

2006 RAAF Museum Air Pageant News

Aussie Mossie volunteers were once again active at this year's Pageant. The Restoration hangar was open to the public, with thousands of visitors showing a great deal of interest in A52-600 in particular. The MAAA displayed a selection of photos of 87 Squadron aircraft, had a number of pamphlets and facts sheets available as give-aways, and answered lots of questions. *The* most common was "Is it really made of wood?" We were able to assure everyone that it was indeed. Perhaps the most valuable interpretive display was the half section of rear fuselage which is layered to show areas of the plywood inner skin, balsa filler, spruce frame members and plywood outer skin. It was constructed two years ago (by Brett Clowes, Geoff Matthews and Ron Gretton) with just this purpose in mind. A further cut-off section of the new rear fuselage was on display to show how strong and light this structure is.

Alan Middleton had prepared a brief history of A52-600 on A4 sheets, which were posted on a couple of fuselage jig frame members and generated considerable interest. Don Taylor's data pamphlet on the aircraft was a valuable source



Phil Spielvogel OAM speaking with Pat Dulhunty

of reference to all of us when stumped by various questions and Graeme Coates' pamphlet on our Association was widely distributed and will

hopefully attract some new members. A very welcome visitor on the day was MAAA member Phil Spielvogel (who recently turned 90), one of



the original 87 Squadron members from Coomalie Creek days during WW2. A fit and active man, Phil had driven over to Point Cook from t'other side of Anakie in his Jaguar for the Pageant.

Other highlights of the day were catching up with old friends, and the flying displays (of course). We were all pleased to see the Museum's newest arrival, Tiger Moth A17-692 lead a flight of three Tigers on the day. This was the culmination of many hours of hard yakka by all Technical staff to complete an overhaul and have it signed off in time to fly on the Sunday (first engine run was on the Saturday evening). Great work all round, and a fitting reward with a successful first early morning flight prior to the show. Seeing and hearing three Mustangs flying in formation has to be right at the top, too.

Visitors left us with the lasting impression that the RAAF Museum is seen as a highly valued and thoroughly appreciated community asset; long may it remain so. And to the many people who said (of A52-600) "I just wanted to touch it!": we know how you feel.

... TRB

The President's Log—by Alan Middleton

Our report in an earlier edition of the bulletin of the re-formation of 87 Squadron apparently beat the gun, but we are now pleased to advise that it is now a goer.

Timetable for the event has not yet been confirmed but we can advise we understand it will happen in July at Edinburgh, South Australia.

Wing Cmdr. Rick Keir has been appointed Commanding Officer and has been busy doing all those things which a C.O. of a new Squadron must do to meet the program. Rick is coming to Point Cook on 26th and 27th April and Terry Burke and I will meet him there to introduce him to A52-600.

A member of 87, LAC Stephen Hobbs, came to Point Cook recently to photograph A52-600 and to talk to Geoff Matthews and Ron Gretton about the restoration as he has been assigned the task to prepare an article for inclusion in the RAAF Annual outlining the history of 87.

He is also keen to interview former members of 87 for inclusion in a video embracing the old and the new 87. Please let us know of any survivors who would be prepared to take part in this project, which will include the launch of the new unit.

The history of 87 is an ongoing project being most capably handled by MAAA member David Devenish. He has devoted many hours to collecting photographs from many people who have connections with 87 pre 1945 and the results so far are very exciting. We look forward to the completion of David's work, which will be a DVD of considerable historical importance and I take the opportunity to thank him for his efforts.

As you all are aware, a Chapel was constructed at Coomalie Creek by 31 Beaufighter Squadron in 1944 and was restored by Richard Luxton and a team from Darwin University. Richard has now made the plans of the Chapel available to RAAF Museum, Point Cook and it is understood consideration is being given to the erection of a replica of the Chapel at Point Cook to be used as a shelter for visitors to the Museum.



On 9 April, the Museum conducted the biennial Air Pageant at Point Cook. The collection of aircraft attending was superb, the flying display thrilling and the interest in A52-600 was almost overwhelming.

All members of your Committee attended, some on Saturday and Monday, as well as on the Sunday, to assist with the setting up and cleaning up and were able to provide answers to the many questions asked by visitors.

On your behalf, I thank your Committee Members for their participation.

Alan.

Tongue in cheek

A woman has twins and gives them up for adoption.

One of them goes to a family in Egypt and is named "Amahl",

The other goes to a family in Spain; they name him "Juan".

Years later, Juan sends a picture of himself to his birth mother.

Upon receiving the picture, she tells her husband she wishes she also had a picture of Amahl.

Her husband responds, "They're twins! If you've seen Juan, you've seen Amahl."

Some people must make a full time career of clumsiness.
They couldn't be so good at it by accident - W.G.P.

Restoration News by TRB

In A52-600 restoration news this edition we'll look at some of the small but vital components undergoing a re-birth. The cockpit engine instruments sub-panel



Cockpit mockup with panels held in place

has been restored at a surface level, without conducting a full overhaul of instrument internals. They are all complete however, and may be functionally restored at a future date. Fuel pressure warning lights are still to be installed.

In the photo Graeme Coates is shown holding this panel in position in the cockpit mock-up—spot the RAAF Museum's latest addition (another DeHavilland product, a DH 78 Tiger Moth A17-692), the wings of the Sopwith Pup replica, and Mrs. Clowes' steam iron.

The hydraulic 3-way selector valve assembly has been

stripped and all components inspected and refurbished where required. Ron Gretton (pictured with MAAA Vice President Graeme Coates) says the bores and pistons were in remarkably good shape, as were most of the other components. New O-rings to the original spec have been fitted on re-assembly.

Flaps, landing gear and bomb bay doors were controlled by these three levers. It will be trial assembled in the cockpit mock up when complete.

Also finding a temporary home at the moment is the bomb (and camera) aimer's chart table, up in

the nose of the aircraft on the starboard side.



(Continued on page 10)

People's minds are like parachutes. To function properly they must first be open - W.G.P.

The Dawn Service

The ANZAC tradition was forged on 25 April 1915 when the Australian And New Zealand Army Corps landed on the Gallipoli Peninsula.

It marked the start of a campaign which lasted eight months and resulted in some 25,000 Australian casualties, including 8,700 who were killed or died of wounds or disease.

The bravery and spirit of those who served on the Gallipoli Peninsula shaped a legend, and so the 'ANZAC' became a part of the Australian and New Zealand lexicon.

In 1916, the first anniversary of the landing was observed in Australia, New Zealand, England and by troops in Egypt. That year, 25 April was named 'ANZAC Day'.

By the 1920s, ANZAC Day ceremonies were held throughout Australia and the states had designated ANZAC Day as a public holiday. Commemoration of ANZAC Day continued throughout the 1930s and 1940s with World War II Veterans joining parades around the country.

Over the ensuing decades, returned Australian servicemen and women from conflicts such as Malaya, Indonesia, Korea, Vietnam and Iraq as well as peacekeepers and Veterans from allied countries now march proudly in the Parades.

**LEST WE
FORGET**

ANZAC Day

The Dawn Service observed on ANZAC Day has its origins in an operational routine which is still practiced by the Australian Army today.

The half-light of dawn plays tricks with soldiers' eyes and, from the earliest times, the half-hour or so before dawn, with its grey, misty shadows, became a favoured time for mounting an attack. Soldiers in defensive positions were woken before dawn, so as the first dull grey light crept across the battlefield they were alert and manning their weapons. This was, and still is, known as "stand-to" and repeated at sunset.

After World War I, returned soldiers sought the comradeship they felt in those quiet, peaceful moments before dawn. With symbolic links to the dawn landing at Gallipoli at 4:29am on 25th April 1915, a dawn stand-to or dawn ceremony became a common form of ANZAC Day remembrance during the 1920s.



Nothing will ever be attempted if all possible objections must be first overcome - Dr Samuel Johnson

Dambusters - Part 2

This is Part Two of a two part story about the Dambusters reproduced from the June 1993 Supplement in the FlyPast Magazine published by Key Publishing Ltd, Stamford, England on the 50th anniversary of the Dams raid, May 16/17 1943.

Part One covered the politics, building and testing of the 'bouncing' bomb in the previous Bulletin and now Part Two details the raid.

No 5 Group Operation Order No B976 was finalised on the morning of Saturday May 15 and Gibson revealed the targets to his pilots and navigators - six dams in Germany: Mohne, Sorpe, Lister, Ennepe, Eder and Diemel, the main targets to be the Mohne, Eder and Sorpe, coded X, Y and Z respectively. The following day all the crews were briefed at Scampton as well as Wallis and Gibson, Cochrane, Whitworth, Summers, Chadwick were also present. Chadwick was there to oversee the loading of *Upkeep* as he had designed all the lifting and fitting gear in conjunction with Wallis. The tail of the Lancaster was raised by a crane so that the nose was slightly down from the horizontal and the trolley holding the depth charge could be pushed under the aircraft then lugs were attached and the ordnance winched into position, callipers and the drive belt from the small hydraulic motor, which would spin the weapon, connected.

It had been a bit of a rush - the decision to carry out the operation on May 16/17 had only been made on May 14. Wallis arrived with Summers on May 15 and Chadwick the next day.

The briefing was long and detailed. Three groups of aircraft would take-off from Scampton, the first of nine aircraft in three sections spaced at ten-minute intervals led by Gibson with Hopgood, Martin, Young, Astell, Maltby, Maudslay, Knight and Shannon to head for the Mohne and Eder dams. The second group of five, led by F/L J C McCarthy DFC with Byers, Barlow, Rice and Munro was to bomb the Sorpe. The third group was a reserve of five aircraft led by F/S W C Townsend DFC with Anderson, Brown, Burpee and Ottley.

The aircraft were to take-off, climb to 1,500ft (450m) and on leaving the coast descend to 60ft (18m) staying at that height all the way to the target. Weighing-in at 63,000lbs (28,350kg) with 1,740 gallons (7,830 litres) of fuel and the 9,250lb (4,162kg) weapon the Lancasters were flying heavy, making handling difficult at low altitudes.

Soon it was time to go, there was a brief flurry when it was discovered that the wrong oil had been sent for the *Upkeep* release gear, but Wallis sorted that out. At 2030hrs the aircrews piled into assorted transports for the short drive to the waiting Lancasters, but there were still all the pre-flight details to go through. After the weeks of training this was the real thing - they knew the target and the method of delivery, but would it work?

First off, at 2128hrs. was Bob Barlow in ED927. He was followed by Les Munro (ED921), Vernon Byers (ED934) and Geoffrey Rice (ED936). Joe McCarthy, who was to lead this formation, had trouble with his aircraft (ED923) and raced for the reserve ED825/G, which had been at Boscombe Down and only arrived at Scampton earlier that day. It was incomplete with no spotlights or VHF radio fitted. His take-off was delayed until 2200hrs.

Gibson and his crew took-off at 2139hrs in ED932, together with Harold Mick Martin (ED909) and John Hopgood (ED925), eight minutes later Melvyn Young (ED887), David

Maltby (ED906) and David Shannon (ED929) were airborne. The final three of the nine aircraft left at 2159hrs - Henry Maudslay (ED937), William Bill Astell (ED864) and Les Knight (ED912).

Fourteen aircraft were airborne, McCarthy flying as fast as he could to catch up with his flight, heading towards the enemy coast. Byers and his crew were killed as they crossed the Dutch coast at about 2255hrs, 'AJ-K' was hit by anti-aircraft fire and crashed into the Waddensea. Rice in 'AJ-H' had a narrow escape - they flew too low and the Lancaster hit the water ripping *Upkeep* from its retaining arms. Water gushed into the aircraft and Rice opened the throttles and climbed as quickly as he could -with the heavy mine gone, the aircraft responded. Dejected, he turned back for Scampton and landed at 0047hrs.

Gibson's formation roared over the flat countryside and though they were fired at several times they were generally too quick for enemy gunners. Hopgood ('AJ-M') was hit in the head, but he continued flying with his port outer engine powerless. Bill Astell in 'AJB' was shot down at 0015hrs and hit power lines as he went down north of Dorsten - only a few flying miles from the target and just as Gibson reached the Mohne Dam.

About this time, 0036hrs, Les Munro landed back at Scampton with *Upkeep* still attached, contrary to regulations. 'AJ-W' had been hit as they crossed the Dutch coast and all their radios were out of action.

Rather than place the mission at risk with no communications. Munro reluctantly turned back. He and Rice nearly collided on landing, as Munro was unaware of the other aircraft and could not call control. Munro landed at 0036hrs and Rice touched-down at 0047hrs. Back at Scampton, the last aircraft took off at 0009hrs, Warner Ottley (ED910), Lewis Burpee (ED865), Ken Brown (ED918), William Bill Townsend (ED886) and Cyril Anderson (ED924).

Wallis, Cochrane, Chadwick, Dunn and Harris were at 5 Group Headquarters awaiting the result on the raid to come through on a prearranged radio code, these would be dealt with by W/C Wally Dunn, who had been responsible for installation of VHF fighter-type radio communications in the aircraft.

Gibson made a dummy run before turning to make a bombing run on the Mohne Dam.

Sgt Pulford switched on the small motor, run from No 3 engine, to start *Upkeep* spinning, P/O Taerum switched on the lights and guided Gibson down to 60ft (18m). The gunners had woken up and were shooting at the illuminated Lancaster roaring down at them. F/S Deering in the front turret fired back, all ammunition was tracer so he could see hits along the walls. The German gunners failed to hit 'AJ-G' as she approached at 232mph (371 km/h); at 0027hrs P/O Spafford pressed the button, as the retaining springs released the

Money is better than poverty, if only for financial reasons - Woody Allen

Dambusters - Part 2 (contd)

depth charge, spinning at 500rpm, a pin pulled out and armed the weapon. It fell away and the Lancaster, now some 9,000lb (4,050kg) lighter, sprang up into the air. F/L Trevor-Roper fired at the gun positions from his rear turret as he watched the weapon bounce three times and hit the wall to sink. It would appear that Gibson's depth charge hit the dam wall 90ft (27m) left of centre and took out some of the torpedo nets. Gibson watched a plume of water erupt to 1,500ft (450m) and had to order the remaining aircraft to wait until it subsided before they made their attacks. As the water mist cleared they looked at the dam, it was still there and looked massive in the moonlight.

Hopgood was next in M-Mother, he had nursed his stricken aircraft, in spite of his bad head wound, to the target. By now, the Dam gunners had found their range and Hopgood's aircraft came under heavy fire sustaining several hits and catching alight. F/S Fraser may have released *Upkeep* too late as it bounced over the wall and exploded on the power station below as Hopgood's Lancaster flew over. Witnesses said that Hopgood tried to gain height to allow his crew to bale out, but they were too low to make a conventional drop. Fraser opened his parachute inside the aircraft and fed the

pressed the release button at 0038hrs but this *Upkeep* was also off target, it exploded some 300ft (90m) away from the wall on the left bank. Martin's aircraft was hit by enemy gunfire, but not seriously.

Once again, Gibson ordered the aircraft to wait until the water subsided and then told Dinghy Young to attack in A-Able, this time Martin flew alongside to draw the enemy fire while Gibson flew north of the dam to detract attention from the attacking aircraft. Young's bomb-aimer F/O Mac-Causland released the weapon at 0040hrs and it was perfect. It bounced dutifully along to hit the Mohne Dam dead centre. When the water subsided it looked to be unbreached, Gibson ordered Dave Maltby into the attack in AJ-J. As he came into the bombing run Maltby saw a small break in the wall, his bomb-aimer P/O Fort released the depth charge, this too was on target and hit the wall dead centre. The water plume subsided and the wall still looked to be unbroken, Gibson ordered Dave Shannon in 'AJ-L' to the attack, as he was making his run the wall rolled over and water poured through, Gibson called Shannon off. A massive 132 million cubic metres of water swept away everything in its path.



The superb painting by John Larder titled '*Operation Chastise*'

silk out of the forward escape hatch allowing it to pull him out, he survived, as did rear gunner F/O Burcher. He also opened his parachute inside the Lancaster and allowed it to pull him out of the rear entry door, but he struck the tailplane and broke his back. 'AJM' crashed near Ostonnen north of the Mohne Dam killing the remaining crew.

To confuse the enemy gunners and to draw their fire away from Mick Martin in P-Popsie, Gibson switched on his lights and flew alongside as Martin made his run. Bob Hay

It has often been recorded that four depth charges were used to breach the Mohne, but in all probability, it was Young's that did the most damage, assisted by Maltby's. Wallis's theory, that one would be sufficient, held good. It must be noted that Gibson's and Martin's hits would have helped undermine the massive structure. Once the initial break was made, the water pressure simply pushed the masonry away.

(Continued on page 7)

If a dog jumps onto your lap it is because he is fond of you; but if a cat does the same thing it is because your lap is warmer - A.N. Whitehead

Dambusters - Part 2 (contd)

(Continued from page 6)

Gibson sent the code word Nigger to signify the Mohne Dam was breached at 0056hrs. Wally Dunn took it down and handed it to Harris, the assembled company was elated and Harris telephoned Portal at the White House with the news. Portal was accompanying the Prime Minister, who was equally delighted. Sadly, about the time Gibson began his run on the Mohne, F/L Bob Barlow in 'AJ-E' hit some power lines near Emmerich on the German border, (about 2350hrs), all seven men were killed but *Upkeep* survived and was taken intact by the Germans who were able to discover the secrets of the Wallis mine.

and cried off. Shannon went in again, his bomb aimer F/S Sumpter released the depth charge on target, a small breach was noted. Maudslay came in once again and P/O Fuller pressed the button to release the depth charge - slightly late, it struck the dam parapet and exploded as the Lancaster flew over. The Lanc was badly damaged, but Maudslay kept her airborne. More enemy gunfire brought 'AJ-Z' down some 40 minutes later, near Netterden, all crew members were killed.

Gibson called Les Knight in 'AJ-N' to come in, F/O E C Johnson released *Upkeep* at 0152hrs and the Eder was breached. Gibson sent the agreed code word Dinghy back to group two minutes later. With no depth charges left to attack

any of the remaining targets, the aircraft turned for home. Gibson and Knight passed the breached Mohne Dam and saw the extent of the damage, as Gibson was to write later, "...the map had altered".

Young, Gibson's second in command, (and the man who had done most to train 617 Squadron for Operation Chastise) was flying 'AJ-A' back over the northern Netherlands but was shot down into the sea as he was about to cross the coast near Ijmuiden. There were no survivors, the bodies were washed up later and buried by the Germans.



Robert Taylor's painting of Mick Martin's ED909 'AJ-P' as it parts company with its *Upkeep*

Gibson set course for the Eder accompanied by Shannon, Young, Knight and Maudslay, Martin and Maltby turned for home as they were now weapon-less. Their journey back was uneventful.

Of the second wave, only McCarthy reached the Sorpe and he made several runs before his bomb-aimer was satisfied, for this target *Upkeep* would be dropped as a conventional weapon, the aircraft flying in line with the wall and not at right angles. McCarthy recalled that they were 30ft (9m) above the dam when, at 0046hrs, Sgt G L Johnson released the weapon which exploded on target, a small breach was made in the earth dam, it had to be partially emptied for repairs to be carried out. McCarthy flew past the breached Mohne on their way back to base, they landed at Scampton at 0323hrs.

At the Eder, Shannon was first into attack at 0139hrs but was unhappy with the run and called off the attack. Gibson sent Maudslay in who was also unhappy with his approach

The reserve force was en route for the Sorpe - Warner Ottley's aircraft (ED910) was shot down at 0235hrs and crashed near Hamm. Only the rear-gunner, Sgt F Tees, survived. Lewis Burpee's aircraft was shot down near Tilsburg in the Netherlands at 0200hrs, there were no survivors.

Ken Brown reached the Sorpe and like McCarthy before him found the valley hidden by mist, he carried out some dummy runs and attacked the dam at 0314hrs with his bomb aimer Sgt S Oancia dropping *Upkeep* as a conventional weapon. Anderson in ED924, failed to find the mist-shrouded target as his radio was out of action, he turned back. Bill Townsend in 'AJ-O' was directed by Group to head for the Ennepe Dam, he dropped his weapon at 0337hrs, no apparent damage was detected. It would appear that Townsend attacked the Bever Dam near to the Ennepe, the surrounding terrain was similar and hampered by low-lying mist.

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One trouble with political jokes is that they sometimes get elected - W.G.P.

Dambusters - Part 2 (contd)

(Continued from page 7)

All the depth charges had been accounted for and aircraft were either en route to Scampton or had landed. As Bill Townsend flew over enemy territory the dawn was breaking, they flew past the Mohne and saw the vast sheet of water covering a massive area Maltby landed at 0311 hrs, McCarthy at 0323hrs, Shannon 0406hrs, Gibson 0415hrs. Knight 0420hrs, Anderson 0530hrs (with mine attached), Brown 0533hrs and Townsend at 0615hrs, he had flown most of the journey back in daylight and kept his Lancaster right down on the deck with a "vengeance to survive" as he later recalled. 'AJ-O' had spent the longest time airborne and Townsend was deservedly awarded the Conspicuous Gallantry Medal, as was Ken Brown.

Harris and the others were at Scampton to welcome back the crews. There was still the de-briefing before the tired members of 617 Squadron could sleep. Next day, the publicity machine went to work - Chastise provided a tremendous boost to morale for Bomber Command, the UK and the US.

Eight Lancasters failed to return. 54 men died and the raid was largely forgotten after the war. The movie, *The Dam Busters* brought the raid back into the limelight, and rightly so!

In recent years some have chosen to denigrate the raid, describing it as 'useless' but what is the truth? Ask the Germans first. Albert Speer, Hitler's Minister of Armaments, is on record as saying that the raid caused havoc, railway lines were washed away, canals serving the area made unnavigable, roads impassable, homes and factories destroyed, people killed and made homeless and for several months 7,000 workers were taken from vital work on the Atlantic wall

to clear the area and begin repair work on the dams. There was no power and no water, ironically. Additional troops were sent to the area and defences reinforced as the Germans believed the RAF would be back to hinder repair work and continue to bomb the dams. Although operational, in a limited capacity, by September 1943 the Mohne Dam was not completely repaired until August 1944.

It remains speculative that if all the dams scheduled for attack had been breached on May 16/17 Germany's Ruhr war production could never have been reinstated and the war may have ended there - perhaps? Photographs taken by F/O Searle of 54 (PR) Squadron from Spitfire PR.XI

EN346 at 29,000ft (8,700m) on May 17 showed a breach of 250ft (75m) at the top of the Mohne Dam to 150ft (45m) at the base. The continued damage caused by the floods affected many and the German official report, *Mohndetal - Katastrophe* published on June 4, detailed some 476 Germans dead, 69 missing, 593 foreign workers dead and 156 missing. A total of 92 houses were destroyed, 971 houses damaged, 11 factories destroyed and 114 damaged.

Harris wanted Barnes Wallis knighted and put his name forward, but as he related in later years this was blocked by some of the more jealous elements at Vickers and by the communist Stafford Cripps, who did not like Wallis. It was not until 1968 that Wallis was finally knighted.

On May 28, 35 citations were gazetted to the men who breached the dams, Guy Gibson was awarded the supreme Victoria Cross, justly deserved and Roy Chadwick the CBE. The presentation was made by HM The Queen Elizabeth (then the Queen Mother) at Buckingham Palace on June 22. That evening, A V Roe gave the squadron a splendid dinner at the Hungaria restaurant in Lower Regent Street, among those present, apart from the 617 personnel, were Chadwick, Wallis, Summers and Thomas Sopwith.



The fine art painting *Après Moi le Deluge* is by artist Pete West

Operation Chastise remains unique-the sheer brilliance of the collected enterprise stands alone and over the years has gained legendary status, whether it deserves such an accolade or not remains speculative. However, nothing will alter the facts that brave men of 617 Squadron pulled off a difficult and dangerous mission with distinction.

(The author would like to thank Drs Harry and Mary Stopes-Roe, Margaret Dove, Douglas Webb, Andrew Rennick, Ian Thirsk, Christine Gregory, the late Tony Harold and 617 Squadron archives for their generous assistance with this feature.)

New ideas, like seedlings, must be well watered if they are to survive - P.K. Shaw

Mossie Data by Brian Fillery

Mosquito NF Mk 36.

Description:	Night Fighter
Engines:	Merlin 113/114, 113A/114A
Wing Span:	54ft 2ins (16.45m)
Wing Area:	454sq ft (42.2sq m)
Length:	44ft 6ins (13.56m)
Height:	12ft 6ins (3.81m)
Weight:	13,400lbs (kg) empty
	21,600lbs (kg) max
Speed:	407mph (654.9kph) max
Ceiling:	38,000ft (11,528m)
Max Range:	1,300 miles (2,092km)
Weapons:	4 x 20mm Hispano cannons
Bomb Load:	None
Notes:	Later type AI radar. Used by RAF until 1953.



NB: Mosquito data from various sources is often contradictory.

Mac Skinner—Profile and exploits

Mac Skinner has provided a brief synopsis along with the items in the “From the Mailbox” section.

Mac Skinner completed his Navigators Bomb Aimers course at 3 A.O.S. Port Pirie, S.A. on 26th May. 1944, receiving his Observer's Wing (known in those days as the Flying Arsehole) and a commission as Pilot Officer.

He was drafted to travel to England, to fly with the RAF. After pre-embarkation leave, as no transport was immediately available, he joined 71 Squadron at Coffs Harbour, NSW for three

weeks, doing coastal patrols in Avro Ansons.

Eventually at the end of July 1944, he travelled to England via Brisbane, San Francisco, New York, and Greenock, to join the RAAF Staging Unit at Brighton.

He was then given the option of going straight Navigator or straight Bomb Aimer, both on heavy Bombers or going as Navigator/Bomb

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Morale is when your hands and feet keep on working when your head says it can't be done
- Admiral Ben Moreell

Restoration News by TRB

(Continued from page 3)

It includes racks for two portable oxygen bottles underneath the table. This must have been a small and crowded working environment (the chart table is not much

Some main landing gear components have been disassembled and sand-blasted prior to priming, painting and reassembly. We're not sure yet whether any bearings, bushes etc. will need to be replaced; more on this as we go on.



Meanwhile Terry Burke in collaboration with Graeme Coates are producing drawings for wing ribs 3 and 4, which form part of the structure around the mounts for the main landing gear.

Mock-ups will be made and installed in a stand so we can reassemble the complete undercarriage

bigger than an A4 sheet of paper), and pretty uncomfortable when things started flashing and banging round about.

riage in aircraft rigging position, prior to restoration work on the wings.

TRB

Question: What is the small brass cylindrical device at the front of the table?

Answer next edition, and an Aussie Mossie cloth shoulder badge to the winner. All entries (by snail mail or email to the Secretary, please) will be placed in a hat a week before print deadline, and the first correct entry opened will win.

Those accompanied by a three guinea note will receive preference.



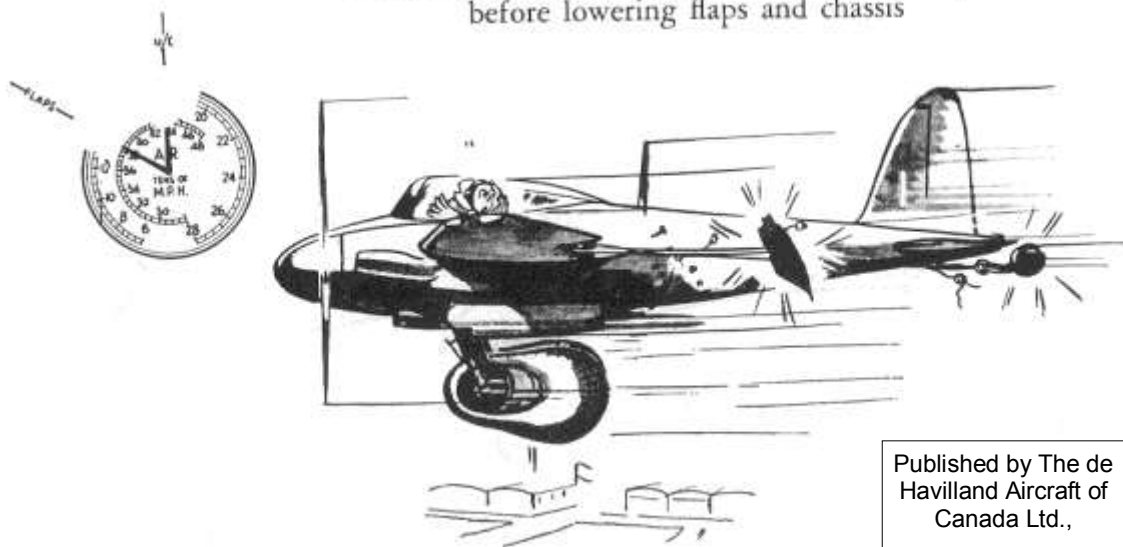
Bachelors know more about women than married men; if they didn't, they'd be married too
- H.L. Mencken

Unmade Runways

Although Hercs can operate from unmade airstrips when you mix the two it can be disastrous.



Distorted view people get who don't reduce speed before lowering flaps and chassis



Published by The de Havilland Aircraft of Canada Ltd.,
Toronto, 1944

No wonder teenagers become confused. While half the parents are telling them to find themselves, the other half are telling them to get lost - W.G.P.

From the Mailbox

Bryan Langsford son of member Ron Langsford DFC, who passed away last August, sent in this Eulogy. Bryan has become a member to continue the Langsford association with MAAA.

I would like to try and convey to you just a little about my Father's full and wonderful life.

Ron was born at St. Peters, South Australia on 31st December 1918.

In November of 1940 aged 21 he joined the Air Force in Adelaide.

In an early course of 36 as a trainee pilot in Rhodesia on Tiger Moths he passed out as first on course in ground subjects and second as ability as a pilot. He flew 53 sorties over enemy territory in the Middle East and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. His Citation referred to "his having been an inspiration to all ranks, both in the air and on the ground". He received a rating of "Exceptional" as an operational pilot – which was recorded in his log book. Further RAAF duties included chief test pilot Accra (then Gold Coast now Ghana) where all American Aircraft for Africa were handed over to R.A.F for acceptance and then flown on to Middle East. He finished his service on Mosquitoes up North of Australia

While on 14 days leave in Adelaide and before heading up North he married his childhood sweet heart – Elma Grace Francis on the 10th June 1944. He then had a month or so training at Sale on Mosquitoes and Beaufighters before attachment to the 87 Reconnaissance Squadron at Coomalie Creek, just south of Darwin. It was from here that he took off for his final mission in June of 1945 and crashed in the Indian Ocean, landing on an Atoll, North Keeling, where the German

Battle ship the Emden went down and his Mosquito broke up around him. He and his navigator got out unscathed.

His service in community affairs included:

- Hon. Treasurer of Royal Victorian College of Nursing (now Aus. Nursing Federation)
- President of Rotary Club, Ballarat.
- Dad was awarded the Paul Harris Award for 37 years dedicated service to the Rotary club.
- His life long friends from the Middle East campaign had a great impact on Dad. Leo Harwood, Navigator—and his C.O. Sid Ault. The three had enormous respect for each other
- Ron was good at recording his War Adventures both on a Brownie Camera and jottings. To me they are priceless.
- Very proudly Dad could still quote his service number 407621 right up to the last few days.

He embraced all the challenges that came along in his life with the same commitment and passion and believed in doing his very best in any given situation.

Thank you Dad for the wonderful legacy you have left for family and friends – we will always love you and cherish our memories.

Bryan.

New member Bob Bartram AM (Retired GpCapt) entitled this piece "A MOSSIE AIR-RACE SNIPPET"

Having recently joined the Association I was recalling my experience fitting out PR Mosquito A52-34 to Ron Gretton and he encouraged me to tell the story so here goes.

As a young RAAF instrument fitter at No.3 Aircraft Depot Amberley I was given the task of fitting out the oxygen system, to double its capacity, on the PR41 Mosquito provided by the Government to retired SqnLdr A.J.R. (Titus) Oates for the 1953 London to Christchurch air race. De Havilland at Bankstown had provided three-stage supercharged Merlins and with long-

range fuel tanks in the bomb-bay and two 100 gallon drop tanks this extensively modified aircraft, painted red was a magnificent machine. Its civilian registration was VH-KLG. One suspects DH hoped that it would re-enact the success of the DH88 Comet that won the 1934 Mildenhall – Melbourne race.

In contrast, a PR41 Mosquito A52-319 was sold to Captain Woods in Perth and registration VH-WAD requested. However, DCA insisted that its C of A would only be valid for the manufacturer's all-up-weight requirements. Unfortunately, the

Good management consists of showing average people how to do the work of superior people
- John D Rockefeller

From the Mailbox - (contd)

entry withdrew due to lack of sponsorship.

To my story. Working in the fuselage of the Mosie, after climbing in through the small access door (which I left open) was a hot stuffy environment – especially as I was silver-soldering copper tubing to enlarge the bank of oxygen bottles. The aircraft was on the apron in the hot Queensland sun adding to the temperature. In the early 1950's airmen marched in flights to lunch and on the way one of the 'wags' called out, "come on Bart its lunchtime" and slammed the door closed. Unbeknown to him the door could not be opened from the inside. When I went to climb out the dilemma of opening the door arose. Naturally, thinking someone would open it I called out with some jovial comment. However, as the silence became 'deafening' panic set-in! Some time after my mates returned from lunch and one asked, "where was Bart?" On opening the back hatch I half-fell out – unconscious! One soon recovered in the fresh air, but took some coaxing by the Corporal to get

me to climb back in – we stood to attention in front of Corporals in that era. I think I 'insisted' that the hatch be removed – or was I that smart then?

Unfortunately, en route to England the aircraft was crash-landed in a swamp near Mergui, Burma while trying to make it to Bangkok on diversion due to a navigation problem in a storm. Sadly, the 4000 mile range with the extra tanks was not enough and fuel ran out. The aircraft was covered by tidal waters and totally lost. Fortunately, Titus Oates and the navigator D Swain escaped with minor injuries.

Thankfully, I am now too large and old to climb into the back of A52-600 being lovingly restored by Geoff Matthews and Ron Gretton and the team at the Museum. However, I thought you might smile at this small experience!

Regards Bob Bartram

(Ref: Flypast – A record of Aviation in Australia)

Member Mac Skinner was prompted to write in about his flight at the end of the war.

Mac's profile and his exploits are chronicled elsewhere in this Bulletin .

In a MAAA newsletter an excerpt from a publication stated that the last RAF raid of the war against Germany took place on the night of 2/3 May 1945, when 125 Mosquitos attacked the port of Keil.

They bombed in two waves, making use of a sophisticated navigational aid called "Oboe" This prompted Mac to check his Log Book, which showed that they bombed Husum A/F (Keil), on that raid, dropping a 4,000 lb "cookie". Regards Mac.

R.A.F. Station,
BOURN. Near Cambridge.
England.
4th June, 1945.

Mosquito "A" 105 Squadron

This is to certify that on the night of April 30/21st, 1945, the last R.A.F. bomb to be dropped on Berlin, was released by P/O. Skinner (Aus), navigator of Mosquito "A" 105 Squadron, which was piloted by P/L. Young (N.Z.)

Bomb Load :- 4 x 500 M.C. Fused .025 secs. Tail Delay.

Aiming Point :- Alexandre Platz, Centre of Berlin.

Height:- 28,000 ft.

I.A.S. :- 166 Knots.

T.A.S. :- 260 Knots.

Time of Release:- 0226.2

Computed Error:- 50 yards.

Airborne Time:- 4 hours 10 minutes.

B. E. Smith P/O
for Senior Intelligence Officer,
R.A.F. Station, Bourn.

One man's wage rise is another man's price increase - Harold Wilson

From the Mailbox - (contd)

105 SQRN					Time carried forward: 22:05 97:50		
Date	Hour	Aircraft Type and No.	Pilot	Day	Remarks (including results of bombing, gunnery, exercises, etc.)	Flying Times	
						Day	Night
May 16	2230	Mosquito R	F/Lt Young	NAV	OPS - HUSUM AIRFIELD (KEIL) 18000ft ALCB HT 28,000'		3:05
May 17	1430	Mosquito B	F/Lt Young	NAV	BOMBING - OTMORA	1:55	1:55
May 30	1030	Mosquito H	F/Lt Young	NAV	COMBAT TOUR - BASE - OTMORA - WACHENAU - ARTISER - WESSEL - ESSEN - HANNOVER - OBERKUMM - MÜNSTER NIMMEN - BASE	4:25	4:25
FLYING TIMES FOR MAY 1945						6:20	3:05
EXTRACT FROM NOG BOOK REV. 43581 F/O M. B. SKINNER						W. A. Phillips S/O O.C. 'A' FLIGHT J. G. Marshall G/C C.O. 105 SQRN.	
The last RAF raid of the war against Germany took place on the night of 2-3 May 1945 when 125 Mosquitoes attacked the port of Keil. They bombed in two waves, making use of a sophisticated navigational aid called 'Obol'. The bombing was accurate, many fires were seen in the target area and the official comment on the opposition was 'Defences Nil'. All the Mosquitoes returned safely, some to the same airfield at Wyton near Huntingdon that had dispatched the unfortunate Blenheims to Wilhelmshaven over five years earlier. Four days later the war in Europe was over.						TOTAL TIME 230:35 96:00	
The Nuremberg Raid 30-31 March 1944 by Martin Middlebrook - Cassell Military Paperbacks 2000 edition.							
EXTRACT FROM MAAA NEWSLETTER							

Progress on Mossie FB 26—KA 114



The reconstruction in New Zealand of KA 114 is progressing at a fast pace—the website has photos and monthly progress bulletins for those interested.



For those of you with the Internet, the site is:
<http://www.warbirdrestoration.co.nz/current.html#ka114>

Lack of money is the root of all evil - George Bernard Shaw

Vale

It is with regret that the Association must relay the passing of two of it's members:

LAMBLE, Leonard Robert (Bob) of YARRA GLEN, Victoria

WOOD, Arthur of TRARALGON, Victoria

The Association's condolences go to their families.

New Members

The Association is pleased to announce and welcome the following people who have joined us since the last Bulletin was published:

BEAZLEY, David, of BRAY PARK, Queensland

CHARLWOOD, Don, of WARRANDYTE, Victoria

COWHEY, James, of FOOTSCRAY, Victoria

CRISP, Cornelius Thomas, of MILDURA, Victoria

HAMBLETON, Peter, of ALBANVALE, Victoria

LUXTON, Richard of COOMALIE CREEK, Northern Territory

POULTER, Raymond of LAKES ENTRANCE, Victoria

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

Who
had
the
right
of
way?



I think we consider too much the good luck of the early bird and not enough the bad luck of the early worm - Franklin D Roosevelt

Mac Skinner—Profile and exploits

(Continued from page 9)

Aimer, which would probably be on Mosquitos.

While he was at Port Pirie, he saw his first Mosquito, when Black Jack Walker flew in from Western Australia, and took off the next morning with a bit of a display.

Mac has been rapt on Mosquitos from that day. He took the option to remain as a Navigator/ Bomb Aimer and after doing Advanced Flying Unit, Operational Training Unit, Mosquito Conversation Unit and Pathfinder Training Unit he was eventually posted to 105 Squadron at Bourn (nine miles out from Cambridge).

105 Squadron used a top-secret system, called Oboe, for accurate bombing and target marking. His pilot was a New Zealander - David Young.

At 2:26 on the morning of Mac's 20th birthday, 21st April 1945, in Mosquito "A" of 105 Squadron he released 4x500 M.C. bombs on Alexandre Platz, in the centre of Berlin, from a height of 28,000 feet, using "Oboe" for a computed error of 50 yards.

It transpired that these were the last RAF bombs to be dropped on Berlin and Mac has a certificate, signed by Bourn's Intelligence Officer confirming this.

Later on that day Russian troops were in the streets of Berlin, which negated any further bombing. The reason that these bombs were the last, was that just prior to take-off, the Mosquito scheduled to be used developed an engine fault which necessitated a change to Mosquito "A*", with a delay of about 20 minutes, by which time a cold front had moved in and to avoid icing on the wings, they flew out at 30,000 feet dropping to 28,000 feet for the 10 minute run into the target.

In a MAAA newsletter an excerpt from a publication stated that the last RAF raid of the war against Germany took place on the night of 2/3 May 1945, when 125 Mosquitos attacked the port of Keil.

They bombed in two waves, making use of a sophisticated navigational aid called "Oboe".

This prompted Mac to check his Log Book, which showed that they bombed Husum A/F (Keil), on that raid, dropping a 4,000 lb "cookie".

Mac was later posted to Administration at RAAF Holding Unit at Gamston, and finally returned to Australia in early January, 1946, and rejoined the staff of Bank of New South Wales, two months before his 21st birthday.

(See also "From the Mailbox" in this issue.)

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A CD of all previous Bulletins is available from the Editor at no cost to members.

A committee of one gets things done - Joe Ryan