

## **Peter Lynn Hummerston**

Peter Lynn Hummerston. RFD  
Born 15<sup>th</sup> July 1923, Perth, Western Australia

Attained Junior Standard at Perth Boys High School. Commenced work as a Trainee Refrigeration Air Conditioning Mechanic in 1939, with ERECO. Transferred to Perrys Ltd 1940. Transferred to Harris Scarfe & Sandovers, Carrier Agency, March 1941.

Joined WA Squadron Air Training Corps 1941. Prior to Enlistment in the RAAF, Empire Air Training Scheme, 26 Course, 29<sup>th</sup> March 1942.

Enlisted in the RAAF to assist in the defence of Australia in case of possibility of invasion by Japanese Forces.

Initial Training School, Clontarf WA. Qualified W/T Operator Air. No 1 Wireless & Gunnery School, Ballarat 11/11/1942. Qualified Air Gunner, No 3 Bombing and Gunnery School, Sale, 10/12/1942. Staff Flying No 2 Air Navigation School, Nhill, 13/02/1943. Qualified D. R. Navigator No 2 Air Observers School, Mt Gambier, 23/06/1943.

Based at Aitkenvale 36 Squadron, flying Australia and Pacific areas, 26/06/1943.  
Pearce, WA, 35 Squadron, 24/08/1943.  
Pearce, 7 Communications Unit, 29/11/1943.  
Pearce, 35 Squadron, 03/02/1944.  
Garbutt and Pacific areas, 36 Squadron, 09/08/1944.

Majority of flying with 36 Squadron was overseas in the Pacific area. For the period 09/08/1944 to 20/07/1945, Member felt that he was assisting with the War effort with his flying.

After completion of Air Crew training and qualified originally as a Wireless Air Gunner and later as a Navigator, member was posted to 36 Squadron at Aitkenvale, a suburb of Townsville. The Squadron used the Stock Route strip and were quartered in vacated civilian houses. Two months after joining 36, five crews, mainly West Australians, were chosen to go to Amberley to pick up some new Dakota aircraft that had been ferried out from the United States and ferry them across to RAAF Base Pearce to start 35 Squadron off with Dakota aircraft. Some weeks later the aircraft were sent to 33 Squadron at Milne Bay, leaving 35 without any aircraft. Some of the crewmembers remained at Pearce and were posted to 7 Communications Unit, THE FLYING CIRCUS. Later, 35 was re-equipped with Dakotas and crew posted back. Member remained with 35 for another six months then requested on Operational Posting and was posted back to 36 Squadron where he remained until just prior to VP Day. Was then posted south pending discharge.

Flying in the Pacific involved many and varied movements. Troop carrying, general transport, Medivacs, evacuation of POWs. The Squadron had a number of nicknames, "The Hydraulic Squadron – We Lift Anything" "Biscuit Bomber" "Gooney Bird" "Dizzy 3" etc. Member participated in some 84 supply dropping missions in the Torricelli Mountains and the Bougainville areas. Flying conditions in the 6,000 foot mountains were horrendous and aircraft were lost through weather closing in and trapping the aircraft in the valleys as the dropping height was normally around 300 feet for "Free" droops and only a little higher for parachute drops.

Member accumulated 920 hours flying within Australia, a further 482 hours on Operations in the Pacific. Operations included 84 supply dropping missions, also a total of some 618 landings and take-offs.

Aircraft flown in wartime – Wacket; Fairey Battle; Hawker Demon; Anson; DC3; DH 84; Lysander; Beaufort; B 24; C 60 Lodestar.

The above experiences created a change in the member. Going from youth to manhood in a very short time. Realising the responsibility of an individual going to the responsibility of a "Crew" member.

Member had been operating continuously in the Pacific area for some time when advised that he was being posted south for possible discharge as there were indications of the War ceasing and member had indicated that he did not wish to continue in the RAAF post war.

On returning to WA member resumed his career as a Refrigeration Air-conditioning Engineer.

Post war, member transferred to the RAAF Reserve.

Attached to WA Squadron Air Training Corps in 1953 as an Instructor.

Promoted from Warrant Officer to Commissioned Rank in 1960.

Promoted to Flying Officer 19<sup>th</sup> July 1961.

Promoted to Flight Lieutenant May 1969.

Discharged on retirement 10<sup>th</sup> August 1983.

Aircraft in which flown post war; Iroquois; Macchi; 707; C 163; Pilatus Porter; Nomad; Arava; Tiger Moth; Dakotas at Air Transport Squadron, Lae, PNG.

Foundation member 35 Squadron Branch RAAFA. Later became Australia-Pacific Branch.

Awarded Life Membership RAAFA 7<sup>th</sup> August 1994.

Foundation Member Ex WAAIRTC Instructors Group.

Member Highgate RSL Branch.

Sub Warden Kings Park War Memorial.

Member, Kings Park Honour Avenue Committee, maintaining plaques and posts in the Honour Avenues.

Marshall for RAAF Ex Services Groups, Anzac Day services.

Recently appointed to become the incoming warden for the State War Memorial, effective 11<sup>th</sup> November 2004.

MEDALS. 1939/45 Star; Pacific Star; Australian Service Medal: General Service Medal; Dutch Cross; Philippines Liberation Medal.

AWARDS. Cadet Forces Medal 1970.  
Reserve Forces Decoration 19<sup>th</sup> May 1988.