



# *Memorial Service for*

**The Crew of**

# **BEAUFORT A9-186**

**No 100 Squadron  
Royal Australian Air Force**

*Warrant Officer Russell Henry Grigg (405284)*

*Warrant Officer Clement Batstone Wiggins (405335)*

*Flight Sergeant Albert Beckett (408343)*

*Flight Sergeant Gordon Lewis Hamilton (414022)*

## **26 APRIL 2024**

**RAAF Amberley, Queensland**



# WELCOME

## GATHERING IN GOD'S NAME

Grace and peace from the Lord be with you all.

We have come together to thank God for the lives of Russell Henry Grigg, Clement Batstone Wiggins, Albert Beckett and Gordon Lewis Hamilton, to mourn and honour them, to lay to rest the mortal remains of Russell and Clement with others who have died far from home, and to support with our love and prayers those who for many years have been burdened with sadness and uncertainty because they did not know where their loved ones lay.

We are reminded at this time of the certainty of our own death and judgment. Yet Christians are comforted by their belief that those who die in Christ share eternal life with him.

Therefore, in faith and hope, we can turn to God who created and sustains us all.



# THE STORY OF BEAUFORT A9-186

## SERVICE HISTORIES

Warrant Officer Russell Henry Grigg

Warrant Officer Clement Batstone Wiggins

Flight Sergeant Albert Beckett

Flight Sergeant Gordon Lewis Hamilton

## FAMILY REFLECTIONS

*The families of*

Russell Henry Grigg

Clement Batstone Wiggins

Albert Beckett

Gordon Lewis Hamilton



## A READING FROM MARK 10:42-45

So Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers in this world lord it over their people, and officials flaunt their authority over those under them. But among you it will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you must be the slave of everyone else. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many."

## ADDRESS

## THE PRAYERS

### Psalm 23

The LORD is my shepherd,  
therefore can I lack nothing.  
He shall make me lie down in green pastures;  
and lead me beside still waters.  
He shall refresh my soul:  
and guide me in right pathways for his name's sake.  
Though I walk through the valley  
of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil;  
for you are with me;  
your rod and your staff comfort me.  
You spread a table before me  
in the presence of those who trouble me;  
you have anointed my head with oil  
and my cup will be full.  
Surely your goodness and mercy will follow me  
all the days of my life:  
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever.



Loving God, we thank you that you have made each of us in your own image, and given us gifts and talents with which to serve you. We thank you for the lives of  
Russell, Clement, Albert and Gordon.

Now give us strength and courage to leave them in your care, confident in your promise of eternal life, to all those who love you.

Merciful God, we pray especially for the families of these men. They have suffered long years of anguish and uncertainty, and the pain of uncompleted grief. Be near to them now and always and give to them the peace that you alone can give.

May this service today bring them great comfort and closure.

Casting all their cares on you, may they know the consolation of your love;  
through Jesus Christ the risen Lord.

*Amen.*

## THE MILITARY FAREWELL

### 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.

*(All) We will remember them.*

### Lest We Forget

### The Last Post

### Minute's Silence

### Rouse



# THE COMMITTAL

## Psalm 103

You, O Lord, are compassionate and gracious,  
slow to anger and abounding in love.

As a father has compassion on his children,  
so you have compassion on those who fear you;  
for you know how we are formed,  
you remember that we are dust.

Our days are like the grass,  
we flourish like a flower of the field;  
when the wind blows over it, it is gone,  
and its place remembers it no more.

But your loving kindness, O Lord,  
endures for ever and ever on those that fear you;  
And your righteousness on their children's children.

## Prayer of Committal

Almighty God, our heavenly Father,  
you have given us a sure and certain hope  
of the resurrection to eternal life.

In your keeping are all who have departed in Christ.

We here commit Russell Henry Grigg and Clement Batstone Wiggins  
to your safekeeping, as we begin the journey to lay them to rest, and likewise  
we commit the loving memories of Albert Beckett and Gordon Lewis Hamilton  
to your loving care in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, who died, and was  
buried, and rose again, and who shall change mortal bodies that they  
may be like his glorious body.



## **The Lord's Prayer**

Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy Name,  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory  
for ever and ever.  
*Amen.*

## **Flag Presentation to Families**

# **THE BLESSING AND DISMISSAL**

God of truth and love,  
give us wisdom and grace  
To use aright the time that is left to us.  
While we have opportunity, lead us to repent of our sins,  
And to do what we have left undone.  
Strengthen us to follow in the steps of Jesus,  
Along the pilgrim way to your eternal kingdom;  
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
*Amen.*

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God,  
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all.  
*Amen.*

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# BEAUFORT A9-186

Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) Beaufort A9-186 was relocated nearly 79 years after it went missing during an attack on Japanese targets in the Gasmata area of New Britain in the Australian territory of New Guinea.

The aircraft, from the RAAF's No 100 Squadron, went missing on an operation on 5 September 1943, while engaged on a mission to bomb Gasmata airfield. Japanese ground fire against the raid was heavy and accurate that day, with three of the 10 attacking aircraft shot down over the target, and another lost upon its return to base. A9-186 was last seen on fire during its attack run, and was believed by the other crews to have crashed into the sea.

No 100 Squadron Beauforts operated from Gurney Field at Milne Bay, New Guinea, at this time. They were used for maritime patrols, bombing raids and torpedo attacks against enemy shipping, with missions against targets on the island of New Britain common. No 100 Squadron was the first RAAF squadron to operate the Beaufort, and did so with distinction throughout the war.

The wreckage of A9-186 was found in 43 metres of water, 1.4 kilometres southwest of Gasmata airfield in 2020, and was positively identified following investigations undertaken in 2022.



*A Beaufort bomber in flight  
(Image: Department of Defence)*



## WARRANT OFFICER RUSSELL HENRY GRIGG

Warrant Officer Russell Henry Grigg (405284) was born in Brisbane, Queensland (Qld), on 25 May 1909. He attended Taringa State School from 1921–3, Brisbane Boys Grammar from 1923–5, and achieved his Junior Public Certificate in November 1925. Warrant Officer Grigg also attended Queensland Agricultural College from 1926–8 and achieved a Diploma of Agriculture in December 1928.

Warrant Officer Grigg's previous service included a two-year period with the Mobile Veterinary Corps (1927–8) and he also attended The University of Queensland in 1929 for a short term. In 1933, he married Christian Marguerite Copeman (born on 7 November 1910). Their son John Copeman was born on 25 May 1934 and their daughter Mary Louisa was born on 18 June 1936.



*Image: Mary Peden*

On 28 August 1940, he enrolled in the RAAF Reserve in Brisbane and was farming at Wamuran on the Kilcoy Line, Qld, at which time he was a successful fruit grower and tractor-ploughing contractor, and very active in local community affairs.

Warrant Officer Grigg enlisted in the RAAF on 2 March 1941 as aircrew trainee at No 3 Recruiting Centre Brisbane, qualifying as a Navigator in November 1941. His third child, a son (Frank William) was born on 5 July 1941. Warrant Officer Grigg trained at Bomb and Gunner School at Evans Head in New South Wales from August to October 1941. He returned there in December 1941 until August 1942, at which time he was posted to No 22 Squadron, flying Boston aircraft in Port Moresby. After completing Beaufort conversion training in June 1943, he was posted to No 100 Squadron at Gurney Field, Milne Bay, on 15 June 1943. Warrant Officer Grigg was listed as 'Missing in Operations believed killed' on 5 September 1943, aged 34.

*If we win this war then my little sacrifice  
will be nought with the thousands of others  
and it will have been worth while for the  
youngsters sake & this lovely country of ours.  
I'm afraid most of us have failed to appreciate  
its beauty and freedom & have just wanted to  
bleed & destroy it for our own petty gains.*

*Let us hope that victory will mean a clearer  
sense of duty & appreciation so that we can  
become great.*

Warrant Officer Grigg composed the following shortly before his final mission:

*"If we win this war then my little sacrifice will  
be nought with the thousands of others and it will  
have been worth while for the youngsters sake &  
this lovely country of ours. I'm afraid most of us  
have failed to appreciate its beauty and freedom &  
have just wanted to bleed & destroy it for our own  
petty gains. Let us hope that victory will mean a  
clearer sense of duty & appreciation so that we can  
become great."*



## WARRANT OFFICER CLEMENT BATSTONE WIGGINS

Warrant Officer Clement (Clem) Batstone Wiggins (405335) was born on 29 March 1915 in Gatton, Qld. He attended the Lockyer High School and Technical College from February 1928 to February 1933, and Queensland Agricultural High School and College in Lawes, Qld, from February 1933 to December 1934.

He then attended the Teachers Training College in Brisbane, Qld, between May and December 1935, before gaining employment as a schoolteacher at Murgon State School. Warrant Officer Wiggins's educational achievements were a Junior Public Certificate (November 1933), Senior Public Service and supplementary examination (February 1933), a Diploma in Agriculture and, finally, Class 3 Teacher, Department of Public Instruction.



*Image: Virtual War  
Memorial Australia*

Before his enlistment, he enrolled in the RAAF Reserve on 20 July 1940 in Brisbane, and enlisted in the RAAF at No 3 Recruiting Centre Brisbane as Trainee Pilot on 2 March 1941. He was awarded his Flying Badge on 19 September 1941. His flying duties included postings to Nos 7 and 6 Squadrons and No 1 Aircraft Depot. After completing Beaufort aircraft training in early 1943, he was posted to No 100 Squadron at Gurney Field, Milne Bay, on 15 June 1943.

Prior to this posting, he married Colina Ailsa Louisa McNaughton, a Corporal Driver in the Australian Women's Army Service, in May 1943. Warrant Officer Wiggins was listed as 'Missing believed killed' on 5 September 1943, aged 28.



## FLIGHT SERGEANT ALBERT BECKETT

Flight Sergeant Albert 'Bert' Beckett (408343) was born on 3 April 1921 in Launceston, Tasmania. He attended the Wellington State School in Launceston from 1927–34, and Launceston State High School from 1935–7. After school, he was employed as a Builder's Apprentice (Carpenter) in Launceston. He enrolled in the RAAF Reserve on 23 June 1941 at No 6 Recruiting Centre Hobart.

Flight Sergeant Beckett enlisted in the permanent RAAF on 6 November 1941 at Hobart as an Aircrew Trainee, and qualified as a Wireless Air Gunner on 20 August 1942, having received his Wireless Badge on 20 July 1942.

He was posted to No 100 Squadron at Gurney Field, Milne Bay, on 15 June 1943 and was listed as 'Missing believed killed' on 5 September 1943, aged 22.



*Image: Cheryl Griffin*

## FLIGHT SERGEANT GORDON LEWIS HAMILTON

Flight Sergeant Gordon Lewis Hamilton (414022) was born on 25 July 1917 in Brisbane, Qld. He attended Caboolture State School from 1928–32 and Boys Grammar School Brisbane from 1933–4, achieving his Junior Public Certificate in November 1934. After school, he was employed as a Baker's Assistant as well as a Transport Driver's Assistant. Prior to enlistment, he enrolled in the RAAF Reserve on 18 January 1941 at Cleveland, Qld, where he was residing.



*Image: Redland Museum Inc.*

He enlisted in the RAAF as Aircrew trainee on 20 July 1941 at No 3 Recruiting Centre Brisbane. He qualified as Wireless Operator and Air Gunner on 30 April 1942, having received his Wireless Operator Badge on 1 April 1942. On completion of Beaufort conversion, he was posted to No 100 Squadron at Gurney Field, Milne Bay, on 15 June 1943, and was listed as 'Missing in Operations believed killed' on 5 September 1943, aged 26.



*In Memory of*

**THE CREW OF  
BEAUFORT A9-186**

**No 100 Squadron  
Royal Australian Air Force**



**Warrant Officer  
Russell Henry Grigg**



**Warrant Officer  
Clement Batstone Wiggins**



**Flight Sergeant  
Albert Beckett**



**Flight Sergeant  
Gordon Lewis Hamilton**