

Royal Australian Air Force



No. 4 Service Flying Training School
Geraldton, Western Australia
Pilot Training Base
1941-1945



Reflections of WAAAF and RAAF Personnel, who Served on this war time Station.
and
A personal memoir of a WW 2 Pilot, who trained there.

by

Leslie R. Jubbs

2005



In 1936 Wing Commander R.J.Brownell MC, MM was posted to England to evaluate aircraft suitable to meet the needs of the Royal Australian Air Force. At Royal Air Force Manston Station they had been equipped with the new Avro Anson aircraft, which he was able to test. He then visited the Avro Anson factory and suggested a number of modifications, then had no hesitation in recommending to the Australian Government the Avro Anson as the best aircraft available.

Although the Avro Anson was used extensively in Service Training Schools it played many roles in active service through out WW2.

Avro Anson

Type	3 seat coastal reconnaissance bomber	
Country of origin	United Kingdom	
Number ordered	1020	
Entered Service	1937	
Left Service	1950	
Other roles	Transport, training, observation, wireless air gunnery, ambulance.	
Armament	Guns	2x.303 inch MGs
	Bomb load	360 lbs
	Depth charges	500 lbs
Weight (lbs)	Empty	5,375 lbs
	Loaded	9,540 lbs
Dimensions (feet)	Wingspan	65.6
	Length	42.3
	Height	13.1
Power	Two Armstrong Siddeley Cheetah 1X 350 hp.	
Initial climb	720 feet	Ceiling 19,000 ft
Endurance	790 miles	Speed Cruising 158 mph Maxi. 188 mph

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**Kingsley, Western Australia
October 2005**

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Overview

Early in 2005 I wrote to the Public Library, in the City of Geraldton, to enquire if any books had been published about the huge Royal Australian Air Force Station that once operated on the outskirts of the (now)City that had been created to train multi-engine Pilots during 1941 to 1945 under the **Empire Air Training Scheme**. Its location was on the actual site that is today, the **Geraldton Air Port**.

To my utter astonishment and disappointment nothing was available I then approached the Australian National Library, the Australian War Memorial and the RAAF Historical Section, all located in Canberra, only to learn that nothing had been recorded about the very important role played by **No. 4 Service Flying Training School**. An enormous number of Pilots had Graduated there had been posted to duties relevant to the needs of the Service, whether against the German, Italian and Japanese Forces. Many never returned home.

In due course I visited this thriving City and found no one, whom I asked, if they knew any thing about the War time RAAF Station.

One of the factors that motivated me was after a visit the Geraldton War Cemetery (the only one in Western Australia other than Karrakatta) where the graves of so many young men lost their lives during Training.

Having spent four months on this Station (as it was then called) learning to fly the twin engine aircraft, the Avro Anson, I considered remedying this by the possibility of assembling a book. Locating WAAAF and RAAF personnel from that far off era was the greatest challenge, but this publication indicates, I hope, an indication the importance of the 1500 personnel on the Station, who provided all the necessary services for 200 Trainee Pilots.

Every 28 days a Course of Trained Pilots Graduated, culminated with their Wings Parade, and virtually on the day of their departure another Course would arrive from No 9 Cunderdin Elementary Flying Training School.

The Electronic Version of this book.
RAAF Geraldton
No. 4 Service Flying Training School
Pilot Training Station.

The electronic form of my recently published book (Oct 2005) has many photographs in colour. Primarily the objective of this electronic version is for this history of the Base to be available to anyone, Schools, Libraries, and Organisations etc.

There are no restrictions on down loading to your hard disk and copying to a Compact Disk (CD) and making duplicates for others.

<http://members.iinet.net.au/~lesjubbs>

There are NO fees involved

Leslie R. Jubbs.

Author's Note

When in May 2004 I decided to take a short holiday in Geraldton, after returning from Exmouth, I thought it was an opportunity to take “a trip” down memory lane by exploring the region that I had viewed from the air during my multi-engine Pilot training in the RAAF during 1943 at **No. 4 Service Flying Training School**.

For assistance I approached the Geraldton Tourist Information Centre to inquire if any Tourist Signs had been erected identifying the two satellite airfields and the secret sealed air-strip that fledgling Trainee Pilots used. It appeared that they were non-existent.

Having learnt that a Mr Gary Warnor, a Reporter with the Geraldton “Guardian” newspaper had just written a story about of the secret airstrip I immediately contacted him. This in turn led me to Mr Graham Warr, who owned the farm on which the airstrip is located.

From Mr Lindsay Peet, a Perth Historian, I learnt the location and dimensions of Georgina and Kojarina satellite aerodromes.

From the Geraldton Library, Ms Ann Boyle, Local Studies Librarian, stated that no book had been published about the very important role played by **No.4 Service Flying Training School** that was located on the outskirts of the Town of Geraldton, in Western Australia. Thousands of young Pilots gained their coveted “WINGS” and went on to join Squadrons here and in all theatres of war and many never returned.

As I already had four other books on the Internet, which can be down loaded and copies made completely FREE of charges, I thought I may be able to also contribute to recording the role played in the WW2 War Effort by the thousands of young women and men of the supporting Ground Staff, who operated the hugh complex of No.4 SFTS as well as all the dedicated Flying Instructors and their Trainees.

Leslie R. Jubbs.

When once you have tasted flight you will always walk the earth with your eyes turned skywards: for there you have been and you will always be.

Leonard Da Vinci

Acknowledgements

To attempt such an undertaking to record the very important role played by RAAF and WAAAF personnel, meant first locating them and then interviewing about something that happened 60+ years ago. I am truly indebted to all those who were able to contribute, although many initially indicated that it was so long ago. Fortunately many would suddenly wake in the early hours of the morning after their subconscious mind had been busy, that brought about those rewarding times and thoughts came flooding back. For many, who may not have associated with their wartime friends for a very long time, soon often re-discovered those times they shared together.

Mrs Janet Beck, of the RAAF Historical Section in Canberra, who was able to access many RAAF Records or suggest avenues for assistance.

My Local State Librarians for obtaining books and references:

Mr Bob Urguhart, Geraldton Air Port Manager.

Ex SQNLDR Doug Burton, Pilot Instructor, No.4 Service Flying Training School, Geraldton.

Mr Jeff Wheat, Geraldton Chemist.

EX WGCDR Robert (Bob) Holmes, from No. 8 Course. The first Course to enter RAAF Station Pearce in 1940 then Graduate as a Pilot from No. 4 SFTS, Geraldton in 1941.

Mr Alex Cleave for the History of Lake Karryup Country Club.

Mr Gary Warnor, Geraldton "Guardian" Newspaper.

Mr Frank Warr, for showing me the "Secret Landing Strip".

Mr Philip Short, for kindly showing me over the old bombing range on his farm.

The Staff of the Shire of Greenough, Geraldton.

To all those who contributed with advice and suggestions, and especially to those, who so freely gave me their personal stories reflecting on that long ago era so very important in their youthful lives, I am most grateful.

To my Pilot Course friend, Mr Elton Larsen, & Catalina Pilot, and to Mrs Erica Haddon, who both kindly proof read this document, I acknowledge my sincere appreciation.

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Empire Air Training Scheme

Some forward thinking members of the **Royal Air Force** realised the possible threat by the very large and developing German Air Force (Luftwaffe) and that war was a real possibility, stated that the United Kingdom needed to prepare for such a threat and called upon **Canada, New Zealand and Australia for assistance.**

In October 1939 Government representatives from United Kingdom, Canada, New Zealand and Australia met in Ottawa, Canada to hear about a proposal for the **training of Air Crews for Service with the Royal Air Force.**

Australia was represented by the Minister of Air (Hon. J.V. Fairbairn), the Assistant Chief of Air Staff (Wing Commander G. Jones) and Messers Elford and Kellaway.

Lord Riverdale and Mr Fairbairn signed a Memorandum of agreement between the United Kingdom and Australia concerning the Empire Air training Scheme on the 27 November 1939.

In December an EATS program was agreed to by the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Canada and Australia and the plan was for an annual requirement of 50,000 Air crews made up of 20,000 Pilots, 30,000 Observers and Air Gunners. Britain would contribute 4/9 of this number, and Canada would provide 56%, and 36% by Australia and 8% by New Zealand.

It was also agreed that Australia would send Australian Air Crews to Canada to complete their training.

For Australia to achieve her commitment required an enormous amount of planning and the construction of Air Fields and the vast number of facilities for a great number of Personnel.

Here in Western Australia there was only one Royal Australian Air Force Station, located in Bullsbrook, and named **Pearce**, which had been opened in 1938 using Avro Ansons and Hawker Demons.

As this Station (later called Base) was to become **No.5 Initial Training School** many buildings had to be constructed for lectures and accommodation (huts) before the first Course under the Empire Training Scheme arrived.

With the War in progress and daily accounts shown in newspapers, on radio and the important newsreels shown in picture theatres, the general public became well aware of the grave danger happening in England and Europe.

Men quickly **volunteered** for Service in the Australian Army, Navy and Air Force for Australia did not have compulsory Service.

All those young men, volunteering for the Royal Australian Air Force were readily accepted, but those wanting to become Air Crews were accepted but sent away with Special Booklets comprising of 20 Lessons to study and pass each Section before being inducted into the EATS programme. This was some-what a disappointment to a great many but it was essential pre skills that would become

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more demanding once **Initial Training Schools** were established. One of the very necessary skills to achieve was Morse Code both in sound and light so an early introduction was essential.

Towards the latter months of 1941 the **Air Training Corps** was established for 16 to 18 year age young males to provide similar training they would require for Air Crew Training at ITS. Here in WA five Squadrons located in the metropolitan region were formed while later others were created in large country towns and later Country Flights were established as well as some correspondence services for those in remote areas. Sometime later a Squadron was formed to cater for these young men destined for the important Ground Staff. The **Women's Air Training Corps** was also formed with many Members also entering the Women's Services.

Initial Training School commenced at RAAF Pearce with No.8 Course, while in other Australian States training had already commenced, while in other regions ITS would commence with later Course numbers. Here a multitude of subjects had to be mastered and after examinations at the completion of the course then had to go before a **Category Selection Board**. Those selected as Pilot Trainees went onto EFTS.

After No.8 Course completed training at **No.9 Elementary Flying Training School, Cunderdin** they then made the 400+ km train journey to Geraldton to take up "residence" at **No 4 Service Flying Training School** commencing flying on the first of March 1941. The Station had been formed on 10 February 1941 but construction was not fully completed.

No.4 SFTS, Geraldton

The Station is thought to have been constructed by the **Allied Works Council** but was not completed when the first Commanding Officer, Flying Instructors and Pilot Trainees arrived.

First RAAF Party to Arrive

The first Officer to take up Duties on this Station found it was still under construction and together with a small party of RAAF personnel had the enormous task of setting up facilities and resources to prepare for the arrival of the first group of essential Station Personnel. The RAAF Organisation, which planned this Base had, as part of their Duties, to set in motion for the constant arrival of even the most basic needs to equip all incoming Musterings. Just the housing and catering arrangements was an enormous task, but such Records are NOT available but it takes little imagination to have an inkling as to the enormity this Officer had to tackle, but who ever it was, should certainly be acknowledged, but unfortunately such information was NOT forthcoming.

When the first Commanding Officer arrived he certainly made it known about the effectiveness of this Station and immediately had Pilot Training underway.

By the 30th April 1941 there were 50 Officers and 744 Airmen on the Station.

No.4 Service Flying Training School Pilot Training 1941-1945

The RAAF Historical Section in Canberra fortunately forwarded to me the following account written by the first **Commanding Officer Air Commodore P.G.Heffernan**, of this important RAAF war- time Base, as it appeared in “**StandTo**” the Canberra R.S.L. Office, Oct/Dec 1966. (permission was given to use this document)



“In January 1941 I was in Singapore, commanding No. 8 Squadron, R.A.A.F., when I received a signal posting me to command No. 4 Service Flying Training School at Geraldton in Western Australia. In due course I handed over No. 8 to Frank Wright and returned to Australia by QANTAS flying boat Captained by Aub Koch. We landed at Rose Bay and, after a brief reunion with my wife and baby daughter, I proceeded to Melbourne by train for a briefing by the Director of Training, Group Captain (later Air Marshal) Sir George Jones. He explained that No. 4 S.F.T.S. would be officially formed on **1st March 1941**, that instructors and ground staff were already on their way, and that the first intake from the Elementary Flying Training School at Cunderdin would arrive on the 10th March 1941.

Pre WW2 FLTLT.

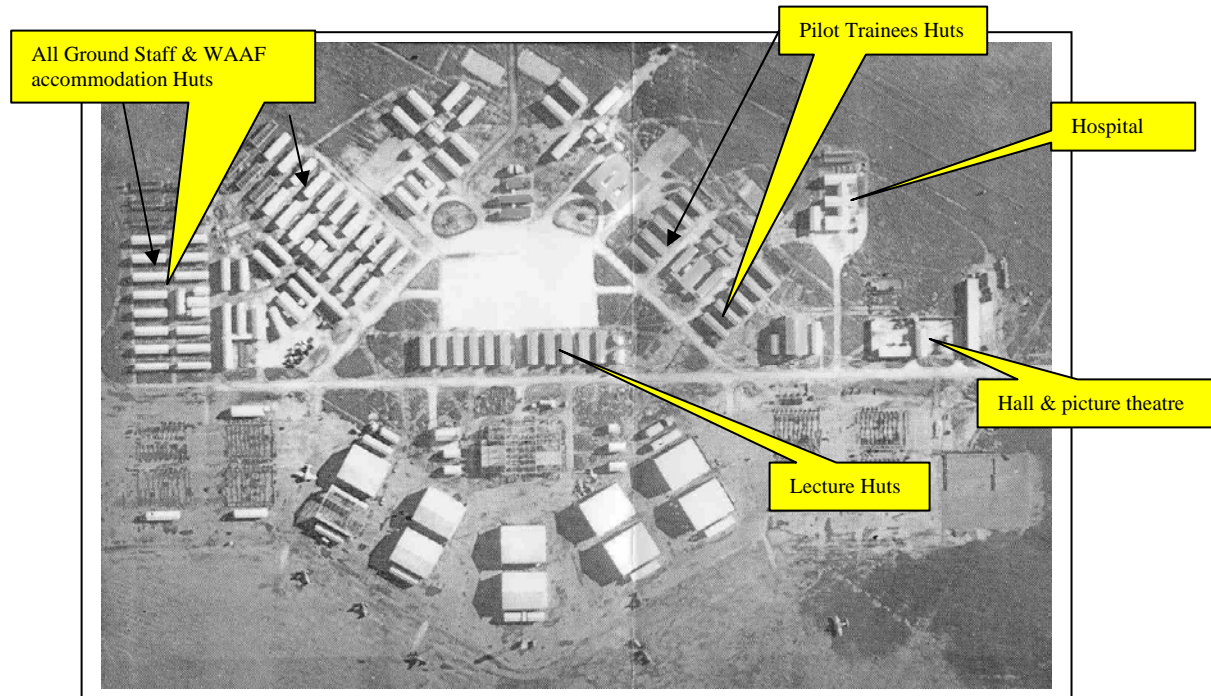
This would be **No. 8 Empire Air Training Scheme Course**. He then gave me a long talk on the problems of flying accidents and asked me to take any measures to keep the accident rate down. I spent a couple of days getting all information I could about the new school and was then joined by my wife, and we set off by train for the West.

On arrival in Perth I was further briefed by Western Area and in due course caught the night train for Geraldton. To my horror I found on the train the instructors and the pupils of No. 8 Course. In fact, the whole train was made up of staff for the school. When we reached Geraldton, my wife and I took up quarters in a hotel, and after breakfast I went out to the school to take stock of what there was.

In common with all the **E.A.T.S. Schools** Geraldton was brand new and, apart from an airfield, was almost non-existent. A couple of hangars, a workshop, some flight huts and the duty pilot's tower comprised the technical buildings. The airmen's mess was complete, while the Officers' and Sergeants' messes were still under construction. By putting about fifty personnel to each sleeping hut instead of the regulation thirty, we could sleep everybody under cover. However, it was summer time, and a number of the troops slept in huts without walls in preference to being crowded.

I was lucky in the staff, who had preceded me to the unit. The Administration Officer, Squadron Leader Jim Darling, was an old infanteer from 1914-18, and the Adjutant, Flight Lieutenant Kevin Carr, ex-Royal Naval Air Service. These two had performed wonders with the limited facilities. In between the wars Kevin had been a farmer at Mingenew, some twenty miles south of Geraldton, and so knew all the locals, and this knowledge was most useful in getting things done. I was also fortunate in having a big percentage of permanent personnel among the ground staff. The Instructors were led by Squadron Leader Eric Cooper, who had been serving in the Citizen Air Force at Richmond (N.S.W.) when war broke out; he was joined later by Squadron Leader "Jock" Wittschiebe, who had joined the R.A.A.F. in 1934. About half of the instructors had some pre-war R.A.A.F. experience, and the

other half was aero-club-trained pilots, who had been given refresher flying and then an instructor's course.



No.4 SFTS was still under construction when this photograph was taken while the large white area was the Parade Ground.

The aircraft presented a different problem. Usually when an aircraft is transferred to another unit, the allocating authority gives the number of the plane to be transferred; but in this case units holding Anson aircraft were just told to transfer so many of them to Geraldton. These units did just what any other unit would do they picked the oldest wrecks that they had and sent them off to us. At this time, March 1941, Australia was still dependent on the supply of Ansons from England and, whereas the R.A.A.F. had plenty of aircraft, spare parts were just not available. Local supply was in an infant state and only a trickle of bits and pieces was coming forward. Airframe spares were fairly easy to make, as the Anson was constructed with a tubular metal fuselage covered with fabric, and the wing and control surfaces were three-ply covered with fabric, but engine spares were the big problem.



Taken during a formation exercise of one of the Ansons frequently used by SqnLdr Doug Burton as an Instructor at No.4 SFTS.

D.Burton.

Flying started on 11th March 1941. The day before I paraded all the instructors and we had a "father-to-son" talk on flying accidents. Whether it was the talk or the high standard of the instructors that did it, I'll never know, but in the year that I commanded the school an instructor caused only one flying accident.

Following that parade I did the same with the pupils and told them quite plainly what would happen if any of them caused accidents through carelessness or disobedience of orders. It has been proven over the years that, provided the pilot observed his flying-orders, there was very small chance of his coming to grief. I explained, that the object of the school was to turn out fifty pilots every twenty eight days, and that, in the event of having to penalise a pupil for disobedience, I did not intend to ground him but would fine him the maximum I could - fourteen days pay. I pointed out that the other service flying training schools equipped with Ansons and Oxfords had a very bad name for accidents, and that accidents could mean only two things, first, a loss of valuable pilot material, second, loss of scarce and valuable aircraft and waste of man hours in repairing them after accidents. Therefore it was not only in their own interest, but also in the interest of the country not to damage aircraft.

I realised from my own experience in training pilots that we would be very lucky if we had no accidents, but I had hopes that my talk might cut out the needless accidents caused by carelessness and disobedience of orders. And so we became airborne. Some three days later we got our first accident. An Anson was seen to start its take-off and, after running about 150 yards, "ground looped" and pulled off the undercart. Cooper and I went straight to the crash and proceeded to "interrogate" the pupil while he was still conscious of what he had done. Incidentally, he wasn't hurt, so we could not be accused of using Gestapo methods.

When flying a multi-engined aircraft, such as the Anson, two of the rules that must be observed are: (a) tighten the lock nut to stop the throttles from slipping to the shut position; (b) keep the right hand on the throttles. Cooper checked, and sure enough the lock nut was loose. So the question was put.

"Why did you not tighten the lock nut?" Answer - "Forgot".

"Did you take your right hand off the throttles?"

"Yes"

As the pupil could give no explanation for his lapse, he was charged under the appropriate regulation with negligently damaging H.M. aircraft. He pleaded guilty and was fined fourteen days pay.

That evening I paraded the members of the course in a lecture room and discussed the crash with them, after having the offending pupil state what he did. The whole discussion was conducted in as informal, a manner as possible, and eventually the course agreed that the offender was a "clot" and told him so. This had been a simple type of accident, but it was found that these informal discussions, held as soon as possible after the accident, were of the utmost value. The offending pupil always sat on the dais with the chief flying instructor or myself and gave his version of what happened. The other pupils then cross-examined him, and the C.F.I. or myself gave a summing-up at the end. If the offender happened to be an instructor, which luckily (as mentioned above) happened only once during my regime, the same procedure was adopted, but then only instructors were present. However, the summary of the accident was made known to all the pupils.

The moral effect of having his mates telling him what a "clot" he was, and never knowing when they might themselves be the "victim", must have had some effect, because we had the lowest crash-rate of all the Anson and Oxford schools. In the twelve months I had the Geraldton school, our worst month was one accident in 1060 hours and the best one in 2,739 hours, with an overall average for -the year of one in 1469 hours. The year's accident rate for instructors was one in 33,898 hours. In fact, the school went for twenty- two months before a fatality occurred.

At one stage I heard that some low flying was taking place during the cross-country navigation exercises. So I took the school Moth and flew out along the known track of the aircraft. Having chosen a suitable paddock, I landed and parked the Moth under a tree, lit a cigarette and waited. Sure enough, along came an Anson at about ten feet above the ground, when it should have been at a minimum height of 2,000 feet. I took the number, started the Moth and went back to Geraldton. I organised two Service-police to be on the tarmac when the pupil landed, and as he stepped out of the aircraft the police arrested him and carted him off in full view of all the other pupils. Within ten minutes of landing he had been charged with low flying and fined fourteen days pay. One might say that to be the chief witness, prosecutor and judge was a bit illegal, but that was the least of my worries. The object of all that I did was to save lives and turn out efficient pilots, and so far as I was concerned the means justified the end.

While on the subject, one humorous incident, against myself, occurred. As mentioned earlier, my wife and I were living in a hotel in Geraldton, and my wife had nothing much to do except look after our first-born, then aged about six months. Some of the pupils had been "beating up" the town, so I asked my wife to get the number of any plane seen over the town, particularly if it was low down. One day she spotted a plane, took the number and made for the telephone. She asked the switchboard for my extension and as soon as a voice answered she said, "I've got one for you, darling!"

"One what?", replied "darling". "The number of a plane".

"To whom do you wish to speak?" said "darling"

"To Group Captain Heffernan. Isn't that you, darling?"

"No", replied "darling", "it's the Adjutant!"

Naturally, he spread the story and there after my wife was known as "Mata Hari". The said Adjutant happened to be a personal friend of ours, and my wife threatened to shoot him on sight, and she told me that henceforth I could find my own b..... air force and she would mind the baby.

For the first graduation Parade two months after we started flying, we arranged for a gentleman of politics to be the guest of honour. The station was paraded and everybody put on a first-class show. The drill was excellent and not a rifle was dropped. After the final general salute I reported to the Air Officer Commanding, Air Commodore "Kanga" de la Rue, who then asked our political friend to address the parade.

He did so for some twenty minutes and finished up his address with the words "**Men of the A.I.F. I thank you!**" I was watching "Kanga", and his naturally florid complexion started to take on a deep purple shade. Thereafter we conducted our own graduation ceremonies without assistance.

Every twenty-eight days a new intake of some **sixty pupils** arrived from Cunderdin, where they had received their elementary training in Tiger Moths. The C.O. of Cunderdin, Norm Brearley was an old friend of mine – well known in aviation circles in the West as the pioneer of West Australian Airways - and so we liaised continually. The set-up in Western Australia was very compact: the trainees started at the initial training school in Perth (Squadron Leader Alan Brown), then went to Cunderdin and later to us at Geraldton. Each month we three C.O.s got together and discussed the problems of each course, and so by the time the trainees came to me I had had the benefit of the experience of the other two.

Generally no real problems arose except in the spare-parts supply for the Ansons. As mentioned earlier, we got about the oldest Ansons in Australia, and after about five months the engines started to give continuous trouble. For example, one morning we put twenty-four Ansons on the line and at the end of the first flying period had only seven serviceable. Cylinder wear caused by dust was the main trouble, which fused plug fouling and consequent engine failure. Repeated demands for new cylinders and pistons had met with "nil" returns or stony silence. So I sent a signal to Western Area Headquarters, and repeated it to Air Force Headquarters, that we could not accept the next entry of trainees.

Such a decision was like trying to plug a 16 inch water main with your finger, because once the flow of trainees had started it had to be cut off at the source and not along the line. The results were dramatic. Within forty-eight hours a Dakota arrived with four new Cheetah engines and a second one the next day with a gross of cylinders and pistons. I could never understand why dramatic steps had to be taken to get stores, that should have been available through normal supply channels. Quartermasters were always queer people and they apparently thought that the contents of their stores were their private property.

Flying training pursued its usual hazardous course until 23 November, when I had a phone call about midnight from the A.O.C. telling me that the **HMAS Sydney** had failed to acknowledge radio calls and that we were to start a search for her in the morning. I called the Duty Officer and ordered twelve Ansons to be ready for 6am take off and crews to be in the Briefing Room at 5am. I was given a rough area where the Sydney was likely to be found so parallel track searches were organised to a depth of one hundred miles starting from a point off Port Hedland. The first sorty failed to sight anything, but mid-afternoon lifeboats were reported some fifty miles off the coast. The next day the boats were taken in tow by the Centaur (later torpedoed by the Japanese) and brought close to shore at Port Hedland. The locals had prepared a welcome for the ship wrecked mariners, as it was expected they came from the Sydney; but they were sadly disappointed when it was found they were Germans from the raider Kormoran, which had sunk our ship.

We spent a couple of days flying up and down the coast looking for survivors, but found no trace of any. I should have mentioned that on the second day of the search we were joined by two Catalina flying boats from Port Moresby, and they searched up to 500 miles out to sea, well beyond the depth of the Anson searches. The only trace of the *Sydney* was a shrapnel riddled Carley float washed up on the beach between Canarvon and Port Hedland; this was spotted by one of our Ansons and duly collected by a ground party and delivered to Geraldton.

The dramatic news of, the entry of the Japanese into the war and the subsequent bombings of Darwin, Wyndham, Derby and Port Hedland made us wonder if we were on the waiting list of

targets. But, apart from a report that an aircraft was heard over Geraldton one night, we got no closer to the war. After the bombing of Port Hedland we flew quite a number of the injured to Perth, and then pressure of training, as well as the arrival of No. 14 Squadron (Hudsons) from Pearce, allowed us to resume our normal activities.

As a precautionary measure, reserve squadrons were formed in all twin-engined training units, by change of name only, but, apart from occasional searches to sea, they were never called for active duty. Aerodrome defence measures were speeded up and some slit trenches were dug around the drome. We flew a lot with the local C.M.F. assisting them in citing beach defences. Dispersal airfields were located inland, and generally speaking we were as prepared as we could be, considering the shortage of equipment

There was always the problem of aircraft sabotage as we had 104 Ansons scattered around the field, so roving patrols covered the aerodrome by night. A scare occurred one night when an Anson was seen to burst into flames. The fire was put out and the investigation disclosed no sabotage, but a most peculiar set of circumstances. The aircraft were equipped with a downward signalling light in the belly, and the switch controlling this light could be used as a Morse key or switched on permanently. An enthusiastic but misguided airframe mechanic had covered the light on this Anson with a piece of fabric, nicely doped and painted, and on the last flight of the day the pilot, in getting out of his seat, had accidentally knocked the switch to the "permanently on" position. Naturally, quite a lot of heat had developed and the fabric had caught fire. Luckily the aircraft was near the hangars and the fire crew were smartly on the job, with no great resultant damage from the fire.

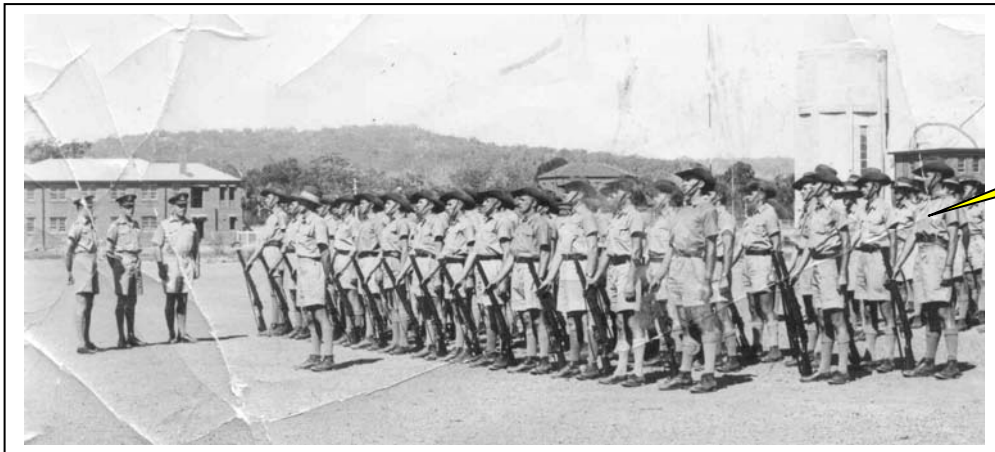
In January 1942 I was posted from Geraldton to command the RAAF Station Pearce, near Bullsbrook. Having seen the Geraldton station grow from infancy, it was a bit of a blow. We had an excellent crowd of Instructors and the enviable reputation of an **almost accident-free flying record**. I suppose we can claim some reflected glory, as one of the first public pupils trained there is now D. G. Anderson, Director-General of Civil Aviation. It was a happy unit, the weather was beautiful, and the Dongarra crays were 2s.6d a dozen. However, all good things had to end, and towards the end of January I headed for Pearce, to be succeeded at Geraldton by Wing Commander Ron Fleming." End of quote.

Details taken from Station Records during the 1941 period.

26 June 1941 52 Members of the first Pilot Course No. 8 successfully completed their training and departed the Station. 35 were posted to the Royal Air Force while 17 were posted to the RAAF.

AC 1. Robert Holmes (later Wing Commander)

Robert (Bob) Holmes joined the RAAF as an EATS Trainee and entered RAAF Station Pearce **Initial Training School** on 11 November 1940, with over 100 other AC2s to begin their Rookies Course as well as an introduction to a very demanding range of subjects.



AC2 R. Holmes

Being summer it was shorts “the dress of the day” with heavy black boots modelled on the Army issue, carried them throughout ever facet of the daily routine. All sorts of drill manoeuvres were introduced by enthusiastic Drill Instructors, who in turn were assessed by the Station Permanent Warrant Officer (WOD).

This Group of Trainees was the first EATS (Empire Air Training Scheme) Course and were to be known as **No. 8 Course**. They would in due time be also be the first Course to proceed through to No. 9 EFTS (Elementary Flying Training School) at Cunderdin and first to proceed to No.4 SFTS.

It was reported to me that on the completion of this ITS period the Group was lined up and the Officer in Charge pointed to the last 12 men in the line and announced that they would be posted to Gunnery School. This undoubtedly came a great shock to this enthusiastic group of men, who had visions of at least given an opportunity to train as Pilots. Those, who objected, were given an ultimatum to either continue on the Gunnery School or return to civilian life. Apparently one elected to become a civilian and it is believed he became a Pilot in the Fleet Air Arm.

Later years all Trainees, who had passed all examinations, went before a **Categorisation Board**, who made the final decisions as to whether you were to be a Wireless Air Gunner, an Observer or Pilot. I personally have a suspicion that this Board also had instructions regarding the pressing needs dictated by Operational Squadrons.

Being pioneers in the EATS programme I would imagine there was some settling down period, not only for these Pilot Trainees but also for the Pilot Instructors, who were also travelling on the same north bound train. The Commanding Officer, his wife and baby were also on the same train.

Robert Holmes, who had recently Graduated with a Law Degree, found himself with 50+ Pilot Trainees on a Midland Train bound for No. 4 SFTS, Geraldton, some 300+ miles north of Perth. On arrival very few Huts and many other essential buildings were not completed, which created overcrowding.

Trainee Pilot Robert's last flight in a 4 SFTS Anson

Robert was informed by an Instructor he could go for a last flight without any stipulation as to what he was to do so he set off heading away from the Station. Knowing the consequences of going low flying Robert decided to do the complete opposite because he had never heard about any limit restrictions in that direction.

When out of the circuit area he commenced gaining height and kept doing so until he reached a situation in which his Aggie was staggering and floundering about some 17,000 feet up. Lesser mortals would have followed the Kings Regulations or some other such official edict, which stipulated oxygen had to be used above 10,000 feet. This Aggie not being suitably endowed with such luxuries was therefore no deterrent to Robert.

While no doubt, somewhat pleased with his achievement, he was admiring the region from this dizzy height, and a speck to anyone at ground level, he was suddenly brought back to reality when one engine stopped. Not satisfied with one record for the day but now began what possibly would rate as another record for the longest one engine and semi gliding approach and landing for an Avro Anson aircraft. As an inkling to his future pilot competencies was that he now had to bring this aircraft back safely to the ground if he was to have any future in this profession. So began his remarkable demonstration of flying by positioning himself, first gliding back to above the Station then a gradual descent at the deemed correct gliding speed for he still had assistance from one engine. Gliding approach and landing was one of the many skills that every young Trainee had to demonstrate continually to Instructors, who frequently cut back both throttles accompanied with "forced landing!"

Perhaps as Robert descended from his lofty height his predicament was observed by one or more on the ground and alerted the Control Tower Duty Pilot, who then alerted emergency teams. Vigilant ground observers would quickly notice that one propeller was NOT turning and that this aircraft was not simulating a forced landing but in reality some one was in real trouble.

This landing had to be perfectly judged so that there was certainly no undershooting nor could the opposite be contemplated for there would be "no going around again!"

Robert made an exemplary landing then waited for the explaining he would have to offer to his Instructor and the Advanced Training Squadron Commanding Officer, but he was congratulated for the one engine landing.

In due time, with all the examinations and training completed learning to fly the Avro Anson from a group of Instructors, many of whom had been decreed by “the powers to be” to be made Instructors against their will. The sheer necessity to make the EATS a success and produce a trained Group of Pilots every 28 days, made in necessary to obtain as many Instructors as possible in the shortest time.

After their Wings Parade



Robert Holmes

Bob Holmes 8 Course Graduating Pilots

Jim Cahir, Bob Milne, Vern Keyser. Lloyd George, Lloyd Woodroffe, Phil Morphett, Ted McKinnon. Neil McDonald, R Harris, Jack Stubbs, Reg Stokes, Ivan Crossing, Joe Knight.

Cedric White, Charles McKiggan, Richard Browne, Cliff Douglas, Colin Thompson. Ken Pericles, Murray Wilson, Gilbert Dawe, Fred Workman, Ken Rolfe, Lindsay Broom.

George Fogarty. George Weston, Alec Norman, Ray Nowland, John Barker, Don Bland, Alan Moyle, Geoff Briggs, Roger Jefferys, Glen Gabb, Frank Fahey, Boyd Roberts.

Alex Gordon, John Brennan, Ted Baker, Dudley Dyson, Colin Veal, Charlie Hugall, Joe Morphett, Don Beaton, Cliff Burgess, Bob MacKenzie, John Fisher.

Jack Zafer, Bob Holmes, Lloyd Wiggins, Percy Stacey.

(taken from Albert N. Bingley's book "Australian Airmen")

Albert Noris Bingley was a Member of No. 8 Course at Pearce.

No 8 Course Graduates as

Pilot Officers

406378 LAC Workman F.J.	406370 LAC Beaton D.C.
407533 LAC Morphett J.E.	406356 LAC Holmes R.
406354 LAC Fogarty G.	406359 LAC Keyser V.F
406357 LAC Hugall C.B.	306345 LAC Cahir J.T.
406353 LAC Fisher J.	406363 LAC Roberts H.C.
406355 LAC George L.	406190 LAC Spicer R.C.
406344 LAC Burgess R. H.	406339 LAC Pericles K.H.
4067523 LAC Brown R.H.	406315 LAC Crossing I.E.
407541 LAC Wiggins A.L.	

Promoted as Sergeants

406335 LAC Veal C.G	407519 LAC Bland G.L.
406362 LAC Milne R.A,	406163 LAC Gordon A.H.
406366 LAC Nowland R.W.	407530 LAC Mc Kinnon A.F.
406352 LAC Fahey F.F.	407534 LAC Moyle A.L.
406351 LAC Dyson D.H.	406376 LAC Wilson W.M.
406360 LAC Knight R.	406341 LAC Barker J.N.
407539 LAC Weston G.O.	406358 LAC Jeffreys G.R.
407537 LAC Thompson C.S.	406374 LAC Stubbs J.H.
407542 LAC Woodroffe H.M.	407531 LAC McKinnon T.
407526 LAC Gabb G.	407520 LAC Briggs G.B.
406371 LAC Rolfe K.	407522 LAC Morphett P.H.
407540 LAC Harris R.	406373 LAC Stokes R.J.
406343 LAC Brennan J.J.	406365 LAC Norman A.
406380 LAC Zafer J.	406372 LAC Stacey P.N.
407529 LAC McDonald J.M.	406345 LAC Dawes C.
407521 LAC Broom L.M.	406340 LAC Baker E.G.
406321 LAC McKenzie R.D.	
406375 LAC White C.A.	
406349 LAC Douglas C.S	

On this occasion the Wings Parade for No. 8 Course was held at RAAF Station Pearce.

Immediately after No. 8 Pilots Course was awarded their Wings at RAAF Station Pearce Robert was married in Guildford Grammar Chapel, his old School, and shortly after some embarkation leave left for England.

A brief period was spent in Bournemouth (South coast England) then progressed to an Operational Training Unit (O.T.U.), collected a Crew and was posted to Bomber Command. There after some hazardous 14 bombing raids in Bomber Command he was then sent on to **Coastal Command**. He took up duties with No. 455 Squadron, then equipped with Hampden torpedo carrying Bombers. He was then still a Pilot Officer and it was April 1942.



The Station Engineering Officer on the left, Gunner Terry Olcorn, Navigator FLTLT Dick, SQNLDR Robert Holmes and one of the Ground Crew.



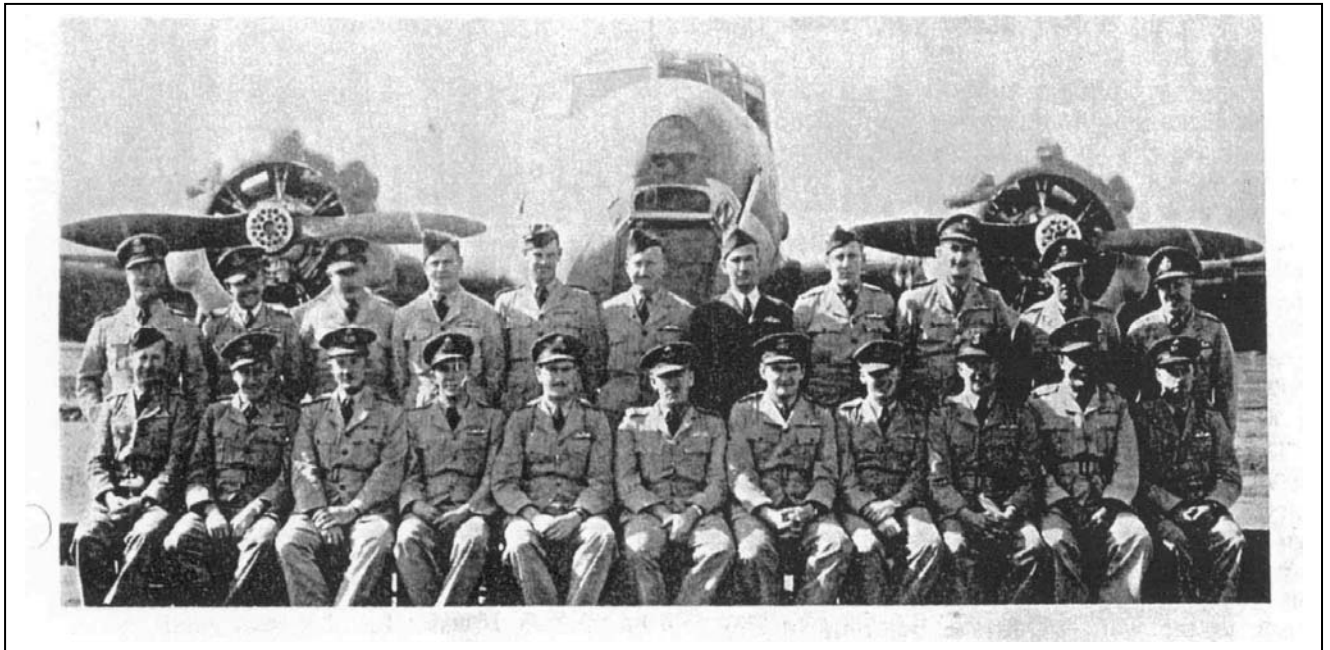
By July, having by passed Flying Officer rank then to Flight Lieutenant was promoted to Squadron Leader just in time to lead his Squadron to northern Russia in early August (1942). These aircraft were there to protect the Allied shipping Convoys carrying essential supplies to Russia. A great many transport ships had been sunk by German U Boats and their war ships.

The Squadron was on duty near Murmansk until 21 October 1942 where the Royal Navy, collected them after teaching the Russian Pilots how to fly their aircraft, which were being left behind.

Robert Holmes, now having completed a Tour was Posted back to Australia. After some leave in Perth was converted to Venturas of No.32 Squadron for a short time then transferred to No.13 Squadron during November 1944.

Robert was finally discharged on 24 December 1945.

Many of No. 8 Pilot Course also distinguished themselves in many of the regions where the Royal Air Force and RAAF Squadrons fought, but it has only been my privilege to have met Robert Holmes from that gallant Band of Men of No. 8 Pilot Course. (Author)



Staff of No.4 SFTS, July 1941

Back: P/O R.T Clark, **F/O G.M.Smith**, F/O Greenwood, F/Sgt D.J.Moron-Hilford, P/O R.A. Provost, F/Sgt J.M.Forbes, F/Sgt J.C.Miles, F/O P.E. Biven, F/O R.T.Susans, F/O S.A. Roggenkamp, F/O J. D.Entwistle.

Front: F/O L.D.McKenzie, F/O J.O.Carter, F/O R.G.Matherson, F/Lt R.A.Little, F/Lt C.S.Hamblin, **W/Cdr P.G.Heffernan**, S/Ldr E.W.Cooper, F/Lt R.S. Dennis, F/Lt J.G.Manford, F/O J.E. Dures, F/O Kemp.

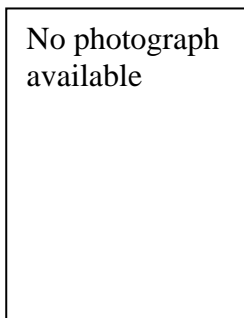
4 SFTS Commanding Officers.

10 February 1941 **Under Temporary Command of Squadron Leader G.A.Cowper**

- 1. 10 March 1941 **Wing Commander P.G. Heffernan**
- 2. 3 February 1942 **Wing Commander J.R.Fleming**
- 3. 14 October 1942 **Group Captain N. Brearley**
- 4. 1 March 1944 **Wing Commander D.R.Chapman**



Air Commodore Heffernan



WGCDR Ron Fleming



Later Air Commodore Brearley



Group Captain Chapman

Commanding Officer Wing Commander Ron Fleming
3 February to 13 October 1942

No. 68 and No.69 Reserve Squadrons had been formed and carried out anti-submarine patrols and convoy patrols began operating from No.4 SFTS along this West coast and continued for the following 12 months.

Course 19 Wings Parade was held and 42 Graduates were presented with their Wing.

On 14 April,1942 saw the first arrival of 28 WAAAF (**Women's Australian Auxiliary Air Force**) personnel take up duties on the Station under Assistant Section Officer Darbyshire.

By 30 April 1942 the 3rd Light Ack Ack Battery commenced defence duties at the Station and, during August the defences had been further strengthened with the arrival of 2nd Light Ack Ack On the 11 January 1943 the 7th Light Battery was operating. This was the period when Darwin was under continued bombing raids and the possibility of raids on the West coastal towns.

Throughout this period the lessons learnt by the continuing bombing raids by the Japanese Aircraft on Darwin was filtered down to WGCDR Fleming, who then arranged for every available person to construct "slit trenches" in case of bombing raids by Japanese Forces. Sand bags protected every important facility and building. Practice air raids were conducted to test the organization and locate any improvements needed. Camouflage of important buildings and hangers was carried out.

One critical requirement was for machine guns, 303 rifles and ammunition to be provided along with a great many steel helmets for personnel. Both WAAAFs and RAAF Ground Staff under went rifle firing on the range. Gas masks were flown into the Station while blackout of all buildings of the whole Station was implemented. All aircraft were dispersed and Station Guards organised. On one occasion a fire started on an aircraft wing by the heat generated from an electric globe in a downward signal light that had been patched over, but one of the Guards quickly put it out. All petrol in 44 gallon (200 lt) drums were dispersed while underground fuel tanks (10,000 gallons each) were installed

The reality of what could possibility occur was reinforced by the graphic news reel documentaries shown during picture shows (movies) depicting what was happening in Darwin and New Guinea so the Station personnel needed no persuasion for the reality was there. All Station Messing Personnel were trained as stretcher-bearers as well as receiving first aid instruction.

Unarmed defence training was carried out by both, WAAAF and RAAF personnel as well as bayonet fighting practice exercises. All machine gun Crews carried out weekly firing practice. A motorboat was acquisitioned from a local owner and used for off shore work. Firing fighting parties carried out regular training.

Throughout this 1942 period all normal pilot training continued in its many and varied ways while Anson Aircraft continually departed for major overhauls while other were flown back. A number of aircraft stopped over on their way north to other forward Stations and Squadrons.

On 5 th March 1942 SQNLDR Truscott DFC landed his Kittyhawk at No.4 SFTS on his way north from RAAF Station Pearce to Onslow. He departed a little over an hour later.

Two day later, Sister Mc Namara and FLGOFF Oakley took a stretcher case patient to 110 AGHospital, Perth. On the same day Section Officer Darbyshire, an Administration Officer was posted to RAAF Station Pearce.

United States Catalina flying boats began operating from Geraldton Harbour while an Air Craft Spotting Station took up duties on Wallaby Island. A Station Pilot Officer and Party of RAAF personnel had already established a Spotting and Wireless Post south of Greenough.

Satellite Aerodromes had been formed at Kojarena, Georgina, Mingenew, Tenindewa and Yuen.

During September 1942 Low Level and high level bombing exercised by Trainee Pilots were carried out with 312 bombs being dropped by 39 details. 6000 rounds had been fired by 63 details.

Aircraft on strength was made up of 1 Battle, 3 Moths and 93 Ansons.

Personnel numbered 105 Officers, 4 Nurses, 1 WAAAF Officer, 39 Airmen Pilots, 51 Observers, 50 Wireless Air gunners, 194 Trainee Pilots, 167 WAAAF, 1103 Airmen giving a

Total 1714.

All throughout this period there was a regular movement of Personnel being posted away and incoming, promotions as when Flight Sergeant V.G Burrow was Commissioned as a Pilot Officer, General Duties. A RAAF Dragon Air Ambulance arrived from Maylands Airfield to collect one Airman for admission to No 110 A.G.H. accompanied by FLTLT Daly.

4SFTS airfield was in constant use by a variety of aircraft in transit going by both the northern and southern routes as well as occasional Official Inspections. Vital construction work was carried out on the Satellite aerodromes. Heavy rains caused flooding in slit trenches so they were replaced in more suitable ground..

L.A.C. Treadgold R. F. made a perfect precautionary landing on the aerodrome but when he turned out of wind, the starboard wheel leg collapsed causing damage to the propeller, engine and mainplane, but no personal injuries.

Records showed there were 92 officers, 3 Commissioned Nurses and 11 WAAAF Officers on strength.

Pilot Officer P.H. Oldfield was posted on 14 July 1942 to Central Flying School, Tamworth for Elementary Flying Instructors' Course. This same Officer would be my first Instructor at No. 9 Elementary Flying Training School, RAAF Cunderdin and made my first flight in a Tiger Moth with him on 26 August 1943. After 3.35 hours I was transferred to PLTOFF Ivan Thomas, who had to have FLYOFF Phil Oldfield test me before going Solo. I flew with Ivan Thomas for the remainder of my time at 9EFTS.

General Blamey, Commander in Chief of Australian Military Forces landed in a Lockheed aircraft on 15 July 1942 and inspected an A.M.F. March Past taken on the main road outside the RAAF Station.

On 14 October 1942 Group Captain J.R. Fleming, Commanding Officer of No. 4SFTS, was posted away.

New Commanding Officer: Group Captain Norman Brearley
14 October 1942 to 28 February 1944



Group Captain Norman Brearley, was a Decorated Pilot from WW1 and joined the Royal Australian Air Force during the Second World War, taking up duties at No. 4SFTS, Geraldton. Unfortunately the RAAF Historical Section in Canberra was not able to provide records of his time as Commanding Officer at 4SFTS for I imagine his attitude was that his influence was easily demonstrated in the most effective Pilot Training Station. His very important developing role in Civil Aviation in Western Australia is provided below.

In the Uniform of the RFC, WW1.

The first occasion I really had near contact with GPCAPT Norman Brearley was when suddenly all the lights came on the Station Picture theatre, and he was there standing on the stage. All attention centred on him for what he was about to announce stunned everyone, he clearly announced that there was a threat of a Japanese Fleet approaching the Western Australia coast and he went on to order all the **Trainee Pilots from No. 41 Course (mine)** to report to our Flight Commander to immediately disperse all aircraft. I have no recollection what the audience did after this news but you could imagine the immediate thought flashing through everyone's mind. During the previous year, there had been a similar threat and everyone on the Station had been involved in unarmed combat exercises, learning to use rifles and machine guns, constructing slit trenches, filling sand bags and erecting them around vital buildings, and practised air raid procedures. (Author)

Early next morning on **13 March 1944** I took off in Anson 2133 with a Wireless Operator and Sergeant McLeod to conduct a sea Patrol Search looking for this Japanese fleet. The aircraft was loaded with a WW1 bomb of 112 lbs in weight, but what this was to do against such a mighty naval force was not even discussed. Fortunately for this Crew nothing was sighted but unknown to everyone, until years later, was the mass action taken in the Eastern States. Masses of aircraft, and specialised Service personnel were dispatched to Western Australia. All ships in Fremantle Harbour were either deployed in a defensive manner or sent south to Albany. American Submarines went on patrols. There were Australian Army anti-aircraft batteries located off the eastern boundary aerodrome.

It was most fortunate for Australia that both these threats of invasion never materialised but Australia was still being bombed by Japanese aircraft especially Darwin.

No. 41 Course was not to come in direct contact with our then Commanding Officer, Group Captain Norman Brearley, because he was posted away before their Wings Parade.

THE START OF AUSTRALIA'S AIRLINE INDUSTRY



5 December 2001 marks the 80th Anniversary of scheduled airline services in Australia, and coincidentally in the Southern Hemisphere, and it all started here in Western Australia, with a service operated by Major (later Sir) Norman Brearley.

Norman Brearley was born at Geelong, Victoria in 1890. Although he may not have received the accolades afforded to the likes of Kingsford-Smith and Hinkler, Norman Brearley's contribution to the Australian aviation scene was much greater and longer lasting, and he has been described as Australia's greatest airline pioneer. He gave long and distinguished service to Australia's aviation industry.

Norman moved to Western Australia, from Geelong, with his family in 1906 and after witnessing the first aeroplane flight in the State, by Englishman J.J. Hammond in 1911, determined that his future lay in the air.

In 1914, he was in his final year of an engineering course when war erupted in Europe, and he was one of many thousands of young Australians who headed off to England to fight for King, Country and Empire.

Norman joined the Royal Flying Corps, and after his basic training – with the emphasis on basic – he took his first solo flight after only 1 hour and 50 minutes of tuition. He posted to France as a fighter pilot and he was later shot down and wounded. After recovering from his wounds, and in recognition of his exceptional flying abilities, he was given command of the Instructors' School of Special Flying, which taught advanced flying skills to experienced pilots.

At the end of the war Brearley had attained the rank of Major, and had been awarded the Distinguished Service Order and the Military Cross – these being presented to him by King George V, at a ceremony at Buckingham Palace.

Major Brearley returned to Perth in 1919, and brought with him two war-surplus Avro 504 aircraft (later registered G-AUCL and G-AUDF). He then embarked on barnstorming demonstration flights through the State to prove to the Government and the public, the potential of aircraft to conquer the vast distances and isolation of outback Australia.

Like most other aviators of the day, Brearley initially flew from local racecourses and ovals, but soon moved his operations right into the heart of the city, and commenced flying from Langley Park, on the banks of the Swan River. By coincidence, Michael Durack, the State parliamentarian for the remote Kimberley region – an area that in later years Brearley would be instrumental in 'opening up' – had a large house opposite Langley Park, and Brearley persuaded the politician to let him build a hangar for his aircraft at the bottom of the garden, and so Perth's first airport was established.

In an even stranger quirk of fate, Durack's young daughter Mary (later noted authoress Dame Mary Durack) would later marry another aviation pioneer Horrie Miller, who in 1934 would take over many of the routes pioneered by Norman Brearley, with his company MacRobertson Miller Aviation Company, which later became Ansett W.A.

In 1921, the Federal Government recognised that the aeroplane was the only practical means of transport that could link many of the remote centres throughout Australia, and called tenders for the country's first air service. This was along the North West coast of Western Australia between the towns of Geraldton and Derby. Services were not allowed to originate in Perth, due to the Government's concern for competition with the rail service. The tender attracted a great deal of interest, and Brearley was advised in August 1921 that he had won the tender. Operations on the 2000 km route were to commence by the end of the year.

Brearley had been extremely confident of winning the contract, and had in fact tentatively ordered six Bristol Tourer aircraft (passenger planes converted from World War 1 fighters), from England. On being awarded the contract, he immediately telegraphed the Bristol Aeroplane Company and told them to send the machines to Australia, on a "cash on delivery" basis. Brearley then found himself in an awkward dilemma, as some of his promised financial backers got "cold feet" and let him down. Brearley then turned to an old acquaintance, well-known Victorian farm machinery manufacturer, H.V. McKay, who pressured the Federal Government into a guarantee for a bank overdraft to pay for Brearley's machines.

Thus Western Australian Airways Ltd (later shortened to West Australian AirLines) – Australia first airline – was born.

Brearley's next task was to select suitable pilots for Australia's first airline. He was not impressed with the flying skills of many of the hot-shot wartime flyers who sought jobs with his company, and insisted that all of his pilots should have the right temperament demanded for commercial operations. He required all applicants to undertake a test flight under his personal supervision, and then hand picked those he wanted. One of the first pilots he chose was the young Charles Kingsford-Smith.

In a ceremony at Langley Park on Saturday 3rd December 1921 the Western Australian Governor officially inaugurated the new airline service. Bristol Tourers G-AUDI, G-AUDG and G-AUDX were then flown to Geraldton in preparation to commence the inaugural service on the following Monday morning.

Shortly after taking off from Geraldton on December 5th, Tourer G-AUDG flown by Len Taplin developed engine trouble and set down safely in a paddock near Murchinson House Station. Pilot Bob Fawcett made a low pass over the downed aircraft to see if he could assist, and lost control of his Bristol Tourer and crashed into the ground, killing himself and his mechanic Edward Broad.

It was not an auspicious start to Australian's first airline service.

Politician Michael Durack, who, with journalist Geoffrey Jacoby, were passengers in Brearley's aircraft, together convinced Brearley that he should suspend the new service immediately, and not resume until the Commonwealth upgraded the airstrips and provided the emergency landing grounds along the route, as they had promised. It was late February 1922, before the landing grounds were upgraded, and the service resumed.

It is also interesting to note that in these early days, airlines such as West Australian Airways (and later Qantas) would not have been able to exist without substantial Government subsidies.

In Brearley's case, the service was tendered out on an annual basis, and in the first year the subsidy amounted to \$50,000. The subsidy was increased in later years, as was the term of the contract (to three years). W.A.A., and to a lesser extent, Qantas, received the lion's share of the available funds for more than a decade, and this caused considerable resentment from the rest of the aviation industry, which was virtually starved of Government funds.

January 1924 saw the service extended south from Geraldton to Perth, as the Government no longer considered the air service would have a detrimental effect on the railway service linking those two centres. The same year also saw the airline's first and only industrial dispute, when the pilots went on strike for higher wages. The pilots were paid \$1200 per year when the basic wage for other workers was only \$400 per annum, and they only flew two or three days each week. In Brearley's words "they could go fishing or shooting at idyllic location on their days off" but they wanted more. Brearley wouldn't budge to their demands and sacked the ringleaders, including Charles Kingsford-Smith, and then went to the Eastern States and hired new pilots.

Brearley considered it was more economical and practical to build his own airliners than import them from England and in 1926 he arranged with the de Havilland Company to build three DH.50 aircraft under licence in the W.A. workshops in Maylands. The first of the aircraft, G-AUFD, flew that same year and all were used mainly on the airline's coastal route to the north. Additionally, three two-seat Moth biplanes were also built.

Perhaps Australia's infant aircraft manufacturing industry could have been born from this venture but unfortunately Brearley closed down the production line after his own requirements had been met.

1928 saw tenders called for a weekly air service between Perth and Adelaide, and Brearley was one of 21 operators to bid for the contract. His was the successful bid and operations commenced in June 1929 when he personally flew the first service out of Perth in the DH.66 Hercules G-AUJO "*City of Perth*". This first transcontinental air service left Perth each Tuesday morning at 9.30am and arrived in Adelaide at 1.00pm the next day. The \$36 fare included the cost of accommodation for the overnight stopover at Forrest, on the Nullabor, at a rest house built by the airline. This route then had the highest load factor of any airline route in Australia.

Huge searchlights were also erected atop 50 ft (15m) high towers at strategic points across the Nullabor, to provide guidance for night flying operations. Quite a far cry from the satellite navigation systems in today's modern jets!

In the 1920's Brearley's Western Australian Airways was by far the most successful airline in Australia – even surpassing the later established Queensland and Northern Territory Aerial Services (QANTAS). In fact, Qantas founder Sir Hudson Fysh, in his book *Qantas Rising* wrote:

"It must be recorded that Norman Brearley had established the first well organised air transport operation in Australia in 1921, and his operation was superior to our own more groping endeavour. He showed the way to us all".

Norman Brearley also extended his aviation ventures into flying training, setting up the Perth Flying School at Maylands in 1927, using the three Moth aircraft that his company built.

Major Brearley would later become the first President, and a Life Member of the W.A. Aero Club (later the Royal Aero Club of W.A.), Australia's largest Aero Club.

Airline flying in those days was often anything but routine, Brearley's machines were engaged in a number of major aerial searches in Western Australia, including:-

- The 1928 Coffee Royale affair, in which Kingsford-Smith and Ulm in Southern Cross were lost in the Kimberley region for 12 days.
- The 1932 search for German Fliers Bertram and Klausmann, who were lost in the Kimberly region for 40 days.
- The 1932 search for Lasseter's (lost gold) Reef, in the Great Victoria Desert, and the rescue of prospector Paddy Whelan.

After pioneering Australia's first air route, Brearley lost the northwest coastal contract in 1934 to Horrie Miller's MacRobertson Miller Aviation Company then based in Adelaide. Two years later, Brearley sold West Australian Airways, and the rights to the Perth – Adelaide route, to Australian national Airways Ltd. By coincidence, both of these airlines were later taken over by Ansett Airlines.

Brearley retired from the aviation scene, but the outbreak of the Second World War saw him again in uniform for his country. As Group Captain Norman Brearley, he commanded No. 4 Service flying Training School at Geraldton, and later other R.A.A.F. establishments throughout the Eastern States. With the cessation of hostilities, Brearley returned to his retirement, which had been interrupted for 5 years by the war.

In his latter years Norman Brearley was most active in a new field – that of inventor – and his aviation and engineering background stood him in good stead. Several of his inventions were bought by interstate companies, and put into production.

It is a national disgrace that recognition of his services to Australian aviation were so very late in coming. But at long last this recognition was forthcoming in several ways, and included –

- The naming of the main road into Perth Airport, Brearley Avenue, in 1962;
- A knighthood in 1971, for his services to Australian aviation;
- The award of the prestigious Oswald Watt Gold Medal in 1974;
- Geraldton Air Terminal, from whence Australia's first airline service was flown, being renamed Brearley Terminal in 1979.

After a long and distinguished career dedicated to Australian aviation, Sir Norman Brearley died in Perth in 1989.

The safe and routine operations of today's major airlines, owe much to the foresight and vigour of Norman Brearley, in setting up Australia's first airline, 80 years ago.

Civil Aviation Historical Services

Wing Commander D.R. Chapman **1 March 1944 to Disbandment in May 1945**



Wing Commander Dixie Chapman arrived from serving in the Middle East to take over as the Station Commander and one of his first duties was to gather No.41 Course together in the Trainee Pilots Mess. There he put everyone at their ease and asked, who had arranged for parents, friends, wives to attend their Wings Parade due almost immediately. All arrangements regarding the long train travel to Geraldton, some 400 km from Perth, as well as booking accommodation had to been done some time previously so there had been a considerable financial commitment. Every one wondered what was coming next. WGCDR Chapman then explained that he had received an Order from Melbourne RAAF Headquarters stating that the Wings Parade was to be postponed for four weeks. Every one was stunned by this news because every one of the Course, who had reached this stage, was eagerly waiting this important day.

Later as a Group Captain.

What WGCDR Dixie Chapman then went on to explain had everyone greatly relieved for he immediately decided that he would proceed with the Wings Parade and No.41 Course would be sent on Leave for four weeks as Leading Air Craftsmen (LAC). They would then return to No.4 SFTS to receive their Official Promotion either as Sergeants or with a Commission.

This was fantastic news regarding the coveted Wings, that had only come after eleven months of examinations and exacting flying Tests for all those, who had survived from the original Course. Every young man readily agreed that the "Boss" was great for this action, but what the Commanding Officer repercussions had to endure, because of his decision, no one would ever know. Newly Graduated Pilots wandering around the City of Perth, country Towns and Suburbs no doubt caused some sideway glances by passer-by citizens along with RAAF personnel and Service Police for everyone was aware that Pilots carried Non Commissioned Rank or had Commissions,

Those from the original No.41 Course, who had been divided from the Graduating Members, and filled in four weeks of frustration doing a great variety of menial work like filling in rabbit warrens with shovels, manning supply vehicles etc were also relieved that they were at last to commence their Flying Training. For weeks they had looked with envy at the lucky ones but now it was their turn.

Throughout 1944 the Commanding Officer was undoubtedly well informed about the likelihood that Flying Training would eventually be reduced, but up until he conducted the No.42 Course Graduation, which also celebrated the fourth Anniversary of the Empire Air Training Scheme. This was a particular impressive Parade with many invited guests and Service Personnel along with the Graduating Course relatives and friends.

Glynn Melville Smith
Pilot Instructor
 at
No.4 Service Flying Training School
 Geraldton, WA

Glynn Smith had every intention of following his father into an accountancy business but in 1936 decided to visit England where he attended the famous Farnborough Air Show. There is every possibility he was inspired by the participating Royal Air Force Pilots demonstrating their incredible flying skill.



On return to Perth Glynn promptly joined the Royal Aero Club and enrolled as a pupil Pilot. On going solo he made many flights to Rottnest Island taking along friends.

At the outbreak of war against Germany Glynn, along with friends immediately joined up and entered the RAAF. His posting to RAAF Point Cook required the crossing of the Nullabor Plains in a steam locomotive. Much to Glynn's great disappointment he was selected as a Pilot Instructor and proceeded to under go specialised training.



For many the Nullabor crossing meant travelling in "cattle trucks" (freight) with only palliasses for sleeping and sitting.



Glynn in the rear cockpit of this trainer at RAAF Point Cook having his Instructor demonstrate the "patter" to be used with Trainee Pilots.

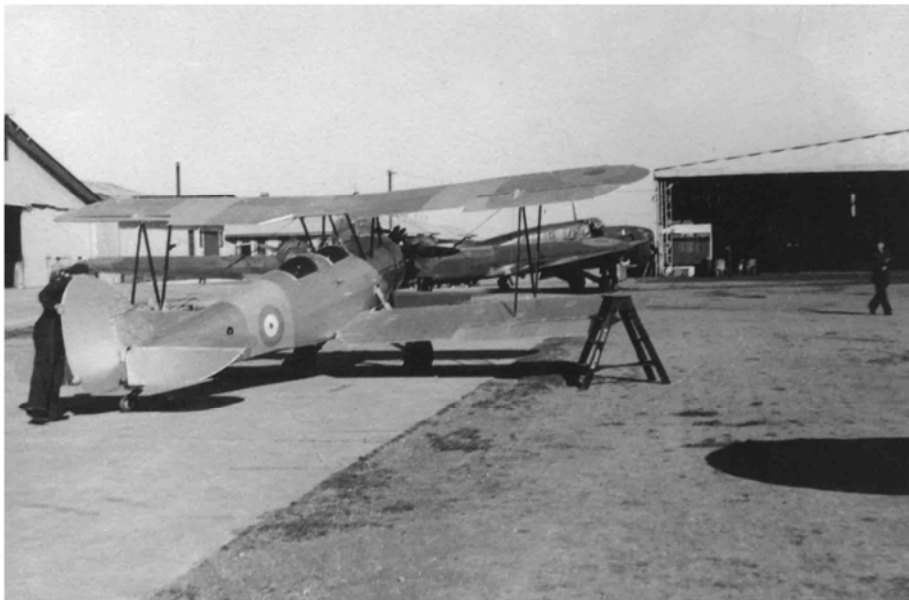
Australia was committed to the Empire Air Training Scheme and to fulfil the commitment to provide a great many trained Air Crews for the Royal Air Force, required obtaining an immediate number of Pilot Instructors to accomplish this. With so many young men with private flying experience, highly motivated were to enter the RAAF to assist England in its defence against the powerful German Air Force. Daily newspapers and newsreels shown in picture theatres certainly showed the dire straits being inflicted on the people of Europe and the United Kingdom brought out this patriotism.

Glynn Smith signed up with the RAAF and commenced his flying, where he had originally commenced, at the **W.A. Royal Aero Club**, then located on the Maylands Aerodrome. On 5 March 1940 he commenced his RAAF flying lessons in a DH 60 aircraft and a week later went Solo after 5.40 hours.

Squadron Leader Norman Brearley, then Commanding Officer of No.5 FTS, signed his Log Book.

By the time he had 126.05 hours recorded in his Log Book he was assessed as **Above Average** by SQNLDR N. Brearley.

His next posting was to RAAF Point Cook where he was introduced to the Link Trainer (an important flight simulator used extensively for the rest of a Pilot's service.)

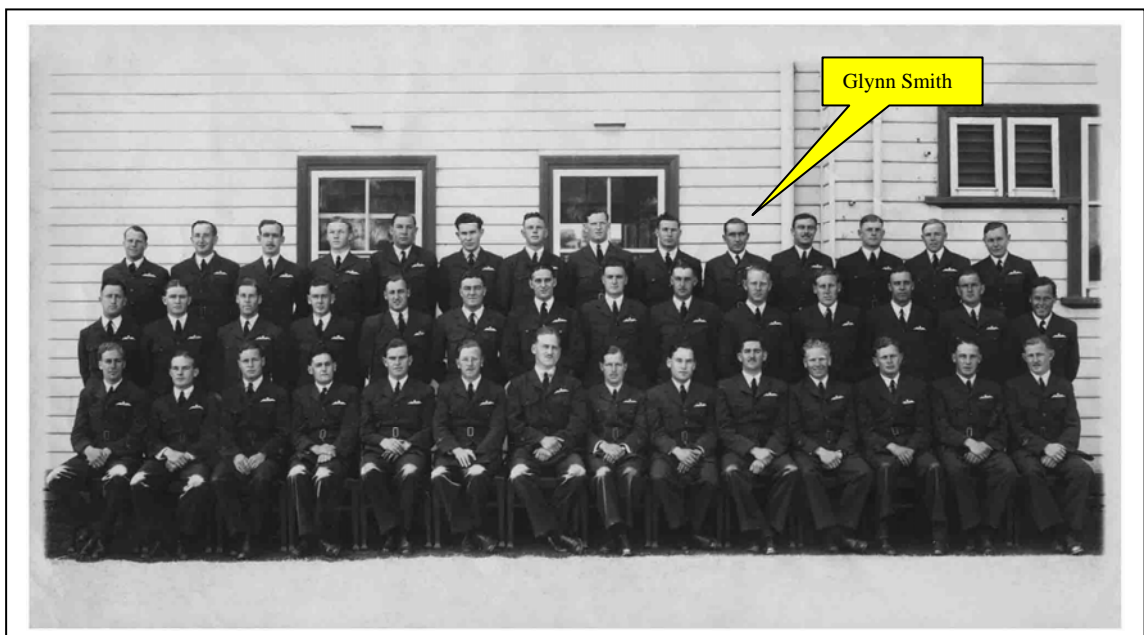


Here at Point Cook he entered the Intermediate Training Squadron and flew the Avro Anson on August 1st 1940 and went Solo on 9 August after 6.05 hours. By the 12 November he had completed the Advance Training Squadron with 217.30 hours with an Assessment of Average Plus.

He then discovered he was to become an Instructor so duly arrived at **RAAF Camden Central Flying School** in November 1940. His first flight was in a Wirraway Trainer & by 27 November had completed 3.45 hours. This was followed by flights in an Avro Trainer and again went solo in 4.05 hours.

He then Soloed on an Avro Anson after 1.25 hours and by a month later had amassed 302.40 hours in his Log Book.

Glynn's Pilots Graduating Course Point Cook



Like every newly Graduated Pilot the gaining of their RAAF Wings was certainly a high light in their lives. Probably everyone in this Group had high expectations of going on to Operations to assist the Royal Air Force. Glynn Smith, like many others was bitterly disappointed to discover the RAAF needed their newly gained skills and experience as Pilot Instructors regardless of their own personal desires. Many were to remain in this very important roll until the end of hostilities although many regularly applied for release to join Operational Squadrons. Although some actually were engaged in sea patrols over shipping convoy routes this provided no acknowledgement as War Service and the accompanying post war assistance given to those returning from overseas Air Force Personnel. This decision by the "powers to be" greatly disadvantaged these Instructors, who had volunteered to serve overseas.

(G. Smith)



Signatures of the Graduating Pilots are on the back of the above photograph

After Glynn departed Point Cook he then attended No.1 Central Flying School for further training as an Instructor. For a short period he was at No.1 Bombing and Gunnery School after which he returned to No.1 CFS from 23 December 1940 to 23 February 1941. For just one month



Glynn was attached to No. 1 SFTS Point Cook. His permanent posting to **No.4 Service Flying Training School, Geraldton** meant a recrossing of the continent, arriving in Geraldton on 2 April 1941.

There he took up duties with the **Intermediate Training Squadron** to instruct the new arrival trainees from Elementary Flying Training School, Cunderdin, for their conversion from the single engine Tiger Moths to a monoplane, the Avro Anson, an aircraft with two powerful engines,.



Glynn's posting was to take up duties at No. 4 Service Flying Training School, where the buildings were still under construction when the new Commanding Officer, the Instructors, and Trainee Pilots of No.8 Course all departed Perth Railway Station on the Midland Private Railway Company's train for the 400km journey.

Glynn himself had just been converted to the Avro Anson and now he was to commence training young highly motivated Trainee Pilots on this aircraft.

Like most of his fellow Pilot Instructors Glynn frequently requested a posting to Operational Duties but the "powers to be" refused such requests for with the momentum of training 50 to 60 Trainee Pilots, it was considered not advisable. With Graduations every 28 days and being awarded their Wings, Glynn's gathering expertise made him and others too valuable to be replaced.



All RAAF Pilots and Trainees had to wear one of two types of parachute.

This type was used on Ansons and required the parachute to be carried in the hand and to be clipped on in an emergency.

For the Tiger Moth the complete harness and parachute pack was worn and the pack was sat on in the cockpit.

Glynn was to keep a record of the Trainee Pilots he was to convert to multi-engine Ansons, and at a later stage Instructed in the **Advanced Training Squadron**, which led to their Wings Graduation Parade.

Found in Glynn's Log Book was a list of some 2000 Trainee Pilots he had Instructed during his enforced time as an Instructor at Service Flying Training Schools. His importance as a talented Instructor was, like so many others, vital for the success of the Empire Air Training Scheme. It would appear that this importance was largely forgotten after the War concluded.

Accidents did occur.



In reality instructing was a form of punishment by the RAAF Headquarters in Melbourne not to have allowed these Instructors an opportunity to proceed to an **Operational Training Unit** for training and then, hopefully to a Combat Squadron.. Glynn was destined to remain at Geraldton from 1941 right through to 1944. No. 4 SFTS was disbanded in 1945. This dedicated Service to his Country also denied him the rights provided by the Commonwealth Government to all those men, who served overseas.



Glynn had a miraculous escape on this occasion for he was in the underneath Anson. He was across wind, waiting for an opportunity to take off when this Anson ploughed into his Anson. The starboard propeller ripped into his cockpit right behind the seat holding Glynn. (G. Smith)

Some accidents were fatal and this is evident in the nearby **War Cemetery** where forty one young RAAF personnel are buried

No.4 Service Flying Training School Geraldton War Cemetery 1941-1945



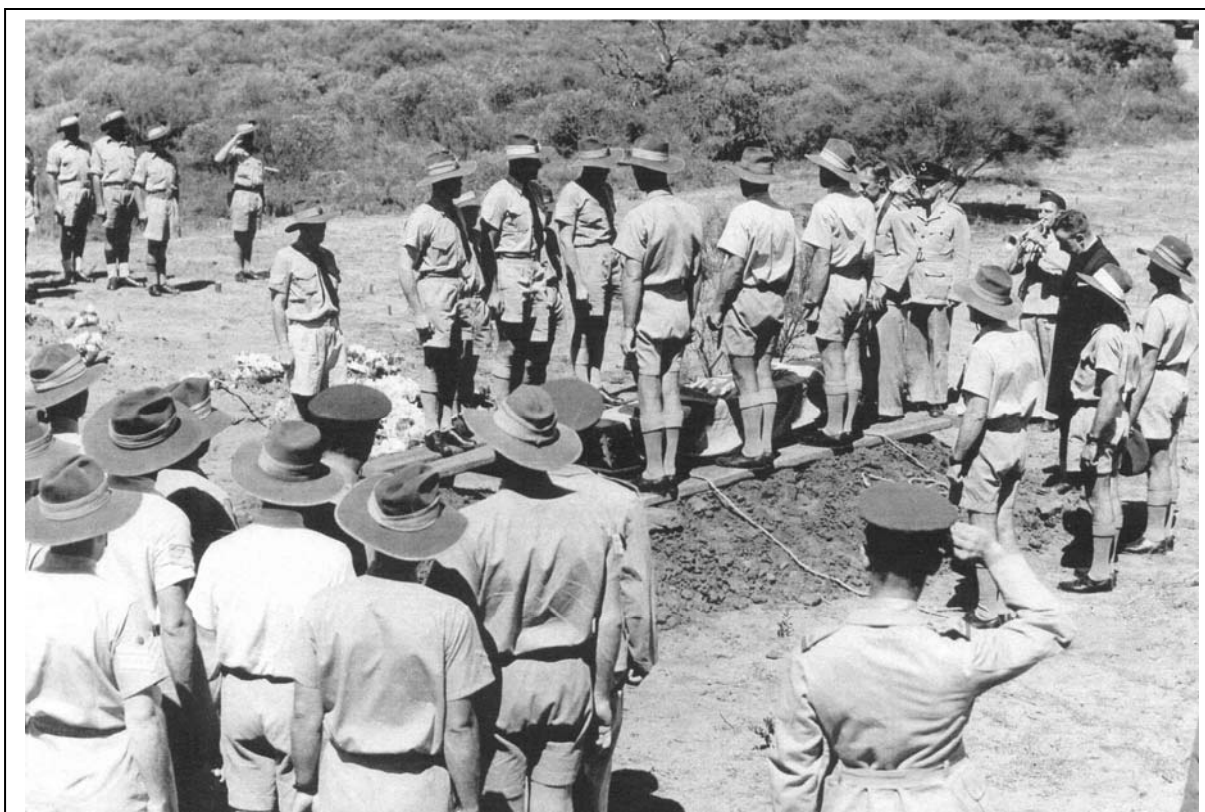
War Cemetery is located on Western side of the of the Main Entrance to the Geraldton Cemetery.

42 RAAF personnel, young Australian Airmen were buried here during WW2.

No	Name	Rank	Service	RAAF	Date of death	Age	Grave/Memorial Ref.
1	ANDRE, JOHN JEFFERY	Leading Aircraftman	81619	Royal Australian Air Force	24/10/1943	19	Plot A. Row B. Grave 13.
2	AUSTIN, JAMES	Sergeant	404699	Royal Australian Air Force	25/09/1942	26	Plot B. Row A. Grave 12.
3	BELTZ, ERIC LOUIS	Leading Aircraftman	18764	Royal Australian Air Force	10/07/1941	28	Plot A. Row C. Grave 11.
4	BINGHAM, CLIVE FREDERICK	Pilot Officer	413515	Royal Australian Air Force	30/09/1942	22	Plot B. Row A. Grave 1.
5	BISHOP, GEORGE	Pilot Officer	417040	Royal Australian Air Force	15/03/1943	22	Plot A. Row A. Grave 9.
6	BROCK, JAMES	Flight Sergeant	409983	Royal Australian Air Force	24/10/1943	27	Plot A. Row B. Grave 15.
7	CARR, BINDON JOHN	Corporal	45887	Royal Australian Air Force	02/02/1945	35	Plot B. Row A. Grave 3.
8	CARTER, GODFREY	Aircraftman 1st Class	80814	Royal Australian Air Force	15/03/1943	34	Plot A. Row A. Grave 14.
9	CATTON, NORMAN	Sergeant	21710	Royal Australian Air Force	25/08/1944	28	Plot B. Row A. Grave 2.
10	CHALMERS, JOHN	Flight Sergeant	18741	Royal Australian Air Force	27/03/1945	29	Plot B. Row A. Grave 6.
11	CHESTER, IVAN ISADORE	Leading Aircraftman	429693	Royal Australian Air Force	21/07/1943	20	Plot A. Row B. Grave 6.
12	CLARKE, LAWRENCE HENRY	Leading Aircraftman	427845	Royal Australian Air Force	21/07/1943	21	Plot A. Row B Grave 5.
13	COOK, ERNEST NEWTON	Sergeant	46603	Royal Australian Air Force	05/12/1944	37	Plot B. Row B. Grave 1.
14	CRAWFORD, DAVID MAXWELL	Flying Officer	411751	Royal Australian Air Force	21/07/1943	28	Plot A. Row B. Grave 4.
15	CROSS, STANLEY WILLIAM	Flight Sergeant	415122	Royal Australian Air Force	01/11/1943	24	Plot A. Row C. Grave 1.
16	DIX, GORDON EDWARD	Flying Officer	401423	Royal Australian Air Force	25/08/1944	25	Plot B. Row A. Grave 5.
17	DRUMMOND, KENNETH NOEL	Flight Lieutenant	63089	Royal Australian Air Force	06/10/1944	26	Plot B. Row A. Grave 11.
18	DUNNE, FREDERICK DORIAN	Corporal	38496	Royal Australian Air Force	10/02/1946	30	Plot B. Row B. Grave 10.
19	FORBES, DONALD MCPHERSON	Pilot Officer	406753	Royal Australian Air Force	24/10/1943	28	Plot A. Row B. Grave 11.
20	KEMP, GILBERT PETER	Corporal	82153	Royal Australian Air Force	30/04/1944	39	Plot B. Row B. Grave 2.
21	KILPATRICK, HERBERT SPENCER	Leading Aircraftman	29130	Royal Australian Air Force	15/03/1943	27	Plot A. Row A. Grave 12.
22	LACEY, BRIAN JOSEPH	Aircraftman 1st Class	68344	Royal Australian Air Force	19/08/1943	19	Plot A. Row B. Grave 9.
23	MARCHANT, FRANCIS ALBERT	Sergeant	16039	Royal Australian Air Force	19/02/1943	28	Plot A. Row A. Grave 8.
24	MILSTEAD, EDWARD JOHN	Leading Aircraftman	436204	Royal Australian Air Force	01/11/1943	22	Plot A. Row C. Grave 3.
25	MORLEY, WILLIAM ROBERT	Leading Aircraftman	437091	Royal Australian Air Force	01/11/1943	21	Plot A. Row C. Grave 4.
26	NITSCHKE, CLEMENCE FRIEDRICH	Flight Lieutenant	407300	Royal Australian Air Force	21/07/1943	28	Plot A. Row B. Grave 3.
27	PATCHING, CHARLES VINCENT	Sergeant	7030	Royal Australian Air Force	15/03/1943	30	Plot A. Row A. Grave 16.
28	PEDROTTA, GEORGE LOUIS	Leading Aircraftman	80149	Royal Australian Air Force	15/03/1943	32	Plot A. Row A. Grave 13.
29	PERCEVAL, WILLIAM ALEXANDER DE BURGH	Flight Lieutenant	252207	Royal Australian Air Force	07/01/1944	39	Plot B. Row B. Grave 4.
30	RANDALL, JOHN MAXWELL	Flying Officer	412183	Royal Australian Air Force	24/10/1943	27	Plot A. Row B. Grave 10.
31	RASTON, THOMAS NOEL RYDER	Leading Aircraftman	80118	Royal Australian Air Force	24/10/1943	26	Plot A. Row B. Grave 12.
32	READ, PETER TODD	Flying Officer	407251	Royal Australian Air Force	20/04/1943	23	Plot B. Row A. Grave 15.
33	REDMAN, ROBERT AMBROSE	Sergeant	416032	Royal Australian Air Force	15/03/1943	23	Plot A. Row A. Grave 11.
34	ROBERTS, WILLIAM CLAUDE	Leading Aircraftman	81693	Royal Australian Air Force	17/02/1944	19	Plot B. Row A. Grave 9.
35	RUTHERFORD, JOHN	Flying Officer	402254	Royal Australian Air Force	14/02/1943	22	Plot B. Row B. Grave 5.
36	SANGSTER, JOHN CLIVE	Squadron Leader	281703	Royal Australian Air Force	25/08/1944	40	Plot B. Row B. Grave 8.

37	SMITH, HAROLD WILLIAM	Leading Aircraftman	80136	Royal Australian Air Force	24/10/1943	31	Plot A. Row B. Grave 14.
38	SPICER, ROBERT CECIL	Flight Lieutenant	406190	Royal Australian Air Force	09/02/1943	24	Plot A. Row A. Grave 6.
39	WAITE, DONALD ASHBY	Sergeant	411973	Royal Australian Air Force	15/03/1943	22	Plot A. Row A. Grave 10.
40	WATLING, EDWARD	Sergeant	17174	Royal Australian Air Force	15/03/1943	30	Plot A. Row A. Grave 15.
41	WILSON, ROBERT JOHN	Sergeant	417287	Royal Australian Air Force	01/11/1943	21	Plot A. Row C. Grave 2.
42	WRIGHT, COLIN CHARLES HORTON	Leading Aircraftman	427368	Royal Australian Air Force	09/02/1943	18	Plot A. Row A. Grave 7.

**Next page has this List sorted by DATE.
Royal Australian Air Force**



On so many occasions, such scenes took place in the **Geraldton War Cemetery** (the only one in WA apart from Karakata Cemetery).

No.4 Service Flying Training School
Geraldton War Cemetery 1941-1945
Names sorted by Date of Accidents

No	Name	Rank	Service	RAAF	Date of death	Age	Grave/Memorial Ref.
3	BELTZ, ERIC LOUIS	Leading Aircraftman	18764	Royal Australian Air Force	10/07/1941	28	Plot A. Row C. Grave 11.
2	AUSTIN, JAMES	Sergeant	404699	Royal Australian Air Force	25/09/1942	26	Plot B. Row A. Grave 12.
4	BINGHAM, CLIVE FREDERICK	Pilot Officer	413515	Royal Australian Air Force	30/09/1942	22	Plot B. Row A. Grave 1.
38	SPICER, ROBERT CECIL	Flight Lieutenant	406190	Royal Australian Air Force	9/02/1943	24	Plot A. Row A. Grave 6.
42	WRIGHT, COLIN CHARLES HORTON	Leading Aircraftman	427368	Royal Australian Air Force	9/02/1943	18	Plot A. Row A. Grave 7.
35	RUTHERFORD, JOHN	Flying Officer	402254	Royal Australian Air Force	14/02/1943	22	Plot B. Row B. Grave 5.
23	MARCHANT, FRANCIS ALBERT	Sergeant	16039	Royal Australian Air Force	19/02/1943	28	Plot A. Row A. Grave 8.
5	BISHOP, GEORGE	Pilot Officer	417040	Royal Australian Air Force	15/03/1943	22	Plot A. Row A. Grave 9.
8	CARTER, GODFREY	Aircraftman Class	1st 80814	Royal Australian Air Force	15/03/1943	34	Plot A. Row A. Grave 14.
21	KILPATRICK, HERBERT SPENCER	Leading Aircraftman	29130	Royal Australian Air Force	15/03/1943	27	Plot A. Row A. Grave 12.
27	PATCHING, CHARLES VINCENT	Sergeant	7030	Royal Australian Air Force	15/03/1943	30	Plot A. Row A. Grave 16.
28	PEDROTTA, GEORGE LOUIS	Leading Aircraftman	80149	Royal Australian Air Force	15/03/1943	32	Plot A. Row A. Grave 13.
33	REDMAN, ROBERT AMBROSE	Sergeant	416032	Royal Australian Air Force	15/03/1943	23	Plot A. Row A. Grave 11.
39	WAITE, DONALD ASHBY	Sergeant	411973	Royal Australian Air Force	15/03/1943	22	Plot A. Row A. Grave 10.
40	WATLING, EDWARD	Sergeant	17174	Royal Australian Air Force	15/03/1943	30	Plot A. Row A. Grave 15.
32	READ, PETER TODD	Flying Officer	407251	Royal Australian Air Force	20/04/1943	23	Plot B. Row A. Grave 15.
11	CHESTER, IVAN ISADORE	Leading Aircraftman	429693	Royal Australian Air Force	21/07/1943	20	Plot A. Row B. Grave 6.
12	CLARKE, LAWRENCE HENRY	Leading Aircraftman	427845	Royal Australian Air Force	21/07/1943	21	Plot A. Row B. Grave 5.
14	CRAWFORD, DAVID MAXWELL	Flying Officer	411751	Royal Australian Air Force	21/07/1943	28	Plot A. Row B. Grave 4.
26	NITSCHKE, CLEMENCE FRIEDRICH	Flight Lieutenant	407300	Royal Australian Air Force	21/07/1943	28	Plot A. Row B. Grave 3.
22	LACEY, BRIAN JOSEPH	Aircraftman Class	1st 68344	Royal Australian Air Force	19/08/1943	19	Plot A. Row B. Grave 9.
1	ANDRE, JOHN JEFFERY	Leading Aircraftman	81619	Royal Australian Air Force	24/10/1943	19	Plot A. Row B. Grave 13.
6	BROCK, JAMES	Flight Sergeant	409983	Royal Australian Air Force	24/10/1943	27	Plot A. Row B. Grave 15.
19	FORBES, DONALD MCPHERSON	Pilot Officer	406753	Royal Australian Air Force	24/10/1943	28	Plot A. Row B. Grave 11.
30	RANDALL, JOHN MAXWELL	Flying Officer	412183	Royal Australian Air Force	24/10/1943	27	Plot A. Row B. Grave 10.
31	RASTON, THOMAS NOEL RYDER	Leading Aircraftman	80118	Royal Australian Air Force	24/10/1943	26	Plot A. Row B. Grave 12.
37	SMITH, HAROLD WILLIAM	Leading Aircraftman	80136	Royal Australian Air Force	24/10/1943	31	Plot A. Row B. Grave 14.
15	CROSS, STANLEY WILLIAM	Flight Sergeant	415122	Royal Australian Air Force	1/11/1943	24	Plot A. Row C. Grave 1.
24	MILSTEAD, EDWARD JOHN	Leading Aircraftman	436204	Royal Australian Air Force	1/11/1943	22	Plot A. Row C. Grave 3.
25	MORLEY, WILLIAM ROBERT	Leading Aircraftman	437091	Royal Australian Air Force	1/11/1943	21	Plot A. Row C. Grave 4.
41	WILSON, ROBERT JOHN	Sergeant	417287	Royal Australian Air Force	1/11/1943	21	Plot A. Row C. Grave 2.
29	PERCEVAL, WILLIAM ALEXANDER DE BURGH	Flight Lieutenant	252207	Royal Australian Air Force	7/01/1944	39	Plot B. Row B. Grave 4.
34	ROBERTS, WILLIAM CLAUDE	Leading Aircraftman	81693	Royal Australian Air Force	17/02/1944	19	Plot B. Row A. Grave 9.
20	KEMP, GILBERT PETER	Corporal	82153	Royal Australian Air Force	30/04/1944	39	Plot B. Row B. Grave 2.
9	CATTON, NORMAN	Sergeant	21710	Royal Australian Air Force	25/08/1944	28	Plot B. Row A. Grave 2.
16	DIX, GORDON EDWARD	Flying Officer	401423	Royal Australian Air Force	25/08/1944	25	Plot B. Row A. Grave 5.
36	SANGSTER, JOHN CLIVE	Squadron Leader	281703	Royal Australian Air Force	25/08/1944	40	Plot B. Row B. Grave 8.
17	DRUMMOND, KENNETH NOEL	Flight Lieutenant	63089	Royal Australian Air Force	6/10/1944	26	Plot B. Row A. Grave 11.
13	COOK, ERNEST NEWTON	Sergeant	46603	Royal Australian Air Force	5/12/1944	37	Plot B. Row B. Grave 1.
7	CARR, BINDON JOHN	Corporal	45887	Royal Australian Air Force	2/02/1945	35	Plot B. Row A. Grave 3.
10	CHALMERS, JOHN	Flight Sergeant	18741	Royal Australian Air Force	27/03/1945	29	Plot B. Row A. Grave 6.
18	DUNNE, FREDERICK DORIAN	Corporal	38496	Royal Australian Air Force	10/02/1946	30	Plot B. Row B. Grave 10.

No.4 Service Flying Training School

Station Morale

(The confidence, zeal, cheerfulness of a group of personnel)

In the only two Reports I have received, and written by two of the Commanding Officers, both have mention how the Morale of the Station was high.

On reflection I tried to remember how these two seasoned Officers assessed Morale, but when I looked at the dictionary definition, I thought back to those far off days and my recollections during those four months of training.

One facet came readily to mind was the way every one on this immense RAAF Station was dressed. Summer uniforms, that were then the Order of the Day, were immaculately ironed, while those personnel wearing the standard issue overalls always appeared well washed and clean. Many long serving personnels' overalls were nearly devoid of blue colour and would have certainly reflected any undue industrial dirt or oil.

The little daily opportunity we Pilot Trainees had in contact with anyone other than our Flying Instructors and Lecturers was limited, yet it was always evident when on a number of occasions I returned my personal parachute to the Parachute Section for its regular inspection and repacking, everyone there appeared well presented and cheerfully obliging. Perhaps I was watched for my relieved reaction when my 'chute cascaded onto the floor after being invited to pull the rip-cord. On the tarmac there was only brief contact with the Fitters except on return from a flight if there was anything to report about an aircraft. When I asked a Fitter to show me over the cockpit of an Anson for the very first time no one could have been more obliging and understanding.

Further contacts usually occurred when visiting the Canteen or when attending the weekly picture show or during the weekend bus to and from Geraldton, when, as in those days the custom, seats were readily offered to girls and women on civilian buses and it also happened on Service transport.

I have a suspicion that Morale was also reflected in the Catering offered by all those Station Personnel, who usually had to depart the comfort of their beds before anyone else, and report to their Mess to prepare meals for seven days every week. My only experience was in the Pilot Trainees Mess, where there was NOT one occasion did I ever hear a complaint lodged when the Duty Officer called for "any complaints?" I recently discovered, in newly published book, the possible reason for this:

Book:

"Western Memories" History & Recollections of the Western Australian WAAAF 1941-1946, by Doris Ferry, an ex Corporal Dental Orderly at Geraldton, RAAF No.4 SFTS Station.

Under the guiding influence of **Sergeant Elizabeth Margaret Fraser** and her WAAAF Kitchen Staff she was awarded a:

Certificate of Appreciation

This stated:

Your name has been brought to my notice. I am authorised to signify by the award to you of the **Certificate, my appreciation of the good service you have rendered.**

I have given instruction that a note of your devotion to duty shall be made on your Record of Service.

Signed by the:

**Officer Commanding Jones, Air Vice Marshall, Chief of Air Staff
dated 30 the June 1944.**

What is also very evident in this remarkable book was the very cheerful and marked enthusiasm recorded by the reminiscences recorded by these ex Women's Australian Auxiliary Air Force personnel, who Served Australia so well throughout the War years.

Perhaps in the other Station Mess for WAAAF and Ground Staff they also had talented personnel. The Officers' and Sergeants' Mess would certainly have the authority to organise how their Mess should operate because they were required to also contribute their own funds.

I would imagine all those holding rank created a harmonious working environment and set the wide ranging attitudes, that was expected. In my reading from the WAAAF book on some occasions, when young women entered a male dominated work place, there were some suspicions that females could not carry out duties effectively. In all cases reported this quickly changed as evidenced by the rapid increase in numbers of WAAAF being posted in to 4SFTS and the number of male Ground Staff departing to front line Squadrons where girls were not permitted.

With the large seaside town and Port of Geraldton located nearby, and the available transport to carrying personnel there, together with leave available on Saturdays and Sundays this probably had a great deal to do with such a harmonious RAAF Station.

There were many shops catering for the local population and outlying farming communities that the Air Force had access, that could have a bearing but there were probably many other attractions as well. The weekly Yacht Club dances were certainly a well patronised venue by all Station personnel. The beaches in summer were also very popular but as was pointed out that it was a **punishable offence**, under Air Force Law to get badly sunburnt. Whether this is true I don't know but it would appear to be reasonable.

The women citizens of Geraldton decided to take matters into their hands and established a "Cottage" for WAAAF to have some where they could have accommodation over the weekends

but I have yet to discover if there was any catering arrangements. In other cities of Australia similar facilities were provided.

Some long serving Air Force personnel at 4 SFTS made friends with local people and were often invited to stay in their homes or farming properties.

I have now discovered some of the activities that both WAAAF and Ground Staff were involved in and they included a Drama Club organised by Michael Drage (no mustering or rank available) and one of the productions was The 39 Steps. The Station Padre, David Byer, was associated with arranging Concerts.

Bill Dowels, a pianist, with the assistance of a drummer and saxophone player formed a band, who not only played for Station dances but also toured around the region.

Football teams representing the Instructors and Ground Staff, also played other local teams and on a number of occasions resulted in broken bones for some Instructors.

There were tennis courts available on the Station and there was even a Rowing Eight Club.

LAC Sydney Hopkinson

Instruments Mustering



I joined the RAAF in August 1943 and commenced Technical Training at No. 5 S.T.T. at the Perth Technical College. Next I found myself on a train heading for Sydney Technical College in Ultimo for a three month Instrument Repairer's Course. Four months later I was posted to No.2 B.A.G.S. in Port Pirie to work on Fairy Battle aircraft.

Next Posting was to the Exhibition Building (known colloquially as "Pleurisy Palace" in Melbourne to complete a six month course in Instrument Makers Course at the Melbourne Technical College.

Then a trip back across the Nullabor to take up residence at No. 9 EFTS, to work on Tiger Moths. This was to be only a short stay then onto No. 4 SFTS Geraldton to work on the two engine Avro Ansons. This Station was a busy and popular Unit and all personnel based there enjoyed a pleasant climate close to a lovely town. Any leave available gave exposure to quite a variety of sport, dances at the "Yacht Club," swimming and fishing including an occasional chance to catch crayfish on the reef at Greenough River mouth was very popular.

Personnel at RAAF Station 4SFTS, Geraldton, in wartime enjoyed some entertainment from the weekly picture show in the Station Hall. On one occasion the film a well known "tear jerker" "**WUTHERING HEIGHTS**" was showing and towards the end of the film there was heavy drama and emotion following the death of the beautiful heroine. The hero then gathering her in his arms, stepped outside overlooking the moors as an audible flood of tears and sniffles could be heard, mainly from all the WAAAFs in the theatre.

At this point a loud male voice rang out "**Bring me another woman – this one's dead!**"

I readily recall much noisy laughter from all the males and absolute disgust from all the girls present.

A surprise Posting for Sydney happened in early 1945 to New Guinea and then onto the island of Morotai.

During May 1946 in Sydney was Discharged from the RAAF. Memories of the time spent at 4SFTS linger with him, including contact still with wonderful friends made there.

Another side of RAAF Service Life at No.4 SFTS, Geraldton
RAAF Blues (Maintenance) Triple 1944 Football Premiers

**Geraldton National Football Association
and
Winners of the Two and one-Day Premierships.**



Back. R.Sanders, T.Wood, M.Britza, J. Hurt, A.Webber, F. Sainsbury.

Middle. J.Seddon, S. Hopkinson, C.Shumann, J.Cooper, R.Ralph, R.Walker, D. Swinger, C.Saligari

Front. J.Reilly, R. Leonhardt, H.Howard, G.Davey (Captain) WGCdr Higginson, R.Hinchliff,
R.Jones, B. Ryan, R.Whelan.

Other 4.SFTS Teams



Another RAA football TEAM



4 SFTS Swimming Team



Swimming training front beach



Long jetty in background

LAC Vic Tenger

16431 Flight Mechanic (later Lancaster Pilot)



Vic initially joined the Royal Australian Army Engineers while working as an apprentice as a hand Compositor with the WA Government Printer. He had a long time dream of becoming a Pilot but volunteered to join the RAAF. On the fourth of May 1940 was inducted into the RAAF as a Flight Mechanic and on that same day was posted in his civilian clothes to No 1. Recruit Depot, RAAF Station, Laverton, to undergo his Rookies Course. This was followed by a posting to No.1 Engineering School, Ascot Vale, and Melbourne's Show Grounds to commence the Flight Mechanics Course.

Vic working on a Cheetah Engine.



During this period Vic and all the other Trainees were billeted in a show ground display area sleeping on a straw filled hessian bag filled with straw and an issue of three blankets to cope with the bitterly cold. After much pleading with the authorities they were given an extra blanket.

After a number of other postings Vic arrived at No.4SFTS on 25 February 1941 only to discover there were no Ansons on the Station but this soon changed because No 8 Pilot Course soon arrived and Pilot Training commenced.

Forays into Geraldton to sample the night life, beaches and hotels was along the idea of reconnoitring this large country town as to assess the local talent (girls) but when the first Pilot Course arrived with their distinctive white flash in their caps, the available young females were greatly in demand and consequently the Ground Staff Uniform, members had much competition.

Vic in his pre-war Army.

The Officer Commanding of Western Area Air Commodore D'la Rue visited the Station and let all personnel know he was there to listen to any complaint anyone had and to bring to his notice. Most Ground Staff appeared in their best blues, shoes shown to perfection and told their story. Vic was summoned from the tarmac to the Headquarters and arrived in beret and greasy overalls having moments before had been working on an aircraft engine.

After saluting this distinguished Officer he was asked to explain his complaint. Vic's was that he was not allowed to remuster to Air crew and that Flight Mechanics could not remuster to anything nor advance beyond an L.A. C. (Leading Air Craftsman). He further explained it was a dead end job.

Air Commodore D'la Rue suggested perhaps a Fitter 11E but Vic retorted that such an avenue did not exist and he still wanted to transfer to Air Crew.

The Air Commodore said he would "look into it" Years later Vic discovered this signal had been sent.

On 6 July 1941 Vic was posted to under go a Fitter 2E Course at No. 1 Engineering School, located at Ascot Vale as a member of: **No. 2 Fitter Conversion Course.**



The wheels of bureaucracy finally moved when Vic received notification to **change Mustering and enter Air Crew**, a long time goal. In due time he graduated as a Pilot and was posted to the United Kingdom. There after delays finally commenced flying training at an Advance Flying Unit then followed by an Operation Training Unit, where he met up with his Crew to fly the famous Wellington Bomber.

Every member of Vic's Crew had a responsibility to develop complete competence in their Air Crew Mustering for they all relied on each other's skill.

Vic had to pass a very Intensive AFU Course.

After many hours of flying in a great variety of weather conditions over the surrounding seas and country side, where every technical skill was assessed before moving to a Heavy Conversion Unit. There Vic was delighted to learn they would complete this last stage using the famous Lancaster, heavy, four engine bomber, which was probably the greatest aircraft of its time.

Much time was spent by the Crew in developing how to escape from the fuselage of an old aircraft and it took some time to master what he considered an easy task. For those members, who were with the Pilot (Flight Engineer & Bomb Aimer) had to climb over the main wing spar, encumbered with flying gear, Mae West and parachute and its harness took a certain amount of agility while those remaining, Wireless Air Gunner, Navigator and two Gunners needed to bail out through the nose section. No matter how proficient they became there was no simulation of a fire on board, or the aircraft spiralling downwards in steep turns or out of control or they being tossed about by exploding antiaircraft shell bursting. Then there was the possibility of ditching in the sea.



Vic (third from the left, rear) with his Crew at No. 3 RAF Squadron, where they had just returned from an operation over Germany. The extra one in this group is the Flight Sergeant in charge of the Ground Crew. (third in back row)



Vic at the end of the war.

Vic Tenger was promoted to Pilot Officer while on Operations so the Crew now had two with Commissions.



Vic Tenger Navigator, E.W.(Jessie) James



This is a unique photograph for it shows Vic Tenger, the Pilot, flying his Lancaster on a day light operation in loose formation. Although not showing in this photograph was a bursting anti-aircraft shell just in front slightly above the cockpit wind screen ledge. Vic's hands are on the throttles to keep in formation, while the Flight Engineer (on right) has his hands at the ready.

AC1 Patrick Smith **Technical Librarian**



Patrick was working for the Westfarmers Company in Meckering, as a Clerk Trainee, when he decided to enlist in the RAAF early in 1941. After the first six weeks of his Rookies Course at RAAF Station Pearce he was posted to 4SFTS where his first job was to carry messages to the Cypher Unit.

The position as Technical Librarian was taken over by Pat after attending a Course in Perth and this meant an enormous task of filing of Official Instruction Manuals after he had handed them to the Chief Flying Instructor or Engineering Officer. From then onwards there was a steady stream of updates, which first had to be acted upon by the relevant Officers, then added to the original Document.

The Education Officer also received many Training Manuals and updates all of which had to be filed and readily available.

During Pat's spare time he attended the ever popular Yacht Club dances, played football with the RAAF team and occasionally took part in a two up game held behind the Airmen's Huts.

After a year at 4SFTS Patrick was posted to the Embarkation Depot in Wembley (Perth) then for a period in the Fremantle Boys School building as a Technical Librarian..

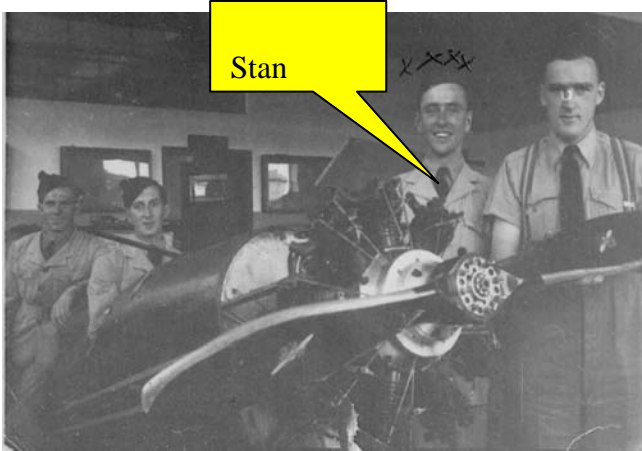
Finally Pat found himself at RAAF Cunderdin, where No 25 Squadron Liberators were based, as the Technical Librarian of a bombing Squadron. Again the Technical Manuals and updates created an enormous amount of work.. Next he found himself as the Technical Librarian for No.14 Squadron, which operated out of RAAF Station Pearce.

This was followed by a stint at A.N.A. House in Perth again as a Technical Librarian then shortly afterwards returned to No.5 S.T.T., in Wembley.

It was on this RAAF Station that the news of the end of the war in Europe came through which culminated in a march through the City to Gloucester Park for a wild celebration.

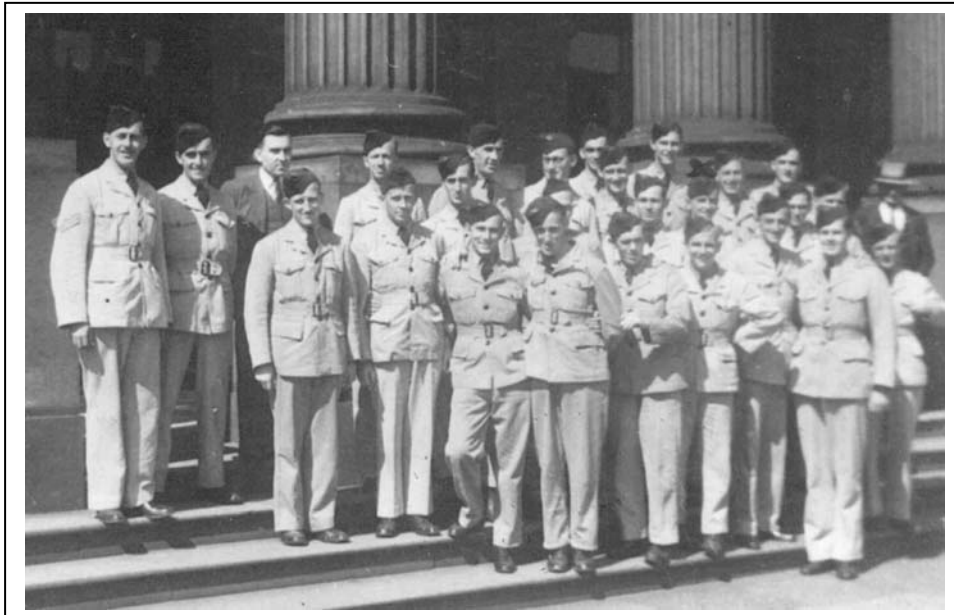
Patrick was Discharged from the RAAF in March 1945.

Stan Hopewell
Electrical Fitter 2 E
WX 12458 RAAF 17801



Stan was an 18 year old Apprentice Electrician, with the J.L.Mattinson Electrical Contractors, when he entered the RAAF in 1940 so he had the skills necessary in the Mustering he selected for expanding Air Force. An immediate posting to the Melbourne Technical College was undertaken after a Rookies Course at RAAF Point Cook on No.17 Course. Much of the Electrical Course was about theory, Stan, during his Course at the Melbourne Technical College Stan had already a

thorough knowledge.



With the Graduation from No. 17 Course from the Melbourne Technical College all were anxiously waiting their next Posting.



After their last photograph taken at RAAF Point Cook many would never see one another again being Posted to many different Stations both here in Australia and overseas.



Stan & Jack Harrison accompanied Miss Olgive & Miss Wilbraham, together with their watchful brothers during one of their leaves to Mount Marther during 1940.

**AC1, SGT & Noel Porter 210053 Fitter 11E
(Later FLTLT)**



Noel joined the RAAF on 23 September 1939 after completing an apprenticeship as a Motor Mechanic and was posted to RAAF Station Pearce for a Rookies Course. His first posting meant a crossing of the continent to Melbourne, where he was given a Trade Test then onto RAAF Station Point Cook, the first Station for the RAAF.

The aircraft operating there were the Seagulls (known to the RAF and many others as a Walrus) an amphibian seaplane, that was Piloted and serviced by RAAF Ground Crews aboard Royal Australian Cruisers. The Navigators and Air Gunner/Wireless Operators were Naval personnel. Avro Ansons were used in the role they were designed for as Coastal Reconnaissance so by the end of 1940 Noel was a Corporal.

Noel like every one else was responsible for his own washing and ironing.



Noel's Fitter training was done at RAAF Station Point Cook and it was under these conditions great friendships evolved.

L to R:

Bill Cavanagh, Bill Kelly, Bob Savage, Dick Thorton, Snow Kohlor, and Harry Mellor.

During 1941 Noel was a Member of a Crew to ferry an Avro Anson to No.4 SFTS to 4SFTS and to take up Duties there as a Fitter 2 E to maintain aircraft engines. With Convoys of Cargo and Naval Ships passing along our WA coast two Squadrons each of

Twenty Ansons were based on Georgina and Kojarena and the Ground and Air Crews were billeted there living in tents.



While the Patrol Squadrons were based on one of the Satellite aerodromes all the Ground Staff personnel lived in tents, while meals were delivered from the Main Station.



The “mod cons” consisted of galvanised metal tubs and were also used for their laundry. RAAF personnel readily accepted these conditions during those times.



With some ones camera available came the opportunity for a photograph of all the Ground Staff on Kojarina Satellite landing strip.



An opportunity for a days fishing by the Ground Staff was organised when Mr Eric Akerstrom, a Geraldton fisherman provided his large fishing boat. It was a break from the daily routine.



When an opportunity arose the men of the Ground Staff trudged across country for a swim at the back beach but the lack of swimming trunks did not deter the intrepid bronze Australians. It is fairly evident what the usual uniform of the day must have been but the incident of skin cancers was created from that era.

When Noel was promoted to Sergeant he lived in the Sergeants Mess and one evening when several Naval Petty Officers, from the HMAS Sydney, were entertained there the night before their ship sailed.. A charcoal sketch was drawn on a wall of the Mess by one of the Petty Officers and signed by his colleagues before they departed to return to their ship. A few days later this AUSTRALIAN Cruiser was sunk by a German Raider. The sketch was taken down after the war and now resides in the Australian War Memorial. The two Squadrons Aircraft were involved in the sea patrols trying to locate the missing Cruiser Sydney but without success.

Because the two Reconnaissance Squadrons Nos. 68 and 69 were operating from the two Satellite airfields the Squadron Members took advantage for a weekend in Perth on a regular Anson flying to Perth. No. 68 Squadron Ansons were based on Kojarena while No. 69 Squadron was at Georgina..



General Reconnaissance flights extended as far south as the Great Australian Bight and up along the WA coast accompanying Ship Convoys.



The Anson was Australia's front line defence at the outbreak of WW2..

Train travel to Geraldton was always an experience of over crowding and usually overnight and the discomfort endured via the Midland Railway and the Government Railway always brought out devilment by some travellers. Noel reported that because of past travel experience by one enterprising RAAF member he had purchased a number of china teacups for the journey and when they stopped for pies and cups of tea sold on several Rail Stations there was always a deposit of one shilling (10cents) required. The entrepreneur handed in his unused cups and collected a shilling deposit. It was reported his capital investment for buying cups from Wool Worth's netted him an enormous profit.

The owner of the Station eatery found to his dismay that the till was down and he had accumulated an excess of cups.

Noel Porter was later to be posted and promoted to Commissioned Rank and served as Engineering Officer on many of the Operational Squadrons fighting against the Japanese.

Leading Aircraftsman	1. 07.40
Corporal	1. 10. 40
Sergeant	1. 07. 42

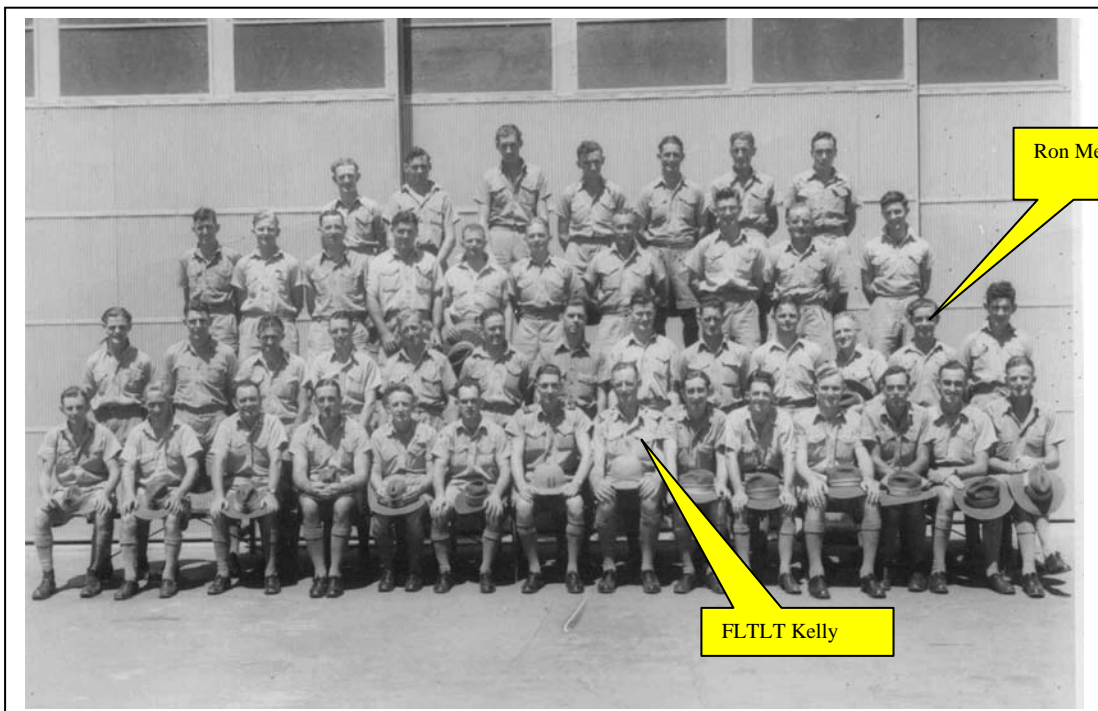
Commissioned 19. 06. 43 after attending the Carlton University.

AC1 R.C.Mellar, 38505
(later FLYOFF)



Ron Mellar entered the RAAF Station Pearce on 24 April 1941 and, after the usual Rookies Course, was posted to RAAF Station No.4 SFTS Geraldton arriving there on 6th June 1941. He took up duties as a Clerk in the rapidly expanding Stores Section so vital for the smooth operations of this potentially large RAAF Training Station for Trainee Pilots.

Laundry facilities were basic because there was no alternative on this Station because it was still under construction and Trainee Pilots had not yet arrived.



FLTLT Kelly was in Charge of the new Stores and in this photograph shows, Stores Personnel combined with other Ground Staff members.



Hut 16 was the new Residence for this group.

L to R Bob Nicholls, Ron (himself) Corporal in Charge and

Eddie Rhodes.

Front is Alex Hebiton.

Eventually Ron Mellar was allowed to transfer to Air Crew Training so packed his gear and made the long 400km return to Perth and was duly taken to **No. 5 Initial Training School RAAF Clontarf**. Here Ron joined his Air Crew Course and his well used and faded blue overalls indicated he was Remustered from Ground Staff.

After the initial training in a very wide range of subjects, gruelling regime of physical training, inoculations and vaccination, a grasp of Morse Code and making a success of final examinations Ron, along with the other 120 Trainees had to appear before a Category Selection Committee. This Group made the decision as to whether a Trainee would be a Wireless/ Air Gunner, a Navigator or a Pilot, but the unsuspecting Trainees were unaware of the criteria used.

Ron was to discover his name appeared in the list of Wireless Air Gunners and duly departed for RAAF Ballarat to commence his Wireless Training, a stiff and demanding Course, which including the mastery of Morse Code both in sound and light for this important, and demanding Role in a Bomber Crew.

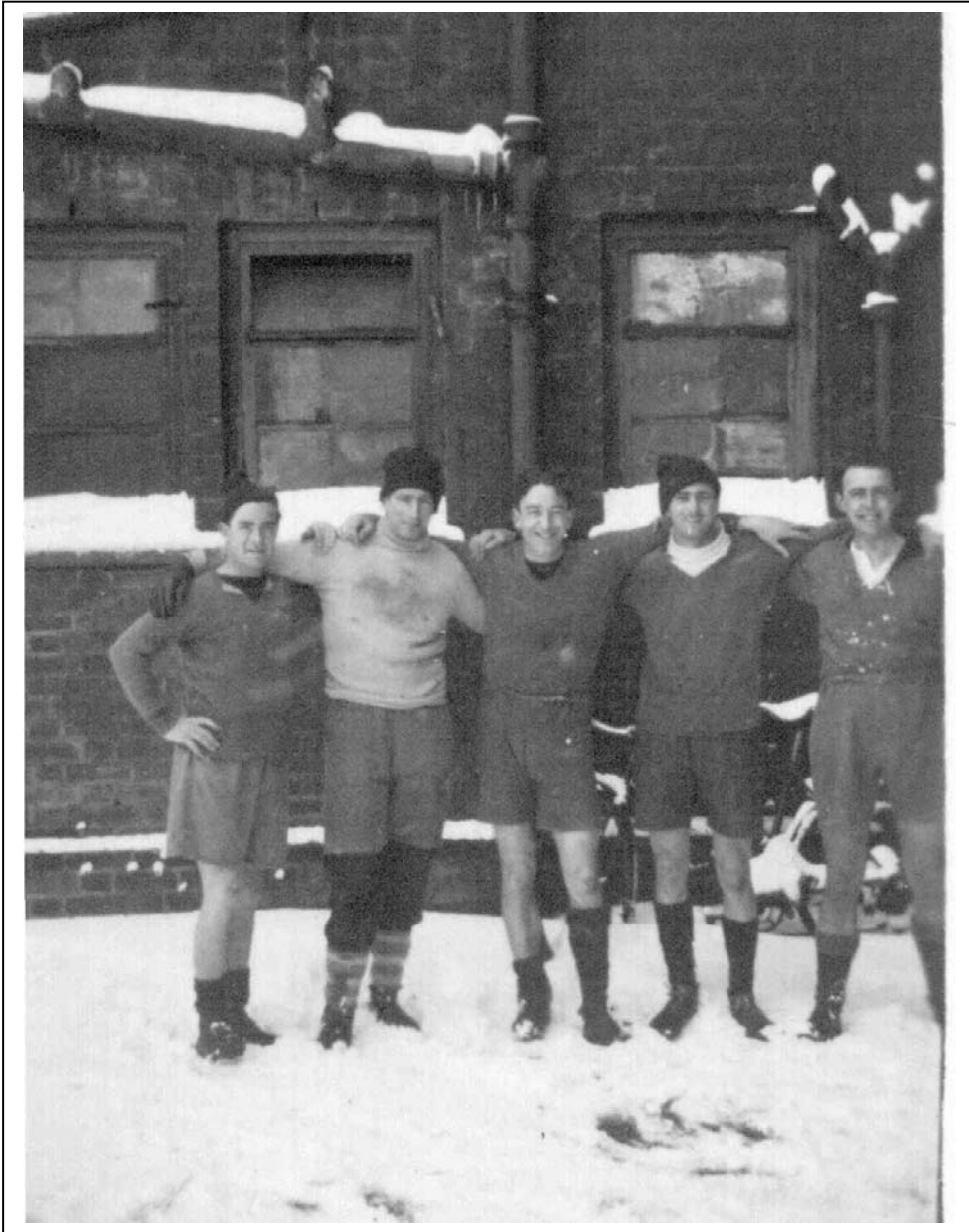


On successful completion of this facet of training he was then posted to Gunnery School to master machine guns, operate a turret in a variety of aircraft and exercises. This culminated in Graduating as a Wireless Air Gunner. Some trainees, who could master the wireless and Morse Code, but were considered suitable for Gunnery School would go there and Graduate as an Air Gunner to man the vital positions of Tail Gunner or Mid Upper position. In the UK the new wing was as a Signaller.

After Ron's Wing Parade he returned to Western Australia for the allowed Embarkation Leave (from 14 May 1943) then made the long crossing back to Sydney where he joined a Troop Ship "Mt Vernon" bound for San Francisco. For a while his Air Crew Group were stationed in a US Transit Camp near Boston on the East Coast of United States.

Ron Mellar made the Atlantic crossing and arrived in England on 10th August 1943 and after a time in Brighton was posted to RAF Halfpenny Green Wireless School to commence training on the RAF Wireless equipment used in Bomber Command, the Marconi Transmitter and receiver. and the great many emergency procedures and the latest operating techniques.

In due time Ron was posted to an Operational Training Unit to join a great many others for a procedure used by the RAF to get Bomber Crews together. This comprised of Pilots, Navigators and Gunners and Wireless Air Gunners (WAGs) changed to Signaller, being set lose in a hanger and being ordered to get themselves sorted into Crews. Many accounts as to how this occurred have been published but it happened and a bond developed from then onwards because every one realised it was vital each would perform to the highest standard possible. On the Ground there were a lot of procedures the Crew had to perfect so that emergency procedures became not only automatic but also in the most efficient manner possible for speed in an emergency was vital. Just getting out of the fuselage of a Wellington Bomber took ages to perfect and the whole procedure had to be meticulously duplicated in every type of aircraft used at OTU, then Heavy Conversion Unit and finally, the aircraft, the Crew would use on Operations in Bomber Command and in Ron's case, the **Heavy Halifax four engine bomber**.



Intrepid Crew Members playing hardy in the Yorkshire snow during their initial Crew training. Ross Hutchinson Pilot (in centre) with the Navigator, W/Op, Bomb Aimer, Mid Upper Gunner.



The mighty Halifax Bomber "X RAY" that was to carry Ron Mellar (front middle) throughout their Tour. The bombs drawn on the fuselage indicates the number of Missions this aircraft had flown up until this photograph was taken.



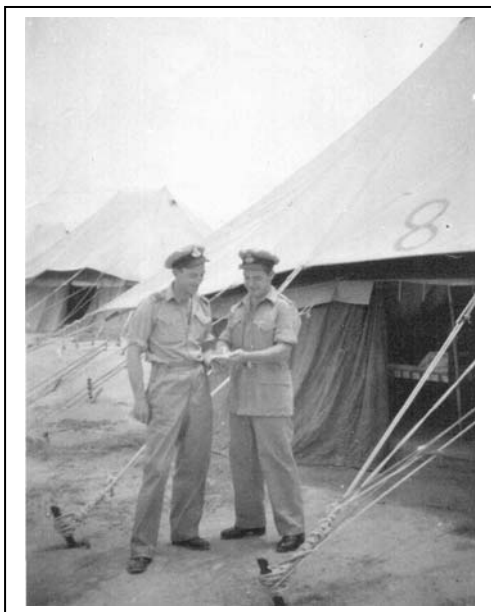
Crews operating at high altitudes would be in warm bulky flying gear along with a parachute harness, with finally the Mae West (life-jacket) shown in this photograph of Ron Mellar.



Ross Hutchison's, (Captain) (later Sir Ross), Crew

H. Dalton, Bomb Aimer, John Fleming Rear Gunner, Bob Noonan, Navigator, Ross Hutchison, Pilot, Jim O'Connor, Mid Upper Gunner, Al Ronaldson, Engineer, Ron Mellar, Wireless Operator
The wonderful Ground Crew

The Royal Air Force posted three of the Crew, first to the Middle East to operate a Dakota in Transport Command and later sent on to India.



Ross (left) with Ron Mellar.

John Kessey Flying Instructor later

(WGCDR Commanding Officer No. 100 Squadron. DFC JP MAP)

I was born in Newcastle NSW on 30 August 1918, and spent my youth in the Moree district and in Sydney.

In 1937-38 I was a member of the Naval Air Cadets, an organization operated by a Naval retired officer, Commander Hammer, in Sydney Garden Island. I applied to enlist in the RAAF in 1938, and was interviewed for a Wireless Operator or Navigator appointment for training. I was successful, but was deferred to go before another committee for RAAF officer Cadets. This was also successful, and I reported to Point Cook RAAF base on 16 January 1939 to commence my Training as an Officer Cadet.

War broke out on 3rd September '39, and my course graduated as Pilot Officers on October 1939. Our flying training was on Gypsy Moths, Avro Air Cadets, for initial training, and then the Westland Wapiti for advanced training. On graduation I was posted to No.2 Squadron at Laverton for six months, flying Avro Anson bombers, escorting convoys from Sydney and Melbourne into the Southern Ocean area - soldiers en route to the U.K. Then posted to Point Cook flying the Avro Anson aircraft with students doing their Navigation Course.

On 19 June 1940 I was posted to Camden RAAF Base to commence my flying instructor's course, during which time we flew Avro Trainer Cadets, Avro Ansons and Wirraways. This course was completed by 6th October 1940, and I was posted back to Point Cook as a flying instructor on Avro Ansons.

On 4th November, my next posting was to Amberley in Queensland where we flew our Wirraways from Melbourne to Amberley and commenced the Advanced Training School at Amberley. We trained pilots on Wirraways and Avro Ansons, and it was here with a student pilot in a Wirraway, that I was faced with a student, who just froze on the controls while doing a spin, and I was initially unable to overcome his pressure on the controls. Perseverance prevailed and we just pulled out of the spin almost at tree top height. That student went through and did very well on fighters in Europe.



My next posting was to Geraldton W.A. I collected my Anson at Melbourne and flew it across to Geraldton, leaving Melbourne on 4th May 1941 in Avro Anson 2058 with passengers SQNLDR. Leader Tunbridge and A.C.1 Cavey. We flew from Laverton to Parafield, then the next day on to Ceduna and Forrest. Next day was off to Kalgoorlie, Pearce and finally **Geraldton arriving on the 10th May '41**. On the 11th May I had L.A.C. McKenzie as my first pupil here, on a formation flying exercise.

Flying Officer Ivan Black was the O.C. of my flight which was X flight.

In September I became Officer Commanding X Flight and normal flying training progressed until 26th November, when I was sent on a search for any survivors of the HMAS Sydney, which was missing.

I went off to Carnarvon in Avro Anson No. W2072, with Sergeant Olive as crew, to start the search for any survivors. On the 27 November, the next day, I had SQNLDR. Leader Jock Wittschiede as crew, and we sighted two life boats with survivors on board. Assuming hopefully that they were from the Sydney, we did a very low fly over, but the seamen crouched down low, as though they were expecting to be strafed. They were sailors from the German raider Kormoran. If they had been Australians they would have stood up and waved madly. I had the position of the M.V. Centaur, which was en route from Singapore to Fremantle, so I intercepted them, and gave them the position of the German survivors. The Captain towed them into Carnarvon where the police took them in charge. I was told that the Germans demanded to be taken on board, but the Captain of the Centaur refused them and after some threats of capsizing the life-boats, etc. they settled down and were towed into Carnarvon. The Germans did not know that the Centaur Captain had been sunk in the Mediterranean by a German submarine and wasn't going to have any Germans on his ship! That flight was only one and a half hours, but the following day I was off again searching for the Sydney survivors, with Sergeant Olive as crew, plus a radio technician. We were given a search pattern to follow, and after some time, I realised that the original wind had strengthened and was whipping up reasonable waves. On estimating when the wind had changed, and calculating the remainder of our search plan, I realised that we would not have sufficient fuel to complete the required plan and finish at Onslow as required. I then replanned the route with our remaining fuel endurance, and in due course set off for Onslow.



Known as the Headquarters, John Kessey 3rd from the left, with other Instructors were Based on Kojarena, the satellite aerodrome for 4 SFTS, with their Ansons as part of the dispersal arrangements. It was from here sea patrols were carried as well for the search for HMAS Sydney and her survivors.

This route, from our current search position, should take us across the North West Cape and on to Onslow. As we approached the time to fly over the North West Cape, we became enveloped in a very thick dust storm and could not see anything. After our estimated time for the cape had been and gone, nothing but dust was evident, so I asked the radio technician to obtain a bearing from Pearce in W.A. and Laverton in Victoria. After some considerable time, the Radio Operator told me he was unable to get any bearings from either station, and that our radio was now unserviceable. I allowed 20 minutes time to elapse before making any other decision and was still in the dust storm, assuming we were lying parallel to the coast in a north -east heading. On the expiration of this time, I suddenly saw an Island, which did not look anything like the island on my 1880 chart, but hoping it was correct, I altered course south east to find Australia, allowing 9 minutes time to cross the coast. Luckily, after 9 minutes we crossed the coast. Now if this island was the correct one on my chart, Onslow must be south west of our position, so I flew along the coast and on estimated time, a town and river came into view, but the river and town had changed positions, due to the river having over the years, altered its course. I found a good level area and landed, only to find that I had found the Onslow aerodrome, and my day's flight was completed, having been in the air for 5 hours, and to cap it all I ran out of fuel at the end of my flight on the runway. The Island turned out to be Barrow Island. We were at Onslow for a day and on the 29th November we flew from Onslow back to Carnarvon and then on to Geraldton arriving late at night, thus ending my search for the survivors of the Sydney, but received an Above Average assessment on the operation. We mainly did our training out at a satellite aerodrome at Kojarena sheep property. Our training of the students incorporated general flying ability with circuits and landings, and night flying was done at Geraldton airfield. We taught formation flying, bombing with practise bombs, and across country flights to practise their navigation.

On one occasion, a friend of mine, **FLTLT. Lieutenant Archie Longden, who was the RAAF Entertainment Officer**, visited Geraldton, and he organised us and put on a variety show in Geraldton. "Geraldton Air Force Concert" and wrote a song for the occasion called "**VICTORY**"



No.4 SFTS Concert Party, John Kessey is 10th from the left, the girls were Serving WAAF and FLTLT Black is holding the "C".



SGT Phillip Hargreaves, a prominent pianist participated in the Station Concert.



Other Station Members, who contributed to the fine concert.

Pilot Graduating Courses



FLTLT Ivan Black, Officer in Charge (centre) with John Kessey on right with the Graduating Course.



Instructor John Kessey with the newly Graduated Pilots.



Uniforms indicate the season that the Graduation Parade was held.



Some SGT Pilots are shown in these Groups and were then known as "Driver Pilots" this term was not used during the Author's time at 4SFTS.

Another incident occurred one day when some No. 14 Squadron Lockheed Hudsons were at Geraldton for a brief visit. When they took off, they held the aircraft in take off attitude, and when they reached take off speed, they selected their gear up. The Hudson's undercarriage was very quick in retraction, and then the pilots held the same attitude just above the ground till they reached the end of the field, and then did a steep climb out. One flying instructor tried to copy their actions in his Anson, and had a student ready to wind the gear up at take off speed. Unfortunately, the order was given to wind the gear up just before achieving flying speed and the Anson settled gently to the ground! A most embarrassed Instructor and student crawled out of the Anson when it came to a stop.

Operational Posting at Last

I enjoyed my period of service at Geraldton, but was overjoyed when, on 9th July 1942, my posting to Cressy and Bairnsdale for Operational Training, and ultimately a conversion course on to Beaufort Bombers, and later active operations, became effective.



WGCDR John Kessey rose to become the Commanding Officer of No. 100 Squadron, Beaufort Bombers that operated out of Aitape, New Guinea, against the Japanese Forces.

4249 Corporal Alex Munro
Fabric Worker

Alex and a friend decided to approach the RAAF Recruiting Office to inquire about joining up but was put off to wait the arrival a Recruiting Team due to arrive in WA from the Eastern States.

During September 1939 Alex was finally sworn into the RAAF and took up residence at RAAF Station Pearce, which had only opened the year previous. Ironically this new Station was name after a relation of Alex's Wife.

His first official job was to repair a torn section of the tail plane of an Avro Anson so he had to cut a piece of cotton fabric and paint it with a coating of "dope" using a brush then brush on the torn area and, after applying the piece of fabric over the tear give it another application of dope.

Alex suddenly became aware of an Officer standing next to him, who suddenly asked "Who are you?" This enquiry was made by the Officer Commanding the Station, WGCDR Brownell, who up until then was unknown to Alex., but Alex immediately provided his name followed by "SIR!"

Early in 1941 Alex found himself at the entrance gates of No. 4 SFTS Station, Geraldton, as Senior Corporal attached to the Fabric Section, which also included the Parachute Section of this fledging RAAF Station. Barrack Huts were still uncompleted and while trying to eat meals had the added complication of warding off attacking blow flies.

Being a Member of the Permanent RAAF Alex soon discovered he had to be multi-qualified because he was allocated many additional Duties. One initial assignment was to assist in installing the Power Generator to supply a great many Sections of the Station.

While visiting the Commonwealth Hotel in the Geraldton Township the Proprietor asked Alex if he would like to accept two billiard tables for the RAAF Station completely FREE of any charges. The Hotel owner wanted to extend the facilities because of the influx of RAAF and Army personnel coming into the region meant added business.

As a Corporal, Alex used diplomacy by immediately asking permission from the Station Officer, which receive immediate blessing by WGCDR Hefferman as well as placing these two most valuable assets in the Airmen's Recreation Hut. Alec was also involved in organizing the transport of the never ending supplies arriving by rail from major RAAF Stores, from the nearby rail siding, to the new Stores building.. The new Stores Personnel were amongst the first group to arrive for it was vital to have this up and running before the Station was fully operational.

For nearly the next three years Alex would work on a great many Avro Ansons and was finally promoted to Sergeant. When asked about the Airmen's Mess Cooks and their contribution Alex's immediate response was a typical Service expression "WHO called the bastard a Cook?" followed by peals of laughter.

During this period all Leave Trains were stopped because the coal miners in Collie were on strike even though there was a war being raged.. One civilian facility used on occasions by Airmen, was the Taxi operated by a Mr Dave Mc Fee, when a group combined their money to meet the cost of the fare.

Alex was in a Nursing Home when this interview was being recorded so was never completed.

No.4 SFTS Post Office LAC Ray Passmore

Through ex RAAF **LAC Ray Passmore** I discovered a team of civilians actually worked on this very large Base. There was a Post Master and two Assistants, who operated from a long Hut, which was divided into three with the Post Master's Office, a middle section and an area for serving and was located next to the Station Hospital. Ray Passmore, being the only RAAF member started the day by opening the Post Office at 9 am (locking at 4.30pm) because the civilians lived off the Station.

Apart from helping in the Post office it was Ray's responsibility to carry out all the mail collection and deliveries using a motorbike. On occasions he also delivered personal telegrams to a place where the recipient was working. A whole range of very personal telegrams were received by Morse Code and Ray was most impressed by the speed of the Post Master.



Ray Passmore found the Post Office duties most interesting for he was able to visit many Sections in his Official capacity
(R.Passmore)



On the left is the Post Master while the other was one of his assistants. Not only did they handle selling postage stamps for letters and parcels but in addition operated the Bank for the Station personnel.
(R. Passmore)



A group of Ray's hut friends



Ray Passmore on the pillion

Like civilian postmen Ray also collected each morning all out going mail from Mail Boxes located next to every Mess (dining hut) and assisted in sorting. Every night a RAAF Tender (motor vehicle) took all mail into the Geraldton main Post Office.

AC1Westgarth (Wes) Jilley 38797
Instrument Repairer.



Westgarth enlisted in the RAAF On 28 May 1941 and was immediately posted to RAAF Station Pearce to complete his Rookie Course. He was Mustered, as an Aircraft Hand, and later would change to an Instrument Repairer.

First posting from July 1941 was to No.4 SFTS, Geraldton and it was an indignant general feeling amongst the Ground Staff that they opposed the likelihood of women entering the RAAF. This would immediately take away the many privileges they enjoyed such as the macho Notice Board lingo. No more be permitted to slip from the showers with only a towel wrapped around themselves, sunbaking in the “nick” would not be permissible while swimming also in their birthday suits would definitely be a “no-no” because up until then they never wore bathers. Suggestive stories and coarse language was common practice while the Hoteliers advertised to attract male drinkers with notice boards advertising “A Male Only” entertainment with details like “Metho Myrtle”, “Mullewa Kate” and “The Woman with the busted A.....” all very suggestive.

One very cold winter’s morning all Ground Staff were ordered by the Station Medical Officer to line up in a single line on each side of the road for a “Short Arm” medical inspection where every man had to bare from neck to knee. Only those RAAF males, who ever went through this form exercise will never forget the experience. This was brought about because one Airman had contracted venereal disease, and the Medical Officer wanted to “Nip it in the bud” but what made the ordeal even more embarrassing, was that the WAAAF Medical Staff were involved.

All this preconceived prejudice disappeared soon after the first Group of WAAAFs arrived and their presence brought about a “Brothers & Sisters in arms on a united front attitude” and was never to reappear again. Maybe the males suddenly realised that these girls were a reminder of sisters, cousins and girl friends.

One treasured memory Westgarth still has was the night when mates of his from HMAS Sydney were all reunited at a function in “The Railway Hotel” in Geraldton. Their party rocked on into the early hours of the morning on that wonderful occasion. Soon after the news of the sinking of the “Sydney” became known and shock set in and a real war was on our doorstep. The Station Avro Ansons returned from a most intensive search and it soon became known that the only lifeboat sighted actually was from the German Raider, “Kormoran” and there was not one H.M.A.S. Sydney survivor.

When the war with the Japanese finally brought havoc on Darwin and sped the exodus south of civilians and the following air raids on Broome Geraldton became the first safety haven for fleeing Netherlands and American aircraft in front of “the yellow horde.” To actually see with your own eyes, so close to home, these aircraft, all shot up and landing amongst the dispersed Ansons at Kojarena and Georgina brought the reality of war to us. It was a rude awakening for me and my immediate thoughts were for our families.

Early in 1942 thirty Aircraft Hands, under the supervision of one Engineer were ordered to dismantle two aircraft hangers at 4SFTS and to take them to Kalgoorlie and re-erect them. This was the beginning of a large RAAF presence in this area. For us Aircraft Hands we were but a Master of none “Jack of all trades”. In one particular field they mastered was “Partying” for during the two months, they were billeted in a boarding house, and enjoyed the hospitality of hundreds of girls-“a party every night”

Going on leave from 4SFTS Geraldton to Perth was a night mare with from nine to eleven personnel in a “Dog Box” compartment on the Midland Railway meant a problem for sleeping. Luggage racks provided for the more nimble, the floor and also the toilet floor and sharing the two seats had to be utilised. A few “Fellas” left the train carriage and took up residence in a rear luggage wagon that was nearly filled with cabbages and for this escapade were arrested for breaking a seal on a wagon.

While on secondment in Kalgoorlie Wes received a Posting to Canberra in the Australian Capital Territory to commence Training at **No. 2 School of Technical Training as an Instrument Repairer**. Further training at No.3 School of Technical Training followed this.



Breakfast in Kalgoorlie June 1942 while awaiting the arrival of their train.

After a period in Port Pirie, South Australia, at RAAF No.4 BAGS (Bombing & Gunnery School) Wes became part of No. 457 Spitfire Squadron then based 25 miles south of Darwin at RAAF Livingston Air Strip.

Another very long trip back to Western Australia to join four engine No.25 Squadron then operating from RAAF Cunderdin flying four engine American Liberators, which staged through the secret RAAF Coruna Downs, located in a very dry, inhospitable location in North Western Australia.

Wes finally had to make the long journey back to Melbourne before being Discharged from No. 5 Embarkation Depot.



Wes would certainly travel the length and breadth of Australia during his RAAF Service life.



The Instrument Repairer's Course personnel held in the Basic School of Technical Training Canberra 1942.



RAAF Station Port Pirie Instrument Section of No. 4 BAGS was first posting as an Instrument Repairer.



Jack Sullivan, Bob Sullivan, John Turner, and Wes on leave in Canberra, 1942.



A short stop on the Nullabor Plains, Jim Robbins, Freddie Milhaven, Les Winston, Harry Webb, Tommy Turbit, Louie Reid, George Humpryson,



There were an enormous number of Huts at No.4SFTS, Geraldton to accommodate nearly 2,000 personnel.



9 th Ave must have been a name bestowed upon this area by the Ground Staff.



The main street in Geraldton was Marine Tce and every one from the RAAF Station regularly visited this sea side town and Port.



It was a surprise to the RAAF personnel that the Trains discharged passenger here.



Typical shop fronts of country towns in Western Australia.



K Eddie Cubbage, & Sol Lonne perhaps modelling the fashion in RAAF work dress!



Aircraft Hands were called upon to fill in for Staff shortages in all Mustering including Guard Duty, but ammunitions only for special Duties.



During Rookies Course all Trainees received rifle handling & firing as well as bayonet drill.



N Eddie Cribbage & Wes also learnt the "art" of filling sand bags along with Guard Duties.



Ray McGlin was on "walkabout" when reached the top of the hills overlooking 4SFTS.



Modesty prevailed after a cool down swim in a farm dam. Roy Mc McGill on right.



John Turner, Eddie Cubbage, ? Chambers Along side a dam about one mile from the RAAF Station.



Kojarena or Georgina Satellite aerodromes were also used to disperse Anson Aircraft. Ground Staff & Pilots lived in there tents.



In true dispersal aircraft would not be lined up in this fashion.



It fell to Bill Kimber to guard this Anson on Georgina, which had its wing damaged



All "A" Flight 457 SQD Ground Staff grouped around a MK 5 Spitfire in 1943.



Afternoon Tea break for A Flight. Wonder what the incidence of skin cancer is now?



Bert Seadie, an Instrument Repairer, now has evidence of himself in a SQD Spit.



No. 457 & 452 Australian SQDs were brought back to Australia from England along with RAF 54 SQD.

James (Jim) M. Forster 29282**Fitter 2 A**

Jim joined the RAAF on 20 November 1940 and entered RAAF Station Pearce for a six weeks Rookies Course but was not impressed with all the drill because he had spent two years with an Army Unit. One thing it did mean because of this experience was to be Guard Duty.

His first posting was to undertake a basic Fitters' Trade Course in the Exhibition Building in Adelaide, South Australia. A great deal of filing and measuring was involved in making tools to exact dimensions and learning about a whole range of tools.

The following Posting was to Ascot Vale in Melbourne (Victoria) to begin an Air Frames Course and this appealed to Jim having as a youth built model aircraft. On completing and graduating Jim found himself on the steam train bound for No.9 Elementary Flying Training School, Cunderdin in Western Australia, his home State. One of his duties was to assist Trainee Pilots get into the cockpit of a Tiger Moth trainer and to be properly strapped in with the cross over harness as well to check their parachutes were correctly adjusted.

His next reason for packing up and getting all the necessary Clearances from each Section of the Station was to take up Duties at No. 4 SFTS, Geraldton. After a very long and tiring steam train journey to Perth, then the 300+ very slow speed miles northwards via the uncomfortable and cramped Midland Railway Company carriages, he arrived

In those early days on the Station Jim's initial reaction was that the incessant dust caused no end of discomfort. Their huts and belongings were covered in red dust, blowflies were in hordes while their Mess tables were also clothed in a layer of dust including the open tins of Apple Jelly jam.

The initial Avro Ansons were in a dilapidated condition even with plywood peeling off the wings for it was apparent other SFTS Stations had got rid of such aircraft. Jim's Sergeant told him to rub the exposed sections on the wings with sandpaper and add glue and fabric over the replacement bits of plywood. The engines were really extremely poor, for there was little in the way of spare engine parts, spark plugs, in fact little in the way of spares to make the aircraft safe. Ground Staff during this period were forbidden to even talk to Trainee Pilots in case they created alarm about the condition of the aircraft they were about to fly. (Note, by the time the Author was there this state of affairs had long disappeared) The spark plugs on the lower cylinders had to be removed so that oil could leak out overnight because of the poor quality of the piston rings and cylinders.

One of the problems for the ground Staff was to get these engines started each morning with the winding of a handle so on one occasion the Engineering Officer called for suggestions. Jim independently approached the Office in his Office and suggested they construct a device that had been used to start the Bristol Bulldog fighters but this was dismissed. Even the undercarriages created many problems, for the oleo legs leaked

air badly and there fore had to be pumped up manually, the enormous infestation of large double gees accumulated in the wheel housing and wise Ground Staff learnt NOT to put their hands in this region, while the same double gees played havoc with the aircraft tyres.

With the bombing of Broome and the arrival of shot up aircraft landing at Geraldton with their evacuating women and children brought home the reality that the war was indeed close by and the digging of slit trenches and sand bagging of buildings was initiated, as well as defensive training commenced. No one knew when the Japanese could attack by air or invasion. One day a battered US Flying Fortress landed with a load of passengers and taxied up to the tarmac, much to the amazement to all the ground Staff because no one had seen such an aircraft before.

During one occasion Jim and friends were in a Geraldton Hotel when a group of Dutch Sailors walked in and joined the party. This led to an invitation to visit their submarine that had called into the Harbour for some very necessary repairs and go for a test run the following morning. In due time the intrepid Airmen went aboard the submarine and were overwhelmed by the smell of diesel oil every where throughout the cramped conditions. The ship cast off and after cruising for about a half an hour under diesel motors they were preparing to dive to check the electrical motors but because something was wrong, returned to the wharf much to the great relief of Jim and his mates. This Submarine had seen service in the First World War so was a very old ship.

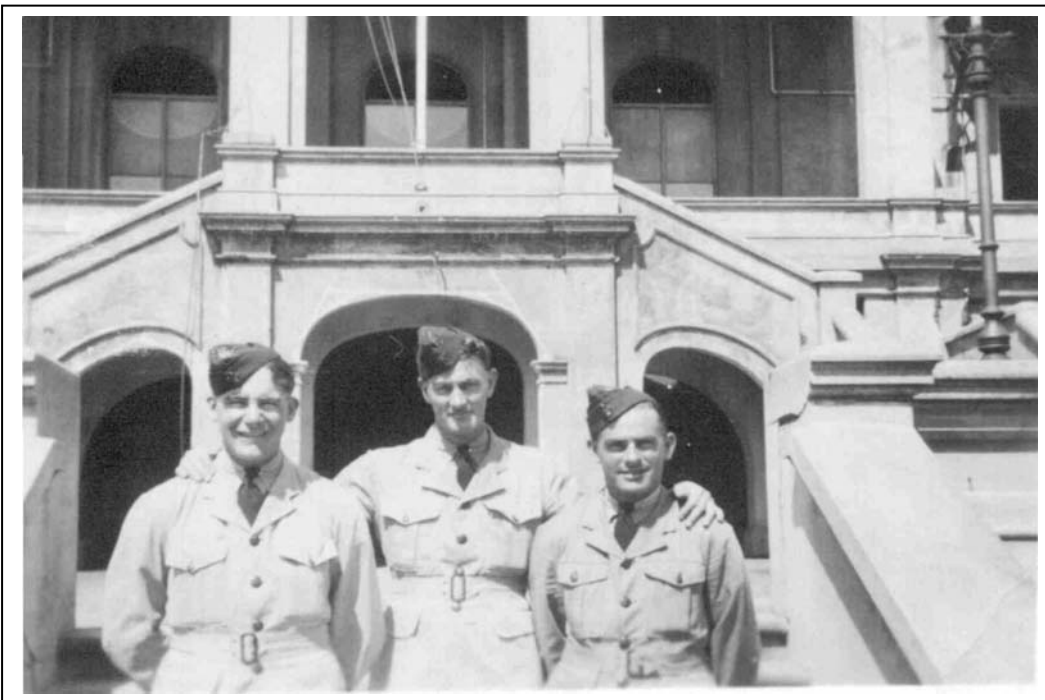
Around this period an outbreak of influenza struck the Station causing the Station Hospital to be inundated with severe patients, while others had to remain in Huts. Jim's recovery was in self diagnosis by going into Geraldton and purchasing a bottle of Rum, devouring the contents and hopping into his bed with a pile of blankets and sweating out the flu systems. Jim was soon fully recovered and returned to duties.

Jim contends that one of the Trainee Pilots, whom he personally knew, was killed when his aircraft crashed because of the poor condition of the aircraft but this was never mentioned. One evening during a film being shown called "The Power and the Glory" there was an Anson depicted and the commentary mentioned its history during the first months of the war in Europe. Members of the Ground Staff immediately recognised the aircraft and told the Engineering Officer that the same aircraft was then on the Station Tip or Grave Yard. The next day the historical aircraft was brought back to a hanger with the intention to being restored but Jim has no recollection as to this aircraft's future because he was posted soon afterwards.

One Anson departed Geraldton with urgently needed medical supplies and returned with evacuated women and children bring evidence just how close the war was.

During night flying one of the Ground Staff walked into a revolving airscrew and was thrown about twenty yards after receiving very deep cuts and after immediate treatment was flown to Perth for treatment but Jim has no idea to whether the man recovered..

Jim was, after a very short, but active time at 4SFTS, posted south to take up duties with No. 77 Squadron then equipped with P40 Kitty Hawk aircraft. This inturn led to other posting with other RAAF Fighter Squadrons and the last with No 86 Squadron Kitty Hawks P40 based in the very remote Dutch New Guinea region of **Merauke** on the south coast of New Guinea during 1943.



Jim Forester (left) with Merve Flynn and Doug Last outside their North Terrace Barracks at the rear of the Adelaide Exhibition Building. Must have been some leave time or Posting to be in their Drab Uniforms, "Airmen for the use of" which required a certain amount of skill and dexterity when ironing after the rigors of laundry. Each day the Course Jim belonged to had to march to their lectures and practical workshop training, then return for meals.

**Jim Forster with No 86 Squadron,
MERAUKE, Dutch New Guinea.**



The "Defence Warriors" made up of men from all Musterings from Ground Staff. There were also Army Units nearby.



Jim (left) with two mates outside their tent at Merauke south New Guinea during 1943. Natives had erected a thatched roof.



No 86 SQD Kitty Hawk Ground Crews. The Air Crews were there in Merauke to tackle any Japanese aircraft.



Jim, (far right, standing) with the other members of the workshop team outside their hidden workshop.



An alert had been issued and 86 SQD Pilots await the order to take off against a Japanese raid.



Kaya Kaya native of this remote region of Dutch occupied New Guinea lived on the opposite side of the river from the RAAF.

Jack Van Emden 34611
Corporal Instrument Maker



I was born and lived in the Sydney suburb of Maroubra, 7th Oct, 1922, the younger son of a WW1 veteran who originated from Holland but was in the AIF for that conflict & who brought back a "Pommie" war bride. Maroubra, if you know it, is considered the biggest & best surf in Sydney (probably contested by others but no contest).

I grew up there, going to school & surfing with my brother & friends. That was my only sport & we all loved it & I was still doing it until a triple heart bypass slowed me down a bit at 65 years old.

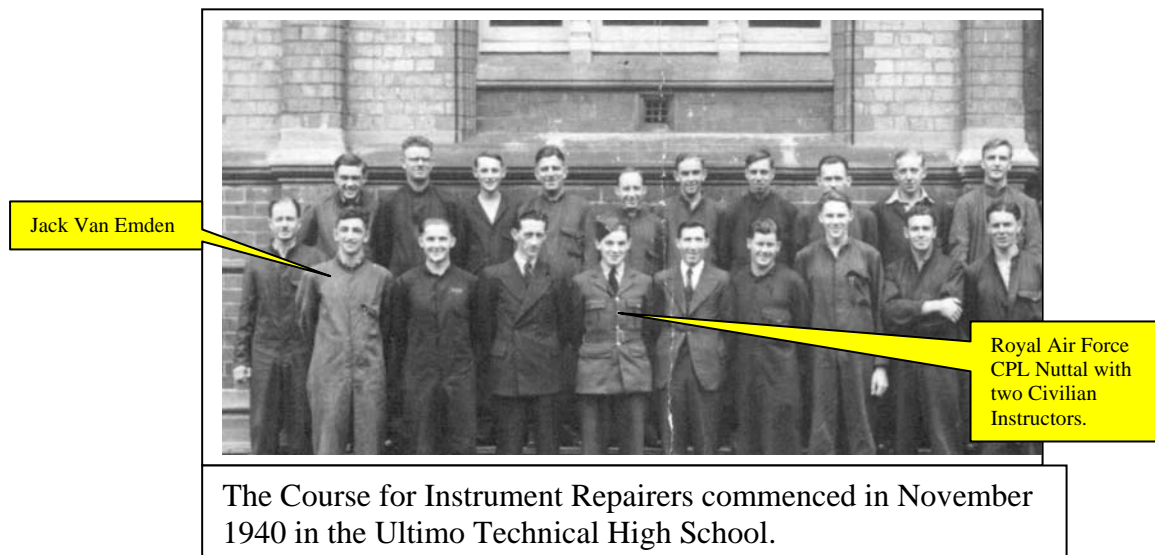
After leaving school at the end of the depression I went straight into a watchmaking apprenticeship, which was a course of 6 years. In those times most watchmakers were also optometrists and that entailed doing a course at Sydney Technical night school, which I was doing, when, at 17 yrs I decided to join the RAAF as an Instrument maker for my war effort. I passed all the trade tests and medicals but had to wait until I turned 18 to be called up which happened on Oct 30 1940.

The day I was called up was a very hot day and there must have been 500 or, perhaps even more called in that day. I found out years later from another instrument maker that on the same day in Melbourne there was a huge call up which he was part of. We were processed in the recruit centre, a large building in Woolloomooloo, that had been taken over from a car dealership, allocated our service numbers, and bundled off in many double Decker buses to **2AD RAAF Station Richmond** into "Tin City" which was a prefabricated hut camp outside the main unit and given 3 wooden planks to sleep on with a base to hold them slightly off the floor. Then a hessian bag called a palliasse was thrown at each of us, which we were told to fill with straw from the barracks store and that was to be our "mattress" Every posting I had from then on always began with filling your palliasse except in New Guinea where the ground was your palliasse. I began to wonder why I'd volunteered to live like this especially when I went to the toilet and found that it was just a big hut with toilet bowls along each side with nothing between them for privacy and where all these old blokes around 30 yrs old sat smoking and talking with everyone, who were doing their jobs. The medical we went through was done in a prefabricated hut, which was stifling hot and I can still remember the horrible stench of a hut crammed with naked bodies that was sickening. It made me wonder what it must have been like on the slave ships from Africa, well known for their horrible stink.

Later the WOD gave us an indoctrination talk about how much better than the army we were, which brought a few remarks from some of us that had friends and relatives fighting in the Middle East. When he told us that leave was from 1700 to 2359 he had me completely bamboozled, never having heard time expressed like that before. I thought that they must have started their time from the beginning of the month and continued right through to the end of the month. I was soon put right by a few of the old timers and sorted it all out OK. We were issued with our “Goonskins” (overalls) boots, underwear and a few things like “housewives” etc and a 303 rifle but, as the RAAF was going through a rapid expansion, there were no uniforms for us. Our Rookie Training began the next morning and everyone got sore feet from the ill-fitting boots and sore collar bones from the weight of the rifle while drilling.

After only 2 or 3 days of this, two of us that were to be instrument makers were posted to **3STT Ultimo** right in the city of Sydney to a course that had already began a few days earlier. As I had been studying Sloley’s “Aircraft Instruments” from the Tech library in anticipation of joining the RAAF for a few months before my 18th birthday, I had no problem catching up in fact I think I may have been a bit ahead.

There were about 5 others who were watchmakers and the rest were from all sorts of trades, in fact some were not even technical but clerks and bank workers, but they all seemed to adapt to the training OK. This was long before conscription came in so I think that most of us were in it for patriotic reasons or for adventure. While training we received 5 shillings a day pay which was a big let down for me who was getting 3 pounds a week, a few months later it rose by 1 shilling a day to 6 shillings. The venue for our classes was the same rooms that only 4 years earlier I had studied and sat for, and passed my Intermediate Certificate in 3rd year of Technical High School. There were two civilian instructors and one RAF instructor, Cpl Nuttall in his grey RAF uniform and they were all popular with the trainees.





Every day the Flight had to march to and from their barracks to the Classrooms and return for meals.



“Volunteers!” had to learn the most practical way to dig slit trenches by doing, and at a later stage for survival.

We marched about a quarter mile each morning & afternoon from barracks to classroom. I remember that at the time we were there was when the incident of the two Avro Ansons landed pick-a-back at Wagga. There were other musters at the barracks, they were trainee radio operators and they kept us awake all night calling out to each other in dits and dahs (dots & dashes) We must have been very diligent while we were there because I can't remember any high jinks until we had finished our course. One thing that upset us was that we found out we were actually only classified as **Group 2 Instrument Repairers instead of Group 1 Instrument Makers, which meant a lower rate of pay.** The same work was done by both but apparently the ones that trained in Melbourne were Makers and in Sydney were Repairers The same course was done by both.

Jack Van Emden



Back: Jack Van Emden, P.Kelly, B.Deary, J. Creasey, M. Petersen, B. Bruce, E. Crichton, H.Friend.

Front: R. Cook, T.Guthrie, H.Hawken, G. Paddon, N. Griffiths, M.Pain, G.Hyles, W.Keeling, H.Phipps

The course itself consisted of a bit of theory of flight, functions of aircraft controls, how they operated and further effect of controls, weather, aircraft engines as they related to instruments, safety around aircraft, internal workings of all the instruments, also how to repair and adjust them and possible faults to expect, maintenance of engine parts of instruments, fuel gauges and their tank floats, naturally all flight and panel instruments, automatic pilots "George", bomb sights, pitot heads and all oxygen installations including the transfer of oxygen from the large tanks to the small aircraft tanks. (In the squadrons we later found out that this was a job no-one liked because it had to be hand pumped from large low pressure tanks to small high pressure tanks in the aircraft. The practical work was more or less just getting used to handling all the tools that we were likely to come across in our work. Quite a few of us technical blokes were familiar with most of these anyway. We had to make various things like spanners, callipers, a complete morse-code buzzer capable of transmitting a message, an exact 1 inch cube of steel using a file only and various other things, that I can't remember now.

During the course, when possible we continued our rookie training in the grounds of Sydney University, which was only a short march away and to this day I don't think I have yet finished my rookie course!!

Towards the end of the course we were asked for our preferences in postings and naturally I opted for Sydney where I would be able to frequent my favourite surfing beaches. It was about this time that we were at last issued with our drabs (summer uniform) but we still didn't have a full kit including our blues. At this time, servicemen in uniform only paid a penny on public transport but because we were in civvies we had to pay full fare of four pence, even showing our leave passes cut no ice with the bus & tram conductors, we still had to cough up the full fare.

When the course was over, we were all posted to 2AD RAAF Station Richmond to await our postings to various units and whilst there 2 or 3 of us who were attached to the young 6 Squadron, which had Lockheed Hudsons. As yet, they didn't have turrets in the back, only a backward facing opening for the gunners to fire from and through which the wind howled all the while the 'plane was in the air. A father of one of my schoolmates from Maroubra was a Sgt 2E in the SQD and I worried him to get me a flight. It was a patrol over Sydney and along the east coast of NSW, which was a thrill. This was only the second flight I had had in my life up to then, as the first was a ten bob ride in the Southern Cross when I was 9 yrs old from Mascot over the newly opened Sydney Harbour Bridge in 1932. In those days we spent quite a lot of time hanging around the airport, which had no security or fences. Little did I know then that I would later be a member of 6 SQN in Milne Bay and Goodenough Island for nearly 2 years.

One by one the postings came out and **"Where's Geraldton?"** three of us asked. Well we soon found out that it was as far as you could get from my preference in Sydney and still be in Aust. AC1 Padden, AC1 Phipps & AC1 Van Emden were the three to go there. It was An 8 day trip each way in those days, overnight to Melbourne changing trains at Albury for the different gauge rails and a slow trip all the way to the west stopping for water and coal many times.



The crossing of Australia by rail meant having to change trains in each State because there was no standard rail gauge.



While crossing the wide Nullabor the engines had to often stop to take on board both coal and water for the necessary steam.

Transcontinental Rail Travel in 1940



Silver Service Dining was the way to travel in 1940 but later Service personnel often travelled in "Cattle Trucks" and consumed food prepared by Army Cooks.



Future Service personnel would be forced to sleep on the floors, seats and baggage racks and consume food while sitting in the red dust competing with resident flies.

There were no troop trains operating as yet so we went over in the Transcontinental, where we were served our meals by an old fashioned waiter with a towel over his arm and who used to bow to us when taking our orders. The train only went as far as Midland Junction and everyone had to transfer to the local service for the rest of the way into Perth on the 3ft 6inch gauge, which we reckoned had square wheels. The train to Geraldton took 24 hours to do the approx. 300 miles as it was part passenger and part goods and shunted with a crash and a bang at every stop, denying sleep to all but the solid sleepers. One local Geraldton passenger told us that you get off the train at Narngaloo as that was closer to the RAAF camp.



Every WAAAF and RAAF person, who made the Rail Trip from Perth to Geraldton, will provide graphic details about the Midland Train journey.

This 400 km journey, with innumerable stops and slow travel, often took 24 hours.

Hanging from outside each compartment was a water bag to provide drinking H₂O for the crowded Service passengers.

Not realising that there most likely would have been a tender to pick us up at Geraldton Station, we alighted at Narngaloo Siding and I don't know what it is like now but then it was like in the middle of the desert. We hung around with all our kit for a couple of hours wondering what to do when the tender turned up coming from Geraldton and picked us up together with a tongue roasting from the driver, who probably had enjoyed a bit of time in the pub in town.

When we arrived at the camp, it wasn't completed, some of the huts had no sides in them but at least they all had roofs on. The hospital was only started and would be some time before it would be operational. For some reason the whole of the station had to go into town to the local radiology place and everyone was given a chest X-ray. There were already a few Ansons being flown. I believe that only recently it had been a tomato farm, of which there were plenty about the area. There were no sealed runways, it was just an all over grass field. It already had a mysterious hut called **the camera obscura** hut with a large hole in the roof which we were told that was used for recording the results of the bomb aiming from the planes above.

To get from the cookhouse to the mess hall required a long walk of many yards and if you were carrying a plate in each hand the flies had open go on your meat so we had to get used to wiping the blowie larvae off the meat before eating it. It's funny how one got used to doing that without flinching after a while.

The whole area was given over to tomato farms including the airfield before the RAAF came and although you could almost lean over and pick tomatoes next door, we were eating tomatoes grown in Geraldton, sent over to Melbourne to be canned and sent back to Geraldton for us to eat.



Living quarters for both RAAF and WAAAF all shared the same type of Hut, with a fold up bed, a straw filled palliasse, while later have the luxury of a steel cupboard. Blankets had to be religiously folded in a prescribed manner ready for morning inspection.



Jack's Ground Staff mates of Hut 34. Blue overalls were the working uniform and those with faded ones were recognised as "old hands" having boiled out the blue. Blue Berets or slouch hats completed the order of the day. The Corporal has on his forage cap.

We were accommodated in Hut 34 but the memory is so dim that I just can't place where it was now. We soon settled in to our routine of daily inspections of the Instruments on the Ansons and repairing any that needed fixing. Another regular job was to clean the hornets nests out of the **pitot heads**, which would have shown zero air speed on the indicators if not cleaned out before take off. We went up on lots of test flights after major overhauls and enjoyed them immensely except for having to wind the undercarriage up by hand with, I think, many more than **160 turns of the handle**. If we went for a flight with a trainee pilot, they loved to have someone to wind the undercart up and to restart the Cheetah Motors when they stalled on the ground doing circuits & bumps. They were the biggest mongrels of things to start when hot and the starting handle, similar to a car starting handle, was used above head height which soon exhausted the one doing the turning especially on a very hot day of which there were plenty. One test flight I went on with the Engineer Officer, FLTLT Adler flying the 'plane and we came in to land in a field full of wheat fully grown a few miles to the south of the camp. I thought there must have been something wrong with the 'plane, but after we landed he taxied over to a man on a tractor, spoke to him for a short time and then took off back through the wheat. I realised a couple of months later that this must have been the land the RAAF was acquiring for a satellite.

As yet there were no WAAAF at Geraldton as they didn't start until 15th March 1941 and this also was long before any army units were in the vicinity. The town was a bit of a ghost town when we first got there but after a few months stores began reopening and the place livened up. One friend I had (I can't remember his mustering) was Jack Curtin the then Prime Minister's son, who was a very nice bloke. The bus service at the beginning was not very frequent so I bought a pushbike that I often rode into town. Later on the bus service was improved and it was geared to our starting and stand-down times and special times for the finish of the pictures in town. There was not a lot to do in town except drink beer or go fishing off the wharves and listen to the Filipino seamen on the tied up ships playing their guitars and singing at night. The thing about the beer was that every pub in town had slivers of ice in the glass when a beer was pulled and it contracted one's throat as it went down.



Mullewa football spectators!!!

On stand down days we sometimes hiked into town along the river. Sometimes we went to Mullewa for a look around or when the RAAF team was playing the Mullewa team. There were occasional concerts in town also movies that we attended. I became friendly with a few of the local boys around my age whose fathers owned the local fishing boats and I was promised a trip to the Abrolhos Islands when I could work a few days

Leave, but saving all my recreation leave days to

accumulate enough to reach Sydney and back took a bit of doing, so I missed out on that. I did use a few days in trips to Perth a couple of times and there were always plenty of Perth boys going down. In camp we had a concert party and although I was no good as an actor, I could play a harmonica and overcoming my nerves, I occasionally played a few popular tunes, which seemed to bring a bit of applause. I don't think I could have ever earned a living by it.

Around April '41 along came the rest of my kit to make it complete together with my blues, that made six months to get my full kit but as I found out later, that meant more stuff to cart around when a posting came. It was about this time that one of the boys in the paint shop was using an oxy-acetylene torch and accidentally wiped it past a drum of highly flammable aircraft dope. The paint shop was destroyed and one person was killed with 2 or 3 in hospital for some time with bad burns. There were some very strict regulations about flammable materials after that. The funeral was a sad occasion.

RAAF Innocent Instrument Maker!

One of our jobs was to replace the air filters on the vacuum pumps situated on the Cheetah engines and the material used, of all things was Kotex Ladies' sanitary napkins. Every time I opened a new box and found leaflet advertising a belt for women to wear I was completely mystified as to why an ad for some sort of belt would be put into a box of aircraft filters. Not having any sisters and being ignorant of these girly things it didn't occur to me to ask someone what it was all about. One day the RAAF store ran out of Kotex and Sgt Petty our instrument Sgt said that someone would have to go to Woolworth's in town to get some. I immediately volunteered thinking to get a bit of time in town so went into Woolies where in those days both Woolies and Coles had long tables full of merchandise where you picked what you needed and handed it to the girl behind the counter. It also didn't occur to me what Woolies would be doing stocking aircraft filter material and when a young airman gathered 12 boxes of Kotex and handed them to the shop girl, there were a few gasps and giggles from some women customers as well as the shop girls. It was years later when I was a bit more mature that it suddenly hit me what a sight it must have been.

My Geraldton Departure

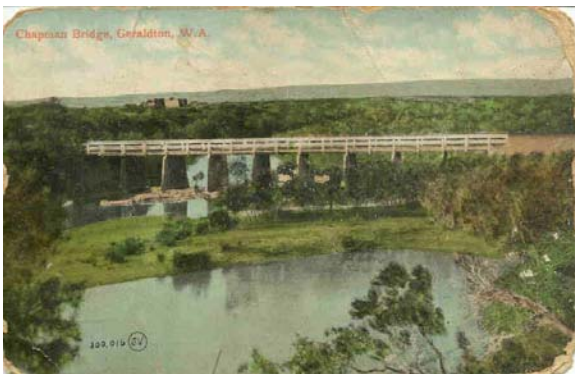
In October '41 I think, Harry Phipps and I got leave to visit home, Sydney for me and Ballina in northern NSW for him. When our leave was over we met at Sydney Central Railway Station to return and when the train arrived in Melbourne the next day there were two **Service Police** looking for Lac Phipps & Lac Van Emden. We immediately thought that we must have done something wrong to warrant that so we kept quiet for a while. When we decided to make ourselves known the SPs told us that we both had been posted and need not go back to 4SFTS. I was to go to **No.10 EFTS RAAF Station Temora** and Phipps to 5SFTS Uranquinty so the RTO gave us rail warrants to the appropriate places and away we went. We thought after, how silly we were to have made ourselves known when we could have had a ride all the way back to Geraldton, got our clearances, picked up our gear and then a nice trip back. As it happened we had to get in touch with the SPs at Geraldton to pack the rest of our kits, dispose of my bike and we didn't receive our kits till months later in Melbourne. Whilst I was at 10EFTS the Japs bombed Pearl Harbour immediately stopping all leave and necessitating us all doing commando training in case we were overrun.

I always thought that the weather in Geraldton was about the best in Aust. The beautiful white fluffy clouds were different from anywhere else I'd been and even now 64 years later whenever I see a certain white fluffy cloud formation I call it a Geraldton sky. My wife and I returned to Geraldton by car about three years ago and took videos at the Geraldton airport but nothing looked familiar at all.

After being at 10EFTS for a short while I was posted To Melbourne to do a conversion course to Instrument Maker, which turned out to be the same course done at 3STT earlier with maybe some slight differences. On the train going down Phipps got on at Uranquinty going to the same course and it wasn't till we were half way through this course that our kits turned up from Geraldton.

In Melbourne we were stationed in Ascot Vale Showgrounds which was freezing in the winter and, having no lockers to put our belongings in (we were billeted in the cattle pavilion), was quite a bit of stealing went on, in fact I had drawn 9 pounds from the bank to buy my brother a wedding present (a lot of money then) and it was stolen. No-one ever seemed to get caught for these robberies. We also spent a few months in the famous Melbourne Exhibition Building which had been taken over by the RAAF while we did part of the course at the Melbourne Radio School. One amusing incident happened while we were on parade one morning when the **not too bright WOD** read out an order that **“because of the wooden floors, youse blokes are to wear your sanshoes in the mornin’ to “illuminate” the noise”**. While at Exhibition it was decided to dig slit trenches in the case of Japanese bombing and it was our course, 22IM that fell for it. I took several pictures of us digging and a few years ago after a historian got in touch with me, I sent them to him and copies are now on display in Exhibition Building’s small museum and one of them appears in a book of the history of Exhibition Building in the Melbourne Museum.

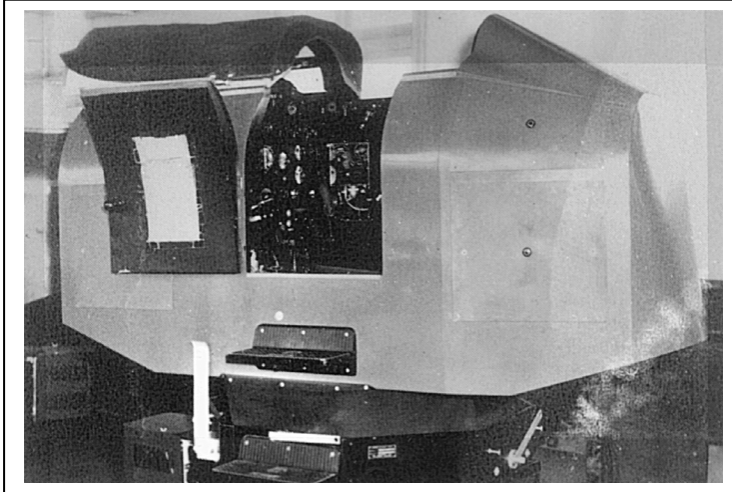
My next posting was to 8EFTS Narrandera not far from 10 EFTS where I met the girl in the Land Army who was later to be my wife. After she joined the WAAF in 1944 when she turned 18 she did a technical course and became a Flight Mechanic working on Pratt & Whitney Wasp engines on the Wirraways at 5SFTS Uranquinty. In the recent interviews of thousands of ex-service people, the transcripts of which are on the World Wide Web under australiansatwar.gov.au, she was one of the interviewees From there I was sent to 5AD Wagga 1ED Embarkation Depot 1RPP (Reserve personnel pool) Townsville, 6 SQN New Guinea, back to 1RPP Townsville , back to 5AD Wagga until the end of the war and discharge as a Corporal.



One of the photos of Geraldton that you will recognize as an old postcard “From Charlie to Jenny” on the back became a strange co-incidence. My mother’s brother emigrated to Aust. Before WW1 and settled in Geraldton of all places, and sent that postcard to her in England. He went away with the AIF and was sadly killed in France and his name, Charles Berry is on the memorial in Kings Park and also in the War Memorial in Canberra.

The Chapman River flows into the Indian Ocean just north of Geraldton Township while the Irwin enters some miles south.

Another responsibility of the Instrument Makers was the Link Trainer. We were responsible for the installation and maintenance of it and that took a bit of doing when you think it was before electronics began to bloom. Most of the inst makers that worked on it had extra training and spent most of their time on it. There was quite a bit of maintenance needed.



Link Trainer was a simulator to teach Pilots to fly accurately by Instruments so very necessary for night flying, in clouds and fog. All the flying instruments were monitored by a Link Trainer Instructor sitting at a nearby table and a red line tracing recorded on a glass top table recording every move.

All instruments in the 1940's compared with to-day's instruments were pretty basic, the artificial horizon and the DG were both run by vacuum instead of electronic as now. The vacuum had to come from the engine to the instrument through pipes and every joint, of which there were many, had to be perfectly airtight. The air coming into the inst was played through a nozzle on to cups in the perimeter of the Gyro, something like a water wheel. Now the Gyros are simply spun by electric current like an electric motor.

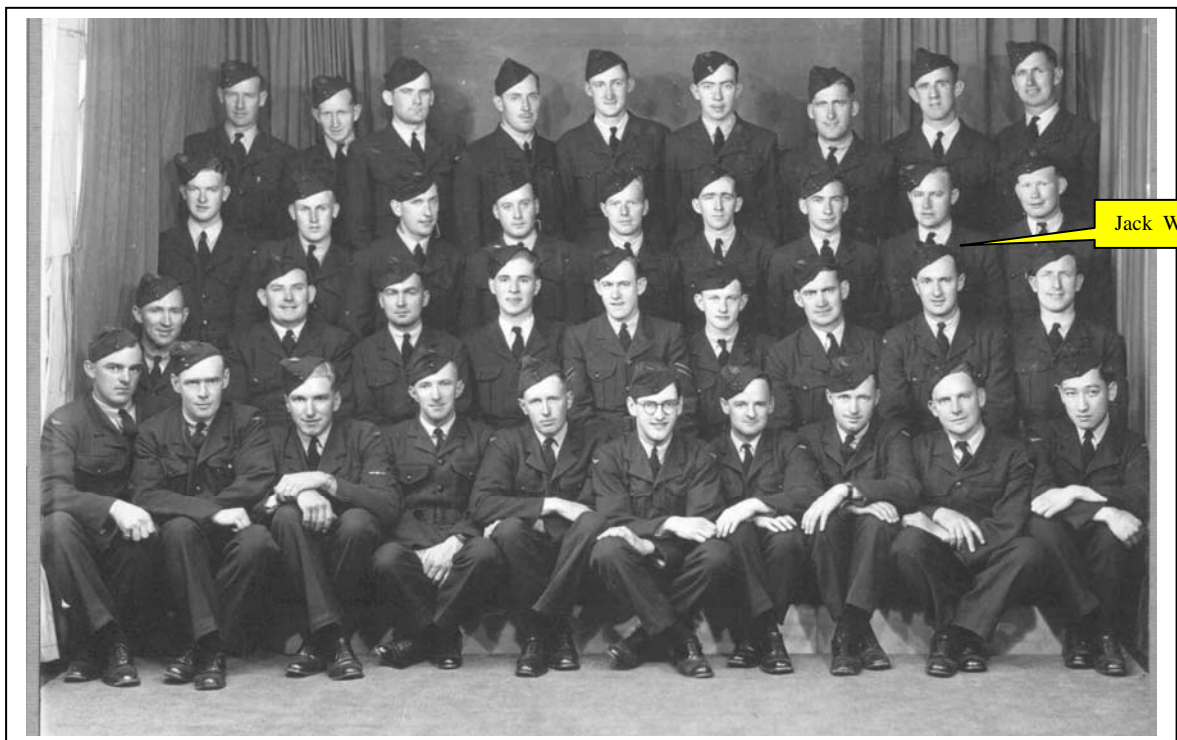
The instruments themselves were all held in the panel by small bolts and nuts and because the nuts were at the back, we all had to be contortionists to get them on and off. The engine tachos were driven as in a motor car, by a flexible cable which had to be constantly pulled out, dis-assembled, cleaned thoroughly and sometimes new square ends made for them because of wear which would give a false reading if worn too much.

Jack (Jock) Whyte Instrument Repairer



Jack Whyte was working as an Engineer on a Plantation in Malaya when the Japanese invaded so he made his way to Singapore and escaped by ship and discovered, on disembarking, that he was in the Port of Fremantle. As there was no possibility of being able to return to the United Kingdom he joined the RAAF. As he knew no one in Western Australia he was given somewhere to stay until he found himself posted to RAAF Station Pearce to complete his Rookie Training.

Jack found himself selected to undergo training as an Instrument Repairer. Which immediately meant a posting to No. 3 S.T.T. Ultimo, where he was a member of **Flight 462, COURSE 38.**



Rear: Ker R., Kelly P.J., Hays H.J., Underwood.D.E., Ridley A.C., Duff P.G., Sailer C.A. Bienvenu J.W., Burgess G.T.
 3rd Row: Watts K.C., Brace S.R., Foster W.G., Pattinson A., Cowans J.C., Mc Laughlan J.W., Myres F.M., **Whyte G. J.A.**, Dukes K.F.,
 2nd Row: Priestman J., Stone A.S., Goodwin C.T., Mitchell N.J., Cpl Oulds A.H. Instructor., Schumacher B.H., Kenneally W.J., Mc Lardy W., Jackson G.D.
 Front: Haase A.R., Goodwin R., Schols A.L., Speed F.J., Cox W.R., Workman A.E., Groves L.M., Jackson H., Tadman F.A., Sing V.G.

On completion of training Jack then had to again make the long train journey from one side of the continent to the other arriving at No.4 SFTS during????????????? . . Major part of the work carried out by the Instrument Section was to keep the multitude of instruments used on Avro Ansons in tip top condition. These aircraft, with Trainee Pilots subjected instruments to some time

violent manoeuvres as part of recovery training along with high and low level cross country flights and the same for bombing exercises. Dust and spare parts caused maintenance problems.

Training Days



Blue overalls, heavy black boots & beret was the uniform for everyone during Courses.



Hotel Astra in Bondi, NSW was the “residence” for budding Instrument Repairers.



Geraldton 4SFTS friends: Jack, Whyte, Don Rogers, Harry Howe, Laurie Gentille (SGT) & Doug Favas



In due time Jack was to meet WAAAF Elaine Hoskins & later marry. Jack&Elaine, ?????????? taken at the Back Beach in 1944.

Note:

The marriage of Jack Whyte to WAAAF Elaine Hoskins can be found in Elaine’s Story.

Robert (Bob) Jones (later Squadron Leader)
4 SFTS Instructor



Bob took up flying in 1938 with the Royal Aero Club, then located on the airfield at Maylands, flying just for the sheer fun. Pleasure trips to Rottnest Island and country towns with passenger friends added to this enjoyable time.

During late January 1939 the Aero Club Manager called all Pilot Members together and advised them that a Flight Lieutenant from RAAF Station Pearce would visit the Club the following Sunday afternoon to talk to everyone and he hoped every one would attend.

FLTLT Ingledeu duly arrived and explained the seriousness of the developing situation in Europe and invited everyone to sign a Document to join the RAAF Reserve. Everyone immediately volunteered.

When in September war was declared Bob immediately joined up at the Adelaide Terrace Recruiting Office on 10 September a few days before his Reserve papers arrived.

Immediately Bob and others were told to report to Maylands as Officer Cadets to commence our Elementary Flying Training Course under the Command of FLTLT Ingledeu.

EFTS training continued at Maylands until **No 28 SFTS Course** had completed their RAAF Station Point Cook Course then Bob and his group made the long rail trip across Australia to Melbourne. There they commenced the Service Flying Training School Officer Cadet Course. The EATS was yet to commence.

All graduated as Pilots from No. 29 Course as Pilot Officers at the end of January 1940 and Bob was immediately posted to RAAF Station Camden to undergo an Instructors' Course. On completion of this Instructor Course Bob found he was to take up Duties at RAAF Station Wagga Wagga to teach EATS Air Crew No 1 Course to fly both Avro Ansons and Wirraway aircraft. At the completion of No. 8 Course Bob took on the role of Ferry Pilot by delivering two Ansons to far away 4SFTS, Geraldton, where he took up Duties there as an Instructor.

Bob was involved with the Training of number 9 Course through to 12 Course when he was delighted to receive a posting in August 1941 to the Middle East to join No. 3 Squadron.

There he commenced flying Kittyhawk fighters during September 1941 giving protection to RAF and RAAF Bombers carrying out daylight raids on Italian Airfields. During one of these Strikes Bob was shot down on 11 January 1942.



In due course Bob found himself as a Prisoner of War until he managed to escape from the Germans during September 1943 and finally reached the United Kingdom via Switzerland and France. The United States Air Force flew Bob from southern France to England arriving there at the end of November 1944.

After the usual de-briefing and some leave Bob found himself attached to Headquarters in London as an Intelligent Officer, with Duties to visit a great many Air Fields

giving talks to Air Crews. The RAF Policy was not to allow escaped Air Crews to again fly on operations into Europe.

When the war in Europe ended Bob found he was appointed to RAF Brighton where he was to interview ex Prisoners of War just released in conjunction with all the services provided by Doctors, Padres and Red Cross personnel. Those deemed well enough were soon on ships bound for far away Australia.

During this period Bob under went a certain amount of rehabilitation himself when visiting local farms, museums, playing cricket all interspersed with some jovial recreational pursuits usually under taken by all Air Crews.

In due course Bob himself boarding the last ship returning to Australia in March 1946 for the four weeks necessary for such a journey.

After the customary leave Bob was Discharged from the RAAF as a Squadron Leader and walked out the gates in July 1946 with a multitude of memories of his long Royal Australian Air Force Career.

No. 4 SFTS Station Hospital

With such a large number of RAAF personnel on this very important Training WW2 RAAF Station the presence of a Hospital, with Doctor, Nurses and Staff was essential. With such fit and healthy personnel there would appear to be little call for attention.

One Pilot Trainee was to spend some time as a patient as he had an outbreak of boils. Much to his annoyance this meant he lost flying time, which resulted in dropping back two Courses.

On occasions accidents did occur in the work place but probably the worst accidents must surely have been when aircraft were involved.



On this occasion there could have been very serious consequences but fortunately the Instructor in the underneath Anson was not seriously hurt because the rotating propeller in the upper aircraft sliced through the cockpit and came to rest just behind the Pilot.
(G. Smith)

A visit to the nearby War Cemetery will provide ample evidence that the Medical Staff were directly involved in the fatal accidents experienced at No. 4 SFTS. On one occasion, (the Author was aware of) a WAAAF walked into the revolving propeller of an Anson during a night flying exercise. On this occasion the lass was extremely close to dying yet the extent of her injuries was not disclosed.

On occasions fatal accidents did occur to only one person but on many occasions there were multiples of young men dying. On these occasions it was probably the whole Medical Section that had

to attend and experience the whole trauma of retrieving bodies. Station Doctors would have to provide all the required Reports both in written and verbal forms.

To the badly injured their presence in the Base Hospital was a constant reminder to the Nurses and Staff of the seriousness of such accidents that may have taken a long time for healing.

During 1942 with the ever-present possibility of an air raid brought about all the very necessary planning of handling casualties, evacuation procedures, and the setting up of emergency First Aid Posts. Slit trenches had to be dug and sand bag protected together with all the practices to be carried out for the protection of both Staff and patients.

Members of the Catering Messes were co-opted into becoming stretcher-bearers and received first aid procedures. The graphic newsreels, shown in the nightly picture theatre showed all these types of activity. Not only the newsreels from London but now it was really happening in Australia especially when the Public and Services Personnel saw what had happened during the large bombing raids on Darwin in February 1942. The reality of war coming to Australia was now vividly brought home to every one.

The whole RAAF Station had to go through the air raid siren procedure never knowing if it was a real raid but these exercises had to be done to evaluate their effectiveness and measures for improvement. On occasions when some slit trenches proved ineffective because of the collection of rain, new ones had to be constructed in better locations.

Thousands of sand bags had to be filled and built into protective structures around any essential buildings around the Station while for the Hospital the Operating Theatre and all relevant buildings had to be provided with the same protection.

Everyone on the Station during this period must have wondered when such a raid could find them. Gas masks and steel helmets had to be rapidly brought in for all Station personnel and carried at all times. This was a period for the unexpected.

One occasion I discovered in records, was the approach of an unidentified aircraft that was no doubt found by the very secret WAAAF Radar Unit. (Such a Unit was completely unknown to Trainee Pilots, who were as I have now discovered, tracked our Anson Aircraft.) When finally an American Catalina flying south appeared there was great relief from everyone.

Station Medical Staff

Please Note: There may have been many more but these are all recovered from limited Records.

Doctors :

FLTLT Norman Medical Officer	FLTLT K.W.MacLeod
FLTLT Robinson Medical Officer	FLTLT T.H.Walker
FLTLT Ray Wood	FLTLT ?? Dennis
FLTLT J.deVidas Medical Officer	FLTLT Moss
SQNLDR Creight	FLT Cunningham

FLTLT Sweetman arrived with 3 Nursing Orderlies because of a tonsillitis epidemic (19/8.41)

Nurses:

Staff Nurse Manton	Sister McNamara
Sister Keough	Senior Sister E.J. Geering
Sister A.E. Bennett	Sister R.C. Charlton
Sister A.D.M.Lindley	Sister V.S.Goodall
Sister P.D.Thompson	Sister D.F.Zappa

Recorded Medical Evacuations

On 27 July 1943 SQNLDR Doug Burton flew Sister Keough to Maylands Aerodrome with two LACs, one of whom was the only survivor of an accident with FLTLT Nitsche.

Women's Australian Auxiliary Air Force

No 4 Service Flying Training School for Air Crew had **28 WAAAF personnel appointed on the 14 April 1942 with Assistant Section Officer Darbyshire**. The number had risen to 167 by September 1942 (1103 Airmen). By January 1943 there were 180 WAAAF personnel on the Station (plus 850 Airmen) and **by August 1944 the maximum WAAAFs reached 252 (Airmen total was 550.)**

On completion of this elementary rookie training, the WAAAF were posted to other sections and units to undergo further training in the trades to which they were considered most suitable.

For future training of new recruits, No 3 WAAAF Depot, Karrinyup (WA) was established on 24 April 1942 and some 100 young women would pass through the training programme each month. Some 3,345 young Western Australian women entered the WAAAF out of the total of 27,874 Australia wide. This included 616 in the Nursing Service.



WAAAF cap badge

WW2 WAAAF were involved in 70 Musterings

With WAAAFs taking over many skilled Musterings on RAAF Bases meant Ground Staff men could be posted to active Squadrons operating against the Japanese..





A great diversity of Muster-

ings was done by the young

Women of the WAAF.



Comparative Ranks during WW2

WAAAF

Group Officer (C.S. Stevenson)
 Wing Officer
 Squadron Officer
 Flight Officer
 Section Officer
 Assistant Section Officer

Under Officer
 Flight Sergeant
 Sergeant
 Corporal
 Leading Aircraftswoman
 Aircraft Woman

RAAF

Group Captain
 Wing Commander
 Squadron Leader
 Flight Lieutenant
 Flying Officer
 Pilot Officer

Warrant Officer
 Flight Sergeant
 Sergeant
 Corporal
 Leading Aircraftsman
 Aircraft Man Class 1

WAAAF Rates of pay were 2/3 of that of male ranks.

Some 700 women held Commissions in the WAAAF during WW2 and some 27,874 young women joined the Service. The WAAAF was the first Australian Women's Service formed after the Nursing Service.

Recollections of ex WAAAF Flight Mechanic.

WAAAF A.C.W. Ila Cox: (Mrs Dellar)

Ila Cox entered the WAAAF shortly after her 18th birthday, (because Ila was under age her Parents had to sign her Official Form, as was required by Law) and was posted to No.1 Recruit Drill Course, Malvern, Melbourne for her “rookies course”. Her appointment was the very secret Directorate of intelligence, Co-ordination of operations Intelligence Centre, Victoria Barracks. As she had been promoted to Corporal she was posted to RAAF Station, Pearce, as Station Intelligence Clerk.

The Conversion Course



Shortly after my return to Pearce, some of us were excited to read in D.R.O.'s (Daily Routine Orders) that volunteers were being called to train in the first course for women in a number of technical trades. These **included riggers, instrument makers, armourers and electricians and flight mechanics**. On successful conclusion of the appropriate courses, trainees would be remustered for work in these areas. We could see that this was a real break-through for those who wanted to take advantage of the opportunity. Of course, as with all mustering, though women would work alongside men, do exactly the same work and take exactly the same responsibility, we would only be paid at two thirds the rate in male-oriented fields.

A number of us, including Di Farrelly and myself, rushed to apply for the new course. We were first given aptitude and intelligence tests to see if our female brains were equal to the task. Society had always presumed that our brains were both different and inferior, and that women had no mechanical 'nous', so it was with some pride that we learned the tests had apparently indicated otherwise, and a relatively small number of us were selected for the first intake. We were posted to **3 S.T.T. (School of Technical Training) in Ultimo, Sydney**, and I believe another parallel course was held at No.4 S.T.T. Adelaide.

I felt like an old hand at crossing the Nullabor on a troop train when Di and I, in company with Audrey Carpenter (with whom I had done the Rookies Course), Faye Bankcroft, Nell Bankcroft, Grace Burton and others, entrained for the long haul to Sydney. We had little idea what was ahead of us, but were all seasoned Service-Women, and prepared for anything. I remember when we stopped at Parkston just East of Kalgoorlie; Di was greatly excited when her Mother and younger sister came down to see her. There was an enormous amount of traffic across the country at this time, and inevitably we were held up from time to time. The result was that we actually lost a couple of days between Perth and Sydney. We stopped at Port Pirie and were given a meal at the mess, which I will not forget for two reasons. The first was that it was the first time I had fly-blown food - the blowies beat the fork to your mouth if you were not careful. The second was that while we stood in the mess line parallel to a similar male line, I was treated to my first bit of sexism. One cheeky airman slapped me on the backside as we moved along, passing some male chauvinist remark. My immediate and instinctive reaction to this unforgivable liberty was to swing round and give him a furious slap on the face! It caused quite a stir!



Train travel across Australia was often in what was known as “a cattle truck” which comprised of a large railway wagon with barn type doors on diagonally opposite corners and furnished!! with straw filled palliasses. Meals were provided along side the rail line in often remote areas with each WAAAF offering their own metal food container. Washing up in a bucket was a sight to be forgotten after large numbers had used this water. (Ila Cox)

Because of the delays, we arrived in Sydney two days late. Humping kit-bags, tin hats, and gas masks, we emerged from Central Railway Station, to find no-one knew about us, or what to do with us. After considerable confusion, we were finally temporarily housed in **Ultimo**. We marched there from the station, and at the commencement of our course, marched daily to the **Technical School** through seamy streets, trying to ignore the fact that this was a veritable slum, peopled by the city's least desirable residents. After between a week and a fortnight we were finally transported to Coogee Beach, and to the magnificent, palatial, **Oceanic Hotel**, with all its terraced glory, overlooking the ocean - a wonderful improvement on our first billet, but of course it was stripped of all its luxurious furnishings, and equipped with the usual metal lockers, iron beds, palliasses and straw, WAAAFs for the use of.



This is how this Oceanic Hotel appeared many years after the war. (Ila Cox)

For three months we were students at the Technical School at Ultimo, with a civilian trade instructor - **Trainee Fitter Course No. 194**. This was the basic part of our course, so there was no specialisation or separation for different musterings. All did the 12 weeks bench fitting - using machine tools, and hand tools, learning theory and doing practice ad infinitum. We practised filing small blocks of metal to a fine degree of accuracy, using micrometers, drilling holes in metal with soluble oil, and using other machine and hand-tools the names of which were an area of study as well. We soon came to terms with bastard files, nipples, and male and female fittings without our initial embarrassment. It was different, and we were different. We were **DIRTY!!** We knew we were.

While we were in Sydney, the decision was made to change our enrolments in the service to enlistment, like the men, for the duration and up to twelve months thereafter. Implicit in this decision was acknowledgement that women were now essential to the armed forces - and also that hostilities were likely to continue for some considerable time.

At the conclusion of the Basic Bench Fitting Course, our further training was decided. Myrtle was selected to remain and do the Instrument course and she later got the opportunity to do further training and go up a group. **Most of us were to become either flight mechanics or riggers, and so were posted to 1 E.S (Engineer School) Ascot Vale, in Victoria, together with the group, who had done Basic Bench Fitting in Adelaide.**

The Melbourne Showground was the location of the Engineer School, and we were **Course No. W.367, Trainee Flight Mechanics Course**, which was to run from May 24, 1943 to August 28, 1943. It was a 'live-in' situation, and our quarters were the exhibition halls. We had the doubtful privilege of being residents of the Pig Pavilion (or was it the Leyland Building?) - a vast barn of a place, with concrete floor, unlined and unsealed, broken up into bays each of which accommodated (from memory) 10 beds and lockers - half down either side. We had selected the worst months of winter, and it was just as extreme as had been our summer Rookies course. It was bitter, bleak and damp. I can recall that one night the inside of the hall was so thick with fog that I could not find my bay. The lights were on, and I had a torch but despite this the foot-high numbers, which identified them, were obscured behind the blanket of clammy moisture. We slept dressed in everything we could find, with greatcoats over the bed, and it was never enough. I can recall having to put a raincoat over everything else on the bed to catch the pools of condensation.

Somewhere along the line, I did a “barter”. My mother had hand-knitted long socks for my brother when he was in the A.T.C. and I pleaded with her to send them to me. I swapped one pair with an aircraftman for a pair of his long, fleecy underwear - and I wore them - both socks and long-johns - day and night! We attended theory classes in the Sheep Pavilion on the principle of the four- stroke engine, on the fuel and oil systems and the electrical system. We also had to learn about metals, and of course the constituent parts of the engine. The arena of the showground was the parking area for an extraordinary variety of aged aircraft - Fairey Battles, Gypsy Moths, and Wacketts; even, wonder of wonders, a modern Spitfire - and many others. As we progressed along the course, we had our stint out on this mock-up aerodrome, taking turns to start up these ancient museum pieces, some of which were relics of World War I. The routine was for the favoured person to sit in the cock-pit and follow the cock-pit drill, while one swung on the airscrew - and all the rest threw their bodies (done up like Eskimoes to protect against the icy slipstream) across the tail plane or held the wing tips to hold the beast down and prevent it being airborne! First, however, we would usually have to remove the icicles, which festooned every surface. Despite the rigours, this was our favourite segment of the course, and none of us could wait to get through the course and on to real modern aircraft. Unbelievably, after only a few weeks of theory and minimal exposure to a gypsy moth engine, a publicity stunt was arranged in Myer store in the city. In the Exhibition Hall, they had a sectionised modern Rolls Royce Merlin engine from a “Spittie”, and several of us were given the PR job of explaining all its exposed working parts to the general public! Talk about throwing us to the wolves! Meantime, down at street level in one of the windows, a team was occupied stripping down a gypsy moth engine and re-assembling it. The course had very few girls, so we all had to take it in turns, first upstairs then down. I found the latter to be a lot of fun in the beginning. We were aware of the multitude of curious passers-by watching, but we were safely insulated, cocooned inside the display window, so were able to carry on a frivolous conversation in private. But upstairs was another story. From the depth of our ignorance, we were expected to answer questions from anyone at all - an engineer, perhaps - which meant we relied largely on bluff and quick thinking to get us out of some twisty technical explanations. As I still had my 'stripes', I had the dubious responsibility of being in charge.



The "Myer Store" WAAAF Demonstrators had time for gossiping behind the window glass. (Ila Cox)

As the winter progressed, and the weather got worse, our morning parades were an indication of the effect it was having on us. There were times when three flights were reduced to two or even less, so many being on sick parade. It was not just the cold weather, which most of us were not accustomed to, but the truly dreadful living conditions. The "ablutes" hut was some distance away from our Pavilion, and we not only had to make a sharp dash with towel and toilet bag between the two, but if you were not early, the hot water would be stone cold - and I mean icy! One girl clearly decided it was more comfortable to avoid showering altogether. She probably had successfully fooled everyone for a few days, but inevitably her excuses did become obvious. I was very impressed with the gentle but effective way the other girls kidded and persuaded her to 'take the plunge' without ever doing or saying anything embarrassing to her.

THE YEAR OF THE GREASE-MONKEY

Despite the difficulties, the time came in August for our final exam, and the excitement once more of learning if we had passed, and if so where each was posted. This also meant the **ceremonial demoting of Corporal Cox to ACW**. Once again, a tight and happy group was, after six months, to break up, and each of us to go our separate way. My brother had been called up in due course, and by this time had done his stint at I.T.S. Clontarf, 4 E.F.T.S. (Elementary Flying Training School) Cunderdin, and was now at **No.4. S.F.T.S. Geraldton** (Service Flying Training

School). I was overjoyed to find that this was to be my unit and that I was to work in **No. 1 Maintenance Squadron - the first woman ever to do so**. Di was posted to Kalgoorlie where the big workshop was located, and as this was her home-town she too was delighted. It was a big wrench, though, as we had been together for 14 months, at Pearce, Ultimo and Ascot Vale. I did not see her again. She married a colleague up there and I lost contact with her until 1988, 45 years later! Audrey Carpenter was sent to Cunderdin, where she met and married her husband. However, there were some old friendships to renew, and fresh ones to make. Ida Della Vedova (from the Rookies' course and Headquarters, Melbourne) was a sergeant, and had been at Geraldton some time. Others were Robbie, Ann Davies.

September 16, 1943 was the beginning of a whole new phase, and it was with some trepidation that I prepared for my test of fire. There is an immense gulf between theory and practice, and now I was going to have to sign on the dotted line for every job that I carried out, and take full responsibility for it - or be forever set to sweeping the hangar floor and making the tea! It depended entirely first on myself and my own conscientious approach to my work, and second on the attitude of the all-male workforce I was moving in to. They might belittle me and put me down; or they might be paternal and patronising; or they might accept me! I could not have been luckier. **The Sergeant in charge, Bob Maher**, had a great outlook. He was a good tradesman himself, and more than willing to help and advise in any way, should I ask! But he did not interfere, or indicate in any way that he lacked faith in my work. My fellow grease monkeys treated me as just another member of the team. Equality of the sexes started for me right there, and though Institutions took a long time to accept the justice of this, I have never found a problem with male colleagues in so-called male dominated fields of endeavour, either then or since, and I have often been the only female in a job, course of study or profession.

The aircraft in use were Avro Ansons - known colloquially as flying classrooms, as the unit was a training school for pilots. They had twin radial engines, which had to be given a stipulated series of pre-flight checks, post-flight checks, then, periodical overhauls in the Station workshop after every 40 hours and every 80 hours flying time. A 240 hour major overhaul was always done at the workshop in Kalgoorlie. Mechanics each had two aircrafts in their 'charge' but worked with a team of riggers, instrument maker and electrician. If the aircraft was scheduled to fly, it had to be collected either from the hangar or from where-ever else it was picketed. If it was out at a dispersal area, it would have to be pulled in my tractor. After the pre-flight check was complete and the EE77 signed, it was brought out to its position on the runway ready for take-off. The mechanic ensured the chocks were in place, then started up the engines, waiting until the Instructor and Trainees came on board. "Chocks away" was the final chore, until the instruction period was over, or the aircraft returned for some other reason. Finally, it had to be subjected to the step-by-step post-flight check, when any faults noted by the pilot on the log would have to be diagnosed and corrected. It would then have to be either picketed for the night, or tucked away in the hangar.

There never was enough under-cover parking for all, but where ever your aircraft was parked there could be inbuilt problems. Though four aircraft per hangar would have been relatively comfortable, five used to be fitted in, using a sort of herring-bone pattern. My first trial by the boys was when they tucked my baby away in the middle spot - then left me to show them I could extract it without any mishaps, and above all without any loss of temper. Should your aircraft be parked in a dispersal area, and should it have been there during any sunlight hours, then the perspex canopies

turned the cabin into a hot box, and the cockpit into a searing oven. During the biggest part of the year, Geraldton being so far north, we were in tropical gear, which gave minimal protection for bums on seats! You only needed to be caught once!

I had, by now, been two years in the service. It is an indication of how social morals change when I say that I had been brought up in a home where bad language was not used, and was quite adamant that 'dirty words' and 'dirty talk' were unattractive and unnecessary. Believe it or not, I never did hear any 'dirty talk' but I was first put through a test to try the most patient to see if I could maintain my own standards. A modification was required on all Avro Anson engines, which involved removing the cowling from the top of each engine, and perching up on a strut with a special spanner to remove the offending part from an obscure position, almost out of reach and entirely out of sight. The strut was acutely uncomfortable, and some distance above the ground, which meant that some means had to be used to climb up and down. Once up there, the fiddling, frustrating job invariably resulted in the spanner being frequently dropped. Just as invariably, the means of climbing up and down would have been mysteriously spirited away, and all my 'mates' would have disappeared quietly. It did not take long for me to twig what was going on, and to determine that I would show supreme restraint even if it killed me! I survived the test, and thence forward was always shown respect. I feel strongly there might be a message in there somewhere for present day 'libbers', but I guess they don't really want to know.

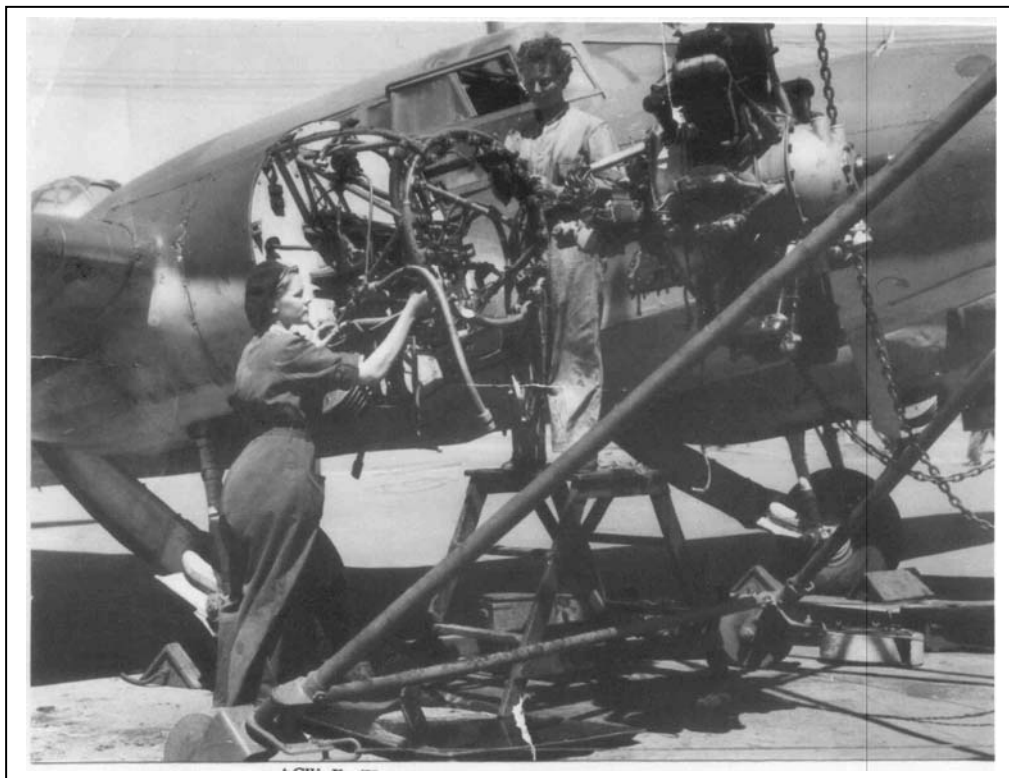
We had great fun at Geraldton. There were the usual social functions held on the station - the weekly 'hop', the 'flicks'. And then there were the trips into town. Week-end leave accommodation was provided in a but with some facilities, and the usual sleeping arrangements, set on a piece of land adjacent to the Catholic Presbytery. The first night I spent there was following an evening's entertainment at the Victoria Hotel, and I was in no way prepared for the cacophony which woke me all too early in the morning. Our Reverend neighbours kept peacocks. Their raucous calls, unexpected and unidentifiable as they were, terrified me. That was the first time. Eventually, I became used to them, and even think back with some nostalgia to their hideous sound.

We had the beach near by, and as I had lived all my youth by the sea and in the sea at Cottesloe, that was marvellous - except for the recollection I have of being thrown, in boisterous horseplay, into the water at the back beach - into a seething mass of blue-bottles. There were also barbecues at Greenough to entertain us, and I recall a very grand masked ball. It was difficult to come up with anything very fancy, but we were allowed to wear long ball dresses. I had none, so bought the fabric and made myself a flowing skirt with huge blue roses all over it, a blouse with a silver stripe, and finished the ensemble with a towel coiled round my head (as after a shampoo!) to hide my give-away red hair, and a mask painted silver in the 'dope' hangar. I can vividly recall one of the girls (whose name escapes me) putting on a very sophisticated oriental dance, with bare midriff, harem pyjamas, sinuous hip movements and all, which I thought was fantastic - thoroughly professional, even to the two great urns on the stage from which flares were let off. The effect was magical.

I have distinctly embarrassing recollections of the first Maintenance Squadrons 'Smoko' after my arrival on the station. This had always been an all male function, and I was unsure as to whether I should attend. After some agonising, I decided that though I was the first female in the Squadron, I would not be the last. It therefore behove me to bite the bullet, create the precedent, be the trail blazer, or what you will! The function was really a sit-down dinner and a beer-up. The meal was arranged on a long line of trestle tables, and predictably I was subjected to good-natured wolf-calls as I found myself a seat, carefully placing my bush hat on the floor at my feet. That was the first and last concession to my gender, and we all settled down to enjoy the festive occasion. That would have been that if it were not for a completely shattering mishap at the end

of the evening. I bent down to pick up my hat, and as I groped for it and started to drag it out, I caught the corner of my eye and cheekbone on the corner of the trestle table. I exercised great restraint, and did not call out at the sudden hurt, thinking, "Thank God for that!". But even before I had got clear of the hall, I could feel the inevitable 'shiner' developing. It wasn't that night, but the next day I began to suffer the ribald remarks and innuendo of both W.A.A.A.F. and R.A.A.F. After all, who could be expected to believe a story like that?

Not long after, other women began to arrive - aircraft hands, mechanics, riggers and all the technical musterings. Marian Dace worked with me, and at one time a publicity man photographed us, grease and all, working on the Anson over a drip tray. It looked most impressive, and I still treasure a print, a copy of which is now in the Museum at Bullcreek. Another new posting to the unit was Phyl Medway. Her sister, Pearl, had been on the Rookies' Course with me, and also had done the same conversion course. Phyl and I became great friends, and we maintained the friendship for many years after the war. After Phyl and her family moved down to Mandurah we tended to contact one another at Christmas only and sadly our lives and interests moved in different directions.



A.C.W. Ila Cox (on the stand) and Marian Dace pioneered and gained acceptance by the Ground Staff, that young women could service aircraft. Ila's brother, a Trainee Pilot, later flew this Anson. To Sergeant Maher it must be credited, who provided the smooth transition of these young WAAAF into the then male dominated domain. (Ila Cox)

Just in passing, I believe my brother and I created a unique situation at this time, in that he, as a trainee pilot, flew the aircraft I serviced, not once but many times. I wonder what the statistical chances are, and whether anyone else could make a similar claim. He had a setback during this stage in his training, perforating his ear-drum. This meant a period of time when he was medically unfit to fly, and was forced to go back one course (from 39 to 40). I was extremely proud of him when he graduated, though this meant I would not see him again for a long time. He



was posted to the U.K. until the European theatre of the war had finished. He spent some time before his return to Australia in the RAAF aquatic team as a high-board diver - representing his service in Holland, Scotland and England with marvellous success.

My ambition to fly was realised when 'my' aircraft had received a service, which required a test flight. Since this meant putting the engines, airframe and instruments through their paces, it was heart-stopping at times, but I thoroughly enjoyed these flights.

It was not long before I noticed that some of the maintenance boys were disappearing while 'their kites' were away doing circuits and bumps, or other exercises. A few judicial enquiries, and I found they were stowing away and enjoying unauthorised flights. This was far too good an opportunity to miss. I would grovel to the Flying Instructor if necessary, but I must be in this little 'lurk'. It was easier than I thought.

"Just sit on the floor and pull your beanie down over your ears until we pass the Duty Pilot's tower!" These quite illegal jaunts were one of the high-lights of my service life. We hedge-hopped over sandhills, 'shot up' goods trains and sheep, and we even went surfing!. The last escapade consisted of flying a way out to sea, then skimming back as close to the water as possible, just rising slightly as we came to the beach and the sand hills beyond. This was the greatest of all fun, but was stopped short when it was discovered that the aircrews were mysteriously encrusting with salt!

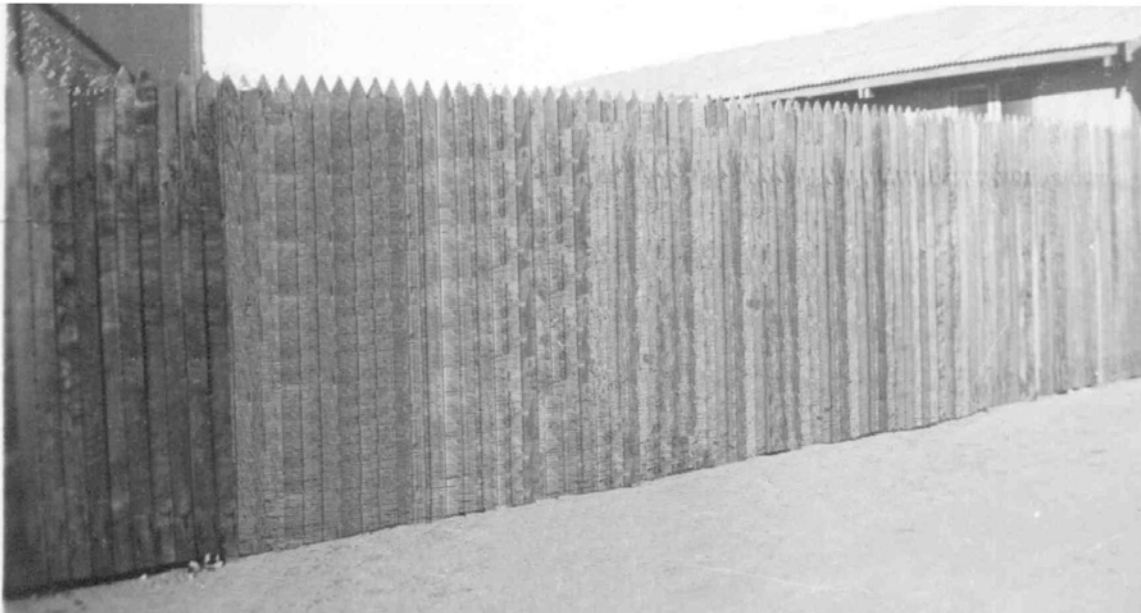
I finally gathered up enough cheek to ask if I could have a go at the controls. No trouble! I never did land, but I took off (provided our aircraft was far enough away to avoid detection), flew, banked and turned quite a number of times. As all good things must, it came to an end when security was tightened up on the tarmac following a terrible accident. A **WAAAF** (not an illicit stowaway) walked into an aircrew one night, and received the most horrendous head injuries. She did recover, though not fully, and later started with my husband on a Rehab. Teacher Training Course, but I believe did not complete it.

	
<p>WAAAFs from then on replaced many men on RAAF Stations so that they could join forward area Combat Squadrons. (Ila Cox)</p>	<p>Ila standing, in her work overalls.</p>

I really enjoyed my work, and was devastated when I began to experience abdominal pain which restricted my ability to do the more strenuous jobs. I was put on to light duties at the Station Hospital (cooking for the patients on bland diets). Even this had its advantages, as we were often able to get some real luxuries from the American Base nearby, such as canned leg ham, icecream and other delectable goodies which had not been available under our tight rationing of food for years now. The down side was trying to keep the kitchen free of blowflies. I have never, before or since, seen them in such plague proportions. Though traps were set outside the building, which ensnared teeming thousands of them, they still managed to find their way inside, and drop their revolting maggots every possible place. It was worse than working with a swarm of bees.

Eventually I was sent down to Perth to a Medical Specialist, who apparently recommended that I was medically unfit for further Service in the WAAAF. I was very sad that my time in the Royal Australian Air Force was prematurely ending. My posting came through for me to proceed to No. 5PD in Perth just as I was to completing my third year and was Discharged and dated November 13 , 1944 (Friday 13th!). Because the war had not yet finished I was manpowered into the Naval Victualling Yard in Fremantle, but as a civilian- albeit somewhat brief-with the Senior Service.

The “WAAAFERY” at No. 4SFTS Geraldton



The WAAAFERY, the completely self contained living Section for all the WAAAFs on the Station was easily distinguished because of this six foot (nearly 2m) closely boarded wooden fence surrounding the whole area. There was only one entrance gate and it faced the Parade Ground. All sleeping Huts, Abolition Blocks, Recreation Hut, and their Mess for all meals, were located. This was the complete domain for females.

The WAAF Occupation Lake Karrinyup Country Club

1942 to 1945

For

Rookie Training



New WAAF occupational Forces with Staff

In December 1941 the Lake Karrinyup Country Club went into recess for the duration of World War II. The club was taken over by the armed forces, with the full co-operation of the club itself, to be used as a training establishment. After the war, Karrinyup found itself delicately poised, either to pass out of existence altogether or to be revived only with great difficulty. In this chapter we consider the events of the war years, the crisis which then afflicted the Club, and the eventual recovery of the club from the edge of complete annihilation. As it happened the recovery was only the first stage of rehabilitation in two phases, the first devoted to basic survival, and the second concerned with the club's reinstatement among the first ranked golf clubs in Australia.

The WAAAF Occupation

A corollary to the tempestuous times into which Australia was pitched in 1941 and 1942, was the significant role accorded women in Australia's workforce and the forces. The Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force came into being during 1941, and quickly expanded under the leadership of **Wing Officer Clare Stevenson**, formerly a staff training officer with the Berlei Company in Australia. Basic training establishments sprouted in Melbourne and in Sydney to provide instruction in the variety of skills - food preparation, clerical, wireless telegraphy and the rest which the women were destined to exercise in the service of their country's air force. Recruitment reached fever point late in 1941 as the shortages of air force personnel became critical. In October Stevenson visited Perth to interview young women for the WAAAF who, once selected, were to travel to Victoria for training.' But after Japan entered the war, in December, the Minister for Air A.S. Drake-Brockman, with support from Senator H.B. Collett, changed the arrangements to allow West Australian women to be trained at RAAF Station Pearce, the air base just north of Perth.' Only wireless telegraphy trainees were sent east. The object was to prevent congestion on the interstate railway and to reduce expenses.

Section Officer A.B. Bromley in December 1941 left Melbourne with a Corporal drill instructress, to initiate the WAAAF training at Pearce. For some months the unit trained about 100 women each month. But as the allied position worsened, with the fall of Singapore and of the Dutch East Indies, the bombing of Darwin and Broome, and the sighting of Japanese reconnaissance planes over Pearce itself, the RAAF area headquarters became anxious to evacuate the women trainees from Pearce. At the time, Bromley (now Mrs Russell) remembers, the personnel at Pearce were on constant alert. They wore tin hats and carried gasmasks at all times and each day were involved in real and practice air raid warnings. Wives and families of the station personnel were evacuated and the air force sought another place for the WAAAF trainees.

This coincided with the decision of Lake Karrinyup's remaining members to suspend the club's operations, which was taken at an extraordinary meeting on 29 December. In the circumstances there was little else to do. Fuel rationing meant that members could not travel out to the course, while large numbers had enlisted or else were involved in war work and so were not playing. There was money for neither maintenance nor workmen, and golf course maintenance hardly rated priority from the manpower authorities. A caretaker committee formed itself, headed by Charles Maynard and including the secretary Arnold Hodder and Douglas Gawler. The associates' committee suspended operations in late 1941. Maynard's committee made the decision to rent the property to the forces hiring authorities, for the use by the WAAAFs until needed no longer. This brought in an annual rental of £698/10/0, (£554/9/10 in 1942), while simultaneously enabling the Pearce base to evacuate the trainees to a site that was available, well removed from the suburbs and central city, and suitable for the purpose.

Section Officer A.B. Bromley led the staff and trainees, about 120 people, across to Lake Karrinyup on Anzac Day in 1942. At Karrinyup the first action was to hold an Anzac Day Service on the lawn in front of the club-house. After the service everyone set to work, filling palliasses with straw, erecting tents, organising the kitchen, putting up beds and settling in. As Bromley recalls there were few complaints despite the awful food, the lack of comfort and the ill-fitting and unattractive uniforms. The trainees' discomforts seemed petty by comparison with those of men fighting in Papua New Guinea, the Middle East or Britain, or already prisoners of war in Germany and Singapore.

Under its new tenants, the club-house was quickly adapted to serve their training purposes. The carpark became an excellent parade ground; the two locker-rooms served as dormitories; the dining room emerged as the airwomen's mess; and the lounge room "with its polished jarrah floors and rugs and chintz-covered furniture became a rather grand airwomen's recreation room". A flat behind the kitchen served its new masters as the Officers' Mess; the secretary's office was occupied by the Commanding Officer; the ladies committee room became the Unit Orderly Room, and the

professional's shop was converted into an Equipment Store. Arnold Hodder's house across the street from the entrance, served as the Sick Quarters, under the charge of Senior Nurse A.P Potter.

The senior personnel in the unit were the Commanding Officer Bromley, Section Officer T.D.Buckland (unit equipment officer), Assistant Section Officer L.F. Tipping (training officer), Assistant Section Officer F.M. Hodgkinson (barracks and messing officer) and Assistant Section Officer S.F. Heard (the unit adjutant). Among the NCOs were included Sergeant Moira Jowett, Corporal R. Blake and Corporal Joyce Wade. (I was fortunate to speak at length with the latter three and with A.B. Bromley, now Mrs A.B. Russell.)

At Karrinyup the unit engaged in basic recruit training only. Women were called up from civilian life, equipped with uniform, taught how to wear it properly and to take a pride in it. The Training Staff taught the trainees to drill and march, accept a strict discipline, and understand the rudiments of Air Force law and something of the service history of outstanding airmen. The stress was on discipline and "indoctrination", with an emphasis on service morale and esprit de corps. At the end of a month-long course, the trainees sat a written examination, after which if successful and supported by favourable reports from the drill instructress, they passed into other units, replacing men as clerks, cooks, drivers, tailoresses, messwomen or telephonists. Others might be posted for specialist training as W/T operators, aircraft mechanics, fabric workers, or cypher clerks. As Mrs Russell also notes, they were never, at this stage, posted to Aircrew Training. Most passed the basic training course, although in May 1941 the Unit Operations Record Book mentioned that Squad RD8 "failed to pass off the square". In service jargon this usually implies a disciplinary measure affecting the squad. Two days later the women appeared to have redeemed themselves however.

While at Lake Karrinyup, the WAAAF staff had time to settle into a fairly comfortable existence. At the invitation of the club the women at first attempted a little golf, but without maintenance the course soon became unplayable. Afterwards, the 18th fairway became the site for physical training and games, rounders usually, and to practise hockey. The women entered a team in the local competition and also boasted a choir. The lounge area furnished an ideal setting for occasional dances. In June 1942 the unit entertained officers and airmen from No. 77 squadron at a dinner dance. This particular occasion proved the downfall of Mrs Norma Hugall, wife of Charles, who was a member. She was on her first leave as a recruit and was dared, after attending a wedding elsewhere in Perth, to attend the dinner dance. Her evident enjoyment of this occasion earned her a confinement to barracks for the rest of her training course!" Somewhat later, in 1944 the unit entertained at a dinner dance, 22 members of HMS Maidstone, which was visiting Fremantle at the time. The unit also in 1944 adopted as "sons" members of No. 325 Radar Station, at Marble Bar, to whom they posted food parcels.

Those on the WAAAF Staff at the time remember other aspects of life at Karrinyup. They all recall the crowding of beds in dormitories squeezed onto the verandah, enclosed in asbestos sheeting for the purpose, and in the ballroom, the men's locker rooms and in tents and huts erected as the Unit grew in size. Late in 1942 extra shower and latrine facilities were provided. The enclosed courtyard - dubbed "holy ground" - was barred to all, save Officers! All envied the fortunate few located in the club's tower, which commanded views over the golf course. Joyce Wade, however, recalls the tower water tank overflowing, after she forgot to turn off the tap, and nearly flooding the club-house. She also relived her depression when faced, upon arrival at Karrinyup, with the task of cooking for the unit on the club's huge iron wood-fuelled stove. The club's infamous boiler, fired by coke, drew snorts of anger from all charged with tending it!

The occupation period witnessed serious moments tempered in retrospect by their funny aspects. Regular air-raid alerts during 1942 caused panic among the recruits led by only slightly

more composed officers and NCOs, who fled for shelter in slit trenches cut in the club-house grounds and fairways.

Moira Ball also reported sighting a flashing light on shore, possibly someone signalling to an enemy submarine that caused a flurry of activity. Barbed wire at this stage was laid on the fairways and the Air Force issued the unit with a solitary, ancient and extremely heavy service revolver, to be used for firearms practice. Most of the women could hardly lift it, much less actually hit the circle drawn on a gum tree by **Staff Officer Bromley!** Regular patrols by 77 squadron Kittyhawks at this time had another outcome - the "buzzing" of Karrinyup by pilots with WAAAF contacts, who practically demolished the artificial spire on the club-house roof. These reckless pilots were warned off their showmanship, when high ranking officers were visiting Karrinyup, by the laying of a white sheet on the 18th fairway. Throughout, a binding experience of discipline, purpose, comradeship and laughter created for the WAAAFs a sense of significance and competence that none have forgotten.

Gay Andrews captured something of this experience in an evocative note to Moira Ball, which included the following reflections:

" . . . Seventeen months! The day I entered camp! How excited I was then, how bewildered . . . as the days of my Rookies had drifted by. The discipline almost got me down and I resented it. Then I became resigned.

" . . . What was happening to me? I was becoming acclimatised. It was taking me all this time to see the Service as a whole and not just to look at myself individually ... I was learning to know people as I had never had the chance to do in ordinary times ... I could see the reason for the discipline ... As I have said people were more thrown together than ever before, more of one cause than ever before, and there had to be some guiding interest for all to follow. . .

" . . . Seventeen months! The war had been going on for over four years now. Yet the green fairways were just the same, the trees still stood in their everlasting watchfulness. Trees! What did they know of human strife. But stay! Maybe they know more than mere mortals . . .

" . . . But as I watched I knew that we were learning through a very bitter school the real meaning of peace. How we would value it when the time came and how good we would try and make it.

" ... I knew that after the war one of the lessons of the Services, we will have learned is how to co-operate with others and work with them for a common cause. **'Esprit de Corps'**

"Yes, the war was making men and women out of our country's youth and I looked forward to seeing the results of their maturing when it was all over

Throughout its stay at Karrinyup the WAAAF unit was run totally by women; the only males were a Padre, a Doctor and a Dentist, who visited regularly. Indeed, one or two male club members, returning to Perth on leave and travelling out to Karrinyup to see how their course was faring, recall having been issued swift marching orders - out the gate again. This experience. by women, everywhere assuming charge of significant war-time operations, fundamentally altered the status of women in the post-war years. The Karrinyup WAAAF unit took pride in the quality of its training and in the size of its operation. By the end of 1942 tents augmented available accommodation and the unit bustled with purposeful activity. However, in 1944 the WAAAFs vacated Karrinyup, leaving a skeleton staff for care and maintenance. Earlier the 15th Motor Regiment had been detailed to remove the barbed wire, a task it performed so perfunctorily that it fouled the fairway mowers when they were restarted in 1945. Meanwhile, the WAAAF facilities were largely dismantled and the club's surroundings returned to something resembling their pre-war state.



“Rookies” and WAAF Training Instructors.



The WAAF Training Staff at RAAF Karrinyup just before disbandment.

WAAAF Dental Nurse ACW Doris Causbrooke (Mrs Ferry)

The Dental Surgery was a wartime Hut building consisting of two Dental Surgeries, for two Dental Officers and Assistants, and three Dental Technicians, as well as an Orderly Office.

Appointments were made and the hours were from 8am to 5pm.



With the Station the size of 4SFTS we were busy, especially when the Trainee pilots completed their training and postings were through, all Dental Clearances had to be obtained. All postings out of the Station by any Air Force personnel had to be cleared by the Dental Section.

All Pilot Trainees, had, while at Initial Training School, all necessary dental work carried out and again at Elementary Flying Training School so there should not have been many patients from that Section of the Base. With some 1500 other personnel, many having been on this Station for some considerable time, would occasionally require some dental maintenance, while occasionally team sports produced some work for the Dental Staff, especially during football matches between Instructors and other teams..

With a great many Army Units nearby the Dental Unit often performed dental work for these men. Army Anti-aircraft Units were deployed around boundary fences of the aerodrome and in the surrounding hills.

Station Dentist was FLTLT John Holmes

Dental Assistance Personnel were WAAAF SGT Pat McKennar, ACW Hayes,

Daily routine for all WAAAF personnel was the same in all three Services, leaving their Huts (Barracks) neat and tidy, and the assembly before marching off to the area where their Section was located. **Panic Night**, at Geraldton was on Monday night, when everyone had to thoroughly clean the Hut for an inspection by Madam, but it was also a time for everyone to meet up. With the arrival of ten pm each night was the signal for “lights out” in all Huts. It was early wake up in the morning when Drill Sergeants made a noisy walk through each Hut.

“WAAAFery” was the colloquial name of the self contained area for WAAAF Huts, Mess and Ablution Block and was completely surrounded by a closely boarded six foot high picket fence with one entrance gate facing the Parade Ground.

The Red Cross and Salvation Army made regular visits to provide cups of tea and coffee. Pictures were held in the Station Hall twice a week, which was probably a time for “fraternization” but it also provided an insight through the vivid “newsreels” to what was happening on the battles fields being fought against the German, Italian and Japanese. This Hall was also the venue for Station Dances, Concerts and Plays performed by Station Personnel.

Weekend leave was available to visit nearby City of Geraldton with its range of shops but the Yacht Club dance was always popular for all Station personnel. It was also a possibility for WAAAFs to change into civilian dresses.

Sunday mornings was also for Church Parades for different Denominations.

Both the Front and Back beaches were popular swimming sites for all members of the Station. Dire warnings were circulated about getting badly sunburnt because it was claimed as a punishable offence under Air Force Law.

Pay Parades were held fortnightly but the young women of the WAAAF did NOT receive the same rates of pay as the males of the gender. This was also was the case for all female workers.

With the Japanese bombing of Darwin brought the reality of war to No.4 SFTS and created the influx of Australian Army and anti-aircraft guns to the perimeter of the Aerodrome and also into the nearby hills. Bomb slit trenches had to be dug in all areas adjacent to work areas and during air raid siren alerts everyone had to take refuge. During the rainy season this caused considerable discomfort because of the water collecting in these trenches. To protect important buildings and essential services hundreds of sand bags had to be filled and stacked in place.

Physical education was also regular for the WAAAF along with Unarmed Combat Drill for personal defence and occasional Gas Drill exercises.

For a some what of a home amenity many WAAAFs brought sheets and pillow slips to present some semblance of comfort to go with the RAAF striped, grey issue blankets, but what a congestion must there have been caused on “wash days” with a myriad of sheets for drying.

With summer uniforms came the “**Order of the Day**” and a great deal of washing and ironing was created for both the WAAAFs and all for all those other personnel living outside the “fence!” This was most evident for every where, all personnel appeared to immaculately turned out.

Dental Officers

SQNLDR L.C.Stinton

FLTLT, N.G. Simpson

FLTLT, N. Lionel Stenton

FLTLT, Henderson

Dental Assistants ?

ACW Meg Porter Radar Operator (Mrs Coten)



I grew up on a farm near Narrogin in the south west of Western Australia and at first attended a small, one Teacher School. After completing High School that year, visitors arrived, and we teenagers went swimming in the cold muddy farm dam, played tennis and had shooting competitions using jam tins on fences as targets. Some one left a wind up gramophone on which we played our limited collection endlessly. I knew I would have to make a decision regarding future employment but my Mother ordained that I was to train as a Nurse at Royal Perth Hospital.

My brother Dick was studying Medicine at Melbourne University while a number of Aunts were nurses so it was arranged I present myself before the Matron for an interview. During this time the news regarding the Japanese bombing on Darwin was in the newspaper and on the radio and the disclosure of Radar that could track aircraft. The bombing of Broome and the great loss of life followed this by those in flying boats waiting to take off.

My brother Tom was in the Army and my Dad joined the Home Guard and for the period after Christmas I helped on the farm waiting for the Hospital appointment. One day a news item in the newspaper caught my eye, which stated that the WAAAF wanted girls of intelligence, and integrity to train on secret work involved radio location operators.

Mum's reaction was "Oh no, darling, I don't think the services sounds very nice!"

Dutifully I reported to the Matron but found her very forbidding and after five minutes I was convinced nursing was not for me. Immediately I went to the WAAAF Recruiting Office and picked up the enlistment papers and sent a telegram to my Mother informing her I was not taking up nursing and am joining the WAAAF.

Back came an immediate response "**Come home immediately!**" Being under 21 years of age I had to have my parent's permission before I could be accepted. Many years later I learnt from my Mother that Dad had said at the time "Thank goodness she is showing some initiative!"

I duly reported to the Recruiting Office and was shown into bare room and went and sat next to the only occupant enveloped in a large brown overcoat. From its depths came a deep voice "I'm from the bush, where do you come from?"

We were kindred spirits both hoping to become radio operators and it was the beginning of a close friendship until her recent death.

We were given a demoralising medical examination when modesty was cast aside with our clothes, and several written tests followed. This was followed by an interview with a RAAF Officer and he said my maths were so poor he did not think I would qualify for radiolocation training. Eventually he decided to give me a chance because he sent me off with twenty maths lessons that trainee Pilots had to do, and to study them.

In retrospect he probably had no idea what the work entailed to be a Radio- Direction Operator as the maths were used very little. I returned home and worked my way earnestly through the lessons hardly daring to hope, but to my huge delight my call up papers came a few weeks later.

This time I set off for Perth with eager anticipation and on 21 September 1942 I and about sixty other girls assembled outside ANZAC House in St George's Terrace to be taken by buses to RAAF Karrinyup (Golf Course) to commence our Rookies Course.

No time was lost in showing us the long dormitories where we were to sleep, the four cold showers, and open to the world, which we were to share, as well as the mess. There were girls from all walks of life hoping to train as transport drivers, cooks, telegraphists, stewardess, clerks and eight radio operators. We were divided into squads with a WAAAF Corporal in charge of each. We were lined up for various injections and small pox vaccinations, the latter cause of some girls' misery. As I had already had been vaccinated in Narrogin I knew what these poor things were going through. To make things worse we were issued with "goons" heavy denim overalls, which cause much distress getting them on over swollen arms.

We then received our messing gear consisting of an enamel plate, mug, knife, fork and spoon, three blankets and two towels. A clothing issue was made to every one, except me. Being a large girl I got only the basic requirements. This had one advantage as I had to go to a tailor in Perth to get a drab shirt in Officer type material and buy shoes. I only ever had one shirt though every one else received two. It would, be in Melbourne before I got my full uniform of "blues"

We spent part of each day at lectures learning Air Force protocol, aircraft identification, gas mask drill etc. Our quarters were inspected daily to see if our blankets were folded with the required, exactitude and placed neatly on the palliasse mattress folded in three and shoes, towels and messing gear laid out as stipulated.

We were drilled relentlessly marching with arms swinging shoulder high and learning the meaning of "right dress", left turn and how to salute. Before long we marched like a well-oiled machine. I love the feeling of unison of marching in a squad and pride in our perfection. We were marched to the beach across cuts of jarrah logs on the road built by convicts in the previous century.

Our lecturers spoke of "esprit de corps" and I began to realize the significance of the term as we came closer to one another. Then came our postings with our group destined to RAAF Richmond in NSW. The trip across the Nullabor was in the comfort of a two berth cabin with two WAAAFs sharing a bunk. The usual changing of trains in each State because there was no uniform rail system operating. The troop train would stop in some remote place where every one in front of an Army table with an enamel plate extended to receive the usual stew that had been cooked on the train.



In due course we departed Melbourne dressed in our Uniforms for the trip to **RAAF Station Richmond, No.1 Radio School**, via Sydney. Every morning we had to have our hut ready for inspection before 7am. Our Training started in earnest but as it was Christmas were given leave to visit Sydney but a few days after returning to Richmond, I went sick with Mumps. During this period my Group completed their training while I lingered in hospital.

Richmond, Training Officers at Richmond. F/O Peebles, F/O Henry SGT Carlstom (after Commissioned)

RAAF Richmond (Sydney)

Back. Meg Porter, Betty Spencer, Helen Wroth, Doreen O'Neil, Kath Thompson
 Front. Win Cambell, Pat Ainsworth-Morison, Vida Wright.

In the new Course I joined I felt out of place but because Radar equipment was manufactured in England and the ship bringing it to Australia was sunk we WAAAFs were told we would have to remuster. It was in this period I was mowing lawns until one day I was told to get all clearances done and report to a train departing in two hours bound for RAAF Laverton in Victoria. After a short period in the Orderly Room I next found myself in the Airmen's Records Department in Chappell Street, Melbourne

Here a Group of WAAAFs were given the task of arranging how RAAF personnel would accumulate a system of points that would decide the order in which personnel would be discharged after the war. During this period we lived in a beautiful home in Toorak. Shortly afterwards I contacted German Measles so was out of action for 10 days. On return to work other members had received letters from Radar Operators extolling the wonderful time they were having. Our reaction was to become quite unco-operative and cold stare treatment, which had the desired effect with all of us being posted away. Three of us let the Posting officer know we would prefer to be posted to Geraldton in WA.

Posting to No. 447 Radar Unit

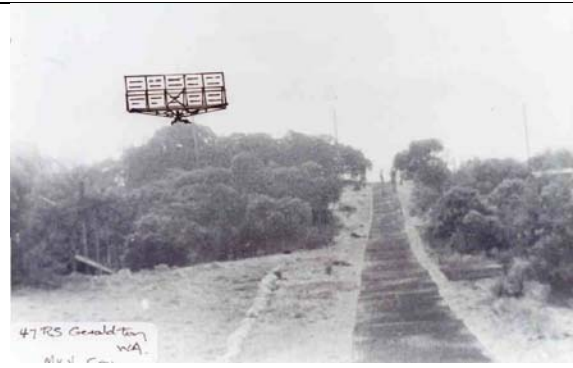
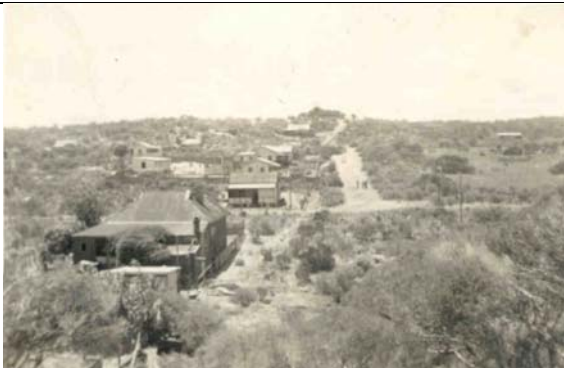
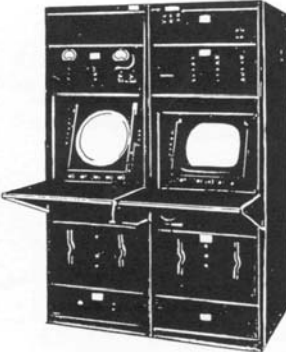
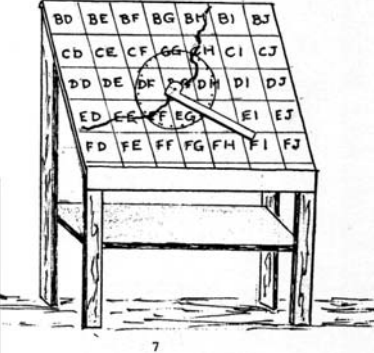
In due time we arrived at Geraldton and took up duties at No. 447, a hush, hush establishment on the outskirts of the Township. All our tribulations were soon forgotten when we arrived and met by our friends on the Unit. Even our beds were set up ready for us. We were soon off to the luxury of the Victoria Hotel for a great Dinner of soup, fish and a selection or roasts of meat, poultry followed by sweets for the cost of five shillings (50 cents) each. Sheer luxury followed by coffee and crème de menthe yet being in uniform, and not then 21 years of age, we were not the legal age to be drinking in a hotel.

Next morning Madam informed us that the proper procedure was to report to the Orderly Room upon arriving on a Unit. In reality it was only a token rebuke because Madam herself was living it up and gave us plenty of leeway.

Our Unit consisted of several houses, which had been commandeered on the southern outskirts of town. There was low scrub and sandhills and only a short distance away was the back beach. The Operations complex, two sandbagged all around with an aerial like a big bedstead turning around on top and about 200 yards from the nearest house was situated on a sandy hill. It was camouflaged and the track leading to it was also covered so that it would not appear to be in constant use.

There was a high fence all around the complex with a RAAF Guard on duty out side the gate at all times. At night we would be challenged when approaching the locked gate and have to give the password before being admitted.

There were few rules apart from regular cleaning duties and one Parade a week taken on the road in front of the WAAAF Quarters. The CO's Inspections on Tuesday mornings were only a formality otherwise, apart from Official Duties we were free to do what we liked mainly because we were worked shift work 24 hours a day.

	
<p>The "Doover" was located on a high sandhill over looking the Radar Unit.</p>	<p>At the foot of the sandhill were the Radar Unit houses and facilities for WAAAF & RAAF.</p>
 <p>(M. Fenton)</p>	 <p>(M. Fenton)</p>
<p>Radar Operators spent only 30 minutes per session in front of these</p>	<p>Radar Operators passed the range and directions to Plot positions of a Target.</p>



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The entrance gate to the Doover was always protected by a RAAF Guard.

Dot Murphy (left) after she was promoted to Commissioned rank.

Goldie and myself were put on shift together because we still had three months training to complete before we were qualified. We were lucky to have a dedicated Corporal, who gave us plenty of practice during slack periods until we reached needle sharp.

Every Crew on Duty had a Mechanic with them and mostly they were boys, who had been doing engineering at University and had six months specialist training before being qualified. One of these was a cheerful boy from Sydney with a crop of chestnut curls. One day, not long after our arrival he and the Senior Mechanic were going swimming after the shift at the back beach., which had a reputation for being dangerous. We told him to be careful. He laughed and said he had played a lot of sport but was not a strong swimmer. Blondie grabbed his curls and said "This looks like seaweed!"

His body was taken by an undertow and found three days later at the mouth of the Greenough River. On occasional visits to Geraldton I have visited his Grave in the War Cemetery and placed flowers on his grave. Also in this cemetery are the Graves of five other men, who were in an aircraft that crashed while I was plotting their route south when the blip disappeared.

We led a lotus eating life off duty but were very keen when it came to our work. Because of temperature inversion along our coast our radio waves often went lower and further than expected, and we often picked up far away blips on every sweep of our antenna. A visiting war-time Japanese Submarine Commander stated that during the war he had sailed along our coast and surfaced close to Geraldton at night. He had heard music and singing and thought at the time the war must have ended.

The reality of war was brought home to us when the fiancé of one of the WAAAF Operators died in the Islands and another heard that her fiancé was a prisoner of war of the Japanese.

During this period many of the Operational Crew had their 21st birthday while at Geraldton so our recreation hut was frequently decorated with gum leaves and rations were pooled for the cake and we danced to the music of our wind up gramophone and the recordings of "Tumbling Tumble Weed", "Buttermilk Sky", "I Lost my Heart at the Stage Door Canteen" and "The Anniversary Waltz"

Apart from the bathroom all internal walls of our quarters had been removed to make one big area. A little hut in the back yard served as sleeping quarters for the night shift personnel.


On the Anniversary of the WAAAF all the Air Women and Madam went out to dinner at the Victoria Hotel and had a very happy evening.

Chaos greeted us on our return. The RAAF Air Men had taken the opportunity “to do over our quarters”, and had done it very effectively. The beds, wardrobes, cupboards had been changes around, shoes mixed up and dried peas lovingly piled into our mosquito nets so that when we pulled them down they showered everywhere. They did not have the temerity to give Madam the treatment, which was a bit chicken, hearted.

We said very little but bided our time until some weeks later by cunning and good staff work wreaked a very satisfactory revenge.

On occasions water fights would breakout over some minor incident but ended up with everyone entering into the situation and all getting thoroughly soaked including beds and belongings.

WAAAF Radar Operators

	
<p>Our Radar Operators were a very happy Crew.</p>	<p>During 1943 dress code appears to have been relaxed.</p>
	
<p>Official summer uniforms were the Order of the Day.</p>	<p>Beach Belles, Pat Murphy and Meg frequented the nearby back beach</p>

Goldie and I travelled to Northampton by train for an overnight leave but for a trip of 33 miles it took three hours for this winding journey. Even the train Guard left the train and picked a bunch of wildflowers and then reboarded. When we got off the train at Northampton the train Crew tried to persuade us to travel on to Yuna with them but we waved them on and said we would see them next day on return.

Northampton was hardly a seething metropolis for there was only a café come store, the Hotel and a few houses. The only moving life was a cattle dog chasing a brown paper bag being lifted along by the wind. The people in the Hotel were kindness itself. We had an excellent dinner, slept like logs and felt very relaxed.

Next day we went along to the café for a light lunch before our return trip. While there the Café owner answered the telephone and we heard him say “yes they are here!”

“That was the train Driver,” he told us and the Crew want to know if you two girls want to go back to Geraldton because they have been waiting an hour. We immediately sprang up.

“Oh don’t hurry, they will wait!” he called.

The Train Crew cheered when we arrived at the station and we were red-faced as we scrambled on board.

Sometimes we went to the RAAF Station to see old films in our Section tender but our drivers always raced there along this rough dirt road. Both Goldie and I shared a love of horses and riding and borrowed two hacks from one of the local tradesmen to go for a ride. They were pretty rough horses and not too happy having the extra work. On our second excursion Goldie’s mount tossed her over his head into a prickly bush and although funny to me Goldie was infuriated.

On our return the owner baled me up in a stall and got a bit boyish but a swift kick in the shins straightened him out so we decided not to return.

I soon had to eat humble pie shortly afterwards when I was summoned to the Orderly Room and told I was to accompany a very important U.S. Colonel, who was visiting the RAAF Station and he wanted to go riding. I had to go to the stables and get him a horse and be his guide. The Colonel, I need hardly say had been lent a thorough bred. My reception was frigid and I was supplied with a docile looking mare and I think that was subtle revenge. In spite of being manageable otherwise, no amount of pulling and kicking could stop her tailgating the Colonel’s horse.

The Colonel snapped at me to control my horse and I snapped back. It was a dreadful ride saved by a good gallop along the beach when my mount could not keep up with his. But he and I were barely on speaking terms as we parted..

RAAF Radar Personnel



George Cracknell, Les Hales, Alan Stark



Con Parcutt and RAAF Guard.

Eric Howarth, John Thompson, Ernie Busby, Gordon ?, Maxie King, Ron Briscoe, ? Hough Russell Ames.



“1944 Beach Boys” John Talbot, Don Parcutt Tom West. Jack Morrison Telegraphist.



Don Frank, Wally, Val, and Commanding Officer Trevor Robinson.



Yorki, Civilian, Frank Pandelli, Len Hearn
CO Trevor Robinson, SGT Quarters



Tom West our Crew Mechanic.

As our Unit had only one cook each Crew was rostered in turn to take over in the kitchen on Sundays so she could have some time off. As well as the two Officers there were thirty hungry people to feed and sometimes stress levels in the kitchen were high. One Crew, who looked hot and flustered when they served us confessed after the meal that someone had dropped the large roast and potatoes all swimming in hot fat on the floor just before we arrived and they had to scrape it up.

By the end of 1944 it was clear the war would end before long so the dismantling of southern Radar Stations began. It was a case of last in to the Service was last out and marching orders for the two of us who had trained together from Melbourne the previous year. I was posted to the Clothing Store at No. 5 Embarkation Depot in Wembley (near Perth).

We were sad to leave but almost the whole Unit came to see us off. We went to the Victoria Hotel to ease the pain of departing with a few drinks- quite a few gins and orange if I remember correctly. There was a big farewell on the railway station and we reluctantly climbed aboard. As dusk was approaching I felt a bit chilly so decided to put on a jacket and at that moment I realised my kit bag was left behind on the back of the tender. I had some explanation to give when I reached pert but the transport Officer contacted the Unit and gave me a message to say one of the Unit Guards coming down on leave would bring my luggage with him.



February 1945 No. 447 Radar Unit, Geraldton Personnel

No. 5 Embarkation Depot was in a large fenced off area in Wembley and I had trouble talking my way in past the Duty Guard when I arrived without any documents for they were in my kit bag. Eventually a message came through from the Duty Officer giving me a clearance.

I shared a Nissan hut with about thirty other girls and the wire stretcher beds were so close together I had to climb over the end of mine to get into it.

There were four other girls in the Store and a very large RAAF Wing Commander in Charge being six feet four inches and weighting twenty stone. We WAAAF were behind the counter and supplied uniforms to mainly airmen and Officers on posting north or to other States. Everything had a classification and had to be recorded.

Tuesdays were the Commanding Officers' inspection day and when the CO and his entourage came around on the first one after my arrival and went into the Wing Commanders Office I heard great guffaws and mirth issuing forth.

When the official party left I was called into the office. Chuckling the WGCDR said. "Guess what the C.O. has just said to me?"

"I see you've got your sister working for you now!"

I was outraged, I was a big girl but not in his class.

After that the WGCDR always called me sister if he wanted anything I would be summoned. "Sister, Sister! I want you."

He was a great tease and loved to call me into the office when he had a ROOMFUL OF SUPERCILLIOUS YOUNG pilots all sitting around smoking with their feet on the table.

"Gentlemen," he would say. "I want you to meet my Sister"

Needless to say I would blush scarlet with embarrassment and felt like murdering him.

Then he would issue a string of commands. "Sister would you please get such and such piece of clothing for the Flight Lieutenant so and so"

Even if I remembered the list he gave me I didn't know where to find the things the other girls were very good and would help me. They thought it a great joke.

I missed my friends and the casual life style of Geraldton while two of my friends had been posted to Rottnest Island Radar Station and my heart was full of black envy.

One day I was sent to the Orderly Room with a message and as I walked beside the Parade Ground when I saw one of the Group 447 Mechanics, who saw me at the same moment and with a shout ran towards me. We met and hugged each other in relief at seeing a familiar face.

"Will the WAAAF and the RAAF in the middle of the Parade Ground come to the Orderly Room immediately!" roared a voice over the P.A. loud speaker. We did not know the Parade ground was hallowed ground and no one walked on it except for Parades. We hung our heads as reprimands came thick and fast but luckily we were not put on a Charge.

During this period I was in limbo when in some mysterious way my Mother found out the Red Cross was offering a **Scholarship for Social Work** training. I was not totally opposed to the idea but and having no idea what social work entailed, I made an application.

I was interviewed by a kindly Social Worker in the Red Cross who explained that when troops were demobilized at the end of the war, they and their families would need skilled help with problems of resettlement, employment and housing they would face.

A week later I was summoned to the Wing Commander's office with the usual bellow "Sister!". He told me I had been granted a Scholarship. He could not have been more proud of me and the Senior WAAAF officer, who happened to be visiting the Office a few days later, echoed his words.

Unhappily I was in the Sick Bay during her visit because I had been struck down by an attack of the "collywobbles" due to eating over ripe plums.

Although things were winding down none of my friends had been discharged and I felt like a deserter when I was given some clothing coupons, my fifteen pounds deferred pay and some cash and back to civilian life.

I had contributed very little to the war effort but my life in the WAAAF Service had not only given me special friends and happy days but it had widened my horizons and the confidence to explore them.

Note: All the photographs, except for Morrie Fenton's two, were provided by Meg.

Sergeant Ida Della Vedova (Mrs Anderson)

94485



When war was declared in 1939 I was 17 years of age and working in the office of a large Co-operative Store in Collie, a town in the south west of Western Australia. I was an enthusiastic sportswomen but longed to leave Collie, and the weather and join the WAAAF when recruiting was announced. Like many parents mine, were reluctant to sign the WAAAF Form, but after much persuasion I finally travelled to Perth for an interview. This was the era when parents had to sign Applications to join the Services if a young woman or young man wished to do this.

By this time I was known as Ila Della and when Miss Della Vedova (pronounced incorrectly) my full name, was called I sat there quite oblivious then suddenly responded. While waiting for a call up notice I started studying Morse Code in Collie, along with several other young men because I wanted to be a Telegraphist. As I could send at 20 words a minute but could only receive 12 words a minute at that time. Courses had not commenced so no recruits were required but the interviewing Officer suggested signing up as Clerk General. The added inducement was that I could later request a change of mustering, a ploy often used.

The trip across Australia was then very comfortable with nice bunks and fine meals (a complete opposite for my return journey a year later). I soon made friends with five other lasses, who apparently had attended a Private Girls College together so referred to themselves as the "Elite Five" but after the ill effects of numerous inoculation needles (enough to take them through the jungles of new Guinea, and Africa, they readily came down to earth. We new WAAAFs all billeted in a beautiful house in the elite suburb of Toorak (Melbourne) and were only given blue Overalls as a uniform and a heavy Great Coat, but it was December and it was also hot. There were then no Official WAAAF uniforms so we had to march quite a long way to attend St Catharine's College where they had to under go the trails of a Rookies Course.

On one occasion, while we were marching back to our home (billet) both hot and tired from the heat, they met a woman, with a fox fur draped over her shoulder, who announced, "And this is what we pay for?" was her most unfriendly comment. Just the thing tired, young, and homesick young women needed.

Each day started with an early breakfast then a march to the college and drill for most of the day, learning how to salute, the range of ranks for the Services along with a range of lectures. For newly left home young women the introduction to the various venereal diseases was a cultural shock and enlightenment time for one, who imagined just holding hands caused pregnancy. Every night we slept soundly.

On completion of this Rookie Course we had to find our own accommodation for it was then not the responsibility of the Service so we five new friends had to search together. After a few disastrous boarding houses and bed bugs and suffering starvation we luckily found a nice flat in Park Road.

As we were all posted to different areas we then separated and found our way to work. I was in Kellow House, which had originally been a huge car show room, and was now Australian Air Force Headquarters for Records Section. Here were all details of every Air Force Musterings, venues etc so it was from here that all Posting were done and it was to referred as “The Establishment” There were several hundreds of women and men working there and it took some time to discover where everyone disappeared to twice a day. In my civilian job I had never heard of morning and afternoon tea. For a year I remained in Melbourne, and really enjoyed my work as well as the dances in the beautiful ballrooms and learning to ice-skate at the popular rinks. During this period the United States Forces arrive and took over all the Units in Park Road and forced owners and residents to vacate. I never quite accepted their brashness and being called “Honyeeee”

It was around this time my Army brother was killed by an American Army truck travelling on the wrong side of the road across the Perth Causeway, when it collided with his small Austin car. His two friends, also in his car survived. The Air Force policy was for Service members to be posted to their home State when a death in a family occurred.

By then I was promoted to a Corporal and my posting was to No.4 SFTS, Geraldton, the final training Station for young would be Pilots. Sewing Wings onto uniforms for these young men was a pleasurable pastime (I never discovered this amenity, Author). After a short period with my parents, I arrived at Geraldton during December 1942 and took up duties in the Records Section of the Orderly Room with four other girls.

Part of the record keeping was for details of every new Pilot Course, of fifty+ Trainees including details of their previous occupations and University studies and employment. They were all well spoken, eager young men busting to receive those hard earned Wings. Unfortunately some were “scrubbed” and went on to be trained as Observers (Navigators) or Wireless Air Gunners.

After Pilots Graduation and Wings Parade some were promoted to Pilot Officers and the remainder as Sergeants to go onto become bomber Pilots, fighter Pilots, Staff Pilots or Instructors but many would never return home because of the enormous causality rates in Air Crews.

WAAAF Living Quarters.

Life on this Station was a wonderful experience BUT showers and Toilets without doors took a bit of getting used to. The Station Dances were great and every second weekend we could visit the town of Geraldton where we could wear civilian dresses which was just magic. There were loads of lovely young men to dance with at the Yacht Club Dance once they passed their exams and study. The weekly Station pictures cost 6 pence (5 cents) and it was there we learnt about what was happening around the World through the medium of the Newsreels. Once a month, we could take the bus into town and stay in a huge hall known a “The WAAAFERY” which was crammed with stretchers (beds) and blankets where we could sleep and get a cup of tea. We then went off to the local café or hotels for meals. A lovely change from prunes or apricots and rice. The swimming was great in the summer time at the front beach, but to dodge the stingers, or surfing at the back beach. There were approximately 250 WAAAF on the Station consisting of a great many musterings: Cipher Assistants, Telegraphists, Fabric Workers, Driver Motor transport, Clerks, Dental Assistants,

Nursing Aides, Flight Mechanics, Messing Staff, Cooks etc. were all housed in about ten Huts with 20 to 30 WAAAFs in each. The friends we made at this time some would last a life time.

There was a lot of recreation other than drill in the morning if you wanted it. I played tennis and badminton as well as swimming, diving at the beaches as well as dances and films.



Ida (left) and Shirley Brand were avid tennis players on the Station. In this section of the WAAAFery there is a grass area among the 10 + Huts surrounded by the fence evident in the background



Watermelons proved popular with this group of WAAAF friends of Ila. Apparently cameras could record activities but only within the WAAAFery.



The NCO Course for Sergeants included keep fit sessions on the front beach while in the background is a USA Catalina at a mooring.

In May 1943 I became quite ill with what was suspected rheumatic fever and spent many weeks in the Hospital Bed with a cage structure over my legs to keep the weight of the blankets off me.

Doctor Dennis, who looked after me was quite a “Character”- to help me keep up my spirits he would spend time, when he called, playing a game called “torpedo” (most of the time I

was the only patient) and he would occasionally come into the Ward after a night in the Officers mess and recite quite dramatic poetry to cheer me up, which was greatly appreciated for it made me laugh.

Funnily much later his eldest boy, Peter and my elder son Bill, became great friends in their days at Wesley College.

After a spell in the WAAAF Convalescent Home at Karrinyup, where I had my 21st Birthday, I was promoted to Sergeant (and what a bliss to eat in the Sergeants' Mess) My new position was running a small Orderly Room with an ACW (WAAAF Air Crafts Woman) assistant, for the **Chief Flying Instructor, Wing Commander Manford**, two Squadron leaders, Mc Fetridge and James, who were head of A and B Flights for Trainee Pilots. I loved this job for it was right on the tarmac among the flying. It consisted of filing the records of the Trainee Pilots kept by the flying Instructors, Navigation Officers and Wireless Instructors etc. This along with typing Rosters for the Training Instructor Officers and their Pupils it was most rewarding.

The Commanding Officers during my stay were:

Group Norman Brearley
Group Captain Dixie Chapman
Senior Instructors

(I recall)

SQNLDR Mc Fetridge (Canadian)

SQNLDR James

FLYOFF Ray Storer (Nav.)

Flying Instructors

Ian McPherson

Jack Murray

Colin Cook

?. Hargreaves

There were many more but these are the ones I had most contact with at the time.

Some of the above Instructors had great delight in teasing a very naïve new Sergeant. On one occasion two of them locked me in the C.F.I. Officer's equipment cupboard, then turning it upside down. (I was in overalls) when they thought the Wing Commander had gone flying but he returned suddenly to pick up some gear. Luckily for me it was on his table. There were many more harmless pranks but that one stands out in my memory.

On one particular occasion I knew I was in trouble when I was summoned to the Commanding Officer of the Station, Group Captain Dixie Chapman when one of my private letters to a young Pilot flying Liberators in India and Burma. (later my future husband) contained, stupidly, the information that there was a RAAF Liberator Squadron operating from a very secret Base called Corunna Downs. At the bottom of my letter I had also added, "**If the censor reads this I will be "on the Mat"**".

"Well Sergeant you are on the mat!" the C.O. uttered glancing up at me with a sly grin.

And that was all he said, much to my relief.

It was well known at the time the C.O. was fond of food and drink in the Town Hotel and on one occasion was charged with speeding while on his way back to the Station (his home). His previous flying had been on a Fighter Squadron in the Middle East and I think life on a Training Station was pretty boring for him. However on one particular night he crashed his car while returning to the Station, which resulted in a Court Marshal. Wing Commander Manford had to convene this trial and yours truly was the stenographer and it was quite amusing to me with the “boot on the other foot!” but I think the C.O. had a good sense of humour.

Shortly after I was made a Sergeant it was decided all WAAAF N.C.O's should do a NCO Course. One of the Tests was to drill a Squad, something I had never done, and I definitely didn't have the voice for such a performance. This caused plenty of amusement and entertainment for all the personnel making their way to various venues around the perimeter of the Parade ground. I had to stand on a spot and give commands to my dear little Squad, who started disappearing into the distance with me shrieking “About turn” to no avail until some kindly male voice yelled from the sidelines. I think I received a F for this particular exercise.

I was with sadness when the **Last Pilot Course,(No. 48)** passed out from this large Training Station, and shortly afterwards the Station commenced closing down. The three Pilot Courses already there training, at different stages, were no doubt bitterly disappointed in not completing their training after all they had accomplished. Because the War was still continuing all the Air Crews were given many jobs to do, even picking fruit and grapes as I recall some one informing me years later.

Trainee Pilot Records

The Records of every Trainee Pilot were made out by their Instructors for every subject, then handed to the Chief Flying Officer, and after his comments, which were deemed confidential, were filed away by the two WAAAF after the Course departed. These boxes of files were later packed into boxes, sealed and placed in a locker and then locked away in a special room.

What happened to them after the Station closed is not known.

Pilot Course No.48 was the last to Pass out at No. 4SFTS



Back B. ??? , Cullen, B. Couper, R.Elliot, B Hardwick, S Adams, C.Ball,
 B. Bevilaqua, A. Andrews, P. Wharton, J.Ranich, J.Carpenter, B.Hill, K.Sharpe,
 B.Lindon E. Douglas, J.Cruikshank, A. Rowlands, R. Riessen, , G.Meadows, J. Strickland,
 Dick Brown Frank Byrnes
S/LT.C. Milne, W/ V.Ray, Group Captain D.R.Chapman, W/C E. M. Ball F/L N.R.M. Munts.

So began the process of some personnel being discharged but after I returned to Perth I finally ended up at No.7 Communications Unit then located on the tarmac where the present Perth Air Port is now. I remained there in charge of the Orderly Room until the war ended and I was discharged on 1 January 1946.



My husband to be, eventually returned from Burma, and we were married and had two sons. My elder son is now a Captain on Jumbos with QANTAS and so flying is still in the family while my younger son Neil also loves flying but in a different form, drag motor cycling racing.

Mrs Bill Anderson (nee Ida Della Vedova)

Bill Anderson as a Trainee Pilot.

ACW Margaret Stewart (Mrs Bullock)

103283

Driver Transport



After completing my Rookies Course at RAAF Karringup I made the long 18 hour train trip to Geraldton during September 1942. There were seven of us crowded into this small compartment. On arrival at No.4SFTS Waffery six of us were allocated beds in No.13 Hut. We were soon involved in the air raid drills by jumping into slit trenches, attended the firing range and learning to fire 303 rifles (I was fortunate in having rifle experience up north on the station).

When the RAAF Recruiting Officer queried my driving experience he then enquired if I could also time and tune a truck engine and, when I replied in the negative he recommended I go and learn before the Rookies Course started. This I promptly did by approaching a local garage.

At Geraldton all the WAAAFs drove every type of vehicle then issued to the RAAF Station including the Ambulance. I drove trucks carrying Pilot Trainees to Satellite Aerodromes, carried RAAF Armourers to the Bombing Range, and transported every conceivable type of goods and equipment around the Station and to and from Geraldton Port, the Train Station and the Catalina Base. Ordinary pick up of milk and bread was a daily duty.

WAAAFs also carried out daily maintenance on their vehicle and when necessary, change wheels and tyres along with keeping the vehicles serviced. There was a great variety of vehicles in the Transport Section and each WAAAF could handle all including Panel Vans, International trucks, Utilities and the Station Ambulance. Fortunately the Section had an excellent team of Mechanics to look after our aging vehicles.



Hut 13 was the “home” for the WAAAF Transport Section and a happy group they were. Some WAAAFs had wide experience operating vehicles and farm equipment having been brought up on farms and stations. This experience also included skills in handling rifles so an introduction to using 303 Service rifles came easily. During 1942 all personnel on 4 SFTS were inducted into the use of Service weapons on the Station Rifle Range.

(Margaret Bullock)

Corporal Peg Perry (Mrs Pearce)
Equipment Assistant



As a 19 year old I signed up in 1942 to join the WAAAF and while waiting for a call up was advised to attend the Army Drill Hall, located at the foot of William Street in Perth, to learn about the WAAAF and how to drill.

In due course along with a group of other young women we were taken to RAAF Station Pearce and after a week there being issued with uniforms and RAAF overalls were then taken to complete a Rookies Course at Lake Karrinyup, golf course.

After a short period there Peg boarded a Midland Railway carriage for the long train trip to Geraldton some 300+ miles north of Perth. After the usual initial procedure of signing in and being allocated a Hut was marched to the Station Stores building to take up duties there.



Graduating Flight from RAAF Karrinyup
Spick & span in their new summer uniform.





Overalls were in use for every day
Drill and lectures while at Karrinyup.

The RAAF Stores personnel did not welcome the sudden appearance of a group of young females, who threatened their domain, but within a short period of time they were posted to front line Squadrons. The Japanese forces were already in New Guinea and Darwin had already experienced numerous bombing raids and a Japanese Naval force had been observed moving down the Western Australia coast.

This was the period of defensive action on the Station with air raid slit trenches, sandbagging of important facilities along with the arrival of Army anti-aircraft batteries being installed around the eastern side of the Station.

These young WAAAF quickly mastered the requirements and organization required to efficiently operate a Stores Section with its many diverse sections like Clothing, Stationery, Aircraft parts and tools etc. along with all the necessary recording and records. One requirement introduced was that RAAF personnel had to produce a "chit" to obtain small consumable items (eg screws) but when Peg queried a large burley Flight Sergeant about a Chit he nearly exploded. "I issue Chits" he thundered.

	
<p>Hut 15 tenants within the confines of the Station WAAAFERY. The high picket fence in the background could be likened to a stockade.</p>	<p>Both the Town beach and the back beach were popular with all the WAAAF personnel during the long summer months.</p>

It is not commonly known but WAAAFs, who were first enlisted signed up for 12 months but with the entry of the Japanese in the war the young women were encouraged to sign up for the duration and one year. Those WAAAFs, who were NOT 21 years of age received a lesser wage until they became of age.

Apparently these WAAAFs were only allowed off the Station on Sundays with occasional long weekend leave along with 5 days leave every month. With the provision by the Catholic Cathedral Women's Group of a large stone building, that had originally been a school, made available for WAAAFs to have a place to sleep over while on leave. They had to visit local cafes and dining rooms for meals but it was a place to stay, which was very welcome by these young women. This building was referred to as the town WAAAFERY.



One other important place they frequently used was the Geraldton Freemasons' Hotel where they could have sumptuous meals with the added advantage of reasonable accommodation charges, which was most welcome on occasions.

Although WAAAFs could play tennis on the Station many also played in mixed groups on the Geraldton Club courts or invited to private courts. Swimming at the back beach or town beach was a very popular warm weather activity, while the Yacht Club Dances were very well attended, with a great many more Service men available.

Peg Perry was to remain on this Station from April 1942 right through to November 1945 and it was in this latter period when all Pilot training ceased that many personnel were being posted away. Eventually all the multitude of different types of stores had to be collected and packed and freighted to No. 4 S.D then located at Maylands Aerodrome.

By the time Peg's Discharge from the WAAAF in November 1945 came about most of the personnel on this once very large Pilot Training School had left.

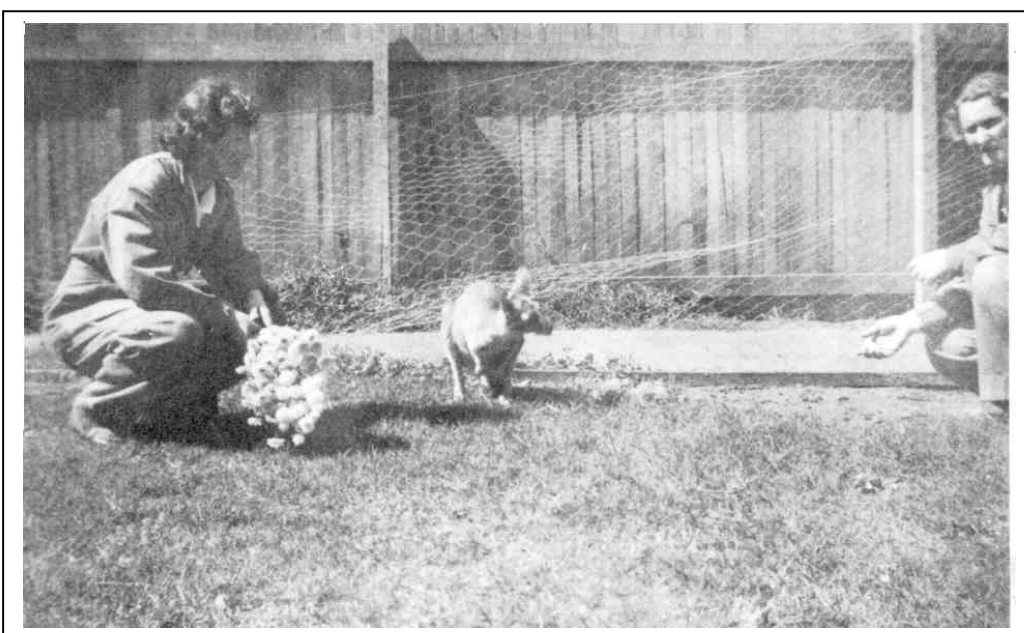
(I have as yet to discover what happened during the period when the Station gates were finally locked and the RAAF presence was disbanded. Author)

Corporal Rose Miller (Howard) Equipment Clerk



After my introduction to the WAAAF Rookies Course was at RAAF Station Busselton and my first posting was to 4SFTS arriving in November 1942. I was the only WAAAF in the Stores as an Equipment Clerk and it was my Duty to attend to all the “paper work” and on occasions assisted with the accounts. One particular Duty I was entrusted with was to visit Geraldton Stores and purchase materials and arrange for equipment and goods required by the RAAF Station.

An additional responsibility, which only occurred on rare occasions, was to collect all the personal belongings belonging to some one who had died. This was to prevent families from receiving anything that could cause embarrassment when personal belongings were received.



Between Hut 15 and the WAAAFery fence this young kangaroo had the freedom during the day to move around but come night his home was in a section of the ablution block. Surrogate mothers were in abundance. Some 26 girls were in residence in this Hut and they were from a range of Musterings so there may have been some well intentioned rivalry.



Lorna Kennedy, Alice Wall, Mary Trigwell, and Sally Regan ready to take on the “night life” of Geraldton in their winter uniforms. In the background is believed to be the Town WAFFERY where lasses from 4 SFTS could stay during weekends and other leaves. The thoughtful Catholic women had arranged this facility, which provided beds with the usual straw palliasse, Air Force blankets and pillow and all the other necessary facilities.

Amongst the varied after work activities some of the lasses were involved in badminton with the courts set up in the large Station Hall and it appears that white uniforms were worn but as these young women had to pass the Trainee Huts, on their way to the Hall, none of the Trainee Pilots ever reported such apparitions. Can hardly believe they were that unobservant.

Mavis, who also worked in the Stores, and in one particular Section, sought the assistance of some willing Trainee Pilots to turn upside down large containers of paint because of their weight. No volunteered reports are available to any outcomes from this fraternization..



Escape from work overalls and official uniforms seem to have been a favourite escape strategy. As a Trainee Pilot one was not to know if the damsel you were dancing with at the Yacht Club was a civilian or one of the above. Can hardly believe the Corporal and WAAAF were chaperons to this lot, who shall remain nameless, only because their names are unavailable,

ACW Mary Bruce (Williams)

Canteen Stewardess



Mary was brought up in Roebourne in far up north of Western Australia and entered the WAAF on 22 June 1943 and duly arrived at Karrinyup to commence her Rookie Course. A temporary Posting to a RAAF Store in Maylands followed but then the long train ride to 4SFTS Geraldton to take up duties in the Station Canteen.

The “Boss” was Harry Isles with one other male and three WAAF Stewardess to operate this important amenity to all personnel. There was a rationing system in regards to chocolate and cigarettes or tobacco but there were many other items on the shelves. On occasions Mary would be transported into Geraldton to collect the soft drinks from the bottling factory.

So that RAAF and WAAF personnel could obtain items in the morning before commencing duties, the Canteen would open early then close down but reopen at 11.30 am ready for customers during the lunch period. After 1 pm the Canteen would close but reopen at 5 pm and remain open until 8 pm.

Because of this shift work the Canteen personnel could leave the Station for a break but they had to be on duty without fail. On Thursday night there was always a rush to close down the canteen because that was the official night when films were shown in the Station Hall but the Canteen team always had to rush to catch the beginning of the film (nowadays every one refers to movies).



Canteen WAAF Staff: Mary Bruce, Eileen Smith and Joe Ivy.



Back row. ??????, "Boss" Harry Isles
 Front: Nora Harmon Mary Bruce Edna Cass

Mary well recalls the Dave McPhee Bus and taxi service, which provided the transport into Geraldton and return. The Friday night bus for Dance at the town Yacht Club would be packed with even some of the standing passengers falling asleep so I am assured by one of the Trainee Pilots.

Saturday morning seemed to be devoted to lighting fires under coppers to boil clothes or to do some hand washing. Drying during summer months took no time so that the electric irons were soon in action creating a supply of clothes for the coming week. No gallant Mothers available but some reluctant participants (perhaps only by Trainee Pilots) took advantage of personal washing services operated by entrepreneurs.

Mary recalls fond memories of the ordinary women of Geraldton, who went out of their way to provide small amenities, like, teas for Service Women after a hockey game or just even in buildings on streets just a place to call in and sit down, have a talk while having a cup of tea. All these young Service Women were all far away from their own homes and families. One lady, who lived in the lighthouse home, frequently, had WAAAFs home for a meal. One lady often, with the assistance of her daughters, would have up to 16 Servicemen home for an evening meal. The Canteen Services Trust was set up to assist people having difficulty and Mary was a recipient when she became a widow at an early age. The trust provided funds to help with her five children's Education.

SGT Myrtle Berry (Mrs Hookway)
Headquarters Orderly Room



With a younger sister planning to join up, Myrtle, decided to leave the WA Public Service as a Senior Shorthand typist and join the WAAAF in April 1942. In no time she was on her way to RAAF Victor Harbour in South Australia to commence her Rookies Course and receive her uniforms and overalls. Fortunately both Myrtle and her sister shared a sleeping berth while the other WAAAFs had to share with complete strangers. There would be many other occasions that these young women of the WAAAF would have to accept, for the first time in their lives, communal facilities like showers etc.

RAAF Station No. 4 Initial Training School Victor Harbour

Western Australian WAAAF underwent their Rookie Training 1942



No.10 Flight all look very pleased with themselves having passed through the rigours of parade ground drills and P. T. ACW Myrtle Berry (99460) is 4th from the left in back row.



This is the Second Western Australia Group to pass through the portals of No. 4 ITS. From here they would be posted to Trade Mustering Schools. Myrtle is 7th from the left in back row. (Frank Boase photo)



Myrtle's first Posting was to RAAF Headquarters in St Kilda, Melbourne, with the Director of Repair and Maintenance Section. There her group had to Parade once a fortnight in a back street.

Captain Cook's Cottage was a popular attraction for WA WAAF.

Phyl Quigley, Olive Russell, Myrtle Berry and Vi Leahy arrive in completely different "uniforms of the day" to inspect his cottage that had been pulled down in England and completely re-assembled in Melbourne.

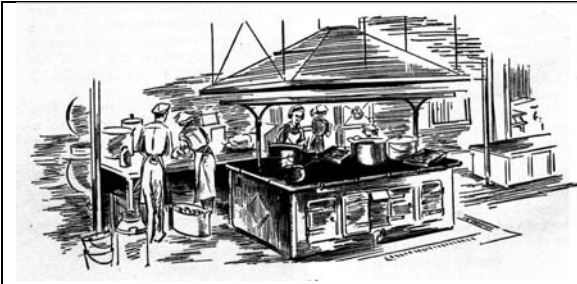
No. 4 Service Flying Training Station, Geraldton

Fortunately for Myrtle's next posting was to No.4 SFTS, where like so many others, found it a wonderful Station and thoroughly enjoyed her work there right up to her Discharge in Jul/August 1945.

Her Hut was No 15 and she shared it with life time friends representing other WAAF Musterings. Her duties were as a Filing Clerk in the Station Headquarters. Hours there commenced at 8.00 am and ended at 5.00pm.

Realism of WAAF Service Life

<p>Regulation prepared bed ready for daily inspection with straw filled palliasso, folded grey blankets, uniform hats displayed.</p>	<p>Wood fired coppers provided hot water combined with cut up soap for boiling clothes & concrete troughs for washing.</p>



Service kitchens in hot Geraldton summers combined with wood burning stoves made an unbearable environment for Cooks.



To every WAAAF their meagre pay was recorded in this most important record book for it also recorded many facets.

Tennis was a popular sport and one Pilot Trainee introduced her to the mysteries of golf but cannot now recall where they played. Compulsory Church Parade was every Sunday morning. WAAAFs had one day free each Saturday but having 4 days leave every month, allowed her to travel to Perth to visit her family, which compensated this. Two days were spent travelling by slow moving trains.

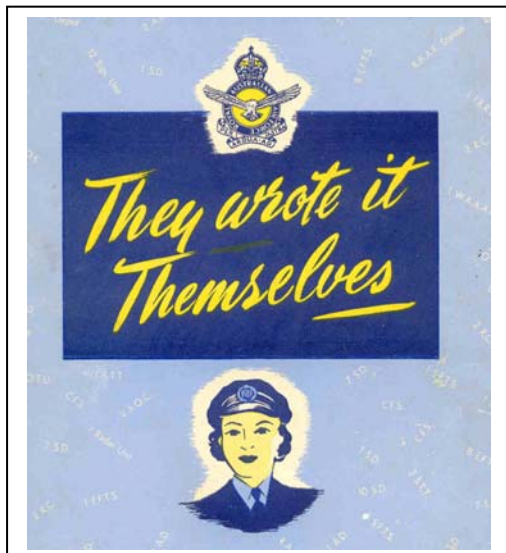


To all WAAAF the two main beaches were always popular but on this occasion the town beach was popular for Elsie Keel, Peg Perry, Mara McKinnon and Myrtle Berry. The Town "WAAAFERY" provided accommodation for leave opportunities.

WAAAF second birthday celebration on 15 th March 1943



On this special occasion the WAAAF from No.4 SFTS proudly paraded through the Township of Geraldton wearing their Summer Uniforms. Later that day SQNLDR “Bluey” Truscott addressed the WAAAF personnel during his visit to the Station. Shortly afterwards he lost his life in a flying accident.



This book was published in 1946 by W.A. Hamer PTY Ltd using stories recorded by serving WAAAF personnel. The b&w drawings appeared in this book as well as the Birthday parade above.

ACW Edith Aylmore (Bolton)
103485 Officers' Mess Cook



Edith turned 18 years of age in June 1942 and was called up in October 1942 and commenced her Rookies Course at the RAAF Station, Busselton. On completion of this basic training was selected to undergo training as a Cook and was posted to premises on the foreshore of Mounts Bay Road. Billeted in the historical Cloisters building located in St Georges Terrace, Perth. Each morning Edith walked to the Training building until a Hut became available for accommodation. The training commenced in December 1942 and lasted until March 1943. Much of the Course was relevant to cooking quantities required for large groups of Service Personnel.

Edith well remembers the long tiring rail trip to Geraldton with a stop for breakfast, which comprised of tinned bacon and powdered eggs. The rail journey ended at Walkaway Station where Edith and all, the others on Posting, were loaded into RAAF trucks and transported to the RAAF Station. There Edith took up residence in Hut 17 along with fourteen other WAAAF on Posting.

Edith was immediately assigned to the Officers' Mess for Duties and there were both male and females operating in this Mess. Because of the nature of her work as a Cook, this evolved around Shift Work. These times were: commenced at 05.00 hrs (5am) and continue until 1100 hours. The next shift commenced at 1100hours and continued until the last meal at 1700 hours. Apart from the two ACW there was a Corporal and a Sergeants as well as a group of men to help prepare vegetables, wash utensils and keep the floors clean. Wood burning stoves had to be regularly attended to so some had the responsibility to cut and carry regular supplies to the stoves.

The Messing Officer conferred with the Sergeant Cook regarding Menus for the day while Edith prepared and cook meals as well as present them to the WAAAF Stewardesses.

After the morning session Edit would return to Hut 17 and take time to relax after the very early start. As with all the other WAAAFs the Huts had to be ready for inspection every day. Writing letters home and to friends along with personal washing and ironing always took care of spare moments.

When handed Leave Passes Edith and friends caught the bus from the Station into Geraldton. One of the popular places was to go swimming, the local picture theatre (movie theatre), or the dances in the Druid's Hall or the every popular Yacht Club dance.



Two unnamed WAAAF Cooks
at No.4SFTS Officers' Mess.

On those occasions when the Leave Pass was for two or three days Edith and friends took advantage of the "WAAAFERY" provided by the ladies of Geraldton. There they had beds, showers and tea making facilities. For meals there were numerous places available.

Periodically Officers Mess had what was called "Dine in Nights" when special meals were prepared through accumulated Mess Funds. Edith was also involved in the decoration of cakes and pastries under the guidance of the Sergeant Cook whose speciality was in such decoration. Edith enjoyed this facet of her work and especially under his guidance. Local crayfish and fish was a speciality on these Dine in Nights together with all the tradition of such a night.

On occasions the Officer in Charge of the Mess would single out the WAAAFs and inquire about their working environment and their personal well being.

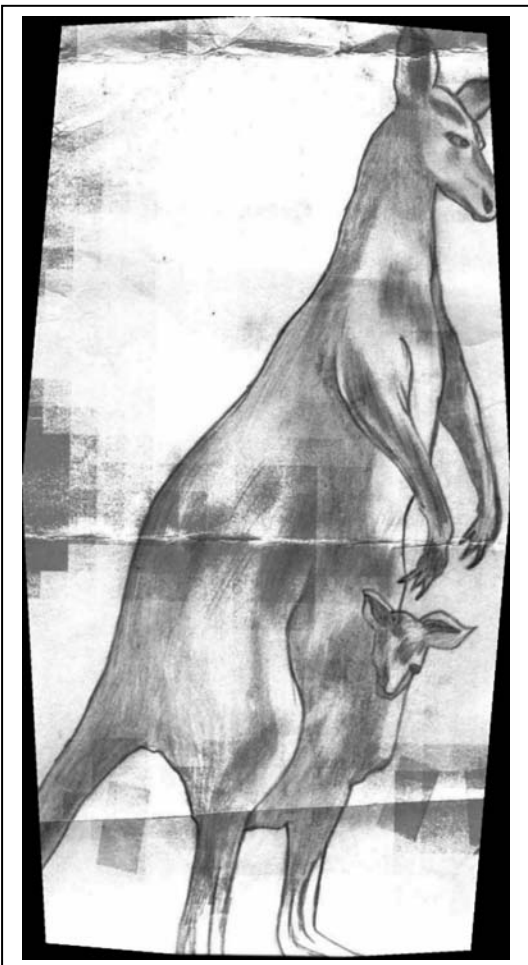
During the winter months the warmth of the wood stoves was most welcome but in the burning summer days it was most uncomfortable but this was the norm in most private home, Wood stoves was how food was prepared by the vast majority of home while in metropolitan regions gas was utilised.

One of the major problems during the long dry summer was the ever-present invasion of blowflies that created real problems not only during the serving but when the Stewardesses carried meals to the tables. On occasions plates of food had to be discarded and new servings provided. This was quite a hazard in every Mess on the Station but somehow personnel were fed and appetites sustained.

Most afternoons or evenings we Cooks could visit Geraldton but if a shift was late to catch a bus we stayed and listened to music or did fancy work sewing but Edith liked sketching in her book.

On two occasions the Sergeant put Edith's name forward to be promoted to Corporal but this never occurred and she was never afforded an opportunity to do extra catering courses.

Edith looked back on her life in the WAAAF as most enjoyable and was "happy to be doing her bit" for the war effort. If she had known that it was possible to have remained in the WAAAF after the war ended she would have willingly applied.



One of a number of activities Edith occupied herself with was sketching and these comprised of wildflowers and animals. Unfortunately many examples have deteriorated or are missing but these two are an example of all that remain.

When asked about listening to music in her Hut Edith explained that she was fortunate that her Grand Father had given her a wind up gramophone and a number of records. While on leave she would either purchase other records or exchange for new ones.

Portable radios were not available during those war years, but gramophones, together with recordings were quite common in many homes.

Fancy work and sewing of dolies and tablecloths created gifts and items for life after the WAAAF days.

Flight Sergeant Florence Tozer (Wells)
Cypher Assistant



ACW Florence Tozer (Wells) was employed as a Country Orders Clerk with Miles & Wares Office up until entering the WAAAF on the 18 March 1942 as a 22 year old.

The Rookie Course was at RAAF Station Pearce, which was followed by operating a teleprinter in the Western Headquarters in Perth. Along with three other WAAAF they were selected to become Cypher Assistants.

When Corporal Florence took up Duties at No.4 SFTS she worked in a confidential and restricted area with Flight Officer Harding. Only Book Cypher work at Geraldton was handled & named Australian Confidential Documents (A.C.D.) Cypher Staff were responsible for updating Confidential Records of Enemy Ships.

Florence, one morning after coming off Night Duty.

Daily routine was the same as for all other WAAAF personnel, living in Huts together with all the usual open primitive living conditions such as open showers and toilets. Because of the highly secret nature of Codes and Cypher these WAAAF could appear to be perhaps apart from the others, because they could not divulge what they were actually doing, nor the information they had privilege to know.

One Trainee Pilot, Florence got to know, in an ad hoc way, often, when seated to watch a film in the Station Hall, she would be called away to Duty when urgent signals had to be attended. One particular memory of those wonderful days at Geraldton was when the opportunity to be driven to the ocean to assist in catching the famous Dongara crayfish. This naturally ended with sumptuous freshly cooked crustaceans being eaten in front of an open fire washed down with amber fluid in congenial company.

On occasions one of the remote Army Camp Bases would send an invitation to the WAAAFery for volunteer girls to attend a dance in a small district Hall. This was usually a great night out for both the Army personnel and the girls from 4SFTS. Fortunately the hierarchy did not stifle this fraternisation.

Like every one else in the WAAAFery the Cypher girls enjoyed their life on this popular RAAF Station especially the sea swimming, shops, Yacht Club weekly dances, Station dances and the occasional visit to the Victoria Hotel and sumptuous meals.



Two Trainee Pilots with three WAAAF. Joan Harvey, John Teppence, Florence, Neville ?, and Gwen Grieve.



Florence (Rt) & another WAAAF, together with the Salvation Army Officer, collecting beautiful everlastings, from a great many different variety wild flowers from this region.

During March 1942, unknown to all the Station personnel there was an incredible amount of very secret signals coming into the Cypher Office during the Japanese bombing of Exmouth and other locations, as well as the possible Japanese invasion ships reported to be making their way down the west coast. This was again to be repeated in March 1944 when an enormous amount of air cover aircraft was flown from the East coast to Western Australia.

Florence was to be promoted to Sergeant just before being posted to Melbourne Signal Headquarters where there was an enormous amount of highly classified signals arriving from a great many war theatres. It was with great reluctance she left this idyllic RAAF Station with its wonderful Mediterranean weather for the rigors of Melbourne Signal Headquarters.



Florence and Amy Parker on leave in Sydney during November 1944. Selection criteria for WAAAF personnel by Recruiting Officers must have been for good looks. (Author)

Town WAAAFRY (Geraldton)

All the WAAAF personnel based at No.4 SFTS expressed delight in having somewhere to stay off the Station, even if it was just for one night. The building was in the ground of the Roman Catholic Bishop Palace of Geraldton and St Patrick Primary School.

Sleeping facilities comprised of ordinary steel mesh RAAF beds, with the traditional straw filled palliasses, the very same as used by the Station personnel, and standard issue blankets along with showers and toilets. The girls could make cups of tea so there must have been some type of milk available, perhaps in the condensed variety. All food and meals had to be purchased from either volunteer women, who manned facilities, in Geraldton Township or private cafes or hotel dining rooms.



The Bishops Palace was where the Priests resided, who served the region as well as the Bishop himself when in Geraldton.

Although there are no records available as to whom were the Catholic Geraldton Women, who provided this facility for the young women serving their country by being in the WAAAFs, it is therefore important to acknowledge their war effort support for this marvellous facility.

Helen Long, of the Diocese of Geraldton City, supplied these photographs, on 16 November 2004.



Back in the war time period this building with the Bingo sign, was where Young Catholic Youth Group held their weekly dances as well as a meeting place. In th background is the building known colloquially as the Town WAAAFRY.



Saint Patrick's Primary School all gave some privacy for the WAAAFs using the WAAAFry for over night stays.

A collection of WW2 Poetry

Throughout WW2 many poems were constructed by young men and women, with such talents, but frequently their names do not appear so that I am unable to acknowledge them. Below are those that ex SQNLDR Doug Burton, a multiengine Instructor from No.4 SFTS, handed to me.

THE FLYING INSTRUCTOR'S LAMENT

What did you do in the war, Daddy?
How did you help us win?
Circuits and bumps in a Moth, laddy,
and how to get out of a spin.

Woe and alack and misery me, I trundle around the sky
And instead of machine gunning Nazis I'm teaching young hopefuls to fly.
Thus is my service rewarded, my years of experience paid
Never a Hun have I followed right down, nor ever got out on a raid.

They don't even let us go crazy, we have to be safe *and* sedate
So nix on inverted approaches, they stir up the CBI's hate.

For it's "Oh, such a naughty example" and "what will the A.O.C. think"
But we never get posted to fighters, we just get a spell on the Link.

So it's circuits and bumps from morning to noon, and instrument flying till Ten
"Hold her off", "Give her bank", "Put her undercart down" "You're skidding, " you're slipping",
that's me.

And as soon as you're finished one course, up another one bobs
And there's four more to show around the cockpit and four more to try out on the knobs.

But sometimes we read in the papers, deeds that old pupils have done
And we're proud to have seen the beginnings, and shown them the way to the sun.

So if you find the money and turn out the planes, we'll give all we know to the men
Till they clutter the sky with their triumphs, and bum out the beast from his den

"A BIT OF PHILOSOPHY"

Sometime, when you're feeling important,

Sometime, when you're ego's in bloom,

Sometime, when you take it for granted,

You're the best qualified in the room.

Sometime, when you feel that your going
Would leave an unfillable hole,
Just follow this simple instruction

And see how it humbles your soul.

Take a bucket and fill it with water,

Put your hand in it, up to the wrist ;

Pull it out, and the hole that's remaining,

Is a measure of how you'll be missed.

You may splash all you please when you enter,

You can stir up the water galore,

But stop; and you'll find in a minute,

That it looks the same as before.

The moral of this quaint example,

Is do just the best you can,

Be proud of yourself but remember;

There's no indispensable man.

"THE AIRFIELD"

Lie here still, beside the stream, abandoned long to nature's will.

Buildings down, my people gone, my only sounds, the wild birds song

Birds will no more rise, no more I hear the *Cheeters chatter

A never know my bosom feels, the rumbling of their wheels.

Laughter, sorrow, hope and pain, I shall never know these things again

Lotions that I came to know of strange young men so long ago,

I'd in the future should structures tall, bury me beyond recall,

Shall still remember them, those wide spread wings of my flying men.

Anon

WE DARE NOT FAIL

Fertile land and swaying grain, of summer's warmth and winter's rain,
For which our fathers fought before,
Their torch we'll bear for evermore, our pledge to thee - this country fair,
The best we'll give whilst in the air, our might forever will prevail,
For you - WE DARE NOT FAIL

Although we are by turmoil tried,
We'll fight for vict.'ry side by side,
Your faith we'll carry always true,
Our all we'll sacrifice for you,
And when at last our vict'y's won,
Our faces turned towards the sun,
For those we love - the sick. the frail
For you-WE DARE NOT FAIL.

Over billowing waves our ensign flies,
And from ten thousand hearts the cries,
For sons, who'll sweep the mighty sea,
Of foes, who wait in treachery.
Your life they hold safe in their hands,

The love of freedom is their stand,
Their cry will be, through your travail,
For you - WE DARE NOT FAIL.
And when at last the battel's o'er,
And foes are vanquished from our shore,
Our thoughts will turn to those who sleep,

On distant lands, and in the deep,
Their cause forever will abide,
Their torch will light the eventide,
They have not lost, but gained new life,

For them we shall not fail.

LAC Westover F. and LAC Graham K.

Hut No.12

This is the tale,
Of Hut No. twelve,
The best but in the compound,
So I've heard tell.

Here dwell the W.A.A.A.F's
Who by nature were made
To be rowdy and noisy
And everything but staid.

Through eating and laughing
Some have got very fat,
But so long as they're happy
Who cares about that.

Now take Viv and Topsy.
Inseparable pals,
They're growing like barrels,
But still very fine gals.

There's Elaine and Enid,
Although very young,
Are there for the doings
And to get the job done.

Sully and Val
Cause a stir now and then
Which makes Backy act
Like a clucking old hen.

Molly's a good girl
To church she does go,
But 'tis really for supper
She puts on this show.

Whitty and Meg
Are two very good scouts
And just a bit keen
On having nights out.

Now one is a spoilt brat
Joan is her name
Her temper and tantrums
Are earning her fame

Muriel and Peggy

Daphne and Rae,
Get around quite a bit,
And with certain Lieutenants
Have made quite a hit.

In mentioning our Jean,
And her grumbling and growling
Must not forget
She's an expert at howling.

Olive can sing,
And at times will be heard,
Warbling in showers,
Like a spritely young bird.

One word about Brenda
Not such a quiet girl,
Her "Come hither eyes"
Send men's heads awhirl.

Doris is usually
A quiet young thing
Although on her birthday
We gave her a fling.

In R.T.O's office
Works Gwen short and stubby
The S.A.O. even
Christened her Tubby.

Where ever there's fun
Parties or ball,
Joan Howie's chatter
Is heard above all.

One can't forget Robbie,
The nurses best cookie,
Up early, works late,
Just like a good rookie.

Here ditty must end
As alone I am left
Being quiet, shy and married
There's nought to confess

So now you have heard tell

Are alike two peas
 They are really two cousins
 And quite easy to please

Then there is Norma
 Our famed "Hello" girl
 And the language she hears
 Would make your hair curl

But apart from all that

She lets every one know
 That the man of her heart
 Is referred to as Joe.
 Muriel and Peggy
 Are alike as two peas,
 They really are cousins
 And quite easy to please.
 Then there is Norma,
 Our famed "Hello" girl
 And the language she hears
 Would make your hair curl.
 But apart from all that
 She lets everyone know
 That the man of her heart
 Is referred to as Joe.

Of each working girl
 Who makes No. twelve
 The best hut of them all

So now you've heard tell
 Of each hard working girl
 Who makes No. twelve
The best hut of them all.

Corporal Elaine Hoskins (Mrs Whyte)
94721 Clerical



Elaine was living in Mt Hawthorne (WA) when she joined the WAAAF as a 20 year old on 8 March 1942 resigning from her job with the well known Baird's Department Store in Perth. Her first Posting was to **the RAAF Initial Training School Victor Harbour** in South Australia as WAAAF Course No. 3 or 4. On the completion of this Rookies Course was transported by the "**Orando**", a ship departing from Port Adelaide to Fremantle because all the Trans Australian trains were fully booked transporting Troops and vital supplies. After disembarking in Fremantle Elaine, with a group of WAAAF made the long uncomfortable 400 km train journey to Geraldton arriving during May 1942 and took up residence with 30 other WAAAFs representing a number of Musterings in Hut 12. Originally Elaine commenced her duties in one office but was then transferred to the Reception Office where among her responsibilities was recording Trainee Pilots' Records.

During weekend excursions into Geraldton, Elaine and friends would do shopping and swimming during the long hot summer season as well as attending dances held in the Yacht Club. Once a month WAAAF could have four days leave to visit their homes. This required two days allocated to travel on the Midland Railway to Perth, then further rail travel, for some WAAAF, to visit their country destinations. On many occasion Elaine and others would stay in the Town WAAAFERY and often attend the RC Church evening session knowing the Church ladies provided a supper!!

On one occasion Elaine and a number of WAAAF managed to arrange a 400 km utility ride to Carnarvon, with a man, who made this regular trip carrying goods. Unfortunately there were regular stops to mend tyre punctures until it was impossible to travel any further, which necessitated camping out over night along side the dirt track. Fortunately a passing truck driver provided a tyre to allow the Group to carry onto Carnarvon. The return trip was comparatively trouble free but in reality the WAAAF group took a risk to accomplish this venture in their allocated four days but they all thoroughly enjoyed their venture.

The Recreational Hut was a facility where WAAAF could congregate and take advantage of an area for corresponding with family and friends.

Elaine was to meet AC1 Jack Whyte while on leave in Geraldton during 1942/43 and this would lead to them marrying in September 1944 when they were based in the Perth region. Elaine had been posted to RAAF Headquarters Secret Intelligence Section after the Service Police had investigated for her family for security reasons. Jack was still operating in his Mustering at RAAF Pearce and later RAAF Dunreath. For a short time Elaine was promoted to Corporal.

When they were Discharged after the war they began a new life in Malaya where they remained bringing up a family until retiring here in Perth.

Elaine and her many WAAF companions at No. 4SFTS



Elaine's proud parents took this photograph out side their Mt Hawthorn home



Some of Hut 16 occupants willing posed for this occasion as evidence of a happy Team of young women in the Service.



Perhaps civilian attire was the disguise used on occasions when may be these damsels attended the Yacht Club dance.



Elaine was to meet RAAF Instrument repairer Jack (Jock) and later married in Perth when they were Posted there.



Summer uniforms always had to be immaculately ironed while the slouch hats provided protection under the summer sun.



Photographic evidence is hotly disputed by these avid non drinkers but the unmistakable working overalls are clearly evident.



On the track heading for Canarvon was an occasion for a tea break when punctures had to be mended,



A small child with this group indicates one of the many occasions local families had "guests" from the RAAF Station.



There were so many punctures on the Carnarvon expedition that an over camp had to be made until a passing truck driver provided a tyre.



Bathing belles of the WAAAF 1943 era willingly posed for the camera owner.



A relation of one of the Station WAAAF had a beach residence, north of Geraldton, where this group made themselves at home for some well earned leave.



ACW Enid Howe, from Busselton, was great friend of Elaine and the tie is for this occasion,



May be after some Phys Ed on the beach but also be a little fun time for the camera owner.



This very large group indicates the size of the WAAF population on the anniversary of their formation, then involved on this large Pilot Training Station.



Also a Parade through Geraldton gave an opportunity for the local civilian population to witness just how many young women were in this WAAF Service.



LAC Jack Whyte had originally been in Malaya but escaped to WA



Jack's story is told else where in this book and he (on left) with other members of his section.



The Geraldton back beach was a very popular swimming venue and it is where Elaine & Jack first met.



May be a photograph to send to friends and family as an introduction.



Another couple from the Station joined Elaine & Jack.



Jack had to find civilian clothes prior to marrying.



After Elaine was posted to Headquarters and Jack to RAAF Pearce they decided to marry on 23 September 1944 in the Methodist Church, where her parents attended.

On Discharge Elaine and Jack returned to Scotland for a short time then they travelled to Malaya. This followed by many, many years working there and their children attended school in Perth and they later retired here.

No. 4 Service Flying Training School

“1944 Winding Down Era”

(taken from Unit History Sheets)

When No 41 Course was presented with their Wings they were posted on Embarkation Leave, and the other half of the original Group now No.42 Course, would be the next to Graduate, but this was the era when the reduction in the numbers of Pilots to receive their Wings would be greatly reduced.

Those trainee Pilots at No 9 Elementary Flying Training School, RAAF Cunderdin, would from now on not be moving on in the same numerical numbers because the “scrubbed rate” would rise. This information was freely given to me by an ex senior Flying Instructor.

Continuously throughout 1944 there was a constant flow of personnel being posted away and others arriving as well as aircraft movements passing through either going north or south. WGCDR T. G. Manford DFC and FLTLT B.A. Leishman were both advised they could now wear the “Africa Star” ribbon, that certainly indicated they had previously served in the Middle East before becoming Instructors at 4 SFTS.

On 23 June 1944 RAAF Nursing Senior Sister E. J. Geering arrived on the Station to commence Duties while at the same time Senior Sister R. C. Charlton was posted to No. 3 School of technical Training.

On the same day SQNLDR L.C. Stinton, Dentist, proceeded on attachment to No. 76 O.B.U. (Operational Base Unit)

On 27 June No. 46 Course completed their Intermediate Training Squadron.

7 July An Anson taxied into another Anson because of brake failure.

11 July WGCDR E. M. Ball the Officer Commanding Intermediate Training Squadron was posted to the Eastern States on recreational leave.

Section officer (WAAAF) G.T. Fraser had her new Rank confirmed as from 11 March 1944.

13 July **Air Commodore H. F De la Rue, CBE, DFC, ADC**, Inspector of Administration arrived on the Station on Official Duties and departed the following day.

Sister V.E. Goodhall Nursing Service proceeded on Attachment to WAAAF Depot.

28 July Sister D.F. Zappa departed 4SFTS Hospital to take up duties at No.5 personnel Dept and also No.110 Military Hospital.

30 July No. 45 Pilot Course Wings Parade was held and on the same day No 49 Course arrived from No. 9 EFTS and was immediately employed on Tarmac Duties.

Commission Promotions

31 July 1944 **The following Non Commissioned Personnel were promoted to Pilot Officer rank:**

Flight Sergeants Pilots: F. W. Tovey, Williams E.T., O.P. Marshman, E.E.

Warrant Officer W.E. Goldsmith, Wireless Operator, was also Commissioned in the General Duties Branch.

Group Captain V.E. Hancock, Director of Postings visited the Station on his way to Perth from northern Units.

No. 4 Service Flying Training School Ceases to Operate As from 16 December 1944

1. **No.50 Pilot Course to be posted to No.6 SFTS to complete their training and to depart on 12 December.**
2. **Except for a few Senior Officers, the majority of the Flying Instructors were posted to Operational Units and training Schools.**
3. **The Staff Officer Personnel, Wester Area telephoned this Unit requesting (!) 200 RAAF Personnel for work on Fremantle Wharf during a STRIKE. 24 NCO's and 176 other Ranks departed 27 December 1944 and commenced work on the Fremantle Wharf within three hours on arrival in Perth. (It has been recorded elsewhere about strikes on wharves holding up essential supplies forward war areas)**
4. **The morale of the Unit is deteriorating, and until the surplus manpower is again fully employed, no marked improvement can be anticipated. The conveying of the majority of the personnel by special train to Perth for Christmas improved the position.
Those members remaining on the Unit over Christmas were extended every assistance to make their Christmas as enjoyable as possible.**
5. **Acting on verbal instructions from Wester Area, work is proceeding on the storage of 73 Avro Ansons and 6 Moths. The numbers of the remaining Ansons have been submitted to Wester Area for allotment by RAAF Headquarters.**

Signed by: Wing Commander V. Ray

T/ Commander of No.4 Service Flying Training School.

VE Day

Wednesday 9 May 1945 was celebrated throughout the World while at No.4 SFTS as many personnel as possible were "Stood Down" and flags were flown, and a great relief was felt every where BUT the war against the Japanese was still raging.

11 May. The Commanding Officer, SQNLDR T.C. Milne flew to Perth to attend a Western Area, Commanding Officer's Conference leaving FLTLT N.Q. Rangecroft in Temporary Command.

13 May the RAAF Station football and hockey teams went to Northampton but the football team was defeated by four points but no record is recorded about the hockey team.

23 May the Commanding Officer returned to Duty on the Station.

Women's Auxiliary visit the Station

Sunday 27 May the following four women representing the Woman's Auxiliary visited the Station and were shown over the facilities. As there was no indication in the Operations Record Book about this Organisation it remains a mystery.

My suspicion these ladies may have been the Geraldton Catholic Church Group, who made a cottage available to the WAAAF girls for accommodation during periods of leave. I have a section elsewhere in this book about what was affectionately known as the **"The Town WAAAFERY"**.

Air Training Corps visitors

On 30 May 1945 the Officer Commanding the Air training Corps in Western Australia, WGCDR Snook made a visit to the Station bringing WGCDR Huxley and SQNLDR Halliday but there is no record of reason except the declining activities carried out by Cadets.

Note: Some 12,000 Air Training Corps Cadets went on to enter the Royal Australian Air Force during WW2. A great many young women of the Women's Air Training Corps also entered the Women's services. (these details are in a book of mine about the history of the ATC)

Complete Disbandment of No. 4SFTS

On the **31 May 1945 No.4 Service Flying Training School ceased to function** and that it would be replaced by No.87 O.B.U. (Operational Base Unit)

Aircraft on strength	90 Avro Ansons		
Personnel	7 officers	1 RAAF Nurse	1 WAAAF officer
2 Airmen Pilots	No Warrant Officers	Nil trainees	
37 WAAAF	114 RAAF	Total 162.	

This concluded entry brings to a close No.4 SFTS, which was part of the E.A.T.S. (Empire Air training Scheme) which has fulfilled an important Role in the defence of the Empire.

Signed by; Squadron Leader (indecipherable) the temporary Commanding Officer.
(no date)

No. 4 Service Flying Training School, Geraldton.

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 become 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 Midland 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 aircraft they had with an enclosed gun turret, a retractable undercarriage, and was initially known as a 3 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.

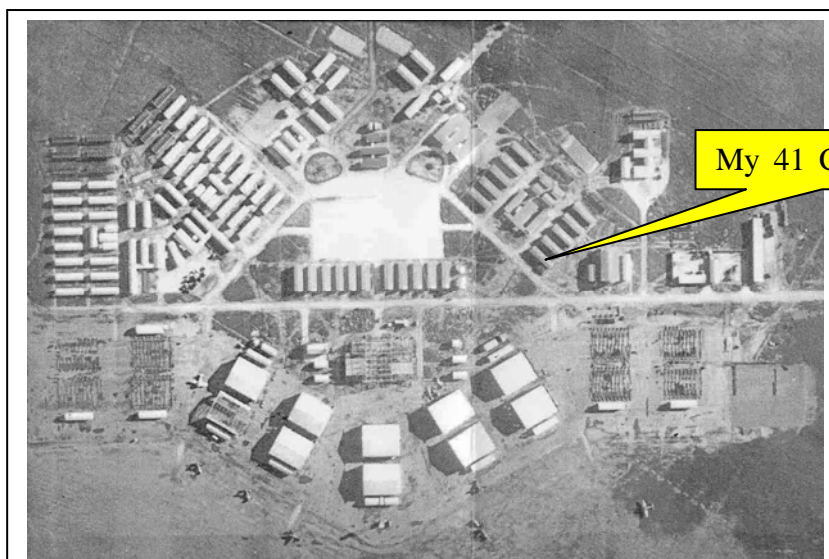
Not long afterwards we finally arrived in the town and port of Geraldton after a 22 hour train trip for the 300 mile trip. Certainly not one of speediest of journeys.

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 multi-engine flying training in the Empire Air Training Scheme. (EATS). 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 hangars 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 aircraft 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 awaited the outcome 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 we 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.



Typical of the accommodation huts used on Air Force Bases, 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 etc. The number of Pilot Trainees housed was usually up to thirty.

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 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.



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 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 but 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 any where 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.

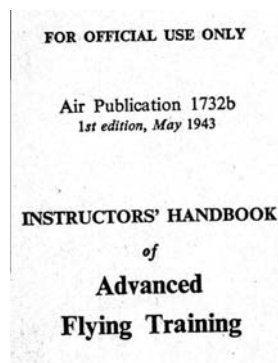
Modesty was not allowed, for in the showers, there were no doors, so when sprogs were waiting their turn to get to the water you were expected to get out and dry yourself outside the shower. All sorts of banter was carried on regarding one's endowments. After a day of running between lectures, physical 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. This looked unfair but when the time arrived for us to receive these little pleasures the original outrage was conveniently forgotten. The usual lining up occurred then we would file past the kitchen staff, who dished up and dropped onto any plate proffered a heap of their responsibility ... a dob of potato etc. Laden with your plates of "goodies" you made your way to the nearest trestle table, usually in company of one of your course or a 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).

It was in November, my "pay" suddenly sky rocked from 66 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 unbelievable. How anyone could talk above it or be able to hear was beyond comprehension. Taxing 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 not 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 advancing towards the nose of the aircraft. Anywhere else and he would have been carved up by those circling

propellers.

"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,"** came 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 off 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," came 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 did not 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 a "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-codling us with sheets etc.

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 we 18 year olds headed for the milk bars. Fruit salad and icecream or rockmelon and icecream 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 licence 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 grow, 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 taxiing 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 (wrong) 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 two 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.

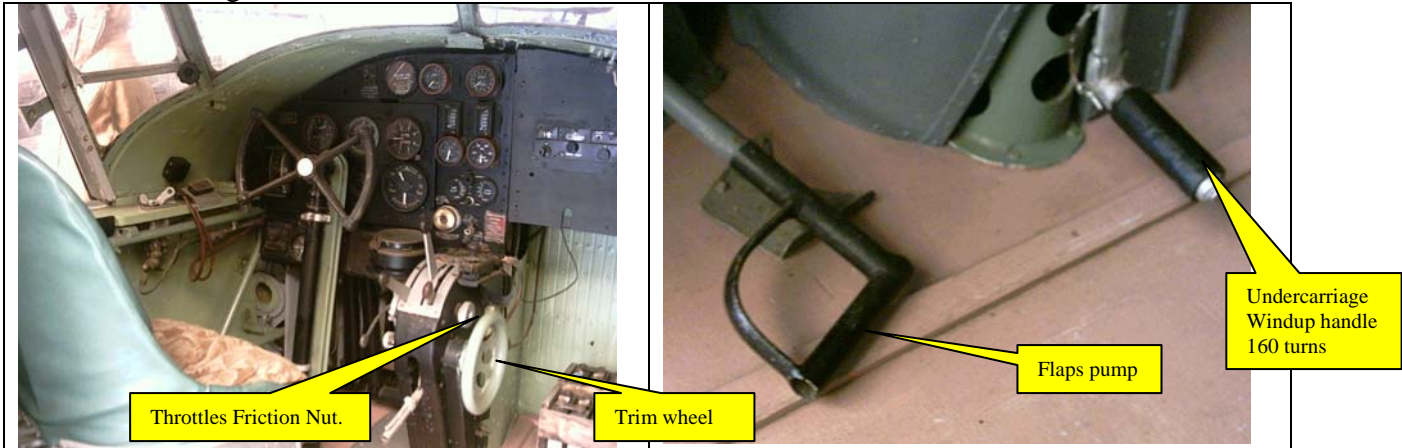
"Ok Jubbs, a forced landing!" We were at 4,000 feet and east of the Base. Everything appeared to have been done to his satisfaction so after "power on" and reaching a 1000 feet I was introduced to a Precautionary Landing procedure. Something new each day appears to be the norm. After his demonstration 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 practise. Suddenly, one day I was scheduled to fly with a new Instructor, Flying

Officer 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 "**homesteads**" 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

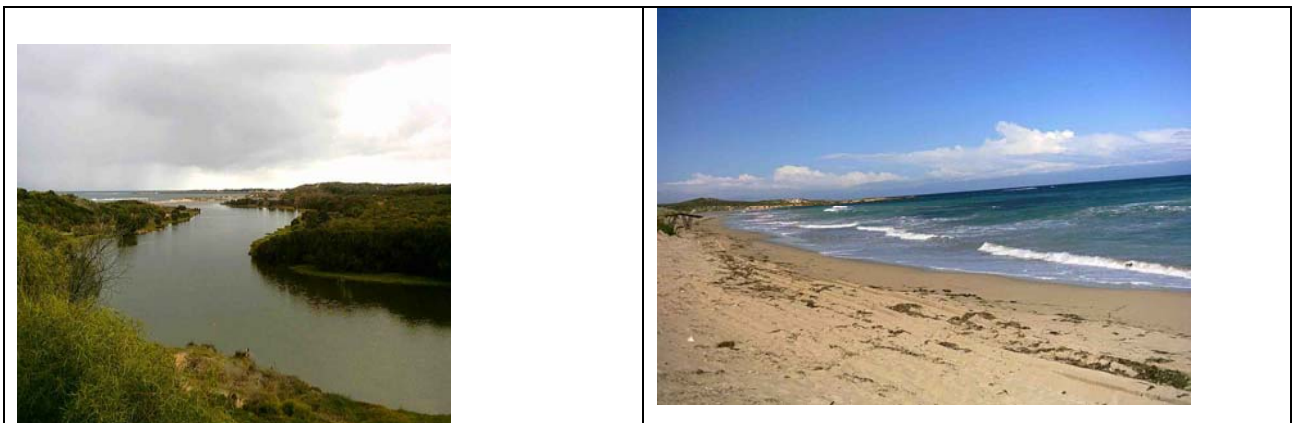
Two days later saw me on a **2.50 hour Solo Cross Country.** If any one should get lost inland you knew that if you headed west you would arrive over the coast with the Indian Ocean stretching thousands of miles to Africa.



<p>RAAFA Heritage Museum Anson cockpit static display. It was once owned by the well known Captain Jimmy Woods, a WW1 Pilot.</p>	<p>Both vital pieces of manually operated equipment was innovative technology when the Anson was designed in the mid 1930s.</p>
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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 did not 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



<p>Low level down the Irwin River was exhilarating and knowing as I departed the river entrance I would steep turn right.</p>	<p>North along the coast until I reached the Greenough River entrance for there I had to turn eastwards & head for the airfield.</p>
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"Get lower!" came the first order in the 2.50 hour flight.

I dropped to what appeared to be inches lower so that we were 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 the 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 were 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 and all the time you are trying to keep level with the aircraft outside my port 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 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," came 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 pattern 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 every daylight 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 applied 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.

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

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 practised continually 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.F. girls walked into a revolving propeller. No details were released and 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 an occasion as I was flying on an inland cross-country exercise at around 3000 feet. A host of willy-willies appeared on 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 willy-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 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 to the progress in the War. Not only were we informed (most likely very 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 "Newsreel" 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 waged 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 then 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.

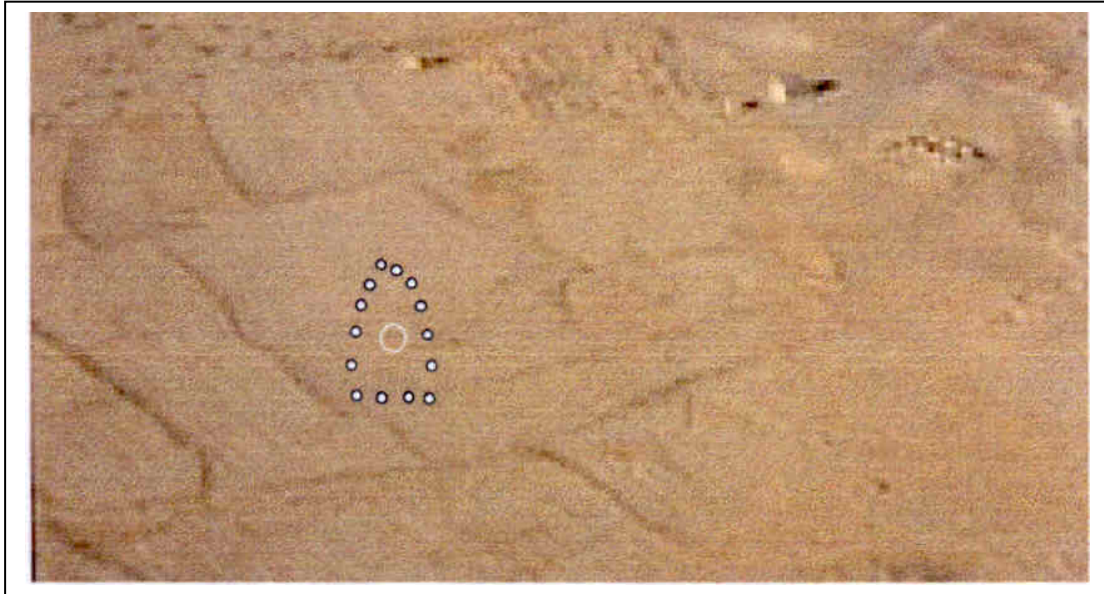
"Bloody Jubbsie!" he exclaimed, "you frightened the daylight out of me."

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 flight 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.



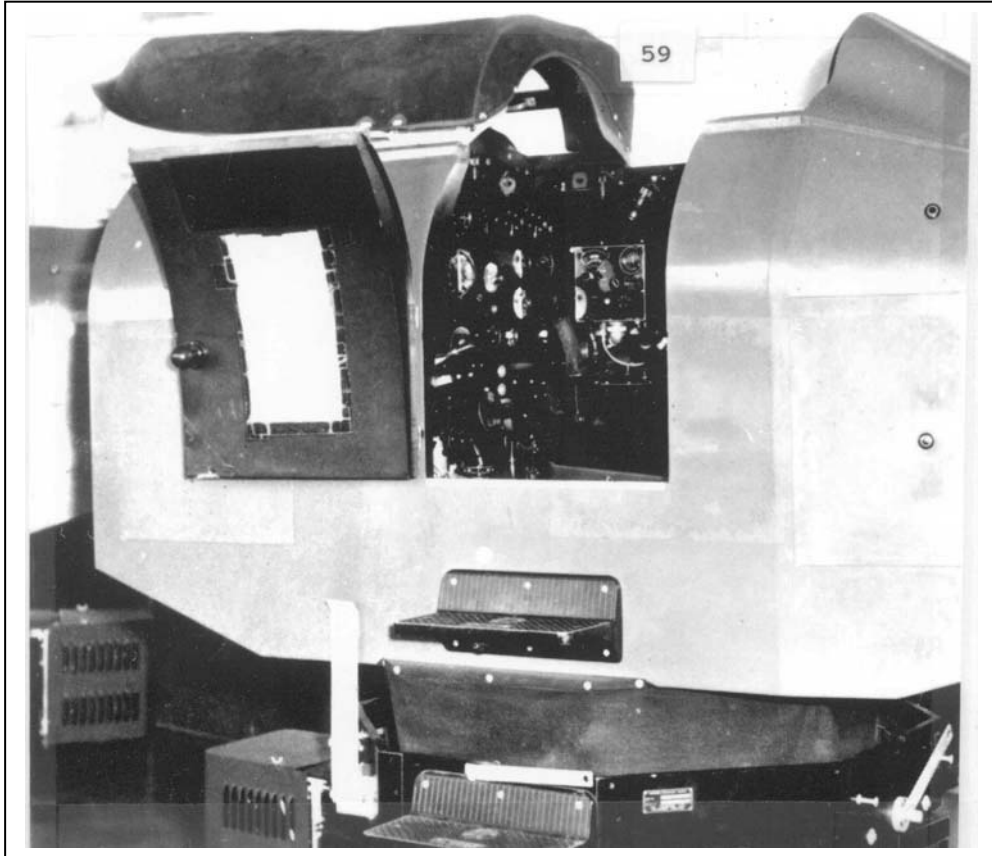
The passing of 60+ years has played havoc on these once protective concrete bunkers for the Air Force Armourers observing our puny practice bomb.



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.



Bomb Sight



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 were 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 flew onto Lake Logue (dry) then back to 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

lectures together with more sophistication of techniques ... multiple bearings to obtain a fix, running bearings etc 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 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 F/lt. Storry for one hour. Another instrument flight with Sgt Mc Cleod 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

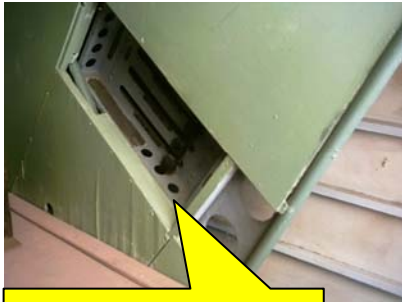
February 9th saw Don and I on another long Cross Country but this time our roles were reversed. I checked the aircraft from the outside especially all flying control surfaces, engines, tyres and fuel caps. I now wonder if any of the Instructors ever watched us doing this inspection. After entering the 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 cock 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.



These fuel cocks had rope attached for ease of use.

When all checks were made and my safety harness locked in position I commenced the engine start up procedure with the ground crew 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.



<p>There are three concrete Pill Boxes located away from the bombing target was where Armourers took shelter when plotting sightings where every practice bomb landed.</p>	<p>This larger Pill Box, located between the other two, was where the Armourer in Charge combined the three bearings to record the exact spot where each of my bombs landed.</p>
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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 US.(unserviceable)

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 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 F/O 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 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.



The secret Yuna air-strip as it is today, the bitumen surface has long disappeared, and 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, F/Lt Storry**, and then the day following with F/0 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 huge 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) have 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 uneventful 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 donot recall ever having any dinghy drill, survival techniques or the best way to land on water. As we didnt 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 certainly did 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.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 Airmanship.

I had religiously perfected this type of landing and today certainly proved the old saying that "practice makes perfect" The circuit actually took me directly down wind over the Base Headquarters at 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, (later) **GROUP CAPTAIN. 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, 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.



I continued on flying after the Wings Parade so on March 20& 21 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		
hours	Pilot	Day	45.25	Night	6.15	Solo	51.40	LINK	Trainer 36.00

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.

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

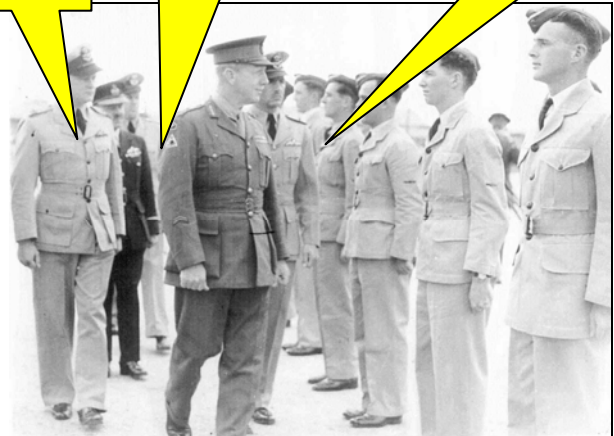
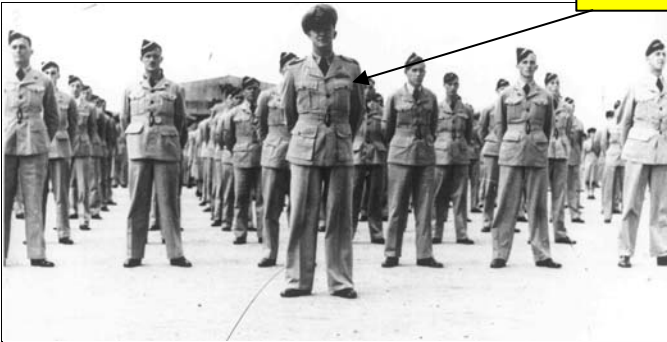


A most impressive Parade was held on this occasion for it marked one of the most successful training ventures ever undertaken to produce such massive numbers of trained Air Crews. Lt General Robertson is shown acknowledging FLTLT Doug Burton, who was responsible for this Parade, in front of Graduating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

FLTLT D.Burton

AIR Commodore Brownell
O.C. Western Command Area

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



FLLT Doug Burton, Flight Commander for the **Graduating No.42 Course.**

FLTLT D.Burton invited Lt. General Robertson to inspect No.42 Course before Presenting their Wings.



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, Dongara, 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 loosing 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	
<u>June '44 to May 1945 = 245 lost</u>	
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
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
Middle East	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 Australia 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 WAAAF officer, 177 WAAAF, 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 were 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.