



SITREP

Air Force Association NSW News and Views

77 Squadron goes 'Multi-Role'

from John Clarkson

During one of the Defence Exercises in Butterworth in 1968, 77SQN tried a very American thing and attempted to get our pilots to fly 'Multi-Role' missions. Each Sabre had a set of 110 gallon combat tanks, (*somewhat smaller than the long range tanks of 167 gallons*), two Sidewinder missiles, (*inert missile motors with the active guidance head attached*) 60 rounds of ball ammunition in each gun, six rockets (*two rocket rails with three rockets each*) on the port side and four practice bombs (*four practice bombs on one bomb carrier*) on the starboard side. The biggest problem for the pilots was really how to manage all the different types of ordnance firing with the small fuel range of the Sabre, hence the additional fuel with the combat tanks; it certainly took some skill on their part. To enable the pilot to select each type of ordnance in turn as he required, the armourers set up the switches in the armament circuitry to enable the pilot to simply select one and then another. (*The Sabre was capable of carrying and firing up to 30 rockets, with a complete set of rocket rails on both sides and no external fuel tanks*). Therefore, with rockets loaded on one side only and just six rockets, the armourers had to pre-set the rocket circuitry for the pilot to go from one type to another.

This became interesting when one of our junior pilots was doing his pre-flight inspection and asked, "Why is my rocket switch selected to 8?" Not having enough time to explain the rocket circuitry to the pilot, our trusty LAC Armourer simply told him, "Because the f***ing sergeant said so". Fortunately, the pilot didn't take offence and saw the funny side.



I can't remember the sequence in which the pilots fired their ordnance once they were out on the range, but each group of four aircraft would be airborne for about 70 to 75 minutes, making use of their extra fuel in the combat tanks. Around late morning, a strange scene occurred just outside the busy flight hut. One notable airframe fitter set up an 'SP bookies' table near the hut, quoting prices on which pilot would be the first to drop a set of tanks. As the pilots had to fire everything else and not jettison the tanks, who would make a switch error and drop the tanks? Some of the younger ones were offended when they saw numbers like 2:1 ON, or even just a low 5:2. Experienced pilots like Denis Stenhouse and Lindsay Naylor etc, were 50:1 and so on. Fortunately, all the pilots did themselves proud and no one dropped any tanks.





Remembering the Service of our Malaya and Borneo Veterans

Sunday, 30 August 2020, Office of the Hon. Darren Chester, Canberra ACT

On Malaya and Borneo Veterans' Day, Australia recognises our personnel who served in the Malayan Emergency (1948-1960), and the Indonesian Confrontation, or Konfrontasi, (1962-1966). Minister for Veterans' Affairs Darren Chester said although sensitivities surrounding the conflicts prevented widespread media coverage at the time, our Australian Defence Force (ADF) personnel played an important role in bringing these conflicts to an end. "The Malayan Emergency was declared three years after the end of the Second World War, when the Malayan Communist Party launched an insurgency against British colonial rule," Mr Chester said. "Australia's commitment began with the Royal Australian Air Force in 1950 and they were joined by the Royal Australian Navy and Australian Army in 1955.

"On 31 July this year, we marked 60 years since the end of the Malayan Emergency and while the Malayan government declared the Emergency over on 31 July 1960, some Australian units remained in Malaya until 1963. "It is important we recognise our Defence personnel who served over the 13 years of Australia's involvement, in what was one of Australia's longest military commitments." The Indonesian Confrontation, a small undeclared war, began in 1962 after Indonesian forces launched attacks on the newly federated state of Malaysia. "Australia's commitment began in 1964, and in 1965 our troops assisted in small scale operations in the thickly forested terrain of Borneo" Mr Chester said. "Although the situation had stabilised by the end of 1965, events within Indonesia led to an official end to the conflict in the following year when a treaty between Indonesia and Malaysia was signed. "Tomorrow, we pay tribute to the 39 Australians who died while serving in the Malayan Emergency, 15 of whom were killed in action. We also pay tribute to over 20 Australians who lost their lives whilst serving in the Indonesian Confrontation. "To those veterans of these two conflicts, on behalf of Australia, thank you for your service and sacrifice." To find out more about the Malayan Emergency and the Indonesian Confrontation , please visit the Anzac Portal website.

MEDIA CONTACTS: Rachel Tharratt: 02 6277 7820
DVA Media: 02 6289 6466



Editor: Following the retirement of the last Qantas Boeing 747, I thought I'd include a few articles on this classic aircraft. Thanks to John Clarkson for his contributions.

Look back at Boeing 747 – the Queen of the Skies

The first Boeing 747 made its maiden global flight on February 9, 1969, a year before entering service with the fondly remembered airline Pan American World Airways.



The last Qantas 747 departs Sydney on its way to the Mojave Desert

It quickly became a passenger favourite. It's doubled as a flying White House as Air Force One, as well as being the setting for many a Hollywood airborne adventure.

The 747 ushered in the era of the twin-aisle, wide-body passenger plane. It was the first aeroplane to have almost vertical sidewalls and a high ceiling, giving passengers a feeling of space and openness. Instead of a long, thin tube, the cabin was split up into "rooms," with galleys and



lavatories installed as dividers. Experts in the 1960s predicted that the 747 would have a short lifetime as a passenger jet, eventually giving way to aircraft travelling at multiple times the speed of sound.

So, the 747's designers tried to future-proof the jumbo by engineering it to carry cargo. The main deck of the 747 was sized to handle two standard cargo containers.

To make loading easier, the nose of the cargo model of the 747 opened and pivoted upwards.



That meant the cockpit had to be located above the main deck, giving the 747 its distinctive hump just behind the flight deck. What was originally envisioned as a crew rest area in that space became the jet's most renowned feature, the passenger lounge.

The last Boeing 747 commercial passenger jet to be delivered was in July 2017 - a jumbo for Korean Air Lines.



Dangers of Clear Air Turbulence – Boeing 747-400

from John Clarkson

Around the late 1990s, a Qantas B747-400 was about to depart Los Angeles (LAX) on a trans-Pacific flight to Auckland (AKL). The Captain, with his flight crew and cabin crew were assembled at the Flight Planning section at LAX airport. The flight crew consisted of the Captain, (who was a Senior Check Captain), the First Officer, who was soon to be selected to undergo Captain training, and two second officers, who were to relieve both the Captain and the First Officer at alternating intervals. The first inkling the Captain had to what may be an unusual flight, was that the MET section was not able to give him an up to date weather report – the report they gave him was by this time 24 hours old. “This is a good start”, the Captain said to his crew. Prior to leaving the MET section, the fellow did say to the Captain, “I have heard that there may be some turbulence about two to three hours out of LAX”. The Captain replied, “Thanks for the warning.”

Prior to boarding, the Captain gathered his crew, both the flight and cabin crews, and as part of the normal pre-flight briefing, he told the cabin crew, “I am aware that you will be serving a meal not long



after our departure; I want that entire meal served and cleaned up before we are two hours out of LAX, I am told to expect some turbulence about two to three hours out. Also, I want you to emphasise to all passengers the importance of wearing the seat belts – even after the seat belt light goes out”. The Captain knew this would be quite a feat to accomplish, but he knew the cabin crew would rise to the occasion.

The taxi out and takeoff went as planned and the flight crew monitored the flight as they climbed to cruise altitude. The Captain allowed the First Officer to take a break before him, as he wanted to be on deck in case they encountered turbulence. The flight crew were well aware of the types of turbulence they might encounter; the most common is the type which is usually found in a storm, and the storm clouds are usually visual and the crew can navigate around them. The crew were also well aware of the dangers of “Clear Air Turbulence”, which is the most dangerous and can rarely be seen and is usually encountered without warning.

At about 2½ hours into the flight, whilst cruising comfortably at 39,000 feet, the Captain was pleased that the cabin crew had in fact served the meal and had completely cleaned up all the trays, remains of food etc and the cabin was clean once again. He also advised the passengers to keep wearing their seat belts – even during cruise. Then, without any warning, the aircraft was struck by a massive blow of Clear Air Turbulence. The aircraft literally fell as if by simple gravity, straight down to about 27,000 feet. Immediately the Captain told the cabin crew of the turbulence and switched the ‘Seat Belt’ lights on. The Captain contacted ATC and advised them that they had unavoidably descended some 12,000 feet due to Clear Air Turbulence. ATC asked if he was declaring an emergency, and the Captain replied, “Not yet, let's see the condition of the aircraft”.

The Captain asked the cabin crew to check on the passengers and see if there were any injuries. Thankfully, all the passengers were wearing their seat belts, but there was one young man who had suffered a broken arm. Incredibly, although he was wearing his seat belt, and he was almost asleep, the sudden negative G force made his arm rise rapidly upwards, and when the aircraft suddenly stopped falling, his arm came straight down hitting the armrest with such force that it broke a bone in his forearm! The cabin crew reported that apart for this unfortunate man, there were no other injuries and there were no cases of trays or equipment flying around.

Just when the Captain was receiving all this news and the flight crew were beginning to climb back to cruise altitude, the aircraft was struck once again with a massive blow of Clear Air Turbulence. Once again, the aircraft literally fell down to about 17,000 feet. The Captain later said that the actual falling, although frightening enough, was not the worst part. He said that when the aircraft stopped falling, there was a very loud BANG, just as if the aircraft had landed on a slab of concrete. He always believed the aircraft must have suffered a huge amount of ‘Over Stress’ in the airframe. Once again, the Captain reported the turbulence to ATC and advised that they were beginning to climb back to their cruise altitude. He also contacted the Maintenance Control Section in Sydney, reporting the two massive hits. The Captain then reported to ATC that they would proceed to their destination with considerable care and requested a straight in approach with no diversions.

However, the drama was not yet over. Several hours later, ATC advised that Auckland (ALK) was suffering very bad weather and they recommended that they divert to an island an hour or two off the NE coast of New Zealand, then after the weather in ALK had cleared, to take off again and proceed to AKL. The Captain rejected the offer and emphasised that once the aircraft had landed, he was declaring it as unserviceable due to an over stress and emphasised that they MUST land at an airport where there was a Boeing 747 Maintenance Facility. So, ATC said they would guide them into ALK, and try to avoid the worst of the weather. Toward the end of the flight, the Captain advised the Cabin Crew that they may experience some stormy weather during the descent and landing – as if they hadn't been through enough already. Whilst the approach was reasonably rough, it was manageable, and they landed at their destination at Auckland.



The Captain thanked the passengers for their patience throughout the flight and they disembarked the aircraft. When the cabin crew and flight crew were leaving the aircraft, the Captain asked them to gather around on the aerobridge whilst he gave them a debrief. Whilst he was complimenting the flight and cabin crews for the way they had handled such a difficult flight, the Captain looked out of the aerobridge window and saw the baggage people unloading the crew baggage. As he watched, he saw his own case lying on the ground, just as a tractor ran right across it. All he could say was, “That’s all I need!” Prior to going to his hotel, the Captain completed all the Tech Logs for the aircraft, describing all the events, and also writing a flight crew report for Flight Operations. Some weeks later, at an ‘Operations – Engineering’ meeting, his report was discussed in detail. The Chief Engineering Officer presented the report on the examination of the airframe, including engine mounts, cabin lockers and other mounts etc, and reported that there was no evidence of any over stress damage anywhere in the airframe. When we told the Captain later of the inspection results, he simply said, “They must be built like a tank!”

We all concluded that the Boeing airframe has been a huge success over many years, as they progressed from the old 747-200 then to the 747-300, (including some minor changes), and then to the 747-400, which included major avionic changes, larger and more powerful engines, and some airframe changes. Yet, the airframe of the 747 was as the Captain said, “Built like a tank”.



Short Take Off Jumbo

from John Clarkson

At my retirement dinner in September 2003, the staff of Flight Technical and Flight Operations presented me with a very nice plaque as a commemoration of my service with Qantas. The plaque contained a photograph of a B747-438 aircraft taking off, as well as a silver-plated inscription with my name and service dates. I was quite impressed. They said they wanted to give me something with a Qantas B747-400 featuring in the plaque as a token of the time I spent as a Technical Coordinator supporting the B747-400 pilots. Over several years, I had produced the Operations Manual suite for the B747-400 aircraft from the Boeing manual, adapting it for Qantas pilots. When I heard the explanation behind the photograph, I then realised just how special this photograph was. I shall explain.

The event came about a couple of months previously as a result of an unexpected “incident” involving a British Airways B747-400. The BA 747-400 had just landed on the long runway at Mascot, R/W 34L, which is about 4000 metres (about 13,100 feet) long and for some reason was stranded almost on the intersection between R/W 34L and the cross runway 09/27. Therefore, this left the only active runway as 34 Right. This runway, which is only 2438 metres (7999 feet) long, is normally only used by domestic aircraft, eg, B737, B767, A330, and other similar sized aircraft. Special permission is required for a B747 to use the runway, especially for takeoff on an international commercial flight.



Right at this time, the QF005 (VH-OJH) was about to depart Sydney for Singapore. The aircraft had just completed pushback and was beginning to taxi. Air Traffic Control advised the crew of the QF005



of the blockage on the main runway and said that they had a choice of either returning to blocks and waiting for the blockage to clear, OR to continue with the flight using the shorter runway of R/W 34R. The flight crew requested a few minutes to re-calculate their take-off data and speeds. The flight crew then confirmed that they could in fact safely use the shorter runway providing that any noise abatement procedures be waived for this take off, in order that a rating of full power be used, rather than the de-rated power setting normally used.

This photograph is of VH-OJH on *that* takeoff! The photo was taken with a telephoto lens, some distance north of the end of the runway, hence the runway distance markers seem to be close together. When you study the photo, there are three sets of lines crossing the runway either under or in front of the aircraft. The line almost under the Body Landing Gear is the “1,000 feet to go” line. The line with just two dashes across the runway, which seems to be under the nose wheel, is the “500 feet to go” line. Then the line with numerous dots represents the “Piano Keys” nearing the end of the runway. The aircraft is shown right on rotation with the last set of wheels just separating from the runway and the aircraft is on full power.

Not long after my farewell dinner, I showed the photo and story to my son, who had just been transferred in Qantas Holidays to the building not far from the Domestic Terminal, and almost in line with Runway 34R. When he showed the photo and story to the other staff members, they all said that they remembered that day quite well, and that there had been some memorable departures by a variety of aircraft, but they all said that the Qantas 747-400 was the best showing its full power.



77SQN Pilot Awarded DFC

22 September 1952

This material is compiled from sources including the History and Heritage Branch–Air Force, the RAAF Museum, the Australian War Memorial, ADF Serials and Peter Dunn. 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, No 77 Squadron Flight Commander Flight Lieutenant Doug Hurst led 12 Kimpo-based Meteors on a rocket attack against a dangerous build-up of enemy troops in northwest Korea. Although met by intense and accurate anti-aircraft fire, Hurst led the Meteors in a low, daring attack, which successfully destroyed about 24 buildings. For this action - and others - Hurst was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. The award was promulgated on 7 July 1953.



Doug Hurst is front row, left, in this Dec 1952 photograph of 77SQN pilots





Request for Information

from Robert Muscat, President – Military History Society of New South Wales

The historian Paul Byrnes, who wrote the recently published book "The Lost Boys" about under age Anzacs in World War I, has contacted me to say he is now writing another book about under age volunteers in World War II. He is interested in hearing from anyone who has a story about Australians under the age of 18 who joined up to serve. If you know any stories in this regard, please feel free to contact Paul on ptbyrnes@me.com

Robert Muscat

President – Military History Society of New South Wales
Mobile: 0419 698 783
PO Box 929, Rozelle NSW 2039



Veteran Family Advocate Appointed

Saturday, 22 August 2020, Office of the Hon. Darren Chester, Canberra ACT

In a significant step towards promoting better outcomes for veterans' families, Ms Gwen Cherne has been appointed as the first ever Veteran Family Advocate, representing their perspectives in ongoing policy and decision making across Government. Minister for Veterans' Affairs Darren Chester congratulated Ms Cherne on her appointment and said that her passion and experience in supporting the ex-service community would ensure the Government continues to put veterans and their families first. "Ms Cherne has an impressive resume in roles relating to defence personnel and veterans' families at both a national and international level, but she also brings with her a range of lived experience - as a Defence spouse, a war widow, and the mother of a current serving Australian Defence Force member," Mr Chester said.

"By directly engaging with the families of veterans of all generations, Ms Cherne will draw on their advice to help shape the design of programs, policy and services, with a focus on building on our understanding of the factors that can enhance or detract from the mental health of veterans and their families, particularly during transition from service." The establishment of the Veteran Family Advocate will be undertaken through the existing Repatriation Commission structure enshrined in the Veterans' Affairs legislation, so it can be established immediately. Ms Cherne said as a single mother with two young children at home, and having lost her husband to suicide, she was acutely aware of some of the challenges that Defence families face. "I am proud to be appointed the Veteran Family Advocate and am looking forward to building on the important work that has been done to better support veterans' families in the last few years," Ms Cherne said. "The department has made some significant and positive changes for veterans and their families, and I am very cognisant of the responsibility I have to ensure that work continues and that the voices of veterans' families are heard."

Ms Cherne's background includes service to the veteran community as a board member on the NSW War Widow's Guild, as an Ambassador for the Commando Welfare Trust and working with DVA on issues facing widows and families through her appointment to the Council for Women and Families United by Defence Service. In recent years, she has also served on the Council of the Australian War Memorial and as an ambassador for the 2018 Invictus Games. A merit selection process to appoint the Veteran Family Advocate was undertaken in accordance with the APS Merit and Transparency Policy. Ms Cherne will start in the role on Monday, 24 August 2020.

MEDIA CONTACTS: Rachel Tharratt: 02 6277 7820
DVA Media: 02 6289 6466





From the National President's Desk

Carl Schiller, OAM, CSM National President

When preparing to write an obituary for the late Air Marshal Selwyn 'David' Evans, I came across one of his beliefs: We are here on earth to do good unto others. What the others are here for, I have no idea. He was patron to several Air Force related associations and in his younger years a very active supporter.

David Evans' belief is central to the Objects of our Association, which is why it has embarked on a transformation process that commenced in 2017 when the then National Council agreed we needed to become 'the Ex-Service Organisation of first choice for Air Force veterans and their families'. Great words, but there's a lot of effort and commitment needed to bring this aspiration to reality. More than anything, it needs collaboration that is difficult in a federated model such as ours. There is a plethora of federated not-for-profit organisations in Australia and my advice is that few have been successful in achieving true unity. And, there are a myriad of reasons why the federated model is less successful in achieving the desired outcomes of the wider organisation. Sovereignty (turf protection), resistance to change, fear of deciding, personal egos, takeover conspiracies, etc are just some of the pushback factors. In some organisations, these have higher importance than its reason for being. However, I have great confidence that the rational thinking and adaptable reputation of Air Force veterans will see our Association achieve its objectives.

Over the last year, the Association has enhanced its relationship with Air Force. Air Marshal Hupfeld is the Patron of Air Force Association Ltd (AFA Ltd). He has shown a keen interest in its activities and has invited Sharon Bown (Vice-President) and I to have regular meetings with him. Warrant Officer Air Force Fiona 'Fee' Grasby has been appointed as a member of the Joint Boards Steering Group, which is a working sub-committee of the National Board. Fee 'beams in' regularly by video and provides an update and question and answer session on current Service activities. Fee is our 'window' to the serving community.

We also have developed an excellent working relationship with other staff within Air Force Headquarters, who recently approached us to assist a serving member who is separating from the Service. Similarly, the Air Force 2021 Team have received the Association's support regarding the veteran component in its planned Air Force 100th Anniversary Commemoration to be held on March 31st next. About 18 months ago, after several months of lobbying, the Association was given official permission to use the roundel within the first letter 'o' in the word Association to enable us to distinguish our organisation from the USAF's Air Force Association. Air Force is vigorously protective of its branding. Its permission for us to use the 'red kangaroo in motion' reflects its attitude of us.

The Association's support for our veteran firefighters, who were exposed to contaminated waste materials during service, is one of the more complex veteran support activities undertaken in recent years. There are possibly upwards to 500 living veterans who could be affected. AFA Ltd has represented these veterans at Secretary, DVA's ESO Round Table, face-to-face video meetings with DVA senior policy staff, and more recently in several conversations with the Minister for Veterans' Affairs. Briefs have been sent to lawyers for a civilian legal opinion.

By a quirk of legislation, these veterans are unable to obtain recognition for their fire training related injuries and receive the appropriate health support and opportunity for compensation available to current serving ADF and civilian firefighters. The disappointment is there is national and international presumptive legislation for firefighters, yet these veterans fall outside current beneficial veteran support legislation for their fire training and employment related injuries. The Association is continuing the fight and will not back away until an acceptable remedy is achieved.

A much needed new AFA National website at <https://raafa.org.au> was upload recently. The website and social medial platforms will provide much of the information on what is happening at National.



All members are invited to submit articles or enquires by contacting AFA Ltd's newly appointed Communications and Media Manager at admin@raafa.org.au.

On September 29th, the AFA Ltd Directors will meet in an Extraordinary Board Meeting to discuss the concept of creating an AFA Foundation like the Bravery Trust. The Foundation would be self-funded by several funding streams. It would not duplicate existing support services available to veterans or the general community, but would provide support tailored to individual needs and would ensure veterans, regardless of where they live, would receive the required level of support. The Foundation's operation would have no impact on the operation of State/Territory Divisions except that these may have a referral role. Depending on the outcome of the meeting, it will likely be part of the next conversation Sharon and I will have with CAF and WOFFAF. Current matters with Air Force are the Association's proposals for an Air Force/Air Force Association Alumni, and an Air Force/Air Force Association Wings sharing arrangement noting the magazine had its origin as an official journal of the RAAF.

The Joint Boards Steering Group has several activities in play. Constitutional alignment heads the list. This isn't about making all Divisions' constitutions the same but having some common elements, such as: common purposes, eligibility for membership, membership categories, etc. Developing elements for common branding and a national membership database are also part of the Group's remit. On October 13th, the Steering Group will meet with the AFA Ltd Board to discuss progress and share ideas. Consequently, despite the COVID-19 travel restrictions experienced this year, 2020 has been a progressive year.

Take care, and stay safe.



Significant New Appointments to Help Shape the Future of Veterans' Support

Office of the Hon Darren Chester, Canberra ACT

Future support for our veteran community has been given a significant boost with the appointment of two senior positions to the Repatriation Commission. Ms Kate Pope PSM has been appointed to the role of Deputy President and Major General Stuart Smith AO DSC (Retd) will act in the role of Defence Engagement Commissioner. Minister for Veterans' Affairs Darren Chester congratulated Ms Pope and Major General Smith on their appointments and said he looked forward to working with them both to ensure the Government had the best possible policies in place to support Australia's veteran community into the future.

“Deputy President Pope will be heavily involved in the decision making of the Repatriation Commission and Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission, which make critical decisions about the services and support for 300,000 current and former members of the Australian Defence Force and their families,” Mr Chester said. “Kate will also be the Department of Veterans' Affairs' senior executive responsible for leading the development of veterans and families' policy and ensuring DVA's service delivery functions are shaped and directed by Government policy.

“As the Defence Engagement Commissioner, Major General Smith will be responsible for engaging with Defence on behalf of the Repatriation Commission, with a focus on strategic planning and advising on what future generations of veterans will look like. “He will provide advice to Government on the future direction of the ADF, ensuring our future veterans have the support they need, when and where they need it.

“Australians recognise the significant contribution of our Defence Force personnel and the Government provides over \$11 billion annually to the Department of Veteran's Affairs to support our veteran community. “These two appointments are crucial in helping to determine how that investment is utilised both now and into the future. I congratulate both Kate and Stuart on their appointments.”



The Repatriation Commission and Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission, through the Department of Veterans' Affairs, provide income support, compensation, health care, rehabilitation and other benefits and services for current and former members of the Australian Defence Force and eligible dependants. Please see below for further detail on the profiles of the new appointments.

Ms Kate Pope PSM has been appointed as Deputy President of the Repatriation Commission for a 5-year term. Kate has over thirty years experience in the Australian Public Service, including at a senior level in the Departments of Immigration and Health. Kate has a passion for supporting our veterans and has been a Senior Executive at DVA since 2016, most recently as First Assistant Secretary, Veterans' Services Design Division. She has acted in the Deputy President role since May 2020. Kate has made a significant contribution to the Department and the veteran community and has been a key contributor to DVA's Veteran Centric Reform Program, which has transformed the way we provide services and support to veterans and their families in recent years.

Major General Stuart Smith AO DSC (Retd) has been appointed as the Commissioner for Defence Engagement for an initial 12-month period. Stuart had a distinguished military career prior to his retirement from the ADF in 2017. He was promoted to Major General in 2012 when he became Commander of Australia's 3,000 Defence Force personnel in the Middle East and Afghanistan. Following his return to Australia he was appointed as Commander, First Division ADF Brisbane (2013-2015) and in the two-year period leading up to his retirement was Deputy Commander of Joint Operations, ADF (Canberra). After leaving the ADF he became an Advisor to the Queensland Premier on community solutions to Youth Crime and from late 2018 until mid-2019 he was State Disaster Recovery Coordinator for the Central Queensland Bushfires and the North Queensland Monsoon Floods, where he led the community infrastructure environmental recovery operations across Queensland.

Media contacts

Rachel Tharratt: 02 6277 7820

DVA Media: 02 6289 6466



Twists of Life

from Guy Cooper

If nothing else I was an early learner – shunted off to boarding school at age four beneath the shadow of NZ's Mt. Egmont. Four years later and after an absence of five years, my father re-introduced himself to my life. Today the remains of his Halifax Bomber lie buried beneath the entrance to Brussels airport.

At the Sydney Opera House in 2010 I had the privilege of introducing the new Australian Father of the Year – Sir Angus Houston. Encountering a brief off-stage delay I commented “My father was in the Air Force during WW2”.

“So was mine” said Sir Angus.

“Mine was shot down over Belgium”, I replied.

“So was mine”, said Sir Angus.

“My father ended up spending three years in Stalag Luft 3” I added.

“So did mine” said Sir Angus.

Due to the consideration and guidance of Sir Angus, a 'just in time' phone contact with my father's then 91 year old pilot in Quebec was achieved. Five families of the seven crew are now engaged in exchanging records, outcomes both tragic and humorous and debating the varying finer points including those buried within the official report of the Luftwaffe ace who brought Halifax W1021 TL-3 to its unscheduled demise.

My ongoing thanks to Sir Angus.





The Day We Almost Lost A Herc

from Col Coyne, President No 37 Squadron (RAAF) Association (C-130E Loadmaster 1981-1990)

Related by Robert "Bennie" St John (FltEng) and Stuart Bryce (A/C Capt)

We had picked up an 'E' model out of the C-130 factory after it had the centre section mod carried out. We had been in Atlanta for six weeks and were fast running out of the pallet load of booze that we had brought with us, so it must have been time for us to depart. The flight home was via Dallas Fort worth and that is a lot of B-52s just there. After a refuel we ended up in Travis for the night before heading off to Hickam. The next leg was to Pago Pago and that's when that stuff hit the fan.



C-130 E Model A97-160 about which this article is written

It was one of those eight hour legs completely over water. The Nav was very busy reading a book, I was busy checking fuel and Stew was doing his command thing. It was getting dark and we were approaching PSR (point of safe return) when we had a catastrophic turbine failure on number two engine.



We quickly caged the engine but as we did we had a fire warning. One bottle gone. We asked the 'Loadmasher', Noel if he could see anything, but that was negative. The Nav had now dropped his book and suggested that we return to Hickam as there was much more in the way of facilities there. We now faced a four hour return flight from whence we came.

I decided that I should let the Squadron know of our predicament and our return to Hickam. I do not know who in the bloody hell answers the telephone but I was very quickly talking to 'roger ram jet', our CO. I was very skilfully informing him of our predicament when we received our second fire warning! It was a matter of transferring the right hand bottles to the left hand side. This action suddenly upgraded our 'PAN' call to 'MAYDAY'. I then lost my contact with the squadron as the radio was being used for more than my chat with the CO. I assume that he then

took this as an indication we had crashed and burned because I had left him hanging onto a silent phone.

Hickam informed us that they had launched a C-130 rescue and a C-141 would intercept us shortly. Now we had a third fire warning and no more bottles; it was time to hit the water. As a very well read exponent of this great aircraft, I was well aware that no one had survived a ditching! BUT we were heading 'south' as fast as the three engines would carry us. It is now as black as the insides of a cow's guts, although I have not had the privilege, but we levelled off at 500 feet above the water and were going as fast as the three turning would carry us. The 141 was overhead (probably to mark the spot of our demise) and shortly after the coastguard C-130 intercepted us, remaining 1000 feet above us with the instructions that if we were to ditch, he would lay a flare path ahead of us. The next thing we heard from the Coastguard aircraft was could we slow down as they were having trouble keeping up. That wasn't going to happen!

The Hickam DME came in at 94DME, so it was only 94 miles before I could put my heart back where it belonged and get rid of all the butterflies. When we landed at Hickam, we were followed by a fire truck which mopped up the fuel that was streaming out of the number two tank and the external tank.



There was nothing left on the flight deck and we even had to send the Nav down to find an approach plate for Hickam, as everything had been removed. The only thing left in the cargo hold was a dozen beers in an esky. We were met by a USAF Major who was at the door when it was opened, so instead of a salute he was given a cold Aussie beer. It was about this time that I remembered that I had left the CO listening to a phone call that wasn't going to be completed. The Squadron had assumed that we had crashed and died!

I had been away for 3 months and my wife had been going about her business as she normally would. She was rather surprised when she answered a knock at the door to find the chief Flight Engineer who promptly told her that If she heard anything about me to disregard it and contact him directly. We didn't even have a telephone in the house!

That nice major took Stew and myself to OPS so I could call the Squadron to let them know that we were safe at Hickam. It wasn't a problem for the USAF, they were great in getting my call through to Richmond. My problem came when ACW "Blogs" received a call from Hickam collect. She was not authorised to receive a collect call. I finally got her to call Air Commodore Marsh (the OC Base) and see if he would accept a call from a wayward C-130. He did and I was 'off the hook'. A few days later another C-130 arrived with the bits to repair our broken bird. The thing that terrified me was that they wanted me to take the good Herc back, something that I was terrified to do!

Stuart Bryce (A/C Capt): Yes, well that's pretty much how it happened. I was asleep on the bunk when the engine blew. I stayed there while I watched Geoff Harmer and Bennie sort out the first fire. When the light went out I got off the bunk, picked up my headset and said jovially, "You bastards woke me up!" Then I looked at Bennie's face and it was white. "Better go back and look at No2!" he said. I did, having no idea what I was about to see - turbine blades hanging out through the cowling and fuel streaming from the wing and external tanks. That's when I dropped the 'F' bomb. What followed has already been said, but there were a few interesting incidents. After the third fire warning and the rapid descent, we opened the overhead hatch and fed Lefty (or was it you Bennie?) out to have a look into the slip stream. It was all clear and no signs of smoke, so the third fire either didn't happen or it went out in the very rapid descent.

We were tooling along low level over a very angry ocean with helmets on when I was aware of Bennie coming up beside my seat, looking me in the eye and then retreating. I didn't know what that was all about. A short time later Geoff Harmer lit up a cigarette; being the good captain I was, I cautioned him that we were on oxygen. Geoff then picked up the cut hose of his mask; cut by Bennie to ensure that we were not connected to the LOX tank should we have to ditch! Mine was also cut. During the intense bout of crew activity, the route check nav, USAF exchange officer Lou Alfonso, looking after Piggy Padgett, asked me did I intend to ditch. I assured him that was the last option.

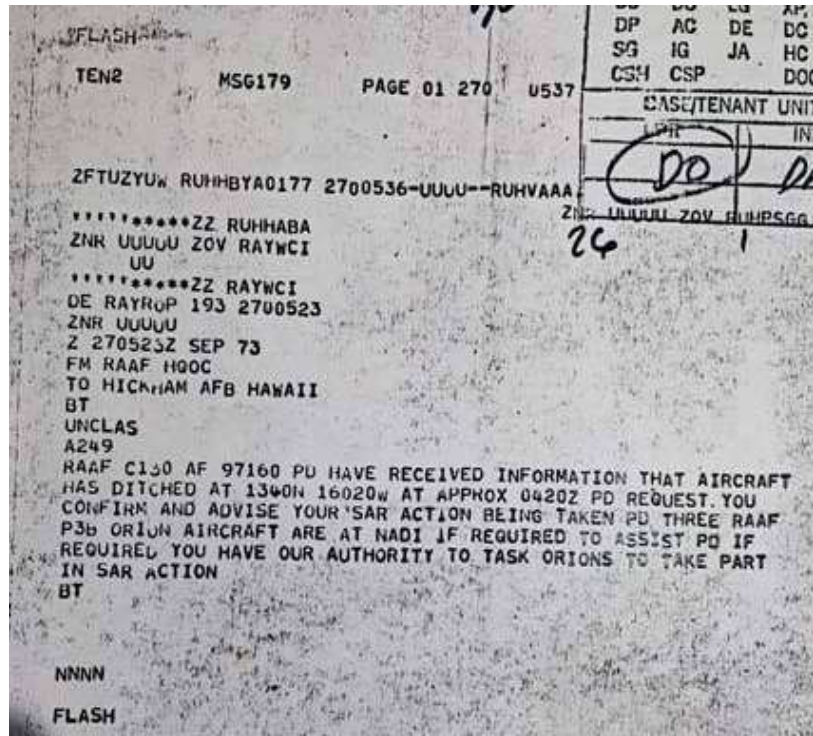
After we landed, we noticed that Lou had grown somewhat; on the four hour trip back to Hickam with nothing to do, Lou had taken out his survival knife and cut the top bunk into little squares of foam and stuffed them down his flying suit! He looked like an advertisement for Michelin tyres! I thought that had we ditched, Lou would have bounced around the flight deck for at least ten minutes! In consideration of making the aircraft as light as possible, there was never any intention of opening the ramp to toss out the duty free.

After landing, I was handed a Flash priority signal reporting that we had ditched (following on from the broken radio call Bennie spoke of with the CO). The problem was to notify Richmond and that was hard! We could only call collect (reverse charges) and initially, the Richmond switch girl refused to accept that call, but I eventually managed to persuade her that the 37 SQN duty officer would accept the call, and I was able to speak to Phil Perrow and tell him that we weren't dead.



The seriousness of the situation really hit home to me when I entered my hotel room, placed my suitcase on the stand and looked at myself in the mirror. I was completely drained, my face was hollow and, unashamedly, I burst into tears. Flying over water mentally affected me for over six years after that incident. I do recall that flying a BAC1-11 from Sydney to Canberra, I actually flew around Lake George! When the co-pilot commented on the slight diversion, I told him to shut up!

I must add that the crew were nothing short of magnificent. An interesting aside happened some months later when I was visiting HQ OPCOM and an AIRCDRE engaged me regarding that incident. He told me that, had I written the report in the first person I would have gotten an AFC. But it was never just me, that's why the report was written: "The Crew...". Thanks guys.



Note signal priority



Loadmaster, Noel 'Lefty' Wright; Nav, Lou Alfonso (USAF); Pilot, Stu Bryce; Co-pilot, Geoff Harmer; Nav, Piggy Padgett; Flight Engineer, Bennie St John



Statistically, 6 out of 7 dwarfs are not Happy.





Escape and Evasion in Europe - An Occasional Series

This material is compiled from sources including the History and Heritage Branch–Air Force, the RAAF Museum, the Australian War Memorial, ADF Serials and Peter Dunn. 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

In Italy RAAF prisoners went first to the transit camp at Bari (Campo PG 75) where, when there were heavy influxes, administrative arrangements were totally inadequate and resulted in poor food, sanitation and medical provisions. The Italian guards were badly disciplined, slovenly and very filthy in their habits, and neither they nor their dandified officers seemed able to appreciate the prisoners' desire to improve the general conditions or even to control vermin - a problem which had already been badly neglected in the holding centres of North Africa. The Italians tended to get very excited about trifles, but real problems or requests were shrugged off with the eternal excuse of "Domani!" (tomorrow).



Officers received preferential treatment but in practice their conditions were seldom good, while those of other prisoners were extremely bad. From Bari some officers went to fortress prisons, such as that at Rezzanello, where living quarters, although cold, damp and draughty, were clean and not too uncomfortable. Early arrivals during 1941 were overcrowded but enjoyed spring beds, good blankets and sheets. A civilian contractor provided cooks and staff, preparing fairly good meals from the basic ration, supplemented by purchases made outside with the prisoners' own money. All officers were paid in proportion to their rank, a flying officer drawing 950 *lire* a month, and practically all was spent on messing. An Italian canteen functioned at Rezzanello but sold little except wine as all other goods were extremely expensive.

The prisoners had only a courtyard measuring 60 feet by 40 feet for recreation purposes, and, although taken out for walks every fortnight, parole was not accepted and usually one guard accompanied each two prisoners.

Early in 1942 the basic food ration in Italian camps was cut drastically, not as a punitive measure but because of the general poverty of the country; in fact the Italians scrupulously attempted to maintain prisoners' rations at the same level as those of base troops (also cut at the same time) in accordance with the Geneva Convention. This inevitably meant hardships for the increasing number of R.A.A.F. prisoners, now sent principally to Sulmona (Campo 78), Chiavari (Campo 52) and Gruppignano (Campo 57) although others were to be found at Servigliano, Macerata, Capua, Chieti and the closely guarded fortress at Gavi. Conditions varied widely according to the personal character of the Italian commandant, but nowhere did camp life run smoothly for the whole duration. Where officers' and other ranks' compounds adjoined, as at Sulmona, the officers made what donations they could to the airmen's canteen, but generally recourse had to be made to illegal trafficking for extra food with guards and civilians. When the war situation was favourable to Italy, "our captors were very arrogant and we suffered accordingly. Mail would be held for a long time in camps before distribution, but just before Italy capitulated some of the prisoners received as many as fifty letters in a few days." Even where, as



at Bologna, new, clean barracks, kitchens and ablutions were provided for prisoners they found that, as at most of the other camps, the water supply failed with exasperating frequency. Recreational facilities everywhere were poor, and life devolved into a constant round of attempting to secure the minimum requirements of food and cleanliness in the face sometimes of positive obstruction and at best a passive inefficiency.

The standard of vigilance in Italian camps was high, large numbers of troops guarding each camp, and very few attempts were made to escape by tunnelling or other means. Several Australians had escaped for varying periods from transit camps in North Africa, but the most determined attempts to get away from a mainland camp usually failed and the Italians were prone to treat recaptured prisoners with great brutality. Flight Lieutenant Jones' and two others cut the wire at Bari during August 1942 but were at liberty only five days. The only large-scale escape occurred during October 1942 when Warrant Officer Comins and Sergeant Canning, with 17 other prisoners, including Australian soldiers, made use of a tunnel which they constructed at Gruppignano. Escapers, however, suffer from the great disadvantage that their positive identity and exact point of departure are accurately known to the searching authorities. Three divisions of troops and many policemen were alerted and all 19 prisoners were found within a few days. As a result of the intervention of the colonel of the unit which recaptured them, Comins and Canning escaped the flogging to which the others were subjected. This officer himself had escaped from a German prison camp in his youth and now arranged a pantomime show of beating the Australians, who, however, suffered when back at Gruppignano by being put on half rations, handcuffed and kept imprisoned in only their underclothes for two days.

With the capitulation of Italy came the first real chance for prisoners to escape, but senior officers in all camps were advised to hold their charges in situ, and the Italians promised if necessary to defend them against the Germans. Italian intentions, however, were not translated into fact and by swift ruthless action, German forces captured most of the camps intact. Individual prisoners at some camps ran into the hills and usually found Italian peasants willing to shelter them. Many were recaptured by German patrols, but Flying Officer Gemmell-Smith from Servigliano remained in hiding until he joined up with Allied forces in June 1944. The Germans were anxious to evacuate prisoners, especially air force men, to Germany without delay, but while these movements were taking place Flying Officer Kirkman escaped from Bologna and Pilot Officer Buckland and Warrant Officer Einsaar escaped from Macerata, and in 1944 were eventually evacuated by sea to friendly territory. The other unfortunate prisoners who had been buoyed up with hopes of a quick end to the stagnation of internment were crowded into cattle trucks and sent in deplorable conditions northwards. Several RAAF men managed to jump from these trains and two, Flight Lieutenants Eggleston and R. S. Jones, reached Switzerland together after an adventurous journey on foot. All the others were recaptured after short spells of liberty and went with their fellows to Germany.



Battle of Britain Ceremony

from Geoff Peterkin OAM, Honorary Secretary, Fighter Squadrons Branch

The Fighter Squadrons Branch staged a modest but meaningful ceremony at the RAAF Memorial Grove, Civic Park on 11th September to mark the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Britain. Due to COVID 19, it was a brief ceremony compared to the usual annual event staged in Newcastle.



Attending were Lord Mayor Nuatali Nelmes, the Williamtown contingent comprising GPCAPT Peter Cluff (SADFO), WOFF John Markham (Base WOD), FLTLT Jason Iuliis (Guard Commander), PLTOFFs Jason Krause and Dirk Smith (Catafalque Party) and SGT Julian Crispigni (Flag orderly). Representatives of FSB included Mike Lavercombe (President), Dave Leach (Vice President), Geoff Peterkin (Hon Secretary), James Mackay and Phil Frawley (Committee Members). A piper and a bugler from the Newcastle Army Band added to the event.



The event was organised by James Mackay and Dave Leach. James Mackay, as Master of Ceremonies, delivered dialogues reminding us of the significance of the Battle of Britain where, of at least 25 Australian pilots who flew in Fighter Command, 10 were killed in action. Among this number, mention was made of our Newcastle boy, John Crossman 21, who was shot down and killed on September 30, 1940.

The usual Flypast was not available but the effect was replaced by the sounds of a Spitfire passing overhead; provided by Phil Frawley. To the strains of the pipes playing "Flowers of the Forest", wreaths were laid by the Lord Mayor, GPCAPT Peter Cluff and Mike Lavercombe. Dave Leach recited The Ode and a memorial silence was observed between The Last Post and Reveille. The event concluded with the National Anthem.



L-R: GPCAPT Cluff, Mike Lavercombe, WOFF Markham, Army bugler and Lord Mayor Nuatali Nelmes.



This is Interesting

from Ray Butler via Peter Ring

The following photos and the poem come from times when people have had to cope with pandemics such as COVID-19. History does indeed repeat itself.

The words of the poem attached to the photo below right are difficult to read, so the editor has transcribed them as follows:

This is Timeless

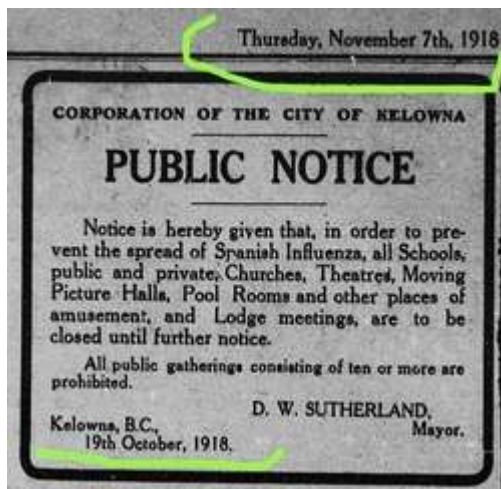
And people stayed at home
And read books
And listened
And they rested
And did exercises
And made art and played
And learned new ways of being
And stopped and listened
More deeply
Someone meditated, someone prayed
Someone met their shadow
And people began to think differently
And people healed
And in the absence of people who
Lived in ignorant ways
Dangerous, meaningless and heartless,
The earth also began to heal
And when the danger ended and
People found themselves
They grieved for the dead
And made new choices
And dreamed of new versions
And created new ways of living
And completely healed the earth
Just as they were healed.

History repeats itself. Came across this poem written in 1869, reprinted during 1919 Pandemic.

This is Timeless....

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75 Years Since the End of the Second World War: Honouring the One Million that Served

Monday 10 August 2020, Office of the Hon. Darren Chester, Canberra ACT

The Second World War had a significant and enduring impact on all Australians. Around 20 years had passed since the end of the First World War and during those two decades our country endured significant challenges, from losing 60,000 men, caring for the many thousands that came back, the Great Depression and at points, sky-rocketing unemployment. And while all these events had a profound effect on Australia, the Second World War changed and shaped our nation forever - redefining aspects of the economic, domestic and international relations landscape, and influencing social issues such as female employment and Indigenous service.

Almost one million Australians served during the Second World War, fighting in theatres of war across the globe, from Europe and the Middle East through South East Asia to the Pacific. Keep in mind, this was at a time when the total population of Australia was around 7 million. Over 39,000 died and some 30,000 Australian service men and women were made prisoners of war. Most of those taken prisoner were captured by the Japanese during their advance and capture of Singapore in early 1942. While many Australians who were prisoners of war of Germany had a strong chance of returning home at the end of the war, over one-third of prisoners of the Japanese died in captivity.

Australian women played a vital role, serving as nurses overseas, in auxiliary services in Australia and overseas and as workers throughout the war, maintaining our agricultural and manufacturing interests



at home. We should never forget that this was a war not only fought on foreign lands, but one that came to the Australian mainland. From air raids on Darwin, Broome and across Northern Australia, to midget submarine attacks on Sydney Harbour, there were hundreds of Australians killed. The fear of an all-out attack on Australia by Japanese forces was very real. Australia’s armed forces employed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in de-facto units to carry out reconnaissance of the northern Australian coastline, where they assisted locating Japanese and Allied aircraft crash sites. The understanding and connection to country that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people had proved to be of great benefit in the defence of the Australian mainland and islands to the north. And we should never forget the powerful bonds created with our neighbours in the Pacific, particularly on the Kokoda Track where Australians were supported by the locals of Papua New Guinea who carried supplies forward and transported seriously wounded and sick Australian soldiers to safety. Their compassion and care earned them admiration and respect from the Australians, who dubbed these men their 'fuzzy wuzzy angels'.

This year on 15 August, we mark the 75th anniversary of the end of the Second World War, also known as Victory in the Pacific Day. This is an opportunity for the Australian community to publicly acknowledge the service and sacrifice of veterans of the Second World War, and also recognise the contribution made by all Australians. More than 12,000 veterans of the Second World War are still with us today. I encourage all Australians to seize the opportunity to talk to any relative, friend or neighbour who lived through the Second World War to share the experiences and stories of this great generation and to say ‘thank you for your service’.

Lest we forget.

MEDIA CONTACTS: Rachel Tharratt: 02 6277 7820

DVA Media: 02 6289 6466



Vale: Able Seaman Moss Berryman - Krait Crew

from Tony Horsington

Able Seaman Moss Berryman, who had died aged 96, was the last survivor of Operation Jaywick, perhaps the most long-ranged and daring special forces raid of the Second World War.

On April 7 1942, as soon as he could, Berryman volunteered for the Royal Australian Navy. He and his friend, Able Seaman Fred Marsh, were still under training in Melbourne when they heard that a British officer was looking for volunteers to do something special. Sent to Refuge Bay on the Hawkesbury River, north of



Berryman, front centre. with his comrades aboard the Krait, a former Japanese fishing boat



Sydney, they discovered that they were members of Z Special Unit, or “Z Force”, commanded by Major Ivan Lyon and part of Special Operations Australia, formed to operate behind Japanese lines in South East Asia. “My mate and I looked sideways at each other,” he recalled. “We were basically Sunday school boys. We had no idea how we were going to learn to kill people.”

However, on September 2 1943 Berryman, now a fully trained commando, sailed north from Exmouth Gulf, Western Australia, in the 70ft Krait, a former Japanese fishing vessel, with seven other British and Australian commandos from the Army and the Navy,



and six boat's crew. Only once at sea did Lyon tell them that they were off to Singapore, some 3,500 miles away, "to blow up a few ships".

Berryman knew that the Japanese did not have a reputation for treating prisoners well, but, he said, "we were young ones, we thought we were indestructible, just like they do today," and Lyon maintained morale by insisting: "this isn't dangerous, it's exciting". "Still," recalled Berryman, "I think if we had known earlier some of us may not have volunteered. There were definitely times we thought, 'What the hell are we doing here? We're getting five bob a day for this?'"

The two-week voyage though Japanese-occupied waters was uncomfortable. They flew the Japanese flag and posed as Malay fishermen, wearing sarongs and constantly applying foul-smelling brown dye to their skin. Berryman spent much time at the top of the mast with binoculars looking out for other craft, which would be given a wide berth. When, occasionally, a Japanese float plane flew over, members of Z Force would wave and stand in a circle pretending to unpick fishing lines.

On 18 September Krait arrived off Singapore – which was ablaze with lights and where the Japanese thought themselves safe – and offloaded six commandos in three two-man canoes. Much to their disappointment, Berryman and Marsh were told to stay behind. "Of course, we put on a bit of a turn – 'We've done all the training, sir, why can't we be in it?' – and he said, 'Nope, you two are going to be babysitters and look after Krait'".

The canoeists established a base in a cave on a small island, and on the night of September 26 they paddled into the harbour to attach limpet mines to seven vessels, sinking or damaging 37,000 tons of shipping.

However, when Krait reached its rendezvous, the island of Pompong, 50 miles off Singapore, on the night of October 1-2, only one canoe was found. Lyon had told Krait to leave that night no matter what – but "being good old Australians, we decided we'd break the law and go back in two nights later," when the other two canoes were recovered.



The Krait – named after a small but deadly fighting snake

On the return voyage, a few minutes to midnight on October 11, a Japanese patrol boat intercepted Krait in the Lombok Strait. As Berryman crouched low with his Bren gun trained on the warship, Lyon, who had packed Krait's bows with high explosive, prepared a suicide ramming which would have destroyed both vessels, but after the longest 15 minutes of Berryman's life, the warship drew away without switching on a searchlight or hailing Krait. "It was pure luck," said Berryman. Krait entered Exmouth Bay after a 48-day mission. Berryman was Mentioned in Despatches for gallantry, skill and devotion to duty in a hazardous enterprise.

When later in 1943 Lyon asked Berryman whether he would care to return to Singapore as part of a larger, repeat mission, he carefully considered the proposal for two seconds before declining. All members of Operation Rimau were killed in action or executed by the Japanese. Instead, Berryman completed his war service in the destroyer HMAS Vendetta, and was demobbed in February 1946.

Mostyn Berryman was born at Kent Town, South Australia, on November 9 1923, and was brought up a Methodist: his father had fought as a teenaged signaller in the Australia Imperial Force on the Western Front in the First World War. Post war Berryman returned to the stockbrokers S.C. Ward & Co, where he had been a clerk, and remained there until his retirement 46 years later.



Berryman was aboard Krait when she entered Sydney in 1964 to become a museum ship, and in 1993, on the 50th anniversary of Operation Jaywick, he met Lyon’s son – “the spitting image of his father” –



Berryman, top left, and comrades

at Kranji War Cemetery. Lyon’s French wife, Gabrielle Bouvier, and their baby son, had spent the war in Japanese internment camps, and together Berryman and the son cried that the son had never met his heroic father. For many years Berryman was owed the five-bob-a-day danger money which he had been promised, and which the government topped up to A\$5,000.

Operation Jaywick, one of the most successful clandestine raids in Australian history, left a bitter aftermath. Lyon had intended that Jaywick be publicised to rattle the Japanese and boost Allied morale, but senior commanders decided against

this as they wished to conduct similar raids in the future. Not having the slightest idea of how the attack had been mounted, the Japanese inflicted savage reprisals on Singaporeans, who they suspected of aiding the attack. “Sometimes,” a troubled Berryman mused in later life, “I feel that we shouldn’t have done it because they murdered untold numbers of people trying to find out who did.”

Berryman married his childhood sweetheart, Mary Cant, who predeceased him in 2018, and he is survived by their four daughters.

Moss Berryman, born November 9 1923, died August 6 2020



Mirage Memoirs

from Bob Weight

Changing Drop Tanks

I cannot recall the year or the Kangaroo exercise but it was when they were called 'Kangaroo' not 'K'. It would have been late '60s and I was on attachment from 481SQN to 76 SQN - we were in Darwin getting ready to return to Willy at the end of the exercise.

We were changing the supersonic tanks for subsonic ones and a bunch of troops would hold the tank as the framie would disconnect (after someone would go down the line yelling “defueled, defueled...” pointing to each tank that had been defueled). I was standing second from the rear end of one tank that we had been told was defueled and as soon as the framie undid the bolt we quickly realised it was fully fuelled and of course we could not hold it and it crashed to the concrete immediately. The bloke beside me (totally forget his name) was holding the fin end of the tank and it hit the ground such that the angle part of the fin just touched his t-boot breaking his little toe. Had he been standing six inches to the left it probably would have taken his foot off. It certainly got our attention. I also then heard some words from the SGT to the CPL who was doing the refuelling that I had never heard before.



Towing

On the same exercise a bunch of us were walking from the WRP down to the ORP – not sure about now, but back then this was all at the southern end of the runway and there was a taxiway going down



to that end of the runway – the WRP and ORP were adjacent to the taxiway and the runway end. The taxiway was a curved road that went down a fair bit of a slope down to the runway end.

As we were walking down, we saw this Mirage being towed at a ridiculous speed. The bloke in the cockpit was yelling and waving his hands to try to get tractor driver to slow down and the Mirage was swinging huge amounts from side to side. We all ran towards the tractor to get the bloke driving it to stop which he eventually did.



When asked why, he said he was “scared that the shear pin would break and that the pitot probe would hit him in the back of the head and kill him”! True story; he was given a bit more hands-on training.

30 Seconds stand-by

As part of the 'war' during the Kangaroo exercises we would have two aircraft on 30 seconds stand-by. Pilots would be in and all equipment running except for the engine (we eventually managed to get the oxygen off as well so that it was not all used up by the time they had to scramble). We would regularly provide the pilots with plastic cups of iced cordial.

We had three troops to get the Mirage away and most times they would be sitting under the shade of the aircraft or as was the case this time, the troop at the front adjacent to the cockpit to relay signals to/from the pilot to the others was lying down in the sun using ear muffs as a 'pillow'.

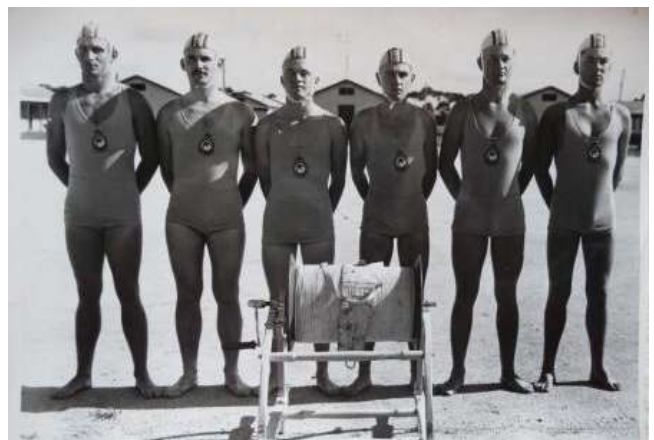
In Darwin we were mostly just in shorts and t-boots as it was very hot. One time I was CPL running the ORP line and was walking along the line checking 'stuff' when I noticed one of the two pilots had finished his cordial and was shaking the cup with the ice to get the last drop out of it and then looking to what he could do with the cup. I started to head towards the aircraft to get the cup when I noticed he looked over the side and saw the troop lying on his back in just shorts. His hand (with cup of ice) came out of the cockpit and inverted 180° and the ice hit this poor troop smack on the chest. He came off the ground almost horizontal but already punching his invisible assailant. The pilot had his head and arms down in the cockpit as if he as examining the instruments. The troop eventually realised what had happened but certainly did not lie down again whenever the pilot was given any cordial.



The Army Play Serious - Beware

from Peter Scully

The RAAF College started a Surf Life Saving Club in the early '50s, with members formally instructed and qualified by the Victorian State Organisation. The club was allocated a strip of beach at Ocean Grove – even now shown on some maps as ‘RAAF Beach’. During the summer season those cadets involved were taken by RAAF truck on Friday evenings, complete with marquee and tents for accommodation and we set up camp in the sand dunes behind the beach. Formal patrols then operated on Saturday and Sunday.



RAAFCOL Surf Life Saving Team 1953

While there was much work involved in training and maintaining patrols there were associated benefits of which the senior staff were either unaware or overlooked. It enabled cadets to ‘escape’ from the prison of Point Cook and depending on the attitude of the senior cadet - who almost always wanted to dampen his thirst at the end of the day – we had the opportunity to walk down to the Barwon



Heads Pub for a slap up meal and a few beers which were officially on the ‘verboden’ list for junior cadets.



Surf Carnival Torquay, 1954

planned to relieve them of a rather splendid banner we’d noticed during one of our rugby matches there. Naturally, we were successful but we’d been seen by the ‘enemy. We were travelling on a RAAF ‘blitz’ wagon and as we climbed aboard – with the precious flag – to head back to our camp at the beach, we discovered that the Army had closed their main gate. So, we ‘ordered’ our driver to ‘floor it’ and much to our surprise he did so, taking the gate in the process. We were not followed so we gleefully settled into our tents at our camping ground.

In 1953 a surf club was set up by the locals and the RAAF College team was then allocated the back beach at Portsea to patrol. (where Harold Hold went missing – we had no part of it, I assure you.) The surf there was much better than at Ocean Grove, often too much better. The Club was not far from the Army’s direct entry training school; frequent opponents on the rugby field. As part of the ‘friendly’ rivalry between colleges, we



Army revenge; a mohawk for Peter Scully

At about 0200 hrs, we were stealthily ‘attacked’ by a large group of Army cadets intent on revenge. They caught us completely by surprise as we were all fast-asleep, so they had no trouble just tying us into our sleeping bags, leaving us completely helpless. They also committed other indignities:



37SQN Continues To Kick Goals in The Middle East

from Col Coyne President, No 37 Squadron (RAAF) Association (C-130E Loadmaster 1981-1990)

37SQN, flying C-130J Hercules, have been in the MER on permanent rotation since 2003, in itself a mighty effort. This year they were called upon to add the provision of Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) to their mission load, in their response to the Beirut disaster:

15th August 2020

37SQN MER C-130J team contributing to the Beirut HADR mission yesterday, see attached photo(s)



Statement from Senator Linda Reynolds

I couldn’t be prouder of the ADF. A C-130J Hercules based in the Middle East has touched down in Beirut after collecting Australian funded supplies from the United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot in Dubai. These supplies include mobile warehouses to help replace storage facilities destroyed in the Beirut blast, and shelter kits and tools to help address urgent needs for the 300,000 people left homeless. Australia is home to a large Lebanese community, with more than 230,000 Australians having Lebanese heritage. Our hearts go out to them, the people of Lebanon and all those affected by this disaster.



22 August 2020

The squadron's C-130Js based in the MER are still responding to the humanitarian crisis in Beirut with a second round of emergency supplies including blankets and tarpaulins to provide shelter to thousands of people left homeless from the blast earlier this month.



Australia stands with Lebanon. Once again, well done to all concerned.

31st August 2020

37SQN delivered another consignment of humanitarian supplies to Beirut today. Magnificent effort from our C-130J aircrew and maintainers in the MER. Once again the DFAT staff were there to greet them and assist with the unloading and distribution of the supplies.



Angels With Broken Wings

from Tomas (Paddy) Hamilton

Dedicated to the approximately 300 RAAF aircrew killed during training at flying schools and conversion units in Australia during World War II.

Time has long since passed you by, in tranquil sleep you lie
Beneath sun bleached headstones, as cattle graze nearby
Since man first walked upon the earth, he's had the dream to fly
Defying nature's barriers, by conquering the sky

Kingsford Smith and Hinkler, though heroes of their day
This nation was oblivious, to the terror far away
The world stood blind and silent, till the jackboot marched north, then west
Civilisation as you knew it, was put to a deadly test

Flying schools and units, sprang up across the land
You realised all too well, it was time to make a stand
You joined the many thousands, when you heard the nation's call
Like your parents generation, you vowed to give your all

But war was not the nemesis that took your life so young
Cut down by fate or fury, before your mission had begun
An empty heart, the legacy, to the ones you left behind
Victims of war's folly, the curse of all mankind

The ghostly whisper of the trees, will sooth you as you sleep
Most comrades have by now passed on, few are left to weep
The crows now caw your requiem, a distant magpie sings
Forever consigned to history's page, as angels with broken wings





Gas lighting

from Tony Horsington

What is gas lighting? The term originates in the systematic psychological manipulation of a victim by her husband in Patrick Hamilton's 1938 stage play *Gas Light*, and the film adaptations released in 1940 and 1944. In the story, the husband attempts to convince his wife and others that she is insane by manipulating small elements of their environment and insisting that she is mistaken, remembering things incorrectly, or delusional when she points out these changes. The play's title alludes to how the abusive husband slowly dims the gas lights in their home, while pretending nothing has changed, in an effort to make his wife doubt her own perceptions. The wife repeatedly asks her husband to confirm her perceptions about the dimming lights, but in defiance of reality, he keeps insisting that the lights are the same and instead it is she who is going insane.

We are living in a perpetual state of gaslighting. The reality that we are being told by the media is at complete odds with what we are seeing with our own two eyes. And when we question the false reality that we are being presented, or we claim that what we see is that actual reality, we are vilified as racist or bigots or just plain crazy. You're not racist. You're not crazy. You're being gaslighted.

New York State has twice as many deaths from COVID-19 as any other state, and New York has accounted for one fifth of all COVID-19 deaths, but we are told that New York Governor Andrew Cuomo has handled the pandemic better than any other governor. But if we support policies of Governors whose states had only a fraction of the infections and deaths as New York, we're called anti-science and want people to die. So, we ask ourselves, am I crazy? No, you're being gaslighted.

We see mobs of people looting stores, smashing windows, setting cars on fire and burning down buildings, but we are told that these demonstrations are peaceful protests. And when we call this destruction of our cities riots, we are called racists. So, we ask ourselves, am I crazy? No, you're being gaslighted.

We see the major problem destroying many inner-cities is crime; murder, gang violence, drug dealing, drive-by shootings, armed robbery, but we are told that it is not crime, but the police that are the problem in the inner-cities. We are told we must defund the police and remove law enforcement from crime-riddled cities to make them safer. But if we advocate for more policing in cities overrun by crime, we are accused of being white supremacists and racists. So, we ask ourselves, am I crazy? No, you're being gaslighted.

The United States of America accepts more immigrants than any other country in the world. The vast majority of the immigrants are "people of color", and these immigrants are enjoying freedom and economic opportunity not available to them in their country of origin, but we are told that the United States is the most racist and oppressive country on the planet, and if we disagree, we are called racist and xenophobic. So, we ask ourselves, am I crazy? No, you're being gaslighted.

Capitalist countries are the most prosperous countries in the world. The standard of living is the highest in capitalist countries. We see more poor people move up the economic ladder to the middle and even the wealthy class through their effort and ability in capitalist countries than any other economic system in the world, but we are told capitalism is an oppressive system designed to keep people down. So, we ask ourselves, am I crazy? No, you're being gaslighted.

Communist countries killed over 100 million people in the 20th century. Communist countries strip their citizens of basic human rights, dictate every aspect of their lives, treat their citizens like slaves, and drive their economies into the ground, but we are told that Communism is the fairest, most equitable, freest and most prosperous economic system in the world. So, we ask ourselves, am I crazy? No, you're being gaslighted.

The most egregious example of gaslighting is the concept of "white fragility". You spend your life trying to be a good person, trying to treat people fairly and with respect. You disavow racism and bigotry in all its forms. You judge people solely on the content of their character and not by the color



of their skin. You don't discriminate based on race or ethnicity. But you are told you are a racist, not because of something you did or said, but solely because of the color of your skin. You know instinctively that charging someone with racism because of their skin color is itself racist. You know that you are not racist, so you defend yourself and your character, but you are told that your defense of yourself is proof of your racism. So, we ask ourselves, am I crazy? No, you're being gaslighted.

Gaslighting has become one of the most pervasive and destructive tactics in American politics. It is the exact opposite of what our political system was meant to be. It deals in lies and psychological coercion, and not the truth and intellectual discourse. If you ever ask yourself if you're crazy, you are not. Crazy people aren't sane enough to ask themselves if they're crazy. So, trust yourself, believe what's in your heart. Trust your eyes over what you are told. Never listen to the people who tell you that you are crazy, because you are not, you're being gaslighted.

Sophocles said: "What people believe prevails over the truth."

And that's what the media is trying to exploit.

Jay Smith



The Coffee Break

from Tomas (Paddy) Hamilton, 3Sep20

I watched them as they shuffled past from the coffee shop
Their weary hands were trembling, but they didn't spill a drop
Finding an empty table, they eased into a chair
Totally oblivious, to others sitting there

They clinked their mugs so gently, sharing a salute
And softly said "I love you", their voices almost mute
The shoppers seemed to drift on past, without a second glance
Ignoring in their daily haste, this scene of quiet romance

They spoke of that long distant past, when luxuries were few
As we were transported back, to a world that we once knew
Where mateship was a fact of life and your word a binding law
And we read about our heroes, who lived in days of yore

University was for the rich or the very smart
If your old man was in the know, you might just get a start
Nursing was the sole domain, of the fairer sex
Split shifts and bed checks, they were often nervous wrecks

Every child learned to swim, when they started school
No one had ever seen a private in-ground pool
If the copper caught you wagging school, he'd really make you pay
With a swift kick up the arse and tell your dad next day

No Macca's there in those days, the colonel was a rank
And you had to strain the tadpoles, from the water tank
A movie was a well earned treat, at the local picture show
And the hero always saved the day, how I'll never know

They gazed across the food court, as if looking for a friend
Perhaps to share a memory, or another ear to bend
But their voices became silent, with nothing more to say
So they both pulled out their i-phones and merrily scrolled away





The Early Days of Over the Horizon Radar

from Dave Bowden

Many years ago when our very long range radar was being refined before going into formal contract for construction, I had the privilege of escorting very senior military people and VIPs to the site. At this stage, non-military visitors were often sponsored by the Defence Science and Technology Organisation (DSTO), as they were still responsible for much of its operation and testing.

One such non-military visitor was an Under Secretary for Defence in Japan. Our party duly visited the site and eventually entered the operations room where a number of screens were being used by Air Defence operators to detect, identify and correlate international aircraft tracks with known air traffic. The VIP was most surprised and impressed that we were viewing aircraft movements in areas where 50 years previously, Japanese aircraft would have been conducting raids against us and allied forces.



OTHRA Antenna Array

It just goes to show that Sun Tzu was correct in his book *The Art of War* when he said "in peace prepare for war - in war prepare for peace". Here we were in peace time demonstrating our very impressive capabilities to a previous 'enemy', hoping of course that war would not occur as we had just demonstrated our best capability. It was ironic that some months later we were using this radar capability for the first time in a major Pitch Black air defence exercise and the USAF exchange air defence officer was not allowed to know or see that capability in operation.



Recollections From RAAF Richmond (July 1966 – Aug 1968)

from Bob Weight

I was posted to RAAF Richmond (No 2AD) from Wagga in July 1966 after completing my apprentice course (No 18 INSTFITT). During that time airmen were required to do both guard duty and fire duty. If I recall correctly we had to do two weeks guard duty and two or three weeks fire duty. Guard duty was either at the front gate or in the guard house (opposite the cinema and adjacent to the boundary between the living quarters and the working/operations areas). Fire duty was spent at the fire section adjacent to the control tower and each airman was assigned to a specific truck. I do not recall the actual dates, but two events from that time remain with me – one a bit humorous the other rather frightening.

I was on guard duty and alone in the guard house one night with my major responsibility being to answer the phone and do as I was told. I was also responsible for providing food and water to any prisoners (the guard house had two or three cells as I recall), but as there were none it was a very boring night. However at about 0100hrs the phone rang to advise me that the police were on their way with a prisoner that I was to place in a cell and take care of until the morning. At that time conscript Army officers heading for Vietnam did training at Skyville and this one junior officer had gone on a bit of a wild drinking episode before he was heading out to Vietnam. He was arrested but as they had no facilities at the Army base or the town they decided to bring him to RAAF Richmond.

They arrived and this Army officer was about 7ft tall and could have played 2nd row for any 1st grade rugby team in Sydney – he was huge. Those who know me would know that I would barely come up to his waist. He was filthy, with mud all over him; the police were also very muddy. They told me he asked them to stop so he could go to the toilet which they did and he promptly jumped the fence into a watermelon patch and was jumping up and down and dancing around and teasing the coppers to 'you



can't catch me'. They chased him all over the paddock, finally catching him and getting him back into the police car.

By this time the young lieutenant was almost passed out so we managed to get him into the cell and onto the bed. I took his shoes off and anything else that might cause harm and locked him up. I asked the coppers just what someone my size could do against someone his size – they just laughed and told me that was my problem and their job was done. Here I was a brand new AC (had not even reached the LAC heights) barely knowing which end of an aircraft went forwards and here was an officer about to go into a shooting war. To say I was concerned would be a gross understatement. I spent the rest of the night scared out of my wits about what this bloke was going to do to me once he woke up and realised I had him locked up.

Anyway, once he did wake up and I took some breakfast in to him, I met one of the nicest and quietest blokes I have ever known. He kept asking me did I know what he did and how come he was so muddy. I told him and he could not believe it and could not stop apologising. Anyway, Army MPs arrived not long after and took him away still apologising to me. Never remembered his name and of course never saw him again, but a night I will always remember. I can only trust he survived his Vietnam tour safely.

The second story was during a stint at the Fire Section during 1967 I think. We were given basic instructions etc but in reality, if the red phone rang at any time we all had to race to our vehicle and go to our allocated position around the runway. We would get details and instructions via the radio. On this particular night around midnight the red phone rang so we all ran to our respective trucks. I was in the passenger seat with the fireman driving – just the two of us. We were to go to the Windsor end of the runway via the taxiway. We had just got the word that it was a Caribou that had not called the tower and was landing. The fireman said to me that this is normally just a radio failure in the aircraft. It was pitch black and the truck headlights were not that great.

As soon as we hit the taxiway he suddenly said to me “did you see something in front?”, to which I said “no I didn't”. He then said “I am sure I did”, and then a few things happened at the same time. He swung the steering wheel to the left and we very quickly left the taxiway heading towards the flight line. At that same time, the taxi lights of a Neptune suddenly turned on almost directly in front of us and the propeller arc went past us, missing the driver's side by inches and the wing tip going over our heads.

The firey stopped the vehicle and I recall him radioing back to the Fire Section what had just happened and that we were going nowhere until his legs stopped shaking and he was able to breathe again. I never found out why the Neptune was taxiing with no lights on, or why we were not informed of such traffic by the tower. But the unfortunate thing is that I have lost the name of the fireman whose gut instinct saved us both that night.



'Fast Caravan' Article Evokes Memories

from John Clarkson

In your last edition of SITREP, there was a good article on 'Operation Fast Caravan' written by Peter Scully. Whilst I never served directly under Peter, I have always had a great deal of respect for him. His article opened up a host of memories for me, as I was one of the many who were already at Butterworth (77 SQN, Sabres) when 75 SQN (Mirage) first arrived.

When I recall my memories of the occasion, I can now look at them with the wisdom of hindsight, and perhaps dilute some of the ill-feelings we had at the time. There is no doubt that the entire exercise of 'Operation Fast Caravan' was a huge success, as it gave the squadron such a good start in Butterworth. Their CO, Wing Commander Jim Flemming, handled much of their entry into the area and base with considerable flair. We others were led to believe that these Mirage fellows could do no wrong. Hence



the notice on the board at the RAAF Hostel around July or so in 1967, which said, “All personnel travelling from the island to the Base for work will cross the Penang Straits on the ferry, excepting those personnel of No 75 Squadron. Personnel from No 75 Squadron are to walk across”. Hence the belief that 75SQN members could walk on water!



75SQN Mirages overfly Butterworth

To understand where the fellows from 77 SQN stood during this drama, I need to back track to the previous year. Prior to December 1966, 78 Wing consisted of 478 SQN, and Nos 3 SQN and 77 SQN. The Indonesian Confrontation was still in full swing, and an Operational Readiness Pad (ORP) was being maintained both at Butterworth and at Tengah in Singapore. The ORP at Butterworth was operated by the Sabres from 0600 to 1800 every day, and by the RAF Javelins from 1800 to 0600 every night. When the RAF Javelin squadron was called back to the UK, the ORP was handled by the Sabres only, and was shared equally by Nos 3 and 77 SQNs. Admittedly, by this time the frequency of live scrambles was decreasing, probably to about one or two per week. This was in comparison to some

years previously when there would have been about one per day. Of course, all aircrew and groundcrew were on the Ubon (Thailand) roster, and when there, the ORP would have been scrambled at least once or twice per day!

Then, around Christmas 1966, or very early January 1967, No 3 Squadron left Butterworth for Williamtown to be re-equipped with the Mirage. That left 77 SQN to handle the ORP duties etc on their own. By mid 1967, yes, we were still doing ORP, although the frequency of alerts was decreasing, we were still arming aircraft with HE ammunition and live Sidewinders every day – seven days per week. During this period, 77 SQN was also flying a very heavy ordnance programme every week. Each week, we would rotate between air-to-air gunnery, (providing the banner tug ourselves), air-to-ground gunnery, rocketry, and practice bombing with a programme of heavy bombing at Tengah about twice per year.



77SQN Sabres

We members of the ground crew actually expected 75 SQN to join into the ORP roster, once the squadron had settled in. However, we were then informed that if two Mirage aircraft were fully armed and parked at the end of the runway for the whole day, with pilots sitting some 30 metres away, they would not have been able to get airborne in less than three minutes. That is when we found out that the Mirage aircraft will never take part in the ORP operations.

So, the ORP operations continued until about June 1968, when the powers that be decided that they were not needed any more. By this time, the manpower of 77 SQN was being gradually depleted. From about May or June 1968, when a member of 77 SQN was posted back to Australia, he wasn't replaced. Each member stayed with 77 SQN right up to the day of his three years in Malaysia, then flew home by civil air.

Around March or April 1968, there was a huge defence exercise, involving the RAF from Tengah, the RAAF at Butterworth, the Australian and British Army, (on the east coast of Malaysia), and the Royal Navy, also on the east coast. 77 SQN were given the task of ground attack to the 'enemy' who were trying to invade up near the NE border between Malaysia and Thailand. 75 SQN were given the task of the air defence (air to air) of Butterworth and surrounding areas. This exercise went for about three or four days, and we were sleeping in the hangar when not actually at work. I remember our squadron



handled its tasking very well indeed, but we were told that the base at Butterworth was ‘attacked’ several times as the ‘air defence’ of Butterworth (75 SQN) were not able to get airborne quick enough to defend the base against these invaders. I think that was another straw on the camel’s back. Sadly, some of the real younger men, both pilots and ground crew, were quite condescending toward we Sabre people. Also, I must admit that there were times when we Sabre people may not have too kind to the new kids on the block!

Of course, since then the Mirage squadrons have accounted for themselves very well indeed. But just a few of us have memories of that brief period when both the Mirage and the Sabre were operational in Butterworth. Even as recently as 2018, the friction between the Mirage and Sabre people was still evident. When the 3 SQN Association began to plan its big celebration of 50 years since its arrival in Butterworth, I wrote to them asking to amend their invitation sheet. I suggested they say, “50 years since 3 SQN returned to Butterworth”, for the squadron had done exceptional service there between 1958 and 1967. The reply was, “We’ll change the words if you insist, but those previous years with the Sabre don’t count”.



RAAF E-7A turns 10

from Bettina Mears, Communications Advisor – Surveillance and Response Group

I mportant Defence industry partnerships and a culture of excellence have been key to the operational effectiveness of Air Force’s highly advanced airborne early warning and control capability – the E-7A Wedgetail – now celebrating 10 years since its introduction into RAAF service. Air Force operates six E-7A Wedgetail aircraft from RAAF Base Williamtown, which provide Australia with one of the most advanced air battlespace management capabilities in the world.

Based on a Boeing 737-700, the E-7A Wedgetail combines long-range surveillance radar, secondary radar, passive detection surveillance receivers and tactical/strategic voice and data communications systems. This provides the Australian Defence Force with its ability to survey, command, control and coordinate a joint air, sea and land battle in real time.



As the sole operating squadron for the platform, Commanding Officer of Number 2 Squadron, Wing Commander Jason Brown, said over the past 10 years the E-7A fleet had been regularly dispersed



around the world supporting concurrent exercises and operations, often with all aircraft deployed simultaneously with mission success. “As commanding officer during this significant milestone, it is a great honour and I am immensely proud of what has been achieved by the squadron, not only during my command but historically, at home and abroad”, Wing Commander Brown said.

Major contributions since the E-7A’s introduction into RAAF service include Operations Spate, Atlas and APEC Assist; providing concurrent support for Operation Okra; and achieving a high mission success rate with No. 2 Squadron E-7A maintenance and aircrew in support of the US-led coalition operations. “At Operation Okra, the RAAF E-7A Wedgetail had responsibility for the command and control of all coalition aircraft in a ‘battle management area’ and crews regularly managed more than 80 combat aircraft during a single mission”, Wing Commander Brown said.

“RAAF E-7A crews have also conducted record-breaking endurance sorties for their aircraft type. “In an integrated force, the E-7A shared information with other coalition aircraft, which allowed the force to have situational awareness across air, land and sea domains. The E-7A Wedgetail provided a force multiplier effect, not only for RAAF but for all participating nations.” With many operational milestones and achievements to reflect on, 2020 also represents a significant year for No. 2 Squadron association members, with some marking the 50th anniversary of their service contribution to the Vietnam conflict. No. 2 Squadron was awarded a Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry and a United States Air Force Outstanding Unit Commendation. It also received a US Presidential Unit Citation for service in World War II. “The women and men of No. 2 Squadron continue to honour this legacy and are proven operators in a cohesive and agile team environment and their important contributions have provided Air Force with an advanced, highly capable airborne early warning and control platform that is the envy of armed forces worldwide”, Wing Commander Brown said. “The ability to perform with excellence, consistently achieving a high rate of serviceability under diverse, demanding and complex conditions is a direct result of our personnel's professionalism and dedication to duty.”

The squadron’s efforts have also been acknowledged with the 2018 Duke of Gloucester Cup for outstanding achievement as “the RAAF’s most proficient flying unit” supporting E-7A operations. The important partnerships and successful collaboration with the Airborne Early Warning and Control System Program Office (Capability Acquisition and Sustainment Group) and Defence industry partners, including Boeing Defence Australia, have been a key contributing factor to the effectiveness and operational success of the platform – from its introduction into RAAF service to the continual sustainment and contribution to the Australian Defence Force capability at home and abroad, as called upon by government. Boeing Defence Australia’s vice president and managing director Scott Carpendale said it was a partnership that continued to deliver successful outcomes for the Australian Defence Force, ensuring the highest levels of aircraft availability and mission readiness. “We have built deep sovereign capability and are exceptionally proud of our contribution to the development and ongoing delivery of critical upgrades and sustainment for this world-class capability,” Mr Carpendale said.



12SQN re-formed at RAAF Amberley

1 September 1973

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No 12 Squadron re-formed at RAAF Amberley on this day to operate 12 newly acquired Boeing-Vertol CH-47 Chinook helicopters. No 12 Squadron was a WW II squadron which operated Wirraway, Avro Anson, Vultee Vengeance (in a dive bombing role from September 1942) and, finally - from February 1945 - Liberator bombers from bases in Northern Australia (Darwin from July 1939;



Batchelor (from early 1942)) and Merauke, Dutch New Guinea (from July 1943 operating Vultee Vengeances). The squadron returned to Australia and became non-operational in July 1944 following the withdrawal from service of the Vengeances but it was reactivated on 3 February 1945, equipped with 10 Consolidated Liberator bombers.

After the cessation of hostilities, the unit assumed a transport role dropping supplies to prisoner-of-war camps and moving personnel throughout the area. In mid-1947 No 12 Squadron converted to Lincoln bombers at RAAF Amberley before disbanding on 22 February 1948 when Nos 12, 21 and 23 Squadrons were renamed Nos 1, 2 and 6 Squadrons.



CH-47 Chinook

In 1969 the government approved the purchase of 12 medium-lift helicopters for the RAAF. The two contenders for the medium-lift helicopter role were the Boeing-Vertol CH-47 Chinook and the Sikorsky CH-53 'Jolly Green Giant'. The CH-47C Chinook was selected, and this was announced by the Defence Minister on 19 August 1970. An order for 12 helicopters was placed on 6 March 1972, making the RAAF the first foreign customer for the Chinook.



To Fly a Mustang

from Peter Scully

Having delivered a Meteor from Williamtown to Amberley, I spent the night there. After dinner hand over a beer in the bar, I met the Flight Commander of the Test & Ferry Flight. I mentioned to him that my one big disappointment was never having had the opportunity to fly a Mustang. He listened for a while and then left, telling me he'd be back in a minute. He returned with a copy of the Mustang Pilots' Notes which he gave me, then told me: "finish your beer, go to your room, study the book and report to me at 0800 tomorrow and I'll have a Mustang ready for you to fly." Eureka, and of course I did what he said and I reckon I was 'full bottle' on those pilots' notes the next morning.

At breakfast, I received a message to report to the Officer Commanding's office straight away. "Bloody hell", I thought "what on earth have I done." Well, apparently I was the only pilot on the base who was current on the Wirraway. There was a medical emergency at Inverell and I was to fly the Base medical officer there. So, off we went, expecting to return that afternoon.



Wirraway and Mustang in formation

Unfortunately, the doctor was required to stay over-night. I was taken into town and looked after by someone from the Air Training Corps – I was dressed only in my flying suit. The next morning, the doctor and I went out to the plane



to find it covered in snow and we had no option but to stay another night. On return to Amberley, I was met by the Flt Cdr of Test & Ferry Flight and told that unfortunately, the Mustang had to be transferred to another location and would not be returning. Well, at least I got to fly an old piston aircraft again – not quite the same I know, but it was still fun.



Possum

from Ross (Bags) Mathieson

I served in Vietnam as an Iroquois pilot with No 9 Squadron from May 1967 until April 1968. On 22 Nov 1967, I heard a MAYDAY call, whilst on a “hash and trash” task as copilot to Athol Jory. The caller gave a ‘Possum’ call sign and an eight figure grid reference. I thought that was impressive, but realized later that the crew had already written it down. The grid reference was only five minutes or so away from our position so we responded immediately.

On arrival we saw a large ball of flame with a still-turning rotor sticking out of the top of the flame, and a turning tail-rotor sticking out of one side. It was on a bush track in a large, sparsely treed clearing and the Aussie pilot, Roger Colclough, and observer Stephen Moore were standing nearby. We landed next to them and then flew them to Nui Dat. I’m told that Roger had minor shrapnel wounds.

The story was that they had spotted a VC flag in a tree, and were close to it when a mine exploded. It was possibly command- detonated, but more likely the rotor wash tugged on a wire in the tree. A few years back I saw this incident written about in a book of 161 Recce Flight incidents, which was in the War Memorial bookshop in Canberra. I think it was called 'Possums and Birddogs' by Peter Nolan, but the author had erroneously attributed the rescue to an American aircraft and crew.



Murphy says to Paddy, "What ya talkin into an envelope for?" "I'm sending a voicemail ya thick sod!"



Souvenirs

from Peter Scully

In 1956 the Meteors were being replaced by Sabres and the aircraft from Williamtown were allocated to some of the Citizen Air Force squadrons. I was detailed to fly one to No 23 Squadron at Amberley on 7 Sep 1956. 23 had been my first squadron after graduation while waiting for the next course at the Operational Training Unit at Willy (all I flew there was a Wirraway and there’s another story in that).

Souveniring was ‘de rigueur’ back then. As an old Manly boy I’d already been involved in stealing the ‘Biloba’ Bell from the School of Artillery at North Head in Sydney (much agony over that) and earlier in stealing a canon from the Navy at Cerberus (even more agony). So, while at Amberley waiting to be picked up and returned to Willy in a Mk33 Vampire, we couldn’t resist the temptation of relieving 23 SQN of its brand new coloured crest hanging outside their HQ – it fitted comfortably in the Vampire down beside the ejection seat.

Very shortly after our CO received a call from CO 23 demanding its return and advising that two aircraft were on their way to collect. We humbly surrendered the stolen crest and arranged for our ground crew to stow it one of the 23 SQN planes. For some reason, one of the 23 SQN aircraft had to return early. This presented our flight line crew with a cleverly devised opportunity. They hid the crest



and as the ground crew strapped in the pilot of the first aircraft they told him that the crest was in the other plane and later they told the other pilot that the crest was already on its way.

One can imagine the scene at the Amberley that evening. First pilot announcing: ‘mission accomplished’ and that the crest was on its way. Second pilot arriving in bar. Where’s the crest?? Haven’t you got it?

However, the spirit of friendly rivalry did not last. The CO 23 went ballistic and set out to Willy: his complaint, airmen lying to officers. We then gave it back. Who won? Both I guess.



Sound Barrier Broken for First Time in Australia

14 August 1953

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During a 20-minute test flight on this day, the prototype Sabre swept-wing jet fighter built by the Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation (CAC) became the first aircraft to break the sound barrier over Australia. Taking off at 1140 from CAC’s Avalon airfield outside Geelong, Victoria, aircraft A94-101 (the first local version of the North American F-86 Sabre fitted with the Rolls Royce Avon RA7 engine) reached a height of 25,000 feet before entering a shallow dive over Port Phillip Bay. As the aircraft’s speed reached 670 mph (1078 km/h), it generated a sonic boom that was heard in Melbourne.



A94-101 at Pt Cook

The pilot on this occasion - 28-year-old Flight Lieutenant William Scott - was actually not the first RAAF member to achieve supersonic sound. This feat had apparently been achieved two years earlier on an American F-86 by Wing Commander ‘Dick’ Cresswell, while he was briefly attached to a US fighter group in Korea.



Air Marshal The Earl of Bandon

C in C Far East Air Force

from Peter Scully

There are two stories about ‘Paddy’ Bandon worth repeating.

After leaving a very snobbish London Club, Paddy – after a few too many – tripped, fell down the steps and landed in the gutter. Following him was a Guards Major who commented that such behaviour was totally unacceptable and that he was going to advise the Secretary that his membership should be cancelled. “And who the bloody hell are you”, said Paddy. “I’ll have you know, sir, that I am the honourable, Major Ponsonby De Clair.”

“Well” said Paddy, I’ll have you know that I am Air Marshal the Earl of Bandon and I’ve got you fu**ed on both counts.”



After leaving FEAF, he became C in C 2nd Tactical Air Force in Germany. He was visiting a horse show when an old colleague saw him across the ring and yelled out: “Hello Paddy, how are you enjoying the show?” “All I’ve seen so far, said Paddy. “ is a lot of stupid horses showing off their arses to a lot of stupid arses showing off their horses.

The Chief’s ADC was the spitting image of his chief with a very similar manner; we got on well together and whenever the Chief was absent, we gathered and sampled his whisky – I felt guilty of course, but not much.

One further comment. The Chief had a personal helicopter and pilot as well as his Hastings. The chopper was used mainly to take the Chief from HQ to Air House for lunch and back. On this occasion, with the Chief up in the cockpit, the pilot attempted a start only to have a problem with the starter solenoid. So, he climbed down and opened the front engine doors, picked up a rock and hit the solenoid (standard practice with many old planes). Unfortunately, he’d left the flywheel running and so the engine fired up. It was a difficult climb back into the cockpit and the Chief had no skills at all and eventually the Whirlwind began to move forward ever faster, being chased by the pilot to no avail, gathering an increasing pitching attitude until it finally cut its tail rotor off then falling over, all with the Chief inside. Fortunately, he wasn’t hurt but the pilot was on the next Britannia back to Britain.



No 1 Recruit Training Unit formed at RAAF Richmond

2 August 1954

This material is compiled from sources including the History and Heritage Branch–Air Force, the RAAF Museum, the Australian War Memorial, ADF Serials and Peter Dunn. 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, No 1 Recruit Training Unit (RTU) was formed at RAAF Base Richmond. The unit then relocated to RAAF Rathmines (near Newcastle) on 28 April 1958; to RAAF Base Wagga on 30 November 1960; to RAAF Base Edinburgh on 27 March 1964 and finally, back to RAAF Base Wagga in 2008. Early training of female recruits was undertaken in several locations until a WRAAF Recruit Training Flight was eventually incorporated into 1RTU on 21 July 1965. With the absorption of the WRAAF into the RAAF in 1977 the function of training female recruits was transferred to Women’s Training Unit (WTU) in Tottenham (Melbourne) on 13 June 1976. After a second move to RAAF Laverton from January 1977 until January 1981 WTU was disbanded and the responsibility of training both male and female recruits was vested in 1RTU at RAAF Base Edinburgh.



Since its formation, No 1 RTU has provided initial recruit training to over 40,000 entrants. Recruit courses today vary from the Air Force Recruit Course (fully integrated Permanent Air Force and RAAF Reserve) as well as providing training for Military Skills Instructors.



The wife has been missing a week now. Police said to prepare for the worst. So I have been to the charity shop to get all her clothes back.





It Happened on the Road to Mazir-e-Sharif

from Geoff Raebel

As we slowed, Afghan troops on each side of the road rose out of the grass, their Russian 'Tommy Guns' ready to hose us down. Immediately I knew we had broken the first rule of free camping in a hostile country, especially Afghanistan... 'Never return to the same place'. It had taken us two days to get permission to travel north from Kabul to Bamiyan in 1979 to see the Giant Standing Buddas which were destroyed by the Taliban in 2001. While our ex-British army truck ground north, a few of the more military inclined among us observed what great country it was for ambushes and guerrilla warfare.

Our trip was to be 3 months from Kathmandu to London - overland. The middle East was in turmoil. Ayatollah Khomeini had overthrown the Shah of Iran. General Zia Al Huk had taken over Pakistan by coup. There had been a revolution in Afghanistan and America and Russia were vying with each other for favour with the Afghans. The Americans, kicked out of Iran, wanted to install listening posts in Northern Afghanistan to spy on the Russians. Predictably for the Russians, Afghanistan was to them what Cuba was to the Americans.

In Kathmandu, Stewart, our driver called the 26 passengers together to decide on whether to go or not. "I've been out here for 12 months" he said "The truck and I are going home. You can come with me or make your own way". We all elected to go. Four weeks later we had reached the Bamiyan turn off. Immediately we were stopped by government troops with their AK47 rifles. We were not allowed to proceed. The Bamiyan area was in control of the rebels (Northern Alliance). We had a small meeting over morning tea. The decision was made to proceed North from Kabul through the Salang tunnel and onto Mazir-e-Sharif. Mazir was the main town in the north and as I remember, there was a legend that Mazir was the end point of a journey by Mohammed and I think his elephant died at Mazir. To commemorate this, the Afghans built a most beautiful mosque with the exterior clad in blue ceramic tiles. During the afternoon our track zig-zagged up into the mountains of the Hindu Kush, the end of the Himalayas. We stopped outside the Salang tunnel to rug up in warm clothes. The tunnel itself was wet and cold and black. It is the highest longest road tunnel in the world, 10 miles long through hard rock.

It was a gift from the USSR to the people of Afghanistan; it was prophetic that most of us observed that the tunnel would just nicely accommodate a T64 tank transporter. Finally we broke out into brilliant sunshine and the truck halted in a snow field where we expended energy in a wild snowball fight. I think the car loads of locals passing, thought us mad. By late afternoon we had descended into the savannah grass lands of northern Afghanistan.

Stewart decided that we had gone far enough and with no cars in sight suddenly turned left off the highway and drove through the low grassy hills before pulling up in a shallow valley. "Stay down in the valley" Stewart warned "Rig the tents and get the meal going before dark." One group of three cooked the food they had bought that day while we set up tents and played cricket. I don't remember much about the meal except that the group of cooks were extremely messy and always burned food on the pots and that night we had to deal with cooked-on cheese.

The next morning we turned left back onto the highway to Mazir. It was a beautiful city; flat, well laid out with two and three storey blocks of units and bungalow houses in shaded yards. There must have been poor people, we didn't see where they lived. Life must have been fairly simple. There were enough vehicles, not too many, lots of Russian made 6x6 heavy trucks. The roads were dusty and the day hot. It was our turn to cook that day which meant we had to buy food. It was memorable that we found a fruit seller on a corner. We haggled a price for the apricots and then he proceeded to weigh them out. He used a traditional hand held beam balance used in those countries. On one side he put the apricots and on the other he put rocks! We were dumbfounded at whatever the rocks weighed. The fruit seller wanted to know where we were from - 'AustraliaStan' didn't seem to mean much but one of the others who put a right fist on his heart and proudly stated 'EnglandStan' brought more



comprehension. It was a great day and I was privileged to have visited this remote place. Late that afternoon was when we made our mistake. We turned right off the highway into our haven in the hills. It was a lovely night, clear and black. The “Belt of Orion” looked beautiful in the sky.

Next morning we turned right onto the road to Kabul. We had only gone a mile when we came to a jeep parked by the roadside. The only occupant was an officer sitting on the back of a seat so that he was facing us. Inevitably he was smoking and casually put up his left hand calling us to a halt. When we slowed, the troops rose out of the grass to cover us with their Shavka machine guns. The officer questioned Stewart as to who we were and where we were going. He then came to the tail gate of the truck, looked up and down the two rows of passengers and the mess of unstowed material around our feet after breaking camp. “Ah, Western Hippies”! He spat dismissively stepping out onto the road. He shouted at Stewart in Afghani. My Afghan was pretty basic but the meaning was clear enough. It went something like “F Off”! Stewart was not inclined to argue and off we went for the Salang pass with its concrete anti-landside roofs at each switch-back. We had several more adventures in Kandahar, Bost, Herat and Iran before we reached London four weeks later.



World War II Spitfire Pilot Dies Aged 96

from Maurice Kissane

World War II veteran Charlie Miller OAM, known for his extraordinary bravery as a Spitfire pilot and his significant contribution to the Mount Gambier community, has died. He was 96 years old.

Charlie flew Spitfires in 457 Squadron RAAF. While Mr Miller never referred to himself as a hero, he performed dozens of low-level missions strafing Japanese strongholds during risky and dangerous missions. These missions were considered the most precarious feats by pilots. Many of his fellow pilots never returned.



Charlie Miller (left) learnt to fly in Tiger Moths and became a military flying instructor

