



SLIP STREAM



**FLEET AIR ARM
ASSOCIATION OF
AUSTRALIA (NSW) inc.**

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AUSTRALIA. NSW Inc.

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EDITORIAL

What a crazy mixed-up world we live in.

In 1947 the Naval Aviation Planning Staff produced a large tome entitled 'The Naval Plan for Naval Aviation'.

A paragraph reads in part as follows:-
"The Navy today cannot perform its duty of protecting our sea lines of communication or of assisting in active operation against the enemy, save by the use of aircraft operating as an integral part of the Navy and conforming to Naval tactics and strategy."

To my way of thinking, the same philosophy still applies in 1991 but the politicians don't seem to see it that way.

Cuts in Defence spending have been across the board. The only step left for the 'razor-gang' at Albatross, would be to put the museum sign over the main gate and use the Historic Flight as a front line squadron flying from the new museum complex.

Later in the current decade, HMAS Jervis Bay will be replaced with a ship which can fulfil the dual roles of training and helicopter support.

By the time this vessel puts to sea, the next problem will be what flag it's going to fly. The New Republic of Australia will have its own colours flying from the mast. If the people who suggested this idea have their way, it's likely to be a Boxing Kangaroo or advertising space for some brewing company.

Even ANZAC Day isn't sacrosanct. Public servants with their big shiny medal will now lead the march, while the veterans of two world wars take their place at the rear with other recipients of 'foreign' (Imperial) awards.

Like I said, it's a crazy mixed-up world.

If any readers know of any old 16mm movies lying around which relate to Naval Aviation, training, or anything of interest, please advise the editor of their whereabouts.

With the advent of video cassettes, a lot of these old films are being dumped or thrown into cupboards where they deteriorate. Two of our members are checking out these old films and those of historic value are being recorded on video tape. These tapes will eventually be presented to the the Naval Aviation Museum for its archives.

I bet many an ex-Navy man cried tears-of-blood for those poor passengers on the cruise ship that ran out of revs. The Pierre Cardin suits were crumpled, the Yves St Laurent dresses were dishevelled, the blue rinse had faded and the mascara had run. "You've no idea what the heat was like without the air conditioning", gushed one bejewelled passenger. Does she want to bet? She should have tried doing engine changes in the hangar on the Melbourne, when the only air conditioning was when the ring bolts rusted through from the flight deck.

Till next time. Peregrine

CHECK THE PHOTOGRAPH ON PAGE 6

Can you identify the Carrier in the photo? If you think you can, send the answer and an unused 43cent stamp to the editor. All correct answers will go into a draw, the winner receiving a bottle of port from the editors own cellar.

The views and opinions expressed in articles printed in this journal do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of the Association or the Committee of management.

FORCE STRUCTURE REVIEW.(NAV)

May 1990 the government commissioned the Force Structure Review as a means to identify the way ahead for Australian Defence into the 21st century

The Review builds on 20 years of development towards defence self reliance in Australia.

The recently released Defence Update summarises the findings of that commission, and has this to say about the Navy.

There will be little direct impact for the majority of Navy's people from the outcome of the Force Structure Review. Force structure and planned enhancements have been thoroughly examined over the last four to five years resulting in a balanced and effective Navy. The changes that do affect people are generally some years off and will be brought about gradually.

Contrary to public speculation, the Navy is not facing major manpower cuts and ships will not be manned to one-third by reserves.

The review points Navy in the direction of doing the support tasks more efficiently and gives more priority to the op end.

OPERATIONS

The review focuses on four major roles:

- * Intelligence and surveillance.
- * Maritime patrol and response.
- * Protection of shipping and off-shore territories and resources.
- * Response to requests from regional nations.

These roles form the main basis of the review's approach to Navy's overall force structure. Submarines are an important part of the intelligence and surveillance capability, and contribute to defence of Australia's shipping and offshore territories and resources. The need for comprehensive knowledge of our marine environment also supports Navy's continuing marine science and hydrographic activity.

Maritime patrol and response requires a balance between aircraft, surface ships and submarines and this area of activity is the predominant element of the requirement for surface combatants. The need to be able to respond to requests from regional nations is also significant.

Naval aviation also plays an important part in the roles listed above, in terms of its integral part in the surface ship weapons capabilities as well as in support of response to requests from regional nations.

These roles provide a sound justification for the current capital acquisition program, reaffirming the requirement for the six COLLINS class submarines and the eight ANZAC class Frigates.

The surface combatant force will be built up to 16 destroyers and frigates, and 12 offshore patrol vessels.

This two tier structure replaces the current three tier system. The destroyer and frigate force will include the DDG's, FFG's, and the ANZAC Frigates.

The DDG replacement will probably be a derivative of the ANZAC design with the first of the class being delivered in 2006. Following an extension of life program to keep them in service until 2005, the Fremantle class patrol boats will be replaced by more heavily armed and capable offshore patrol vessels.

The resultant surface combatant force of 16 destroyers and frigates and 12 offshore patrol vessels is tailored to meet the maritime patrol and response requirement and to provide the necessary capability for protection of shipping and offshore territories and resources. It will also be capable of contributing to response requests from regional nations.

Later in the current decade HMAS Jarvis Bay will be replaced with a ship which can fulfil the dual roles of training and helicopter support. Helicopter support is of particular importance to Navy's capability to respond to requests from regional nations.

The marine science force will include new oceanographic and hydrographic vessels. These will replace HMAS Moresby and Flinders as they reach the end of their life.

The Sea King helicopters will be retained in a utility role, until their replacement in 1995-6 with purchase of a new utility helicopter. Acquisition later in the decade, of a further 10 helicopters for the ANZAC ships is also foreshadowed. On these plans, the future of rotary wing naval aviation is assured.

The need to acquire an effective mine countermeasures capability is recognised. Four coastal Mine Hunters of a proven design and suited to Australian conditions will be acquired as a matter of priority. The planned warfare systems centre will also go ahead. These initiatives will replace construction of further inshore Mine Hunter catamarans, although testing will continue to equip the two current prototypes with an effective mine hunting system.

The Craft of Opportunity auxiliary mine sweeper concept will be developed to 'proof of concept' but acquisition of the planned core force of auxiliary mine sweepers will not proceed.

Overall the decisions in respect of mine countermeasures aim to improve Navy's mine warfare capability in the shortest possible time. To reap the benefits of scale and to ensure development of the necessary skills and standards, all mine warfare vessels will be based in Sydney. Weapons systems to support the required operational capabilities have also been reviewed:

* Development of the surface towed array surveillance system will be redirected towards production of a passive surveillance sonar array suitable for use deployed from FFG's and the ANZAC Frigates

* Two older weapons systems have been withdrawn from service. The Seacat anti-aircraft missile, and the Ikara anti-submarine system have declined in relative effectiveness, and the cost of their operation can no longer be justified.

* The defences of the DDG's and the support ships will be enhanced by fitting them for the Phalanx close-in-weapon system. Additional Phalanx systems will be purchased for fitting on ships on a pool basis.

* Overall, the planned naval force structure is well suited to its operational roles. Changes and reorganisation in support will ensure that priority and resources are directed to providing an effective operational capability.

SUPPORT

The rationale for Two Ocean Basing has been established for some time, and the Government has reaffirmed its commitment to this significant activity:

* The ultimate mix of combatants to be based on each coast will be the subject of further studies by Navy, but in the next few years two FFG's will be based at HMAS Stirling, with ANZAC class ships being based there later.

* All six COLLINS class submarines will be based at HMAS Stirling, although there will be regular deployments for operations off the East coast.

* Development of HMAS Stirling to support Two Ocean Basing will continue, although some specialised facilities that exist in the West will not be duplicated.

Navy's overall support activities will be improved by:

* Once the final OBERON class submarine has paid off, consideration will be given to the closure of HMAS Platypus. Establishment of submarine support facilities, up to intermediate level maintenance capability, at Sydney Fleet Base will be examined.

* Air technical training for Navy will be undertaken by RAAF at RAAF Base Wagga.

* The remaining technical training, currently undertaken at HMAS Nirimba will be transferred to HMAS Cerberus and HMAS Nirimba will close.

* Further opportunities to use commercial support will be sought. This is nothing new to Navy, which has traditionally depended on a civilian workforce. However, the concept will be expanded.

* Rationalisation of warehousing and wholesale supply management as part of the Defence Logistics Redevelopment Project will significantly streamline supply support and release resources for operational capabilities.

* Navy will make better use of experienced people through the planned Ready Reserve to be formed employing former naval personnel. The aim will be to retain access to their skills for surge activities.

SUMMARY

The implications of the review for Navy are consistent with the overall approach of streamlining the "tail", to free up resources for an enhanced operational capability. In many areas Navy was already well placed to benefit from this process with the result that the review has reaffirmed the basis for the future force structure.

The Navy's present and future force structure leaves it well equipped to meet strategic guidance which emphasises the maritime nature of our defence planning priorities, particularly in the areas of operational capability given focus in the Force Structure Review, which provides sound direction for Navy's future development, and a sound basis from which to respond to future developments. Where activity has been reduced or terminated, there are clear and obvious links with the new or improved maritime capabilities made possible as a result.

NAVY HELICOPTERS IN THE GULF

The following are extracts from the R.N. Fleet Air Arm news release, Yeovill, U.K.

At the time of the cease-fire 32 Fleet Air Arm aircraft were operating in the gulf. Ship based Lynx helicopters had sunk most Iraqi patrol boats. Troop carrying Sea Kings at sea and in the desert had supported the land battle. Two 846 Squadron helicopters that deployed in October with the casualty ship RFA Argus landed troops on the roof of the British Embassy after the retaking of Kuwait City.

SUPPORT HELICOPTERS FROM SOMERSET

In August and October elements of 846 Squadron had deployed to auxiliary ships in afloat support and casualty evacuation roles. As the crisis deepened 845 and the hastily reformed 848 Squadrons left their base at Naval Air Station YEOVILTON, Somerset. Their 12 Sea King HC4 were loaded into SS Atlantic Conveyor at Southampton before Christmas. They were met at Al Jubayl by 300 aircrew and maintainers early in the new year and straight away went into the desert in support of the 1st (BR) Armoured Division. Just before the land battle 2 spare Sea Kings were flown to the Gulf in a giant US Galaxy transport aircraft. That deployment brought to 520 the total of YEOVILTON personnel in the Gulf.

DORSET LYNXS SINK MISSILE BOATS

In British Frigates and Destroyers operating in the Northern Persian Gulf Lynx helicopters fired Sea Skua missiles in a series of actions that destroyed the Iraqi navy patrol boats whose own missiles threatened the Allied fleet. 815 and 829 Squadrons at Portland Naval Air Station, Dorset parent the ships flights each comprising 2 aircrew and 7 maintainers. Eight ships flights have been directly involved in the Gulf war.

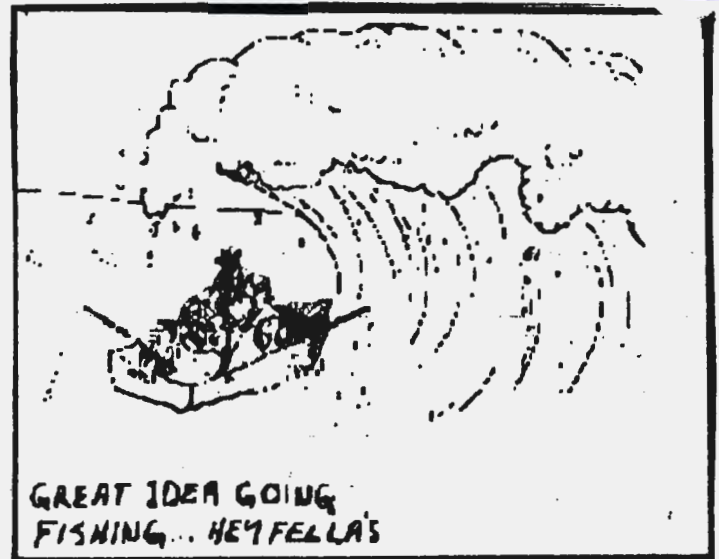
CAN YOU HELP

K. Abbot L/FX 763318 wishes to contact ex-shipmates from 802 Squadron 1946/47 on board HMS VENERABLE. His home address is:
Ash Lea, Moor Rd, North Oversby Market Rasen
Lincolnshire LN8 3PR.

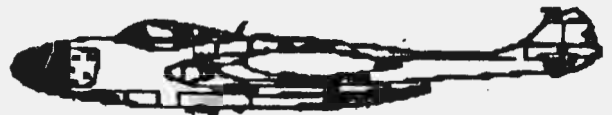
W.B. Knight (Bogey) wishes to contact ex-shipmates who served on 793 Squadron from August 1943 to August 1945. His home address is:
W.B. Knight, 86 Beverley Close, Rainham Gillingham,
Kent ME8 9HQ.



De HAVILLAND TIGER MOTH



De HAVILLAND VAMPIRE



De HAVILLAND SEA VENOM

THE QUIET KILLER ASBESTOS

The useful properties of asbestos were a boon in the building industry, in motor vehicle and aircraft, in ships, water reticulation, steam plants and insulation generally.

It seemed to have a lot going for it. It is fire proof, acid proof, vermin proof, a no conductor of electricity, it can be moulded and woven, included in sheets and pipes, produced in a "wool" form and seemed to have a never ending series of applications. A miracle fibre.

But for a number of years now it has been identified as a "quiet killer". It is the cause not just of asbestoses, a crippling and fatal malady effecting the lungs, but also of bronchial cancer and mesothelioma.

What is worse, invisible dust particles can take as long as 30 years to do their damage.

The recent landmark \$25m out-of-court settlement of claims associated with asbestos mining at Wittenoom WA, together with the reported possibility of further claims against Mr Lang Hancock (who owned the Wittenoom mine prior to 1964) and CSR Ltd which has been involved with the mine since, has highlighted the need for those ex-members of the ADF who have been exposed to asbestos fibres to be alert to any chest illness.

It is appropriate to now repeat an article written in 1987.

ASBESTOS, OCCUPATIONAL DISEASES and RAN AIRCRAFT CARRIERS.

An American study in 1987 estimated that over the next 30 years as high as 18% of total cancer deaths in the USA would be due to occupational exposure to asbestos dust.

The study conclusion raised severe criticism but whether absolutely correct or not, it did not highlight in simple and stark terms the danger of exposure to asbestos dust and in this, there is no quarrel. Asbestos dust is deadly.

These dangers of asbestos have been known since the 1930's but it was not until the late 1960's that concern firmed to the point where further use was limited.

It is a superb engineering material and it has been hard to replace by substitutes. By the late 1970's active programs of removal, mainly insulation in public buildings, commenced. The Navy began a program of removal from its ships.

All the Armed Forces of Australia have used asbestos in the past, for example, Aircraft and vehicle brake linings, but the Navy has been the biggest user in ships for insulation and pipe lagging.

Some exposure is likely in small workshops of WW11 or earlier construction, such as Frigates and Destroyers.

Newer warships, because they are new with insulation in better condition and because asbestos is less used or not used, present lower risk of exposure.

The biggest offenders have been Australia's aircraft carriers simply because of size, age, condition, complexity and, nature of operations.

Anyone who served in HMAS Sydney (1949-1967), HMAS Vengeance (1952-1954) and HMAS Melbourne (1955-1982), must have been exposed to asbestos dust and probably asbestos dust of the most dangerous kind.

HMAS Vengeance saw WW11 service and was tired when Australia got her. Her insulation and lagging were in poor condition and men who served in her say that the

air, particularly during flying operations, was filled with dust.

HMAS Sydney was also bad but HMAS Melbourne was probably the worst. Asbestos dust showered down on men in top bunks. Dining tables had to be wiped clean of asbestos dust and particles before meals.

Whenever the catapult fired or whenever arrestor gear was actuated during land-ons, the air was filled with asbestos dust throughout the ship. The ships ventilation system, influenced by the demands for boiler air, carried the dust throughout the ship and asbestos dust had to be cleaned from uniforms and brushed from the hair.

Deckhead and bulkhead insulation was in bad repair and frayed at the edges. The many miles of pipe lagging was often in poor repair and frayed. It took very little to shake loose showers of asbestos dust particles.

All three ships were laid down in WW11 and the insulation and lagging was designed for North Atlantic conditions and although HMAS Sydney and HMAS Melbourne were fitted out for Australian service, no basic changes to insulation were made.

It is probably safe to say that exposure to asbestos dust in the Navy may not be a problem now or in the future. We have learned, not so much from mistakes but from past lack of knowledge, and adequate standards are now in force.

The concern of the RFDWA is not therefore in prevention for the future but for compensation for the past.

If anyone who served in these ships suffer certain diseases or develops them in future, then their doctor should be consulted to see if there is any possible connection between the disease and their exposure to asbestos.

If there is a possible connection then service has caused or contributed to the disease and it is right and proper to make a claim to be compensated.

For servicemen we have the Commonwealths Compensation Act and the Veterans' Entitlements Act. (formerly Repatriation Act). Our Parliament enacted this legislation for the purpose of compensating servicemen for service caused injury and disease and it is up to us to use the legislation.

The following broad brush treatment may be useful in deciding if a serviceman might be harmed by asbestos exposure.

No claim is made to medical expertise and if the information is not strictly correct it will at least give a start point for further enquiry.

First, what is asbestos?

In its pure form it is a double chain silicone molecule. Quartz is a pure form in a network solid crystal.

Depending on how asbestos molecules form into crystals or combine with other elements, fibre silicates are formed and these are the types in which asbestos is used.

There are many types and the three principle types are - blue asbestos (crocidolite), white asbestos (chrysotile) and brown (or grey) asbestos (amosite).

The degree of hazard and diseases caused depends on the type of the asbestos.

Asbestos is basically inert and it is the fibre size and shape, and not the chemical properties, that determines the disease caused.

Blue asbestos has the smallest straight fibre and is the type most likely to escape the many hair and mucous safety features of the pulmonary system and penetrate to the innermost reaches of the lungs, the alveoli, where oxygen transfers to the blood.

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE.....

Blue asbestos is so dangerous that it is no longer mined or used. It was used for insulation and in building materials.

On the best information presently available, blue asbestos was the main type used in the aircraft carriers.

White asbestos, used in friction materials such as brake linings and clutch facings, makes up about 85% of asbestos used. It has a larger curly fibre more likely to be stopped by the body's safety systems and although still very dangerous, is the least dangerous type.

Brown asbestos, also used in insulation, makes up about 15% of asbestos used and its degree of danger lies between blue and white asbestos.

The most frightening aspects of exposure to asbestos is that diseases caused only become apparent many years later, sometimes up to 40 years after exposure and, there is no identifiable threshold at present on which there is agreement that there is no risk.

It seems logical that risk should depend on degree and duration of exposure but so far this cannot be sustained on evidence, that is, any exposure however slight may present a risk of disease.

When exposure to asbestos causes disease, it is pneumoconiosis, a reaction to retained dusts. Lung cancer is the most serious disease and all types of asbestos are recognized as a cause with the risk being greater if the serviceman is a cigarette smoker.

Risk here is related to degree and duration of exposure.

Bronchial cancer is in the same risk class and these cancers may develop more than 25 years after first exposure.

Asbestosis is scarring of lung tissue called interstitial fibrosis and though in itself not fatal, it can reduce lung function and can develop into lung cancer. It can be caused by all types of asbestos.

Pleural plaques or pleural calcification are deposits of the lung pleura, the membrane lining the lungs. In itself it may not be disabling but it warns of other possible forms of asbestos related disease. It usually occurs before asbestosis.

Mesothelioma is a cancer of the pleura and blue asbestos is thought to be the cause. It is highly malignant but rare. The risk appears to depend on degree and duration of exposure. Unlike lung cancer, pleura mesothelioma is unrelated to cigarette smoking.

Cancer of the Larynx may be caused by exposure to asbestos and like lung cancer, the risk is greater in cigarette smokers and, it has a long latent period as well.

Peritoneal mesothelioma is a cancer of the membrane lining the abdominal cavity. Inhalation, not ingestion, of blue asbestos is associated with this cancer and, cigarette smoking is not a risk factor.

Bowel cancer occurs on the inside lining of the intestines and evidence suggests relationship to inhaling, not ingesting, asbestos dusts. Cigarette smoking is probably not a factor.

Cancers of other organs may have an association with asbestos but the evidence is scarce and awaits further study. In the case of mesotheliomas, these cancers can extend locally or they may metastasize, that is transfer from one organ to another site not directly connected.

The moral of all the above is, if you have a pulmonary disease or a cancer of any kind, and you have been exposed to asbestos, tell your doctor and have him record it.

It will not make you any better but it will help in claims for your protection and the protection of your family.

Source Material (with apologies)

1. Report on The Health Hazards of Asbestos: National Health and Medical Research Council: June 1981
2. Harrison's Principles of Internal Medicine: 9th ed.
3. Chemistry: principles and Applications: Miller: Wadsworth 1976.

RDFWA NEWS

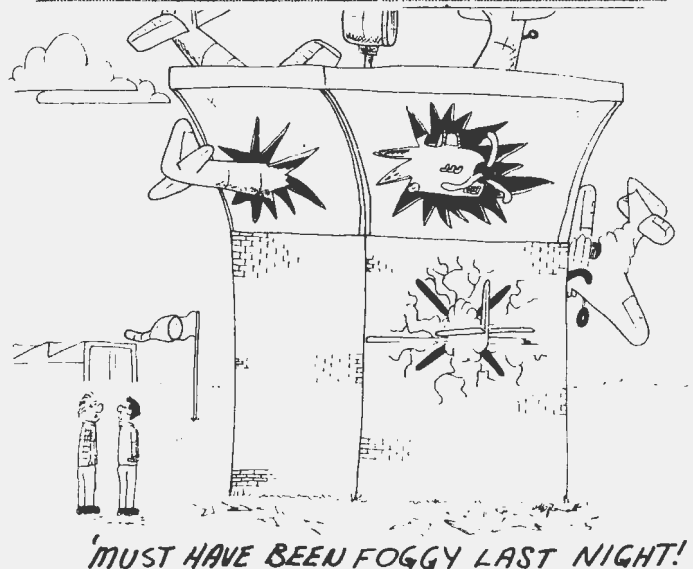
For some time the local branch of the RDFWA has been concerned at the anomalies in the Veterans' Legislation that denies entitlements to those ex-service members who have deemed not to have 'eligible service'. Many of those denied access to Veteran benefits served for long periods, many over 20 years, and all they have is DFR&DB entitlement which was compulsory and which they purchased. 'Eligible Service' has become a clouded issue particularly as the Whitlam Government granted some benefits to all serving a 3 year or more engagement.

In an effort to even things out, The Shoalhaven Contact Group RDFWA prepared a submission on the subject and raised it through political and RDFWA channels.

We are pleased to hear that the Regular Defense Force Welfare Association have taken up the case and it is being made a National issue. The Government has acknowledged inadequacies of aspects of the current legislation where some matters are covered by Veterans' Affairs, and others Commonwealth Compensation (COMCARE), and are looking at the problem.

It is likely to be a lengthy battle however and could eventually call for support from individual members to lobby their local Federal Politicians.

We'll keep in touch.



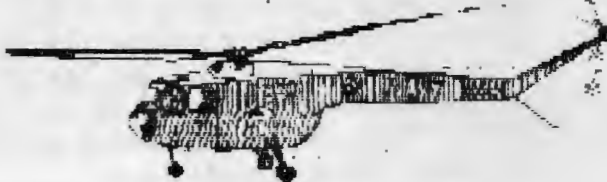


GANNET XA 434 RESTORATION

Twelve months have passed since restoration work commenced and due to the fine efforts of our weekend labourers this aircraft is all but ready for presentation. All external surfaces (except the flaps) have had their final coat of paint, which only leaves the detailing to be done.

We have had an offer from a Sydney company to endeavour to rid the canopy transparencies of glazing, the first one has been sent.

It is well worth a trip to Albatross to see first hand what the team have accomplished.



SYCAMORE RESTORATION

The Sycamore is proving very labour intensive as all paint has to be removed with the old "wet and dry". The cockpit and cabin are starting to look a picture thanks to the efforts of Ray Larder, Ken Day, and Ron Ross.

The main rotor gear box is completely seized, however we are managing to free it with prolific amounts of WD40. After all it has been 27 years since it was last turned.

We are desperately in need of a nose transparency (nose bubble). If anyone out there knows how we can come by one, please let me know.

Project Manager Don Parkinson.



SEA VENOM WZ937 RESTORATION

Some sad news I'm afraid. We have got the aircraft to a state where it is ready to roll out and start, but unfortunately we received a signal saying that we are not to use the existing starter cartridges as they are to unstable. At the moment we are looking for an alternative starting method.

Meanwhile the aircraft has gone back to looking like a Sea Venom with just the fibre glassing of the fuselage and then the painting of the whole aircraft to be completed. More next issue.



SEA FURY RESTORATION

I am happy to report the restoration program of the Fury is well under way due to the efforts of our willing team.

The Centaurus engine tear down project has given us some problems, but due to the efforts of George Meecham, Jack Constantine and the team, Navy co-operation via A.B. Dave Chiverton with a lot of help of Navy people too numerous to mention we are over coming the problems slowly but surely.

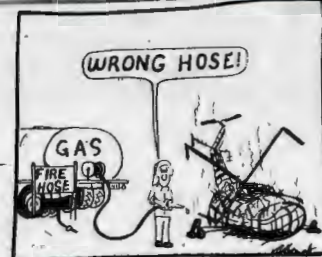
The airframe area is going very well and at this stage, suprisingly, is showing minimal signs of corrosion. The centre fuselage section has been cleaned and bead blasted and looks like it has just arrived from the factory. We are trying to decide whether to charge Ken Lee for the loss of bead blasting grit due to the amount he has removed from Albatross in his hair, eyes and clothes. Thanks for a great effort Ken.

Commander Phil Parker is whitling away with the grit blaster on the centre wing section which is also cleaning up beautifully.

We could do with more willing hands on this project.

Anyone interested, please contact me on 415843.

Malcom (Oscar) Harper Project Manager.



THE BISMARCK ATTACK

The following is a story sent to us by one of our members, Bill West.

This year is the 50th Anniversary of the sinking of the Bismark, so it seems a good time to reprint the story written by Les Sayer DSM, of his involvement in that magnificent FAA action.

Suddenly the boredom of the long wait is over. Leaving the unused pack of cards on the briefing room table, someone cut the three of spades on his way out and with a tense grin said "Ah well it could have been the ace!"

The 'Vic' seemed to be going flat out and as the TAGs emerged onto the wet pitching flight deck, they walked first uphill and then down towards the rather pathetic looking range of Swordfish, each with a real war headed tin fish on which impolite messages for Adolph had already been partly obliterated by the intermittent avalanches of heavy spray churned by the 'VICS' hasty pursuance of 'BISMARCK' in rather unkind weather.

Getting airborne was no problem. There was plenty of wind, although it was wet and gusty. Soon, in loose formation this threat to the greatest ship afloat was on its two hour journey into hostility.

Nestling a little more comfortably in my Sidcot flying suit, wiggling my toes in the flying boots and thinking of the illegal rum secreted in the starboard flying step brought on an inner warmth. I checked my gun and hoped the radio was tuned in to the right spot on the dial in uncertain radio silence. Through a small hole I could see the red fin of the torpedo slung underneath and hoped it would soon disappear to find its mark.

The actual attack on the Bismark is well documented but no one has ever asked this Grandad for his story, so much remains unwritten. Suffice to say I had great faith in my pilot who had a Dartmouth type determination with an ability to make decisions. Anyway from where I was sitting there was very little I could do.

Quite suddenly there was this monster steaming at high speed with all guns blazing and looking like the dying embers of a wood fire caught in a draught. A muffled matter of fact voice announced down the Gosport Tubes "going in".

During that steady period when the pilot was getting his sights lined up, this TAG stood up, unseated his gun with the intention of letting off a few rounds if the opportunity arose. A violent turn away and evasive action thumped me back on the seat and to my horror could still see the red fin of the torpedo. The same matter of fact voice said "I'm going round again not quite lined up".

After coming all this way, getting within spitting distance of the enemy, here we were going round again. This is no practice run, its the real thing, those pretty lights coming up at us were for real and could hurt.

As the aircraft left the scene at wave top hight this TAG had an uninterrupted view of Bismark still going flat out and the other aircraft climbing on their way home, but we were going round again!! At about twenty five miles, still at sea level we turned to face

the target again. All the Bismarks attention could now be given to this solitary Swordfish, how can they fail to destroy it? One torpedo, two 303 guns and three bods against the might of the German Navy.

Closer and closer, the Bismark got bigger and bigger, they had not yet seen us, how can we miss, this is the perfect run in. Torpedo gone, the aircraft lifts and as we turn away we are spotted. That bottled up hell is now going to be let loose on us, the elation of a hit is wiped away by the serious business of avoiding the Bismarks total armament. To avoid this, one counted seconds from the flash of the guns then turned to avoid the huge splashes.

Clear at last we set our lonely course back to where we hoped the 'VIC' would be, the immense relief a little marred by the thoughts that if we did have enough fuel to get back, would we be able to find her.

Mercifully the 'VIC' broke all regulations, put herself at risk, and switched on her light beacon. We all made it back with very little fuel to spare.

Going below, we passed those faces that had seen us off some hours before with looks of "your a bloody fool" or "bloody hero" but now showing smiling relief and pleasure that we were back.

Eggs and bacon plus a tot and it was all over.

HS817 Squadron

HS817 was a Royal Navy air squadron during World War II and performed with distinction as an anti-submarine squadron with various types of aircraft. On Anzac Day 1950, it re-commissioned with Firefly aircraft as a Royal Australian Naval Air Squadron.

Embarked in HMAS *Sydney*, the Squadron fought in Korea in 1951, attended the Monte Bello atomic tests in 1955, and the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953. Early in 1955 the Squadron disbanded and reformed in August of the same year with Gannet anti-submarine aircraft. Serving in HMAS *Melbourne*, it saw much of the Far East and participated in many exercises before disbanding in 1958.

In 1963, the Squadron again reformed this time with Wessex anti-submarine helicopters and continued to embark in HMAS *Melbourne* until the carrier's modernisation program began. After this, an element of the Squadron embarked in HMAS *Sydney* for anti-submarine escort during troop movements to Vietnam.

Early in 1969 the Squadron was re-equipped with the Wessex 31B helicopters, and has embarked in HMAS *Melbourne* during her post modernisation cruises, providing anti-submarine protection to the fleet.



SPIN US A 'DIT'

One summer Sunday in the early fifties HMAS Sydney was swinging around the pick in Jervis Bay.

Many of the ships company were ashore enjoying the delights to be held in what was at the time a holiday paradise. There was swimming, golf, tennis and some young ladies from the various guest houses and the Naval Lodge Hotel. Last but not least was the Fleet Wet Canteen (currently the Fleet Support Section!!!).

The last boat was due to return to the ship at 1800, the bar closed at the same time. Shortly before 1800 a southerly buster came through with winds in the region of 30 knots, which whipped up a nice old chop on the bay. This resulted in the last boat being delayed one hour, closing was also delayed one hour.

When 1900 arrived the boat in the shape of a GPV duly loaded its cargo of jolly jacks, some were much more than jolly. The deck was crammed as we made our way out to the ship and we took more than a few greenies on the way drenching most. The din from those on board could be heard from Point Perpendicular.

The GPV came along side the Starboard For'd ladder to be greeted by the ships Commander V.A.T. Smith (complete with telescope). He took one look at the seething mass below and in his best stentorian voice called "Silence in the GPV", to this one of the more jolly of the jacks replied "Go and get ***** you silly old ****, quick as a flash the order came "Take that GPV off for one hour" the telescope indicating the direction of Point Perpendicular.

One hour later after slopping up and down on the Middle Ground a very cold wet bedraggled and subdued group arrived back along side, as each stepped from the ladder to the deck he was scrutinised by you know who. Those who had been the most vocal were duly segregated to be dealt with at "HIS" table the next day. Oh!! by the way, almost forgot, the Officer in Command of the GPV was a MIDN T.A. Dadswell.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

A brief report on page 8 of the January Slipstream contained highlights of 1990. Notably the introduction of a National lapel Badge in blue and gold which could be worn by full members.

The Federal Council is now considering the feasibility of providing a similar badge in silver finish for Associate members.

Meanwhile the original V.A. F.A.A. silver wings may always be worn with pride by all members.

The Secretary's report was continued on page 2 of the April Slipstream. That edition included a specially reproduced copy of the FAA(NSW) Constitution for you to remove, re-fold, READ and retain for future reference.

A significant number of members appear to have overlooked the advice that annual subscriptions fall due on the first day, of January each year. Also, that receipts for sub's and new membership cards will not be returned unless specifically requested. Why waste your funds on unnecessary postage? The Committee feel that we all contribute sufficiently to the profits of Aust Post. Remember, New Year - New Subscription.

Your address label on the Slipstream wrapper includes your financial status.

eg. /90 in arrears.
/91 financial
/92 paid in advance.

These figures appear on the bottom of the address label.

The New South Wales membership register lists 224 names. About one quarter are unfinancial for 1991. Seven (7) only are also unfinancial for 1990. The

latter situation will be a matter for the next General meeting of members (in September) to consider.

It seems likely that we will lose a few of our financial A.C.T. resident members in the near future; and be pleased to do so. You are probably aware that efforts are being made to extend the FAAA Nationally.

Presently there are State Associations in WA, VIC, SA and NSW. There is also a very strong Fleet Air Arm Officers Association based in NSW.

Last May 30th a meeting of persons interested in forming a FAAA(CT) took place. National Association President CDRE "TOZ" Dadswell addressed the meeting. Subsequently a decision to form an A.C.T. Division was taken.

However, to return to our own affairs. The NSW Division is centred in Nowra. Open forum meetings will continue to be held in the Shoalhaven City Library public meeting room, on the lower level, until further notice.

Meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month and commence at 1930, sharp. So right now, make a note in your diary, or on the fridge, or behind the dunny door, or other significant place, that the next meeting is on Tuesday 16 July, then Tuesday 2nd August followed by Tuesday 17 September.

Please take this as official notice that:-
A GENERAL MEETING OF MEMBERS WILL TAKE PLACE ON TUESDAY 17 SEPTEMBER.

At the venue detailed above.

Items for Agenda should reach the Secretary by Monday 02 September.

Items for discussion/decision will include:-
annual subscriptions for 1992. Action re unfinancials.
Social programme for 1992.

J.Lee Hon. Secretary.

OBITUARY

It is with regret that we report the passing of ex-shipmate Patrick James Hanson - On May 22 1991 (late of Ulverstone) - Leaving those who knew him feeling poorer for his passing, yet richer for having known him. Late CEAW RAN. In his 65th year.



Local members watch the local Wednesday papers for the above logo.

MUSEUM NEWS

Despite 25cm of rain in the preceding 24 hours, the Australian Naval Aviation Museum open day at HMAS Albatross on Sunday 9th June was well patronised by the public with an estimated 3000 people braving the wet conditions to see various warbird, vintage aircraft, Navy and Air Force aircraft on display.

Limited flying displays were conducted by Navy helicopters, Air Force training aircraft and a Royal New Zealand Air Force Skyhawk jet fighter. Various other aircraft were on static display and included an Air Force VIP jet transport aircraft, Navy helicopters recently returned from the Gulf war and a Fleet Support Services target towing jet aircraft.

The open day was held to raise funds for construction of the new museum display facilities to be developed over the next five years. The new facilities are required to protect and preserve the 15 historic Naval aircraft and many items of historical significance already held by the museum.

The Museums Capital Campaign fundraising Committee have raised sufficient funds from the corporate sector and private donations to allow construction of stage 1, the \$1.2 million aircraft display hall.

Funds from June 9 open day will be used for the construction programme to preserve a significant part of Australia's Aviation history.

Rear Admiral Andrew Robertson, Chairman of the fundraising campaign and the Commanding Officer, HMAS Albatross Commodore Rob Partington were both delighted that so many of the public braved the weather and showed considerable interest in the Historic aircraft restoration programme. Many of the museums major sponsors were present including those Nowra sponsors who were instrumental in making the day a success.



FLEET AIR ARM REUNION 1992

Reunions are held every four years for ex and active Fleet Air Arm personnel, their families and friends.

The first national reunion was held in 1988 and more than a thousand former naval aviators and support crews turned up for the week-long activities in the Shoalhaven.

Some of the participants at that event had served at Albatross (then HMS Nabbington) during the war years. They came all the way from the UK to see if conditions had improved since they slept under canvas at the side of the airfield.

Since 1948 when HMAS Albatross was commissioned, many thousands of FAA personnel have passed through the main gates, each and every one of them making his mark in some small way to this country's Naval Aviation history.

The rigours of Service life and the necessary discipline and teamwork to function as a unit provides many lasting friendships. Reunions provide an opportunity to relive in words the joys and hardships of those days at the 'tross and the carriers that we so proudly served on.

For those of you who may not know, the next reunion will be held in May, 1992.

Planning the activities programme has taken several months of concerted effort. Seeking approval from RAMAS for certain aspects, costing river and Jervis Bay cruises, golf, races, barbecues etc..

At the moment, the committee are looking at a range of souvenirs to mark the occasion. High on the list are quality jumpers with an embroidered FAA crest, short sleeved cotton knit sports shirts with crests, caps, Commemorative Port and Squadron crested glasses. Other items are being considered.

Over three hundred acceptances have been received, including some from the UK, USA and New Zealand, unfortunately response from the 'Nowra natives' has been poor.

If you are intending to participate don't leave your application to the last minute or you stand a good chance of being disappointed.

New security rules are being applied and ID cards are to be issued only to those who are REGISTERED, so, if you're not registered you wont be admitted.

Some of those forwarding their ten dollars and application form may be familiar to you. LtCdr Joe Gates, USN Rtd, Lt Tony Hill Rtd, from Aberdeen Scotland, Bishop Wayne, Fred Husband, 'Blackie' Dowson, and most importantly a 'man' called Smith.

It is of the utmost importance that registration be effected as soon as possible. The registration fee provides the necessary finance, and more importantly, pays for advance orders of souvenirs and memorabilia.

Profits from this venture are channelled directly to the fund raising appeal for the Naval Aviation Museum.

Come on fellas, you've done your bit for your country, now do something to preserve your history and have a great time doing it.

For further information give Les Matterson a ring on (044) 217945, or send him a letter to 252 Kinghorn Street, Nowra. NSW 2541.



DEVELOPMENT OF BRITISH NAVAL AVIATION AND THE AUSTRALIAN FLEET AIR ARM

PART 1 IN THE BEGINNING CONT.

Consequently the Mobile Naval Airbase (MNAO) was created in 1944. The parent base was commissioned on 4 September at Ludham, Norfolk as HMS Flycatcher. The basic unit in the organisation was the Mobile Operating Naval Air Base (MONAB) which was to provide the basic necessities for between 85 and 108 aircraft. No provision was made for airfield construction or defence. The base was to be located at an existing, hastily constructed or recently captured, airfield in a forward but not combat area.

MONAB 1 began to assemble immediately and with no practical background experience the personnel and equipment left Britain in mid November 1944 to set up base at RAAF Station Nowra. Its prime task would be to act as "Home Station" for the British Pacific Fleets torpedo bomber reconnaissance Squadrons. Therefore, from the outset MONAB 1 would not be employed in the original role for which it had been intended. It would be required to provide the facilities of a fully established Naval Air Station.

There had been no time for the parent MNAO to develop a practical system before this first MONAB was prepared for service overseas. Certain much needed items of stores and equipment were in extremely short supply, or simply omitted. Other less urgent items were supplied in bulk. Personnel complementing was similarly affected with undermanning in some trades and overbearing in others.

DEVELOPMENT OF AIR STATION NOWRA.

Before examining the role of the British MONAB 1 in the development of what is now HMAS Albatross, RANAS Nowra, it is interesting to review the progress of Naval aviation in the Nowra area in the ten years preceding the MONAB units arrival.

In 1935 a licenced civil aerodrome operated by the local council was located three miles from the Nowra township. It was used by the RAAF when co-operating with the Fleet.

In 1938 the Department of Civil Aviation selected a new site six miles south of Nowra for a Civil aerodrome and an advanced operational base for the RAAF. The first land was acquired in 1939; clearing and grading began almost immediately.

September 2nd 1939 saw the outbreak of WW2 and the approval to develop RAAF Advanced Operational Base Nowra was given in October. Work commenced in 1940 and on 1st August the Nowra Municipal aerodrome was de-licenced. In March 1941 a wireless transmitting (W/T) station was erected in close proximity to the base.

On 21st July 1941 RAAF Central Headquarters (HQ) was advised that "Nowra was suitable for use at all times". In September it was decided to develop Nowra as an Operational Station comprising a HQ and two general reconnaissance (GR) Squadrons. Additional works including the acquisition of 50 acres for campsite and accommodation of 734 personnel were approved. In November the development requirements changed to one GR

Squadron and one GR Torpedo Squadron. During the latter six months of 1941 both fighter and bomber aircraft used the Nowra Airfield extensively. Development work halted temporarily when the base proved unsuitable for Beaufort bomber operations without extensive works. Required development works resumed almost immediately at Ministerial direction. A two year useful airfield life was intended.

On 1st January 1942 the RAAF advance Operational Base was taken over by the Department of Air and became RAAF Station Nowra. It continued development to maintain one GR Squadron and one GR Torpedo Squadron with a Marine Section and torpedo dropping range at Jervis Bay. On 7th May, Nowra Station HQ formed with an initial strength of 51 personnel under Wing Commander J.M. Lerew. On 1st June No 1 Mobile Torpedo Section was added to RAAF Station Nowra.

The Station developed primarily as a training base for RAAF Torpedo A/C and aircrews. The facilities were also used for training United States Army Air Corps (USAAC) Units. When Wing Commander N.C. Walker RAF assumed Command of RAAF Station Nowra on 30th June 1942 the complement was: RAAF 14 Officers and aircrew, USAAC 16 Officers and 46 enlisted men. Training facilities were later extended to units of the Netherlands East Indies (NEI).

On 28th July allied Air Forces HQ requested extension of runways for US Martin Marauder B26 bomber operations. This was granted A1 war priority and completed in six months. On 2nd September RAAF No 73 Squadron moved to Nowra as GR Operational Squadron equipped with Anson A/C for squadron training, convoy patrolling, search and surveillance of enemy submarines and shipping.

Other significant events in 1942 include, 7th September 1942 Base Torpedo Unit (BTU) formed; 12th November, No 1 Flight of 18 Squadron NEIAF - Mitchell B25 A/C arrived under command of FLT/LT Van Der Brock. 1st February 1943, East/West runway extended to 6,300 feet and North East/South West to 7,300 feet. 5th June No 6 Operational Training Unit (OTU) formed to co-ordinate all torpedo facilities. On June 30th 1943 the Nowra personnel complement stood at 1460 total, made up of - RAAF Station HQ 414 - Base Torpedo Unit 398 - No 6 Operational Training Unit 648. The aircraft strength was 36 including No 6 OTU 23 Beauforts - 3 Wacketts - 2 Oxfords, No 73 Squadron 7 Ansons and 1 Moth. By 29th February 1944, because of winding down of RAAF Station Nowra, total complement had reduced to 589.

Because of its training role it could be argued that the Station did not seem to have conducted any significant operational action during the war years. However, it could also be said that as all torpedo bombing training was conducted there, its contribution was considerable. Two significant aircraft crashes affected both the development of Nowra and the tactics of torpedo bombing.

CONTINUED NEXT ISSUE.

THE

NAVAL AVIATION MUSEUM



ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVAL AIR STATION
HMAS "ALBATROSS"
NOWRA, AUSTRALIA.