

Dedication

I should like to dedicate this book to the memory of Geoff.

Also to over 55,500 other airmen from Britain, her Commonwealth and other lands who
gave their lives in Bomber Commands titanic struggle.

And to all the other servicemen and women of all nationalities and services who gave their
lives for us.

Thank you all for your faith and unselfish devotion to your duty.

INTRODUCTION

In a speech to parliament in July 1940 Winston Churchill said:

“This is no war of chieftains or of princes, of dynasties or national ambition; it is a War of peoples and of causes. There are vast numbers, not only in this island but in every land, who will render faithful service in this War, but whose names will never be known, whose deeds will never be recorded. This is a War of the Unknown Warriors; but let all strive without failing in faith or duty, and the dark curse of Hitler will be lifted from our age”.

This book sets out to tell the story of a family member. It would not be complete without inclusion of the crew that he flew with and others that they all served with. These men epitomise to me those that Sir Winston was talking about. The crew came from varied backgrounds and countries. Two came from England. Four more came across the globe from Australia and another one from New Zealand to fight for the cause. Who were these people?

My search really began in my Grandparents house more than forty years ago. That's when I first noticed the shiny brass picture frame in the shape of an ivy leaf. In it was a simple photo of a young mans smiling face. When I asked who he was, I was told he would have been my Uncle Geoff but that he had been killed in the war. When my Grandparents died the picture came to sit on our mantelpiece at home and I often asked my Dad about him and how he had died. Unfortunately, although he knew a lot about his life Dad couldn't fill in the missing details. He did however know that he was buried somewhere in France.

I felt I needed to know about this man whom I was named after. Research the service history that led to his death. Who were the crew that he flew with and what aircraft they had flown in? It was my personal search for this information that led me to the families of all of the crew and the details behind their untimely deaths.

Finally I was able to return to France with many relatives and friends. There, with the assistance and generosity of the French people we erected a memorial to these seven brave young men.