



Wing Cdr Heuke, one of the best

FOR the past few years it has been my privilege to know Wing Cdr Fred Heuke and in the rarified atmosphere of other ranks and combat veterans he was what most aspire to and rarely achieve: he was an officer and a gentleman.

Fred flew the first of our beloved Wallaby Airlines Caribous to Australia and served in Vietnam until they were our freedom birds home.

Sadly, last Saturday Frederick William Heuke arrived at his final battlefield with prostate cancer.

His funeral service will be held in New South Wales. There will also be a wreath-laying ceremony at the Townsville Cenotaph at 11.30am tomorrow in honour of Fred.

I invite all who knew Fred or were so fond of those magnificent pilots flying our big red rats to come and do honour to one of the best.

SYD (Mac) McLEOD,
Wulguru.

The Aircraft that later Wing Commander Fred Heuke flew on its delivery flight with Wing Commander Norm Geschke, Flight Lieutenant Al Field and Sergeant Stew Bonnett was No 264. Sadly only Stew Bonnett is still alive.

Mick

M. P. KEARNEY
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"Good leadership is a never ending investment"

My Father, Fred Heuke, formerly of 38Sqn, died on the weekend after a long battle with cancer.

Fred was one of the crew that went to Canada to collect A4-264 and made the long delivery flight back to Australia, he served a year in South Vietnam and was Detachment Commander in New Guinea for a few years before ending up behind a desk. Having flown quite a few different aircraft in his time, he was always happiest in the cockpit of a Caribou. I suppose it is rather ironic that he died the same year that his favourite aircraft is being pensioned off.

Anyway, to cut a long story short, Fred's funeral will be held at Taree on Friday the 18th of September between 11.00 and 12.00 and the family was hoping, and I know it is a very long shot, that if there were any 38Sqn aircraft transiting the area on Friday, whether it would be possible for one to divert and do a fly over of the crematorium?

Please find below a bit of a history of my Dads time in the RAAF.

Thank you for your time.

PROFILE OF FRED HEUKE WGCDR (ret).

I joined the RAAF in 1959 based in Sale Victoria as a Trainee Navigator. Having been aeroplane-mad as a youngster, this wide-eyed country lad was immediately into a new world of parade-ground discipline, saluting & ground school instruction in aviation subjects. Flight training in Dakota aircraft in which we ranged over eastern Australia, absorbing, deduced reckoning navigation, astro- navigation, which I mastered and have never used since, plotting fixes etc. Woe betide any cadet whose navigation log was less than immaculate and not error-free. Lasting memories of those days were the high standards of the instructors and mentors, and the astonishing sight of seeing a trainee literally seize-up mentally on a night flying exercise. The poor fellow was eventually scrubbed.

Upon graduation I was posted to No 2 SQN at Amberley to undergo a Canberra Conversion. Another shock as the hot-shot boggie learned how little he knew as he grappled with the problems of flight at 3 times the speed and 4 times the altitude of the Dakota, as well as the mysteries of the T4 bombsight and the latest thing in Doppler navigation aids. Eventually, one achieved an acceptable standard, and the weekends at Surfers Paradise were fun. Life generally was pretty good apart from being prone to airsickness in the black-hole known as the 'navigator position'. But I persevered, and so did my pilots, as after each sortie

24/09/2009

I carried my previous meal in a plastic bag to the bin. In reality we had a great machine that could fly at 450 knots for 4 hours and we criss-crossed the country on 'jollies', racking up hours. Space precludes me from reporting some of our 'experiences' but I can recount a couple. On one occasion a flight of 4 aircraft flew out from Townsville on a live H.E. (high explosive) bombing exercise on a rock to the north. On the final run-in, bomb doors open, a launch was suddenly seen adjacent to the rock and the mission was hastily aborted. The boat operator had not read his NOTAM's and as a result had come within a couple of seconds of wearing a couple of tons of H.E. The C.O. was not amused! On another occasion the completion of a low-level exercise out of Darwin we had parked our aircraft when another taxied in behind us. The whine of its engine ceased as it was shut down, followed immediately by a THUD and we were treated to the sight of a Canberra with its nose on the ground and its tail in the air. The pilot, tired and 'not with it', had intended to press the stop-watch to time the engine run-down but had, instead, pressed the undercarriage up button beside it. Ergonomics in English aircraft had much to answer for but the poor chap finished his career as a mess manager.

After three years at Amberley in 1963 I was given an overseas posting to Butterworth Malaysia, to 2 SQN, again on Canberras. It was there, in 1965, that I met a remarkable lady in the RAAF Nursing Service - Madelon Waterman- who subsequently became my wife and is known to many of you as Del. About then the Australia entered the Vietnam war and Indonesian Confrontation blew up. Del was soon flying off regularly to Vietnam on the 2 SQN Dakota on 12-15 hour days bringing casualties back to 6RAAF hospital in Butterworth before flying them home to Australia on C130's (A Models). We Canberra crews continued whizzing around Malaysia practising bombing, interspersed with an occasional side trip to Ubon. By then the RAF had moved in V-bombers and Javelin night fighters. We could no longer fly direct to Darwin and were forced to fly around the north of Sumatra and stage through Cosos Is. and Perth/Pierce. The RAF weren't fussed - they simply flew at 60,000 ft. at night and no one could get near them. At one point some USAF F105 aircraft and crews arrived on exchange and I was able to scrounge a ride in a two seater. What a revelation! I had the quickest, smoothest ride around Malaysia that I I'd ever had, at a speed 420 kts at low level, that would have rattled my teeth in a Canberra, followed by an automated, radar-guided simulated atomic bomb run. The old compressed air-driven T4 bombsight which had it's ancestry in the WW 2 Lancaster looked rather dated. The RAAF did not receive comparable equipment until the arrival of the F111.

In 1965 after some 1800 hours on Canberras I applied for, and was granted, pilot training, it being judged that navigator-trained pilots would be useful in Vietnam operations, so it was off to Point Cook for basic training on Winjeels. Del and I squeezed in a marriage during the course Easter break in 1966, despite it being against the rules at the time. I incurred the Chief Ground Instructors displeasure but nothing worse. The course then went to Pearce for advanced flying on the Vampire. That was a different kettle of fish to the docile Winjeel, but I passed with only one heavy landing and was sent to 38 SQN in 1967 to learn to operate the Caribou. After 18 months of learning short-field operations, including an eye opening 'New Guinea' trainer tour, I was selected to crew the pickup of a Caribou from the DeHavilland factory in Toronto,

Canada. Our loadmaster was Stew Bonnet. It will ever be remembered for the 16.5 hours it took to fly from San Francisco to Honolulu, our arrival there making the local news. On return I was posted to No. 35 SQN VungTau, where the flying was marvellous but hard work, as we had to help load and refuel our aircraft as well as fly them. Highlights? There was the incongruity of enjoying a beer in the mess in the evening while watching gatling gun gunships hosing down and island about 5 miles away, from which the VC occasionally launched rockets. The V.C drove us into the bunkers twice - one rocket attack did no damage beyond digging big holes in the sand. Another salvo scored a direct hit on the fuel storage tanks. Next morning the black smoke cloud stretched all the way to Saigon. One of our crews were lucky to escape unscathed when mortar shells exploded around the aircraft nose while they were unloading at a strip near the Cambodian border. They jettisoned the load and hastily took off for Bien Hoa despite over 50 holes in the Caribou, a smashed windscreen, a u/s magneto and damaged hydraulics. From memory, a D.F.C. and D.F.M were awarded for that performance. Most of our work entailed flying drums of fuel and crates of rockets and other ammunition mostly over ranges of 30 miles. 10 - 12 take-offs and landing per day was fairly average, 16 not unknown. Many strips were short and primitive - some bare dirt (mud in the monsoon) while a 'good one' was pierced steel plate (PSP), sometimes laid on the top of a canal bank. Flight during the monsoon was nerve-wracking and the American radar was far from infallible. In addition it was necessary to get separate information to avoid artillery firing. The crews were very busy. We slept well at night, unlike our army colleagues, we had a dry air-conditioned room. None- the-less there were still the laughs and tragedies of war. There was the RAAF cook who became disorientated and confused after a few beers and tried to get into bed with the RAAF Commander, the legendary Gp. Capt. 'Bay' Adams. He was smartly orientated to his correct billet, and the next morning the Grouper invited the A.C to his office for morning tea and a chat! Then there was the near-disaster - we flew down to a VNAF base in the delta and as we circled down to land, saw a C-47 lying off the end of the strip in the paddy field. It transpired that the aircraft, equipped with gatling guns had been flown down from Saigon the previous afternoon in anticipation of some local V.C. activity. Unknown to the USAF Captain, the crew included some V.C. sympathisers who hi-jacked the aircraft during the night with the intention of hosing down Bin Thui airbase before escaping over the nearby Cambodian border. They weren't too clever, however, as they attempted to take-off with the engines in lean mixture. They roared down the full 7000ft length of the strip without achieving flying speed and crashed into the paddy field beyond. Before they could collect their wits the Base police grabbed them and hauled them off to the slammer for some corrective counselling. In October 1969 after 1000hrs and 1900 sorties for the year, I was in quick succession posted back to 38 SQN, sent to PNG on detachment then posted to PNG as Detachment Commander of the three Caribous based in Port Moresby. In the meantime my long suffering wife had produced a son, sold the house, car and the furniture and organised a move with two children.

The purpose of the Port Moresby detachment was to provide air support for the Pacific Islands Regiments at Lae, Wewak and Port Moresby, plus a little civil work, but mostly to provide tropical and high altitude training for the Caribou crews. It was necessary for them to learn how

to use the major valley systems as air routes and recognise numerous passes or gaps as ways in and out of valleys beneath the weather. This was achieved with a small permanent air, ground and admin. staff, while everyone else was on 3 month detachment. PNG flying was always nerve-wracking and tricky and several aircraft had crashed or been damaged over the years. One acts as a tribal meeting house off the end of Tahpini strip in the highlands. In August 72 the unthinkable happened when we suffered the tragedy of the loss of a Caribou in bad weather south of Wau with the loss of four fine colleagues and around twenty PNG cadets. Two survived and walked out but the aircraft was swallowed up by dense jungle and it was not found for several days.

By the end of 1972 PNG Independence was in the air and law and order deteriorated, especially after an inappropriate speech by an Australian P.M. Our dog was stabbed by an intruder, we had nightly prowlers and locals under the misunderstanding that they would immediately take over expatriate jobs and houses camped outside our married quarter fence and some came brazenly to the front door asking when they could move in. Burglaries became more frequent as did rape and violence. Del had a native come at her through the car side window, wielding a rock - she only just managed to speed off causing him to slip off the bonnet. We were not sorry to leave Port Moresby at the end of 1972, by which time I had accumulated around 3,500 hrs. on Caribou and 2000 navigator hours. As General Duties careers go I had a good innings and staff work beckoned with a promotion to SQN. LDR. and a posting to operational command programming the RAAF's Hercules and Caribou fleets. Generally, 'tasking' was fairly routine but could quickly go to 'max effort' with flood relief work or, in 1974 air-lifts for Cyclone Tracy and the evacuation of Saigon. I recall sitting in the windowless ops. room during some flood relief and being in awe of the airmanship and navigational skill of an Iroquois' crew who set off from Bourke to rescue a couple trapped on top of a car surrounded by flood waters somewhere north of Tibooburra. Most navigational features had been obliterated by floodwaters but they flew straight to them and effected a rescue. Brilliant! we had no GPS then, remember! Then there was the politician who, at the height of Cyclone Tracy airlift tried to directly order me to task a C-130 to pick up a load of flour from one of his constituents, rather than work through the state S.E.S. I refused and he got quite uppity and took it all the way to the Chief of the Air Staff. He lost the argument, I'm pleased to say. A few months later during a Staff Inspection, I was introduced to the C.A.S. who said "Ah yes I've heard of you"! Oh well, I suppose notoriety is the next best thing to fame. After three years at H.Q.O.C., I was promoted to Wing Cdr, and posted to the Air Staff at Richmond to supervise the production of operating manuals, S.A.R. operations and sundry letter writing. These were two pretty uneventful years but the domestic front stability was welcome. A posting to Point Cook followed as C.O. of the Officers Training School where direct entry officers received several months training in RAAF administration, law and drill before postings as Education Officers, Administrative or Accounts Officers and Nursing Officers. My immediate impressions were of the high calibre and qualifications of the staff. Articulate Bachelors of Arts, Education and Accounting held sway and managed to gently lead a mere transport pilot into a more cerebral world and mostly assisted me to avoid making administrative blunders. An exception being the time when, lacking any feedback on the performance

of our graduates and in a mis-guided attempt at quality control, I despatched some staff to another base to make some enquiries. Quite correctly, I received a king-sized rocket for not going through Command channels. Oh well it wasn't a hanging offence. O.T.S sure had it's moments - there was the B.A. graduate student who was found to need remedial english tuition, and could not do cursive writing. This officer was earmarked for - wait for it- Education Officer duties! Another young fellow had never made a withdrawal from a bank - he was hoping to be an Accounting Officer. However, it was a group of Medical Officer graduates who took the cake. After being sustained at Medical School for 3 years with RAAF money, they not only found a few weeks at OTS to be beneath them, but also decided to welsh on their return of service obligations, by refusing to sign the Official Secrets Act. Their real motives were to get into prestigious civilian appointments early. After a short stand-off , an eminent medical officer with Reserve rank of GP. CAPT. came out from Melbourne to talk to them. He won their hearts and minds by pointing out that if they pursued their present course, they would find themselves on an un-official medical black list and their careers may not be as rosy as they imagined.

After 18 enlightening months at OTS, the incumbent at Base Squadron a couple of hundred yards down the road, resigned. So it came to be that I was appointed C.O. Base Squadron. At least we stayed in the same married quarter. Another steep learning curve as I became responsible for three messes, works and buildings, fire fighting, medical quarters, air traffic control, service police, and RAAF Museum. Thank heaven for a competent staff, but the strain was beginning to tell. After a year in which we had a couple of messy staff divorces, one suicide, a married quarter fire, drug problems, three major thefts, (where the perpetrators were caught), theft of a service pistol (unsolved) a rape in the WAAF quarters, and attempted break-ins to the switchboard, it all got a bit much and I resigned. Perhaps having more insight into my predecessors difficulties. Even resignation was not straightforward. Our removal was arranged for a week before Christmas, and after waiting until 4pm on the designated day for the removalist, the Service Police turned up to advise us that the removalist had gone bankrupt. Christmas dinner was a salad roll in the gardens in Melbourne -Welcome to civilian life!

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ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE

EULOGY

NAME: Frederick William HEUKE

DATE OF BIRTH: 22 November 1937

RANK: Wing Commander

SERVICE NUMBER: 43460

ENLISTED: 27 August 1959

CATEGORY/BRANCH: General Duties/Pilot

PROMOTIONS:

Trainee Aircrew	27-08-1959
Pilot Officer	25-08-1960
Flying Officer	25-08-1962
Flight Lieutenant	25-02-1965
Squadron Leader	01-01-1971
Wing Commander	01-01-1976

SERVICE HISTORY:

Frederick William HEUKE started his career with the Royal Australian Air Force as a Trainee Aircrew on the 27th August 1959 when he enlisted at 5 Recruit Centre - Adelaide. He was appointed to a commission in the Royal Australian Air Force on the 25th August 1960 with the rank of Pilot Officer. During his service he served at the following Units:

Frederick William HEUKE was then posted to School of Air Navigation – East Sale on the 27th August 1959 to undergo his initial recruit training. On completion of his initial recruit training on the 29th August 1960 he was posted to 82 Wing Headquarters – Amberley, and on the 29th August 1960 he was posted to 1 (B) Operational Conversion Unit – Amberley. On the 2nd December 1960 he was posted to 6 Squadron – Amberley.

On the 11th July 1963 Frederick William HEUKE emplaned Brisbane for his service overseas and on the 12th July 1963 deplaned Penang, Malaysia. He was posted to 2 Squadron – Butterworth on the same day. On the 30th September 1965 he emplaned Butterworth, and on the 1st October 1965 deplaned Sydney. On the 26th October 1965 he was posted to Base Squadron – Laverton, and on the 27th October 1965 he was posted to 1 Basic Flying Training School – Point Cook. On the 18th July 1966 he was posted to 1 Applied Flying Training School – Pearce.

On the 9th January 1967 Frederick William HEUKE was posted to 38 Squadron – Richmond. He emplaned Sydney on the 21st October 1968, and deplaned Saigon, Vietnam on the 22nd October 1968. He was posted to 35 Squadron – Vietnam on the same day. He returned to Australia on posting to 38 Squadron – Richmond on the 22nd October 1969.

On the 16th October 1972 Frederick William HEUKE was posted to Headquarters Operational Command – Penrith, and on the 1st March 1976 he was posted to Headquarters – Richmond. On the 18th July 1978 he was posted to Officers Training School – Point Cook, and on the 10th December 1979 he was posted to Base Squadron – Point Cook.

On the 5th January 1981 Frederick William HEUKE was posted to Base Squadron - Williamstown where his appointment terminated on discharge from the Royal Australian Air Force on the 6th January 1981.

HONOURS AND AWARDS:

Australian Active Service Medal 1945-75 with Clasps 'MALAYSIA' 'VIETNAM'

General Service Medal 1962 with Clasp 'MALAY PENINSULA'

Vietnam Medal

Australian Service Medal 1945-75 with Clasps 'SE ASIA' 'PNG'

Defence Force Service Medal with First Clasp

National Medal

Australian Defence Medal

Vietnamese Campaign Medal

Oh! I have slipped the surly bonds of earth
And danced the skies on laughter silvered wings,
Sunwards, I've climbed and joined the tumbling mirth
Of sunlit clouds - and done a hundred things
You have not dreamed of - wheeled and soared and
Swung high in the sunlit silence. Hov'ring there I've
Chased the shouting wind along, and flung
My eager craft through footless halls of air.
I've topped the wind-swept heights with easy grace
Where never lark nor eagle flew,
And while with silent lifting mind I've trod,
The high un-trespassed sanctity of space
Put out my hand - and touched the face of God.

*A poem by John Gillespie Magee a 19 year old pilot of
the Royal Canadian Air Force killed in action 1941.*



Fred

*Our family would like to thank you for your love and
kindness at this very sad time. Please join us for
refreshments and memories in the tea room at
Manning Great Lakes Memorial Gardens
after Fred's Service.*



Thanksgiving For The Life Of



**Frederick William
Heuke**

Born on the 22nd November 1937
Entered eternal life on the 12th September 2009.



In God's Loving Care