

The

WHISPERER

The Newsletter of the Beaufighter and
Boston Association of Queensland

SEPTEMBER 2004

GRANT PRESENTATION



The presentation of the Department of Veterans' Affairs grant by the Minister the Hon Dana Vale at the offices of the Federal Member for Moncrief, for which we sincerely thanked the Minister.

From L-R Steven Ciobo Federal for Moncrief, Peter White (Hon. Sec.), the Minister, Mr Arch McDonald President Surfers Paradise RSL, and Ralph Ind (Pres)

Earlier this year President Ralph made an application to the Department for the grant and we express our appreciation for the aid given to Ralph in the preparation of the paperwork by Ms Anne Maree Grasso an officer from the Department.



ASSOCIATIONS DAY 2004 RAAF AMBERLEY

The Combined Associations Day 2004 at RAAF Amberley will be held on Wednesday 15th September 2004. This will include a Memorial Service, presentation of trophies, a tour of the Base, and to complete a most enjoyable day, a light lunch in the Officers Mess.

The following is the proposed itinerary for the day's activities:

0930-1000 A Memorial Service in the Memorial Garden, conducted by Chaplain Wing Commander Paul Goodland. This service will conclude with the unveiling of a Memorial Plaque affixed to the Memorial Wall, to honour the memory of our Founding Patron the late Group Captain Raymond Smith RFD AE LLB. There will be a flyover a fly over with an F111 and a Caribou, during the service.

- 1000-1030 Morning Tea in the Officers' Mess
- 1030-1100 Presentation of trophies in the Officers' Mess
- 1100-1200 Various optional tours around the Base. Not everyone will be able to see everything)
- 1200-1400 Light buffet lunch in the Officers' mess.

Group Captain Kym Osley has advised that he has been posted to Canberra effective from 2nd August 2004, and regrets he will be unable to be our host this year. Wing Commander Mike Smith is to be acting Officer Commanding 82 Wing to fill the vacancy and will be our host.

Parking as usual outside the main gate, we will walk to The Memorial Garden, and from thence bussed around the Base.

Air Marshall Angus Houston AO, AFC, Chief of the Air Force has graciously approved funding for the morning tea and luncheon.

It is important for security and catering purposes you advise me before 6th September 2004 if you will be attending.

AMBERLEY OPEN EVENT

(Some special arrangements for members of our Association)

Chief of the Air Force, Air Marshall Angus Houston has decided that the RAAF Amberley Open Event will be held over two days – **Saturday and Sunday October 2-3.**

The event will showcase the Australian Defence Force operations and support, but of course it is the flying program that will be the highlight of the day's activities. Organizers expect a full roll up of every aircraft type in the ADF inventory, and anticipate some overseas involvement. This will be confirmed in coming weeks.

You are advised to pre-purchase entry tickets from Ticketek and to utilise train/bus connections to avoid traffic congestion and parking problems. It would be best to consider using this special public transport arrangement, as there will no doubt be serious traffic congestion.

Arrangements are now underway to have a tent erected near the control tower for Association members and a special area has been set aside for member's car parking. To gain entry to the Base, members will have to purchase tickets from Ticketek, \$10 per adult 17 years and over, \$2 for children 2-15 years.

Bring your own chair, it will be a long day, and you must advise me so that I can arrange for passes for members to get on to the base.



COMMITTEE

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President's Corner

Dear Member,

In January this year Peter & I discussed the problems he was having with his personal computer which had been playing up & making it very difficult for Peter to be absolutely sure that he would be able to publish the *Whisperer* each quarter on time & despatch the same to our members.

As a result I had a discussion with Anne-Marie Grasso from the Dept. of Veterans' Affairs who advised me that the Dept might be prepared to make a grant to the Assoc. to enable it to purchase a new computer so that the *Whisperer* could be produced without difficulty every quarter.

One of the problems we were facing was that our Assoc. is an unincorporated body & it was necessary for us to find an incorporated organisation which would act as our sponsor. I approached Surfers Paradise RSL Sub- Branch Inc. which indicated it was quite prepared to act as our sponsor as it had done on a previous occasion when we raised \$8000 which was used to erect our various Memorials.

The necessary application for the grant was prepared with the help of Anne-Mane in January & lodged with the Dept. About 6 weeks ago we received a cheque via our Sponsor for \$3705 being the grant from DVA for the purchase of a computer, printer etc. About a fortnight ago Steve Ciobo the Federal Member for Moncrieff arranged for Dana Vale, the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, who was visiting Surfers, to call at his office where photos were taken of her handing over a large make believe cheque to our representatives & the Sponsor. I understand that Peter has put the money to good use & is already practising on the new computer in preparation for the next edition of the *Whisperer*.

Two months ago I recommended Peter for consideration to be a recipient of a Moncrieff award. Such awards are sponsored by Steve Ciobo & are highly regarded in the electorate. Recently at a public meeting in Nerang Peter received not one but two Moncrieff awards which he so richly deserved for his efforts on behalf of the Assoc.

Peter has since written to Anne-Mane Grasso thanking her for her very much for generous assistance in connection with the application for a grant from DVA in respect of our new computer.

For those of you who may not be aware Peter has been in very indifferent health of late after a couple of operations at Greenslopes. I am sure he would appreciate messages of support from our members.

Regards Ralph

Moncrieff Community Awards 2004



The Awards were presented at the Main Auditorium Centre at Nerang on 10th June 2004. The presentations were made by Senator the Hon. Rod Kemp, Federal minister for Arts and Sport, and The Hon Steven Ciobo, Federal Member MP, Federal Member for Moncrieff.

One of the recipients was Hon. Sec Peter who received an award for Outstanding Service, and a Commonwealth Recognition Award for Senior Australians, in the form of a Gold Medal.

It was a very good night with entertainment by The Gold Coast City Band, addresses by Rod Kemp and Steven Ciobo, and a particularly moving address by Andrew Csba. Andrew was a young man who was very seriously injured in the Bali explosion. He suffered extremely extensive burns to his body, his right foot and part of his leg were blasted off, and he lost part of his left foot.

This young man's address of his plight, his rescue and the dedication of so many people in the medical field, who fought to save his life, was one of the most moving addresses I have ever listened to.

SOME FACTS

The Japanese eat very little fat, and suffer fewer heart attacks, than the British or Americans.

The French eat a lot of fat and also suffer fewer heart attacks than the British or Americans.

The Japanese drink very little red wine and suffer fewer heart attacks than the British or Americans. The Italians drink excessive amounts of red wine and also suffer fewer heart attacks than the British or Americans.

Conclusion:

Eat and drink what you like. It's speaking English that kills you.

TIGERS OVER NEW GUINEA

Reading the interesting article from Harry's Diary in the June 2004 edition I was reminded of the trauma (for Tigers anyway) of flying over the Gap in the Owen Stanleys I largely depended on what aircraft one was flying & at what height. This article has very little to do with Beaufighters & Bostons but rather our shared experiences mainly in a disease ridden country i.e. PNG. I used to observe the B&Bs haring around with a great deal of envy & it being my desire that one day I would be flying them too.

I hope you don't mind me taking up a little space in the "Whisperer" on a matter which has little to do with B&Bs, however, you might be able to dine out at the expense of one or two of your mates on the answer to the unlikely question "Did Tiger Moths ever fly operationally in New Guinea in WWII"? I know of two chaps who have done so. I arrived in Port Moresby on the 20/11/1942, having flown Tigers from Tville with two other RAAF types. The route we flew was Cairns, Cooktown, Iron Range, Jacki Jacki, Horn Island, Daru, Kerema Beach & PM, flying time 19 hours 15 minutes.

After a short stint as duty pilot at Wards strip. I met up with the Tigers at No 1 Rescue & Communications Sqdn. On the 14/2/43 two Tigers & their pilots were detached to Dodder, their prime purpose being to carry ammo & grenades to Imo on the Kumiai River, which was the HQ of the Papuan Infantry Battalion (PIB) the troops of which were setting ambushes along the tracks leading from the Gona-Buna area to Salamaua. We were also required to make reconnaissance flights sometimes behind enemy lines with various Aust. & American personnel.

The Tigers had had the front cockpit remodeled with an auxiliary fuel tank fitted & could also carry approx. 250 lbs of ammo & grenades. Landing at Ioma was no joke having regard to the acute shortness of the strip & the Tigers having no brakes etc., etc. All approaches were precautionary & once you were committed here was simply no question of going around again.

The distance between Dobadura & Iorna was approx. 70/80 miles & consisted of swampy terrain & as we were instructed to fly at tree top height at all times one could see the sun glinting on the water between the trees the whole way. I often wondered if they would ever have found my mate or me if either of us had suffered engine failure. It would not surprise me if a number of allied & / Jap aircraft are still undetected in that swamp.

Young Harry's Diary suggested that the facilities at Dobadura for "blow-ins" were not exactly 5 star however I suggest the facilities in late 1942/early 43 were far from good for anyone. Our small camp could only be described as a very basic facility with a lousy view, was situated right next to an American Casualty Cleaning Station. We were subject to frequent Air Raids & on one occasion shortly after a very heavy raid many dead & dying American soldiers were brought to the CCS with dead bodies & mangled limbs being piled on top of one another in a most grotesque fashion. I am

afraid the mental images thereof remain with me to this day. The American unit involved had apparently ignored the Air Raid warning with disastrous consequence.

On the question washing facilities what young Harry apparently & his crew were not aware of was that the personal & other washing ablutions for most RAAF types were carried out in the fast flowing stream which ran adjacent to our strip. One could sit in the stream on the sandy bottom where you could watch the myriad flecks of gold wending their way down to the sea from the Owen Stanleys. I suggest there are not too many 5 Star hotels which can boast of flecks of gold in their bath water.

Flying in PNG in light aircraft was generally not a picnic particularly if you were carrying a heavy load, because of the shortness and positioning of many strips & the ever changing weather in the mountains. I remember one occasion landing at Kokoda. & after dropping my passenger, I was told by one of the Patrol Officers who rushed up to aircraft to POQ which I did only to find myself immediately on take off in what I can only describe as a "whiteout" & heading straight for the mountains which I had observed on landing.

Because of the "whiteout" I couldn't see in any direction. The only reason I am not a statistic is that I flew on instruments steadily climbing to port in an upward spiral until about 10 minutes later the plane broke out of the "whiteout" into clear blue sky with mountains & hills around me. I can assure you the experience was quite scary.

I well remember my 1st trip over the Kokoda track. I had been told by our CO, an old PNG veteran that Tigers only had a ceiling in the tropics of 7200 ft, max. & that if I didn't make it over the gap by 10 AM because of the rapid build-up of the Cu-Nimbus to forget it & return to base. I can assure you the old Tiger was really struggling at 7000 ft., however I just made it. I must confess that when observing the terrain over which the Aust. troops had been fighting the Japs only a short time before I was very thankful that I had joined the RAAF & not the Army

'Whilst at Dobadura we had a ringside seat to a dogfight between Zeros and Lightnings, the highlight being an head on collision between two aircraft which was quite spectacular. Fortunately the American pilot was able to parachute to safety while the Jap pilot was still in his plane when it crashed.

In all I made 45 flights in 30 days before I copped a fairly decent bout of malaria & was sent south. So you may be assured that, however unlikely it sounds, Tigers did fly operationally in PNG WW II. The proof is not only in my log book but also in the Sqdn's history enshrined in Aust. War Museum including to my amazement the details of all flights we made from Dobadura to Ioma together with the weight of all ammunition etc. that was carried to the PIB.

Ralph Ind

1921 - OUR BEGINNING

It was the Commonwealth Gazette No 28 of Thursday, 31st March, 1921 which formally announced the formation of one of the oldest air forces in the world. It was just three years younger than Britain's Royal Air Force, and more than a quarter of a century older than the United States Air Force. The US Air Force did not gain complete independence from the US Army until after World War II.

Under the heading "Order by His Excellency the Governor General of Australia" the proclamation read in part "Now therefore I, Henry William, Baron Foster, the Governor-General aforesaid, acting with the advice of the Federal Executive Council, do hereby order that a force, to be called the Australian Air Force, be constituted as part of the Australian Military Forces as from the thirty first day of March one thousand nine hundred and ninety nine".

The simple title "Australian Air Force" didn't last long. In June 1921, King George V approved the prefix "Royal" and this was officially applied the following August. The formation of the RAAF was not the beginning of Australian Military flying. That had all started seven years earlier in March, 1914 when. When a Bristol Boxkite and a Deperdussin were test flown at Point Cook, on the shores of Victoria's Port Phillip Bay.

These flights were conducted by the recently established Australian Flying Corps, like it's British counterpart (The Royal Flying Corps), was part of the Army and it's personnel carried Army ranks. Investigations into the establishment of an Australian Aviation Corps as begun as early as 1910 (only a year after Bleriot had flown the English Channel for the first time). In early 1911 a Bristol Boxkite was demonstrated to Army officials. In December of the same year an advertisement was placed in the Commonwealth Gazette calling for "the appointment of two competent mechanics and aviators".



BE.2a biplane

Things began moving rapidly in 1912. Two BE.2a biplanes and two Deperdussin monoplanes were ordered in July and in August Lt. H A Petrie was appointed Australia's first military aviator. In September the formation of the Australian Flying Corps (AFC) and Central Flying School (CFS) was appointed by the Minister of Defence, and in December a Bristol Boxkite was ordered. Point Cook was selected as the site for the CFS and, until 1922 was the place where trainee RAAF pilots began their flying carriers, at least in peacetime.

During World War II, the demand for thousands of pilots resulted in the establishment of numerous

elementary flying training schools around the country. The first four CFS students began their training at Pint Cook in August 1914, just after the outbreak of World War I - all of them Army officers, of whom Lt Richard Williams would be the first to qualify for his wings in the following November. Williams went on to be appointed the RAAF's first Chief of Air Staff, a post he held on three separate occasions during his long an illustrious career. Air Marshall Sir Richard Williams KBE, CB, DSO is regarded by many to be "father" of the RAAF.

The Australian Flying Corps was the only Commonwealth Air Arm to see active service during World War I. The traditions of flying efficiency began in 11915 with the establishment of the famous Half Flight in Mesopotamia (Iraq) in response to a request from the Indian government for assistance. The Half Flight went into action for the first time on 31st May 1915 from Basra. Later incorporated into the Royal Flying Corps, the Half Flight flew a variety of aircraft and suffered heavy casualties, including the loss of two of the original four students, LT. GP Merz and Capt. T W White.

Australian Flying Corps squadrons followed the Half Flight "over there" to join battle. No 1 in Egypt and Palestine (1916-1918 under the command of Richard Williams). Nos 2, 3 and 4 in France (1917-1918) and Nos 5, 6, 7, and 8 in the United Kingdom. The Squadrons operated a variety of aircraft, including the famous Scout types such as the Sopwith Camel, Snipe, and Pup, the SE 5A and the Bristol fighter.

Some Australians made their mark in the Great War. The leading Australian Air Ac of the 1914-18 conflict was Capt. R A Little who scored 47 aerial victories whilst flying Sopwith triplanes with the Royal Naval Air Service. Some of the other Australian pilots who flew with the British on active service would later become household names in civil aviation, among them Charles Kingsford-Smith, Bert Hinkler and P G Taylor. The top scoring AFC pilot of the war was Capt. A H Cobby of No 4 Squadron who flew Sopwith Camels and accounted for 29 enemy aircraft and 13 observation balloons. No 1 Squadron's F H McNamara was awarded Australia's only air Victoria Cross in WW I for his heroic rescue of a downed comrade.

A total of 460 officers and 2,234 other ranks served with the Australia Flying Corps in World War I, along with 200 pilots and observers who flew with other flying services. The die had been cast.

ASHLEY OWEN.



Sopwith Camel

COMMEMORATIVE ADDRESS - CANBERRA, 27th APRIL 2004

(Given on the occasion of a 31 Squadron Association wreath-laying ceremony at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra.)

We are gathered here today to remember with pride, and to honour, those of our 31 Squadron members who made the supreme sacrifice during the Second World War, and also those who have passed on in the almost 60 years since the war ended.

We are not by nature a warlike, militaristic people. But when the precious freedom which we enjoy in this beautiful country is under attack, as it was in the 1940's, we are very determined to defend it to the utmost. No 31 Beaufighter Squadron, R.A.A.F. formed in Wagga in 1942, was an expression of the Australian characteristic, that the best form of defence is attack- Between 1942 and 1945, this belief saw our 31 Squadron Beaufighters penetrating deeply into enemy-held territory, seeking out and destroying enemy bases, personnel, equipment and shipping where-ever they could be found, in areas ranging from Timor and nearby islands, through the Celebes, Halmaheras and Ambon, as far as North Borneo and Labuan. This strategy of offensive defence required team-work of the highest order, and I must stress that all members of the Squadron played vital roles in the Squadron's successful operations.

But these successes were gained at a cost. At this moment, I am sure, we each have in our minds, memories of a number of Squadron members who lost their lives in the service of our country. They were fine young men, some so very young, with all their lives before them. (Personally, I am thinking, at this moment, of Alan Lewis, a navigator from Cardross, near Mildura, Victoria, who was only 20 years old when he died, and his pilot, Bill McGuigan from Western Australia. When they were shot down, Bill survived the crash but was later captured and executed by the Japanese.) Now, as we look back over nearly 60 years of living, we can

more truly appreciate the magnitude of the sacrifice which all these young men made. They were not seeking fame or glory. They were ordinary young men, typical Australians, but imbued with a lively spirit of adventure. They were faced with a challenging task which had to be done, and they did it to the best of their considerable ability. They would have much preferred to live in peace, back home with their families, but they did their duty in the role which was allotted to them. They faced the challenge, and, in doing so, they made the ultimate sacrifice on behalf of us all.

We, who have been fortunate to be spared to this day, can give thanks to God that we have been so privileged as to have known them, to have served with them, to have been their friends. We each have our own special memories of their comradeship and we will cherish those memories always.

At this time we also think of those members, or wives of members, who have shared with us in past Reunions, perhaps over many years, but who have passed on and are now no longer with us. At a time of Remembrance such as this, let us also remember, with grateful thanks, the years of fellowship which we have been able to enjoy with them. (Personally, I suffered a great loss when my pilot, Ken Sounness, of Mount Barker, W.A. died of polio only five years after the war ended.) Although our ranks are thinning, yet that vital spirit which moulded 31 Squadron into a formidable fighting force, that spirit which inspired those whom we are now remembering, is still strong today. Long may it continue among our people.

Ladies and gentlemen, I thank you all for allowing me the privilege of expressing these few thoughts on your behalf Thank you, ladies and gentlemen.

Gordon Cant, Nav (W).

SENILITY PRAYER

*God grant me the senility to forget,
the people I never liked anyway,
The good fortune to run into the ones I do,
and the eyesight to tell the difference.*

- Now that I am older, here's what I have discovered:
- I started out with nothing. I still have most of it.
- My wild oats have turned to prunes and All Bran.
- I finally got my head together, now my body is falling apart.
- Funny I don't remember being absent minded.
- All reports are in. Life is now officially unfair.
- If all is not lost, where is it?

- It is easier to get older than it is to get wiser.
- Some days you're the dog, some days you're the hydrant.
- I wish the buck stopped here, I could use a few.
- Only time the world beats a path to your door is if you're in the bathroom.
- If God wanted me to touch my toes He would have put them on my knees.
- When you're finally holding all the cards, why does everyone else decide to play chess?
- It's not hard to meet expenses - they're everywhere.

Courtesy Qld Carer Nov/Dec 1999)

MYSTERY AIRCRAFT - BACHEM Ba 349

Towards the end of the war in Europe, Germany was being bombed day and night by both American and British air forces. The Luftwaffe was losing aircraft faster than they could be produced. New aircraft had to be found that could deal with the masses of bombers that raided with impunity. The most effective in service was the Me-262 twin jet fighter but these were far too few. Due to interference by Hitler who had insisted that it had to be designed as a fighter-bomber, production had been held up for two years. The Me-163 'Comet' rocket had been unsuccessful against the American box formations so designers were called on to produce a cheap answer to the problem.

Among the designs proposed was what must be one of the strangest aircraft to come off the drawing board. The Bachem Ba 349A 'Natter' (Viper) was a tiny, all wood aircraft that was to be launched from a vertical steel frame by external booster rockets. An auto pilot steered the machine as the pilot was likely to pass out from the G forces on take off. When it attained the required height an internal steering rocket motor cut in and the pilot manoeuvred it to line up on the massed bombers. The nose cone was then jettisoned to reveal a cluster of 24 or 33 high explosive rockets which were fired into the enemy aircraft.

On completion of this exercise the pilot would then dive away from the formation, pull a lever and the aircraft would fall apart. If all went to plan he and the rocket engine would parachute to the ground. The motor would then be fitted to another airframe and be ready for the next sortie within a very short time.

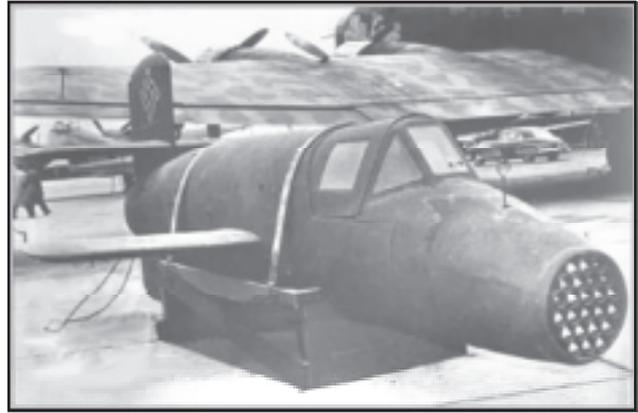
A series of unmanned test flights indicated the need for more power in the rocket engines. Unfortunately they were very scarce and the pace of testing slowed.

In late February 1945 Oberleutnant Lothar Siebert undertook the first manned flight. The aircraft left the gantry perfectly and climbed from sight but crashed close to the launch pad a minute later. It is probable that the canopy had broken loose and struck the pilot in the head either knocking him out or killing him.

It is thought that the only time the 'Natter' attacked an enemy formation was on 29 March 1945, when Feldwebel Ernst Hemmer took on a flight of B-24 Liberators and reported downing two and damaging a third.

American ground troops were pressing into Germany and the Bachem team retreated before them. Rocket engines and fuel had become almost impossible to obtain. Even trucks to carry the equipment and airframes were unavailable. They sunk some engines in Lake Constance.

There are reports that a battery of about fifteen aircraft was set up near Stuttgart but when the Americans were about to attack, they and the launchers were blown up.



Although there are many replicas of the Ba 349 in aviation museums around the world, this example now in the Smithsonian, is thought to be the only genuine one.



As steel became unavailable to build launching frames, the crews resorted to power poles with steel runners attached.

BACHEM Ba 349DATA

Power Plant	Walther 509A engine w/ 4 solid fuel boosters*
Maximum Speed	11,000 m per 60 seconds (Vert) 1000 km/h (Horiz)
Take-off Weight	2230 kg loaded w boosters (880 kg empty)
Span	4 meters
Endurance	130 s at 800 km/h at 3000 m
Range	20-80 km depending on altitude
Length	6.02 m
Weapons	24 x 73 mm Fohn rockets or 33 x 55 mm R4M
Internal Fuel	750 kg

*Ba 349B had a Walther 509c engine, which also had a cruise setting, doubling the endurance.

The Australians in the Great Escape

THOUSANDS of their compatriots fell victim to fighters and flak in the air battles of World War II, but five Australians who broke out of Stalag Luft III in the Great Escape on March 24-25, 1944, met pitiless deaths at the hands of the Gestapo, along with 45 other airmen.

They were Squadron Leader James Catanach, DFC, aged 22; Warrant Officer Albert Horace Hake, 27; Flight Lieutenant Reginald Victor Kierath, 29; Flight Lieutenant Thomas Barker Leigh, 25; and Squadron Leader John Edwin Ashley Williams, DFC, 24. Of the five, WOFF Hake - whose Spitfire was shot down over France in April 1942 on operations with No. 72 Squadron (RAF) - played the most prominent part in preparations for the breakout as he was the mastermind of the compass-making operation.

The ingenious compasses were made from melted bakelite phonograph records, slivers of magnetised razor blades, glass from broken windows and solder obtained from the seals of tin cans. WOFF Hake stamped them with the inscription "Made in Stalag Luft 111. Patent pending" so that the bearers, if recaptured, would not be shot as spies.

This did not prevent his execution after he was caught not far from Sagan, where the POW camp was located, as he slogged on foot across the snow-covered landscape.

When he joined the RAAF in January 1941, on his enlistment papers he had included ice skating among his list of sporting pursuits. (He first met his future wife, Noela, at an ice rink. They were married five months before he embarked for service overseas.) But the icy conditions the exposed POW faced on the run were something else and he suffered severe frostbite. Other recaptured Allied airmen saw him hobbling with a group of prisoners and a Gestapo escort to a black car outside the Gorkitz civilian prison on March 30. The man renowned for lively renditions of songs, including *Waltzing Matilda*, on guitar at Stalag Luft 111, was never seen alive again.

FLTLT Leigh was also in the group of airmen murdered at that time. He, too, had been recaptured in the Sagan area. An air gunner with No. 76 Squadron (RAF), he had been in a Halifax bomber that had been shot down in August 1941. An ex-RAF Halton apprentice, his nationality is listed as United Kingdom on Commonwealth War Graves Commission records, but he originally came from Sydney.

Like FLTLT Leigh, SQNLDR Williams joined the RAF before the war, though he was flying with No. 450 Squadron (RAAF) when his Kittyhawk was shot down during a strafing mission in North Africa in October 1942.

He had been born in New Zealand but his family moved to Australia when he was a child.

Known to his squadron mates as "Willy", he took to the skies in baggy khaki shorts and shirt and leather sandals. Despite his appearance, he was a formidable pilot who became an ace and earned the DFC.

At the POW camp before the Great Escape he was among those who collected wooden slats from the bunks to shore up the tunnels. He and FLTLT "Rusty" Kiera6 were among a group of 12 airmen disguised as foreign workers who attempted to make their way to Czechoslovakia. Their pair - who had attended the same school - were arrested with two others by a mountain patrol near the border and taken to Riechenberg jail. They were murdered by the Gestapo on March 29.

For the Kierath family, descended from German immigrants and who had already had a son killed in action with the Australian Army at Tobruk in 1941, the death of another son who they believed was safe in a POW camp would have been devastating. A member of 450SQN, FLTLT Kierath became a POW in April 1943 after being hit by anti-aircraft fire while attacking naval targets. At Stalag Luft 111, he helped create fake walls to hide forged documents, Al Hake's compasses and other material vital to the breakout.

SQNLDR Catanach enlisted in the RAAF in Melbourne in August 1940. His previous military experience was confined to three years in the cadet corps at Geelong Grammar, but he became an accomplished flier. He never lived to receive the DFC awarded for bringing back to base on three occasions aircraft that had been severely damaged on raids with No. 455 Squadron (RAAF).

There was to be no return when his Hampden bomber and other Coastal Command aircraft flew out on September 2, 1942, for Murmansk, Russia, to protect Arctic convoys. Near the Finnish/Norwegian border, anti-aircraft fire from an armed trawler forced him to crash land. One of the RAAF's youngest squadron leaders and keenest fliers was forcibly grounded - a prisoner in Stalag Luft 111.

Fluent in German, he learned Norwegian in the POW camp. After he broke out, he and three companions headed for Denmark. Near the border a suspicious policeman insisted on checking their cases, which contained escape rations. Inspection of their clothing revealed they were wearing altered greatcoats. The four airmen were handed over to the Kiel Gestapo and murdered on March 29, 1944.

David Edlington

Interview With Lieutenant Saburo Saburo 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

Continued from September 2003

Interviewer: How is the Zero in combat?

Saburo Sakai: Good things about the Zero in combat were the responsiveness of the control stick, the tight turns it could make (to the left), the ability to

climb quickly, and the reliability of the 7.7mm fixed-machine guns.

Interviewer: What is your opinion on the other Japanese planes you flew?

Saburo Sakai: Type 96: Was better for dogfights than the Zero, but its range wasn't as good

Raiden: An interceptor.

Shiden: Range was too short and the landing gear had issues

Interviewer: What would you tell new pilots about the Zero?

Saburo Sakai: I would tell new pilots the following things about the Zero...

Good points: Dogfighting prowess and a quick rate of climb. And the 7.7mm are very reliable.

Bad points: Doesn't perform well in dives. Enemy fire causes fires and easily damages the airframe.

Interviewer: What advice did you actually give?

Saburo Sakai:

Strong points: The responsiveness of the control stick, the range, and the reliability of the 7.7mm guns

Weak points: Understanding of group tactics. Methods of evading enemy fire when surprised by the enemy. Use sudden control adjustments, pulling away in the opposite direction of the line of fire, slide to the side, and continue to do this.

In wartime, you're afraid when you meet your enemy for the first time. Never be isolated from the leader. Keep your cool and posture - never panic. When you enter an area where the enemy can attack you, adjust the propeller pitch so you won't burn up your engine in a dogfight. Make sure you switch your fuel to main tank and drop your drop tanks. We used drop tanks over enemy territory, but rarely over our own territory.

Interviewer: What was life like about a Japanese carrier? What were the men like?

Saburo Sakai: Officers and enlisted pilots were treated differently. There was an incredible amount of discrimination between officers and enlisted pilots. This included differences in food, alcohol, cigarettes, and even the briefing rooms where they waited before flights at airbases.



BEAUFIGHTER RESTORATION DUXFORD

One wonders how this could have happened. The components of two of 31 Squadron Beaufighters were collected from crash sites and shipped to England. Maybe some of our readers can provide an answer to how this occurred. We have so few restored Beaufighters, and yet the Brits got hold of the components of these aircraft without what appears to be any serious objections, or Government requirements.



Reg/Serial	A8-324 or A19-144
Markings	RAAF colours as A19-144
Current Status	Under restoration to airworthy condition.
Location	Duxford

The Fighter Collection acquired this Beaufighter restoration from the Historic Aircraft Restoration Society in 1991, along with a cache of Beaufighter parts. It has been undergoing restoration to airworthy condition at Duxford since then. A8-324 served with the Royal Australian Air Force, and would have been built towards the end of World War Two. It was recovered by HARS from a shed in Melbourne in 1985. The restoration includes the fuselage of Beaufighter XIc A19-144. It was originally IL946 until it was transferred to Australia. It crashed on landing at RAAF Drysdale, Western Australia on January 22nd 1944, when the tail wheel broke off on the runway. To avoid swinging round towards parked aircraft, the undercarriage was retracted, it was reduced to components after its mishap, and most of these parts, including the fuselage and wing section remained at Drysdale for many years. In 1980 the Historic Aircraft Restoration Society, who had a large number of Beaufighter components, required a centre section and wing section for their intended Beaufighter restoration. An expedition to the disused airfield was made, and after several days of hard work the remains of '144 (with A19-148 and other bits and pieces lying around) were trucked to their base in Sydney, Australia.

SHARKS CAN FLY

Sharks of the swimming kind, not the football kind, left sea level for the first time when they were transported on-board an Air Force C 130 Hercules from Darwin to RAAF Base Amberley recently. The live Bull Whaler sharks reached their ultimate destination at Underwater World on the Sunshine Coast in good condition following the road and air trip from the Northern Territory.

When Underwater World was unable to gain transport by commercial air freight, they approached the Department of Defence for assistance. The Air Force agreed to transport the sharks by C-130 Hercules as part of a training activity. C-130H aircraft of No 36 Squadron perform a variety of airlift tasks, everything from aero medical evacuation to providing support for Australian troops in the Middle East, but transporting live sharks was certainly different.

Caught in the Daly River in the northern Territory, the sharks were on public display with three other Bull Whalers. The baby sharks, just 50 centimetres in length, were transported in oxygenated water in a 750kg sealed tub. Underwater curator Mr Andrea Fisher travelled with the live consignment from Darwin, constantly monitoring their progress.

"I was quite concerned about the sharks" he said, "We needed to get the tank open immediately at Amberley to increase oxygen levels or we could have lost them."

However the outcome was good. Unperturbed by their ordeal, the babies are now relaxing in their new home in a fresh water exhibit as part of an awareness programme at Underwater World.

Courtesy Defence News

TERRIBLE JOKES

Do You Hear Me Right?

Three retirees each with a hearing loss were taking a walk one fine September day.

One remarked to the other, "Windy, ain't it?"

"No" the second man replied, "It's Thursday"

And the third man chimed in, "So am I. Let's have a beer."

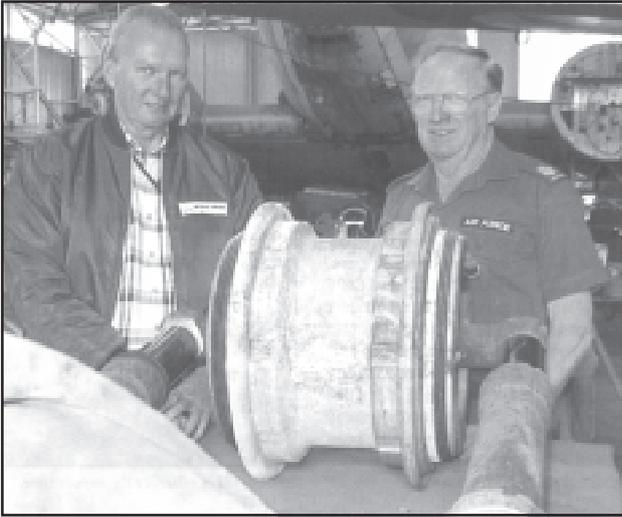
Wanted a good Woman.

Must be able to clean, cook, sew, dig worms clean fish.

Must have boat and motor.

BOMBER UNDERCARRIAGE FINALLY LANDS IN AUSTRALIA

After 60 years, the landing gear of a Mitsubishi G4M 'Betty' Bomber dug out of a swamp in Papua New Guinea in the 1970s has found a final resting place with the Amberley Aviation Heritage Museum.



A Boeing employee, Grant Beaumont, recently donated the main undercarriage assembly to the aviation museum currently located at RAAF Amberley. While employed in Kavieng, Papua New Guinea, Grant and his colleagues were presented with the undercarriage, which the local natives dug out of its resting ground amongst wrecks of other World War II aircraft.

"After many years, the Betty Bomber finally did what it was designed to do - land on Australian soil," said Grant.

Restorations Officer and retired RAAF Warrant Officer, Dennis Doggett intends restoring the under-

carriage to its wartime condition and put it on display in the museum.

"It is in remarkable condition considering the age of the undercarriage," he said.

"It is a very generous offer from Mr Beaumont to donate something so historical."

Museum staff have been restoring aircraft and securing military aviation history for a number of years now. Commonly known as the Boston Hangar or Boston Restoration Project, the museum was funded by the RAAF Museum to complete the restoration of two Boston Bombers and the structural repair to a RAAF Catalina flying boat.

The museum is a non-profit organisation that relies on volunteers and donations to maintain the operation of the museum, so a significant donation such as the undercarriage is an important addition.

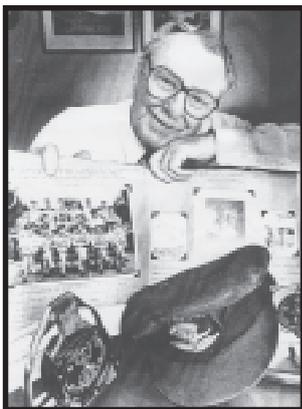
Since the museum is currently situated at RAAF Amberley, access for civilians to enjoy and view aircraft/military history is restricted but the organisers plan is to have with access to the general public.

"We are trying to secure a piece of defence land outside the RAAF Amberley perimeter," said Mr Doggett. "We already have a hangar, volunteer landscaping, security and concreting ready, we just need somewhere to put it all."

The museum committee are hoping that people will want to make donations to the museum whether in the form of aircraft parts, photographs, aircraft - or just volunteer their time to maintain a part of aviation history.

Courtesy Defence News

More Bits & Pieces from George Drury



I can't remember when I first found the following greeting. I found it fascinating, intriguing and charming. Could it be from the great Homer, or indeed from our finger-moving friend of old, Omar Khayarn?

'May the seed which grows the tree, from which your coffin will be made be not yet planted.'

And what about this 'Touch of humour'?

The following humorous dialogue comes from a lawsuit brought by a Queensland farmer after his horse was hit a by a car:

Defence Counsel: After the accident, didn't someone come over to you and ask how you felt? Farmer: Yes, I believe that is so.

Defence Counsel: And didn't you tell him that you never felt better in your life. Farmer: Yes, I guess I did.

Defence counsel sits down. Plaintiffs counsel stands up.)

Plaintiffs Counsel: Will you tell His Honor the circumstances in which you made the response?

Farmer: Yes. Not long after the accident, my horse, which had sustained broken legs, was thrashing around. A policeman came up to the horse, put his revolver to its ear and shot it dead. He then went over to my dog, which had a broken back and was howling miserably. He put his revolver to the dog's ear and shot it. Then he came to me and asked, "How do you feel?"

From George Drury



IMPRESSIONS OF A PILOT

Flight is freedom in its purest form,
To dance with the clouds which follow a storm:

To roll and glide, to whirl and spin,
To feel the joy that swells within:

To leave the earth with its troubles and fly,
And know the warmth of a clear spring sky:

Then back to earth at the end of a day,
Released from the tensions which melted away.

Should my end come while I am in flight,
Whither brightest day or darkest night:

Spare me your pity and shrug off the pain,
Secure in the knowledge that I'll do it again:

For each of us is created to die,
And within me I know,
I was born to fly.

Gary Claud Stoker