

The President of the WA Division, Mr Greg Kelson, attends to the graves of two young aviators 'rediscovered' at Karrakatta Cemetery, Perth. WA Division cleaned the headstones and laid wreaths in memory of the two young lives lost.

The Fleet Air Arm Association recently 'rediscovered' the final resting place of a young aviator who lost his life in a tragic accident in October 1959. [S/Lt Leon Anthony Mauritz](#) suffered dreadful injuries when his Fairey Gannet struck trees near Nowra, NSW.

On visiting the grave it was found that another young aviator, [Midshipman Ian Caird](#), was buried alongside him. Caird was killed when his Firefly flew into the hills near Foxground, NSW, on the night of 19 March 1957.

Leon Mauritz was a WA boy, born in Morawa in 1936 in the 'wheat belt' of Western Australia. Initially qualifying as a school teacher he yearned for a more exciting life and enlisted in the RAN in June of '57, progressing through basic and flying training. In July of 1959 he was posted to Albatross where he commenced training on the Gannet, in preparation for an operational tour on 725 Squadron.

The Gannet was a complex aircraft which, when mastered, was a delight to fly – but it had a few traps for the unwary. One of these was during single engine operations when, if correct procedures were not followed, a high and uncontrollable rate of descent could be experienced close to the ground. It is

thought that young Mauritz fell into this trap as his aircraft struck trees close to HMAS Albatross. Although he was pulled from the wreckage alive, he succumbed to his injuries two months later.



Wreckage of S/Lt Mauritz's Gannet

Midshipman Ian Caird was also from Western Australia, having been born in Kalgoolie in 1937. One of three siblings, he enlisted in the RAN in March 55 and, after initial training as a pilot, transferred to Observer. He was subsequently posted to HMAS Albatross (most probably 851 Squadron), where he began his OFS on the Fairey Firefly.

On the night of 19 March 1957 he was flying with S/Lt Warren Browne on a navigation exercise in Firefly WD869. Shortly after 2100 people in the Foxground area heard the sound of a low flying aircraft and saw it crash into the mountains to the north. Rescue crews struggled to reach the wreckage through



Wreckage of WD869

thick bushland, eventually arriving at the site to find both young officers had died.

An investigation surmised that the crew had mistaken the lighthouse at Kiama for that at Pt Perpendicular, and believed they were on track for *Albatross*. They

were, in fact, some 20 miles north, flying below the lowest safe altitude for that area.

The Fleet Air Arm Association maintains a record of everyone who lost their lives in accordance with our Roll of Honour (RoH) criteria. The full list can be seen [here](#), with each name linked to a separate page that tells a little about the life and loss of that person, and the circumstances of their death. It is a continuous work in progress as new information about each name comes to light, or relevant information is discovered.

It is not unusual for final resting places to be 'lost'. Traditional Rolls of Honour do not record such details and, over time, they are forgotten. Regrettably, even their descendants forget, in time, and allow the graves to deteriorate.

It is important that we do not forget, however, and that WA Division was able to visit the graves and pay respects to two young men, some sixty years after they were laid to rest. ✈

## Can You Help?



On 20 December 1995 **LEUT Geoff Brooks**, pictured left, lost his life in a tragic winning accident at HMAS Albatross.

We wish to honour him by producing a dedicated page about his life on our website, but regrettably have no access his service records as we have been unable to contact

any of his Next of Kin.

If you are able to provide us with any information about Geoff, such as what he did before joining the Navy, his career in the RAN and his family life/hobbies or interests, please contact the editor [here](#). Alternatively, if you know of Geoff's NOK perhaps you could pass on their details (or send them this request).

Geoff's page is one of the last still waiting to be produced. Each one features the story of a person on our Roll of Honour who lost their life in the service of their country. It is our way of remembering them. Although most other pages have been published they remain a constant work in progress as we add

new information and photographs as they come to hand – so you can help us there, too. ✈

Trey Gowdy, former South Carolina Congressman, recently responded to a question from a CNN reporter about the ban of transgenders from joining the U.S. armed forces. As Trey typically does so very well, he nailed it rather succinctly. He does not mince words.

Question : "How can President Trump claim to represent all U.S citizens, regardless of sexual orientation, when he banned transgenders from joining the military? Isn't that discrimination?"

Trey Gowdy's Response : " Nobody has 'a right' to serve in the Military. Nobody!

What makes you people think the Military is an equal opportunity employer?

It is very far from it - and for good reasons - let me cite a few:

The Military uses prejudice regularly and consistently to deny citizens from joining — for being too old or too young, too fat or too skinny, too tall or too short. Citizens are denied for having flat feet, or for having missing, or additional, fingers." He went on to explain: "By the way, poor eyesight will disqualify you, as well as bad teeth. Malnourished? Drug addiction?

"Bad back? Criminal history? Low IQ? Anxiety? Phobias? Hearing damage? Six arms? Hearing voices in your head? Self-identification as a Unicorn? Need a special access ramp for your wheelchair?

Can't run the required course in the required time? Can't do the required number of push-ups?

Not really a morning person? and refuse to get out of bed before noon? All can be legitimate reasons for denial

The Military has one job: Winning Wars. Anything else is a distraction and a liability .

Did someone just scream? That isn't Fair?

War is VERY unfair; there are no exceptions made for being special or challenged or socially wonderful.

YOU must change yourself to meet Military standards and not the other way around.

I say again: You don't change the Military - you must change yourself.

The Military is not about being fair, it is about taking advantage of others and about winning.

The Military doesn't need to accommodate anyone with special issues.

The Military needs to Win Wars and keep our Country safe - PERIOD!

If any of your personal issues are a liability that detract from readiness or lethality...

Thank you for applying and good luck in future endeavors.

Any other questions?"

*By Ed. The views stated above are not necessarily those of the FAAAA.*

# The Fleet Air Arm's involvement in OPERATION BRANCARD 1998

The recent visit of the President of Indonesia, his Excellency Joko Widodo, is further proof of the burgeoning relationship between his country and ours. But it was not always so. In 1998 there was escalating civil unrest in Indonesia and the ADF was tasked to plan for Operation BRANCARD. Its mission was to provide a Services' Assisted Evacuation of Australian and other approved nations from the Indonesian capital, Djakarta, should the requirement arise. Brett Dowsing remembers those times.

## Planning

As there was a significant Royal Australian Navy presence in Indonesian waters at the time, Maritime Headquarters (MHQ)<sup>1</sup> was tasked to plan on using these assets, augmented as necessary to support this mission. HMA Ships Newcastle (FFG-06) and Canberra (FFG-02) were in Surabaya for Exercise NEW HORIZON with the Indonesian Navy (TNI-AL) and HMA Ships Adelaide (FFG-01) and Torrens (DE-53) had just departed Surabaya for Manila, The Philippines. Adelaide and Torrens were ordered to return to the vicinity of Surabaya to await further orders.

Fleet Aviation Office (FAVO)<sup>2</sup> staff were tasked to liaise with Commander Australian Naval Aviation Group (COMAUSNAVAIR)<sup>3</sup> in developing a plan to maximise the aviation capability of the newly designated Task Group TG 627.5. This was to support a concept of operations in providing an air bridge from Djakarta to Penang, Malaysia for return of personnel then to Australia or other Asian cities. Civil aircraft would be used as much as possible but augmented as necessary by RAAF transport. Principal support by Navy's rotary wing was to transport evacuees from nominated

assembly points ashore to the airfields flying personnel out of Indonesia.

It was quickly determined that the best option for meeting tasking requirements was to deploy additional Seahawk S-70B-2 helicopters from HS 816 Squadron to augment the two already embarked in Adelaide and Newcastle. Although the Sea King SK-50A helicopters of HS 817 Squadron would have provided a greater lift capacity, they would have been required to self-deploy and with a significant support element. In turn, this probably would have necessitated shore-basing with



*S78B Seahawk.*

associated diplomatic complications and risk.

## Preparations

Warning orders were issued Friday evening with HS 816 Squadron<sup>4</sup> directed to ready three Seahawk helicopters, crews, maintenance staff and spares for deployment. Over the Saturday and Sunday and following CDF agreement, Joint Movements staff negotiated the air transportation contract with a British company utilising a Russian civil Antonov AN-124 aircraft. It cost almost \$0.75m for the one-way charter to

<sup>1</sup> Maritime Commander was Rear Admiral Chris Ritchie, AM, RAN

<sup>2</sup> Fleet Aviation Officer - Commander Brett Dowsing, RAN; Deputy - Lieutenant Commander Andrew Johnston, RAN; Air Engineer Officer - Lieutenant Commander Darryl Varcoe, RAN; WOATA Tony Emmett.

<sup>3</sup> COMAUSNAVAIR - Captain Crispin George, AM, RAN

<sup>4</sup> Commanding Officer - Commander Paul Folkes, RAN

transport three Seahawks, a monitoring team, two half ISO containers of support equipment and one power cart.

As the Seahawks had not been air transported previously, and certainly not in a Russian AN 124 aircraft, a significant amount of work occurred over that weekend determining the preparatory requirements and clearances necessary for this deployment. Aviation and maintenance staff across all facets of the Fleet Air Arm including the Naval Aviation Logistics Office (NALO) were heavily engaged in co-operative discussions to make this rapid and complex deployment work.

Preparations for the HS 816 deployment continued throughout the weekend; passports required Indonesian consular staff issuing visas, the Seahawks had their sensor stations, radars and anti-submarine equipment removed and were reconfigured for passenger transportation and Squadron personnel were prepared for embarked operations.

### Deployment

On Monday afternoon, the deployment commenced with the three Seahawks flown from NAS Nowra to Sydney International Airport and the containers and power pack trucked to the Cargo Section of Sydney International for Customs clearance and prepositioning. Personnel not accompanying the Seahawks in the AN-124, flew domestic air to overnight in Darwin before on-flying to Surabaya by RAAF Hercules C130 aircraft, arriving at 1000 Tuesday 19 May.

The AN-124 arrived at Mascot from the West Coast of USA at 2230 on Monday 18 May and loading commenced almost immediately. At 1130 the following morning the AN-124 took off for Surabaya. The aircraft flew at normal air-route altitudes to conserve fuel but because the cargo area of the aircraft is not pressurised, the five accompanying maintainers were stuck in a rather primitive citadel in the tail fin section of the aircraft for the 8.5 hour flight.

After arrival at Surabaya Airport at 1700 Tuesday 19 May, the AN-124 was met by the HS 816 Squadron detachment, cleared Indonesian Customs and off-loaded the Seahawks and accompanying personnel and equipment - all had arrived in good condition. The Seahawks were ground-run and tested before embarking in their allocated ships by 1400 on 20 May.

### Operations

For most of the following week, TG 627.5 steamed between Surabaya and Djakarta remaining off the coast awaiting

orders. The detachment aircraft were each allocated to the FFG's so that HMA Ships Adelaide and Newcastle had two aircraft each and HMAS Canberra had one. The concept for Seahawk operations was to operate either as an Air Group under CTG 627.5<sup>5</sup> if operating from an air-head ashore or as a group from onboard, or as independent embarked Flights if the ships were operating in dispersed areas.

By the end of the week, President Suharto had resigned from office and the situation on the ground improved significantly. On the morning of Saturday 23 May, Torrens was released from BRANCARD duties to resume her South East Asian deployment. The following Tuesday morning 26 May, Newcastle and Canberra were released from duties and proceeded to Darwin and Fleet Base West, Garden Island WA respectively. Adelaide, with her two Seahawks embarked, continued on a modified South East Asian deployment but was ordered to remain within 72 hours' steaming of Djakarta.

### Return to NAS Nowra

Newcastle and Canberra arrived in Darwin and Fleet Base West respectively on Friday 29 May with their HS 816 Squadron detachments self-deploying cross-country for NAS Nowra. Canberra's detachment departed Saturday 30 May and arrived at Nowra the following day, while Newcastle's detachment departed Sunday 31 May and arrived on Thursday 4 June after several unservice-abilities en-route.

Adelaide's detachment personnel were released to return to HS 816 Squadron on Friday 5 June and arrived home by commercial airlines the following day. Adelaide retained two Seahawks onboard until the detachment aircraft was

disembarked to RAAF Base Darwin and then flown from Darwin Saturday 20 June arriving at NAS Nowra on Monday 22 June.

### Conclusion and Consequences

From an FAA perspective, BRANCARD proved an unqualified success albeit not being required to execute evacuations. It proved the concept and an ability to quickly deploy a significant embarked helicopter capability into FFGs within our region. Had the necessity for a significant flying rate of effort arisen, aviation fuel would have been the limiting factor but in this case, a USN tanker was in the region and would have been deployed in support of TG 627.5.

Similarly, this deployment largely denuded HS 816 Squadron of its senior staff and instructors with the subsequent impact



*S78B Seahawk approaching to land aboard HMAS Canberra.*

<sup>5</sup> CTG 627.5 was the Commanding Officer HMAS Adelaide, Captain Lee Cordner, AM, RAN; the Air Group Commander was Commander Paul Folkes RAN, embarked in HMAS Adelaide.

on its training and maintenance programs. Early return of detachment personnel and aircraft alleviated these impacts and the Squadron was back on track within 6 weeks of the cessation of the Operation. ✈

## † REST IN PEACE †

Since the last edition of 'FlyBy' we have become aware of the loss of **Barry Batchlor** and **Terry Ford**.

You can read a little more of these sad events on our Obituary pages [here](#), and, if you are a member of the Association, you can leave a comment there if you wish. ✈

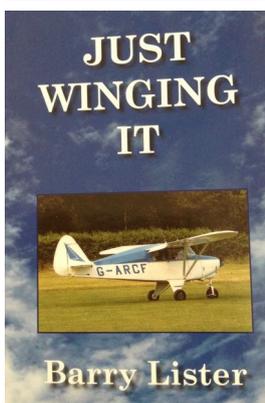
## Wall of Service Update

Order No 44 remains open with the following names so far:

NAAH W.K. Jones	CPO G. Williams
LCDR A.E. Johnson (O)(P)	ABAVN R. Matheson
LCDR G.S. Wall	

We need a minimum of 12 names before we can submit the order to the Foundry, so please get your application in now if you wish to have your name into this batch and avoid a lengthy delay. Note also that prices are likely to go up soon. You can find information (and an application form) on the Wall of Service [here](#). ✈

## Wall of Service Update



Hot on the Heels of "Wings of Gold" – the account of the 49 young men who did their flying training in the United States in the 60s, comes another book written by a Fleet Air Arm author. This one is called "Just Winging It", by Barry Lister.

We have not had the pleasure of reading it, but we have been given a tantalising hint of the content:

*"This is a rollicking rendition by a*

*true Australian, of anecdotes of experiences in the aviation business, and in other most unusual events in which Barry found himself involved. There was his adventure in salvaging the Lusitania, and the time he managed a hotel in West Wales which was just like Fawley Towers.*

*And, he also worked on Concorde 002. And there is a lot more to keep you guessing at what Barry will have a go at next!"*

The cost per book is \$22.50 which includes postage and packing. Orders can be placed at the email address [here](#). Payment by bank transfer to ANZ bank, Barry F. Lister, BSB 014 305 a/c 5887 80107. ✈

## Navy Heritage Flight Update

As we click over into the third month of the year, and with the busy-ness of Christmas behind us (where the hell has the time gone?), it's probably opportune to update our readers on the **Navy Heritage Flight** aircraft. (Photos courtesy of HARS).

You might remember that the "Navy Heritage Flight" (NHF) is the collection of aircraft acquired by Tender by the **Historic Flight Restoration Society** (HARS) at the end of 2018. These were a rag-tag bag of airframes and a bunch of spares, some of which used to be in the Navy Historic Flight, as it was once called. HARS has named the collection the NHF, so their Heritage will not be forgotten.

None of the collection were in a flying condition when they were handed over to HARS – indeed there was a caveat that, even if subsequently restored, they could not fly again without the specific approval of Navy. This was later granted in regard to one of the Trackers, and application may yet be made for other airframes. A lot has happened over the past year.



**Tracker 844** – possibly the most photographed S2 ever – took to the skies for a short flight from Nowra to Albion Park where it has undergone further extensive work to ensure a more permanent flying status. The photo above (courtesy of HARS) shows it in their hangar earlier this year. It will appear at the Canberra Open Day on 5<sup>th</sup> April as a static display. The next planned display flights will be at the forthcoming [Wings Over Illawarra](#) airshow in May – it will be the first time an ex-RAN S2 has appeared at a public air show in over 20 years.

The other of the two NHF Trackers (845) was parked for many months on the western side of NAS Nowra but a timely reminder from an enthusiast gave adequate warning to move it to a safer location just before the recent fires came through. It now resides with **Air Affairs** who have been extremely generous with their time, facilities and money in helping preserve these and other historic Naval Aircraft.

While we are talking Trackers, there are two other airframes that are not part of the HARS NHF collection, but are nevertheless of interest. These are 842 and 845, which were bought by **Keith Boundy** many years ago. Regrettably 845 was all but destroyed in the recent bushfires (see our last edition of 'FlyBy', but we understand that the Vietnam Veterans Museum is still keen to use some remaining parts. Tracker 842 was singed but not burned and has been moved to Air Affairs, pending an offer for a more permanent home somewhere. Keith is keen to see it given a more secure future so if anyone has any ideas, let us know.

We hear there is a plan to restore the two NHF **Iroquois** (893 and 898) to flying status too, in a collaborative arrangement between HARS and Air Affairs. This will depend on a number of factors yet to be resolved, including obtaining Navy agreement to alter the Conditions of Sale to allow them to fly. We will bring you updates on this when we can.



## Last Post Ceremony to Honour victim of Shark 02

Readers are advised that the Australian War Memorial's 'Last Post' ceremony on Thursday 02 April will honour **LEUT Paul Kimlin**, the Captain of Sea King 'Shark 02'.

That day will also mark the 16<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the crash of the aircraft on the island of Nias during the support mission Operation Sumatra Assist. LEUT Kimlin lost his life in the accident, together with eight other ADF members. A further two were injured.

Every day of the year the Australian War Memorial honours a name on its [Roll of Honour](#) by conducting a short ceremony in the Commemorative Courtyard. The ceremonies are beautifully executed and are invariably a moving tribute to those they remember.

LEUT Kimlin's ceremony will commence at the AWM at about 1655, and any reader who is able to attend is invited to do so. ✈

### Heritage Flight Update (continued from previous page)

The two NHF **Wessex 31Bs** will, alas, never fly again – they are just too expensive and difficult to support – but they are both being beautifully restored to sparkling 'static' condition.



We hear that one of the Wessex may be presented in its original ASW role, whilst the other will remain in its SAR/Utility state.

**Sea Venom** reassembly continues – you might remember it was received in many pieces and the build has been very much like putting a jigsaw puzzle together. It will be painted shortly.



**The Sea Fury** was also disassembled and represents a huge challenge to bring to flying status. There is a team interested in doing so, but as always funding will be an issue.

The C47 is currently parked at NAS Nowra and it is hoped to move the fuselage to the Albion Park base in the next few weeks. Once again, the plan is to restore this airframe to flying status in the longer term.

Finally, discussion is still in train for allocation of the block of land adjacent to the FAAM. If this is successful HARS would look to build a hangar and admin complex for the HARS Navy Heritage Flight. They also have an "in principle" agreement with the Albatross Flying Club to share the usage of the



**Left.** The authors of 'Wings of Gold' recently gathered at the Fleet Air Arm Museum at HMAS Albatross to launch their book. From left to right: **Jed Hart, Jack McCaffrie and Trevor 'Trader' Rieck.**

Discerning readers will spot that one of them was 'virtual', as health issues prevented a long international air flight.

The story recounts how 49 young officers undertook pilot and observer training in the USA in the early to mid '60s. A review of the book will appear in the next (March) edition of 'Slipstream'. ✈

hangar(s) and administration block on the site, once developed.

Every dollar that can be raised towards the preservation and/or restoration of this collection is vital. Contributions over \$2.00 are tax deductible so please consider donating, even if it is a small amount. The point of contact is **Professor Michael Hough** at the HARS email address [here](#). ✈

### Any Ideas?

One of our readers sent in the following photos and asked if anybody could throw any light on them. It's an old, flint based lighter and the inscription reads: "Firefly – Made in Australia – Austral Aircraft."



If you know anything of such objects, or even who Austral Aircraft were, please share it with us! Simply email the webmaster [here](#). ✈

### Wanted!

**Peter Coulson** is trying to contact fellow aviators who took part in the 1969 London to Sydney air race. He is preparing a story of the event and hopes to get other perspectives to assist him.

If anyone can help with the whereabouts of **Graham (Dusty) King, Peter Plunkett-Cole** or **Peter McNair**, could they contact the webmaster [here](#), please? ✈

### STOP PRESS!!! Aircrew Reunion Oct 20

As we went to press we received notification there will be an **AIRCREW reunion on Friday 23 and Saturday 24 October, 2020**, to be held at the HARS facility in **Albion Park Rail**.

A registration form will be produced for the next edition of 'FlyBy', so this is a heads up at this point. The plan is:

**Friday 23 October.** HARS Hangar 1. Cocktail Party 1800-2000.

**Saturday 24 October.** HARS Hangar 1. Informal Dinner. Start 1800 if you want a tour of HARS, or 1900 if you prefer not.

Price will be published once an idea of numbers is available, but will be per night (so you can attend one or the other or both) and will be inclusive of all food, wine and beer.

Travel & accommodation will be the responsibility of attendees.

**So, please pencil these dates in:**

**Aircrew Reunion**

**Albion Park HARS Facility**

**Friday 23 / Saturday 24 October 2020**

Note: This weekend coincides with the FAAAA AGM which will be in the White Ensign Club on the morning of Sat 24 October.

