



Outlook

AHSA News

Vol. 38 No. 1 February 2022

Farewell to the Classic Hornet



RAAF Hornet A21-020 leaving to conduct a night mission during Exercise Phoenix Black/Nigrum Pugio 20. (Department of Defence). For the Classic Hornet farewell, see page 9

Newsletter of the
Aviation Historical
Society of Australia, Inc.
A0033653P
ARBN 092-671-773

Website:
www.ahsa.org.au

Facebook Group:
www.facebook.com/groups/AHSAust

Aviation Historical Society of Australia Inc.

Our 2021/22 Committee:

President:	Dave Prossor president@ahsa.org.au
Vice-President:	Derek Buckmaster vp@ahsa.org.au
Secretary:	Mark Pilkington secretary@ahsa.org.au
Treasurer:	Robert Van Woerkom treasurer@ahsa.org.au
Membership Secretary:	David Knight membership@ahsa.org.au

Committee Members:

GPCAPT David Fredericks
Dion Makowski
Phil Vabre

Outlook AHSA News is the quarterly newsletter of the Aviation Historical Society of Australia Inc.

Outlook Contacts:

Postal address: PO Box 461
Lilydale, Victoria, 3140
Editor: Derek Buckmaster
Email: outlook@ahsa.org.au

AHSA Meetings:

Melbourne meetings are held on the 4th Wednesday of each month, at the Air Force Association offices in Camberwell Road, Hawthorn. Meetings are also streamed on Zoom.

Membership of the AHSA for the 2022 calendar year costs \$50 in Australia and \$85 for the rest of the world. A membership application form can be downloaded from our website: www.ahsa.org.au

The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Aviation Historical Society of Australia Inc.

© AHSA Inc., 2022



What's Inside?

President's Comment	2
AHSA news	3
Air Mail - Correspondence	4
Coming Aviation Events	4
Civil Aviation Centenary Update	5
Civil Aviation Snippets	5
RAAF Centenary Update	8
Military Aviation Snippets	9
Australian Industry News Snippets	11
Museum News	12
New Books on Australian Aviation History	13
Book Reviews	16

President's Comment

We are now at the start of the year of 2022. I trust that all our members had a safe and enjoyable Christmas and New Year.

Slowly, but slowly, I can see we are at the end of the repeated and lengthy lockdowns due to the COVID-19 virus. For anyone of senior years it was disappointing to lose those last two years due to the lockdowns. Our tenure is only so long.

At Moorabbin airport, my home base, I was surprised on one particular day when the wind was giving a good crosswind of 15 knots gusting to 18 and there were at least four Cessna 152 trainers taxiing out to test the merits of the aircraft and the junior instructor. No doubt said instructor was just keen to get another hour into his logbook and a dollar in his empty pocket. The max crosswind for a Cessna is normally 15 knots. The student no doubt got a thrill on being in a crosswind with aircraft and instructor at the limit. My CPL holder elected to cancel his flight that day due to the crosswind. Smart man.

It was however good to see an increase in the movement of aircraft at Moorabbin and that life was starting to pick up again. I am of the view that the industry has lost a lot of good people who have elected to take up a non-aviation occupation that pays a more regular salary and with less stops and starts. That applies all the way from students to instructors to commercial pilots and even airline pilots.

Slowly the world is reopening.

The Illawarra Airshow, although with weather issues, on the weekend of 27-28 November 2021 was a good start to the airshow season. It was also the last showing of the RAAF F/A-18 "Classic" Hornet now being phased out in favour of the new F-35.

We are in for a reported wet summer. I would like to think that that will not put a damper on owners and pilots getting out and about in their aircraft be it just to fly or to go to an airshow or event.

Coming AHSA Melbourne Meetings:

(No meeting in January)

February 23rd

March 23rd

Attend in person at the Air Force Association, 24 Camberwell Road, Hawthorn - or join via Zoom

While in lockdown there has been an interesting number of emails flicking back and forth regarding DC-3 modifications as well as an interesting saga on A-26 Invaders that have visited Australia since WWII. Good material for an Aviation Heritage article. I was surprised at the numbers that have come here.

Correct me if I am wrong but at the back of my memory cells I seem to recall an issue some years back about Indonesian A-26 aircraft flying in and out of Australian airspace in the north-west. Can anyone add to that?

The number of airline aircraft parked at Alice Springs has increased and decreased as the weeks have rolled on. Photos show more than 130 aircraft parked in the dry conditions. A few have been returned to service. Australia's equivalent of the Davis-Monthan and the California airline aircraft parking airports.

Drones have been noted flying over the Alice Springs aircraft. Enthusiasts and media having a good look. Drones are certainly becoming a thing of today. I look at jobs for pilots. There are few but a lot of adverts for experienced drone pilots. One only has to look at the real estate adverts to see extensive use of drones for airborne photos. I nearly met one at 2000 feet on a recent local flight.

March and April 2022 have three major airshow events to attend. Anyone with a caravan to hire for an extended stay?

By now we are all getting used to Zoom meetings and use of the QR codes for check-in. How the world has changed in a very short space of time.

I wish everyone a prosperous 2022 - get your two vaccinations and wear a mask as required!

Best regards,

David Prossor
President, AHSA Inc.

AHSA NEWS

New mailing wrap for Aviation Heritage journal

Members will have noticed that we have gone to a new method of delivering Aviation Heritage - using a waterproof plastic wrapper in place of the previous paper envelope. We have engaged a mailing company which collects the printed publication from the printers and then covers them in a plastic bag, adds address labels and gets them mailed. We get one very reasonable bill for the three tasks.

This has in turn freed Brian George from all of the above tasks, which he has been doing faithfully for some ten years. We sincerely thank Brian for his past work, it has been a mammoth responsibility for him to undertake every three months. Now he can sit back and enjoy reading AH without all the extra effort.

October Melbourne meeting – AGM

The October meeting was our 22nd Annual General Meeting, held online via Zoom due to Victorian State Government COVID-19 restrictions.

Our President David Prossor opened the proceedings and provided his annual President's Report, followed by an update on our membership numbers by Membership Secretary David Knight, showing that our membership numbers are stable (new members are making up for those leaving) but not growing. Treasurer Robert Van Woerkom then provided the finance report, which showed we are still in good financial health despite reducing our subscriptions for the 2021 calendar year.

Roland Jahne presided over the election of Committee Members for the 2021/22 year. The current committee were all standing again unopposed, and therefore there was no change in the AHSA Inc. Committee (as you can see from the list on page 2).

The annual subscription fees recommended by the Committee were accepted (these are also listed on page 2), and the meeting was drawn to a close by new President David Prossor.

November Melbourne meeting

Our November meeting was a combined face-to-face plus Zoom meeting on 24 November. Our speaker was Lance Halvorson MBE who presented to us from Canberra via the merits of Zoom.

His subject was "Strike Aircraft of the RAAF – 1953 to 2010" and he gave an excellent talk about the various aircraft involved in strike capability as well as his experiences with these aircraft, which included the Canberra, F-4 Phantom and the F-111.



The meeting was attended in person by some 18 members at the Air Force Association facility and some 18 via zoom. It was a good talk with questions answered afterwards. A video recording is available for viewing on the AHSA website.

With thanks to committee member Group Captain David Fredericks, Director of History and Heritage Services, RAAF, we had a number of books relating to the RAAF and RAAF history that we were able to give as door prizes. Several were also awarded to Zoom participants and delivered by post!

December Melbourne barbecue

A good-sized group of Melbourne members enjoyed our traditional end-of-year barbecue at Moorabbin Air Museum on Saturday 11 December. Committee members Mark Pilkington and Phil Vabre provided their cooking skills on the barbecue under sunny blue skies for a perfect lunch. Thanks to President Dave Prossor for organising the day and arranging the ice, and to Derek Buckmaster for arranging the food.

Welcome to our new members

We welcome the following new members who joined since the last quarterly newsletter:

Brian Bedford, Victoria
Jarryd Cripps, Victoria
WGCDR Lance Halvorson MBE, ACT (Honorary)
Matt Henderson, NSW (Honorary)
Peter Hughes, ACT
John Royds, Queensland
Nick Sayer, Queensland
GPCAPT Ernie Walsh, NSW

Nick Sayer is re-joining the AHSA, as he explained to our Membership Secretary:

"Myself, Ron Cuskelly, my schoolmate Gary Martin and three other enthusiasts met in Brisbane one evening in 1970 to discuss the merits of starting a Queensland Branch of the AHSA. This we did. At the time I was working at ANZ Bank so naturally became the Foundation Treasurer. Next year I chose to join the RAAF where I spent the next 9 years working as a radio technician on Mirage, Hercules and Boeing 707 types. I left RAAF in 1980 and moved back to Brisbane to raise a family and enter a new career in IT. By that time I had lost touch with AHSA (Qld).

"In about 1983 I was looking through aviation magazines at a Daisy Hill newsagent when a gentleman sidled up next to me and asked if I liked aircraft. That gent turned out to be Dick Hitchins, president of Queensland Air Museum (QAM). We talked, provided updates and I discovered that nine years prior AHSA (Qld) had basically morphed into QAM. I immediately joined QAM and have held a number of positions there since then, including the role of Registrar for the past 30 years or so.

"Now I'm closing the loop by reconnecting with AHSA in retirement."

Search for a Secretary

Our current Secretary (Mark Pilkington) has indicated that he plans to move on to other activities at the end of 2022, so the Committee are commencing an early search for a new Secretary for the AHSA. If you have some skills in organisation and are keen to contribute to the future of the AHSA, please contact the President (David Prossor) by email: President@AHSA.org.au.

Note that our monthly committee meetings are held via Zoom, so you don't need to be Melbourne-based to consider this position.

Time to renew your subscription – And our web store now takes credit cards

This is the time of year to renew your annual membership subscription to the Society.

And to make this easier, we have added the ability to pay with a credit card to the AHSA online store. We can take all major credit cards such as Visa, Mastercard, etc. You can still pay via PayPal if you desire.

Just don't forget to renew!

New "Members Only" content on the AHSA website

Members will have recently received an email providing them with new login details for the AHSA website. This is to allow access to new "members only" content which we have started adding to the site.

The most important news is that the **Aviation Heritage Web Archive** is back – just login to the website and you can browse back-issues of the AHSA Journal at your leisure.

So far we have loaded Journals for the following years: 1970, 1980, 1990, 1991, 2000 and 2010 – there are a total of 22 journals available so far, and more are being added (one year at a time) as resources allow. Members can read the journals online, or download a PDF copy for personal use. An example showing the Journals of volume 26 (1991) is shown at the top right of this page.

But note that this content is **only available to financial members of the AHSA Inc**, and you must be logged in on the website to view this "members only" content, so make sure that you renew your annual subscription!

This day in Australian aviation history

Another small new feature we have added to the website is a section showing what took place on this day in Australian aviation history. A database of events is being populated and each time you visit the website you will see events that took place on that day in earlier years.

AIR MAIL – CORRESPONDENCE

Thanks to members who have provided feedback, questions, corrections, additions and updates. Contact the Editor by email at Outlook@ahsa.org.au.

Several submissions from correspondents are included in this quarter's newsletter.

COMING AVIATION EVENTS

5 March	Temora Showcase #1
5 March	Spitfire Association 60 th Anniversary Dinner, Temora Aviation Museum, Temora, NSW
13 March	Tyabb Airshow, Tyabb, VIC
13 March	Australian Gliding Museum Open Day, Bacchus Marsh, VIC
20 March	Serpentine Air Race, Serpentine, VIC
26-27 March	Warbirds Over Scone, NSW
27 March	Essendon Centenary Open Day, VIC
April	Aviation Cultures Spotlight: Indigenous Peoples & Aviation (online)
9 April	Temora Showcase #2
23-24 April	Sale Air Show, West Sale Airport, VIC
21 May	Temora Showcase #3
14-15 May	Central Coast Airshow, Warnervale, NSW
2-3 July	Brisbane Airshow, Watts Bridge Airfield, QLD
15-17 July	Aviation Cultures Conference Mk. VI, University of Southern Queensland, Toowoomba, QLD
24 September	Temora Showcase #4
15 & 16 October	Warbirds Downunder, Temora, NSW
3-5 March 2023	Australian International Airshow, Avalon, VIC

With all events, please check before you make bookings or travel arrangements to ensure the event is still on. The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in numerous event cancellations and postponements even at short notice.

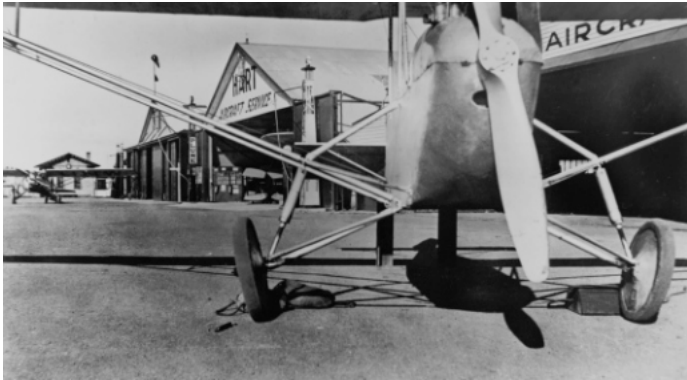
CIVIL AVIATION CENTENARY UPDATE

2021 marks the centenary of the founding of the Civil Aviation Branch of the Department of Defence. We will be reporting news and events marking this centenary all through the centennial year from March 2021 to March 2022.

Essendon Fields Open Day

A public Open Day to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Essendon Fields Airport was planned for last year, and delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The new date for the Open Day has been announced as Sunday 27 March, from 10am to 3pm. Some activities require prior registration, so check the EF100 website for details.

The website is worth a visit in its own right - featuring numerous videos, a timeline of the airport's history, with dozens of articles and stories describing the history of the airport, and community submissions by people who remember visiting or working at the airport. www.ef100.com.au



Above: The Hart Aircraft Service Hangar at Essendon aerodrome. (CAHS via EF100 website)

CIVIL AVIATION SNIPPETS

Aviation clearing auction

Items from Nelson Wilson's aviation collection were sold by auction on Saturday 12 December. The online only auction had a number of items of interest to aircraft owners and aviation enthusiasts. For many years Nelson has maintained a hangar on the west side of Lilydale aerodrome.

The online auction was conducted by Yarra valley Auctions. Items included a Cessna 150H aircraft, VH-DSW, that went for \$20K. There were Tiger Moth BTH magnetos, Tiger Moth parts and Gipsy Major parts. A pair of P8 compasses went for \$220. A wooden Tiger Moth prop went for \$2,200. A CAC Boomerang spinner went for \$6,500. A Boomerang exhaust went for \$1,700. And a Wirraway instrument panel for \$3,400. A Vultee Vengeance instrument panel was sold for \$3,600. A Mustang instrument panel went for \$4,400 while a Tiger Moth panel including a P8 compass for \$380. A Long Harlequin 1930s engine, apparently complete and ready to go, went for \$1,900. A Ford T-model car engine aero engine conversion went for \$900.

Nelson's DH Tiger Moth, VH-PJI, was sold to AAAA Vice President Gordon Rich-Phillips back in March 2021 and is now based at Tyabb, Vic.

The aspect of an online auction is not new but makes for an interesting bidding from both local and even abroad. Bids were being taken in the weeks leading up to the cut off date. An interesting event.

(DLP)

Farewell to Australia's last 727

Despite efforts by several historical groups to conserve the aircraft, the final Boeing 727 tri-jet remaining in Australia, VH-TBS, was broken up for scrap at Brisbane airport on 17 November 2021.

The 727 ushered in the jet age for Australian domestic passengers.

This particular aeroplane, A 727-77QC "Quick Change" model was initially purchased by Ansett Airlines, being delivered to Essendon on 2 November 1969 and was registered VH-RMS. The "Quick Change" configuration allowed the aircraft to be utilised in a 98 seat passenger configuration during the day and as a freighter at night. It was chartered by the pop group ABBA during their Australian tour in 1977.

RMS operated Ansett's final Boeing 727-77 passenger service from Adelaide (West Beach) to Melbourne (Tullamarine) as AN213 on 29 January 1980.

The aircraft went through multiple owners following Ansett (including Air Nauru, as C2-RN7), and was subsequently operated by TAA Cargo, Australian Airlines Cargo and Qantas Freight.

It was finally donated to the Australian Training College, Brisbane as a training aid in March 2004.

(DB)



Above: Boeing 727 VH-TBS at Brisbane on 17 May 2013 while being used as a training aid. (Robert Livingstone)



Above: End of the road for VH-RMS/TBS - cut up for scrap at Brisbane airport, 17 November 2021 (David Thollar)



Above: While owned by Air Nauru and leased to TAA Cargo, C2-RN7 photographed at Perth April 1985. It sat on the ground all day at Perth between night cargo flights to the Eastern States, getting back to Perth each dawn, hotly pursued by Ansett's VH-RMX. (Geoff Goodall)



Above: Again at Perth, in January 1988, now owned by Australian Airlines Limited and registered VH-TBS. (Geoff Goodall)



Above: ABBA coming down the stairs from VH-RMS during their 1977 tour of Australia. Notice the band's logo painted on the aircraft.

Last chance to view the RHSV MacRobertson 1934 Race exhibition

Noel Jackling contacted us to remind members that the Royal Historical Society of Victoria's exhibition "Tales from the MacRobertson International Air Races" **will come to an end on 23 March**, so make sure you take the opportunity to view the display.

The RHSV Gallery is in downtown Melbourne, at 239 A'Beckett Street.

For more details, visit www.historyvictoria.org.au



Farewell Alitalia, hello ITA

Aircraft operated by Alitalia have graced Australian skies for many years, linking the large Italian community in Australia with their home country.

Keen-eyed industry watchers may have noticed that on 15 October 2021 Alitalia (Società Aerea Italiana S.p.A.) ceased operations and its assets were transferred to ITA Airways (Italia Trasporto Aereo S.p.A.) which then re-started a pared-back set of routes - with no destinations in Australia.

Alitalia had been unprofitable for several years and was placed into "extraordinary administration" in 2017. It became wholly-owned by the Italian government on 17 March 2020. The closure of the company had been announced on 24 August 2021.

ITA is flying to 44 destinations and aims to increase that number to 74 in four years. They took over 52 aircraft from Alitalia and plan to grow the fleet to 105 in the same time frame.

(DB)



Above: Alitalia Boeing 747-243B I-DEMB at Melbourne airport on 23 July 1977 (Roderick Smith)

Brisbane Airport noise complaints to be investigated

Noise complaints at Brisbane Airport will be investigated through a community forum that will include former Queensland premier Rob Borbidge and former senator Claire Moore.

The study into aircraft noise at the airport will be the third since the opening of a \$1.1 billion parallel runway in July 2020.

Residents complaints increased seven-fold the first month after the runway opened, culminating in the Aircraft Noise

Ombudsman beginning an investigation into complaints in December 2020.

In July 2021 Airservices Australia announced an investigation into the complaints, as part of its 12-month review of Brisbane Airport's runway operations.

Deputy Prime Minister Barnaby Joyce said the community forum would provide community feedback to the Airservices Australia inquiry.

The community forum, which will be advisory only, will meet monthly and report directly to Mr Joyce.

"The government recognises that residents across a number of Brisbane suburbs have been affected by noise issues since the new runway opened," Mr Joyce said.

"We understand the impact this can have on living standards and we want to give those impacted the chance to have their voices heard and issues addressed," he said.

It was made clear that a new environmental impact study into the parallel runway cannot be ordered by the Airservices inquiry, or by the community forum.

Source: Brisbane Times

Times Past: Yarrowonga Air Show, January 1960

By Lindsay Nothrop

A Little History

The Yarrowonga district in northern Victoria has had an association with aviation since the early days. The town of Yarrowonga is situated on the southern bank of the Murray River while the smaller town of Mulwala is located across the River on the northern bank in NSW. The following is a small selection of aviation-related items up to the time of the 1960 airshow.

Douglas Sloane of Savernake in NSW just north of Mulwala, after building model aeroplanes, decided to build a full-size aircraft complete with an engine of his own design¹. He went to war before he could achieve flight and was killed in an aircraft crash in England. His tailless biplane of 1912 now resides in the Mulwala museum.



Above: The 1912 Sloane Biplane now on display at Mulwala.

Aircraft offering joyrides were active in the district from the early 20s. My grandfather paid for a flight for his eldest daughter in an aircraft that landed on our farm in that period but the identities of pilot and machine are now lost in the mists of time. My aunt, about 11 or 12 years old, was considered the only one old enough to benefit from the experience.

John Duigan, who in 1910 became the first Australian to build and fly an aircraft, ran a motor garage in Yarrowonga after his flying days were over. My grandfather was one of his customers and bought both Nash and Studebaker cars from Duigan. I used the Studebaker as a parts car in restoration of another of Grandpa's cars.

Larkin ran a trial air service to Yarrowonga with the Lascowl G-AUEZ/VH-UEZ in about 1930 delivering newspapers and mail by 10.00 am on a Saturday.



Above: Locals were keen to inspect the Larkin Lascowl G-AUEZ/VH-UEZ when it delivered its first load of newspapers and mail around 1930.

An unusual tragedy occurred during WW II. On 18 March 1943 troops were practicing parachute jumping at nearby Tocumwal. One jumper, Private EF Johnson, pulled his ripcord too soon and became snagged on the tailplane². As the story goes, the crew tried everything they could to rescue the trailing hapless parachutist but to no avail. Understandably, no pilot wanted to land a plane with a person dangling below it.

By this time fuel was running low and darkness was approaching I was told, so the last desperate measure was to release the parachutist as the plane passed very low over the expanse of Lake Mulwala where a person may at least have a slim survival chance by falling into water³. Johnson did not release his harness as hoped probably because he had lost consciousness by this time so repeated lower passes were made striking his body on the water until it dislodged. A crowd of about 600 had gathered to watch and motor boats were at the ready but Private Johnson's body was not recovered from the Lake until four days later. The incident aircraft was most likely Douglas DC-2 A30-9 as it was the only DC-2 on charge with PTU at that time based in Tocumwal. That aircraft now resides in the Moorabbin Aircraft Museum collection.



Above: Douglas DC-2, formerly A30-9, in a dismantled state at Tyabb Vic. on 29.12.1997. This was apparently the aircraft involved in the snagged parachute drama at Yarrowonga in March 1943.

By the late 50s there were four light aircraft owned by locals. Mick Clarke, the local carrier had Tiger Moth VH-BIT in which he was in the habit of performing aerobatics over the edge of town on Sunday afternoons. Frank Cavanagh, an older, wealthy and somewhat eccentric farmer from Wilby just south of Yarrowonga, purchased a new Cessna 175 from Arthur Schutt of Moorabbin. Flying lessons were part of the deal and it was an extended period of time before Frank obtained his PPL.

Rupert Starr, an elderly car dealer in town owned an Auster. Similarly the garage proprietor across the River at Mulwala, Harold Raps, owned an Auster J4 VH-CYR until a landing accident and fire on 12 October 1961 sadly claimed his life.

The arrival of Supermarine Seagull VH-ALB (called a Bristol Pegasus in the local press who confused the engine make with that of the aircraft) became the first aircraft to land on the lake on 19 November 1960 and generated considerable interest for the town. A week later an air service to Melbourne known as the "Cypress Gardens Taxi Service" began using a Cessna 175 with a one-way fare of £5⁴.

The 1960 Event

Although billed as an airshow, a fly-in may have been a more apt description of the event as most of the aircraft were drawn from the surrounding region. Yarrawonga at the time only had a population of about 3,000 so expectations could not be high. The town also did not have a designated airfield or landing ground so a farmer's paddock next to the town boundary was used.

The year 1960 was still in the era when getting up close to an aircraft was not a common experience for the average person so just being able to wander amongst the planes was worth the entry fee. It was a fine clear day but even so the crowd was less than those for a Saturday football match.

Aircraft present included a couple of Austers, a Piper Tripacer VH-WFS, a Fairchild Argus, 2 Ryan STMs, a Chipmunk VH-WFC, Tiger Moth, Cessna 180 and a Bell 47J from Ansett-ANA offering joy flights. The Ryans were the highlight with formation buzzing of the town to draw out paying spectators.



Above: Ryan STM VH-AGW was one of a pair finished in plain aluminum with pink dayglo control surfaces. After restoration it is still active today.



Above: Fairchild 24W-41A Argus VH-AIO came across from Shepparton. According to Geoff Goodall's website it now lies in the shallows of the Indian Ocean; thankfully without loss of life.



Above: Bell 47J Ranger VH-INR up from Melbourne did a good trade with joy flights. A few weeks later tragedy struck when it crashed at Melton Weir Victoria and all on board were killed.

Right: F-35A A35-008 flown by Flight Lieutenant Ross Bowman from No. 2 OCU, performs a handling display practice at RAAF Base Williamtown prior to the Wings over Illawarra Airshow. The gloomy weather for the practice continued for the show! (Department of Defence)



Above: Auster J/1B Aiglet VH-WFA now flies as VH-WWG.

Notes:

1. "To Fly Like an Eagle" by Alexander and Ann Sloane, A & A Sloane, Yarrawonga 1996
2. RAAF Paratroop Training Unit Operations Record Book from March 1943 via Matt Henderson of the Tocumwal Aviation Museum.
3. Border Morning Mail, 22.3.1943, page 2 via TROVE
4. Yarrawonga Chronicle, November 1960

RAAF CENTENARY UPDATE



March 2021 marked the centenary of the formation of the RAAF and we will be reporting relevant news and events throughout the centenary year from March 2021 to March 2022.

Wings Over Illawarra Air Show

Following the disappointment of the cancellation of the 2021 Avalon International Air Show, where a large involvement by the RAAF to mark its centenary was highly anticipated, the Wings Over Illawarra (WOI) air show became the next major event at which the RAAF could showcase the centenary of the service.

Unfortunately the weather for the weekend of 27-28 November was damp and low cloud hampered some of the flying displays. But the weather did not dampen the participation from the RAAF in their centenary year. Numerous RAAF aircraft were on display, and many performed flying routines.





C-130J Hercules A97-447 lands at Shellharbour airport in preparation for the Wings Over Illawarra Airshow 2021. The tail art commemorates the 75th anniversary of 37 Squadron, showing (from the top) Lodestar, Dakota, C-130A and C-130J aircraft. (Department of Defence)



Above: Lockheed P2V-7 Neptune of HARS (former A89-273) lifts off into the gloom at WOI 2021. (Alan Flett)



Above: RAN Sikorsky Seahawk MH-60R N48-007 hovers in the mist at WOI 2021 (Alan Flett)



Above: Hawk A27-31 wearing RAAF 100 tail markings taxis at WOI 2021 (Alan Flett)



Above: Group Captain Jason Easthope, Chief of Staff Air Combat Group, salutes the crowd before his take off in a "Classic" Hornet. (Department of Defence)



Above: "Classic" Hornet A21-44 performs a handling display in the gloom at WOI 2021 (Alan Flett)

MILITARY AVIATION SNIPPETS

Farewell to the Classic Hornet

A ceremony was held at RAAF Base Williamtown on 29 November 2021 to mark the end of service of the Lockheed-Martin F/A-18 "Classic" Hornet. This marked the end of more than 30 years of service by this "fourth generation" fighter, which was first received into RAAF strength in April 1985.



Above: The Hon Peter Dutton MP, Minister for Defence and Chief of Air Force Air Marshal Mel Hupfeld, AO, DSC, in front of aircraft A21-02 at the Farewell ceremony for the F/A-18 Hornet at RAAF Base Williamtown (Department of Defence)

The remaining few active Classic Hornets—that have been employed in the defence of our nation since 1985—were farewelled by Minister for Defence, the Hon Peter Dutton MP, Chief of the Air Force, Air Marshal Mel Hupfeld, AO, DSC, Air Force aviators and industry partners at a ceremony on 29 November 2021 at RAAF Base Williamtown.

The aircraft were from No. 75 Squadron, based at RAAF Base Tindal, near Katherine in the Northern Territory; the last "Classic" Hornet squadron to change over to the F-35A.

Air Marshal Hupfeld, an F/A-18A/B pilot and Fighter Combat Instructor, praised the extraordinary capability the "Classic" Hornets have provided to Australia's air power, and the contribution they have made in so many theatres of engagement.

"It is quite fitting that in Air Force's Centenary year we say goodbye to the Classic Hornet, a fighter jet that has been an integral part of Australia's defence capability for more than three decades," he said.

"As the time of the Classic Hornet draws to a close after nearly 408,000 total flying hours, it's time to for the transition to the advanced lethality, survivability, and supportability delivered by the F-35A Lightning II

Air Marshal Hupfeld also noted that the Classic Hornet had been a special aircraft for Air Force, and an important piece of Australian aviation history.

"The Hornet's first operational deployment was in November 2001 to May 2002 under Operation Slipper, following the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks.

"The Australian Government agreed to deploy F/A-18A/Bs to protect the major United States Air Force air base on the Indian Ocean island of Diego Garcia, which was being used to stage operations in Afghanistan. In February 2003, it was my privilege and an honour to personally command the contingent of 14 Hornets and personnel from No. 75 Squadron that deployed to Iraq under Operation Falconer as part of Australia's contribution to the war on terror.

"This was the first operational combat deployment of Australian fighters since the Korean War, and our aviators and aircraft performed above expectations."

Air Commander Australia Air Vice-Marshal Joe Iervasi, AM, CSC, also an experienced F/A-18A/B pilot, reflected on the Classic Hornet's most recent operational employment, and the future of Australia's air combat capability.

"In 2014 to 2018, F/A-18A/B Hornet squadrons were deployed on Operation Okra as part of the Global Coalition to Defeat Daesh.

"Once again performing above expectations, on Okra the Classic Hornets flew 1937 missions, accumulating 14,780 flying hours, and delivering approximately 1,600 munitions," Air Vice-Marshal Iervasi said.

"While I'm sad to see this incredible aircraft end its role as a sentinel of Australian skies, it's an exciting time for Air Force as we enter our second century with the F-35A delivering combat air power as part of a networked joint force, to assure the ADF's ability to deter or defeat threats to Australia's interests."

The first RAAF Hornet, two-seat F/A-18B A21-101, was rolled out at the McDonnell Douglas St Louis plant on 29 October 1984.



Above: One of the Hornets and the KC-10 tanker are met by a Mirage from Williamtown at the end of the cross-Pacific ferry flight. (Picturegrams/Canberra Times)

This aircraft and A21-102 were then ferried to Australia in a record-breaking non-stop trans-Pacific flight on 17 May 1985. The 12,360km (7,680 miles) flight from US Naval Air Station Lemoore, California, to RAAF Williamtown took fifteen hours and was made possible by in-flight refuelling from USAF KC-10 tankers. The flight was led by No 2 Operational Conversion Unit (2OCU) Commanding Officer, Wing Commander Brian Robinson flying the lead aircraft and Squadron Leader Laurie Evans flying the second aircraft.



Above: This dramatic painting showing A21-101 and A21-102 during their ferry flight across the Pacific was commissioned by McDonnell Douglas.

The first two



Above: Australian-assembled two-seat Hornet A21-103 (ATF3) is rolled out for the media at Avalon on 16 November 1984. (Joe Vella)



Above: Prime Minister Bob Hawke addresses the audience at the roll-out of the two Australian-assembled Hornets at Avalon on 16 November 1984. Seated dignitaries included Minister For Defence Scholes, Minister for Defence Support Brian Howe, Chief of Air Staff Air Marshal David Evans and GAF General Manager J.R.C. Pascoe. (Joe Vella)



Above: Prime Minister Bob Hawke gets the feel for a Hornet cockpit in the front seat of A21-103. (Joe Vella)



Above: ATF4 in final assembly at GAF's Avalon facility, 16 November 1984. (Joe Vella)



Above: About to be replaced: Mirage A3-91 of 75 Squadron on display at Avalon 16 November 1984. (Joe Vella)

INDUSTRY NEWS SNIPPETS

Albatross production proposal re-emerges in Darwin



Above: Concept model of the new G-111 Albatross proposed for production by Amphibian Aerospace Industries. (AAI)

In **September 2017** the then NSW Premier, Mike Baird, announced that a manufacturer of amphibious aircraft will set up a manufacturing base at Central Coast Airport at Warnervale.

Premier Mike Baird said that Amphibian Aerospace Industries (AAI, www.amphibaircraft.com) will relocate its off-shore manufacturing to the Central Coast and become the first transport category aircraft manufacturer to set up in Australia since the 1940s.

AAI holds the type certificates for the (Grumman) HU-16 A-E and G-111 Albatross.

"This is a great day for the Central Coast – this announcement means thousands of jobs for the region with a significant flow on to the Central Coast economy," Baird said.

"The decision by AAI to locate here is a testament that NSW is Australia's prime location for business growth and investment."

Wyong Shire Council Administrator Ian Reynolds said the announcement was the culmination of over 12 months of negotiations between AAI and Central Coast Council.

"Bringing jobs to this region and enabling employment growth are some of the key priorities of Central Coast Council. There were a number of locations that AAI were investigating and we're pleased to have successfully attracted AAI to the Central Coast," he said.

AAI has stated that they will invest \$100 million to build a manufacturing plant to upgrade the Albatross with turbo-prop engines and a glass cockpit.

"We could do this from numerous countries in the world but chose Australia because there is great available aviation engineering talent, we have support from the government and it is a stable political and legal environment," said Amphibian Aircraft Group (AAG) President Khoa Hoang.

"It just made good sense to us to choose the Central Coast. It's close to Sydney and Newcastle, it's in a great location and it offers our employees a great lifestyle."

AAG was at the time headquartered in Leesburg, Virginia. The move into the new Central Coast facility was expected to be staged over three to five years.

As we now know, none of that came to fruition, and the development of an "aerospace precinct" at Warnervale airport became contentious for the Central Coast Council. A newly-elected Council decided not to proceed with the airport expansion plans in October 2017, and they eventually breached the terms of the 40-year lease they had signed with AAI. This resulted in a \$1.5 million payment to AAI to cover the company's costs.



Above: Grumman G-111 Albatross VH-NMO photographed at Avalon on 2 March 2017. This aircraft is registered to Amphibian Aircraft Technologies for development of the G-111T. (Roger McDonald)

Now fast-forward to **8 December 2021** and another announcement from AAI indicates they have signed a new deal to set up production of the G-111T Albatross, fitted with modern avionics and Pratt & Whitney PT6A-67F turbo-prop engines – this time in Darwin.

AAI Chairman Khoa Hoang said the Northern Territory government had recognised the global market potential for the G-111T Albatross and the role it could play in reviving Australia's aircraft manufacturing industry.

"It's a long time since sovereign aircraft manufacturing on this scale has been considered viable in Australia," Khoa said, "but the G-111T Albatross has one of the greatest business cases in aircraft manufacturing making it ideal to be manufactured locally and perfect to be made right here in the Northern Territory."

"Chief Minister [Michael] Gunner has shared our vision that the G-111T Albatross is an incredible aircraft of great and practical use to humanity, whether for registered passenger transport, humanitarian assistance, search and rescue, freight, coastal surveillance, drug enforcement or a host of other roles.

"Today's announcement is just the beginning as we are already working on next generation technologies to produce new variants such as the Zero Emissions-Hybrid powered Albatross and even a stretched 44 seat variant."

The original G-111 was powered by Wright R-1820 radial engines, but the new aircraft coming out of the Darwin plant will have 1700-shp turbines.

"We are delighted to be playing a role in the modernisation of the G-111T aircraft which has such an illustrious history," said Nicholas Kanellias, vice president, General Aviation, Pratt & Whitney Canada.

"The PT6A-67F engines, each with 1,700 mechanical shaft horsepower (SHP), will provide the G-111T with superior performance, greater range and the benchmark reliability and dependability characteristics that are common to PT6A-powered aircraft."

Khoa said the G-111T held a monopoly in its class, but wouldn't compete with larger passenger aircraft.

"Instead it compliments them, which is why it's the perfect platform to build in Australia and rekindle our sovereign aircraft manufacturing capability."

"There is much hard work still to be done to deliver our vision but I know the team we are building will deliver a program of immense social and economic benefit to the people of the Northern Territory and Australia."

TV coverage stated that AAH were planning to have CASA certification completed by mid-2023 and production started by 2025.

Much of the redesign work for the new engine installation is being carried out by Five Rings Aerospace (5r.com.au).

(DB)

Aviation H2 Announce Plans to have hydrogen-fuelled jet flying by 2023

Australian startup company Aviation H2 have announced that they are on track to having Australia's first hydrogen-fuelled plan in the air within the next 18 months.

The company's "Project Darter Bird" aims to research the current state of the art and test the usefulness of potential designs for power creation, energy storage and conversion to thrust.

On completing this planning study, AH2 will make decisions about which power path, or paths, to pursue detailed design, testing and demonstrating.

As an example, one of the power paths AH2 are considering is to store liquid ammonia in high-pressure tanks onboard the aircraft. This would be fed directly into a turbofan engine with modified combustion chambers to burn ammonia instead of Jet-A fuel.

The company claims that a capital raising round for the planning study was over-subscribed, indicating confidence in the company's approach.

(DB)

Australian-developed super-sensitive thermal camera

A Melbourne-based company is helping keep Australian fighter planes in the sky thanks to a world-leading camera invention that picks up metal stress and other issues.

Prototypes for the cutting-edge cameras developed by 1 MILLIKELVIN and the Department of Defence have been used for the FA18 Hornet, and by Lockheed Martin's testing of an F35 joint strike fighter.

Now the company has developed a commercially available product that is expected to be widely used by the military, scientific researchers and private companies.

The machine, named the LTS-640V, is little bigger than a personal camera but uses digital technology and heat detection to find potential fatigue cracks or stress points during flight that could be dangerous if left unchecked.

It is designed to be used during the testing and certification stage for new aircraft to ensure they are as safe as possible before being approved.

This can eliminate some of the surprises found during testing and allow for authorities to check new designs more efficiently.

1 MILLIKELVIN managing director Kheang Khauv said the technology helped designers and operators better understand how different airframes performed.

"This technology has been used to support F/A-18 and the F-35A joint strike fighter, the Australian Defence Force's first fifth-generation air combat capability," he said.

"We are proud our technology is contributing to Defence capability. We're able to see the temperature that's caused by stress.

You could buy the most expensive thermal camera for high-end military and you'd have no hope of seeing it."

Source: Herald-Sun



Above: A prototype of the 1 MILLIKELVIN LTS-640V thermal camera

MUSEUM NEWS

Hunter Warbirds Museum opening on track despite hangar construction pause

Structural design issues with the hangar at the new Hunter Warbirds facility in Scone caused construction to be temporarily halted while options for remedial works were assessed. The Upper Hunter Shire Council approved an independent assessment of the remedial options, and the principal contractor, Kingston, fabricated additional steel members offsite which were added to the hangar's structure, allowing work to recommence. Work continued uninterrupted on other areas of

the site, the framework of the terminal building is complete and roofing and cladding are progressing.



Above: The massive and partially-completed Hunter Warbirds hangar at Scone (Upper Hunter Shire Council)

The program of works for the hangar is scheduled to be completed by February 2022, and Council still expects completion of the facility before the Warbirds over Scone Airshow.



Scone Regional Airport - Bunnard Road - aviation centre from Scone end

(Upper Hunter Shire Council; 2NM)

Tocumwal Aviation Museum

Three AHSA Committee members (Dave Prossor, Derek Buckmaster and David Knight) flew north to the Tocumwal Air Museum on 7 November. The museum had five aircraft on display at the time of our visit but that number will increase in the near future. There is an excellent café / restaurant that your committee members dined at before a tour of the museum. While we sat waiting for our orders, a fourth Committee member (Phil Vabre) turned up so we almost had an informal committee meeting and wondered where the other committee members were.

We were hosted by Matt Henderson and his wife Karen, who are the principals behind the museum.

Matt was generous with his time and conducted a tour of the museum for us. The information boards tell the history of aviation in Tocumwal starting in the early 1920s. It then progressed to the WWII time-span. At one stage Tocumwal was the largest aerodrome in Australia, with very long runways and the massive support infrastructure for the aircraft that were based there — in particular the B-24 fleet of the RAAF. After WWII it became the “breaker’s yard” for a huge number of RAAF aircraft put out to grass following the wind-down from the end of hostilities.

Karen and Matt have struck a good chord by having a great restaurant attached to the museum. It will draw in tourists just for the enjoyment of a great meal. Then to take a tour of the museum. A visit to the TAM is recommended to all AHSA members and their friends. (DLP)



Above: The massive B-24 model and impressive B-24 mural welcome visitors to the museum display hangar. (Derek Buckmaster)



Above: Numerous aircraft are on display in the museum’s hangar, including the immaculate de Havilland DH.89A Dragon Rapide VH-UXZ owned by Maurice and Paige Rolf. (Derek Buckmaster)



Above: Almost a quorum? Four of our committee members enjoy the fare at The Drome café. From the left: David Knight, Derek Buckmaster, Phil Vabre and David Prossor. (Derek Buckmaster)

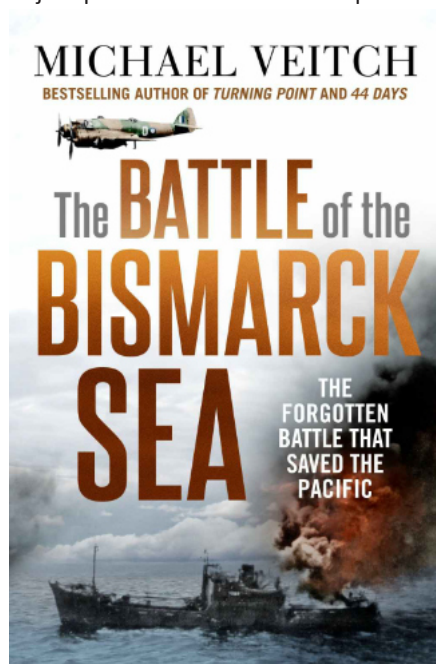
NEW AUSTRALIAN AVIATION HISTORY BOOKS

Last year was a bumper year for new books on Australian aviation history, many of them with contributions from the AHSA or by authors who are AHSA members. 2022 promises to be another year with many interesting book launches. Included below are several notable new releases in addition to several book reviews. If you have read a good book about Australian aviation history, please send us a review and let others know what you thought!

The Battle of the Bismarck Sea

By Michael Veitch

In our August 2021 monthly meeting Michael Veitch gave a presentation about the battle of the Bismarck Sea and introduced his just-published book on the topic.



In the thick of World War II, during the first week of March 1943, Japan made a final, desperate lunge for control of the South West Pacific.

The Imperial Japanese Navy was attempting to move a large troop reinforcement from Rabaul on the island of New Britain to Lae, on the northern coast of New Guinea, where the beleaguered Japanese troops were in need of reinforcements and resupply.

In the ensuing Battle of the Bismarck Sea, a force of land-based aircraft from the RAAF and the U.S. Fifth Air Force attacked a massive convoy of Japanese warships. The odds were against them. But a devastating victory was won and Japan's hopes of regaining the initiative in New Guinea destroyed.

The victory decisively removed any possibility that Australia might be invaded by Japanese forces. For Australia it was one of the most significant times in our history – a week when the country's future was profoundly in the balance.

Veitch tells the riveting story of this crucial moment in history in his lively style – how the bravery of young men and experienced fighters, renegades and rule-followers, overcame some of the darkest days of World War II.

The book is published by Hachette Australia and runs to a solid 352 pages. It also includes numerous photographs of the action shot by the renowned wartime photographer Damien Parer.

ISBN-10: 0733645895; ISBN-13: 978-0733645891

The book is now available “at good booksellers” such as Dymocks and QBD as well as from online sellers such as Amazon.com.au and Booktopia.

Then • Now • Always RAAF Illustrated History 1920-2021

The RAAF has come a long way since its early beginnings in the Australian Flying Corps, an element of the Australian Army. From its birth as a fledgling ‘little brother’ of the other two services, the RAAF has developed over the years in its elements of raising, training and sustaining an effective force, its people, its tools of the trade, its involvement in operations and peacetime activities, and how it looks to the future.

Commemorating the 100 Year Anniversary of the Royal Australian Air Force, *Then. Now. Always* covers the story of the

AFC and the RAAF during time of both war and peace, with carefully researched text relating to various stages of the life of the RAAF. These historical facts have been combined with interesting personal adventures to provide a holistic view of the RAAF story, and is illustrated throughout with an extensive range of both black and white, and colour photographs.

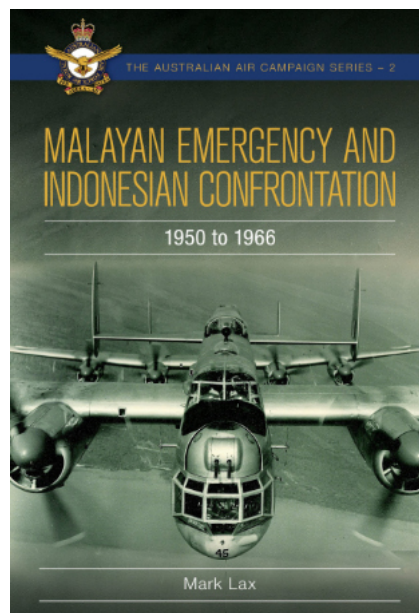
Produced by History and Heritage Branch - Air Force and published by Big Sky Publishing. Release Date: 6 December 2021. 460 pages. Hardback, dimensions: 250 x 250 x 45mm. ISBN: 9781922615053



Malayan Emergency and Indonesian Confrontation 1950-1966

By Mark Lax

Avid aviation readers may already recognise Mark Lax from his excellent book *F-111 From Controversy to Cutting Edge*, and his latest work displays the same easy-to-read style and historical rigour.



Australia's involvement in the Malayan Emergency from 1950 to 1960 and later in a Confrontation with Indonesia in the 1960s is little remembered today. Yet the deployment of over a third of the RAAF to support the British and Malayan governments in what became a long war of attrition against communist insurgents in the former case, and against Indonesian regulars and militia in the latter, kept the RAAF engaged for over 15 years.

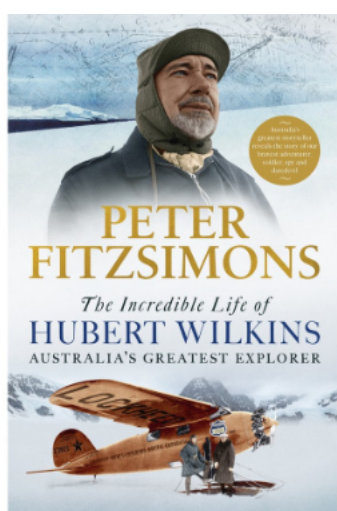
Wars by another name, these two events led to the birth of Malaysia and the establishment of an ongoing RAAF presence in South East Asia. Until recent operations in Afghanistan, the Malayan Emergency was Australia's longest conflict.

Malayan Emergency and Indonesian Confrontation recounts the story of the politics, strategies and operations that brought these two conflicts to a close.

The book includes numerous maps, diagrams, timelines and organisation charts plus excellent aircraft profiles by Juanita Franz.

Produced by History and Heritage Branch - Air Force and published by Big Sky Publishing, www.bigskypublishing.com.au. Release date 9 August 2021. 278 pages. Paperback, dimensions: 155 x 230mm. ISBN: 9781922488947 Recommended retail price \$19.99

The Incredible Life of Hubert Wilkins Australia's Greatest Explorer **By Peter FitzSimons**



Two books have recently been released about Sir Hubert Wilkins, explorer and aviator.

The first is by the best-selling writer Peter FitzSimons. The extraordinary, must-read story of the brave, bold Hubert Wilkins - Australia's most adventurous explorer, naturalist, photographer, war hero, aviator, spy and daredevil - brought to life by Australia's greatest storyteller.

Sir Hubert Wilkins is one of the most remarkable Australians who ever lived.

The son of pioneer pastoralists in South Australia, Wilkins studied engineering before moving on to photography, then sailing for England and a job producing films with the Gaumont Film Co. Brave and bold, he became a polar expedition, a brilliant war photographer, a spy in the Soviet Union, a pioneering aviator-navigator, a death-defying submariner - all while being an explorer and chronicler of the planet and its life forms that would do Vasco da Gama and Sir David Attenborough proud.

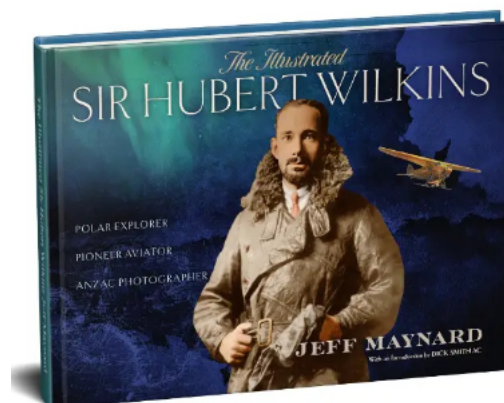
As a WW1 photographer he was twice awarded the Military Cross for bravery under fire, the only Australian photographer in any war to be decorated.

He went on expedition with Sir Ernest Shackleton, led a groundbreaking natural history study in Australia and was knighted in 1928 for his aviation exploits, but many more astounding achievements would follow. Wilkins' quest for knowledge and polar explorations were lifelong passions and his missions to polar regions aboard the submarine Nautilus the stuff of legend.

FitzSimons illuminates the life of Hubert Wilkins and his incredible achievements. Thrills and spills, derring-do, new worlds discovered - it is certainly an unforgettable tale of a most extraordinary life.

Published by Hachette Australia. Release date 27 October 2021. Hardback, 576 pages. ISBN: 9780733641367. Recommended retail price \$49.99, but can be purchased for as low as \$22.00 at Big W.

The Illustrated Sir Hubert Wilkins **By Jeff Maynard**



Another book which deals with the life and exploits of Sir Hubert Wilkins is *The Illustrated Sir Hubert Wilkins* by Jeff Maynard.

Sir Hubert Wilkins always carried a camera. For the first time, the extraordinary photographs he took are being published in a collectible limited edition book from Netfield Publishing, a new Australian publishing house dedicated to high quality collectible non-fiction books. Netfield take their name from Netfield, the childhood home of Sir Hubert Wilkins, located in a remote area of South Australia. All Netfield collectible books are produced, printed and published in Australia.

Revealing Sir George Hubert Wilkins like never before, this book shows the amazing Australian adventurer in a completely new light through his unpublished photographs, private documents and personal artefacts. The book includes

- Stunning hand-coloured glass lantern slides of the first aerial photographs of Antarctica;
- Unpublished records and photographs from Sir Ernest Shackleton's Quest expedition;
- Wilkins' photographs of Anzacs at the Western Front, Anzac Cove and Gallipoli during WWI;
- The first photographs ever taken under the Arctic ice, from the Nautilus submarine on Wilkins' 1931 submarine expedition;
- The Graf Zeppelin around-the-world flight in 1929;
- The Australian Outback in the 1920s. The first flight over the Arctic Ocean; and
- Wilkins' medals, equipment, awards and personal items.

From his birthplace at the Wilkins Homestead in South Australia in 1888, until his ashes were taken by US Nuclear Submarine to the North Pole in 1959, Sir George Hubert Wilkins lived an incredible life. Now it is revealed in this stunning limited edition book written by the acknowledged world expert on Sir Hubert Wilkins, Jeff Maynard.

"The author, who all of us who venture into the Wilkins world owe most, is Jeff Maynard." - Peter FitzSimons author of *The Incredible Life of Sir Hubert Wilkins*.

"I am pleased to introduce this book, which both showcases such remarkable photography, and illuminates the astonishing life of Sir Hubert Wilkins." - Dick Smith AC

"I consider Jeff Maynard to be the foremost authority on Sir Hubert Wilkins and have relied on his expertise in guiding other

researchers.” – Laura Kissel, Polar Curator, Byrd Polar and Climate Research Center Archival Program.

Throughout his remarkable life Sir Hubert Wilkins not only took photographs, but he kept copies of his correspondence and artefacts from his adventures. When he was working as an official photographer at the Western Front with Charles Bean in 1917 and 1918, photographing the Anzacs, Wilkins would collect items from the battlefields. He also recorded which photographs he took. Today those photographs of the Anzacs are at the Australian War Memorial and considered a national treasure.

At the end of the Armistice, Wilkins went to Gallipoli with Charles Bean, to photograph the battlefields and Anzac Cove. Again, he recorded which photographs he took and kept souvenirs. The book includes many of these photographs and shows some of these souvenirs for the first time.

Wilkins also took many photographs and retained items from Sir Ernest Shackleton’s last expedition. Wilkins sailed with Shackleton on the *Quest*, when it left England in September 1921. Wilkins hoped to study Shackleton’s leadership methods and had asked Shackleton to take him along as a kind of apprentice polar leader. Throughout the voyage of the *Quest*, Wilkins wrote to his mother, kept notes, and took photographs. Many of these letters and photographs are still in private hands, and are published in this book for the first time. Items from the *Quest* have also been photographed by the Byrd Polar and Climate Research Center (BPCRC) especially for the book. The result is a unique eye witness account to the last days of Sir Ernest Shackleton, and the end of the “heroic age” of polar exploration.

Wilkins’ pioneering work in polar exploration was in the field of aviation. From the time he first began to explore the Arctic in 1913, Wilkins believed that the future of polar exploration would be from the air. In 1928 he made the first flights in Antarctica. Wilkins took a stunning series of photographs of Antarctica from the air and hand-coloured them. These beautiful photographs are reproduced in the book for the first time and they look as if they had recently been taken using the most modern equipment.

The book was released on 12 November 2021 by Netfield Publishing, (www.netfieldpublishing.com.au). Special price \$160.00 for hardback “collectible” edition (only 1,000 printed).

BOOK REVIEWS

Cold War Warriors **By Ian Pearson**

Cold War Warriors. Royal Australian Air Force P-3 Orion Operations 1968-1991, by Ian Pearson. Published by Big Sky Publishing, Newport, NSW. www.bigskypublishing.com.au ISBN: 9781922488329

Recommended retail price \$39.99. Available from bookstores.

Review by Derek Buckmaster

This is another excellent book recently produced by History and Heritage Branch - Air Force and published by Big Sky Publishing.

The book tells the little-known story of the operations by the RAAF’s P-3 Orions during the latter years of the Cold War. These low-profile missions, usually flown by lone aircraft far from their bases, were often shrouded by confidentiality. Now, access to declassified documents has allowed this story to be told.

Pearson covers the period from the late 1950s when replacements for the RAAF’s ageing Lincoln Mk.31s were being considered, through 1968 when the first Orions were delivered, and up to the end of the Cold War in 1991. Of course Orions have continued in service since that time, but the 1991 cut-off reflects the 30-year period for which classified records must be kept closed. So perhaps we can look forward to another installment in 30 years time.



The story is divided into four chronological parts:

1. 1957-1969 The first Orions
2. 1968-1977 RAAF P-3B Orions on task
3. 1978-1985 P-3B and P-3C fleet
4. 1986-1991 Operations with a P-3C fleet

Pearson covers the last years of Lincoln and Neptune operations and the intrigues associated with the procurement of the Orion aircraft. He describes the development of the Orion from the *Electra*, the Orion’s entry into service and outlines the upgrades which were made to RAAF aircraft during the period of the book.

There are stories of perilous moments experienced by the aircraft and their crews while conducting operations – most of which are related by the crews involved. Using their words, *Cold War Warriors* faithfully describes a number of incidents, both on the ground, and in the air, to provide a sense of the enormous breadth of service the P-3 Orion has provided to the RAAF, to Australia and to our allies. A9-296 was lost during circuit training at Moffat Field in the USA prior to its delivery, when the port main gear failed. There were no injuries, and the story is told from the crew’s perspectives.

The book also covers several tragedies during service life of the Orion. Eight maintenance staff were injured in an explosion and fire aboard A9-300 at Edinburgh in January 1984. One crew member was lost in the ditching of A9-754 in the Cocos Lagoon in April 1991.

Pearson not only documents the P-3’s service in the RAAF but also explains the context of the unfolding domestic and international events that shaped the aircraft’s evolving missions.

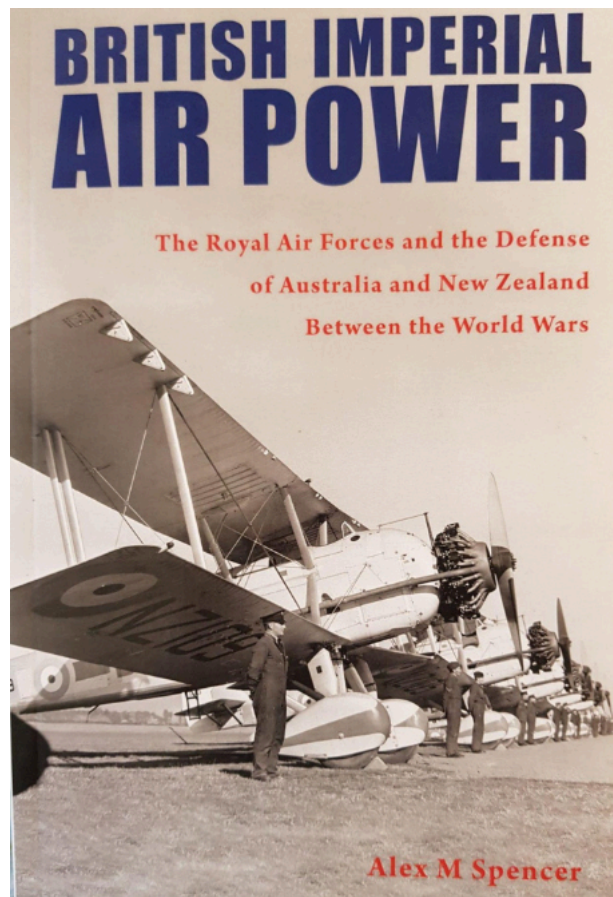
The book also features numerous illustrative diagrams, plus several wonderful side profiles of individual Orions by Juanita Franzi.

The author is well-versed on his subject matter, having joined the RAAF as a cadet aircrew in 1976 and on completing navigator training, serving with 10 Squadron (two postings), 11 Squadron (on attachment), 292 Squadron and Headquarters 92 Wing. His subsequent postings included Director of the Office of the Chief of Air Force, Defence Adviser Singapore, Director Coastwatch Operations, and Chief of Staff, Joint Offshore Protection Command (subsequently Maritime Border Command).

Orions are not my usual topic of interest in aviation, but the author has done an excellent job of telling a compelling story. This is not only a great reference book, but an interesting retelling of history.

British Imperial Air Power by Alex M Spencer

British Imperial Air Power. The Royal Air Forces and the Defense of Australia and New Zealand between the World Wars, by Alex M Spencer. Published by Purdue University Press. ISBN: 978-1-55753-940-3



Review by GPCAPT David Fredericks

I purchased this book recently from Booktopia – not only as the topic aligns with my work but also out of interest as to how an American historian would view this important subject that contributed to the establishment and formation of the RAAF (and RNZAF) in the lead up to World War II. I was intrigued as to why an American would show an interest in such a Commonwealth-specific topic.

On the latter point, Spencer holds a PhD in modern European history from Auburn University where he focused his research on British and Commonwealth military aviation in the 20th century. He also curates two collections of British and European military aviation at the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum. With those credentials, I had high hopes for this book and its content, albeit I still carried some trepidations around it being a US-slanted narrative on the topic. (The use of 'defense' in lieu of defence in the title definitely contributed to my scepticism!)

I am very pleased to say that this book delivered to my best hopes and only got under my skin in a couple of minor areas – more of that later. Overall, it was easy to read, well laid out and underpinned with high quality research using predominantly primary sources. It was also encouraging to see reference to works by well-respected historians on this topic of the likes of Dr Chris Clark (author of *The Third Brother*) and Dr Alan Stephens (*Going Solo*).

I found the strength of this book was that it provided an analysis of the evolution of air power and the air forces of Great Britain, Australia and New Zealand in the interwar period through the lens of British imperial interrelationships of the time. Having read a lot on the topic of the birth and evolution of the RAAF,

this book was a pleasant surprise to me in how it assessed this evolution from the perspective of each nation at a time when the solidity of the once mighty British Empire was waning.

The book provides an analysis of the dominance of the British view on defence policy and the defence forces across the British Empire and its Dominions in the years following the First World War, looking at how this view shaped not only the evolving Royal Air Force construct but also the *raison d'être* and composition of the air forces of Australia and New Zealand. It explores the ensuing inter-service rivalry between each air force and the army and navy in each nation, and how this rivalry both influenced and was influenced by government policies and limited national budgets at a time.

Another topic explored in the book is how the evolution of aviation, both civil and military including through the use of airships, across Europe influenced not only Britain's increasing military budget requirements but also the role of the RAF in defence across the Empire. Spencer explains how the RAF used this situation to mount an argument that the air force would rely upon the concept of 'air mobility' to move aircraft and forces around the empire to defence the empire when called upon.

Spencer explores how during the 1930s, Britain turned more and more to the Dominions to commit to a greater role in the defence of the Empire in the Far East, detailing how Britain sought both Australia and New Zealand to commit funding and the assignment of forces to Singapore, which Britain was relying upon as core to Britain's plans for defence of the Empire in the Far East. This was at a time when British policy was focused primarily on the defence of Great Britain against a militarily resurgent Germany before any consideration of defence of the Dominions against a possible Japanese threat in the Pacific. Spencer explains how this situation, coupled with the inability of the Dominions to be able to procure military equipment from British industry, led to Australia and New Zealand shifting to the USA as their key source of their military aircraft, and the creation of Australia's Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation.

For me, while I was aware of the infighting between the three services in Australia and Great Britain in the 1920s and 1930s, this book was a revelation to me as to the linkages and similarities in the evolution of each nation's air force and their responses to the other two national services. The book also reveals a great deal about how the RAF tried to influence the role and construct of these two Dominion air forces during their formative stages as well as the differences in how these emerged in the infant RAAF and RNZAF. Interestingly, Spencer highlights that, until the mid-1930s, there was little in the way of an interrelationship or communication between the RAAF and the RNZAF, with each air force finding out about the other's activities via communications through the United Kingdom!

Now, as to the bits of the book that irked me. The constant use of the American spelling of 'defense' was frustrating, especially where it was inserted in direct quotes from British and Commonwealth politicians and military personnel of the time where defence would have been used. I can accept it was written for the US audience, but to change the spelling of quotes to Americanisms is not appropriate.

Next the author somehow construed that RAAF base Laverton in Melbourne is spelt 'Leverton'. But worse was the reference to a communication from the Australian House of Lords when he is actually meaning the Senate. (Australia has never had a House of Lords, which is a British parliamentary construct). Small things I know but for someone with Spencer's credentials I would expect them to not slip into this book. Okay, I've got that out of my system!

Overall, I strongly recommend this book to anyone interested in not only the evolution of the RAAF (or the RNZAF) but how this evolution was interwoven with the evolution of the RAF and its aspirations of a greater position amongst the British services in the defence of the Empire.