



NAVBY

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A periodical of the Fleet Air Arm Association of Australia
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Captain Don Dezentje CSM RAN will be promoted to Commodore and assume the duties of COMFAA from 10 December 2018. He replaces CDRE Chris Smallhorn, who has held the position for three years.

CDRE (desig) Dezentje joined the Royal Australian Navy in 1989 as an Aviation Warfare Officer and later specialised as a Helicopter Warfare Instructor (HWI). He has served in 723, 805 and 817 Squadrons, and HMA Ships *Sydney*, *Darwin*, *Tobruk* and *Canberra*. He has served as an Instructor at the School of Air Navigation, as the Chief Aerial Inspector in the United Nations Special Commission in Iraq, and undertook a two year exchange with the Royal Navy on HAS Mk 6 Sea King ASW helicopters in 814 and 820 Squadrons as the Squadron HWI and a Flight Commander as part of the Carrier Air Groups of HM Ships *Illustrious* and *Invincible*.

Staff appointments include Staff Officer (Administration) to the Chief of Defence Force Deputy Director Naval Aviation, Deputy Director Operations/ Chief Joint Operations Liaison Officer in Coalition Maritime Forces in USNAVCENT, and Director Navy People Career Management Agency,

Command related appointments include Commanding Officer 723 Squadron and Deputy Commander Fleet Air Arm. He completed Australian Command and Staff Course in 2002 and

New Commander Fleet Air Arm to take the helm

the Defence & Strategic Studies Course in 2015. He assumed command of the Fleet Air Arm in December 2018.

During his career CDRE Dezentje was awarded Dux of his Instructors course, Sea Skua Trophy for Dux of HWI course, G.R Griffiths Prize for management at ACSC; and five commendations comprising commendations from the Chief of Defence Force, Land Commander Australia, Commanding Air Training Wing (Air Force), Commander Australian Navy Aviation Force and Commanding Officer 817 Squadron. In 2000 he was awarded the Conspicuous Service Medal.

CDRE Dezentje holds three Masters Degrees – Masters of Management in Defence Studies, a Masters of Maritime Studies and a Masters of Business Administration. He is married to Jodie and has three young daughters.



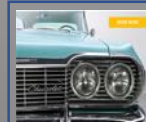
The outgoing COMFAA, **Commodore Chris Smallhorn**, has been at the helm of the Fleet Air Arm since the beginning of 2015 and has overseen extraordinary change over his three-year tenure.

He is posted at Director General Land & Air Combat Analysis, which is based in Canberra. This Branch essentially tests capability proposals to ensure they meet key requirements in terms of

White Paper capability, political imperative, employment parameters and other key factors.

CDRE Smallhorn has been a staunch supporter of the FAAAA. He has frequently observed that the foundation laid by those who went before is fundamental to the ongoing success of present and future Fleet Air Arm. ✈

READ COMFAA's End of Year Letter on page 18



You can attend CDRE Smallhorn's farewell function if you wish, on 10 Dec 2018 at the OASIS CLUB, Albatross. Click on image to book.

The Christmas Bullet



The Worst Aircraft Ever Designed

It was the worst military aircraft of all time.

Developed by a man described as “the greatest charlatan ever to see his name associated with an airplane,” the Christmas Bullet was the rare kind of fighter which had a perfect kill ratio: it killed everyone who ever tried to fly it.

The Christmas Bullet was a product of a bygone age when a lone madman could get rich convincing a New York senator, an established aerospace firm, and the U.S. military all at once that he could develop the greatest aircraft the world had ever seen.

The plane was the brainchild of **Dr. William W. Christmas**, a conman and a psychopath generously described by the Smithsonian Institute as a “pioneer in aeronautical research.” Dr. Christmas did not have a doctorate in engineering; he was a medical doctor, albeit one for whom the Hippocratic Oath appeared to be more of a set of loose suggestions than strict guidelines.

Fortunately for Christmas, nobody else had any real qualifications either in those days. After all, the Wright Brothers were just a couple of bike mechanics, so it wasn't that implausible when Christmas claimed to be a brilliant aerospace pioneer. Christmas claimed he successfully built and flew an airplane in 1908, but he also claimed he burned the plane and all evidence of its existence to protect his design secrets.

He also built and flew an aircraft called the Red Bird, which he patented and claimed to have designed himself despite being a near-exact copy of the AEA Red Bird, a plane built by a company entirely unrelated to Dr. Christmas.

Despite Christmas's questionable record of achievements, on October 26, 1909, Creed M. Fulton, Lester C. McLeod, and Thomas W. Buckley entered into a business arrangement with him, founding the Christmas Aeroplane Company. Within a year, Fulton would

sue his business partners for chicanery and by 1912 the group split up, Fulton's partners having invested several thousand dollars in Christmas with nothing to show for it. Not to be discouraged, Christmas continued to be a presence in airshows, shamelessly promoting himself despite his utter lack of any engineering skills whatsoever.

When the First World War broke out, Christmas sensed opportunity. Writing an article for the New York Times on December 5, 1915, he claimed to have developed a new bomber. The bomber, which he dubbed the “Battle-cruiser”, was said to be the largest heavier-than-air craft ever built — manned by a crew of six and powered by a 1,600 horsepower motor. Christmas added that the European allies had already ordered eleven of the aircraft, which promised to be a revolutionary success. The only problem was that no such airplane, and no such order, existed.

Realising that he needed a real airplane with an actual order to get rich, Christmas convinced Henry and Alfred McC Corey, two brothers who owned a New York brokerage firm, to finance his project, an advanced reconnaissance and “super pursuit plane” named the Bullet, as recounted in *First to Fly: North Carolina and the Beginnings of Aviation*, by Thomas C. Parramore:

“He then approached New York Senator James Wolcott Wodsworth and the Continental Aircraft Corporation (CAC,) claiming the aircraft's supposedly incredible performance would allow it to penetrate German airspace, thus allowing America to kidnap Kaiser Wilhelm II, forcing the Reich to capitulate. Although a prototype was finished by Fall of 1918, this

| | |
|---|------------|
| MODEL: 165-WW-203-1 | SERIAL: AU |
| CANTILEVER AERO CO. | |
| 165-WW 203-1 | |
| Mar. 1919 | TAKE |
| REC'D | TAKER |
| DESCRIPTION: | |
| CHRISTMAS BULLET FLEXIBLE AEROPLANE. | |
| Stainless biplane exhibited at Aeronautical Exposition, New York City, March 1-15, 1919. Side view. Guaranteed speed 200 miles per hour; equipped with 200 H.P. 6-cylinder Hall-Scott motor. Takes off and lands at 55 miles per hour. Invented by Dr. William Whitney Christmas. Built by Cantilever Aero. Co., New York City. | |



insane plot was never carried to fruition because, among other things, Germany surrendered before the aircraft flew.”



Photo: Bain News Service photograph collection, United States Library of Congress

The Bullet's claim to fame was its flexible wing, which was unlike that of any aircraft which had flown before. Christmas believed struts and braces were unnecessary, and that the lack of structure would allow the wings of the plane to flap like a bird. He also insisted that the wings be made of two sections with its steel parts welded together. Despite all known laws of aviation indicating the lack of internal support would cause the wings would snap and fall off, Christmas insisted the flexible wing would actually increase the aircraft's safety.

It was powered by a Liberty L-6 engine, likely given to Christmas by the military on the insistence of Senator Wodsworth. The Army demanded they be allowed to inspect the plane, and that the engine only be used for ground testing, conditions which Christmas ignored. The aircraft was co-designed by CAC's Vincent J. Burnelli, an unwilling participant forced into the project by the company. Burnelli, who later made pains to emphasize he only designed the fuselage of the plane as he knew CAC had a lemon. As *First to Fly* noted:

...Burnelli told Christmas the upper wing must not be built as designed. The inventor had insisted that it be in two sections, its steel parts welded together. This left a joint that "you could have snapped... over your knee," declared Burnelli. But Christmas persisted; he covered the wings with a burlaplike fabric that stretched where it should shrink, and gave it numerous coats of acetate dope. According to Burnelli, the wings were so heavy that they had to be winched into place, and the tail assembly was too small for so heavy a plane.

It was a death-trap. To Burnelli's horror, Christmas and CAC were planning on having an actual human being attempt to fly

the thing. Burnelli, after making his concerns known to no avail, resigned from CAC in protest. He went on to work with the Lawson Airplane Company of Green Bay and Milwaukee, where he would pioneer the concept of the lifting fuselage.

The Bullet's first ill-fated test pilot was a man named Cuthbert Mills, a former Army-aviator-turned-pilot for the U.S. Mail Service (I've seen some sources claim Mills was a down-on-his-luck unemployed former pilot, but the Jan. 11, 1919 issue of *Air Service Journal* lists him as a pilot for the Postal Service. Multiple sources list him as a former Army aviator, although ASJ does not mention it).

Mills, apparently quite proud of being selected as the test pilot for this supposedly cutting-edge aircraft, invited his mother to watch him take the Bullet on its first test flight somewhere between December, 1918 and January, 1919. (Sources differ on the exact date.) Mrs. Mills could only watch in horror as the Bullet's wing fell off a few hundred feet in the air, leaving her son to spiral to his death over the property of one E.J. Jennings. Utterly unrepentant, Christmas would cover up the incident and claim the test flight was a resounding success.

Aviation journalist JD Van Vilet, an admirer of Christmas, falsely claimed the aircraft had successfully completed five test flights and now-deceased Mills had landed safely and praised the Bullet's handling capabilities. Van Vilet would continue to write false stories praising the Bullet into the 1930s, claiming in the July, 1934 issue of *Popular Aviation* that the aircraft was the precursor to the cantilever monoplane despite the fact that world's first cantilever monoplane, the Junkers J1, was successfully tested three years before Cuthbert Mills stepped foot in the Bullet.

The article also admitted, decades later, that the aircraft had indeed crashed, killing Mills, although it was quick to add that it was due to pilot error and not any mistake on the part of Dr. Christmas. Van Vilet failed to mention his previous fraudulent claims. Others were less sympathetic, according to *First to Fly*:

"Vincent Burnelli, who stayed in touch with the project, gave a very different account. Several pilots, he asserted, refused to fly the bullet before Mills agreed to do so. On his first try, the wings fell off, and it crashed, killing him. "At least I figured," wrote Burnelli, that this would be the end of the Christmas Bullet. "But I underestimated the Doc."

Christmas somehow managed to keep Mills' demise quiet, but he still had a problem. The crash of the first Bullet left him without an engine for the next prototype. Christmas convinced the Army to loan him a propeller for a second Bullet. He did not inform them of the fate of the first Bullet and the engine they had loaned him. In March 1919, Christmas would use the new airframe for a static display at a New York air show, claiming it to be "the safest, easiest plane in the world," while shamelessly promoting his contraption to the media. An article in *Flight* magazine noted that "it would seem" that the design and construction of the aircraft would result in a "low factor of safety," but reassured readers that "the designer claims a safety factor of seven throughout."

It went on to falsely claim, presumably on Christmas's word, that Britain and France had expressed interest in sizeable purchases of the aircraft due to its allegedly tremendous speed.

SHOE



BY JEFF MacNELLY

No mention was made of Cuthbert Mills' untimely demise. A month later, Christmas was ready to try again, the next test pilot a man by the name of Allington Jolly, a decorated war veteran who served with distinction in the French Air Force. Shortly after taking off, Jolly lost control of the aircraft, which plummeted into a barn, killing him instantly. This incident was also covered up, and Christmas and the McCoy brothers would appear in a May 1919 issue of *Vanity Fair* promoting the *Bullet's* supposedly flawless safety record.

Despite getting away with it all so far, Christmas must have realized that he couldn't keep killing people forever. Further production and testing of the *Bullet* was halted although he continued trying to sell the *Bullet* to the military, claiming it dramatically outperformed contemporary British and French fighters during a testimony to the House Select Committee on Expenditures in the War Department. Christmas insisted to Congress that he had photographic evidence several successful test flights, but the negatives were hidden or destroyed by the government as part of a malevolent conspiracy against him. By 1923, he called it quits, billing the Army \$100,000 for his patented wing design.

Christmas never stopped making outrageous claims, insisting that Germany had offered him one million dollars to rebuild their air force and that he had invented the aileron, yet somehow never seemed to lose any credibility for it. He would end up the Vice President of the General Development Corporation, a Miami-based real estate company.

He died a rich man in 1960, almost a century old. That's what stands out as the most unbelievable part of the Christmas *Bullet* story. After misleading a senator, misappropriating an engine from the U.S. Army, manipulating a major aircraft corporation, killing two men and swindling the government out of a large sum of money, Christmas suffered no repercussions whatsoever and continued to live a life of victory and success.

Joseph Tyler Lovell. Foxtrot Alpha ✈



The Editor wishes all our Readers a Very Happy Christmas and safe & healthy 2019

Last Mystery Photo



In Mystery Photo number 47 we asked for the name of the ship in company with *Melbourne*, what the event was, and also what the device is circled in yellow on *Melbourne's* superstructure.

This was a big family day on Port Phillip Bay on 09 November 1959 for HMA Ships *Melbourne* and *Voyager*. *Melbourne's* ROP reported some 700 guests were aboard, plus press representatives. The exercise took place in Port Phillip Bay.

The device circled in yellow is a *Venom* radar on the rear of the island just below the big radar aerial. The device only appears in photographs between 1959 and 1963 or thereabouts, and may therefore have been installed during *Melbourne's* August 1959 refit at Garden Island.

The radar had a range (in the air) of out to about 40nm on aircraft and land to 60nm. There was a "lock on" mode which was reasonably effective on targets out to 20nm in to as close as 150 yards or less with the display then transferred to the pilot via a collimator and to his gun sight enabling him to aim his guns. On board ship, as the lock on and the general search modes were not stabilised, the pitch and roll of the ship made the adoption of a glide slope very difficult. We would be very interested to hear from anyone who did a ship controlled approach using this aid.

You can see more detail on this Mystery photo, as well as access to many others, [here](#). ✈



A pilot flying an Airbus A380 drew a Christmas tree over Germany CREDIT: FLIGHTRADAR24

World's largest passenger plane in Christmas stunt over Germany

[UK] Daily Telegraph - 14 December 2017

A skilled pilot embraced the Christmas spirit with a festive stunt while flying over Germany and Denmark.

Flying the world's largest passenger plane, the Airbus A380, the pilot drew the outline of a Christmas tree - complete with decorations - in the sky on 13 December.

An outline of the flight path at 40,000ft was shared by Flightradar24, a site which tracks air traffic in real time, after the plane took off from Hamburg for the five-hour flight.

A spokesperson for Airbus explained it was a normal internal test flight before the delivery of a new aircraft, adding: "There are hundreds of these flights every year.

"The routing of these flights is flexible, they take-off and land at the Airbus Airport in Hamburg-Finkenwerder," they told The Telegraph.

"Thanks to the co-operation of the air traffic controllers (Euro-control and DFS), it was possible to fly that Christmas tree flight path.

"It was the idea of test pilots and engineers - an Airbus greeting to all aviation fans during this Christmas period."

They joked the flight, in which they tested systems like in-flight entertainment, was an "early Season's Greetings" from one of the flight test teams in Hamburg.

The plane later headed towards northern Denmark to create the Airbus A380's 'tree topper'.

Flightradar24 confirmed: "This is a test flight that would be conducted regardless of the particular flight path." ✈

GIBBLEGUTS.COM

By Dan Gibson



This is the pacemaker your insurance approved.

FAAAA Subscriptions Now Due

Well, nearly! Most member's subscriptions run out at the end of December so unless you've paid for 2019 in advance, it would be really helpful to settle your account now.

You can see how to pay (and how much) by checking on the final page of this newsletter. If you are not sure or have any questions, contact the new database manager [here](#). ✈

By Dawn's Early Light

John Van Gelder

It is doubtful if there is anything in the world more complex than the human mind. In our passage through life we are all subjected to experiences which have an impact on our lives, and indeed, may have a profound influence on our future courses of action. I do not think it is unique that certain events which have had a strong impression on our minds can recur in our thoughts at reasonably frequent intervals.

Not long ago a nephew of mine, whom I had not seen for some years, said to me quite unexpectedly 'What were your most exciting moments whilst you were flying in the Navy?' The question took me aback and I think I mumbled something about it all being exciting.

Reflecting on the question later I knew exactly how I should have answered. In the Fleet Air Arm there would not be any pilot who could say that they had not experienced some hairy moments and brief periods of high drama whilst flying. But human nature being what it is these moments are generally relegated to the back of the mind as unpleasant thoughts. Well, hopefully anyway, and my answer to the question is not related to any frightening or dangerous event.



Fairey Firefly AS Mk 6, 817 Squadron RAN. Probably in February 1955 aboard the aircraft carrier HMAS Sydney. The aircraft is taxiing to the catapult prior to launch for rocket projectile firing. The aircraft is armed with four rocket projectiles with 60lb concrete heads. (Pilot and photo: John van Gelder)

I am not sure I have the literary skill to answer the question adequately. However, the event which has had a profound effect on me and the vision of which comes to my mind so frequently occurred many years ago in 1955. At the time I was a pilot of 817 Squadron RAN, equipped with Fairey Firefly aircraft embarked in *HMAS Sydney*.

On 12th March 1955 I was programmed for an early take off. Incidentally, a pilot's Flying Log Book is a wondrous thing. Do you know what you were doing at a precise time nearly fifty years ago?

From memory on the morning of the 12th the ship was in a position some twenty or thirty miles east of Twofold Bay off the south coast of New South Wales. Having had an early breakfast followed by the usual pre-flight briefing my observer, **Joe Tidey**, and I emerged from the island onto the flight deck. The vision that greeted us could not be described as a pretty sight. Although not pitch black it was very dark, with a complete overcast of deep stratus cloud with a cloud base of perhaps 1200 feet.

After external pre-flight checks we manned our Firefly, serial No. WB 507, Squadron side No. 202, started the engine, carried out the usual engine and system checks and were directed from the deck park to the catapult. It was from the time of arrival on the catapult that the vision of the scene becomes so vivid in my memory.

Once an aircraft arrives on the catapult, various actions both outside and inside the aircraft happen very quickly indeed. A wire strop is attached to two hooks on the fuselage of the aircraft and engaged with the catapult shuttle whilst a tang on the aircraft at the rear of the fuselage below the rudder is attached to the hold back strop and secured with a steel shear ring. Meanwhile inside the cockpit constant checks are made on the aircraft systems, particularly engine temperatures and pressures, propeller pitch setting, trim settings, locking the tail-wheel, and lowering the flaps to take off position. All these actions take place in a period of perhaps thirty seconds.

It was during this short time period that the visual scene and

probably the emotional atmosphere had such a marked impact on my memory. My Log Book records the take-off time as 0550. As I raised my head from looking at the red glow of the instruments inside the cockpit my vision automatically adjusted itself to distant vision as I looked through the forward windscreen. It was still quite dark due to the almost complete cloud cover but on the distant horizon to the east the cloud bank had broken to reveal a thin sliver of light. At least it would not be an instrument take off. The ship was on a roughly easterly heading with about ten knots of wind and a long low swell giving a slow but noticeable pitching motion.

As I looked ahead the sea appeared almost black for some miles but lightening and turning to a dull silver nearer the horizon and that small gap between sea and cloud. The cloud bank itself was uniformly dark slate grey except a tinge of light closer to the horizon. The colour of the cloud blended beautifully with what little I could notice of the sea surface and certainly matched the drab grey of the carrier's flight deck. Much closer to me was the centre-piece of the whole scene. Directly in front of me was a V12 Rolls Royce Griffon 74 engine of about 2250 horsepower. Illumination for the scene was provided by six exhaust stubs on either side of the engine cowling. The flames from the stubs varied from an ice blue surrounded with a tinge of red until dissipating into a light glow. The overall effect was enhanced by the subdued reflection of the aircraft's navigation lights and the torch wands of the flight deck personnel, with the result that the propeller seemed to be bathed in an aurora of light.



Fairey Firefly AS Mk 6 of 723 Squadron HMAS Albatross (Photo: John van Gelder)

One could describe the scene as 'magic'. I doubt that this thought occurred to me at the time! With final cockpit checks made in accordance with the check list board held up by the Flight Deck Officer – 'Throttle Friction', 'Take Off Flap' etc, it was time to go to take off power. As the FDO wound you up with his green wand the throttle was advanced to take-off power; a final internal check of engine revs (2,750 RPM), oil and boost pressures OK, left hand clenched behind the throttle, a thumbs up to the FDO, head back against the headrest, right hand behind the control column.

Down goes the green wand, a 4G kick from the catapult and in the blink of an eye one is airborne at 100 knots or so over the bow of the ship. Undercarriage up, flaps up in stages, reduce to climbing power and climb away at 125 knots to operating height, which in this case was about 1000 feet. The purpose of the flight was to search for a yacht apparently missing

off the south coast. I do not recall whether we located the missing yacht but we did return to HMAS Sydney and landed on at 0750. It must have been a busy day as we were airborne again at 0945 for an Army Cooperation exercise.

Some impressions in life stay with us forever and as I have said previously it may have been a long time ago but the memories are still vivid.

Author Commander John van Gelder, RAN (Rtd) – published in Naval Historical Review June 2004 ✪

The Bita Paka Wireless Station



The vital German wireless station at Bita Paka (PNG)

With the 'ANZAC Centenary 2014 - 2018' drawing to a close, it's worth remembering the RAN's role in the Australian Naval & Military Expedition (ANMEF) which was formed on 06 August 1914, just a few days after the outbreak of WW1, consisting of 1,000 militia and 500 naval reservists and ex-RN sailors. The ANMEF's subsequent invasion and occupation of the

German colonies to the north of Australia made a substantial contribution to regional security in the SW Pacific.

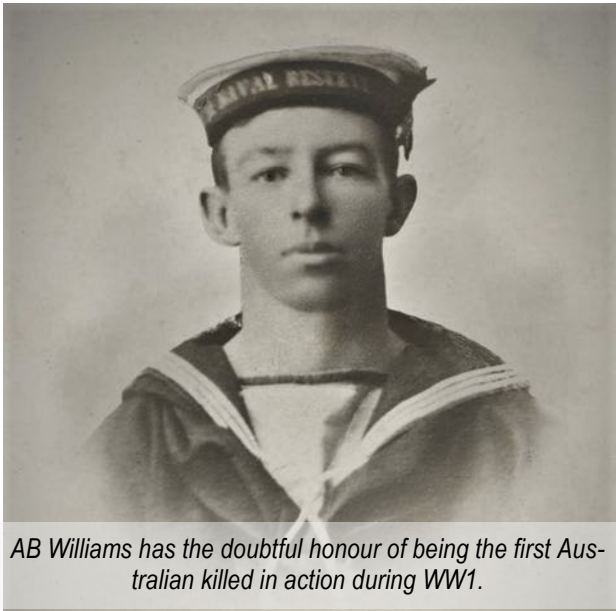
Because there were concerns about the movements of Admiral Count von Spee's East Asia Squadron, whose fleet was at large in the Pacific, a strong RAN force supported the ANMEF; ships included HMAS *Australia*, *Sydney*, *Encounter*, *Parramatta*, *Yarra*, *Warrego*, *Protector*, and submarines AE1 & 2, HMAT *Berrima*, together with several stores ships.



Surgeon Captain Pockley, who was to lose his life on the raid.

On 11 September 1914, at 7 am, Lt Bowen RAN and Army Surgeon Captain Pockley, were rowed to the break-water pier at Kabaul, on New Britain, where they disembarked with an armed landing party of 24 sailors with instructions to destroy a German wireless tower about 7 km inland, at Bita Paka.

After landing unopposed the squad



AB Williams has the doubtful honour of being the first Australian killed in action during WW1.

vanced along the Kabakaul - Bitu Paka Road. The landing party soon contacted a road block manned by German officers and native police who put up strong resistance. Given the strength of the entrenched opposition, Lt Bowen signaled for reinforcements.

The destroyers *Warrego* and *Yarra* were lying inshore and responded quickly by sending additional landing parties. With the sailors working their way through the roadside jungle the road block was soon overcome and the enemy surrendered. But further German entrenchments lay ahead which were cleared with a minimum of bloodshed, ending in surrender. Land mines were also found along the road. Finally, the wireless station was taken at about 7 pm that evening.

During the fighting six Australians were killed and four wounded. Enemy losses amounted to three Germans and about 30 native police killed. The first Australian casualties were: Able Seaman 'Billy' Williams and Army Medical Corps Captain B.C.A. Pockley who came to Williams' aid; both died later that day. Other naval personnel killed or who died of wounds were: Lt Commander C.B. Elwell RN; AB J.E. Walker; AB H.W. Street, and Signalman R.D. Moffatt. AB Williams has the doubtful honour of being the first Australian killed in action during WW1.

The Battle of Bitu Paka was the first serious engagement for the newly formed RAN and the first British force to fight the Germans on their own territory. One of the reasons the Australians advanced so quickly was they surprised the Germans by working their way through the jungle which was unexpected. So, it can be said the RAN provided Australia's first jungle fighters.

Within a few weeks the remainder of the German colonies surrendered without further opposition.

The lingering shadow of the time was the mysterious disappearance of the submarine AE1 with all hands, on 14 September 1914. After many searches over the years, in December 2017, the wreckage of AE1 was found in deep water near the Duke of York Islands. ✈

Wall of Service Update

Order No 40 has been completed and our Wall of Service Administrator, **John Balazic**, has affixed the 12 new plaques to the Wall as well as replacing some which had detached due to adhesive failure. The 12 new names are:

| | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| CPOSE K.A. Summers | CPOMTD C.J. Summers |
| NAMAE N.J. Summers | SQNLDR M. Radisich |
| CPOATA D.C. Mulvihill | WOAVN D.J. Terry |
| POATA D. Henderson | CMDR AE P. Parker |
| CPOATWL W.A.E. Kinross | CMDR R.J. Kinross |
| LCDR A. Kinross , | CPOATWO F. Williams |

Anyone who is on the Wall can check out their name [here](#), which will also tell them whereabouts their plaque is mounted.

Order No 41 remains open for applications for plaques. We need a minimum of ten names before an Order can be raised with the Foundry. Current applications are:

| | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| LCDR A.J. Byrne | LCDR A.F. Beauchamp |
| LSATW R. H.G. Ralph | LSATWL R. W.G. Ralph |
| POAVN A. Ross | CPOATWO J. Hunter |
| NAM W D.R. Smith | |

The Wall of Service is a terrific way to record your own little piece of history by having a plaque marking your service to the Fleet Air Arm. It is relatively inexpensive and is a great gift: either to yourself or to a loved one.

You can find more information, including how to apply, by clicking [here](#). ✈





Christmas will be upon us soon and although it is a joyous occasion for most people, it can be desperately lonely time for others.

So, if you are aware of someone who's on their own, or seems out of sorts or isn't behaving as they normally would, it's time to start a conversation. The four simple steps are:



There's an amazing website [here](#) that gives lots of information about what to look for, how to start the conversation and who can help. So don't wait until it's too late...ask if they are OK now!

Thou Shalt Not Swear...

¹ The Regulations (1790) in force at the time laid down the following tariff for swearing, to be exacted by the Captain:

Commissioned Officers, for each offence, one shilling fine.

Warrant Officers, for each offence, sixpence fine.

Men, 'to punish them by causing them to wear a wooden Collar or some other shameful Badge of Distinction, for so long a time as he shall judge proper'.

Gambier enforced all these, including the collar (which he weighted with two 32-pound shots), making the culprit walk the Poop for several hours on end. But very few Captains paid any attention to the Order and, in 1806, it disappeared from the Regulations. See Dillon, op. cit., N.R.S., Vol. XCIII, pp. 97 and 104.

Did you know that, for a brief period at least, swearing was against regulations in the Royal Navy? The penalties, by the standards of the day, were severe. The 'Gambier' mentioned above was **Captain James Gambier** who was in command of HMS Defence at the time. By faith an evangelical he was regarded as an intensely religious man, nicknamed 'Dismal Jimmy' by the men under his command. It didn't do his career much harm, though. He was later appointed a Knight Grand Order of the Bath and promoted to Admiral of the Fleet. He died in 1833. ✪

HMAS SYDNEY IN KOREA

THE ARMOURER

by Jim Parsons



In the last of our series of Essays by eye-witnesses to the RAN Fleet Air Arm's deployment to Korea, we are pleased to bring you a rare and informed account from a member of the unsung heroes of that conflict – the Armourers. Jim Parsons, like all of those in the various deck parties aboard Sydney, endured long days on a dangerous flight deck battered by storms or sheathed in ice, to ensure the aircraft of the Fleet Air Arm could strike their targets. Here is his story...

When it was announced that HMAS Sydney and its Air Group was to be deployed to join UN forces off Korea I was a 19 year-old Naval Airman Armourer serving on 805 Sea Fury Squadron with the 20th CAG on HMAS Sydney. At the time the ship was cruising off the coast of South Australia. We on the CAG assumed that since we were already on Sydney we would be the Air Group to go.

I was delighted at the prospect. This would be my opportunity to prove my manhood and emulate my forebears who had served in WW1 and 2. I also had some trepidation that perhaps I may also sqib it and not be too brave. We did not know at the time that UN forces had complete control of the sea and air and that it was highly unlikely that the ship would come under attack.

The ship then headed off first to Jervis Bay to disembark the



CAG and then to Sydney to prepare it for war time service, and to increase the crew to war time complement.

Back at Nowra we on the 20 CAG got the shock of our lives, we were advised that both the 20th and 21st CAGs were to be disbanded and a new CAG, the Sydney Air Group was to be formed, consisting of 805 and 808 Sea Fury Squadrons and 817 Firefly Squadron – and both Squadron complements were to be beefed up to war time levels.

The Squadrons then began an intensive work up programme concentrating mainly on deck landing qualifications and armament. Because of numerous postings to the Air Group and also to Air Branch Headquarters, station departments were for the most part very short handed. This had a dramatic effect on the bomb dump in particular, which was very short staffed. The crew there had great difficulty in keeping up supply of ammunition to the aircraft line. They had to prepare and supply thousands of rounds of 20mm ammo daily together with hundreds of rocket motors and practice bombs with the limited staff available. They also had to provide 500lb live HE bombs from time to time, which created a lot of angst and no little anger and panic among various outfits, some of which in retrospect were quite amusing.

About the middle of the year the air group embarked and began sea work up exercises which was much the same for us Armourers as that ashore.

We left Sydney for Japan early in August 1951 at about the time of my 20th birthday. Training of course continued at a pretty vigorous pace. Our first port of call after leaving Sydney was the old Australian naval base Tarangau on Manus Island. Tarangau was also the compound for the Japanese convicted by the Australian Government for war crimes. The compound was surrounded by a chain link and barbed wire fence and was on the way to Tarangau base proper, and we had to walk past it to get to the canteen etc. The prisoners seemed to be as interested in us as we were in them; they would come to the fence to see us pass by. We thought they were a pretty nasty surly, brutal lot and were to be despised. In retrospect, it was not too surprising that they looked pretty unhappy, as most of them had not seen Japan for 10 to 15 years.

Our next stop was Yokosuka in Japan. This was then the headquarters of the American 7th Fleet. I do not remember there being much war damage to Yokosuka but we only had leave from 1600 to 2300 so did not have much time to look



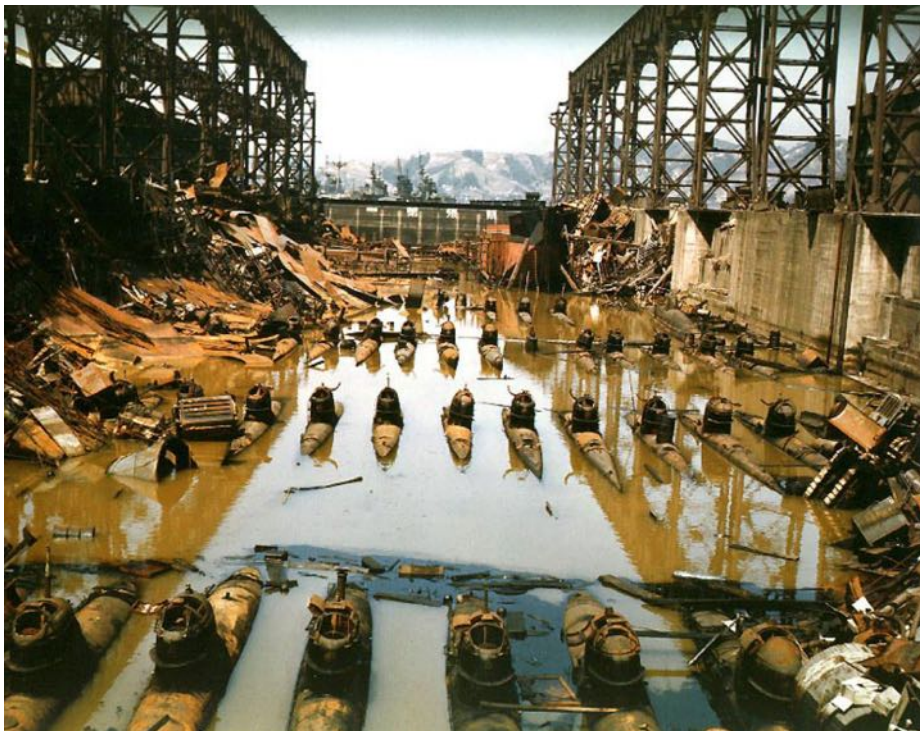
Above left. The main street of Kure, showing the BCOF on the right-hand side. **Right:** Kure harbour, circa 1951. It has since been restored to a spectacularly beautiful setting.



around at all. I went ashore once on my own and found the place very strange and somewhat weird. There was virtually nobody on the streets and the lighting was very dim. I did not stay long.

Our next port of call was Kure, which was the headquarters of the British Commonwealth Occupation Force (BCOF), and was also to be our home port for the duration of our stay. Kure had been a huge Japanese dockyard during the war and had suffered extensive damage in the dockyard area, and the township in the adjacent area was totally destroyed. There were masses of pulverised, broken, shattered concrete and twisted steel all along the foreshore. There was no wharfage at all; our berth was a floating pontoon anchored to the shore.

The only multi stored building that I can remember in the vicinity of the dock yard was a three story one that had been taken over by BCOF for a troops' recreation establishment. It had a bar, restaurant, reading-cum-games room and some accommodation. Since we only had leave from 1600 to 2300 not



Kure had been a major dock yard during the war and was heavily bombed. Above, Koryu class (and other) midget submarines in one of the relatively undamaged dry docks in 1946. Not much else of the dockyard fared as well. (Public Domain)

many of us used this facility, nor did we wander far from the dock area because of the limited time available. Some ventured into the hinterland at weekends when a little more time was available.

The shops, such as they were, were mostly constructed from salvaged timber, sheet iron, canvas and whatever else may prove suitable. The shops were geared to satisfy tourist types such as us, and the bars were operated mainly by Europeans and only sold limited varieties of alcohol and food. Public transport was mainly provided by two-wheel trailers attached to old motor cycles capable of carrying two to three passengers. Japanese labourers used to come on board from time to time to do those laborious, soul destroying jobs that sailors universally hate.

Apart from shop staff, bar keepers and ladies of the night there was practically no traffic on the streets. The ladies of the night were usually quite young, late teens to early twenties and very pretty. It was very difficult for young men such as us to resist for long the invitation "you comma my house" especially after consuming a few jugs.

The Japanese were generally quite prepared to be friendly, helpful and were absolutely honest. We on the other hand treated them badly. There was as far as I was aware no physical or verbal violence but we in our various ways constantly reminded them that we were the winners and they the losers and they must be in some way inferior.

After a week or so we set off for our first tour of the operational area in the South China Sea off the Korean peninsula.

Details of the day to day operations have been recorded in the past so no need for them now. Suffice to say that we lost three Sea Fury pilots, and about a dozen aircraft were lost with many more damaged by ground fire. All of the aircrew with two exceptions were recovered; with one dead.

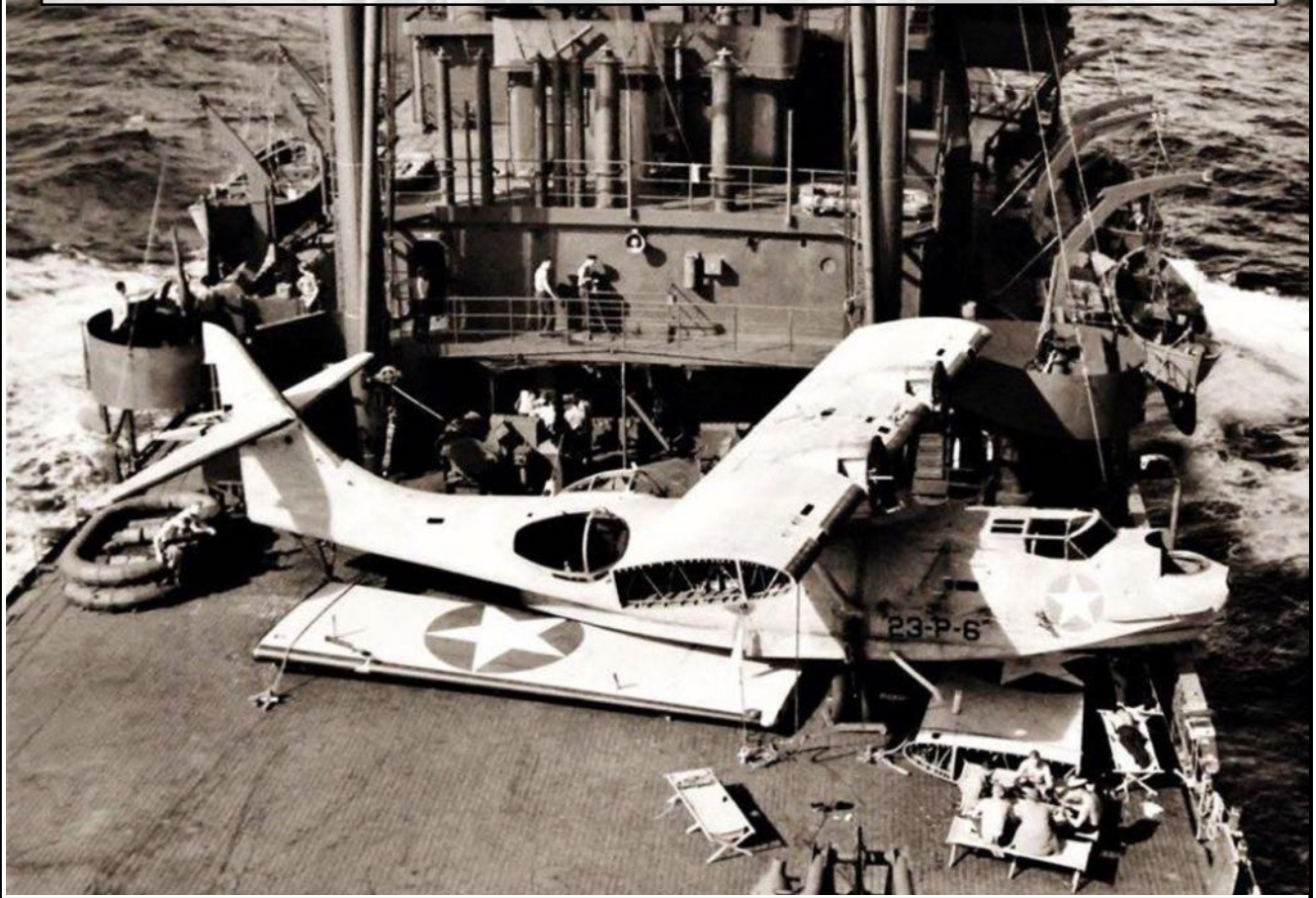
One of the dead Lt Clarkson crashed in the mountains of north Korea and to the best of my knowledge his body is still there. S/Lt Sinclair had to bail out of his damaged aircraft. His parachute did not open and he crashed to earth. His body was recovered and after a short funeral service he was buried at sea. S/Lt Coleman just disappeared in flight. No sign of the crash site was ever found.

We returned to Australia in mid-February 1952 and as soon as we hit Nowra we were sent on leave, the SAG dismantled and we the crew were scattered to the four winds so to speak.

So! How did this affect me? Quite a lot, actually. In my later life I felt deep regret that I was not more conciliatory towards the Japanese; this was a great opportunity to

CAPTION COMPETITION

What do you think the best caption would be for the photograph below.? Send your answer to the webmaster [here](#).



seek greater understanding and respect for a different culture. It also significantly contributed to my diagnosis of PTS and depression that I have since developed and for which I receive continuous medication. ✈

Sydney's Napkin Rings



In our last edition we included a photograph of a square napkin ring (see left), and asked our readers what the number on it might have represented.

We had several responses from people who had served on Sydney who told us that the number engraved on each one was simply the respective officer's mess number. **Mick Storr** went one further and forwarded the photograph of his, which he kept as a 'rabbit' on leaving the ship. See the image right – it makes you wonder what this particular ring has been through. ✈



Did You Know?

- Shellharbour Council have announced that Fly Corporate will operate regular passenger transport (RPT) services from Illawarra Regional Airport commencing 12 November

2018. Using SAAB 340B, 34 seat turbo prop aircraft, the service will connect the Illawarra Region with **Melbourne** and **Brisbane**. For further details on passenger services

go to the Fly Corporate website [here](#).

- Singapore Airlines recently regained the crown for the world's longest scheduled commercial flight. Using Airbus A350-900 ULR aircraft non-stop flights are made between Singapore and New York, with the nominal distance being 8,285 nautical miles.
- the world's shortest scheduled passenger flight is between Westray and Papa Westray in the Orkney Islands. The flight is operated by Loganair with a scheduled flight time of two minutes.
- Qantas has launched Project Sunrise which has the aim of identifying and acquiring aircraft which can fly non-stop Sydney to London or Sydney to New York by 2022. This would see the crown of the longest scheduled flight return to Qantas. Potential aircraft are derivatives of the Airbus A350 or Boeing 777X. ✈
- 816 Squadron celebrated its 70th Birthday on August 28th (sorry we missed it!). Known as the Fighting Tigers the Squadron has flown Fireflies, Gannets, Sea Venoms, Trackers, Wessex, Seahawk S70Bs and now MH-60R Seahawks.



SMNAVN Support **Jessica Crea** and CO816 Squadron CDR **Anthony Savage** cut a cake to celebrate the Squadron's 70th anniversary. Photo Justin Brown, South Coast Register.

That's one of every generation of aircraft in the Fleet Air Arm, which accounts for why the Squadron is the same age as HMAS Albatross and has never been out of Commission in the RAN. It has battle honours for Norway, Mediterranean, Atlantic, Malta Convoys, Arctic, Malaysia, East Timor, Persian Gulf, Kuwait and Iraq; and is the only unit that has been on every RAN deployment to the Middle East since the first Gulf War. ✈

This Month In Aviation History

On 31 **December** 2018 it will be 110 years to the day that **Wilbur Wright** won the first Michelin Trophy and a F20,000 prize. This was regarded as the 'Holy Grail' of aviation achievement.

The triangular course of 124.7km was set out at Camp d'Avours, 11 km east of Le Mans, France. Wright flew a 1907 Wright Flyer and completed the circuit in 2 hours, 20 minutes and 23 seconds, setting a record for duration and distance.

The Wright Model A, produced from 1907 to 1909, was the world's first series production airplane. It was slightly larger and heavier than the Wright Flyer III which had preceded it. It

was a two-place, single-engine canard biplane built of a wooden framework braced with wires and covered with muslin fabric. A new system of flight controls allowed the pilot to sit upright rather than lying prone on the lower wing.



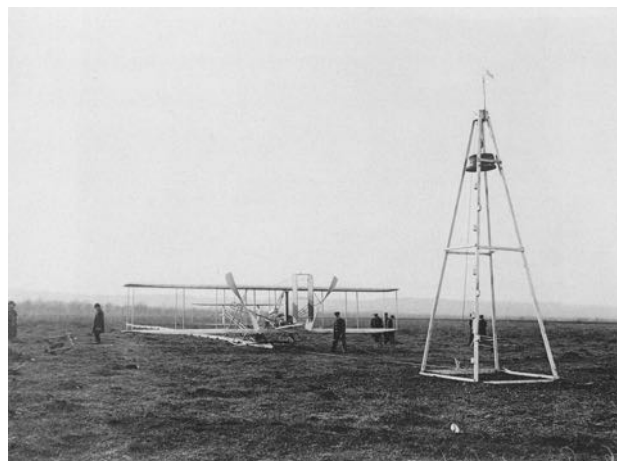
Wilbur Wright at Camp d'Avours, 01Jan1909 the day after winning the Award. (Special Collections and Archives, Wright State University Libraries).

The dual horizontal elevators were placed forward and the dual vertical rudders aft. The biplane was 31 feet long with a wingspan of 41 feet. The wings had a chord of 6.6 feet, and vertical separation of 6 feet. The airplane had an empty weight of approximately 800 pounds.

A water-cooled 240.5 cubic-inch-displacement (3.940 litre) Wright inline four-cylinder gasoline engine produced 32 horsepower at 1,310 r.p.m. Two 8½ foot (2.591 meters) diameter, two-bladed, counter-rotating propellers, driven by a chain drive, were mounted behind the wings in pusher configuration. They turned at 445 rpm.

The Wright Model A could fly 37 miles per hour (60 kilometers per hour).

Sixty years later, on 30 **December** 1968, Chief Warrant Officer



Wilbur Wright Model A Flyer in France, 1909. The derrick supports a weight which, when dropped, pulls the aeroplane across the ground with a cable and puller arrangement until it reaches flying speed. Who said Carriers had the first catapult? (Wright Brothers Aeroplane Company).

4 James Ervin Jr, USN set two *Federation Aeronautique International* awards for time to altitude when flying a Sikorsky CH54A Tarhe. The 'Sky Crane' reached 3000m (9,842ft) in 1 minute 38.2 seconds, and 9000m (29,527ft) in 7 minutes 54 seconds. Erwin deviated from Sikorsky's recommended climb profile by climbing vertically to 20,000 feet before resuming the profile.



Sikorsky CH-54A Tarhe of the Nevada National Guard Nov89 (Mike Freer/Wikipedia)

According to an article in the US Army Aviation Digest, during the record flights the regional Air Traffic Controller called a commercial airliner which was cruising at 17,000 feet: '...be advised there's a helicopter at your 9 o'clock position descending out of 27,000 feet at a rate of 4,000 feet per minute,' to which the airliner responded: 'Good Lord, you mean they're up here now?!' ✈



A reminder of the reunions coming up:

Tracker Reunion 23 October 2019

Where: HARS Aviation Museum, Albion Park NSW

Cost: To be advised.

Contact: Register now to express interest.

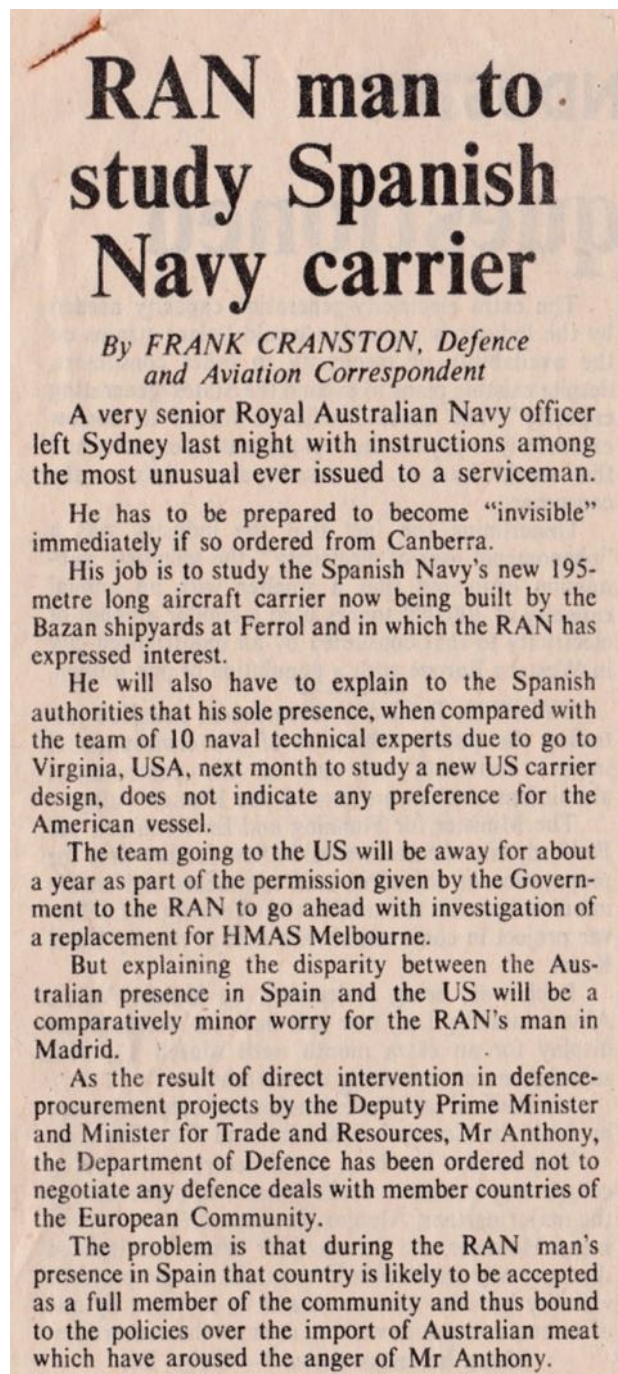
Likely to include a number of events, but you should register your interest. Click [here](#), then click on the "Interested" or "Going" button. ✈

† REST IN PEACE †

Since the last edition of 'FlyBy' we have become aware of the loss of Ron Smith, Ken "Whistler" Harvey and Allen Hoskins. 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. ✈

New Mystery Photo (No.48)

Well, sort of! The new Mystery Photo is actually a photograph of a newspaper cutting (see below). The 'mystery officer' mentioned within it is alive and well and has vouched for the accuracy of the report.



We would like to know: **Who the Mystery Aussie officer was, the approximate date of his invisible journey, and what the circumstances were.**

You can see the Mystery "Photo" in greater clarity on our website [here](#), and find out how to respond should you wish to have a go.

WANTED: More Mystery Photos - anything quirky, or you think would be of interest to our readers. Contact the webmaster [here](#). ✈

So What's the Deal On Veteran Discount Cards?

By your friendly editor

Anybody who's been to a PX in the States would no doubt have experienced a tinge of envy that US Servicemen and women can get great deals though that and other stores, whilst we have no such scheme.

Granted the numbers are much bigger over there, so the economy of scale makes it worth it – but you'd think that the number of serving and ex-service people in Australia at any one time would warrant something, wouldn't you?

Three years ago the FAAAA wrote to a number of businesses to see if they would be prepared to offer discounts to FAAAA members. We didn't even get the courtesy of a reply, so that was a fizzer. Then came [APOD](#), a National Discount Scheme for serving and ex-Service persons. The idea is you become an APOD member for the sum of \$4.95 per month. Their website says you can '...save money on thousands of products and services all year round'. The idea sounds great, but the website is clunky and I was left with a strong feeling of unease when I did coax it into life.

Firstly, it's very hard to find out who 'APOD' is...or, for that matter, what the acronym even stands for. Worse still, when you try to see what sort of deals you might expect, you are consistently taken to a panel that demands your name and your credit card details. Granted, it's only for \$4.95 to join as a member, but I like to know exactly what the likely benefits are before I hand over any of my hard-earned pension.

There is a page that hints at what you might expect (rather than what you get and how you get it). I reached the conclusion that the discounts were modest – typically from 2-5%, although there are a few examples of more generous offers. For example, you can buy a \$50.00 K-Mart or Target Gift card for \$48.75...hardly worth the trouble. And then there is the risk they won't be honoured anyway...I'm reminded of the time I bought a \$100 gift card on the occasion of my daughter-in-law's graduation only to hear a couple of days later that the big

Three years ago, the FAAAA wrote to a number of businesses to see if they would be prepared to offer discounts to FAAAA members. We didn't even get the courtesy of a reply, so that was a fizzer.



bookshop chain it was with had gone belly up and the card was worthless.

It may be that some of our readers use APOD and like it...in which case I'm happy to stand corrected. Me, I wouldn't go near it with a barge pole.

But moving on, I see that the Prime Minister announced that Veterans are to be honoured with a Discount Card and a lapel pin. According to the popular Press, it will be different to the DVA 'benefit' card insofar as all serving and ex-serving personnel will get one, rather than just those with a health condition. If you go to the [DVA website](#), however, it says that only veterans entitled to a DVA Gold, White or Orange card will be eligible. That's some 600,000 people, according to them.

So, what will that card do for you, if you get one? Well, it's early days yet. Mr. Morrison did say that the response from businesses has

been 'fantastic' so far. Hopefully more fantastic than 5% off a Store Card. Apparently such names as Woolies, Coles, K-Mart, Bunnings and Target will come on board, amongst others, so we'll have to wait and see what they will offer.

The Government is hoping to have the scheme up and running by next year, which I guess means 'sometime next year'. No word on how the card will be distributed or by whom, nor even on how they will identify bone-fide veterans, but one lives in hope. Good initiative – I just hope there isn't a general election before its locked in.

We'll keep you informed on the new scheme. As I say, good initiative - but don't hold your breath for a while yet. ✪



Above. Pinched from the "Friends of the RAN Grumman Tracker" Website is the photo above. It shows the progress of an engine swap-over on Tracker 851 of the Historic Aircraft Restoration Society. HARS has, of course, won the Tender for airframes in was once the RAN Historic Flight which includes Tracker 844 – also restorable to a flying condition. We hope there will be two flying S2Gs in the future. (Image Deb Oxy/HARS) ✈

QUEENSLAND MEMBERS HONOURED FOR THEIR LONG AND DEDICATED SERVICE



Queensland Division Acting President **Ray Murrell** (right) presents Testimonials of Thanks to **Des Kelly** (Left) and **Trevor Tite** (Right) for their many years of service to the FAAAA as Treasurer and Secretary respectively. **Barry Lister** was also to be honoured for his many years as President but is in ill health and could not attend. ✈

HARS News

- HARS is waiting the outcome of their State Government Grant application that includes the John Travolta 707 funding. At the same time they are in the process of submitting a Federal Government Grant Application for Hanger 4.
- HARS is the preferred tenderer to own the RAN Historic Flight. They still need committee approval to sign the papers and sort out sponsor commitment to the funds.
- In the meantime, a HARS team is at Point Cook supporting RAAF Heritage in saving Neptune 302.
- The other big news for the week has been the delivery of the first overhauled Southern Cross (SC) Engine from the

Restoration Shops Engine overhaul facility. The SC Team plans to install the engine so the Aircraft can be on show in H1 for the AAHOF Dinner.

- The long-awaited arrival of the second F27 from NZ is expected before the end of November.
- In the last few weeks the Connie has returned from Parkes, C-47 VH-EAF has been flying around with an ARDU FA18 and PC9 and TAA DC3 VH-AES has been to Port Macquarie whilst Caribou 234 has been to RAAF Richmond. Also Neptune 273 has had a post maintenance engine run both Jets and recipis and is almost ready to return to the air. Neptune 566 continues to taxi around and this week had a former French Navy officer who flew our

aircraft many years ago, and the GM of Warbirds NZ Ltd. All had grins that required surgical removal. The Mustang has also departed back to Qld. after many local flights. The P51 will return next year. The Global goes to NZ for a while tomorrow. ✈

War Hero's Medals Find New Home



Above: CAPT Darren Rae with Mr Kenny Best as he hands over Lt Clarkson's medals to the museum.

The medals of the late Lieutenant Keith Clarkson have been donated to the Fleet Air Arm Museum by one of his descendants.

Mr. Kenny Best, the nephew of LEUT Clarkson's late sister, read an excerpt from his wartime diary in which he described the day his Spitfire was shot down by an ME109 over Tunisia in April 1943.

Clarkson survived the war and subsequently transferred to the RAN to join the fledgling Fleet Air Arm. He was serving as Senior Pilot on 805 Squadron when HMAS Sydney was sent to Korea in support of United Nations forces deployed to Korea to counter an invasion by communist troops.

On 5 November 1951 his Sea Fury was struck by anti-aircraft fire during a strafing run on a truck. He did not survive and his body was never recovered. The Squadron diary recorded the event as follows:

"...52 Flight were first airborne and once more the Han River was the target. Troop concentrations were rocketed and strafed followed by an Armed Recce heading north from Packichan. it was during this recce that 52 leader was hit while making a strafing run on a possible truck at BT.670155. The aircraft rolled over on its back and dived into the ground, breaking into many pieces. No sign of life or of fluorescent panels were seen. One aircraft returned to the ship and the remaining two carried out Rescap over the area. Few enemy troops were seen and were strafed and some rockets put into a slit trench. Both aircraft were hit and soon had to land at Kimpo, being short on fuel.

The Diary would like to record the courage and determination of Lieut Keith Clarkson and say how much he was admired and respected by all pilots in the Group. His loss will be felt very deeply."

The Navy honoured Lt Clarkson by arranging a Spitfire flyover at HMAS Albatross on 20 November 2018. Witnessed by about 100 personnel including veterans and their families, the

fighter from Temora Aviation Museum brought home the wartime exploits of Lt Clarkson.

A full account of the medal donation can be found [here](#), and the Roll of Honour page remembering Lt. Clarkson can be found [here](#). ✈

Update on CSM(CT) Medal



In earlier editions of 'FlyBy' we have reported on the (slow) progress of the CSM (Counter Terrorist) medal for aircrew who were involved in [Operation Bursa](#).

Just by way of a reminder, the ASM(CT) is awarded to Army aircrew who were/are involved in flying in support of specified Counter Terrorism operations. This included the protection of offshore rigs when they assumed the task from Navy back in 1989. Navy aircrew, who had performed

the self-same task between 1980 and 1989, were excluded from the award.

A great deal of work has been done to try and address this deficiency, primarily by **Brett Dowsing**, the late **Ted Wynberg**, and by **Paul Fothergill**.

Last year we were optimistic of an outcome sooner rather than later, but things have slowed down a bit. Basically, an Honours and Awards proposed codicil to the Gazettal for GG signature is now being reworked by PM&C for submission. We understand that under its terms the qualification to be awarded the medal will be extended to all those coming under the operational names such as 'Gauntlet' and 'Nulla', which were used to describe elements of the operation.

Unlike the Army, Navy never Force Assigned personnel involved in the operation, however, so there remains some concern that there will be issues of interpretation. Honours and Awards (N) has indicated that Navy will be assessing who was involved, however, and is confident that will not be a problem.

We don't have a sense of the timeframe still required, but will keep you informed as we hear more. ✈

Mick Storrs is organising a 50-year reunion for SL 1/69 in Singapore over Easter 2019.

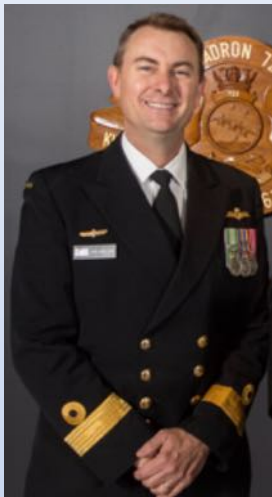
If anyone knows the whereabouts of Paul Healey or Ian White, please contact the Editor [here](#).

FAAAA Annual Subscriptions are due 31Dec18.

Please can you help us by prompt payment to the relevant account (depending on which Division you are in).

Details on last page.

COMFAA's EOY Letter



As I take vectors for final approach in this job I look across the seascape of our Fleet Air Arm today and I see a place that is vibrant and motivated, meeting its commitments, has achieved its re-capitalisation, and has built upon a rich and proud past.

The heavy lifting of the many across all those that make Naval Aviation happen has come together to see eleven mission ready Flights (eight MH60R Seahawk Flights and

three MRH90 Taipan Flights) all a-strength and busy, and a new Squadron (822X) that will see Maritime Tactical Unmanned Air Vehicles (MTUAS) become a mainstay of our future. The eleven Flights is what we promised to deliver by the end of 2018 and a couple of years ago a new MTUAS Squadron was just an idea, today a reality. The grass will never grow long beneath our feet. This is a complex endeavour made to look smooth by an extraordinary group of professional sailors, officers, public servants and contractors – together they have delivered and I could not be more proud of their achievements.

I would hope you might grant me a moment of reflection and nostalgia as my personal time in the FAA draws to an end. I have had the opportunity to work for an extraordinary group of Australians, both those present today and those who have built the cultural foundations upon which we who care take today work. The Fleet Air Arm of today is yet another historic affirmation of the achievements of our past days. It is different but in so many ways the same. I have had the honour of meeting so many of our past FAA team, those who served and their families, and what I find is that so much of what drove us all to serve, to fly, to engineer and maintain, has not changed – we remain driven by adventure and mateship, pride and patriotism. This is a good thing as it provides a pretty good basis to achieve most anything.

To our retired team please allow me to take the opportunity to personally thank you for your service. One never leaves the FAA, they just serve somewhere else. In the past few years we have celebrated 100 years of Naval Aviation, the 50th Anniversary of the first detachment to Vietnam and the

award of the Unit Citation for Gallantry to 723 Sqn Helicopter Flight Vietnam. This year we have celebrated 70 years since the forming of the FAA and commissioning of HMAS ALBATROSS. These are slices of an amazing history and I have been so very honoured to spend time with our retired community who were part of these and so many more chapters of our past. It's a long road from a Sopwith Pup in 1917, through the jet age to the highly complex rotary wing weapon systems of today, and these deep roots form the cornerstone of today's and our future successes.

More recently, in the past couple of years alone we have retired the S-70B-2 Seahawk and the AS350BA Squirrel and completed the introduction of the MH60R Seahawk, introduced the EC135 and the ADF Helicopter Aircrew Training System, introduced the S100 Schiebel UAV and the ScanEagle UAV has completed a 9 month deployment to the middle east, a 3 month deployment to Christmas Island, and completed Exercise Kakadu 18. I believe I have nearly lost count of the number of First of Class Flight Trials and other test programs AMAFTU has completed and we have sent an 816 Sqn MH60R detachment (made up of MH60R Flight 4 and 816 Sqn personnel) to Scotland where it excelled in the complex NATO ASW exercise *Joint Warrior* working fully integrated with the RN's 820 Squadron Merlin anti-ASW helicopters. The MRH90 community is now providing its full three Flights at sea and we have recently integrated a electro optic system onto the aircraft, the integration design and production all completed by NASPO and AMAFTU at NAS Nowra in less than four months – it has proven an highly valuable capability during our recent deployment to PNG in support of APEC. work Our work on the water is important and our Navy is pressing ahead with purpose and vigour – it is quite simply a great time to serve and the men and women of our FAA, and our Navy more broadly, are highly talented and they are ready when called. Quite simply speaking our future is in safe hands and that future is pretty bright.

It has been an immeasurable honour to serve in Command of our Nation's Fleet Air Arm and to enjoy watching the extraordinary success of our men and women doing their job across the globe and here at home. That important work will continue. We will remain for the foreseeable future busy in the Middle East however our focus is well under wheel and shifting to the Asia and south-west Pacific regions. The team is up for some great trips and serious work. Honestly, who wouldn't want to just turn back the clock and do it all again!!

Our FAA Association is strong, vital and present. I offer you my personal thanks for your support to those who serve today and for staying engaged with your FAA community. I can assure you that those who are driving the FAA forward today will do all they can to make you proud. To all I trust you and your family will enjoy a safe and prosperous Christmas and that a successful 2019 awaits. I look forward to seeing each and every one of our Association members at reunions and other functions in the coming years. ✈

UPDATE ON THE HISTORIC FLIGHT AIRCRAFT

HARS is pleased to confirm that it has been accepted as the preferred tenderer for the acquisition of the complete sets of ex RAN FAA Historic Flight assets being disposed of by limited public tender.

This outcome is the result of approximately 14 years of continuous dialogue between HARS and the RAN, following the initial contact made with selected Historic aircraft restoration groups by the then CN - a contact made with the view of disposing of selected RAN Historic Flight assets - essentially due to Budget constraints and missional priorities.

HARS responded with a proposal to keep the Flight intact, and the successful conclusion of this tender in 2018, is the result of the RAN and HARS exploring a number of options including loan of aircraft airframes and assets, through to the open tender process eventually adopted.

All the ex-RAN FAA assets including airframes are being handed over declared non-airworthy, and as a result HARS will need to undertake a full evaluation of any airframe selected for restoration to flying, and re-certify all components and spares.

It is expected that the handover of assets will commence in December 2018. The following table indicates what assets were required and their current location:

| Line | Assets | Quantity | Serial | Current Location as at 20 Nov 18 |
|------|-----------------------|------------|------------|---|
| 1 | Hawker Sea Fury FB II | One | VW232 | FAA Museum HMAS Albatross |
| 2 | Bell Iroquois UH-1B | One | N9-3101 | B Hangar HMAS Albatross |
| 3 | Bell Iroquois UH-1B | One | N9-3104 | B Hangar HMAS Albatross |
| 4 | Spares – UH-1B | 88 Pallets | N/A | B Hangar HMAS Albatross |
| 5 | DH Sea Venom FAW 53 | One | WZ895 | B Hangar HMAS Albatross (In 2 Containers) |
| 6 | Douglas Dakota C-47B | One | N2-90 | In open HMAS Albatross |
| 7 | Grumman Tracker S-2G | One | N12-152333 | B Hangar HMAS Albatross |
| 8 | Grumman Tracker S-2G | One | N12-153600 | B Hangar HMAS Albatross |
| 9 | Spares – Tracker | 37 Pallets | N/A | B Hangar HMAS Albatross |
| 10 | Westland Wessex 31B | One | N7-203 | B Hangar HMAS Albatross |
| 11 | Westland Wessex 31B | One | N7-203 | B Hangar HMAS Albatross |
| 12 | Spares Wessex 31B | 10 Pallets | N/A | B Hangar HMAS Albatross |

The following is the planned initial disposition of assets after acquisition by HARS and removal from HMAS Albatross active base area – mainly from B Hangar:

| | |
|----|--|
| 01 | Hawker Sea Fury FB II – VW232. Initially for Prominent Static Display at HARS Albion Park – longer term rebuild:- Hangared at HARS Sponsor Air Affairs. The aircraft will be surveyed for a more complete restoration. |
| 02 | Bell Iroquois UH-1B – N9-3104. Hangared at HARS Sponsor Air Affairs Complex The aircraft will be surveyed for a more complete restoration and flight status. |
| 03 | Bell Iroquois UH-1B – N9-3101. Hangared at HARS Sponsor Air Affairs Complex. This Aircraft will be used to support N9-3101. |
| 04 | Spares – Bell Iroquois UH-1B 88 Pallet Lot. Used for lots 02 and 03 to bring these two aircraft to their maximum potential. HARS has a significant engineering capability. Spares will be stored at HARS Major sponsor Air Affairs. |
| 05 | De Havilland Sea Venom – WZ895 (Incl 2 X 20' Container). For Static Display at HARS Albion Park complex initially. The aircraft will be surveyed for a more complete restoration. |
| 06 | Douglas Dakota C-47B – N2-90. For Static Display at HARS NHF site adjacent to FAA Museum, subject to a successful HARS application to RAN and EIG for confirmation of use of the land. |
| 07 | Grumman Tracker S-2G – N12-152333. Hangared at HARS Sponsor Air Affairs. The aircraft will be surveyed for a more complete restoration back to flying status. |
| 08 | Grumman Tracker S-2G – N12-153600. Stored at HARS Sponsor Air Affairs, and also to use for parts and training support for Lot 07. |
| 09 | Spares Grumman Tracker 37 Pallet Lot. Used for lots 07 and 08 to bring these two aircraft to their maximum potential. Spares will be stored at HARS Major sponsor Air Affairs. |
| 10 | Westland Wessex 31B – N7-203. For Prominent Static Display - Hangared at HARS Complex Albion Park. This Aircraft will complement the significant military collection at HARS. |
| 11 | Westland Wessex 31B – N7-222. For Prominent Static Display - At HARS Complex Parkes NSW. This Aircraft will complement the significant military collection at HARS – Parkes. |
| 12 | Spares Westland Wessex 34 Pallet Lot. Depending on requirements HARS will store these parts in one or two locations - At Albion Park Rail or Parkes. |
| 13 | Spares Westland Wessex 20' Container - uncatalogued. Depending on requirements and content HARS will store these parts in one or two locations - At Albion Park Rail or Parkes. |

Please note: The HARS Committee has approved keeping the Navy Heritage Flight intact and the longer-term plan is to relocate them to a future site adjacent to the RAN FAA Museum complex. For all details on the HARS Navy Heritage Flight project the HARS Project leader is **Professor Michael HOUGH AM**. You can also see this page on our website [here](#), and comment if you wish. ✈

Youngest and Best Aviator Pilots from USN Pilot Training.

When I was researching some history and photos of VT-5 (TRARON 5), the US Navy fixed-wing aircraft Training Squadron for Carrier Landing Training outside Pensacola, Florida at Auxiliary Landing Field (ALF) Barin, just across the State border at Foley, Baldwin County, Alabama, a question from the USA arose.

This research was prompted by **Trevor Rieck** and **Jack McCaffrie**, who are currently writing a book about the history of flight training for RAN Pilots and Observers during 1966 to 1968 in the USA, and had asked me about some details regarding VT-5 (as it was known then).

The US training of RAN Aircrew had occurred because the RAN had purchased "Skyhawk" and "Tracker" aircraft from the USA, with helicopter training to be done on Sikorski "Seabat" aircraft which were the same as the RAN Wessex 31A aircraft except for the powertrain - the Sikorski used an R1820 cubic inch radial engine and the Wessex a jet engine.

I contacted **Lt. Bob McLaughlan**, a former USN pilot. Bob supplied some answers and then queried the ages of RAN pilots after I sent him a resume of the RAN pilots trained at VT-5 during 1967 and 1968.

Bob had seen that I was 18 years old when he went through training at the squadron and asked how old I was when he completed my "Wings" ceremony and was promoted.

I replied that he was 18 years, 8 months and 12 days old at the time.

Bob then said that I was younger than any USN pilot. The youngest pilot was thought to have been **President George H.W. Bush**, at 18 years, 11 months and 25 days. It was subsequently found that **Chuck Downey** was in fact the youngest US pilot to have graduated with his "Wings" through the system during the Second World War at the age of 18 years, 11 months and 14 days.

During the period after WW2, the entry requirements for US Navy, Marines and Coast Guard pilots to enter training was raised to a minimum requirement of a University Degree or completion of a Naval Academy Course. Hence the average age of pilots at VT-2 and VT-3 (TRARON 2 and 3 respectively), the major or primary flight training establishment for those services was around 24 years of age in 1967.

VT-2 and VT-3 were located at North and South Whiting Fields, Milton, Florida. 1968 was at the height of the Vietnam War and pilot training numbers were at a peak at each Squadron - around 300 students at any time at each Squadron. Both Squadrons together produced around 1000 students per year total output.

Flight scores were calculated on an "Average" of 3, with a "Below Average" of 2 and an "Above Average" of 4 being issued to every assignment or score at both Ground School and Flying Training. There were hundreds and perhaps thousands of assessments for each student. The "Average" student was a "3.00" when finished.

It seems **Patrick Bainbridge** was only just 19 years' old when he received his "Wings" and his flight score at VT-3 was a 3.16, whilst I achieved a score of 3.17.

Both these scores were the highest seen for both VT-2 and VT-3 at the time and for the previous two years. Unfortunately neither result was recorded on the boards kept at the Squadrons at the time which listed the highest achievements of each "Student of the Week". Patrick and myself left the Squadron on completion of our Formation Training and did not check back again. This means we were the two top students in the previous two years, of 1800 trained pilots at those Squadrons in that time period.

I was presented with a certificate of achievement and also a letter from the Naval Attaché in Washington and Commanding Officer of VT-3.

Patrick and I were in the same last formation flight of six planes plus instructor. This was the last training flight at the Squadron for us before we moved on to aircraft carrier qualifications training at VT-5.

Our last formation flight at VT-3 was unusual. As the flight leader that day, I believe that all the students on that flight achieved a perfect score on all items. The instructor was so pleased with how it went that he allowed an extra two T28 "Trojan" aircraft, such that two students with two instructors joined onto the formation. I called the airfield control tower to ask "Tower, this is (Call number) with a flight of nine for the break." It was duly granted and the unusual sight of nine T-28s in a row would have been something to see.

The RAN and Patrick therefore missed out on having a second "Student of the Week" accolade from VT-3 in the group due to him and I being in the same "week".

Both of us went on to join 725 and 817 Squadrons on Wessex 31A and 31B aircraft.

Several of the Pilots from the RAN achieved "Student of the Week" status at various squadrons around Pensacola. **Graham Winterflood**, **Hugh Drummond** and **Andy Craig** were some of these, and Andy would surely have taken some beating as he recorded a score of 3.9, only because his instructor at the time indicated that "No-one is perfect!".



The photo of **Patrick Bainbridge** and myself at Dent, England was taken in July 2018, after Patrick had cycled 173 miles (278 km) in three days and I was on my way to 1000 miles (1600 km), or John O'Groats to Land's End in twenty days. It seems we still have common results in a few things.

The RAN can be proud of its personnel's achievements. **Graham Pring**, Oct18. ✈



The photo above is of an AS350 with a light machine gun mounted in the cabin. Could anyone tell the Editor if this was the standard fit for Squirrels in the MEAO, or were there other installations? Email your thoughts [here](#).

stacks of squadron-specific local mods that had been done over the years.

I also remember accompanying an Air Force Two Star (Ray Conroy) - Head of Capability or something - to a meeting in LA with the software contractor. He laid down the law as to our expectations but in the end I think the whole thing was an impossibility.

Frank Widmann was the Kaman project manager during my time in DC. He was a genuinely good guy who was trying his best to get the thing working. Had dinner once or twice with him and Diana at his very nice home in the Connecticut woods. He was an amateur astronomer and had a pretty decent observatory set up next to the house.

There is a pretty widespread view that our big mistake was in trying to put current avionics into an old airframe but I reckon we would have had the same trouble if we had tried to run the Seasprite concept with say the S-70 or MH-60. It seemed to me anyway, that it was just too ambitious for a small navy to be running with.

Anyway, BZ again with the story. It is a great read.

Jack McCaffrie. Nov18.

By Ed. Thanks Jack. Anyone who missed the article can find it on our website [here](#). We are still very keen to get anyone else's recollections of Seasprite, particularly if you have any photos of them in the desert and/or being refurbished in the Kaman plant, or undergoing maintenance at Nowra. ✈

Seasprite Recollections

Thanks for the article on the Super Seasprite, which I enjoyed reading. I thought I'd share a few recollections on my involvement with the project...with a caveat that these thoughts are just the product of my memory of the time. I don't mind if anyone wants to correct me!

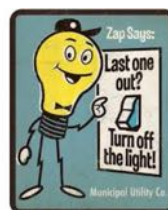
Firstly, I recall **Seamus O'Farrell**, **Jack Lutze** and **Ivan Misfeld** doing a world tour in 1977 or 78 looking for the FFG helo. We know how it ended but I remember Seamus saying that they looked at Seasprite then and rejected it. I think one of the issues was that 'Charlie Kaman' wasn't interested in any mods that the RAN might have insisted on. Hard to see how it could have been any more suitable 20 years later.

Secondly, in about 1997 or '98 I remember **John Crathern** asking for some help with a submission he was putting together to have the project scrapped. Obviously didn't work. (I can't recall where he was working at the time.)

While in DC **Greg Tindal** and then **Boong Dowsing** were my two aviation staff officers and they spent a lot of time on Seasprite. Over time it also got more of my attention - I began calling it Son of Collins. I recall that Georgia Tech Institute in Atlanta were doing quite a bit of work trying to get the software issues sorted, and Greg especially spent some time with them.

I visited the factory at least twice, once with Greg and another time with Chief of Navy Shackleton. Much of it is in an old 19th century stone building - much like the old mills in Lancashire. It is in rural Connecticut. In touring the factory floor we found that some of the guys working on refurbishing our airframes had built them as new some 30 years before. We were also told that it would have been cheaper to have given us new airframes because they had to do so much work to undo

Turn Out The Lights...



After a good night's sleep and due consideration my collective thoughts are that it's time to turn out the lights, lock the doors and throw away the keys because IHMO the FAA and its Association is as good as dead. I could go on but probably better not to bother enlarging on the obvious.

Don't get me wrong - the coming together of those who remain and renewing friendships is great however who is going to do the work to keep it going. IMHO no one, so let's call it a day.

It was a good concept originally but its run its course. The Navy ain't what it used to be.

The established friendships we have will see us through to the end as we each drop off the perch. So enjoy life as best we can, get out and do it all, leave nothing in the tank, and be kind

to each other.

Take care, we love you all. Fay and Harry Harkness.

By Editor. Thanks for your letter, Harry. To suggest the Association should close because you think we are 'as good as dead' from your narrow perspective is a mighty long bow to draw. There's a great deal that goes on in the Association right around this country that you are probably not aware of which is both useful and, in some cases, vital. It is valued by many members, including the younger ones who are on our books.

Your final words: 'Be kind to each other' is certainly the mantle by which we should live. So be kind to the Association, mate. Like all ESOs we have our problems but at our heart are the many hundreds of members who still believe in us and the comradeship we facilitate. I think that what the Association offers is great, and for less than the price of a cup of coffee per month is pretty good value too.

I'd also take issue with your view that the FAA is as good as dead – indeed, with new aircraft, cutting edge equipment and new ships to fly off, the FAA not only remains a highly professional Arm of Navy, but is now bigger and busier than it has been in over 30 years.

So – have another look at that glass in your hand. It's well more than half full, and with the stewardship of the good people we have, and those who follow behind them, may it long stay that way. ✈

Accident Record

Your accident record to Gannet WN456 which ditched off Melbourne on 23Mar 1965 reports “**SBLT J.M. Hutchinson** 816 NW After normal night deck landing No.4 wire engaged, bill of deck hook broke off and a/c trickled off end of angled deck into the sea. Pilot killed, other two crew members - **LEUT G. Bessell-Brown** and **LAUC K. Ryan** rescued uninjured”.

The report of crew injuries in the above version, to my recollection, might well be in error. As I recall, Ken Ryan was injured, suffering a nasty gash to his face and a 'back' injury which in later years required at least one major surgery which never really quite fixed the problem, he wore a 'brace' for many years to prevent breakdowns and assist in mobility.

LEUT G. Bessell-Brown (B stroke) I think had a broken arm and was shipped back to Australia post 'ditching'.

We were deployed during the Indonesian Confrontation on patrol duties in the Malacca Straits. I was, at the time of the 'ditching', an aircrewman on 816 Squadron and was 'crewed' up with Hutch and **Peter Coulson**. Due to unavailability of some aircrew that night, crews were switched around, as a result I flew with SP 'Affie' **Morritt** and SO 'Blue' **Moy**. We were in fact the aircraft that relieved Hutch and crew on patrol duties at around 4AM that morning in the Malacca Straits, after we had launched and were starting our sortie we heard the chatter and were advised that Hutch and co. had 'ditched'.

As a result of the uncertainties of the circumstances surrounding that ditching the deck was declared possibly "foul" and we were diverted into RAAF Butterworth to land and refuel, we returned to the "deck" later that morning at about 11AM as I recall, after the broken piece of the hook had been recovered on the deck and it had been confirmed that the arrestor wires were operating correctly. I visited Ken in the Sick Bay, he was a bit banged up, he was not a pretty sight I have to say.

Some background: Ken and I joined the Navy on the same day

23rd Feb 1959, we both became UC (Underwater Control) Asdic or Sonar operators, at one time we served together in HMAS Vendetta along with 'Darkie' **Phillips** (KIA Aug 1968 Vietnam). We, the three of us, did our 2's course together at HMAS Watson and we were also on the same UC(Air) course in Albatross in 1963.

Upon graduating and gaining our "Wings" on Wessex at 725 Squadron in 1963, the three of us were posted to 816 Squadron flying Gannets, as "Aircrewman" when fixed wing aviation got a new lease of life. We were three of the first of a "new" version of the Aircrewman category and received on the job training to fulfil this role as back seat crew in ASW Gannets, we possibly knew more about ASW than most other 816 aircrew at the time.

Kennedy William Ryan (Buck to some) is currently still alive and kicking in an aged care facility on the Gold Coast and we continue to talk regularly to this day, we 'belong', as most ex-service folk and especially aircrew know, to a fraternity; we still like to think that we have each other's backs.

John Boulton. Nov18 ✈

Rush of Blood



By Ed. By way of explanation, the following letter was written to the Naval Historical Review, in response to a report that the author had stood on his head during a Loyal Toast in the UK. He denies the allegation, as follows:

Dear Sirs,

Re page 17 of "REVIEW" Vol. 17 No. 2 of June 1996. "Rush of Blood".

I did not stand on my head during the Loyal Toast, nor did I say "That's how we do it down under!" The story is this:

At the final Dining in Night for Course 22 at Latimer (Joint Service Staff College) Buckinghamshire, UK, in May 1960, the Directing Staff followed a procedure developed over the

years since the JSSC ran its first course in 1945. The procedure took place after the Loyal Toast, drunk standing up because we had representatives from all Services, civil servants, Americans and other foreigners among the students.

As a farewell gesture, the band played various tunes for the various groups of officers who stood while the tune was being played. For example, the Regimental Tunes for various British Regiments, "A Nice Cup of Tea" for the civil servants, the national anthems of India and Pakistan, "Anchors Aweigh" for the USN, "The Halls of Montezuma" for the US Marine Corps etc. The nationals stood up for their own special tune (no toast). For the Aussies, there were three of us as I recall, the band played "Waltzing Matilda" – no starchy behaviour needed for that!

When the band struck up "Waltzing Matilda", I walked to the centre of the dining room and stood on my head. As at "CERBERUS" on Dining in Nights the tables were arranged in a large square. The other Aussies joined me and stood on their heads too. A Guards officer stepped out and poured a glass

of port down my shirt front. There was wide spread amusement – everyone thought the action of the Australian officers totally appropriate. Latimer was always the most tremendously fun place...

Sincerely, "Knocker" (CAPT N.H.S. White RAN (Ret'd)). ✈



All of the other reindeer used to laugh and call him names.

MY UNCLE'S HORSE (By Ron Marsh)

Ron Marsh, a long-standing member of the Association and great contributor to our various History articles, also loves writing poetry for kids. Noting we had the Melbourne Cup in the month just passed I thought I'd share this one with you, with grateful thanks to Ron.

My uncle had a Clydesdale,
He'd traded for a pup,
He took him down to Flemington,
To run the Melbourne Cup.

The crowd they were all laughing,
And even stewards too,
No one believed as uncle did,
Just what his nag could do.

The horses all were at the gate,
And champing at the bit,
And as the barrier went up,
The field, they had a fit.

They'd never seen a horse like that,
They frolicked on the ground,
No matter what the jockeys did,
No other horse was found
to run against the Clydesdale,
As he went round and round.

So uncle's horse, he won the race,
The Cup was taken back,
The Clydesdale never raced again.
He'd beaten all the cracks. ✈



FlyBy is a periodical of the Fleet Air Arm Association of Australia. Editing and typesetting by Marcus Peake.

We are always on the lookout for interesting articles, photos or stories so if you think you can help please contact the Editor [here](#).

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