



BOMBER COMMAND COMMEMORATIVE SERVICE SUNDAY 02 JUNE 2019 AT RAAF BASE AMBERLEY

What, when and where is the Bomber Command Commemorative Service (BCCS)?

On 2 June 2109, the RAAF, in conjunction with the Queensland University Squadron Branch (QUSB) and other ex-Service and local organizations, will conduct the 11th Bomber Command Commemorative Service (BCCS) in the Memorial garden at RAAF Base Amberley outside Ipswich. This Service is one of many being conducted during June in other parts of Australia and globally to commemorate the deeds and sacrifice of those who served with RAF Bomber Command. The Service will start at 11:00 am and finish by 12:30 pm with guests to be seated by 10:30 am. Medals where appropriate are to be worn. Light refreshments will be served after the Service in the Combined Mess.

Why is the BCCS so special among all the other campaigns commemorated?

Until allied forces landed on the beaches of Normandy on 6 June 1944, the air war over Europe was the only way that allied forces could maintain a sustained attack from the West against the forces of Nazi Germany and its occupied countries to support other campaigns in the East, the South and at sea. In 1940 when Britain faced defeat, UK Prime Minister Winston Churchill saw future victory in his words, now seen on the Bomber Command Memorial in London *“the fighters are our salvation but the bombers alone provide the means of victory”*. The bombers were part of the final victory but at such a terrible cost to allied air force crews. RAF Bomber Command indeed paid a very high price.

What was the price paid and how does this relate to Australia?

The Bomber Command Commemorative Service acknowledges the deeds performed and the sacrifice made by the 55,000 airmen who were lost out of a force of 125,000 engaged on operations with RAF Bomber Command in the air war over Europe during 1939-1945. Of the 55,000 lost, 3,486 were from the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) lost on operations plus another 546 lost during training. Of the enormous numbers of decorations for bravery and service awarded to people in Bomber Command, 24 were the highest award of the Victoria Cross including two to RAAF aircrew.

Why attend the BCCS?

The US Pulitzer Prize winning writer Thornton Wilder captures evocatively the importance of commemorating sacrifice in his words *“All we know about those we have loved and lost is that they would wish us to remember them with a more intensified realization of their reality. What is essential does not die but clarifies. The highest tribute to the dead is not grief but gratitude”*. Attending the BCCS shows our gratitude to the valiant people who were RAF Bomber Command.

How can I or my organization attend?

As the BCCS is held in a secure area, of RAAF Base Amberley, registration to attend is mandatory. Please contact the following for information and/or to register for attendance no later than Monday 13 May 19:
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