

The

WHISPERER

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



Beaufighter Wreck A19-141 Found

Mrs Cecile Benjamin at Kimbe rang me to advise that the wreck of A19-141 was located on a slight rise some 15 miles from Kimbe. It was sixty three years ago that this aircraft was shot down. Two days later George Robertson rang with the same. .

On December 17th 1943 four 30 Squadron Beau fighters were detailed to carry out a barge sweep along the coast of New Britain in the area of Cape Hoskins. The aircraft were A19-138 (Cornish/Braid), A19-3 (Hastwell/West), A19-54 (Eisenhauer/Tiller), and A19-141 (Wein/Kirkwood). Nil sightings were reported and leaflets were dropped on nearby native villages.

A19-141 was last seen investigating a burnt out hulk off Cape Kaos when A19-54 saw A19-141 making a run over the hulk. He thought that Col Wein had found a target and dived down to make a strafing run at the hulk of is own. When he pulled out of the attack he could not see Col Wein's aircraft. A19-54 then made a search as far as Patanga without result.

Mrs Cecilie Benjamin owns and operates a very popular Walindi Dive centre at Kimbe in New Brittain and has been a great friend of 30 Squadron members and was very helpful in establishing a fine Memorial to the members who died and served in that area in WWII. The following is a detailed and informative article Cecilie has prepared for us:

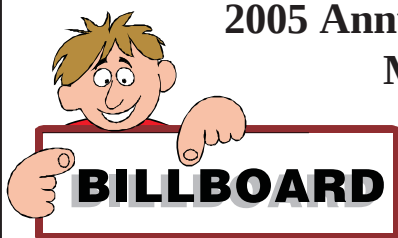


Mrs Cecile Benjamin

Section of the Wreckage



One of the propellers from A19-141



2005 Annual General Meeting

The original date for this year's meeting was scheduled for February as a barbecue at the

AAF Cadets premises at Archerfield aerodrome. This was cancelled due to the weather forecast of an extremely hot day, and rescheduled for March 9 as a lunch at Greenbank Services Club. This was a very pleasant and enjoyable day where we had some twenty members and friends take part. Our guests were President of the Greenbank RSL Services Club Eric Cavanagh and his wife Lindy.

President Ralph Ind presented his report for the previous year, Peter gave the financial position, and the previous committee was re-elected.

Ralph then opened for discussion changes to two items for 2005. The first was that future AGMs be held at the Greenbank venue as a lunch, and this was approved. The second item was a suggested change to our Annual Flying Scholarship. In the past this has been given to a cadet selected by 219 Squadron (aafc) officers.

We had been advised that 201 Squadron (aafc), the cadets Flying Training were seeking further flying scholarships. By granting our scholarship to this squadron there were a number of distinct advantages over what had been done in the past. The main advantages were that the scholarship was open to all cadet squadrons, cadets had to make an application which contained a number of conditions to ensue the applicant wanted to make a career as a pilot in the RAAF, and that the parents matched our grant of \$500. This change was then approved unanimously.

The annual raffle was once again drawn by Mrs Daisy Curran and the winners were:

1st Prize	G. Johnson
2nd "	J. Brassil
3rd "	J. Jacobi.

A very varied and enjoyable menu was then partaken, after Padre Cameron Smith said grace. The meeting was closed after our quest Logan RAAFA. President Eric Cavanagh provided a glass of an excellent port to all present to wrap up a most enjoyable get together

PETER WHITE.



Robert Williams, Stan Curran and Ron Snell



Ralph presents his annual report



Bill counts the money



Jack Chamberlain and Ralph's old Flight Commander, Jim McSharry

(left) Bill O'Connor, Daisy Curran, Stan Curran and Jack Chamberlain

President's Corner

Dear Members



Well Anzac Day has come and gone but not without some disappointment. One of our serious problems was the fact that within a quarter of an hour of the commencement of the march our AAFC cadets, who were originally organized by Peter, to carry our banner had not turned up, which created a bit of a panic.

The RSL had organised a tent nearly opposite to our starting point and by luck after making some enquiries we were allotted two AAFC cadets which eased the tension considerably. I must say the two cadets allotted to us, who I believe were from 208 Squadron AAFC, were the best we have ever had as they kept in step the whole time, which was an improvement on previous years.

I felt so sorry for Peter who had gone to a great deal of trouble to ensure that the cadets would be present to carry the banner. What ever happened to those cadets I don't suppose I will ever know, but I suggest that someone in the ATC squadron deserves a good swift kick in the backside.

Another problem we had was the number of our members who were marching. Apart from the four walking wounded travelling in jeeps, I counted eight chaps behind the banner, but I simply didn't know who the foreigners were, but without them we would have made a rather poor showing.

Members, I urge you not to leave next year's Anzac Day Parade to the next chap, but if you would attend and help swell the numbers, I would be most grateful. In addition it would assist the Association in honouring the memory of our fallen comrades.

Regards

RALPH

2005 COMMITTEE



S. Curran, W. O'Connor, J. Chamberlan, P. White, R. Ind



How to improve your Radio Procedures

(English:-Apologies to Pygmalion)

After my discharge from the RAAF, I re-visited my old home hometown, to hopefully to await my application for Airlines. A friend of mine from our boyhood days had returned home. I looked forward to talking with him. John had been on operations in the UK and recently in the Middle East.

His last posting to a major centre (Malta I think) which was equipped with radar and strictly controlled by "the Brits" brought back some humorous memories. Our briefing / debriefing officer never failed to have a chip at those of us from the RAAF: - your RT procedures are dreadful, with your awful Aussie drawl, it is difficult to understand you: further more you don't seem to know the King's English. ("Oh is he quipped my crew man") which put an end to any further communication between us.

"When we were returning one night from an op", John continued: "The cultured voice of the British controller instructed us to hold south of the airport-there are two aircraft to the north that will be landing before you". I had knowledge of enemy aircraft following in your shadow from the radar and popping you off when you reduced speed in the circuit/ holding pattern. I had a good view of the flare path and could make a landing from our position south with a steep approach. I pulled everything off and put everything down, grabbed the mike and said "We Australians no understand English: coming straight in".

In a matter of minutes we were at the end of our landing run, which was close to our quarters. We shut down and ran to our block, just as those "dim lights" from ops control section were coming to "have a talk". Slamming our door, boots off, and into our cots in darkness, just in time to hear to hear a loud banging on our door. "Aw, fair go", drawled my mate, in perfect Australian, "we have an early op", (he lied) "get lost will you".

"I'm sorry, I must be in the wrong block, I am looking for an Australian Beaufighter crew" was the reply, but he left. Which clearly shows we Australians can be understood, even if half asleep, and speech deliberately slurred to suggest this condition.

ARTHUR THOMSON

Diary of F/Sgt Donald C Kirkwood

RAAF - 30 Squadron

1943 - JUNE / JULY



*CONTINUED FROM
MARCH 2005 ISSUE*

Monday 14th

Nothing spectacular all day. A little bed scrounging during the morning.

Evening mild, with one red warning but the nips couldn't get thru' the weather.

A letter from Mary today.

Tuesday 15th

Looks like a fine day to be had.

8 chaps are off on an ops. this morning. Boana and Kiaput, 2 villages displaying quite an amount of Jap activity. One crew, Sgt. Woolcott (pilot) and Sgt. Hasenohr (observer) had tragic luck, during the take off. One motor failed when they were ½ way down the strip and with almost flying speed in hand. The pilot fought desperately to take her off (A19-93) but the added strain during a bounce burst a tyre further upsetting his control. The aircraft struck the blast wall of a dispersal bay, ripped one engine from its mounting and crashed over said wall. The impact broke the fuselage just fore of the rear cupola, the tail end, containing the observer, was flung 50 feet into the air and landed 20 yards from the forward end.

On impact with the wall, the aircraft blew up and burst into flame immediately, the fires heat causing all ammunition cannon and small arms to explode. Believed 2 gapers were injured from these explosions.

The pilot was killed instantaneously from the explosion and his body incinerated. The observer sustained a broken pelvis, collar bone, wrist, thigh with severe lacerations, a head wound and shock. Seriously injured, but Doe thinks he will pull through in time.

5 men killed since we arrived 17 days ago. Mortality rate for pilots in these crashes is 125%. All bar one of observers have escaped.

We attended the funeral of Sgt. Woolcott at 2pm. Breakfast to buried 7 hours. Too fast, and hard to conceive.

False alert today before lunch. Indulged in gardening and home beautification during late afternoon.

Am now sitting hoping for the cloud to clear so the Jap can bomb in peace at the same time giving our AA a chance.

No raid. Had perfect conditions, but they funk'd it.

Wednesday 16th

Nothing unusual apart from a little energy expenditure in digging up another fern. Both palms are looking rather ill.

No raids even though the weather was suitable.

One very small letter from Mary.

Thursday 17th

Spruced ourselves up for a snapshot during morning, this constituting our only activity apart from the usual chores.

Afternoon was spent at Manubada Island again. Beautiful swimming and quite some fun at sports. No mail tonight again.

The Jap plucked up courage and came over tonight in 2 lots of 2. The first pair were picked up smartly by the lights but the AA appeared erratic but successfully ruined their bombing run. The second pair approached from due south, did a perfectly level run across, effected a rate one turn and crossed over again. However the AA pasted hell out of them this time. One chap was tossed violently at one stage and later on hit. He was seen to dive sharply emitting smoke and continue losing height rapidly. A possible victim. Had to duck once as a nose cap came whistling down. All aircraft were Bettys.

Friday 18th

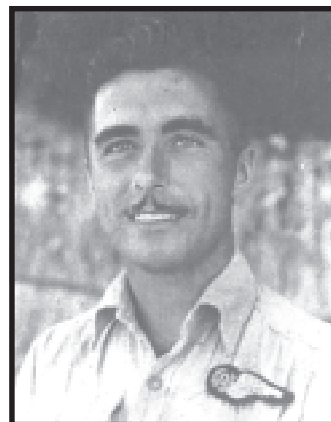
One aircraft of last night's raid claimed as a victim.

After 2 raids here and 2 aircraft shot down coupled with the terrific bashing the Yanks doled out over in the Solomons, namely 32 bombers and 45 Zekes shot down, the Japs must be feeling pretty sore.

Nothing unusual during the day.

Pictures tonight "Seven Days Leave" and "Typhoon". No raid alarms.

2 letters from Mary today, one censored.



Saturday 19th

Nothing unusual during the morning.

Young Bob Hasenohr died at 0017 today and was buried at 11am. Fourth member we have buried since we arrived here. About 4pm A19-102 fresh from ARD was taken off by Maurice Ball and observer with 2 others as passengers. Reached a height of 20 feet when the aircraft nosed straight in. Burst into flame in a minute or two but miracle of miracles all scrambled out unscathed. Aircraft is a total loss. C.O.'s kite flying at same time caught fire while taxiing back to bay. Fire was extinguished. Suspicion of elevator trim having been reversed. 11 aircraft destroyed in 7 weeks. The gremlins are at work.

Evening was spent in a violent dispute as to whether cream be eaten with "plum pudding" slices. Conversation ended at 11.30pm finishing off with reincarnation, evolution of man, Adam and Eve and poor old Noah plus ark.

Sunday 20th

Hard work today. Bunny and I went wood chopping. What a job in this climate, and to think of washing on for tomorrow.

New crews arrived this afternoon. Quite a few old friends among them too. New CO arrived and first landing here his aircraft swung off the strip. A little beer here tonight. 2 glasses per man.

No letters arrived from home today.

Just thinking; we have 6 ex-23 Squadron observers with us. Namely:- Gollan, Hardman, Hullin, White, West and myself. Remarkable!

Monday 21st

Life as usual during am. Nothing spectacular. PM spent in vain attempt to reach Manubada Island. Sea far too rough, shipping greenies and looked like being swamped. Returned to Port M and had swim there while waiting for tender. Water beautifully warm.

Raid warning from 10.50pm to 11.55pm. No kites came along, lap must be feeling sore from his recent bashings.

No letters today.

Tuesday 22nd

Very dull again. Life here is certainly becoming dull. The squadron is only here for face sake apparently. Jobs are few and far between. Col and I have been allotted a kite A 19-3 but as usual with our queer luck it will not be serviceable for I month or more. Just going in for a 240 hourly inspection. Will we be able to stay satisfied? God knows. We are all fast becoming super bored. Spent last 3 days practically within the confines of the tent.

Every time anybody flies something goes wrong with the kites involved. Yesterday 2 kites slightly damaged.

Collided while taxiing. Things must be building up for a big bang somewhere. Had some rain last night. Heaviest since arriving here.

No letters from anywhere. Wouldn't mind doing my spine bashing at or nearer home. Shortest day today, eh?

Wednesday 23rd

Nothing. Very bored all day.

No letters.

Thursday 24th

Unexciting morning. Photos taken in front of A19-132 this afternoon followed by a "Tommy" gun shoot of 20 rounds. Terrific. Still cool.

One censored letter from Mary.

This place is very slack and uninteresting.

Friday 25th

Visit from Air Vice Marshal Cole this morning. Nothing spectacular.

Played ping pong and warsaw to wile away our weary hours. 17 days since we last flew. Wouldn't it? Pictures last night "Amazing Mrs Holliday" and "London by Night".

Bunny, Col, Edward and myself have entered into a syndicate. Namely "Strafers Syndicate" to **yjp** a block of 4 flats or any other prize offering. Most exciting, it will be drawn on Nov. 15. Not far away.

Saturday 26

Nothing doing apart from being bored stiff.

Sunday 27th

Good news yesterday? All may go to Milne Bay for a month on extensive flying duties. I wonder?

We all suspect action, but it is still the RAAF. Went to the 50-50 show tonight. Certainly is an excellent turn. Quite good fun had by all.

No letters today.

Monday 28th

Started day with a visit from Mr Jacobson, known as Master Karl, plantation owner of Lae NG.

Gave us an extremely interesting lecture on how to escape being captured when baled out or forced landed.

Received mosquito lotion after lunch and extra nay, gear in anticipation of our pending extensive flying duties. We are still wondering. Afternoon poor.

Tuesday 29th

Lousy unexciting day. Still very bored.

A letter today. Pictures.

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Wednesday 30th

Nothing again. Motor bike training only thing of interest.

Letter today.

JULY

Thursday 1st

Have grown so lazy that I cannot even remember what has been done during the day. Looking back a whole 2 days I find that I have failed to make mention of Tuesday's trip to Rouna Falls.

Road to the top of the falls provided some exciting moments. It is very narrow and terribly rough. Rocks strewn all over it. At several points you can look back down along the whole length of the valley. Hellfire Pass is a one way section and is aptly named. Like all good falls there is a long arduous tiresome track to traverse to reach the base of the falls. Track is a dark gloomy hole in places, vegetation of all kinds, creepers, weird trees and "Tarzan" vines. The water falls in 2 stages of about 100 feet each. They are really magnificent and a beautiful sight. The floor of the falls is filled with boulders of larva origin, some sizing up to an average house.

The whole area is filled with a dense fine spray reflecting the rainbow colours, and further accentuating the beauty of the place.

Thursday itself. As usual a wonderful game of patience. Still waiting.

Friday 2nd

Nothing.

Pictures tonight.

Bunny and Ted left with a kite for Milne Bay. God knows how Edward came to be taking McRobbie's kite down.

The RAAF again.

Saturday 3rd

Just a continuance of our usual bludging wait.

When will the RAAF start working?

We are all fed up to the neck with the damn inactivity.

Letter from Bub tonight. Feeling miserable.

Sunday 4th

Up at 4.15am. We're off. Down to the strip in the early morn, grey streaks just entering into the sky.

Loaded up the transport kite with our gear and 28 chaps.

Take off at 6.30am, a flight thru' dirty weather, the crew loses themselves and we are forced to return again.

Home again at 10.30am to continue our usual spine bashings.

Monday 5th

Up at 4.1 5am again. A repeat of yesterday except that a fog delayed our take off until 9am. The crew flew over the strip 5 times and did not even see the strip. Wouldn't it. Such is our RAAF.

Back again by 1pm. Continued our loafing.

Tuesday 6th

Up at 4.15am. A habit? Loaded up in a Yank kite and were away at 6.15am.

Half way there the hydraulics failed. No brakes and no wheels. All safety belts on.

They filled their system with water and hoped for the best. Some of the ground crews with us were very, very anxious.

We landed OK, wheels down but no brakes. The pilot was super in his handling.

Good God, what a hole to be in. Sun came out for about 10 minutes and nearly burnt a hole in us. Steam rising everywhere. It is a filthy, muddy place this Milne Bay.

We were transported up to our strip and camp location by road. What a road. Mud 6 inches deep, narrow but lined with coconut palms. The camp site is in a coconut grove or plantation among all the rotting vegetation possible. It is filthy. Food is horrible. Mud and slush everywhere, always raining, everything that walks, crawls, flies, stings, spins and stinks exists here.

No lights, had to shift our tent site too. Woe is us.

Wednesday 7th

Tent collapsed at 2am. Raining all the time.

Spent all day fixing up our tent. Still raining. Nothing outstanding. This is a filthy hole indeed. I hope our stay will be very short.

Thursday 8th

Poured all night again but our tent is superb. No drains required. Acts as a sponge and mops every little bit up.

Life is bearable but the food today was really foul. Diced off into the jungle this afternoon to gather material for the making of a stand. What a job, very nearly broke my back. The stand was a wow, but it does stand.

Rained like the dickens all night and Bunny and I went to the pictures. Seat was an upturned tin in the mud. What a life, really amusing.

Would like to be home now.

Friday 9th

Started the day well by doing a little washing and partaking of my birthday cake for breakfast.

Rest of the day mediocre. Mostly spine bashing.

No letters from anywhere.

FINDING BEAUFIGHTER A19-141

By Cecilie Benjamin

Dear Peter,

Five years ago, on Anzac Day, the 25th April 2000, a Memorial Dedication to Australian airmen lost here during WW2 was held in Kimbe, the main town of the Province of West New Britain, Papua New Guinea. This had come about after George Robertson in 1998, an ex 30th Squadron pilot, had visited the crash site of Beaufighter A19-139 in a rugged area inland from Kimbe township. George had written about this aircraft and the loss of Flying Officers Percy Coates (pilot) and Hilton Chapple (navigator) in an article titled "New Britain Revisited" after his visit to New Britain. It was the first time he had returned to Papua New Guinea since the year of 1943 when, at the height of intense fighting in the jungles of New Guinea, thousands of people caught up in the conflict here during World War 2, were losing their lives.

This publication was the seed from which the Seceretary of The Beaufighter and Boston Association of Queensland, Peter Whitw, developed and designed the original concept of a Memorial built to honour the Australian airmen lost in the Battle for New Britain at the San Remo Club in Kimbe. San Remo Plantation had been an important navigation reference for the Australian airmen. 17 relatives and wartime companions accompanied George back to New Britain for the Dedication Ceremony, among them were Yvonne and Bill Holt from Sydney and Ron and Ethel Wein from Queensland. Yvonne Holt is the daughter of Navigator Donald Kirkwood and Ron Wein is the brother of Flying Officer Col Wein. Donald Kirkwood and Col Wein were on a barge sweep near Cape Koas on the north coast of New Britain when their aircraft, Beaufighter A19-141, went missing. Sketchy information about their capture by the Japanese forces in the Saddle Mountain area of New Britain had left more questions than answers.

I had been involved with the San Remo Memorial Project since its inception. George and Pat Robertson, family friends, had stayed with me at my home in West New Britain, Walindi Plantation Resort, on the shores of Kimbe Bay and I was now familiar with the military history of 30th Squadron in the New Britain theatre of operation. During the course of the Holts visit, Yvonne had remarked to me, what were the chances of her Father's aircraft ever being found? Donald Kirkwood and Col Wein died as POW's in Rabaul, on the 5th March 1944. Yvonne Holt's question remained with me. I often looked up the coast of the island and thought about where A19-141 may be located and if it held further information. Being an agricultural researcher in my previous professional life, the finding of A19-141 became a challenge.

For people to understand the nature of such a search, the reader has to be aware of the size of the island of



Don West at the Kimbe Memorial

New Britain. The island is approximately 40,000 square kilometers in area. It is also covered for most part in dense primary forest. At the time of WW2 there were several coconut plantations which hugged the shoreline but the great forests remained undisturbed. Today, a thriving oil palm industry has been established along the northern coast of New Britain with a road winding along this coast. Access now occurs to areas which were previously only reachable by boat or walking bush tracks made by villagers living on the island.

In looking for lost aircraft here these days, one has to be in contact with several sections of the community. These areas are the logging and oil palm industries along with local residents/villagers. Kimbe is a small town with an international port servicing the oil palm industry. People socialize in close proximity to one another and information tends to be shared. This is not like the anonymous nature of a city. In looking for the information I was seeking, one always was ready to follow up the slightest hint of talk of aircraft wreckage.

The first information I heard was from Peter Humphries, a businessman who has lived in Kimbe all his life and knew many of the Province residents. He had told me a school teacher from an area called Tarobi, near Saddle Mountain had told him about an aircraft from WW2 near his village. The area description was

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vague as were any true details about the actual aircraft, but it is an example of how such a search evolves.

During the visit to Kimbe for the Memorial service in 2000, Frank Lewis, a private pilot, had taken George Robertson and Don West, ex Navigator 30th Squadron, flying over towards the area where information existed about Donald Kirkwood and Col Wein's capture from Japanese records. This was the Saddle Mountain area. Frank, George and Don hoped to see where an aircraft may have been able to successfully either ditch or put down in an emergency. The information about the prospects of an aircraft in the Tarobi area seemed a promising place to start looking.

Throughout the search for A19-141, Frank Lewis has been a colleague. Frank works with thousands of Papua New Guinean smallholders who participate in the oil palm industry here in West New Britain. He is comfortable to move in the rugged terrain of New Britain and to communicate in Pidgin English to people here. This is an essential combination of skills for this type of search.

Frank and Leslie Lewis walked into the Saddle Mountain area at the end of 2000 in search of the missing aircraft. Although they were not successful in finding anything, they were convinced there was an aircraft in the area somewhere by what was being said by local residents. In early 2001, an air search of the same swamps by helicopter also proved fruitless. Information from Brian Bennett, a New Britain resident at the time and WW2 researcher, suggested that the illusive aircraft in the search area was reputed to actually be a P-38.

If the swamps and massive rainforests of this island are visited, it is easier to understand how difficult it is to see aircraft debris from the air here. The wreckage has now been there for over 60 years. The island receives 150 inches of rain annually so vegetation growth rates are very aggressive. The jungle claims its secrets rapidly here. .

The years of 2002 and 2003 went by and life went on. The question of the whereabouts of A19-141 slipped to the back of the mind but never quite disappeared. In 2004, I decided to review the war diary of Navigator Donald Kirkwood. Yvonne Holt had left a copy of this document with John Ray. John was one of the group of people who had been involved with the Memorial Project in 2000. Within the papers, there was a copy of a letter from the Commonwealth of Australia, Casualty Section to Mrs D.C. Kirkwood outlining the report from the Squadron Unit about the disappearance of A19-141. In this correspondence, a target had been sighted on a reef, approximately one mile off shore of Cape Koas on the north coast of New Britain. This was the 17th December 1943. A19-141 attacked the target. The

accompanying Beaufighter, approximately 400 yards behind and initially at a higher altitude dived into a similar run. After pulling away from the target, the following aircraft saw no sign of A19-141. The pilot had assumed the aircraft had flown ahead towards Cape Hoskins. The pilot set his course for base in the Trobriand Islands, Milne Bay, and tried to contact Donald Kirkwood by wireless, but did not receive any answer. This was within half an hour of the attack on the target. There were no Allied witnesses to the disappearance of A19-141. After reading this letter, I thought perhaps I should redirect my inquiries around the Cape Koas area east of Saddle Mountain.

I contacted the General Manager of Hargy Oil Palm, David Mather, at Bialla, told him the story and forwarded copies of the letter describing what had occurred near Cape Koas. David was keen to provide assistance and informed several of his senior staff who were in contact with villagers along the coast. After several months, no information had filtered back.

On Anzac Day 2005 after the Dawn Service at the San Remo Memorial in Kimbe, it is traditional to play a game of cricket with the Anzacs versus a combined team named the Barbarians. During this epic struggle, a member of the Anzac team was 86 not out when I had to return to Walindi Plantation Resort. Being curious to know if the local batting champion had made the first ever century on our communities small cricket oval, I contacted Mark Tickell who had been batting also. This was the afternoon of Tuesday the 26th April. My first question was to enquire about the century, positive reply received, I enquired about the overall winners of the game, Anzacs lost to the Barbarians. Mark then said he had been to see the wreckage of an aircraft that morning. The aircraft had been reported to him on Anzac Day by some of his employees. They had been clearing and cutting timber on an area where a new oil palm estate had just been planted inland from Hoskins airport. The men had gone to hunt birds on a nearby hill when they came across the wreckage of an aircraft from WW2. A phone call to Brian Bennett in Australia, had the weapons in the wreckage identified as Australian. As soon as I heard this comment, my heart leapt, could it be possible this was the aircraft we had been after for 5 years, almost to the day the search commenced! I immediately rang Frank Lewis and we planned to visit the site the next morning, Wednesday the 27th April.

The trip to the site was a beautiful drive through an oil palm plantation called Rigula. Mt Pago, an active volcano which last erupted on the 5th August 2002 was close by. We walked the short walk up the hill with our guides. Almost the first piece of wreckage we came across was metal with the number 141 written on it and we knew this was the Beaufighter flown by the Kirkwood/Wein crew lost over 60 years ago. We

climbed over a ridge and there was an engine, propeller, parts of the fuselage, pilot's seat and a piece of metal with a white painted V on it. We scrambled over the next ridge and came across the other engine and propeller. At the base of this wreckage was another piece of metal with A1 and a part of a 9 formed on it. Frank photographed as much as possible. Ammunition was present and an opened ammunition box lay amongst the debris.



It was obvious no one would have survived this impact. The crew members have parachuted out of the aircraft probably nearby. Indications are the left propeller has been feathered and was not turning at the time of impact. The right prop seems to have had pitch. The crash site would be about 38 kilometers from the area at Saddle Mountain where the search commenced. One of the first things I did was to ring Ron Wein and Yvonne Holt. I informed them of the find and its whereabouts plus the fact the crew would have had to parachute out of the aircraft. Even after 60 years, this information still has impact on the families who have waited so long with so little information about what had happened to their loved ones.

The north coast of New Britain was totally under the control of the Japanese Forces on the 17th December 1943, when A19-141 was lost. Allied Forces mounted attacks on the south coast of New Britain at the Arawe Islands on the 15th December 1943 and successfully landed in the Cape Gloucester area on the western tip of New Britain on the 26th December the same year. It is believed, Donald Kirkwood and Col Wein remained as fugitives from the Japanese for 7 to 10 days respectively before capture.

Now the location of the aircraft is known, it is possible to visit nearby villages and find further information. That will be something Frank and I will attend to in the future. It is ironic to think during the visit of Ron Wein and Yvonne Holt in 2000, if their departing or arriving aircraft into Hoskins airport came in or took off from the inland approach, they would have almost passed over the wreckage site of A19-141 or been able to see the site out the Air Niugini window.

Frank Lewis is a very good friend of Cecilie Benjamin and is also very interested in 30 Squadron Beaufighters. He and Cecilie have visited the site and Frank has taken quite a number of photos

Peter,

Apologies for the mess of emails but getting anything to work here is a challenge. Hopefully the photos have got through ok. There are more but it takes about 20 min to send one and with line dropouts etc I have tried to get a sample for you. Once I sort out copying to CD I'll get Cecilie to send you a copy.

The location is E 150.28.30 and S 05.37.30. (give or take a bit) The plane impacted heavily and is demolished with bits strewn around a ridge top and two gullies. One engine (port I think) has gone over the cliff face which is straight up and down. (the side we approach from is fairly gentle)

The port prop appears to have been unfeathered whereas the starb appears feathered. That engine is the one in the photo. Both props are separated from the engines.

I removed an ID plate from the tail area. It is 3" high by 1.5" wide. Details which I am pretty sure I have read correctly are as follows.

There are two relatively intact canon and another badly bent. There could be a fourth somewhere. I couldn't find any cannon ammo, whole or damaged.

The machine guns are gone as is any intact 303 ammo - there are three ammo boxes which still had cartridges in them but they have gone now - much prized by the locals for raping and pillaging! I'll probably see them at our next holdup! There is remnants of a radio tuner with a Sydney manufacturer's name on a part in it.

The site is easy to get to and once the locals settle down (and realise that people are not going to fork out millions of dollars!) it will be a safe location for anyone who wants to visit. Cecilie (or I) would be happy to help anyone who makes the effort.

Let me know if you require anything further.

Regards

Frank Lewis

New Pension Rates

Effective from 20 March 2005

Service Pension Maximum Rates.

Singles Rate \$476.30

Couples Rate (each) \$397.70

Disability Pension Rates

T&PI \$798.80

EDA \$452.40

War Widows & Widower's Pension

\$476.30

Seniors concession allowance per half year.

Singles \$100.00

Couples (each) \$100.00

Pharmaceutical Allowance

Singles \$5.80

Couples (Each) \$2.90

Telephone Allowance per Quarter

Singles \$19.80

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*Courtesy DVA Gold Coast Office
Kathy, Nikki, Pat & Anne Maree*

The Flight of the Scorpion

On Saturday 7 March 1942, twelve RAF and RAAF personnel set sail from Tjilatjap, Java, in a thirty foot wooden lifeboat. Their mission: to reach Roebourne on the northern coast of West Australia, some nine hundred and fifty nautical miles a way, and bring rescue to the remaining airmen trapped on the island who were in danger of being captured by the enemy. This story is written in memory of the author's father, RAAF Flight Sergeant William Nicholas Pax Cosgrove (1918-1943) of Richmond, Victoria, who was a member of that crew. The names, dates and some events are true. The rest is fiction.

This is a great read well written by the daughter of one of the most colourful members of 30 Beaufighter Squadron Bill Cosgrove, who was posted to the Squadron after his escape. The forward is written by Bill's nephew General Peter Cosgrove AC, MC. Bill and his navigator Bernie Le Griffin lost their lives when Beaufighter A19-74 crashed into the sea on a dawn take off from Vivigani strip on Goodenough Island. They were one of four Beaufighters detailed to carry out a barge sweep from Cape Orford to Awul on the coast of New Britain.

Another escaper who was also posted to 30 Beaufighter Squadron after his escape was George Sayer. George together with his navigator Dick Mairet lost their lives when shot down by ground fire whilst attacking Japanese troops on the Kokoda Track at Buna

The book is now on sale and a copy can be had from: Ginninderra Press PO Box 6753 Charnwood 2615 for \$22.50 (incl p&p).

VALE

JEAN MAVIS BEADLE, wife of Association member Frank passed away peacefully in her sleep at the Ipswich Hospital, after a short illness. A requiem mass was conducted at the All Saints Church of England at Brisbane Road, Booval on 6th April 2005 by the Reverend Les Fernance.

Jean will be sorely missed by husband Frank, daughter and son and six grand children. She accompanied Frank to all our outings, and we found her to be a truly lovely lady and well liked by all of our members.

MAY SHE REST IN PEACE.

*During the service granddaughter
Kate McBean presented this poem
she had written in memory of
her very loved Grandma*

Grandma,

You were a strength

That carried my weight

The kindness of your heart,

Your never-ending faith.

I believe in the pillars

That stand tall in my life

Solid foundations of my childhood

Buried roots growing ripe.

Through your hands and your wisdom

I have learnt and seen much,

Patience and honesty,

True care and pure love.

Your brush that painted all our lives

Has inspired and I'm touched.

Today you are resting

And I bless your beautiful soul,

I thank you and I love you

And cherish all that you have told.

I stand here now, with your memory in my mind,

Of all that you have delivered to me,

I stand here and I shine.

For you are more than just a memory,

You are more than any words

Your essence is within me

Your seeds firmly planted on this earth.

From the bottom of my heart,

From the depths of my soul,

You are the greatest, greatest grandmother

A granddaughter could ever know.

KATE

Darwin Re-visited

Stan Curran who served with 31 Squadron in Darwin was awarded a bursary that enabled him to return to Darwin on Anzac Day 2005 and attend the Anzac Day Service there. He was accompanied by his son, Ian. Ed.

Stan records his visit:

We arrived at Darwin PM hours on Saturday 23 April and visited John Haslett. John had been the curator of the Darwin aviation museum. I had made donations to the museum and given him some technical advice when I was serving at Darwin 1970-72 as Senior Engineering Officer.



John had advised Richard Luxton the owner of the property where 31 Squadron had their camp site and air strip that we wished to visit the site. Richard extended an invitation to us and said he would meet us there. We took John with us and left Darwin early on Sunday morning 24th April. When I was stationed at Darwin 1972-74 I had often visited the area at that time and it was easy to recognize all the war time positions, now the only recognizable site is the airstrip. We followed Richard through a bush track to the place where our chapel had been, Richard who is an architect had designed and built a new chapel at his expense. The design won an architectural award and it has been placed on the list of heritage buildings.

From Coomalie Creek we went about another 30 kilometers down the Stuart Highway to Adelaide River Memorial cemetery. The cemetery is kept in immaculate condition and most tourists stop there to pay their

respects. We were no exception. Some of 31 Squadron who lost their lives during WWII are buried there.

When we returned to Darwin, I contacted Frank Geddes the RSL co-coordinator of the Anzac Day ceremonies and asked him if I could lay a wreath at the dawn service. Of course he agreed and reserved a seat for Ian and myself.

That night, Sunday 24th April, Ian and I visited Sqn Ldr Jim Roddy RAAF (rtd) a former intelligence officer, and his wife Kathy. Their daughter Lyn also turned up. We had been good friends with the Roddys when we had been stationed at Darwin at the same time. We had a great evening reminiscing about old friends and times.

The dawn service was most impressive where the theme was World War I nursing service. A letter was read out. It had been written by a World War I nurse from a forward hospital to her sister in Australia. It was very touching. I have written to Frank to see whether I can have a copy of it. During the wreath laying part of the Dawn Service three names were read out together: Ray Chin OAM, President Darwin RSL Sub Branch, the President of Darwin services club and mine representing Greenbank RSL of Queensland, The Beaufighter/Boston Assn. of Queensland and 31 Squadron Assn. It was an honor to be included with the Darwin RSL presidents.

After the Dawn service I had a couple of drinks with Ray Chin then later took part in the Anzac parade.

Tuesday 26 April 05 it was late when we arrived in Alice Springs as the day had been taken up with checking out of one hotel returning the car, flying to Alice Springs, getting another car, and checking into another hotel.

Wednesday 27 April 05, Ian and I made Alice Springs Aviation Museum our first stop. Pen Morley, the curator, welcomed us and gave us a guided tour of course. The remains of the Kookaburra aircraft was the highlight of the visit.



RAAF's Part in the Battle for Australia

At the opening of the war in the Pacific (7/12/1941) the RAAF had two Hudson squadrons (No.1 & No.28) and No.21 Brewster Buffalo squadron in Malaysia. No.2. Squadron with Hudsons and No.12 Wirraway squadron was based at Darwin. A handful of Hudsons from No.13 were at Ambon. No.20 Squadron equipped with American PBY Catalina and a few Empire Flying Boats from No.11 Squadron were based at Port Moresby.



No.24 squadron was based at Rabaul, with a small force of 4 Hudsons and 8 Wirraways. The flight line facilities were so primitive that the aircraft had to be refuelled using a native bucket line from 44 gallon drums. Throughout the disastrous Malayan campaign, the over-worked Hudsons and Buffalos fought a losing battle, proving no match for the faster, more manoeuvrable Jap fighters.

The RAAF was forced back to Singapore and then had to be evacuated. Again the Hudsons were called into service. They carried out long unescorted daylight reconnaissance's, protected convoys of Australian troops, bombed, strafed, rescued hundreds and brought them safely to Darwin. The record of Nos.2 and 13 Squadrons operating from northern Australia was one of undying labour and courage.

The Japanese attacked Rabaul on 4th January. On the 15th January the Catalinas replied with an attack on the Truk Islands. Five days later the Japanese made their first large scale air attack on Rabaul.

Eight Wirraways took off to intercept over 100 enemy aircraft. Three of the Wirraways were shot down, two others crash-landed and another was damaged beyond repair, but they accounted for five superior Japanese aircraft (bombers).

This reduced the air defence of Rabaul to two Wirraways and one Hudson, all within seven minutes. The other three Hudsons of No.24 Squadron had been damaged during the early attacks by the Japanese. Squadron evacuation was commenced with the surviving aircraft flying out casualties and the remainder of the Squadron personnel moving overland to be evacuated by two Empire flying boats to Port Moresby.

Some of the No.24 Squadron personnel and aircraft evacuated from Rabaul were formed into a composite squadron comprising members of No.23 Squadron (Port Moresby detachment) with three Hudson aircraft

and crews. 17 officers and 94 airmen were under the command of Wing Commander John Lewrew. On the 12th of February Lewrew was shot down while leading a low level attack by three Hudsons on shipping at Gasmata. Later in the month Squadron Leader Deryck Kingwell flew in another 23 Squadron Hudson and crew, also 4 Hudsons and crews from No.6 Squadron arrived to be formed into No.32 Squadron on the 23rd February 1942 with Squadron Leader Kingwell as Commanding Officer.

Often overlooked by aviation writers historians, after the demise of No.24 Squadron all that stood between the Japanese and Australia was the Catalinas of No.11 and No. 20 Squadron and the eight Hudsons of No.32 Squadron based in Port Moresby.

Port Moresby had the only airfield which the Allied air power could deploy from. This was a vital but vulnerable airfield for the defence of New Guinea and Australia. No.32 Squadron was to reconnoitre the Japanese forces and to attack the enemy when and whenever they could and to defend Port Moresby. This they did with great vigour, becoming Moresby's few, holding the forward push of the Japanese until the arrival of No.75 Squadron (March 1942). By early March, the Japanese had control of New Britain, and had occupied Salamaua and Lae on the north east coast of New Guinea.

On March 21, No.75 Squadron with Kittyhawks arrived in Moresby, under Squadron Leader John F Jackson. For a little over six weeks (44 days) this small force of 25 Kittyhawks held the Japanese Navy and Army Air Forces at bay. Not only did they defend Moresby they took the fight to the Japanese. They accounted for more than forty aircraft destroyed and a further sixty damaged. Only one Kittyhawk of the original 25 survived.



Note. Japanese aircraft based at Rabaul were Army: Fourth Air Army, 67th Air Division, Navy: XI Airfleet made up of the 2526th Air Flotilla. Around about 400 aircraft in total.

After the Coral Sea Battle, in which the Japanese lost a large naval force (the turning point in the Pacific war) they attacked Milne Bay. (25th August 1942).

To Be Continued