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A periodical of the Fleet Air Arm Association of Australia Edition 37, September 2020.



Anyone interested in making a quick fortune dreams of finding a hidden cache of treasure.

For the warbird enthusiast, that would be a secret store of old aeroplanes. There are tales of brand-new Spitfires buried in their crates in Queensland, for example, but nobody has ever found them or even confirmed the stories. For the most part, discovering a hidden collection of vintage aircraft is a fantasy, as likely as finding the lost city of Atlantis.

But it's happened, and the story is a remarkable one.

When he was a young man living in New Zealand, John R. Smith witnessed the widespread destruction of warbirds both in his own country and overseas. Wartime stock was no longer required and there was little or no regard for its intrinsic value other than a few dollars for scrap. All over the country, surplus aeroplanes were being chopped up, burned or buried.

So in the sleepy little town of Mapua on the northern coast of the South Island of NZ, he started doing

something about it.

Just a couple of hours away in Marlborough, historic warplanes such as Mustangs, Mosquitos and Hudsons were being destroyed, so he managed to buy a few and store them in a shed on his property.

He travelled further afield too, to places like Rukuhia airfield on the North Island, where various old machines like P-40s were being melted down. It was here that he rescued his Kittyhawk nicknamed "Gloria Lyons", said to be the most famous P-40 in New Zealand.

The collection also includes a complete De Havilland Mosquito. John and his brother found it in various



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pieces at Woodburn (in Blenheim, about two hours from where they lived), and they transported it over several journeys in a little trailer attached to their car. It was subsequently re-assembled and, although old and shabby, is the centrepiece of the collection as DH Mosquitos are extremely rare.

Over the years a number of collectors got to hear of the cache and tried to buy them, but he refused. They remained in his shed, largely unseen, crammed together. They bore their original paint and serial numbers, gathering rust and dust but protected from the weather.



Photo: Graham Orphan. The shed is an Aladdin's Cave of spares and a myriad of other bits and pieces. Observers say it could take three years to sort it out.

So what is going to happen to the collection? John Smith has now passed on, and his family have entered into an agreement with the **Omaka Aviation Heritage Centre** (see side bar) to work with them. The intent is to preserve these historic old aircraft for the future enjoyment of the many people who value such things.

With thanks to RNZ. See original article here

#### The Omaka Aviation Heritage Centre

The Omaka AHC's story began with a resurgence of heritage aviation interest in Marlborough in the late 1990's, when a group of enthusiasts imported two Chinese Nanchang trainers and established the Marlborough Warbirds Association. The sound of the Nanchang's radial engines was heard over Blenheim drawing curious spectators and, increasingly, other heritage aircraft.

As word of the growing range and rarity of aircraft stored at Omaka spread, tourists also began knocking on the hangar doors. At this point, in 1997, a small group of aircraft owners and enthusiasts got together to discuss how these aircraft could be made accessible to the public on a more practical and sustainable basis, and grow the public understanding and appreciation of aviation. It culminated in the formation of the New Zealand Aviation Museum Trust.

Then followed years of planning and fundraising including Marlborough's largest single event, the biennial Classic Fighters Omaka Airshow, currently sponsored by Peter Yealands Wines. On this journey, the original group of enthusiasts were joined by film director, Sir Peter Jackson who had been drawn to their activities and quickly became a part of the NZAMT. His genuine delight and enthusiasm for the creation of an aviation museum was infectious and added to the determination of the group to see it through to completion.

Today, the OMHC is a world class destination for the appreciation of aircraft enthusiasts. You can see their website here.  $\bigstar$ 

## Wall of Service Update

Order No. 46 was submitted to the Foundry in mid August with the following names on it. The plaques are expected to be manufactured in the next month or so.

K. McLACHLAN R63880 ABATC Nov 64 - Nov 73.

A. DICKINSON O129050 LEUT SLEX(P) May 80-May 90.

B. GRAINGER R59354 CPO ATA3 Jul 62 – Mar 74.

T. NELSON O122334 LCDR GLEX(P) Jan 77 - Jul 95.

A.H WHITTAKER O121002 CAPT(O)(P) May 76 - Aug 13. M. CARR O114148 LEUT(P) May 76 - Jan 84. S.G. ELMS 0124017 CAPT(0) Jan 78 - Feb 17. G.P. LUNN O120457 LCDR GLEX(P) Feb 76 - Sep 88. R.J. HILL O120451 LCDR GLEX(P) Feb 76 - Oct 90. M.R. GALVIN 0113975 LCDR GLEX(P) Jan 74 - Jul 89. D.S. McKEAN 0122250 LEUT GLEX(P) Jun 77 – Apr 95. R.L. MILLS R43039 CPOA Jan 65 - Sep 87. G.D. HAWKINS O109072 CMDR(P) Oct 70 - Dec 15. C.W. MARCOMBE 0120458 CMDR GLEX(P) Feb76-Dec19. S. HARWOOD O122228 CMDR(P) Feb 77 - Apr 10. G.L. KNOX O120455 LCDR GLEX(P) Feb 76 - Feb 99. C.S. PRICE O126713 LEUT(P) Mar 82 - Sep 90. R.J. FRANCE O114150 LCDR(P) May 76 - May 94. S. MURRAY O114094 LEUT SLEX(O) May 76 - Jun 83. M.J. MARTIN O120508 LCDR (A) Apr 76 - Aug 16

The Fleet Air Arm Wall of Service is a facility which records the names of members who have served (or are still serving) in or with the Royal Australian Navy Fleet Air Arm. This is achieved by means of bronze plaques affixed to a custom-built wall situated adjacent to the FAA Museum in Nowra, NSW.

It is <u>not</u> a memorial wall so you don't have to be deceased to be on it :-) – rather, it records the names of people as a permanent and proud record of their Service to their country. It is, to our knowledge, unique in the world. Giving someone else a plaque is also a lasting gift, if you are to struggling think of what to do for a loved one.

Order No. 47 is now open for applications with the following names in it:

**T.R. HETHERINGTON** R43207 CPO ATA4 Jan 66 – Dec 13. **A.N.MUDGE** O43225 LCDR AE Jan 66 – Jun 95.

If you would like to apply for a plaque, please fill out the simple little form accessible <u>here</u>. The cost is \$190 for members or \$240 for non-members, but under a special deal you could get your money back (see page 5).  $\bigstar$ 

### The Power of Networking.

In the last edition we asked if anyone had information relating **Brian Wilkinson**, who was known to have been a Gannet crewman in the 60s.

'FlyBy' has done its thing, with some help from its friends.

After his 'crewie' time, Brian commissioned and qualified as an Observer on No 3 course at East Sale. He was married to

Michele and had two sons, who we believe went on to obtain degrees in computing.

He subsequently separated from Michele, with her staying in the Nowra area and him moving to the Gold Coast after leaving from Nowra. Regrettably, he passed away about a month ago. If anyone can advise us of the details of his final years, please contact the webmaster <u>here</u>.

Thank you to all those who responded. It was good to be able to help one of his old friends.  $\bigstar$ 

# Operation Bursa ASM(CT) Update



Advice from Defence Honours & Awards in mid August was that the Queen had signed off on relevant instruments and the modified Determinations were on their way to the Minister and Governor General.

The date of 01 September has obviously slipped and DH&A is now '...confident at last that everything is set for a 01 November change...for the ASM to include Bursa.'

Our thoughts are turning now to implementation. Someone – most probably in Navy - will be designated the approving authority and it will be their job to sign off on each name eligible to receive the award. The passage of time since Bursa means a painstaking and diligent process will be required.

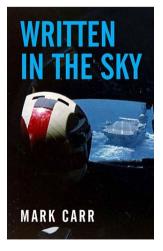
How they do that is entirely up to them, but there are many veterans who would be watching, and would wish to see it done expeditiously. Undue delay would disenfranchise those who have been waiting for years, some of whom are in poor health.

We would like to see early identification of the approving authority and steps by them to set up the mechanisms in good time, ready to hit the road the moment final approval is given. To do so would not be hard, nor consume extra resources. It just makes good sense.  $\bigstar$ 

#### **New FAA Book**

Mark Carr, who flew Trackers, HS748s and Macchis in the Fleet Air Arm, has written a compelling story about his days in the RAN and later, in the RAAF and Cathay Pacific.

A full review of this book will appear in the September Slipstream in a couple of weeks, but in the meantime we are pleased to extend an EXCLUSIVE OFFER to FlyBy/Slipstream readers.



For just \$40.00 you will receive a beautiful soft-copy version. This represents a 25% discount off the normal price though the on-line publisher. As an added bonus your copy will be individually signed by the author. Send your inquiry <u>here</u>, identifying yourself as a FlyBy reader.  $\checkmark$ 



In last month's edition of *FlyBy* we brought you the story of the S2G which diverted to Whenuapai at night in bad weather on one engine.

#### In this issue, Hugh Schneider, the Squadron WEEO, tells the story from the maintenance point of view.

An interesting read from Peter Williams of the late-night, single-engine Tracker incident to the Kiwi base, Whenuapai.

It was, of course, an S2G but I can't remember which number as I'm having trouble connecting my brain nodes it was oh so long ago. Pete finished with "... a nice stay in an Auckland Hotel. An impressive effort by the squadron's maintenance personnel in my humble opinion".

Let's complete the tale from the maintainers' point of view ...

I was waiting on the flight deck just outside the island entryway as I usually did for every walk to the catapult and for landing. It was normal to team up with the AEO but Dave 'Putt-Putt' Villiers was away and I was on my own once again. So, whenever this happened, I leaned heavily on our CAA 'Spike' Jones.

As stated, the weather was crappy waiting for Gary to land. When he finally arrived, it started as a normal approach and then a wave off that was anything but normal. Not understanding what was happening, I raced up to FLYCO where a conversation was going on as how best to deal with an engine down, reduced visibility, gusting winds, the foul weather and proximity to New Zealand.

I waited for a tense 90 minutes with the then skipper, Commodore David Martin, dropping in to FLYCO every now and then for an update. When the aircraft finally landed at a place called Whenuapai, I asked Spike to put an engine change kit together, along with our only spare engine and the minimum maintainers to put this thing back together.

By daylight next morning, there was no shortage of volunteers but space was limited on the Wessex to take us in with tools and crew, so I decided the gentle giant, PO Alf Moffet, PO 'Scruffy' Allen and myself would go. Not sure why I volunteered myself as Spike really was the better choice, but rank has its privileges, I guess. All we had were the clothes on our backs and our wallets running on empty. I thought it was no big deal because we were stopping at an Air Force Base where there'd surely be meals, showers and accommodation. As with all Air Force bases, they know



how to live it up having spent some many months at RAAF Base Darwin for Operation Seawatch (which we jokingly called HMAS Winnelli).

My memory says it was a Wessex that took us in but couldn't carry our crew plus heavy tools, plus an engine on stand weighing around 1,500 lbs so it would arrive slightly later with either a Sea King or for some reason I'm thinking a Sea Knight – where that would have come from I don't know but there you go.

We were dropped off, unloaded our gear, discussed the problem with Gary and then went straight to work dropping access panels. Alf pulled the chip detector plug and the oil filter – it was full of shiny bits of a silvery coloured metal – definitely bad news as that was the indicator for a main bearing failure. The replacement engine arrived and we went straight to work.

After some hours with the three of us covered in black engine oil, we decided to call it a night. We were hungry and dirty and the fun part – RNZAF Base Whenuapai has no mess hall, no food, no shower, no accommodation - 'no nothing'. We had planned to bunk on the hangar floor but luckily one of us had a credit card - you know, those new things where you can buy stuff with plastic. LCDR 'Wacka' Payne (God bless his cotton socks) had with him an American Express Card. So, you might ask - what's a 2<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> doing with a plastic credit card in 1979 from a company noone had ever heard of?

Anyway, it saved our lives and we were assured of a bed. However, as things went, we got to the hotel late and still no food as the kitchen was closed until morning. Up early, same grubby work clothes, had breaky and out the door before too many people noticed. Back at the shed and by late morning, we were setting up to complete our engine runs. Alas, word came down that there would be no chopper to pick us up as the Melbourne was steaming north out of range. Also, we weren't going to receive bearing guidance as they would be on radio silence until we were within close UHF range. If that was all too hard, please fly straight to Sydney – well that wouldn't do at all. How the hell could I explain two more weeks of intensive flying for 816 Squadron without an engineer? Who was going to sign all those pink limitation log entries?

Well we pulled out all stops but at the engine run, we had a pesky stubborn oil pressure gauge where the needle just wouldn't move up from zero. It almost dashed our hopes, until finally after a good bleed for the tenth time it came on line with Alf covered head to tail in oil. We cleaned up the paper work and stuffed the passageway with tools and boxes strapped down the best we could for an arrested landing.

Next problem - there were five of us and only four seats. How to deal with this? – Let's see. Pilot tick, TACCO tick, myself tick and Alf. We discussed stuffing Scruffy in the passage way and tying him down but the tools took precedence. Scruffy would be billeted with the Australian Commissioner until a civilian flight could be arranged.

Late afternoon and off we went. It was really shitty weather with windshield wipers going flat-chat, a low cloud base and no-one to tell us where home was. Wacker worked his magic and when it was the right time asked Melbourne to give us some lights to land. I thought OMG – that's only a postage stamp we're supposed to land on in the middle of nowhere. This was definitely a scene straight out of 'The Twilight Zone'.

As my first night arrested landing, it turned out to be rather straight forward. I was relieved to see Spike and other familiar faces - our CO Peter Coulson gave us a hug - well almost. Two weeks later as we came alongside, Scruffy met us with a big smile which said he'd had a great time and first class everything. The bad engine was also there on the wharf.

All in all, a great experience – if I could use this forum to say the following. I arrived on 851 Squadron only days before the hangar fire as a Subby fresh from the UK. The maintainers worked hard in very trying circumstances with no workshops, no crew rooms, no tools, no hangar, essentially no employment until the S2Gs arrived in country. The guys who went to Tucson Arizona to pick the Gs from the desert, begged, borrowed and stole anything that would be of help with regard to replacing ground support equipment that was also destroyed in the fire. They paid out of their own pockets for removalist trucks to cart stuff back to where the Melbourne parked. They had the devil's job getting reimbursed. We did all sorts of maintenance to make the Gs serviceable as they came to us with all kinds of complications. We then operated out of RAAF Base Darwin and did it well, searching for Vietnamese refugee boats. The Melbourne came out of refit and so we re-established 816 Squadron for which I had the honour of being their engineer. We did RIMPAC, Kangaroo Exercises, TASMANEX, BURSA and all manner besides, day and night. I really miss these guys who gave all they had and did it cheerfully. The morale was always high, we

flew many hours, practised with many weapons and systems and all was done in a professional manner. In all that time, I never heard one word of thank you or well done from the senior Naval echelons. I'd like to name all the people I served with at that time but of course that's impossible. I can't even mention the few I felt close to for fear of leaving someone out.

To Peter Williams - thank you for your kind words.

For those who were there and worked on S2G Trackers - I salute you and thank you for the best 3 years of my 20-year Naval career.

Hugh Schneider WEEO VC851 and VS816 Squadrons. ⊀



The FAA 'Wall of Service' was constructed in 2005 and, fifteen years later, now bears the names of over 1000 people.

To commemorate this milestone, the NSW Division has agreed that one lucky person in the forthcoming order (No.47) will get their plaque totally free!

To enter, all you have to do is apply for a plaque in the normal way. When the order is about to be sent to the Foundry one name in it will be picked out of a hat, and will have their money refunded. It's as easy as that!

The competition is open to any person who is eligible to have their name on the Wall with the exception of any elected office bearers or committee members of the National Body or of any Division of the FAAAA.

So, if you were thinking of getting a plaque, now is a really good time to do it.

For the conditions of the competition and simple instructions how to enter, click <u>here</u>.



Every now and again, our research into the Mystery Photo throws up some exciting information. Last month's MP was such an example.

During WW2, Canada had ramped up production of British designed aircraft for the war effort, including the Hawker Hurricane and Avro Lancaster. The end of the war brought an end to this demand, so the Canadian Government decided to develop a world-leading aerospace industry. Amongst the innovative designs that came out of the factory doors was a revolutionary fighter that challenged the very cutting edge of technology of the time.

This was the **Avro CF105 Arrow**, which was first shown to the public in October of 1957. Designed to fly at close to Mach 2, the beautiful delta-wing aircraft presented in gleaming white livery and represented the pinnacle that the best brains in Canada could develop.

The development of the Arrow had taken an astonishingly short time: just 28 months from its first drawing to roll-out of the first aircraft. It had fly-by-wire technology, new materials and a brand new supersonic engine. By early 1959 there were five flying prototypes, another fitted with an engine ready to fly and a further four in various stages of construction. Proposals for even faster versions were in the pipeline too: Mach 3 and a Mach 5 'hypersonic' model.

But the expenditure by then had ballooned out to the equivalent of over US\$1.6 billion in today's money, and further development costs stretched out into the future. It was deemed too expensive and on "Black Friday" (20 February 1959) the newly elected Government of Jon Diefenbaker cancelled the project without notice. Thousands of skilled workers lost their jobs – many to 'defect' to the United States where they played an important part in the future of that country's aerospace programs, including by an 'Avro Group' embedded in NASA's Apollo program.

In an act of complete bastardry the prototypes were cut up on the shop floor and engineers were told to destroy the blueprints. One of them – Ken Barnes – was so appalled by the decision that he hid the blueprints in his basement where they were only discovered after his death. It fuelled hope that perhaps one of the actual prototypes had been smuggled overseas too, leading to conspiracy theories that



Above. The first Avro CF105 is rolled out of the plant in October of 1957. Featuring many of the technological advances that grace today's aircraft, it was an amazing feat of engineering. (Avro Canada/Canada Aviation & Space Museum)

persist to this day.

Within three years the Avro Aircraft company of Canada had gone, with the loss of thousands of jobs.

Astonishingly, the Canadian aerospace industry survived the shock, and is now the fifth largest in the world.

So what was the 'exciting information' we spoke of earlier?

Well, a group of enthusiasts are building a flying version of the Arrow. You can see all the details on the next page...

# The Arrow 2 Project



Who could have known that, some 45 years after the Arrow was cancelled, a new project would be conceived to build a one-sixth scale flying version of the aircraft?

In March 2005 the Avro Museum in Calgary, Canada, approved the budget to begin work on the replica. Construction began two years later and is now more than 70% complete. It will include a glass cockpit simulator with motion control, and the twin engine aircraft will feature fly-by-wire controls and carry a pilot and one passenger at Mach 0.92.

Left: A compendium of photographs showing the Arrow II in various stages of construction. You can see the full story at the Avro Museum website <u>here</u>.

# The Arrow II Project

The sheer beauty of the Arrow's design and its untimely end has haunted aviation enthusiasts for decades – to the point where, in 2005, the Avro Museum approved a budget to build a flying one-sixth scale version of the Arrow. Known as the "Arrow II" project, the Museum remains committed to this goal. You can see updates of progress and many photographs and videos of the project on the Museum's website <u>here</u>.

The most recent project progress report on their website was in January 2019, which made us wonder what has been happening in the intervening 18 months. We wrote to the Museum in mid-August and received the following update:

"The Arrow II project is alive and well and progressing. First flight is scheduled for about 3 years from now.

Since the website was last updated with pictures we have dismantled a Learjet for the engines for the Arrow II (same engines as in the F-5 except no afterburners), and have stripped down and disposed of or are in the process of selling off everything salvageable from the Learjet. We have cleaned up and rearranged the hangar to get back to work on the Arrow II. We have added fuel tanks into the wings, ahead of the landing gear, and are currently installing the tail on the Arrow II. Work is also progressing on the flight simulator with a full glass instrument panel being assembled as I speak. We are also adding motion control to the cockpit mockup.

You may wish to inform your members that they can sign up for the free Avro Museum Newsletter here. It is currently distributed every 3 months."

With grateful thanks to the Avro Museum for the use of their photographs and material, and the update they provided so promptly.  $\bigstar$ 

### WANTED

Our volunteer historian, Kim Dunstan, is keen to hear from any maintainers who worked on our **Westland Scout** helicopters at NAS Nowra, or when they were embarked aboard HMAS Moresby.

Input from pilots and aircrewmen would also be welcome. Please contact Kim <u>here</u>.  $\bigstar$ 

Two engineers were standing at the base of a flagpole, looking at its top. A woman walked by and asked what they were doing.

"We're supposed to find the height of this flagpole," said Sven, "but we don't have a ladder."

The woman took a spanner from her handbag, loosened a couple of bolts, and laid the pole down on the ground. Then she took a tape measure from her handbag, jotted down a measurement, announced, "6.5 metres," and walked away.

One engineer shook his head and laughed, "A lot of good that does us. We ask for the height and she gives us the length!"

Both engineers have since quit their engineering jobs and have been elected to Parliament.

# **† REST IN PEACE †**

Since the last edition of 'FlyBy' we have become aware of the loss of Brian Wilkinson, Michael "Big Pincher" Martin, Mark Measday, Kevin Doyle, Leslie Oakley, Graham "Beatles" Bailey, Alan "Smiley" McGowan and Col Cook.

You can read a little more on our Obituary pages <u>here</u>, and, if you are a member of the Association, you can leave a comment there if you wish.  $\bigstar$ 

#### Where Are They Now – Andrew Davis

One of the things either the *Slipstream* or *FlyBy* editor would love to feature regularly is a 'Where Are They Now' column. This would say, in a few words, where an ex-FAA person has gone and what they've being doing with their lives.

To get the ball rolling, **Andrew "Mum" Davis** tells us the following:

"As background, I was ex-Tracker and exchanged to RN in 1984 with the demise of fixed wing in Australia. I'm most proud of being the second last guy to trap on Melbourne in '82. **Snapper McKean** landed on 20 seconds after me - and while I've never forgiven him for that I did get his hook point on a plinth as a presentation.

The idea of the exchange was four of us pilots and four observers would do a helicopter conversion and then a front line tour. I did Sea Kings and went front-line on 820 NAS. With no useful job back in the RAN I later transferred to the RN on a permanent basis and went through the Sea Harrier (SHAR) pipeline. Nine other fixed-wing pilots had already gone down that path. At one stage ex-RAN made up a third of the RN SHAR force. I served in all SHAR squadrons 800/801/899 (except 809 of course)\* and ended up driving Naval Flying Standards [FW].

I was the longest stayer, only leaving the regulars in 2004. Since then I have been RN Reserve and happily jetted about in Hawks in the Maritime Strike Training role part-time until five years ago. Since then I've done headquarters, RNR flying supervisory and Ops jobs while playing at being an airline pilot with Virgin Atlantic. I have lived near Yeovilton for pushing on 33 years now. Now left Virgin Atlantic due to COVID, and looking for new work!

That's me in a nutshell. Loving life in UK generally. Regards, AD."

Our readers love to hear what happened to their mates,

particularly if they 'dropped off the plot' (to overseas or to some exotic flying/maintenance/ druglord job somewhere) - so don't be shy. Drop the webmaster a quick email <u>here</u> and tell us your story in a few paragraphs.

\* By Ed. For those that don't know, 809 Squadron was equipped with Sea Harriers and primarily did duties in the South Atlantic immediately after the Falklands War. The Squadron was disbanded in 1982, some time before Andrew arrived in the UK. It has recently recommissioned to be equipped with the F-35 Lightning. ★

#### Sycamore Takes to the Water



In the June 20 edition of this Newsletter we brought you an article and photographs of a 1/72<sup>nd</sup> scale model of the MV *Sycamore*, Navy's Multi-Role Naval Aviation Training Vessel. The model is being built by **Doug Bain**, an exarmourer.

Doug has kindly sent us an update on the completed model and its subsequent sea trials, as follows:

"Sea trials were conduct on Saturday 20th June 2020 and went well and the water was quite calm (photo 1 & 2). As speed was a bit slow it was decided to change from a 6V battery to a 12v 9Ah battery which proved much better. The other change was to replace the EC135 with a Seahawk fitted with 2 Mk 54 torpedos. (Being an Armourer, it must be armed).





A lot more detail has been included, anchor winch (scratch built), forward mast, search lights, sat domes, bridge roof hand rails, life boats/RIB, Hi Abs, and hand rails and some ladders.

**Steve Batcheldor** from TF 72 Wagga 3D printed the Hi Abs, and moulded the Life Boats in fibreglass for me." ★



# significant technical problem in

the last two weeks. You can still access and read it, and we can still post simple messages and posts, but we cannot publish or update complex pages. This is due to a software 'plug-in' incompatibility. Regrettably it is not a simple fix but we are working with our service provider to resolve it.

# MYSTERY PHOTO No. 60

Mystery Photo No. 60, to the left, is a relatively unknown military aircraft. We would like to know the name of the aircraft and its manufacturer, and a little about its service history.

You can see a larger image and submit your answer to the webmaster from the website page <u>here</u>.  $\bigstar$