

The

WHISPERER

The Newsletter of the Beaufighter and
Boston Association of Queensland

SEPTEMBER 2003

PLENTY OF GRUNT FROM THIS PIG



A F-111 finishes a great handling display at RAAF Amberley F-111 30th Birthday Celebrations with a low level wings folded beatup of the strip and a spectacular dump and burn.



The wreath placed by
President Ralph at our
Memorial in the Rose Garden
at RAAF Amberley.

FREDERICK BERTRAM ANDERSON MID

A WIRELESS NAVIGATOR

Interviewed by George Dick and Recorded on tape at Glenbrook, NSW on 31st October, 1990

Having just finished my bombing and gunnery training at No 2 Bombing and Gunnery School at Port Pirie, been categorised as a Wireless Air Observer and promoted to Sergeant, I went by train to RAAF Station Richmond to join a newly-formed operational unit No. 30 Squadron arriving there early in July 1942. Other Sergeant WAO's who had been on my course at Port Pirie came to the squadron from at the same time as I did included Danny K Box, Stewart F Cameron, George C Carnegie, Norman E Greasley and Ronald C Sillett. I'm not sure whether Sergeant J R Wilson came from Port Pirie at the same time as I did or whether he came a few weeks later.

Other pilots and wireless air observers were at Richmond when I arrived, as the Squadron had formed some six weeks earlier. I see from Neville Parnell's book that the unit was formed at Richmond on 9th March 1942 and that Squadron Leader Charles Read was its temporary commander. I never came across him there; we took our orders from Wing Commander Brian (Blackjack) Walker, who had assumed command on 4th June.

A couple of days after my arrival at Richmond I looked out the window of our classroom and saw an odd-looking aircraft on the tarmac. Somebody said that it was the plane we were going to fly in and it was called a Beaufighter. I'd never seen or heard of it before- in fact, until then I had no idea what my posting to Richmond was all about. Nobody had bothered to tell me at Port Pirie (perhaps they didn't know) and nobody at Richmond thought to fill me in.

Initially, ground training occupied most of the WAO's time at Richmond, the focus being on some new Australian radio equipment manufactured by Amalgamated Wireless Australia. While we were reasonably familiar with the 1082/1083 gear fitted in the Oxford and Anson aircraft in which we had done our training, we had never seen or even heard of this AT5/AR8 equipment before, and we spent quite a few hours getting to know it. The transmitter and the receiver had to be manually tuned for, in common with other airborne radios in the RAAF, they weren't fitted with crystals at that time.

We did this radio familiarization in a small square brick building fronting the tarmac, and between two igloo hangars; it is still standing today (1990). Our instructors were Warrant Officer Lenny Greenhill, who had returned from England where he had flown in Sunderlands of No 10 Squadron, and Warrant Officer 'Caesar' O'Connor also recently returned from the UK.

Lenny Greenhill knew his job pretty well, and I think that he knew that he knew it too. 'Caesar' was a different kettle of fish-a happy-go-lucky fellow. Both of these fellows passed on a tip that they had used in their Sunderlands: if you flashed an Aldis lamp fitted with a red filter, the pilot of enemy aircraft might be deluded into thinking you were firing tracer and either break off or keep a healthy distance away.

A lot of the pilots were ex-flying instructors that I think Blackjack Walker knew; he'd been up in Darwin with Wirraways, and some of the pilots and navigators were Permanent Air Force fellows who'd been with him up there. Some other pilots had come back from UK; they'd been on Beaufighters over there. The chap I had, Bob Brazenor-he'd been over there. And Jack Sandford, who later became Commanding Officer of 30 Squadron he'd been over there in the UK too. Jack was decorated with a DSO and a DFC.

Squadron Bruce Rose (who had lost a leg flying in Beaufighters in the UK) was the Chief Flying Instructor during that 'operational conversion/refresher' training period at Richmond. The pilots included Flight Lieutenant Ross Little, 'Torchy' Uren, Dick Roe (he was killed while flying upside down in a Vultee Vengeance during an air pageant in Melbourne after he came back from New Guinea). He was my idol as a pilot-well-built, handsome, and a bonzer bloke.

I imagine the pilots were studying the Pilot's Notes for the Beaufighter, brushing up on its handling characteristics, and discussing among themselves the use of this aeroplane in its operational role. When the Wireless Air Observers weren't delving into the innards of the AR5/AT8 radio gear we were out there getting to know the aircraft allotted to our squadron.

Bob Brazenor and I became crewed up a week or so after I reported in to the unit orderly room at Richmond. I don't know how the pilot/navigator partnerships came about - the names might have been drawn from a hat, or perhaps one of the instructors just drew up a list at random. Maybe the Squadron's Commanding Officer ('Blackjack' Walker) made the allocations himself.

Eventually, pilots and navigators got to fly together on familiarisation flights in the local area. We took off from Richmond on my first flight in a Beaufighter just after morning tea on 28th July. During the one-hour flight my pilot did some formation flying and then fired his armament at the gunnery range. My air experience in the Beaufighter before we took off for our war station in New Guinea amounted to just on 21 hours, of which some 5 hours were night flying. Most of that was in local flying, but there was a grand total of two 'long-range'

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flights- one to Narrandera, one to Cootamundra and Jervis Bay.

That one was at night and gave us quite a scare, for we met extensive cloud cover as we flew up the coast from Jervis Bay, and when my ETA for Sydney was up we couldn't see any sign of the place. Bob decided to head out to sea for some miles and if low cloud still persisted, make a cautious descent, come back westwards, and if we can't make it, then we'll bail out. We did break out of the cloud just above the drome at around midnight and somewhere less than three hundred metres. Due to the blackout conditions applying to all coastal towns at that time we had been unable to get a ground fix.

The AT5/AR8 sets were the only radio communications equipment fitted to the Beaufighters at Richmond. Pilot and navigator wore face masks which incorporated a microphone, controlled by a thumb-switch on its uppermost surface. I tuned the transmitter and receiver so that the pilot could talk to the tower, but when we got outside of the local area I had to tune the sets to the Aeradio frequencies (6540 and 4495 kcs) and send them position reports by Morse. We used this civil communications facility because the RAAF didn't have its own network in Australia to talk to non-operational aircraft.

After a mere three weeks undertaking the 'operational conversion/training' activities at Richmond, the squadron was deployed northwards to its operational base in New Guinea. Bob and I flew Beaufighter A19-15 from Richmond to Townsville (Bohle River) on 17th August 1942. We had two of the groundstaff as passengers- AC1 Carmichael and AC1 Breen (an Instrument Maker). That aircraft we took to New Guinea was one of the 72 Beaufighters built by the Fairey Aviation Co at Stockport, UK, but modified for RAAF service. It was to remain our aircraft for the whole of our tour; it was written off after a belly-landing at RAAF Station Williamtown.

My Flying Log Book shows that on 10th September we made a 4 hour flight from Townsville to Fall River in Eastern New Guinea, and contains the annotation "To Battle- Milne Bay".

We undertook a number of training flights from the aerodromes at Garbutt and Bohle River — where we were camped. We did at least three gunnery exercises out on the Barrier Reef, and some formation flying. The Squadron — or maybe one of the Flights — made a practice deployment down to Charters Towers, the groundstaff taking 11 hours to come back in the train.

Japanese flying boats had recently made two or three attacks on Townsville, but their bombs had dropped harmlessly in the harbour. We were sent up one night to intercept a Japanese raider — the searchlights and were

also involved — but when we closed on that aircraft at about 20,000 feet and picked it up in the searchlights, Bob Brazenor recognized it as a B17. When he told ground control, he was recalled, because it turned out to be an exercise. Control had told everybody else but us.

On another occasion when a raid was expected we were sent up to defend the place, but when our aircraft got to about 20,000 feet, Bob Brazenor discovered that he had forgotten to bring his oxygen mask. There wasn't much point in giving him my mask because I certainly couldn't continue without oxygen either. So down we went, quite quickly.

We were camped in tents which were close to the strip at Bohle River, where there were plenty of dust, plenty of flies, kookaburras and magpies. We relieved our boredom by going out in the bush and firing off our revolvers.

'A' Flight was deployed from Bohle River to Milne Bay and while we there Len Vial and Ralph Nelson managed to write off a Hudson during take-off. The afternoon we got to Milne Bay our aircraft ran off the steel matting and got bogged in the mud; we weren't able to manhandle it out by nightfall, so we were sent off to get some sleep. We were put up in the Sick Quarters which already accommodated a native boy who had been shot up and whose leg had gone gangrenous. The stench was revolting. I believe he recovered and got some decoration for bravery and for being the only survivor from a small boat that had been attacked.

The Beaufighters weren't very active there, but the Kittyhawks always seemed to be in the air and the Hudsons of 6 Squadron were often out on bombing attacks. We sat around playing cards most of the time. The Japanese were all round the strip, for no sooner had the Kittyhawks taken off than they were firing their guns at nearby targets. The natives caught quite a few enemy soldiers, and their attitude was obvious when they brought their prisoners in because they just tipped them unceremoniously on the ground as though they were bags of potatoes. Quite a few Japs were killed in the immediate area of the strip and these were buried with a bulldozer. You'd be walking around the area and see a hand or foot sticking out of the ground.

To be continued.

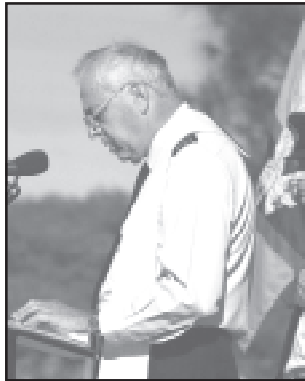
NOW HERE'S SOMETHING TO LOOK FORWARD TO

An item in the *Courier Mail* or *Sunday Mail* a few weeks ago told of one of the local 'knock shops' offering discounts to aged pensioners on Sundays.

How much for just a peek, I wonder!

Memorial Service RAAF Base Amberley June 1 2003

On behalf of the Officer Commanding 82 Wing I welcome you all to this Service of Commemoration. Through this Service we will, I trust, not only initiate a day of rightful tribute and recognition of excellence but more particularly extend our appreciation of that resonance of human life and history that is so embedded in the life and times of our F111 Strike Aircraft.



That history sadly includes the loss of life through sickness and accidents, always a tragedy for loved ones who sadly bear that loss. Death's vicarious presence has from time to time been so penetratingly impacted on us by the loss of aircrew who with consummate passion for excellence in their abilities, faced the risks, hazards and dangers that endure in the challenges of military aviation.

Those we remember today in prayerful reflection and remembrance are not known to all of us, yet some of them are singularly and specially known to some of us, as friends, colleagues and mates, and for the most part as sons and brothers, husbands and fathers. In its own inimitable way this singularity of knowing with all its sharing and caring, of being and doing, and having and holding is the touchstone of the quality of remembrance we see about us today.

Through the incorporation in today's events of the Annual Trophy Presentations by our war time Squadrons' Associations the hand of history emphatically takes hold of this memorial moment. The presence of these men, aged but ever new in the vigour of their tributes to their mates scuttled and lost in the horror of war, has its own rich vocabulary to enhance whatever we might say in attempting to capture the importance, might we say, the sacredness, of keeping to our memory those whose footprints, one way or the other mark the space and territory of the Air Defence of our nation.

W/Cdr Paul Goodland

Many thanks to Chaplain Goodland for this copy of his opening remarks. Due to a misunderstanding of the MC, the microphone of the PA system was not switched on and many of the members did not hear clearly Paul's words.

A Pilot's Gratitude to Ground Staff

It just goes to show how indebted we pilots and aircrew were to our ground crews, who worked in appalling conditions, were not "entitled" to warm clothing, were on call 24 hours a day, overtime and a union for better conditions were not even contemplated. They just had their big hearts, greasy fingers and their devotion to the job. I take my hat off to you fellows and give you my heartfelt thanks to each and everyone of you.

It is a well known but little talked about fact that wartime flying is totally dependant of hard, honest devoted work that is given little or no recognition. This work is, of course, that of the ground-crews. It is they who, literally, wind the clocks of the lives of the aircrews, whose aircraft they service.

At least the ground-crews in the squadrons I served in, worked in the most appalling conditions, in the open air and in all weathers. Having been a mechanic before becoming a pilot, I knew the responsibility and stress of correctly servicing aircraft, combat or not. Even with my short service as a ground-crewman, I could never relax and say that I did absolutely everything correctly. One always wonders; "Did I tighten that nut correctly? Did I fill that tank to the very last drop?" and the list goes on. Supervised mostly by one's honesty only, the proverbial buck always stops with the person doing the job.

What a beautiful job they did!

The quality of our ground-crew's work came home to me, most forcibly on my first trip of the new year trip to Norway in 1945. The first half of that long, 900 mile flight, escorting twin engined Beaufighters was always flown at fifty feet above the sea so as to be under the German radar. Winter flying in Northern Europe is literally the Devil's own time. On most trips we encountered all four season in random rotation. Looking at the grey, uninviting but hungry sea, stretching to all horizons, listening to the sweet, unfaltering song of the engine running like a Swiss watch and the steady gauges made, all of us thankful for our hardworking "Erks".

Even now, so many years later, when those of us pilots left have a small gathering, we often think of those silent, blue with cold, greasy fingered heroes. If there are any of you reading this, please believe that we do appreciate your efforts. We regret not stopping to chat longer but we too had problems to deal with.

The fact that there are relatively many of us flyboys around is very much because of your efforts. I still cannot find words adequate to thank someone for my life. My simple "Thank you" feels to be such a small offering, even so, I hope you will accept it as some small payment as it is all I have to give you. On your behalf, I ask for God's blessing on you and again, thank you so very much.

REMEMBER GUINEA GOLD?

Sixty years ago, on November 19, 1942, Australian and US troops fighting Japanese invaders in the New Guinea jungle during World War II read the first issue of Guinea Gold, a unique four-page Australian army newspaper which day after day thereafter published a record number of world scoops.

It was able to do so because US General Douglas MacArthur, Supreme Commander of Allied Forces in the South-West Pacific, gave it permission to publish his communiqués 20 hours before the release time for the rest of the world's media.

New Guinea was the only war zone where the US armed forces did not produce their own newspaper, Stars and Stripes. With separate American and Australian editions, Guinea Gold fully met their needs.

Earlier in 1942, Melbourne Herald war correspondent Reg Leonard had suggested that the Army should produce its own daily newspaper. Promptly crowned a major, he became Guinea Gold's foundation editor.

Years later, Mr R.B. Leonard, O.B.E., managing director of Queensland Newspapers Pty. Ltd., said that Guinea Gold's success was due very largely to dedicated people below officer rank - men who toiled uncomplainingly and for long hours in the ramshackle buildings that housed its overworked plant.

HOW GUINEA GOLD WAS NAMED

Before Guinea Gold started, the only source of news to the troops came from a news sheet called MANS (Moresby Army News Sheet). This was a single sheet printed on two sides letterpress and was produced by the Army Educational Unit.

The unofficial news going the rounds was known in the slang of the time as the "G.G." ("Good Guts"). The [Australian] Commander-in-Chief was not so isolated from his troops that he did not know. He played with the letters "G.G." and produced the title for the paper - "Guinea Gold."

Courtesy member Bill Masson (Yeulba)

GUINEA GOLD

Vol. 1 No. 3

In the Field, Saturday, 21 November, 1942.

NOT FOR SALE

THE SCORE

During the last few days, the following sinkings of enemy warships have been announced:-

1. One battleship, 3 heavy cruisers, 2 light cruisers and 5 destroyers in the Solomons.
2. One cruiser and one destroyer off Buna.
3. One battleship or heavy cruiser and one destroyer in the Solomons.

MORE HEAVY ENEMY LOSSES IN SOLOMONS

Crippling losses have been suffered by the Japanese in naval engagements off the Solomons during the past two weeks. New details are given in a United States Navy communique issued in Washington.

This special announcement indicates that another battleship or heavy cruiser and a destroyer have been sunk. The communique covers the period November 13 to November 15, and it is made clear that it may possibly cover some damage already announced. Monday's communique announced Japanese losses as 11 warships and 12 transports sunk, and some warships damaged.

A Navy spokesman in Washington said yesterday that, taking into account all possibility of duplication, two battleships had certainly been sunk, and two damaged in the Solomons in the past week. These losses in capital ships represent a severe blow to Japan which has already suffered smashing blows in other sea battles.

ENEMY STAND AT BUNA

In New Guinea, Japanese resistance to advancing Allied forces has stiffened, and yesterday's communique from General MacArthur's Headquarters mentions heavy fighting in the Buna-Gona coastal strip. It adds that enemy air forces have entered the engagement.

AMERICAN UNITS ATTACKING FROM THE EAST AND SOUTH ENCOUNTERED ENEMY MACHINEGUN FIRE YESTERDAY. ONE FORMATION IS MEETING STIFF RESISTANCE WITHIN A MILE OF BUNA.

Back towards the Kumusi river, Australian troops took Soputa yesterday, and moved on immediately towards Sanananda Pt. The position at Gona is unchanged.

Twilight In Italy

Messages filtering through from the Continent state that the defeat of German and Italian troops in North Africa has caused deep depression in Italy where a feeling of hopelessness now exists for any successful outcome of the war.

Secret societies are reported to be expressing mounting discontent and anti-Fascist supporters are becoming more vocal.

Withdraw?

A considerable body of opinion favors Italian withdrawal from the war in the belief that British and American terms would be more acceptable than the rod of the German taskmaster.

NO TIME FOR COMEDY

WHILE expressing the greatest delight at Allied victories in North Africa, the Prime Minister (Mr. Curtin) has issued a warning against any development of what might be termed a "victory complex in Australia."

Mr. Curtin said that while we must rejoice at the successes gained there must be no sign of complacency or letting up in Australia. If this happened the results would be disastrous. "The news in North Africa is magnificent," he added, "but it must not be construed as warranting any diminution of our war effort. The enemy is still thundering at our gates. He has to be driven out of New Guinea, the Solomons, Timor, the East Indies, and the Philippines, and this will require all that we have."

MOSCOW REPORTS VICTORY

Germans Held In Caucasus Battle

A decisive victory by the Red Army in the Central Caucasus is announced in a special Moscow communique.

The battle raged for many days near Orjonikidze, where the Germans were trying to reach the Georgian military road over the Caucasus.

More than 500 Germans were killed, and the Russians captured 140 tanks and a large quantity of other war equipment.

Activity at Stalingrad on Thursday was on a small scale. All German attacks were repelled.

Winter is setting in rapidly on a long section of the drawn out front. It will now be difficult for the Germans to win a spectacular victory before the full fury of the freezing winter months descends upon them.

ATTACK ON TURIN

Explosions caused by British bombs in Wednesday night's raid on Turin in Northern Italy could be heard in towns 80 miles away in Switzerland, according to the Bernese correspondent of the British United Press. Italians admit that the damage was considerable.

It was the R.A.F.'s 20th attack on Turin, which is the site of a large Italian arsenal. All British planes returned.

JAP MOVE IN PORTUGUESE TIMOR

INFORMATION has reached the Commonwealth Government that the Japanese have taken another coastal position in Portuguese Timor. This completes the occupation of the nine anchorages on the island.

It is understood that this latest move by the Japanese increases our difficulties in taking any counter action against them in the future.

Charged With Murder of Mother

Mrs. Alice Louise Johnson, married, 39, was shot dead at her home in Buckingham-street, Footscray, when struck by a bullet from a small bore rifle.

Her son, aged 14, has been charged with murder.

Reports to the police say that when Mrs. Johnson collapsed, her son, who had been cleaning a rifle in the dining-room, ran to a neighbour's house. A doctor and the police were called.

Detectives later took the boy to police headquarters and he will appear before a Children's Court pending an inquest.



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Trophy Presentation RAAF Base Amberley June 1 2003

On Sunday the 1st June 2003 a Service of Commemoration was held at RAAF Amberley to mark the arrival thereof the first F111s 30 years ago. Each of the Sqdn Associations were asked to attend not only to be present at the service but also to lay wreaths in memory of their fallen comrades from the Pathfinders, 467/463 Sqdns, the 10 Beaufort Sqdns & the various Beaufighter & Boston Sqdns & in addition to present our respective annual trophies to the successful candidates.



**Lacw Lia Rowbottom, Travel Clerk, 82
Wing Headquarters, winner of the
Beaufighter Boston Association trophy**

In all it was a very memorable occasion with a fly past of an F 111 & the restored Hudson quite a contrast. Rather than have the usual President's Corner included in this edition it was suggested that a copy of my speech, delivered at the presentation ceremony, be included herein in lieu thereof

During the many visits of our Assoc. to the RAAF Amberley initially to view the lengthy restoration of the two Bostons brought back from New Guinea & the islands but more recently for the presentation of our annual trophies, it was patently clear that the airmen & airwomen to whom we spoke were very much aware of the traditions, Legends & usages which had been bequeathed to them by the Australians who fought & died in the Australian Flying Corps in WW 1. & in the RAAF particularly the 10,000 + airmen who died during WW11 & in other conflicts including Korea & Vietnam.

In speaking with those present members of the RAAF there was, on occasions, the hope expressed that, in the event of the RAAF being involved in a war again after

30 years without seeing a shot fired in anger during that time, that they would not be found wanting.

In the case of 75 Sqdn (just returned from Iraq) the circumstances surrounding the Sqdn's formation some 61 years ago about one month after the fall of Singapore when the U. S. allocated 75 Kittyhawks. to the RAAF of which 75 Sqdn received 25, make a very interesting contrast with the Sqdn's situation in 2003.

In 1942 with the Japanese virtually on our doorstep, the original pilots simply had no time for any operational training & very little time to familiarise themselves with the Kittyhawk. As a result en route from NSW to Port Moresby 3 Kittyhawks were lost & 2 pilots killed.

When the first flight of 4 Kittyhawks were about to land at Port Moresby they were met by "friendly" machine gun fire which damaged the aircraft but fortunately no pilots were wounded-red roundels quickly disappeared thereafter from all RAAF aircraft.

After an epic struggle with the Japs lasting 44 days the only remaining serviceable Kittyhawk of 75 Sqdn was flown back to OZ. Of the 22 original pilots & 15 replacements & attachments 42 or 33% had been killed.

After IF & our Militia forces heavily supported by the RAAF inflicted the first defeat on the Japanese Imperial Forces in WW11. The Sqdn lost another 5 pilots in this action.

When ordered to Iraq earlier this year the 75 Sqdn pilots were very well trained & quite familiar with the Hornets which is in sharp contrast to the conditions in early 1942. However the pilots from both eras, although 61 years apart, had one common goal & that was to get the job done when the shooting began & they both had the guts & determination to carry it through. Like their predecessors the Hornet pilots were not found wanting.

During the Iraqi engagement a message of support was sent to G/C Geoff. Brown, present here today, & to all the Sqdn by our Assoc. conveying to all concerned our best wishes & our hope for their safe return home. In conversation with the G/C prior to the presentations he thanked the Assoc. members very much for their support.

I know we are all very grateful that 75 Sqdn has returned from a job well done with no casualties & we trust that all other elements of the RAAF serving in the Gulf & the Middle East do likewise I would like all the visitors here today to show their appreciation of the efforts of the airmen & airwomen of the RAAF in the Gulf & the Middle East by acclamation.

Apart from the celebration of the 30th Anniversary of the arrival of the F111s at Amberley & also the remembrance of our mates who didn't make it by the laying of wreaths, we are here today to present our annual trophy to the successful candidate which on this occasion is LACW Lea Rowbotham & I would ask Air Marshall Houston Chief of the Airforce if he would kindly present the trophy on behalf of the Assoc"

RALPH IND, President.

Memoirs of The Late Bob Wemyss

Continued from June issue.



The aircrew were entitled to a nip of spirits after every operational flight. Woody didn't drink at all, and I drank only occasionally, so we just collected our operational ration, saved it up in a bottle and sold it to an American when the bottle was full. The going price

was 60 guilders-10 Australian pounds. Later, we came under the command of 1st Tactical Air Force, and our rations were then supplied by the Australian Army.

Originally, No 30 Squadron was equipped with English Beaufighters assembled in Australia (the A19 series of aircraft) but the Australian-built machines (the A8 series) started to come into the Squadron late in 1944 when it was based at Morotai. Perhaps the first two allotted to the Squadron were damaged by the Japanese raid on 24th November. The early English Beaufighters did not have dihedral tails, or they had tails with only a slight dihedral, and they were quite vicious machines to handle. When you went into a steep turn the 'plane would wind up and you had to ram hard on the control column.

The Beaufighter was a typical British aeroplane; like British motor cars they always seemed to go wrong somewhere. They designed and built them to do the job, and almost as an afterthought it was decided to put a pilot in to fly the thing. So the layout of British aircraft was always poor. In comparison, the layout of American aircraft was exceptional; that of the Boston A20, for instance, was very good, the only thing wrong was that the flap and undercarriage controls were down behind the bulkhead and you couldn't see them. You could get away with a lot of things in the Boston, whereas they were just not on for a Beaufighter. When No 22 Squadron lost most of its Bostons during the Japanese raid on Morotai and were re-equipped with Beaufighters, quite a few of the pilots developed a hate for the new aircraft.

In my view, the things wrong with the Beaufighter included the lack of sufficient armour plating, cockpit layout (which was anything but convenient), the stalling speed and the cruising speed at 20,000 feet were almost identical (the had been designed as a night fighter), and in the tropics they had very little blade angle, which meant that on idle the cylinder-head temperatures climbed at an alarming rate. However, nothing could beat the Beaufighter as a low-level

weapons platform; they could wreak hideous damage, and were ideal for the tasks they were given in the Pacific.

Towards the end of my first tour, the call came out for volunteers to stay on, so Woody and myself as well as Ralph Clay and Kim MacKenzie put our hand up to do a second operational tour. I had a short spell of leave between the two tours.

For an attack against the Japanese at Sanadkan, the Commanding Officer had obtained some napalm-filled canisters which were fitted to the Beaufighter's bomb-racks. As we left the target area I saw that a canister was still hanging on one of Carey Thompson's racks and I broke radio silence to warn him. He shook it off on the way back to Morotai, but when we landed he told me that although he appreciated the thought behind the warning, radio silence really meant that there must be no radio transmissions.

At the end of my time in the tropics with No 30 Beaufighter Squadron I came back to Australia in an American C47 which dumped me at Archerfield in July 1945. After a spell of leave they posted me to No 36 Transport Squadron at Archerfield, but I did only two or three trips with them. One of them terminated at Morotai, where 30 Squadron was still based, under D'Arcy Wentworth; but they were all disconsolate as they weren't doing anything at all.

After leaving the Air Force, I flew around with a small air transport company in DH84s for a time and then applied for a position with what became Trans Australian Airlines. I joined them in about September 1946.

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To War and Beyond

By Ken Stone

Continued from June issue

Sunday April 19th: The 44th day at sea. Several butterflies were seen and some type of jellyfish. Even I

think we must be nearer land than I had feared, but still dare not increase rations. Most members of the boat thought they heard a motor working, possibly a small motor boat. Lit a distress flare but had no reply.

Monday April 20th: First Lt. electrified everyone by shouting "Land Ho! " Sure enough there was a beach 50 Yards away. It appeared to be a small island. We soon discovered that we were surrounded by small islands and reefs which we had drifted across in high water. On landing we found a plate on a beacon which had been erected there proclaiming Fraser Islet. This did not convey much to anyone.

Put foot on land for the first time since March 7th-45 days. All members of crew very weak, but looking forward to a hot breakfast, but they found they could not eat as much as they thought. Navigator established that we had reached Dampier Archipelago, between Onslow and Roebourne so decided to make for mainland not far distant.

Tuesday April 21st: Catalina flying boat appeared dead ahead at 1500 feet. After much signalling persuaded to alight but its crew very suspicious. After an exchange of signals I swam over and was given a rope to hang on to, a crew man with a Colt 45 would not let me on board until he was satisfied I was harmless. Three of the crew, Cosgrove, Longmore and Haynes accepted the offer to accompany the Catalina to the American base in Sharks Bay. Anchored for the night in a creek, had a bit of a party.

Wednesday April 22nd 1230 hours, a Catalina appeared from the SW, alighted. Gathered us and our belongings, such as they were, and all the crew were transferred to the flying boat.

So now after 47 days, having sailed and drifted 1500 statute miles, leaking like a sieve, but still serviceable, with a jury rudder fitting in use since the second day out HMRAFS Scorpion was cast adrift off the N. W. coast of Australia without the honour of being sailed into port. She was a cow into wind, would not go about without assistance but very strong and a magnificent sea boat. No member of the crew wishes to make another trip like that, but if fate should ever decree that any of us are again at sea in an open boat we pray that it will another trip be as good as the Scorpion.

By now the war situation was so grim that a rescue attempt of the 50 left in Java was out of the question. They were of course by now prisoners. They had remained on Moesa Kembongon for 44 days waiting and living off the rations collected at Tjelijap, by which time they had reached the stage where they had to find food, and find out what was happening on Java. Two scouting

parties sent out met with disaster, following which Japanese troops arrived and the rest of the party incarcerated.

The four officers detailed to search for escape craft met with a series of mishaps which delayed them, on their return they found Jeudwine and party not at the warehouse. The four officers then set out on their own escape attempt. After 14 days at sea they were forced by a prevailing head wind to return to Java for another attempt, this time to try for Darwin. However on beaching south Java the boat was wrecked and they soon were captured. All four officers survived and returned to the U.K. in October 1945.

For the 12 from the Scorpion it was now back to World War II. The R.A.F. officers returned to the U.K. Wing Commander Jeudwine was, in December 1942, awarded the O.B.E. "for his resourcefulness and refusal to accept defeat associated with this escape." He continued a most distinguished career with the R.A.F., awarded the D.F.C. in 1943, and in 1944 the D.S.O. The citation reads "This officer has successfully completed numerous sorties against dangerous and difficult targets. He has continued to display the highest standard of skill and bravery and has executed his assignments with the greatest determination in the face of anti aircraft fire and fighter opposition. He is a brilliant leader.

Group Captain Jeudwine was killed in an aircraft accident on October 19th 1945 just a few days before the return of the four officers, S/Ldr Taylor and party.

The Australians returned to the R. A. A. F. G. W. Sayer and W. N. Cosgrove were killed in action in New Guinea in 1943 flying Beaufighter aircraft in 30 RAAF Squadron The other six survived another 3 years of World War II serving in the Pacific theatre.

54 years on Peter Haynes now residing at Scarborough W.A. is the sole surviving Scorpion crew member.

Three old men are sitting on the porch of a retirement home. The first says: "Fellas, I got real problems. I'm seventy years old. Every morning at seven o'clock I get up and I try to urinate. All day long I try to urinate. They give me all kinds of medicine but nothing helps."

The second old man says: "You think you have problems. I'm eighty years old. Every morning at 8:00 I get up and try to move my bowels. I try all day long. They give me all kinds of stuff but nothing helps."

Finally the third old man speaks up: "Fellas: I'm ninety years old. Every morning at 7:00 sharp I urinate. Every morning at 8:00 I move my bowels. Every morning at 9:00 sharp I wake up."

Combined Associations Day 2003.

The day took place on Sunday 1st June 2003, and, this year's event was combined with the 30th Anniversary celebration's of the F111's (the Pigs) arrival at Amberley.

The program for the day commenced with a Memorial service, then morning tea in the Officer's Mess. Following morning tea the Association's annual trophies and RAAF Service Awards were presented by Air Marshall Houston, and the presidents of the four Associations. We then went to lunch in the mess. Following lunch we were taken by bus to the hanger area and joined the 82 Wing family birthday celebrations.

The Memorial Service commemorated the memory of those who lost their lives in the RAAF Beaufighter, Boston, Pathfinder, Lancaster and Beaufort Squadrons during World War II, and the F 111 Squadrons in recent deployments.

This year the Memorial Service was attended by the Chief of the RAAF, Air Marshall A G Houston, AM, AFC, many senior officers from 82 Wing together with members of the four World War II Associations, their partners and guests. The service commenced with a full ceremonial parade, performed by Officers and men of 82 Wing, complete with band. This was carried out with a precision that was a pleasure to witness.

Chaplain WCDR Paul Goodland opened the service, and was assisted by Chaplain SQDLDR Bob Heathwood. The usual order of service was followed under the direction of Chaplain AIRCDRE Peter O'Keefe. For reasons unknown the Royal hymn, was not sung, obviously overlooked, as it was included in the printed order of service. Wreaths were laid at our various memorials in the Memorial Rose Garden, with appropriate tributes given by the Master of Ceremonies, GRPCAPT John Ward. Pres. Ralph laid our wreath. As the wreaths were being laid a fly over commenced with a World War II Lockheed Hudson flying sedately overhead at about 500 feet. As the bugler was sounding the last post, an F 111 did a perfectly timed fly over, directly over our heads, at about fifty feet, which shook and shocked all at the service. The fly over was completed by a very skillful piece of formation flying by both the aircraft. I feel that members will remember this fly over for some time. I doubt if any of us will ever again have such a fly over experience.

Then to the mess where The Commanding Officer of 82 Wing, AIRCDRE Kim Osley gave a welcoming address. Group Captain John Ward officiated as Master of Ceremonies this year, and the Association's Annual and some Service awards were presented to the recipients by the Chief of the RAAF; Air Marshall Houston assisted by the presidents of the Associations. Pres. Ralph assisted The Air Marshall to present our trophy to LAC Lia Rowbottom, travel clerk, of 82 Wing Orderly room. The Association's presidents gave short and appropriate speeches as the trophies were being presented, then we broke for lunch. The lunch was again up to the good



Lacw Lia Rowbottom, receives her personal Beaufighter Boston Association trophy from Marshall A G Houston, AM, AFC

standard of the chefs there, and enjoyed by all. During coffee and drinks we had had the opportunity to have a chat with the serving crews. Doug McMillan and I had the good fortune to have a great chat with GRPCAPT Geoff Brown who was the Commanding Officer of 75 Squadron F18 Hornets that took part in the war in Iraq, and who had just arrived back in Australia. During the period of 75 Squadron's service in Iraq, I sent a number of e-mails supporting and congratulating the squadron. What we heard in our chat with Geoff sure made it seem that Iraq was a different kind of war to the one I served in.

After lunch we went to the hanger area and joined the 82 Wing family's 30th birthday celebrations. There was a comprehensive static display of aircraft, weapon systems, jet engines, and many associated items of a modern air force. Part of the RAAF band was also there as an orchestra and played some great music. It was good to sit for a while and have a spell and listen to them play. There were lots of fun things for the kids, and many active displays of various functions performed by the support sections of a modern RAAF Squadron.

The day ended with a mini air show by a World WarII Lockheed Hudson, a P9 from the Roulette Aerobatics team, Caribous, and an F111. It was noisy but great and the F111 (ThePig) finished it's display with a fast beat up of the strip, wings folded, and into a vertical climb to almost out of sight with an afterburner spectacular trail of flame following it.

PETER WHITE

BEAUFIGHTERSTERS ENCOUNTER A BETTY

This encounter occurred on 2nd October 1943, when two Beaufighters briefed to carry out a sweep of the South Coast of New Britain, west of Wide Bay. Their mission was to seek and destroy Japanese supply barges in that area. The barges move at night and hide during the day, and are well camouflaged. The two Beaufighter crews were Ted Marron and his Navigator Bunny Gollan and myself with Peter White.

Approaching the area, all four of us were surprised to see the Japanese Betty, also at low level, and turning north, and apparently without a fighter escort, or other aircraft company. Ted and I positioned our aircraft either side of, above and behind the Betty, whose rear gunner was seen to be active. By giving him a deflection problem, attacking from a quarter angle, changing our positions from left to right and vice versa, we might minimise the chance of being hit. The trouble with this technique was our own weakness at deflection shooting. We had very little training or experience in this art. Ted, however seemed to score some hits around his tail section. It was clear to me that we must end this encounter while we had the advantage. The Betty crew would have been able to break radio silence minutes before, and was moving deeper into home territory.

I drifted our aircraft towards the line astern position, keeping the Japs tail section in the gun sight ready to fire at the first sign of his gun smoke. Nothing happened, except that the Betty started to jink (an uncoordinated movement of his controls causing the aircraft to move about and more difficult to hit. We used this method when pursued by fighters, as one could turn quickly to get behind them to shoot. Unfortunately jinking causes the loss of speed.

I recall feeling sorry for the Jap. pilot. He must have wished they had scored at least one hit, to say an engine



to slow us up, but with full power we closed the gap easily, and as the jinking ceased, and with the centre of our reflector gunsight steady on his upper fuselage, I pressed the button for the four cannon and eight machine guns simultaneously. The Betty plunged into the sea, breaking in two and disappearing from my view as it did so.

I might add that the same two crews were not as lucky two days later, when in the same general area a similar bomber type passed about 6000 feet above, but they were escorted by four Zero fighters. We were very pleased, and rather lucky to make it safely home.

ARTHUR THOMSON



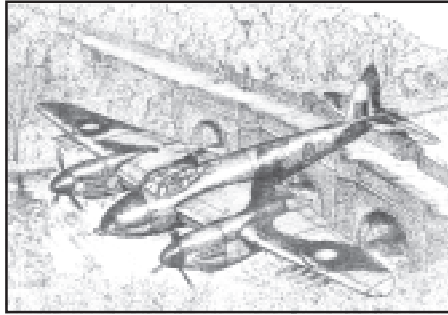
This is a recent photograph of a Beaufighter being restored at Duxford in England from the remains of two of 31 Squadron Beaufighters which crashed in North Western Australia.

This aircraft is to be restored to full flying condition.

The photograph by courtesy of Mr Roger North, taken during a recent visit to Britain.

He also provided me with a photo of a Beaufighter Memorial at Dallachy, Scotland.

ALL THINGS TO ALL MEN



Did you know that one of the most versatile aircraft of the **S e c o n d** World War was almost a **d o l e** project”?

When the Brits realised that they soon could be at war, a group of furniture manufacturers approached De Havilands to suggest they design a lightweight aircraft that could be built of wood. The furniture and cabinet workers had the expertise to carry out the work. The aircraft company, who already had experience in this type of design, decided to plan and build a prototype.

De Haviland designers wanted to build a bomber/reconnaissance aircraft that could fly a 1,000 pound bomb load 1,500 miles at high speed. The original concept drawings show an aircraft similar to a twin-tailed Wellington bomber, with fore and aft gun turrets and a crew of six.

They put their plans forward to the Air Ministry who immediately turned down the proposal, saying wooden aircraft were an out of date concept. They suggested that De Haviland would be better off producing wooden wings for existing aircraft. De Haviland decided to build the machine completely as their own project.

Plans were drawn time and time again, and the plane became smaller and lighter with a crew of two. The turrets were the first to go, then the large fuselage and wings scaled down.

Eventually the only thing left of the original design was the mighty Merlin engines. The specifications were fulfilled and the speed almost twice that of the contemporary bombers was expected.

Construction methods were incredible. Most of the aircraft was built of sections of a layer of balsa between two sheets of ply. These were formed over concrete moulds. When all the piping and wiring were installed, each section was glued together the same way as plastic model aeroplanes are joined today. Even the main spars were made of wood. The metal parts, except for the undercarriage, amounted to just 280 pounds.

In, March 1940 the Air Ministry finally relented and ordered 50 of the new aircraft, only to cancel the order a month later, following the Dunkirk debacle. De Haviland pressed on, and in November the Ministry reinstated its order, and at the end of the month the prototype flew for the first time. It was painted a bright yellow so that it would not be shot at. It was officially flight tested in April 1941 and achieved a speed of 392 miles per hour.

An American, General Arnold saw the flight and on return to the USA gave the information to five top aircraft companies who, sight unseen, agreed that then

concept was flawed and could not carry the bomb load, fly as far and as fast as the specification decreed. They were proved wrong. During weight testing it was mistakenly loaded with 10,000 pounds without any ill effects. It has been estimated that the 2 man Mosquito could carry the same load, faster and cheaper, to Berlin than the B17 with 11 crew.

Various modifications were made and experiments with different armaments were carried out. In all 7,781 aircraft in 43 variants were built in Australia, Britain, and Canada.

The Mosquito served in a variety of roles from unarmed photo reconnaissance, night fighting, ground attack, pathfinding etc. There was even a carrier based version. They also carried out some of the most ambitious air raids of the war.



One of the concrete jigs used for moulding one side of the fuselage of the Mosquito.

The fuselage was made in two halves, which were shaped in concrete jigs and then joined. They were made of balsa wood between layers of birch plywood. The hardener was painted on one surface and the glue on the other. When both substances had gone off, the wood was pressed together then the reaction pulled the two together. The process generated considerable heat and the structure took a couple of hours to cool down. Once set it was as good as steel. When an aircraft was damaged it was just a matter of cutting wood to the shape of the hole and applying the glue and hardener in the same manner. Repairs could be carried out in a very short time. The patch was held in place by tacking waxed strips over it, which were removed when the glue hardened.

The airframe was made from Canadian spruce and birch plywood with some walnut fittings. The wings were made in one piece and glued on later. Five hundred brass screws were used to reinforce the attachment.

There were some cases recorded of the wings coming adrift, but this may have been because of the glue. It was initially a water base product called Casein which was prone to fungus infection. A synthetic product called Airolite 306 or “Beetle” later replaced it.

The Australian versions were built by De Havilland Australia using more than seventy contractors in and around Sydney, including Holden.

D LITTLEFIELD.

Interview With Lieutenant SaburSaburo Sakai

1916-2000 (IJN; 64 victories)

Saburo Sakai: in Memoriam

We recently received the sad news that Saburo Sakai, probably the most famous Japanese veteran of the air war in the Pacific, and a historical advisor to Microsoft during the production of Combat Flight Simulator 2, died in Tokyo on September 22, 2000 at the age of 84.

Earlier this year we were able to interview Mr. Sakai to enhance our understanding of the Pacific air war. His patience and good humor made this memorable interview extraordinarily helpful, and his willingness to share mementos, memories, and insights from his military career helped us make Combat Flight Simulator 2 a richer and more immersive experience.

The time we spent with Mr. Sakai was a rare privilege, a fact sadly underlined by his passing. We extend our deepest sympathy to his family.

The most famous Japanese veteran of the air war in the Pacific, Saburo Sakai scored his first aerial victory in China in 1938. His first actions when the war began were in the Philippines and Dutch East Indies. Transferred to the base at Rabaul, he flew long-range missions to Guadalcanal before moving on to Lae in New Guinea, where he scored most of his 64 kills. He became the senior pilot in his division and mentored fellow pilots, including Nishizawa and Ota, who accompanied him on a quirky and audacious "airshow" mission over Port Moresby. Sakai quickly ran up a string of victories, but over Guadalcanal in August 1942 the backseat gunner in a Dauntless dive-bomber creased his skull. He managed to fly back to base, and was sent home for a lengthy recuperation. After service in the Marianas, in June 1944 he saw action over Iwo Jima, but soon became an instructor as vision problems from his wounds worsened. Author of a memoir titled *Samurai!*, Mr. Sakai graciously agreed to be interviewed in order to help make the *Combat Flight Simulator 2: WW II Pacific Theatre* as compelling as possible.

Transcript of April, 2000 Interview with Saburo Sakai

Interview by Michael Ahn

Interviewer: If you could offer one bit of advice to a new pilot about surviving an encounter with the enemy, what would you tell him?

Saburo Sakai: Remain calm and collected.

Interviewer: What were your "rules of engagement?" Did you have "style" of entering a fight with the enemy?

Saburo Sakai: There are three basic types of engagement: fighting from equal positions, fighting from an advantageous position, and fighting from a disadvantageous position. There are also variations those three.

It's a rare occasion when two groups find each other at the same time. Usually one will have height advantage of the other. A dogfight is a variety of situations. We had no radar then so seeing the enemy first was the most important thing. And once you are in a dogfight you don't know which way the enemy is coming at you - you don't know at all. Therefore, where the fight starts, where is the enemy, how many of them, what kind of shape they're in, what are their tactics - you have to figure this out this as quickly as possible. In the 200 dogfights, I was never seen first - it was always me who found them. I was the fastest in my squadron at spotting the enemy.

Interviewer: Did you practice any kinds of flying rituals (flying high, staying clouds), to gain an advantage over the enemy?

Saburo Sakai: I tried to put myself in a position in which the enemy could not fire upon me but in which I could fire upon my enemy, regardless of the difference in altitude.

Interviewer: What kind of "set-up" did you try to get before opening fire? Behind the enemy? Above or below him? Did you prefer slashing attacks, or turn-fighting tactics?

Saburo Sakai: I strove to shoot down my enemy in the first pass or attack, tried not to open fire too soon, never followed an enemy into a dive, and tried to get behind my enemy and stay there.

1. Attack from above and behind is the most important rule; one should always strive for this
2. Always attack in ways that will keep you behind the enemy
3. Attacking from below and behind, always try to shoot them down in the first attack
4. Do not chase the enemy when they dive or evade using other vertical movement

Interviewer: What did you like the best about the Zero in flight?

Saburo Sakai: Good things about the Zero in flight were the very long range, and the good visibility all around the plane. If you place too much emphasis on a feature, you will lose something else. You have to cover everything in a plane's performance - some positive, some negative. It's a kind of compromise. The Zero-sen is a very good compromise. For a pilot, it's quite comfortable. Before the war I was ordered to fly to China - they never tested how long we can fly and what distance. So we were ordered to try and flew it for twelve hours and thirty minutes - a world record at that time.

To be continued