

**Flt/Lt Michael Dormer (Don ) DELANEY. MID** info as at 23 August 2003.

**13 January 1909 to 9 October 1993**

**4<sup>th</sup> son of Michael Walter and Ophelia Teresa POTOKY**

**Grandson of John and Eleanor McDERMOTT and of Francis Potoky and Harriet Eade**

**Great Grandson of Denis Delaney and Judith Dormer**

Born in Newtown, Wellington, New Zealand he came to Australia at 3 years of age in 1912 with his mother, 2 brothers and 3 sisters and settled in Botany later moving to Bexley.

He worked as a glazier initially and later as a motor mechanic.

He played Rugby Union and was a member of the St. George First Grade Team and was also very active in Musical and Theatrical societies, as was Alice Veronica and that is how they met.

**Don and Alice Veronica LEONARD** married on 12 January 1934 after caring for his mother for many years - it seems Ophelia and husband Michael separated in New Zealand about 1912.

Don and Alice were together for 59 years and Don died just a few days before the birth of their first Great-Grandson and just 3 months short of their 60<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary.

At the time of writing there are 8 Grand-children and 4 great-great grandchildren.

**Alice Veronica's** story is told in the LEONARD saga and also in her own memoirs now being edited.

## **World War 2**

When war broke out Don enlisted in the Air Force in 1939 and was posted to Canada for training and then on to Britain where he rose to the rank of Flight Lieutenant as a Flight Engineer and Flying Officer and belonged to a number of squadrons including 156, 460.

He was a member of the Pathfinder Force which comprised the best possible crews to lead bombing raids over Germany and other Axis targets.

Aside from being the first Australian commissioned as a Flight Engineer he became Flight Engineer Leader during his tours over Germany.

His story is told in part in the book, "With the Stars Above", by Dr. Robert Nielsen.

After the war he was posted to the Governor-Generals Flight - a post held by HRH Prince Henry, the Duke of Gloucester at that time.

Father and mother have kept in touch with the Gloucesters and as late as 1998 on a visit to UK Roger and Lynette visited the Duchess, Princess Alice, at Kensington Palace, having previously been guests of the Princess at the Trooping of the Colour in 1993.

Don also served at War Crime Trials in Europe, in the repatriation of prisoners of war and at the Research and Development unit at the Rocket Range Woomerah.

## **Post war**

From 1948 to 1959 he was for most part Chief Engineer with Pan American Airways and was stationed at Sydney, Fiji and Canton Island.

In 1965 he finished a round the world trip in the last Lancaster to fly back to Britain. Having flown to Sydney via USA in 1943 he was now completing the journey 22 years later. This journey is well documented in "The Last Lanc" written by Patrick Kilvington, a very renowned equine painter and author now deceased.

He has also given a lecture to The Aircraft Historical Society and was a past president of the Pathfinder Force Association. Just recently the John Curtin Library obtained permission to utilize part of his speech and photos during flights with the PM and Mrs Curtin during WW2.

There are many references to father in a new book "Pathfinder in the Air and on the Ground - the story of Wing Commander Peter Isaacson DFC" by Denis Warner.