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Slipstream

Established HMAS Albatross 1957



Initial flight tests of the production prototype SH-2G(A) Super Seasprite multi-mission helicopter are underway at Kaman Aerospace Corporation in Bloomfield, Connecticut, USA. Eleven SH-2G(A)s have been ordered by the Royal Australian Navy. When delivered in early 2001, they will be the most advanced intermediate maritime helicopter available. Photo courtesy Kaman Aerospace Corporation

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FOREWORD

by

Admiral C A Barrie, AO, RAN**Chief of the Defence Force**

I am delighted to be given this opportunity to address the Fleet Air Arm Association when so much development is taking place within the Naval Aviation Force Element Group (FEG).

It is perhaps difficult to accept, upon reflection, that the last of the four aircraft carriers (including HMAS *Albatross*) operated by the RAN; HMAS *Melbourne* was finally paid off on 30 June 1982 – almost eighteen years ago! Our Navy's thirty-four years of experience with classic fixed wing maritime aviation was based on the British model initially, with both ships and aircraft coming from the UK as a 'package deal' including operating procedures. Moreover, many of the personnel had extensive experience gained with the RN Fleet Air Arm during WWII.

Since the decommissioning of *Melbourne* we have transitioned, almost completely, to a helicopter-based Naval Aviation Force. This process will be completed when the Navy's two remaining HS748 fixed wing aircraft are withdrawn from service in June this year – their Electronic Warfare training role is to be provided by a civilian contractor.

The most noticeable change to have occurred in the intervening period is that our embarked aviation capability is now completely decentralised. Instead of most of our aircraft being in a single carrier, as was formerly the case, our helicopter force is now distributed through the fleet and capable of being embarked in our almost twenty aviation capable ships. Each flight operates as an independent unit integrated within its host ship's weapon system. However, perhaps the most truly dramatic change is not as obvious and is that which is occurring over the next several years with our aircraft. I'll attempt to summarise the major aspects as follows:

- The S-70B-2 Seahawk, of which 816 Squadron now operates twelve, will be fitted with Electronic Warfare equipment (ESM), Forward Looking InfraRed (FLIR) and missile countermeasures. The four Seahawks in 'Attrition Reserve' will also be brought into service making a total of sixteen available to the FEG. By 2004, up to eight Seahawks will routinely be embarked in both FFG and Anzac Class FFH.
- The eleven SH2G(A) Seasprite aircraft will commence delivery from the end of this year with the first six flights from 805 Squadron embarking in an FFH mid 2002. The sensor suite of the Seasprite will be similar to that of the Seahawk but without the sonics system. Significantly, the Seasprite will be armed with the most capable Penguin Missile.
- The Sea King is operated by 817 Squadron and seven airframes remain in service. These days the aircraft primarily performs the Maritime Utility role embarked in HMAS *Success* and frequently HMAS *Tobruk*. The aircraft is just commencing First of Class Flight Trials with the lead ship of the two LPA – HMAS *Manoora*. We expect aircraft to operate from HMAS *Kanimbla* from early 2001. Sea Kings and Army Blackhawks will be regularly embarked in these two units undoubtedly providing valuable amphibious support around the region.
- At NAS Nowra, a great deal of building activity is now reaching fruition and will provide accommodation for the new aircraft and its related facilities. Apart from the parent squadrons of the embarked flights, 723 Squadron is scheduled to continue with the units Naval Lead In Helicopter Training role (NLIHT) with six AS350BA Squirrel helicopters currently supplemented by five Bell 206B Kiowa. An important feature of NAS is the increased role played by civilian contractors in support our aircraft on base and the presence on-base of NALMS (previously SAMR, NALO etc.).

I have focused upon the detail of capability we have within our Naval Aviation Force, and the decentralised system of its deployment through the fleet, because many still understand and think of Naval Aviation in terms of the highly visible traditional aircraft carrier and its large Air Group. The ADF's Naval Aviation component, as I have now described it, has moved on from that model and has a most useful and flexible capability which is proving capable of responding magnificently to contingencies, including the Gulf War, Bougainville and currently East Timor. But routinely, the embarked aircraft provide an enormous enhancement to their host ship's capability and because they are deployed either individually

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EDITOR'S CORNER

Thank you, to all those people who have contributed to this edition of *Slipstream*, your help has been very much appreciated.

I apologise for the delay in producing this edition, but once again, promised material that has been allowed for fails to arrive by the deadline. NOT, I might add, material from the Division Scribes who have really excelled themselves.

Then there is the problem of cramming everything into the computer, a machine that is always in a state of combat readiness as far as I'm concerned. There is just no sneaking up on it and cutting a few corners. I tend to concur with a quote I came across recently which read: *'To err is human, but to really foul things up you need a computer.'*

As you read further on in this edition, you will read about the name change to the Museum. No doubt, some of you will get a little steamed up about the change, but I feel that it is for the best. I have spoken to the people responsible, and have found their reasoning to be very sound. The thing to bear in mind, is that whatever it is called, it is still **OUR** Museum.

Be kind to each other.

John Arnold

(Continued from page 2)

or in small numbers, they provide a very adequate and highly responsive operational capacity within the ADF's order.

I am aware that Naval Aviation has its problems. Probably the most significant of these is the approximately twenty-five percent shortfall of aircrew and a higher than desirable turnover of senior maintenance sailors. I know Chief of Navy is grappling with these problems.

In summary, the Naval Aviation Force has in my view, never had a brighter future as it introduces to service aircraft of absolutely unsurpassed capability and capacity. In closing, I would like to emphasise that I consider the support of the Naval Aviation Force by the Fleet Air Arm Association is a very positive influence upon this vital arm of the ADF. Please continue that support.

R

NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S REPORT



Greetings to all members and readers. I hope you enjoy this edition of *Slipstream* and I hope also that you have decided to make a contribution to this or a future edition.

Activity in the National HQ has been fairly quiet during the last few months but we now have to look toward the organisation for the next reunion to occur in October of 2001. You will recall that at the last AGM, a decision was made that reunions should be held at Nowra every three years and that the National Executive should co-ordinate them. It's time to start that task and to attract your interest to attend.

By 2001 there will have been quite extensive changes made to NAS Nowra. I have mentioned before the building activity currently going on there, namely a new control tower, 'H' Hangar replacement, new training complex and other less obvious works. The new training complex is indeed very large and at last there will be an up to date facility for this important activity. The new hangar complex is also much bigger than the old 'H' hangar and means that aircraft maintenance and squadron work can be conducted in excellent facilities. There is a Stage 2 construction plan, yet to be approved by the Govt., which will provide a new taxiway layout and other facilities update.

Work has also begun on the new curatorial, theatre, administration and additional display space facilities at the Museum, to be built onto the southern wall. Added to this are plans for a much improved arrangement of the display of aircraft and associated themes with special effects lighting within the hangar. The construction work should be complete by the end of August this year and the in-hangar component, which will also feature a mezzanine level walkway to enable visitor access to aircraft suspended from the rafters, should be finished within six months of that.

There is to be a change in the future direction of development of the Museum and an accompanying name change. It is important that members and all present and former FAA personnel know what is planned and why, so I will provide a description here and the Museum Director, Mark Clayton, will also include information about these significant changes in his column.

Over the last eight years of its operation, the Museum has attracted a lot of visitors and conducted other fund-earning activity, but this has not generated enough income to meet operating costs. Members' donations, Council grants plus Navy help in the provision of utility services such as garbage collection have helped to keep the Museum going. The Council's \$50,000 a year grant is about to cease, the Navy can no

(Continued on page 4)

longer support the Museum to the extent it once did because of the new commercial support arrangements whereby most utility services are contracted, and donations are reducing. Visitation rates have not improved over the years. Very fortunately, a most generous donation from HEH Insurance and more recently the Federation Fund grant have enabled the building of the new facilities and display improvements. Otherwise there would be no development work going on at all, there has been no earned funds for capital works. Over the last few years, staff numbers have had to be reduced and other activities reduced to contain operating costs.

The Board has had to take action to arrest the financial decline and has decided that the Museum, **in addition to housing and displaying Navy's aviation heritage**, should expand its collection and display material to cover aviation generally. The display of such themes as the history of flight, commercial aviation development and general aviation will join FAA exhibits to tell the wider story of aviation. These changes will bring the Museum into the mainstream of Australian and overseas museums. They should attract greater public support and visitation, as well as support and more involvement from the aviation industry and qualify more for financial support from government as an expression of their policies on regional development, education, and preserving national heritage. The Board considers that the Museum has the potential to become the largest and best equipped aviation museum in Australia.

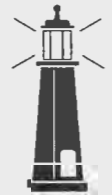
The new name for the Museum is to be '**Australia's Museum of Flight**', a title that reflects history, science and a comprehensive approach to this exciting form of endeavour.

Some of us might be disappointed with this outcome, preferring instead the Museum to remain the Australian Naval Aviation Museum and to tell the extraordinary story and quite fascinating development of naval aviation. The answer to this is that, if it doesn't change, the Board risks further deterioration in the Museum's financial situation with more reductions in activity and staff and less security for its future. If as expected, the institution can develop and expand to realise its full potential through wider appeal, and maintain within it the naval aviation theme, then the ability to tell and display the history of naval aviation will be enhanced. Australia's Museum of Flight is and will be very relevant to our history, it will continue to be the repository for naval aviation heritage and this will continue to give it an interesting, educational and attractive dimension.

I commend the change to you in the interests of preserving and displaying our heritage and sincerely hope you will continue to have a very justified sense of proprietorship in it and give your support to this great institution. Write to the Editor to tell us what you think of it.

Neil Ralph

FOR YOUR ENLIGHTENMENT



Editor's feedback from the last edition of *Slipstream*...

* The biggest 'flak raiser' was generated by the Sea Fury on the front cover, more specifically, the propeller it is sporting.

Max Gant and Frank Donnelly were prepared to bet that the prop had been assembled by Trevor Bolitho because a blade was missing. If that wasn't the case, then someone must have installed a Firefly prop by mistake.

Ron Pennington, from Tasmania, was equally surprised but thankful that he didn't have to fly 'this distorted aircraft'.

[I have been assured that the fifth blade is there – it's just a 'matter of perspective'. Ed]

* The page 6 letter from Jack Routley resulted in a get-together with the 'old and bold' during his recent visit to Australia. See photo elsewhere in this edition.

* The page 6 letter about John Richmond resulted in several of his shipmates contacting John and his wife Anna. John has recently joined the Queensland Division.

* The letter on page 8 entitled, 'A Bloody Good Hand', generated many phone calls and offers to assist in providing a headstone for Graeme 'Zac' Palmer. Enquiries have been made to try and establish where he lays in his pauper's grave. The answer from the authorities is that they can only release such information to his next-of-kin, not knowing who they are, or if they are still alive, posed an immediate problem.

This problem was soon overridden by the statement that, 'if he is in a grave, he might be buried with several others, and this immediately prevents a headstone being erected. On the other hand, if he was cremated, his ashes could be spread around the Rose Garden of any cemetery around Sydney'.

To overcome this apparent stalemate, I have suggested to 'Jaffa' Robinson and 'Zac's' other shipmates, that the erection of a bronze plaque on the Chapel Memorial Wall at *Albatross* may be the answer. This is currently under review.

(Continued on page 5)

* The article on page 11 entitled, 'The Right Spirit', generated many favourable comments. Petty Officer Paul Pelczar has now left Canungra and is serving at HMAS *Cerberus*.

* David Findlay and Gordon Turner made contact in reference to the photograph on page 12 - '816 Squadron presenting a crest to the CO of HMS *Cavalier*'.

Both said that the missing names are Peter Hargreaves and Joe Smith - Gordon wondered whether the other person could be John Selsmark.

* A good response from the photograph on page 12 showing the helo on its side and the caption, 'What's the story?'

At the moment, the odds are even between an anonymous Army pilot and a well known Naval aviator. The replies are published in this edition.

* The photograph on page 13 showing Ron Blewett and Edgar Kennedy, the date in question was 1952.

* The story entitled 'The Test Flight' by John Buchanan, which appeared on page 18, resulted in a request for permission to include it in an upcoming book on Gannets by Ben Patynowski.

* The author of 'Fleet Air Arm Beginnings', page 32, wishes to advise that 21st CAG is an error and should read 20th CAG.

* And finally, a phone call from a member of the 'punting fraternity' to advise that a horse named 'Slipstream' had won at the Flemington Gallops and paid 38 to 1.



Dear Ed

Just because we are at the far end of the Murray doesn't mean that we like to air our dirty laundry. The comments in the last edition of *Slipstream* were unfortunate and do not reflect the views of the SA Division. Regrettably, Roger was reacting to a public and private letter that was critical of his efforts and neither the comments in those letters nor Roger's comment in *Slipstream* do either Mary Rayner or Roger Harrison justice. They are both long serving members who have contributed significantly to the Fleet Air Association and both should be remembered for those contributions.

1999 was a busy year for many of us but I was pleased to see a good level of support to our activities. ANZAC Day; a visit to the Port Adelaide Aviation Museum plus a barbecue at Keswick and a winery tour with 723 Squadron; a trip to Goolwa for the dedication of the 817 Squadron Memorial; the Southern Vales winery tour and finally our Xmas dinner were all good opportunities to get together and spin dits. I believe SA has set an example to the other Divisions in our support to visiting Squadrons and the local aviation museum and plan to build on that support this year. I thank all members of the Committee for their contributions to these activities.

Peter Coulson - President SA Division

Dear Ed

My wife and I have just completed an eight month trip 'around the block', looking up some old shipmates along the way.

While we were in the Perth area, we stayed with a relative, an 'old salt' from WWII. He loaned me a book to read about a unit he served in during the war, the title is, 'Sailor and Commando' - a RAN special beach commando 1942-46. Written by A. E. (Ted) Jones, and printed by Hesperian Press, PO Box 317, Victoria Park, WA 6979.

I have read quite a few books about the RAN, but I didn't know that this particular unit had ever existed. At times they were on the beaches before the American landings. I found it a fascinating book and thought I would pass the information on to the FAA members who may be interested in reading it.

Barry Simpson - Tasmania

Dear Ed

'Have just received my first copy of *Slipstream* and certainly enjoyed it. I was transported back many, many years.

Congratulations on a good publication.

Fred Wessel

[Thank you, Fred. Good to hear from you. Ed]

Visiting the UK...

If anyone is visiting the UK, a visit to Plymouth is a must for those with an interest in maritime history.



Located near HMS *Drake*, Adrian and Amanda Budd, a Royal Navy family, have four self-catering apartments available for the visitor. Set within a large Victorian house, the spacious, self-contained luxury apartments are tastefully decorated and fully equipped to the highest standards; each benefiting from new furnishings and modern fitted kitchens and bathrooms.

One particular apartment is decorated with pictures, photographs, ships' crests and books and videos of the Senior Service.

Many of the people who stay there are from Australia, Canada and South Africa.

Anyone interested can check out the accommodation on the 'net at www.abudd.co.uk or obtain further information by writing to: Haddington House Apartments, 22 Pearn Gardens, Plymouth, PL3 5JG, England.

Telephone 0044 (0) 1752 767730.

Dear Ed

Greetings and salutations.

I am attaching some photo's taken in Darwin when VS816 Detachment Darwin was conducting Operation SEAWATCH looking for Vietnamese refugee boats (the correct terminology was ICOV (Indo-Chinese Origin Vessel)).

Sorties launched at dawn investigated Darwin harbour to ensure that none had sneaked in overnight (one vessel had done this previously), then out over the Timor Sea to the edge of Australian airspace in order to check all approaches to Darwin before returning to land some six hours later.



The aircraft was crewed by 'Topcat 3' (see photo) comprising from L-R: LEUT Alan Earle (Tacco), SBLT Ashley Scott (Pilot), POA Ian 'Squizz' Taylor and CPOA Roy 'The Boy' Coulter.

Alan Earle – LCDR RAN

Dear Ed

Very many thanks for publishing the letter about my uncle, Neville 'Tod' Wanstall, ex-Aircraft Handler RAN.

Uncle 'Tod' has received an overwhelming response from my letter and has had an 'absolute ball' answering the daily phone calls and correspondence from his old flight-deck mates.

He has asked me to pass on his heartfelt thanks to all who have renewed old friendships and spoke about some good times and some sad times with him. In regard to the rumour circulated some twenty years ago that he had been killed in a car accident; he can assure everyone that he is still capable of holding down a Sea Fury chock in any weather – and for some years to come!

He has now relocated to the town where he was born, Mount Morgan, Central Queensland.

'Tod' wishes all serving and retired Fleet Air Arm personnel the very best, and is looking forward to years of renewed mateship. Thanks again.

Wayne Wanstall

Dear Ed

Who was it?

I met up with a guy who used to work for Hawkers at Bankstown and who spent a lot of time in the Chiefs' Mess at *Albatross* over the years. He told me a story about a Sea Fury that had been bought by one of our pilots.

The Fury was delivered on a truck to Bankstown and my friend and another were asked if they could get it to a flyable state, as the pilot wanted to fly it to a strip north of Sydney.

In due course, the job was done and the old girl was fit and ready to go. A Sunday morning was selected as the go day and the pilot apparently spent some time at the bar of the flying club on the previous night and spoke of his plans to all and sundry.

Next morning, he fronted up ready to go but found a CAA official there and the aircraft blocked off. The flight was not allowed as the pilot didn't have a civil licence nor was the Fury fitted out with a C of A.

The above details may not be precisely accurate, but that's the general gist of the tale. My friend doesn't wish to disclose his name and can't remember the pilot's name. Can this story be filled out a little more?

Barry Lister

Dear Ed

On my 'round Australia trip' last year, I met up with some old shipmates from Geraldton, Western Australia. The enclosed photograph is of a small get-together in honour of a long dry spell between drinks.

L-R: John Mitten – Ron Powell – 'Paddy' Williamson – 'Murlex' Bradley – A. J. Fox.

I hope you will find this of interest.

'Paddy' Williamson



When you go into court you are putting yourself in the hands of twelve people that weren't smart enough to get out of jury duty.

Dear Ed

A couple of issues ago, Les Jordan wrote to *Slipstream* and asked if anyone had photographs of him in uniform, and that he would appreciate copies of them.

I thought that I had one somewhere and I have finally unearthed it.



I believe that the smartly turned out rating on the left is young Jordan. The reason that he is helping the 'Greenies' rig festoon lighting escape me (note how many of them it takes to stick in a light globe), but he was always a versatile chap.

I think that the Warrant Officer was probably Charlie Morris.

Brian Terry

Dear Ed

With reference to the South Australian Whipping Boy's 'Quote to ponder in the October 1999 edition of *Slipstream* [*The Almighty in His infinite wisdom did not see fit to create Frenchmen in the image of Englishmen.* Winston Churchill]. I think the 'Old Boy', Sir Winston, not young Roger, has it wrong.

In a survey conducted by Sofres Polling Agency for the Federation of Perfume Industries, the following statistics were cited:

- Only 45% of French men and 49% of French women bathe or shower daily.
- 50% of men and 30% of women don't use deodorant.
- The average French citizen uses only four cakes of soap per year although 94% of households have a bathtub or shower.

Sounds very English!

John Macartney

Dear Ed

I am currently organising a reunion for those personnel who served at RAAF Base Squadron Momote and HMAS *Tarangau* on Manus Island, Papua New Guinea.

The combined RAAF and Navy reunion is to be held on Friday the 13th to Monday the 16th of October 2000 at Maroochydore.

Those personnel interested in attending, please contact:

Lance Doughty, 9 Mai Court, MAROOCHYDORE QLD. 4558 – Telephone 07 5443 2775.

Lance Doughty – Reunion Organising Committee

Dear Ed

After reading 'Baldy' Holston's letter in the last edition, I contacted John Richmond's wife in Cairns. John was unable to speak to me so I wished him well via his wife, Anna.

I knew John when we worked together for a short while at Camden Airport, NSW, in 1969.

I look forward to hearing from old shipmates and others.

Tom Allwood – Hervey Bay, Qld. Tel. 07 4124 2218

Dear Ed

Reading the little snippet on Victor 'Jesus' Zammit in the latest issue of *Slipstream* brought back a few memories I have of the man.

Like being fined 10 pounds for smoking between restricted bulkheads when the ship was in Fuel Danger state; and leading a large dead rat on the end of a piece of rope through the main galley. Also the time when I was the only one in line when the canteen shutter was raised at Stand Easy, Victor taking a quick look and announcing, 'Goffa's on the house'.

But the best of all was in Jervis Bay when Victor went ashore on canteen business. Waiting on the landing to go back to the *Sydney*, a workboat pulled alongside with a young coxswain in charge. Seeing a civilian he asked him who he was and where he wanted to go. 'I'm Jesus and I want to go to the *Sydney*. The coxswain replied, 'In that case, WALK!'

Happy memories.

Frank Donnelly

Dear Ed

Air Commodore John MacNeil is organising a reunion of aircrew from No.7 Air Crew Course at Point Cook, which commenced 26th February 1951, and would like to hear from former (Navy) course members. He can be contacted at: 3/1 Grandison Street, Moonee Ponds, Vic. 3039.

'Windy' Geale

Dear Ed

Could you please ask the secretary to forward me an application form to join the FAAA NSW Division.

I returned to civilian life in 1974 after completing my nine years and reaching the dizzy heights of NAMA E – the last four years being with 805 Squadron.

My many fond memories of my naval time include such things as – being led astray by D B Groom and being caught by the station Commander walking on the sacred grass of the cricket oval - hijacking a Wessex one Air Day – getting nabbed riding a borrowed bicycle the wrong way up Pitt Street late at night, then getting a lift back to the *Melbourne* in the back of a paddy wagon; along with a very indignant John Steele, who I think went on to a commission and Air Traffic Control.

Then there are some stories involving 'Toby' Edwards, who did the right thing and made a career of it. The enclosed photo, taken on 25APR67 in the Paris Bar at Sembawang, Singapore, shows L-R: Mulvihill – McKenzie – Edwards and myself.

'Scotty'



Dear Ed

In response to your request in the last edition for information about the photograph of the Sycamore crash.

At the time 724 Squadron were training Army pilots, one of whom was in control of 851. Just after lift-off and at the hover, ground resonance was experienced, tilting the aircraft to the port side. The rotor tips touched the hard standing and it began to rain pieces of wooden main rotor blades.

The picture tells the story of the result. The crew bolted when it stopped 'raining' and yours truly rushed to the aircraft and climbed in to switch off the ground/flight switch. The inverters had been left running. Sparks and Avgas don't mix well!

John 'Metho' Metherall – ex-EM 723 Sqdn.

**Light travels faster than sound.
This is why some people appear bright until you
hear them speak.**

Dear Ed

Keep up the good work, *Slipstream* is my link with the past and shipmates. Pity it isn't a monthly!

Congratulations to our new secretary, Les Kube, who is doing a great job, as did our last secretary, Alan Andrews.

Ron Pennington –Tasmania

[God is Good! He only allows four a year. Ed.]

Dear Ed

Back in 1951, I joined the RAN as a Recruit Naval Airman and commenced training at HMAS *Cerberus* with another West Australian (Kalgoorlie boy) called Ed Green.

Recently, on a return visit from Singapore, my wife Laurel and I decided to visit the much talked about Margaret River region of WA, to 'check out' the wine industry. We stayed at a little guest house called 'The Noble Grape' – Scout's Honour, that was it's name. We bought a bottle of wine at a local wine shop and liked it, so decided to look up the vineyard. Who do we meet up with? Ed Green.

I hadn't seen him for 40 years. Ed's ambition, when joining the Navy, was to fly in the Fleet Air Arm. The lack of vision in one eye dashed his hopes and he was trained in Meteorology. He left the Navy in 1957 to join the Weather Bureau in Perth WA and in the ten years before his retirement, became the regional aviation and defence weather services manager.

During this time, he developed an interest in growing grapes. Now, Ed and his wife Elenore (previously a practising dentist), are combining part time weather recording and producing award winning wines at their Forest Grove property, 15 km south of the Margaret River. Their Green Valley (note the name!) 1996 Cabernet Sauvignon has won a gold medal, beating many high flyers in the WA wine industry.

So, if you decide to visit the Margaret River wine area in WA and you like good wines, remember to include a visit to Green Valley Wines at Forest Grove. With luck, your host will be a short, round, friendly fellow (hasn't changed in over 40 years) called Ed, and you won't be disappointed.

Don McLaren

Dear Ed

I spent two days in court in February on my appeal with the Administrative Appeals Tribunal to try and get a reassessment of compensation for loss of hearing and tinnitus against the Defence Department and lost the case.

I was awarded \$740 or so in 1974 for a 12.5% loss under the 1971 Act which knows nothing about tinnitus. A later Act of 1988 does. The Board

accepted my evidence that it has got worse (now 28.8% loss), but, because three specialists reckon that it doesn't get worse once removed from the source of the damage and were not prepared to say otherwise officially. The Board decided that they couldn't recommend further compensation, as they weren't able to relocate me to the 1988 Act to back up their decision. Had one of the specialists said 'yes', they would have been favourable.

I was able to physically demonstrate the noise with a small electronic gadget that I have had made, but that wasn't sufficient. One specialist thought it could get worse but wasn't prepared to be categorical about it. They don't appear to know a lot about it and are not prepared to accept the reality of the tinnitus noise levels.

I am going back to my specialist to have a detailed discussion about it to see if he might be a bit more co-operative.

If anyone knows of a specialist, who is prepared to go to bat, please let me know. My phone numbers are: (07) 5493-2934 - Mob.0418-720-223 - e-mail: blister@ats.com.au

Barry Lister

Dear Ed

I recently received a contact from a former shipmate asking me to chase up present and former Cooks, both Officers and Ratings, who have served in the RAN.

I have been able to contact some people through my attendance at various reunions over the years, but there must be hundreds more spread around this wonderful country of ours that might appreciate knowing about our upcoming 'oneout' get together.

It will be held at the Yarraville Club, Stephen St., Yarraville, Victoria, on 20th May 2000, from 7:00pm until midnight.

Dinner will be held in the Bistro Dining Room, the estimated cost being \$25 per person, payable at the door. Drink attendants will serve you at the table and you pay for the drinks. Dress will be jackets and ties. Partners are most welcome.

For further information ring Bill Johnstone on 08-83454885 after 7:00pm any night.

Edward (Jack) Diehm

[CPO Cook (S) Diehm, began a professional boxing career in 1941. He boxed under the professional title of 'Jackie Dean'. In 1944 he defeated the NSW Featherweight Champion, Danny Simmons in a non-title bout; he was never knocked down in fifty-one professional bouts. When eventually posted to *Albatross*, he took a leading part in the production of a Boxing Team.

Jack also had a good sense of humour. In 1958,

Lt Stan Goodridge RANR (S), was married. Chief Cook Diehm provided the wedding cake.

It was reported that: *'At the crucial moment in proceedings, the combined efforts of the groom and his blushing bride on the end of the Pussers' sword, failed to make any impression on the cake. Indeed, their combined efforts were so vigorous that fears were felt for the safety of the sword.'*

The cake in question had been manufactured in a combined effort with the Chief 'Chippy' and the Chief Cook. The report concluded: *'the 'real' cake was eventually produced, much to the relief of several ladies present.'* Ed]

Dear Ed

During my draft to the *Vengeance* in 1953, the Gunnery Officer, LTCDR Duffy, and the Buffer, 'Sticks' Middleton, requested teams from all departments to be involved in a Rifle Shoot. There were about thirty teams mustered; from the Naval Airmen we raised a team of six.

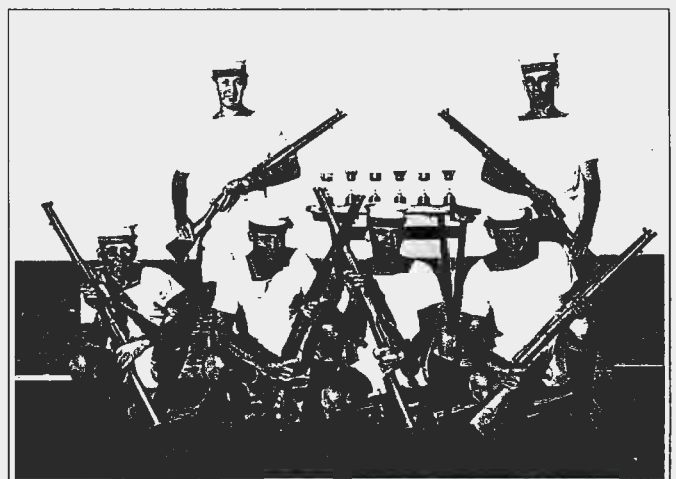
It came 'down to the wire' where there was a team from the Wardroom and our team to contest the finals.

We beat the Officers, who naturally screamed, 'Green Rub!' - 'We were seen off!' etc. But the proof of the winning team is as shown.

Tons of memories, Ed.

'Weed' Smith

[Fred Phelps provided the accompanying photograph. At the time of writing, Fred is very sick, we all wish him well. Ed]



Rear L-R: A J 'Weed' Smith – Barry 'Rastus' Parkes
Front: L-R: Brian Carroll – Bill McFarlane – Fred Phelps – Brian 'Tex' Millar (deceased)

Arguing with a pilot is like wrestling with a pig in mud, after a while you begin to think that the pig likes it.
General Dynamics bulletin board

Dear Ed

Ref. your page 12 'What's the Story' January 2000 edition.

Perhaps the sub-title should read...

'Re-famil - Un-famil'.

Back then (1963), I was attached to 723 Squadron as one of the many A/E ground crew, but the second string to the bow was as one of the very early Winch Operators, I followed on behind Gordon 'Pancho' Walter and Len 'Shorty' Ackerley, and I guess we were the fore-runners of a long and distinguished list of Winch Operators that followed on and continue to do so. (Ref. Syd/Hob.yacht race 1998).

Date: July 17 1963

Time: 1100

Aircraft: Sycamore 851

Pilot: Lt.Spratt

Duty: Aircraft Re-familiarisation

The day started out as fairly routine. I was down to fly with the good Lieutenant as 'ballast' in the left hand seat and was quite looking forward to a routine check of the Jervis Bay beaches, maybe a couple of sloping ground landings (didn't we all love those!), in fact, a bit of a joy ride before lunch.

Earlier in the day, NAM(AE) 'Goldie' Edwards happened by the Squadron A700 office and voiced a desire to fulfil a life time ambition and fly 'Pussers' Airways' for the first time! Not a problem. He got the okay from the Pilot, then made a quick trip to the Safety Equipment section to be kitted out, and returned shortly afterwards complete with flying suit, Bone-dome, Mae West, and a full charge of adrenalin - or was that apprehension ?

If memory serves me right, (its now 36 years on since the ' Incident') our Pilot had been to sea with 805 Squadron on fixed wing aircraft for several cruises and it was quite some time since he had flown a Sycamore helicopter. So, armed with Pilot's Notes, (which didn't instil a lot of confidence in his front seat passenger, let me tell you!) the Before Flight Inspection was completed by our intrepid Pilot. He climbed aboard did all the pre-flight checks as per the book, checked his passengers were strapped in, went through the start-up routine, and shortly thereafter we were at idle speed ready for take-off.

Now, not being a pilot, but having a few hours up in Sycamores, I was aware that the damned things had an inbuilt idiosyncrasy in that on take-off, the cyclic pitch stick had to be moved back and to the right slightly to keep the aircraft straight and level until fully airborne.

To this day, I can't confirm or deny whether this procedure was carried out, but as we lifted off and climbed to all of 10 to 15 feet, we experienced a sharp dip to port and the rotor blades hit the deck!

This was most irregular, thought I... and the following few seconds were absolute noise and pandemonium. I remember as we hit the deck, glancing up through the perspex canopy, hearing the Alvis Leonides 12 cylinder radial grinding on as the blades were getting shorter and shorter and thinking... 'there's a better than even chance I'll lose my head in a second'.... it didn't happen!

After what seemed an age, and was, I guess only a few seconds, all was quiet with the exception of the crash alarm winding up to full bore. Lt.Spratt asked if we were okay as he hung above me in his harness, and with an affirmative we were on the move. I stood and threw the pilot's side door open, which now was uppermost, and I seem to recall walking all over the good Lieutenant on my way out. Once outside I took off, fully expecting the damned thing to explode any second, bearing in mind the high octane fuel it carried, but reconsidered my heroic departure and raced back to offer what assistance I could to the pilot, who was still in harness but madly throwing switches to the 'off'.

Meanwhile, 'Goldie' was making a hasty exit from the rear, and when his feet hit the tarmac headed off in the direction of north - at a reasonable rate of knots, which couldn't have been easy because I observed his bone dome had fallen forward and was now balanced around the bridge of his nose - seeing which way to go must have caused him a great degree of difficulty.

Luckily there were no injuries. Not just from inside the aircraft, but from the ground crew around the 723 Squadron hangar area.

As some will recall, the blades of the Sycamore were constructed of wood (spruce?) and the leading edge protected by segmented brass wrap around sections, with a small gap between each section to allow for flexing in flight. So, when the blades hit the deck, these segments were flying around like machine gun bullets and probably at about the same speed, peppering the hanger walls, doors and surrounding areas. Into all this, I recall seeing 'Pancho' and 'Shorty' and others heading our way carrying and wheeling fire extinguishers of varying shapes, sizes and types. Shortly thereafter, the crash crew arrived and the rest is history.

To this day I have no idea if 'Goldie' ever tempted fate and flew 'Pusser's Airways' again, but he must hold the Navy's 'First Flight Short Distance Record' - 10 feet up and 10 feet down at full power! (Talk about an adrenalin rush.)

Ed., I believe the details to be accurate but you may by now have a different spin on it from either Lt. Spratt or 'Goldie' Edwards....or others.

Keep up the good work with *Slipstream*, it's more than appreciated by all.

Dear Ed

For the story about Sycamore 85I's unusual attitude, illustrated on page 12 of the current edition of *Slipstream*, I would suggest that you ask my friend, former Lieutenant Robin Spratt. Unfortunately I do not have his current address, but if my memory serves me correctly he made an embarrassing attempt to take off in a Sycamore at about that date.

Your readers may be interested to know that British-designed Sycamore differed from later helicopter types in many respects. Firstly, it was rigged so that the controls were central in cruising flight. Secondly, the main rotor rotated in the opposite direction from that of American-designed machines, e.g. the Wessex. Thirdly, there were none of the sophisticated control interconnections such as those built into later machines; all corrections had to be anticipated and input by the pilot. Fourthly, there was no rotor speed governor, the rotor r.p.m. were manually controlled. Fifthly, the controls were not hydraulically assisted. Finally, some Marks had the throttle mounted on the collective lever, but at ninety degrees to it, so that it was operated like a motor bike throttle, except that it worked in the opposite direction. Motor bike riders were prone to closing the throttle when they wanted to open it.

The implication of all of the above is that to take off, instead of starting with the controls central and correcting from there, it was necessary to move the cyclic back and to the right and apply full left rudder before applying collective. Failure to do so meant that the aircraft attempted to yaw right while moving left and forward as it lifted off, thus tripping over its own left main wheel. Large and rapid control movements intended to correct this movement could result in rotor droop, requiring an increase in throttle movement beyond that available to the pilot without changing grip.

Nevertheless the Sycamore was successfully operated by at least the RAN, RAF, and some airlines for many years. Problems arose only when former Sycamore pilots who had moved on to other types returned to Sycamores. A series of similar accidents to the one illustrated which occurred at the RAF C.F.S Tern Hill in 1965 resulted in the withdrawal of the Sycamore from RAF service at that time.

Albert Riley LCDR RANR

Dear Ed

Having recently read Major General Robert Mohr's report on the 'Review of Service Entitlement Anomalies in Respect of South-East Asian Service 1955-75'. It was with particular interest that I noted at the end of Annex 'A', among the organisations who responded to a request for submissions was the 'Fleet Air Arm Association' (FAAA).

Submissions to the review were to reach the Secretary no later than 13 August 1999. The National President made mention of the review in the October 1999 issue of *Slipstream*, he noted that our Patron John Goble was presenting a case together with others. I thought there may have been something further in *Slipstream*, no mention of an Association submission was made at the last Federal Council meeting held at *Albatross* on 30 October 1999. I have written to the National Secretary to enquire what the Association's response was to the request for a submission.

Both HMAS *Sydney* and *Melbourne* saw FESR service during the Malayan Emergency 1955-1960, and then *Sydney*, as the Vung Tau ferry, and *Melbourne* for almost the whole period covered by the review from 1956 on with the exception of a couple of years. The numbers of FAA personnel who are effected by the outcome of the review would have to be considerable. There are probably some out there that are still not aware that a limited repatriation benefit in respect of disability pensions for FESR service has been available since May 1997.

Should the Government accept General Mohr's recommendations with respect to the Malayan Emergency 1 July 1955 to 31 July 1960; then those who had an aggregate of 28 days service in the area will be entitled to the award of the Naval General Service Medal (NGSM) with clasp Malaya, the Australian Active Service Medal 45-75 (AASM) with clasp Malaya, and the Return from Active Service Badge (RASB). The General has also recommended that the service be regarded as Qualifying Service for a Service Pension.

In conclusion it was noted in the report that 7,800 RN personnel were awarded the NGSM with clasp Malaya between 1948-1960. That is somewhat different to what was espoused when Mrs Bishop was the Minister responsible.

Ian Ferguson

Dear Ed

I have had my copy of 'Flying Stations' for several months, but only recently have I done more than flick through it looking at the photographs. I have still not read much of the book, but am impressed, with one exception, by what I have read so far.

The exception is the account (page 144) of the 'Checkmates' collision over Sydney Harbour in 1962, which leaves the reader with the impression that the team was performing at low level over, or dangerously close to, a populated area. According to the text 'the crashed pilot' said, 'I steered clear of the houses before ejecting'. I was the pilot; *I said no such thing!*

Despite the interposition of many years and

several other traumatic experiences, I remember, I believe, the events of 02 October 1962 quite clearly:

The sortie started badly with No.3 (Barry Roberts) going unserviceable on start-up. The other three of us departed on time, with me flying in No.3 position on the starboard wing, instead of my accustomed position 'in the box'. I was very worried about this because although I had flown formation aerobics on the starboard wing before, I had not done so for over a year, and never in a display. However, a few minutes after take-off, Barry's aircraft became serviceable and he chased after us, joining the formation as we approached Botany Bay. I thankfully slid back into the box. We used to fly a very tight formation with the aircraft's wingtips overlapping and the two wingmen stepped up a little, their cockpits adjacent to the leaders tail. In the box I flew stepped down, with my cockpit adjacent to the tails of the wingmen.

Arriving over Sydney harbour we found a fine warm day with 3 to 4 eighths of cloud at about 3000 feet, a bit low for our purposes, but we elected to continue, looping through the clouds. However, the atmosphere below the cloud was very turbulent, making the necessary tight rolls very difficult for the wingmen. The formation was rather rough, and one of them, I can't remember which, complained. Our leader (Roley Waddell-Wood) elected to abbreviate the display, performing no further rolling manoeuvres. He briefed us over the air that we would perform only the bomb-burst and go home.

The 'bomb-burst' was performed by flying a loop, but on reaching the vertical position at the back of the loop the leader continued the loop. The two wingmen rolled ninety degrees to the left and right respectively, and the man in the box performed an aileron turn and pulled out in the opposite direction to the leader. This resulted in the aircraft flying off in separate directions at ninety degrees to each other. This time we reached the vertical dive position at 2500 to 3000 feet, under about 90% power accelerating through about 250 knots.

Because of the weather conditions, I suppose we were all relieved when we heard the 'Break' order. On hearing 'Break', I saw Barry Orr, on the port wing, roll and start to move off. Quickly, I glanced 'up' and right, couldn't see Barry Roberts and

thought he must have already gone, so rolled hard right using full aileron and full right rudder.

As I reached the reciprocal course, my windscreen was suddenly full of Sea Venom. For an instant I was shocked to the point of inaction, then for an instant I was relieved, thinking that it was a near miss, but I was given no time to relax. My aircraft shuddered, I thought it was from hitting the jet wash, then flicked back to the left and began rapidly rotating anti-clockwise. I didn't know what was wrong, embarrassedly thinking that perhaps I had stalled the ailerons, which was possible in a Venom if it was too roughly handled.

Just then I heard the voice of the Observer (Dave Innes) in the lead aircraft calling, 'Are you alright number three?' I had a flash of irritation at this - I was number four, and anyway, I was too busy to answer.

Glancing at the Air Speed Indicator I read 110 knots. This didn't make sense, but I decided that I was in a spin. The ejection seat fitted to the Sea venom had a limitation of 5,000 feet in a dive or a spin and we were already below that. With the words 'five thousand feet...five thousand feet' running through my brain I commenced spin recovery procedure - but the aircraft did not respond to any control movement.

Approaching 1,000 feet, I once again heard Dave Innes' voice, 'Are you alright number three - I think you've lost your left rudder!' I then realised that Barry Roberts was also in trouble, but didn't have time to think about the cause. At that altitude, with the Rate of Descent Indicator on the bottom stop, I realised that even should I recover control of the aircraft I was not going to recover from the ensuing dive.

A quick mental debate followed - Eject? - What's the use? - Eject? - YES! - Transmit? I put my thumb on the transmit button and decided NO - there was no time. I thought, 'so this is what it is like to be killed!'

I ejected the canopy and pulled the ejection handle without taking the time to sit back correctly.

I felt each of the ejection seat's three cartridges go off individually, and the seat cushion reverberating as I struggled futilely to sit back in my seat. I felt a severe pain in my back, but didn't



1962 - 805 Squadron 'Checkmates'
L-R: Lieutenants Albert Riley - Barry Roberts - Barry Orr -
Roley Waddell-Wood and Dave Innes

notice that my right foot had hit the instrument panel until later when it became bruised and sore. I felt deceleration as the seat's drag chute opened, and then a rush of air in my face as I was toppled forward out of my seat.

I was waiting to feel my parachute open, when, to my surprise, I hit the water quite firmly on my back and went under. Either the ejection or the water impact knocked the breath out of me and I was totally spatially disoriented; I had no idea which way was up, or which way I was moving. I struggled to hold my breath but was unable to do so, feeling froth bubbling around my mask I thought I was gasping in water. I heard myself say, 'Mae West, Mae West', and hastily inflated my lifejacket.

To my relief, I soon found myself on the surface. I was still wearing my pressure breathing mask and realised that I had not been breathing water, but 100% oxygen from the small parachute pack bottle. I took off the mask and released the parachute, my dinghy was no longer attached to my lifejacket but I stopped looking for it when I saw a RAAF crash boat approaching at high speed. The water felt good and the harbour looked beautiful.

The superbly handled boat stopped dead within a boat-hook's length of me and I was hauled aboard and taken to Garden Island – probably less than five minutes had elapsed from the time I had hit the water to being rescued.

Still trying to piece together what had happened, I enquired about Barry Roberts and was told that he was okay and on his way back to Nowra. I was told that we had collided, but when asked about the impact, I could only say that I hadn't felt it.

FOICEA, who had observed the accident, and later on the media, both asked the question as to when I had decided to eject. My reply was, 'when I was sure the aeroplane was going into the water', that is when I was sure that it was going to crash. The display was performed over the harbour; there was never any possibility of the aircraft crashing on land.

The team performed together several times after this accident, but we never discussed the collision amongst ourselves. I did not hear the evidence of the other witnesses, nor was I ever informed of the findings of the Board of Inquiry. It would be interesting to hear of Barry Roberts' recollection of the incident.

I write in the hope that the disputed statement will be corrected in the event of the book being reprinted.

Albert Riley

Aeronautics was neither an industry nor a science. It was a miracle. Igor Sikorsky



CANADIAN FAA CONFERENCE

October 1999

During a visit to Canada and the USA, my wife Laurel and I attended the Banshee Chapter CNAG Conference in the magnificent landmark Empress hotel in Victoria, BC, Canada. held 8-10 October 1999.

It was not surprising that the conference was held in Victoria BC. It is a traditional area of Canadian naval activity and there are many retired Canadian Navy folk there. Besides the Empress hotel and other landmarks, there are beautiful places on the island to visit, not least of which is the Butchart Gardens, 21 kms north of the capital.

There were approximately 270 persons in attendance and we were surprised to find that we were the only 'foreigners' to attend. Most proceedings were quite relaxed, in particular the Saturday mid day activity 'Up Spirits', where neat rum was in abundance to those who could handle it. Very British! A dinner dance was held on the Saturday evening at which I had the pleasure of making a presentation to the Banshee Chapter on behalf of the FAAA of Australia. On Sunday, a Worship and Memorial Service was understandably formal and fitting to the occasion.

Membership of this Chapter of CNAG is comprised mainly of ex-sailors. Unfortunately, like our association, the organisation lacks membership of young serving and ex-serving personnel. This is not only disappointing to those who work hard to keep the Chapter active, but does not auger well for its future. They, like us, see the need to get more interest from the younger people, if the organisation is to survive.

One of the pleasures of attending this conference, was meeting up with Canadians we had met during our 50th Fleet Air Arm Reunion and others we did not meet, but who also attended. These people were full of praise for the kindness and friendship they experienced at Nowra and in other parts of Australia during their visit. 'Full marks' must therefore go to our organisers of the Reunion.

One of the highlights of the Memorial Service was listening to the beautiful voice of Judy Dowling singing Amazing Grace. For those of us fortunate enough to still be on this earth, it seemed to put many things into perspective.

It would be remiss of me not to mention some Canadians who were of assistance to us before and during our visit. Any conference requires timely planning and organisation, recognition of which is often lost by those who attend, and 'colourful' characters people can identify with... Some of you may have met some of the following: John Eden, Red Atkin, John (Hoss) Anderson and a special mention for George and Barbara Lenihan. John Anderson impressed us as a lively Master of Ceremonies (a tough job, but somebody has to do it) and, with his astonishing capacity for neat rum, he had no trouble keeping the conversation flowing!

In Summary - a good time was had by all. So anyone who has the opportunity to renew their acquaintance with their Canadian friends at such a conference and are fortunate enough to have Victoria BC as the venue, make every effort to get there. You wont be disappointed.

Don McLaren

WELFARE REPORT

*In conjunction with the
Regular Defence Force Welfare Association*

The first task faced by most Pensions or Welfare Officers is to determine claimants possible eligibility and under which scheme to apply.

For a long time RAN personnel who served in South-East Asian waters were in a state of limbo.

The Review of Service Entitlement Anomalies in Respect of South-East Asian Service was conducted. It covered the period 1955-75 and the results of the review have been published. It now remains to be seen just what the Government does as a result of the review, but it is hoped that it does not become just another exercise in 'bean counting'.

In a media release from the Naval Association, Admiral Hudson is quoted as saying in part: *'It would be a travesty of justice if the positive recommendations of this report were not fully implemented.'*

He went on to say that he acknowledged that cost would be a factor to be taken into account, but *'noted this would be minimal with, sadly, many of the relevant ex-naval personnel having died and others already being entitled to similar benefits from previous and subsequent campaigns'*.

In the last few months several serving RAN members have had disability claims finalised with the Department of Veterans' Affairs, and again I remind veteran members to submit claims as soon as possible.

The Sydney office of the Military Compensation and Rehabilitation Service (MC & RS) has changed address and they are now in the DVA Building (right at Central Station).

There are several trained Pensions Officers within the Fleet Air Arm community and the Editor of *Slipstream* will only be too pleased to supply further information.

From the files this month comes the story of a young woman who wrenched her knee playing organised sport. The injury was severe and she will suffer the affects of it, and the treatment, for the rest of her life.

DVA recognised this and awarded her a small disability pension, but more importantly, a Specific Treatment authority (White card) to cover all future treatment of the injury. Something that all serving and ex-service personnel should consider.

SABRE

The things that come to those that wait may be the things left by those that got there first.

The 'Sharks' turn 50!



A Navy Seaking helicopter from 817 Squadron has been specially painted to celebrate the Squadron's 50th Anniversary. The paint scheme was designed by Able Seaman Bryan Brown, who is a Seaking maintenance technician. The livery depicts the Navy's White Ensign on the front of the aircraft and a large shark, the squadron's emblem, is on the tail fuselage.



817 Squadron is based at the Naval Air Station Nowra and currently operates seven Westland Seaking helicopters. The Squadron's roles include logistic support for ships at sea, surface surveillance, anti submarine weapon delivery, amphibious support and search and rescue. 817 Squadron's operational achievements in recent times include support of UN Operations in Somalia, Bougainville and East Timor. 817 Squadron has also played a major role in supporting the Australian community providing support for flood relief in Nyngan, bush fires in Sydney, assistance during the Thredbo disaster and numerous search and rescues including a major role in the Sydney to Hobart rescues.

817 Squadron was originally commissioned as a Royal Navy Squadron in 1941 flying Fairy Albacores. Serving with distinction in World War II the Squadron received battle honours for operations in Norway, Biscay, North Africa and Sicily.

The Squadron was disbanded after World War II to reform as a Royal Australian Navy Squadron on April 25th, 1950 flying Fairey Firefly aircraft. The Squadron then served and received battle honours for operations on the Korean Peninsula in 1951-52.

CHANGE OF COMMAND AT RANAS NOWRA

Captain J. Wood RAN was born in the United Kingdom and joined the Royal Australian Navy in 1982 after 16 years service in the Royal Navy.

He entered the Britannia Royal Naval College Dartmouth in September 1966 and saw service in HM Ships *Tenby*, *Bossington*, *Sheraton*, *Albion* (first Australian visit to Fremantle in 1968), *Blake*, *Devonshire*, *Brighton* and *Ajax*. His shore postings included service in the Operations Division of Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (NATO), the Royal Naval Staff College at RNC Greenwich, the Staff of the Britannia Royal Naval College Dartmouth and the office of the First Sea Lord in Whitehall.



Captain Cole welcomes Captain Wood

He joined the RAN as a Lieutenant Commander in November 1982 at HMAS *Cerberus* in Victoria and served as the Supply Officer there until January 1985. He was promoted to Commander in June 1985 and posted to Canberra where he served in a Studies Directorate of the Department of Defence until December 1986. He graduated from the Joint Services Staff College in June 1986. He was transferred to Sydney and joined HMAS *Hobart* where he served until December 1988, a period that included the Bicentennial Naval Salute and Fleet Review in Sydney in January 1988.

After leaving HMAS *Hobart* he joined the staff of the Fleet Commander (later to become the Maritime Commander Australia) and served in a number of positions which included Deputy Fleet Supply Officer, Fleet Supply Officer, Chief Staff Officer (Support) and Admiral's Secretary.

He was promoted to Captain in June 1991 and remained in Sydney being posted to the Naval Support Command where he served as the Chief Staff Officer (Administration) until December 1993.

In January 1994 he was transferred to Western Australia as the Chief of Staff and remained in the post until January 1997. He was posted as the Commanding Officer HMAS *Stirling* from February to August 1995. On return to the East Coast in January 1997, he served as the Commander, Defence National Storage and Distribution Centre in Moorebank, NSW, the Australian Defence Force's largest joint logistics unit, until December 1998.

During 1999, Captain Wood attended the Australian Defence College in Canberra. He is a Graduate Member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and a Fellow of the Australian Defence College.

Captain Wood and his wife Judith have four children, three adult and one school age, and reside in Milton on the South Coast of New South Wales. He has been a very keen sportsman and after many hectic years on the cricket and rugby fields, now enjoys a competitive game of golf and a social game of tennis.

Fleet Air Arm Memorial Appeal (UK)

Despite the fact that 6,000 men and women of the Fleet Air Arm, both aircrew and maintainers serving afloat and ashore, lost their lives in the service of their country in two World Wars, there is no National Memorial to them, or to those who died in subsequent campaigns such as Korea, Suez, Borneo, the Falklands and the Gulf.

The Royal Naval Air Service (later to become the Fleet Air Arm) pioneered military aviation at the beginning of the last century and the millennium provides an ideal opportunity to commemorate its achievements. The Memorial will act not only as a focal point for remembering those who lost their lives, but would also give an opportunity to remind the country of the technical skill and innovation which encompassed all aspects of carrier operations to which so many people, both service and civilian, dedicated their lives, in many cases to the detriment of their own health and welfare.

The FAA Officers' Association, together with our brother Associations, the TAG's, The National Fleet Air Arm, The Aircrewmans' and The Aircraft Handlers' formed a consortium to raise funds for a suitable memorial to be erected in central London. The chosen design is of bronze, a winged contemporary figure representing 'Daedalus' mounted on a plain column. It will be sited in the Victorian Embankment Gardens between the Ministry of Defence and the river Thames. The figure itself standing about ten feet high with a wing span of fifteen feet.

Donations to the project can be made to: 'FAA Memorial Appeal', 4 St James's Square, London SW1Y 4JU, England.

AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT

NOWRA AIR DAY 30 MAY 1999

Wirraway - Model CA-16 Mk3
Registration VH-WRX

Bureau of Air Safety investigation report:

The pilot was conducting a handling display in a Wirraway aircraft at a civil airshow at the Nowra Naval Air Station. During the turn back towards the crowd at the western end of the airfield, the aircraft was observed to rapidly descend. Although the wings and nose were seen to be placed in a level attitude, the aircraft continued to descend. The aircraft then abruptly pitched nose up and rapidly rolled to the left inverted, before impacting the ground. The pilot and passenger received fatal injuries.

Witnesses at the airshow reported observing the aircraft conducting steep turns, at the end of each flypast, that were in excess of 60 degrees angle of bank. Some of the witnesses who held pilot or air traffic control licenses reported that the aircraft appeared to be flying at a reduced power setting and that it was being buffeted by the wind.



Discussions with a part owner and examination of fuel company records indicated that it was the pilot's normal practice to refuel the aircraft immediately after each flight. However, on this occasion the aircraft was not refuelled after arriving at Nowra. Allowing for the taxi and flight time from Bankstown to Nowra, it was estimated that the aircraft had about 1.5 hours fuel endurance available for the display. The aircraft's weight and balance were calculated to have been within the prescribed limits.

The pilot was appropriately licensed for the flight. Friends and family commented that the pilot was fit and well and looking forward to participating in the display.

At the time of the accident, weather conditions were recorded as a west-north-west wind at 21 knots gusting to 33 knots and broken cloud at 6,000 feet. Discussions with naval aviators based at Nowra indicated that the western end of the airfield is subject to mechanical turbulence during a

westerly wind.

A retired naval instructor who trained pilots on the aircraft type during its service with the Australian Defence Force commented that the aircraft had some undesirable flying characteristics: if the control column was pulled rapidly towards the pilot while the aircraft was in straight and level flight, it would 'flick' roll uncontrollably; or if the pilot performed a three-point landing with a crosswind, the aircraft would often drop a wing, resulting in wing tip damage. The retired instructor commented that this was most likely due to the wing tip stalling before the wing root. Therefore, towards the end of its service life, strips or wedges were fitted to the centre plane to induce stalling of the wing root before the wing tips. According to the instructor, this measure was partially successful. Pilots who had flown the accident aircraft indicated that these strips were fitted, although the strips

were not recovered from the accident site.

A witness who had spoken with the pilot of the accident aircraft at a prior airshow commented that the pilot was aware of the stall characteristics of the aircraft.

Although the propeller exhibited damage consistent with substantial power at the time of impact, it was not possible to determine the power setting.

An examination of the wreckage indicated that the aircraft was considered to have been capable of normal operation prior to impact.

It is probable that during the final turn in gusting conditions, the aircraft's airspeed decreased to the point where the aircraft began to descend rapidly. The pilot, observing the rapid rate of descent, levelled the wings and attempted to recover the situation. However, realising that the aircraft still had a high rate of descent, the pilot may then have moved the control column rapidly rearwards and thus induced a stall and rapid roll to the left inverted.

Landing on the ship during the daytime is like sex, it's either good or it's great. Landing on the ship at night is like a trip to the dentist, you may get away with no pain, but you just don't feel comfortable. LCDR Thomas Quinn, USN

PROFILE ON MARY RAYNER

by K. Boulter

There is a group of people in all communities, who serve in an official capacity as secretaries, treasurers, presidents and committee members; they represent the core of a wide range of volunteer activity. Without them, local government would fail, the Red Cross would dissolve, and all manner of worthy causes would collapse.

The Naval Association, and all ship associations under its umbrella in South Australia, are blessed with such a volunteer in Mary Rayner (nee Brundell). As State secretary of the Naval Association for nine years - three years as its State publicity officer, and fourteen years on the executive of the Fleet Air Arm Association in the South Australia Division, Mary's activities reach further than the normal call of perceived effort. She is the unobtrusive face in the crowd.

Mary represents the State Naval Association at DVA and RSL meetings; she can be found at memorial services handing out programmes and sprays of rosemary, preparing food at Naval functions, attending funeral and visiting the sick.

The Allied Chinese ships and forty- three other ship Associations and many sub-sections are all part of her fleet.

She is always there somewhere, helping. Mary Rayner works and is available literally seven days a week, and will race off in her not too trusty and rusty car 'Charlie' to attend what ever, and who ever calls her.

Existing on the low side of the economic fringe, she balances her naval family with her own. How she does this is her secret; for the mother of five children, and eleven grandchildren (her third daughter, Elizabeth, died at the age of eight), life hasn't been easy for this active and responsible lady,

She is pragmatic in her approach to her work; never offers advice unless the subject has been thoroughly researched and works within the protocol of the various constitutions.

Elizabeth Brundell was born in 1930 at Beccles, in Suffolk, on the border with Norfolk, but the family home was in Norfolk - Nelson country.

Beccles was where Nelson's father was the curate - he married the daughter of the local vicar at St Michael's church - Mary was also married in that church.

Her father's land was close to the sea - it was here that she developed a love of all things Naval and Nautical. Mary's father was a Nelson scholar.

In the graveyard at Beccles, a monument is dedicated to



the officer brothers, Harmer, they fought alongside Nelson at Trafalgar. The Harmer brothers were buried in Barbados. They were related to Mary through her Grandmother.

Mary's knowledge of naval history, literature, and poetry of the sea was to serve her well in the years to come. She joined the WRENS in 1948 and completed Air Radar/Radio Mechanics courses for the Fleet Air Arm at Warrington, in Lancashire. In 1949 she was drafted to Lossiemouth at the time that the Australians were studying for their own FAA.

Mary recalls; 'there were a lot of Australians there at the time, Clem Conlan, Pat Molony, Jimmy French, Les Matterson, George Thompson, Len Murray and Roy Rayner to name a few. The Aussies were considered to be a pretty wild bunch by the locals and you were thought very brave to go out with one in those

days (some kind of metamorphosis has taken place with the 'wild ones' over the years). 'All these men were to serve in the FAA with great expertise', she says.

As a Air Radar/ Radio mechanic in the Royal Navy, Mary worked on Fireflies, Sea Furies and Sea Venoms - her association with the Fleet Air Arm, in and out of the service, has been a long one.


Married in 1950 to Roy Rayner, she made her way to Australia on an immigrant ship, but the rosy picture painted by the authorities was not at all accurate. Working and living in all kinds of harsh employment and physical environments in early post war Australia. Mary was conditioned for the times ahead and never lost her passion for the navy and the needs of its ex-service men and women and their families.

She settled with her family in Adelaide in 1971 - her marriage was dissolved in 1975. Roy Rayner died in 1980.

Not all have been lyrical about Mary's work and it has attracted the odd abrasive comment. She reviews her mortality when things get tough, and knows only too well, the distinction between the facile smile and the warm handshake.

When she was asked if she would like to step down and relax, she said, 'Yes, I would like to, as soon as someone suitable nominates'.

But she will always be there, somewhere, that unobtrusive face in the crowd, attending to something.



The next edition of *Slipstream* 'should' be ready for distribution by the second week of July. The absolute deadline for this edition is 16 June - NO reminders will be sent. Ed.

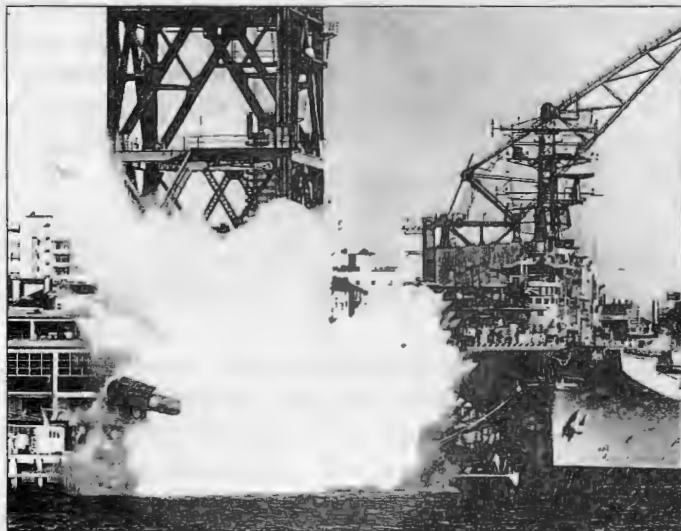
MOMENTS IN TIME



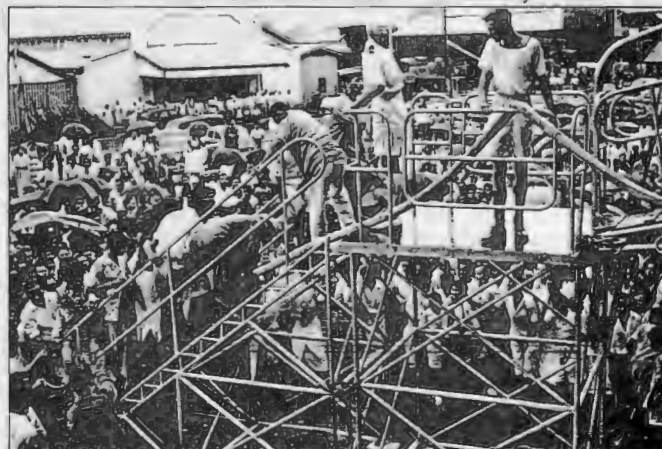
12 August 1971 – Second batch of Skyhawks from the USA being lightered from the Sydney in Jervis Bay – Photo Navy PR



Perspex model of HMAS Sydney used for instructional purposes before the arrival of the ship. Ross Wylie on left – the others? AND – where is the model NOW? - Photo courtesy B.Dunne



Catapult trials HMAS Melbourne – 'Chloe' doing a bounce



HMAS Melbourne – Fiji 1958 – Fire hose diplomacy in an effort to control the crowd – Photo courtesy Col MacKenzie



02 May 1969 – Captain J P Stevenson presents SBLT Ross Keith Smith with a cake to mark the one thousandth deck landing on Melbourne since the ship was recommissioned. Photo courtesy 'The Age'



Date? Bob Perkins Didn't find the food on board filling enough. Photo Man. Dir.



15 October 1970 – THE LAST FLIGHT FOR NAVAL VAMPIRE The Executive Officer of RANAS, Commander N E Lee, climbs into the cockpit of a Vampire trainer aircraft for the last time. The Vampire has been phased out and has been replaced by Macchi trainers (background). Ten Australian-built Macchis for Naval use have been bought at a cost of \$7.6 million . Commander Lee first flew Vampires in 1954.

Photo and text courtesy 'The Age'.

Photographs: I have received several complaints about photographs being published without names. Wherever possible, it would be appreciated if you could include the names and dates on your submissions. Many thanks for your help. Ed.



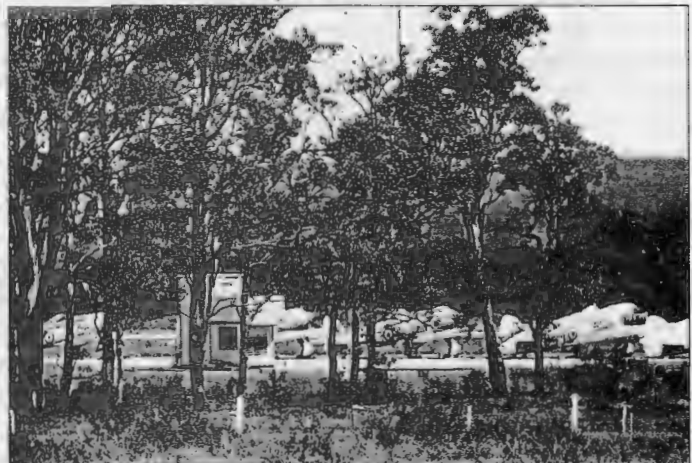
07 February 1963 – The first operational training school for the new Wessex anti-submarine helicopters has just begun at RANAS Nowra. A FAA Observer makes an emergency exit from a Wessex as part of the 'abandon ship' routine. *Photo courtesy 'The Age'.*



February 1959 – No.74 Class AH3s RANAS Nowra
L-R: Terry Chatwin – Tony Halpin – Les McCulloch – Peter May – John Oscar Nystrom *Photo courtesy Peter May*



27 September 1954 – On board HMAS Sydney. Lt. MacMillan, Bristol Sycamore pilot, watches mechanics at work on the helo. *Photo Courtesy 'The Argus'*



Early 1955 – A view of the Dummy Deck at RANAS Nowra taken from the porch of 15 Waterhen Street in Married Quarters. It is now the site of Australia's Museum of Flight. *Photo courtesy Col MacKenzie*



16 May 1956 – An Avro 707 Delta Wing being unloaded from HMAS Melbourne. What is the story? *Photo courtesy 'The Argus'*



27 February 2000 – Four of the FAA 'originals' (centre) meet up at the AMoF. L-R: Bob Geale – CAPT George – 'Nat' Gould – Ed – Fred Randall – Bill Stevenson – Jack Routley – Mark Clayton – Glen Tilsley *Photo courtesy RAN*

AUSTRALIA'S MUSEUM of FLIGHT

Article and photographs courtesy of Mark Clayton – Museum Director

As reported elsewhere in this issue, the Foundation Directors have recently resolved to change the trading name of the museum from Australian Naval Aviation Museum (ANAM) to that of Australia's Museum of Flight (AMoF). This is clearly a decision of considerable importance, and for this reason I thought it might be helpful if I used this column to closely examine its rationale and possible implications.

When Sydney's Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences announced back in the mid-1980s that it was considering yet another name change, there was scarcely a murmur of opposition. In retrospect, this seems somewhat surprising, given that venerable institution's prominence and the seeming irrelevance of the adopted name, Powerhouse Museum, which is in no way suggestive even of that institution's real purpose. Nowadays, of course, we simply take that name for granted without pausing even to consider its origin or suitability. In fact, the name Powerhouse has become so firmly entrenched in our collective consciousness, and so synonymous with quality and success, that there probably would be a public outcry if some future State Government were daring enough to tout an alternative. Powerhouse has been so rapidly and thoroughly assimilated, that today, just fifteen years on, it's simply unthinkable that anyone could, or would, ever want to reinstate the former title of Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences.

That said, it's more than likely that the name Powerhouse will in turn, like so many other sacred cows, eventually be set aside in favour of some other more marketable or expressive appellation which could deliver that competitive edge needed to secure and retain an even greater market share. Corporate makeovers and name changes, once the cause of much shock and disillusionment, are commonplace these days and no longer confined just to government departments and mainstream commercial enterprises. In the face of shrinking public subsidies, cultural heritage institutions everywhere, both large and small, private and public, are also having to develop alternate marketing strategies, the Powerhouse being just one of several local and regional examples that come readily to mind.

Though steeped in tradition and stacked to the gunwales with sacred artefacts, military museums are by no means exempt from these economic pressures. The Australian Naval Aviation Museum being just the latest to join the ranks of those other military and technology institutions, that have already had to reinvent themselves in order to

survive. Australia's oldest aviation museum, for example, known for almost thirty-five years as the Moorabbin Air Museum, now operates as the Australian National Aviation Museum. Similarly, the Darwin Aviation Museum, one of the country's largest, saw fit a few years ago to adopt the new title, of Australian Aviation Heritage Centre. Defence Museums too have also joined the march with our colleagues at the Museum of Australian Army Flying in Oakey, now operating under the Flypast Museum banner. And it's tempting to speculate, given the impending sale of Point Cook airfield and the civilianisation of the RAAF Museum, that all three of Australia's defence aviation museums might well have been renamed before too much longer. This trend, of course, is by no means confined to these shores, the Royal New Zealand Air Force Museum's Patron, HRH Prince Phillip, having assented in recent years for that fabulous institution to be renamed Air Force World.

Although Museums everywhere are having to respond to the same commercial pressures, the ANAM, being such a large facility with no guaranteed subsidy, is more vulnerable than most. Compounding this situation is the widely held misconception – borne of the prefix 'Naval' – that the ANAM is a government owned and funded institution, when in fact, nothing could be further from the truth. It's difficult to know for certain, of course, what this misconception has already cost us in terms of missed grant funding opportunities (which are generally only available to non-government organisations). What is certain, is that by proclaiming ourselves to be a single-theme museum (i.e. we deal solely with FAA heritage) we have, just like single-issue political parties, almost certainly limited our actual and potential public appeal. The truth of the matter is that more people are likely to turn off the Princes Highway to visit a general aviation museum as opposed to a naval aviation museum, especially in these politically correct times when – in some circles at least – it is fashionable to eschew all things bellicose.

We are in fact the state's largest regional museum and yet we've never received any recurrent State and Commonwealth funding. The Shoalhaven City Council have, for the past nine years, been giving the Foundation a small annual grant, but this generous commitment is scheduled to expire early next year, whereafter we'll be forced to begin using up our cash reserves. In recent months we've halved our administrative staffing levels and switched to using volunteers on the front desk at weekends, but nonetheless, these essential cost

saving measures still fall well short of addressing our underlying financial difficulties. The ANAMF still doesn't have an adequate or sustainable funding base, even after ten years of selfless and comparatively successful fundraising by legions of volunteers and even a few professional fundraisers.

Against this sobering background, the name change can be seen as an undisguised attempt to keep the doors open by increasing patronage and, therefore, admissions income. This strategy should also allow us to broaden our rapidly diminishing membership base that has been limited mostly to former FAA personnel.

Hardship can of course sometimes give rise to opportunity and ANAMF Directors are not insensitive to the fact that the AMoF, soon to become the largest and best institution of its kind in the country, offers the best possible foundation for a future Australian national aviation museum. Central to these changes and future visions is the inviolable principle that the ANAMF's museum at HMAS *Albatross* is to remain the repository for the RAN FAA's heritage, our Chairman having emphasised this point when he recently appraised the Chief of Navy of the Board's decision.

You can be further assured that the Foundation has every intention of retaining all those naval aircraft types presently exhibited, although it's possible that some duplicate airframes – of which we have several – will be used as exchange loans. As reported in the last issue of *Slipstream*, the ANAMF will continue to actively collect airframes of historical significance to the FAA (such as the soon to arrive Westland Dragonfly). It will in fact retain ownership of all the museum's assets – purchases and donations – and will continue to function as the museum's governing body administered by both serving and retired naval officers (CO NAS included). Inevitably there will be less space given over to the FAA when the AMoF opens its new exhibitions in 2001, but at the same time there will be more complementary and contextual displays. We will, for example, be including exhibitions that explore the principles of flight as well as the development of flight technologies, both of which dovetail well with the school's curricula and which are essential prerequisites for comprehending the FAA's purpose. After all, what's the point of us having all that polished metal if we can't explain how it's made and why it works!

The new name and corporate logo will be progressively introduced over the next few months with the change being officially proclaimed at the Stage Four opening scheduled for Saturday, September 9th. I'm confident though, that with your continued support we will be effected seamlessly, and without any inconvenience to the Association.



The freshly painted deck of the Museum makes a big difference



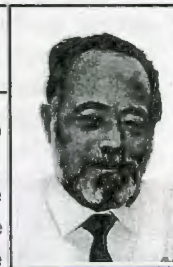
Preparing the foundations for the Stage Four extensions



Museum Director, Mark Clayton (right), accepts a clock made at HMAS *Albatross* in 1983, which was presented to the late Captain Barbara MacLeod AM RAN (Rtd) on the occasion of her retirement from the RAN. The clock is part of a collection of personal memorabilia given to the Museum in early March by her brother, John MacLeod, who is seen here accompanied by his wife Rosemary.

FOOTNOTE: The clock was designed by WRANs Anne Hayward, Del Ponterello and Judy Prince. They went to Canberra, and with assistance from Marcia Chalmers, researched the order in which WRAN categories were developed. The badges form the numerals in order 1 to 12. The presentation and farewell dinner was held in the Chief Petty Officers' Mess at RANAS.

NATIONAL SECRETARY'S REPORT



I have to open with apologies to the Ed. for being adrift with my report. With a bit of luck I will be given stoppage of secretarial duties (if only).

Fortunately the December / January period is generally a pretty quiet time as far as the Association is concerned. I am sure you will all appreciate that when the house is overrun with grandchildren and with friends coming and going there is little time is left for anything else.

There has only been two subjects with which I have been involved that are worthy of reporting- a) The effect of the dreaded GST on the Association and, b) the reorganisation of our insurance policies.

The bad news first, I attended a seminar arranged by the Australian Taxation Office to advise charities and non-profit organisations of the impact of the GST on those organisations, and I have spoken with one of their consultants. Basically, the bottom line for us is that we do not meet the criteria to be classified as a charity, therefore we will have to pay the GST on all our transactions that are outside the Association. Obviously, this will increase our operating costs with such items as the printing of *Slipstream*, the purchase of badges, postage, insurance premiums, etc all being effected. We don't have to apply it directly to membership fees, however, naturally there must be a flow on. In total our yearly expenditure is approximately \$25,000 and so the maximum increase would be \$2,500 based on a 10% GST, however, some other taxes will be removed. The National Executive has recommended to the Divisions that we hold the *Slipstream* and Capitation fees as they are for the time being, and see what the longer-term effects of the tax will be on our finances.

On a brighter note, and thanks to the early legwork of Mike Heneghan, the NSW Division Secretary, we have re-arranged all our insurance policies. In doing so, we now have better coverage at reduced premiums e.g. a saving of about 40 to 50% or \$600 in a full year. We have changed over from our local broker who has looked after us well in the past, to the insurance arm of the NSW Meals on Wheels Association. This group negotiates standard insurance, including Public Liability and Personal Accident for volunteer workers, with the insurance companies on behalf of numerous non-profit Community, Welfare and Service organisations. With total premiums that are in the \$M's, they have considerable buying power and negotiate from a position of strength.

If any of our readers would like more information or how to contact MOW in respect to insurance for your own organisations please contact me. (This is not a paid advertisement as John Laws might say.)

A quick note to keep you in the picture - my wife, Carole, will be retiring the first week in April and we will be joining the 'Grey Nomads' - caravan - the whole bit. First stop Brisbane at the end of April to see family and grandkids then north until the 'mozzies' get too big. I will be away for about six weeks, however, I am sure I will find someone to mind the shop while I am away.

Gordon Edgcombe - National Secretary

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Phone: (02) 4422 1759 - Fax: (02) 4422 3979
E-mail: faassn@shoal.net.au

NEW SOUTH WALES DIVISION

Hello, and greetings to all members and families of our Association. I hope you are all well and trust that the year 2000 has started the way you had wished it.

The hours in the day have not been anywhere near enough over the last few months so I apologise for the brevity of this report.

On Wednesday 1st March, we held a small function in the Museums' White Ensign Club to publicly draw the raffle that had been running for the past six months. The CO of *Albatross*, Captain Geoff Cole, kindly accepted an invitation to draw the Raffle.

The First Prize was an oil painting of HMAS

Melbourne valued at \$2000.00, and with so many tickets I couldn't understand why I was not the winner, however, that was not to be and the winners are as follows:



- 1st prize Mr. Dale Willis from Eden NSW 2551 with ticket No.002732
- 2 d prize Mr. Neil Couloch from Kippa-ring Qld 4021 with ticket No.000703
- 3rd prize Mr. Alistair Ogg from Bomaderry NSW2541 with ticket No.001279

The winners have been notified by 'phone and the prizes are being packed and sent off to the them. Congratulations to them and a sincere thank

you to everyone who supported us by purchasing tickets. The object of having the raffle was to supplement our income, and in doing so, we hoped to minimise any annual subscription increases. Whether that form of income will continue to be sought is something for the new Management Committee to determine.

Prior to the raffle draw, the Management Committee, on behalf of the Division, took the opportunity to say farewell to Captain Cole and Mrs Lyn Cole. Geoff (see photo) is retiring from the service and moving to Kiama, so I am sure the Kiama Golf Course will be getting a good work out.



Patron John Goble, is hoping to organise a social get-together in Sydney during this year. It would be great for 'City/Country' to meet up. Whether it is a daytime BBQ somewhere or a night-time function remains to be seen, however, he has asked for members to contact him with any suggestions. I am hoping for some good support from the Nowra locals, and hopefully, any member within spitting distance of the Metropolitan area.

That's it for this issue, best wishes to all.
 Max Altham – President

OTHER NSW HAPPENINGS

SPOTTED AT THE BIG RAFFLE DRAW



Kevin and June Camm with Deirdre Penny



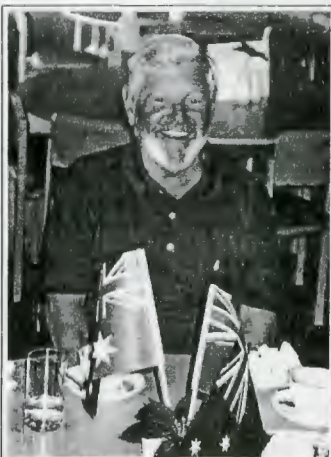
Ron 'Butch' Jenkins and his 'child bride'



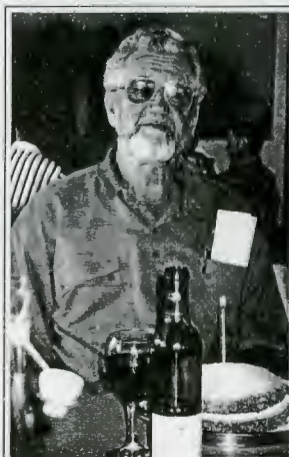
The Smithers and a cast of thousands

Secretary: Mike Heneghan. PO Box 28, NOWRA NSW 2541
 Phone/Fax: (02) 4441 2901
 E-mail: faassn@shoal.net.au

**THE DEADLINE FOR THE
 NEXT EDITION IS 16 JUNE!**



Ken Greenaway celebrated Australia Day with a glass of water



Jim Lee had a birthday – he didn't celebrate with water

VICTORIA DIVISION

On behalf of the President, Committee and members of the Victoria Division, may I convey best wishes and salutations to all.

As reported in the previous *Slipstream* our Annual General Meeting was held on the 13th February 2000. The following members were duly elected: President - Ralph Mayer, Vice President - John Champion, Secretary- Ron Christie, Treasurer - John Ikin, Committeemen - Alan Clark, Rob Earle, Les Jordan, Geoff Litchfield, Ian Stanfield, Social Co-ordinator - Val Christie and Auditors - Anne and Rob Taylor, retiring committeeman Bill Martin due to illness.

There were 44 members in attendance at our AGM. This was very pleasing to see and we are very appreciative of those who make the effort to attend, but it would be nice to see a few more members make an effort to participate in the various events throughout the year.

The next major event for the Division will be Anzac Day, firstly the march, assembly point is the south cast corner of Swanston and Flinders Streets (opposite St Pauls). Form up time is 0830 for 0900 step off.

As State President of the RSL, Bruce Ruxton states, 'Unfortunately, Anzac Day this year falls on what used to be called Easter Tuesday, and it could mean that numbers may be down, not only attending the March, but also watching the March'.

We hope this is not the case, and hopefully as many of our members as possible make the effort to attend the march, so come along and join your fellow members on the day.

As usual, an 'After March Re-Union' will be held at the Melbourne Naval Centre. A catered two-course lunch will be available at a cost of \$10 per person, if you require lunch, booking and payment, must be made by 18th April 2000, (all cheques and Money Orders made payable to 'FAAA (Vic)'. Thank you.) NOTE: No Booking - No Payment - No Lunch.

On Friday 25th February, twelve members of the Division visited the home of Bill Martin, where Vice President John Champion, made the presentation of a Certificate of Appreciation to Bill for his services as a Committeeman of the Victorian Division. We extend a special 'thank you' to Gwen and Bill for their hospitality.

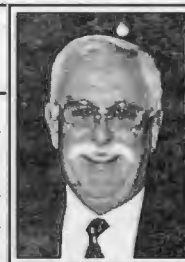


Photo courtesy John Champion



VICTORIA DIVISION COMMITTEE MEMBERS FOR 2000

Rear L-R: John Champion (Vice Pres.) - Ian Stanfield - Rob Earle - Rob Taylor (Auditor) and Geoff Litchfield

Front L-R: Ron Christie (Sec) - Les Jordan - Ralph Meyer (President) - John Ikin (Treas) and Alan Clark - Missing is Anne Taylor (Auditor)

Photo courtesy Alan Clark

Our thoughts and best wishes go out to the following friends and members who have not been in the best of health of late, Mons Frank (Tiger) Lyons, Bill Grant, Les McKiernan., Bill Martin, John Mann, Ron Breaden.

There will be several members of the Victoria Division heading up to Canberra in April for the Korean War Memorial Dedication, some of us will be travelling up by bus per the Korean Veterans Association, others by private transport, we are looking forward to meeting up with old friends.

Until the next time, best wishes and good health.

Ron Christie

Secretary: Ron Christie, 15 Bianca Court, ROWVILLE VIC 3178 - Phone: (03) 9764 5542 - Fax: (03) 9755 5417 - Mob: 0418 551 235

QUEENSLAND DIVISION



With any luck, this could be the first time I've beaten the editor's deadline, if I can manage sending attachments by e-mail. It amazes me that I do manage to send a few - it must be because I was a mechanician.

Hello to all interstate members, I hope you've all had a good summer - apart from a few floods here and there.

Lee Harris, one of our members here was one of the winners of the big Millennium Lotto on New Year's Eve and collected a very tidy sum to be going on with from a 'quickpick'. Lee has been in a wheelchair since a car crash in '74 or so and his wife has had a brain tumour. Good one Lee. His address is c/o- Post Office, Rio de Janeiro, if anyone wants to send a begging letter.

Cliff Eaton's wife has been awarded the Australia Medal for Community Services with children. Congratulations to both of you, I'm sorry that I forgot to mention it in my recent newsletter, and Cliff, I miss you making the coffee at the office. You can call here any time to carry on the good work.

The FESR Review findings were handed down to the Government on 2nd March and should be good for a lot of us, subject to the Government making the right decision around mid year. It will be good if we achieve parity with the other services.

Plans are well in hand for our reunion in Bundaberg on the first weekend of September. A flyer should be included with this edition setting out the programme; it includes a chit to send to Trevor Tite. I know there are already some interstate members planning to attend. It will be a good weekend. Once again, the RSL is delighted to have us back there to use it as a base camp.

We are holding our AGM on Sunday, 19th March, at the Bribie Island RSL, followed by a BBQ/Picnic after the meeting. All present Office Bearers are standing again. We've been short one committee member and hope to get someone from the floor if possible. We're expecting a good roll up. (and good weather).

Bob Brown, Ningi has been in Hospital with liver problems and is home trying hard not to go back there. Val is keeping their new 'u-beaut' bike dusted off for when they can use it again. Ray Bucholz, 'Shorty' Nielsen, 'Bear' Hammond and D'arcy Doyle have all been in hospital and are now home recovering. May Linnaker has completed radium treatment and having further blood tests. Our best wishes to all of you.

'Bear' is off caravanning somewhere, D'arcy and I had a laugh remembering when I phoned him

some time ago after an operation. He answered the phone, in hospital, just as he was coming out of the anaesthetic. I was amazed he could speak! We had a laugh then as well. Lindsay McDonald has also had an operation and is now doing well.

I spoke to Harry and Fay Harkness recently. They're moving to Bundaberg soon from Mt.Perry - Harry has had a job in 'Bundy' for a couple of years now. Good luck with the move. I asked after Stan and Kath Brown and then phoned them. Stan is pretty ill, but they are planning a trip to the Eastern States soon - If not now, and he is fighting hard. You've to admire their spirit. They asked me to send their best wishes to all.

Bill Strahan remarked, on the way back from our committee meeting, that, apart from being called 'Darkie' most of the time, he was sometimes called '2359'! A bit of a giggle there. He also told us that his great grandmother was the first white woman to set foot in Western Australia. Apparently, as a little girl, she was put out of a boat onto the bank of the Swan River whilst the adults did something or other. Maybe more people should know about that, Bill. [Who do you have in mind, Barry? The Department of Immigration? Ed.]

Garry Reid has retired at last, and tells us that he receives the grand sum of 70 cents per fortnight, or week, from the Government whilst Sharon is working. He's wondering if it will go up to 80 cents when the GST is introduced. I reckon you might get 75, Garry.

Ray Murrell has been in training at the Olympic site, I thought that he was driving buses, but I'm now informed that he will be driving a 'Limo' during the Games. Good one, Ray.

On ANZAC Day, we're second cab off the rank - meet at Queen's Park, as usual, and then over to the Bulimba Army Barracks again. Food will be available at \$5 pp same as the last time. We are presenting the Sergeants' Mess with a plaque in appreciation of their hospitality to us. Warren Walters is coming up for a few games of 'chase the white ball', and will march with us. In August he's off to live in the USA and is being married to the lovely Maria in November. I'll have to dust off the glad rags! I just might have to visit Las Vegas again and see the Grand Canyon.

I did my biannual Flight Review a week ago and am legal to fly again. Had grounded myself from last May with too much on my mind to be safe. It was good to get back to it again.

(Continued on page 26)

(Continued from page 25)

I spent a couple of days with Ken and Claire Hegarty recently. Ken has a good supply of home made red wine and we sampled a reasonable amount. Claire made a nice breakfast next morning and I was embarrassed I couldn't do it justice. She remarked that she wasn't surprised after looking at the near empty Drambuie bottle. I wondered why I felt a bit blurred when I went to bed.

Ian and Florence Henderson called in a few weeks ago for a visit. Ian worked in Melbourne for three months, then they went to Cunnamulla for Christmas with their daughter. They spoke of the boggy conditions they had encountered, then on the way back, drove through deep red bull dust. Someone had left a rear window open on the van and they were having fun cleaning dust out. They're now in NZ touring. Hope they'll be back for the AGM with more travel tales.

The ladies had a nice day at the Casino in Brisbane on 11th Feb. About ten of the ladies were there, and more are welcome to attend these luncheons. The 'Watchkeepers' enjoyed themselves too, as well as Mick Blair who had a win.

We welcome new members Peter Keddie, John Richmond and Trevor Richards. John was Mick Blair's Best Man some moons ago. We look forward to seeing you all soon.

Does anyone know where Bernie Fry is? He was on Mech's course with us in '58, missed the cut and reverted back to Leading Hand. We then lost track

of him. I thought he came from Brisbane, but Bill Strahan tells me he came from Sydney.

Well, that's about it for now. Have fun and hope to see some of you in September.

Barry Lister - President



'Line Dancers' at the Mooloolaba Barbecue

L-R: 'Snow' Tite - Dulcie Blair - Barry Lister - Mick Blair - Warren Walters and Max Wilson in front, who hasn't realised he's lost his horse.

Secretary: Trevor Tite, 37 Miles St, CABOOLTURE QLD 4510
Phone: (07) 5499 3809

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN DIVISION

Greetings to all from the Western Australian Division. Since my last report in the January 2000 issue, we have held what was to prove a very successful AGM. The event was preceded by a luncheon with our spouses and partners; an innovation that I believe made an important contribution to the record numbers who attended the meeting. Other Divisions may be interested in giving our idea a trial.

The ladies moved into the card room to chat and the meeting proceeded. Elected were: President: Jack Suriano, Vice President: Ron Forbes, Secretary: Colin Bushe-Jones, Treasurer: Brian (Joe) Jost, Committee: Harry Webster, Bevan Daws, John Green and Elva Jost (Social Secretary). We believe that the presence of Elva Jost on our committee will further expand interest in our Division.

We were pleased to welcome two new members, David Rutland and Tom Elvard, both of whom served at *Albatross* in the 1950's and 60's. An old icon from the Safety Equipment Branch, Hughie

Wells and wife Betty, were also in attendance. They are currently touring around Australia from their home in Sunny Queensland.



Later, Jack Suriano hosted a special committee meeting aboard his motor cruiser. Jack brings a wealth of experience and enthusiasm to both the Committee and the Division and will, I believe, inject new life into our organization. A variety of interesting social functions are planned and we believe they will create an upsurge in interest and an increase in membership.

Australia Day was celebrated at the beautiful home of Kerry and Kerry Sojan. As we approached the house we were left in no doubt as to whether we were at the right house, greeted as we were by the largest White Ensign I have ever seen. As newcomers we had no difficulty getting a fix on the venue. On behalf of all present I want to thank the Sojans for the fine food provided including the yummy crayfish. Present were: Barry and Joan

Templeman, John (Dusty) Grierson and Val, 'Irish' O'Leary and Sue, Peter 'Kipper' Britton and Kath, Leo Burnsand and the ever patient Barbara, Ron 'Gabby' Hayes and Rose, Ron and Evelyn Cole, Arthur 'Butch' Jenkins. Keith Doncon was there without minder Sue, as were Vic Slim (ex 'Bandie'), Alistair Cuthbert (RN & RAN) with wife Anne, Bevan and Kaye Daws and lastly, yours truly. AWOL was 'Snow' Hall and wife. Will you pass on our best wishes and hope she has a speedy recovery. Bravo Zulu to the Sojans for an excellent Australia Day party.

Stop Press! Have just been advised by Keith Doncon that 'Butch' is recovering well from heart bypass surgery. All the best mate from us all, and my special best wishes.

It was very sad to read about Ambrose 'Zac' Palmer in the last Slipstream. I was Reg. Chief when Ambrose was posted to 817 Squadron. I can only concur with what 'Jaffa' had to say in his letter to the editor and suggest that perhaps the Association will do something about providing a headstone. Perhaps the National Body could seek donations towards a suitable memorial.

I would like to remind our West Australian members about making contributions to Slipstream. Sometimes here in the West news is a bit short and any help members can give is always appreciated. A note to me, a telephone call, or even drop by – whichever way you choose – every little bit helps. Sorry! Not into computers yet. If anyone has a spare one lying around, I would only be too happy to give it a good home and put it to good use. Even a little cash available if necessary.

A thank you to Terry Hetherington for that splendid obituary to Nick Mudge. I think most 'Birdies' here in the West were saddened to learn of his passing. Our condolences to Jan and family.

Well! Me hearties, that is about all from the West this time round. Remember, call or write to an old friend and I'm sure you'll feel much better.

John Green - Slipstream Scribe

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TASMANIAN DIVISION

Let's start this epistle with a little dit from Les Kube in Hobart; I have been assured that it is all true....The 'watertight State' was recently graced by the presence (not presents) of the one and only Fred Husband, and his wife Eileen. Both down from the deep north (Cairns) to sample some good food, fine wine, good weather and 'wicked' beer. Well, three out of four wasn't too bad. But what can you expect? The first time back in forty years and they expected good weather too! The Cascade Brewery is now anxiously awaiting Fred's return.

Whilst here they caught up with a few 'old' friends and shipmates, the O'Donnell clan and Les and Fiona Kube amongst others. Since their return home we have heard that they weathered Cyclone 'Steve' okay, Fred describes the experience as...'got bloody tons of leaves in me pool...and me bloody mango tree has gone to live at me bloody neighbour's place.' It was good to see you both again and hope to catch up with you in the not too distant future.

Well, the new year and millennium is well under way and who knows what it will bring us all, we shall just have to wait and see.

Bill Lowe (ex-POAH), has had a spell in sick bay, nothing too serious, he tells me that with a little bit of TLC and recuperation he will be as good as nearly new. Not a bad comment for a seventy-two year old having his first time in sick bay. He said

that the Staff and nurses were good, and the choices for 'scran' were as long as your arm provided you stayed within your diet. Much better than the two choices that were offered by 'pussers' – take it or leave it - even in the Chief and PO's Mess. Good luck, Bill, we all wish you well.

I was told that our last meeting in Hobart went off well. 'Andy' Andrews tells me that Ron Pennington, ex-Firefly pilot from Warwick, is still doing pretty well. He has his periodic medical interludes which usually end up in the Royal Hobart Hospital; but he usually bounces back harder than ever, one of the good old breed, keep up the bouncing, Ron.

Barry and Roma Simpson returned from a motorised safari around the 'big island' to the north, by the time you are reading this they will have ventured off again. [No E-mail until 03 June 2000.]

Our next get-together is in late May in Somerset, no doubt you will be informed of the date and venue etc. As you can see, there isn't a great deal of news this time, but it is better than none at all. Until next time, we wish you all well, whoever you are and wherever you are.

Matt Jacobs

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SOUTH AUSTRALIAN DIVISION



As this promises to be my final *Slipstream* contribution, I will begin by offering an apology to our long time stalwart to the SA Division, in fact she has been with us from the beginning, I speak of Mary Rayner. It appears that my usual throwaway lines, which I would use everyday, have been taken up with serious intent. The result being that both she and the 'whipping boy' are no longer talking to each other. For this I apologise.

President Peter Coulson has been very long suffering and busy writing apology letters to everyone, and I suspect there will be one in this edition of *Slipstream*, which in turn will make the *Slipstream* editor nervous as he proof reads this copy. Life moves on!

Our AGM will be held on the 17th March and most of the committee will change hands, new blood will be stepping forward to continue this Division well into the new millennium. By the time you have digested this section of the ever-popular *Slipstream*, the dust will have settled and the blood washed from the walls. Welcome to the new committee.

As mentioned in the January *Slipstream*, our first meeting for this century was indeed held at the home of Henry and Madge Young. The evening was well represented by current members who made the most of the break in 38-degree days. The BBQ was a delight with everyone contributing in some way towards its success. Full marks to the Coopers home made damper, unfortunately I only managed three slices before being pushed aside by our president, Peter Coulson, who after all, is still a growing boy. Many thanks to the Youngs for opening their lovely home for the Divisional first meeting. It was lovely to meet the spouses of several other members that night, namely the Cains from Strathalbyn, the Osbourne's, Widger's, Percival's and Ian Laidler's first wife, Dee, along with Barry Lord and Grant Jesser. I have already mentioned Peter Coulson being present to push the pensioners aside, he was keeping good company with his lovely wife Sandra, who only a few days before had picked up a CSM for her efforts as Senior Naval Officer, South Australia; and for keeping Peter under control and having him shipped to Norfolk Island to serve out several days hard labour. Well done, Sandy, we will miss you and 'what's his name' when you finally move to Mt Gambier later this year.

Our Social Secretary, Dinsley Cooper, is busy planning out the Divisional social calendar and working it around the arrival of 817 Squadron in mid April, followed by 723 Squadron arriving in mid May. All members will be kept informed via our local news letter as details come to hand, as you

might remember, Navy planning changes every 20 minutes to GO or not GO!

I met the new Naval Officer Commanding SA at the last Small Ships Association meeting and was pleased to hear that he had a good grasp of the Queen's English and wasn't frightened to use it. As a 'Birdie' Observer from the 70's and 80's, he has been a very busy boy and I hope we can harness some of that energy into the Division in some way or other. I take this opportunity to welcome Commander Neil Phillips and Cherie to South Australia.

We have a friend of the Association over here who is busy constructing a 9ft 8 inch model of HMAS *Melbourne*. This model will be radio controlled and will sever any other ship that gets in its way. The Division will be involved in anyway possible but if you feel you could assist with early photographs of the flight deck layout or island superstructure, then do not hesitate to contact John Dungey on 81862740 - or write to him at 20 Wilson Street, Christies Beach. 5165.

As this will be my final contribution to *Slipstream*, I cannot close without thanking the many members who have assisted myself and the Division with cuttings, stories and photographs to be included in either the local newsletter or the *Slipstream* magazine. I speak of Dinsley Cooper, Ian Laidler, Mary Rayner, Barry Lord, Peter Coulson and Les Matterson in Nowra, just to name a few. Members have commented on my efforts, others do not understand the humour but smile politely anyway, truly a delightful group of people and to these people I say THANK YOU.

As 'whipping boy' to the Association, I shall close off with my usual quote:

'I don't make predictions. I never have and I never will!'

Tony Blair, Prime Minister UK, Channel 4.

Regards to you all.

Roger Harrison - Hon. Whipping Boy.

Secretary: Roger Harrison
2 Gwendoline Court, COROMANDEL VALLEY SA 5051
Phone: (08) 8278 8307

The Ace...

Response by Captain Ray Lancaster, USAAF, when he was asked why they called him 'Ace':
'Because during World War Two, I was responsible for the destruction of six aircraft, fortunately three were the enemy.'

A.C.T. DIVISION



Greetings to all from the Nation's capital. You may well have thought that we had forgotten our shipmates over the past two editions, but somewhere along the line I got my dates mixed up. Other than that, there has been very little of interest in this neck of the woods over this period.

Just prior to Xmas, we held our Xmas Cocktail Party which was well attended and all enjoyed the evening. However, after that it seemed that many left the area for holidays in various climes and are only just starting to trickle back. So much so, that we had to cancel our AGM set down for 24 February and now this will take place on 27 March. Because of this we are unable to advise who our office bearers will be for the year 2000.

We would like very much to enlist to our membership those of the Fleet Air Arm currently serving in this area. Should anyone know of such

potential members, we would be pleased if you could inform us. We realise that such people may be reticent to join as they could well be posted in a year or two, but that is the strength of our Association in that we can transfer members easily from one Division to another and thus, they can keep in touch with members who have similar interests.

We trust that the year 2000 will be a memorable one for all members.

Brian Treloar

Secretary: RADM B T Treloar AO RAN (Rtd)
PO Box 3652, WESTON CREEK ACT 2611
Phone: (02) 6288 2730

We Might Have Lived Forever

By A. Sailor

We might have lived forever
And never died at all.
But we've been dead for decades
And you'll find us on The Wall.

We were children of the fifties
Who were forced to quickly age.
Few of us had even voted
When that awful war was waged.

We were raised by Disney
And by Captain Kangaroo
We weren't meant to end our lives
Being led and fooled by you.

Just why was it you betrayed us?
Why was it that we fought?
What was so important
That you left our bones to rot?

You played your party politics
And closely checked the polls
Then bought your place in history
With our hearts, our youth, our souls.

Was it so important
This war you seemed to crave?
That you sent our youth to die in vain
So young, so fresh, so brave.

We died to save Man's pride and lust
For this we had to fall
Truth's an easy thing to see from
Our perspective on The Wall.

There is no country anywhere
Worth all this death and waste.
When will man learn to let war go?
When will he lose the taste?

Mankind must learn this simple truth
That war will cure no ills.
War deludes us, war demeans us
And worst of all, it kills.

Is Mankind's bright potential
To terminate in war?
I think we need an answer.
Is this what we all died for?

Or is there hope that Man will change,
And lose the urge to fight.
Can Mankind live in brotherhood?
Could Earth's future be so bright?

Man can live in peace and harmony.
No one has to bear war's pain.
If this dream becomes our legacy
Our deaths were not in vain.



*An Abstract – from the Ancient Aviator***Consider this for one moment...**

If you can start the day without caffeine; if you can get going without 'pep' pills; if you can always be cheerful, ignoring aches and pains; if you can resist complaining and boring people with your troubles; if you can eat the same food everyday and be grateful for it; if you can understand when your loved ones are too busy to give you any time; if you can overlook it when those you love take it out on you, when, through no fault of your own, something goes wrong; if you can take criticism and blame without resentment; if you can ignore a friend's limited education and never correct them; if you can resist treating a rich friend better than a poor friend; if you can face the world without lies and deceit; if you can conquer tension without medical help; if you can relax without liquor; if you can sleep without the aid of drugs; if you can honestly say that deep in your heart you have no prejudice against creed, colour, religion or politics; then my friend – you are almost as good as *your dog!*

VALE

**Barbara Denise MacLeod, AM
Captain RAN (Rtd)
1929 – 2000**

'BD', as she will be affectionately remembered, dedicated herself to ensuring that women could have a fair and proper place in the Navy, shaping careers and futures of hundreds who served in the Women's Royal Australian Naval Service. (WRANS).

Perhaps her greatest achievement was winning over those who tried to limit women's careers to the WRANS alone. She achieved what she probably considered her birthright, to serve fully in the Australian Defence Force.

Her no-nonsense approach to life, her integrity and courage, and her belief in hard work blazed a trail for many young women to follow if they were strong enough and brave enough. She was no easy act to follow.

'BD' fought to achieve better status, worthwhile careers and a level playing field for women. Her generosity of spirit, her strong moral code and her genuine belief in the equality of women eventually became an acclaimed asset for all who served in Australia's Navy.

That she was elevated to the position of Wrans Director, and later Director of Naval Industrial Policy as a full member of the RAN are real achievements in the advancement of the status of women in the Australian Defence Force.

After retirement 'BD' took a very active role in the community life of Mollymook on the South Coast of NSW. She was a keen sports lover and golf became her passion.

BOGS

VALE

**James 'Whisky' Richard Dalton 1933 – 1999
Naval Airman 1st Class, AH 3.**

Served in the RAN from 1952 – 1964 on HMA Ships *Cerberus, Albatross, Sydney, Nirimba* and *Melbourne*.

Born and passed away in Gayndah, he is survived by his mother, two sisters and two brothers.

His most famous feat was as the founder of the 'Ralphs' in 1957. He participated in Rugby League/Union, Hockey and Soccer as well as being a Cricket umpire.

He was a 'pig farmer' extraordinaire, and had a long and close association with the *Albatross* identity, 'Jazza' the dog.

After discharge, he worked for the Gladstone Port Authority where he was known as 'The Burglar'.

'Boxer' Banks

[The 'Pig Farm' referred to above, was an important source of funds for the ship's company at HMAS *Albatross*. Under the 'command' of the First Lieutenant, it was a source of cheap pork for the 'troops' and a method of disposing of the large amount of leftovers from the galley and dining halls.

'Whisky' loved the environment of the pig farm where he was virtually his own boss and could move around at his own pace.

I can remember one day when he forgot to fall in for Men Under Punishment at the Guardhouse. The Officer of the Day was really 'peed off' and sent the Mobile Patrol to collect him.

He arrived at the Guardhouse in a boiler suit and rubber boots, both suitably adorned with bits of straw, securely attached to his apparel with portions of the pig's diet that they had no further use for.

The officer of the Day rounded on him; 'Dalton, you're always under punishment. Do you have any ambition at all?'

'Yes, Sir', responded 'Whisky', 'I want to pay off from this bloody outfit and come back as the Wardroom Caterer!' Ed.]



July 1960 – RANAS Sick Quarters – The late 'Whisky' Dalton answering the call for blood donors.

Photo courtesy 'Boxer' Banks

Logic is a systematic method of coming to the wrong conclusion with confidence.

FRESH WATER FLAT-TOPS

By Graham Wilson

'As the sun rose in the east, the sound of approaching aircraft was detected. In preparation for the approaching aircraft, the carrier turned into the wind. Black coal smoke belched from the stack as the engines increased power to drive the paddle wheels at the ship's sides. As the flight deck crews rushed to take up their positions, a fine spray of fresh water whipped across the wooden deck.

Coal smoke? Paddle wheels? Fresh water?

At first glance none of this makes much sense; yet in World War Two, the United States Navy actually operated two coal fired, paddle wheel driven aircraft carriers whose keels never touched the salt of the open sea. This article relates the story of two of the most fascinating but obscure warships to serve in the war.'

During the Second World War, the United States Navy, from a very faltering start, rose to pre-eminence in the field of aircraft carrier operations. At the time of America's entry into the war, the USN operated a total of seven aircraft carriers – six fleet carriers (CV) and one light fleet carrier (CVL). By the war's end, this figure had grown to almost one hundred, including twenty fleet carriers, eight light fleet carriers, and a staggering seventy escort carriers (CVE), for a total of ninety-eight flat-tops.

But this was not the complete inventory. The US Navy's pennant lists for the years 1942-45 include two intriguing ships classified as 'IX' and listed as training carriers. These two vessels, the USS *Wolverine* (IX-64) and the USS *Sable* (IX-81), were unique amongst aircraft carriers for a number of reasons. First of all, they carried no embarked aircraft, all aircraft operating onto and off the ships being shore based. Second, they were coal fired – a rarity enough among all surface combatants of the day, but unheard of in aircraft carriers. Third, they operated not on the wide waters of the Atlantic or Pacific Ocean, but on the enclosed, relatively sheltered and relatively benign waters of the Great Lakes. Finally, both carriers were driven through the waters of the lakes not by propellers, but by paddle wheels!

The saga of *Wolverine* and *Sable* had its genesis with the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour on 07 December 1941. While an American naval expansion had been put in train some time before Pearl Harbour, the Japanese attack and America's subsequent precipitous entry into the war added an urgent impetus to the expansion programme. In particular, the US Navy desperately needed to expand its carrier fleet. This expansion encompassed not only ships but also men. The

officers and sailors recruited to crew the CVs, CVLs and CVEs coming off the slipways of America's shipyards needed to be trained; not only the aircrews, but also the flight deck crews.

At first sight, the training requirement seemed to be an insurmountable problem. In its first year at war, the US Navy was barely holding its own in the Pacific and could ill afford to spare one of its precious flat-tops to be used for training purposes. Even if a carrier had been available for training purposes, the navy was not prepared to risk having one of its carriers operating close to the coast. The predictable and easily monitored sailing patterns would make the vessels prime, and relatively easy targets for prowling Axis submarines. This was especially true of America's eastern seaboard where German submarines roamed its length almost at will. The U-Boats relatively unhampered by an inexperienced US Navy that had yet to acquire the skills of anti-submarine warfare, skills that had been painfully learned by the Royal and Canadian Navies over the preceding two years.

The US Navy, however, was not to be denied, for it needed training carriers. While a great deal of flight training for carrier crews could be conducted at land based facilities, the vital skills of landing and taking off from a moving deck could only be practised from a carrier. Similarly, while the flight deck crews could practice their vital support role at land based facilities, they also needed sea going experience to become proficient.

A 'stop-gap' measure was devised using escort carriers that had been hurriedly converted from merchant hulls. These could be easily operated in the fairly easily defended waters of Chesapeake Bay, and in the less easily defended waters off San Diego on the western seaboard.

The solution was far from ideal. Chesapeake Bay is one of America's busiest waterways and extremely congested, this would make training very difficult; whilst the other alternative, on the west coast, was vulnerable to Japanese submarine operations. With America now in the war and an enormous number of keels for new carriers being laid down, there was an urgent need for extremely large numbers of qualified aircrew; an answer had to be found.

The final solution came from the fertile mind of a US Navy aviator posted far from the sea. At the outbreak of the Pacific War, Commander (later RADM) Richard Whitehead USN, was Aviation Aide to the Commandant of the Ninth (or Great Lakes) Naval District. With stunning originality, he hit upon the idea of using small carriers, converted from merchant ships, on the Great Lakes.

His idea, although far fetched at first glance,

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had enormous merit. The biggest advantage offered was security. On the land-locked Great Lakes, ships would be far from the threat of submarines and could operate almost at will with no escort requirements. In addition, the region boasted a number of useful military airfields, including the Great Lakes Naval Air Station at Glenview, Illinois. The only drawback that could be envisaged, was the extremely bitter weather that would probably halt training during the wintertime.

Whitehead was able to convince his superior, RADM Downes USN, of the merit of his idea and Downes sent an urgent letter to the Chief of Naval Operations on 10 January 1942; incredibly, the idea was accepted and acted upon immediately. In his proposal, Whitehead had suggested that if a suitable ship or ships were not available, then the navy should construct small carriers on the Lakes. As it transpired, this wasn't necessary, the search for suitable ships had commenced with some success.

The luxury passenger ferry, *Seandbee*, was selected; a side-wheel paddle steamer (the largest in the world) that had been built in the yards of the American Shipbuilding Company at Wyandotte, Michigan, in 1912. *Seandbee* had been built for the Cleveland and Buffalo Transit Company and when that company became bankrupt in 1941, the *Seandbee* was sold for the ridiculous sum of \$135,000 to a Chicago businessman. In March

1942, the navy purchased the vessel from the new owner for \$765,000 – quite a tidy profit! *Seandbee* was sailed to Buffalo, New York, where she was put in the hands of the American Shipbuilding Company's yard and her conversion commenced.

The conversion commenced in May 1942 and took a mere three months to complete; a phenomenal effort considering the ship's vast proportions. All the upper works were removed until she sat a bare twenty-six feet above the water. An overhanging flight deck of just over five hundred feet was constructed over the hull and a small island constructed on the starboard side. *Seandbee*'s four smokestacks, previously one of her most prominent and distinctive features, were routed to the starboard side and rose above the island. With

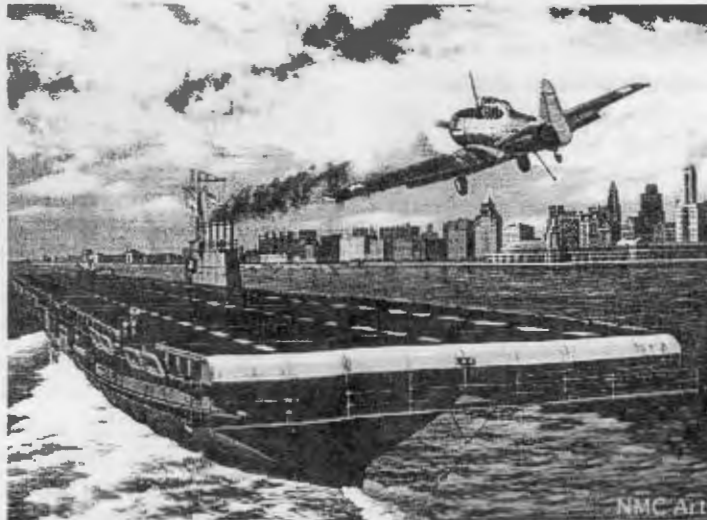
conversion complete, she was commissioned into the USN on 12 August 1942, as the USS *Wolverine*; classified as 'miscellaneous auxiliary unclassified' (IX) and was allotted the pennant number 68.

In her very first days of operation on the Great Lakes, it was found that the heavy clouds of smoke from the coal fired boilers, so obscured the flight deck that landings were a near impossibility. The problem was traced to the fact that the Navy stokers had not yet acquired the necessary degree of skill in the almost lost art of coal heaving. They were unable to pitch the coal far enough into the furnace for fresh loads to burn cleanly. This problem was overcome when the stokers gained more experience and the fuel changed to a cleaner burning type of coal, of which the ship burned about one hundred and fifty tons a day.

Even as *Wolverine* was completing her conversion, it became apparent that the numbers of pilots required would overwhelm the capacity of one ship. At the urging of CMDR Whitehead, the paddle wheel ferry, *Greater Buffalo*, built in 1924 and operated by the Detroit and Cleveland Navigation Company, was acquired in 1942. The ship was handed over to the American Shipbuilding Company for immediate conversion. On completion, it was almost identical to *Wolverine*; the major differences being that the new ship had only two smokestacks and

was fitted with a steel deck (the first US aircraft carrier to do so) as opposed to *Wolverine*'s timber deck. The only resemblance they bore of their former self was the huge paddle boxes on either side of them that housed thirty-foot diameter paddle wheels. On 08 May 1943, she was commissioned into the US Navy as USS *Sable* (IX-81).

When *Wolverine* commenced operational service in August 1942, work began immediately with the new ship operating in conjunction with the Carrier Qualification Training Unit (CQTU) located at the Great Lakes Naval Air Station. The aircraft used for qualifying pilots were the SBD 'Dauntless', TBM 'Avenger', F4F 'Wildcat', F6F 'Hellcat', F4U 'Corsair' and the SNJ 'Texan'.



Practice makes Perfect – a painting by Stan Stokes

This painting depicts an SNJ approaching the USS *Wolverine* and being waved off as its pilot struggles to make a successful arrest.

Courtesy www.nmcbiz.com/stokes

Nine months later when *Sable* joined up with *Wolverine*, the two ships were grouped together as 'Carrier Task Force X'. The training schedule for this task force was gruelling. In the relatively sheltered waters of Lake Michigan, the carriers could operate almost unhindered by the weather all year round. Even the foreseen restrictions imposed by winter weather failed to materialise, except for a three-month period during the winter of 1942.

During other periods of cold weather, the problems imposed by ice floes were solved by working in conjunction with Great Lakes based US Coast Guard ice breakers, which quickly cleared a path for the carriers out into the open waters of the lake. The ability to operate the carriers in the coldest weather had the unforeseen benefit of providing an opportunity for the testing of cold and foul weather gear.

There were two major restrictions, the first being that the carriers were unable to fly aircraft off at night, restricting flying to daylight hours. Secondly, because there was no hangar space aboard the ship and deck parking space was limited to three aircraft, the aircraft landing on had to immediately take off again to make room for the next in line.

On a typical day, the carriers would fire up their boilers before dawn and set sail to clear Chicago by 0800 and operate through the daylight hours, making for twelve to fifteen hour days. When it got too dark for aircraft operations, the carriers would turn about and steam through the night back to Chicago, often arriving in time to turn around and do it all again. Operations were carried out seven days a week with the occasional day off for coaling.

The prevailing winds on Lake Michigan are north to south so the carriers would generally steam north from Chicago all day to make use of the headwind. Pilots found that the low height of the flight deck (thirty-feet) above the water made for some interesting moments as their aircraft 'dipped' as they crossed the bow on take-off. Although there were some 'near misses' and 'close shaves', there is no record of anyone ending up in the water.

The pace of flight operations was nothing short of amazing. Aircraft would be constantly landing and taking off throughout the day, with training squads of five or six aircraft forming up over either carrier and taking their turn to land on and take off. In the beginning, carrier qualification called for each pilot to make eight successful landings and take-offs; in late 1944, the requirement was changed to fourteen.

On 28 May 1943, *Sable* set an unbeaten record when she recorded fifty-nine pilots qualified in one day. This translated to an amazing four hundred

and eighty-eight landings in nine hours, that is approximately one a minute!

On 04 June 1944, *Wolverine* made her claim to fame when she recorded six hundred and thirty-three landings in a single day.

Not only did these two ships enable huge numbers of pilots to qualify, at the same time, they also provided invaluable training and experience for all important flight deck crews without whom carrier operations could not be conducted. The levels of skill in aircraft handling achieved by both carriers' flight deck crews can be seen by the statistics listed previously.

Among the most critical skills taught and practised aboard the Great Lakes carriers, were those of the Landing Signal Officer (LSO) and Flight Deck Officer (FDO). Originally there were only two LSOs in Chicago, one for each carrier. Early in her operational career, *Wolverine's* only LSO came down with appendicitis and all operations had to be halted for two weeks while he underwent surgery and convalescence. This incident brought home to the navy the scarcity of this resource and a training programme for LSOs was quickly developed, along with formal programmes for FDOs and flight deck crews in general. Fortunately, if that is the word, CQTU was able to commence the LSO training programme with five fully qualified LSOs. Besides the two from the training carriers, three additional LSOs became available throughout 1942 when their carriers, *Lexington*, *Yorktown* and *Hornet* were sunk-making them 'surplus to establishment' (so to speak).

Before concluding, it is worth considering the overall statistics arising from the operations of *Wolverine* and *Sable*, and making a few comparisons. A staggering 40,000 carrier personnel were qualified under the Great Lakes programme including pilots, LSOs, FDOs and flight deck crews. Of this rough total, 17,820 pilots were qualified. Add to this a pilot accident rate of around 0.5% and one begins to appreciate the efficiency and value of these two unique ships. In comparison, while some carrier training was conducted on the east and west coasts using escort carriers, it is illuminating to note that during the period 25 August 1942 to 02 December 1944, *Wolverine* and *Sable* qualified 9,729 pilots while USS *Core* (CVE-11) and *Long Island* (CVE-1) qualified only 372! The entire cost of purchase and conversion of the two carriers came to \$4,833,369 which, even by WW2 standards, was a paltry sum and was incredibly inexpensive in comparison to the return on investment.

With the end of the war, the need for the two Great Lakes flat-tops was at an end. Both ships

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were decommissioned on 07 November 1945 and laid up at Navy Pier, Chicago. Held in reserve for three years, the ships were stricken and sold for scrap, a somewhat ignominious end for two grand old ladies who had served the United States Navy well. It is not beyond the realms of possibility that without their contribution, the outcome of the war may very well have been drastically different.

Author's Note: It should be noted that the other major carrier based navy of the day, the Imperial Japanese Navy, faced the same problem of training with security. They solved it by relegating the old (1925) small carrier *Hosho* to training duties in the sheltered Inland Sea for the duration of the war. She was, in fact, one of the few Japanese carriers to survive the war.

I wish to acknowledge the invaluable assistance of Mr Paul H Durand of the Emil Buehler Naval Aviation Library of the National Museum of Naval Aviation at Pensacola, Florida, without whose assistance in the provision of obscure source material, not otherwise obtainable in Australia, this article could not have been written.

[In his autobiography 'All Navy Aviators can fly the SNJ', former WWII Naval aviator, George Coombes, mentions his Carrier Qualifications aboard the USS *Wolverine*. He described the flight deck of the ship as having a landing arrestment system consisting of seven stranded wire cables across the deck, and a barrier resembling a wire fence to prevent landing aircraft from running into the awaiting planes.

Being current in Hellcats, he was surprised when he was told to fly an SNJ, along with the comment, 'all Navy aviators can fly the SNJ'. Having arrived in Chicago from Florida, his first problem was how to start the aircraft in the cold weather, his next problem was that no one would tell him what trim to apply – so he selected neutral trim on elevator and rudder. Not having the correct rudder trim, his first take-off resulted in him hurtling over the left hand corner of the flight deck, but managing to remain airborne.

It was his description of the aircraft's hi-tech deck hook system that I found intriguing, he said that it consisted of a piece of sash cord attached to the hook in the tail and the other end tied to the arm rest in the cockpit. So – Down Hook – undo the rope! Ed.]

The Chief

The old Chief stood, with hands that shook
Like leaves from a wind blown tree,
And asked the M.O. for some relief
From this dreadful malady.

The M.O. gave him a thorough check
With sure and competent touch,
'There's not much wrong with you', he said,
'Except that you drink too much'.

That's all very well', the old Chief said,
'You can blame the grog if you will,
But it's not what I drink that's getting me down,
It's the amount that I bloody well spill'.

With thanks to Owen Holston

Life is stranger than fiction

A young female was admitted to a London hospital Emergency Ward complaining of severe stomach pains.

She was quite a punker with a spiked multicoloured hairdo, several tattoos and pierced body parts.

The doctor diagnosed her problem as acute appendicitis and announced that they would need to operate immediately.

When the nurses took her away to prep her for the operation, they discovered that her pubic hair was dyed green and a tattoo on her stomach said, 'Keep Off The Grass!'

After the operation, the surgeon attached a note to her dressing that said, 'Sorry honey, but we had to mow the lawn!'

The Rabbit Test

The Los Angeles Police Department, the FBI and the CIA are all trying to prove that they are the best at apprehending criminals. The President decides to give them a test. He releases a rabbit into a forest and has each of them try to catch it.

The CIA goes in. They place animal informants throughout the forest. They question all plant and mineral witnesses. After three months of extensive investigation they conclude that rabbits do not exist.

The FBI goes in. After two weeks with no leads they burn the forest, killing everything in it, including the rabbit, and they make no apologies. The rabbit had it coming.

The LAPD goes in. They come out two hours later with a badly beaten raccoon. The raccoon is yelling: 'Okay! Okay! I'm a rabbit! I'm a rabbit!'

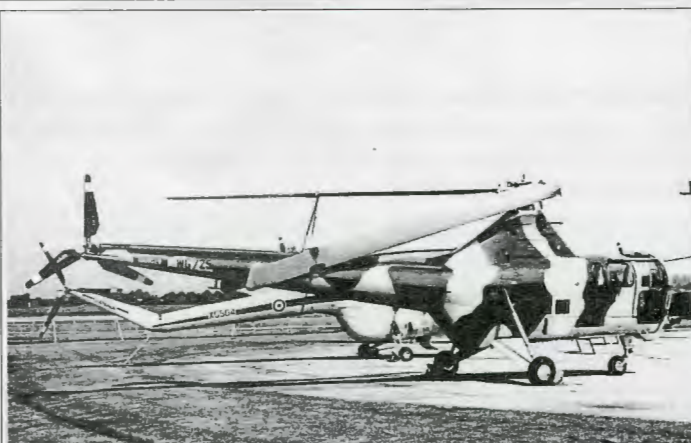
Strictly for the Birds

According to a US news item, the inscription on the metal bands used by the US Department of the Interior to tag migratory birds has been changed. The bands used to bear the address of the Washington Biological Survey, abbreviated to 'WASH. BIOL. SURV.' until the agency received the following letter from an Arkansas camper:

Dear Sirs,

While camping last week I shot one of your birds. I think it was a crow. I followed the cooking instructions on the leg and I want to tell you it was horrible.

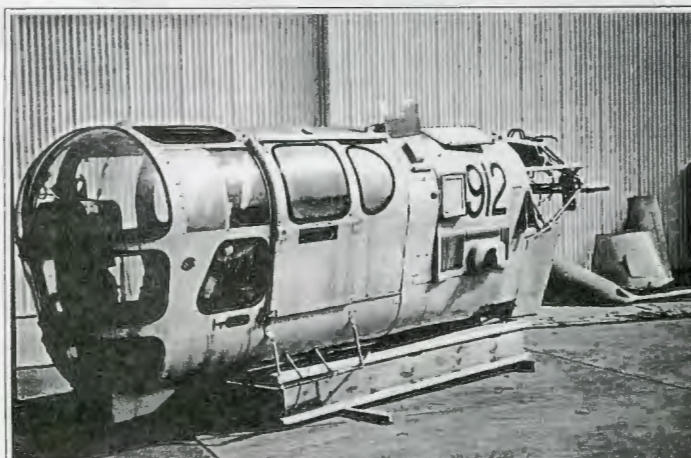
ARRIVAL of NEW ACQUISITION by AUSTRALIA'S MUSEUM of FLIGHT



Dragonfly HR3 – WG-725 – Pictured here in the totally inaccurate colour scheme in which it was presented for the Royal Air Force 50th Anniversary display in 1968.



This photograph shows the same aircraft on display at Flambards Theme Park, Helston UK, in 1986. Repainted as WG-754 and given the spurious code '912'



13 April 2000 – Arrives at the Museum. The fuselage section removed from the container. There is a LOT of work to be done to prepare it for display.

Information / photographs courtesy Heliresearch, UK and Peregrine

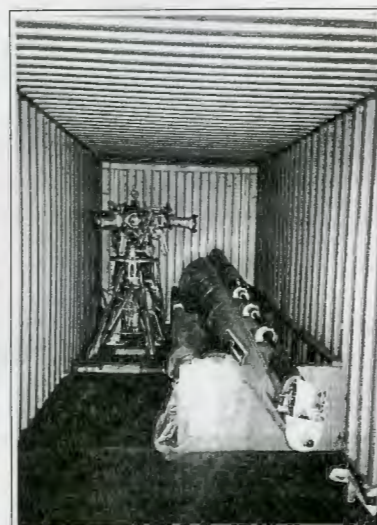
Some of WG-725's checkered history

- 28-10-52:** First Flight
- 25-11-52:** Delivered to RNAS Gosport
- 11-01-53:** Transferred to Boscombe Down – Used By 'D' Flight – Operated in Holland on flood relief work.
- 23-11-54:** Returned to Weslands, Yeovil.
- 16-07-56:** Transferred to Royal Aircraft Establishment, Bedford for Naval Aircraft Division.
- 23-11-60:** To the No.8 School of Technical Training, at RAF Weedon.
- 09-65:** Repainted in spurious RAF colour scheme.
- 06-68:** Displayed at RAF 50th Anniversary celebrations at Abingdon – now part of the RAF Museum collection.
- 1969 – 1979:** Various RAF and Army exhibitions.
- 1981:** Moved to Southend, Essex, in late 1981.
- 1982:** Sold to Aces High. Refinished at Southend, painted in Venezuelan Air Force colours. To be delivered to Venezuela after being made airworthy. Given American Civil Registration N9987Q for this purpose. The aircraft was not completed/delivered on schedule and remained at Southend.
- 21-09-86:** Sold and delivered to Flambards Triple Theme Park, Helston. Repainted as WG-754 and given the spurious code '912'.
- 13-04-00:** Arrived at Australia's Museum of Flight.

As mentioned in the last edition of *Slipstream* on page 20, the Dragonfly is the British-built version of the Sikorsky S-51, both of which were operated on Australian carriers.

The latter was the first helicopter embarked by an Australian warship, HMAS Sydney.

And what happened to the 'real' WG-754? It served with Culdrose Station Flight during 1951/67, it was last heard of in 1974 at Wisbeck, its final fate is unknown.



And here is the rest of it... courtesy of Nedlloyd.

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VALE**Commander Gerald M. Haynes DSO, RAN (Rtd)
1911-1999**

Gerald Haynes joined the RAN as a cadet at the Naval College in Jervis Bay in 1925. In 1933, he resigned from the Navy and was placed on the emergency list. He then embarked on a career in engineering and in small ships servicing the islands in the Bass Strait.

In 1938 he was recalled to the RAN and appointed to HMAS *Canberra*. At the beginning of the war he volunteered for flying duties and was a member of Number 42 Observers Course in Trinidad. He completed his observer training in time to join *Victorious* in June 1941 and participated in the ill-fated raid on Petsamo and Kirkenes. Of sixteen crews only three survived that exercise.

The Squadron returned to Crail to reform, intending to rejoin *Victorious*, but instead was diverted to Malta. 828 Squadron arrived at Hal Far in September 1941. Soon after, the Squadron Commander, Lt. Commander Langmore, failed to return from a mission and Haynes became Commanding Officer.

At about this time, the Squadron was equipped with the first sets of anti-service vessel radar. This enabled us to improve the technique of attacking shipping with torpedoes at night. Despite many losses, some caused by enemy action, and some caused by oil leaks from the Taurus engine, the squadron enjoyed considerable success operating jointly with 830 Squadron.

During this time Gerald Haynes showed tremendous qualities of leadership, and endured a thousand air raids in the six months that he was there, so that he was constantly on duty both by day and by night. For his service with 828 Squadron he was awarded the DSO.

At the end of 1942 he found that he was the sole survivor of the original 828 Squadron that embarked in *Victorious* in 1946. As he often remarked, he had had a lucky life.

He was relieved in May 1942 and the RAN requested that he return to Australia. He was loaned to the RAAF in order to train Beaufort crews to drop torpedoes at night whilst operating in New Guinea waters. The experiment was not a great success and was abandoned after six months.

In 1943 he returned to the United Kingdom to join the School of Naval Air Warfare as Chief Instructor. In 1944, he joined Commander (later Admiral Sir Victor) Smith at the Admiralty where together they prepared a report which became the foundation for RAN naval aviation.

In 1946 he resigned again from the RAN. He was granted a Certificate of Service as master of a Foreign-Going Ship, and ran a fleet of small merchant ships trading from Melbourne to Tasmania and around the Australian coast, to New Zealand and Papua New Guinea. He specialised in the carriage of explosives.

He died in 1999, and in his Will decreed that there was to be no funeral but that a wake was to be held in the Australian Club at which I had the honour to pay a tribute to him for his great service in the RAN during the War

Hon. Peter Howson CMG - Lieut. (A) RNVR (Ret'd)

A LAST FAREWELL

The Association records with regret the deaths of the following members and shipmates:

James 'Whisky' Richard Dalton - 21 December 1999

*

David Kerwitz - January 2000

*

Captain Barbara MacLeod AM RAN (Rtd) - January 2000

*

LCDR Gerald Edward Riley DFC RAN (Rtd) - 11 March 2000 -
After a long illness bravely endured, reminiscent of his heroism as a Pathfinder in Lancasters in WWII, and later with the Fleet Air Arm.

*

Bernie Baalham - 29 March 2000

*

Commander Bruce Franklyn Ledlie RAN (Rtd) - 06 April 2000

CB

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