

# Mari-times

Official Magazine of RAAF Edinburgh

**SUMMER 1982**

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## EDITORIAL

All good things, it is said, must come to an end. In the case of 'Mari-times' that end is — for the time being at least — upon us. For reasons which are addressed by the Officer Commanding on page two of this issue publications of 'Mari-times' is to be suspended.

The success that the magazine has enjoyed since it first appeared in autumn of 1980 has not been accidental. A lot of hard work has been put in — particularly by a small group of regular contributors, without whose efforts 'Mari-times' would not have attracted the favourable comment that it has from many sources. To them and to my predecessors as editor, go my thanks for a job well done.

Mention must also be made of the support and co-operation received by the editorial staff from our publishers, Messenger Publications Pty. Ltd. Their professional guidance of us well-meaning amateurs is evidenced by the quality of production that they have achieved consistently in spite of us.

**SQNLDR Ian Little.**

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FRONT COVER: RAAF Edinburgh is widely known as a base for Maritime operations. Another major role, less well known but no less important, is recruit training. The cover picture shows recruits of No 1688 Recruit Course against an appropriately 'maritime' background.

# The future of Mari-times

Since its inception this magazine has attracted considerable interest. As a Base magazine it has served us well in depicting life here at Edinburgh not only for our own members and the RAAF at large, but also for the maritime community of our allies.

I am mindful of the esprit de corps generated by such a magazine in Base personnel. However, in recent months, the conflict between competing demands on manpower resources of the Base has forced me to reconsider the priorities accorded to various tasks presently undertaken by our staff. Like all other public sector employers, we are subject to increasing constraints on manpower growth at a time when our task is increasing. Consequently, those tasks which are non-essential must make way for those of higher priority.

Production of a Base magazine is one of those tasks which must be classified as desirable, rather than essential. Therefore, I have reluctantly decided that publication of Mari-times will be suspended after this issue. I use the word suspend rather than terminate in the belief that future circumstances may permit resumption of publication.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all past contributors to the magazine and, in particular, the editors and their staffs for their dedicated efforts in producing such a high standard publication in trying times and with limited resources. Their efforts have not gone unnoticed by Base management.

J. A. PAULE  
AIRCDRE  
OC RAAF EDINBURGH



The Governor General, Sir Ninian Stephen, accompanied by guard commander, Squadron Leader Bob Howard of Edinburgh's Aircraft Research and Development Unit, inspects a 100-man Royal Guard of Honour on arrival at Adelaide airport for his first official visit to South Australia recently. The Queen's Color was also paraded by airmen from RAAF Base Edinburgh for the Governor General's ceremonial welcome.



# Northern patrol in CP-140 Aurora

By SQNLDR B.A. COLLINS

FROM June 1979 to July 1982 I served an exchange tour with 405 Maritime Patrol Squadron (VP405) at Canadian Forces Base Greenwood, Nova Scotia.

The base is situated in the pretty Annapolis Valley about 100 miles west of Halifax and is subject to pleasant summers and cold, snowy winters. In the 'fall' the local scenery is extremely beautiful. The native 'Canajans' (Nova Scotians are referred to as 'Bluenosers'; a term contrived out of a colourful history and deep respect for the local fishing industry, in particular the schooner 'Bluenose', a famous fishing vessel) are extremely friendly, kind and considerate and we were able to form many firm, lasting friendships.

I flew as a pilot on both the old and venerable CP-107 Argus plus her replacement, the CP-140 Aurora. Throughout my tour I had the opportunity to visit several interesting places both within and outside Canada, some of which were Iceland, the Azores, Bermuda (somebody had to do it!), the U.K., U.S.A., 'Australia' (via NZ, Tahiti and Hawaii) and the Arctic. Of all these, my most vivid, lasting impressions are of the Northern Patrols (NORPATs) over the Canadian Arctic.

A typical NORPAT would involve four days away from Greenwood with an itinerary similar to the following:

Day 1 Patrol — Greenwood to Frobisher Bay.

Day 2 Patrol — Frobisher Bay — circumnavigate Baffin Island and return to Frobisher Bay.

Day 3 Crew Rest Day.

Day 4 Patrol — Frobisher Bay — Davis Strait (Canada — Greenland) and return to Greenwood.

Approximately 30 hours flying is involved over some of the world's bleakest and starkest territory. Much of the landscape overflown is also overwhelmingly beautiful. In fact, it is awe-inspiring. The Baffin Island patrol offers spectacular views of two permanent ice caps (Penny and Barnes), strikingly complex, long and twisting glaciers, sensational snakelike passes through areas of some of the oldest rock formations known to man, serenely beautiful fiords similar to those found along the Norwegian coastline, large and small icebergs either 'anchored' in bays and fiords or floating alone on the open sea, sometimes embedded among the ice pack and jagged mountain peaks, totally void of any vegetation. To experience all these sights from the air was truly a privilege.

The rest day is usually spent (by tourists such as me!) walking around Frobisher Bay talking with the locals, fishing for Arctic Char and taking lots of photographs. The Hudson Bay store offers such souvenirs as native (Eskimo) soapstone carvings, blankets, badges and stickers, much of which are purchased by people such as me visiting the area. One can also purchase either a seal or polar bear skin (the latter costing around CAN \$2000!).

Many people would picture the Arctic as a white desert, but during the summer months this is not so in the more southern regions. It can still be quite cold, but all the snow would have thawed leaving a barren landscape interspersed with fast flowing rivers and lakes. However, beneath the Arctic surface, a layer of permafrost exists, which will continue until the end of time.

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CP140 AURORA ground support operations at a typical North West Territories (Arctic) location during winter months.



"Old" iceberg and "old" sea-ice (icepack east of Baffin Island in Davis Strait).

The local Eskimos, or Inuits, no longer live in caribou hide tents or igloos. Through government-sponsored assistance, accommodation is now in semi-detached housing units. Also, 'Skidoos' or Snowmobiles have, in the majority of cases, replaced the traditional dog sled. This is not to say however, that the old traditional way of life has been completely forgotten — it hasn't! The contemporary Eskimo still quite frequently hunts seal, polar bear, caribou, narwhale and other smaller Arctic wildlife.

The return flight to Greenwood can involve some interesting moments. Usually a fisheries surveillance mission in the Davis Strait area provides the opportunity to fly relatively low over the ice pack past sometimes huge icebergs. Large herds of seal are often encountered sunning themselves on the ice floes, but retreat quickly back into the water as the aircraft flies overhead.

All too soon, the Aurora is inbound to Greenwood following a four-day scenic tour, the likes of which cannot be equalled. The arrival at base will either be in drizzle and fog or blowing snow over an ice-covered runway. It's all in the day's work and a reasonable subscription to be levied for such a memorable excursion.

# ARDU Dakotas set up new HQ

(MACHNAV)

ON MONDAY, September 20, 1982 police, ambulance, fire brigade and members of the Nyngan Rescue Squad were placed on standby for the arrival of the first ARDU Dakota into Nyngan. While the official reason for the sudden arrival was a complete loss of hydraulic fluid, we the unknowing of ARDU knew that ARDU Support Flight was setting up their summer headquarters.

The aircraft was being flown by PLTOFF John "Battle of" Brittain; ably assisted from the 2nd officer's position (Nav table) by the well known ARDU personality of the skies PLTOFF Rocky "Grogan" Logan. The aircraft captain was the intrepid adventurer SQNLDR Al Field (you have to be adventurous to fly with boggies).

On board were "Battle of's" wife Linda and son Warren and SQNLDR 'H' Bradford, who had thought the Dakota was more reliable than his F111C (still is). The Nyngan News quoted Mrs Brittain as not being worried as she knew the capabilities of the crew and of the Dakota. Good one Linda! (Payment will follow).

Having survived the onslaught of the press and old timers, who remembered flying in Dakotas in the 1940s, the crew retired to a motel to set up HQ. Word soon spread about the easier life away from ARDU. The remaining Dakota crew at Edinburgh decided a rescue flight was in order and shot off as quickly as possible.

That night, with two crews in town, the metropolis really throbbed. One of the "groundies" pulled off the RSL jackpot pokie and was soon the centre of attention.

Next morning the ground crew repaired the broken Dakota. As one fellow had forgotten his toothbrush one crew and Dak departed for Edinburgh. With no-one else to talk to and having found no big city was within an easy drive of Nyngan the original pioneering crew set out for Amberley.



The Dakota crew PLTOFF Logan, PLTOFF Brittain and SQNLDR Field are 'booked' by Constable Richards (NSW Police) for speeding and standing in a "no parking" zone.

En route they saw a quiet little town with a racehorse statue dominating the town's centre. So they "dropped" in on Goondiwindi to pay homage to Gunsynd, and brightened up that town that for a night. The official reason: impenetrable thunderstorms in the Amberley area.

Next day the aircraft finally arrived at its original destination — Amberley. A one-day journey that had turned into a three-day sojourn had finally finished. The crew "rested" before making the return journey without incident. Unfortunately the new HQ was not established at Nyngan or Goondiwindi. The crew has since tried Laverton for a few days, but it was just another RAAF base. So ARDU is still waiting for the Dakota crews to decide on their new venue. Don't forget the Dakota logo "You call — We haul".

## Car-toonist cops a laugh

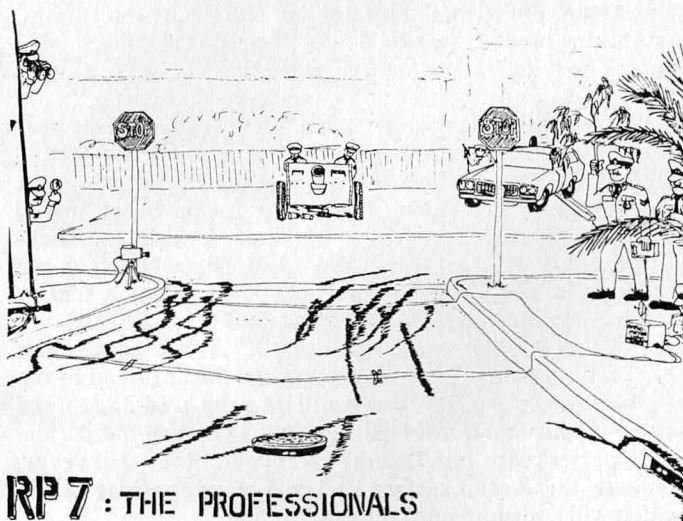
THE RAAF Police of RAAF Base Edinburgh wish to thank the anonymous cartoonist for the recognition in his drawing of their efforts to try and control some of the bad driving habits of a few Base personnel.

During the lunch hours of October 13, 14 and 15 a concerted effort was made to detect drivers failing to stop at the stop sign at the corner of Trials Avenue and Research Street. A total of 29 drivers were detected over the period. Many more were given the benefit of the doubt.

A budding 'Pickering' decided to tell the WOFF I/C RAAFPOL that the efforts of his men had not gone unnoticed. The cartoon was accepted in good faith and enjoyed by all Police members. It shows that a message did get to someone, so the cartoon and penalties handed out to the guilty parties, will probably highlight the bad practice of driving through stop signs. To that end the cartoon is reproduced here for a wider circulation.

To the cartoonist, again a hearty thanks from the 'NCO I/C Traffic Control', as addressed. Your efforts

were appreciated in our campaign to make the roadway safe for all users.





# A look from the other side

By FLTLT C. GRANT

When I first came to 292SQN I expected a change. After lots of flying hours, and plenty of time away from home, I was ready for IT. I'd heard of the 'Black Hole', and how people managed to disappear through the woodwork, but I didn't believe IT. I've been with 292SQN for more than 2 years now, AND I can believe IT!

I used to think that the flying squadrons ran the show. Now I'm not quite so sure. How can anyone possibly look after their own affairs when they're not always at home? Ask your wife how she copes when you are away. Did you wait for the answer?

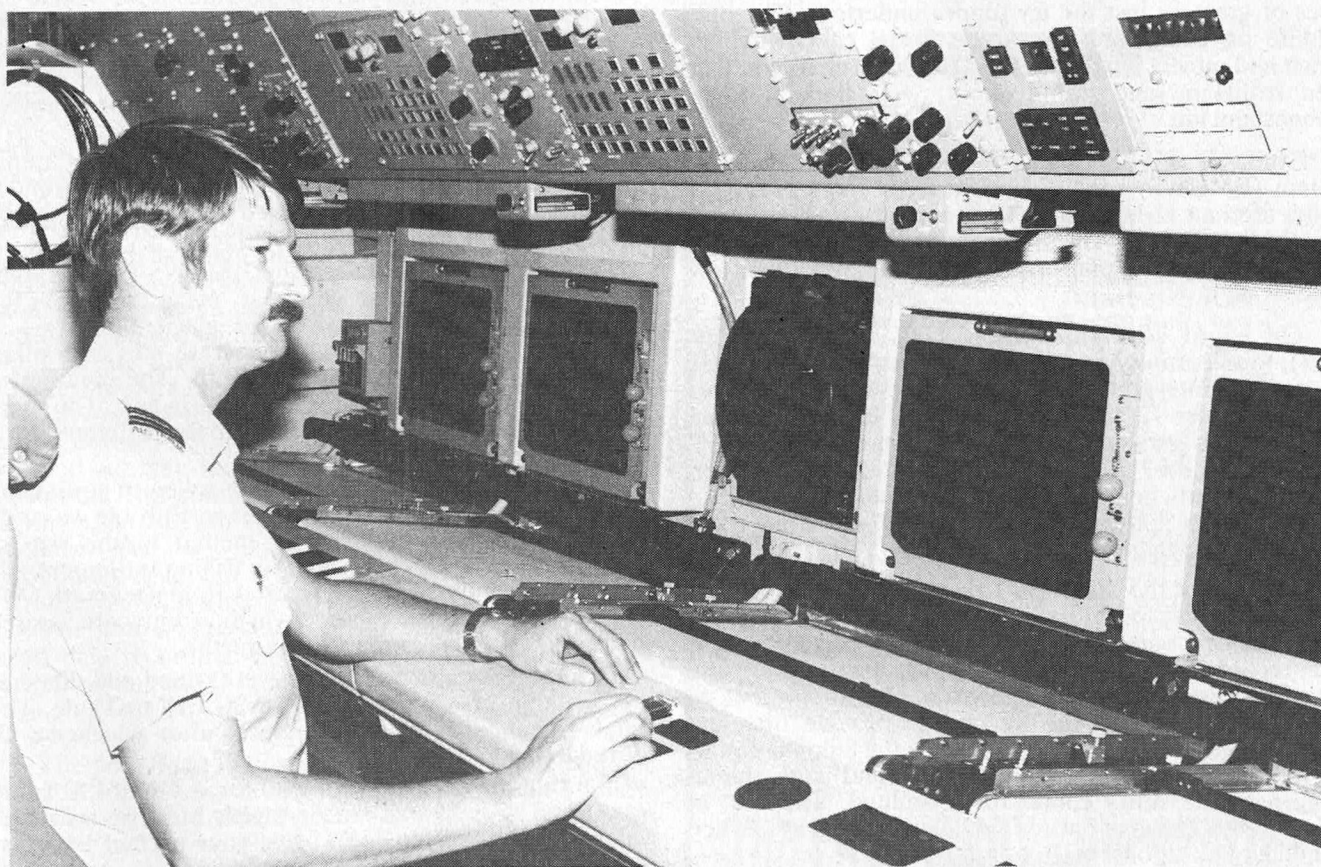
I'll bet you haven't even had time to stop and look at what is going on around the place. Things just aren't happening the way they used to a few years ago! Remember the preparation you had to go through for just one aircraft sortie. Messages to write, rations to order, aircraft requirements to fill, missions to plan, etc, etc. How time consuming, and what a drag. I'll bet though, that it was a far cry from the last exercise flight brief you had in the CMI. No messages to send, flight briefs already prepared, transport on request, rations delivered, etc. It was all probably so quick and easy that you didn't have time to think of just how easier it really was for you.

Yes, things have changed, and the good part is that they're going to get even better. I'm not going to say that 292SQN is doing it ALL (Heaven forbid), but they sure are playing a big part. More people, equipment and resources are the main reason for things becoming so much easier. Yes, the CMI has helped, but it's really just a needle in the haystack. As talent within 292 is nurtured, and allowed to develop, 292 will grow and become even more important to the support of the operational squadron.

Next year alone will see the introduction of total P-3C conversions. Two new buildings will be finalised to house both, a new P-3C Operational Flight Trainer (OFT), and Operational and Support Facilities. NCO Sensor Operator training will commence and the CMI will be further utilised for complete 24 hour support of 92 Wing operations.

It won't be easy making it easier for you — the 'USER'. But if somebody didn't do it, how could you know how much time, effort, money, experience, work and time away from home IT could really save you?

The next time somebody mentions the dreaded 'Black Hole' to you, ask them if they've tried finding IT lately through the maze of rising woodwork?



FLTLT N.A. SHELTON operates Sensor Station 1 in the P-3C Tactical Trainer section of the CMI. This complex station will be manned by NCO operators in the near future.

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# To the North



The author who came in from the cold.



Britannia Test Aircraft.

By FLTLT K. McPHERSON

On the morning of September 16, 1981 we awoke to a cold, freezing day. The outside air temperature was  $-5^{\circ}\text{C}$  gusting to  $-23^{\circ}\text{C}$  with the winds. There had been only  $3\frac{1}{2}$  hours of darkness, winter was on its way. Thule (pronounced Toolie), Greenland is a barren place with no trees or grass — just the icy tundra underfoot. The only wildlife on land were the Arctic foxes, called archies, which had rabies. On the ice floes the polar bears could be seen frolicking and lazing about, ever hopeful for a Queensland tan.

Thule is a U.S. Ballistic Missile Early Warning System (BMEWS) site. We had arrived there two days earlier after an 11-hour flight from Brize Norton, England in a RAF Britannia. The Britannia was perhaps the best equipped navigation platform in the world over those few days.

On board were three Inertial Navigation Systems (INS); four Loran systems; an Omega; a Decca Navigator Mk19; two integrated systems comprising twin gyros, Decca Doppler 72 and a Decca TANS computer; three sets of twin gyro platforms; an azimuth gyro; GPS NAVSTAR, the USAF sponsored satellite navigation system currently being tested; two sextants in case all else failed and the Capt. Cook method of navigating had to be used; and 28 navigators.

The aim of the flight was to test all the equipment in the polar area. Members of No 14 General Duties Aerosystems Course (GDASC) operated the equipment and recorded data throughout the flight. Company representatives for all equipment were also present to ensure correct use of the kit and to provide first line maintenance if necessary. The flight is the culmination of Flight Trials Training on the GDASC, and is an annual sojourn to the sultry climes of Greenland. The visit in 1981 was the 21st consecutive annual visit and was marked by much celebration.

On the journey to Thule the crossing of the Arctic Circle was celebrated in much the same way as the Navy

celebrates crossing the Equator. On arrival at Thule the Base Commander welcomed us and asked if we could use the NAVSTAR to accurately locate his base — no wonder we were off track on arrival!

As we had to wait for four satellites to be visible for an accurate fix, we retired to the warmth of the all ranks club until midnight. Midnight in the Arctic is not the usual dark, black time of the day. We came out of the club to bright sunshine, albeit the sun was low on the southern horizon.

The NAVSTAR showed the base was nearly a mile away from the position most people thought. No wonder navigators get lost! Having solved the problems of the world we turned in for a well-earned rest.

Next morning we toured the BMEWS site, a rather chilly introduction to the cold war. Near the site is the only place on Earth where three glaciers meet — a spectacular sight, watching glaciers crash into each other at a speed of about one mile a month. The creation of icebergs falling from the glaciers held us in awe. The sheer size and power of these ice castles held us spellbound for a long time.

After the BMEWS visit we were taken to an Eskimo village about 15 miles north of the base. Enroute we could touch the remains of icebergs, melted to the size of ordinary houses. The village was a fishing settlement and was made mainly of logs imported from Denmark. We were disappointed not to see any igloos, but were assured that such housing did exist further north.

That night back at base we were wined and dined at the 21st anniversary party of GDASC visit to Thule. The usual exchange of gifts took place, after which we all retired to the local disco.

During the early hours a gale force wind of 70 knots blew up. The base was put on amber alert for weather, which basically meant don't leave your current location, do not go outside.

By morning everything was back to normal. Around 10 a.m. the resupply ship for the Base Exchange (BX)

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# Pole and back again

arrived. With all the help available the BX was filled in a few hours. The afternoon was spent shopping at the BX and the Eskimo trading store. That night was spent at another disco.

The next morning, September 16, was the one we had all been awaiting. We packed up and loaded the Britannia with half the BX. Preflight checks were completed with greater care than normal. Nothing was allowed to go wrong today. But Murphy's Law stepped in and an aircraft unserviceability kept us on the ground until 4 p.m. Then it was all systems go. The Britannia slowly got airborne — a BX weighs a lot. A lazy turn over the base to farewell Thule for another year was completed before a heading of true North was established.

Thule was 700 miles south of the North Geographic Pole so we had a few hours to settle back and watch the navigation equipment silently tick over. Nearly three hours after take-off we were given the warning "standby for on top the North Pole in two minutes". Excitement started to rise in anticipation of what might happen — will we fall off the top end? Was Columbus right about the world not being flat? What will the instruments do?

It all came together at 7.02 p.m. Greenland time when the NAVSTAR operator finally counted down (or up) "eighty-nine degrees fifty-nine minutes North; 89. 0759.4' North; 89. 0759.8' North; NINETY DEGREES NORTH". Cheering erupted as we realised we'd reached the Top of the World, and only had one way to go. We'd reached the only place on Earth where a navigator can be confident of his outbound heading — South.

Our elation turned to despair as one INS kept counting up — 90. 0700.5'N; 90. 0701'N — according to it we were going ballistic into space! Even the navigators picked that one normally shouldn't be able to go further north than 90 degrees North.

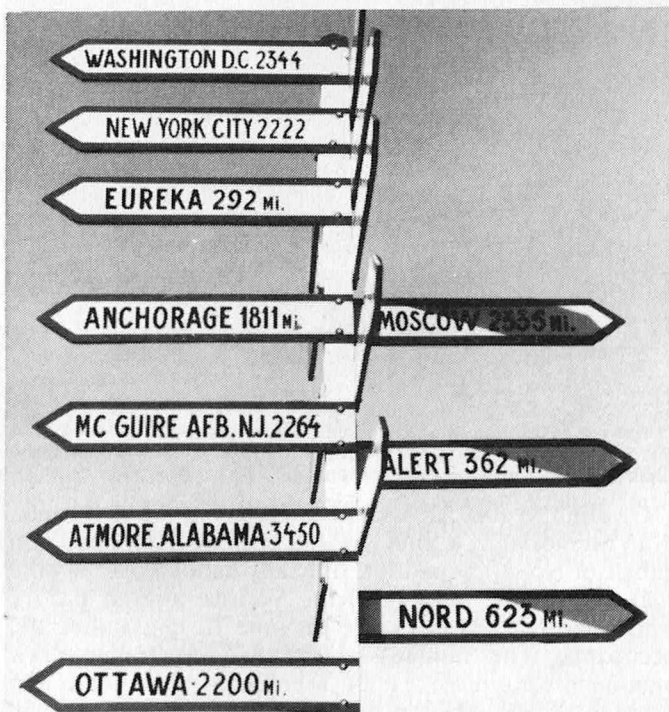
One of the scientific boffins was using the Omega in the grid navigation mode. At the North Pole he set 270 degrees grid heading into the computer and wondered why the set was beating itself to death. With all the jubilation someone suggested we circumnavigate the world. So we did, in two minutes flat. It was so much fun doing a Rate 1 turn (3 degrees per second) that every two minutes we were literally flying around the world.

We toured the world three times before making a major decision, which longitude to take. We had the world at our feet, but chose the route to England. And so we left the Top of the World and descended back into the depths of an English autumn. We were disappointed not to have seen any post or flag marking the North Geographic Pole, but at 18,000 feet we only saw the ice, relying on satellites to confirm our position accurately.

The journey back to England was uneventful, just a lot of data recording. Our arrival at Brize Norton at 0 dark thirty marked the end of an opportunity of a lifetime — to go to the Top of the World and back by courtesy of the RAF.

The post flight data analysis showed that we had not gone ballistic; that one azimuth gyro had us in Hudson Bay, Canada; and that the Omega had stopped flailing itself. We had proved the usefulness of such flights to test equipment in the polar areas and everyone agreed it was a great way to do flight trials. My fondest memory was the Eskimo farewell saying "Nuck Nuck".

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Signpost to the World.

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Mr. Bruce Bell presents his brother's logbook to Sir Thomas Daly, Chairman of the Australian War Memorial's Board of Trustees.

On June 25 1980, at a small ceremony at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra, Sir Richard Kingsland, on behalf of No. 10 Squadron, officially handed over a wing spar and engine cowling of the Walrus' aircraft L.2312 which had crashed in France on June 18 1940 killing the occupants. The families of the two Australian crew members who died, Flight Lieutenant John Bell and Sergeant Charles Harris attended the ceremony. For 40 years the events surrounding the death of these men had remained secret. It was only in 1977, when the history of No. 10 Squadron was being compiled by Flight Lieutenant Kevin Baff<sup>2</sup>, that he was able to piece together the events surrounding the tragedy.

In June 1940, with the fall of France imminent, General de Gaulle, now in England, became the leader of the French movement organised to carry on the war against Germany. However, his family, still in France, was in serious danger of being captured by the German forces advancing towards their home at Carantec in coastal Brittany.

# A SECRET MISS

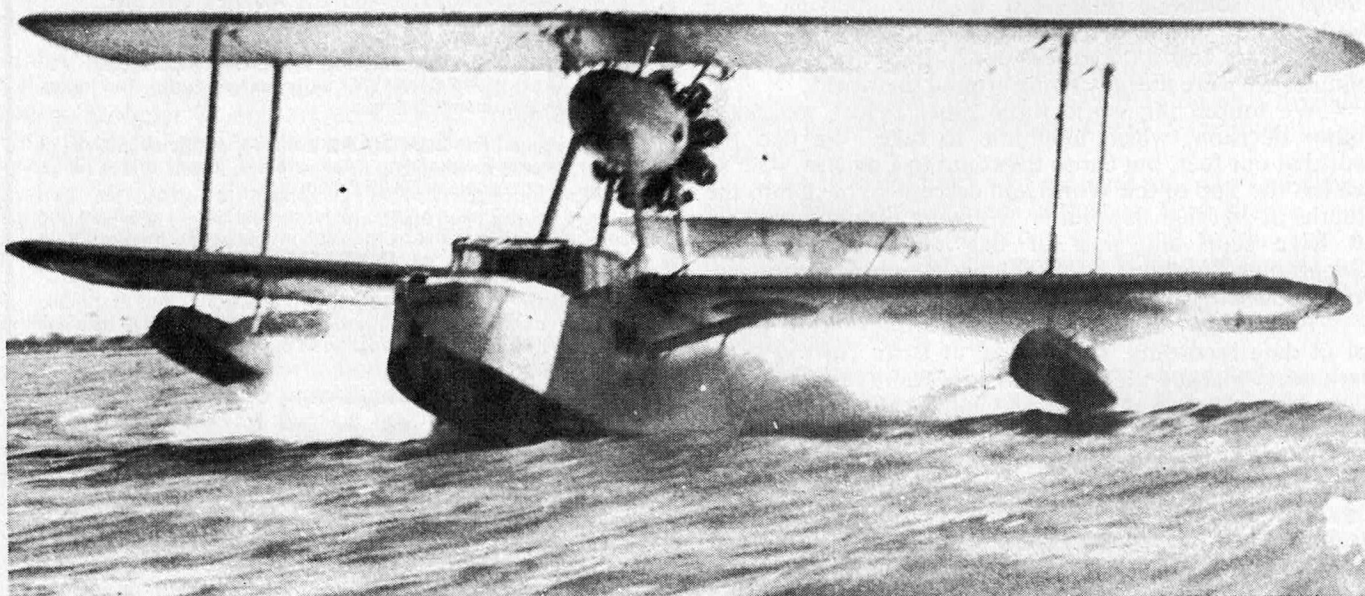
## Australia's first casualties of World War II

Churchill had realised that under no circumstances should the de Gaulle family be allowed to fall into enemy hands. It has therefore been planned that they should be evacuated on the last British destroyer to leave from Brest. However, plans had been prepared before news was received of Rommel's rapid advance through Brittany.

In these circumstances it seems likely that Churchill gave special orders for a contingency plan to be adopted. This plan was to be implemented alongside existing arrangements for evacuating the de Gaulle family by destroyer from Brest. It required an aircraft to be flown into the area by a highly trained crew using the shortest possible route. As the situation in Brittany was fluid it was important that the aircraft be able to land in a field or on the sea, accommodate 5 passengers plus the crew and be able to take off in a short distance. A secret service agent was to accompany the flight and on landing near the town he was to confirm whether they had indeed already left.

It soon became clear that Churchill was fully justified in his fear that the de Gaulle family were in danger of being captured. On June 18 Yvonne de Gaulle, who was still at Carantec, learned that the last two ships were to sail from Brest for Britain that day, one soon after midday, the other at 9 p.m. that night. She realised that not only did she not have time to collect her mother-in-law who lived 100 miles away, but that she would have to move quickly herself if she was to escape. With her children crammed into a little Renault she set off for Brest.

The car broke down on the way and by the time they arrived the first of the ships had already left. She was



A Supermarine Walrus similar to L. 2312, "on the step" during the take-off run from RAF Mount Batten on Plymouth Sound.



# ION TO FRANCE



Sgt Charles Harris at RAF Station Mount Batten about four weeks before his ill-fated sortie.

fortunate to be delayed, as soon afterwards it was sunk by a bomb down the funnel and few survivors were rescued. Yvonne de Gaulle and her family caught the last ship, a Canadian freighter, which zigzagged across the Channel through the night and landed her at Portsmouth on the morning of June 19.

The previous day an RAF Walrus amphibian had crashed in fog in a field between the small town of Ploudaniel and Brest, killing all on board. Among the dead were two Australians, the first of the Australians to lose their lives in the Second World War.

Flight Lieutenant John Bell, the pilot of Walrus L.2312 which crashed in France, had only been officially posted to No. 10 Squadron from the beginning of April 1940 though he had in fact joined it in February of that year. Born at Farina in rural South Australia he had been educated at St. Peter's College, Adelaide. He had joined the RAAF as a cadet in 1935 at the age of 19 years and had been appointed Pilot Officer a year later. Between 1936 and 1939 he had served with No. 5 Squadron from Richmond and had built up over 1000 hours experience, flying mainly Walrus aircraft.

Bell had been posted to No. 9 Squadron from the beginning of 1939. Just over a year later he flew to England to join No. 10 Squadron and arrived in London on February 2, 1940. His first flight in a Sunderland with



The graves of the crew of Walrus L. 2312 at Ploudaniel.

the Squadron was on February 12 and he qualified as First Pilot on March 16. Between February and June he flew about 300 hours on convoy patrols and bombing missions. It is interesting to note that while with No. 10 Squadron which was only equipped with Sunderlands, he had occasion to fly Walrus aircraft. Indeed on 20, 21, 23 May he flew the Walrus in which he was to crash.

Sergeant Charles Harris was born at Collarenebri, NSW, educated Auburn Public School and Sydney Technical College and enlisted in the RAAF in December 1934 at the age of 26. He was initially employed as a fitter with No. 3 Squadron. He served with a number of units as fitter, turner, air gunner and air observer before he joined No. 10 Squadron from No. 22 Squadron in November 1939. It is interesting to note that he held a private pilot's licence. Sergeant Harris was married and had one child, a son.

On June 17, 1940, Winston Churchill, who now had grave fears that de Gaulle's family would fall into enemy hands, contacted D Section of Special Operations Executive (SOE) and requested that they immediately make arrangements to rescue his wife and family from Carantec in Brittany. On the evening of the same day the Duty Controller at RAF Mount Batten received the following message from the Staff Officer attached to Admiral Sir M. Dunbar-Nasmith VC., Commander-in-Chief, Western Approaches.

## FORM GREEN

- A. PL/G12/17/6
- B. MOUNT BATTEN
- C. ONE WALRUS TO PROCEED WITH ADMIRALTY PASSENGER FROM PLYMOUTH SOUND TO NORTH COAST BRITTANY AT EARLIEST 16/6. PASSENGER WILL GIVE DETAILS OF DESTINATION ON ARRIVAL ABOUT 2359/17. AIRCRAFT TO BE FULLY ARMED AND TO KEEP DEFENSIVE WATCH AT ALL TIMES ESPECIALLY WATERBORNE. RETURN TO BASE ON COMPLETION.

According to Squadron Leader Pearce, the Officer Commanding No. 10 Squadron. Flight Lieutenant Bell volunteered for the special mission. It is interesting to note that his logbook shows that he flew a mission in Walrus L.2312 to Brest on June 16 and had returned the following day. Sergeant Harris was unlucky to be on the



M. Robert Kerbrat of Guipavas, France, with the wing-strut from the crashed Walrus.

## SECRET MISSION TO FRANCE

(Continued from previous page).

mission as the Air Observer who should have been on the flight was unwell.

Shortly before midnight on June 17 Captain Norman Hope, a British Intelligence Corps Officer who was working for the Admiralty arrived at Roborough Airport. According to Mr. Ted Cocks, the No. 10 Squadron duty NCO, he was wearing civilian clothes for the mission, being dressed in a brown suit and hat and carrying a small tan attache case. The final member of the crew was Corporal Bernard Nowell, an RAF wireless Electrical Mechanic. It appears that he had had little experience in operating radio sets in the air as he had to be given a course during the night.

It was at 02.55 that the Walrus finally ran down the slip-

way and took off into the night flying south towards the French coast. It is presumed that during the flight Captain Hope briefed the crew on the mission to rescue the de Gaulle family and instructed Bell as to where he should land. The exact details of what happened over the next hour and a half will never be known, and a number of important questions remain unanswered. Did the aircraft drift off course and become lost in the fog or was it intended that Ploudaniel should be visited? Was the aircraft intercepted by German fighters or hit by ground fire or did it experience engine trouble? While researching the incident, Flight Lieutenant Baff interviewed two members of the village of Ploudaniel who remember the incident. These interviews only provide a partial answer to the question.

Madame Marie Pengam, who lived at that time at the little village of Keranou near Ploudaniel, recalled that at about 4 a.m. she heard the sound of an aircraft flying low over the village. On investigation she recalled that she saw that the aircraft was on fire and she later heard that it had been fired upon from the ground. Because of the thick fog Bell appeared to have considerable difficulty in selecting a suitable spot to land. After flying low over a number of fields he chose one that was cultivated and appeared to be level.

Unfortunately the aircraft flew directly into a bank, broke up on impact and burned furiously killing all the occupants. Robert Kerbrat, who was 13 years old at the time, confirms the second half of the account supplied by Madame Pengam. He recalls that when he arrived at the scene of the crash the aircraft was broken in two and was burning. He commented that the undercarriage had broken off and that had the aircraft missed the bank it would probably have landed successfully.

In 1946 the Mayor of Ploudaniel gave the following account of the incident in a letter to the Bell family.

*"On June 18, 1940, at 4.40 a.m. the people in the district of Kerbiquet in Ploudaniel were awakened by the sound of the engine of an aircraft which seemed to be flying very low. The fog was very thick and the engine was not working properly. The machine flew over the area two or three times, low down, as if it was looking for a landing ground, and finally came down in a clump of trees 1½ miles away on the edge of a field. The aircraft caught fire at once. The rescue party was immediately organised, but the flames prevented the rescue party from going near the machine, and they could only bring out of the fuselage the burnt bodies of the unfortunate crew."*

He went on to say that the bodies had been buried at the churchyard of Ploudaniel at a service attended by a large part of the local population and that, in spite of the occupation of the area by the Germans, the graves were well tended throughout the War and always covered with flowers.

*"It is for us, a duty to pay honour to those who gave themselves for the defence of our liberty, and to the ordinary people who care for the graves."*

He wished to assure the families of those who died that they lay "not in a foreign land, but in friendly soil."

Following the disappearance of the Walrus, and having received no information that the de Gaulle family had



reached England, another member of Section D of SOE was sent to Carantec by Motor Torpedo Boat. They enquired about the de Gaulle family and the missing Walrus but were unable to obtain news about either as the town had just been occupied by the Germans. This is how the matter had rested nearly 40 years until Flight Lieutenant Kevin Baff decided to compile a detailed account of the wartime history of No. 10 Squadron. Inevitably his interest soon turned to the events surrounding the deaths of Bell and Harris.

Baff thought that it would prove to be a relatively simple matter to unearth the details and therefore contacted Air Commodore Charles Pearce who had commanded No. 10 Squadron for the first few months of the War. Air Commodore Pearce informed Baff that the mission was to drop an intelligence officer on the Loire and to collect a French Countess. Pearce had heard at the time that Winston Churchill had somehow been involved. By now Baff's interest was aroused.

In April 1978 Air Historical Branch of the British Ministry of Defence was approached for information but were unable to help. Baff did, however, manage to establish that the Walrus used on the mission was operated by No. 15 Group Communications Flight which was also based at RAF Mount Batten. Accordingly the Public Records Office in London was approached for records of the operation of this unit. All they were able to confirm was the fact that the Walrus had been lost in an operation in France. Strangely, though, no record was made in the Duty Controller's Log, Mount Batten, in connection with the loss of the Walrus. The log did however indicate that the Commander-in-Chief, Western Approaches had somehow been involved. Baff contacted the Ministry of Defence Naval Historical Section who confirmed that the Cabinet Office Historical Section should be contacted. They were approached but were unable to help.

In March 1979 Baff had his first success. He was investigating 'Commander Pinson' who had been involved in the passing of the details of the mission to No. 10 Squadron. The Naval Historical Section of the Ministry of Defence were unable to find any reference to Pinson in the 1940 Navy list, but discovered the name Commander Pinsent who served on the staff of the Commander-in-Chief, Western Approaches. It seems that Pinsent had been involved at that time with the evacuation of a number of prominent French citizens from France. It was suggested that an approach should be made to the Historical Section of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in London. It was about this time that Baff received

news from the Mayor of Ploudaniel that supplied information of the crash in a field outside Ploudaniel. He included with his letter two statements, one from Madame Pengam the other from Monsieur Kerbrat both of whom had witnessed the incident.

Meanwhile Baff had contacted the Foreign and Commonwealth Office once more and it had been recommended to him that he should look through published accounts of the fall of France. They referred Baff to three works, *The Men Who Saved France: Petain and de Gaulle*, by General Sir Edward Spears, *War Memoirs*, Vol. I, by General de Gaulle and *De Gaulle* by Edward Ashcroft Spears, in his account of the period stated that Churchill was involved in the evacuation of prominent Frenchmen from France while the works on General de Gaulle confirmed that the timing of the mission coincided with plans to evacuate his family. Baff contacted Professor M.R.D. Foot, the author of *SOE in France*, in 1976. He noted on page 150 of this work,

*"... just before the fall of France, section D sent a flying boat to collect de Gaulle's family from Carantec, on the north Breton coast near Morlaix; it disappeared. Early on June 20 a D staff officer reached Carantec by MTB, only to find that the Germans had arrived, after Mme. de Gaulle had left; she reached England by more orthodox means."*

While it had been many years since Foot had seen the papers, he was sure that Bell and Harris had been involved in this mission.

Early in 1980 Baff contacted the Foreign and Commonwealth Office once more and asked that the SOE files for 17-20 June be inspected. These revealed that Section D had been involved in the evacuation of the family of a prominent French official from the village of Carantec. As the Germans were expected to arrive the following day an officer was despatched in a flying boat. The officer and aircraft had been lost and investigations on 20th proved to be fruitless.

After piecing together all the details of the mission, Baff visited Ploudaniel, where he met Madame Pengam and Monsieur Kerbrat, and saw the graves of the Walrus crew and passenger. He recovered the Walrus engine casing and a wingstrut, from the site of the crash and later donated them to the Australian War Memorial.

(Condensed from an article in Vol. XXII of 'Sabretache', the journal of the Military Historical Society of Australia and reproduced with permission of the author, Jim Heaton.)

1. In Australia the Walrus was known as the Seagull Mk. V.
2. Flight Lieutenant Baff is presently based at RAAF Edinburgh where he has recently been posted from No. 10 Squadron to instructional duties at No. 292 Squadron.

# Engineering Support Flight: 492SQN

By FLGOFF STEVE BOTH

ENGINEERING Support Flight: what is it, who is it, where is it and what does it do?

Engineering Support Flight (ESF) was established at RAAF Edinburgh in late 1980 to provide engineering support for the maintenance element of 492SQN. ESF evolved from AVES (Avionics Engineering Section) or the avionics 'think tank' of the 70's.

The aim of AVES was to provide the engineering expertise required at unit level to support the advanced technology avionics, computer and weapons systems for which 492SQN had maintenance responsibility.

The scope of AVES was widened in 1980 to include all forms of engineering. An aeronautical engineer was added to provide expertise in aeronautical systems. Since AVES was thus no longer concerned with purely avionics (and to reflect the wider responsibilities of the section) the name was changed to Engineering Support Flight. At the same time the establishment was increased to a total of eight engineer officers and the OIC position was increased to SQNLDR rank.

ESF was boosted to full manning early in 1982 with the arrival of the current OIC, SQNLDR Kev Beer, and a number of graduate engineer officers from Frognall.

August 1982 saw the posting in of ESF's first Systems Technician (SYSTECH), SGT Ken Buch, who filled the post of NCOIC Electrical Modifications. The remainder of the ESF staff are Flying Officers John Hermann, Steve Both, Shayne Flint, Geoff Northam, Marty Hilton, Jenny Fantini and Glen Evans; their respective specialities are Radio/Radar Systems, Anti-submarine Warfare Systems, Integrated Avionics (the digital fitment to the P3C), Electrical Systems/Compilation Mission Support and Integration Facility (CMI), Instrument Systems, Automatic Test System, and Mechanical Systems.

To supplement their expertise several members have undertaken courses at 492SQN Field Training Flight, including in particular, Weapons System Technician, Automatic Test Equipment, Infra Red Detection Set and CMM (Computer Aided Maintenance Management) courses.

The expertise available within ESF is intended to provide a capability for detailed investigation and analysis of faults, performance deficiencies, and defects in software (including any software not supported by 292SQN's INSOFLT). ESF is totally committed to developing methods for overcoming deficiencies or improving performance of the Orion aircraft and associated GSE. A major part of this involvement includes the development of modifications and evaluation of modification proposals. The functions and capabilities of ESF are also available to HQSC and other organisations to assist the engineering investigations. In fulfilling this part of its role ESF continually liaises with DRCS, ARDU, HQSC and civilian contractors.

Some of ESF's past activities have included co-

ordination of the Water Spray Modification, completion of a Maritime Radar Performance Study, investigation of corrosion in the Infra Red Detection Set, and involvement in the P3C Sonics Processor installation. ESF has also pioneered many other modifications.

The ESF staff can be found in Building 507, a small portable hut across the road from Orion maintenance hangars 594 and 595. Although the seven junior officers manage to co-habit (?) in one large office, they happily anticipate moving into more spacious accommodation in the near future.

Other events in the near future include the posting in of FLTLT Dave Marshall, currently OIC CMI Maintenance, as OIC ESF, as well as the possibility of more SYSTECHS, and of the involvement of ESF in the procurement of new P3C aircraft.

The introduction of ESF is an extension of an old concept. However, through the efforts of individual members ESF is able to remain a vital cog in the support of maritime operations.

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# Base kindy there to care

ALTHOUGH some people may not be aware of it, RAAF Base Edinburgh boasts one of the leading kindergartens in the local community.

Situated in a quiet location behind the Base cinema, the kindergarten provides pre-schoolers with fun and education five mornings per week and is open for children of both RAAF and civilian families.

The kindergarten is a Government registered establishment sponsored by the Kindergarten Union, which means, like other kindergartens, the running of the kindergarten is delegated to the staff and kindergarten committee, responsible to the union, which acts as the governing body.

The present staffing consists of the director Katrina Hunter, teacher Chris Venema, aide Norma Kingston and long-term volunteer Pattie Potter. Parents are also encouraged to spend time with their children at the kindy and assist the staff with day to day routine.

The children, who number around 35, busy themselves with the usual cutting, pasting, painting, storytelling and singing, but more than that are able to participate in educational themes, attend plays, selected films, and go on a variety of excursions, on Base and out in the local area. Recent activities include visits to the Base Fire Station, Salisbury College and the Octagon Theatre in Elizabeth, where they held their own fancy dress term break-up party. This term the children will concentrate on themes such as transport, sea life and Christmas.

Facilities available to the children are more than equal to those of other kindergartens, with the added advantage of having a quiet, secure, grassed playing area well equipped with climbing equipment, swings, large sandpit and a fort.

Inside, the kindergarten is divided into four main

areas so that several group activities can be conducted simultaneously. A combination of linoleum and carpeted areas allow the children freedom to engage in all forms of activity comfortably throughout the year.

For the grown-ups, a parents' corner has been set up providing a quiet area for parents to enjoy a cup of coffee and engage in discussion with staff or other parents.

The kindergarten committee looks after all the administrative aspects such as fund raising to cover running costs and make general improvements and at the same time encourages parents to take a more active role in their children's pre-school years. Meeting once per month at the kindergarten, the committee invites all parents and other interested people to join them at the meetings, merely to join in discussion or more importantly, to volunteer themselves as kindergarten committee members. The committee is always on the lookout for new members as postings and child progression to primary school ensure a high committee turnover. It is not necessary to have a child at the kindergarten to become a committee member.

On a similar note, child numbers vary throughout the year and at times hover near the minimum number necessary for Kindergarten Union support. If you have a child nearing kindergarten age, have one going to an overcrowded kindy, or know of someone else who does, why not enquire about the RAAF Edinburgh Kindergarten. A waiting list is also being taken for those children not yet of kindergarten age.

The kindergarten director can be contacted during kindergarten hours on 256 2402. And don't forget the kindy is open to civilians as well as service dependents.

The more support the kindy is given, the better it gets.



Kindergarten assistant Pattie Potter oversees some 'flight training' at the playground fort as children release paper helicopters.



Teacher's aide Norma Kingston lends some assistance during a cut and paste session.

# Are you chicken-hearted?

By FLGOFF  
DAN REAVEY

IN MAY of 1976, during a protest by some farmers in France, a group of battery hens were let loose on the road, presumably to cause chaos and to bring traffic to a halt.

Instead, the poor hens who were springing into action for the first time in their lives, all died from cardiac arrest. The totally sedentary lives they had led meant that their hearts had deteriorated to the point where any physical activity whatever was too much strain.

Inside every one of us there beats a small muscular organ, weighing less than a pound, the heart. The heart is the greatest equaliser of our society. The moment it stops beating, everything material which has been accumulated becomes valueless to its owner. The heart is simply a pump at the centre of the complex system which circulates the blood around the body, taking the oxygen you breathe from the air to every part of the body.

The heart is a muscle and, like all muscles, it will become stronger if it is used and weaker if it is not used. A sudden increase in the rate at which it has to work is bad for it, but a gradual increase trains the heart so that it acquires a greater working capacity. One effective way of achieving this is to undertake a regular running programme.

For a lot of people jogging has become a way of life and they reach a stage in their programme where they feel guilty should they go two or three days without exercise.

If you have any inclination to join the jogging fraternity, there are a few basic rules to follow:

**Rule 1** — Before undertaking any fitness programme check with your doctor.

**Rule 2** — Obtain a good pair of running shoes. Tennis shoes with perhaps an added foam rubber insert will do for a start, but for regular running the feet must be given the correct support. The right training shoe will have a gristle rubber sole and a soft leather and nylon upper. Between sole and upper is a wedge of firm rubber, which gives a lot of padding under the heel. The shoes should fit firmly, but not too tightly when worn with a pair of woollen socks.

**Rule 3** — Try to run at the same time every day. Pick a time that suits your lifestyle. Man is a creature of habit, so that the quicker you can get into the habit of running at a particular time of day the easier you will find it to get out onto the road.

Having prepared yourself and obtained your medical clearance the following table is offered as a beginner's programme:

Miles	Stages/Weeks					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	20	18	16	14	13	12
1½		30	27	24	22	21
2			36	32	30	28
3				48	44	40
4					65	60

Target  
time  
in  
minutes

Times for distances are given in minutes. The target times and the distances will not be aimed for every day, but are a guide to what must be achieved at each stage. You must bear in mind that stages will only correspond to weeks if steady progress is made and each stage is successfully completed without any troubles or interruptions.

Having completed the beginner's schedule most people still need a set of targets to reach in order to assess the state of their fitness. A suggested basic running schedule is given in the following table:

Miles	Stages									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	12	11	10		9	8½		8		7½
1½			16	15		14	13		12	
2				21	20	19		18		17
3					34	32	31	30	29	28
4								44	42	40
5									57	54

**Remember at all times that no new stage should be attempted until the times for the previous stage have been successfully achieved — and if at any stage you feel like cheating, the only person you will be cheating will be yourself.**

**Now, go to it!**



# Memories can be beautiful but...

Do You remember when?

- We had Australia on the sleeve of our service jacket.
- The paying Officer counted out your pay.
- L Group didn't have to use a computer to sell you a pair of socks.
- The main gate was 200 yards further North.
- The Flight Lieutenant you see was a Pilot Officer.
- Look at that a Datsun staff car.
- Edinburgh! It's only a small base, RTU and No. 11 Squadron, that's all.
- How do they expect us to cash one of these new \$50 notes.
- I've been posted to Viet-what.
- Six million dollars for an F111!! We can't afford it.
- If you don't give me at least \$50 a fortnight for housekeeping I'll have to go to work on the streets.
- Your sideburns are halfway down your ears laddie, shave them off.
- While you're shopping could you get me a new pair of collar-studs.
- A toolboard! It won't work.
- You had to stir your tea with the other end of your spoon.
- We've had a £1-6-2 pay rise my sweet.
- Go down to the main store and get 6 biros and tell them we'll send a counterslip later.
- A cranky WOE asked, "Who signed this 77?!!"
- Dear, could you get a bucket of hot water from the bathroom so I can do the dishes.
- Get some plywood and patch the nose of the Vamp.
- How easy it was to button your fly and your jacket to the top of your trousers in the middle of winter.
- What do we need numbers for, we know each other.

- You're joking, Lt. Williams wants his aircraft when?!!!
- When the first edition of Maritimes was published?  
Don't remember any of these? Neither do I.

## Royal Air Forces Association

The South Australian (1200th) Branch of the Royal Air Forces Association Inc. has written to advise RAAF Edinburgh personnel of the availability and advantages of membership:

"Sir,

Did you know that a club is available for your use in Elizabeth? Serving and ex-serving members of Commonwealth Airforces are eligible for membership.

Over a thousand branches of the Royal Airforce's Associations throughout the world from Norway to Holland, Switzerland, France, Cape Town and Buenos Aires to name a few.

The club is located on the corner of Philip Highway and Ridley Road, membership is a small \$5 per year.

The benefits of belonging to the Association are many and aid in financial and legal form is freely available to all members.

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# No. 11 Squadron wins Marconi Trophy

A CREW consisting of 10 Officers and 2 SNCOs from 11 Squadron supported by maintenance personnel from No. 492 Squadron, left RAAF Base Edinburgh on October 29 for Whenuapai, New Zealand, to compete in the annual Fincastle anti-submarine warfare competition.

The competitors, 11 Squadron's C crew, won the right to represent the RAAF against crews from England, Canada, and New Zealand by winning the Marconi Trophy in August of this year.

The Marconi Trophy was presented to the RAAF by Marconi Avionics Limited to mark the acceptance of the

first production AQS-901 sonics processor on the 2nd of March 1979 and is competed for annually by Nos. 10 and 11 Squadrons. This year 11 Squadron's C crew flew off against 10 Squadron's Crew 3 during Exercise Tamex 82/4. Both crews flew day and night ASW missions against an RAN Oberon class submarine off the east coast of Australia. The fly off result was very close with both crews achieving good results on both sorties.

The Officer Commanding RAAF Edinburgh, Air Commodore J. A. Paule presented C crew with the Marconi Trophy on August 26, 1982.



Flt Lt Mike Harris and Sgt Robert Liivamagi of No 11 Squadron were recently awarded the Catalina Trophy by the National Catalina Committee. The presentations were made at the opening dinner of the Third National Reunion of the Catalina Association held at Nelson Bay, NSW, on September 20. The Catalina Trophy is awarded annually to an officer and an airman of No 11 Squadron in recognition of outstanding performance.

The winning crew after being presented with the Marconi Trophy are (left to right): PLTOFF Johnstone (Copilot), FLGOFF Oldfield (Navigator), FLGOFF Evans (Copilot), FLTLT Harris (Captain), FLTLT Vansetten (Navigator), FLTLT Lavelle (Tactical Coordinator), FLGOFF Phoebe (Navigator), PLTOFF Tippins (Navigator). Missing were FLTLT Schmitt (Lead Sensor Operator), FLTLT Ryan (Sensor Operator), SGT Blanning (Engineer) and Sgt Crimean (Engineer).

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