



July 2026
Number 197

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Airtourer Association Newsletter

Dedicated to the preservation and continued airworthiness of
Vica and AESL Airtourer and derivative series aircraft

ANNUAL REPORT



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Editor	Tony Self c/- Airtourer Assoc P.O. 778, Tewantin, QLD 4565 Australia	Mobile: Email:	See Membership List editor@airtourer.asn.au
Articles for inclusion in the Newsletter should be submitted directly to the Editor at the contacts listed above. Contributions and or advertisements for the next issue need to be received by 21 August 2026. Advertisements are free for Association members.			

Disclaimer

The views expressed are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of the Publishers, the Airtourer Association or the Airtourer Co-operative Ltd.

Cover: Glenn Alderton's superb photo of Camden-based CT-4E Airtrainers VH-NMY and VH-NMX over The Oaks in the Burragorang Valley NSW! Both these aircraft were previously operated by Singapore Youth Flying Club.



From the President

by **Deb Evans** (Victa Airtourer 115, VH-IOF)

Welcome to the Winter edition of our Newsletter, it is hard to believe the year is half over and the inevitable tax time. Angela Stevenson and Tony Self are busily working on the President's Fly into Merimbula from the 9th – 11th October.



For those who were unable to attend Temora, it was a fabulous weekend from the Friday night BBQ with the Temora Aero Club to our guest speaker Mark Skidmore on the Saturday night and the simulators on the Sunday. And wonderful to see Ric and Veronica Davies travel from WA to join us in Temora. After the AGM a missing man formation was flown in honour of Stan Tilley and Cliff Tait. Full report on page 15.

Our latest Zoom catch-up saw Dee Bond and Neil Young from NZAero join us. Besides asking them to join us for our 50th anniversary in 2028 with a CT-4G(!), I also had a thought... For 2029, we could organise a trip to Auckland to visit the Museum of Transport and Technology (MOTAT) to see the Cliff Tait exhibition and then travel to Hamilton for a tour of NZAero. Who's interested?

At our AGM, your committee remained almost the same, but we now have a full complement with Tim Glabbatz joining the committee. Welcome, Tim.

Membership fees are now payable; thank you to those who have paid and thank you in advance for those still to pay. Membership of the Association allows you to:

- Meet new people
- Learn new skills
- Have fun and stay motivated
- Build confidence

It is with sadness we needed to notify the membership of the passing of Stan Tilley our condolences go to Bonnie and family. Stan will be missed, he was a stalwart at our gatherings. Our condolences go out to the family of John Wynn... another giant of the Airtourer family. Our condolences also go to Pat Peak and family on the passing of her son Jon. Up until recently Jon was a regular at our gatherings. The Association was represented at Jon's funeral by Stu Hislberg, Doug Stott, and John and Jan O'Halloran. In keeping with Jon's love of aviation, the casket was fitted with a 'Remove Before Flight' flag. Our Vice-President Doug Gould's father passed away in June. To all our members who have lost loved ones – we are thinking of you during this difficult time.

I'm looking forward to seeing you in Merimbula – the program is spectacular with a sensational guest speaker. Smooth landings!

Deb



Next: President's Fly-in, Merimbula

Friday 9 October to Sunday 11 October 2026

START PLANNING NOW!

- Beautiful Sapphire Coast location
- Newly upgraded airport
- Grand Dinner with fabulous Guest Speaker
- Lunch flight to Mallacoota
- Navigation exercise
- Coastal flying
- Formation opportunities
- ***Fast but no so Furious 3*** information sessions
- Frog's Hollow visit
- Pilot Proficiency Programme



Latest details on [Airtourer Fly-in Web site](#)



Discounted accommodation at Merimbula Sapphire Waters Motel (ask for AIRTOURER rate).

REGISTER ONLINE TODAY



THE LATEST NEWS



Vale Claude Meunier



Claude Meunier was a long-time Association member, with a Victa 100 that he co-owned with Robyn Stewart, VH-GBS. Claude, from Northam, WA, was a dyed-in-the-wool aviator, with an unquenchable passion. He was a familiar figure within the Sport Aircraft Association, and had built his own Jodel. His greatest achievement, however, was his 1996 round-the-world record in an Aerostar. (Painted in the same colours as GBS!) The current owner of Claude's Aerostar flew into Northam for the memorial service; standing vigil as a beautiful gesture.

Claude passed away last October, leaving behind a lifetime of fond memories. He will be missed, and he will be remembered.

Vale Stan Tilley

Stan was an Airtourer enthusiast and owned a number of Airtourers over the years. He and Bonnie regularly flew from Hobart, across Bass Strait then all around Australia. Not letting the weather hamper their plans he upgraded his Airtourer 160, MTL, to IFR.

Stan held a low level aerobatic rating and was a regular at Airshows and performed displays at our fly-ins. He even took MTL in Skyrace Tasmania in the 1990s.

Stan was a regular contributor to this Newsletter, with stories of his many long trips around Australia. Our thoughts are with Bonnie and their family. **A celebration of Stan's life will be held on 31st August from 1-4 pm at Royal Yacht Club of Tasmania.**



Vale Bob Tait

The Australian aviation community is mourning the loss of Bob Tait OAM, one of the country's most beloved aviation educators, who died on 6th May 2026 aged 84.

After learning to fly on Tiger Moths and building thousands of hours in bush charters, Bob found his true calling in the classroom. His study guides, covering the full range of private and commercial pilot theory subjects, became the standard reference for generations of Australian student pilots.

"I teach in parables," he explained. "I start by telling a story, and the story brings out the point. They don't forget that. And if you can toss in the odd laugh, well, that's good too."

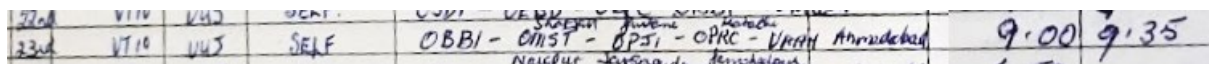
He will be greatly missed, leaving behind a rich legacy that has touched so many in the aviation community. Blue skies and tailwinds Bob.

Australian Flying

Vale John Wynn

Aside from his cherished family, there will be a debate about what John Wynn loved more... flying in an Airtourer, or Ocean Grove. For his whole life, he was rarely far from either.

Very few private pilots would have a line in their log book like this:



23 Dec	VUJ	VUJ	SELF	OBBI - OMT - OPSI - OPRC - VUJ	9.00	9.35
				Nugget - Bendigo - London		

It reads, 23 Dec 1969. Flew Bahrain - Sharjah - Jiwani - Parachinar - Ahmedabad. 9.00 hours day plus 9.35 hours night. In a VT10 (Victa Airtourer 100), international callsign VUJ (VH-MUJ). John and his mate Keith Buttrey flew from Bendigo to London in VH-MUJ, so they could compete in the London-Sydney Air Race in the same Victa, Little Nugget.

John was known as a warm and generous man, and touched the lives of many, many people.

Not just in the aviation world.

He was a life member of

Rotary, a life member of the

CFA, Lions Club member, a

passionate Ocean Grove

resident, a surf lifesaver, a teacher, a shire councillor, a husband, father, grandfather, colleague, legend, adventurer, and friend.



RFDS Donations

RFDS donations from Temora totalled \$350! Thanks to Jane Morris for donating the much sought-after Cliff Tait books that were the subject of furious bidding at the dinner auction under the gavel of Ric Davies!

Name Badges

“Don’t you know who I am?”

You’ll never have to ask this question again with an Airtourer Association name badge. There’s space for your name and aircraft registration.

To order, email the Treasurer (treasurer@airtourer.asn.au) with your details, including your mailing address, and she will invoice you for \$20 per badge.

From Airtourer to Citation

Mellory Aitken, featured in the January 2025 Newsletter, has now moved into jets! She is now flying Cessna Citations in FNQ. It seems she also scored a credit in the TV Mini Series “Lakefield”, with a role as “Pilot”! Quite a change from a Victa 100!

Formation Camp Fully Subscribed!

The annual Airtourer Association Formation Camp has proved to be very popular... in fact, too popular. This year’s event, scheduled from 6-8 November 2026 in Yarrawonga, is already fully subscribed with a dozen aircraft and pilots registered.

There is a waitlist, in case a pilot or an aircraft can’t make it. To get on the waitlist, complete the registration form at <https://forms.gle/kHNTQYqyZCHmhFtP6> and we will be in touch.

G-AZHI Written Off

Barry Fitzgerald from the UK has sadly reported the demise of Airtourer T5 G-AZHI in a landing accident on 30 September 2025. Fortunately, no-one was injured.

G-AZHI featured on the cover of the November 2024 Newsletter; that edition also included a profile of the Flying Grasshoppers syndicate which owned AZHI. The AAIB report summarised the incident at Lydd (London Ashford) EGMD airport as:

"Following three touch-and-go circuits with a half-flap setting, the aircraft was configured with full flap for the next approach. On touchdown, which was harder than normal, the left main landing gear collapsed. The aircraft veered off the runway and came to rest on the grass". The aircraft was deemed "damaged beyond economic repair".

[Accident Glos-Airtourer Super 150 G-AZHI, Tuesday 30 September 2025](#)



Buy, Swap and Sell

Don't let your unneeded Airtourer and CT-4 bits and pieces collect dust! Put them up for sale here! Or do you need a particular part or instrument? Ask here! Why not try to swap for something you no longer need? Or is it time to re-home your aircraft, or are you looking to buy? Buy, Swap and Sell is your Airtourer and CT-4 marketplace! It's free to advertise... just send your ad to editor@airtourer.asn.au.

Victa Airtourer 115 - VH-RQL

Serial number 84, middle of the Australian Victas built in 1964.

TTIS 8369. Low empty weight 502 kg. MR to 20-6-2026.

115HP Lycoming O-235 smooth running with good compressions on condition. New baffles.

- 2 x ICOM IC-A210 radios.
- 1 x GTX 327 Transponder factory reconditioned 2025.
- 1 x new DG.



Passenger side iPad mount. New LED landing and nav lights.

New master cylinder and brake gaskets. One of two Victas with wheel spats.

Original factory paint scheme 4/10 but repainted tail plane and elevator 10/10.

Good canopy seals and new studded Pumpkin Head cover - a reliably waterproof aircraft for outdoor parking.

Contact Robin Hilliard 0418 414 341

(Don't worry we'll still be around, upsizing to a CT-4)



Short Stay Accommodation at Yarrawonga

Airtourer Association members who have passed through Yarrawonga in the last couple of years will know that Angela (and Tony) have been busy building two-level accommodation into their hangar. Well, it's finished, and The Aeropartment is now available for short-term accommodation! Stay on the airfield, in a very comfortable and well-appointed apartment, with your Airtourer/Airtrainer visible in the hangar through the glass doors! Booking is done online, and if you are a current financial member of the Association, you can use one of the three codes AIRTOURER, AIRTRAINER or AIRCRUISER to get a 20% discount! More at <https://aeropartment.lodgify.com/>



For Sale: Victa 100 Muffler

Brand new Victa 100 muffler, part number 42125/1 for sale. \$400.

Contact David Wearne, dwearne@exemail.com.au or 0408322398.

For Sale: Propeller, Tyres and Seat

Propeller - original 115 McCauley fixed pitch propeller with 300 hours of life before requiring refurbishment.

Three only 500x5 brand new old stock tyres suitable for Airtourers. Original seats excellent condition - vinyl only requires dusting off and cleaning due to storage. Contact Ray Abernethy, rayabernethy@gmail.com, 0409 411 940.



Advertise here! Buy, Swap and Sell advertisements for Association members are free!



Victa Airtourer 150 VH-MRI

Airtourer 150 (Fixed Pitch), VH-MRI recently suffered a prop strike during and engine ground run when the nose tyre burst. The insurance company has paid out the owner and offers the aircraft for sale.

Manufactured in 1965 as a Victa Airtourer 115, serial number 158, it was later upgraded to 150HP fixed pitch. The last MR was performed by the Royal Aero Club of Western Australia on 5th May 2022. When the recent incident occurred VH-MRI had a total time in service since new of 5,743.6 hours. The Lycoming O-320-B2B has a TBO of 2,000 hours, and currently has 1,743.6 hours. The Sensenich 2-blade fixed propeller also had a time since overhaul of 1,743.0 hours.



Contact Mike Ellis, Ellis Aviation Adjusting Pty Ltd, 0412 749369, mpellis@gabaviat.com.au

Victa Airtourer 115 VH-MVF



We are selling MVF! Aussie built 115, serial number 19. MVF was a demonstrator for Victa and was on static display at Sydney Royal Easter Show in 1963.

- TTIS: 8378.6 hrs.
- Engine TSO: 1959.5
- Prop TSO: 341.8

Call or text Mark Barnett for details Ph: 0400 051 528

Wanted: Photo of Bill Kelly and others

Doug Stott (djm.s@bigpond.com) is looking for a photo of former Treasurer Bill Kelly. Bill held some fly-ins at his servo in Bannockburn. Also, does anyone have photos of Earl Johnson, Frank Rogers, Gerry Walsh and/or Barbara Main? Earl was a solicitor in Taree and owner who helped set up the Association and write the first constitution.. Frank was a draftsman with Victa. Gerry was an engineer with Victa and worked with Alan Wood.



Fit for royalty!

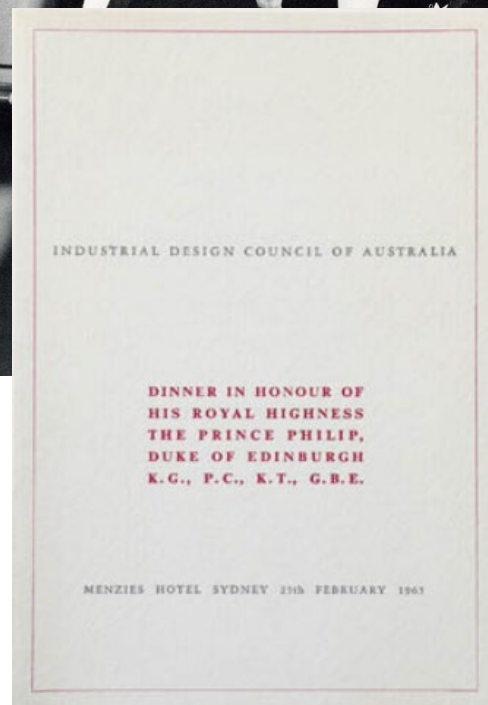
Tony Self (AESL Airtourer T6/24, VH-FVV)

I'm no monarchist, but if a princess, king or queen shows an interest in an Airtourer or Airtrainer, I'm willing to buy a New Idea.

The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince Philip (taken far too soon), got his first look at an Airtourer. He was at the 1965 Australian Industrial Design Council dinner, accompanied in this photo by Garry Richardson and Mervyn Richardson of Victa. The Airtourer was in the ballroom of the Menzies Hotel in Sydney. (*Ironically, a year later, Victa closed the Aviation Division.*)



What did Prince Philip think? His Royal Highness, an enthusiastic pilot himself, was most interested and so impressed by the aircraft's appearance that when he returned to England, he requested a Victa to be made available on the airstrip outside Windsor Castle one Saturday morning so he could fly it himself.



And how did the Victa get in the ballroom?

According to a Victa booklet of the period, it was lifted by a giant crane operating



from the top of the partly built Commonwealth Bank building right over the top of all the buildings in the Wynyard area to be lowered into the 2nd floor ballroom. (The 2nd floor must have had a big balcony.)

From 1965 to 1969, the Queen's representative in Australia, the Governor-General, was Lord Casey, a well-known aviator (and founder of Casey Airfield in Berwick, Victoria). His wife, Lady Casey, was even better known as an aviator, and was the inaugural patron of the Australian Women Pilots Association. When she and Lord Casey visited the Victa factory, she not only insisted on going for a fly in an Airtourer, but requested Victa demonstration pilot Hazel Mayes take her. (See Airtourer Association Newsletter of January 2025 for Hazel's story.)



Speaking of royalty, the late Neville Duke was definitely aviation royalty. He had a swag of medals, including a Distinguished Service Order, an Order of the British Empire, a Distinguished Flying Cross and Two Bars (meaning he was awarded the DFC **three times!**), an Air Force Cross, and a Czech Military Cross. Oh, and he was a Fellow of the Royal Aeronautical Society. But that's not the only reason he is aviation royalty! He was a World War II fighter pilot, and shot down 27 enemy aircraft. And he was shot down three times himself! But even that's not all. No, there's more.



After the War, he joined Hawker Aircraft as a test pilot. In 1953, he broke the world air speed record in a Hawker Hunter, reaching 727.63 mph (1,171.01 km/h). A few crash landings - one of which broke his spine - caused him to retire from test flying in 1955. But that's not the end of his aviation achievements. He was Sir George Dowty's (of Dowty Aviation) personal pilot in the 60s and 70s, dabbled in test flying for Edgely and Brooklands, published a few books



(including "Test Pilot"). He also ran an aviation consultancy business, where one of his jobs seems to have been performance testing for Glosair when they were experimenting with upgrading the 100 hp Continental to a 130 hp O-240, possibly for the Farnborough Air Show that year where G-ATEX was on static display. And this is where Neville Duke encountered the Airtourer. What did aviation royalty think of the humble Victa?

"I very much liked the central stick and found it a totally natural control system. It was a super aerobatic machine and beautifully built. The Airtourer has always remained in my mental data bank of one of the nicest in its class."

In case you are a loyal CT-4 subject and are starting to feel overlooked, read on!

The Thai monarchy have had a 50-year association with the Airtourer family. King Rama IX, who reigned from 1946 to 2016, was involved in the acquisition of five Airtourer T6/24s from 1970 to 1972. The photo in the May 2026 Newsletter shows him blessing 1909 (B577), the last of the Thai Airtourers, on delivery to the Royal Thai Police Aviation Division. The four earlier T6/24s were delivered to the Civil Aviation Training Center (CATC).

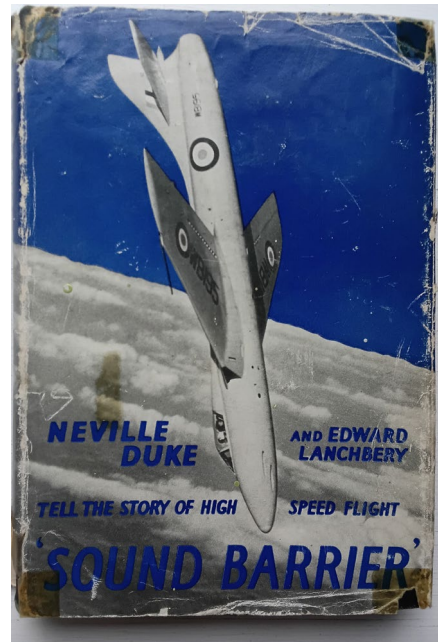


Photo: collection of Phakphum Tangkijjarak

www.wings-aviation.ch



In December 1972, AESL gifted King Rama IX the second CT-4 prototype, which went to the Thai Police for rain-making experiments as 2009 (c/n 002). (This was the King's area of research, and he was recognised as one of the leading figures in rain-making.) An order for CT-4As for the Royal Thai Air Force followed, and the RTAF became the largest and longest-running CT-4 operator. (Thailand continues to operate CT-4B and CT-4E Airtrainers.)

When King Rama IX was succeeded by his son, Rama X, the royal aviation connection continued. The new King was a pilot.

Queen Suthida of Thailand (the King's fourth wife) continues to fly regularly in RTAF CT-4E Airtrainers. (She completed her training with the RTAF in 2012, following on from her civil training in 2010.)



As an aside, the former Royal Consort, Major General Sineenatra Wongvajirabhakdi, was also a CT-4 pilot.

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Members Only Offer!



Punkin Head Air Sports are offering Airtourer Association members a 5% discount on all canopy, propeller and pitot/intake covers for Airtourers and CT-4s. Dianne has the patterns for all models, and can provide covers in different materials and weights. Phone Dianne on 0429 938 426



or visit www.punkinheadair.com.au



Temora Convention 2026

A weekend of Airtourers, Airtrainers, Spitfires, Canberras and others

Contributors: Chris Camier, Dave Ellis, Angela Stevenson, Tim Glabatz, Murray Joel, Tony Self, and some anonymous users, with photos from Julian Szaters, Chris Peak, Jan O'Halloran, David Ellis, Chris Camier and Tim Glabatz.



In a break from the normal way we report on an event, this report has been written collaboratively by a number of participants, some known and some unknown. Here is their story...

The 2026 Airtourer Association Convention and AGM was held in Temora from Friday 22 to Sunday 24 May.

Flying In

Dave and Jude Ellis (Victa Airtourer 150, VH-CND)

We left Riddell Airfield just after lunch into skies that can only be described as “smooth as a billiard table”. The “auto-pilot” did a wonderful job - rock solid “heading” and “altitude hold” with minimal negative feedback. She did say it was pretty easy when the conditions were so good!

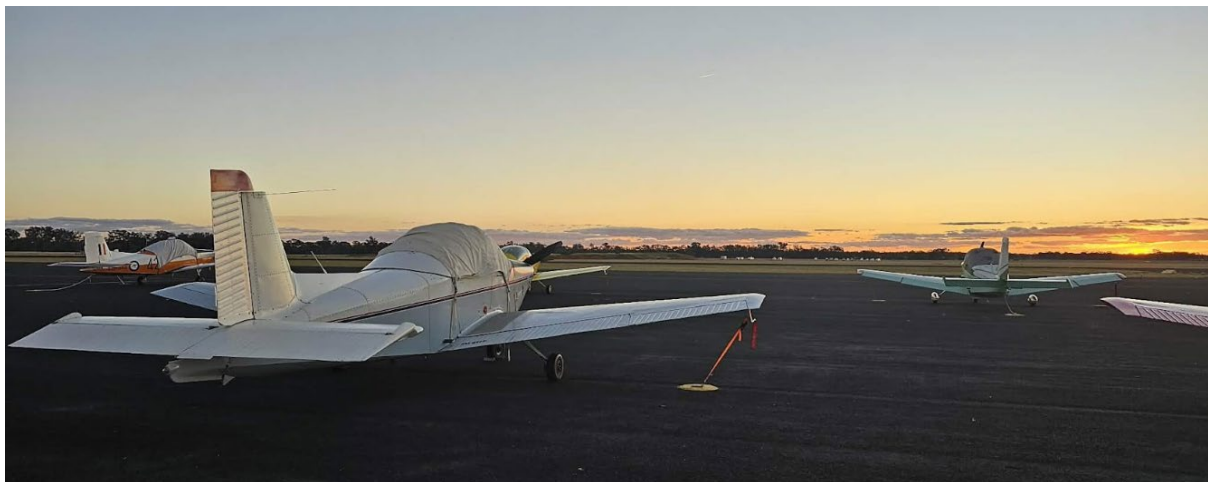


VH-CND gobbled up the miles, but due to restrictions on our endurance (the captain's bladder), a "gas'n'go" was made at Yarrawonga. The Treasurer and Associates "Hangar House" was pointed out in the hope of generating some curiosity and the response was positive. Hopefully a visit to Yarrawonga is on the cards soon.



The final leg to Temora was very enjoyable and being "run down" by Doug Gould in the Seneca gave us a good excuse to enjoy a scenic of the town.

We had a warm welcome from the team, got CND all tucked up for the night, settled into our very comfortable accommodation at the Skylodge, and then to the Aero Club for more catch-ups and a delicious BBQ dinner.



Tim Glabbatz (Victa Airtourer 115, VH-MRE)

We departed Albury around 14:50, with Paige Rolfe (MRE's owner) in command while I rode along in the right seat. We managed a solid 100 knots as we cruised not above 2000 ft. Upon arrival, we were met by the welcoming party before John O'Halloran provided a lift across to our accommodation at Three Ponds Estate.



Tony Self (AESL Airtourer T6/24, VH-FVV)

We arrived from the north (Dubbo) instead of the south (Yarrawonga), due to us still being on the return legs of our grand adventure to Airlie Beach. An out-of-service fuel bowser in Narromine resulted in a side-trip to Dubbo, where we were held up by a KingAir emergency. We arrived at Temora late afternoon on Thursday, and were given a warm welcome by Robin Hilliard (RQL) and Rick and Ron Davies (RIC).



Friday Night BBQ at the Temora Aero Club

Tony Self

People were starting to gather at the Temora Aero Club as daylight expired, but a CT-4 starting up in the dark awoke the curiosity of many. It turns out that Julian Szaters had decided to use the opportunity to put in a few night circuits in VH-PGH, with Tony Self as passenger.



The Temora Aero Club put on a delicious dinner, and there was a nice buzz in the room as excited participants shared stories, true and untrue.

At the end of the evening, President Deb made a presentation of an Airtourer Association plaque to Temora Aero Club president Guy Bowley, as a token of thanks for the Club's assistance, and there were some fun moments there too, mostly relating to the height difference!!



Friday night didn't end at the Aero Club dinner though, as entrants in the Navigation Exercise had been handed some very officious envelopes with instructions for the next day's challenge. A number of competitive personalities stayed up late to plan their mission!



Saturday Breakfast

Dave Ellis

After a yummy breakfast at the Guardhouse Cafe, it was very enlightening to hear from Peter Norford about the plans for the 100 Squadron. Although his explanation about “what’s in/what’s out” makes sense, the rationalising of this amazing fleet of historic aircraft is saddening - hopefully they will fly on in the hands of other aviation enthusiasts for years to come.



As an "aerosexual", the visit to ANY aviation museum is gleefully anticipated, and to see the beautifully presented exhibits with their history was certainly a highlight of the weekend. It was a bit disappointing that the MKXVI Spitfire was missing its engine and prop - her beautiful lines a little disfigured with the absence of her cowlings and spinner. Ah, next time.

Museum Tour

Anonymous

We were split into two groups for the tour, so only half of us were blessed to be allocated into Bev's group. As our leader for the museum section, she was not only highly enthusiastic about the museum, but knowledgeable on innumerable elements of every plane in the museum. She was quite outspoken of her passion for the planes on display and the future of the museum collection.



Many of David Lowy's fleet of fully restored operational planes were gifted to the RAAF. The Air Force has decided that it will not continue to retain many of these planes as operational units. A sad short sighted outcome after an immense amount of money and work.

On display was a beautifully restored jet engined English Electric Canberra bomber which is the only flying type of this plane in the world. The engine start has been converted from cartridge style to electric to reduce engine maintenance. As all of us heard during the introduction the RAAF is not interested in David Lowy's fully restored RAF plane as it's too expensive to be bothered keeping it flying. The ejection seat needs to be updated and the fuel burn cost is high at 50-60 litres per minute per engine!

Tim Glabbatz adds: "Save the Bomber" says Bev. (We'll get her into trouble if we repeat comments about the RAAF dude that attended the weekend. 😊)



Navigation Exercise

The Navigation Exercise briefing took place, fittingly, in the Aviation Museum briefing room. There were six crews: Julian Szaters, Ange and Tony, Doug Gould, Robin Hilliard, Ric and Ron Davies, and Dave and Jude Ellis. A seventh crew, Mark Skidmore and John O'Halloran, were to fly part of the way in formation with Ange (FVV) and Julian (PGH). *[Ed: By departing the formation early, Skates and JOH broke Ange's leader record of always returning with the same number of aircraft.]*

Dave Ellis

After a peek [well, more than a peek: Ed] at the cryptic instructions, some head scratching, a shortening of the proposed route, a thorough brief, preflight and refueling, we were off!

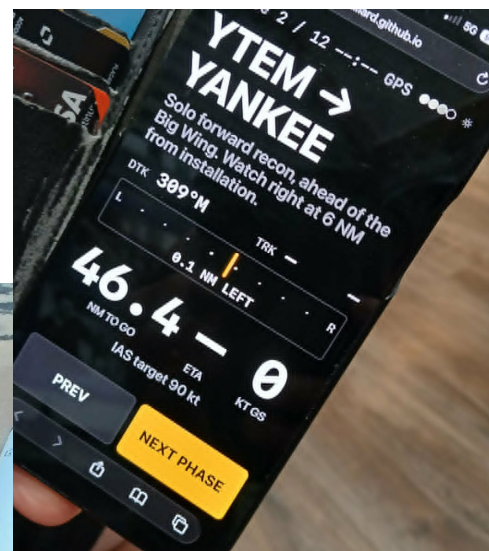
We departed at roughly 10-minute intervals to avoid any conflict and tried (perhaps in vain?) to identify the prescribed landmarks. Thank goodness for OzRunways and the invention of the moving map - I'm not sure this pilot's navigation skills are quite what they used to be!

And thank goodness for Google - it sure helped us clarify answers to the questions that WD Gould had fiendishly concocted (and who knew that there was a website dedicated to NSW grain silos! www.nswsilos.com).

Tony Self

Meanwhile, Robin Hilliard had been up all night working with Claude (the AI agent) on an app that would not only answer all the cryptic questions, but also guide his flight path.

(Needless to say, Claude and Robin didn't win!)



Dinner at the Ex-Services Club

The venue for the official dinner was the function room at the Temora Ex-Services Memorial Club. A buffet meal was served, and there was much chatter and conviviality in the room.



The winner of the Navigation Trail was precisely calculated by Doug Gould, using a devious and dubious disqualification method that might well have come directly from the Luftwaffe High Command.

Dave and Jude Ellis (Victa Airtourer 150, VH-CND)
(Winners of the navigation challenge)

The first highlight of our evening has to be “doing a Bradbury” - being the only crew and aircraft NOT to be disqualified in the Navigation Trial and therefore becoming the 2026 Recipients of the Cliff Tait Trophy!



This was closely followed by the emptying of our wallets by the auctioneer and coming home with copies of Cliff Tait’s “Flight of the Kiwi” and “Water Under My Wings”. Of course, all proceeds going to the RFDS.

But the best was yet to come!





Doug Gould and Ric Davies



Jan O'Halloran and Ron Davies

Guest Speaker - Mark Skidmore

AVM Mark (Skates) Skidmore took the podium and you could just about hear a pin drop. Tales from his amazing career certainly kept everyone enthralled, with the highlight being his second-by-second account, and video, of flying the Bristol Boxkite replica around an “abbreviated” (due to an overwhelming desire to stay alive) circuit at Point Cook in 2013.

For me personally, there is no matching a first-hand account of flying the mighty Grumman F-14 Tomcat, amongst others, at the US Naval Test Pilot School, Patuxant River.



Sunday Breakfast, AGM and Scones

Dave Ellis

Another yummy breakfast followed by the AGM - interesting to see, first hand, the machinations of the committee and the plans for '26/27.

Angela Stevenson (AESL Airtourer T6/24, VH-FVV)

The AGM began as a relatively sombre affair with a minute's silence being held for passed members Cliff Tait and Stan Tilley. The current Committee was re-elected, and a new Ordinary Member was elected - Tim Glabbatz of Albury - owner of twin T6's VH-OVV and VH-XVV, and President of the Albury Aero Club - welcome Tim! It's wonderful to see a fresh face on the Committee, especially leading up to our 50th Anniversary in 2028.

The meeting was relatively short with the usual presentations of reports and financials, including an interesting report by the Airtourer Association Historian (Tony Self), before we all cracked on to the excellent morning tea provided by the Museum.

Simulator Rides

Dave Ellis

Secretly, for me, Sunday's highlight was taking the Spitfire simulator from an undisclosed location near the Cliffs of Dover for a low level coastal patrol with a few upward rolls for good measure and a successful RTB with the "aeroplane" able to be reused after my landing!

Jude took the controls of the P-51 and managed to fly it under the Sydney Harbour Bridge and emerged the other side with a big smile on her face - you can't lose your licence if you don't have one!





Tim in the Spitfire



Chris doing his pre-flight

Missing Man Formation

Angela Stevenson

It was a moving moment for Tony Self (PIC) and Angela Stevenson (navigator) in Airtourer VH-FVV (#CaptScarlett) to lead a “Finger Four Strong Right” formation to mark the passing of Stan Tilley and Cliff Tait. Murray Joel (CT-4A VH-LAH) and Julian Szaters (CT-4B VH-PGH) were wingmates #2 and #4, and Andrew Clement (Airtourer VH-KGR) in #3 was bestowed the honour of ‘departing the formation’ as it passed overhead the Temora Aviation Museum viewing area where a crowd of Airtourer Assn members and others had gathered.

The formation was well executed and a few on the ground found quite an emotional experience.

Video of Missing Man Formation

<https://youtube.com/shorts/R5TxnRM5lyU>





Unusual angle from Julian's PGH hardpoint camera of Skates and JOH in MCT.



Ric and Ron won the award for the longest distance travelled in their Victa Airtourer VH-RIC from Coorow (250 km north of Perth) in Western Australia.



The AGM underway at in the Temora Aviation Museum.



Dave and Jude Ellis

Unfortunately, our time in Temora had come to an end just after lunch. We timed our start and taxi perfectly with the “missing person” formation expertly flown by the team. A wave to the assembled crowd and we were off - a nice 20 knots of tailwind, a “tech stop” in Yarrawonga, and before we knew it, VH-CND was tucked up in her hangar with her covers on.

A massive thank you to the committee for organising such an enjoyable weekend, and thank you to everyone for making us both feel so welcome at our first “fly-in” and AGM.

PPP Session

John O'Halloran presented an informative Pilot Proficiency Program (PPP) on crosswind landings. PPPs have become an important feature of Airtourer Association events.



Following the Crosswind PPP, a few members stayed to hear of JOH's experience with the Martin-Baker ejection seat. Luckily there happened to be one in the Museum display.





Departures

After the PPP, the Convention drew to a close. As Sunday progressed, the number of aircraft on the flight line dwindled as participants headed home, and soon there were only a handful of stragglers left. But flying was not over for the day.

Bev's Joyflight

Tim Glabatz

Bev, our Temora Aviation Museum Tour Guide, arrived back at the airport late on Sunday afternoon and was just so excited to be invited to go for a ride in an Airtourer. She is such an Airtourer fan, that she sometimes signs off her name as **Bravo Echo VICTA**.

She spoke fondly of her days learning to fly in a 150 Airtourer (VH-EQG), and when she found out that MRE only had 115, she was a bit surprised: "But isn't it a bit gutless?"

After much convincing that a 115 is actually beautifully balanced, Paige and I offered Bev a ride during 'golden hour' on the Sunday. Despite the difficulty getting in and out of the aircraft, and Tony and Ange's commentary asking if I'd taken my epilepsy tablets (this was gold!), she was treated to a nice local scenic and a chance to get a



feel of those balanced controls. Pretty sure she didn't stop talking about it for a while afterwards and plenty of yelling upon parking at the bowser!



We told her to pull a face on take-off, and Bev didn't disappoint!

Anonymous

We could hear her from the ground when you were at 1000 ft!

Stragglers' Dinner at Shamrock Hotel Chinese

Anonymous

The Shamrock is probably the most impressive looking double story hotel in Temora. Arriving in the hotel restaurant we were stunned to find it empty with the tables all set for 2 or 4. The restaurant had no idea that 26 people were about to arrive. The staff were almost unflappable and set up a long table down the full length of the room for us.

It wasn't long before every seat was filled and the usual Airtourer noise went to maximum level and you could hardly hear the person next door talking! The waitress did an amazing job taking the orders and placing the food in front of the appropriate people. The kitchen staff did a fantastic job with no notice and the delicious food arrived promptly.

It was a reasonably early night as most people had an early start to head for home in the morning.

What a great weekend!





Postscript: Monday Departure YTEM to YGAS

Murray Joel (NZAI CT-4A Airtrainer, VH-LAH 042)

As the weather in SE Queensland looked decidedly shaky, and forecast to get worse as the day progressed, the good ship 042 (the answer to Life the Universe and Everything) was loaded on Sunday night, preflighted in the Monday morning darkness and departed at the first sign of First Light. Extra vigilant kangaroo watch during the T/O run, so as to avoid a nasty meeting before lift off was mandatory!!

The ride at A055 to YNBR was smooth, and, as usual, lacking anything like a tailwind. Generally clear and stress free. A quick refuel for 042, and defuel for the intrepid aviator, saw us heading for YTWB, intention being to refuel before the final short leg to YGAS.

Initially at A055, the A075, then A095 (even snuck up to A100, just because I could!) trying to avoid the white fluffy rain filled atmospheric, only to fail in that endeavour. So a hole was used for rocket descent to A035, then A030 and finally 500 AGL.

Approaching the border into Godzone it became obvious that YTWB would be a bridge too far, weather wise, so a path direct to home at YGAS was chosen. I say 'direct' when the track line looked more like a drunk driving home after a night out. A small gap allowed me over the Great Divide to the south of YTWB, and YGAS greeted me with a celebratory rainstorm for my approach. (He thinks - wouldn't it be nice to have some windscreen wipers?!?).

All in all a successful trip, although any delay out of YTEM would have seen me diverting to somewhere else as the weather continued to close in after my arrival at YGAS. Perhaps that instrument rating renewal I am contemplating would be a good idea!?!

Added bonus - I now know where my canopy leaks are!!



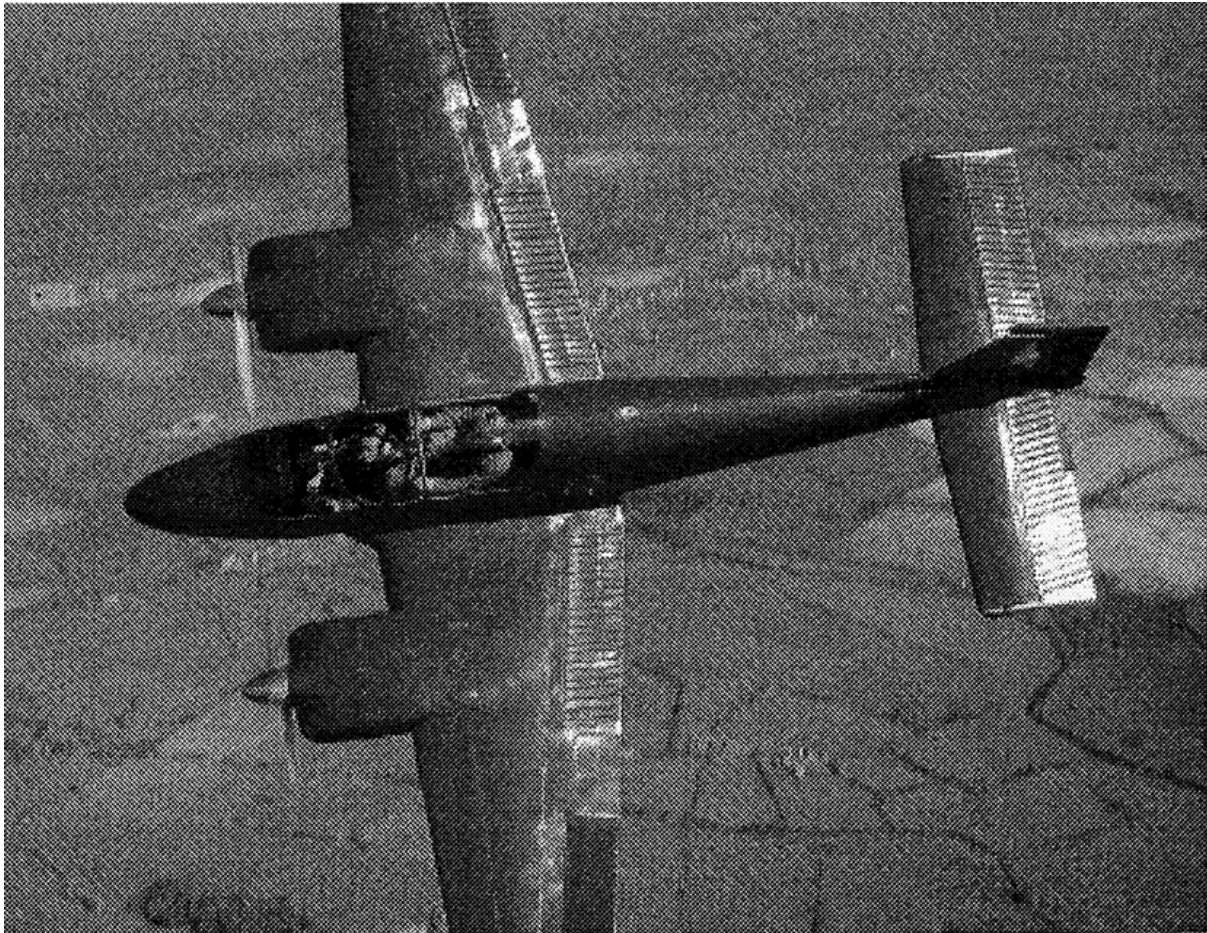
Roll Call

Registrant	Mode	Scarlett Form	Missing Man
Deb and Rick Evans	Airline then car		
John and Jan O'Halloran	Airline then car		
Murray Joel	CT-4A VH-LAH		Victa 2
Graham and Lorraine Wood	Car		
Peter and Jane Norford	Car		
Jane Morris and Chris Camier	Airline		
Dave and Jude Ellis	Airtourer VH-CND		
Angela Stevenson and Tony Self	Airtourer VH-FVV	Scarlett 1 (AS)	Victa 1 (TS)
Paige Rolfe	Airtourer VH-MRE		
Tim Glabatz			
Ian Close and Sue Harris	Car		
Mike Cleaver	Local		
Pat Peak and Chris Peak	Local		
Doug Stott and Janice Landells	Airline		
Doug Gould and Sally McDonald	Seneca VH-STT		
Beryl Marshall and Garry Butcher	Car		
Julian Szaters	CT-4B VH-PGH	Scarlett 2	Victa 4
Mark Skidmore	CT-4A VH-MCT	Scarlett 3	
Robin Hilliard	VH-RQL		
Ric and Veronica Davies	VH-RIC		
Andrew Clement	VH-KGR		Victa 2

More photos next Newsletter!



Twin Airtourer?



From Airtourer Association Newsletter 103, August 2022.

Intrigued? Here's some extra reading for you!

- [Newsletter 103.pdf](#)
- [Speedtwin E2E Comet 1 - Wikipedia](#)
- [Jever Steam Laundry - 4 Sqn personnel Phillips 014](#)



Roy Riddel, RAAF

Part two: Hot Shot

by **Peter Roberts and Judy Riddel** (originally published in SITREP Magazine, June 2023, reproduced with permission)

In June 1942, after almost six months flying with the RAF in England, Roy Riddel disembarked in Melbourne to fly against the rapidly approaching Japanese. By 8 June he was posted to No. 75 Squadron RAAF, joining the squadron on 21 June. Some of the pilots he'd sailed home with also joined him there, including Jeff Wilkinson, Frank Shelley, Keith Gamble, Dick Holt, Mark Sheldon and Raife Cowan.

75 Squadron had been established in Townsville on 4 March 1942 under the command of Squadron Leader Peter Jeffrey DSO, DFC, equipped with P-40E Kittyhawks. They were soon ordered up to New Guinea. The 'Neverhawks', as they had been christened by the troops in Port Moresby, arrived on 21 March to a hot reception. Believing them to be yet another Japanese attack, the anti-aircraft gunners opened up as the 75 Squadron aircraft came into land and managed to damage several aircraft. Fortunately, no one was hurt and a patrol was mounted that afternoon by Flying Officers Wackett and Cox, who in turn intercepted and shot down an enemy aircraft to register the squadron's first victory. 75 Squadron stayed at Port Moresby for two months before receiving orders to return to Townsville on 7 May. It was during their time in Port Moresby that they discovered their P-40 Kittyhawks were no match for the Japanese Zero in a dogfight. The Zero was too manoeuvrable, but the Kittyhawk was faster, particularly in a dive. The advantage of speed could be used to escape a bounce, or to set up an attack. They did manage to claim 18 enemy aircraft shot down, four more probably destroyed and 36 damaged with a further 33 enemy aircraft either destroyed or damaged on the ground. Against this, the squadron lost 12 pilots, as well as 15 Kittyhawks shot down, two destroyed on the ground and five destroyed in accidents. Roy had joined a seasoned squadron that had acquitted itself well.

During the next two months 75 Squadron took on a large number of new pilots who were all given three hours on Wirraways before converting to the Kittyhawk. In the last week of July, the squadron received orders to move to Fall River, the code name for Milne Bay. Roy's overwhelming memory of Milne Bay was of the dreadful living conditions - mud, rain, and more mud. There were fuel drums everywhere. After the Americans arrived, he recalled seeing 12 of their jeeps bogged. The airstrip was mud with Marsden matting over it, but the matting proved to be only partially successful; a heavy landing would result in mud oozing up and spraying into wheel wells and onto the undercarriage, flaps and lower wings, giving the ground crew more work.

With the mud and the rain came malaria and dysentery. No. 76 Squadron relocated to Milne Bay at around the same time. Their ORB recorded 'the airstrips had not



been completed and aircraft could not be dispersed to areas from which they could operate. Owing to high and consistent rainfall and the nature of the soil aircraft were constantly being bogged. The nature of the roads was very poor and the squadron found great difficulty in moving about with its present transport.



Photo: Milne Bay, September 1942. L to R: PLTOFF Bruce Brown, SQNLDR Les Jackson, 75SQN, FLTLT Vernon Sullivan, 76SQN, FLTLT Lex Winten, SGT Roy Riddel, 75SQN. (Australian War Memorial) Accession number: 026655

It was in these conditions that they prepared to fight the Japanese. On 4 August, as the Kittyhawk squadrons were establishing themselves, four Zeros flew into Milne Bay on a strafing attack that destroyed a 75 Squadron Kittyhawk, A29-98. Daily defensive patrols were set up over the airfield and surrounds to counter these attacks. Much of Roy's time at Milne Bay was spent on such patrols, many in the early morning, sometimes with other patrols later in the day interspersed with flights to intercept incoming enemy or unidentified aircraft. On 7 August there was a break from routine when he flew out to Goodenough Island with Pilot Officer Whetters to deliver supplies to some stranded 76 Squadron pilots.

Roy flew the early morning patrol on 11 August, then as part of a patrol of sixteen aircraft around midday after reports of an incoming raid. At around 2:30pm, Roy was one of thirteen 75 Squadron Kittyhawks to take off to intercept 'two enemy bombers escorted by three enemy fighters'. This turned out to be an attacking force of thirteen Zeros, intent on drawing allied fighters into battle. 75 Squadron quickly lost two pilots, Flying Officer Mark Sheldon (A29-123, 'U') and Sergeant Francis Shelley (A29-100), before the action degenerated into individual dogfights. The squadron claimed two enemy aircraft probably destroyed and six damaged, but it was a 'shaky do' with several of their own aircraft damaged. Roy (A29-136, 'N', 'Stardust') was credited with a Zero as damaged.



Roy had been close to Sheldon and Shelley. They had joined 75 Squadron at the same time and he felt their loss keenly, but there was no time to mourn. He was back on base patrol in the coming days, usually twice a day, with occasional interception patrols. On 17 August he was one of twelve aircraft that took off to intercept an unknown aircraft heading for Gurney Field, but nothing was seen. Early in the afternoon of 19 August and again around midday on 23 August, he was part of a five-plane formation sent out to intercept in-coming raids but on each occasion, nothing was found.

In the early afternoon of 24 August, the squadron did intercept an enemy raid bound for Milne Bay, officially recorded as air raid #3. A group of fifteen Zeros swept in to attack the airfields. One section of Zeros strafed the airfield but were beaten off by AA fire, while the other section of Zeros covered the attack and engaged the Kittyhawks. Roy recalled that the squadron was bounced as it was climbing for height. He was flying Flight Lieutenant Lex Winten's Kittyhawk (A29-111, 'W', 'MAALEESH') which he knew to have a vicious swing to the left. He figured Lex must have had a very strong right leg! When a Zero fastened on to his tail, he "did what any law-abiding hero would do in a Kitty – I dived". His speed built up to almost 500 mph and the aircraft continued skidding to the left, registering hits large and small in the starboard wing with the accompanying noise and smell. He later discovered more hits in the tail. Roy put his survival down to the Kittyhawk continually swinging to the left which must have left the Japanese pilot very frustrated. He shook off the Zero and returned to base where Lex met him after he had landed. Roy thought Lex would have been pleased to see him back but all he could say was "Christ Riddel, look what you've done to my plane!" Roy pondered on this encounter later; would the outcome have been different had he been flying his own plane, which dived more or less in a straight line? The Japanese pilots submitted claims for five fighters destroyed. 75 Squadron claimed two damaged Zeros, and 76 Squadron four destroyed, though Japanese records show that all aircraft made it back to base with slight damage to one.

On the night of 25 August, Japanese forces landed near Milne Bay and as they began their march on the garrison at Milne Bay, the Kittyhawk squadrons were given the new task of ground support. Each Kittyhawk could fire up to 1400 rounds, and the next day Roy flew two sorties attacking enemy concentrations and stores around K.B. Mission. Targets were identified by the Army using Verey lights. Results from these attacks were always hard to determine owing to the surrounding jungle, but after one attack ammunition and fuel dumps were observed to be on fire.

On 27 August the squadron put up a patrol of six Kittyhawks following reports of an incoming raid. Roy (A29-127, 'Z') was flying with Sergeant Stu' Munro (A29-108, 'M', 'Schuftie') when the patrol encountered 12 Zeros and eight Type 99 dive bombers





Photo: Milne Bay, September 1942. L-R: FLGOFF Bruce Watson, SGT Cecil Norman, SGT Roy Riddel, FLTLT Archie Hall and PLTOFF Arthur Gould. The Milne Bay mud and water is evident on each side of the Marsden matting. (Australian War Memorial) Accession number: 026658

attacking Gurney field. The Zeros were from the famed Tainan Kokutai, flown by some of Japan's best fighter pilots. As the Kittyhawks manoeuvred for position, a Zero swept past firing and Roy watched helplessly as Stu's smoking Kittyhawk crashed into the jungle below. Roy believes it was the same Zero that then turned its attention to him and he found himself locked in a series of head on attacks. On the last, the Zero passed a little to his right and Roy took the opportunity to shoot, opening up a hole in the starboard wing root and saw oil leaking out, causing the Zero to roll. They were quite low by this time and as he turned, he saw it crash into the jungle. Alone and at low altitude, he climbed for height and found another Kittyhawk (A29-71), flown by his CO, Squadron Leader Les Jackson. As they continued their patrol, they saw some activity just off the coast and went to investigate.

As the Kittyhawks had battled the top cover of Zeros, a second flight of Zeros had strafed Gurney field. Two of the attacking Zeros were hit by ground fire and one, flown by Petty Officer Enji Kakimoto, was eventually forced to ditch just off shore up the coast from Milne Bay, seven miles east of Dowa Dowa Creek. He managed to swim to the shore and watched as two of his fellow pilots attempted to destroy his ditched plane. Enji identified these planes as being flown by Flyer Kihachi Ninomiya and Petty Officer Sadao Yamashita. It was this activity that Les and Roy had seen. The Kittyhawk pilots dived down to the perfect position to catch the two Zeros as



they pulled up from their first pass and coming in fast, fired on the unsuspecting pilots, closing in to a few yards. Roy would later recount that it was just like shooting clay pigeons. Both planes crashed into the sea and Roy couldn't help thumbing the transmit button on his radio and letting out a great yell of delight as the stress of the last few days and minutes erupted. It was "a sort of way of getting it out of your system."

The Tainan Kokutai was the group that had been the nemesis of 75 Squadron when they had been based at Port Moresby earlier in the year. Now, the squadron had evened the score. The Tainan Kokutai had lost five aircraft; this would be the biggest one-day loss in its entire history. Enji Kakimoto was found by friendly natives and later turned over to Australian forces. He was eventually interned at Cowra, and was found hanged on the night of the infamous Cowra breakout. Roy and Les returned to base where they lodged their claims. Roy was only officially credited with one Zero, the one he'd shot down into the sea with Les. To the squadron, he had shot down two in one day and promptly acquired the nickname 'Hot Shot'. But he'd lost another close friend. He'd shared a tent with Stu and he reflected on all the men he'd shared quarters with, had grown close to, and who had died. In England he'd knocked around with Arthur Corser, Bill Norman, Norm Mowatt and Tommy Enright, but within six months they were all dead. Shelley and Sheldon, dead. And now Stu. From that time on Roy vowed he would never share quarters with another pilot.

The following day, 28 August, the squadron again strafed enemy positions around K.B. Mission, but this time flew on to overnight at Port Moresby for 'security reasons', primarily due to the on-going shelling of the base at night by Japanese cruisers. It was dusk when the Kittyhawks approached Port Moresby and the garrison there turned on their searchlights to identify the approaching aircraft. Sadly, Sergeant William Cowe (A29-109, 'K') was dazzled by the light and fatally crashed. It was only later that Roy realised he had picked up Bill's kitbag by mistake, and Bill his, which now lay destroyed in the wreck of his Kittyhawk. With it was Roy's logbook and camera. They returned to Milne Bay the next day and Roy's was one of six Kittyhawks that flew 'diversionary tactics' in support of Hudsons attacking Japanese shipping seen that morning.

Japanese forces had now closed on Milne Bay and snipers had encroached close to the airstrips, so the Kittyhawk pilots were instructed to put a burst of machine gun fire into the surrounding palm trees as they took off. This not only deterred the snipers, it stripped the trees of their foliage and deprived them of any cover. On 4 September, Roy bombed enemy positions then escorted a transport to Port Moresby. The continual air and ground attacks, and destruction of enemy supplies was turning the tide and on 7 September Japanese ground forces began withdrawing, though their air forces were still able to mount a bombing raid on the airfields at Milne Bay on 8 September killing two 75 Squadron guards. Roy returned from Port Moresby on 10 September to join the squadron in ongoing bombing and strafing to repel the



Japanese, culminating in a mission to Goodenough Island to strafe retreating Japanese forces on 16 September. Milne Bay had been saved. The Kittyhawk squadrons withdrew in the last week of September, 75 Squadron to Horn Island and 76 Squadron to Darwin.

Roy was very proud to have served at Milne Bay. Despite the atrocious conditions, he was still able to recall lighter moments. There was the time he gave his boots to a local to clean. They were returned spotlessly clean, inside and out. Unfortunately flying boots aren't meant to be cleaned on the inside. Then there was the time when part of the 'go-down', the name for one of the big stores areas, was partially blown up. On 29 August, a group of US soldiers had fired on some cows approaching a minefield. Those in charge of the canteen and stores, fearing the Japanese had infiltrated, blew up their supplies! On the upside, the Salvation Army took a truck into the area, rescued the unbroken beer bottles and distributed them amongst the men. There was also a good supply of cigarettes for the next few days. Roy loved flying and often did so inverted, sometimes at low level. One day, while flying formation with Pilot Officer Noel Todd, Roy felt the 'call of nature'. Pulling out the relief tube, he began to relieve himself when an aircraft suddenly hurtled across his nose, causing him to spray the cockpit and instruments. It was Noel. Roy called him on the radio and asked, "How did you know?", to which came the reply "I've just taken one myself."

Roy had immense respect and admiration for the ground crew who had to work in all conditions to keep the aircraft flying. When a Kittyhawk needed an engine change, a pair of palm trees was used to winch the old one out and install the new engine, all within 24 hours. Les Spotswood was one of the ground crew who worked on Roy's aircraft and became a lifelong friend. Les went on to train as a pilot and was posted to England to fly bombers but the war finished before he had that chance.



Photo: Roy flying P-40E Kittyhawk A29-153, 'O', 'Orace', 75 Squadron, 1942 (Riddel Family Collection)

October found 75 Squadron settled on Horn Island. By this time Roy had been promoted to Pilot Officer. Horn Island gave the squadron time to refresh its men and refurbish the aircraft. Roy found it a dreary place. No mud but plenty of dust and desolation, and not much beer. At this time, he took P-40 Kittyhawk A29-153, 'O' as



'his' plane and had the name 'Orace' marked on the cowling, after the name 'Horace' his family had given to his father (this is often mistaken as 'Grace'). On 25 October, after flying an early morning exercise, CO Les Jackson pulled Roy aside and asked him to accompany him to Cairns. They removed the ammunition from the wings of their Kittyhawks and when they arrived at Cairns were able to squeeze 250 bottles of beer into the planes. They returned at 22,000 feet to chill the beer and received a very warm welcome back at Horn Island. While they were congratulated on their very gentle landings, they received 'an irate blast from North Eastern Headquarters RAAF, who in narrow-minded fashion suggested that ammo bins in the wings were for ammunition only'.

The stay at Horn Island was short, and by November the squadron had redeployed to Townsville where there was more formation flying and practice. After reports of a possible Japanese seaplane being seen, Roy (A29-131, 'H', 'Miss K. HAWK III') and Flying Officer George Shiells were sent on a detachment to Bowen on 11 December, carrying out an uneventful sea patrol that evening and two more patrols the following day. They carried out another patrol on the evening of 13 December, returning at dusk. According to the squadron ORB, 'on landing A29-131, PLTOFF Riddel bounced slightly and on touching down again the tail came up high, airscrew touching the ground and the tail continued to rise. Approximately 160 yards after touching down aircraft nosed into runway and crashed on its back. Pilot severely injured and admitted to Bowen Hospital. Aircraft damage extensive.' Roy simply remembered following Shiells down, then the brakes jammed and the Kittyhawk flipped. He was pulled unconscious from the wreck and remained unconscious in hospital for several days. Hemiplegia was diagnosed; a severe or complete loss of strength or paralysis on one side of the body. When he finally regained consciousness he was paralysed, but the paralysis gradually resolved into a weakened left hand and a numb right leg, conditions that remained with him for the rest of his life. He later found that he could put a lit cigarette against his leg and not feel it. He had come very close to death, and recalled, with some emotion, a lady telling him she had come by his bed every day to pray for him. He was removed from the seriously ill list on 28 December but remained in hospital for three months.

Roy was declared fit enough to fly again by April. On April 1, he was promoted to Flying Officer and on April 27 was posted to No. 3 Air Depot at Amberley for aircraft ferrying duties, then as a test pilot flying a wide variety of aircraft. Amberley had been the site for erecting Airacobra aircraft coming to Australia. When the ground crew found an Airacobra that had been abandoned by the USAAF and managed to get it airworthy, Roy used it as his personal hack, complete with USAAF markings. The ground crew also found a Boomerang for Roy but he wasn't overly impressed with that one. Roy's father was very keen on flying and while he was at Amberley, Roy arranged to fly a Wirraway to Archerfield. He organised to meet his father by the Aero Club, where the fence was quite low and his father would be able to scramble through.



Unfortunately, the CO at Archerfield was on to him and came over to find out what was happening. Roy introduced his father, who then rather sheepishly turned about and climbed out again.

Roy's reputation as a skilful and fearless pilot brought him many requests to test aircraft. On one occasion he was asked to test fly a Kittyhawk with a modified carburettor, diving it at 550 mph. During the test the cowl broke away and hit the fin but fortunately he managed to get back safely on the ground. By 1944 he was itching to get back to a squadron, but had to make do with a posting to A Flight, No. 2 OTU, Mildura in March. 2 OTU operated a variety of aircraft, but Roy spent most of his flying time in Kittyhawks, Spitfires and Boomerangs, logging 287 hours there and bringing his total flying time to 1408 hours. On 1 October Roy was promoted to Flight Lieutenant, and in December he finally got his posting to a squadron, No. 84, flying Kittyhawks again.



Photo: P-51 Mustangs of 84 SQN RAAF, Townsville, Queensland July 1945. Pilots and aircraft, front to rear: SQNLDR James Cox, LB-V; FLTLT Roy Riddel, LB-K; FLTLT Don McQueen, LB-W; FLTLT S. E. Armstrong, LB-O. (Australian War Memorial) Accession no: NEA0698

Roy joined No. 84 Squadron, and CO Squadron Leader James Cox, in Townsville as A Flight commander. The squadron was equipped with P-40Ns and P-40N5 A29-535, 'K', became his regular aircraft. The squadron had been chosen to receive P-51 Mustangs, and was essentially marking time with flying and ground attack practice. On 6 February Roy flew to 1st TAF RAAF HQ with Squadron Leader Cox to gain information on the latest tactics being deployed, returning on 17 February. Roy found himself as acting CO several times while Squadron Leader Cox was on leave.

84 Squadron received its first Mustang, a P-1K A68-506, on 21 May for training purposes and began training up on the new aircraft over the next few months. When Cox was injured in a crash on 7 August, Roy was appointed acting CO. On 10 August when the Duke (Governor General of Australia) and Duchess of Gloucester visited



Townsville to inspect No. 84 and No. 86 Squadrons, Roy escorted their plane to Mareeba. The war came to an end in September before the squadron could be deployed and on October 4, Roy handed over command of 84 Squadron to Don McQueen. He was officially discharged from the RAAF on 21 November 1945.

Following the war, Roy joined his wife Joyce whom he had married in 1944. As with most returned servicemen, he struggled to adjust and find his place in civilian life. Sometimes moody, the war had left him with a new view on what was important and he could be quite intolerant of trivial matters. Perhaps at times considered cantankerous, he was actually quite shy and compassionate and could relate well to people. He was also known for his self-deprecating humour and booming laugh. Roy had a variety of odd jobs before deciding to become a dentist. He qualified at the University of Queensland and after briefly practicing in Sydney moved to Coffs Harbour, where he practised for over 30 years. He had four children, John, Susan, Robert and David. Sadly, Joyce passed away in 1971. He later married second wife Judy and both were active members in the Coffs Harbour Aero Club, sharing their passion for flying. After more than sixty years flying, Roy hung up his wings in 2000.

Roy flew back over Milne Bay in 1975 with Judy and son David in their Cessna 172. The palm trees around the old airfields that he had strafed in 1942 were still blackened and dead and he found it an eerie experience. After reading 'Onward Boy Soldiers, the Battle for Milne Bay, 1942' and the story of Enji Kakimoto, he gained a better understanding of the Japanese in WW2, but never really got over the memories of lost friends, nor the men he had killed. Roy later visited Cowra and the Japanese POW cemetery. He found the plaque marking the grave of Enji Kakimoto, and carefully placed a piece of flowering gum next to it.

Roy Riddel passed away on 30 March 2008.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

NEA0732

Photo: Flight Lieutenant Roy Gordon Riddel, 27 July 1945, Townsville, Queensland (Australian War Memorial) Accession number: NEA0732



Authors Note: I would like to acknowledge the invaluable assistance of Judy Riddel and Peter Malone, whose generous help, knowledge and expertise enabled this article to be written. Judy would also like to acknowledge the efforts of Bob Piper who provided a great deal of valuable assistance to the family in compiling information on Roy's service, which in turn has been used here.

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- <http://www.adf-serials.com.au/2a29b.htm>



Calendar of Events

5 July 2026	Aerobatic Seminar Flight Deck Bar and Grill, Moorabbin, Victoria	Book at: https://www.trybooking.com/events/landing/1574791
12 August 2026	Zoom Members Social Meet-up	Check your email for details
13-15 August 2026	Pacific Airshow Gold Coast	https://pacificairshowaus.com/
October 2026	President's Fly-in, Merimbula, NSW	9-11 October 2025 Book now!
6-8 November	Formation Camp, Yarrawonga	To get on the waitlist, contact Tony Self at editor@airtourer.asn.au
23-28 Feb 27	Australian International Airshow, Avalon	Details coming...
2027	AGM and Convention, Broken Hill, NSW	Dates TBA
2027	President's Fly-in, Clare Valley, SA	Dates TBA

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The Treasury

by **Angela Stevenson** (Airtourer T6/24, VH-FVV)

Happy EOFY to everyone,

(Well, for everyone except the Association that is, because our financial year runs Jan 1 to Dec 31 - I am very grateful that this is the case),

Some facts from the Treasury to keep you sustained during your EOFY period:

1. \$73,000 - cash held in three term deposits.
2. 3.95%, 5.1% and 4% - the interest rates respectively (this is because two of the TDs were established late last year when interest rates were lower).
3. \$23,000 - cash held in the operating account.
4. \$3,400 - the Association's current liability to co-operative.
5. 109 - the number of membership invoices sent this year.
6. 8 - the number of living life members.
7. 56 - the number of membership invoices already paid since 15 June.
8. 53 - the number of membership invoices outstanding as at 29 June 2026.

Paid your membership fees?

If you haven't received your membership fee renewal invoice, please let me know!

Credit card payments now available

And finally, we have managed to set up the ability for our members to pay by credit card via MYOB. Fees are wholly passed onto the payer in this instance. If you wish to avoid the MYOB fee, then you can still pay by bank transfer. The system seems to be working well.

With many thanks for the continuing support and friendship of all of our members and our Committee!

Happy Airtourer-ing everyone!

Angela Stevenson
VH-FVV



Well, well, well...

Flight training redefines air power generation

by **FLTLT Jessica Auciello** (RAAF)

<https://www.defence.gov.au/news-events/news/2026-02-26/flight-training-redefines-air-power-generation>

Air Force Training Group has launched an innovative pilot training trial at RAAF Base Point Cook, partnering with RMIT University Aviation Academy to explore new ways of delivering Initial Flying Training (IFT).

“The Pilot Training System (PTS) is recognised as a world-class capability. Powered by the PC-21 turbine platform and advanced synthetic training devices, the PTS is designed to meet the contemporary needs of the ADF and deliver highly skilled aviators,” Commander Air Force Training Group Air Commodore David Strong said.



*Delegates from the Initial Flight Training Course 4 at RAAF Base Point Cook.
Photo: Flight Lieutenant Jessica Auciello*

The IFT program is testing a commercial, off-the-shelf approach to basic flying training. Over two years, five courses will undertake a 24-week program, where trainees fly Cessna aircraft to achieve civilian licences and instrument ratings, and integrate seamlessly into the military pilot training continuum.

The design of IFT is similar to that employed by several allied air forces, including the United States Air Force, where the basic phase integrates into their contemporary flying training continuum.

This approach is not without precedent. During World War II, the Empire Air Training Scheme contracted civilian flying schools to conduct ab-initio training for allied air forces, including the Royal Australian Air Force. The Empire Air Training



Scheme produced tens of thousands of aviators at speed, proving that partnerships can underpin readiness in times of strategic demand.

“Scalability isn’t just a concept, it’s a force multiplier. This initiative demonstrates how we can adapt quickly without compromising the standards that underpin Air Force training,” Air Commodore Strong said.

“In Air Force Training Group, our mission is simple and clear – train well, train smart and stay ahead of the challenge. The IFT program is a powerful step in that direction.”

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From the Archive

The Ripple Effect



Here’s a 1967 photo of a Maldivian islander, Mohamed Naeem (Pilot Naeem) when he was learning to fly in Australia. In a Victa Airtourer 100. The photographer was Cliff Bottomley.



Pilot Naeem was the first pilot in the Maldives, and inspired other aviators, including the first Maldivian ATPL pilot, Ibrahim Rasheed.

<https://www.aviatorsmaldives.com/post/4323400065>

Pilot Naeem went on to be a pioneer of aviation in the Maldives, as the first Air Traffic Controller, and a five-decade career at Hulhulé Airport, now Velana International Airport. He passed away in January 2026. Remembered as a trailblazer and mentor, Naeem's legacy lives on in the modern aviation system of the Maldives, which has grown from modest beginnings into a key pillar supporting tourism and national development.



Airtourer Association Inc
P.O. 778, Tewantin, QLD 4565
Australia

