THE MOSQUITO AIRCRAFT ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

The Aussie Mossie

NUMBER 33

JUNE 2002

A52-600 Restoration Back In Action

Great News...
As you can see A52-600 has been rolled out of the isolation ward and is bound for recovery in the Restoration Hangar at Point Cook.

The Supermarine Walrus has now been completed and moved to her new home where she is proudly displayed in the Museum's display hangars for the general public to get a close look at all the painstaking work that has been put into the restoration over the past seven or eight years.

But now it's time to get out the hammers, nails and saws to transform the "Wooden Wonder" back to her former glory.

The MAAA is calling on ***YOU*** to help and participate in whatever way you can—to fundraise, increase our membership, advertise, get down to Point Cook and put in a good day's 'hands on' effort.

Without your continued and increased support the restoration will drag on for years and years—and we don't want that do we?

Notice of 10th MAAA Annual General Meeting

Will be held at: **Mosquito Restoration Project Room**
RAAF Museum
Point Cook, Victoria

On: **Sunday 4th August 2002**

Commencing at: **11:00**

(Please read loose leaf sheets for more information, and nominations forms for the Executive Committee)

Correction for pamphlet included with the last Bulletin

Enclosed with the last Bulletin was a pamphlet detailing the production of a fine set of hand drawings of views of A52-600 during her restoration at Richmond. Due to an editorial bungle the credit for them was not given to the right person, they should have been attributed to Bill Wells, who was, at that time, in hospital suffering from a stroke. My apologies and best wishes to Bill. Ed.

Thanks

The Association would like to thank Jayne Gray for her kind offer and permission to look through her late husband Gerry's photos and documentation that he amassed during the restoration of Mossie A52-319 in Canberra. See Vale notice on page 7 of this Bulletin.
Also thanks to Ron Vassie for meeting Jayne and undertaking the task of gathering this worthwhile information that will assist in restoring A52-600. Ed.

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Introducing the A52-600 Project Manager

There is a new face around the Museum and A52-600 - LAC Brett Redway who served with the RAAF for 6 years Full Time and now works as a Reservist with 21 Squadron. Brett joins the Museum to project manage the restoration of the Mosquito project, working with Mosquito Association volunteers and Friends of the Museum. Before this he was an Aircraft Technician at Williamtown and then spent a year at ARDU as a civilian when ARDU went from military to a civilian contract.

He has just started an Advanced Diploma of Aerospace Engineering at RMIT and the Project Management role will provide him with a vast amount of practical experience to match his theoretical studies.

His interests include camping and 4-Wheel driving. He has acquired the title of "B2", because Brett Clowes has been dubbed "B1". For those who have known him previously he answers to the name "Red", not only because of his surname but due to the colour of his hair!

Currently 21 Squadron are working on the restoration of the Museum's Iroquois for restoration and display.

Brett has always been interested in restoration since he was about 12 or 13. His family were members of the Pichi Richi Railway in South Australia (used in the film 'Gallipoli'), so that probably planted the seed, and then became he became interested in World War II cars. He is currently working on fixing up a World War ll jeep, but he has always had a passion for old aircraft.

Brett's comments on his new role are:

"It was a bit of a surprise to be working on a Project like this, but now it is bedding down, things seem to be working out alright. The good thing about this project is that it ties in very well with my study. There's a fair bit of a technical component, which I have Recognition of Prior Learning because of my trade background and so therefore it's mainly the project management and Occupational Health and Safety that I have to complete… Its basically: learn it - apply it and also apply it - learn it, at the same time".

"I will be learning the old ways! I've been working on mostly American and modern aircraft, so I'll be learning the old publications and drawings, that sort of thing. We've got to find out what we've got before we can start, but that gives me time to get my footing and also lay down a plan of how we're going to work. I haven't worked with a wooden aircraft before – that will be one of those interesting things! But I have a very wide range of volunteers to keep an eye on. Some have had nothing to do with aircraft in their life, others being ex-aircrew. In that sense, they may remember where things went, as well as some of the stories and heritage behind it. I think I have found the difference between Volunteers and paid people... these guys want to be here."

The MAAA welcomes and looks forward to working with Brett into the future as we work together to resurrect the old girl – A52-600.

If the enthusiasm shown by Brett over the past weeks and his ability to soak up the technical detail is an indication for the future, we will fly through the restoration.

Electronic Bulletin

Thanks to the people who have sent their email addresses. This Bulletin is the first to be sent via email, providing swift delivery and a reduction in production costs.

If you are receiving a paper copy and wish to receive your copy by email, please send your request to:

rsteven1@bigpond.net.au

Snippet of information from Brian Fillery

On the 26 July 1944 an Me262 piloted by Alfred 'Bubi' Schreiber shot down a Mosquito. That Mosquito therefore has the dubious honour of being the first Allied aircraft to be shot down by a jet fighter.

In fact out of the first ten aircraft shot down by the Me262 there were 4 Mosquitos, 3 Spitfires and 1 each of Flying Fortress, Lightning and Mustang.

Thanks again Brian.

"Life in Paradise" by Noel Sparrow

Letter and photos from Noel Sparrow of Oxford Park Queensland.

I thought I might elaborate a little on the 87 Squadron detachment to Fiji in 1952 – it might make interesting reading.

We were based at Nandi International Airport having followed the Mosquitos across in an 86 Transport Wing Dakota, first landing at Tontouta Airport in New Caledonia and staying in Noumea overnight and arriving in Nandi the next day. A hangar, a Jeep and comfortable quarters were made available to us along with a small building which was to be our dark room.

My first job, being the detachment "Chippy" was to work with the Photo Section constructing the dark room, workbenches, print washing facilities and drying racks etc. Local Indian plumbers connected the water, while the aircrews planned their flying program – our assignment was an aerial survey of the islands for the New Zealand government.

It wasn't all hard work though; we dined at the Mocambo Hotel and were made honorary members of the Nandi Airport Club.

A bus and Fijian driver was made available to us for off duty activities. A local gentleman was assigned to us as a liaison officer and guide who organised trips to the beach and local Fijian villages etc. We visited the nearby town of Lautka and the gold mine at Vatukoula. We were introduced to some of the local customs and language and took part in Kava drinking ceremonies. We were made very welcome wherever we went. We often visited the township of Nandi and haggled with the Indian shopkeepers. We also spent a weekend in Suva and visited the RNZAF base at Lauthala bay.

The Pan American Airways staff often arranged social activities. We even challenged them to a game of baseball and would you believe we beat them!

The South Pacific air transport association held it's meeting at Nandi that year and we paraded for and was inspected by the then Governor of Fiji.

To me this was one of those trips of a lifetime but one partic-

Group photo taken at the beach – Squadron Leader McKenzie seated third from the left. Flt Morrison standing fifth from the left. Flt Sergeant Holdstock standing extreme left. Sergeant Dick Glassey standing third from the right. Standing next to Dick was our Fijian driver. The elderly gentleman seated second from the right was our guide. I am kneeling extreme left. One member not appearing in the photo was Flt Sergeant Barney Eurell who took the photo. His passing was noted in the MAAA Bulletin some years ago.

"Life in Paradise"

ular incident will always remain in my memory, it happened the day one of our pilots, Sergeant Dick Glassey, who sadly passed away a few years ago, strolled into the hangar after an early morning photo run and announced that he had just logged up his first thousand hours and felt like celebrating. Turning to me he said, "how would you like to come up for a spin young Sparrow?" I jumped at the chance and was helped into a parachute harness. Dick climbed aboard, I soon followed up the ladder, settling into the observer's seat and wondering what the hell I had let myself in for. Dick taxied to the end of the runway, after a brief run-up we were soon airborne amid the roar of the mighty Merlins.

For several minutes Dick put on one hell of a show over Nandi, with a series of loops, rolls, stalls and turns followed by several high speed low level passes over the runway. One such pass, to my amazement upside down, I felt completely safe in Dick's hands and enjoyed every moment of it.

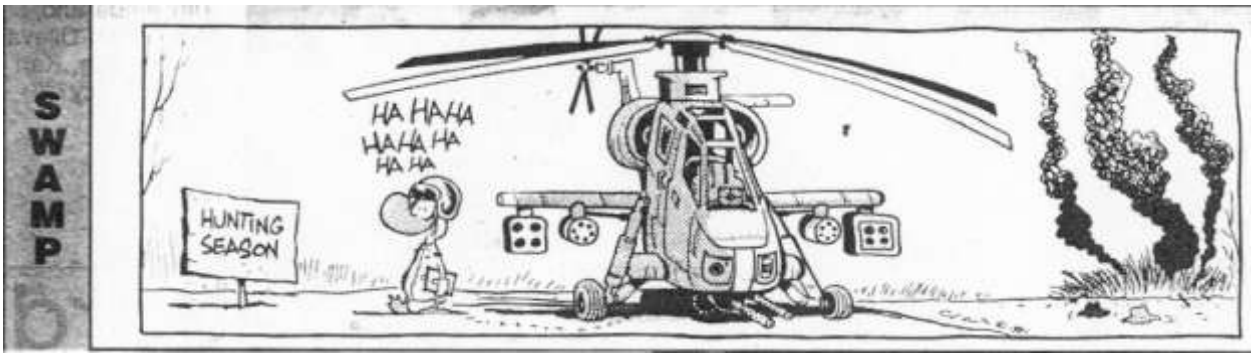
After landing and taxying back to the hangar area we noticed a fairly large group of onlookers had gathered outside the terminal building. As we climbed down out of the aircraft they broke into loud applause in appreciation for what they had just witnessed. Dick certainly celebrated in fine style. I was only along for the ride yet I felt nine feet tall and wondered how many young chippys would get the chance to experience such a flight in a Mosquito.

I learnt later that our C.O. congratulated Dick on a fine display and then roasted him for performing aerobatics with the long-range fuel tanks attached.

That was fifty years ago, yet I still sense the excitement when I look through my photo album and wonder what has happened to all the blokes from that detachment. I know of six who joined the MAAA.

ps: "Nandi" being an international airport, we had the opportunity to meet several well known celebrities, one of whom was the late great Gary Cooper – flim star. He was passing through to Samoa where he made the film "Return to Paradise". Pan American put on a party in his honour and we were all invited. I have a photo of a small group of us bidding him farewell outside the terminal the next morning.

Find enclosed photographs of the two Fiji Mosquitos – A52-301 and A52-302 crewed by Squadron Leader McKenzie (Pilot), Flt Morrison (Navigator), Sergeant Dick Glassey (Pilot) and Flt Sergeant Graham Holdstock (Navigator).



From the Mailbag

This is a follow on from the story in the last Bulletin.

It's from Max Ordinall

With reference to the story and photograph in the previous Bulletin about the prototype "Sea Mosquito" landing abroad HMS Indefatigable, March 25, 1944.

I wish to inform you that my father was a mechanic on Seafires (894 Sqdn) and remembered the occasion well, aboard Indefatigable.

The ship at the time had recently been commissioned and was new. The ship later served on operations against the Tirpitz and some Russian convoy escort duties.

Later it was a part of the British Pacific Fleet at Okinawa and Iwo Jima.

The story was an extract extract from Captain "Winkle" Brown's book "Wings on My Sleeve" - a collection of his experiences (well worth the read).

Of interest in the photograph are the 4 bladed propellers, extended wings and the proximity of the batsman to the aeroplane - nowhere near his 'usual ' spot close to the port side. The batsman is giving the 'cut' signal.

Even though the carrier would be steaming into wind approaching 30 knots, the Mosquito would still be passing him at close to 100 knots, so he was certainly pushing his luck.

With this letter I have also photocopied a chapter on flying the Mosquito from the book "In the Cockpit, Flying the World's Great Aircraft". This is a vivid description from takeoff to landing.

The article "High Drama" is about PR flights. The Spitfire PRXI and PRXIX were 'sisters' to the Mosquito PRXVI for reconnaissance duties, so might also be of interest.

Thanks Max, the articles will be reproduced in this and an upcoming Bulletin.

An anecdote from Tom Parsons of Leongatha, Victoria.

In March and April 1945, there was a completely different change in the Air War. The Luftwaffe had lost it's sting, and the Allied and Russian fronts were approaching Berlin, each trying to beat the other there so as to claim victory first and to claim as much of Berlin as they could.

When we were flying towards Berlin at about 25,000 feet, we could see the flashes from the guns on both fronts. Mosquitoes were sent over every few hours to get the sirens going and to keep the Berliners out of bed. The average time from our base at Upwood was a return trip of about 4 hours, depending on the winds.

I remember one night in April 1945, I was getting very tired, and on the way to Berlin I thought I would try and stretch my legs. Having very long legs, and the cockpit of a Mosquito is not large. In fact it is very cramped. I put my two legs over the top of the rudder pedals and enjoyed the lovely stretch.

Dick Burgess, my Navigator, complained that he had lost most of his electrics and as he was using H2S (our version of radar) he was not able to give me an accurate time when we should be over the target.

We were coned in about four searchlights, and the Flak was coming up very fast, so when we thought we should have been there, I opened the bomb bays and pressed the release button and let the load go.

The camera was in the bomb bay, and started taking pictures as soon as I pressed the release. We brought home a beautiful clear picture of our bombs exploding smack in the centre of the large water reservoir that supplied Berlin. I guess we killed a lot of fish.

I have this picture in my Log Book. I treasure it!

The sequel to this story was when we arrived home and Dick complained about the H2S not working, the technicians next morning checked and found that when I had stretched my legs past the rudder pedals, I had upset the works and that is why the thing did not work!

A short note from MAAA's V.P. Alan Middleton.

All Nav/W's who were fortunate to have had Harrold Ballam (Cza) O'Connor as an instructor on course at Ballarat and Mt Gambier will regret to learn that he died on 19th August 2001 at Warrnambool, Victoria, where he had lived with his wife Peg for many years.

The sympathy of all who knew Cza is expressed to Peg and Family.

Vale

It is with regret that the Association must relay the passing of another three of our members.

CJ (Cecil) Cousins

of LEEBANA, New South Wales
Passed away on 28th January 2002
in the Mater Hospital Waratah, NSW
following a short illness.

Our sympathies to his wife Daphne and family.

NC (Norm) Petschel

of BACCHUS MARSH, Victoria
Passed away on 4th December 2001

Our sympathies to his wife Doris.

G (Gerry) Gray

of Summer Hill, New South Wales
Passed away November 2001

Gerry spent 6 years restoring A52-319 (now in the War Museum Canberra)

Our sympathies to his wife Jayne and family.

Round like a shot

GOING to bed the other night, I noticed people in my shed stealing things.

I phoned the police but was told no one was in the area to help. They said they would send someone over as soon as possible.

I hung up. A minute later I rang again. 'Hello,' I said, 'I called you a minute ago because there were people in my shed. You don't have to hurry now, because I've shot them.'

Within minutes there were half a dozen police cars in the area, plus helicopters and an armed response unit. They caught the burglars red-handed.

One of the officers said: 'I thought you said you'd shot them.'

To which I replied: 'I thought you said there was no one available.'

TONY GLADSTONE

New Members

The Association is pleased to announce that the following people have joined as members:

HJ (Harry) Farmer
12 Dellwood Street
NATHAN
Qld

JL (John) Steel
SYDNEY
NSW
Nephew of A52-600 Navigator John Reynolds (Decd)

C.(Christine)Cribb
11 Nabiac Place
WESTLEIGH
NSW
Neice of Navigator John Reynolds.

GJ (Graham) Gillespie
35 Foley Place
SINNAMON PARK
Qld
Son of Sqdn Ldr Ian Gillespie who was killed at Coomalie Creek in Aug 1945.

DJ (David) Barr
16 Manifold Court
CROYDON SOUTH
Vic

WS (Shaw) Hurwood
16 Albert Street
WILLIAMSTOWN
Vic

Welcome to all, we hope you all have a long, enjoyable association and take an active interest in the restoration of A52-600.

A man takes his Rottweiler to the vet.
"My dog's cross-eyed, is there anything you can do for him? "
"Well," says the vet, "let's have a look at him"
So he picks the dog up and examines his eyes, then checks his teeth.
Finally, he says "I'm going to have to put him down."
"What? Because he's cross-eyed? "

Radio Section at Coomalie Creek

Here is the fourth pencil drawing by Association member Keith Muller of Penrith, NSW.

"In the Cockpit, Flying the World's Great Aircraft"

The following excerpt was sent by Max Ordinall from a book titled 'In the Cockpit, Flying the World's Great Aircraft', edited by Anthony Robinson from McDonald & Co publishers, under the Black Cat imprint, London House, London ISBN 0-748101152

Aerodynamically the 'Mozzie' was a beautiful shape, the sharply tapered wing located on the smoothly contoured fuselage at mid position. The engines were closely cowled in low-profile nacelles, their radiators being incorporated within the wing leading edges adjacent to the fuselage. Spruce sandwich construction was employed throughout the aeroplane, an expedient adopted by the design team, which had produced the famous Comet racer half a dozen years before the war. Pilot and navigator sat side-by-side in the nose, while the four 20mm Hispano cannon, carried by the fighter and fighter-bomber versions were located under the cockpit floor.

Entry to the cockpit was by means of a telescopic ladder leading to a hatch in the lower starboard side of the nose, the pilot entering first to occupy the port seat and the navigator following. Bearing in mind that this hatch was also the emergency exit through which the crew bailed out, it always seemed to the uninitiated that the starboard propeller was uncomfortably close to the hatch. However, although it was recommended that, if there was time the propeller should be feathered before stepping over the side, a perfectly safe bail out was possible without doing so.

After switching on the electrics and checking that the 24-volt battery was fully charged and the pneumatic system showed a pressure of 200 psi, the outer fuel tanks were selected for use first. This was because in

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"In the Cockpit, Flying the World's Great Aircraft" - contd

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the event of an engine failure, it was not possible to cross-feed fuel from the outer tanks of one wing to the engine on the other side.

To start up, port engine first, the throttle was set slightly open, constant-speed propeller controls fully forward, super-charger set at 'moderate' and fuel pressure venting cock switched on. The ignition switches - two per engine - were switched on and the starter and booster-coil buttons pressed. As the ground crew feverishly operated the priming pump, the engine would fire to an accompaniment of loud irregular bangs from the exhaust manifolds scarcely six feet from the canopy windows. This was always an impressive moment when starting engines at night for, even when fitted with exhaust shrouds, the excess fuel in the cylinders exploded to cause pyrotechnic flashes that lit the night vividly.

As soon as both engines settled down to an even firing, the throttles were eased forward to give about 1,200rpm and the radiator flaps opened. As with many Merlin-powered aircraft -particularly the Mosquito with its slim wing radiators - overheating on the ground, either when stationary or taxying was a feature of engine handling that had to be watched carefully. If the coolant temperature rose much above 70 degrees centigrade it was essential to turn the aircraft into wind and run the engines up to about 2.000rpm for a short period.

Before taxying, normal checks were carried out to ensure propeller constant speeding, flaps operating and that, with take-off boost; the engine revs reached 3.000rpm. Testing the operation of the magnetos was by ensuring the engine speed did not drop by more than 150rpm when each magneto was switched off in turn.

Taxying the Mosquito was straightforward as the over the nose of the bomber and fighter bomber version was excellent, although the later AI Mark X - equipped night fighters, with bulky nose radome demanded fish-tailing to see the taxi-track ahead. The powerful wheel brakes were operated from a lever on the control column, differential effect being achieved by use of the rudder bar.

Arriving at the takeoff area it was customary to swing into wind and with the control column held hard back run the engines up to 3.000rpm to clean the spark plugs. Takeoff cheeks were brief: check trimmers - elevators slightly nose heavy on most versions, rudder slightly right and ailerons neutral - propeller pitch controls fully forward, fuel cocks set to outer tanks and tank contents checked, flaps selected up or about 15 degrees down as required, super-charger at 'moderate' setting and radiator flaps open.

After being given takeoff clearance the throttles were pushed slowly forward, leading slightly with the port control to counteract a fairly, marked tendency to swing to the left. Acceleration after releasing the brakes was most impressive and the moment at which the pilot would raise the tail varied from version to version. The night fighters, which had more equipment in the nose, tended to assume a tail-up attitude fairly quickly and it was necessary to cheek this with slight backward pressure on the stick. Unstick, occurred at around 200 – 210km/h (125-130mph) indicated: it was then essential to hold the aircraft level raising the wheels as soon as possible to allow speed to build up quickly to the fairly high critical speed of 320km/h (200mph) the minimum speed necessary to maintain control of the aeroplane should an engine cut out on take-off. The relatively small, high-placed rudder, combined with the low-slung engine nacelles, imposed this lack of directional control at low airspeeds, and it was an unfortunate feature of early Mosquito operations that accidents due to engine failure after take-off were fairly frequent. Later Mosquito versions, with more power available on takeoff, reached their critical speed appreciably quicker.

Once the safety speed was reached the aircraft could be trimmed into the climb, flaps

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"In the Cockpit, Flying the World's Great Aircraft" - contd

(Continued from page 9)

raised (if used) and engines throttled back to climb at 274km/h (170mph) indicated. It was customary for the pilot and navigator to use oxygen from takeoff onwards during night flights, and in daytime to switch over to oxygen at 2,400 – 3000m (8,000 – 10,000ft).

Fighter-versus-fighter air combat in the Mosquito by day presented some difficulty owing to the field of vision from the pilot's seat being severely restricted by the large engine nacelles, located so close to the cockpit, and by the side-by-side seating. In combat against bomber aircraft and such targets as the flying bombs, two criteria were essential - heavy armament and high speed, both possessed in abundance by the Mosquito. That is not to suggest that the aeroplane lacked manoeuvrability, and acrobatics were a delight to perform, the sensitivity of the controls for what was, after all, a fairly big aeroplane, being particularly memorable.

A slow roll was relatively difficult to execute as the speed dropped off quickly and the nose dropped fairly sharply during the second half of the roll, so that a fair amount of height was lost: it was necessary to barrel the nose round the horizon to maintain height. If the roll was too slow there was a risk, of one or both engines cutting while inverted. It was, however, quite possible to barrel-roll the Mozzie fighter-bombers with one engine's propeller feathered, provided the entry speed was at least 480km/h (300mph) indicated. Before executing aerobatics involving entry speeds over 515km/h (320mph), a good deal of nose-down trim was needed to counter tail heaviness, which increased as the speed built up.

The best way to do a climbing roll was to open the throttles in a shallow dive to bout 600m (2,000ft) and ease back on the stick as the speed built up to around 595km/h (370mph) indicated, and start the roll as the nose rose about 40 degrees above the horizon: the speed would drop off quickly and to avoid stalling it was necessary to ease off the stick as soon as the roll was completed. For a straightforward loop the same entry speed was needed, although it was usually recommended that the minimum hight should be greater. The backward pressure on the stick had to be maintained so as to 'fly the aircraft around' fairly tightly, easing off some throttle when inverted otherwise excessive height would be lost in recovery.

An entry speed of not less than 610km/h (380mph) was needed for a roll off the top and the rolling out had to be started as soon as the nose touched the horizon. In an aircraft with plenty of fuel left the rollout was a bit uncomfortable, as the speed would have dropped off quite close to the stall. Despite the use of constant speed propellers there was a tendency for them to over speed during high speed diving in the later versions of the Mosquito, especially during recovery from the loop. The best way to minimise this was to avoid using the throttles during the aerobatics themselves, other than throttling back during recovery.

Stalling was again straightforward, the stall in the 'clean' condition being induced by holding the stick firmly back and closing the throttles. The stall was heralded by slight pitching, followed by the nose dropping fairly steeply and possibly one wing. Spinning was generally frowned upon owing to the lack of rudder effect at low speed. With wheels and flaps down the stall was somewhat more energetic, being accompanied by a good deal of pitching and vibration. If the stick was held right back in this condition, one wing would drop quite sharply. Recovery from the stall required little effort from the controls, apart from easing the backward pressure on the stick, as the speed built up very quickly in the glide.

Aerobatics, other than gentle rolls, were not as a rule encouraged in the Mosquito night fighters as excessive 'g' was not considered conducive to efficient operation, either of the radar or its operator. In any case the greater nose-heaviness rendered the aircraft

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"In the Cockpit, Flying the World's Great Aircraft" - contd

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very sluggish in climbing and looping manoeuvres.

Gun firing in the Mosquito was always a stimulating experience, particularly in these versions armed with the full four cannon and four machine gun battery. The aircraft was an extremely steady gun platform, there being little change of trim while firing in a curve of pursuit, and none in level flight. The crash of gunfire from the cannon less than a foot beneath the cockpit floor was possibly amplified by the lightweight wooden structure of the airframe. When dropping bombs from the fuselage bomb bay there was little change of trim, although opening the bomb doors resulted in a slight nose-up change.

In later life, particularly in the post war RAF, Mosquitoes suffered quite a high rate of engine failures as their service lives were stretched well beyond that originally envisaged. There were also instances when, following recall from duties in tropical and humid theatres overseas, their spruce airframes deteriorated without the flaws being detected. Of course, careful monitoring of engine temperatures would enable incipient engine trouble to be avoided, even if this simply meant closing down an overheating engine to avoid the possibility of more serious problems.

Battle damage to a radiator would almost invariably result in engine overheating and, unless stopped quickly, eventually fire or failure. Shutting down an engine was effected by throttling back and switching off the relevant magnetos, and then pressing the propeller-feathering button. A windmilling propeller caused considerable drag on that side, so much so that too little rudder control would remain for a safe landing. If an engine fire had occurred, the relevant fire extinguisher button would he depressed. As always, once the extinguisher had been operated, it was never wise to attempt to restart the engine owing to the possibility of a recurrence of the fire without further means of extinguishing it. The fire extinguishers operated automatically in the event of a crash.

Control of one engine gave no trouble, as there was adequate trim available from the rudder tab to hold the aircraft straight at a reasonable speed. However, care had to be taken in turns not to allow the aircraft to tighten up when turning toward a dead engine.

In the event of dire emergency, unless speed and altitude dictated otherwise, it was not recommended to ditch the Mosquito in the sea. There was a tendency for the weight of the engines to 'bury the nose'

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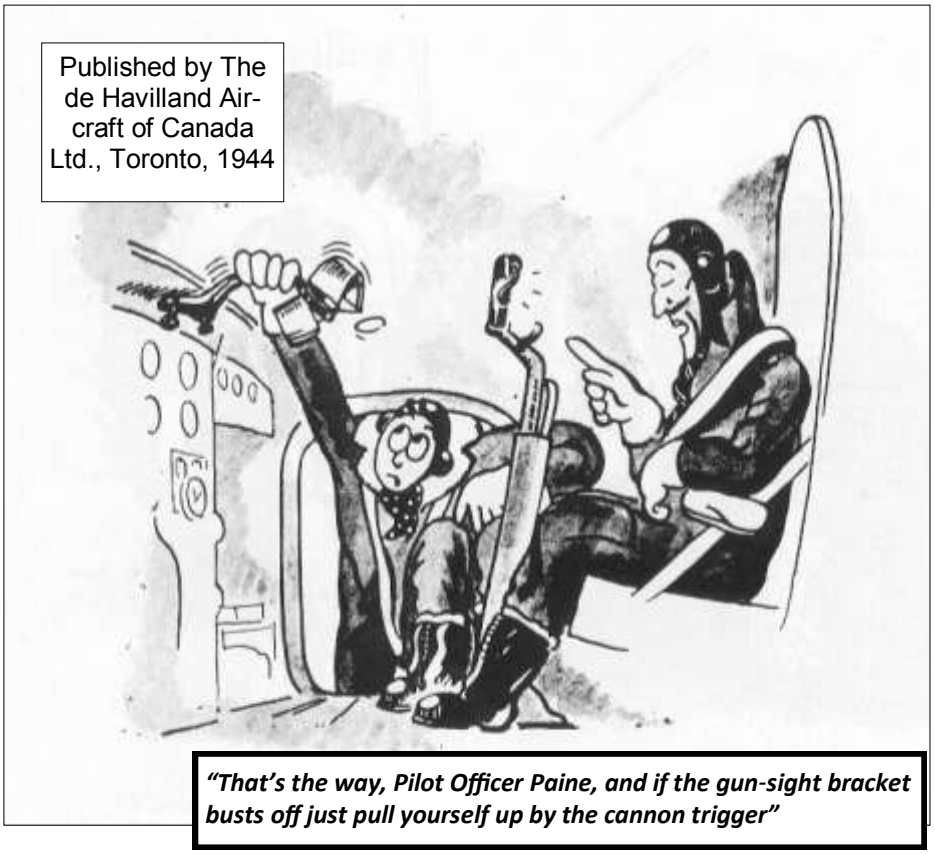

"That's the way, Pilot Officer Paine, and if the gun-sight bracket busts off just pull yourself up by the cannon trigger"

"In the Cockpit, Flying the World's Great Aircraft" - contd

(Continued from page 11)
and the lightweight wooden structure could break up very quickly. Both crewmembers carried K-type dinghies in their parachute packs, and most Mosquitoes were equipped with L-type two-man dinghies, which popped out, by operation of an automatic immersion switch. Exit from the cockpit either after ditching or a wheels-up landing was through the roof emergency panel, which should have been jettisoned before touchdown.

Although bailing out was recommended in preference to ditching, it could be a rather confusing process unless thoroughly practised by crews on the ground, owing to the confined nature of the cockpit. As already mentioned, it was best if the starboard engine was stopped and the propeller feathered. The hatch by, the navigator's right leg was jettisoned by pulling the large red handle and kicking out the panel. The navigator would leave first, followed by the pilot who had to negotiate the control column, being careful not to snag his harness on any of the numerous controls, knobs and switches, particularly in the radar-equipped night fighters.

Rejoining the landing circuit was a procedure that varied according to the duty performed by, the Mosquito. The bombers tended to make long, flat, powered approaches, whereas the fighters and fighter-bombers usually completed a tightish circuit of the airfield on to the approach quite close to the boundary. Unless on a 'straight in' instrument approach, the night fighters generally compromised with a larger circuit, aiming to straighten up for the final approach about one or one-and-a-half miles downwind of the runway threshold.

During the downwind leg, checks for landing were carried out while reducing speed to about 290km/h (180mph) indicated. Brake pressure was checked to ensure minimum of 200psi, superchargers set at 'moderate', radiator flaps open and undercarriage lowered (if returning on one engine the wheels took a good 30 seconds to extend and lock down). Propeller pitch controls set fully forward and the fullest fuel tanks selected. Flaps were then selected fully down - requiring a lot of nose-down trim and by the time the aircraft turned cross-wind and started to descend the speed would have dropped to about 257 km/h (160 mph).

Using throttle to adjust the rate of descent, the aircraft was turned on to the final approach at about 225km/h (140mph), and to check its fairly high rate of descent a good deal of power was needed, aiming to cross the threshold at a height of 4.6m (15ft) up at about 193km/h (120mph), when the throttles could be closed and the stick eased back. The aircraft at average landing weights stalled at about 169km/h (105mph) and the night fighters slightly higher.

Landing on one engine presented no real difficulty provided a longish approach was made enabling the speed to be kept above about 160mph and the rate of descent controlled by use of the good engine. The descent rate was a good deal faster and a rather steeper approach than normal was advisable. The author recalls an instance when returning at night on one engine, the other engine failed at the moment of touchdown. The aircraft swung quite violently towards the windmilling propeller and careered across the unlit airfield, between the air traffic control tower and a hangar before it sat down on its belly having knocked off both main undercarriage members on an obstruction. The fuselage fuel tanks ruptured, but fortunately there was no fire.

In the event of a baulked landing and the need to 'go around again', it was again essential to accelerate as quickly as possible to gain that vital critical speed, so the throttles were pushed open fairly smartly and the aircraft held drop and the wheels retracted immediately. The flaps were left down until a height of about 150m (500ft) was reached, as raising them caused the aircraft to sink quite appreciably.

Once finally down on the runway the deceleration caused a slight tendency to swing to the right, but this could be checked quite easily by use of the left rudder and possibly a bit of brake. However, the radar-equipped night

In a recent interview, General Norman Schwartzkopf was asked if he didn't think there was room for forgiveness toward the people who have harboured and abetted the terrorists who perpetrated the 9/11 attacks on America.

His answer was classic -

He said, "I believe that forgiving them is God's function. Our job is simply to arrange the meeting."