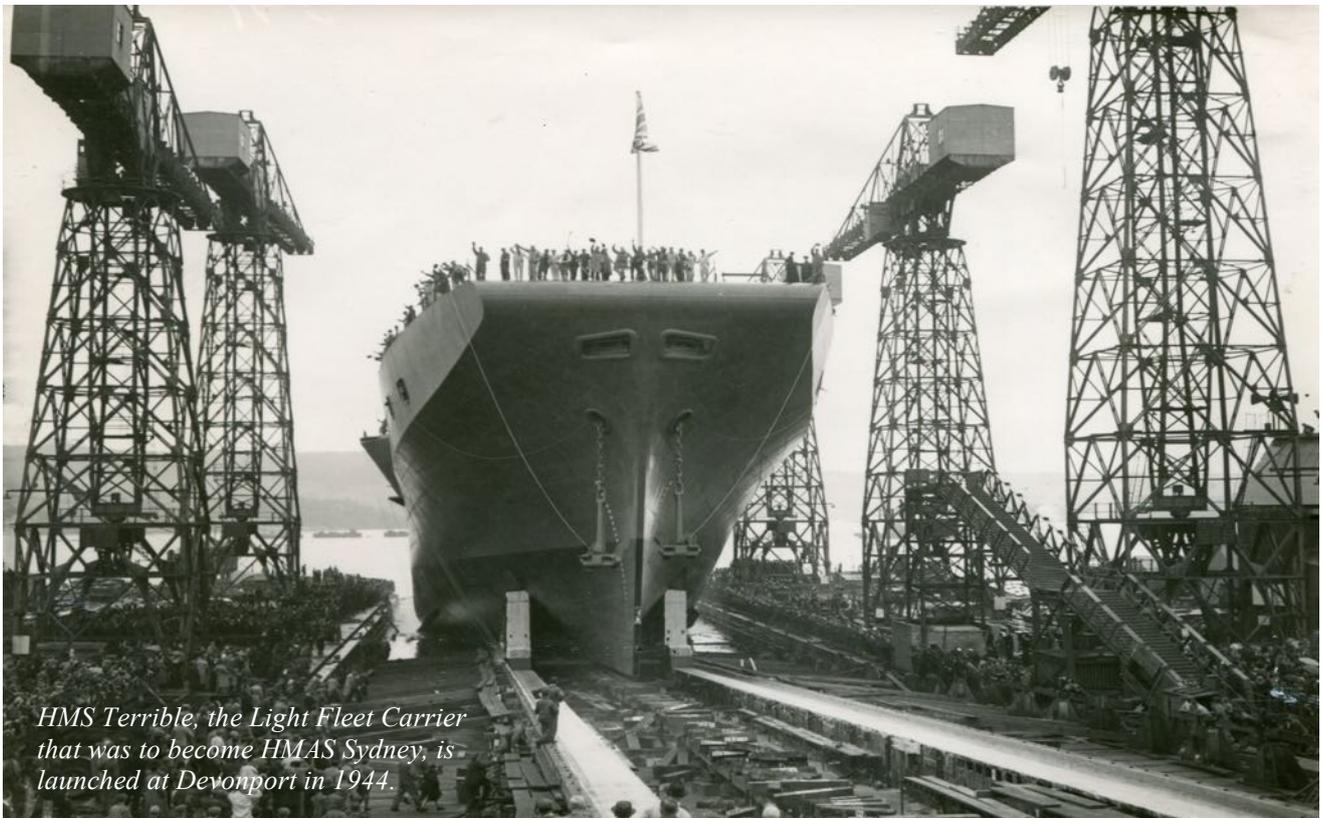




THE BIRTH OF THE FLEET AIR ARM



HMS Terrible, the Light Fleet Carrier that was to become HMAS Sydney, is launched at Devonport in 1944.

In August of 1947 Cabinet finally approved the formation of a dedicated Air Arm for the Royal Australian Navy. It was the end of a bitter and acrimonious debate in Defence circles, and the beginning of a new Force Element in the RAN which was to make an indelible mark just three years later over North Korea, and to become the professional force it remains to this day.

The story of the early years of the RAN is a fascinating one. Our early experience with aircraft on ships was stunted by the fragility of aircraft of the time, and the requirement to stop the ship to either launch or recover them (or both). Further, they took up valuable space and therefore had to earn their keep – a task not always possible in theatres where more modern enemy fighters made short work of the lone, technically inferior embarked aircraft of the day.

These problems and the increasing obsolescence of the airframes available eventually overcame their usefulness, and by 1944 the last aircraft had been removed from our cruisers.

Yet despite these problems, the value of organic air support at sea was understood, particularly as the latter years of WW2 had demonstrated the value of a carrier equipped with multiple modern aircraft.

By war's end the Navy was well positioned in terms of manpower but in poor shape for ships, with two cruisers less than at the start of the War, and a rag-tag fleet of 10 destroyers. The Australian government recognized the need to rebuild the fleet, and took Navy's advice that part of this modernization should include a Fleet Air Arm.

The RAN's position was the exact inverse of the Royal Navy, which had too many platforms but neither the men nor money to operate them. The British recognized that providing carriers to Commonwealth nations was an easy and relatively cheap way to project force, but without the manpower and costs otherwise involved.

As in any procurement program, however, it was not a smooth road. Each government wanted a better deal than was offered by the other, and negotiations took several years. By 1947 agreement had been reached, however, and in August of that

year Cabinet agreed to the formation of a Fleet Air Arm and provision of suitable ships and aircraft to equip it.

The next 18 months were frenetic: the acquisition of a half-built aircraft carrier and its completion, trials and acceptance; the development of a whole air wing from scratch; work on an air station as a home base - and the fusion of the whole lot into a functional, superbly equipped FAA. It was an extraordinary effort unmatched at any time since.

Kim Dunstan, our resident historian, has captured the story of those months and of the subsequent delivery of HMA Ships *Vengeance* and *Melbourne*, and what they got up to through until 1958. And we've added a 'History in Pictures' article, too, which captures some of the more unusual shots of the time. We've also got a superbly researched essay by RADM **James Goldrick** that delves into the politics and problems behind the decision to buy *Sydney* and *Melbourne*.



You can read the article, see the photographs and read the essay simply by **clicking on the image LEFT**. This will also let you link to many other interesting pages on the website,

which together are building into an impressive historical record of Australian Naval Aviation from the very first days to the present. ✈

Mystery Photo No. 40 Answer

The last Mystery Photo (No.40) was as follows:



The photograph was kindly supplied by Ron Marsh and shows an aircraft whose wingtip has become tangled in tram lines whilst being towed though a street in Brisbane

The most complete answer was from **Richard Kenderdine**, who thought it was a Chance-Vought F4U Corsair, probably from the British Pacific Fleet (insignia painted out under wing) in 1946. He went on to surmise it was probably on its way to being dumped off the coast as part of the lend-lease agreement with the US. HMS *Pioneer* and *Perseus* were involved in transporting the aircraft to the dumping site. ✈

New Mystery Photo (No. 41)

Mystery Photo No.41 shows a Navy aircraft hiding behind a fence, being watched by locals. You can see a bigger version of it [here](#).



Can you tell the webmaster: **What type of aircraft it is, where it was, why it was there, and an approximate date?** One point for each correct answer, and a bonus ten for the date of birth of the pilot! Click [here](#) to respond, quoting MP41. ✈

Letters to the Editor



Dear Shipmates,

I suspect more than a few can attest to this. Perhaps Wessex 31B crew members should take particular note!

Following my flying career in the RAN which looking back, I enjoyed immensely, I have developed a marked loss in hearing acuity and quite severe tinnitus, so much so that if I am not wearing a hearing aid, I seem to be asking people to "say again" or more politely to repeat themselves more than once. I have also noticed that when I am watching television or listening to the radio that voice transmission seems muffled or garbled unless I can see and read lips. Often I ask people to repeat transmitted words. That is frustrating to me and irritating to them. Most times when I am watching television at home I don a Bluetooth headset which assists me greatly in hearing clear diction.

My tinnitus sounds like the combined high pitched hiss of thousands of male cicarda insects, each screeching their mating calls from close high trees. This high-pitched hissing sound is almost identical in frequency to the RAN Wessex 31B helicopter intercom background noise. As an aside, I have found that the best antidote against tinnitus for me is sleeping with the TV on throughout the night! The TV emits a hissing sound too. Other people have varying tinnitus sound experiences, often brought about by other abnormalities involving the middle ear.

Some can be loud. Some have multi-tones, some are broken. It seems most are different.

It seems highly likely that both of my cumulative disabilities are mainly attributable to noise exposure in varying forms. Further,

it is reasonable to state that nearly all the high-level noise exposure that I experienced during my life so far has been experienced during my RAN career.

Noise sources included low flying or ground running jet aircraft, piston engine aircraft, helicopters, Bofors gun practicing, Aircraft rocketing on to a Splash Target, Small Arms firing all magnified within sponsons and/or unprotected areas of shore facilities or on board HMAS Melbourne and other Major Fleet Units and Air Capable Ships.

One notable noise source that few may be aware of was the continuous and repeated exposure to severe background intercom noise in the RAN Wessex 31B helicopter complemented by a combination of engine, jet exhaust, Main Rotor Gearbox and high speed transmission shafting noise transmitted through live aircrew throat microphones. Often, in the Wessex 31B helicopter intercom transmissions between flight crew members was indecipherable above the background noise, especially if pilot's sliding windows above the jet exhausts or rear cabin doors were ajar. This was often an operational requirement. Aircrew Mark 3 helmets of the day had poor noise attenuation properties.

I can well recall a deadened audible response after one or two Anti-submarine sorties during a 24-hour period.

Regrettably, emphasis on personal safety including noise exposure during my early RAN career was scant and not all protective equipment such as Ear Muffs, Safety Goggles and many other items were freely available. Often, the limited Safety Equipment that was available was poorly designed, uncomfortable, bulky and ineffective which encouraged non-use by personnel. Further, we were not conversant on the many long term effects of the various exposures that accrued through not wearing safety equipment.

More recently, Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) has become a legislated and formal "all embracing" term covering all types of workplace safety awareness, on the job training, personal safety, industrial safety, hazard reduction, accident prevention and includes such matters as "Duty of Care", Accident Investigation, reporting and follow up and many other aspects including the operation of a legislated and functional Work Cover organisation.

I have taken the liberty of attaching an article titled "Tinnitus-More than just ringing in the ears" written by Prof. Ian Gardner, Principal Medical Adviser, Department of Veteran's Affairs which may assist readers on Tinnitus.

Yours aye, Peter J Cannell

By Ed. If you are interested in the article that Peter provided, email me [here](#) and I'll be happy to forward a copy on to you. ✈

Dear Editor,

What great articles about the Korean War [in the last edition]. A copy should be sent to the current minister for Defence and one to her opposite in the Labour party.

30 Second Quiz

Q1. What was the name of the first dedicated Aircraft Carrier in the RAN Fleet Air Arm?

Q2. In 1924 a Fairey IID embarked on an RAN vessel for a particular purpose. What was the name of the vessel and what was the purpose?

Q3. In a Naval Aviation context, what is a Fresnel Lens used for?

Q4. When was the first operational embarkation of an aircraft in an RAN warship?

Q5. What was the most unusual feature of the Fairey Gannet propulsion system for aircraft of the time?

(Answers on page 13) ✈

I joined in late 1952 hoping to get to Korea, but was tied up with courses at Cerberus and Nirimba. I had a cousin, Lieutenant Bill Dunlop, who flew Fireflies and got a mention in the book 'Wings over the Navy'.

Again congrats to the crew who put it together.

Cam "Mal" Barnes

Thanks Mal. The beauty of publishing on our website is that we can add items as they come in. If anyone has any stories or photos (or other material) about the Fleet Air Arm's role in Korea, send it to the webmaster for inclusion. We are particularly interested in people's personal experiences. Ed. ✈

Dear Editor,

Happy Easter! I'm much more easy going than one of your other readers!! Possible correction - the photo of Melbourne decommissioning in your latest News Letter has a caption dating the event as 30 June 1981. My Log Book shows myself as SP VS816 disembarking for NAS Nowra on 10th November 1981 after completing the final Deployment "up top" with Trackers, Sea King and SAR Wessex.

Cheers Jeff Dalgleish.

You are quite right, Jeff. HMAS Melbourne decommissioned on 30 June 1982, not the previous year as I had indicated. I'll have a stern word with my fat typing fingers! Thanks for putting the record straight. Ed. ✈

Dear Editor,

Today (04 April) is a historical date for EMU 309. The last KIA's in the 135th occurred on April 4th 1971 when **Noel LaPlante, Terry Knight, Harvey Reynolds** and **Larry Steppe** flying 568 came apart in mid-air near Tra Vinh.

† REST IN PEACE †

Since the last edition of 'FlyBy' we have become aware of the loss of Ron Powell, Ken Vandenberg, Mark Dunlop and James "Zeke" Greenup. You can read a little more on our Obituary page [here](#).

Captain Collins and EMU Inc's founder, Geoff were flying lead. Our Chief Pilot, Peter, was flying in 309 immediately in front of 568 which was in trail. 568 had recently come out of maintenance and suffered a catastrophic rotor failure that was never completely explained. Peter and Geoff were the first on the scene of the wreckage. Besides the four Americans, 12 Vietnamese infantrymen also died when they were thrown completely from the aircraft as it disintegrated in flight.

There were numerous WIA after this episode before Peter and Geoff left eight months later, but 309 was intimately involved with this somewhat historic date for the 135th AHC. Long time passing.



Around the same time the Seawolves (US Navy) had a similar problem and lost the crew. The US Navy traced it back to an antiwar movement within Bell Helicopters, or so I've been told. If that is correct then 568 may have had a main rotor blade made by the same person/s, although that is speculative.

John "Mac" Macartney ✈

Dear Editor,

I have scratched through my diary of the Coral/Balmoral weeks [in Vietnam] and offer the following from those writings. There is a disclaimer that this diary was the work of a perpetually hung over, stropy, Acting Sub Lieutenant and may contain errors. Some things I wrote are accurate reports from daily briefings but some of these observations may be misunderstandings of the official briefing or just gossip I picked up somewhere. There's probably some additional errors and omissions due to the fact that the diary was often written days late.

To make this (hopefully) a little clearer, what is written in my diary is in inverted commas. I have added notes in square brackets at the bottom of some days. These notes are explanations and things which I remember now but hadn't written in 1968.

I make the disclaimer that I cannot claim this is 100% accurate – just observations at the time.

Fri 10 May

"Spent some time putting contact on the maps we will be using in the area of Phu Loi (16km north of Saigon) and to NE of there which is the area we are to move into soon."

[so we could draw in chinagraph the artillery activity as advised before each sortie (and as passed to us during flight). With the given points marked on our maps we could work out how to fly around (or under) this artillery].

Sun 12 May

[1 RAR and 3 RAR lifted into Coral by US 135th AHC (9 Sqn not yet up to full complement of UH1H for big lifts of troops). Coral was about 5km from Phu Loi.

In the days prior to 12th May, the Aust troops were operating out of FSBs Harrison and Anderson to the far north of our AO and we did a lot of flying out of Bearcat supporting them.

9 Sqn based three UH1Hs with crews plus at least one spare pilot and maintenance crews at Phu Loi from 12th May on a five-day rotation plan. There were to be many flights back and forth to Vung Tau for maintenance and crew changes, etc. I wasn't in those first 3 Phu Loi crews and can't remember who was.]

Mon 13th May

"FSB Coral was attacked last night by a VC Battalion. FSB Coral is in War Zone D. (the Iron Triangle that has been a VC stronghold for the last few years) 1 RAR and 3 RAR are there with 102 and 106 (newly arrived) Batteries. 10 Aust KIA and at least 53 VC KIA. The attack on Coral began at 0300 and the VC completely overran the FSB before being repelled. One Aust KIA had only been in country 3 days and was married just 3 months ago. As Alb 04B we flew up from Nui Dat to do one medevac from Coral. That was the furthest north I had flown in country."

Tues 14th May

"Not much activity in our area (Phuoc Tuy) but many contacts up north. We did three trips up to FSB Coral (mostly medevacs) and took up extra stokes litters. Each return trip to Coral from Nui Dat was 90 mins. There was another RPG and mortar attack on Coral as we departed on one trip with rounds landing where we had just taken off from moments before. Lots of 30 cal and 50 cal from N to E sides as we flew away. Many dust offs again.

Two of the Phu Loi crews remained back in VT for the night after tasks to VT. It seems as if we are in for a bad time up there. I was Duty Pilot tonight and had to organize the crews coming in late."

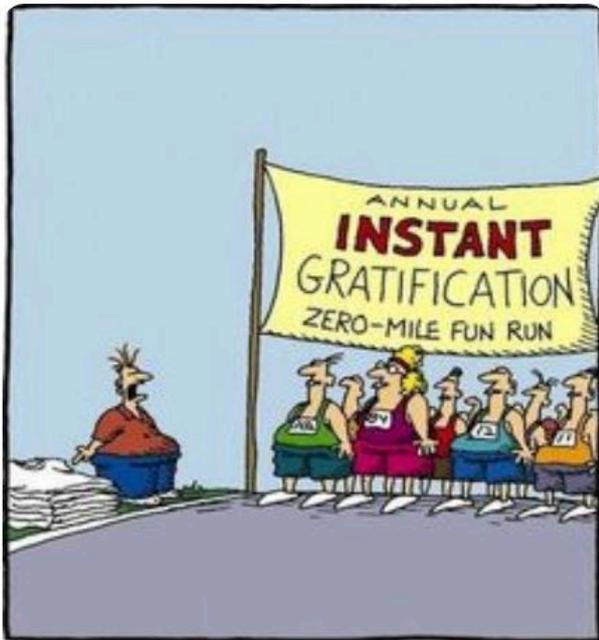
[medevacs included a NASHO 2nd Lt Tim Fisher who later became Deputy Prime Minister]

Wed 15th May

"Up early to get the Phu Loi crews away at 0500. Usual Duty Pilot work and a flight out to Corpus Christie Bay to collect aircraft spares."

Have you paid your Subscription?

As of the end of April 20% of members had yet to pay their 2018 subscriptions. Regrettably we are about to suspend "FlyBy" mailing for these individuals as we cannot continue to subsidise non-financial members. It's easy to reverse this, though: simply pay your annual fee! Ask the webmaster [here](#) if you are not sure how to do that.



"Runners to your mark. Get set. Go! ... OK, come get your T-shirts."

Thurs 16th May

"Day Off. Lunch at Peter Badcoe Club with Tony Casadio who was down from 135th AHC. There is still a lot of activity up at FSB Coral.

Another 11 Aust KIA at Coral today. Crews up there report regular rocketing of Phu Loi. I feel that down here we are missing out on a lot of action."

Fri 17th May

"I was captain for Alb 04A but we did not do any flying this morning. After an early lunch, I flew up to Blackhorse with Tony Casadio and WO Ken Witkins to begin my week of "exchange" with US 135th AHC."

[For the next week, there is a lot of writing in my diary of flying with 135th (including being shot down with Crow Crawford at Tan An in the delta on Sat 18th and flying into Cambodia near Duc Hue on Mon 20th). During this time I had no news of FSB Coral (but at the daily 1900 brief at Blackhorse on 21st there was mention of Aust Centurion tanks moving up north to Tan Uyen to support continuing heavy contact)

Fri 24th May

"At lunch time, Rod Adam flew Marty Ward up to Blackhorse where he will spend the next week with 135th. Rod flew me back to VT with WO Wally Williamson who is the US pilot on exchange with 9 Sqn this week.

The task for 135th this afternoon (that I missed) was to move 3 RAR further north (? to FSB Balmoral)."

[Marty Ward later went back to 135th for an extended period as an "in country" replacement for John Leak after he and Andy Craig were medivacced back to Australia. I think Marty remained with 135th until the first contingent returned to Australia in October]

Mon 27th May

"We led a "hot" SAS extraction near Bien Gia and another routine one near Binh Ba. We also directed an artillery strike into a

base camp near Binh Ba."

Tues 28th May

"Was NDO last night and called out at 0600 to Long Cat on Hwy 15. Made two trips in B model for three serious lying cases and one sitting.

Last four RAN Detachment 9 Sqn pilots (Andy Craig, Bomber Brown, Peter Ey and Ken Vote) and a few new RAAF pilots arrived at VT today."

Sat 1st June

"Early departure to begin my time with forward party at Phu Loi. This is a big very muddy base with poker machines and a juke box in the Officers Mess. The US helicopter company based here and "hosting" us are callsign "Tomahawk". The Tomahawk pilots are big players and on this first night I stayed at Phu Loi there was a Mess Dinner in the Officers Mess complete with "boat races" and "Moriarty" continuing to 0200."

Sun 2nd June

"We were on standby all day at FSB Coral. There is a crew tent there full of lollies and C rations. The tent is riddled with shrapnel and bullet holes from previous attacks. We did one resupply to FSB Balmoral and brought one POW with a gangrenous foot back late in the afternoon. It rained all morning. There is mud all around up here which isn't much good for my Navy suede flying boots. Flew the POW to Long Binh (24th Evac Hospital) for his leg to be removed. It was dark when we left Long Binh, but we returned to Phu Loi low level around the west of Bien Hoa before climbing to cruise at 2000 feet where we were fired at by 30 cal.

Another big night with the Tomahawks before adjourning to the Kangaroo Club (the Aust ORs mess) at Phu Loi. Made it to bed at midnight."

Mon 3rd June

"No flying and had trip to base PX. The Army at Coral and Balmoral are really getting it hard. I am sure they will be glad to get back to Nui Dat for a rest. Indications are that the VC are moving back into Phouc Tuy now. They are moving freely in villages which is what we are trying to prevent.

In the Officers Mess we were required to attend a briefing tonight by CO 11th Aviation Battalion on Flight Safety and VD."

Tues 4th June

"Not much work all day. Did resupply to Balmoral with ice and soft drink from Phu Loi. Aust troops are starting to move back now.

There was a party lined up for Australians at the base swimming pool in Phu Loi but rain ruined it so we had a quiet night in the bar. I went to bed early for the first time at Phu Loi."

Wed 5th June

"There was a farewell night for the Australians in the Officers Mess. We put money over the bar which lasted until closing time. 3RAR returned to Coral from Balmoral tonight."

Thurs 6th June

"We flew a dustoff to Long Binh in the morning.

This afternoon everyone departed for Nui Dat. The convoy started to leave at 1300 to assemble on Hwy 16 (where an APC had hit a mine this morning). Mud was all over the base and many trucks were bogged. Finally everything was going smoothly and jeeps were getting through the thick mud. A major came up and said "don't go that way – go here!" and consequently the whole convoy was bogged and held up for a long time until APCs pulled them out. We flew the Task Force Cdr back to Nui Dat and arrived back at VT at 1630. Other crews from Phu Loi came back in a Caribou."

Endnote

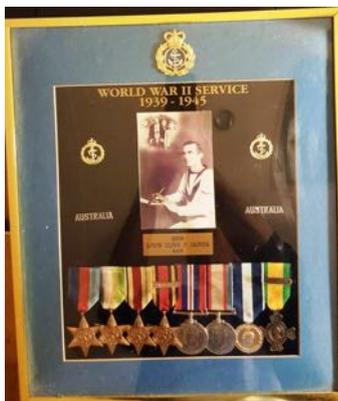
On 5th August I was paid \$6.50 for my Phu Loi detachment. This was some sort of extra allowance for the days away from VT. I don't think there was ever any extra allowance for time at Blackhorse with the 135th

Geoff Vidal ✈

Dear Editor,

In 2011, whilst clearing out items from a house I owned in Willoughby, NSW, and which had been rented to a number of parties from 2001 until 2011, I found a framed memorial to a RAN serviceman, L/STR Clive F. Oliver, service number 11258.

The item displays WWII service medals and photos of Mr Oliver and a family portrait. See attached image.



I would like to return the item to his descendants.

Are you able to email this request out to your wide network of Ex navy people?

Yours sincerely,
Peter Krug
Tel 02 8959 8822
Mob 0434 324 564
peter.krug@ieee.org ✈

SPAM!



In last month's 'Flyby' we mentioned that the webmaster had been hit by flying 'Spam', and promised a more general article on what it is and what you can do about it.

Spam is the widely-used term for unsolicited emails that arrive on your computer. They are, at best, annoying, but some may seek to defraud you and others may seek to damage your computer or its contents, if you are not careful.

The Australian Cybercrime Online Reporting Network, or ACORN, describes Spam as electronic junk mail – unsolicited messages sent by email, text message or instant message without the recipient's consent. Spam messages often contain offers of free goods or 'prizes', cheap products, promises of wealth or other similar offers. You might be asked to pay a joining fee, to buy something to 'win' a prize or to call or text a 1900

telephone number (calls made to these numbers are charged at premium rates).

Do not respond to spam messages. If you receive a spam email, the best thing to do is delete it. Most importantly, do not send any money, credit card details or other personal details to the scammers. You should also report the spam message to [ACORN](#).

Sending spam emails for commercial purposes is an offence under Australian law. There are significant fines attached to this offence, of up to a maximum of \$1.1 million for offending businesses. The Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) enforces Australia's anti-spam laws, and provides advice for businesses to avoid breaching these laws.

More information about unexpected prize or money scams (which are often contained in spam emails), can be found in [Online scams or fraud](#).

Case study

Stephanie is a university student living in Cairns. She receives an email from an airline saying that she has won a \$999 credit towards her next holiday. To redeem the credit, the email requests that Stephanie respond within the next 12 hours with her credit card details. She responds straight away, including her full name and credit card details. The next day, Stephanie notices that \$1000 has been taken from her bank account.

Stephanie should immediately notify her bank, and should also report this to ACORN.

What is Phishing?

Phishing is a way that criminals trick people into giving out their personal or financial details. Phishing messages often pretend to come from legitimate businesses, such as banks or telecommunications providers.

Do not respond to phishing messages. If you receive a phishing message the best thing to do is delete it. You should also report the phishing message to ACORN.

Case study

Mark is 42 years old and lives in Adelaide. He receives an email from his bank which says his internet banking password needs to be changed. He clicks the link in the email and resets his password. The next day, he realises that the email was not actually from his bank. He checks his account and finds \$1000 is missing.

In this case, Mark should immediately notify his bank. He should also report this to ACORN.

Some Phishing messages are quite sophisticated, containing logos of banks or other commercial institutions and replicating their style of communicating. It's all to make you think it is genuine. Typically, however, they will refer to you as 'Customer' whereas real messages from your bank (for example) will refer to you by name. Further, legitimate organisations will never ask you for your password or account details.

You should not be put off by Spam or Phishing. Internet banking is safe, provided you use it properly – but just as you would be careful about protecting your physical valuables against theft,

you should take care of your electronic valuables (including your identity) too.

So, general rules on Spam or Phishing messages are:

- Learn to recognize fake messages and delete them without responding.
- If you are not sure about a message, treat it as fake.
- Never click on any link in a fake message.
- Never give your passwords, credit card or bank details in response to an email. ✈

You Can See a Piece of History



In 1917/18 selected ships of the Royal Navy's Grand Fleet were engaged in flying-off trails, which involved launching aircraft directly from the ship, rather than having to lower floatplanes into the sea.

The battle cruiser *HMAS Sydney* took a leading role in this endeavour, including the launch of Sopwith 1½ strutters off short wooden platforms built over its gun turrets. It was an innovative idea as the ship had no need to deviate from its course because the turret could be rotated into wind.

Now some remarkable movie footage has become available. Released by the Imperial War Museum in London, it shows a Sopwith being launched from 'Q' turret of *HMAS Sydney*, probably in 1918. Those readers with an interest in the historical foundation of Naval Aviation may wish to view the video [here](#). ✈

A Lucky Shot

Bill Hysmith recently posted the following on a Facebook page but I thought it might be of interest to readers here. Ed.



A lucky shot by the VC hit the tip of a 17 pounder on *Taipan 609*. The explosion rocked the ship almost 90 degrees to the left. They landed her in the nearest rice paddy, about 5 klicks from Dong Tam. In spite of looking like a piece of swiss cheese the crew decided to limp her home.

The wearer of the helmet bled some but only needed a few stitches. That's a 3 inch piece of shrapnel stuck in his visor slot. There was also a 6 inch piece stuck in the chicken plate he sat on.



The hole in the chin bubble tore up some avionics and just missed the AC's feet.

A big hole through the main rotor blade wasn't discovered until they shut down at Dong Tam. She was repaired and

finished her tour of Vietnam still with the 135th AHC.

609 is on display at Battleship Cove, Mass. with the wrong tail markings (121st AHC Vikings) for a Musket (176th AHC had white-red-white stripes) gunship. ✈

World First – The TurboFish Takes to the Skies

Putting turbine engines into old aircraft is not unknown. As far back as 1990 Oshkosh Wisconsin rolled out the first Basler BT-67 with its DC-3 airframe and modern turbine engines, giving a new lease on life for the Dakota airframe.



They had in mind the success of turbine conversions of two of the world's finest radial-engined bush aircraft, the de Havilland Canada DHC-2 Beaver and DHC-3 Otter. With their new powerplants, each of them can now continue their lengthy career with no end in sight: in fact, in the case of the Beaver, the turbine conversion came while the assembly line was still grinding out airframes, with 60 of the final units coming off the line as DHC-2 Mk. III Turbo Beavers.

But Vintage Wings of Canada has taken this trend to a whole new level, with their reported conversion of a Fairey Swordfish. Airworthy Swordfish are amongst the rarest warbirds in the skies, with reportedly only two examples left in the world. *Vintage Wings* owns one, and after many years of trying to get their original Bristol Pegasus engine overhauled have given up and now advise they have replaced the old powerplant with a Pratt & Whitney PT-6 turbine engine.



Now, before you condemn them to the eternal fires of Hell for desecrating both the purity of the old 'Stringbag' design and its memory, consider this: firstly, it has produced a mighty fine looking aircraft, and secondly, they have a product that will continue in to the future. Granted it isn't an original any more, but it can now go to airshows where commentators will talk about the famous vintage aircraft, and people will learn about it. As someone once said, any history lesson is better than none.

You can see more of the story on our website [here](#). It tells the remarkable tale of how Vintage Wings finally came to the conclusion that the old Fairey Swordfish's Bristol Pegasus was no longer viable, and how they went about turning the venerable old aircraft into the 'TurboFish'.

If you don't like the idea, why not vent your frustration here? The "Letters to the Editor" section is always looking for input and this promises to be a lively topic. Click [here](#) to write to the webmaster. ✈



TurboFish HS554 of Vintage Wings of Canada in flight.

Flex Deck Follies

In 1946, engineers and technicians at the Royal Navy's Farnborough facility were actively developing and testing their prototype 'Flexdeck', or cushioned carrier landing deck. The Flexdeck was actually "an interim measure which, if used with

existing jet designs with their undercarriages removed, would teach us a lot and show the way to the solution of the problem of creating a new type of carrier". That, at least, was the view of **RADM M. S. Slattery**, the Royal Navy's Chief of Naval Research, in April 1945. After extensive tests of developmental models of flexible landing surfaces, the staff at Farnborough began working on a full-scale system in January 1946. As anticipated, some major problems developed. The "cushion" for the flexible deck was composed of a series of inflated, sausage-shaped flexible cylinders. On top of the cylinders was a flat rubber deck—the "carpet"—along which the landing aircraft was to skid. Tests with modified gliders dropped onto such a surface showed that a method had to be found to keep the weight of the landing aircraft from pushing one inflated cylinder over its neighbours and thereby dramatically reducing the cushion effect.

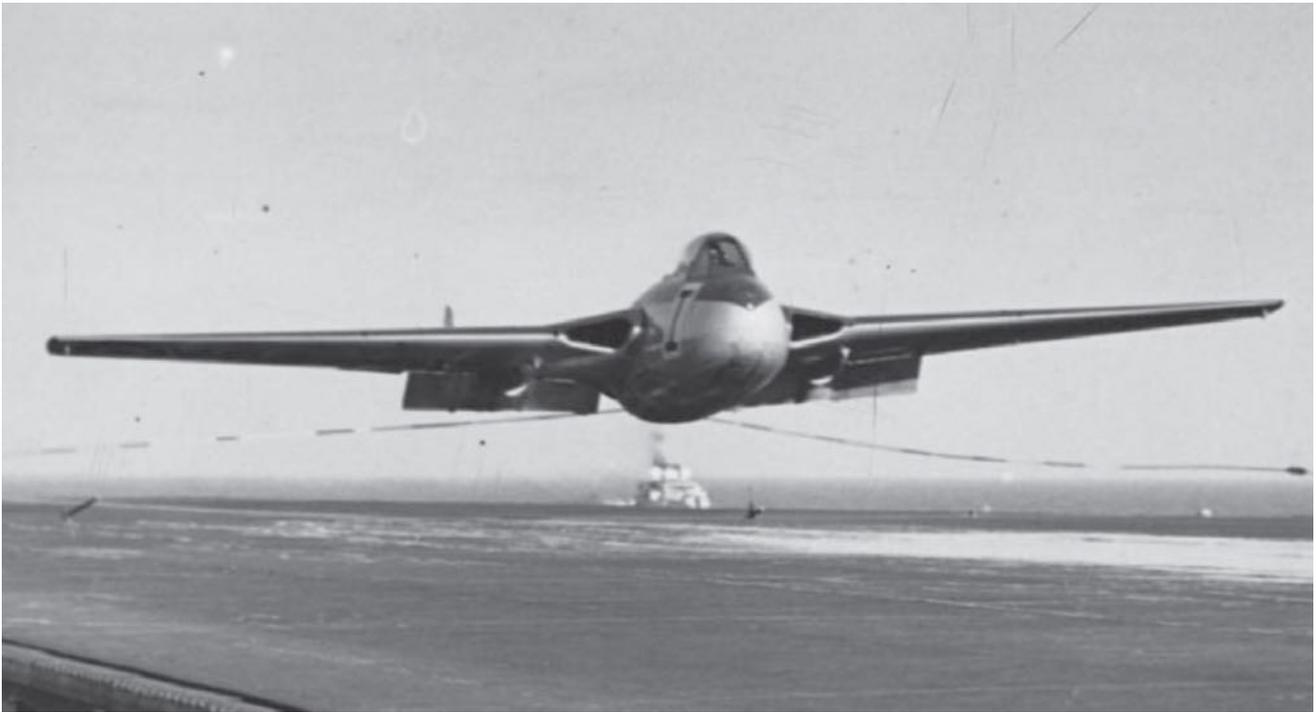
The real problem confronting the ground crew at Farnborough, however, turned out to be the carpet itself. As one of the engineers observed, "nothing of this magnitude had been attempted before [and] a great deal of experimental work with the manufacturers [was] necessary before the design could be initialised".

Beginning in March 1947, the engineers and technicians at Farnborough began testing a flexible deck two hundred feet long and sixty wide, complete with its own arresting gear cable. The first manned landing was made on 29 December 1947 by the noted RN test pilot **Eric "Winkle" Brown**, and it nearly cost him his life. He was fortunate not to be seriously injured or killed.

Tests continued in 1948, and Brown made forty of these landings in all at Farnborough. Then the flexible deck was installed



Grumman F9F-7 Cougar (BuNo 130862) upon completion of an arrested landing at NAS Patuxent River on February 1, 1955. The belly of the aircraft was beefed up significantly to absorb landing loads. (NNAM)



Lt. Cdr. Eric "Winkle" Brown of the Royal Navy's Fleet Air Arm catches a wire on HMS WARRIOR while testing the "Flex Deck" concept of carrier landing on 3rd Nov 1948. (NNAM). You can see an excellent video of the event [here](#).

aboard the carrier HMS WARRIOR, and Brown put a Vampire down on it for the first time on 3rd November 1948. After a long string of successful landings, Brown argued in his report of the trials on Warrior "...that the principle of flexible deck landings for undercarriageless aircraft is fundamentally sound. . . It may even be that future swept-back and delta plan form aircraft will be forced to adopt this method of landing on carriers, since all calculations point to serious wheeled landing problems on such aircraft."

Brown was puzzled that other Navies did not perceive the utility of the Flexdeck. He knew that the U.S. Navy's Bureau of Aeronautics (BuAer) had watched the progress of the Royal Navy's work, and he knew that engineers in BuAer were interested in it. What he may not have known about, however, was the opposition to the Flexdeck by BuAer's chief, Rear Admiral **Alfred M. Pride**.

Once Pride left BuAer to become the aviation type commander for West Coast aircraft in May 1951, the engineers in BuAer who thought that the Flexdeck might have potential got the green light to develop a version for the U.S. Navy. Though that version was eventually tested, the U.S. Navy never adopted the concept, mostly for the same reasons that the Royal Navy didn't.

By Thomas C. Hone, Norman Friedman, and Mark D. Mandeles. This article was originally part of a larger article that first appeared in the Naval War College Review, Spring 2011. ✪

Behind Every Story...

Behind every story there's another one...or two, in this case. Consider the following press cutting from a Scottish newspaper of 8th April 1965, which mentions to ex-RAN FAA aircrew:

"Instant Rescue

*On Thursday a Shackleton aircraft of No.120 Squadron (RAF) captained by Flight Lieutenant **John Champion** of Salisbury*

played a major role in an actual search and rescue operation involving a pilot of the Royal Navy, who had ejected from his Seahawk aircraft north-west of Inverness. Within minutes of a request for help being received from Lossiemouth, Ft.Lt. Champion and his crew were searching the area for the aircraft. Meanwhile a helicopter had been sent from Lossiemouth to stand by at Inverness to assist.

After searching the area west and north-west of Inverness for about 20 minutes a parachute on the ground and a distress flare were sighted by the Shackleton crew who then called the helicopter to this area.

*Using the Shackleton as a radio link the Royal Navy at Lossiemouth directed the helicopter in its rescue operation. The pilot of the Seahawk, Lt.Cdr **Barny Barron**, had been picked up by the helicopter and returned to Lossiemouth.*

It is a remarkable coincidence that Ft.Lt. Champion, who is an Australian serving with the Royal Air Force and formerly served in the Royal Australian Navy Fleet Air Arm, knows Lt.Cdr Barron very well. In fact they served together at Nowra, in New South Wales with the Fleet Air Arm when Lt.Cdr Barron was serving on exchange with the RAN."

The actual story goes something like this: Barny Barron was a delightful Scot who had more than his fair share of accidents. He was also an excellent fighter pilot Squadron Commanding Officer and friend. He first saw Nowra from a Corsair, when HMAS Albatross was HMS Nabbington in WW2. On exchange duties from the Royal Navy, he commanded the RAN's 724 and 805 Squadrons (Vampires and Sea Venoms) between 1959 and 1961.

John Champion knew Barny in Australia and coincidentally coordinated his 'rescue' after Barny ejected from a troubled Seahawk in Scotland. This is described in the Press Cutting above.

Those who knew Barney will not be at all surprised to learn that he did not just hang around in the Highlands in the wet and cold waiting for a helicopter to pick him up after he ejected from his aircraft.

As an ex-805 Squadron pilot Steve Smith says of the accident:

"Barney told me his Seahawk fell into a small Loch, one of the only two in the world deemed pure enough at the time to be used in the production of high quality malt Scotch whisky, including Glenfiddich. His Seahawk's unburnt fuel, oil, grease and other contaminants had the potential to cripple the industry, with obviously world-wide ramifications.



Steve Smith (left), Barney Barron and ex-Qantas Captain Geoff Piggott discuss the events surrounding the near-national tragedy in one of Barney's preferred Inverness watering holes.

No doubt full of remorse, Barney found a police car to take him to a nearby quality hostelry where the publican aided the search by telephoning base to report Barney 'calming his nerves'. When the rescue chopper arrived, glasses of Whisky lined the bar. 'Well, we canna' just leave them,' Barney challenged, so he, the constabulary, the publican and the helicopter crew decimated the local stocks of the national tippie.

One unfortunate by-product of this intensive therapy was the disappearance of a young doctor who started off as part of the chopper crew. He could not be found after a round or two or more. A determined but perhaps not-too-efficient search, considering the circumstances, failed to locate the medico, so Barney and the remaining crew manned the helicopter and just had to struggle back to Lossiemouth without him."

The afore-mentioned John Champion also has his own story to tell of those days of flying in Scotland:

"Having completed over eight years as a pilot with the Royal Australian Navy, I sailed to England in mid 1961 to try civilian life. After several months I found I missed flying, so I found the Royal Air Force would accept me on an eight-year commission as a pilot.

I joined in early 1963, and after a re-famil course on the Vickers Varsity and the MOTU, I was posted to RAF Kinloss to join 120 Squadron flying Mk 3 Shacks – a delightful aircraft to fly.

Shortly after joining I was with Flt. Lt Claude Fryer, as Captain, on several sorties. On 8th Jan we flew direct to Keflavik, a USN Air Base in Iceland.

After staying overnight we headed north east to have a look at the ice cap. It was a magnificent sight. Whilst there, Claude asked me "if we had to ditch, would you put it down in the sea or on the ice?" I said "in the sea", as I didn't fancy bouncing from ice-floe to ice-flow. He didn't reply, so I thought it must have been the right answer.

On leaving the ice-cap, we continued with our ops sortie, landing back at Kinloss in the early hours of the 10th. Within 12 hours of the landing I was airborne again with Claude in the North Atlantic. We were one of four aircraft on ops; well, one of three, as one was delayed with an engine problem. Shortly before midnight, we received a coded W/T message: '120 Sqn aircraft crashed, crew safe.'

After a delay, Flt.Lt. John (Pop) Gladstone and crew had taken off at about 23:00. On reaching approximately 8000 feet near Inverness his No.3 engine failed, caught fire, and fell off the wing; the whole wing caught fire, and the No. 4 engine failed. The Navigator could see the lights of Inverness through the wing!



A reminder of the reunions coming up:

Vietnam Veteran's Reunion, Old Bar NSW

When: 17-21 August 2018

Where: Old Bar, NSW

Cost: Depends on the events you choose to attend.

Contact: John Macartney (02) 6557 4165

Open to all Vietnam Vets and their family and friends, and particularly 9 Squadron personnel. Full details can be found [here](#).

2018 General FAAA Reunion

When: Thursday 25 - Sunday 27 October 2018

Where: Nowra Locality

Cost: Depends on the events you choose to attend.

The big one! This reunion includes different events including an official 70th Anniversary Dinner. You need to register now, so click [here](#) to find out all the details.



ATTENTION KOREAN WAR SURVIVORS AND/OR CARERS!

There will be a National Ceremony to celebrate the 65th anniversary of the Korean War Armistice on 27 July 2018 in ANZAC Pde CANBERRA around 1100 (details all TBC). The Korean Embassy has put on a lunch after similar events regarding Korean War commemorations in the past. They are considering doing the same again, but want to understand how many people might be attending.

If you wish to attend please nominate NOW by clicking on [this link](#). We need your name and the name(s)/relationship of any person you wish to accompany you, and your email address and phone number.

Nominations close on **3 May** so please act **now** if you are interested.

Well, Pop, with the help of his co-pilot Jim Lee, managed to crash land on Culloden Moor. Apparently, they didn't need landing lights as the fire gave enough illumination. It was a Saturday night, and nearby, a Barn Dance was being held in a hall in Smithton where the crew were comforted with tea and sticky buns and, I believe, some whisky.

Pop phoned Kinloss in order to speak to our CO, Wg Cdr Ken Courtage (a very popular gentleman). The switchboard operator said the line was busy, so Pop told her to break into the conversation which she did.

Pop: 'Flt.Lt. Gladstone here, sir.'

CO: 'Where are you, Pop?'

Pop: 'At Smithton.'

CO: 'I didn't know there was an airfield there.'

Pop: 'There isn't, sir!'

When we landed, after 13 hours and 40 minutes of night flying, probably just before dawn, Pop and his crew were back at the Squadron having a BBQ. Well, that was the end of XF-710: the same aircraft we had been flying over the ice cap on its previous flight!

Had this incident occurred near the ice-cap, I'm sure I wouldn't be here today."

(The above material was kindly provided by John Champion, who is a member of the FAAAA) - Ed. ✈

Wall of Service Update

Order No. 38 is now closed and has been submitted to the Foundry for the manufacture of plaques for the following:

LCDR T. **Rieck**; LEUT J. **Davidson**; POATC3 I. **Carroll**;
LCDR G. **Collins**; LEUT R. **Waites**; LS P. **Flanagan**, CPO
K. **McKenna**; PO R. **Dumigan**; PO H. **Harkness**; CPO G.
Holloway; CMDR G. **Bell** and CPOATWL G. **Hajek**.

Order No. 39 is now open, but at the time of going to publication there are yet to be any applications. If you wish to find out

more about the Wall of Service and how you can order a plaque to go on it, click [here](#). ✈

The Meaning of ANZAC

ANZAC Day 2018 has come and gone, but it should not be in our minds for only one day a year. I received this letter a couple of weeks ago from a work colleague: it is an essay written by his 15 year-old daughter on the subject 'ANZAC – What it means to me', and it gives a moving insight into why the ANZAC legend is safe in the hands of our youngest generation.

"Over the years, the meaning of ANZAC has evolved and developed into many ideas and motions that have become a part of what it means to be Australian. Although the meaning of ANZAC today inspires us to be and become better, it often means something different to every person. ANZAC didn't have the same meaning and impact it does now than it did back then: legends and stories passes down through generations have made it what it is today. It all depended and still depends on its meaning to us, and why we should continue telling the ANZAC story.

Back then, when the ANZAC name was still young, it still had so much significance. It signified allegiance with New Zealand and coming together for a common cause, but it had not quite found its identity yet. ANZACs often joined the army for what they thought would be an adventure, a chance to see the world, or, they could have just simply felt that it was the right thing to do for the freedom of their country. WW1 was also a huge step for Australia, it was the first-time Australian soldiers had fought under the Australian flag for a common cause, and the nation was still only fourteen years young. Even though many of these soldiers would have only been a few years older than I am today, they still rose up to the challenge and fought until the end, despite the overbearing sense that urged them to run. These common ideals were and still are what gives us the heroic examples of mateship and coming together that make up a critical part of our Australian identity today.

ANZAC is a legacy, something that every Australian inherits no matter your background. All those years ago, our brave predecessors laid down their lives, and the foundations for what would continue to become one of the most widely recognised stories of mateship, sacrifice and persistence. After Gallipoli, the most that followed the returning ANZACs was grief, sadness and loss. They had been through so much, seen too much, enough to last more than a lifetime. Nevertheless, when they were called to arms again, to fight on the western front, they marched on forward. The emotional and physical turmoil that they would have had to go through is unimaginable for my generation. We are still young ourselves, still finding our identities and some of us would be the same age as the ANZACs would have been but they didn't get a chance to finish finding their identities so they have become a part of ours.

When we study the landing of Gallipoli in our history lessons, for what seems to be the tenth time it has been taught to us, our teachers try to connect the ANZACs with us by comparing our vocabulary with theirs. They use these words like sacrifice,

mateship and courage but they always sound... refurbished. Aged. They somehow make us feel like we should be in a different time. Mateship, when you look it up, means the same as friendship but it doesn't. When you try to describe the relationships between the ANZACs with the word friendship, it just doesn't feel right. Bonds between people aren't the same anymore and because these bonds have become so different, a different word must be used, making the old one seem so out of context. Over the years, once the ANZACs were no longer memories, but history, we have forgotten how to form those kinds of bonds. That's why we keep using those words. They give us something to strive towards. They are able to represent the ANZACs emotions in a nutshell. We want to be able to feel like we can connect with those words once again like the ANZACs once did.

We can all remember hearing the Ode at our ANZAC day services but the one that has always stayed with me is the one that was read at the Canberra Dawn Service. It was freezing, yet there were thousands of people there, remembering. When the Ode was read, this sense of coming together ran through my body and as everyone around me stood taller, prouder, I knew that they felt it too. We may be strangers, but we had a connection that ran deeper than anything I had ever felt. Mateship. For a just a moment, we were all mates.

The ANZAC name still lives on today, through us and through their feats of bravery. They will never be gone, their stories always continued to be told. When we commemorate them and their stories, The Ode is spoken to renew the promise that Australia had made all those years ago. We will remember them.

*"They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old;
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them."*

If we can remember the promises that we make every year, their story can continue to live on within us, a part of us and their story will never truly be forgotten. However, like all stories, stories become legends and legends become myth. Nevertheless, myths always have an element of truth in them and their myth will tell the truth about mateship, bravery and persistence in Gallipoli. It will continue to define and shape what it means to be an Australian and inspire all Australian and New Zealanders to be and become better like the ANZACs once were.

That is what ANZAC means to me.

By Cobey Smith. ✈

By Ed. Thank you Cobey. I know also that your father, who is the RSM of 10 Force Support Battalion in Townsville, read this out at his Anzac Day address. It's an extraordinary insight and we are grateful for your permission to use it here.

And to finish off on the subject of mateship, here's a short poem forwarded to me by Ron Batchelor. Author unknown.

MATES

I've travelled down some lonely roads
Both crooked tracks and straight,

An' I've learned life's noblest creed
Summed up in one word ... "Mate"
I'm thinking back across the years,
(a thing I do of late)
An' this word sticks between me ears
You've got to have a "Mate".
Someone who'll take you as you are
Regardless of your state
An' stand as firm as Ayres Rock
Because 'e is your mate.
Me mind goes back to '42
To slavery and 'ate
When Man's one chance to stay alive
Depended on 'is "Mate".
With bamboo for a billy-can
An' bamboo for a plate
A bamboo paradise for bugs,
Was bed for me and "Mate".
You'd slip and slither through the mud
And curse your rotten fate,
But then you'd 'ear a quiet word:
Don't drop your bundle "Mate"
And though it's all so long ago
This truth I 'ave to state:
A man don't know what lonely means
Til 'e 'as lost his "Mate".
If there's a life that follers this,
If there's a 'golden-gate',
The welcome I just want to 'ear
Is just "Good on y' Mate".
An' so to all that ask why
We keep these special dates,
Like "Anzac Day" ... I answer "why?"
We're thinking of our "Mates".
An' when I've left the driver's seat,
An' handed in me plates,
I'll tell ol' Peter at the door
I've come to join me "Mates".

WANTED!

The next 'Heritage' article on the website will be the Grumman Tracker.

Heritage articles capture the story of the life of airframes in the RAN: why we got them, how we got them and how we flew and maintained them. The Tracker was one of the classic aircraft of our time and gave many years of service...and it's story deserves to be told well.

We are interested in any photographs, memories, stories or documents – in short, anything that you, our readers, think will contribute to an interesting historical record of this remarkable machine. Simply send them to the webmaster [here](#).

30 Second Quiz Answers

Q1. HMAS *Albatross* was the first aircraft carrier, although it was not 'through deck'. Her Seagull aircraft had to be placed into the sea for take off and landing. Albatross was obsolete before she became operational, but was an important step in the development of the RAN's air capability. Read more [here](#)

Q2. HMAS *Geranium*, which was doing a survey of the Great Barrier Reef in 1924. You can read the story of this embarkation [here](#)

Q3. The Fresnel Lens is a particular type of lens (for focusing light) that is thinner than conventional lenses. In a Naval Aviation context it is used in aircraft carrier Mirror Landing Systems.

Q4. In HMAS *Brisbane*, in early 1917. The aircraft, a Sopwith Baby, was borrowed from the RN whilst the ship was in Colombo and was only embarked for a few days to assist in the search for the German Raider SMS WOLF. Although the search proved fruitless, the embarkation sowed the seeds of organic naval aviation and led to the carriage of aircraft on RAN cruisers during most of WW2. You can read about Brisbane's Baby [here](#).

Q5. It was a twin-pack engine design driving two contra-rotating propellers on the same axis though a complex gearbox system. For technically minded readers, a detailed article on the Double Mamba engine build and specifications can be seen [here](#). ✈