

Thermal

the official journal of Bathurst Soaring Club



Spring 2003



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There's always a first time!

Gliding is made up of 'firsts'. First lesson, first solo, first flight in a single seater and so on. Perhaps no 'first' is as daunting as 'first cross country flight'. To look back at the airfield and watch the angle flatten, to reach the point at which a small voice suggests it's time to point the nose back home. Just like a honeymoon night, things don't always fit together the first time.

It's a great system for cross country camps where newbies like me are partnered with a more experienced pilot to share a club single seater. It removes the strains of de-rigging and rigging, and towing a glider trailer for the first time – all small but significant newbie hurdles. Even better, I've got a motor home so what a good deal: I provide the accommodation and my partner provides the expertise and a car with a towbar. I book the junior, the instructors panel nods sagely in approval.

However, other commitments arise and my flying partner is no more – I consider putting a towbar on the back of the motor home. All right on a sealed road, not so good in a

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BSC Officers & Delegates

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Committee

President	Peter Williamson
Vice-President	Keith Gateley
Secretary	Margaret Jones
Treasurer	Paul Hyman
Membership Secretary	Peter Bowring
Flying Ventures	Armin Kruger
Compliance Officer	Richard Bull
Parachutes	Eddie Pahic
Member	Aaron Stroop
Member	Graeme Cant
Member	Alan Taylor

Other Officers

Glider Bookings	Bess Phillips
Ground Engineer	Mike Perry
Instruments	Graham Spoor
Airworthiness	Peter Newcomb
Chief Duty Pilot	Leigh Youdale
Aerotow Ropes	Brian Bailey
Airfield Co-ordinator	Joe Brown
Thermal Editor	Armin & Kathleen Kruger
Tug Maintenance	John Carr
Tug Master	Ray Humphrey
Certificates Officer	Colin Turner
BSC Website Co-ordinator	Serge Lauriou
Chief Flying Instructor	Phil Jones

Instructors

Phil Jones (CFI), Graham Brown, Robert Bull (AEI) Paul Drew, Keith Gateley, Bob Hall, Peter Hanneman, Ray Humphrey, Nick King, Armin Kruger, John Leonard (AEI), Alan McGown, Lyle McLean, Eddie Pahic, Aaron Stroop, Brett Sutcliffe, David Wilkins

Cross Country Coaching Co-ordinator

Armin Kruger

Tug Pilots

Ray Humphrey (Tug Master), Brian Acker, Brian Bailey, Chris Bennett, Alan Bones, John Carr, Greg Dillenbeck, Dennis Gilbert, Peter Hanneman, Nick King, Lyle McLean, Peter Rainsford, Graham Spoor, Geoff Sweeney, Alan Taylor, Bill Tugnett, Bob Warburton

Maintenance Panel

Glider Maintenance Co-ordinator: Peter Newcomb

DG-505 (Orion):	Armin Kruger, David Ollivier
ASK13:	Kathleen Mason, Matthew Minter
Puchacz:	George Marbot, Bhup Mistry
Junior:	Nigel Gray, Ian Richards
Libelle:	Peter Gore
DG-300:	Peter Newcomb, Robert Bull

Other BSC members active in the gliding movement

Bob Hall:	President of GFA
Aaron Stroop:	NSW GFA Councillor, NSWGA Vice President, GFA Radio Officer, Southern NSW RTO Ops
Eric Sweet:	NSW Gliding Association President
Kerrie Claffey:	NSW GFA Delegate
Armin Kruger:	CFI NSW Air League Gliding
Rod Leonard:	Group Captain NSW Air League Gliding

Thermal is the official magazine of Bathurst Soaring Club.
All contributions welcome. Please send articles to the editor.
Piper's Airfield co-ordinates: 33°23'S 149°30'E
www.bathurstsoaring.org.au

Notes from the editor

If you were wondering where everyone was during the second half of November, just read the articles from Leigh Youdale, Graham Cant and Ian Shepherd. (Be kind to Ian next time you see him, he's only new to this cross-country business.) Thanks also to Geoff Bott for his account of the ridge camp.

From my end: upon arriving at Narromine on 15th November we heard the usual 'you should have been here last week...' then the first week wasn't much to crow about, but the second week (Narromine Cup Week) was – oh well, better luck next year. At least we had a chance to put the Orion through its paces and so far so good. I must say that the Orion is an extremely comfortable machine, even after a 5 hour flight in high work-load conditions. No doubt, some of us short wing pilots need to re-adjust our techniques somewhat to suit the 20 metre wings, but that's a good challenge in any case. Anyway, I think Graeme and Kathleen enjoyed their flights.

The flight with Graeme was a bit of a struggle but Kathleen certainly had better conditions and we flew 348kms, most of it in company with Bill Tugnett, Bob McDonald and Norm Sanders in the Canberra club's Jantar.

I won't talk about rigging the Orion – that's another story, better told by an amused spectator.

But seriously though, we're very fortunate to have a 2 seater of this performance and quality in our club – I can hardly wait for the next one!

The trailer still needs some work and modifications, and Eddie Pahic and Graeme Cant have offered to take this project on between them.

Ron Ballard and Werner Geisler have each provided an article for Thermal about some of their interesting and colourful past. We're also very fortunate to have members with their levels of experience, and even more so that they can put pen-to-paper for our enjoyment – thank you Ron and Werner from all of us.

In early January it's off to Temora again for our annual 2 week pilgrimage. Bill Tugnett has all the preparations under control, so if you have any questions, call Bill.

Back at Piper's, preparations are well in hand for the Xmas party, as well as the Xmas Camp – hope to see you there.

Armin Kruger

Narromine Cup

The week of the Bathurst club camp at Narromine was as dull as the next week's Narromine Cup was exciting. This year's Cup attracted about 80 pilots and 60 gliders. Holding it the week after the NSW State Comps at Lake Keepit meant that a number of Queensland and Victorian gliders also came together with the usual collection of foreign glider groupies that Narromine attracts from Europe, Japan, etc.

A number of BSC members and gliders stayed on from the camp and with some new arrivals BSC had 18 members there at one stage and 14 gliders – probably the largest contingent from any single Club.

The weather turned on a good performance beginning with a dull Friday and a wet Saturday. Sunday, however, was full of clouds and sunshine, Monday was dry enough for the thermals to work well (though not very high) and wet enough for each of them to have its own personal cloud marker. It was almost impossible not to find lift and some outstanding performances were turned in. The best day of all was Tuesday with climbs reaching 9-10,000 feet under skies full of giant cumulus. After that the week trailed off into merely very good, pretty good and not-bad-at-all-but-you-have-to-work-at-it. The thermals remained strong, but the clouds became rarer and later and higher until the Friday became completely blue – except towards Bathurst (which becomes relevant later).

So what did all these people and plastic do over the week? The answer is miles and miles and miles but two flights stand out. First, Robbie Bull's 540km triangle in HDZ, the Club's DG-300; the first teenager to do that for some years. After a week at the NSW Comps at Lake Keepit, Robbie began his week with a 'short' 500km with Paul Mander in Paul's ASH-25M on Monday followed with 410km on his own in the DG-300 on Tuesday. Wednesday saw him back with Paul for another 710km while on Thursday he completed what he started on Tuesday – a 530km triangle in the DG300 from Narromine to Condobolin, Coonamble and back to Narromine for his Diamond Distance and Diamond Goal. As a finale he flew Coonamble, Parkes, Narromine on the Saturday for another 480km. A great performance.

The other stunning flight was when Aaron Stroop displaced Robbie (kicking and screaming I understand) from the ASH-25M on Tuesday and with Paul Mander completed 1016km in 8 hours 29. Their route took them past Bourke and back and was clearly the best flight of the Cup. Paul took his glider home on Thursday so we all had to make do with much less span after that.

Richard Bull came fourth overall in the Cup with consistent performances every day including two flights over 600 km and three over 500km for a total distance of 3660km. He launched early and returned last on most days with his landing time being set not by the end of daylight but by Arnie Hartley being down to the last 5 steaks on the barbecue. He did outland once at Mundgeribah (only 20km up the road) on the same day that Keith relit the Orion at Trangie. Keith enjoyed putting the Orion to work and claims the first 500km in the Orion (the first 300km was the week before) and can



also be credited with the first outlanding. Sensibly, he chose a proper airfield since de-rigging could well have been a solo exercise. Keith flew with Chris Manchester on two days and with Marg Jones on another. Finally, with Robbie Bull in the back seat, he joined Phil Jones in the Jantar and Aaron in the Nimbus 3 to fly back to Piper's on Friday. Some people will do anything to avoid de-rigging the Orion. As it turned out, the only direction with clouds and decent thermals that day was eastwards and the flight home took only about 1 hour 50 for the 224km from Narromine via Parkes. Aaron said that after the 9-knotter to 9000 feet over Parkes, they had final glide to Piper's. Ray Humphrey flew them back to Narromine in the Cessna after solving the flat battery problem (Go on.Ask him).

All the other usual suspects were there. The Pik squadron (Pete Williamson, Geoff Sweeney and Doc Gray) went everywhere – usually places we'd all agreed not to go to before we took off. Col Turner flew the fastest 300 – and without water. Mike Cole flew his third and fourth 300km triangles and at last did one that Beryl just might accept as Gold distance. Bob McDonald, Ed Marel, Bob Hall, and myself just enjoyed ourselves. I'd estimate that between us we flew 25,000km and it would be hard to think of a better way to spend a week. Orana Soaring Club are always great hosts and they have a knack of arranging a week's flying that leaves pilots flying a Ka6 no less happy and satisfied than those in a Nimbus 4D.

My own personal satisfaction came from my longest solo flight so far and from a 530km flight with Bob McDonald as coach in the DG500. 'DON'T TURN!' he said – early and often. In the end it was broadcast all over western New South Wales. He's right – don't turn, fly fast, stay high. One day I'll make it all work. They all make it look so easy...

Graeme Cant

Aviation history on a small scale

The four Allied Forces, governing Berlin after the war strictly prohibited any gathering or formations of groups with aviation interests, naturally!

About 30 former glider pilots met regularly to keep the spirit, so to speak, alive. We approached the Forces independently but all said no except the Brits who suggested we call ourselves a Model Glider Club! We needed some kind of recognition because we had a plan, which could have implicated some of us seriously. Otto Lilienthal's 100th birthday happened to be on the 23.5.1948. O.L was one of the few glider pioneers who designed and built contraptions with aeronautical intentions and launched himself off any available hillside. He built himself one in a suburb of Berlin, which was later made into a memorial park. My father and uncle who had had a bronze art foundry since 1925 were commissioned by the city fathers to cast a bronze globe approx. 1.2 meter in diameter in 1932 in his honor. When things didn't go too well for Germany near the end of the war all bronze statues were melted down and made into bullets and the globe was one of them. After the war I joined my uncle, father disappeared in Russia, and we started again casting bronze busts, plaques and monuments, this time mainly for the Russians.

Early in 1948 the small glider fraternity had a plan. It was to clean up Lilienthal's memorial park and I volunteered to cast a one meter diameter plaque in bronze. A bunch of fellow conspirators met between the 22nd and 23rd of May. We sneaked up the hill and fastened the plaque onto the granite stone and left undetected.

Next morning the newspapers and radio stations were duly informed of the changes on the hill!

Some years later the city fathers decided to replace the plaque with a globe but this time made out of stone. I thought that was the end of my plaque.

On one of my visits to Berlin friends took me to another Lilienthal park and to my surprise, there was my lost plaque set into the stone base of another memorial and this time, hopefully, forever!

Werner Geisler



Above: Original bronze globe from 1932



Above: Lilienthal park as it is today



Above: Bronze plaque cast in 1948



Above: Stone globe

The Mayor of Bathurst visits Piper's

Here is the Mayor of Bathurst, Ian Macintosh (left) pictured with Bill Tugnett (right), our former, and much respected president.



Some firsts

Michael Cole – 300km
 Robert Bull – 500km
 Leigh Youdale – 500km
 all in November 2003

Name these characters

Remember these 2 nameless characters from last 'Thermal'? Did you guess who they are?

Well they are no other than Aaron Stroop on the left and Mike Morris (Pilatus) on the right, flying at Benalla many years ago.



BSC Soaring Calendar (updated December 2003)

Date	Aircraft	Pilot/Contact	Event
December 25–Jan 2		Armin Kruger	Christmas Camp at Piper's
January 3–18 2004		Bill Tugnett	Club Camp at Temora

Note: AirTC courses at Raglan will have access to our aircraft on weekends when not required for club use. This will be monitored and controlled by the duty pilots and instructors to ensure the most efficient use of our equipment. Independent operators' days are for pilots holding an independent operator's rating.

Orion

It was a blue day but it looked reasonably promising and quite hot. We (Armin) decided to christen the Orion with its first 120kg of water. After some time mastering the intricacies of a water system with two wing tanks and two tail tanks we decided we were set. We put our mobiles and some toilet paper in our outlanding kits and launched – some time after everybody else.

We (Armin and I) set off to do Armatree, Nyngan and back to Narromine but it didn't quite work out like that. We climbed to a reluctant 4200 feet over Narromine while still trying to plug the task into the GPS-Nav. We set off in hope with my GPS still set on 'Goto Narromine' just as a backstop. As we slowly descended with no sign of a thermal and reached about 13km out and 3500ft, we remembered the problems of rigging and derigging the Orion, so we returned to our house thermal at about 2350 (ground level 800) and climbed again to 4200. Again we set off. Again we went back. Again we thermalled to 4000. Again we started. As we reached the same distance at the same height as before, I mentioned this to Armin. With no response. When we reached about 20km from Narromine with hardly a bleat from the vario I mentioned it again. Armin said 'Sometimes you just have to go. Something will turn up'. So we did. And it did – at 1500 above the ground.

Well. From there on the rest was a piece of cake. We never got that low again, but then we didn't get much higher either. The logger says we topped out at 6300 feet about 15km short of Armatree but that was the first time we got over 5000 and the second last. I think that was where I dozed while Armin worked. Later Armin dozed while I worked. As you can see, the later stages were more relaxing.

After Armatree, we could hear the Presidential Group (Sarge, Sweeney, Bob McDonald, Al Bones and Bill Tugnet) discussing the strife they were having around Warren on their way to Nyngan and what a lousy day it had been generally. We decided that a discreet task adjustment would be in order. We turned south and dumped the water. As it turned out, nobody got to Nyngan and most came home via Nevertire. Being a little further back, we joined everybody at Trangie. There's a great wheat paddock south west of Warren with a red earth hill studded with stones in the middle. If you need some height any time, it's really reliable – but it still won't get you above 5000.

All in all, it was a great day. I learned a lot about thermalling technique on blue days (look down, not up). I learned that Bi-Lo chocolate chip cookies may be no match for Mrs Fields but when your stomach is empty they're just great. I learned that dropping your water early can be a really good decision. I learned that Armin is a great companion for a hard day's slog and the Orion is a lovely cross country glider with (thankfully) quite long legs. If you get the chance, grab either or both and go for a long ride. You'll love it.

Cheers – and thanks for the flight!

Graeme Cant

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paddock! The Volvo S60 can handle the job but then again it might get dirty!

So I requisition Sue's Fairmont station wagon – an ideal gliding vehicle. Oh Yes, I'd better organise a tent as well. All set and ready to go – I've packed the things I think I need, GPS & spare batteries, first aid kit, 2 WAC charts taped together and laminated, baked beans and a bottle of port.

Arrive at Piper's on Saturday morning to de-rig the junior and tow it up to Narromine.

Sounds quite simple when you say it quickly. The junior is not in the hangar. Perhaps a good fairy has de-rigged and put it in the trailer for me: Perhaps not. There it is lined up on the runway. I start getting the trailer ready whilst the junior gets an airing at 4000 ft. Some time is taken replacing bits and bobs of missing trailer and eventually with much appreciated advice and assistance from others I am ready to go.

Just get the junior's battery because I discover it has been flown with one from the K13.

No battery to be found, another delay.

Eventually I am on my way, gradually discovering that point of speed at which the glider trailer starts to wobble and attempting to keep just under it. Arrive at Narromine just in time to join the rest of the Orion rigging team for

an hour of exercise in not putting the Orion together. Understand why the sport of gliding is aptly described as 'a bunch of old men in floppy hats shouting at each other' before the group en masse admit failure and leave the rigging for the next morning. Now to put the tent up before it gets too dark. Oh yes, and listen to the ubiquitous 'You should have got here earlier; it was a great flying day!'

Five days later I have had some days of bad weather and storms, some minor damage to the tent but also two flying days, managing to leave the ground for periods of three and four hours and travelling 56 km up the highway and back safely to Narromine.

On the return journey, I arrive at Piper's on Friday evening and stay overnight to rig the junior on Saturday morning. Rain and no rigging on Saturday so head for home.

Opening the back of the station wagon I see the battery from the junior. What a nice day for a family drive to Bathurst. We stay and have dinner in the clubhouse.

On Sunday, back at home, I empty out the rest of the car and there sitting innocently in a box of food, I find the main pin from the junior. Next camp I will be organised, honest I will!

Ian Shepherd

Ridge Camp – a personal tale

Ridge camp on again – bewdy! My son John and I put our names down for attendance on the Sat/Sun as work/school precluded us from taking time off. So, on the Friday evening we loaded up and beetled off to Cowra.

On the way we were treated to an extraordinarily terrifying display by a Police pursuit car overtaking us at a speed in the vicinity of 180km/hr then braking suddenly in front of us in order to nab some poor unfortunate miscreant in an MX5 daring to cruise at 130 km/hr on the open road! Seems like one law for us and one for them.

On arrival we found ourselves at our motel with the smallest room with the largest number of beds crammed in but at least it was clean and comfortable.

Early up and out to Jim's farm for a looksee. Bright sunlight up to Koorawatha looked good but excrement happened thereafter with cloud cover overhead as we proceeded South. At Jim's, the cloud was shrouding the top of the ridge and the usual gang of mopers hung about the shed, drinking coffee waiting for the cloud to lift while some fiddled hopefully with their gliders. (You should have been here yesterday, it was great then and we.....)

Then it rained. We hung about for some time waiting, waiting, waiting... The Bendick Murrell tavern makes a great hamburger we discovered.

Eventually, the cover burnt off and we started operations. In due course John clambered aboard the K13 and was briefed by Brett Sutcliffe on the aspects of ridge flying and they took off. John achieving his first take off and landing unaided, in between times having a great flight, albeit not so long due to the lack of lift.

I eventually had a flight in the Junior, rather a controlled descent really. But it was so flat a day that I had a virtual hands off aerotow and a nice scenic flight without all those nasty bumpy bits.

That evening at the Koorawatha pub, a good time was had by all with good cheap grub. However there was not a great deal of lie telling about the great flights that were had that day and we retired to our motel for an early night.



On Sunday morning, much grumbling was heard about the wind, as is usual at Bendick Murrell as it was largely blowing at a 45 degree angle to the ridge so it was not all that promising. I took the Junior and had a high tow in fairly smooth conditions. After a run along the top of the ridge and back, steadily getting lower I eventually scraped along the side for half of the length, experiencing some gusts from the ravines but not much anywhere else, then turned and ran for home. On the way back the gusts were just sufficient to maintain a safe height, but I was keeping an eye out for paddocks on the way just in case! At Jim's I found that I still had plenty of height and had to make a full airbrake descent and plopped down without disgracing myself.

By this time it was 1.00 pm and it did not look like improving. So with regret, we loaded up the Junior and we towed it back to Bathurst without incident. All of the other hopefuls stayed on and returned on Monday. (I expect it was, 'You should have stayed, we had great weather and....')

To sum up, we did have a good time as always with good company but if the wind is not right, the ridge does not work and the rain stuffed any thermal activity. The Sperber got a good workout I noticed. Poor Jim is still having trouble with builders so has no house built yet.

On another note, I see president Bill has now retired and I would like to say thanks for his efforts.

Geoff Bott

PB, BP and the DT's

PB = Personal Best

That's what Narromine Cup Week is all about and I achieved mine, flying the Mosquito cross country for the first time that week. The first week at Narromine which was the BSC camp was not all that flash. Although some arrived in time to fly on the Saturday, by Sunday when I got there the wind was blowing fiercely and continued to do so on Monday, wiping out two days flying.

Tuesday was flyable but scrappy and nobody did very much. I flew locally for 3 hours.

Wednesday was better with 4000' ceiling and a couple of people struggled around a 300km task but most settled for something less ambitious and I got nearly four hours in but only covered about 150km all up. Still getting used to the new aircraft, I told myself.

Thursday, Friday and Saturday were virtual washouts. Cloud, rain, no launches at all. Everyone was getting very depressed and several people actually arrived and went home without even flying. Early departures were increasing.

Sunday 23rd started to look better. Cloud base got to 7500' during the day and I experienced my first genuine all-the-way 10 knot average climb. It could have been more but my averager only reads to 9.9 and the vario needle was on the stops the whole time. I flew 253 km to Tooraweenah, Gular and back to Narromine but wimped out on trying anything more. That took three and a half hours.

Monday I flew again but just couldn't connect with good climbs and struggled to get away from the airfield in good time. I flew to Nevertire and back, after hearing everyone else had cleared out well ahead of me. Cloud base was no more than 5000-6000' and there were lots of clouds and heavy rain showers around. Having got caught in a microburst in the Libelle at Narromine last year I was a bit reserved about flying into that stuff. One thing I did learn on this flight was how much the wing performance deteriorates when they get wet in heavy rain! Two hours of virtually local flying.

Tuesday was THE day. It looked fairly good right from the start. I washed the glider and made all my preparations before briefing. I launched at 11.30, mainly because the previous day Bob McDonald had complained that nobody would stick with him and we agreed to try to fly together this time. Also, with some 60-70 gliders on the field for Narromine Cup, if you didn't get out there early you might not get launched until 2 PM despite them having four or five tugs on the go.

I set off a little behind Bob Hall but ahead of Geoff Sweeney and Sarge. The task was to Coonamble, then into a headwind to Condobolin and back to Narromine – 533km in all. Climbs to 6000' produced a feeling of cautious optimism as we set off and Bob was calling the conditions ahead so I was able to avoid a difficult area around the river north of Narromine and tracked slightly more eastwards.

Sweeney and Sarge passed me just before I got to Coonamble but I was able to track them for a long time and they warned me about weak conditions over the irrigation north of the Trangie road. This leg was a long one – nearly 250km. I knew I had an 'out' if I needed it



with airfields at Trangie and Mudgeeraba, and not too far across to Narromine but by this time we were getting climbs to 9000'. The cores were narrow and broken down low but if you stayed in the top half of the convection it worked pretty well.

Bob McDonald and Graeme Cant passed me in the DG500 on this leg near Trangie but proved helpful on the last leg by calling the conditions ahead of me. Turning Condobolin I was glad of the tailwind component, especially as it was around 5:30 and the day was starting to weaken. I had a good climb to cloud base going in there, found by Col Turner who got there earlier, and another about 20km towards Narromine but by this time the lift was definitely weaker and the clouds were flattening out into little pancakes rather than the puffy cumulus we'd seen earlier in the day. I started to fly very conservatively because I still needed a couple of good climbs to get me home and although they were far apart and some were quite weak I did eventually get them including an unexpected 9-10 knots about 50km out from Narromine which gave me final glide. It's nice to see the airstrip in the far distance and after a while realise it is getting lower in the canopy rather than higher! I was able to increase my speed a little then. I arrived with 2000' in hand and was on the ground 7 hours and 2 minutes after launch. After appeasing the earth gods with the usual offering and getting my legs to walk properly I felt great satisfaction in having done my first 500km flight, even though it was pretty slow. I must learn to stop thermalling in weak lift and move on. I averaged 80kph. Col Turner went around the same task at 110kph. That day there were 30 flights of more than 300km. Fourteen were 300's, ten were 500's and there were six more ranging from 600 to 1000.

BP = Be Prepared

I wasn't. I had my maps, my GPS, food, water and even the barograph but because I didn't really believe I would do it I didn't declare the task, take the camera or line up an Official Observer, so I can't claim the flight. I'll have to do it all again! It doesn't really matter because I know now I can do it and there is a lot of personal satisfaction too – but if I'd been properly prepared and a little more optimistic about the outcome I'd have my badge now instead of having to wait for maybe another year or even two for a similar opportunity to come along.

The DT's

The result of a scrap of anguished conversation heard over the radio from the DG. You'll have to ask Graeme or Bob about that!

Leigh Youdale

Ron's life of flight (part 1)

Ron Ballard

I was born on the 19th May 1922 at the Glengarlen private hospital in Neutral Bay, in Sydney. My parents were Geoffrey Elwin Ballard, who was born in Wairoa, New Zealand on the 27th of May in 1894, and my mother was Eileen Vida Ballard (nee Stirling) who was born on the 22nd February, 1903 in Newcastle, NSW, and who was just 19 at the time of my arrival.

I have just one sibling, Peter Stirling Ballard, who is still alive, but in poor health. He is 3 years younger than me, and living in the War Veterans' homes in Narrabeen.

I attended the Neutral Bay Public School in 1927 from Infants' School to completing the Intermediate School Certificate in 1937. My final education was at the Sydney Grammar School where I obtained the Leaving Certificate in 1939 after World War 2 broke out.

Until leaving home to join the services I lived with my parents at a small cottage in Benelong Road Cremorne. The weekends were spent at Palm Beach, initially at a camp site on the Barrenjoey Peninsular hut later at a weekend cottage built by my parents, where we enjoyed golfing, swimming and boating right throughout the year. During these times I was fascinated with aviation and built many model aircraft most of which I designed myself. I had a strong ambition then to become an aircraft designer.

My first employer was David Jones in their Market Street food store, but I did not stay long there as I believed the work I was assigned was somewhat below my dignity as a holder of a respectable Leaving Certificate, and found a job at a wool storage business at the Sydney Show Grounds. Later I secured a job with the Commonwealth Public Service as a clerk in the Postmaster General Dept. This was in 1940 and with the war raging I decided I would join the RAAF and made application to join the Empire Flying Training Scheme and was accepted and placed on the call up reserve. I hated the work in the Post Office and decided to join the Army Militia Service whilst awaiting my RAAF call up. This was a big mistake. I spent a few months playing soldiers with the 2nd. Armoured Regiment based at Ashfield. My main reason for this move was to avoid buying myself civilian clothing which I badly needed but I felt was a waste, as I was about to join the Air Force.



When my call up eventually came in May 1941 I had great difficulty in obtaining my discharge from the 'Chockos' but did succeed and was enlisted as a trainee airmail the Air Force on #15 Course in the Empire Flying Training Scheme. I spent 2 months at Initial Training School at Bradfield Park, Lindfield where I was graded as a pilot trainee.

Next posting was to #10 Empire Flying Training School (LET'S) at Temora, NSW and did well soloing in five and a half hours which I believe was achieved because of my previous hobby in studying the theory of flight. I had one hiccup when I suffered acute appendicitis during a flying lesson and was in some pain, but did not tell my instructor. I was then matted for a bad performance in the flight commander's office where I promptly fainted and was hauled off to the camp hospital. The F/C was annoyed that I had not spoken up during the flight. After a few days I recovered enough to continue my training. The appendicitis returned later when based in Perth where an operation fixed the problem.

From Temora I was posted to the Service Flying Training School at Forest Hill near Wagga Wagga and learnt to fly the Australian built Wirraway which was developed from the North American Harvard. This aircraft was considered to be the services fighter bomber having a more powerful Pratt & Whitney engine than the Harvard, two Browning 303 machine guns firing through the propeller and a Lewis machine gun at the back seat.

It is interesting to relate here that my flight commander and instructor was Flight Lieutenant Bill Newton who later faced the Japanese Zeros at Rabaul in a Wirraway and was hopelessly out maneuvered, out numbered and out gunned and was shot down, whereby the Japs beheaded him on the beach where he had landed and he was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross.

After two months at Forest Hill I was then posted to the #2 Operational Training School at East Sale in Victoria and became, in theory, in one month, a red hot fighter pilot with a total of 164 hours.

I was granted a short leave break back home in Sydney and was sent with about twelve of my fellow graduates to #77 Squadron at Pearce just north of Perth making the tiresome journey to Perth by steam train via Melbourne, Adelaide and Kalgoorlie in 4 days. We eventually found our way to the Pearce guard house with our movement orders only to be told that they knew nothing of any 77 Sqdn. After some urgent phone calls we discovered that 77 Sqdn, consisted of one only Pilot Officer who told us that we were at least two weeks too early, so he granted us all 2 weeks leave with travel documents back to Sydney.

At this stage no one had any idea of the type of aircraft the squadron were to be equipped with so at the completion of our leave and another 2 lengthy train journeys we arrived back at Pearce to be informed that we were to receive the American P40 E Kittyhawk fighters which PM Curtin had obtained from the Americans, only because they were on a ship destined to be delivered to the Dutch Air Force in Surabaya, but the Japs had got there first. Roosevelt had previously argued that Australia had no pilots good enough to fly them.

77 Sqdn. was initially commanded by a RAF experienced fighter pilot who had escaped from Singapore and to prepare us for flying these hot machines, decreed that we should first fly a De Havilland Moth Minor without any instruction, which we managed to do without busting it. Sqdn. Leader Parker had escaped from Singapore and was anxious to return to the war in England so after only 2 weeks with 77 Sqdn. he embarked on a ship and was never heard from again, having been lost presumably at sea by enemy action. He was replaced by Sqdn.Ldr. Richard Cresswell. I should mention here that we also had a certain PIO John Gorton with us who had also been evacuated out of Singapore after crashing his Brewster Buffalo fighter and disfiguring his face on the gun sight.

Eventually the day arrived when we saw our first Kittyhawk which was ferried in from Cunderdin WA, where they were being assembled. The delivery was by an American ferry pilot. We requested that he give us some instruction in flying it but he declined saying he had to return immediately to Cunderdin and that, 'it's all in the instruction book,' which was about the size of a brief car manual.

So the squadron pilots who were by now at full strength of 24 proceeded to fly the Kittys' without incident. This was interesting as the other two squadrons #75 & #76 being formed in Williamstown NSW and who had American instructors, had several accidents. I can relate my experience with my first flight where I taxied it about a bit and lined it up for my first go. I opened the throttle and the 1200 VIP of the Allison engine accelerated the A/C rapidly to flying speed I eased it into the air and then looked for the undercarriage lever, having found it and started the retraction I looked up to find I was descending into the boundary trees, my first discovery, the Kitty had to be held into the climb until a lot more flying speed was reached.

Panic over, I flew it around for about an hour marveling at the little stubby wings that were keeping me airborne. I entered the circuit area at about 250 mph and read the decal 'do not lower the U/C above 180 mph' and did two full circuits easing back on the throttle to slow to the required speed, being sure that the small wings would stall if I pulled power too rapidly, this was achieved and I pulled off a reasonable approach and landing. Lots of questions from my mates for tips before their turn.

Whilst based at Pearce I experienced an unpleasant incident when carrying out gunnery practice with the wing mounted 6 Browning 0.5 in. machine guns on a rocky, exposed reef off the west coast, I noticed a strong smell of fuel in the cockpit and discovered fuel actually flowing through the cockpit and the fuel tank depleting rapidly. I immediately headed back to Pearce switching in turn to two other tanks before they showed empty and landed just in time before the last tank was emptied. There was of course a large fire risk which didn't eventuate luckily and inspection showed a copper fuel line had fractured but the engine had received enough fuel at low power to continue to operate.

Another incident occurred whilst at Pearce when I had my only accident in P40's. I had been practicing formation flying as #2 wing man to my section leader, F/O Tom Watson, from the Royal Canadian Air Force. Arriving back at the field I mistook landing instructions and believed I was to carry out a formation landing in pairs, which Tony had not intended, he didn't notice that I was still on his right side as we came over the fence and he landed in the middle of the runway forcing me to land off to the side, the right undercarriage struck an object and folded causing the A/C to ground loop and sustain severe damage.

After a couple of months training we became a reasonably efficient group and loved the Kittyhawks. The Air Board decided that we should remain in Perth for the defense of the city. The Japanese were still advancing in the north and we were moved to a camouflaged strip built on the Dunreath Golf course, complete with bunkers and lots of trees and close to the city, taking over a couple of mansions as our accommodation. There was a locked cellar in our mess and being young and disrespectful, broke into it to discover a large wine cellar which was soon depleted. Later it cost us a packet as we had to make a substantial repayment for the loss of the owner's wine. The strip was many years later to become Perth International Airport with the removal of many buildings and the Dunreath Golf Course.

We really had a pleasant war in Perth then, with plenty of visits to the city and parties in the mess. As mentioned previously I had a period in Hollywood military hospital for the removal of my troublesome appendix after another flare up.

After seven months the Jap advance had been stopped and Darwin and the north west coast was coming under air attack so the squadron was moved to Darwin, or rather to Batchelor airfield, south of Darwin town taking over from the US Air Force 39th Pursuit Group. Just one squadron of somewhat cavalier pilots who had each of their P40's emblazoned on the engine cowling 'Parson Postens Piss Poor Pilots', Colonel Posten being the commanding officer. They were transferred to Townsville on our arrival and having four more aircraft than pilots they requested having four of our pilots fly them. I was picked to go. Actually before this they had given four aircraft to the RAAF, and four pilots arrived from the south to ferry them, their leader was Flt/Lieut Cyril Stark who was first airborne, aircraft #2 commenced his T/O run in heavy dust and collided with #3. Both A/c were destroyed by fire. I was later told that Col. Posten said 'God damn, that was bad luck. I'll give you another couple.'

Papua New Guinea adventures



Locals roll away empty petrol drums from an airstrip in Papua New Guinea.

We were briefed that we would be accompanied by a Lockheed Loadstar with a navigator on board and make stops at Katherine, Daly Waters and Mount Isa for refueling. I had decided that I would take a set of maps for the flight and set off in a loose formation following the Lodestar. We transited Katherine and after a while I heard a radio call from the navigator, 'Say, does anyone know where we are?'. No response. So I called saying, 'Yes I do'. From there on, they all followed me and in sight of Daly Waters there was a race to get on the ground. I held back and landed last. From then on I was nominated navigator.

Back at Batchelor we did lots of training but saw no action, scrambled many times to chase enemy aircraft. The Japs had now resorted to night attacks and our commander, Dick Cresswell, put himself on standby every night determined to shoot down a bomber. The night eventually came when he luckily, with the help of radar, found a 'Betty' bomber and we all watched and cheered as we saw it falling in flames.

The next move was to a new strip closer to Darwin. It was constructed on the side of the main road North and named Livingstone Strip, one of 3 constructed for the defence of Darwin and later equipped with RAAF Spitfires. 77 Sqn. was then transferred to Townsville as reserves.

This was the time that the Japs made a bid to invade New Guinea at Milne Bay and were repulsed by Australian Ground forces supported by 75 and 76 Squadrons, which 77 Sqn then replaced. I spent only two weeks here and were once bombed up to attack the Jap invasion fleet in the Battle of the Coral Sea. The fleet was decimated and withdrew before it came within our range.

From 77 Sqdn. I was posted to a new squadron #86 being formed in Gawler, South Australia and spent another couple of months there working up the new pilots and being 'experienced' was now a section leader. It was a pleasant posting in the wine country and got to know a particular viticulturist family named Hoffman in Tanunda. It seemed strange to be socializing there with a German family, but they were on our side and treated us to lots of their fine product, a delicious port, in return for a supply of beer which was hard for them to obtain.

Our next posting was to Merauke on the south coast of what was then Dutch New Guinea. The Sqdn. left Gawler in two groups and ran into some really bad weather heading for Brisbane which broke up the formations. Most made a successful landing at Tamworth, but four A/C made forced landings in various paddocks and suffered extensive damage. We then re-grouped in Townsville before moving on to Merauke via Horn Island. Once again we experienced bad weather but all made it to Merauke except one A/C piloted By P/O 'Happy' Harris who was never seen again, apparently coming down in the Timor sea, the only casualty in my time with both Sqdns.

Merauke was a dreadful place built on a very extensive swamp, the mosquitoes literally carried one away. The unfinished strip was being constructed by an American airfield construction unit. I remember a time that we came under air attack and I witnessed a Negro grader driver leave his machine and running for the bush saying 'Lord you pick 'em up and I'll put 'em down.'

The strip was graded earth and then covered with Bifurcated Steel Plate (BSP) which was used mainly for airfield construction in the South Pacific this made a reasonable runway surface but made a hell of a noise as aircraft rolled over it. The Jap raid put a bomb in the middle of the strip and also destroyed a Boomerang Fighter, but the hole was repaired in half an hour with the damaged BSP plates being removed, the hole filled and new plates filled.

During my time in Merauke I took some leave with my friend Peter Brown to go to Sydney and be 'best man' for Peter's wedding. We had just five days and then to return to the squadron. At the completion of our leave, we boarded a C47 from #36 Squadron at Richmond for the trip to Merauke, flew to Townsville, had a night stop, taking off the following morning. The weather was bad with the inter-tropic front in place. The C47 endeavored to climb over the weather (impossible) and then descended to a few hundred feet over the sea, east of Cape York, we were surprisingly flying at a high angle of attack.

Peter and I were passengers in the back, without seat belts (slack Air Force procedures), when the first officer sergeant pilot, opened the flight deck door and said, 'Strap yourselves in. We are going in'. There was somewhat of a panic amongst the eleven passengers as they moved towards the rear bulkhead, where the seat belts were stowed. Peter and I realized the danger to the A/C, flying apparently with one engine out and having a sudden rearward C of G movement, took charge and distributed the belts with instructions on fitting them, I got my own fitted just as the aircraft touched down on a choppy sea before coming to a sudden stop.

The A/C was sitting flat on the water. I opened the left hand over-wing exit and stood on the wing and watched as the main door opened and a dinghy' deployed. No one thought of attaching the static line as it inflated and we watched it start to drift away from the A/C. I recall a soldier saying to the Captain, 'What will I do now, sir, I can't swim', the reply was, 'Well you had better B- well learn now', wherewith the fellow jumped in without a lifejacket and with arms and legs thrashing made it to the four-man raft.

The A/C slowly sank nose first to Davy Jones Locker whilst seven people squeezed into the life raft with six hanging to its side. The radio operator was still on board sending out an SOS then locking his key down just before the plane slid from sight with the transmitter still operating. About five hours later, after we had been desperately paddling using two distress flares as paddles towards land and being blown steadily eastwards, a Beaufort bomber arrived and dropped another four-man raft. Unfortunately it landed downwind and drifted away from us, the R/O and I volunteered to swim after it, the longest and hardest swim of my life. We eventually caught it and climbed aboard exhausted, but could not see the others with the heavy rain. When this cleared we could see the others in the distance and rowed our way back with the other five swimming people getting aboard. It was then discovered that the first dinghy had collapsible oars in the raft which weren't found due to the overcrowding.

By this time it was fairly late in the afternoon when we saw a boat in the distance. The flares which had been used as paddles were deployed and luckily still worked and sent off star shells and with great joy we watched the RAAF Crash Boat turn towards us. After being taken onboard we found they had absolutely no food or warm clothing on board. Shortly after a RAN boat arrived and offered to take some of us on board. The RAAF crew said they would arrive back at Horn Island long before the RAN, but I and a few others elected to go with the Navy. What a difference, fresh clothing, warm food and drink, good old Navy. I had now qualified to be a member of the 'Gold Fish Club' but in those days got no counseling for our stressful experience on the 14th of December 1943.

The squadron saw some action in Merauke and destroyed a few lap aircraft, but mainly carried out strafing attacks on enemy positions further to the west in which I was involved. The only time that I came close to taking a shot at a lap plane was when I was scrambled with my section (4 A/C) to chase a 'Dinah' photo reconnaissance plane which we sighted but lost in cloud. I called for the section to split into two pairs and go either side of the cloudbank. My #2 mistook the order and stayed with the 2nd pair, I found the 'Dinah' by myself and closed in for the kill but I was flying a brand new P40 N which had not had the guns serviced and they all jammed because of heavy inhibitor grease. That Jap was one lucky boy! The sad thing was that my rookie #2 had an older P40 M with serviceable guns and had missed the kill.

During my stay in Merauke I was approached by my armourer with a request that I correspond to his niece who wanted to have a pilot pen friend and I made contact with Margaret Stone, who I found to be a delightful and attractive young lady who lived in Drummoyne. When I later returned to Sydney, after the war, she became my girl friend, and we had many happy outings together. I needed a car which was hard to find in those days and located a 1937 Morris A40 for 200 pounds, it was a bit of a wreck but I had fun doing it up and taking Margaret on outings. Petrol was rationed but my stepfather, who was at the time running a shop and post office at Fairlight, gave me all the coupons I needed.

My operational service finished in May 1944 and I was posted to the navigation school at Evans Head in NSW, where I checked out on twin engine aircraft, the Ansons, and was appointed Flight Commander of 'B' flight, flying trainee navigators over land and sea, day and night, and sometimes having to find our way home after the trainee became hopelessly lost.

Next posting was to #20 GRP Course at Bairnsdale to learn more of the art of navigation. This was what I wanted, to be more qualified with an eye to a career in civil aviation. Completed the course in July 1945, just as VE Day dawned. I was discharged on the 5th October 1945.

I returned to my career in the Public Service, this time as a cadet draftsman in the PMG Dept. I remember my first day here well, and was taken in hand by the chief draftsman who presented me with a new set of the top drafting tools saying, 'You need the best because you are a 3rd Division Officer and will be here for the rest of your life.' I immediately thought, 'NO WAY', and started planning my way out of this situation. A few months later I applied for a new position of cadet quantity surveyor which I was awarded, but after my service life, could not settle, and in 1946 applied for a returned service university course in engineering and resigned from the Public Service.

University life was much more pleasant than the Public Service where there was no urgency to get the immense back log of work dealt with, and I enjoyed the study and friendship with my group of undergraduates, the social life was great too with attendance at dances. My girl friend Margaret had found another boy friend so I had to fall back on my cousin Barbara Stirling for social events, which was fine, but not too reliable, as she had also other interests. My friends planned attendance at a ball in the Mosman Town Hall, Barbara was not available, so I initially decided not to go, but was persuaded to come and share the others girl friends. This was a momentous event for me when I had several dances with Harry Smith's friend, Giselle Sloane, and fell head over heels in love, she was just gorgeous, I told Harry to watch out as I wanted to have her for myself, and he replied that I should go for my life as she meant nothing to him, so started my first real romance. Giselle was a kindergarten teacher boarding with friends in Neutral Bay, which was great for me as I was living at Spit Junction with my mother who had recently been widowed. We made good use of the Morris taking deprived kids from Surrey Hills on picnics and also became a devotee of the ballet, which was Giselle's passion.

In spite of my fun life I did manage to pass the first years exams but in my second year started to become restless and wanted to get back to my old love of flying. I applied to Qantas and other airlines to no avail, they all wanted heaps of hours, an ex fighter pilot with a grand total of 831 hours were not what they wanted, so I decided to try the back door, and in October I left Uni. and secured a job with Qantas as a traffic officer at the Rose Bay flying base, dispatching Sunderland, Catalina and Empire flying boats.

This was an enjoyable job with shift work which gave me a lot of time to spend with Giselle. I proposed to her but she did not want to settle down at that time and had ambitions, as girls do, to travel to England. The aircrew manager then, Capt. Reeves, was a flying boat pilot, and I used to harass him for a flying job whenever I saw him at Rose Bay.

He eventually succumbed to my constant requests and said he would arrange a flying test before he would consider me for a position. This was done in March 1949 in a Wackett Trainer, a really hot day, well over 100 deg.F with Capt. Bob Grey, a rather taciturn person, who said it was a good thing I hadn't flown one before as it was a better test of my ability.

I took off from Mascot to proceed to Bankstown for some circuits, but because of the heat the Wackett just wouldn't climb. I recall being over Parramatta at just 800ft. when Grey said 'take me back to Mascot and if you do a reasonable landing you are in'. This I managed to pull off, and as far as I know am the only pilot ever employed by Qantas by this method.

Training commenced on C47 aircraft and I was assigned to the Bird of Paradise Service flying to New Guinea in May flying from Sydney to Brisbane Rockhampton with a nightstop at Townsville, Port Moresby then across the Owen Stanley's to Lae, another night and then return to Sydney via the other ports. My first trip was with Capt. Fred Phillips, still one of my best friends. I did three only of these trips before being posted to Lae to fly in New Guinea and other islands. I had sought this with the plan of flying single pilot aircraft to build up my command flying.

In September 1949 checked out on DF183 Fox Moth and DH 184 Dragons flying into the Highlands, a very interesting experience. The only way of getting the fully laden Dragons there was to ridge soar them over ridges into the highland area. The Dragons were only capable of single engine performance when empty, with a density altitude of 2000 feet. In New Guinea the DA was 2000 feet at sea level. So it was only the reliability of the Gypsy Major engines that enabled the operation at all. Luckily we never had a failure. Maybe because Keith Ginman was one of the LAME's.

I naturally missed Giselle whilst I was here and we corresponded regularly. The Dragons had to be flown to Brisbane each year for annual inspection and I did several of these. On one of them, waiting in Brisbane for the work to be done at Archerfield, I was requested to go to the airfield to do a test on the aircraft brakes which had been notoriously bad.

The engineers were trying out new type brake linings, with the chief engineer accompanying me we taxied out and the brakes worked exceedingly well. Kit Brown suggested I take the aircraft up to 40 knots to see how quickly it would stop. The result was remarkable, the plane stopped immediately, standing on its nose and I was summons to Sydney for an inquiry.

The inquiry was conducted by Capt. Bert Ritchie who was then General Manager, a busy person, so the matter took a week. I stayed at my mother's flat in Spit Junction. Giselle was invited to stay also and we had a lovely week together with the inquiry sitting spasmodically only. Also during this week a good friend of my mother arranged for a visit by her niece and friend from New Zealand. So I met two charming and attractive young ladies, Joy Robinson and Betty Nathan, but with Giselle's presence did not take too much notice of them then.

The inquiry finished with a mild admonishment to me. I was in future to ensure that for future taxi tests I was required to ballast the aircraft. I certainly would not make that mistake again.

Back in Lae I was fully occupied with my flying duties, flying mainly the Dragons on mail runs into the Highlands, sometimes the Fox Moth (DH83) which was like a fat Tiger Moth built with a tiny cabin in the fuselage which sat four passengers two facing rearward and two forward, the pilot was in an open cockpit behind them and it was very difficult to see forward, my Kittyhawk experience came in very handy then. I also did a fair amount of co-pilot flying in the Dakotas to places like Honiara and Rabaul.

At one time I was based at Garoka in the Highlands from December 1950 to February 1951, living in a rough house by myself with a native boy servant named Borgia, flying to various places in the highlands and picking up charters where I could. The weather was very unpredictable so I became very cautious and cunning and had no real dramas. In March one morning I awoke to an earth tremor and looking out the window observed the mountain range rising and falling below the window ledge, it was of course the house rocking from side to side. Much more was happening in the eastern end of New Guinea where Mt. Lamington was erupting with unbelievable force flattening about 100 square miles of dense jungle and completely obliterating the district office and village of Higatura with the loss of all inhabitants.

My friend Ross Biddulph was flying into Higatura at the time, and observed the explosion at a close distance. He told of the mountain expanding just like a balloon. He turned the Dragon around and, diving at full throttle, stayed ahead of the blast and flew back to Lae to report the eruption.

A few days later I was recalled to Lae and was given the job of flying the government vulcanologist from the village of Pependetta which was the closest strip to Mt. Lamington for him to observe the crater. Each morning, early, we would take off before the cloud covered the mountain and fly around the crater which was still very active throwing out large coloured rocks. He wanted me to fly right into the crater for a closer look, but I steadfastly refused. After a week doing this I was relieved by Jock McKee, who was apparently braver than me, he stayed for two weeks and was subsequently awarded the MBE for his work. Don't know what the vulcanologist got for his bravado.

I left Lae in early July 1951 at the end of my posting in New Guinea with command time of over 2000 hours which put me in a much better position for promotion. I also was able to take six weeks leave and went to see England for the first time and see Giselle who was now living there. She had told me that she would arrange accommodation for me and on arrival, said I could stay with her and her Australian friend Lucy Clifford, an actress, who had the use of a very nice flat in Chelsea

belonging to Lucy's uncle, a titled gentleman, who lived in the country.

I had also arranged to buy a car on the export plan, a Ford Prefect, which we used for plenty of sightseeing in England, Scotland and also Europe travelling through Belgium, Holland, Austria, Italy and France.

After returning to Australia, I checked out on DC4's as first officer and commenced overseas flying to Singapore, Japan, Hong Kong, Philippines and New Zealand. Also had visits to Labuan and Guam, which was fascinating for me especially Hong Kong with its regular bad weather.

With my eye on the future I purchased a block of land overlooking Bilgola beach with a magnificent north easterly view for 300 pounds (\$600) and employed a local builder to design and construct a two bedroom house. Unfortunately I made a bad choice as he became bankrupt shortly after work was commenced and I was unable to obtain finance to continue with another builder and was forced to carry on with the work myself. I also found that the work done was sub-standard and quite a lot of remedial work was needed. However I eventually completed the work and had a home base. During this period I basically lived at Mona Vale with my good friends Roger and Pat Wilson.

These were the days that Captains were not required to have check flights, as is done today. I personally had a couple of interesting flights with a couple of below average captains. On one flight I was rostered for a Japan flight with a Captain who will remain nameless. We had an uneventful flight to Manila, then left there for Iwakuni in Japan in rather bad weather. The Captain set course in a NNE direction towards a mountain range flying IFR in cloud, when the navigator, 'Banjo' Patterson, had given him an initial heading to fly of due east. I pointed out to him his error, only to be ignored. I started to wonder how I should deal with this dangerous situation, when the navigator appeared brandishing an empty Coke bottle, saying, 'Captain, if you don't head east I'll hit you with this.' Without a word said the A/C was turned due east.

Later on the same flight over southern Japan the Captain ordered the second officer, Ron Williams, into the co-pilots seat. Ron, hurriedly getting into the seat bumped his head severely onto the #4 feather button and the engine came to a halt. He was blasted by the Captain for being such a clumsy oaf, during this verbal barrage the Captain un-feathered the engine without paying too much notice of the correct procedure, with the result that the engine went into over-speed and could not be stopped. After about 5 minutes the engine seized with a shuddering jolt and we proceeded into Iwakuni on 3 engines, with a rather unhappy crew.

Later in Sydney I was asked to give my version of the engine failure, and was told it didn't agree with the Captain's version, he had concocted a totally false story in his report. I thought I was in big trouble, as captains in those days were considered infallible. Luckily for me the navigator was then asked for his version which he backed up with his full written nav. log, including the Manila episode. The last I heard of him, was that he was driving tractors in South Australia.

Early in 1953 I heard from Giselle that she had met a new friend, a 'Great Dane', and would not be returning home as planned. She told me I should forget any plans for our mutual future, but remain good friends. I was of course quite shattered, but decided that I should get on with my life and seek other girl friends. This I did, and found one, Greta Killingbeck, she was very nice but didn't really appeal as a soul mate.

Later in the year in November, Joy Robinson again came into my life. She was now a trainee nurse at Lower Hutt Hospital in Wellington and came on a holiday to Sydney with another friend, Dulcie Perry. Her aunt Mary Kate Rothwell, knowing I had broken up with Giselle, had told her I was anxious to meet her again, and told me the same story, which was not quite true.

Nevertheless I decided to squire Joy and Dulcie around Sydney for their two week stay. It wasn't long before I realised that Joy was quite gorgeous and found I was rather concentrating on her and not poor Dulcie. We had a wonderful ten days before she would escape back to New Zealand. One night, shortly before they were to leave, I took her to a quiet spot somewhere in the eastern suburbs and proposed. I was thrilled that she immediately agreed, and so at the age of thirty-one I had found my future life partner. I was just so happy. It was the 24th of the month.

The next day we purchased an engagement ring at Prouds and booked a phone call at the GPO to tell her family. After about half an hour the call came through, Joy spoke to her mother. I later learnt that her mother, Belle, said she didn't know whether to be happy or sick. Luckily the Robinsons had an aunt, Sophie, a war widow who lived with them and had known me when she had previously stayed with Mary Kate in Sydney, and she was able to put in a good word for me. That night we celebrated at Romanos. Joy and Dulcie boarded the flying boat at Rose Bay the next day for Wellington at the end of their brief but eventful holiday.

Over the next few months we corresponded regularly, Joy gave up her nursing career and worked for her father who ran a concrete post manufacturing business together with his carrying business. I gained a good idea of her drive when I learnt that after he mentioned one day that he was considering selling the carrying business. The next thing Bill knew was that Joy had arranged a sale to his nephew, Bert Anderson. Wedding plans were made for the 24th. April, 1954.

In January 1954, I experienced my worst incident with Qantas. I was rostered to do a flight to Japan with another problem Captain with whom I had not flown before. He was known amongst the crews as 'Kamikaze'. it was a practice for people to go sick just before the rostered flight, but I decided to go. He however was a pleasant enough person and we had an uneventful flight to Hong Kong.

The weather on arrival was not good with frequent showers. We made an NDB approach on Waglan Island to the SE of the Harbour to 700 feet and could not see the Waglan Gap, so broke off the approach. This procedure showed his instrument flying was well below average in my opinion. Normally we should have waited for improved conditions or diverted to Manila. Lower decided that we should attempt another approach from the west, although this was not approved by Qantas. He directed me to copy the procedure by radio which I did, but not in sufficient detail.

He carried out the Chung Chow approach badly and the DC4 broke out of the cloud in the western Harbour and I was relieved to see the 09 runway in the distance. However we then ran into a rain shower and to my amazement he pulled back the control column and said in a terrified voice, 'We're going to crash!' I thought, 'Not if I can help it', and pushed the engines up to T/O power. The second officer Graham Lance, was in the right hand seat and I instructed him to take over the controls and do a sharp left hand turn to the west as we climbed in cloud. The navigator, 'Lofty' Bracker, thrust a large scale map into my hands and I had to mentally track out of trouble with the Captain sitting stunned in the left seat.

He recovered his composure and apologised, but then wanted to have another attempt. I told him I would not agree and called for the diversion to Manila.

That night we had a crew meeting, without the Captain, and I persuaded the crew to carry on with the service and I would watch things very closely. The next day we returned to Hong Kong with better weather and landed on the NW runway, but to my astonishment, he lost control of the aircraft and ran right off the runway, luckily not hitting anything.

In retrospect I should have refused to go on any further, but with another crew meeting we carried on and eventually landed back in Sydney. I thought I would surely lose my job this time, but another inquiry resolved the issue with reports from the full crew, including the cabin crew, and to my relief, a letter signed by some of the passengers describing the Hong Kong episode. Once again I was involved with the demise of a captain.

In April, 1954, I took annual leave and proceeded to New Zealand for my coming wedding, travelling on a DC4 via Christchurch. The landing there was dramatic with very bad turbulence, so much so that the captain refused to return to Sydney until the aircraft had been thoroughly inspected for possible damage.

I was anxious to get to Napier, so approached NAC, the local carrier. They allowed me to travel on their DC3 service to Wellington where I could request a further flight to Napier. The captain after take off flew at low level out to sea and we had a fairly comfortable flight to Wellington. Later I hitched a ride to Napier via Palmerston North and again experienced a very rough trip and was thankful to be met at the airport by my lovely fiancé and meet my in-laws to be.

I had four or five days staying with Joy's family meeting lots of people and preparing for the big event on the 24th. We had a memorable service and wedding breakfast, attended by over a hundred guests on the brides side and two only on mine, my mother with a friend of hers who had come to the wedding with her.

Joy's dad, Bill, loaned us his Vauxhall for our honeymoon which we spent travelling about the picturesque North Island for a couple of weeks before returning to Sydney by sea on the Union Steamship, 'Wanganella'.

to be continued in the
Summer edition of 'Thermal

BSC Flying Charges

(GST inclusive) May 2003

Glider Hire												Tug Towing			
Standard gliders – DG-505 (Orion), ASK13, Puchacz, Junior								\$30/hr or \$0.50/min				Launches = \$14.00 +\$0.70 per 100 feet			
Libelle								\$21/hr or \$0.35/min				– based on altimeter setting			
DG-300								\$36/hr or \$0.60/min				of 2,200 feet QNH at Piper's			
Min.	Standard	Libelle	DG-300	Min.	Standard	Libelle	DG-300	Min.	Standard	Libelle	DG-300	Altitude	\$	Altitude	\$
1	\$0.50	\$0.35	\$0.60	21	\$10.50	\$7.35	\$12.60	41	\$20.50	\$14.35	\$24.60	2300	\$14.70	4300	\$28.70
2	\$1.00	\$0.70	\$1.20	22	\$11.00	\$7.70	\$13.20	42	\$21.00	\$14.70	\$25.20	2400	\$15.40	4400	\$29.40
3	\$1.50	\$1.05	\$1.80	23	\$11.50	\$8.05	\$13.80	43	\$21.50	\$15.05	\$25.80	2500	\$16.10	4500	\$30.10
4	\$2.00	\$1.40	\$2.40	24	\$12.00	\$8.40	\$14.40	44	\$22.00	\$15.40	\$26.40	2600	\$16.80	4600	\$30.80
5	\$2.50	\$1.75	\$3.00	25	\$12.50	\$8.75	\$15.00	45	\$22.50	\$15.75	\$27.00	2700	\$17.50	4700	\$31.50
6	\$3.00	\$2.10	\$3.60	26	\$13.00	\$9.10	\$15.60	46	\$23.00	\$16.10	\$27.60	2800	\$18.20	4800	\$32.20
7	\$3.50	\$2.45	\$4.20	27	\$13.50	\$9.45	\$16.20	47	\$23.50	\$16.45	\$28.20	2900	\$18.90	4900	\$32.90
8	\$4.00	\$2.80	\$4.80	28	\$14.00	\$9.80	\$16.80	48	\$24.00	\$16.80	\$28.80	3000	\$19.60	5000	\$33.60
9	\$4.50	\$3.15	\$5.40	29	\$14.50	\$10.15	\$17.40	49	\$24.50	\$17.15	\$29.40	3100	\$20.30	5100	\$34.30
10	\$5.00	\$3.50	\$6.00	30	\$15.00	\$10.50	\$18.00	50	\$25.00	\$17.50	\$30.00	3200	\$21.00	5200	\$35.00
11	\$5.50	\$3.85	\$6.60	31	\$15.50	\$10.85	\$18.60	51	\$25.50	\$17.85	\$30.60	3300	\$21.70	5300	\$35.70
12	\$6.00	\$4.20	\$7.20	32	\$16.00	\$11.20	\$19.20	52	\$26.00	\$18.20	\$31.20	3400	\$22.40	5400	\$36.40
13	\$6.50	\$4.55	\$7.80	33	\$16.50	\$11.55	\$19.80	53	\$26.50	\$18.55	\$31.80	3500	\$23.10	5500	\$37.10
14	\$7.00	\$4.90	\$8.40	34	\$17.00	\$11.90	\$20.40	54	\$27.00	\$18.90	\$32.40	3600	\$23.80	5600	\$37.80
15	\$7.50	\$5.25	\$9.00	35	\$17.50	\$12.25	\$21.00	55	\$27.50	\$19.25	\$33.00	3700	\$24.50	5700	\$38.50
16	\$8.00	\$5.60	\$9.60	36	\$18.00	\$12.60	\$21.60	56	\$28.00	\$19.60	\$33.60	3800	\$25.20	5800	\$39.20
17	\$8.50	\$5.95	\$10.20	37	\$18.50	\$12.95	\$22.20	57	\$28.50	\$19.95	\$34.20	3900	\$25.90	5900	\$39.90
18	\$9.00	\$6.30	\$10.80	38	\$19.00	\$13.30	\$22.80	58	\$29.00	\$20.30	\$34.80	4000	\$26.60	6000	\$40.60
19	\$9.50	\$6.65	\$11.40	39	\$19.50	\$13.65	\$23.40	59	\$29.50	\$20.65	\$35.40	4100	\$27.30	6100	\$41.30
20	\$10.00	\$7.00	\$12.00	40	\$20.00	\$14.00	\$24.00	60	\$30.00	\$21.00	\$36.00	4200	\$28.00	6200	\$42.00

Walk-in passengers (including temporary GFA membership) = \$100.00

Friends of members in attendance at Piper's: club rates + **temporary GFA membership** + airfield levy

Piper's airfield levy: \$2.20 per person per day or \$4.40 per family per day

EVERYBODY at the field must pay to support clubhouse amenities.

Movement fee: \$2.50 per takeoff for ALL gliders except club 2-seaters

Full membership: joining fee \$165, annual subs \$165 plus \$175.00 GFA fee

Family membership: joining fee \$0, annual subs \$82.50 plus \$139.00 GFA fee

Student membership: joining fee \$0, annual subs \$82.50 plus \$108.00 GFA fee

Family student: joining fee \$0, annual subs \$82.50 plus \$72.00 GFA fee

Air League: joining fee \$0, annual subs \$82.50 plus \$139.00 GFA fee

Trial membership: 3 months + 5 flights (including aerotows) + logbook = \$330.00

Bulk flying scheme: \$450 per annum, paid in advance for unlimited flying (aerotow NOT included) from Piper's in club single-seaters

Log books: \$5 (in bar)

Basic gliding knowledge: \$25 – contact Peter Bowring

Glider hire: \$500 deposit required

DG300: \$100 per day weekends, \$77 per day weekdays

Other gliders: \$77 per day weekends, \$60 per day weekdays

Booked cross-country flights: no glider charge over 4 hours

Tug outside hire:

Dry hire: \$143 per hour tacho time, ferry and onsite

Air Training Corps / Air League: \$115.50 per hour dry

Aerotow retrieves of outlandings: Tacho time @ \$185 per hour plus \$9.00 landing fee at Raglan, Spring Hill and other aerodromes

Tug pilot training: per Peter Hanneman, \$600 per course

Unrestricted tug rating training: \$180 per hour

Map to the home of Bathurst Soaring Club Piper's Airfield

Freemantle Road
Eglinton NSW 2795
(via Bathurst)
Telephone: +61 2 6337 1180
www.bathurstsoaring.org.au

Piper's Airfield co-ordinates: 33°23'S 149°30'E

