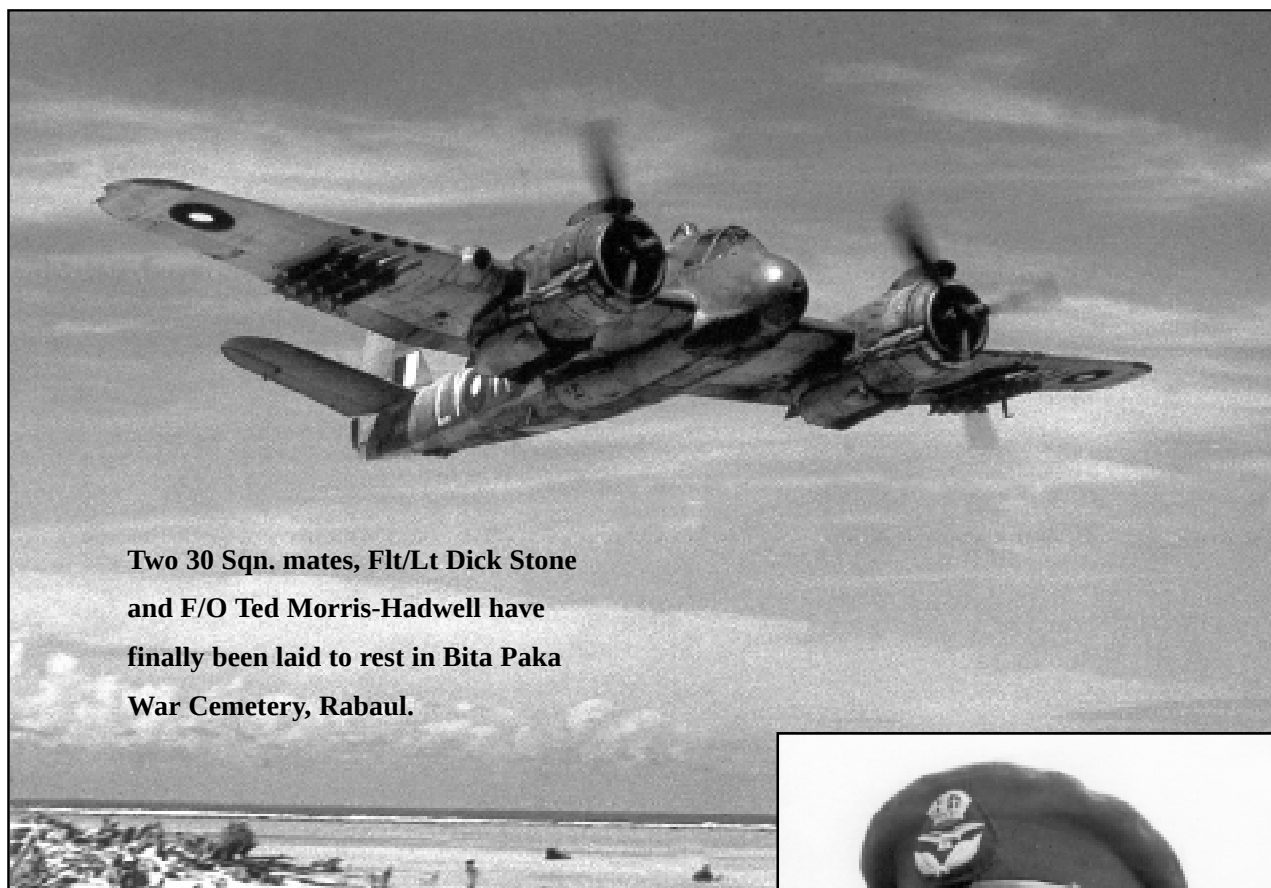


The

WHISPERER

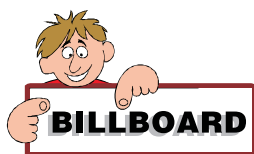
**The Newsletter of the Beaufighter and
Boston Association of Queensland**

DECEMBER 2000



Two 30 Sqn. mates, Flt/Lt Dick Stone
and F/O Ted Morris-Hadwell have
finally been laid to rest in Bitu Paka
War Cemetery, Rabaul.





RAAF ANNUAL MEMORIAL MASS

The mass was celebrated on Sunday 5th November 2000, at the St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church at St Lucia. This church has a large sandstone RAAF Memorial on the eastern side, adjacent to the main entrance.

President Ralph, Stan Curran, and Hon Sec attended the mass. This is an important Service for ex-members of the RAAF, as it is held at the start of Air Force Week each year. The Celebrant was Wing Commander Paul Goodland, a Chaplain serving at RAAF Base Amberley.

Once again the church was full, and the service was moving. The church choir is really great, especially with a trumpeter in their ranks. Morning tea and very nice sandwiches gave all who attended the opportunity to get together and have a chat. I recommend that all members make an effort to attend this service next October.

WARPLANES MUSEUM CABOOLTURE

President Ralph, Stan Curran and Hon. Sec. were invited to the Museum to be given a flight in one of the restored Wirraways. On 14th November 2000. It was quite an experience for each of us, The Pilot was Paul Lobston, who is one of the part owners of the Wirraway, and is a retired Cathay Pacific Pilot. Paul also served in the RAAF



Maybe the years do condemn, for to get into the back seat of the aircraft was quite an effort. It also needed some assistance. It is hard for me to believe that I used to climb into this type of aircraft with no effort at all, even with a seat type parachute and dinghy attached. Stan found the going pretty tough just trying to get out of the thing, even with the aid of a step-ladder and a couple of strong bods. Ralph didn't seem to struggle so much.

Whilst there, we presented three framed paintings by John Castle, which were gladly accepted. Making it a total of six framed paintings together with the two models from us are now on display, and in a safe and accessible place for future generations to see.

22 SQUADRON MEMBERS SIGN A BEAUFIGHTER PAINTING

On Saturday 4th November 2000 six 22 Squadron members of the Association signed a painting of 22 Squadron Beaufighter, A8-61 by artist Brian Wood of Cleveland Brisbane, who together with 22 Squadron pilot Eddie Norton also signed the painting. This is a very good painting of a Beaufighter low flying over a New Guinea landscape. The members also signed some 100 prints of this painting which are now on sale at The Military Workshop.

This event was arranged by the proprietor of the Military Workshop of 489 Creek Road Mt Gravatt 4122,

phone number 07 3349 636

e-mail <brett@milwkshop.bu.aust.com>.

The prints are 700X435 MM in size. The painting, has been named **Ordinary Men, Extraordinary Times**. Prints are available to members at \$88 each. You must advise Mr Williams that you are a member of the Beaufighter and Boston Association of Queensland.

When Brett Williams, the proprietor of the Military Works first approached me to arrange as many members of 22 Squadron as possible to sign these prints, he promised to let me have a print to be raffled for Association funds. This seemed a pretty poor offer, considering the value our members signatures would put on the prints. A meeting was arranged with him to discuss the matter further. The result of this meeting between MrWilliams, President Ralph, and Hon Sec. resulted in the offer being raised to one signed print free to each signatory one print to the Association for a raffle, and a cash donation of \$600 to our funds. This has all been satisfactorily completed. The members who signed were: Ralph Ind, Bill O'Connor, Jack Chamberlain, Ken Creedy, Ron Hall, and Ron Collins. The day was made very pleasant by a sausage sizzle and drinks, all prepared by Mrs Brett Williams.

Peter White



Stan Curran, Peter White and Ralph Ind presenting the John Castle paintings to Warplanes Museum, Caboolture's President.

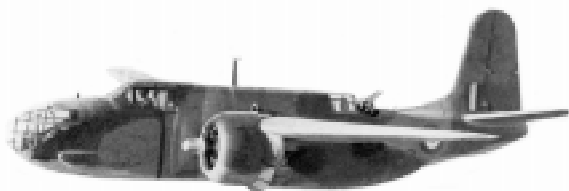


PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Only approximately 5 weeks to Christmas - where has the year gone? The old saying "stop the world I want to get off" has never been more appropriate to me than it is right now.

On behalf of our members I wish to complement Peter on the excellence & content of the "Whisperer" which has been produced by him often under very difficult circumstances. I would also like to thank our Honorary Artist and Associate member John Castles for his extremely generous donation of 5 paintings, one depicting an F111 flying low over The Gold Coast Seaway another, his father's Lancaster and three of Spitfires (More about these later).

On 16th November we visited RAAF Base Amberley for the presentation of our Annual Award and the unveiling and dedication of the Memorial Wall to commemorate all those airmen/airwomen who died whilst on service at Amberley. We took the opportunity to present the F111 painting to Air Commodore Dave Dunlop for safekeeping, and we know it is in good hands. The painting was admired by all those present. At the same time Stan Curran presented the President of the Officer's Mess with three beautiful plaques he made showing the crests of 22, 30, and 31 Squadrons. Congratulations Stan on your superb workmanship.



A Merry Xmas and a Happy New
year to all members from
President Ralph and
your committee

THE AGM BARBECUE

***Make a note now: The AGM will be
held at the home of President
Ralph Ind, 13 Inga Avenue Bundall,
on 19th January 2001 at
1100 hours.***

On the 8th November Stan, Peter, and I paid a visit to Warplanes Museum at Caboolture which houses our Memorabilia, including our Beaufighter and Boston models and John Castle paintings, which the Museum is happy to display and keep in trust for us. The Museum representatives were very happy to accept the Lancaster and Spitfire paintings. Possibly to show their gratitude for our confidence in them, we were each treated to a couple of circuits in their Wirraway.. Talk about "age wearying and the years condemning" none of us presented a pretty sight getting in and out of the rear cockpit. As the plane trundled down the strip I couldn't help feeling sorry for those crews who went to their deaths in the Wirraways at Rabaul.

Some time ago we were approached by Mr Brett Williams of the Military Workshop Mt. Gravatt re signing of prints of a painting of Eddie Morton's plane M-DU in action, by 6 of our members. The signing took place on 4th November when Peter was handed a cheque for \$600 to help swell our coffers. Also a big thank you to the signatories who helped our financial position by giving of their time and effort.

As Joan is now well on the mend there is no impediment to holding our AGM at 13 Inga Avenue Bundall on the 19th January 2001 at 11:00AM and I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible on that occasion.

Regards

RALPH.

The Airman's Prayer.

When the last long flight is over
And the happy landings past
When my altimeter tells me that the crack-ups
come at last
I'll swing her nose to the ceiling
And I'll give my crate the gun
I'll open her up and let her zoom
To the airpark of the sun
And the great god of flying men will smile at me
— sort of slow
As I slow my crate in the hanger where all good
fliers go
Then I'll look upon his face
The almighty Flying Boss
Whose wingspread fills the heavens
From Orion to the Cross.

Anon.

VALE

RON WARDLAW

Ron Wardlaw passed away and a Memorial service was held in Caloundra, on the 12th October 2000. Ron battled for quite a long time with failing eyesight and cancer. It was a long hard battle, but he showed great fortitude and put on a brave face.

Ron was the Association's representative with the Caloundra Air Museum, and looked after our interests there. It was very fitting that a photo of the Association's banner was on the front page of his order of service. He was responsible for the erection of the Association's Memorial plinth in the front garden of the Museum. and he unveiled it at a very moving ceremony. Those of us who attended the unveiling and dedication of the plinth at the Museum, and there were nearly two hundred from all round the country, will always carry the memory of his eloquent and emotional unveiling of this Memorial which is, now also his.

May a gallant comrade rest in peace

JOHN FARQUHAR

I have received a phone call from son Garth, advising that his father John died some five months ago, after a long battle with ill health. John lived at 65 Longeval Street Moorooka. I offered our deepest sympathy to John and his family on his father's passing.

DICK STONE and

TED MORRIS-HADWELL

Dick Stone and Morris Hadwell were finally laid to rest at the Bita Paka War Cemetery on 15th November 2000. Both men were given a service with full Military Honours, by the RAAF.

Dick's daughter Glenda and her son together with two nephews of Ted Morris Hadwell attended the service. The Eulogy was given by member George Robertson and a wreath was laid on behalf of our Association.

Dick and Morrie were the crew of Beaufighter A19-97 taking part in a large scale combined attack against the Japanese Base established at Rabaul, on 12th October 1943. They failed to return from this mission, and it was not until some fifty seven years later, the wreck of the A19-97 was found, and positively identified. The had crashed only some 15 kilometers south of the Tobera strip on which they had made an attack. At the time of discovery of the wreck, their remains had not been located. It was not until a further detailed search was made at the request of Dick's son in law Stuart Lovell, that there remains were found, near the wrecked aircraft.

Our deepest sympathy goes to the families of Dick and Morrie, who were not only friends but good mates.

LEST WE FORGET

I DID NOT DIE

**Do not stand at my grave and weep
I am not there, I did not sleep
I am a thousand winds that blow
I am the diamond glint on snow
I am the sunlight on the ripened grain
I am the gentle Autumn rain
When you awake in the morning hush
I am the swift uplifting rush
of quiet birds in circled flight
I am the soft stars that shine at night
Do not stand at my grave and cry
I am not there. I did not die**

Anon.

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Peter White



PETER's PAGE

MOORABIN BEAUFIGHTER A8-39.

The members response to the request to write to the Minister for the Arts to refuse an export licence to the owners of Beaufighter A8-39, the Moorabin Museum Board, was great. Some thirty-one members advised that they had written. And I received six copies of letters sent to me by members. We have some talented letter writers in our ranks. Please use your talents and let me have something for the "Whisperer." I have Barbara Wick's permission to publish her response in this issue of the "Whisperer." Thank you Barbara.

Ken McDonald advised me there has been nothing positive to date, however at The AGM of The Moorabin Museum there have been changes in the make up of the board, with some of these new directors opposing the sale of the Beaufighter, There has been no decision to date, but it is hopeful.

Committee member Stan Curran contacted one of his very influential nephews Mr Ken Cowley who in turn has discussed the problem with Dick Smith. Dick stated during their discussion, "They can't do that. I'll talk to the minister." Thank you very much Stan.

PRESENTATION OF THE BEAUFIGHTER & BOSTON ASSOCIATION TROPHY

This annual event was held at RAAF base Amberley on 16th November 2000. This is still a combined function when we join with the following associations to present each association's trophies:

Beaufort Squadrons Association(Qld)
Pathfinder Force Association (Qld)
467 & 463 Squadrons Association (Qld)

The day got off to a very good start with a welcoming address by the Commander Strike Reconnaissance Group Air Commodore Dave Dunlop CSC, at morning tea in the Officer's mess. During his welcoming address, the Air Commodore said that as from January 1st 2001 civilian contractors would carry out all servicing, maintenance and modifications to the F111 aircraft. Our Annual Trophy is awarded to a non-commissioned officer, or airwoman/ airman, in the Strike Group, as there will be none of these people left after Jan 1st 2001, it will be necessary to make a decision with the Commander, as to what category he would like the trophy be awarded to.

.Each group then met their host officer. Ours this year, was Wing Commander Peter Murphy a F111 pilot with some twenty years service in the RAAF, and a most genial host he was.

We were then bussed to the tarmac area adjacent to the F111 shelters, where a static display had been prepared. The display included four aircraft which were open for inspection-F111, Caribou, Boston, and Lockheed Hudson. We were then returned to the Officers' Mess for a very nice luncheon, then followed the presentation of the trophies.

President Ralph presented our shield to Sergeant Greg Cannak, together with the personal trophy which is an inscribed pewter mug. Ralph then presented a very large, beautifully framed painting, to Air Commodore Dave Dunlop. This painting was of an F111 flying very low, under a great thunder storm just offshore from the Southport Seaway by John Castle, which he had named "Passing Thunder" This will be hung in the Officer's mess joining the three other John Castle paintings. Committee man Stan Curran then presented three shields with the crests of 22,30 and 31 Squadrons to the PMC, Wing Commander Dave Steel These beautiful shields were made by Stan, and will be mounted over the bar in the mess.

After lunch we attended the unveiling and dedication of a New Memorial wall at the Memorial Rose Garden. The service was conducted by Chaplain Wing Commander Paul Goodland, and the unveiling was carried out by the Governor of Queensland Major General Peter Arnisson AM. After the service we adjourned to the mess for afternoon tea. Where some of us had a few words with the Governor. Our group then were taken to 23 Squadron hangar to catch up with Warrant Officer Dennis Doggett. He had the Boston back in the hangar from the static display, and proudly gave us a run through on the Catalina that they have nearly finished restoring.

WHY WORRY

There are only two things in life to worry about.

You are either rich or poor

If you are rich, you have nothing to worry about

If you are poor there are still two things to worry about./

You are either well or ill.

If you are well, you've got nothing to worry about.

If you are ill you still have two things to worry about.

You are either going to get better, or you're not.

If you are going to get better, you have nothing to worry about.

If you are still not well you have two things to worry about

If you are going up you have nothing to worry about.

If you are going down, you will be so long shaking hands with

old friends, you won't have time to worry



SO WHY WORRY?

From Charlie King.

A PROUD DAUGHTER'S APPEAL TO THE MINISTER

Unit 1

Kawangun

HERVEY BAY 4655

The Hon Peter McGauran
Minister for the Arts
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Sir

It has come to my attention the request from the Moorabin Air Museum for a permit to export a Beaufighter aircraft to an overseas purchaser.

This Beaufighter is one of only two in Australia, the other being of British manufacture and in an incomplete state, and privately owned. The Beaufighter in question was acquired by Melbourne City Council after the war then a group of interested volunteers set about forming a group,(AARG) essentially to acquire, restore and preserve the aircraft for the Australian people.

Melbourne City Council donated the aircraft with the provision that it would remain in Australia as an important heritage object.

Therefore to attempt to sell it to an overseas buyer seems to be a breach of the original terms of donation, and I feel the present Board of Management of the Moorabin Airport should be bound by those terms.

Apart from that, I am a member of the Beaufighter and Boston Association of Queensland, as my father F/Sgt John Lyon, (dec) 401706 was a WAG in 22 Squadron. He flew with pilot VC winner Bill Newton and flew every mission with him, (all 54), eventually losing his life by execution by the Japanese in Lae PNG in 1943.

I recently watched the restoration of a Boston Aircraft at Amberley Air Force Base in Queensland.in which my father had flown, and was at the ceremony when this aircraft was dedicated and later sent to the air museum at Pt. Cook, in Victoria. The feeling s of emotion I had cannot be explained on paper, but while I was sad, I was proud to think my father had given so much to his country, and some of it in this very aircraft. If I were to learn that this aircraft was to be sold to some overseas purchaser, I would be furious, as this is my children's link to their heritage and to the bravery of their grandfather.

I can imagine how any member of the Australian Beaufighter Squadrons, must be feeling, on reading of the plans to sell this aircraft to an overseas purchaser. This is part of **OUR** heritage, **OUR** history, of those brave boys who gave their lives so that you and I could go on living in this beautiful land of ours. Don't let that sacrifice be forgotten, as so many other things are being forgotten. Help to preserve this aircraft and give it back to the RAAF, send it to Point Cook, to rest beside the Boston. They fought together in the Pacific, let them lie together, there at rest, where our families can go and see them, pay our respects, and recall the many brave deeds that were carried out in them.

Please, consider this plea, and the many more I am sure you will receive, **PLEASE**, do not let this aircraft leave our shores, it is **OURS** , it is an important part of our history and our lives.

Show this government does have compassion and pride, **DO NOT** grant a permit to sell this aircraft

Yours Most Sincerely

Bette Wicks. (Bette M Wicks) Proud Australian and proud daughter of F/Sgt John Lyon.

22 Squadron NSW News

In recent correspondence, Dick Hutchinson, 22 (City of Sydney) Squadron historian, advised that 22 Squadron Association long time President Wal Tulloch said he would no longer be able to carry on as President. After admonishing him for being a piker, "You've been in the job for a few months, and you are quitting already", he replied he had been severely handicapped, and could no longer get about. Knowing that he had to resort to a wheel chair last Anzac Day, Dick made further enquiries and found out that Wal's problem did not stem from his health. He has simply decided to hand his driver's licence in, before they could take it away from him. Considering he turns 100 this month of August, I am sure all members will be appreciative of the great job he has done for the Association since it was formed just after the War.



Wally at his 100th birthday party.

Wal's retirement coincided with the decline in health of three other members of their committee, and thus left the future of the Association in the air. This is a problem affecting all other ex- service associations including ours. Fortunately a group of Post War ex members have held a meeting, with the full co-operation of the Squadron's present Commanding Officer, to ensure that the Association's future is assured. We in the Beaufighter and Boston Association do not have a serving Squadron to carry on for us.

Dick is also involved in RFD (Reserve Forces Day), and 22 (City of Sydney) Squadron

Marches in this parade each year. He tells me that 22 Squadron was originally formed from two flights from 3RAAF Squadron. If you need any info on RFD please do not hesitate to contact me.

I now have a copy of No 22 Squadron's Newsletter, advising of the Association's AGM, which will be held at 22 Squadron's headquarter's at Richmond on 10th

December 2000. All members will be new members, and will have to make an application to become members. The Association has now been incorporated.

Dick has appealed in the newsletter for information regarding the Squadron's two George Cross Medal winners that we asked him about. Coincidentally he has received a query from the widow of one of these winners, who would like someone to visit her, at her retirement home.

DICK HUTCHINSON

The Airman's Prayer.

*When the last long flight is over
And the happy landings past
When my altimeter tells me that the crack-ups come
at last
I'll swing her nose to the ceiling
And I'll give my crate the gun
I'll open her up and let her zoom
To the airpark of the sun
And the great god of flying men will smile at me –
sort of slow
As I slow my crate in the hanger where all good
fliers go
Then I'll look upon his face
The almighty Flying Boss
Whose wingspread fills the heavens
From Orion to the Cross.*

Anon.

The Bristol Beaufighter

The Beaufighter was one of the most outstanding aircraft of World War. It was not only a very successful aircraft, but also formed the equipment of over forty Squadrons in various RAF commands, as well as a number of squadrons in the RAAF, SAAF, and RCAF during the war years.

Apart from its various duties in Northern Europe, the Beaufighter became the scourge of shipping in the Mediterranean and Aegean Seas, a night fighter and strike fighter in North Africa, and an Army support and strike aircraft in Burma, and along the eastern seaboard of the Indian Ocean. The Australians built it and used it in their strafing and bombing attacks on the Japanese in the Pacific. To the Japanese the Beaufighter was known as "Whispering Death" on account of its relatively quiet approach.

Climbing into the Beaufighter's heavily armoured cockpit, flanked on either side by a big, beautiful air cooled Bristol Hercules engine, one had the feeling of the strength of the aircraft. When these two Hercules engines started up she became alive, she vibrated with power and sitting in the cockpit with four 20mm cannon stowed in her belly, and six.303 machine guns in her wings, she appeared tough – she was tough. The sterer – she looked what she was – a pugnacious beauty of a war machine, a tough lady.

VICTOR BINGHAM.

FROM GEORGE'S DIARY

Here we are then, Dave Beasley (my Navigator) and I starting on our second tour of operations. We traveled to Goodenough Island and caught up with the Squadron again. This Goodenough Island was a wonderful place. It was an island only about eight miles in diameter I suppose, and yet in the middle there was a mountain called the Pimple, which was about 8000 feet high. It ran almost straight up, and our camp was in the foothills of this mountain. This camp was magnificent, about 2000 to 3000 feet up, and our tent was possibly the highest one up the slope, up a little mountain track. At nights and in the evening we could sit outside the tent on the ground and look out over the Pacific Ocean. It was beautiful, it really was.

One of our operations or "sorties" which Dave and I participated in on 12th October 1943, has been recalled to me when I read the book *Beaufacturers over New Guinea*, by George Dick, published in 1943. George was a navigator in, and later historian for, 30 Squadron. Let me quote from his book regarding this job:

"One of the events in No 30 Squadron's calendar of activities was its participation in the attack on the enemy's major stronghold at Rabaul on 12th October 1943. So that they could take their place in the allotted stream, Beaufacturers and Bostons, were ordered to fly out of Goodenough the previous day. As Arthur Thomson positioned A19-157 for take off, the nose wheel of a bombed up Boston, which was rolling down the runway, collapsed. Laurie Crouch, was standing in the well of his Beaufacturer, and his diary recorded the event". "The plane flipped on its back. Two gunners got out but the pilot was trapped. The plane caught fire and exploded in a huge ball of fire. Not a good prelude to our take off. We flew over the smoldering funeral pyre." Harry Braid was standing in the well of A19-139 and saw the crash over his pilot's shoulder. "I urged Cyril Cornish to get us off the ground as quickly as possible," he said. "He managed to do just that, but I could see the strain he was under for the sweat just poured out of him".

At the time of the planned raid the Japanese had about 330 aircraft in New Britain and they had five good aerodromes in the Rabaul area. Tobera, which was to be the Beaufacturer's target, had been completed only two months before the raid and had an 1100meter concrete runway as well as revetments for 75 fighters. Rabaul bristled with over 370 ack-ack guns

An Allied force of 308 aircraft assembled at Dobodura. Dust delayed the take-off of the 13 Beaufacturers:

Bill Boulton & Keith McCarthy (A19-54)

Jim Emmerton & Alf Burgoyne (A19-147)

John McRobbie & Clive Cook (A19-103)

Ken Barber & Bert Claire (A19-139)

Fred Catt & Bill Davis (A19-107)

Chas Harris & Don Miller (A19-104)

Graeme Hunt & Arthur Hodges (A19-111)

Cyrill Cornish & Harry Braid (A19-138)

Arthur Thomson & Peter White (A19-157)

George Robertson & Rex Pitman (A19-120)

Ted Marron & Vern Gollan (A19-142)

George Drury & Dave Beasley (A19-134)

Dick Stone & Ted Morrie-Hadwell (A19-A19-97)

At about 1045am, when all the other 296 aircraft were heading home, the 12 Beaufacturers were approaching the target area, at sea level and met two squadrons of Mitchell's head on. The Mitchell pilots thought the Beaufacturers ahead were Sallys (Jap fighter-bombers), and one of them fired a burst, which passed between the aircraft flown by Chas Harris and Fred Catt. Bill Boulton made radio calls, which prevented further firing.

The formation leader had his Beaufacturers flying in echelon to the left and increased his speed as he neared Tobera airfield. George Robertson's aircraft wasn't able to reach that speed. He was number 11 in the formation so he and his wingman, (possibly Dick Stone) fell behind the others. Fred Catt thought the attack on Tobera wasn't as successful as it might have been, because the leader took the formation in at low level all the way, and all the pilot's could do was to press the trigger and spray the general area as they hurtled over the airfield. "To make a proper attack" he said "you've got to get up as you near the target area, select a particular target and then dive on it, holding fire until you are really close".

George Drury and Dave Beasley took off from Dobodura with the formation but turned back when the pilot had to shut down the port motor because of a serious oil leak. Dick Stone and Ted Morris-Hadwell took the place of their disabled aircraft in A19-97. That crew was lost that day.

The crew, which was lost, was Dick Stone and Ted Hadwell, who had replaced us in the formation when we had to turn back, so possibly we were lucky that day.

Note that in the first paragraph it tells of the Boston flipping over on its back, I had seen the Boston crash at the end of the strip, so I shut down my motors, opened my cupola and stood up in my seat. I had my personal camera with me, so I aimed it for a shot and pressed the button at the instant the petrol and bombs exploded in a most incredible ball of fire. I quickly

wound the camera on to the next shot and took a second photo, seconds after the first. Both photographs are quite clear, and graphically illustrate George Dick's description of this devastating accident. The pilot of the Boston was a bloke I knew from earlier training days, his name was Jim Wright. The photos I have are most graphic with the fireball clearly shown. Poor bugger he didn't stand a chance. A bit later we took off on the operation

I've recorded in my diary one of our last operations on Saturday 23rd October 1943. This was a very, very exciting operation. It was a real big day, I think it was the biggest thrill I've ever had in my whole lifetime. The excitement of the day was absolutely fantastic. The Allies had an Observation Post on New Britain and it had reported over a number of days on the movement of Jakes, that is a Japanese twin-engined floatplane of about 50-foot wing span. Sometimes three and sometimes two had flown over Cape Orford every evening at exactly 1815 hours.. There is where I think the Japs were so stupid in my opinion; they would do things so regularly. Four Beaufighters were briefed for a Jake hunt over Cape Orford from 1745 to 1845 hours, and just embarrass any Jakes appearing in the vicinity. Peter Fisher led; McRobbie was his number 2, while Len Hastwell led me in the second formation with me in number 2 position. We arrived over Cape Orford and began gradually patrolling along the coast in this area at about 2000 feet, although Len and I climbed to 3000feet. At exactly 1808 hours Dave called out "Bandit aircraft at six o'clock, 1000feet." I peeled off to starboard telling Dave to inform the formation of our sighting. As we peeled down I saw McRobbie peeling off also. Then I spotted a Jake. And the game was then on". McRobbie had been behind me, and thus being lower was ahead of me as we came out of a peel off dive, so I ranged myself number 2 to him I guess the Jake must have spotted us then, as he dived at the coast at full speed. McRobbie followed him around the Cape, which stuck right out into the sea and was not very long and only a few miles wide. I cut across the top of the Cape to intercept the Jake. For about a minute I lost sight of both of them, then I saw McRobbie pulling up to port to about 500 feet as if he had just made an attack, which I learned later that in fact he had. He got in a full deflection shot, but did not know whether or not he had hit the Jake. Just as McRobbie pulled up I spotted the Jake, which was about 500 yards ahead to the port and below me. He turned starboard as if to head up the Tigmi River valley, but this brought him quite close to me and then he saw us and thought better of it and turned to port and headed along the coast again, right down on the tree tops. I swung to his starboard for the attack and came in, in a typical beam, quarter and stern attack, which brought me right onto his tail and about two hundred yards behind him. At this juncture his rear gunner opened up, and I could see the gunner, and the flashes of his burst and the tracer whizzing under my

port wing. Tracer bullets are queer things, you see them fired at you, like a big firefly coming at you from the enemy gun, quickening in pace as it approaches and pheet! Zips past you. You hope. Realizing the enemy fire was not friendly and not conducive to long life I took mild evasive action by slightly walking the rudder, which swung the aircraft from side to side, and then Crump! We knew that the Jake's rear gunner had hit us in the port engine. At this moment it hardly registered on George Drury's brain, so intense was my excitement, and so intent was I on concentrating on, and carrying through a successful attack. I had closed to 150 yards and each time the Jake came across my ring-sight and onto the dot I gave him a short squirt of cannon. The third burst must have hit him fair and square, killing the gunner and the pilot and any other crew on board. and hitting the engine because the gun stopped firing, dropped loosely, and pointed upwards. The aircraft pulled up apparently out of control to about 100 feet and thick black smoke poured out from underneath the engine. I dived under the Jake, over the tops of the trees and Dave gave me a ball to ball description of it's finish. "Christ! It's right overhead! Gawd! I think the gunner is gone. It's smoking like buggery. Whacko! The bastard's burst into flames! It's swinging over to starboard. Hooray, it's pranged into the hillside." I did a full turn left and told Dave to get the camera ready. I flew close to the column of smoke rearing skywards from the dense jungle. Actually the Jake had swung sideways and into the jungle covered cliff and it stuck there. The sun had just gone down, but the photographs later showed very satisfactory proof of damage. Our elation knew no bounds and we called to each other "Oh boy, what a" "Geez, what excitement" and so on.

After we had taken the photographs I called the rest of the formation and told them to resume patrol, but we only stayed about another half hour until 1830 hours, as the weather was closing in fast and we had a long way to go back to Goodenough Island. The last hour of the journey was in darkness. This was the hard part, because the Japanese rear gunner had hit our exhaust pipe and the exhaust collector ring that collected all the flames and carried them to the back of the aircraft. Now damaged, it blew it blew part of the exhaust right at me, the pilot, and the flames from the cylinders instead of being collected and taken back were going straight across the front of the aircraft, creating such a glare I could not see anything. Dave navigated us back eventually to Goodenough Island, and we flew at a fair height there, round and round, the C.O. sent another aircraft to fly beside us because we could hardly see the landing strip. This aircraft flew down and down and told us what speed to use and when to put our undercarriage down, and when to put our flaps down-and he talked us down onto the strip. We landed successfully at first, but because we could not see, we must have

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drifted, towards the last run of the landing, and we went across the landing lights and wiped off half a dozen of them. Here comes the good old Australian humour again. The next morning when we down to our blast bay where the aircraft was stationed, the ground staff had painted on the side of the aircraft one Jake and six landing lights. A photograph of the damage to the collector ring is in my photo album.

The Diary again Dave and I didn't get to bed until midnight, and didn't get to sleep till two hours later with the excitement and elation and pumping of the adrenalin was still running so high in our systems that it completely over ruled the fatigue of the job. I thought of Bill Newton when I was chasing that Jap. I thought of him again in bed. I guess the score had been evened up just a little bit.

GEORGE DRURY.

So Near and Yet So Far

After the fall of Singapore, approximately 2400 Australian and British prisoners of war. Including 8 from my home town in Parkes in Central West of NSW, were transferred to the death camp at Sandakan, North Borneo, to build an aerodrome where, including the two death marches from Sandakan to Ranau all but six died of disease, maltreatment or were murdered.

It is only recently after reading two books on the subject that I have come to realize with regret, how close we were as members of 22 Squadron at Tawi Tawi, to be able to take part in a mission that was already at an advanced stage to rescue at least some of these Australian and British prisoners of war.

In the book "Project Kingfisher" by Athol Moffitt, later Justice Moffitt, who was the chief prosecutor in North Borneo of Japanese war criminals, it is stated (page 237), that a rescue of prisoners was aborted due to the fact that General MacArthur would not release C47 aircraft for the transport of Australian Paratroop Commandos, a battalion of whom had been trained in Australia specifically for this operation coded Operation Kingfisher.

However it is now revealed in the book, published in the last three months, "Sandakan a Conspiracy of Silence" by LR Silver, that at the time Australia had 74 C47 aircraft available, and that MacArthur had advised General Kenny that 30 of them were specifically available for this mission, (see pages 176 and 177) of the above book, and that Operation Kingfisher was aborted by General Blamey, later given as a reason that Higher Command would not release these aircraft. On 29th May 1995, 536 prisoners of war commenced the second Death March from Sandakan to Ranau, the

Sandakan camp was virtually deserted and 288 sick were left behind, all to die in the open, as all the buildings had been destroyed by the Japanese.



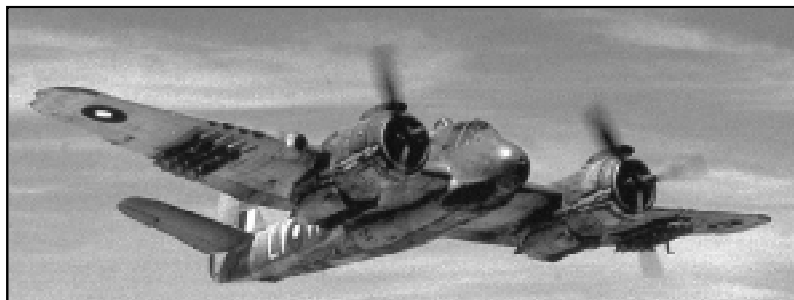
On 31st May 1945. 22 Squadron moved to Tawi Tawi in the South West Philippines, and we undertook air strikes to various parts of North Borneo, including Brunei and Jesselton.

On 4th June 1945 we carried out bombing and strafing attacks on stores near Beaufort and a bomb hung up on one wing of our Beaufighter. Due to bad weather and cloud build up over Borneo we climbed to 14,000 feet at which height the Beaufighter was staggering, so we decided to return to Tawi Tawi via the North Borneo Coast.

On the way back we flew over an area near Sandakan, marked on the map as a prisoner of war camp, we circled the area, which seemed to be deserted. Fortunately, by fiddling with switches and fuses in the electrical control panel the bomb apparently released, and we made it back to Tawi Tawi without incident, although I must admit that we both beat a hurried retreat from the aircraft on landing in case the bomb was still there.

However, now after 53 years, and having read this latest book on the subject, it is hard to come to terms with the realization that we were so close to these prisoners, without knowing it, and without being in a position to assist them.

ALLAN MILLER



TEN TIGER MOTHS

Early in 1945, Ten Tiger Moth aircraft were converted to Air Ambulance configuration at 10 Aircraft Repair Depot, Breddon in Queensland, not far from Charters Towers. These aircraft were destined to be used for medical evacuation of the wounded in the Jacquinot Bay area of New Britain..

Because of the low speed of the Tiger Moths, an Avro Anson was chosen as the escort aircraft to provide navigational and wireless communication for the flight. Chosen to crew the Anson were F/O W Rinkin, pilot and W/O J Brassil as Navigator/Wireless Operator

With the Tiger Moths flying at their normal cruising speed, the Anson's cruising speed was faster. Thus the Anson would fly up the side of the flight of Tiger Moths to a point a few miles ahead, then turn and fly past the flight on a reverse course, and repeat the process again and again.

Because the flying range of the Tiger Moths was low it would mean many landings and takeoffs at refuelling points along the way. As you all know the operation of the Anson's landing gear was not automatic. It needed 99 turns of the undercarriage handle to raise the landing gear, and 99 turns to lower it. The engines had to be hand started by a crank handle. We could see that this was not going to be an easy trip.

We left Laverton on the 27th. of March 1945, and arrived at Breddon on the 29th. of March 1945. The Tiger Moth pilots had arrived at Breddon and were flying testing them. During our time at Breddon we were lodged in a hut that had not been used for some time. We spent a dreadful first night, and found ourselves and pajamas alive with bed bugs. The beds and pajamas were burnt and the hut was fumigated.

All aircraft departed Breddon on 3rd April 1945, and spent the first night at Garbutt. Our intention was to take off early every morning and fly as far as we could before the turbulence made flying difficult.

Next morning we were ready to depart Garbutt at 0730 hours, but found the Tiger Moth's engines would not start. On checking the engines, the spark plugs were found to be crystallized. The crystals had to be chipped away and the points reset. This crystallization was to be evident every morning until we reached Higgins Field, where we received a signal advising the Tiger Moth's engines had been modified to take 100 octane fuel, instead of the lower rating fuel we had been using.

We left Garbutt at 1100 hours.

Our next stop was Cairns and then on to Cooktown. On approaching Cooktown, one of the Tiger Moths forced landed on the beach at Weary Bay,

but the pilot. F/O Tom Glynn was OK. The rest of the flight landed safely at Cooktown. We spent two days recovering the downed Tiger Moth.

We were due to leave Cooktown on the 11th April, however on loading our gear on to the Anson, my parachute was pulled and that ended our intentions for the day. Next day we had to fly to Mareeba, to have my parachute repacked at an army Parachute Depot. We arrived back at Cooktown on 13th April, but we did not leave until 29th April.

During our stay in Cooktown we took part in the Anzac Day Service, and celebrations with the Cooktown RSL. During the day we met Mr Jack Cash, who was a veteran of the Zulu Wars, Boer War and The Great War.

We also experienced further engine trouble, and had to wait for delivery of our ordered spares of tail skids. The tail skids were wearing out very quickly on the macadamized strips and we were to experience further trouble with the skids on the American laid metal strips. Also everyone in the flight picked up a good dose of dysentery, which did not abate until we arrived at Higgins Field, and in medical care.

We took off from Cooktown at 1020 hours on 29th April for Coen and Iron Range, finally arriving at Higgins Field on 2nd May 1945. By this date we had flown approximately 500 miles and had completed about one third of the journey.

Take off from Higgins field was delayed until 6th May whilst all aircraft were tested satisfactorily. Our next stop was Daru, an Island, run by ANGAU, at the mouth of the Fly river. This was disastrous for the Anson, as it was bogged down immediately, but necessary to refuel the Tiger Moths. We hoped it would not rain, however the Tiger Moths made two attempts to get down to the refueling point, without the escort, but the weather beat them. During our stay at Daru we were treated like Royalty- breakfast in bed, washing done, clean boots, every morning by the local population. As the weather got better, we were able to move the Anson to the take off point with the help of the Islanders, who also cleared the long grass off the strip, thus giving us a good surface for take off.

We were able to leave Daru on 13th May for Huiva, a small strip on the south coast of Papua New Guinea, where the Tiger Moths landed to refuel. The Anson had to go on to Port Moresby, refuel and return to pick up the Tiger Moths, to continue their flight to Port Moresby.

Bad weather again halted progress, and we finally left Port Moresby on 18th for Abau which was half way to Milne Bay. One of the Tiger Moths overturned at Abau, and had to be left. The next day the Anson picked

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up the remaining Tiger Moths, and returned to Milne Bay. Fuel supplies at Huiva and Abau were laid on specially for this mission.

We continued on to Finchhaven, via Dobadura, and arriving on 21st May 1945. Our next leg was to Jacquinot Bay, via Cape Gloucester in New Britain. At Finchhafen, operations personnel thought it was a joke for us to want to go to Jacquinot Bay, as our orders stated. It appeared that refueling at Cape Gloucester was a bit dicey, as operations were sure there was a fuel dump there, but did not know who held it. Us or the Japs. We were invited to press on if we wished. F/O Rinkin wanted to send a signal, south, requesting instructions, but a decision was made at a higher level, directing us to Tadj, as Finchhaven did not want the Tiger Moths cluttering up their strip. We arrived at Tadj, 49 days after leaving Breddon.

After handing over the Tiger Moths, the escort started the flight back to Laverton at 1300 hours on 22nd May. We followed the same route back to Townsville. On 26th May we refueled at Garbutt and set out for Bundaberg. Over Mackay. A cylinder came out through the starboard engine cover with a hell of a clatter. The engine seized, and the aircraft did a violent turn to starboard, and we had to get the undercarriage down in a hurry. We landed or glided in on one engine to the end of the Mackay strip - very lucky. We spent the next ten days waiting for engine spares and a fitter. Finally we got away on the 7th June 1945, and arrived back at Laverton on 16th June 1945, 78 days after we started out. The anson was condemned as it had a warped mainplane.

The pilots of the Tiger Moths were - George Spencer, Peter Joubert, Bill Lingmore, Arthur Tomkins, V Andrews, D Stevenson, C Goldstein, C Rayner, Lyle Holkemp, Tom Glynn, and ? Gibson. I have forgotten their ranks, and the name of the fitter, who joined the Anson at Breddon.

No 17 AOP, at Jacquinot Bay does record eventually receiving three Tiger Moths - A17-98, 212, & 505, early in July, but RAAF Historical Office thinks it very doubtful that any of the Tiger Moths were ever used in their Ambulance role. It is more probable that they were all scattered amongst various units, and served in a communications role.

What RAAF Canberra and I would like to know is a complete list of serial numbers of the Tiger Moths, so if any of the pilots read this article could they write to the undersigned,

J BRASSIL
Anniversary Drive,
Terrigal 2260.

PETER'S PAGE

A "BEAU" CAPTURES A JAP BARGE



A Japanese barge was "captured" by Beaufighter aircraft of 30 Squadron RAAF on the 2nd of October 1943.

The barge was sighted, empty and drifting out to sea about 40 miles south of Gasmata, New Britain, by two Beaufighters of 30 Squadron RAAF, flown by Flying Officer C.H. Cornish (pilot) and Sergeant H.V. Braid (navigator) and Sergeant M.C. Morgan (pilot) and Sergeant F.G. Cassidy.



Both Beaufighters were conducting a sweep along the coast of New Britain and the barge was sighted, and was instructed to remain over the barge. Both aircraft stayed on station for 3 hours until they were relieved by another two Beaufighters from 30 Squadron flown by G Robertson (pilot) and Sergeant R.W. Pitman (navigator) and Pilot Officer Haswell (pilot) and Flight Sergeant Don West (navigator) who remained over the barge another four hours until a United States Navy PT boat arrived and took the Barge in tow.

Towed to the Island of Kirawina where Thirty Squadron was then based the barge was used for recreation by Australian and United States troops. Booty from the barge, including a flag, a bugle and saki, found its way into the Squadron Aircrew Mess.



Courtesy Australian War Museum.