



FLYBY

ABN 3007 129 1677
See our website [here](#)

A periodical of the Fleet Air Arm Association of Australia
Edition 45, May 2021.



The recent awards of an ASM(CT) to Fleet Air Arm personnel who engaged in Operation Bursa has motivated a number of people to not only join the FAA Association, but to contribute material which remembers those days. This extract from the HC723 Line Book of 1983 brings back a few perceptions. Words by Graeme Lunn with illustrations by Ron Lawrence.

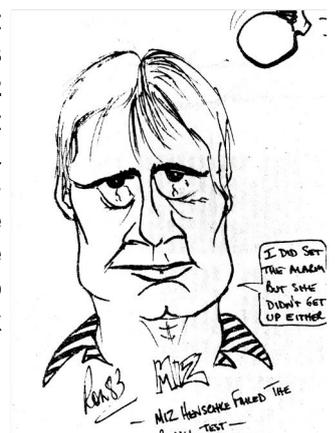
A Squadron's spirit can be distilled into their Line Book especially when it is fortunate enough to be enlivened by the cartoon art of LEUT **Ron Lawrence**. In the early 1980's the wide ranging roles implied in the acronym HC (Helicopter Composite) of 723 Squadron, with its accompanying operational tempo and high spirits, was never more in evidence than in the pages, press cuttings, copies of signals and cartoons contained in the 1983 Line Book. The 14 Wessex 31Bs comprising 'A' Flight were heavily involved in a secret Counter Terrorist National Task that is only now being recognised with the award of the Australian Service Medal. Shared commitments with the equally in-demand 4 Bell 206Bs and 4 Iroquois UH1Bs of 'B' Flight ranged from embarked flights, Fleet Support, SAR and Medevacs alongside the continual cycle of pilot, observer and aircrewman training.

The line book opens with pride in the January Singapore Cable Car rescue flown by one of their own on exchange, LEUT **Geoff Ledger**, while throughout the rest of the year day to day squadron life at NAS Nowra is observed with requisite humour. The mundane operational events such as conversion courses and wet winching drills were noted alongside the social such as the cricket

winching drills were noted alongside the social aspects such as the cricket Ashes and Dining outs.

Also highlighted were those logbook milestones of a naval aviator's life - LEUT **Jim Llewellyn** reached 3000 hours, LEUT **Steve Brand** 1000 hours, LEUT **Dick Chartier** 1000 Wessex hours and all topped by the CO's incredible (for a naval aviator) 5000 hours.

'A' Flight being subject to 24/7 sudden recall from high up in Canberra's DoD was obviously not relished but those, such as LEUT **Miz Henschke**, that did not make a timely appearance at the Squadron were wide open to Line Book humour.



Even though on almost permanent detachment the HMAS Moresby Flight was never out of mind. LEUT **Reyne** and SBLT **Fisher** spent arduous months surveying in the remote Joseph Bonaparte Gulf justly winning the McNichol Trophy to the parent squadrons delight. Other embarked flights from the Squadron that year were LEUT **Dinger Bell** and SBLT **Leigh Godlonton** in HMAS Tobruk and the 'Canary Airways' 206 flight in HMAS Stalwart.

The regular deployments south by the aged airframes of the Wessex on their National Task gave ample opportunity for cartoon humour to which the 'Wally' Wessex was well suited. The saga of 10 Little Wessex leaving individuals scattered across the route to RAAF East Sale would still draw a fondly wry smile from any aircrew or maintainer caught up in this or similar events.

The National Task imagery reflected humour and contemporary popular media while never dwelling on the peril - although it was well known that the 'Men in Black' considered the cabin of a Wessex in assault mode the most nerve-wracking time of their nights. Six Wessex forming at 100 feet on a few cyalumes in the dark was playing 'Space Invaders', while the tented camp at East Sale became 'Moon Base Alpha'.

In August RADM **Hudson** visited the Taipans at East Sale and wrote that he was "tremendously impressed with every aspect of the operation" while recognising the "high risk." Risk within the squadron was called 'sporting' and, if particularly hair raising, it was 'quite sporting'. There was always keen competition to be in the 'Space Invaders Championship Team' where the

award of a National Task captaincy was held in highest esteem.

Later in the year the activities of the Nightsun Wessex on its way to Golden Beach was being reported in the popular press as definite proof of Alien activity in Gippsland. The Nightsun could put an awful lot of candlepower into quite a small beam from 1500' and if there were distractions around, the helicopter noise footprint was small. The squadron hierarchy maintained a suitably confidential silence back at Albatross when the news articles were brought to their attention but it inevitably provoked an amused reaction in the Line Book.

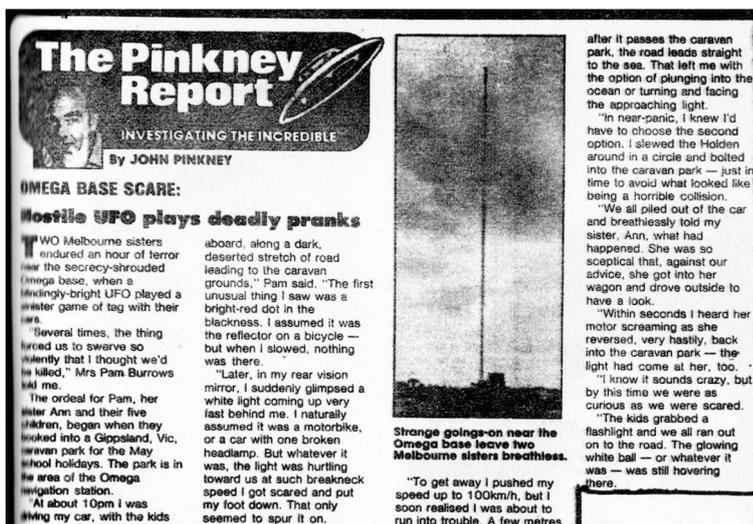
The Wessex was a venerable airframe and September 1983 saw its 21st year of RAN service being celebrated. There was a guest appearance by **LCDR John Salthouse**, who had accepted the first Wessex in 1962,

and birthday wishes from 1st SAS Squadron to the "Venerable Aircraft and their Jockeys". **LCDR Mike Lehan** had been RN aircrew on the type in 1962 which meant that the most junior members of the Crew Room were flying aircraft older than themselves under a CO who was wearing naval uniform before they were born.

Anyone who witnessed the large 21st birthday formation of inherently unstable helicopters understood the old adage "One Way, Same Way, Some Day". Yet clearly reflected in the Line Book is a unity of purpose and pride, from most junior person in the Squadron to the most senior, and an enviable team spirit.

(Continued on page 6)

"Admiral Mike Hudson visited the Squadron at East Sale during his appointment as Maritime Commander to view CT operations over the Bass Strait. Returning from a night formation sortie, with the Admiral up front in the left-hand pilot's seat and LCDR Mike Lehan in the right, they were greeted by an ageing Warrant Officer after a stream line astern landing of six Wessex Helicopters. The Warrant Officer marshalled them in (they were short of manpower!). They shut down and the aircrew climbed down the side of the aircraft, took off their flying helmets upon which the WO exclaimed in a loud voice 'I knew that the RAAF were short of aircrew but I didn't appreciate the RAN had the same problem and let old bastards fly' ".
(Excerpt from "Flying Stations")



Left. A report in the local paper of two women who experienced inexplicable bright lights from the sky on their drive home. Obviously no one asked Dick Chartier what it was.

FAAAA Makes Submission to DHAT

In our last edition we advised that the Defence Honours and Awards Tribunal (DHAT) were conducting an inquiry into whether there should be recognition for members who are killed, wounded or injured whilst in Service. The Tribunal sought submissions from interested parties, and advised a closing date of 31 May 2021. This gave us very little time to respond.

The FAAAA did manage to make a submission supporting the notion that there should be a medallic award to such members in recognition of their sacrifice. The body of the submission was as follows:

"The Fleet Air Arm Association of Australia (FAAAA) is strongly of the view that members of the ADF who are injured, killed or wounded in Service, and that the families of such ADF members, should have appropriate recognition afforded to them.

Medals provide a powerful and well-accepted system to recognise each member's journey in the ADF by telling the story of specific and recognisable points in their service - be it the length of time they serve, particular dedication in the workplace, the campaigns they have served on or acts of valour performed. Paradoxically, the system does not recognise perhaps the most notable and potentially devastating of events: viz - their death as a result of Service, or the pain and hardship caused by injuries or wounds they have suffered. This omission leaves an inexplicable gap in the story of these members.

We believe that, aside from recording these sacrifices in a sensitive and visible way, it would help to bring some closure to the families of those who suffer the loss of a loved one, or who are living with the outcomes of their injuries or wounds.

In some cases, Members killed or injured on foreign soil may be afforded an honour by that country, which is paradoxical. For example, the nine ADF members who lost their lives in the 2005 crash of Sea King 'Shark 02' were each awarded the Indonesian Medal of Valour in recognition of their ultimate sacrifice. It must seem unjust to their loved ones that a foreign country recognises them in this way, but the Australian government does not.

The FAAAA is of the view that the honours system is best placed to mend this omission. Medals not only map the journey of that member but are lasting. They are valued by generations beyond the members' lives. They bring a lasting tribute that cannot be replicated in any other way on a personal level.

We suggest that such recognition should only be afforded in circumstances where the member is killed or injured whilst engaged in operations (warlike or non-warlike), humanitarian aid or in training for these events. Members killed or injured outside of these parameters, such as in motor vehicle accidents, would not be recognised however tragic that might be.

We believe the award must be retrospective. Whilst this may present a huge logistical/historical task, it would be unconscionable to have a 'line in the sand' which recognises members on one side of the line but neglects those of identical circumstance on the other. The size of the task should not be seen as a reason not to proceed.

We further suggest that, rather than a new medal, it would be appropriate to have a "Killed/Wounded/Injured in Service" CLASP to be affixed to the ADF member's relevant campaign medal or their most appropriate/recent service medal. This would give not only lasting visible recognition, but a sense of the timing of their death or debilitation. Further, it would avoid the cost of striking a new medal and the cost to the member (or their family) of mounting it." ✈

Wall of Service Update



Order No. 48 has now been affixed to the Wall of Service, containing the following names. You can see the WoS listing [here](#).

K.B. ENGELSMAN O2154 CMDR (P) Feb63-Jul10.
E.H. DALE A35562 POAF(A) Dec47-Mar54.
W.J. CALLINGHAM R95087 CPOATA Oct65-Oct85.
J. McCAULEY O105961 LCDR(P) Mar70-Jan84.
W.R. WARE R51285 LAMET Aug55-Aug61.
T.J. BULLEY O125389 CMDR WEA Oct78-
D.R. HILL R96182 CPOATA Jul67-Mar85.
G. S. SEALY R107017 LSATA Nov69-Nov79.
R.M. GOLDEN R103606 ABATA Jul68-Jul74.
A.J. LENDRUM R114540 CPOA Apr73-Apr93.
P. BARNES R63176 EMAC Apr64-Jul70.
S. FLANNERY 8074180 CPOATV Apr80-Mar20.
G. P. JAMES R41785 LSATA Apr66-Feb74.
M.B. ALEXANDER R103497 WOATC Jul68-Jun88.
D. WRIGHT R105274 LSATWO Jul68-Jul81.
R.P. BALMFORTH S141775 LSA Jun87-Jul99
G.E. ARMSTRONG S125120 WOATA Jan78-Jul00.
R.J. THOMAS R52716 NAMA E1 Jan57-Jan63.
S. WALTERS S131880 WOATA Jan82-Aug20.
R. WOOD R94558 LSATC Jul64-Jul76.

Order Number 49 is now open for applications, with 2 names on it so far (below). You can find out what the Wall of Service is and how to apply for a plaque on it by clicking [here](#).

J.R. MACARTNEY R93356 POEAC Jul 61-Jun73.
E.M. GANGLOFF S112549 CPOATA Jul72-Dec92 ✈

Remember Lieutenant Barnett



This month we remember Lt. **Robert Barnett** RAN, who was killed when his Sea Fury crashed into the sea off Jervis Bay 70 years ago.

Barnett was a Melbourne boy, who, like most of his

generation, was caught up in the Second World War. Having completed his flight training in the RAAF he was promoted to Leading Aircraftsman (Pilot) and flew Kittyhawks against the Japanese in the Pacific.

At the end of the war he, like many demobbed RAAF pilots, found it difficult to adjust to civilian life and was attracted to the newly forming RAN Fleet Air Arm. After training in the UK he embarked on HMAS Sydney as part of the 21st CAG, sailing for Australia on 26 October 1950.

When 808 Squadron was subsequently told they would be deployed to Korea on HMAS Sydney, it began work up with other Squadrons of the CAG. The ship began flying operations off Jervis Bay on 01 May 1951.

On the morning of Thursday 3rd May Lieutenant Barnett lined up his Sea Fury for take-off and engaged the RATOG (Rocket Assisted Take Off Gear). His

aircraft cleared the deck but, according to eye witnesses, commenced a slight turn to starboard after the launch. This developed into a barrel roll with the aircraft striking the sea wings level, nose down.

A search by Sydney, a destroyer and two Air Sea Rescue launches failed to find any trace of the aircraft and Lieutenant Robert Barnett, age 26, was pronounced missing, presumed dead. The sea remains his grave.

Lieutenant Barnett's death led to the abandonment of the RATOG in the RAN. ✈

R.A.N. PILOT KILLED
Plane Crashes Into Sea

MELBOURNE, Thursday.— Lieutenant R. W. Barnett, of Elgin Street, East Gordon, Sydney, died to-day when a R.A.N. Sea Fury fighter crashed into the sea off Jervis Bay.

The Minister for the Navy, Mr. J. Francis, said to-night that the Sea Fury crashed a few moments after a rocket-assisted take-off from the aircraft carrier H.M.A.S. Sydney.

The starboard wing dropped, and the plane turned to starboard and did a complete barrel-roll before hitting the water the right way up and nose down.

The plane disappeared almost as soon as it hit the water, except for the tail, which broke away and sank a few minutes later.

Crash boats and aircraft searched the area for several hours, but failed to find any trace of Lieutenant Barnett.

† REST IN PEACE †

Since the last edition of 'FlyBy' we have become aware of the loss of Dean Gedling, Raymond Morgan and Ron McClenahan.

You can read a little more of these sad events on our Obituary pages [here](#), and, if you are a member of the Association, you can leave a comment there if you wish. ✈



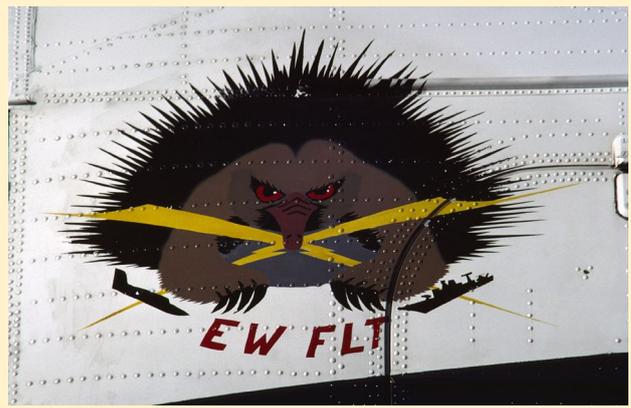
CALLING ALL HS748 OPERATORS

The anticipated roll-out of our new website in a month or two requires new material, and **Kim Dunstan**, our historian, is working on it.

He's preparing a 'Heritage' feature on the RAN's HS748s, and is looking for information on reconfiguring the aircraft for passenger/ cargo work and EW operations. He would also be delighted to hear any stories or memories from those who flew in them, and from those who maintained them.

Little has been written about the 748s and it is important to capture first-hand detail and information about what these beautiful aircraft did, before it is lost.

So, if you were part of the 748 team you can make a vital contribution by helping Kim put the story together. You can contact him [here](#).



Medical Musings...



When Your Prayers are Answered



The pastor asked if anyone in the congregation would like to express praise for an answered prayer.

Suzie stood and walked to the lectern. She said, "I have some praise. Two months ago, my husband Frank had a terrible bicycle accident and his scrotum was completely crushed. The pain was excruciating and the doctors didn't know if they could help him."

You could hear a muffled gasp from the men in the congregation as they imagined the pain that poor Frank must have experienced.

"Frank was unable to hold me or the children," she went on, "and every move caused him terrible pain. We prayed as the doctors performed a delicate operation, and it turned out they were able to piece together the crushed remnants of Frank's scrotum, and wrap wire around it to hold it in place with metal staples."

Again, the men in the congregation cringed and squirmed uncomfortably as they imagined the horrible surgery performed on Frank.

"Now," she announced, with a quivering voice, "thank the Lord, Frank is out of the hospital and the doctors say that with time, his scrotum should recover completely."

All the men sighed with unified relief.

The pastor rose and tentatively asked if anyone else had something to say.

A man stood up and walked slowly to the podium. He said, "I'm Frank".

The entire congregation held its breath.

"I just want to tell my wife that the word is sternum."



Aren't you glad you didn't do your service in the 18th Century? Here's a little snapshot of how they treated people suffering from drowning. It's taken from "The Health of Seamen in the Royal Navy" – 1762.

"But let us turn our eyes to those in a state more justly demanding the Attention of Humanity; such as have been unfortunately drowned. So soon as a person supposed to be drowned is taken out of the water, he ought not, as usual, to be held up long by the Heels; the continuance in such a posture is the most likely means to prevent him from coming to life. The head must be inclined in a position favourable to empty the stomach; mean while the utmost dispatch is used to remove all the cold, wet cloaths, by stripping the person quite naked, and immediately exposing the body to the heat of the warm sun, or fire, to prevent stiffness and cold; or, to regenerate heat, he may be put in a bed well warmed, where the belly, breast, and especially the pit of the stomach, must be well and constantly rubbed with warm clothes, keeping the Head and Face gently inclined forwards, as in a person under the operation of an Emetic.

At the same time, the Limbs must be well chased with hard coarse clothes, made very warm, and the whole body often shook or rolled about. All possible attempts must be made from the beginning to bleed; and there in different Veins. The temporal Artery may also be cut. Warm Bricks, Irons, or bottles of Hot Water must be applied to the Feet; volatile salts, and stimulating spirits to the Nostrils; and air, moderately heated by being near a fire, blown by means of a Bellows into the Anus and Lungs.

Or, a person that chew Garlick may endeavour to blow into the Lungs with his Breath, keeping the Nostrils of the Patient shut for a few seconds of time to prevent its escape; mean while, another person, by a gentle alternate pressure and dilation of the Ribs with a corresponding alternate Compression of the contents of the belly upward, imitates as near as possible the Act of Respiration in a living Body. A Clyster of Tobacco smoke may also be given, and Tobacco moistened, or its Juice, may be put into the Mouth, from the stimulus of which in the throat and stomach, a Recovery and Vomiting has sometimes ensued.

Though these Means should not speedily produce the desired effect, yet the person is not to be relinquished. They must be repeated and continued for some Hours, keeping the Body all the while warm, or in a hot place, persevering in the Concussions and Rollings; and lastly, he may be immersed and kept for some Time in a Bath of luke warm water, after which, the former Means are to be again assayed."



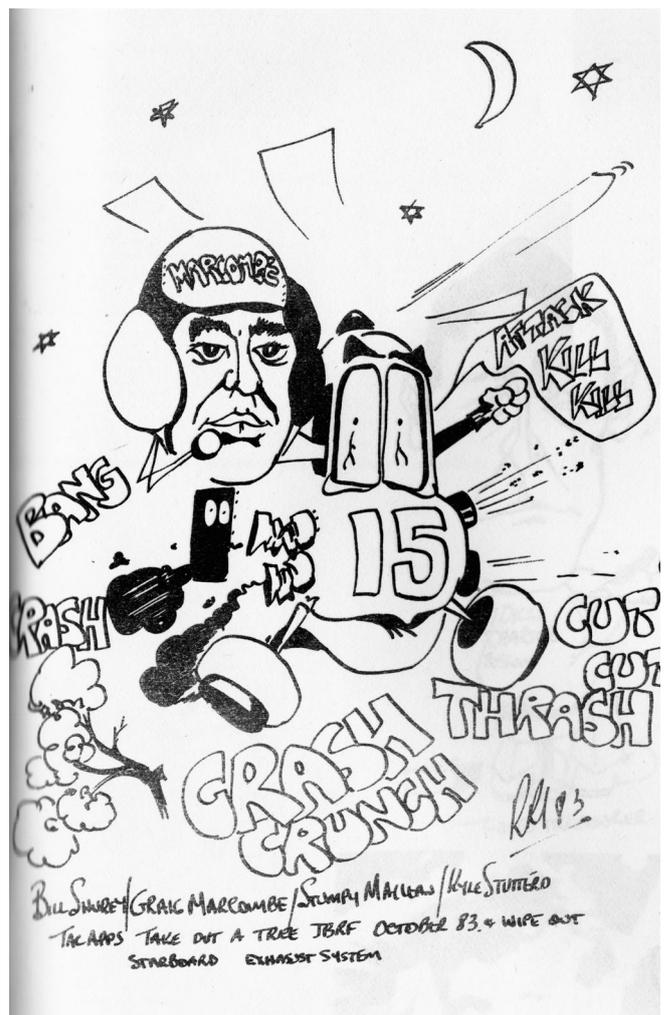
HC723 Line Book 1983 (Continued from page 2)

The TV series 'Patrol Boat' was in its heyday and B Flight Iroquois assisted in the filming for the 'Make and Mend' episode in May. Laughably in June Navy Office asked for a list of those who would like to be considered for possible Shuttle astronaut training. Bored of Uckers in the Crew Room to a man the squadron put their names on the list. Nothing was ever heard back although SBLT **Godlonton** did go on to Empire Test Pilots Course in the UK.

Mid-year sadness was the expected formal notification that Melbourne was paying off with no replacement. Through the year both A and B Flights oversaw the third and fourth rotations of squadron personnel with the ANZAC Rotary Wing Aviation Unit in the far off Sinai which had commenced operations in March 1982. If they were Wessex drivers B Flight would assist with some refam hours on the Iroquois before they left Nowra.

With one exception it was a remarkably lucky Squadron given the demanding nature of its various tasks whether operating under a Taipan or a Possum call sign. Practicing Tactical Approaches one night the leader of a six aircraft formation in line astern on late finals to the target scraped through some gum trees before climbing away in R/T silence. As befitting a former RANHFV pilot, LCDR **Bill Shurey** thought it hardly worthy of comment let alone formal investigation while his co-pilot LEUT **Craig Marcombe** was left very wide eyed as it had been 'quite sporting'! With typical wry under-statement the hard working maintenance crews christened that particular aircraft "Miss Eucalyptus" from then on.

Many hours were flown in the UHIB "Walgett Taxi" flood relief operation without incident, the embarked flights reported no major safety concerns and LEUT **Derek Frew's** training enabled him to survive several days at sea after his yacht capsized. Unfortunately on the final deployment of the year to East Sale a catastrophic gearbox failure caused an uncontrolled



One of the aircraft scraped though some gum trees before climbing away in R/T silence...

ditching of Wessex 825. Due to LEUT **Mark Henske's** commendable actions six of the eight people onboard survived – but the loss of RAAF Corporal **J Campbell** and Leading Aircrewman **Gary Macey** was tragic.

These two young men's names became the 67th and 68th to be added to the **Fleet Air Arm Roll of Honour**.

The Unsung Heroes

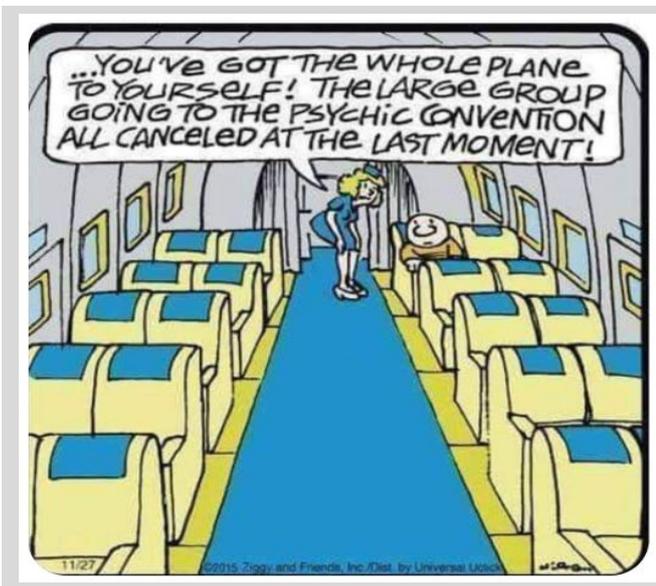
The Line Book, by its nature, tended to concentrate on aircrew antics but the unsung heroes of Operation Bursa were, without doubt, the maintenance crews. Working with old aircraft with inadequate spares in cold and shabby hangars, they achieved miracles.

Maintenance, previously conducted in two watches, was reorganised into three to give round-the-clock effort. And the teams kept on, overcoming one obstacle after another to produce aircraft on the line day after day.

There were no mobile phones in those days and pagers were unavailable, so everyone had to be on a couple of hours notice to move, in case the Wessex were required at East Sale. This meant months of being on call, staying near a telephone, and not even having the luxury of a beer or two when the day's work was done. Despite this, morale was high and everyone involved worked to a single purpose with dedication and professionalism. In short, the maintenance teams were amazing.

The Admiral's Inspection just before this deployment had noted the high morale of HC723 which is reflected in every page of the Squadron Line Book. While the end of 1983 found the Wessex of A Flight grounded at East Sale awaiting recovery back to Jervis Bay onboard HMAS Tobruk the Line Book remained resolutely upbeat reflecting with pleasure the Xmas promotion of their CO Mike Lehan to his well-earned Commanders' Brass Hat.

Hopefully the names and events touched on in this short article will prompt further memories, comments, clarifications, photographs and stories to FlyBy! Graeme Lunn. ✈



Dear Editor

Thanks for another 'FlyBy' with lots of great reading.

I was interested in the Jerry O'Day letter on page 7 regarding the sale/transfer of the RAN Austers and the rough landings the new owners experienced.

The attached casts some light on this subject as it was not uncommon to see the Austers doing 'kangaroo hops' down the runway at Nowra – usually rusty pilots or those converting to type – and the reason for this is the rubber cord (bungy strop) shock absorber system fitted to the Auster, which for the unwary provided a copybook example of Isaac Newton's law of 'every action has an equal and opposite reaction'.

Unlike conventional shock absorbers that smooth the initial shock followed by a slow release, with the Auster upon a heavy landing the rubber (elastic) cords would stretch and then catapult the aircraft into the air. Once pilots became aware of this they could land in a way that minimised the bounce.

Cheers, Kim Dunstan ✈

AUSTER AUTOGRAT

SHOCK CORDS

A.R.B. APPROVAL HAS NOW BEEN OBTAINED TO FIT ALL AUSTER AUTOGRATS WITH A SET OF 4 WEAKER TYPE SHOCK CORDS FOR THE UNDERCARRIAGE. THE PART NUMBER FOR THESE BEING E.50178.

THIS APPROVAL HAS BEEN OBTAINED OWING TO COMPLAINTS RECEIVED FROM NUMEROUS CUSTOMERS OF THE LACK OF SHOCK ABSORPTION ON THE UNDERCARRIAGE. IT WILL BE FOUND THAT THESE NEW SHOCK CORDS WILL GIVE MUCH SMOOTHER TAXYING AND LANDING CHARACTERISTICS.

ALL NEW AUTOGRATS ARE NOW BEING FITTED WITH NEW TYPE SHOCK CORDS WHICH ARE BLACK IN COLOUR.

ANY OWNER WISHING TO PURCHASE THESE CORDS MAY DO SO FROM HIS DISTRIBUTOR OR DIRECT FROM AUSTER AIRCRAFT LTD., SERVICE DEPARTMENT, REARSBY, LEICS. THE COST OF A SET OF THE NEW SHOCK CORDS IS £1,8.0, EX WORKS PLUS POSTAGE AND PACKING. THE COST OF FITTING A NEW SET OF SHOCK CORDS IS £3.0.0.

Dear Editor,

Jerry O'Day's letter regarding Austers took me back. I got checked out in the Auster after a fifty minute dual trip and sent solo. At the time I had a previous 9:10 dual and 8:30 solo in Chipmunks. I recall on one solo doing numerous circuits trying to land, I kept kangaroo hopping down the runway. At one stage I thought that the only way permanent contact with mother earth was going to eventuate was by running out of fuel or being shot down.

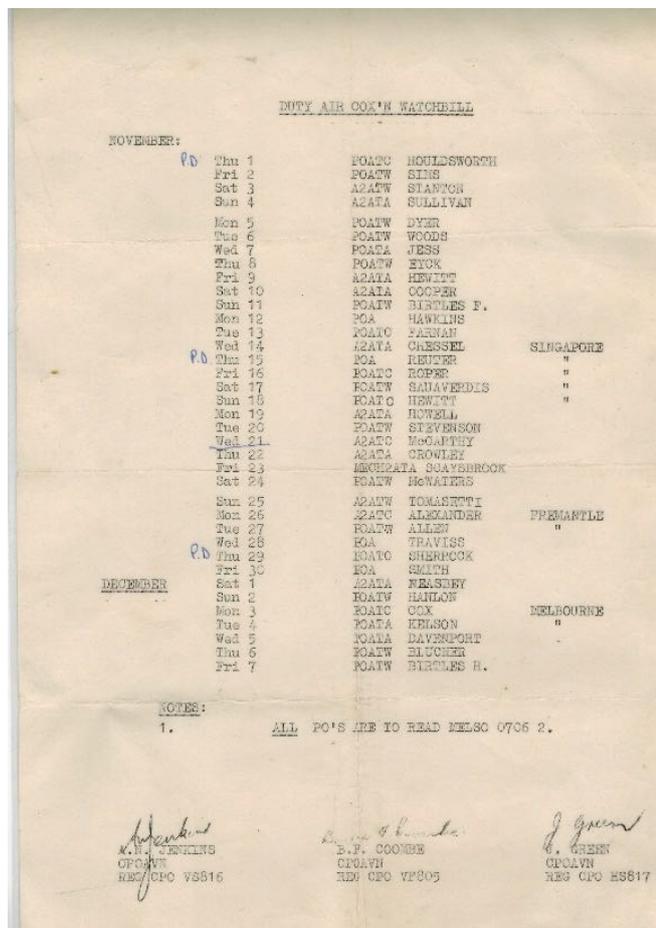
Six months after joining the RAN I got a job to ferry an Auster to a chap who had just purchased the aircraft. Unlike Jerry, I had vast experience in Austers - a grand total of sixteen hours, but like him it had been four years since flying one. At the destination some of the local pilots who I knew turned up to see what laughs could be gained from the landing, Austers having the reputation they did. They went home disappointed: the Gods were smiling and a greaser was made. The flight grading at Moorabbin on Chipmunks no doubt helped, along with my currency on Tiger Moths at home.

Blue Skies, Brian Abraham. ✈

Dear Editor,

A blast from the past! Just going through some old papers and I found this Duty Air Coxswain Watchbill for HMAS Melbourne in 1973. The handwritten "P.D." had me stumped for a while until I realised it was the very important Pay Day!

Cheers, Andrew McCarthy ✈



Dear Editor,

Fortunately, the need to carry out a ditching – reference the excellent Pan American story in the last issue - has become a rare event, but it is something that all international airline pilots still train for.

One of the issues that gave me cause for concern and the need to consider my options, was the loss of South African Airlines Flight 295, Taipei to Johannesburg, during November 1987.

The aircraft was a B-747-200 (Combi) model, which experienced a catastrophic in-flight fire in the aft cabin cargo area, broke up in mid-air, and crashed into the Indian Ocean east of Mauritius.

This model of Boeing permits the mixing of passengers and cargo on the main deck and on this flight, there were 140 passengers and six pallets of cargo, none of which should have been of an endothermic category.

The cause of the fire was thought, but not conclusively proven, to be caused by a thermal runaway of lithium batteries. Many conspiracy theories also surfaced during the investigation.

On Combi aircraft the rear third of the main passenger compartment was divided off by a bulkhead, behind which general cargo was carried and accessed externally by an additional cargo door. There was also a door in the bulkhead to allow access from the main cabin.

The compartment was fitted with a smoke detection sensor which activated a warning on the flight deck, but, unlike the lower main forward and aft cargo compartments, did not have an extinguishing system, and relied on a senior cabin-crew member, armed with a large extinguisher, to don an oxygen mask, then enter the compartment and fight the fire.

At the time, Singapore Airlines (for whom I worked) operated several 747 Combi aircraft, used mostly between the Asian manufacturing centres of Singapore, Taiwan and Korea, flying to the United States, or Europe.

They were also used for the transportation of livestock, often valuable race-horses.

An uncontained fire aboard any airliner is an aircraft commander's worst nightmare and it requires a diversion to the nearest airport and landing made as soon as possible, followed by an evacuation.

Unfortunately, when you are half way across the Pacific or Indian Ocean, usually at night, this option is not often available, and the commander is confronted with the decision either to press on to a distant diversion point, or make a controlled ditching whilst he still has full control of the aircraft...

It is something that I gave much thought to, but fortunately, never had to rise to the occasion...

Anson E (Ted) Goater. ✈

Dear Editor,

One more prompt from last month's 'Flyby' – with my mind drifting back to times past.

Looking at the new Shoalhaven Bridge works gives me the feeling that its western construction boundary must be right next to where the old RAN Sailing Club boathouse (circa 1960) was located on the banks of the Shoalhaven River. The Sailing Club was very active and it was a lovely place to be on a weekend and especially on a warm summers day. Given the broad reaches of the Shoalhaven it was the perfect place for a sailing club with a perfect view of the old bridge in the middle distance.

The group photo shows some of the Sailing Club members with family who were attending a sailing regatta at Lake Illawarra. [Photo Kim Dunstan. Boathouse photo courtesy of **Ron Marsh**].

Cheers, **Kim Dunstan**.



By Editor. I studied Google Maps for a while, trying to figure out exactly where this was, but without any Observer skills failed dismally. Does anyone remember the club and/or any stories associated with it? ✈

Dear Editor,

I don't want to appear picky because I think you do a great job, but the town of Holbrook is in NSW not Victoria [see *FlyBy Apr21* page 5]. I enlisted from there in 1954. No real connections any more. A nice little town. I enjoyed my early youth there. Was school captain. **Robert Allen**.

By Ed. Oops! Another demonstration of my Observer skills! Mind you, only 70km out, so getting better. ✈

Dear Editor,

Does anyone know where the Burmah Oil Company complex, the base 851/816 had in Broome for operation trochus in 1975 was? I know Ray Murrell and Chris Hall were there with 816 (FAAAA members). Any advice would be gratefully received.

Robert Wood.

By Ed. You can email your response to Robert [here](#). ✈



**AUSTRALIAN VETERANS'
CHILDREN ASSISTANCE TRUST**

Do you have a child/grandchild who could use up to \$4000 a year for tertiary or trade study? If so, you might want to read the following carefully.

Applications for 2022 AVCAT Scholarships, including the Long Tan Bursary, open 18 August 2021, Vietnam Veterans' Day, and close at midnight 31 October 2021.

Applications must be made online at avcat.org.au.

AVCAT Scholarships are for the children and grandchildren of Australian ex-serving veterans. Long Tan Bursaries are funded by the Australian Government Department of Veterans' Affairs, and AVCAT Scholarships are sponsored by ex-service organisations, corporate sponsors, and individual donations.

AVCAT Scholarships provide up to \$4000 per year, for three years, to full-time students at university, TAFE or registered training organisation.

To be eligible students must be:

- The child, stepchild, foster child, or grandchild of an Australian ex-serving veteran.
- An Australian citizen or permanent resident.
- Enrolled, or planning to enrol in a full-time course at an Australian university, TAFE or registered training organisation in 2022.
- In receipt of, or eligible to receive, Centrelink payments including Youth Allowance, ABSTUDY, Austudy or an accepted means-tested Commonwealth government payment in 2022.

Some scholarships have specific eligibility criteria, for further information go to avcat.org.au.

Contact info@avcat.org.au for further information.

Kind Regards, Len Russell CEO AVCAT ✈

REUNION CORNER

Vietnam Veterans Concert 5/6 June 2021



The **Vietnam Requiem** will be the third in a series of seven national commemorative concerts and recordings that are created and produced by The Flowers of War team through

assistance from the Australian War Memorial.

It will premiere **Saturday 5 and Sunday, 6 June** from 1300-1600 at the Llewellyn Hall, ANU, Canberra

This epic concert of music and projected images will be a fusion of iconic songs of the era featuring **Little Pattie, John Schumann** (I was only 19), **Normie Rowe**, and others in the first half.

The second half will be created by some of Australia's leading composers and performers. Written by **Ross Edwards, Elena Kats-Chernin, Andrew Schultz** and **Graeme Koehne** with musicians from the RMC Duntroon Band and the Canberra Symphony Orchestra, we will detail the war's chronology by telling the stories of the war in each of the movements. The Australian and NZ personnel on the battlefield; medical staff, journalists, cameramen, photojournalists and entertainers who toured; the protest movement, and the South Vietnamese refugees who fled here to freedom as Boat People. Movement three Tuba Mirum by Graeme Koehne features the RAN and the HFV with images displayed on the big screen during the music.

Little Pattie wrote to **Chris Latham**, the Director of the Flowers of War "I know that this Requiem can be an important step on the road to healing. I promise I will bring all my life's experience working with the Vietnam Veteran community, to ensure its success."

Tickets will go on sale from 15 March via Ticketek. We are also offering veterans, donors and guests the opportunity to book early from 22 March to avoid disappointment. Tickets are \$70 for veterans and concession card holders; \$85 for adults.

Chris Latham,
Flowers of War team
www.theflowersofwar.org

Phone: 0438 952263 ✈

Vietnam Veterans 16-18 August 2021



You are invited to join us for three days of activities to commemorate Vietnam Veterans Day, concluding with a Service hosted at the Old Bar Public School.

An outline of the program is as follows:

Monday Aug 16th. Meet and greet from 4pm

Tuesday Aug 17th. Lunch with the RSL, and Reunion Dinner.

Wed Aug 18th. Brunch. Vietnam Veterans Parade and Service. Farewell Dinner.

Enquiries to: John Macartney. Phone (02) 6557 4165 or 0427 787 296 or email [here](#). ✈

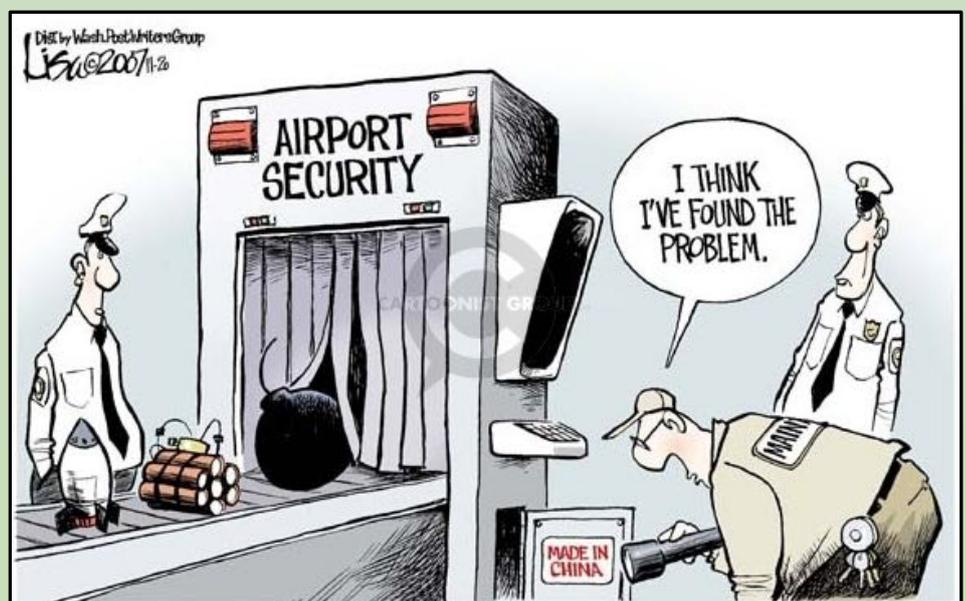
Aircrew Reunion 22-23 October 2021

An Aircrew Reunion is planned for **22-23 October** at the Historic Aircraft Restoration Society at Albion Park Rail, Illawarra.

Note this is different to the MG-99 reunion detailed on page 11.

Details are to be advised, but get the dates in your Diary as places are expected to go quickly once bookings are open.

More info in future FlyBy newsletters. ✈





On 21 June 1981 Grumman Tracker 851 flown by SBLT **Dave Marshall** with observer LEUT **Steve Langlands** and LS **George Casey** was on its last circuit of the day in the South China Sea when they spotted a vessel 10 miles west of *Melbourne* that appeared to be on fire.

The flames were, in fact, a signal from the disabled vessel *Nghia Hung*, crowded with Vietnamese refugees aged from seven months to 65 years, fleeing from Vietnam to Singapore. Their engine had broken down and the boat was adrift. The refugees were in dire straits and could hardly have survived much longer.

After covering the Tracker's landing back on Melbourne as plane-guard, Wessex 815 piloted by LEUT **Vince Di Pietro** with LS Aircrewman **Ray Cully** and SAR diver AB **Mitch Douglas** aboard rushed to the scene until a boarding party and doctor arrived.

Over the next three hours, the hard-working officers and sailors of the *Melbourne* and destroyer escort *Torrens* brought a total of 99 exhausted and barely conscious men, women and children aboard the aircraft carrier.

Five days later, the Vietnamese, known as Melbourne Group 99 (MG-99), were disembarked at Singapore. They were transferred to a refugee camp and quickly processed as migrants to Australia.

With the continuous interest and support of Melbourne's Supply Officer **John Ingram**, the remarkably cohesive MG-99 group mostly settled in Sydney and, led by **Stephen Nguyen**, kept in touch and held reunions with the ship's company in 2007 and 2012, the latter leading to the short documentary 'The Luckiest Refugees' by **Mark Corcoran** on ABC's Foreign Correspondent program, updated in 2014. You can see that [here](#).

But not long before this year's 40th anniversary, the rescue by the RAN suddenly reemerged after a

remarkable coincidence involving the HARS Aviation Museum at Albion Park, NSW, and the commissioning of a naval painting of the moment Tracker 851 spotted the stricken vessel on that last patrol under dark stormy skies and turbulent seas.

Answering the call from New Zealand, RAN veteran and marine artist **Darrell White** began research and contacted his brother **Glenn**, also a RAN veteran and HARS volunteer, for help.

Remarkably, Tracker 851 -- the very same one his younger brother needed for his painting, was undergoing restoration at HARS.

The discovery of 851's extraordinary story has sparked a rapid sequence of events.

What: Reunion of the MG-99 Group and all who helped them.
When: Sunday 20 June, 1300-1600
Where: HARS Aviation Museum, Albion Park Rail.

First, led by Stephen Nguyen and boat captain **Nguyen Van Tam**, over 40 refugees and family were joyously re-united with Tracker 851 and a Wessex similar to Pedro 15 involved in their rescue at HARS on 13 March.

That visit has now led to the MG-99 group booking a much-larger Anniversary Reunion at HARS Aviation Museum on SUNDAY 20 JUNE 2021, 1300-1600. This is also World Refugee Day.

Organisers are hopeful of 300-400 refugees and their descendants plus as many Australians who were involved in the rescue as possible.

Anyone involved -- especially from the Melbourne Air Group and the company of *Melbourne* and *Torrens* is warmly invited to join the celebration! You will be very special guests.

A reach-out via HMAS Melbourne and HMAS Facebook pages has already stirred lots of interest and many sailors are planning to attend. For further information and to register your place, please contact Vietnam War Correspondent and HARS volunteer **Carl Robinson** [here](#). ✈

When it first flew in 1935, nobody could have known that the DC-3 would become one of the most successful aircraft in history, but eighty five years later some are still flying commercially. It was truly one of the greats of modern aviation.

But another nail in the coffin of their longevity has been hammered home by the European Union's insistence that any DC-3s in the UK must be retro-fitted with modern egress slides and weather radar to meet EU Health & Safety rules. 'Ask Bob', of the [AMT Community](#), takes a look at this sad event.

'It groaned, it protested, it rattled, it ran hot, it ran cold, it ran rough, it staggered along on hot days and scared you half to death. Its wings flexed and twisted in a horrifying manner, it sank back to earth with a great sigh of relief. But it flew and it flew and it flew.'

This is the memorable description by Captain Len Morgan, a former pilot with Braniff Airways, of the unique challenge of flying a Douglas DC-3. It's carried more passengers than any plane in history, but - now the DC-3 has been grounded by EU health and safety rules.

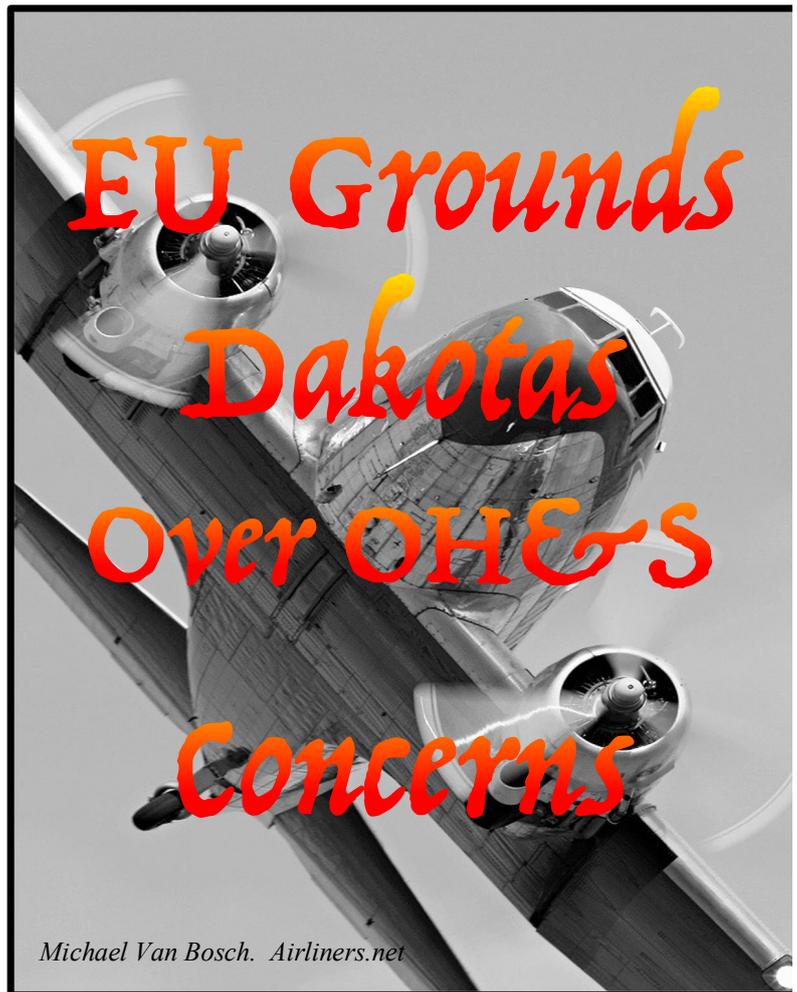
The DC-3 served in World War II, Korea and Vietnam, and was a favourite among pilots!

For more than 70 years, the aircraft known through a variety of nicknames --- the Doug, the Dizzy, Old Methuselah, the Gooney Bird, the Grand Old Lady --- but which to most of us is simply the Dakota --- has been the workhorse of the skies.

With its distinctive nose-up profile when on the ground and extraordinary capabilities in the air, it transformed passenger travel, and served in just about every military conflict from World War II onwards.

Now the Douglas DC-3 - the most successful plane ever made, which first took to the skies just over 30 years after the Wright Brothers' historic first flight - is to carry passengers in Britain for the last time.

Romeo Alpha and Papa Yankee, the last two passenger-carrying Dakotas in the UK, are being forced into retirement because of - yes, you've guessed it - health & safety rules. Their owner, Coventry-based Air Atlantique, has reluctantly decided it would be too expensive to fit the required emergency- escape slides and weather-radar systems required by new European rules for their 65-year-old planes, which served with the RAF during the war.



Mike Collett, the company's chairman, says: "We're very saddened."

The end of the passenger-carrying British Dakotas is a sad chapter in the story of the most remarkable aircraft ever built, surpassing all others in length of service, dependability and achievement. It has been a luxury airliner, transport plane, bomber, fighter and flying hospital, and introduced millions of people to the concept of air travel. It has flown more miles, broken more records, carried more passengers and cargo, accumulated more flying time and performed more 'impossible' feats than any other plane in history, even in these days of super-jumbos that can circle the world non-stop. Indeed, at one point, 90 percent of the world's air traffic was operated by DC-3s. More than 10,500 DC-3s have been built since the prototype was rolled out to astonished onlookers at Douglas's Santa Monica factory in 1935.

With its eagle beak, large square windows and sleek metal fuselage, it was luxurious beyond belief, in contrast to the wood-and-canvas bone shakers of the day, where passengers had to huddle under blankets against the cold. Even in the 1930s, the early Dakotas had many of the comforts we take for granted today, like on-board loos and a galley that could prepare hot food. Early menus included wild-rice pancakes with

blueberry syrup, served on bone china with silver service.

For the first time, passengers were able to stand- up and walk- around while the plane was airborne.

But the design had one vital feature, ordered by pioneering aviator Charles Lindbergh, who was a director of TWA, which placed the first order for the plane. The DC-3 should always, Lindbergh directed, be able to fly on one engine. Pilots have always loved it, not just because of its rugged reliability but because, with no computers on board, it is the epitome of 'flying by the seat- of- the- pants'.

One aviator memorably described the Dakota as a 'collection of parts flying in loose formation', and most reckon they can land it pretty well on a postage stamp. Captain Len Morgan says: 'The Dakota could lift virtually any load strapped to its back and carry it anywhere and in any weather safely.' It is the very human scale of the plane that has so endeared it to successive generations. With no pressurization in the cabin, it flies low and slow. And unlike modern jets, it's still possible to see the world go by from the cabin of a Dakota. (The name, incidentally, is an acronym for Douglas Aircraft Company Transport Aircraft.)

As a former Pan Am stewardess puts it: "From the windows, you seldom look upon a flat, hazy, distant surface to the world. "Instead, you see the features of the earth - curves of mountains, colours of lakes, cars moving on roads, ocean waves crashing on shores, and cloud formations as a sea of popcorn and powder puffs."

But it is for heroic feats in military service that the legendary plane is most distinguished. It played a major role in the invasion of Sicily , the D-Day landings, the Berlin Airlift, and the Korean & Vietnam wars, performing astonishing feats along the way. When General Eisenhower was asked what he believed were the foundation stones for America's success in World War II, he named the bulldozer, the jeep, the half-ton truck, and the Dakota. When the Burma Road was captured by the Japanese, and the only way to send supplies into China was over the mountains at 19,000 ft, the Chinese leader Chiang Kai-shek said: 'Give me 50 DC-3s, and the Japs can have the Burma Road ...'

In 1945, a Dakota broke the world record for a flight with an engine out of action, travelling for 1,100 miles from Pearl Harbor to San Diego, with just one- propeller working. Another in RNZAF service lost a wing after colliding mid-air with a Lockheed bomber.

Defying all the rules of aerodynamics, and with only a stub remaining, the plane landed, literally, on a wing and a prayer at Whenuapai Airbase. Once, a Dakota pilot carrying paratroops across the Channel to France heard an enormous bang. He went aft to find that half the plane had been blown away, including part of the rudder. With engines still turning, he managed to skim the wave-tops before finally making it to safety. Another

wartime Dakota was rammed by a Japanese fighter that fell to earth, while the American crew returned home in their severely damaged - but still airborne - plane, and were given the distinction of 'downing an enemy aircraft'. Another DC-3 was peppered with 3,000 bullets in the wings and fuselage by Japanese fighters. It made it back to base, was repaired with canvas patches and glue, and then sent back into the air. During the evacuation of Saigon in 1975, a Dakota crew managed to cram aboard 98 Vietnamese orphans, although the plane was supposed to carry no more than 30 passengers.

In addition to its rugged military service, it was the DC-3 which transformed commercial -passenger flying in the post-war years. Easily converted to a passenger plane, it introduced the idea of affordable air travel to a world which had previously seen it as exclusively for the rich. Flights across America could be completed in about 15 hours (with three stops for refuelling), compared with the previous reliance on short hops in commuter aircraft during the day and train- travel overnight. It made the world a smaller place, gave people the opportunity for the first time to see previously inaccessible destinations, and became a romantic symbol of travel.

The DC-3's record has not always been perfect. After the war, military-surplus Dakotas were cheap, often poorly maintained, and pushed to the limit by their owners. Accidents were frequent. One of the most tragic happened in 1962, when Zulu Bravo, a Channel Airways flight from Jersey, slammed into a hillside on the Isle of Wight in thick fog. All three crew and nine of the 14 passengers died, but the accident changed the course of aviation history. The local radar, incredibly, had been switched off because it was a Sunday. The national air safety rules were changed to ensure it never happened again.

"The DC-3 was, and is, unique," wrote the novelist and aviation writer Ernest Gann, "since no other flying machine has cruised every sky known to mankind, been so admired, cherished, glamorized, known the touch of so many pilots and sparked so many tributes. It was without question the most successful aircraft ever built, and even in this jet-age, it seems likely that the surviving DC-3s may fly about their business forever." This may be no exaggeration.

In the wake of the EU's decision, Romeo Alpha and Papa Yankee begin a farewell tour of Britain 's airports before carrying their final passengers at the International Air Tattoo at RAF Fairford. But after their retirement, there will still be Dakotas flying in the farthest corners of the world, kept going with love, dedication and sheer ingenuity. Nearly three-quarters of a century after they first entered service, it's still possible to get a Dakota ride somewhere in the world.

I recently took a DC-3 into the heart of the Venezuelan jungle --- to the "Lost World" made famous in the novel by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. It is one of the most remote

Not all surplus DC-3 are parked in convenient places! This one, having reached the end of its working life, was donated to local dive centres in southern Turkey and gently submerged to provide a novel diving experience. Images by [Rico Besserdich Aquatic Photography](#).



regions on the planet --- where the venerable old planes have long been used because they can be manoeuvred like birds in the wild terrain. It's a scary experience being strapped into a torn canvas chair, raked back at an alarming angle (walking along the aisle of a stationary Dakota is like climbing a steep hill) as you wait for take-off. The engines spew smoke and oil as they shudder into life with what DC-3 fans describe as 'music', but to me sounded like the hammering of a thousand pneumatic-drills. But soon you are skimming the legendary flat-topped mountains protruding from the jungle below, purring over wild rivers and the Angel Falls, the world's highest rapids. Suddenly the ancient plane drops like a stone to a tiny landing strip just visible in the trees. The pilot dodges bits of dismantled DC-3 engines scattered on the ground and avoids a stray dog as he touches down with scarcely a bump. How did he do it without air traffic control and the minimum of navigational aids? "C'est facile - it's easy," he shrugged.

Today, many DC-3s live-on throughout the world as crop-sprayers, surveillance patrols, air freighters in forgotten African states, and even luxury executive transports. One, owned by a Houston lumber company, had mink-covered door-knobs, while another belonging to a Texas rancher had sofas and reclining chairs upholstered with the skins of unborn calves.

In Jaipur, India, a Dakota is licensed for flying wedding ceremonies. Even when they have ended their aerial

lives, old Dakotas have become mobile homes, hamburger stands and hen houses. One even serves as a football team changing room.

Clark Gable's private DC-3, which once ferried chums such as John and Bobby Kennedy, Marilyn Monroe, Frank Sinatra and Ronald Reagan, is in a theme park in San Marino. But don't assume it won't run again. Some of the oldest hulks have been put back in the skies.

The ancient piston-engines are replaced by modern turboprops, and many a pilot of a modern jet has been astonished to find a Dakota alongside him on the climb away from the runway.

So what is the enduring secret of the DC-3?

David Egerton, professor of the history of science and *(continued on page 17)*



The recent death of **HRH The Duke of Edinburgh** reminded us of a little story of when he flew in an RAN Sycamore helicopter with the late **Seamus O'Farrell** in November 1956.

Seamus was tasked to carry the Royal Personage from Government House in Sydney, to a gathering of schoolchildren in Kensington, NSW. It was a hot and humid day and after a difficult vertical take-off he heard the biggest bang of all time, just as he cleared the trees at about 150 feet – one of the most unforgiving areas of the flight envelope.

HRH, who was learning to fly the Sycamore, said "What was that, O'Farrell?"

"That's a rich cut, Sir," he replied, not wishing to admit the aircraft carrying the Precious Personage might be in peril.

HRH fell silent, which allowed O'Farrell time to feverishly scan the unforgiving area below for a potential forced landing. There wasn't much: a gap between a bus and tram in George Street, perhaps, which seemed unpalatable. They limped onwards.

At the destination he planned a very gradual approach using the ground cushion to demand minimum power from a possibly damaged engine, but just before touchdown the engine went 'Bang!' again. The aircraft greased onto the wheels and although a throng of children were waiting for the Duke to appear, he made no attempt to unstrap.

"I suppose that was another rich cut," he said.

"Yes Sir."

"Tell me now," he said, "what is a rich cut?"

"Well Sir," Seamus replied, "too much fuel, unburnt in the cylinders goes 'bang' in the hot exhaust on the way out."

"What causes that?" he persisted.

"Well Sir, I was too ham. I pulled the collective up too hard and too fast."

The Duke shook his head. "I was watching you, everything you did. I have never seen anyone pull the collective up so slowly before. I've never seen a landing like that before. No, I won't wear that."

"Well, maybe the humidity, volumetric efficiency, too much unburnt fuel, exhaust, bang..." Seamus struggled, lamely. He could see the Duke didn't believe him.

Once HRH had gone the Sycamore was loaded into a truck and carted to Nowra, where they found two cylinder heads fractured at their skirts.

Many years later, in a RAF mess in the UK, Seamus was introduced to a Commander **Dick Turpin RN**, who grabbed him and said "You're the bloke I've been waiting to meet for years. I was the Prince's naval helicopter instructor. He came back here after one visit to Australia with a load of codswallop about Rich Cuts. What was all that about?"

Seamus said it took a glass or two of explaining. ✈



The first general presentations of the Australian Service Medal, with clasp Counter Terrorism/Special Recovery, for Operation Bursa (counter terrorism activity in Bass Strait in the 1980s) were conducted late last month. These covered recipients in the first three batches vetted by the Team.

Presentation ceremonies were conducted at:

- Nowra (FAA Museum) - Mon 19 Apr (morning and afternoon ceremonies)
- WA (HMAS Stirling) - Mon 19 Apr
- Canberra (HMAS Harman) - Thu 22 Apr

The next presentations are at:

- Brisbane (HMAS Moreton) - Tue 4 May
- Cairns (HMAS Cairns) - Wed 5 May

Presentations are still to be organised for other locations, including Melbourne and Sydney. These may be delayed until after the approval of later batches, due to small numbers in those locations (a number of Sydney and Canberra recipients chose to travel to Nowra for presentation of their award). Batch 4, those applicants notified of “received and registered” by 15 Apr, has been processed and is now with Navy Honours and Awards. Batch 5 will be forwarded mid-May.

The use of a spare medal for presentation photos, for those who had received their medal and had it mounted, worked well and the Team will continue with this approach.

So far, the Team has processed over 270 applications. There are probably still 200 or more people who qualify but are yet to apply. **TELL YOUR MATES.**

If you have been notified that you were in any of Batches 1-3 (i.e. you were invited to a presentation) and

haven't received your medal/clasp; advise the Team so we can initiate tracing action.

Details of how to apply for your medal are in the sidebar to the right.

The Op Bursa Recognition Team is contactable at: op.bursa@defence.gov.au. The Team always seeks to respond to any applications within seven days of them being received.

Andrew Whittaker, CAPT RAN

Photo Caption: The presentation at HMAS STIRLING on 19 April by the Fleet Commander, RADM Mark Hammond. Front L-R: RADM Mark Hammond; CPOATV4 Darryl Ward Ret'd; CPOATC3 Ian McNeill Ret'd; LSATC Michael Stewart Ret'd. Rear L-R: CPOATA4 David Suffolk Ret'd; LCDR Wayne (Bill) Canna Ret'd; LtCol Ian Sangston Ret'd; CDRE Brett Dowsing Ret'd.

Were you involved in Operation Bursa? If so, you may be eligible for the award of an Australian Service Medal (CT clasp) – but only if you apply. It will not be issued automatically.

Full details of Operation Bursa can be seen [here](#).

Full details of how to apply for your medal, if you think you are eligible, can be found [here](#).



DC-3 Grounded by EU (continued from p.14)

technology at Imperial College, London, says we should rid our minds of the idea that the most recent inventions are always the best. "The very fact that the DC-3 is still around and performing a useful role in the world is a powerful reminder that the latest and most expensive technology is not always the one that changes history," he says. It's long been an aviation axiom that 'the only replacement for the DC-3 is another DC-3'. So it's fortunate that at least one seems likely to be around for a very long time to come.



HARS has two airworthy Dakotas, and a third – previously in the RAN Historic Flight, can be seen tucked in the back of their hangar. It is hoped to restore this one to flying status too.

In 1946, a DC-3 on a flight from Vienna to Pisa crashed into the top of the Rosenlauri Glacier in the Swiss Alps. The aircraft was not damaged and all the passengers were rescued, but it quickly began to disappear as a blinding snowstorm raged. Swiss engineers have calculated that it will take 600 years for it to slide down inside the glacier and emerge at the bottom.

The modernisation requirement of the EU is the most asinine ruling ever dreamed up by a nightmare bureaucracy!!! I especially appreciate the part requiring "escape slides". On its belly, you can step down from the aircraft floor to the ground. And the article left out the tale of the "DC-2-and-a-Half". After being shot-up by Japanese fighters, the damaged wing of a DC-3 was replaced with one from a DC-2. It was then loaded up with refugees, and flown to safety.

ONE OF THE SAFEST PLANES EVER BUILT, FOR OUR USE, WITHOUT ALL THE NEW GADGETS, HAS BEEN GROUNDED. IT SURE BROUGHT US WHERE EVER AND WHENEVER WE WANTED AND TOOK US BACK SAFELY.

Thanks a million 'Old Bird', 'DC3' or 'DAKOTA'. You'll be missed a lot, for carrying us to safety, when we needed you. ✈

Website Update



Construction of our new website is proceeding apace.

The main structure is complete, and work continues on 'translating' all of the pages from the old website language to the new one. Many of the

pages – particularly in our 'Heritage' section - were extremely complex with photographs carefully intertwined with each other, and this involves manual labour to re-write them into the new format.

To keep costs to a reasonable figure this laborious task is being completed by part-time marketing employees rather than coding experts. This means extensive checking is required, but it saves thousands of dollars.

Once the page translation is complete, which should be in early to mid May, we enter the final checking phase which involves detailed testing of the functionality of

the website, and ensuring that every page has been ported – especially those generated in recent weeks (obituaries and ‘FlyBy’ mainly) – and they are formatting correctly. With several hundred pages there are bound to be some bugs!

We hope the new website will be handed over in June. Then I’ve got to learn how to use it, and to write an instruction manual for my (eventual) successor. That means “FlyBy” will need to consume less time than it currently does.

Thank you again to those who supported us with financial assistance. Without you, this wouldn’t have happened.

Marcus Peake, Webmaster. ✈

DFRDB Submission



In previous editions of ‘FlyBy’ we have endeavoured to keep you up to date with the long running dispute with COMSUPER over under-payment of DFRDB pensions in some circumstances. The matter has been pursued by the tireless efforts of the Australian Defence Force Retirees Association Inc (ADFRA), under the leadership of **Jim Hislop OAM**, ably assisted by **Herb Ellerbock**.

ADFRA has just made its submission to the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee inquiring into the accuracy of information provided to DFRDB recipients.

The submission, which is very comprehensive, can be read [here](#). ✈