



Flying Officer
Reginald Grenville
BARRINGTON DFC

1924 - 1989

Part A:

On the 1st of September 1939 German military units launched an attack on Poland, the catalyst of World War II. By 1940 Great Britain stood alone against the axis forces which occupied Central Europe. Defiant British Prime Minister Winston Churchill sought to hit back at Germany following the German Aerial bombing offensive against British cities. The strategy adopted by Royal Air Force Bomber Command, following criticism of bombing inaccuracy in the Butt Report, was to target German industrial areas and use the tactic, area bombardment. This method was detailed in the British air staff paper 23rd September 1941¹, "The ultimate aim of an attack on a town area is to break the morale of the population which occupies it. To ensure this, we must achieve two things: first, we must make the town physically uninhabitable and, secondly, we must make the people conscious of constant personal danger. The immediate aim, is therefore, twofold, namely, to produce (i) destruction and (ii) fear of death."

Among the 182,000 members of the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) that served during WW2, was one man, Reginald Grenville Barrington. Reginald served as a Flying Officer at no. 460 squadron during 1944, flying a total of 34 missions, bombing enemy targets. From 1939 to 1945 a total of 2.7 million tonne of bombs were dropped by the Allied air forces, flying 1,440,000 bomber sorties and destroying 20 percent of buildings in Germany².

In Renmark, South Australia, on the 7th of April 1924, the son of Emily Mighell (nee SMITH) and Titan Barrington was born. Reginald Grenville Barrington (figure 1) lived on a fruit block on Chowilla Street with his three older siblings, Edmund, Joseph and Alice Nora. He attended Renmark North Primary school where he became good friends with Howard Hendrick, whom he would later serve with during the War. Howard recalled how Reginald always had a fascination with aircrafts and would build models out of cardboard and wood. In his spare time, he enjoyed swimming, cricket, football and cycling and would spend time on his block picking fruit or working as a distillery labourer.

Reginald was soon in high school and even with his bright mind, he did not always use his head. One day, Reginald made a bomb and brought it into school. He told a few of his mates and stored it in his locker throughout the day, however, one boy was concerned and reported the matter to a teacher. The bomb was discovered, and Reginald got into serious trouble (Howard, 2020). Little did he know, that a few years later, he would be dropping bombs ten times the size and destruction of the small high school experiment. Despite some poor decisions, Reginald excelled academically at school³. It was his fascination in aircraft and bombs that directed him towards the RAAF and prepared him for the unbelievable tasks that lay ahead.

According to the Australian War Memorial, at the age of 18, Reginald travelled to Adelaide, South Australia, to enlist in the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF). It was the 20th of June 1942 when Reginald signed the papers that would take him across the globe. His journey, however, began a little closer to home attending No. 4 Initial



Figure 1. Reginald Grenville Barrington in uniform

¹ The National Archives (2004), *Transcript Source 2*, Viewed 11 May 2020, <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/heroesvillains/transcript/a1cs3s2l.htm>

² Wikipedia, (2020), *RAF Bomber Command*, Viewed 4 May 2020, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RAF_Bomber_Command

³ Interview with Howard Hendrick, former friend and wartime Bomber pilot (20 March 2020)

Training (I.T.S) at Mt Brecken, Victor Harbour, learning basic military discipline and attended weekly exams. He then travelled to Parafield, North Adelaide, taking part in No. 1 Elementary Flying Training (E.F.T.S). Here, Reginald learnt basic airmanship, flying aircraft such as the Tiger Moth and CAC Wackett Trainer. Reginald also attended No. 6 Service Flying Trainings (S.F.T.S) at RAAF Station, Malala, learning a more intermediate training. His last training was at No. 7 Service Flying Training School (S.F.T.S) at Deniliquin, New South Wales. On the 3rd of July 1943, Reginald embarked on a one-month journey from Australia to England, sailing into the coast of Britain on the 14th of August 1943.

Reginald commenced conversion to heavy bombers at No.18 Operational Training Unit (OTU) and completed advanced flying training at No. 20 (P) AFU having progressed on Halifax and Liberator aircraft. According to squadron records from 460 Squadron Veterans and Friends' Group (2020), he arrived at No. 460 Squadron RAAF at RAF Binbrook, Lincolnshire (figure 2), on the 8th of July 1944. As a new pilot to the Squadron, his first two missions were flown with experienced pilots. On the 18th of July 1944, ten days after his arrival, Reginald flew his first mission with Holmes J. C, bombing five villages east of Caen, France. This raid was one of the most effective operations carried out by bomber command, destroying two German divisions⁴.

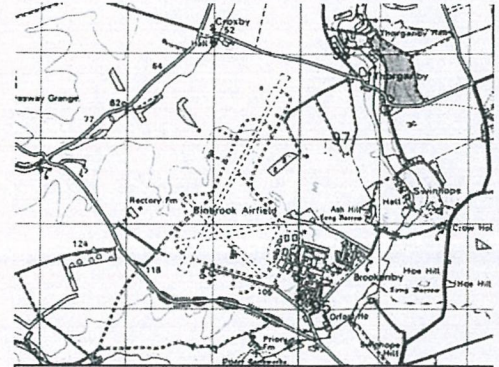


Figure 2. RAF Binbrook, Lincolnshire, England – no. 460 Squadron base

His second mission was flown with the commanding officer of Binbrook at the time, Edwards H. I. This operation took place on the 23rd of July 1944, the group headed for Kiel, Germany, and was the first major raid on a German city in two months. The surprise attack caught the Germans off guard and all parts of Kiel were hit including the important port areas and naval facilities. It was one of the heaviest raids of the war cutting German water, cooking supplies and transport for multiple days⁵.



Figure 3. Reginald - Far left pictured smoking

According to Howard Hendrick⁶, a fellow pilot and friend, Reginald (figure 3) completed many successful missions, however, on one occasion he got off to a bad start when he failed to go through the comprehensive pre-flight checks, neglecting to lower his flaps. The role of the flaps is to increase the arch of the wing to help lift the aircraft. Reginald thundered down the runway his flaps not lowered, quickly approaching the end of the airstrip. He pulled hard on the stick and the Lancaster (figure 4) just cleared the boundary fence. The control tower observing this at the time were so sure that the aircraft would crash that they sent a fire tender and ambulance after him. The airfield was luckily higher than the surrounding area, enabling Reginald to lower his flaps, gain air speed and climb away. Upon his return he faced a board of enquiry as to what happened that day.



Figure 4. Lancaster bomber flown by No. 460 Squadron

⁴The National Archives, (2004), *Royal Air Force Bomber Command 60th Anniversary – Campaign diary July 1944*, Viewed 16 April 2020, <https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20070706054449/http://www.raf.mod.uk/bombercommand/tul44.html>

⁵The National Archives, (2004), *Royal Air Force Bomber Command 60th Anniversary – Campaign diary July 1944*, Viewed 16 April 2020, <https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20070706054449/http://www.raf.mod.uk/bombercommand/tul44.html>

⁶Interview with Howard Hendrick, former friend and wartime Bomber pilot (20 March 2020)

According to Nationalarchives.gov.uk (2004), perhaps one of the most significant operations, which was to receive little credit in the history books, was Operation Hurricane. This raid occurred on the 14th of October 1944 and was a 24-hour terror bombing on Duisburg, Germany. The intention of this operation was to demonstrate to Germany the overwhelming power of the Allied Air Forces, causing mass panic and disorganisation across the country, disrupting the frontlines and communication⁷.

Duisburg was also a major location of heavy industry. At 0849 hours on the 14th of October 1944, Reginald was flying over Duisburg along with 957 other bombers who proceeded to drop 3,574 tonnes of high explosives and 820 tonnes of incendiaries (shown in figure 6). However, that was only the first wave, a second wave of bombers bombarded Duisburg hours later. Reginald returned to Binbrook at 1120 hours. The National Archives (2004) detailed the damage caused to Duisburg was very serious, resulting in large numbers of casualties and a delay in local production.

Robert Spence (2020), (Treasurer at 460 Squadron Veterans and Friends Group) stated that once the minimum number of 31 sorties had been completed, experienced pilots and crew members were sent to fulfil other duties while they rested from operational flying. Reginald completed a total of 34 operational sorties (missions) before being posted after his last operation on the 27th of November 1944 (figure 7). Aged 20, Reginald joined Transport Command at No. 466 Squadron. Here, he trained 30 hours on a Liberator before commencing his assignments. On the 13th of April 1945 Reginald received the news that he had been awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross⁸ (DFC) (refer to figures 8 and 9). This cross is awarded to officers of the RAF for showing acts of courage, valour or devotion while serving in operations against the enemy.

Reginald was demobilised on the 28th of February 1946, at just 21 years of age. He returned to Adelaide with his wife, Bessie, having married during the war, and attended university to study astronomy (Howard, 2020). Unfortunately, money was limited, so he changed courses, completing a teaching degree. Reginald returned to his hometown, Renmark, and went on to teach Maths and Science at his old school, Renmark High. His students soon learnt that if they

were able to coax Mr Barrington into talking about his wartime exploits during a maths lesson, then soon enough the lesson would be over. An extract from the Renmark High School 75th Anniversary Book (2000) details an incident at the high

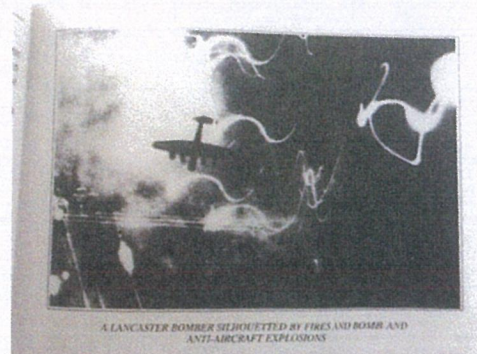


Figure 5. Lancaster bomber silhouetted by fires and bombs



Figure 6. Photograph of Duisburg during bombing – Operation Hurricane



Figure 7. Battle order 196, 27th November 1944, final mission, Freiburg



Figure 8. Article in the Murray Pioneer Thursday 26th April 1945



Figure 9. DFC similar to the one Reginald would have received

⁷ Wikipedia, (2020), Bombing of Duisburg in World War II, Viewed 29 April 2020, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bombing_of_Duisburg_in_World_War_II

⁸ Staunton, A, (2020), Awards From London Gazette 460 Squadron RAAF, Peter Dunn, Viewed 23 February 2020, <https://www.ozafwar.com/460medal.htm>

school where a chemistry lab caught fire. Students were running around the block unable to extinguish the flames, but Reginald, the epitome of an Air Force Pilot saw what was happening, calmly attached a length of rubber hose to a lab sink tap, turned on the water and put out the fire. Reginald continued his passion for flying and in 1959 built two Hall Cherokee gliders at the Renmark Gliding Club⁹. His two gliders were known as 'green' and 'orange' and are still affectionally referred to as the 'Barrington Cherokees' (as shown in figure 10). He continued to teach at Renmark High School before retiring after 17 years.

Sadly, Reginald Grenville Barrington DFC, passed away on the 8th of June 1989 at the age of 65 after losing a battle to cancer (Howard, 2020). He is buried at Enfield Memorial Park, Adelaide¹⁰.



Figure 10. Two Hall Cherokee gliders built by Reginald, 1959

Word count: 1482 words

⁹ Vintage Times (2016), 'The story of 2 Cherokees', *Newsletter of Vintage Gliders Australia*, (135), July 2016, p.8, 9, <https://www.vintageglidersaustralia.org.au/documents/Vintage%20Time%20135.pdf>

¹⁰ Gravin G, (2016), *Reginald Grenville Barrington*, Find a Grave, Viewed 20 February 2020, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/158780978/reginald-grenville-barrington>

Part B:

The ANZAC Spirit, comprising of courage, perseverance, mateship and resourcefulness was exhibited by Flying Officer Reginald Grenville Barrington throughout the duration of his service. In the four years Reginald Grenville Barrington served in World War II, he displayed incredible courage on every occasion. World War II was voluntary, men and women made the choice to sign up and commit to a life at war. At the young age of 18, Reginald showed admirable courage and signed up for the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF). His passion for flying showed, joining 460 Squadron of Bomber Command.

During the second world war, Bomber Command suffered a very high casualty rate of 46 percent, almost 60 percent were either killed, injured or taken prisoner¹¹. There was always a risk of encountering an enemy plane or colliding with another aircraft on every mission, yet Reginald was one of the fortunate men who showed the fortitude and courage to pull through. Fellow 460 Sqn Pilot Gordon Stooke writes in his memoir *Flak and Barbed Wire, 'In the Wake of Wuppertal'* (1997) how in the darkness, vision was limited and collisions between aircraft were not uncommon, 'I saw a bright flash of light that slowly faded and finally vanished. "Probably a collision between two 'friendlies.'" I shuddered. "Another 14 airmen gone.'" Reginald would wake up to empty beds where comrades should have been. In addition to anti-aircraft fire directed by coning from enemy search lights, records only once refer to an encounter with an enemy aircraft in aerial combat (figures 11). It was during the raid on Kiel dated the 23rd of July 1944, that a FW190 German fighter aircraft attacked Reginald's plane sometime between 2258 hours and 0413 hours (figure 12). Keeping a clear head, he fought off the enemy plane and returned safely to the base in Binbrook at 0413 hours, his plane in one piece.

Figure 11. Documentation of operations – combats with enemy highlighted

KIEL				Pilot	EDWARDS H I
LL 064	23/07/44			2nd Pilot	BARRINGTON R G
				Engineer	WILLIAMS S W
E04				Air/Bomber	ROBINSON A E
				Navigator	COFFEY P J
	UP	DOWN	Dur	Bomb	WirelessOp
	22:58	04:13	5:16	01:33	AirGunner1
					AirGunner2
					NEEDS A G

Figure 12. Reginald's mission details

As well as courage, Reginald also showed outstanding mateship throughout his service. Not only did he fly the required 31 operational sorties, he continued to fly three more just so his crew could make it through together¹². The majority of Reginald's missions were flown with the same six crew members, (figure 13 shows this) they became part of a family and no man was left behind. Records from ozatwar.com (2020) confirmed that Williams S.W, Mcelrea C.W.J, Towell K and Needs A.G all flew their 31 or more missions together with Reginald, all completing their required number of operations. Every day crews went missing, every day Reginald would have to face the horrors of war, but every day, he got up to fight. Without mateship, none of this would have been possible, that tight band of brother fliers made him do it again and again. Despite the high casualty rate, Reginald flew three extra missions, risking his life every time. The only explanation for this is the power of mateship, being there for your mates, because if one goes down, you all go down together.

806 Barrington R G - 1944 - (See H27, H04)

(P2) 21/11/44 Luhrs L O.

(E) Williams S W	Williams S W	Williams S W	Williams S W
(R) Robinson R E	Robinson R E	Trimmer J	Parkinson E
(N) Coffey P J	Rigby R	Rigby R	Rigby R
(M) Mc Elrae G W	Mc Elrae G W	Mc Elrae G W	Mc Elrae G W
(G) Towell K	Towell K	Towell K	Towell K
(G) Needs A G	Needs A G	Needs A G	Needs A G
	1	5	1
(E) Williams S W	Williams S W	Williams S W	Williams S W
(R) Gray H J	Wilkinson F C	Deloria F B G	Deloria F B G
(N) Rigby R	Rigby R	Rigby R	Bain R G
(M) Mc Elrae G W	Mc Elrae G W	Mc Elrae G W	Mc Elrae G W
(G) Towell K	Towell K	Towell K	Towell K
(G) Needs A G	Needs A G	Needs A G	Needs A G
	1	1	6
(E) Williams S W	Williams S W	Sutton E G	Williams S W
(R) Deloria F B G	Deloria F B G	Deloria F B G	Deloria F B G
(N) Carruth E M	Rigby R	Rigby R	Rigby R
(M) Mc Elrae G W	Mc Elrae G W	Mc Elrae G W	Mc Elrae G W
(G) Towell K	Towell K	Towell K	Towell K
(G) Needs A G	Needs A G	Needs A G	Needs A G
	1	12	1

Figure 13. Reginald's crew

Word count: 481 words

¹¹ Wikipedia, (2020), RAF Bomber Command, Viewed 4 May 2020, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RAF_Bomber_Command

¹² Mission log of Reginald Grenville Barrington, ed. (PDF), from David Tod, 23 February 2020.

Appendix of Figures

Figure 1: Image of Reginald Grenville Barrington, photograph, from David Coombs, 25 February 2020.

Figure 2: Wordpress, n.d, *460 Squadron – Bomber command WW2*, map, viewed 4 May 2020, <https://bombercommand.wordpress.com/binbrook-1943-home-of-460-squadron/>

Figure 3: Image of Reginald and fellow pilots, Photograph, from Renmark High School, 20 February 2020.

Figure 4: Wordpress, n.d, *460 Squadron – Bomber Command WW2, Image*, viewed 4 May 2020, <https://bombercommand.wordpress.com/the-village-inn-460-squadron/>

Figure 5: Stooke, G, (1997) *Flak and Barbed Wire – In the Wake of the Wuppertal*, Picture, silhouette of Lancaster, Veronica Place, Loftus, Australia

Figure 6: The National Archives, (2004), *Royal Air Force Bomber Command 60th Anniversary – Campaign diary October 1944*, image, Viewed 29 April 2020, <https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20070706055527/http://www.raf.mod.uk/bombercommand/oct44.html>

Figure 7: Image of Battle Order 196, photograph, from Howard Hendrick, 20 March 2020.

Figure 8: National Library of Australia, n.d, *Murray Pioneer D.F.C awarded to Renmark Airman*, Newspaper article, Viewed 23 February 2020, <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/109411618/10482654>

Figure 9: Wikipedia, (2020) *Distinguished Flying Cross (united Kingdom)*, image, viewed 29 April 2020, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Distinguished_Flying_Cross_\(United_Kingdom\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Distinguished_Flying_Cross_(United_Kingdom))

Figure 10: Vintage Times, (2016) *Newsletter of Vintage Gliders*, image, viewed 24 February 2020, <https://www.vintageglidersaustralia.org.au/documents/Vintage%20Times%20135.pdf>

Figure 11: Australian War Memorial, n.d, *Reginald Grenville Barrington*, Scanned file, viewed 20 February 2020, <https://s3-ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/awm-media/collection/AWM2019.8.270/document/7384901.PDF>

Figure 12: Mission Log of Reginald Grenville Barrington, PDF, from David Tod, 23 February 2020.

Figure 13: *460 Squadron Pilots and Crews (2020)*, John Watson, Viewed 14 May 2020, <https://www.ozatwar.com/460sqdn/crewb.htm>

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