



Of Hurricat and Hoverfly

The
Extraordinary
story of the MV
Daghestan and
her part in early
wartime Naval
Aviation.

On the right we see a very early Sikorsky R-4 rotorcraft (BuNo 46445) as it comes in astern of the red duster-flying British Merchant Vessel *Daghestan* during tests on Long Island Sound in early January 1944. The pilot is LCDR Frank A. Erickson, Coast Guard Helicopter Pilot No. 1.

The image is part of an extraordinary history of the vessel, which not only beat the statistical odds of surviving numerous Atlantic convoys, but played a pivotal role in the deployment of both fixed and rotary wing Naval Aviation in the dark years of the war. (continued on page 5)

**Last Post Ceremony for LEUT Paul Kimlin
Friday 2nd April 2021 at the Australian War
Memorial. See full details on page 16.**



Mystery Photo 62 Answer



Mystery Photo No. 62 (left) gave our readers a clue (that it was not a Gannet!) and asked them to identify the aircraft if they could.

We got many responses, most of which were very close, and one or two of which were spot on. A few weren't quite right with Westland Wyvern as a suggestion, and a Martin-Baker prototype aircraft – but well done to all and thank you for participating.

The right answer is, in a nutshell, a **Spitfire XIV** – but as you would expect there's a lot more behind the picture than first appears.

This particular Spitfire was originally built by Vickers Ltd. in 1944 as a PR.XIX with a Griffon 66 engine, arriving at 6 Maintenance Unit on 9 April 1945 before joining 542 Squadron on 13 June 1945 followed by 81 Squadron at Seletar, Singapore in January 1951.

In 1954 she was transferred to The Royal Thai Air Force where she served until 1962. At that point she was donated by King Bhumibol of Siam to Ed Maloney of the Air Museum at Claremont, California, U.S.A. During a rebuild PS890 was fitted with a Shackleton engine with contra-rotating propellers, before flying again in May 2002 with Planes of Fame, Chino. In 2005 she was bought by Christophe Jacquard and taken to Dijon-Darois, in France.



Jacquard was a self-made French businessman who became obsessed with aviation early in his life and drifted into owning a number of warbirds. He had owned a Spitfire previously, the rebuild of which wasn't going well, so he sold it. A few years later the offer of PS980 came up and he seized it.

So why a contra-rotating prop? Jacquard explains: "Spitfire PS980 has been restored by the Planes of Fame Museum with a Griffon 58 engine from an Avro Shackleton, which used contra-rotating propellers. What was it like to fly? Fantastic, because there was absolutely no torque. It was possible to fly with +16" of boost, which was double a normal Griffon engine. I used to do take offs with



Above: Jacquard's spitfire three years after he bought it. The Shackleton engine had been removed, along with its contra rotating propellers, and a standard 5 blade Skycraft prop. installed. He said 'the feeling inside is like a real Spitfire again.'

a 45° climb angle. Everyone was very impressed. It was so strange, so bizarre to fly with no need to use rudder all the time. But it was not elegant.”

Unfortunately PS980 was to suffer a misfortune, when, in the hands of another pilot, it nosed over on take-off at Longuyon-Villettee in June 2017. Although very badly damaged it was returned to Historic Flying’s Duxford premises for a full rebuild, which is almost complete: in fact, Jacquard is quick to point out that the aircraft would be flying except for the COVID situation.

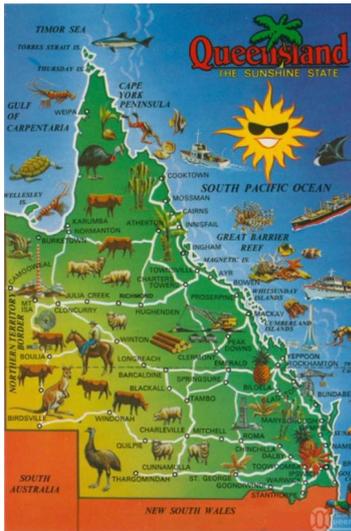
We wish him well in his ventures. ✈

Below. Having purchased the contra-rotating Spit, Christophe Jacquard had the old Shackleton engine and prop removed and replaced with a ‘standard’ Griffon engine with a five bladed propeller. Unfortunately this aircraft came to grief when another pilot nosed over during take-off and flipped inverted. You can see the event on YouTube [here](#). The first photo below shows the moment when things started to go very wrong. The pilot was pinned under the aircraft, and, with limited facilities at the small regional airstrip, spectators helped to lift the aircraft to release him. The severely damaged PS890 was shipped back to Duxford where it has yet again been rebuilt, ready to fly again. Images from YouTube. ✈



Why fit a contra-rotating prop? ‘Contra-rotating’ refers to two propellers turning in opposite directions but driven by just one engine (unlike the Gannet which was counter-rotating). But why would you bother fitting one, which is heavier and more complex? Well, a conventional (single) prop. causes tangential airflow which not only represents wasted energy but causes handling problems at low speed as the rotational air strikes the stabiliser. To use this wasted effort a second propeller is placed behind the first to take advantage of the disturbed air. In a well-designed system the contra-rotating prop will have no rotational airflow, resulting in higher performance and low energy loss. It also serves to counter the asymmetrical torque effect of a conventional propeller. ✈

Queensland Division Members Take Note!



The Qld Division of the FAAAA will hold its Annual General Meeting on **Sunday 10th March** commencing at 10 AM at the Pine Rivers Naval Association Club Rooms.

The address is "The Anchorage" Ogg Rd, Murrumba Downs Brisbane.

(It is right at the southern end of Ogg Road, adjacent to the Playing Fields – see directions below).

The President of the QLD Division has asked that all members please make a special effort to attend this meeting, as they really need new blood on our committee. For example, the President will not be standing again so please try and make it a good meeting. Nominations can be made from the floor.

Luncheon will be at the Murrumba downs tavern after the meeting

Directions if travelling from south leave the motorway at Dohle Rocks Rd., turn left and follow through 3 sets of lights, turn left at the Macdonalds corner and the club rooms are about 100 metres on the right.

If you are travelling from the north leave motor way at Anzac Ave., turn right, drive about 5km then turn left onto Dohle Rocks Road. Follow through until you see Macdonalds on your right at a set of lights. Turn right turn right and club rooms are approx 100mtrs on the right.

Queensland Division is the second largest Division in the Fleet Air Arm Association and really needs your support at this meeting.

Ray Murrell President ✈

Vietnam Veterans Please Take Note!



The **Vietnam Requiem** will be the third in a series of seven national commemorative con-certs and recordings that are created and

produced by The Flowers of War team through assistance from the Australian War Memorial.

It will premiere **Saturday 5 and Sunday, 6 June** from 1300-1600 at the Llewellyn Hall, ANU, Canberra

This epic concert of music and projected images will be a fusion of iconic songs of the era featuring **Little Pattie, John Schumann** (I was only 19), **Normie Rowe**, and others in the first half.

The second half will be created by some of Australia's leading composers and performers. Written by **Ross Edwards, Elena Kats-Chernin, Andrew Schultz** and **Graeme Koehne** with musicians from the RMC Duntroon Band and the Canberra Symphony Orchestra, we will detail the war's chronology by telling the stories of the war in each of the movements. The Australian and NZ personnel on the battlefield; medical staff, journalists, cameramen, photojournalists and entertainers who toured; the protest movement, and the South Vietnamese refugees who fled here to freedom as Boat People. Movement three Tuba Mirum by Graeme Koehne features the RAN and the HFV with images displayed on the big screen during the music.

Little Pattie wrote to **Chris Latham**, the Director of the Flowers of War "I know that this Requiem can be an important step on the road to healing. I promise I will bring all my life's experience working with the Vietnam Veteran community, to ensure its success."

If anyone would like to know any further information, they are welcome to contact me at any time.

Tickets will go on sale from 15 March via Ticketek. We are also offering veterans, donors and guests the opportunity to book early from 22 March to avoid disappointment. Tickets are \$70 for veterans and concession card holders; \$85 for adults.

Chris Latham,

Flowers of War team www.theflowersofwar.org

Phone: 0438 952263 ✈

Vietnam Veterans Day 2021
Monday 16-Wed 18 August 2021
Old Bar, NSW

Full details will be provided in the next edition but, in the meantime, please mark these days in your calendar.

Contact John Macartney for further details. Ph: (02) 6557 4165 Mobile: 0427 787 296.

Email: hfvemu67@gmail.com ✈

Of Hurricat and Hoverfly (continued from p.1)

Built for the Hindustan Steam Shipping Co. Ltd, of Newcastle to replace a lost ship of the same name, MV *Daghestan* was a 7,200-ton Santa Rosa SR-3 type grainer with four holds.

She was laid down at William Doxford & Sons Ltd., Pallion, as Yard No. 674, and was completed in August 1941. As a British cargo ship plying the North Atlantic during the "Happy Times" of Donitz's U-boat wolf packs, her life expectancy outlook was mixed at best, but she was soon on regular convoy runs.



Freighter SS Daghestan going south 13 January 1942 out of Halifax. She has a pair of 3-inch guns on her stern and carried smaller portable Lewis guns for AAA work. It is hard to tell, but she also should have a catapult over her bow. H.B. Jefferson Nova Scotia Archives 1992-304 / 43.1.4 11

Soon after she was completed, *Daghestan* was one of eight privately-owned British merchies that, along with 27 Ministry of War Transport-owned ships, were selected for use in the Catapult Armed Merchantman program. The CAM ships were a desperate effort by the Brits to counter long-ranging German Focke-Wulf Fw 200 Condor patrol bombers of Fliegerführer Atlantik who were prowling the sea lanes between Canada and Ireland, bird-dogging convoys who had no air cover.

Carrying a low-UHF band sea search radar and a 2,000-pound bomb load, the Condor could remain aloft for 14 hours, ranging some 2,200 miles from bases in occupied France, haunting not only the Bay of Biscay and the English Channel but pushing out to the Irish Sea and North Atlantic proper as well.

The ungainly Condors proved extremely effective in



Egbert Friedl Scalemates box art

both cueing U-boats and plinking freighters on their own, reportedly taking credit for some 365,000 tons of Allied shipping between June 1940 and February 1941 via low-altitude bomb drops on slow-moving targets.

Winston Churchill described the Condor as the "Scourge of the Atlantic" and penned a March 1941 memo to the MOD saying:

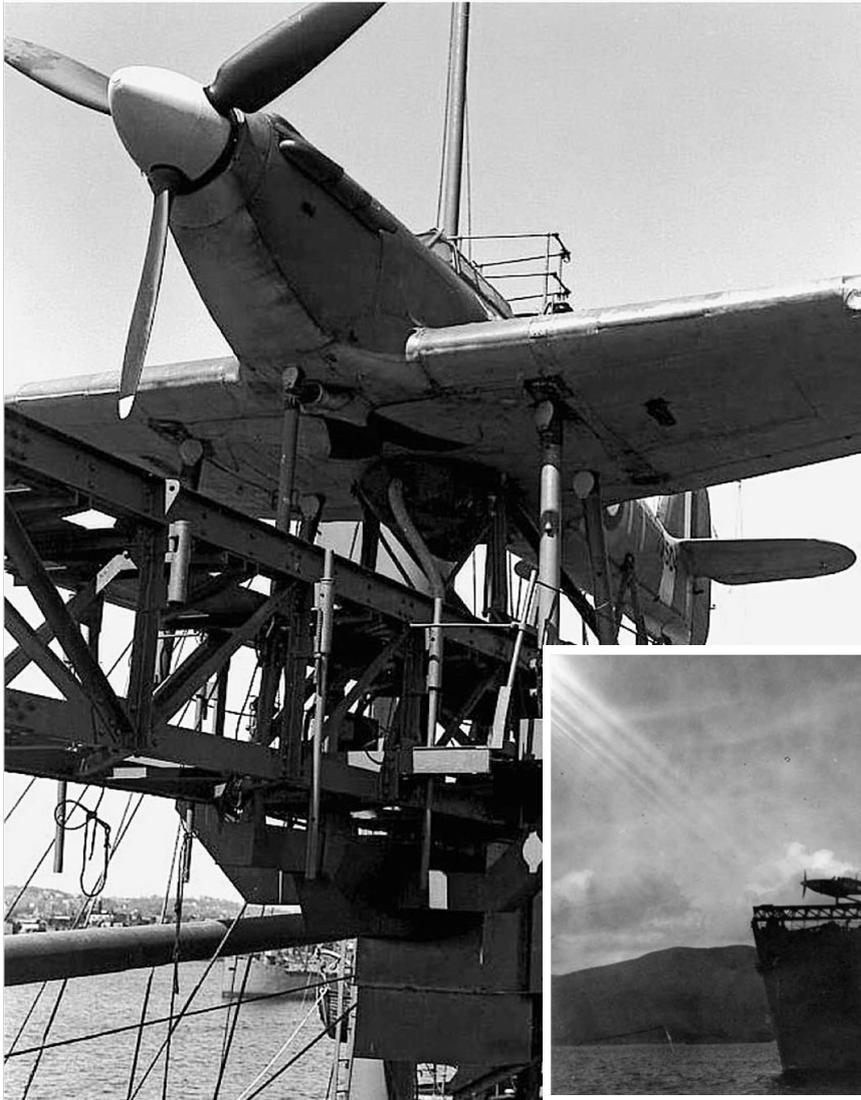
"We must take the offensive against the U-boat and the Fokke Wulf wherever we can and whenever we can. The U-boat at sea must be hunted, the U-boat in the building yard or in dock must be bombed. The Fokke Wulf, and other bombers employed against our shipping, must be attacked in the air and in their nests.

Extreme priority will be given to fitting out ships to catapult, or otherwise launch, fighter aircraft against bombers attacking our shipping. Proposals should be made within a week."

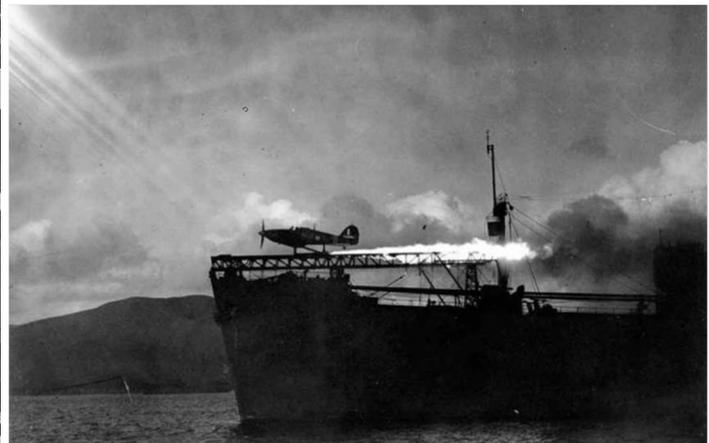
As with the other CAM ships, *Daghestan* had a short



Sea Hurricane I Merchant Ship Fighting Unit aboard a Catapult Armed Merchant Gibraltar IWM CH6918



Left: Modified by General Aircraft Limited to be carried by CAM ships, these Sea Hurricanes, typically referred to as Hurricats or Catafighters, were given more than 80 modifications including an easily removable canopy (as the pilot likely had to ditch at sea), a 44-gallon overflow fuel tank to extend the plane's range (which might make it able to reach shore) and an on-board rapidly deployable dinghy for logical reasons. About 50 such Hurricanes were converted, assigned to the RAF's purpose-formed Merchant Ship Fighter Unit, and manned by volunteers.



85-foot catapult fitted over her bow, just past her forward cargo hatch— these mini aircraft carriers were still expected to carry their full cargo load on escort missions. Her aircraft, mounted on the cat for a single-use launch, was a decrepit “Sea Hurricane Mk. IA,” an aircraft essentially on its last legs and otherwise unfit for further front-line service but still flyable enough to take on a slow and relatively lightly armed Condor in a one-on-one dogfight.

To give the aircraft a little extra boost, they have a rocket-assisted take-off.

The catapult was angled to starboard over the bow, both to prevent the blast from its rockets smoking the superstructure, and to reduce the risk of the pilot being overtaken by the ship, should the Hurricat wind up ditching on launch.

One of the pilots assigned to *Daghestan* during her CAM service, Alec Lumsden, reportedly told his son

that “his back was never the same” after being catapult certified.

Between August 1941 and August 1942, *Daghestan* shipped out on at least seven Atlantic convoys as a CAM ship, often with similarly equipped vessels to help share the load.

While she did not have to launch her Hurricat, at least nine combat launches from other CAM ships took place during the conflict, resulting in nine downed German aircraft, thus proving the concept. When it came to the Hurricats themselves, eight of the nine launched ditched at sea, with seven pilots recovered alive. The ninth aircraft, on a Murmansk convoy, was close enough to Russia to make shore— after splashing two He 111s out of Norway.

Regardless, with the increased use of escort carriers, the CAM project was phased out by 1943, leaving *Daghestan* and her fellow Hurricat-carrying (continued page 8)



Here's an old picture! We know the figure in the Sycamore cockpit is **Don Farquharson RN**, and below him is **Seamus (Jim) O'Farrell**, but we haven't been able to identify the two in the back. Any ideas? Contact the Editor [here](#). ✈

...and while we are on about Bristol Sycamores, here's another picture of one...a little more dramatic this time! It captures the moment when XA221 plunged into a flood as it attempted to rescue two men trapped in a nearby signal box. Astonishingly, the crew of LCDR Gordon McPhee and LEUT Hill were rescued some five miles downstream none the worse for their ordeal. You can see this and other images [here](#).



Of Hurricat and Hoverfly (from page 6)

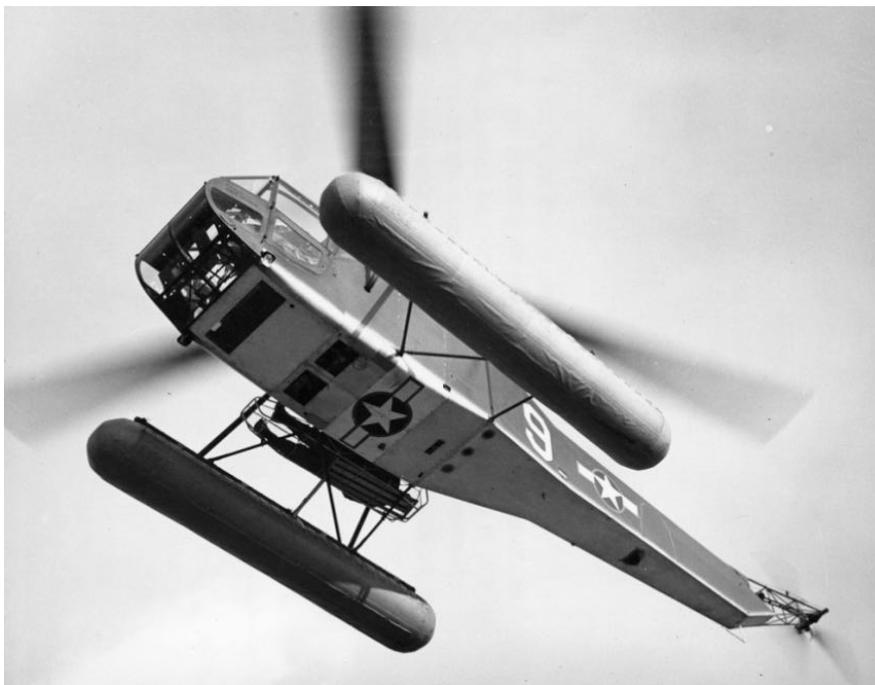
partners to land their catapults and bid the RAF goodbye. She went on to pull at least another seven convoys with just her guns for protection by October 1943, but that doesn't mean she was done with aviation.

Enter the Whirlybird

Igor I. Sikorsky's attempts to create a practical helicopter got a big boost from the Army in December 1940 when they gave him \$50,000 for his XR-4 concept aircraft, itself a development of his earlier VS-300. The helicopter first flew on 14 January 1942, with Sikorsky chief test pilot Les Morris at the controls. The first production aircraft, 41-18874, was adopted by the Army in May 1942.

By 1943, more advanced versions of the R-4 were fielded, and the aircraft was theorized to be able to carry small bombs or casualty litters.

Soon, floats were fitted to make the eggbeater amphibious, leading to tests from the decks of the hastily converted freighter SS *Bunker Hill* and the troopship USS *James Parker*. From there, the Coast Guard and Navy ordered a trio of YR-4Bs while the Royal Navy signed on for seven. In the end, the Navy would up this to a full 20 aircraft, designating it the HNS-1 (Helicopter, Navy, Sikorsky, model 1) while the British Fleet Air Arm, in conjunction with the RAF, would eventually buy 45. The first British ship to operate them was our humble *Daghestan*.



HNS-1 in flight. Note the litter. (Coast Guard Historian's Office)



MV DAGHESTAN (British freighter) lies anchored in Long Island (top), while a Sikorsky HSN-1 (BuNo 46445) landing in the water (above). Note, she now has four elevated gun tubs as her two original stern tubs were replaced by the landing pad. Photograph received in January 1944 but was likely taken in late 1943. 80-G-159947

Coast Guard LCDR **Frank A. Erickson**, an unsung aviation pioneer, trained at Sikorsky Aircraft Company's plant at Bridgeport then by November 1943 was aboard *Daghestan*, which was anchored in Long Island as a floating testbed for the YR-4 series. With her bow catapult long removed, she now carried a stern helicopter pad.

In all, Erickson would conduct shipboard trials with the R-4 while eventually training 102 helicopter pilots and 225 mechanics, including personnel from the Army Air Force, Navy, Coast Guard, and the British Army, Royal Air Force, and Navy.

He also made history on 3 January 1944 when he rushed much-needed plasma by helicopter from Battery Park to a hospital in Sandy Hook through a severe winter storm. The plasma, used to treat injured sailors from the damaged destroyer USS *Turner* (DD-648), was a literal lifesaver.

As for our ship, she solidified her place in naval



BuNo 46445 takes off from a platform constructed on board the British MV, DAGHESTAN, then anchored in Long Island Sound. Pilot: Lieutenant Commander Frank A. Erickson, USCG; Note details of cameraman and platform. Photograph received January 1944 but was likely taken in late 1943. 80-G-159940

lore when she left New York in convoy HX 274 on 6 January 1944, heading for Liverpool with two Royal Navy-manned R-4s aboard, ready to fight. *Daghestan's* choppers were fitted with floats and believed to have flown convoy-protection trials from the ship during the voyage.

The trials must have been successful as the Brits soon deployed other R-4s, with the escort carrier HMS *Thane* at the end of December 1944.

In the meantime, our freighter was back to her more

traditional convoy runs, sans choppers. Typically carrying Canadian wheat/grain/flour and mail, she crossed the Atlantic at least 18 times headed west to Britain, before returning with largely empty holds.

Coming through the war in one piece, *Daghestan* was disarmed and soon back on the commercial trade with Hindustan Steam.

Sold in 1957 to Asimarfield Shipping Corporation of Monrovia, she left her Red Duster behind for a Liberian

flag as MV *Annefield* for another decade of service.



On 21 February 1969, MV *Annefield* was delivered to Isaac Manuel Davalillo in Castellon, Spain, where demolition began in May.

Acknowledgement. *The above article was taken from the article "Of Hurricat and Hoverfly" and reproduced with the kind permission of Chris Eger, the author. You can see the original on his blog, "laststandon zombieisland" [here](#). ✈*



Dear Editor

The recent articles on the demise of the Qantas 747 Fleet brought back memories of a flyaway to Avalon Airfield in Victoria that I participated in whilst serving on VF805 SQN back in mid 1973.

I was an ABATA at the time and the purpose of the flyaway was to support an A4G that was engaged on operations in support of post refit work-ups for one of the Destroyer Escorts (can't remember which one) and whilst we were at Avalon, Qantas was using the airfield for training flights for 747 crews, mainly on practice landings and take-offs due to the extra long runway length and lack of any scheduled flight operations at that time, with the aircraft sometimes often sitting on the ground for varying periods.

It was during one of those on-ground periods that another member of our team, I think it was **ABATWO 'OD' O'Donnell**, arranged for some of us to go and

have a guided tour of the aircraft and what a tour; we were shown through the whole aircraft from the baggage hold through to the then 1st class lounge that was located in the upper bubble, and from the cockpit through the pax compartments to the rear of the aircraft and even had a ride in the staff elevator that went from the galley area down to the storage compartments below the main deck.

We didn't get to fly in the aircraft during that flyaway so long ago, but I have had the opportunity in later years to fly on the 747 a couple of times and whilst not wanting to brag (but I will), I recall a flight from LA to Sydney in late 2001 (in fact very shortly after 9-11) returning from a trip to Montreal as a civvy working for Defence when I had the two window seats to myself in the upper deck business class. Whilst this predated the sky beds of today, it was still very comfortable.

That flyaway had a number of firsts for me in my Defence career, not least being my first flyaway and first time onboard a 747, but also first time flying in a Dakota, which took us down to Avalon and back (not sure which aircraft, but it was the one with those 'really comfortable' wooden seats), and my first and only time that I replenished an A4 liquid oxygen converter (and not in the LQOX Bay at Albatross).

Not long before the flyaway I had completed the liquid oxygen facility operator course, but because the facility was offline for maintenance at the time of completing the course, the course participants were unable to undertake the practical phase of the course, but were still passed as qualified. So going back to Avalon, a contingency of the operation meant that the converter in the A4 ended up requiring replenishment and rather than sending the aircraft back to Nowra, it was decided that it would be done locally, with me being the bunny to do it.

And so it came about that a portable cylinder of Liquid Oxygen, about the size of a 90kg LPG cylinder, was set up on a grassed area outside the hangar we were working out of and using fill hoses delivered from Albatross and a brass adapter fitting manufactured locally to connect the fill hose to the bottle (with a not so perfect seal), I kitted myself out in the necessary protective equipment (overalls, face shield and gloves) and with **CPOATA Eddie Bracken** supervising from a safe distance, then proceeded to replenishment my first and only liquid oxygen converter.

A lot of water has gone under the bow since then, but where would we be without memories and we need to make the most of them whilst we can still remember them.

Regards, **Paul (Rocky) Norris** Ex CPOATA. ✈

Dear Editor

LT Ross Dunhill (Pilot), myself (TACCO), **SBLT Barry Bromfield** and **PO Joe Kroeger** were one of the crews that operated from Tico between 08NOV1971 and 11NOV1971. It was a pleasure to operate off a proper ASW aircraft carrier for a change. Things went pretty smoothly with very little difference between flight deck procedures (from memory, the only noticeable difference was the catapult officer's night "full power" signal with their signal was waving the baton from side to side and ours being waving it in a circle.

It wasn't my first sojourn on a US carrier as I flew 4 sorties off USS Bennington (in February 1968) with VS-33 (on loan from VS-41).

One big difference between then and us was that, while we barely had enough aircraft to defend the carrier, they aggressively hunted submarines using LASTAG (Large Area Search, Tracking and Attack Group, I think) tactics. Working on a 4 hour launch cycle, each launch consisted of 6 Tracker and 1 Willy Fud. Four of the tracker monitored/relayed a large sonobuoy pattern from about 4000 feet, one was assigned to the Willy Fud to investigate his contacts and the other was a spare/coordinator and usually had a CMDR or LCDR as pilot. Helos weren't used to screen but were held in wait for the prosecution phase. Ships weren't allowed within 50 miles of the sonobuoy pattern except to

inflight refuel helos (most USN destroyers in those days carried AVTUR as they'd been fitted with a jet-engined remote control helo).

When the sonobuoy monitoring Trackers made a detection they didn't prosecute straight away but waited until it was near the edge of the pattern (meanwhile moving the ships around to be in a good position to support the prosecution when it kicked off). The prosecution was conducted using air assets and the only involvement from ships (except for providing a platform for the air assets) was a couple of destroyers being allowed close enough to refuel the helos.

Happy to answer any further questions you may have,
Peter Williams. ✈

Dear Editor

The cross deck operation referred to was during RIMPAC 71 & while 4 Crews from VS816 may have been involved over the Rimpac exercise period I don't believe they were all embarked on the "Tico" at one time. My crew **SBLT's John Crathern** and **Peter Rowbottom** and **CACM Fred Atkinson** + myself were in USS *Ticonderoga* from 11th November to 14th November 1971 and attached to VS 33 "The Screwbirds".

During the time embarked we flew two Rimpac sorties as part of the Tico Air Wing- both VS 33 and VS816 Trackers were S2E aircraft with the same ASW detection equipment. According to my Logbook we recorded 3 Day Catapult Shots + 2 Day and 1 night landing on "Tico"- 18 months later while on Exchange with the USN and posted to VS35 NAS NORTH ISLAND Coronado I was embarked in "Tico" for a week off the West Coast and completed my USN initial Day Carrier Qualification and Commenced LSO Training. Later during 1973 when serving with VS 38 and flying the S2G in CVW11 and embarked in CV 63 USS KITTYHAWK VS33 was part of the same Airwing. Two things I do remember from the Rimpac cross deck exercise was the seemingly





We still have a few **Fly Navy** stickers for sale. They are self-adhesive, made of high quality fade-resistant vinyl, and are 200mm x 60mm in size. See image above for the design.

On the printer's website they were a prohibitive \$5.50 each, but our buying power means we can do them for just **\$1.50** each inclusive of domestic postage (minimum order 5), or **\$1.40** each if you order 10 or more.

The last batch went like hot cakes and these are also selling fast, so don't delay if you want any. Simply send the Webmaster an email [here](#), advising how many you want. He will respond with payment details and will post them to you once he has your money. They are in stock and available for immediate delivery.

Marcus Peake. Webmaster ✈

long Catapult shot compared to HMAS Melbourne and the introduction to box lunches USN style consisting of Peanut Butter and Jelly Sandwiches- an acquired taste!!

I cannot comment regarding one of the USN crews having problems landing on Melbourne other than to note that the actual landing area on both carriers was about the same size and while the USN carrier only had 4 Arresting Wires & it had a lot more Real Estate around the landing Area.

Regards **Jeff Dalglish** (Daggers). ✈

Dear Editor

I was on 816 on all cruises from 69 to the end of 72 and again on the last cruise of 73 but do not recall any USN Trackers coming aboard Melbourne in that time frame.

On the first and infamous 69 cruise I spent a couple of days on *Kearsage* with VS21 and flew a night Casex sortie as co-pilot/Tacco on 27th May 69.

On 7th Sep 72 during Rimpac it was arranged to send 4 Skyhawks to Ticonderoga to operate a CAP sortie. I flew a Tracker over with Phil (Pippi) Landon as my co-pilot to act as LSO for this operation as at that stage Tico was only an ASW carrier with no A4 qualified LSOs.

I have spoken with Jeff (Daggers) Dalglish who seems to remember crossdecking to Tico in Rimpac 72 but if

Tico's Trackers came to Melbourne I don't remember nor does **Graham (Grimy) Quick**.

Who was also the other LSO on 816 along with me. If they did come across who waved them?

To be continued I guess!

Regards, **Peter (GT) James**. ✈

Dear Editor

I am not at all surprised that Norman Lee made the comment that, "The Auster J5 was not really my most favourite aircraft." (FlyBy Edition 42).

Amongst the many different types, or marques of light aircraft that I had the pleasure to fly, the Auster, without a doubt was the least enjoyable. In fact, I equated it to an umbrella with an engine...

It was under-powered, slow, noisy, had an uncomfortable seating position and the flight controls were floppy, to say the least.

Flight in gusty cross-wind conditions was a challenge, and required a lot of stick and rudder work to maintain positive control and achieve a reasonable landing.

When you compare the handling characteristics with the DH-82 Tiger Moth (1932) or the DHC-1 Chipmunk (1946), both of an earlier vintage, there was little to recommend it performance wise.

In fact, I wonder at the Navy's choice of aircraft at that time, in view of the role – ferrying passengers and freight - that it was required to fill.

There were several more appropriate aircraft available circa 1950, all of which would have made a far more suitable choice.

The De-Haviland DHC-2 Beaver or the Cessna 195 were of that vintage and both were faster, roomier and had better payloads, and certainly much better to fly. The pilots, would certainly have had more fun...

Cheers, **Ted Goater.** ✈

Dear Editor

Thanks for the latest FLYBY, always a good way to start another month. I enjoyed the article on the Auster aircraft very much. I had a flight in one, naturally as a passenger, some time, I think in the late 1950's. The flight was from "Albatross" to Mascot and the pilot I am sure was a Leut Knowles. He was having a rest from flying Venoms and was the Cinema Officer at "Albatross" at that time. The flight as far as I can remember was quite uneventful but I know I was quite glad when we had landed safely at Mascot. I would have gone back to Nowra by train!!

Kind regards, **Don Simpson.** ✈

Dear Editor

I was in the intake with **Frank Hodgson** and **Leon Mauritz** in June 1957 as R/NA (a/c).

There were eight of us, two from WA, two from Queensland, one from SA and three from Victoria. I was 19.

The FAAAA website Obituaries for Frank and Leon admit that some of the chronology is lacking because of lack of records, particularly about their time at Albatross, and that the gap has resulted in some creative writing.

In fact, we were transferred to Albatross because a problem with RAAF pilot training and the need to delay because they were changing to jet trainers at RAAF Pearce, WA. I am not sure but I think it was an Italian aircraft - maybe a Machi trainer.

Regardless, our training program was put on "hold" for three months while the RAAF got its act together.

I believe the RAN had not planned such a delay and any training program was fragmented or virtually non-existent.

At Albatross, there was little training for the group. We kept fit by running up Nowra Hill and around the airfield

perimeter and 10 laps of the Pool each morning, we got the occasional trip in a Firefly (Not aware if anyone got a trip in a Gannet or a Venom) but our main duties included cleaning the Air Traffic control tower - including removing old wax from the already old lino and rewaxing, and assisting with the changing of landing lights on wind changes.

Some of us were used to keep the operations board in the Tower up to date during exercises and we had occasional duties in the "Pie Cart" to observe if aircraft were landing with "wheels down" despite the call that the pilot had three Greens. We also did one survival exercise where we were taken to Huskisson and dropped on the other side of the creek there and told to get back to Albatross.

There was no special training for the group as detailed in the info. about Leon Mauritz.

Reference was made to Kuttabal in one of the stories but if any of us actually went there, it was only driving past to go to Kings Cross. My service papers indicates that we were attached to Kuttabal but with a notation (U'quinty).

In January 1958 were transferred to Uruquinty for initial flying training and after 3 months we commenced Basic Flying Training.

At this point, and after a few weeks flying, I was scrubbed because I wasn't good enough.

Frank and Leon went solo very early and I believe they were the only two from our group who eventually went on to Pearce, WA.

I have a memory that both Frank and Leon had flown before in a National service Squadron in Perth - as I said, just a memory.

Frank married an ex Wran in Bunbury, WA shortly after being commissioned.

Each man had very different personalities. Frank was from a "tradies" background and had to work hard on maths and associated subjects to keep up. He was a very methodical man and always presented himself very professionally.

Leon was more "laid back". From what he told me, he grew up on a property near Carnavon WA and had interesting ideas about that life. He was a great mate, but we all were as we were such a small group. Other people in the group were **Anthony Powell** and **Ken Brown** (Victoria), **Jock Spence** (RAN) SA, **John Hughes** and **Bob Morrish** (Qld). The last I heard from John Hughes (ex Childers) was that he was on Norfolk Island.

Hard to remember much else that may interest you but

maybe some questions arise from my story so I will be happy to answer them.

Leon Atkinson. 0414038280. ✈

By Ed. Thank you, Leon. We do our best to present an accurate picture in our Obituaries but with the passage of years it is sometimes hard to get every detail right. First-hand input like yours is like gold dust and we are much obliged to you.

Dear Editor

Further to ex FAA pilots who transferred to Qantas. From memory some of my contemporaries transferred following the decision to cease fixed wing in 1960. They include **David Howells, Don Davidson, Rob Waites, Doug Anstee, Malcom Barrett, and Bruce Waring-Smith.**

All became 747 Captains. **Phil Rowe** was another.

Some of these pilots had probably retired before some of the pilots listed in the January edition were born!

Brian Farthing. ✈

Wall of Service Update

Order No. 48 is now open for applications with the following names so far:

K. ENGELSMAN O2154 CMDR (P) Feb 63 – Jul 10
E.H. DALE A35562 POAF(A) Dec 47 – Mar 54
W.J. CALLINGHAM R95087 CPOATA3 Oct 65 – Oct 85
J. McCAULEY O105961 LCDR(P) Mar 70 – Jan 84
W.R. WARE R51285 LSMET Aug 55 – Aug 61
D.R. HILL R96182 CPOATA Jul 67 – Mar 85
T.J. BULLEY O125389 CMDR WEA Oct 78 –
R. GOLDEN R103606 ABATA Jul 68 – Jul 74
G. S. SEALY R107017 LSATA Nov 69 – Nov 79
A.J. LENDRUM R114540 CPOA Apr 73 – Apr 93
P. BARNES R63176 EMAC Apr 64 – Jul 70
S. FLANNERY R8074180 CPOATV Apr 80 – Mar 20.

We now have sufficient names to submit this order to the Foundry but the WoS administrator has agreed to hold it for anyone who wishes to apply in the next couple of days. This will avoid you having to wait for an extended period before your plaque gets manufactured, so get your application in early! You'll find all the details about it, and the cost of doing so [here](#). ✈

Attention All NSW Division Members!

The NSW Division is holding its AGM at the White Ensign Club (adjacent to the FAA Museum at Albatross) on **Saturday 20 March 2021**, commencing at **1030**. All members are invited to attend this meeting which will be followed by a light lunch.

If you wish to nominate yourself or any other person for a position on the Committee, or if you have any other Motion to raise, you can fill out a small electronic form available [here](#). It only takes a second. ✈

Further details from the Secretary, [Mr Dick Martin](#)

Please.... If you haven't already paid your 2021 Membership subscriptions can you do so now? At the time of going to press we still had more than half our members now out of date. Full details on the last page of this newsletter.



Advice has been received of an 817 Squadron Reunion Weekend at Goolwa, SA from Friday 23 to Sunday 25 April 2021. 817 'Adopted' the town of Goolwa some years ago and there was a close relationship between the township and the Squadron up to its disbandment in 2011.

Organised by Nobby Clarke, the weekend will include a Friday night evening at the South Lakes Golf Club at Goolwa featuring a show by John Schumann and the Vagabond Crew; a Saturday morning march to the memorial site of Shark 902 and the opportunity for golf at the RSL; an evening BBQ at the RSL and a bonfire, beer and wine evening at the Goolwa Discovery Van Park.

817 Squadron will be asked to attend the Dawn Service at the Goolwa Cenotaph and of course anyone attending this weekend may do so too. The remainder of time in Goolwa is free time to enjoy the local area and many sites and restaurants.

The reunion is open to anybody who served on 817 Squadron. . You can buy your tickets [here](#). ✈



Birdies Lament

*There was no movement at "the station"
There was just no-one around,
As the FAA we knew had gone away.
And unlike the other forces, it seems ours has gone to ground,
For it's nothing like it was "back in our day".*

*Big H came down from Queensland,
Bob drifted up from Melbourne town, and
Tony Herbert scurried up from Batemans Bay.
Paul Goddard, Colin Cook, Barry Hicks as well came down,
Though I'm not too sure how these three found their way.*

*We knew we were at "Albatross", the signage told us so,
Although very little there we recognised.
The strip was there, the hangars gone, accommodations too, and only model
aircraft filled the sky.*

*They've launched the "Ritchie" squadron (it's 822 you see),
And we understand the kites will all be drones;
No more Handlers, no more line crew & yes, no more SE
The Flight Deck Captain now has been dethroned.*

*We can't deny that times have changed, that everything moves on,
And we don't expect the "kids" to understand.
What it's like for us to realise that all we knew is gone, and to us, all this new stuff
seems so bland.*

*Forgive us our nostalgia, we know you can't relate,
We too were young men then and in our prime;
It was 'get the bloody job done' and relying on your mates,
The bonds we forged just strengthened over time.*

*The best of times, the worst of times, we sailed through them together,
The memories in our hearts and in our minds*

*Our "salad days": the memories will stay with us forever
And we trust that father Time will now be kind.*

Bill Sonsee

LAST POST CEREMONY

For **LEUT Paul Kimlin** 02 April 2021

Friday 2nd April will mark the 16th Anniversary of the tragic loss of Shark 02, in which nine ADF personnel lost their lives.

The Australian War Memorial will conduct a “Last Post” ceremony on this day to specifically remember **LEUT Paul Kimlin**, the Captain of Shark 02. Members of the public are welcome to attend the free ceremony in person (within Covid-19 restrictions), or can watch a live stream of the event. Details are below.

Date: 2nd April 2021 (Good Friday). Time: 1645. Location: Australian War Memorial.

Because physical numbers are limited you must have a ticket to attend the AWM in person, including for Last Post Ceremonies. You can register for your ticket in advance [here](#).

Alternatively, you can stream the ceremony Live on YouTube or Facebook, or watch it later on YouTube. Links and details can be found [here](#). ✈

Bursa Recognition Update



The Operation Bursa Team is continuing to process applications for the award of the Australian Service Medal (ASM) with clasp Counter Terrorism/Special Recovery (CT/SR), for personnel involved in operations conducted

in Bass Strait in the 1980s, for the protection of offshore oil and gas platforms against potential terrorist attack.

The number of applications coming in has slowed to a trickle, even though there are probably still several hundred
(Continued on page 18)



VALE JACK ECCLESTON

We have, perhaps, all become inured to the dreadful toll exacted by Covid19 in the States, but every now and again we hear of someone we knew who has fallen to it. Jack Eccleston LT J.G USN served with 851 Squadron as the Tracker AEO between January 78 and December 80, and recently lost his life to the disease. We extend our sincere condolences to his family. ✈

TRACKER MAGIC...



What a difference!

The regular HARS Navy Heritage Flight report I receive, courtesy of Michael Hough, contained the picture of Tracker 845 (above) after hundreds of hours of work by willing volunteers.

Compare it to the tired old girl on the right, which was her condition when HARS bought her at the end of 2018.



If you can help with a few dollars please use the DONATIONS website [here](#). HARS are also always on the look out for skilled labour so if you are in the locality and have some time, speak to Michael Howe on 0418 424 748.

HARS acquired all of the old Historic Flight aircraft at that time, most of them either decrepit or in pieces. They have worked wonders since, including on the two S2s contained in the package. 845 is for static display only, and has been restored magnificently.

844, pictured left, was restored to flying status but work continues to ensure its ongoing certification. In this photo Garry Hollaway identifies some of the components that must be replaced, which will cost \$6,500.00. If you are able to help – even with a few dollars, please use the contact details on the left. Of interest, Tracker parts are still widely available from an outfit in the States that bought many of the type for fire-fighting duties and fitted them with gas-turbine engines – but the refurbished spares come with a hefty price tag. (Images from HARS). ✈

Perseverance Lands On Mars

If you haven't been keeping an eye on the news in the last few days you'd not have seen some of the stunning pictures being sent back to Earth by **Perseverance**, the module that successfully landed on Mars on 18 February after nearly seven months in space.

Surely even the most disinterested observer must have been inspired by the intricate manoeuvre to land the module safely.

Two million miles from the landing site, the spacecraft shed its Cruise Stage, which housed solar panels, sensors and fuel tanks. Shortly afterwards, the spacecraft used thrusters to arrest its 2 rpm spin and to adopt the optimum landing attitude.

Five minutes before entering the Martian atmosphere, the craft dropped 140kg of ballast to create the required drag-to-lift ratio.

At 40 miles from the landing site, the guided entry algorithm corrected any remaining cross-range errors. Touchdown was just over three minutes away.

Eleven miles from the site, the spacecraft executed the 'straighten up and fly right' manoeuvre, ejecting six more ballast masses and setting the angle of attack to zero.

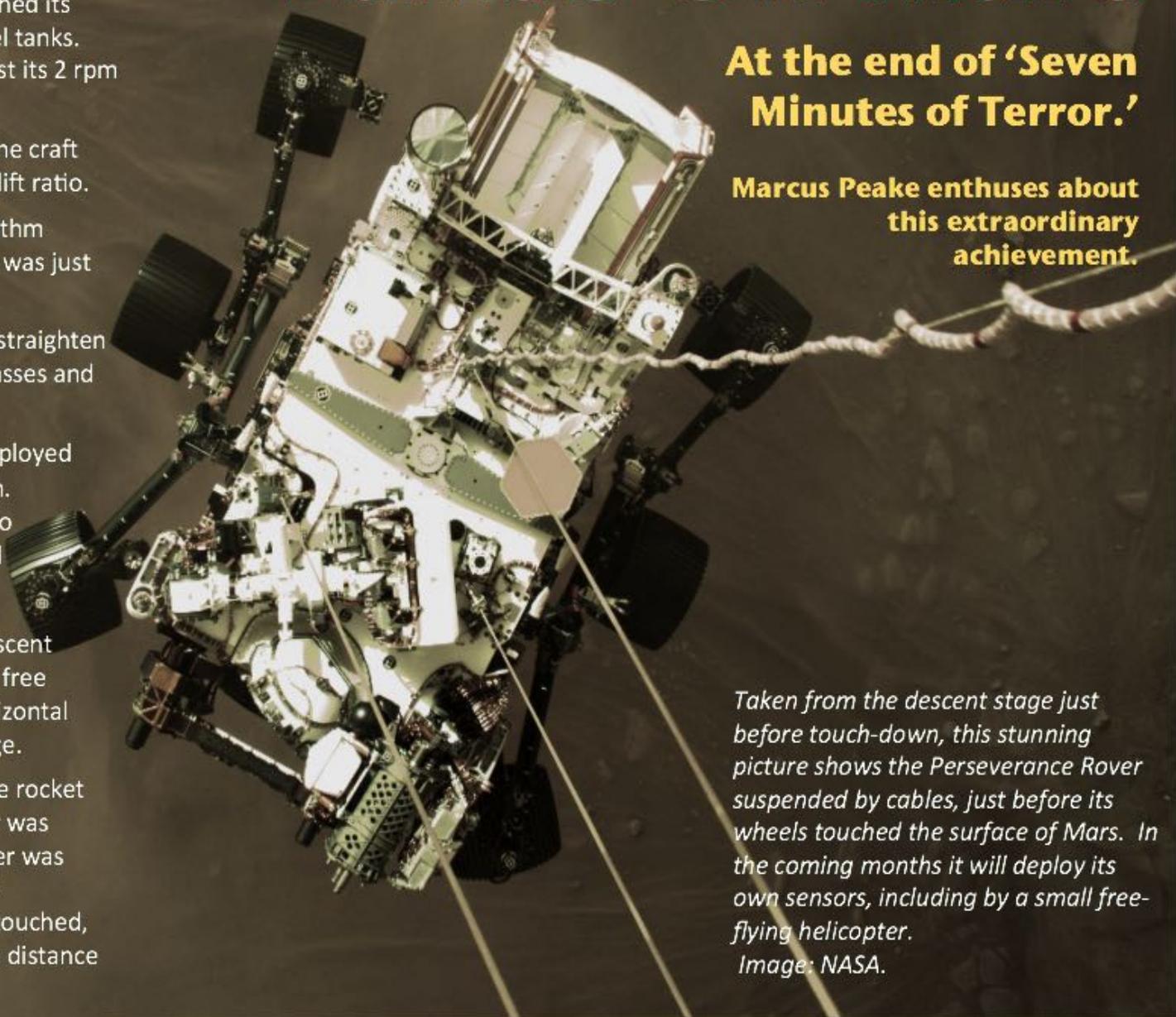
On achieving its Range Trigger, a huge parachute was deployed to slow the craft from about 1000mph to under 200 mph. Terrain Relative Navigation then compared what it saw to images previously taken of the required landing site, and made small adjustments to align the two.

The Perseverance Rover and its own rocket-powered descent engine then disengaged from the parachute, and began free descent, to reduce vertical speed and eliminate any horizontal drift. It was about one mile from the surface at that stage.

When the Rover was 21 metres from the ground, half the rocket engines cut out and the final descent speed of 2.7 km/hr was stabilised. At about 20 metres from the ground the Rover was lowered on a set of cables. As that happened the Rover unlocked and deployed its wheels, and, as soon as they touched, the cables were cut and the descent stage flew off a safe distance to be discarded.

At the end of 'Seven Minutes of Terror.'

Marcus Peake enthuses about this extraordinary achievement.



Taken from the descent stage just before touch-down, this stunning picture shows the Perseverance Rover suspended by cables, just before its wheels touched the surface of Mars. In the coming months it will deploy its own sensors, including by a small free-flying helicopter.

Image: NASA.

Bursa Update (from page 16)

people who qualify, but are yet to apply for the medal. The upside of a reduction in work on the “validation phase” of the project is that the Team is now able to spend more time on the “delivery phase”.

The relaxing of COVID-19 restrictions has allowed for consideration of award ceremonies. While the intent is to have presentation ceremonies in various locations, the medal will still be delivered to recipients by mail. This means you will need to bring the medal to the ceremony for it to be formally presented to you. While that may sound odd, it is a more expeditious delivery method and prevents screw-ups in changing the delivery address.

So, when will you get your medal? Generally, you will be in one of the following batches if you received a positive response (ie “registered” or similar) in the specified time frame:

Batch 1 – notified before 19 Nov 20.

Batch 2 – notified between 20 Nov 20 and 9 Dec 20.

Batch 3 – notified between 10 Dec 20 and 28 Jan 21.

Batches 1 and 2 have been processed by Navy Honours and Awards (H&A) after vetting of the applications by the Op Bursa Team. H&A has uploaded the validated lists onto the system and sent them to the Governor General for signature. Batch 1 was sent on 9 Feb 21 and Batch 2 on 16 Feb 21.

Advice from H&A is that the timeframe from the list being sent to the GG until arrival of medals is generally in the order of 6-8 weeks. This should be taken as INDICATIVE ONLY of when you may expect your medal to arrive.

In consideration of proposed medal presentation ceremonies, those in Batches 1 and 2 have been asked whether they would like to attend, which resulted in an overwhelmingly positive response (over 80%). Planning is now underway for ceremonies in Nowra, Sydney, Canberra, Brisbane and at Stirling. Depending on numbers, ceremonies may also be held at Oakey, East Sale and in FNQ.

As an indication of numbers; there were 100 aircrew and maintainers verified by the Team in Batch 1, with 42 of those residing in the Nowra area. Batch 2 has 62 applicants, with 26 living in the Nowra area. Some have opted to attend a ceremony in Nowra, even though they live outside the area.



For those outside the Nowra-Sydney-Canberra triangle, presentation ceremonies may combine multiple batches due to the smaller numbers, where this doesn't present undue delay.

Remember to keep spreading the word to your mates who are yet to apply, and direct them to the FAAAA website for all necessary information, including the application form.

The Bursa Team always seeks to respond to any applications within 14 days of them being received.

Andrew Whittaker, CAPT RAN

By Webmaster. *I continue to get occasional questions about the Op Bursa Medal through our website or by direct email.*

Please note that although the FAAAA is helping to get the word out and to keep people informed through this column, the actual process of applying for and receiving the medal is nothing to do with us. If you have any questions please direct them to the Op Bursa Recognition Team at op.bursa@defence.gov.au.

Stop Press

Australia is notable insofar as it is one of the few western nations that does not have an award for those that are wounded or killed as a result of their Service.

It would appear that the Government is reconsidering this position, and at the time of going to print the communique on the next page had just been received. The timeframe is relatively short, but readers may wish to make a submission to the Tribunal, which can be made by post or email.

The address is: Defence Honours and Awards Appeal Tribunal, Locked Bag 7765, CANBERRA BC ACT 2610.

Email: DHA.Tribunal@defence.gov.au

Further background information can be found [here](#).



Australian Government

Defence Honours and Awards Appeals Tribunal

INQUIRY INTO RECOGNITION FOR MEMBERS AND FAMILIES OF MEMBERS OF THE AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE FORCE WHO ARE INJURED, WOUNDED OR KILLED IN OR AS A RESULT OF SERVICE

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Defence Honours and Awards Appeals Tribunal (the Tribunal) is directed to inquire into and report on recognition for members and families of members of the Australian Defence Force who are injured, wounded or killed in or as a result of service.

In particular, the Tribunal is to seek and receive submissions and consider whether it is appropriate that members of the Australian Defence Force who are injured, wounded or killed in or as a result of service, or their families, receive an Australian honour or award, or another form of recognition for that service.

The Tribunal is to consult broadly in conducting this inquiry, and is otherwise to determine its own procedures. The Tribunal may conduct its own research, consult with and interview individuals and organisations it considers appropriate in public or in private, and consider material provided to it that is relevant to the Terms of Reference. The Tribunal is to report, in writing, to the Minister for Defence Personnel on the findings and recommendations that arise from the inquiry.

In making its findings and formulating its recommendations, the Tribunal is to have regard to the integrity of the Australian honours and awards system and identify any consequential impact any finding or recommendation may have on that system. The Tribunal may make any recommendation it considers appropriate, that arises from the inquiry.

Submissions to the Tribunal close on 31 March 2021.

Subscription payment details for members:

NSW DIVISION:

Account Name: FAAAA

BSB: 637 000

Account: 7168 19388

Reference: Membership Number or your surname+initial

Amount: If you receive 'Hard Copy' Slipstream - \$35.00
If you receive Electronic Slipstream - \$25.00

Cheques: The Treasurer FAAAA NSW Division, PO Box 28, NOWRA 2541. Ensure you put your full name on the back!

ACT DIVISION:

Account Name: FAAAA

BSB: 032 719

Account: 374 093.

Reference: Membership Number or your surname+initial

Amount: If you receive 'Hard Copy' Slipstream - \$30.00
If you receive Electronic Slipstream - \$20.00

Cheques: The President FAAAA Act Division, 41 Noarlunga Crescent, BONYTHON 2905. Ensure you put your full name on the back!

SA DIVISION:

Account Name: FAAAA

BSB: 065 118

Account: 009 05 668.

Reference: Membership Number or your surname+initial

Amount: \$45.00 per annum

Cheques: The Treasurer FAAAA SA Division, 460/1075 Grand Junction Road, HOPE VALLEY 5090. Ensure you put your full name on the back!

QLD DIVISION:

Account Name: FAAAQld

BSB: 034 611

Account: 171 277.

Reference: Membership Number or your surname+initial.

Amount: \$30.00 per annum.

Please note subs would be appreciated no later than end Jan21.

Cheques: The Treasurer FAAA QLD Divn, 6/74 Mattocks Rd., Varsity Lakes, QLD 4227. Ensure you put your full name on the back!

WA DIVISION has declined to publish its payment details. If you have any queries please contact the Secretary.

If you need some advice/help

You can make a payment as per the instructions on the left, but if you need to contact your Secretary you can do so using the links below.

[NSW – Dick Martin](#)

[ACT – George Sydney](#)

[VIC – Mal Smith](#)

[SA – Jan Akeroyd](#)

[TAS – Graham Nicholas](#)

[WA – Keith Taylor](#)

[QLD – John Stewart](#)

or: Contact the Database Manager, [Rocky Norris](#), who can offer advice on your membership details.

Did you know you can pay for future years of membership in advance (except ACT Division)? This will protect you from future price increases, and will save you from the chore of renewing each year.

Simply make your payment a multiple of however many years you wish to sign up for: e.g. for a NSW Slipstream 'Softcopy' recipient, one year = \$25, two years = \$50.00 and so on.

VIC DIVISION:

Account Name: FAAAA

BSB: 083 961

Account: 3108 23774.

Reference: Membership Number or your surname+initial

Amount: If you receive 'Hard Copy' Slipstream - \$45.00 Associate Members - \$10.00

Cheques: The Treasurer FAAAA VIC Division, PO Box 2179 RMH Post Office, PARKVILLE 3050. Ensure you put your full name on the back!

TAS DIVISION:

Account Name: FAAAA

BSB: 037 013

Account: 13 3119.

Reference: Membership Number or your surname+initial

Amount: \$35.00 per annum.

Cheques: The Treasurer FAAAA TAS Division, 7 Danbury Drive, LEGANA 7277. Ensure you put your full name on the back!