



Anzac Day 2026

Tribute to

Warrant Officer William Frank McLaren Dimmick OAM

Service No: 430913
No 460 Squadron, RAAF

11 March 1925 – 20 August 2013



ACT OF REMEMBRANCE

'I am the Resurrection and the Life', says the Lord; 'Those who believe in me, though they were dead, yet shall they live; and whosoever lives and believes in me shall never die.'

John chapter 11

Let us remember before God, and commend to his safe keeping, those who have died for their country in war; those whom we knew, and whose memory we treasure; and all who have lived and died in the service of our country and Commonwealth, and the peoples of the world.

They went with songs to the battle.
They were young, straight of limb, true of eye.
They were staunch to the end against odds uncounted:
they fell with their faces to the foe.

Laurence Binyon (1869-1943), For the Fallen

THE ODE

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old.
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun, and in the morning,
We will remember them: we will remember them.

Laurence Binyon (1869-1943), For the Fallen

A PRAYER FOR ANZAC DAY

O God, our ruler and guide, in whose hands are the destinies of this and every nation, we give you thanks for the freedoms we enjoy in this land and for those who laid down their lives to defend them: we pray that we and all the people of Australia, gratefully remembering their courage and their sacrifice, may have grace to live in a spirit of justice, of generosity, and of peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

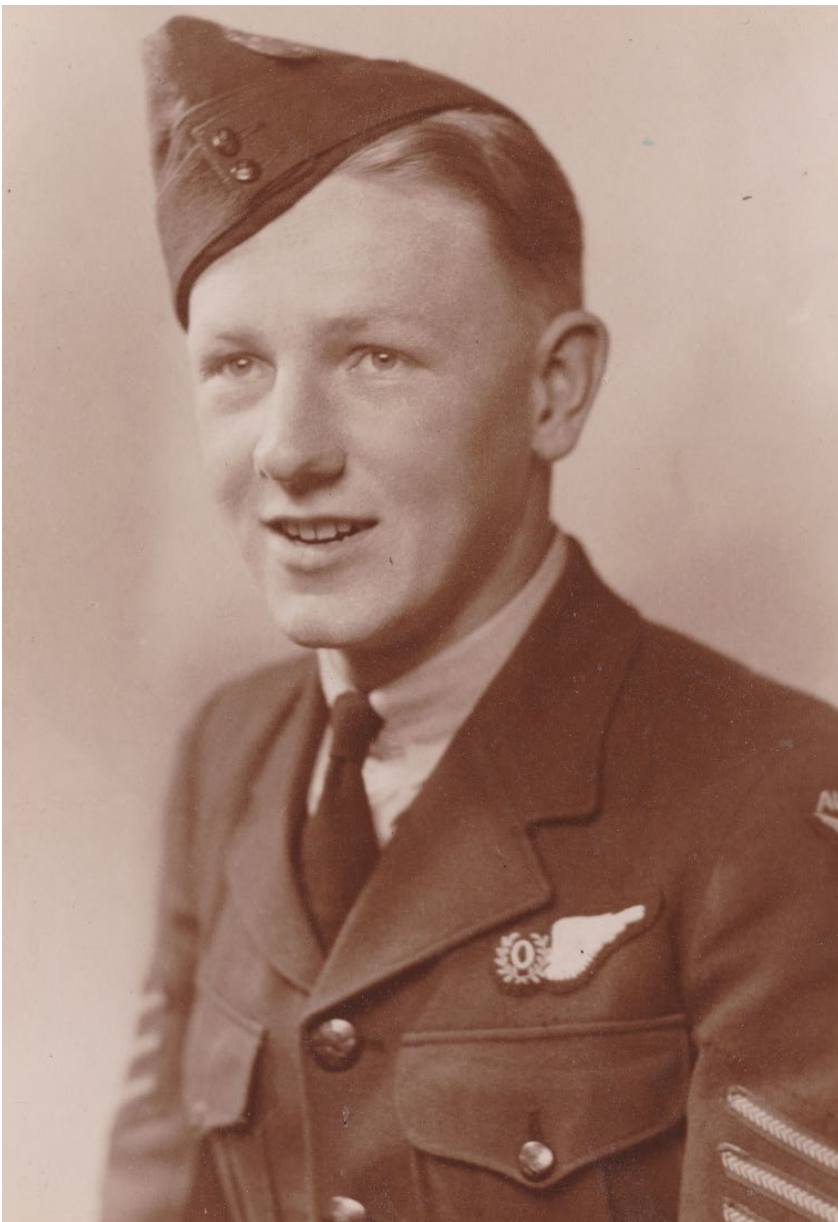
William Frank McLaren Dimmick Tribute

Warrant Officer William Frank McLaren Dimmick

No. 460 Squadron RAAF

Motto:

Strike and Return





Carey Cadet Corps Officers 1941

*provided by former Carey Grammarian Keith Webb
Gordon Webb, is in the second row fifth student
Frank Dimmick is in the third row third student*

Warrant Officer William Frank McLaren Dimmick was born in Camberwell on 11 March 1925, the second son of Roy and Myrtle Dimmick. Known to all as Frank, he had an older brother, Sam, and a younger brother, John, and they lived at 21 Victoria Avenue, Canterbury.



*Cr Roy Dimmick JP,
Mayor of Camberwell*

Following service in the 12th Field Ambulance in World War One, Roy Dimmick worked as a real estate agent. Roy was a Justice of the Peace, a Special Magistrate at the Box Hill Children's Court, and President of the Canterbury Cricket Club. He served as a councillor for the City of Camberwell from 1934 to 1947 and was elected Mayor of Camberwell in 1934 and 1935. Roy's community service is acknowledged and commemorated by the Dimmick Memorial Gateway at Surrey Gardens, built in 1950. Myrtle, originally from Sydney, was heavily involved in supporting the work of the Red Cross.



*Surrey Theatre
140 Union Road, Surrey Hills*

Jan and Sally Dimmick recollect:

Roy was great friends with Robert Menzies and John Curtin. He part-owned the Surrey Cinema in Union Road, and he asked Menzies to officially open it. Menzies and his wife, Patti, arrived, but Menzies informed Roy that he would have to open it at the beginning of the programme, and not at the interval, as he had to return to Canberra to make an announcement. He advised Roy to go home after the screening and listen to the wireless.

The family story was that John (Frank's younger brother) and Frank bought hot chips from the local fish and chip shop and shared them with Patti in the back of the car on the way home. When they got home and turned on the wireless, Menzies announced that Australia was at war – its first involvement in World War Two.

A postscript to this story occurred at Sam's memorial service in 1984 – 45 years later. Dame Patti Menzies attended and came over to speak to John. One of her comments was to remind John that she still remembered those chips in the back seat of the car.

Writer Alf Batchelder, in a eulogy-tribute to Frank Dimmick titled "No Ordinary Bloke" for the *Aerogram* magazine, drawing on material printed in the *Argus* newspaper and the writings of Stuart Sayers in *By Courage and Faith*, made these observations:



Urangeline House, 1943

Roy Dimmick's strong community involvement set a powerful example for his three sons. His influence on them was reinforced by their years at Carey Baptist Grammar School. Founded in 1923, the tone of the school was very much shaped by its headmaster, Harold George Steele, "an uncompromising Baptist believer" who urged his charges "to be truthful, or understanding, or kind, or courageous for the faith". Steele maintained that "spiritual issues were much more important than material success".

Determined "to cling to what has been proved effective in our educational system", Steele aimed to provide students "with a good general education for the life that awaits them" and to teach them, through sport, to "play the game".

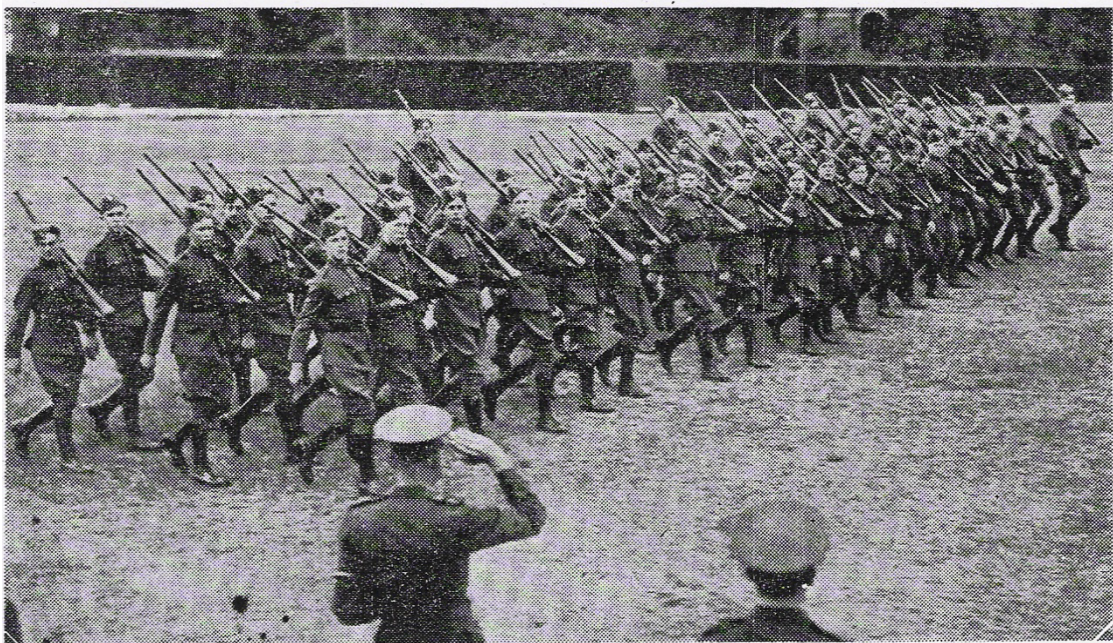
In doing so, Steele shared Roy Dimmick's view that every individual was duty-bound to lead a life "devoted to the service of their fellows". Steele's efforts were ably supported by teachers like the "redoubtable" Les Frewin, who left students with strong convictions about what was right and wrong.

During Frank's years at Carey, the school regularly established new records for enrolments and academic achievement. From an initial total of 68 students, Carey's numbers had expanded to more than 230 by 1940, the year in which 1935–36 dux Alan Treloar was awarded a Rhodes Scholarship.

Frank commenced his education at Carey in 1931, a few weeks before his sixth birthday. Plans for him to transfer to Scotch College never eventuated, thanks to Harold Steele's ongoing encouragement for the family to keep their sons at Carey.

During Frank's final years at Carey, the Second World War intruded heavily on school life, particularly after the German conquests of France and the Low Countries. Amid a rising turnover of staff, Carey instituted economies ranging from reducing scholarships to cutting costs on the school magazine. In preparation for petrol rationing, the use of private cars was reduced.

ARGUS, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 24, 1940.



FORMED ONLY IN FEBRUARY, Carey Grammar School senior cadet corps held its first official parade yesterday. The boys were inspected by Captain F. Fleming, of the General Staff, who took the salute at the march past.

A cadet corps had been established in 1939, and for the 65 boys who enrolled by the end of the year it was "an exciting new experience", though it was "still something of a game".

Nevertheless, by 1941, Frank had displayed the seriousness required to reach the rank of lance corporal. While parents and students contributed to Carey's War Savings Certificate Group, junior students, under the direction of Marien Metcalfe, became enthusiastic salvagers of everything from tins and paper to tyres and lawnmower parts.

November 1940.



ON THE PARADE-GROUND the cadets show precision in their marching drill.

Neville.

I can't find the photo that I spoke of the other day, but I am still trying. The attached photos may be of some interest - hope so.

Frank

The Ladies' Auxiliary and Patriotic Circle began knitting socks and other warm articles for the Red Cross and Australian Comforts Fund, while messages and Christmas parcels were sent to Old Boys serving in the forces. Even before Japanese attacks brought the war to Australian shores in 1942, fire-drill regulations were displayed throughout the school. Black-out preparations were made, and senior students attended lectures on air-raid precautions and extinguishing incendiary bombs.

Kew Council provided picks and shovels for parents, teachers and students to dig air-raid trenches between the Preparatory School and the tennis courts.

When Frank left Carey at the end of 1941, Harold Steele announced that more than a hundred Old Boys had enlisted, "a record of which we may well be proud, considering the shortness of the school's history".

While news about decorations awarded to Old Grammarians boosted this pride, the announcement of additions to the Roll of Honour made some Friday assemblies particularly poignant because, in such a small school community, senior boys like Frank, who had been at Carey for almost half of its history, would have been familiar with many of those who would not return.



Frank took part in the school's broad sporting programme but was not a leading sportsman. Apart from selection in the athletic team, he represented Carey in the Second Eighteen and Second Eleven but played for the Firsts in House Tennis. Though his academic results showed early promise, his performance in Leaving proved disappointing. In the University of Melbourne's 1940 Intermediate Certificate examinations, the fifteen-year-old obtained first-class passes in Arithmetic, Algebra, Geometry, Geography, History and Drawing, and passes in English and Commercial Principles and Practice. Apart from a failure in French, these results were commendable – and in stark contrast to his performance a year later.

At the Leaving examinations, held around the time that Japan launched its Pacific advances, Frank passed only in Drawing and Mathematics II. However, he secured a scholarship in commercial law from the Blennerhassett Institute of Accountancy, which boasted the “best obtainable” courses in Australia.



Frank's older brother, Samuel (Sam), after leaving Carey, worked for the Metropolitan Board of Works prior to the outbreak of World War Two. Sam then served part-time (1940–41) in the Australian Militia, then, having enlisted in the Royal Australian Naval Reserve on 27 June 1941, saw active service from 1943 to 1945 in the Pacific as a Leading Supply Assistant in HMAS Shropshire.

After the war, Sam returned to work in the Diplomatic Service as Cultural Attaché in Indonesia. Upon his return he entered academia at the University of Melbourne and co-founded International House, which has Dimmick Hall named in his honour. After leaving the University, Sam headed up the Land Conservation Council.



Royal Australian Air Force Trainees marching at Somers

Frank joined the volunteer Air Training Corps in 1942, becoming a member of No. 3 Squadron and rising to the rank of Corporal.

After leaving school, Frank immediately started working as a junior clerk at the Box Hill branch of the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney.

In February 1943, Frank submitted his application for air-crew. On his eighteenth birthday, he signed the oath to “well and truly serve our Sovereign Lord the King” as a member of the Air Force Reserve.

On 23 April, Frank enlisted at the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) No. 1 Recruiting Centre in Russell Street, Melbourne. Aircraftman Second Class Frank was immediately posted to No. 1 Initial Training School at Somers, near Western Port Bay. There, Frank was introduced over three months to Air Force discipline, learning how to march and, like all recruits, learning that there was the right way, the wrong way, and the Air Force way. Training was shaped by the Empire Air Training Scheme.

For the rest of the year, Frank undertook specialist training in Mount Gambier and flew as a navigator for the first time on 9 September, making a ninety-minute map-reading flight to Penola and Beachport. Towards the end of the year, he spent time at the Air Gunnery School at West Sale.

Alf Batchelder noted that a training manual from the time shows that the navigator was a highly responsible position:

“Mentally, the navigator must always be on the alert. They must estimate and plot the course, be able to take snap readings, and judge weather conditions. Above all, they must never make mistakes.”

In January 1944, Frank was sent to No. 1 Air Observers School at Evans Head, in northern New South Wales, and then returned to Melbourne, where he was posted to No. 1 Embarkation Depot, which was located at the Melbourne Cricket Ground and known as RAAF Ransford.

On 1 March, just days away from his nineteenth birthday, Frank boarded USAT Sea Corporal, bound for San Francisco and then service in the United Kingdom. On 7 April, he disembarked at Gourock in Scotland from the Queen Elizabeth.



Peter Mason (front left) and his crew, with Frank Dimmick second from the left in the back row

Following training in Scotland, on 3 October Frank was posted to No. 27 Operational Training Unit at Lichfield in Staffordshire. This marked the final transition from training to operations. At Lichfield, pilots, navigators, wireless operators, bomb-aimers and air gunners were, for the first time,

trained as a crew. Frank joined a crew led by Flight Sergeant Peter Mason from Sydney.

In March 1945, Frank and fellow members of Peter Mason's crew joined No. 460 Squadron. Frank served as a navigator in Lancaster bombers based at Royal Air Force Binbrook airfield in Lincolnshire.

The following month, Prime Minister John Curtin, travelling on a Lancaster bomber, visited the airfield where Frank had been posted.

Frank completed seven sorties over Germany and was present for the final bombing operation for 460 Squadron, which took place on the 30th anniversary of Australian troops landing at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915.

On that day, Frank was involved in a bombing raid targeting Nazi leadership residing at Berchtesgaden, a Bavarian town in south-eastern Germany. At 5 am on ANZAC Day, twenty Australian crews in Lancaster bombers departed Binbrook airfield and successfully struck the heavily defended mountain retreat of Obersalzberg, a series of chalets and mountain lodges belonging to the Nazi elite.

Bombs landed on Hitler's alpine lodge, the Berghof, the nearby military and security barracks of Hitler's personal bodyguards from the 1st SS Panzer Division "Leibstandarte SS Adolf Hitler", and the holiday dwellings of Hermann Göring, Martin Bormann and Albert Speer, and on what Nazi propaganda once referred to as Hitler's mountain retreat, the Eagle's Nest, a reception house which had been given to Hitler for his fiftieth birthday in 1938.

Frank's navigation skills meant that Peter Mason's Lancaster, serial number RF254, released its load of a 4,000-pound bomb, four 1,000-pounders, and single 500- and 250-pound bombs, scoring a direct hit on the SS compound.

The 4,000-pound bomb was designed as a blast bomb that did not bury itself in the ground. It was known to the crews as a "cookie".

For the return flight, Frank gave Peter Mason a course that took RF254 towards Belgium, and at 1328 hours the aircraft landed safely back at Binbrook.



Frank and others involved in the raid then participated in an ANZAC Day parade, with the knowledge that a 1,000-pounder had made the deep end of Göring's swimming pool just a little deeper.

The ANZAC Day raid on Berchtesgaden would be No. 460 Squadron's last bombing operational sortie (ops) of the war, but their ops service did not end there.

Date		Hour	Aircraft Type and No.	Pilot	Day	Reasons (including number of bombing sorties, exercises, etc.)	Day	Night	Time
Time covered forward: 215.55 100.15									
MAY 1			LANK. 8	P/O MASON	NAV.	SUPPLY DROPPING 1000' ROTWADEN	2.35		
.. 3			.. 8	P/O MASON	NAV.	SUPPLY DROPPING 1000' ROTWADEN	2.30		
.. 7			.. 8	P/O MASON	NAV.	SUPPLY DROPPING 1000' ROTWADEN	2.30		
.. 11			.. V	P/O MASON	NAV.	LANDED BRUSSELS	3.15		
.. 25			.. X	P/O MASON	NAV.	"Y" X/C ENGINE FAILURE	0.35		
.. 27			.. G	P/O MASON	NAV.	FORMATION FLYING	2.10		
.. 30			.. Y	P/O MASON	NAV.	"Y" X/C BOMBING	6.05		
SUMMARY FOR MAY 1945									
UNIT 460 SQR									
DATE 31.5.45									
SIGNATURE <i>Frank</i>									
O.C. B. FLIGHT <i>Frank</i>									
OPERATIONAL 9.55									
NON OPERATIONAL 10.35									
Total Time .. 217.00 107.00									
Time covered forward: 181.15 26.10									
460 SQUADRON SINBADOK									
MARCH 1830			Y	P/O MASON	X/C BOMBING	"Y" & "GER" X/C BOMBING 1000'	5.40		
.. 21 1000			J	P/O MASON	NAV.	P/O A/O FIRMS BOMBING 1000'	2.50		
.. 22 1500			K	P/O MASON	NAV.	"Y" X/C BOMBING 1000'	4.15		
.. 24 1300			C	P/O MASON	NAV.	P/O	6.00		
.. 26 1300			B	P/O MASON	NAV.	"Y" X/C BOMBING 1000' UNREP	3.40		
.. 27 1500			J	P/O MASON	NAV.	17000' PADERBORN 10000' UNREP	6.05		
.. 30 1300			D	P/O MASON	NAV.	"Y" X/C BOMBING	3.05		
SUMMARY FOR MARCH 1945									
UNIT 460 SQR									
DATE 31.3.45									
SIGNATURE <i>Frank</i>									
O.C. B. FLIGHT									
OPERATIONAL 5.05									
NON OPERATIONAL 10.25 6.5.0									
Total Time .. 215.55 100.15									

Frank's Logbook entries outlining his involvement in both the bombing of Berchtesgaden and Operation Manna



Two more peaceful operations followed:

Operation Manna, a food-lift to the stricken and starving civilians in the densely populated urban areas bounded by Amsterdam, Utrecht, Rotterdam and The Hague, and

Operation Exodus, the evacuation of Allied prisoners of war from Germany.

In January 1945, Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands called upon Allied leaders to save western Holland from starvation. From 29 April 1945 until their largest drop on 7 May 1945, Frank and other Australian crews assisted with

several ops to drop food to the starving Dutch. The British poetically named this operational sortie "Operation Manna", in reference to God providing "food from heaven" mentioned in the Exodus story in the Bible.

Frank and other Australian crew members assisted in dropping over 340,000 kilograms of food to starving Dutch civilians, and the squadron flew 118 sorties in this humanitarian operational sortie just days after completing their final ops bombing raid of World War Two.

According to Rupert Guinness's book *The Flying Grocer* and other sources consulted by Alf Batchelder,

"Frank and his 460 Squadron colleagues found their role in Operation Manna was immeasurably satisfying, for it was a rare privilege ... to end the war saving lives rather than destroying them."

After Lancaster RF254 took off at 1410 hours, loaded with four blocks of 230 bags of supplies, Frank plotted a course across the North Sea to Rotterdam. For the second half of the flight, the cloud base was as low as 1,000 feet, but the Lancasters came in at 500 feet. Once over Holland, the

airmen were stunned by the devastation beneath them: the flooded fields and towns, the absence of crops and livestock, and the desperate sight of thousands of starving Dutch rushing out from their houses.

In addition, the flight possessed an edge of tension, as the Germans remained suspicious, even placing anti-aircraft guns at each designated drop-zone. While the bombers flew so low that crews could see “the happiness and relief on the faces of the starving Dutch”, they could also discern “the expressions of anxiety, suspicion and fear amongst the German troops who stood ready in case the Lancasters dropped bombs or released gunfire from their turrets. And the suspicion was mutual ...”.



After Frank and the crew of RF254 took part in similar operations on 3 and 7 May, the war in Europe ended on 8 May. For young men freed from the perils of war, the end of hostilities justifiably brought an enormous outburst of merriment and drinking. At Binbrook, the 460 messes were filled with what has been mildly described as “laughter and chatter”. A pyrotechnic display, in which a car was set on fire and the fire brigade’s hose cut, suggests that the celebrations were boisterous and unrestrained.

Following a day’s recovery, an important duty awaited 460’s crews. After World War I, it had taken nearly two months to repatriate all prisoners of war. Now, with 75,000 British servicemen leaving German camps, the RAF

offered its Lancasters to hasten the process. On 10–11 May, aircraft from 460 Squadron flew to Brussels, packing each Lancaster's tight spaces with 24 liberated prisoners. According to his logbook, Temporary Warrant Officer Frank Dimmick landed in Brussels on 11 May, but the Unit History does not record the involvement of the Mason crew in the repatriation flights. Possibly, they were aboard the aircraft that "had a taxiing accident ... and had to be left overnight for servicing".

Once Germany surrendered, Frank and many fellow Australian crew members immediately volunteered for Tiger Force, to join twenty-two Bomber Command squadrons preparing to fly to Okinawa for the war against Japan. Fortunately, the war in the Pacific ended while Frank was still in the United Kingdom.

According to Alf Batchelder,

"Early in 1946, Dimmick's return home was slightly delayed when about 400 airmen, calling themselves the 'Blokes from Belsen', marched off HMT Orion at Southampton in protest over 'atrocious conditions'. They demanded 'decent accommodation' instead of having to 'eat, sleep and live herded like cattle for nearly a month'." After the situation was resolved, Frank, as a twenty-year-old, disembarked in Melbourne on 2 February 1946. He was posted to No. 1 Personnel Depot at the Melbourne Cricket Ground, where he was discharged with effect from 21 April. On 5 May, he was promoted to the rank of Warrant Officer.

No. 460 Squadron flew the greatest number of sorties of any Australian bomber squadron in World War Two and dropped the highest tonnage of bombs of all Bomber Command squadrons. The squadron suffered over 1,000 casualties, around 200 taken prisoner, and the loss of over 180 aircraft.



Frank married Janet Colclough at St. John's, Toorak, on December 7, 1949

Upon his return, Frank studied law at the University of Melbourne, where he met Jan Colclough at a student dinner. Jan was studying Architecture and later became his wife. They had three children (Guy, Sally and Sue) and three grandchildren (Alistair, Annabelle and Charles), with one attending Carey.

Frank was a solicitor for over 50 years with one of the oldest firms in Australia and was made an Honorary Life Member of the Melbourne University Law Society.

Beyond work, Frank involved himself in the care of veterans, serving as President of the Air Force Club, Secretary and President of 460 Squadron, and President, Secretary and Treasurer of RAAF Europe, an umbrella organisation for all ex-Allied World War Two air force personnel.

Air Vice-Marshal Peter Scully recognised Frank's commitment to veterans with these words in a letter to both Frank and Jan:

"It is 30 years since I met you both and I soon came to realise how passionate Frank was about



RAAF Europe, an event which preceded my knowledge by many years. The annual RAAF Europe dinner was a unique commemoration and the list of annual speakers was absolutely extraordinary. Frank was the driving force and his passionate dedication to the veterans was commendable. The work involved was demanding and I know the family provided enthusiastic support."

In June 2009, Frank was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in recognition of his work in caring for veterans and was the instigator of the building of a memorial at the Somers Children's Camp in memory of those who trained there with the RAAF during World War Two.

Frank was also a member of the Melbourne Cricket Club for 74 years and was a tour guide there for 16 of those years. He was a passionate supporter of the Melbourne Football Club and the Victorian Cricket Team. Indeed, he had an elegant and simple cure for the ills that have affected the Australian team over the years: remove the New South Welshmen and replace them with Victorians. He was also a member of the RACV Club and the RSL and Services Club for over 58 years.

Frank was a keen golfer and tennis player and, for many years, a member of the Sorrento Sailing Club, where he crewed in a Jubilee skippered by his cousin David Long, with whom he won the Huntingdon Cup and came second in the Australian Jubilee Championships.

Jan and Sally Dimmick on the Manna drops:

Years later, when Frank was visiting his daughter Sue, who was living in Holland, locals learnt that Frank had been involved in the drops and hugged him. News spread, and many strangers in the area would randomly hug him if they saw him and thank him. In Melbourne, the Ambassador's wife told Frank that the drops had saved her brother's life, as he needed specific medication and food.

Frank entered eternity on 20 August 2013.

Animo et Fide
Lest we forget



Warrant Officer
William Frank McLaren Dimmick
No. 460 Squadron RAAF
Motto
Strike and Return





Carey Cadet Corps Officers 1941

*Standing (back): L/Cpl. Grigg, L/Cpl. Ratcliff, **L/Cpl. Dimmick***

Standing (centre): L/Cpl. Hodgetts, Cpl. Wilcox, Cpl. Piesse, Cpl. N. Gadsden, Cpl. Webb, L/Cpl. Bird, L/Cpl. Reynolds, Cpl. Martin, L/Cpl. Gutch, L/Cpl. Weller

Sitting: Cpl. Bevan, Sgt. Hudson, C/Lieut. Williamson, Lieut. Bennett (O.C.), C.Q.M.S. Robertson, Sgt. McLaren, Sgt. Mercy

Tribute provided by

Jan Dimmick (née Colclough), Sally Dimmick and Scott Bramley

Additional information sourced from

Alfred Batchelder, Melbourne Cricket Club historian

Gavan Burn, Carey Roll of Honour

Lachlan Grant, historian in the Military History Section of the Australian War Memorial

Janenne Moffatt, 460 Squadron Association

David Morgan, interview with Frank Dimmick

Dianne Rutherford, *Food from Heaven – 460 Squadron and Operation Manna, 1945*

Keith Webb, Carey Baptist Grammarian

Helen Wolff, Carey Baptist Grammar School Archivist

Images courtesy of Jan and Sally Dimmick, Keith Webb, Carey Archives, State Library Victoria and the Australian War Memorial,

A note of thanks to Katrine Bramley for assisting with the layout of this tribute.