

The Quarterly Journal of the  
**FLEET AIR ARM ASSOCIATION of AUSTRALIA Inc**

VOLUME 4 NUMBER 2 APRIL 1993



# SLIPSTREAM



PUBLISHED BY - FLEET AIR ARM ASSOCIATION of AUSTRALIA (NSW) Incorporated

PO BOX 28, NOWRA, NSW, 2541 - AUSTRALIA

REGISTERED BY AUSTRALIA POST PUBLICATION No.NAS2604



## FOREWORD

by **REAR ADMIRAL A.L.HUNT AO RAN**  
FLAG OFFICER NAVAL SUPPORT COMMAND

**Fellow members of the FAAA of Australia, it is a great thrill to be invited to write a few words for this edition of Slipstream. I am only in my test flight phase as the Naval Support Commander but I am already enjoying the contact with sailors, ships and establishments as against my recent years in the head office bureaucracy.**

I have already enjoyed some interstate travel in the job which has included renewing friendships with FAAA of A members. As my term of office extends, I would hope to get around the whole Navy family and meet more of you.

In one of my first weeks in Sydney, I was taken out to Spectacle Island to see the splendid Naval historical collection and was somewhat staggered to find my photographic image staring back at me - whether we like it or not our own brief experience is already part of history.

You will know that in my recent past I have been involved with the new shipbuilding program covering the Seahawk helicopter, Collins submarine, ANZAC frigate and more to come. Each of these programs has been interesting in its own right, but most significantly all show a pointed swing towards platform and weapon design unique to Australia and our environment. This represents considerable challenge for the next generation, but a challenge for which the RAN has been well prepared by the experience and learnings of the past.

When I left my last job in the Materiel Division I was aware that some of the ships, aircraft and equipment we are now bringing into service will be operational to about the year 2030 or so. Some of us (standfast, Dadswell and Cronin), will not be around at that time. It seems to me, therefore, that we need to seriously consider the membership of the Association, facing up to whether we want it to be a collection of relics of the past or an entity which includes the men and women of the future. Naval aviation in the RAN has changed and will change, but in certain fundamentals will continue to play a key role in the Navy's future. Therefore this organisation needs to think seriously on attracting and welcoming membership from the new naval aviation core who might look different, but are very much of the same tradition as our squadrons off Korea, in SEATO, Malaysia and Vietnam.

## EDITORIAL

This edition of Slipstream is brought to you by the generosity of Transfield Amecon - Shipbuilders, to whom the Association offers their most sincere thanks.

If anyone ever needed a reminder of their mortality, this past month has provided it. We have seen the loss of member Errol Kavanagh, and the passing of fellow shipmates, Brian Jenner, Lou Luther, Jim Lamb, Arthur 'Chippy' Bartlett (in UK), and Ken Patterson an ex-TAG who was employed at Albatross for many years.

There can be no doubt that their end will leave an unfillable gap in the lives of their families, and to them, our condolences are offered.

It would be equally true to say, that another piece of our Fleet Air Arm history has gone with them. Only too often, the individual tends to think that their service contribution is too insignificant to bother recording - that thinking results in a jig-saw of history with half the pieces' missing.

The complaint has been made that the Naval Aviation Museum is overly Aircrew and 'Brass-hat' oriented. The truth of the matter, is that there has been very little input from that vast army of 'little-people' who kept the wheels turning.

If you don't wish to record your service career for the archives, at least do it for your grandchildren. But always remember the old ditty...*for the want of a nail, the war was lost!*

Although the membership of the association is on a steady increase, more could be done if everyone actively tried to recruit one more member. If you can't spare the time - send me the name and address of a prospect.

Photographs, articles and yarns are always required by Slipstream and for newspaper PR - it is YOUR journal, and will only be as good as YOU make it.

## PROFILE

**Commanding Officer of  
HMAS Albatross  
Commodore G.A. Morton,  
RAN**

Commodore Geoff Morton was born in Brisbane, Queensland, on 10 December 1944 and was educated in Queensland, joining the Royal Australian Naval College, *HMAS Creswell*, as a Cadet Midshipman in January 1961.

After graduating from RANC in 1964, he served as a Midshipman in a number of fleet units including *HMAS Derwent* during the Malay confrontation, before spending 2 years in the United Kingdom undertaking academic and professional studies.

On his return from the UK he served in *HMAS Anzac* and as Executive Officer *HMAS Gull* before returning to the UK to undertake a year's gunnery training.

After graduation from *HMS Excellent* and completion of various USN weapons courses, he served as a Gunnery Officer of *HMA Ships Torrens, Melbourne* and *Perth*, and held staff gunnery appointments in Canberra, Washington and at the RAN Tactical School. He was promoted to the rank of Commander in 1980 and attended the Joint Services Staff College before serving as the Director of Surface and Air Weapons - Navy.

As a Commander, he commanded *HMAS Tobruk* from mid 1983 until the end of 1984. He was promoted to Captain in June 1985 and has since served as Chief Staff Officer Operations at MHQ, Commanding Officer *HMAS Creswell*, and in the Strategic and International Policy Division of the Department of Defence.



He assumed command of *HMAS Brisbane* in June 1989 and served in that position until June 1990 when he was posted to head the RAN Officers Career Study.

He was promoted to the rank of Commodore on 24 September 1990 and assumed duty as Commodore Training and Naval Officer Commanding Victoria on 01 October 1990. He served in this position until 29 January 1993.

Commodore Morton took command at the RAN Air Station, *HMAS Albatross* on 30 January 1993.

Commodore Morton's wife, Dianne, is also a Queenslander and they have two daughters, Priscilla, who attends university in Brisbane, and Cecilia, who attends Scots PGC College, Warwick.

His sporting interests include flying light aircraft, gliding, tennis and cricket.

*\* Director of Public Information - Navy.*

## FRONT COVER

The photograph shows the latest ship to carry the name *HMAS Melbourne*.

Several members have asked why this ship has a slightly different badge than the previous Melbourne.

The answer is that the badge has been changed so that it 'more accurately reflects the origins of the badge ie. the Coat of Arms of the City of Melbourne'.



## SLIPSTREAM

All correspondence to: PO BOX 662,  
NOWRA, NSW 2541, Australia.

Phone: (044)232014 Fax: (044)232412

**\*\* All rights reserved. Reproduction in part or whole is forbidden without the express permission of the editor in writing.**

**\*\* The opinions and views expressed in this journal do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of the Association or Committee of Management.**

# THE FIREFLY.....that didn't!

by Terry Hetherington

## RAN Historical Aircraft Flight

Since May 1991 the focus has been to 'Get the Firefly flying'. Last November we thought that all our major problems were over and we would soon have the aeroplane inspected by CAA examiners and be ready for the coming round of air shows along the East Coast. However a series of setbacks have so far prevented WD826 from getting airborne; something it last did in 1988 at the BI-Centennial Airshow.

WD826 is a Fairey 'Firefly' A.S. Mk.6, which was converted to Target Towing configuration (T.T.6) in the late fifties. It was one of the early batch of Mark 6's, between constructor's numbers 8652 to 8698, which were delivered to the RAN in 1950 and 1953.

Not much of its earliest history is recorded, but it is known that it was converted for target towing duties by The Fairey Aviation Co. of Australasia at Bankstown in 1958. It operated in that capacity from G.A.F at Avalon and at RANAS Nowra, until April 1964. In December 1965 it was transported from Bankstown to HMAS *Nirimba* at Quakers Hill to become an instructional airframe for Aircraft Artificer Apprentices and Air Mechanicians.

It was here in 1966 that I first encountered WD826, in its distinctive silver and yellow target towing livery, with side number 845. Any old Mob's from those days will still remember Dusty Miller, our ex-RAF instructor, trying to make us enthusiastic about working on an old aeroplane that was just another relic from the Korean War period. It couldn't inspire us with interest at all. We were the future Tracker and Skyhawk tiffies, what did an old 'Fairey' matter to us.

Thankfully not everyone thought of WD826 as a relic. The founders of the then Fleet Air Arm Museum at Nowra arranged for WD826 to be transported back to Albatross to join the collection in 'D' Hangar. I well remember Commander Col Patterson and CPO Eddie Bracken scaring the socks off most of the dignitaries and guests at the official opening of the collection in December, 1974. Admiral Sir Victor Smith had just finished saying 'I declare this Museum open', when Col 'hit the lit' on the Coffman starter and the Firefly's Rolls Royce Griffon engine roared into life, much to the amazement of most of those present.

With all that eventuated in *Albatross* during the late seventies and early eighties, the Museum collection had to be moved out of 'D' Hangar; with most of the aircraft, including WD826, being displayed on the Dummy Deck, albeit

exposed to the weather. In the mid-eighties the RAN Historical Aircraft Flight evolved out of those museum aircraft, and others, with the potential to be restored to flying condition and registered under special regulations with the CAA. Included was WD826, which had only accumulated 732 flying hours during its operational life.

Many hours of restoration and inspection resulted in WD826 returning to the skies in October 1986, represented as a Korean War veteran in dark grey and green camouflage paint scheme and carrying the side number 245/K, of 817 Squadron, HMAS *Sydney*. After a successful and eventful period of display flying at Air Shows around Australia, including an in-the-field engine change at Coff's Harbour, the aeroplane had to be removed from service late in 1988 to have a defect in the replacement engine investigated. It was due to the resulting repair work on the engine that I renewed my acquaintance with WD826 that began in 1966 back at *Nirimba*.

Dave Spralling and Keith Boundy, who are both employed at *Albatross*, had completed the majority of the inspections and repairs to the engine when I became involved early in 1991. By that time the engine was in the final stages of reassembly, but one major obstacle to be overcome was the need for replacement camshafts.

Help came in the form of a positive response from the Simpson family, operators of Classic Aviation at Bankstown. They had obtained the damaged remains of Firefly WD828, the first privately owned example to fly in Australia since the sixties, but which was sadly crashed at Camden in December 1987. Their kind offer of the loan of a pair of serviceable camshafts led to a concerted effort to get WD826 at least to a taxiable condition for the Naval Aviation Museum's Air Day late in 1991.

Even the Commanding Officer of the Air Station, Commodore Rob Partington got involved in refitting camshafts and setting valve clearances in the hope of having the plane ready for the Air Day. At 8:30pm on the Saturday night before the big event, Doug Purvis, Qantas First Officer and ex-Tracker pilot, coaxed the big Griffon back into life for the first time in three years. A minor miracle had been accomplished and the Firefly's return to the public eye was well received.

But what was going on under those big aluminium rocker covers? We calculated that between the Air Day and when we next inspected the camshafts some three months later, the engine had done about four hours of low to medium power ground running. Upon inspection, it was found that both camshafts and all forty eight rocker arms had been damaged beyond limits due to a restriction in the low pressure oil system which feeds the cams and rocker assemblies. Back to the drawing board.... and what about the borrowed camshafts!

One benefit of the Warbird movement that has developed throughout Australia



Early shot of WD 826 in December 1974. The aircraft is painted in target towing colours with broad yellow and black stripes predominant underside. The spinner is yellow with black base and the upper sides are light grey. (Photo: Craig Justo)



Despite the many setbacks encountered, the author managed a smile as he posed with Firefly WD 826. (Photo: Peregrine Publishing '92)

in the last ten years is that you'll seldom find yourself without the offer of help in bad times. Bob de la Hunty and Gordon Glynn, operators of the ex-RAAF Neptune which is based at Nowra, came to our assistance by delivering eight repairable camshafts to a specialist in California, and coming back within two weeks with a new pair ready to fit.

Meanwhile the defects in the oil system were diagnosed and fixed, and replacement rocker arms were obtained locally and reassembled with the imported cams. Many other areas were attended to as well to improve the general condition of the aeroplane, most significantly the undercarriage oleos, which were replaced by a pair on loan from the Simpsons once again, and overhauled by Bill Crowley and Dave Chiverton at *Albatross*.

As 1992 advanced, we set ourselves a target of having the Firefly ready for the Avalon Air Show in October, but primarily to be able to display her at the official opening of the Naval Aviation Museum on 1st November. The Avalon Show came and went, and once again we found ourselves well short of being ready for the Museum Air Day. Keith Boundy and I resolved that we would not prejudice the engine once again for a short-lived moment of glory.

The engine did get run, this time at about 5 o'clock on the Saturday afternoon before the Air Show, but it would not pull above 1000 rpm and was backfiring intermittently on the left bank of cylinders. Much head-scratching and

soul-searching followed and we decided that first thing on Sunday morning we would re-check the valve timing in the vain hope that it might have been a tooth or two out.

Sunday morning verified that valve timing was not the problem on the left bank, but on removal of the rocker cover on the right bank something that we dreaded ever seeing again presented itself to us. Two cam lobes on the right-hand shaft had started to wear away already, within 30 minutes of running. That certainly put paid to any ideas of even a taxiing display for the Air Day.

Theories range from a defective fuel injection system to incorrect valve clearances as the cause of the low RPM problem, and the wear to the cam lobes is probably attributable to either poor case-hardening of those two lobes or

blocked oil feed holes on their respective rocker arms.

The original problem of oil starvation to the rocker assemblies is discounted, as oil is evident on all other areas of the assemblies, and a healthy pressure reading was obtained on a slave gauge fitted to the low pressure system.

Since the Air Day we have been left jaded by the disappointments of failure and are yet to find renewed enthusiasm. Doubtless this will return. The eventual rewards of seeing WD826 back in the skies over Nowra and beyond are too strong to resist.

Credit is due to many people for their concerted efforts over the years to ensure the preservation and restoration of WD826. Without the foresight of people like Rear Admiral Andrew Robertson, the dogged determination of Lieutenant Commander Ken Alderman, the technical skills of Mark Wallace, Peter Pring-Shambler, Peter Dickinson, Keith Boundy, Dave Spratling and hosts of others, the encouragement of Commodore Rob Partington, and the financial and moral support from the Naval Aviation Museum, Fairey Firefly WD826 might well have passed into history as just another old relic. TH ©

### FAIREY FIREFLY A.S. Mark 6 (T.T.6) WD826.

**Constructors Number:** 8654

**Date of Delivery:** March 1953 (note 1)

**Date of Conversion (TT):** 8th May 1958 at 235:15 a/f hours

**Last Operational Flight:** 14th April 1964 at 731:20 a/f hours

**Disposal Date:** 28th April 1964 to Hawker de Havillands, Bankstown for R.I.P.

**Transfer to Nirimba:** 12th December, 1965

**Return to FAA Museum:** mid 1974

**Restoration to flight with RAN Historic Flight:** 4th October 1986

**Date Last Flown:** 1st October 1988 at 790.5 a/f hours

**Note 1:** WB505 was the first A.S. Mark 6 produced and was delivered to the RAN on 26th May, 1950. WD826 was the seventeenth of a total of 133 Mark 6's produced by Faireys up to September 1951.

Records indicate however that WD826 was not delivered to the RAN until March 1953 aboard HMAS Vengeance, despite later production aircraft (up to WD840) having been delivered in 1950. This leaves the history of WD826's first three years of existence somewhat uncertain. Can anyone help?

Interestingly, the very last Mark 6 produced, WJ121, was also one of the 108 Fireflies delivered to the RAN between 1948 and 1954, and was disposed of by the Department of Supply in June, 1957. \* *Terry Hetherington*

### HALF - MAST

*Overheard at the Senior Sailors' Reunion in '92*

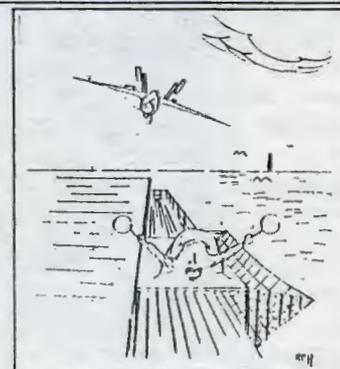
Two ex-Chiefs having a beer in the Mess:

"How are getting on then?" says one.

"Not too good, mate," says the other, "you remember that stuff the MO used to put in the tea to quieten us down?"

"Yeah. What about it?"

"I think it's just beginning to catch up with me."



# RAST

## RECOVERY ASSIST SECURE and TRAVERSE

### HELICOPTER HAULDOWN SYSTEM

1. The RAST system, as it is generally known, is fitted to the RANs 6FFG Class vessels and will be fitted to the 8 ANZAC Class ships currently under construction at Transfield Amecon Facility at Williamstown, Victoria.

As the name implies, the system performs three functions, Recovery, Assist, Secure and Traverse. The RAST System provides the capability to operate a helicopter up to 10,00kg (in the case of the RAN this will be a Sikorsky Sea Hawk), on board a ship up to Sea State 5. Therefore the principle performance criteria of the RAST System is that it be capable of recovering and traversing the helicopter with deck motions of 31 degrees of roll, 9 degrees of pitch and a heave rate of 6 metres (20 feet) per second. It must also be capable of securing

the helicopter against these motions within 2 seconds.

2. The 'Recover Assist' (RA) function assists the pilot to safely land the helicopter within the confines of a Rapid Securing Device (RSD). Recovery is accomplished by attaching a constant tension Recovery Assist (RA) cable from the ship to the deck (fingers crossed) while increased tension on the RA cable guides the pilot during his descent, thus providing a stabilising and centralising effect. The result is a significantly reduced landing dispersion which ensures the probe will be located within the RSD.

The 'Secure' function secures the helicopter, within 2 seconds of landing, without the use of on-deck crew.

3. Securing the helicopter is achieved by 'trapping' a probe, projecting from the underside of the helicopter, in the jaws of a Rapid Securing Device (RSD). The RSD is firmly connected to the flight deck and is operated by a Landing Safety Officer (LSO) who is located where he can safely see the RSD and helicopter probe. The area between the RSD jaws (arresting beam) is approximately one square metre (10 square feet).

4. Traversing the helicopter

between the flight deck and the hangar is achieved by the RSD which moves in a deck track at a rate of 18 metres (60ft) per minute.

Straightening the helicopter prior to traversing into the hangar is a simple operation with the RAST system. Tailguide winch cables are connected to the helicopter at a point near the tail wheel. A deck crew member at last! The LSO operates a single control lever on the control console to align the helicopter with the traverse track. The helicopter is held securely during the straightening operation, which usually requires one or two manipulations and is achieved in less than two minutes.

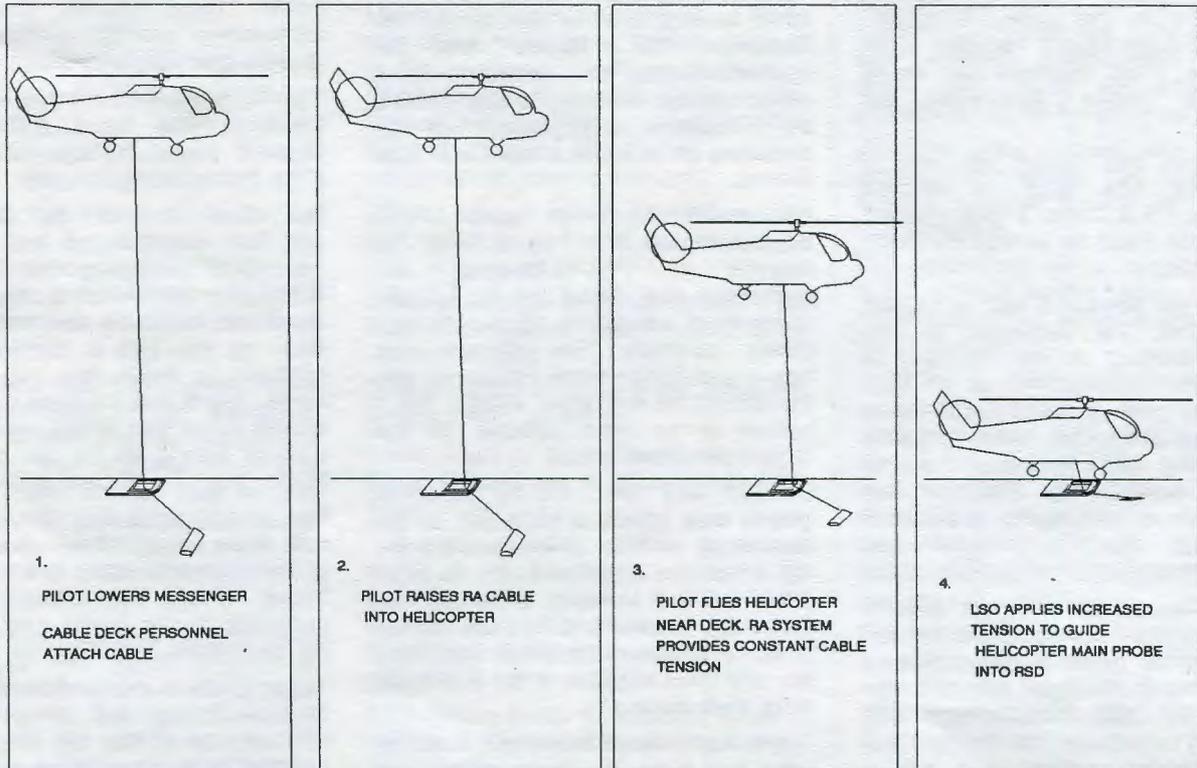
5. A similar but more simplified system will be fitted to the New Zealand 'ANZAC' Ships. The difference being that the Kiwi's will employ a grid for capturing the helicopter and a 3-wire system for traversing the helicopter into the hangar.

As one ex-pilot was heard to comment, "No wonder so many of our members are retired, there's hardly anything for us to do these days. Next thing you know the bloody aircraft will be pilotless!"

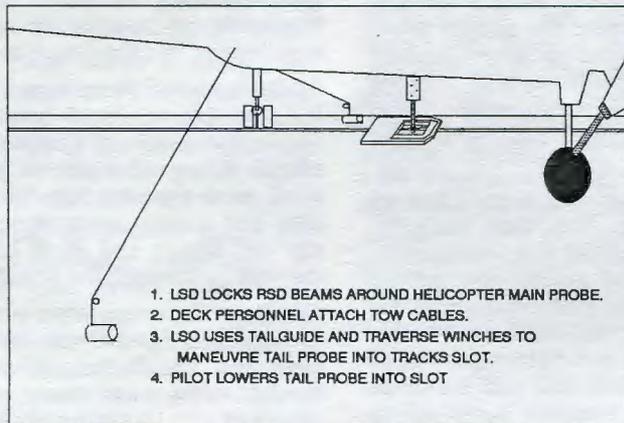
*\*Article from Ms Lavinia Williment - PR Coordinator Transfield Amecon.*



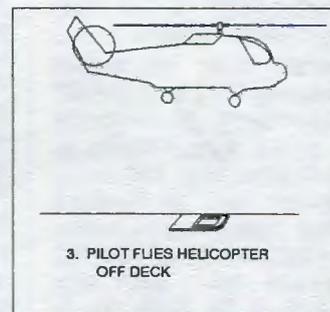
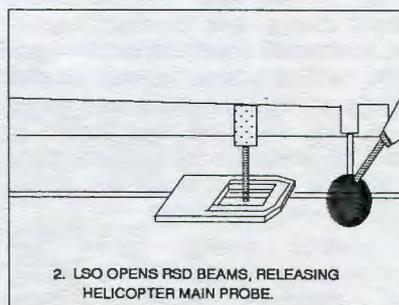
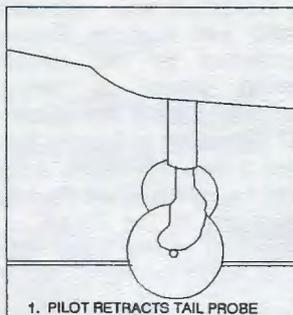
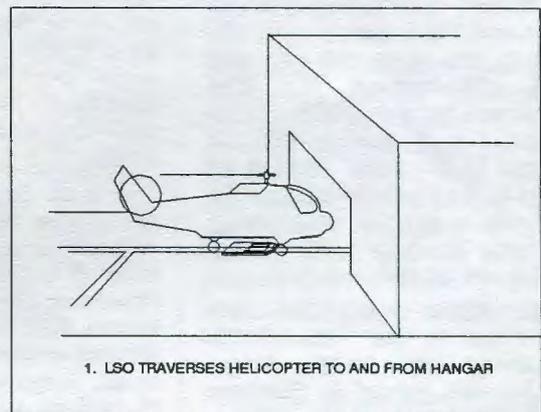
## RECOVERY ASSIST FUNCTION



## SECURING FUNCTION



## TRAVERSE FUNCTION



## FLEET AIR ARM PERSONALITY

In June 1942, a group of young Australian fighter pilots returned to Australia from the United Kingdom. They had been hastily recalled to fly Kittyhawk P40E fighters for No.75 Squadron, Royal Australian Air Force.

Pilot Officer 'Nat' Gould was one of these. He was later to become Commander A.J.Gould, a distinguished pilot with the Fleet Air Arm of the Royal Australian Navy.

Seventy Five Squadron had performed well against the Japanese in the dramatic defence of Port Moresby in March/April 1942, but most of their aircraft had been lost and twelve pilots killed. Replacements were urgently needed and after forty-four days of relentless combat, the Squadron had been withdrawn to Kingaroy in southern Queensland for rest, refit and replacements.

Nat was trained as a fighter pilot in Australia and in December 1940 he was one of a small group of pilots shipped from Sydney to Glasgow on the cargo ship, the SS Largs Bay. He was only twenty and keen to get into the fight, but the unescorted vessel followed a devious course for eight frustrating weeks.

He was first sent to Lincolnshire where he underwent a course to fly Hurricanes. It was damp and cold with low cloud and frequent rain. The privations of war became real. Later he was transferred to fly Spitfires with the battle scarred 17 Squadron relaxing on patrol duties in the Shetland Islands. His next move was to join 134 Squadron in Yorkshire, once again to fly Hurricanes. From there a new adventure began.

He was expecting a move to join other Australian pilots in the heat of the western desert in North Africa. However, he was moved to Glasgow and issued with heavy winter clothing. He joined a group of young pilots who were put aboard *HMS Argus*, a small aircraft carrier with a cargo of Hurricane aircraft and a secret destination.

The *Argus* headed north into arctic waters, finally bearing east to stand off the port of Murmansk in northern Russia. These young pilots flew off a carrier for the first time. They had been briefed to fly south, find the Russian coast and follow a river inland to locate the aerodrome. Their task was to deliver the Hurricanes and then teach the Russian pilots how to fly them. It's a long story and one he will never forget. Finally he returned on board the *HMS Intrepid* to fly the Spitfire V's in Northern Ireland.

By then, Japan had struck Pearl

Harbour. Australia was at risk and needed experienced pilots. By May 1942, he was back in Melbourne. The European War, Russia and the oppressive winter were far behind. But a new challenge loomed. He was needed by 75 Squadron at Kingaroy, which was preparing for its return to the war in New Guinea.

Nat joined the tough band of 75 Squadron pilots who had survived the defence of Port Moresby. His experience was valued and his Russian songs were a welcome addition to their bawdy repertoire. The Kittyhawk was heavy and cumbersome compared with the aircraft he had flown abroad, but it proved to be more suitable for the rugged conditions ahead.

On 30th July 1942, the 75 Squadron ground crew arrived at Milne Bay on the eastern tip of New Guinea aboard the SS *Anhui*. The Kittyhawks flew via Horn Island and Port Moresby. Milne Bay was a strategic location and the Japs wanted it. No.76 Kittyhawk Squadron was there too, and three brigades of the Australian Army were moving in.

There was constant heavy rain. Coconut trees had been cut down to form an airstrip in the low flying Gili Gili plantation bordering the head of the bay. The steel matting surface failed to control the ooze and the aircraft threw up a spray of mud as they clattered along the slippery surface. Flying conditions were dangerous with mountain peaks, low cloud and poor visibility.

The camp consisted of a collection of rain-soaked tents. The heat, humidity, mud and constant rain were oppressive. Cooking on wood stoves was almost impossible and the food unattractive. Pit latrines filled with water and overflowed. Minimal washing, wet clothes, hurricane lamps, overcrowded tents and the smell of garbage and humanity combined to reduce confidence.

Gastroenteritis, mosquitos, insects, malaria, dengue and skin conditions depleted energy and lowered morale. Nat contracted gastroenteritis and despite medical advice he was ordered to fly. As a result the cabin was fouled and at one stage he was forced to remove his oxygen mask to vomit. Nat's love of flying was put to the test during his New Guinea experience.

For several weeks, patrol and reconnaissance flights were maintained. Coast watchers remained alert. Occasional aerial attacks by Zeros were repelled and several pilots were lost. The Australian Army and the two Kittyhawk squadrons braced themselves for the attack which was imminent. Finally, on 25th August, a large invasion

fleet was sighted.

Nat flew one of the Kittyhawks which raced along the muddy strip, each with a five hundred pound bomb suspended below. They headed towards the approaching convoy, climbing through cloud to gain height for attack.

Visibility was poor but finally there was a break in the cloud revealing two cruisers, three destroyers, two troop ships and several gun boats.

Nat dived towards the target. He describes "intense flak and a wall of fire". After releasing his bomb, he turned into cloud heading away from the coast and cautiously descended to sea level. He was able to identify the wide entrance to Milne Bay and head for home. There was no flare path but he arrived safely just before dark. He was credited with a hit on one of the gun boats - shared with another pilot.

For several days Nat flew constantly with all the aircraft from both squadrons, giving close air support to the Australian troops locked in battle with the Japanese in the jungle and plantation on the northern arm of the Bay.

Target location was indicated by flares fired up through the canopy of trees. Strafing was at tree top level and, as ammunition was expended, each aircraft would return to re-arm and set off again. This constant lethal fire within the circuit area provided valuable support as thousands of rounds of ammunition were poured into the jungle below.

On 30th August there was a possibility that the enemy might break through. There was a risk of destruction of the aircraft during the night. All aircraft and pilots were evacuated to Port Moresby. New gun barrels were fitted and next day the aircraft and most of the pilots returned to continue the attack.

Finally the Japanese were in retreat and during the night their survivors re-embarked. The Battle of Milne Bay was the first allied land victory against the Japanese. There is no doubt that air support was a deciding factor.

The threat of occupation was over and 75 Squadron was withdrawn to Horn Island and then to Cairns. Nat was transferred to the advanced flying training school at Mildura as an instructor. Finally, he spent a year with 457 Squadron in Darwin flying Spitfires. Then a new adventure awaited him. In 1945 he relinquished the rank of Flight Lieutenant in the RAAF to become a Lieutenant in the Fleet Air Arm of the Royal Australian Navy. WD-B ©

*\*Especially written for Slipstream by Dr Bill Deane-Butcher, Medical Officer No.75 Squadron RAAF - March '42 to March '43, his book, Fighter Squadron Doctor, is available from the author C/- PO Box 251, GORDON NSW 2072.*

# INDIAN NAVAL AVIATION

While the RAN ran down its naval aviation forces during the 1980s, paradoxically, India's objective is to build a five carrier force so that at least three vessels will be deployed continually.

The Indian Naval Service current order of battle includes two aircraft carriers and over 150 aircraft. The *INS Vikrant* (formerly *HMS Hercules*), the Service's flagship and sole aircraft carrier since March 1961, has been complemented by *INS Viraat* (formerly *HMS Hermes*), a large carrier of the ALBION class that saw extensive action in the Falklands. Both carriers have been structurally refitted with ski-jumps, and their sensors, weapons and propulsion systems have been extensively modernised to support the (currently) 28 Sea Harriers in service.

The INS envisages the present carriers as stop-gap vessels to help maintain the continuity of its naval air traditions until a third indigenously designed 30,000-ton carrier, to be laid down at the Cochin Shipyard, is commissioned late this decade. Interestingly, the design contract for the new carrier includes studies for both conventional steam catapult and ski-jump configurations. The design that is finally chosen will be determined by cost, the availability of combat aircraft in this weight class and the specific strategic and operational objectives of Indian naval planning at the turn of the century.

Altogether, the present expansion of naval aviation has resulted in the creation of a moderately large force of influence: organic air capabilities presently include an attack-interceptor force of 28 Sea Harriers that can employ a variety of conventional and guided ordnance (including Sea Eagle SSMs), and 32 Westland-Sikorsky ASW Sea King Mk 42s (which can also carry Sea Eagle SSMs as well as other ASW ordnance), distributed over the two carriers and naval air stations. Since rotary assets often share berths on board several other surface combatants like the *Leander*/*Godavari* frigates, this force will acquire 20 additional Sea Kings in the near term so that a minimum five-rotary craft contingent can always be maintained aboard each carrier. The introduction of a third *Viraat*-sized carrier suggests that sea carrier strength will eventually rise to approximately 60 aircraft (if the V/STOL option is exercised), but as carrier acquisitions increase over the long term, an even larger force of some 80 aircraft

is required, especially if a simultaneous three carrier deployment of full battle is the aim. When expansion of the surface fleet with additional indigenous and Soviet ships is accounted for, the Sea King inventory will also rise to similar levels (including possibly six plus AEW Sea Kings), as will the number of Soviet rotary air frames, currently consisting of 13 Ka-25/28s deployed aboard the Soviet imports.

The growth of the navy's shore based aviation capabilities has been equally impressive in recent years, with significant investments taking place both in equipment and in basing facilities. The navy's maritime reconnaissance workhorses, currently consisting of two squadrons of four Lockheed Super Constellations and three Soviet Il-38 Mays, will be supplemented by as many as eight TU-142s (Bear-F) in the long range patrol regime. The new TU-142s will extend the navy's surveillance envelope - already reaching well beyond the Persian Gulf in the west and the Straits of Malacca in the east - to the far reaches of the Southern Indian Ocean along an arc tangential to the Madagascar - Tropic of Capricorn - North Australian Basin. They will also bring a new level of effectiveness to the long range ASW mission. Carrying a comprehensive sensor suite, large numbers of sonar buoys, and a heavy weapons payload, these aircraft make possible a fully autonomous 'saturation-search' hunter-killer capability that the Super Constellations and the Mays presently lack.

For missions closer to the Indian coastline, 24 Dornier Do-228 maritime reconnaissance aircraft, armed with the

Sea Skua-Super Searcher missile-radar combination, will be complemented by an assortment of 18 VN-2 Defenders, thus assuring complete oversight of the nation's coastline and contiguous waters.

Complementing these diverse aircraft purchases, the Indian navy has already embarked on a large-scale acquisition of British and Soviet long-range and surface-launched tactical cruise missiles, which are expected to proliferate across all classes of navy and air force aircraft. These weapons will not only enhance the effectiveness of the deterrent forces presently maintained, but will also bequeath the navy the massed fire capability it has always desired but never possessed before. In time, it may also pave the way for a dedicated contingent of long-range shore-based all-weather attack aircraft, a capability the fleet sorely lacks in spite of being judged desirable by several civilian and uniformed analysts.

Notwithstanding the substantial increase in naval aviation and other Service assets, ASW presence, escort and local patrol rather than genuine sea command and power projection requirements, are the dominant operational rationales for Indian sea-borne naval aviation.

\* By GLW (Geoff Vickridge (WA Div). The Editor acknowledges the kind permission of the Director of the Indian Ocean Centre for Peace Studies in allowing publication of this edited summary of Indian Naval Aviation from the publication, "The Modern Indian Navy and the Indian Ocean", Curtin University of Technology, 1989.



**FULL SET!** The above photograph was taken by Chief Phot. from the *Firefly* Trainer piloted by Cdr Lister RN in March 1956. Pilots from front to rear are: Dusty King - 956, Kevin Knowles - 957, Don Davidson - 958, Geoff Litchfield - 959, Rob Waites - 960. All of whom progressed to the field of Civil Aviation. (Photo kindly provided by Dusty King - New Zealand)



## CONTACT COLUMN

Dear Sir,

I represent a recently formed group of former 848 Squadron members of the 'Malayan Emergency' formation (1952-'57), and we held our first reunion in November ['92], the 40th anniversary of the involvement.

We plan to meet in 1993, the Squadron's 50th Anniversary. As I am trying to contact further old pals of the era, I am writing to ask if you will consider a small mention in an Association Newsletter.

A former AA2 from Collaroy in NSW attended our reunion in November and I am wondering if your association has any ex-RN members in touch, with possibly Malaya 848ers among them. Any help in this regard would be most appreciated.

Also present at our reunion were seven 'originals', being aircrew of the 1944 '45 British Pacific Fleet formation (Avengers of HMS Formidable), and they will also participate again next year, their 50th anniversary.

Incidentally, in 1955 I returned from Malaya to UK courtesy of 'Grey Funnel Lines of Australia'. The crew were to collect their 'new model' as I recall, HMAS Melbourne.

Yours sincerely,

Les Smith - Oakdale Lodge, Washhills Lane, Hopwood, Alvechurch, WORCESTER B48 7AT, UK.

Dear Sir,

It was with great surprise that I read Gordon Evans' letter in the January 'SLIPSTREAM'.

I am an ex-member of Benbow Division at Newcastle-under-Lyme, who joined the RN on 3 September 1941.

We had a 50th Anniversary Reunion in the UK in 1991, and Gordon was one of the missing. Now, through his letter, we have found at least three more.

If there are any ex-'Benbows'(1941 to 1944) out there, please contact us.

Good wishes to all ex-members who were at Nowra in 1949/50 and at Flinders in 1954/56.

Yours sincerely,

Frank Larbalaster - Lane Cove, NSW

Dear Sir,

I am writing on behalf of 845 Naval Air Squadron who plan to start an 845 Naval Air Squadron Association.

Any members of 845 Naval Air Squadron past or present, interested in

joining the soon to be formed association, please contact:

S/Lt S.A.J.Cox, 845 Naval Air Squadron, RNAS Yeovilton, SOMERSET BA22 8HT, UK.

Dear Ed,

It would be appreciated if the following could be included in the next edition of Slipstream to give publicity for the HMAS Bataan Association.

'HMAS Bataan Reunion - 13/15 November 1992 - I am pleased to make the following report on the reunion of former crew members of the Tribal Class destroyer, HMAS Bataan.

For many years nothing has been done to commemorate this ship, but at long last one of the commissioning crew decided to do something about it. Ex-AB Bain (Smouge) Howell of Launceston, Tasmania, ably assisted by his wife, Madge, organised a commemorative plaque, sent the word out and about, fixed up accommodation, and with the assistance of the Australia/Shropshire Association, made arrangements for a most enjoyable and unforgettable weekend for those who made the journey.

Shipmates, some with their wives, travelled from the Eastern States and met in Ulverstone, Tasmania, for the get-together. The activities began with a 'Getting-to-know-you' at the Ulverstone Football Club on the Friday night. 'A good night was had by all', will suffice to describe that pleasant evening.

On Saturday morning we mustered at the Ulverstone Wharf. We formed up in our respective ship's companies in alphabetical order - Australia, Bataan, Kanimbla and Warrego, and led by the Ulverstone Brass Band, marched to the Shropshire Memorial Park to take part in the Annual Naval Memorial Service of Thanksgiving.

The next event was the unveiling and consecration of two plaques, one for the Australia and one for the Bataan. This was presided over by NOIC Tasmania and the service was conducted by the local Salvation Army Officer.

On completion, we proceeded to TS Leven where we were treated to a light luncheon. The hospitality shown to us here can only be described as excellent.

Later in the evening, we met once again at the Football Club for the Naval Memorial Service Dinner where we 'spun a few dits', sank a few jugs, danced with our partners, and had a good time.

On Sunday, the last day of the reunion, we met at Shropshire Park for a barbecue lunch. Letters of goodwill from the three surviving Captains were read,

and several proposals were made. It was during this gathering that the HMAS Bataan Association was formed.

It was interesting to note that the entire life span of the ship was covered by those who attended.

All too soon the departures began, but all agreed that the reunion was a resounding success and plans are being formulated for this year's get-together.'

\* John Boyer Ex- LM(E) R 28486 Vic. Division

Dear Ed,

Enclosed is a photo of my new car's registration number. As an ex-member of the FAAs 816 Squadron (Gannets), I was delighted to be issued such appropriate plates.

Of course, FAA 805, FAA 817, FAA 851, plus the '700' squadrons would have been issued.

I wonder if any ex-'Birdies' from Victoria have any?

B.J.'Beauchamp' Butler - Vic. Division



Dear John,

My wife and I paid a fleeting visit to the Museum in February because I wanted to see what my brother-in-law (Gary MacDonald, ex-Petty Officer) had been working on.

The fleeting visit extended into a four hour browse that left me with a funny feeling. I need to go back and take in all the things that I have missed. I mean missed - by being away from the smells of engines and oil and aircraft, the sounds of engines running and aircraft taking off, the activity of the Navy and Squadron life, the loyalty and sense of purpose, the honesty and companionship of life in the Fleet Air Arm.

Since leaving the Navy (17 1/2 years ago), I have worked in Staff positions in three companies, and in each company I have said the same thing: "Give me one Petty Officer and two Leading Hands and I will improve this place by at least 400%". I have found that, generally speaking, the managers, superintendents, foremen, chargehands and some tradesmen in industry are untrained for their jobs, incompetent, lazy, unwilling to learn or listen to trained people, disloyal to their employers and employees, untrustworthy and extremely greedy. It is strange how the ex-servicemen stand out from their workmates. 400% at least....read Alan Clark's article on

Williamstown Dockyard, and I think Dr White set his target too low.

About the museum....

I thoroughly enjoyed my walk around the memories, some of 'MY' old aircraft and the models and pictures, but as an old artificer I didn't see any aircraft log books. The old A700 is just as much a part of the Fleet Air Arm as the aircraft and many long hours of hard work by dedicated ground crews are recorded in them. They are OUR history and our efforts, just as much as the aircraft and the memorabilia of the aircrews.

About the Association....

Thank you for your invitation to join. Joining may not mean that I will be able to participate in any activities and/or attend any functions, but the Slipstream will be appreciated. That reminds me, I seem to remember that name being attached to a magazine at Albatross many years ago.

The brain cells are being reactivated and nostalgia is overwhelming me again. The cheque and application form are enclosed.

Regards - Alan G Spearpoint (Augie)

Dear Sir,

In his absence I acknowledge receipt of the current issue of your journal, on behalf of our son, F/Sgt B L Winders.

You are probably aware that he has been serving as part of a combined RAN, Army and RAAF team for the United Nations with UNOSOM ('Operation Iguana') in Somalia since late October 1992, and does not expect to be back until April/May 1993.

At present he is stationed at the airport at Nairobi, on aircraft movement control (and has one aircraft manned by Russians!). He moves when required to/from Somalia, but expects to transfer there with the rest of the 'team' when the 900 or so Australian Army troops are finally settled in.

He has not had a great deal of time to write, but seems to be enjoying the experience.

His address for Somalia is: WINDERS F/Sgt L, Australian Contingent, C/o UNOSOM, PO Box 48246, NAIROBI, KENYA.

He understands that on his return he could be posted to RAAF Base at Williamstown, and I know he is hoping that this will allow him to see old friends at the RAN Base at Nowra from time to time.

With kind regards, M G Winders AM

Dear Sir,

Could you please forward me the necessary application forms, so that I and a couple of those 'faces' which

appeared in your Journal 'Slipstream', dated January 1993, may join the association.

On receipt of that journal and reading some of the stories, it brought back a lot of memories and through your organisation we may be able to meet up with a few of our old shipmates.

Yours sincerely,

Charles Ash -  
Luddenham, NSW

Dear John,

On behalf of the Naval Association of Australia - Country Headquarters Sub Section, I would like to advise your membership of the following...

Last Year's Anzac Day reunion at the Forbes Hotel was such a fabulous success that it has been decided to do it again. From 0900 the Forbes Hotel on the corner of York and King Street in the city will have its first floor available to all naval and ex-naval personnel who finish their march early, and who would like to get together with old and new shipmates for a yarn and a drink. Finger foods will be made available.

Another item is the Naval Association's Annual Church Service and Family Day which will be held on 16 May at the Apprentice Training Establishment, HMAS Nirimba, commencing at 1100. Rear Admiral A.L.Hunt and Mrs Hunt will be our guests, and members wishing to attend the service are requested to be seated by 1050.

This may be the last time you will have a chance to visit this establishment as Nirimba will be closing down in December of this year.

After the service, pre-luncheon drinks will be available followed by a sit-down luncheon. The cost is \$27.00 for a family, and \$13.50 for a single person.

Afterwards, you will have the opportunity to have a last look around this well known establishment.

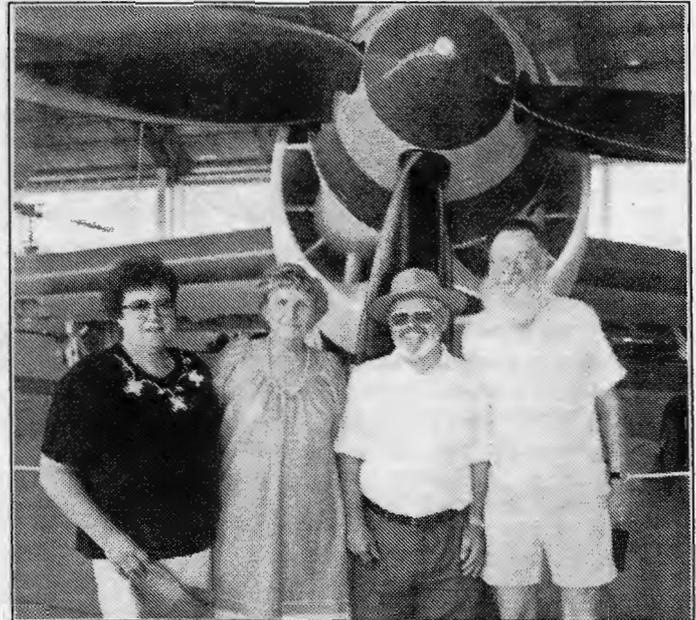
It is suggested that anyone attending should wear a name-tag to enable easy identification between the 'old and bold'.

Yours sincerely, Ken Spragg

#### PONAM ASSOCIATION UK

Please pass on our Best Wishes to the members of your Association.

Yours aye - Harry Bannister



Pictured at the Naval Aviation Museum, L to R: Eileen Inzminger, Francis and Ken Greenaway, Frank Reesor. Photo: Peregrine Publishing

#### OLD FRIENDS MEET AGAIN

A recent visitor to the Australian Naval Aviation Museum was Mr Frank Reesor of Nova Scotia, accompanied by family friend, Eileen Inzminger of Alberta.

Both were house guests of Ken and Francis Greenaway of Vincentia NSW.

The friendship between Ken and Frank goes back to 1948 when both were under training at Arbroath in the UK. Ken with the Australian FAA contingent and Frank with the Canadians.

*The following is a private letter from Bill Crozer, I feel sure that he wouldn't mind me sharing it with you. If you remember Bill from the Albatross 'Genesis days' and would care to drop him a line, please contact 'Slipstream' for his address.*

Greetings John,

Many, many thanks for all the information which you sent to me, especially the bits and pieces mentioning myself, which will now swell my album dealing with my time in 'Oz'. I've written to Bob Geale thanking him for introducing us.

As a matter of interest, I thought I'd photostat a couple of photo's from my collection and send them on, although I expect you've seen most of them, especially the Bush Survival Exercise as I expect Butch Hain has a copy of these. (Hadn't seen the one of Butch in the 'nuddy' before. Ed.)

My terms of reference [whilst at Albatross] being in charge of Handling and Fire fighting, Safety Equipment and Survival, Motor Transport, and of course, assist in Naval Airman Training.

I did of course find myself involved in

most things at Nowra, even to being elected as non-playing manager of the Australian Rules football team, of which I knew absolutely nothing, being a Rugby player myself.

In my retirement I live in a bachelor flat at the top of a 200ft tower block overlooking Portsmouth Harbour, so I don't lack for watching the activities of the RN - not a lot these days.

I've dabbled in oil painting over the years, mostly copying from photographs, seascapes, ships, landscapes and pets, but no portraits which I'm hopeless at.

After returning to the UK my career varied quite a bit. I went to the AH School, *HMS Syskin*, Gosport, as an instructor. Whilst there, and having, prior to the FAA, been a Royal Marine drill instructor, I trained the FAA Street Lining Party for the Coronation in '53 and took them to London - awarded the Coronation Medal.

Then to *HMS Bulwark*, stood by her building, six months in Belfast, Northern Ireland, then did the first commission on her - a 'Jonahs' ship for me - two accidents onboard, slipped a disc, had it removed, and also fractured left arm

and pelvis.

Then to RNAS Culdrose in Cornwall, flying twin-engined Sea Prince aircraft on Observer training.

Went to Suez Campaign in HMS Theseus.

Did a helicopter course.

In 1958 elected to retire on Reduction of Officer's scheme.

Joined the RNR HQ looking after Operations and MCM plots and briefing NATO Staff on disposition of UK and Russian fleets. The staff were then at Portsmouth before transferring to London.

I was given a two year extension over the retiring age of 55 and served 14 years - was awarded Reserve Decoration.

So, I did 42 years RM and RN associated time altogether.

Well, John, hope you understand the scribble. The above rambling has helped to produce a reasonably sized letter.

Best of luck to you and the magazine.

Cheers, Bill.

heavy damage, but fought their way out and back to the fleet. Once landed on, Task Force 63 withdrew southwards. They had lost 2 Avengers, 6 Corsairs and a Hellcat and nearly all aircraft had heavy damage from fighters and flak.

The second strike, Meridian 2, followed much the same pattern but of course, this time the Japanese were even more prepared and the fleet had to fight off attacks from Jap aircraft. In total, Force 63 lost 16 aircraft in combat, 11 ditched and 14 crashed on deck landing. In all, a total of 41, a casualty rate that would even have made Bomber Command wince.

The Japanese lost 68 aircraft, 28 on the ground and 30 in the air with another 7 probables. All oil production was stopped at the refinery for two months, after which, only a trickle was forthcoming. So when the Japanese really needed these supplies in the Pacific, the Fleet Air Arm had reduced their total output to 35% of normal."

**Ex-Telegraphist Air Gunner Bill West, of the ACT Division, also participated in these strikes. The following is an excerpt from his log-book:**

*29 Jan 45 0640 - Strike at Palembang Sumatra. (P) S/L Gawthorpe (O) Lt. Overed - Avenger 1G.*

*Aircraft could not keep up with main strike. Secondary target (Military compound) bombed and machine gunned. Returned before reaching main target.*

**Lt. Harold Chandler RN (Rtd), another member of the ACT Division, was serving on HMS Victorious in January 1945 when the raids took place.**

Harold recounts that there were three strikes in all, the first on 24 Jan 45 on Pangkalanbrandan and several days later successive days on the twin oil refineries at Palembang at Pladgoe and Soengi Gerong. After the first strike, Harold's Squadron (849) was reduced from 15 to 12 serviceable aircraft. Only 8 of these returned from the first strike on Palembang but all 8 returned from the final strike. Some 200-210 aircraft from 4 carriers were involved in these raids and approximately 50 were lost as a result. Aircrew who survived and were captured, were imprisoned in Changi Prison. At the end of the war, in August 1945, the Japanese captors executed nine of these Fleet Air Arm personnel.

One of the aircrew shot down at Palembang, Dickie Richardson DSM, on hearing of the fate of his comrades at Changi Prison, started an appeal for a Memorial. The appeal became a reality when a Memorial Plaque was unveiled and dedicated at Changi Museum on 15 August last year.

\* Brian Treloar - ACT Division

## WAR TIME RECOLLECTIONS

### AIR STRIKE AT THE PALEMBANG OIL REFINERIES

*The following account was prepared by Roy Gibbs, a TAG with 820 Squadron:*

"The Palembang refineries were more than 150 miles from the nearest point on the Western coast of Sumatra. They were heavily defended by a ring of fighter airfields, anti-aircraft batteries and a balloon barrage. It was thought that any carrier attack would sustain heavy losses.

However, on 16 January 1945 we left Trinco, designated Task Force 63 consisting of the *Indomitable*, *Illustrious*, *Indefatigable*, *Victorious*, *KGV*, *Argonaught*, *Black Prince*, *Euryalus* and 10 escorting destroyers.

On 24 Jan the first strike was on, named Meridian 1. It was to be made by 12 Avengers from each of the four carriers; top and middle cover by Corsairs and Hellcats; bow close escort by Fireflies; stern close escort by Corsairs; Fighter Ramrod strikes to be carried out by Corsairs; 2 Walrus to stand by for SAR and Sealires to provide fighter cover for the Fleet.

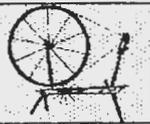
Aircrews were briefed on strike and escape procedures including removal of all rank insignia because of Jap behaviour towards prisoners. Fifteen miles from the target the first cry of 'Bandits' was heard as 20 Tojos and Nicks broke through the top and middle cover to attack the Avengers. A wild Air

battle had begun in which the enemy fighters were driven off.

Meanwhile, the anti-aircraft had opened an intense barrage of heavy and light flak becoming more and more accurate for height. The balloons were an alarming and unusual obstacle and enemy fighter reports kept coming in; 'Bandits left 30 up ten miles', 'Bandits right 90 closing', bandits here, bandits there. We approached the target 'Attack, attack, attack' and down we go through the balloon barrage.

There are far too many individual combat stories of that day to fit into this article, but TAG's put their new fire power of a Browning 5 in a powered turret to good use and downed several fighters. One Avenger pilot even downed a Jap fighter with his front guns. Subsequent photography showed the bombing had been extremely accurate.

The Avengers emerged from the target area in a long straggling line still encountering intense anti-aircraft fire and then headed towards the rendezvous. It was here that the Avengers suffered their worst damage as although some remnants of the close escort and middle cover fighters were still with them, the main body of fighters was still in combat 30 miles away. Enemy fighters lying in wait attacked fiercely and the bombers sustained



## HEARTS OF OAK- MEN OF STEEL- BALLS OF IRON

I think that the above description was coined for the old time gunners in days of yore.

The story I am about to recount is not one of personal observation, but one told to me many years ago by a Gunnery Chief at Flinders Naval Depot. (Club Med of the South)

It would appear that one of the Gunnery Schools legendary characters was a Chief who went by the name of Blackie. No one seemed to know his first name, he was Chief to the troops and Blackie to his friends.

Blackie's whole life revolved around his one undying, ever faithful love .... Gunnery. He lived and worked for this one magnificent obsession. Although married for many years, it appears that people knew more about his gunnery passion than his domestic one.

It was rumoured that all his vast knowledge of the subject came from personal experience. It was also mooted that he did his apprenticeship on a Man-of-War, ramming cannon balls down the smoking maws of bloody-minded cannons.

His close friends had no doubt that he truly loved and cared for his land bound family, but preferred to be at sea, dodging the shiny casings as they ejected from modern armament and filling his lungs from the cordite fumes they left behind.

During one Winter leave period, Blackie had spent most of the morning pottering around the backyard. After a hot lunch and a drop of liquid refreshment, he started to go outside again, when, out of a steel grey sky, it suddenly started to rain. Blackie decided he'd stay inside and read the newspaper instead. He found the paper and retired to the lounge room where a gentle heat was starting to permeate the air from the recently lit solid fuel heater. Finding the room just a little too cool, he dragged his chair closer to the fire, sat down and propped his heels on the small mantelpiece, breathed a contented sigh and started to read the paper.

The family cat, as is usual with most felines, soon sniffed out the new comfort zone. Strolling into the lounge room, it eyed Blackie's chair parked in front of the fire and decided to jump up and settle down in Blackie's lap.

Mrs.B looked in on them later, Blackie

had dozed off, the cat was asleep in his lap and the discarded newspaper had slid to the floor. She stood there for a moment or two, delighting in something that was relatively rare to her, her man in a scene of perfect domesticity. She swallowed a lump in her throat that had somehow arrived uninvited, brushed a tear from her eye which had arrived the same way and then returned to the washing-up in the kitchen.

After washing and drying the dishes, she tiptoed back into the lounge room and hung the wet tea towel on a temporary line that had been rigged up over the fire. She stole another moment to look at the sleeping twosome and suppressing another tear, she retired to the inner recesses of the house to complete a couple of other chores.

Unbeknown to all and sundry, the 'wet' tea towel was now very dry indeed. It hadn't been positioned too carefully on the temporary clothes line and as the hot rising air gently fanned the towel, it had gradually repositioned itself until now, one corner of it had come into contact with the metal top of the hot fuel stove.

Blackie and the cat continued to doze as wisps of smoke developed on the lower edge of the tea towel.

Mrs.B was busy folding clothes in the bedroom when her sensitive nose detected the first acid smell of something burning. Rushing down to the lounge room, she opened the door, the tea towel was smouldering away quite merrily, Blackie and the cat were still asleep.

*Now dear readers, it is at this point that I must remind you that this story is NOT one of personal observation, therefore I cannot vouch one hundred percent for what is to follow.*

.....,Blackie and the cat were still asleep.

The first lick of small flames appeared on the tea towel.

Mrs.B, from her vantage point in the doorway, yelled out in her loudest voice. "BLACKIE, FIRE!"

Blackie's years of gunnery training came to the fore, his actions were totally instinctive, he grabbed the cat, opened the fuel stove door, rammed the cat in and slammed the door shut. He stood to attention, turned in the direction from which the order had been issued, saluted smartly and said." LEFT GUN READY TO FIRE - SIR!"

I'm told on good authority that Mrs. B never shed another silent tear over her 'Gunnery mate', but, I believe the cat was another matter altogether.

Then again, I can't vouch for that either.

## MAN PROPOSES...GOD DISPOSES!

The retired Commodore was in a foul mood. The new grog-free diet he was on had led to a restless night, his mood didn't improve when his golf partner failed to turn up.

The only other person in the club-house waiting for a game was a Naval Chaplain from the nearby base. They introduced themselves and set off.

The Commodore drove a mighty drive, and removed a large divot, the ball remaining stationary.

"Bugger it, missed!" he said.

The Chaplain didn't care for the comment and said so.

A bit further on the Commodore 'fluffed' a shot and yelled: "Bugger it, missed!"

At this point the Chaplain really told him off about his language, and finished up saying: "I must warn you, the Almighty will not be impressed with your swearing, stop it now before something dreadful happens to you."

The Commodore kept himself under control, and, needing the last hole for the match, was left with a six-inch putt.

He took careful aim and ... missed.

His flow of blasphemies was interrupted by a terrible clap of thunder, a flash of lightning came out of the sky, and struck the Chaplain dead.

From behind a big black cloud a voice rumbled: "Bugger it, missed!"

## UP THE WORKERS

A young porter in a UK hotel was brought up in Court for raping the chambermaid. She alleged that while she was leaning out of the hotel window to watch a May Day parade, the youth lowered the sash, trapped her, and took his will of her.

"But Miss," said the Judge, "why didn't you start yelling?"

"What, and have everybody thinking I was supporting the Labour Party!"

## An Officer and a Gentle Man.

*From the Naval Officers Association of Canada newsletter, Starshell.*

Pierre S....., whose irrepressible humour is usually at his own expense, claims his classmates at Cornwallis stripped him one night, secured him spread-eagled in the window of his cabin with the light on, and rang the fire alarm, knowing the WRENS would fall in on the road outside.

From then on, he said, he knew that every Wren who saluted him was not thinking that, "There's an Officer, whose uniform I must respect", but, "There's the boy with the balls to the breeze."

## NATIONAL SECRETARY'S REPORT

During the Federal Council Meeting held in Adelaide in October 1991, I was tasked with producing a National Membership list. Very little progress was made with that task because Divisional Membership lists were not readily available.

Now that 'Slipstream' has become the National Journal, these lists are now available and the National Membership list is being compiled. Initially each member will be allocated a number on an alphabetical basis commencing at 100. The number will have a prefix letter to indicate the division eg. N for New South Wales, V for Victoria etc.. It should be noted that this number is not intended to replace the Badge/Membership number given to members by their divisions, it is for National administrative purposes ONLY!

Some time in the not too distant future, this number will appear on the address label for 'Slipstream' which will be in the following format:

93F X1234  
STROP Jack  
10 Deadbeat Street  
YOUANMEIT XYZ 9990

The first line shows that the member is financial in the current year and is a 'FULL' member, the suffix 'A' will indicate an 'ASSOCIATE' member, the National number follows.

Members are asked to ensure that any change of address is notified without delay via their Division Secretary. Problems with the distribution of 'Slipstream' have already arisen due to incorrect addresses. Be assured that all details remain confidential and addresses will only be released with the individual member's permission.

During January, whilst returning a couple of Grandsons to the fold in Canberra, I paid a visit to our Patron, Sir Victor Smith. Sir Victor likes to have a chat and keep abreast of what is happening in the Association. He was most pleased with the progress being made in Queensland. Unfortunately, at the time of writing this report, Sir Victor has been in hospital once again. We all wish him well.

For most of June and July, I will be in the USA visiting the #1 son. In my absence, 'Juke' Matterson will be attending to any urgent matters which may arise. (This column in the July issue may well be in the form of a 'James A. Fitzpatrick Travelogue'.)

The Victorian Division have volunteered to host the 1993 Federal Council meeting from 29 October to 2 November. It could be a punter's paradise. More details will be provided

by the Victorian Committee as arrangements are finalised.

\* Ian Ferguson - National Secretary

## DIVISION NEWS

### TASMANIAN DIVISION

Just a quick note with some information to include in the next edition of Slipstream.

For the first time Australia will see the exciting and exhilarating sport of Reno style Pylon Air Racing.

Australian National Air Races Pty Ltd has established Skyrace Tasmania to conduct aircraft pylon racing at Launceston in Tasmania with the assistance of the Reno Air Racing Association Inc USA who will also be in attendance as technical advisers

Among the entries are a couple of Sea Furys, one from New Zealand.

The programme runs from 27 February to 6 March 1994. It starts off with a three day Navigation Air Race around Tasmania followed by two days of time trials around the pylons, one day of heats and the finals on the last day. The total prize pool is \$175,000.

If anyone requires further information they should contact Australian National Air Races Pty Ltd, PO Box 63, Evandale, Tasmania, 7212. Phone: (003) 918380 or Fax: (003) 918662.

We have been contacted by John Rix, ex-RN, who trained quite a few of our original Fleet Air Arm personnel in the UK. John is now resident in Tasmania and is interested in contacting a Lt. John Simpson, who changed over from the RN and was in charge of the Salvage Section at *Albatross* for a time in the 1950s. If anyone can help in this search, please contact me at PO Box 686, Devonport, TAS 7310.

Or next meeting will be held in Hobart and will be followed by a tour around the new ABC Television and Radio studios, courtesy of Les Kube.

On a personal note, I would like to take this opportunity to pass on my sincere thanks to all members who sent cards and contacted me following the recent passing of my wife, Margaret. She was the driving force in setting up our Tasmanian Division.

\* Barry Simpson - President Tasmanian Division.

### VICTORIAN DIVISION

On Saturday 6 February 1993, the tenth Annual General Meeting of the FAAA of A (Victoria) Inc., was held at Topolino's Restaurant, St Kilda.

It would have been nice to have had more members present, but the forty-

two in attendance did have a pleasant and enjoyable afternoon.

The Committee for the ensuing year were duly elected as follows:

President: Les Jordan

Vice-President: Frank Crowe

Hon' Secretary: Ron Christie

Hon' Treasurer: John Ikin

Committee: Len Baggott, Alan Clark, Terry Egan, Alex (Jock) Lacy, Bryan Roberts, Roy Weddell and Max Wilson.

The 10th AGM did regrettably see the retirement of our Immediate Past President, Clem Conlan, due to ill health.

Over the past ten years, Clem has always been a very loyal and dedicated worker for the Association, and in particular, the Victoria Division, for which we will all be very grateful.

Another memorable occasion was the first presentation (for this Division), of the Certificate of Service awarded to the following worthy recipients:

Clem and Betty Conlan, John and Sybil Ikin, Rob and Anne Taylor, Mike Thorne and John Ahern.

For any Association members who may be in Melbourne for Anzac Day, the march is scheduled to move off at 0900, our mustering point is in Swanston Street, just north of the Melbourne Town Hall.

The 'After March Reunion' will be held at the same venue as our AGM, Topolino's Restaurant, 87 Fitzroy Street, St Kilda.

\* Ron Christie - Hon Secretary

### ACT DIVISION

The Annual General Meeting was held on Wednesday 24th February and attendance was somewhat disappointing with only 12 members present. The new office bearers for 1993 are as follows;

President: C. Bushe-Jones

Vice President: B. Matthews

Secretary: B. Treloar

Treasurer: M. Astbury

Committee: N. Clarke, W. West, G. Coker-Godson, N. Lee, Mrs. J. Lee & J. Campbell

The outgoing Treasurer reported a sound financial balance in excess of \$3,000 and we thank Maurie Tiffen for his outstanding efforts as Treasurer over the past two years.

There was a deal of discussion on the continuance of monthly meetings and this could well be confined to members of the Committee in future. Members will be canvassed shortly to seek their views on future social events.

The Division will again be marching on

Anzac Day and this will be followed by a Barbeque and get together at *Harman* as has been our custom for the past four years. We would welcome any interstate visitors who may be in Canberra to join us at both these events. Inquiries can be made to the Secretary on (06) 2882730.

\* B. Treloar - Secretary

## QUEENSLAND DIVISION

Thanks to the help of 'Slipstream' our membership to date stands at 41 financial members with more coming in each week. A Newsletter was posted out to 220 addresses early in March which has also created a good response. Some letters have come back 'Address Unknown' and if anyone knows the whereabouts of the following blokes, please let me know W(074)954288 or H(074) 932934.

Greg Baker            Len Sims  
Wayne Mahoney    T. O'Shaughanessy  
Ted Hundley        D. Malcolmsen  
Roy Hall            Kev Stephenson  
Marshall            Rob Peacock  
Mick Whiteley

We held our last meeting at *HMAS Moreton* on 26 February and were able to confirm that we have gained permission to march in the Anzac Day Parade in Brisbane as a Division. We will be behind the RAN Communication group and form up in Charlotte Street at 10am, so come along and join in. The Executive Officer of *HMAS Moreton* has suggested we may retire there after the march for some sustenance.

At the moment we are endeavouring to get permission to 'hang' our Charter at *Moreton*. Brian Sargeson works there and will be of great assistance I know.

A BBQ get-together was held at J.C. Slaughter Falls Park on Mt.Cootha on Sunday 14 March - a great success - with the rain holding off. Seventy-five people turned up and we had a good day with many laughs and salty yarns.

Dick Coates came and we recalled some hilarious details of his hypnotist shows, seances etc.. Like the time Dick got one bloke drunk on half a glass of water and before Dick could bring him out of it, he'd shot through and got to the Guard House. He upset the mob up there so much he was arrested! Dick had to do some swift talking to defuse the situation.

We also heard the tale of Dick and Jack Suriano - a name many may recall - doing a bit of a trip in Captain Fanshawe's car - unknown to Le Capitan initially. I think they came back from Bendigo eventually and just about got away with the escapade.

D'Arcy Doyle, now noted artist, is kindly making our Marching Banner for Anzac



BBQ at J.C.Slaughter Falls Park, Mount Cootha. Dave Randall, Duke Kennedy and spouses enjoying the feast. The background group are - the Listers, the Blairs, the Hendersons, Bob Baxter, Eric Cottrell, Noel Fisher and others. Photo: Barry Lister

Day. Many thanks, D'Arcy.

We are asking for volunteers in the areas away from the south-east corner of the State to form up Sub-branches to extend communication between us.

At our last meeting, we briefly discussed holding a mini-reunion, at a location suitable to most, sometime within the next year or so. Bundaberg could be a possibility. We need the members from the far north etc. to feed back on the idea as to a suitable venue with regard to the distance required to travel. Everyone in the SE area is very keen on the idea.

Secretary, Paul Woods, is off to Indonesia to work there for a couple of months. Paul is into high tech work involved with power stations. His wife is going with him. Good luck, Paul. It's good to see high tech work being generated by Aussies in high demand overseas. Mick Blair will take on the role of Assistant Secretary with me while Paul is away.

Ray Bucholz contributed a delightful pack of wine and Galway Pipe Port for a raffle at the BBQ. Al Smith and Johnny Richards did a marvellous job selling raffle tickets. We included a FAA sports bag as well, making a good prize. Barry Andrews won the lot. Thanks, Ray, Al and Jnr for making it a success. We were disappointed that no one from the Sunshine Coast were able to get to the BBQ. We hope that Anzac Day will rectify that.

Our next meeting will be at *HMAS Moreton* on 2 April when we hope to finalise the Anzac Day arrangements. At our last meeting, it was agreed to ask Col Wheatley to lead us, Col has agreed to this request. He is living on

Bribie Island and works in Real Estate there.

Dick Coales was able to fill in the details of 'Chunder' Smith and friends arriving back onboard *Albatross* at 2 o'clock one morning using private transport - an elephant from a circus in Nowra. 'Chunder', who used to work with the circus, had been to see the show with Dick and others, they then visited the pub. Not surprisingly they missed the last bus at 11pm. This was no problem to 'Chunder' - elephant transport laid on.

The OOD at the gate, refused to believe the tale of arriving by private transport until 'Chunder' suggested he look outside the gate. The elephant was tied up by a piece of string!

The elephant spent the night secured in one of the car parks until picked up by a low loader the next morning. Those were the days! The OOD went to bed for the day to recover from shock.

Ian Henderson is the Treasurer, PO Box 113, CLEVELAND 4163 - Applications for membership and cheques should be sent to him. Joining fee \$15 Annual Membership \$15.

That's it for this time. Regards to all,

\* Barry Lister - President



## WESTERN AUSTRALIAN DIVISION

Hi, shipmates! It's that time again to try and make some sort of effort to bring you all up to date with things that have happened, and are about to happen, since the last 'missal'.

First, and most important, MEMBERSHIP FEES ARE NOW DUE! If you haven't parted with your cash yet, please send it in. We will accept all cash as long as it is Australian, cheques, money orders, bank drafts, but no promissory notes or IOUs. So get the fees in as quickly as possible!

It is on a sad note that I advise you that Brian Jenner passed away in Nowra recently. Brian has been battling cancer for some time. Rest in Peace, Brer. Our condolences to Helen and family.

Rick Hammond has been in hospital for a reconstruction of his knee. I have been told that he is progressing well and along the road to recovery. Hope to see you back soon, Rick.

Attention, all you ex-Armourers out there! For you lucky ones, there is a world-wide Armourer's Reunion to be held in Hong Kong in 1995. It is still a couple of years away, but the time is flying past at a great rate and there is lots to organise in that time. Those wishing to be in on the trip will have to think about it now, as flights and accommodation have to be worked out.

Whilst in Nowra last October, I was given a new Armourer's Pocket Badge by Bill Paul, these are available to you at a cost of six dollars. These are real beaut and a bargain, those wanting the badges or information about the trip can contact me at 24 Baltic Mews, Waikiki, 6164 or by phone on (09) 5279186.

Just think, a trip back to 'Honkers' before it reverts back to China, the birds may be older, but then, so are we. Make the effort and be there in '95.

Anzac Day - the 'fall-in' is in the same old place. After the march we will have drinks (Coffee) on the 'Midstream' with Captain Jack, before going on to the South Perth Civic Centre to win all the chooks and plonk as usual. Grab a mate and bring him along to make it a good day.

We are in the process of arranging a day visit to the new Submarine Training School at *HMAS Stirling*, this will be on a Saturday so we hope everyone can come along. A BBQ will be held at the rear of the school after the visit, wives, girlfriends and family are welcome, so keep in contact for the final details.

The AGM was held in February and the following Office Bearers were elected:

President: Hilton Devereux

Vice-Presidents: Rick Hammond and

Eddy Cook

Secretary: Yours truly (no one else wanted it!)

Treasurer: Jim Caldwell

Assistant Treasurer: Ron Tate

Committee: Ron Tate, Harry Webster, Neil McGrilles, Jack Suriano.

Social Secretary: Lou Burns

We are trying to change the format of the General Meetings to make them more interesting, with Guest Speakers, games nights - we are open to suggestions so let's hear them.

I requested that the members supply information for the magazine, so far I have not received one report, good, or bad. Surely there are people out there who have some small snippet of news or gossip. Whatever it is, send it in - if it's not going to land us in court we will print it.

You've all heard the story about the Red Back spider on the dunny seat - well this one was in a pile of bricks and bit me on the leg. I finished up in Hollywood Hospital for ten days over the Xmas break, getting out late afternoon on New Years Eve. The leg is still giving me problems with the swelling and pain, but it is getting better and the Doc said he was happy with the progress, so, if he's happy - what the hell!

'Must tell you this true story of Lou Burns (Lou the lovely). Picture this, it's around 38 degrees Celsius, and that's in the shade. Lou is at the front of the property welding steel posts for the front fence. As the day is rather hot, Lou has taken the proper precautions to prevent any outbreak of fire. He has laid out the fire hose which is attached to the bore pump that gives three thousand gallons plus per hour. So all is ready.

Lou is welding away, although it is rather hot he feels that there is something wrong because he is warming up at an alarming rate. He removes his head-piece and observes that he is not on fire yet - but the surrounding bush is!

No problems - remember that all is in readiness - hose out - pump ready to go. A quick rush to the pump - switch on - grab the hose and rush to the scene of the fire.

Suddenly the feet are still going in the direction of the fire, but the body has taken up an horizontal position and our fire-fighter is flat on his back in the middle of the yard. The water, pumping at three thousand plus an hour, is going straight up into the air, and guess where it is coming down? You're right - on Lou!

It appears that the hose had become entangled around a stump and caused the sudden stop, but after saying 'damn and blast' a couple of times, he was able to proceed to the fire - which was

growing all the time - and put it out.

I had only been out of hospital a couple of days when Lou told me about his troubles - it cheered me up no end.

I must say, the Ponderosa is looking a real treat with flower beds and trees everywhere, keep up the good work, mate.

We were going to build the new house on the block, but Barbara said she felt that our talent shouldn't go to waste and decided to call in a builder.

Now don't forget your FEES - repeat - FEES!

To all you people that have to live on the East Coast, we wish you the best, and hope that you and your families enjoy the best of health. If any of you are travelling to the better part of the country, please let us know and we will try to make your visit a better one.

\* *Theo Bushe-Jones - Secretary*

## NEW SOUTH WALES DIVISION

The Division has steadily increased its membership throughout the year, although one would hardly think so when viewing the attendance at meetings.

Financially we are in a very sound position with some \$4,000 in liquid assets and fixed assets of approximately \$5,000.

Social functions have been held but attendances have been down on previous years, no doubt an active Social Secretary would improve this situation.

With Commander Mike Lehan at the helm, the museum volunteer force is gradually becoming a reality. Known as '8-9-10 Museum Support Squadron', the volunteer organisation is beginning to show its worth. A series of Fly-ins programmed for the remainder of the year will give our members the opportunity to take part in the museum activities, this should also bring about a closer rapport.

Your committee opened an Aircraft Restoration fund, for the sole purpose of purchasing hard to get items or material that cannot be obtained through service or museum contacts. Any other Division are welcome to contribute to this fund, which first started with a most generous donation from South Australia.

All members who did not attend the AGM can now relax. All positions for Office Bearers have been filled, with the exception of Social Secretary. That position requires a very special person with a touch of entrepreneurial flair - if you fit that specification, please contact the secretary.

The Office Bearers are as follows:

Vice-President: Bob Cronin

Secretary: Terry Hetherington

Treasurer: Frank Birtles

Welfare Officer: Ivan (Chips) Gray

PR Officer: John Arnold

RAN Historic Flight Liaison: Keith Boundy

Committee: Ray Larsen, Barry Roberts, Gordon (Pancho) Walters, George Plant.

In delivering the President's report to the AGM, Bob Cronin stated that his increasing commitments in other areas, plus ill health in the family, precluded him for nominating for the position of President in 1993.

He also stated that Ray Larsen would not be nominating for an Executive Committee position this year because of his increasing work load with the Nowra Race Club. Bob thanked Ray for his dedication and outstanding performance in his capacity as Treasurer since the formation of the NSW Division during the FAA Reunion in 1988.

The highlights of the past financial year were outlined with special mention of the FAA Reunion of 1992. He praised the efforts of his Reunion Committee and referred to the assistance given to the reunion executives by particular members of the host NSW Division. Some of those acknowledged being Les and Florence Matterson, Hugh and Val Molyneux, and Peter and Deidre Penny.

There were many others of course, too many to list here, but one who deserves special mention is Peter Clark, who gave unstintingly of his time and use of his business vehicle to ferry truck loads of 'Rabbits' hither and thither.

Peter, proprietor of 'Premier Coast Pre Used Office Furniture Warehouse' in Nowra, has also donated the office furniture to set up the National Executive Secretary as well as cabinets for our own Division. Peter's business commitments mean that we don't see a great deal of him, but his most practical support of the Association is very much appreciated by the membership.

Thank you, Peter.

\* Jim Lee - NSW President

## SOUTH AUSTRALIAN DIVISION

At last we got here on time - just!

A warm welcome to all members throughout the Nation. 'Have a few important snippets to tell you so I'll get right into it.

Firstly, the Slipstream Magazine is truly a winner and deserves to be supported. What better way of keeping in touch with mates throughout the other States.

Our own Association is labouring on with the same cheery faces doing all the work. At the AGM, held on 19 February, Mr John Berry was elected President again, Alastair Dick - Vice President, Michele Dick is Secretary. John Berry also takes on Treasury, Dinsley Cooper is Social Secretary, Roger Harrison - Delegate and Newsletter Editor, John Saywell, Mary Raynor, Darryl Greer, Richard Widger, Jim Elston and Ian Laidler are committee members.

Dinsley Cooper has formulated a wide and varied list of events for this current year, so here we go:

\* Dinner Dance at Naval House - 29 May. Three course meal, music and bar - clowns supplied.

\* Family BBQ 27 June at the Stockade Botanic Park - where?!!

\* Quiz Night at Naval House - 24 July - Naval Officers are to stand down. BYO brain.

\* Scottish Night - with the traditional piping in of the Haggis followed by actually eating some of it with Neaps and Tatties, all washed down with a bell of whisky. No wonder the Scots talk funny!

\* Christmas break-up, possibly lunch in the city, but more information as the day gets closer.

### MEMBERS ON THE SICK LIST

Tony Haynes springs to mind as the most urgent. He has several life threatening cancers and although he has maintained that positive, cheerful attitude, his body is rapidly letting him down. The members and I have known Tony for several years now, a finer man I have yet to meet. All the other mates that know Tony wish him well.

A lovely old darling battling along here is Darcy Howlett. Often see him scooting up Unley Road on his battery cart, chatting up all the pretty girls.

Also, our good wishes are extended to our Patron, Sir Victor Smith

ANZAC Day - is fast approaching, so please keep Monday 26 April clear for a good swagger or march down King William Street. Meet at 09:15 near Hindly Street and after the Service, at Naval House where the President, John Barry - *will shout the bar!*

This has given you some idea of what we in the south are up to. I have left out several items to save space and litigation.

Regards to all.

\* Roger Harrison

**DIVISIONS PLEASE NOTE**  
THE DEADLINE FOR MATERIAL IN  
THE JULY EDITION OF  
SLIPSTREAM IS 18 JUNE 1993.

## WELFARE OFFICER'S REPORT

From July 1992, Veteran Affairs, after consultation with the ex-Service organisations, made changes to the contentious 'Lifestyle Assessment System'. Veterans are now offered a new lifestyle assessment system when they claim for a disability pension or apply for a higher rate.

Veterans may choose one of three assessment methods: Self Assessment, Average Lifestyle Rating, and Lifestyle Questionnaire.

The department will usually accept the rating without further query, but may check ratings that do not seem to match the disabilities.

SYSTEM 1 - Self Assessment. May be a suitable choice if the veteran is concerned about giving details of his/her private life. It should be remembered however, that if accepted by the determining officer, as you have made the assessment there is no right to appeal against the assessment.

SYSTEM 2 - Veterans who choose not to provide any details of their lifestyle, will have an average lifestyle rating allocated for their level of medical impairment. The member can appeal against this rating.

You will then have to justify the appeal with enough information the determining officer requires to convince him/her that you are worse than average for that particular medical condition.

SYSTEM 3 - Veterans who choose to complete a Lifestyle Questionnaire will be sent the appropriate form and the rating will be calculated on the basis of the answers given. This method may suit those who are unsure as to how one or more disabilities will affect their lifestyle. The claim will take longer to process than Systems 1 and 2. You have the right to appeal against the assessment.

The RDFWA tends to recommend System 3, as we believe no two people or their lifestyles are the same, or for that matter, the medical condition or severity of it. If you opt for System 3, that is to complete a Lifestyle Questionnaire, make sure you get assistance from an experienced RDFWA or RSL Welfare Officer.

On the Shoalhaven scene, as well as providing assistance to veterans and widows, Shoalhaven and District RDFWA Publicity Officer, Neil Gage, organised an appeal for funds to help with the specialised treatment required by the son of a serving sailor. Thanks to the excellent response from numerous organisations and individuals, a trust fund has been established to assist the child, now and in the future.

\* I.G.(Chips) Gray JP - Chairman Shoalhaven and District RDFWA.

**8910 MUSEUM SUPPORT  
SQUADRON RESTORATION  
CREW  
PROGRESS REPORT**

**DAKOTA 800**

Since my last report we were very fortunate to acquire the services of five midshipmen for three weeks work whilst awaiting commencement of their 'knife and fork' course at *HMAS Creswell*. These guys were fresh out of RMIT, four destined to become WEOs and one AEO.

The Engineer (ex-Nirimba Apprentice), successfully accomplished a 'bash and patch' skin repair on the leading edge of the Port tail plane. This task was made very difficult due to a lack of proper tools and materials. To his credit, through compromise and initiative, the young fellow did a good job.

The four future Electrical Officers achieved a fantastic result in re-wiring and bringing back to life most of the 28volt lighting services. We now have a TV and Video set-up in the aircraft and can run an interesting selection of aviation film footage.

During the 18 months that we have been working on this aircraft, we had been unaware that she still held approximately 250 gallons of AVGAS (Purple). For safety reasons, a well as insurance purposes, this had to be drained. We had the fuel tested for impurities, unfortunately, the contamination was well outside the permissible limits.

**OTHER RESTORATION PROJECTS**

**20mm HISPANO CANNON**

Ian Ferguson (ex-Armourer), has expressed an interest in restoring the sectioned working display model of the 20mm Hispano Cannon to working order. Good on you, Ian!

**SUPERMARINE SEA OTTER (HULL)**

This is another piece of priceless memorabilia that requires restoration. The intention is to rub back, re-paint and fit out the cockpit as much as possible, and allow the public access to its interior. Volunteers are required for this project.

**UH1B IROQUOIS VIETNAM DISPLAY**

This display is quite run-down and badly in need of a face lift. It has to be moved from the old museum building and resited in the new hangar.

This display has a lot of potential and the suggestions and ideas as to how to set it up are limitless. Volunteers are required for this project.

Anyone interested in lending a hand with these last two projects, with 'IDEAS' and/or labour, please contact me on (044) 218695.

\* Don Parkinson - Project Manager

**+ SEA FURY REPORT +**

Recently, two Hawker Sea Fury aircraft were returned to the Australian War Memorial from *HMAS Albatross*.

Sea Fury VW 232s restoration commenced in 1991. At this time the aircraft was in a poor state. Although the engine was still fitted, it was only 50% complete.

Work commenced on the twin banks of cylinders with the Top #1 cylinder on the front bank and the cylinders on either side on the rear bank requiring a complete reassembly and refit, including all exhaust pipes and air baffles.

Work then commenced on all engine accessories. Refitted were the magnetos, butterfly valves, Hobson carburettor assembly and the drive shaft to the pump drive box. Engine controls were reconnected and 40% of the oil lines. A full set of plugs were installed and the ignition leads fitted.

Although inspected and cleaned, work was not commenced on either the cockpit, fuselage or wings.

Regrettably the aircraft has been reclaimed by the Australian War Memorial for conservation as opposed to restoration.

Work then commenced on Sea Fury WG630. The airframe was inspected for general condition, and major corrosion was found on both main wing spars. This meant that 630 was destined for static display.

A start was made to clean up the fuselage, but the AWM then reclaimed this airframe to allow all loose parts to be allocated to the correct airframe.

Hopefully, 630 will return to us, including all spares. If so, it will be located in the Museum hangar where it can be restored to her former glory.

\* Gavin Johnson - Project Manager

**IROQUOIS N9-3102 (894)**

Restoration work has commenced on Navy Iroquois 895 (Tail #N9-3102). Sadly, at this stage, 894 is a little worse for wear. The Tail Rotor Assembly is missing, otherwise the aircraft is complete.

The restoration programme, will include refitting the Lycoming engine with its missing accessories so that it will provide a suitable display when the engine cowlings are pinned open. The transmission is complete as is the rear troop/cargo deck.

The cockpit requires seats/harness and the instrument panel is missing a few minor instruments.

Overall, the restoration is fairly easy.

Once the aircraft has been washed, minor repainting carried out and then given a good polish, it will make quite a presentable display.

Some suggestions for types of display include, Medevac fit, Gun-ship fit, and the standard troop carrier / SAR mission fit.

\* Gavin Johnson - Project Manager

**FIREFLY WD 826 (245)**

**HISTORIC FLIGHT**

Since the last report, the enthusiasm has returned (as expected), and the team has been busy chasing the necessary spares and publications required to overhaul a set of undercarriage legs.

A copy of the required publication has been donated and as soon as suitable seals are obtained, the task will be undertaken.

The replacement camshafts have yet to arrive from the overhaul facility in the USA, so little progress is being made on the Griffon.

The Firefly is generating a lot of interest from the general public and enthusiasts who want to know when it will fly. The answer is simple - 'When it is ready!'

**FIREFLY WJ 109 (207)**

**MUSEUM STATIC DISPLAY**

With the inception of 8-9-10 Squadron, the Firefly restoration team, under the guidance of Terry Hetherington, has taken on the refurbishment of the museum Firefly. This aircraft has looked very 'second-hand' for some time now.

So far the team have removed the remains of the engine, cowlings, propeller and engine frames. The rudder has also been removed for repair after sustaining wind damage last year, not to mention the odd hole from kid's fingers!

In general, the restoration is progressing slowly, but it is hoped that 207 will be up to a reasonable static display standard as an ASG variant within six months. It is hoped that a new coat of paint can also be arranged in that time period.

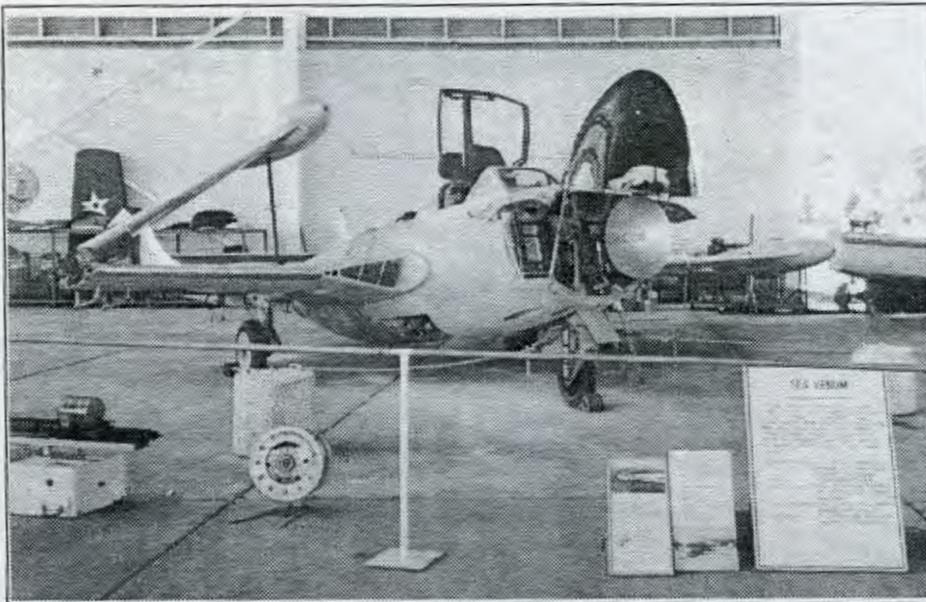
\* Keith Boundy - Firefly Maintenance Coordinator

**SEA VENOM WZ 937**

WZ 937 was last seen disappearing down the road in the direction of the Spray Bay - No further reports to hand.. See photo next page.

**SEA FURY RESTORATION**

No progress reports available from the Project Manager.



Sea Venom WZ 937, all rubbed back and ready for the paint shop. In this photograph the aircraft is parked in front of the almost completed workshop in the Naval Aviation Museum complex. Photo: Peregrine Publishing

## NAVAL AVIATION MUSEUM - SITREP

As you are all now well aware, Stage 2 of the museum project included a function centre capable of catering for large parties. However, patronage in the cafe area has not been sufficient to successfully contract out, and we have been entirely dependent on volunteers to keep this avenue of good will continuing.

In view of this factor, the Board of Directors have agreed to a temporary proposal to change the main area of the function room and bar area into a display arena. Memorabilia from the old museum will be used and that facility will be closed down. A small cafe area will compliment the display area upstairs.

When these changes are completed, fees will be increased by one dollar, and free tea and coffee will be provided to visitors.

### STAGE 3 - (Alpha) CLADDING THE MUSEUM

Detailed design drawings have been completed and documents are ready for the tender process. The tender is designed to be directed at local Shoalhaven companies to show our wish to support the local economy. It is hoped that the hangar can be fully clad before the winter westerlies create havoc.

The walls will be built of the same materials that were used in the roof, except for the southern end which will be glass. Two very large hangar doors are designed for the northern end and there will be six emergency exit doors.

The walls are to be insulated and this material will be covered by an inner lining. It will be 'acoustically sound' - pun?

As an interim measure only, a strip of clear view panels will be positioned high up along the walls to provide some light. This measure is to save on electricity bills during the next stage of consolidation and manufacture of displays. The final design will be centred around a darkened hall with soft focus lights on the displays.

### STAGE 3 - (Bravo)

To be done when we have the financial pledges, includes:

Theme capsules, parks and gardens, BBQ areas, children's playgrounds in the gardens, stores facilities, outside toilets, administrative facilities and display areas. These display areas will replace the Stage 2 interim display areas which can then be converted back to their original purpose - offices and the function area and bar.

There is much to be done and we are making progress - if only slowly.

### PROGRESS REPORT

After the completion of Stage 2, the staff of the museum have been directing their efforts towards consolidation. After the incredible efforts of Spike Campey and his small team in completing the hangar and display centre, there has been a need to attend to the detail of the Museum Foundation - since December the following progress/actions have

been taken and/or achieved:

- Fund raising has continued, with hardly a break for Christmas, by Rear Admiral Robertson and his team, we are well on the way to covering the cost of cladding the display hangar. We are approximately at the half way point in our \$8m target to fully complete the project.
- The White Ensign Club Function Centre has been formally named and large signs proudly perpetuate the name at either end of the facility.
- The cafe in the function room has been operating since early December, commenced during the school holiday period by the ex-WRENS Association. It was a fantastic achievement which has been carried on by a dedicated group of volunteers from all walks of life.
- The shop and entry point is also manned by volunteers who willingly give up their time in order that essential funds can be used on progressing the Museum Foundation. It is a success story which continues to expand. The patronage has increased, but there is every day evidence of the recession continuing to bite.
- The workshop is nearing completion, with a mezzanine floor fitted, storage shelves on every wall from top to bottom (these are temporary until we can afford a proper storage facility), and power and lighting being installed. There is still a great need for the donation of tools of any description. Well done the team! With special thanks to Phil Parker for 'biting the bullet'.
- New road signs have been sponsored by James Hardie Industries and they are now in position on every access road.
- Aircraft restoration has recommenced in earnest. The DC3 cabin cinema is now complete (we are waiting for someone to sponsor us a TV/Video to show 'Warries'). The next stage is to remove the starboard wing to allow the aircraft to be positioned close to the wall, then the aircraft will be ready for a clean and repaint. Well done! Don Parkinson and his hard working team of 'pie-woofers'.
- The Sea Venom has disappeared from the museum, it was last seen being towed towards the paint spray facility on the base. Three days after this sighting, the CO of *Albatross* came to the museum and posed the question, "Why is a Sea Venom taking up my valuable glider space in 'G' Hangar?"
- It would appear that the spray shop was full, and Tony Penno, using his 'initiative?', parked the Venom under cover...after all, the aircraft is stripped, vulnerable, ready for its new paint job, and above all needed some TLC.
- Work has commenced on restoring the

second Firefly - utilising the new workshop. Terry Hetherington and Keith Boundy need more help on this project.

- The Wessex hulks which were purchased by the museum, have been moved to the museum to get them out of the weather. Wessex spares are being gathered and restoration will commence in the very near future. Team members are urgently required to help in this project.

- As mentioned previously in the Historic Flight report, Gavin Johnson suffered a severe blow when the Sea Fury he had been working on for some time, had to be returned to the Australian War Memorial. He has now diverted his attention to the Iroquois UH1B in the museum, which is need of some very special care.

- Don and Ray continue to dust and fuss around the Gannet and Sycamore...they are worried that Chris George may pop over to check that the aircraft are being well cared for.

- The Sea Otter hull is about to undergo another face lift.

- It looks as though we may have lost the Anson airframe and associated equipment. The trade deal did not auger well for the museum.

- Attempts are being made to obtain a Macchi, CT4 and Jindivik.

- A MiG 17 is anticipated, as are full size



models of a Spitfire and ME 109.....for interest value.

- Aircraft display signs, sponsored by Caltex, are being produced for the hangar display, these will be positioned when the hangar is enclosed.

- Governor/ Sponsorship boards have been produced.

- Fly-In/Family days have been programmed for 4 April - 6 June - 1 August - 31 October (to coincide with the Nowra Spring Festival activities) and 5 December.

- Staffing at the museum has increased.

We have now employed Karen full time on Job Search. Hopefully, we can now make more progress with our Donor Data Base and get the Society Membership Certificates out to our members. Please be patient out there ...we are doing our best.

We have been sponsored by C E Heath Underwriters to employ a Promotions Manager for three years, advertising for this position has commenced.

- We will be doing another fund raising mailing soon - be prepared!

- Monthly corporate fund raising lunches have begun in the local Nowra area. If you have any rich friends, please let the Director know.

## MEMBERSHIP TO THE MUSEUM SOCIETY

Fleet Air Arm Association members are eligible to become 'Founding Members of the Museum Society' if they still wish to do so. The delay in this offer is regretted, but has been caused by the backlog in preparing and Issuing Society Certificates. Please contact the Slipstream editor for the necessary forms.

\* Mike Lehan - Museum Director

## A LABOUR OF LOVE

**"I suppose I've probably built more Spitfires than the British produced in World War Two!"**

This was the modest admission made by St. Georges Basin model maker, Ken Taylor, during a recent interview at the Naval Aviation Museum.

He was talking about his early introduction into model making during the six years he spent at Boy's Town as a youngster.

"I eventually progressed into making flying models, but I was such a lousy pilot I decided I would devote the rest of my time into making solid models, with special attention to detail and finish".

No one who has seen his work can doubt that he has succeeded most admirably in his ambition.

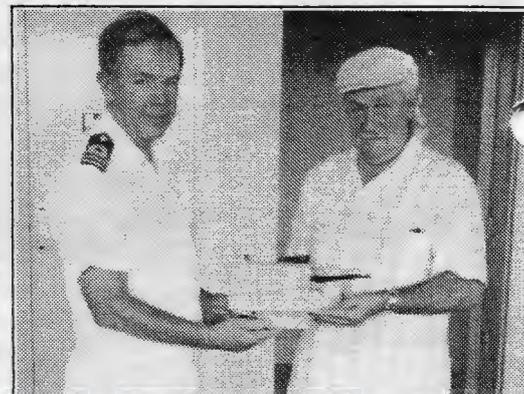
Samples of his work are held in perpetuity at the Naval Aviation Museum. There you can see a Firefly,

Sea Fury, Sea Venom, Gannet and a Skyhawk, all lovingly carved and finished from a variety of timbers, but mainly Maple, Cedar and Spruce.

Ken has already secured space at the museum for his current project, a half-inch scale model of the Voyager, which in the old system, works out to a total length of 16 feet 4 inches.

When asked why he was making this particular model, he said that he was doing it so that it could be put on display as a memorial to the survivors of Voyager.

Construction has now reached the stage where he is seeking good, clear photographs of the uppers, director and squid sectors to assist with his plans. If you can assist him in this regard, he would take special care of any photographs loaned to him, and ensure they were returned to the owners.



Ken Taylor showing Cdr Mike Lehan a gun turret from his Voyager model. Photo Peregrine Publishing

Ken has also given an open invitation to any of Voyager's crew members, to call on him, view the progress he has made, and offer any advice relating to detail, but please phone him first. He can be contacted on (044) 435098 and at 94 Island Road, St Georges Basin, 2540.

**TO THE FLEET AIR ARM  
ASSOCIATION OF  
AUSTRALIA**

This is an 'early warning' notice concerning the special 50th Anniversary Memorial Reunion for all those who served with the British Pacific and East Indies Fleets 1944-46.

This reunion will be held in Portsmouth, England, in September 1995, is being organised by a special National Committee working in close association with the City of Portsmouth and the Flag Officer Commanding Portsmouth Royal Naval Base.

It is an honour for me to be a member of the National Committee. My special responsibility is to provide information and assistance to all those eligible personnel now living outside the United Kingdom, and to those who at the time were serving in Commonwealth and Allied ships attached to the two fleets. A list of those ships from your country's navy who were attached to the two fleets and whose veterans are eligible to attend the reunion is attached.

It would be most appreciated if you can circulate this information to members of your association. Any individual or group who decide to attend please contact me at the address which appears on the attached sheet or by telephone (021) 382 6648 (UK)

This is important so we can establish a record of how many are attending (including wives etc.) and help us to relate numbers to the capacity of venues. A mailing list will be established so we can forward more detailed information of the activities being planned as and when this becomes available.

We are seeking sponsorship for the various projects within the Reunion from Industry and Commerce to finance our efforts on behalf of those attending. It is hoped that this will result in a surplus which will be given to Forces Charities in UK and Overseas.

Yours sincerely,

Gerry Purnell (Lt RN (Retd))

### CHIPS CALLS IT A DAY

**HMAS Albatross** Training Department personality, Terry (Chips) Raftery is retiring after 44 1/2 years with the Department of Defence.

After 20 years in the Royal Australian navy and a further 24 1/2 as a Senior Technical Instructor, he has decided to call it a day.

Terry was born at Toowoomba in 1928 and joined the RAN as a Naval Air Mechanic (Engines) Technician in 1948.



### REUNION FOR 'FORGOTTEN FLEETS' OF WORLD WAR II

A special 50th anniversary memorial reunion is being organised for all survivors of the 'forgotten' British Pacific and East Indies Fleets 1944-46 in Portsmouth in 1995.

The organisers have posted an early warning of the event so that all ship's secretaries and Fleet Air Arm squadron secretaries can submit their names and addresses for full details.

All men and women who served under the commands of the Royal Navy, Royal Marines, Fleet Air Arm, Merchant Navy or the RN Shore Bases, including shipmates from the Commonwealth, will be invited. They are often described as the 'forgotten' fleets due to the fact that many ships returned to the UK months after the victory celebrations had subsided.

The event will take the form of a civic reception in honour of the two fleets at the Portsmouth Guildhall on Saturday 2nd September 1995, followed by a Memorial Service the next day.

The following individuals should be contacted:

RN Ships - Mansel Evans, Bryn Deryn, Lon-yr-Eglwys, St Brides Major, Bridgend, MID GLAMORGAN, UK. CF32 OSH.

RAN, RNZN, RCN Ships - Gerry Purnell, 164B Green Lanes, Sutton Coldfield, WEST MIDLANDS, UK. B73 5LT.

All Fleet Air Arm Squadrons - Dennis Gardiner, 116 Folly Lane, STROUD, Glos., UK. GL5 1SX.

Merchant Navy - Frank Manning, 2E Valley Road, Kenley, SURREY, UK. CR8 5DG.



Terence (Chips) Raftery

Once his basic and trade training was completed, Terry joined the Engine Repair Section at *HMAS Albatross*.

Later in 1951, he passed the Pilot's Mate multi-trade course and served with 805 Squadron maintaining Sea Furies onboard *HMAS Sydney* during his first tour of the Korean War.

While still on *HMAS Sydney*, Terry was promoted to Leading Hand and posted to 816 Squadron to work on Fireflys.

Later that year, *Sydney* was tasked with patrol duties around Monte Bello Island; the atomic bomb testing area.

Terry still remembers the incredible flash of light and the enormous mushroom cloud he could see from the flight deck, about 70 miles away.

1953 saw Terry moving on to 850 Squadron (Sea Furies), this time onboard *HMAS Vengeance*, and then back again to *HMAS Sydney* for a second tour of duty in Korean waters.

In 1954 he was promoted to Petty Officer and posted to *HMAS Nirimba* to do a Mechanics course.

After a short stay at *HMAS Albatross*, Terry joined 805 Squadron (Sea Venoms) onboard *HMAS Melbourne* in 1957, during that period he was promoted to Chief Petty Officer.

1960 saw him working on Sea Venom and Vampire aircraft.

His next move was to UK for six months with the Wessex helicopter special maintenance party, on his return he joined 725 Squadron.

In 1963, Terry took up the position as Chief Instructor at *HMAS Albatross* Air Training Department. This posting was followed by a move to *HMAS Melbourne* as the Chief Mechanician of 817 Squadron.

During 1966, he was awarded the British Empire Medal for his services to aircraft engineering on the work he did on Wessex helicopters.

His last posting was to *HMAS Nirimba* where he held the position of Chief Instructor at the Apprentice's Air Technical (AE) School.

Discharged in 1968, he took his present position as a civilian instructor at *HMAS Albatross*.

Terry has had a busy and rewarding career but still found time to raise ten children.

Now that he has retired and has more time on his hands, he intends to tour Australia by caravan.

He may even get the chance to follow his other great loves, golf and hobby farming at Jaspers Brush.

\* Photograph and article courtesy The Shoalhaven and Nowra News. (24MAR93)

# Around the Traps!



'Toz' Dadswell, Colin Bushe-Jones and Brian Treloar, all members of the ACT Division, helping out with the Naval Aviation Museum mobile display van at the Michelago Village Fair. Photo: Mike Lehan



You put your left leg in and shake it all about.....Jim Lee, NSW President of the FAAA, showing how it's done on National Clean-up Day. Photo: Peregrine Publishing.



The new Interdenominational Chapel under construction at HMAS Albatross. It is located between the Quarterdeck and the Wardroom accommodation block. Photo: Peregrine Publishing.



Naval Aviation Museum curator, Bob Geale, prays that this is the last office move! Photo: Peregrine Publishing



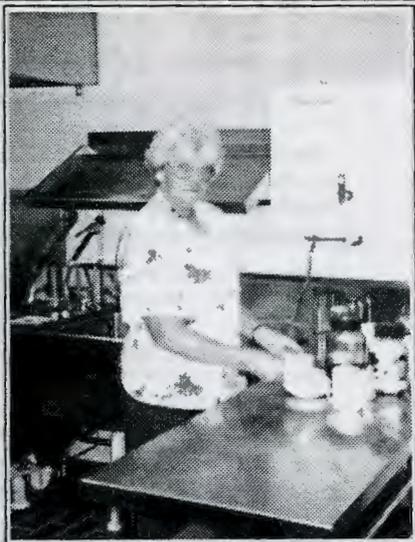
When the USS Coral Sea (CV-43) de-commissioned in April 1992, SMCM Kenneth Testor as the Master Chief serving aboard, was authorised to carry the House Flag off.

The House Flag is designed by the crew members of a ship on commissioning and serves as a battle ensign.

The flag has now been presented to the Naval Aviation Museum as a gift to the RAN and the people of Australia.

The picture shows National FAAA President, 'Toz' Dadswell, at the presentation of the flag to Museum Board Chairman, Cdre Partington.

Photograph: Peregrine Publishing



**BEAM ME UP, SCOTTY!**  
 New South Wales Divisional Chaplain, the Reverend Walter Wheelden.  
 Photo: Peregrine Publishing

8-9-10 Museum Support Squadron volunteer, Norma Lee, busy in the galley of the Naval Aviation Museum White Ensign Function Centre.  
 Photo: Peregrine Publishing

In an attempt to isolate an allergen, President 'Toz' has been undergoing a series of dietary constraints. This photo was taken whilst undergoing alcohol denial, proof of this being the empty wine glass and half glass of water on the table. The as yet unidentified allergen, has the effect of paralysing the 'smile' muscles.  
 Photo: Les Matterson



NSW Division members Frank Birtles, Kevin French, Gordon 'Pancho' Walters and Les Young (ex-White Ensign Club Manager), doing their bit on Clean-up Australia Day. Photo: Peregrine Publishing



Jack Constantine, one of the Sea Fury team of the Historic Flight, slaving away over a hot buffer as he polishes engine parts. Photo: Peregrine Publishing



When WZ 943 was replaced on its perch fifteen months ago, the sign from the base vanished. Can someone PLEASE replace it and keep the tourists happy.

There was standing room only at the ANZAC Chapel at Duntroon on Wednesday 17 March 1993, as relatives and friends gathered to pay their last respects to Errol Martin Kavanagh.

Errol, affectionately known as 'Klump' to his shipmates, was born in Millicent, on 2 July 1944, the son of Melva and Doug Kavanagh. He was a boarder at Marist Brothers College before being accepted for flying training with the Navy in 1962. This was the realisation of a dream for Klump, as he had, from a very early age, a burning desire to become a pilot.

Midshipman Kavanagh gained his wings in 1964, and after completing training at *HMAS Albatross*, joined VS 816 flying Gannets. In 1967 he completed a QFI course and was posted to RAAF Pearce as a flying instructor and as Senior Naval Officer.

In 1968 he returned to *Albatross* for an A4 course, after which, he served as Senior Pilot of VC 724 and VF 805. A two year exchange posting with the USN followed, during this time he qualified as a Landing Signals Officer.

On return to Australia he qualified for his Bridge Watch-keeping Certificate, and after a posting to Navy Office returned to sea as the Commanding Officer *HMAS Ibis*. Two more commands followed, firstly as Commanding Officer VC 724, then as CO VC 805. This dream run of postings came to a halt in 1980 when he joined *Melbourne* as LICdr (Flying).

In 1982, the newly promoted Commander Kavanagh returned to Canberra to serve in the Joint Intelligence Organisation. His last sea posting was as Executive Officer *HMAS Supply* in 1984/85.

After completing the Joint Services Staff College, Klump was sent to RAAF Point Cook to learn Indonesian, but the call of the cockpit was too strong and in 1987 he resigned to take up a flying job with Lloyds Aviation.

In 1989 he was accepted by QANTAS, but his heart was always with high speed, high performance military aircraft. It was this love of the ultimate in flying that attracted Klump, and other ex-Fleet Air Arm pilots, to the historical aircraft industry. It was whilst flying a MiG 15 in the Canberra area on Saturday 13 March that Klump's luck ran out.

Faced with a major aircraft failure, he had to carry out an immediate forced landing with restricted control over the aircraft. The cleared areas available were occupied by people playing sports so he tried to land in a confined area surrounded by trees. Even the above average flying skills of Klump could not pull off such a feat. He died a hero, doing what he loved most.

Klump was an exceptional pilot, naval officer, shipmate and family man. The above resume of his service career gives little indication of the personality of this most likeable man. His love of his family and his love of life are well documented in the hearts of all who knew him. He will be sadly missed by all his friends and family and whenever aircrew meet to spin a dit, the exploits of Klump Kavanagh will dominate the conversation.

The Fleet Air Arm Association offers to his lovely wife Carol and his two daughters, Justin and Erin, our most sincere condolences.



**Cmdr Errol Martin Kavanagh RAN (Rtd)**

### HIGH FLIGHT

*Oh! I have slipped the surly bonds of earth  
And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings;  
Sunward I've climbed, and joined the tumbling mirth  
Of sun-split cloud - and done a hundred things  
You have not dreamed of - wheeled and soared  
and swung*

*High in the sunlit silence. Hov'ring there  
I've chased the shouting wind along, and flung  
My eager craft through footless halls of air.*

*Up, up the long, delirious, burning blue  
I've topped the wind - swept heights with easy  
grace*

*Where never lark, nor eagle flew -  
And, while with silent lifting mind I've trod  
The high untrespassed sanctity of space  
Put out my hand and touched the face of God.*

*\* by Pilot Officer John G. Magee Jr.*

*A young American who served with a RCAF Spitfire  
Squadron in England during 1940-41*