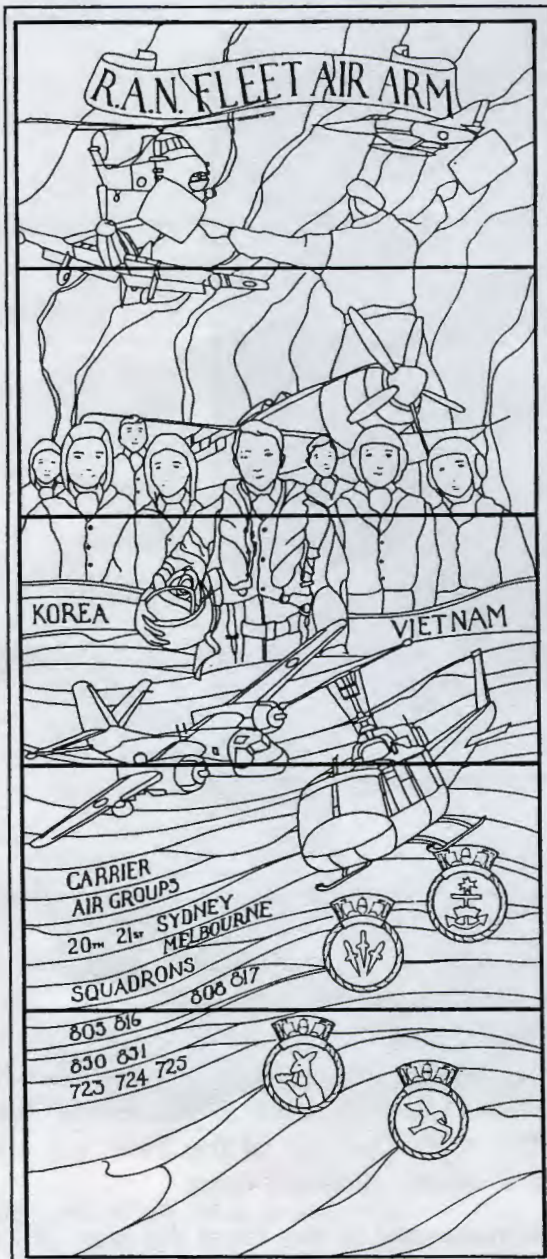


# FLEET AIR ARM ASSOCIATION of NEW SOUTH WALES

POSTAL ADDRESS: PO BOX 28, NOWRA, NSW, 2541

## SLIPSTREAM



44th ANNIVERSARY  
of the  
Royal Australian Navy  
FLEET AIR ARM

SPECIAL EDITION

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## FOREWORD

By Admiral Sir Victor Smith, AC, KBE, CB, DSC, RAN Rtd

In the late 1950's at "Albatross" we began a periodical named Slipstream. Its purpose was to inform, interest and entertain its readers. The first editor was the senior instructor officer, Dick Fennessy, and the amusing sketches were done by Prof Edwards. A copy was usually sent to FOICEA and, in effect, it was the genesis of the E.A.A. Navy News which subsequently developed into the format with its wide distribution which the present Navy News has. Consequently, it must be very satisfying to many, that the NSW Division of the Fleet Air Arm Association of Australia has revived Slipstream, even if in a slightly different form.

The publication of this edition coincides with the 44th Anniversary of the Fleet Air Arm which makes it rather special. What has given the Air Arm the qualities it has shown over this period? I suggest that principally it has been the comradeship and the will to provide the best possible solution to any task, irrespective of the problems involved. We can all remember instances which support that statement.

Those of us who are no longer serving helped to maintain these high standards and I believe that they will continue to be upheld by the present and future members of the Fleet Air Arm.

*This Special Edition of Slipstream has been published to celebrate the 44th Anniversary of the Fleet Air Arm of the Royal Australian Navy. The 28th of August 1948, is the day the 20th Carrier Air Group was commissioned at the Royal Navy Air Station Eglinton, Northern Ireland. On the 31st August 1948, the RAN Air Station, HMAS Albatross, was commissioned.*

*The historical snippets in this edition, can only give a very brief outline of the lead-up and eventual reality of the Fleet Air Arm as many of us know it.*

*Our thanks are extended to Bob Geale, Curator of the Naval Aviation Museum, for his assistance. If there are any errors in the chronology, he would be delighted to hear about it.*

## GENESIS OF THE FLEET AIR ARM

At the start of the twentieth century, increased technological developments in Europe gave cause for the British Admiralty to consider that such a technical upsurge could have an effect on the ability of the country to defend itself. As a result of such considerations, in 1907, Admiral Sir John Fisher instructed Captain Reginald Bacon to take up the study of aviation. As a result of Bacon's subsequent report to the Admiralty, in July 1908, Prime Minister Asquith gave the go-ahead for the construction of a rigid airship. One year later, Vickers began work on the project which was known as "Mayfly", completed in 1911, it failed to meet the design expectations of the Admiralty and they temporarily abandoned the idea of airship use.

Two things were to bring about a rapid reversal of this policy. The first being the success of the Zeppelins in Germany, the second, was Winston Churchill taking over as the head of the naval service. Operating under a large budget, in which aeronautical expenditures were easily concealed, he proceeded to push both lighter- and heavier than air-aircraft.

By 1912, Zeppelins were making patrols over the North Sea, at the same time the British were developing seaplanes and flying boats and the necessary equipment to make use of them at sea. Further development of the rigid airship by the Admiralty was limited because they were copies of captured German airships or plans, this resulted in extensive delays in construction. On the other hand, the development of non-rigid airships went ahead rapidly and attempts were made to use the more advanced models at sea with the fleet. At first these met with little success due to their relatively low speed in a headwind, however, they were used for anti-submarine work.

Naval aircraft were also being specially developed for Britain's Royal Naval Air Service (RNAS), and, to a lesser extent by other nations.

The first pilots were trained at Eastchurch in Kent starting in 1911. Short Brothers had a factory nearby, where they specialised in manufacturing naval aircraft. The seaplanes were developed by attaching floats to ordinary landplanes. After being hoisted over the side of an 'aircraft carrier', they were moderately successful in the calmer waters of the Mediterranean, but failed miserably in the choppy North Sea.

Naval aircraft scored a first in the Dardanelles campaign of World War One when, on August 12, 1915, an enemy ship was sunk by an aerial torpedo. RNAS airmen also pioneered in penetration raids, deep into enemy territory, such as the attack upon Friedrichshafen to knock out Zeppelin production on November 21st, 1914, and the ship-launched strike on the Cuxhaven airship sheds on December 25, 1914. As a result of the latter, special work was on aircraft carriers was undertaken which at the end of the war led to the evolution of the first flush-decked carrier. In the meantime, on August 3rd, 1917, Squadron Commander E.H. Dunning had successfully landed on the foredeck of a moving ship. The first real aircraft carrier available to the Grand Fleet was "Argus", in which was embarked for the first time in October 1918 a full squadron of torpedo bombers. Another method was the towed lighter, from which in August 1918 Lt.S.D. Culley flew a Sopwith Pup and shot down Zeppelin L.53.

The activities of the RNAS were not limited to actions at sea. Apart from the Friedrichshafen raid, it undertook both fighter and bomber raids from its base in Dunkirk, striking at Zeppelin and submarine bases. For this part of naval warfare the RNAS rather than the Royal Flying Corp (RFC) developed the large Handley Page bombers and pioneered night-flying and bombing techniques. By the time of its absorption into the RAF in April 1918, the RNAS had become the worlds largest and best naval air force.

### EVOLUTION OF SEPARATE AIR FORCES

While for various reasons the British establishment in early 1918 of an Air Ministry and the RAF has been remembered, it is often forgotten that these were intended as temporary wartime measures. Both the

British Army and Navy thought that they would recover their air services after the war ended. And indeed the fate of the RAF hung in balance until late 1922. The Air Ministry was safe because it was to supervise civil aviation, but the RAF had yet to establish a role for itself. It was the intention of the government headed by David Lloyd George that it should be disbanded. But in early 1919 Trenchard, again Chief of the Air Staff, was able to show that the Air Force could garrison Iraq at about one-third of the cost of the Army there. Then in 1922 deteriorating Anglo-French relations, coupled with skilful propaganda by P.R.C. Groves, led to a fear that London would be bombed. The Balfour Committee noted that only the RAF could provide for air defence and in May 1923 the Salisbury Committee confirmed this judgement. The government under Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin at once began a five-year build-up, which was not, however, completed when rearmament in the face of the German threat began in 1934. In practice, the RAF devoted most of its energies to developing a colonial air force, for although the Home Defence Air Force was supposed to be a counterstrike deterrent force, it was not equipped with suitable airplanes. At the same time, aircraft used by the Navy were manned and serviced by RAF crews until 1924, when the Fleet Air Arm was established using naval personnel. The Fleet Air Arm did not achieve autonomy and reverted to the Admiralty until mid-1937. The supply of aircraft remained largely an Air Ministry responsibility, and naval aircraft were largely inferior to contemporary land-based aircraft until U.S. aircraft became available during World War Two. In 1936 the RAF was divided into three operational commands: Fighter, Bomber and Coastal, with the latter being responsible for operations from shore bases. The reasons for the developments up to 1937 can be traced to the fact that officers for the postwar RAF were handpicked by Trenchard (Chief of Air Staff). Thus most ex-RNAS personnel were eliminated and the service was heavily dominated by members of the RFC who had served in France. It was only in 1937, partly as a result of a memorandum by Captain B.H. Liddell Hart, that the defence of Britain was transformed from a reliance on bombers to one of fighters so that the island base could survive as an arsenal. The correctness of this decision was made obvious by the results in the Battle of Britain of 1940-41.

( It is of interest to note that the Japanese Air Arm was trained in the early 1920's by ex-RNAS personnel.)

#### INTERWAR YEAR IMPROVEMENTS

In regard to naval air forces the interwar years saw a number of important improvements. Apart from patrol flying boats, which showed a slow, but steady

development, naval aircraft were almost exclusively single-engined. Thus, because engine failure meant ditching and possibly drowning, the emphasis was placed upon reliability. At the same time, the development of aircraft carriers, which had begun in the fleet in 1914-18, progressed rapidly. The flight deck in the new carriers, the first of which was the British "Argus", ran the full length of the hull, and the funnels and bridge were shifted to the starboard side. Since aircraft were airborne at very low speeds because of their light wing loadings, the principal problems were landing on the carriers and stowage. After a series of experiments, the modern hydraulically controlled transverse arrestor wires were developed to aid in landing by 1933. To enable more planes to be carried, aircraft were fitted with folding wings to reduce the stowage space required below decks. At the same time aircraft types developed in World War One, such as the torpedo bomber, were improved while the newer technique of dive-bombing was perfected. Both the British and U.S. navies converted large battle-cruiser hulls into aircraft carriers before designing carriers from the keel up, though the first such vessel was the British light carrier, "Eagle", also commissioned in 1922.

## FLEET AIR ARM - THE AUSTRALIAN CONNECTION

From settlement in 1788 to 1859 Australia depended for naval defence on detached ships of the Royal Navy based in Sydney. In 1859 Australia was established as a separate British Naval Station and thereon until 1913 a Squadron of the Royal Navy was maintained in Australian waters. For port defence, South Australia, Queensland and Victoria maintained small sea-going forces which passed to Commonwealth control on Federation in 1901.

In 1911, the title Royal Australian Navy was granted to the Commonwealth Naval Forces.

On 4 October 1913, the Australian Fleet entered Sydney Harbour for the first time and on the same day the British Commander-in-Chief, Australia Station, struck his flag signifying the end of Imperial naval control. Thereafter, the Commonwealth Naval Board became the administering authority.

Aviation development coupled with maritime interest led to the birth of naval aviation during World War I. The cruisers -HMA Ships Australia, Sydney and Melbourne - figured in early experiments.

On 18 December 1917, a Sopwith Pup aircraft piloted by Flight Lieutenant F.N. Fox made a successful take off from the quarter-deck of the cruiser HMAS Australia. It was an historic achievement for the RAN, but thirty-one years were to elapse before the Fleet

Air Arm, as it is thought of today, came into being.

When Flight Lieutenant Fox made his first take-off from HMAS Australia in 1917, the Royal Australian Navy was just six years old. Other early experiments in naval aviation were made on board HMAS Sydney and HMAS Melbourne. However, the cruiser HMAS Brisbane became the first Australian warship to carry an aircraft operationally when it used a Sopwith Baby seaplane from April to June 1917 during the hunt for the German raider, Wolf.

In June 1918, Sopwith Camel aircraft from HMA Ships Sydney and Melbourne went into action against enemy aircraft during a sweep of the Heligoland Bight.

After World War I, tentative plans to form a Royal Australian Navy Fleet Air Arm were drawn up, these hopes were dashed by the 1920 Budget when the Prime Minister announced that... 'the air force is to be under the control of a board, on which there will be representatives of the Navy, the Army and civil aviation'.

The Minister for Defence proclaimed that.. 'as it is unnecessary at this juncture to create a separate department and it would be wasteful to separate the naval and military sides of this service'.

The same budget that dashed the hopes of the Navy, also provided for the establishment of an air force, and in 1921 the Royal Australian Air Force was formed. Within the budgetary figures for the air force, was an allowance for one squadron of ship's aeroplanes - six Fairey 111D floatplanes were ordered, the only naval aircraft available in UK at the time. Originally they were to be stationed in the Sydney area for fleet co-operation duties, economic restraints at this time saw this plan being changed and they were based at Point Cook, Victoria.

In 1923, in line with British Admiralty policy, the RAN instituted a specialist branch of observers, a small group of personnel were also selected to be trained as pilots.

In 1924, Cabinet gave approval for the construction

of a seaplane carrier. The carrier was built at Cockatoo Island dockyard, Sydney. Named HMAS Albatross, the six thousand ton carrier was launched in 1928 by the wife of the Governor General, Lady Stonehaven. At the same time, the attempt to establish a Fleet Air Arm entirely controlled and operated by the RAN, was dealt another blow when Cabinet decided not to approve its formation. The RAAF were to provide aircraft, pilots and maintainers, while the RAN would provide the observers and telegraphist/air gunners.

Albatross was commissioned in January 1929, and in February of that year, 101 Flight (Fleet Co-operation) consisting of nine officers and 41 NCOs and airmen, with six Supermarine Seagull 111 aircraft, embarked on the Albatross. The observers and two of the six pilots were RAN.

In April 1933, reductions in naval strength, caused by the world economic conditions (Great Depression), saw the Albatross de-commissioned and placed in reserve. Some five years later, the carrier was transferred to the RN in part payment for the cruiser HMAS Hobart.

During the period 1933 to 1935, Fleet Co-operation was limited to the operation of Seagull 111 aircraft from HMA Ships Australia and Canberra. These aircraft were used until they were replaced with Seagull V aircraft in 1935. With the introduction of the new aircraft, HMAS Australia went to the UK to be fitted with a catapult. Shortly afterwards, HMAS Canberra was similarly fitted in Sydney, and the other light cruisers, Hobart, Perth and Sydney soon followed suit. Throughout World War Two, these aircraft were serviced by RAAF or RN Fleet Air Arm crews.

In the latter period of the war, the RAN started planning for its peace-time requirements. The initial planning included two light fleet carriers, two naval air stations, and two air groups.

On 3 July, 1947, the Commonwealth Defence Council approved the formation of a Fleet Air Arm which would be totally controlled and operated by the RAN.

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## THE FLEET AIR ARM - 1925 VINTAGE

*This Commonwealth Navy Order, highlights some of the problems associated with a non-independent FAA.*

### **CNO 137/1925-ESTABLISHMENT OF A FLEET AIR ARM OF THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY.**

The Naval Board have decided to establish a Fleet Air Arm of the Royal Australian Navy, based as far as practicable, on the scheme adopted in the Royal Navy, as set forth in Admiralty Fleet Order No.1058 of 1924, and subsequent relative AFOs.

2. Applications have been invited from Officers wishing to undergo the Long Air Course of four years, commencing in January 1925.

3. Officers volunteering for the Fleet Air Arm must be of the rank or relative rank of Sub-Lieutenant or Lieutenant, and must not be above the age of 28 on 1st January in the year in which they commence the course.

Sub-Lieutenants must have obtained their Watchkeeping Certificates. In the main, Officers selected will be of the Executive Branch, but a small number of (E) Officers are also required. Officers before selection will be required to pass a medical examination.

4. Officers who apply are required to volunteer for service in the Fleet Air Arm, involving attachment to the Royal Australian Air Force for certain periods, the duration of which will be decided by the Naval Board from time to time. No Officer who volunteers will be required to undertake a second or subsequent period of attachment otherwise than with his own consent. For the present, it is intended that the periods of attachment and General Naval Service shall be approximately as follows.

A. First Period	Air	Four years, which will include a period of training.
B. Second Period	General Naval Service	Two years.
C. Third period	Air	Two years for 50 per cent of the Officers who have completed A - the rest remain General Service.
D. Fourth period	Air	Two years for 60 per cent of the Officers who have completed C - the rest remain General Service.
E. Fifth period	General Service or Air	For remainder, if any, of Lieutenant Commander's for all Officers, who have completed D.

5. Appointments of attached Officers will be made by the Air Board on the nomination of the Naval Board.

6. Naval Officers attached to the Royal Australian Air Force will be granted Air Force rank during attachment, the initial rank granted that of Flying Officer, and they will be eligible for advancement in the Royal Australian Air Force, irrespective of their rank in the Royal Australian Navy. They will be given temporary RAAF commissions while attached; such commissions will be given to ensure the status and authority of attached Naval Officers under Air Force Law while under training, or at such times during their attachment when they may have to command RAAF personnel not under the Naval Discipline Act, and will not in any way whatever affect their Naval status or authority. Attached Naval Officers will invariably be addressed by their Naval titles, and if their Naval rank is relatively higher than their Air Force rank, they will take precedence (but not command) among Air Force Officers in accordance with their Naval rank. They will continue to wear the uniform of their Naval rank, but will wear also a distinguishing badge indicating that they are attached to the Royal Australian Air Force for service in the Fleet Air Arm.

7. They will continue during the attachment to draw their full naval pay, and will receive in addition an allowance of 6 shillings per day. This allowance may be drawn in addition to (E) pay, or to Gunnery Torpedo, or other similar continuous Specialist Allowance. It will be paid during attachment under the general conditions laid for Submarine Allowance. During the periods of Naval General Service, however, when the officers cease to be attached to the Royal Australian Air Force, the allowance for flying duties will not be payable.

8. When attached to RAAF Establishments on shore, they will either be accommodated and rationed, or will be eligible to receive in lieu, in addition to Naval full pay and flying duties allowance where applicable, lodging and victualing or provision allowance at RAN rates.

9. When embarked during periods of attachment, their flying duties will be considered as equivalent to specialist duties. They will, therefore, have the rank and status and authority of their Air Force rank when they are engaged in specialist air duties: at other times, when they are engaged in General Naval Duties, they will have their Naval rank, status and authority. They will be available for ship duty in addition to flying duty, and in order to emphasise this, they will, when appointed to a carrier or other of HMA Ships, receive an appointment from the Naval Board as well as an appointment from the Air Board.

10. Attached Officers will, as stated in paragraph 6, be eligible for advancement in the Royal Australian Air Force, under RAAF Regulations, irrespective of rank in the Royal Australian Navy, and such advancement will be determined by the Air Board, in consultation with the Naval Board.

11. The promotion in the Royal Australian Navy of RAN Officers serving in the Fleet Air Arm will be governed by Naval Regulations, and this service will be considered to be as good as service towards promotion as if they had served in any other specialist branches.

12. Attached Officers, while serving at RAAF Establishments on shore, are to be borne nominally on books of HMAS Cerberus; when serving afloat they will be borne on the books of the ship in which they are serving. \*\*

## THE FIRST FORWARD STEP

To quote from Commodore 'Toz' Dadswell's story, 'From Midshipman to Admiral in a flying forty-nine years':

..One of the most influential figures in the RAN's history is Admiral Sir Victor Smith AC, KBE, CB, DSC, RAN Retired. Admiral Smith served for nearly fifty of the Navy's eighty years, and as a naval aviator saw the transition from the biplane to the jet aircraft. During his career, Admiral Smith was involved in some of the most important decisions affecting the course of the Navy's development. In particular he was one of the key figures in Australia's acquisition of two aircraft carriers and the establishment of the Fleet Air Arm....

...In the last year of the war the RAN looked to its future; the shape of its peacetime fleet. It envisaged a Navy with two light fleet carriers, two air groups and two naval air stations. Lieutenant Commander Smith was given the task of drawing up a draft plan for the creation of the new Fleet Air Arm. In October 1945 he flew to London to work closely with the RN on details of the plan. A year later he was back in Australia as a member of the Australian Naval Aviation Planning Staff. The government approved the Naval Aviation Plan in 1947 and Lieutenant Commander Smith returned to London to implement the extensive training programme and logistic support scheme. After two years, and with the great satisfaction of seeing the RAN's first aircraft carrier, *HMAS Sydney*, and her two squadrons commissioned, Commander Smith returned to Australia....

## NAVAL AIR STATION ALBATROSS

### A CHRONOLOGY

**1928** - Mr. Cyril Blacket, a local architect, proposed the establishment of an airfield to serve Nowra.

**1930** - Joy flights were made from an area known as McDonalds paddock.

**1935** - Municipal aerodrome established three (3) miles from Nowra and granted a licence by the Department of Civil Aviation (DCA) and officially opened 6 July 1935 (located behind houses on Southern side of Albatross Road on the town side of Calyanea Street).

**1938** - DCA surveyed the Nowra area for a new site for the Municipal aerodrome. Air Board advised DCA that the selected site would also serve as a RAAF Advanced Operational Base. Mr. Augerson, for DCA selected an area, located on the Braidwood Rd, six (6) miles from Nowra.

**1939** - Acquisition of the land was gazetted. 357 acres on 14 June and a further 118 acres on 14 September.

**02:9:1939** - War declared.

**10:1939** - Approval given to develop the airfield for the RAAF.

**5:1940** - Nowra Municipal council granted permission to use the airfield on a no interference basis with the RAAF.

**01:8:1940** - Nowra Municipal Aerodrome de-licensed.

**3:1941** - W/T station erected.

**21:7:1941** - Nowra aerodrome suitable for use at all times.

**26:9:1941** - Works approved, 229,860 pounds allocated for development of the base including procurement of another 50 acres and accommodation facilities for 734 personnel. RAAF Nowra was to be an operational base. A General Reconnaissance Squadron and a General Reconnaissance Torpedo Squadron equipped with Beaufort bombers were to be based at Nowra.

**01:12:1941** - Airfield found to be unsuitable for operating Beauforts Jervis Bay surveyed as a possible alternative airfield.

**05:12:1941** - As the result of local pressure, work resumed.

**01:01:1942** - Department of Air assumed authority for the base.

**07:05:1942** - RAAF Nowra formed under the command of Wg.Cdr. J.M. Lerew, RAAF. 51 personnel.

**05:1942** - The two (2) gravel runways sealed.

**30:06:1942** - Wg.Cdr. M.C. Walker RAF assumed command of RAAF Nowra.

**28:07:1942** - HQ Allied Airforces obtained approval for extension of runways.

**17:08:1942** - No. 7 Squadron RAAF moved to Nowra. Beaufort bombers.

**02:09:1942** - No. 73 Squadron moved to Nowra. Avro Ansons.

**10:1942** - Heavy rains and flooding damaged runways.

**28:10:1942** - No. 7 Squadron moved to RAAF Townsville.

**12:11:1942** - No. 1 Flight of No.18 Royal Netherlands East Indies Air Force Squadron arrived. Mitchell (B25) bombers.

**01:02:1943** - Runways 26 and 21 extended to 6,300

and 7,300 feet respectively. Additional land acquisitions were made.

**13:04:1943** - WgCdr. J.E. Graham RAAF assumed command of RAAF Station Nowra.

**14:04:1943** - Beaufort bombers A9-27 and A9-268 crashed into Jervis Bay after mid-air collision. Bodies of the crew of A9-27 were recovered and are buried in Nowra War Cemetery.

**04:05:1943** - RAAF Station Nowra transferred to the control of No.2 Training Group, Sydney.

**05:1943** - Heavy rains and flooding with damage to the runways.

**14:08:1943** - Beaufort A9-101 carrying out low level convoy escort had its port propeller hit the water. The propeller complete with its reduction gear was torn off. The A/C returned safely. In 1981 a trawler recovered the propeller and presented it to the Naval Aviation Museum.

**26:11:1943** - Wg.Cdr. G.F. Ell RAAF, assumed command of RAAF Station Nowra.

**10:05:1944** - Five (5) hangars constructed. Four (4) remain - now known as C,D,E, and F.

**07:1944** - A Royal Navy liaison team, under the command of Rear Admiral C.S. Daniel CBE, DSO, RN inspected Nowra Air Station with a view of setting up a Fleet Air Arm Base capable of handling up to 90 Torpedo Bombers and Fighters and accommodate up to 2,000 personnel.

**09:09:1944** - No.73 RAAF Squadron disbanded.

**15:10:1944** - RAAF Station Nowra disbanded and turned over to the Royal Navy.

**11:1944** - Work commenced on hardstandings and taxi ways.

**08:12:1944** - Work commenced on accommodation facilities. No.6 Royal Naval Mobile Air Torpedo Maintenance Unit arrived.

**27:12:1944** - Advance party from Mobile Naval Air Base 1 (MONAB 1) arrived.

**02:01:1945** - The Royal Navy commissioned the airfield as HMS Nabbington under the command of Captain G. Nunnerly

**27:01:1945** 723 Squadron personnel arrived at RNAS Nowra and were allocated 6 Miles Martinent target towing aircraft.

**09:02:1945** - 1830 and 1833 Squadrons of Corsair aircraft disembarked from HMS Illustrious.

**10:02:1945** - Grumman Avenger aircraft of 820 Squadron, HMS Indefatigable, 849 Squadron, HMS Victorious and 857 Squadron, HMS Indomitable flew

ashore to RNAS Nowra.

**10:02:1945** - Corsair fighters of 1834 and 1836 Squadrons disembarked from HMS Victorious to RNAS Nowra. Grumman Hellcat Squadrons 1839 and 1844 disembarked from HMS Indomitable to RNAS Nowra.

**11:02:1945** - Grumman Avengers of 854 Squadron disembarked from HMS Illustrious to RNAS Nowra.

**27:02:1945** - 820,849,1834,1839 and 1844 Squadrons depart to embark in their carriers.

**28:02:1945** - 857 Squadron embarks in HMS Indomitable.

**06:03:1945** - 854 Squadron departed for HMS Illustrious.

**07:03:1945** - 1830 and 1833 Squadrons depart for HMS Illustrious.

**03:1945** - Captain H.G. Dickinson, DSC, RN assumed command of HMS Nabbington.

**07:03:1945** - Runways unserviceable. Aircraft moved to RNAS Jervis Bay.

**27:04:1945** - Repairs to runways completed and aircraft return from RNAS Jervis Bay.

**12:05:1945** - A Firefly Mk1 of 1771 Squadron crashed at RNAS Jervis Bay killing its crew. Both crew members are buried in Nowra War cemetery.

**06:1945** - 24 RAAF pilots voluntarily transferred to the RANAS served with RN Squadrons of BPF..

**04:06:1945** - 1839 Hellcat Squadron from 'Indomitable' arrives Nowra.

**05:06:1945** - 1844 Hellcat Squadron from 'Indomitable' arrives Nowra.

**06:06:1945** - 857 Grumman Avenger Squadron from 'Indomitable' arrives Nowra. 854 Avengers arrive from 'Victorious'.

**14:07:1945** - 1845 Corsair Squadron arrives from RNAS Maryborough.

**21:07:1945** - 1846 Corsair Squadron arrives from 'Colossus'.

**22:07:1945** - 1843 Corsair Squadron arrives from 'Arbiter'

**02:08:1945** - The 3rd Carrier Air Group formed at RNAS Nowra. Comprised of 854 Avenger, 1843 and 1845 Corsair Sqdns.

*Between 2nd of August and the 15th of November 1945 there were several Squadron movements to ships and back to RNAS Nowra.*

**15:11:1945** - HMAS Nabbington paid off. RNAS Jervis Bay (HMS Nabswick) closed down. RNAS



Nowra then commissioned as HMS Nabswick.

*Between 15th of November and 18th March 1946 there were several more Squadron movements and unfortunately several fatal accidents.*

**18:03:1946** - HMS Nabswick, RNAS Nowra paid off and returned to RAAF Caretaker status.

**17:04:1946** - Tacit approval given, by Cabinet, for the establishment of a Naval Air Branch.

**14:09:1946** - Admiralty advise Australia that they are prepared to bear half the cost of two light fleet carriers for the RAN.

**17:09:1946** - The Prime Minister approves the recommendations from the Defence Committee for establishment of the FAA.

**15:12:1947** - RAAF Station Nowra transferred to the RAN.

**01:01:1948** - The first draft of RAN ratings selected for the Fleet Air Arm proceeded to U.K. for training.

**23:02:1948** - London Order No. 5967 placed for:

6 x Sea Fury Mark 11

6 x Firefly Mark V

delivery to be monthly commencing May.

**03:1948** - Cabinet authorise purchase of two (2) Light Fleet Carriers.

**05:04:1948** - London Order No. 5603 placed for:

25 x Sea Fury Mark 11

25 x Firefly Mark V

9 x Centaurus engines

9 x Griffin 74 engines

as the outfit for the 1st Air Group.

**06:1948** - The Air Board allocated the following aircraft to the RAN:

3 x CAC Wirraway

14 x Supermarine Spitfires

4 x Vultee Vengeance

**28:08:1948** - *No. 20 Carrier Air Group formed up at RNAS Eglinton (HMS Gannet).*

805 Sqdn - Sea Fury Mark 11s

816 Sqdn - Firefly Mark 5s

**31:08:1948** - *H.M.A.S. Albatross commissioned with the White Ensign being hoisted over the control tower. \*\**

## AND WHAT DID THE PRESS HAVE TO SAY?

*The following article appeared in a local newspaper in the first week of September, 1948.*

### HMAS "Albatross" Commissioned

On Tuesday morning, in glorious sunshine, at nine-thirty promptly, HMAS Albatross, the first Royal Australian Naval Air Station, was commissioned, and a beautiful White Ensign flew proudly from the control tower of the Nowra Aerodrome.

The Officers and men, under Acting-Captain, Commander H.J.F.Lane, OBE, RN., saluted the flag as it floated out on the breeze after Yeoman Napier had called the hour of commission. It was indeed an historic moment for Australia, when Australia came into line with the other great powers of the world and provided the nucleus of its own Naval Air Arm.

Residents of Nowra, who have a warm spot in their hearts for the crew of the "Shoalhaven", will be interested to know that Commander R.Rhoades, DSC, RAN., had the silk Ensign, which was used on Tuesday morning, presented to him when he was the Captain of the "Shoalhaven". He is now stationed at Nowra as second in command, and was present at the official ceremony.

Other leading Officers present were Commander (E) A.S.J.Banks, Air Engineer Officer, with Lt.Commander The Hon.D.W.E. Chubb, RN., and Lt.Angell, secretary to the acting-captain.

Commander Lane will control the drome until the arrival of Captain R.G.Poole, RN., who is expected in late September.

All the familiar terms of the RAAF will be used when speaking of the drome, such as taxi-ways etc., and there will be a special part of the drome where the pilots will learn to land their aircraft the same as on the deck of a carrier.

For the Nowra drome will be an essential training ground for the Naval Air Arm and the first fifty recruits are expected next week. These will be technical recruits, and all phases of technical teaching, such as meteorology, and the mechanical side of aircraft handling, will be taught at the drome.

It is expected that early next year about one thousand officers and men will be in training here, and the number is expected to rise to fifteen hundred in 1951. The exact number will depend on how aircraft materials are available, and the expansion of the Naval Air Arm. Present ship's company is about one hundred and forty, including Officers, Chief Petty Officers, Petty Officers and Naval Ratings.

Early next year with the arrival of the Aircraft Carrier "Sydney", carrying about 21 aircraft, Sea Fury and Fairey Firefly Strike type, the Nowra drome will really get going, and when the "Sydney" is in harbour at Jervis Bay, Nowra will be a busy spot. For the Nowra drome is really a supply base for the Naval Air Arm, and will carry reserve aircraft and all supplies, including trained men.

Judging by recent utterances by the Minister for the Navy, another aircraft carrier can be expected late next year, and the Nowra drome will become busier than ever, keeping up essential supplies up to these two aircraft carriers, which will form the nucleus of Australia's Naval Air Power.

Although aircraft carriers usually have a compliment of 1360 men during war-time, this number is brought down to about 750 in peace-time, and it is expected HMAS "Sydney" will have about 1000 men aboard upon arrival. \*\*

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***.....and a beautiful White Ensign flew from the control tower of the Nowra Aerodrome.***

The Executive Officer probably thought that the control tower was not the place for the White Ensign to be flown.

Records show that the main mast at Albatross was constructed by the shipwrights of HMAS Moreton and stood in the grounds of the small craft base at Colmile, Brisbane, throughout World War Two.

It was brought to HMAS Albatross at the instigation of Commander R. Rhoades, DSC, RAN, the first Executive Officer of the Air Station. \*\*

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## AND ONE YEAR LATER...

*In the August 1949 edition of PIX magazine, the journalist had this to say...*

### AUSTRALIAN NAVY'S FIRST AIR STATION

They call it HMAS Albatross, although it's a solid chunk of land on the NSW coast.

HMAS Albatross is one of those things that make the Navy so incomprehensible to the layman. It isn't a ship at all but a solid chunk of land, like many other Navy stations. The galley is just a kitchen and the men sleep in cabins and 'tween decks which are actually bedrooms and dormitories.

To add to the confusion the crew aren't sailors either but mostly airmen and air mechanics. For Albatross is the Royal Australian Naval Air Station at Nowra, 100 miles south of Sydney. (When this reporter had trouble putting a long distance call through to Albatross the telephone operator at Sydney GPO said

she thought the ship had sailed.)

The station was built for the RAAF in the early 40's, was later handed over to the Pacific Division of the Royal Navy as an air base. When Australia acquired her first aircraft carrier, HMAS Sydney, the Nowra station was acquired by the RAN and was ready for the reception of the first Naval Airmen trainees in August, 1948.

But it wasn't until Sydney arrived from England recently that HMAS Albatross really got cracking. Fireflies (multi-purpose, two seater aircraft) and Sea Furies (Naval fighter planes) were unloaded from the carrier, and hundreds of RAN personnel began serious training in the handling and maintenance of Navy aircraft.

Many of the personnel are RN men who have joined the Australian Navy for from two to six years. Some of them are bewildered by the amenities provided at Nowra. There are no hammocks, but proper beds with sheets and pillow cases, and on the dormitory floors are gay pink and green rugs. (Most of the men keep their rugs and bed linen securely under lock and key, seldom use them.) Six miles away is the town of Nowra (population 4400). One of the amenities there is a club, the Shoalhaven Naval Centre, for the men, but it is not wildly popular. Shire Councillor W.P. McDonnell, the clubs secretary, said: "Our committee of 30 decided that the running of the club was a job for men. We have a paid manager and the towns business people make donations. There is money to run the club but no real sympathy for it. The townspeople are scared of a big influx of Navy personnel." Women are permitted on the premises only on special nights. When we asked why this was so, a Nowra publican fixed the reporter with an angry eye and demanded: "Have you got a daughter?" He seemed to think that answered the question fully. The men, specially recruits from far-off Britain, are hurt and angry at the attitude of the Nowra people. Said one 20 year old from Devon: "I'd like to meet some folk and be asked home to tea and sit by a fire. And meet a nice girl and take her to the pictures. But the people seem to think we are no good."

*Several interviews were carried out to supplement this article.....*

\* Master-at-Arms wife, Mrs Frank Edwards, is the only woman at the RAN Air Station, Nowra. (Officers and Men's wives live in Nowra and at Jervis Bay). Asked if she were lonely, Mrs. Edwards said: "I've got my husband Frankie."

**NB:** *On the 4th of October 1949, approval was given for the establishment of Married Quarters. 5 ex-British Torpedo Unit huts to be converted, 20 Nissen huts to be converted, 10 x (36'x24') and 10 x (42'x 16') quarters to be built. Ed.*

\* Naval Air Mechanic Barry Colpus (20) is from London, he left the RN to join HMAS Sydney, now stationed at Nowra. PIX found him at a local cinema. He said London was rather brighter, but added stoically: "This is the Navy."

\* "You can get a real good juicy steak here," says Electrician's Mate 'Chips' Wood (20) from Middlesex. "Not like the sixpenn'orth of meat in England. I like Sydney and dancing at the Trocadero. But Sydney girls don't worry me- I got a real nice girl back home."

\* Sydney seems all play and no work, is the impression of Electrician's Mate Stan Went (20) from Birmingham. "I've always wanted to see Australia; it's a land of plenty. But I reckon the people in England are working a lot harder than the people in Australia."

\* "Sydney looks on Navy men as if they're dirt," says AB Bill Bowden (24) from Devonshire. "If you have a drink you're a drunkard. We have more freedom back home. I'd like to go back to England tomorrow. Australia is just a land of make-believe - no reality about it." \*\*

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## SHOALHAVEN NAVAL CENTRE

This facility mentioned in the PIX story is not the old White Ensign Club.

The following abbreviated article appeared in the local press on the 19th April, 1949:

### **PUBLIC MEETING SEEKS WAYS AND MEANS OF PROVIDING AMENITIES FOR ALBATROSS**

A public meeting was held in the School of Arts on Wednesday night last, with the object of establishing an amenities centre, or something of the kind, for the benefit of the personnel of HMAS Albatross.

It has been felt for some time that something of this kind would be of great benefit to the men of Albatross, as many of them, when on leave, have nowhere to go and little to do. The idea is to have a centre to which men can go when in Nowra, to play games, write letters, read, or rest, as they feel inclined.

The Shire President (Cr.H.O.Cox) who convened the meeting occupied the chair, and after briefly stating the object of the meeting, and extending a welcome to Lieut.R.Jolly RN, and Mr.W.T.J.Crozer (Commissioned Flying Officer), of HMAS Albatross, invited those present to submit suggestions.

He reminded those present that HMAS Albatross brings about development from which the whole area directly benefits. From the National stand-point he

said we feel that it is a duty to welcome all personnel and offer the hand of fellowship to them. We want to make them happy and feel that they are at home among us and in some small way, bring them happiness.

Lieut. Jolly, on behalf of R.G.Poole RN (Commander of Albatross) expressed gratitude that something was being done in this way. He said Captain Poole appreciates very much, the move on the part of the people of Nowra to provide amenities for the personnel of the Station.

Mr.Crozer reminded the meeting that this was no temporary arrangement, that the numbers at the station are going to increase and that for these reasons, something of a more or less permanent nature is needed.

*\* As a result of this meeting a committee was formed, it consisted of two representatives from each of the thirteen organisations present at that meeting.*

*The Shoalhaven Naval Centre became a reality. Thought to have been located in the area behind the Nowra School of Arts, it closed within seven months due to lack of public support and finance.*

*The next such project to take place was the White Ensign Club, which opened in October 1954 in the old Nowra Hospital in Bridge Road. \*\**

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## Australia's Naval Airmen

*This was the title for the article that appeared in the October 1951 edition of AIRCRAFT magazine. It is apparent that the 'Master Plan' was well under way, setting the pattern for the years to come.*

....A survey of this recent RAN development, the training facilities at HMAS Albatross (Nowra), and some expansion plans.

Naval Aviation, as the newest branch of Australia's defence organisation, is still, an important part, a foster child of the Royal Navy, but it is rapidly developing an Australian entity both in personnel and facilities.

For some time to come, however, it will include a proportion of RN Officers, Petty Officers and technicians on loan, and Australian recruited aircrew personnel will get a considerable proportion of their training in the United Kingdom.

The Royal Australian Navy, as a whole, developed in a similar way, inheriting methods, traditions and the general basis of its being from the RN, and then developing an Australian character. This process is being re-enacted in Naval Aviation, but there is another factor in development here - the link with the Royal Australian Air Force.

Many of the Naval pilots now attached to the 20th and 21st Carrier Air Groups are ex RAAF members, who chose to enlist in it postwar and who added their specialised Naval Aviation training to the wide general aviation training and wartime operational experience they gained in the RAAF.

Most of these, like A/Lt Cdr A.J. (Nat) Gould, commanding officer of No. 816 (Firefly) Squadron, of the 20th CAG, have taken to their new service with enthusiasm. They like it, even prefer it to the RAAF, but they have brought with them some of their RAAF character. They are easily distinguishable from most of their RN colleagues.

The young Australian naval pilots and observers, post war enlisted, also have a RAAF link. Sensibly, it has been decided that *ab initio* training of both RAAF and RAN aircrew will be carried out at the RAAF College, Point Cook.

The changing character of the RAN Naval Aviation can be judged best in the sub-lieutenant grade of the Carrier Air groups. Only about five percent of these are RN, 50 percent of the rest are ex-RAAF, 40 percent direct entry as RAN pilots, and the other five percent are RAN cadets in background.

Among the more senior officers the percentage of RN pilots and observers on loan is higher, but this position is changing gradually. It is interesting, incidentally, to find five New Zealanders, some RAN, some RN, among them. One of these, A/LtCdr W.G. (Jimmie) Bowles, RAN, is commanding officer of No. 805 (Sea Fury) Squadron.

The Australian Naval pilot, after his initial training at Point Cook, goes to England to take his service training at Syerston, in the English Midlands, and his advanced training in the special requirements of flying from a carrier at Lossiemouth.

It is at Lossiemouth that he begins specialising either in fighter or anti-submarine aircraft. On the basis of this he is sent either to the anti-submarine schooling Northern Ireland, or the fighter school in Cornwall, before he first goes to a carrier for actual deck landing experience.

This period of training occupies from 18 months to two years.

The making of a naval pilot is a costly business. Australia pays 100 pounds a flying hour for her personnel under training in England and 150 pounds a deck landing. It can be said, therefore, that every naval aviator who comes fully trained into the service here represents a capital investment by his country of about 10,000 pounds.

Whether it would be cheaper to set up the necessary training establishments in this country to do the full

job would depend on the number of aircrew who were required annually to maintain service strength. It seems extremely doubtful, at the present time, whether it would be economic, or in the best interests of the trainees, to do this.

Australia at present supports two Carrier Air Groups, the 20th and 21st, each composed of one fighter and one antisubmarine reconnaissance squadron. The normal allocation is one group to each carrier. Australia's second carrier, HMAS Melbourne when it arrives.

There are plans for third CAG to be set up possibly next year, which will form in its early stages, at least, an aircrew reserve, training and replacement pool for the operational CAG's.

It has also been announced by the Government that the formation of an RANVR Air Group is in planning. The first squadron of this, for reconnaissance and anti-submarine training may be formed next year, with a fighter squadron to come later. These volunteer squadrons will have their headquarters at Schofields, NSW, where a RAN station is to be established side by side with the existing RAAF station, using the same airstrip facilities. The volunteers for this will come from ex service pilots and groundcrew.

These are big developments, and call on personnel, recruiting and on training facilities will be considerable, for a Carrier Air Group is a complete entity, from the aircrew to the servicing and handling aspects.

It is thus obvious that Naval Aviation in Australia has to plan for an expansion which will place considerable strain on existing facilities-but which augurs well for the advancement of those who are "in on the ground floor."

A considerable proportion of technical personnel now manning HMAS Sydney and the Naval air station at Nowra, HMAS Albatross, are on loan from the Royal Navy, but in this direction rapid progress is being made in the training of technical ratings and naval airmen generally.

A strong preference for the Navy is being shown by Australians volunteering for a service career, and the intake of these personnel into Naval Aviation is steadily building up.

For all recruits the foundation is that of the ordinary seamen and the initial training is a five week course at Flinders Naval depot. For their specialist courses the naval airmen are then transferred to Nowra.

They have a choice of seven different trades. Three of them - engines, airframes and ordnance - are listed as technical, and the other four - meteorology, photography, safety equipment, and aircraft handling - as non technical. Forty percent of the recruits are

required for the technical trades and the rest for the non-technical.

There are schools for each of these at Nowra, the technical ones coming directly under the supervision of the Air Engine Officer, Commander (E) R.H.S. Clark, RN and the non-technical under the Chief Ground Instructor and Training Officer, LtCdr J.L. Baker, RN.

The schools, each headed by an officer specialist, are well equipped and in their courses there the trainees are given an admirable foundation under capable instructors, mainly Chief Petty Officers and Petty Officers on loan from the Royal Navy. They gain from the fact that their training is being carried out at a station which is in active operation also as base for carrier operations.

Until a few months ago the intake was between 28 and 30 trainees a month; more recently it has dropped to 19 a month, but an increase in the flow is expected again at the end of this year.

Up to 50 percent of the non-technical ratings are needed as aircraft handlers, a classification that covers a wide variety of jobs.

One of the most interesting features of the school equipment is the layout of a full scale macadamised "model deck", in exact replica of the deck of HMAS Sydney, even to a small building representing the bridge "island" structure.

The "deck", measuring 240 yards by 80 yards, has the usual array of arrestor wires and safety barriers, and both fore and aft lifts are marked out. Around it are ranged a number of old Sea Fury and Firefly aircraft, all of which are capable of taxi-ing, if not flying.

On this "model deck" the handlers, fire fighters and other tradesmen are given realistic training in all the duties required of them on the deck of a carrier.

Similarly, the various schools work on actual aircraft engines and weapons, an excellent adjunct to the theoretical training the young naval airmen are also given. Advanced courses up to leading hand and petty officer status are also given.

The set-up at Nowra is somewhat complicated at the present time. It is at once an operational station, the base headquarters of the CAG's both for land training and major engineering and airframe maintenance, and a training school.

At the time when this reporter visited HMAS Albatross the augmented 21st CAG was just going aboard HMAS Sydney for "working up" training before going to Korea.

The station was a hive of activity - under difficult

circumstances. The two 6000ft runways were built in wartime without thought of permanency and their foundations have not stood the test of time. Now they are being reconstructed, with six inch gravel foundations, proper drainage, and concrete ends 600ft in length.

But the work of reconstruction and of flying operations are going on concurrently.

The Jervis Bay strips, again built to war requirements have disadvantages of location for peacetime training, particularly of the exacting naval kind, with surrounding hills and thick crowding bush.

But activity at this stage was not confined to the runways. The hangars areas were equally "flat out" - both from the construction and aircraft preparation aspects. Two big new hangars are now under construction, and a further three are to be built.

HMAS Albatross, commanded by Captain G.H. Beale, DSO, OBE, RN is at present both the first and the only naval air station in the Commonwealth. Later, it is proposed to transfer the technical training schools now located there to Schofields, NSW, but this will merely make room for expansion of other activities. Most of the present disadvantages are temporary, and are now in process of being overcome; the advantages are obvious.

It is placed in an attractive setting, steadily being beautified, is seven miles from Nowra township, 11 miles from the coast and 18 miles north-west of Jervis Bay - the main exercise area of the Australian Fleet. It is well provided for by rail transport, and both land and sea bombing and rocket firing ranges are available.

It has already given service to the RAAF, and was the Royal Navy's main Pacific Naval Aviation training base during the war with Japan. As Naval Aviation grows as a part of Australia's defence system, HMAS Albatross will grow with it. There is plenty of breathing space about it, and few limitations to its development. \*\*

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## THE FINAL WORD

Before the 'original' Slipstream was published at Albatross, another publication called TARMAC was doing the rounds. It sold for the princely sum of three-pence.

The collection at the Naval Aviation Museum consists of two editions, number twelve and thirteen.

It is only fitting that this final article, taken from TARMAC and dated 14 February 1950, should show the opinions of the 'Albatross inmates' of that era.

The by-line is - *'A Colonel story'.....*

## A GUIDE TO ALBATROSS

HMAS ALBATROSS is a big stone Frigate, way back and just a ducky Naval name for a RAN Air Station.

An Air Station is not a place where people talk hot air (usually) but a place where Naval aircraft land and take off (sometimes). Being an Australian Air Station, it is inhabited by English sailors, as all the Australian sailors are in England learning to play Ludo, that being the national game of much binding.

It is situated in the bush between Nowra and nowhere on the left hand side one way, and on the right hand side the other way. Map references will be given in issue No 99, as nobody has a compass and the only chap who could read one was demobbed last week.

### INHABITANTS

Albatross is inhabited by several specimens of nature; the first being called the "UPPERDECKAPUS." The Upperdeckapus is a strange animal that cannot walk very far, and when it requires to move from one part to the other it has to rely on one of the other specimens to transport it. It makes a strange sound like a cross between a BBC announcer and a barman from the "Old Kent Road."

Another inhabitant is called a "CROSSANCHORPUS," which, in common with the Upperdeckapus, does not work. It lives in a hole of its own called a POMESS, where it eats and drinks all day long; eventually becoming so fat that it is known as a "CHIEF CROSSANCHORPUS," and can always be recognized by the froth coming out of its ears.

The other main specimen of nature is called a "LOWERDECKAPUS" which is a cross between a Spanish Galley Slave and a convict doing six months' "hard." They wander about like nuns in Pompey Barracks, dodging the two previous specimens, and looking for quiet places to get their heads down.

### COST OF LIVING

Eight pence per glass. .

### LOCAL METROPOLIS

The nearest city is called Nowra, this being an old aboriginal name meaning "Like Nothing on Earth." It is also the largest city this side of Bomaderry. In order to get to Nowra, it is necessary for Albatross specimens to go by Liberty Boat, as it is much to far to swim. Any reference to Nowra can be found in H.G. Wells' "Things to Come," or Aristotles' "Things Wot 'Av Been."

In conclusion, anyone wishing to visit Albatross to obtain first hand information should write to the Chief

Lama of Tibet, who will immediately refuse permission. They will never realise how much they owe to that man. So, in conclusion, may I quote the words of Milton, who said of it:-

Oh, to be at Albatross,  
Now that summer's there,  
Oh, to be in Nowra, where the  
Pubs have got some beer.  
Who wants to be a civvy  
And lead a life of pleasure,  
I'd sooner be a sailor  
And live a life of leisure. \*\*

## ALBATROSS COMMANDING OFFICERS

CAPT. R.G.POOLE, RN 1948/50  
CAPT. G.H.BEALE, OBE, DSO, RN 1950/52  
CAPT. R.RHOADES, DSC, RAN 1952/54  
CAPT. D.SANDERSON, DSC, RN 1954/55  
CAPT. P.E.FANSHAWE, OBE, DSC, RN 1955/57  
CAPT. V.A.T.SMITH, DSC, RAN 1957/59  
CAPT. T.K.MORRISON, OBE, DSC, RAN 1959/1962  
CAPT. J.S.MESLEY, MVO, DSC, RAN 1962/65  
CAPT. J.H.DOWSON, CBE, RAN 1965/67  
CAPT. D.C.WELLS, RAN 1967/68  
CAPT. A.N.DOLLARD, DSC, RAN 1968/71  
CAPT. J.D.GOBLE, RAN 1971/72  
CAPT. D.A.H.CLARKE, MVO, DSC, RAN 1972/73  
CAPT. H.E.BAILEY, DSC, RAN 1973/73  
CAPT. A.J.ROBERTSON, DSC, RAN 1974/-

\*IN COMMAND AND NOIC JERVIS BAY\*

CDRE A.J.ROBERSTSON, DSC, RAN 1975/76  
CDRE G.E.JERVIS, RAN 1976/77  
CDRE G.Mc.JUDE, RAN 1977/79  
CDRE N.E.LEE, RAN 1980/81  
CDRE T.A.DADSWELL, AM, RAN 1981/84  
CDRE N.RALPH, DSC, RAN 1984/85  
CDRE H.P.BERGER, MVO, RAN 1985/87  
CDRE M.J.TAYLOR, AM, RAN 1987/89  
CDRE R.N.PARTINGTON, AM, RAN 1990/- \*\*

## ALBATROSS EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

CMDR R.RHOADES, DSC, RAN 1948/50  
 CMDR R.J.ROBERTSON, DSC, RAN 1950/52  
 CMDR G.C.B.CRABB, DSC, RAN1952/54  
 CMDR W.B.M.MARKS, DSC, RAN 1954/54  
 CMDR I.H.McDONALD, RAN 1954/55  
 CMDR B.S.MURRAY, RAN 1955/57  
 CMDR D.K.L.LEARMOUNT, DSC, RN 1957/59  
 CMDR G.V.GLADSTONE, DSC, RAN 1959/60  
 CMDR G.D.GRAY, DFC, RAN 1960/63  
 CMDR A.H.McINTOSH, RAN 1963/64  
 CMDR D.C.JOHNS, DFC, RAN 1964/66  
 CMDR J.M.KELLY, DSC, RAN 1966/67  
 CMDR H.K.DUNCAN, RAN 1967/69  
 CMDR N.E.LEE, RAN 1969/1971  
 CMDR T.A.DADSWELL, RAN 1971/71  
 CMDR G.J.M.CLARK, RAN 1971/73  
 CMDR W.K.BIRD, RAN 1973/75  
 CMDR W.E.ROTHWELL, RAN 1975/77  
 CMDR J.St.B.MORE, RAN 1977/78  
 CMDR R.R.M.LEA, RAN 1978/79  
 CMDR A.L.ECCLESTON, RAN 1979/79  
 CMDR R.J.R.PENNOCK, RAN 1979/81  
 CMDR J.A.PAYNE, RAN 1981/82  
 CMDR P.O.HAMON, RAN 1982/83  
 CMDR T.A.BURDORF, RAN 1983/84  
 CMDR E.B.HALL, RAN 1984/84  
 CMDR M.C.WEBSTER, RAN 1984/86  
 CMDR M.J.LEHAN, RAN 1986/88  
 CMDR B.J.BROMFIELD, RAN 1988/90  
 CMDR R.W.SHARP, RAN 1990/92  
 CMDR G.A.LEDGER, RAN 1992/- \*\*

## ALBATROSS COMMANDER'S AIR

CMDR H.J.F.LANCE, OBE, RN 1947/50  
 CMDR P.C.WHITFIELD, DSC, RN 1950/50  
 CMDR J.H.STENNING, RN 1950/52

CMDR R.H.HAIN, RAN 1952/55  
 CMDR D.BUCHANAN, RAN 1955/56  
 CMDR J.A.GLEDHILL, DSC, RAN 1956/58  
 CMDR F.T.SHERBORNE, RAN 1958/60  
 CMDR J.D.GOBLE, RAN 1960/62  
 CMDR H.E.BAILEY, DSC, RAN 1962/63  
 CMDR D.C.JOHNS, RAN 1963/64  
 CMDR J.A.O'FARRELL, RAN 1964/65  
 CMDR K.M.BARNETT, RAN 1965/67  
 CMDR T.A.DADSWELL, RAN 1967/68  
 CMDR N.E.LEE, RAN 1968/69  
 CMDR K.A.DOUGLAS, RAN 1969/70  
 CMDR D.J.ORR, RAN 1970/72  
 CMDR R.McKENZIE, RAN 1972/73  
 CMDR N.RALPH, RAN 1973/75  
 CMDR J.R.DaCOSTA, RAN 1975/76  
 CMDR R.J.SIMMONDS, RAN 1976/77  
 CMDR M.J.ASTBURY, RAN 1977/78  
 CMDR D.G.DEBUS, RAN 1978/79  
 CMDR B.A.DUTCH, RAN 1979/80  
 CMDR W.P.JAMES, RAN 1980/81  
 CMDR B.J.DIAMOND, RAN 1981/81  
 CMDR P.O.HAMON, RAN 1981/82  
 CMDR T.L.FORD, RAN 1982/83  
 CMDR D.J.RAMSAY, RAN 1983/84  
 LCDR I.R.PAYNE, RAN 1984/85  
 CMDR P.L.CLARK, RAN 1985/86  
 CMDR H.E.CAMPEY, RAN 1986/88  
 CMDR C.F.GEORGE, RAN 1988/90  
 CMDR G.A.LEDGER, RAN 1989/92  
 CMDR A.F.WRIGHT, RAN 1992/- \*\*

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\*Front cover, Fleet Air Arm window at the Naval Chapel, Garden Island. \*\*Our thanks to the NavAv Museum and Jack Constantine for the photographs.

## HONOUR ROLL

	DATE	NAME	SHIP/BASE	SQDA/C	HOW
1.	19/03/30	A/LTAG D.McGOWAN RAN	ALBATROSS	101 SG3	CRASHED
2.	25/09/40	LCDR(O) F.K. FOGARTY RAN	AUSTRALIA	9 WAL	KIA
3.	25/09/40	FLT G.J. CLARKE, RAAF	AUSTRALIA	9 WAL	KIA
4.	25/09/40	POTAG C.K. BUNNETT, RAN	AUSTRALIA	9 WAL	KIA
5.	04/04/41	LEUT(A) J.J. HOATH, RN	AUSTRALIA	9 WAL	CRASHED
6.	19/11/41	LCDR(O) J.C. BACON, RN	SYDNEY	9 WAL	KIA
7.	19/11/41	FO S.O. BARRY, RAAF	SYDNEY	9 WAL	KIA
8.	19/11/41	LSTAG W.S. FIBBENS, RAN	SYDNEY	9 WAL	KIA
9.	19/02/42	FO E.J. ROWAN, RAAF	AUSTRALIA	9 WAL	CRASHED
10.	23/02/42	LEUT(O) F.G. GORDON, RAN	VICTORIOUS	817 ALB	MIA
11.	11/03/42	LEUT(O) N.D. McWILLIAM RANR	PERTH	9	KIA
12.	26/06/42	LEUT(A) R.W. EVERETT, RN	EAGLE	804 SHU	CRASHED
13.	09/08/42	FO D.J. MURCHINSON, RAAF	CANBERRA	9 WAL	KIA
14.	21/10/42	LCDR(O) H.B. GERRETT, RAN	AUSTRALIA	9	KIA
15.	29/11/45	SBLT(A) L.J. NORTON, RANVR	IMPLACABLE	801 SFI	CRASHED
16.	12/03/46	SBLT(A) N. FAULKS, RANVR	IMPLACABLE	806 SFI	CRASHED
17.	17/11/49	PROB(P) K.J. SHERIDAN, RAN	POINT COOK	RAAF	
18.	22/02/50	LEUT(P) N.S. FERRIS, RAN	LOSSIEMOUTH	RN SFI	CRASHED
19.	23/06/50	PILOT4 G.K. ELDERING, RAN	LOSSIEMOUTH	RN SFI	MISSING
20.	10/07/50	LEUT(P) K.F. WILSON, RAN	ST. MERRYIN	817 FY	CRASHED
21.	06/02/51	LEUT(P) R.E. SMITH, RAN	SYDNEY	816 FY	CRASHED
22.	03/05/51	LEUT(P) R.W. BARNETT, RAN	SYDNEY	808 SF	CRASHED
23.	25/06/51	LEUT(P) M.B. BROWN, RAN	RN	RN	
24.	25/09/51	PILOT4 D.J. SLATER, RAN	EGLINTON	RN FY	CRASHED
25.	25/09/51	OBS.4 E.J. EDMONDS, RAN	EGLINTON	RN FY	CRASHED
26.	18/10/51	PROB(P) N.F. SWEENEY, RAN	POINT COOK	RAAF	CRASHED
27.	01/11/51	SBLT(P) B.W. WILLIAMS, RAN	RN	RN	CRASHED
28.	05/11/51	LEUT(P) K.E. CLARKSON, RAN	SYDNEY	805 SF	KIA
29.	07/12/51	SBLT(P) R.R. SINCLAIR, RAN	SYDNEY	805 SF	KIA
30.	02/01/52	SBLT(P) R.J. COLEMAN, RAN	SYDNEY	805 SF	MIA
31.	03/02/52	LEUT(E)(P) F.A. STURGESS	CULDROSE	RN FY	CRASHED
32.	19/02/52	LEUT(P) B.H. WALL, RAN	NOWRA	816 FY	CRASHED
33.	19/02/52	SBLT(O) D.H. SAUNDERS, RAN	NOWRA	816 FY	CRASHED
34.	22/02/52	SBLT(P) D.P. SMALL, RAN	NOWRA	816 FY	MISSING
35.	22/02/52	OBS1 J.G. SHARPE, RAN	NOWRA	816 FY	MISSING
36.	17/07/52	LCDR(P) D.R. HARE, RAN	NOWRA	805 SF	CRASHED



37.	26/02/53	ASLT(P) B.D.WREN, RAN	EGLINTON	RN	CRASHED
38.	17/05/53	LCDR(P) R.A.WILD, RAN	WAGGA	850 SF	MID-AIR
39.	20/11/53	ASLT(P) R.ROBERTS, RAN	CULDROSE	RN FY	CRASHED
40.	09/12/53	ASLT(P) BODEN, RAN	CULDROSE	RN FY	CRASHED
41.	29/12/53	ASLT(P) M.J.BEARDSELL, RN	SYDNEY	850 SF	CRASHED
42.	15/01/54	ASLT(P) J.H.McCLINTON, RAN	SYDNEY		PROP +
43.	21/07/54	LEUT(P) E.C.GRAY, RAN	E.SALE	RAAF	CRASHED
44.	16/09/54	LEUT(P) R.G.OWEN, RN	NOWRA	808 SF	CRASHED
45.	09/06/55	PROB(P) K.B.ROBERTS, RAN	Pt COOK	RAAF	CRASHED
46.	21/07/55	LEUT(P) R.J.LEESON, RAN	NOWRA	805 SF	CRASHED
47.	19/10/55	ASLT(P) K.C.HENRY, RAN	NOWRA	805 SF	CRASHED
48.	10/11/55	SBLT(P) J.P.VAN GELDER, RAN	CULDROSE	817 GT	CRASHED
49.	10/11/55	LEUT(O) D.PADGETT, RAN	CULDROSE	817 GT	CRASHED
50.	10/11/55	ACMN(T) N.J.SELF, RAN	CULDROSE	817 GT	CRASHED
51.	05/01/56	LCDR(P) P.H.WYATT, RAN	YEOVILTON	808 SV	CRASHED
52.	05/01/56	CMDR(P) G.F.BROWN, RAN	YEOVILTON	808 SV	CRASHED
53.	12./05/56	ASLT(P) B.J.HOWE, RAN	NOWRA	724 SF	CRASHED
54.	06/08/56	LCDR(P) W.E.DUNLOP, RAN	NOWRA	724 VA	CRASHED
55.	09/08/56	LEUT(P) B.Y.THOMPSON, RAN	MELBOURNE	808 SV	CRASHED
56.	09/08/56	LEUT(O) K.C.POTTS, RAN	MELBOURNE	808 SV	CRASHED
57.	09/10/56	CMDR(P) D.BUCHANAN, RAN	NOWRA	724 VA	CRASHED
58.	27/11/56	ASLT(P) A.ARUNDEL, RN	NOWRA	851 FY	MID-AIR
59.	27/11/56	MIDN(O) N.F.FOGARTY, RAN	NOWRA	851 FY	MID-AIR
60.	19/03/57	SBLT(P) W.J.BROWNE, RAN	NOWRA	851 FY	CRASHED
61.	19/03/57	MIDN(O) I.T.CAIRD, RAN	NOWRA	851 FY	CRASHED
62.	30/01/59	LEUT(E)(P) P.J.ARNOLD, RAN	NOWRA	816 GT	CRASHED
63.	20/05/59	LEUT(P) S.R.CARMICHAEL, RAN	NOWRA	724 SV	CRASHED
64.	20/05/59	ASLT(O) M.C.WILLIAMS, RAN	NOWRA	724 SV	CRASHED
65.	15/10/59	ASLT(P) A.L.MAURITZ, RAN	NOWRA	725 GT	CRASHED
66.	11/02/60	ASLT(P) F.G.HODGSON, RAN	NOWRA	724 SV	CRASHED
67.	11/02/60	EM(AIR)2 M.W.HOLLOWAY, RAN	NOWRA	724 SV	CRASHED
68.	03/12/64	ASLT(P) G.J.GEERLINGS, RAN	NOWRA	724 SV	CRASHED
69.	23/03/65	ASLT(P) J.M.HUTCHINSON, RAN	MELBOURNE	816 GT	CRASHED
70.	20/01/66	MIDN A.P.HAMMOND, RAN	PEARCE	RAAF VA	CRASHED
71.	28/04/66	LEUT(O) E.G.KENNEL, RAN	MELBOURNE	816 SV	CRASHED
72.	11/10/67	SBLT(P) M.D.LYNCH, RAN	LAVERTON	724 VA	CRASHED
73.	11/10/67	FO S.R.BARKLEY, RAAF	LAVERTON	724 VA	CRASHED
74.	22/02/68	LCDR(P) P.J.VICKERS, RAN	RANHFV	IR	KIA
75.	05/06/68	LEUT(P) P.C.WARD, RAN	NOWRA	723 IR	CRASHED

76.	05/06/68	POACMN D.J.SANDERSON, RAN	NOWRA	723 IR	CRASHED
77.	05/06/68	NAMAE R.K.SMITH, RAN	NOWRA	723 IR	CRASHED
78.	21/08/68	LEUT(P) A.A.CASSADIO, RAN	RANHFV	IR	KIA
79.	21/08/68	POACMN O.C.PHILLIPS, RAN	RANHFV	IR	KIA
80.	03/01/69	ASLT(P) A.J.HUELIN, RAN	RANHFV	IR	KIA
81.	31/05/69	LACMN N.I.SHIPP, RAN	RANHFV	IR	KIA
82.	16/05/74	LEUT(P) R.McMILLAN, RAN	NOWRA	724 A4	CRASHED
83.	17/07/75	ASLT(P) M.K.McCOY, RAN	NOWRA	805 A4	MID-AIR
84.	02/12/83	LSA G. MACEY, RAN	E.SALE	723 WX	CRASHED

### MEMORIAL PRAYER

*Almighty God, we give thanks for all who have served as members of the Fleet Air Arm both in war and peace. We thank you for the memories we have, both happy and sad, for friendships and good fellowship. We remember those who have lost loved ones and commend them to your care. May the tradition of loyalty and unstinting service in the defence of our Nation remain an inspiration to us and generations to come. Amen.*

**NOTE:** + Walked into a Sea Fury propeller.

LEUT(A) Everett, DSO, RN was born in Tenterfield NSW and was serving in the Royal Navy. He was awarded a DSO for his actions while flying Sea Hurricanes (Hurricats) from catapult equipped merchant (CAM) ships.

LEUT(O) F.G. Gordon, RAN, of 817 Squadron was lost on 23rd February 1942 when his Fairey Albacore flying from HMS Victorious disappeared in a snow storm 30 miles east of the Shetlands during a search for the enemy fleet.

**AIRCRAFT:** - SG3 - SEAGULL, SF - SEA FURY, VA - VAMPIRE, WAL - WALRUS, TM - TIGER MOTH, IR - IROQUIOS, SFI - SEAFIRE, GT - GANNET, A4 - SKY HAWK, FY - FIREFLY, SV - SEA VENOM, WX - WESSEX, ALB - ALBACORE, HC - HELLCAT.

*RAN Armourers under training at RNAS Yeovilton - 1948*





**CAPTAIN R.G. POOLE, RN**  
**Commanding Officer - HMAS Albatross**  
 1948 - 1950



*HMAS Albatross Officers - Commissioning Day 31 August.*

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|--|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>TOP L-R</b> WO(S) T.F.S. Brown, RAN | The Hon LCdr D.W.E. Chubb, RN | WO(W) E. Stokes, RAN  |
| Lt. W.S. De B. Griffiths RN            | Cmdr(E) A.S.J. Banks, RN      | WO(AL) F. Randall, RN |
| LCdr(S) G.W.J. Pugh, RN                | Cmdr Exec R. Rhoades, RAN     | WO(S) C. Wilding, RN  |
| WO(P) W.I.J. Crozer, RN                | Cmdr(A) H.J.F. Lane, OBE, RN  | WO E. Millwood, RN    |
| Lt.(A) J.R. Routley, RN                | Cmdr(S) Hatherell, RAN        | WO G. Daniels, RAN    |
| Lt.(S) R.B. Angel, RN                  | R. Crech, Res. Eng. Works     |                       |
|  | LCdr (Inst) T. Smith, RN      |                       |

