

A TALE OF TWO BROTHERS

13 Squadron R.A.A.F - WW2



Frank Meyer



Jack Meyer

Two Guildford born brothers both served in World War 2 with 13 Squadron of the R.A.A.F. Notification of “Missing in Action” of one, motivated the other to enlist as soon as he was able.

Francis Norman (Frank) Meyer, Service Number 290745, was born 1921, the year the R.A.A.F. was founded. He joined the RAAF in February 1940 at age 18 and by 30 January 1942, as Flying Officer, was in Ambon, Dutch East Indies, when the Japanese invaded. One serviceable Hudson left Ambon with as many personnel as it could carry. 11 R.A.A.F personnel did not make that flight, including Frank, and tried to quickly repair the remaining Hudson in order to evacuate. They were unable to make repairs, immediate evacuation was not available, so they were left to plan other options.

The group made their way across Ambon to escape by boat to the island of Ceram. Arrangements had been made with the R.A.A.F. to rendezvous there to be evacuated to Darwin. They were captured by a Japanese Patrol boat, taken prisoner to Laha on Ambon, and executed. Their deaths as Prisoners of War was recorded as 20 February 1942 - the precise date was not known. About 300 Australian Army members of Gull Force were also massacred at that time.

His younger brother **Edmund John (Jack) Meyer**, Service Number 436335, was born in 1924 and was only 17 years old when he heard that Frank was “Missing in Action”.

Jack said, “As to be expected, it had a profound impact on me, and I let it be known to my father that I wanted to enlist in the R.A.A.F. as soon as I could. At the time I was 17, and a Corporal in the Air Training Corp, 78 Squadron. My father, after receiving confirmation advice that Frank was ‘Missing in Action’, wrote a letter of appreciation to the R.A.A.F. He did this because of the support it provided the family in clarifying, the best it could at that time, the circumstances surrounding Frank.”

Jack’s father wrote:

“We are delighted to know that he was granted the privilege of being associated with that fine body, the R.A.A.F., in the defence of his country. It was bad luck, it’s the fortune of War that

he was out so soon. However his brother, an enthusiastic member of the A.F.C., only awaits his 18th birthday next month to follow in his footsteps with, we hope, a little better luck."

"It wasn't until mid-1946 that detailed information leading up to Frank's capture and death was provided to my father as a result of trials and interrogation of the Japanese forces who served in Ambon at the time."

At 18 and one month, Jack had joined the R.A.A.F. "I was enthusiastic to be in the R.A.A.F. I was unable to be a pilot so trained as an Air Gunner. I was too young to go to the UK, but with some satisfaction I was later assigned to 13 Squadron, my brother's squadron". Initially trained on Hudsons, Jack and crew were posted to the reformed 13 Squadron flying Venturas. He said, "On our first flight, approaching take off speed, something happened, and we ended up doing 'ground loops', just missing the hanger and other aircraft."

Initially flying escort duties and anti-submarine patrols, the crew relocated to Gove. "We carried out anti-submarine patrols and armed reconnaissance, flying out of Gove and Truscott. We were assigned bombing raids on shipping and supply barges in and around the then Dutch East Indies of Sumba, Sumbawa and the Flores. We were targeted with anti-aircraft, machine gun and small arms fire, but with no major incidences." Jack recalled that, "On one mission we spotted a Japanese vessel at anchor, but needed to reload to bomb it, so instead we attempted to use our guns, but problems with the Gun Turret forced us to return to base." A lucky escape.

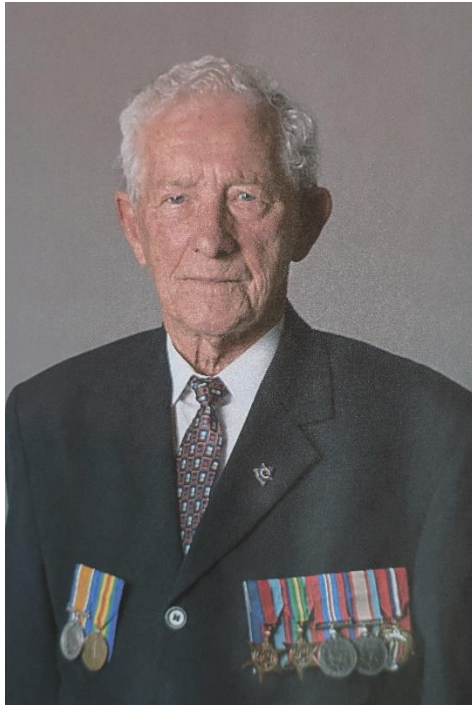


Jack(bottom left) with air crew.

"Dinkie", the dog, is wearing a harness and flew on missions with the crew.

"Towards the end of the War we flew in and out of Morotai, ferrying high ranking Defence personnel to the RAAF Command base there, for them to participate in conferences with the Americans. On our flights to and stays on Morotai and New Guinea, we also experienced being bombed by the Japanese Airforce."

Jack reflected that, "The relationship between members of the crew was very supportive and we enjoyed a camaraderie that was typical of a R.A.A.F. bomber crew."



Jack Meyer

Jack served with distinction and would have made Frank proud of him. He was discharged on 14 November 1945 with the rank of Warrant Officer. He then re-joined the S.G.I.O, and by 1948 was with the Commonwealth Bank. He completed his career in 1982 as Manager of its Belmont Branch.

“I joined the RSLWA, Maylands Sub-Branch, in 1945 but didn’t remain a member. In 2007 following the death of my wife, I joined the Air Force Association and the North Beach Sub-Branch. I attend as many meetings as I am able and enjoy the friendship and support it offers.”. “I also used to deliver Sub-Branch newsletters to those members who lived in my area and were unable to attend meetings”.

John Rolfe, the North Beach Sub-Branch President said: “Jack is an active and respected member, attends our meetings, commemorations and social events. It is important that we all respect and honour our World War 2 Veterans and their service.”.

Jack is three years younger than the R.A.A.F, and reflecting on this he said, “I’m proud of the contribution I made, as it was my passion to serve with the R.A.A.F. from a young age.” He commended the R.S.L., and in particular his Sub-Branch, for “the support, respect, and friendship it offers .”

It is the service of people like Frank and Jack, that has helped make the R.A.A.F what it is today.