

## Museum Point Cook Air Pageant 2010

On Sunday 28 February 2010, more than 25,000 people braved a strong, cool southerly wind to enjoy the Museum's Open Day this year. Weather conditions curtailed the flying program slightly, but didn't dent the family atmosphere.

Dads, mums and kids of all ages filed through the Museum complex from 9 until 5, with only a slight thinning out during the flying display. Number one choice for many of the kids in the Restoration Hangar was the Mossie main undercarriage as-

sembly and making the wheel rotate. That's now one highly polished tyre!

Formation flying displays were a stand-out. The Harvard-mounted Southern

Knights were back with their high precision 4-ship formation aerobatics, particularly impressive given the strong and gusty winds. Any formation led by the world's only flying Merlin-engine P-40F and flanked by a P-51D Mustang and Mk VIII Spitfire has to be a show stopper, and that's what we saw. Three Merlins on song and all being used hard make stirring sounds! Spitfire and Mustang returned later to formate on the Museum's newly restored Avon Sabre and created another great photo opportunity. After more than 3 years' work, Temora Aviation Museum returned the Sabre to fully operational condition last year, and this was our first chance to see it back at

home. Following several formation passes, the Sabre went solo for a handling display which included a full range of aerobatics, then the Roulettes closed the show with another magnificent formation aerobatics display.

A group of MAAA members spent most of the day in the Restoration Hangar, answering questions about Mossies in general and A52-600 in particular. And there were some beauties! One young second year aero engineering student asked

why some of the plywood grain structures are at 45 degrees to the aircraft centre line and others at 90 degrees. (External and internal sheets around the tail area of the fuselage are at 45 degrees, as the structure has to resist loads in many directions from



the tail wheel, rudder and elevator inputs particularly.)

Major sections of the Bristol Boxkite replica (Project 2014) were positioned in front of the Mossie, with the fuselage, some wing elements plus the engine and cockpit section making up the display. Add to that the Rocket Scientists' rocket-powered Fairey VTO aircraft restoration, various aero engines (including the starboard engine from the Mossie) and a fully sectioned Aden 30mm cannon from the Sabre helped make up a hangar full of interest.

TRB

## The President's Log—by Alan Middleton OAM



The Membership of our Association numbers about 200, spread throughout the World. I often think the restrictions of the Privacy Laws deprive our Members of personal contact with other Members who may live in the same neighbourhood but are not known to each other as fellow Members of MAAA. The names and contact numbers of your Committee Members are known to all Members and, in the 18 years of existence of our Association, I believe there has not been one problem due to this information being available.

Due to the scattered domiciles of our Members, in many cases a long way from Melbourne, participation in Association activities is not viable, and I have been wondering if providing address and telephone number of Members in the same, or nearby areas, may prove of interest and may lead to a feeling of belonging to a

more personal group of people with similar interests, and perhaps bring about closer ties, even with Members overseas. Your thoughts on this matter would be greatly appreciated.

Your Association now has a limited supply of NECK-TIES for sale at \$25 each. These are navy blue with a small motif of MAAA and an outline of a Mosquito. We are aware that ties are considered "OLD HAT", but we are also sure that our tie will be welcomed to those of us who still believe a tie is appropriate, even if not compulsory, on many occasions. An order for a tie (or ties) with \$25 per tie, sent to me will be received with thanks and responded to with all haste.

While I am in a mood to consider our other Merchandise, we still have a few, (VERY FEW) prints of John Brown's great painting of A52-600 landing at Coomalie Creek. This is the last of these great prints and at \$120 each is a great buy.

The usual caps, shirts etc are also available. I continue to marvel on the activities of our Committee on your behalf. They not only attend to their assigned Committee functions, but are also the most regular and skilful attendees on the restoration of A52-600 at Pt Cook.

At the recent Pageant at Pt Cook, these same guys, plus several of our Members, assisted with the set up and clearing up, and manned the MAAA area throughout the day, answering hundreds of enquiries about the 600.

On your behalf I thank them most sincerely. Please accept my thanks to all Members for your continuing support and my best wishes for a long future.

Alan Middleton

## Coomalie Diary by Richard Luxton and TRB

Coomalie Farm's looking a picture as the end of the Wet nears. The small creek in the photo (a tributary of Coomalie Creek) is not only full of life, it's turned up another crop of aircraft parts after the season's rains. We've identified several Mossie bits such as a Ki pump (cockpit-mounted, pilot operated) for priming the engines with fuel prior to start-up, and a large section of lower nacelle cowling. Other large molten aluminium remains point to an intense fire, which suggests these may be remnants of A52-605.

At least two other significant sites have been identified. Using a Noggin ground radar unit and metal detectors, we've established that one contains small Beaufighter parts (mostly burnt, and probably the remains of A19-31) and the other may be the re-



Beauty is only sin deep



# Coomalie Diary by Richard Luxton and TRB

mains of a P-38 (also burnt). This tallies with information concerning the demise of A19-31 in the late Ken McDonald's book "Coomalie Charlie's Commandos", and the re-discovered crash site of the last Lightning in RAAF service, A55-3.

Meanwhile archaeologist Julie Maston and friends have continued their excavations on the VJ Day bonfire site, recovering many more (burnt)

*(Continued on page 8)*



Above: Julie Maston using the Noggin ground radar units and friends searching for historical items.



Above: Beaufighter parts  
Right: Mossie parts



Creek bank.  
Sun 7/2/10



Left: Storch replica returns to Coomalie Creek

Never, under any circumstances, take a sleeping pill and a laxative on the same night.

## Classic Jets Fighter Museum, Parafield S.A.

After the No. 87 Squadron Battle Honours unveiling ceremony last year, Alan and Shirley Middleton, Graeme Coates and your scribe visited the Classic Jets Fighter Museum at Parafield aerodrome, north of Adelaide.

Whilst the display of jet powered aircraft is impressive, our primary focus was on the restored Lockheed P-38 H Lightning in the main Display Hangar, and the almost-completed Bell P-39 Airacobra in the Restoration Hangar. Both types marked milestones in aircraft design.



Aided by its long range, the twin-boom, twin-engined, 'Kelly' Johnson-designed P-38 became the leading destroyer of Japanese aircraft in the Pacific theatre during WW2. Its unique shape plus tricycle undercarriage arrangement also made it one of the most readily identifiable fighter aircraft of its era.

This example, formerly operated by the USAAF's 475<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group 'Satan's Angels', crash landed inland from Madang, near the north coast of Papua-New Guinea in 1943. Museum owner Bob Jarrett and his team of volunteers laboured hard to firstly retrieve the aircraft from its site, bring it home to Parafield and finally restore it to superb display condition.



There's a wall-mounted photographic display of P-38s behind the aircraft, which includes an air-to-air shot of one of No. 87 Squadron RAAF's P-38s (A55-3) above countryside near Coomalie Creek, N.T.

Powered by a similar Allison V1710 V-12 engine to the Lightnings, the P-39 Airacobra was also a significantly advanced aircraft for its time. This robust fighter shared a tricycle undercarriage configuration with the P-38; its engine was mounted behind the pilot with its drive shaft

Intelligent people have more zinc and copper in their hair.



# Classic Jets Fighter Museum, Parafield S.A.



Author: TRB  
19 January 2010

passing beneath him (or her), then stepped up via transfer gears to the propeller hub.

This allowed a cannon to be mounted on the aircraft centreline to fire through the spinner, with additional wing-mounted machine guns. It's being painted to represent No. 24 Squadron RAAF Airacobra A53-12, T-GR, and should be on its wheels early to mid-2010. For more information on the Museum, see their website at [www.classicjets.com](http://www.classicjets.com) or phone them on (08) 8258 2277.



## Photographs:

*Previous page top right:*

Corsair – next restoration project

*Previous page bottom left:*

P-38 H and Jindivik in the Display Hangar

*Above:*

P-39, almost complete

*Middle:*

Graeme Coates, Bob Jarrett and Alan Middleton in the Restoration Hangar

*Right:*

Volunteer and P-39 behind a see-through wing



It is impossible to lick your elbow.

# William (Bill) Orr

Dad was such a fine chap and lived a wonderful life to the age of 89.

He sure did love his Mosquitoes, even belly landing one!

Katrina Goldsworthy (daughter)



Bill was born in 1920 at his parents home in Chatswood, Sydney – the 3rd son of 5 children to Frank & Lucy May Orr. Bill lived his childhood in Sydney and the Blue Mountains during the Depression years. Bill was reared in a strict religious family and at times was the main bread-winner for his family. His first job was a paper boy, then left school at 13 and worked at Ripdin Paint Wholesalers. Later he went back to school, completed his Intermediate Certificate, worked in a sheet metal factory making jam tins for a while then studied to be a wool classer. Although qualifying as a wool classer, he never practiced this occupation, though it did give him a love for textiles all his life.

In 1941, Bill was called up to join the army. However, after 4 months Bill transferred to the Airforce joining the day before Japan went into war.

Bill's rooky training commenced at Bradfield Park for 4 months. Categorized to become a pilot, Bill then spent 3 months learning to fly Tiger moths at Neranderah NSW. Bill was then selected to become a fighter pilot and undertook training on Wirraways at Uranquinty, NSW near Wagga Wagga.

In January 1943 Bill got his wings and was promptly made a flying instructor, which Bill was not particularly happy about, as all the other blokes went overseas.

## **Bill & de Havilland DH 82 Tiger Moth**

Next Bill went to Tamworth to become an instructor for few months. Then back to Neranderah NSW for 12 months to teach pupils how to fly tiger moths.

From there Bill was selected to become a flying instructor on twin engine aircraft completing courses at Parkes NSW and Bundaberg QLD which included a period as flying instructor with Avro Anson aircraft.

In 1944, Bill was posted to No 1 OTU (operational training unit) Sale, in Victoria to complete operational training on Beaufort bombers. From here Bill was selected for the second course of pilot conversion training for Mosquitoes at No 5 OTU at Williamtown, Newcastle, NSW. This training also included the unit's first Mosquito (attack) course from which Bill graduated and was selected for the newly reformed No 1 Squadron.

In March 1945 Bill joined No 1 Squadron in Kingaroy Qld, where training continued until May when the unit moved to Amberley. The men were billeted at Sandgate and it was here that Bill met Milly (his wife to be) a WAAF in the Air Force based at Sandgate. The aircrew and aircraft were constantly on stand-by awaiting advice to move to an operational area. Very little flying took place due to serviceability requirements and the small maintenance staff available.

On the 31<sup>st</sup> July, the Squadron departed for Labuan Borneo via Higgins on Cape York Peninsula then Morotai and finally Labuan. The Squadrons first task came on the 8<sup>th</sup> August two days after the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima. Bill saw very little action completing one operation two days before war's end when Bill & Keith



FO Bill Orr (Pilot) and FO Keith Ryan (Nav)

Never be afraid to try something new. Remember that a lone amateur built the Ark.  
A large group of professionals built the Titanic.



## William (Bill) Orr

undertook an armed seaward reconnaissance from Borneo to Mayan Coast.

Whilst the war officially ended on the 15<sup>th</sup> August the unit continued search, reconnaissance, escort and air cover missions until the middle of September. One notable mission occurred on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of August, when Bill belly landed his beloved Mosquito which he and Keith walked away from, to tell the tale.

Whilst taking off, their starboard tyre punctured and blew out, the coral surfaced strips being very rough on tyres. They were safely airborne with a full load of fuel and only one useable main wheel. In contact with ground control, Bill's options were either to abandon the plane and use their parachutes or attempt wheels up landing. Bill said that the choice was easy, so they flew around for some time, dropped the wing tanks and then made a successful belly landing. The aircraft was repaired and returned to Australia.

Many of the Squadron sorties concentrated on monitoring the terms of ceasefire ensuring no Japanese could escape the cordon set by the Army and search for POW camps. One of these sorties was very poignant for Bill as he had received news of the death of his brother Jack in a POW camp, Sandakin.



Painting of No 1 Squadron aircrew by Katrina Goldsworthy.

Given the rapid deterioration of the Mosquito aircraft in tropical weather, their return to Australia was hastened. In October the first 10 aircraft and 20 aircrew departed for Australia via Balikpapan, Darwin, Alice Springs and finally to Richmond where the aircraft were handed over to No 2 AD for disposal. Bill returned to Australia with the last of the aircraft in November where upon the Squadron was disbanded. Bill remained in the service and was transferred to another unit.

At the end of the war, Bill married Milly and they settled in Sydney.



No 1 Squadron aircrew at Kingaroy.  
FO Bill Orr is in the back row 5<sup>th</sup> from the right and his navigator,  
PO Keith Ryan is in the next row at the LH end.

In 1946, Bill volunteered to escort No 82 Squadron Mustangs to Japan for garrison duties with the British Commonwealth Occupation Forces. The Mustangs were single engine aircraft requiring navigation escort by Mosquitoes. Bill and 3 Ferry Flight Mosquitoes departed Richmond, NSW on the 15<sup>th</sup> February 1946 and proceeded to Labuan, then Clark Field near Manila, then Okinawa and finally to Bofu, Japan - a distance of some 2300 miles. After 3 weeks in Japan, Bill flew back to Australia and not long after left the Air Force.

After working for his sister Dorothy in her business for a short time, Bill became a salesman in manchester sell-

Imagination is more important than knowledge.

## William (Bill) Orr



Mosquito A52-511, on Labuan strip Aug 1945.

ing out of a suitcase anywhere and everywhere. Family life flourished and a son Raymond was born in 1949, and two daughters Katrina born in 1954 and Michelle born in 1956. In 1959 the family moved to Tamworth where Bill joined AMP in 1963. Another move to Brisbane in 1964, followed by more moves to Buderim in 1981 and Ormiston in 1986.

Good and bad times came with all the children marrying, a divorce, births of grandchildren and great grand children. The devastating loss of his first grandchild Michael aged 8 to leukemia. Further battles, fortunately successful, with cancer affecting both Ray and Katrina. After 52 years of marriage in a loving but at times colorful life together Bill's beautiful and creative wife Milly passed away in 1998, aged 73.

Dad was such a fine chap and lived a wonderful life to the age of 89.

Based on:

*Eulogy from Katrina Goldsworthy*

*Notes and photo by C Smith QLD, sent to MAAA 2001, based on correspondence with Bill*

*Documented record of No 1 Squadron, "Something to Remember" by Mark Lax.*

And thanks to MAAA Historian David Devenish for additional photos and script.

## Coomalie Diary by Richard Luxton and TRB (contd)

(Continued from page 3)

parts from A52-611. Continuing the theme of aircraft remains salvaged, a rare find was made recently by a professional fishing crew in the Timor Sea. While operating some kilometres north of Millingimbi, they snagged a section of fuselage which appears to be the remains of a Japanese float plane. One of the No. 31 Squadron crews in a Coomalie-based Beaufighter reported downing such a machine in this area in 1943.

A Feisler Storch replica formerly owned and recently re-purchased by Richard has found a new home at Coomalie, while many visitors continue to fly in to keep the airfield alive and kicking. More news next time, includ-

ing a preview of the 65th. anniversary of VP Day fly-in and commemoration.

Best wishes to all from the Top End.



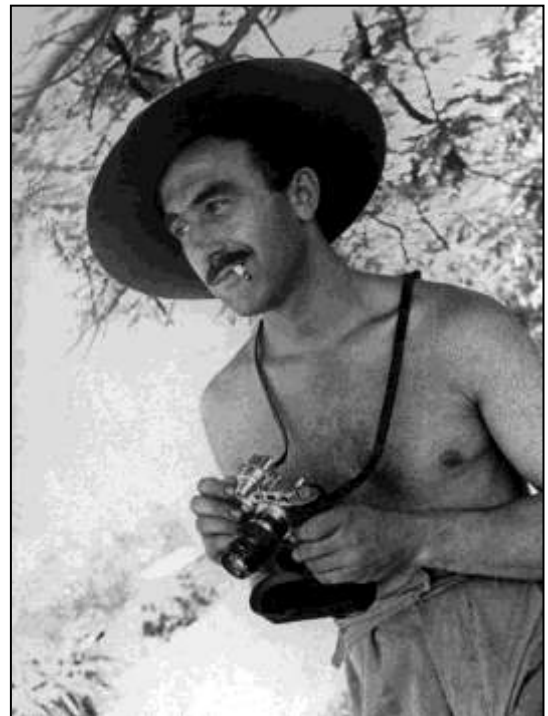
Blitz tray and manufacturing plate



People who want to share their religious views with you almost never want you to share yours with them.



Article reproduced from the Meredith & District News - story by Marg Cooper  
and  
Thanks to MAAA Historian David Devenish for additional photos.



Phil Spielvogel with Lieca camera, 1945, 87 Squadron, Coomalie Creek.

In the quiet and peaceful Morrison Cemetery a Rabbi conducted a Jewish burial service.

The plain pine coffin was draped with a black cloth and then the Australian Flag. The coffin was lowered into the grave and the mourners were asked to shovel soil, to cover the coffin, in the Jewish tradition.

In the Morrison Anglican Church on 29/4/2009, following the burial, the Minister read the obituary followed by Jeremy Johnson with stories of Phil when he was on the Ballarat Council and John Abraham, telling of Phil's service to the Ballarat Jewish Community. Afternoon tea was enjoyed by a large crowd at the Meredith Golf Club after the services.

Phil was a dapper man who dressed well, had a neat little moustache, twinkling eyes, a wonderful smile and was described in the newspaper obituaries as a rascally saint! He was short in stature but big in fun, conviviality and service to the community.

Phil was born 28/3/1916, grew up in Ballarat and trained as a photographer. He enlisted in the RAAF on Septem-



Cameras used in DH98 Mosquito PR aircraft and three members of the photographic section. L to R: LAC Reg Duncan, Corp Phil Spielvogel & LAC Neil Ray.

There is a very fine line between "hobby" and "mental illness."

# Frederick Phillip Spielvogel OAM 28/3/1916 – 26/04/2009

ber 13, 1940 and became an official war photographer. He flew mainly, in Catalina airplanes in areas including New Guinea.

After the war he set up a photographic studio in Sturt Street, Ballarat. He married Mavis McCormack in 1947 and they had a son Tom. They came to Morrison to farm after his father in law died.

Phil became very involved in the community including taking office at Elaine School and Cricket Club, Morrison CFA and Meredith Football.



Phil Spielvogel talking to MAAA volunteer Pat Dulhunty, at Point Cook RAAF museum, in front of 87 Squadron Mosquito, A52-600, currently undergoing restoration. Phil on a number of occasions drove his Jaguar car, down to Point Cook to meet with volunteers and museum staff. He was an enthusiastic supporter of Mosquito Aircraft of Australia Association activities and welcoming to all who wished meet and chat.

He was President of the Hebrew Congregation at Ballarat.

He was a Councillor of the Ballan Shire for 25 years; he served three terms as President and was a member of the Municipal Association of Victoria.

His lengthy involvement with RSL included Meredith Secretary for 30 years and a term as President together with service on various committees including the Land Settlement Committee. For his service to RSL he was awarded a Life Membership.

He joined Legacy in 1978 and was its representative in his district for the last 30 years.



Neil Ray (L) & Phil Spielvogel (R) loading 3 cameras into DH98 Mosquito, Coomalie Creek, C.1945.

The award of the Order of Australia Medal acknowledged a life-time of community service.

Phil had strong principles and worked hard to achieve what he believed in. He believed the Vietnam Veterans should be recognised and moved motions at RSL Conferences for years to that effect, with little result. He initiated recognition for the Vietnam Soldiers on the Meredith Memorial.

His good friend, Bruce Ruxton, President of RSL who had been against the idea, offered to open it and from then on, every-where, included the Vietnam Vets on their memorials.

Phil loved people, meetings, horse racing, roses, Jaguar cars and St Kilda Football Club.

He had friends everywhere and everyone was his friend!



Phil Spielvogel, a Member of the MAV Policy Executive (1988 -91) passed away on 26 April. Phil was a long standing councillor with the former Shire of Ballan, serving three terms as Shire President. He was renowned for his community service and on Australia Day 1992 he was awarded an OAM for his service to local government and the community. In 2007 at a meeting of the Moorabool Shire Council, Phil was recognised and awarded a medal as a founding member of the Morrison CFA with 55 years of continuous service. He attended this year's ANZAC Day service at Meredith and received a standing ovation on entering the RSL Hall. Phil was 93.

Between 42.7% and 55.1% of all statistics are made up on the spot.



*In September 1944, No 87 Squadron was formed from RAAF No 1 Photographic Reconnaissance Unit (PRU) at Coomalie Creek, NT. The difference being the unit now had Squadron status in preparation for a large increase in additional Mosquito aircraft and air crew in the following months. As part of this build up of Squadron personnel, additional photographers also joined the Squadron for servicing the cameras and processing the film resulting from increasing reconnaissance sorties over enemy territory. One of these photographers transferred into 87 Squadron, was Phil Spielvogel. Over the subsequent months, till wars end, Phil performed a pivotal role with the photographic group, servicing and installing aerial cameras in the Mosquito aircraft. The photos, from the Neil Ray collection, capture Phil's unique and wonderful moustached smile. (A History of Mosquitoes in Australia and RAAF Operations by David Vincent)*

**Get your passports ready...**



**Mosquito KA114.** A most exciting debutante for many will be Jerry Yagen's Mosquito which is steadily advancing towards completion at AvSpecs Ltd., Ardmore. One of the most significant restorations happening anywhere around the globe at present, the Mosquito will be the first of its type seen airborne for over a decade and a half, and the first fully rebuilt Mosquito to fly (i.e. with all new wood through the airframe). It will be a huge privilege to have this aircraft debut at Omaka but AVSpecs CEO Warren Denholm is determined this will be the venue for the aircraft's first airshow before it is shipped home to Virginia Beach, in the United States.

**Visit web site for more details at :  
<http://www.omaka.org.nz/classic-fighters-news.htm>**

**Omaka Aerodrome, Marlborough, New Zealand  
April 22 - April 24**



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Save the whales. Collect the whole set.

# Mosquitoes Bite At Night

Mosquitoes Bite at Night was authored by Ken Wright, Melbourne, Australia.

Photographs are by Jack Rayner. Blackwood, Victoria, Australia.

The Calgary Mosquito Society ([www.calgarymosquitosociety.com](http://www.calgarymosquitosociety.com)) has the full document and photographs on its site:

[http://www.calgarymosquitosociety.com/articles/mosquitoes\\_bite\\_at\\_night.pdf](http://www.calgarymosquitosociety.com/articles/mosquitoes_bite_at_night.pdf)

During World War Two, 52,818 Australians volunteered for training as pilots, navigators, gunners and 136,565 as ground crews in the Royal Australian Air Force for service in most theatres of the war. They left to fight far away from their homes and loved ones. They came from the land, from sheep and cattle stations, factories, cities, country towns and brought with them that unique sense of humour and devoted mateship that is the fierce pride of the Australian warrior.

In the freezing skies over Europe, over 6,636 Australian aviators paid the ultimate price to win a war. They came as boys, flew with Royal Air Force and if they survived, were old men by 30. When the war in Europe ended, 15,000 Australians had been involved in the air war against Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy.

464 Squadron was formed in England in September 1942, and was initially equipped with the unsuccessful Ventura light bomber. This notionally RAAF unit comprised air and ground crew from Australia, Britain, Canada and from across the British Empire. The unit was

always cosmopolitan in nature and together with sister units 21 and 487 Royal New Zealand Air Force squadrons comprised 140 Group of the Second Tactical Air Force.

The three squadrons went on to fame as Gestapo and SS hunters. In September, 1943 the Squadrons had converted to the DeHavilland Mosquito known as the 'Wooden Wonder' or simply as the 'Mossie'. This aircraft excelled in a wide variety of roles including low level and high attack day/night bomber, long range photo reconnaissance, minelayer, pathfinder, high speed military transport, long range day/night fighter and bomber.

The Mosquito served in Europe, the Middle East, Far East and the Russian Front. Of the 7,781 Mosquitoes built, 6,710 were delivered during the war years. No fewer than 27 different versions went into service and some of the most spectacular operations of the air war were due to this moulded plywood wonder aircraft.



464 Squadron flight line at Thorney Island late 1944

At 437mph [728 kph] it was the most versatile twin engine propeller driven aircraft in the Second World War. Its wooden construction made it more difficult to detect by radar than conventional metal aircraft and it could be flown at great heights at high speed which gave it almost complete immunity from German anti aircraft guns and fighters until the advent of the German ME 163 and ME 262 jet fighters in 1944.

It could carry phenomenal loads over

A person who is nice to you, but rude to the waiter, is not a nice person.  
(This is very important. Pay attention. It never fails.)



## Mosquitoes Bite At Night—contd

extremely long distances performing feats out of all proportion to the original specifications envisaged by its designers. The Mosquito was an outstanding warplane on every count but it was not without its problems. However, the majority of those who flew in them loved them. Right from the start, low level intruder and precision bombing attacks became the squadron's speciality. Their contribution to the war was invaluable but this little known unit is generally only remembered by the daring attacks on Amiens Prison, the Aarhus University and the Copenhagen Gestapo headquarters.

Jack Palmer and Jack Rayner had something in common apart from their first names. Both had originally joined the Australian Army, both somehow managed to transfer to the RAAF in 1942 and both lived in close proximity to each other in the same state. Both went to Nova Scotia in Canada where they teamed up, passed their training courses and travelled to England for final operational training at Bicester, which they completed with above average ratings. They would go on to be a very successful combination and complete a rare 47 day and night intruder missions.

In the world of combat crews, life was an attempt to escape the odds. They had the reflexes, instincts and natural self discipline to thrive, if they survived the first few missions.

Just prior to 'Operation Overlord' the planned June 6 1944 D-Day invasion of occupied France, Allied aircraft were tasked to cause maximum delay to all enemy movement by rail, road or river as well as their normal operations as a diversionary tactic. As part of the operation, 464 Squadrons mosquitoes were to operate at night in an allocated area by either of two methods depending on moon, weather and visibility.

By low flying attack with cannon, machinegun and bombs using the 'cat's eye' method. As night visibility was best in clear conditions under a half moon, aircrews were kept in darkened rooms during the day before raids or encouraged to wear light proof goggles to avoid

bright lights that would ruin their night vision.

Similar attacks but against targets that had been marked or illuminated by pathfinder aircraft. Operation Overlord was the greatest amphibious assault in history and the landing on the Normandy coast was a great



tactical surprise. Some 4,000 ships and landing craft carried 176,000 Allied troops and supplies across the English Channel escorted by 600 warships which supported the assault with their guns.

The RAF and the Eighth US Air Force played a large part in the success of the D-Day invasion by disrupting the enemy's ability to re-supply their troops.

The new boys in the squadron, Flight Lieutenant Palmer [pilot] and Flying Officer Rayner [navigator] arrived at the Squadrons base on Thorney Island [near Portsmouth, England] early September 1944, and missed all the operations against the enemy both before and after the D-Day invasion and only began their first raid as a team on September 17 over Holland and North West Germany. Flying Officer Rayner recalls their first operation:

You should not confuse your career with your life.

## Mosquitoes Bite At Night—contd

“Our main job was to stop any transport, road, rail or river from bringing up supplies to the front. At briefing, crews were given an area to patrol and we left base at intervals between 2100 and midnight to harass transport in our area over a period of up to six hours. We flew in total blackout conditions and once we were over the North Sea and nearing the Dutch coast which we regularly crossed at Egmond we would fly in a cork-screw action to put off any enemy night fighters.

Once we were over the North Sea, you would hear the German radar picking us up. You could hear it as a humming noise through our headphones. The volume would increase or decrease as the aircrafts' height went up and down. There was one place called Hilversum in Holland where the Germans had a radar directed blue searchlight. The sounds of the radar carrying out a sweep in our headsets got more intense as we approached then suddenly there was a high pitched squeal and the blue searchlight was switched on and caught us in the middle of the beam.

Once an aircraft was targeted, several white searchlights would come and cone our aircraft and the flak would start. We lost our night vision and couldn't read our instruments so essential for night flying. We escaped by putting the aircraft into a steep dive, doing a screaming turn and were gone while they were still blindly groping around looking for us. Once we reached our patrol area, we were free to go where we liked with in that area as long as we made every effort to cross on our return, the coast at a point determined at the pre flight briefing. It was our exclusive entry door in which no-one else could use it. We used to see lots of other aircraft go past when bombing raids were taking place and unfortunately with everyone flying around in the dark, there were many collisions”.

October 2/3 was a highly eventful night for other members of the Squadron. A series of damaging attacks on enemy rail transport in the Osnabruck area resulted in

three trains strafed and bombed, a locomotive blown up and nine other trains hit. The two Jacks were also having some success of their own on the same night in the Emmerich-Munster area.



Bombing up-Thorney Island

JR: On railway patrol, we scored a direct hit on railway trucks in a siding, strafed two trains in the marshalling yard blowing one up. The nose combination of four .303 machineguns that fired at a rate of 1,000 rounds per minute and four 20mm cannons at a rate 600 rounds per minute gave the Mosquito a very nasty sting. Mixed in with the ammunition were rounds of high explosive, tracer and incendiaries so when we fired, the tracers could be clearly seen. When strafing with machine guns there was some noise whereas the 20mm cannons were very loud and caused considerable vibration in the aircraft. In addition, we carried four 500 pound bombs. Sometimes on a really dark night, two one million candlepower parachute flares were substituted for two bombs which enabled us to illuminate the target before bombing.

October 28. Jack Palmer and Jack Rayner strafed a train and destroyed a locomotive. The following night, four planes from the Squadron flew on a special mission. Their objective was to destroy a train loaded with V2 rocket components spotted in a siding near Sneek in Holland. The attack was at low level with about a dozen strafing and bombing runs which were very effective. The next night, the Jacks bombed barges and shot up a small ship in the Dutch Islands and Rhine Delta. The first night of November, they were at it again.

JR: Sank one tank landing craft and forced the other to shore, cannoned a train, bombed another in the Zwolle/

There comes a time when you should stop expecting other people to make a big deal about your birthday.  
That time is age eleven.



## Mosquitoes Bite At Night—contd

Arnhem area and a few nights later in the same place, machine gunned transport trucks. It was here our luck almost ran out. The night was pitch black and as we patrolled we could see these coloured lights down below us so we went to investigate. As we got close we were starting to get nervous and ready to get out of the area quick fast in case of trouble. Suddenly, it dawned on us that we were over the Zwolle German night fighter base with their aircraft passing us. The only thing that saved us was that their anti aircraft batteries, 150 guns no less, couldn't open up on us for fear of hitting their own planes. Needless to say, we got out of there fast!

December 16, 1944. As fog, rain and snow blanketed Allied aerial observation and hobbled combat capabilities, General Gerd von Rundstedt launched a surprise counter offensive in the Ardennes area. The hard pressed Germans had secretly gathered an army of 24 infantry divisions, ten of them armoured and forced a V-shaped salient in between the British and American lines at a weak point forcing the surprised and demoralised Allies back approximately 100 miles [161 kms]. Called 'The Battle of the Bulge' by the Americans and the 'Ardennes Offensive' by the Germans, it was an enormous gamble by the desperate German forces to turn the tide of battle in their favour. The timing was unfortunate as it coincided with the worst winter in decades making life and the conduct of operations extremely difficult for friend and foe alike. Thick fog across the battlefield hampering air operations in the first week of the offensive forced even the redoubtable Mosquito to conduct operations elsewhere.

On December 23, the two jacks flew a mission to support the U.S. Army in the St Vith area and on Christmas Eve, flew another support mission to St Vith. They may not have been able to celebrate Christmas in the Squadron mess but they did have their very own fireworks display on a grand scale, compliments of the German army. They scored a direct hit on an ammunition train near Murlenbach just inside Germany. Their Christmas went off with

a big bang. They supported the Americans again four days later at Laroche.

January 1, 1945. While the fighting raged in the Ardennes, the German Air Force launched Operation Bodenplatte [Baseplate] a major offensive against all forward Allied air bases in Europe. Every available combat aircraft was scrambled for the surprise attack. Historians differ greatly as to the numbers of aircraft lost on both sides, but a loose estimate of Allied aircraft the Germans succeeded in destroying was approximately 122, mostly on the ground. The Luftwaffe lost 200 aircraft and irreplaceable crews. The result was a dismal failure for the Germans. The Ardennes offensive lasted 31 days and resulted in an Allied victory and ended any chance of Germany being able reverse their military fortunes. The German war machine would never recover and begin the down hill slide into the abyss of total defeat. In the meantime, 464 Squadron had moved to Rosieres-en-Santerre near Amiens in France. The officers' accommodation and mess were established in the nearby Chateau de Goyencourt which was not as impressive inside as it was outside. Being a Luftwaffe base before the Squadron took it over, the Germans had stripped it almost bare and left the new occupants a couple of nasty booby traps which were more nuisance value than anything else. The other ranks unfortunately had to live outside in tents. During the battle when weather conditions permitted, 935 sorties were



Officer Jack Rayner second from right.  
Group shot Thorney Island October 44

flown against the enemy hitting 74 trains and attacking over 1,000 wagons. As the fighting moved on, large numbers of serviceable Tiger tanks were found abandoned. They had run out of fuel. Clearly, the Squadron had played their part in von Rundstedt's defeat.

The most destructive force in the universe is gossip.

## Mosquitoes Bite At Night—contd

The Germans may have been down but they certainly were not out, so the Allies decided to 'to put the boot in' and kick the enemy around a bit more. On 22 February,



'Operation Clarion' was launched and was to be the biggest single daylight operation of the war by Allied Air Forces. The Allied army was poised to cross the Rhine at Wesel and 'Clarion' was designed to stop the enemy sending supplies and reinforcements to oppose the crossing. It was hoped that all forms of transport available to the Germans in a 24 hour period would be destroyed. About 9,000 aircraft from bases in England, France, Holland, Belgium and Italy attacked German railways, bridges, roads, rivers, ports and communication centres over 250,000 square miles [647,5000 kilometres] of enemy territory. The Jacks were part of the 16 aircraft the Squadron contributed to the operation.

JR: We had an area south of the major port of Bremen. Tactically, we felt it was a badly organised operation because we had to fly in a group. We were number two. Navigation was difficult and eventually didn't have much of an idea where we were. We came to a railway and followed it north strafing as we went. Suddenly, the outskirts of Bremen loomed up so we veered south-west and bombed a train just west of Soltau scoring a direct hit on the engine. We strafed railway trucks in a siding at Verden, three locomotives at Langwedel and were shot at by a flak train in a siding at Furstenaw. At Ligen we had our second close call and by sheer luck or divine mercy, lived to fight another day. We had accidentally flown between two anti-aircraft gun positions and they had a go at us. It was a 90 degree deflection

shot that hit us in the fuselage just in front of the tail. A magnificent piece of gunnery but fortunately for us, the shell failed to explode. If it had, it would have blown the whole tail assembly off and it would have been all over

for us. The shell made a hole in the main plane severing the trimming tab cable to the elevator. We limped back to base at ground level which was bloody hard for Jack Palmer as without the trimming tab on the elevator, he had great difficulty holding our aircraft straight and level. German night fighters shadowed us but didn't attack as we were too fast for them. We got back to our base at Rosieres-en-Santerre ok but discovered on landing that only one strand of the elevator cable remained. During this operation, one of our pilots, a Canadian was shot down by an American fighter who possibly mistook the

Mosquito for a JU 88 or a ME 110 or so we thought at the time.

The Yanks later tried to tell us it was a German in an American plane. We considered this utter rubbish! The Americans were well known for their, 'shoot first and ask questions later' attitude. Fortunately the crew survived and were back in the air a few days later. However, later towards the end of the war one of our squadron pilots, Gordon Nunn, found in a hanger on a recently abandoned German airfield outside Cologne, two fairly new fully armed Mustang fighters still in their American colours which had been captured by the Germans. It was well known both sides had captured aircraft which were tested in the air for evaluation and comparison to their own. Perhaps in this case, and with hindsight, we may have been hasty in our judgement of the Americans.

It is only speculative but these aircraft may have been part of the highly secret trials and research unit of the Luftwaffe called 2/Versuchsverband Ob.d.L. This unit operated a number of British and American captured aircraft including P51's P47's Spitfires and even a British Typhoon for testing, evaluation and operational sorties until April 1945.

JP. I can't remember the date but one very interesting experience we had was with static electricity caused by lightning. We were flying through an electrical storm

Gravitation is not responsible for people falling in love.



## Mosquitoes Bite At Night—contd

over Holland/Belgium and you could hear the electrical interference on the radio and radar. Around the perimeter of the propeller, you could see static electricity building up. It began as a whitish colour but as it danced up the wingtip it turned blue. It built up on the props and suddenly, there was a blinding flash and the static electricity jumped across from the engine across me to the wingtip. I was blinded and couldn't see the instrument panel. The blindness didn't last long but it was certainly an experience.

The Squadron moved to Melsbroek in Belgium and in April 1945, the two Jacks began bombing operations over Berlin. Using specially constructed bomb bays to carry a 4,000 pound bomb, the 'Pregnant Mosquitoes' as they were called by the crews, flew missions every night over the dying capital of the Reich.

JR. The Germans hated the Mosquito crews. When the weather was very bad and other aircraft were grounded, the Mosquito would still be up and it was business as usual making life hell for the residents of Berlin. Air raid sirens, exploding bombs, fires, homes destroyed air-raid shelters full of terrified people and another sleepless night. We got such a bad name that a report came through at one stage that if a crew bailed out and were caught, they would be cut to pieces. Nevertheless, the comradeship that had developed between us was due to the simple fact that one's life depended on the other. One mistake and we were gone. Each of us had, by necessity, established a high degree of personal discipline.

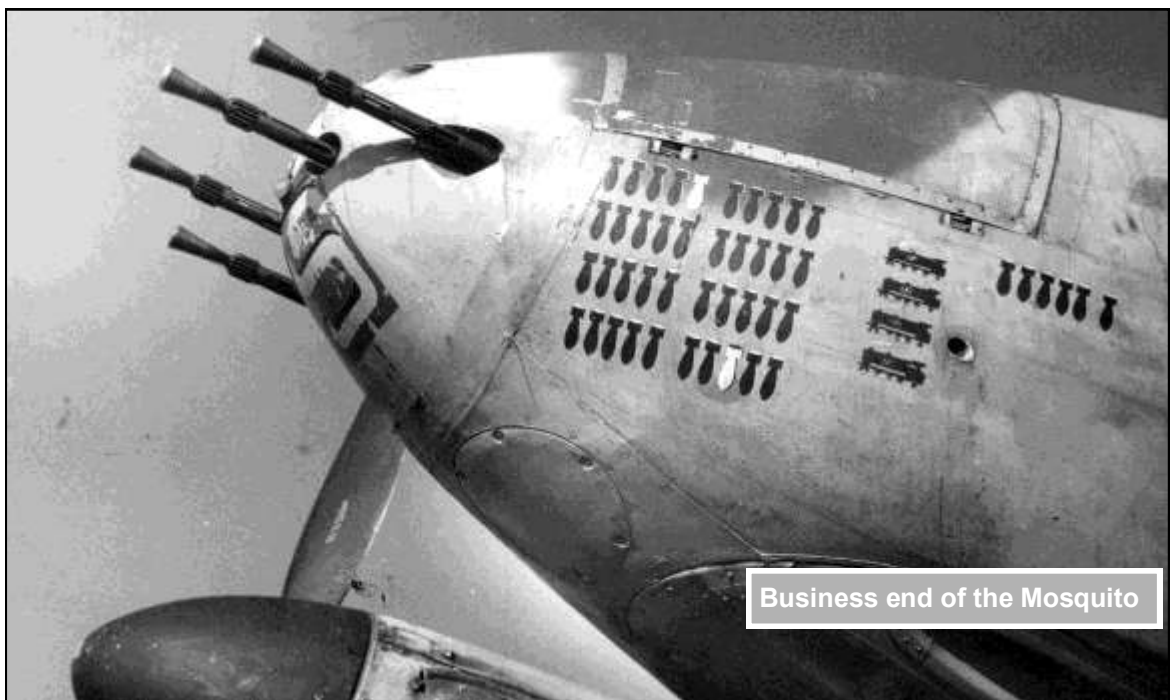
The Squadron flew its last operation on 2 May and following the end of hostilities, flew

the German Commander, General Alfred Jodl [later executed after the Nuremberg trials for war crimes] to Berlin to sign the surrender agreement on behalf of Germany officially ending WW2 in the West at midnight 8/9 May 1945. Among other VIP's escorted by the Squadron were the British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and Crown Prince Olaf of Norway.

JR. One interesting trip we had was up to the Potsdam conference near Berlin. We were in charge of a flight of three aircraft and had to escort the British Foreign Minister, Ernest Bevin back to London from this meeting. We left Melsbroek and flew to Gatow airport in the British sector near Berlin.

The Potsdam Conference July 17-August 2, 1945 was between the principal Allies to clarify and implement agreements previously reached at the Yalta Conference [4-11 February 45]. The chief representatives were Premier Stalin, Prime Minister Winston Churchill [later replaced by Prime Minister Attlee who defeated Churchill in the British elections at the time] and President Truman. The foreign ministers of the three nations were also present.

JR. We arrived on the 31 July and were not due to leave until 2 August so a group of us with time off decided to go 'sightseeing' to see first hand the famous or infamous German capital. The devastation was horrific. Quite shocking really! The city had been bombed so often, every night for the month of April and had only a few weeks earlier, suffered further terrible destruction by the Russian military. The scene was ghastly and never to be forgotten. We only saw a handful of undamaged buildings; more than 90% were no more than burnt shells. We



Business end of the Mosquito

"The hardest thing in the world to understand is the income tax.

## Mosquitoes Bite At Night—contd

visited the Reichstag, Germany's Parliament building and inside was ankle deep rubble with fallen ceilings mixed up with hundreds of thousands of Army record cards. We went into the wrecked Reich Chancellery building which was just inside the Russian occupation zone and guarded by their troops. The lack of personal hygiene by the Russians was clearly evident. They went about their natural business wherever they stood thus adding to the rubbish and causing an awful stench. We wandered around and in one room the floor was inches deep in a variety of war medals and ribbons in dirty envelopes that were being picked over by Russian soldiers.

I managed to collect a small box full of assorted medals including a silver Iron Cross and a special medal inscribed with Hitler's signature that he awarded to the mothers of German servicemen. As we passed the Russian guard at the front door on the way out, he just stood there with his submachine gun and gave us the silliest grin I have ever seen. One of our Squadron members, Howard Purnell, had previously been in the Chancellery building and got a set of Hitler's door handles. He is reputed to have been the first non-Soviet serviceman to enter Hitler's Berlin bunker after he bribed the Russian guards to allow him in.

464 Squadron may have only been in existence for a short period but their war record is impressive. They destroyed eleven aircraft, 143 MT vehicles, 33 trains, one flying bomb, 24 tanks and damaged six E-Boats, 138 barges and small boats, 2,396 MT vehicles and attacked 328 trains together with 743 stationary railway trucks. Add to this impressive achievement the precision attacks on the SS barracks at Egletons and Bonneuil-Matours in France plus Gestapo HQ's at Odense, the Aarhus University, and Shell house in Copenhagen, Denmark. The best known attack was on the Gestapo prison in Amiens, France. This one hour raid which has now entered RAF and RAAF folklore as perhaps one of the greatest operations of the European conflict, freed political and Resistance prisoners who were able to identify many Gestapo agents and collaborators responsible for their imprisonment,

seriously damaging future German counter-intelligence efforts.

The Squadrons achievement can be summarised using the words from a note from the French Resistance five days later.

"I thank you in the name of our comrades for bombardment of the prison. The delay was too short and we were not able to save all, but thanks to the admirable precision attack the first bombs blew in nearly all the doors and many prisoners escaped with the help of the civilian population. Twelve of these prisoners were to have been shot the next day.....To sum up, it was a success!"

After participating in a number of fly pasts, the Squadron flew to Fersfield in East Anglia and was disbanded on 24 September 1945. Both Palmer and Rayner returned home and back to civilian life in Australia. Although they had been 'Mentioned in Dispatches' for meritorious service during the war, further accolades were to come.

On 6 June 2000, both Jack Rayner and Jack Palmer were honoured by the French Government for their service in the liberation of France. The French Consul-General presented them both with a Diploma of Honour and a medal commemorating the Normandy landing. This prestigious award has been presented to only a few Australians, most who served with the RAAF. A fitting recognition not only for their efforts during WW2, but also in memory of all the aircrews and support staff of the Squadron whose efforts, 'saw the powers of darkness put to flight and saw the morning break'.



The Two Jacks aircraft, SBJ and ground crew

Reality is merely an illusion, albeit a very persistent one.



## Mosquitoes Bite At Night—contd

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Courtesy; Jack Rayner. Blackwood, Victoria, Australia.

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## From member Ray Arthur

It's a slow day in a dusty little Australian town.

The sun is beating down and the streets are deserted. Times are tough, everybody is in debt, and everybody lives on credit.

On this particular day a rich tourist from down south is driving through town, stops at the local motel and lays a \$100 bill on the desk saying he wants to inspect the rooms upstairs in order to pick one to spend the night.

He gives him keys to a few rooms and as soon as the man walks upstairs, the owner grabs the \$100 bill and runs next door to pay his debt to the butcher.

The butcher takes the \$100 and runs down the street to repay his debt to the pig farmer.

The pig farmer takes the \$100 and heads off to pay his bill at the supplier of feed and fuel.

The guy at the Farmer's Co-op takes the \$100

and runs to pay his drinks bill at the local pub.

The publican slips the money along to the motel owner to pay off a private debt.

The motel proprietor then places the \$100 back on the counter so the rich traveller will not suspect anything.

At that moment the traveller comes down the stairs, picks up the \$100 bill, states that the rooms are not satisfactory, pockets the money, and leaves town.

No one produced anything. No one earned anything.

However, the whole town is now out of debt and looking to the future with a lot more optimism.

And that's how the Australian Government's stimulus package works.

I never think of the future. It comes soon enough.

It is with regret that the Association must relay the passing of the following members:

**Orr**, William (Bill), of Ormiston, Queensland

**Taylor**, Aubrey Arthur, of Bayview, New South Wales

The Association's condolences are extended to all the Member's loved ones.

Their support to the Association will be sadly missed.

## New Members

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

**Arthur**, Eric, of Mount Gambier, South Australia

**Redway**, Brett, of RAAF Museum, Victoria

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

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Sometimes one pays most for the things one gets for nothing.