

## **Bob Newman - his WW2 experience**

*At the Bomber Command wreath laying ceremony on Sunday June 1 2014, choir member Bob Newman placed a wreath. Here is his background story*

In 1941, when Bob was 12, his parents were invited to be part of an organisation of families throughout the United Kingdom providing rest and recreation, away from air operations, for aircrew who were from the Commonwealth. These men started to arrive in large numbers as the RAF built up its fighting force.

The concept was strongly supported by the Air Ministry and was organised by two well known charity workers who operated from London, one of whom had the imposing title of Miss Macdonald of the Isles!

From a large number of RAAF aircrew, the Newmans provided rest and recreation continuously until the middle of 1945. There were 146 battle weary Australians who came to stay at their the home with an average of at least two airmen all the time, totalling 450 visits during that period. Many came more than once to stay and Alec Saint-Smith DFC and DFM came at least 8 times. He was the first pilot to fly G for George displayed at the Australian War Memorial. He flew in Lancasters and Mosquitos for 73 operations and was killed just after D-Day when a bomb from above his aircraft destroyed his aircraft. The Newmans treated him like a son and it was reciprocated by him.

The Newmans would not take any money for their contribution to the war effort. In addition Bob's father was appointed a Wartime Inspector of Police as well as maintaining his job as a sales manager for an oil company. 32 of the airmen were killed in operations and this had a profound effect on Bob's mother. During a visit, Airman Max Durham from Bacchus Marsh who had some knowledge about Australian Forestry suggested a career in that industry. So Bob arrived in Australia in 1946 at the age of just 17 to study forestry at Melbourne University. He had already played Rugby Union for the senior representative team for Hampshire County. He is still the youngest player to represent that county.

## **AWM Bomber command WRC photos**

Photos from Bomber Command WRC AWM June 1 2014  
All of the photos below are available on order from the AWM.  
Photographer AWM's Kerry Alchin.

Selected photos> <https://flic.kr/f/cigy1>

Here is the complete album of the event> <https://flic.kr/s/aHsjYz1wE1>