



ADF Serials Telegraph News

News for those interested in Australian Military Aircraft History and Serials

Volume 6: Issue 2: Autumn 2016 Editor and contributing Author: Gordon R Birkett,

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Message Board – Current hot topics: These boards can be accessed at: www.adf-messageboard.com.au/invboard/

News Briefs

- **7th January 2016:** L-3 Communications Mission Integration, Greenville, Texas, has been awarded a \$93,632,287 firm-fixed price contract action for two Australia Government G550 ISR aircraft procurement and maintenance. The announcement that the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) is to acquire and field the G550 as a special mission platform is somewhat surprising given that no official requirement was previously disclosed. It is assumed that these aircraft will replace the role of the two Intel /ISR Orion. What Unit will be formed to fly these is unknown.
- **17th January 2016:** NH Industries has revealed a wider slowdown in NH-90 production levels in line with the company completing deliveries on a number of international procurements. Six final assembly lines (FALs) were busy last year, but only five will remain in 2016: France (Marignane); Germany (Donauwörth); Italy (Vergiate); Spain (Albacete); and Australia (Brisbane). Finland's FAL in Halli, operated by Patria, delivered its 29th and final helicopter (19 for Finland and 10 for Sweden) in December 2015. The Australian FAL will be the next to close in 2017 when the 42nd multirole MRH 90 will have been delivered. At the same time, Albacete's FAL will continue its ramp up towards the completion of 22 tactical troop transport helicopters (TTHs) for the Spanish needs. However, global NH90 production is now declining, following a peak in 2014 when 53 helicopters were delivered worldwide. Last year, due to delayed orders and the end of some export production, NHI's global output was only 35 machines. Should the total order of 509 remain unchanged, the production will end in 2021. The lead time for production is said to have dropped from 18 months to 30 weeks since the first NH90 was produced 10 years ago. On the subject of the ARH Variety, France has ordered seven more Tiger attack helicopters from Airbus, the French defence procurement agency (DGA) announced on 22 December 2015. The latest order will bring France's total inventory of Tiger helicopters (known in France as the Tigre) to 67 aircraft. The new aircraft will be delivered between 2017 and 2018, the DGA stated.
- **10th February 2016:** The first air-to-air refuelling from an 33 Sqn RAAF KC-30A Multi Role Tanker Transport (MRTT) (A39-002) to a C-17A Globemaster III (USAF 03-3121) occurred over Edwards Air Force Base in the United States. The five-hour sortie was conducted by members of the RAAF's Air Warfare Centre Aircraft Research and Development Unit, 86 Wing and the United States Air Force (USAF) 418th Flight Test Squadron. During the sortie approximately seven tonnes of fuel was successfully transferred from the KC-30A Advanced Refuelling Boom System (ARBS) to the USAF C-17A.



- 25th February 2016:** A RAAF F-35A block buy across low rate initial production (LRIP) Lots 12, 13 and 14 is still possible despite the US services not being able to fully participate. US Air Force Lt. Gen. Christopher Bogdan was in Canberra to testify at a Senate inquiry into Australia's purchase of 72 F-35A aircraft to replace its F/A-18A/B Hornet fleet. The US has told the program office that it cannot participate in a block buy of jets until at least LRIP 13. Australia has two aircraft at Luke Air Force base now, used in the training of pilots, and its next batch of aircraft, eight jets, will be built in LRIP 10; six will go to Luke Air Force Base, Arizona, and two will arrive in Australia at the end of 2018 for local operational test and evaluation.



A Sqn 5 AAv Reg MRH-90 A40-011 gets unloaded at Suva, Fiji

- 25th February 2016:** The first operational use of a LPH has been made when HMAS Canberra sailed to Fiji to assist in humanitarian role after Fiji suffered its worst cyclone ever, Cyclone Winston, on the 20th February 2016. Two Navy MRH-90s and one troop of four Army Aviation MRH-90s are deployed, with the later arriving ex Townsville by RAAF C-17A and flown after reassembly from Suva. *The first two MRH-90 aircraft were accepted into service eight years ago in Brisbane on 18th December, 2007.*
- 28th February 2016:** The Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) conducted a memorial service for eleven crew members lost in waters south of Cairns on 28th February 1943 in RAAF Catalina A24-25. Catalina aircraft stationed at Cairns were used from late 1942 by Number 11 Squadron to fly long-range missions against Japanese shipping and submarines. On 2251hrs, 28th February 1943, Catalina A24-25 and its 11 crew were engaged on a 17 hour mission to provide anti-submarine cover to a convoy heading for Milne Bay in Papua New Guinea. A Court of Inquiry recorded that the aircraft crashed at sea whilst attempting to land due to exhaustion of its fuel supply. There were no witnesses and no sightings of wreckage or crew during subsequent searches. The wreckage was first discovered 56 kilometres south of Cairns in 35 metres of water by local Cairns diver Mr Kevin Coombs in 2013.

- **1st March 2016:** Defence Helios deliveries: Fifteen MH-60Rs have arrived in Australia, with a further one held in the USA. The last of twenty-four will be delivered in August 2016. The first of fifteen EC135's has arrived at Nowra, marked Navy and Army. Some thirty-six MRH-90's have been delivered to both Army and Navy. A further three CH-47Fs will be ordered for delivery by 2018.



- **7th March 2016:** US Air Force awarded Northrop Grumman last year, after a hotly contested contract with Boeing, to build the secretive long range strike bomber, is now numbered as the **B-21**. To be powered by a derivative of the F-35 power plant, but the Northrop Grumman's B-21 will yield lessons learned that will also benefit future F35 engines that power the F-35. Pratt and Whitney also declined to confirm that the two aircraft will eventually have a common engine.



- **11th March 2016:** The Royal Australian Navy selected Spanish shipbuilder Navantia as preferred tender to construct two auxiliary oiler and replenishment (AOR) vessels under SEA 1654 Phase 3. These two new replenishment ships will be based on the Spanish Navy's 19,800-ton SPS Cantabria class vessel, which deployed with the Royal Australian Navy in 2013. The ship's capacity includes 8,920 cubic metres of ship fuel, 1,585 cubic metres of JP-5 jet fuel, 215 cubic metres of fresh water, 280 tons of ammunition, and 470 tons of general cargo. The fuel storage areas are double-hulled. Cantabria can replenish three ships simultaneously; one on each side, plus a third via a stern refuelling station. She can carry two NH Industries MRH-90 helicopters to perform vertical replenishment. *NB: Per Sea 1000, Japan will dispatch a Soryu Class high-tech submarine to Sydney this April 2016 as it pulls out all the stops to win the contract to help build the replacement to Australia's Collins Class fleet.*



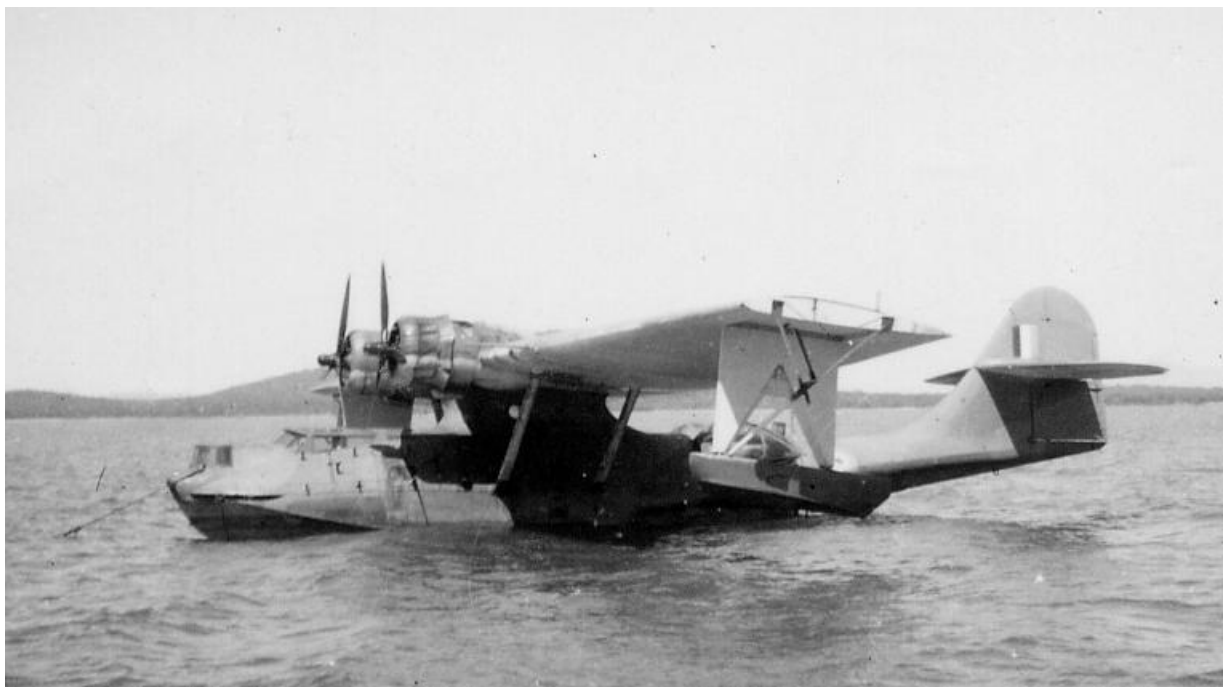
The Search for HMAS Sydney by 11 Squadron Catalina's.

Written by Mike Mirkovic, March, 2016.

On November 19, 1941, HMAS Sydney and the German raider SMS Kormoran fought a naval engagement in the Indian Ocean off the West Australian coast somewhere between Geraldton and Carnarvon, during which both vessels were sunk. The Sydney was lost with all hands and the survivors of Kormoran took to their life boats and headed for the coast of West Australia, where they surrendered when they were located.

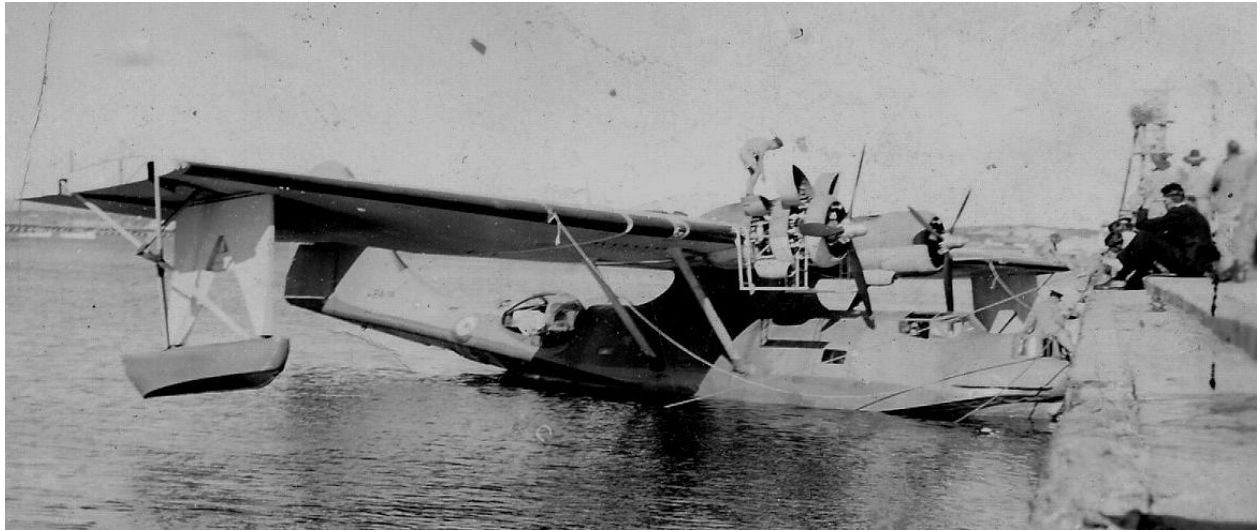
Responding to a request on 24 November by Central War Room from Air Officer Commanding Western Area, Air Commodore de La Rue for additional aircraft for reconnaissance of the area. C.W.R. contacted Air Command Headquarters Townsville to immediately despatch two Catalina flying boats with experienced crews from Port Moresby to Fremantle to help in the search. 14 Squadron Hudsons at Pearce were initially involved in search along with Ansons from 4 S.F.T.S at Geraldton but aircraft with longer range were needed.

Catalina A24-11 was the first to leave Port Moresby, crewed by Lt. G.L. Hutchison, USN (on secondment from the US Navy) with P/O. R.M. Seymour as his second pilot/navigator, They left Port Moresby at dawn on November 25 and flew to Darwin, arriving 9 hours later where they refuelled and took off for Fremantle, arriving there soon after dawn on the 26th. On the previous day Sqn Ldr 'Hoot' Gibson with Lt. S. Weller, USN were delivering Catalina A24-14 from Rathmines up to Port Moresby via Townsville when they received a signal diverting them to Fremantle. They refuelled at Townsville and then flew to Darwin and onto Fremantle arriving on the morning of the 26th.



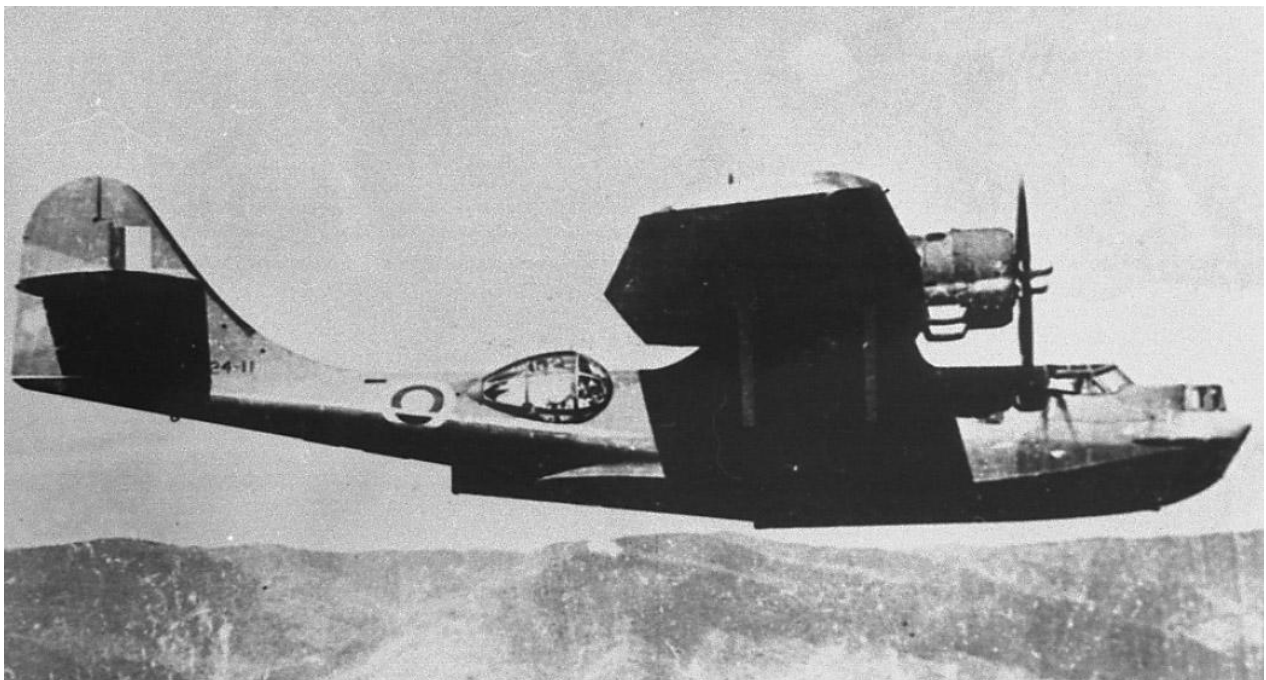
Catalina A24-14 at Townsville, Nov., 1941 before flying out to Fremantle

Both aircraft were then refuelled and reequipped while moored in the Swan River and the crew were briefed and had a short nap and meal before flying up to Geraldton that afternoon. They moored in the bay and crew were then ferried ashore and onto RAAF base Geraldton for a good meal and sleep, their first in nearly two days.



A24-11 Pictured at Geraldton's waterfront wharf, November 1941

On the 27th the first search was flown radiating from the estimated position of surviving boats and rafts that drifted from Nov.19. Navigating was by dead reckoning due to radio silence and distance from Perth's H/F and D/F broadcast stations. Nothing was found that day or the next two days while the search pattern changed during that time, flying closer to the coast and then radiating outwards. On the 30th they were stood down for a rest after having flown over 61 hours in five days.



Catalina A24-11, pictured in early 1942(note Standard RAF Style Roundels introduced Dec 1941).

On Dec.1st they returned to Port Moresby via Darwin, they flew along the coast and hit appalling weather arriving at Darwin after nearly 18 hours in the air and landed at night. The following day they flew on to Port Moresby in 8½ hours.

References

- Catalina Chronicle by David Vincent.
- Report from Sqn Ldr R.M. Seymour and extracts from the Official inquiry into the lost of HMAS Sydney held in the Aviation Heritage Museum of W.A.
- All photos are sourced Aviation Heritage Museum of W.A. via Mike Mirkovic, March, 2016.

The New RAAF Strike Aircraft choice: GAF Canberra B20 Replacement @Gordon R

Birkett@2015

1st May, 1960 A CIA Lockheed U-2C (Article 360, USAF# 56-6693), flown by Francis Gary Powers from Peshawar, Pakistan, was shot down by an SA-2 Guideline missile, near Sverdlovsk, USSR. A new threat to aircraft had arrived.

Process:

Submission of the "Selection of a replacement Strike/Reconnaissance Aircraft for the RAAF, per Cabinet Decision No 1022 , dated 16th September 1963, outlined its ethos:

" The primary role of the fighting services of a country is to protect their country against attack. In order to meet this task they must possess a broadly based (balanced) capability; so far as the Air Force is concerned this includes the ability to carry out reconnaissance tasks over the territory of probable enemies, and in war, to attack important targets outside the range of our tactical fighters.

The evaluation team reported that the two types of aircraft underdevelopment (The American TFX and the British TSR2) and, that both *"meet the Air Staff requirement better than any existing aircraft"*.

The team assessed the TFX :*"as definitely superior to the TSR2" therefore, the ideal choice for the RAAF, ignoring other aspects, is the TFX"*

However, based on the development and availability of the said aircraft and the time factor of the effectiveness of the Canberra Bomber , the Team accordingly concluded: *"The selection of the RA-5C to replace the Canberra is the quickest and most effective means of providing the RAAF with a Strike/Reconnaissance Force"*



A USN North American RA-5C Vigilante Bu No 156639, one of 36 constructed in this late Bu No series, which later ended up as a target at NWC China Lake in June 1979.

However, Cabinet Decision No 1057 on the 7th October 1963, concluded that the RA5C , as recommended by the Air Force Evaluation Team, should not proceed, but rather *"the Government should enter into a discussion with the United States Administration at a political level, concerning the problems of replacement and the way or ways in which the Government may deal with them"*.

Comments included in the decision process:

- *"The Cost of the project would be out of proportion to the operational effectiveness of the weapons system when using conventional bombs"*
- *"In a S.E.A.T.O.¹ war, it can be argued that America would not require any assistance from us in the "bomber" field" . ¹ SEATO regional-defence organization from 1955 to 1977, was part of the Southeast Asia Collective Defence Treaty, or Manila Pact, was signed on 8th September 1954 in Manila. SEATO was intended to be a Southeast Asian version of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)*
- *"Does the strategic assessment over the next ten years provide for bomber attack upon Indonesian targets?"*

The Aircraft

A total of forty-three standard RA-5C's were built or rebuilt out of earlier versions, with these following closely on the heels of the eighteen original A-5B aircraft. When the last of these rolled off of the Columbus, Ohio assembly line, it appeared that the Vigilante production had come to an end.

Accordingly, tooling and related hardware was placed in long-term storage. The Columbus facility then shifted its priorities to other projects including the remanufacture of the forty-three remaining A-5A and A-5B aircraft to RA-5C standards. The delivery of RAAF RA-5C, had they been ordered, would have had the first squadron operational by December 1966.

Post Hindsight proof of wrong first choice: The RA-5C was first deployed to south-east Asia in August of 1964, initially flying missions only over South Vietnam because the Navy was reluctant to jeopardize the aircraft's sophisticated and very expensive equipment, should the aircraft be lost over North Vietnam.



It should be pointed out though, the RA-5C had the highest loss rate of any US Navy aircraft deployed during the Vietnam War with eighteen Vigilantes being lost due to the hazard of their primary mission; pre- and post-strike photography,

- 11 were lost to antiaircraft fire.
- 2 were shot down by SA-2 Guideline surface-to-air missiles (SAM's).
- 1 was lost to an Atoll missile fired from a MiG-21 fighter.
- 4 were lost for unknown reasons, over N. Vietnam.
- 1 other aircraft was lost for unknown reasons, not over N. Vietnam.

Attrition caused by the continuing hostilities over Vietnam and from carrier operations therefore resulted in renewed US Navy interest for acquiring additional RA-5C's. In 1968 the US Navy ordered a further forty-six new production RA-5C's, by restarting the production line. Only thirty-six of these new aircraft were actually built, with the last completed in August 1970.

Visually they differed from the previous models only by a leading edge extension which extended from near the wing root to the forward air intake lip. The purpose of this extension was to generate improved airflow over the stabilizer at low speeds, enhancing pitch control during the landing approach. These aircraft were all powered by J79-GE-10 engines.

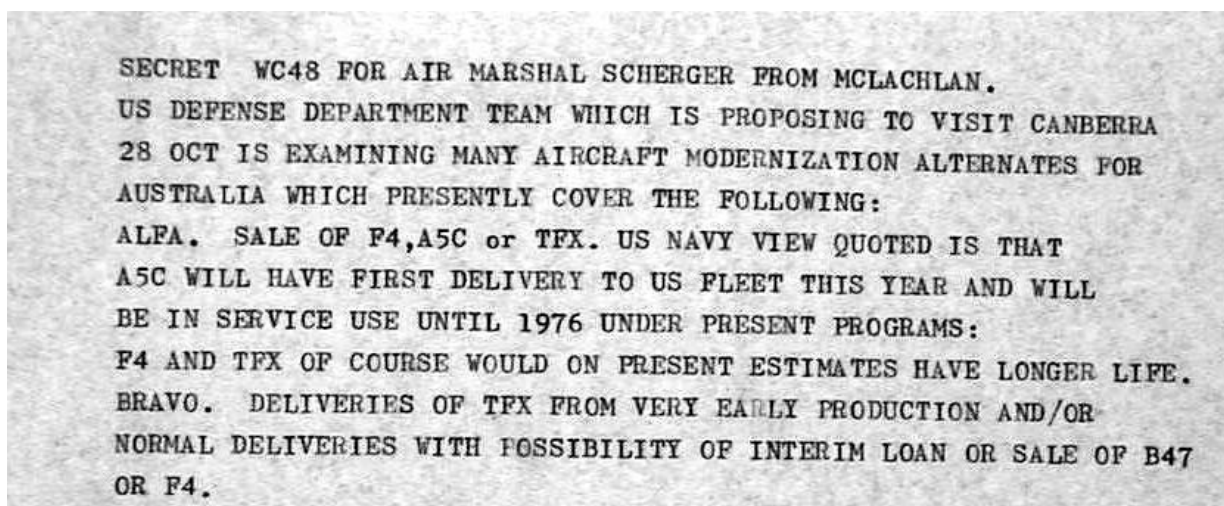
All Vigilante Bu No s are listed below:

- Bu No 145157/145158 2 aircraft
- Bu No 146694/146708 10 aircraft, further 10 cancelled
- Bu No 147850/147863 14 aircraft
- Bu No 148924/148933 10 aircraft
- Bu No 149276/149299 24 aircraft
- Bu No 149300/149317 18 aircraft
- Bu No 150823/150842 20 aircraft
- Bu No 151615/151634 20 aircraft
- Bu No 151726/151728 3 aircraft
- Bu No 151962/151969 8 aircraft cancelled
- Bu No 156608/156653 46 Attrition, with only 36 built

NB: In all, some 65 plus Vigilantes out of the 156 built, were lost in both accidents and in combat

Right, Stage Left: we'll go with Number One Choice you thought you'd never get!

Direct discussions with Secretary of Defence, United States of America, Robert McNamara and Assistant Secretary of Defence (US), Mr. Bundy, followed in early October 1963, via the Washington based Delegation of Australia, headed by Defence Minister Mr. Athol Townley, informed the Australian Government on the 20th October 1963:



SECRET WC48 FOR AIR MARSHAL SCHERGER FROM MCLACHLAN.
US DEFENSE DEPARTMENT TEAM WHICH IS PROPOSING TO VISIT CANBERRA
28 OCT IS EXAMINING MANY AIRCRAFT MODERNIZATION ALTERNATES FOR
AUSTRALIA WHICH PRESENTLY COVER THE FOLLOWING:
ALFA. SALE OF F4,A5C or TFX. US NAVY VIEW QUOTED IS THAT
A5C WILL HAVE FIRST DELIVERY TO US FLEET THIS YEAR AND WILL
BE IN SERVICE USE UNTIL 1976 UNDER PRESENT PROGRAMS:
F4 AND TFX OF COURSE WOULD ON PRESENT ESTIMATES HAVE LONGER LIFE.
BRAVO. DELIVERIES OF TFX FROM VERY EARLY PRODUCTION AND/OR
NORMAL DELIVERIES WITH POSSIBILITY OF INTERIM LOAN OR SALE OF B47
OR F4.

Thus the announcement of Decision No 1117 on the 23rd October 1963; to the agreement of the twenty-four F-111A/RF-111A Contract, came out of left field for the RAAF.

There was also a loan proposal of twelve USAF SAC B-47E/RB-47E aircraft as interim bombers until their delivery. Three USAF B-47Es arrived for a demonstration to the RAAF during the following month.

On the assumption that the delivery of the twelve interim B-47E Bomber Force would be arriving post June 1965, if an agreement was reached by June 1964, there was also a requirement to complete plans on the introduction, air crew training and ground maintenance training and spare parts holdings(Including Depot maintenance or overhauls are performed in the USA or Guam where B-47s were based in the Pacific).

It should be noted that in Hansard the day after in Federal Parliament, on the 24th October 1963, that the Prime Minister Robert G Menzies, stated to the Hon Gough Whitlam, "that an agreement has been reached with the United States that up to two squadrons of B-47E aircraft will be made available to Australia with no leasing charge to the Australian Government. Australian personnel will be trained by the USAF on the the basis of reimbursement costs, and ground handling equipment and logistic support provided at satisfactory prices"

This total is correct, as Decision No 1104, dated on the 22nd October 1963 stated:

"Proposals now being discussed in Washington by the Minister of Defence for the supply to Australia of two squadrons of aircraft of the TFX type, with an understanding that if interim replacement of the Canberra Bomber is desirable the united States will lend to Australia up to 24 B-47 Aircraft with reconnaissance capacity and fitted for the internal carriage of conventional bombs".

111. INTERIM AIRCRAFT.

A. IN VIEW OF THE EARLIEST OPERATIONAL CAPABILITY DATE OF THE F111A AND RF111A, INTERIM REPLACEMENT OF THE CANBERRA BOMBERS MAY BE DESIRABLE.

FOR ECONOMIC AND BUDGETARY REASONS, ANY REPLACEMENT WOULD HAVE TO REMAIN WITHIN THE GENERAL LIMITS OF PLANNED FINANCIAL AVAILABILITIES.

B. IF DESIRED BY THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT, THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE WILL (WITHIN 90-180 DAYS OF A REQUEST) LEND UP TO TWENTY-FOUR B-47 AIRCRAFT, SELECTING THOSE IN THE BEST CONDITION, TO THE AUSTRALIAN ARMED FORCES ON THE UNDERSTANDING THAT THESE AIRCRAFT WILL BE RETURNED TO THE UNITED STATES AFTER THE F 111A AND RF 111A AIRCRAFT ARE OPERATIONAL IN THE AUSTRALIAN ARMED FORCES.

C. THIS LOAN OF TWENTY-FOUR B-47 AIRCRAFT WILL BE SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING UNDERSTANDINGS CONCERNING COSTS:

1. THE UNITED STATES WILL MAKE NO CHARGE FOR THE BASIC AIRCRAFT.

2. AUSTRALIA WILL REIMBURSE THE UNITED STATES FOR ALL OUT-OF-POCKET COSTS OF THE UNITED STATES ASSOCIATED WITH THE LOAN OF THE AIRCRAFT.

3. ALL OUT-OF-POCKET COSTS OF THE UNITED STATES FOR WHICH THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT WILL BE LIABLE WILL BE SUBJECT TO ADVANCE REVIEW AND APPROVAL BY AN APPROPRIATE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT.

4. UNLESS OTHERWISE MUTUALLY AGREED, MAJOR OVERHAULS OF THE BASIC AIRCRAFT WILL NOT BE REQUIRED TO BE CARRIED OUT BY AUSTRALIA UPON RETURN OF THE AIRCRAFT TO THE UNITED STATES.

On the 30th October 1963, some eight days later, a letter from the Secretary of the Air Force, Mr. A B McFarlane to the Secretary of the Defence, Mr. E W Hicks, stated that the stated B-47E arrangement was a proposal only and that concern by the Department of Works was that the established runways, taxiways and hard standing would fail quickly if reconstruction work was not performed at the operating bases in Australia.

Only RAAF Darwin could operate these aircraft without any reconstruction work. RAAF Amberley would require existing pavements to be overlaid in concrete, as would be the other paved areas. As it would be the primarily the training location for this squadron, there was doubt whether or not the main runway would be long enough to safely operate the aircraft. Amberley's length was 8000feet, and would therefore require lengthening to 10000feet, with a start to commence by April 1964, which would require the current building of RAAF Tindal's pavements and runway by the RAAF's sole Airfield Construction Squadron, to be deferred by some fifteen months.

Thereafter it would end its operational days as a war reserve Light Bomber Squadron of eight Canberras, until sometime in 1970/1971 when all present operational Canberras were to be withdrawn, following the introduction of the F-111 in 1968. RAAF Canberra B20 strength at the time of 19th August 1966, was at thirty-nine (39) airframes in use. Down from the total of 52 ordered and delivered.

As it was later, Amberley Extensions post 1966, proposed a final requirement for a Hard standing extension between taxiway's "F" and "G" in an easterly direction for the return of the third Canberra Bombing Squadron(No 2 Squadron based at Butterworth, Malaysia), would be needed when it was due to return to Australia around June 1968.



Amberley RAAF, Snapshot March 1971, and the hardstands post laid. Photo: RAAF Official

Sources:

- National Archives of Australia: Aircraft as replacement for the Canberra's
- National Archives of Australia: Procurement of nuclear weapons - use of by the Australian forces
- National Archives of Australia: Indonesia - Special actions and operational plans [Confrontation]
- Flight Magazine Articles
- [WWW.se-asia.commemoration.gov.au/background-to-indonesian-confrontation](http://www.se-asia.commemoration.gov.au/background-to-indonesian-confrontation)
- Source: http://www.bobjellison.com/RA5C_Vigilante.htm



Airframe #24, A8-148, after its first coat in original S.E. Asian and white under scheme, Fort Worth Texas, 1968. Photo: Unknown



P-40 Operations in Australia: Supplementary #6 @Gordon R Birkett@2016

"The ever confusing evidence of early 1942 RAAF P-40E/E-1 A29 Serial allocations, as seen by a novice, in search of the identity of missing A29 Pilot and a associated Pilot Accident record for Mr Gilbert."

The early story: From the RAAF Side

The entry of a possible USAAF Pilot named **Gilbert** after being reconciled against **P-40E-1 41-24817 (ET141)** crash, twiggged an issue some time ago when I was doing aircraft delivery and accidents research on behalf of William H author of "Everyday a nightmare"; the story of USAAF Pursuit Pilots who arrived into Australia and then sent to Java, during the early part of 1942. That research by me started way back in 1998.

By listing all of the pilots of several Convoys (Dec 41 to March 42) and those evacuated from the Philippines, there appeared to be no "2nd or 1st Lt or Capt Gilbert" what so ever, in any United states Army Forces in Australia (USAFIA) listing.

The first mention of the name "Gilbert" was when his name and aircraft serial was listed by the USAFIA Aircraft Supply (ACS4, equivalent to rank of Major or above) Officer's Assistant, a 1st Lt Elmore G Brown, on USAAF Damaged Aircraft in Australia.

Though not dated, it would seem to include all accidents from early January 1942, to up to April 1942. Per the first entry below,..the time/date/Location given for Gilbert's accident was 0920hrs, 02/02/42(or so it seemed dated) and located in a ploughed field near Tumut in the NSW Highlands .

HEADQUARTERS
U. S. A. AIR FORCES IN AUSTRALIA
A-4. AIRCRAFT MOVEMENTS STATUS & STATISTICS SECTION.
Location and Status of Damaged Aircraft in Australia.

ACS-4
EGB/PO'S

TYPE	SERIAL NO.	PILOT	TIME	CAUSE	NATURE	TYPE OF DAMAGE	LOCATION AT TIME OF CRASH UP	PRESENT LOCATION	REMARKS
P-40	41-24817	Gilbert	0920/2/2	Smoky haze	Crash landing	Total loss	Tumut		Total loss, removed to Air-drome.
P-40E	41-5619	J.J.Lanett	6312/2/3		Ground loop				
P-40E	40-412	Connell	0130/2/3	Put on brakes & plane nosed over	Overshot field	Aircrew & other extensive damage	Williamstown		
P-40	41-36321	Lt. Miller	3/2/42			Major damage wing & landing gear	Archerfield		
P-40	36-476	Lt. Glover	3/2/42			Electrical system, rudder, elevators & tail wheel.	Amberly		
P-40E	Box No.186	Lt. Goodyear	3/2/42			Undercarriage, oil filter	Amberly		
P-40E	41-36095	B.W.Headrick	09 02/2/4	Damaged on landing		Propellor	Williamstown		Awaiting supply proper local repairs.
P-40E	41-5606	Alford	2300/2/7			Nose over damaged propellor.	Laverton	Geelong	
O-47A	37-282	H.V.Maul	0500/2/8	Applied brakes in landing	Nose over		Archerfield		"
P-40E	41-5436	Lt. Wilhite	8/2/42		Landing made with wheels retracted				Undercarriage, Air screw, airfilters under surface of plane.
P-40		Lt. Levston	15/2/42			Wing tip, Aileron, entire left landing gear	Richmond		
A-24	41-15794	Lt. Jacobs	17/2/42		Attempted night landing	Crashed	Darwin, Civil A.B.		
B-17E	41-2430		18/2/42		Collision of civil Aircraft taxiing into B-17 while of ground	Has been repaired	Archerfield		

ELMORE G. BROWN,
1st Lt., Air Corps,
Asst. A-4.

That became one of those elusive "place back on the top shelf" issues for some years.

Note: Signature is by 1LT ELMORE G. BROWN O-022057 Based at CLARK Field before coming to Australia 1942, ex 19th BG,...USMA 39 (West Point) Commissioned into Infantry, before USAAC Wings Class of 40 (Pilot School).

The below is the only March 1942 photographed crashed 8th PS P-40E-1 held, near Tumut. *Nb: Though with a Olive Drab or Blue Spinner, scheme is Repo P-40E-1 disruptive green/brown with E-1 Formation lights on cowl, and staggered pitot wing tube.*



When finally getting a hold of 49th Pursuit Group P-40E/E-1 allocations to the 8th PS, then based at Canberra (from the 15th March 1942, up to the 6th April 1942 before going to Darwin, NT) there was this mentioned **P-40E-1, 41-24817**. (In red are the CW Line#/FY Serial conversions see note¹)

TO 8TH PURSUIT SQUADRON		
TYPE	AIR CORPS NO.	
P-40E	41-5501	41-5481
"	41-24800	
"	41-5330	
"	41-5329	
"	41-5243	
"	41-325	41-5345
"	41-24367	
"	41-24811	
"	41-5517	
"	41-24813	
"	41-5332	
"	41-5575	
"	41-5344	
"	41-5642	
"	41-5607	
"	41-412	41-5392
"	41-5295	
"	41-5511	
"	41-5455	
"	41-24831	
"	41-5553	
"	41-55	Unknown Box#
"	41-5348	
"	41-5602	
"	41-681	Actually 40-581
"	41-388	41-5368
"	41-382	41-5349
"	41-24817	
"	40-507	

A part of the 4th Depot Repair Squadron and Headquarters & Headquarters Squadron were assigned the mission of establishing an Aircraft repair depot at the RAAF Station, Wagga Wagga, New South Wales, Australia, working in conjunction with the Royal Australian Air Force, early in April 1942.

A further entry, above, of the aircraft serial, P-40E-1 41-24817, showed following the accident, that it was sent to Depot (Wagga?) on the 26th March 1942, for disposal or reclamation, seemingly by road. Other records show, at this time, the aircraft was still at Canberra after a mishap, assigned from the 8th Pursuit Squadron, to the insitu 4 Air Depot detachment from Wagga. There the trail went cold for the aircraft. It seems that the accident damage wasn't that bad, and perhaps it was repaired? I was still scratching my head as it didn't fit the dates!!!!!!

The pilot trail became hot again sometime in 2004, because,.....up comes a file on the National Archives of Australia which I saw. *But the dates in relation to the first entry per ACS-4 List, seem out by two months,..the actual accident date being on the 4th April 1942 and different location.*

NAA: Title: GILBERT Arthur George William - (Flying Officer); Service Number - 799;
File type - Casualty - Repatriation; Aircraft - P40E; Place - Cessnock, New South Wales;
Date - 4 April 1942 Contents date range 1929 - 1960. Accumulation start date 05 Apr 1942 Series number A705 Control symbol 163/34/170 : Citation NAA: A705, 163/34/170 Item barcode 1054867 Location Canberra Access status Open

So we had at last a pilot rank and name regarding a unknown P-40E accident at Cessnock, NSW, perhaps? Flying Officer Arthur George Gilbert Serv# 799 was based at RAAF Canberra with the 8thPS until he was posted to Archerfield QLD as an original member of 76 (F) Squadron, RAAF, on the 31st March 1942. The Squadron had been formed there a Archerfield Qld on the 14th March 1942.

This raised several questions in my mind:

- Was the serial and accident the same as per the ACS-4 List?
- Why was a RAAF Pilot flying P-40E-1 41-24817
- Was P-40E-1 41-24817 the missing Cessnock Crash?
- Why was A29-46 screaming out in the background, due to its crash location?

What has been seemingly found, is that P-40E-1 41-24817 #52 was not tied up to a A29 Serial issue. A further single source, dated two days after,... gave me a identified A29 Serial for this RAAF Piloted Cessnock P-40E , the ORB of 76 (F) Sqn, Page 71,..and it caused me to blink,..... then scream!!!

6.4.42. AIRCRAFT CASUALTIES AND FORCED LANDINGS.
Flying Officer GILBERT in Aircraft A29-76 crashed at CESSNOCK while on ferry trip between CANBERRA and ARCHERFIELD.

Was Gilbert was seemingly flying A29-76, perhaps #2 of 3 allotted, per 76 Sqn Records on the date 06/04/42? So,....here were details of a similar accident at Cessnock dated two days before the 04/04/42 accident per E/E88 Card! But,... was he actually flying A29-46 (ex 41-5522), hence the similar number stated flying,...A29-46*** versus an erroneous A29-76?????**

RAAF E/E-88 and 75 Sqn Records shows that "Final" **A29-76 was **P-40E 40-663** , received by 2AP Bankstown on the 06/04/42 and was coded "T" with 75Sqn RAAF ,.. and w/o after Sgt Bob Crawford ditched it 6 miles west of Port Moresby on the 24/4/42. NB:P-40E **41-5508** was **A29-76#1**

*****P-40E 41-5522** , which was a ex bent USAAF **#12 Black** that was ground looped at Lowood on the 4th February, 1942, then repaired at Amberley, before being issued to the 13thPS (Prov), only to be damaged at Richmond or Bankstown on its way to the USS Langley, before being repaired and transferred to RAAF as **A29-46**.

So,....was there are two separate "stated" accidents at Cessnock, west of Newcastle NSW? Then the question is,....if not, who was the other pilot of A29-46?

But was there two accidents? P-40E-1 41-24817 , with Gilbert, was stated involved in a forced landing at Tumut,... south west of Canberra! The aircraft was then sent to Wagga Wagga with 5AD or USAAF 4AD, and was salvaged.

Date wise, the 8thPS didn't have aircraft until the third week of February 1942, therefore the date on the ACS-4 File for accidents is in err per 0920hrs, 02/02.

The first RAAF Pilot to be assigned to the 8thPS was F/Lt B.M.Cox , ex 4Sqn RAAF , on the 14th February 1942, with the 8th PS actually arriving in Canberra sans aircraft, on the 16/02/42. F/O Gilbert arrived on their doorstep on the 19th February 1942 as one of three RAAF attachments; in his case ex 7SFTS to assist in training using two Wirraways loaned to the 8th PS. In return, they got bootleg time in P-40Es

19/2/42 Flying Officer A.G.W. GILBERT 799 arrived by road from DENILIQUIN for duty with No.8 Pursuit Squadron.

It seems now that the date for the crash of P-40E-1 41-24817 would have been perhaps mid to late March 1942, for as at the 31st March 1942, it was sitting at Fairbairn RAAF, Canberra.

What's known, **P-40E-1 41-24817 #52** was retrieved from Tumut and was still stored at Canberra, extremely damaged, per USAAF ACS4 advice ex RAAF Canberra via a 43rd Material Squadron report (in tan below), along with others left at other bases, per dated RAAF Letter on the 31st March 1942. So how does the 4th or 6th of April 1942 fit in?

Also noted that the action was commenced per disposal of airframes to 5AD Wagga on the 3rd April 1942, but the 4th Air Depot Repair Sqn, USAAF didn't arrive at Wagga Wagga until the 13th April 1942. (Meaning: 41-24817 could not be flown by the 4th April 1942!)

At Canberra -
5 P-40E's
41-5617
5646
388 CW#388 =41-5368
369 CW#369 =41-5349
24817

4803 "S" Block, Victoria Barracks
MELBOURNE, S.C.I.
3 APR 1942
SECRET
Headquarters,
R.A.A.F. Station,
CANBERRA, A.C.T.
COLLECTION AND DISPOSAL OF CRASHED AIRCRAFT
ON STRENGTH OF U.S.A.F.I.A.
1. Air Board has advised that with reference to the above subject U.S.A.F.I.A. Headquarters have advised that they have received a report from the 43rd Material Squadron, concerning the following aircraft which are damaged beyond local repair facilities and should be collected and forwarded to No. 5 Aircraft Depot, WAGGA.
5 P.40E's 41 - 5617 ✓
5646 ✓
388 ✓
369 ✓
24817 ✓
2. It is required that you take the necessary action to have these aircraft delivered to No. 5 A.D. WAGGA and advise this Headquarters when action has been completed.

Conclusion; F/O A G W Gilbert had bent two P-40E/E-1's during a short time between March and the 4th of April 1942, and that 76 Sqn History Record per stated "A29-76" entry is in err, and should be read as **A29-46**.

The date is also wrong, per Sqn records, and should read 4th April, 1942 per his Accident file: (GILBERT Arthur George William - (Flying Officer); Service Number - 799; File type - Casualty - Repatriation; Aircraft - P40E; Place - Cessnock, New South Wales; Repatriation; Aircraft - P40E; Place - Cessnock, New South Wales; **Date - 4 April 1942**

Date - 4 April 1942 does corresponds with A29-46 E/E-88 Card, which is also dated **04/04/42**

A29-46 being effected that station
44-42 crashed at Cessnock

Common sense and research reasoning stands out, I think, that the "4" in A29-46, was misinterpreted as a European style crossed 7 ("7") by the ORB Officer when writing up the 76 Squadron History Sheets, or perhaps from a badly hand written Cipher Message error preceding that. It should have read **A29-46**.

Thus GRB's final findings are:

1/ The first accident, whilst attached to the 8thPS/49thPG USAAF, based in Canberra, was with **P-40E-1 41-24817**, with F/O A G W Gilbert #799 at the controls, forced landed and wrote off this aircraft at Tumut ACT during mid to late March 42.

2/ The second accident, was **P-40E A29-46**, ex **41-5522**, at Cessnock NSW, on ferry to 76 Sqn RAAF on the 4th April 1942, piloted also by F/O A G W Gilbert #799 (Assigned 76 Sqn RAAF 31st March 1942 ex Canberra) when it was damaged either on take-off, or landing (for refuelling), at the Cessnock Civil Aerodrome, during his flight from Bankstown to Archerfield.

Mind you, Mr Gilbert had already suffered the misfortune of another prequel accident, *long before all of this happened*, in a 7SFTS Wirraway(A20-273) on the 8/12/41, at 600 ft, when after the engine cut out, forcing him to land in a paddock.



By any account, after bending a further two P-40E/E-1s,(making three all up), luck would have F/O Arthur Gilbert being transferred from 76 Sqn to 5SFTS Uranquinty NSW, to train others in Wirraways, from the middle of May 1942 onwards!

18.5.42. POSTINGS AND ATTACHMENTS - OFFICERS -~~FROM~~76SQUADRON.
Flying Officer GILBERT (799) proceeded on posting to No.5.S.F.T.S.URANQUINTY.
27.5.42. Pilot Officer B.J.DAVIS (407225) ceased attachment on completion of conversion course.
POSTINGS AND ATTACHMENTS - AIRMEN - TO 76 SQUADRON

Sources:

- USAF AHRA Microfilm Reel A7501: Aircraft Status Report USAFIA
- USAF AHRA Microfilm Reel 7/8/9th Fighter Sqns, 49th Fighter Group
- A50 History Sheets/ORB 75 and 76 Sqn RAAF: NAA
- E/E88 A29 Cards RAAF :NAA
- A20 Accidents:A20-273





Corner



A16-207 pictured in May 1942 over Darwin: GRB Collection

A16-207 c/n6476 USAAF FY#41-36987 RAF Number FH186 Acc ex Lockheed 9/02/1942 Rec Australia, 6/04/1942 Ordered under RAAF Hudson Indent 911: Rec USAAF as RA-29. Defence Aid consigned ex USAAF. Rec 1AD 06/04/42. Rec 2 Sqn RAAF 11/05/42. Rec 1 RSU 13/08/42. Rec 2 Sqn RAAF 27/08/42. Rec 1AD 02/11/42. Rec 2 Sqn RAAF 09/11/42. Rec 1 RSU 27/12/42. Rec 3AD 28/01/43. Rec 2 Sqn RAAF 05/02/43. Rec 1AD 31/03/43. Rec 5AD ex 1AD 02/04/43. Rec 2 Sqn RAAF 09/06/43. Rec 4RSU 01/09/43. Rec 2 Sqn RAAF 14/09/43.

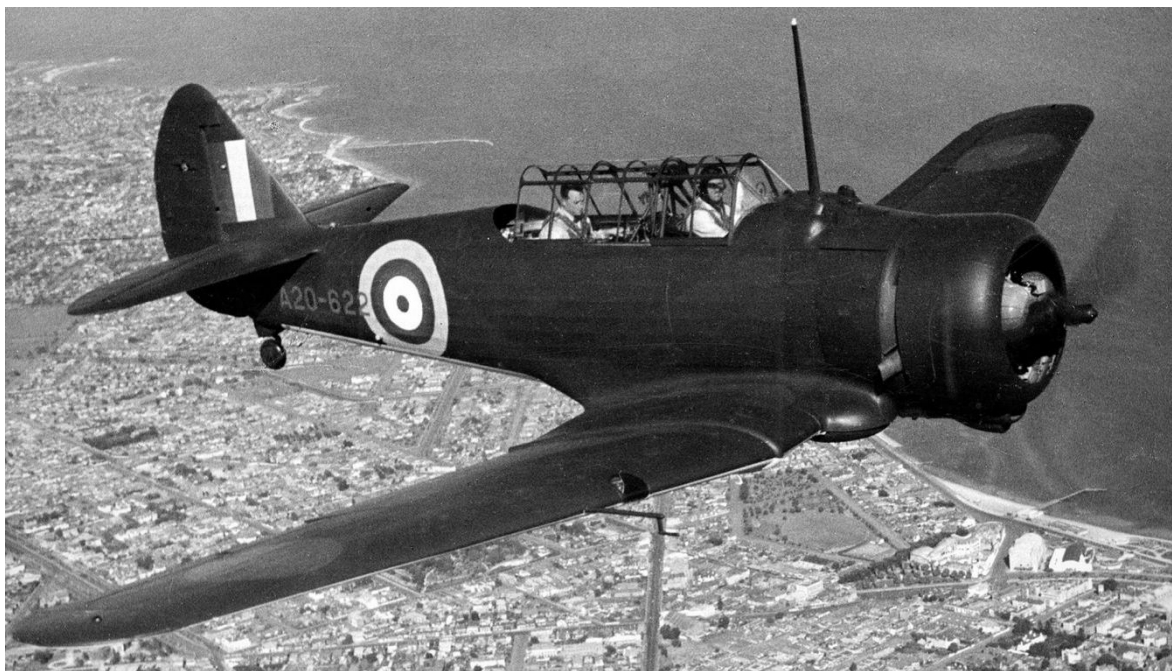
On the 19th October 1943, Throttle problems were experienced when the captain of the aircraft, F/O Craze, was required to abort his mission(HUG42) to Fuiloro when it jammed at 2000rpm. The aircraft, after jettisoning its bombs, returned to Hughes Strip, but it became free overhead strip prior to landing.

Rec 4 RSU 28/11/43. Rec 2 Sqn RAAF 03/01/44. Rec 2AD ex 2 Sqn RAAF 19/03/44. Rec 1OTU 03/06/44. Rec ANA Parafield Sa for conversion to Aerial Ambulance 14/12/42. Rec 2AAU 25/06/45.

Allotted Survey Flight 07/08/45. Issued Survey Flight 20/08/45. Held with Survey Flight 7/08/46. Issued SHQ Flight Canberra 11/09/46. 08/10/46 to be stored 2AD. Disposed through CDC 28/07/46. Sold to Macquarie Grove Flying School 30/09/47 for £150.00. Collected 12/12/47.SOC 12/12/47.



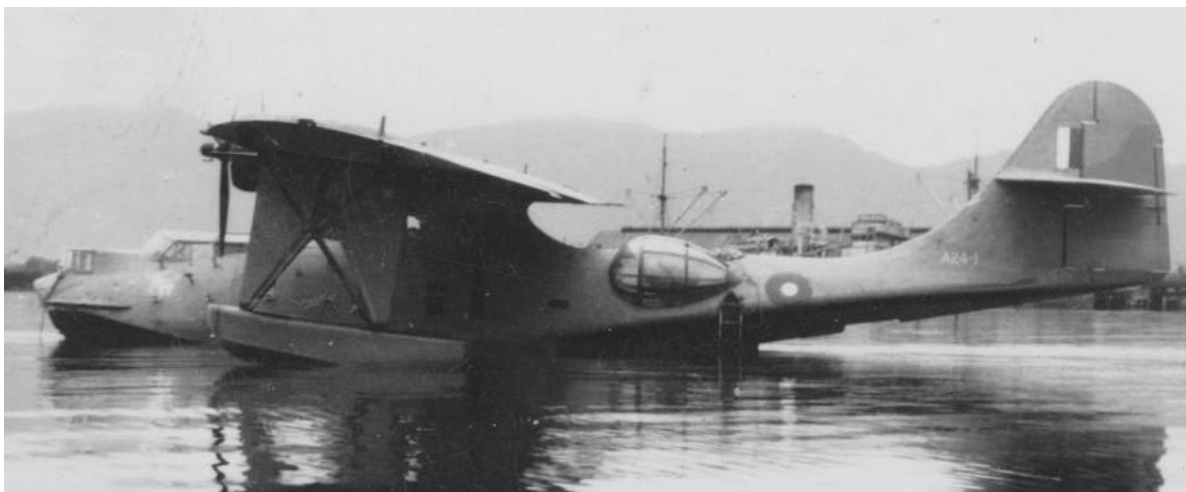
Odd Shots: War Years



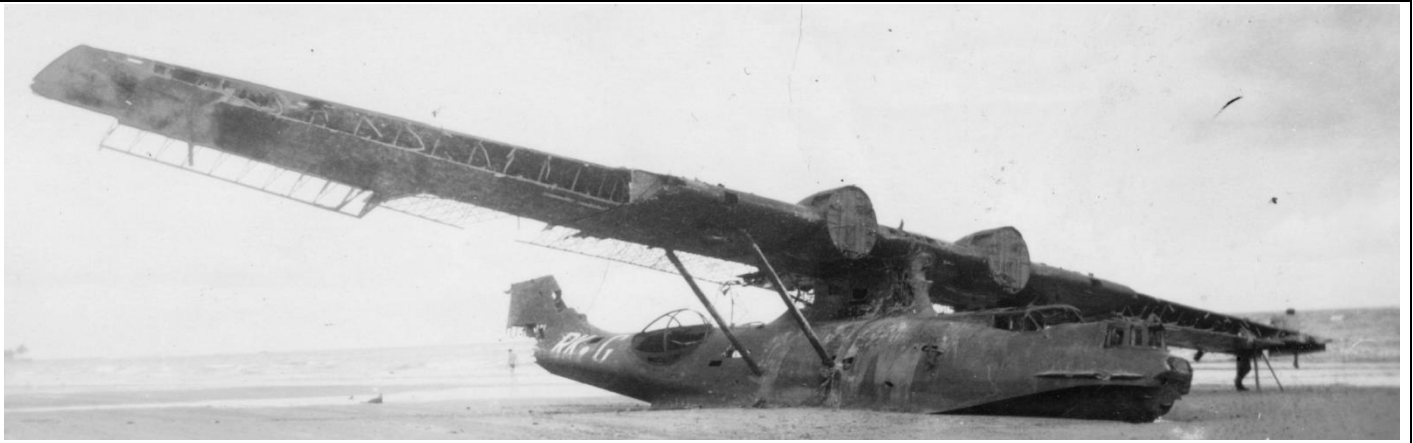
Wirraway A20-622 in June 1942 on its acceptance test after being built at CAC. Note Standard RAF Marking Scheme per Dec 1941 Direction.



Kingfisher A48-11 in ala Natural Metal: GRB Collection



Catalina A24-1 at Cairns: GRB Collection



Catalina A24-101 RK-G wrecked and salvaged:1945. GRB Collection



10TU Beaufort's A9-102 and A9-66 display both before and after RAAF roundel styles, Sept 1942. GRB Collection



Editor's Notes:

Special thanks to Mike Mirkovic for his leading article: Ed

Next Issue, the Autumn 2016 edition, will be out circa late April 2016

Articles to be included in future editions:

- **P-40 Operations in Australia; Supplementary #7.**" Where's A29-73?????"

Contributors are most welcome to provide written articles or even topics to be covered by others.

Cheers

Gordy

