could be made.

Strategic bombing on Burma was never on the scale that it was over Europe. However, the Wellingtons and later Liberators in the theatre did achieve some remarkable feats with their limited numbers. Their willingness to continue flying through the monsoon season was an impressive feat. Japanese aviators pulled out of the theatre during this time as they considered it was too difficult to fly. Although flying under these conditions was an added danger, it was felt by the RAF that the benefits justified the decision. The targeting of Japanese airfields meant that the Japanese Air Force pulled its planes further back and indirectly lead to Allied bases being made fairly safe from Japanese air attack.

From Rick's archive, it can be concluded that he finished his first tour of duty flying with the RAF in 215 Squadron and the 31st West African Division over Burma, and was sent back to Australia where he disembarked at Melbourne on 17 January 1945. As was the practice, he was sent to the Advanced Flying and Refresher Unit based in Deniliquin, NSW. This was more commonly known as No. 7 Service Flying Training School RAAF (SFTS). To illustrate the point made earlier, No. 7 SFTS suffered a number of accidents during its existence, resulting from pilot error, mechanical faults, fuel exhaustion, and collisions on the ground and in the air. At least 29 instructors and students were killed during training.

It was here that Rick's war ended and he was discharged in July 1947.

Following discharge from the RAAF, he served under articles to Mr M. J. Lea C. E., and obtained his license on 16 October 1950. He joined the CRB in July 1951. For several years he carried out all types of surveys throughout the state and the metropolitan area, and he was appointed Senior Staff Surveyor in December 1962. However, as the CRB expanded it wasn't long before the Title Survey Section had to relocate to "Saint Martins in the Field", a smallish former church hall around the corner in Queensberry Street.



Rick Clarke on his appointment as Principal Title Survey Officer.

Rick became the third leader of the Title Survey Section following the death of Sid Atkinson (see Chapter 6) and later, the retirement of Theo Lester Atkinson (see Chapter 6). He was an extremely competent and visionary manager and ensured that the section adopted the best modern technology, new computer systems and that all surveys were fully integrated within the CRB and the State. Part of his vision was to combine the various survey and mapping functions that were operating separately throughout the CRB. After a significant amount of work he brought all groups together to form the Survey and Mapping Division. This new Division included title surveying, engineering surveying, geodetic surveying, cartography, photogrammetry, survey development photography and all the survey and mapping records.

Rick was a leader in the survey profession throughout the State. He was an active member of the Institution of Surveyors Australia and was President of the Victorian Division of the Institution during 1971 and 1972. He was appointed as a Member of the Surveyors' Board of Australia for a two-year period from 1975 to 1977 where he and other Members were responsible for the Registration of Surveyors and maintaining and developing the application of cadastral surveying and standards throughout Victoria.

After his retirement from VicRoads, he moved to Barwon Heads with his wife and enjoyed a long and healthy retirement. It is interesting to note that one of his sons, Drew Clarke, was also a surveyor who worked for many years in several Commonwealth Government Departments. Drew had a somewhat stellar career and he became Chief of Staff to Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull.

Rick died near Geelong on 31 July 2016 at the age of 94.

### **Warrant Officer Gabriel (Gub) Alexander Pierre Considine, 18743**

Gabriel was born in Mildura in 1914 and enlisted in the RAAF in September 1940. He described himself as a motor mechanic. He was married with one child.



Warrant Officer Gabriel Alexander Pierre Considine.

He desired to enlist as a ground mechanic. He explained that he was apprenticed to George Phillips in his motor garage for four years and drove passenger buses for W. L. Telfer of Mildura for two and a half years. He also drove a Patrol Grader for his present employer (CRB) on road grading and maintenance work – including truck driving and labouring. He also apologised because, “I have only had a 6th class education”. It is noted in the file that he had worked for the CRB for three years.

He didn't do too well at his Trade Test because his ability to read drawings was only fair. However it was noted that he was patriotic and wanted to do his bit. He was neat, clean and respectful and a nice type.

He was taken on as a Trainee Mechanic and in February 1941 he qualified as a Flight Mechanic. In June 1941 he was a Fitter (Driver Motor Transport) and then a plant operator in November 1943. His postings included Laverton, Melbourne, and Ascot Vale (in Victoria), Birdum, Melville Bay, 58 Mile and 109 Mile (in the Northern Territory), Mount Martha (Victoria), Randwick and

Sydney (New South Wales). He disembarked from Sydney in April 1945 for Morotai and then moved to Tarakan and Balikpapan before returning to Sydney in December 1945.

Gabriel was discharged in January 1946 and died in 1982 at Frankston.

### **Corporal Francis (Frank) Ernest Cutting, 51280**

Frank was born in Oakleigh in 1907 and enlisted in February 1942. He married Alice May Dunster in 1930 and they had four children at the time of enlistment. He was nearly 35 years of age and his occupation was 'Gardener'. When he enlisted, he was asked what was his preference of trade and he requested 'Aircraft Hand' for which he was rated as suitable. He had to sit for an exam to prove his suitability.



Frank's enlistment photograph – 1942.

As a young man, Frank was a talented cyclist and on 3 August 1927 he won the Leongatha-Korumburra-Wonthaggi Road Race. The newspaper report said that he won easily on a Malvern Star

Frank's initial postings were as an Aircraft Hand at Laverton and Cressy (in Western Victoria) through to May 1943. After that he was reclassified as a Driver Motor Transport where he worked

with the Mobile Works Squadron. His postings are difficult to decipher but he definitely worked for a time in Sydney. I could not see any embarkation details for overseas service – and yet he was awarded the Pacific Star and the War Medal which infers he had either overseas service or service in the Northern Territory where he would have been vulnerable to hostile air attack. His proficiency rating throughout his RAAF career was consistently at the highest level.

Frank had a career in horticulture which spanned fifty one years. He commenced with the State School's Nursery in 1921 and worked there until he enlisted. After his discharge he started work with Caulfield City Council and joined the Board in 1947. After a short spell at South Melbourne, he transferred to Dandenong Division where he worked under Bob Joyce who was later to become the CRB's first Horticultural Officer. He followed Bob to the Works Sub-branch and was reclassified as an Overseer on Roadside Development. In this capacity he worked across the State in planting and landscaping roadsides and developed a fine reputation for his technical skills and thoroughness.



Frank Cutting on his retirement in 1972.

He was discharged from the RAAF in November 1945 and he retired from the CRB in July 1972.

Frank died at Heidelberg in 1980.

## **Flight Lieutenant John Frederick Dohrmann, 409822**

John enlisted in October 1941 at nearly 19 years of age. He was born in Kew in October 1922 and he lived in that suburb all his life. At enlistment, he described himself as a draughtsman with the CRB, Carlton. He was a Leading Aircraftman but in October 1942 he was granted a commission and became a Flight Lieutenant.

He joined 76 Squadron. This squadron was formed in Queensland on 14 March 1942 as the RAAF's second squadron equipped with P-40E Kittyhawk fighters. During April, seven of No. 76 Squadron's P-40s were ferried to Port Moresby and handed over to No. 75 Squadron, which was suffering heavy losses while defending the town from Japanese air raids.

The squadron deployed to the front lines of the New Guinea Campaign in July 1942 but John did not join it until July 1943. He served at Milne Bay until September and then transferred to Kiriwina for the next three months. Kiriwina is the largest of the Trobriand Islands north of the eastern-most tip of the mainland of New Guinea. Allied forces landed on Kiriwina in June 1943. US Army Engineers immediately commenced the construction of an airfield including a 2,000 metre coral-surfaced runway. In addition to Kiriwina, 76 Squadron also established bases at Momote, Noemfor, Morotai, Tawitawi and Labuan. The squadron engaged in bombing-and-strafting attacks on enemy troop and gun emplacements, enemy airfields, supply points, shipping (particularly barges and small craft), and as escort for bomber aircraft.

John returned to Melbourne in December 1943 – to No. 1 Personnel Depot located at the Exhibition Building in Melbourne. The RAAF requisitioned the building in October 1940 for use as a barracks and training facility. It occupied the building and the adjacent Carlton Gardens between 1941 and 1946. This was a homecoming for John because the CRB also occupied part of the Exhibition Building.

In July 1944, John was redeployed to 105 Fighter Control Unit in Darwin and later to 110 Fighter Control Unit in Sattler in the Northern Territory. In January 1945, he was transferred to Morotai and, in May 1945, he served at Tarakan in No. 114 Mobile Control and Reporting Unit until September 1945.

All these units were responsible for controlling anti-aircraft batteries and air-to-air interceptions of Japanese planes and shipping.



Course photograph of No. 4 Service Flying Training School (4 SFTS). John is on the extreme right in the back row. Of the 33 men in this picture, 9 were killed on active service.

John married Henrietta Deacon in 1945. I don't know any details about his career at the Country Roads Board but he is listed as working there in the Board's 40th Annual Report. From electoral roll information, I can confirm that John was a consulting engineer and that he lived in Kew.



John Dohrmann in later life.

He was discharged from No. 114 Fighter Control Unit in November 1945.

John died in January 2011.

### **Warrant Officer Stewart Maxwell Doig, 401923**

Stewart enlisted in April 1941. He was born in Sandringham in October 1920.

I have no record of his career at the CRB but in the electoral roll of 1949 he is described as a draftsman and in the 1989 one he is an engineer – meaning that he qualified after the war. His wife's name was Joan Margaret and they lived in Hampton.

Stewart had three years of experience with the Metropolitan Gas Company in their Drawing Office and Structural Shop before joining the CRB where he worked as a draftsman in the Bridge Design Office. At enlistment, he was in the third year of a civil engineering course at the Melbourne Technical College.



Stewart Doig at enlistment – 1941.

His initial training was carried out at many places – including Camden, Laverton, Benalla, West Sale, Mildura and others. As an Airman Pilot he and trained in many different types of aircraft such as Wirraway, Kitty Hawk, Oxford, Battle, Ryan, D.H. 82, Wackett Trainer, Avro Trainer and Avro Anson. His total flying hours on completion of his service was 899.50 of which 47.40 hours



was flown while serving with No. 80 Squadron, and 168 hours flown on test and ferry duties with No. 5 Aircraft Repair Depot (ARD) in Wagga.

No. 80 Squadron was formed at Townsville in September 1943 and was equipped with Kittyhawk fighter aircraft. It became part of RAAF's main mobile unit, No. 10 Operational Group upon its formation. This group's main role was to support the rapid advance of Allied units along the north coast of New Guinea. Once its training was completed the squadron moved to Nadzab in New Guinea in February 1944.

Probably because of the breadth of his training, Stewart became a test pilot. A confidential report written by the Commander of No. 15 ARD said:

*'W.O. Doig has shown outstanding keenness and efficiency. While test flying aircraft he has been involved in four accidents due to mechanical or structural faults and in each case exhibited coolness and sound airmanship. These accidents have in no way reduced his enthusiasm for test flying duties. He has a quite retiring nature and is thought highly of by his fellow mess members. His service outlook is good.'*

This report implies that he was test flying planes that had been repaired, mechanically and structurally, to ensure that they were fit for service.

At the time of his discharge in February 1945, Stewart was a Warrant Officer in No. 15 ARD in Port Moresby, New Guinea. There is no record of him returning to the CRB after the war.

Stewart died in Carrum in June 1996.

### **Corporal James (Jim) Henry Albert Drayton, 56270**

Jim was born at Winchelsea in 1917. He enlisted in May 1942 and joined the Royal Australian Air Force. His first job was with Fletcher Motors in Geelong but at the time of enlistment he was working at the Country Roads Board. He described himself as a motor driver.



Jim Drayton's paybook photograph – 1942.

Jim undertook training in flight rigging, fitting and plant operations – all of which he successfully completed. He joined 8 Airfield Construction Squadron which was formed at Ascot Vale on 1 Jan 1943. The unit first moved to Flemington, Victoria, where it collected its equipment and prepared both personnel and stores for transfer to the Northern Territory. On 4 May 1943 Jim was in the advance party that reached Venn Airstrip, Northern Territory, and commenced work. Their first task was the construction of a road between the bases at Long and Fenton, which was completed after one week. During August a detachment proceeded to Melville Bay to sink water bores and assemble facilities for a full-scale move to Melville. Jim was stationed at Melville Bay from 25 October 1943 to 29 July 1945.

Jim's first letter home to Ella, his wife, was dated January 1943. He wrote many, many letters to her during the three and a half years he was in the RAAF.

After returning from the Northern Territory to NSW and Victoria, Jim was posted to 7 Airfield Construction Squadron which, in May 1945, was sent to Bougainville where he served for six months.



Ella and Jim Drayton.

He was a Corporal at the time of his discharge in 1945. He joined the CRB soon after returning from the war and remained for the rest of his career with CRB until he retirement in 1975. He was employed as a grader driver in Geelong Division then moved to Box Hill and became the Chief Driving Instructor attached to the Mechanical Sub-Branch at Syndal. This role saw him working throughout Victoria in training drivers and assisting in the purchase of new plant. He was then promoted to an Engineering Assistant position located on the fourth floor at 60 Denmark St as a controller of the CRB's construction plant throughout the state until he retired.

He talked very rarely about his time in the RAAF up until members of his family travelled to the Northern Territory. He then recalled how they used to jump from their machines and hide in trenches when the Japanese fighters came over.



### Jim Drayton in later life.

Jim died in 1999. Jim had another connection to the CRB. His daughter, Jan, married Norm Bettess. At Jim's suggestion, Norm joined the CRB in 1966 and worked in Plans and Survey (under Noel Anderson – ex RAAF), in Dandenong Division and in Building Services until he resigned in 2001.

### **Warrant Officer Walter (Wally) Frederick Dyall, 430203**

Wally was born in Benalla in August 1924 and enlisted in the RAAF in January 1943. His occupation in civilian life was 'survey chainman'. Wally matriculated from Benalla High School and passed all subjects at a 'higher standard'. After graduation from high school, he commenced a course of Engineering Drawing by correspondence with the Melbourne Technical College.

He trained with the RAAF at Benalla, Deniliquin and Mildura as an Airman Pilot in Tiger Moths, Wirraways and Spitfires. He started as a Leading Aircraftsman and was promoted to Sergeant in October 1943, Flight Sergeant in April 1944 and Warrant Officer in April 1945.

After completing his training, he was posted to 457 Squadron in January 1944 at Livingstone (near Darwin) in the Northern Territory. This squadron was originally formed in England in 1941 and was equipped with Supermarine Spitfires. It was redeployed to Australia in June 1942 to provide air defence for Darwin and northern Australia.



Wally Dyall on enlistment – 1943.

The squadron remained in the Northern Territory and saw little combat during 1944 although Wally is recorded as having flown nine operational sorties in the south west Pacific area during this period. The squadron moved north to Morotai in early 1945, and from there supported the invasion of Labuan. It attacked Japanese positions in the Netherlands East Indies and Borneo as part of Allied offensives in these areas. However, Wally didn't participate in this theatre and saw no further action. In October 1944, he was posted to No. 1 Personnel Depot at Ransford – which was the name given to the RAAF base at the Melbourne Cricket Ground.



Melbourne, Vic. C. 1945. A WAAAF airwoman, two RAAF aircrew trainees and a RAAF airman during their discharge process at No. 1 Personnel Depot RAAF, Ransford, Melbourne Cricket Ground.

Shortly after the Japanese surrender in August 1945, 457 Squadron was disbanded. Wally was eventually discharged in October 1945 with the rank of Warrant Officer.

Wally worked in Benalla Division and later transferred to Bairnsdale as Assistant Divisional Engineer.



Wally Dyll's Spitfire

From *The Supermarine Spitfire Mk. VIII in the Southwest Pacific – the Australians*

by Phil. H. Listerman.

When he was in Benalla Division, Wally told Ted Barton of an exploit. He said that it was fairly difficult to get a bead on a target in a Spitfire. When he was in Darwin, an Australian plane had to make a forced landing on the beach of a small island. The RAAF was concerned that the plane might be salvaged by the Japanese so they sent Wally and another pilot out to destroy it. Wally said that the plane was sitting quite clearly on the beach and he and his flying partner attacked it with all guns blazing - but Wally said that the safest place on the island at that time was in the abandoned plane on the beach.

Wally married Barbara Ellen Broughton in 1945 and died at Bairnsdale in 1998 at the age of 73.

## **Flight Lieutenant Arnold Ralph Easton DFC, 410469**

Arnold was born in Corryong in 1917, and after attending primary and secondary schools in Bairnsdale, he started work as a civil engineer at Preston City Council, studying at night at Swinburne and RMIT. He enlisted in the Royal Australian Air Force in January 1942. He cited his previous trade and trade qualifications as Draftsman, Assistant Engineer and Survey Draftsman.



Arnold Easton at enlistment and 1979.

In his first year with the RAAF, he trained as a navigator at Somers, Mt Gambier, Port Pirie and Nhill. In 1942 he was a Pilot Officer and was promoted to Flying Officer in 1943 and finally to Flight Lieutenant in 1944.

He left Melbourne in January 1943 for Brighton in the UK (via the USA) where he attended Officer's School. He was posted to 467 Squadron at Waddington in Lincolnshire. He flew in Lancaster bombers and was awarded a Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC). It stated that Flight Lieutenant had completed numerous operations against the enemy in the course of which, he invariably displayed the utmost fortitude, courage and devotion to duty. In his discharge papers, his Squadron Leader said: "This Officer is outstanding in every way. His great sense of duty and efficiency has been an inspiration to all. He is highly competent and extremely reliable." His Group Captain, D. Bonham-Carter added: "I have a very high opinion of this officer".



This is the regular crew of Old Fred on 23 of the plane's 49 missions.  
Two men were RAF and the remainder were RAAF.  
Arnold – the Navigator – is centre rear.

Arnold published a book in 1997 called *We Flew Old Fred: The Fox Lancaster POF (DV372)*. In it, he meticulously detailed every mission he flew as described in his log book. He identified every crew member and described what happened on each mission, including the flight paths.

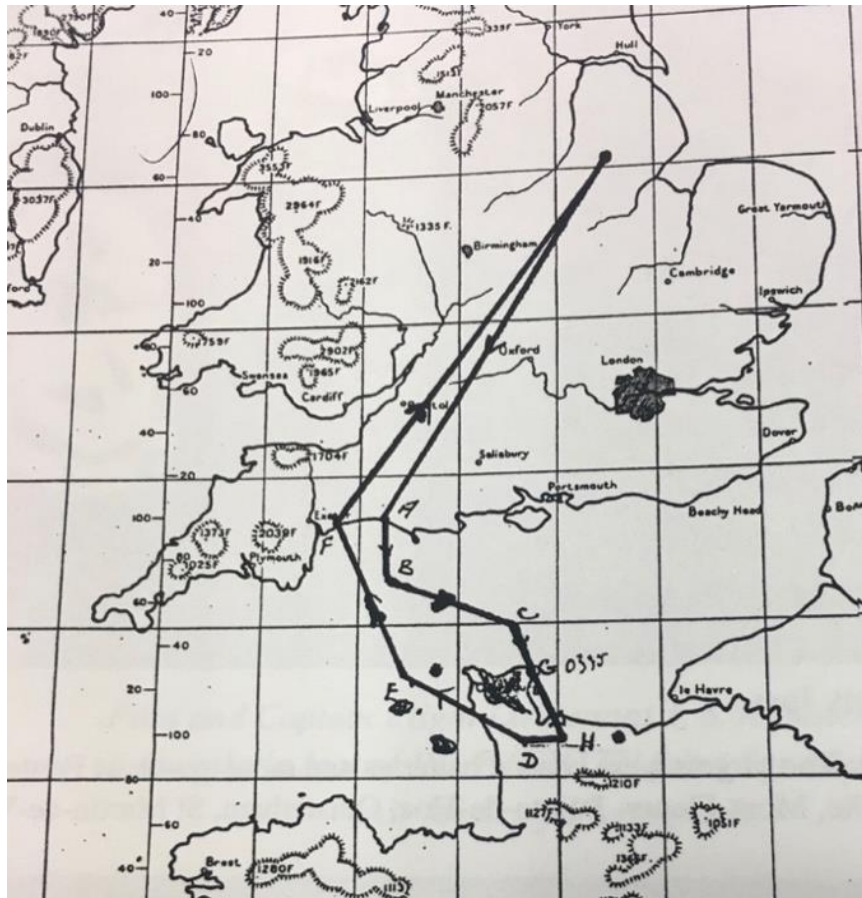
The forward section of Arnold's plane is in the Imperial War Museum. I found an article on <https://somethingverybig.com/tag/lancaster-dv372/> written by Adam Purcell in 2009, which provided the following information.

Avro Lancaster Mk I DV372 of 467 Squadron flew its first operation on 18 November 1943. The target was Berlin. Over the next seven months the aircraft would fly on 50 raids, including the entire Battle of Berlin period, the infamous Nuremberg Raid and the Transportation Plan operations on French railway targets in the lead-up to D-Day.

*Old Fred*, as it was known on account of its squadron code letters PO-F, was on the strength of 467 Squadron. The man with whom *Old Fred* is probably most associated, is Flight Lieutenant Arnold Easton, a 467 Squadron navigator who flew 20 trips in the aircraft from March until May 1944. His logbook was preserved, and befitting his civilian career as a civil engineer, it is one of



the most detailed and comprehensive wartime logbooks. It was the basis of the book, *We Flew Old Fred – The Fox*, written by Arnold after the war.



This was the route taken for the raid on St Pierre du Mont on 5/6 June, 1944 (D-Day). The route was taken well to the west to be clear of the Normandy invasion forces.



A painting of Old Fred the Fox.

Like many surviving Bomber Command aircrew, Arnold kept some bits and pieces relating to his wartime service when he returned to Australia. Arnold's son, Geoff, used to play with his flying helmet, putting it on and pretending to connect the intercom cable, with its distinctive bell-shaped Bakelite plug, into an imaginary 'aeroplane'. Somehow it never stayed plugged in.

Geoff and his wife decided to donate his leather flying helmet and metal circular navigational computer to the Imperial War Museum in London. They were unique relics with a direct connection to *Old Fred*. They allowed Geoff and his wife to crawl into the aeroplane through the bomb aimer's escape hatch in the nose. They then used the yellow handrails on the side of the fuselage to move up underneath the flight engineer's position into the cockpit proper. There, just behind the pilot's seat, was the navigator's bench and, tucked in underneath it, attached to a swinging arm, the unpadded metal bucket chair in which Geoff's father sat for twenty operations over enemy territory. Pulling the chair out, Geoff sat down and placed the helmet on the desk. He looked around, soaking up the atmosphere. Among the instruments and equipment remaining in the cramped compartment, hanging from the bulkhead to his left was a rather familiar-looking bell-shaped Bakelite plug. Could it be?

Geoff picked up the end of the intercom cable on the helmet. He pushed the two bell-shaped plugs together. There was a snug click. For the first time in nearly 70 years, the flying helmet was reunited with *Old Fred*. Geoff stood up, stooping somewhat under the low roof of the fuselage. He exited the aeroplane the same way he came in, leaving his father's flying helmet on the desk.



### The forward section of Old Fred.

Arnold also described his emotions when he visited the Imperial War Museum when he re-acquainted himself with Old Fred. He said:

*'As I gaze up at her, a feeling of deep pride engulfs me. She looks huge. Just for a fleeting moment I feel she is mine and mine alone. It is hard now to comprehend the fact that she has survived all those daring, tumultuous and hair-raising experiences, half a century ago. Many times I guided her through periods of unbelievable difficulty and danger, and then, after debriefing, slept, as best I could, whilst she was prepared by the ground-crews ready to venture forth once more the next night.*

*I always wondered what was to come next – life or death? A parachute jump from a blazing aircraft? Escape or capture? Imprisonment perhaps for years to come? If we had known, would we be able to cope? Now as I gaze at her my emotions deepen. It is unbelievable. All I feel like doing is to reach out and touch her. She is real! Events of long ago flood through my mind. The aura which has enveloped the two of us is indescribable – is it a type of love? Admiration perhaps. Or just deep respect we have one for the other? For all that time she has waited patiently in the Museum for one of her Australian crew members to come to her – other Australians have come, only to gaze, and then seemingly unimpressed, just pass her by.*

*Suddenly out of the blue it seems as if PO-F quietly says to me – “Let’s live again one of those bombing raids, eh?” Like a flash, my inner being urges me to shout the reply, “Now? I wouldn’t have the guts to!” Perhaps it is my pride that prompts me to remain silent and she continues – “What about that nine hour trip to Munich?”*

In September 1945, at his own request, he was transferred to the Reserve to join Qantas Airways as a navigator. There he flew in Lancastrians – the civil version of a Lancaster - between Sydney and Karachi, but health problems forced him into giving up flying and he returned to life as a civil engineer. He qualified in 1950 and worked for APM before joining the CRB in 1973 where he worked until his retirement in 1979.

Like Bill Kendall (also ex-RAAF), Arnold worked in the Municipal Section at Dandenong Division. One day he brought in some long, aluminium strips, which his aircraft had dropped as part of the British ‘Windows’ deception to confuse German radar operators.

He freely talked of his experiences – some of his colleagues thought it was his way of coping. However, his colleague in Dandenong Division, Stan Hodgson, told me that the Chief Engineer at the time, John Mathieson, had asked Stan to ensure that Arnold was provided with work that was not too stressful.

Arnold married Helen Margaret Tanner in 1948 and died in Blackburn in August 1999.

### **Leading Aircraftman John Frederick Edwards, 54000**

John was born in 1923 at Flemington and enlisted in April 1942. He gave his occupation as farmer. I have no information about his employment at the CRB.



John Edwards paybook photograph.

John did a number of training courses relating to fitting, flight rigging, aircraft recognition, and air gunning. He was stationed at Darwin a number of times and at Rathmines (at Lake Macquarie, NSW). RAAF Base Rathmines was established in 1939 and was the RAAF's main flying boat base during the Second World War. During the war, aircraft based at Rathmines conducted anti-submarine patrols along the Australian east coast and the base was home to the RAAF's main seaplane training units. In addition, detachments from squadrons based at Rathmines flew

numerous offensive mine laying missions into Japanese-held territory (due to Rathmines' distance from the front line, these aircraft staged through bases in Northern Australia when travelling to and from their targets).

There is an esoteric mention of duty outside the mainland of Australia but no other details are provided.

He was discharged in March 1946.

### **Flight Lieutenant Andrew (Andy) Edward Guthrie, 254459**

I worked for many years with Andy in Bridge Division and had no inkling that he served with the RAAF during the war. He lived in Hawthorn and was loyal in every way to Hawthorn – especially their football club. In fact it was his persistence that prompted me to try out with the Hawks in 1963. In his enlistment papers Andy described himself as an engineering and architectural draughtsman and I saw his name on many of the bridge plans in the files at the CRB. He was also a skilled drawer and it was always his responsibility to draw up the Bridge Division Christmas card each year – usually an elderly masonry bridge with weeping willows on the river bank. Most of all, however, I remember him playing in the solo school at lunchtime – and in the afternoon he often pondered over whether he should have called *misère*, or finessed on the first lead. In those days, Andy was in charge of the plan filing and specification office.

Andy was married when he enlisted in the Citizen Air Force in February 1942. He and Mary lived at 544 Burwood Road Hawthorn. They later bought a house not far away in Inverleith Street where they lived out their lives. Mary was a hairdresser. Her maiden name was Mary Isobel Matheson

He was born in 1905 in Pietermaritzburg in Natal, South Africa. He joined the CRB in 1938 but he did not start his career in Bridge Branch until he was discharged from the RAAF in 1945. In later years he was an active member of the R.S.L. and was President of the Hawthorn Sub-branch 14 times and he was made a life member of the R.S.L..



Andrew Guthrie's enlistment photograph,

On his application form for a Commission in the RAAF he said that his present occupation was *'Road designing draftsman at the Country Roads Board. Past 18 months coordinating officer Institution of Engineers voluntary drafting service for defence work.'* He also played cricket for Hawthorn East Melbourne and his golf handicap was 21.

Most of his postings were with 6th Squadron (where he acted as Adjutant) and 79th Squadron. There are a number of references in the file about Andy's age. He was just shy of 37 when he enlisted and there is no mention of him flying. I'm sure that his role was administrative.

Andy served in Townsville, New Guinea (from March to December 1944), Darwin and Brisbane. 6 Squadron was mainly a training squadron but 79 Squadron was a fighter unit equipped with Supermarine Spitfires which saw combat in the South West Pacific theatre of the war. I think it was with them that he served in New Guinea.

He was discharged in October 1945 and he returned to the CRB where he worked until his retirement.

Andy died in 1970.

## **Flight Lieutenant David (Dave) Thomas Hewson, 41999**

David and John Pittard (see below) had much in common. They were a bit like brothers. They were both born in 1924 – two months apart - David in Brighton and John in Hampton.

I met both of them when I started at the CRB in 1961. David was the Deputy Chief Road Design Engineer under Harry Townley and John succeeded another serviceman, Frank Hosking, as the Advance Planning Engineer, after serving a long time in Bridge Design Branch.

Dave and John first met when they trained together in the RAAF training school at Western Junction in Tasmania. After completing their training, Dave was posted to Point Cook to learn to fly twin-engine Airspeed Oxfords and John to Deniliquin to fly single-engine Wirraways.



December 1942 – RAAF Course 31 for trainee pilots at No 8 Elementary Flying Training School, Western Junction, Tasmania. David Hewson is on the left end of the seated row and John Pittard on the right of the second top row.

Dave enlisted in the RAAF in October 1942 and was discharged as an Airman on 16 June 1943 on being granted a commission as a Pilot Officer. At the time of his enlistment, he had worked at the CRB as a Junior Draftsman.



David Hewson - 1942

On 4 August 1943, Dave embarked from Adelaide to England where he arrived on 10 September. In England, Dave undertook further training in flying Blenheim, Beaufort, Beaufighter, and Mosquito planes which, when added to his training in Australia, clocked up more than 380 hours of flying time. In May 1944, his first posting was to No. 510 Squadron RAF at Hendon in Middlesex. The squadron flew light transport aircraft on communications and liaison flights within the United Kingdom. In September 1944, Dave was transferred to 456 Squadron.

No. 456 Squadron was the RAAF's only dedicated night fighter squadron. It was formed at Valley, on the Welsh island of Anglesea, in June 1941 and joined 9 Group of Fighter Command. The squadron was initially equipped with Boulton Paul Defiant aircraft but had barely begun operations before it was re-equipped with Bristol Beaufighters. The obsolete Defiants were ill-suited to the night fighter role, but the potent radar-equipped Beaufighters, were well-equipped for stalking German bombers in Britain's night skies.

The squadron operated Beaufighters for a little over a year before it was re-equipped with De Havilland Mosquitoes in December 1942. The De Havilland Mosquito was even more versatile and its introduction, combined with a lessening of the German air threat over Britain, led to a diversification of 456 Squadron's activities. From the start of 1943 it was also employed on offensive patrols over occupied Europe, striking at both German bombers near their home



airfields and at targets on the ground. In March 1943 the squadron relocated to Middle Wallop, in Hampshire to the east of Salisbury.

At the time of its introduction in 1941, the Mosquito was one of the fastest operational aircraft in the world. Originally conceived as an unarmed, fast bomber, the Mosquito's use evolved during the war into many roles, including low to medium-altitude daytime tactical bomber, high-altitude night-bomber, fighter-bomber, photo-reconnaissance aircraft, pathfinder and day or night fighter. The crew of two, pilot and navigator, sat side by side.



A De Havilland Mosquito of No 456 Squadron, flying from Middle Wallop, in flight. The censor has scratched out the wing-tip antennae of the Airborne-Interceptor radar.

Although the night skies remained the 456 squadron's principal domain, it also mounted operations in daylight, attacking trains and other enemy transport in France, and flying patrols in defence of Coastal Command aircraft operating over the Bay of Biscay.

At the end of February 1944 a German "mini-blitz" on London and other targets in southern England resulted in 456 Squadron being redeployed to strengthen the defences there. It joined 11 Group at Ford, south east of London, and operated in its primary role against German bombers. The German campaign petered out at the end of May, just in time for 456 Squadron's efforts to be diverted to protect the Allied landings in Normandy that began on 6 June. Later that month, the squadron returned to the air defence of Britain, mounting patrols to intercept V1 flying bombs.

456 Squadron launched its last operational sorties of the Second World War on the night of 3 May 1945 but these were aborted due to bad weather. After the Armistice on 8 May, the squadron was employed to enforce the surrender of the German garrisons on the Channel Islands and on reconnaissance missions over Germany. It disbanded on 15 June 1945 having shot down 42 enemy aircraft and 29 V-1 flying bombs during the war.

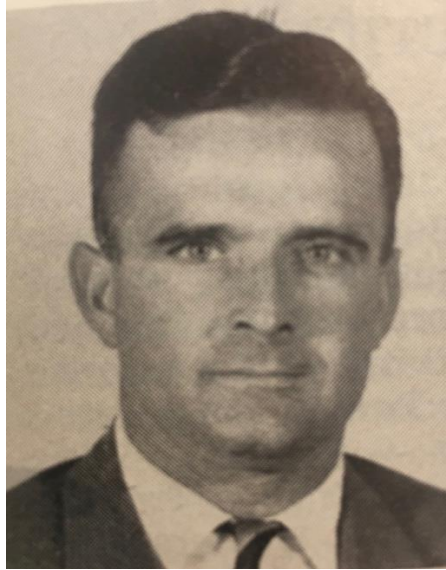
In April 1945, Dave and his navigator, Warrant Officer John Hutchinson of the RAF, were returning to RAF Station, Bradwell Bay in Essex, in a Mosquito Bomber after an unnamed sortie over Europe. They came in to land at 3.05 a.m.. Both propellers of the plane had been damaged by flak, but Dave safely negotiated the landing and neither of them were injured.

David flew as first and second pilot and racked up 160 hours of defensive and offensive night fighter operations over Europe. He flew 22 sorties between September 1944 and June 1945. His total accumulated flying hours in the UK – training, operational and non-operational – was a grand total of 660 hours.

He was promoted to Flying Officer in December 1943 and to Flight Lieutenant in June 1945.

David was highly respected. In reports on file, it said: *“F/O Hemson with experience should go a long way as a leader, has a most charming personality, sound common sense and is very loyal. Is well liked by his subordinates and treats them in a correct manner. A very good pilot and a definite asset to the Flight, No task any trouble to him. An above average officer.”*

On his return to Australia after the war he studied at the University of Melbourne under the Commonwealth Repatriation Training Scheme and obtained the degree of Bachelor of Civil Engineering. He returned to Plans and Survey at the CRB and then transferred to Bridge Division as a construction engineer. In 1956 he was appointed Assistant Divisional Engineer at Bendigo and in 1959 he returned to Head Office as Assistant Plans and Survey Engineer. In 1965, he became Engineer for Plans and Survey.



Dave Hewson – 1965.

Noel Anderson (see above) told me another story about Dave. Apparently, there was a Polish engineer/draughtsman who worked for Dave in Plans and Survey who was a wizard at maths. However his wartime experiences had left a mark on his emotional condition and he was prone to severe changes in mood. One night, Dave was contacted to say that this particular person was down at the police station as a result of some sort of altercation. Rather than leave it alone, Dave went down and sorted it all out with the police and paid the bail to enable the man to be released. Noel said that Dave knew the man's wartime history and was very supportive and protective towards him.

David was also known for another act of heroism which was recorded in the CRB's 42nd Annual Report as follows:

*It is with pride and pleasure that reference is made to an act of conspicuous gallantry by Mr. David Hewson, a member of the Board's Engineering staff during bridge building operations on the Calder Highway in Gisborne.*

*Early in the afternoon of the 19th July, 1954 two employees of the bridge contractors were demolishing the centre masonry pier of the old bridge when one of them, a non-swimmer, fell into the creek. The other man, who could barely swim went in to try and save his companion, but was unable to support him and was in difficulties himself. Mr. Hewson dived into the water fully clothed, brought the second man back to the pier and then dived unsuccessfully for about 10 minutes in an endeavour to recover the first man's body. His quick action undoubtedly saved the life*

*of one man, and his sustained efforts to try and recover the body of the man drowned were most praiseworthy, especially as the temperature of the water was very low at the time.*

*The Royal Humane Society of Australia has awarded a Certificate of Merit to Mr. Hewson for his rescue work.*

Dave married Dorothy Emslie Hauser in 1947 and they had four children.

Tragically, and somewhat ironically after such a distinguished war record in the face of high danger, Dave was killed in a car crash on the Calder Highway, early in the morning of 23 March 1968. He was only 43.

### **Flying Officer Edric (Ted) Charles Howlett, 2977, 1116**

Ted was born in Ararat in September 1917. His next door neighbours were the Ross family and their son, Jack, and Ted became life-long friends. They both worked for the CRB, their families holidayed together and they lived near each other in Melbourne. However, during the war, Ted served with the RAAF and Jack served with the RAN (See Chapter 8).



Ted Howlett as best man at Jack Ross' wedding in 1942.

Ted enlisted in the RAAF in August 1937 (No.1116) and in the RAAF (No. 2977) in June 1942. He had worked as a clerk at a local timber and hardware store and later as the Assistant Secretary

of the Ararat and District Hospital where he worked for 18 months prior to joining the RAAF. In 1942, Ted married Vera Jean Sherwell.



Ted's photobook photograph – 1942.

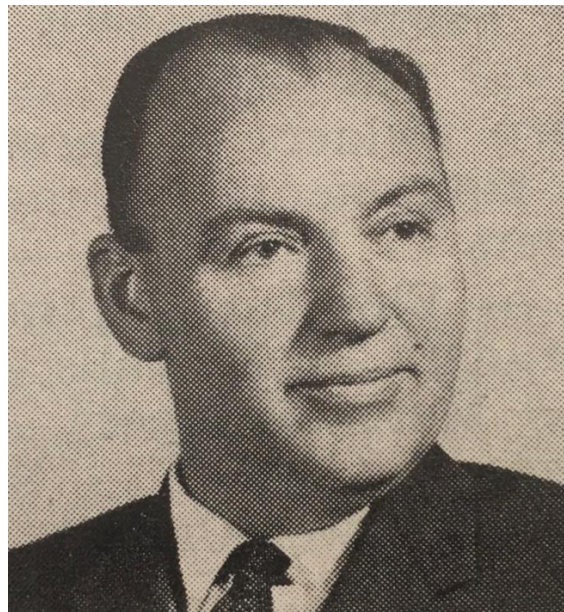
Following his initial enlistment he undertook training at Laverton in August 1937 (Recruit Training), and at Point Cook in October 1937 (Flying Training School), July 1939 (No. 10 Squadron) and September 1939 (Flying Training School). After enlisting full time in June 1942, Ted was posted to Air Force Headquarters in Melbourne. In the following September he attended the School of Administration in Carlton after which he was posted to Townsville in November. A week later he was sent to Port Moresby to join 'RAD Wing'. This abbreviation is not in the standard glossary of RAAF abbreviations but I suspect it might mean radio wing.

In April 1944 he returned to Townsville and then in May, he was appointed to RAAF headquarters in Brisbane until November 1945. He remained in the RAAF for quite a while – until March 1948 – before being discharged. Ted had a reputation at the CRB as an excellent administrator and I think the RAAF soon found this capability. Interestingly, Ted joined the War History Section in November 1945 until June 1947, presumably documenting, assembling and filing records of the RAAF's contribution to the war effort.

Ted started with the CRB at the Exhibition Building in 1948 as a Senior Clerk. His responsibility was to assist the Secretary and to act as Minute Secretary at Board meetings. In 1949 he was appointed Personal Assistant to the Chairman, Donald Darwin. He came to admire Darwin very much including his puckish sense of humour. He recalled that Darwin was doing some Christmas

shopping and he entered Ted's office to say "I must get Bizet with my Chopin Liszt – but I won't be Bach in Ten Minuets". His entire career at the CRB was spent as the Chairman's administrative right hand, organising meetings, deputations, Board inspections and the one hundred and one minor and major functions that occurred in the affairs of the Board. He assisted Chairmen Roberts, O'Donnell and Donaldson until his retirement.

His success in the role of Personal Assistant was acknowledged when he was selected to accompany the Minister of Public Works, sir Thomas Maltby on an overseas tour in 1959.



Ted Howlett – circa 1960s.

Ted's major outside interest was 'Legacy' for which he was an enthusiastic and tireless worker.

He retired in 1978 after 29 years of service and died in Box Hill in July 1989.

### **Sergeant William (Bill) James Kendall, 58751**

Bill was an air wireless mechanic with the Royal Australian Air Force. He was born in 1924 in Hawthorn and enlisted in 1942. His previous occupation in civil life was 'as a junior pay clerk with the Dunlop Rubber Company.

Bill attended St Patrick's School in East Melbourne and the headmaster, as one of his referees said that "He is a steady, patient, willing worker of more than ordinary ability. He is a strikingly honourable, straight, reliable boy: of good address, perhaps a little diffident on first approach." I knew Bill, albeit fleetingly, but I think this is a very apt description of him as a man.

He trained in Australia and then served in the UK from 1944 to 1946. His file indicates extensive training in Australia (including Signals School at Point Cook and Richmond, NSW) before his embarkation to England. His proficiency in all categories was rated 'A' class and his character was rated 'Very good'.

It is not clear where he was in England but there is one mention of Metheringham in Lincoln. He was attached for a time to three different Servicing Echelons – numbers 6456, 4466 and 6451. Servicing Echelons (SEs) are support units for various combat squadrons. The last three digits represent the squadron and the first digit the type of aeroplane. For fighters the code is '6' and for transport planes the code is '4'.

So, using this system I think I can say with confidence that Bill was with 456 Squadron (the RAAF's night fighter squadron) in Middle Wallop in Hampshire, 446 Squadron (RAAF bomber squadron) at Metheringham, and 451 Squadron (RAAF spitfire squadron) at Hawkinge in Kent.

SEs were originally formed by taking the ground servicing elements of a flying squadron and making them self-contained. The idea was to make squadrons more mobile. A squadron could land at an airfield with an SE to be rearmed, refuelled or receive minor repairs. When a squadron was required to move, it only involved the flying element.

SEs originally had no squadron allegiance and morale within these units began to suffer so in 1944 they were renumbered and attached to a squadron although the flying element could relocate leaving the SE at the old location.



Bill's pay book photograph and circa 1960s.

He was discharged in 1946 with the rank of Sergeant.

Bill studied engineering part time at Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology during the 1950s. He worked for the CRB in Plans and Survey and later as the Municipal Engineer in Dandenong Division.

Bill died at Warrandyte in February 2006.

### **Flying Officer Lloyd George Lawson DFM, 401223**

Lloyd was born in Camberwell in 1916 and attended Scotch College. He enlisted in January 1941 and in his enlistment paper he cites his civilian occupation as chicken sexer. When I first read this I thought he might be pulling our leg, but it is true – his father was a chicken farmer and Lloyd worked as a chicken sexer when he was 21 and again when he was 32.

In 1939, he married Valda Winifred Vogt.

Lloyd attended his initial training course at the 1 Wireless Air Gunners School (WAGS) in Ballarat where over 6,000 RAAF personnel were trained during the Second World War. Approximately 20% of the trainees died in action or on active service. WAGS was established in April 1940 as part of the Empire Training Scheme which aimed to support RAF Bomber Command. There were



58 Wireless Air Gunner Courses and 12 Navigator Courses conducted between 1940 and 1945. Lloyd attended the eleventh course between March and August 1941. Thirty five of his fellow trainees were killed in action and others were to become prisoners of war.

Lloyd also trained in Port Pirie and left Australia in the *Mariposa* in October 1941. He disembarked in Bournemouth and he was crewed up with Flight Sergeant G.N. Reeve D.F.C.. Reeve returned to Australia but was killed in an air accident after his return.



Flying Officer Lloyd Lawson.

He served in the RAAF over Europe with the 35 Squadron Pathfinder Force in Bomber Command and was discharged in February 1946 with the rank of Flight Lieutenant.

The Pathfinder Force was an elite corps of crews with high navigational ability. It evolved from the somewhat limited accuracy of bomber crews during the early years of the war together with the development of more sophisticated and difficult to use electronic navigational aids. In August 1942, the officer in charge of Bomber Command, hand-picked crews from operational bomber squadrons to form the Pathfinder Force. It was commanded by veteran Australian bomber pilot, Air Commodore D.C.T. Bennett, who retained command throughout the war.

The gallantry of the Pathfinder Force is now legendary. Its contribution to the war effort was immense and the greatest of its many successes was its part in the sustained Battle of the Ruhr.

The Pathfinder Force flew over 50,000 individual sorties against some 3,440 targets. The cost in human lives was grievous. At least 3,727 members were killed on operations



No. 35 Squadron – 1942. Lloyd is in there somewhere.

Lloyd completed 45 operations with 35 Squadron after which he won his Pathfinder Badge. He completed 37 missions with Reeve. The other eight were with various pilots, one of whom was Commanding Officer Brian Robinson D.F.C. who was later killed. He completed two raids over Berlin with Robinson and said it was a terrifying experience as the Group Captain believed in flying straight and level across the target – and did so through all the Berlin defences.

His tour included raids on Kiel, Stuttgart, Pilsen, Duisburg, Essen, Hamburg, Turin, Milan, Lorient, Naxaire, and many other targets.

Lloyd was awarded the Distinguished Flying Medal, conferred on him by the King at Buckingham Palace on 2 November, 1943. The citation stated: *“With a large number of operational sorties to his credit, Flight Sergeant Lawson has proved himself to be a most capable and efficient Air Gunner. During his missions, when severe opposition has been encountered, he has never faulted in his duties. The safety of his aircraft has frequently been dependent upon his direction and the effective operation of his guns. Throughout all his operations, which includes attacks on Essen, Hamburg, Berlin, Turin and Milan, his conduct has been exemplary”*.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

UK0621

2 November 1943 – RAAF officers outside Buckingham Palace after an investiture.  
Left to right: Flying Officer L.G. Lawson DFM, Flying Officer C.O. Aubert DFM  
and Warrant Officer J. Carson DFM.

(It is possible that this photograph was taken by another CRB Airman, Tom Scott. He was the RAAF's official photographer in England at the time and he attended all the investitures at Buckingham Palace.)

There is a report on file by Pilot Officer G. N. Reeve which describes an incident on one mission. It is written in a very stilted, militaristic style so I will paraphrase it. Reeve was nervous because it was his thirteenth mission over Germany in a Halifax. They were climbing slowly at 140 m.p.h. when an engine cut out and the plane stalled. Reeve ordered the flight engineer to jettison the bombs. However one of the big bombs became stuck and the weight of it threw the plane out of balance and it began to spin. While the flight engineer struggled with the hand release the plane fell spinning from 16,000 feet to 8,000 feet. At this height, Reeve ordered the crew to bail out. He said they nearly lost Lloyd George Lawson of Melbourne. He was half way out the escape hatch when suddenly the bomb gave way and the plane straightened out. They made it back to base on three engines.

Lloyd left London in June 1949. I can only presume that his wife, Valda, joined him in London after the war. On his return to Australia he lived in Camberwell with his wife and mother. In 1954 his occupation is listed as restaurateur. During the 1960s and 70s Lloyd worked as an Experimental Officer in Materials Research Division of the CRB.

At some time after 1977, Lloyd and Valda shifted to Perth in Western Australia. Valda died there in 2012 and Lloyd died later. I could not find a date of his death but he and Valda were both well into their nineties.

### **Leading Aircraftman William (Bill) Peter Lindstedt, 117223**

Bill was born in Surrey Hills in July 1924. He attended Chatham Primary School and Box Hill High School where he played tennis, football and hockey. In fact, he played tennis with Wimbledon champion, Frank Sedgman. After completing his Public Service entry exams, he joined the Vacuum Oil Company where his interest in sport was further nurtured through his boss, Percy Beames<sup>4</sup>. Keith Miller – the Australian cricketer - also worked in his office.

He joined the RAAF in July 1942 immediately after his 18th birthday. Bill wanted to join the navy but because Bill's father was a sea captain, he but would have none of that – no doubt influenced by his experiences working on a mine-sweeper during the First World War.



Bill Lindstedt's photographs.

There are three photographs of Bill in his archive. I suspect the one on the right was taken in the Philippines when Bill was working with the American forces.

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<sup>4</sup> Percy Beames was an all-round sportsman. He played 231 VFL games for Melbourne and was captain/coach for 48 of them. He played in three premierships teams (1939, 1940 and 1941). He represented Victoria 18 times in Sheffield Shield cricket scoring 1186 runs at an average of 51.56. His highest score was 226 not out. He was appointed captain of Victoria in 1945 but retired a year later to concentrate on football. He became the doyen of cricket and football reporter for *The Age* newspaper – for 30 years.

Bill trained at 1 WAGS (Wireless Air Gunner School) and numerous signal and telegraphy schools and successfully completed all courses. However, he was prevented from working as an aircrew member due to his poor eyesight and so he was posted to 6th Wireless Unit as a wireless operator and telegraphist. He trained in Point Cook and Brisbane, and in 1944 he was sent to New Guinea, Morotai (Indonesia) and later, in 1945, to Leyte Island in the Philippines. Bill had been trained in Japanese radio codes and his role was to eavesdrop on Japanese radio communications. He was repatriated in January 1946 to Heidelberg Hospital with an eye infection that he picked up in New Guinea. At discharge he was a Leading Aircraftman.

Bill once described what he called his 'jaunts' overseas, the second of which was at the time of the liberation of the Philippines by General Douglas MacArthur. They took Leyte Island and then followed on to Luzon and finished up about 80 miles north of Manila in an area occupied by the Japanese which had previously been a holiday resort for the wealthy Spanish overlords of the Philippines. He said that the Japanese had poisoned the water in the swimming pool but compared to the conditions that the Australians provided on his previous 'jaunt' in New Guinea, living with the 'Yanks' there was a luxury.



San Miguel, The Philippines, 1945. No 6 Wireless Unit, RAAF.  
The large tent in the centre was the Signals Office. From there a radio circuit was run back to the main unit on Leyte Island.

After the war, Bill studied Personnel and Human Resources Management at RMIT and in 1964 he joined the CRB's Human Resources Department where he worked in various roles until his retirement in 1984.



Bill Lindstedt – 1978.

He started as an Industrial Relations Assistant in a period of great change which saw the regulation of Conditions of Employment for Salaried Staff and other conditions determined by the Awards of the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission. In 1981 he became the Chief Industrial Relations Officer – a position he held until his retirement in 1984.

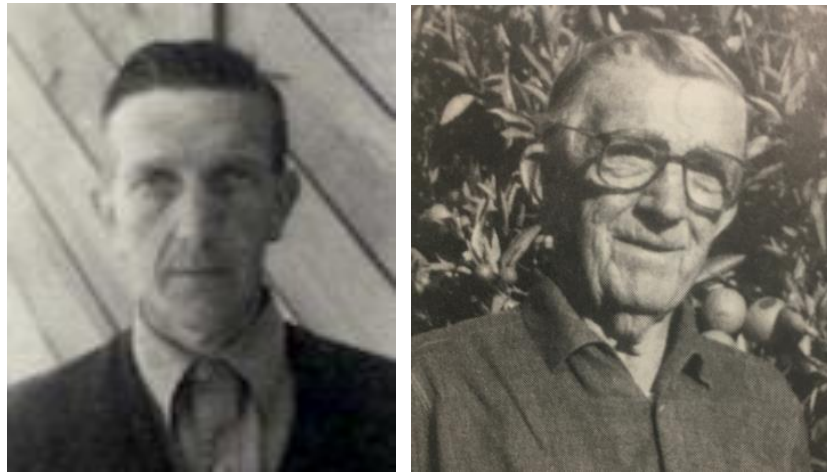
Bill married Winifred Kathleen Sayers Williams in 1949. He died in July 2010, just a month shy of his 86th birthday.

### **Warrant Officer Eric Harold Martin 485**

Eric was born in Fitzroy in October 1903 and enlisted in September 1924 – hence his low service number. His Record of Service states that he had done training in radio engineering and that he served in the RAAF for six years. It also noted that he was a Stores Officer with the Country Roads Board, Melbourne.

He re-enlisted in July 1941 when he was 37 years old. His papers for his re-enlistment state that he served at Radio Schools in Canberra, Richmond, Townsville, Bowen and Swan Hill. It noted

that he was an 'A' Class Radio Mechanic and he was awarded the War Medal – probably because of his service in Townsville which suffered bombing by the Japanese.



Eric's enlistment photo (left) and at 80 years of age.

He was discharged from the 1st Personnel Depot in December 1945.

Eric had the distinction of developing and installing Victoria's first traffic signals. He was a radio ham and qualified radio telegrapher. He joined the CRB in 1934 to work with road gangs operating out of the South Melbourne store yard. But his talents were more suited to other tasks.

In 1936 he was offered the position as chauffeur to the Chairman, William McCormack. The Board was obviously impressed with Eric's qualifications; he had previously been the official driver for the Duke and Duchess of York (later to become the Queen Mother) during their visit in 1927 to open parliament in Canberra. Eric drove the Board over every kilometre of declared road in the State; if roads were impassable, inspections were completed on horseback.

After his war service with the RAAF, Eric returned to the CRB's Film Unit, screening movies to the workers at depots all over Victoria. It was his flair for electronics, however, where Eric made his biggest impact. He developed and installed the first traffic signals in the State at a busy highway section near Deer Park. He adapted American traffic counters to suit Australian conditions and refined them to register both cars and multiple-axle vehicles. He invented transistorized counting machines which were later patented by the CRB.

When Eric retired in 1969 he was, rather appropriately, the Electrical Officer and his duties were as varied from changing blown light globes to testing concrete on bridges with his own specially devised meter.

Eric's fascination with electronics never waned. Just one week before he died in 1987 he was working on circuits for a new metal detector. He was 83 years old.

### **Leading Aircraftman Alan Graeme Muir 148033**

Alan was born in Flemington in 1926 and enlisted in the RAAF at Essendon in March 1944 when he was 18. At discharge in June 1946, he was a Leading Aircraftman posted at Air Defence Headquarters in Darwin. His record shows that he was suitable to train as a radar operator because his maths and speech were deemed to be 'OK'.



Alan's enlistment photograph.

The daily pay applicable to his mustering was six shillings and sixpence (6/6) per day. If he were married he would have received an extra 4/6 – and for children, 3/6, 2/6 and 1/6 for each child thereafter.

He attended Radar School at Richmond in NSW and was posted to Darwin where he served until his discharge.



In 1950, he married Elizabeth Loder. He was head of the Geology Section in Materials Research Division of the CRB for many years.

### **Flying Officer John Henry Pittard, 419670**

John Pittard enrolled in the RAAF in September 1942 – a month before Dave Hewson (see above). He was 18 years of age and his occupation was given as ‘clerk’. John and Dave trained together at flying school in Tasmania.

After graduation, John was sent to Central Flying School and served as a flying instructor. He was a Flying Officer at 1 Aircraft Depot (AD). In March 1940, the RAAF began dividing Australia and New Guinea into geographical zones. No. 1 AD came under the auspices of Southern Area Command, which was headquartered in Melbourne and was responsible for RAAF units located in Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania. In addition to its training functions, No. 1 AD undertook research and development on various aircraft types, including Supermarine Spitfires, Boomerangs and Wackett Woomerangs. It also conducted comparative performance studies on Spitfires, Boomerangs, Kittyhawks, Brewster Buffalos, and Mitsubishi Zeros.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

NEA0408

CAC Boomerang undergoing tests.

When war was declared on 3 September 1939, the RAAF had just 3,489 men in uniform. Britain was able to supply only 22,000 of the estimated 50,000 they had calculated they would need. As a consequence Britain entered into an agreement with its dominions, including Canada, Australia and New Zealand, to contribute pilots and aircrew in support of the RAF. Australia agreed to supply 36% of the total number required. That meant training 800 new crew every month, a total of 28,000 men over the three years of the Empire Air Training Scheme. While initial training was undertaken at Point Cook, which had to be expanded to accommodate the large number of trainees, satellite runways were also constructed at Lara, Little River and in Werribee to ease the congestion in the skies.

By 1945 the RAF had more than 173,000 personnel in uniform, including 30,000 Australians, proving the success of the Empire Air Training Scheme, but this rapid expansion had come at considerable cost; almost 3,000 aircrew had died in training accidents across the Empire. Some of these casualties are included in this narrative. The British had initially promised that Australians would fly in national squadrons but this proved not to be the case. Most Australians flew in British Squadrons and joined in the most historic escapades of the war. Australian crew flew with Bomber Command over Europe and at least 37 Australian pilots flew Spitfires in the Battle of Britain in the skies over the Home Counties in 1940. One Point Cook graduate, Don Bennett, led 'The Pathfinders', an elite group within Bomber Command who guided the main bomber force to targets over Germany, marking them with flares and incendiary bombs. Bennett was later appointed Air Vice-Marshal, the youngest in the RAF.

John Pittard went to Benalla as an instructor. It was there that he met his wife, Betty Ann Fouracre. She was the secretary to the Chief Flying Instructor. He was there for about 18 months and taught about 50 airmen to fly – “more or less effectively” John said.



Flying Officer John Henry Pittard – circa 1940s.

After the war, John studied civil engineering at the University of Melbourne and graduated in 1950.



John Pittard before his graduation from the University of Melbourne – 1950.

John was discharged from the RAAF in Feb 1946. He died in Bendigo in May 1916 at the age of 91. John's nephew, Derek Trewarne, joined the CRB in 1963 as a Junior Clerk and had a long career there where he was finally located in the Property Services Department.

**Corporal Keith Thomas Pullin, VX23150**

After being shot down over Germany, Keith was taken prisoner of war. His story is included in Chapter 10.

**Flying Officer Wilfred James Quonoey, 428658**

Wilfred was an overseer in Benalla Division although his occupation at enlistment was salesman. He came from Wodonga and enlisted in May 1942 at the age of 18. Initially, he served as a Private in the 53rd Anti Aircraft Company but he was discharged from the Army in December 1942 to join the RAAF where he achieved the rank of Flying Officer in July 1945.



Wilfred's enlistment photograph.

He was discharged from the RAAF as a Flight Sergeant in January 1945 when he attained his commission as a Flying Officer.

He trained in Sale, Somers and Pascoe Vale from December 1942 to June 1943 after which he trained in Edmonton in Canada under the Empire Training Scheme. In 1944 he joined RAF 147 Squadron at Doncaster in England.

No. 147 Squadron had been formed early in the war as a bomber squadron but because of a shortage of aircraft it was used as a maintenance unit for other squadrons. The squadron was reformed in October 1944 as a transport squadron flying mainly Douglas Dakota aircraft in which Wilfred had received his training. The squadron provided transport between the UK and the newly liberated cities of Europe in France and Belgium. Initially flights were provided to Paris and Brussels, followed by Marseilles, Naples, Bordeaux and then Gibraltar and Greece. Destinations in Germany were added as they fell into Allied hands and, after the war, Norway and Czechoslovakia were also added to the list.

Wilfred was cited as Mentioned in Despatches which was promulgated in the London Gazette in January 1946 but no details were provided.

Wilfred died at Mt Eliza in 2004.

### **T. J. (Jack) Ryan – known as Long John**

I have not been able to find Jack in the archives. His initials were obtained from the phone directory of Dandenong Division but the DVA nominal roll for the RAAF lists seven men with the name T. J. Ryan, only two of whom were born in Victoria – one in Little River in 1907 and the other in Clifton Hill in 1896. Obviously the latter one is too old and the other seems to be born in the wrong part of the state.

We know certainly that Jack was a second generation roads man. His father, Frank 'Bull' Ryan was an overseer down in Gippsland who, during the Second World War, worked on the North-South Road in the Northern Territory. Jack started work as a labourer with the CRB in 1934 on the widening of the Licola Road. He said:

*"It was an Unemployment Relief job and the blokes on the job worked half time only; they were all single men. There were 400 or 500 of them. Camps were spread along just north of Heyfield for about 25 miles up the road. I got a job as a local which you could do in those days; everyone didn't have to come from Melbourne. I was a labourer. They were about the only jobs that were going.*

*With Unemployment Relief works, the Government had stipulated that all money had to go into wages, if possible. There was little mechanised plant on the job. There was a compressor for rock boring but other than that there was very little mechanised plant – horses and drays mainly.”*

Assuming Jack was say 17 years of age when he started work as a labourer it would mean he was born about 1917 – so the T. J. Ryan born in Little River also appears to be out of the equation.

After the war, Jack became a cost clerk (in 1945) and eventually he became the Divisional Engineer's Clerk in Traralgon Division – and when the Divisional Engineer, Frank Docking, shifted to Dandenong, Jack followed him and became the D. E.'s Clerk in Dandenong.

Jack himself wrote:

*“At one stage (in 1939) I was up in Bairnsdale working on the Nicholson River Bridge. There was a lot of fishing there. I was there on this job with Tom Mintern-Lane Snr, and on Sunday night we heard that war had been declared.*

*I worked there for about three months and I got the enlistment bug and enlisted in the Air Force. At that stage the Empire Air Training Scheme had not started and there were no vacancies in the Regular Air Force so I got on to the reserve. They said they would call me when something turned up. Nothing turned up for about 12 months, when I was finally called up. During this time a lot of the Bridge people had enlisted in the Engineers' outfit in the 8<sup>th</sup> Division. Most of them ended up as prisoners of war. They had a pretty awful time. I considered in one way it was a bit of a blessing that I hadn't been called up. I doubt if I would have survived the railway. In April of 1941 I went into the Air Force and didn't come out until just on Christmas 1945.”*

Another possibility is John Ryan 11561, born in 1915 and who enlisted on 1 August 1941 and was discharged on 21 December 1945 – an exact fit. He was born in Holbrook NSW. He was a Corporal and at the time of discharge he was in 1 Operational Training Unit. But his occupation on enlisting was cited as a motor mechanic. I don't think it is him.

So the real Jack Ryan remains a mystery. John Wright was an engineer in Dandenong Division and he remembered Jack telling him that he was injured as a result of a crash in a Flying Fortress in the Pacific theatre. John was also of the view that Jack was based in Townsville.

## Leading Aircraftman Melbourne James (Jim) Sanguinetti, 400649

Jim was born in Petersham in NSW in February 1910 and enlisted in Melbourne in October 1940 at the age of 30. His occupation was 'Grazier at "Nareen", Coleraine.' His next of kin – his mother was also mentioned as 'Home duties'.

Nareen was the home of Australia's 22nd Prime Minister, Malcolm Fraser. His family bought the property in 1946. First settled in the 1840s as part of the larger squatting run 'Koolomurt' on the traditional lands of the Jardwadjali people, Nareen was carved off as a separate parcel in 1886 by early Victorian grazier and parliamentarian James Graham.



Nareen Station – Coleraine.

I suspect that James' worked for the then owners, the Chaffey family who were pioneers of the irrigation industry in Mildura. James was educated at Camberwell Grammar between 1922 and 1925 and was then sent to King's College in London in 1926. He trained at the Officer's Training Corps in London and, in 1929, he joined the 44th Battalion of Australian Field Artillery where he served for one year.

James was very tall – six foot four inches – and he trained with for Aircrew in the RAAF at Somers, Essendon and Wagga but without success. He was discharged in August 1941 after 10 months of

service with the comment “Not likely to become efficient aircrew”. At the time of his discharge he was posted at the 2nd Flying Training School in Wagga.

In 1942, he married Charlotte Annie Kemp.

Jim was the Administrative Officer in the CRB’s Asphalt Division for many years up until his sudden death in the 1970s. It was John Rebbechi (ex-Asphalt Division) who alerted me about Jim. During the war, John’s father was a Flying Instructor with the RAAF at Point Cook and Jim was one of his trainees.

Jim was an active participant in the Municipal Officers Association and, rather than having his salary paid into a bank account, he opted to be paid in cash. When Jim died, John Bethune (who was the Asphalt Engineer at the time) assisted Jim’s son on matters regarding Jim’s estate. They could not find any records of any bank accounts. Apparently, Jim dealt only in cash.

Jim died in 1975 while still in the service of the Board, having worked there for 23 years.

### **Flying Officer Hartley Trevor Sargeant, V44681, 419278**

After being shot down over Germany, Hartley was taken prisoner of war. His story is included in Chapter 10.

### **Sergeant Edmund Thomas (Tom) Scott, 11849**

Tom was an iconic member of the Board’s staff. As the Board’s Photographer in Charge, he recorded all the major events such as road and bridge openings, conferences, ministerial and vice-regal inspections - as well as details for Annual Reports and progress on major (and minor) projects. He was a photographer with *The Age* prior to joining the Board in 1950 and many of his photographs found their way into that newspaper after he joined the Board. He also covered Royal tours in the state of Victoria. Tom regularly took to Victoria’s skies to take photographs of roadworks and construction projects.





The photographer photographed.  
Tom at work recording road works underway.

In the 1950s and 60s Tom organised (with Jim Stirling) the showing of films in the CRB camps scattered around the state. Many of these camps were in remote areas well away from townships. Whenever a film night was to be held, word got around the local community and they would turn up and often provide the supper. According to Tom, this was great for the road men because it enabled them to get to know the locals. They were all friends. They had a fortnightly round visiting up to ten camps per rotation. One week they would go east - and the next they'd go west.

Tom's file in the Australian Archives is the longest I have encountered so far – 183 pages. This is mainly due to two issues. The first was in regard to service medals to which he was entitled and the second was about the payment of expenses. I will discuss these later.

Tom was born in January 1918 at New Gisborne and left school early. When he was 14 he worked as a gardener at Mount Macedon for the Nicholas family (of Aspro fame), the G.J. Coles family and Sir Frank Clark, all of whom had large homes in the area. When he was 17 he left home to train as a landscape gardener but he lost interest and gave it away after a year. He was interested in radio and photography and for two years he worked in a radio shop selling and fixing radios. His mother was the local correspondent for *The Age* and his first ever published photograph was accepted by that newspaper when he was about 15.

He first tried to enlist in the RAAF in October 1939. He wrote to the Recruiting Officer of the Radio School in which he mentioned that he had been driving buses for two years (1936 to 1938). The Air Board responded saying they were very grateful for his application and that his name had been recorded as being available for duty. But that was it.

He wrote again in January 1940 pointing out that the RAAF advertisements in the newspaper seeking trainees for wireless operators suited him down to the ground. He pointed out that he had obtained Intermediate arithmetic and algebra and had attempted trigonometry and geometry – and that he was sitting for Leaving English the following month. In his spare time he was studying electricity and physics.

At the end of February 1940 Tom was invited by the RAAF to attend a trade test emphasising that the cost of travel in connection with the test had to be borne by Tom Himself. So his ongoing battle about expenses started before he even joined up. At the end of March 1940 he was invited to undergo another test as a photographer. This was to be done at Laverton and he was told that it would take all day. The letter stated that, *“No travelling or other expenses can be paid to you in connection with this test. A mid-day meal can be procured at the Air Force Station on payment of one shilling”*. He passed the test and was informed that the RAAF would contact him at a later date when he was required.

He started with the RAAF in August 1940 and underwent training in Laverton, Point Cook and Ascot Vale. He embarked for England early in 1941 aboard the H.T. *Ulysses*. The journey took 15 weeks and the ship was attacked off the coast of Ireland. The ship next to them was sunk. Once in England he was posted to 10 Squadron which was located in South Wales.



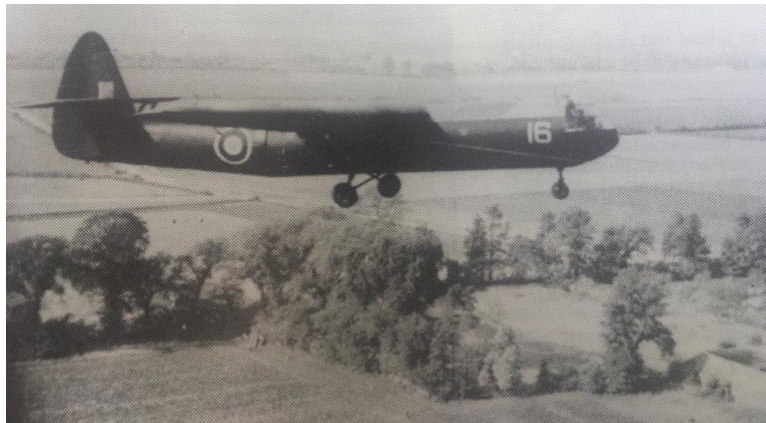
Tom Scott – 1941 – armed with an RAAF aerial camera at Cressy, in Western Victoria.

Immediately after forming at Point Cook, Victoria, in July 1939, No. 10 Squadron aircrew and ground staff departed for England to gain experience on Sunderland flying boats before ferrying them back to Australia. After war was declared, however, the squadron remained in England on active service with RAF Coastal Command, becoming the first Dominion squadron to go into action in World War II.

The unit's main tasks included convoy escorts, anti-submarine patrols and air-sea rescue work, and in July 1940, it gained the distinction of sinking the first submarine destroyed by the squadron. Operations continued into 1942 and 1943 with occasional attacks against U-Boats and regular encounters with German fighter aircraft. As result of armament modifications by No. 10 Squadron personnel - including the addition of galley hatch and wing-mounted machine guns - the Sunderlands came to be regarded as 'flying porcupines' by German aircrew.

In the month of February 1944, No. 10 Squadron accomplished a Coastal Command record by flying over 1100 hours - this remarkable rate of effort was only achieved through the dedicated efforts of aircrew and ground staff. Anti-submarine patrols continued throughout 1944 and by the end of hostilities, No. 10 Squadron had destroyed six submarines and became the only Air Force squadron to see continuous active service throughout the war.

He moved with the squadron to Plymouth and in August 1942, Tom undertook a course in photography at the RAF base in Farnborough where he excelled. His instructor noted that he was “*a good intelligent type of NCO who made full use of the course. He has a very good technical knowledge and is a good instructor*”. In 1943 he joined the RAAF Public Relations Office attached to the Overseas Head Quarters (OHQ) in London. He became the official photographer for the RAAF in Great Britain and he visited every Australian Squadron in England. He was showing the world what the RAAF was doing and his photographs were printed in the Australian press and distributed world-wide.



This is Tom's photograph of a glider (as used for the D-Day Landings) being towed over England. Tom was sitting in another glider and had to take his parachute off to take the picture.

He used to cover the investitures of RAAF personnel at Buckingham Palace and it was here that he met the Queen Mother (then the Queen) for the first time. She was his favourite model and he was to photograph her many more times during his career with *The Age* and the CRB. Tom also became expert in tennis photography at this time. In London, the RAAF had a special arrangement with Wimbledon which allowed RAAF personnel to play there. His photography there led to him becoming a photographer for the Davis Cup – initially as a hobby but later, he followed it around as part of his job. He explained it was only possible while he was single. But his photography appeared in many Australian tennis magazines.

Tom had a running battle with the RAAF regarding his expenses. To be honest I don't know how it was resolved because it would be too confusing to wade through the whole archive to find out. One of the letters he wrote is shown below.

*During my attachment to O.H.Q. from 1 January 1943 to 1 September 1944, I spent 86 days travelling on duty out of London. This time constitutes 29 trips of a duration of one to nine days. In which I covered 13,630 miles. In addition to this I attended over 100 functions, investitures, Wings for Victory Parades etc. in and around London.*

*My duty was to obtain photographs for Public Relations Branch and O.H.Q. photographic Section. In all this work I had to obtain contact and establish friendly relations with members of the RAF to fulfill my duty efficiently, but I received no allowance to cover the expense involved.*

*On all trips out of London of more than one day duration my London living allowance was stopped although my expenses actually doubled. I was allowed a refund for my lodgings for this period.*

*I was allowed claim a travelling allowance of sixpence per hour, on condition that service transport was not provided. This allowance averaged two shillings per trip, irrespective of the time spent out of London.*

*Transporting bulky cameras, slides, etc. entailed the use of taxis, and on long distance train journeys the use of sleepers was necessary. I received no refund for those expenses.*

*A Sergeant in the RCAF on identical duties was permitted to draw his London living allowance of 12 shillings per day, when out of London, and in addition received a travelling allowance of one pound per day.*

Tom estimated that he travelled 93,000 miles around the British Isles on photographic assignments with the RAAF. He kept those statistics because he reckoned he was being underpaid on his expenses.

He also had another running battle about his eligibility for the Atlantic Campaign Star. He wrote many letters and in 1996, Tom made a statutory declaration as follows:

*I understand I am entitled to the World War 2 Atlantic Campaign Star.*

*Servicemen who received the 1939-1945 Star for service during World War 2, also received a Campaign Star denoting the command area in which they served.*

*My Squadron, No. 10 RAAF operated Sunderland Flying Boats over the Atlantic for over five years against hostile submarines, shipping and aircraft, escorting supply ships to the United Kingdom. Their airmen received the Atlantic Star.*

*In transit to the United Kingdom, I spent 15 weeks travelling through hostile waters, eight weeks of this time in the Atlantic, where we were rostered for duty watching for enemy submarines, shipping and aircraft.*

*Our ship TSS Ulysses, was attacked while in convoy, and the ship alongside us, the Somerset, was sunk by German Fock Wulf Condor aircraft, in the Atlantic west of Ireland on May 11, 1941.*

As a photographer, he was classified as non-crew although his log book showed that he had flown in 15 fighting aircraft of the RAAF and the RAF on duty while serving in Great Britain. The main bases from which he operated – Plymouth, Mount Batten and Pembroke Dock were prime enemy targets and experienced periodic and saturation bombing throughout the course of the war. Bill kept a meticulous record of all his flights and recorded their purpose – air to air photography, aerial photos, shipping and the like.

The difficulty of Tom's case was that he flew with many different squadrons and there was no independent corroboration of his flying record. He did however receive the Defence Medal, the War Medal, Australia Service Medal and the Returned from Active Service badge.



A Sunderland Flying Boat as flown by 10 Squadron.

Tom applied for and was given early repatriation because of his mother's declining health. He turned to Australia in December 1944 and he was discharged in October 1945.

He worked for *The Age* for five years. He liked fashion photography and the social rounds. He described it as a good job if you liked ink in your veins and if you stayed sober.

In 1950 he joined the CRB. Jim Stirling was already there and he too was an RAAF veteran. They made a good team as Jim was more interested in making movies while Tom was more interested in still photography. In fact it was Tom who introduced photography into the CRB Annual Reports. He suggested it to the Chairman at the time and now it is standard practice.



Tom at work in the CRB Photographic Section in 1973.

Tom retired from the CRB in 1984 and died in October 2002.

### **Leading Aircraftman William Henry Smart, 120758**

William's enlistment papers state that he was a clerk with the CRB, prior to which he was employed by Albion Quarrying Co. There is also a letter on file written by Rolf Jansen, Secretary of the CRB, dated 2 October 1942, stating, "I have to inform you that the Board is prepared to grant the necessary release to enable you to join the RAAF."



William Henry Smart.

William was born in November 1924 in Armadale. He enlisted in November 1942 immediately after he turned 18. After enlistment he had to agree that, "... on satisfactory completion of a course of training I shall be re-mustered to Group II, as an Instrument Repairer, Armourer. Flight Mechanic or Flight Rigger, or any other mustering in that Group in accordance with Service requirements." He completed a six week Armourers Course at Armament School in Hamilton. Victoria, with excellent results in Gunnery, Bombing, Aircraft Recognition, Workshop Practice Mathematics and Chemical Warfare. He passed with special distinction. He did another 10-week course at Nhill and trained on 39 Beaufort Gun Turrets.

The history of aviation during the Second World War is full of exploits of pilots and aircrew, and this is as it should be. These people serve as the most visible members of the RAAF. However, then as now, there were thousands of others who performed their duties out of the public view on whom aircrew were totally dependent for their efficiency and safety. These were the people who maintained the aircraft, and made sure that all the equipment, instruments and guns were in working order. After planes returned to base, maintenance crews had to inspect them and, if necessary, repair them and get them ready for their next sortie.





Ground crew of No. 110 Squadron RAF service the starboard engine of a de Havilland Mosquito FB Mark VI at Joari, India.

Aircraft maintenance required strict attention to detail and was a dangerous business in itself. I read of one instance where an American B-17 blew up on the ground at Alconbury in Cambridgeshire, killing 19 people and destroying another four planes.

Many women became involved in the aspect of the war in the air. The Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force (WAAAF) was formed in March 1941 after considerable lobbying by women keen to serve and by the Chief of the Air Staff who wanted to release male personnel serving in Australia for service overseas. The WAAAF was the largest of the Second World War women's services. It has since been disbanded and now, female personnel have been absorbed into the mainstream RAAF. Australia's first female air force pilots graduated in 1988 and today, every role in the Air Force is open to women.



Two WAAAF flight mechanics checking aircraft engine components at RAAF Station Tocumwal, 1944.

So this young clerk from the CRB became an expert Aircraft Fitter/Armourer. The first part of his war was spent in Victoria but in February 1945 he was sent to England where he remained until March 1946. He was attached to 467 Squadron at Metheringham in Lincolnshire. This was the same squadron in which Arnold Easton (see above) served.

At the end of 1945, the Country Roads Board sought his release from the service which was eventually granted. He was discharged in May 1946.

William married Olga Doreen Wilkinson in 1948. I have not been able to find the date of his death.

### **Leading Aircraftman Donald Spencer-Jones, 126296**

Donald was born in Ivanhoe in 1925 and enlisted in January 1943 on the day after his 18th birthday. His file in the National Australian Archives has not been digitised so I cannot provide details of his service in the RAAF. However, from an excerpt in a Roadlines magazine in 1950 it stated that he worked as a radar mechanic for three years during the war. It also stated that he took a Science Course under the Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme after the war and he was discharged from the RAAF in March 1946.

He must have specialised in geology in his BSc because he commenced with the Board as a soil surveyor in 1950. He married Marion Neilson and they had two daughters, Meredith and Carolyn. Marion died in 1990.



Donald Spencer-Jones -1950.

I suspect his tenure at the CRB was short lived as most of his career was spent with the Geological Survey of Victoria and, in October 1967, Dr Spencer-Jones was appointed Director of that organisation.

Donald died in 2018 and at his funeral, Marion's brother, John Neilson, gave a eulogy to Donald. This is part of that eulogy.

*“He had a very inquiring spirit and sought always to understand the language of the Earth. He had a quiet sense of humour and sense of fun, which were endearing traits. He worked over a wide range of issues, including radioactive minerals, but his most lasting contribution was the detailed geological mapping and analysis of the Grampians. This, to me is his memorial. It also gained him his PhD. At about this time, he spent a week with me in the mountains north of Maffra, where I was busy on a geological mapping project. It was so good to have both his company and his advice and, camped in a cattleman's hut, we cracked many jokes at the fireside.*

*The next stage was Don's promotion to the role of Director of the Geological Survey, to which he made major contributions. First, he stabilised its structure, giving full recognition to its roles with groundwater and geological*

*mapping, and its roles with minerals and the importance of geology to major engineering projects. He saw the completion of geological mapping of the state at the scale of 1-250000. He developed the staff. This led to some gaining PhD degrees, while all gained in some ways. One feature of Don's was his humility. In leadership he saw himself as a servant and that word indeed describes his whole life. He left the Geological Survey as a widely respected body. The next move was to the top administration of the Department containing the Geological Survey. This was a difficult assignment in which I am sure he acquitted himself well. He left huge footprints for others to follow."*

Donald was also an Honorary Director of the National Museum and a Councillor of the Royal Humane Society.

### **Squadron Leader James (Jim) Belton Stirling, O36125 (2343, 829)**

Jim Stirling of the CRB was the top State-employed photographer. He made 16 colour movies for the CRB and was the mainstay of the film of the first Royal Tour of Queen Elizabeth. By virtue of his reputation as a photographer, he became Victoria's State photographer for royal visits and he accompanied the tour around Victoria. Tom Scott (see above), the CRB's other highly respected photographer, accompanied Jim and was responsible for the still photographs. The Premier's Department thereafter enlisted them to record other royal tours – those of Princess Alexandria, the Queen Mother (whom they described as a photographer's dream), the second Royal Tour, and the Duke of Edinburgh. Their portrait of the Queen was officially accredited as the official portrait of the Queen to be displayed in the Victorian Parliament, the Melbourne Town Hall and all State offices – including the CRB.

Jim was born in Hawthorn in August 1902 and married Eleanor Marie Watson in 1925. He enlisted in June 1934. He originally enlisted for six years but was re-engaged for another six years in 1940. On his Record of Service it states that he had three years working as a salesman and six years as a photographer. He had a long history of service. He was a senior cadet for four years, two years in the Citizen Military Force, a Stoker in the RAN for six months and as a photographer in the RAAF between 1926 and 1932. He had special qualifications as an Air Gunner and a Bomb Aimer.

From 1934 to 1941 he was attached to 3<sup>rd</sup> Squadron, Head Quarters Laverton, 4<sup>th</sup> Squadron, 6<sup>th</sup> Squadron, Survey Flight and another (illegible) unit in Mt Gambier. He was discharged in December 1941 on being granted a commission. His promotion through this period was steady – Leading Aircraftman, Corporal, Sergeant and Warrant Officer. Once commissioned he became Pilot Officer, Flying Officer, Flight Lieutenant and finally, Squadron Leader, in December 1943.

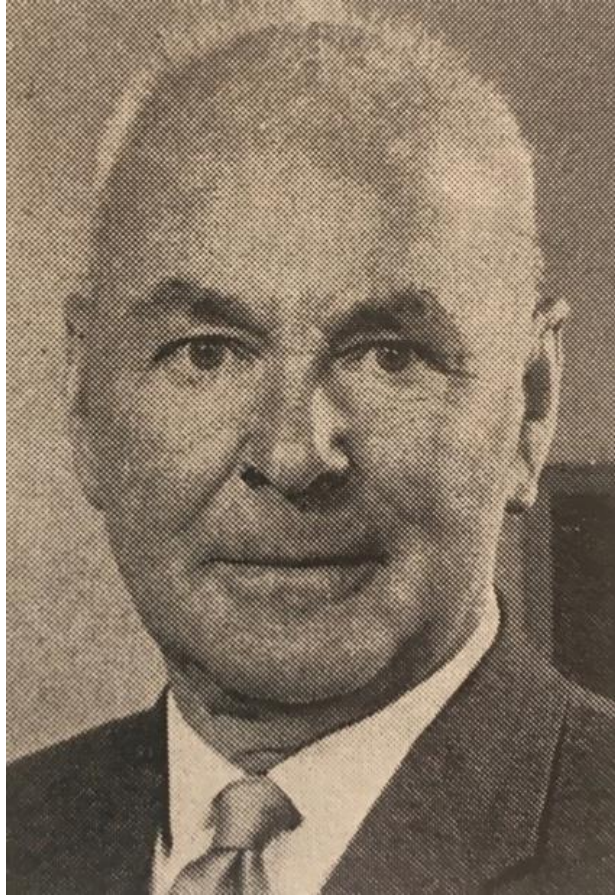
His postings were Adelaide, Port Pirie, Mallala (north of Adelaide where an Advanced Flying school had been established by the RAAF), Maryborough, Merauke (Indonesia), Wadke and Noemfoor (small islands off the northern coast of New Guinea), and Tadgi and Nadzab (small settlements on the northern coast of New Guinea). All of the locations in Indonesia and New Guinea were battle sites between the Japanese and American armies.

All his duties were as a photographer except for one appointment in 1941 which was as an instructor to an Army Corps. He was hospitalised twice for short periods but no further details are provided. Some of the movies he took during the war are in the archives on the Australian War Memorial website including the evacuation of Australian servicemen from Labuan (Malaya), soldiers relaxing (Burma), and gunnery practice in India.

On the Australian War Memorial website there is a 10 minute long, black and white video shot by Jim showing scenes on the wharf at Labuan Island, Malaya in October 1945. It shows RAAF personnel embarking for return to Australia and scenes on board the troopship.

In February 1945 he embarked from Melbourne aboard the '*Penrith Castle*' for the Middle East and it appeared he spent some time with the RAF in Colombo, Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) on the way back.

He was discharged from RAAF Headquarters in July 1946.



Jim Stirling – at his retirement in 1968.

Jim's date of death is unknown.

### **Miss T. Storey**

The list of Board personnel who enlisted for the Second World War as shown in Appendix 2, includes the name of one woman, 'T. Storey. I was eager to know her story - no pun intended. However there was only one woman called Storey who was born in Victoria in the nominal roll but her name was Valerie June Storey. Unfortunately, her archive has not been digitised so I can't see her details.

Valerie June Storey (90600) was born in 1922 in Preston and she enlisted in the RAAF in January 1942. She was discharged as an Aircraftwoman from 1 Embarkation Depot in January 1944. Once I am able to see her archive I can make a more balanced judgement about her identity. I might be grasping at straws.

**Flight Lieutenant Leonard (Len) Upton, 252706**

**Also Lance Corporal, VX32022**

Len was discharged from the Australian Army because of ill health and he joined the RAAF where he worked in a construction unit until his discharge in October 1945. His story is told in Chapter 6 above.



This photograph of Len is in his RAAF archive – circa 1940.

**Pilot Officer Thomas Allen Wade, 428281, V255036**

Thomas was a draughtsman at the CRB when he enlisted in September 1941. He was born in Surrey Hills, Victoria, in 1922. He was originally assigned to the 2nd Survey Regiment of the Royal Australian Artillery. However, he was discharged from the Army in October 1942 in order to join the RAAF. Refer to Chapter 6 for details about his army service.



Thomas Allen Wade. The badges on his collar indicate that this photograph was taken during his army service although the photograph is included in his RAAF archive.

During 1942 and 1943, Thomas trained as a pilot at Somers (Victoria), Parkes (NSW), Port Pirie (South Australia), Ascot Vale (Victoria) and Adelaide. He flew Fairey Battle, C.A.C Wackett, Anson, Wellington, Halifax and Lancaster aircraft. He embarked for UK in August 1943 with the rank of Flight Sergeant. There is no mention of the ship he embarked on but there is a note to say that he spent five days in the ship's hospital.

He spent time at the RAF No. 32 Wing at Whitley Bay in Northumberland. This was a training ground for toughening up aircrew. He also trained with the RAF at Little Horwood in Buckinghamshire. This station was for training recruits in combat and for 'nickelling', or the dropping of propaganda leaflets. He also flew non-operational flights (training) out of Market Harborough in Wellingtons.

In June 1944, he commenced a tour of duty with 138 Squadron and he was to complete it in March 1945. This squadron was formed in 1941, and was the first squadron of the RAF Special Duty Service. The squadron dropped supplies and agents for the Secret Intelligence Service and the Special Operations Executive to Axis occupied territory. They had several all-Polish volunteer crews. It carried out this role until March 1945 when it was reassigned to Bomber Command



The Nazi occupation of much of Western Europe in early 1940 posed many challenges for the British Secret Services. A high priority was to find an effective means of infiltrating and exfiltrating agents and, later, reliable methods for supplying the growing resistance movements with arms and ammunition. The work fell outside the normal duties of RAF squadrons so, in March 1940, RAF Tempsford in Bedfordshire became the base for No.138 Squadron and No. 161 Squadron. Flying mainly by the light of the full moon, these two squadrons operated throughout the length and breadth of Western Europe, delivering agents and supplies. Without the agents the secret services would have been hamstrung, and without the supplies the resistance movements would have been unable to participate in the armed struggle. By the end of the war, the Squadrons had, between them, lost in excess of 600 men.



Night flying was the *modus operandi* for No. 138 Squadron.

Tempsford Airfield was the base for some of the most secret squadrons of World War 2. They specialised in the delivery of agents either by parachute or by landing at night in a moonlit field, usually by the light of just three torches. The squadrons also conducted 'pick up' operations, again landing in the chosen fields to collect agents who needed to return to England.

Agents in the field needed equipment, and the Tempsford squadrons supplied it; they delivered arms, ammunition, radios and other equipment to the resistance movements in German occupied countries. These Squadrons acquired, over the years, various nicknames. They have been referred

to as the 'Moonlight Squadrons', 'The Cloak and Dagger Squadrons' and, perhaps somewhat tongue in cheek, 'The Tempsford Taxis'!

No. 138 also carried out food-dropping operations over Holland and POW repatriation flights during which it brought home nearly 2,500 men before VE Day.

Thomas flew 28 sorties for a total of 412 hours. Four of these were Special Duty flights and twenty four were for Bomber Command. The archive reveals that he flew Halifax and Stirling aircraft. This is a remarkable record. Bomber command normally limited aircrew to no more than 200 hours in one tour of duty over a year. Thomas flew over twice those hours in nine months. Bomber aircrew also had a terrifying survival record – 46 per cent perished – but Thomas' archive mentions nothing about misadventures.

In May 1945, Thomas was discharged from the RAAF and granted a commission as Pilot Officer. He arrived home in July 1945.

In 1974, he was living at the same home address in Surrey Hills to that from which he enlisted. I cannot find a record of marriage and I suspect Thomas remained a bachelor.

Thomas died in 1984.

### **Leading Aircraftman Kevin William Walsh AO, 147935**

The 1952 CRB listing of staff who enlisted in the Second World War (see Appendix 2) included a 'K. Walsh'. At first I had a bit of difficulty locating Kevin's details, but with the assistance of his colleagues, friends and family, I have been able to discover his story – and what a story it is!

Kevin was born in St Kilda East in July 1925. He went to work at the CRB when he left school in 1942. He worked in an engineering office - drawing road signs - while at night he studied engineering at the Working Men's College (now RMIT).

He enlisted in the RAAF in March 1944 - at the age of 19. His file in the Australian Archives has not been digitised so that I have been unable to see details about his service. His daughter, Bernadette, said that her father didn't refer to his wartime service often, except to say that he had a job decoding signals. His son, Brendan, said that he intercepted and decoded the signals and

transmissions – quite a task given that they used a hybrid of Morse Code to represent the Kanji script in all their military communications. He said that they were all packed up ready to go overseas, and were on the docks to be loaded into a troop ship in Brisbane when they received the message that the war was over and they were not being deployed. He remained in Brisbane and, according to the DVA nominal roll, he was discharged in October 1945 from RAAF COMM. I presume this is an acronym for RAAF Communications and Signals.



Kevin Walsh at enlistment – 1944.

Kevin was to become the grandfather of clinical neuropsychology in Australia and the founder of the Australasian Society for the Study of Brain Impairment (ASSBI). After his discharge from the RAAF, he commenced medical studies in 1946 under the Commonwealth Rehabilitation Training Scheme which paid for all his university fees, books and a living allowance. This scheme enabled many working class men and women to gain a tertiary education.

In the first year of his medical training, he became interested in psychology and enrolled in the University of Melbourne's newly established Department of Psychology. He studied both medicine and psychology concurrently. After completing his medical studies, Kevin became interested in abnormal behaviour, and during his tenure as a Neuropsychiatric Medical Officer at the Mont Park Mental Hospital, he studied the complex behavioural alterations induced by prefrontal leucotomy, for which his degree of Master of Science was awarded in 1960. Working

as a medical officer, he saw a clinical discipline that would unite psychological depth with neurology.

In 1961, Kevin joined the teaching staff of the University of Melbourne's Department of Psychology, initially in an honorary position. He taught his students to listen to and observe the patient, talk to the family and to think logically, describing neuropsychology as 'a body-contact sport.' Kevin retired from teaching in 1991.

One of his most influential works was *Neuropsychology: A Clinical Approach*, first published in 1978, intended to be an introduction to the field. The book was published with David Darby in 1999, then published as *Walsb's Neuropsychology* in 2005, and was translated into a number of languages.

Australia is, as a consequence of Kevin's influence, a Mecca for neuropsychology training, having six doctoral and masters level training programmes. Kevin was the founding President of ASSBI in 1978, believing passionately in the need for multidisciplinary study of all forms of brain impairment in order to facilitate their understanding and optimal management.

In 1991, the year of his retirement, Kevin was awarded the honour of Officer of the Order of Australia. He continued to mentor students in the doctoral programme at Monash University over a number of years, providing gifts or prizes which were the fruit of his woodworking labours – his other passion. Kevin spent his retirement living in his family home in Ivanhoe, which he had shared with his late wife Pat, with whom he had six children and many grandchildren.



Dr Kevin Walsh AO – circa 2016.

Kevin died in 2017 aged 92.

All I can say is that Kevin was a huge loss to engineering!

Kevin's brother, Brian, served in the Australian Army. He enlisted on part time duty in the Citizen Military Forces in August 1940 and was called up for full time service in February 1943. He served in the No. 4 Australian Special Intelligence Personnel Section in New Guinea and the Philippines. Brian became an accountant after the war and died in 2020 aged 100.

I wish to thank Professor Jennie Ponsford AO of Monash University and Kevin's daughter, Bernadette, for their assistance in discovering this remarkable man.

### **Sergeant Walter McClelland (Mac) Wilkinson, 439133**

Mac started at the CRB in 1937 as a junior messenger in the store yard in Montague Street, South Melbourne. He was only 15 but he loved all the steam rollers and graders. He thought they were beautiful. He rode his bike to work from Middle Park. His Sunday School teacher, Mrs Hicks, was the wife of the Accountant at the CRB and she said they needed a lad at the store yard.

He was given a promotion about a year after he started which doubled his salary from 15 shillings a week to 30 shillings. His title was Junior Assistant. Later, he was transferred to Head Office at the Exhibition Building to the Plans and Survey Division thus commencing his road design career until his retirement

When the war broke out he joined the Army (Serial No. V34954) in December 1940. He was posted to the 10th Field Company Royal Australian Engineers 3rd Division. He was sent to Laverton Aerodrome working on the runways on the night shift. However his army career was short-lived. His Commanding Officer sent him back to the CRB, placing him on the reserve list saying that there was essential work to be done with the Board. When he got back to the CRB, the Chief Engineer, John Mathieson, told Mac that he was going to the Northern Territory to work on the North South Road. Mac said he'd have to ask his mother but Mathieson said, 'If you were in the Army you wouldn't see your mother'.

He went up there as a laboratory assistant. He did a variety of tasks and he recalled working with Frank Docking in Tennant Creek. Frank would occasionally miss sending a report in the mail run and he used to say to Mac, 'Oh look Mac, would you slip this down to Alice Springs?' It was 314 miles away! Frank also scared him two or three times when he headed off with Mac into the bush to look for gravel. A doctor and his wife had recently died of thirst in the region after they went wandering off the road.

At the end of 1943 he returned to the CRB in Melbourne and approached the Chief Engineer, D.V. Darwin seeking his release from the Board to join the Army again. He was released but, for reasons unknown to Mac, Darwin insisted he had to join aircrew. He enlisted in the RAAF in January 1944.

He undertook pilot training in Tiger Moths at Tamworth, Somers and Benalla, and then more advanced training in Airspeed Oxfords at Mallala in South Australia. This training finished in June 1944 and Mac volunteered to fly bombers. He was sent to Deniliquin and Ballarat to learn to fly DC3s but not long after, the war finished and Mac was finally discharged in September 1945 from the Advanced Flying and Refresher Unit.

He returned to the CRB and was sent up to Reefton Spur to join a survey gang and was eventually given his own survey party after about three hours instruction. His career continued on an upward

trajectory in Roads Design and he retired as Superintending Draftsman in Plans and Survey. He married Gwendoline Winifred O’Heare in 1949.

Mac lived in Queensland after his retirement. He died in December 2008.



Left to right: Mac Wilkinson (RAAF), Noel Anderson (RAAF), Andrew Noble (Army), Tom Russell (North-South Road), Brigadier Andrew McGalliard RFD ED (Melbourne University Regiment) and Gordon Hiscock.

Photograph taken at the retirement of Jack Ross (RAN) seated with his wife, Lesley. 31 July 1980.

Neither of Mac’s archives (Army and RAAF) have been digitised and all the information in this entry have been gained from *Reminiscences of Life in the Country Roads Board* and *Oral History of the Construction of the North-South Road, Northern Territory by the Country Roads Board*.



Mac Wilkinson – 1962.

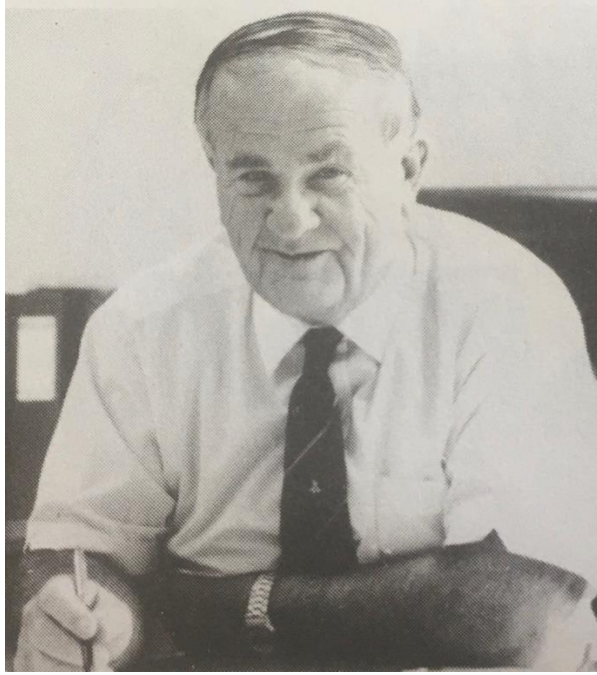
### **Warrant Officer Geoffrey (Geoff) David Williams, 438398**

Geoff was born in Oakleigh in 1925 and enlisted in the RAAF in 1943. Geoff joined the Motor Registration Board (MRB) as a sixteen year old in 1941. His first job was in the Records Section in the Exhibition Building where he had to climb 5 metre high wheeled ladders hooked on to a rail at the top to retrieve and replace files. The records included Engine Card records, an Owner's Index for transfers, and Owner's Certificates for the life of the vehicle. He moved to Drivers before enlisting when he turned 18.

Geoffrey trained as a navigator/bomb aimer but I can't provide further details as his archive has not been digitised. However, in the round+about magazine of the Road Traffic Authority, July 1985 Geoff was quoted as saying the he was "... fortunate enough to see a fair bit of the world and very little action."

He was discharged in 1946 and returned to Drivers at the MRB. Geoff became Personal Assistant to the Officer-in-Charge, Mr A. H. O'Dee, and was given the task of investigating Data Processing for vehicle registration. He introduced a punch card system in 1953 and over the next two decades refined the hardware and systems to cope with modern demands. He became Assistant Officer-in-Charge in 1971 and Deputy Officer-in-Charge in 1979 where he stayed until taking over Regional Operations in 1983.





Geoff Williams – 1985.

Geoff retired in May 1985 after 41 years of experience with the MRB and the Road Traffic Authority.