

Royal Australian Air Force



The **Un-wanted Bomber Pilot.**

**A Personal Memoir of my early days, and the Royal Australian
Air Force Pilot Period.**



by
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**My last Formation Flight at RAF Weston
on the Green, No. 4 Advanced Flying Unit,
Oxford, England.**

Empire Air Training Scheme

The struggle to gain strength in the air to meet the certain German onslaught, after years of political neglect, was a very lucky race. When World War 2 commenced, the R.A.F. had just enough crews to hold out. No one could then see the tremendous loss of Air Crew and aircraft that would finally occur.

The Empire Air Training Scheme originated in an agreement signed in Ottawa, Canada, in December 1939, by United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand. In time it would include citizens of many other countries.

On the 29th April 1940 the Scheme came into being throughout the Commonwealth.

The aim was to produce 50,000 Air Crew annually made up by 20,000 Pilots and 30,000 Observers and Wireless Air Gunners.

Australia was to train every 4 weeks: 432 Pilots...226 Observers...392 Wags.

Some Australians partly did their training in Australia then went to Canada to complete their courses.

Altogether, more than 250,000 young men participated in the Empire Air Training Scheme. Some 38,000 Australians joined as Air Crew, and I was one of them.

Please Note:

By mid 1943 the EATS was so successful, that the ever vigilant Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, WINSTON CHURCHILL advised the Australian Commonwealth Government NOT to send any more Air Crews to England.

Winston Churchill had discovered there was an excess of Pilots, Navigators, Wireless Air Gunners and Gunners in England yet here in Australia this notification was ignored because immediately after my Pilot Graduation, in early March 1944, I was posted to Royal Air Force in England. For several months afterwards even more Australian Air Crews were still being sent to the United Kingdom.

To compound this problem newly Graduated Air Crews from Canada and New Zealand were also continuing to arriving.

These young, personally highly motivated young Air Crews, found themselves constantly separated from their contemporaries and moved to a never ending stream of different RAF Air Fields. In my own case this meant once again flying the Elementary Trainer "Tiger Moth", on a number of different RAF Stations, which in reality, was an invaluable introduction to map reading in a highly congested landscape and a busy air space. On many RAF Bases there was little to do other than "filling in time!"

Unbeknown to me, some of my fellow Pilots Volunteered to under go Re training as Flight Engineers at Royal Air Force Station, St Athans, in Wales, destined to replace the RAF Flight Engineers in RAAF Lancaster Squadrons destined for the war in the Pacific against the Japanese.

Foreword

Early in 1944 it was becoming evident to the Empire Air Training Scheme countries, that all objectives for training of Air Crews had been accomplished. There was even a large surplus of Pilots in England. Young, highly motivated Pilots, fully expecting to advance to Advanced Flying Units and then Operational Flying Units, were informed, on arrival in the United Kingdom, that they would not be needed for a month. During the following weeks they reported to Whitley Bay, on the North East coast, to undergo the rigors of a Commando Course. Then followed a regular splitting up of groups and dispersing them to a wide range of R.A.F. Bases, each with a variety of duties. This policy of frequently moving individual Pilots lessened the possibility of group disenchantment.

Back in Australia, and probably in New Zealand and Canada, there was a slowing down in the graduation of Air Crews.

To those Pilots, who did not advance beyond Service Flying Schools, and to the Pilots who went onto A.F.U. (Advanced Flying School) and O.T.U. (Operational Training Unit) the sudden ending of War in Europe and South East Asia stopped all flying.

Although the Allied Countries rejoiced in the cessation of all hostilities, these young Pilots felt some-what "cheated" in not fulfilling their personal ambitions of flying in Bomber Command.

For the remainder of their lives many would watch from the foot path, the yearly Parade of Ex-Servicemen and Women as they proudly march with their Squadrons, Ships, and Divisions and Units, for they were not really participants in World War 2.

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EARLY Life



I was born on the 23rd February 1925 and given the name of Leslie Ronald. We lived in Price Street Fremantle, a short distance to the Indian Ocean (it is never referred to by that name). In fact the sea was at the end of the street with a railway line running parallel to the ocean front.

My vivid recollection of my early years was that I liked climbing, especially onto a picket fence that seemed to enclose all houses in those days. When I about 5 years of age an older lad showed me how to climb onto the roof of a factory in the next street. Although there was a certain amount of fear at such a height the vista of the world below and to the horizon towards Garden Island blocked out any real concern (until it came time to return to ground level).

Photographs of me in those far shaggy haired dog, with a kind companion. Packing up a bag an exciting journey although it for small sand whiting was success.

led off on a voyage of further remember looking down into the excited as the striped bait. A sudden tug on the catgut me frantically hauling in the line and creating an enormous tangle. When landed my first ever catch was greeted with derision by my new found fishing companion.



off days usually showed in company of a face, called Rover, who was my constant and going fishing was like setting off on was only to the end of the street. Fishing constantly pursued but without any The arrival of a slightly older boy I was discovery to the fishermen's jetty. Well I deep, crystal clear waters and grew more "footballers" approached my dangling line (no nylon lines in those days) found

"It's only a "blowie!" he roared with laughter.

The sudden arrival of a large triangular fin introduced me to what was a shark. It somewhat installed into me the need for care when moving about the jetty. South Beach was a popular swimming area close by with a shark-proof steel net enclosing the swimming area. This facility was probably developed because ships from our north-west ports unloaded cattle for the Robbs Jetty meat processing abattoirs. A large two-story building provided change rooms and shops for the busy summer weekends.

Just before my 6th birthday my parents and my younger brother, Keith Roland, moved to Stratford Street in East Fremantle. Looking from the back veranda of our house we could see across the vacant blocks to the Richmond State School, which was higher up than our property. School was a pleasant place to begin my schooling. "Bubs," as it was then called, but in reality, Infants Class, (now, Year 1.)

During this period I was introduced to flying kites, which in turn necessitated learning to construct one. A home made kite took some time to construct as it required carving the wooden frame from thin pine wood pieces taken from boxes (shaping with a pocket knife). Binding the frame then covering with brown paper, using glue made from flour and water, took hours to accomplish but, was fully rewarded, with the many hours of sheer pleasure it brought.

At this time a neighbour took me fishing and crabbing to the nearby Swan River from the Bicton jetty .It always appeared to be only a short distance to the river probably because of the sheer excitement and chatter that occurred.

During this period my parents separated with my Mother having to go to work in the country so my brother Keith and I were separated. He went to board with an elderly lady and I with an Aunt and her family. In turn I lived with three married Aunts over the next five years. An un-expected birthday present from my Mother arrived one day ... a push-bike (bicycle). I wheeled it round and round until my Uncle Norm (15 months older than I) announced he would teach me to ride. Little did I know what was in store for this innocent. Into the next street we went with me proudly wheeling the new bike. At about two hundred metre along this gently sloping side street I mounted the bike with my uncle holding it upright until I had it balanced.



The lace collar was known as Lord Fauntleroy style while the hair style was later The Beatles.



Keith, my brother arrived on the scene three years after me.



What a tolerant Rover he was with this inquisitive blonde.



Keith and myself posed for a photographic competition but results are unknown.



One of the very few photographs of my Mother with the fashion of the day, with Nana Collins.



Our Aunt Verna with Keith, but she was never to have any children of her own Adopted Trevor



The only photograph ever taken of Mum, Keith and myself. I would have been about sixteen years of age.

With Norm holding the back of the seat he soon had the bike moving with me wobbling about. By this time the bike was moving at about as fast as Norm could run so he "cast me adrift". Down the hill I sped getting faster and faster as I hurtled toward the fast approaching Albany Highway intersection. This Highway carried all the through traffic as well as the electric trams that provided the only means of transport through East Victoria Park to the city of Perth.



Myself, 6th from left in front row at East Victoria Park in Year One. All the boys were caught eating the Head Mistress' nasturtium flowers and after being questioned I was sent off scott free when I answered that I eaten them while the remainder were caned.

This terrifying incident took only a short time but it seemed an eternity. I didnot know how to stop or how to turn plus the bike was not equipped with brakes. I swept into the intersection of Albany High Way in a wide sweeping turn ending by heading back the way I had come, no traffic of any kind appeared during my assault. The taunting I received from other boys was unmerciful because my bike had what was called Parson's handlebars. I set out to prove that the handlebars were no hindrance to me during the skidding competitions across the gravel surface school yard during weekends. Although my steed had no brakes I could lean across the handlebars and brace my legs and lock the back wheel causing it to skid.

For the ensuing years the bike gave me a degree of freedom to sail forth all over the neighbourhood.

An introduction to smoking at 8 years of age ended up with me going into hospital because of excessive smoking. Years later, while in the Air Force with liberal supplies of American cigarettes available I did not take up smoking.

During the Christmas Holidays of 1936 my brother and I were re-united with my Mother and went to live in an apartment in Perth. I had just returned from a fantastic Christmas holiday spent with my Grand Mother, (called Nana). She was employed on a farm at Wokalup that had been established for boys who had been in trouble with the law. Although I was two months off my 12th birthday I was never conscious of the fact that any of the young men had been in trouble. They never said anything to me about their troubles or any derogatory remarks about



the Staff of the Farm School of which my Nana was known as the Matron. I was soon introduced to milking cows and eventually caught Cow Pox, which would cause problems with my rejection of Small Pox vaccination on entry to the R.A.A.F. At the time I knew nothing about how Dr.Edward Jenner had discovered the way to prevent the hideous disease Small Pox, by vaccinating people with Cow Pox. Well I remember the first day I was allowed to saddle a horse under the guidance of one of the boys. I thought I was doing it for this particular lad for he explained how to adjust the length of the stirrups by using the length of my arm (this I did find strange because your foot went into the stirrup). When everything was completed to his satisfaction I was told to mount up. We moved off in single file until we left the farm and entered a winding gravel road that ran along side the farm boundary. Suddenly one of the boys came along side of me, grabbed hold of the reins and set off until we were galloping. I was terrified for down to my left there was a sheer drop so I some how clung hold to the large knob on the front of the old Light Horse saddle. After a few minutes I was thrown the reins and I eventually slowed to a walk. By the time we eventually returned to the homestead I had practically forgotten my introduction to horse riding for I thoroughly enjoyed the outing. During the remainder of the holiday I learned many things and experienced innumerable adventures. What a pity all children could not experience once in their life, a holiday on a farm

My brother and I enrolled in the East Perth State School (they are now called Primary Schools) in the February of 1937. I was placed in Standard 6 (now called Year7). 1938 and 1939 saw me enrolled in the Junior Technical School, in Leederville. It was a school supposedly for the less academically endowed for it prepared boys who would proceed to the Trade Occupations. One of my R.A.A.F. Pilot colleagues also attended Junior Tech. and went on to become a Research Officer in the W.A. Forestry Department, then later a Lecturer in Geology and eventually a Consultant Geologist. Another went onto become a Professor in Canada. So much for the education system that can foresee the potential of a youngster. Years later I went to the Western Australian University to enquire about Late Development in individuals. I was astounded to be invited to tell them what I knew about Late Development for they had no knowledge of the subject. We probably could all name some one who did not shine in the formal domain of school life yet went onto lead most successful careers. Years later, in conversation with a man at the "Ye Olde Narrogin Hotel" in Armadale, this subject was raised. He went onto explain how at Perth Boys' School he had just scraped through the 'Junior Examinations" yet he had gone onto become the Managing Director of one of the largest businesses in the city of Perth. This was not said in any bragging tone.

My Head Master, Mr Lutz, selected a group of boys and proposed to coach us to attempt our Junior Certificate, a State Examination, which was held at the end of 3 years Secondary School. This didnt happen because Junior Technical School was for only 2 years and we had already spent one year there.

In 1939, during my second year, saw the declaration of World War 2. News reels at the picture theatres and magazine articles and pictures graphically showed us what was happening in Europe.

1940 saw me enrolled at the Perth Technical College for a Day Engineering Course for one year. I was 15years old.

In January 1941, just before my 16th birthday I commenced work at Atwood Motors a large motor car and truck distributor. This entailed starting work at 7.30 am and finishing at 5.pm.for 5.5 days per week for 16 shillings and sixpence. (\$1.65)

The War in England was devastating for England. Australian Air Crews were sent to the U.K. as well as to the Middle East where our A.I.F. (Australian Army) was engaged against the German and Italian Armies.

During November 1941 an appeal was launched by Wing Commander C. W. Snook to establish an **Air Training Corps** in Western Australia, for youths from 16 years to 18 years.

On my 12th birthday I had received a book called "**Let's Learn to Fly**" which I read over and over but never in my wildest dreams did I believe I would sometime learn to fly. A strange incident happened just after my next birthday when we were living in West Perth. I was invited in for afternoon tea with a lady, who rented half the house. Her guest commenced reading "tea cups" and duly looked in mine and announced that I would train as a pilot and enter the War.

This really startled me because I had not mentioned anything about flying to anyone. While attending the Windsor Picture theatre in Subiaco one evening, during September 1941, an appeal was announced from the stage, during the intermission, for young men and women to join the local Rifle Club. This certainly interested me for I had used a 22 rifle shooting rabbits in the Darling Ranges some 18 miles east from Perth on occasional trips with my Uncle Roy.

The Rifle Club was manned by men from the First World War, who decided they could contribute to the war effort. Well I remember an old soldier explaining how to line up the foresight in the "V" of the back sight at six o'clock on the bulls eye. The 303 rifle was clamped in a special vice already correctly lined up on the target.

This experience was to pay off the first time I went to the Range at the **R.A.A.F. Initial Training School, Clontarf**. As we had some ex-A.I.F.(soldiers) members on our Course they suggested we all put 2 shillings each in a kitty with the winner taking all. I returned to the barracks (small huts or tents) loaded with two shilling pieces. This was to happen twice more during training and once during a Commando Course in England. The old soldier's advice and guidance certainly assisted me when it came to using a variety of machine guns and pistols.

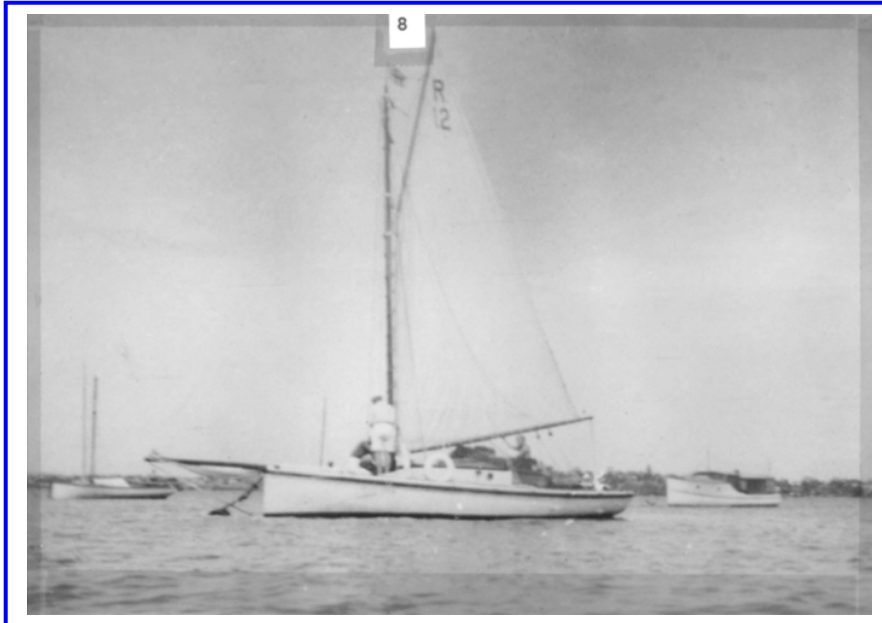
When enrolments were called for the **Air Training Corps** I arrived early (it was an advantage in living only a few hundred metres from the Head Quarters of the City of Perth 75 Squadron). All Parades were held in the Christian Brothers' College in St. George's Terrace Perth. The first night Parade of the ATC occurred on the 14th October 1941, but every boy had to pass a medical examination before being finally accepted.



For the next 17 months I was fully occupied and engrossed in learning a host of exciting and interesting subjects that was highly necessary to ultimately enter the Royal Australian Air Force. Parades were held on two evenings each week, and Saturday afternoon. During the first summer months we had to purchase our own summer uniform, which consisted of khaki shorts, shirt long socks and black shoes. We were given an Air Force forage cap with the A.T.C. badge. Evenings were taken up with lectures, Morse Code, aircraft recognition, navigation, Air Force Law, mathematics etc while the Saturday afternoon was devoted to marching and physical fitness sessions that had been devised by Mr Bill Halliday from the W.A. Education Department.

Towards the end of 1942 a yachting programme was put in motion by Wing Commander Snook and I was selected to sail on his yacht each Sunday. A high light was a cruise to Garden Island for a week during the Christmas of 1942. Because the entrance to Fremantle Harbour was

guarded by an anti-submarine net, special permission had to be obtained to allow our yacht to pass through. I did suffer one bout of sea sickness while rolling about in the swell on the western side of Garden Island.



Every Sunday I crewed aboard WGCDR Snook's yacht then moored in the original Royal Perth's Yacht Club located where William Street met the Swan River.

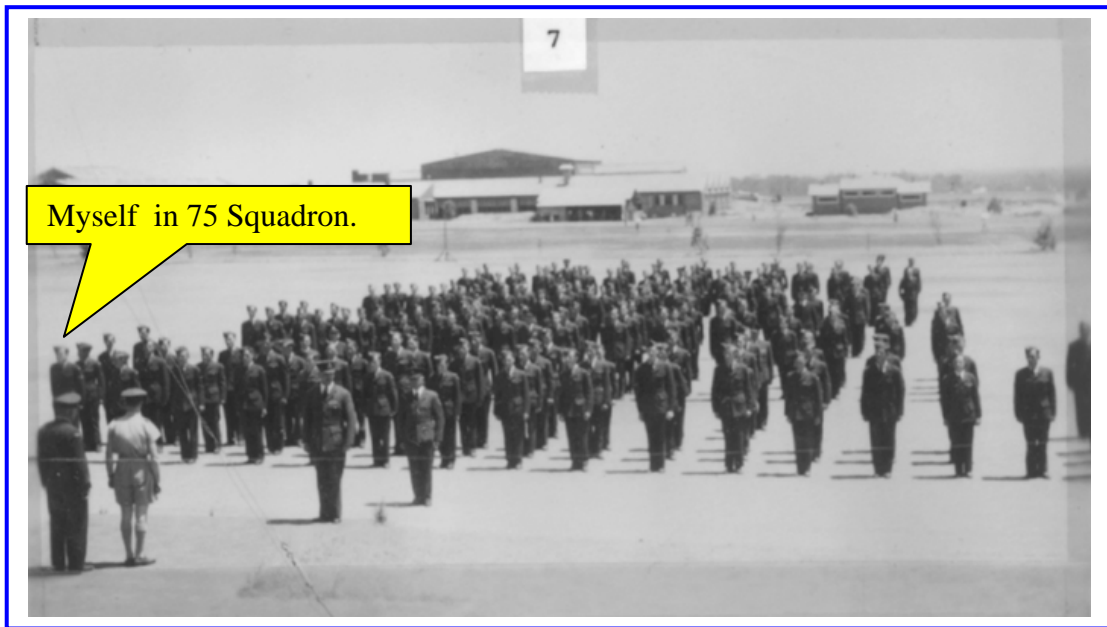


All these men volunteered to become ATC Instructors devoting a great deal of time to the war effort. SQNLDR Bradshaw was the Commanding Officer of my No.75 Squadron, Perth. (second from Rt in front row)



I was also fortunate in being taken for a short flight in Wing Commander's Snook's twin engine Monospar aircraft. Although I had been up in a civilian Hercules aircraft when I was very young I had no recollection of that trip. By this time I had been made a Sergeant in the Air Training Corps, which usually meant taking Flights on marches during the Saturday afternoon as well as assisting in the physical education sessions.

As no official record exists of the contribution made by the 12,000 Air Corps Cadets who entered the [R.A.A.F. during-1941to1945](#) I would in my retirement write a History about the Air Training Corps and it would eventually join five other books, all available FREE on my Web Page on the Internet.



In December 1942 all the Perth ATC Squadrons entered RAAF Pearce for a Camp, which introduced us to Service life.



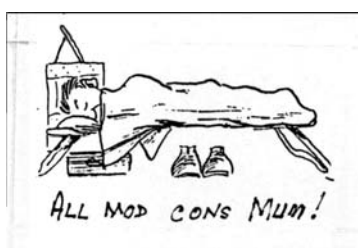
Some where in this crowd of Cadets, dressed in our new "Blues" (every RAAF & WAAF person was in their summer uniform) I am some where in this crowd.

Enter the Royal Australian Air Force

The 23 February 1943 arrived and I turned 18 years old and fully expected to be called up in the March intake. Much to my disappointment this did not occur nor did it happen in April. I was desperate so I went to the Recruitment Officer in Perth to seek an explanation or assistance. It was arranged that I should go before a special board. It was considered I did not have a sufficiently high enough standard in mathematics. The result was that I must have impressed the Board for they proposed that I should enter the May intake two weeks before the next Course No. 41 commenced.

With a tearful Mother seeing me off (the Initial Training School was only 5 miles from Perth) I duly reported to the R.A.A.F. Head Quarters. I was incredibly elated for I had waited 17 months for this day. On arrival at Clontarf, the **RAAF Initial Training School** I was reminded that this establishment had been a Home for Boys, and operated by the Roman Catholic Church. Much to my surprise I was joined by a group of ex-soldiers, who had applied to join the R.A.A.F. Air Crew. Like me they were there to see if we could attain the necessary improvement in mathematics.

To my utter delight the two weeks presented me with no challenges or problems with mathematics nor did it ever happen throughout the rest of my training. The ex-soldiers were great to me as I was the baby of the course but I did not dare to divulge that I had been a Sergeant in the A.T.C. and had some experience with drill.



After two weeks the full Course of 100 more young men duly arrived and were kitted out and taken to our new living quarters!! Most were put into tents but I had the luxury of a small cabin made of hard board. Beds were fold up steel frame with what looked like steel fencing netting to support a mattress made up of a large jute bag (like a chaff bag used to hold feed for horses) and into this we stuffed straw that must have been recently standing in some wheat field. From this time we were known as **No.41 Course**.

A drill instructor Corporal duly introduced us to the mysteries of folding up blankets and straw mattress and assembling any other pieces of equipment that was needed for the daily inspection. Wow and behold any one who did not meet the standard that was expected. It was quietly introduced our vocabulary that you could be “scrubbed” from Air Crew for hinted at miss-demeanours. This threat was to be held over us throughout all our training.

For convenience our Course was divided into Flights made up each with about 40 recruits. After each subject lecture we had to double march between locations. Physical education sessions were always carried out by constantly running. A series of fitness achievements were soon pointed out to us. Running a mile within 6 minutes was expected (the 4 minute mile was then years away). Un-armed combat, assault course, rifle drill with bayonet, were all devised to make us fit or weed out those who did not possess the necessary stamina. Jumping off a high tower to simulate a landing by parachute seemed to be a daily occurrence along with a host of other deviously designed activities.

We were to come under the guidance of drill instructors for many months to come. Although many of our Course could run the mile in a comfortable time, some could even chat like you now see modern day joggers, but I never found this to be easy in fact I was usually exhausted by the time the mile was completed. Everyone was then subjected to receiving all our inoculations and vaccinations. Some recruits were seen to keel over during the inserting of the hypodermic needle but the medical people followed them to the floor where they completed the injection. Often on parades some one would keel over from the effects of their inoculation. Small Pox vaccination resulted in a large puss sore appearing which later changed to a large scab. No such thing happened to me. A year later on a troop ship heading for America an astute Australian RAAF Medic accompanying us, apparently checked all our medical records and discovered I

did not have the necessary protection. He seemed pleased to have a victim to combat his boredom and explained that he would certainly be successful. On my bare arm he scored a deep cut with a large needle onto which a drop of the vaccination material was deposited. In due course a very large puss sore appeared, much to the delight of the medic.

Intensive lectures and developing new skills in navigation plotting exercises, Morse Code proceeded every day. One particular Flying Officer lecturer impressed me greatly for he had a friendly efficient competence in all his lectures. In aircraft recognition he was a master in his presentation for he could draw pertinent shapes of an enemy aircraft that made learning more effective. Years later this particular officer, a Mr Barton was to become the Director of the Western Australian Education Department.

After three months and final examinations completed each Aircraftsman 2 (we were the lowest rank in the Air Force) had to go before a Category Board. Generally speaking most air crew had aspirations of becoming a pilot so the interview was the last step in making a decision as to what Air Crew section we would proceed to for the next phase of our training.



Mum with Keith in my new flying gear.

Word quickly spread that the decisions had been finally made so with some trepidation I went to the notice board to find out my fate. There in front of me stated the fantastic news that I had ever had in my life. I was posted to **6 Elementary Flying School, Cunderdin, W.A, as a Trainee Pilot.** There would have been many disappointments among the Course Members, but my close acquaintances were also becoming pilots so I do not remember talking to one disappointed trainee. Some were going to Victoria to attend Wireless School at Ballarat while those who did not finish that exacting course went on to become straight Air Gunners. Probably the more talented went to become Wireless Navigators or Navigators. This Category had always been known as Observers and were recognised by a large "O" in a half Wing. Later many resisted having to change their original Wing.

Elementary Flying School

After my brother Keith tried on all my new flying gear, and a few days leave, I joined the rest of the group departing Perth Railway Station on the 14 August 1943. My Mother's parting advice was not to fly too high or too fast. Little was she to know that advice would have been the undoing of many a pilot.

As our steam train approached Cunderdin we all rushed the windows to see the Tiger Moths making their approach to the airfield. How would I measure up to my expectations? It felt strange to at last arrive on a real Air Force Base. Our first welcoming was from a group of trainees as we staggered towards our unlined huts.

"You'll be sorry!" they chorused.

Drill instructors soon had us through the usual formalities that always proceed upon taking up residence on any R.A.A.F. or R.A.F. Station. Having settled into the daily routine of new subject lectures it was time for my first encounter with my Flying Instructor... a certain young man, who had the nickname of **"the Boy Bastard"**. The first thing he said to me was.

"I suppose you have heard what I am known as?" he grouched.
In my youthful in-experience, replied that I did. How much better would it have been if I had said I did not know is debateable.

I have no recollection of what further transpired at that first interview but I was taken out to see my first Tiger Moth. This two wing trainer had to be manhandled out of the hanger by lifting the tail up to shoulder height and with the help of a "sprog" pilot on each wing we

proceeded to wheel it out onto the tarmac under the supervision of a Ground Staff Corporal. I couldn't believe my eyes at the construction of a Tiger Moth. It appeared to be made of painted canvas and tube metal a very flimsy piece of equipment I thought. How wrong can first impressions be. They must have been incredibly robust to withstand the punishment of heavy landings. Even now, after many years since those days, many modern day pilots would dearly love to fly those fully aerobatic bi-planes.

One of the first things we had to learn, and it was quite a dangerous task, was how to swing the propeller to start the Tiger.

Cunderdin EFTS Days”



"No swinging your bloody leg!" exclaimed the Sergeant Ground Staff fitter, "you are not to do what you've seen American's do in the movies!"

On one occasion, while swinging a propeller for another sprog pilot, I was slightly hit on a finger by a prop. Apparently some one saw what happened, reported to someone because suddenly I was whisked off to the Station Hospital in an Ambulance. There I was rushed into the Doctor for examination. After a brief look I was pronounced fit to resume flying. My incident seemed to break the monotony for someone's day. Ground School lectures gradually introduced us the aerodrome layout, airframes, engine, Airmanship and all that it implied, Theory of Flight, Navigation, Morse both sound and light using an Aldis lamp, Armaments including gunnery on the firing range using Browning machine gun, pistol, rifle, fitting and wearing of the seat type parachute and emergency use. One of our older trainee pilots confided to me that he, on one occasion, undid his safety harness and prepared to bailout when his Tiger wouldn't come out of a spin. He took his feet off the rudders left the joy stick and prayed as he set to bail out, when on its own accord the forgiving Tiger came out of the spin.



The DH 82 “Tiger Moth” was also used in Canada, England to provide Elementary Flying Training to all Trainee Pilots. It was fully aerobatic and even in these modern times are still used by enthusiasts and Aero Clubs.

Finally the day arrived when I started the Tiger for the Boy B..! then climbed into the rear cockpit and fastened the special safety harness. The grinning face reflected in the instructor's rear vision mirror watched me through his flying goggles.

"Leave your feet and hands off the controls," came a terse command through the headphones fitted inside my all leather flying helmet. Communication was through a primitive speaking tube with a mouth piece situated a few inches in front of my face.

With a sudden roar from the Gypsy Major we set off across the grass surface airdrome bumping across the uneven surface and at the same time the aircraft turning 10 degrees left and then right so that we could see ahead. The Tiger had a tailskid so that it was in a three point landing position when taxiing. Finally we crossed to the far side of the aerodrome. In those days there were no large runways. At Cunderdin the winds were predominately from the East so the first flight in the morning had to cross the vast drome to the Western side. Here we joined the other group of early morning aircraft. Flying commenced extremely early although it was still August and in our winter while later in the year pilots had to start even earlier as summer approached.

After the instructor checked that the ailerons were functioning correctly by moving the joy-stick first to the left then to the right (I was commanded to observe what happened), the elevators were also tested then the rudder bars were fully pushed forward first the left then the right. This procedure was always carried out on all other aircraft. We had been warned that on some occasion a pilot had not done these basic tests and therefore crashed on take off because the special wooden blocks had not been removed. These were fitted at the end of the day to protect the controls from moving when the winds blew across the controls especially when aircraft were parked outside.

We now moved forward and to a position across wind to test the engine by revving the motor to a set number of revolutions then switching off first one of the magneto switches and noting any drop in revs. Then to the other switch.

With a look all round to see if it was clear of approaching aircraft the Tiger moved forward then turned into wind. Large air-socks were placed around the drome so that the direction from which the wind was coming could be clearly seen. It was essential that the Tiger took off directly into wind and also when landing The throttle was then thrust fully forward and the Tiger quickly gathered speed then suddenly the tail came up and we were moving straight and level. A constant flow of commands were constantly fed into my ears.

"I'll keep the kite heading for that small shed on the far side of the field, "and as we lifted from mother earth, "hold her down to get the airspeed up, now a gentle climb keeping the airspeed to 65 m.p.h."

All the time I was conscious of the blinding light from the rising sun in the eastern sky. Later when returning a short leave in Perth we were to learn of a fatal two aircraft collision involving two Tigers on morning take off. Accidents were to occur on all sorts of Air Force Stations and it wasn't until after the war would the extent be known. We were continually reminded that vigilance was paramount. Even today my eyes are constantly moving about the traffic on the busy roads trying to anticipate what some one ahead might suddenly do. We were always told to search the sky from behind all around the horizon and up and down. It became second nature to keep track of other air craft in the vicinity. Self preservation was paramount for around Training Stations there was a constant flow of aircraft coming and going. Suddenly, I was returned to reality.

"Place your feet on the rudders and take hold of the control column lightly!" commanded "Boy B".

We were not permitted to wear our beautiful, black flying boots like our instructors wore, but black sand shoes (gym. shoes) so that we would have a light touch regardless to the fact our toes might be near freezing.

"Now keep her flying straight ahead with the wings level," ordered the voice from the front cockpit. "Lift your bloody port wing!" roared the Boy B.

Anyone following me must have thought some drunken bod was in control as the Tiger meandered across the cloudless blue sky as one wing then the opposite dropped. Needless to say we were alternately diving and climbing simultaneously creating somewhat of a hazardous situation. While my inane effort was taking place the comments emanating from up front would have made a mule driver blush.

"Taking over!" barked the voice, then we headed for a landing. So ended my first thirty minute flight in a Tiger Moth..

I could see that learning to control an aircraft was going to be somewhat like my learning to ride a bicycle, hair rising at first, and, hopefully improve with practise. Such youthful, and wishful thinking.

Two days later I was to endure the vent of venom that was to say the least, a completely new way of communication that I had never previously experienced. Something inside of me made me resolve not to let the bastard get me down, for to do so was a sure way to get "scrubbed" as a pilot. By the time I had logged 3hours 35 minutes I had started to get the feel of this flying business then occurred a startling good piece of news. The "Boy B" was dropping me (or dumping) and I was to fly with a brand new young Instructor one Pilot Officer Ivan Thomas.

What a transformation in the whole environment both on the ground and in the air. A quiet, encouraging flow of remarks and guidance was a new experience. Climbing turns, diving and the climbing to an ordered height, steep turns, and gliding turns began to be mastered. Quite un-expectedly P/O Thomas announced that we were going to "do" some loops.

"Would you start your dive from 4,000 feet letting the air-speed build up then gently pull the stick right back and when you come over the top of the loop cut the throttle, continue the loop letting the airspeed build up then gradually complete, the loop then level out," came the clear direction.

This most exhilarating experience I had ever had, and when P/O Thomas said that it was a great loop because I had flown it right round, I felt like the proverbial dog with two tails Side-slipping was another fantastic manoeuvre that allowed extra height to be washed off especially when coming into land. Many years later I was to read a book about Sergeant "Ginger" Lacey, who, during aerial fighting in France in 1939-40 during the Battle of Britain, had shot down more German planes than any other pilot in the R.A.F. also used to slide slip a Hurricane fighter.

After 4hours 25 minutes with P/O Thomas the un-thinkable happened. I was down to fly with the "Boy B." A flight for one hour ended with one of my landings going into a wide ground-loop.

"What in the hell did you do that for?" screamed the familiar voice.

I leant forward and spoke into the voice pipe and said. "I thought you had taken over Sir".

An hour later the "Boy" and I were up climbing, turning, stalling and recovering then a couple of landings. After taxiing back after the last landing the "Boy" jumped out of the Tiger and came to the side of my cockpit and said.

"Ok Jubbs, go solo!, complete one circuit and land and bring the aircraft back to me."

He then walked away.

Going Solo

With due caution I moved to the start of the take-off position across wind and went through the cockpit drill, checked for incoming aircraft then turned into wind. Gradually I applied full throttle and the tail lifted more quickly than I had previously experienced and I was soon hurtling across the vast dirt field. With the bumping ceased I was flying keeping down to build up flying speed. Now I climbed straight ahead to 300 feet and did a rate one climbing turn to port. All these thoughts were running through my mind or whether I was mumbling them to myself I'm not sure, but I didn't usually talk to myself. I still kept climbing across wind until another turn to port had me running down wind at 1000 feet. By now I was flying parallel to where I intended to land as it slipped past my wing tip. Another turn to port...throttle off start my glide...last turn to port...DON'T HOLD OFF IN A GLIDING TURN. Came in over the fence at the right height...hold off...stick hard back... I've done it. I've done it I wanted to shout out. After checking for any other aircraft I taxied back to the waiting "Boy". I had, after two Instructors, gone Solo at 9 hours 45 minutes.

Never again was I to fly with the "Boy" It was September 4th, 1943. Daily bouts of air sickness plagued me all through this period. Because it wasn't possible to get my head very far over the edge of the cockpit some of the contents being ejected ended up in the blind flying hood that was folded down some what like a pram in which babies are trundled about. There fore, the first job I had to do after landing was clean out the offending, smelly, yuck. I made a furtive visit to see the Station Medical Officer to see if he had some magic concoction. He was most sympathetic for he suffered the same affliction but had no suggestions to make for he had tried everything so that he could learn to fly. As there was no apparent remedy I decided that for early morning flights all I would eat was some toast. Usually I could then face up to the usual R.A.A.F. lunch. Afternoon trips were usually when there was a great deal of turbulence about so I tended to forego the lunch with much to ragging from the rest of the sprogs. But as usual the cleaning of an aircraft was my lot It was with a certain amount of apprehension that that befell me three days after going solo. This was my first flight under the hood. Pilot Officer Thomas fastened it down after a cheerful, understanding comment.

"Today we'll have a gentle flight of rate one turns so that you can get the feel of instrument flying. A Tiger Moth's consisted of a Turn and Bank instrument, an Altimeter, Air Speed Instrument and a Magnetic Compass. Not many to assist in learning to fly straight and level. Less than 12 hours back I had made my first wobbly flight with the horizon to assist in keeping the wings level.

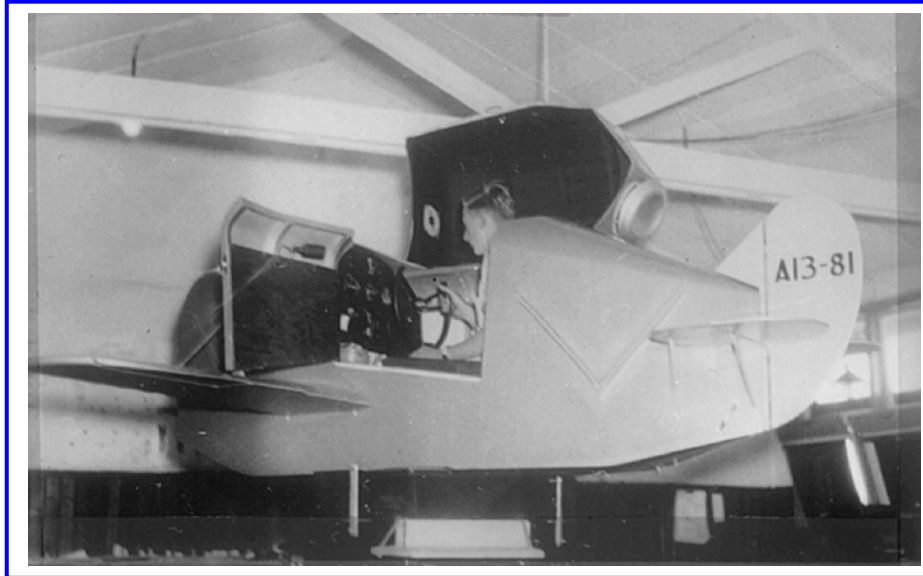
With a deafening roar we charged across the 'drome and within the confines of the enclosed hood all I could see was the instrument panel rattling and shuddering. Suddenly all the racket stopped and P/O Thomas' voice calmly speaking.

"Set your compass to 300 degrees then take over the controls. With the revolving ring of the of the grid compass set and locked I took over. How to watch every thing at once required every bit of concentration as well as reacting to what was being indicated. The calm voice of P/O Thomas was ever encouraging, gradually brought about some degree of limited skill to keep the kite some where near the starting height after a number of gentle dives and climbs. Flying with only a turn and bank instrument and a climb and descent instrument made gentle turns in both directions a demanding exercise. After 30 minutes I was released from my enclosed cocoon like existence into brilliant sunshine.

"Take her into land," came the voice from the front cockpit. Fortunately I could see the railway line to the south and the salt lakes that lay just outside the perimeter of Cunderdin Aerodrome. Joined the circuit on the down wind leg and went into land. After taxiing back to the area where other sprogs were awaiting their turn to fly.

A parting comment came from the "Boss". "You did very well Jubbs!" as I clambered out of the cockpit encumbered with the bulky flying suit and seat type parachute and waddled off. Dropped the chute by hitting the large central quick-release button and collapsed flat out on the ground completely exhausted. The complete concentration of my first instrument flight had zapped me both mentally and physically. Suddenly I sat up right with a sudden surge of exhilaration there had been no air-sickness!! Was this the turning point I wondered? Perhaps if I had been sick in the enclosed cockpit may be I would have been scrubbed and sent for training in some ground occupation. Two days later commenced a regular pattern of check flight for 15 minutes with my instructor then sent solo to practice "circuits and bumps", this made four flights that day. Grand total of 12.45 hours!! Training continued with every day something new being introduced. Because of the ever present possibility of engine failure we practised forced landing procedures in every conceivable situation. After take off, this was simulated, with the Instructor cutting the throttle. Land directly ahead into some suitable paddock (field) but in no circumstance try to turn around and head for the aerodrome. This was drummed into us. From different heights the throttle would be cut and it was up to me to get the Tiger into a safe landing. Some times the Instructor would leave pushing on the throttle until we were coming in over the fence which then indicated to climb away

Spinning was always practised and the recovery perfected then one day as I was being entombed under the hood P/O Thomas announced that to day we would do spins. These were duly carried out after I had reached the safe height. Fortunately no air sickness occurred so training continued. A Flight Simulator called a Link Trainer (named after the American who invented it) was the next new step in mastering this flying business. On entering a special building there before me sat this squat little, make believe aeroplane. Seated at an adjacent large table was Sergeant Crosby, who set about introducing me to this new environment. On his table was a set of flying instruments linked directly to those in the Link Trainer so that he could monitor what ever I did. Communication was carried on via a set of headphones and microphone. Incidentally, there was no radio communication between Flying Control in the Control Tower and aircraft at Cunderdin, No.9 Elementary Flying Training School in 1943. On the table was a triangular shaped metal object that was supported by small wheels and had a number of trailing cables. This mysterious object would track across a glass topped table (over a map of the district) and make a record of where I went with a narrow red line. After entering the Link Trainer a large hood was brought down completely entombing me. From now on I was to follow the direction from Sgt. Crosby. The Link had a complete set of flying instruments including those found on all modern aircraft. An Artificial Horizon sat right in front and gyro-compass enhanced the ability for blind flying. For the remainder of my service life I would use every opportunity to fly in a Link Trainer to enhance my ability for blind flying and to develop skills in accurately flying Beam Approach. My total flying hours now amounted to 8.10 hours solo and 15.25 hours dual, and four weeks since commencing Flight Training. My introductory 30 minutes within the Link was followed by a 60 minute session the following day and continued throughout the Elementary Flying Training Course. Ground School continued every day either in morning sessions or the alternative afternoon. Map reading skills needed plenty of concentrated effort along with the pre-flight planning and plotting. A special flight computer instrument had to be mastered so that wind drift, ground speed, and course to fly could be calculated. In the air this gadget was tied to your right upper leg so that information could be entered and calculations attempted! A folded map with tracks and turning points clearly pencilled in was folded in a special way so that it could be gradually unfolded to reveal the country ahead.



The Link Trainer was used extensively in United States, England, Canada and New Zealand to teach elementary instrument flying while at a later stage high precision instrument flying as an introduction to Blind Flying for Beam landings. All Pilots, especially for night bombing raids, flew confidently through many hazardous types of weather for many, many hours. Currently, Simulators are used by all Pilots in training.



By permission of Alston of "The West Australian"

No way could the full map be opened up because I would be sitting in an open cockpit with a considerable slip stream hurtling passed only a few inches away which would certainly whisk it away. In a Tiger Moth, with the usual turbulence operating, took a great deal of effort to keep the aircraft flying straight and level on a particular compass heading. A compass is often thought to be a passive, ever assisting aide to heading in a particular direction. In reality it appeared to have a mind of its own for when turning through a north or South Pole direction it would hurry or lag so that you had to come out of your turn allowing for the lag then wait for the compass to settle!!! When turning through an east or west heading a different set of idiosyncrasies seemed to prevail. To compound the compass problem I would have to cater for the Compass Deviation that was shown on a small card next to the compass bowl. Each aircraft effected its own compass so that it didnot accurately show the correct heading so a certain number of degrees had to be added or subtracted depending upon the course. Little sayings had to memorize to help apply the correction. "compass deviation west magnetic Best". I also might add, required Variation (which was shown on all charts as so many degrees east or west) to be allowed for in all plotting. With the Tiger being subject to wind buffeting and turbulence it was constantly moving about in all directions while the Sprog Pilot endeavoured to fly, map read, watch the flying instruments, the engine revolutions, fuel supply, write details on a Log by changing hands to hold the "joy stick" brought about more new skills to be acquired. My first dual cross country with P/O Thomas took 1 hour and 30 minutes with just over 18 hours dual instruction recorded in my Pilot Log Book. Apart from my scribble record in the flight log I duly found my way around the turning points and returned to Cunderdin. With no pre-warning I found that I had to make a Progress Test with my Flight Commander, F/lt. R. Cohen. Every thing appeared to go quite well as there were only a few positive suggestions. While suffering from "my affliction!" I came under the bragging of another Sprog who took fiendish pleasure in bragging to me, on every opportunity, as to how he was doing aerobatics and finding it so easy. My relief came about when he suddenly disappeared after being "scrubbed" I never learnt what had caused this action to be taken. Whoever planned the progression of things to learn and skills to acquire under the Empire Air Training Scheme had certainly got it right. My next major step was to graduate to Night Flying with only 21 hours dual and 15.35 hours solo to my credit. At this Elementary Flying School there was no radio communication between aircraft and Flying Control No flood lights were used for night flying. A primitive kerosene lamp, shaped like a garden watering can, with a wick shoved into the pouring spout was lit and gave off a smouldering feeble flame that just managed to illuminate a small circle of the ground. A number of these "lights" were set out in the form of a "T". All that could be seen from the air was this line of faint light that told us where Mother Earth was because you certainly could not see it. Link Training flying had certainly given me the extra practice in blind flying but to-night there would not be an artificial horizon, nor a gyro compass with me in the Tiger. No flying commenced until it was quite dark because it was explained that in partial or semi-darkness was a dangerous time for night landings. Be that true P/O Thomas, with me in tow in the rear cockpit, made a take off and circuit. It was extremely important to accurately fly a rectangular circuit at specified heights as was done during day circuits. On the down wind leg it was necessary to fly parallel to the flight path so we kept it just beyond the port wing tip. My take off appeared to be normal but as I climbed away I was suddenly conscious of the complete blackness ahead and the difficulty to use the horizon to orientate the wings. A glance to the turn and bank confirmed that I was neither skidding nor slipping in while the altimeter glowed in the darkness indicating that the first turn to port height had been reached. Continuing to climb cross wind until another turn to port had me running down wind at 1000 feet. Now came the really important decision as to when to make my cross wind leg loosing height until a final turn to line up with the flight path at the usual 300 feet. As you approach the ground the flight path lights start to loose the apparent spacing between each. From here in it seemed the daily circuits and bumps some how had ingrained into me the reactions to make as to landing. After flaring out and then feeling the aircraft begin to sink as flying speed dropped having

the "stick" right back usually brought off a reasonable landing. Three hours dual saw me go solo for 40 minutes night flying.

The second dual Cross Country again with the "Boss" took 1 hour 50 minutes without getting lost. In this farming region there were no prominent land marks. Aerobatics with Stall Turns, Slow Rolls, spins were now practised under the guidance of my Instructor, then I was sent off solo to repeat the same manoeuvres. About this time came the introduction to low flying in a special area and only with an Instructor. Instant "scrubbing" to any sprog found low flying. There is no doubt that low flying is an exhilarating experience but a very dangerous occupation for us novice flyers. A Test Flight with F/O Howling was a prelude to my final assessment by the Flight Commander in five days time. My 40 minutes demonstrating what I had learnt appeared to be acceptable. Preparations had been completed when I took off for my Solo Cross Country, which would necessitate landing in a paddock near the small country town of Narrogin. I do not recollect if there was a designated air field. Map reading in the wheat and sheep growing areas of Western Australia was not hampered with an abundance of railway lines, large rivers, prominent mountains and a profusion of large towns and cities. In due time I arrived over the Narrogin and confirmed I had the right paddock, (there was a wind-sock indicating a light breeze) completed a circuit and made my approach. As I lined up for landing I was suddenly aware that I was actually landing on land that was not flat, but gradually rising on a sloping hillside. Taxied to a designated area and stopped the engine and clambered out. What a reception it was to welcomed us sprog pilots. The **Australian Country Women's Association Group** was out in force with tables of food and goodies spread out on sagging trestle tables. It appeared as if half the township was there plus all the youngsters from the local school. You would have thought we were one of the early aviation pioneers just arriving from England. Country Women are renowned for their friendliness and generosity especially when it came to providing lunches and afternoon teas. Years later I was to buy a Country Women's Cook Book as a present for my Wife! Under the watchful eyes of all present I took off and a quick look sideways saw a host of waving hands and tea towels. Now came the important part. I had to find my way back to Cunderdin after the heady reception we had received. With the east/west railway line ahead gave a definite fix for a course correction for the airdrome yet my E.T.A. (estimated time of arrival) was not what I had calculated. A circuit then the final approach just over the fence but the Tiger continued to float, and float with the hangers fast approaching. Finally the kite stalled and landed but kept rolling onwards until it finally stopped just short of the pocket handkerchief piece of green grass at the bottom of the Control Tower. It was the first occasion I had ever landed in what was practically no wind. For that misdemeanour I had to polish the Flight Commanders long black flying boots. The day's outing was timed at 3 hours flying time by far the longest time I had spent in the air but the sheer pleasure I experienced was unbounded. That night I was asleep before I hit the pillow. Now arrived the day for my final assessment as to whether I would advance or depart the pilot course.

"Take off and climb to 4000 feet," came FLTLT Cohen's voice through the headphones. Weeks of conditioning to all procedures and flying techniques had developed automatic reactions that allowed concentration to what was now requested. It seemed that the whole gamut of flying skills had to be performed and executed. After 45 minutes we arrived back at the flight line where my place was taken by another worried Sprog.

My final flight with P/O Thomas followed and for 45 minutes I repeated my previous trip with the Flight Commander. Often I have regretted not thanking P/O Thomas for his patience and understanding for teaching me all the skills that I had acquired. As a youth of 18 years those qualities of maturity had not as yet developed, plus I was probably so highly elated at having reached this far.

On October 13th 1943 (never gave the date one thought) I spent 1hour 30 minutes cavorting about the sky steep turning around cumulus clouds and dashing down valleys between them. The skies above Cunderdin were usually clear of fine weather clouds. It was sheer enjoyment for it seemed like light-years ago that as a callow youth I had hoped to do what I was now doing. Flying Tiger Moths had commenced on the 26 August 1943.

No. 4 Service Flying Training School, Geraldton.

Western Australia

LA.C. Leslie R. Jubbs 436853



**As an 18 year old,
proceeded to 4.SFTS
1943**

There was some degree of excitement within me as I staggered onto the Perth Railway Station lugging my two heavy service kit bags. All the flying kit, in one, would never be used by me again for where I was now going it would be becoming hot as summer approached. Geraldton was some four hundred km to the north and surrounded by wheat and sheep properties. The crowded platform was the gathering place for families saying goodbye as if we were about to go over-seas. Some of my age were making the most of the situation with girl friends. It was the 23 October 1943 and we had just completed our Elementary Flying Training School flying Tiger Moths at RAAF Station Cunderdin.

With a blast of a whistle from the guard we hustled into the cramped confines of a small carriage of a train owned by the Geraldton Railway Company. Later it would be taken over by the Western Australian Railways.

Our journey was so slow moving that often an enthusiastic sprog would alight from the moving carriage and walk along side much to the amusement of onlookers. At Gin Gin a huge contingent of Army personnel left the train to take up residence for further training. Outside each compartment a water bag was suspended to catch the flow of air, which cooled the contents. Naturally this was our supply of drinking water. This was a common form of cooling water so a water bag would be often found in many homes. In country schools water bags were provided by the Education Department because the only water available was that which fell on the roof of the school during the winter rains and was caught in large, circular, corrugated iron tanks

All day we slowly wended our way northwards until evening approached. It was quite obvious that sleeping in this crowded carriage, which consisted of one long seat faced by a shorter one was going to be a problem. We had a small washroom but no outside passage- way to allow access to other compartments. Someone with past experience on troop trains explained a solution to allow some degree of stretching out for the long night ahead. To make it legal all

new positions for sleeping were written on slips of paper then each drew their piece from a cap. The loose seat cushions were placed on the floor for three bodies, the two luggage racks catered for two, and the actual seats looked after the needs of two. Much to the surprise of my fellow travellers I produced a blanket and two pieces of rope and made a hammock stretched across the carriage and there spent the night swaying to the movement of the rocking train. Those who had to clamber up into the luggage rack, and not tumble out deserved some recognition for their fortitude, but didn't.

Next morning our puffing steam engine passed through the small coastal town of Dongara, which also provided shelter for the cray fishing boats (now called rock lobster). What amazed me was to see the wheat and oat crops growing in small paddocks between the railway line and the Indian Ocean.



Crops of ripening wheat were growing between the railway line and the sand hills.



Along these flats were many old buildings from another age, with many now restored.



Because of the very strong winds from the ocean many of the original trees grow horizontal.



A road-side sign now describes the River Gums in this region and the reason for this growth.

I know of no other place in Western Australia where this occurs nor have I ever seen so many old stone buildings left crumbling in disrepair yet testimony to the early pioneer farming communities. Further along we passed similar evidence at Greenough where a thriving community had once existed.

"Anson!" someone suddenly yelled, pointing from the advantage of a window seat. Seven heads crammed the narrow windows of our compartment. An Avro Anson was taking

off from the Satellite Aerodrome at **Georgina**. To most all of us this was our first glimpse of the aircraft on which we were to continue our flying training.

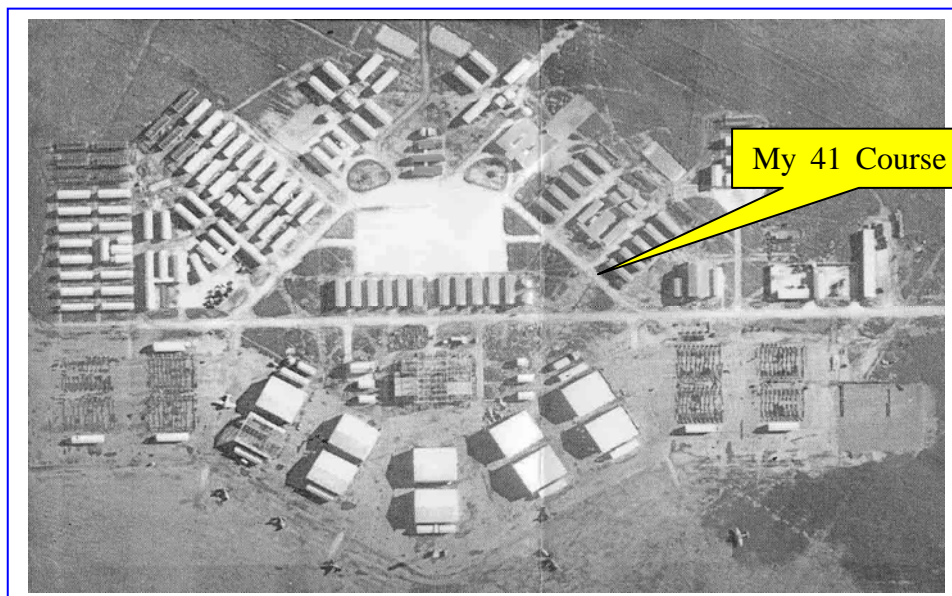
In 1939 the "Avro Anson" was Australia's first line of defence. For the R.A.A.F., the Anson was the first monoplane aircraft they had with an enclosed gun turret, a retractable undercarriage, and was initially known as a three seat Coastal Reconnaissance aircraft. Although now used as a twin-engine training aircraft under the Empire Air Training Scheme it was still extensively being used in a multitude of rolls both here and overseas.

Not long afterwards we finally arrived in the town and port of Geraldton after a 22 hour train trip for the 300 mile trip. Certainly not one of speediest of rail journeys. Heading eastwards from Geraldton our R.A.A.F. bus momentarily slowed down when passing the cemetery where the day before a burial was carried out for crew and Ground Staff passengers, who had crashed on take off and all killed.



Up until the out break of WW2 the Avro Anson was Australia's front line defence aircraft. It formed the backbone of multiengine flying training in the Empire Air Training Scheme. (EATS). Also used extensively for communications.

As we passed through the Main Entrance of the R.A.A.F. Base I was overawed at the apparent size of our new "home" for the next 4 months. A long line of huge hangers in front of which were a great number of Avro Ansons all facing a wide expanse of grass field all dried brown by the sun. This was the original aerodrome but we were never to use it. Students and Instructors had to taxi quite a long way to reach our take off and landing area, which looked as if it was a reclaimed farming property. Enormous clouds of brown dust were stirred up after each air craft took off. This must have been wind erosion of the highest magnitude.



This aerial shows in 1940, that No. 4 SFTS was still being built.

."All out!" barked a Sergeant Drill Instructor, who would be our "tormentor" for our stay at Service Flying Training School. Fifty one of my fellow Course Members assembled in the usual rows of threes and awaited the out come of a discussion taking place between two Drill Instructors.

"When you hear your name called acknowledge and fall in over there," ordered one Instructor. Eventually I joined a group which totalled 28. Everything done in the Air force was always done alphabetically. This exasperating procedure occurred hundreds of times and must have been a great nuisance to those whose names were at the end of the alphabet.

"Collect your kit bags and select your beds in this hut," came the next order. The card-playing (poker exponents) congregated at one end while us lesser mortals drifted to the opposite. I am forever thankful this occurred for the poker players tended to play until way past lights out. They were the older members of our group and they played for months on a regular basis. Who were the real winners I have no idea.



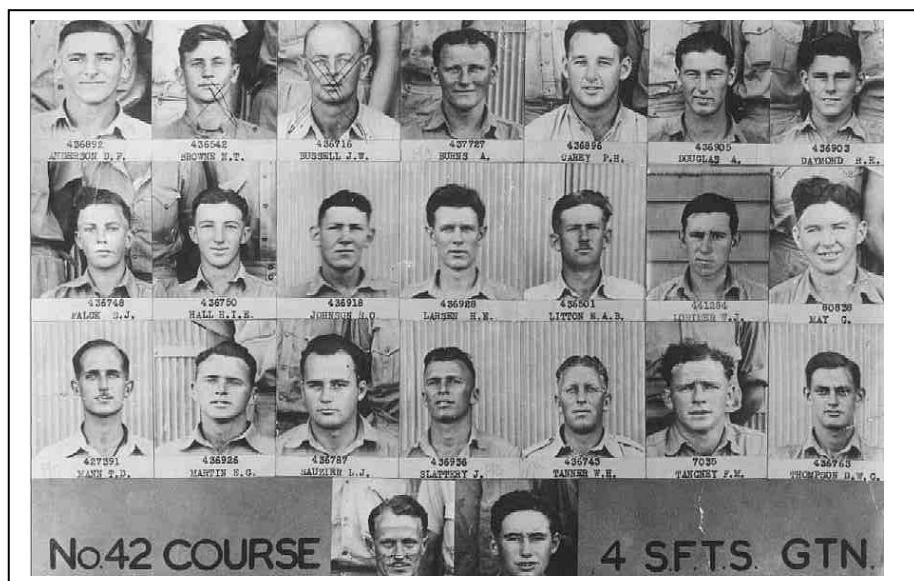
An example of the usual RAAF war time Huts occupied by both men and women. Each furnished with a steel, fold up bed, a straw filled bag (palliasse), a pillow (no pillow case) and a number of grey blankets. A steel-locker for storage of uniforms was provided for each Trainee.

The day after our arrival it was announced that 41 Course was to be divided into two with one group being delayed a month before recommencing training. The new Group to be known as **No.42 Course**. Fortunately the division made the day before to place us in our living quarters ("Huts") was the Course division so I was fortunate to be in 41 Course and to commence training immediately. Over the following three weeks, Ground School introduced us to a whole range of new subjects and a continuation and development of others started at Cunderdin. Skill in Morse was essential because we had to be able to receive 12 words per minute in code (plain language could lead to guessing) along with Visual signals using an Aldis Signal Lamp at 4 or 5 W.P.M. After a Morse session I often stayed behind to get extra practice and by the end of the course I could take 20 w.p.m.

No.41 Course was now divided into two.



My Course would immediately commence the Ground School segment of our multiengine Pilot Training Course. Two members are missing.



The other half of our original Course.

From now on the only opportunity to ever meet up with the other of our original Course was during meal times and weekends. They were given a multitude of tasks, like filling in rabbit warrens and other menial jobs just to waste time until their Ground School could commence. This was the start of the RAAF reducing Air Crew Graduations.

Navigation plotting exercises became more complex with running fixes using hand bearing compasses, wind speed and direction to be found using a bomb-sight ("cocked-hat") and keeping a Navigation Log. Our training also included Cross Country trips under the supervision of our Flying Instructor as well as solo trips but more importantly as a Navigator. To accomplish the latter each student pilot was paired with a "Crash Mate"(student pilot). Mine was Don Hollamby and we also shared the same hut together with the same Flying Instructors. On high level and low level bombing exercises and photographic flights we flew with Crash Mates. We both developed faith in the others ability and on no occasion do I ever recall being nervous with Don.

Many new concepts had to be learnt and understood about the engines, airframes, emergency procedures relevant to the Avro Anson long before we were even allowed to approach one. Sight seeing was not allowed on a **R.A.A.F. Station** so we dared not go anywhere near a hangar or aircraft. To move about it was necessary to march and if two or more were going together then one had to be in charge and march the others. It was taboo to cut across the parade ground to shorten the distance between two points. On my first outing to the Station Canteen (after the evening meal) with three other sprogs we had to pass the Sergeants' Mess as well as the Officers' Mess. In a hushed voice someone ventured to comment.

"Wonder which Mess we will end up in when we get our Wings?"

Mostly all pilots graduated as Sergeants, but a few received Commissions as Pilot Officers. Unlike American Cadet Pilots, who wore uniforms during training, we wore dark blue overalls and a matching beret and wore heavy black boots. As we all had to do our own laundry some trainees endeavoured to boil out some of the dark blue dye to create the illusion that they had been in the Air Force for some time. Many of the Ground Staff had very light blue overalls.

Now being the summer time uniform period, khaki shorts and shirts were worn with long khaki socks. During Saturday visits to Geraldton we could wear the summer long khaki trousers and tunic, which had to be starched and ironed by ourselves. Washing clothes for many was a new experience but we had quickly learnt the first week we entered the Service. A few old hands set up a laundry service (at a price) and did a roaring trade.

Modesty was not allowed for in the showers there were no doors so when sprogs were waiting their turn to get to the water you were expected to get out and dry yourself outside the shower. All sorts of banter was carried on regarding ones endowments. After a day of running between lectures, physical training, assault course torture, basket-ball all in the dry heat of Geraldton, the showers were a welcome relief.

Sprog's Mess (Pilot Trainees) was situated in the centre of all our huts, for at any one time there were four courses in training. At Initial Training School the Senior Course had certain privileges like going into meals first and going on leave first. We lined up and dropped onto any plate proffered, a heap of their responsibility ... a doh of potato etc. Laden with your plates of other "goodies" you made your way to the nearest trestle table usually in company of one of your

course or particular mate. Set out on each table was mathematically calculated lumps of butter, cheese, jam and slices of white bread (no wholemeal for discerning customers).

We soon learnt to devour, jam and cheese on one of your two slices of bread. During each meal-time we had a visit from the Duty Officer, who announced:

"Any complaints?"

The only time that a complaint lodged by a sprog and endorsed by the whole mess (dining hall) was because every day we were given "bully beef" served in a number of different ways yet we were in the metropolitan area of Perth. This incident occurred at Clontarf, our I.T.S. (Initial Training School). On that occasion an inquiry was held and resulted in charges being laid for there had been some graft and collusion between the Army Supply Column and the Head Cook.

A rumour was circulated around the township of Geraldton during the early days, probably by Ground Staff, that Air Force personnel wearing a white cloth insert in their Forage Hat should be avoided because of venereal disease.

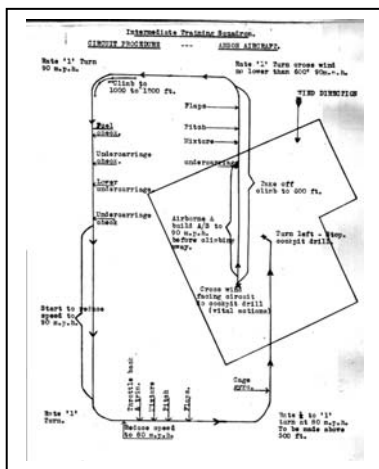
No doubt that this was aimed at the fairer -sex of the community but the ruse seemed to have failed for none of the Trainee Pilots I knew ever found any evidence of discrimination. All Air Crew Trainees had to wear this distinguishing insert but we were never told of its origins.

Some three weeks after our arrival we were finally ushered into the C. Flight of the **INTERMEDIATE TRAINING SQUADRON** (I.T.S.) to hear the words of wisdom from our Flight Commander.

"You all realize that the Anson is only held together by glue and copper nails?" confided the godly figure. A few other pearls of wisdom were scattered before being shown our section then handed three plasticised cards.

"Memorize and get to know the whereabouts of all items listed on the card showing **"Vital Actions"**, commanded the Flight Commander.

"Also be familiar with the **"Circuit Procedure"** card and the card listing the **"Sequence Of Instruction"**, because your life will depend upon it!"



INTERMEDIATE TRAINING SQUADRON				
VITAL ACTIONS				
BEFORE TAKE OFF				
T. TRIM Elevators & rudders	M. Mixture Control Take-off position. Tighten friction nut.	F. FINECH Adjust to fine.	FUEL Select tanks. Check contents. Check fuel pressure gauges. Check interconnecting cocks.	FLAPS Up Check.
AFTER TAKE OFF				
Undercarriage up	M. Mixture control Rich at safe height.	F. Select climbing boost & synchronise. Pitch to coarse.	FLAPS UP Check.	
BEFORE LANDING				
FUEL Check contents of all tanks. Check fuel pressure gauges.	U. Check audible warning Lower undercarriage. Check indicators Check audible warning. nut.	M. Mixture control in take-off position. Slacken off friction	F. Pitch to fully fine.	FLAPS. Select and lower.
AFTER LANDING				
M. Mixture control in rich position.	FLAPS Raise flaps.			

Un- be- known to others of my Flight I went and spoke to a Flight Sergeant in the nearby hanger and asked if I could sit in the cockpit and get to know the layout.

"Come and I'll show you around," came the reply from the obliging Flight. This would not be my last friendly assistance I would get from a member of the Ground Crew in my entire time in the Service.

On the 18th November renewed my association with the Link Trainer under the guidance of Warrant Officer Roach (first time I had been associated with a W.O.)

It was in November my "pay" suddenly sky rocked from 60 cents per day, for an AC2 (the lowest rank in the RAAF) to 106 cents per day as a LAC (Leading Air Craftsman). The rank badge was a small metal propeller worn on your sleeve.



At last, my first flight in a multi-engine aircraft Avro Anson No.2278 with Flying Officer Crooks. I was now wearing a special parachute harness but without the 'chute pack. The pack had to be carried aboard and stowed behind my cockpit seat. Escape procedure was explained in minute detail. After adjusting the lap safety harness F/O Crooks explained the cockpit layout then commenced the pre-flight start up procedure. The first roar of the port engine was deafening and by the time the starboard engine was running the noise was un-believable. How anyone could talk above it or be able to hear was beyond comprehension. Taxying past parked aircraft my Instructor commenced his "patter" (it was laid out in a procedure booklet that all Instructors had to follow, so I was recently informed) The distance we had to go gave me a view of this part of the Base that I had never seen before. Finally we stopped at a spot where a Ground Staff, dressed in overalls, stood waiting.

"Got to get some air," F/O Crooks explained. I thought he must have been pulling my leg but that was quickly dispelled when I spotted an air hose in the hand of the erk (UK expression for Ground Staff) advancing towards the nose of the aircraft. Anywhere else and he would have been carved up by those circling propellers.

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INSTRUCTORS' HANDBOOK
of
Advanced
Flying Training

"Watch that air pressure gauge and make a note of the final pressure," shouted the Instructor. The brakes were operated by a hand-brake and using the rudder pedals you could assist turning. We soon learnt that

you had to use the brakes sparingly for the air to operate them came from a high-pressure tank in the aircraft, which, could only be replenished from the external source.

"Ok Jubbs tell me the **"Vital Actions,"** was the next command when we reached an angled position across wind "Trim elevators & rudder," I shouted back. I was then shown what to do.

"Mixture control to take of position ... tighten friction nut"

"Pitch to fine"

"Fuel ... select tanks ... check contents ... check fuel pressure gauges ... check interconnecting cocks"

"Flap up ... check" and after each "Vital Action" I was shown what to do by F/O Crooks.

After the engines were run up and tested we turned into wind, the throttles fully advanced and we roared across the wide grass field. Everything seemed to be rattling and vibrating then suddenly it all stopped ... we were airborne flying just off the ground while the airspeed built up.

"After take-off Vital Actions," the next command.

I rattled off these only to be informed that the under- carriage would not be raised because, although it was retractable, it had to be done manually. I was soon to learn just how many turns it took to raise it, (160) then later, the same number to lower and lock down the wheels. All the time F/O. Crooks continued his explanation of what he was doing. At 600 feet a gentle rate one turn was made to port while still climbing. At 1000 feet turned 90 degrees to port, which had us on a reciprocal course to take off. How strange it was to see the whole R.A.A.F. Base passing by off our Port wing tip. We continued on out of the circuit area to where I tried the controls. This entailed climbing, gliding and stalling, level flight with full power then turning both port and starboard. It was a fantastic feeling handling the controls of a twin- engine aircraft. Then came a demonstration of what was to become second nature in handling a twin ... one of the throttles was pulled back slightly causing a strange pulsating and distracting noise from the engines. Advancing the throttle again so that both engines were synchronized and giving a steady tone rectified this.

My first introduction to the Anson soon ended after sprouting my Vital Actions before landing and being shown what was carried out. From now on we referred to these checks as **"Cockpit Drills"** for we were to be reminded of their importance by stories and anecdotes of what had happened to dead pilots who failed to do these drills.



We young sprog pilots didnot realize just how much energy was used in each succeeding flight but each night we collapsed into bed and slept soundly. Each morning a Drill Instructor stamped through the hut bellowing.

"Come on, get up, rise and shine!"

The usual hustle followed. Shaving off my fair facial fluff ... not even whiskers had appeared on my boyish countenance after six months of this daily ritual. Breakfast followed then folding the blankets in the prescribed R.A.A.F. fashion, the straw palliasse into an "s" shape fold and the one luxury a pillow (no pillow-slip supplied) decorously perched on top. No sheets were supplied so even in the developing hot

nights you either slept on top of the regulation number of blankets or perhaps one over you. There was no thought of molly-codding us with sheets and pillow slip..

Each Saturday morning was partly spent "doing" our own personal washing of our clothes using a copper. This was a large tub made of copper, which was filled with water and heated using wood. Clothes and soap then added and brought to the boil so as to wash out the grime. After rinsing and wringing, clothes quickly dried in the hot sun. Ironing of uniforms and shirts was a skill many of us had quickly acquired.

As soon as possible on Saturday we boarded a bus and headed for the nearby town of Geraldton that always seemed to have an abundance of service personnel. There were always a large number of soldiers and Ground Staff (R.A.A.F.) as well as Pilot Trainees exploring the amenities. Local country "pubs" were always a popular place but us 18 year olds headed for the milk bars. Fruit salad and ice-cream or rockmelon and ice-cream became a weekly delight.

Every Saturday night the Yacht Club held a dance, which also included a supper in the admission price. Dances in Australian towns invariably comprised of 50/50 old time, and modern so as to cater for all tastes. A group of us always had a great time flirting with the local girls as well as the W.A.A.A.F. girls, who often changed from their uniforms into dresses for the occasion.

Maybe some of the more adventurous types had girl friends but most of us returned to the Base on the last crowded bus. On Sundays, Church Parades were held for the more devout while others lounged about before heading back to Geraldton for a swim.

Six more flights, then, with F/O Hall, doing more take off and landings giving me a **total of 5 hours 55 minutes dual instruction.** Suddenly F/O Hall informed me.

"Well, Jubbs, go and do 15 minutes of **"circuits and bumps then report back to me."**

Here I was 18 years old, without even a license to drive a car being told to fly a twin engine aircraft that was still being used all over the world in many combat areas. I was confident, yet readily aware that great care was needed in this flying business. Take off was usually in a south-west direction for the winds in that region invariably came in from the ocean. Evidence of the strength of these winds and their persistence can be seen in the way the trees grew, especially near the coast. When we were approaching Geraldton on the train I was mystified as to why all the trees were permanently bent over and growing horizontally.

As there were no radio flying control operating at this very busy Training Base it was essential to doubly check for incoming aircraft before turning into wind and taking off. I cannot remember if I completed two circuits, but with all the taxing to and fro from the Flight Office and after landing it was probably only one.

Next day after 20 minutes dual with F/O Hall I was sent off solo to do **"circuits and bumps" for 50 glorious minutes. It was December 2, 1943.**

On return to the Flight Office Flight/Sergeant Martinovich took me for a short check flight then sent me off solo for another 45 minutes by myself. No wonder I slept soundly that night for I had 35 minutes dual followed by one hour 35 minutes solo that day. Two days later F/O McDaniel introduced me to Low Flying in an "Aggy" (Anson). I suspect that low flying for instructors, was an outlet for their frustration at having been assigned to that occupation.

What an exhilarating session it was. Hurling along, so very close to the ground that we had to lift up to clear the low fences surrounding paddocks. Kangaroos were startled up and

tried to flee from us as we thundered overhead. Flying in this situation gave me no opportunity to observe what the Instructor was doing or how near his hands were away from the control column. With a Sprog pilot in control his life was in the balance for a split second lapse of concentration could end in disaster

"Climb to 2000feet," brought me back to reality. "Now we'll do some Instrument Flying." What a contrast in flying techniques, but the session lasted 2 hours. My time in the Link Trainer certainly assisted me in this first session. The "Aggy" was continually moving about in the normal turbulence that was always experienced in this hot region. Setting the Gyro in relation to the Grid Compass was some thing that we learnt to do frequently because course setting and then flying a particular heading was a skill we had to quickly acquire. Invariably an Instructor would give a course, which necessitated rotating the upper ring then clamping in position so that you could always see what the course should be. What the "Boss" was really wanting to assess was the ability to turn the correct way for it was possible to turn the "long way".

Flying a compass course was more difficult than most would realize. On some headings the compass would lag while on other headings it would accelerate. The compass needle in a Grid Compass had to be kept parallel between to engraved lines on top of the glass cover. The Gyro Compass made flying a course more accurate for it stopped the tendency to chase the compass needle.

Each day brought new flying skills to be mastered. Steep turns to Port could easily end up in a diving spiral or a climbing spiral. Therefore, in a steep turn, the nose of the aircraft had to be held in a certain relationship to the horizon by use of the rudder pedals. After a while some semblance of competence was attained.

"Now try a steep turn to Starboard," came the next command from F/O Mc Daniel.

What a shock this was. All the orientation of nose to horizon was now quite different in this opposite turn. By the end of the session I had grasped some degree of competence in being able to change from one direction to the opposite in a steep turn. Climbing turns was a progression that was also introduced at this point. What a lot of new things had to be quickly mastered. To cap off this hour of dual was to carry out forced landings. It was constantly drummed into us to always be observant of the terrain over which we were flying for at any time it may be necessary to put down. Having selected a suitable landing spot you had to quickly assess the wind direction so that an approach and landing could be attempted. Usually the Instructor would see how your attempt was progressing then as you came in over the fence he commanded "**power on**" and climb away on using take off procedures. Now having been introduced to all these new skills I returned the instructor to the Flight Hut and then spent another hour practising circuits and bumps using gliding approach. I could see that this would next lead to forced landings with gliding approaches.

Sure enough the next day while flying with F/O Mc Daniel and having just completed a series of steep turns in both directions he cut both throttles.

"Ok Jubbs, a forced landing!" We were at 4,000 feet and east of the Base.

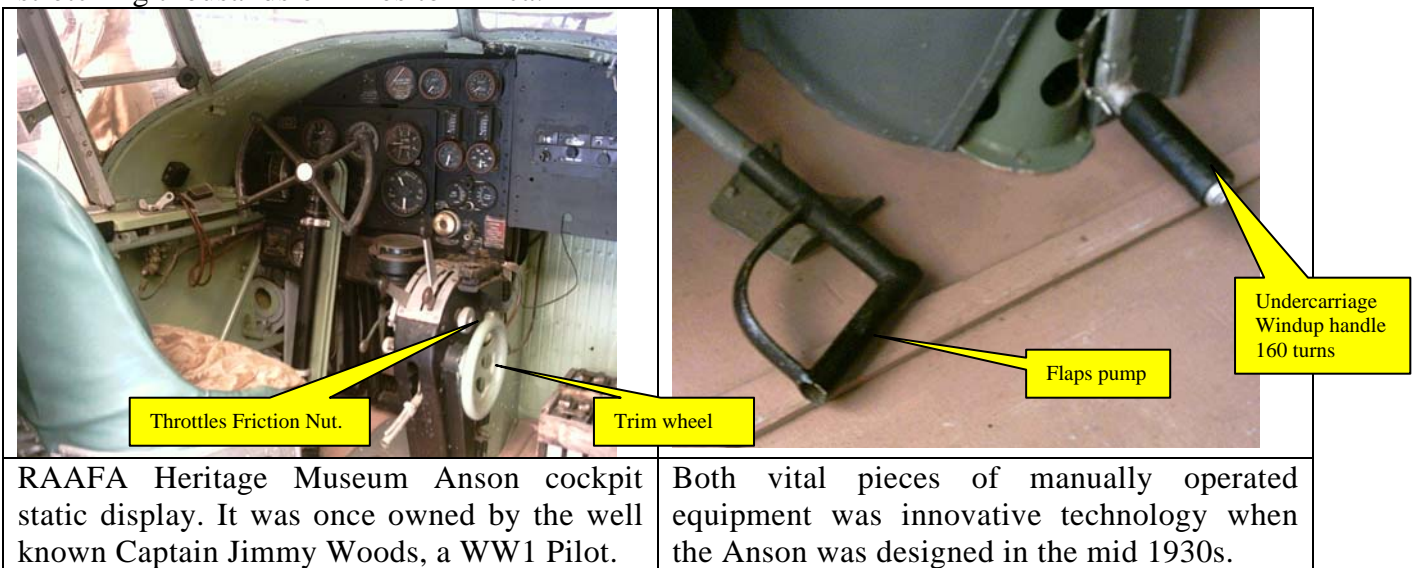
Everything appeared to have been done to his satisfaction so after "power on" and reaching a 1000 feet I was introduced to a Precautionary Landing procedure. Something new each day appears to be the norm. After his demonstration it was my turn. I found the precautionary procedure to be an extremely accurate way to land on a given spot. It was a powered approach with the aircraft in a three point landing attitude, and the height regulated by the throttles. How glad I was to master this technique for during my Wings Test the Chief Flying Instructor pointed out a brown patch on the aerodrome and directed that I land on it using a Precautionary approach. On that day the wind was coming from the east for the only time during my time at Geraldton. It was strange to be completing a circuit over the Training Base.

Each day usually started with a Dual Flight then I would be sent Solo with specific techniques to practice. Suddenly, one day I was scheduled to fly with a new Instructor, F/O Hall for a Progress Test. This lasted one hour and by now I had amassed the grand total of:

12.45 hours Dual and 6.30 Solo.

A Cross Country with P/O Martinovich was set up for the 14th December, which necessitated flight planning and looking at the photographs of our turning points. These were usually "**home steads**" of sheep stations in very remote areas north east of Geraldton. No well defined rivers, mountains or towns for map reading but only "tiger country" a desolate, dry low scrub region. After a two-hour flight we duly arrived back over the Geraldton Base

Two days later saw me on a **2.50 hour Solo Cross Country**. If any one should get lost inland you knew that if you headed west you would arrive over the coast with the Indian Ocean stretching thousands of miles to Africa.



Fortunately there was a huge, glistening white sand hill on the coast that could be seen from 50 miles away if you were high enough. I always looked for this familiar land-mark for it was a comforting feature. On these cross-country trips the undercarriage had to be manually raised and lowered with the 160 turns it took. What a blessing it would be when I would have an aircraft with hydraulically operated undercarriage.

Who ever designed our course didnt leave any spare time for two days later I made my first Low Level Cross Country flight with F/Sgt. Murray. We were soon hurtling across the farming areas south of the Base flying between trees scraping over fences and startling grazing sheep. Well I remember turning westwards following the twisting **Irwin River** that flowed into the sea at Dongara. A steep turn to starboard took us northwards hugging the coast



Low level down the Irwin River was exhilarating and knowing as I departed the river entrance I would steep turn right and head



North along the coast until I reached the Greenough River entrance for there I had to turn eastwards & head for the airfield.

"Get lower!" came the first order in the 2.50 hour flight.

I dropped to what appeared to be inches lower so that we just skimming the surface of the sparkling, blue sea. Fortunately I spotted a small anchored yacht ahead but with no mainsail hoisted. A slight backward pressure on the stick took me over then back down again to resume this breath taking flight.

"Do a climbing turn to 045 degrees and head for home," came the next command. At a 1000feet I joined the circuit, checked for other aircraft, landed, and taxied back to the Flight Hut and parked the kite. Instructors seemed to be a breed of people, who rarely talked to trainee pilots, in fact I cannot ever remember even one occasion. Perhaps they imagined that we might try to take advantage of any hint of friendliness or perhaps such overtures were not to be encouraged by the "higher ups." (current RAAF Pilot training has Instructors conducting briefings with their Trainee Pilots immediately after a flight)

Ground School and Flying continued with one half day devoted to each aspect then the afternoon given over to the other. The day following the reverse occurred. A particular building intrigued me when I first arrived on the Base for it was located near our living quarters (huts)

."What's that place used for I?" queried a sprog pilot from another Course. "You'll soon find out," was his casual noncommittal reply.

It wasn't long before I was directed to go to the Bombing Simulator, which was located in my mystery building. It was an eerie darkened interior with an upper level where we operated. We stretched out on a protruding piece of flooring on which was a bomb-sight. Onto the large floor below a movie film of the European countryside was projected. From our perch we watched the country side and cities slide past. We learnt to develop map-reading skills so that we could identify the relationships between rivers, roads, railway lines and certain targets. Early exercises



with the bomb-sight had us adjusting it so that the target could be tracked down between two wires running its length of the bomb sight. Wind speed and direction had to be incorporated into the setting up of this piece of equipment if any kind of accuracy was to be obtained. We practised flying on three different headings and plotting the wind drift

for each course. With these drifts we could then calculate the wind direction and speed. Hours were to be spent in this simulator for on future cross-country trips I would be acting as a navigator. Use of the bomb-sight was a very necessary skill to be mastered so as to be able to ascertain the information about winds. Accurate courses could be calculated then plotted. With this information we could then work out ground speed, the amount of drift and the E.T.A. (estimated time of arrival).

The simulator was really to teach us how to bomb from varying heights, and, more importantly, give us an understanding of the skills and limitations of a future Bomb Aimer, (crew-member). I desperately wanted to be a bomber pilot of a Lancaster four engine aircraft. Our bombing skills would also be assessed in a more practical way for we had to carry out a number of high level bombing runs (with practice bombs) on the special bombing range. From 10,000 feet the outline of a ship could be clearly seen and in the centre a circle was marked in white and in its centre was a steel post. Later while on low level bombing runs this steel post was our aiming point. Result of our bombing was in relationship to this post for some where on the ground there was Ground Staff personnel, who accurately plotted the position of every bomb. We were given the results in so many yards from the post. The bomb-sight was certainly a piece of equipment I wanted to master.

Along with two other Ansons I had my first introduction to Formation Flying. The Instructors (mine was F/Sgt Murray) had already formulated their arrangements as to who would first lead and signals used for changing courses and positions. There were still no radios in any of the aircraft at Geraldton yet in Flying Training Schools through out Canada, U.S.A. and U.K. they were essential for communication training.

"Get in closer to his starboard wing tip!" shouted F/Sgt Murray. I edged in a few yards. "Closer, closer!" followed every yard I moved. Even on the ground I had never been so close to another kite. With one hand on the control column the other on the two throttles it was some what of a nerve racking experience. When your reaction was a little slow your aircraft would fall behind and the "close in!!" order was called. You would pour on the power then tend to over run so you would then reduce power. Gradually your co-ordination began to get the "hang" of this. All the time you are trying to keep level with the aircraft out side my starboard window. For a while it resembled a ride in an elevator that continually moved up and down.



By some mysterious signal F/Sgt Murray then announced that we were about to make a turn to port.

"Be ready to pour on more power to keep your station as we go into a turn," was the only bit of advice provided. As we moved into a gentle rate one turn to the left I advanced the throttles while my eyes were glued on the aircraft that was ever so close. Some how I caught a fleeting glimpse of number three aircraft just before it disappeared from my line of sight. As we came out of the turn I automatically ease off the power to hold my station. Out of the corner of my eye I caught another glimpse of number 3 coming back into its position. I was soon to receive another learning experience.

"We'll now be making a turn to starboard so slacken off your power as we enter the turn," came F/Sgt Murray's explanation.

Dutifully I eased back the throttles so as to keep station and the next moment the horn was blasting. This occurred whenever the throttles were moved too far back when the wheels

were retracted. It was a warning sound. Having lost too much flying speed I had fallen some distance behind the lead aircraft so the throttles were rammed forward so as to catch up and regain my station. Being on the inside of a turn was quite a skill to attain for it required fine movements of the throttles while at the same time keeping the correct position.

Next came a manoeuvre to change places in the formation so that we **sprog pilots** would have a chance to lead as well fly the other two positions. By the end of the hour the physical drain became apparent shortly after entering the Flight Hut and comparing with the other two sprogs. We were all exhausted. It seems incredible now but we were then sent off again to fly Solo Formation for a further hour.

May be it was such a hair raising time **for Instructors** that having given us an introduction, they reckoned we could now go and become proficient on our own.

Both these Formation sessions happened on the 19th December 1943 but the Air Force decreed that I could now go and put in a 30 minute period of solo circuits and bumps to finish off the morning. That same evening I was down to commence Night Flying after an afternoon of Ground Lectures. This would result in 3hours 40 minutes flying in the one day and this was only the **Initial Training School** on Ansons. Like Shylock, the Air Force wanted their pound of flesh in return for their investment in us.

My first session of night flying on a twin engine is indelibly ingrained on my mind but because of what occurred prior to the night session. After a concentrated afternoon of Ground Lectures and a movie film about meteorology I headed for a relaxing time under the shower before the usual inspiring evening meal! As I stepped out of the shower in response to an appeal from another sweating sprog to hurry up I felt a most agonizing sting on the most vulnerable part of the male anatomy. A bee had decided to make his final presence felt. It was to say the least that I suffered some degree of discomfort but at the same time gave my fellow trainees some hilarity at my expense. It seemed that every one knew about my affliction for the amount of merriment it created.

Night flying would not commence until all light was gone for it was claimed that student pilots would be trying to see the ground if it was not quite dark. The standard flare path was laid out with a line of goose-neck (ie a watering can) containers filled with kerosene. At the take off position was a flood-light. After entering the aircraft and finding my way to the cockpit in the darkness I strapped myself in quite automatically. There was an eerie feeling sitting there in the glow of the luminous light from the array of instruments. Outside in the surrounding darkness it all looked very confusing. F/Sgt Murray was my Instructor for my introduction to flying the Avro Anson at night. All Instructors have a set "patter" of instruction, which they have to conform, for at their School for Instructors they had to memorize and demonstrate all the patter procedures. While taxiing through a bewildering maze of other aircraft and lights we reached the pre-take off position where I ran through the usual cockpit drill but I was now aware of our navigation lights on the wing tips as they reflected on other stationary aircraft. F/Sgt Murray took off giving the "patter" that standardized the teaching of sprog pilots throughout the **Empire Training Scheme**. On the down wind leg he ordered.

"Fly due North out of the circuit area at 3,500 feet."

After setting the compass ring to 360 degrees and the gyro I altered course and climbed to the allocated height. A glimpse out side the port window all I could see was an

occasional twinkling light from a home in the Geraldton outer areas. Black out was required by all persons in 1943. Suddenly I jammed the stick forward then eased it back

"What in the hell did you do that for?" demanded the Instructor.

"There was a light coming straight for us," I shouted back over the noise of the engines.

"Well I never saw another aircraft, but what you probably saw was a star," came his explanation.

This was probably correct for I had been concentrating on flying the aircraft on instruments then when I looked out forward there was this light. In the inky darkness surrounding me there was now sign of the horizon so that it was essential to fly by what the flying instruments told me. We had been warned on many occasions not to be influenced by what our body or brain told us about our flying attitude. I had experienced this once in a Link Trainer when I had the feeling that I was turning and losing height but according to the flight instruments I was flying straight and level.

"Ok, head back to the air field and we'll do some circuits," was F/Sgt Murray's next order.

I instinctively turned and headed in the direction I thought the air-field would be. I now realize that Instructors were always doing this to see if their charges had a sense of "airmanship". As we approached the Geraldton Base the flare path, in the shape of a "T" showed up in the inky darkness.

"Fly down the flare path on the starboard side, drop to 1000 feet and complete a circuit," called F/Sgt Murray, "and keep a lookout for other aircraft."

As I made my final turn to line up the flare path I was surprised at how little illumination the flares provided. In reality all they showed was that the ground was there. F/Sgt Murray continued his patter to assist me make my first multi-engine night landing. We then taxied back to the take off position and I ran through the pre-flight cockpit drill.

"Now take off and make a circuit Jubbs!"

I moved forward turned into wind, lined up the Aggie parallel with the flare path and fully advanced both throttles and hurtled down the bumpy grass air field. When the kite came unstuck I held it down to gain air speed then climbed away and continued with the same procedures that I practised in every day light trip. After making a climbing turn to port I glanced down and back to the flare path. The down wind leg allowed me to watch the flare path slipping past the port wing tip. By now I had amassed the grand total of 19 hours dual and some 13 hours solo on the Avro Anson and here I was night flying. Two more circuits and bumps completed my first session. No damaging comments were forthcoming from F/Sgt Murray.

When I joined my compatriots on the ground I was handed a cup of coffee and a salmon sandwich. We stood around in the semi darkness and nattered about our first effort. Generally, most Australians are usually less prone to elaborate about their flying skills than some other nationalities that I would meet in the distant future.

All this training and practise was turning into automatic responses for I was now doing things without having to think about them. For example, when my Instructor suddenly cuts a throttle my leg automatically applies the correct rudder to stop the aircraft going into a violent turn without any thought process on my behalf. The hands also automatically reach for



the Mixture Control and pull it back to the rich position then advance the throttle on the operating engine while the eyes check the flying instruments and engine instruments. Assessing the possible cause of a real engine failure necessitates checking fuel gauges, electrical switches, while at the same time considering whether a forced landing was inevitable. The "Boss" drummed into me to be constantly aware of possible landing sites along a flight path.

Mixture control

Every thing we trained to do was to make sure we did things automatically.

Wheel brakes handle

Each day was now being taken up with a session with the Instructor then going off to practise. Warrant Officer Tregoweth showed me how to take off with varying degrees of flap during an hour dual then hopped out of the Aggie and I went off for another 45 minutes.

Instrument flying in an Anson was done by enclosing myself by use of blinds so that I could not see out of the cockpit. With the Instructor sitting next to me he could observe what I was doing and at the same time keeping a lookout for other aircraft. Forced landings with and without power were being continually practised under the critical eyes of different Instructors.

Four days before Christmas F/Sgt Murray took me **Night Flying** for 30 minutes then the I did a circuit with F/Lt Ford. After I completed the circuit and taxied back he unbuckled his lap harness then turned to me and said.

"Ok Jubbs, go and do a circuit and bring my kite back to me!"

I cannot remember being nervous about taking an aircraft up into the darkness so I guess in my youthful innocence I was being conditioned to this way of life in the Air Force ... be shown something then carrying out the task. I recollect being a little pleased with myself when I delivered the aircraft back to the assembly area. **I had gone Solo after 1 hour 55 minutes dual.**

There was a tragedy one evening during a Night Flying exercise when one of the W.A.A.A.F. girls walked into a revolving propeller. No details were released but all we learnt was that the accident had occurred. The utmost care had to be taken when approaching an aircraft that had the engines turning over. Every time I saw the Ground Staff approach the nose of the aircraft to fill the compressed air tank for the brakes I could readily see that an accident would so easily happen with one careless step.

Weather was unvarying at this time of the year for each day was very hot with cloudless blue skies. During Ground School meteorology usually took the form of innumerable movie films about cold and warm fronts, their cloud forms and the very real danger of cumulo-nimbus when flying an aircraft. Conditions of fog and low cloud were not in the realm of possibility in this region so the movie film was our only experience.

Conditions in an unlined Hut during the heat of the day, together with blackout curtains, that prevented any movement of air, was conducive to sending trainees to sleep on the long narrow wooden stools while the movie film kept running. It was incredible to see how some could stretch out on a nine inch wooden plank, fall fast asleep in the hot muggy environment yet never once did any one ever fall off onto the floor.

One strange phenomenon occurred on one occasion as I was flying on an inland cross-country exercise at around 3000 feet. A host of willie-willies appeared out the port side of the aircraft looking like giant electric light poles stretching nearly up to my height. As a youngster I had seen miniature willie-willies suddenly start up ...a spinning column of dust, leaves and odd pieces of paper were spun around and around then carried upward and away. Now today I could see many of these columns. What a terrifying experience it must be in tropical areas where giant water spouts and tornados rip through communities destroying every thing in their path. In certain respects the weather can create incredibly dangerous situations, but here at Geraldton very little ever happened weather wise so movie films was our only source of simulation.



Lecture huts were located along side the Parade Ground while one was for **Camera Obscura**. The Bombing trainer was a two- story building to the left of this photograph. In the background is one of the very large aircraft hangers..

Fitted in between all our flying and Ground Studies was the periodic sessions in the Link Trainer which steadily developed skills in blind flying that would finally lead on to the Beam Approach. The technique and procedure was to teach us how, in fog or low cloud, to fly a special circuit that would lead onto a Beam that radiated from an Air Force Base and ultimately over an outer and an inner marker beacons down to a runway. Provided very accurate courses and heights were flown you would be brought down to a low height from where a visual landing could be carried out.

My first Christmas Day in the Royal Australian Air Force was celebrated at **No.4 S.F.T.S. Geraldton** in the usual manner with Officers attending our Christmas Dinner.

A few days later we were back to flying and further practising precautionary landings, steep turns then I had my next Night Flying solo session after the usual check flight with F/Sgt Murray. Three days later a check flight with P/O Martinovich saw me with another 40 minutes of solo night flying doing circuits and bumps.

It didnot appear to be the policy to notify us sprog pilots when we were due for special flying tests so it was usually announced just as you were about to enter an aircraft. P/O Bostleman announced to me that we were going off to complete an Instrument Flying Test for a 60 minute session. No apparent problems for I carried out the set courses, turns, and changes in heights as directed by another of my many different Instructors without any adverse comments.

It was a strange trip the following day for this time I logged a two hour passenger flight with F/Lt Ford in a Map Reading exercise. Avro Anson W2121 was the kite that day and only recently I again sat in the cockpit of that same restored aircraft, which is now in the Western Australia's Air Force Association Heritage Air Craft Museum, near Perth, the Capital City of this huge State.

It must have been the season for tests for F/Lt Ford, Commanding D Flight, took me for an hour flight while the next day F/O Crooks and I set off on a two hour Navigation Test. This was then followed two days later with a "**Wings Test**" with F/Lt. Gibbings.

Why a Wings Test so early in my training I'll never know but that day I had to demonstrate every facet of what I had been taught and practised during the past two months in the **Intermediate Training Squadron**. My final session in the I.T.S. was another one hour 30 minutes with F/O Crooks giving me a Grand Total (in Avro Ansons) of 33 hours dual and 19 hours 30 minutes solo for day flying and 3 hours 40 minutes dual and 1 hour 40 minutes solo night flying with a host of different Instructors.

In 1943 the weekly picture (movie) night held in a large auditorium on the Base was the occasion when we found out what was happening all around the world especially with regards the progress in the War using News Reels. Not only were we informed (most likely carefully selected by the authorities) but also certainly a considerable amount of motivation was generated in respect of us trainee pilots. All this was through the medium of the "News Reel" films that accompanied the feature films. News Reels were often produced by civilian cameramen, who risked their lives to obtain such graphic material. This format was the only way in those days that we kept up with what was happening. I have no recollection of having access to daily newspapers that were printed 300 miles away, nor ever being given the opportunity to listen to daily news reports on the radio. No one had a personal radio in those days. We could see the hardships that the Australian and American Servicemen were enduring in the war being raged in New Guinea and especially the part being played by the Air Crews in their attacks on the Japanese on the land, sea, and air. The realism of the News Reel was brought about because the cameramen were "shooting" out the same windows that the pilots and gunners were using. Well I remember the Beaufighters attack on the Japanese ships that were on their way to attack Port Moresby, which, if successful, would have meant the invasion of Australia. Through the News Reels we could at last see what a Lancaster and Flying Fortress Squadrons were doing in Europe, the progress of the North African Campaign and the peril on the seas of the world because of the German U-Boats. Each week the News Reels paid a very real part in providing information. Occasionally the projectionist would show photographs of pilots, who had trained at Geraldton, and were now serving in some theatre of war far removed from our little kingdom.

ADVANCED TRAINING SQUADRON

A few days later we were assembled and marched to meet the Flight Commander of the Advanced Training School. After some acid comments we were informed the name of the "**Crash Mate**" with whom we had been matched. **LAC Don Hollamby** and I would be flying



together and trusting in one another's ability. As usual names were matched alphabetically or as close as possible. By now we had risen through the ranks from A.C.2 to and now to the exalted rank of **Leading Air Craftsman**. We would now have a propeller insignia sewn on the sleeve of our shirts and uniforms. Right through this period of our training a Drill Instructor and P.T. Instructor regularly subjected us to sessions of physical training. During the heat experienced in this region was not conducive to running off the Base for about a mile then racing through an assault course that was designed to break you physically. With no respite you then had to return to the base as fast as your wobbling legs could carry you while under the gaze and urging of our tormentors. It was claimed that pilots had to be perfectly fit both mentally and physically. (some one had been reading about Plato)

How much more civilized it would have been to have had the use of an air-conditioned gymnasium. If fitness was essential how was it, that none of the Pilot Instructors were ever observed keeping in shape? We played basket-ball as some respite from the dreaded assault course but in no way was there any resemblance to the fast and furious game that now commands Inter State Competition. Our brand had some semblance of rules that were acquired as we went along but we certainly got into a lather of sweat (some one once said that only horses sweated) Perhaps there was some correlation between parade ground drill and flying but if there was, then, it was another war time best kept secret.

Although Geraldton Base was a RAAF Training Base no other Service Air Craft ever visited nor did I ever observe one flying overhead. One could hardly believe that there was a war going on in this isolated area of Australia. While at **Cunderdin E.F.T.S.** we were suddenly aware of a very large aircraft as it thundered low overhead making a steep turn circuit of the Base. It was my first view of the R.A.F. Bomber Command, "**Lancaster**" that had been flown to Australia by an Australian Path Finder Crew. No doubt within a few seconds every one on the Base was outside, gaping wide mouthed at the unbelievable sight of this great, four engine bomber. It was probably then that I vowed that I too wanted to fly a Lancaster. My closest association I had with that Lancaster was at 2am the following morning I was standing guard over it leaning up against one of the enormous undercarriage wheels, endeavouring to gain some shelter from an icy wind and driving rain. The Sergeant in charge of the guard detail had advised me, before he left to return to the comfort of a near by office, that if I wanted to really frighten anyone approaching the "Lanc." all I needed to do was to hit down the bolt of my 303 rifle the shout out,

"HALT, who goes there!!"

Sure enough at the end of my guard duty I could hear approaching footsteps so I slapped down the bolt of the rifle and called out the halt command.

"Don't shoot!" came the alarmed cry.

"Advance and be recognized I commanded." I had learnt that from looking at too many American movies.

Out of the darkness came my relief guard, another of my fellow trainee "volunteer" pilot guards.

"Bloody Jubbsie!" he exclaimed, "you frightened the daylights out of me."

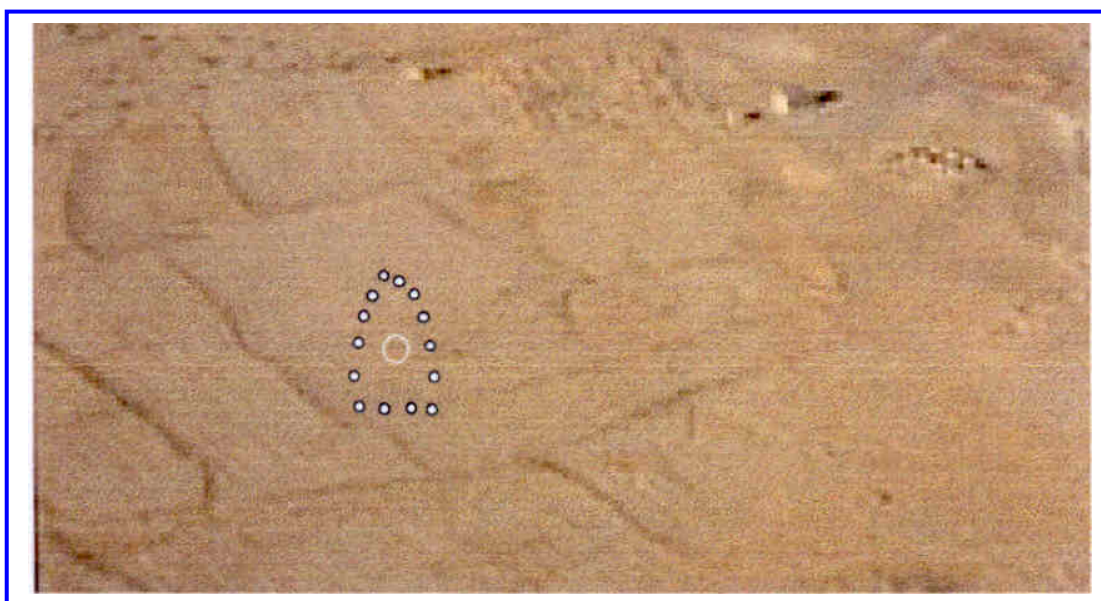
I then pacified him by explaining that the 303 rifle had no ammunition. Apparently we were not to be trusted with a loaded weapon. No doubt my relief guard played the same trick on the next incoming "volunteer" guard.

Peter Isaacson, the Skipper of the Pathfinder Lancaster, "Queenie 1" and his Australian Crew had completed a Tour on 460 Squadron then proceeded to do another 50 "Ops." with No 156 Path Finder Force (P.F.F.) before flying more than half way around the world, while here I was, just starting out. My only consolation was that Isaacson had also once been a "sprog" pilot.

Not once during their stop over did I catch a glimpse of this history making crew. It is only recently did I read the full story of this remarkable crew in a book written by **Robert.S.Nielsen**, the Navigator in Isaacson's Crew. "**With The Stars Above**" is a very large book comprising of a biography of each crew-member and printed in 1984.

On 17th January 1944 I commenced my first **Link Trainer** session since moving into the Advanced Training School then made my first fight in an Anson with FLGOF Mc Daniels. This was an **A.T.S. Acceptance Test** to evaluate my competence in handling the "Aggie" and it lasted one hour. I have no recollection of any comment being uttered. Later that day I spent another hour with FLGOF Mc Daniels completing a searching, Instrument Flying Test. I can

only surmise that both flight tests were satisfactory because the following day my "crash mate" L.A.C. Don Hollamby and I were sent off flying together with L.A.C. Gerald Haddon, another Trainee Pilot. What we had done many times in the Bomb Trainer Building with a bomb-sight, now had to be accomplished in an Avro Anson. As it was the height of summer you could be sure that there would be a great deal of turbulence. Our three-hour flight would be shared between the three of us. I took off and when we reached 6,000 feet Don went down into the forward section and set up the bomb-sight. What we each had to do was to calculate the wind speed and direction at that height by flying three different compass courses. On each course the drift of the aeroplane could be found by adjusting the bomb-sight so that an object on the ground would track down between two parallel wires on the side of the bomb sight.



Our Bombing Range was located south east of the RAAF Station, inland from the Walkaway Railway Station on land that is now a wheat & cattle farm. Being a hot summer the outline of a ship could be easily distinguished on the brown landscape. From high altitude, careful aim was essential with the target running down through the two wires on the bomb-sight if the practice bomb was to hit the target. Watching for the white puff of smoke was the only indication of how accurate I was. A crucial ingredient was the calculated wind direction and strength.



Over the passing of 60+ years has played havoc on these once protective concrete bunkers for the Air Force Armourers observing our puny practice bomb.



On the rear wall shows much larger ammunition has been inflicted on this concrete and I wonder if large calibre canons from modern aircraft created this damage.

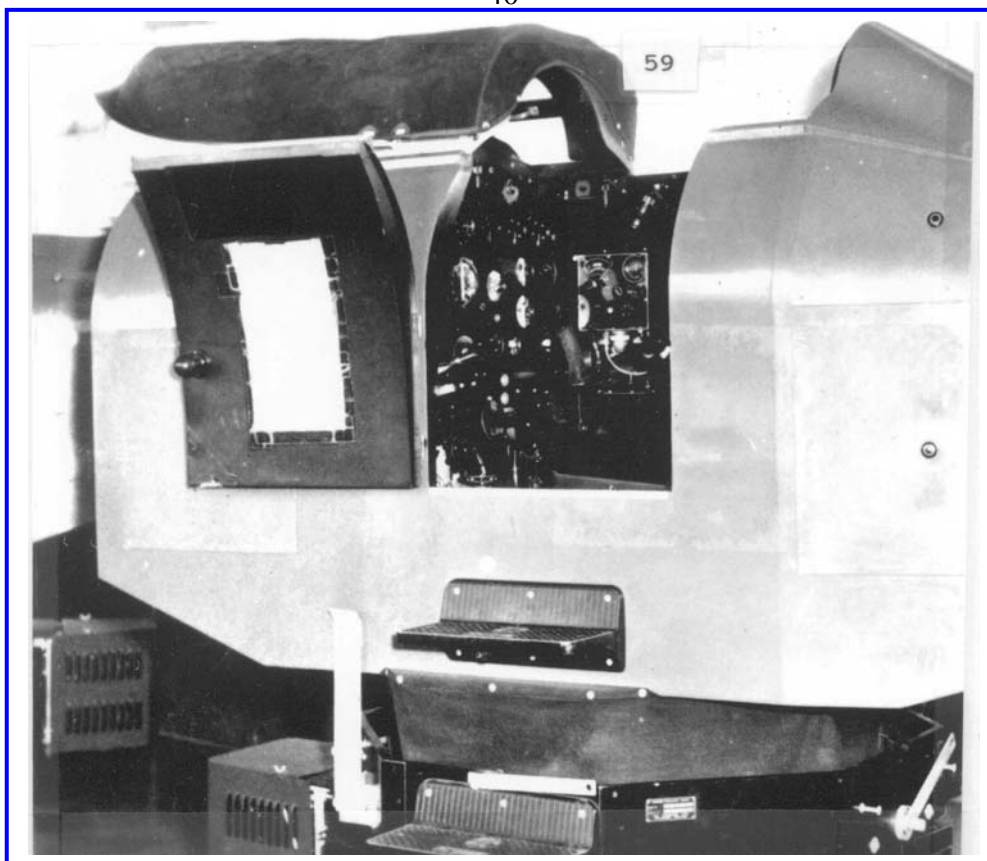


Every Trainee Pilot spent many hours in a specially constructed building learning how to operate a Bomb Sight. This included calculating the wind speed and direction using three different courses. This in turn led to making adjustments to the Bomb Sight. This then led onto practical applications to Cross Country Exercises flying with our Crash Mate using the wind finding exercise first. By observing our flown course against the map reading technique we were immediately made aware of the accuracy of our wind causing any drift.

Further exercises using the Bomb Sight was during High Level Bombing from different directions. Each practice bomb was accurately plotted by Ground Staff Armourers located in the specially constructed concrete buildings.

My only “Above Assessment“ Officially recorded in my Log Book was for bombing but I never learnt whether it included a combination low level bombing as well high level.

In reality Trainee Pilots had to learn about the skills that Navigators did(they also used the bomb sight for navigation and bombing) while the proficiency in Morse Code and using Browning machine guns were also required by Pilots so they were well aware of the responsibilities of Wireless Air Gunners.



The "Link Trainer", was a flight simulator where Pilots perfected blind flying techniques in preparation for Beam Approach landings. Perfect Instrument flying was crucial for Pilots attached to RAF Bomber Command because their offensive against Germany was carried out during the night.



The whole simulator flight was recorded by a thin red line traced on a chart by a marking pen carried by a 3 wheel unit. A Link Instructor could monitor every flying instrument by his own table set and at the same time speak to the Pilot under instruction by radio.

As pilot I had to fly an accurate course and speed so that Don could accurately gauge the drift. When Don had the degree of drift on that course he then had to plot it on the glass face of the bomb-sight. As we had no inter-communication radio Don had to signal to Gerald, who was now sitting in the second dicky seat, when I was to fly a new course. After Don had plotted the three drifts on different headings he was then able to calculate the components of the wind. This would be a procedure we would adopt of future cross-country trips as Navigator.



Gerald now took over as pilot as it was my turn to go forward into the nose of the aircraft and find the wind speed and direction while Don took over as observer.

After my session Don took over as pilot and Gerald went forward to complete the exercise.

When we returned to the Base Flight Office we each submitted our assessed wind speed and direction findings.

The day following had me flying with F/O Dalby on a formation flying exercise with two other Ansons. After each taking turn to be the lead aircraft and both wing positions the one-hour session quickly passed. This was followed by a formation flight by three aircraft and three sets of "crash mates". I flew the first hour while Don sat in the right hand seat. After a duplication of the earlier flight (with Instructors) Don took over as pilot. I must say there was some degree of apprehension as Don brought a wing in close to another aircraft's wing but that concern soon passed.

On the 20th January Don and I was down to fly with F/O Anderson on a Cross Country Navigation Exercise. I flew the Aggie on the first two outward legs while Don did the navigation and kept a log. I map read during my session for we were travelling over areas that were new to me. I had also calculated possible courses and estimated time of arrival over the turning points but flew the courses given by Don. **Barnong Home Stead** was my first turning point then on to a position marked as "X" on a chart. In due time I took over the roll as navigator and we onto Lake Logue (dry) then back to the Geraldton Base.

After a Link Trainer session Don and I went off for an hour each of formation flying with two other aircraft. What an advantage it would have been to have had radio communication. There were no near collisions as by now a degree of proficiency had emerged especially when turning in both directions.

As a test to our ability with a bomb-sight we each spent an hour "bombing" a special building called "**Camera Obscura**". Ground staff inside the building could track our bombing runs from different directions and assess our accuracy. Our accuracy was dependable upon the other's flying ability.

To complete the mornings flying time I went off with Sgt. McLeod for 60 minutes of Instrument Flying. The remainder of the day was spent attending Ground Lectures. During this period of training we had to become proficient at Morse Code and obtain a pass at 12 words per minute taking code. This was a combination of letters and numbers so that no guessing could be done. I usually remained after the lesson for a short time so that I eventually could take 20 w.p.m. We also had to master Morse code using the Aldis Signal Lamp. Most of the time we spent receiving and writing down the message, while watching the flashing light some hundred yards away. A pass rate of 6 w.p.m. was required. Navigation exercises figured prominently in Ground

School lectures together with more sophistication of techniques ... multiple bearings to obtain a fix, running bearings etc It was an enervating experience while in the air, the plotting of courses, calculating E.T.A. for turning points, keeping a log, map reading, finding a new wind speed and direction, dead reckoning chart, using a hand bearing compass to obtain multiple bearings etc No wonder we were dead beat after a three-hour cross-country exercise..

No where in this vast tract of desolate brown country were there any prominent hills, towns, rivers, but dried up salt lakes, very small towns along side single track railway lines, while roads were usually brown, dusty tracks. Small trees gave some indication of very small streamlets that occasionally flowed in seasons when light rain fell.

One day, I was one of four trainee pilots, who had the task of **swinging the compass** of an Anson that had just been given a major overhaul. Armed with a hand bearing compass and the aircraft located on the far eastern side of the original aerodrome we set about the task. We had never even seen another aircraft having a compass swung, but armed with a verbal explanation on the "how to do it" we commenced. It was obvious that we should all have a go in each sequence.

One had to sit in the aircraft and note the magnetic heading of the compass. Another "sprog" took the hand-bearing compass some 30 yards away, but behind the kite and directly in line with the fuselage and take a compass reading. The other two bods then pushed the tail until the aircraft had moved about 10 degrees. On each 10 degree heading the one in the aircraft wrote down the heading of the aircraft compass and along side it the hand bearing compass reading. Each in turn took the hand bearing compass reading and the position in the cockpit. From the two compass readings we were able to make out a compass card for that particular aircraft. At least we were now aware of how the deviation card for a compass was constructed. Because of its position in the aircraft the magnetic compass was affected by metal, electrical wiring and switches so the Deviation Card was essential to convert the true course, with Variation applied to the compass course for that aircraft.

Now followed a series of Instrument Flying and Formation Flying flights with different Instructors. On the 26th January I did an hour Formation Flying with F/Lt Storry the O.C. "Z" Flight and that night I flew with Sgt. McLeod for one hour followed by 75 minutes of solo night flying. Circuits and bumps for the whole period certainly provided an opportunity to develop those necessary skills. Total flying for that day was 3hours 15 minutes.

Two days later my Crash Mate Don was to be my Pilot on a three hour cross-country while I did the navigating. The met forecast provided a wind speed and direction for the height I was to fly for the three legs of this exercise. My first turning point was **Bowgada Home Stead** then onto **Woolgorong Home Stead** then back to Geraldton. Most of the flight plan had to be done in the Flight Office before take off. Tracks to each turning point had to be drawn on a chart, distances noted and with the estimated wind the courses to be flown to make good the desired track. At a specified airspeed I could now calculate the number of minutes each leg would take. All this information had to be written down in the flight log but would only be an estimate for in reality the wind speed and direction was a variable that could only be discovered once flying. From map reading on the outward leg of the flight I could soon discover if I was making good the intended track. If I was drifting to one side of the track I immediately knew that the estimated wind speed and direction was not accurate so I made allowance and set about recalculating a new course and E.T.A. I also would have the option of finding the wind using the bombsight on three different headings.

A crucial part would be how accurate Don could fly a given course and set airspeed in the flying conditions at the time. Turbulence was always a factor that made it difficult for the pilot. Pin pointing my position on a chart could be confirmed by two or three hand compass bearings on landmarks. The turbulence on this my first long cross country was extremely bad for I had some difficulty in writing details into my flight Navigation Log. The hand bearing sights produced a rather large "cocked hat" for a position point. I duly navigated our way back to Geraldton Base and tendered my Flight Log. At least we did not get lost.

Two days later I was the pilot on another different cross-country with Don doing the navigation. For self-preservation I too had worked out a flight plan so that I could follow the tracks I had plotted on my chart. Don duly returned us to Base. These three- hour flights could be very wearing, in fact down right exhausting.

Periodically I attended the Link Trainer room and completed the necessary exercises. On the last day of January I had to under go a Flight Test with the Flight Commander FLTLT. Storry for one hour. Another Instrument flight with Sgt Mc Cloud followed. That evening a 45 minute Night Flying Test with the Flight Commander, who, then sent me off for an hour and half Solo. That day I had flown 4hours 15 minutes, which also included a number of Test Flights. I slept like a baby, what was left of that night. The Air Force certainly gets their pound of flesh for their investment!

It must have been the season for Tests for on February 2nd I had to demonstrate to F/O Dalby every type of flying technique that I had been taught up until that time. This composed of two flights totalling 1 hour 30 minutes. A further solo flight for 30 minutes followed. That evening a check flight with Sgt Mc Leod for 30 minutes followed by 1 hour 45 minutes of solo night flying. Another 4 hour 15 minutes flying that day.



Next day I had a solo period, and then went as passenger with L.A.C. Ron Hesford for an hour's formation flying. Although Ron was on the same 41 Course and we shared the same hut (sleeping accommodation) this was the first time we flew together. I was credited with 1 hour Second Pilot time but Ron's flying was most competent so all I had to do was keep a lookout for other aircraft. On one of the Cross Country flights Ron must have been tempted to possibly stray a few miles past a turning point and fly over his parent's wheat and sheep farm in Perenjori.

I have wondered if the R.A.A.F. had any organization that reported formation flying by Avro Ansons. With three aircraft there were 6 sprog pilots meandering all over the place but out of view of Instructors. At the time we certainly had to concentrate on keeping a close contact with the other two aircraft. Don and I had an hour each on the 6th February. As Don and I walked out to our "Aggie" he turned to me and said in a mock stern voice.

"Well Jubbsie, we have a three hour trip today and you are credited with passenger time so make sure you are on the ball and don't get us lost for I have no desire to put down in some remote "tiger country" out beyond the back blocks!"

"If you can fly an accurate compass course within one degree each side of the course, and fly a constant airspeed and height I'll have you back over the base on E.T.A.," I confidently jibed.

While Don walked around the aircraft checking the wheels, controls and making sure the Pitot head canvas cover was removed I clambered aboard and set up my navigation log, chart, my navigation computer, hand bearing compass and an assortment of pencils, dividers. Today I was the Navigator. I checked the bombsight then did up my safety harness while sitting at the navigator's table.

After take off Don circled the base to get to the height specified for the trip. I had given him a course to fly, which he had already set on the Grid Compass. As we approached the Base, Don called that he was on course then called out when we passed over the Control Tower. I immediately made a note of the time in the Log then worked out how many minutes it would take to pass over a land mark of a junction of two minor roads. Map reading along our track drawn on the chart showed that I was drifting to port more than I had allowed for. In due course I noted the time when I was abreast of my land-mark but a couple of miles off track. I passed Don a course correction to make good the track then revised my E.T.A. for the Turning Point. By now I had some confidence in the wind speed and direction, which I would apply to the next leg of the Cross Country. By continually predicting land-marks and times I could double check by visual observation. To comply with the Navigation Instructions I took a compass bearing on three different locations and plotted their positions. The resultant "cocked hat" was very close to my track made good. As we approached Bowgada I handed Don the new course for Woolgorong Home Stead, our next turning point. On this leg I decided to try doing a running fix using a reasonably prominent hill. This navigation business needed constant checking and anticipating places and land marks that would confirm your position both on the ground and on the chart.

In due time we turned on the Home Stead and headed for Geraldton Base landing after 3 hours as passenger!!

The following night I spent 30 minutes with Sgt Strickland then went off for one hour 45 minutes solo completing circuits and "bumps." All this night flying progressively developed a degree of competence in both landing and take off as well as flying on instruments around a circuit. With no radio communication available all "sprog" pilots had to be constantly alert for other aircraft in the circuit area

February 9th saw Don and I on another long Cross Country but this time our rolls were reversed. I checked the aircraft from the outside especially all flying control surfaces, engines, tyres and fuel caps. I now wonder if any of the Instructors ever watched us doing this inspection. After entering the rear door I carefully checked that it was closed correctly. A year later in England a fellow pilot had a narrow escape from a crash when a ground staff erk did not correctly shut a rear door on an Air Speed Oxford.

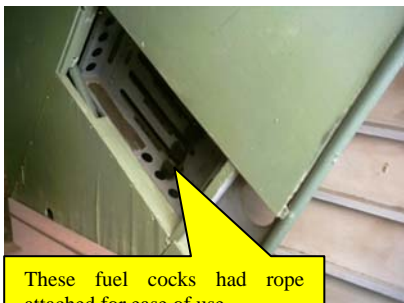


As I carried my parachute in my hand it had to be stowed in a special section before sitting in the pilot's seat. Both myself, and Don wore our parachute harness at all times but in the case of emergency we would clip the parachute onto two large clips positioned on our chest. The [W.A.A.A.F. parachute packers](#) usually reminded us to return the "rip-cord" a large handle if we had to use the 'chute!. On two occasions I was invited to pull my rip-cord while standing in the parachute issue building.

Parachutes had to be periodically aired, inspected and re-packed

so we were invited to pull the handle and see the rolls of silk tumble onto the floor. No doubt aimed at developing a confidence in the life saving pack.

As this was to be a long trip, I double-checked that all petrol tanks had the maximum of fuel and that the correct tanks were selected. As these fuel cocks were located on the far starboard side of the cockpit and each had short lengths of rope attached to assist sliding the fuel cock up or down a long slot. On my first solo cross country I had great difficulty in making one of these fuel cock slide to its correct position. I had to resort to partly leaving my seat and stretch across and kick the offending chock until it was in the correct position. This was more difficult than it sounds for the cocks were along side where the second pilot would be seated.



When all checks were made and my safety harness locked in position I commenced the engine start up procedure with the ground staff member standing in view through my port side window. With both engines running I first checked the air pressure for the brakes was correct, then waved away the chocks. Don had already indicated that he was ready and in position so I commenced to taxi to the distant take off position. Across wind I went through the take off cockpit drill then turned to Don and shouted. "Australia is a bloody big place, so today bring me back to this spot in three hours."

"Never fear Jubbsie, as a last resort we can always head west until the Indian Ocean is below us then toss up whether we turn south or north," he called back.

With no aircraft in sight I turned into wind, thrust the both throttles to the "gate" and roared across the open field towards the south-west. When the Aggie came unstuck I held it down to build up flying speed then eased the column back and climbed away. With the after take off cockpit drill completed I commenced the long tiring task of winding up the under-carriage with its 160 turns as I headed out gaining height. In due time came back over the Base and called to Don that I was on the course he had given me then let him know when above the Control Tower.

With cloudless blue skies you could see perhaps a hundred miles when at 6,000 feet but in the Australian bright light there was always haziness. In due course we flew around the prescribed cross-country legs and arrived back at Geraldton Aerodrome.

That evening I had night flying with F/O Dalby for 1 hour 45 minutes. This was in reality a preamble for the following night when we went on a 1 3/4 hour cross-country. Flight.

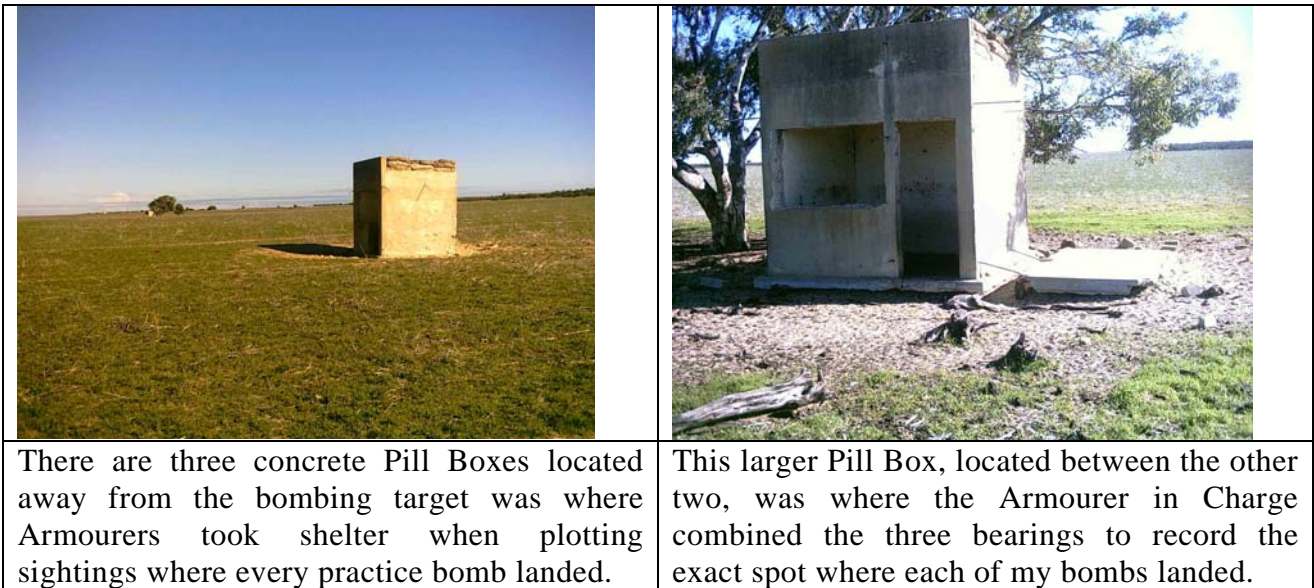
On the 14th February, with F/Lt Storry in the right hand seat, I had the most exhilarating introduction to low level bombing. We headed out to the **bombing range** where I could see the white outline of a ship on the ground. Immediately the Instructor signalled to me to go in, I pushed the column forward and dropped down very low and hurtled towards a steel post in the centre of the outlined ship. F/Lt Story was constantly explaining what I was to do.

"Head for the post and when it disappears under the nose of the aircraft count up to a certain number then push the bomb release button. Then do a steep turn to port and look back and see where your bomb has dropped then fly out and steep turn and make another run at right angles to the first run."

With that I made my first four bomb drops and at the same time thoroughly enjoyed the whole experience.

Next day, Don and I did a 45 minutes each of high level bombing, but on the **Camera Obscura building**.

A repeat low level bombing session was done with F/O McLean resulting with my only above average assessment endorsement in my Log Book. The low level result may have also been incorporated in my high level assessment.



After more days of instrument flying, camera obscura bombing, and formation flying came my first day with an air to ground radio. What a fiasco, it must have been like re-inventing the wheel for the radio was so primitive. It had a long lever that I had to move slowly up or down to fine-tune the reception. To try to communicate I had to request a long count so that I might tune the strongest signal. This must have been the most baffling session I ever experienced. No communication was made during the 60 minute session so I left the transmit switch on and gave a running commentary of my circuit, approach, and landing.

When I checked into the Fight Office a message was waiting for me. I was to report to the officer in the Radio section. In all innocence I duly presented myself ready to explain the utmost difficulty I had had using the new radio.

"What the blazes did you think you were doing L.A.C. Jubbs, cluttering up the radio with your idle chattering about your landing?" demanded the Officer.

I explained the difficulty I had experienced and how I accomplished no contact with the ground so I assumed the radio was U.S.

I was summarily dismissed and warned not to do repeat the performance. I was never again to use a radio in an Anson nor am I aware that the radio was again used. Apparently none of my Course tried out this radio.

About this time I was about to go for a solo flight when an Anson came hurtling across the old airfield, in front of all the hangers, at about 50 feet from the deck, then did a climbing steep turn. I watched this aircraft as it made a circuit and repeated the low level run. I thought that the pilot was in trouble or perhaps some trainee pilot had gone berserk. By now a crowd had gathered as the fire tender and ambulance raced into position.

The aircraft made an approach for a wheels up landing, which was beautifully carried out as it passed just in front of my aircraft. By the time the fire tender and ambulance reached the kite the pilot was leaving the rear door. I believe it was L.A.C. Kurtz from the Course that was soon to be given their Wings who made such a great landing. Being a grass aerodrome there was very little damage done to the Anson except for two bent propellers. The wheels of the undercarriage did not fully retract but always exposed part of the wheels. No doubt that was the intention of the designer of the Avro Anson.

On the 23 February, 1944, my nineteenth birthday, I went for an A2 flying test with Sgt Wood followed by two solo flights.

An Instrument Cross Country for two hours with FLGOF McLean was then followed by an hour of formation flying. Ground Lectures alternated with flying periods and some how we fitted in sessions on the Bombing Trainer and Link Trainer.

One day I was told by my Instructor to fly north-east to Yuna. While on the flight there he informed me that we were going to do cross wind landings on a remote and isolated landing strip. We over flew the strip, that was miles away from habitation, and then I turned and flew back, down low over the strip so that I could see the surface.

"Now do a circuit at the correct height and make a landing," ordered the Instructor.

From the wind-sock located off to the side of the strip I had seen that there was quite a strong breeze across the strip. As I made my final turn for a landing I kept drifting off line as I made my approach.

"Head slightly towards the wind direction and "crab" in so that you are constantly lined up on the strip," explained the Instructor.

By now the landing had to be aborted so the Instructor called to power on and go around again. On this occasion I allowed for the drift and came crabbing in getting lower and lower when suddenly my Instructor advised.

"Just when you are about to stall, in your three point landing attitude, kick the rudder to bring the aircraft facing down the runway."

This I did successfully then came the next hurried bit of advice.

"Do not allow the aircraft to swing in this wind so use your rudder and engine and a little brake."

I rolled down the strip until a taxi way presented it then proceeded to return to the take off position. Never before had I ever experienced cross wind landings for we had always landed directly into wind. It was a very strange sensation to approach the strip in this crabbing way. At the end of that session I had some degree of confidence of making satisfactory approaches but

it created a good feeling at that moment when you kicked the rudder to bring the aircraft heading down the strip.



Mr Frank Warr, farmer owner of the land where the secret, cross wind landing strip was located.

The secret Una air-strip as it is today, the bitumen surface has long disappeared, and while down each side a new cereal crop is just germinating. During the post war period this strip has been used by light aircraft, car races etc.

After a future session on the crosswind strip I suddenly blurted out to the Instructor. "Sir, during our next session would it be possible to try some Right Hand circuits? Perhaps we might end up flying from strips that have hills down one side of a strip," I continued.

Later I told my Crash Mate Don about my suggestion.

"I don't imagine anyone will take your suggestion seriously after all the years they have been here at Geraldton," came his comment.

The next time I flew to the strip nothing was said by the Instructor (a different one from the previous session) until I had made my first landing.

"Well L.A.C. Jubbs, today we are going to do **Right Hand Circuits!!**" he informed me. "This is certainly going to be a new experience for you, (for you also, I thought!) especially your final turn," he added.

My take off was quite normal but the first turn to starboard felt quite strange but flying down wind and looking out past the Instructor gave a different perspective. I still allowed the strip to pass along beyond the end of the Starboard wing tip. The cross-wind leg also created a new experience, as did the final turn. The "crabbing" in was the normal procedure as was the final kick to line up the strip. Then followed a full period of Right Hand Circuits but I have since wondered whether they became a standard practice or whether it was only that one occasion.

On March 5th I flew with the **Officer Commanding. Z Flight, FLTLT Storry**, and then the day following with FLYOFF Mc Daniell for another Test and over the next two weeks a whole battery of final Tests.

A series of photographic flights had to be made using a hugh aircraft camera. The high altitude was no problem but at a low altitude I had to hand hold the camera and take a photograph out the side of the Anson as Don (Crash-Mate) flew low along side a railway line so that I could photograph the name of the very small railway siding.



It was along this railway line (the only east/west one) that I once photographed a small railway-siding building that has since disappeared.

On 9th March saw Don and I doing an hour each Formation Flying followed an instrument flight with the Flight Commander for an hour.

On the evening 12 March we were all at the pictures on the Base when in the middle of some film the lights all came on and there standing on the stage was **Group Captain Norman Brearley, Commanding Officer of Geraldton 4 S.F.T.S.** What was about to be said came as a shock.

"All senior Pilot Trainees (this was my Course) had to report immediately to the Flight Commander so as to disperse all air craft!" he ordered. **"The Japanese Fleet's position has been lost and there is a possibility they may be off our coast."**

Next morning when I reported to the Flight Commander I found that I was down to make a sea patrol out to the Abrolhos Islands some 50 miles off the coast. From there I would fly north then return to Geraldton. A 1914-18 bomb weighing 112 lbs was already loaded. The Anson had a radio installed and a Radio Operator would be coming with me as well as Sgt. McLeod. I have no recollection of any "briefing!" especially in relation to what I was expected to do with one puny bomb against the might of Japanese Fleet. The flight was un-eventful but certainly not without some inner excitement. Whether the Wireless Operator had any communication with the Geraldton Base was not told to me. I duly returned to base and greased the Aggie in with my best landing for the week (some what motivated by the presence of the ancient bomb). A World War 112 lb bomb. (one cwt and 20 to the ton)

This was not my first trip out over the Indian Ocean for Don and I had made a shared two hour flight out to the Abrolhos Islands some two weeks previous. I do not recall ever having any dingy drill, survival techniques or the best way to land on water. As we did not carry a radio there was no way the Base would know of our predicament if we were forced down in the sea until some time after our maximum flying time had expired. Two 18 year olds did certainly not consider what could have been done by the Air Force to rescue two in those shark-infested waters at that time. Flying over the ocean was my first experience at perfect flying conditions for there was no turbulence so the Anson could be trimmed for nearly hands off flying. Looking down on the ocean while making drift sights I could see the very real problem of sighting anyone in the water for it would be an impossibility among the myriad of white caps.

With practice bombs loaded Don and I spent 2 1/2 hours on a high level bombing exercise over the bombing range. First finding the wind speed and direction using the bombsight then making our four bombing runs took up time. From the nose of the aircraft I soon lost sight of the small practice bomb but kept a careful watch to see the puff of smoke given off by the bomb on impact. The outline of a ship was our target but from our height it looked quite a small target. As on all our shared flights there came a time when the pilot had to leave that position while the other hopped into the vacant pilot seat. In turbulent conditions this could be a little disconcerting but at our tender age we accepted it as the norm.

In Avro Anson 3342, with FLTLT Mc Fetridge, acting for the Commanding Officer for the **Advanced Training School** I had a final Flight Test. I had to demonstrate every flying technique that I had been taught, and answered all the questions asked while doing steep turns, stall recoveries, single engine flying etc.

Finally he asked me. "Do you see that brown patch on the ground?"

"Yes, Sir," I replied.

"Well then L.A.C. Jubbs make a precautionary landing on that brown spot," he commanded.

This type of landing was used to get into confined areas so the control of the Anson's descent was controlled by the power of the engines with the aircraft in a landing attitude.

I checked the wind direction sock, and found to my utter amazement, the wind direction was now at right angles to my take off. In all the months at Geraldton S.F.T.S. this would be the first time I had ever landed in this direction from a side of the landing field where I had never been. It was as if there had been some royal command by this Instructor to really test my Airman Ship.

I had religiously perfected this type of landing and today certainly proved the old saying that "practise makes perfect" The circuit actually took me directly down wind over the Base Head Quarters at a 1000 feet and the cross wind let down was much further out than the normal approach. My final turn into wind only required a slight turn to line up the "brown" patch so with the aircraft in its landing attitude I came in low over the boundary fence. As the spot was well into the field I held off until I had just about reached it then cut the motors and dropped

exactly on the patch. The only time I was ever commended for a landing was on that occasion. I then completed the cockpit Vital Actions then taxied back to the Flight Office.

Several more flights with other Instructors culminated my Pilot course at **No.4 Service Flying Training School**.

Wings Parade for No. 41 Pilot Course

With our Flying and Ground School Examinations completed, all that remained was the Official **Wings Graduation Ceremony** before moving onto what ever the Royal Australian Air Force planned to do with us.

The new Station Commander, **WING COMMANDER D. CHAPMAN** had only recently taken over the Geraldton Base, after, I believe, serving in the Middle East Command. He called our Course together to discuss our Wings Parade. He explained that he had received a signal instructing him to delay our Official Wings Parade for one month. This came as a complete anti-climax to our euphoria at having come this far.

"How many of you have arranged for parents and friends to come all the way from Perth (400 km) to attend this Wings Parade?" he enquired.

As a considerable number had made accommodation and travel arrangements that could not be readily altered so Group Captain Chapman immediately told us that under the circumstances he would still go ahead with the Graduation. He then informed us that we would not be given our promotion for a month. A great feeling of relief was felt as well as a great admiration for the Commanding Officer's decision.

In due time we were drilled in the procedure of receiving our wings, and then waited for the official day to arrive.

Just a short time before our Graduation Day our position on course was announced and the names of the two course members, had gained Commissions as Pilot Officers while the rest of us would be Sergeants.

I had entered the R.A.A.F. in the previous May (1943) and it was now in March 1944 I had completed the Course. What enormous amount I had learnt and experienced during that time. I had finally achieved what I had only dreamed about during my seventeen months in the Air Training Corps.

Although I have a clear recollection of my time at No.4 SFTS, but on this very special day I simply have NO memory of what happened immediately after the ceremony. It must have been complete euphoria, apart from feeling somewhat very pleased at having achieved this goal I had, since entering the Air Training Corps in late 1941.

Finally on the **third of March 1944** No. 41 Course presented our selves to the **Commanding Officer, now Group Captain "Dixie" Chapman**, who then pinned on our Wings.



My Wings.

I continued on flying after the Wings Parade so on the 20 & 21 March 1944 I spent flying solo in an Avro Anson for two hours each day. They were probably the two happiest days of my life up until that time for after I took off I flew all over the area but not once was I tempted to go low flying for I had known of one sprog who was "**scrubbed**" for doing just that in the last week of training.

At the time I wasn't to know but that would be the last time I would venture aloft in an "Aggie".

Some days later, with rail warrants in our pockets together with a leave pass for a month we departed Geraldton Base in time to catch the train to Perth. We were travelling with wings on our shirts but with L.A.C. badges on our sleeves. This was an un-heard of situation in the Air Force, but I once heard that a Sergeant Pilot, who had "shot up" RAAF Station, Cunderdin had been court marshalled and reduced in rank to an L.A.C.

What a surprise my Mother had when I arrived with the Wings on my shirt for I did not write about my flying in case she should worry. It was also a shock to Mum to learn that I really did fly an aircraft by myself.

Walking around the City of Perth as an L.A.C. Pilot did create some side ways glances from other members of the R.A.A.F. The leave was great but I did miss the company of my fellow Course members for most had returned to their families in country towns and sections of the metropolitan region.

At the end of the month we again assembled at the Perth Railway Station and returned to far off Geraldton. Back in our familiar hut, straw palliasses and grey blankets brought us back to reality. Sewing our sergeant Stripes onto shirts and summer uniforms and winter blues kept us occupied. Ground Staff fellows appeared in our Hut and sold us plastic wing shapes onto which we could sew our wings so that they could be easily taken off our shirts before laundering.

One day in the Sergeants' Mess was all we had, for by that time we had our necessary clearances so that we could now depart officially for Embarkation Leave. Just prior to receiving my Wings I had gone before the Flight Commander, who asked where I would prefer to be posted and to what type of aircraft I would like to fly. My immediate reply was to go to England and to fly Lancaster Bombers. Much to my amazement that was the sum total of my interview with this officer.

This short leave in Perth was an indication I could be posted overseas and duly arrived in the United Kingdom, via New York, shortly after "D" Day, 6 June, 1944.

So ended my **Elementary and Service Flying Training** and my **Log Book** showed the following flying hours:

Single Engine Aircraft

30.30 Dual 27.25 Solo Day 3.30 Dual 40 Solo Night

Multi-Engine Aircraft

						TOTAL		
I.T.S.=	DUAL	Day	33.05	Night	3.40	Dual	64.55	
=	PILOT	Day	19.30	Night	1.40	Solo	19.30	
A.T.S.=	Dual	Day	28.50	Night	4.30	Dual	33.20	
	Pilot	Day	45.25	Night	6.15	Solo	51.40	LINK Trainer 36.00 hours

Grand Total 220 hours 55 minutes



Although used extensively in Service Flying Training Schools, the Avro Anson performed many roles in active service though out the World.

No. 42 Course Wings Parade


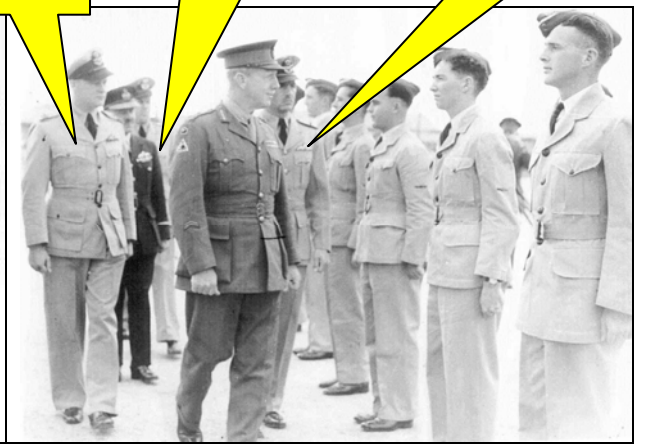
4 May 1944

What follows is the very important Wings Parade, for the other half of our original Course, who had, had their SFTS Course delayed by four weeks.

As this occasion also coincided with the **fourth anniversary of the Empire Training Scheme**, a very special occasion, which was celebrated in the presence of many dignitaries, friends, relations when **Major R Robertson** presented the Wings to many of my friends.



A most impressive Parade was held on this occasion for it marked one of the most successful training ventures ever undertaken to produce such massive numbers of trained Air Crews. Lt General Robertson is shown acknowledging FLTLT Doug Burton, who was responsible for this Parade, in front of Graduating No.42 Course. Many friends and families of the Graduating Course attended this Parade as well as Official Guests and Dignities. (Ron Daymond)

	
<p>FLTLT Doug Burton, Flight Commander for the Graduating No.42 Course.</p>	<p>FLTLT D.Burton invited Lt. General Robertson to inspect No.42 Course before Presenting their Wings.</p>

FLTLT D.Burton

AIR
Commodore

GPCAPT "Dixie"
Chapman. O.C.4SFTS



LAC Ron Daymond was fortunate to have this memorable occasion recorded on film for it was not then customary.

Sequence of Flying Instruction
Intermediate Training Squadron
No.4 SFTS

Anson Aircraft

1. Familiarity with cockpit layout
- 1.a Air Experience
2. Starting, running up, and stopping engines.
- 2.a Taxing
3. Effect of controls
4. Climbing, gliding and stalling
5. Straight and level and full power.
- 5.a Straight and level half power
6. Medium turns, full power
- 6.a Medium turns, half power
7. Taking off into wind
8. Powered approach and landing
- 8.a Half power approach, and landing
(Demonstration only before solo)
9. Gliding approach and landing.
- 9.a Mislanding procedure; Flaps etc.
10. Action in the event of a fire.
11. First Solo.
12. Slide-slipping.
13. Precautionary landing.
14. Low flying with Instructor only.
15. Steep turns.
16. Climbing turns.
17. Forced landing, half power.
- 17.a Forced landing, no power.
18. Abandoning an aircraft.
19. Instrument flying.
20. Take off and landing, with Varying
degree of flaps.
21. Night flying.

Tests in accordance with A.P. 1388, Chap.1V
Part 11 Para. 1. Pages 20,21

Instrument flying tests

I.F. (i)	1.	(i)
I.F. (ii)		(i)
		Night flying tests.
N.F. (i)		(i) a dual
N.F. (i) b.		(I) b
N.F. (ii)		(ii) solo
		Formation flying
F.F. (i)		(i)
F.F. (ii)		(ii)
		Air navigation
A.N.1		“ Exer. Dual
A.N. 2		“ Test Dual
A.N. 3 (i)		“ Exer. Solo
A.N. 3 (ii)		“ Exer. Solo
A.N. 4		“ Final Test
P.Y.		Progress Test
CFI		Test for Wings.

Please Note:

All the numbers on this page and the following page were entered in each Trainee Pilot’s Log Book to signify what exercise was carried out during that particular exercise.

Sequence of Flying Instruction
Advanced Training Squadron
No.4 SFTS

- A 1. ATS Acceptance Test
 A 3 Practice
 A 4 Flight Check
 B 1 3 Course Wind Finding (Nav)
 B 1P 3 Course Wind Finding (Pilot)
 B 2 Straight Runs Camera Obscura Nav.
 B 2P Straight Runs Camera Obscura Pilot
 B 4 4 Course Grouping Camera Obscura. N.
 B 4 Course Grouping Camera Obscura. P.
 B 5 Low level bombing
 B 6 Application Bombing (Nav)
 B 6 P Application Bombing (Pilot)
 B 7 High Level Bombing (Nav)
 B 7 P High Level Bombing (Pilot)
 F 1&2 Formation Flying (Dual)
 F 3 Formation Flying (Solo)
 G. 1 Air to Ground Gunnery (Dual)
 G 2 Air to Ground Gunnery (Dual)
 G 2P Air to Ground Gunnery (Pilot)
 G 3 Air to Air Camera Gunnery (Gunner)
 G 3 P Air to Air Camera Gunnery (Pilot)
 G 4 Air to Air Camera Relative Speed (Gun)
 G 4 Air to Air Camera Relative Speed (Pilot)
 G 5 Air to Ground Gunnery 100 rounds (Gun)
 G 5 P Air to Ground Gunnery (Pilot)
 G 6 Front Gunnery Air to Ground (Nav)
 G 6 P Front Gunnery Air to Ground (Pilot)
- I 1, 2 &3 Instrument Flying
 I 5 Instrument Cross Country
 N 1 Cross Country (Nav)
 1. G'ton, Barnong H.S., Position X
 Lake Logue, G'ton.
 2. G'ton, Bowgada H.S, Woolgorong HS
 G'ton.
- N 2 Cross Country (Pilot) 1.
 1. G'ton, Goorow MarroorooH.S., G'ton.
 3. G'ton, Lake Nedo, Carnaging Lake,
 G'ton.
- N. 3 Low level cross Country. G'ton, Yuna,
 Strawberry, Dongarra, G'ton.

- NF 1. Night Flying Dual
 NF 2 Night flying Solo
 NF 3 Night Flying Cross country:
 Kojarina
 Northampton, Mullewa, G'ton
- P 1 Photography Stereo Pairs :
 Walkaway
 and Moonjanoora (Nav)
 P 1 P. Photography Stereo pairs:
 Walkaway, and Moonjanoora (Pilot)
- P 2 Line overlap Photography (Nav)
 P 2 P Line overlap Photography (Pilot)
- R. 1 Reconnaissance
- S. 1 Air to Air Signalling.

Australia's Contribution to Empire Air Training Scheme

Fully trained in Australia:	10,882 Pilots
	6,071 Navigators
	10,432 Air/Wireless Gunners

Total = 27,387

After Elementary Training in Australia:

	10,351	Australians sent to Canada
and	674	Australians sent to Rhodesia
Therefore:	27,387	Trained in Australia
	10,351	Trained in Canada
	674	Trained in Rhodesia
Total =	38,412	Australian Air Crew

9,000 Australians flew with Bomber Command from Bases in the United Kingdom.

Bomber Command Losses

Example: **"Battle of Berlin" November 1943 to March 1944**

Marshall of the R.A.F. Sir Arthur Harris had anticipated losing up to 500 bombers.

During the raids on Berlin in those few months some 492 Bombers were shot down, a further 95 were wrecked on landing back in England, while 859 returned damaged.

There were 10,500 Air Crews in Operational Squadrons and in those few months and **50% had been lost.**

Air Craft Losses

(during my (L.J.) period in the United Kingdom)

Night Bombing	Air Craft Damaged
June 1944 to May 1945 = 954 lost	3,897
Day Bombing	
June '44 to May 1945 = 245 lost	
Total Air Craft lost = 1199	3,897

This loss of 1,199 aircraft also meant a loss of 1199 Pilots!! Many Pilots were wounded in returning Bomber Command aircraft.

Many Pilots were lost in other Commands:

1. Coastal Command, 2. Fighter Command, 3. Special Duties Command Transport Command, 5. Reconnaissance Command, Weather Flights, Fighter Affiliation, Strike Command, just to name a few, as well as Squadrons operating in Operations against the three Enemy countries of Germany, Italy, Japan in far away battles.

RAAF CASUALTIES IN ALL THEATRES

RAAF Casualties - types of units:

Operational squadrons	8,884
EATS schools	1,070
OTU's and other flying schools	1,762
Other units	<u>2,038</u>
Total	13,754

RAAF Casualties - musterings

Air casualties

Pilots	5,131
Navigators	2,312
WAG's	2,328
Air Gunners	1,210
Technical air gunners	238
Ground musterings	358
Ground Casualties	
Aircrew	399
Ground musterings	<u>1,778</u>
Total	13,754

TABLE B - RAAF casualties, by areas, to 15th August, 1945

(Deaths from illness in brackets)

	Died	Injured	Total
Europe	5,397 (26)	947	6,344
<i>Middle East</i>	1,135 (9)	413	1,548
Canada	147 (5)	55	202
India-Burma	242 (3)	89	331
Far East	136	44	180
South West Pacific	3,342 (298)	1,614	4,956*
Other Areas	163 (1)	30	193
TOTAL =			13,754

Of a total of 1,122 non flying personnel who died, 1,009 were in the South West Pacific Area. * Includes casualties in Australia not on operations or in operational areas.

Table C

Casualties to RAAF personnel in European Theatre to 15th August, 1945

	Dead	Injured
Bomber Command	3,486	265
Fighter Command	191	49
Coastal Command	408	113
Other Forces and units	478	151
OTU's and similar schools	724	298
Other training schools & units	110	71

From the Australian Official War History of WW I 1.

United Kingdom Prime Minister, Mr W. Churchill

What is now recorded had a direct bearing as to what happened to my No.41 Course when we first arrived at No.4 SFTS. This Course was divided into two with one section becoming No. 42 Course and resulted in the ultimate decline in Air Crew Training.

Note: The following details appeared in a book: “A Last call of Empire, Australian Aircrew, Britain and the Empire Air Training Scheme” by John Mc Carthy, Australian War Memorial, 1988.

“There was evidence in 1942 that there was in RAF Fighter Command a surplus of 400 day fighter Pilots. In June 1943 the sharp restless eye of Winston Churchill noticed that Fighter Command had on strength 945 more Pilots than it had aircraft. The Prime Minister began to probe further. Wanting to know if aircrew availability everywhere was being maintained on a similarly lavish scale so he asked Clement Atlee to make a thorough investigation. It was found that in the strategic bombing force alone there was a surplus of 338 complete Crews. By October 1943, Portal was forced to minute the Air member for Personnel:”

The surplus of air crews in Home Command has now reached alarming proportions...large crew surplus exist not only in Fighter Command but in the other Commands,

It appears that by December 1943 some **670 Australian Air Crews** were arriving every four weeks. In February 1944 the Air Ministry declined to accept the March/April Australian contingents.

In reality, I personally arrived in England shortly after the “D” Day landings in Normandy on **6th June 1944**, and for some months afterwards other Australian Air Crews were still arriving. With such a surplus of not only Australian Air Crews, but there were many from Canada and New Zealand all bitterly disappointed in not continuing their advanced training at Operational Training Units. It was some nine months before I finally reached an **Advanced Flying Unit**, while a number of my friends volunteered to under go training as **Flight Engineers**, at RAF St Athan, and a number of these joined Lancaster Squadrons in time to bring home Prisoners of War and join Tiger Force. Back in Australia many of my Pilot Course had joined Squadrons in the war against the Japanese.

When the **Australian Prime Minister, John Curtin**, visited England in May 1944 he informed Winston Churchill that Australian Squadrons should return to Australia to engage with the war against Japan. But it was **not until April 1945** it was decided two Australian article XV Squadrons would be included in the ten British Bomber Squadrons to be based in Okinawa.

When the War against Germany ended, Australian Bomber Lancaster Squadrons were formed into **Tiger Force** and were to fly their four engine bombers to the Pacific, but with the dropping of the Atom Bombs and the surrender by the Japanese, this Tiger Force was disbanded.

Throughout Australian there were a great many young Air Crews, at various stages of training, when it was announced that all training should cease. For months potential Pilots were being scrubbed when normally they would have progressed.

By June 1944 Australia was advised that the British Air Ministry required no further aircrews at all, yet more Air Crews kept arriving including Members of my original Course.

This in reality meant that the Empire Air Training Scheme should probably not have been renewed in March 1943. The sudden cessation of EATS drafts for overseas meant that Australian Schools could be closed but it left Australia with a large surplus of partially trained personnel. Many Australian Air Crews being trained in Canada would now be returning to Australia. The EATS Program had indeed been VERY successful, but the British Government had NOT been vigilant in assessing the RAF's requirements.

The Empire Air Training Scheme had certainly accomplished its objective.

GERALDTON AIRPORT HISTORY

Like most aerodromes in Western Australia, the Geraldton Airport started as a landing field in pre-World War II. The term 'Airfield' was derived because aircraft in pre-war times were required to always land directly into the wind. To allow this to happen fields or paddocks were used.

The Geraldton Airport was used extensively during World War II. It was used mainly for training purposes and for long-range armament supplies. The Airport was well developed with a network of taxiways, runways and on the landside there were extensive barracks and buildings.

In 1940 the present Airport was but a freshly graded strip of land whipped into clouds of dust by the southerly winds.

On February 2, 1941 No 4 Service Flying Training School arrived in Geraldton. The function of the unit was to provide intermediate and advanced training of the pilots. The normal course took 16 weeks divided equally between the two sections of flying. It was a difficult course with many failing to complete it.

It took over two years to convert the bare stretch of ground into a smooth running unit. Hessian was used to cover the first 26 Ansons until the hangars were built.

The Station was constructed by the Allied Works Council. Rows of orderly huts housed 103 officers, four nurses, one WAAF officer, 177 WAAF, 27 air-pilots, 46 air-gunners, 176 trainee pilots and 992 airmen, totalling 1572 personnel.

Post war to 1955, the Airport was wound down with a number of taxiways, aprons, roads and buildings being removed.

In 1955/56 the Department of Civil Aviation was formed for the operation of Civil Aerodromes and a redevelopment of the terminal was carried out in 1958. This "new" terminal existed through until the construction of the Brearley terminal (built in 1979).

The policy of the then Department of Civil Aviation was to transfer aerodromes under the Aerodrome Local Ownership Plan to the local authorities. This was accompanied by the eligibility for reimbursement of approved maintenance expenditure of 50% from the Commonwealth.

In 1990, the Commonwealth Government elected to discontinue operation of the Australian Local Owners Plan. This was phased out over two years with the Shire of Greenough opting out at 30 June 1991. As part of the windup, Council was given a grant of \$180,000 to upgrade the facilities. Much of this was expended on resealing the main runway. From this point on, Council become totally responsible for the operation of the Geraldton Airport. It is interesting to note that the only Buildings sited at the Airport at this time was the Brearley Terminal, an Ansett freight shed, the old power house, hangars 110 and 116 and part of the Shire Works Depot. Since the take over, several private hangars have been constructed along with a General Aviation Terminal, Bushfires Board (now FESA) headquarters and major extensions to Councils Works Depot.

The Greenough Shire Council employed a permanent airport manager in August 1998.

In January/February 1999 Council expended two million thirty nine thousand dollars applying approximately 80mm of premix to the main runway, taxiway and aprons. This raised the PCN from 14 to 34 and allows for regular landing and take off of Aircraft up to B737-800 (190 seat jets) This runway surface is expected to have a life span in excess of 20 years and requires a minimum of maintenance.

During the mid 90,s it was recognised that the capacity of the Brearley Terminal to accommodate the number of passengers flying in and out of Geraldton was inadequate.

To provide for our future, Council elected to plan for the construction of a new terminal building. Meetings were held in July/August 1999 and Eastman & Poletti/GHD were appointed Architects to design a new terminal building. Numerous meetings were held and in July 2000 tenders were invited. In September 2000 Crothers Construction were selected to construct a new Terminal building. The following budget was:

Building	3,265,773
Furnishings	60,000
Landscaping	25,000
Architect/Consulting fees	<u>227,550</u>
	<u>3,578,323</u>

Funding was as follows.

Airport Reserve Fund (Cash)	1,828,323
Loan Funds borrowed over 10 years @ 6.75%	1,500,000
State Government Department of Transport Grant	<u>250,000</u>
	<u>3,578,323</u>

Earthworks for the new Greenough Terminal Building started on site on Monday 9 October 2000. The first passengers used the terminal Friday 27th July 2001 and the Greenough Terminal was opened by the State Premier Hon Geoff Gallop 13th August 2001.



The Geraldton Air Port as it is today (winter) with a concrete runway and a host of new buildings.

Going Overseas

My embarkation leave was spent at home in Perth, the Capital of the largest State in the Commonwealth of Australia. As my Mother was working and my brother had just started in a job I was without their company for much of the day. Sleeping in was a luxury I indulged, especially gratifying were the white sheets and pillow slips and soft mattress after 12 months of a straw palliasse and grey blankets. Wandering the city looking at the old familiar buildings was usually followed by a midday lunch in one of the many cafes. Usually I would meet up with one of my Course for a game of snooker or billiards in an Air Force Club. This introduction to these two games was to stand me in good stead during my time overseas for the special tables needed for Snooker & Billiards, were often found in a Sergeants' Mess. Going to the picture shows (movies) was a popular diversion but attending dances was certainly most welcome. Wearing our dark blue uniform was in contrast to the khaki worn by the Aussie and American soldiers but we all had a great time. An occasional visit to my Aunts and Grand Mother brought me up to date on the whereabouts of Uncles in the armed forces. A few occasions were spent at the beaches but as it was now April the weather was becoming cooler.

Finally on the **14 April 1944** I again met up with a few of my Course at the Perth Railway Station to commence our journey to the Eastern States. We were not told of our destination so it would come as a surprise. After buckets of tears had been shed the troop train pulled out under the power of a puffing steam engine. The Western Australian railway lines were spaced 3 foot 6 inches apart which naturally created considerable problems for interstate transfer of goods and passengers. Seating position in the "dog box" compartment was sorted out in the most democratic way possible....first in had first choice late comers took what was left. The usual banter of stories about the embarkation leave, conquests by the self-confessed braggers. Inwardly we were all pretty excited about what was immediately happening and what was likely to be our ultimate destination overseas. Now the trains in W.A. were not renowned for rapid movement but at least we were travelling in an eastward direction. Some 12 miles out of Perth we commenced a snail paced crawl up a steep incline, through a tunnel and finally reached the top of the escarpment. W.A. has a narrow coastal plain then a plateau some 600 to 1200 feet high then well inland another plateau rising up to 3000 feet. We had for company a huge silver coloured pipe that followed the railway tracks. This was the world famous water pipe line carrying water from the Mundaring Weir to the dry interior ending at the Golden Mile city of Kalgoorlie. Provision of this water made for the very existence of our inland towns.

An unexpected stop at the small railway station of Clackline saw the sudden exodus of "old hands" for they knew that a refreshment room would be open for thirsty and hungry travellers. An Australian railway refreshment room in those far off days was an experience like no other. A pie and tomato sauce, thick white bread sandwiches and cups of tea formed the staple fare but the more sophisticated, discerning customers headed for the bar and a scooner (glass) of beer. We were soon passing through wheat and sheep farming areas now still brown and dry after the long hot summer. By next month, after the first of the winter rains, the country will be transformed by a carpet of green of sprouting crops or pastures. All day we travelled in the rocking rail carriage stopping for typically prepared Army style meals. Although the journey to Kalgoorlie was 372 miles we would not arrive until the following morning. Just to the east of Kalgoorlie we all told to leave the train with our personal luggage. We only had a fleeting glimpse of the City of Kalgoorlie as we slowly passed through and stopped." Everyone left the train carriages with our kit bags.

"I need 20 volunteers," sprouted a Sergeant involved with the movement of troop trains, "you, you, you," he commanded as he moved along in front of us, "**follow me with your gear.**"

Up ahead was a Commonwealth train that travelled on the world standard 4 feet 8.5 inch track with its hissing steam engine impatiently waiting. We stumbled along the track running along side the rails, past the long line of rail carriages." Halt!" bellowed our train guide," your first class rail accommodation awaits you mob!"

"What do you mean, this isn't a carriage?" ventured a more mature member of our mob. "Well it is as far as you concerned. Hop inside immediately and you will see just how spacious your compartment is." "It's a bloody cattle truck!" exploded a more knowledgeable Pilot, "My brother told me about them." With some difficulty we tossed our kit bags in through the door and dragged ourselves up and into the truck. Although in all honesty there was no sign of any cattle having travelled in this particular rolling stock. It did look something like one of those carriages in which, luckless German prisoners were herded, as depicted in the movie films of the era. "Bloody straw palliasses and army issue blankets!" exploded the first to enter the new domain. As we all event rely assembled in this huge van the full realization of our predicament jolted us to reality of the situation. This would be our home for the days ahead that it took for a train to cross the Nullarbor Plain (treeless) until we reached the state of South Australia. Along each side of the van was a narrow wooden bench that served as a seat but was in reality far too narrow while at one end was a barn type door (we had just entered through it) and another at the diagonally opposite end. This meant that the lower half of the door could be closed and the upper section left open. With three bodies leaning on the open door looking, out was the maximum number catered for at each door. It was fairly evident that the simple pleasure of viewing the passing vista was going to take a great deal of restraint by every one's patience. There certainly were no windows. I wonder if the "decision" makers of this form of travel had ever bothered to see the final arrangements when loaded with troops. I suspect they probably kept well away and promptly forgot about it. Our water bag was in place on the "barn type" door, but no toilet "facilities" were included. Another of my Course, Don Burges, from a well known farming family in York (W.A.) and I set up our selected palliasses adjacent to one another. With our kit bags as pillows we surveyed our domain from the flat of our backs. From this position one gained a completely new perspective. Having made claim to a site we clambered down to the ground and set off to inspect the travel arrangements of other pilots. If you have ever tried entering a railway carriage from ground level you will remember just how difficult it is.

"Well Jubbsie, where did you end up, lost sight of you as you disappeared into the distance?" asked the smirking Keith Smith. "Oh, a first class carriage at the front of the train," I lied." You lucky b..... (well used Aussie expression) just look how we are jammed in." Don and I viewed the arrangements and departed for a toot had been sounded from our waiting locomotive. Apart from not having any windows to watch the passing country side our "cattle truck" took on a new dimension was our decision for the moment. "Looks like we may about to leave," I mentioned, but that explanation was rudely interrupted by a sudden jolt that sent a number of standing occupants crashing down onto their straw palliasses. Well they certainly broke their fall but dented a little of their egos. By the time the train had reached its cruising speed it was most evident to all that this form of rail travel was going to be something to remember and endure. Some one suggested that the carriage wheels were not completely round which was causing the swaying and shuddering that vibrated the whole environment. "This is no b.... good!" I growled as I dug into my kit bag, "But I'll soon fix that." I had been a Boy Scout for only one evening, but it left me borrowing their motto, "Be Prepared." From the depths of the kit bag I with drew my two pieces of cotton rope (from the Geraldton trip) and promptly set about erecting a hammock using one of the army blankets. I had already noticed the hand rail on each side of the van above the narrow seat. I was soon ensconced in my cocoon swaying back and forth but without the jolts.

The transit observers standing at the open barn door provided a running commentary of points of interest as they flashed by. When something of profound interest (like a wild camel) was sighted, a mad rush to the door was made. It wasn't long before we settled into a routine of dozing, reading a book that some one had thoughtfully brought with them, playing cards or trying to talk above the deafening noise. When our train gave indications of slowing down everyone reached for their own personal crockery and cutlery thoughtfully issued by the R.A.A.F. before leaving Perth. This comprised of two large, rectangular, galvanized steel pannikin each with a fold up wire handle, knife, fork & spoon and enamel mug. We stood waiting for the train to come to a halt so as to quickly exit the van and head for the meal serving area. Several tables were set up near the end of this very long line of carriages. Because we were located near the steam engine our arrival was usually at the end of a very long queue of soldiers, sailors and airmen. Meals usually meant army stews in one pannikin while the other proffered pannikin was given a serving of tinned fruit and custard. If you were able to manage to carry both pannikins in one hand you could collect a mug of black, sweet tea. Meals were devoured sitting in the desert sand with one hand fending off the hordes of bush flies. There was always some discussion about the additives that cooks (who called the b... cooks) were supposed to add to meals or tea to curb the natural desires of active young men. I never did learn the truth or fantasy of such statements. I wonder if any combat cameraman ever recorded these train catering capers. The washing up facilities was an eye opener the first time one experienced the army style on a troop train. What had started out as a tub of hot soapy water soon deteriorated into a murky mess. After immersing your pannikin you endeavoured to complete a final cleaning with a piece of paper. Whether the army cooks came out of the hinterland or whether they accompanied us in their own section of the train I never tried to find out. Our Toilet requirement was accomplished by heading for the bush. Needless to say this mode of travel was the most basic and I would not wish it on anyone. Three stops a day for meals also meant a short time to walk about and escape from the constant noise and an occasional chat with another traveller. A warning toot from the engine driver had us scurrying back to our "van". Eventually we crossed into another vast state that of South Australia. I vividly remember the havoc of wind erosion caused by the plague of rabbits that has decimated many farming areas throughout Australia.

We continued onto Adelaide, the Capital of South Australia, meant another change of trains again because of a different railway line gauge. The trip was now onto Melbourne, the Capital of Victoria, so we had to change to another train because of a different rail gauge. Fortunately we were now travelling in normal (by Australian standards) rail carriages, so at least we could see where we were going. I found the whole trip a most interesting experience. Finally our destination was reached when we pulled into the beautiful city of Melbourne. Eventually we were delivered to the Melbourne Cricket Ground where the England verses Australia Test Matches were fought out.

"What are stopping here for?" enquired a boy from the bush. "This is your new home!" exclaimed our tour N.C.O. guide, "collect all your gear and follow me."

Finally we were led into one of the enormous grand stands. "Drop your kit bags here on the grand stand seats, and now come with me." After we collected the ever popular straw palliasses and blankets we were herded back to our kit bags "I wonder where our beds are?" commented an innocent from W.A. Our tour leader thought that was hilarious. "You will make up your beds right where you are standing." So our new abode was somewhat original...something to write home about. Who could ever, in years to come, could boast about the time they slept in these famous stands. I must mention that partitions had been erected to keep out the driving rain, for which Victoria was famous, but not the breeze that funnelled around the stand creating a wind tunnel.

Over the next 8 days we were apparently fed then let loose on the unsuspecting inhabitants of Melbourne. Sight seeing appealed to us young innocents. A visit to the Melbourne Museum was high lighted because that is where we saw the legendary race horse, "Phar-lap" on display in a huge glass case. A more knowledgeable character informed us that Australia's most famous horse was poisoned at a race track in America to stop him winning a particular race. Probably the most important places we visited were the two ice rinks. We had all seen the fabulous movies with Sonya Henie making ice skating look so easy. Local girls, with their ever so short skating skirts, encouraged us to go onto the ice usually in the hope that we might make their acquaintance. It was through their help that we started to at least make some shaky circuits (and bumps). We had such a great- time helped by some gorgeous creatures, that we all returned a number of times through out our stay. As usual going to the movies was a popular pastime and one particular film I enjoyed was "Stage Door Canteen." Little did I then know that in just over a month's time I would be standing in front of the real Stage Door Canteen in New York.

On the 27th April, 1944, a number of us were told to have all our gear packed and to be ready to move at a moments notice. This would be the first time we were split up for we had been together as a group for the past year. Hasty good-byes were made to those who were not then moving on. No one was aware where we were going. That evening we assembled with our kit bags, and wearing our newly issued dark blue battle dress uniforms with "Australia" badges sewn on (by our own needle craft) each shoulder as well as on our great coats. Still no indication as to where we were bound. A short train ride had some hundreds of assorted Air Crew, made up of Air Gunners, Wireless Air Gunners, Navigators and Pilots deposited at the Port of Melbourne. Staggering under the load of a large white kit bag and a smaller blue kit bag we were herded up the gang plank of an awaiting ship. In no time we were shown an allotted bunk in a crowded cabin. Three sets of double tiered bunks, meant that six of us, together with all our blue kitbags dumped in the middle of the available floor space, created a degree of chaos. By the time we had made up our bed and stowed our gear we were reasonably comfortable providing we were not all standing up at the same time. Our cabin had a bath room adjoining. It appeared that our vessel was a passenger ship and our cabin had originally been designed to hold two occupants in some degree of comfort. With everything reasonably tidy we went out on deck to look around but a cloak of darkness encompassed the ship and wharf. These were the days of "black outs." As it was cold and a drizzle of rain was falling we went below as the ship cast off and made its way down Port Phillip Bay.

"It'll get pretty rough as we go out through the Heads," informed one of the Victorians. As I have had one bout of sea sickness while in the Air Cadets I decided that I would have an early night. In reality I was extremely tired for it had been a long day accompanied with excitement and a certain degree of apprehension. Early the following morning I quickly dressed and made my way out onto the aft deck. It was a cold overcast day with light rain falling and the ship was rolling quite heavily in the notorious Bass Strait. Every now and then the whole ship would vibrate as the stern rose on a wave. A nearby merchant sailor was standing with feet apart and moving with the motion of the ship. In my usual inquisitive nature I let go of the rail and tried to stand like the professional and started up by enquiring the name of the ship. "She's the "Mariposa" an American passenger ship," came his reply after he spat over the side, "and we are heading for the States. "What intrigued me was a packet he withdrew from his duffle coat and shook some of its contents into his right hand then transferred it to his mouth. I could contain my interest no longer.

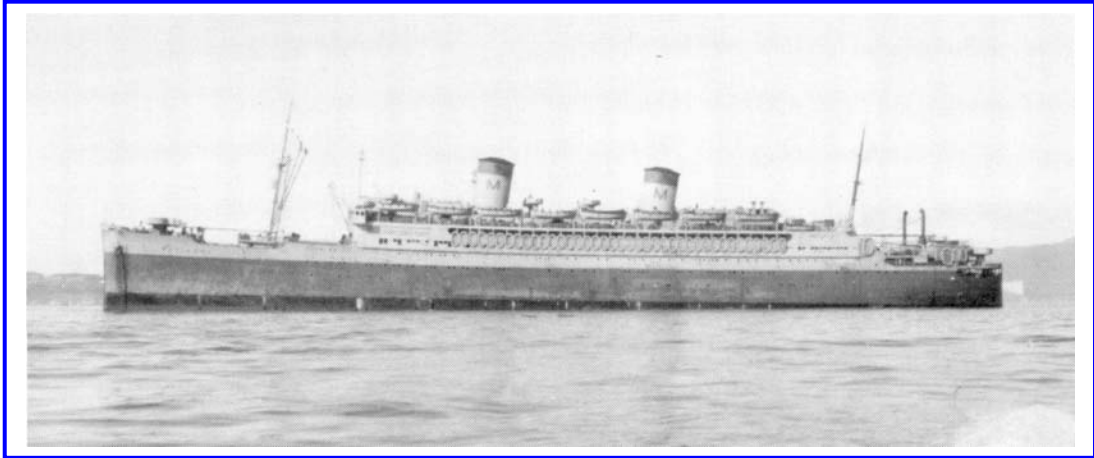
Would you tell me what that crumbly stuff you are chewing is?" "Why that's chewing tobacco!" came his surprised answer. I knew that sailors of old used to bite off pieces from a plug of hard tobacco then "gob" over the side. I imagine that is why American sailors were known to us as Gobs. We stood chatting for some time before he set off to go on duty. I stayed on deck just

getting used to the motion of the ship as it went on an apparent weaving course. Over forty years later, on a Junk in Hong Kong, I was to unexpectedly meet up with that same ex-sailor (a chippy, a carpenter) who had made that same voyage on the "Mariposa." In the circumstances I decided I would not go to breakfast but stay in the fresh air and look around the steadily rolling ship. Little did I know there would only be two meals each day so my next would not be until evening.. What a strange sensation of pressure on your legs as you walked along a deck as the bow dipped, then the opposite occurred, and you were then pressed into the deck....one minute a lightness the next a heaviness. By now many of my countrymen were on deck all talking and discussing the direction we were travelling and the ultimate destination. Although completely overcast with occasional showers we knew that we were heading in an easterly direction. I was able to tell of my earlier conversation and the likely hood that we were going to America. The appearance of an albatross kept me fascinated by its effortless flight, one moment skimming the surface of the rolling seas, the next rising and weaving without once flapping its wings. For the weeks ahead we would often have the company of these great sea birds. Flying fish would occasionally break out of a wave and skim for a considerable distance before re-entering the grey seas. I had read that on yachts they would frequently land in the cockpit then into the cooking pot. On returning to my cabin I met by two Flight Sergeant Pilots, who appeared to have been waiting my arrival.

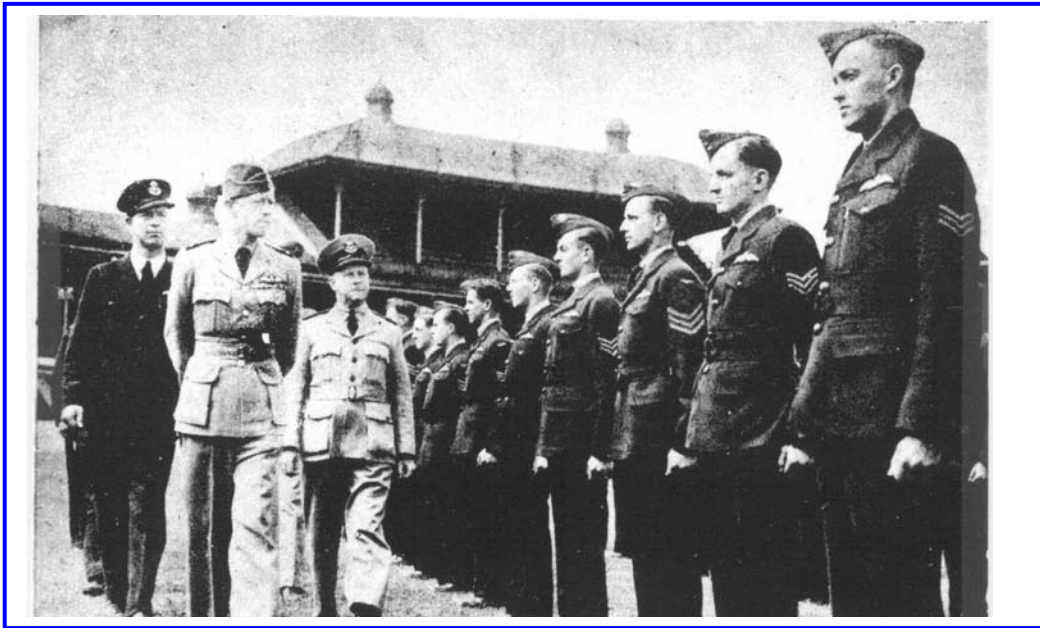
"I am Basil Atkinson and my mate here is Ron Jacobs" Les, would you mind swapping cabins so that Ron and I can travel together?." Both had been Staff pilots probably flying Navigators or Wireless Air Gunners while impatiently waiting a posting overseas. Transfer of my gear took only a few minutes so we both gained for I was back with two from my group. I was informed by those, who had braved the breakfast, as to the culinary delights and the whereabouts of the dining area a number of decks down. I believe I had made the right decision but I was never to miss another in my complete circumnavigation of the world even the worst of storms at sea. There is probably a degree of "mind over matter" regards sea sickness. Two of us, Don Burges and I set off to explore the ship and seek out any facilities.

My first shock was on entering a large saloon to find it was already crowded but not with Servicemen, but dozens of women, children and men. These people were Missionaries from India returning to the United States of America. That confirmed that our destination was somewhere in that huge land mass but which seaboard no one really knew. Never before had I ever seen family groups, who had willingly left the comfort of their own country to go off to preach the Gospel to peoples of remote India. Frequently I attended their daily services to hear of what their lives had been like and their successes. Not being very religious (I had attended Sunday School but as an 8 year old had spent my collection coin on small packets of "Wild Woodbine" cigarettes!. My attendance was mainly to observe these people and occasionally have a brief chat. There seemed to be a herd instinct with these people for they tended to keep very much to themselves. Perhaps they had heard some unfavourable things about the Australian "colonials." Up on the boat deck we made our way forward so that we could see over the foredeck to the bows lifting and diving as the ship was driven by the following seas. It was exhilarating just watching and occasionally catching a fleeting glimpse of the phantom crew members up on the Bridge. The day passed quickly for our time was fully occupied searching every where that it did not have a "No Admittance" sign. There would come a time later in the voyage that those signs were ignored.

"Chow" time was announced over the loud speakers so down to the Mess Hall we scampered. What a surprise...there were long high tables but no chairs so it would be a stand-up meal. At the line up I was introduced to the special meal tray that was indented to hold portions of different foods. Americans had a system of allowing you to have as much as you wanted BUT were



The "S S Mariposa"(26,141 tons) was in Sydney on December 7 1941 as part of her regular passenger voyage. My voyage on her was from Melbourne on 27 April 1944, bound for Boston, USA. During WW2 this ship transported 202,689 Service personnel.



Just prior to going over seas most newly Graduated Air Crews were inspected by visiting "Brass"



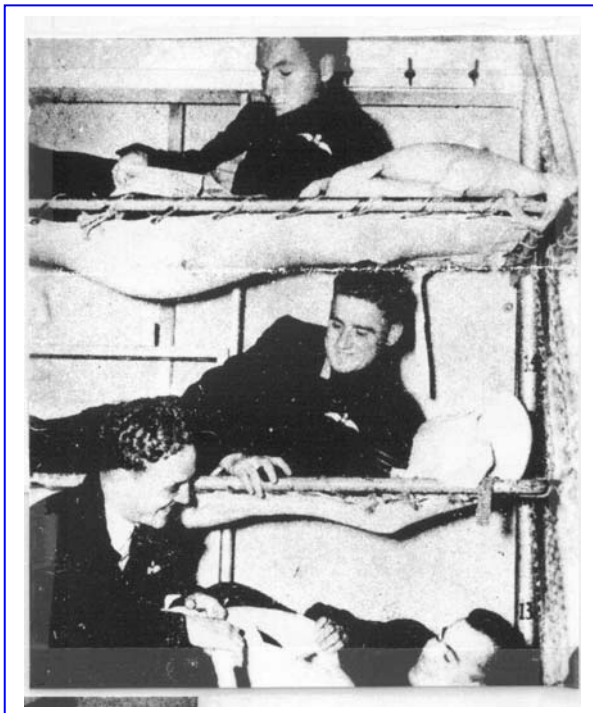
It was necessary for all personnel to pack in their small kit bag every thing they could possibly want for a ship voyage that could take a month in duration. All other gear was packed in a large white kit bag and stowed in section of the ship and would not be available until leaving the ship.



Those Air Crews with a Half Wing could be Observers, Wireless Air Gunners or Gunners while others were Ground Staff.



On occasions some one may have had an illegal camera because it was against Regulations. Consequentially there is a dearth of personal photographs taken on Air Force Bases.



Multiteered Bunks was the most favourite way to cram and incredible number of Service personnel into a Troop Ship. Aboard the Queen Mary we had 16,000 young American Soldiers on board but only for 6 days..

United States of America were known for providing great meals and on the Mariposa we were greatly pleased and surprised by the diversity of meals. There were only two meals per day but there was never any rationing but very much against wastage. Therefore only take what you would eat. On our first Sunday evening meal we were given what appeared to be the World's largest chicken leg. It looked as if it had come from the leg of an Emu (large flightless Australian bird) but it was in reality my first introduction to a turkey. I believe every Aussie went through the servery line a second time. I guess the American cooks were well aware of the likely hood that these Aussies would be back for seconds. The aroma of American coffee was what I vividly recall and got to like with the addition of "cream" but really a tinned, un-sweetened milk. When we

advanced to the place where we washed up our tray, came my second surprise. Jets of scalding sea water thoroughly cleaned each crevice then the tray was dipped in a bath of boiling water and deposited on a drying rack. I thought back to the troop train facilities on the Nullarbor. We were assembled on the boat deck and introduced to the wearing of our orange coloured life jackets and the proper position where we were to assemble in an emergency. This drill would be carried out occasionally throughout the voyage for we realized that emergencies did occur and our survival depended upon playing our part.

"500" was a popular card game we all played throughout the day. Anyone who lost concentration was soon teased by a partner or took a ribbing from the opponents. The only gambling game,(it is hard to imagine how it could be classified so) allowed under King's Regulations in the British Forces was Housie... or now known as Bingo. A game was started one evening by some enterprising pair of English soldiers, who just happened to have the necessary score cards. Rules were explained to us "new chums" as we all sat in the foyer along side of the stairs going down and up to other decks. Then commenced the calling of the numbers as they were taken from a barrel and announced in a rhyming slang. "legs eleven" and so on. The idea was to cover each number on the card (we only hired it for one game) as they were called. I found it rather boring but I was talked into a second game which I won the prize. With the winnings I trooped off to the canteen where I became addicted to tinned salted American peanuts. Some one produced a map of the world from some long since discarded school atlas. Some ex-boy scout demonstrated how to find north using our wrist watch. From then onwards you would occasionally see someone rechecking north. As budding navigators we calculated our progress to the nearest 1,000 miles. In due course, and in the dead of night, we stood on deck and caught a glimpse of the coast line of the North Island of New Zealand as it passed down our port side. Naturally we then hurried to the starboard side and waited for a sight of the South Island. In due course a sighting was made. A certain smugness descended upon us. From that day the ship appeared to be making for lower latitudes for the climate, although approaching winter in the Southern Hemisphere, was starting to become chilly. Captain Cook, in his voyage looking for the Great Southland had said of the climate that it was "bracing". We certainly had sunny days that seemed to enhance the incredible blue of the South Pacific. Winds were undoubtedly part of the Roaring forties for their direction never varied. We assumed our passage so far south was to keep clear of Japanese submarines. One day I was standing on the aft lower deck looking at the churning wake when I noticed something bobbing about on the end of a long piece of rope that was fastened to the hand rail. Presently an English soldier came up and stood next to me and commenced to pull in the rope. What a surprise I got when over the side came a bundle of clothes all sparkling clean (but would be quite stiff when dried). As he appeared to own the rope I started a conversation about what he was doing on board as a lead up to making use of his "facility." I'm a prisoner of war guard," he explained, "to those Germans over there." He pointed to an enclosure on one section of the starboard after deck. "They're a surly, arrogant bunch and not to be trusted," was his final comment. With his permission to use his rope I raced back to the cabin, collected my towel, shirts and under gear then hurried back to the stern. With all tied on securely I dropped the lot overboard and meditated over the ease of now doing the washing of clothes. "Hell!" came a startled cry from a young bloke near by, "I've lost all my gear!" as he hauled in a broken piece of rope. Anxiously I looked out to the turbulent, thrashing foam then carefully pulled in my essential belongings, which by now had gained considerable weight being laden with Pacific ocean. Once retrieved and on deck I there and then vowed I would revert to the more traditional method of "doing" the laundry in the cabin basin. All this good food and idle life style was conducive to putting on weight so the more energetic fraternity started jogging (called running in those far off days) around the spacious boat deck while us lesser mortals went for leisurely walks and saw the same sights. While on one of these constitutionals my name was called over the public address system...at least it was pronounced correctly. My guilty conscience set up alarm bells...had it been discovered that I should not have

been given wings, or what misdemeanour had I committed...all sorts of thoughts were running through my mind as made my way to Cabin 56. Cautiously I lightly tapped on the door hoping no one would hear

"Come in!" commanded the hidden person. "You're Jubbs, 436853?" queried a R.A.A.F. Sergeant Medical Type. "Yes," I stammered. "I've been checking your medical records and have discovered (my heart momentary stopped, I think) you have not had a vaccination against Small Pox. A flood of relief came over me but it was short lived. I hastily explained my early brush with Dr Edward Jenner's Cow Pox as an 11 year old "It will certainly take this time after I have given it to you, or I'll swim the rest of the way," came the reply to my protestations. "Remove your battle dress tunic and roll up your shirt" No wonder the Air Force condition us by constantly issuing orders for we unconsciously do as we are told (or get "scrubbed" for not doing so). By now the Medic had turned to face me and advanced with a great big darning needle in his right hand and a small bottle in the other. With a sudden sideways swipe at my left arm a scratch one inch long was inflicted causing blood to flow. To this was applied a dab of some substance from the small bottle "That'll do the trick" came the sinister remark as a protective patch was applied, "Come back and see me in a few days when it has taken," came the self assured order.

As I returned to the cabin I couldn't help thinking about the Medic, who was actually working while we lounged about in the sun. I had no idea that anyone was actually accompanying us for I had no recollection of any Officer being in Charge of our group, it was as if, we were free agents on a world cruise. "What happened to you Jubbsie ?" enquired one of the reclining cabin members. My explanation brought peels of mirth for they had already, twelve months earlier, gone through the turmoil of the Small Pox vaccination. Full of confidence I remembered my Cow Pox and how I had been spared the problems that some air crew members went through. A few days later I awoke feeling a little off colour so I lifted the gauze patch on my arm and to my horror saw the beginning of long pussy sore. A short time later it had grown to an enormous proportion. Eventually a scab formed, then fell off leaving a wide scar. The medic was pleased with his handwork for it seemed to have justified his trip with us for he didnot have any other customers. On morning we realized we had changed course and were now heading in a more north-easterly direction. The weather was warming and clear skies appeared. With this change in temperature the air in our small cabin became quite muggy during the night. A number of us then decided that we would sleep out on deck under a covered area. All went well until rudely awakened, very early, by a crew member, who began to hose down the deck. Knowing this hosing went on each morning didnot deter us from sleeping out on many occasions. As a youth I had slept out on a verandah at my Aunt's house (which was a common practice in those days.) The gun crew decided to have a little practice one day. We were startled when the 4 or 5 inch gun roared forth. A target barrel had been dropped overboard but whether it was hit we never found out. It was a re-awakening to the fact that there was a war going on and perhaps we were approaching a region where alertness was essential. There was a sudden rush out onto the deck by every one for the distinctive sound of a multi-engine aircraft was overhead. At about 200 feet an American Martin Mariner flying boat made three passes down our port side. Some one must know our whereabouts and destination. A few days later an Air Cobra fighter buzzed our ship so we knew we must be fairly near to land. Sure enough a port hove in sight and other ships appeared. We had finally reached Balboa, the entrance to the famous Panama Canal. Today was going to be one my most interesting experiences.

The "Maraposa" moved slowly up river passing many ships going in the opposite direction. Many had undoubtedly come from ports on the eastern sea board of United States of America, and now, heavily laden with essential war supplies for the U.S.A. armed forces in the Pacific. As we moved on I caught a momentary glimpse of two enormous gates slowly opening for our admittance

to the first of the "Miraflores" locks. Heavy steel hawsers linked our ship to two miniature electric locomotives which immediately hauled us into an immense concrete dock. The moment the vessel came to a stop and the lock gates began closing. Here we were well down inside the lock looking up to where we could see armed soldiers. As water from ahead poured into our lock our ship began to rise as if on an escalator until we were then looking down onto the locomotives that had drawn us into the lock. Now two lock gates ahead opened and we were again drawn into the next lock. Again the same procedure was carried out with us rising on each occasion. This procedure was to be repeated a number of times before passing through the "Pedro Miguel" locks. As we were about to leave the last lock I hurried to the stern of our ship. What an incredible sight it was, for there, stretching for miles, was a bird's view of the series of stepping stones locks that had lifted this huge ship from the Pacific Ocean, far below, and now, to the lakes high up on the hinterland of Panama. While we were being lifted to the "Gatum Lakes" other ships were being lowered through a duplicate set of locks. Heavy jungle came down to the waters edge of these lakes through which we now moved under our own power. The route through the Lakes was quite torturous, for we were continually turning one way then the other often passing other ships heading in the opposite direction. Eventually ahead we could see the series of "**Gatum Locks**" down which we would be carried to the Caribbean Sea that lay far below. How glad I was that we had made this section of our voyage in day light. Passing through the port of Colon saw us ready for "hitting the hay" for it had been a very long, but interesting day. By the following morning we were back on deck for we were in an area where many ships had been sunk by German U-Boats. Black out on the ship was demanded. We sailed through the Caribbean Sea and not once did we see any island although there must be hundreds. By now we had moved into the Atlantic Ocean and it was here we had a number of submarine alarms which had us to our allotted life boat station in record time. One morning a U.S. Navy Blimp made a sweep over us creating a feeling of some security in the notion that no submarine would surely make a move on us with that craft above us. No sign of any other vessel did we encounter on our run up the eastern American seaboard.

On the evening of the 23 May 1944 we tied up in **Boston Harbour, United States of America**, the site of the famous "Boston Tea Party". No leave was to be granted so there was a degree of disappointment as we had been on board the Mariposa (a pre-war American Passenger ship) for the past four weeks. A "buzz" quickly circulated through all the Air Crew that we would walk off the ship and to all assemble at 8pm at the gang way. By the appointed hour every one had assembled in our best blue uniforms. Down the gang plank strode the "gallant" (like the gallant 600 in days of old) only to come to a sudden halt when two American S.P.(Service Police) armed with .5 Tommy Guns said No!! As discretion is the best form of valour, those in the front rank with the Tommy Guns thrust into their stomachs, nodded in ready agreement. Their big problem, at that very moment was how to convince the two hundred behind them to see their predicament. In due course the word filtered back to the rear and to the relief of the two facing the firing squad the "march off" was abandoned. A few did consider putting their commando skills to the test by going ashore down the mooring lines but I saw no one make the attempt. The following morning all the R.A.A.F. contingent left, what had been our home for the past four weeks, and went ashore with high hopes, but still not knowing where we were going. A bus took us to a waiting train after each being issued with an individual lunch box. Our rail carriage was the most comfortable I had ever ridden. It was like a bus, with all the seats grouped around small tables. You could feel the generated excitement for everyone was grinning and wide eyed. Here we were in the United States, travelling on a great train, leaving Boston but still unaware as to our destination "It's New York!" came a sudden yell from Keith Smith, "we're going to New York." Pandemonium broke out, everyone was so ecstatic at the very thought of really going to the "Big Apple." Keith had used some common sense and asked the very person who would know where we were going. He had asked the ticket collector! There was so much to see as we raced through the country side and

through towns first looking out the window next to our seats then rushing to the opposite side windows in response to some excited shout. The opening of our lunch boxes caused some hilarity at the discovery of the thoughtful contents among the sandwiches and fruit. Every thing was individually wrapped including an issue of toilet paper along with candy bars and a carton of fruit juice. If only such a box could be air freighted back to Australia and shown to every politician and Serviceman and Servicewomen. As our train approached our destination it slowed down considerably so as to meander through the winding tracks that overlooked some of the seamier side of this very congested City. That late afternoon we arrived at Fort Hamilton, a U.S. Army Base Camp located in Brookland. Our barracks were exactly like the ones we had seen in all the American Movies. Spotlessly clean and fitted out. As it had been a long day a shower and clean clothes rejuvenated any flagging bodies. The Mess Hall and food was marvellous. Then someone discovered a magical place called a **P.X.** but I still do not know what P.X. means but it was a huge shop, and department store all rolled into one. We all bought over-night bags for someone had found out that we would be given some leave. Next day we all assembled in a very large hall to be given a "pep talk" by some Australian, R.A.A.F. Officer, who had come down from Canada. Would his trip expenses ever be questioned by some authority for the sum total of his contribution to our enlightenment would not have been more than fifteen minutes. Apart from the usual warning about V.D. he stated that no one should go into Harlem. Bill Connolly (ex-policeman) and a mate, promptly made a visit at the first opportunity. He commented about the different meanings, that the Americans would interpret from of our colloquial sayings, was the only thing I remember. He said that we should not use the expression... "I called around to her place and knocked her up!" I don't think I had ever heard anyone use the expression at home in Australia. Its American meaning meant "you got her pregnant!" After receiving a pay in U.S. dollars and doing such mundane chores, like washing clothes, and ironing shirts and tunic uniform we hurried into New York. Don Burges and I found a place to stay called the Red Shield I didn't realize that it was a Salvation Army establishment) which had been a men's club before the war. It was an excellent place to stay for it was centrally located and quite inexpensive. For days I went off by myself just wandering about this wonderful city. Central Park is right in the city and completely surrounded by tall buildings yet also has a Zoo. While strolling down Fifth Avenue I found my self standing outside the entrance to a large department store so I went in. Every where there was nothing but displays of diamonds and attentive shop assistants present. I had only been there a few minutes when a well dressed man approached and asked if he could be of assistance "No thanks," I replied, "I am just having a look around but I don't intend buying any diamonds!" "Would you like to see some diamonds, I could show you some of our collection?" was his suggestion. During the next fifteen minutes I was exposed to trays and trays of the most beautiful gems. Finally he ushered me into an inner sanctum and asked me to sit down at a special display table. This was impressive to an innocent a broad like me "The diamond I am about to show you is very rarely seen by visitors and it has the same name as our Store." He then uncovered the most beautiful, yellow coloured and probably one of the largest dazzling diamonds in the world. It was the "Tiffany Diamond." In later years I would look at that diamond in an encyclopaedia and wonder if I had only dreamt the whole incident. "If you had said that you wanted to purchase a diamond then I would not have shown you what you have seen today," was the parting comment of my Host. He must have been some one of importance In Tiffany's to have had access to the "**Tiffany Diamond.**" Having heard about the "Empire State Building" I set off in search of that most famous structure and an obliging New York Cop pointed me in the right direction and duly arrived after a number of diversions along the way. An express lift soared me aloft with a number of "G" forces exerted on my body. A change of lift took me to the then highest building in the world. It was as high as what we flew to complete a circuit of an airfield on which we were going to land. The view was breathtaking. Bridges across the East River

were crowded with vehicles and in the opposite direction was the river separating Manhattan and New Jersey. Sky scrapers were in every direction. I enjoyed just wandering down the Avenues and side Streets just observing the life around me. Suddenly I remembered the movie about the "Stage Door Canteen" so I asked the first U.S. Serviceman for directions.«» "You're too late," was his first remarks, "it's closed for renovations." He explained how to get there so that is where I headed. At least I walked up to the very door of the locked building. As it was approaching my Mother's birthday I went into "Macy's Department Store" and had a parcel of linen sent back to Australia. Un-be known to me but the Store sent a cheque for 25 cents to my Mother because I had been overcharged!. Often people would stop me in the street to offer guidance, or to hear what language the people from "Down Under" used. One young lass, about my age, asked three of us if we would like to have lunch at her Aunt's apartment the day following. Naturally this was an invitation we could not refuse but when we arrived outside the apartment next morning I wondered what we had let ourselves in for. A lift ride to the seventh floor, a few steps to apartment nine, found us ringing the bell. A beaming smile from our Hostess and a friendly greeting invited us into a large, beautifully furnished room. In the corner stood a real Harp which intrigued me for I had never seen one that I could actually touch. "Does your Aunt play the Harp?" I ventured to ask. "No," came a laughing reply, "but I do, because the Harp belongs to me." In response to our flow of questions we learnt that our Hostess was from one of the Southern States and at present visiting her Aunt.

"Hope you all like lobster salad?" enquired our charming Hostess as she showed us around this very large apartment. What a contrast this apartment was to what I had tried to imagine while standing on the side-walk (foot path). Our lunch was a most pleasant occasion with the three Aussies responding appropriately to the questions asked. We each had an enormous lobster (our version at home were known as crayfish) with equally large nippers, Marian Perley's feast included a whole range of delicious salads. The dining room was spacious with a very long table capable of seating a very large group. The Aunt was not at home during our stay. Later that afternoon we made our departure after profusely thanking this lass for her kindness and generosity. Just prior to returning to Fort Hamilton I paid a visit to "Radio City" and saw myself on a T.V. monitor. It would be many years before television would change our life styles. On return to the "Fort" there was a deluge of stories and experiences exchanged. Some who had run out of money had approached an Air Force Club in New York for assistance. What a time some of them had if you only believed a fraction of their accounts. When it was announced at an assembly that we could have another seven day pass (leave) a spontaneous roar of approval went up. A rush was made to pack a bag, collect some money and accompanied by Don Burges, hurried back to the "Big City". It appeared that most of my colleagues had the same idea for where should we all bump into one another but at the "Air Force Club." A most efficient lass, made a phone call, after consulting a file catalogue, then explained to Don and I where to go. Armed with directions, we made our way to the ferry to cross the Hudson River, where we boarded a train for Crandford, New Jersey. On Crandford Railway Station we were warmly welcomed by Mr Towler, who quickly ushered us into his car and whisked us to his home. I felt strange driving along on the right hand side of the road, but as I remember it, doing a left hand turn was hair- raising. With in a few minutes we drove up the drive of a lovely, two story home. The front door immediately opened and Mrs Towler gave us a beaming smile and invited us in. Don and I shared a bedroom on the floor above where we quickly deposited our few belongings and reappeared down stairs. It was a most beautiful house with elegant furniture. We were shown all over the house including the cellar, which surprised me as to its huge floor area. A heating furnace, for central heating, gave an indication that winters in this locality could be severe, stood in one corner along with an array of sporting equipment. Jane, the daughter, was on holidays from "Smith's College" but at our arrival was "doing" a vacation job, while the son had not come home from college. Mr Towler was with a Publishing Company in New York and commuted each morning with friends on the fast train service. During the week, with this

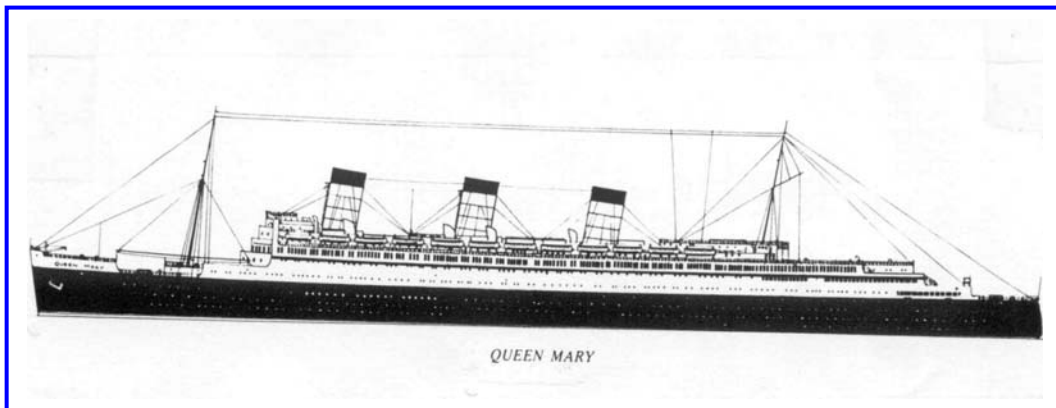
great family we visited Princeton University, passed through a host of nearby towns and a sea side resort with its long, wide board walk



Don Burges, ?, Jane Towler and myself taken by a sea side photographer, who then printed this photograph back to front as evidenced by our Wings and caps on the wrong side.

. The beach sand certainly wasn't the glistening white sands of Perth beaches. Each day both Don and I frequented the "Country Club" and swam in the swimming pool, lazed in the warm sun (it was summer time in the northern hemisphere) glanced over to the golfers playing on "Club's" course, then had leisurely lunch. This was a life style that we certainly found no fault. Un-known to us, but a number of our colleagues were also staying with different families in Crandford. Daughters of all the Host families organized a soft ball game, in which we all participated, and finished the afternoon with a barbecue. Hot dogs smothered in lashings of mustard were handed out by all the gorgeous girls. My only experience with mustard was with the extremely hot variety so it was with a certain amount of caution that I tackled mine. What a surprise to find it was a very mild variety which I still enjoy. Another surprise the girls had for us was canoeing on a local waterway. I couldn't imagine how you could keep an Indian type canoe moving straight ahead by paddling on one side but there was a technique we learnt. It was somewhat reluctant departure when we had to leave our kind and generous Hosts and go back to the reality of our being there. Our arrival back in Fort Hamilton, regrouped our contingent with just enough time to compare our past week when we were told to pack and get ready to move within the hour. What a surprise was in store. There, berthed at one of the long docks was the one time largest ship in the world, the **"Queen Mary."** Also boarding were 16,000 American G.I.s for today was also the day of the **"Normandy Invasion." June 6, 1944.** We found our cabin held two bunks but I think its original purpose was to hold brooms for the cleaning staff. By the time we had things stowed away the "Queen Mary" had cast off and was heading for the open sea. We had a hurried view of the Statue

of Liberty but getting up on deck was a feat on its own. It seemed that 16,000 others also wanted to make their farewells to N.Y (many would never see it again) so it was a matter of waiting in line as we slowly made our way up the stairs. A place on deck could only be acquired when a body left. First day at sea was less crowded for many of the soldiers had succumbed to sea sickness. At meal times it was a sight to be seen and the organization must have been born out of long practice to feed so many mouths. I remember seeing the "Queen Mary" anchored off Fremantle (Western Australia) in 1940 loaded with Australian soldiers on their way to the Middle East to fight the Germans and Italians. Here I was now on that same mighty ship. It was explained to our R.A.A.F. group that it would be necessary for us to do some duty while on the crossing of the Atlantic Ocean. As the American soldiers would be on K.P. duty (kitchen duty) we would have



The "Queen Mary" (81,235 tons) travelled without the protection of war ships because of her extraordinary speed in all weathers (29 knots). I boarded her in New York Harbour on 6th June 1944, with 16000 US Soldiers for the voyage to Scotland. This mighty ship carried some 810,000 troops during WW2. She is still afloat at Long Beach as a museum, hotel and convention centre.

to do submarine watch. A groan could be heard. Our position would be from the Bridge!!!! Call that a duty I thought, what a fantastic opportunity to be able to go to that position. Weather for the first two days was reasonably fine so a wander around the open decks brought me in contact with a whole variety of G.I. musicians. There must have been up to a dozen groups usually comprising of three or four men playing instruments that could easily stowed away in kit bags (clarinet, trumpet, saxophone) while one would beat out a rhythm on the wooden deck with drum sticks. Each group all showed extreme competence and their own self enjoyment was most noticeable. My submarine duty fell due during a day with threatening dark clouds, with occasional heavy showers of rain, but with mountainous rolling waves. The "Mary" ploughed on through these waves while at the same time continually weaving from one heading to another. My position was from the port side of the bridge to sweep the ocean from the stem to a little aft of the bridge. I did catch a glimpse of a Royal Navy Destroyer heading in the same direction as us as it plunged into these enormous waves. In the few minutes it remained in my view, it appeared to be completely engulfed in water and spray. How glad I had never had any desire to join the Navy. The "Mary" seemed to be completely oblivious to the waves and wind for it continued to charge ahead at some fantastic speed for the Destroyer was soon left far behind. Our runaway passenger ship was so fast that war ships did not accompany her. I was also glad to be on this ship and not on one of the slow ships in a convoy that remained under the constant threat of waiting U Boats. Our Atlantic crossing ended on our arrival at Greenock, Scotland. As this was the height of the summer in this northern hemisphere I began to wonder what the winter would bring. It was even difficult to make out the shore - line even as the

"Mary" edged into the berth. We disembarked and boarded a railway carriage that must have been ready waiting our arrival. Within a few minutes we left and started a new phase in our life. Our carriage had large comfortable seats seating about five on each side of the compartment. Outside the sliding doors was a long passage way that gave access to the other compartments as well as the "little boys' room". Through out the night we raced catching occasional glimpses of small stations and hamlets but the sound of the wheels was what reminded me of the poem. "Faster than Fairy's faster than witches, bridges and houses." etc. When we woke the following morning I experienced a some what drowsy feeling then realized what had caused it when I saw the windows were completely fogged up. The air in our compartment was hot and smelly from the lack of fresh air.

Three windows on the outside of the compartment were all dropped simultaneously but the blast of bitterly cold air smelling of coal smoke from our steam train had our windows up in a flash. Small doses of outside air were occasionally allowed to enter. In due course we arrived at Warrington, mid way between Manchester and Liverpool, in the County of Lancashire. A short bus trip saw our arrival at the well known reception centre of **R.A.F. Padgate**. With our assortment of kit bags, accumulated over-night bag and odds and ends we were ushered into long dormitories. Our bed was a steel framed type but the mattress was made up of three separate squares (known as "biscuits") that could be stacked on one another for the daily folding of blankets. Fortunately we no longer had to conform to that chore but left our beds permanently made up. At least we now had sheets and pillow slips. We were introduced to the weekly laundry arrangements. A bag to hold all soiled clothing and socks was sent off and duly arrived back clean and shirts and collars ironed. I felt positively pampered. A meal times was an eye opener. W.A.A.F. girls served all meals but what I remember was the long white cotton coat worn over their uniform and some sort of white scarf over their hair. My first realization that I was really in England was when these girls spoke in their distinctive accents and called us "luv" at the end of sentences. Usually two types of potatoes were served at each meal along with other vegetables. A new dish called "spam" was frequently on the menu along with beetroot. I had never really liked beetroot but I rapidly learnt to like it for when you are hungry you tend to try every thing besides it was a bright colour and it did give another range of flavour. After a day or two settling in, we were all assembled for an address by the Commanding Officer of the RAF Padgate Base. The crux of his address was that the Pilots would not be required for a month (little did we know). All the Navigators, Wireless Operator/Gunners and straight Gunners quickly disappeared. As we could now come and go as we pleased for there was nothing for us to do regarding further training so I set off to see the sights of Warrington, Liverpool and Manchester. Thirty six years later I was to discover that I had Grand Parents and a flock of Aunts and an Uncle living in Manchester all wondering whether I would ever visit them. I had no idea that they even existed for my Mother and Father had separated when I was six years old. They all knew that I was in England in the Air Force for they had received a photograph of me that had been published in a news paper in Perth, Western Australia. The devastation and burnt out shells of buildings in Liverpool and Manchester introduced me to the fact that this country had been on the receiving end of hundreds of air raids since they commenced in 1940. People were moving about freely, going to work in the factories supplying every conceivable item for the War Effort. On this western side of England we were not able to see the daily formations of the United States Air Force flying off to Europe nor to listen to the nightly excursions by the Royal Air Force Bomber Command on their way across the North Sea or English Channel. War in Warrington was now a little remote for the likes of us but the local people were constantly reminded by their daily toil, the constant shortages of every thing and the missing family members and friends, who were in the Armed Forces. Our daily hope was that we would be un-expectedly notified to move onto an Operational Training Unit for that is why we had journeyed 12,000 miles. I now imagine that is why we remained so passive about the whole business. With more maturity no doubt a better use of all this spare time to have been more productive. We were to putter about for many weeks until it was announced that we were to proceed to Whitley Bay to take part in a Commando Course, but for

the next nine days we could go on leave. "What should we do?" asked Don Burgess as soon as the C.O. left the room. "We could go and see the Padre and take him up on what he said on our arrival about an organization that took the likes of us during leaves," I replied. "The Padre welcomed us warmly and probably thought we were a couple of potential Chapel helpers, but when we explained our need to do something during the next 9 days he was most helpful.

"Where would we like to go, town, city, village, farm, and in what region of the United Kingdom?" came his calm reply. Don and I had already discussed Scotland as a possibility so when we disclosed this he immediately suggested Edinburgh and told us to come back in two days. Sure enough two days later he had confirmation of our leave address in Edinburgh (using **The Lady Frances Ryder Scheme**) together with the necessary rail warrant. All we had to take was a food rationing card. As we were also given an Australian Comforts Parcel we were able to go armed with some tin fruit and various other "goodies". With overnight bag filled with personal clothing (a much more civilized way of carrying our gear) made our way to the Warrington Railway station and boarded a train for Bonny Scotland. It was all so exciting going on our first leave in England. We noticed the typical reserve of our English travelling companions but we soon had every one talking especially in response to our myriad of questions. As Don came from a prominent farming family in York, Western Australia, he set the ball rolling when he discovered one of our carriage companions was from a small farm in the Highlands. It seemed that in no time and we pulled into the Main Railway Station in Edinburgh. It was a fine sunny day when we jumped aboard a tram in Princess Street outside the Station. In a few minutes we approached the front door of our leave billet with a certain degree of nervousness. The front door opened in response to my gentle knock.

"Welcome lads, come inside," came a friendly greeting, "would you like a cup of tea?" Our Hostess showed us our upstairs room and over the house. I had the feeling she was relieved to know that neither Don nor myself smoked cigarettes. The only request made was that it would be appreciated that we returned reasonably early each evening. Most of our time would be spent sight seeing around Edinburgh. What intrigued me was to see the agility of elderly ladies jumping off the moving trams that rushed up and down Princess Street. I eyed the beautiful displays of chocolates in a number of shop windows in this main thoroughfare. As I did not have an appropriate ration card I never enquired about the possibility of purchasing any. Our days were kept fully occupied exploring. The first flower clock I ever saw was adjacent to Princess Street. The visit to the famous Edinburgh Castle was also our introduction to the rain that regularly fell during our stay. Some one suggested joining a party that was being shown over "**Youngers Ale Brewery**" but as neither Don nor myself drank beer we were a little reluctant. It was then suggested that the visit was of an "Educational Enlightenment!!!" It was an excellent tour conducted by the Manager who, at the end of the visit, invited us into a special reception area to see the full range of the bottled beers. Here we were offered a "Happy Day" a mixture of a "Baby Worthington" and another bottled beer. Without giving offence to our Host we tried the beverage. As I sipped my ale I wondered what one of our fellow pilots, who as yet had not arrived in U.K., would have done today because he had taken an oath not to drink alcohol. This introduction to the demon alcohol was to lead me onto many a wonderful evening spent in pubs throughout the British Isles. It wasn't only the drinking that made the evenings but the meeting of fellow travellers and "locals," darts and other parlour games, sing-songs around a piano (I am a monotone) and a place to chat-up girls. In many small villages the pub was the only meeting place to gather. As in most towns and cities throughout the U.K. the dance halls were a popular meeting place.

After attending a dance on another evening I arranged to meet a delightful young English Army lass the following day and take her to afternoon tea. We were to meet outside the famous Princes Rail Station and I duly waited and waited there but there was never a dull moment for a constant stream of kind Scots stopping to chat. Our distinctive blue uniform with Australia name tags on our upper sleeves caught their attention.

In reality was quite unaware just how time had slipped by for I had never waited two hours for anyone until the Army lass came rushing up. Apparently some officious Sergeant had deliberately held up her leave pass (perhaps she was protective knowing she was about to meet an Australian!!) but she could not believe that I would still be there. We spent a most enjoyable afternoon before returning to her Unit. Our leave soon came to an end so Don and I thanked our Hostess for her kindness and returned to Padgate. Don and I had spent a leave together in America and now in Edinburgh but now we would go our separate ways and not meet again for another 14 months. It was on rare occasions that I would meet any of my Pilot course group in Brighton during all my time in the U.K. I would be associated with Aussies, who came from the Eastern States of Australia.

A group of 30 Aussie Pilots left Padgate, loaded with all our webbing gear, and travelled by train to Whitley Bay up on the East coast of England. Our accommodation was in private homes taken over by the Government for the duration of the war. British army instructors set about introducing us to the usual marching, rifle and revolver skills along with a lot of other techniques that befitted a Commando. A day on the rifle range brought me another bag of two shilling pieces won as a prize. The real test of our course was a route march to a far distant tent camp where we had to arrive that evening. Our party was joined by three other groups of R.A.F bods, all loaded with webbing packs and a 303 rifles. As Brits. marched at something like 160 paces a minute we found that it was not to our liking so we decided to revert to the 120 paces. It appears that our paces were longer so at 120 per minute we were still able to pass the other three groups and from then onwards were never passed. By the time we reached our destination (felt like 20 miles) we were b...ed. Fortunately our circular tents were all erected for I guess we wouldn't have had the energy to erect them. After a cold shower and an evening meal we were about to crawl into our blankets in a thoroughly exhausted state when someone mentioned that a dance had been organized in the nearby village. Miraculously all thoughts of tiredness disappeared and a crowd descended on the local hall. We had a great night culminating, with four of us being invited, by a brave young damsel, who took us back to her parent's home for a "little" supper. It was a mining village so when we arrived outside her home I wondered what we had let ourselves in for. To my astonishment when the front door was opened by her smiling Mother. I found the interior was in complete contrast to the smoke grimed outer walls of this semi-detached home. Our evening was capped by the friendliness of this lovely family. Next morning brought more survival and cooking methods using old engine oil, which when ignited and combined with drops of water created greater heat for use in specially constructed ovens. It looked as if some one had plans for our future to be in some tropical region. Our course at Whitley Bay had us swimming in the near freezing North Sea and clambering into an aircraft life raft. It was a great deal more pleasant practicing in a heated public swimming pool but someone considered it had more realism in the open ocean. On one occasion we were taken aboard a British submarine as a familiarization exercise. Again I'm glad I had no desire to join the Navy. During one of our free moments I wandered along the sea front during a severe storm and watched the towering waves as they crashed on the breakwaters.

Once again I was packed, and our Commando group dispersed with me heading for the south coast to Brighton. During the 1930's there were a number of movie films made in England and often Brighton featured in many scenes, two especially famous hotels. The Australians were billeted at either the "Grand" or "Metropole" and one this occasion was given a room (with a

number of others) in the Grand. The bath was of enormous dimensions and would have required a great deal of hot water to fill. I have no recollection of any showers being available. Perhaps the taking of a shower was somewhat undignified in the eyes of the pre-war clients. Apart from the usual roll call at morning assembly we had very little to occupy us. One of my visits we were taken to the indoor swimming pool to prove that we could at least swim and clamber into a life raft. What I did enjoy was doing some clay pigeon shooting with 12 bore shot guns at a range on a cliff top facing out over the English Channel. I believe we had a little aircraft recognition sessions but much of our time was spent wandering about Brighton town or walking along the wide sea front footpaths. Barbed wire separated us from approaching the waters edge. What fascinated me were the huge Piers that jutted out from the sea front. During peace time would have been crowded with fun fare amusements for the holiday makers. On one occasion we were marched out onto one of these piers and suffered the indignity of having a medical inspection made on our male anatomy. There were some ribald comments made by the less inhibited of our colleagues. Night life in Brighton made up for the boring waiting game that we endured in our innocence. This was September 1944 yet across that protecting ribbon of English Channel hundred of thousands of soldiers were fighting for their lives against a very determined German Army while the likes of me could enjoy myself. The Palladium Theatre was playing to packed houses. How civilized were these "Poms" for during the interval alcoholic beverages could be bought and consumed along with cups of tea! Ice skating was also available so having had a few hours solo in Melbourne we bravely ventured onto the rink holding onto the learner rails. As on previous occasions helpful maidens assisted us "colonials" so in gratitude we bought suitable available refreshments.

A favourite building of mine (in the road running from the sea front to the Brighton Railway Station) had three floors each providing a different form of entertainment. On the top floor was a huge dance hall with a revolving stage for different dance bands. A bar and refreshments were always available while the dances were fantastic. There were hundreds of girls and men in a whole range of uniforms. On one occasion I met a Wren then a few minute later I thought I was seeing double for I had met what must have been quite unique in the Royal Navy, twin Wrens. We had a great night. One every occasion I went to that dance hall I had a great time but gave very little thought to the war being raged. On the floor below was a picture theatre where the latest films could be seen. Frequently a huge organ rose from the side of the stage and a very accomplished organist entertained us. I was surprised to see people were allowed to smoke in the theatre. On the lower floor was a really nice restaurant known as the "Ship", where I often went. Next to our hotel residence I discovered a small cafe where my introduction to raw, but deliciously ripe sliced tomatoes on toast, and hot chocolate, could be obtained to replace the R.A.F. breakfast. Naturally this was paid for out of my own pocket but it was a most welcome respite. Our Australian pay rates were in excess to what English Pilots received but certainly not in the same league as American Servicemen. Our constant reminder that a war was being fought were the daily formations of American Flying Fortresses and Liberators that could be seen so very high that only their vapour trails divulged their whereabouts. Hours later many would return barely maintaining height over Brighton because we could readily see that many had been shot up over Germany evidenced by feathered props. Suddenly one morning at an assembly I was told to pack and report to the Orderly Room. I needed no urging with my packing then made my way to the Office where I was informed to collect a Rail Warrant for my first posting to a RAF Station.

R.A.F. Station Fair Oaks.

I was all buoyed up with expectation, but when I learnt that I was going to **No. 18 E.F.T.S.** to fly Tiger Moths I was shattered. As Fair Oaks was only a short train journey from Brighton it was only a few hours later that I took up residence on the 4th September 1944. Next morning I reported to the Flight Office and made my first 20 minute flight in England with F/Sgt. Beale of the R.A.F. The following day was a 50 minute dual flight with the same Instructor then sent solo. Two periods of solo that day set the pattern for the following four weeks. Cross country map reading exercises was a completely new "ball game" for there was an immense amount of detail on the large scale maps we used. Looking over the side of the cockpit reaffirmed what the maps depicted. As we were very near London the number of railway lines radiating out from that huge city made the eyes boggle. Even the shape of small woods were accurately shown on maps. It would be extremely easy to get lost so it was imperative to ever mindful as to my whereabouts. On one occasion I was stooging along scanning the sky all around when I suddenly saw a huge flight of D.C.3 towing gliders coming up to me from directly behind. I shoved the stick forward and the throttle to the gate to be well out of the turbulence of that Armada. Looking up I could see some thirty aircraft and the same number of gliders heading for France. A perfect lesson for being vigilant, while in the air above England. One morning there was a screaming sound from a single engine aircraft taking off from a different section of the airfield. It appeared that the aircraft was a Harvard and was flown by King Peter of Greece (I believe he had a R.A.F. Officer Pilot with him) King or was he was also known as Prince Peter flew infrequently during my month on this Base.

As I gained greater confidence in finding my way about on extended cross country trips I took a little sight seeing venture flying down the Thames River looking at the many fine mansions



Ron Hesford in dress of the day, for flying in open cockpits.

lining the bank. There is every possibility that to gain a closer view I had to come down below the allowed height. My crazy Flight Commander decided to frighten the day lights out of me by completing an outside loop. I never knew that such a manoeuvre could be done but he did it. I could imagine the wings being ripped off so I was ready to release the Sutton Safety Harness if that should occur. It was with a certain amount of relief to return to terra firma at the end of that session. My four weeks at Fair Oaks passed quickly for I flew twice a day which often included cross countries. It was soon evident that this flying was invaluable experience as a stepping stone to going onto an O.T.U. On the 19th October I once again returned to Brighton and this time went to the Metropole Hotel. It seemed as if I was not destined to bump into any of my original pilot course members

No worthwhile activities can be recalled during the five weeks spent

in my sea side resort. Some where in England, or perhaps London, was a person, who monitored my whereabouts and what I was doing, for it now appears to me, that I was like a chess pawn to be periodically lifted from one place and then set down some where else. Whether there was some sequential planning about my future flying development is some what debateable. In due course another visit to the Orderly Room presented me with another rail warrant to **R.A.F. Sywell, No. 6 E.F.T.S.** located north west of London, near Northampton. On the 21 November '44 commenced a repetition of my previous E.F.T.S. On one extended cross country to R.A.F. Sealand (on the coast, south of Liverpool) I set off with two other Aussies in Tigers. We arranged to fly in formation after leaving the circuit area, which also included some flying through cloud. On the way we were

battling strong head winds which necessitated landing at one R.A.F. Air Field to fill up our petrol tanks before pushing onto Sealand. Our arrival over Sealand showed us that there were actually two aerodromes separated by a fence. By following the leading aircraft we all put down on the same field but by now the wind was really roaring in from the Atlantic. Our ground speed was practically zero but landed safely and taxied back to the tarmac only to be told by some erk (Ground Staff) that we were on the wrong field. Un-deterred by the mounting wind we all took off, made a circuit and made our approach. Down below I could see a reception committee awaiting our landing. Air speed was the usual but by now we had a very low ground speed so much so that each ground staff member ran along side us and grabbed a wing tip before we even stopped. Another erk hung over the fuselage in front of the tail as we taxied back to the hangers where the three kites were placed to protect them from the storm. As there was no possibility of our returning to R.A.F. Sywell I arranged for a signal to be sent then we set about going through the whole rigmarole of getting bedding from the stores and setting up our accommodation for the night. Next day we had to go through the whole procedure again to get cleared. By morning the weather had cleared so we set off for Sywell and landed there without having to refuel as we did on the outward trip.

A new Link Trainer procedure called Fighter Interception had to be learnt along with the English Beam Approach System. I was to spend many hours in the Link while at Sywell. An introduction to night flying conditions from a R.A.F. Station was hair-raising because the goose flares could not be seen after the first cross wind turn was made. For the rest of the circuit it was necessary to fly accurate compass courses and judge when to make your final approach to the flare path. If your judgement was spot on the flare path would mysteriously re-appear at about 300 feet so that you could then line up and make your landing. After a 40 minute dual I went solo but I do not recollect what procedures were adopted if you were lost in the circuit area. After nearly a month on Tigers my mysterious "Controller" shipped me back to Brighton. With some more leave due I requested to go to a farm (using the Lady Frances Ryder Scheme) and in due course arrived at "**Manor Farm**" in Somerset. Mrs Butt, her daughter Letty, and son Gerald made my stay a memorable one. Heavy frosts covered the country side in a mantle that looked like snow. It was strange to see whole trees white with frost and on some a days thick fog rolled in so that visibility was nil. Gerald heard that some one had a huge wine barrel for sale so we set off in a thick fog and some how arrived at the nearby farm. On our return to Manor Farm I discovered why the barrel was needed. In a room near the house Gerald had a number of these Spanish wine barrels all containing various vintages of locally made Apple Cider. Gerald usually had a jug of cider on the table during meal times. Although invited to have a glass I usually refrained after I tried my first glass. When called to High Tea at about 4pm I imagined this was to be the main meal until the following morning but I was in for a surprise a few hours later. There seemed to be an abundance of food on the farm for it was by English standards a very large property.



I spent three wonderful leaves on "Manor Farm" in Somerset, with Mrs Butt, her daughter Letty and son Gerald. The other two guests (rear) are an Aussie (left) and a Kiwi (New Zealander).

It was a very large dairy farm and produced large cheeses. Went rabbit shooting and got chased by an inquisitive cow. Here I was introduced to apple cider and country ale. Christmas visit was a very white occasion.

In the main it was a dairy farm and produced large round cheeses. I went in to see the Lass making these cheeses and saw the whole process. There were dozens of cheeses maturing on drying shelves in the store room. Armed with a small bore shot gun I went out looking for the same type of rabbits that now plague Australian country side. In due course I managed to see a rabbit only by being perfectly still for some 20 minutes. My one shot certainly frightened off any possibility of a second shot but I had scored one dead rabbit. On close examination I could not find any trace of a gun shot wound so I guess he died of fright!! It would be on my next leave to Manor Farm that I would see what a working and productive property would be doing during the English summer. It was a wonderful experience to spend Christmas with Mrs Butt and her family for it was like a scene from a typical Xmas Card. On return to Brighton a posting to another RAF Station.

Leave organisation in the United Kingdom

The Lady Frances Ryder Organisation was formed during the First World War to provide an opportunity for Air Crew Servicemen to spend leave with families in the UK. This marvellous Hospitality Scheme was utilised by many Air Crews and I certainly used every opportunity. The generosity of my Hosts made my leaves memorable.



The three Australian Services serving in the United Kingdom were represented on this Christmas Card I sent back home to Australia that year.

Some personnel had been in the UK since 1939 and some were married with children, who would later be passengers on the "Bride Ships" arriving during 1946.

R.A.F. Newton, just outside Nottingham, was awaiting my arrival. The morning of my departure from Brighton I saw my first snow fall as the train departed Brighton Rail Station. For the whole journey to the Midlands the snow kept falling but as our train was centrally heated I was somewhat divorced from the cold reality of snow. Sergeant Pilot Freddie Wrigley, an Aussie from Sydney, was also posted to **No.16 S.F.T.S. Newton**. We duly arrived at the R.A.F. Base and taken to our quarters which were quite unlike any previous accommodation. Newton Base was probably of pre-war construction for all living quarters were two story brick buildings. In our dormitory we shared with three Canadian Flight Sergeant Pilots completing their A.F.U. (Advanced Flying Unit) on single engine Magister aircraft and their Instructor was a R.A.F. Flt Sgt. The first day we arrived the Instructor was giving his opinion about the futility of providing women with labour saving washing machines. He based his experience on his observations during his Flight Training in the U.S.A. where he vowed the women had so much spare time on their hands that they strayed!! He therefore advocated that women should be kept busy to make a successful marriage. As Freddie and I had been posted to be Air Traffic Controllers we fully expected to at least be gainfully employed but that was not to be the case. We received no instructions, nor any explanation as to what we could do, so in reality our presence was not required. This was a S.F.T.S. for training Polish pilots so all communication seemed to be in the Polish Language. The only memorable occurrence was the landing of a Lancaster, which was taxied and parked quite near the Control Tower. One solitary figure emerged from the Lancaster and strolled toward our office taking off a flying helmet to reveal long blonde hair of a girl. I was astounded at the sight of these diminutive lass having flown the heaviest R.A.F. bomber then in use. Little did I then know of the tremendous contribution made by the women pilots in the A.T.A. (Air Transport Auxiliary) who delivered every type of aircraft to

aerodromes throughout the U.K. It is only recently have I been able to discover the roll played by these women and their counter parts in the American Ferry Command. A completely boring time commenced until the arrival of three American Air Force Technicians, who took up beds adjacent to mine. Two were Sergeants and one was a Corporal, but I escorted them to the Sergeants' Mess for their first meal. When were seated the Corporal leant over and whispered.

"These Poles are talking about me being a Corporal and that I shouldn't be in this Mess!" "Forget about them," I replied, but I wasn't sure what might occur later, but the solution came from the Corporal's next utterance. "I'll be getting my Sergeants stripes tomorrow." Some of the typical Polish food surprised me, especially the roll-mops (made of what I thought was raw fish) in brine. When I saw Polish men actually wearing hair nets to go to bed I wondered about them! With much time on our hands Freddie and I often played snooker in the Sergeants Mess. One night a party of British Sergeant Soldiers visited the Mess for a snooker competition. Someone had matched both Freddie and myself with two tough Army Sergeants, who with their opening shots and scores, put them in the skilled category. While the score for them climbed we had yet to score so there was a certain gloating feeling being promulgated at our expense. Quite un-expectedly Freddie and I began to make the most unlikely shots (flukes was the only explanation) until we actually won the frame to the utter annoyance of our visitors. At a small farm, just near to the Base, we could have a "smashing" breakfast of bacon and eggs for a nominal amount of money. It meant trudging through the snow but the aroma of grilled bacon would attract anyone with money in their pocket.

Our American Sergeants were a great group but were not permitted to divulge what they were doing in their special caravan located some where on the base. I suspected it had some thing to do with communication with the American Bombing Squadrons, but I never questioned them about their role. We occasionally went into Nottingham for a meal and visit a few of the local pubs. One in particular was called "The Trip to Jerusalem" where you had to bend slightly to get through the door. On my 20th birthday Freddie and I happened to be at this pub when two young American pilots got into conversation and complained about having to fly D.C.3's. When asked what we flew Freddie immediately, but quite casually announced, that we were Spitfire pilots. I didn't know what a line shooter Freddie could be until that moment but for the rest of our evening our American would not allow us to even buy one drink. During one night I awoke with the most agonizing ear ache that I made myself report to the Station Hospital. Because it was freezing cold I wrapped my extra long scarf around and around my head to cover my ears, then clad in my battle dress and great coat made my way to the Station Medico. He was unable to help me (not sure why) but I was despatched to the Nottingham City Hospital. My introduction to a civilian Doctor was to witness his caustic remarks to a Mother, who had brought her child to him with an ear infection. It appeared that the child had a piece of cotton wool in the infected ear. I quickly removed mine! My treatment for two days was having steam inhalations. With my face over a basin of boiling water my head was then covered with a large towel so that steam could not escape. My effort was to breathe deeply the steam that had some medication added to the water. A wheel chair ride to a surgery brought me into contact with the Ear Specialist, who advanced on me with a thin metal hollow rod. While the assisting nurse held my head firmly the rod was pushed up my nostril and into the Eustachian tube. A rubber tube was slipped onto the tube and air pumped into my middle ear to inflate it. A few minutes later I was returned to the Ward. During the early hours of the morning I was awakened by a commotion caused by thirty badly wounded soldiers being wheeled into the Ward on stretchers and put to bed. Most of these young soldiers had lost legs and one very young Polish lad had both legs amputated above the knee. In broad day light some of the horrors of war could be seen in that Ward. I felt some what guilty being there with my minor problem. The Ward Sister suggested that I exchange my distinctive blue uniform for the blue uniform of Service patients. I refused and insisted in walking about in my own uniform. For those Soldiers able or willing to talk I sat with them. The young Pole taught me a few Polish greetings for me to try out

when I returned to R.A.F. Newton. A day or too later I was discharged much wiser to the results of this game called war. With little to do as far as duties on the Base I left Freddie covering for me and went off to visit the city of Sheffield, without bothering to first obtain a Leave Pass. After my three days of being absent without leave I returned to Nottingham by rail. In my compartment was a young R.A.F. A.C.1, who confided in me, that he was A.W.O.L. When our train stopped at the Nottingham Rail Station he quickly left the carriage right into the arms of two S.P. (Service Police). I walked brazenly past and caught a bus back to the Base. As a "Colonial" (it was not uncommon to be referred to as a colonial) I was never asked to show a leave pass.

The Base Link Trainer provided me with the only opportunity to practise Beam Approach and blind flying techniques. After two months at RAF Newton, Freddie Wrigley and I came under the movement procedure of my "Controller" with me departing again to the sea side at Brighton. A visit to the great city of London for the purpose of doing some sight seeing of the places of historical significance was made at the first opportunity. Riding on a tube railway was certainly a new experience for it was down there that many Londoners sheltered from the Buzz Bombs and later the dreaded V2 Rockets. Burnt out shells of buildings were every where but I was still surprised to see that the city was not completely demolished after all the bombing raids that London had endured since 1940. Travelling through Croydon, on the train, showed me how whole areas had been completely wiped out in past air raids. My first brush with the demon alcohol happened on this visit to London. Four of us visited the local pubs after a day of travelling the city but it wasn't until going out into the chill of the night air did I suspect that something was amiss. It was a moment after collapsing on a bed at the Salvation Army Hostel that the full realization of my plight came when, the moment my eyes closed, the room began to spin!. What a shattering way to be introduced to the end result of over imbibing of amber fluid.

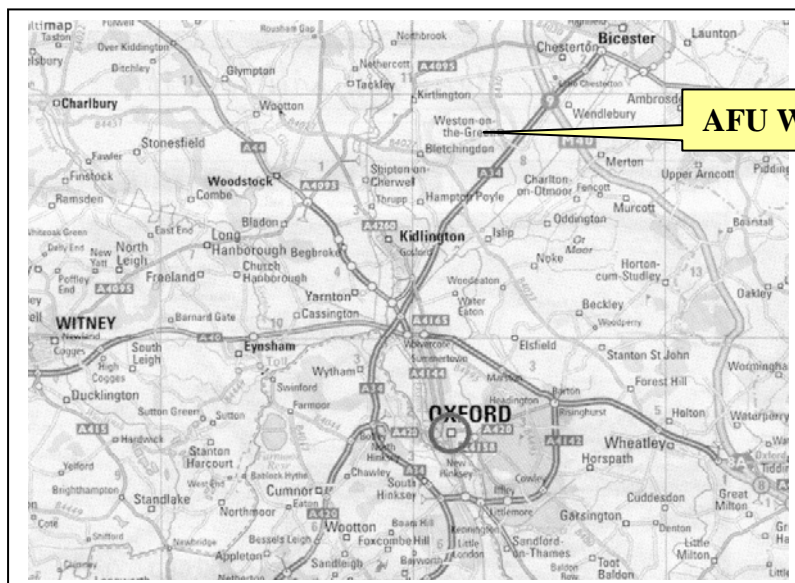
On return to Brighton another posting was waiting for me to **No 18 A.F.U. Church Lawford**. Another wasted two weeks in which no useful purpose was served by my presence. Each night I spent in a Nissan Hut, I think it was called, but it was made of curved corrugated steel, in which we very nearly froze. Each day we endeavoured to obtain pieces of coke by devious means so that we could stoke up the single stove in the centre of the hut until it glowed red before jumping into bed. By the early hours the fire had gone out and the freeze began. My only other recollection was a game of hockey suggested by a couple of Canadians. Hockey has many devotees, but when a group of Aussies take up the game without any instruction or rule of play, it becomes a shambles and more importantly, positively most dangerous.

It was now back to Brighton to learn of my most important posting since stepping ashore in the United Kingdom but first, I could have a short leave. So once again I sought out the assistance of the Station Padre regarding this leave and two days later travelled along the south coast to Lymington, in the New Forest. Mr & Mrs Lawrence made my stay a most relaxing break with lots of interesting walks. On one occasion accompanied Mr Lawrence to a Boys' Club in the town of Lymington where I spoke to the lads for a few minutes. The visit to the Manor House, "Walhampton" was like stepping into the life style of the very wealthy for it was a really magnificent house. A beautiful Ball Room was being used as a volley ball court by the American Air Force Service Officers there on recreational leave from Bomber Command. I was invited to have lunch, which was sumptuous. On my return to Brighton I was at last off an **Advanced Flying Unit in Oxfordshire.**

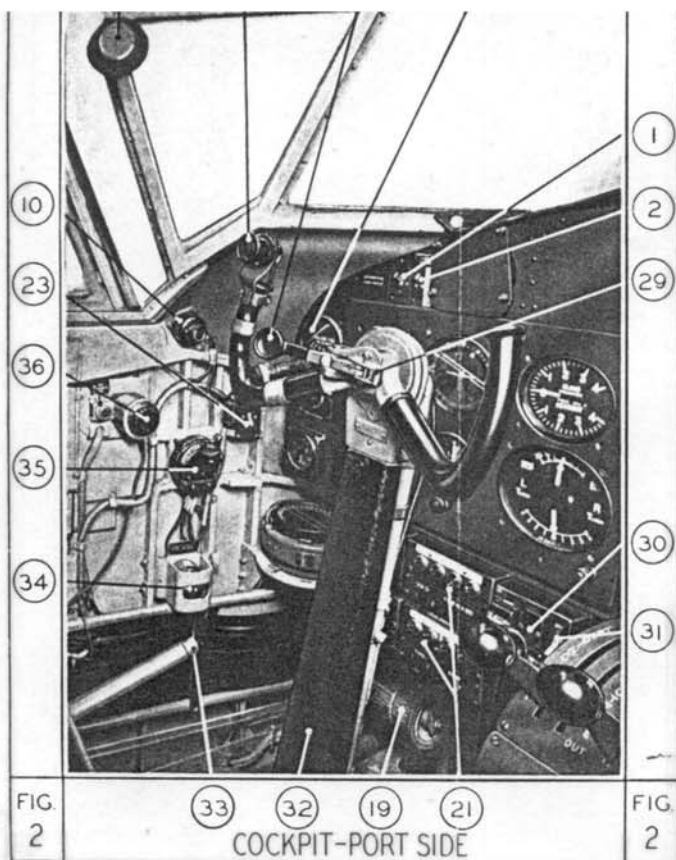
No 20 A.F.U. (Pilots) Weston on the Green

Finally, after 10 months in England, a posting to an R.A.F. Station to commence my flying at an Advanced Flying Unit, had finally arrived. This would then lead onto an O.T.U. and in turn to Lancasters. At the University city of Oxford our train was met by a R.A.F. bus which carried us onto R.A.F. Weston on the Green some 10 miles North East. Our living quarters and mess was about a mile from the base so as to disperse personnel away from possible attack from enemy aircraft. I recently learnt that Weston on the Green was operating in the 1914-18 War and up until the present conflict. No 28 Training Depot Station opened on the 27th July 1918 with as many as 72 aircraft residing there, together with six aircraft sheds and repair sheds. All activity ceased at Weston on the Green in 1921 becoming grazing land. In 1939 Weston was operating as a satellite for R.A.F. Brize Norton so on the 2nd September Blenheims were sent there. On August 9th 1940 Weston on the Green had the distinction of being the first Oxfordshire airfield to be bombed. During November Harvards and Oxfords used the airfield from 15 S.F.T.S. Kidlington. During December 1941 No.2 Glider Training School was operating at Weston on the Green. The six week Glider Pilot Course commenced on January 2 1942 using Hotspurs. Intensive glider pilot training continued into 1943 when on 24 March it became No.20 Pilot A.F.U. with 76 Oxfords and 3 Ansons. Later the number of aircraft would double. On May 31 1945 the A.F.U. was disbanded.

Each Pilot on Course was issued with a bicycle so as to be able to get to the Flight Office and other facilities. My dormitory held a crowd of Aussies (from the Eastern States) and an equal number of Kiwis. Without our battle dress jackets you could not distinguish which country any one was from by listening to their speech. We were a pretty harmonious group all anxious to get "cracking" on the Course. Air Speed Oxfords were the aircraft we would be using. Some of the pilots had had no previous experience on twin engine aircraft having trained on singles. Not having ever used radio communication during our training it was quickly introduced to our Ground School range of necessary skills. A four, push button radio allowed us to select one or other of A B C D Channels. "D" for Darkey channel was an emergency frequency to be used if you were in trouble and desperately required assistance. Movie films had been, for years demonstrating the use of radio procedures so it was not completely new to us but its clarity and range was what impressed me. W.A.A.F. Air Traffic Controllers handled most of the radio transmissions at Weston on the Green in a most efficient and professional manner. Not once did I ever have to ask one to "say again" instruction.

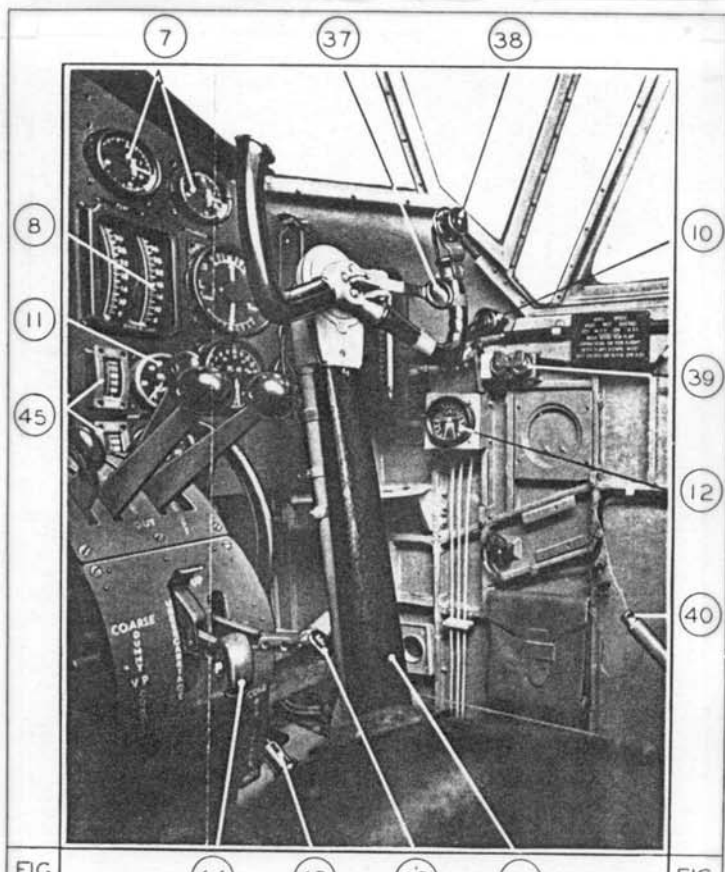


The Cockpit layout for Airspeed Oxford.



COCKPIT—PORT SIDE

1. Recognition lights switch
2. Navigation lights switch
10. Cockpit lighting rheostat
19. Adjuster for Pilot's rudder pedals
21. Bomb selector switches
23. Identification lights selector switch box
25. Fuel gauge
26. Direct vision panel opening knob
27. Press to transmit button
28. Pilot's brake control lever
29. Parking brake catch
30. Bomb warning light
31. Bomb gear master switch (wired up)
32. Pilot's control column
33. Pilot's seat raising lever
34. Landing lights switch
35. Identification lights switchbox
36. T.R.gK controller and warning light



COCKPIT—STARBOARD SIDE

7. Boost gauges
8. Engine revolution indicators
10. Cockpit lighting rheostat
11. Oil temperature gauges
12. Triple pressure gauge
37. Instructor's brake control lever
38. Instructor's press to transmit button
39. I.F.F. destruction switch
40. Instructor's seat fore and aft lever
41. Instructor's control column
42. Flap selector lever
43. Carburettor air-intake heater
44. Undercarriage selector lever
45. Oil pressure gauges

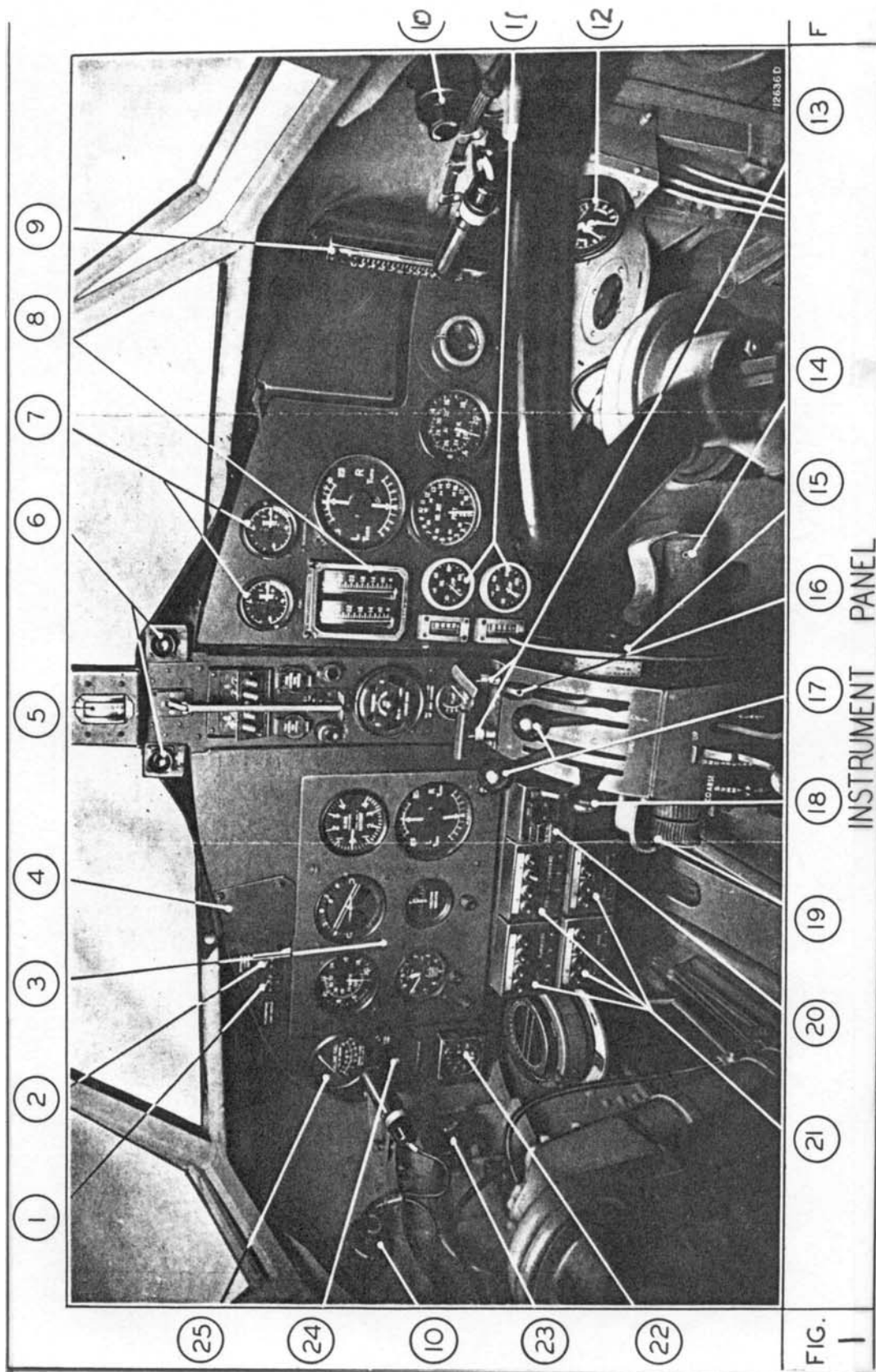


FIG. 1 INSTRUMENT PANEL

- | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recognition lights switch 2. Navigation lights switch 3. Instrument flying panel 4. Stowage for beam approach indicator 5. Vacuum gauge (selector cock above it) 6. Oil dilution buttons | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Boost gauges 8. Engine revolution indicators 9. Air temperature thermometer 10. Cockpit lighting rheostat 11. Oil temperature gauges 12. Triple pressure gauge | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 13. Main fuel cocks 14. Instructor's rudder pedal 15. Elevator trimming tab control and indicator 16. Mixture control lever 17. Throttle control levers 18. Landing lights elevation control lever | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 19. Adjuster for pilot's rudder pedals 20. Bomb jettison button 21. Bomb selector switches 22. Bombing steering indicator 23. Identification lights selector switchbox 24. Fuel gauge selector switch 25. Fuel gauge |
|--|--|---|--|

My first flight was with RAF Warrant Officer Phillips as Instructor took place on the 8 April 1945 just two weeks over one year since I last flew in a twin engine aircraft at No. 4SFTS Geraldton. It was unbelievable that amount of time had slipped by since receiving my Wings Parade. Clambering onboard an Oxford, wearing a seat type parachute, and making my way forward to the cockpit was a little awkward on this first occasion. W.O. Phillips demonstrated the start up procedure after introducing me to the cockpit layout. What a glorious feeling was that first take-off across the wide grass field of Weston on the Green. For the next hour and twenty minutes was spent getting to know the Oxford. After three flights in the Oxford and I was sent off solo. It was sheer pleasure for me to fly an Oxford, especially with the flick of a red knob and the hydraulics retracted the undercarriage. With the weather being uncommonly fine meant excellent visibility and a chance to fly all around Oxford and take in the beautiful country side. What I was to remember most about England in years to come was the wonderful range of greens in the trees and shrubs and the patchwork of colours in the fields when viewed from the air. The great diversity of architecture, not only in the great Cathedrals and fine buildings, but also in the homes in which I was so fortunate to spend my leaves. Thatched houses and ordinary homes of many people had surprised me on a number of occasions on entering. The old adage of not judging a book by its cover would also certainly apply to many of the homes I visited. Every where I visited I always found a fascination in meeting a wide spectrum of people, yet was never troubled with accents used in many Counties. As my own Father originally came from England, and my Great Grandfather, who came out to Western Australia in the middle of the last century, probably stirred up some remote inheritance, or affinity within me.

WO Phillips, was my Instructor for several more flights, but I now wonder what his background was in the R.A.F had he been an Operational Pilot or had he always been an Instructor like all our Instructors in Australia. I now know that the very few Operational Pilots, who actually completed a Tour of Operations, often went to Training Command for 6 months before resuming operations. Now began daily flight with other Pilots who, like myself, were "doing" the course. Usually we did instrument flying with the second pilot keeping a lookout for the other then we would change rolls. On one occasion I was diving extremely steeply, but watching to make sure the engine revs. were within the accepted limits, I heard a radio recall for this particular aircraft as it was due for a major overhaul. I made the necessary radio response then turned to my "co-pilot" and said. "Did you hear the recall?" "What are you talking about, I heard nothing," was his exasperated reply. I then explained what was up and that perhaps the wings might just happen to now be about to fall off after my steep dive and recovery. A series of dual cross country trips with FLTLT. De Pass resulted in my going on solo excursions all round the Midlands. Up until this time I had satisfactorily completed 7 hours of instrument flying in the Link Trainer prior to commencing flying in the Oxford. This Link Trainer instrument flying proved invaluable as preparation for instrument flying tests in the Oxford with W.O. Phillips then a few days later with F/Lt. De Pass. During this time I had commenced a new Beam Approach Technique on the Link Trainer with Sgt. Willetts, and progressed through the learning stages. During my last flight (after 5 hours) Sgt Willetts had me complete a complete Beam Approach exercise then asked me to repeat the complete exercise. While accurately flying the Link Trainer at the recommended airspeed and heights, and carrying out rate one turns, I continually timed all courses with a stop watch. When I finally completed the duplicate exercise I was asked (I was then a Flight Sergeant) to leave the Link Trainer and come to the table where my exercise had been recorded by a machine that traced my whole flight on a large scale map.

"Take a look at your result of your last exercise," commanded a grinning Sgt Willetts. I leant over the table to inspect the 1/16 of an inch (1 mm) red line that showed my turns and courses that ended with me on the diagram of the Beam drawn on a chart of the aerodrome. "Looks like I managed to fly the beam," I remarked

"Chiefly (an expression related to Flight Sergeants)"you have accomplished something I have never before seen while instructing on the Link Trainer," was Sgt.Willetts' comment.

I must have looked enquiring at this statement for he then volunteered. "Your second Beam Exercise has followed exactly the first Exercise. If you look closely you will see that not even the slightest amount have you differed from the first. The Instructor was positively beaming. At the time this revelation was not of much importance, yet it confirmed I could fly accurately on instruments in a Link Trainer. To repeat this competence while flying a real aircraft in a non stable environment would take a great deal of practice. This was an objective that I was determined to accomplish at every opportunity, for in Bomber Command, flying at night, in all conditions was the norm. Within a month I would be posted away to another R.A.F. Station to complete a special Beam Course, but more of that later.

On the 26 April 1945 F/Lt. De Pass took me on an Instrument flying excursion using a whole range of developing skills that had been gained while flying with a number of other members of the course. It was also interesting to evaluate the relevant flying ability of my fellow travellers. FLTLT. De Pass sent me off solo to practice steep turns and single engine flying. It was essential to develop reflexes and to carry out exercises like single engine flying so that they became automatic in my reaction. Turning an aircraft, with one engine operating, requires a considerable degree of skill especially as it essential to turn towards the operating engine. Engine failure is always a possibility so that it is a skill that all Instructors would be testing at any time. These solo flying periods was for that very purpose so I fully expected to be tested during the next Dual period. With FLTLT. De Pass in the right hand seat I started up G.D.599 for a series of taking off and landing out of wind, but as Weston on the Green didnot have runways, it up to the Instructor to dictate the direction. Then followed a series of precautionary landings, onto specified areas of the aerodrome. Next followed a whole range on instrument flying then several forced landings.

The un-expected happened. "Well Jubbs, let's go low flying. Take her down in the low flying area," came the order through the head phones in my leather flying helmet. Not since S.F.T.S. had I done any low flying. There is something exhilarating in flying low to the ground but at the same time there is the ever present possibility of the un-expected in the way of terrain changes or engine failure. After 1.35 hours of fairly rigorous flying I returned to Weston and the Flight Office. No comments were made about any of my flying that day but I personally felt I had regained some degree of former skill. As FLTLT. De Pass un-buckled his safety straps he turned to me and said. "Go and spend 1.30 hours doing steep turns, precautionary landings and a host of glide and engine assisted landings with a gaggle of single engine flying," commanded he who should be obeyed. By now I had 12 hours dual and 7.50 hours solo on the Oxford so another hour and a half was most welcome. Next morning, I was peering out through the Fight Office window watching a W.A.A.F. fitter working on the port engine of an aircraft. Apart from being a girl, what I particularly noticed was she had very short curly hair yet was completely in place although there was a 10 knot wind blowing. I was brought back to reality by a tap on the shoulder. I turned away from the window to face a rosy cheeked English Pilot Officer, who was also doing the Course.

You and I are down to do some Instrument flying," he announced. "Right then," I heaved my self out of the chair, "Let's get going. Who's down to fly first?" I enquired. "You are," replied Peter Watkins as we collected up our helmets and seat parachutes and headed for B.H.197 the Oxford the pretty W.A.A.F. had been working on. I had already checked and signed the special aircraft Service Form 700. I would liked to have talked to that lass but I had more serious things to accomplish. I started up and taxied to the take off position, went through the "Vital Actions" then

called Flying Control for clearance. The clearance was immediately given by a well spoken W.A.A.F. Air Traffic Controller. I looked across to Peter, who gave me a thumbs up that he was ready. I checked for incoming aircraft then turned into wind advanced the throttles to the gate, with the right one a little in advance to correct any likely swing that the Oxford was said to do to the unwary. After climbing out of the circuit area I immediately went onto instrument flying with Peter acting as observer. An arrangement I had made with Peter was for him to call for me to change courses, heights etc while keeping a lookout. Throughout the period I religiously flew under a type of hood that was designed to prevent looking out of the cockpit. At the end of my session I landed back at Weston on the Green where Peter and I changed places for his turn at Instrument Flying. Two days later Peter and I joined up again to fly a 2.35 hour Navigation Exercise with me sitting in the right hand seat as second pilot. The day following was a Navigation Exercise with FLTLT. De Pass and on return he sent me off solo to go Low Flying after completing some steep turns and precautionary landings. I dutifully carried the prescribed exercises then dropped down to the low flying area. For nearly an hour I ranged the whole area until I spotted two Land Army girls standing on top of a hay stack waving their arms. I did a series of steep turn circuits of the field while these two lasses kept up jumping up and down and furiously waving their arms. It was a lot of sheer pleasure for me but it looked as if they also had some fun. I then made some low passes along side of their hay stack castle so that I could see the smiles on their faces as I flashed past. The whole period was perfect but I was continually aware that the slightest error in flying could have fatal consequences to me. Next day I was teamed up with P/O Wellar, another Sprog Pilot doing the Course, for a 3.35 hour Navigation Exercise with me in the left hand seat. We duly arrived at all our turning points then back to Weston on the Green. The map reading exercises in Tiger Moths was, I now recognized, invaluable training for what I was now doing. F/Sgt. Emmett, an Instructor now took me on the most searching Instrument Flying Exercise to test the whole range of flying as well as blind takeoff. No adverse comments resulted from that episode. A shared Instrument Flight was made with another Kiwi Pilot, Sgt Jones, who was also "doing" the course. On no occasion did any of my flying partners try to dodge the objective of practicing instrument flying but in reality gave it our best endeavour. I guess we really realized the importance of developing these skills for it really did require a great deal of concentration. It was essential to accept what the turn and bank instrument was telling us especially after doing lots of turns. The minute hairs in the inner ear dealing with balance could be lagging and telling the brain some thing that would lead you to believe that you were still turning, diving or climbing. The confidence in our flying instruments was re-enforced during every flight for if some thing was amiss our Instructor or Sprog Observer Pilot would certainly have something to say.

My Instructor must have had some confidence in me for next day I had another period of low flying after completing a series of steep turns and single engine flying. No lonely Land Army Girls to day but lots of fields, hedges and trees to skim over while at the same time looking out for others who just might have the same session of flying in this neck of the woods. For one hour twenty minutes I revelled in this utter freedom of hugging the ground and being paid good English pounds for the pleasure of doing it. On return to the Flight Office I had to prepare a Flight Plan for a cross country Instrument Flight with FLTLT. De Pass. I obtained the weather forecasts and likely wind speed and direction, and with the course to turning points drawn on the chart I calculated, with the navigating computer, the appropriate magnetic courses and the duration of each leg of the route. With my flight plan double checked I awaited the call from the Instructor. No doubt Instructors were always assessing our performance from the time we left the Flight Office, to the pre-flight preparations to the whole time we were under their scrutiny. After take off I circled the airfield to gain height then set course heading in towards the aerodrome. Now I went onto Instruments timing my departure when F/Lt. De Pass said we were directly over the aerodrome. Departure time was noted on my flight plan strapped to my leg and the E.T.A. (Estimated Time of Arrival) entered in the appropriate column. No remarks emanated from the right hand seat occupier

for I never glanced to see what he might be doing for I was fully occupied in flying an accurate airspeed and compass course. The necessary compass deviation had been applied to all courses. After flying the three legs of this cross country for 1.15 hours I was commanded to go on visual flight and land back at Weston on the Green, which I could now see ahead slightly off the port side. Fortune certainly smiled on me that day. A few days later on **May 8, 1945 the War in Europe ended so there was great rejoicing throughout the country.** We had some merriment in the Mess after which some of us jumped on our bikes and did a pub crawl through three local villages and chattered up the girls and downed a number of pints of local beer. For a horrible moment I thought there would be no more flying but there was still a desperate War being raged in the Pacific, but more importantly, very near to Australia.



I found the Airspeed Oxford a joy to fly. A flip of a switch and the undercarriage came up and another lever activated the flaps. What a contrast to the Avro Anson.



“Clueless” formation some where over Oxfordshire just before heading for RAF Station Sturgate to complete a B.A.T. (Beam Course)

10th May saw me on a Day-Night flight with Sgt. Hansford (Instructor) and in my Log Book it is recorded in Red Ink!. On return to Weston, Sgt. Hansford left the aircraft and I spent the next 75 minutes solo doing single engine flying on alternative engines and making a number of forced landings in the low flying area, not actually putting down. The remainder of the period I devoted my whole attention to the authorized Low Flying. I was certainly being given every opportunity to perfect this technique of flying especially as the weather was perfect with little wind. No turbulence like the conditions we flew at S.F.T.S. Geraldton. On return to Weston on the Green I still had two more flights to share with W/O Stubberfield (also doing the course) we each spent 40 minutes doing some thing called Arm. 1-4. I have no recollection of dropping bombs or firing machine guns. While taxiing the following morning I heard an emergency call from an approaching aircraft coming in from the north east. All aircraft movements were held until the Oxford in trouble landed safely accompanied by ambulance and fire tender. One of our Course pilots had dropped off an Erk at R.A.F. Bicester, some 5 miles away, but had failed to close the rear door securely. When airborne the aircraft became quite unstable so the Sprog Pilot using full take off power flew straight ahead, at ground level, to Weston on the Green and landed safely with a very shaken pilot. I now wonder how many fatal accidents during training and on operations had resulted from similar situations. W/O Stubberfield and I shared an Instrument flight around Oxfordshire and on return I changed to another aircraft and went off solo practicing a whole range of specific exercises. With Sgt. Handsford, an Instructor, I did an instrument take off and stayed on instruments for the next hour. Climbing and descending while turning onto compass headings was the order of the day. I completed the period with a number of precautionary landings then changed aircraft for a solo session. The now customary array of steep turns in both directions, single engine flying, forced landings on vacant fields without actually touching down, precautionary landings all followed by another 40 minutes of low flying. I seemed to be given an unexpected amount of time to this most pleasurable past time of zooming over hedges, lifting wing tips over trees and meandering over the Oxford countryside. On return to the Flight Office I discovered I was down to take another aircraft, EG 731, for another hour duplicating the previous trip but without the low flying component. After reporting back to the Flight Commander I was given another aircraft KK 4620 for a further 1.25 hours. No wonder I was feeling a little tired by the end of the day for I had been in the air for 5.15 hours.

Back in the Nissan Hut living quarters we tended not to discuss what we had been doing in the air but I do not recollect that it was taboo but it just wasn't "done" Perhaps it was just as well for I well remember the pest at E.F.T.S. who would pester me with his bragging about what he was doing each day up until he was "scrubbed" and shipped out (as the American's say). The day following had me using two different aircraft for two and a half hours perfecting circuits and bumps using the whole variety of approaches...glide...engine assisted...with and without flaps...wheel landings...three point...and going around again. In HT 365 with FLTLT. Trevallyn in the right hand seat in response to his orders (or requests) I demonstrated my ability to completely fly by instruments. On return to Weston I changed aircraft and completed a 45 minute solo period. Once back on the ground I teamed up with FLTLT. Trevallyn for 80 minutes of formation flying with two other aircraft. Back on the ground the three instructors left the aircraft and sent us off solo for a further 100 minutes of formation flying roaming all over the Oxford country side. By the end of the day I had been aloft for 4 hours 50 minutes which included being under the scrutiny of a senior Instructor. On the 16 May 1945 had me with F/Lt. Trevalion for a day/night flight. This was followed by a Final Test with the O.C. of the Flight one FLTLT. K.A.Knight for 45 minutes. On returning to the Flight Office I discovered I was to make another trip with FLTLT. Trevalion for 75 minutes. Then to cap off the rest of the day was with a Day/Night flight with Sgt Hansford for a further 85 minutes. So ended my last day of flying at Weston on the Green Advanced Flying Unit having spent 260 minutes of that day under the watchful gaze of three Instructors. Did their

collective silence about my performance indicate any thing? At the time I was feeling reasonably pleased with myself but I was then un-aware of next step for me in the R.A.F.'s grand plan. Next day the Flight Commander handed me a Movements Paper. I was to pack up and get cleared through the different sections and report to the Transport Section for a trip into the City of Oxford where I would catch a train for **No.15-20 B.A.T. at R.A.F. Sturgate.**

Once again it was a hurried farewell to the others, who were "doing" the course but I was now moving on, by myself. I wondered why? As I packed, and being alone in the quarters hut, I suddenly started to think about what had happened over the last action packed five weeks of flying. Brief friendships had emerged, especially with a fellow Aussie, Eddie Stanbury. My train was carrying me Northwards towards the City of Lincoln with its famous Cathedral that nightly welcomed home the returning heavy bombers of Bomber Command. Their visits to Europe were now confined to bringing home the men from the Prisoner of War Camps for the War had ended but the troubles and concerns were just beginning as the World learnt of the horrors of concentration camps. Throughout England demobilization was taking place. Edie Stanbury, a Victorian by birth, travelled to the United Kingdom on both the same ships as myself but we had never met up until Weston on the Green. I was now going on so I wondered what was in store for Eddie and the other great friendly bunch of fellows. Our occasional excursions to local village pubs and the weekly film shows on the R.A.F. Base was a great experience. It seems hard to believe that I only managed one sight seeing visit to the nearby University City of Oxford but in reality my time had been fully occupied. Morning bike rides to the aerodrome and the usual skylarking, visiting the arrival of the Ladies with the N.A.F.E. van with their cheery greetings as they handed out cups of "char" and buns. "Tee-Emm" books in the Flight Office with the very pointed doses of humour about serious breeches of flying techniques.

I took one last look around the empty hut and collected up my gear. What must all the Course Pilots think with my sudden disappearance. My thoughts were suddenly interrupted.

"Your transport is here Flight," called a voice from the doorway. "Right," I replied.

RAF Sturgate

My train carried me northward towards the City of Lincoln with its famous Cathedral, which nightly welcomed home returning heavy bombers of Bomber Command. Their flights to Europe now were confined to bringing home the men from the Prisoner of War Camps now that the war had ended. The troubles and concerns were just beginning as the World learnt of the horrors of concentration camps.

In due time I arrived at R.A.F. Sturgate, some ten miles S.E. of Gainsborough, between the villages of Heapham and Upton. This airfield was one of the last to be constructed during the Second World War but did not see any operational service. It had three enormous concrete runways and encircling perimeter track but its only flying unit based there was the one I was joining. **1520 B.A.T. Flight.** This Flight would close down three days after I departed. After the usual rounds of the different sections I finally located my living quarters and unpacked. On 23 May 1945 I met up with WO. Noel Ennis, an Aussie Instructor after I had spent an hour in the Link Trainer with SGT Price

"What perfect weather to "do" a Beam Course" I thought. It was nearly necessary to obtain a Guide Dog to find your way about. Heavy overcast with very low cloud base and traces of fog but I was to learn that for my stay this was a good day. We wended our way to Oxford 128, boarded and started up both engines and made our way to the main runway. I did not volunteer that I had not

ever landed or taken off on a runway in an Oxford. I ran through the Cockpit Drill (Vital Actions) and tested the magnetos making sure that the altimeter was set to zero for it was then showing 30 feet above ground. I looked again at the surrounding murk wondering whether we would continue.

"Right, Jubbs, let's go!" came the order through my headphones. I called the Tower for permission to take off, which was given immediately, probably no one else was anxious to fly. I moved onto the centre of the runway, checked the gyro and advanced the throttles to the gate and concentrated on keeping to the centre of the vast runway. I held the Oxford down after lifting off and flew along this very long runway before climbing away to disappear into low cloud. We flew west from the aerodrome, then on a variety of compass courses, mainly to get me confused as to my position. Suddenly W/O Ennis switched on the Beam radio and I heard the sound of "A" Morse Code. Because the main runway was nearly east/west I then flew south so as to cross the Beam. When I entered the beam and A (Morse code) ceased so I timed the length of time it took until the N (Morse) commenced. I then made a right hand, rate one turn until I was flying north. I timed the width of the Beam and found that this of longer duration meaning I was definitely west of the Base. Next I turned to starboard in a gentle rate one turn until flying 180 degrees. When I reached the Beam I turned to 78 degrees to follow the Beam. When I drifted off the beam I corrected slightly to come back on the Beam (no signal) still holding the same height. Soon I heard the Outer Marker Beacon then a little later the Inner Marker Beacon which confirmed I was correct. Shortly the Cone of Silence emanated through my headphones. I then commenced a gentle rate one turn to port and commenced the Beam Approach circuit and let down procedure. The whole time I was flying on instruments for when I glanced out of the cockpit confirmed I was in complete cloud. At 300 feet over the Inner Marker Beacon I came under visual flight control with the vast runway stretching ahead. I was about to complete the landing when the command to go around again emanated from WO Ennis sitting beside me. I climbed away and re-entered the cloud and flew out of the circuit with the Beam switched off. I repeated the whole procedure but this time landed and taxied back to the Flight Office. My first session had lasted 65 minutes. After lunch I spent another hour with WO Ennis locating the Beam and completing the whole approach. Next morning was spent in the Link Trainer for 55 minutes before a two hour session with FLTLT. Kent the Flight Commander. Each day started with the Link Trainer for an hour. On the third day of the course I spent two sessions with WO Ennis. During the first 70 minutes I made a completely blind approach and landing.

"Just feel for the runway," came the re-assuring voice as I held off with my eyes glued to the altimeter, gyro compass and A.I.S. I then felt the rumbling as the wheels came in contact with the runway. I then looked forward out of the cockpit and saw this B... great runway stretching far into the distance. I felt a little pleased with myself for I had never contemplated being able to make a landing without actually seeing the ground. That afternoon I took Oxford 483 for another 100 minute session with WO Ennis in the same very low cloud conditions. On the 26 May the fog was particularly threatening when I taxied out with my last flight with WO Ennis. A Blind takeoff was necessary for the forward visibility was non existent. The takeoff went smoothly and I climbed away knowing that the fog was completely enveloping the aerodrome, but who was I to question the wisdom of what I had just done. Getting back on the ground was another matter even though the day before I had actually landed by feeling for the ground. We flew around for some time on a whole host of compass headings until the Beam was switched on. I found the Beam flew down it then commenced the prescribed circuit. I had the most eerie sensation as I came over the Outer Marker Beacon. WO Ennis called

"Look ahead!". I glanced up from the flying instruments and there, stretching ahead, was an inferno of flames on both sides of the runway dispersing and lifting the fog so that I could see the whole length of the runway. In the intense heat generated there was a certain amount of turbulence as I came in over the threshold to complete a greased on landing (line shooter). That 65 minute session

was certainly a high light of the course. "F.I.D.O." had been switched on for my benefit. **F.I.D.O. (Fog Investigation Dispersal Operation)** had been developed and installed on fifteen R.A.F. strategically located aerodromes in the Bomber Station region. Fog had caused many casualties to returning bombers during World War 2. For example: On December 16/17 December 1943, 492 bombers were sent to Germany and 25 were shot down BUT 29 crashed while trying to land because of heavy fog.

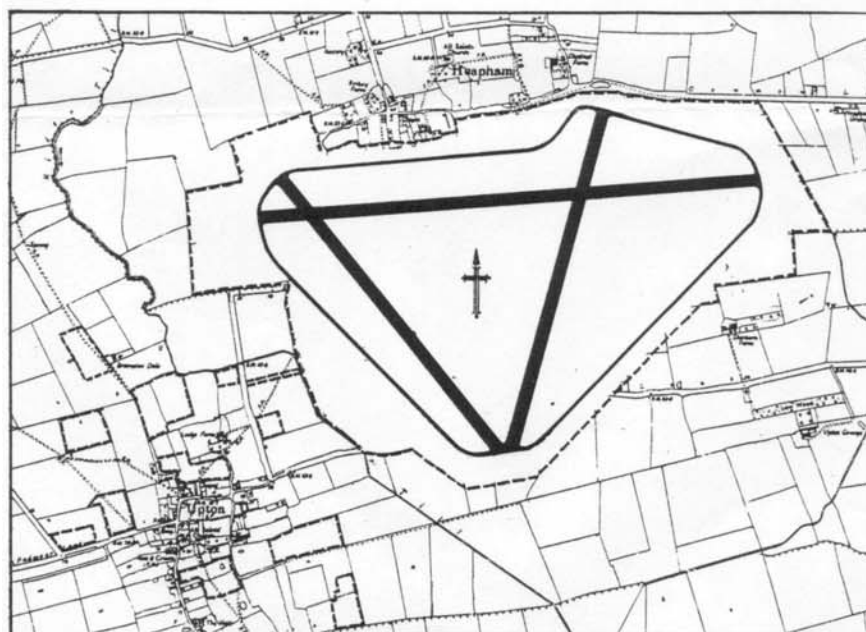
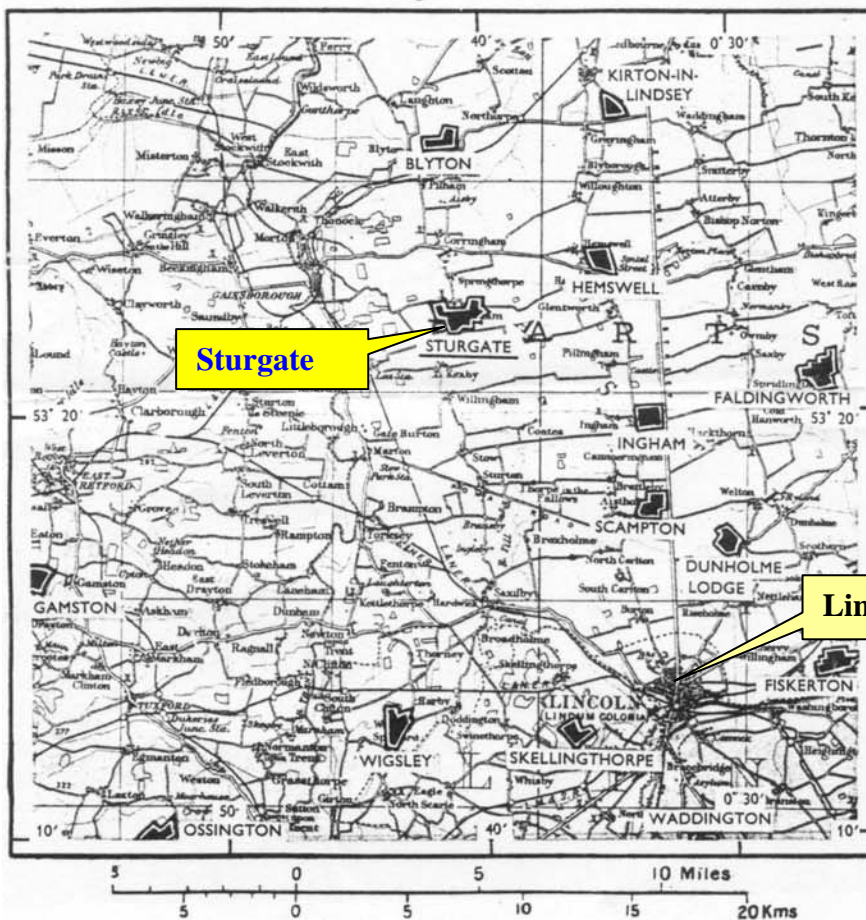
What the cost of all the aviation 100 octane fuel must have cost is beyond my comprehension but as the RAF Station was closing down shortly after my departure I imagine the RAF wanted to actually witness the FIDO in action for the very last time.

This must have been considered before I made my last flight for there would have been other problems I had been diverted to some other RAF Station.

My time at RAF Sturgate was rewarding in many ways and to culminate with that final experience "made my day!!!"

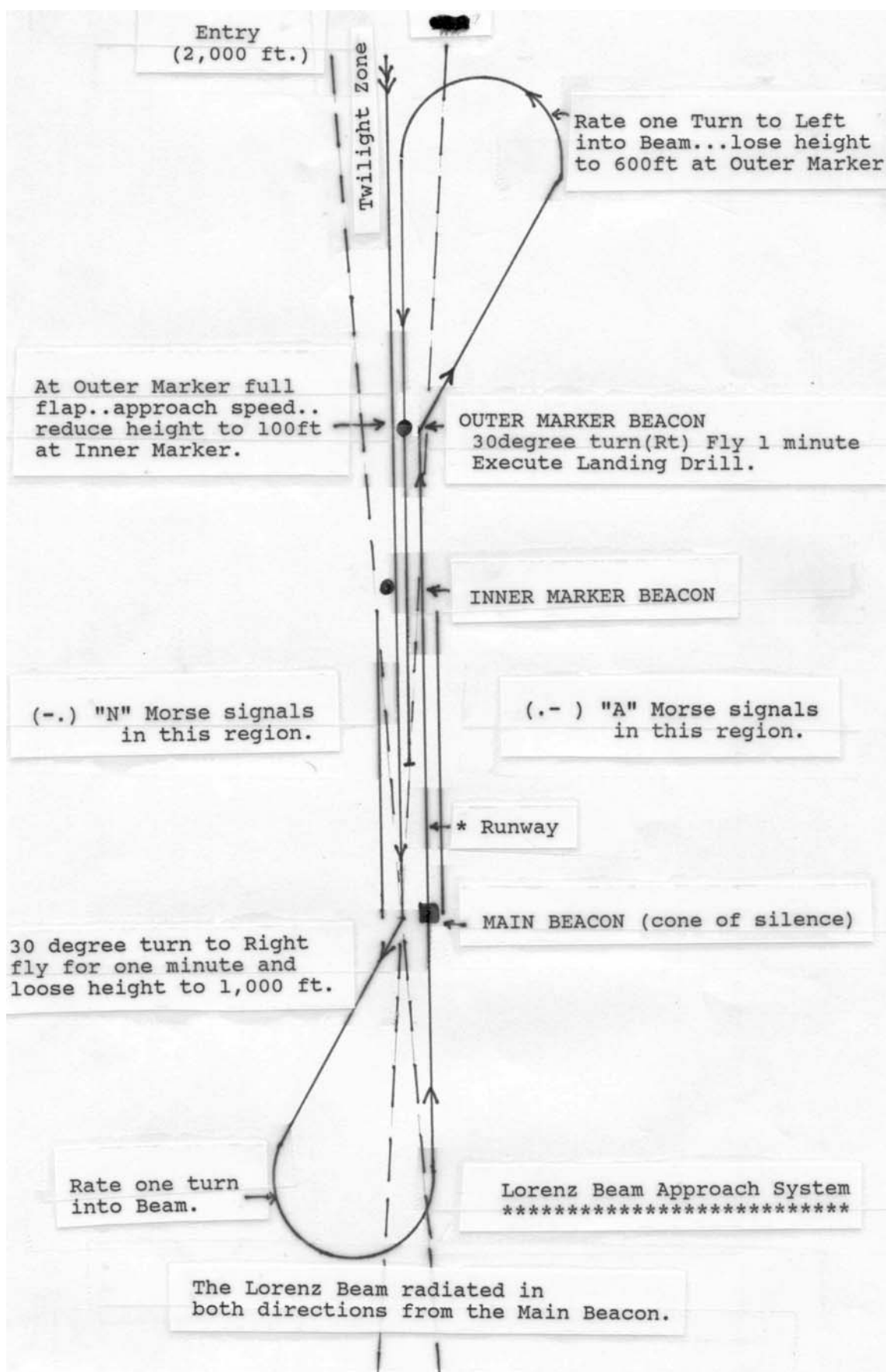
STURGATE

Lat.53° 22' 45"N. Long.00° 40' 45"W. 55FT.A.S.L.



During my whole time on this Blind Flying Course I never saw the Air Field from the air.

This was the original layout of a Beam Approach but in the UK a simpler version was used.



After F.I.D.O. had been installed some 2,486 aircraft landed with the assistance of this aid during the remainder of the war. I then can claim a successful landing **after** the war in Europe. Two more flights were made this day after the fog had dispersed but low cloud persisted. I took off with F/Sgt Hill (also doing the Course) sitting in the right hand seat as observer. After my 60 minutes of flying the Beam I landed and we changed seats.

Next day I spent my last day on the Beam Course with F/Sgt Emmett an Instructor. Over the 5 days of the B.A.T. Course I had 9 flights resulting in 9.10 hours dual, 1.00 hour as 1st Pilot and 1.10 hours 2nd Pilot. Every day was really perfect weather for testing ones ability to fly the Beam. Not once during my time at R.A.F. Sturgate did I ever see the aerodrome or the surrounding country side from the air nor did I see much from the ground. In fact I arrived in very poor visibility and I departed in equally poor weather. Before leaving Sturgate I was informed that I was to report to **No. 6 (P) A.F.U. Windrush.**

As the train rushed south towards Oxford I gazed blankly out of the window not seeing the sights as we rushed by. For the first time in days I had time to reflect on the Sturgate episode and what had lead up to the satisfactory completion of the Course. I remembered the silent figure sitting in the right hand seat throughout each hour of the flying, ever ready to take over in an emergency, for the Instructor's life was also at risk. What also came flooding back was the thought of the many, many hours spent in the cocoon of the Flight Simulator (Link Trainer) practising to fly on instruments and perfecting the newly adopted Beam Approach System that closely followed the normal landing circuit procedure. The hours spent blind flying the Oxford when it was just as easy to have gone onto ordinary visual flight. All the landings I had performed. The accumulation of all facets had come together to prepare me to successfully fly the Beam for 11 hours in the most appalling flying conditions that in normal circumstances would have grounded all flying. My thoughts turned to completing the next segment of the A.F.U. and beyond to the anticipation of going onto Wellington Bombers at O.T.U. (Operational Training Unit) and joining up with a crew, who were also probably preparing for their place in a crew.

"Mister!" called a small voice, and a tugging at my battle dress jacket, "do you come from Australia? My Mom says you do"

I abruptly came back to reality and found I was looking into the face of a very small boy. "Yes I do laddie," I replied. "Where is it?" he then asked?

I was conscious of other eyes in the crowded carriage. "Well, if you got on board a large ship and set sail you would have all your meals and all your sleeps for the next four weeks before you would reach Western Australia where I grew up from a little boy like you." My new young friend decided he wanted to know a little more about this mysterious place.

"What's it like?" "It's very big and right now my Mother is experiencing the start of the rains of winter but later on the sun will get very hot when summer arrives. When I was your age I left off my shirt and the sun was so hot that I was badly burnt. You have to very careful in the hot sun if you have fair skin like mine. We have lots of very special fruits that you would like to eat.

"Let me see your hands?" "You would need two hands to hold one juicy yellow peach. Perhaps one of these days you might take that long journey to my country." Little did I then know that in a few years thousands and thousands of young people and whole families would take up the Australian Government's offer for a ship board trip to Australia for 10 pounds Sterling each.

I received a lovely smile from the Mum as she gathered up her small boy and made ready to leave the carriage as the train pulled into a station. At Oxford I left the station to be collected by an awaiting R.A.F. bus for the run along the Oxford/Cheltenham main road for a little over 20 miles to Windrush.

R.A.F. Windrush, No 6. (P) A.F.U.

Windrush had come into being early in the summer of 1940 for aircraft based at R.A.F Little Rissington's S.F.T.S. Oxfords. During April 1942 Windrush became an A.F.U. for Pilots using two Sommerfield Tracking runways.. Our living quarters were close to the A40 main road.

On the 31 May 1945, with FLOFF Widgery as an Instructor in the right hand seat I took off on runway 19/01 for a 75 minute Q.G.H. procedure. A 30 minute check flight with FLGOFF Olive saw me off for a solo circuits and bumps session of 40 minutes. This was immediately followed by 1.45 hours of formation flying. I now teamed up with P/O Hunt (RAF, another Course participant) for a 90 minutes navigation exercise. I flew up to Blackpool Tower, did a steep turn around that famous land mark then put the nose down and scampered off as fast as the Oxford could travel. (a guilty conscious reaction) When I brought the Oxford back to Windrush we changed seats and John Hunt repeated the navigation exercise but to a different turning point. Just to give the R.A.F. value for money I then pushed off for a 60 minute solo nav. Exercise just on **seven hours in the air** on the second day at this Base. I wondered if this would be the norm. 4th June, my Mother's birthday, saw me in the air for just over two hours completing two different cross country exercises and some steep turns followed with single engine flying. Some days later FLGFF Olive and I went Instrument flying followed by another 45 minutes of fantastic low flying through the beautiful country side of Gloucestershire. A solo session of a variety of landing procedures then off I went for a solo low flying session. Although I didnot know it at the time this would be the last occasion I would ever experience this type of exhilarating flying. June 12th saw me airborne with FLTSGT. Pevan as Instructor for the start of a series of night flying exercises spread over several nights. I did an hour of circuits and bumps with F/Sgt Pevan then a further 60 minutes with F/Lt. Lucie completing a precision exercise. The following night a further 40 minute session of circuits and I went off solo for a further 40 minutes. Throughout the U.K. could be found red flashing light beacons, which, if you had the code for that night, allow you to pinpoint your self on a chart. For an hour with F/Sgt Pevan (Instructor) on board I roamed the County from one beacon to the next like a cross country exercise. During our free evenings, two English Pilot Officers and I would go off to Cheltenham for a night on the town. I remember sitting up the front of the bus peering ahead through the darkness when suddenly, a row of small lights marked the curve of the road appeared. The vehicles of the U.K. still had their blackout lights in place but what light they did emit was reflected by the tiny glass reflectors embedded in the centre of the road.

The Commanding Officer of the Base announced next day to all flying personnel, that as from 18th June 1945 all flying would cease. A stunned silence pervaded our small group of Pilots. We were at a complete loss or there was nothing we could do. All over England R.A.F. Bases were closing and by the 12 July Windrush would be disbanded. My two P/O friends and I went off to Cheltenham, had lunch, and sat in the park, and pondered our future. A few days later, I packed and returned to Weston on the Green into the company of equally astounded compatriots to await our fate and future.



Back at “Weston on the Green” this group of Aussies were not only stunned, but bitterly disappointed in not proceeding onto a Squadron after having travelled some 12,000 miles. Many years later we realised just how lucky we probably were when it was discovered some 55,000+ Bomber Command Air Crews lost their lives & countless numbers were maimed for life.

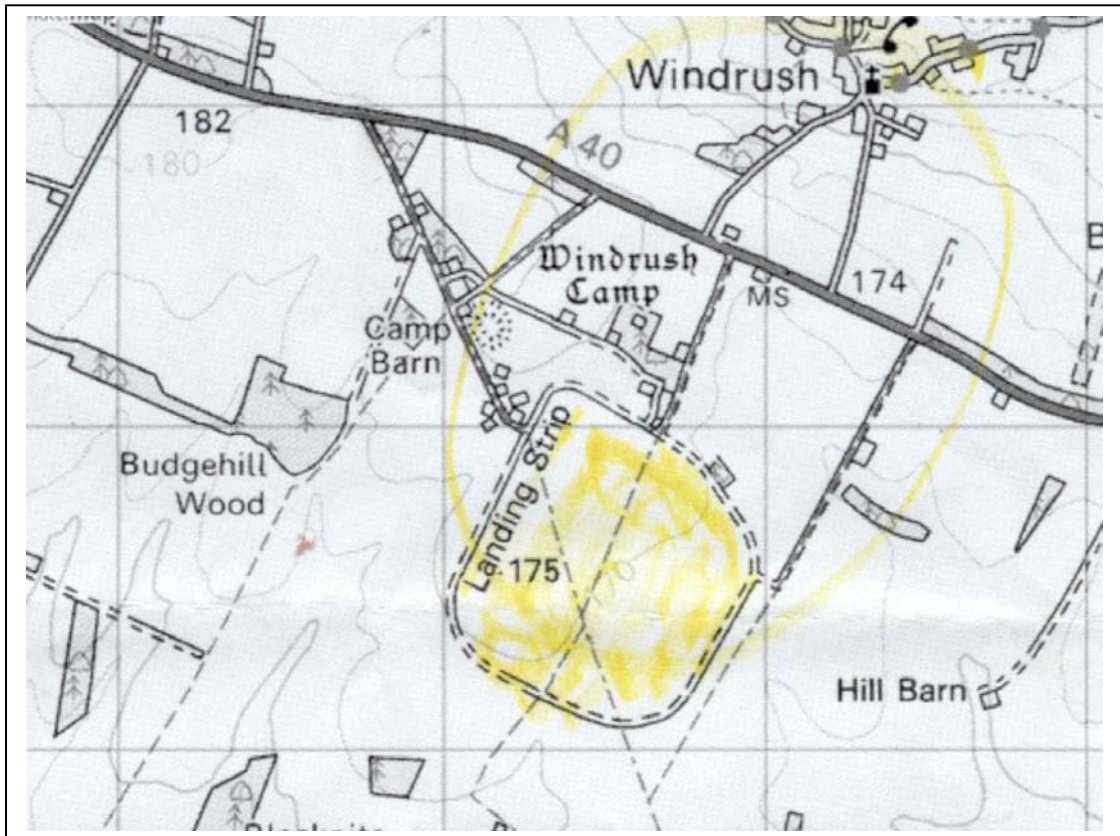
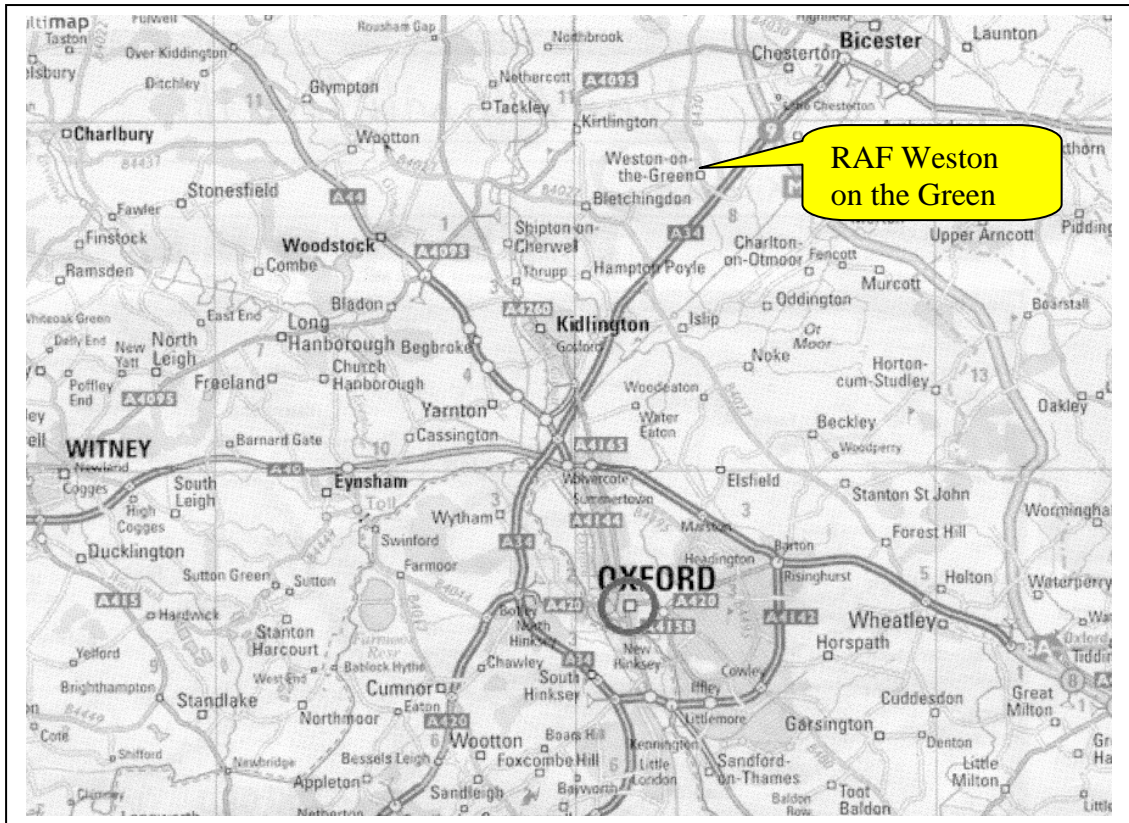


Fortunately, this photograph, of the cockpit of an Oxford, was made after my last formation flight.

Cameras were NOT permitted on RAF and RAAF Stations!!!

Although the confined space in a cockpit made it difficult to move about, encumbered with a parachute, within a short time this posed no problem.

My Two Royal Air Force AFU Stations.



War is Over in the Pacific

With no possibility of further flying came as a blow to all of us at Weston on the Green and Windrush, for what had we really accomplished would concern us for years to come. The final thrust was when we had to hand in our personal flying gear, for it was then the full realization hit me, that there was no way I could again go zooming over the sky. Once again a large group assembled in front of our Weston on the Green barracks, with all our worldly possessions, for a train trip to R.A.F. Millom, up on the far West Coast of England. Why we should be going there was another of the best kept secrets. After an overnight train trip we passed through the ship building port of Barrow In Furnace early in the morning. After travelling north around a long bay we headed south to the small town of Millom. R.A.F. buses then conveyed us to a remote aerodrome within walking distance to the Irish Sea. The strange part of this posting is that I have no recollection of an airfield or aircraft. After a day of signing for the usual array of bedding we set up our chattels and crashed onto made up beds. Crowded train carriages are not conducive to sound, restful sleep.



Eddie Stanbury and my self finally met up again at RAF Millom and we were soon to embark on two "volunteer" holiday excursions. One to Lake Windermere and one to the City of Stoke on Trent as Guests of the Lord Mayor.



Don Burges (left), Freddie Wrigley and my self finally met again during our short stay at Millom.
Don & I were on Course together & spent leaves in New York & Scotland but had not seen one another during our time in the UK. Freddie and I had some time together on a Polish RAF Station 16 SFTS Newton, supposedly doing Air Traffic Control.

On a Notice Board some one read that volunteers were wanted to go for a **Rest and Recreational leave to a home located near Lake Windermere.**

Sceptics referred to the old saying of not volunteering for anything but 20 of us did for it was an opportunity to get away from isolated Millom with its towering Black Combe (hill) towering over us.

Our journey by bus took us up along the west coast passing through the mining town of Whitehaven, where it was reported the mine actually went well out under the Irish Sea. We continued on inland and easterly to Lake Windermere. Our bus entered the grounds of a magnificent two story country house.

“Why are we stopping here?” enquired a voice from the back of the bus, “this isn’t Lake Windermere?”

“This is your summer residence for the next nine days,” we were informed by the bus driver.

We piled out clutching our over night bags (bought in the PX in U.S.A. and were met at the large entrance door of this stately home by the Lady of the House, who warmly welcomed us.

Eddie and I shared a beautifully panelled bedroom overlooking a garden and a view of a nearby valley.

“Let’s go and have a look at Lake Windermere” suggested Eddie.

We unpacked our gear and set off to walk the short distance. What a very pleasant surprise was the town of Windermere with its many small shops catering for the holiday makers. There were many young people touring and some were living in a tent village. It was a new experience to see mixed groups spending their holidays together in this manner. The country side was picturesque with a great deal to see without long distances to cycle unlike the country of my birth.

Villages here, and all over England, seemed to be only a few miles apart. Weather was particularly mild with many sunny days. In due course our wandering took us down to the lake's edge of the famous "Windermere". What a fabulous place for a holiday. People were boarding sight seeing motor boats all wearing summer clothing and basking in the sunlight. What ever little sunlight there was everyone made the most of it. The lake was swarming with row boats with usually one occupant lolling back in the stern while the other manned the oars extolling the prowess of the rower, the scenery, nearby female rowers, or light banter remarks about the lack of the other’s rowing prowess.

“Hi Jubbsie!” came a loud call from a passing row boat being sculled along at a fast pace by a pair of Aussies. "Let's go and find a place to have some lunch," I suggested, "so that we'll have the strength to take on that bunch out on the lake." While strolling along one of the twisting roads in search of a place to have a meal I kept noticing a sign in the front garden of a number of private houses. Because they intrigued me I stopped a passing "Bobbie"(policeman) and asked him what the signs meant. “That "B & B" notice means that the owners welcome visitors to stay overnight in their homes for "Bed & Breakfast" at a reasonable cost," came his immediate explanation.



Our beautiful Windermere Private home, where our wonderful Hostess made our stay so perfect, but she was at a loss as to why some of my compatriots did not go for walks. Wandering around Windermere, and rowing on the large Lake was unforgettable.

On one occasion both Eddie and I stayed at a B & B and had a most delightful room with an excellent breakfast. Many, many years later, on a return to the United Kingdom, I stayed in many of these Bed & Breakfast establishments and thoroughly enjoyed them all.

Out on the Lake was a most pleasant interlude with us taking turns to man the oars. By now a number of our Aussie travellers were also out on the lake that been the venue of the World water Speed Record.

Those of us, who went sight seeing also had a great time at the local dances and local pubs but a number Aussies remained quite inactive at our Holiday Home: much to the amazement of our Gracious Hostess.

In due time, our interlude at Lake Windermere came to an end, but the experience lingered in my memory for many years. Our very pleasant holiday all too soon ended with the bus took us through Windermere and crossed the Lake at its narrowest end where I observed a small factory

that had a brilliant blue dye stain on its wall. The colour reminded me of the blue often used in laundry water in Western Australia for making clothes whiter.

Our arrival back in Millom was accompanied by ribbing about “volunteering” After our explanation (suitably embellished by some creative characters) as to the great time we had had probably stirred up some regret by those, who had “knocked” going.

The day following we were again assembled and informed as from the day following we would be going on a Commando Course in RAF Weston Super Mare. We located it and discovered its location was on the Bristol Channel. This meant we had to go through the whole process of handing back to the Station Stores Section all our bedding and obtaining the necessary signed “chit” as a clearance. A meeting was called in one of the dormitories, for all those destined for the Commando Course Draft, where it was decided we would present ourselves at the appointed time, BUT without our webbing gear.

A shocked R.A.F. NCO roared at the assembled group as we waited along side the waiting train carriages but it was too late to return to Millom Base. Only one member of the Draft showed up with all his webbing gear.

When we duly arrived at RAF Weston Super Mare there was disbelief that this group of “Colonials” had dared to report without their Webbing Gear. The upshot was that we pleaded innocence as no direct order had been made that we should come with the missing equipment.

After a day of sight seeing on the sea front of this peace time holiday town, I discovered some one had stolen my RAF issue sunglasses, we returned to RAF Millom.

Our return to Millom must have squashed any further postings to the Commando Course. As the weather was mild and sunny a group of us decided to head for the nearby Irish Sea for a swim and some sun bathing. Not much swimming was done in the icy cold sea but we did endeavour to get some sun on our whitened bodies that had been un-exposed to direct sun light for over a year. When a problem of what to do with us presented itself, the "R.A.F.'s solution was to send us on leave. It was probably the best thing that could have been done in the circumstance yet there was still a War in the Pacific to be won. I have no recollection of any official concern regarding the war still raging so close to Australia.

More Leave so off to Banchory, Scotland

As was my usual approach to these periodical leaves I went to see the Station Padre (using the Lady Frances Ryder Club) and requested some where in the High lands of Scotland. Within a few days, armed with a leave pass, rail ticket and an address in Banchory some 20 miles inland from Aberdeen, I was on my way. By now I had been conditioned to the constant breaking up of a temporary group of pilot friends. A few of the Aussies, like Eddie Stanbury, from the State of Victoria, would again meet up at a later date. All the Kiwi Pilots I would never see again. At the time I wasn't to know, but apparently it was only Don & I were the only one from my original Pilot Draft, who had actually reached an A.F.U. I also didn't know that some Pilots had elected to train as **Flight Engineers** and by now had been posted to Lancasters and were engaged in bringing back Allied Prisoners of War from all over Europe. Some were taking the Squadron Ground Crews on flights over Europe to witness the end result of years of bombing on the cities of Germany.

My journey northwards was on a train crammed with Service men and women going on leave or changing postings. When I now look at a RAF map, that I still have, it is unbelievable that so many aerodromes could have been constructed in the United Kingdom.

On arrival at the Banchory Rail Station, who should I bump into, but another Flight Sergeant Aussie named Brendan McGurk, and, like me, hailed from Western Australia. We soon discovered that we were both going to spend our leave with Major and Mrs Kerr and Daughters. Well I remember strolling up a winding gravel driveway and glanced into the open boot of a car parked near the front door of our host's house. What a shock it was to see two small venison, laid out on a mat, (quite dead!) along with several braces of partridges all tied together in pairs with luggage labels attached ready for posting. We later discovered that bird and deer would be taken to the rail station and sent off South to friends. We would also later sample venison and partridges at the large dining table with the family. A few more steps forward brought us to the door of this large house to be welcomed by a young lady.

"Mother and Father are expecting you both so do come in," was an invitation from one of the daughters. We were made most welcome and then shown around the house and finally our bedroom. From our room we could look out onto steep surrounding hills that were often shrouded in mist or low clouds. That night we went down to dinner in a very large dining room with an equally long table. To draw us into conversation Major Kerr asked. "Do either of you lads know anything about the Midland Railway Company in Western Australia, because I have some shares in that organization?"

"Yes I have had some experience as a passenger on that private railway," I ventured. I then gave a graph description of my 24 hour troop train journey, including my swinging hammock episode. I don't believe that was the sort of information the Major wanted to hear about his investment, but the daughters all smiled. Next day, as the weather was fine we took a picnic lunch and with three daughters went on a climb to the summit of the nearest hill. By the time we reached the top I was certainly ready for a rest before I could entertain assisting in demolishing the picnic hamper. I believe it was that afternoon the most fantastic news was received. **The War with Japan had suddenly ceased** after two special bombs had been dropped on cities in Japan. As more radio news reports came in we learnt about the Atomic Bombs.

It was 15 August, 1945 "V.P. Day"

Two of the Daughters did some telephoning and then announced that Brendan and I would accompany them to a party in Aberdeen that evening. A trip in the family car soon had us in the bustling city of Aberdeen and to the door of a swank hotel. It appeared that to gain entry was by a special invitation, which caused no problem to our Hostesses. There was much merry making with many a dram consumed before we wended our way back to Banchory. Breakfast was prepared by the daughters and it was set out in individual covered dishes so that you could make your own selection. There appeared to be no apparent shortages even though the U.K. had severe rationing of food. Brendan and I took up someone's suggestion to take a bus and visit Braemar the peace time location for the Highland Games. On the way we were to see out the port side of our bus, Balmoral Castle, where the King and Queen of England spent holidays with their family. A back drop to the Castle scene was a high, tree covered range of hills creating a setting that could have been used by Walt Disney in his movie films. On our return journey we intended hopping off the bus and study the scene a little more leisurely. After an hour or two in Braemar we set off to retrace our bus trip and duly stopped the bus and alighted and made our way up a hill to gain a better view of Balmoral Castle. Being a beautiful sunny day we stretched out on the grass and consumed a bottle of soft

drink and a number of iced cakes. What a peaceful scene it was and how fortunate it was that we were there. We returned to the main road and walked to the little Crathie Church where the Royals attended during their visits to Balmoral. The door of the Church was not locked so two inquisitive Aussies wandered in and sat down. We had now some thing in common with the Royal Family. As a bus was shortly due we returned to the road to await its arrival. Our delightful leave with our generous Hosts soon came to an end. A train ride back to Aberdeen provide us with some hours to spare to go sight seeing in this City of Granite before commencing the journey back to R.A.F. Millom.



The day of our departure from the beautiful home our Hosts. Major and Mrs Kerr and three of their daughters. Brendan and I spent a glorious time in the heart of the Highlands of Scotland.

As the town of Perth was a stop on our way south, we left the train to wander about this lovely town, the name sake of the Capital of Western Australia. I had only been back a day at R.A.F. Millom, when Eddie Stanbury and I read on a notice board that the **Lord Mayor of Stoke on Trent was hosting a "Course for Dominion Forces" called "THE POTTERIES"**. We immediately "volunteered!!" and duly arrived at Stoke on Trent on Monday, September 24th. 1945 and attended a Civic Reception. This was followed by a Dinner at the "Castle Hotel"

Eddie and I were Billeted with a wonderful family for the following week. Each day was completely taken up with Official Engagements and Visits. Every evening saw us attending a Theatre, Dance, or Picture Theatre. Un-forgettable visits were made to the very famous "Wedgwood Pottery" where we saw a special Dinner Service being made for the United States

White House. This was followed by a visit to the Kemball Coal Mine, which meant going under ground. How glad I am not a miner. After a Lord Mayor's Special, Lunch at the North Stafford Hotel we went to a Football (soccer) Match to see Stoke City play Newcastle. It was my first visit to an English Football match but to see a really outstanding player called Stanley Mathews in action made it a memorable match.



A Civic Reception given by the Lord Mayor and Mayoress, Alderman W.H. Kemp, was held in the Town Hall in Stoke on Trent, on 24 September 1945. We were the guests of the City for six wonderful crammed packed days.

Our Hostess, her three daughters and her sister




Our Hosts proved to most charming and their generosity was really wonderful.



What a wonderful occasion it was to have experienced such hospitality while visiting Stoke on Trent. We were taken on many visits during our stay.

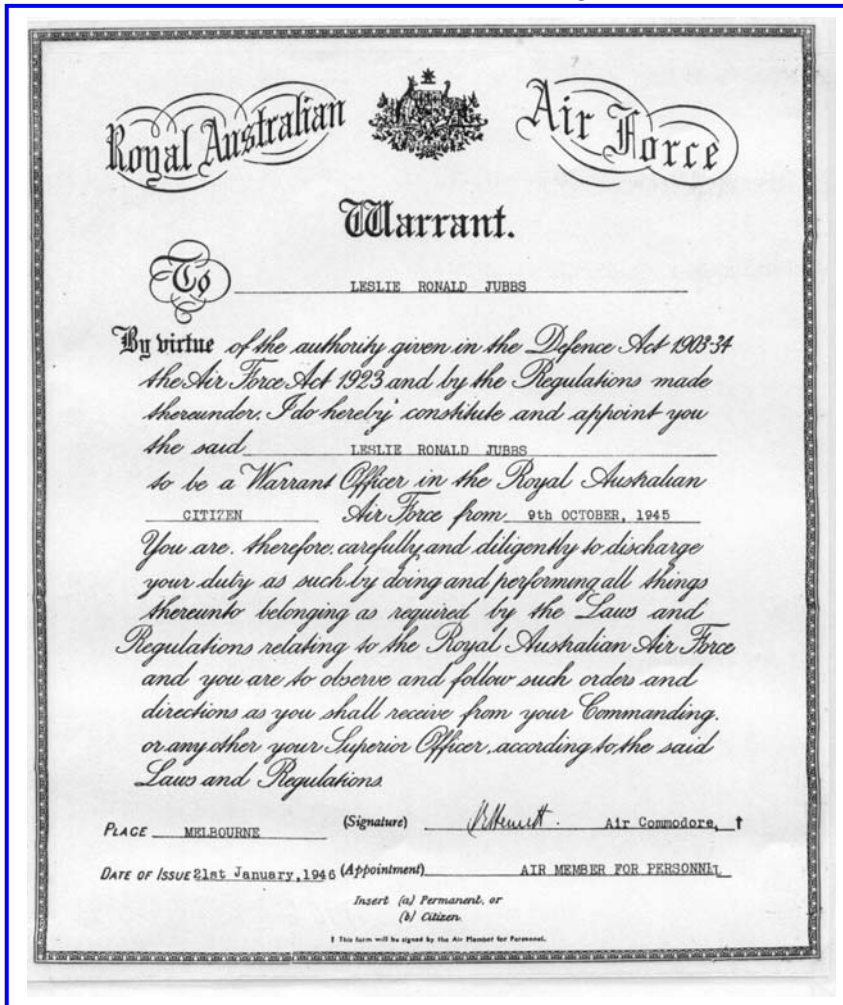
"THE POTTERIES"

A COURSE
for
Dominion Forces
on Leave



Organised by
THE BRITISH COUNCIL
under the patronage of
The Right Worshipful
the Lord Mayor of Stoke-on-Trent
Monday, Sept. 24th to Saturday, Sept. 29th, 1945.

<p>Monday, Sept. 24th</p> <p>4-30 p.m. Reception by the Right Worshipful the Lord Mayor of Stoke-on-Trent (Alderman W. H. Kemp, J.P., M.P.S.), at the Town Hall, Stoke-on-Trent.</p> <p>Tuesday, Sept. 25th</p> <p>11-0 a.m. Talk on "The Potteries," by Dr. H. W. Webb, O.B.E., Principal of the North Stafford Technical College. This lecture will be held in the Technical College.</p> <p>11-30 p.m. Bus will leave the Technical College for visit to the Kemball Coal Mine. Lunch at the Colliery.</p> <p>Wednesday, Sept. 26th</p> <p>9-30 a.m. The Course will meet at the North Stafford Technical College, and will divide into two parties. One party will visit the Caxmounside Senior Modern School and the other the Thistley Hough Girls' Grammar School. Taxis will be provided, and lunch will be given at the school.</p> <p>1-45 p.m. Return to the North Stafford Technical College. Taxis will be provided to leave the schools at this time.</p> <p>2-0 p.m. Bus will leave the Technical College to visit the L.M.S. Goods Station, Longport.</p> <p>7-0 p.m. Theatre Royal, Hanley. Donald Wolfitt in "Cymbeline."</p>	<p>Thursday, Sept. 27th</p> <p>9-0 a.m. Bus leaves Technical College for visit to Engleton Hall Farm, near Penkridge.</p> <p>1-0 p.m. Lunch at G. W. Ward & Son, Ltd., Shrewsbury.</p> <p>2-30 p.m. Arrive at Shrewsbury School.</p> <p>Friday, Sept. 28th</p> <p>9-30 a.m. Bus leaves Technical College for visit to Rodway Green Ordnance Factory. Lunch in the Factory.</p> <p>2-30 p.m. Arrive at J. Wedgwood & Sons, Ltd., Barlaston. Tea at the Factory.</p> <p>Saturday, Sept. 29th</p> <p>Morning free.</p> <p>1-0 p.m. Lunch, presided over by the Right Worshipful the Lord Mayor of Stoke-on-Trent, at the North Stafford Hotel.</p> <p>3-15 p.m. Football match. Stoke City v. Newcastle United.</p>
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My Warrant promoting me to a Warrant Officer eventually arrived.



With my promotion came a new uniform, great overcoat all made with a new type of material and flat cap.

It was with a certain sadness I felt when we had to bid farewell to our generous Host Family and once again return to R.A.F. Millom. On the 9th October, 1945 I was promoted to Warrant Officer, a rank rarely seen in England owing to the terrible losses of N.C.O. (Non Commissioned Officers) Air Crew. Here I was being granted this Royal Australian Warrant because I had survived. A few days later we all packed and after the usual "chit" clearances, boarded a train for the rail trip to our favourite sea side holiday resort "**Brighton**"

Brighton, Sussex, prior to embarkation



Brighton was by now flooded with Aussies so both the **Metropole and Grand Hotels** must have been completely filled. Although we left all our gear in our rooms I never heard of any one having personal belongings stolen. Being that time of the year the weather was beautiful and by now the barbed wire along the beach front had been removed and crowds of people were on the shingle. I do not recollect ever seeing anyone actually in swimming but many were paddling. I rushed down to join the civilian population but walking barefooted across the shingle was a somewhat tricky experience on feet that had only seen the light of day when going to bed or taking a shower. With rolled up trouser legs I too went for a paddle in what I discovered was extremely cold water. No wonder no one was actually in swimming but some girls actually change into bathers while sitting on the beach yet revealed nothing to the watching Aussies. During this period of sheer idleness I frequently went "up" to London to go sight seeing but on one occasion I saw for the first time what an aircraft fire had done to the face of a R.A.F. Pilot. I had just crossed a busy road and was about to step onto the footpath when this Pilot, who was engaged in conversation with another pilot, passed in front of me. He had no ear on the side I could see while the remainder of his face was terribly scarred. It would be a long time before I read about the work of a New Zealand Doctor, who perfected skin grafting and lead a team of doctors in helping Air Crew, suffering such hideous burns.

Although I had been bitterly disappointed in not advancing to a squadron, the battered bodies of young soldiers I met in Nottingham City Hospital, and now, just seeing only two burnt victim, was a reminder to me as to just how lucky I had been in not becoming another statistic in the records of war. When I saw the published casualty records of Bomber Command in Europe, it was unbelievable. It was most likely that many of the Air Crew I had landed England with in June 1944 would not now be returning to Australia.

With the daily arrival of more Australian Air Crew I began to again meet up with members of my original Pilot Course, who came onto England some time after my arrival. They had crossed the Pacific and landed in San Francisco and then "suffered" the hardship of a Pullman rail carriage to New York. My meeting with Don Burges was to discover of his recent marriage to an English lass. Don was a very shy, retiring fellow who probably didn't disclose to many that he had "taken the plunge" into matrimony. Both Don and I were not to have our 21st birthday until the New Year so we were still "babes in arms". As it turned out there were a great number of war time marriages judging by the ship loads of girls, and some with children, who started arriving at the Port of Fremantle in Western Australia in 1946. Just by chance I discovered that some one had made arrangements with a Swiss Watch Manufacturers to take orders from returning R.A.A.F. personnel. We had to make a selection from a range of wrist watches then pay for them with the understanding that they would not be given to us until we were nearly back in Australia. My selection was for an "Enicar Sport" with a large dial, and a sweep second hand. I wonder how many

of those original watches are still in use for mine is still keeping excellent time after many years of daily use. On a number of occasions, while travelling overseas I have been tempted to purchase another watch but have not done so. Being nearly to the end of October 1945 the weather down on the South coast of England was commencing to get a chill in the air giving an indication that winter was approaching. Rain was also more frequent and combined with strong winds a stroll along the beach front had lost its earlier appeal. The powers to be had issued a warning that our departure for Australia was imminent and therefore we must be at each morning's parade for details. The realization that I could soon be leaving England brought a certain degree of sadness, for my eighteen months spent there had been a most rewarding experience.

Homeward Bound

"You will have your deep sea kitbag packed and properly labelled for landing in Fremantle, W.A. for all West Australians, while your blue kit bag will accompany you on your ship. Tomorrow morning you will all assemble here at 08.30 hours ready to leave for home," explained an R.A.F. Officer. A tremendous shout of approval and joy rang out and a fever of excitement over took every one. Back to our rooms we scurried and feverishly assembled all accumulated goods and clothing. With a voyage likely to take a month and moving from the approaching winter to approaching summer in the Southern Hemisphere a decision as to what to take to accompany us on the voyage was crucial. By next morning the excitement coupled with "butterflies" in the stomach we assembled with our two heavy kit bags and over night bag (most had acquired one). I believe we were responsible to carry all bags to the ship which meant tying both kit bags together through the locking handle used in each bag. Both kit bags were then draped over a shoulder and steadied with one hand while the other managed the over night bag. Fortunately trucks carried us to the Brighton Railway Station because there was no way we could have lugged all our gear that far. We still didnot know our destination but it was generally agreed it would be Southampton, but then stranger things had been done in the past. Fortunately, Southampton, which was the nearest port, was selected, and there waiting for us was the 45,000 ton, Cunard-White Star Liner, the **"Aquitania"**.



This hugh ship was used as a troop Ship in the first World War and again during WW2. At one stage was converted to a Hospital Ship.

Boarding a large troop ship took some time, and for some one in their planning, must have allocated cabins and deck space accommodation in some particular order. By now the extra heavy white kit bag was discarded and placed in a special heap so that it could be stowed in one of the ship's holds. Eventually we staggered up the gang plank (in reality a wide covered walkway) then led up to A Deck. Posh cabins I imagined but we were continued on to the actual outside Port Deck to where rows and rows of bunks, three bunks high. I must explain that large, hinged shutters totally enclosed us from the rain and sea spray. This would be the area used by passengers, on sea cruises, to stroll and view the scenery. My bunk was the centre of a column of three and next morning I would discover, by raising the large shutter, I could look out over the ocean from my bunk. In reality I had one of the most ideal positions on the ship and later in the voyage I was to discover how very fortunate I was after seeing and smelling the "fug" in the crowded cabins in lower decks. Onwards to Australia by the time we had stowed our gear and organized our individual bunks a meal was provided in some kind of rotation, for the Aquitania was crowded with a wide variety of Services. There were many South African Air Crews on board returning to Cape Town, a contingent of Royal Navy Sailors, a large group of British Tommies (soldiers), crowds of Kiwis (New Zealanders) and hundreds of Australians. It was Sunday 28th October 1945. As it had been a long day most of us "crashed" on our bunks. I believe I was asleep by the time my head hit the position where a pillow should be.

Next morning we were well on our way and out of sight of land. It was a grey, overcast day with occasional showers and a heavy sea running. Going to bed appears to a reasonable way for the human body to get accustomed to the ship's movement. Years later I did the same thing when I left on a pleasure cruise. Exploring the Aquitania was my first priority, along with hundreds of others, so it was a day of shuffling around. Occasionally discovering many Air Crew friends I had not seen for a long time. I was to have quite a few visitors to my ideally placed bunk. It wasn't long before we reached the notorious Bay of Biscay and it lived up to its name for the seas by now were enormous and breaking completely over the Bridge. A ship passing in the opposite direction, off the starboard side was having a rough time for it was more like a submarine.

Those on board, who had belonged to Coastal Command, could now see what it was like for the many ships, to safely passed through this most dangerous region, due largely to their presence. Owing to the war time secrecy by governments, little was known about the real, day to day operations of all Air Force Commands. I now realize just how little I knew while passing through the Bay of Biscay, then having Gibraltar and the entrance to the Mediterranean pass by un-noticed. It is only recently I have tapped into the enormous fund of books and resources about W.W.2, now available through the Western Australian State Library Board, to discover the extent of our involvement in the War against Germany and Japan. Day to day routine of eating, sleeping and showering fell quickly into place, and, the weather was becoming warmer and, as we approached the western side of Africa a holiday atmosphere developed. Basking in the sun light was eagerly sought but finding out door deck space was a difficulty because of large numbers of transit "passengers". One morning we woke to find our ship anchoring off shore from the Port of Freetown. Within a few minutes we were surrounded by "bum" boats loaded with tropical fruits and African produced handicrafts. Bartering and buying quickly got into operation with baskets of fruit coming on board. What a surprise I had when I peeled a green skinned orange and found the usual orange coloured fruit just the same as our home variety. Blood oranges were a variety I have never since seen. Our reason for calling into this remote port was soon evident for a large contingent of British Soldiers was going ashore to commence Garrison Duties. Here they were starting a career while we were ending one. I did not envy them for one moment for the weather was extremely hot and oppressive. That night, as I lay awake I could imagine a malaria mosquito flying out from shore, through my open shutter and locating me. In the early hours we were once again at

sea ploughing ahead at considerable speed across a glassy sea. By now we were approaching the Equator, where traditionally on peace time cruises, passengers were introduced to Davey Jones but those festivities did not take place. With Cape Town still some 3,500 miles away we settled down to a leisurely way of filling in the daylight hours wandering throughout this very large ship, playing 500, (card game) sleeping or discussing our U.K. interlude. Some one discovered that our arrival in Cape Town was likely to be on Sunday, November 12th 1945 so we were looking forward to going ashore after being on board since leaving Southampton.

Cape Town "Escapade" 1945

From the deck of our troop ship `Aquitania` hundreds of cars could be seen lining the shore. We were expecting to go ashore after the long voyage from Southampton but what a disappointment when the ship dropped anchor in mid harbour. Rumour informed us that the citizens of Cape Town were waiting to show us their city but the Officer in charge of Troop Movements (my belief) was determined not to take the ship into the new dock. Water carrying barges started to arrive and it took two hours to off load one barge. Frustration was building up because of this unfair decision. Suddenly, the large scrambling nets that had lay rolled up for years all along side the ship, dropped down ending up touching the water barge tied along side our ship. I joined the seething mass of bodies descending the nets.(commando course skills had finally had some use. The water barge was soon loaded to its capacity but with no apparent resistance from the crew.

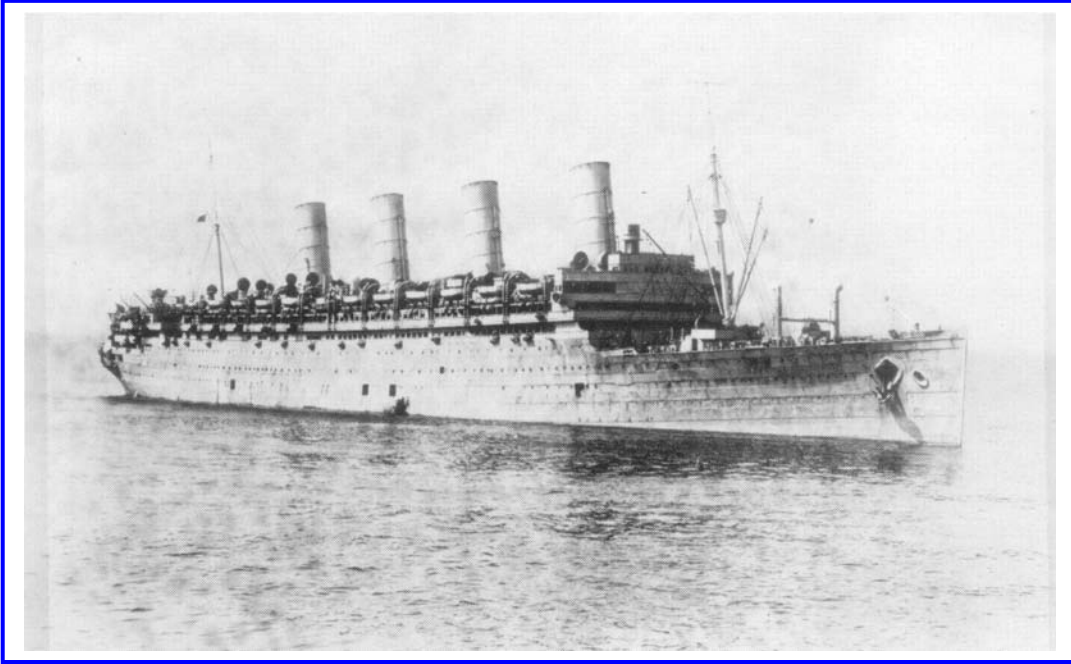
From the bridge of the Aquitania appeared a roaring head, of what appeared to be a British Army Officer, (I could be mistaken) who threatened to have us all court-martialled and (perhaps flogged and keelhailed. The upturned faces, to this apparition, were one of contempt. Hundreds of fellow passengers looked down on us enviously but now awaiting their chance on the next water barge. Within a short time the barge cast off and headed for the welcoming shore with a great crowd of jubilant aircrew completely occupying every available space. The blue skies overhead added to the "going on holiday spirit" that all were then feeling. Perhaps there was some apprehension as to what might be in the way of a reception committee when we arrived at the wharf side. With no apparent `committee` waiting we swarmed ashore onto `terra firma` for the first time in weeks. Out through the main gates and headed for the city, its sights, shops and people. Table Top Mountain and its table cloth cloud had been beckoning us all day and now the possibility of actually visiting was a reality. My friends and I became so engrossed with the life and peoples about us, mountain climbing was forgotten. The sheer enjoyment of this freedom of wandering about overwhelmed us. I do not recollect clearly what we did for accommodation that night but there is some hazy thought that we shared the floor in some hotel lobby. Next morning the local news paper published an account of the preparations, made by a huge Welcome Committee and the people of Cape Town, while we were still many days away before arriving. The local citizens were bitterly disappointed by the decision made by the ship board powers that denied them the opportunity to show their hospitality.

Throughout the following morning a vehicle toured the city broadcasting to the "holiday makers" that the ship, "Aquitania" would be leaving at a certain time, and that all Australians had to be back on board.

On return to the Cape Town wharf we found our water barge was our only means of return to the ship still anchored in mid harbour.

Coming along side our floating "Hotel" the only provision for gaining entry was by the same manner in which we had departed, and, that was by the same scrambling nets. With some small gifts and parcels stuffed inside our uniform jackets we scrambled back on board. What was

now to happen to us now did not enter my consideration. Not long afterwards the ship set sail and my recollect was a very happy interlude in my youth, and, long after, I could reflect on that day of happiness.



Cunard White Star Liner "AQUITANIA" was carrying 4691 Service Personnel including 213 Western Australians. She was 44,786 tons, the only four funnel liner still operating and she had served in WW1 and had a total of 1,000,000 passengers carried and was therefore the most travelled ship afloat.

AQUITANIA TROOPS ASHORE

Hundreds Take French Leave in Tugs

SWARMED DOWN ROPE LADDERS

SEVERAL hundreds of Australian troops, disappointed and indignant at being refused leave ashore in Cape Town from the Aquitania, dropped to the decks of two tugs lying alongside the liner last night and, refusing to return, were brought ashore. They entered the city in orderly groups and gave no trouble.

City was Ready to Welcome Aussie Troops

THE Mayor of Cape Town, Mr. A. Bloomberg, issued the following statement last night:
"As Mayor of Cape Town

The number who had landed up to midnight was estimated roughly at 600. Many of them had no idea where they would sleep, and some had already started to return to the liner.

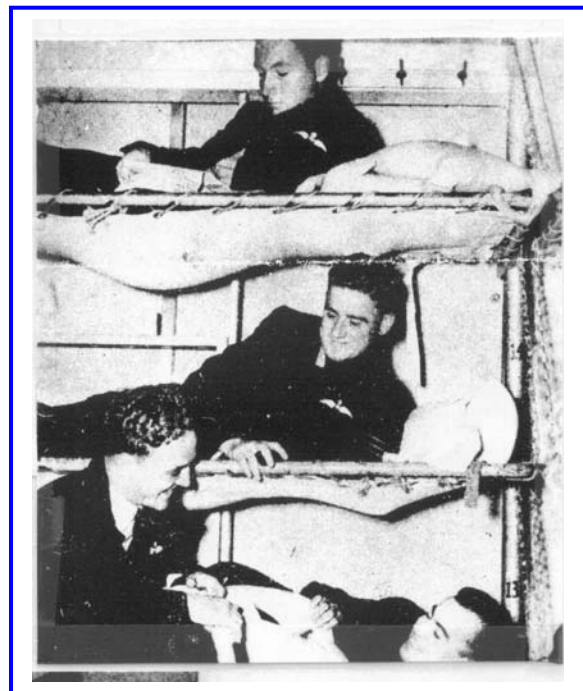
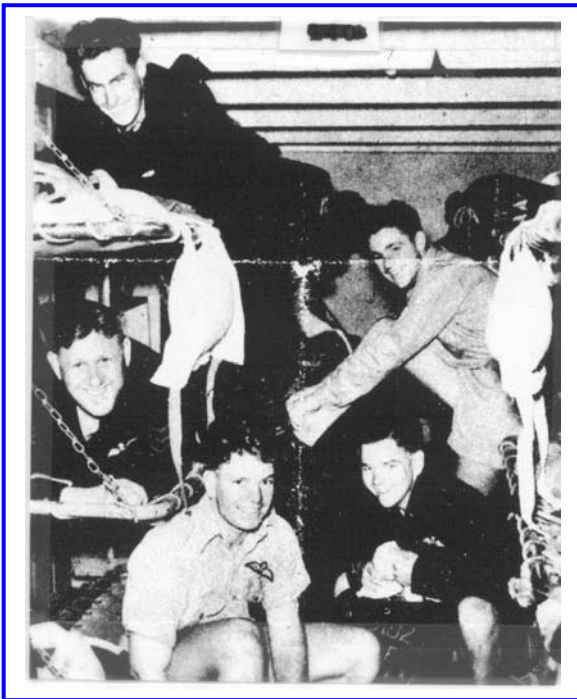
An attempt to pump oil-fuel on board the liner, while lying in the roadstead, had to be abandoned after the tanker engaged in the attempt had been slightly damaged. It is officially stated that the order for the Aquitania to be provisioned in the roadstead came from the Admiralty. No obstacle to her docking came from the Railways and Harbours authorities.



The Citizens of the famous City of Cape Town had arranged a Public Reception & welcome for the Service Personnel on the AQUITANIA but it appeared that the Admiralty had decided that the ship was NOT to, on this occasion, tie up along side the Harbour facilities but remain at anchor.

On to Fremantle in Western Australia

As a school boy I had heard of the notorious Cape at the south end of the continent of Africa and the mountainous waves that could be encountered there. The day of our departure was like a typical summers' day in my home state....a sunny day with not a cloud in sight, light winds and a slight sea that was of the deepest blue in colour. Our rounding of the cape had us heading in an easterly direction for Cape Town and Fremantle are practically on the same parallel of latitude. You would have thought our arrival was imminent for there was a feeling of excitement in the air but we still had a considerable distance to cross the vast Indian Ocean. A few days later a call came over the public address system announcing the distribution of the wristlet watches paid for in Brighton. I was delighted to receive mine for the one that I had, was looking a little worse for wear. Some of my pilot friends commenced discussing what they were going to do as civilians. Some would return to their parent's farm, some would take up in the occupations that they had left nearly three years previously. For my self I had not the slightest idea what the future held for me. In fact I was somewhat concerned as to what I might do for there was probably no future in the R.A.A.F. and I certainly didnot have the necessary qualifications for civil aviation. I would face that hurdle when it arrived. Before leaving R.A.F. Millom I had cabled home all the money I had saved during my period overseas so I knew I had at least some reserve for emergencies!! On one occasion our ship was surrounded by thousands and thousands of dolphins all heading in our direction like a huge welcoming committee yet we were as yet many days away from shore. The usual day to day activities continued for the remainder of the voyage.



An incredible number of “bunks” could be installed in civilian ships used to carry Service Personnel to all the far flung locations and countries around the world.

Fremantle, our home coming.

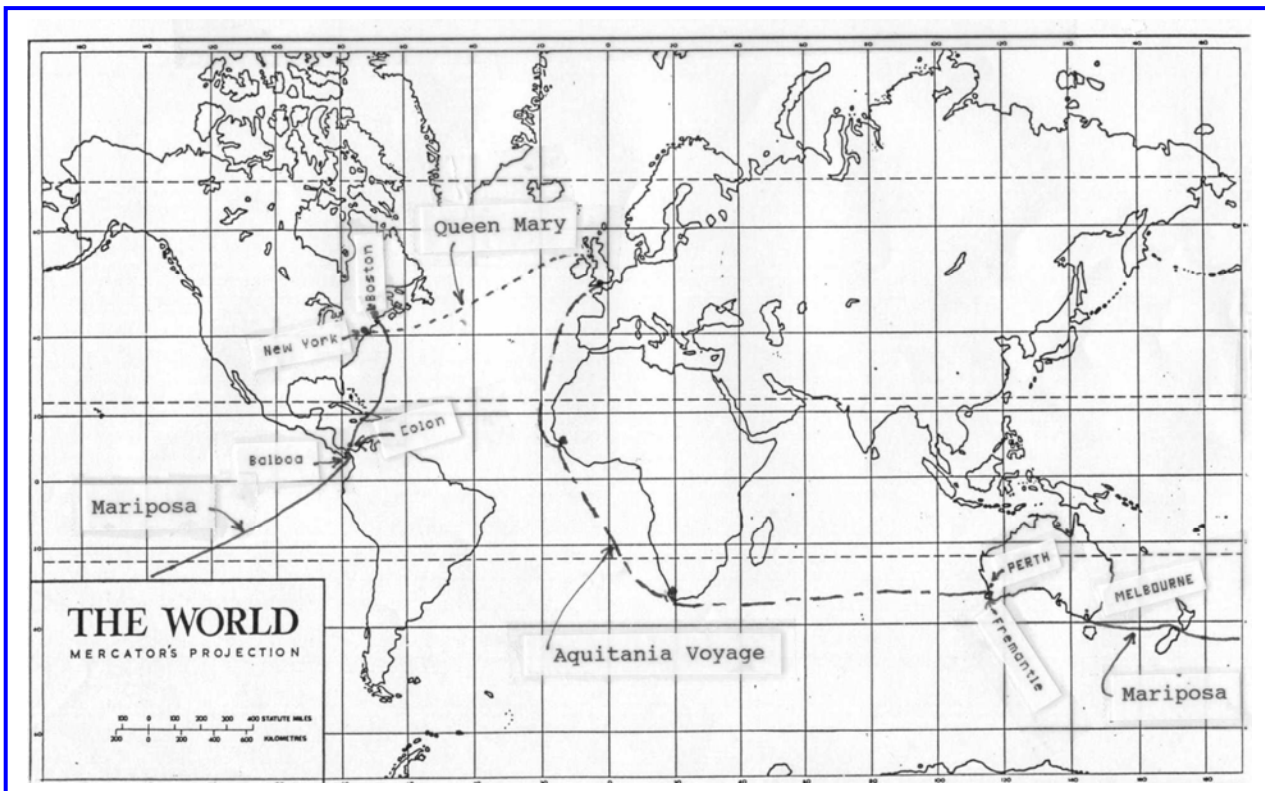
Knowing our arrival off the Port of Fremantle was for the following day we Western Australians rose early and packed our gear ready for departure. Out of the early morning haze the shore line came into view and as we made our final starboard turn to run parallel to the coast I recognized the Cottesloe beach by the tall pine trees along one of the streets. I had a sudden pang of nostalgia for the beauty of the British Isles and the wonderful places and kind people I had met.

A call over the Public Address System summoned all of us, who were going ashore. Last minute good-byes to my many Eastern States friends, whom I would never see again, then we stepped on board a small Boom Defence ship for our short trip to the wharves of Fremantle. Our "Aquitania" by now lay at anchor in Gage Roads because she was too large to enter the port.

A cheer rang out from the hundreds of R.A.A.F. still onboard, who now still had thousands of miles to go before they also reached their home states. I must admit to a degree of nervousness as I came down the gang plank and stepped ashore to join my Mother, who had tears flowing down her face. Some weeks of leave had been granted so I went through a period of concern as to my future while at the same time trying to come to grips with the dryness of the weather and the brown dead wild grasses in the paddocks. Out in the country it was wheat harvesting time for the real heat of approaching summer was becoming evident. I really missed the utter greenness of England.

While in the City of Perth I suddenly bumped into Don Burges, who was down from the country town of York. In his usual shy self asked me to accompany him to Fremantle to meet his wife coming on a "Bride" ship. Fortunately he had a photograph so I at least had some idea as to her appearance. Lining the rails of the ship, which had come into the Port of Fremantle, were many hundreds of War Brides, some of whom had accompanying children. I quickly spotted Margaret Burges and pointed her out to a very nervous Don. It was with Don that I had spent our two first leaves overseas together, yet I would only see him once more before his tragic death two years later.

Finally, on the 25th January 1946, with all my clearances completed at the R.A.A.F. Base in Wembley, I was Discharged from the Royal Australian Air Force. Having circumnavigated the World, at Government expense, I was still one month off my 21st birthday. On reflection, I count myself one of the lucky ones, to have been exposed to the World at large, the broadening of my knowledge, experiences and development, and that would not have occurred but for my entering the Air Force. So ended the era of my youth, but also, the commencement of a new and rewarding career.



My circumnavigation of the World completed before my 21st Birthday, while the Map of the United Kingdom indicates the locations and Cities associated with my stay during those important days of my youth.

Bomber Command Crews

In March 1942 a decision was made to completely alter the composition of Air Crews. At that time Crew training on Whitley and Wellington, two engine bombers was made up of two Pilots, an Observer, and two Wireless Air Gunners.

When a Bomb Aimer became a Crew member the second Pilot was deleted. With the arrival of the four engine bomber, the Stirling and later by the Halifax and Lancasters, a Flight Engineer was added to the Crew.

1000 Bomber Raid in May 1942

When it was decided to launch the first of these massive raids the average number of aircraft and crews available was between 300 and 400. To make up the balance, Crews in training at Operational Training Units (O.T.U.) and Heavy Conversion Units had to be used.

Surplus of Air Crews

Although Bomber Command suffered horrendous losses of Air Crew, with only 20 Crews in every 100 completing a Tour, the Empire Air Training Scheme was successfully supplying a steady stream of replacement personnel. By my Wings Graduation it must have become evident to Planners in the Air Ministry that a surplus of Pilots was accumulating in England. At about that time newly graduated **R.A.F. Pilots already in England** were given the option of becoming Flight Engineers, re-mustering to other Ground Staff duties, or becoming Glider Pilots. It wasn't until 6 months after my arrival in England that some Australian Pilots were offered a course to become Flight Engineers. I was never aware of this, probably because I was going to an Advanced Flying Unit.

The Prime Minister of the UK, Winston Churchill had advised the Australian Government during mid 1943 NOT to send any more RAAF Air Crews to England, but this was completely ignored by the Australian Government. There was also a surplus of New Zealand and Canadian Air Crews thus compounding the problem.

Australia's Contribution to Empire Air Training Scheme

Fully trained in Australia:	10,882 Pilots
	6,071 Navigators
	10,432 Air/Wireless Gunners

Total = 27,387

After Elementary Training in Australia:

	10,351	Australians sent to Canada
and	674	Australians sent to Rhodesia
Therefore:	27,387	Trained in Australia
	10,351	Trained in Canada
	674	Trained in Rhodesia
Total =	38,412	Australian Air Crew

9,000 Australians flew with Bomber Command from Bases in the United Kingdom.

Bomber Command Losses

Example: **"Battle of Berlin" November 1943 to March 1944**

Marshall of the R.A.F. Sir Arthur Harris had anticipated losing up to 500 bombers.

During the raids on Berlin in those few months some 492 Bombers were shot down, a further 95 were wrecked on landing back in England, while 859 returned damaged.

There were 10,500 Air Crews in Operational Squadrons and in those few months and **50% had been lost.**

Air Craft Losses

(during my (L.J.) period in the United Kingdom)

Night Bombing	Air Craft Damaged
June 1944 to May 1945 = 954 lost	3,897
Day Bombing	
June '44 to May 1945 = 245 lost	
Total Air Craft lost	3,897

This loss of 1,199 aircraft also meant a loss of 1199 Pilots!! Many Pilots were wounded in returning Bomber Command aircraft.

Many Pilots were lost in other Commands:

2. Coastal Command, 2. Fighter Command, 3. Special Duties Command
4. Transport Command, 5. Reconnaissance Command, Weather Flights, Fighter Affiliation, Strike Command, just to name a few, as well as Squadrons operating in Operations against the three enemy countries of Germany, Italy, Japan in far away battles.

RAAF CASUALTIES IN ALL THEATRES**RAAF Casualties - types of units:**

Operational squadrons	8,884
EATS schools	1,070
OTU's and other flying schools	1,762
Other units	<u>2,038</u>
	Total 13,754

RAAF Casualties - muster**Air casualties**

Pilots	5,131
Navigators	2,312
WAG's	2,328
Air Gunners	1,210
Technical air gunners	238
Ground musterings	358

Ground Casualties

Aircrew	399
Ground musterings	<u>1,778</u>
	Total 13,754

TABLE B - RAAF casualties, by areas, to 15th August, 1945

(Deaths from illness in brackets)

	Died	Injured	Total
Europe	5,397 (26)	947	6,344
<i>Middle East</i>	<i>1,135 (9)</i>	<i>413</i>	<i>1,548</i>
Canada	147 (5)	55	202
India-Burma	242 (3)	89	331
Far East	136	44	180
South West Pacific	3,342 (298)	1,614	4,956*
Other Areas	163 (1)	30	193

TOTAL = 13,754

Of a total of 1,122 non flying personnel who died, 1,009 were in the South West Pacific Area. * Includes casualties in Australia not on operations or in operational areas.

Table C**Casualties to RAAF personnel in European Theatre to 15th August, 1945**

	Dead	Injured
Bomber Command	3,486	265
Fighter Command	191	49
Coastal Command	408	113
Other Forces and units	478	151
OTU's and similar schools	724	298
Other training schools & units	110	71

From the Australian Official War History of WW I 1.

Discharged from the RAAF

The reality of finally leaving the Royal Australian Air Force after nearly three years came over me as I walked through the gates of No P.R.D.C. Wembley for the last time with a parcel containing a new suit and a felt hat. What was I now to do as a civilian again? Here I was a month off my 21 birthday and having circumnavigated the world but with no plans formulated as to what I now should contemplate. My contemporaries in the main would return to their former employers, but that was not what I contemplated for it had only been a stepping stone to my one desire at the time to become a Pilot in the RAAF.

I made my way home to Woodman's Point where Mum and Gerry Mc Mahon (my step Father) and Mum had set up house, provided by the State Explosive Department. I endeavoured to come to some decision as to what I might consider. No blinding flash of sudden solution came my way so after two hours of bus and waiting time connection I ambled through the front door and announced I had been DISCHARGED. No doubt my Mother sighed with relief for Mothers had watched the casualty lists that daily appeared in the news paper as well as the arrival of a telegram boy with the dreaded telegram announcing the son missing or killed while on active service. Such thoughts never troubled the likes of me for such negative thoughts were never contemplated.

As the heat of summer, that January 1946, I lounged around for a few days, went swimming at the beach in front of the Explosive Magazine land, experienced the fantastic fishing from the Explosive Jetty until completely bored. I missed the daily routine of Service life but probably more than that missed the company of men I shared the experience with during the month long sea voyage from England.

Dressing in civilian clothes again was a new experience for it was in marked contrast to my very distinctive dark blue uniform of the RAAF that was quite unlike any other service uniform. Australian Air Force personnel were easily recognised anywhere. That morning I walked to the Spearwood Bus stop and waited for the old bus feeling completely alone standing there by myself in this quite remote place. Eventually the bus came to a sliding stop on the loose blue metal. The trip through the vegetable growing district of Spearwood was in it self an experience for there were many, many small properties operated in the main by Yugoslav and Italian families. The whole families, including school children, were expected to assist.

On arrival in Fremantle I then had to find my way to either the train station, the departure point for buses or the small, rapid transport bus, known as the Parlour Car, which I soon preferred for the driver operated like a taxi driver. During this period I soon learnt my way around and rediscovered the suburbs on both sides of the winding Swan River on my way to Perth.

On very rare occasions would I bump into any of my old service friends for many had already returned to their old jobs or to the country towns where they lived and worked. A number were once again involved with farming. It was quickly evident that I too would have to make a decision but I could not discover an inkling of what I should do. From an early age all I had wanted to do was to become a Pilot but at that time I really gave no thought to approaching an Airways Company as I believed that all possible positions had been taken up by many very experienced bomber Pilots.

During February 1946 I embarked on a future Career that was to be most rewarding right up until I finally retired in January 1986. My period in the Royal Australian Air Force also provided a great many advantages that was a great asset during my civilian Career.

Conclusion

My main intention in this book has been to indicate the rigorous training Pilots undertook during our first ten months in the Royal Australian Air Force. It would appear that on every Pilot Training Station (later called Bases) the incremental stages of training was universal and the “patter for each new learning experience” was strictly enforced by Instructors. At No. 4 Service Flying Training Station, Geraldton this strict curriculum resulted in every Trainee Pilot methodically progressing so as that every new learning facet was covered. Some how this progression had to be recorded against each Trainee, with no doubt, personnel evaluation at each stage by every Flying Instructor for we all had many Instructors Our Flight Commanders no doubt received progress Reports so that any Trainee could be assessed before continuing training. The expression “SCRUBBED” meant a Trainee had not met the required standard and would have been sent some where else for training in another facet of Air Crew or Ground Staff categories.

The only occasion I recall of a Trainee being Scrubbed was the pest at Cunderdin Elementary Flying Training School, who seemed to pick me out knowing how I succumbed to Air Sickness every day. He took some delight in bragging to me as to how he was able to do all kinds of aerobatics and not be affected my air sickness.

None of my Course ever mentioned this affliction yet they all knew that it was my responsibility every day to clean out the blind flying hood on a Tiger Moth I had flown. Years later I found out that some fellow Trainees had been ‘Scrubbed’ and as I had not associating with them did not realise they had departed. Rumours at SFTS were circulated, perhaps by Instructors, that some one on a previous Course had been tempted to go low flying and consequently was Court Marshalled and scrubbed.

The threat of being scrubbed was first mentioned in a subtle way, by our Drill Instructors, from the very first day of entering the RAAF, and if we did not make satisfactory advancement in training this would be our fate. The Order to shave every day was take very seriously by me although, all I had was fair fluff instead of whiskers because they had not even developed, mainly because I had not begun to actually use a safety razor even at 18 years of age. I was most conscious of my lack of formal education compared with all my contemporaries so I was determined to try my very best in every facet.

On reflection I have now pondered on the influence of my Service in the Royal Australian Air Force had on my future and rewarding Career,

Perhaps the very first thing that springs to mind was from the attendance at the initial No. 75 Squadron of the Air Training Corps in October 1941. From then onwards there was a purpose in my life for many challengers had to be achieved. The two evenings each week to attend intensive teaching lessons about vital subjects relevant to the preparation of entering the Air Crew Training program. Taking the opportunity to attend an Instructional Course in Jujitsu under the tutelage of an Austrian gentleman was indeed an enlightening experience. Being selected for promotion to the rank of Sergeant brought about added responsibility as a Drill Instructor. This is a great deal more than just marching up and down. What made this extra duty possible for it was an era of complete “Self Discipline” by every, highly motivated Cadet for they were also determined to becoming an Air Crew Member. Another opportunity was to be a Crewman on WGCDR Charles Snook’s yacht, “TIMAROO”

Being select from 120 Members of No 41 Course, after the intensive Initial Training School time, as a Pilot Trainee was certainly a rewarding experience. To be Awarded my Pilot Wings was certainly the most highest point in my life until that moment.

From that moment on was a never ending succession of rewarding outcomes not only in the social experiences in the United States and the United Kingdom, but with every day opportunities and personal achievements in progressing through the demanding requirements demanded by the Royal Air Force.

Every thing was a challenge to be met so my nearly three years of Air Force Service prepared me for another challenging Civil Career.

The RAAF made all this possible.

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When some 50 years had disappeared after the cessation of the War in Europe and Pacific I discovered just how lucky I had been when I discovered the horrendous Air Crew losses there had been during 1939 & 1945. (see pages 124 / 125.)

Just for the period I was in England some 1199 bombers were shot down killing Crews, while 3,897 returned damaged carrying killed, maimed and injured Crew Member.

During **just one night raid on Nuremburg, of the 795 bombers sent, each with seven Crew members, 96 bombers were shot down with a loss of **672 young Air Crews.****

Late Discoveries in mid 2008.

Recent communications with the United Kingdom I discovered the actual days allocated to the three RAF Training Stages allocated to each, for newly arrived RAAF Pilots in England.

With suitable weather, some 21 days was devoted to Pilots entering an **Advanced Flying Unit (AFU)** but in my case I actually spent some 68 days, some three times the usual, mainly because the War in Europe had ended so there was no real urgency by the Royal Air Force for me to proceed to an **Operational Training Unit**, flying Wellingtons and gathering a Crew of other young Air Crews.

All RAF Pilots suddenly disappeared and posted else where yet as there was still a War against the Japanese still raging, I continued flying and enjoying ever aspect, yet still fully expecting and highly motivated to continue to an **OUT.**

RAF Sturgate was a sudden posting, which on reflection came about after the Link Trainer Instructor informed me he had never witnessed before the result of my final Test when the replicate of two ink copies of test resulted in one tracking exactly over the other.

This Instructor must have reported this to My Flight Commander because I was immediately posted to RAF Sturgate the following day. On my last day there I was delegated to take off in dense fog must have been permitted by the Commanding Officer in complicity with the Beam Approach School Flight Commander, because of the incredible cost of burning an enormous amount of high octan petrol needed to allow me to land using the FIDO System.

I contacted an Historical Group for RAF Sturgate to ask how often FIDO had been activated and they reported only one other occasion was when a small number of Lancasters land safely but were kept on the ground for days but this had occurred while the war was still raging over Europe. This was the only Officially Recorded occasion.

My final experience with FIDO was on 27 May 1945 so the activation of FIDO must have been for the benefit for the decision makers to witness the final occasion for my benefit because RAF Sturgate did NOT Record this occasion because the War had ceased and the Base was disbanded three days later.

This occasion was for me, an exciting flying experience, and so well remembered as a high light of my flying with the Royal Air Force.