



ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE

History and Heritage Branch- Air Force Headquarters

BP7893191

WALHALLA CRASH SITE H8122-0067 – HISTORY AND RAAF INVOLVEMENT

1. On 29 December 1948, Mr Don Findlay discovered the wreck of a P-40E Kittyhawk near Walhalla in Eastern Victoria. On 01 January 1949, personnel from RAAF Base East Sale visited the site recovered human remains and seven aircraft identification plates.¹ The RAAF Directorate of Personnel Services (DPS), Casualty Section in Melbourne, responsible for searching for missing World War II aircraft and pilots, concluded no RAAF pilot or RAAF P-40E Kittyhawk was involved in this crash.

2. United States (US) authorities agreed the wreck was likely to be a US P-40E Kittyhawk flown by Captain (CAPT) Joseph McLaughlin who went missing in March 1942.² On 01 June 1949, the remains were passed to US authorities for further identification processing.³ At the time, US authorities did not identify the remains as CAPT McLaughlin because of minimal physical evidence, and uncertainty in the dates he went missing.⁴ As such, on 08 December 1949, the remains were interred as an Unknown US Airman in the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Honolulu, Plot P, Grave 1035.

3. In 2004, the US Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) investigated the Walhalla site, and subsequently the Central Identification Laboratory (CIL) determined the unknown airman in Plot P, Grave 1035 was CAPT McLaughlin.⁵ In 2006, his remains were exhumed and subsequently interred in Section 60, Grave 749, Arlington National Cemetery, with a headstone citing the Date of Death as 10 March 1942.

4. Since then, there has been speculation on three issues regarding the Walhalla site:

- a. The Walhalla crash did not occur in 1942.
- b. There are two RAAF Kittyhawks and pilots involved with two crash sites at Walhalla.
- c. The identification of the remains interred in Arlington is incorrect.

¹ NAA: Royal Australian Air Force; A705, 166/1/182 (3374280), *RAAF Headquarters – DPS (Directorate of Personnel Services) Casualty Section – Research for Missing RAAF Personnel – Southern Area – Investigations and reports: f.8c, Report to Commanding Officer RAAF East Sale from FLTLT McGilvray, Investigation of report of crashed aircraft*, 1 January 1949.

² NAA: A705, 166/1/182, f30, Enclosure to Folio 28, FLTLT Kibble Statement to Coroner, 21 October 1949.

³ NAA: A705, 166/1/182, File note 4; FLTLT Kibble handed over remains to COL Gillespie, US Air Force Attaché, 1 June 1949.

⁴ Quartermaster General QMGMT 293 (23 September 1949). 'Transmittal of Board of Proceeding (2382), located in file '293 Unknown Schofield Maus #2, Isolated Burial (Walhalla I.B.), Housed in file 'Australia, MACR 16535, 'Barcode 06238 at JPAC'.

⁵ Scientific Director, Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) Central Identification Laboratory, (8 October 1994). 94CIL01 1771 Memo, Identification of CIL 2004-021-I-01. Contained in CIL2004 021 at JPAC

5. Although identification of US airmen and aircraft is a US matter, the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) History and Heritage Branch, Historic Unrecovered War Casualties (HUWC) team was tasked to review the RAAF involvement in this case.

6. This document sets out the evidence and reviews RAAF involvement whilst recognising the US has made conclusions in these matters, and any formal review of the case (including identification) falls under US jurisdiction.

METHODOLOGY

7. HUWC team have researched evidence and facts available in official records and other information sources. Where required, additional information was sought from a range of experts to ensure the assessments and conclusions regarding the evidence were robust, and adhered to Defence policy. This method minimises confirmatory bias that may occur by focussing on individual pieces of evidence.

8. **Team Composition.** The HUWC team consisted of the following senior RAAF personnel:

- a. Wing Commander Grant Kelly - a pilot with 38 years' experience including Aircraft Accident Inquiry Management and Advanced Aviation Safety Officer/investigator qualifications.
- b. Wing Commander Greg Williams, OAM - a senior administrative officer with 30 years' experience investigating WWII aircraft crash sites.
- c. Wing Commander Malcolm Tutty - an Armament Engineer with 38 years' experience who holds a Doctorate degree in human decision making with complex adaptive decisions in flight test, Armament, Electronic Warfare, Industry design authority.
- d. Flight Sergeant Justin Galbraith - a Defence Flight Safety Bureau (DFSB) investigator with qualifications from Cranfield University, 25 years as an Air Force Avionics Technician and five years as a DFSB investigator.
- e. Flight Sergeant Darryl Fell - Air Force Intelligence Analyst–Geospatial (AIA-G) 25 years' experience including 18 years' experience interpreting imagery for intelligence purposes.

9. The HUWC team consulted with several aviation archaeologists, US Department of POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) experts, aircraft historians with a knowledge of Kittyhawk aircraft from the Australian War Memorial (AWM), the RAAF Museum, ADF Serials website, the Gippsland Armed Forces Museum, and a local Walhalla area historian.

WWII IN AUSTRALIA

10. On 19 February 1942, the Japanese armed forces bombed the Australian mainland. This attack followed a similar attack by the Japanese armed forces on Pearl Harbour, Hawaii on 07 December 1941.

11. These attacks saw Australia rapidly mobilise its armed forces to face the Japanese threat resulting in large quantities of arms and equipment (including aircraft) being shipped

into the country and moved north for the defence of Australia.

12. US Forces initially arrived in Australia in late 1941 with the headquarters, established in Melbourne to coordinate the arrival and deployment of large numbers of personnel and equipment. US President Roosevelt and Australian Prime Minister Curtin discussed a new strategy to defeat Japan, which included the appointment of General (GEN) Douglas MacArthur as the Supreme Allied Commander in the South-West Pacific.

13. US P-40E Kittyhawk aircraft were one of the key US Air Defence assets in early 1942. The manufacture of Kittyhawks was in full-scale production during this period, and Kittyhawks were provided to the United Kingdom, Australia and Russia.

14. At the start of WWII, the RAAF consisted of 246 aircraft, 12 Squadrons and 450 personnel. The size of the RAAF peaked in late 1944 with 6 200 aircraft, 61 Squadrons and 182 000 personnel.

OFFICIAL US RECORDS FOR CAPT MCLAUGHLIN

15. The final months of Captain McLaughlin's service in 1942 were documented poorly. This lack of clarity hampered a coherent story developing when he was linked to the Walhalla crash site.

16. **Final posting.** A number of US records document the last known movements of CAPT McLaughlin. In early 1942, the then Lieutenant (LT) Joseph Potter McLaughlin O396389 was with the 20th Pursuit Squadron operating out of the Philippines. The 20th Squadron Roster for 07 March 1942 reports LT McLaughlin as being on Detached Service (D.S.), indicating he was detached away and probably already in Australia.^{6 7} There are reports LT McLaughlin returned to Australia on 15 January 1942 as crew of B-18.⁸ CAPT McLaughlin was released from the Brisbane Erection Depot on 09 March 1942 and posted to HQ Geelong Erection Depot, HQ 4th Air Depot Group, to report on 11 March 1942.⁹ In 2002, the former Commanding Officer of the 20th Pursuit Squadron, GEN Moore, informed JPAC, CAPT McLaughlin remained in Australia to test fly newly assembled P-40 Kittyhawks.¹⁰

17. CAPT McLaughlin's Missing Aircrew Record (MACR) 1653, raised on 27 January 1948, and his Individual Deceased Personnel File (IDPF) are the official US files containing information and decisions regarding the loss and subsequent identification of CAPT McLaughlin. The key documents are outlined in the following paragraphs.

18. **Missing report (undated, post 1943).** The undated report records CAPT

⁶ Headquarters 5th Air Force Historical Record (1942). Bataan Roster of 24th Pursuit Squadron: 7 March 1942.

⁷ United States. War Dept. (1940). *War Department Technical Manual, Dictionary of United States Army terms*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Govt. Print. Off: p. 87 *Detached service, duty with another organisation, making necessary a continuous absence of 24 hours or more from a military unit to which one is normally attached*, abbrev: DS.

⁸ Morris, J.R. (1942, June 6). *To Tokyo, Dammit!* Colliers Weekly pp 12-13, Springfield, Ohio (1939-1957). Retrieved <https://www.unz.com/print/Colliers-1942jun06-00012/> LEUT McLaughlin operating as refueller on a B18 as a 120lb jockey like person from Mindanao to Darwin returning to Australia.

⁹ Captain McLaughlin's Individual Deceased Personnel File (IDPF): Change in Status of Missing Personnel, 8 May 1943.

¹⁰ CIL 2004-021 reported E-mail from Joe Moore, Lt Gen, USAF (Retired), 30 May 2002.

McLaughlin as departing Canberra in stormy weather at 0800 hours on 10 March 1942. His status is Declared Dead on 19 March 1943.¹¹

19. **Change in Status of Missing Personnel, 04 May 1943.** This document included the posting of CAPT McLaughlin to HQ 4th Air Depot Group on 11 March 1942.¹²

20. **Determination of Status of Joseph P. McLaughlin, 19 March 1943.** This report states he was missing from 19 March 1942 according to messages received on 23 June 1942 (USAFIA No 1178) and 09 July 1942 (USAFIA No U-145). The report concluded CAPT McLaughlin was reported as missing on 19 March 1942 after take-off from Canberra for an undisclosed base and made a finding on his presumed date of death as 19 March 1943.¹³

21. **IDPF Finding of Death of a missing person, 08 May 43.** This document states CAPT McLaughlin was missing as of 19 March 1942 (no aircraft ID or location given).¹⁴

22. **Review of circumstances surrounding the disappearance of Captain James P McLaughlin, 27 January 1948.**¹⁵ This report includes the follow witness statements:

- a. **Witness Statement CAPT R.P. Duncan of 15 July 1942.** CAPT Duncan stated he believed CAPT McLaughlin transferred to Laverton about 05 March 1942 and heard he took off from Canberra on 18 March 1942, and never arrived.
- b. **Witness statement LEUT D. Steel of 16 July 1942.** LEUT Steel stated CAPT McLaughlin transferred to Laverton ten days before he went missing, disappeared on or about 18 March 1942, left Canberra for Laverton and was last seen flying low in a rainstorm.
- c. **Witness statement of LT H.J. Marshall of 20 July 1942.** LT Marshall stated CAPT McLaughlin was ordered to Canberra on a special mission. He believed CAPT McLaughlin left Canberra on 10 March 1942, and states there was a sighting of CAPT McLaughlin's Kittyhawk over Yea on that day. LT Marshall believed a local Air Raid Warning system sighted a P-40 type aircraft at 1000 feet which was assumed at the time to be CAPT McLaughlin's aircraft. The aircraft was seen heading towards Alexandria with smoke seen near Chapel Mountain, however searches found no aircraft or pilot.

23. The 27 January 1948 review concluded CAPT McLaughlin left Canberra (no date specified) and was seen over Yea after leaving Canberra and was last seen flying low in a rainstorm in the mountains. Reports of smoke near Chapel Mountain were investigated in 1942, but nothing was found. An official statement of death was not issued.

24. **Summary of pertinent facts on Case 18-118, dated 04 May 1948 and 26 November 1948.**¹⁶ This report declared CAPT McLaughlin was reported missing after he

¹¹ IDPF, (n.d.) Missing report, McLaughlin, J.P.

¹² IDPF, Change in Status of Missing Personnel, 4 May 1943

¹³ IDPF, AG-704, Determination of Status of Joseph P. McLaughlin, 19 March 1943

¹⁴ IDPF, Finding of Death of a missing person, 8 May 1943

¹⁵ IDPF, Review of circumstances surrounding the disappearance of Captain James P McLaughlin, 27 January 1948

¹⁶ IDPF, Summary of pertinent facts on Case 18-118, dated 26 November 1948

failed to return from a test flight on 19 March 1942, in an unidentified aircraft reportedly last seen at Yea, Victoria, Australia. The US investigated the Yea sighting and contacted the Yea police on 04 October 1948. The Yea police reported no aircraft had crashed in the district for eight years, and any crash would result in a report to the State Police Headquarters (HQ) and RAAF HQ, however, no reports exist at these headquarters.

Yea sighting on 10 March 1942

25. There is no evidence to support witness speculation a Kittyhawk was observed by the Volunteer Air Observer Corps (VAOC) in the Yea area on 10 March 1942. While it is possible a Kittyhawk on a test flight from Laverton was seen in the area, there are no reported Kittyhawk flights or crashes recorded. One RAAF aircraft was reported missing near the Cathedral Range area, Taggerty on 12 May 1942, however, the pilot bailed out and survived. The aircraft, Wirraway A20-592, was incorrectly reported as being a Kittyhawk in the local newspaper on 15 May 1942.¹⁷

26. The Wirraway aircraft crash site was located in 1954, approximately 12 miles southeast of Yea and west of Taggerty¹⁸, which places the site in the direction the smoke was observed from Yea in LT Marshall's statement. According to the aircraft status card for Wirraway A20-592, the aircraft was off-course and subsequently abandoned because of weather conditions.¹⁹

27. As witness statements relating to CAPT McLaughlin were taken three months after he went missing, the reports of the Wirraway crash (reported as a Kittyhawk) in May 1942 may have been conflated with CAPT McLaughlin's Kittyhawk going missing in March 1942. Given there is no other evidence of a sighting of a Kittyhawk on 10 March 1942, it is likely Wirraway A20-592 was mistakenly reported as a missing Kittyhawk in witness statements.

CAPT MCLAUGHLIN'S SPECIAL MISSION

28. The 2020 review conducted further research to clarify Captain McLaughlin's final days. The RAAF News October 1979 article: '40 WWII Wrecks in Victorian Bush'²⁰ reported the *Age* and defunct *Argus* newspapers describing a flight on 19 March 1942 from Canberra to Melbourne. These two articles led researchers to the 'special mission' CAPT McLaughlin was involved in.

29. On 22 February 1942, President Roosevelt directed GEN Douglas MacArthur to leave the Philippines and travel to Australia to take command of all US Forces in the Pacific.²¹ GEN MacArthur and his entourage travelled by boat to Mindanao on 10 March 1942, arriving at Del Monte 14 March 1942. The group then flew on three B-17s to Australia,

¹⁷ Search for Plane, (1942, May 15), *Alexandra and Yea Standard and Yareck, Gobur, Thornton and Acheron Express*, pp 2-3. Retrieved from <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article64702964>

¹⁸ Plane Wreck Identified, (1954, February 26), *Herald*(Melbourne), p5, Retrieved from <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/245135322>

¹⁹ NAA: A10297, Block 108, Aircraft Status Cards – Wirraway A20-500 to A20-757.

²⁰ 40 WWII Wrecks in Victorian Bush, (1979, 1 October). *RAAF News*, p4, Retrieved from <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/rendition/nla.news-article259006480.3.html>

²¹ The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower. The War Years, ed. by Chandler, A.D., Jr. (Baltimore and London, 1970), Vol I, p. 127, citing OPD Exec 10, item 7a. Retrieved from <https://www.ozatwar.com/genmarshall.htm>

arriving at Batchelor Airfield Darwin at 0900 hours on 17 March 1942.²² The group subsequently flew to Alice Springs, arriving later that day.²³

30. Late on 17 March 1942, GEN George Brett, Commander US Forces in Australia (USFIA), contacted Prime Minister Curtin and advised him GEN MacArthur had arrived safely in Australia and was enroute to Alice Springs. GEN Brett also informed the Prime Minister he would be sending a letter (containing President Roosevelt's intentions) via a special messenger with the *'utmost despatch'*.²⁴ GEN Brett's letter to the Prime Minister was recently found in AWM files (figure 1).²⁵ Additionally, a cablegram dated 17 March 1942, from GEN Brett to Washington made reference to negotiating and drafting a joint simultaneous official announcement of GEN MacArthur's appointment as Supreme Allied Commander.²⁶ On 17 March 1942, President Roosevelt made that announcement.²⁷

31. On 18 March 1942, Prime Minister Curtin advised GEN Brett that he welcomed the announcement by the President.²⁸ Later that day, the Prime Minister informed the Advisory War Council of GEN Brett's letter.²⁹ The Government accepted GEN MacArthur's nomination as Supreme Commander of all Allied Forces in the South-West Pacific in a message to the President transmitted through the Australian Minister, Washington³⁰ and to the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom.³¹ Finally, the Prime Minister made a press announcement about the safe arrival of GEN MacArthur in Australia and GEN MacArthur's intent to transfer his HQ from the Philippines to Australia to become the Supreme Allied Commander in the South-West Pacific.³²

32. The *Army Navy Journal* (21 March 1942)³³, *Melbourne Herald* (18 March 1942)³⁴

²² Long, Gavin, MacArthur as a military Commander, Sydney, Angus and Robertson 1969, p81

²³ AA: FDR-FDRPSF, Diplomatic correspondence 16618300, Australia, 1939-August 1942. Retrieved from <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/16618300> P 60 From Australia (Brett) to AGWAR no 736/17th

²⁴ Australian War Memorial (1942) Special Collection I, Defence Committee Records, Bundle 5, *Future Policy and Strategy for the conduct of the war in the Pacific*. 17 March 1942, Records of seorafone conversation by PM with GEN Brett.

²⁵ Australian War Memorial (1942) Special Collection II, Defence Committee Records, Bundle 5, *Future Policy and Strategy for the conduct of the war in the Pacific*. Letter GEN Brett to Prime Minister John Curtin 17 March 1942.

²⁶ AA: FDR-FDRPSF, Diplomatic correspondence, 16618300, Australia, 1939-August 1942. Retrieved from <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/16618300> P 60 From Australia (Brett) to AGWAR no 736/17th, sent 0648AM Washington time (which is 2348 hours local in Australia).

²⁷ Australian War Memorial (1942) Special Collection II, Defence Committee Records, Bundle 5, *Future Policy and Strategy for the conduct of the war in the Pacific*. 18 March 1942, Message from Colonel Merle - Smith to GEN Brett, announcement approved by President Roosevelt.

²⁸ Australian War Memorial (1942) Special Collection II, Defence Committee Records, Bundle 5, *Future Policy and Strategy for the conduct of the war in the Pacific*. 18 March 1942, Message from Mr Snedden to Colonel Wilson.

²⁹ AWM 247, 2/2, 976868, Commonwealth Government, Official History 1939-45 War Nancy Penman extracts Advisory War Council minutes and agenda 5 January 1942 to 28 May 1942. P 125. Items 836 & 837

³⁰ DFAT Historical Records, Volume 5, 415 (17 March 1942), Cablegram 62, Prime Minister to Minister to the United States. Retrieved from <https://www.dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/historical-documents/Pages/volume-05/415-mr-john-curtin-prime-minister-to-mr-r-g-casey-minister-to-the-united-states>.

³¹ DFAT Historical Records, Volume 5, 415, Johcu 27 of 17 March 1942) Australia to Prime Minister Churchill

³² NAA: B5459, 22, General Douglas MacArthur, pp-14-15, 18 March 1942.

³³ Army Navy Journal (1942, March 21). *Gen. MacArthur given Command in SW Pacific*. VOL LXXXIX no 29, Washington D.C.

³⁴ American Forces now in Australia, (1942, March 18). *Melbourne Herald*. Retrieved from <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/245108782>

and the *Age* (19 March 1942)³⁵ reported the content of the letter sent to the Prime Minister on 17 March 1942. Additionally, the *Argus* (19 March 1942)³⁶, the *Canberra Times* (19 March 1942)³⁷ and *Dungog Chronicle and Gloucester Advertiser* (Friday 20 March 1942) included mention of CAPT McLaughlin. These three articles described the Base Commander of RAAF Fairbairn, WGCDR Ian McLachlan, driving CAPT McLaughlin to Parliament House from his warplane to deliver the letter to Prime Minister Curtin's private rooms on the afternoon of 17 March 1942. The articles also described the safe arrival of GEN MacArthur in Alice Springs and discussed his leadership of Australia's forces as the Supreme Commander of Allied Forces in the South-West Pacific.³⁸

33. There is substantial evidence showing GEN MacArthur's safe arrival in Australia on 17 March 1942 set a chain of events in motion. CAPT McLaughlin's special mission was to deliver GEN Brett's letter to Prime Minister Curtin on 17 March 1942, which he completed at approximately 1915 hours that day. CAPT McLaughlin was a suitable choice for this mission, given his experience on the Kittyhawk. The urgency of the mission and the ammunition associated with the crash site meant the aircraft he was assigned was probably being readied for transfer to the RAAF at No 4 Aircraft Depot at Laverton. The details of CAPT McLaughlin's aircraft for his return flight were finalised in the 2004 JPAC investigation. It is now more likely CAPT McLaughlin left Canberra to fly back to Laverton on 18 or 19 March 1942 and went missing on that flight.

³⁵ MacArthur's nomination – Request to Mr Curtin, (1942, March 19). *The Age (Melbourne)*, p3, Retrieved from <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/205287078/19384561#>

³⁶ Australia asked for GEN MacArthur "Leadership on Inspiration", (1942, March 19). *The Argus*, p3. Retrieved from <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/8238141>

³⁷ MacArthur to lead in Anzac Area, (1942, March 19). *The Canberra Times*. p1. Retrieved from <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/2595564>

³⁸ Dramatic Scene at Canberra, (1942, March 19). *The Dungog Chronicle and Gloucester Advertiser*, p1. retrieved from <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/141295019>

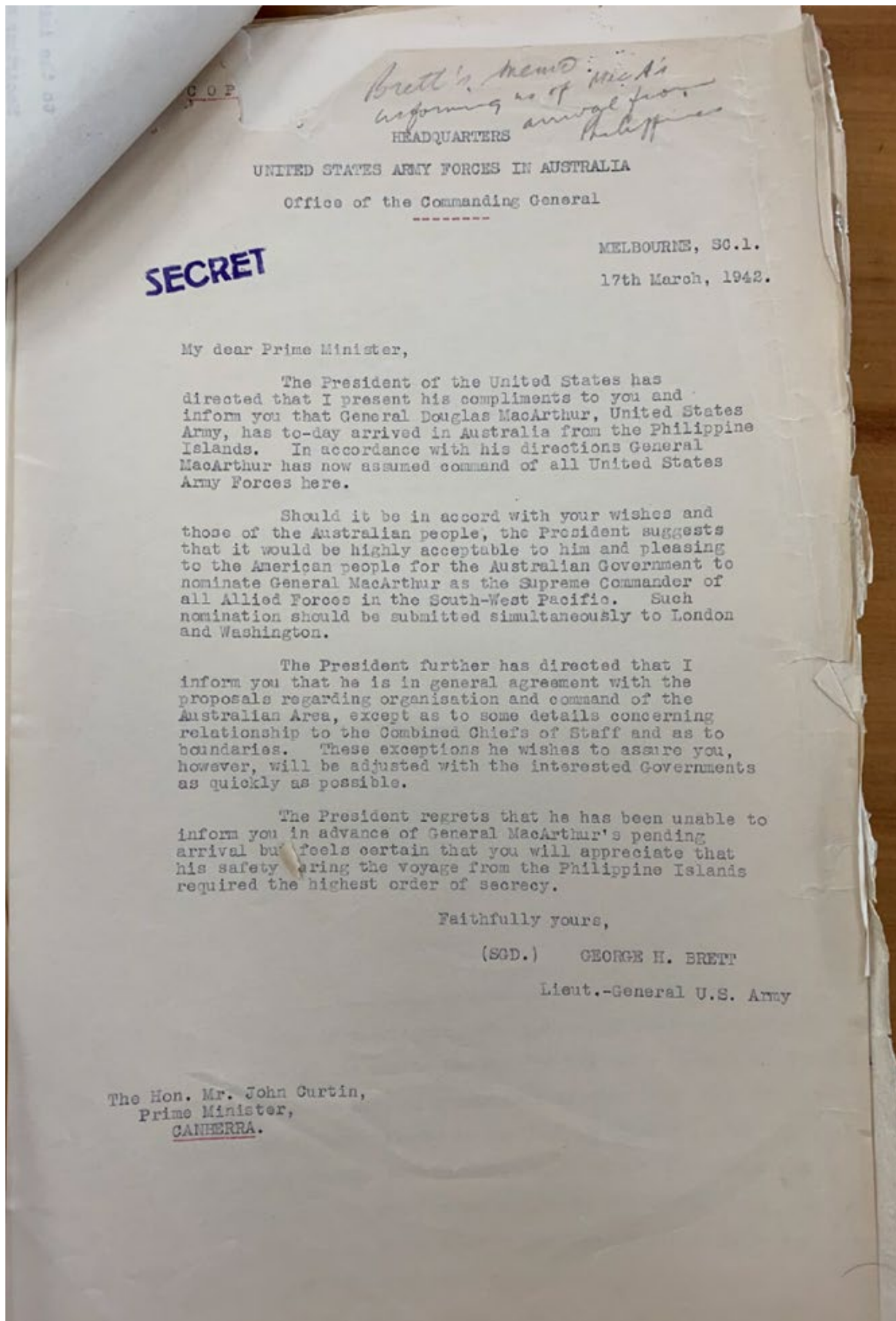


Figure 1. 17 March 1942 Letter from GEN Brett to Prime Minister Curtin

AIRCRAFT CRASH INVESTIGATIONS

34. **Authority to investigate aircraft crashes.** Any investigation of an aircraft crash site must consider Standards and Recommended Practices for Aircraft Accident Inquiries, first adopted by the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) Council on 11 April 1951 pursuant to Article 37 of the Convention on International Civil Aviation (Chicago, 1944) and were designated as Annex 13 *Aircraft Accident and Incident Investigation*.³⁹ Annex 13 requirements apply to civilian aircraft accidents. Responsibilities for countries are reflected in requirements for the State of Occurrence, and State of Registration, listed in the Annex. Investigations surrounding recent aircraft crashes, require forensic issues (i.e. matters pertaining to the court) to be dealt with. Personnel on-board the aircraft need to be found, identified and the cause of death established. The cause of the crash is also a matter for the Coroner in the first instance and there may be other official enquiries relating to the crash. For these reasons, controlled access and chain of evidence protocols are required.

35. Air forces, including the RAAF have set up incident and investigation processes based on Annex 13 requirements. Defence Force Safety Bureau (DFSb), and its previous iterations, act as the investigator for contemporary Australian defence aircraft incidents/accidents; other air forces have similar investigation bodies. The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency is now the responsible agency for US WWII aircraft crash investigation and personnel identification.

36. WWII crash investigation requirements are different to contemporary aircraft crashes as there was no forensic issues to be dealt with. WWII crashes and losses were considered by an appointed Board or Court of Inquiry with a determination of death being issued for the missing personnel. These determinations were necessary for compensation/pensions, support to the bereaved and finalisation of the members' affairs. A Court of Enquiry or accident investigation may have been conducted if there was sufficient evidence at the time.

37. The amount and/or deterioration of wreckage through deformation and/or fire, and lack of witnesses mean often the causes of historic aircraft crashes cannot be determined with any certainty, and a regular lack of unique parts surviving an aircraft crash mean identification of WWII aircraft is difficult. Initially, the identification of the aircraft determines the missing personnel who might be recovered and/or identified. Each crash site is different, providing unique challenges in identification. Aircraft components that are complete, unique, or have serial numbers are the primary evidence used to identify aircraft wrecks. Analysis of a WWII crash site is used to determine the most probable areas to search for crew remains and personal effects. HUWC-AF work with partner organisations in other countries to research and sometimes conduct field operations. The required level of proof in determining the identification of an aircraft is the balance of probabilities.

38. During WWII, the DPS Casualty Section, collated information about missing RAAF aircraft and aircrew. The DPS Casualty Section also organised search teams who found 300 aircraft and accounted for nearly 700 of the 1500 missing RAAF personnel in the Pacific

³⁹ International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) Annex 13 Accident Investigation, retrieved from https://www.emsa.europa.eu/retro/Docs/marine_casualties/annex_13.pdf

theatre soon after the War.⁴⁰

DISCOVERY AND INVESTIGATION OF THE WALHALLA CRASH SITE

39. The crash site near Walhalla was found by Mr. Don Findlay on 29 December 1948 and reported to Erica Police.⁴¹ Subsequently, on 01 January 1949, RAAF HQ Southern Area gave instructions to RAAF Base East Sale: *'to investigate a crash site on the side of a mountain 10 miles north of Walhalla near Aberfeldie river', 'Crash judged to have occurred four or five years ago'. 'Ammunition to be removed and disposed of.'*⁴²

40. As commonly experienced in WWII crash sites, the lack of controlled access to the Walhalla site meant there were no chain of evidence protocols in place. There are reports from early January 1949, that *'people with toolboxes'* were visiting the crash site.⁴³ Anecdotal evidence from a Walhalla historian and the Gippsland Armed Forces Museum (GAFM) indicate much of the wreckage was salvaged over the years, with some of the material being handed over to the Gippsland Armed Forces Museum for display purposes, and to JPAC in 2004.

41. On 01 January 1949, FLTLT McGilvray from RAAF Base East Sale visited the site with two other RAAF personnel, three policemen, a Justice of the Peace (JP) deputised by the Coroner, and members of a fishing party including Mr John Holborn and Mr Don Findlay. The team surveyed the site in heavy rain, recovered the human remains, and seven identification plates. Before leaving the site, FLTLT McGilvray's team buried live ammunition found at the site.⁴⁴

42. Ammunition found at the Walhalla site and displayed at the Gippsland Armed Forces Museum (GAFM), has the Headstamp 'FA 41'. This headstamp indicates the round was manufactured in 1941, at Frankford Arsenal, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.⁴⁵ There was a large volume of ammunition usage in WWII, and ammunition manufactured in 1941 would be loaded and fired on 1941 missions at the earliest and 1942 missions at the latest. Safety dictates the use of oldest ammunition available. Additionally, the full load of ammunition and presence of guns would be appropriate to an aircraft being readied in Laverton to fly north and participate in the war, but not appropriate for an aircraft being disposed of as any reusable items are removed prior to disposal of aircraft.⁴⁶ As such, speculation the aircraft was being ferried for disposal cannot be sustained.

43. On return from the crash site, the JP deputised by the Coroner commenced an Inquest.⁴⁷ In parallel FLTLT McGilvray raised an investigation report which was sent to

⁴⁰ About 600 planes are missing, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, (1949, March 2). Retrieved from <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/245108782>

⁴¹ Victorian Coroner, (1949), *Proceedings of Inquest (1596, dated 8 December 1949)*, Mr John Holborn statement

⁴² 166/1/182 (1 January 1949) f4A Message HQ Southern Area to East Sale

⁴³ Holborn, J., (23 February 1999), Statement made to Rick Hanning, Sale Victoria.

⁴⁴ 166/1/182 (1 January 1949) f8c Report FLTLT McGilvray to CO RAAF East Sale –Investigation of report of crashed aircraft.

⁴⁵ Huntingdon, R. T. (1978). *Small Calibre Ammunition Identification Guide*, Volume 1, p115. Defense Intelligence Agency. Retrieved from <https://apps.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a165896.pdf>

⁴⁶ NAA, 164922, A705, 9/86/157, f17, *Disposal of Kittyhawk aircraft and Allison engines*, p7.

⁴⁷ 166/1/182, (1 January 1949), f8c

RAAF HQ Southern Area on 03 January 1949, along with seven identification plates, and burial warrant (for human remains recovered).⁴⁸ On 05 January 1949, HQ Southern Area asked the Air Board to research and investigate the report.⁴⁹ DPS, Casualty Section, as the relevant RAAF authority at the time, undertook that investigation.

44. On 04 January 1949, FLTLT Kibble, an experienced DPS Casualty Section member who investigated aircraft crashes in the South-West Pacific Area, began the investigation of the Walhalla site. On 07 January 1942, a file note describes FLTLT Kibble's phone conversation with Group Captain (GPCAPT) Charlton, where the GPCAPT remembered what he referred to as the '*Laughlin*' case and was sure he went missing in early 1942.⁵⁰

45. On 04 January 1949, DPS Casualty Section asked the US authorities whether the pilot found in the Walhalla wreck could be United States Army Air Corps (USAAC) CAPT McLaughlin, and sought personal details and information about the aircraft he was flying.⁵¹ On 06 January 1949, the US authorities advised Casualty Section, CAPT McLaughlin went missing on 19 March 1943 and provided a physical description and dental records.⁵² Casualty Section queried the US authorities about CAPT McLaughlin's reported date of death in 1943.⁵³

46. Newspaper reports on 12 February 1949 state RAAF HQ was confident the American pilot was CAPT McLaughlin; however, official identification of remains would be conducted by the United States Army Air Forces (USAAF) in Hawaii.⁵⁴ On 14 January 1949, the US authorities advised CAPT McLaughlin went missing in action on 10 March 1942 and was declared dead 19 March 1943.⁵⁵

47. The DPS Casualty Section did not identify the remains or the aircraft. The report stated it was considered certain that the remains were an American pilot and most likely CAPT J.P. McLaughlin.⁵⁶ The DPS correspondence between RAAF and US authorities then focussed on returning the remains to the US.

48. On 01 June 1949, FLTLT Kibble handed a casket containing the human remains found at the Walhalla site to Lieutenant Colonel (LTCOL) Gillespie, Air Attaché, United States Air Force.⁵⁷ The casket was shipped to the Central Identification Laboratory, Schofield Barracks, Territory of Hawaii.

⁴⁸ 166/1/182 (3 Jan 1949) F8b, Letter HQ RAAF East Sale to HQ Southern Area, , Examination of wreckage of crashed aircraft Aberfeldie river valley

⁴⁹ 166/1/182 (5 Jan 1949), f8a, Letter HQ Southern Area to Air Board, Examination of wreckage of crashed aircraft Aberfeldie river valley.

⁵⁰ 166/1/182, (7 Jan 1949), file note 1, Kibble conversation record.

⁵¹ 166/1/182, (4 Jan 1949), f5 Message AFHQ to US ARPAC Fort Shafter,

⁵² 166/1/182, (6 Jan 1949), f6 Message US ARPAC Fort Shafter to OC RAAF Vic Barracks-

⁵³ 166/1/182, (10 Jan 1949), f9. Message AFHQ to US ARPAC Fort Shafter, 10 Jan 1949

⁵⁴ Identity of Crashed US pilot awaited, (1949, February 12), *The Argus*. Retrieved from <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/22712020>

⁵⁵ 166/1/182, (14 Jan 1949), f11. Message US ARPAC Fort Shafter to CO RAAF Victoria Barracks – 14 Jan 1949

⁵⁶ 166/1/182, (28 April 1949), f15. Letter Air Member for Personnel (AVM) to HQ Southern Area, 28 Apr 1949, Examination of wreckage of crashed aircraft Aberfeldie river valley.

⁵⁷ 166/1/182, (21 October 1949), File note 4 1 Jun 1949, Casket containing remains handed to Col Gillespie US Air Attaché

49. **US Identification of the remains.** American Graves Registration Service Board Proceedings 2382 dated 23 September 1949 disapproved the identification of CAPT McLaughlin. This decision followed analysis of physical characteristics, location, and circumstances of death.⁵⁸ The isolated remains were declared unidentifiable and this recommendation was approved on 12 October 1949. The isolated remains were then interred in the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, Plot P, Grave 1035 on 1030 hours, 08 December 1949. On 09 January 1950, a US review of the McLaughlin's case resolved that *'the subject be declared unrecoverable'*.⁵⁹ It is not known when the US informed the RAAF of the decision to inter the remains as an Unknown US Airman.

50. **Australian Inquest.** After research and discussions with the US in 1949, the Air Board advised the Chief Commissioner of Police the recovered remains were an American pilot, believed to be CAPT J.P. McLaughlin, flying from Laverton to Canberra on 10 March 1942.⁶⁰ The Victorian Police requested a suitable statement to allow finalisation of the Inquest. Correspondence between the Air Board and Victorian Police highlighted the US records were incomplete or unreliable and introduced confusion about engine number 41-36209 being an aircraft serial number rather than an engine serial number.⁶¹ FLTLT Kibble, Officer in Charge, DPS Casualty Section, provided the following statement to the inquest: *'it is beyond doubt the P-40E Kittyhawk was being flown by an American pilot. The remains are believed to be CAPT JP McLaughlin, lost on 10 March 1942 flying from Laverton to Canberra.'*⁶² The Inquisition held on 08 December 1949 concluded that CAPT McLaughlin died in the crash on or about 10 March 1942. This decision reflected the agreed US and RAAF position at the time. The finalisation of the Inquest occurred after US identification decisions were made regarding the remains recovered from the Walhalla site.

Aircraft Identification

51. Plates that were recovered from the Walhalla site were described in 1949 correspondence with US authorities. There is no record of the disposal of these plates on file. A RAAF enquiry on 07 March 1949 included the following information regarding the engine specification plate: Allison engine V1710-39, AC 41-36209 dated accepted 18 November 1941 (11-18-41), manufacturers number 5842, engine specification 123-E.⁶³ Internal US enquiries about the identification of the aircraft CAPT McLaughlin was flying when he went missing did not yield any results.⁶⁴ ⁶⁵ However, this engine serial number came from a batch of engines that were fitted to P-40 Kittyhawks with serial numbers 5520-5530.

52. **The 1941 engine number.** The RAAF made enquiries to the US in 1949 about the engine serial number 41-36209, which was accepted by US manufacturers on *'11 18 41'*

⁵⁸ IPDF, Board Proceedings 2382 dated 23 September 1949

⁵⁹ IPDF, HQAGRS Proceedings of Board of Review 2733, 9 January 1950

⁶⁰ 166/1/182, (14 June 1949), f17A, Letter Air Board to Police, Remains believed to be CAPT McLaughlin)

⁶¹ 166/1/182, (21 October 1949), f28. Letter Secretary Department of Air to Police, Remains of American Aircraft found near Walhalla.

⁶² Victorian Coroner, (1949), *Proceedings of Inquest (1596, dated 8 December 1949)*, FLTLT Kibble statement.

⁶³ 166/1/182 (7 Jan 1949), Folio Message AFHQ to US ARPAC Fort Shafter, , and IPDF p5 message clarifying identification plates

⁶⁴ IPDF Telegram to OQMG to FT Shafter 14 Feb 1949

⁶⁵ IPDF (28 January 1949) Feb 49 telegram to American graves Registration Service.

(18 November 1941)⁶⁶, however, no further information was received. The 1941 acceptance date associated with the engine serial number is consistent with an aircraft built in late 1941 or early 1942 given the rate of production at that time. Accordingly, speculation the aircraft is a late model Kittyhawk being ferried for disposal cannot be sustained.

53. **Kittyhawk 41-36209.** FLTLT McGilvray's report lists engine serial number as 41-36209.⁶⁷ This was not an aircraft serial number as P-40E 41-36209 (MSN 18730) went to the Royal Air Force as Kittyhawk IA ET855 and went missing from a bomber escort mission to Mareth on 21 March 1943.⁶⁸ One of three documents held on DPS 166/1/182 citing the number 41-36209, incorrectly describes that number as an aircraft serial number. Claims this serial number error was in FLTLT Kibble's evidence to the Coroner, in the Coroner's findings, or in subsequent US processes or decisions on the identity of CAPT McLaughlin, cannot be sustained.

54. **Kittyhawk 40-559.** There is a document in CAPT McLaughlin's IDPF⁶⁹, dated 11 August 1949, from the Office of the Quartermaster General of the US Army which references a P-40E, serial number 40-559, and requests information in order to determine whether it is the aircraft CAPT McLaughlin was piloting. Although no document in the case file answers the inquiry, the "Proceedings of Board of Review," convened on 06 December 1949, approximately three months later, indicates the Board found no identification data for CAPT McLaughlin's aircraft, suggesting it did not correlate to 40-559. The aircraft history for the referenced P-40E, 40-559, shows it was assigned to Puerto Rico, where it crashed on 09 March 1943, showing it was not lost in 1942.⁷⁰

55. CAPT McLaughlin's aircraft could not be identified from evidence available in 1949. The engine specification plate was not enough to identify the aircraft. Unfortunately, the black and white photographs taken of the site in the 1950s could not assist in the identification of the aircraft.

56. The National Archives of Australia (NAA) file, *Kittyhawk - Missing U.S Aircraft*, only records operational WWII losses with no reference to the loss of CAPT McLaughlin.⁷¹

SPECULATION THE WALHALLA CRASH OCCURRED AFTER 1942

57. The initial investigations in 1949 focussed on confirming there were no missing RAAF Kittyhawks in Victoria. After DPS Casualty Section confirmed there were no missing Kittyhawks, attention was focussed on the loss of CAPT McLaughlin in 1942. While there has been speculation the crash happened after WWII, there is no evidence which suggests another Kittyhawk, other than the US P-40E Kittyhawk was found at the crash site. The conclusion that the crash occurred in 1942, or soon after, can be determined from the following evidence.

58. **The 1949 witness descriptions.** On 01 January 1949, the RAAF HQ Southern Area

⁶⁶ IPDF (5 February 1949) message p31 and 166/1/182, (7 January 1949), f7A message AFHQ to US ARPAC Fort Shafter.

⁶⁷ 166/1/182, (1 January 1949), f8c.

⁶⁸ Joe Baugher.com US serial number lists retrieved from http://www.joebaugher.com/usaf_serials/1941_5.html

⁶⁹ IPDF, (11 August 1949). Unnamed document

⁷⁰ Joe Baugher.com US serial number lists retrieved from http://www.joebaugher.com/usaf_serials/1942_5.html

⁷¹ NAA A9845, Barcode 6950628, *Kittyhawk - Missing U.S Aircraft* Contents range 1942 – 1945.

relayed to RAAF East Sale a report from Erica Police describing the crash-site '*as four or five years old*', not two to three years as has been suggested.⁷² Senior Constable Haberman's statement to the 1949 inquest also included a description of the crash site: '*On arrival, I saw a wrecked fighter plane, which from its appearance had been there for some time.*'⁷³ His descriptions support the conclusion the crash site was related to the WWII period and not a post war crash.

59. **Survey photography.** Aerial survey photography was taken of the Walhalla region on 22 November 1944.⁷⁴ An assessment by a RAAF Imagery Analyst in July 2020 concluded the survey photography was not suitable to locate a relatively small crash site. The presence of a crash site on the imagery could not be conclusively proved or disproved.^{75 76}

60. Primary witness statements from individuals who visited the 1949 crash site together with the ammunition date and the evidence detailed above, support the conclusion the Walhalla crash occurred in 1942, or soon after.

Post-1949 Inquest

61. On 23 March 1955, Headquarters Training Command (HQTC) reported the discovery of a crash site to the Secretary, Department of Air. Mr Kenneth Sherlock reported a crash site three miles North East of the junction of the Walhalla Aberfeldie Road and Aberfeldie River (this description matches FLTLT McGilvray's 01 January 1949 hand-drawn map, Figure 2). The ammunition reportedly found at the site reflects the possibility the ammunition disposal conducted during the 01 January 1949 visit was compromised by the heavy rain. The discovery of a damaged machine gun is also possible as no guns were removed during the 01 January 1949 visit. FLTLT Kibble concluded this site had been discovered and searched in 1949.⁷⁷

62. In 1979, a machine gun was found in a woodcutters hut some distance away from Walhalla.⁷⁸ A woodcutter reported he took the gun from the Walhalla site in 1949, which again is possible as no guns were removed from the site by the RAAF on 01 January 1949.⁷⁹
80

63. US authorities agreed the crash was likely to be a US Kittyhawk P-40E flown by CAPT J.P. McLaughlin, lost on 10 March 1942. US authorities could not provide identification details of CAPT McLaughlin's aircraft. FLTLT Kibble told the Coroner the remains were not Australian and the only American pilot missing at the time was CAPT J.P. McLaughlin lost on 10 March 1942 in a Kittyhawk aircraft travelling from Laverton to

⁷² 166/1/182, (1 January 1949), f4A. Message HQ Southern Area to East Sale.

⁷³ Victorian Coroner, (1949), *Proceedings of Inquest (1596, dated 8 December 1949)*, Senior Constable Haberman deposition.

⁷⁴ Walhalla Cartographic material Australian aerial photographs J55 6 851 Bib ID 4328670.

⁷⁵ Royal Australian Air Force, (2020). Imagery Analysis Aircraft Crash Walhalla Graphics Report.

⁷⁶ Royal Australian Air Force, (2020). Imagery Analysis Aircraft Crash Walhalla Text Report

⁷⁷ 166/1/182 (1955, March 23) f35A. Letter AOC HQ Training Command to Secretary Department of Air. Reported Discovery of crashed Kittyhawk – Aberfeldie River Area

⁷⁸ Gardner, R. (1979, July 19). *Search for plane after gun found on mount*, The Sun.

⁷⁹ Aircraft Wreckage found, (25 July 1979). *The Canberra Times*. Retrieved from <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/110570074>

⁸⁰ 40 WWII Wrecks in Victorian Bush. (1979, October). *RAAF News*. Retrieved from <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/259006480/28902225#>

Canberra. The incorrect dates and flight details reflected confusion in the US documentation about CAPT McLaughlin's final flight at that time.

64. The Heritage Council of Victoria have since registered the Walhalla crash site (H8122-0067) on the State Heritage Inventory, and the site is protected under the provisions of the *Heritage Act* (2017).⁸¹

2004 JPAC INVESTIGATION OF WALHALLA SITE

65. Several people, including CAPT McLaughlin's former Commanding Officer, GEN Moore, petitioned JPAC (now DPAA) to investigate the Walhalla crash site. JPAC investigated the Walhalla site from 08-15 March 2004. Several artefacts recovered from the crash site were handed to, or found by the JPAC team. These artefacts include a landing gear oleo plate with the aircraft serial number 41-5526, a watch engraved with McLaughlin's name, and a set of US pilot's wings.

Identification of CAPT McLaughlin

66. JPAC report CIL.2004-021 records the evidence and conclusions of that investigation. The report summary misconstrues the 1949 RAAF statement and Coroner's decisions in the identification of CAPT McLaughlin. The research has shown that the RAAF concluded the remains were not Australian, and therefore American. FLTLT Kibble's statement indicates the only American pilot missing is CAPT McLaughlin (lost 10 March 1942), and the Coroner reiterated that as fact in his finding that CAPT JP McLaughlin died in the crash on or about 10 March 1942. This representation of the 1949 Australian statement/decisions is an historical mistake that is not mentioned or reflected in US identification processes and decisions in 1949 or 2004.

67. The laboratory findings combined with the evidence found were sufficient to establish a '*presumptive identification of CIL 2004-021 as the remains of CAPT Joseph P McLaughlin O 396289 US Army Air Forces, to the exclusion of all other reasonable possibilities*'.⁸² The conclusion was reached using physical and historical evidence available at the time. Any matters regarding the integrity of that evidence or the weighting of evidence in the identification decision is a matter for US authorities.

68. As a result of the findings, CAPT McLaughlin was taken off the Missing in Action list on 08 October 2004. On 10 April 2006, CAPT McLaughlin was buried with a full military funeral at Section 60, Plot 649, Arlington National Cemetery, Washington DC.

Aircraft Identification

69. **Curtiss P-40E 41-5526.** Curtiss Factory records show aircraft serial 41-5526 had the constructors' number 16518 and a Customer Sequence number of 546 (both serial and constructors number shown on the landing gear oleo plate). The factory records show its final destination as XYZ (associated with aircraft being sent overseas to Australia and the Philippines). The aircraft was accepted into service on 06 December 1941. The aircraft is

⁸¹ Heritage Victoria H8122-0067 (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://vhd.heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/places/6582/download-report>

⁸² Scientific Director, Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) (8 October 94). Central Identification Laboratory, CIL01 1771 Memo, Identification CIL 2004-021-I-01. Contained in CIL2004 021

recorded on its Individual Aircraft Record Card (IARC) as being "British Repossessed" whilst at SAD (Sacramento Air Depot): it was then transferred to San Francisco for its port of embarkation. The aircraft is then noted as going to X (believed to be Melbourne) arriving in February 1942.^{83 84}

70. **Engine Serial Number.** There is a strong case to support engine number 41-36209 (from identification plate found at the crash site) accepted by the US on 18 November 1941, would be connected with aircraft 41-5526. Annex A lists aircraft and engine serial numbers accepted in early 1942 by the US and RAAF. Aircraft serials either side of 41-5526 were fitted with engines of a similar production block to 41-36209.

71. **Analysis of wreckage.** There is speculation damaged items in the aircraft wreckage indicate a different model P-40E was involved in the Walhalla crash site that may or not have been a US aircraft. Analysis of fire impacted, damaged and incomplete parts are of limited use in providing accurate or definitive proof of an aircraft type or model variant. Further, no explanation has been provided as to why a post WWII late model Kittyhawk would have been fully armed with 1941 ammunition; nor has there been credible evidence put forward regarding an alternative missing RAAF aircraft.

72. The RAAF supports the US conclusion the Kittyhawk is likely to be 41-5526. The landing gear oleo plate and engine identification plate are the two primary pieces of wreckage that support this conclusion. With no alternative aircraft theory or significant secondary evidence, the only conclusion that can be sustained is the aircraft at the Walhalla site is P-40E Kittyhawk 41-5526.

THE POSSIBILITY OF TWO CRASH SITES AT WALHALLA

73. Speculation has been put forward there are two crash sites at Walhalla involving RAAF Kittyhawks and RAAF pilots. No evidence has been provided on the identity of the RAAF aircraft or the missing RAAF pilots. A claim has been made the crash site found in 1948 was near the Scotia mine in Walhalla, however, no official documents reference the crash site near that mine. In 1949, FLTLT McGilvray described the location of the crash-site as: *'being up from the spur near the Aberfeldie bridge on the south side of a peak (2500)'*.⁸⁵ Hand-drawn maps in FLTLT McGilvray's report (Figure 2) indicate the most likely spur rising from the bridge is the one that leads to the Perseverance mine site.

74. Due to the technology available in 1949, the site was not accurately described with coordinates in official documents until the 2004 JPAC investigation (Figure 3). The descriptions from witnesses are consistent with the 1949 and 2004 maps: The site is reached by going up the spur from the Aberfeldie bridge. That spur is east from the bridge and reaches the Perseverance mine site almost directly east of the bridge, as depicted on each map.

⁸³ JPAC footnote. Information about the history of 41-5526 is limited, but available documentary evidence indicates that Captain McLaughlin was flying this aircraft when he was reported missing. The P-40E, serial number 41-5526, arrived in the Southwest Pacific approximately three weeks prior to the date Captain McLaughlin departed Canberra

⁸⁴ Curtiss Airplane: IARC 41-5526 (1941), Curtiss Airplane Billing Microfilm, ACC.2006-0043.

⁸⁵ 166/1/182 (1 January 1949), f8c.

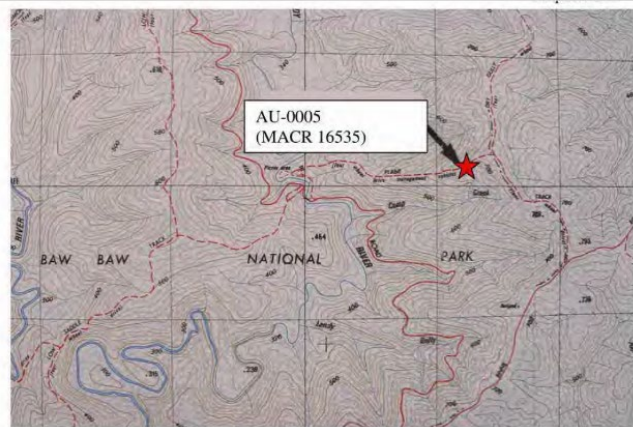
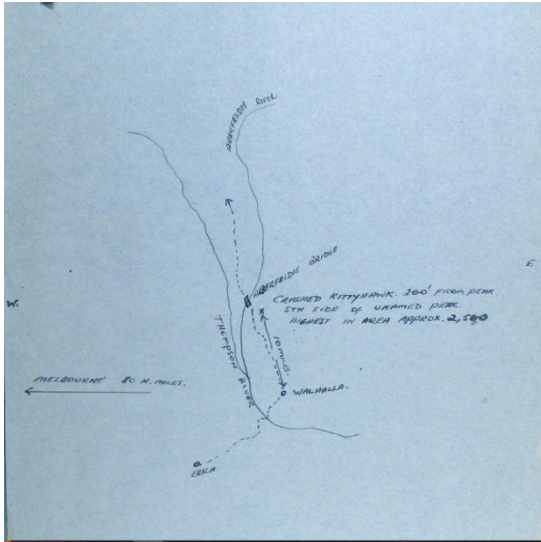


Figure 2. McGilvray's Map 01 January 1949 **Figure 3.** 2004 JPAC map of Walhalla Site

75. Mr Don Findlay made one reference to a bullock track, although nothing is listed regarding bullock tracks on maps produced by local historians.

76. Mr. John Holborn was a member of the 01 January 1949 search team and made a statement in 1999 to Rick Hanning from the GAFM about his visits to the site. In his statement, Mr Holborn said *'I walked to the plane wreck situated near the top of the mountain which rises from the Aberfeldie River, at the bridge.'*⁸⁶ Additionally, as the team left the site on 01 January 1949, people were *'arriving with toolboxes'* with the likely intent of salvaging items.⁸⁷ He also described trying to access the original site in 1970 via the 'plane track' and in 1999, described the Perserverance Mine area as the crash site. This statement is the only evidence from an original 01 January 1949 team member clearly linking the crash site with the Perserverance Mine area vice the Scotia Mine area.

77. Local historians describe trekking to the Scotia Mine area from the Aberfeldie bridge necessitates traversing the first spur, another creek and climbing a very steep incline which is barely suitable for people let alone a bullock.⁸⁸ No evidence of a trail is evident from the Aberfeldie bridge to the Scotia mine area.

78. Approximately 50 Australian newspaper articles, from 01 to 05 January 1949, reported the discovery of the Kittyhawk at Walhalla. An article in the *Age* (01 January 1949),⁸⁹ varied in reporting the crash site as being near the *'Scotia gold reef.'* describing a gold reef versus a gold mine. The mines in that area had not been actively used since the late 1800s and no records were found describing a *Scotia gold reef* in the Walhalla area. The Perseverance mine site (near the crash site) was also included in the relabelled Scotia Reefs Development Company lease 5454, aka New Scotia, from 23 September 1941-02 July 1946. This lease did not include the former Scotia mine.⁹⁰ The term *Scotia gold reef* could be

⁸⁶ Victorian Coroner, (1949), *Proceedings of Inquest (1596, dated 8 December 1949)*, John Holborn statement.

⁸⁷ Personal Communication, (1999). Rick Hanning, John Holborn.

⁸⁸ Personal Communication, Rudi Poletti, Greg Williams, reconnaissance activity 3 August 2020.

⁸⁹ Burnt War Plane and body found in hills. (1949, January 1). *The Age (Melbourne)* Retrieved from <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/205350180>

⁹⁰ 1941, Lease 5454 Scotia Reefs Development Co, NL (New Scotia) 23 Sep 1941- 02 Jul 1946.

describing an area that includes the Perseverance mine. No other evidence has been provided that supports another crash site near Walhalla.

79. The 1949 witness descriptions of paths from the Aberfeldie bridge (including a recollection by Mr John Holborn in 1999), the map descriptions in 1949 and 2004, and analysis of the map contours between the Aberfeldie bridge and Perseverance area, support the 1949 site being the same site that JPAC investigated in 2004. Evidence put forward of one newspaper report which described the site as being near an indistinct area (Scotia gold reef) is not sufficient to conclude the 1949 site is near the 'scotia mine'.

RAAF P-40 KITTYHAWK AIRCRAFT OR PILOTS MISSING NEAR WALHALLA

Research into RAAF Kittyhawk losses

80. The following records were reviewed for any missing RAAF Kittyhawks in Victoria. The review found no evidence of missing P-40 Kittyhawks in the Walhalla area before 1948.

- a. RAAF Aircraft Status Cards account for all RAAF Kittyhawks, noting A29-73 serial number was never used by RAAF.⁹¹ There is no evidence that an aircraft A29-73 existed and no status card has been found. The lack of documentation for A29-73 can be attributed to the fact much of the Kittyhawk documentation lagged behind the actual in early 1942. This serial number may have been skipped or a status card for A29-73 may not have been raised if the delivered aircraft was not there to transfer onto the RAAF register.
- b. RAAF P-40 Accident files and Courts of Enquiries into Kittyhawk accidents.⁹²
- c. Kittyhawk Flying Safety Accident Records for the period 1942-1946, noting there were no Kittyhawk accidents listed after 1946, show all accidents during that period occurred overseas or north of Brisbane, Queensland.⁹³
- d. Directorate of Disposal files related to RAAF Kittyhawks.⁹⁴
- e. **ADFSerials.com.** This website maintains extensive research on the histories on all RAAF Kittyhawks, and recorded no lost Kittyhawks or missing pilots in Victoria.⁹⁵
- f. **OzAtWar.com.** The website details all known military crash sites in Victoria and NSW. Analysis of the Victorian and NSW military losses do not show any unaccounted P-40 Kittyhawk losses in the Walhalla area.⁹⁶

⁹¹ NAA references are detailed at annex B

⁹² NAA references are detailed at annex C and D

⁹³ A summary of the P-40 aircraft involved in accidents is at Annex E

⁹⁴ NAA, A705, 9/86/157, 164922, Disposal of Kittyhawk aircraft and Allison engines

⁹⁵ <https://www.ADFSerials.com>

⁹⁶ <https://www.ozatwar.com/crashvic.htm>

- g. **Pacific Wrecks.com.** The website lists missing and crashed RAAF P-40 Kittyhawks. There are no RAAF Kittyhawks listed missing in Australia. US serial number 41-5526 is listed as missing in Walhalla.⁹⁷
- h. **Bureau of Aircraft Accident Archives.** No missing RAAF Kittyhawks are listed in these records.⁹⁸
- i. **RAAF Searches Post War.** Various search activities were coordinated by DPS Casualty Section after WWII. Department of Air has the collated details of all crashed and missing aircraft and is regarded as one of the definitive documents on RAAF aircraft losses in Australia.⁹⁹ That document does not record any RAAF Kittyhawks missing near Walhalla or elsewhere in southern Australia during or after WWII.

Missing RAAF Personnel

81. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) lists all missing service personnel from WWII. This information was collated by Allied countries in the years after WWII following searches for missing aircraft and personnel. Missing personnel from WWII are normally recorded on memorials in the area of operations where they went missing. Basic information regarding personnel and their immediate Next of Kin (NoK) is recorded on the CWGC website.

82. HUWC maintains a master register of all missing WWII personnel using CWGC data. The relevant Australian memorials listing personnel lost in Australia are in Sydney and Adelaide River. There are no missing WWII RAAF pilots or reports of missing pilots in the Walhalla area until 1949. The research and decisions of CWGC and DPS are the most authoritative documents in relation to missing RAAF pilots.

83. The nature of military aviation has meant the RAAF has lost personnel during training, operations, and on peacetime activities. While information regarding RAAF air crashes may not have been published during WWII, the wartime Minister of Air, Mr. Frank Drakeford, re-iterated in 1946 that the details of all operational and non-operational RAAF air crashes could be published following notification to NoK.¹⁰⁰ As such, once NoK were informed, details of air crashes were on the public record. Further, as no family members or RAAF personnel have come forward since WWII, seeking details in relation to the fate of missing RAAF personnel, speculation an air crash has been covered up, cannot be sustained.

CONCLUSION

84. The discovery of the crash site in 1948 and subsequent RAAF decisions were appropriate and correct at the time. Significant research has validated the 1949 DPS Casualty Section decision that there are no missing RAAF pilots or Kittyhawk aircraft in the Walhalla area; nor is there evidence of two crash sites at Walhalla. There is evidence pointing to the crash having occurred in 1942 or soon after. No other evidence has been offered regarding

⁹⁷ <https://www.pacificwrecks.com>

⁹⁸ <https://www.baaa-acro.com/>

⁹⁹ Department of Air, (1961). Details of Crashed or Missing Aircraft in Australia.

¹⁰⁰ Minister replies to Press Statement on Air Force Crashes, (1946, January 29), The Kyogle Examiner. Retrieved from <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/rendition/nla.news-article234961065>.

missing RAAF Kittyhawks or pilots. Subsequent administrative issues with RAAF statements, Kittyhawk documentation or actions since 1949 have not altered the facts in this case.

85. There is substantial evidence showing GEN MacArthur's safe arrival in Australia on 17 March 1942 set a chain of events in motion. CAPT McLaughlin's special mission was to deliver GEN Brett's letter to Prime Minister Curtin on 17 March 1942, which he completed at approximately 1915 hours that day. CAPT McLaughlin was a suitable choice for this mission, given his experience on the Kittyhawk. The urgency of the mission and the ammunition finding meant the aircraft he was assigned was probably being readied for transfer to the RAAF at No 4 Aircraft Depot at Laverton. The details of CAPT McLaughlin's aircraft for his return flight were finalised in the 2004 JPAC investigation. It is now more likely CAPT McLaughlin left Canberra to fly back to Laverton on 18 or 19 March 1942 and went missing on that flight.

86. The RAAF believes the official records and evidence supports the US conclusion CAPT J.P. McLaughlin O396289, crashed in USAAC P-40E Kittyhawk 41-5526 near Walhalla in March 1942. CAPT McLaughlin can now take his place as having participated in a significant event in Australia's history when Australia first looked to the United States to help secure Australia's defence.

87. All matters regarding the identification of a US aircraft, US pilot, and interment of CAPT McLaughlin in the Arlington National Cemetery remain matters for the US authorities.



G. KELLY
WGCDR
DD-HUWC

June 2021



G. WILLIAMS
WGCDR
HUWC

June 2021

Annexes:

- A. US and RAAF P-40E Kittyhawk serial numbers, and US engine serial numbers
- B. NAA Listing: RAAF Aircraft Status Cards (NAA A10297 Block 212-225).
- C. NAA Listing: RAAF P-40 Accident files (NAA A9845 Blocks 3-10, 155-172).
- D. NAA Listing: RAAF A29 Kittyhawk Courts of Enquiry into accident files (NAA Record summary)
- E. Defence Flying Safety Bureau – RAAF P-40 Kittyhawk events

Bibliography

Primary source documents¹⁰¹

- AA: FDR-FDRPSF, Diplomatic correspondence 16618300, Australia, 1939-August 1942. Retrieved from <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/16618300>
- Australian War Memorial (1942) Special Collection I, Defence Committee Records, Bundle 5 , Future Policy and Strategy for the conduct of the war in the Pacific. 17 March 1942.
- AWM 247, 2/2, 976868, Commonwealth Government, Official History 1939-45 War Nancy Penman extracts Advisory War Council minutes and agenda 5 January 1942 to 28 May 1942.
- Curtiss Airplane. IARC 41-5526 (1941). Curtiss Airplane Billing Microfilm, ACC.2006-0043.
- Department of Air, (1961). Details of Crashed or Missing Aircraft in Australia. DFAT Historical Records, Volume 5 415, (Johcu 27 of 17 March 1942). Australia to Prime Minister Churchill
- Hobbins, P.; Roberts Pedersen, E.; Sun, C.; Signorelli, L.. Retrieved from <https://ses.library.usyd.edu.au/handle/2123/20010>, <http://dx.doi.org/10.25910/5c6b21fa2ae97>
- History of the Air Force (n.d.) Retrieved from <https://www.airforce.gov.au/about-us/history>
- Headquarters 5th Air Force Historical Record (1942). Bataan Roster of 24th Pursuit Squadron: 7 March 1942.
- Holborn, J., (23 February 1999), Statement made to Rick Hanning, Sale Victoria.
- Huntingdon, R. T. (1978). *Small Caliber Ammunition Identification Guide*, Volume 1, p115. Defense Intelligence Agency. Retrieved from <https://apps.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a165896.pdf>
- International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) Annex 13 Accident Investigation. Retrieved from https://www.emsa.europa.eu/retro/Docs/marine_casualties/annex_13.pdf
- Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) CIL2004 021 Identification of CAPT Joseph Potter McLaughlin U.S. Army
- Lease 5454 Scotia Reefs Development Co, NL (New Scotia) 23 Sep 1941- 02 Jul 1946.
- Long, Gavin, MacArthur as a military Commander, Sydney, Angus and Robertson 1696, p81
- McLaughlin, Joseph P. 0-396289 Captain; Individual Deceased Personnel File; Record Group 92; Washington National Records Center, Suitland, MD.
- Missing Air Crew Report 16535; The Missing Air Crew Reports of the US Army Air Forces, 1942-1947; (National Archives Microfilm Publication M1380); Records of the Quartermaster General, Record Group 92; National Archives, Washington, DC.

¹⁰¹ A primary source provides direct or firsthand evidence about an event, object, person, or work of art. Primary sources include historical and legal documents, eyewitness accounts, results of experiments, statistical data, pieces of creative writing, audio and video recordings, speeches, and art objects. Interviews, surveys, fieldwork, and Internet communications via email, blogs, lists, and newsgroups are also primary sources. <https://libguides.ithaca.edu/research101/primary>

NAA A9845, 6950628, Kittyhawk - Missing U.S Aircraft Contents range 1942 – 1945.
 NAA: Royal Australian Air Force; A705, 166/1/182 (3374280), *RAAF Headquarters – DPS (Directorate of Personnel Services) Casualty Section – Research for Missing RAAF Personnel – Southern Area – Investigations and reports*
 NAA: A10297, Block 108, Aircraft Status Cards – Wirraway A20-500 to A20-757.
 NAA: B5459, 22, Digest of decisions and announcements and important speeches by the Prime Minister (the HON John Curtin).
 NAA: B5459, 22, General Douglas MacArthur, pp-14-15, 18 March 1942.
 NAA, A705, 9/86/157, barcode 164922, Disposal of Kittyhawk aircraft and Allison engines
 QMC Form 1044b; File "293 Unknown, Schofield Maus #2, Isolated Burial (Walhalla IB)," housed in file "Australia, MACR 16535," bar code 06238 at JPAC.
 QMGMT 293, "Transmittal of Board of Proceeding (2382), 23 September 1949, located in file "293 Unknown, Schofield Maus #2, Isolated Burial (Walhalla IB)," housed in file "Australia, MACR 16535," bar code 06238 at JPAC.
 QMGMS 293, " Additional information" Letter, 28 January 1949; QMC Form 351, Telegram, 14 February 1949. -
 Royal Australian Air Force, (2020). Imagery Analysis Aircraft Crash Walhalla Graphics Report.
 Royal Australian Air Force, (2020). Imagery Analysis Aircraft Crash Walhalla Text Report.
 The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower. The War Years, ed. by Chandler, A.D., Jr. (Baltimore and London, 1970), Vol I, p. 127, citing OPD Exec 10, item 7a.
 Retrieved from <https://www.ozatwar.com/genmarshall.htm>
 United States. War Dept. (1940). War Department Technical Manual, Dictionary of United States Army terms, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Govt. Print. Off: p. 87.
 Victorian Coroner, (1949), *Proceedings of Inquest* (1596, dated 8 December 1949)
 Victoria Heritage H8122-0067. accessed
<https://vhd.heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/places/6582/download-report>
 Walhalla Cartographic Material Australian Aerial Photographs J55 6 851 Bib ID 4328670.

Secondary Source Documents¹⁰²

- 40 WWII Wrecks in Victorian Bush, (1979, 1 October). *RAAF News*, p4. Retrieved from <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/rendition/nla.news-article259006480.3.html>
- About 600 planes are missing, The Sydney Morning Herald, (1949, March 2). Retrieved from <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/245108782>
- Aircraft Wreckage found, (25 July 1979). The Canberra Times. Retrieved from <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/110570074>
- Army Navy Journal (21 March 1942). Gen. MacArthur given Command in SW Pacific. VOL LXXXIX no 29, Washington D.C.
- American Forces now in Australia, (1942, March 18). Melbourne Herald. Retrieved from <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/245108782>
- Australia asked for GEN MacArthur "Leadership on Inspiration", (1942, March 19). The Argus, p3. Retrieved from <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/8238141>
- Burnt War Plane and body found in hills. (1949, January 1). The Age (Melbourne) Retrieved from <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/205350180>
- Dramatic Scene at Canberra, (1942, March 19). The Dungog Chronicle and Gloucester Advertiser, retrieved from <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/141295019>
- Gardner, R. (1979, July 19). Search for plane after gun found on mount, The Sun. <https://www.ADFserials.com>
- <https://www.ozatwar.com/crashvic.htm>
- <https://www.pacificwrecks.com>
- <https://www.baaa-acro.com/>
- Identity of Crashed US pilot awaited, (1949, February 12), The Argus. Retrieved from <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/22712020>
- Joe Baugher.com US serial number lists retrieved from http://www.joebaugher.com/usaf_serials/1941_5.html
- MacArthur's nomination – Request to Mr. Curtin, (1942, March 19). The Age (Melbourne), p3. Retrieved from <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/205287078/19384561#>
- MacArthur to lead in Anzac Area, (1942, March 19). The Canberra Times. p1. Morris, J.R. (1942, June 6). To Tokyo, Dammit! Colliers Weekly pp 12-13, Springfield, Ohio (1939-1957). Retrieved <https://www.unz.com/print/Colliers-1942jun06-00012>.
- No Hush on RAAF Crashes, says Minister, (1945, October 20), The Herald (Melbourne). Retrieved from <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/2595564b>
- Primary and Secondary sources (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://libguides.ithaca.edu/research101/primary>
- Search for Plane, (1942, May 15), Alexandra and Yea Standard and Yarck, Gobur, Thornton and Acheron Express, pp 2-3. Retrieved from <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article64702964>
- Woman's Expert War Job, (1949, February 17), The Argus. Retrieved from <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/22707676>

¹⁰² Secondary sources describe, discuss, interpret, comment upon, analyse, evaluate, summarize, and process primary sources. Secondary source materials can be articles in newspapers or popular magazines, book or movie reviews, or articles found in scholarly journals that discuss or evaluate someone else's original research. <https://libguides.ithaca.edu/research101/primary>

P-40E Kittyhawks: USAAF Serial, RAAF Serial, Engine Serial, Reference

41-5463 A29-31 41-36094 R.A.A.F Form E/E.88 (June 1938) for A29-31
41-5494 A29-32 41-36174 R.A.A.F Form E/E.88 (June 1938) for A29-32
41-5518 A29-33 41-36062 R.A.A.F Form E/E.88 (June 1938) for A29-33
41-5520 A29-34 41-36227 R.A.A.F Form E/E.88 (June 1938) for A29-34
41-5523 A29-35 41-36218 R.A.A.F Form E/E.88 (June 1938) for A29-35
41-5525 A29-36 41-36237 R.A.A.F Form E/E.88 (June 1938) for A29-36
41-5530 A29-37 41-36259 R.A.A.F Form E/E.88 (June 1938) for A29-37
41-5533 A29-39 41-36234 R.A.A.F Form E/E.88 (June 1938) for A29-39
41-5536 A29-40 41-36047 R.A.A.F Form E/E.88 (June 1938) for A29-40
41-5546 A29-42 41-36057 R.A.A.F Form E/E.88 (June 1938) for A29-42
41-5549 A29-43 41-36054 R.A.A.F Form E/E.88 (June 1938) for A29-43
41-5597 A29-44 41-35980 R.A.A.F Form E/E.88 (June 1938) for A29-44
41-5598 A29-156 41-36295 R.A.A.F Form E/E.88 (June 1938) for A29-156
41-5621 N/A 41-36395 Served with 8th FS/49FG – reporting April 1942
41-5638 N/A 41-36311 Served with HQ Sqn/49FG – reporting April 1942

Item list

Select	Series no.	Control symbol	Item title	Date range	Digitised item	Item barcode	Format
☐	A10297	BLOCK 212	Aircraft status cards - Kittyhawk A29-1 to A29-99 [3 cm] Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1942 - 1953		3033013	
☐	A10297	BLOCK 213	Aircraft Status cards - Kittyhawk A29-100 to A29-199 - Also Instructional No.1 Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1942 - 1949		3045952	
☐	A10297	BLOCK 214	Aircraft Status cards - Kittyhawk A29-200 to A29-205 Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1943 - circa1988		3045953	
☐	A10297	BLOCK 215	Aircraft Status cards - Kittyhawk A29-300 to A29-389 Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1943 - 1948		3045954	
☐	A10297	BLOCK 216	Aircraft Status cards - Kittyhawk A29-400 to A29-499 Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1943 - 1944		3045955	
☐	A10297	BLOCK 217	Aircraft Status cards - Kittyhawk A29-500 to A29-587 Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1943 - 1945		3045956	
☐	A10297	BLOCK 218	Aircraft Status cards - Kittyhawk A29-600 to A29-699 Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1943 - 1944		3045957	
☐	A10297	BLOCK 219	Aircraft Status cards - Kittyhawk A29-700 to A29-704 Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1944 - 1948		3045958	
☐	A10297	BLOCK 220	Aircraft Status cards - Kittyhawk A29-800 to A29-811, A29-819 to A29-828 Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1944 - 1946		3045959	
☐	A10297	BLOCK 221	Aircraft Status cards - Kittyhawk A29-900 to A29-928 Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1944 - 1948		3045960	
☐	A10297	BLOCK 223	Aircraft Status cards - Kittyhawk A29-1100 to A29-1199 Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1944 - 1946		3045962	
☐	A10297	BLOCK 222	Aircraft Status cards - Kittyhawk A29-1000 to A29-1079 Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1944 - 1946		3045961	
☐	A10297	BLOCK 224	Aircraft Status cards - Kittyhawk A29-1200 to A29-1221 Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1945 - 1946		3045963	
☐	A10297	BLOCK 225	Aircraft Status cards - Kittyhawk C3-500 to C3-556 Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1943 - 1945		3045964	

Item list

Select	Series no.	Control symbol	Item title	Date range	Digitised item	Item barcode	Format
☐	A9845	3	Kittyhawk A29 [AccidentsPart 1] {Note: for table of accidents see item note} Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1939 - 1945		7127141	
☐	A9845	4	Kittyhawk A29 [Accidents Part 2] {Note: for table of accidents see item note} Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1939 - 1945		7127142	
☐	A9845	5	Kittyhawk A29 [Accidents Part 3] {Note: for table of accidents see item note} Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1942 - 1945		7127143	
☐	A9845	6	Kittyhawk A29 [Accidents Part 4] {Note: for table of accidents see item note} Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1942 - 1945		7127144	
☐	A9845	8	Kittyhawk A29 [Accidents Part 6] {Note: for table of accidents see item note} Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1943 - 1945		7127465	
☐	A9845	7	Kittyhawk A29 [Accidents Part 5] {Note: for table of accidents see item note} Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1942 - 1945		7127500	
☐	A9845	9	Kittyhawk A29 [Accidents Part 7] {Note: for table of accidents see item note} Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1943 - 1945		7127501	
☐	A9845	10	Kittyhawk A29 [Accidents Part 8] {Note: for table of accidents see item note} Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1943 - 1945		7127502	
☐	A9845	155	Kittyhawk A29 [Accidents Part 9] {Note: for table of accidents see item note} Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1943 - 1945		7127503	
☐	A9845	156	Kittyhawk A29 [Accidents Part 10] {Note: for table of accidents see item note} Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1943 - 1945		7127504	
☐	A9845	157	Kittyhawk A29 [Accidents Part 11] {Note: for table of accidents see item note} Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1943 - 1945		7127505	
☐	A9845	158	Kittyhawk A29 [Accidents Part 12] {Note: for table of accidents see item note} Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1943 - 1945		7127506	
☐	A9845	161	Kittyhawk A29 [Accidents Part 15] {Note: for table of accidents see item note} Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1944 - 1945		7127509	
☐	A9845	160	Kittyhawk A29 [Accidents Part 14] {Note: for table of accidents see item note} Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1943 - 1945		7127508	

☐	A9845	159	Kittyhawk A29 [Accidents Part 13] {Note: for table of accidents see item note} Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1943 - 1945		7127507	
☐	A9845	162	Kittyhawk A29 [Accidents Part 16] {Note: for table of accidents see item note} Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1944 - 1945		7127510	
☐	A9845	163	Kittyhawk A29 [Accidents Part 17] {Note: for table of accidents see item note} Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1944 - 1945		7127511	
☐	A9845	165	Kittyhawk A29 [Accidents Part 19] {Note: for table of accidents see item note} Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1944 - 1945		7127512	
☐	A9845	166	Kittyhawk A29 [Accidents Part 20] {Note: for table of accidents see item note} Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1944 - 1945		7127513	
☐	A9845	164	Kittyhawk A29 [Accidents Part 18] {Note: for table of accidents see item note} Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1944 - 1945		7127514	
☐	A9845	167	Kittyhawk A29 [Accidents Part 21] {Note: for table of accidents see item note} Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1944 - 1945		7127515	
☐	A9845	168	Kittyhawk A29 [Accidents Part 22] {Note: for table of accidents see item note} Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1944 - 1945		7127516	
☐	A9845	25	Kittyhawk A29 [Collisions between aircraft] {Note: for table of accidents see item note} Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1943 - 1945		7127561	
☐	A9845	172	Kittyhawk A29 [Accidents Part 26] {Note: for table of accidents see item note} Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1945 - 1945		7127520	
☐	A9845	171	Kittyhawk A29 [Accidents Part 25] {Note: for table of accidents see item note} Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1945 - 1946		7127519	
☐	A9845	170	Kittyhawk A29 [Accidents Part 24] {Note: for table of accidents see item note} Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1945 - 1945		7127518	
☐	A9845	169	Kittyhawk A29 [Accidents Part 23] {Note: for table of accidents see item note} Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1944 - 1945		7127517	

Item list

Select	Series no.	Control symbol	Item title	Date range	Digitised item	Item barcode	Format
☒	A705	32/24/1057	Kittyhawk A29-915 - Court of Inquiry re Accident to at Townsville 22.9.45 Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1945 - 1945		276928	
☒	A705	32/24/1046	Kittyhawks A29-900, A29-803, A29-810, A29-1001, A29-1014, Beaufighters A8-56, A8-149, A8-107, A8-141, A8-146, A8-167 - Court of Inquiry re Accident at Morotai on 23 April 1945 Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1945 - 1945		278154	
☒	A705	32/22/1055	Beaufort A9-660 - Kittyhawk A29-649 - Court of Inquiry re accident, place unknown, on 28 January 1945 (en route Port Moresby to Lae) Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1945 - 1946		682607	
☒	A705	32/24/1054	Kittyhawk A29-190 - Court of Inquiry re accident at Merbein, 27 August 1945 Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1945 - 1945		692614	
☒	A705	32/24/1055	Kittyhawk A29-349 - Court of Inquiry re accident at Parkes on 21 August 1945 Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1945 - 1946		692615	
☒	A705	32/24/1052	Kittyhawk A29-118 - Court of Inquiry re accident at Merinee, 25 July 1945 Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1945 - 1945		692616	
☒	A705	32/24/1047	Kittyhawk A29-148 - Court of Inquiry re accident at Mildura, 25 May 1945 Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1945 - 1945		692618	
☒	A705	32/24/1050	Kittyhawk A29-307 - Court of Inquiry re accident at Richmond on 24 June 1945 Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1945 - 1945		692619	
☒	A705	32/24/1039	Kittyhawk A29-423 - Court of inquiry re accident at Mildura on 1 April 1945 Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1945 - 1945		692620	
☒	A705	32/24/1041	Kittyhawk A29-146 - Court of Inquiry re accident at Wentworth on 30 March 1945 Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1945 - 1945		692621	
☒	A705	32/24/1042	Kittyhawks A29-1220 and A29-1185 - Court of Inquiry re accident at Ross River Strip on 6 April 1945 Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1945 - 1945		692622	
☒	A705	32/24/1034	Kittyhawk A29-199 - Court of Inquiry - Commanding Officer's report re accident at No 20TU on 14 February 1945 Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1945 - 1945		692623	
☒	A705	32/24/1035	Kittyhawk A29-167 and A29-186 - Court of Inquiry re accident near Mildura on 17 February 1945 Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1945 - 1945		692624	
☒	A705	32/24/1036	Kittyhawks A29-342 and A29-335 - Court of Inquiry re accident at Bohle River on 9 March 1945 Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1945 - 1945		692625	

☒	A705	32/24/451	Kittyhawks A29-621 and A29-616 - Court of inquiry re accident near Merauke on 30 April 1944 Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1944 - 1945		693414	
☒	A705	32/24/1012	Kittyhawk A29-153 - Court of Inquiry - Commanding Officer's report re accident at No2 OTU Mildura on 5 October 1944 Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1944 - 1945		693423	
☒	A705	32/24/1023	Kittyhawk A29-115 - Court of Inquiry re accident at High Dive Bombing Range, Darwin [actually Wentworth NSW] on 12 November 1944 Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1944 - 1944		693433	
☒	A705	32/24/1032	Kittyhawk A29-85 - Court of Inquiry re accident at No 2 OTU [Mildura] on 8 February 1945 Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1945 - 1945		693435	
☒	A705	32/24/122	Kittyhawk A29-156 Court of Inquiry re accident at Cairns on 26.11.1942 Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1942 - 1943		698002	
☒	A705	32/24/148	Kittyhawk A29-150 - Court of Inquiry re accident on 28.3.43 (Late Squadron Leader K W Truscott) Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1943 - 1943		698003	
☒	A705	32/24/225	Kittyhawk A29-1 - Court of Inquiry re accident on 4.8.1943 - Two and one half miles south of Mildura Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1943 - 1943		698004	
☒	A705	32/24/279	Kittyhawk A29-511 - Court of Inquiry re accident to on Carmilla on 16.10.43 Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1943 - 1944		698005	
☒	A705	32/24/320	Kittyhawk A29-80 - Court of Inquiry re accident to on 26.11.43 near Mildura Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1944 - 1944		698006	
☒	A705	32/24/338	Kittyhawk A29-90 - Court of Inquiry re accident to on 4.1.1944 near Mildura Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1944 - 1944		698007	
☒	A705	32/24/1029	Kittyhawk aircraft A29-71 - Court of Inquiry - Police report, re accident at Lake Reeves on 16 January 1945 Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1945 - 1945		778361	
☒	A11083	906/69/P1	North Eastern Area Headquarters - Court of Inquiry - Accident Kittyhawk A29-70 - Number 76 Squadron [0.5cm] Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1942 - 1942		3080345	
☒	A11083	906/70/P1	North Eastern Area Headquarters - Court of Inquiry - Kittyhawk A29-42 - Number 76 Squadron [0.5cm] Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1942 - 1943		3080350	
☒	A11083	906/72/P1	North Eastern Area Headquarters - Court of Inquiry - Accident Kittyhawk A29-37 - Number 76 Squadron Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1942 - 1942		3080359	
☒	A11083	906/742/P1	North Eastern Area Headquarters - Court of Inquiry - Accident involving aircrafts [Kittyhawks] A29-1185 and A29-1220 - Number 84 Squadron Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1945 - 1945		3080433	
☒	A11083	906/749/P1	North Eastern Area Headquarters - Court of Inquiry - Aircraft accident - Kittyhawk A29-915 - 22/9/1945 - Number 2 AD [Aircraft Depot] Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1945 - 1945		3080440	
	A705	32/24/1058	Kittyhawk A29-1006 - Court of Inquiry re accident at Zamboanga on	1945		3317521	

☒			15.11.1945 [2cm] Access status: Open Location: Canberra	- 1951			
☒	A705	32/24/1060	Kittyhawks A29-537 and A29-1210 - Court of Inquiry re accident to at Tadi on 15.11.1945 - Madigan, V (Flying Officer) (killed) [and Flying Officer D H Harrison - injured] [0.25cm] Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1945 - 1946		3317526	
☒	A705	32/24/225	Kittyhawk A29-1 - Court of Inquiry re accident on 4.8.1943 - Two and one half miles south of Mildura CATEGORY: photograph FORMAT: photographic print TYPE: photographic paper STATUS: preservation material Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1943 - 1943		31707571	
☒	A705	32/24/225	Kittyhawk A29-1 - Court of Inquiry re accident on 4.8.1943 - Two and one half miles south of Mildura CATEGORY: photograph FORMAT: photographic print TYPE: photographic paper STATUS: preservation material Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1943 - 1943		31707572	
☒	A705	32/24/320	Kittyhawk A29-80 - Court of Inquiry re accident to on 26.11.43 near Mildura [Map] Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1944 - 1944		31707721	
☒	A705	32/24/320	Kittyhawk A29-80 - Court of Inquiry re accident to on 26.11.43 near Mildura [Map detail] Access status: Open Location: Canberra	1944 - 1944		31707722	

DEFENCE FLYING SAFETY BUREAU – RAAF P-40 KITTYHAWK EVENTS

The Defence Flight Safety Bureau has carried out an extensive hard copy and digital file search of all A29 Curtiss Kittyhawk aircraft incidents during the period of time 1939-1946 (no events after 1946). There is no evidence of any unaccounted for aircraft or airmen. DFSB does not have any outstanding investigations for A29 Curtiss Kittyhawk aircraft.



MR Justin Galbraith

Aviation Safety Investigation - Defence Flight Safety
Bureau (DFSB)

Defence Aviation Safety Authority

(02) 6128 7401 | F4-1-069 | Fairbairn Defence
Precinct, FAIRBAIRN, ACT, 2610

1942

Curtiss Kittyhawk	A29-xxx	04 Feb, Cat 5, Crashed on side of Hill, Numimbah (near Beaudesert) Valley, QLD
Curtiss Kittyhawk	A29-5	28 Mar, Cat 5, One death, Veimari Plantation, NW Port Moresby, NG
Curtiss Kittyhawk	A29-7	17 Apr, Cat 5, One death, Aircraft Crashes and Burned, Near Bulwa NG
Curtiss Kittyhawk	A29-69	27 Apr, Cat 5 Crashed on Beach, Near Murdoch point (50nm NE CookTown), QLD
Curtiss Kittyhawk	A29-108	26 Aug, Cat 5, One death, Arada River, Milne Bay area NG
Curtiss Kittyhawk P40E	A29-59	13 Nov, Cat 5 Crashed, Mouth Of Daly River QLD
Curtiss Kittyhawk P40E	A29-112	22 Dec, Cat 5, Crashes, Lee point area, Darwin, NT

1943

Curtiss Kittyhawk	A29-169	14 Apr, Cat 5 One death, Crashed in Sea, 20nm N Gurney (??) Strip, Milne Bay, NG
Curtiss Kittyhawk P40E	A29-327	08 Sep, Cat 5 Failed to arrive horn island from Merauke Horn Island Area QLD
Curtiss Kittyhawk P40E	A29-511	16 Oct, Cat 5 One death. Dived into sea, sank 2nm offshore, during ferry flight Bundaberg-Townsville

1944

Curtiss Kittyhawk P-40E	A29-523	27 Jan, Cat 5 One death, Midair collison with A29-530 Jomba Is, 2nm S Madang, NG
Curtiss Kittyhawk P-40E	A29-530	27 Jan, Cat 5 One death, Midair collison with A29-523 Jomba Is, 2nm S Madang, NG
Curtiss Kittyhawk P-40E	A29-537	02 Mar, Cat 5 One death, Drifted out of formation, disappeared in bad weather during transit Horn Island-Gove Torres Straight/Gulf of Carpentaria area QLD.
Curtiss Kittyhawk P-40E	A29-479	23 Mar, Cat 5 One death, disappeared after entering cloud during transit Gove-Horn Island. Torres Straight
Curtiss Kittyhawk P-40E	A29-xxx	24 Mar, Cat 5 One death, Hit palms trees no more detail near Manus Island
Curtiss Kittyhawk P-40E	A29-150	28Mar, Cat 5 Crashed in sea. Entrance Bay of Rest, Exmouth Gulf, WA
Curtiss Kittyhawk P-40E	A29-536	21 May, Cat 5 One death, Maffin, NG
Curtiss Kittyhawk P-40E	A29-xxx	18 Oct, Cat 5 One death, Shot down by ground fire crashed in sea, Near Mandkwan, Irian Jaya

1945

Curtiss Kittyhawk P-40E	A29-350	08 Jan, Cat 5 One death, Crashed in Sea Broc Bay Noemfoor Is
Curtiss Kittyhawk P-40E	A29-71	16 Jan, Cat 5 Crashed Lake Reeve, Vic
Curtiss Kittyhawk P-40E	A29-649	28 Jan, Cat 5 One death, Disappeared en route Pt Moresby to Lae Via Kokoda Gap in company with A9-660 Bristol Beaufigther
Curtiss Kittyhawk P-40E	A29-xxx	16 Mar, Cat 5 Crashed on Mud Flat Between Alligator and Crocodile Creeks near Townsville QLD
Curtiss Kittyhawk P-40E	A29-xxx	11-13 Apr, Cat 5 Extensively damaged in taxing accident
Curtiss Kittyhawk P-40E	A29-818	21 Apr, Cat 5 Fuel exhaustion during convoy escort, pilot bailed out and rescued 2 days later. Banda Sea near Ceram
Curtiss Kittyhawk P-40E	A29-900	23Apr, Cat 5 One death, Bomb dropped and exploded under aircraft during takeoff, Morotai Halmahera
Curtiss Kittyhawk P-40E	A29-808	27Apr, Cat 5 One death, Engine failure during convey escort. Pilot bailed out low level chute did not open. Near Morotai Halmahera
Curtiss Kittyhawk P-40E	A29-xxx	Apr, Cat 5 One death, Midair Ross River, QLD
Curtiss Kittyhawk P-40E	A29-xxx	Apr, Cat 5 One death, Midair Ross River, QLD

Curtiss Kittyhawk P-40E	A29-1109	13 Jul, Cat 5 One death, Tengeroh District, Sarawak Borneo
Curtiss Kittyhawk P-40E	A29-827	14 Jul, Cat 5 One death, Crashed in Flames 3 nm NW Ranau Airstrip Borneo
Curtiss Kittyhawk P-40E	A29-680	30 Jul, Cat 5 2,46N, 112.03 E, SSW Mukah Borneo
Curtiss Kittyhawk P-40E	A29-1161	09 Aug, Cat 5 One death, Crashed into oil pumping station. Anggana-Mahakan Delta, Samarinda area Borneo
Curtiss Kittyhawk P-40E	A29-915	23 Sep, Cat 5 Crashed Sorrell Hills, QLD
Curtiss Kittyhawk P-40E	A29-605	Oct, Cat 5 Forced landing written off. Near Merauke