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AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION – TOWNSVILLE BRANCH

FLIGHTLINE

Volume 20 No. 8

Next Branch Meeting

Sunday 10th January 2021

1000 Hours

Boulton Clarke Community
Centre, Rowes Bay

Next Branch Event

Christmas Lunch

Mercure Hotel

13th December 2020

1130 Hours

★★★★ This will be the last newsletter for 2020. Have a great Christmas and we hope a better 2021 - ED ★★★★★

On behalf of all members, we wish the following members a very Happy Birthday.

★HAPPY★
BIRTHDAY!

December

2nd December Paul Howard
3rd December Bill Norton
4th December Paul Gallagher
8th December Basil Nelson

January

4th January Geoff Strange
9th January Mike Hayes
12th January Gillian Krink
25th January Peter Mulroney

If we have missed anyone, please forgive us and have a Happy Birthday.

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MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM THE PRESIDENT

Another year with a difference, Townsville was still getting over the “flood Event” when COVID 19 hit. We have been very lucky in NQ with only a few cases and these from visitors and crew from a ship off our coast. The impact on us as an association is our meetings were conducted via BlueJeans – for our “mature” age group I think we did very well – thank you to those who made the effort to join in the meetings. 2020 has been yet another year with no extra income. Hopefully this will improve in 2021 with our first community raffle at the Cowboys on 31st January.

We are just getting back into the swing of social events, the night at the Stage Door was great fun for those who attended. Thank you Bas for organising the night.

Our return “home” to the RSL was not a great success – bordering on a dismal failure! Hopefully by the time this newsletter is sent we will have an answer back from Boulton Clarke Villas regarding the use of their Community Hall for next year.

Christmas is a time to reflect back on the year, make plans for an improved 2021 and continue relationships with family and friends - Received a good Christmas quote – “ **Christmas is mostly for children. But adults can enjoy it too, until the credit card bill arrives**”

Hope to see you all at the Christmas function at Mercure Inn on 13th December

Regards

Trevor

I’LL NEVER FORGET THE DAY

In August 1996 I was on a 10 day training flight to PNG in a 35SQN Caribou as auxiliary crew to gather current photos of the coastline and some facilities. Whilst bumbling up the East coast between Madang and Wewak, one of the pilots, a Wing Commander who shall remain anonymous, was catching a nap sitting across several seats and leaning back on the forward bulkhead on the starboard side.

I decided on the spur of the moment to take a photo. When the flash went off, I swear he rose almost a metre vertically, still in the sitting position, swivelled around, and landed on his feet! He uttered several phrases which I can only abbreviate and describe as WTF - WTF? I realised too late that the flash perfectly imitated the effect of a nearby explosion. Needless to say, for the next couple of days relations were somewhat strained and I never took another photo without warning the crew!



Thank you to Mel Dundas-Taylor for this story

MEMBER PROFILE

Learn some interesting facts about your friends with this insightful probe into a member's life.

Mel Dundas-Taylor



Where were you born?

Edinburgh, Scotland

Where did you go to school?

Northallerton Primary Council School/Brompton County Council School England, St. Brendan's School, Edinburgh, Loanhead County Council School Edinburgh, Daniel Stewarts College, Edinburgh, St Andrews School Blantyre (Malawi), Lasswade County Council School Edinburgh, Karingal High School (Frankston, Victoria), Rockhampton Boys Grammar School

What are your interests/hobbies?

Collecting militaria, electronics, Locating and identifying WWII sites and facilities for Australia@War.

Do you have a favourite book/movie/song?

Any Wartime/50s/60s.

When did you join the military?

1961 Cadets, 1964 CMF, 1966 RMC Duntroon, 1971 Airforce Reserve

Where was your favourite posting?

27SQN

What is on top of your bucket list?

Revisit the UK

What do you like about Townsville?

What's not to like?

FLYING FORTRESS MIRACLE

A mid-air collision on February 1, 1943 between a B-17 and a German fighter over the Tunis dock area became the subject of one of the most famous photographs of WW11. An enemy fighter attacking a 97th Bomb Group formation went out of control, probably with a wounded pilot, then continued its crashing descent into the rear fuselage of a Flying Fortress named "All American" piloted by Lt Kendrick R. Bragg, of the 414th Bomb Squadron.

When it struck, the fighter broke apart but left some pieces in the B-17. The left horizontal stabiliser of the Fortress and its left elevator were completely torn away. The two right engines were out and one on the left had a serious oil pump leak.

The vertical fin and the rudder had been damaged. The fuselage had been cut almost completely through and was left connected only at two small parts of the frame. The radios, electrical and oxygen systems were also damaged. There was also a hole in the top that was over 16 feet long and 4 feet wide at its widest. The split in the fuselage went all the way to the top gunner's turret.

The tail actually bounced and swayed in the wind and twisted when the aircraft turned. All the control cables were severed except one single elevator cable still worked and the aircraft miraculously still flew

The tail gunner was trapped because there was no floor connecting the tail to the rest of the aircraft.



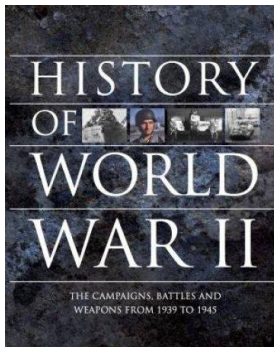
The waist and tail gunners used parts of the German fighter and their own parachute harnesses in an attempt to keep the tail

from ripping off and the two sides of the fuselage from splitting apart. While the crew was trying to keep the bomber from coming apart, the pilot continued on his bombing run and released his bombs over the target.

When the bomb doors were opened, the wind turbulence was so great that it blew one of the waist gunners into the broken tail section. It took several minutes and four crew members to pass him ropes from parachutes and to haul him back into the forward part of the bomber. When they tried to do the same for the tail gunner, the tail began flapping so hard that it began to break off. The weight of the gunner was adding some stability to the tail section, so he went back to his position.

The turn back to England had to be very slow to keep the tail from twisting off. They actually covered almost 70 miles to make that turn. *(continued on page 5)*

A BOOK IN REVIEW



Authors

Mal Elliot

ISBN

9781922265142

Published

05/05/2019

Binding

Paperback

Pages 224

Price \$25.00 (50% off RRP)

The events of 1939–1945 had such a dramatic impact on the world that it is easy to forget that Allied victory was far from certain, especially in the early part of the war when both the Nazis in Europe and the Japanese in the Pacific were sweeping all before them.

History of World War II chronicles the war as it happened, focusing on key battles and events that act as signposts in the slow change of fortunes of either side. Divided into two sections, one on each major theatre, the book describes such famous events as the attack on Pearl Harbor, the battle of Stalingrad, the Normandy landings, the fall of Berlin, and the struggle for Iwo Jima. Linking each famous event is an in-depth chronology detailing other events happening elsewhere, building into a snapshot of the war at that point.

Feature spreads focus on weapons, uniforms, vehicles or aircraft used in each campaign, such as the Panzer III Ausf F tank, KMS Bismarck, B-17 Flying Fortress, M2 Browning .50 cal and many more.

Have you read a good book lately that you think other members may enjoy? Then write a brief review and send it in for inclusion in our newsletter

LUNCH IN THE PARK

Bunnings had nothing on us when a small group of members & partners had a sausage sizzle at Jezzine Park. It was a good opportunity to enjoy open spaces in the fresh tropical air and relax over a sausage (on bread with onions on top!!) and a yarn.



Not surprisingly we didn't see any snakes, or other wildlife for that matter, probably because of all the war stories, and associated ordinance, being thrown around. Don't forget your flack jacket and helmet next time!!!



AVIATION HUMOUR



The Flying Fortress Miracle – continued from page 3

The bomber was so severely damaged that it was losing altitude and speed and was soon alone in the sky.

For a brief time, two more Me-109 German fighters attacked the “All American”. Despite the extensive damage, all of the machine gunners were able to respond to these attacks and soon drove off the fighters. The two waist gunners stood up with their heads sticking out through the hole in the top of the fuselage to aim and fire their machine guns. The tail gunner had to shoot in short bursts because the recoil was actually causing the aircraft to turn. Allied P-51 fighters intercepted the bomber as it crossed over the Channel and took one of the pictures shown. They also radioed to the base describing that the “appendage” was waving like a fish tail and that the aircraft would not make it and to send out boats to rescue the crew when they bailed out.

The fighters stayed with the Fortress, communicating using hand signals and relaying the messages to the base. Lt Bragg signalled that 5 parachutes and the spare had been “used” so five crew could not bail out. He made the decision that if they if they could not bail out safely then he would stay with the aircraft to land it.



2 ½ hours after being hit the aircraft made its final turn to line up with the runway while it was still 40 miles

Some Hot Shot Pilot!

It seems that a young man volunteered for military service during World War II. He had such a high aptitude for aviation that he was sent right to Pensacola Naval Air Station, skipping recruit training. The very first day at Pensacola he solos and is the best flier on the base. All they could do was give him his gold wings and assign him immediately to an aircraft carrier in the Pacific.

On his first day aboard, he took off and single-handedly shot down 6 Japanese Zeroes. Then climbing up to 20,000 ft., he found 9 more Japanese planes and shot them all down as well. Noting that his fuel was getting low, he descended, circled the carrier and came in for a perfect landing on the deck.

He threw back the canopy, climbed out and jogged over to the captain. Saluting smartly he said, “Well sir, how did I do on my very first day?”

The captain turned around, bowed politely, withdrew his samurai sword and replied, “You make one velly, velly selious mistake!”

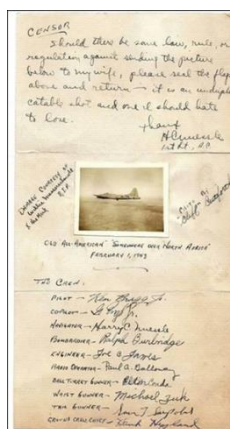
away. It descended into an emergency landing and a normal roll-out on its landing gear.



When the ambulance pulled alongside, it was waived off because not a single member of the crew had been injured.

No one could believe that the aircraft could fly in such a condition. The Fortress sat placidly until the crew all exited through the door in the fuselage and the tail gunner had climbed down a ladder, at which time the entire rear section of the bomber collapsed.

The old bird had done its job and brought the entire crew home uninjured.



Padre in the Sandpit

Somebody once said, "war is 10% excitement and 90% boredom." I think that is an exaggeration, but the reality is that much of the time on deployment is spent in a very busy, but rather dull routine of administration, servicing of aircraft, keeping fit and other tasks. For the younger people it can get rather boring and some of them, especially the blokes, try to raise the excitement level by carrying out pranks, or by pushing over the edges of acceptable behavior.

We had two airmen who were experts at this. They never really got into big trouble, but sometimes the OIC or WOD would ask me to give them a "fatherly talk" about their behavior before they really got into strife - another one of the varying duties of a padre. We had two accommodation blocks, one of which was exclusively occupied by women. Someone decided that it would be fun to see the occupants of that block outside in their night wear and fired a fire extinguisher into a smoke alarm. That had the desired effect, but the alarm was also hard wired into nearby blocks occupied by Americans, including senior officers, who did not consider it joke and demanded our OIC parade and admonish us. He assembled us in the briefing room, but his "admonishment" was very low key. I think he was somewhat pleased the Aussies had got one over the Americans. On the way out I called over the before-mentioned airman and said: "you did that didn't you?". "Padre, how do you know it was us?" was the reply. "I could say that God told me, but let's say I just had a very strong hunch. I strongly suggest you keep a low profile for a while."

This is funny story, but thinking about a bit more, it might not have been funny for the victims of the prank if they had been working very hard, facing an early morning call out, and needed their sleep. Jokes, pranks and humour are something that makes the world a more interesting place to live in, but we need to be careful that we don't hurt or disadvantage other people with our attempt to liven things up..



*Padre Wayne Melrose,
Townsville Branch Chaplain*

UPCOMING SOCIAL EVENTS

Sunday 13th December - Christmas Lunch

As we near the end of the year, it's time to get ready for our annual Christmas Luncheon. The function has been booked for **Sunday, 13th December, at 1130.**

Please let me know no later than 4th December if you will be attending and how many in your party. This function is open to members, families and friends. It will be greatly appreciated if you could bring a gift up to the value of \$10 to be prizes in our raffle.



Do you have a story to tell, a joke to make us smile, a poem, an event you want to tell us about or anything else you think our readership would be interested in? Then send it to raafatvlsectr@gmail.com.

