

Speech given on September 4<sup>th</sup> 2013 at Lancaster EE138 crash site Stadil, Denmark by:

**Wing Commander A.M. O'LEARY OAM**  
**Royal Australian Air Force**  
Assistant Defence Adviser (Strategy)  
(Assistant Air Force Adviser)

Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, members of the Danish, United Kingdom and Australian communities present, and most importantly the family members of the crew of Lancaster EE138.

Today, the 70th anniversary of the crash of EE138, is a special day and it is fitting that we come together to celebrate their lives of the airmen who volunteered, and eventually gave their lives to preserve the freedom we enjoy today.

This day, and the path that lead to this ceremony, are clear recognition of the value of their lives, the values they held important, and to the character of all the people involved in today.

I'd like to take this opportunity to reflect on the character of the eight crew members of EE138, by reading a short extract developed from their diaries and mission reports to give you an insight into the courage, commitment and dedication of these airmen.

This story covers five of the crew that formed a bond in training and learnt to place their trust in each other. These five men were then crewed up with Thirkettle, and later joined by Squadron Leader Carl Richard Kelaher and Sergeant Arthur Rolfe for the flight on EE138.

The 5 crew members, Sidney, Ewin, Cyril, John and Charlie on the 27 June 1943, prior to converting to Lancasters, conducted a training mission to France. We pick up the story of the 27 Operational Training Unit Wellington coded "V" outward bound over the English Channel. The report goes:

Outward bound, 6000 feet, cloud tops (cover) 10/10th, visibility 5-10 miles over the English Channel with cloud cover breaking up towards the French coast.

At 0130 hours, whilst flying at 15000 feet, they identified the Jersey Island a few miles to the starboard or right wing. They encountered search lights and anti-aircraft fire and reported back 10-12 search lights and heavy machine guns targeting their formation. They did a circuit and passed in safety.

Later they saw the Loire River another important marker for Warrant Officer Ewin Carthew, the navigator. They photographed the river as part of the mission and then continue towards Tours.

At 0221 hours, whilst at 15000 feet over Saumur, they encounter rocket fire just before reaching their target (Tours – France) where they observe ground haze or fog over the target and visibility of one mile. They drop the leaflets, at 0236 hours from 14500 feet containing articles from the daily news, before starting the return journey.

On the return journey they are caught again in search lights as they approached the French Coast, but pass through safely.

They cross the English Channel and know they are safe, as they break out of the clouds they identify the aircraft of Joe Goodwin's on fire. Even in training these men were exposed to the dangers and realities of war. They land safely at 0521 hours and complete the post mission reports. The crew graduates and is sent off to commence Lancaster conversion training.

These men, Carl and Arthur were all volunteers; all understood the risk of aviation and war. They showed the moral fortitude and courage required to willingly walk out to their aircraft, start the engines and taxi, knowing that they or the aircraft to the left or right may not return. These airmen had faith in each other's ability, the courage of their conviction, and belief in their cause or simply put in 'doing the right thing'.

This day reflects the unity and shared purpose of people from Denmark, United Kingdom, Australia and Europe in 'doing the right thing', and today is about 'doing the right thing by the airmen of EE138 and their families'.

Many of the stories of the soldiers, sailors and airmen of World War 2 remain untold even today, but their contributions are still important. The governments of the United Kingdom and Australia have just recognized the contributions of some of these people with the Bomber Command Clasp and Battle of Atlantic Star.

Recognition, through the awarding of Medals, is important to those who take part in operations and to their families as they recognize the importance of the contribution of their husbands, their fathers, their mothers, their uncles, aunts, cousins, brothers and sisters, and especially when they made the ultimate sacrifice.

For some of the families here today, the journey of obtaining their relatives medals has just begun, and for others they will be seeking the recently released clasp for Bomber Command.

Today we are privileged to be able to posthumously present the medals of Flying Officer Sidney Milton Forrester.

Sidney's medals will be presented by the Australian Ambassador and will be placed on the Memorial denoting Sidney's, and the crews, presence at today's service and connection to the community gathered.

The medals that will shortly be presented to Peter Forrester, Sidney's nephew, are:

- Air Crew Europe Star
- 1939 -1945 Defence Medal
- War Medal 1939 – 1945
- Australia Service Medal, 1939 – 1945
- 1939 – 1945 Star with Clasp "Bomber Command"

Some of the other crew members will also be entitled to some, or all, of these medals.

I would now like to invite the Ambassador for Australia, His Excellency, Mr Damien Miller, to present Flying Officer Sidney Milton Forrester's medal to his nephew Peter Forrester and place them on the memorial as part of this service.

Thank you

SECRET NOTWT  
IMMEDIATE



E G C. LTV NR LTV6/27 IMMEDIATE SECRET NOTWT  
PASS TO

TO HQ 93 GROUP  
FROM 27 OTU  
23/JUNE.

RAID REPORT

SECTION A. 93 GROUP, LICHFIELD RPN01 26/27TH JUNE 1943.  
WELLINGTON III 'V' 27 O.T.U.  
F/O FORRESTER PUPIL.  
NICKELS TOURS. LANDED 05.21 HRS

- SECTION C.
1. TOURS
  2. 02.36 HRS 14,500FT 110 DEGREES T-I.A.S. ●  
140.
  3. GROUND HAZE, NO CLOUD. VISIBILITY 1 MILE
  4. D/R
  - 5-7 NIL
  8. (A) YES  
(B) NIL
  - 9-10 NIL
  - 11 INTERESTING.

SECTION D.

12. (A) BASE - LEICESTER - SELSEY BILL -  
CHERBOURG - SAHUR - DROPPING AREA -  
QUISTREHAM - SELSEY BILL - BASE.  
(B) OUTWARD - 10/10THS CLOUD TOPS  
AT 5,000FT TO ENGLISH CHANNEL BREAKING  
UP TOWARDS FRENCH COAST VIS 5-10 MILES.  
TARGET AREA AS (3) ABOVE.  
HOMEWARD. PATCHES OF CLOUD, OVER FRANCE,  
TOPS 5,000FT. 10/10THS CLOUD OVER ENGLISH  
CHANNEL AT 5,000FT. VISIBILITY GOOD
13. NIL
14. BELIEVED JERSEY ISLAND, 0130 HRS.  
1500FT. FEW MILES TO STARBOARD  
10-12 HEAVY GUNS WITH SEVERAL LIGHT  
GUNS FIRING INTO S/L CONE (10-12  
BEAMS)
15. 3 MILES SOUTH OF SAHUR, 02.21 HRS  
15,000 FT. VERY BRIGHT AERODROME  
LIGHTING.
16. SAHUR, 02.21 HRS. 15,000FT. BLUEISH  
WHITE ROCKET FIRED.
17. NIL

T.P.L. 1008

~~BY F/O FORRESTER SEC. C. NR Tel. A.S. 140~~  
~~SEC. D. NR 5,000FT 10/10THS CLOUD NR 0130 HRS 15000~~  
~~FR 008 15000S SENT (PARA 14.)~~  
~~23 11 1100~~