

The

WHISPERER

The Newsletter of the Beaufighter and
Boston Association of Queensland

DECEMBER 2003

BATTLE OF THE BISMARK SEA



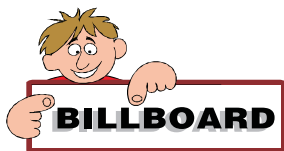
Photo: Courtesy 30 Squadron President Fred Cassidy AOM



**NEXT YEAR'S
RAFFLE PRIZE**

**THE GREAT
AIR RACE**

Print of the original
painting by
John Castle.



2004 A G M AND BARBECUE

The 2004 Annual General Meeting and Barbecue will be once again be held at the Headquarters of 215 Squadron Mortimer Road Archerfield, on Friday 16th January. It is timed to start at 1100 hours. Their building is on the Southern boundary of the 'drome and can only be entered from the side gate.

The Commanding Officer of 219 AAF Squadron FLTLT (AAFC) Bob Haiduczok has given his permission for us to use the facilities at Archerfield. Mr Rob Williams has once more has agreed to carry out all the cooking duties. I know two of our members will be pleased to know Rob is also going to make some of his special apple slices. There will be a charge of \$10 per person, payable on the day to help defray expenses.

It would be appreciated if some of the ladies could provide some potato salad etc, to go with the barbecue. **RSVP.** by Monday 12th January 2004

VALE

Dorothy Heron OAM, the long serving and hard working secretary of the Queensland Division of the RAAF Association passed away after a sort illness. We found Dorothy very helpful and obliging in solving any problem we had with the RAAFA.

Stan Curran represented our Association at her funeral Service, and a Sympathy card was sent to her family.

SEASONS GREETINGS.

I take this opportunity of wishing all our members and their families a very Happy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year.

2003 RAFFLE

The prize for next year's raffle is to be a framed print of Gold Coast artist John Castle's painting entitled "The Great Air Race". This race was the 1943 Kirrawina version of that year's Melbourne Cup.

It was held on the first Tuesday in November and the contestants were a Beaufighter and a Boston instead of horses. The Beaufighter won and you can tell by the smoke that the Boston was exhausted. A great deal of money changed hands on this occasion. The Kittyhawk was both Starter and Referee.

John Castle generously presented the painting to the Association, and a decision was made that the painting should hang in the art section of Caboolture Warplanes Museum.

RAAF MEMORIAL SERVICE 2003.

The Annual Memorial Service, held at St Thomas Aquinas RAAF Memorial Church St Lucia was held on Sunday 9th November 2003. RAAF Chaplain Wing Commander Paul Goodland conducted the service.

The Governor of Queensland Mrs Quentin Bryce and her husband Michael attended, together with a number of senior officers from RAAF Amberley, including Air Commodore Stuart Cameron and his wife, and Air Commodore Osley and his wife. It was very noticeable that the number of veterans attending was down on last year. This has been apparent in the last three years.

The Address was given by Air Commodore Stuart Cameron and carried a very good message. Once again we all enjoyed the church choir, supported by piano and trumpet. At the conclusion of the Service Chaplain Goodland thanked all for their support and attendance. He then invited us to morning tea and sandwiches which was provided so well by the church's ladies guild. The governor and her husband joined us for morning tea and spoke to many of those who attended. President Ralph together with Stan Curran and Peter White attended. It is recommended that members consider attending this service as it a service that has real meaning for all RAAF members and veterans.

COMMITTEE

Patron

Hon. Sir James Killen

President

Ralph Ind 5564 0181

V. President

William O'Connor 3286 1067

Secretary

Peter White 3287 5488
Email: petewhite@iprimus.com.au

Committee

Stan Curran 3388 6053
E-mail: currans@powerup.com.au

Jack Chamberlain 3848 2184



JAPANESE SOLDIER'S DIARY

During World War Two on March 16th 1943 RAAF Squadron 22 flying Boston aircraft carried out an attack on Japanese installations and newly installed oil tanks at Salamua on the Northern coast of New Guinea. Six aircraft took part, and were led by Pilot F/LT W Newton, and crew, Navigator F/Sgt J Lyon and Wireless Air Gunner B Eastwood.

They carried out a low level bombing attack, damaged some buildings and started some fires, and were subject to intense low level ack-ack three of the aircraft were hit and Newton was the worst. He managed to fly the badly damaged Boston back to the Seven Mile Strip at Moresby and made a safe landing it was not available to carry out further operations.

Two days later, on March 18th, Newton and his crew led a second attack again to Salamua in another aircraft. The attack was similar to the previous one. Again three aircraft were hit, and when Newton's aircraft was hit it burst into flames. He made a good landing close to the shore, and he and John Lyons were seen making to the shore with Lyons assisting Newton stay afloat. There was no sighting of Sgt Eastwood.

Both men were captured by Japanese troops. Bill Newton was executed by being beheaded by a Japanese officer in the Bushido tradition. John Lyon was taken to Lae where he was executed by being bayoneted to death.

In post war years the remains of both men were recovered and given a full Air Force Burial at the Lae War Cemetery, attended by family and relatives. .

This crew of three had carried out 52 operational missions together and had exceeded the normal requirement for a full tour of operations, which was 44 or six months. They were due for posting back to Australia when they lost their lives. Fortunately Bill Newton was suitably rewarded for his courage and duty beyond, by being awarded the Victoria Cross posthumously. It has always seemed very unjust that the two crew members who died with him were not also rewarded with a posthumous award.

When our troops advanced and captured Salamua among the many prisoners taken a diary was found in the possession of one of them. The following is a copy from an entry in that diary:

A Japanese who was captured at Hollandia in Dutch New Guinea and a witness to the execution, wrote in his diary a graphic and extraordinary account of what happened. The diary would probably have been destroyed, as it was most incriminating evidence, but the man was captured at Hollandia in Dutch New Guinea and the diary was found. In its translation it throws little light on what motivated the Japanese in their brutality, but it is a chilling record of how many other Australians must have met their end, including the six

year old child and the rest of the party from Sangara who had been beheaded nine months earlier on Buna beach. It makes very little reference to Bill's Observer, John Lyon who was also captured, and who was bayoneted to death at Lae.

There is no name on the diary to reveal who kept it, but the entry has the heading 'Blood Carnival'.

'All four of us,' it begins, 'Technician Kurokawa, Nishiguchi, Yawata and myself assembled in the front of the HQ at 1500 hours. One of the two members of the crew of the aircraft which was shot down by AA on the 18th and who had been under cross examination by the 7th Base Force for some days, had been returned to the Salamua garrison and it had been decided to kill him. Tai Commander Kornai, when he came to the observation station today, told us personally that in accordance with the compassionate sentiments of Japanese Bushido, he was going to kill the prisoner himself with his favourite sword. So we gathered to observe this.

'After we had waited a little more than ten minutes, the truck came along. The prisoner who is at the side of the guard house is given his last drink of water etc. The Chief Medical Officer, Tai Commander Kornai and the HQ Platoon Commander came out of the Officers Mess wearing their military swords.

'The time has come so the prisoner with his arms bound and his long hair now cropped very close, totters forward. He probably suspects what is afoot, but he is more composed than I thought he would be. Without more ado he is put on the truck and we set out for our destination.

'I have a seat next to the Chief Medical Officer; about ten guards ride with us. To the pleasant rumble of the engine we run swiftly along the road in the growing twilight. The glowing sun has set behind the western hills, gigantic clouds rise before us and the dusk is falling all around. It will not be long now.

'As I picture the scene we are about to witness, my heart beats faster.

'I glance at the prisoner, he has probably resigned himself to his fate. As though saying farewell to the world, as he sits in the truck he looks about, at the hills, at the sea, and seems deep in thought. I feel a surge of pity and turn my eyes away.

'As we passed by the place where last year our lamented Han was cremated, Technician Nishiguchi must have been thinking about him too' for he remarked, it's a long time since we were here last. It certainly is a long time. We would see the place every day from the observation post but never got a chance to come.

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‘It is nearly a year since the Han leader was cremated. I was moved in spite of myself and as I passed the place I closed my eyes and prayed for the repose of Shimizu’s soul.

‘The truck runs along the sea shore. We have left the navy guard sector behind us and now come to the army guard sector. Here and there we see sentries in the grassy fields and I thank them in my heart for their toil as we drive on. They must have got it in the bombing the night before last „there are great holes by the side of the road, full of water from the rain. .

‘In a little over twenty minutes we arrive at our destination and all get off. ‘Tai Commander Kornai stands up and says to the prisoner, We are now going to kill you”. When he tells the prisoner that in accordance with Japanese Bushido he will be killed with a Japanese sword and that he would have two or three minutes grace, he listened with bowed head.

‘The flight lieutenant says a few words in a low voice. Apparently he wants to be killed with one stroke of the sword. I hear him say the word “One” in English. The Tai Commander becomes tense and his face stiffens as he replies “Yes” in English.

‘Now the time has come and the prisoner is made to kneel on the bank of a bomb crater filled with water. He is apparently resigned. The precaution is taken of surrounding him with guards with fixed bayonets, but he remains calm. He even stretches out his neck and is very brave. When I put myself in the prisoner’s place and think that in one more minute it will be goodbye to this world, although the daily bombings have filled me with hate, ordinary human feelings make me pity him.

‘The Tai Commander has drawn his favourite sword. It is the famous Osamune sword which he showed us at the observation post. It glitters in the light and sends a cold shiver down my spine. He taps the prisoner’s neck lightly with the back of the blade, then raises it above his head with both arms and brings it down with a swoop.

‘I had been standing with my muscles tensed but in that moment I closed my eyes. “Ssh! It must have been the sound of blood spurting from the arteries. With a sound as though something watery had been cut the body falls forward. It is amazing he had killed him with one stroke. The onlookers crowd forward. The head, detached from the trunk rolls in front of it. “Ssh! ...Ssh! ...”The dark blood gushes out.

‘All is over. The head is dead white like a doll. The savageness which I felt only a little while ago is gone and now I feel nothing but the true compassion of Japanese bushido. A senior corporal laughs loudly. “Well, he will enter nirvana now!”

‘Then a superior seaman of the medical unit takes the Chief Medical Officer’s Japanese sword and intent

on paying off old scores turns the headless body over on its back and cuts the abdomen open with one clean stroke. They are thick skinned these koto (a common term of opprobrium for a white man, meaning literally hairy foreigner) even the skin of their bellies is thick. Not a drop of blood comes out of the body.

‘It is pushed over into the crater at once and is buried. ‘Now the wind blows mournfully and I see the scene again in my mind’s eye. We get on the truck again and start back. It is dark now. We get off in front of HQ. I say goodbye to Tai Commander Kornai and climb the hill with Technician Kurokawa. This will be something to remember all my life. If ever I get back alive it will make a good story to tell so I have written it down.

‘At Salamaua Observation Post, 30 March 1943, 0100 hours, to the sound of midnight waves.’

MOTTO REDEFINED

Since its inception in 1921 the Air Force’s motto of “Per Ardua ad Astra” has remained unchanged, although there has been a recent shift in the interpretation of the words.

CAF Air Marshall Angus Houston has endorsed the new definition, which replaces the RAAF’s previously accepted translation of “Through Adversity to the Stars, with “Through Struggle to the Stars”.

“The change has been a talking point, particularly among experienced Air Force personnel, at base visits by teams promoting the Air Force Vision issued earlier this year.

The revised understanding of the motto stemmed from the redevelopment of the Air Force Memorial in Canberra, dedicated last November.

The then plaques on the site stated the motto meant “Through Adversity to the Stars”- a translation whose authority is unknown- but the redevelopment committee’s research revealed other interpretations. These included “Through Hardship to the Stars”, and “Through Toil to the Stars”.

The committee noted that the Royal Canadian Air Force accepts the meaning as “Through Adversity to the Stars” but, according to the Royal Air Force, “since there can be a number of different meanings to Ardua and Astra, scholars have declared the motto untranslatable. To the RAF and Commonwealth Air Forces though it will remain “Through Struggles to the Stars”.

The committee opted for the singular “struggle” rather than the plural “struggles”. It stated that: “We have also considered the current dictionary meanings of the various interpretations of the key word and concluded that struggle is more appropriate, particularly in view of the RAAF’s early history”.

The motto “Per Ardua ad Astra” was first proposed by subaltern J S Yule for the Royal Flying Corps in 1912, received approval for King George V in 1913 and was adopted by the RAF in 1918 and by the RAAF three years later.

A SIGINT INTERCEPT BROUGHT ABOUT THIS VICTORY

Isoroku Yamamoto sat gazing out the window of his aircraft. The plane was almost brand new, though not luxurious by the standards of a man of his power and influence. He had always been more concerned with function than form.

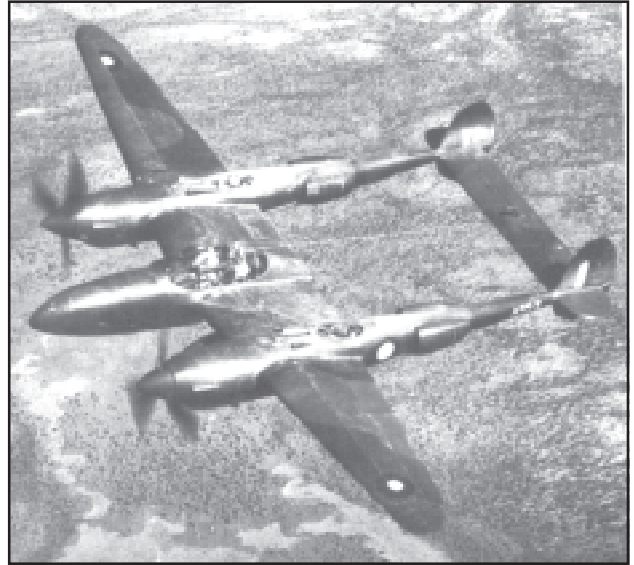
The Mitsubishi G4 and its crew shared one function; to get him quickly and discreetly to his destination in the south Pacific. He despised many things about his French colleagues, nevertheless they would be punctual and unobtrusive.

Yamamoto looked around the bare fuselage at his staff strapped into fold-down seats. Only two had accompanied him on this trip. He grinned inwardly. The young female secretary had form as well as function. His male aide, on the other hand, was formed like a tree trunk and his function was to look after his boss. Chained to the aide's right wrist was a polished alloy brief case, its contents perhaps even more valuable than Yamamoto himself.

He went back to watching the green rain forest slide beneath them. The aircraft had lifted off at exactly 8.00 am from Rabaul, in New Guinea's New Britain province. Timing had always been critical for the man who planned the raid on Pearl Harbour, Admiral Yamamoto, Commander in Chief of the Japanese Combined Fleet. It was almost 9.30 am.

It was also critical to other powerful men thousands of miles away. In Washington the clocks in the White House showed 6.30 pm, and in the Hawaii headquarters of Admiral Chester Nimitz the minute hand ticked toward 1.30 pm. Four days earlier, on April 14 1943, the US Navy's Fleet Radio Unit Pacific Fleet had decoded a hot Japanese signal outlining an inspection tour of Japan's front line bases around Bougainville Island by Yamamoto. Nimitz was satisfied Japan had no one capable of replacing the brilliant naval strategist and tactician. The opportunity was too good to miss and the President agreed. The ambush was assigned to the Allied Commander Central Solomons, Admiral William Halsey.

From Henderson Field, on the island of Guadalcanal, the United States Army Air Force 339th Fighter Squadron had launched 16 long range P38 Lightning fighters about the same time the Japanese Admiral's G4 Betty had taken off from Rabaul in company with another identical bomber and six Zero fighter escorts. Admiral Yamamoto gazed out the window again, noticing the second bomber in echelon carrying his Chief of Staff, Admiral Ugaki. The Mitsubishi Kasei engines ate into the miles and soon they would be back over the ocean. The plane's 3000 mile range would mean no more stops before the French island airstrip. The aircraft matched the man. Yamamoto was a long range planner, a powerful, determined negotiator who brought plenty of clout and few niceties to the table.



Two years ago he had warned the Americans he would dictate terms in the White House. Now, with what the French had to offer, he would change the course of the war.

Major John Mitchell had made the last change to his course half an hour earlier, heading north east from the coast of Vella Lavella and flying at wave top height toward Bougainville. The night before they'd calculated the cruise speed of the Betties at 180 MPH. The 400 miles separating Henderson from Bougainville meant the P38s were the only aircraft capable of the pursuit. All night long the ground crews had sweated to fit larger than normal drop tanks to the twin boom interceptors. The powerful Allison engines had needed every yard of runway to lift 18 Lightnings into the sky and two had quickly turned back with mechanical problems. Capable of almost 400 MPH, the twin engine aircraft had stormed along in radio silence barely thirty feet above the flat ocean.

Yamamoto reviewed his plan for the meeting with the French. Soon Ugaki would peel away to land at Kahili while Yamamoto continued south east.

Mitchell reviewed his plan. Lieutenant Lanphier would lead the killer group including Barber, Holmes and Hine. As Commanding Officer Mitchell would take the cover group of six all the way up to 20 000 feet. A second cover group of six would be standing by. Failure was not an option and Major Mitchell could still see the signal he'd been given late the night before. "SQUADRON 339 P-38 MUST AT ALL COSTS REACH AND DESTROY. PRESIDENT ATTACHES EXTREME IMPORTANCE TO MISSION." The signature block read, 'Frank Knox Navy Secretary.'

The hunters reached the slot for the attack at exactly 0930 local. The Admiral was tired. It had been an early start and a couple of hours napping would be good. John

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Mitchell's ass was numb and he'd consumed two canteens of water already. The P38 was built to be the fastest fighter in the inventory with a service ceiling of 40 000 ft. It was the most amazing plane he'd flown but it was built for cold climates and high altitudes with no cooling system to relieve the sauna conditions under the clear bubble canopy. The squadron gossips said the Lightning had been designed at some secret Lockheed factory called the Skunk Works.

Well it sure stank inside his cockpit now. Doug Canning broke radio silence.

"Bogeys. Eleven O'clock. High!"

The two G4 Betties and their Zero escorts were at 5000 feet, exactly where Mitchell and Lanphier had guessed.

Long range tanks tumbled away from all but two of the fighters and superchargers screamed as the Americans went in to kill. Holmes and Hines were still struggling with the jerry rigged tanks as Tom Lanphier and Rex Barber ignored the Zeroes and stormed in on the bombers.

Admiral Yamamoto was not wearing a headset and didn't hear the pilots swearing. He heard the engines bellow to full power and felt the aircraft dive to increase speed. Spent cases cascaded from the machine guns in the dorsal turret. From the tail came the heavier hammering of the 20mm canon, but the gunner could not get enough elevation to keep the leading American fighter from its first run.

The Japanese gunners feared the Lightning, and not only for its speed. Its four .50 calibre machine guns and single 20mm canon were all clustered in the nose. With no need to calculate the converging patterns of wing mounted weapons, the pilots hosed in from 1000 yards range.

One of the P-38 pilots got a Zero in his sights and machine gun rounds streamed into the smaller aircraft. The broken, burning wreck tumbled past the Admiral's window an instant before his own pilot banked hard right to escape another Lightning attacking from behind and above.

The second Betty was trying to stay in formation, allowing the tail and upper turret gunners to support one another and cover each other's arcs, but the hard evasive manoeuvring of the lead aircraft forced the second pilot to swerve, offering his flank to the hunters. Yamamoto's own demands for a high-speed, long-range naval bomber meant the G4 carried huge fuel tanks in the wings and little armour.

The Americans called them the Flying Cigars and now the Admiral saw how easy they were to light up. Flame burst from the port wing of Ugaki's plane and it turned out to sea, the pilot hoping to ditch.

Holes gaped in the surviving bomber but it stayed intact, swooping to tree top level. The Zeros were all gone and the American gun and canon fire was tearing into Yamamoto's Betty. His secretary was pulped by armour piercing rounds.

Yamamoto screamed at his aide to pass his short ceremonial sword. These western bastards would not rob him of his honour. The case chained to the Ensign's right wrist left him fumbling around with his left hand. Again the aircraft slammed over, changing direction. The passengers were bruised and chafed by the harness restraints. The aide released his straps and tried to hand him the sacred blade. The Admiral stretched out, only to gash his hand as the aircraft bucked hard and split open, thin metal peeling away from the starboard side of the fuselage.

Yamamoto watched in horror as the Ensign was whisked out at almost 300 miles per hour, into the trees flashing past barely fifty feet below.

His horror only lasted only the few seconds it took for the dying bomber to swoop another thousand yards before disintegrating in the jungle.

Japanese troops located the wreckage even before John Mitchell and his men landed back at Henderson. The bodies of Yamamoto, his female secretary and the air crew were located and cremated.

PHIL SMITH.

Ed. In the March 2002 issue of Whisperer, Roy Inche notes this incident in his story on his work with Sigint.

LITIGATION

There are strange rumours circulating that the honourable Stan Curran is facing litigation over his impersonation of The Crocodile Hunter. Stan said "No worries, Peter White has offered to act on my behalf. Pity help the prosecutor when Peter is finished with him, I may even get compensation".

Peter was certainly a debonair gentleman when his photo was portrayed in the last Logan City RAAFA *Flypast*. According to their Secretary, Vicky, he is still a smart looking gentleman.

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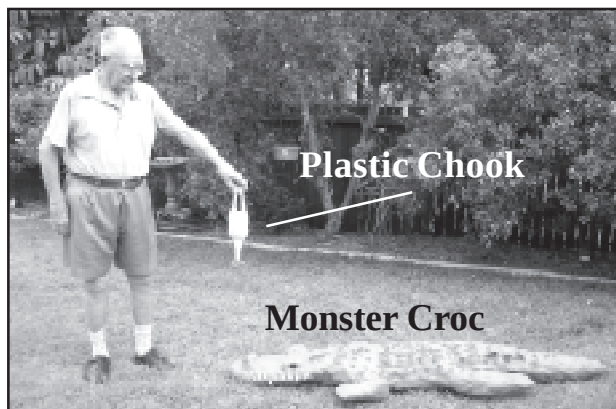
The better half's view. On a recent visit to Greenslopes I was having a discussion with the specialist who recently increased the strength of potent painkillers. The doctor asked me did I feel loopy in the mornings. Vicky's reply before I had a chance to answer was "He is always loopy".

JOHN HOULSON



Crikey! Crocodile Creator Curran

I had a phone call from Stan Curran a couple of days ago telling me he had a 3 metre crocodile in his backyard, and that I should come up and have a look at it. This I did pronto, doubting the authenticity of Stan's statement. But lo and behold, when I got there Stan did have a large croc in his back yard. At my first look it looked like a very big croc, but getting closer I saw that it was a very lifelike replica. Have a look at the photo and I am sure you will agree with me.



He had designed and constructed this croc at the request of son Don, who is to attend a Scout Jamboree in Adelaide, and he wanted one for a display as part of the good things Queensland has to offer. After some weeks without a real life model and with a lot of ingenuity and skill, he completed the making of his very first croc. Steve "Crikey" Irvine now has a reason to be concerned. There is a rival in his speciality field of crock fighting and museums, Stan could be going into mass production, so if we wanted a croc for our backyard Stan could easily provide one for us. I reckon he could be heading to make his first million. Maybe Steve wouldn't like this competition.

Seriously I would like to record the skills and artistic ability that this over eighty member of our RAAFA has. He makes memorial plaques of top quality, which are skilfully designed, and constructed, makes beaut picture frames and other fancy wood items. All this work, and there has been a lot of it that Stan has generously carried out and given to members of different Associations, like RAAF, RSL, and for display at RSLs, Aircadets, RAAF bases, and Warplane Museums. You can see examples of his work in our club rooms, all done generously at his own cost. At present he is making a special plaque to present to Mrs Gladys Waters, the widow of our only aboriginal pilot, Warrant Officer Jerry Waters.

Samples of his work can also be found overseas in Athens, and the large Duxford Museum in England. There seems to be no limit to his ability and skills, which are remarkable for a person of his age. Stan, long may you be spared to do these things you love to do.

PETER WHITE



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Dear Members

On the 11th October Joan & I made a rather quick trip to Sydney to attend the Annual Dinner which commemorates the award of the Victoria Cross to FLt Bill Newton.

The dinner is held in the Sergeants's Mess at Richmond Air Base. I attended as a Life Member of the 22 Sqdn Assoc. & it is the first time that I have been able to attend the function. We didn't know a soul there - I had hoped to catch up with some of my old Sqdn mates but there were none in sight -I guess it's a sign of the times.

However I felt a little more at home when I noticed a painting of a 30 Sqdn Beaufighter on the wall of the Mess.

I recently acquired a copy of the very chilling account of Bill's execution the original of which was found on a Japanese soldier captured at Hollandia in Dutch New Guinea At the dinner I also obtained a copy of the citation which resulted in Bill being awarded the Victoria Cross posthumously. I was absolutely horrified at the cruelty & callousness of the Japanese when the event occurred in early 1943. I doubt if the leopard has really changed his spots.

The bayoneting to death of Bill's navigator Sgt. Lyons after he had assisted Bill to reach the shore, after being shot down, is a classical example of the brutality of that race. I believe Sgt. Lyons should have received some recognition for his actions.

One can only have the highest admiration for the very calm & stoic manner in which Bill accepted his fate knowing he was about to die. He certainly upheld the highest traditions of the RAAF.

Prior to the above dinner Peter Joan & I attended the dining in night of 219 Sqdn which was enjoyed by all.

On Sunday the 9th Nov. Peter, Stan & I were present at the RAAF Memorial service at the St. Thomas Aquinas RAAF Memorial Church. St. Thomas Aquinas I could encourage more of our members to attend this annual service which is quite impressive.

Wishing you all a Merry Xmas & happy New Year.

Regards

RALPH

FREDERICK BERTRAM ANDERSON MID

A WIRELESS NAVIGATOR

Continued from September Issue.

There were some Beauforts at Milne Bay at that time, probably No 100 Squadron, and they were doing torpedo attacks, although I don't think they had any great success at that time. One of the Beauforts returned with a torpedo still attached, but when the aircraft landed the torpedo fell off and went haring off down the strip in front of the aircraft. It didn't go off, but it certainly caused a stir.

We were at Milne Bay from 10th to 25th September 1942, at which time we flew to Wards Strip at Moresby.

We went back to Milne Bay on a deployment from 3rd October to 19th.

Our tent at June Valley was already set up for occupation, although I think we dug our own trench. During one of the air raids I'd jumped into the trench but hadn't been in it for more than a minute or two when I heard an almighty rushing sound, which I took to be a bomb, and believed that I was about to be blown to smithereens. Then something hit me across the back — which turned out to be either Bob Cummins or Alan Kirley from the next door tent; they'd been asleep and were woken by the ack ack guns, and as they hadn't got round to digging their own trench, and thought that mine was the place to be that night. Alan said that he had been dreaming about going home on leave at the time of being woken, and when the all clear was given, was going back to sleep to find out what he did on that leave.

There wasn't much to do around the camp if you weren't flying. We spent a good deal of time down at the strip, talking to the engine fitter and the airframe fitter who looked after our plane, and fiddling with the wireless gear to make sure it was in tip-top condition. A lot of the other aircrew played cards, but that didn't interest me.

I had a hand-wound gramophone but only two records - 'Abide With Me', and 'Lead Kindly Light'. I don't think that either Padre Reeve or Padre Kirby ever invited me to take my machine to one of their church services. Padre Reeve was a later awarded an OBE for services to the Sydney City Mission. The Padres would come round the camp and chat to the chaps in their tents. It seemed to me that Padre Kirby was not so much interested in providing aid and comfort as he was in collecting material which could be used in the novel which he published a few years later.

Damien Parer visited the Squadron during March 1943 and in addition to making a cine film of the Bismark Sea episode, took quite a few stills around the camp. We also had a visit from a war artist — Dennis Adams — who did quite a number of pencil sketches, including one of me in the back of a truck.

Peter Parker didn't come to Moresby with the Squadron but went back south around about Xmas time. Peter and Blackjack seemed to be good mates; both of them wore Lugers. Peter sent up a crate containing a couple of dozen bottles of beer and Blackjack was looking forward to having a whale of a party. You should have heard what he said when he opened them and found that they were filled with water!

The crew in the next tent to ours — probably that occupied by Bob Cummins and Alan Kirley — made up a brew of jungle juice in a kerosine tin. It was made up of apples, sultanas, coconut juice and other things and because they had screwed the lid back on the tin and the yeasty gas couldn't escape, the whole thing blew up one night and took the side out of their tent.

Letters home were supposed to be censored by an officer, and he would cut out any bits that gave specifics of our aircraft, operations, location, and so on. I used to give mine to Bob Brazenor and he would sign them without reading them, trusting me not to have broken the rules.

One of the most frightening and terrifying things that I saw was when a B24 came back to do a night landing. He appears to have mistaken Wards Strip for Jacksons, and was making his approach when he saw our Beaufighter making its landing approach to Wards, at which time he swung off his approach run, hit the top of one hill, bounced off that onto the top of the next hill, where the aircraft and its bomb load simply exploded. A dreadful sight.

We didn't do too many night operations, but on one occasion we were sent out to strafe four destroyers which were lurking about to the north of Lae. Some genius at Operational Group Headquarters had prescribed that we should make our staffing runs on those vessels by the light of flares. But it was hopeless. The pilots simply couldn't handle that — for one thing they had no idea where the horizon was.

Probably the most tragic event which affected me personally was the fatal accident when Bruce Stephens was on the approach to Wards in A19-14, and he must have hit a tree because the aircraft went in just at the end of the strip, killing the pilot, and his navigator, Stewart Cameron. The Beaufighter just blew up, and we were standing watching it, all helpless as they burned to death in their cockpits. A dreadful sight which I've never forgotten. Stewart and I were quite good mates, and he had been extremely helpful during our signals and observer training. He was a real brain. He could pick up mathematics in a wink, whereas I found them a bit of a struggle. He took me under his wing. Another one of our navigators — Bill ('Tiny') Cameron was later killed in a Beaufort from Nowra which crashed into the sea.

On 13th October 1942 we were ordered to carry out an attack on Buna and the Beaufighters were climbing in formation to get over the Owen Stanley ranges when Tom Butterfield called out over the R/T that he couldn't make it, and ploughed into the side of a hill. Tom and his navigator, Jim Wilson, were killed, and that was in A19-68.

I was down at Wards the day that Blackjack pranged his Beaufighter. Just as he was about to touch down, another aircraft taxied on to the runway, so the CO bounced his own aircraft over the top of the intruder and, of course, landed so heavily on the other side that his undercart collapsed.

We were attacking Lae on one occasion when we lost an engine in A19-15, not because of enemy action, but they had shot away our trim tab with a point five shell. We had to make a forced landing in a small clearing in the jungle near Dobodura. We went back to Moresby for the night, and I came back with Ron Uren the next day, and he flew the plane out and back to Wards after the mechanics had made the necessary repairs. That was on Saturday, 6th February 1943. Some of the Americans who saw the engine with the cowls off wanted to know where the tappets were. That was the day, incidentally, that the Yanks had shot down 21 enemy planes at Wau, without sustaining any losses themselves.

Some time earlier we had been on an Army co-operation mission at Wau. The Japanese strip were at one of the strip and the Japanese were at the other end of the incline. The Army were supposed to use smoke signals to show us where the enemy soldiers were, but as we never saw any smoke, we strafed what we thought was the Japanese position. Many years later I met a soldier who had been there at the time and he said it was a most frightening experience to see and hear the Beaufighters attack with machine guns and cannons blazing. He also said that we very nearly wiped out the enemy hiding in the trees at the bottom of the strip.

Our own soldiers often complained that we were never around when they were in a tough position, and they probably doubted that their own Air Force was even in New Guinea. So we were sent over to put on a display at the Kanuzi river, near Buna, and not only show them that we were around, but show them what a Beaufighter could do. It was all low-level stuff, and when we landed we found some leaves and branches in our undercart.

On another occasion - early in January 1943 - we were sent out to find a B24 which had crash-landed in the Buna area and eventually sighted some of the crew about a mile north of Mambare. One of them wrote a message in the sand that they wanted food, matches, maps, and shoes. Jim Yeatman and I dropped them our boots, what food we had in our aircraft, a medical kit, and a map on which I had indicated their present positions together with a message that an enemy patrol

was nearby. We heard later that they had been rescued and were flown back to Moresby.

I imagine that everyone was a little bit apprehensive when we went out on a strike — you wouldn't have been normal if you weren't. And I suppose there were one or times when I was a little bit scared. I wasn't a bit concerned when, on one of our first operations to Buna, I saw quite a number of little black puffs floating by; they looked so inoffensive. Bob Brazenor called out to ask me if I had seen them, and it wasn't till he reminded me that these were Ack Ack explosions from gunners who were trying to shoot us down that I hoisted in the situation. When we landed we found a few holes in the aircraft's fuselage and that brought home to me that this flying game was quite serious.

Yes, I suppose I was a bit concerned, but I accepted that if I was to die then I would die. There was nothing much I could do about it. A lot of fellows had been killed either by enemy action or flying accident, and it was in my mind that if it was my turn to go then that would be it. We were told that if we were ever shot down or forced down in enemy territory we should avoid being taken prisoner, because they had heard about the treatment prisoners had been getting. I suppose we were prepared to kill ourselves if we were ever to be in that situation.

Since I wore shorts, short-sleeved shirt, and soft-leather flying boots, it would seem that I never gave serious consideration to the idea of surviving in the jungle if we ever came down. Those clothes would not have lasted more than a few days in that sort of environment.

The conditions inside the Beaufighter flying at low level in the tropics more-or-less dictated the wearing of light and comfortable clothes. The most torrid time for the navigator was when he had to move forward from his station to change the cannon drums. He would be draped about with a web belt to which was attached his revolver and pouch, ammunition pouch, water bottle, and survival kit; he would be wearing the most awkward life jacket ever invented, a jungle knife strapped to his leg, and trussed up in a tight-fitting parachute harness. And while the pilot was throwing the aircraft round in tight turns in the target area, the navigator would have the struggle of removing the heavy drums from the cannons and replacing them with the heavier drums filled with 20mm shells. And inevitably, the cord from the navigator's microphone and headphones would snag in some protrusion and nearly jerk his head off.

The pilot got in and out of the Beaufighter through a hatch which was essentially a section of the floor which opened outwards and downwards, and which could be locked in either the open or closed position. We were over Buna when our hatch in A19-15 flew open and Bob Brazenor called me to come down and close it because, not only was it noisy and windy inside the aircraft, but

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the aircraft's performance was being affected. So I had to straddle this gaping aperture, looking straight down at the tops of palm trees whopping past us only a few feet below us. That was quite a frightening experience.

We were intercepted by Zeros a couple of times over Lae, but we were able to get down on the deck over the sea and since they couldn't overtake us, they would eventually turn back. There wasn't a great deal of difference in their respective speeds, but the Beaufighter had a slight edge at low level. Our job wasn't to take on the enemy fighters in the air, but to take them out on the ground. Other targets were the enemy installations, their barges, luggers, and ships, supply dumps, and vehicles.

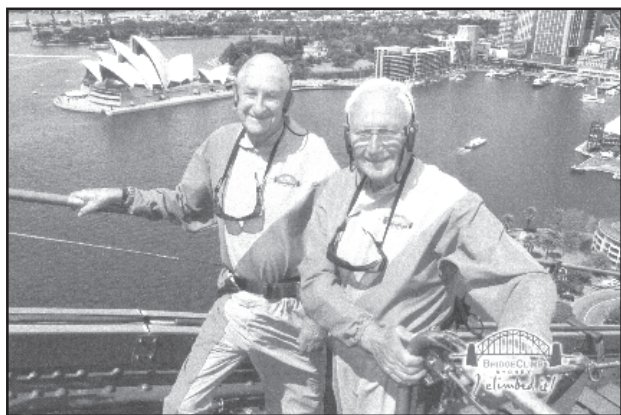
Just to the rear of the cupola, and above the radio crates there was an aperture to accommodate the Verrey Pistol. Nearby was a canvas stowage pouch which contained a number of Verrey cartridges and I often fired some of these off. I had the idea that they might start a fire among the ground installations, so Bob would let me know when we approaching something appropriate and I would fire a cartridge, not though its proper aperture, but downwards, through the flare chute. I shouldn't imagine that it caused any damage but it gave me some personal satisfaction that I had actually discharged a weapon at the enemy.

Our activities on 3rd, 4th, and 5th March 1943 - during the Bismark Sea Battle — were certainly the most exciting; there was so much happening and so many planes involved. Bob Brazenor and I did four sorties, including two on one day.

We did a number of attacks on Lae, and all of them were heart-in-the-mouth sorties. There was an old ship off the end of the strip that had been wrecked a long time ago, but every day some American bomber skipper would lay claim to having sunk a ship off the coast at Lae.

The area around Lae contained a couple of Australian coastwatchers and they would send radio messages telling Moresby what the enemy was doing, and, in particular, what aircraft were there and where they were parked.

FRED ANDERSON



Would-be High Flyers, Don Angus and Fred Cassidy survey Harbour Sights from top of the bridge

The Association's Sad Sack Secretary



Some three years ago I was fortunate enough to acquire two master copies of the video Ghosts of war. This was a video proposed by the restoration section of 23 Squadron, and made by a local film maker, after the Boston "Jessica" was completed, and some time after the Roll Out

Ceremony, at RAAF Base Amberley.

The Association made a substantial cash grant to the Squadron when lack of funding almost stopped the production. After the video was made and approved, because of the continuing lack of funds, it apparently was not possible to print the necessary number of copies estimated for distribution. The local Gold Coast video company had made an excellent documentary.

It was much later, that I learned of this and that only a few master copies had been printed. I then acquired two of the master copies for the association's records, because of our cash grant.

On acquiring these copies I advised Members via the Whisperer that we had these copies and members were welcome to borrow them. About seven members took advantage of this, however I discovered that one of the copies had been returned minus the first two minutes. I then decided not to loan them out any more, until three weeks ago, when I loaned them to a kindred organisation for viewing by its members.

I then made what has turned out to be a very bad mistake, firstly in relenting in my previous decision, and then when posting a copy to this organisation I believed I had posted the damaged copy. When it was returned to me I then found out it was the undamaged copy that I had posted, and all footage except twenty minutes had been deleted. I surely was upset.

We now have two damaged copies, with one damaged fatally. I can only apologise for my foolish error, that has all but lost us a very important record. Perhaps all is not yet lost. I have enquired from two professional organisations concerning making one whole video from the two damaged ones, and have been advised this can be done satisfactorily. Now the only way that members will be able to access to this very important video will be to purchase from the Association, a professional copy at a cost of \$30, including postage and packing.

Any member wanting a copy can either contact me or make a note and enclose a cheque with the Annual Subscription form. A decision has already been made to provide copies to some Australian Cadet Squadrons for their libraries, at a later date.

NOMINAL ROLL

Addison GCAPT W	15 Ferdinand Avenue Campbell ACT 2601	02 6248 9282
Angus D	21 Madrers Avenue Kogarah 2217	
Atkinson LAC W	5 Doman Court Deception Bay 4508	3204 1667
Anderson F	58 Peridon Village Daleys Point 2257	
Beadle LAC F	11 Tuggerah Street North Booval 4304	3281 3928
BlainMr G	47 Warner Road Warner 4600	3264 4142
Brassil FSGT J	46A Melbourne Street East Gosford 2250	02 4322 7576
Brazenor FLT R	7Virginia Street Mt. Waverley 3149	03 9807 2697
Boehm T M	45 Carbeen Avenue St. Ives 2075	
F/Lt F Cassidy	1/64 Boundary Road Mortdale 2223	02 9580 2944
Campbell CPL C	22 Wangawallen Road Eagle Heights 4271	5546 1980
Castle J	41/7 Oatlands Esplanade Runaway Bay 4216	5537 9699
Chamberlain FLT J	120 Dudley Street Annerley 4103	3848 2184
Clark LAC K	Lake Sherrin Homes Boundary Rd. Thornlands 4164	3206 4146
Clark Mrs M	92/42 Ridley Street Bridgeman Downs 4103	3263 5412
Close FLT G	7 Chaley Street Aspley 4034	3253 5387
Gaunson Mrs J	15 Benze Street Logan Central 4114	3208 3379
Coleman FLT MID E	100 Kirkwood Rd West Tweed Heads Sth 2486	5524 9379
Collin s FO R	101 Christian Street Clayfield 4011	3262 8179
Corbett Mrs D	2 Bellbird Street Wellington Point 4160	3107 3398
Crone P/O M	77 Twilight Street Kenmore 4069	
Creedy FLT K	84 Richmond Street Gordon Park 4031	3857 2875
Curran SLDR S	6 CaloolaDrive Springwood 4127	3388 6053
Cutler FLT S	14 Turner Street Ipswich 4305	3281 3145
Dallitz Mr W	69 Eucalypt Street Bellara 4507	
Donnelly W/O A	15/4 Britannia Avenue Broadbeach 4218	0738 1626
Drury F/Lt G	5 Hanlon Cres. Sandown Vil. Sandy Bay 7005	
ENGLISH OBE A	33/9 Salford Street Victoria Point 4165	207 7424
Fanning FO L	2 Burkitt Street Bundaberg 4670	4152 4522
Goodland GCAPT P	12 Tenterfield Place Forest Lake 4078	3879 1252
Gordon FO I	97 Shenton Road Swanborne 6010	
Hall FO G R	403 Levitt Road Upper Kedron 4055	3351 4052
Hamilton FO J	135 Victoria Street Mackay 4740	4955 1313
Hayes Mrs J	8 White Street Gladstone 4680	4957 4002
Hill LAC A	39 Stewart Street Bundaberg 4670	4152 0637
Holt Mrs Y	34 Charles Street Baulkham Hills 2153	02 9639 9862
Houston WO F G	47 Plover Street Slade Mackay 4740	
Howarth Mr L	2/98 Kangaroo Avenue Coombah 4218	
Hunt Mrs N	PO Box 123 Tweed Heads 2485	5536 6767
Hunt Mr B	4/71-73 Wharf Street Tweed Heads 2485	5536 2533
Huston Ms M	AWM GPO Box 345 ACT Canberra	
Hutchinson FSGT	R61 Alpha Road Greystaines 2145	02 9896 6891
Inches CPL R	717 Rutheven Street Toowoomba 4350	4636 5917
Ind FLT R MID	49 Atlantis West 2 Admiralty Dr Paradise Waters 4217	5564 0181
Jacobi FO J	27 Tilquin Street The Gao 4061	3300 2090
Jensen MS P	PO BOX 2388 Bundaberg 4570	4159 6866

Jensen CPL C	MS 963 Langebecker Road Bundaberg 4570	4159 7356
Johnson FO G	8/134 Middle Street Cleveland 4163	3821 3574
Kemp Mr S	9 Acacia Street Thornlands 4164	3286 2511
King FLT C	127 Britannia Avenue Morningside 4170	3399 3540
King LAC F	2 Megan Street Tweed Heads 2486	5524 3637
Lawson LAC R	2186 Wynnum Road Wynnum 4178	0428191454
Loveband WO J L	PO Box 494 Batemans Bay 2536	02 4471 3853
Lovell S	PO Box 770 Mossman 4873	4098 8406
Lyons WO D	316 Beaconsfield Terrace Brighton 4017	3269 1331
Marks K	1/13 Grenada Crescent Varsity Lakes 4227	
LAC Masson	Wilderness Yeulba 4427	4624 4034
Masterson FO W	4/5 McKean Road Scarness 4655	4124 4034
McClymont Mrs S	"Palmal" 151 Nth Creek Rd Lennox Head 2478	02 6687 7304
McDonald K F/Lt DFC	5 Grosvenor Street Frankston 3199	03 9787 6962
McMillan D	42 Vergulde Road Regents Park 4118	3402 3528
McMinn SGT V	4 Kurrawa Avenue Mermaid Waters 4218	5572 2805
McKinnon Lorna	14/33 Tolvern Street Rochedale 4123	3341 3379
Meers C	PO Box 117 Mapelton 4560	5445 7565
Merrotty SGT J	17 Murphys Road Kingscliffe 2487	02 6574 2830
Miles Mr C	29 Pilbi Street Woodridge 4114	
Miller FO A	18 Fairway View Catalina 2536	
Morgan LAC H	119 Madsen Street Grovely 4054	3356 6596
Moore L	PO Box 2060 Innisfail 4868	4063 3557
Nicholson FLT K		
Nixon Mrs B	"Phiara" Rolleston 4702	4984 3163
Nye Mr Tony	61 Sussex Road Acacia Ridge 4110	
O'Connor WO W	26 Coburg Street Cleveland 4163'	3286 1067
Quinn FSGT K	23B Tweedale Road Applecross 6153	08 9364 1343
Robertson FLT DFC G	189 Quarry Lane Rockhampton 4700	4921 2171
Rose FLT G	16 Novar Court Robina 4226	5562 0202
Rowell FLT H	10 Duncraig Road Applecross 6153	08 9364 7656
Scheckenbach Mr A	23 Brigden Crescent Theodore ACT 2905	02 6292 8782
Shaw Mr D	21 Exeter Street Hadfield 3045	03 9306 1986
Smith SLDR C	2/438 Cooloongatta Road Tugan 4224	
Smith Ms B	PO Box 1371 Southport 4215	5502 8387
Snell Tec Rep	50 McLean Gulliver 4812	4779 5042
Tanner Mr D	68 Evelyn Road Wynnum West 4178	
Taylor Mr D	135 Handford Road Zillmere 4034	3265 6866
Taylor F/Sgt	21 Garema Street Indooroopilly 4068	3870 9980
Thomson DFC SLDR A	323 Myers Road Merricks North 3926	03 5989 7219
Tritton MID SLDR N	142 Yabba Street Ascot 4007	3262 5965
Turnbull FLT L	40/7 Oatlands Esplanade Runaway Bay 4216	5537 7965
Turton F/O	5/37 Monaco Street Surfers Paradise 4217	
WARDLAW Mrs E	30 Curramundi Road Caloundra 4551	5493 4374
Wells Mrs K	13 Considine Street Rockhampton 4700	4922 6260
Wemyss Ms A	78 Stuart Street Bulimba 4171	3395 7210
Wicks Ms B	1/40 Ian Avenue Hervey Bay 4655	4194 0149
White F/Lt MID	9 Scott Street Beenleigh 4207	3287 4588
Wilson J	184 Bryants Road Cornubia 4130	3801 5064

Please advise Secretary of errors and omissions