Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE0147

Pearson, Joan Daphne Mary

(1911 - 2000)

Born	19110526, Christchurch Hampshire England
Died	20000725
Occupation	Horticulturalist, Photographer, Researcher

Summary

Pearson was the first women in Britain to be decorated (received the George Cross) for saving a pilot from a burning plane.

Details

Born: 26 May 1911. Died: 25 July 2000.
In 1939 Pearson joined the Women's Auxiliary Air Force. It was while stationed at an RAF Bomber Command at Detling Kent, in 1940 as a radio operator, that she noticed an engine on an aircraft was "coughing" as it approached the landing strip. The aircraft, which had a full bomb load, crashed and Pearson helped rescue the crew, covering the pilot with her own body, when the first of the bombs exploded. After the war she worked as a civil servant for ten years and then as an assistant with the Royal Botanic Gardens UK for three years.
Pearson came to Australia, in 1959, on the inaugural flight of the Comet IV from Heathrow to Darwin. She worked as a horticulturist, first with the Department of Agriculture in Victoria and from 1968 to 1976 the Commonwealth Department of Transport.
Pearson was a member of the Victoria Cross and George Cross Association (London), Australian Red Cross Society (Victorian Division), Women's Royal Air Force Officers Association (UK), she was a Life Member of the Royal Air Force Association (UK) and Honorary Life Member of the Returned Services League (RSL), Royal Air Force Club (UK) and the British Legion (UK).
Her interests included: gardening, writing and reading.

Published resources

Newspaper Article
Daphne Pearson Heroine, Telegraph, 2000

Resource
Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Archival resources

State Library of Victoria
Papers, 1962-1970. [manuscript].

Papers, ca. 1958-1980. [manuscript].

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