SITREP

AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION NSW - NEWS AND VIEWS

I Banged Out Over Canberra

Introduction by Ian "Muldy" Muldoon

This account by SQNLDR Doug Johnston first appeared in the RAAF Base Williamtown magazine MIRAGE - September 1966. In it Doug demonstrates professionalism, discipline, foresight and skills when, on 29/7/66 at 4000 feet, he ejected successfully from the infamous A3-28 Mirage. He reminds us, inter alia, of the many factors that were instrumental in his successful ejection and return home, including LAC John Harris, Safety Equipment Worker, who serviced the parachute, LAC Bob Smith, Armament Fitter, who serviced the ejection seat, Mr Baker of course, and Athol Jory, helicopter pilot, who lifted him from his landing site, and No 34 Squadron, who Dakota'd him back to Williamtown. To understand the adjective 'infamous', consider that on 27th January 1966, FLTLT Dick Waterfield landed A3-28 on its wheel rims after the main tyres had blown on take-off. Here is SQNLDR Johnston's account of his ejection on the 29th July 1966 almost precisely six months later.

I was authorised to ferry Mirage A3-28 from Williamtown at 1030am and carried out an afterburner climb to 38,000 feet and set course for Avalon on cruise power. I was cleared through Sydney radar and then passed Goulburn on course. Shortly before reaching Canberra, I heard a grinding noise behind me, which lasted for about a second. This occurred at 11.04 am, My instruments indicated that a main failure had occurred, and numerous warning lights were illuminated.

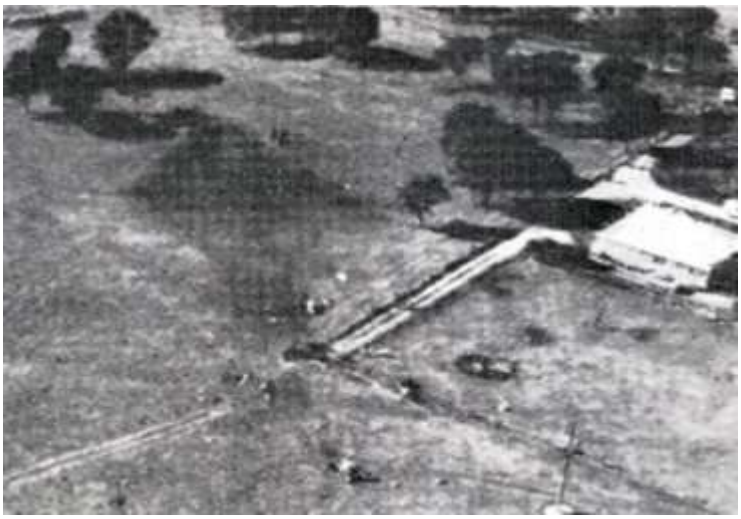
At this stage I set the aircraft upon a glide at 300 knots and turned towards Fairbairn airfield at Canberra. I declared a "MAYDAY" situation and closed the engine throttle. At 24,000 feet, I carried out my emergency drills and pushed the engine relight switch. I moved the throttle forward but there was no response. I then obtained landing conditions at Fairbairn, and at 18,000 feet I again attempted to relight, but without success. I then decided that the engine had seized and I positioned myself at 14,400 feet for a forced landing at Fairbairn. Shortly after passing overhead, I selected undercarriage down by the normal method, and then by the emergency method, but my instruments showed that the wheels had not gone down. At this stage an Iroquois helicopter from Fairbairn contacted me by radio, and I asked the pilot if he could see the condition of my wheels. However, he was not in a position to check them, so I continued my descent and checked my emergency systems.

I was in a good position for my forced landing at 6000 feet but, unfortunately, my undercarriage would not go down. As I was now only 4000 feet above ground level, I called the chopper and I said I was going to point the aircraft towards the uninhabited hills to the east and eject because it is impossible to safely belly-land a Mirage. I turned right about 30 degrees, pulled the nose up slightly, pulled my feet back and pulled the blind with both hands. At this stage my indicated height was just over 4000 feet. There was a short delay after I pulled the blind, then I heard the canopy go and then there was a loud explosion and the biggest kick in the tail I had ever experienced. I let go and had the sensation of tumbling once before I felt the pull of the parachute harness on my shoulders. I looked down at the ground and estimated I was 800 to 1000 above it. I then looked over my right shoulder and noticed the aircraft slightly below me going away in a

safe direction. Then, to my alarm, the Mirage began to bank slowly to the right so that it seemed to be heading towards the only house in the area! I then looked down and saw two sets of power lines and a railway line in the area where I thought I would land. I had another quick look at the aircraft and saw that it was going to crash quite close to the house. I then had to quickly pull up about four handsfull of the left hand risers to clear the power lines, and again looked for the aircraft which had just crashed.

I was extremely relieved to see that it appeared to have missed the house and I immediately hoped that no was hurt. In the photo below the dark area in the centre background is the crash site. To the right is the homestead of Mr and Mrs Morrison.

I next remember hitting the ground fairly untidily, collapsing the chute and I then disengaged myself from the parachute harness. I looked at my watch and noticed that everything that had happened since that emergency had all taken place within two minutes. I remember thinking that I had lost an aircraft worth $2,000,000 in two minutes, and everything else seemed to be unreal. I knew I was thankful to be alive, and I kept hoping that no one was injured when the aircraft crashed.



I lit up a Peter Stuyvesant to steady my nerves and I noticed that two helicopters were close by and that one of them was coming in to land. This helicopter, flown by FLTLT Athol Jory, flew me across to the scene of the crash, and I was happy that the house appeared undamaged. We then proceeded to RAAF Base Fairbairn, where I was admitted to the hospital for a routine check. Later in the afternoon, a Dakota aircraft from 34 SQN flew me back to Williamtown, where we landed at 4.20pm. Looking back on that event, I shudder to think of all the things that could have gone wrong. I can only be thankful that everything turned out the way it did, and that no one was injured. Here (left) I happily am wearing the tie Mr Baker awarded me.

I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation to all members of RAAF Base Fairbairn who helped me on this eventful day. And, of course, I cannot speak too highly of LAC John Harris, Safety Equipment Worker, and LAC Bob Smith, Armament Fitter, both of No 481 (M) Sqn, who serviced the ejection seat of Mirage A3-28. I would also like to extend to Mr and Mrs Morrison my sincerest regrets for any inconvenience or upset caused to them by the aircraft crashing near their home.

Fatal Accident On Butterworth Runway, 06 July 1976

By Jim Hall

I was having a clean-out on my computer recently and I came across a couple of photos of the accident at Butterworth when one Mirage landed on another, back on 06 July 1976...40 years ago exactly.

At the time I was a Herc Flight Engineer on C-130As at 36 Squadron and we were on a regular Butterworth supply run, which on the day meant Darwin - Tengah (RSAF Fighter Base in Singapore) - Butterworth. We were taxiing at Tengah for Butterworth when the runway at Butterworth was declared 'black' ie. closed, so we taxied back and shut down. Sometime later we were given clearance to proceed to Butterworth and land over the wreckage, which was basically in the centre of the ideal landing area of the runway (RWY 18). The remaining available runway was ample for a C-130. Here is what I know and I have attached a couple of pictures (hitherto unpublished) that I took as we landed over the top of the wreckage.

The following is an attempt to inform and perhaps clear-up any misconceptions on what happened on that tragic day. There were plenty of rumours and half-truths - and as it worked out, these were surprisingly accurate. I asked around and I had a fair knowledge of what may have happened when the Aviation Safety magazine *SPOTLIGHT* of 02/2014 (page 18) turned up from one of our members, Jason Hall (also my son), which carried the full report. This then made my task much easier - and more accurate, which is paramount.

It appears one Mirage was doing circuits interspersed with *'touch and go*'s and *'go-arounds'* as the pilot had been on leave and he was doing some refresher time. That was A3-64 (from 75 Squadron), piloted by Flt Lt Paul Kaye and he was on finals when the pilot of A3-26, Flt Lt Perry Kelly (3 Squadron), was given clearance by the tower to enter the runway. Subsequently the one on finals landed on the Mirage on the runway.

The Mirage, having a delta wing with no leading edge or trailing edge flaps, had a very high *Angle of Attack* (Incidence) on landing and pilot forward vision, although good, was not ideal - to the extent there was an indicator in the cockpit reflecting the *Angle of Incidence* of the aircraft by a series of lights. I understand A3-26 was on another test flight after numerous post-E Servicing test flights. It was in the process of being transferred from 75 Squadron to 3 Squadron.

I was fortunate to get the following comments and observations from Bruce Grayson, one of our Association members and an ex-CO of 3 Squadron at Butterworth (March 1977-July 1979), so I present them without alteration:

"Aircraft accidents rarely result from a single causal factor and this accident is no exception. There are several factors involved here; any of which, if eliminated, could easily have influenced the result.

1. The pilots were on different radio frequencies - one on tower frequency and the other on GCA (Ground Controlled Approach) frequency. This is a standard, normal, necessary procedure but does mean that one cannot hear the instructions being given to the other.

2. The departing aircraft, because of the ground tests required before take-off, had entered the runway from the ORP (Operational Readiness Platform) which placed him further down the runway than usual and was positioned within the 'normal Mirage touchdown zone', i.e. 500 ft down the runway.

3. The 'normal touchdown zone' was contaminated with black rubber deposits - the result of many years of aircraft landings. When combined with the dark Mirage camouflage paint scheme, this made any Mirage aircraft within this area very difficult to see from the air, especially by the pilot of a Mirage which has a very high angle of attack at normal approach speeds. Apparently, and as a result of this incident, a regular program of de-rubbering the runway thresholds was introduced and continues to this day."

The official report from the Spotlight publication is shown below and includes an aerial view of a Mirage parked on the 'rubberised' section of the runway. Camouflage painting of aircraft obviously works. I have added some other photos [movie stills] of the wreckage of the aircraft involved which have come across my desk, courtesy of another one of our members, Barry Roberts.

Aftermath: A3-26 cockpit area, showing impact marks.

Rear view of A3-26 fuselage, showing crush and fire-damage

*[The following article appeared in the February 2014 Issue of **Aviation Safety Spotlight.** Reproduced with their kind permission.]*

"Mirage Tragedy"

By Paul Cross. (Deputy Director Safety Communications, DDAAFS)

A Mirage at Butterworth in 'landing' attitude.

[This photograph dates from the era 1986-88, as it shows 79SQN markings. 79SQN took over 3SQN's Mirage aircraft and a large majority of the Mirage personnel on 31 March 1986, as 3SQN was due to re-establish in Australia, introducing F-18s to RAAF operations.]

About 2pm on 6 July 1976, Mirage A3-64 was landing from a practice ground-control approach (GCA) and impacted Mirage aircraft A3-26 which was lined-up on runway 18, waiting for take-off clearance.

A3-26 was destroyed and its pilot killed instantly. A3-64 was also destroyed, but the pilot escaped without significant injury.

Both aircraft were engulfed in flames almost immediately after impact. As the aircraft separated, A3-26 continued to burn fiercely as did A3-64, with the exception of the partially-broken-away front fuselage section. About three minutes after impact, the first crash vehicle arrived at A3-64 and had no difficulty in rapidly extinguishing the fire. Simultaneously, other crash-rescue vehicles were directed to A3-26, where the fire in the vicinity of the cockpit area was quickly controlled. However, considerable difficulty was encountered in containing and extinguishing the fuselage fire because of fuel leakage and numerous flashback fires.

The ambulance arrived after about seven minutes and the duty medical officer declared the pilot deceased.

The pilot of A3-26 was a Category B fighter pilot with a total of 1,187.4 hours, including 761.5 on Mirage and an authorised squadron test pilot. The pilot of A3-64 was a Category C fighter pilot and considered most dependable, conservative in his approach to flying and well aware of his capabilities and limitations.

Following the investigation, the *Court of Inquiry* outlined several factors that were integral to the tragic events of 6 July:

<u>Circadian Dysrhythmia</u>
Three days before the accident, the pilot of A3-64 had returned from a 54-day holiday in Europe.

The impact scene

He would have, in that time, established a sleeping pattern consistent with the northern hemisphere summer and, having travelled east to return to Butterworth, would have experienced a time-shift of more than seven-and-a-half hours. His sleep pattern on return showed evidence of significant disruption consistent with interference to the normal circadian rhythm.

The Court noted, *"One response to circadian dysrhythmia relates to the tendency for mental blocking or lapses in attention. This phenomenon, termed response blocking, has been under investigation in the analysis of accidents, where subjects have apparently failed to see, interpret or react to apparent or dangerous situations".*

Other Physiological Factors

Other physiological factors could also have influenced the pilot's performance level, including his loss of heat acclimatisation and sleep deficit. It was accepted that there would have been a loss of acclimatisation after 54 days in a temperate climate and that it was very unlikely that the pilot had re-acclimatised in the three days before the accident.

"Two lengthy sorties and a low fluid intake (one cup of black tea and a drink of water) would lead to a body-fluid deficit. The effect of this deficit and loss of acclimatisation would be to increase the individual's susceptibility to the effects of heat with the resultant fatigue."

On the two nights before the accident, the pilot had only slept a total of nine-and-a-half hours.

"Sleep deficiency will result in fatigue… fatigue produces a further decrease in performance in an individual subjected to time zone shift."

Currency

Following a lengthy break, the pilot of A3-64 was considered "a little rusty" by his supervisor in a simulator refresher before flying. His flying of the GCA that culminated in the accident was flown very accurately. It was thought that the attention to accuracy could impose a "greater than usual" workload on top of an already medium-to-high workload situation. *"The pilot was in the habit of checking his glideslope and centreline at the commencement of the approach then monitoring his approach on TACAN, which he did. Because of his lack of currency he only monitored the TACAN range but did not compare expected height with actual height or monitor approach on the air-to-ground radar. That is; he was load shedding."*

GCA Four-Mile Call

The pilot of A3-64 at the four-mile point was given an instruction by ATC to check wheels and to overshoot at minimas. This call was given amid glideslope and heading information and was acknowledged by the pilot. However, he did not obey the overshoot instruction and was confident in his own mind that after GCA minimas he had been given clearance to land.

"An important point in regard to the four-mile call is the fact that there was no laid-down requirement to read back the key executive word of such a clearance."

"In this particular case, read back of the executive 'overshoot', firstly, would have confirmed with the controller that the clearance had been heard and understood and, secondly would have reinforced the executive in the pilot's short term memory, enhancing retrieval or, alternatively, reducing the probability of substitution."

"The Court therefore believes that had overshoot been read back, there is a high probability that the causation chain would have been broken."

Hand-off at Minimas

The hand-off call given to A3-64 by the controller was "continue visually and call the tower on the go." In contrast, the standard call, as contained in the manual was, "look ahead and land/overshoot visually."

The hand-off call was non-standard and importantly did not contain the essential executive word overshoot. This was not a positive and reinforcing four-mile call and contained the ambiguous phrase "on the go". Some pilots interviewed contended that "on the go" was consistent with the continuation of a touch-and-go but all, including the pilot of A3-64, stated they would not interpret the phrase as a change of clearance but would respond to the previous instruction to overshoot and at the least query their clearance.

Departure and Arrival Procedures

It was accepted and common practice at Butterworth to line-up aircraft with other aircraft on finals. Some controllers would not have done this with an approaching Mirage within three miles of touchdown but at the time of this accident no distances were laid down for visual meteorological conditions (VMC) operations. In this particular instance controllers thought the approaching aircraft was beyond four miles—when in fact it was about three.

Had A3-26 been positioned at the runway threshold, there was a possibility that A3-64 might have cleared it, but A3-26 was some 500 feet further along the runway — close to the touchdown point for a ground-controlled approach. This would create a visual problem for the approaching pilot.

A Failure to See

The pilot of A3-64 did not perceive A3-26 lining up 500 feet from the threshold of runway 18 and there were a number of factors that could account for this.

A camouflage-painted aircraft sitting on the rubber-darkened section in the centre of the runway is not so easy to see. It has a very low contrast ratio and added to this would be the hot gasses emitting from the engine, reducing sharpness of the aircraft's outline. A3-26 was stationary, reducing the approaching pilot's visual cues that he was on a collision course.

The position of the sun made it unlikely that any glint from the Mirage's canopy would be seen by the approaching aircraft.

"During a simulation it was apparent that the target aircraft became invisible when displaced one to two degrees from the central vision. Thus, unless A3-26 had been fixated centrally, the probability of target detection and recognition would have been very small.

"Although many pilots are unaware of reflections in aircraft windscreens, this does not alter the fact that they impose an additional load on the visual system and reduce contrast ratios of targets seen through these reflections, thereby reducing the probability of successfully detecting a low-contrast visual stimulus."

Another factor is that the pilot of A3-64 did not expect to see an aircraft lined-up on runway 18, if he thought he was cleared to land. Further, he did not expect an aircraft to be lined up 500 feet from the threshold, where A3-26 was located.

"These factors will affect both the pilot's visual search strategy and also the perception formed by the brain in response to a particular visual stimuli. The probability of perceiving an aircraft on the runway is likely to be less in these circumstances for a just perceptible stimulus."

A3-26 represented a visual target with a low probability of detection. The effects of fatigue and circadian dysrhythmia may have aggravated the situation by raising visual thresholds, particularly in the periphery, where high workload situations can lead to tunnelling of vision.

The Court concluded that while A3-26 was seeable, the possibility of it being seen by the pilot of A3-64 was remote.

Approach view on finals at Butterworth with a camouflaged Mirage holding in the rubberised area.

Trainee Controller

At the time of the accident, a trainee controller from the RMAF was under supervision and working in the Tower 1 position. From the time the pilot of A3-26 called "ready", there was a delay of one minute before he was given a line-up clearance. Although there was other traffic in the pattern, there were opportunities to line up A3-26 and obtain a departure clearance from approach.

After clearance from the approach controller was given, there was further delay and discussion about the possibility of an airborne confliction between A3-26 and A3-64 and the decision was made to await the overshoot by A3-64 before clearing A3-26 for departure.

"As the controllers had witnessed previous low overshoots, it was only three or four seconds before impact that they realised that A3-64 was continuing with the landing. At this point a controller called 'overshoot' into the microphone while another was attempting to select all frequencies."

By this stage the accident was inevitable. While the delay in clearance of A3-26 was a link in the causal chain, under the circumstances no criticism of the controllers was intended or warranted.

Court CONCLUSIONS

The primary cause of the accident was that the pilot of A3-64 landed without clearance, but that landing was the effect of numerous causal factors that coalesced into a series of events, any of which by themselves would have been insignificant - but in this instance came together at one place and at one time for tragic consequences. This complex chain of events could have been broken at many points by the removal of just one of those insignificant events.

My wife asked me to take her to one of those restaurants where they make food right in front of you. I took her to Subway. That's when the fight started.

How To Annoy Your Boss

From Peter Scully

I was Officer Commanding RAAF Townsville and was facing my first Air Officer Commanding's annual inspection. All the brass had been polished, lawns (grass) mowed and gutters painted white. As Mrs AOC was accompanying the boss, I'm sure my wife would have had her hair done (at great expense) and I'd even had a haircut. To impress the AVM I arranged for the Army Band to be present for the arrival, together with a quarter-guard of our own troops all looking spick and span.

Townsville was a civil/military airfield and I knew the airport manager very well. After informing him of the visit from the Head Shed (it was then known as 'Fort Fumble'), he offered to lend me a set of civilian aircraft steps to replace the self-contained Orion ones. The aircraft stopped at the appointed spot, the civilian steps were brought forward and then…they got stuck under the fuselage, leaving a one metre gap between the aircraft and the steps. There, at the aircraft door, stood the AOC looking somewhat stunned and not happy at the gap to the top of the stairs. The band played, the general salute was called and there was the boss, stranded up there looking anything but friendly, with me down on the ground looking even less happy. 'There goes my career', I thought. With some difficulty the problem was solved and the inspection proceeded, perhaps less that happily.

The only aspect that went well was the lunch my wife hosted at our residence for Mrs AOC and all the senior Army officers. Not quite the end of the story: just as the AOC and I stepped into the Officers' Mess for dinner, every light on the base went out. Someone was certainly working against me and I reflected on what I might have done to deserve this. My career was now definitely over!

Oh, but the Air Force works in mysterious ways. Shortly after this misadventure, I was advised that I was posted to London to attend the 12 month Royal College of Defence Studies course and then to stay on as Air Force Advisor at the Australian High Commission – and promotion to Air Commodore. But the promotion was to take place when I arrived in London – also go directly, do not pass go and do not collect $100. I asked the reason for this procedure, which caused some difficulties as the new hat and rank emblems were not kept at Townsville and any way, I was not entitled to them until I arrived in London. The hat and a few rank slides were finally delivered to me at Sydney airport. Apparently, the reason for my promotion not being made until my arrival in London was that if I were promoted before I left Australia, I would be entitled to travel first class. I mentioned that as I had two children under seven I was entitled to travel first class anyway. "Ah", I was told, "but it's the principle of the thing".

However, earlier on I had to send my wife back to Richmond on a Caribou which was returning for servicing, to enable her to hitch a ride to our home in Canberra to pack some winter clothes. I found out later that the public servant students attending the same course were given generous leave to enable them to attend to these matters.

The trip was made to seem longer by having two young children and we were relieved to finally arrive and be accommodated in a hotel until my predecessor departed. We were exhausted on arrival, having travelled directly from Townsville, arriving five days before Christmas. When we entered our room, there was a flashing light informing me of a message which was: "You have exceeded your credit limit, please settle your account immediately". That was my introduction to administration at Australia House. All was resolved, eventually, and we finally moved into my predecessor's tiny house at Hinchley Wood. We expected a rural location, but no, it was in the midst of suburbia. I was then told that the house would be unsuitable for entertaining and that I'd have to find different accommodation before I assumed the position of Air Adviser, fortunately 12 months away.

Thus started our London life, which we both look back on as an agony from a domestic aspect. Accommodation costs far exceeded the allowance, commuting was via Southern Rail, (not on the Tube, we found out too late), which was frequently on strike or stopped by ice in the points. Not once did I ever get a seat on the way to work and after work, having walked (for a good part of the year) in the dark to Waterloo Station, I often found the notice 'Service Cancelled'; that meant a trip by the underground and then two separate bus trips. Life in London can be hard!

Having finally settled into the Australia House job, an 'establishment team' came by, reduced my position to Group Captain and said "Go home"; 18 months into a three-year posting. We were not too happy. But it was so good to get back to Oz.

Amazing Rescue

From Yvonne Holt OAM, Secretary 30 Squadron RAAF Beaufighter Association

Jim Collison and Neal Redfern

30 Squadron Beaufighter Association was contacted via the website earlier in the year by the Historian of the 2nd Emergency Rescue Squadron that flew PBYs (Catalina) during World War II to ask if we knew of Jim Collison and Neal Redfern. Of course, we did and were able to put him in contact with the families of both of these fellows. It was not long before Jim Collison passed away, so it was good timing, as Jim or the families had not been aware of the report before this. Neal Redfern passed away a few years ago. The following is an extract from the website report.

US PBY Catalina

USAAF REPORT
"11 MARCH 1945

Captain Gerard F. Wientjes, pilot of "Playmate Special", departed Morotai at 1330, arriving in the vicinity of Majoe Island to begin searching for a downed Beaufighter crew. Sighting an oil slick and debris on the water they saw the crew on what looked like a raft at 1400. On closer inspection, one of the survivors was floating on a tire and wheel that had broken off his Beaufighter, and the other survivor was hanging onto a tiny navigator's table about a half mile away. Captain Wientjes anxiously looked at the heavy sea below and knew that it was almost impossible to make a safe water landing with waves running 10 to 12 feet high. If the men had been on a raft he would not have chanced the landing at that time, but their plight prompted the decision to attempt the rescue. The crew took their crash-landing positions and I prayed as the plane dropped. When the plane hit the water the nose buried under the waves and quickly bounced back into the air. After three terrific bounces, the "Cat" settled onto the water 50 yards from the Aussie floating on the table. As the plane taxied to within 20 yards, the Australian manoeuvred his floating table close by. Thinking he had a one hand grip on the nose of the plane, he let go of the table. In an instant, due to his exhausted condition, he lost his hold, a huge wave came in over the plane and washed him away. He shouted that he couldn't swim, and quickly disappeared. The next time the crew spotted him he was 50 yards away. Captain Goldberg stripped off his clothes, dived into the raging sea, fought his way to the drowning soldier shedding his life preserver rather than have it handicap his swimming. He

grabbed the unconscious Aussie as he was disappearing and towed him to the plane. The engines were switched on and the plane taxied in the direction of the other Australian, while Captain Goldberg worked with his patient.

The second drifting airman had disappeared but Lieutenant Arthur J. Carothers spotted him as he appeared on the top of a huge swell. The plane was tossing like a cork, almost out of control. The occasional flash of the Aussie's mirror directed the pilot and soon he was pulled aboard at 1435. The seas were increasing in fury and water was breaking over the ship and pouring into the hull. The radio men and engineer bailed furiously to avoid being capsized. The pilot and co-pilot decided a take-off under these conditions would be suicide, so the only thing to do was look for smoother water. The navigator, 1st Lieutenant Richard W. Deane, located a small island about 25 miles away and the plane started its long water journey through the roughest sea any of the men had seen. It took 5 hours to cover the 25 miles, bucking the pounding waves all the way. The engines were stopped eight times to enable the bailers to catch up. Water was up to the rudder pedals in the front of the plane. Captain Wientjes said afterward "I was ready on two occasions to give up the ship when I saw her nose go under. I thought we were gonners." The situation became so desperate they asked for a rescue boat to be sent out for them. The plane seemed doomed. It would have taken 9 hours for help to arrive so the men "prayed and passed the buckets". Finally, they reached the lee side of the tiny island and made a take-off at dusk. They headed for home, flying through very heavy weather and reaching Morotai at 2020. The landing strip was closed in. Five large airdrome searchlights were turned on, but the pilots couldn't see them. A radio bearing was flashed to the plane, and no sooner had this been received, the ship's radio conked out due to all the water. They finally dropped low enough to see the search beams and they made a safe landing. The survivors were transferred to an ambulance and taken to the 155th Station Hospital. The survivors stated that they were forced to ditch their Beaufighter because of engine failure.
1310: Takeoff
1440: Sighted men.
1405: Landed, sea was extremely rough. Swells were running about 10 to 12 feet high with a fifteen to twenty knot wind. The swells were breaking over the nose and water was pouring in fast. Take off was impossible so it was decided to taxi to Majoe Island and gain the lee side of the island, the natives came out in canoes, we asked them if there were any Nips on the Island and they replied "no". Take off was made with comparative ease. Weather on course back to base was very bad, heavy rain. We got a radio bearing from fighter sector and came in OK.
1410: Picked survivor up.
1435: Picked survivor up
1850: Took off.
2020: Landed at Morotai and delivered survivors to ambulance."

<u>RAAF REPORT</u>
"MOR 29 – Also on March 11, two Beaufighters to sweep the Tomohon area. Aircraft and crews taking part A19-187 Redfern/Collison, A19-140 Warner/Hackshaw, departed 0924/11I returned 1530/11I, with A19-187 lost. On this mission there were no signs of enemy activity. After completing a strafing sweep of Lake Tondano east of Tomohon, Beaufighter aircraft A19-187 was hit in the starboard engine by medium ack-ack fire from the enemy. The crew consisted of F/O N.P. Redfern (411186) Pilot and No 440058 F/Sgt Collison J.N. Navigator. The pilot headed for base but with one damaged engine was unable to maintain height and was forced to ditch in the sea approximately 10 miles north of Majoe Island. The accompanying aircraft piloted by F/L A.L. Warner (400946) contacted base and a Catalina rescue plane was soon on the scene and picked up the crew of A19-187 who had taken to their dingy. Due to rough seas considerable difficulty was experienced in taking off but in the late afternoon the Catalina lifted off and arrived

safely back at base one hour after dark. F/O Redfern and F/Sgt Collison were naturally tired and exhausted but apart from a few scratches and bruises were none the worse for their experience."

Quite a difference between the two reports of the same incident!!

The website for the full report is WWW.pbyrescur.org, then RESCUES scroll down to MORE RESCUES BY MONTH, MARCH '45, click on 11 MARCH 1945

Saigon Soirée

From Peter Scully

Just as the Vietnam War was firing up, the RAAF received an invitation to visit to help celebrate the 1st birthday of the South Vietnamese Air Force. Eight aircraft from 78 Wing at Butterworth were chosen to be the RAAF's representatives. The Officer Commanding the Wing decided to lead the 'push' and for some reason I was designated as 'Ops O'. We were to go via Bangkok, where we would engage in a SEATO exercise with the Royal Thai Air Force and the French Air Force. I think this was the first time since Dien Bien Phu that the French had been invited back to the region.

Perhaps I might dare to comment on 'our leader'. He had no experience at all in the fighter world and this caused some difficulties with procedures. I should mention that the OC was not keen on strapping into his aircraft (Sabre) in the sun – this was well before any thought had been given to providing sun shelters. His solution was to have his aircraft towed into a hangar where he strapped in and waited until the other aircraft were all set to go. He would then have his aircraft towed onto the line and then call: "Start-up". He was a little concerned about leading an eight aircraft 'gaggle' so we had a practice take-off and turn onto our outbound heading to Bangkok the day before actual departure. I still remember the heading – '029' (I think).

We managed to get safely to Don Muang and were joined by the French. I was standing with the French CO watching their arrival which was a zero feet, grass-cutter flypast over the airfield. The CO turned to me and said: "What can you do with young fighter pilots?" We were billeted with them, where they plied us with warm champagne - not be recommended no matter how thirsty you are. After the exercise I had to give a very early-morning briefing for the leg to Saigon, Tan Son Nhat. While in a hangar writing up the briefing, I was attacked by more mosquitos than I thought existed. I was covered in them and my flying suit offered no protection at all. So much so that I had to search for old newspapers and wrapped myself in them as a defence - which was only marginally successful. By the time the squadron arrived for the briefing the sun was up and all the mozzies had departed – so what's your problem they said?

I'd prepared maps for the boss, carefully annotated. His reply was "I don't look over the side, just give me some NDB frequencies." So off we went; two lots of four aircraft. The boss had decided on a descent point; a 10 degree intercept on two radio stations. There was a heavy undercast and on descent the boss made several tentative attempts to descend through. Eventually, he pushed the nose down and while the rest of us kept our fingers crossed and sphincters tight, much to our astonishment, the airfield appeared directly ahead – not only that, but we landed exactly on time. Someone was looking out for us because it was certainly not a result of competence.

French Air Force Dassault Super Mystere

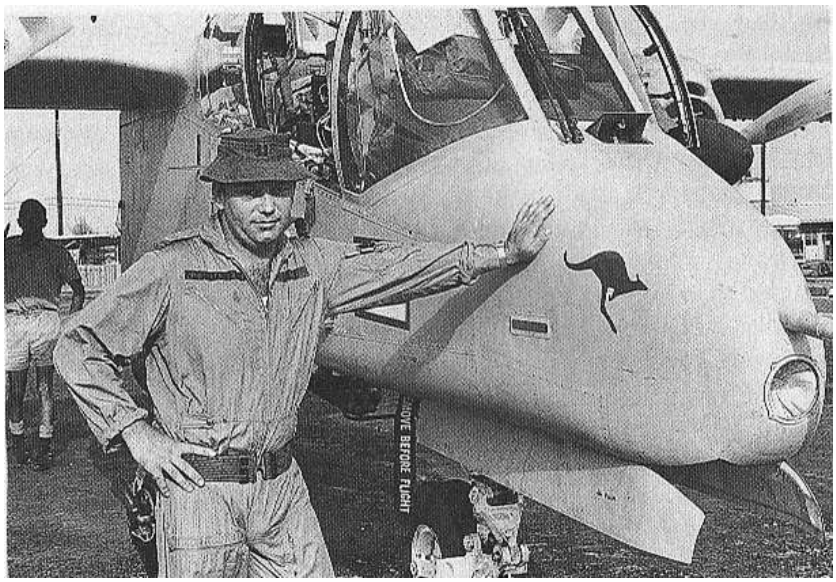
While in Saigon, each visitor was allotted a day to perform. I led a small formation aerobatic team - Phil Dunn, Geoff Jenkins and moi, and our performance went very well. The French had Super Mysteres, capable of supersonic flight at low level and that's what they demonstrated – along the Mekong river right in front of our water-front hotel, the Majestic. Yes, they broke the sound barrier, part of the ceiling of our hotel fell down on top of the grand piano in the ballroom and many toilet cisterns with broken. The worst damage was in the main street where most of the plate glass windows were broken, including the Australian Embassy's. The French had made a right mess of their return to their former colony. Some of us – those who had studied French – had been invited to dinner at the French Ambassador's that evening, including the French. We arrived to find we were the only guests; the French had been invited to go home after their disastrous display. Anyway, we had a good dinner.

On departure – with our aircraft having been closely guarded by the French security – we gathered in the airport café for refreshments. As the nominated French speaker, I was busy negotiating our final account with the most gorgeous Vietnamese lady behind the counter. Having concluded the deal, she announced in a loud voice: "By the way monsieur, your French is 'tres bad." I was pleased to leave.

On Again, Off Again, Red Kangaroo

From Ken Mitchell

During my tour in Vietnam 1968/69 as an Australian FAC, I had to fly down to Vung Tau every month or so to collect my pay. On arrival al Vung Tau, my OV-10 had a Red Kangaroo painted on its nose. On my return to Lai Khe or Bien Hoa the Crew Chief would slip into me and advise me that foreign emblems are not allowed to be painted on USAF aircraft and immediately had it painted over.



While at Vung Tau, FLTLT Ken Mitchell savours his momentary win in the game played with his USAF crew chief at Cu Chi over the on again/off again kangaroo emblem painted on his OV-10. (AWM Neg VN68-96-1(13))

So on my next visit, I repeated the exercise and painted the Red Kangaroo on my OV-IO. Again, I was berated for having a foreign emblem painted on my USAF aircraft. Needless to say, this went on for the rest of my tour. The "On again off again Red Kangaroo".

The Wayward 9mm Holster

From Ken Mitchell

On my return to Australia from Vietnam in 1969,1 was posted back to our fighter base at Williamtown. The inevitable paperwork followed me from Vietnam and apparently, after an inventory check of equipment issued to me before I left for Vietnam, I had returned without the holster for my 9mm Browning automatic pistol.

The Senior Equipment officer (SEO) threatened me with doom and devastation if I didn't return the holster. I had no idea where it was. After a month or so of harassment, I decided I had better write a letter of explanation to get him off my back. Hence the following letter of explanation:

"It was 0200 hours at Lai Khe base in South Vietnam, when a huge barrage of rockets and mortars started impacting our area. Shrapnel was hitting our roof, so we all tumbled into the bunker clutching rifles, grenades and side arms. We were also under ground attack, and as our hooch was close to the wire, we scrambled out of the area firing as we went. It was then I realized I was holding my 9 mm pistol, but didn't have my holster. I raced backed to the hooch which was now on fire, and with explosions all around me, I tried but couldn't get into the hooch to retrieve my holster.

Could this be the missing holster?

I immediately thought, 'Boy, am I going to be in trouble when I get back to Australia, the SEO will have my hide!' I quickly re-joined the other FACs and we continued to battle all night, dodging bullets, mortars and rockets. The attack finished at dawn and we all sat around buggered and exhausted. Subsequently, I found no trace of my holster in the hooch."

I submitted my letter of explanation to the SEO and heard nothing from him for a week or two, until our paths crossed at the bar in the Officers' Mess. He said, "After a story like that, let me buy you a beer, and by the way, I have written off the 9mm holster. You won't be charged for it." I thought "Thank God for that!"

Almost a true story!

RAAF FAC Awarded the DFC for Action in Vietnam

25 July 1966

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Early on the morning of this day, Wing Commander Vance Drummond - attached to the USAF's 19th Tactical Air Support Squadron as a Forward Air Controller (FAC) flying Cessna O-1 'Bird Dog' aircraft - and his USAF pilot, saved a US Army company under siege by the Viet Cong. On the evening of the previous day, Drummond and his pilot responded to an urgent call for support, and despite heavy anti-aircraft fire, they flew at low level, dropping flares, illuminating enemy positions, and calling support from fighter-bombers and helicopter gunships.

Cessna 'Bird Dog' FAC aircraft

After flying five hours on that day, the pair flew a total of eleven hours in four sorties during darkness on 25 July 1966; by dawn, the soldiers had been saved. For his outstanding courage and unselfish devotion to duty, Vance was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. For similar work on 27 October 1966, he was awarded the Republic of Vietnam's Cross of Gallantry with Silver Star. Drummond flew a total of 381 operational missions and set a high standard for Australian FACs who followed him.

WGCDR Drummond, as Commanding Officer of No 3 Squadron, was killed at 1620 on 17 May 1967 when his Mirage aircraft crashed into the ocean about 80 kilometres north-east of Newcastle, NSW.

I want to be 14 again and ruin my life differently. I have new ideas.

Spartan to Enhance Response and Engagements

Reprinted from CONTACT Magazine

An Air Force C-27J Spartan aircraft during Exercise Talisman Sabre 2021.
Photo by Leading Aircraftwoman Jacqueline Forrester.

Defence is enhancing support for humanitarian disaster relief, crisis response and regional engagements by redefining the role of the C-27J Spartan aircraft. The Spartan's new role will enhance Australia's humanitarian and emergency response to natural disasters in Australia and our near region, regional engagement across the Indo-Pacific including through Pacific Step-Up, and the Australian Defence Force's military logistics and air mobility capability.
Chief of Air Force, Air Marshal Mel Hupfeld, said the Spartan's capabilities were aligned with Defence's strategic objectives to shape Australia's strategic environment, deter actions against our interests and when required, respond with credible military force. "The Spartan demonstrated its specific capabilities during the 2019/20 Australian bushfire crisis by safely evacuating 2,400 fire-affected community members and resupplying remote communities that were inaccessible by larger aircraft, which included moving 300,000 kilograms of cargo," Air Marshal Hupfeld said.

"The Spartan conducted these missions at a range that exceeded the ability of Defence helicopters because of its flexibility and the inherent operational characteristics of a light tactical fixed wing aircraft." Head of Air Force Capability, Air Vice-Marshal Cath Roberts, highlighted the Spartan's contribution to ADF contingency response, and its value in providing assistance to regional neighbours. "The use of the Spartan on exercises such as Arnhem Thunder and Talisman Sabre to deliver vital stores to expeditionary airbases, showcases its ability to reach remote and austere airbases. And it has also recently transported medical supplies and equipment to Port Moresby to assist PNG in the fight against COVID-19; as well as contributed to Australia's support to regional maritime security and fisheries protection on the high seas through deployments on Operations Resolute and Solania," Air Vice-Marshal Roberts said. Redefining the role of the Spartan will ensure Defence delivers an airlift capability that meets Australia's requirements, providing vital support to the nation and our near region.

First Radio Intercept Station Established

23 August 1941

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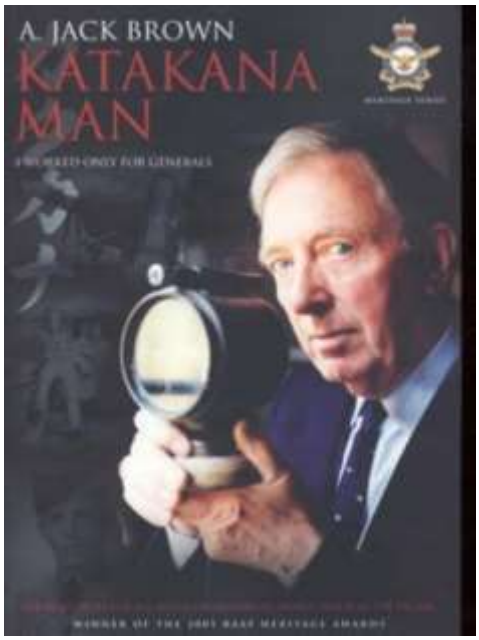
In early July 1941, nine skilled radio operators – seven from Air Force and two from Army – began a course conducted under Navy auspices at Victoria Barracks, Melbourne, to teach them the Japanese version of Morse Code. This entailed learning the 71 symbols of the *Kata kana* syllabary used to write traditional Japanese as well as foreign words. The six RAAF men who completed the course departed Melbourne by rail on this day, under Corporal T.S. ('Snow') Bradshaw, bound for Darwin. Arriving 11 days later, on 3 September, the group set up an intercept station at the RAAF aerodrome and began around-the-clock operations to copy communications between Tokyo and Japanese bases at Truk (Caroline Islands), Saipan (Marianas), and Palau.



Wireless Unit staff, Coomalie Creek, 1944

This was the start of a highly secret activity which would ultimately see six RAAF Wireless Units deployed across the South-West Pacific Area during the course of WW II.

The 224-page *Katakana Man*, by Jack Brown, can be downloaded here:
https://www.radschool.org.au/Books/Katakana%20Man.pdf

Sergeant Pilot's First Lesson

From Ray Winslow

A young sergeant pilot newly arrived at Brighton, the RAAF PDRC (Personnel Despatch & Reception Centre), came across a group of young ATSs (Auxiliary Territorial Service). He asked them what their badge meant. In reply, one lass said "Any time sergeant."

I never found out if he had a reply.

Centenarian Recalls his Best Flight

Alan Hastie with an Air Force 2021 Commemorative memento in celebration of his 100th birthday.
Story by Evita Ryan. Photo by Corporal Brett Sheriff

He's 100 years of age and has flown all around the world, but Air Force veteran Alan Hastie said the best flight of his life was on a British Bristol Beaufort at the end of World War II.

After a year-long deployment to Papua New Guinea where he serviced Beauforts as an aircraft technician, Mr Hastie's commanding officer gave him a choice between flying home to Brisbane in the co-pilot's seat of a Beaufort or sailing home with other ADF members on an aircraft carrier. "I'm not sure why he gave me the option," Mr Hastie said. "He just asked me how I'd like to get home and if I'd rather go home on an aircraft carrier or on a plane. "I didn't want to be on an aircraft carrier for a week with thousands of other people, so I chose the plane."

Originally enlisting in the Army in Brisbane in 1941, Mr Hastie obtained the rank of acting sergeant before transferring to the RAAF three years later. "I changed over to the Air Force to try and get into aircrew," Mr Hastie said. While training to become an aircrew member in Kingaroy, Queensland, Mr Hastie was told that the RAAF had an adequate supply of aircrew and he would be moved to ground staff.

After six months of training as an aircraft technician at Sydney Technical College, Mr Hastie was briefly posted to Tocumwal, NSW, before being deployed to Aitape in PNG. "I did enjoy it," he said. "You might say it was an easy job in one way, because we weren't involved in actual fighting, just servicing the planes."

Jumping at the opportunity to fly home to Brisbane as the only passenger on a Beaufort at the end of the war, Mr Hastie remembered the scenic journey along the Queensland coastline. "We picked up fuel at Cape York and the pilot said that we would dodge Townsville and Cairns so we wouldn't have to go through the red tape there," he said. Following the coastline south, Mr Hastie and the Beaufort pilot stayed overnight in Rockhampton before continuing their journey the following morning. "We were going to land at Amberley because, back then, Archerfield was a civil aerodrome," he said. "It was the main airstrip for Brisbane at the time. "As we got close to Brisbane, the pilot said 'show me where it is', referring to Archerfield, so I pointed it out to him and we landed there."

After saying goodbye to the pilot, who had to return the aircraft to western NSW, Mr Hastie caught a bus into Brisbane and a tram to his family home in The Grange, where he surprised his unsuspecting parents. “I turned up home and my parents said ‘Where’d you come from?’,” Mr Hastie said.

Discharging from the RAAF as a leading aircraftman in 1946, Mr Hastie married Mary Ursula Sims, a kindergarten teacher and raised four children.Since turning 100 on April 14, Mr Hastie has received numerous messages, including a letter from The Queen.

Senior ADF Officer at RAAF Base Amberley Group Captain Iain Carty presented Mr Hastie with a framed Air Force centenary commemorative memento in recognition of his milestone birthday and to honour his service to the nation. “I’m very grateful, I really am,” Mr Hastie said. “I’ve done very well but I don’t think I’ve deserved it all as there were thousands of us and I didn’t do anything special, I have to confess, I just did the work.”

In Case You Were Wondering…Badge or Crest?

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One of the most common mistakes in the Air Force is referring to the Air Force or Unit Crest; the Air Force only has badges. The term crest refers to a device worn on top of a helmet and forms part of a coat of arms, while a badge is an emblem or device that was traditionally worn on clothing. Crest is also often mistakenly used to describe arms, but arms consist of various heraldic parts including supporters to the shield (such as the kangaroo and emu on the Commonwealth Coat of Arms) on which the heraldic device is displayed.

A 'coat of arms' refers to the custom dating to the 11th century, of displaying an emblem on a tunic or coat worn over the armour of a knight. The crest was originally displayed on the helmet and the shield he carried which provided a good surface for the display of a design. The emblems and designs were also displayed on banners and flags. Each design was unique so the armoured wearers could be accurately identified and distinguished from each other.

Air Force Badge Crowns

Up to the early 20th century various crown symbols had been used to represent the monarchy and “the crown”, meaning the sovereign, as source of government authority. The Tudor Crown design (with its single surmounting arch) was standardised at the request of King Edward VII in 1902. The Tudor Crown design was never intended to represent any actual physical crown and continued in use until the death of King George VI in 1952.

Shortly after Queen Elizabeth II acceded to the throne, an Order in Council announced that the Royal Crown to be used during Her Majesty's reign should be the “Edward Crown” (St Edward the Confessor), with its surmounting paired half-arches.

This meant that badges, emblems, crests and so forth which previously carried the Tudor Crown would need to be appropriately altered. However, the Queen's Command does allow for certain exceptions to this rule, all of which are at the discretion of Garter, Principal King of Arms. Many Royal Australian Air Force squadrons and units that were active during WW II in the reign of George VI but were disbanded before his death, naturally bore the Tudor Crown on their unit badge.

Tudor Crown

Edward Crown

For historical accuracy it may sometimes be desirable to reproduce badges with the Tudor Crown surmounting. Publications or memorials to WWII/Korean War units may display the badge with a Tudor crown. However, histories or memorials to units that were or are active post 1952 should use the St Edward crown. For example, a publication about No 460 Squadron in RAF Bomber Command (1940-1945) would be correct to use the unit badge with a Tudor crown. A publication about the history of No 460 Squadron (1940-Present) would display the unit badge with a St Edward crown.

Why It's Called The Sharp End

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On 10 March 1943, Pilot Officer Arthur Dawkins was one of twelve El Assa-based No 3 Squadron aircrew flying an armed reconnaissance of 15 enemy tanks and 25 armoured cars near Kazr (Ksar) Rhilane in modern day Tunisia.

The Kittyhawks wrought havoc on the German column; Dawkins claimed five motor transports and one petrol tanker blown up.

According to the Unit History, *'an enemy canteen was severely mauled by P/O Dawkins, who brought back a truck cover and a radiator cone full of razor blades.*'

Flying Officer Arthur Dawkins of Gawler, SA - Foggia, Italy, 1943

"Buster's" Bomber

Tomas (Paddy) Hamilton 26Aug21

I have little trust, in fate or superstition
If religion is your soap box, it depends on what rendition
I have witnessed the strangest things, as through life's twisted web I wander
Some things are, as they seem, but others make me ponder

I was but a youth of seventeen, attending my first Dawn Service
They asked me to read the prayer, so I was somewhat nervous
I stood proud in my air force blues, spit polished shoes and all
When first light bathed the cenotaph, I felt ten feet tall

The bugle's loud, but haunting notes, pierced the chilly air
The wreaths were laid upon the steps, with respect and utmost care
The anthem played, I made my salute and returned to join the crowd
While the autumn mist, slowly rose, like a lifting shroud

Then I heard it, far, far off from the east,
The sound of aircraft engines, like some struggling beast,
Closer, ever closer, till it was overhead
I gazed up and saw nothing, just fading stars instead

But just as swift, it was gone and I know this sounds absurd
I knew from wartime movies. It was a Lancaster I had heard
A voice then whispered in my ear." I guess you heard it too
It's "Busters" ghostly bomber, lost with all her crew"

Buster was my closest mate, we met while still at school
Loved dearly by his parents, he was his mother's jewel
We looked after each other, of that there's little doubt
And both joined the air force, when the war broke out

We learned to fly at "Quinty", not far from Wagga town
In winter it was freezing, in summer, sunburnt brown
After mastering "Aggie" Anson, we set off in great haste
To do our advanced training, in Canada's frozen waste

We ended up at Waddington a Lincolnshire bomber base
Where the beer was warm, the weather cold and everything arse about face
We flew near every second night, thirty ops made a tour
Bombing every city, based along the Ruhr

If we didn't hit the target, we'd have to go back again
After three months operations, we were down to half our men
Replacements when they arrived, didn't seem to be afraid
But we lost far too many, on their first "Big City" raid

Stress and strain took their toll, many had the shakes
But we carried on regardless, to prove, we still had what it takes
Our flying suits were heated, but we were always cold
Trapped in between the flak and the night fighters fold

I was well and truly time expired Buster was one trip shy
When they told us we were going home, to teach fledglings how to fly
Aircrew learn the hard way, never tempt your fate
But for poor young Buster, the warning came too late

He'd fly mission number sixty and roll the devil's dice
But for this single act of valour, he would pay the highest price
I farewelled him at dispersals and went to catch my bus
That would take me to the troopship, no dramas and no fuss

I listened till his engines, faded to a hum
Remembering his final words "Give my love to mum"
We'd both catch up in this home town, on next Anzac Day
And remember all the mates who died, in that tragic fray

The loss of your closest friend, in war is nothing new
He disappeared off the Dutch coast, it was just as if he knew
He flies in from eternity, every single year
Knowing that in his soul, he'll find me waiting here

Based on a true story

Delta 15 – A Good News Story

From John Clarkson

This story has been sent to me by a few different people, but it is far too good not to spread further. I have checked it out through the internet and found it to be genuine. So, I have reproduced the story here below so more people can read it. If you have seen this before, then I apologise, but this is for the benefit of those who have not read it before. A good story in these times of lockdown & civil disobedience that shows there are still people of 'goodwill' in this world!

It is 20 years since 9/11 and here is a wonderful story about that terrible day. It is written by a flight attendant on Delta Flight 15, written following 9-11.

On the morning of Tuesday, September 11, we were about 5 hours out of Frankfurt, enroute to Atlanta, flying over the North Atlantic. All of a sudden, the curtains parted and I was told to go to the flight deck immediately to see the captain. As soon as I got there, I noticed that the crew had that 'All Business' look on their faces. The captain handed me a printed message. It was from Delta's main office in Atlanta and simply read, "All airways over the continental United States are closed to commercial air traffic. Land ASAP at the nearest airport. Advise your destination".

No one said a word about what this could mean. We knew it was a serious situation and we needed to find terra-firma quickly. The captain determined that the nearest airport was 400 miles behind us in Gander, Newfoundland. He requested approval for a route change from the Canadian traffic controller and approval was granted immediately – no questions asked. We found out later, of course, why there was no hesitation in approving our request.

While the flight crew prepared the airplane for landing, another message arrived from Atlanta telling us about some terrorist activity in the New York area. A few minutes later word came in about the hijackings. We decided to lie to the passengers while we were still in the air. We told them the plane had a simple instrument problem and that we needed to land at the nearest airport in Gander, Newfoundland, to have it checked out. We promised to give more information after landing in Gander. There was much grumbling among the passengers, but that's nothing new! Forty minutes later, we landed in Gander. Local time at Gander was 12:30pm! That's 11:00 AM EST.

There were already about 20 other airplanes on the ground from all over the world that had taken this detour on their way to the U.S. After we parked on the ramp, the captain made the following announcement: "Ladies and gentlemen, you must be wondering if all these airplanes

around us have the same instrument problem as we have. The reality is that we are here for another reason". Then he went on to explain the little bit we knew about the situation in the U.S. There were loud gasps and stares of disbelief. The captain informed passengers that Ground Control in Gander told us to stay put.

The Canadian Government was in charge of our situation and no one was allowed to get off the aircraft. No one on the ground was allowed to come near any of the aircraft – only airport police would come around periodically, look us over and go on to the next airplane. In the next hour or so more planes landed and Gander ended up with 53 airplanes from all over the world, 27 of which were U.S. commercial jets.

Meanwhile, bits of news started to come in over the aircraft radio and for the first time we learned that airplanes were flown into the World Trade Centre in New York and into the Pentagon in D.C. People were trying to use their cell phones, but were unable to connect due to a different cell system in Canada. Some did get through, but were only able to get to the Canadian operator who would tell them that the lines to the U.S. were either blocked or jammed. Sometime in the evening the news filtered to us that the World Trade Centre buildings had collapsed and that a fourth hijacking had resulted in a crash. By now the passengers were emotionally and physically exhausted, not to mention frightened, but everyone stayed amazingly calm. We had only to look out the window at the 52 other stranded aircraft to realize that we were not the only ones in this predicament.

We had been told earlier that they would be allowing people off the planes one plane at a time. At 6pm, Gander airport told us that our turn to deplane would be 11 am the next morning. Passengers were not happy, but they simply resigned themselves to this news without much noise and started to prepare themselves to spend the night on the airplane. Gander had promised us medical attention, if needed, water, and lavatory servicing. They were true to their word. Fortunately, we had no medical situations to worry about. We did have a young lady who was 33 weeks into her pregnancy. We took REALLY good care of her. The night passed without incident despite the uncomfortable sleeping arrangements.

About 10:30 on the morning of the 12th, a convoy of school buses showed up. We got off the aircraft and were taken to the terminal where we went through Immigration and Customs and then had to register with the Red Cross. After that, we (the crew) were separated from the passengers and were taken in vans to a small hotel. We had no idea where our passengers were going. We learned from the Red Cross that the town of Gander has a population of 10,400 people and they had about 10,500 passengers to take care of from all the airplanes that were forced into Gander! We were told to just relax at the hotel and we would be contacted when the U.S. airports opened again, but not to expect that call for a while. We found out the total scope of the terror back home only after getting to our hotel and turning on the TV, 24 hours after it all started. Meanwhile, we had lots of time on our hands and found that the people of Gander were extremely friendly. They started calling us the 'plane people'. We enjoyed their hospitality, explored the town of Gander and ended up having a pretty good time.

Two days later, we got that call and were taken back to the Gander airport. Back on the plane, we were reunited with the passengers and found out what they had been doing for the past two days. What we found out was incredible. Gander and all the surrounding communities (within about a 75 Kilometre radius) had closed all high schools, meeting halls, lodges, and any other large gathering places. They converted all these facilities to mass lodging areas for all the stranded travellers. Some had cots set up, some had mats with sleeping bags and pillows set up. All the high school students were required to volunteer their time to take care of the 'guests'. Our 218 passengers ended up in a town called Lewisporte, about 45 kilometres from Gander where they were put up in a high school. If any women wanted to be in a women-only facility, that was arranged. Families were kept together. All the elderly passengers were taken to private homes.

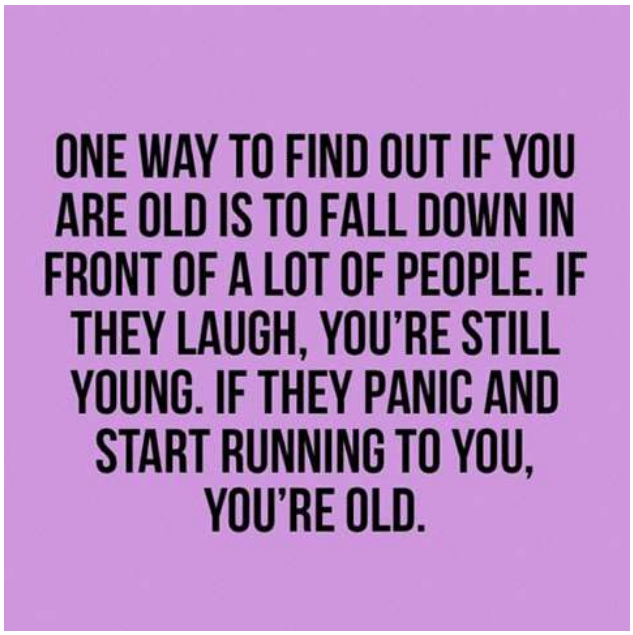
Remember that young pregnant lady? She was put up in a private home right across the street from a 24-hour Urgent Care facility. There was a dentist on call and both male and female nurses remained with the crowd for the duration.

Phone calls and e-mails to the U.S. and around the world were available to everyone once a day. During the day, passengers were offered 'Excursion' trips. Some people went on boat cruises of the lakes and harbours. Some went for hikes in the local forests; local bakeries stayed open to make fresh bread for the guests. Food was prepared by all the residents and brought to the schools. People were driven to restaurants of their choice and offered wonderful meals. Everyone was given tokens for local laundromats to wash their clothes, since luggage was still on the aircraft. In other words, every single need was met for those stranded travellers.

Passengers were crying while telling us these stories. Finally, when they were told that U.S. airports had reopened, they were delivered to the airport right on time and without a single passenger missing or late. The local Red Cross had all the information about the whereabouts of each and every passenger and knew which plane they needed to be on and when all the planes were leaving. They coordinated everything beautifully. It was absolutely incredible.
When passengers came on board, it was like they had been on a cruise. Everyone knew each other by name. They were swapping stories of their stay, impressing each other with who had the better time. Our flight back to Atlanta looked like a chartered party flight. The crew just stayed out of their way. It was mind-boggling. Passengers had totally bonded and were calling each other by their first names, exchanging phone numbers, addresses, and email addresses. And then a very unusual thing happened.

One of our passengers approached me and asked if he could make an announcement over the cabin PA system. Normally, we never ever allow that but this time was different. I said "of course" and handed him the mic. He reminded everyone about what they had just gone through in the last few days. He reminded them of the hospitality they had received at the hands of total strangers. He continued by saying that he would like to do something in return for the good folks of Lewisporte. He said he was going to set up a Trust Fund under the name of DELTA 15 *(our flight number)*. The purpose of the trust fund is to provide college scholarships for the high school students of Lewisporte. He asked for donations of any amount from his fellow travellers. When the paper with donations got back to us with the amounts, names, phone numbers and addresses, the total was for more than $14,000! The gentleman, a MD from Virginia, promised to match the donations and to start the administrative work on the scholarship. He also said that he would forward this proposal to Delta Corporate and ask them to donate as well. As I write this account, the trust fund is at more than $1.5 million and has assisted 134 students in their college education.

I just wanted to share this story because we need good stories right now. It gives me a little bit of hope to know that some people in a faraway place were kind to some strangers who literally dropped in on them. It reminds me how much good there is in the world. In spite of all the rotten things we see going on in today's world this story confirms that there are still a lot of good people in the world and when things get bad, they will come forward. This is one of those stories that needs to be shared. Please do so. It clearly demonstrates the power of love in midst of trials. When people rally together, incredible things can happen. We can all use it as inspiration to follow the kind example of the townspeople and passengers. How can you encompass that attitude today and make our world a better place? So, fifteen years later, like all of us, I remember the violence of 9/11 with tears of grief, anger, and horror. But it's the bedrock of Canadian values embodied in the emblematic kindness in the actions of the people of Gander, Newfoundland that I choose to remember with respect, gratitude, pride and humility.



Butterworth Radar Unit Placed On Alert

3 September 1964

This material is compiled from various sources including the History and Heritage Branch–Air Force, the RAAF Museum, the Australian War Memorial, ADF Serials and www.ozatwar.com. The History and Heritage Branch–Air Force is not responsible for pre-1921 items. Whilst every effort is made to confirm the accuracy of the entries, any discrepancies are solely the responsibility of the originator. As I am not a member of History and Heritage Branch-Air Force, all Air Force history or heritage queries should be directed, in the first instance, to airforce.history@defence.gov.au

All leave in No 114 Mobile Control and Reporting Unit (114MCRU) at RAAF Base Butterworth was cancelled on this day, and the unit began a 24-hour, seven-days-a-week operation. The previous day, about 100 Indonesian paratroops had been airdropped into northern Johore, signalling a disturbing escalation in Indonesia's policy of confrontation with the newly-created Federation of Malaysia.

As a precaution against possible air raids, the operations room and the unit's power station were sandbagged. Small arms and ammunition were also issued to technical and operations personnel, as a self-defence measure against possible attacks by saboteurs, and armed guards and area patrols were instigated.

114MCRU Radar Head at RAAF Base Butterworth, circled

A month later, a detachment of 114MCRU was dispatched to Kampong Changkat, south of Butterworth, to operate an Army Mk 7 light anti-aircraft 'gap filler' radar, but by the following month the alarm created by the Indonesian landings had largely dissipated.

Sabres Deployed to Darwin (Operation HANDOVER)

8 September 1964

This material is compiled from various sources including the History and Heritage Branch–Air Force, the RAAF Museum, the Australian War Memorial, ADF Serials and www.ozatwar.com. The History and Heritage Branch–Air Force is not responsible for pre-1921 items. Whilst every effort is made to confirm the accuracy of the entries, any discrepancies are solely the responsibility of the originator. As I am not a member of History and Heritage Branch-Air Force, all Air Force history or heritage queries should be directed, in the first instance, to airforce.history@defence.gov.au

On 16 September 1963 Malayan Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman formally announced the existence of the Federation of Malaysia, incorporating Malaya, Singapore, and the British territories in Borneo. This prompted a hostile response from Indonesia; in Australia, a contingency plan prepared in January 1964 - "Operation Handover" - was predicated on the assumption that Darwin was a "vital base on our direct air route to South East Asia through Singapore" and that it was within range of aircraft operated from "potential enemy bases". Under this scenario it was imperative that the Darwin base be secured "until [unspecified] allied support [was] received".

The first phase of operations to secure the Darwin base was to be the deployment of two squadrons (32 Sabre aircraft) from No 81 Wing at Williamtown, supported by four Neptune maritime patrol aircraft and Hercules, Dakota and Caribou transports. The search-and-rescue responsibility was accepted by an Iroquois helicopter deployed from No 9 Squadron's home base at Fairbairn, and the strike/reconnaissance capability was to be provided by No 82 Wing Canberra bombers from Amberley. Due to aircraft unserviceability, the deployment of sixteen No 76 Squadron Sabres was delayed until the morning of this day.

The Sabres - escorted by a Canberra bomber from Amberley and supported by four Hercules transport aircraft - staged through Edinburgh and Alice Springs, before landing at Darwin at 1710 local time. The maintenance personnel and equipment travelled in five Hercules sorties. One supported the fighters en-route, the second flew direct to Darwin with 50 passengers and 16,000 pounds of freight, while the third - not part of the No 81 Wing plan - deployed an Iroquois helicopter from Fairbairn. The fourth Hercules carried 75 base support personnel and personnel to augment the staff of No 2 Control and Reporting Unit (CRU), which was the ground radar unit responsible for surveillance and the ground control of fighter interception (GCI). The last aircraft carried the Sidewinder air-to-air missiles, test equipment and 6,000 pounds of freight. In all, 170 officers and airmen were despatched from Williamtown for duty in Darwin.

The War We Nearly Had

By John Clarkson – RAAF Armourer – Retired.

Introduction

There have been many articles and essays which have described the Australian involvement in the Indonesian Confrontation of Malaysia during the 1960s. Some have called it "The Forgotten War", a title normally given to the Korean War, and rightly so. However this essay is primarily concerned with the involvement by the RAF and the RAAF fighter squadrons during the peak period of September 1964. It has been well recorded that Indonesia began its confrontation with Malaysia during the year of 1962. Several Australian Army units were deployed to the southern areas of Malaysia, to serve alongside many of their British Army colleagues. At this time the RAF had squadrons in Tengah, (one of the three operational bases in Singapore), as well as squadrons on RAAF Base Butterworth, an old wartime base on the mainland adjacent to the island of Penang, which was refurbished and extended by the RAAF in the late 1950s.

This essay has been written partly from the statements given to me by other airmen who were on the scene at the time, as well as my own memories of actions witnessed at my own squadron. When I arrived at No 78 Fighter Wing in Butterworth from Amberley in September 1965, many of the tradesmen and other airmen were still talking about the events a year earlier. As a new arrival at the squadron, an intensive training programme ensured that I was brought up to speed with all things Sabre within a short time. This allowed the Senior NCOs to place me on the ORP (Operational Readiness Pad) roster in order to spread the turnaround time, making it fair for all concerned.

At the time, the RAF had two bomber squadrons in Tengah; one operating Canberra aircraft and one operating the Vulcan 'V' Bomber. The RAF also had two fighter squadrons in Tengah; one operating the Hunter aircraft and one operating the Javelin aircraft. The RAF also had a fighter squadron in Butterworth operating the night fighter Javelin aircraft. The RAF also had a deployment of two or three Vulcan Bomber aircraft sitting on the tarmac fully bombed up with some 21 x 1,000 pound bombs. These aircraft would be regularly rotated with their squadron at Tengah, always leaving a minimum of two fully bombed and prepared aircraft at Butterworth. The RAAF had two fighter squadrons operating the Sabre aircraft, (Nos 3 and 77 Squadrons) one bomber squadron operating the Canberra aircraft, (No 2 Squadron) and one helicopter squadron (No 5 Squadron) operating the UH-1B Iroquois stationed in Butterworth. During the period from 1962 to late 1964, all of these squadrons were performing their appropriate roles to monitor the Indonesian activities. The fighter squadrons were supplying an alert capacity, the Sabres during the day and the Javelins during the night.

When the Balloon Went Up!

The following events took place in September 1964. I can't remember the dates, but it was around the middle of the month. Although the primary event occurred in RAF Base Tengah, I shall describe the events by individual bases from a RAAF airman's point of view. As one can imagine, news of some of these events travelled by the well-oiled grape vine and the reliability or the accuracy was – shall we say – reasonable!

RAF Base Tengah

Part way through September 1964, a small detachment of Sabre aircraft from 77 SQN had flown to RAF Base Tengah for a combined RAF/RAAF exercise. The squadron operating the Javelin aircraft at Tengah was tasked with providing two aircraft on a five minute alert, similar to the requirement at the RAAF Base in Butterworth. Then, quite late one evening, probably around 2200 or so, the RAF Javelin crews were alerted to intercept an unidentified aircraft crossing the south west coast of Malaysia. So far, their evening was not all that unusual, as these types of

alerts did happen from time to time, but mostly the 'unidentified' aircraft turned out to be a friendly who forgot to identify themselves!

However, when the RAF crew drew closer to the location, they saw an Indonesian C-130 Hercules aircraft flying over Malacca, toward the southern part of Malaysia. This C-130 had its rear side cargo doors open and the RAF pilots could see paratroops ready to exit the aircraft. The RAF pilots radioed the Indonesian aircraft urging its crew to turn away from Malaysia, but to no avail. The RAF pilots continued to try a number of different methods over the next few minutes to deter the Indonesian crew to abort its mission – but in vain.

By this time the situation became quite urgent and very serious. It was obvious to the RAF pilots that Indonesian paratroops were about to be deployed into the Malaccan jungle. Radio transmissions were made with their commanders, and a decision was made. One of the RAF pilots fired a Fire Streak missile from his Javelin aircraft and the missile hit the C130 right in the inboard engine on the starboard wing, destroying the engine and severing the starboard wing. The aircraft was destroyed mid-air and it fell into the Malaccan jungle. I am led to believe that the wreckage – or some of it – can still be seen in the Malaccan jungle. The RAF pilots then returned to RAF Base Tengah and immediately began to report all of their activities to their Commander. The RAF at Tengah increased their alert status from that evening onwards. The RAAF crews from 77SQN, who were deployed at Tengah, tell of the sight of the operational Javelin aircraft returning from their flight with the fire streak missile launchers empty, and concluding they must have had some action!

RAAF Base Butterworth

It was a routine Thursday evening at Butterworth. The workers from the squadrons and other parts of the base not required for after hours or night duties had all gone to their homes, either on the mainland near the base or to married quarters on Penang Island. Upon hearing the news late in the evening from the RAF at Tengah, the OC of the RAAF Fighter Wing immediately authorised a recall of the remaining fighter squadrons bringing them to an alert status. This action took a few hours and many of the airmen tell of anecdotes between Australian airmen and the crew of a Penang ferry when they were trying to get the ferry operator to take them to the mainland, even though it was after normal operating hours. I am led to believe some of the airmen became rather agitated toward the ferry crew!

The remainder of the evening, and into the next day, Friday, saw an enormous amount of diplomatic activities in Malaysia. Many senior officers could see some very nasty and potentially dangerous outcomes from the previous evening's operation. After considerable discussion between diplomats, senior officers etc, an agreement was reached. The Indonesian Air Force released a statement saying that an Indonesian Air Force C-130 aircraft had crashed due to an engine failure. At the same time, the RAF authorities at RAF Base Tengah issued a statement that its Javelin aircraft had lost a Fire Streak missile in flight and was investigating the incident. I suppose that in one sense, their statements were partly true. To say that these diplomats and senior officers prevented an all-out confrontational battle between Indonesia and the Australian UK and Malaysian allies is a huge understatement! It was that close!

RAAF Base Williamtown

On the Friday – the day after the Malaysian incident, news of the previous evening's operation had reached Operations Command Headquarters at Glenbrook, NSW. It would be fair to say that the grape vine system had not yet succeeded in getting the news to their Australian based colleagues in a mere 12 or so hours. By midday on the Friday, the senior officers at Operations Command had made a very serious decision: they would deploy a reasonably sizable fighter force to RAAF Base Darwin. A telex was sent high priority to the OC of the Fighter Wing at Williamtown, arriving at his desk just after lunch on the Friday. Basically, it gave a command

saying: “The Wing shall deploy eight Sabre aircraft to Darwin and begin operational patrols of the northern coastline of Australia. The first patrol of two aircraft will depart RAAF Darwin at 1300 hours (Saturday) and will be loaded with two HE Sidewinder Missiles and a full complement of HE ammunition”. The telex ended with the words – “This is not a practice”. To the credit of all the crews of the fighter wing at Williamtown, yes aircrew and ground crews, they rallied together and achieved the task allocated to them. Also, considering that it was on a Friday afternoon, the commanders still managed to round up a sufficient force to support eight aircraft on a fully operational deployment. The aircraft were prepared on the Friday afternoon, and the maintenance ‘Fly Away Kits’ were checked and packed on to pallets ready for loading on to a Hercules and the squadron was deployed. We are told that the first patrol of two aircraft fully loaded with HE ordnance took off from Darwin on time at 1300 hours local time.

RAAF Base Amberley

At the time, I was an LAC Armourer at No 1 Squadron, Amberley, which operated the Canberra aircraft. Our crews became aware of the urgency of the situation when our squadron was tasked with providing a ‘Sabre escort’ from Williamtown via Alice Springs to Darwin. (This was common practice then so the crew in the Canberra flew up to an hour ahead of the Sabres and would relay weather and wind conditions to the Sabre pilots. This enabled the Sabre pilots to make the best of their short range for the trans-continental flight). As the Canberra aircraft was capable of flying from Amberley to Darwin at a moment’s notice, it was deemed unnecessary to deploy a flight of Canberra aircraft as they did for the Sabres. At No 1 squadron, an administrative command was issued which cancelled all recreation leave for all squadron members for the next three months. Our squadron remained on an alert basis for some time.

RAAF Base Darwin

There is little doubt that the Base Commander at Darwin would have been notified of the deployment of the Sabres at around the same time as was Williamtown. By the time the Sabre deployment of aircraft and men arrived, Darwin was ready. All the logistics including normal base facilities, ordnance requirements, fuel and other aircraft needs were prepared. The Sabre pilots continued to fly their patrols over the northern coastline.

Conclusion

Firstly, for Butterworth, the two Sabre squadrons and the RAF Javelin squadron shared the ORP roster, ensuring there were two fully armed aircraft sitting at the end of the runway with air and ground crews on a five minute alert – day and night – seven days per week. The Sabres manned the ORP from 0630 until 1830 every day, and the RAF Javelins manned the ORP from 1830 until 0630 every night. This continued right through until about late 1967. Each of the fighter squadrons would still complete their normal flying programmes, particularly their ordnance programmes of gunnery, (air to air as well as air to ground), rocketry, practice bombing and air to air missile tactics on a very regular basis.

The RAAF Sabre squadrons maintained a very high flying rate with a high ordnance usage during this entire period. Many of these flying days were high pressure for the flight line maintenance crews as they often literally ran between aircraft. Then at least twice per year, the squadron would take part in a high pressure defence exercise, including high ordnance expenditure. The first crews to deploy from Williamtown were told to take enough personal belongings for about 12 to 14 days. The first crew were replaced with another similar crew some eight weeks later! This was to become for many of the Williamtown people the ‘Darwin Roster’. Entire crews were rotated from Williamtown to Darwin each eight weeks through until around early 1968.

For the Canberra squadrons at Amberley, their flying programme increased to the point where we did considerably more ‘rapid’ bombing deployments to Darwin and more Air Defence

Exercises (ADEX) out of Amberley. These exercises involved a mock bombing mission of another base requiring that base to defend itself given an incredibly short warning.
For the RAAF fighter squadron involvement, when one considers the logistics of supporting an ORP of two aircraft armed with two live HE Sidewinder missiles, and a full load (300 rounds) of HE 30mm ammunition every day for nearly four years, this was an outstanding achievement indeed! For the maintenance planners, they had to choose two aircraft which had more flying hours than others to place on the ORP for a few days, in order for the other 'low flyers' to catch up on the squadron stagger board. For the armament fraternity, they were required to maintain an appropriate number of serviceable Sidewinder missiles, ensuring they were serviced at regular intervals. They were also required to ensure an appropriate quantity of HE 30mm ammunition was always available, should any of the ORP aircraft fire some of its HE ordnance.

The RAAF proved beyond all doubt that a fully operational, fully armed ORP could be raised at short notice and maintained for several years, whilst still operating and flying their normal squadron programmes. Many of these airmen, aircrew and ground crew alike, had the view that there was absolutely no reason that such an operational readiness system could not have been maintained in the north of Australia for many years after the Indonesian Confrontation was called off.

9 SQN Supports Tongan Cyclone Recovery

From Sandy Main

Back in 81-83, I was XO 9 SQN at Amberley, and in late 82, half of our 16 Iroquois, plus crews, were away in the Sinai with the MFO. Others were involved in Army co-op exercises and I think we only had three aircraft available for anything else, plus a couple of 'hangar queens'. At this time, a killer cyclone swept right through the tiny Pacific nation of Tonga, some 2000 km east of Brisbane. Tonga is a small country, population-wise, but it is spread over some 170 islands, in three groups; about 500 miles from North to South. Well, we got orders to launch and Spurge (CO), Henry Kwaczynski and I, and some others, took our three aircraft (might have been only two, can't remember!) over there by C-130 and commenced immediate medevac ops.

9SQN Iroquois

The place was an incredible mess. Trees down, cars blown over, huts flattened, the single hotel in the capital, Nuku'alofa, had its windows blown in with bedding all over the place, even in the trees and swimming pool. Far worse were the casualties, which were awful: many folk badly cut about by flying sheets of corrugated iron, broken glass, and airborne tree debris. So we set to, island-hopping and picking up the injured and the sick, some two to three days after the cyclone had passed. Of the 170 islands, perhaps 60% were inhabited, so it took us a good four days or so to get the worst casualties back to the hospital (not badly damaged) in the capital.

Following this phase, the security and safety of island water supplies became paramount. We had with us a RAAF hygiene sergeant, a most energetic chap, who we choppered around the islands, enabling him to test the various water tanks on many of them. Island water tanks were small, underground concrete arrangements, with hatches, and on one occasion, Henry had our tester on board, along with a gigantic area chieftan (Tongans are huge!). Stopping at one island, our tester jumped out, sprinted over to a hatch arrangement over one tank, opened it, put his head in and immediately recoiled violently. Whereon the village chief in the back said to Henry "Sir, your man has just put his head into the village's sewage pit." Quelle horreur! Followed by great hilarity on board... (the "water" was declared definitely "off").

On this trip, we nearly took the photo op of a lifetime. Henry and I were transiting between islands (two aircraft) when, over completely open and calm seas, we came across a classic, tiny, tidal island of pure white sand, nothing else, oval in shape, about the size of a half-size tennis court, just big enough for one Iroquois. I was about to tell Henry to land on it while we got a classic publicity photo of him and his aircraft on the island, when it crossed my mind that if anything went wrong while he was on it, we'd have no way of accessing or fixing it, since we had no hoist, or of getting the crew off before the tide came in. So I chickened out. Helo folk learn about these things the hard way; 9 SQN lost a just-overhauled gunship on a beach in Vietnam in 1970 when the tide came in after a forced landing due to battle damage. Had we not flown on in Tonga, Henry and co could still be there!

National President's Message

From Carl Schiller OAM, CSM

ADF Firefighter Scheme

I am pleased to advise the Scheme commenced operation on September 20th 2021, as planned by Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA). The Department expected the Scheme would benefit approximately 300 veterans and their families. To date, 250 veterans have registered their interest following early advice about the Scheme. Details of the Scheme can be found on the DVA website at: https://www.dva.gov.au/financial-support/compensation-claims/claims-if-you-were-injured-1-july-2004/australian-defence.

DVA staff involved in the Scheme's administration have consulted the Association throughout the development process and worked diligently to keep the program on track. I applaud their professional approach.

Air Force Association Foundation

AFA Ltd's Foundation Working Group has been working with Dalton Garland Blanchard, its contracted fundraising organisation, to develop a case for seed funding for the Association's veteran and family homeless recovery project. This first step in the project will be completed within the next two weeks.

AFA WA Division has started its journey in establishing a veteran homeless facility that will be the pilot project. AFA VIC Division is developing a business plan based on AFA WA's experience

and other similar homeless programs operating in the wider community. AFA VIC will share its development business plan with any other division that may wish to opt in on the program. The veteran homeless initiative is the start-up project for the Foundation that will include a broad range of veteran and family support initiatives. The AFA Ltd Board decided to launch the Foundation's initial fundraising campaign around the veteran homeless project because of the over representation of veterans among Australia's homeless and the likelihood this initiative will have great appeal to the philanthropic community. The Foundation will seek to benefit veterans of any Service.

Establishing the AFA Foundation is a relatively simple task. Identifying and meeting the greatest needs are a challenge. Fundraising for this initiative is beyond the 'tin rattling', donor letters and raffle ticket sales strategies of smaller campaigns. We are adopting a highly sophisticated approach to achieve the greatest chance of success for this most worthwhile project. Your representative on the AFA Ltd Board is Peter Ring, AM AFC who is a keen supporter of veteran and family support measures.

Air Force/Air Force Association Alumni Group

Peter Ring and Robert Redman of your State Council are the principal players in developing a Statement of Requirement (SoR) for an Air Force/Air Force Association Alumni Group that is likely to be titled Network Air Force. The AFA Ltd Board will consider the SoR and will consult Air Force before approving development work. The task's Working Group, chaired by Peter Ring, will steer the development process.

Contesting the ANZAC Legend – Review of the Australian Curriculum

Our Association, like other major veterans' organisations has serious concerns about the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority's latest review of the Australian Curriculum, in particular the section on the different historical interpretations and contested debates about the nature and significance of the ANZAC Legend and WW1. I have written to Alan Tudge, MP (Minister for Education and Youth) and Andrew Gee, MP (Minister for Veterans' Affairs) expressing the view that it is incumbent on those teaching this subject to ensure actions of the past are examined in a clear and understandable context of today's and yesterday's values. The world was a very different place when the ANZAC spirit was established, but the contexts of sacrifice, nation-building and selflessness need to be clearly expostulated when teaching the topic to the next inheritors of this history. What is not contestable is recognition of the courage and acceptance of duty of all servicemen and women on any battlefield.

I also stressed that Australia commemorates and not celebrates war, remembering and honouring the sacrifices of those who served, and lives lost in the course of duty. Commemorations have a therapeutic value, especially for those who have been directly affected by the event and that this level of detail is missing from the Curriculum. Our Association is a guardian of Australian military history and does not resist its re-evaluation provided it is based on fact and presented in a balanced way.

'Buddy' system

The AFA Ltd Board will consider at its October meeting an initiative based on the 'buddy' system for supporting serving veterans and their families. It is designed to complement existing Defence support arrangements, including transition. I look forward to bringing you more information on this initiative in the near future.

Lastly: we'll learn to live with COVID but it's important to get vaccinated so we can enjoy past freedoms. Stay well and safe.

Neptune Support for Vietnam Transit

From Peter May

I was asked for my recollections of an 11 SQN deployment to New Guinea in support of HMAS Sydney's transit to Vietnam in 1965.

I was on the Lae deployment with 11 SQN in 1965. Our task was to escort HMAS Sydney through the Indonesian archipelago and on to Vung Tau. Indonesia had several Whiskey Class submarines in the area and moved a number of fighter and strike aircraft to their northern bases. Our four P2E Neptune (the older aircraft model) were well suited to the task because they were equipped with both "X Band" and "S Band" radars (APS 20 and APS 31) and a very effective ECM system (for the time). That allowed us to suppress the subs; they could not travel on the surface and could not recharge their batteries effectively. The ECM system allowed us to monitor the Indonesian air operations because they were largely dependent on ground radar support and we always knew "what, where and when" there was any action anywhere near the carrier.

11SQN P2E Neptune

I was an AEO at that time and flew several sorties as the convoy moved through the Java and South China Seas. I also operated our Operations Centre (a tent on the Lae airfield) and briefed and de-briefed crews; I was there for the comings and goings of most crew sorties. My memories are still about "Forms Purple and Green" as communications between the Detachment and Australia ran hot.

Air Crew were accommodated at the old "Cecil Hotel" (I think it subsequently burnt down). It was not far from the airfield and even when I was in my bunk, I could hear the morse code coming from our "Ops Room". It is a sign of the times that one of the local employees was also one of the last cannibals in the area and he served us breakfast every morning - I took a close interest in my bacon and eggs every day! We didn't get a lot of sleep, at least not on the ground and it was often hard to remain awake during some of the long sorties. I recall one scary occasion when the whole crew "nodded off" at the same time. It was lucky Bill M… woke up when he heard the engine noise change as it reflected back off the sea surface.

I remember the wreck off the end of the runway and was grateful for it as a landing aid at the end of a long sortie. More particularly, it was a place where taking off downwind was preferable to the normal practice of "in-to-wind" take offs. Clearing the wreck and heading over the sea = better than getting airborne and facing those mountains and not being able to turn!

On a different tack…it was only a couple of decades earlier when my father was in and around Lae. He was part of the push against the Japanese who were trying to retake Lae (2nd/28th Battalion, 9th Division AIF). The Australia Army landed at Scarlet Beach and 9 Division was given the task of capturing Finschhafen, a major strategic point dominating the gap between New Guinea and New Britain. The Japanese were desperate and the fighting was most intense at that time. My father was awarded the DCM for action at the crossing of the Busu River (near Lae). I had an opportunity to see that part of the country and it would not have been an easy time.

Bomber Command Commemoration at the AWM

From Fiona Campbell and Gordon Johnstone

Representatives of many community and veteran organisations, the RAAF, the Federal Government and Opposition and the Diplomatic Corps joined Bomber Command veterans, families and friends at the annual Bomber Command Wreath Laying Ceremony at the Australian War Memorial on Sunday 6 June. The Ceremony commemorates the service and sacrifice of all those who served and those who gave their lives while serving with RAF Bomber Command during the Second World War. Of the estimated 10,000 RAAF aircrew who served in Bomber Command, more than 4,100 were killed.

Dr Ron Houghton DFC, President of the Bomber Command Association in Australia and Air Marshal (Ret'd) Geoff Brown AO, Patron, Bomber Command Commemorative Day Foundation.
Photo courtesy of the AWM

Matt Anderson PSM, Director of the Australian War Memorial, gave a generous welcome on behalf of the AWM. Chief of Air Force, Air Marshal Mel Hupfeld AO DSC, provided a thoughtful commemorative address and Commanding Officer No. 86 Wing, Group Captain Tony Bull, delivered the "Reflections" on behalf of the veterans. In closing the ceremony, Air Vice-Marshal Warren Ludwig AM (Ret'd), President of the Bomber Command Commemorative Day Foundation, spoke of the legacy provided by the veterans and thanked the numerous organisations and individuals who provided support for the ceremony. Afterwards, a good number attended a relaxed lunch at "Poppy's" Café in the Australian War Memorial grounds.

The Bomber Command Commemorative Day Foundation has conducted the ceremony since 2008, with the exception of 2019 due to COVID. For more information about the Foundation go to bccdf.org.au.

The Welcome address by Matt Anderson PSM, Director of the Australian War Memorial, is available at: www.awm.gov.au/commemoration/speeches/bomber-command-ceremony-2021

The Australian War Memorial and the RAAF have provided photos of the event online at:
The Australian War Memorial albums at www.flickr.com/photos/australianwarmemorial/albums (search for "Bomber Command Commemorative Wreath laying Ceremony 6 June 2021")

Defence Images at https://images.defence.gov.au/assets/S20211861

Just Another Night At Work

(For "Deadly"), Tomas "Paddy" Hamilton 19SEP21

I knew Ernie for many years, until he passed away
He related to me this story, late one ANZAC Day
It's written in the first person, so you can easily see
It's exactly the way it was, when he shared this yarn with me

The year was 1943, our squadron flew from Driffield
In spite of all our losses, no one would ever yield
Our trusty steed, the Halifax, was as solid as a brick
The kite you could rely on, when the flack was thick

In the air at sunset, then out across the North Sea
We knew of all the dangers, but I prayed it would not be me
The throbbing of the Hercules, they haven't missed a beat
With the pressure the "erks" are under, that's no easy feat

The call comes through the intercom. "Enemy coast ahead!"
But we are all so busy, we have no time to dread
A Roman Candle falls to earth, leaving us in little doubt
In spite of all our hopes and prayers, the poor souls did not get out

The Rhine looms up before us, now the "fun" begins
Flack and blinding searchlights, a pair of lethal twins
The bomb aimer calls corrections, the pathfinders have done their job
Flying through that maelstrom, we have to weave and bob

The cry goes up. "Bombs gone!", now it's "Home Sweet Home"
No time for complacency, this is where night fighters roam
Bacon and eggs for breakfast, hardly a delight
Little compensation, for the ones we lost tonight

We'd hidden a bucket of beer, certain to hit the spot
But the Pathfinders beat us home and scoffed the bloody lot
They denied all knowledge, of this dastardly deed
They said it was the gremlins, who had the greater need

Personal kit to be packed away, letters to next of kin
No matter how often it's done, compassion never wears thin
The bar does not provide, the solace that you seek
Deep down inside, we all know, we will be doing it again next week

In spite of all the dangers, there's one thing I knew for sure
When I had my thirty ops up, I'd put in for another tour
The only demon that I'd feared, till I took my last breath
Lack of moral fibre is a fate far worse than death

Bomber Command's "jack of all trades", fulfilling every role
Flying in all weather, when the night was black as coal
Towing gliders over Arnhem, dropping spies behind the lines
A variety of payloads, from troops to shipping mines

I know that in the air force, everyone has their own story
The "Halibag" always plodded on. While the Lanc took all the glory
Some tasks were unpopular but you did not dare to shirk
For remember that in Bomber Command it was just another night at work

The History of No.1 Wireless Air Gunners School Ballarat 1940 - 1945

From Peter Dowling Secretary, Acting President and Treasurer Sunderland Branch NSW. Secretary AFA Ballarat Branch.

No 1 Wireless Air Gunnery School, known as 1WAGS, was established in Ballarat, Victoria on the 22nd April 1940. 1WAGS was established as part of the Empire Air Training Scheme (EATS) to provide a pool of trained aircrew who could then serve with the RAF. It was a purpose built school to train wireless operators and air gunners. Over 6000 trainees passed through the

school from 1940 to 1945. Under the EATS agreement, it was proposed that each country's aircrew would serve in distinct national squadrons once they arrived in Britain. However, the bulk of Australian aircrew actually served with RAF squadrons and not with a designated Australian squadron. Eventually there were 17 RAAF squadrons, these being numbered 450-467. Another five squadrons were also formed in the Middle East. SQNs 10 and 11 had already formed; SQN 10, the Sunderlands, joined coastal command in Europe at the outbreak of war while SQN 11, the Catalinas, served in the Pacific theatre.

Wireless Air patch

Air Gunner brevet

The first trainees arrived on the 29th April 1940 and were based at the Ballarat Showgrounds. The initial intake into Course 1 was 80 Wireless Air Gunners with approximately another 80 men arriving each month. As more recruits arrived at the base, accommodation was in tents until the school was transferred to the Ballarat aerodrome. Trainees were accommodated in purpose-built P-Type huts which were basically a timber and corrugated iron box with a gabled roof and usually with doors at each end. By 1941 there were approximately 160 standard P-Type huts erected at the Ballarat base. Some of the P-Type huts remain at the aerodrome today, including the Officers' Mess, Hut 48, which was recognised as 'historically significant' by Heritage Victoria and has been recently renovated with the assistance of The Ballarat City Council. This hut is now the headquarters of the AFA Ballarat branch, and the hut's restoration was the initiative of its members.

The purpose of the school was to train RAAF recruits in all aspects of wireless operating including morse code, setting up wireless equipment and operating from an aircraft. The course would take 24 weeks to complete with another four weeks at Air Gunners School at one of the three Bombing Air Gunners School - Evans Head NSW, Port Pirie SA or Sale VIC. Trainees needed to be capable of sending at least 18 words a minute in morse, and it was expected that after graduation, trainees would be competent enough to take on operational flights immediately. The number of trainees on the courses varied, usually between 100 and 150. With the closure of 2WAGS in Parkes NSW and 3WAGS in Maryborough QLD, the numbers on some courses increased. There were 58 Wireless/Air Gunner Courses and 12 Navigation Courses conducted at 1WAGS from 1940 to 1945 with over 6000 trainees having passed through the school. As WWII progressed, there was only the need for Air Gunners to be trained for RAAF service, so basic training for wireless operators ceased in May 1945.

Avro Anson with trainees at Ballarat

In October 1940, four Avro Anson aircraft arrived at the base to enable trainees to gain valuable practical experience in sending and receiving messages in planes. The Ansons arrived in time for Course No. 1 to utilize before graduating. Other aircraft to be used at the

school included Tiger Moths, Dragons, Douglas DC-2s, Oxfords and Wackett trainers. The Wacketts were originally designed to train pilots, however, the aircraft proved to be 'under powered' and the 'engine unreliable', so they were used by wireless operators to practice their new-found skills. The DC-2 was large enough to be used as a 'flying classroom', allowing a few trainees at a time to man the wireless equipment.

The WAAAF played a very important part in supporting the school - in the hangars, stores, messes, radio rooms and offices. Such was their contribution that on the 16th February 1943, journalists from The Age and The Australian Womens Weekly arrived to photograph the WAAAFs and interview them about their jobs. At their peak there were 159 WAAAF serving at 1WAGS Ballarat.

L to R: Wing Commander Guy Gibson, VC, DSO and Bar, DFC and Bar; Pilot Officer P M Spafford, bomb aimer; Flight Lieutenant R E G Hutchinson, wireless operator; Pilot Officer G A Deering and Flying Officer H T Taerum, gunners.

Photo thanks to the Imperial War Museum, © IWM TR 1127

The Memorial Roll commemorates 1182 RAAF 1WAGS trainees who were killed in action or on active service during WWII. As Wireless Operators, Air Gunners and Navigators they were crew for RAF and RAAF squadrons and served in all theatres during WWII - the UK, Europe, the Mediterranean, the Middle East, the Pacific and Australia. Those who perished, died as a result of air battles, aircraft accidents or as POWs. One of those who didn't return was Flying Officer Frederick Michael Spafford from 1WAGS Course 6. He was posted to 50 SQN RAF as a specialist bomb-aimer and after a tour of 30 operations, he joined the elite 617 SQN RAF for a special mission against dams in the Ruhr valley. He flew with Wing Commander Guy Gibson who regarded Spafford as the best bomb-aimer there was. The mission was successful with Spafford being awarded the DFC and Gibson the Victoria Cross.

Another of the many who completed the 1WAGS course and returned to civilian life was Denis [Ned] Kelly, who enlisted in the RAAF in 1940 and trained on 1WAGS, Course 2. He was posted to England and flew in Lancasters with 467 Squadron RAAF. His aircraft was shot down by a German night fighter but Denis evaded capture and finished the war with the rank of Flying Officer. Denis accepted the Legion de'Honneur at the French Embassy in Melbourne in 2015 on behalf of his crew mates. He passed away in September 2019.

Peter Dowling is the Secretary of the NSW Sunderland Association NSW. Like many Australians, he knew little of his father's history in WWII because like so many, it was never discussed. On joining the Sunderland Association NSW, he was privileged to gain much knowledge from Mr Peter Jensen of 461 SQN, who knew his father personally. Following his move to Ballarat in late 2018, Peter joined the Ballarat AFA, and was astonished to discover his father's name on the roll of honour in the renovated Officer's Mess AFA Hut 48, having been on No. 6 course in 1940. Peter's father had participated in 72 sorties as a WAG on Coastal Command Sunderland aircraft and was repatriated to Australia in 1944, returning to 1WAGS Ballarat as a radar operator instructor.

For more information on the history of 1WAGS in Ballarat visit:
www.1wags.org.au

Queensland Fire Insurance

From John Clarkson

A man and his wife moved back home to Toowoomba from Campbelltown, New South Wales. The wife had a wooden leg and to insure it in New South Wales was $1,990.00 a year! When they moved to Queensland, they went to an insurance agency to see how much it would cost to insure the wooden leg. The agent looked it up on the computer and said to the couple, '$39.00.' The husband was shocked and asked why it was so cheap here in Queensland to insure, because it cost him $1,990.00 in N.S.W.!

The agent turned his computer screen to the couple and said, 'Well, here it is on the screen, it says: "Any wooden structure, with a sprinkler system over it, is $39.00."

I often do find the Queensland logic far superior to most others!

AFC veteran won Australia's First Official Air Race

27 August 1920

This material is compiled from various sources including the History and Heritage Branch–Air Force, the RAAF Museum, the Australian War Memorial, ADF Serials and www.ozatwar.com. The History and Heritage Branch–Air Force is not responsible for pre-1921 items. Whilst every effort is made to confirm the accuracy of the entries, any discrepancies are solely the responsibility of the originator. As I am not a member of History and Heritage Branch-Air Force, all Air Force history or heritage queries should be directed, in the first instance, to airforce.history@defence.gov.au

On this day, William Harold Treloar - a former Lieutenant in the Australian Flying Corps (AFC) - won Australia's first official air race. One of four AFC veterans competing, the race was conducted in Victoria with the aircraft taking off from Serpentine, flying to St Kilda, circling above the spire of Christ Church before proceeding to the General Post Office in Elizabeth Street, Melbourne.

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL P00449.004

A large crowed assembled at the 'winning post', the Melbourne Town Hall, to witness Treloar win in 1 hour, 15 minutes and 17 seconds, with the second and third place getters arriving two minutes later, only eight seconds apart.

A motor mechanic who had previously served as a 2/Lt in the militia, Treloar joined the Mesopotamia Half Flight on 26 May 1915 and was forced down and captured by the Turks on 16 September 1915, spending the remainder of the war in captivity in Constantinople. Released on 21 November 1918, Treloar returned to Australia on 5 February 1919 and his appointment terminated on 30 March that year.

One Hundred and One Years of Comradeship

From Christopher Beazley

Whilst doing some research I came across this article about the Air Force Association back in 1971. It was in the October 1971 edition of RAAF NEWS and then titled *Fifty One years of Comradeship*.

The Air Force Association, which sponsors a large part of the activities featured each Air Force Commemoration Week, is one year older than the RAAF itself. It celebrated its fiftieth anniversary on February 28 last year. Its full name is The Australian Flying Corps and Royal Australian Air Force Association, but it was founded as the Australian Flying Corps Association and sprang from the historic exploits of the AFC in World War.

After the war ended the Australian airmen returned home and set about re-establishing themselves in civil life. Some of them became founder members of the RAAF in 1921. Most felt the need of coming together again to preserve the comradeship of the war years, to assist the next-of-kin of the deceased and those survivors who needed help because of war injuries or other difficulties, and also to support the interests of flying in Australia.

This caused the formation of the Australian Flying Corps Association, with a dinner to celebrate. One of the men at that dinner was Lt Colonel Richard Williams, former commander of No. 1 Squadron in the Middle East, and who was to become a year later the First Air Member of the Air Board of the newly-formed Australian Air Force.

About the same time, other members of the Australian Flying Corps in other capital cities were getting together and forming Associations, and these became linked in following years. By social events, publicity campaigns, air pageants and similar, they raised funds for benevolent purposes and they carried out those activities normally expected of ex-servicemens' organisations. Air Marshal Sir Richard Williams maintained a close link with the AFC Association, and the AFC and RAAF Association as it later became. He was for twenty-five years its Federal President and is now its President-of-Honour. In 1943 the old AFC Association opened its ranks to the young Australian airmen of World War II, and grew to become, as it still is, one of the major ex-service organisations of Australia.

The Association acquired benevolent funds, set up pensions and welfare sections, and looked after the interests of its airmen with the Repatriation and War Service Homes departments. On Federal and State levels its representations were received by Ministers and Governments and played a part in the forming of Repatriation and War Service Homes legislation.

BRANCHES AND CLUBS

The AFA has divisions in all States with many branches. These are either area branches (eg. Fremantle Branch) or unit (eg. 458 SQN Branch). The Association also has licensed clubs. Through these branches and clubs, it provides its members with continuing comradeship and friendship with many people of similar interests and background. It provides the means by which those who need help can receive it promptly. During a typical month, the statistics of welfare and similar cases handled by the Association would be:

Welfare cases: 60
Pensions applications and appeals: 56
Housing cases: 8
Employment: 8 (this figure is expected to increase in the near future)

As well, as many as 500 telephone enquiries on general welfare and pension matters could be handled. Eligibility for membership is gained, for both men and women, by six months service anywhere in time of war, (includes Malaya, Korea and Vietnam as well as the two World Wars) or two years service at anytime, anywhere, in the Air Force. Naturally those still serving are eligible to join.

Illegal Fishing 'Discouraged' with HE

From John Clarkson

This incident occurred to an 11 Squadron crew back in 1980. At the time, I was a Sergeant Armourer working on the flight line at 492 Squadron. There were frequent flights by both 11 Squadron and 10 Squadron crews doing coastal surveillance and other flights all around the Australian coastline.

An 11SQN Chinese fishing vessel 'discourager'

During a coastal surveillance sortie, an 11 Squadron crew, in a P3-B Orion, was searching the ocean not far from Darwin for any illegal activity. They noticed a Chinese vessel; not Chinese Navy, this vessel appeared to be a fishing vessel, but the P3 crew thought the vessel was involved in a lot more than just fishing. The aircraft captain decided to notify the ship's crew that they were in Australian waters and that they should leave. This was unsuccessful, so the aircraft crew employed several other moves to attempt to get this ship to change course, however it seemed that no amount of aircraft manoeuvring, including low flypasts, could motivate the ship's crew to move.

So, our brave and innovative captain thought of a plan he knew would work. The aircraft returned to RAAF Base Darwin, and the crew requested a reasonable quantity of the "Signal Underwater Sound" (known simply as SUS) from the War Reserve stocks held on several bases. The normal SUS which was always loaded on the P3-B aircraft contained a small charge (about 2 ounces) of tetryl. When the SUS was dropped into the water, at either shallow (about 50 feet) or deep (about 600 feet), the charge would make a small detonating sound which would be heard by any vessel. However, the War Reserve SUS contained a larger charge, (about two pounds of TNT) which when detonated in the water gave the appearance of a depth charge. So, our valiant 11 SQN crew took off from Darwin once again and flew straight back to the area where this recalcitrant Chinese ship was still sailing in Australian waters. The captain then flew at reasonably low level, going past the ship several times, and on each occasion dropped a few of these HE SUS alongside the ship, starting a few hundred feet astern the ship, and progressing along the coastal side of the ship. All the charges were set at "Shallow", causing these two pound TNT charges to detonate at about 50 feet depth. The result was several plumes of water not unlike that of a depth charge, appearing behind and beside the ship.

The result was very satisfying for the 11 SQN crew, as the Chinese ship changed course almost immediately! The aircraft crew logged the whole event and continued on their coastal surveillance. The end result was that the official RAAF view did not appreciate the aircraft captain choosing to use the HE version of SUS and, sadly, he was reprimanded to some degree. I don't think the reprimand was all that severe, as he and his crew continued flying their normal programme after this incident. However, the incident was a good talking point for some time, and many appreciated the effect that the SUS (HE) had when detonated at a shallow depth.

Mine Search Training in Iraq

21 September 2004

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On this day, Squadron Leader Paul Muscat arrived in Iraq to become Officer-in-Command of Explosive Ordnance Disposal with the multinational command established in Iraq following the overthrow of Saddam Hussein in 2003.

The campaign of violence mounted by dissident elements, involving extensive use of improvised explosive devices, required special emphasis by coalition forces to counter such weapons. In his new capacity, Muscat led the Explosives Hazards Awareness Team with the role of coordinating mine search training for all coalition personnel in theatre and preparing to enter Iraq from Kuwait. From January 2005 until he departed Iraq in March, Muscat also coordinated the induction of Australian Defence Force personnel into the Combined Explosives Exploitation Cell (CEXC) in Iraq. RAAF Sergeants, Flight Sergeants and Warrant Officers were rotated through the CEXC before the ADF withdrew in July 2009, and another two RAAF officers also succeeded Muscat in his position.

More on CEXC is here: https://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/the-birth-of-the-combined-explosives-exploitation-cell

Let's have a moment's silence for all the people stuck in traffic on their way to the gym to ride stationary bicycles.

Bargain!

From John Clarkson

A motoring enthusiast was reading the pages of carsales.com.au looking for that elusive bargain. Then he saw this advertisement:

For Sale: Classic Mercedes Benz 350SE, fully restored, roadworthy certificate supplied, all receipts available. Vehicle is in impeccable condition, 11 months registration left, cash sale only. Will sell for $20.00. Call this number.

Our enthusiast could hardly believe what he was reading. He called the number and a lady answered. Yes, she said the Ad was genuine and yes, he could come and inspect the vehicle. With no time to waste, our man drove over to the address given to him by the lady and he proceeded to inspect this beautifully restored Mercedes Benz. He inspected all the paperwork which came with the vehicle, then looked at all the receipts and, although amazed, he realized that all was in order and he agreed to pay the lady $20.00 in cash. The lady promptly wrote a proper receipt for the vehicle including the cost as $20.00 as full and final payment, and then signed the transfer of registration forms.

As our man thanked the lady profusely for this amazing sale, he said, "I have to ask, how come such a magnificent vehicle is being sold at such a ridiculous price?"

The lady replied, "I am complying strictly with the conditions of my late husband's will. The will stipulated that all the proceeds from the sale of his classic Mercedes Benz were to be paid directly to his secretary".

Calling former Wesley College, Melbourne Veterans

From Leigh Treyvaud

In recent years substantial work has been undertaken improving the knowledge of the service of former students of Wesley College, Melbourne in WWI and WWII. Wesley now seeks to expand that work by seeking information on former students who had military service in the post-1945 era. This would include those who served full time, part time or through National Service. Any Collegians who have served, are still serving or family members of those who are deceased, are invited to contact Leigh Treyvaud (NS Intake 4/1967) at: treyvaud-lc@bigpond.com.

A more recent history of service

In recent years, substantial work on improving our knowledge of the service of OWs in the conflicts of WWI and WWII has been undertaken.

However, there is also the matter of military service in the post-1945 period. For one reason or another, the recording of OWs in service since that time does not match the records for the years prior to that.

Work has commenced to remedy that. **Leigh Treyvaud (OW1963)** has stepped forward and started the task to find the stories of our post-1945 men and women in service, by combing through College records, conducting internet searches and following leads as names are put forward. Leigh is ideal for this task, having commenced two years National Service in 1967 and spent time at the Officer Training Unit, Scheyville, NSW before being posted to the 1st Armoured Regiment at Puckapunyal.

One person who has emerged from this research is **Robin McBride (OW1964)**. Robin served in the Army for over 25 years, including SAS service. He has recently published a story of his SAS patrol experience in Vietnam and is also writing the story of his father **Ian McBride (OW 1924)**, who led an amazing escape from Japanese forces on Ambon in 1942. The McBride military story extends back to Robin's great-uncle **Allen McBride (OW1905)** who served in France in WWI, unfortunately dying of influenza during that pandemic in November 1918.

So, if you are an OW or you have a family member who served in uniform post-1945, please contact Leigh via the OWCA office: OWCA@wesleycollege.edu.au. He would be most pleased to hear from you.

At home researching OW military service post-1945, is Leigh Trevaud (OW1963), who welcomes stories and enquiries.