

# Hockley's Heroes



**A short history of the crew of Fortress II, SR384, BU-A “Able”  
that was shot down over Holland on the night of  
24/25 May 1944**

By Ryan L. Dudley

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Cover photo: Allan James Neville Hockley, 1941 [Sharon Balmer]



## Hockley's Heroes

The following are the names and particulars of the crew of Fortress II, SR384, BU-A "Able" that was shot down over Holland on the night of 24/25 May 1944.

- A420197 Pilot (RAAF) – Pilot Officer Allan James Neville "Skipper" Hockley; born 12 May 1917 Enfield, New South Wales, Australia
- 1516970 Navigator (RAF) – Flight Sergeant Thomas Duke "Tommy" Glenn; born 26 October 1922 Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Northumberland, England
- A421541 Wireless Operator 1 (RAAF) – Flight Sergeant Raoul Trichon "Tom" Lyall; born 23 May 1923 Bondi, New South Wales, Australia
- 1587281 Engineer and Second Pilot (RAF) – Sergeant Walter William Charles "Bill" Hallett; born 1 May 1922 Over Wallop, Hampshire, England
- NZ42663 Air Bomber (RNZAF) – Flight Sergeant Robert Yewen "Bob" Gundy; born 2 May 1920 Pukekohe, South Auckland, New Zealand
- 1805752 Mid Upper Gunner (RAF) – Sergeant Raymond George Victor "Ray" Simpson; born 16 October 1923 King's Lynn, Norfolk, England
- 1590361 Rear Gunner (RAF) – Sergeant Enoch "Nick" Lovatt; born 19 June 1924 South Shields, Co. Durham, England
- R178606 Ball and Waist Gunner (RCAF) – Sergeant, James Edward "Jim" McCutchan; born 7 June 1913 Kenora, Ontario, Canada
- 2211370 Special Wireless Operator (RAF) – Sergeant Robert Francis "Bob" Lloyd; born 14 February 1915 Conway, Caernarvonshire, Wales



Allan James Neville Hockley was born at Enfield, New South Wales on 12 May 1917 to Walter James Hockley and Minnie Blanche née Hogan. Walter Hockley's family had resided in and around the Enfield area since 1810 when his great-grandfather, Samuel Hockley, a former convict and soldier with the New South Wales Marine Corps, was granted 50 acres on Punchbowl Road (Lakemba) which he called Essex Hill Farm after his native county in England. When Samuel Hockley died in 1859, the property was left to his two children, Sarah Smith and John Samuel Hockley, the latter selling his portion in 1875.

The Hogan family resided not far away at "Marmont", Liverpool Road, South Strathfield. Allan's maternal grandfather, Frederick Alfred Hogan, was born in Perth, Western Australia but settled in New South Wales in the early 1880s. Like the Hockleys, the Hogan family attended church at Saint Thomas', Enfield and within the church registers can be found the baptism, marriage and burial records for both families dating back several generations. Walter and Minnie were married at Saint Thomas' on 13 December 1913.

Walter, Minnie and their sons, Walter Jnr and Allan, initially lived at "Marmont" until 1921 when they purchased 68 Mintaro Avenue, South Strathfield. Walter Jnr's widow, Joyce Paynter formerly Hockley née Davidson, continued to reside there until her death in December 2010.



Hockley family – Allan, Walter Jnr, Walter Snr and Minnie [Sharon Balmer]





Allan was twenty-four years old and working as a bus driver in Sydney when he enlisted into the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) as an Aircraftman on 11 October 1941. From No. 2 Recruit Centre, Sydney, he was sent to No. 2 Initial Training School (No. 2 ITS), Bradfield Park, where he was promoted to Leading Aircraftman and remained until February 1942.



420197 Allan James Neville Hockley, 24 October 1941 [NAA: A9300, HOCKLEY A J N; Maree Fox]

Flight Lieutenant Murray Peden, Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF), who was later attached to 214 Squadron, RAF, around the same time as Allan, summed up the ITS course as ‘essentially a six-week ground school, during which the instructors, who were almost all former school teachers, tried to determine the aptitude of the cadets. On the basis of their assessments they recommended the best cadets for further training, either as pilots or observers (navigators).’<sup>1</sup>

Following the No. 2 ITS course Allan spent a further three months at No. 4 Elementary Flying Training School (EFTS), Mascot, and No. 10 EFTS, Temora, before being posted in May to No. 6 Service Flying Training School (SFTS), Mallala, South Australia. The SFTS provided advanced training for RAAF pilots on fighter and multi-engine aircrafts. Allan spent five months in Mallala before being sent back to New South Wales to embark for overseas duty. On 15 October Allan was promoted to Sergeant.

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<sup>1</sup> M. Peden, *A Thousand Shall Fall: The True Story of a Canadian Bomber Pilot in World War Two*, Stoddart Publishing Co. Ltd., Park Centre, Toronto, 2000, p. 16





Course 22, No. 6 SFTS, Mallala, July 1942 – Allan front row kneeling first on left [Tony Hockley]

James Hilton “Jim” Broadley, who was eight years old in 1942, fondly recalls that while his older cousin Allan was stationed at No. 4 EFTS, he would receive a phone call from him to let him know he was flying over and would drop toilet paper out of his Tiger Moth for the children below.



New trainee pilots receiving their first instruction on the controls of a Tiger Moth plane at the EFTS, Mascot  
[State Library Victoria: PCLTA 1998]



The newly trained pilots were stationed at No. 2 Embarkation Depot, Bradfield Park, until 13 November when they embarked for the United Kingdom on the QSMV *Dominion Monarch*.

According to late Keith Hamilton Bowly of Caloundra, Queensland, 25 RAAF men embarked on the QSMV *Dominion Monarch*. Keith had been called up off parade that morning to take the spot of another man who was unable to board due to illness.

Friday 13<sup>th</sup>

We had breakfast at 7am and were transported for Embarkation at 8am. We spent all day on board, sleeping, eating (whenever possible) & playing deck tennis and other sports and sleeping<sup>2</sup>

The following identified servicemen are mentioned in the diary kept by Allan during the voyage:

- 24286 Sergeant Lionel Severin Draper; died 1965 Cairns, Queensland
- 38976 Sergeant Neil William Mclay Morrison; died 1994 Mandurah, Western Australia
- 413561 Pilot Officer Maurice Joseph Freeman; KIA 23 November 1943 Germany
- 41359 Flight Lieutenant Ronald David “Ron” Hodgen; died 1996 Laurieton, New South Wales
- 414458 Flight Lieutenant Keith Hamilton Bowly; died 2014 Caloundra, Queensland
- 420191 Warrant Officer Keith Whitten Hayward; d. 2000 Parramatta, New South Wales
- 420215 Warrant Officer George William Liels; KIA 1 June 1944 Aegean Sea

With the exception of Ron Hodgen, these young men all trained at No. 6 FSTS Mallala alongside Allan. Amongst his closet friends was George Liels of Leichhardt, New South Wales who enlisted with the RAAF in Sydney on 11 October 1941 aged twenty-one years. After further specialist training in Britain, Liels was posted in February 1944 to the Mediterranean, where he joined 454 Squadron, RAAF.

At this stage the squadron was based in Egypt, where it was part of 201 Group of the Royal Air Force Middle East Command. 454 Squadron was equipped with the two-engined Martin Baltimore light attack bomber. During the period that Liels was with the squadron, it operated

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<sup>2</sup> Diary of Sgt Allan J. N. Hockley, 13 November 1942



mostly as a maritime patrol squadron, targeting enemy submarines and shipping – as well as operating against targets in mainland Greece and the Greek islands.

On 1 June 1944 the Baltimore which Liels was piloting was part of a raid on a German convoy that had left Piraeus Harbour in Greece, bound for Crete. Liels's Baltimore was shadowing the convoy and had been fighting off persistent attacks by the strong German fighter escort accompanying the convoy. His aircraft was last seen about 50 miles north of Crete, and was presumed to have been shot down by enemy fire.

Liels and his three Australian crewmates – Maxwell Schultz, Max Short and Edward Quinlan – were all killed. Their bodies were never recovered.<sup>3</sup>

The worst was still to come. Well it happened – George didn't come back. Sent an OA then cancelled it – then sighted at 1315 and then silence. Have worried myself sick all night trying to figure it out, but it just doesn't make sense. Frankly I think he hit the deck in the sea. Pederson was on the op an hour after and saw no a/c at all and the impression is that the whole pack went for him, but I don't think so. He was too wise to go in a second time. Could be anything and he could be anywhere. Shall write to Ma Liels soon, but God knows what there is to say.<sup>4</sup>

John Robert "Jack" Ennis was another pilot who trained at No. 6 FSTS Mallala with Allan. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC) for his 'high degree of skill, courage and resolution in ops.' He was one of the few pilots to return home after the war.<sup>5</sup> Jack Ennis died aged eighty-five years on 5 November 1999.

When the QSMV *Dominion Monarch* arrived in Auckland, New Zealand on 17 November the RAAF men on board were given their first shore leave. They spent their first night dancing and chatting up girls at the "Down Town Club" before being billeted out to local residents like Ralph Hipkins, clerk, and his wife, Margaret, who took in Allan and another serviceman. Allan's diary mentions Mr and Mrs Hipkins along with their two daughters, Margaret "Peg", aged twenty-four, and Nancy, aged twenty. The Hipkins resided at 58 Gillies Avenue, Auckland.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Australian War Memorial

<sup>4</sup> Diary of John Robert "Jack" Ennis, 2 June 1943

<sup>5</sup> Australian War Memorial, Honours and Awards

<sup>6</sup> New Zealand Electoral Rolls, 1853-1981



On Saturday, 28 November, the QSMV *Dominion Monarch* left Auckland harbour. The RAAF men spent their time on board in the lounge reading, at PT, or competing in a variety of sports on deck including tennis and basketball. The ship reached Panama on 12 December and the men were once again given a period of shore leave. This time they were under strict instructions not to travel about alone but to remain in a group at all times.

Four days after Christmas 1942 the QSMV *Dominion Monarch* reached its final destination and the RAAF men were allowed to disembark. Allan was immediately sent on to No. 11 Personnel Despatch Reception Centre, Bournemouth, Dorset where he spent the next four months waiting to be posted to an Advance Flying Unit (AFU). On 12 April 1943 he was posted to No. 15 AFU stationed in Andover, Hampshire and shortly thereafter promoted to Flight Sergeant.

Murray Peden explained the function of the Personnel Despatch Reception Centre was to ‘act as a holding unit and get us prepared for more flying training as soon as the Advance Flying Units should make space available for new drafts.’<sup>7</sup> The AFU, however, ‘was designed to achieve three objectives: to improve our general flying skill and thus take us an additional step toward the standard required for flying on operations; to give us the experience to maintain that standard under worse weather conditions than we had previously been permitted to fly in; and to teach us the flying characteristics and “feel” of a heavier aircraft.’<sup>8</sup>

After two months of AFU training, pilots were given a week’s leave before being sent on to an Operational Training Unit (OTU). Allan arrived at No. 11 OTU, Wescott, Buckinghamshire on 1 June 1943. With their fleet of Wellingtons, No. 11 OTU trained pilots, air observers, air bombers, wireless operators and air gunners for multi-engine squadrons. Effectively, the OTU teamed up crews before they were sent on to the Main Force squadrons or to the Heavy Conversion Units.

Allan’s logbook for this period records that he had an above average proficiency as a pilot although he ‘could be a firmer captain’.

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<sup>7</sup> Peden, op. cit., p. 111

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 147







Two photos given to the author by his great-aunt and Allan's cousin, Mavis Cavell "Mai" Cook [Ryan L. Dudley]



Hockley family – Walter Jnr, Minnie, Walter Snr, Allan [Maree Fox]



## The Crew

Crews were formed by the men themselves, without regard to nationality, at the OTUs. Although groups formed initially around bonds of friendship, the role of self-preservation and trust in the individual skills of others was essentially what brought crews in Bomber Command together. Thus, many crews did not care to be broken up upon a posting to a squadron.

Choosing a pilot could be a much more critical decision than choosing a wife. A bird-brained wife might still make life worth living, and remain an object to cherish. A bird-brained pilot was likely to kill everyone who flew with him, soon.<sup>9</sup>

On 19 August 1943, Flight Sergeant Hockley and crew were sent to No. 1657 Conversion Unit in Stradishall, Suffolk where they would undergo conversion to Short Stirlings. Jock Whitehouse of No 214 (FMS) Squadron Association supplied the following additional details of the crews' time at Stradishall:

9 September 1943. 20.50. Burst tyre on landing caused an undercarriage collapse.

No injuries.

16 September 1943 Night flying test.

4hrs 30 mins.<sup>10</sup>

Following a successful conversion, the crew of seven were posted to 214 Squadron on 18 September<sup>11</sup> where they were mainly involved in "Gardening" (minelaying operations) in the "Nectarines" (Frisian Islands) off the Dutch coast. At the time, 214 Squadron was stationed at Chedburgh, Suffolk having been converted to Stirlings in the spring of 1941.

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 167

<sup>10</sup> Jock Whitehouse, No 214 (FMS) Squadron Association, 22 February 2010

<sup>11</sup> The National Archives: AIR 27/1322/19



The crews stationed at 214 Squadron seem to have shared a particularly strong bond and comradery as explained by Bill Hallett:

Discipline such as saluting was almost none existing at the station due to many crews that included commissioned officers up to the rank of Squadron Leader, so a storm was caused when a Home Guard officer chipped one guy for not saluting him or the uniform. Word travelled very quickly through the Squadron and when this guy asked for a survey flight covering the whole of his area, all crews were put on notice to make sure he had an enjoyable trip whoever got the job, and guess what Allan and his crew were chosen. We all laid it on thick saluting him, when he was halfway up the ladder, when he was almost in a seat and when he was being told the basics of safety, we were sure he got the message. After we got airborne and flying low Allan showing him local land marks and he was asking questions until we were at the end of the set area, Allan being a brilliant pilot with Stirling's his fighter affiliation experience was the envy of many other pilots, he could throw the big aircraft around like a small fighter, and that day he performed it all very well with steep falls and rises with slow rolls. The guy ended up at the rear with his head in a portable chemical toilet, every turn splashed a little more brown chemical over his face, after 30 minutes of flying we landed, no-one gave him a salute and we all had the feeling the job was well done and just a little sorry for the once pompous guy.

The Hockley crew enjoyed an unusual happy relation to each other which made it easy for all to try and excel in their particular position, a briefing meeting which detailed the particular target and course to be taken was usually given in the afternoon before take-off at night, after these meetings Allan would get us together and discuss the raid and what was needed to make it successful and a save return, this gave us the feeling of being invincible, but unfortunately things happen to stretch that feeling.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Bill Hallett, 1 April 2009





In 214 Squadron, a crew consisted of 7 regular crew members and 1 special wireless operator, fluent in German, who was responsible for the electronic jamming equipment aboard the aircraft. The special wireless operator for the Hockley crew on the night of 24/25 May 1944 was Sergeant Bob Lloyd, a Welshman who resided in Blacon, Cheshire before the outbreak of the war. According to his son, Tony, Bob had learnt to speak German and Dutch while working with his two elder brothers on a golf course in Hamburg during the 1930s.

The original crew did not include Bob Lloyd. The explanation for this is that our crew, when operational on Stirlings was seven, with Jim McCutchan joining us on a permanent basis when we converted onto B-17s. The eight of us were then augmented by a ninth, a special radar operator, who was assigned for just the one nights' operation and Bob was unlucky enough to be with us on the night of 24th of May, 1944.<sup>13</sup>

Previous to the operation on 24/25 May 1944, Bob had flown with Warrant Officer Eric James Morrison and Flight Lieutenant Murray Peden in both air tests and operations. On 19 May 1944, Bob was the Special Wireless Operator in Peden's crew during an operation to Le Mans.

On May 19th we flew with Main Force in an attack on the railway yards at Le Mans. In the early stages of the trip our number four engine began to act up, adding to the hundred and one regularly recurring worries that were a normal part of every operation. We nursed it along for a couple of hours at reduced power, but eventually it began to overheat even while being thus favoured and Bill had to feather it. We had just cleared the target and were still a long, long way from Blickling Hall; but F Fox simply raised her voice, droning a little more imperiously on the remaining three engines, and, working up a bit of a sweat, carried us safely home.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Michael Moores LeBlanc

<sup>14</sup> Peden, op. cit., p. 380





The crew of Fortress II, SR384, BU-A "Able"

Back: Jim McCutchan, Tom Lyall, Ray Simpson, Bob Gundy, Nick Lovatt

Front: Bob Lloyd (inserted into bottom photo) Tommy Glenn, Allan Hockley, Bill Hallett

[John Simpson & Edward Cantle]



In January 1944, Allan was promoted to Pilot Officer. Two months earlier, on 11 November, 214 Squadron had been relocated to Sculthorpe in Norfolk where it was converted to special operations as part of No. 100 Group. The formation of No. 100 Group on Armistice Day 1943 revived Bomber Command's interest in the B-17 Flying Fortress as their main operational aircraft. The B-17s offered a performance which in many respects could not be matched by those being made in the United Kingdom. An important factor in the bomber support planner's minds was the vulnerability of jamming signals being 'homed' onto by the enemy. As a consequence of this, it was anticipated that No. 100 Group's squadrons would suffer heavy losses when operating over enemy territory. The altitude performance of the B-17 seemed to offer a solution to this problem, especially when combined with the type's potent defensive armament, and during the last months of 1943 it was decided to equip at least one of the Group's squadrons with this type. Accordingly, the Eighth Air Force was formerly requested to supply 14 B-17 aircrafts to No. 100 Group on 12 January 1944 and a new Special Duties Unit, 214 Squadron, was drafted in from 3 Group to operate them. 214 Squadron, which had previously flown Stirlings, moved from Downham Market to Sculthorpe between 17 and 20 January and received its first B-17s on the latter date.

The jamming and associated equipment fitted to the Group's B-17s was as varied as the aircraft themselves. On 12 January 1944, Bomber Command laid down the specification for radio counter-measures (RCM) for 214 Squadron's B-17s which included a crew of 8 (pilot, navigator, flight engineer, wireless operator, special operator, air bomber and two gunners) and the installation of H2S navigational radar, the Gee or Loran navaid, the Monica IIIA tail warning radar, M/F and H/F wireless telegraphy, H/F and VHF radio, the Jostle IV VHF communications jammer and four Airborne Grocer AI radar jammers.

When delivered to 100 Group the first 14 B-17s carried, besides additional wing tanks, the standard armament of nine 0.5 in Brownings disposed in a dorsal turret (two) the radio room (one), a ventral ball turret (two), the waist positions (two) and a tail turret (two). In addition, most of the aircraft were fitted with the mountings for two Brownings in the nose cap glazing and at least one of them carried G-type gun mountings, an installation which was fairly common on late production B-17Fs.

The instalment of the ABC equipment in the squadron aircraft took some time and by the end of March 1944, only six operational aircraft were available.



On 16 May, Sculthorpe was closed, after the aircrafts had been suitably converted to RCM requirements. 214 Squadron moved to Oulton which was to be its home for the remainder of the war. It was to be involved in jamming undertaken by the 100 Group but mainly concentrated on Special Window Force (SWF) and Main Force support sorties.

Main Force operations were usually flown some 1,000 to 2,000 feet above the stream and from December 1944, the Squadrons B-17s were required to circle the target area giving jamming cover during the whole of the attack. This hair-raising procedure was executed within a five-mile radius of the aiming point and could last up to 15 minutes. In this way, three or four aircraft could give cover to the whole of a raid. SWF operations were flown at a similar altitude. Jamming would commence on instructions received from 100 Group and would usually start over the North Sea outward bound. Transmissions were maintained until well into the return journey.

For the next few months the Hockley crew spent the vast majority of their time practising circuits and landings and flying fighter affiliation exercises. Allan's logbook records that he became conversant with the following systems and drills of the B-17: petrol system, oil system, engine limitations, action in the event of fire, feathering an engine, abandoning aircraft. Sergeant Bill Hallett, the crew's engineer, underwent further training in order to fulfil his new role as second pilot. His instructor for this, unsurprisingly, was his skipper, Allan Hockley. The two worked mainly on landing the aircraft and the safety requirements that a second pilot was ultimately responsible for in the case of an emergency. In the event of injury or fatality to Allan, it would be Bill's job to ensure that everyone returned home safely.

At the start of May 1944, the crew were given a week's leave following their last fighter affiliation exercise. Allan spent his leave time with his Navigator, Tommy Glenn, and his family in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Tommy's younger brother, Mick Glenn, has kindly supplied the following details from his diary which he kept during Allan's visits. The details in parenthesis were added after the author contacted the Glenn family.





02.03.44	Got telegram from Tom. Coming late tonight with Alan [sic] and Olive (Alan's girlfriend). Tom, Olive and Alan arrived 0110. Tom and Alan slept in front room and Olive in theirs.
03.03.44	Went to Empire (a Theatre in Newgate Street, Newcastle which is no longer with us) with Tom, Dad, Ma and Peter. Alan came in after half time. Saw "Black Vaniter"
03.05.44	Tom rang this morning - him and Alan coming up tonight on days leave. Arrived 7.30pm. Tom and Alan 6.00.
04.05.44	Alan went to Wooler for the day
05.05.44	Alan came back this morning and Joan, Alan, Ma, Tom and Miss Taylor went to Haymarket (a picture house in the Haymarket)
10.05.44	Tom went back tonight at 10.00.
10.11.44	Family received letter from RAAF that Alan's body was washed up on shore on the 11.7.44.

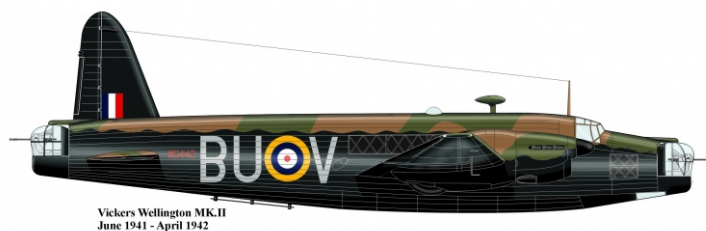


Allan and Mr Cecil Thomas Glenn, Tommy's father, in Jesmond Dene, March 1944 [Roz Glenn]

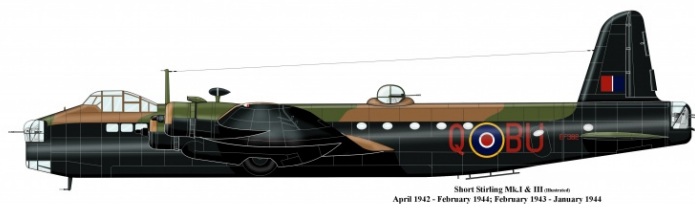


## Aircrafts

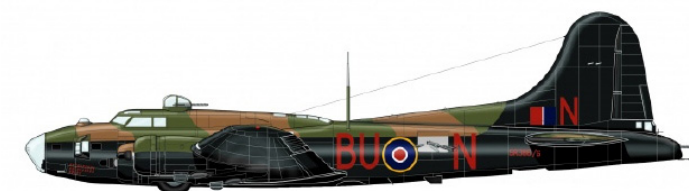
Aircrafts flown by 214 Squadron			
Manufacturer	Model	Service Start	Service End
Handley Page	Harrow Mark II	Jan 1937	May 1940
Vickers	Wellington Mark I	May 1939	May 1940
Vickers	Wellington Mark I C	Jul 1940	Apr 1942
Vickers	Wellington Mark II	Jun 1941	Apr 1942
Short	Stirling Mark I	Apr 1942	Feb 1944
Short	Stirling Mark III	Feb 1943	Jan 1944
Boeing	Flying Fortress Mark II	Jan 1944	Dec 1944
Boeing	Flying Fortress Mark III	Nov 1944	Jul 1945
Consolidated	Liberator Mark VIII	Jul 1945	Nov 1945



Vickers Wellington MK. II



Short Stirling MK. I & III



Boeing Flying Fortress Mk. II (B-17F)

[M. D. Howley Sept 2005 / No. 214 Squadron Association]



## Operations

### October 1943

2	Stirling 1	R9283 BU-R	Minelaying	French Coast; mines dropped 21.56 from 2,000 feet
3	Stirling 3	EF120 BU-Y	Operation	Kassel, Germany; mines dropped 21.01
8	Stirling 1	R9284 BU-W	Minelaying	French Coast; mines laid at 02.46 from 4,000 feet
25	Stirling 2	EF967 BU-T	Minelaying	Skagerrak, North Sea; mines laid at 19.41 after a pin-point/dead reckoning run; diverted to RAF Lossiemouth on return

### November 1943

18	Stirling 3	EF125 BU-X	Bombing	Ludwigshafen and Mannheim, Germany; diversionary attack for main raid on Berlin by 440 Lancasters and 4 Mosquitoes.
19	Stirling 3	EF124 BU-X	Bombing	Leverkusen, Germany
22	Stirling 3	EF125 BU-X	Bombing	Berlin, Germany; 764 aircraft took part; F/Sgt Atkinson who was on 1657 HCU was killed on this trip

### December 1943

1	Stirling 3	EF967 BU-T	Minelaying	Skagerrak, North Sea; mines laid at 18.39; diverted to RAF Acklington
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### April 1944

22	Fortress	SH382 BU-B	Bombing	Düsseldorf, Germany
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### May 1944

12	Fortress	SR381 BU-F	Bombing	Hasselt, Holland (Special Duties)
25	Fortress	SR381 BU-A		Antwerp, Holland (Failed to Return) <sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> The final entry in Allan's log book was written after the crew failed to return from the operation. Whoever recorded the entry clearly recorded the wrong serial number for the aircraft which should read SR384.



Further details about the operations flow by the Hockley crew can be found in the 214 Squadron: Operations Record Books (transcripts below) and in the Bomber Command Campaign Diaries (also Appendix II) held at The National Archives, Kew. The identification of each aircraft in square brackets have been supplied by Jock Whitehouse of No 214 (FMS) Squadron Association.

#### 2.10.43 Stirling Mk. I. R.9283 [BU-R]

Sgt. Hockley A.J.N.

Gardening Nectarines I

19.10 – 22.25

This aircraft did not drop it's [sic] mines in allocated position but jettisoned 6 x B200 in position 5209 N 0156 E at 2156 hrs. from 2,000 feet, owing to port outer engine believed hit by flak, bomb bays damage by flak, hydraulic pipes hit. Route O Cromar – Garden – Orfordness.

Bill Hallett recalls that while minelaying in the Frisian Islands on 2 October, their Stirling was hit by flak resulting in damage to the hydraulics bomb bay and No. 1 engine, forcing Bob Gundy to jettison the mines at 2156 hours from 2,000 feet. When the crew returned to base they learnt that Bob had dropped the mines right in front of an allied convoy and, as a result, the whole crew were required to work on their “moral fibre” for the next few weeks. Bob was constantly reminded of this by the crew from then on.

#### 3.10.43 Stirling Mk. III. EF.115 [BU-Y]

F/Sgt. Sellar J.

Sgt. Hockley A.J.N. (2nd Pilot)

Attack on KASSEL

18.55 – 00.35

This aircraft attacked KASSEL at 2127 hrs. from 15,000 ft. with 850 x 4 lb., 50 x 4 lb. (X) and 64 x 30 lb. It was a starlight night, with no cloud and moderate visibility. Green markers only seen, the centre of which was bombed. Fires burning deep Red and well concentrated round markers. Much smoke from fires up to 5 – 7,000 feet. Incendiary bomb from another aircraft fell through starboard side of mid upper turret injuring mid upper gunner and causing fire in fuselage, which was extinguished by mid upper gunner (Sgt. Vernon) and Flight Engineer





(Sgt. Jacobs) Mid upper gunner remained at his post to extinguish the fire despite a broken arm. Route as ordered. One photo attempted.

8.10.43 Stirling Mk. I. R.9284 [BU-W]

F/Sgt. Hockley A.J.N.

Gardening DEODARS

23.50 – 05.35

This aircraft dropped mine in allocated position 4540N 0126W from 5,800 feet – load 2x H802, 2x G700. It was a starlight night poor visibility. Route as ordered – diverted to Tangmere

25.10.43 Stirling Mk. III EE.967 [BU-T]

F/Sgt. Hockley A.J.N.

Gardening

16.25 – 22.25

This aircraft planted 2 x G714 at 565030 N 1124 E from 5,700 feet, at 1941 hrs., interval 10 secs., on a heading of 075°M. A pinpoint was made at KNUDSOVED and a D.R. run was made to the garden from there. The weather was dark, no cloud and fairly good visibility. The captain states that he could NOT have crossed the enemy coast before 1850 hrs. in darkness. Route as ordered.

Diverted to LOSSIEMOUTH.

18.11.43 Stirling Mk. III EF.125 [BU-X]

F/Sgt. Hockley A.J.N.

Attack on LUDWIGSHAFEN.

17.55 – 23.25

This aircraft attacked MANHEIM at 2037 hrs. with 1 x 2000 720 x 4, 32 x 30 from 13,000 feet. There was no cloud and clear visibility. Bombs dropped on Green T.I.'s and seen to burst on believed buildings. Considerable smoke and fires seen to be starting. Route as ordered. One photo attempted.





Photo taken by P/O. H. E. Rawlin during the attack on Mannheim, 18-19 November 1943

[The National Archives: AIR 27/1327]

19.11.43 Stirling Mk. III EF.125 [BU-X]

F/Sgt. Hockley A.J.N.

Attack on LEVERKUSEN.

17.45 – 19.10.

Abortive sortie. Late take off and inability to reach enemy coast and target at time laid down. 1 x 2000, 49 x 30, 850 x 4, 50 x 4 jettisoned in position 5204N 0250E at 1834 hrs. from 10,5000 feet.



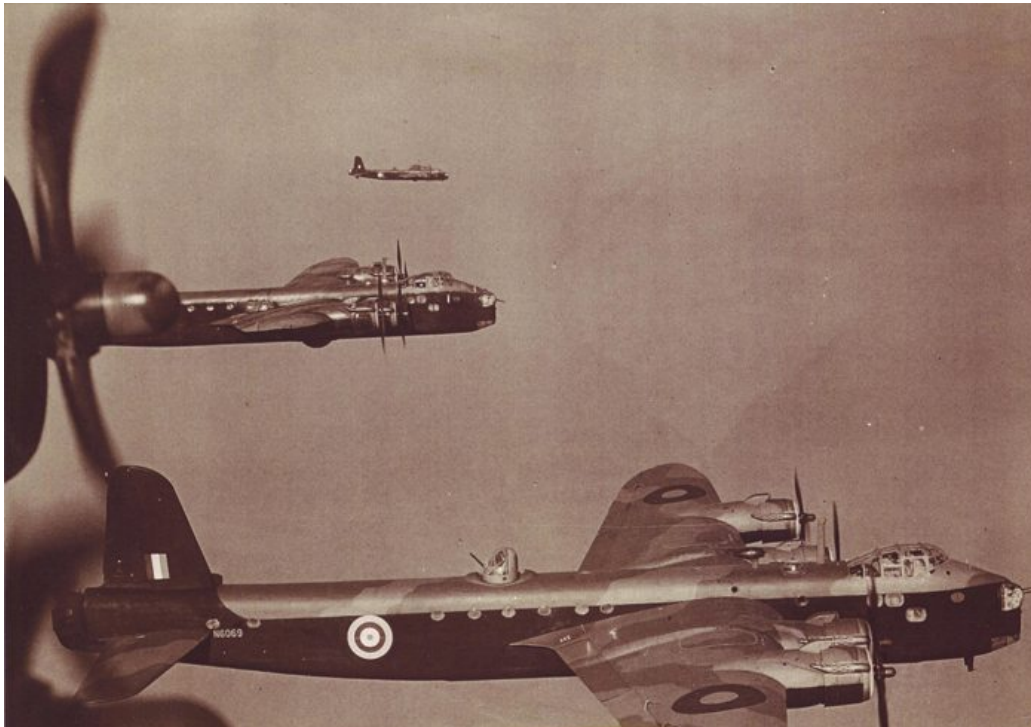
22.11.43 Stirling Mk. III EF.125 [BU-X]

F/Sgt. Hockley A.J.N.

Attack on BERLIN

17.20– 23.50

This aircraft attacked BERLIN at 2012 hrs. from 16,000 feet with 1 x 2000, 8 x 30lb., 336 x 4lb. 24 x 4. There was 10/10ths cloud, tops about 13,000 feet. Bombs were aimed at centre of three sky markers. A good concentration of sky markers. No fires could be seen through thick cloud. Aircraft sustained slight damage from flak on starboard wing tip and on port wing. Route as ordered. One photo attempted.



Stirlings in flight formation [Bomber Command Museum]

‘The Stirling was one of the finest aircraft ever built’<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Peden, op. cit., p. 227



Bill Hallett:

The target was Berlin a 10 hour return trip, involving Stirling bombers in the first wave flying at 18,000 ft followed by the second wave 5 mins later by Halifax bombers flying at 22,000 ft, and a third wave 5 mins later again by Lancaster bombers flying at 26,000 ft. We were all in our allocated positions aboard the aircraft going through the necessary pre take-off drill. During engine warm-up a warning light was showing from one engine, the ground staff mechanic sorted and fixed the electrical problem, but we were 12 mins late in take-off. Allan said he would be trying to make some time up even though extra speed would use more fuel (it was a long trip) we arrived at the target area about 8 mins late and fully aware while we were dropping our bombs on the coloured marker flares, (these were positioned by Pathfinder Aircraft earlier) we would be under lots of the other aircraft dropping their bombs. On our approach towards the flares we were continually running into the slipstream of other aircraft causing us to drop violently. We saw one cross our path just what seemed just a few feet above us and we caught its slipstream too, this situation continued and we all were expecting a collision or a dirty big bomb to clobber us on its way down. We had heard that some crews said they never get scared and wondered if in the same conditions they would be able to continue saying that. We had previous contact with flak and enemy fighter but none left us so drained as that experience. Comments between us after landing at base left no doubt that we all were very scared and hoping it would never happen again. Reports tabled after the war said, "Collisions between our aircraft was rife" but numbers not available.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Bill Hallett, 1 April 2009



1.12.43 Stirling Mk. III EE.967 [BU-T]

F/Sgt. Hockley A.J.N.

Gardening SILVERTHORN XI

15.30 – 22.15

This aircraft laid mines – 1 x G710 (6), 1 x A108, 1 x B18 (6) in allocation position at 1839 hrs. from 5,500 feet. It was moonlight with 10/10ths, tops 3,000 feet, visibility poor. Aircraft diverted to Acklington owing to weather. Route as ordered.

12/13. May Fortress II. “F” (381)

P/O. Hockley A.J.N.

Special Duties.

22.55 – 02.00.

This aircraft completed its mission to Hasselt. The weather was fine but hazy. Bombing was reported to be concentrated mainly on two Red and one Green T.I.’s close together.

24/25. May Fortress II. “A” (384)

P/O. Hockley A.J.N.

Special Duties.

23.40.

Nothing was heard of this aircraft, which is missing.





YEAR 1944		AIRCRAFT		Pilot, or 1st Pilot	2nd Pilot, Pupil or Passenger	Duty (Including Results and Remarks)
Month	Date	Type	No.			
Totals Brought Forward						
MAY	2	B17F	SR 379 <sup>0</sup>	Self	Crew by Kerm	Fighter Pilot INCO Air Gr.
	12	B17F	SR 379 <sup>F</sup>	Self	Crew by Kerm	Air Test
	12	B17F	SR 381 <sup>F</sup>	Self	Crew by Kerm	Ops - HASSELT - HOLLAND.
	15	B17F	SR 381 <sup>F</sup>	Self	Crew	Air Test
	23	B17F	SR 381 <sup>F</sup>	Self	Crew	Air Test
	24	B17 F.	SR 381	SELF	CREW	AIR TEST
	25	B-17-F	SR 381	SELF	CREW	OPERATIONS
Summary for May 1944.						
Certified Correct.						

SINGLE-ENGINE AIRCRAFT				MULTI-ENGINE AIRCRAFT						Pas- senger	INSTRUMENT FLYING (1 to 10) cont. (1) to (10)	
DAY		NIGHT		DAY			NIGHT				(11)	(12)
Dual	Pilot	Dual	Pilot	Dual	1st Pilot	2nd Pilot	Dual	1st Pilot	2nd Pilot			
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)			
30.45	57.10	4.10	2.05	87.30	201.40	27.10	26.20	102.50	11.05			
17.58					20							
12.15					1.20							
14.55								3.05				
13.10					.55							
11.15					1.00							
12.25	30.45				55							
13.40												
Total Day flying				4.30								
" NIGHT "				3.05								
				A.C. 214 SQRN								
				F/LT								

Final entries in Allan's log book [Tony Hockley]



When not on operations or training, the crew made the most of what free time they had to them.

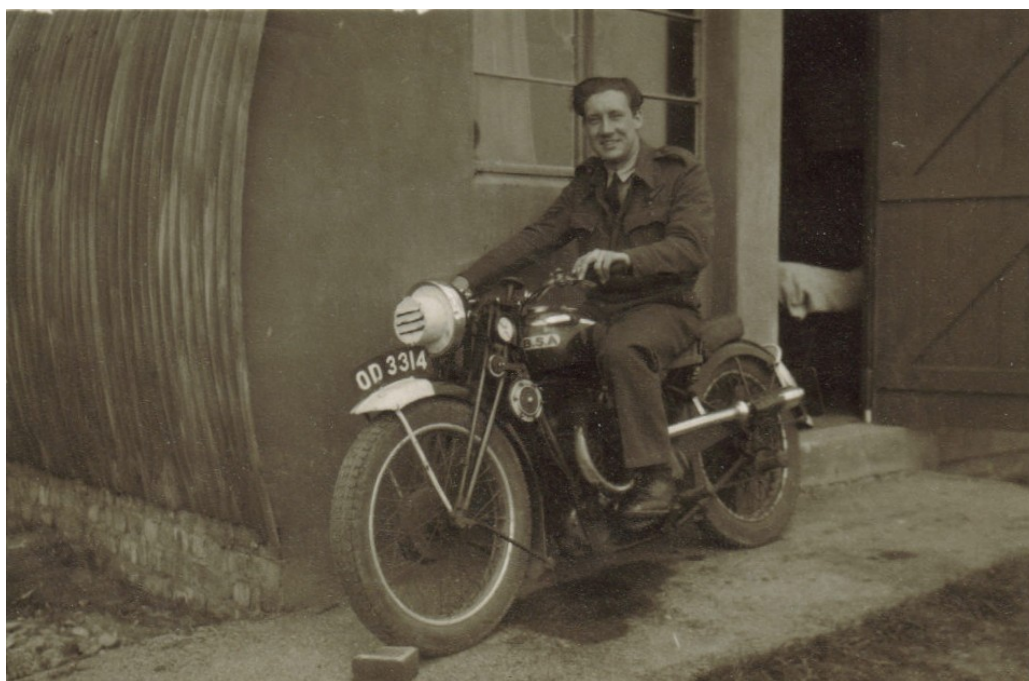
I owned a registered A.J.S motorcycle and kept it at the various places the squadron operated; it was available for any crew member to use. It was garaged either outside the billet or at the mess. Petrol was rationed and a very small amount was allowed each month, so it was decided to use high octane aircraft fuel; this was always available by draining the pipe from bowzers that fill aircraft. There were always volunteers for this chore, this fuel was brightly coloured for security reasons and it used to stain parts on the cycle making it obvious where it came from, but during all the time it was used at the station and places in towns and villages it was never challenged.

Allan the pilot was the only one of the crew that drew caution on some of the crazy things that were performed with it. Most of the boys had contacts where they could borrow a push bike for special events. If this was in town (about 10-12 kilometres) the motorcycle was called to help; 3 bodies on the cycle a piece of wood fixed across the rear enabling a tow for up to 4 push bikes. We only travelled at a slow speed but it was very efficient and saved a lot of pedalling work on hills, considering many trips were made to Pub's and dances. It was lots of fun but no accidents were recorded.

Another time when the A.J.S was useful. The weather had turned foul, thick fog was forecasted to last a few days, so the powers decided to have an exercise where the R.A.F Regiment (like an army to defend the Stations), with all the air-crew to try and infiltrate into the station, they were taken outside by transport. I said this is not for me, and Bob jumped to be with me. We left for town early before it started, lazing about all day eating and drinking until around 4.30pm when we considered it would be over. On arrival at the main gate we found it was still going, a number of guys with guns came at us. We said what's going on? we have been on Leave and they let us through, we were sitting quietly in the Mess when a few top brass came and asked us how we got into the Station. On telling them we had been on Leave, we received congratulations on using the



idea. At a meeting later when the exercise was discussed, we thought we were in for a medal.<sup>18</sup>



Nick Lovatt at Sculthorpe on a Birmingham Small Arms Company (BSA) motorcycle [Roz Glenn]

Bill's was not the only bike at 214 Squadron. Flight Lieutenant Murray Peden had a BSA motorcycle while with the squadron that he had purchased from fellow Flight Lieutenant Cam Lye of the Royal New Zealand Air Force. As Peden later humourlessly recalled, he was prepared 'to lengthen 214's motorcycling causality list.'<sup>19</sup>

A rash of motorcycle accidents, most of them serious enough to hospitalize the riders involved, brought that subject into our casual conversations as a highly current topic.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Bill Hallett, 4 April 2009

<sup>19</sup> Peden, op. cit., p. 308

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., pp. 273-274







Left: Ray Simpson and Allan Hockley Right: Allan Hockley and Bill Hallett [Tony Hockley]



Left: Tommy Glenn and Bob Gundy Right: Allan Hockley [Tony Hockley]



On 12 May 1944, a few days before 214 Squadron's transfer to Oulton, Allan and crew joined 111 allied aircrafts of 100 Group on an operation flight to Hasselt. Most of the attack fell in open fields and only a few bombs hit the railway yards that had been the target of this operation.

Two weeks later, on the night of 24/25 May, Bomber Command organised for five operations over Europe including an attack on the Ford Motor Factory located in Antwerp. Allan and crew were again on the battle order for that night.

The operation we were assigned that night was a decoy one to Antwerp, involving about forty planes while the main target were the railway yards at Aachen, when over 400 planes were involved. Our operation was only a minor one and I remember, at the pre-briefing, feeling a little bit apprehensive when we were told our height was to be only 8,000 feet there and back. In Stirlings, we were used to around 18,000 feet and that was considered low. Those Lancasters on the raid carrying bombs were targeting the Ford Motor factory.<sup>21</sup>

SR384, BU-A "Able" took off from Oulton shortly before midnight and flew under radio silence at a height of 2,700 feet.<sup>22</sup> The height for most missions was around 20,000 feet (the ceiling for this aircraft was 35,600 feet) where the aircraft was less susceptible to flak damage.



Fortress II, SR384, BU-A "Able" about midday on 24 May 1944 [Gerhard Heilig]

<sup>21</sup> Information supplied by F/Sgt Thomas Duke Glenn c/o Michael Moores LeBlanc

<sup>22</sup> Tommy Glenn, *Eendrachtbode*, 11 May 1988



The photo of Fortress II, SR384, BU-A “Able” was taken by Sergeant Gerhard “Harry” Heilig after having completed a 25-minute air test about midday on 24 May 1944. Heilig, a special wireless operator, did his first flight on Fortress BU-C “Charlie” with Allan on 26 March 1944 and another 6-hour night exercise with him on Aircraft BU-N “Nan” on 7 April.<sup>23</sup>

Flight Sergeant Tom Lyall and Sergeant Bob Lloyd were the two radio operators on board for this operation. Lyall was responsible for the aircraft’s own high-frequency Radio telephony (R/T) and Lloyd for picking up German messages, to interfere with them and/or to send wrong messages in return.

Shortly after midnight the B-17 was picked up by the radar of German night fighter ace Oberleutnant (Flying Officer) Hermann Leube, Staffelfkapitän of 4 Nachtjagdgeschwader 3, who went in pursuit of the bomber stream, as Feldwebel (Sergeant) Eberhard Scheve recalled:

Until this day night radar SN-2 was only jammed by *Düppel*, the silvery foil, which showed up on the radar screen as aircraft targets. On this night, however, our equipment was jammed by a flying transmitter, which caused a flickering of the waves over the full width of the picture tube and which completely prevented the blips from appearing normally. I tried a few tricks, switched off the transmitter of my SN-2 set, then dimmed the amplifier on the receiver and then had two different flickering bands to the left and to the right of middle line. I told my pilot to alter his course and established that the flickering bands changed accordingly. I therefore decided that I could use this jamming transmitter as a flying beacon to home on to. As the jamming transmitter probably flew inside a bomber stream to give protection to the formation, we decided to investigate this.

It took us a long time before we spotted the bomber, and we attacked it no less than six times before we were able to shoot it down. At once when the bomber exploded the jamming of the SN-2 ended. The vanishing of the jamming at this instant was confirmed by our staffel comrades, who had also flown around aimlessly for several hours. At debriefing we told of our observations, but we were then told that no such thing existed as a jamming transmitter for the SN-2, and that we had experienced jamming by the overlapping of other SN-2 sets.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Gerhard Heilig, 14 March 2008

<sup>24</sup> T. Boiten, *Nachtjagd*, The Crowood Press Ltd., Ramsbury, Marlborough, Wiltshire, 1997, pp. 186-187



Oberleutnant Leube first shot the fuselage of SR384 which caught fire, followed by the wings, before the Fortress finally exploded over the Oosterschelde near Antwerp at 0057 hours. According to the crew, it was not the night fighter that finished off the plane but flak from flying at such a low altitude.

Special Wireless Operator Bob Lloyd recalled:

...the first shell passed through the fuselage, between Tom Lyall and me, bursting overhead... the second shell exploded below, and the third in the port-inner engine which caught fire.<sup>25</sup>

Allan hurled the aircraft into a dive in an attempt to extinguish the fire. When this failed, he gave the order to abandon the aircraft which was then switched on to autopilot. Bob Lloyd ejected the escape door and, along with Jim McCutchan, Tom Lyall, Tommy Glenn, assembled to jump.

We soon had the answer with the Skipper's voice shouting over the intercom, 'Abandon Aircraft! Abandon Aircraft!'<sup>26</sup>

Bob Lloyd:

Bob [Gundy] made to jump and then went back to look at the fire; this happened three times. I had had enough by this time and made to jump, but was blown back against the fuselage and got stuck in the hatch, and I had to be pushed back.<sup>27</sup>

According to Flight Sergeant Tom Lyall, Glenn, Lloyd, Gundy and Hallett all jumped before him while Lovett, McCutchan, Simpson and Hockley were still in the aircraft. Jim McCutchan and Nick Lovett followed soon afterwards. At this time the aircraft was at an altitude of about 1,000 feet or less.

<sup>25</sup> O. Clutton-Brock and R. Crompton, *The Long Road: Trials and Tribulations of Airmen Prisoners from Stalag Luft VII (Bankau) to Berlin, June 1944-May 1945*, Grubb Street, London, 2013, p. 30

<sup>26</sup> Information supplied by F/Sgt Thomas Duke Glenn c/o Wim de Meester, "Wings to Victory"

<sup>27</sup> Clutton and Crompton, op. cit., p. 31





No. 11 (RAAF) P.D.R.S. (SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE SECTION) R.A.F. STATION, BRIGHTON.

STATEMENT OF ESCAPED, EX-INTERNEE, REPATRIATED P.O.W., RELEASED P.O.W.

Number. Aus/ 62541 Rank W/O Name LYALL RT

Squadron 214 Mustering W.A.G.

1. Particulars of operation on which engaged.

I was the W/O (mustering) in the crew of a FORTRESS (type aircraft) detailed to attack a target at ANTWERP (name of target) on the 24/25-5-44 (date)

2. Circumstances of loss of aircraft.

Give details of what occurred paying particular attention to (i) Cause of damage to aircraft (ii) Orders given by captain to abandon A/C and if acknowledged by crew. (iii) Details of injuries to any members, and if so whether unable to bale out. (iv) The identity of members who baled out up to time of your leaving aircraft. (v) The number and identity of any members of crew whom you know to have still been in the aircraft when you left it. (vi) Height at which you baled out. (vii) Whether or not aircraft was in control at that time, and its condition whether on fire etc. (viii) Approx where A/C aircraft crashed.

damage was caused by flak (four hits) Abandon A/C given by captain did not hear other members acknowledge. no knowledge of injuries to crew. F/Sgt GLENN SGT LLOYD F/Sgt GUNDY SGT HARLETT LEFT before I did. SGT LLOYD SGT SIMPSON P/O HOCKLEY SGT MCCUTCHEN STILL IN A/C WHEN I left. approx 200ft controls of A/C shot away, losing height and making wide circuit whole port wing on fire. A/C crashed in river approx. 5 miles from TONEN HOLLAND

3. Probable fate of other members of crew.

(Including whether saw parachutes in the air, made contact with other members on the ground, or received any information regarding them from any source whatever; any details of burials etc.)

F/S GLENN F/Sgt GUNDY SGT HARLETT SGT LLOYD SGT LLOYD SGT MCCUTCHEN P.O.W.S.

P/O HOCKLEY KILLED BURIED IN HOLLAND

SGT SIMPSON. NOTHING KNOWN.





4. Have you any information whatever of any R.A.F., R.N.Z.A.F., R.C.A.F., or R.A.A.F. personnel other than members of your crew.

NO

5. Were you at any times in the hands of the enemy as a P.O.W.; If so state circumstances and details of any subsequent escape or release.

captured 25.5.44 held POW. till released  
by Russians 22.4.45

6. If you were identified by the enemy as being in enemy occupied territory state details of identification.

AS ABOVE

7. Did you injure or kill an enemy at anytime. NO

8. How many operational trips or hours have you completed. 9 SORTIES

Is this your first or second tour? FIRST

9. Do you require repatriation to Australia as soon as possible after your leave?

(a) NOT ESPECIALLY ANXIOUS TO RETURN IMMEDIATELY

(b)

Dated the 18 day of JUNE 1945.

R. J. Lyall

N. J. Wadley R.F.C.  
Signature of Officer before whom  
statement is made.







Of the nine crew members, seven left the stricken plane by parachute after which it crashed into the Eastern Scheldt River between Yerseke and Gorishoek. Tommy Glenn later recounted:

We were shot at by a German fighterplane. Our plane was hit and we were given the command to jump. When I came down I saw the German fighter. I turned the straps of my parachute and saw that our plane was on fire. Below me just a black mass. I thought it was clouds, but it turned out to be water.<sup>28</sup>

The Germans did not initially realise their success but this became quickly apparent after the scores of victories they started booking on returning bombers. The Germans put some effort into trying to salvage the remains of the B-17 as did the allied forces after the war but to no avail.

Tragically, Allan and Mid Upper Gunner Ray Simpson went down with the plane. The latter's partly carbonized body was recovered from the sea on 20 June and initially buried at Yerseke as an unknown airman in grave 172. Allan's body had washed ashore near Yerseke on the 10 June and was buried in grave 171<sup>29</sup> the following day after formal identification had taken place.

24.5.44.

4 aircraft were detailed for operations[.] The weather was hazy over the target area of Antwerp but ground and water detail could be seen by the Light of Flares especially early in the attack. Bombing was reported to be scattered, but centred round the T.I.'S. One combat occurred – strikes seen, but no claim made. No aircraft were seen shot down but fire on ground at enemy coast homewards, might have been an aircraft. There was little fighter activity but flak over target was fairly intense and heavy flak very accurate. Light flak was active all the way home especially to starboard. 1 aircraft "A" (Captain P/O. Hockley) failed to return.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>28</sup> *Eendrachtbode*, 11 May 1988, p. 11

<sup>29</sup> Initially reported as grave 172.

<sup>30</sup> The National Archives: AIR 27/1322 / 17 – 1323/25





The esteem for which Allan's crew had for their "Skipper" is evident in the memoriam written in the front of Flight Sergeant Tommy Glenn's Prisoner of War (POW) diary:

IN MEMORIAM

P/O HOCKLEY, ALAN JAMES NOEL [sic]

OUR "SKIPPER" AND PILOT, WHO  
GAVE HIS LIFE, SO THAT WE MAY  
LIVE, REMAINING AT THE CONTROLS  
OF THE AIRCRAFT, THUS ALLOWING  
ALL BUT ONE OF US TO PARACHUTE  
TO SAFETY.

HE WAS A NATIVE OF SYDNEY,  
AUSTRALIA, AGED 26, WHO WAS  
ALWAYS TOLERANT, GENEROUS,  
SPORTING AND CERTAINLY ONE OF  
THE BEST PILOTS IN THE R.A.F. OR  
R.A.A.F

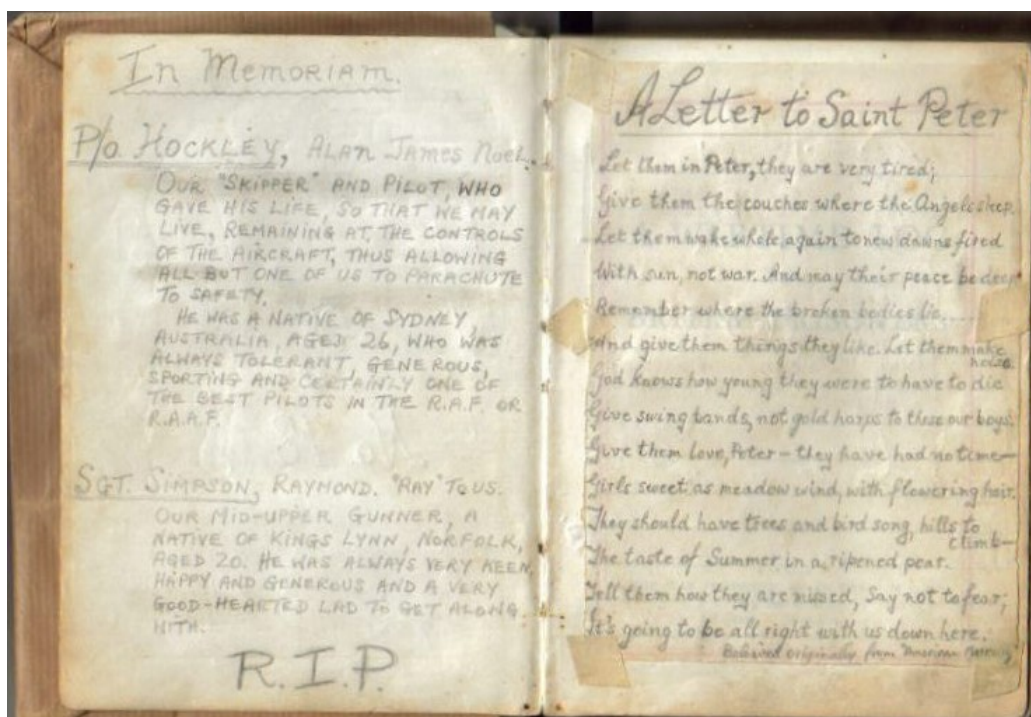
Glenn's diary also contains a memoriam for Ray Simpson:

SGT. SIMPSON, RAYMOND, "RAY" TO US  
OUR MID-UPPER GUNNER, A  
NATIVE OF KINGS LYNN, NORFOLK,  
AGED 20. HE WAS ALWAYS VERY KEEN,  
HAPPY AND GENEROUS AND A VERY  
GOOD-HEARTED LAD TO GET ALONG  
WITH.

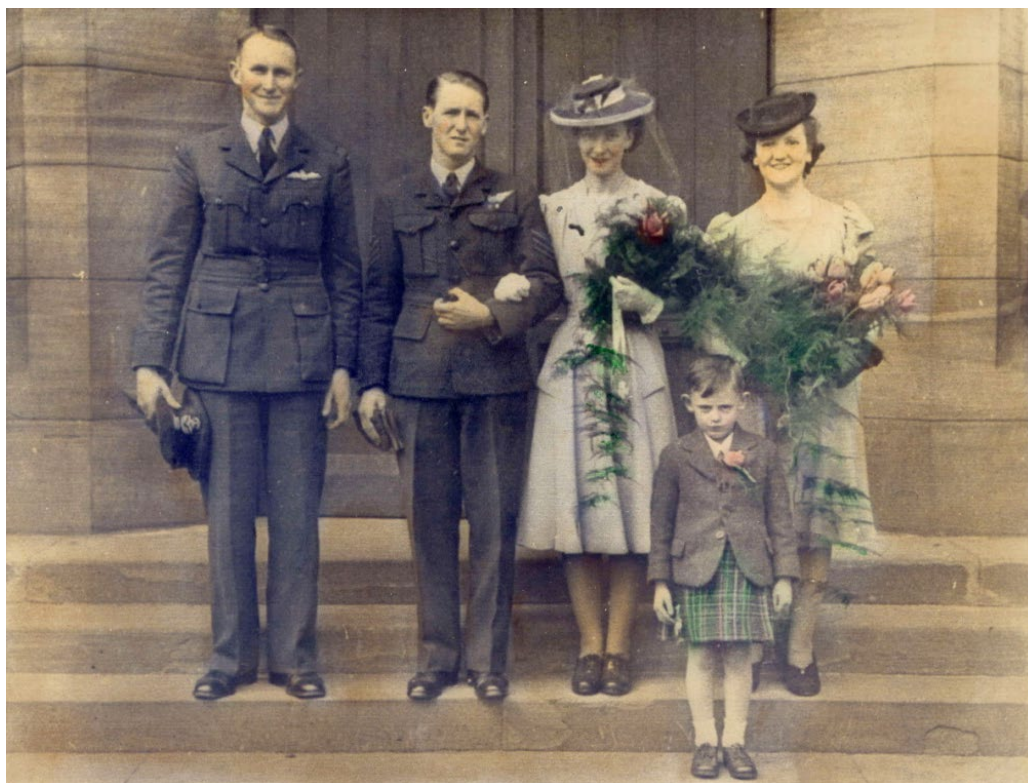
R.I.P.

Fellow Australian, Tom Lyall, named his son Don Alan Lyall after his "Skipper". Allan had been Tom's best man when the latter married Janet Winning Sneddon at St Mary's Church, Kirkintilloch, Dunbartonshire, Scotland on 6 May 1944. Janet had been serving as an aircraft woman with the Signals Section, RAF, stationed at Wrattling Common, Cambridgeshire when she met Tom.





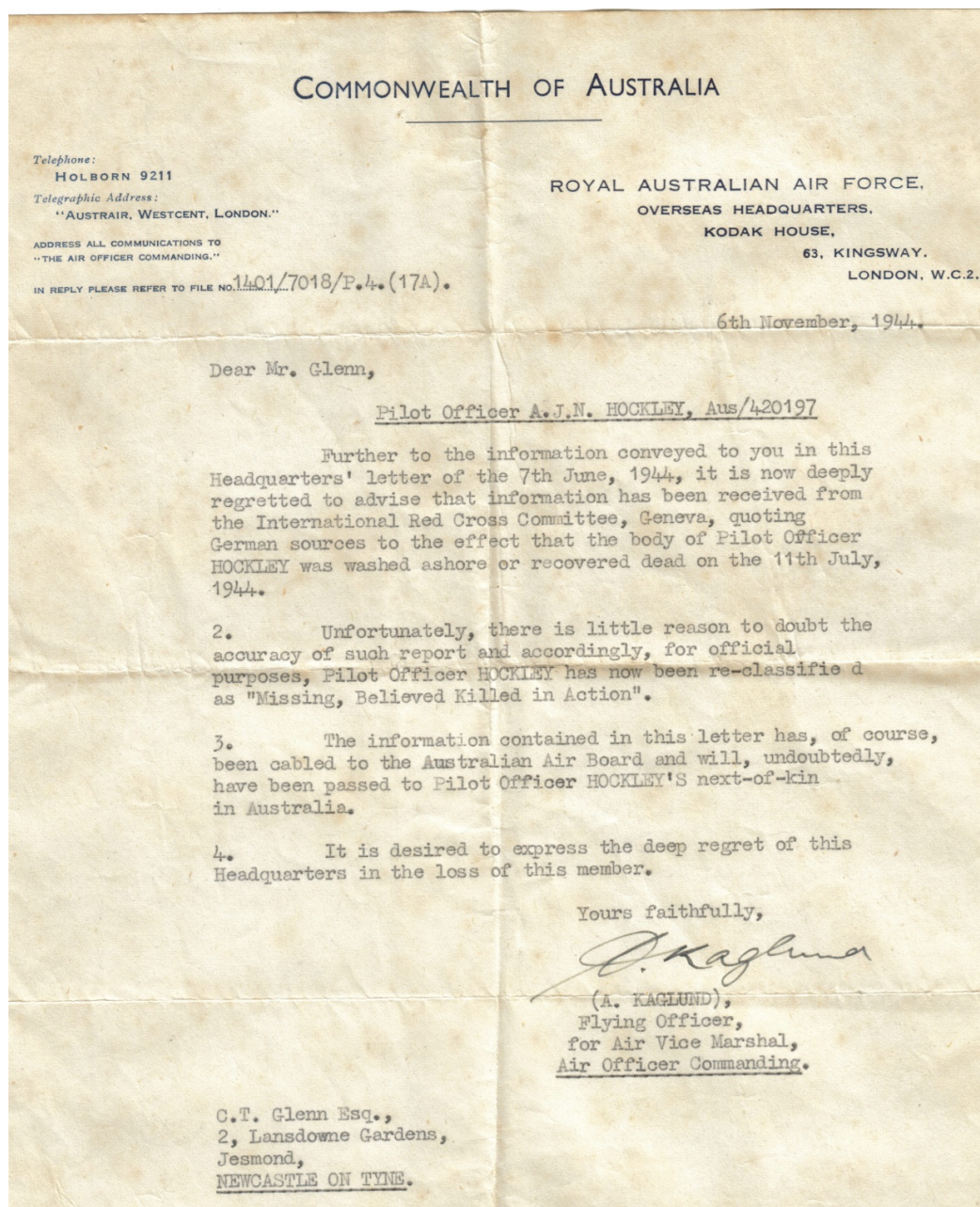
Memoriams to Allan and Ray in Tommy Glenn's POW diary [Roz Glenn]



Allan at Tom and Janet's wedding, 6 May 1944 [Tony Hockley]







Notification of death of Pilot Officer Hockley sent to Mr Cecil Thomas Glenn, 6 November 1944 [Roz Glenn]

Fortress II, SR384, BU-A was the first aircraft of its type lost by 214 Squadron.

At breakfast next morning we learned that we had lost our first Fortress. A cheerful young Australian, Pilot Officer Hockley, and his crew, had failed to return.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Peden, op. cit., p. 381



I was not a close friend of Allan's, but on the other hand I did know him very well – well enough to kid around and joke with him the odd time when we were brought together, or when we met in the mess after hours. Allan was easy to like because he was always cheerful and full of fun.

I heard immediately when his plane was lost, of course, but I never did get any particulars of his death until your material just now.<sup>32</sup>

Sergeant Ronald Arthur “Jimmy” James who served in 214 Squadron as a Mid Upper Gunner from 1944 later wrote:

On the night of May 24/25, 1944, the Squadron suffered its first Fortress casualty when P/O Hockley, RAAF, was shot down on a patrol to Antwerp. It was on this flight that SDO (Special Duties Officer) Lloyd-Davies [Bob Lloyd] was the stand-in operator. P/O Hockley stayed at the controls of the burning aircraft to give his crew the chance of bailing out and in doing so forfeited his own life. All the crew with the exception of the pilot and Sgt Simpson managed to parachute out and landed on one of the small Dutch Islands, in the North Sea. As this area was well guarded by Germans, they had no opportunity to evade capture and were quickly rounded up by the enemy.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Murray Peden, 22 November 2007

<sup>33</sup> R. James, *Avenging in the Shadows: No. 214 Squadron Royal Air Force*, p. 149



Yerseke is a village and commune in Zuid Beveland, 13 kilometres east of Goes and 35 kilometres west of Bergen op Zoom. The cemetery is in the north-western part of the village, on the road known as Steeweg. In the north-eastern section lie the graves of Allan and Ray, the only allied servicemen buried in the cemetery.

On 17 September 2017, Allan's nieces Maree Fox, Sandra Watson and Christine Hockley visited Allan and Ray's graves. To their delight, they discovered that the story of 'the captain who drowned while trying to save his mate is well known in Yerseke'<sup>34</sup> and that the men were considered local heroes (see Appendix I).

Every year on 4 May there is a ceremony at the cemetery which is attended by children from the local schools together members of the community. Boy Scouts lay flowers on Allan and Ray's graves and the 'Last Post' is played followed by a ringing of the church bells.<sup>35</sup>



Allan and Ray's graves, Yerseke General Cemetery, 2005 [Wim de Meester, "Wings to Victory"]

<sup>34</sup> Joan van Liere, VVV Yerseke, 31 October 2007

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 7 November 2007





**GEMEENTE YERSEKE**

No. 709. Bijl.: 3

Onderwerp: **Graf P/O A.J.N. Hockley**

Bericht op schrijven van: **12 Mei 1948, no. A6/3472**

Telefoon no. 56.

Girono. (gem. secr. 393097. (gem. ontv. 93283.

Aan de Consul-Generaal der Nederlanden voor het Gemeenebest van Australië

58 Margaret Street

**S Y D N E Y .**

Yerseke, 14 Juni 1948

Naar aanleiding van uw in margine aangehaald schrijven, doe ik U hierbij drie foto's toekomen van het graf van wijlen P/O A.J.N. Hockley, grafnummer 171.

Het stoffelijk overschot is op 11 Juni 1948 op de algemene begraafplaats alhier, ter aarde besteld.

Het graf wordt onderhouden door de gemeente Yerseke.

Indien Mevrouw Hockley bepaalde wensen voor de laatste rustplaats van haar zoon mocht hebben, dan verzoek ik U beleefd deze aan mij te berichten, opdat de gemeente Yerseke hieraan kan voldoen.

De Burgemeester der gemeente Yerseke,

*A.C. Villenruef*

3-10-'47. 2000 G.

Report re burial of P/O A. J. N. Hockley, Yerseke General Cemetery [Wim de Meester, "Wings to Victory"]

'If Mrs. Hockley has any wishes for the last resting place of her son, I politely request you to report them to me, so that the municipality of Yerseke can meet them.'







Grave 171, A. J. N. Hockley, Yerseke General Cemetery [Ryan L. Dudley]







Grave 171, A. J. N. Hockley, Yerseke General Cemetery [Wim de Meester, "Wings to Victory"]







Grave 172, Unknown Airman, Yerseke General Cemetery [Ryan L. Dudley]







Grave 172, Unknown Airman, Yerseke General Cemetery [Wim de Meester, "Wings to Victory"]



LA. 253. P.O.W. LIST NO. FC. 808. *Line 17A*

CABLE RECEIVED FROM THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS COMMITTEE,  
GENEVA, BY THE PRISONERS OF WAR INFORMATION BUREAU.

Received :- 1045 Hrs. 27/11/1944.  
Submitted:- " " "

Berlin communicates following deceased airmen:-

One unknown Australian	Washed ashore 12/7 North Beach Isle Terschilling buried 14/7 War Cemetery Isle Terschilling grave 119.
<u>420197, Hockley, A.J.N.</u>	Washed ashore 11/6 Harbour Yerseke buried communal cemetery Yerseke grave 172.

4487 AX19 *36 N2* *159* *Spent 1/11*

**CYPHER MESSAGE** R.A.A.F. Form A.14(a)  
(R.A.F. Form 683)  
(Revised April, 1943)

This message must not be referred to in any but cypher messages. Serial No. *3110102*

TO - RAAF HQRS	TOO 3110102
<b>ACTION COPY</b>	Receipt Despatch
	Time of 311521Z
FROM AIR MIN KWT	System W/T

PCX705 31 OCT.

AUSCAS 702. REF. AUSCAS 775 25/4/44 (D) TO READ AUS 420197 PILOT OFFICER A.J.N.  
HICKLEY MISSING BELIEVED KILLED IN ACTION. TELEGRAM FROM I.R.C.C. QUOTING BERLIN  
INFORMATION STATES 11/6 P/O HICKLEY WASHED ASHORE OF RECOVERED DEAD. KINNOT.

*Copy cypher to  
Hickley P.O. (P.O.W.)*

IMMEDIATE.

*RB 1/11*  
**D.P.S. CASUALTY SECTION**

*CHANCERY*

**URGENT - CHANGE OF CATEGORY** *See Annex 1/11 8/11*

Cables from the International Red Cross and Air Ministry re recovery of Allan's body on 11 June 1944

[National Archives of Australia: A705 166/18/365]





(48008) WT.P.2259/2808 20.000 3/53 A.&E.W.LTD. GP.685

## Graves Registration Report Form. ORIGINAL

COMMUN : HOLLAND. REPORT No. : SCHEDULE No. : 1.

PLACE OF BURIAL : YERSEKE GENERAL CEMETERY,  
Zeeland.

Land belongs to

The following are buried here :—

Certified complete and correct.

Signature *[Signature]* Date 26 MAY 1955

P.R.G.	No. and Rank	Initials, Name and Honours	Unit	Date of Death	For works use
171	<sup>420197</sup> Pilot Officer.	A.J.N. HOCKLEY.	Royal Australian Air Force.	25. 5.44.	C.H.
172	<sup>1805752</sup> SGT.	<del>R.G.V. SIMPSON</del> <del>UNKNOWN AIRMAN.</del>	<del>R.A.F. (V.R.)</del>	Found <del>20. 6.44.</del> 25. 5. 1944.	C.H.

*Unit "Gom 17"*

Grave Registration Reports [Commonwealth War Graves Commission]

Form H/2

Contract No:- SCHEDULE "A" Page No;4

Name & Address of firm:- Name of Burial Place :-

COMM. CEMS., HOLLAND GROUP NO.50 (RAILHEAD BERGEN-OP-ZOOM)

YERSEKE GEN. CTY., NO.1					
Z/1200/1/A/8	171	1	1/HH/6	172	2
Pilot Officer			An Airman		
A.J.N. Hockley			Of the		
Royal Australian Air Force			1939-1945		
25th May 1944 Age 27			War		
(Cross)			Found 20th June 1944		
Greater love			(Cross)		
Hath no man than this.			Known unto God		
He gave his life for us					

Headstone Schedule [Commonwealth War Graves Commission]







Allan Hockley, photo taken shortly before being promoted to Pilot Officer [Ryan L. Dudley]





Ray Simpson, a “good-hearted lad”, was only 20 years old when he lost his life on 25 May 1944 [John Simpson]





Rene Cornelisse of Vlissingen, Zeeland sitting at the front of Allan and Ray's grave

Rene adopted the graves as part of a program introduced by the Wings to Victory Museum, Zeeland

[Renee Cornelisse]



## Internment

Baling out was not without its dangers. Bill Hallett hit the trailing wireless aerial (due to the situation it had been overlooked and not removed), ripping off his boot, while Bob Lloyd's experience left a lasting impression on him.

... in my haste I forgot to remove my flying helmet which was still attached to the radio set. This jerked my head violently backwards and I was thrown about the cabin. Eventually I removed my helmet and joined three other members of the crew... Owing to the behaviour of the aircraft I was blown back into the escape hatch banging my head against the side and getting stuck in the hatch. I had to be pushed out this causing an awkward fall and I again collided with the side of the aircraft striking the back of my head. The force of the blow was sufficient to knock me out and I next remember opening my parachute when quite close to the sea.<sup>36</sup>

despite these incidents, the seven crew members landed relatively unhurt on the partly inundated island of Tholen between Gorishoek and the Schelphoek near Poortvliet. Three of them, Tom Lyall, Bob Gundy and Bill Hallett, were taken in by local residents before being handed over to a German patrol a few hours later. The following day, Jim McCutchan and Nick Lovatt were also picked-up and taken to Wemeldinge (Zeeland) by the ferryman Larooy on orders of the German army.

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<sup>36</sup> Bob Lloyd, 19 February 1980





Bob Lloyd and Tommy Glenn, meanwhile, settled themselves in a deserted family home whose owners had been evacuated. This was the farm yard “de Zoete Rave”, residence of the Burgers family.

Next morning, I kept observation on a large house about 150 yards away which appeared to be surrounded by water and after what I estimate would be about half-an-hour, I made my way over to it. It was surrounded by about 2 feet of water and I tried to break down the door but could not do so. I then walked round the out-buildings and got a terrible fright when someone shouted. It was a man standing in the entrance to a doorway to a barn one floor up, without a stitch of clothing. I was so confused that I peeled off question after question without waiting for answers. Who are you? Where have you come from? How long have you been here? Are you English? After a few minutes he calmed me down and was a member of my crew [Bob Lloyd].<sup>37</sup>

During the evening of 26 May the pair tried to reach “polderdiekje” with a makeshift raft; however, this kept sinking so they proceeded through the salty water on foot. Unexpectedly, the water levels started to rise on them and, as both men were greatly exhausted from their ordeal, the situation becoming increasingly dangerous. Fortunately, young Karel Poot spotted the airmen wading through the water and came to their rescue.

Karel Poot, who was a 13-year old boy, together with Dies van ‘Hof, picked up the English military men from the polder... Poot often went to Dies van ‘t Hof, the lock-keeper: “as a young boy I loved to be in a little boat. I went there any time of the day, very often and frequently stayed overnight. And if you did see somebody, that was of course very remarkable. So they saw Glenn and Lloyd wade through the water to the Polderdyke.

According to 86-year old Mrs. J.P. van ‘t Hof-de Vliet from Tholen, widow of Dies van ‘t Hof, her husband knew that on that day (25 May) more survivors could possibly show up in the area. Shortly after the plane crashed, during the night, there was a knock at the door at Van ‘t Hof and the lock-keeper let in one of the RAF military men and gave him dry clothes and food. He is supposed to have spend [sic] the night there too. “The Germans gave him a good telling off

<sup>37</sup> Information supplied by F/Sgt Thomas Duke Glenn c/o Michael Moores LeBlanc



for letting this man in. It is the enemy, they said. You are not allowed to let the enemy in” recounts Mrs. Van ‘t Hof, who at the time was evacuated to Halsteren with her two daughters.<sup>38</sup>



Tommy Glenn (right) with wife Margaret visiting Karel Poot (middle), Mees Burgers (2nd from left) and Johannes Poot (left) in 1988 [*Eendrachtbode*, 11 May 1988]

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<sup>38</sup> *Eendrachtbode*, 11 May 1988





IT AND IT FLOATED OK. A HEAVY SHOWER DURING MADE ANOTHER RAFT, BUT ALSO A “DUD”. REMADE MORNING ENABLED US TO GET A DRINK, BY USING A JAM-JAR TO COLLECT WATER DRIPPING FROM A BROKEN DRAIN PIPE. SUN CAME OUT LATER AND I SWAM OVER TO HAYSTACK TO RECOVER SOMETHING. UNSUCCESSFUL. PREPARED SOME CLOTHING ETC. FOR CROSSING TO DYKE AT DUSK. COMMENCED ATTEMPT AT ABOUT 8.00 P.M. WHEN PATROLS HAD FINISHED. HAD TO ABANDON RAFT AFTER COVERING A SHORT DISTANCE. CARRIED A VALISE OF CLOTHING AND LEFT THE REST. WE HALF WADED AND HALF SWAM ANOTHER 20 YARDS WITH STILL ANOTHER 150 TO GO, WHEN TWO DUTCHMEN SAW US FROM THE BANK. WE HAD BEEN WATCHING THEM AND THEY APPEARED TO US TO BE OK. WE WERE BEGINNING TO FEEL COLD AND FATIGUED WITHOUT MENTIONING HUNGER. WE FINALLY WAVED TO THEM TO WHICH WE RECEIVED AN IMMEDIATE RESPONSE. THEY COMMENCED TO COME TO OUR AID IN A BOAT. WE COVERED ANOTHER 50 YDS. AND THEY JUST WAITED. THEY TOOK US OFF, DRIED OUR CLOTHES AND GAVE US PLENTY OF BREAD. WE WENT TO BED.<sup>39</sup>

Bob Lloyd and Tommy Glenn spent that night with the Poot family. Mrs. Poot took their insignia's and burnt them in the kitchen stove before drying their clothes and feeding them. Next day they were taken POW by patrolling Germans.

Lloyd was sitting on the toilet, this was outside. I still hear him say to these Germans: You bugger off!<sup>40</sup>

The two airmen were escorted to the city of Bergen op Zoom about 6.5 kilometres south of Tholen. Despite the presence of armed soldiers, many civilians stood outside their homes and made the V for victory sign as the airmen were led away. The crew were detained overnight in the local gaol where they were questioned and placed into separate cells underground.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>39</sup> POW diary of Tommy Glenn, 26 May 1944

<sup>40</sup> *Eendrachtbode*, 11 May 1988

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*



IT WAS VERY HELPFUL TO OUR SINKING MORAL TO TAKE IT IN TURNS TO CONSTANTLY CURSE OUR GUARDS AND GET A SMILE IN RETURN, ON THE JOURNEY WE PASSED THROUGH THE TOWN OF “TOLEN” WHERE CROWDS TURNED OUT TO SEE, GIVING US ALL THE SIGNS WE KNEW SO WELL, THE GUARDS LOOKED VERY SMALL WHEN WE DECIDED TO REST IN THE CENTRE OF THE TOWN WITH CROWDS AROUND US. AT THE PLACE WHERE WE WERE TAKEN TO WE HAD A TASTE OF OUR FIRST GERMAN FOOD AND COFFEE - BOTH MADE US SICK. WE DIDN'T STAY LONG AT THIS PLACE, BUT SENT ON TO THE DETENTION BARRACKS – “BERGEN-OP-ZOOM”, HERE WE WERE QUESTIONED AND OUT IN SEPARATE [sic] CELLS, THE BEDS IN THE CELLS COULD HARDLY BE COMPARED TO A FEATHER ONE, EVEN IF IT HAD IT WOULD HAVE BEEN IMPOSSIBLE FOR ME TO SLEEP, AS MY THOUGHTS WERE SO STRONG OF MY PARENTS, THE BOYS AT THE STATION, AND ESPECIALLY OF MY GIRL WHO I WAS GOING TO MARRY ON MY NEXT LEAVE<sup>42</sup>

From Bergen op Zoom the crew were taken to Dulag Luft via Frankfurt. Arriving on 30 May each prisoner was sorted and placed 9-10 in a very small cell to await interrogation.

OUR HUNGER WAS TERRIBLE, A DRY CRUST OF BREAD WAS FOUND IN A CORNER WHICH WAS EATEN WITH OUT THOUGHT.<sup>43</sup>

THERE NINE OR TEN OF US BUNCHED TOGETHER WERE PUSHED INTO A SMALL CELL FOR THE NIGHT TO SLEEP AS BEST WE COULD. EVERYONE HAD AT LEAST TWO HOURS SLEEP UNDER THESE CONDITIONS! SOME STALE BREAD WAS FOUND LYING ON THE FLOOR, WHICH WE VERY SOON DEVOURED.<sup>44</sup>

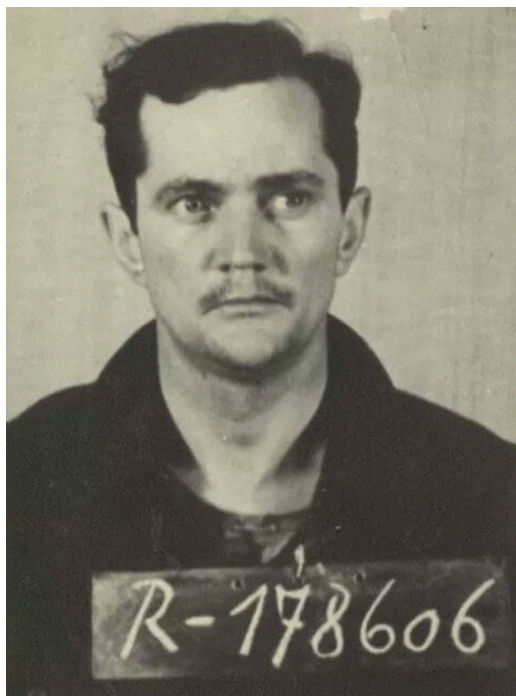
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<sup>42</sup> POW diary of Bill Hallett, May 1945

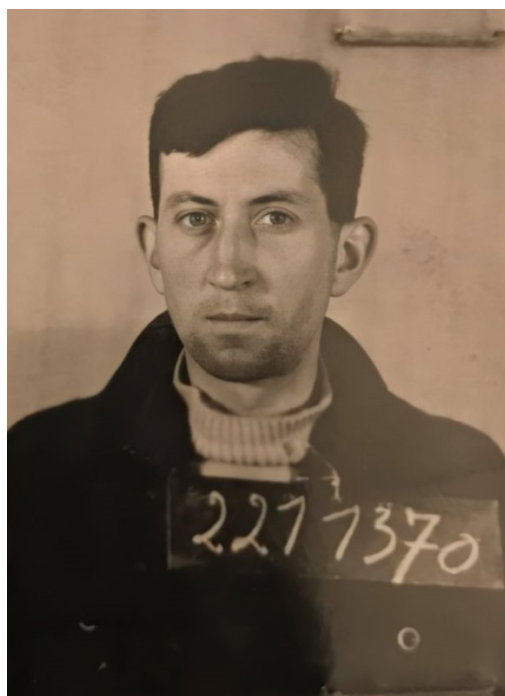
<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 30 May 1945

<sup>44</sup> POW diary of Tommy Glenn, 30 May 1945

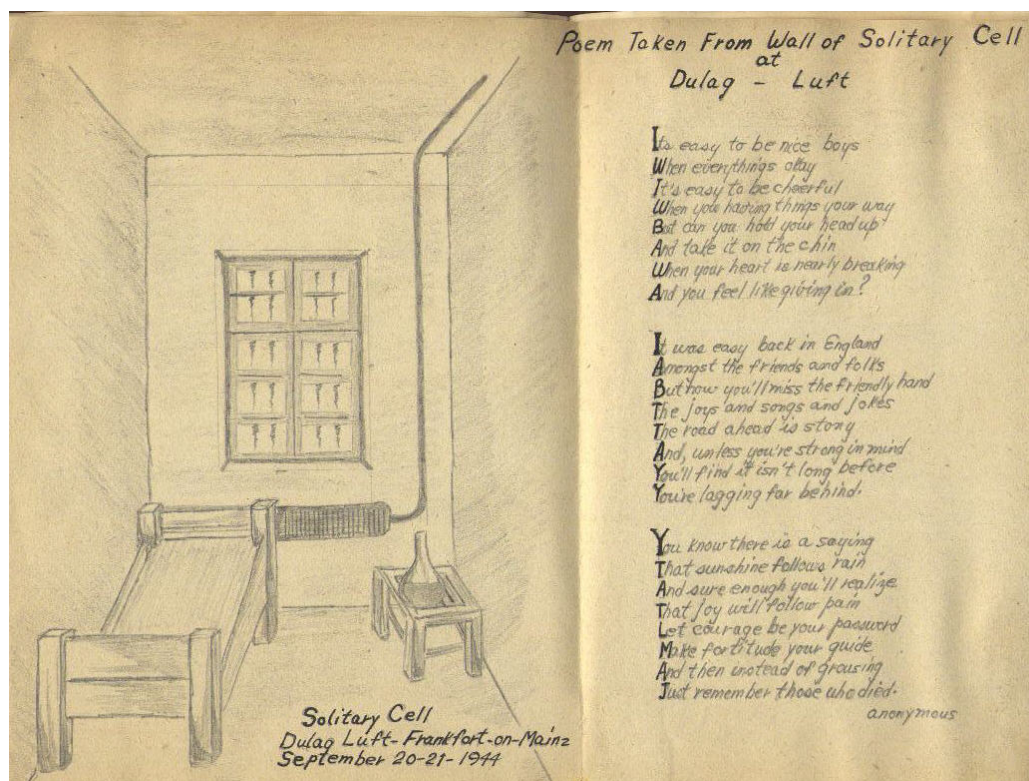




POW photo of Jim McCutchan, RCAF [Norma McCutchan / Karen Ebert]



POW photo of Bob Lloyd, RAF [Tony Lloyd]



Sketch and poem from the POW diary of Lieutenant Walter M. "Dick" Culbert, 510th Bomb Squadron, detailing a solitary cell at Dulag Luft, Oberursel near Frankfurt-am-Main [James H. Culbert]



Dulag Luft was located at Oberursel (13 kilometres north-west of Frankfurt-am-Main) and was the largest Luftwaffe Interrogation Centre in Europe. Nearly all captured Allied airmen were sent there to be interrogated before being assigned to a permanent prison camp. While at Dulag Luft the crew were kept in constant solitary confinement.

At Dulag Luft each prisoner was studied by several psychologists in order to learn his likes, dislikes, habits and powers of resistance. The method of procedure was then determined, and the machinery was set into operation to destroy his mental resistance in the shortest possible time. If the prisoner showed signs of fright or appeared nervous, he was threatened with all kinds of torture, some of which were carried out, and he was handled in a rough manner. Others were bribed by luxuries. They were traded clean clothes, good living quarters, food and cigarettes for answers to certain questions. Those who could neither be swayed nor bribed were treated with respect and handled with care in the interrogator's office, but were made to suffer long miserable hours of solitary confinement in the prison cells.<sup>45</sup>

Following their interrogation, the crew were sent to the transit camp at Wetzlar on 2 June and then on to Stalag Luft VII at Bankau, near Kreuzburg in Silesia (now Poland), arriving on 6 June.

ARRIVED AT OUR DESTINATION OF "BANKAU" AT 09.00, WE WERE PUT IN A SIDING AND LEFT... AT 15.30 WE WERE TAKEN OUT AND PROCEEDED ON THE THREE KILOMETER [sic] WALK TO THE CAMP. IT WAS RAINING AND HARD ALL THE WAY AND OUR SPIRITS WERE VERY LOW<sup>46</sup>

NOW THAT WE HAD REACHED BANKAU, BILL AND I HAD A GOOD TUCK IN FOR DINNER. WHEN THE ESCORT ARRIVED, WE WERE FORMED UP OUTSIDE THE STATION AND PROCEEDED TO WALK THE 2 OR 3 MILES TO THE CAMP ITSELF. THE WOUNDED WENT BY HORSE AND CART! THE OFFICER IN CHARGE OF THE GUARDS EVEN TRAVELLED BY THAT CONVEYANCE! THE MARCH DID NOT GO

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<sup>45</sup> Kenneth W. Simmons, *Kriegie*, Thomas Nelson, Edinburgh, 1960, p. 55

<sup>46</sup> POW diary of Bill Hallett, 6 June 1944





DOWN WELL FOR NOT ONLY DID WE FEEL RATHER WEAK, BUT IT DECIDED TO RAIN AND VERY SOON WE GOT SOAKED THROUGH, UNDER THESE CONDITIONS, THEN, LITTLE WONDER OUR SPIRITS WERE VERY LOW WHEN WE SAW THE CAMP WE WERE TO SETTLE IN.<sup>47</sup>



Bob Lloyd's POW identity disc [Tony Lloyd]

POW Number 34

Kr. Gef. – Kriegs Gefangener – Prisoner of War

Lager – Camp

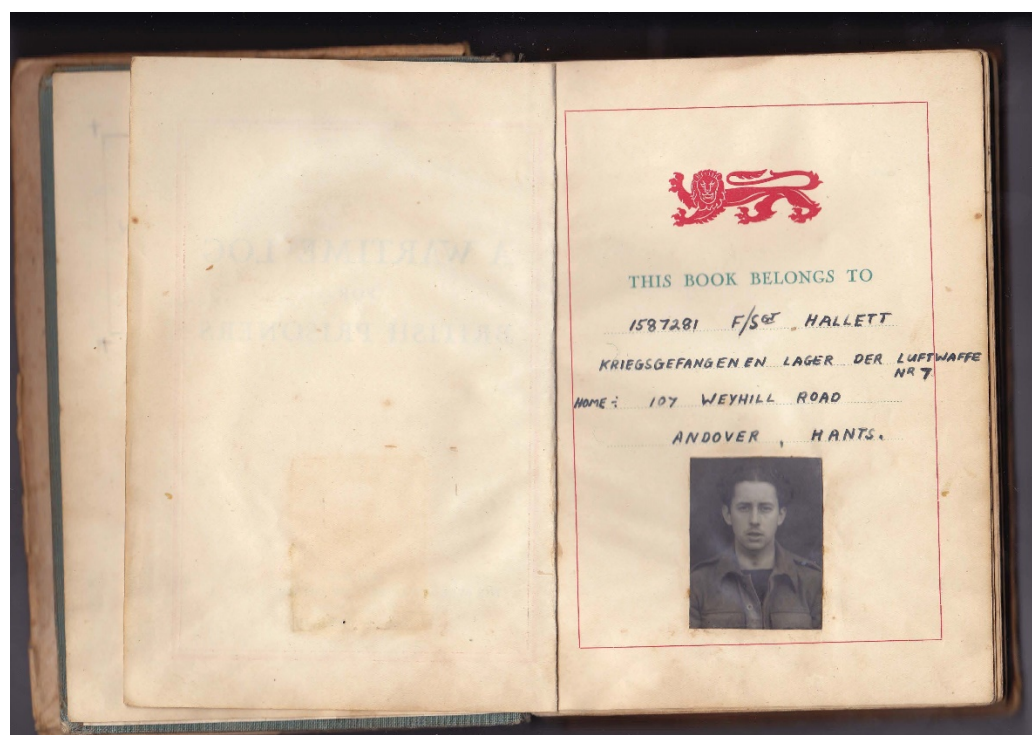
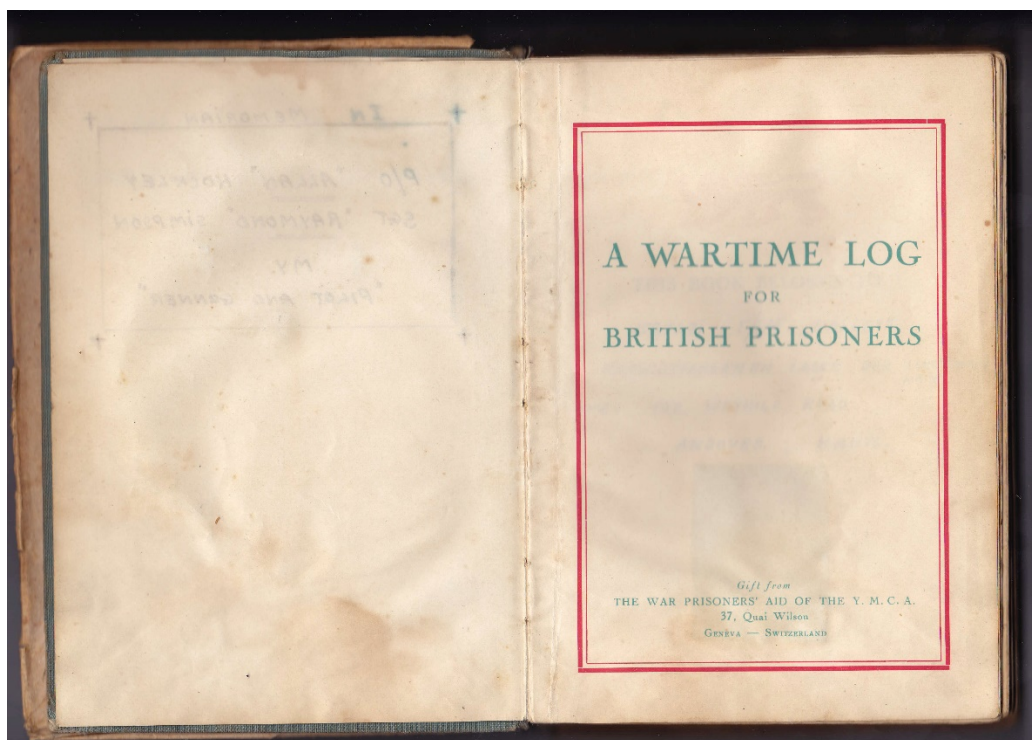
d. Lw.Nr.7 – der Luftwaffe Number 7 [Bankau]

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<sup>47</sup> POW diary of Tommy Glenn, 6 June 1944

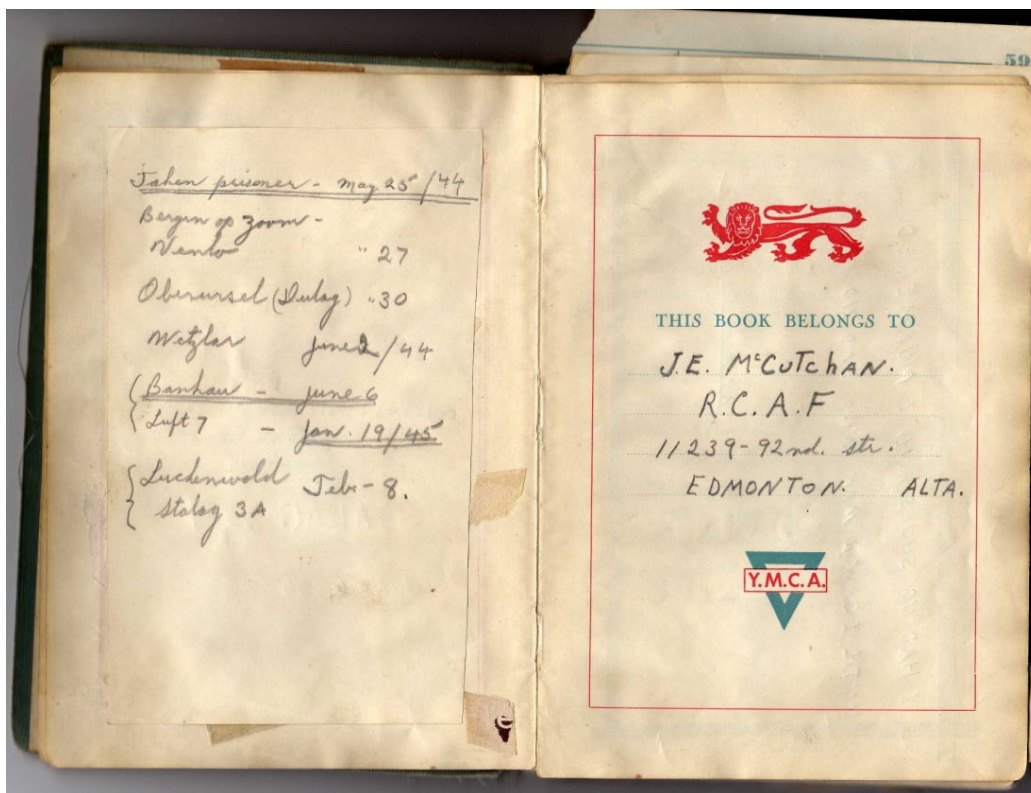
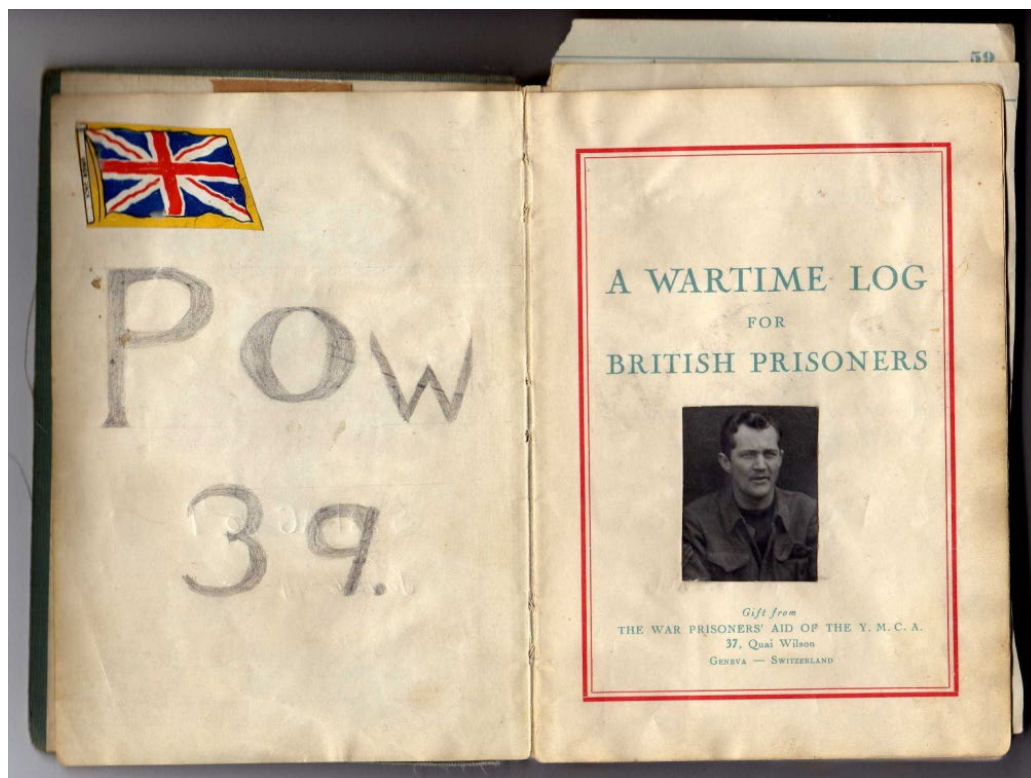






Pages from Bill Hallett's POW diary which record the crew's movements after their capture  
[Bill Hallett]





Pages from Jim McCutchan's POW diary which record the crew's movements after their capture

[Norma McCutchan / Karen Ebert]







Dulag Luft, Wetzlar, 4 April 1945 [Judy Kaester]

As 214 Squadron was engaged in special operations (radio countermeasures), the crew claimed they had been a part of a Lancaster crew that had been shot down during a bombing mission. The crew maintained this throughout all further interrogations they underwent.

Stalag Luft VII, not to be confused with Stalag VII-A in Moosburg, opened in 1944 and by 1 July the camp held 230 prisoners, mostly American airmen. Over the following months, prisoner numbers increased due to the influx from other camps further east, and by 1 January 1945, the camp held 1578 allied prisoners.

The camp consisted of eight, fourteen room, wooden blocks raised and separated by about three feet of clear space underneath to deter prisoners from escaping. Each room was intended to house



twelve prisoners, sleeping in double, or even treble, bunks, with some basic luxuries as a wooden table and small heating stove.

#### OCCUPANTS OF HUT 53

P.O.W. DIVISION II

NO

18 F/SGT GLENN, NAVIGATOR, 21

(1939-45 STAR) NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE

36 F/SGT LYALL, WIRELESS OPERATOR, 21

(1939-45 STAR) AUSTRALIA

23 F/SGT GUNDY, BOMB-AIMER, 23

(1939-45 STAR) NEW ZEALAND

49 F/SGT RODGERS, WIRELESS OPERATOR, 24

(1939-45 STAR) CASTLEFORD

24 SGT HALLETT, ENGINEER, 21

(1939-45 STAR) ANDOVER

35 SGT LOVATT, REAR GUNNER, 20

(1939-45 STAR) SOUTH SHIELDS<sup>48</sup>

POW 34, Bob Lloyd, and 39, Jim McCutchan, were housed separately from the other members of the crew. Along with the prisoner accommodation, the camp also held two toilet blocks, consisting of sanitary pits, an administration building, kitchen, storehouse and theatre/recreational hut. Electricity and an adequate water supply allowed prisoners the further luxury of the occasional hot shower; however, bathing and washing was generally very poor.

In a questionnaire distributed to him after the war by the Special Administrative Section, 11 Personnel Dispatch and Reception Centre (PDRC), RAF, Tom Lyall stated the prisoners were issued with a capture case (Red Cross), 1 pair boots, 1 pair slacks, 2 towels, 1 shirt, 1 sweater, and 2 pairs socks. Rations were poor in both quantity and quality and there were practically no cooking facilities within the camp that the prisoners could use. The Red Cross supplied 1 comfort parcel per week and mail was also received regularly until 18 January 1945.<sup>49</sup> Luxury goods could be acquired in Stalag Luft VII for the right price as Tommy Glenn noted in his diary:

<sup>48</sup> POW diary of Tommy Glenn

<sup>49</sup> Statement from Raoul Trichon Lyall, NAA: A9301, 421541





MARKET PRICES  
(LIABLE TO FLUCTUATION!)

1 BAR OF CHOCOLATE	35 CIGARETTES
1 PCKT OF TABACCO [sic]	50 “
1 PCKT OF CHEWING GUM	20 “
1 TIN OF SYRUP	10 “
1 TIN OF JAM (AMERICAN)	10 “
“ “ “ (ENGLISH)	20 “
1 TIN OF BISCUITS	20 “
1 PCK SUGAR (ENGLISH)	20 “
“ “ (AMERICAN)	20 “
1 PCK CHEESE ( “ )	20 “
“ “ (ENGLISH)	15 “
1 PCKT DRIED FRUIT	15 “
SALT, PEPPER, MUSTARD 15	“ EA(!)
1 TIN OF CONDENSED MILK (OR KLIM)	35 “

-----X-----

RAZOR BLADES	5 CIGARETTES EACH
PIPES	50 “ “
TOOTHPASTE	35 “ “
RAZOR	50 “ “
WATCH (LATEST OFFER!)	800 “ “
SLIPPERS	50 “ “
COMB	50 “ “
TOOTHPASTE	50 “ “

“ELEGANTES” NOT ACCEPTED!<sup>50</sup>

At the start of 1945 the Soviet armies had put into motion their plans for a decisive offensive against Germany. On 17 January, following rumours that the Russians had almost encircled the camp, the prisoners of Stalag Luft VII were told to prepare to evacuate; however, this was delayed by two days following a Soviet raid on the camp at about 5.30 p.m. that evening.

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<sup>50</sup> POW diary of Tommy Glenn



COLD ALL DAY.–THIS AFTERNOON THE GERMANS HAVE GIVEN US ONE HR. IN WHICH TO PREPARE TO MARCH OUT OF THE CAMPS-THE RUSSIANS ARE CLOSE. NIGHT FINDS US STILL IN CAMP, WAITING. BAGS OF RUMOURS AS TO THE RUSSIANS POSITION. WENT TO BED AT 2300 HOURS. HAVE ALL BEEN ISSUED 4 DAYS MARCHING RATION.<sup>51</sup>

On Friday, 19 January 1945 the 1,565 prisoners of Stalag Luft VII marched out of camp accompanied by guards, guard dogs and two field kitchens. Each prisoner was issued with two-and-a-half days marching rations consisting of 1/7<sup>th</sup> tin of meat, 2/3<sup>rd</sup> loaf of bread, 1/8<sup>th</sup> lb margarine, 1/4<sup>th</sup> lb honey and 2 cheeses. The next three weeks would later be known simply as “The March”; one of a series of death marches which saw over 80,000 allied POWs forcefully marched westward across Poland, Czechoslovakia and Germany during one the coldest winter months in the twentieth century.

In the bitter cold temperature movement of the party was slow and prisoners were limited to a five-minute rest every two hours. At 1600 hours the party reached the town of Winterveldt (Winterfield), a distance of 33-34 kilometres, where some prisoners managed to spend their first night in vacated barns and farm outbuildings before moving out again the next morning.

ATTEMPTS WERE MADE PUTTING US INTO SMALL BARNS TO SLEEP ABOUT 150 MANAGED EVENTUALLY TO GET IN BEING AMONGST THE UNLUCKY ONES I WAS OUTSIDE, I DIDN'T GET ANY SLEEP AT ALL<sup>52</sup>

At Karlsruhe, a distanced of 12 kilometres, the party were accommodated in an abandoned brickworks factory where they were given the opportunity to light fires and brew coffee and tea before moving on. The Germans were desperate to cross the River Oder by 0800 hours next day as the bridge was due to be blown around 0900 hours.

<sup>51</sup> POW diary of Jim McCutchan, 17 January 1945

<sup>52</sup> POW diary of Bill Hallett, 19 January 1945



At 0515 hours on 21 January the party crossed the river Oder in single file and continued to march until they reached the town of Schönfeld at 0900 hours. The sick and weary prisoners had accomplished an incredible feat, covering 42 kilometres in a single day in -15 °C conditions. For this they were each issued with 100gms of dog biscuits and a single cup of coffee.

The next day the prisoners marched to Groß Jenkwitz, a distance of 23 kilometres, where each man was issued with a half cup of soup, some raw potatoes and half a dog biscuit. A further march of 20 kilometres to Wanzen followed where they rested until 25 January. From Wanzen they were moved to Heidersdorf, a distance of 30-32 kilometres, where they were again rested for a full day, before being moved a further 19-22 kilometres to Pfaffendorf.

On Sunday 28 January the prisoners were awoken at 4.00am to start marching again at 5.45am. A snowstorm had wiped up overnight resulting in strong winds and an intense cold which lasted until 1 February.

THE SNOW WAS TERRIFIC NOW WITH A STRONG WIND AND IT WAS REALLY COLD...IN A VERY SHORT TIME THE SNOW WAS OVER ONE FOOT DEEP, CARS AND LORRIES STUCK FAST...THE SNOW WAS IN PLACES AT LEAST 2-3 FT DEEP, AND A BLIZZARD THAT HARDLY COULD BE IMAGINES, THE COLD WAS SO INTENSE, MANY OF THE LADS WERE FALLING BACK EVERY MINUTE...IT SEEMED AN ENDLESS JOURNEY.<sup>53</sup>

At Standorf, a distance of 21-25 kilometres, a second food distribution was made before the main column moved on. Finding it almost impossible to take another step, the prisoners finally reached Peterwitz, 23-25 kilometres away, on 30 January where they immediately threw themselves upon the ground overcome with fatigue. To make their predicament more unbearable, the prisoners were later informed that their entire soup supply was split during the journey.

Following a day's rest at Peterwitz, the party marched to Prausnitz, a distance of 12-14 kilometres, where they remained until 5 February. Further rations were issued before marching out to Goldberg, a further 7-8 kilometres, where they were to be put into cattle trucks, fifty-five men or more in each, to be taken the rest of the way.

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 28-30 January 1945



By this time there were numerous cases of dysentery and facilities for men to attend to personal hygiene were inadequate. The majority had no water on the train journey for two days. When the men were allowed out of the trucks to relieve themselves, numerous of the guards ordered them back inside again and we had to be continually getting permission for the men to be allowed out.<sup>54</sup>

On 8 February the party, suffering from severely malnutrition, reached Stalag III-A at Luckenwalde, having covered a distance of some 260 kilometres. Stalag III-A already held an estimated 20,000 prisoners and each new arrival was searched and then separated into compounds according to his nationality (British, American, French, Italian, Belgian etc.).

Conditions in the barracks were poor and grossly overcrowded. The newly arrived prisoners were expected to sleep on straw lined floors for the first few nights. In late February visiting German Red Cross Officials, noticing the poor physical condition of the prisoners, made efforts to have more food, either from the Germans or Red Cross, to be sent to the camp.

18/2/45 A VERY NICE DAY ESPECIALLY CONSIDERING THE TIME OF YEAR. WANDERED AROUND TRYING TO GET A HOLD OF “SPUDDER”, BUT FAILED. WENT ROUND TO SEE BOB, NICK AND TOM AND OF COURSE WE TALKED OF FOOD AND NOTHING BUT-OF DISHES WE HAD HAD AT VARIOUS STATIONS AND WHAT WE ARE GOING TO HAVE. EVERYONE IS TALKING OF FOOD ALL THE TIME.

28/2/45 2 OF OUR CHAPS SHOT LAST NIGHT, APPARENTLY, WHILE ATTEMPTING TO BREAK INTO THE “SERBS” RED CROSS STORE, AND A THIRD PUT IN THE “BUNKER”. ONE IS SUPPOSED TO BE SERIOUS AND THE OTHER SLIGHTLY SHOT. YES, ALL THE SERBS, POLES, FRENCH AND EVEN ITALIANS (!! ) GET RED CROSS PARCELS, BUT NONE HAVE SOME CONSIGNED TO US, SO WE GET NAY, (AND WE’VE NOW BEEN HERE 3 WEEKS).

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<sup>54</sup> Diary of D. C. Howatson, RAMC, Camp Medical Officer, in James A. Davies, *A leap in the Dark: A Welsh Airman's Adventures in Occupied Europe*, Leo Cooper, London, p. 143





9/3/45 NED NOT TOO WELL TO-DAY, SO THE THREE OF US WERE KEPT BUSY PREPARING MEALS FROM THE RED CROSS PARCELS RECEIVED YESTERDAY (ONE PER MAN) AND WE CERTAINLY GOT STUCK IN. SPAM, CHIPS AND FRIED BREAD AND AFTER BREAD, JAM AND CHEESE SANDWICHES, BISCUITS, AMERICAN COFFEE WERE COMMON. IT WAS A GRAND FEELING TO FEEL SATISFIED FOR A CHANGE<sup>55</sup>



Football match played between RAF and other Allie POW's at Stalag III-A [Flight Sergeant David Berrie, RAF]

At 1100 hours on 21 April 1945, the entire German staff and guards packed their kits and evacuated Stalag III-A. The following day the Red Army liberated the camp; however, the allied prisoners, with the exception of the Russians who left to join their comrades, had to remain in the camp and await further instructions.

21/4/45 NO PARADE THIS MORNING. MANY WILD RUMOURS FLYING AROUND AND PLENTY OF EXCITEMENT. PLENTY OF GUNFIRE IN THE DISTANCE. AFTER BREAKFAST (ABOUT 10.30) THINGS BEGAN TO REACH A CLIMAX. ALL THE JERRIES CLEARING OUT – SEEM TO BE IN A HURRY TOO.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> POW diary of Tommy Glenn, March 1945

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 21 April 1945



Finally, on Sunday, 20 May 1945, Russian trucks arrived at the camp and took all the remaining POWs to the river Elbe at Wittenberg where they were handed over to the Americans. From here they were taken to Halle/Leipzig by truck and then to Brussels by Dakota.

MAY 20<sup>TH</sup>. SUNDAY.

EVERYONE FEELS ON TOP OF WORLD, AS THE “RUSSIAN” TRUCKS HAVE ARRIVED TO TAKE US TO THE “ELBE” RIVER WHERE WE ARE TO MEET UP WITH THE AMERICANS.

THE JOURNEY HERE WAS VERY PLEASANT EXCEPT FOR A LITTLE ROUGH GOING – BUT WE CAN STAND IT, IT WAS A LOVELY FEELING WHICH CANT BE EXPLAINED TO BE OVER THE RIVER AND IN CIVILIZED TRUCKS. THE “YANKS” TOOK US TO “HALLE”.<sup>57</sup>

It was exactly one year and two days after they had landed on the inundated island of Tholen that the seven surviving crew members of SR384, BU-A “Able” arrived back in England (26 May 1945). After receiving medical treatment and kitting out at Cosford the crew was disbanded and allowed to return to their homes.

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<sup>57</sup> POW diary of Bill Hallett, 20 May 1945



Today only one of the seven crew members is still with us. Bill Hallett was due to marry his fiancée, Edna Beryl Darby, when the crew received their next leave but this was interrupted by the events of 24/25 May. Upon his return to England, Bill and Edna were married at St Peter's Collegiate Church, Wolverhampton on 18 August 1945. Tommy Glenn acted as Bill's best man.

Bill, Edna and their infant daughter, Marilyn, immigrated to Australia in 1951 to join Edna's parents who had immigrated in 1948. The extended family lived together at 31 Wardrop Street, Murwillumbah, where Bill worked as a salesman.

Bill and Edna have happily retired to Pottsville Beach, south of Murwillumbah, where they volunteer at a local Neighbourhood Centre two days a week.



Edna and Bill Hallett, December 2014 [Marilyn Wood]



## Acknowledgment

The success of Bomber Command came at a heavy price. Over 12,000 Bomber Command aircraft were shot down during World War II, and 55,000 aircrew (almost 60%) were killed, the highest attrition rate of any British unit.

214 Squadron flew a total of 4,189 sorties between 1940 and 1945 with the loss of 112 aircraft. Fortress II SR384 BU-A was 214 Squadron's first loss since becoming part of 100 Group in January 1944.

214 Squadron went on ops again the night of May 23-24, but our crew was not on the battle order. At breakfast next morning we learned that we had lost our first Fortress. A cheerful young Australian, Pilot Officer Hockley, and his crew, had failed to return.<sup>58</sup>

This short history could not have been written without the help of many people. I would like to thank my late great-aunt, Mavis Cook, who first told me the story about her cousin Allan Hockley; cousins Maree Fox, Allan's niece, and Tony Hockley, Allan's nephew, for allowing me access to Allan's material; cousin Sharon Balmer, for sharing her photos of Allan; family and friends of the crew who have so kindly sent me what information they had; Bill Hallett for being there and supporting this project; Murray Peden for his wisdom and allowing me to use extracts from his wonderful book *A Thousand Shall Fall*; Carol and John Edwards who administer the 214 Squadron website; historian Jock Whitehouse, No 214 (FMS) Squadron Association; historian Michael Moores LeBlanc who collected information on all Bomber Command crew lost on 24/25 May 1944 ; "Wings to Victory" historian Wim de Meester; Joan van Liere of VVV Yerseke; and last, but not least, the ex-servicemen of 214 Squadron who wrote to me and shared their experiences.

*"Ultor in umbris"*

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<sup>58</sup> Peden, *opc. cit.*, pp. 380-381





## In Memoriam

“Skipper”

Allan James Neville Hockley died 25 May 1944 Oosterschelde, Zeeland, Netherlands

Loving son of Walter James Hockley and Minnie Blanche née Hogan

“Ray”

Raymond George Victor Simpson died 25 May 1944 Oosterschelde, Zeeland, Netherlands

Loving son of John Ewen Simpson and Edith Mary née Wadlow

“Nick”

Enoch Lovatt died 15 October 1957 South Shields, Co. Durham, England

Loving son of Enoch Lovatt and Eva née Pratt

Loving husband of Elsie née Banks

“Jim”

James Edward McCutchan died 19 March 1985 Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

Loving son of Edward Head McCutchan and Hanna Maude née Winfield, formerly of London

Loving husband of Norma Ruth née Woolman

“Bob”

Robert Francis Lloyd died 1 September 1992 Sefton South District, Merseyside, England

Loving son of Robert Lloyd Davies and Elizabeth Ellen née O’Neil

Loving husband of Betty née Keeling

“Bob”

Robert Yewen Gundy died 2 May 1996 Ranfurly War Veterans Home, Auckland, New Zealand

Loving son of Walter Edward Gundy and Violet Jenny née Milligan

Loving husband of Josephine Mae née Newberry

“Tom”

Raoul Trichon Lyall died 1 June 1999 Coffs Harbour, New South Wales, Australia

Loving son of Francis Griffin Lyall and Eileen née Trichon

Loving husband of Janet Winning née Sneedon



“Tommy”

Thomas Duke Glenn died 16 February 2000 Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Northumberland, England

Loving son of Cecil Thomas Glenn and Eva née Duke

Loving husband of Margaret née O’Mahony



Hockley’s Heroes [Don Lyall]



POW photo of Bob Lloyd who ‘refused to smile for those f\*ckers!’

[Tony Lloyd]



# Appendix I

ACTUALITEIT

Stichting 4 mei begeleidt nabestaanden

## Australische zussen bezoeken graf gesneuvelde oom in Yerseke

**YERSEKE** - De Australische zussen Maree, Sandra en Christine brachten zaterdag in Yerseke een emotioneel bezoek aan het graf van hun gesneuvelde oom Allan Hockley. Daaraan ging 73 jaar en heel wat onderzoek vooraf.

DOOR JAN-KEES DE MEESTER

Gezagvoerder Allan Hockley op zijn bemanning, die bestond uit Britten, Australiërs, een Nieuw-Zeelander en een Canadees, hadden een bijzondere taak. Hun B-17 Flying Fortress was oorspronkelijk gebouwd als bommenwerper, maar later geschikt gemaakt voor elektronische oorlogvoering. De speciaal opgeleide crew verstoortte met apparatuur de radargolven van Duitse nachtjagers en met Duitstalige radiob berichten probeerde zij de vijand te misleiden, een techniek die in de Tweede Wereldoorlog nog in de kinderschoenen stond.

### Testbaar verdriet

Hoewel de zussen te jong zijn om zich hun oom te herinneren - Christine was ten tijde van de crash zelfs nog niet geboren - was het verlies binnen de familie altijd aanwezig. "We hadden thuis foto's van oom Allan, ook in uniform. Toch sprak onze vader zelden over hem, waarschijnlijk omdat het verlies voor hem dan te tastbaar werd", aldus Maree Fox, de oudste van de zussen. "Onze oom en onze vader hadden geen andere broers en zussen. Hun leeftijd ontliiep elkaar niet veel en ze hadden een nauwe band. De broers gingen vaak met z'n tweeën kamperen, hadden samen een boot en

speelden allebei cricket. Daarnaast waren ze beiden buschauffeur van beroep."

### Missie

Laat in de avond van 24 mei 1944 steeg de SR384 op vanaf vliegbasis Oulton in Oost-Engeland. De missie: het verstoren van vijandelijke communicatie en radar om een groep geallieerde bommenwerpers die Antwerpen als doel had een grotere overlevingskans te bieden. Daarvoor moest de B-17 op 2700 meter hoogte heen en weer vliegen tussen Amsterdam en de Belgische grens. Maar rond één uur 's nachts werd het toestel onderschept en in brand geschoten door een Duitse nachtjager. Hockley bleef tot de crash in de Oosterschelde achter de stuurknuppel. Daardoor konden zeven van de negen bemanningsleden het brandende toestel tijdig verlaten met hun parachutes. De gezagvoerder zelf kwam samen met de Engelse rugkopschutter Raymond Simpson om het leven. Hockleys lichaam speelde op 10 juni aan bij Yerseke en tien dagen later werd ook Simpsons gedeeltelijk verkoelde stoffelijk overschot gevonden. Zijn identiteit is pas later vastgesteld. Hij werd naast Hockley begraven.

### Indrukwekkend

Yersekenaar Adri Doone van de Stichting



De zussen Sandra Watson, Christine Hockley en Maree Fox bij het graf van hun oom.

FOTO JAN-KEES DE MEESTER

4 mei deed al sinds 2003 verwoede pogingen om de nazaten van de gesneuvelde vlieger op het spoor te komen. Daarvoor is hij zelfs naar Australië afgereisd. "Maar de naam Hockley bleek in Sydney zo algemeen, dat het zoeken was naar een speld in een hooiberg", aldus Boone. Het balletje ging pas weer rollen toen de Australiërs zelf contact zochten via VV Yerseke; de familie was haar eigen onderzoek gestart.

Fox: "Daarvoor verdient onze neef Ryan Dudley alle eer. Hij is historicus en verzamelde gegevens, ging nauwkeurig alle feiten na en de verhaallijn eindigde uiteindelijk hier in Yerseke."

Jan Rijstebil, voorzitter van de Stichting 4 mei uit Yerseke, gaf de zussen bij het oorlogsmonument eerst uitleg over het herdenken van oorlogsslachtoffers binnen de dorpsgemeenschap.

20 SEPTEMBER 2017

*The 4 May Foundation supports relatives*

## Australian sisters visit grave of fallen uncle in Yerseke

**YERSEKE** - Australian sisters Maree, Sandra and Christine paid an emotional visit to the grave of their fallen uncle Allan Hockley on Saturday in Yerseke. This was preceded by 73 years and a great deal of research.

BY JAN-KEES DE MEESTER

Captain Allan Hockley and his crew, consisting of British, Australian, New Zealander and Canadian, had a special task. Their B-17 Flying Fortress was originally built as a bomber, but later adapted for electronic warfare. The specially trained crew disrupted the radar waves of German night fighters with equipment and tried to mislead the enemy with German-language radio messages; a technique that was still in its infancy in World War II.



### **Tangible grief**

Although the sisters are too young to remember their uncle - Christine had not even been born at the time of the crash - the loss within the family has always been there. “We had pictures of Uncle Allan at home, also in uniform. Yet our father rarely spoke about him, probably because the loss would become too tangible for him,” said Maree Fox, the oldest of the sisters. “Our uncle and our father had no other brothers and sisters. Their age did not differ much from each other and they had a close relationship. The brothers often went camping together, had a boat together and both played cricket. In addition, they were both bus drivers by profession.”

### **Mission**

In the evening of 24 May 1944, the SR384 took off from Oulton Air Base in East England. The mission: to disrupt enemy communications and radar to provide a group of Allied bombers that Antwerp aimed to increase its chances of survival. For this, the B-17 had to fly back and forth between Amsterdam and the Belgian border at an altitude of 2700 meters. But around 1 a.m. the plane was intercepted and set on fire by a German night fighter. Hockley stayed behind the control stick until the crash in the Oosterschelde. As a result, seven of the nine crew members were able to leave the burning aircraft in time with their parachutes. The captain himself died together with the English turret gunner Raymond Simpson. Hockley's body washed up at Yerseke on June 10, and ten days later, Simpson's partially charred remains were also found. His identity was only determined later. He was buried next to Hockley.

### **Impressive**

Yersekenaar Adri Boone of the Foundation 4 May has been making frantic efforts since 2003 to trace the descendants of the fallen pilot. Before that, he even travelled to Australia. “But the name Hockley was so common in Sydney that it was like looking for a needle in a haystack,” said Boone. The ball only started rolling again when the Australians themselves contacted VVV Yerseke;<sup>59</sup> the family had started its own investigation. Fox: “Our cousin Ryan Dudley deserves credit for that. He is a historian and collected data, carefully checked all the facts and the storyline ended here in Yerseke.” Jan Ristsbil, chairman of the Foundation 4 May from Yerseke, first explained to the sisters about the war memorial commemoration of war victims within the village community. Then the party walked to the grave of the killed pilot in the Yerseke cemetery. Visibly affected, Maree, Sandra and Christine placed a wreath of flowers on their

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<sup>59</sup> The author made contact with Joan van Liere of VVV Yerseke in October 2007.





uncle's grave. The gold letters on the white ribbon say: 'Never forgotten by your family'. Then Maree declared, "For us this was a very impressive and emotional journey."



*Sisters Sandra Watson, Christine Hockley and Maree Fox at their uncle's grave. PHOTO JAN-KEES DE MEESTER*



Wreath provided by the Yerseke Memorial Committee [Maree Fox]



## Appendix II

### BOMBER COMMAND

#### Royal Air Force Bomber Command 60th Anniversary



#### Campaign Diary

##### October 1943

##### 3/4 October 1943

Kassel: 547 aircraft – 223 Halifaxes, 204 Lancasters, 113 Stirlings, 7 Mosquitos. The H<sub>2</sub>S ‘blind marker’ aircraft overshot the aiming point badly and the ‘visual markers’ could not correct this because their view of the ground was restricted by thick haze. German decoy markers may also have been present. The main weight of the attack thus fell on the western suburbs and outlying towns and villages. 24 aircraft – 14 Halifaxes, 6 Stirlings, 4 Lancasters – lost, 4.4 per cent of the force.

##### 7/8 October 1943

10 Mosquitos to Munich, 7 to Emden, 5 to Aachen, 79 aircraft minelaying from Brest to Heligoland, 14 OTU sorties. 1 Stirling minelayer lost.

##### 24/25 October 1943

13 Mosquitos to 5 targets in the Ruhr area and 6 Mosquitos to Emden, 30 Stirlings and Wellingtons minelaying in the Frisians and off Texel. No aircraft lost.



## Campaign Diary

### November 1943

#### 17/18 November 1943

66 Lancasters and 17 Halifaxes of No 8 Group on a purely H<sub>2</sub>S blind-bombing raid to Ludwigshafen without any target indicators being dropped. Few details are available about the results of the bombing but it is believed that the attack was accurate and the IG Farben factory was hit. Because of misleading instructions broadcast from England to the German night-fighter pilots, most of the fighter force landed early and only 1 Lancaster was lost.

#### 19/20 November 1943

Leverkusen bombed by 266 aircraft – 170 Halifaxes, 86 Stirlings, 10 Mosquitos – of Nos 3,4,6 and 8 Groups. Only 4 Halifaxes and 1 Stirling – 1.9 per cent of the force – lost; very few German fighters were operating, probably because of bad weather at their airfields. Failures of equipment prevented most of the Oboe marking being carried out and other Pathfinder aircraft were unable to mark the target properly in difficult weather conditions, leading to bombs being scattered over a wide area. At least 27 towns, mostly well to the north of Leverkusen, recorded bombs. Leverkusen's own records show only one high-explosive bomb in the town!

#### 22/23 November 1943

Berlin attacked by 764 aircraft – 469 Lancasters, 234 Halifaxes, 50 Stirlings, 11 Mosquitos. This was the greatest force sent to Berlin so far but it was also the last raid in which Stirlings were sent to Germany. Bad weather again kept most of the German fighters on the ground and the bomber force was able to take a relatively 'straight in, straight out' route to the target without suffering undue loss. 26 aircraft - 11 Lancasters, 10 Halifaxes, 5 Stirlings – were lost, 3.4 per cent of the force. Berlin was again completely cloud-covered and returning crews could only estimate that the marking and bombing were believed to be accurate. In fact, this was the most effective raid on Berlin of the war. A vast area of destruction stretched from the central districts westwards across the mainly residential areas of Tiergarten and Charlottenburg to the separate suburb city of Spandau. Because of the dry weather conditions, several 'firestorm' areas were reported and a German plane next day measured the height of the smoke cloud as 6,000 metres (nearly 19,000 ft).



It was estimated that 175,000 people were bombed out. Interesting entries among the lists of buildings destroyed or severely damaged are: the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche (the Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church which is now, half ruined, half restored, a major attraction in West Berlin), the Charlottenburg Castle, the Berlin Zoo, much of the Unter den Linden, the British, French, Italian and Japanese embassies, the Ministry of Weapons and Munitions, the Waffen SS Administrative College, the barracks of the Imperial Guard at Spandau and, among many industrial premises, 5 factories of the Siemens electrical group and the Alkett tank works which had recently moved from the Ruhr.

## **Campaign Diary**

### **December 1943**

#### **1/2 December 1943**

Minelaying: 19 Stirlings and 12 Halifaxes were sent to the Frisians and to the east coast of Denmark. 2 Stirlings lost.

## **Campaign Diary**

### **April 1944**

#### **22/23 April 1944**

Düsseldorf: 596 aircraft – 323 Lancasters, 254 Halifaxes, 19 Mosquitos – of all groups except No 5. 29 aircraft – 16 Halifaxes and 13 Lancasters – lost, 4.9 percent of the force. 2,150 tons of bombs were dropped in this old-style heavy attack on a German city which caused much destruction but also allowed the German night-fighter force to penetrate the bomber stream. The attack fell mostly in the northern districts of Düsseldorf. Widespread damage was caused.

## **Campaign Diary**

### **May 1944**

#### **12/13 May 1944**

Hasselt: 111 aircraft – 100 Halifaxes, 7 Lancasters, 4 Mosquitos – of Nos 4 and 8 Groups. 6 Halifaxes and 1 Lancaster lost. Most of the attack fell in open fields and only a few bombs hit the railway yards.





### **24/25 May 1944**

44 Lancasters and 7 Mosquitos of 5 and 8 Groups to attack the Ford motor factory at Antwerp but the bombing missed the target. Some bombs fell on nearby dockside buildings. No aircraft lost.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> The role of 214 Squadron was so secret that their job in Bomber Command was not made public until the 1980s. This may explain why the loss of Fortress SR384, BU-A is not recorded in the Campaign Diaries.



## Addendum

Allan was not the only member of his family to lose his life flying with Bomber Command during the war. Norman Lindsay Weirick was born at Paddington, New South Wales on 2 March 1913 to Norman Sydney Weirick and Marie née Hull. Through his paternal grandmother, Grace Esther Weirick née Fletcher, Norman was a 1st cousin once removed to Allan Neville James Hockley.

When Norman was eight years old his father deserted the family and four years later his mother died. Norman was subsequently adopted by his mother's sister Doris and her husband Claude Newell in November 1925 and had his name changed to Norman Lindsay Newell.

On 14 October 1942, twelve months after Allan had enlisted with the RAAF, Norman was discharged from the Australian Military Force for service with the RAAF. Those men selected for aircrew training were, in general, more educated and more likely to come from the ranks of those with 'white collar' jobs, such as school teachers, clerks, bankers, or civil servants. Norman had been an accountant with premier Glass Co. Ltd. Located at 104 King Street, Newtown.

Like Allan, Norman was sent initially to No. 2 Recruit Centre, Sydney, as an Aircraftman 2 followed by No. 2 Initial Training School (No. 2 ITS), Bradfield Park. Based on results at the ITS, recruits were designated for training as pilots, navigators, bomb aimers, wireless air gunners, or air gunners. Norman was designated as an Air Gunner and on 18 October 1942 was posted to No. 2 Wireless and Gunnery School (No. 2 WAGS) located in Parkes and promoted to Leading Aircraftman on 5 December 1942.





428888 Norman Lindsay Newell, 14 October 1942 [National Australian Archives: A9301, 428888]



From 11 Personnel Despatch Reception Centre (PDRC), Brighton, Norman was sent to No. 27 OTU, Lichfield on 7 September 1943. It was at the OTUs those individual airmen became members of a crew and were prepared for operations on a particular type or types of aircraft. No. 27 OTU was formed in April 1941 at RAF Lichfield as part of No. 6 Group RAF Bomber Command to train night bomber crews using the Vickers Wellington.

Crewing up has been described as an ‘intense personal experience’ and a critical one. The large four-engine bombers, the Halifaxes and Lancasters, which were the defining aircraft of Bomber Command from late 1942 until the end of the war, demanded a crew of seven. These men were required to undertake thirty operations – a ‘tour’ – many lasting up to seven or eight hours, through skies where the enemy’s main aim was to destroy them. Their lives would depend on the individual ability of each man to do his job effectively under extreme pressure; a moment of inattention or hesitation from any one of them could prove fatal for all.<sup>61</sup>

Norman was attached to a Halifax crew as an Air Gunner serving in the role of Mid Upper Gunner. The Halifax carried six 0.303 inch machine guns, two in the mid-upper position and four in the tail turret. Absolute vigilance was required from Norman as his role was to keep an all-round lookout for German night fighters (as well as the other aircraft in the bomber stream which might be getting too close) and warn his skipper of their presence. Unlike in the Halifax B Mk I, the Mid Upper Gunner’s turret in a Halifax B Mk II had a field of fire of 360°.

Good gunners could, with a few bursts, force most night fighters to work at long range, spoiling their aim; after that, very skilled (or lucky) gunners managed to destroy enemy aircraft.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>61</sup> *Bomber Command: Australian in World War II*, Department of Veterans’ Affairs, Canberra, 2012, pp. 20-21

<sup>62</sup> Larry Milberry, *Sixty years: the RCAF and CF Air Command 1924-1984*, CANAV Books, Toronto, 1984, p. 162





Because of his jovial nature and broad grin, much like his cousin Allan, Norman was affectionately known as “Happy” Newell. The other members of the crew were:

- 290934 Pilot (RAF) – Warrant Officer Arthur Frederick “Fred” Edmonds
- 1523070 Flight Engineer (RAF) – Sergeant Bernard “Bern” Coughlin
- J/14176 Navigator (RCAF) – Flying Officer Richard Elwood “Dick” Padget
- 1323689 Air Bomber – Flight Sergeant John James O’Neil “Jack” Kennedy
- 1076760 Wireless Operator (RAF) – Sergeant Clifford Owen “Cliff” Tyler
- 1312367 Air Gunner – Rear Gunner (RAF) – Flight Sergeant Raymond Walter “Ray” Wheeler



The Edmonds crew [Vickey-Anne Diouf]

L-R: F/Sgt. “Happy” Newell, F/Sgt. “Jack” Kennedy, F/Sgt. “Cliff” Tyler, F/Sgt. “Fred” Edmonds, F/Sgt. “Ray” Wheeler, F/O. “Dick” Padget, Sgt. “Bern” Coughlin



Many never made it to an operational squadron. John Herington gives an official figure of 724 Australian deaths in air accidents at OTUs, the great majority of which would have been from among those training for Bomber Command. At an OTU men were tested, for the first time, in bombers, not smaller lighter training aircraft... John McCarthy [RAAF] refers to the Wellington at this time as an 'obsolescent aircraft of doubtful serviceability', and writes of the twelve week OTU course as something of a 'nightmare'. Certainly it was dangerous, and according to McCarthy virtually every page of the Operations Record Book for No. 27 OTU Lichfield contains details of an accident, usually fatal.<sup>63</sup>

Fortunately, the Edmonds crew came through No. 27 OTU unscathed and were posted to 77 Squadron, RAF on 20 December 1943.

Originally formed during the First World War for Home Defence against enemy airships, 77 Squadron was later re-formed before the outbreak of the Second World War at Finningley, Yorkshire, as a bomber unit attached to No. 4 Group. The squadron, which initially flew Whitleys from Driffield, was employed on dropping Nickels, or propaganda leaflets, over enemy territory in the early months of the war. Leaflets were dropped on the Ruhr, Vienna, Prague and Warsaw and, usually, the Whitleys operated from an advanced base in France.

In addition to Nickelling, 77 Squadron was employed on reconnaissance and Security Patrols which included dropping bombs on what appeared to be harbour and seaplane base landing lights at or near Borkum, Sylt and Nordeney. The spring of 1940 saw the squadron start bombing in earnest and during the period March to June it figured in several notable operations under Bomber Command.

77 Squadron continued its offensive against enemy land targets until April 1941, and then, early in May, was posted to Chivenor, North Devon, for temporary duty with No. 19 Group, Coastal Command. From Chivenor the Whitleys were mainly employed on flying anti-submarine patrols over the Bay of Biscay and on 3 September one of them attacked and sank with depth charges U-705.

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<sup>63</sup> Larry Milberry, *Sixty years: the RCAF and CF Air Command 1924-1984*, CANAV Books, Toronto, 1984, pp. 22-23



In October 1942 the squadron relocated to Elvington and converted to the Handley Page Halifax B Mark II, B Mark III, B Mark V and B Mark VI. It was ready in plenty of time for the Battle of the Ruhr which opened in the following spring. The squadron continued with Halifaxes for the rest of the European war and, in addition to playing a prominent part in the bomber offensive, also participated in Bomber Command's highly-successful Gardening, or minelaying, campaign.

The Edmonds crew flew the Handley Page Halifax B Mark II (serial LW341, code KN-D). The B Mark II Series I was the first of the bomber variant and from March 1942 onwards was fitted with TR1335 navigation aids.

On the night of 28/29 January 1944, the Edmonds crew were on battle order when 677 aircraft – 432 Lancasters, 241 Halifaxes, 4 Mosquitos – took off on a bombing raid over Berlin. Part of the German fighter force was drawn up by the early diversions and the bomber approach route over Northern Denmark proved too distant for some of the other German fighters. The German controller was, however, able to concentrate his fighters over the target and many aircraft were shot down there. 46 aircraft – 26 Halifaxes, 20 Lancasters – lost, 6.8 per cent of the force. The cloud over Berlin was broken and some ground-marking was possible but the Bomber Command claim that this was the most concentrated attack of this period is not quite fully confirmed by German records. The western and southern districts were hit but so too were 77 places outside the city.

At a height of 18,000 feet, position 5250 N – 1250 E, at an indicated air speed of 170 m.p.h., Halifax "D" under the command of Flight Sergeant Edmonds was attacked by a Messerschmitt (Me 210), sighted dead astern and down at a range of 100 yards. The Rear Gunner, Sergeant Wheeler, instructed Edmonds to corkscrew to port. Searchlights formed a blanket on the clouds, making a silhouette of the enemy aircraft. Wheeler and Mid Upper Gunner, Sergeant Newell, opened fire at 100 yards and maintained it until the fighter broke away, starboard and down, and was lost to view.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> The National Archives: AIR 50/194/115



The Flight Lieutenant Gunnery Leader of 77 Squadron later recorded in the official combat report:

A fairly good show. Evasive action good and credit goes to the Gunners for thinking so quickly and opening fire immediately.<sup>65</sup>

77 Squadron: Operations Record Books:

20/21.1.44. TARGET:– BERLIN

Halifax.II.LK.730.“G”.

F.SGT.EDMONDS.A.F.

16.33 – 19.39

This aircraft returned early owing to Gee being U/S [un-serviceable] from Hornsea and remained so till 54.18 00.32 W on return. Bombs were jettisoned at 54.44 02.59 E 10000ft. (SAFE). Aircraft landed safely at BASE.

21/22.1.44. TARGET:– MAGDEBURG.

Halifax.II.LW.341.“D”.

F/SGT.EDMONDS.A.F.

10.06 – 03.31

The primary target was identified by red and green TI's and red flares with green stars. Ground haze but fair visibility. Bombs were dropped from 17000ft. on M.P.I. of very big cluster of over 12 green TI's already on the ground. One biggish first amongst numerous scattered smaller white ones. From these white smoke had already risen 2000ft. approx. Aircraft on return from this operation landed safely at BASE.

28/29.1.44.

Halifax.II.LL.341.“D”

F/SGT.EDMONDS.A.K. [sic]

BOMBING BERLIN.

23.47 – 08.45

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<sup>65</sup> The National Archives: AIR 50/194/116





The primary target was identified by red flares and green stars 9/10ths – 1 /10ths cloud fairly low. Bombs were dropped from 17000ft. on centre of 2 or 3 clusters or red flares with green stars bursting about 13000ft. there appeared to be 2 main areas affire [sic] in the target area one South of the other. The glow from these could be seen when an aircraft was over LUBECK BAY. Aircraft on return from this operation landed safely at BASE.

Combat Report for 28/29 January 1944:

### COMBAT REPORT.

On the night of 28/29 January 1944, Halifax “D” (LW.341) of 77 Squadron, was detailed to attack Berlin. At a height of 18,000’, a position 5250N – 1250E, at an I.A.S. of 170 m.p.h., heading 075°I, at 03.10 hours, the aircraft was attacked by a ME.210, sighted dead astern and down at a range of 100 yards. The Rear Gunner instructed the Pilot to corkscrew to port. Searchlights formed a blanket on the clouds, making a silhouette of the E/A. Gunners opened fire at 100 yards and maintained it until the fighter broke away, starboard and down, and was lost to view. Monica was u/s/ Weather was 10/10ths, misty below, visibility fair.

Pilot	: F/Sgt. Edmonds	
M/U.Gunner	: Sgt. Newell,	2 B.A.G.S., Port Piria, 1658 C.U.
Rear Gunner	: Sgt. Wheeler,	2.A.G.S., 21 & 23 O.T.U., 1658 C.U.

### Gunner Leader’s remarks:

A fairly good show. Evasive action good and credit goes to the Gunners for thinking so quickly and opening fire immediately.

F/Lt., Gunnery Ldr., No. 77 Sqdn, R.A.F.<sup>66</sup>

After a rest of more than two weeks, due to bad weather, 891 aircraft – 561 Lancasters, 314 Halifaxes, 16 Mosquitos – were dispatched to Berlin. This was the largest force sent to Berlin with every squadron making a major effort to get every available aircraft off the ground. Furthermore, the 15/16 February operation was largest non-1,000 bomber force sent to any target, exceeding the previous record of 826 aircraft (which included Stirlings and Wellingtons) sent to

<sup>66</sup> The National Archives: AIR 50/194/116



Dortmund on the night of 23/24 May 1943. It was also the first time that more than 500 Lancasters and more than 300 Halifaxes were dispatched. The German controllers were able to plot the bomber stream soon after it left the English coast but the swing north over Denmark for the approach flight proved too far distant for many of the German fighters. The German controller ordered the fighters not to fly over Berlin, leaving the target area free for the flak, but many fighters ignored him and attacked bombers over the city. The diversion to Frankfurt-on-Oder failed to draw any fighters. 43 aircraft – 26 Lancasters, 17 Halifaxes – were lost, 4.8 per cent of the force.<sup>67</sup>

The bombers took off early evening, the Edmond's crew taking off from Elvington at 17:24, with no incidents until over the North Sea when they were detected by German night-fighters who fired off green flares to light up the bomber stream. The first contact was made near the east coast of Denmark and focused mainly on the rear half of the bomber stream.<sup>68</sup> Halifax (B.II, serial LW341, code KN-D) was hit during this time and crashed into the Baltic Sea south of the islands of Lolland and Falster.

When the remaining bombers reached Berlin they found the city covered by cloud for most of the raid. Heavy bombing fell on the centre and south-western districts and some important war industries were hit, including the large Siemensstadt area. This was really the end of the true 'Battle of Berlin'; only one more raid took place on the city in this period and that was not for more than a month.

77 Squadron lost 3 Halifaxes during the raid on Berlin with all crew members killed:

- Halifax II (B.II, serial LW341, code KN-D) Warrant Officer Arthur Frederick Edmonds, Baltic Sea
- Halifax (B.II, serial LK726, code KN-O), Flying Officer Geoffrey Bodden, Berlin
- Halifax (B.II, serial LL244, code KN-T), Flight Sergeant Hubert Blewett, Hanover

On 28 July 1944 the body of an airman in RAF Battle Dress was recovered from the sea and buried in the cemetery at Kappel, a small village located approximately 6 miles south-west of the town of Nakskov on the island of Lolland in Denmark. No clear identifying marks could be found on the body. Then on 29 August 1944, Norman's body and that of another unidentified airman

<sup>67</sup> Royal Air Force Bomber Command 60th Anniversary, Campaign Diary, 15/16 February 1944

<sup>68</sup> Martin Middlebrook, *The Berlin Raids*, Pen & Sword Aviation, Barnsley, South Yorkshire, 2010, p. 265



washed ashore at Riddertofte Strand beach on the island of Lolland. Both men were laid to rest in the same cemetery in Grave No. 8 and No. 9, Row 9 on 1 September 1944 by the Lutheran Minister Pastor Albert Madsen. Norman's body was fully clothed in Australian type Battle Dress (including "Australian" shoulder flashes, Observer brevet, Sergeant stripes and crown) and trousers complete with underclothing and wearing a parachute harness. He was identified by his identity discs. The body of the other airman was found in a semi-naked state. The only clothes being one pair of issue socks, traces of woollen underpants and one escape type flying boot. There were no marks of identification traceable.

Initially crosses were placed over the graves of the airmen; however, these were later replaced by official headstones by the War Graves Commission.

The six other members of the crew who have no known grave are commemorated on the Memorial to the Missing at Runnymede, Surrey, England.

The two airmen buried alongside Norman remain, to this day, unidentified. In the nearby cemetery of Dannemare is the grave of another unknown airman who washed ashore on 13 August 1944. The body was dressed in RAF type Battle Dress blouse and trousers with traces of issue type shirt, underpants, vest, braces and pullover. Flight Sergeant stripes and crown were found on the Battle Dress and an assumed laundry mark, similar to that found on Norman's clothing, appeared on the back of the shirt collar. It is possible that the airman buried in Dannemare also came from the Edmonds crew.

In November 1997 Norman's cousin (adopted-sister) Margaret Russell née Newell and her husband Alan, visited his grave at Kappel. A small bronze plaque was presented to the people of Kappel on behalf of the Australian Government in recognition of their continuing devotion to the care of the graves of the four allied airmen in their communal cemetery including that of Flight Sergeant Norman Lindsay Newell.







Memorial and graves, Kappel Cemetery [Gert Larsen, caretaker Kappel Cemetery]







Plaque presented to the people of Kappel [Gert Larsen, caretaker Kappel Cemetery]



Memorial to the Missing, Runnymede [Commonwealth War Graves Commission]







Norman Lindsay Newell upon being promoted to Sergeant [Ryan L. Dudley]

